

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

“The Church must take right grounds in regards to politics... the time has come for Christians to vote for honest men, and take consistent ground in politics or the Lord will curse them.”

American Evangelist Charles Finney

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Editorial

We were recently at a family camp beside a small river and after dark everyone sat around a large fire. Yet, sadly, most people took little notice of that wonderful source of light and heat.

Having taken some photos of the fire, it was fascinating to see the different flame shapes and colours - fire can be devastating but it can also be devastatingly beautiful; it can destroy but it can also produce new life.

One of the most amazing stories about fire concerns our own Australian bush.

Although we tend to panic when bush fires erupt, especially near houses, and we spend a fortune in man-hours and money putting them out, they are an essential part of the ecology of the eucalyptus forest.

The aboriginal people who lived here before the arrival of the British knew how important a bush fire was. About every 7-10 years they would deliberately set the bush alight if it had not happened naturally through lightning strikes.

They knew that if they were to continue to live off the forest it needed a refining fire or they would lose a valuable source of life-giving food. Without fire, the debris from leaves, bark and dead fronds from ferns would stop any new growth. They also knew that vines would suffocate the gum trees until they died but that after a fire thousands of healthy green shoots would sprout from the ground and the trees.

Our scientists have since discovered that the fire not only opens up the gum nut, allowing the seeds out, but that the heat also 'cures' those seeds as they fall. Even more surprising was the discovery that the best fertiliser to give those seeds a healthy start in life was the ash left after fire.

As the first refreshing rains arrive the burnt forest springs into new life. The animals and birds return for a feast on roasted seeds which are eaten and later deposited throughout the forest and the green shoots give vital nutrients to the animals.

Have you ever asked yourself why our native Australian animals are marsupials? A unique collection of animals with pouches in which they raise their young. It is all connected to living with the imminent threat of fire. If the baby is "on board" the mother can take off - if the babies were in nests, delays would occur and many lives lost.

What an amazing God we have, and as Paul explains so clearly in Romans 1, "since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood **from what has been made**, so that men are without excuse."

The Bible also talks of the Holy Spirit "burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. 3) The 'refining fire' needed to purge the rubbish out of our lives to give us new life through Christ. The organised Church, over the centuries, has also needed the same refining fire to burn up the rubbish that enters through man's desire to control, his greed and lust for power.

Today we see too many of these things in the church as well as a lot of revisionist theology, mostly for self justification of sin that abounds in the church. We see Christians calling evil *good* (like supporting homosexuality and abortion) and good *evil* - opposing discernment of right and wrong.

The only thing that will save our nation is for us, the Church, to humble ourselves before God, to allow His refining fire to sweep through us, and then the church.

Lord, let your fire refine and renew us.

Peter & Jenny Stokes

The threat of anti-discrimination laws

by Jenny Stokes

Within days of sending the last journal to the printer with the article *Underground Church in Australia?* we received news of a ruling by the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal that told *Wesley Dalmar Child and Family Care* that they cannot discriminate against homosexuals being foster carers. *Wesley Dalmar* is part of Wesley Mission in Sydney, which in turn is part of the Uniting Church.

In 2002 *Wesley Dalmar* refused an application by two male homosexuals who wanted to foster a child. The men took their complaint to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board. Six years later the case has finally been decided [but an appeal may be lodged].

Wesley Dalmar has been told to pay \$5,000 to each of the men and to “review its policy on homosexual foster carers and take all necessary steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination on the ground of homosexuality in the facilitation and provision of its foster care services”.

The men had requested an ‘apology’ and asked that all staff members be trained in anti-discrimination procedures. Fortunately the Tribunal declined those requests.

Each applicant had to show “he was treated less favourably than a heterosexual person was or would have been treated in the same or similar circumstances; and one of the reasons for that treatment was his sexuality.”

The NSW *Anti Discrimination Act* has exceptions for religious bodies, and these were claimed by *Wesley Dalmar* and the Uniting Church Property Trust. The relevant part of the exception reads “Nothing in this Act affects: (c) the appointment of any other

person in any capacity by a body established to propagate religion, or (d) any ... act or practice of a body established to propagate **religion** that conforms to the **doctrines** of that religion or is necessary to **avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities** of the **adherents** of that religion.”

The three Tribunal Members (one judge and two others) found that they didn’t apply.

Why didn’t the exceptions apply?

The Tribunal looked at the question of the **religion** of *Wesley Dalmar* and found that

“There is a diversity of beliefs within the Christian religion on the issue of homosexuality”

it was ‘Christianity’. They then analysed what **doctrine** the agency was relying on and identified it as “the belief that ‘monogamous heterosexual partnership within marriage is both the norm and ideal’ [of the family].”

However, the Tribunal decided that “It is common ground that there is a diversity of views and beliefs within

the Christian religion on the issue of homosexuality”.

The judges also considered that, alternatively, the religion of Wesley was the ‘religion of the Uniting Church’ (which in turn is Christianity). Following that line of reasoning they concluded that it still wasn’t a ‘doctrine’ because the Uniting Church itself has diverse views on the subject.

The judges noted that “the 2003 Assembly passed a resolution, which affirmed that it was for local presbyteries to consider applicants for ordination and to take into account various criteria, including sexual orientation. It seems that some presbyteries take the view that Christian scriptures

and theology prohibit the appointment of homosexuals to the clergy whereas other presbyteries think that there is no scriptural prohibition on homosexual clergy.”

Hence, the Tribunal members decided it wasn't 'doctrine' because different parts of the church have different views!

As for the clause “avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of the adherents of that religion”, the tribunal said the ten Wesley congregations only made up a small part of Christianity and other adherents might not be upset!

The Tribunal also noted that one agency of the Uniting Church *already* accepts homosexuals as foster carers and concluded that “There is no evidence that this has caused injury to the religious susceptibilities of the members of the Uniting Church.”

We have always said that exceptions for religion in Equal Opportunity laws are not worth very much; this case highlights those deficiencies.

We have also consistently said that liberal theology is a liability to any Bible-based Fellowship because, if a discrimination case arises, general or denominational liberalism will undermine any stand for righteousness.

With Victoria considering removing current exemptions and the Vic. Justice Department conducting a total review of discrimination laws contained in the Equal Opportunity Act with a view to increasing the scope of the Act, the situation will only get worse.

Currently the system operates by people making a complaint which is investigated by what is now called the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (EOHRC). If accepted, it 'must' go to 'conciliation' and may then be referred

to the Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a hearing.

Two aspects of the 'Options' being considered are of grave concern.

The first is the proposal to give **additional** powers to the EOHRC so they can tackle 'systemic discrimination'. What does that mean? Things like institutionalised (Christian) opposition to homosexuality!

Removing 'systemic discrimination' was a commitment by the State government prior to the 2006 election. That means conducting wide-scale investigations into 'discrimination' without people actually making a complaint and allowing EOHRC to initiate complaints!

The second is a proposal to treat some groups *more favourably* than others to remove perceived discrimination!

The Options Paper says that in the past, 'formal equality' required that all groups be treated equally; it “assumes that by extending equal rights to all, discrimination will be eliminated.” Now some groups are asking for 'real' or

'substantive equality'. The Report says “Equal treatment can, in practice, lead to unequal outcomes. Equal treatment does not recognise the relevance of difference and ignores actual imbalances of power in society, whereby women, ethnic minorities, and other groups, continue to experience disadvantage and detriment.”

The solution proposed?

“Substantive equality” actually means **special** treatment of some 'minority' groups to supposedly make them 'equal'.

We increasingly face radical proposals to change equal opportunity laws and also to change the laws themselves to suit

“Substantive equality recognises that people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve equality”

minority groups.

The federal Rudd government is already moving quickly to 'remove discrimination' against same-sex relationships. They recently announced they would change 100 Commonwealth laws to give additional benefits to same-sex 'couples'. This is in response to the Report *Same Sex - Same Entitlements* which was produced by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in July 2007. They only identified 58 laws to be changed - the government has gone further and found another 42! The only thing they are not doing is giving same-sex 'marriage'. As Kerry O'Brien asked on the 7.30 Report, isn't it discriminatory to remove ALL the other areas of discrimination but NOT give homosexuals the right to marry?

These changes will be implemented in stages, with some coming this month, and all done by mid-2009.

All around us, 'discrimination' is being used as a vehicle to change the fabric of society. Increasingly that will affect what the church can do and say.

Now is the time to act!

Please tell your State and federal MPs and Senators you do not support these changes to State and Federal laws.

Tell them you oppose more rights for homosexuals and are opposed to increases in discrimination laws.

NSW readers should express their concern to their MPs about the *Wesley Dalmar* decision.

Our web site has details of the Wesley Dalmar decision and the changes to the 100 laws - see 'Latest News'.

Justice Michael Kirby and homosexuality

High Court judge Justice Michael Kirby is continuing to promote the homosexual agenda. With his retirement due in March 2009, his recent public statements have focused on aged care and judicial pensions as well as church doctrine.

Last November he did a 2-part feature interview for the ABC's *Sunday Profile* program. During the interview, he called himself "a Christian Anglican" and also talked about his long-term male partner.¹

Sydney Anglican minister Rev Richard Lane heard the interview and wrote to Justice Kirby, calling on him to repent. The subsequent series of letters were made public on April 8, 2008 by Justice Kirby, during a '**Conversation**' between himself and David Marr (a homosexual journalist), organised by St James Church in Sydney. The church is seen as 'liberal' and describes itself as a "progressive community that welcomes all people regardless of age, race, sexual orientation or religion".

The letters were then published by the *Sydney Morning Herald*.²

During the 'Conversation', Justice Kirby described himself as a 'Protestant Anglican'. He says he believes that the 'new Covenant', loving God and neighbour, has replaced the Old Testament and the law. He says that science and research teach that "there is a small proportion of humanity everywhere who have the same sex attraction. Then that is part of the reality against which you have to read the text [Bible]."³

This is not the first time Justice Kirby has made that claim - but there is still no such scientific evidence.

Aged care

Later in April, Justice Kirby was part of a panel at a forum on aged care held by the homosexual community in Sydney, called *Ageing Disgracefully*. Justice Kirby urged churches to make their aged care facilities more 'gay friendly'.⁴

Church doctrine

In the *Sunday Profile* interview Justice Kirby again criticised the church's traditional view on homosexuality and said that peoples' beliefs were influenced by their "religious upbringing, reinforced, even to this day, by religious instruction and, it has to be said, religious instruction from the two Archbishops of Sydney".

At the aged care forum, he also spoke against the church. He said "A lot of the prejudice that still exists ... comes from religion ... handing out messages of hate" and "Things written four or five thousand years ago are the cause of a lot of hatred out there. It has to change. I don't know how it will change but it has to change."⁴

He reiterated his comments on the ABC's *AM* program and added "It may not necessarily be appropriately dealt with by law. It may require changes within the churches themselves, and that's why people of spirituality have to reach out, who are gay, have to reach out to the churches and try to open a dialogue about this thing. Something that has lasted for hundreds and hundreds of years isn't going to change overnight, but it won't change unless people stand up and who can persuade and *cajole* and put their point of view and basically get to be known."⁵

Did you notice the word 'necessarily'? An important word! The possibility of changing the law is left open if churches don't act!

He is encouraging activists to get involved in churches and "cajole" them to change their position. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary says 'cajole' means "to persuade with flattery or gentle urging especially in the face of reluctance".

This is consistent with the fact that Justice Kirby is the new patron of Anthony Venn-Brown's group *Freedom 2 B[e]* which acts

as a support group for active homosexuals in Pentecostal churches.⁶ Venn-Brown has certainly been attempting to 'cajole' the AOG church to change their position on homosexuality, and has had some success.

Judicial pensions

During the aged care forum, and on *AM*, Justice Kirby noted that his male partner would not be eligible for a judicial pension if Kirby died first. He called for changes to the law.

It was not the first time he had called for such changes. In July 2007, Justice Kirby wrote to the Howard government about judicial pensions, noting that his long-time male partner would not receive a benefit if Kirby died first, and asking them to change the law.⁷ He didn't reveal the contents

of the letter, saying it was 'private correspondence' ... but somehow the media found out that a letter had been written!

The letter was sent to the government at the same time as HREOC released their report on same-sex couples and discrimination –which called

for changes to pension rules!

No changes were announced prior to the election, but, within two weeks of last November's federal election, the Rudd Labor government announced they would change the law to allow same-sex partners, including judges, to receive superannuation benefits.⁸

Just two days after Justice Kirby again called for pension changes at the aged care forum, the Rudd government announced that they would change 100 Commonwealth laws to 'remove discrimination' from same-sex couples.⁹

You can download this article with references from our web site: www.saltshakers.org.au - then go to Issues/Homosexuality/Justice Kirby. Or email us and ask for a copy.

“A lot of the prejudice that still exists ... comes from religion ...”

News Update

Tax on alcopops

PM Kevin Rudd has announced an increase in the tax on so-called 'alcopops' [pre-mixed drinks containing spirits and soft drinks] in the vain hope it will stop young people from drinking them. The tax will increase by 70%, with the average drink increasing in price from around \$4 to \$5.

This will hardly deter them from buying the drinks! Or they will switch to cheaper drinks with more alcohol - wine/beer. What we need is effective education encouraging young people not to drink!

The federal budget has funded a trial program, in Victoria, to try and combat binge drinking - it includes 'education' and gives police the power to confiscate alcohol.

ACT: Civil partnerships

The ACT government has passed the **Civil Partnerships Bill** - but they amended it to conform with the wishes of the federal Labor government. In early May, Mr Rudd said he would overturn the Bill if they passed it as it was. The main point of contention was that it included a 'ceremony' and the government, encouraged by some Christian groups, claimed that the 'ceremony' made it 'mimic' marriage. Take out the 'ceremony' and it will be OK, they said!

However, the amended scheme will allow for an "administrative ceremony" - and the ACT government will PAY for the ceremony!

In his media release ACT Attorney-General Simon Corbell said "Gay and lesbian couples in the ACT will now be able affirm their relationship before friends and families and gain legal recognition of their partnership.... All couples are now entitled to participate in a non-legal ceremony provided by the state and conducted by

the Registrar General or her delegates, providing couples with the opportunity to publicly reaffirm their written declaration of commitment."

Ceremony or not, the registering of the relationship is what counts!

WA: Cloning Bill defeated

Western Australia's Legislative Council defeated the *Human Reproductive Technology Amendment Bill 2007* by a vote of 18 to 15.

WA is the first state to debate cloning laws since Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka turned ordinary human skin cells into induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) in November 2007. Richard Egan of Festival of Light explains "This new science has developed so rapidly that it has now made cloning scientifically redundant because iPS cells are biologically indistinguishable from embryonic stem cells."

A number of Christian groups actively opposed the legislation. Thank you to our WA readers who contacted their MPs and asked them to oppose this law.

NSW: Lesbian rights

The NSW government has announced that it plans to give more rights to lesbian parents. The proposed legislation will cover children conceived by artificial fertilisation.

Attorney-General John Hatzistergos says the new law will recognise the relationship a child might have with the female partner of their birth mother. The government aren't giving the same rights to male homosexual parents - they say that is too "complex" as there are problems of the rights of the birth mother and surrogacy. That doesn't mean they are opposed to such changes - they just plan to wait for the national discussion on surrogacy. [ABC, 22/4/2008]

If you live in NSW, please contact you MPs to oppose this proposal.

Gambling-related fraud

Some of the losses due to gambling-related fraud have been calculated and published in a report by Warfield and Associates, a firm which specialises in forensic accounting and the investigation of fraud and corruption.

The study, by Brett Warfield, was published on May 12. It found that \$269 million was lost to fraud nationally in the last ten years. In Victoria, 150 gamblers have stolen \$102 million, making up 40% of the total. In NSW, the figure was \$71 m, followed by Queensland where gamblers stole \$25 m.

The report analysed losses between 1998 and 2007 as recorded in 528 cases that resulted in a criminal conviction for deception-related offences where the proceeds were used for gambling. Although the research is extensive, it does not cover all the district and magistrate courts.

The lowest amount recorded as being stolen was \$127 and the highest was \$22,447,500. Of the ten largest frauds nine were by men. 55 people stole more than \$1 million each; 1/3 of all frauds were for amounts less than

\$50,000 and 2/3 were by employees.

Poker machines were identified as the most common form of gambling by the offenders. Five murders were committed by fraudsters trying to cover their tracks.

The study sought to answer the question 'Is problem gambling a motivating factor in the committing of an act of fraudulent behaviour?' The report says "It is clear... that **gambling has caused significant problems for the 528 people included in this research.** In particular, as a **motivator for the commission of acts of deception.**"

The saddest part of the report is the realisation of the devastation and unhappiness that followed.

Brett said "Reading case after case, judgment after judgment, the overwhelming feeling that pervades is a sense of waste, of opportunities lost, of people hurt and trust betrayed. For those affected, it has been a decade of misery."

The Report (28 pages) is at <http://www.warfield.com.au/WarfieldGamblingFraud.pdf>



2020 Summit - Bill of Rights and Republic

Two of the most 'popular' ideas to come out of the 2020 Summit were a republic and a Bill or Charter of Rights.

That wasn't a surprise! There were 118 representatives from **Get Up!** - a 'left-leaning political activist group' - at the Summit.

These proposals were already supported by Labor prior to the Summit, and some commentators noted that the Summit 'endorsed' Labor policies in a range of areas... perhaps due to who was selected to attend!

The federal government plans to conduct a

national consultation about a Bill of Rights. The question is: "Who will they consult?"

So it was encouraging to read an Opinion article by former NSW premier **Bob Carr** opposing a Bill of Rights in *The Australian*. He said it would just encourage litigation and give judges more power. What was really surprising was that the article was circulated on the ALP's email news stream!

Bob Carr's article is well worth reading: *Lawyers are already drunk with power* - at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23588943-7583,00.html>

Victoria: Abortion

NOW is the time to act on the proposed decriminalisation of abortion...

The government has to release the Report from the Victorian Law Reform Commission by June 11, 2008. Although the contents are not known, it is expected that the Report will recommend the decriminalisation of abortion - taking it out of the Crimes Act.

If you live in Victoria, the action you need to take is simple... you do NOT need to write long letters or offer 'alternatives' or propose 'restrictions'.

What to do NOW:

Contact your SIX MPs. . .

(One Legislative Assembly, five in the Legislative Council. Contact details at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/handbook/menupage.cfm?menuId=1> - Use 'Search by Home Address area')

Write, email or visit them.

Plan of ACTION

1. Identify yourself as a constituent - that you live in their electorate.
2. Say "We want you to oppose the decriminalisation of abortion in Victoria".
3. Say "I look forward to your reply."

That's it - simple isn't it?

Yes, you can add more if you wish, but the important thing is the NUMBER of letters the MPs receive. We need ALL Victorian Christians to do this... LOTS of letters are needed. The MPs will measure the piles of letters for and against!

Spread the word - get your church and all your Christian (and non-Christian) friends to do the same!

Update: King and King

Do you remember the parents in the USA who complained because their child was forced to read a book at school called *King and King* about a prince who was looking for love? Instead of finding a princess he 'married' a man.

A federal appeals court has ruled that a Massachusetts lower court decision was correct when it denied parents the right to remove their children from such classes.

The appeals court admitted the purpose of the book was to influence children to "tolerate" same-sex marriage saying "It is a fair inference that the reading of *King and King* was precisely intended to influence the listening children toward tolerance of gay marriage." But they added "That was the point of why that book was chosen and used."



The court said "Even assuming there is a continuum along which an intent to influence could become an attempt to indoctrinate, however, this case is firmly on the influence-toward-tolerance end. There is no evidence of systemic indoctrination."

Two families complained to the school district, which responded that they were not obligated to advise families about such matters, and would not allow parents to opt-out. David Parker and other parents with children in the school district responded by filing a federal civil rights lawsuit. After the suit was dismissed by Federal District Judge Mark L. Wolf in early 2007, the parents appealed but now the Federal appeals court has rejected it. The families plan to appeal to the Supreme Court. [Lifesite, 5/2/2008]

Christians are not alone

Muriel Porter's article ("Highest praise for nuptials" Australian, May 6 p.12) is to be deplored for its bitter tone and its denigration of Christians who oppose "gay marriage".

Her claim that Christians have exerted undue influence on government to oppose same-sex marriage does not take into account the fact that their view is also shared by people who aren't Christians. May I remind her that the Bible says: "The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light" (Luke 16:8). In other words, one doesn't have to be a Christian to observe that heterosexual marriage is, and has always been, the norm in any properly functioning society, and that problems arise when this foundation is undermined.

Zillah Williams, ACT

The Australian 7/05/08

The blame game

SORRY Catherine Deveny (Opinion, 23/4), but I'm afraid things are only going to get much worse for the lefties. In a few short months, George W. Bush will also be gone. In the good old days, Howard and Bush could be blamed for all our woes, whether it was a flat tyre, burnt toast, or global warming. Today, with wall-to-wall Labor governments at home, and perhaps a Democrat soon in the White House, the left will really have to come up with some new scapegoats.

Indeed, you really have to feel for those on the left. Interest rates keep rising. Share trading companies go bust. Petrol prices are rising. And not one Liberal government in the country to blame. It's gotta hurt.

Bill Muehlenberg, Heathmont

The Age 25/04/2008

No same-sex reform

I appeal to Prime Minister Rudd not to pursue changes for Same-sex couples.

Our nation needs members of parliament with a clear strong stand for what is true and right.

Same-sex so-called couples are not true nor right.

Mr Rudd should allow a conscience vote for MPs.

Mrs Judith Bond, Glen Alpine

Illawarra Mercury 5/5/2008

A partnership of ideas

The Australian Government's commendable refusal to acknowledge same-sex marriages is really a recognition that historically, and across all cultures, marriage has never been recognised as anything other than defining one particular relationship between a man and a woman.

So, rather than take over and redefine this word and institution, those who are still dissatisfied should invent their own new and separate word for their chosen unions, and press for that word to be included in the law. At least that would be more honest.

Rev Graham Nicholson, Hawthorn

Herald Sun 2/5/08

China's multitude of wrongs

The arrival of the Olympic torch in Australia is an embarrassment to every Australian. How can we celebrate a country that has forced abortions, a one-child policy causing an incredible gender imbalance, has children and young women stolen and sold to the highest bidder and no religious freedom?

Those who complain only about the harsh treatment of Tibetans are as blind as our China-centric PM. We should all turn our backs on the flame, not celebrate it.

Peter Stokes Forest Hill (Vic)

Sydney Morning Herald 25/04/2008

Herald Sun 25/04/2008

Carbon emissions tax to hit hard.

Forget the puny tax increases on alcohol and cigarettes, the big new tax is about to hit us in 2010. Due to the Theory of Global Warming, Australians are going to be heavily slugged with a carbon emissions trading scheme tax.

Anything so complicated and changeable as world weather systems cannot be predicted 50 or 100 years into the future.

Even dealing with El Ninos, or just a 10 day local weather forecast, often results in inaccuracies. So, who decided we should be taxed at \$35 per carbon tonne?

Who will levy the charge? Who will keep the tax revenue? How will it be allocated to benefit Australians, if at all?

The big question is: why should Australian families and businesses be taxed on a theory? My theory is that all governments are addicted to taxes, and more taxes.

David G. Westaway, Navigators Vic.

The Ballarat Courier 30/04/2008

Geelong Advertiser 30/04/2008

Cannabis: Risk Factors

by Jenny Stokes

Increasing evidence shows that cannabis is dangerous and that it is hard to break the habit. Even the 'body + soul' section of the *Herald Sun* published a long article warning how hard it is to stop smoking cannabis.

What causes a person, especially a young person, to start using cannabis?

A recent front page headline in *The Age* declared 'Pocket money link to drug use'.¹

Research by the Australian National Council on Drugs, looking at the issue of drug testing in schools, found that students with relatively high disposable incomes were most at risk of getting into drugs.

Those who had between \$21 and \$60 a week pocket money were 60% more likely to have used drugs in the past 12 months than those with less than \$20 a week pocket money.



Risk factors

The long term study done on babies born at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane between 1981 and 1983 has provided valuable insights into what causes young people to smoke cannabis. The researchers interviewed the mothers and the children at regular intervals over the past 25 years.²

The researchers have found that cannabis use is more likely in these circumstances:

Childhood sexual abuse

"Young adult men and women who reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse had significantly higher rates of frequent use of cannabis in early adulthood."³

Maternal marital status

Changes in maternal marital status when the child was aged between 5 and 14 years was significantly associated with increased risk of cannabis use. In other words, a divorce, or new *de facto* partner have significant impact on the teenager and lead to a higher likelihood they will use cannabis.⁴

Maternal smoking

The researchers assessed whether a mother smoked or drank when the child was 5 years and again at 14 years of age.

After controlling for possible confounders, the authors found that maternal smoking at 14 years was associated with frequent use of cannabis in offspring at 21 years, regardless of whether the mother smoked when the child was 5 years old.⁵

Maternal alcohol use

Children of mothers who drank more than one glass of alcohol a day when the child was 5, and when they were 14, were more likely to use cannabis in early adulthood.⁵

A mother's drinking also led to a higher rate of the children drinking alcohol. "For youth aged 14 years, maternal moderate alcohol consumption accounted for the highest percentage of attributable risk among those exposed. Results show that exposure to maternal drinking in adolescence is a strong risk factor for the development of alcohol problems in early adulthood."⁶

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Escape from Reason III

This final discussion in the series focuses now on **formal fallacies**, in contrast to the informal fallacies of the first two articles. What is a “formal fallacy”? Briefly stated, a formal argument has premises and a conclusion; the latter arrived at by standard rules of inference. A fairly standard example is:

*All cats have fur;
This is a cat;
Therefore this cat has fur.*

This argument is valid, that is, the conclusion follows strictly from the premises. It is also true: since the first premise is true, that truth translates to the specific instance of this cat. Note also that it has three terms: all cats; having fur; this particular cat.

Now formal fallacies occur when a standard argument form is somehow corrupted. A typical example, distorting the example above, is the following:

*All cats have fur
All dogs have fur;
Therefore all cats are dogs (!)*

We can see from this amusing (and ridiculous) example how the illegitimate “common factor” (ie possession of fur) is employed to reach a false conclusion. Yet this appeal to a common factor recurs constantly in what passes for reason from the least to the greatest. In particular, it is the stock-in-trade of wild conspiracy theories. While ‘left-wingers’ will often accuse the ‘right’ of indulging in conspiracy theories, they do this sort of thing themselves quite often. Consider just one example:

The left accuses any sceptics of global warming (GW) as being somehow “in the pay” of big commercial giants like oil companies. The argument goes like this:

*John Jones is a GW sceptic;
Oil company representatives are GW*

by Murray Adamthwaite PhD

*sceptics;
Therefore John Jones is some covert representative of an oil company.*

This is strictly analogous to the cats-and-dogs argument above, and just as ludicrous. Likewise, common “smear” tactics in order to marginalise opponents, apart from being *ad hominem*, belong to this category of formal fallacy.

A valid argument must have only three terms. This brings us to another formal fallacy often called the ‘four terms’ fallacy. Consider a fairly standard example:

All inventors are men who see new patterns in familiar things;

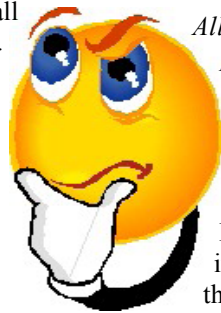
All those who see new patterns in familiar things are eccentrics;

Therefore all inventors are eccentrics.

Here there has been a subtle shift in meaning from the first premise to the second in “seeing new patterns in familiar things”. In the first the term denotes a wholly positive type of exploration, whereas in the second there is a distinct negative overtone, that someone who explores new paths is necessarily some kind of crank. Hence what purports to be a single term is in reality two, making a total of four in the argument.

Now consider this familiar line:

“Islamic jihad does not call for killing innocent men, women and children...” (according to Australian mufti, Sheikh Fehmi, *The Age*, 17/11/2005). ‘Islamic justice is indeed severe on all but innocent victims, but this commitment regarding the innocent makes Islam a peaceful religion.’ This sounds fine until we learn from high level Islamic clerics that no



kafir (infidel or non-Muslim) is considered “innocent”. In the first part of the statement “innocent victims” means (apparently) what Westerners understand by it, but in the remainder of the statement “innocent” means more what Islamic law understands by the term; hence it is a “forked tongue” claim, exploiting the ‘four terms’ fallacy.

One finds the same fallacy in that favourite post-modern buzzword “tolerance”. Time and again when someone waxes eloquent on the need for tolerance, and then castigates someone who stands for moral principles, two senses are operating. In the one instance it denotes tolerance of people, what used to be called forbearance; in the other it has to do with tolerance of ideas, accepting all as equally valid, no matter how bizarre or repulsive. And this subtle shift can be made in the same sentence, illustrating again what is otherwise called equivocation.

We move on to what is called the *non-sequitur*, that is when a conclusion simply does not follow from the stated premises. A straightforward example comes from the critical allegation that because Darius is said to be a Mede in Daniel 5:31 he was therefore king of the Medes. One could by the same logic conclude that because Napoleon was a Corsican he was therefore emperor of the island of Corsica.

Similarly, when an atheist objects to belief in God on the grounds that this has provoked wars and strife through history; one hears this frequently from slick talkback hosts, from secular journalists, even from academics, and it is thrown up as an excuse as to why they reject Christianity as false and refuse to embrace it. However, let us suppose for a moment that all these allegations are true: does all that have anything to do with whether or not God exists? Whether Christianity is true? Of course not! The fact that Christian belief

happens, for various reasons, to offend the militant atheists of this world may or may not be interesting, but it has nothing whatever to do with whether or not it is true. This is a classic *non sequitur*.

We could go on, but I will conclude on this note: in Daniel 4 there is the story of the all-powerful king, Nebuchadnezzar, who is humbled from his pride and reduced to being a madman. The punch-line is given in vv 32-34, where the voice from heaven declares that he will be driven away from mankind, his dwelling will be with the beasts of the field, and he will eat grass like cattle...but after the appointed period his reason will be returned to him. Part of the judgment of God on our present world is that our reason is taken away, and people believe, say, and do the most bizarre things.



Even secular people observing the phenomenon of political correctness, for example, remark that the world has gone mad! We may not eat grass like cattle, but let it be clear: reason has flown away, and that is part of the judgment.

Likewise the Apostle Paul relates in Romans 1 the sad declension of mankind to callousness and barbarism. How does this start? The answer is clear: in rejection of God through the pretensions of superior wisdom, “professing to be wise, they became fools”(v 22). But the claim to wisdom is but the manifestation of the irrational, and that is precisely where we are. Has there ever been such a time as right now for Christians “to be mature in their thinking.” (1 Cor 14:20)

Murray Adamthwaite has a PhD in ancient history and a degree in theology. He is a member of Salt Shakers Reference Panel. Murray has a website with details about the lectures he gives in ancient history and Old Testament. Murray has recently launched a new website which contains all his articles: <www.adamthwaite.com.au>

Prayer Update



During the last month we have witnessed dramatic pictures from devastating natural disasters, complicated by poor government responses, especially in Burma. God's word says "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan." Proverbs 29.

It is clear, certainly in the case of Burma, but also in China, that there has been a lot of unnecessary groaning going on. It is so sad to see the government corruption and mismanagement largely because of pride hindering the helping hands that could have been mobilised so rapidly.

- Please pray for the thousands who have lost loved ones and the millions who have been displaced from home and community.
- Pray that as the 'capitalist' west, with its many Christian aid agencies lends a helping hand, that Jesus will be lifted up and these people will be set free, at least from their spiritual bondage if not immediately from the bondage of depravation.

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

2008 Budget - Federal laws

The Budget assisted some and penalised others – and yet still there seems to be a lot of money gathering in the 'public' purse while many are doing it tough.

- Pray that governments will have a social conscience as well as restraint against unnecessary spending.
- Pray for those feeling the pressure of high mortgages.
- Pray that the government will encourage more mothers to stay home with their children rather than continue to reward those who go to work and put their children in child care.

Federal government changes to 100 laws to 'normalise' immoral relationships:

- Pray that good, not evil, will be rewarded.
- Pray that supporters of homosexuality will be removed from our parliaments unless they improve their performance and support Godly values.
- Pray that God would forgive our nation for continually giving legal recognition and acceptance to what He calls sin – abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, etc, etc.

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

UK - Hate speech law

A Bill to ban ‘homophobic’ hate speech has just been passed in the United Kingdom. **Stonewall**, a homosexual activist group assisted in drafting the Bill.

Christians were rightly concerned that the law could be interpreted to ban any criticism of homosexuality. The Bill amends Clause 126 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill to create a new offence of incitement to hatred on grounds of sexual orientation. It is now an offence to “use threatening words or behaviour with the intent of stirring up hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation”. The penalty is up to seven years in prison.

The Bill originally passed the Commons by a vote of 338 to 169 on January 9, 2008. A cross-party free speech amendment to the ‘homophobic hatred’ offence, based on wording proposed jointly by the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, was defeated.

When the Bill went to the House of Lords, Lord Waddington proposed a free speech amendment that said “the discussion or criticism of sexual conduct or practices or the urging of persons to refrain from or modify such conduct or practices shall not be taken of itself to be threatening or intended to stir up hatred.” This was passed

by the House on Lords on April 21, 2008 by 81 to 57. The government opposed the amendment saying the Bill exempted such comment and that courts would have to prove that the behaviour was intentional.

The Bill went back to the Commons on May 6, 2008 for a vote on the Lords’ amendment. The Commons defeated the amendment by 338 to 136, so the Bill went back to the House of Lords for another vote. This time the Lords voted for the free speech protection clause by 178 to 164. The Bill went back to the Commons again - where the government decided to accept the amendment and the Bill was passed - it now includes the free speech amendment!

Although the Bill is still undesirable, it is better than it might have been...

Congratulation to the Christian groups which lobbied hard on the issue, including the Christian Institute and the Lawyers Christian Fellowship. Thanks are also due to Lord Waddington and the other peers who voted to protect free speech.

Find out more: Christian Institute, ‘Incitement to homophobic hatred’ Resources, http://www.christian.org.uk/issues/2007/gay_rights/hatecrime/index_resources.htm

Free speech and Islam

When Dutch politician Geert Wilders made a 15 minute film about the Qur’an, called **Fitna**, no TV station would screen it and he had trouble getting it hosted on the internet. It was released on *Liveleak* on the net, but was withdrawn the following day due to threats to their staff. It was later edited and reposted and is on Google video.

Geert Wilders has received numerous death threats. The film contained verses from the Qur’an, media clips of imams speaking and

scenes of terrorism.

Meanwhile the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is urging the United Nations to **stop any criticism of Islam**.

The United Nations has gone further, and is now monitoring criticism of Islam: on March 28, the UN Human Rights Council passed a disturbing resolution that directs the body’s expert on free speech to report on “individuals and news media for negative comments on Islam.” [Frontpage, 11/4/2008]

real choices AUSTRALIA

by Jane Power

There is growing international evidence that large numbers of women make the decision to terminate a pregnancy, not out of a sense of freedom of 'choice', but from a sense of not having another option. Often this is due to relationship difficulties, financial pressures and because their real needs remain unmet. A growing number of these women are beginning to see that there could, or should have been, other options made available to them.

Without adequate support to continue a pregnancy, abortion is never a free choice. Without access to accurate and up-to-date information about the consequences of abortion, abortion is not an informed choice.

Real Choices Australia (RCA), established in September 2007, is a not-for-profit organisation committed to the empowerment of women and men in decision-making about pregnancy, relationships and sexuality through the provision of quality education and professional services. Our organisation aims to promote healthy lifestyle choices, which affirm life and the uniqueness and value of every human being.

Early sexual activity can negatively affect the ability of young people to form stable and healthy relationships in a later marriage. Research indicates a correlation between sexual activity among adolescents and the likelihood of engaging in other high-risk behaviours, such as tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use.

Media articles regularly appear from all over the world, including Australia, about the need to have good programs on relationships and sexuality in an attempt

to stop the high teen pregnancy, birth and abortion rates and escalating incidence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. It appears that the promotion of contraception has not worked at reducing these statistics. Evidence is emerging to support the positive results from appropriate relationship and sexuality education programs.

Choices Decisions Outcomes. (CDO) is an innovative value-based education program for adolescents encouraging responsible decision-making regarding sexuality. Many of you will be familiar with CDO. Jane Power (its creator) has trained and resourced teams throughout Australia. It is estimated that CDO has been presented to over 100,000 students.

In order to meet the continued growth, so that more students can benefit from this life-changing program, CDO now only operates as a direct service of RCA. RCA is excited to be a part of the vision to expand and grow CDO nationally and at the same time retain a regional focus.

If you would like to establish a pregnancy resource centre or a Choices Decisions Outcomes team in your local area, please contact Debbie Garrett (RCA Executive Officer) or Jane Power (CDO National coordinator)

The RCA website provides information, links, educational material, an interactive forum and access to a professional consultant for live chat. www.realchoices.com.au

CDO website: www.cdo.net.au

Our work is only possible with community support. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.



Influence of Islam - University 'Prayer Rooms'

The influence of Islam in Australian universities continues to grow. Most universities in Australia provide handbooks for Muslim students and special prayer rooms that include washing facilities.

RMIT in Melbourne has a "Spiritual Centre" for all religious groups to use. Recently the space was extended with the opening of new 'prayer rooms' which are "Muslim-friendly". In April, RMIT's Student Newsletter *The Fly* said "They cater separately for women and men and include ablution [washing] and social spaces."¹

The report said "The new prayer rooms are booked permanently for the exclusive use of Muslim staff and students from 11.30am - 5pm each week day..."

So much for equality! Dedicated spaces and exclusive use times for Muslim prayer.

But that wasn't enough. The RMIT Islamic Society wanted 'Muslim-ONLY' prayer rooms in Melbourne like RMIT Bundoora, where there are already dedicated Muslim-only prayer rooms.

One reason Muslim students are upset is that a couple of months ago, according to the RMIT Islamic Society, the original plan was that NO-ONE else would have access to the rooms! Amr Fouda, President of the RMIT Islamic Society, writing in *Catalyst*, the RMIT Student newspaper, complained about an RMIT staff member entering the facility in February and objecting to the "Muslim 'branding of the facility".

Protests ensued... Fouda wrote "all Muslims are committed to boycotting the facility for so long as it is not a Muslim Prayer Room. Muslim students have prayed their Friday

Prayers in congregation on Bowen St. for the past 3 weeks in protest. ... "

He went on to claim that "A dedicated prayer room is a necessity, not a privilege."²

More lobbying ensued: The RMIT Islamic Society said "Pressure has been applied to RMIT from ICV, ISV, AFIC, Mufti of Australia, Embassies/Consulates and the RMIT Student Union."³ [This link shows photos of 'outdoor protest prayers']

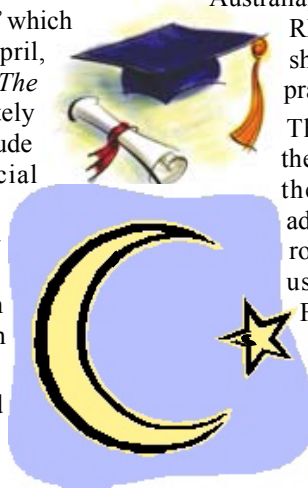
The Islamic Society met with the Student Union and obtained their support in lobbying the administration to have the prayer rooms allocated for sole Muslim use. Meanwhile the on-street Friday prayer meetings continue - with free pizza provided for 'bonding'!

At the **University of Melbourne**, Muslim students have had a dedicated area for

a prayer room for five years. When the area was closed for renovation earlier this year, and it appeared they would not be given permanent space on-campus, the Muslim students organised extended protests, demanding a separate area with full facilities on the main university campus. The protests seem to have worked!

At **Monash University**, a 'Religious Centre' was built to cater for the religious needs of all students. A number of the rooms in the Centre have been used as dedicated prayer rooms for Muslim students for some time.

Now the "Monash University Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee has approved the building of new mosque facilities for the Muslim community". Adhnan Wazil, President of the Monash University Islamic Society, announced the



decision, and rejoiced at the announcement of a donation of \$10,000 toward the project from the Vice-Chancellor! He also noted that the land is on the border of the university and said the uni would 'gift' the land for the mosque. The estimated cost of the mosque is \$4 million - he said he expected Muslim embassies will 'contribute'!

Despite squeezing Christians into multi-faith spaces we can expect to see more of this appeasement to Muslims in our universities across the country.

In September 2007, a conference called "Access, Inclusion and Success - Muslim students at Australian universities" was held at the University of Western Sydney.

The conference covered a range of issues relating to "gender, discrimination and how to meet the fundamental religious needs of Muslim students." The list included the availability of halal food and prayer rooms on campus. The aim? "To develop national standards for Muslim students which could be incorporated by other universities".

Schools are not immune from such activity... we already know of some secondary schools that have established Muslim prayer rooms.

Next month we will look at the funding of University Chairs in Islamic Studies.

Links to sources are available from our web site Issues/ Islam/Uni Prayer Rooms.

Countering the sexualisation of girls

The proliferation of *Bratz* dolls and *Barbie* dolls for girls promotes the sexualisation of girls.

A new range of dolls which emphasises the innocence of childhood is now available. The Only poseable *Only Hearts Club* dolls, which have a pre-teen girl's figure and clothing and come with their own pet, are now available in Australia from *Brainy Days*, a new company which has just opened an office in our building. The company sells educational games including the maths game '24'. They have just started stocking the dolls as an alternative to *Bratz* dolls. Separate clothing for the dolls is available - pyjamas for a pyjama party, a ballerina outfit for ballet class, jeans and top and so on.

A range of small books is available to match the dolls - each contains a moral dilemma which needs to be resolved. Girls are encouraged to 'do the right thing'.

So if you have a daughter or granddaughter wanting *Bratz* or *Barbie* dolls and you don't think they're suitable, check out the dolls, books and clothing on the *Brainy Days* website. Dolls are \$29.50, books are \$9.95. Web: www.brainydays.com.au

If purchasing a doll, mention you heard about them from Salt Shakers. Next time you call at our office, why not visit *Brainy Days* in Suite 2?

The dolls are made by 'Only Hearts Club' (OHC) in the USA - their president Les Simonian says "We have received countless communications from parents and grandparents, telling us how thankful and thrilled they are to see something that both their girls love to play with and that tells them that "it's cool to do the

right thing" and do nice things and be nice to others."

OHC website: www.onlyheartsclub.com/



World News

UK: Cannabis

The UK Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has announced that cannabis will be re-classified up to a Class B drug. This is a reversal of the current position adopted in 2004, when cannabis was downgraded to a 'Class C' drug. The maximum prison sentence for possessing cannabis will rise from two years to five years.

The reason for the change? Increasing evidence of the connection of cannabis to mental health problems. In addition, stronger varieties of cannabis now available - some reports say that 'skunk' is up to three times stronger than cannabis available in 1995. [BBC, 7/5/2008]

California - same-sex 'marriage'

On 15 May, the California Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage, saying sexual orientation, like race or gender, "does not constitute a legitimate basis upon which to deny or withhold legal rights." The ruling was 4-3 and takes effect in 30 days.

USA: Activists visit churches

Soulforce, a homosexual activist group led by Mel White, is holding a six-week campaign of visiting large churches across the USA. Called "The American Family Outing", homosexual families travel to churches to "create meaningful conversations" about faith and homosexuality.

Soulforce says they want to enlist churches in the battle to end "the physical and spiritual violence perpetuated by some religious voices against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) people and their families."

Jeff Buchanan, from *Exodus International*, said he is concerned by the stereotype that

all churches are party to that violence. He recommended churches - and all Christians - embrace the issue "with compassion, not compromise." [Citizen Link, 12/5/2008]

New Zealand: Morning after pill

The morning after pill will soon be available over the counter at pharmacies in New Zealand. It will be available to all women, including teenagers, at no cost in a trial scheme in Auckland costing \$247,000. The women would also be offered condoms and a pamphlet on sexual health and contraception.

Pharmacists will be allowed the option of referring women to a family doctor. Vision Network opposed the handing out of the morning after pill. Director Glyn Carpenter said "It is disingenuous to say the pill avoids abortions when that is precisely what it does do." He said that knowing the pill is available often put pressure on people to engage in unwanted sexual activity.

NZ: Anti-smacking law

In 2007, New Zealand passed a law which outlawed smacking by parents. The Kiwi and Family Parties are running a petition to force the government to hold a referendum on the issue of smacking at the upcoming general election later this year.

The petition needed to obtain the signatures of 10% of all registered voters to hold a referendum. The petition, which was presented to the Clerk of Parliament on Feb 29, 2008, needed 285,027 valid signatures.

These were then checked by the authorities. Although the organisers gathered 324,316 signatures, it was decided that only 269,500 signatures were valid.

A 'sample' of 29,501 signatures were checked: of these 3373 could not be found on the electoral roll, 214 were illegible, 158 were duplicated and two had signed three times. The organisers have two months to obtain the additional 15,000 signatures

Ministry News

**Don't forget to mark the date for
Salt Shakers Annual Dinner -
September 13 - 7pm**

May was a quiet month for speaking engagements with Jenny speaking at a Pro-Life conference but the working week continues to be full of challenges with our monthly Journal and the many E-News emails alerting you to the changes to legislation coming thick and fast.

Peter & Jenny will be heading to NSW later in June speaking at Tarcutta on Friday night (June 20) and in Sydney at the 'Choices of Life Annual Dinner before they head into country NSW for a well-earned rest.

The venue once again is **The Quest** in Wantirna, and it has been refurbished especially for us! Well not quite, but we do hope to see many of you there.

Our calendar is filling up for the second half of the year so if you would like a weekend Worldview School or Sunday church visit get in early or you could miss out. Contact the office for more details,

Please continue to pray for Peter & Jenny, especially as they travel, also our Board and the team at our office.

Salt Shakers is a faith ministry...

If you value and appreciate the service we provide, we ask that you help us continue to keep you informed by making a regular monthly contribution to this ministry.

Even the amount of one hamburger per month will help.

Please see the inside of the wrapper your Journal arrived in for more details.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
5	Discrimination	Federal MP, Senators, Party Leaders - State MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	NSW Lesbians	State MPs in both houses, Party Leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Abortion: Vic	Your FIVE MPs, Party Leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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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

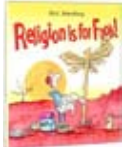
Gianna - Aborted... and lived to tell about it - by Jessica Shaver

\$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

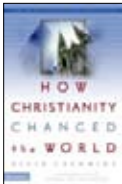
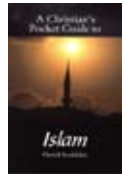
A former comedian and religious skeptic, Bill Medley examines objections to religion in a humorous and surprisingly clever way. He shares his discovery that faith is more than how one feels about it - what matters is whether or not it is true. Bill is now a Christian.

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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