

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

Silent night, holy night

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon Virgin Mother and Child

Holy Infant so tender and mild

Sleep in heavenly peace

Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight

Glories stream from heaven afar

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!

Christ, the Saviour is born

Christ, the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night

Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from Thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace

Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth"

**My God richly Bless you as you spread the
Good News that the Saviour has been born**

December 2009 AD

Email Journal subscription. \$25

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Editorial

Have you noticed how often the Christmas season is called the “silly season”? Of course, this has nothing to do with Jesus, the real reason for the season, but relates to the foolish behaviour of too many people at Christmas parties and New Year events.

We get the feeling that the silly season started very early this year, especially at the growing number of ‘thought police’ government Tribunals and Commissions.

Two government bodies have recently made very silly decisions.

Firstly, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT) denied a woman the right to organise women’s only holidays for senior ladies. VCAT’s reason was that it would discriminate against men. Yet, that, of course, was the idea, to allow women who do not feel comfortable in mixed company to have that freedom. It now seems OK for VCAT to allow a woman to organise a lesbian-only nightclub and for Muslims to have women-only swimming sessions, but if you’re not a Muslim or a lesbian, tough! You don’t have the right to privacy.

The second silly decision was made by the Australian Human Rights Commission which stopped cruise ship operator *Carnival Australia* banning young passengers during schoolies week. Why? Because that would be age discrimination. Yet this decision clearly discriminated against older passengers who wanted to enjoy a cruise without drunken schoolies roaming the ship.

As Elise Parham, Policy Analyst at CIS stated, “this was inconvenient for the government, because the decision came down just as Health Minister Nicola Roxon unveiled her latest tool in the campaign against youth binge drinking: ***Kids and Alcohol Don’t Mix***. Perhaps no one

has told her that that’s discrimination?”

But why are we talking about discrimination at Christmas?

Well, the Christmas story shows us that discrimination has its rightful place.

The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus came for all people - John 3:16 states “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

As individuals, God loves ALL people and Christ died for all people without distinction or discrimination. Yet time and again we read discriminatory statements about the consequences of our behaviour.

Paul states in 1 Cor 6 “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.”

Jude states “as Sodom and Gomorrah, ...having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

This is a clear case of discrimination against the wrong choices people make.

The message of Christmas and of the cross is non-discriminatory, but the message of eternal life is pure discrimination based on our choices. Yes, Christ paid the price but it is a fallacy to suggest that presents us with a blank cheque to write our own salvation. Salvation and eternal life are discriminatory because they are based on the response we make and our behaviour.

Today we hear a very false message that all discrimination is wrong. All people are born equal but the consequences of our choices are certainly not equal.

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



Why Did Jesus Die?

-The Sacrificial System and Creation

by Roger Birch

In May 2007, I wrote an article for this magazine entitled “*An Evangelical ‘Litmus Test’*” in which I talked about the watering down of the term ‘evangelical.’ The ‘litmus test’ I suggested as a mark of a true evangelical was an acceptance of a straight reading of Genesis 1-11 since an attack on Genesis 1-11 is basically an attack on the authority of the Bible, and hence God.

Now many people calling themselves evangelical would dispute such a statement, claiming that the creation versus evolution issue is ‘not relevant’ to their faith or that the creation account can be interpreted in different ways. However, the purpose of this article is to suggest that both of these positions create major theological problems.

This article will not delve into the science of creation versus evolution as this is well covered elsewhere, but rather will expand the theological issues surrounding a question left open in my 2007 article, namely, “Why did Jesus die?”

No genuine evangelical can suggest that Christology is ‘not relevant’; Millard Erickson states our “understanding of Christ must be central and determinative of the very character of the Christian faith. All else is secondary to the question of what one thinks of Christ.” However, a lot of theology has been affected by ‘science’ and Christology, in particular, has ignored issues such as Luke tracing Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam and Paul stating that death only came into the world with Adam’s sin.

Christology is a massive subject in its own

right, and space precludes too much detail. Suffice to say there are two main approaches to how we look at Jesus: from man’s perspective (Christology ‘from below’) or from God’s perspective (Christology ‘from above’). The former approach, although technically valid theologically, tends to be the domain of liberal scholars who question the accuracy, and even the authority of the Bible. Christology from above is more aligned to the evangelical position with its implied acceptance of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and so I will focus on that approach, and its implications, in this article.

If we take a ‘verse count’ in the Gospels to suggest what God sees as important, then the primary emphasis is clearly the cross. There is no direct information as to Jesus’ appearance, His likes, dislikes, etc. Two of the Gospels even

omit direct details of His birth. Conversely, well over half the chapters of the Gospels are dedicated to the last week of His life, the events immediately leading up to it, or the events following His crucifixion.

The creation versus evolution debate is typically fought on scientific grounds, but what about the impact of the creation account on the topic of Christology and, especially, Jesus’ death? There are three issues in particular that need careful examination:

- What is death?
- Why did Jesus have to die?

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• What ‘CV’ did He need to fulfil the requirements needed to die for us?

All three topics are major and, once again, space precludes a full treatment here, and so the following arguments are, by necessity, very brief but hopefully sufficient to show both their importance and relevance to the creation account.

According to both theistic and humanistic evolutionists, death and suffering occurred for millions, or even billions of years before man either evolved or was created by some process omitted from the Bible. However, what is death and how did it originate?

Both Genesis and the New Testament (Rom 5:12) state that death entered the world through the sin of one man, with the clear implication there was no death before Adam. So why do we ignore what both Testaments say and take for granted the evolutionary assumption that death is ‘natural’?

Interestingly, evolutionists seem quite happy to accept death as an integral part of the natural selection process, and yet often accuse the so-called ‘God of the Old Testament’ of being cruel for requiring animals’, and then Jesus’ blood to be spilled on our behalf. The reality is, though, that the author and creator of all life – according to the Bible – has the ‘right’ (using modern terminology) to remove that life. When someone finally does what God has done and creates life from nothing, only then can they moralise over who is entitled to dictate the rules as to what happens to that new life form!

In fact, the first recorded (or implied) death

in the Bible was when God killed an animal (a lamb?) to provide skins for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness. By this act, God initiated the sacrificial system that required the spilling of blood to cover sin, a system that is then explicitly mentioned in the Cain and Abel narrative in Genesis 4. Furthermore, the first allusion to Christ crushing Satan is in Genesis 3:15 - “And I

will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

So, by Genesis 4, there is a linking of sin, death and the sacrificial system plus a reference to Christ coming and, linked with the sacrificial system, the need for Him to die.

Now most evangelicals would agree that Jesus Christ had to die and also had to be: a) human; b) divine; c) male; d) first-born and e) perfect without blemish.

But why? Where do we establish these criteria?

Standard evangelical theological works will readily provide verses to show Jesus’ humanity and deity, but the latter three requirements are all part of the sacrificial system.

Although the sacrificial system was present from ‘the beginning,’ it is not until Moses that we find any codification and, with that, the ‘CV’ that Jesus had to fulfil to be able to die for us which provided a unique list of requirements. However, if the straight reading of Genesis 1-4 is removed, then not only is there no explanation, or justification for the sacrificial system (which, like many biblical topics up to and including the flood is virtually universal), but there is also no

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valid, biblical explanation for Jesus to die.

So, just how does Jesus fit the requisites of the 'CV' set some 1,500 years before He came? In the New Testament, we find that Jesus was male and first-born (eg Luke 2:2), He was born of a virgin with the Holy Spirit being the father (Luke 1:26-38) to break the line of inherited sin, and that He was without blemish (Col 1:22; 1 Pet 1:19). He was also human and divine so we have a complete match!

However, this is where the creation versus evolution issue, and the associated issue of long ages, ceases to be 'irrelevant' but is inexorably interlinked with the authority of the Bible, Christology and, ultimately, our own redemption.

Quite simply, to suggest the story of Adam and Eve (and the associated issue of sin and death) is myth, or needs 'reinterpretation,' is both a direct attack on God and the authority of Scripture, and also brings into question the whole purpose of Jesus' death.

It is an attack on both the Old and New Testaments since Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38), Paul refers to Jesus as the 'last Adam' (1 Cor 15:45) and there are other New Testament references to Adam (1 Tim 2:13-14; Jude 1:14). Sin, and with it the introduction of death, is also linked with Adam in the New Testament (Rom 5:12). So, if Adam is not a literal, historic figure, then effectively nothing of the Bible can be taken at face value, a fact that atheists seem to appreciate more than many evangelicals! Even worse, the whole justification for Jesus coming to die for us is destroyed and, with it, our redemption.

But can God still have used evolution and

what about long ages?

If Adam and Eve are historic figures, then clearly there is no need for evolution from that point on as evidenced by Jesus' genealogy in Luke. Furthermore, if there was no death prior to Adam (Rom 5:12), there is no necessity for evolution at all – it is completely ruled out.

That only leaves long ages prior to Genesis 1:2 – but for what purpose? If we are to accept the Bible from the creation of

Adam onwards, why would we even question God with the remaining few verses? The only basis on which to concoct a 'gap' between Genesis 1:1 and 2, or to see the days in Genesis as being "God's days, not man's days" or some other 'explanation' to deny the straight reading of Genesis is purely to adopt a non-biblical, non-supernatural, humanistic worldview into one's theology which requires long ages for evolution to work!

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the 'last Adam' (1 Cor 15:45) who came to die for our sins and, by dying on the cross, has provided us with the means of being reconciled to God and to be able to spend eternity with Him. As Paul says in Galatians 1:6-7 any other 'gospel' is not really a Gospel!

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Roger is a member of Salt Shakers Reference Panel on theological issues.

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News & Action

ACT: Same-sex ceremonies

On November 11, 2009 the ACT government passed legislation to allow formal legally-binding ceremonies in their Civil Partnerships legislation.

The Bill was proposed by the Greens - the Labor government supported it but amended it to **ONLY** allow legally binding ceremonies for same-sex couples.

The *Civil Partnerships Act*, passed in 2008, allows heterosexual and homosexual couples to register a 'civil partnership'. The changes mean that same-sex couples will be allowed to have a ceremony to register their civil partnership - the partnership will legally start when the certificate is signed.

The ACT Attorney-General restricted the ceremonies to same-sex couples to avoid claims that the law now mimicked marriage.

Some groups called on the federal government to overturn the new law, saying it mimics marriage by having a ceremony. As a result, the Rudd government made a compromise with the ACT government: the ceremonies will stay - but will also have to be registered by the Registrar (not just the celebrant). However, when it is registered, the civil partnership will legally be considered to have begun at the date of the ceremony and not the date it is placed on the Register!

Naturally, since we don't agree with any form of registration of homosexual relationships, we also oppose any 'ceremonies' for them!

'Human Rights Day' - Dec 10

Yes, a special day for 'human rights'!

This was originally implemented by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1950! The Australian Human Rights Commission has a special webpage

to help people celebrate the day!

Amnesty International have organised a breakfast in Melbourne at which the main speaker is Tibetan Buddhist, the Dalai Lama, who was in Melbourne for the Parliament of the World's Religions.

Human rights, Buddhism, interfaith and Amnesty - what a combination!

School Chaplains

The federally funded school chaplaincy program is currently being reviewed. The program was begun by the Howard government in 2006 and is just finishing its first three-year cycle. Most schools appreciate the program and want it continued.

Some time ago Julia Gillard indicated that it could be expanded to include 'secular' welfare workers. In November, Senator Ron Boswell asked a question at Senate Estimates about the future of the program and received a noncommittal answer.

Shortly after, whilst speaking at the ACL conference Kevin Rudd said that the government would extend the chaplaincy program for an extra two years before reviewing it. That takes it to a year after the next election - and attempts to avoid having it as an election issue!

ACTION: Even though Mr Rudd has made some response, it is still important to contact him - as well as the Leaders of the Liberal Party and the National Party. Write to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

Also write to your federal MP and your 12 State Senators. MP contact details: Phone 13 2326 or see our website - <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/parliamentmps/79-federal>

Ask them to ensure that the school chaplaincy program is continued - not just for two years but as an ongoing program and that the emphasis be placed on Christian Chaplains.

Political Parties - What do they stand for?

Part two - Minor Parties #1

by Peter Stokes

There are many 'minor' parties, often standing on one issue and normally having no real chance of being elected - but in today's world of politics, who knows! If a risqué model and showgirl (Mara Carfagna) can be elected as a national MP in Italy and become a government Minister, anything seems possible in politics.

I think there are four minor parties that warrant attention, three have Christian roots and one is extremely unchristian, so we will start with the worst and deal with the others in the coming months.

The Australian Sex Party (ASP)

Now you might ask, "why would you bother talking about this party?" But, as stated above, anything can happen in politics.

One thing most small parties lack is a strong network or support base from which to gain votes and actively campaign. Few would have a support base of 4 million people but the ASP does, or so they claim. That advantage could help generate a chunk of first preference votes from people who support pornography becoming more freely available.

The ASP was officially registered by the Australian Electoral Commission in August 2009 - and launched at 'Sexpo', a pornography industry promotional event. Their slogan is "We're serious about sex".

I find it interesting that an asp is "a small venomous hooded serpent"!

Their website states, "The *Australian Sex Party* is a political response to the sexual needs of Australia in the 21st century. It is an attempt to restore the balance between sexual privacy and sexual publicity that has been severely distorted by morals

campaigners and prudish politicians."

The ASP platform includes reducing censorship and legalising the sale of X-rated material, introducing a national sex education curriculum, abolishing the government's proposed internet filter, supporting homosexual marriage and legalising abortion.

Three people appeared in the launch photo for their first foray into politics, the Higgins by-election, and they sum up what this Party stands for: Fiona Patten - the candidate, Dean Beck and Angela White.

Fiona Patten is the chief executive of the *Eros Association*, the body that represents pornography retailers in Australia.

Dean Beck is a homosexual, former president of *Pride March* Victoria, and a photographer - hence, no doubt, his interest in promoting pornography - the homosexual sort of course.

In 2009 Beck had a photography exhibition titled '*A photographic exploration of the moments after sex*', which was a documentary "of his own daring life in sex, with many photos taken as he exited from one-night stands"!

Extreme, you would say, but on the webpage advertising this 'sexploit' exhibition is the logo of the Melbourne City Council!

Angela White is a Melbourne Uni student financing her 'Gender Studies' course by making porn movies in the US and Europe!

My friends, God has spoken. Romans 1 states, (paraphrase) 'not only those who practice such things are deserving of death, but those who endorse those who practice them.' That means those who vote for them!



Poker machines, VCAT and community interest

by Jenny Stokes

Last month saw a very significant decision about gaming machines in Victoria.

The decision was made by Justice Kevin Bell, the President of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. VCAT refused to allow a hotel in the country town of Romsey to install poker machines.

Since many Victorian towns have hotels with poker machines, why was this decision so significant?

First a little background...

Peter and I began Salt Shakers after a three-year fight against poker machines going into our local shopping centre. That battle started back in 1991 - initially it involved people at our church objecting at the Council level. Peter and I later attended an appeal, a liquor licensing application and appeal and monitored the developers' application to the gaming authority. During our battle, we learned that citizens could only object to a proposed poker machine development on **planning, legal** and **taxation** grounds.

Since the government had made it legal to have poker machines, they imposed particular planning guidelines and they were getting taxes from them, it was extremely difficult to oppose the venue.

We found out that the ability to oppose a proposed development on **community interest** or **moral grounds** was removed by the Labor government when they legalised brothels in Victoria back in 1986. This was so suburban communities could not object to having brothels in their area - brothels would thus be spread out across the suburbs.

The Romsey case

When the local hotel in Romsey decided they wanted poker machines, they applied

to the local Council. Many local residents objected and the Council refused the application.

The hotel owners appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal - VCAT overturned the Council decision and ruled that the poker machines could be installed.

But the Council took the matter to the Supreme Court - Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal overturned the decision and sent the case back to VCAT. However the Appeal Court made it clear that VCAT must consider community interest.

When Justice Bell handed down his VCAT decision in November 2009, he ruled that the poker machines could not be installed. He cited community interest, and the fact that a large number of residents opposed the move, as reasons for not granting the permit for poker machines.



Not just poker machines

This ruling is very significant because it reinstates the ground of **community interest**. The ruling could be cited as a precedent in future cases at VCAT. It will undoubtedly influence numerous Council decisions as well. Developers will be less likely to appeal to VCAT given this ruling!

It won't just affect poker machines - the decision could apply to proposed brothels, strip clubs and other planning decisions.

This decision could well change the way these matters are decided in the future. Ever since fighting our own poker machine battle from 1991-1994, we have advocated for the reinstatement of community interest and moral grounds for such decisions. We welcome the decisions by the Court of Appeal and Justice Bell!

Same-sex 'marriage'

The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee has recommended that same-sex 'marriages' not be allowed in Australia.

The Committee, which had been asked to investigate the Greens proposal to legalise same-sex marriages, presented its Report to Parliament on 26 November. The Committee received submissions and held public hearings. There were 81 submissions from organisations - 36 opposed, 44 in favour. There were also 15,979 submissions from individuals opposing the bill and 5,574 from individuals supporting the bill.

We are thankful that the Committee has rejected the proposal to change the *Marriage Act* to allow homosexuals to marry.

However, the Committee also recommends "that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issue **Certificates of Non-Impediment** to couples of the same sex on the same basis as they are issued for couples of different sexes". This means that same-sex couples who want to 'marry' overseas could be given a certificate to assist them in establishing their ability to 'marry'.

The third recommendation is that the government review the recognition of homosexual relationships with the "aim of developing a nationally consistent framework to provide official recognition for same sex couples and equal rights under federal and state laws."

Of course, that is Labor Party policy. We note that the words 'relationship registers' and 'mimic' marriage' are both gone! The Attorney General is talking about **civil partnerships** - since the ACT already has this form of relationship recognition.

We reject these two recommendations from the Committee, as did Liberal Senator Guy Barnett in his Dissenting Report.

The Report can be read at http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/marriage_equality/index.htm

Vic ALP Motion

More pressure was placed on Mr Rudd and the Labor Party to recognise same-sex 'marriages' when the Victorian branch of the ALP voted to support same sex 'marriages' at their state conference last month.

Submissions from groups

Most of the law reform organisations made submissions calling for the *Marriage Act* to be changed to allow same-sex 'marriage' - as did various state and federal Anti-Discrimination Commissions. A large number of homosexual groups supported the Greens proposal.

One concerning submission - but not surprising - was from the Australian Gay and Lesbian Christian Network. They supported same-sex 'marriage' but suggested that ministers and churches should not be forced to perform ceremonies if they didn't agree with them! This was signed by Anthony Venn-Brown, clergy from the Metropolitan Community Church, Rev Dorothy McRae McMahon and the Ecumenical Catholic Church of Australia - all of whom support homosexuality. An individual submission from Baptist minister Nathan Nettleton endorsed same-sex 'marriage'.

Another submission supporting the proposal was from **Amnesty International** - the group that used to lobby governments on behalf of political prisoners - such as Nelson Mandela. How times have changed! Recently we reported that they support abortion. Now it is homosexual 'marriage'!

In February we'll have more details and some proposed action.



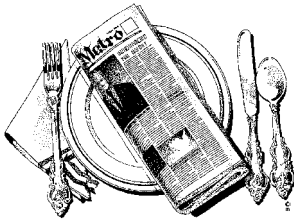
Responding to 'Killjoys'

It seems that Dale Townsend ("Killjoys of Newcastle") has a miserable idea of "joy" and "vibrancy".

He and his drinking companions can only gain "joy" by damaging their brain cells, so that they can inflict damage and pain on their bodies, their homes, and their neighbours. "Vibrancy" to them means vomiting, violence and vile, vicious behaviour - such as smashing the property of anyone who dares to stand up to them. It's no wonder that fewer people go into inner-city Newcastle. Drunken louts keep many out.

Live music and hospitality can be enjoyed much better without alcohol. Instead of trying to hide the emptiness of your life with this drug, try the real joy of helping others, as God intended. We'll all enjoy a better city.

Christina Naylor, Mayfield, NSW
SMH 26/10/2009



Rain dance claim is hogwash

I usually enjoy reading the Back Paddock page. However, I was somewhat surprised about last week's item, "Our rain dance", taking credit for the wonderful rain which we all enjoyed so much.

I strongly believe (the claim) that Huey, whoever that may be, had something to do with that is a load of "hogwash".

When will we start to acknowledge almighty God and his son Jesus?

It is to them that all the credit and praise must go.

Bill Lodewijk, McCrae
Weekly Times 21/10/2009

Clean up the screen

Crude and foul language, sex and violence on Television poisons the mind.

Once images are in the brain, its very hard to remove them.

Program managers, please put a stop to distorted and unrealistic expectations and images on ads and programs.

Judith Bond, Glen Alpine, NSW
Illawara Mercury 24/11/2009

Questions over Islamic Debate

I am writing this letter to ask the Islamic spokesman Keysar Trad one question that bugs me and most other law-abiding Australians: If Australia does indeed welcome other religions groups with open arms, freely allows them to build places of worship to attend, gives them quality regarding their status as Australians, arrests those who would denigrate those places of worship and fosters mutual respect for all races and religions, why does Keysar Trad and his Muslim counterparts not want this type of relationship promoted in the very countries that most Muslims have departed from?

In many Muslim countries today, persecution of the Christian minority is rife.

Indonesia, the very place where millions of dollars of taxpayers money goes to help an organisation calling itself 'The Islamic Defenders Front', has forcibly closed many churches in the Tangerang district near Jakarta.

Likewise, Iran and Egypt prohibit the conversion of Muslims to Christianity and those who decide to follow the Lord Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life, face death and persecution.

Can I ask Mr Trad if the roles were reversed here in Australia and we forcibly closed down mosques, would he and his fellow Muslims be scared for their lives?

I think they would, yet the very same Keysar Trad who travels to Muslim homelands does not lift a small digit to condemn the atrocities ministered to other faiths in his (should I say) former country.

So, could I be right in assuming that Muslims will genuinely stick by their own kind but will not see the misdeeds done towards other faiths by their counterparts as crimes against humanity?

Please answer me as spokesman for your religion. Are you willing to put pressure on Islamic nations for their cruelty towards other faiths?

Warren Williams, Oxenford
Gold Coast Sun 11/11/2009

Judith is the winner of the letter-writing competition for the second year in a row! This letter is the 62nd letter Judith has had printed this year. Congratulations - well done!

Euthanasia Roundup

Euthanasia bills have been debated in three states in the past couple of months. All of the bills have been proposed by the Greens!

Tasmania

On November 4, 2009 the Tasmanian House of Assembly defeated a euthanasia bill that Greens leader **Nick McKim** had introduced.



All Members were given a conscience vote. The four Greens MPs all voted for the bill; all the Liberals voted against it.

We thank God that the bill was defeated by 16 votes to 7!

South Australia

When the Greens euthanasia bill was voted on in the Legislative Council during November, the second reading vote (signifying the MPs' intentions) was almost even. Independent MP Ann Bressington's vote sent the bill to the committee stage so that amendments could be considered. When her amendments were defeated, Ann didn't participate in the final vote.



That left it at 10-10, with the President having the casting vote. He had already said

he would support the bill.

Greens MP **Mark Parnell** gave his closing address. Family First leader Dennis Hood gave then pointed out the flaws in the bill.

Then an amazing thing happened - a miracle! Then liberal leader David Ridgway told the parliament he no longer supported the bill, due to the death of his mother the previous week! The Bill was then **DEFEATED** by a vote of 11 votes to 9!

Western Australia

Just before the close of parliament for the year, Greens MP **Robin Chapple** gave notice of motion to introduce his euthanasia bill into the WA Legislative Council. Due to the large amount of legislation it didn't get to the first reading stage. The bill could be debated early in 2010.



ACTION: If you live in WA, please contact your one MP in the Legislative Assembly and your 5-7 Members in the Legislative Council. Please ask them to oppose the bill in order to protect life and point out that vulnerable people are put under pressure by such legislation.

Review of ban on transplant of pig organs

There is currently a moratorium in Australia on the transplantation of animal cells and organs into humans.

There are good reasons for this - risk of disease, viruses and infection for a start.

From a Christian perspective, animals and humans are different species, so transplanting animal organs and tissue crosses the line of what is morally and ethically acceptable.

However, the *Sydney Morning Herald*

recently reported that the ban could be overturned by the National Health and Medical Research Council when it expires on December 31, 2009. [SMH, 28/10/2009]

Just as they were in the stem cell debate, compassionate arguments are being used, with claims that lifting the ban could assist research into diabetes and Parkinson's.

ACTION: Please pray about the increasing amount of experimentation being done on humans in the name of science.

Does God Exist?

by Murray Adamthwaite

What a question for an overtly Christian publication, you might ask! Of course God exists! But here is the rub: what “God” are we talking about when assert that “He exists”? You see, the Bible may start with the assertion, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ (Gen. 1:1), without raising the question of His existence, but that is not to say that the existence of the God of the Bible, or the existence of any other so-called ‘god’ is sidestepped as unimportant; and with the Parliament of the World’s Religions held in early December this “ontological” issue (to use a philosophical term) is of paramount importance. “Ontology” is that branch of philosophy which considers questions of existence, and this smorgasbord of religions presses the matter of the existence of not only the God of the Bible, but the claims for the gods of Hinduism, Shamanism, Shinto, Islam, and others.

God’s existence is a fair question for philosophy, provided of course that the issue is conducted in a fair and reasonable manner, and not with atheistic prejudice determining the discussion. However, in today’s pluralistic world we must ask, “What ‘god’ are we talking about?” Allah? Shiva? The Earth spirit? Or the Triune God of the Bible? To guide our inquiry let us return for a while to the world of the Old Testament. Here there was a bewildering array of gods: Molech of the Ammonites and other Transjordan nations; Baal, Ashtarte and Asherah of the Canaanites; Teshub of the Hittites; Aššur, Ninurta and Sin of the Assyrians; Ishtar, Marduk, and Nabu of the Babylonians and others. Then,

in Egypt people worshipped Amun, Re, Hathor, Thoth and a host of other deities.

Now ancient peoples really believed in their respective deities: for them they were real and together they controlled nature, the destinies of men, and the outcomes of human decisions. Hence, when Isaiah, for example, challenges the pagan nations to make a case for and produce proof of their deities, it was in that cultural context an

affront to their sensitivities: “Present your case,” says the LORD...Announce to us what is coming; declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods...Behold, you are of no account...” (Isaiah 41:21, 23)

Here, the prophet proposes a test: if any of the gods of the surrounding nations can give a genuine prediction of the future then we may have reason to consider the claims made for

such a deity. But, failing that, they are “of no account”. They are not merely powerless; they don’t exist! You see, if a “god” is worthy of the name at all, he must know the end from the beginning, at least to some extent. He must be cognizant of some things about both the distant and forgotten past and the not-yet-happened future. And certainly the ancients tried to discern the future, just as do many moderns – by resort to occult means. They sought mediums, diviners, and priests, who would read cloud patterns, entrails from animals, sticks thrown in the air, or consult with the dead – in an effort to obtain information about the unseen world or the future. Isaiah mocks all such enterprises, for the simple reason that the

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Lord Yahweh alone exists, and He speaks by His appointed prophets about both past and future.

Another quite crucial passage which displays this point about the non-existence of “other gods” is the well-known story of Elijah’s contest with the prophet-priests of Baal on Mt Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40). You remember the scene: two altars are erected, with a sacrificial animal on each, but no fire is allowed. The god, or God, who sends fire to consume the sacrifice is the true God. The Baal prophets then danced around their altar for hours, enacting what is clearly recognisable as a Canaanite rain-dance. By contrast, Elijah went out of his way to make things hard for himself:

giving his opponents first try, letting them have most of the day to get Baal to work for them, mocking them half-way through, and then dousing his altar and sacrifice with precious water when his turn came. Yet, for all that, after a calm, simple and humble prayer the fire came – and consumed not only the sacrifice but absolutely everything: animal, altar, water, the lot.

The whole point of this encounter is often misunderstood: it was not to demonstrate the superior power of Israel’s God, and the relative impotence of Baal, but to show conclusively that Baal is a non-entity. Baal cannot send fire from heaven, because Baal doesn’t exist! There is no Baal. Brevard Childs, an Old Testament scholar from an earlier day puts it like this:

“Actually this is not really a contest between two gods. Elijah does not believe that Baal is a god at all. The confrontation is between Yahweh, God of Israel, and a sheer delusion.” (*On Reading the Elijah Narratives*, Interpretation, 1980, p 132).

This quite sensational demonstration underlines the consistent testimony of the Old Testament from one end to the other. Consider:

- Moses speaking to Israel, “To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him.” (Deut. 4:35)

- Isaiah comforting Israel, “...there is no one besides Me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:6)

- The psalmist, “For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.” (Psalm 96:5).

In this last text the word “idols” means literally “things of nothing”, “vain or non-existent things”. The psalmist is declaring

that the gods of the nations are but “nothings”; at best they are ‘so-called gods’ (cf Psalm 97:7; 1 Cor 8:5). They have no existence outside the pagan imagination.

Hence, when we face the claims of the various non-Christian religions we do not merely say that the God of the Bible is superior, more

powerful, more trustworthy than say Allah, or Shiva, or whoever.

No, it is the much stronger claim that the others simply don’t exist. Just as there is no Ishtar, no Molech, no Re of antiquity, so there is no Allah, there is no Shiva, there is no New Age Gaia, there is no Izanagi (one of the gods of Shinto mythology), and so on. “The God who is there” (to echo Francis Schaeffer) is the God of Scripture, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons in one Godhead. Hence, the message of the Gospel to a pagan world is “to turn to God from idols, to serve a living and true God.” (1 Thess 1:9). This is the message which needs to be preached loud and clear, not the polyglot of confusion that was evident in the recent Parliament of the World’s Religions.

“The confrontation is between Yahweh, God of Israel, and a sheer delusion.”

Brevard Childs

“Time heals all wounds.”

Michael Glatze shocked the US homosexual community a little over two years ago when he publicly denounced homosexuality along with his life as a homosexual man and ardent activist for pro-homosexual ‘causes’.

He had been the editor of a pro-homosexual youth magazine, as well as a vocal political fighter but he announced he had seen the light. That light was Jesus Christ.

He wrote about his changed life in *WorldNetDaily* and immediately discovered what many Christians who are bold enough to speak out against the normalisation of homosexuality find today - they are not liked.

“People were pretty livid in the blogosphere”, he said, and homosexuals attacked him “from just about as many angles as Sarah Palin was attacked during the worst of those times. I had people calling me insane – which I’ve come to think might be the worst insult of all – and saying I must have AIDS, calling my home to swear at me, threatening me to my face, saying, ‘I hate people like you!’

and so much more!”

“I think my ‘coming out’ of the lie of homosexuality did trigger something, because I was so honest about it – and, because I was so obviously NOT crazy.”

You see, while the truth will set people free it is very unpopular and offensive to those who have been sold the lie that they cannot change.

Michael went into virtual hiding for two years to gain personal strength and escape the abuse but has recently reaffirmed his decision and started to speak publicly about the change that has taken place in his life.

It is never easy to leave the homosexual lifestyle, especially when you have been actively promoting it.

Please pray for Michael and pray that his testimony will be mightily used to show the same light to other homosexuals.

To read his story go to: <<http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=112247>>



Global Convention: The Rise of Atheism

Fresh from hosting the Parliament of the World’s Religions in December 2009, Melbourne will be welcoming atheists from all over the world to a global convention of atheists called ‘*The Rise of Atheism*’.

The Convention will be held from March 12-14, 2010 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The major speaker is well-known atheist Richard Dawkins, the author of *The God Delusion*.

But he is not alone - the program features 25 speakers, many of them from overseas.

Australia’s own Peter Singer, an advocate of euthanasia and infanticide, and now a lecturer in ethics at Princeton University in

the USA, will be speaking at the convention.

Australian speakers include Phillip Adams, former Democrat Senator Lyn Allison, Leslie Canold, Sue-Ann Post, John Perkins, Tamas Pataki and Catherine Deveney.

The event is hosted by the Atheists Foundation of Australia and the Atheists Alliance International.

Website: www.atheistconvention.org.au

How should we respond?

Pray that whilst the attendees and speakers are discussing the rise of atheism and the non-existence of God they will be confronted with the truth!

Prayer Update

Christmas

Pray that the Holy Spirit will impact people over the Christmas period about the person of Jesus Christ and God's message in sending Him to die for our sins.

Pray that people won't be distracted by the additional trappings commonly associated

with Christmas (dinners, trees, Santa Claus, etc).

Pray that people won't just focus on the birth of the baby Jesus but will reflect on the purpose of His whole life on earth, His death and resurrection.



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

Members of Parliament

Pray that all Members of Parliament - both federal and state - will have time to spend with their families and have a refreshing break over Christmas and January. The parliamentary year often means they have less time during the year so this is an important time for them and their families.

'Freedom of Religion' Inquiry

Pray that the Commission will conclude that 'Freedom of Religion' laws are not required in Australia.

National Charter/Bill of Rights

Pray that the government does NOT introduce a Charter of Rights.

Copenhagen Summit

• Pray that our government will not sign over our sovereign rights to the United Nations through the Copenhagen treaty on

climate change.

• Pray that families will be protected from higher taxes due to the myth of 'human induced' climate change and the ETS.

GOOD NEWS

The Greens' euthanasia bills were defeated in both Tasmania and South Australia.

• Praise God for both these victories that Christians supported

Bad News the Greens have now given notice they will lodge a euthanasia Bill into the WA Parliament.

Western Australia has a number of good Christian MPs who are working hard to oppose this proposal.

• Pray that the Christians in the WA parliament will be able to persuade their colleagues not to support this proposal.

• Pray that Christians will lobby their own MPs to oppose this bill.

Join us for Prayer and Breakfast

Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers

We start again on January 28 - 6.30am to 8 am

Book Review: Ideological Jihad

Ideological Jihad is an intriguing book written by Vickie Janson as a response to a book by Waleed Aly - who has emerged as the current Australian spokesman for everything Islamic. Waleed's book was called *People like us: How arrogance is dividing Islam and the West*.

In this very significant book, Vickie contends that the problem isn't arrogance. In fact, as she clearly shows, it is the very nature of Islam that causes the conflict with the West. In doing so she addresses the 'jihad of ideas' surrounding Islam.

In the book, Vickie explains how she set out to interact with a Muslim friend many years ago, mostly to witness to her about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

She noticed the responses that Muslims made after September 11 - her Muslim friend started wearing the hijab and become more conservative.

Vickie and her husband attended Muslim meetings and university conferences about Islam in an effort to engage with Muslims.

The book is written as an 'Open Letter' to Waleed Aly. She initially decided to write a personal letter to him, responding to a

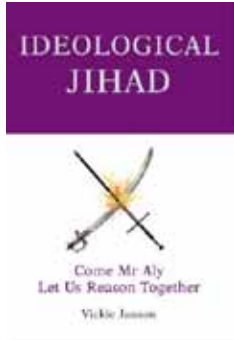
statement on the back cover of Waleed's book on opening up a 'conversation' about Islam and the West. However, since she had only ever had one reply to all the letters she had written to Muslim leaders about Islam, Vickie decided to write an 'Open Letter'.

Vickie addresses the issue of secularism and explains that whilst the church and state are separate, Western notions of democracy and civilisation are based on Christian principles of law, government and society. Islam, which sees politics and religion as one entity, promotes shari'a law which is not compatible with Western democracy. Vickie also highlights the increasing Islamisation of Australia and alerts readers to the real situation we are facing.

Vickie devotes a chapter to showing that the common claim that Islam and Christianity are both 'Abrahamic faiths' is without foundation. In doing so she clearly shows that God and Allah are very different.

Vickie tackles her subject with insight and compassion. It makes compelling reading.

It is available from Salt Shakers: Cost \$18 posted. Also available from Vickie's website: www.ideologicaljihad.com



Resistance Thinking

Cameron Spink, the *Resistance Thinking* co-ordinator, is now sending out weekly emails to young adults (and anyone else who would like to receive them). They list recent articles on the website and current forum topics. A monthly 'Higher Distinctions' email discusses a more complex issue.

Aimed at young adults 16 to 30, *Resistance*

Thinking helps them understand and live out a Biblical worldview and to resist the thinking of the world.

Check the RT website:

www.resistancethinking.com

- Make a comment (or two) on the forum.
- Encourage young adults you know to get involved and 'join the resistance'!
- Encourage them to sign up to the emails.



Climate Change Update

by *Jenny Stokes*

'Climate change' was prominent in the media last month, with a federal parliament vote on the emissions trading scheme and the *United Nations Climate Change Conference* in Copenhagen 7-18 December.

The Copenhagen conference is considering a new treaty to replace the *Kyoto Protocol* which expires in 2012. It now appears that an international treaty is unlikely to be agreed on and that a 'non-legally binding statement' might be made instead.

During November, Lord Christopher Monckton said he had read the draft treaty. He said it spoke of a 'government' - a governing agency to enforce the treaty and supervise what sovereign nations do relating to energy and carbon emissions. This notion of a 'global government' caused a great deal of concern among Christians.

He also highlighted that, under the treaty, huge amounts of money would be paid to developing nations as a 'climate debt'. Australia's contribution has been estimated at around \$7 billion per year - an additional amount of aid that is more than our current total contribution to foreign aid!

The Rudd government continues to call carbon dioxide "pollution"! They put their *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme* to the Parliament in November where it was passed by the House of Representatives.

Liberal leaders negotiated a deal with the government - which gave more money to mining companies and electricity producers and less compensation to low income households! Liberal leader Malcolm Turnbull insisted that the Liberals support the 'amended' scheme but Liberal MPs were divided on the issue. All Nationals MPs opposed the scheme.

A number of Liberal Senators and MPs then resigned from the Shadow Cabinet in protest.

A leadership vote was to be held just after we went to print.

Tony Abbott, Joe Hockey and Malcolm Turnbull were expected to contest the leadership. The Senate was also due to vote on the ETS bill just after we went to print, so you'll know the outcome by now...

Whatever you think of this issue, our concern is about the truth. There is disagreement about the 'science' - is the temperature rising, is CO2 causing temperature rises, is it man-made, can anything be done to change it? We are also concerned about the extra tax burden on families.

Back in March 2007 we wrote our first article on 'global warming' because we noted that Mr Rudd and some Christians were calling this the 'greatest moral issue of our time'. It seemed to us that matters such as abortion were graver moral issues.



Global Warming: Now Definitely a Christian Issue

by *Murray Adamthwaite*

Christians are called among other things to be people of the truth: truth in conversation, truth in dealings, truth in associations. What we cannot tolerate is a tissue of lies, whether from politicians or scientists. In the past there were strict rules regarding the conduct of science, and scientific fraud was treated

as a criminal offence.

However, on November 21st, 2009 news broke of a mountain of emails from the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia, courtesy of either a hacker or a whistleblower (not yet established).

The former possibility does raise moral concerns, which US Senator James Inhofe conceded this week, but he commented further that now that they are in the public domain, lawmakers have an obligation to conduct a thorough investigation.

On examination the emails reveal, in Andrew Bolt's words,

"...a conspiracy of many of the world's leading global warming scientists that involves massaging data, dodging scrutiny, ...fudging figures, the possibly criminal destruction of data under FOI request, tax avoidance, gloating over a sceptic's death, admissions of using "tricks" to "hide" inconvenient trends, farming grants, private admissions of grave doubts in their own public warming warnings..."

And it gets worse. Neal, a commentator at **Climate Audit**, remarks concerning a programmer's coding, "In other words make the code ignore inconvenient data to show what I want it to show."

RIGHT!

WRONG!

Now all this and more, which has been going on since 1995, adds up to a fraud of monumental proportions, yet one which, despite the revelations, has had no effect on the politicians who still insist on passing the emissions trading scheme to our immense cost, and the cost of industry. Add to

this the revelation from Lord Monckton a few weeks ago that the proposed Copenhagen treaty is not really about climate change so much as setting up the framework for a world government, courtesy of the United Nations, and raking off billions of dollars from Western nations each year to pay off an imagined 'climate debt'.

A Christian issue? You betcha! We demand truth. Away therefore with contrived hoaxes and frauds! Historically, Christianity has both engendered and sponsored Western science, and has had a serious stake in genuine science. What we see now is debased and politicised science, besmirching both its integrity and its programme.

Pro-life TV - online!

Facing Life Head On

A great pro-life TV program called **Facing Life - Head On** is available in the USA. It is on the internet at www.facinglife.tv The program is in its fourth season and screens on cable and satellite TV stations. All the programs can be purchased on DVD - costs range from US\$10 to \$15 per episode. Seasons 2 to 4 can also be **watched online** - each program is about 85-90 MB.

The program is encouraging, uplifting and challenging - it shows families coping with tough issues such as a Down syndrome or spina bifida child, breast cancer, using adult stem cell transplants to overcome paraplegia and a family having sextuplets even though their doctor suggested aborting

some of them. Each episode is a fusion of entertainment and education.

Faces of Abortion

Another inspirational and challenging TV program is **Faces of Abortion**. This program, a project of **Operation Outcry**, features women telling their own stories of what abortion has done to them. *Faces of Abortion* is touching hearts and changing lives through the testimony of those who have been hurt by abortion.

The program screens on *Sky Angel* satellite TV. Several episodes can be watched online - see <http://www.operationoutcry.org/pages.asp?pageid=27773> All episodes are available on the AFA website: <http://www.afa.net/womansrights/index.html>

World News

UK: Lower age of consent

UK academic, Cambridge law professor John Spencer, is calling for the age of consent for sex to be lowered to 13.

We ask 'Why?'

He argued, on a BBC debate on 'Iconoclasts' in September 2009, that the current 'age of consent' of 16 makes criminals of half the population. That is, they're having sex anyway so we should legalise it!

But if the age of consent was lowered to 13 then a 30-year-old man could legally have sex with a 13 year old girl - or boy!

During October 2009, yet another case was reported in the UK of a 14 year old girl being pregnant to a 13 year old boy. The government's \$300 million funding to try and prevent teen pregnancies and promote condom use is NOT working.

Why not educate them about the adverse consequences of early sexual activity and promote abstinence?

UK: Muslims in cathedral

Bradford Cathedral recently appointed a **Muslim woman, Nuzhat Ali**, as its Inter-faith Development Officer! Her role will include a theological dimension as she will give "Scriptural Reasoning Workshops"!

This situation is deplorable! How can a Muslim teach Christian doctrine and beliefs?

Canon Chris Chivers, of Blackburn Cathedral, the first to employ a Muslim, pre-empted any protest by saying "There are always going to be people with extreme views who have difficulties with this. However, if you are firm and strong in your

faith, then what is the problem in talking with someone of a different faith? What are you going to lose?"

However, this is a straw man. First, it implies that one is an extremist if you object to a Christian cathedral employing a Muslim. Second, the idea that "talking to someone of a different faith" automatically equates to employing them is clearly questionable.



Manhattan Declaration

A formidable coalition of 150 Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical leaders are calling on Christians to reject secular authority – and even engage in civil disobedience – if laws force them to accept abortion, same-sex marriage and other ideas that betray their religious beliefs. They have prepared and published a new manifesto called "**The Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience**". The 4,700-word document was released on November 20, 2009.

Prominent US Baptist Albert Mohler said he signed it because it was important to make a stand as the time could well be coming when such action is needed. On second thoughts, perhaps it has already arrived!

Read the Declaration at <http://manhattandeclaration.org/>

You can sign the declaration online to show to show your support. At the time of printing there were already 194,672 signatures.

Sweden and same-sex 'marriage'

The Lutheran Church of Sweden has decided to endorse same-sex 'marriages'. In their statement they said, "From the perspective of biblical theology, the commandment of love is superior to all other commandments and prohibitions in the Bible. The decisive factor where forms of cohabitation are concerned is not individual bible passages but what is of benefit or of harm to people." So much for what the Bible says!

Ministry News

Peter and Jenny had a great time in Western Australia, speaking at the **CDP WA Branch Annual Conference**, Bassendean Presbyterian Church, Hope Christian School (to all students Prep - Yr 12 in different groups) and at a number of other engagements.

We made some important new contacts ,especially in the WA Parliament, and many people signed up for our various information sources - the Journal and E-news.

Jenny spoke at the **Australian Christian Nation Conference** in Sydney and was well received. Once again making important new contacts.

Cameron continues to ramp up the

Resistance Thinking web site and is now sending weekly RT emails and encouraging some great debates on the RT blog.

Peter and Jenny are proud grandparents for a second time. Zoe Olivia was born during November. Mum, Dad, Zoe and big brother Tyler are all doing well.

Please Note: We do not produce a journal in January - the February Journal will be mailed on February 4, 2010.

Also Please Note: The office will be closed from Friday December 18, 2009 until Monday January 18, 2010.

Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support through 2009, without which we could not keep you informed and help you 'Make a Difference' in your community. This time of year is often difficult for us financially, so please pray that adequate funds come in.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	School chaplains	Kevin Rudd, Malcolm Turnbull, fed MP, Senators.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	WA: Euthanasia	MPs - 1 in Leg Assembly, 5-7 in Leg Council	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Special Salt Shakers *E-Journal* Christmas promotion

Buy one get one free

December is a time of giving and January is a time for holidays, that is why both months are always financially difficult for us at Salt Shakers.

Nevertheless, you could help us ride through this time by directing some of your Christmas spending our way and at the same time help your friends be better equipped to oppose the forces of darkness in our nation.

As a **subscriber** to our Monthly E-Journal we invite you to give **two E-Journal gift subscriptions for the price of one. Yes, 2 subscriptions for \$25 -**

Once you purchase the first two subscriptions you can make as many half price gift subscriptions as you wish.

On receipt of your gift subscriptions, we will send an E-card announcing your gift followed by the December E-Journal.

How easy is that? Forget the incessant Christmas shopping, just phone through your order on (03) 9800 2855 with your credit card details or complete the attached form and your gift will be on the way before Christmas. (Offer closes December 16)

All the Details we require are listed on the form below. Payment by CC, Direct Deposit or Cheque - see below. This offer closes on December 16 and is for a one year subscription only

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