

# Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

“Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand.

Thomas Carlyle, Scottish author & historian (1795 - 1881)



February 2008 AD

Email Journal subscription. \$25

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# Editorial

## Welcome to the revolution!

We know 2009 will be challenging but as our front page states we must look at the issues at hand and not fear what the future 'may' bring. In fact, there is way too much fear around at the moment, thanks to those who have rejected God and see no hope outside their own endeavours.

It never ceases to amaze us how easily the Jews took their eyes off God and wandered aimlessly, not only in the desert but wherever they were. It did not take the early Christians long to do the same thing and transform Christianity into a man-made religion of fear.

Today, many in the Church are doing it all over again as Christians become caught up in all sorts of conspiracy theories and live in fear of man-made issues like global financial crises, over-population and global warming, oops sorry, 'climate change'.

We have taken our eyes off God and His promise to sustain the world and the seasons until Jesus returns; we have become as (false) gods when we kid ourselves that we can save the planet.

Yes, we must do the best we can as 'stewards' to create the least actual pollution we can, but without detriment to good development and especially without restricting the advancement of the underdeveloped third world.

How sad it is that Christians soak up and even promote the fear of climate change, as we discovered in the last Tear Fund magazine at the end of 2008. We have personally supported this Christian group for many years but when we read their humanistic view on climate change we changed our mind and increased our support of Barnabas Fund instead.

We are supposed to bring hope to the world, not fear. Except, of course, the fear of eternal separation from God.



Rather than push the negative 'possibilities' we are to promote the facts. The main work of the Church and of every Christian should be evangelism. Not the feel good, it's all about love, of the postmodern church but the truth of the Gospel.

IF we do social work or political activism it is ONLY to show people the truth we celebrate at Christmas and Easter and throughout the year - that we have a Saviour who has paid the price for our sin and wants us to repent and follow him. Our good works through social justice and overseas aid, and our political activism must never become an end in themselves.

The world needs to hear about a Saviour who really can control the climate - not a hundred filmstars who make money out of talking about it and political leaders who are taxing us because of it.

This year we must show the fearful world the hope that only comes through Jesus Christ. If Christians live in fear of climate change or financial collapse, and tell the world it is over-populated and that our very existence is the problem, how will those without hope find Christ and the hope He alone can give.

There are many issues that we know will directly threaten the freedom and democracy Christianity has given - we must work hard on those, but we must not feel anxious.

Our aim for 2009 is to give hope to the lost and offer a better way and better values than those the world offers. A way based on THE Way, and THE Truth, and THE Life!

Yours, in the service of Jesus Christ  
Peter & Jenny Stokes

## Re-shaping our culture

by Peter Stokes

In recent years we have seen satan taking ground like we have never seen before. Sadly, we also saw Christians willingly giving ground like never before.

The issues of abortion and homosexuality, where satan made his biggest gains in 2008, seem irrelevant to too many Christians. Some say the only need is prayer, some say we need to help the poor, and some say all we have to do is 'evangelise'.

Yet while all three are greatly needed, and the last of these should be our priority, the issues of abortion and homosexuality are issues that Christians cannot afford to underestimate because they are culture issues.

Culture is about the underlying values upon which a society is based. As we often state, Australia was founded on a Christian culture. Of course, bad things happened, even in the name of the church. People were treated badly in some church institutions and child abuse, largely emanating from the Catholic Church but not exclusively so, is still an appalling legacy that needs to be soundly condemned. But these were relatively isolated instances amongst a developing country that was largely shaped by Christian thinking and Christian values.

### ***Who is shaping our culture today?***

Just prior to Christmas the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution that was supported by Australia to include 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity' as 'human rights'.

Australia could not refuse to sign it when it had just passed over 100 changes to our laws to make them homosexual couple 'friendly'. Our new 'culture' says that we cannot discriminate against a person's

sexual choices. Gone are the days when there were two sexes, male and female. Our culture now says 'you are what you think you are' and if you want to change your mind that is fine too. I say 'our culture' because everyone has to accept that or be classified as a bigot or homophobe.

Although we have not been aware it is happening, Western society has been involved in what has been termed "Gender Mainstreaming" for some time. Author Gabrielle Kuby says this is a construct of the ideologues on the far left who are working to create a "new man" who can arbitrarily decide whether he is a man, a woman or some other "gender" unrelated to the natural distinctions of biology. "According to them," she writes, "there are not two sexes, but six or more, depending on sexual preference." Thus the

term incorporates homosexuality as well.

The German government has totally implemented the "gender mainstreaming" ideology as part of the "guiding principles" of every ministry of the government.

Our new federal government has joined its State counterparts in "gender mainstreaming" since taking office, although we have yet to see the term officially used.

It doesn't matter to them that these "universal guiding principles" run completely contrary to logic, biology and our Christian culture.

But the changes do not stop there. Our attitude to children has changed dramatically too. Children are no longer a gift from God but a 'right', a commodity to be 'had'.

Although Victoria was not the first State to say it is OK for a child to be 'produced' by ANY artificial means available, just so

**Our nation was largely shaped by Christian thinking and Christian values**

long as the adults get what THEY want, it has now set a new national benchmark for other states to follow.

There is also a continuing push in the UN to include 'a woman's right to an abortion' as a 'Human Right'. Again Australia could not refuse to support that either as we now have some states that allow abortion on demand for any reason at any stage of a pregnancy. Once again, Victoria has set a new national benchmark that other States like NSW and Qld are getting ready to follow.

This issue of the value of children and life itself also redefines our culture. Like homosexuality, they are totally contrary to any logical or proper theological understanding of Biblical truth, no matter how hard some Christians try to justify their appeasement on these issues.

The fact that even many Christians today think it is acceptable to kill a child for 'some' reasons, or that there are different degrees of 'morality' about doing so at 8 weeks or 28 weeks, shows how society's moral rudder, the church, has been seduced by the humanist culture.

All too often this is because much of today's church fears the world more than the wrath of God. But then most clergy stopped teaching about the wrath of God a long time ago!

While some Christian groups like ACL think that giving ground will hold back the homosexual agenda, they are clearly wrong. Both the homosexual and abortion lobbies have continually shown this by taking whatever they are given and then continuing to demand more.

### ***God has not changed***

God made man in His image. He designed human sexuality as male and female, the vital first part of the divine human jigsaw

puzzle that only works when all the pieces are correctly in place. Valuing all human life and children is another vitally important piece of Christian culture. Without these two aspects the whole moral fibre of our society begins to crumble. Instead of being made in God's image, higher than the animals, we become morally no better than the animals.

We live for self-gratification, putting our own pleasure before all else.

These selfish characteristics are totally contrary to God's personality. His character is sacrificial, putting others first. He showed

this by giving his only Son to die for His Creation. How much it must pain Him to see that pinnacle of His creation once again turn its back on Him.

God has not moved - we have.

### ***Whose "principles"?***

There should be no doubt in our minds that the principles society is now following are Humanist.

The 1973 Humanist Manifesto II states, regarding ethics, "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest."

Thus, humans can be whatever they want to be because there is no God and we have simply evolved from the slime.

Male and female are constructs of our own imagination so we don't have to be locked into those constructs.

With the election of Barack Obama, we will now see the US capitulating to these new humanist "principles". The left of politics, in cooperation with the new cool, postmodern, left-leaning Christians who supported his election, will change an already weakened Christian culture to a humanist one.

**There  
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minds that  
they are**

This was clearly evident when President-elect (now President) Obama asked Rick Warren to do the Invocation prayer at his inauguration and openly homosexual 'Episcopalian' bishop Gene Robinson to pray at another pre-inauguration celebration. Robinson said he had been reading inaugural prayers through history and was "horrified" at how "specifically and aggressively Christian they were." He states, "I am very clear that this will not be a Christian prayer, and I won't be quoting Scripture".

Of course there was a huge outcry from the homosexual lobby when Rick Warren was asked to pray at the inauguration, simply because he had spoken against homosexual 'marriage'.

As Albert Mohler (Southern Baptist President) pointed out in an article titled *The High Cost of Being (and Staying) Cool*, in regard to the outcry over Warren, "No matter how cool you think you are or think that others think you are, the hour is coming when the issue of homosexuality - taken alone - will be the defining issue in coolness. If you accept the full normalization of homosexuality, you will be cool. If you do not, you are profoundly uncool, no matter how much good work you do nor how much love and compassion you seek to express.

"Liberal Protestantism came to this conclusion long ago and those churches desperately want to be considered cool by the elites. Having abandoned Biblical authority, there is nothing to prevent them moving fast into coolness. The only barriers are outposts of conservative opposition, but they will not last long."

We have those same 'cool' Christians in Australia, both in denominations and organisations, compromising the Scriptures - and they are heavily influencing our government and culture right now.

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## *What of the future?*

The immediate future, that is, not the long term 'global' future catastrophes that man is concentrating on, but can do little about.

We can be overwhelmed by the cultural change or stand and be counted. 2008 was not a good year. Many barriers fell and our culture is the worse for that. Babies will die and boys will be seduced into homosexuality because our governments and too many Christians now say that is OK.

The push for a national Bill of Rights threatens not only our democratic process but also our free speech, freedom of religion and our ability to be the "conservative opposition".

Oh yes, we will still be able to preach Christ crucified, for a while anyway, but we will not be able to say lifestyles or choices are wrong or that other religions are false.

Activist Judges like Michael Kirby will try to make sure of that. He may have retired from the High Court but he will still be active and his replacement is just as much an activist having already been an advocate of 'gender mainstreaming'.

Many homosexual activists have been claiming that a Bill of Rights will give them the ability to remove the last vestiges of 'discrimination'. That big hurdle of 'marriage' will, they hope, come through the Courts as it has in other places like Canada thanks to a Bill of Rights.

This is the big battle - the defining challenge for our culture. Our children will get 'No Hope' from humanism.

Will we be the barriers, the outposts of conservative opposition Mohler talks of, or will we join the 'cool' people who stand for nothing and fall for everything, gradually changing our culture to suit the 'times'?

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## **We have those same 'cool' Christians in Australia**

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## News Update

In the first two weeks of December we went interstate to visit family. During that time, parliaments around the country finished their year by passing various pieces of legislation prior to the Christmas break. In some cases, Bills will be debated and voted on as soon as Parliaments resume. Meanwhile, other parliaments announced Inquiries. By the time we caught up with all of those, it was nearly time for another break!

### Legislation passed:

#### *Federal - homosexual rights*

The three bills giving additional rights to homosexual couples have ALL been passed by the federal parliament - these cover superannuation, access to the Family Court and amendments to a large number of Acts (more than 60) giving homosexual couples equivalent rights to heterosexual *de facto* couples and in many cases the same rights as married couples.

#### *Victoria - ART Bill passed*

The Victorian Legislative Council voted to pass the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Bill by **20 votes to 18** on 4 December.

Only one Liberal MP - Bruce Atkinson - voted FOR the Bill. Only one Labor MP - Adem Somurek - voted AGAINST the Bill.

#### *Western Australia - Surrogacy*

The Western Australian government has passed surrogacy laws that allow a single person or couple to use surrogacy for the production of a child. After passing the upper house in November 2008, the lower house passed the Bill by 36 votes to 16 on 3 December.

### Still being considered:

#### *South Australia - Cloning*

The SA Upper House did not consider the cloning bill before the end of the parliamentary year.

The Bill will be considered when parliament resumes in February.

**ACTION:** If you live in South Australia please write to Members of the Legislative Council. They ALL represent you!

Remind them that new developments in cloning technology using adult stem cells mean that embryonic stem cells are no longer needed for 'research'!

#### *Victoria - Caring Relationships*

On 4 December, the Victorian Legislative Assembly voted to support amendments to the Relationships Register to allow caring relationships to be registered.

The Coalition parties did not oppose the Bill and a division was not called.

The Bill then went to the Legislative Council and had its second reading. It be debated by the Legislative Council when Parliament resumes in 2009.

**ACTION:** Victorians, please write to your FIVE MLCs asking them not to support the registration of 'caring' relationships as it further undermines the significance of registering marriages. MP details - <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/13/B/107/>

#### *UPDATE: Californication*

Series 2 of this sleazy program, which promoted gratuitous sex and drug use, finished on the Sunday before Christmas.

**Fifty-one companies/organisations** told us they had asked Channel Ten NOT to show their company's ads on the program. By the end of the series, the program was being shown late at night and the number of advertisements had dropped.

The list of companies is at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/558/>



# National Consultation on Human Rights

On 10 December, to mark the 60th anniversary of the United Nations' *Declaration of Human Rights*, federal Attorney General Robert McClelland announced a "National Consultation on Human Rights".

This really means looking at whether Australia should have a 'Bill of Rights'.

The government appointed Jesuit priest **Frank Brennan** to lead the Consultation.

The Consultation Committee includes Mary Kostakidis, Mick Palmer and Tammy Williams. Frank Brennan was said to be 'neutral' or 'undecided' on the question of a Bill of Rights - however he was very active in various aboriginal rights campaigns including Mabo.

The Key Consultation Questions are:

- \* Which human rights and responsibilities should be protected and promoted?
- \* Are human rights sufficiently protected and promoted?
- \* How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

## ***Our response?***

We oppose the introduction of a federal Charter or Bill of Rights because they inevitably add additional 'rights' that particularly favour minority groups. They also give too much power to judges. Under our constitution the elected parliament makes the laws and judges make rulings accordingly. We have God-given 'rights'. Britain's *Magna Carta* and *Bill of Rights*, which are based on the Bible, are part of Australian law. Any new 'Bill of Rights' would be based on humanist principles.

## ***Other responses***

Some politicians and media commentators

have already strongly opposed the idea of a Charter of Rights. Some of them belong to the Labor Party - former NSW Premier Bob Carr is opposing a formal Charter of Rights, as is the NSW Attorney-General John Hatzistergos and South Australian Attorney-General Michael Atkinson.

Media commentators Paul Kelly and Janet Albrechtsen have both strongly opposed a Charter of Rights.

On the other hand, numerous groups are lining up to support a Bill of Rights. *New Matilda* has been running a campaign for some time and *Liberty Victoria* is supporting a Bill of Rights.

Homosexual groups are stating that a federal Charter of Rights might help them get new 'anti-discrimination laws' based on sexual orientation and perhaps even give them 'marriage'!

## ***Freedom of speech and religion***

Freedom of speech and freedom of religion could be further undermined by a 'Charter of Rights'. Some people might want to specifically include them in a Charter - but trying to define these 'rights' usually ends up limiting the freedoms we already have.

## ***ACTION: What can we do?***

The Consultation Committee is asking for our 'views'. Submissions close on **29 May 2009**. They are also holding 'community roundtable discussions'. The Committee will prepare a Report which has to be handed to the government by 31 July 2009.

This month, we suggest you read some articles - we've posted these on a campaign page along with links to the Inquiry - At <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/567/> Next month we'll list some points you might include in your submission.

**A Bill of Rights would undermine our freedom**

## Three leaders - and a spiritual adviser

What do UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, US President Barack Obama and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd have in common?

### *Influence*

As leaders of western nations, they each have a great deal of power and influence. However, one could ask “What sort of influence will they have?”

### *Progressive*

Each of these men is described as ‘progressive’. Kevin Rudd spoke at the **Progressive Governance Forum** in London in April 2008.<sup>2</sup>

The Forum was initiated by former US President Bill Clinton in 2001 and regular Summits have been held. The Progressive Governance Forums are conducted by Policy Network, “an international thinktank dedicated to promoting progressive policies and the renewal of social democracy.” They “facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences among politicians, policymakers and experts on the centre-left.”<sup>3</sup>

Of course “social democracy” can be interpreted in many ways. The Australian Labor Party Platform describes the party as “democratic socialist”.

Gordon Brown and Bill Clinton also attended the 2008 Forum.

Barack Obama has often been described as a ‘progressive’ and, in an official document on his website called ‘Obama on Faith’, he refers to himself as “progressive”.<sup>4</sup>

Kevin Rudd contrasted ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative’ politics in his Gough Whitlam lecture last year, identifying Labor with ‘progressive politics’. He said

*by Jenny Stokes*

the principle, that “self-interest and the interests of our fellow human beings are inseparable”, is a “continuing principle - and constitutes the core dividing line between progressive politics and conservative politics; between social democrats and neo-liberals, and, in Australia, between Labor and the Coalition.”<sup>5</sup>

### *Politics and Religion*

That’s politics you might say – we’d expect leaders of these three nations, especially when they are all on the ‘left’ of the political spectrum, to have many things in common.

What about religion? That’s an interesting question.

There is one religious leader who has connections to all three political leaders - **Jim Wallis**, leader of the US group **Sojourners**. He, too, has been described as ‘progressive’ and on the ‘left’ although he claims to be rejecting left and right and taking the ‘centre’ ground,

which can be a dangerous place!

During a visit to Australia to launch his latest book (Seven ways to change the world) in 2007, he had dinner with Kevin Rudd. The media reported that “Over the past three years, Mr Wallis has become a private adviser on spirituality and ethics to Mr Rudd - a role he has served for 10 years with Mr Brown.”<sup>6</sup>

The report said that Mr Wallis also noted that he had been an adviser to the US Democratic Party on ‘how to engage with Christians’. It said ‘at the 2006 mid-term elections, Democrats, following his advice, won up to 40 per cent of evangelical votes. “If Barack can win just 35 per cent of

**One religious leader has connections to all three political leaders: Jim Wallis of Sojourners**

evangelicals, then that's the election won," Mr Wallis said.<sup>6</sup>

As for the third leader, Jim Wallis noted that he had known Senator Obama for 10 years and already had a relationship with him.

Writing on his own website about his meeting with Kevin Rudd, Jim Wallis said "the first time we had dinner a couple of years ago, he told me he had been a longtime reader of Sojourners and my books".<sup>7</sup>

When Labor lost the 2004 election, Kevin Rudd set up a 'Faith, Values and Politics' group in the Labor Party to strategise to gain the Christian vote. He visited Jim Wallis in the USA as part of that strategy.<sup>6,8</sup>

He said Rudd had shared with him his "assessment of his first G8 meeting this spring and the U.S. image in the world". Wallis wrote "I encouraged the young prime

minister not to underestimate the influence of middle-sized countries, like Australia, in providing global leadership on some of the most important issues of our time."

But what issues will they be? A look at Sojourners website shows an emphasis on social justice issues.

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3. *Policy Network*, <http://www.policy-network.net>
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7. *A Prime Minister's Preferential Option for the Poor, and the Planet*, Jim Wallis, 4/8/2008, [www.soho.net](http://www.soho.net)
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## 'Brave Little Bear' by Bernadette Black

Brave Little Bear is a wonderfully honest account of Bernadette's pregnancy and the subsequent birth of Damien (her Brave Little Bear).

Bernadette discovered she was pregnant at 16, after her "first time" with her boyfriend, also 16. She determined 3 things – to be a great mum, to complete her education and to write a book of her experience.

To be a great mum, Bernie chose to keep her baby, against the wishes of the family of her boyfriend, but with the loving support of her family. By searching for a suitable venue for continuing her education she found a community house which had a crèche for Damien, and further support from other mums there. After marrying, not the father of Damien, and having two more children, Bernadette was able to devote time to write this book, completing her three goals.

This book talks frankly of

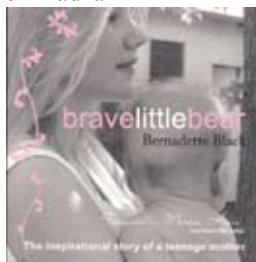
*Reviewed by Kerrie Ternes*

Bernadette's regret at having given in to having sex with her boyfriend. It shares her symptoms and secret pregnancy testing. It details her distress at finding herself pregnant at 16 and unmarried. It tells of her delight in her husband and credits her faith as the reason she could be strong enough to cope with her experiences.

I was touched by the honesty and openness of Brave Little Bear and wondered whether we could challenge our readers to send us the money to purchase a copy for their local secondary school or local library. It

would be helpful for students to read of Bernadette's positive experiences following her initial bad choice.

Read more of Bernie's story on her website. You can purchase the book directly from the website: [www.bravelittlebear.com.au/](http://www.bravelittlebear.com.au/)



## Each month we publish some of the letters our readers have published in local and national newspapers.

We do this as encouragement to the writers and to encourage others to try to do the same. Newspaper letters are read by hundreds of thousands of people when printed in major City newspapers. Even local papers reach many thousands.

This is a great way to educate the 'world' about the Christian worldview and show that we are concerned about people and values.

Today, newspaper web sites also have 'readers comment' pages where even more letters can be placed. We often send the same letter to both sources.

## Competition results and new 2009 competition.

**Last year's competition certainly encouraged a few people so we are doing the same this year.** This is based on the number of letters YOU tell us about, so the onus is on you to send us an email copy of the letter with the date printed and name of the newspaper.

Our 3 winners for 2008 were: Judith Bond (NSW) with an amazing 84 letters, David Westaway 30, and Arthur Comer with 16. In all three cases, many of them were printed in their local papers so this is clearly very fertile ground.

The challenge is on - who will be this year's THREE winners?

### And the winner was - Mrs Judith Bond

#### Take a Stand

Please do not even try to add, change or delete any part of our National anthem or flag.

These have stood us well for many years. We need to stand strong and firm to our true, blue Aussie traditions, cultures and icons.

**Judith Bond**, Glen Alpine  
*Illawarra Mercury* 17/12/2008

#### Reach for the off switch

So young children are now being blamed for watching too much TV at home!

Who is in charge at home?

The children or parents?

If it is that easy for children to turn ON the TV, how easy is it for adults to turn OFF the TV!.

**Mrs Judith Bond**, Glen Alpine  
*Sydney Sun-Herald* 7/12/2008

#### We will remember

We must never forget our men and women who gave their lives for our freedom.

Thank God that we can remember and value our heritage. We will remember them.

**Mrs Judith Bond**, Glen Alpine  
*Illawarra Mercury* 11/11/2008

#### Global warming hysteria an abuse

The planned 5% emissions reduction by 2020, along with our ongoing population growth, will in real economic terms, place an unnecessary burden on our nation.

The green alarmist activists unleashed a storm of temper tantrums as their totally unrealistic demands were substantially diluted.

They need to go melt an ice floe and chill out.

For every hundred articles on the changes in the Arctic Ocean ice cover there is only one on the expanding Antarctic continental ice cap. Constant one sided repetition of the Gore-acle dogma does not establish scientific fact.

Global warming hysteria, and its accompanying misinformation, is certainly not helping our young people hold out much hope for their future. It is actually a sustained program of generational abuse.

**David G. Westaway**, Navigators  
*The Courier* 24/12/2008

#### Christian Lobby drops homophobic documents

We are still waiting for the "thorough list of [claimed] inaccuracies"!!!

We would very much like to see it.

**Peter Stokes** Salt Shakers  
SSO web site comment 23/12/08

## Reflections

- by Emma Hughes



Five years ago I needed reading material for a train trip to the city. I grabbed the closest thing to me as I rushed out the door- it happened to be a Salt Shakers journal. As I sat there reading on the journey I turned to the last page and saw a request for prayer to fill a paid position as a research assistant. As I began to pray it suddenly hit me- perhaps I could be the person for the job! Looking back now I am more than convinced that this was the case as the past five years have been an absolutely invaluable experience.

Delving into university life can be complicated and studying Arts even more so as the student is forced to navigate the myriad of worldviews cleverly disguised as objective fact by one-eyed lecturers. Film Professors revelled in showing soft porn to students under the guise of 'education'; History Professors didn't even bother to conceal their prejudice against conservative leadership and used revision lectures as space for them to rail against the evil John Howard; English Professors ran Women's Studies classes to 'educate' women of the oppression of marriage, motherhood and domestic housework.

It was in this bewildering phase that I joined the team at Salt Shakers. I was given the opportunity to delve into various worldviews immediately, composing submissions to Government inquiries on topics of same-sex marriage, discrimination, adoption, IVF, suicide-related materials etc. This dove-tailed perfectly with my

Law degree as I learnt to communicate with policy-makers and frame appropriate responses. In late 2006 I was involved with the initiative to launch the young adult organisation, Resistance Thinking. Since this time I have worked to keep the website fresh and updated as well as ensuring readers received a thought-provoking email every fortnight.

When I reflect on the time spent here I cannot imagine how different life would be if I had merely settled for a casual retail job during university. Where else can one have space to actively develop a holistic Christian worldview, review movies, write articles, monitor public opinion in newspapers, debate on forums and simply learn as part of one's paid employment? I know that I now have a solid grounding in my faith which is now not based on mere emotion but on the overwhelming evidence and common sense of the Christian story and worldview.

With my last day in the office today it feels somewhat surreal, yet I know that these have been incredibly formative years for me and for that I thank Peter, Jenny and Kerrie. I look forward to seeing what Salt Shakers and Resistance Thinking will do in the future.

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

## Beware Wikipedia!

by Murray Adamthwaite

In the academic field I need constantly to remind students to check their data from reliable sources: reputable books by known and respected authors in the field of study in question; articles in peer-reviewed journals, again by reputable authors; and when they happen to become available, personal communications with such authors and scholars. However, the advent of the Internet has now clouded the issue of sourcing. Together thousands of sites display a welter of information, much of which is anonymous, at times borrowed wholesale from other sites, copied from out-of-date encyclopaedias, or just plain misinformation from sloppy research.

One primary site used constantly as a prime source, not only for students but for researchers generally and even teachers, is Wikipedia. One can “Google” on any topic, personality, issue, and up will come the relevant Wikipedia entry. Despite the convenience – and extent – of the information from this source, it has serious problems, as follows:

- Wikipedia can be amended by any viewer according to his own whims, and does not necessarily require documentation. Hence one can never know who is responsible for any piece of discussion at any given point of an article. He could be well-versed in the field, or a rank amateur!
- The amount of documentation varies from article to article. Quite often there is none at all. Moreover, there is no peer-review process.
- Wikipedia’s hosts will vet all posts and alterations to those posts as they see fit. Those hosts are, to the best of my knowledge, all politically correct, left-wing

liberal in their outlook, who anonymously deliver their PC wisdom from on high. Thus any specifically Christian content will be edited out or at least modified.

- The factual information in Wikipedia, while broadly correct, can all too often be misleading and even plain wrong. Hence it always needs to be checked against reliable sources.

Therefore this source must be used with great caution, and when cited at all it must be done so with reserve and qualification.

Let me give four examples of this unreliability:

Some months ago I was researching the reign of Charles I and the struggle which led to the English Civil War. Charles summoned three parliaments in the first four years of his reign (1625-1629), but when I examined the relevant entries in Wikipedia I found confusion concerning those early years. I

checked its material against the new, and magisterial, book by Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (OUP, 2002): the latter not only sorted out the confusion, but showed how incorrect Wikipedia was in its order and chronology, and therefore in its explanation of how Charles came to rule without a Parliament from 1629 to 1640.

A second instance concerns the editing out of anything Christian. Probably the most outstanding figure of reform and philanthropy during the Victorian period was Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885), whose untiring labours for the welfare of children occupied him as a Member of Parliament for almost fifty years. He inaugurated the many Factory Acts to reduce and finally



abolish child labour; as president of the Ragged School Union he promoted these institutions until education for the young up to a certain age became enshrined in law; and gave generously to philanthropic causes throughout his life. The motivation for his work was his deeply Christian evangelical faith which he had received from a Methodist housemaid in his youth, but the short and perfunctory entry in Wikipedia makes no mention of any of this. The most it will say is that he was a “religious man”. Likewise with other examples: such is the aversion to Christianity, but faced with the obvious evidence of Christian outlook in such people as Hannah More or William Wilberforce the most the authors will concede is that they possessed a “religious” motivation.

The final example is even more serious: some time ago there was an exchange between Lawrence Solomon, author of the anti-global-warming book *The Deniers* (Richard Vigilante Books, 2008), and the Wikipedia host. This had to do with the “findings” of the California scientist and warming alarmist Naomi Oreskes regarding global warming (GW). The dispute, in summary, went as follows: Dr Benny Peiser, a very prominent UK scientist, had challenged the conclusions of Oreskes, who had been given a very approving write-up on a Wikipedia page, without any hint of dissent. Solomon checked with Peiser, who informed him that the statements on Wikipedia were distorted and incorrect, whereupon Solomon amended the pages accordingly (as anyone can do). Imagine Solomon’s dismay when he found that within minutes his corrections had been re-edited or deleted! When he contacted the host of Wikipedia’s pages on this issue he was met with an effete reply that “We have a reliable source...” In vain did Solomon plead that Peiser had verified his concerns with him personally only in the previous



hour or so. No; what the host had written she had written.

A perusal of all of Wikipedia’s pages on the GW issue reveals that every sentence has been vetted to ensure that the GW faith is presented in all its purity, without demur. Wikipedia is carefully vetted on a daily basis to make sure that no contradiction is admitted which may raise doubts about the green faith. Yet the same people would raise a hue and cry about ‘censorship’ in many other connections.

Another, even more egregious, example of Wikipedia mendacity arose quite recently (14th Dec.) concerning Rev. Joseph Farah, one of the hosts of World Net Daily, a conservative news site. Wikipedia actually declared Farah to be a “noted homosexual of Lebanese and Syrian heritage”. A couple of years ago the hosts claimed that Farah had conducted an affair with “a prominent female columnist”. Whether he is a heterosexual philanderer or noted homosexual, both charges are fatuous nonsense.

Farah complains that when he contacted the hosts, “I was even told I was not a reliable source of information about me.” His conclusion: “(Wikipedia) is a wholly unreliable website run by political and social activists promoting their own agenda.”

The Farah episode, along with the other examples, only highlights the fact that Wikipedia is in no sense a reliable source on a level with Encyclopaedia Britannica or Chambers. In the academic sphere, if your lecturer allows you to cite Wikipedia in an essay or paper, he is at that point abdicating responsibility. An astute academic will disallow such citations.

When we write our own literature it behoves us as Christian “truthers” to treat such sources with due scepticism and do our homework properly.

## Prayer Update

### *Prime Minister and Cabinet*

Pray for Kevin Rudd as he makes decisions on vital issues affecting all Australians. The current financial situation is creating new pressures for the government.

Pray for the federal Cabinet as they deal with many difficult policy areas.

### *Members of Parliament*

Pray for all members of parliament - whether in state or federal parliaments.

Pray for State Premiers.

Pray for the Leaders of Opposition parties at federal and state levels.

Pray that Christians will be encouraged to act according to a Biblical worldview rather than just go along with the philosophy of their political party.

### *Local Councils*

Pray for the Mayors of local councils and for those who serve as councillors.

Pray that people involved in all levels of politics will do so from a motive of 'serving' the people rather than obtaining power.



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

## How can we pray for what seems impossible? Peace in Israel

I'm sure, like us, many of you struggle to know how to pray about the conflict between Israel and Hamas which, even if there is a cease fire by the time you read this, shows no signs of a permanent solution.

In real terms, possible options are that Israel ceases to exist or Hamas has to do a total about face and agree to the existence of Israel and leave them in peace.

Neither of those answers look even remotely possible because we know that Hamas is far from being a tiny David in a struggle with Goliath. Hamas is supported by Iran, a nation ten times bigger in population than Israel, and Iran does not believe Israel should exist.

Interestingly, even the 'anti war' movement in Israel has supported the recent conflict because of the years of relentless rocket attacks by Hamas.

Naturally we do not want to see Israel

disappear so we need to pray for a huge miracle, a change of heart by not only Hamas but also by Iran and the whole Muslim community across the world.

A big miracle indeed.

Of course, there may never be peace in the Middle East or across the world.

The Bible clearly states there will be wars and rumours of wars until Christ's return.

In that case we must also pray for the people in the war-torn Middle East and in every area of the world where there is no peace.

Pray especially that people will come to know Christ - and for the Christians who are so often the first targets in today's world of global terror and corruption.

Pray that they will know the peace of God despite their circumstances. Pray that the church in the west will be generous in their giving to groups like Barnabas Fund.

## mardi gras again!

The Sydney homosexual mardi gras is on again in Sydney. A month of “festivities, parties, exhibitions and concerts” culminate in the mardi gras parade on Sat 7 March.

The mardi gras will be broadcast on TV this year for the first time since 2002. Fortunately it will only be on pay-TV. Foxtel is putting it on ‘Main Event’ where viewers have to pay extra to watch.

The campaigns we ran prior to 2002 were successful in getting the screening of the mardi gras OFF free-to-air TV!

### **Sponsors**

The mardi gras has struggled with sponsors over recent years. For the past three years their ‘Presenting Partner’ was *gaydar* - a homosexual dating website. There is no Presenting Partner this year but there are a number of ‘Major Partners’.

A new ‘Major Partner’ this year is the ANZ Bank, along with Events NSW and the Flight Centre. They join Virgin Blue, Ikea, Pump and the City of Sydney. Foxtel is the ‘Official Broadcast Partner’. Homosexual media, alcohol companies and a homosexual cruise company are also ‘partners’.

### **Messages of Support**

The mardi gras Guide includes formal “Messages of Support” from **Prime Minister Kevin Rudd** and **Leader of the Opposition Malcolm Turnbull**.

This is a new direction for the Coalition - it is the first time a leader of the Liberals has sent a message of support. John Howard consistently declined to send one!

**NSW Premier Nathan Rees** and the **Lord Mayor of Sydney Clover Moore** also sent messages of support.

**Kevin Rudd** said “I am pleased to provide this message on the occasion of the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival. Mardi Gras is a vibrant and colourful event of

national and international significance that attracts visitors from all around the world. The festival is a key event on the Sydney calendar and its enduring success reflects the cultural diversity of modern Australia. I send my best wishes to everyone involved in the 2009 festival.”

**Malcolm Turnbull** said “2009 marks the 32nd year of Mardi Gras since its inaugural march in 1978. During this time Mardi Gras has protested against discrimination.

It has promoted awareness of, and greater support for those suffering from, HIV and AIDS. It has become part of the colour and culture of our magnificent city - above all a celebration of humanity in all of its diversity. Once again Lucy and I are delighted to support the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Have a great Mardi Gras!”

**ACTION:** Please contact the following sponsors and MPs to express your concern at their support for mardi gras.

### **Write to Sponsors:**

ANZ Bank - Mr Mike Smith, CEO, ANZ, 100 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000.

Virgin Blue - Mr Brett Godfrey, CEO, GPO Box 1034, Spring Hill, Qld, 4004.

Pump - Mr Warwick White, Managing Director, Coca Cola Amatil, PO Box 145, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

City of Sydney - The Mayor, GPO Box 1591, Sydney NSW 2001.

### **Write to MPs:**

**Kevin Rudd** and **Malcolm Turnbull** - at Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

**Nathan Rees**, Premier of NSW, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

**Clover Moore**, Lord Mayor of Sydney, GPO Box 1591, Sydney NSW 2001.



## Transsexualism - Part 2

by *Ken McGuire*

In part one of this series we saw how the concept of a “true transsexual” was discredited following the discovery that sex-change experiments had been conducted on mentally ill patients who had lied about their histories in order to fit the belief that transsexuals are born that way.

Despite such setbacks, sex-change specialists around the world maintained that sex-change surgery was still the best means of coping with an estimated 10% of transsexuals who remained unresponsive to psychotherapy, irrespective of the underlying cause.

In Australia, the Melbourne based sex-change team petitioned the government to re-establish a clinic that would provide a service for a broad range of gender identity issues and problems, not just transsexualism. They argued that there was an urgent need for research into the cause and treatment of the condition and that this was best done in a public setting.

In 1988, the Australian government acquiesced, establishing the **Monash Medical Centre Gender Dysphoria Clinic** on the proviso that any decisions by the team to administer sex-change procedures would have to be approved by an independent advisory committee.

The advisory committee established to oversee the clinic fell apart soon after it was formed and Monash Medical Centre refused to host any sex-change procedures. Control of the clinic was given to a psychiatrist on the sex-change team who arranged for her secretary to attend the clinic two days a week.

The secretary appears to have played the role of a psychiatrist at the hospital, accepting patient referrals, requesting

medical and hormonal tests to be conducted, summarising clinical material, documenting her own conclusions about the diagnosis and condition of patients as if these were matters of fact and then referring patients on to the “private practice” of various team members for treatment. Unsupervised in this way, the Melbourne team was able to use the public hospital as a front for their continued sex-change experiments.

Internationally, sex-change enthusiasts set out to convince the world that transsexuals were born that way and cannot change.

This was accomplished through the misuse and misunderstanding of scientific studies, political activism, litigation and manipulation of the media.

It is believed that genetic factors may predispose individuals to a number of mental disorders, anxiety, depression and substance abuse. It does not follow from this that people are “born that way” or that they cannot be helped with appropriate psychotherapy or psychotropic medications. Yet this is exactly what sex-change enthusiasts have repeatedly claimed about the findings of genetic studies into gender identity disorders.

Two such studies were published last year. One of these studies found that a particular gene in Male to Female transsexuals was slightly longer on average than that found in the general male population. The other study found that a completely different gene variant was slightly more prevalent amongst Female to Male transsexuals than it was in the general female population.

Even overlooking the small sample size of the studies, the fact that the results have yet to be verified, and the uncertainty as to the



role that these genes might [actually] play in the development of transsexualism, one is still left with the fact that the gene variants in both studies are present in nearly half of the general population, and are absent in more than half of the transsexuals studied.

In other words, if there is a link between these genes and transsexualism, then it is at best an extremely weak one, which would lead good analysts to conclude that transsexualism is almost entirely due to psychological or situational factors, with genetics perhaps contributing no more than a slight predisposing role for some individuals.

The way in which sex change enthusiasts have misused such studies to promulgate their views is deceptively simple.

Typically, a reporter with a vested interest obtains an opinion from one of the researchers that their findings [could] “support a biological basis for gender identity” together with a statement from a pro sex-change specialist that they believe transsexualism is a biological condition. Add to this mix a comment from a transsexual about how they have always felt that way from birth, and the reporter publishes the article under a headline such as “Transsexualism is in the genes”. Thus all those who read this article are deceitfully convinced because the newspaper said so and newspapers don’t tell lies!

Similar tactics have been regularly used to promote the legalisation of illicit drugs and the normalisation of homosexuality and lesbianism.

Using this kind of deception combined with public apathy, sex-change enthusiasts have managed to push through a number of legislative changes over the years that grant transsexuals legal recognition as the opposite to their birth sex and even special “anti-discrimination” rights. These new

laws have then been successfully enforced through litigation, often encouraged by ‘Equal Opportunity Commissions’.

Peculiarities in the law have effectively prevented anyone other than sex-change ‘specialists’ from giving expert witness. In the absence of any views to the contrary, the courts have invariably ruled in favour of the theories held by sex-change specialists and these judgments are then cited by sex-change enthusiasts as further proof of their beliefs.

Today it is psychotherapy and not sex-change surgery which is considered inappropriate. As for Australia, nearly every patient

referred to the Monash Clinic over the past twenty years has been placed on their sex-change program and I could find no record of Monash treating anyone with psychotherapy as opposed to gender reassignment after reviewing the documents.

Consequently, a significant number of patients drop out part way through the sex-change process and many post-operative patients are left with a body that they feel is no longer recognizable as male or female because, despite all the rhetoric, it is still impossible to actually make a man a woman or vice versa.

Sex-change specialists, thriving on the conviction that people are “born that way”, have nothing further to offer. Left with a sense of betrayal by the professionals they had turned to for help, and faced with the prospect of living an isolated and lonely life on the outskirts of society without any real possibility of marriage and family, too many find suicide to be their only remaining option.

In the final part of this three part series on transsexualism, we will look at the true cause and appropriate treatment of this psychological condition.



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## NSW - adoption by homosexuals?

The NSW government announced an Inquiry to investigate giving adoption rights to same-sex couples just before Christmas! Governments seem to like launching Inquiries at the end of the year, just when people are going on holiday!

The Minister for Community Services, the Hon Linda Burney MP, asked the NSW Parliament's Standing Committee on Law and Justice to conduct an inquiry into whether NSW adoption laws should be amended to allow same sex couples to adopt.

**ACTION:** If you live in NSW, you need to write a short submission/letter AND SEND it in by 13 February 2009. Email to [lawandjustice@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lawandjustice@parliament.nsw.gov.au) or mail to The Director, Standing Committee

on Law and Justice, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

Tell the Inquiry that a child needs a mother and a father. Social science research has confirmed that children do best when raised by their biological mother and father who are married. Children who are adopted are already missing out on this - it is our responsibility as a society to give them the best opportunities that we can. Adoption by same-sex couples is not in the best interests of the children.

There are very few children available for adoption - there is a long waiting list of heterosexual couples wanting to adopt.

Check our website campaign page - <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/html/P/302/B/568/> It has full details of the Inquiry!

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## UN - Homosexuality

On the 60th anniversary of the UN's 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' the UN General Assembly reviewed the Declaration - and proposed calling for the removal of discrimination based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity". The resolution also proposed the decriminalisation of homosexuality, a call to stop violence against homosexuals and the removal of criminal penalties.

Sixty-six nations signed the declaration sponsored by France and the Netherlands. The USA was the only western nation NOT to sign - Australia signed the resolution!

Sixty other countries of the UN's 192 member states, including a number of Arab and African states, rejected the non-binding declaration. The Vatican said they

could support the decriminalisation of homosexuality but said the resolution went far beyond that - they could not support the inclusion of 'discrimination' based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

More than 50 nations joined in an alternative resolution, which condemned "all forms of stereotyping, exclusion, stigmatization, prejudice, intolerance and discrimination and violence directed against peoples, communities and individuals on any ground whatsoever, wherever they occur," but stated that nations

have the right to uphold their own moral standards and to protect the family. The alternative resolution cautioned that anti-discrimination measures should not be used to invent new categories of civil rights. [BBC, Reuters, Catholic Culture, 19/12/2008]



## World News

### **UK: Genetic diagnosis - eugenics**

In the UK, a baby has been born after her parents 'selected' an embryo to ensure she did not carry an altered [faulty] gene that could cause breast cancer (BRCA1).

The parents were told that if a female child had the gene there was a 50-80% chance she would develop breast cancer. Females in two previous generations had died of breast cancer in their 20s.

The case also involved sex selection - choosing a female embryo because a male child would be a carrier of the gene. Eleven embryos were created - six carried the gene and were destroyed. [BBC, Times, 10/1/2009]

Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis has previously been used in testing for genes which would guarantee a baby would inherit a disease such as cystic fibrosis. However in 2006, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority said doctors could test for so-called **susceptibility** genes that **may** have an influence in causing a disease. Doctors in the UK have already selected embryos on the basis of their risk of getting bowel or retinal cancers.

**This is eugenics.** Where will scientists stop in trying to breed the 'perfect child'? God is the giver of life. When man starts to interfere, we end up with Darwinian ideas of 'survival of the fittest' and the Nazi eugenics program where some were not considered worthy of life.

### **UK: Hybrid embryos - Eugenics?**

In November 2008 the UK Parliament passed the *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill*, allowing the creation of animal-human hybrids. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

(HFEA) didn't wait for the new law - they decided to issue licences in January 2008, before the Act was passed!

The Christian Legal Centre (CLC) and Comment On Reproductive Ethics (CORE) applied to 'judicially review' the HFEA decisions but were refused permission.

The High Court said that human-animal hybrid embryos fitted within the definition of a 'human' embryo that was established in the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, despite the fact that manufacturing human-animal hybrids had not been thought of at the time.

Worryingly, the court also said that the definition of what is 'human' depends on the facts understood by scientific knowledge at the time!

[*Christian Concern for our Nation*, UK, 15/1/2009]

Some good news! Both projects using animal-human hybrids have stopped due to lack of money - they claim that's due to the 'scientists on the funding committees who are morally opposed' to the research. That highlights how important it is for Christian groups to oppose such research with good arguments.

### **USA: Richard Cizik resigns**

Richard Cizik, formerly the Washington lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals, resigned in December.

In an interview on NPR's Fresh Air radio program he said he had changed his view on homosexual civil unions ... and now agreed with them. Following the interview there was an outcry among evangelical Christians that led to his resignation.

Cizik was also involved in 'Creation Care', a movement that promoted the notion of man-caused global warming and the need to address the issue. During November Richard Cizik visited Australia to speak about 'climate change' and other matters.



## Ministry News

Peter & Jenny started the year by having a great time at the Creation Ministries Super Camp on Phillip Island. It was good to see some of our readers there soaking up the wealth of information presented.

It was also great to spend time in fellowship with like-minded Christians from all over the country and to have the opportunity to introduce Salt Shakers to them. Our display table was constantly busy, we sold a lot of books and have many new subscribers.

As you will have read in the Resistance Thinking update on page 11, just before Christmas we farewelled Emma after 5 years with us. Please pray for her as she

commences full time legal work and please pray that the right person will be quickly found to fill her shoes. This person will need to be keen on debating with young people from a solid Biblical worldview and have a heart to help young people contend for the faith in an increasingly challenging world. Nathan is holding the fort at the moment but recommences his own Uni studies soon and will need to drop back to part time. Contact us if you think you could be this person!

We are also still looking for a part time Media person. If you have media/computer skills, we would like to hear from you.

Just maybe God has a person out there who could fill both roles!!

Please pray about these vacant positions and for the Ministry in general - for staff, finances and wisdom to deal with issues.

### **ACTION checklist:** Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	SA - cloning	MPs - SA Legislative Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Vic - caring relationships	MPs - Legislative Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	National Bill of Rights	Submission - read articles	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	mardi gras	MPs and sponsors	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	NSW - adoption	Submission to Law and Justice Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>

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