

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

“In a time of universal deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” (George Orwell)

Jesus Christ said,
“I am the way, the truth, and the Life.”
He was right!

Jesus Christ said,
“NO man comes to the Father but by me.”
He was right!

He was Born of a Virgin, He Died on a Cross,
He Rose again to live Eternally.

Celebrate the ‘truth’ this Christmas
and
Live the revolution in 2009!

December 2008 AD

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Editorial

Are you ready to 'live the revolution' in 2009? It won't be easy - it could well cost you more than you ever thought being a Christian in Australia would ever cost. But those words 'choose this day whom you will serve' are getting louder and louder.

We need to get ready to be revolutionary, because we are increasingly living "In a time of universal deceit [where] telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

Postmodernism, which says there is no such thing as truth, has invaded the world. Sadly, a growing number of Christians are finding it easier to go with the flow rather than swim against the tide and proclaim the truth. As Christmas approaches will we proclaim the Christ born of the virgin as the Son of God or one of many postmodern alternatives?

A few months ago we wrote about the watering down of morality, but, even worse still is the growing number of Christians who are watering down the Word, the Word become flesh, Jesus Christ himself.

No doubt everyone has heard of John Shelby Spong, the retired Episcopalian heretic who does not believe in the virgin birth or the resurrection of Christ. He calls for a "fundamental rethinking of Christian belief, away from theism and from the afterlife as reward or punishment for human behaviour". He questions most of the very tenets of Christian faith. Unfortunately, he is far from alone in his heretical views as we have seen from the proclamations of Francis Macnab in Melbourne this year. He actually seems determined to out-spong Spong. However, his obscure views are not new. He stated back in 1999 "I cannot see any good in the doctrine, [of original sin]

any more than I can see it in the doctrine of guilt and repentance".

When he launched his "new faith" recently, many in his own church were upset. McNab responded "Some said I shouldn't be allowed to be here anymore and that I should be drummed out of town. I would expect that kind of reaction from people who take the scriptures far too literally."

Yes, that is the trouble today, we must not take anything too literally, even God's Word. That is why a Muslim Imam can stand in front of Christians at the 'National Prayer Breakfast' and get a standing ovation for saying that Islam had been misinterpreted and that it is a forgiving religion.

Too many Christians find it easier to believe that than face the reality that Islam is a false 'religion' which denies the death and resurrection of Jesus. Islam wants to dominate the world, by peaceful submission if it can but by force if it has to.

Such is the world in 2008 and will increasingly be in 2009. The desire to be popular, to be cool, to be tolerant and to be nice is appealing, but truth is far more important than being appealing. The broad, accommodating road leads only to hell, to eternal separation from God.

Christ alone offers us eternal life through FAITH in Him and through our repentance of sin. Joshua 24:14-15 (paraphrased) says, "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped..., and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Peter & Jenny Stokes



English Law and Religious Law: Synergy or conflict?

by Mark Mullins

Mark Mullins, a lawyer and barrister, has spoken on matters relating to Christianity and the law in the UK for many years; previously as a spokesman for the UK Lawyers' Christian Fellowship and now as spokesman for a new group 'Christian Concern For Our Nation'.

Since Australian law is based on English law, Mark's insights apply to us here in Australia as well...

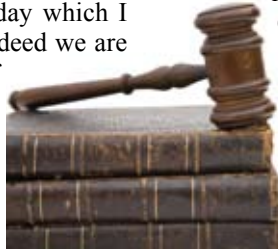
In 1763 Sir William Blackstone declared that "Christianity is part of the Laws of England". I do not believe that English Law has ever fully reflected the principles of law enshrined in the New and Old Testaments of the Bible but there was a degree of synergy that is increasingly absent today which I believe is to our detriment. Indeed we are moving rapidly to a place of conflict with Christian laws.

First I need to define terms: what do we mean by religious law in a Christian context? The Mosaic Law contained

harsh penalties for a number of breaches of God's moral law which included adultery but by the time of Christ's coming Judea was under Roman rule and the Jewish authorities no longer had the power to implement capital punishment themselves. When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus by the Pharisees with an invitation to stone her, He invited the one who was without sin to cast the first stone. Nobody did and neither did Jesus. She was sent away and told to sin no more. I believe this incident gives us an insight into the way we, living in New Testament times, are to read the penalties of the Mosaic law. The moral principles in that law still stand but the punishments for their breach must be

looked on rather differently today.

The apostle Paul spoke of the role of Government in the 13th chapter of Romans; first he described Government as an instrument appointed by God and second he ascribed to that Government the duty to punish evil and reward those who did well. The thorny issue is the definition of good and evil; in my view that must come from the Bible. Indeed the Bible is express on this point: The Prophet Isaiah gave this health warning: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil". Where the law of the land has reflected the principles of good and evil as defined in the Bible then there has been a fairly close synergy with Christian law.



It is interesting to note that at her coronation the Queen swore to maintain, amongst other things the "Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel and the Protestant Reformed religion established by Law".

Today we live in a society where a small minority are practising Christians and where the governing ethos is multiculturalism and accommodation with groups that may have little or no sympathy with the historic Christian faith.

Let us consider the family. The Bible is clear that the only place for sexual relationships is in a marriage of one man and one woman for life. Biblical marriage wasn't fully recognised in England until 1753 when Lord Hardwicke's Act finally did away with the concept of "common law marriage" and required the presence of two or more credible witnesses before a church minister. However we now have a divorce law that

is almost on demand; contrary to Christ's warning that "what God has joined together let no man put asunder".

Today the gates have opened even wider: The *Gender Recognition Act* of 2004 gives legal recognition to a transsexual's 'acquired gender', effectively allowing two people of the same actual gender to get married. The *Civil Partnership Act 2004* gives formal recognition to same sex couples who wish to register their relationships as civil partners. Increasingly the courts are recognizing the rights of co-habitees. Perhaps unsurprisingly along with the official recognition of a plurality of relationships has been the endorsement of adoption by lesbian couples who will now, under the *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act* be able to apply for IVF treatment without being required to demonstrate how the child's need for a father will be met.

It was the President of the Family Division, Sir Mark Potter who gave this ringing endorsement to marriage in the unsuccessful challenge of a lesbian couple to have their Canadian marriage recognised in the UK:

"It is apparent that the majority of people, or at least of governments, not only in England but Europe-wide, regard marriage as an age-old institution, valued and valuable, respectable and respected, as a means not only of encouraging monogamy but also the procreation of children and their development and nurture in a family unit (or "nuclear family") in which both maternal and paternal influences are available in respect of their nurture and upbringing".

I believe it is to the detriment of the fabric of society that Christian marriage has not been allowed to maintain its supremacy in this nation. These changes have not only placed English law at loggerheads with

Christian law but they have led to issues of conscience for individual Christians which have placed their careers in jeopardy.

Recently Lilian Ladele, a Christian Registrar who could not in good conscience preside over the formation of same-sex civil partnerships, was suspended from her position with Islington Council on the grounds that she was discriminating against same-sex couples on grounds of their sexual orientation. She was eventually able to use the *Employment (Religious Belief) Regulations 2003* successfully to challenge this suspension within the Employment Tribunal (July 08) although her case is currently under appeal.



In 2006 a lay magistrate, Andrew McLintock, unsuccessfully challenged a decision by the Courts Service that he could not continue to sit as a lay magistrate if he refused to place children with same sex couples for adoption: he said this; "In the 15 years I have sat with colleagues on the Family Bench,

I can say with total conviction that I have always acted in the very best interests of every child over whom I have been asked to make an order..."

The Church of England recently lost an Employment Tribunal case under the *Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003* when it refused to appoint Mr Reaney as a youth worker in the Hereford Diocese. Although he had been in a same-sex relationship for 5 years he was not then in a relationship and the Tribunal held that it had been unlawful for the Bishop of Hereford to reject Mr Reaney's undertaking that he would not enter into another relationship while he was in the post.

Regrettably space does not allow me to highlight other areas where the law

of this country has turned against the laws of Christianity. A truly tolerant society should make accommodation for issues of conscience even in areas which are becoming increasingly sensitive. Christianity is exclusive in its claim that the Bible is the only divine revelation that exists in this world and a person's eternal destiny hinges on whether he accepts or rejects the teachings and person of Jesus Christ which culminated in His death for our sins and his victorious resurrection three days later. I strongly believe that our tradition of tolerance comes from the far-reaching influence of the Son of God who led by example and demonstrated the extent of his love for mankind by His gruesome death on a cross. The principles He instituted may be challenging to us personally but they

are ultimately for our good. I started with a quote from Sir William Blackstone who 250 years ago gave his speech: ***Lecture to the Study of the Law*** that along with his commentaries framed the whole of English law. This was his charge to Parliamentarians in that speech:

“They are the guardians of the English Constitution ... bound by every tie of nature, of honour, and of [Christianity], to transmit that constitution and those laws to their posterity, amended if possible, at least without any derogation.

“We have not only derogated but we have gone into reverse and I believe we all need to take stock and consider whether this new direction will be to the long term benefit of our society or whether we should return to the synergy we once enjoyed.”

Sex on TV - and teen pregnancy

A new study in the USA has found that adolescents who watch a lot of TV shows containing a high amount of sexual activity, such as *Friends* and *Sex in the City*, are TWICE as likely to be involved in a pregnancy over the following three years as their peers who watch few such shows.

The study was conducted by Dr Anita Chandra of the RAND Corporation; it was published in the journal *Pediatrics*. The researchers interviewed 2,000 adolescents aged 12 to 17 three times between 2001 and 2004. The findings applied to girls and boys: the study is the first to establish a link between teenagers' exposure to sexual content on TV and **either pregnancies among girls or responsibility for pregnancies among boys.**

The study found that teens got a lot of

information about sex from such TV shows, but the programs did not highlight the “risks or responsibilities” of sexual activity.

Again, it seems obvious that watching lots of young people engaged in sex will lead to young people following suit and having more sex themselves - and

getting pregnant. Still, it is helpful to have research that confirms the link between sex on TV shows and teenage pregnancy.

The solution?

The researchers suggested:

- * Limiting exposure to sexual content on TV to help reduce teenage pregnancies.

- * Parents discussing sex related matters with their children.

References: BBC, 4/11/2008. Rand Corporation - media release/Research Brief: www.rand.org/news/press/2008/11/03/



News & Action

SA - Cloning

The South Australian **House of Assembly** voted 25 to 14 on 30 October to approve laws that will allow the cloning of embryos to obtain stem cells.

South Australia is the last of the states to consider laws that mirror the controversial embryo stem cell laws that were passed by the federal Parliament in 2006.

The Bill was then debated in the South Australian Legislative Council in late November.

IVF - Victoria

The Victorian Legislative Council debated the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Bill in the final week of October.

The Bill would allow single women and lesbians to access IVF, allow a lesbian birth mother's partner to be registered as a 'parent' on the child's birth certificate and open up surrogacy laws.

The vote on the Bill was delayed to 13 November. Unfortunately the second reading vote was 20 to 18 in favour. The Bill was sent to the Legislation Committee for analysis. It is expected back in the Legislative Council for a final vote on 2 December. Please pray it is defeated.

Federal - same-sex laws

There has been a considerable shift in the federal parliament on the issue of homosexual rights since the election of the Rudd government. Homosexual and heterosexual couples are now allowed to use the Family Court for the resolution of property and financial matters. Previously,

ONLY matters relating to **children** of *de facto* couples were considered by the Family Court - other matters went to state courts.

The same-sex superannuation law was also passed - this means Commonwealth superannuation schemes will pay benefits to same-sex partners in the same way they are currently paid to married couples and heterosexual *de facto* couples.

The third law was one which changed more than 60 Commonwealth laws to give homosexual couples almost all the same rights as heterosexual married couples. The final debate and vote on this was held in the week beginning 17 November.

Thank you to everyone who wrote to their federal MPs on all these proposals.

Californication

Thirty-three companies and organisations have told **FamilyVoice Australia** and ourselves that they don't want their ads on Channel 10's program 'Californication' since the series started on 5 October!

That's good news! Last year 64 companies told Channel 10 the same thing! The program was recently moved to a later timeslot, following a repeat program.

Some companies have told us they gave specific instructions that their ad NOT be shown on Californication - so they are very unhappy with Channel 10 when they find out the ads were shown! Others tell us, once they are alerted to the fact their ad was shown, that they've told Channel 10 NOT to show their ad on the program again.

Check out our campaign page - and the list of companies which don't want their ads on the show at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/558/>

ACTION: Each week of the series we send an email with the contact details for companies on our E-News list. If you have time, please join our campaign. The more letters they receive the better!



Fertility Rate rises

The fertility rate in Australia has risen to its highest level for 25 years. It is now **1.93 babies per woman** - an increase from 1.81 in 2006. Prior to the introduction of the **Baby Bonus** in July 2004, the rate had fallen to 1.73 in 2001. Peter Costello, then the Treasurer, called for women to have "one for Mum, one for Dad and one for the country"!

The number of babies born has also increased - in 2007 a record 285,213 babies were born, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

One reason for the rise is the increasing number of women in their 30s who are now having their first children - the rate for women aged 30-34 was **126.5 babies per 1000** women in 2007. The fertility rate increased last year in ALL age groups.

The introduction of the \$5,000, from July 2004, is believed to have contributed to the increase in the birth rate.

We are still a long way from full population replacement figures - the rate for maintaining the population is 2.1 babies per woman.

Married couples

About 2/3 of all babies are born to couples who are married, though a growing proportion are born outside of a marriage.



The ABS reports that "In 2007, 67% of births were to parents in a registered marriage, compared to 82% in 1987. The proportion of births to parents outside registered marriages has increased steadily since 1975. In 2007, 33% of all births registered were to parents who were not in a registered marriage."

Baby bonus

The Baby Bonus, currently \$5,000, is also paid to parents who have a stillborn child, to assist with the costs incurred.

In August 2008, Senator Cory Bernardi (SA) alerted the government to an abuse of this system by people who have an abortion after 20 weeks. Since it is registered as a birth and a death, some people had presented that certificate in order to claim the Baby Bonus, even though they had an abortion. The Minister for Families Jenny Macklin gave an assurance that this would be fixed so that people having abortions could not claim the 'Baby Bonus'. In late October, Centrelink officials told the Senate estimates hearings that they had NOT received any instructions from the Minister to

act. Senator Bernardi recently told us that Centrelink IS changing the forms in January 2009 to ensure the loop-hole is CLOSED! Well done!

Families in Australia

The majority of all families with children in Australia are couple families - in 2006-2007, 2.6 million, or 80% were couple families and 20% were one parent families.

Another piece of good news - the proportion of children living in couple families has increased since 2003.

Around 73% of the couple families were

'intact' families where the children are the natural or adopted children of both parents and there are no step children.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4442.0 - Family Characteristics and Transitions, Australia, 2006-07

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4442.0>

Politics - getting involved!

by Peter & Jenny Stokes

As we confront an increasing range of immoral laws being passed by our parliaments, we have pondered the question, 'How can we ensure that GOOD laws are passed?'

The first answer is that there is an increasing need for Christians to get involved in the political process at a grass roots level.

Elected governments largely enact their pre-determined agenda, so we need to be involved in setting that agenda, not just sit back and decide at election time which is the worst of the evils presented to us.

During the recent abortion debate in Victoria, politicians received thousands of letters. Some were persuaded by the arguments, but many had pre-determined philosophical or Party positions.

Difference between Parties

Whilst it may have been partly true in the past, we can no longer rely on the so-called 'conservative parties' to promote moral laws.

In Victoria, a number of Liberals and one National MP supported Abortion and some Liberals supported the relationship register for same-sex couples.

In the federal Liberal Party, leader Malcolm Turnbull actively supports policy changes to endorse increased rights for same-sex couples. This has already led to a major shift in policy in this area amongst many in the federal Liberal Party.

In the Labor Party, the national platform endorses the legalisation of abortion and rights for homosexual couples.

The platform also affirms the establishment of State-based registers for same sex couples based on the Tasmanian model.

Both Kevin Rudd and Malcolm Turnbull,

attended the recent National Prayer Breakfast - they each read a Bible reading at the Breakfast, yet both support homosexual rights. Malcolm Turnbull has been instrumental in changing the Liberals' position since his election as leader.

Perhaps that shows the struggle we face, when men who present themselves as Christians at such a public event endorse such policies.

Follow the other states

There is also the 'Domino Effect' of legislation. One state passes a law, and that is used as a reason for the next state to pass a similar law.

Elected governments largely enact their pre-determined agenda

During the debate on religious vilification laws in Victoria, the minister John Pandazopoulos told a public meeting that Victoria was 'playing catch-up' and enacting laws that other states had already passed. The truth was that, whilst some other states had passed racial hatred laws, NONE of the states or the federal government had passed religious hatred laws.

Divided Christian activism

A wide range of views are promoted as 'Christian' today. In Victoria, the Anglican Archbishop asked eight women, who held 'beliefs' across the spectrum, to draft a submission to the VLRC on abortion. Such a process is always going to result in a compromise and one that tends to go towards the 'lowest common denominator'. No surprise then that the submission said "the moral significance increases with the age and development of the foetus".

In the ACT the Liberals opposed Stanhope's Civil Union Bill but proposed a Relationship Register. Why? The then leader told us it

was 'because churches and some Christian groups supported that'!

When Christians are divided on the major moral issues, we indeed have an uphill battle. In fact, such divided positions enable the politicians to say, well there are Christians on each side, so I can select the viewpoint that suits **me**.

If Bible-based Christians do not get involved in shaping policy the liberals certainly will. In fact, they already are!

Activist MPs

Another factor that influences the sort of policies promoted by governments is the particular agenda of Cabinet Ministers.

In Victoria, Attorney General Rob Hulls has pursued an agenda of social change. In contrast, a more conservative Attorney General like South Australia's Michael Atkinson has been prepared to listen to Christians on some of the moral issues.

Sometimes a firm belief in a particular area can hold back laws that have been made in other states - for example, NSW Labor Premier Bob Carr refused to support a religious vilification law.

Individual MPs

In a recent article in *The Age* newspaper, Michael Bachelard noted that most of the new Liberal MPs elected at the November 2006 election are "deeply conservative" and pointed out that they were 'out-of-step' with their leader Ted Baillieu.

Of the 17 Liberals elected for the first time, 17 voted AGAINST the abortion Bill, 12 voted against embryo stem cell research and 10 voted against the Relationships Register. All three newly elected Nationals voted against all three Bills.

Electing good politicians

This clearly reveals what is most needed

to stop bad legislation... more politicians with conservative Biblical worldviews on all issues, not just the clearly defined 'moral' issues.

Christians need to be involved in grass roots politics at both state and federal levels to cut ensure Christians are endorsed as candidates and are elected.

We can only increase the number of conservative MPs by being involved in selecting the candidates.

If candidates have libertarian or humanist views we will get humanist policies and humanist laws. Elect Christians with left-leaning views and you get policies that are 'left-leaning'! It really is that simple!

Liberal grass roots

During October the Victorian Liberal State Council decided to alter their pre-selection process. Under the new system,

aimed at increasing membership, individual grassroots members will be able to vote on pre-selections. If enough Christians became branch members, they could now change the outcome of pre-selections and ensure that at least the Liberal

Party appoint even more conservative people.

It might be harder to influence the Labor party but we must be in there too.

So, how do we create change?

Yes, WE need to be involved because...

* We can't elect the right people if they are not on the ballot paper.

* The right people have to have to be pre-selected or stand as independents. Few independents are ever elected

* Unless Christians with conservative moral views are in political parties they cannot be pre-selected.

* So, getting involved IS the ONLY WAY to change the political direction our nation and our states are heading!

**Yes, WE
need to be
involved!**

Mum and dad are a natural

All the radical social engineers are trying to tell us that manufacturing babies to give to singles and lesbians is somehow in the best interests of the child. Wrong.

International studies have consistently told us that the very best thing we can offer a child is his or her own biological mother and father. The social science data on this is clear.

Yet, we want to create a brave new world where children are denied the most fundamental of human rights: their own biological parents.

This is certainly in the interests of selfish adults, but it is not at all in the interests of innocent children who deserve better.

Bill Muehlenberg, Heathmont

Herald Sun 31/10/2008

Pollies get pigeon-holed

How pathetic we have become. Although kicking a pigeon is not nice, I find it appalling that an obviously troubled man gets taken to court for kicking a pigeon ("Bond over pigeon kick" Oct 10) yet in the Victorian Parliament, MPs are saying it is OK to Kill unborn children.

If this does not show how upside down and sick our society has become I don't know what it will take to bring us to our senses.

Peter Stokes, Forest Hill

Herald Sun 11/10/2008



Pokies reliance not the way to go RSL.

I have great respect for the RSL, but for its local president to say that the club needs extra pokie machines to build revenue to continue providing services, indicates a major problem within the organization. (The Courier, October 21)

It needs to have a long look at its role and the reasons for not attracting new memberships, rather than pleading for more of these socially destructive gambling machines to meet its perceived needs.

Pokies actually rip money out of the community, not bring money into it.

We need fewer of these rapacious monstrosities.

David G. Westaway, Navigators

The Courier 22/10/2008

Parenting let down

Prof Fiona Stanley is to be commended for calling for a national campaign to protect the future of Australian children ("Parents failing children", SHS, September 28).

However, parental failure has been assisted by the medical profession. For example:

In Victoria, the AMA is supporting the decriminalisation of abortion.

Despite data showing children fare much better when raised by their married biological parents, the AMA has done nothing to promote marriage.

Doctors in NSW have promoted the legalisation of drugs of addiction and injecting rooms. If Sweden has a much lower rate of hard drug usage with zero tolerance, why does Australia persist with a harm minimisation strategy?

Lack of support for campaigns by pro-family organisations for income splitting between parents and a homemaker's or child care allowance to be paid direct to mothers rather than subsidising child care centres.

We hope Prof Stanley takes heed of this in her advice to the Government and medical profession.

Babette Francis

Endeavour Forum, Toorak.

Sunday Herald Sun 5/10/2008

Why the shock?

Upon reading the Monash Journal ('Church stance a shock', September 28), I am wondering: where is the shock?

Is it that Syndal Baptist Church welcomes gays, or that the church's policies reject the homosexual lifestyle?

This is a biblical policy and should be the policy of all Bible believers.

The shock is that too many Christians do not follow what the Bible says about many sinful attitudes today—including both homosexual and heterosexual sex outside marriage.

The Bible clearly states that all sexual relationships other than heterosexual married relationships are a sin and that any relationships other than that between a man and a woman are unnatural.

We do, however, welcome all God's children, hoping and praying they will change their lifestyle.

John Broadley, Wheelers Hill

Monash Journal 5/10/2008

AHRC: Freedom of [from?] Religion

Last month we told you about the disturbing Inquiry being conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), called **Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st century**. They've published a Discussion Paper that outlines the aims of the Inquiry.

Submissions have been called for - YES, that means we ALL have an opportunity to tell them what WE think!

Discussion paper overview

The 16 page Discussion paper provides the background and context to the *Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century* project, outlines the objectives and focus (including questions), and details the consultation process.

Major Objective

The major objective is to produce a report which will give "recommendations for promoting freedom of religion and belief (including secular belief) in Australia".

The project will examine the emergence of a multi-faith Australia; the shift away from mainstream Christianity; the growing interface between science and faith; and the privatisation of government services.

Seven Areas

The Discussion Paper lists seven areas for consideration - each of these includes a number of questions. Please obtain the Discussion Paper to read the questions as we can't print them all here!

Here are just a few of the questions - to illustrate the broad scope of this Inquiry:

* How are federal and state and territory governments managing incitement to religious hatred, and the question of control and responsibility?

* Would a legislated national Charter of Rights add to these freedoms of religion and belief?

* Is there religious radicalism and political extremism in Australia? If so, what are the risks to Australia?

* How is diverse sexuality perceived within faith communities?

* Do you consider environmental concern to be an influence shaping spiritualities and value systems?

* Are there religious groups, practices and beliefs that you think are of concern to Australians?

Can you see from these questions the direction the AHRC wants to go?

What does 'sexuality' or politics have to do with religious freedom?

What has the 'environment' got to do with religious freedom?

Who do they think the 'religious radicals' are in Australia? Are they talking about

'fundamentalist' Christians being involved in politics?

Is the real purpose to tell religions what their beliefs should be? Is their purpose to create a level playing field?

ACTION: PLEASE write a submission! We need to tell the Australian Human Rights Commission our views - otherwise they'll just hear from everyone else!

Submissions DUE by 31 January 2009.

VISIT our campaign page - it has information for your submission - and live links to the Discussion Paper and website: <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/563/>

The Inquiry website is http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/religion/index.html

SEND your submission by email to: frb@humanrights.gov.au

Alternatively post it to Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century Submission, Race Discrimination Unit: Education and Partnerships Section, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001.



Transsexualism

It is vitally important that Christians understand the truth about sexuality issues. Political Correctness has clouded many of these issues to the point that it is almost impossible to get to the truth.

For the sake of people suffering gender confusion it is vital that we not only know the truth but also that the Church offers help and compassion to sufferers.

Only the truth can set them free.

Transsexualism - Part one

by Ken McGuire

The belief that transsexualism is a biological condition for which sex-change surgery is the only treatment is a total sham. This is the first part of a three part series on transsexualism in which we will expose some astonishing facts behind this deception.

There is no doubt that transsexuals suffer from psychologically-based gender-role distress, personality disorders, sexual deviancies and other mental illnesses. The psychological and situational factors which cause transsexualism have been known and well documented for decades.

During the 1950s and 1960s, however, US endocrinologist Harry Benjamin theorised that there was a subgroup of transsexuals apart from the main - "true transsexuals" - who had been born with a brain of one sex and a body of another. He speculated that this was due to some kind of hormonal fluctuations in utero and that it could be resolved surgically, by physically altering the patient's body to resemble that of the opposite sex.

It was also supposed that the "true transsexual" could easily be distinguished from the mentally ill because, again in theory, a "true transsexual" would describe feelings of having belonged to the opposite sex from birth, of having experienced great distress during puberty and a persistent discomfort in their biological gender role consistently throughout life.

Although these ideas were almost universally rejected by mental health professionals and despite the complete lack of any kind of scientific or medical evidence in support of such theories, a few practitioners in various places around the world - including Australian practitioners in both Melbourne and Sydney - commenced clandestine experiments on their patients. One such practitioner stated that: "The first male-to-

female surgery in Melbourne was cloaked in the deepest secrecy. It was the late 1960s and the public would have been in uproar. The surgeon and his staff operated on Sundays so his colleagues would not know and the whole procedure was kept firmly underground."

Sex-change specialists published some initial follow-up studies that minimized complications and gave glowing accounts of post-operative adjustment and then used these to persuade responsible authorities to establish "properly supervised programs".

In 1969 the Melbourne team established their sex-change experiments under the guise of a "Transsexual Consultative Service" (TCS). The University of Melbourne Department of Psychiatry and the Mental Health Authority endorsed the service, which was located at Royal Park Hospital and funded by the Office of Psychiatric Services (OPS) of the Department of Health Victoria (HDV).



Medical practitioners and nursing staff who became aware of what was going on questioned whether performing the surgery was morally acceptable and whether or not it was a dangerous collusion with mental illness. Many of those initially willing to assist the sex-change specialists soon became disillusioned and ceased further involvement.

Consequently, sex-change experiments in Australia had to be moved from one medical facility to another until, by the late 1970s, there were no medical establishments left that were willing to host the sex-change surgeries.

Elsewhere in the world, more problems with the sex-change experiments were beginning to surface. Post-surgical complications were being reported in over half of the operations, including breast cancer in hormonally-treated males; the need for surgical reduction of bloated limbs resulting from hormones; repeated construction of neo-vaginal openings; infections of the urinary system and rectum; haemorrhaging; loss of skin grafts; post-operative suicides and suicide attempts; persistent post-operative depression, psychosis, and phobia; sexual dysfunctions; and pre- and post-operative prostitution, often necessitated by the high cost of treatment.

The patients themselves were often taken by surprise by the severe post surgical pain associated with the genital mutilations. Many patients were distressed that they did not come out of the anaesthetic with the kind of "twice born" euphoric experience that had been glowingly reported by sex-change enthusiasts. Some patients questioned whether the surgery had been successful at all whilst others expressed early feelings of post surgical doubts and regrets.

Following surgery, the patient's expectations

of an immediately blissful, exciting and romance-filled life was replaced with the reality of a number of legal, social, economic and emotional problems. Many post-operative transsexuals attempted to solve these problems by demanding more and more cosmetic surgery in the hope of finally becoming the opposite sex, but never quite getting there.

In 1979 the largest "sex-change" program in the USA at John Hopkins was closed following an outcome study by Meyer and Reter which concluded that sex-change surgery had actually conferred no objective advantage to their patients.

Then sex-change specialists were shocked by another discovery: their patients had routinely and systematically lied about their life histories in order to match the prevailing

theories about "true transsexualism". As it turned out, the kind of history that sex-change specialists had expected from true transsexuals was rarely encountered in practice.

The concept of a "true transsexual" was abandoned and the medical profession's worst fears about the sex-change experiments had been confirmed - collusion with mental illness.

In part two of this series, we will expose how sex-change specialists turned this situation around and how the Melbourne team managed to establish a government funded sex-change clinic at Monash Medical Centre. We will also uncover some shocking consequences.

Ken is happy to dialogue with anyone regarding the information in this article or any transgender issue. Please contact Ken at: gendermender@gmail.com



Falling markets and falling values

by Jeremy Peet

The troubles in financial markets of the last 12 months have now clearly made their way into the broader economy. We presently hear the “R” word (recession) being mentioned with growing prominence - with present and expected economic recession in the US and many parts of the world, perhaps even including Australia.

Last month’s journal did a good job of explaining that the sub-prime crisis was caused not by “extreme capitalism and greed” as our messianic Prime Minister said but, rather, by ‘feel good’ government policy that is really bad policy (of lending to those who could not afford it) that could not be sustained. However, as we can now clearly see, the sub-prime crisis has only been the trigger of a much deeper financial and economic crunch.

Governments around the world have responded to the crisis by taking unprecedented action with regard to pouring cash into the banking system (devaluing our money, by the way, and which we pay for in the first place), taking control of banks and institutions, providing guarantees on financial products and even the financial rescue of governments and nations that are bankrupt. Apart from such direct interference, governments have dramatically reduced the interest rates they pay banks (by 2.0% in Australia) over the last few months. The aim is to stimulate recovery / activity through debt and borrowing.

In recent times, and the last decade in particular, we have seen an amazing growth in derivative or ‘intangible’ financial products. The size of these contracts is enormous and, hence, the bailout of such

liabilities is beyond the reach of most governments. Trying to avoid the day of reckoning is optimistic at best. In addition to derivative products and liabilities, we have also seen the huge growth in both compulsory investments (superannuation and national “sovereign” wealth funds) and speculators driven purely by change in market values. Sovereign wealth funds such as the “Futures fund” are not that big in Australia but are in many other countries. We, however, have government rules forcing people to invest through superannuation that, whilst being of good intent perhaps, does create a distortion of the true demand for investments.

What does this all really mean?

Apart from ‘end times’ considerations such as world banking and central world government, will more government control and ownership prevent the hardship resulting from weakening economies or does it miss the point entirely?

There are many valid reasons why such bailouts are wrong – not the least of which is to do with the role of governments – but a problem given little mention is that the underlying liabilities of the financial system being ‘bailed out’ could easily equal the size of the economy itself. Furthermore, it is fair to say that we have had it too good by actually living beyond ourselves as illustrated by the incredible debt levels of individuals, corporations and nations.

What we are seeing is a result of failing to heed God’s word. The Biblical protestant ethics in relation to work and avoiding



debt have been unwound. We see corporations and individuals seeking return from no effort (speculators, derivative products and traders, day share traders, etc) and we have lending as the base for nearly all economic activity and management.



Our response as Christians should be twofold: Firstly, we should ensure, wherever possible, to avoid all forms of debt (especially the modern form of usury, Credit Cards) and remember that reward and profit is to be earned from work and effort, not from gambling - be that what we generally term gambling or from 'gambling' on various forms of stock market transactions.

We are also seeing the result of postmodernism where the action taken by investors from day to day and hour to hour is irrational and gives scant regard to underlying economic and financial fundamentals. The volatility on investment markets is unprecedented and well illustrated by the Russian stock market frequently falling or rising 20% or more in a day.

Secondly, as citizens we should seek to elect wise men to Parliaments who understand the Biblical role of economics and government.

Jeremy Peet is a Salt Shakers supporter who works in the finance industry.

Interfaith dialogue

The Vatican and the United Nations hosted major interfaith meetings last month.

In Rome, the first meeting of the **Catholic-Muslim Forum** was held. Muslim clerics had written to the Pope and Christian leaders in a document titled *A Common Word*

which proclaimed the 'common' features of 'love of God' and 'love of neighbour' - but was in effect a call to embrace Islam. Although the Pope had not responded favourably to the Muslim document, the Vatican agreed to hold meetings with Muslim clerics.

At the United Nations, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah spoke at an interfaith conference sponsored by his country to discuss ways to avoid the religious and social divides dubbed the "clash of civilisations."

However, the real reason for the conference is more complex. Two commentators, who opposed the conference, wrote that King Abdullah was "pushing for a proposal

sponsored by the 56-member Organization of Islamic Conference that wants a law that ostensibly guarantees respect for religions, places of worship, and their symbols, 'therefore preventing the derision of what people consider sacred'.¹

In effect this would be a blasphemy law prohibiting criticism of Islam.

They said "The lofty-sounding principle is, in fact, a cleverly coded way of granting religious leaders the right to criminalize speech and activities that they deem to insult [their] religion".

In effect this would be a blasphemy law prohibiting criticism of Islam.

Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, the public practice of religions other than Islam is prohibited. Islam punishes apostasy - leaving

Islam. At the UN conference, President Bush talked about his faith and insisted that the ability to change one's religion is a fundamental human right, one that is stated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

1. The Saudis' dubious interfaith agenda at the UN, CS Monitor, 13/11/2008.

Prayer Update

As we come to the close of 2008 we must pray that the Lord will forgive us, and our nation, for turning its back on His righteousness.

Many of the laws passed in our nation this year have given credibility and even benefits to many things God calls an abomination.

Giving 'rights' and privileges to homosexuals and lesbians, allowing abortion on demand in Victoria, giving ART to single women and lesbians are just some of those.

The financial unknowns have told us that nothing in this world is 'safe' except the constant love of Jesus.

We need to pray against a further raft of bad laws and suggested laws such as a National Bill of Rights - religious freedom Laws, a continued push for a God-less Republic and suggestions that the Commitment to Almighty God and the saying of the Lord's Prayer be removed from federal parliament.

Pray for our young people. With so much doom and gloom they can easily lose hope and we already have one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world.

Pray for our church leaders. Too many are falling away through pressure of

work, seeing their congregations deplete or even through a crisis of faith.

Praise God for our staff - Kerrie, Emma, Nathan - and all the volunteers who have helped out at Salt Shakers throughout the year.

Pray for Peter & Jenny as they travel to Tasmania, Shepparton and Phillip Island over the Christmas break.

Pray for our MPs as they get a few weeks holiday with family. Pray that they will be able to have quality time with their spouses and children.

Pray that 2009 will be a year when our nation repents and turns back to the Lord, a year in which we see righteous government return to this land.

Pray for the new President of America Barack Obama and his family as they move into the White House and start to lead what is currently the most powerful nation in the world.

This is not the best time to take up such a position or to be in government in any country - pray that world leaders will be forced to look to God rather than their own flawed intellect.

Pray they will lead wisely and justly regardless of the country they rule.



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

There will be no Prayer and Breakfast during
December or for most of January
Prayer breakfast meetings will resume at 6.30 am
Thursday 29 January 2009

Inspiration for a leader by Jenny Stokes

It is a year since Kevin Rudd became Prime Minister. A lot has happened in that year!

Notably there was the promised signing of the Kyoto Agreement and a formal apology to aborigines for the 'stolen generation' – though many commentators refer to this as a broader 'apology to aborigines'. His government has passed laws giving additional rights to homosexual couples and encouraged States to legally recognise same-sex relationships.

Who inspires the Prime Minister?

During the election campaign and in an article titled 'Faith in Politics', Kevin Rudd said the man he "most admired" was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Christian pastor who stood up to Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.¹ He also mentioned two Labor political leaders: Keir Hardie, the founder of the British Labour Party and Labor Prime Minister Andrew Fisher (1908), both of whom were "Christian Socialists". Naturally this went down well with many Christians but especially with the social left of Christianity.

Just prior to the election some new 'heros' emerged. Mr Rudd was asked which Prime Ministers he identified with – he said "you draw inspiration from the likes of Whitlam and Hawke and Keating".²

In September 2008 Kevin Rudd gave the **Gough Whitlam Lecture** at Sydney University³; the lecture is conducted by the University Fabian Society. The Fabians goal is "the promotion of socialist and progressive thought throughout society"; through *gradual* means rather than revolution.

In the lecture, full of rhetoric, Kevin elaborated on his admiration for Gough Whitlam and his policies, saying he was a "great reformer of this great Australian nation" and that he had a "visionary government". Mr Rudd said "in the great tradition of progressive

politics, Whitlam sought to shape that future, rather than simply respond to events".

Much of what Mr Rudd now promotes was inspired by Whitlam's policies, which he says are still evident today. He said that in the 20 years Labor was out of government before 1972, Gough Whitlam kept on strategising: "He did not waver. He did not just keep the faith. He fought the fight."

In 1984, Bob Hawke, giving the annual Fabian Society lecture, said that Gough Whitlam was the 'Fabius Maximus' of the Labor Party as he planned for a long time and then 'struck hard'.

Mr Rudd specifically commented on three matters: the reform of the Labor Party, engagement with China and education.

Mr Rudd advocated the position called the "reforming centre"; he said this tradition was "alive in Whitlam, alive in Hawke, alive in Keating – and [is] especially alive in the policy direction of this new Australian Labor Government of today".

Gerard Henderson, commenting on the directions outlined in the speech said "If Mr Rudd's championing of his hero Whitlam is just another act of Labor tribal loyalty, then that's OK. Yet if the Prime Minister really believes in Whitlamism, then there may be a real and present danger."⁴

Gerard outlined the problems encountered by the Whitlam government; when they faced financial crises they continued to implement their election promises rather than re-assess their direction.

As we face financial uncertainties at this time, careful assessment of policies will be necessary for Mr Rudd not to repeat the mistakes of his Labor hero.

1. *Faith in Politics, The Monthly, October 2006.*

2. *Lateline, ABC, 8/11/2008.*

3. *Gough Whitlam Lecture: <http://www.pm.gov.au/>*

4. *Gerard Henderson, Sydney Institute, 14/10/2008.*

UK: Islam and shari'a law

by Jenny Stokes

The British government has confirmed that Muslims are able to use shari'a law (Islamic law) in resolving items such as divorce between Muslim couples and other personal matters.

Back in February the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, created controversy when he said that it "seems unavoidable" that parts of Islamic shari'a law would be adopted in the UK in order to maintain social cohesion.¹

It was recently revealed that shari'a arbitration tribunals for divorce, financial and other matters are already operating in the UK.

During October, Bridget Prentice, a junior government minister, answered a question in Parliament, saying that Shari'a Councils are able to settle disputes regarding money, property and access to children. She said that, if a couple uses the Shari'a Council to settle divorce matters, they will have to get the ruling "rubber-stamped" by a judge sitting in an ordinary family court. However neither person has to attend - they can just submit a two-page form!

Bridget Prentice said that the Shari'a Councils have no legal jurisdiction in England and rulings by religious authorities would have no legal force.

Some press reports claimed this was a new development. However, the Lord Chancellor Jack Straw said that people can abide by shari'a law if they wish, "provided they do not come into conflict with English law... But English law will always remain supreme, and religious councils subservient to it. Mr Straw said that "Nothing has changed to the law or to the Government's position". He said that the Arbitration Act, the law that allows arbitration through shari'a courts, was passed in 1996.



Shari'a Councils have operated in the UK for some years. In 2007, the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal was established. They run tribunals in London, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and at MAT headquarters in Nuneaton. Now they are planning new shari'a tribunals in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Website: <http://www.matribunal.com/>

One concerning statement by Bridget Prentice was "If, in a family dispute dealing with money or children, **the parties** to a judgement in Shari'a council **wish to have this recognised** by English authorities, they are at liberty to draft a consent order embodying the terms of the agreement and submit it to an English court. This allows English judges to scrutinise it to ensure that it complies with English legal tenets."

TWO questions: What if they DON'T want to have it recognised by the British authorities? What happens if a woman doesn't want to go to a Tribunal but has no choice in the matter?

This Shari'a Council system allows an alternate or parallel legal system in the area of divorce. Ironically, last month the House of Lords ruled on a case where a Lebanese woman was to be returned to Lebanon with her child. The woman claimed that if she returned to Lebanon her child would be removed from her under Islamic law. The Lords said the Islamic legal code was "wholly incompatible" with human rights legislation. This incremental introduction of shari'a law is of major concern.

1. BBC, 7/2/2008.

2. Sharia rulings 'can go to courts', BBC, 25/10/2008.

3. English law reigns supreme over sharia, says Straw, Telegraph, 30/10/2008.

World News

USA election - Barack Obama

Barack Obama won the USA Presidential election on Tuesday 4 November.

During the election campaign, Obama's record on voting FOR abortion was made public - as well as his intentions once he became President. Focus on the Family said "Obama pledged during the campaign that one of his first acts in office would be to sign the **Freedom of Choice Act** if it hits his desk, a bill that would overturn many state abortion regulations such as parental notification and waiting periods. He also is expected to rescind Bush administration restrictions on the use of federal funds for embryonic stem-cell research, and for abortions and abortion referrals by international agencies."

Many people were persuaded to simply 'Vote for Change' - which was Barack Obama's slogan.

One Gallop poll prior to the election showed that Obama had not swayed the people who attend church 'more than once a week' - 28% said they'd vote for Obama, similar to the 29% who said they'd vote for John Kerry in the 2004 election.

Success on Ballot Propositions

Good news! In California **Proposition 8** was passed - 52% of voters supported the move to change the state's Constitution to affirm that marriage is between a man and a woman. This stopped same-sex 'marriages' occurring in California - these were allowed by a Supreme Court decision earlier this year. Similar moves were also passed in Arizona (57%) and Florida (62%).

There has been a huge backlash, with protests across the USA by homosexual groups at the loss of 'marriage' in California.

In Arkansas voters approved a measure that now means only married couples can adopt or foster children.

Meanwhile, the first same-sex "marriages" were held in Connecticut on 12 November 2008. They are now the second state, after Massachusetts, to legally recognize homosexual unions as "marriages".

UK: Scouts and sex

What next! The UK Scout Association has issued guidelines for scout leaders to teach young scouts about sexually transmitted disease and contraceptives.

Scout leaders will be expected to speak about the risks of sexual activity to youngsters as young as ten and to hand out "emergency condoms" when they feel that youngsters appear to be on the brink of sexual activity. Contraception for female scouts is to be administered in case "their physical or mental health are likely to suffer" without it!

The sex education guidelines were released in a document entitled "Promoting Good Health Sexual Health within Scouting," because some leaders requested guidelines on how to offer advice to scouts on questions about sex.

[Lifesite, 11/11/2008]

The pregnant [wo]man is back

Earlier this year we reported on a woman in the US who decided she wanted to be a man. She had a partial sex-change - she had her breasts removed, took male hormones and dressed as a man.

Because of lax state laws she was able to legally a woman - her lesbian partner!



Confused? Yes so is she, because she then decided to get pregnant because the woman she married could not do so.

A baby girl was born in June.

The sad news is that she, complete with beard, is pregnant again.

Ministry News

As we come to the close of another year we look back with thanks for God's provision through you, our readers.

In times of financial stress everyone feels the pinch in some way but you have continued to support us and your generosity continues to encourage us that He wants us to continue to challenge the works of darkness in our nation.

It has been an extremely busy year. It started off with the very successful Summit Worldview School and then came a constant run of bad legislation from state and federal governments that saw some wins but also some very sad losses.

As we finish the year we are very sorry to be losing Emma from our *Resistance*

Thinking young adults Ministry.

Emma joined us 5 years ago as she commenced her Law studies to help Jenny with research, and has worked tirelessly on a part time basis. She is now commencing work full time in her chosen profession. We wish her well. Who knows, we might need a good lawyer one day!

There is no January Journal, so Peter and Jenny are heading to Tasmania for two weeks to see Peter's 98 year old mother.

The office will be closed from December 19 until January 12 when Peter & Jenny return from the CMI Super Camp on Phillip Island. We hope to see some of you there.

Thank you to all those who have already responded to our 14th Birthday appeal. Please continue to prayerfully consider making a regular monthly contribution if you are not already doing so.

ACTION Checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	Californication	Join our E-News campaign to advertisers	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Freedom of Religion	SEND submission by 31 January	<input type="checkbox"/>

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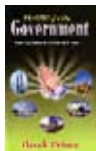


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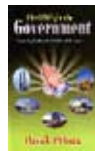
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