



# conneXions

...growing God's family..

## “But wasn’t the Bible written by drunk monks?” | *Ray Ortlund Jr*

Yes, I really have heard that objection. But there are many ways one can cast doubt on the Bible. It’s a huge subject, and it quickly becomes technical. But here are two things to keep in mind.

**One**, how the Bible came down to us. The New Testament was preserved along many lines of transmission, and copying the Bible was a serious matter to the people involved. The United Bible Societies edition of the

Greek New Testament lists hundreds of manuscripts, a few dating as far back as the second and third centuries. By contrast, the Loeb edition of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is mostly derived from five manuscripts, the best of which dates

to the tenth century A.D., about 1300 years after Aristotle. Bruce Metzger, an expert in the field, wrote, “The textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of his material” (*The Text of the New Testament*, second edition, page 34). We don’t have to re-create a lost New Testament.

And in the Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm that the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, though medieval in date, was carefully preserved. The scribes obsessed about accuracy. Take Isaiah. There are thousands of words in Isaiah. But the Revised Standard Version of 1952, which had no axe to grind for a conservative view of the Bible, decided for a wording in the Dead Sea Scrolls Isaiah against the Masoretic Isaiah in only around 15 cases. Why? The traditional

text is a convincing witness to antiquity.

**Two**, what Jesus thought of the Bible – in his day, the Old Testament. Jesus said, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He never breathed the slightest hint of doubt about the Bible. He affirmed its truth-value repeatedly, including some of the hard-to-accept parts, like Jonah and the

whale (Matthew 12:40). John W. Wenham summarizes Jesus’ view of the Bible: “To him, what Scripture said, God said” (*Christ and the Bible*, page 37). If we respect Jesus enough to believe him about other

things, why refuse him here?

Some will object, “But everybody back in Jesus’ world believed that. He was a man of his times. We know better now.” Do we? Isn’t our skepticism a function of our own times? What’s so striking about Jesus is how unlike his times he was. That’s what got him crucified. Let’s not patronize Jesus. He was a competent thinker for all times. He demonstrated a wisdom that – if we’d accept it today – would advance our thinking on all the most important fronts.



**Ray Ortlund Jr** is Lead Pastor of Immanuel Church in Nashville, Tennessee, USA and a Council member with The Gospel Coalition.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Pastor’s Desk	2
Financial Report	3
Before the Throne of God Above	3
Church Calendar for September	4
Software Review: You Need a Budget	5
Mission News	6
Faith of Our Fathers - Duncan S. McEachern	7
Which morality? Whose hypocrisy? - Carl Trueman	8
Kings of Judah: Growing Old Ungracefully - Kevin DeYoung	

### THIS MONTH’S HIGHLIGHTS

- **Thursday 1st 1.30pm**  
PWA Musical Afternoon
- **Monday 5th 7.30pm**  
Session (Elders’ meeting)
- **Sunday 11th 9.30am**  
Lord’s Supper
- **Monday 12th 7.30pm**  
Board of Management
- **Monday 19th 7.30pm**  
Session (Elders’ meeting)



## From the Pastor's Desk | Gary Ware

While away on holidays in our home suburb in Brisbane, I'm not certain that

my children notice that our car trips seldom seemed to take the same route twice.

The reason was not that I'd forgotten my way around, but rather that I was choosing to drive past various locations that had certain past meanings.

Homes we'd lived in, schools we'd attended, even places we'd eaten and shopped.

Sometimes I'd tell the children the significance of what we were going past and other times I thought that I may as well spare them yet another dad story of minor significance.

Perhaps the habit is the mixture of curiosity, nostalgia and sentiment.

Perhaps it's something more.

Some places do bring back very distinct and singular memories.

Margaret and I pointed out that the church building in which we were married (and in which our eldest daughter was baptized) is now a kindergarten. It was in the front yard of that building that I first met Margaret.

There's a sense of sadness about that, but the mission of the church that worshipped in that building goes on.

Our memories and sentiments

about that place are overwhelmingly positive.

Other places evoke more general emotional responses.

The family home that I principally grew up in raises confused feelings.

I think of it as a place of such enormous potential, and yet the five of us who lived there all experienced events that have challenged us, and continue to challenge us (still alive) even thirty years later.

It wasn't the world's worst or unhappiest childhood, by any means. No one should think that. We were loved and well provided for, particularly by our mother. And you generally think of that with which you grow up with as 'normal'. It's only later that you learn that maybe there were more healthy forms of 'normal'.

So many different life pathways can be imagined as flowing from that place if different choices had been made and if different priorities had ruled.

But they weren't.

So, yet another viewing brings a sense of determination to be more than the sum of that time and place.

And I wonder if it has been a happier home for those who have lived there since.

This trip home I also felt it was time to find out where my late father's remains were resting.

As most of you know, we did not have

much contact. The last time I saw him was when we left Brisbane in 1997. We had a brief phone conversation toward the end.

When notified of his death I left it to the authorities to carry out a funeral for him. At that time I had no real sense of connection with him, nor did any of my family.

It was a bit of a process, but eventually some helpful folk put me on the right track to finding a memorial garden south of Brisbane where his ashes had been scattered.

A green and quiet garden, it is covered with memorial plaques of varying sizes which mark the fact that the earthly remains of many, many folk have also been scattered in the vicinity.

As yet there is not marker to indicate the fact that my father's remains are there.

I don't think these sorts of recollections are about closure, as much as they are about connection.

We are beings created in the image of a relational God, so we are relational too. While the saying is true that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Him, part of being in Christ means that our human relationships are essential.

Not because they give meaning to our lives, but because they ask us to reflect on how well we reflect the image of God into the lives of those we love.



**Children's Christmas Boxes will be due in mid-September.**

**Boxes to fill are now available**

from Care & Concern members: Deanna Ferguson, Rhonda Jones, Yvonne Cherryman, Nancy Bonney and Mary Somerfield.



## Before the Throne of God Above

**Please pray for:**

James Davidson; Noel Cusack; Pearl Hellyer, Fred Nash, Margaret Ware, Ina Earl; Mary Jeffrey, Gladys Jones, Elaine Harfull, Jayne Pritchard, Vi Fraser, Blake and Orlando Vause, Emmie Thompson, Ned & Joan Morrison, Bernie Hutcheson, Glenys McBride.

**Continue to uphold our church mission partners:**

- Matthew serving in west Asia.
- School Christian Pastoral Support Workers.
- Mission Partners/APWM national office: Kevin Murray, national director.

- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste including: developing our partnership with the churches in the Aileu district, the mission trip in October, and the project to translate the Bible into Tetun.

**Also intercede for:**

- State Government: Premier Mike Rann and Premier-elect Jay Weatherill; Leader of the Opposition Isobel Redman.
- Patrick Secker MHR (Member for Barker), Don Pegler MLA (Member for Mount Gambier).
- Converge International chaplains: Heather Baker, John Deer and Ian Touzel.
- Jubilee Christian Centre (AOG) (Pastor Errol & Gwen Carson)

## Financial Update & Board Report

July 2011

<b>Income:</b>	\$11,010.05
<b>Includes:</b>	
Offerings:	\$10,272.74
	= per week \$2,054.55
	(budget -\$2,700.00)
Donations:	\$420.00
Other receipts:	\$222.96
Interest	\$94.35

**Expenditure:** \$14,237.32

**Includes:**

Pastors' remuneration & superannuation	\$9,798.91
Missions	\$0.00
Fees	\$255.45
Utilities	\$332.48
Care ministries	\$0.00
Biblical training	\$305.18
Repairs & maintenance	\$0.00
Insurance	\$1,107.70
Rates & taxes	\$0.00
Sundries	\$772.73
Pitt Bequest expenses	\$1,527.18

**Deficit for July:**

- \$3,227.27

**Deficit for year to date:**

- \$19,162.23

**Bequests & Property Sales Funds**

**Income received** \$2,302.06

## A Gospel Outreach



MGPC through the Biblical Training Idea Group provided \$160.00 to cover the cost of 40 New Testaments. The New Testaments were distributed in our central business area by Jonathan Adams and his family. They trav-

el around Australia distributing Bibles with the support of the Bible Society and local churches. Ian Jones, the "Pearly Gates" cartoonist, granted permission to use some of his work, including on their vehicle.

**Direct Giving**

If you wish to give using direct crediting from your bank account rather than cash, this church's account details are:

Mount Gambier Presbyterian Charge  
 Account no: 00900574  
 Bank: Commonwealth Bank  
 Branch: Mount Gambier



**Remember this church in your will.**

*Your bequest will assist advance gospel ministry in the years ahead.*



**RESERVE THIS WEEKEND!  
 FRIDAY 2<sup>ND</sup>—4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2012**

**Church Camp at Karnkendi  
 Speaker: Darren Middleton  
 Pastor, North Geelong PC**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				11 11am PWA 1.30pm PWA musical afternoon	2 10.30am Bible Study 6.30pm Evangelism Training @ Hamilton PC	3 9am-5pm Evangelism Exploration Training @ Hamilton PC
4 Ian Touzel Gary Ware at Narra-coorte PC NE: Alan Fox	5 9am Women's Growth Group 7.30pm Elders' meeting	6	7 10am Coffee & Craft	8	9 9.30am Mums' Group 10.30am Bible Study 6.30pm Evangelism Training @ Hamilton PC	10 9am-5pm Evangelism Exploration Training @ Hamilton PC
11 10am Lord's Supper	12 9am Women's Growth Group 7.30pm Board of Management	13 1.30pm Care & Concern	14 10am Coffee & Craft	15	16 10.30am Bible Study	17
18 NE: Ian Touzel	19 9am Women's Growth Group 7.30pm Elders' meeting	20	21 10am Coffee & Craft 7.30pm Ladies Fellowship	22	23 9.30am Mums' Group 10.30am Bible Study	24
25	26 9am Women's Growth Group	27 1pm Women's Missions Prayer Meeting	28 10am Coffee & Craft	29	30 10.30am Bible Study	

## Software Review | You Need A Budget

I have always wanted to manage my money well. I have often been convicted that with my rudimentary knowledge of finances, it would be especially important for me to learn to budget well. For many years I tried to put together a budget and often found myself searching for software that would make it simple. I tried all kinds of programs and found that none of them quite did it. Then, finally, I found just the thing I was looking for. It is called **You Need a Budget** (YNAB). And it's far and away the best budgeting program I've ever used.

The software, and the budgeting system that lies behind it, depends on 4 big concepts:

- 1.** Give every dollar a job. Each month you assign your available dollars to spending/savings categories. This process takes 20 minutes and revolutionizes the way you think about your money.
- 2.** Save for a rainy day. You'll anticipate larger, less-frequent expenses and will be ready for them. Insurance premium due in six months for \$600? Save \$100 each month and watch the Car Insurance balance grow.



- 3.** Roll with the punches. The key is to keep moving even when you fail (you will). YNAB will make small adjustments when you overspend, ensuring that you fix those mistakes before you go to the next month.
- 4.** Stop living paycheck to paycheck. We want you to work toward living on last month's income. Both the software and methodology will help you do just that.

The big mind-shift at the heart of it all is to stop looking at your bank accounts, adding up the money, and believing that this is what you've got to live on. YNAB helps you start to divide that money into categories like "tuition payments," "future car purchase," "emergency funds," "electric bill," "vacation fund" and so on. This is remarkably freeing and helps you understand your money in a whole new way. Though you may look at your bank account and see a balance of \$10,000, YNAB will show you that only \$200 of that is actually available for spending on a new

television—the rest has all been reserved for other uses.

In my estimation, and based on the way my mind works, YNAB is far more effective at budgeting than Mint or Quicken or any of the other packages. It does just the one thing and does it very well—budget your money.

Here is how I use it. Once a month I take a few minutes to set my budget for the month to come, trying to anticipate the best way to allocate the money available to me. I then take about 15 or 20 minutes every Saturday to update YNAB with the latest data from my bank. I categorize all income and expenditures and sync the results to my iPhone (totally optional, but I like to have my numbers with me when I'm out and about). That takes

just a few minutes and it sets me up for another week. I even use it with my kids. Once a month I enter their transactions from the month before and help them divide out their money into simple categories—giving, spending, saving.

YNAB's learning curve may seem a little bit steep, but once you get your

mind around the concepts, you will find it very easy to use and maintain. Depending on your knowledge of financial concepts, you may need to take a few hours to read the manual, to watch the training videos, or even to take one of their free online seminars. The effort will prove well worth it.

YNAB works on any computer platform—Mac, Windows, Linux. Depending on the setup of your home computers, can probably even use it on multiple computers.

So what can I say? I highly recommend the software on two levels—practically, it will help you manage your money well and spiritually it will help you ensure that you are taking control of your money, freeing you up to use it in a way that honors the Lord.

Check it out at:  
<http://www.youneedabudget.com/>

Review by: *Tim Challies at [challies.com](http://challies.com)*

### Church Directory

**Pastor:**

Rev. Gary Ware,  
 4 Rosemary Ave.  
 Mount Gambier SA 5290.  
 Ph. 8725 0228  
 Mob. 0417716865  
 Email: [gjware@internode.on.net](mailto:gjware@internode.on.net)

**Assistant Pastor**

Ian Touzel,  
 53 Vivienne Ave  
 Mount Gambier SA 5290.  
 Tel: 8723 9317  
 Email: [ihtouzel@bigpond.com](mailto:ihtouzel@bigpond.com)

**Session Clerk:**

Alan Fox,  
 52 Cardinia St.  
 Mount Gambier SA 5290.  
 Tel: 8724 9629  
 Fax: 8723 2416  
 Email: [facafox@bigpond.com](mailto:facafox@bigpond.com)

**Secretary, Board of Management:**

Jeroen Zwijnenburg  
 CPA Moorak  
 Moorak SA 5290.  
 Tel: 8724 9230  
 Email: [jzwijnenburg@bigpond.com](mailto:jzwijnenburg@bigpond.com)

**Church Office**

Hours:  
 Monday: 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
 Thursday: 9.30 am – 12.30 pm;  
 Friday 11.00 am – 12.30 pm &  
 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm.  
 PO Box 270  
 Mount Gambier SA 5290.  
 Tel/Fax. 8723 9028  
 Mob 0427 239 028  
 Email: [office@mgpc.org.au](mailto:office@mgpc.org.au)  
 Website: [www.mgpc.org.au](http://www.mgpc.org.au)

**ConneXions Editor:**

Ian Touzel  
**Editorial deadline:** 3rd Sunday of the preceding month.

**This Church seeks to comply with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 at all times. A copy of the Church's Privacy Policy is available on request. If you do not wish to consent to being identified in this or any other Church publication please advise the church office accordingly.**

**Sunday Services**

Mount Gambier, Allison St.  
 9.30am—worship  
 11.15am—All age Sunday School.  
 5:30pm—Evening fellowship  
**1st and 3rd Sundays:**  
 9:30am (EST)—Nelson  
**5th Sunday**  
 9.30am—Worship with a 'bring & share' lunch at Mount Gambier



# Mission News local | national | international

## TIMOR LESTE MISSION TRIP



For the first time as a church, in obedience to our Lord's command, we are sending a working party consisting of Roger Bannister, Alan Clarkson, Gavin and Sandra Megaw to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste, (EPC-TL) churches in the Aileu district.

The team's focus will be on gaining an understanding of the churches and their situation, as well as how we may humbly serve them in the future.

By way of practical help \$2,000 has been to purchase a generator and other supplies. Four manual typewriters and a guitar are being delivered on the trip.

Please be in daily prayer for:

- the team members
- their strength, health and safety
- Their adaption to and discernment of the environment.
- Their opportunities for ministering God's Word
- The interpreters: Ameta and Abraham.



## MISSION AWARENESS TOUR

Next month Francis Touzel will joining a group from Hunter Bible Church (Newcastle, N.S.W.), on a Mission Awareness Tour conducted by Australian Indigenous Ministries (AIM). The tour runs from 24th September to 8th October.

The group will travel to AIM centres in western New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory. They will spend time with AIM workers and indigenous Christians,

with opportunities for learning and ministry.

For Francis the tour is part of a SACE subject—Vetamorphous (Level III Certificate in Christian Theology and Leadership).

## "HISTORIC DAY" FOR ALGERIAN CHRISTIANS AS CHURCH GRANTED OFFICIAL RECOGNITION

Algerian Christians are rejoicing after the country's Protestant Church Association was given official recognition by the government; it cancels out a threatening closure notice from the police for all unregistered churches.

The head of the Algerian Protestant Church Association, Eglise Protestant d'Algerie (EPA) received the licence, which grants all of its affiliated churches the right to meet and worship freely, from the Minister of Interior on 18 July. It was

described as "an historic day in Algeria for the Algerian believers in Christ" by a senior Christian leader.

The EPA, to which the majority of Algerian Protestant churches belong, now has the right to rent, buy and/or build property for Christian activities. It is a remarkable turnaround for the EPA, which though registered in the past, has repeatedly failed to obtain legal status under stringent regulations introduced in 2006 since its former licence expired. Its affiliated churches have been subjected to frequent harassment and sporadic closures by the authorities. These climaxed in May with a police notice that threatened the permanent closure of all Christian places of worship throughout the country that had not been designated for religious purposes.

Following the police closure order, which threatened "severe consequences and punishments" for those in breach, a senior magistrate came out in support of churches in his region. The Wali of Bejaia assured EPA leaders that no church under his jurisdiction would be closed and that he would personally see to the protection and continuity of the Protestant Church's activities.

The licence from the government now extends that protection to EPA churches throughout the country. Individual churches will still need to register with their local authorities, and Algerian Christians request prayer that this process will go smoothly; numerous past applications have been met with no response. Non EPA-affiliated churches

remain unprotected because they have no official recognition.

Christian leaders are still pushing for reform in Algeria and want the 2006 regulations to be repealed; these continue to



Algerian Christians at worship

restrict evangelism and the distribution of Christian literature.

Algerian Christian Siagh Krime was sentenced to five years in jail on 25 May, accused of blasphemy after sharing his faith with a Muslim neighbour. An appeal against this sentence has been lodged and will be heard at the Algerian Supreme Court on 29 September.

Despite harassment and persecution from the authorities and Muslim-majority community, the Protestant Church in Algeria, which is comprised mainly of Muslim converts and their children, continues to enjoy remarkable growth. There are now tens of thousands of Christians, whereas back in the 1970s there were very few.

— Barnabas Fund  
www.barnabas.org



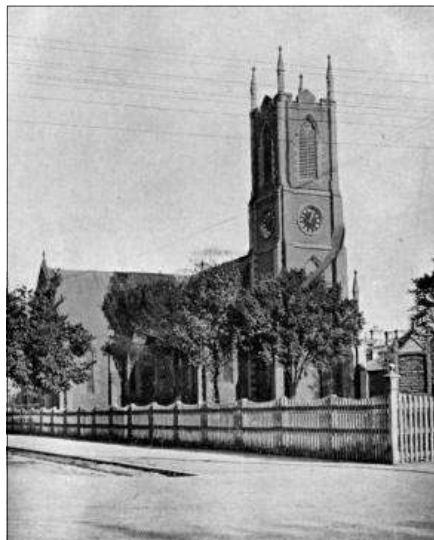
# Faith of Our Fathers | *Duncan S. McEachran*

**Duncan S. McEachran** (1826-1913) was pastor of St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Carlton, Melbourne 1868-1902. Under his ministry the congregation grew to be the largest in the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. An able

preacher and Bible teacher, he was a passionate evangelist as well as having a lifelong commitment to home and foreign missions. He stood against those in the Presbyterian Church who sought to move to a liberal theology.

On the last Lord’s Day of 1902, Mr. McEachran preached his final sermons as pastor of St Andrew’s, Carlton, many old friends coming from great distances to hear him on the occasion. At the evening service on that day he said:

“It is now thirty-four years, a fortnight ago, since I preached the first sermon as minister of the church, although I had preached once or twice previously. There are a few present now who were here then. I am deeply conscious of my shortcomings, but I ever thank God in His mercy for blessing me to preach the gospel. I have striven to preach unto you the unsearchable riches of Christ. I have made it my business to preach the Word. I have not preached to you the speculations of men, but the testimony of God. I have studied hard great books, but all with the object of thoroughly understanding the Bible, that so I might present the teaching of the Bible to you. I have sought ever to consider the Word from the law and the testimony; I have preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified ; I have preached repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. I have not shunned to declare to you the true counsels of God. I have taken you through large parts of the Bible, Sabbath after Sabbath, that nothing profitable to you might be kept back. I have set before you God’s great promises and precepts, and notwithstanding my many shortcomings, you will bear me witness that I have not trifled, but have given myself wholly to my work. I have tried the words, ‘In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or



**St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Carlton, Melbourne**

that, or whether they both shall be alike good.’ Blessed are they that so work! To be instant in season and out of season. I attach great importance to the being instant out of season, as well as in season ; for what is said out of season takes hold of men; they are taken by surprise, when what is said in season is passed over and disregarded. I have ever striven to do my ministry among you, so that I may be free from the blood of all men. I have striven to speak to every man I met, and to present Christ to them, and, with all humility, I may say God has given me not a few souls as my hire. In addition to those

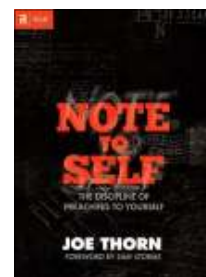
added from year to year, He has given us three times of special blessing; first, when Dr. Somerville was here, 60 new members being added during two years; secondly, the two years after our own John McNeil preached here there were added some 50 or 60; and last year, after the Simultaneous Mission, were added 20.

And now, my dear friends I am speaking to my own people, deeply sensitive of all the kindness and forbearance that you have shown to me these long years - I commend you to God and the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified ; and for all who have not already come to Christ, I pray that you may delay no longer, and for all I pray

that God will give you a pastor after His own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding, and win many souls as one who must give account. I will preach about as God will give me opportunity, and my prayer is that God will keep me to the end, so that when the end comes I may be able to say, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.’”

*From: Jubilee History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church of Carlton, W. A. Sanderson, (1905).*

“In exposing our own corruption, the law of God leaves us guilty and points us to our need for redemption. We are lawbreakers and need forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration. In this sense the law serves as a guide in leading us to the gospel. It fits us for it, prepares us for it. The law, while being ‘holy and righteous and good,’ is itself not good news. It is the bad news that makes the good news of the gospel so relevant. In this way, the law prepares us for the gospel by showing us our need for it.



— Joe Thorn,  
**Note To Self**,  
(Crossway Books),  
page 27

# Which morality? Whose hypocrisy?

| Carl Trueman

One of the things the non-Christian world does so relentlessly, and often rather accurately, is mock the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of the church. Of course, the Bible does the same, as anyone who has read Judges or any of the prophets will know. The church at its best makes no bones about the fact that it is never more than something of a mess.

Still, it is good to know that the secular world is just as ridiculous; and, with its repudiation of a doctrine of original sin, has much less excuse.

Now, I am not known to be a fan of Rupert Murdoch. For me, Fox News is comedy and The Sun is soft porn. But there is an irony that he has been forced to publish an apology in the British newspaper, The Guardian, for his companies' phone hacking activities.

Strange that. I thought the The Grauniad (sic) thought that illegal hacking and publishing private and confidential documents was abso-

lutely vital to free society. After all, Julian Assange, of wikileaks fame, is *Hero Numero Uno* in The Guardian Hall of Martyrs. This is the man who made his name hacking other people's computers, writing a book to tell



Rupert Murdoch, Executive Chairman of News International

others how to do it, and growing famous on precisely the kind of behaviour for which Murdoch is now pilloried (and for which he probably has no personal responsibility).

Why the difference in response? Well, it cannot be racism because (a) this is The Guardian and (b) Murdoch and Assange are both Australian. Could it perchance be that Murdoch is old, rich and selectively

conservative (depending on the market) while Assange is young-ish, a bit weird and allegedly 'sticking it to the man'? Aesthetics, anyone?

The church may be ridiculous, hypocritical and self-righteous; but it has no monopoly on that. And as with alcoholism, acknowledging the problem is the first step to solving the problem. Full page apologies from Murdoch in The Guardian don't give much hope... for The Guardian and its ilk. The secular world might want to put its own house in order before it expends too much time trashing the hypocrisies of those whose very creed acknowledges their hypocrisy at the outset.



**Carl Trueman** is Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

This article first appeared as a guest post at: <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/>



## Kings of Judah: Growing Old Ungracefully

| Kevin DeYoung

**2** Chronicles 16:10-14: *Then Asa was angry...And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time.* (verse 10) Most of us will grow old. Only some of us will do it gracefully.

Verses 10-14 record the last stubborn days of a great king. Asa was a grumpy old man. His major offense? He got a disease in his feet and didn't ask the Lord for help. Now, there's nothing wrong with going to doctors. God wants us to be wise. But he also wants us to trust him—more than counselors, therapists, doctors, and pills—and trust him to the end.

There are two types of old Christians. There are those who fret and fuss about how bad things have gotten

and how rotten kids are these days. These cantankerous old rascals don't like the church's music, people, or pastor. But then there are Christians who, like fine wine, get better with age. They pray more. They get wiser and kinder. They understand what really matters. They love the Lord and everyday they read their big print Bibles with the devotional tucked in as a book mark. They pray for their kids and grandkids without ceasing. They're a pastor's best friend and they long to be with Jesus. These are the un-Asa-like believers the church desperately needs.

So what type of senior saint will you be—crotchety or Christ-like?

**Kevin DeYoung** is senior pastor of University Reformed Church, Lansing, MI, USA.