

# Sola Power From The Church Of The Reformation For The Church Of Today

The reason why it is important to look back and celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation is so that we can see how the Church of those days was revitalised under God by a raft of five simple truths in order to reclaim them for today's Church, as she faces a future plagued by many difficulties, including rampant secularism and militant Islam. A Church whose power has been sapped by theological liberalism, weak leadership and indifference to the lostness of the lost, desperately needs to rediscover that five-strand raft of truths which fired up the likes of Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli as they led the Church out of the mediaeval morass which had overtaken her and into centuries of new-found zeal. This zeal, however, has long since faded and must be rekindled afresh in the Church today.

**It was through these great truths arising out of the rediscovery of the Scriptures** that God gave the Reformers the determination, courage and boldness to challenge a church which had so dramatically lost its way, and to turn her focus away from herself and back to Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church. Revival, renewal, rededication – these are what we pray this remembrance will bring back.

**These are those great truths:**

- Salvation by grace alone.
- Through faith alone.
- In Christ Alone.
- According to the Scriptures alone.
- To the glory of God alone.



(‘Sola’ = ‘alone’ or ‘only’, and these five ‘sola’s’ form a powerful and empowering formula from the Word of God for the Church in every generation.)

‘By prayer alone’ may well be added to them as the principle which binds these five together. The very utterance of prayer acknowledges the frailty of humanity in need of the almighty power of God to be able to do His work in His world today. Our Lord Jesus Christ is so often shown in the Gospel narrative to be at prayer to the Father, and if that was so for the Divine Son of God, how much more must it be so for us today? Like their Lord, men and women of faith have so often found strength and comfort, power and perseverance ‘by prayer’ through which the Lord gives strength to the arm of His servants.

**Remembering such an event as Martin Luther’s lighting the spark which set the fire going** reminds us above all of the Lord’s empowering His weak, and yes, sinful servants; that He has done this on many occasions before and since; and that since He is the God who ‘so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ... not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved’, (John 3.16,17) He will doubtless be of a mind and have a plan to bring this to fulfilment in His own good time and in His own wonderful way and amazing grace.

**Many celebrations of the events of 31 October 1517** have been held around the world, not least in the place where they happened and from where they moved out. On following pages we tell something of that story. Read on, and be encouraged in the Lord our gracious God.

– Bob Thomas

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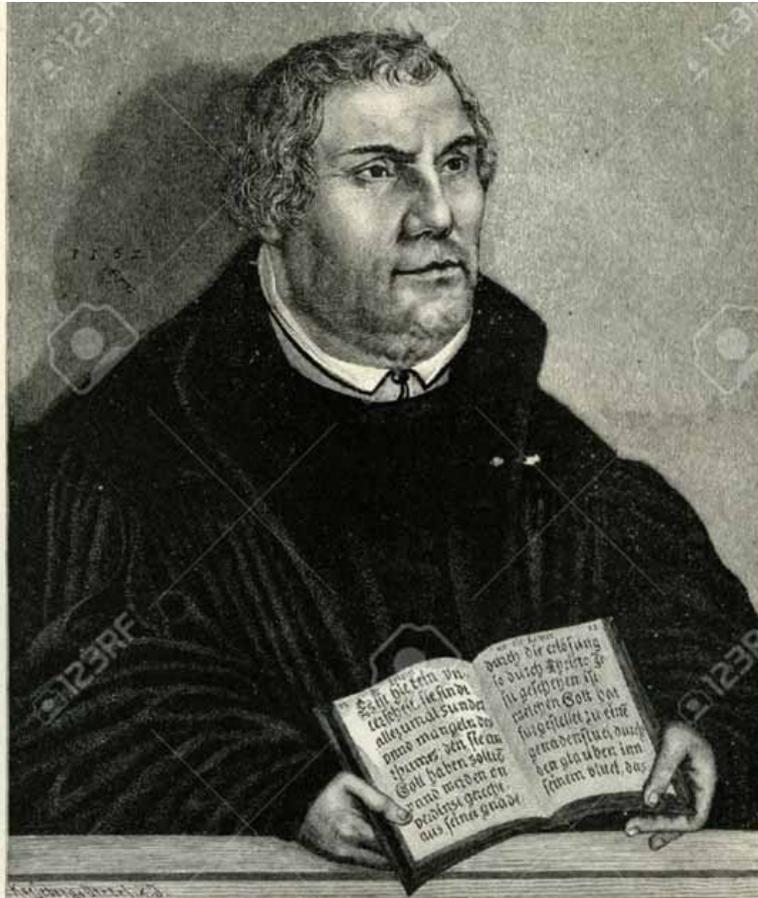
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**newlife**  
AUSTRALIA'S CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER



*Martin Luther*

"PEOPLE SHOULD PUT THEIR  
TRUST IN NOTHING BUT  
JESUS CHRIST ALONE, NOT IN  
THEIR PRAYERS, MERITS, OR  
THEIR OWN GOOD DEEDS."

- MARTIN LUTHER

**'WE ARE EYEWITNESSES'**

## The Reality Of The Reality Of The Reformation

There's nothing like 'being there' to capture the reality of any given event, and it was my privilege to spend a week in Wittenberg attending the World Reformed Fellowship Reformation Conference leading up to 31 October and the celebration of the launch of the Reformation by Martin Luther's nailing his *95 Theses* to the door of the Castle Church there.

**The nailing of the Hands which made the world to the Cross of Calvary** that they might be the Hands which brought new life to that

world long lost and dead in its trespasses and sins is doubtless the hinge of history, but Luther's nailing of his *95 Theses* to that church door in Wittenberg brought the atoning death of the Crucified One and the imputing of His righteousness to believers back into the centre of and back into focus for the Church which had lost its way in proclaiming that truth, that Gospel.

**Now enshrined in brass on the side door of Wittenberg's Schlosskirche**, we note that not all of the theses express the fullness of Protestant, Biblical faith, being largely Luther's reaction to the practice of the selling of 'indulgences' and other malpractices of the Church in his day. But as Luther's own faith developed through his prayerful study of the Scriptures, those which underlined the great doctrines brought to the fore by the Reformation gained prominence, particularly the 'Solas' – salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone according to the Scriptures alone and for the glory of God alone.

**The Day of Remembrance, 31 October 2017, began with an English language service** in the Castle Church, conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The service was a relatively simple one, based around 'Luther's Psalm' (Psalm 46) and his famous hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. The sermon was preached by the Rev Dr Rafael Malpica Padilla, a Venezuelan and Executive Director of ELCA Global Mission. After giving a passable summary of Luther's doctrine of justification by grace through faith, he veered to the left under what he claimed would be 'an attempt to free Luther from his *Babylonian Captivity*' (the title of one of the reformer's major writings). Unfortunately it seemed to this observer that he actually re-consigned Luther to his *Babylonian Captivity* as he expounded what is known as 'liberation theology' which, like all aberrations of Christian theology is 'works-based' in contrast to the grace/faith base of Protestant theology.

**Following the service, the crowd built up and the mood of the day changed** from being a Christian celebration to a Vanity Fair-type jolly good time. Nevertheless there were flashes of Gospel light. A choir from Crown College Of The Bible in England gathered in front of the door of the Castle Church and gave a moving rendition of *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* followed by tract distribution and one-on-one evangelism in the streets.



Crown College Choir

A brass band in the Market Square received hearty applause as they played German hymns, including *Praise The Saviour All Who Know Him, Now Thank We All Our God* and (inevitably, but I'm not complaining), *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. Many joined in singing them. A little further away an earnest young man movingly played a selection of hymns on what looked like pan-pipes, including *Amazing Grace* and *Nearer My God To Thee*. Another man somewhat further along was playing hymns on a saxophone. Franklin Graham's *Samaritan's Purse* ministry was prominently placed as it distributed tracts and engaged passers-by in carefully directed Gospel conversation. A Norwegian couple were distributing tracts, and a group of young Christians were encouraging people to 'Trust Jesus'. Several services were held throughout the day in both the Town Church and the Castle Church, in German and English. (Continued on Page Four)

## 'WE ARE EYEWITNESSES'



*(Clockwise from left) The capacity congregation in the Castle Church for the English Service; Wittenberg Town Band playing hymns; 'Trust Jesus' workers; Samaritan's Purse stall holders.*

*(Continued from Page Three)*

**Overall the day pointed up several lessons** to be taken away and become points for prayer and spurs to greater endeavour on the part of concerned Christians.

- 1. Biblical Truth rediscovered at the Reformation** is falling behind in its impact both in the Church and in the world.
- 2. Biblical Truth needs to be cordially accepted**, lovingly practised and staunchly maintained by the heirs of the Reformation for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
- 3. While Roman Catholicism has made some small modifications** to those practices and doctrines which sparked the Reformation, it still grants indulgences and engages in other practices protested against at the Reformation and is still a works-based religion.
- 4. Luther may have nailed the abuses of his day to the door of the Castle Church**, but much of Protestant Christianity is holding the gun at its own head today by tolerating 'theological liberalism' and watching by and wringing its hands as its exponents gain ever more influence within the Church.
- 5. 'The main thing must remain the main thing.'** Our task is not to roll over in the face of secularism's assaults or Islamist terrorists, but to proclaim our crucified and risen Lord in all His saving power, that 'where sin abounds, grace will abound all the more.'
- 6. As in the Early Church**, the turn of the 1st Millenium, the Reformation, the Great Awakening; the sharpest minds, the boldest warriors and the most gifted practitioners need to be ushered to the fore and encouraged to give strong leadership and be 'examples to the flock'.

*– Bob Thomas*

**NEXT ISSUE: World Reformed Fellowship  
– An Exercise In Faith Building**

**NEW LIFE – 1 November 2017 – Page Four**

## **1,000 Australian Churches Invited To Partner With BGEA In Easter 2018 Outreach**

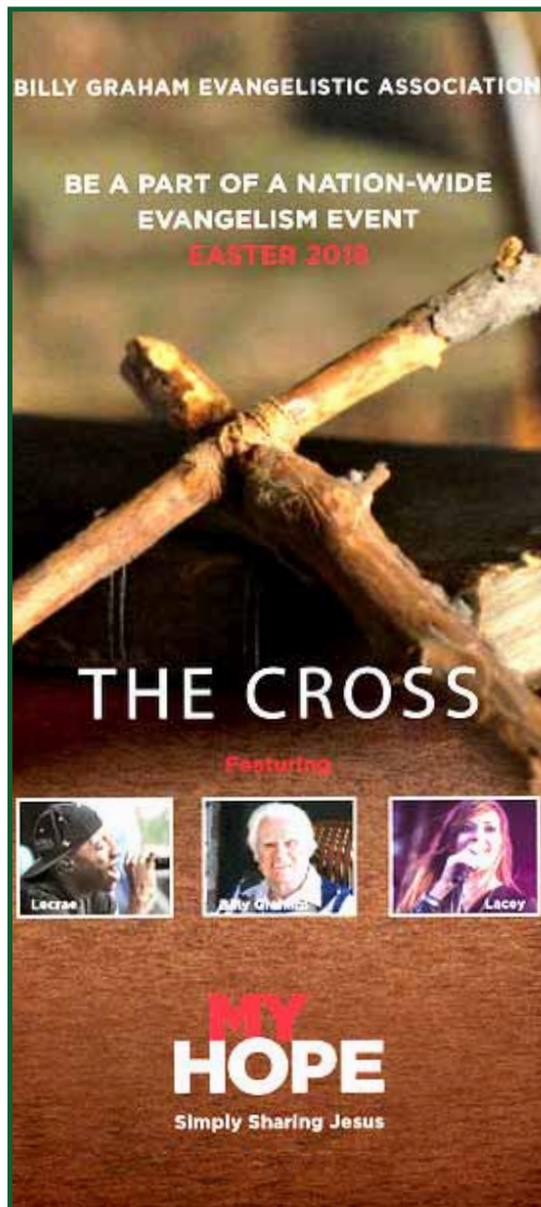
The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is looking to partner with 1,000 Australian churches for their *My Hope Easter 2018* campaign. *My Hope* is based around a 30-minute video, *The Cross*, produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. It is designed to be shown by churches and Christian organisations at outreach events and is being offered free of charge.

'We ask churches to partner with us by participating in this program over Easter, 2018 and actively seek to invite their local community to attend,' said Jorge Rodrigues, Executive Director of BGEA Australia. 'As our nation turns increasingly to secularism and challenges Christian values, we want to partner with 1,000 churches to lovingly proclaim the everlasting Gospel and share the message of hope and eternal life with communities across Australia,' said Jorge.

Partnering churches will be offered promotional resources and the contemporary *The Cross* video, featuring Billy Graham and guest musical artists, at no cost. They will also be offered free training resources to assist them with the *My Hope Easter 2018* outreach.

**Jesus said about Himself: 'I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.** No-one comes to the Father except through Me' (John 14.6, NKJV) and churches are asked to stand together and proclaim this truth.

More information about this outreach is available on [Billygraham.org.au/my-hope](http://Billygraham.org.au/my-hope) and from Jorge Rodrigues: Phone: (02) 8825 1300. Mobile: 0406 641 610. Email: [jorge@billygraham.org.au](mailto:jorge@billygraham.org.au)



## **CHINA: House Church Leader, Daughter, Grandson Arrested For Sharing Faith In Public**

**China continues its crackdown on Christians.** In the most recent report of persecution, a Chinese house church pastor, her daughter, and her grandson were arrested for expressing and sharing their faith in public. According to [ChristianityToday.com](http://ChristianityToday.com), Xu Shizhen, along with her daughter and grandson, was singing and dancing in worship and preaching about her faith in a public park in Xianning, Hubei province. A month after expressing and sharing her faith in the park, Xu, her daughter Xu Yuqing, and her three-year-old grandson Xu Shouwang were arrested. Their exact whereabouts following the arrest are unknown.

**Xu had previously had a run-in with authorities** when her house church was seized by officials and placed under the supervision of China's state-run Three-Self Patriotic Movement church. China's government under President Xi Jinping recently added new religious regulations which restrict religious expression to an even greater extent.

'The new religion regulations are sweeping in scope and, if fully enforced, could mean major changes for China's unregistered church, not only in its worship and meeting practices, but also engagement in areas such as Christian education, media, and interaction with the global church,' wrote ChinaSource president Brent Fulton.

**Please pray for Xu, her daughter, and young grandson.** – Veronica Neffinger, Editor, [ChristianHeadlines.com](http://ChristianHeadlines.com)

## **TAJIKISTAN: Christians Persecuted Severely**

Tajikistan, in Central Asia, borders Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China. Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union and became an independent country after the dissolution of the USSR in 1992. Tajikistan suffered a five-year civil war which resulted in many deaths and had a devastating effect on the country's life and economy. It is officially the poorest country in Central Asia and one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Its population approaches nine million and about 98% are Moslem.

**The Christian churches are a tiny minority** and face a lot of pressure from the government and Muslim society. The law prohibits children and young people under 18 participating in religious activities in both churches and mosques. The greatest pressure is on the Christians with Muslim background who experience persecution at all levels – from their family members, the Muslim community and state officials.

**The pressure is especially strong in rural areas.** It can take different forms, from verbal to physical abuse, beatings, abduction, home detention, discrimination, losing jobs and in other ways. The number of Christian churches remains small but there are many secret believers. It is illegal to meet for worship without state registration, but it is also extremely difficult and practically impossible to get state registration. For that reason many Tajik Christians meet secretly in house churches, facing the risk of police raids, detention, interrogation and fines.

**President Emomali Rahmon was given the official title**, 'The Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation'. During his 25-year rule, the religious freedom situation in Tajikistan has worsened significantly. Since 2016, human rights in general are also considerably worse, with many arrests and imprisonment of members of the opposition parties, including top officials.

**Christian churches also have been experiencing increasing pressure in 2017.** In the capital city, Dushanbe, two kindergartens were closed because of the Christians employed and a Christian book being found. In March, a registered church in Konibodom was raided, believers interrogated, threatened and beaten and the church was closed. In June, a non-registered Baptist Church in Dushanbe was raided, books confiscated, believers videotaped, interrogated and their details taken. Demolition of the church building was threatened.

**Other non-registered churches were raided**, books confiscated, church leaders threatened and fined. In April, Bakhrom Kholmatov (42), the pastor of a registered Sunmin church in Khudzhand, was arrested, accused of inciting religious hatred and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The accusations were based on Christian hymn books found in the church with songs like *God's Army Is Marching* and *Our Fight Is Not Against Flesh And Blood*, as well as the *More Than A Carpenter* book by Josh McDowell. The judges considered they were all 'extremist material'.

– Anneta Vyssotskaia, a Russian Christian and religious liberty expert on Russia and Central Asia, is the guest contributor to the RLPB ministry with this and the next two bulletins.

### **REMEMBER THE PERSECUTED!**

**International Day of Prayer  
for the Persecuted Church**

**Sunday 5 or 12 November 2017**

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

- all the Christians in Tajikistan, especially Muslim background Christians, to stand strong in their faith as they are interrogated and threatened;
- the restraint of the authorities, for human rights, the rule of law and cessation of attacks on and destruction of churches and their facilities;
- Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov, his family and his church to be comforted and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

**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)**

# Life Should Be Seen As God's Gift

An ongoing push in Australian parliaments for euthanasia or 'assisted dying' was unanimously rejected by Sydney's Anglican Synod on its first sitting day. As the NSW Parliament prepared to consider a new *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill*, Synod also called on state MPs to reject the legislation and prioritise the improvement of palliative care, encouraging Anglicans across the Diocese to contact their local member as well as engaging in any public debate on the issue.

**The mover of the motion, Dr Karin Sowada**, said that with the exception of the Northern Territory Parliament's vote to legalise euthanasia in 1995 (which was overturned by the Federal Government), there had been more than 50 failed attempts to introduce euthanasia legislation since 1993 – the most recent being a 'resounding' defeat in Tasmania, where the vote was 18-6 against. She said it was important to acknowledge that many people came to the debate with 'personal stories of family, friends and relatives who have suffered greatly' from terminal illness, but warned that experiences from overseas showed the dangers of normalising death by choice.

**Dr Sowada cited a report in the *British Medical Journal*** that found 32% of all euthanasia deaths in one region of Belgium 'occurred without the request or consent of the patient' – and said the country's laws had gradually broadened to allow children and the mentally ill to seek permission to die.

**'The bracket creep happens very quickly,' she said**, adding that, 'The elderly are very vulnerable to co-ercion by family ... People must have the right to live the extent of their natural life without the guilt of "hanging on". We must remain clear-eyed as to what represents the common good and what euthanasia represents: a fundamental change to social and medical practice. At its core, it contradicts the Christian view of life as God's gift,' Dr Sowada added.

**Archbishop Davies has written to members of the NSW Legislative Council** to express the Diocese's 'very strong opposition' to the pending legislation.

## FamilyVoice Australia Rejects Euthanasia

Christian advocacy group **FamilyVoice Australia** has told the WA parliamentary inquiry into end-of-life choices that doctors must continue to serve only as protectors of life. In a written submission to the *End-Of-Life Choices* inquiry, FamilyVoice Australia said medical practitioners historically took the Hippocratic Oath, which forbids euthanasia.

**'That promise has shaped medical ethics since ancient times,'** said FamilyVoice National Director Ashley Saunders. After the horrendous abuse by Nazi medical personnel, the Declaration Of Geneva enabled doctors to pledge utmost respect for human life from birth to natural death,' he said. 'It was followed by the International Code Of Medical Ethics which required doctors to preserve human life.'

**'In 2015, the World Medical Association reaffirmed** the 1992 Statement Of Marbella that labelled euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide as unethical, the FamilyVoice submission explained. 'Then after a comprehensive policy review, the Australian Medical Association last year resolved to maintain its opposition to euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, because doctors should not seek to end human life,' Mr Saunders noted. 'We urge state MPs to heed the wise counsel of Australian, international and historic experts in medical ethics and give no approval of euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide.'

– *FamilyVoice Australia, a Christian voice for family, faith and freedom. Website: [www.fava.org.au](http://www.fava.org.au)*

## Burmese Baptist Pastors Sentenced To Prison

Two Baptist pastors from Myanmar have received prison sentences for leading journalists to a church reportedly destroyed by military air strikes last year. Dumdaw Nawng Latt, 65, was sentenced to four years and three months and his nephew, Langjaw Gam Seng, 35, to two years and three months on 27 October under the country's Unlawful Associations Act. Both men are pastors in the Kachin Baptist Convention, a 300-church denominational body formed when American missionaries were forced to leave the country historically known as Burma by a military dictatorship that seized control in 1962.



## Equipping The Defence Force With The Whole Armour Of God

A new waterproof New Testament has been created by Bible Society Australia for the Australian Defence Force. The Air Force version, the first of three versions, was recently launched in Canberra. Air Commodore Kevin Russell, the director-general of Chaplaincy, told guests at the launch that the duty of a chaplain to share the Word of God was 'a great and heavy privilege.' He said the very durable, pocket-fit New Testament matches the new uniform and has been created for use in any situation. Bible Society Australia's CEO Dr Greg Clarke said they are thrilled that people will be able to take this Bible with them wherever they go and in whatever challenges they face.



The waterproof Bible will be used by chaplains both in Australia and overseas. A version of the waterproof Bible for the Army and the Navy is also in progress, and each version includes the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs.

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

## Israeli PM Netanyahu Challenges Christian Media

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called on a group of Christian journalists to put a spotlight on the persecution of Christians under Iran's Islamic regime. Speaking at the first *Christian Media Summit* in Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu said it's time to speak out for suffering Christians in Iran. He cited pastors who are jailed for no other reason than being a Christian leader and believers who have been brutally tortured just for practising their faith. Mr Netanyahu said, 'I think that how a country treats religious minorities is a very good indicator of how it will treat its fellow citizens and its neighbours.' Sponsored by the Government Press Office, the Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office, the summit has brought more than 100 Christian journalists and speakers from around the world to learn about Israel's biblical and modern history, and its security challenges. Mr Netanyahu's address, to begin the summit, was given at the Israel Museum.

– [CBN Christian World News](http://CBN Christian World News)

## Quiz Worx Comes To Queensland

'Life is boring without puppets,' says Scruff, a *Quiz Worx* puppet. He might be right. And Queenslanders are about to find out what they've been missing. *Quiz Worx*, a children's ministry that performs puppet shows to tell biblical stories to children in churches, schools and holiday clubs, has traditionally been based in New South Wales. The team of 14 has performed more than 4,000 puppet shows and estimates that more than 400,000 people have seen them since the organisation's inception in 1998. The concept is simple: 'We go and tell people about Jesus, in live shows ... with puppets,' says *Quiz Worx* performer Mike Pickering. *Eternity News* reports that the organisation is committing to doing more of that in Queensland, opening up an office in January 2018 and seeking to partner with local churches and schools. *Quiz Worx* works with RI teachers in state schools, Christian schools and churches. – [Eternity News at biblestudies.org.au](http://Eternity News at biblestudies.org.au)

Delivering More Than Furniture

Wayne Beddow runs a large retail furniture outlet in Wollongong, south of Sydney. But over the past several years he may have led more people to the Lord than has his own pastor. Wayne's floor staff and truck drivers are trained to listen to customers and be ready to offer prayer. Paul Bartlett, senior minister of *Lighthouse Church* in Wollongong says Wayne probably leads more people to Christ through his business than they do on Sunday. Pastor Bartlett urges business people in his congregation to view their businesses as like the well that attracted the Samaritan woman – she came for something natural but, thanks to her encounter with Jesus, she left with something supernatural. He has written a book called *Thank God It's Monday*, based on his belief that the way to reach a secular nation such as Australia is not by trying to get people to come to church but rather empowering church-goers to see their Monday-to-Friday world as their calling.

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

## A Time To Think – About God

**Thinking Of God**, an interdenominational ministry which aims to encourage and equip Christian leaders, held a day conference on Thursday 19 October at St Margaret's Presbyterian Church, Balaclava. TOG has held conferences in other cities, but this was Melbourne's first and was entitled, *Confessing Christ Today, Confessional And Relevant?*

**Kamal Weerakoon**, Director of TOG and a Presbyterian minister in NSW, gave a lively address on what it means to confess Christ today, especially as we remember the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. He spoke of the relevance of the Doctrines of Grace and the reliability of Scripture in an age of secularism, narcissism, hedonism and self gratification.

**Darren Middleton ministers in North Geelong**, and during seven years of ministry there has seen significant growth. He spoke about the particular approach needed for this work, but most of all, of the reliance upon God.

**Ben Nelson**, recently appointed Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, and a doctoral candidate, gave a clear and thoughtful address on Oecolampadius, the Swiss Reformer and contemporary of Martin Luther. Though hardly known today, Oecolampadius was very influential in his time. He used his learning to explain the Scriptures to his generation, which then contributed to Calvin's thinking, from which we all benefit today.

**A time for questions followed each talk** and a panel of three men – Bob Thomas, minister of the host church, Andrew Courtis of Hills Bible Church, Wantirna and Rowland Ward, minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia – provided feed-back and further discussion of the topics covered.

**ToGrow Melbourne was a great conference in a good venue**, with people attending from a variety of churches, providing a good opportunity for fellowship which is so much needed today when Christian values are under attack. Most who attended were ministers, but it was also suitable for any thinking church members, men and women, wanting to learn more about how to serve the Lord. It was a pity that more could not attend, but hopefully, more will be able to come to future conferences. – Anna F. Ward



### **JESUS Film Can Reach Non-English Speakers In Western Countries**

While there are many ways to share the *JESUS Film*, a whole new door has opened to share the Gospel – through gift cards which are meant to help reach non-English speakers living in Western countries. *JESUS Film* project's Ray Rohland says one effective way of using the card is to offer it to someone who has assisted you – a shop attendant, waitress and so on. He says 99% of the time they'll say yes. The card provides an internet link which leads to a page that asks 'What language do you speak?' From here, there is the opportunity to download or stream the *JESUS Film* in a person's heart language. The *JESUS Film* is currently available in almost 1,600 languages. Usually, such a promotion expects about 1% of respondents. However, with the *JESUS Film* gift cards, the ministry has had about a 10% response rate.

– Mission Network News

### **Eric Liddell – Still Running The Race**

The daughter of Scottish Olympic gold medallist, Eric Liddell, whose story was told in the film *Char-*

*iots Of Fire*, has written a book about the man she never met. Maureen Liddell Moore was three years old when her father died in 1945 while captive in a Japanese World War II Internment Camp in China. Eric had been a missionary for almost 20 years before he was held prisoner in the camp, and was known as both an Olympic hero and a Christian leader. As Maureen never knew her father, she decided to turn to faith and God in what she calls her 'search for her father's love'. *God And Me*, available from Amazon, is a book of prose, poetry and art in which Maureen honours her father, while strengthening her own Christian faith. 'My father wanted everyone to know God,' she says. 'This is my small contribution to furthering his goals.'

– Inspire Magazine

**Who Can YOU Forward  
New Life To?**

**Jews Standing Up For Christians**

A new phenomenon has emerged in the Middle East in the form of Jews standing up for persecuted Christians. It is considered by commentators as a warm response to the growing worldwide support for Israel among Christian people, especially in Africa. Keen to build on this developing friendship, the Israeli government has hosted an unprecedented media summit in Jerusalem for Christian journalists from around the world. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used the occasion to speak up for embattled Christians in Iran and neighbouring Syria.

**Day Of Prayer For North Korea**

Christians in the UK have held a Prayer Day For North Korea. Speakers urged Christians around the world to be involved in prayer and action to help North Korean believers. Zoe Smith of the persecution charity

Open Doors, which has ranked North Korea as the worst country for Christian persecution for the 15th year in a row, said that prayer was a powerful weapon to bring an end to the oppressive North Korean regime. and a generator is a life-saving piece of equipment.  
 – ASSIST News Service

**A Simple Outreach**

A Street Evangelist in Tasmania is reaching dozens of people – homeless and wealthy alike – with the Gospel. Helen Devenish does so by simply starting conversations in her local coffee shop, walking through the mall or while stopping to help a mother struggling with her pram. Ms Devenish has released a book titled *Let's Go – Fearless Evangelism* in which she shares her experience of overcoming 'Evangelism Anxiety', and some of the incredible stories she has witnessed as she ministers on the streets of Hobart.

**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)



*Make a Difference for Jesus!*

Begin a journey of study into the Word of God that will change your life and the lives of those you come in contact with.

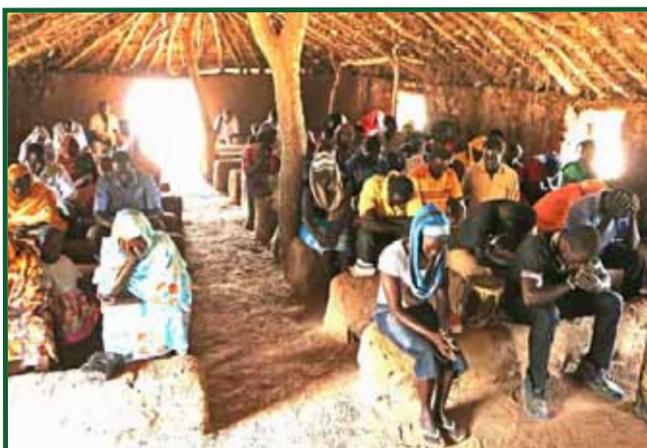
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## WHERE 'TO MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE TO THE LORD' IS ILLEGAL

### Sudanese Church Of Christ Leaders Charged With Sound Pollution For 'Noisy' Services

Five Sudanese Christians arrested, but later released, on Sunday 22 October have now been charged with causing sound pollution through overly loud church services. The five church leaders – Ayoub Teyan, Abdelbagi Tutu, Ali El Hakim, Ambarator Hamad and Haibil Ibrahim – were summoned to court on 26 October, but immediately told their hearing was to be postponed until 31 October. 'The continued violation of religious, media, and political freedoms is another proof that the lifting of the US sanctions was only a means of granting an umbrella for the regime to continue its oppression,' said former PM Sadiq al-Mahdi, A former Sudanese Prime Minister, he returned to Sudan from Egypt in January, vowing 'to stop war, achieve peace and set up democracy and restitution of rights and to work to fight Islamic extremist groups and revive moderate Islam. [We call on] all political forces, unions, civil society and pressure groups to condemn this brutal attack against our Christian brethren,' he said.



A church service in Sudan's Nuba Mountains (WWM)

His statement comes as Christians wonder whether the easing of sanctions will prompt the Sudanese government to be more open to finally releasing a consignment of Bibles held in Port Sudan for at least two years. A senior church leader told World Watch Monitor on 26 October that the Bible Society has not had Bibles to distribute in Sudan since around 2013.

'They need Bibles, they need materials. It's very difficult for them to get them now,' he said. 'The government is denying their right to know their own belief and study their own religion.'

The five Christians arrested all belong to the Sudanese Church Of Christ, which has come under repeated pressure from the Sudanese government. – World Watch Monitor via Worldwide Photos

Read Practicality  
by David Holden  
at [www.defenceofthefait.org](http://www.defenceofthefait.org)

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

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## **A Prayer Of Sir Francis Drake:**

### **Disturb us, Lord,**

when we are too well pleased with ourselves,  
when our dreams have come true  
because we have dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
because we sailed too close to the shore.

### **Disturb us, Lord,**

when with the abundance of things we possess  
we have lost our thirst for the waters of life;  
having fallen in love with life,  
we have ceased to dream of eternity  
and in our efforts to build a new Earth,  
we have allowed our vision  
of the new Heaven to grow dim.

### **Disturb us, Lord,**

to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas,  
where storms will show Your mastery;  
where losing sight of land,  
we shall find the stars.  
We ask You, Lord, to push back  
the horizons of our hopes;  
and to push us into the future  
in strength, courage, hope, and love.

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## **'Then I Knew That This Was The Word Of The Lord' (Jeremiah 32.8)**

**The eventful week in August of 1971** when everything came together for me with a visitation from the Lord remains vivid in my memory. That week, 'a man called Peter' had spoken at the Missionary Seminar at Melbourne Bible Institute where I was a student and much in prayer concerning what the Lord would have me do and where He would have me go. If someone had not drawn a camel on the blackboard we would not have known that Peter was from the Middle East. He came to the lectern and for the next 50 minutes preached with fervour and spirit from John 15, then sat down. That was his missionary address!

**After lunch I spoke with Peter who gave me literature to read.** Peter asked me to come and see him again before he left Melbourne, which I did at the end of the week after reading the literature. One booklet by Dr Lionel Gurney ('Doc') particularly caught my attention, as I prayed about what I was reading. 'Doc' referred to three tribes in the Middle East who had never heard, and who didn't have any Scriptures in their own language, and these languages were different from the national languages. For security reasons, let's call these languages Solonoid, Manifolda, and Batteria. I returned to see Peter before he moved on and he said, 'Let's continue to pray about all this, and see what the Lord will do'.

**At the same time I was studying Old Testament Hebrew at University** to better prepare myself to work 'among people who had never heard', being strongly persuaded that such people would also need the Scriptures. In the next week after Peter's visit, and after hearing about Solonoid, Manifolda, and Batteria languages for the first time in my life, I went to my Hebrew lecture about 10 minutes early. There were four of us in the lecture, and because I was early I was alone at the time with the lecturer, Dr Murdoch. He was sitting at his desk, working, when suddenly he turned and began talking to me. For six months I had been in his lecture. He had not spoken privately before, and of course he knew absolutely nothing about me.

**He started to tell me all about himself, his family, his home country (Finland),** why he had come to Australia, and how he came to be a lecturer in Hebrew. Then without prompting he said 'Mr Pearce, you may be interested to know that I have an interest in the languages of the Middle East'. I responded immediately, 'Actually I'm very interested too. Which ones?' He said 'Solonoid, Manifolda, and Batteria!' These were the very languages brought to my notice the previous week, through Peter and the booklet written by 'Doc'. I later found out that Dr Murdoch and one other scholar in Europe were the only two in the whole world at the time, apart from the people themselves, who were speakers of Solonoid, Manifolda, and Batteria, and one of them 'happened' to be my lecturer who 'happened' to mention it to me in the next week after Peter's visit.

**This was clearly of the Lord!** Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact will be confirmed! From that day forward all energy and every step has been taken with these languages sealed in my heart. I had previously told the Lord, and meant it, that 'whatever, whenever, wherever, however, whoever, whatsoever' He wanted me to do I would, in His strength, do it. And I was not going to make my own choices according to my training or what I thought I could do for Him, as this is often a big mistake we make as we seek guidance from the Lord for our lives, and it confuses us about His leading and sending.

**I was permitted in 1972 to do one whole year of study in the Manifolda language under Dr Murdoch** as preparation for doing an MA thesis in the language. This thesis has never been done, because I have always been looking after other people, however others are doing the job. Dr Murdoch preferred me to study Manifolda because he said he knew it better than Solonoid. During 1972 I tried twice to get to the Manifolda people in an area which was under communist control at the time, and another government replied to tell me that there was a war in their Manifolda area, so they could not permit me into that place. So after two years I went to study Arabic and work through that language, while waiting further leading.

**Eventually the Lord used us to set up teams among all three language groups.** I had departed Australia on 14 November 1973 and arrived in the Middle East on 23 November 1973, after a few days with missionary friends in Mumbai, and a few days with friends in Addis Ababa and Asmara. While editing this testimony on 23 November 2013 (40 years after arrival in the Middle East), I was also reminded that 50 years ago that day (Australian eastern time) President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, and also C.S. Lewis went to be with the Lord at 65 years of age. What a contrast in usefulness for the Kingdom! How strange and wonderful are God's ways! Let's live for Him, in our one and only opportunity before eternity calls, and that's forever and ever. There are no second chances!

– Len Pearce

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*(Len and Wendy Pearce laboured faithfully for many years among these people groups. In retirement their hearts are still burdened for these people as they continue to lift them up before the Lord. Some pseudonyms have been used to protect identities and the ongoing work – Ed)*

## LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP: Training Future Leaders Of The Eritrean Church In Exile



**For the first time earlier this year**, Langham Preaching led training in Northern Ethiopia, an area dominated by the Orthodox Church and under-reached by the Gospel. It is also right on the border of Eritrea, where a brutal government persecutes Christians. 100 to 150 Eritreans are risking their lives to cross the border daily. Many of these are evangelical Christians, who are now living in four camps in the area where the Langham Preaching seminar took place. One of the Langham Preaching trainers who led the seminar gave an exclusive interview. He asked not to be named for security reasons.

**Preaching Seminar.** 'At the Langham Preaching seminar, there were about 32 participants, 16 came from Northern Ethiopia, and 16 were Eritrean refugees who came from four refugee camps. That's what's made it very unique. I was delighted to have participants from these refugee camps because eventually I'm sure God will bring down this brutal regime in Eritrea. I believe these refugees will return to Eritrea, so it's a great opportunity for Langham Preaching to equip the future leaders of the Eritrean Church. That's the exciting thing!

**Paying The Price.** But these people are paying a price. Some of the seminar participants had been imprisoned for their faith back in Eritrea. There was a young lady, who was 19 or 20. She was imprisoned three times, starting when she was 14 years old. They put her in prison because of her faith, for the first time when she was just 14, then they released her because she was 'underage'. Then again, they put her in prison when she was 17, and again at 18, until finally she escaped the country. When the refugees come to Ethiopia, they have to pay a lot of money for guides because they have to lead them through a secluded area and secluded roads. Some of them are making a big sacrifice to come to Ethiopia. That's what makes this training very unique. These refugees are not only future orientated. In these camps there are also churches reaching out. From the four refugee camps there are four evangelical churches. These refugees go back to the camps and minister to many of the believers in the camp.

**Further Training** We are planning to do Level Two training next year. We also established preaching clubs for these refugees in the camps. From each camp three or four people came, so we encouraged these people from each camp to get together, to encourage one another about their ministry, and about their preaching especially. In Level One we focus on expository preaching, how to preach from taking a single passage, so we have established three preaching clubs in the refugee camps.

**Please Pray** for the Lord to give freedom of worship in Eritrea, to bring regime change, for the Gospel to be preached openly, for the Lord to continue to equip leaders. These Eritrean believers are like exiles, they are like the Eritrean Church in exile. In Ethiopia, we were communists from 1974 till 1991, so we've gone through the same kind of situation: the church was persecuted, but when the government was overthrown in 1991, we lacked Church leaders. Now if we prepare leaders throughout exile, one day when the Lord answers our prayers and brings down the Eritrean regime, if these leaders go back they will be equipped. Otherwise, Christianity will be shallow. In Africa, there is a saying that Christianity is a 'mile wide and an inch deep' because there is little discipleship. We are training the 'disciplers' of the future.

- Langham Partnership

### **NIGERIA: Four British Missionaries Kidnapped**

Four Britons serving as missionaries and medics in a rural area of southern Nigeria have been kidnapped. According to *The Times*, they include a couple from Cambridge, former GP David Donovan and his wife Shirley, who are both 57 years old. A spate of similar incidents in Delta state has been linked to efforts by the government to tackle militancy, including separatist movements. Delta police commissioner, Zanna Ibrahim was quoted as saying: 'The kidnap may not be unconnected with the present onslaught on militant activities embarked upon by the military (Nigerian) ...' The gang thought to be behind the kidnapping

has a reputation for releasing captives shortly after a ransom has been paid. Mr and Mrs Donovan run New Foundations, where they work alongside their sons, 30 year old Julian and Aidan, 27. The couple have been operating in the region for 14 years, running Bible classes, a boat clinic and a permanent health care centre. Fourteen suspects have been arrested by police, while officers have announced that a joint task force will make an attempt to rescue the group. Travellers to Nigeria are currently warned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to avoid all travel to riverine areas of Delta state, and all but essential travel to non-riverine areas.

- Alex Williams, Premier News

**When The Lord Stands By His Servants**

**ACTS 22.**

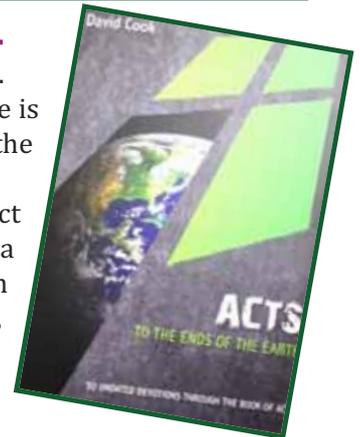
**The commander of the Roman barracks at Jerusalem** makes two mistakes. First, in Acts 21.38, he mistakes Paul for an Egyptian terrorist and assumes he is probably uneducated and unsophisticated, as Egyptians were reputed to be in the 1st Century. Paul is a well-educated, Greek-speaking, Hellenistic Jew.

**Secondly, having rescued Paul, he orders Paul be flogged** in order to extract information from him (v 24). As in Philippi, so in Jerusalem, the flogging of a Roman citizen is illegal and so Paul calls upon his rights as a citizen. All Roman citizens had to be treated according to proper legal processes. In Paul’s case, this meant that he had to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin. Once again, the commander acts with integrity when his mistake is pointed out to him.

**On the steps of the barracks, Paul gives his testimony in Aramaic**, the heart language of the people (vv 1–21). He addresses them respectfully, ‘Brothers and fathers’, and tells them of his own Jewish heritage and training. They listen respectfully until he says that his ministry is to the Gentiles (v 21). He asserts that ‘the God of our Fathers’ (v 14) has a purpose that includes the Gentiles – the unclean nations, outsiders in His Kingdom.

**Where now are the thousands who believe and are zealous** for the law that we read of in chapter 21? Where now are James and the elders? Paul is left to face the hostility alone. He later testifies that he had been abandoned, but ‘the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength’ (2 Timothy 4.17).

**What a sight this must have been** – Paul being beaten up by his own countrymen on the steps of the barracks. Having been beaten, Paul is rescued from the angry crowd and taken to be flogged. We might wonder; will he survive? Will God’s plans be thwarted by such aggression? Tension mounts at the end of the chapter, as Paul is brought to appear before the Sanhedrin.



**FOR REFLECTION:**

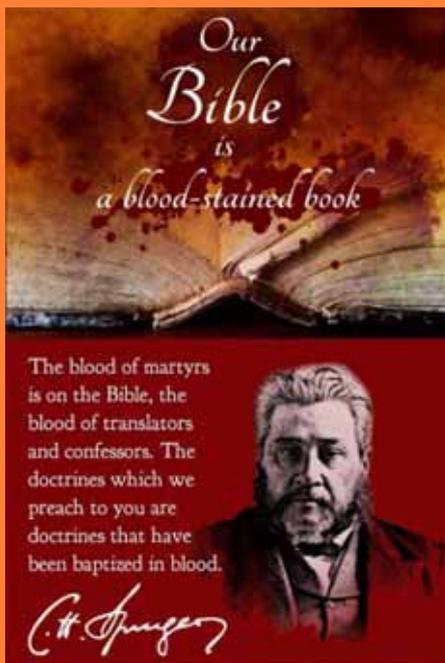
John Wesley said that parochialism is always the enemy of the Gospel.

Why do you think the crowd was so upset in verse 22?

Paul is well qualified to reach the Jews (vv 3,4). What does it tell us about Christian service that God sends him to the Gentiles?

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

**SEEN ON FACEBOOK:**



**Hebrews 13.8**  
**He Is Always The Same**

**Words Of Wisdom:**

"It is the supreme prerogative of the preacher, not to prove that God exists, but to unfold His character and beauty."  
– F W Boreham

## BOOKS WORTH READING

### THE HEART IS THE TARGET – Preaching Practical Application From Every Text' by Murray Capill

Each Monday morning a group of us as local pastors in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne meet for fellowship and prayer, and to read good Christian books. Currently we are working our way through Murray Capill's excellent book, *The Heart Is The Target – Preaching Practical Application From Every Text*. Originally from New Zealand, Murray now serves as Principal of the Reformed Theological College in Melbourne's CBD.

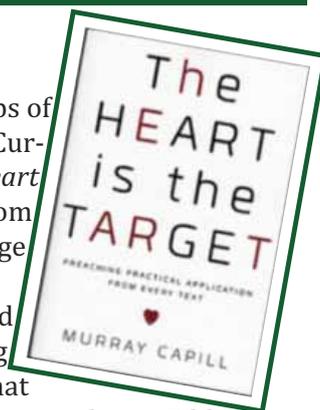
We have reached Chapter 6 of Murray's book, so whilst I heartily recommend it, this review will deal only with chapters 1 to 6. Murray started off by exhorting pastors to find applications for their sermons which are more robust than what he calls 'bolt-on applications', which he defines as exhortations such as 'pray more, read your Bible more' etc.

Instead, God's Word must first of all affect the pastor's life. Then, assisted by a reservoir of life experiences, when he preaches, his sermons will affect his hearers. In all sermons and applications, the heart must be targeted. In Chapter 4, Murray notes that our heart contains four parts. At the top (and therefore most easily addressed) is our mind, which in turn affects both our conscience and our will. At the bottom (and therefore hardest to access) are our passions. Skilful sermon applications seek to address all four areas.

In Chapter 6 Murray urges the pastor to choose carefully which 'arrows' he will use in order to make applications effective. Those 'arrows' include appealing to a person's judgment, answering possible objections, using illustrations or testimonies, or speaking personally.

*The Heart Is The Target* is not only thoroughly biblical, but also warmly and intensely practical. I thoroughly recommend it. Any pastor who takes Murray's wisdom and advice will benefit from this book, as will his congregation.

– Martin Rogers, Pastor, GraceWest Bible Church, Albion, Victoria



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## 'WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS BETTER BY FAR'

### Farewell To Ken Craig:

**Ken Craig left this life to be with the Lord on Sunday 1 October 2017, aged 91.** Ethiopia, the country where Ken and his wife Shirley served with SIM from 1948 – 1967 in church planting and mission leadership, was also where they married and initially raised their three boys; David, Paul and Ian. Ken and Shirley were a team in the true sense, and upon returning home, served a further 10 years with SIM Australia in Melbourne.

**When I first met Ken in the late 1980's** I was preparing to head out short-term with SIM to Ethiopia as a motor mechanic. My memories of that first encounter was of a man still very passionate for the Lord and the people of Africa who had yet to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. This passion was best seen when Ken started recounting stories of their time in Ethiopia, as though it was just yesterday! Besides being a story teller, Ken was a prayer warrior and an evangelist. I went on to experience Ethiopia, even visiting one of the regions where Ken and Shirley had served, and found myself also drawn into God's heart for the nations.

**Ken's call to God's mission did not end after 30 years with SIM,** it was a call that he continued to live out every day, touching and impacting many lives. He went on to work with Mission Enterprises from 1978, an organisation dedicated to releasing funds for cross-cultural mission. Ken maintained strong ties with the SIM Australia family through faithful attendance at the SIM prayer meetings. He was also a regular attender at annual conferences and mission breakfasts/suppers that are held from time to time during the year. He will be greatly missed here on Earth, but will have received his Lord's commendation: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.' – Matthew 25.23

– Neil Sim, SIM Regional Ministry Director Vic/Tas



**Betty Barclay** went to be with the Lord on 20 October. She was 92 years of age. Howard and Betty Barclay served with Interserve in various capacities for most of their lives both overseas (India, Nepal, Mongolia and South Central Asia) and in Australia. In 2015, Betty and Howard were made Honorary Life Members of Interserve Australia in recognition of their outstanding service to God's Kingdom. Betty was a remarkable woman who impacted many lives with God's love and grace. Interserve extends love and care to Howard, John and Janine, Ruth, Heather and Tim, Margie, and the wider family. Please continue to keep Howard in your prayers; he has been unwell in the last week.

– Christine Gobius, National Director, Interserve

## GOOD NEWS FROM ABROAD

### Church Rebuilds In Iraq

In Iraq, over 250 Christian families have returned to rebuild their homes after fleeing from the Islamic State, and something amazing is happening – a new church is rising. One church leader said that 45% of new Christians are from a Muslim background. Another said, 'We should be optimistic about the future of the church. With Islamic State, another pressure came upon us as Christians, but God uses this pressure. We are now reaching out to others and see new people coming into the church.' Pictured is Noeh and his family who have returned to their home in Northern Iraq to rebuild.



### Pence Vows US Aid for Persecuted Christians

'Tonight, it is my privilege to announce that President Trump has ordered the US State Department to stop funding the ineffective relief efforts of the United Nations and from this day forward, America

will provide support directly to persecuted communities through USAID.' Vice President Mike Pence delivered the keynote address at the *In Defence Of Christians* annual summit, and brought a message of solidarity and hope for the persecuted Christians of the Middle East. 'The Bible tells us that all who desire to live a godly life through Christ Jesus will be persecuted,' Pence said. 'Sadly, today, Christianity is under unprecedented assault in the ancient land where it first grew. Tonight, I came to tell you, help is on the way. President Trump and I and our entire administration are working tirelessly to protect these ancient communities,' he added. Christians and religious minorities have endured ongoing torture in the Middle East, actions the Trump administration calls by name: genocide. They are crimes against humanity and we will call them what they are,' Pence said. 'President Trump and I see these crimes for what they are: vile acts of persecution animated by hatred for Christians and the Gospel of Christ.'

– Open Doors