

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

“It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand.”

US President John Quincy Adams, 1776

“Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Ephesians 6:13

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Editorial

The headline stated “CDC study finds 25 percent of teen girls infected with STD”

The study, released by the Centers for Disease Control in the USA, has found that “More than 3 million teen girls aged 14 to 19 years-old have an STD, and that among sexually active teens, the rate was 40 percent.”

The immediate response in the USA was to blame public policy and sex education.

OK, so this is the USA, but is it any better here?

In Dec 2006 a La Trobe University study of 2000 Year 10 and Year 12 students across the nation found 35 per cent had had sex, 6.1 per cent reported it had resulted in pregnancy, while 7.5 per cent said they were “unsure.”

What was the response to this bad news? Academics slammed the Federal Government for inadequate sex education in schools and called for more!!

Ironically, that’s always the cry from the ‘academics’. Yet, despite all the increased sex ‘education’ and ‘safe-sex’ promotion, there has also been an increase in the incidence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and the latest figures show that the rate of condom use in Australia has actually declined since 1997.

The attitude of academics and governments alike seems to be, ‘The medicine is not working, in fact it is causing increased side effects, but hey, let’s not ask why, let’s just increase the dose’!

There is, of course, also the appalling sexualisation of society through the media and especially in marketing aimed at children and young people. Then there is the growing ease of access to pornography, for

both boys and girls, on the internet.

But, despite all this desire today to always blame someone else, the bottom line still comes down on parents. Are we adequately training and protecting our children and young people?

We have been watching ‘*Brat Camp*’ on TV of late. The young people, boys and girls, are really in a mess and they are sent to a US desert to do it tough and learn about respect and responsibility.

But I can’t help feeling that in many cases it should be the parents that go into the desert to reflect about responsibility, because the parents on this program so often seem to have put themselves first, some have walked away from their marriage commitment, others have simply delegated their responsibility to welfare agencies, school teachers, etc. It is often so clear that they did not lose control, they simply never took control or responsibility in the first place.

Sadly, though, even good parenting can so often be undermined by peer pressure or our society’s *lasse faire* attitude to morality.

We believe one solution is for parents to learn how to teach their children to respect themselves and make good informed choices.

One way of doing this is to get involved in and encourage your church or your child’s school to invite Bruce Coleman to run a ‘Choices of Life’ course.

This excellent program, developed by Bruce after years of interaction with young people, aims to help them take control of their lives. To give them the power to make the right choices. (More details are on page 11)

Unless the fight back for our youth starts at home, and in our churches, we will lose another generation to ‘the world’.

Yours in Christ Jesus
Peter & Jenny Stokes

Another difficult issue

We hear a lot of Christians, and of course humanists, today talking about ‘peace’, often without defining what they mean.

For Christians this can range from the micro of peace (and ‘unity’) between Christians through to ‘peace between religions and ultimately to the macro (the big picture) of ‘world peace’.

We also have Christians calling for the abolition of punishment - on the micro level this is usually anti-smacking laws and on the macro level it is the abolition of capital punishment.

On the other hand we have those who believe that peace is simply not possible, that ‘just war’ is OK and that the death penalty should be retained or brought back.

We cannot ignore these issues simply because they are divisive and contentious in

today’s society and in Christian discussion. If we are to contend earnestly for the faith we need to know what the Bible says. This is all part of establishing a Biblical Worldview.

For this reason we have occasionally run what we call ‘another difficult issue’ - simply to get us thinking and talking about the hard issues. The following article is sure to get us some feedback because it deals with Capital Punishment. An issue where Christians are on both sides and hold opposing views.

Augusto Zimmermann has prepared a brief overview in the hope that you will explore the Scriptures yourself to find the true Biblical position. At the end of the article we have a link to our web site where you will find some more in-depth articles on this issue.

What does the Bible say about Capital Punishment?

There was a time, not long ago, when people tended to consider the death penalty a useful, moral and necessary punishment for serious crimes. Things have changed over the years and now the sensibilities lean toward the prohibition of capital punishment. For Christians, however, the final authority in matters of right and wrong is the Holy Bible, not public opinion. Changes in cultural mood or in legislation do not alter God’s abiding word as it is revealed in the Bible.

The first biblical reference to capital punishment is found in Chapter 9 of the book of Genesis. Following the worldwide Flood, God instituted the provision of capital punishment as a just safeguard against the prevailing violence which had precipitated His judgement. There God requires the death penalty to be applied by

By Augusto Zimmermann PhD

human authorities against everyone who takes the life of an innocent human being: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Gen 9:6). According to Michael Cassidy,

“This passage suggests that the murder of a fellow human being is a crime, not only against the victim, but against the Creator. Since murder is a crime against both humanity and God, there are in fact both temporal and divine consequences for such sin. God himself will punish sin (“I will surely require a reckoning”), but humankind also has the responsibility to punish (“by man shall his blood be shed”).¹

The sanctity of human life is the primary basis on which God sanctions the death

penalty. Far from cheapening human life, Genesis 9 reveals the uniqueness of the human life by demanding an exact equivalent to the death of an innocent victim.² Because humans are created in the *imago Dei* (image of God), human life must be considered so sacred that its destruction in God's eyes requires both divine judgement and human punishment. As R.C. Sproul points out, "God has placed his image on human beings, and he manifests the importance of that image by protecting individual lives. When the murderer is executed and justice prevails, the sanctity of human life is honoured".³

Since the institution of capital punishment was established by God before His covenant with the people of Israel, the biblical conditions for its application remain intact and must continue to apply to all humankind. Such conditions are certainly preserved in the New Testament. After all, the Son of God came on earth to fulfil the law of God, not to abolish it (Matt 5:17). As the Word of God who was made flesh (John 1:14), the Lord Jesus declared that it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for any small detail of God's moral laws to be changed (Luke 16:17).

Each human authority, writes the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans, is lawfully commissioned as 'a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword in vain; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil' (Rom 13:4). As everybody knows, the sword was used in Paul's time as an instrument of execution. In another passage the Apostle to the Gentiles confirms this

assumption by referring to the sword to indicate death (Rom 8:35).

By drawing from numerous examples in the Holy Scriptures, great Christian figures such as St. Augustine of Hippo and St Thomas Aquinas argued for the morality of the death penalty as a 'just recompense of reward' (Heb 2:2-3). According to Aquinas, capital punishment is necessary for the well-being of the community.⁴ He also endorsed

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Augustine's argument that it 'is in no way contrary to the commandant 'Thou shalt not kill'... for the representatives of public authority to put criminals to death, according to the law, that is, the will of the most just reason'.⁵

The fact that ignorance and injustice exist in a judicial system is no excuse for abandoning God's commands. The possibility of convicting an innocent person for any crime is an inherent part of living in a fallen world. Yet, the possibility of miscarriage of justice does not warrant abandoning the pursuit of

justice.⁶ If complete proof were to be demanded, then we would have to dispense with the criminal justice system altogether. That is why legal cases demand 'proof beyond a reasonable doubt'.

One does well in this sense to remember that Christ himself was the victim of a deeply unjust death penalty. No one was subjected to more injustice than the Son of God. He was indicted on false charges, sentenced by a cowardly judge, and executed in unspeakable cruelty. What a perfect opportunity for Him to condemn the death penalty! Yet, the Lord Jesus did not speak against it and did not even contest one of the two criminals who was crucified with Him, when he recognised that his crimes were

worthy of death. Rather, Jesus promised that murderer that He would meet him again that day in paradise (Luke 23:39–43).

The opposition to capital punishment comes mainly from a secular humanist philosophy which sees the physical death as the end of everything. Although such humanistic philosophy has in many ways corrupted the central message of the Gospel in so many Christian denominations, it is not the physical death that believers should most fear. Rather, it is the second death that they need to avoid at all costs. Jesus declared: “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mat 10:28-29 NASB). Accordingly, a murderer who is duly and fairly tried for his crime is more likely to avoid this second death when he faces imminent execution. The certainty of meeting his Creator might lead him into repentance.

Endnotes:

1. Michael Cassidy, *Thinking Things Through: Christian Reflections on some Contemporary Ethical Issues*. Acorn Press, Brunswick East/Vic, 2006, at 122
2. Stott, J., *Christian Basics: An Invitation to Discipleship*, Monarch Books, London, 2003, p 79.
3. R.C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess Vol 3*, Phillipsburg/NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007, p 191.
4. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II,

Finally, the argument that capital punishment only adds a second murder to the first reveals a regrettable lack of discernment between the violent acts of depraved individuals and the holy justice of the righteous God.

Curiously, many of those who oppose the death penalty for cruel murderers are comfortable in justifying the killing, for profit, of defenceless little children in the womb.⁷ How can such people justify both positions simultaneously? The answer is rather simple: Both positions are actually pro-death, because they reveal a deep disregard for God’s commands which is also a disregard for life itself: “For whoever finds me finds life, but all they that hate me love death” (Prov 8: 35-6).

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- II, 64, 3.
5. St Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, Bk.1., Ch.21.
6. Henry M. Morris and Martin E. Clark, *The Bible has the Answer*. Green Forest/AR: Master Books, 2005, at 273.
7. *As to the Mosaic law itself, according to Exodus 21:22-25, if a pregnant woman is injured by someone else, if there is no serious harm to child, the penalty is monetary compensation, but if there is serious harm, then the death penalty applies.*

Our web page on ‘capital punishment’

We have posted a number of articles on the topic of ‘Capital Punishment on a new page on the Issues section of our website: <<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/490/B/0/>>

An article by Bill Muehlenberg titled “On Capital Punishment” explores the topic in more detail. He says “Thus there is some latitude here for the believer. Christians can rightly argue for either a pro or anti position on the topic”. Bill looks at Old Testament

law and the covenants and the question of ‘turning the other cheek’ and goes on to argue that it can be justified Biblically. Kerby Anderson, of Probe Ministries, explains the different beliefs and objections.

Michael Cassidy explores the issue of capital punishment in his book *Thinking Things Through* which covers a range of ethical issues. Available from Salt Shakers. Cost: \$24 posted.

News & Action

Swearing in of federal MPs

When the new Parliament began on 13 February, only FOUR of the new Rudd government frontbench ministers were sworn in holding a Bible. They were Kevin Rudd, Simon Crean, Martin Ferguson and Peter Garrett. In contrast ALL the members of the Coalition front bench were sworn in holding the Bible. Many supplied their own Bibles! [*The Aust*, 13/2/2008]

Victoria: Euthanasia

\$50 for a cuppa and recipe to die - the headline on a Page 1 newspaper article reporting on a 'lecture' and workshop held by euthanasia advocate Philip Nitschke at the Senior Citizens Centre in suburban Templestowe. After a free lecture, 100 senior citizens were invited to pay \$50 to attend a workshop telling them how to use 'suffocation bags' and mix drugs to kill themselves. [*The Age*, 12/3/2008]

The attendees were asked to sign a disclaimer that declared they would not use the information "to advise, counsel or assist in the act of suicide".

Why? Because to do so would be against the law. The ridiculous nature of the disclaimer was highlighted by Nitschke, who said "It's effectively saying that you won't take notice of what I'm saying."

Euthanasia is on the agenda in Victoria and federally and those advocating euthanasia are already gearing up for a battle.

Federal: Euthanasia

Bob Brown's *Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008* has been referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and report by 1 May 2008. Details of the Inquiry and Bill are posted on the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/legcon_ctte/terminally_ill/index.htm>

The purpose of Brown's Bill is to repeal the 1997 Euthanasia Laws Act, which overturned the Northern Territory's euthanasia law.

ACTION: Please send a submission to the Inquiry - opposing the repeal of this law. Send to Committee Secretary, Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Department of the Senate, PO Box 6100, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600. Or Email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au



Creation Supercamp

Five years ago we (Peter and Jenny) attended a 'Supercamp' run by Creation Ministries International (CMI). We really enjoyed the challenging lectures and the opportunity to meet with hundreds of like-minded Christians.

The next Supercamp will be held on Phillip Island from 5-9 January 2009. The brochure enclosed with this journal lists all 14 speakers, along with accommodation and meal options.

There is plenty of time for relaxation, with some activities provided onsite and others nearby. Accommodation is booking up fast, so get your registration in soon if you plan to go. The Creation Ministries International website is at <creationontheweb.com>

Salt Shakers has endorsed the CMI Supercamp, along with a number of other Christian organisations.

Peter and Jenny will be attending the Supercamp so we look forward to meeting many of you at there in **January 2009!**

Alcohol and binge drinking

When Corey Worthington threw a party and advertised it on the internet, hundreds of teenagers turned up.

The resulting media coverage was varied. At one extreme was praise and adulation, which led to Corey hosting dance parties across the country and overseas. At the other extreme was criticism of Corey for betraying his parents' trust and damaging the family home.

The role of alcohol in such parties often goes unreported. But binge drinking and alcohol and drug abuse are all prevalent in the youth party culture.

The connection between alcohol, drugs and violence is becoming patently obvious to readers of Melbourne's newspapers. Police are trying to control violence on the streets around bars and nightclubs. A number of new clubs have been given licences, including one club that is licenced to hold more than 7,000 people. The Melbourne City Council has now intervened to reduce the number by 5,000!

Meanwhile the **Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS)**, Victoria's biggest drug treatment service for those under 21, has found there is a six-fold increase in cases of young people who have drinking problems. The YSAS says that alcohol and cannabis dependence are now more common than heroin addiction and that children as young as 12 are seeking help from the service for drink-related problems.

At the same time, the **Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD)** says that "the biggest problem Australian families are facing when it comes to substance misuse is young people binge

drinking".

The ANCD says it is critical that families coping with young people who are either binge drinking or have issues with drugs get support and help.

The ANCD also released the latest statistics on drug and alcohol use:

"In any given week approximately

- * 1 in 10 (or 168,000) 12 to 17 year olds reported binge drinking/drinking at harmful levels (males 7 or more drinks on the day and females 5 or more on the day).

- * The figure was 1 in 5 for 16 and 17 year olds.

- * Less than 0.5% (or 1 in 200) 12 year olds drank at harmful levels in the past 7 days.

- * 237,000 (1 in 7) secondary school children used cannabis in the past 12 months.

- * 67,000 (or 1 in 25) secondary school students are estimated to have used amphetamines in the past year.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd responded to the recent articles and research on binge drinking. He said "I am concerned about what I describe as an epidemic of binge drinking across the country."

Three weeks later, on 10 March, he announced a \$53 million plan to tackle binge drinking. \$20 million will be spent on advertising, using elite sports stars across four codes in the ads. The government will also put \$5.2 million into a national *Good Sports* responsible drinking program, and \$2 million into a Club Champions program to make senior players at local clubs responsible drinking ambassadors.



Alcohol is fast becoming a major concern for our young people. As Christians we need to carefully consider how we approach this issue. Can we 'drink moderately' and at the same time advise our young people not to drink?

Where can we find support for young people and families to help them deal with the trauma of alcohol or drug use?

Someone Who Cares is an organisation in Melbourne run by Warwick Murphy that offers a support service to families as well

as to young people caught up with drugs . Warwick and his family worked in London for many years with drug addicts.

Someone Who Cares: Ph (03) 9878 6099

Youth Substance Abuse Service: <<http://www.ysas.org.au/>>

ANCD Report Media Release: <<http://www.ncnd.org.au/media/media113.htm>>

Article: 'Elite sports stars to aid binge drinking campaign, PM says', *Herald Sun*, 14 March 2008.

R18+ computer games

The Rudd government recently gave a commitment to consider "updating the classification system for games to include an R18+ rating."

Bob Debus, Minister for Home Affairs, "confirmed the issue of "whether or not to allow an R18+ classification" for games would be discussed by censorship ministers at the next Standing Committee of attorneys-general (SCAG) meeting on March 28. [*The Age*, 25/2/2008]

Michael Atkinson, the South Australian Attorney-General remains opposed to allowing R-rated games, but other Attorneys-General are expected to support the change. [News.com.au, 27/2/2008]

By the time you read this, that meeting will be over... but we still need to take action!

When the Classification Guidelines were last reviewed, in 2005, the Coalition government refused to allow R18+ games to be allowed.

The highest rating for computer games is MA 15+ - games that exceed these guidelines are 'refused classification' and not allowed to be sold.

Claire Bowdler, spokeswoman for the Classification Board, told *The Age* that 18 games had been banned since 2001. Of

these, eight games were allowed after their content was modified.

Some of the games that have been banned - and which could be allowed if the government decided to allow R18+ games:

Dark Sector: graphic violence including "decapitation, dismemberment of limbs with blood spurts, neck breaking twists and exploded bodies with post-action twitching body parts".

Blitz: Drug use related to rewards.

Soldier of Fortune-Payback: excessive violence.

BMX XXX - for sexual content

Reservoir Dogs: high levels of violence - the ability to shoot hostages' heads off.

Source: *The Age*, 25/2/2008.

ACTION: Write to the federal government and ask them NOT to allow R-rated computer games to be sold in Australia: Kevin Rudd and Bob Debus, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

State/Territory Attorney General at your state's Parliament House.

Then write to your federal MP/Senators.

Contact details at <<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/13/B/82/>>

Welfare groups supporting 'diversity'

by Jenny Stokes

It is tempting to think that the promotion of homosexuality is something that happens in the 'city', not in country towns.

However, this is not true! So called 'support groups' for homosexual and transgender youth are springing up across the suburbs AND in country towns.

What is more disturbing is that church welfare groups are supporting and sometimes even running such groups.

In February we stopped in Healesville (80 km NE of Melbourne)

for an evening meal.

Whilst walking down the street we came

across the Anglicare

office. In the window

was a poster advertising

a regional council-run

support group for same-

sex attracted youth. The poster even offered free transport to get to the meeting.

We need to realise that these are groups that affirm homosexuality, NOT groups to help people leave the lifestyle.

Uniting Care Cutting Edge in Shepparton has worked with same-sex and transgender youth for some time. NO, once again this is not to tell them that homosexuality is wrong and help them deal with the underlying issues. The group supports them in **being homosexual**.

Several years ago *Uniting Care* in Shepparton ran a 'Camp Camp' for same-sex attracted youth.

Now *Uniting Care Cutting Edge Diversity* has started a "new meal program for same-sex attracted and transgender young people in the Goulburn Valley".

The local newspaper reported on the program: "Program co-ordinator Damien Stevens said *Eating Out* would run fortnightly

and be aimed at same-sex-attracted and transgender young people and their friends between the ages of 15 and 25. Mr Stevens said "By attending the fortnightly *Eating Out* program, young people can learn to cook healthy, nutritious meals, enhance their social and life skills, and in doing so, enjoy a greater sense of connection to local community. It will also enhance self-confidence and help young people

better understand safe, positive relationships, learn about sexual health information, and think about and discuss future strategies for addressing all of the above issues, **including driving their**

own advocacy." (emphasis ours)

ACTION: *Uniting Care* is the national body for community services in the Uniting Church. *Uniting Care Cutting Edge* is part of that group, dealing with youth services and with offices in Shepparton, Seymour & Cobram. '*Diversity*' is the specific program for 'same-sex attracted' youth.

Write to Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director, Uniting Care Australia, PO Box 519, MAWSON ACT 2607. Express your concern to her about their support of this program.

Source: 'Education and a Feed', *Shepparton News*, 22/2/2008.

An article about Cutting Edge Uniting Care and their 'Diversity' Support group appears on Page 3 of this publication at: <<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/wayout/July07.pdf>>

The *UCCE Diversity* home page is at <http://www.ucce.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=46>



Let's celebrate the long-time married

How encouraging to read in your paper stories of people who are celebrating 50 and 60 years of marriage together.

What role models and they show that people do actually work at their relationship.

Our marriage vows are ".... till death do us part", not "... till we find a better or another person."

In this day and age, we do need to know that marriage is a life time commitment.

Mrs Judith Bond, Glen Alpine
Macarthur Chronicle, 11/3/2008

50 / 50

"I wonder what the abortion rate would be like if as many took offence to the act itself rather than the descriptive brochures?"

Jeremy Peet Belgrave, Vic.
Herald Sun 13/03/2008

Pan unhealthy lifestyle and you discriminate

For any disease to have reported cases rise by 44% between 1999 and 2006 has to be of real concern. But for a University of NSW study to further predict a rise of over 70% in the next 7 years must be a cause for great alarm.

If this was a type of cancer, such as cervical or breast cancer, there would be massive attack launched immediately to prevent this occurring.

This study though, was in relation to the spread of HIV/AIDs, largely caused by homosexual activity (GA 03/03 "HIV blowout predicted"). Homosexual lobbyists continually and vigorously focus on demanding their relationship rights, not on the dangers of their homosexual behaviour and lifestyle.

A long term study in Denmark showed that those in long term homosexuality had a life expectancy of at least 20 years less than the general population. This is another major concern.

Yet to report these findings or to comment on the unhealthy outcomes of this lifestyle choice is to elicit calls of discrimination and victimization.

Hopefully we won't have to wait until 2015 for this scourge to be successfully addressed.

David G. Westaway, Navigators, Vic.
Geelong Advertiser 07/03/2008

Abortion submission

As ambassadors of Christ we are obligated to speak the word of God into the social situations in which we find ourselves. When the Victorian Government announced the review process of the abortion laws we had a magnificent opportunity to shine the light of Christ unequivocally on this issue by proclaiming that God is for life in every circumstance, and none more so than in this issue of abortion. God says "do not kill"; the Anglican church recognizes selfhood from conception, so it is logical to believe that the "Anglican women" on the Archbishop's committee could have spoken with one voice to declare to women in Victoria "do not kill your babies"; and to the government "do not change the law regarding criminal sanctions against doctors who perform abortions".

In the submission process there is opportunity to also discuss compassionate options for care for women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant or worse and as the body of Christ we should also proclaim our defence of these women and care for them.

This includes care for women who have undergone abortions, recently or in the past. Christ's love is to bind up the broken hearted and surely, there is no one more broken hearted than a woman who has knowingly or unknowingly cut short the life of her baby.

As Melbourne Anglicans, we need to speak to these social situations clearly, so as young women know unreservedly that abortion is against God's plan for their lives. This submission does not do that. By removing criminal sanctions for doctors who perform these operations we are effectively condoning abortion in the eyes of future young women.

(Mrs) Kerrie Ternes, Wantirna South
The Melbourne Anglican March 2008

Lesson here for students

Tabcorp chief Elmer Funke Kipper has provided English Teachers with a great example of double-speak on how wonderfully his pokies benefit Victorians ("Can Victoria win on pokies?", March 17).

It actually reads like something out of George Orwell's 1984. Just let your students loose on this piece of self-congratulatory nonsense...

David G Westaway, Navigators, Vic.
Herald Sun 18/3/2008

Ongoing matters of concern

The following matters were reported in the March journal - they all require YOUR continuing ACTION!

Some of these are state-based so if you live in that particular state, please write to your MPs. See our website for contact details of all MPs: <<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/13/B/0/>>

ACT Civil Partnerships Bill

Jon Stanhope is planning to re-introduce this Bill - with some slight modifications. A tussle is occurring with the Federal government who say they want 'relationship registers' not 'civil partnerships' but also don't want to overrule the ACT government.

Victoria - IVF/Surrogacy

The government is expected to act on the VLRC recommendations soon - and

introduce legislation to allow IVF for lesbians and single women. Contact MPs.

Victoria - Abortion

The VLRC presented their report to the parliament at the end of March. The government is then expected to draft legislation to decriminalise abortion. NOW is the time to contact MPs - before they finally make up their mind!

Victoria - Euthanasia

A private member's bill is expected later this year.

WA - Human Rights Bill

The government has released its inquiry - we expect the WA government will introduce legislation for a 'Human Rights Act. Please contact your MPs to oppose this law.

SA - EO Act amendments

Please continue to contact your MPs

The 'Choices of Life' program

The **Choices of Life** program provides an interactive school presentation for Primary and Secondary students on the facts and choices surrounding the beginning of human life. It has an uncompromising Christian foundation and is appropriate for all schools.

The outstanding success of the program during the past 10 years in over 250 schools in NSW is coming to Melbourne and Hobart.

Bruce Coleman, who has been responsible for the promotion, presentation and success of the program, is seeking to train others to be involved in this exciting and vital ministry.



Bruce will be conducting a training program in Melbourne on **Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th April** at the Heathdale Christian College, 175 Derrimut Rd, Werribee.

Bruce will be in Hobart during the week **14 April**.

All general inquiries to: Bruce Coleman on

brucecoleman@choicesoflife.com.au or Phone 02 9499 5108.

In Melbourne you can contact Salt Shakers (03) 9800 2855 and in Hobart contact Brenda on (03) 6227 1425 re local courses.

Information on the program, along with testimonials from Schools, is available on www.choicesoflife.com.au

University and Summit

by Joy Clements

As a young Christian at university, I don't think I could have found a better way to spend a week of my summer holidays than at **Summit**. Before I went to uni, I'd been warned that my faith would come under attack, but I wasn't prepared for the onslaught of feminism, post-modernism, and secular humanism that hit me during my first year at UTAS.

As a new student still adjusting to university, learning the jargon and unfamiliar with my subject material, it was hard to know when I was learning fact and when I was being influenced by an anti-Christian political or religious agenda.

Going to a Summit conference was great because it gave me a Biblical framework through which to approach my studies and negotiate the value systems behind the lectures.

Sometimes Christianity is openly attacked at uni but I think the real danger is that Christianity is being undermined by the subtle, secular-humanist world-view, which underpins everything we learn.

Often what we're being taught sounds quite reasonable but we are being groomed to see life from a non-Christian perspective. It's no coincidence that most of my peers at uni (particularly in the Arts faculty) are left wing political supporters, on the band wagon for climate-change and insisting that Australians must counter the ongoing effects of our forebears' destructive behaviour through acts such as apologising to the Aborigines and giving power to 'minority' groups like Muslims, Buddhist and homosexual communities. Christianity,

they say, needs to be cut back since all religions are equal and one religion can't be allowed to dominate the others.

I think Summit ministries are doing a great job of teaching Christian youth to think critically about what they're learning at uni and how to engage, on an intellectual level, with the different world-views they encounter. I was really challenged at Summit to completely review the way I think about things and bring my thinking into line with the Bible. Seeing all knowledge from a Christian perspective is absolutely essential and I would really encourage other young people to make sure they're aware of what's going on in our education system and society in general.

At church, youth group and even the on-campus Christian group I attend, the main message we hear in relation to uni is that 'we shouldn't be afraid to say we're Christians and we must be ready to give an answer for our faith'. That's very true, but in the uni classroom, the combat switches to a whole new level and we need appropriate weaponry to defend ourselves. It's great to be able give your testimony but we need intelligent arguments and a good grip on apologetics to survive in the intellectual arena. Summit was really beneficial for me in this regard and introduced me to lots of accessible and practical resources and inspiring lecturers.

I came away from the conference with a new confidence about my faith, renewed zeal to defend it and strategies to approach my uni studies as a Christian. There is a huge need



and opportunity for Christian economists, doctors, philosophers, scientists, teachers, lawyers, politicians, etc (especially uni lecturers!!!) to impact our nation- and the world - for Christ. At Summit we were really encouraged to see our academic studies as a way to help turn around the present moral decline



in our culture. I would strongly urge anyone who is serious about their faith to get to grips with the issue of world-views and from my own personal experience I would highly commend Summit as an introduction to the Christian (and other) world-views and excellent preparation for university studies.

Salt Shakers One day introductory worldview courses

Salt Shakers one-day 'Introductory Worldview School', run by Peter & Jenny, includes an overview of worldviews and 3 DVD lectures by overseas speakers from the Summit course to whet your appetite. Plus some practical sessions on how to apply this to every area of life.

Joy attended our one-day worldview school in Hobart last June prior to attending the week-long Summit course.

If you would like Salt Shakers to run a one-day 'Introductory Worldview School' in your church, town/city, please give us a call at the office on (03) 9800 2855



This year the **National Day of Thanksgiving** will be held on Saturday 10 May 2008.

Since this is the weekend of Mothers' Day, the special focus this year will be on mothers and those who nurture and teach others. The NDOT team says "Those to be honoured and thanked as part of the National Day of Thanksgiving celebrations to be held on 10th May 2008 are as follows:-

"We wish to honour all Mothers and thank those people throughout our respective communities who nurture, train, teach, mentor or care for babies, children and youth. This would include but not be limited to: Full and part time workers and

volunteers in Babies and Children's homes, Foster Carers, staff in Child Care and Pre-School facilities, staff and volunteers working in Youth Shelters, School Teachers and Chaplains, Youth Workers, Sporting team coaches and administrators."

So that gives a lot of scope for reaching out to your community and thanking those who help others! Fathers could be included in your thank you!

Many local communities hold Mayoral Thanksgiving Breakfasts and Thanksgiving Services to honour those in the community and thank God for His blessing.

Why not get involved in celebrating this day - the National Day of Thanksgiving website has a host of ideas and a list of events being held around Australia.

You can order special Thanksgiving cards to give to teachers, mothers, MPs and others in the community, as well as buttons, T-shirts and more. NDOT website: <www.thanksgiving.org.au>

Prayer Update

Prayer should always be the first call with regard to all the issues we confront in society because they all have spiritual implications:

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

We need both God's help and protection and there is no better time than the start of the day to come before God and surrender afresh to Him. Our Lord showed the way by getting up early to pray:

Mark 1: 35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

The importance of starting each day with

prayer should never be overlooked but it so easily is in our busy lives.

We need to pray for our own safety and strength but also for that of our Church and political leaders.

They are on the front line, or should be, in standing up for Christian values in our society.

Over the years we have seen too many 'fall from grace'. It should not surprise us when 'morals' campaigners fall, but rather than throw stones, we should perhaps repent that we have not upheld them before God enough. It is tough trying to stand against the tide and yet Paul tells us to stand.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.



If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chr. 7:14

How to Pray for the Government

Christians often ask **how** they should pray for political leaders.

A 30 page booklet written by Derek Prince is a valuable resource in this area. In just 30 pages, he outlines "how to pray effectively for the Nation and its Leaders".

He considers the verse from 2 Chronicles 7:14. In response to the view that this "promise was spoken to Solomon a long time ago in the Old Testament and doesn't have much meaning for us today", he emphasises that "all the promises" of God are valid (2 Cor 1:20) and that Christians are 'called by God's name'.

He says the verse shows that if we, His people, will do four things (humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, turn from their wicked ways - then God will do three things - hear from heaven, forgive their sin, heal their land.

Derek discusses being salt as part of the healing process. He then explores the verses about praying for leaders and kings and shows that it is vital that Christians pray for our nation and leaders.

Praying for the Government by Derek Prince is available from Salt Shakers.

Cost: \$5 posted.

More on Climate Change . . .

Garnaut Review

Back in April 2007, Australia's State and Territory Governments commissioned Professor Ross Garnaut to conduct a review on the impact of climate change on the Australian economy. He was asked to recommend medium to long-term policies and policy frameworks.

Following the election, Kevin Rudd asked Prof Garnaut to continue with the Review. Prof Garnaut released an Interim Report in February 2008. The final report is due by 300 September 2008. Read the Interim Report at <<http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/pages/reports-and-papers>>.

In the Interim Report, Professor Garnaut says that Australia will have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90% from 2000 levels! This is significantly more than the current commitment of the Rudd government, which is to reduce carbon emissions by 60%.



International Conference

The International Conference on Climate Change was held in New York at the beginning of March. More than 500 people attended the conference including scientists, economists, scholars, and policy analysts.

They released **The Manhattan Declaration**, which says that "There is no convincing evidence that CO2 emissions from modern industrial activity has in the past, is now, or will in the future cause catastrophic climate change." The Manhattan Declaration is at <<http://www.heartland.org/Article.?artId=22866>>

Biofuels and climate change

The British Government's Chief Scientific Adviser Professor John Beddington has said that the promotion of biofuels, as a means of addressing 'climate change' concerns, is threatening world food production and the lives of billions of people. He says food production will be a crisis long before climate change. [Guardian, 7/3/2008]

Another side to a 'Sorry' story

Elders from the aboriginal community of Aurukun in Cape York, Queensland, have called for children over the age of 9 to be removed from the community, saying justice, education and child safety standards have collapsed and that it is not safe for them to remain. Elder Martha Koowarta and other members of Aurukun's community justice group, have suggested that they be sent to boarding school for their safety and education, returning home for holidays.

Last year, 763 defendants - including repeat offenders - from the 1000-strong township faced the circuit court.

Martha said "I was put in a mission dormitory when I was eight, nine. I cried for two nights; then I was right with the rest of those kids. We weren't stolen; our family was there. It was a good system. Or a better system than now. At least my generation learnt to read and write properly."

Aurukun was in the headlines last year when three men and six boys who raped a 10-year old girl were not given prison sentences.

SMH, 14/3/2008. <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/we-need-to-get-the-children-out-of-here/2008/03/13/1205126112217.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>>

Sydney mardi gras - The Biggest yet”!!!

by Peter Stokes

The biggest yet? Well, that’s what the newspapers said anyway, but that really depends who’s doing the counting or what you are counting!

Biggest for crowd numbers? NO, Can’t be - 300,000 is LESS than HALF the 700,000 ‘claimed’ by mardi gras organisers in 1998!

So how is it now the biggest? Well, if one story won’t stick, try another. Over the last three years organisers have been claiming dramatic annual increases in the numbers actually in the parade, raising the figure by 2,000 per year to this year’s all time best of 10,000. So that has now become the defining figure for “biggest ever”.

Nevertheless, mardi gras organisers are still prepared to hang on to their charade of recent years - they again claimed that around 300,000 people lined the 1.6 km route. This is despite any evidence or any reliable method of assessing that guesstimation.

In fact one newspaper report quoted one organiser getting very carried away, by stating that ‘there was ‘anything up to 400,000 spectators’: “The crowds were up on last year, but it’s difficult to measure exactly how many people were there.”! No kidding!! Sounds like the person in the mardi gras office a few years ago who admitted their guesstimation was “a stab in the dark”. He quickly added “but don’t quote me” - too late, the cat was already out of the bag.

Two years ago they stated they had a new counting method, having lowered their guesstimation by 200,000 overnight. Apparently someone had emailed the media claiming the figures were impossible and the media started asking awkward question

I wonder who that was!!! But still, why let truth get in the way of even a bad story?



After all, 300,000 people would ONLY require 23 rows of people on EACH side of the parade - assuming 10 people stood side by side in every single metre.

Surprise, surprise, there were NOT 23 rows - we know, because we were there.

We have photos on our web site to prove it. See <<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/9/B/487/>>

In reality, along most of the 1.6 km there were about 5 rows with just a few places where maybe 9 or 10 rows struggled to view the action. Places like the sloped ground of Hyde Park and at Taylor Sq. Our estimation is that there were probably about 60-80,000 in the area. A lot of the people in the area were actually queuing to get somewhere else, like the night clubs in that area.

There were NOT ‘100 Revs’ there either, thank goodness. In fact they had about 35 in the parade and 85 signed up on their web site just after mardi gras. A few more drifted in over the next two week. Sadly there were far too many Victorian Baptists on the list.

Some of those knew exactly what they were signing. We are sure others simply thought it was a ‘nice’ thing to do.

What these people are really saying is that God does not understand His creation and that He has changed his mind and that homosexuality is not sin anymore

Regardless of numbers, this parade is still a blight on our nation and on all those who marched in support of immorality.

Nevertheless, we must pray for all those who are attracted to people of the same sex - they need to know God’s healing and we need to continue to tell them He loves them, but, like all sinners, they need to repent.



Victorian 'same-sex register' vote

The Victorian Legislative Assembly (Lower House) passed the same-sex 'Relationship Register' bill on March 11.

Yes, we lost round one, but there is still a chance to defeat this Bill which is one of the most blatant anti-Christian, anti-marriage, pieces of legislation to ever hit our State parliament. This Bill will give homosexual and heterosexual 'couples' the ability to register their relationships.

Praise God that 24 MPs saw the danger and voted against it – sadly 54 were still blinded to the truth.

Unfortunately, the homosexuals were assisted by some Christian groups who hold the misguided idea that giving ground on this issue will somehow save marriage.

Some State Parliamentarians personally told us that the Christians advocating the acceptance of a 'Relationship Register' had undermined their attempts to persuade some of their colleagues to oppose this law.

Unless there is united and strong Christian

opposition to ANY 'same-sex' or 'other' relationship recognition, they will eventually get what they want - same-sex marriage. Doing so will certainly not hold back the homosexual agenda.

As we have repeatedly stated, giving any relationship benefits to anyone outside a marriage between a man and a woman WILL simply undermine marriage itself.

We must stand our ground. Whether or not at the end of the day we win or lose a battle is not the issue. We are called to stand, not to compromise.

Below is a general analysis of the vote.

IF YOUR MP voted AGAINST the Bill, please write a short note/email to THANK and encourage them. They will no doubt be attacked by homosexual activists.

A more comprehensive analysis and MP contact details are on our web site at: <<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/472/>>

You can phone 13 2326 to find your MP.

General Analysis of the vote:

* The Liberal and National Parties gave their Members a free or conscience vote.

* Mr Brumby did not give Labor MPs a choice!

* Labor has 55 Members in the Legislative Assembly - 48 voted FOR the Bill

* The 7 ALP Members who did not vote were - Carlo Carli, Luke Donnellan, Judith Graley, Jenny Lindell, James Merlino, Don Nardella, John Pandazopoulos.

We do not know why they didn't vote, so if one is

your MP, please ask them. [Note: Judith Graley is on leave after surgery for cancer].

* No National Party Members voted for the Bill - 1, Ken Jasper, did not record a vote.

* Six Liberals voted FOR the Bill. They were - Ted Baillieu (Leader), Louise Asher, Andrew McIntosh, David Morris, Heidi Victoria and Mary Wooldridge. The 2 Liberal who did not record a vote were - Christine Fyffe and Helen Shardey.

* Independent Craig Ingram voted against the Bill.

Join us for Prayer and Breakfast
Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers
6.30 am every Thursday morning at SALT SHAKERS Office

More discrimination!

Christian couples continue to be discriminated against because of their Biblical beliefs on homosexuality.

Another Christian couple in the UK, Eunice and Owen Johns, have been told they cannot foster children. The Derby Council Social Services has withdrawn their fostering application following concerns that their beliefs about sexual ethics and in particular the practice of homosexuality did not meet 'diversity standards'.

The couple, who have previously fostered children, were surprised and dismayed to learn that their application had been

withdrawn following a series of meetings and interviews with social workers. They feel that their belief about the practice of homosexuality is the reason for the Council's unwillingness to take their application any further. The Christian Legal Centre is supporting the couple and will pursue legal action should the Council refuse to reconsider the Johns' application. It is likely that any action would challenge the diversity standards which the Council allege the couple failed to meet. Report from CLS, UK 23/2/2008. Initial report: *Telegraph*, 23/2/2008.

Interfaith Centre for England

A multifaith centre, costing £6.5 million (A\$13.6m) will be built in Guildford in southern England. The centre will have separate worship areas for Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and a further shared space for Buddhists and Hindus.

The centre's main fundraiser, Lesley Scordellis told *The Times* "We think this is the first of its kind. The Jewish space has an exclusive kosher kitchen and the Muslim

space has an ablutions facility. The design of the building is to facilitate the feeling that they [worshippers] are in one building about faith."

The Church of England has donated 250,000 pounds towards the centre, which is close to Guildford Cathedral and Surrey University. The centre is scheduled to open in 2010.

[*The Times*, 22/2/2008]

Political Correctness

Charlton Heston said "Political Correctness, what does it mean? It means that telling us what to think has evolved into telling us what to say, so telling us what to do can't be far behind. Before you claim to be a champion of free thought, tell me: Why did political correctness originate on American campuses? And why do you continue to tolerate it? Why do you, who're supposed to debate ideas, surrender to suppression? Lets be honest who thinks professors can say what they really believe? It scares me to death, and should scare you too, that the superstition of political correctness rules the halls of reason."

Charlton Heston, *Winning The Cultural War*, Speech to the Harvard Law School Forum, 16 February 1999.

Transcript of the speech: <<http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/forum/heston.html>>

Audio recording: <<http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/forum/audio.html>>

Both at <<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/charltonhestonculturalwar.htm>>

World News

USA: Companies & sex change

Goldman Sachs, ranked No. 9 on Fortune's list of 100 Best Companies to Work For, has decided to pay for sex change surgery for employees. As part of a 'diversity' program, the company will pay for health insurance coverage of sex-reassignment surgery. - which can cost up to \$150,000 in the USA.

"The American Psychiatric Association lists 'gender identity disorder' as a classifiable and treatable condition," said Caleb H. Price, Focus on the Family research analyst. "Rather than paying for people to indulge their confusion and undergo mutilating sex-change surgeries, Goldman Sachs should demonstrate ethical prudence and pursue mental health treatment options instead."

Homosexual lobby group Human Rights Campaign states that many US companies, including Bank of America, Wachovia, Microsoft Corp. and General Motors Corp., also cover at least part of transgender treatments. [Citizen Link, 13/2/2008]

UK: Baby born healthy

A couple in Wales are enjoying their healthy 5-month-old son. Before he was born doctors used an MRI scan and diagnosed that he has a rare brain disorder that would cause deafness and blindness and that he would probably only live for a few hours.

They recommended an abortion. Parents Becky and Kriss ignored the doctors' advice; a few weeks later their son was born - healthy!

Mum Becky said "I feel incredibly guilty

thinking that I could have killed him — and then I find myself wondering how many other babies are killed who would have turned out to be completely healthy".

[Citizen Link, Daily Mail (UK), 26/2/2008].

UK: Blasphemy law

The UK government has voted to remove the blasphemy law which applied to Christianity. On 5 March 2008 the "UK House of Lords voted 148-87 in favour of abolishing the criminal offenses of blasphemy and blasphemous libel from the UK common law." [This was Amendment 144B to the government-sponsored Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill.]

"The UK government proposed the provision after being criticized last November for chiding Sudan for arresting a school teacher for insulting religion while having a blasphemy law on the books in the UK. The last blasphemy prosecutions in the UK were in 1922, and before that the two prior prosecutions were in 1841 and 1676."

JURIST, 6/3/2008. <<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/paperpurchase/2008/03/uk-house-of-lords-votes-to-abolish.php>>

USA: Hillary and homosexuals

Hillary Clinton has "reiterated her 'strong' support for a range of gay rights initiatives in an exclusive interview with the Washington Blade", a prominent US homosexual paper. She confirmed she had fought against the Federal Marriage Amendment and worked "hand-in-hand with [the Human Rights Campaign] and other members of the LGBT community to stop the amendment."

She also told the paper "she would become the first U.S. President to march in a Gay Pride parade". [Washington Blade, 11/2/2008] <http://www.washblade.com/thelatest/thelatest.cfm?blog_id=16508>



Ministry News

As mentioned elsewhere in this Journal, Peter & Jenny started the month in Sydney to monitor the mardi gras. It is 6 years since we last did this, so it was decided an update was due. We now have our 2008 pictures on the web site - not of the parade, but of the crowd, or lack of it, at least compared to the exaggerated estimations of mardi gras organisers. (See page 16)

Peter & Jenny then had a few days in Tasmania to visit Peter's mum who is rapidly approaching 100.

We attended a meeting in Canberra to network with other groups to try to get us all singing from the same song book. In other words to get a more consistent

Biblical position on some of the major issues confronting us at the moment. How successful that was only time will tell.

Introductory Worldview Schools

Last year we ran a number of these Saturday 'schools' and we are keen to do the same this year. They are a great introduction to the concept of 'Biblical Thinking', especially in terms of the other 'ideas' that so impact our minds today.

If you want to learn more about "the renewing of your mind" so that you can better contend for your faith, organising a visit for Peter & Jenny is a great way to start. Contact the office for more details, including a program and a running sheet to help you organise their visit.

Please continue to pray for Peter & Jenny, our Board and the team at our office.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	Euthanasia	Senate Inquiry - send submission	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	R18+ Games	Kevin Rudd, Bob Debus, State Attorneys-General	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<i>Diversity</i> support	Uniting Care - National Director Lin Hatfield Dodds	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Ongoing issues	Various issues for several states	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Vic Register	Write to 5 MLCs - and MLA if they voted AGAINST	<input type="checkbox"/>

SALT SHAKERS On the Web - www.saltshakers.org.au

E-News sign up: Send a blank email to news-subscribe@saltshakers.org.au - then confirm your request by simply clicking 'reply' & 'send' when asked to do so by a return email

For further information about SALT SHAKERS or issues in this Journal contact;

All administration and financial matters

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The First Nine Months

\$2

This is a great little brochure from Focus on the Family featuring the beautiful photos of Lennart Nilsson, giving a step-by-step journey from conception to birth.

Help your friends and family understand the development of the baby by having this on your coffee table or by giving them away

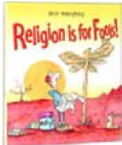
Gianna - Aborted... and lived to tell about it - by Jessica Shaver

\$16

As an unborn baby... she survived abortion

As a young girl... she battled physical and emotional scars

As a young woman... she boldly speaks the truth about abortion - This is her story.



Religion is for fools - by Bill Medley - A great evangelism tool

\$9

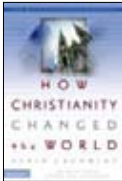
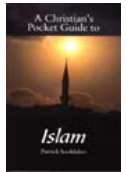
A former comedian and religious skeptic, Bill Medley examines objections to religion in a humorous and surprisingly clever way. He shares his discovery that faith is more than how one feels about it - what matters is whether or not it is true. Bill is now a Christian.

A Christian Pocket guide to Islam - by Patrick Sookhdeo

\$8

This fascinating book provides Christians with a simple description of the origins of Islam, what Muslims believe and how it affects their attitudes, worldview, everyday life and culture.

Practical guidelines are given for relating to Muslims in a culturally sensitive way as well as witnessing effectively and caring for converts.



How Christianity Changed the World - by Alvin Schmidt

\$26

In this well-documented book, Schmidt marshals the evidence for the transforming power of the Christian faith.

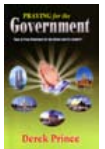
He shows how Jesus has the power to transform people, who in turn are able to transform society.

He shows the impact Christianity has had in so many areas of western social development.

Praying for the GOVERNMENT by Derek Prince

\$5

Derek's main gifting is in explaining the Bible and it's teaching in a clear and simple way. In this booklet he helps us know HOW to pray for our government.



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