

# Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion.

In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, 'tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine'.

J C Ryle, 1877

February 2010 AD

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## Editorial

After a welcome break over Christmas and New Year - we are back at our desks and at our computers!

Even though we have had a rest, the issues and situations have not stopped... here is a sample. . .

\* **Californication** another series has been shown on Channel Ten on Wednesday nights over the summer. Despite huge opposition, Channel Ten has even brought the start time forward to 9.30 pm.

\* **Midsumma** - Melbourne's homosexual festival - is currently on from January 17 to February 7, 2010. The promotion of homosexuality through these events, especially the 'pride' marches supported by both politicians and community leaders like the Victorian Police Commissioner are a blight on our city, our state and our nation.

\* **R18+ rated computer games** - Submissions are being received for the federal government's inquiry into whether violent and sexualised computer games should be allowed in Australia for adults - naturally this means children and teenagers will also have easy access to them too.

\* **Earthquake aftermath** - Every night we have seen the human tragedy on our TV screens from the massive earthquake in Haiti as people struggle to find food and shelter. The people desperately need help.

\* **The climate keeps changing** - a recent newspaper told us that the southern states of Australia are in for a "three-month-long cool change" whilst the northern states are expected to have hotter than average temperature! Britain and the USA have just had one of the coldest and whitest Christmases on record. We have received many photos from family and friends in

the UK of snow, snow and more snow. Makes one ask just how cold it would have been without global warming! (Sorry, couldn't resist that!)



\* **The relentless push towards same-sex 'marriage'** in Australia continues with more rallies planned across the country by various homosexual groups in 2010.

We have said it often, but once the door to legal recognition was opened and endorsed by some Christian groups there would be no stopping the push for "marriage equality". Despite the token political support for not changing the law to allow same-sex 'marriage', incremental change has and will continue to happen until the almost inevitable 'equality' is granted. UNLESS there is a renewed and strong voice opposed to the legal recognition of immorality the future of marriage and the natural family will continue to be at risk.

A special 'thank you' to all those who responded so generously to our pre-Christmas email appeal for financial help to get through the usually quiet (financially) months of December and January.

We were able to have a break without worrying if we could afford to pay the next month's office rent. We really appreciate your ongoing support. Thank you for caring about the issues facing our community... Please stay tuned in the coming weeks as we gear up for another busy year in 2010.

If you do not receive our E-News email updates please sign up. Simply send an email to [peter@saltshakers.org.au](mailto:peter@saltshakers.org.au) and provide your name, phone number and postal address as verification and we will add you to the growing number of people receiving the extra information that helps you to 'Make a difference'.

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

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# The Future of our Christian Freedoms

By Peter Stokes

The future of our Christian freedom in Australia lies very much in the hands of the Christian church itself, as has always been the case throughout history.

The initial advance of Christianity was through a few passionate people prepared to lay their lives on the line to spread the 'Good News'. Christianity was taken across the world by passionate people.

In more recent history we have seen the advance of Nazism, Communism and materialism made easy by a weak and apathetic church. Even the rise of Islam and other religions in the UK, once the light to the world, has been made easy because of a divided, weak and materialistic church.

Our Christian freedom in Australia has been eroded for the same reason. Once the church put social justice ahead of evangelism and compromised its Christian voice for money, our freedom decreased.

Social welfare and education have always been ways the church has shown the love of Christ to the community at large. Christians took in the unwanted babies dumped by the Romans, did research in health and science leading to the establishment of hospitals, opposed slavery and established schools and universities. These things were done in the name of Christ in order to reach the lost with the Gospel, to give the message that 'Jesus is the only way to God'.

Sadly, many of these things have now become 'secular' institutions, no longer preaching the Gospel. Partly because Christians lost their zeal for evangelism and partly because

of money, usually government money, and along with the money came the pressure to stop evangelising.

At the same time Protestant Christians started to believe the lie that 'politics and religion don't mix', they no longer saw their role as leading society, but leading denominations and churches.

Today, we regularly hear objections to government funding of Christian schools and hospitals simply because they are Christian. This is because there are now so many atheists and a growing number of people from other 'religions' in our parliaments.

A new threat to Christian freedom and freedom generally then came through government legislation. Anti-discrimination laws grew from a desire to stop colour and ethnic discrimination and, sadly, Christians did not oppose these laws because they did not understand the real agenda behind them.

Neither did they think enough about politics to realise that making laws is the wrong way to deal with such issues. The Christian church uses dialogue and education to spread its message, not laws, and that is the message Christians should have given to government. Instead they remained virtually silent.

Christians also missed the obvious fact that such laws would never stop at issues of race and colour. Through the sexual revolution and the feminist movement, personal 'rights' became more important than community freedom, so the list of issues

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covered by anti-discrimination laws grew. Once this type of law was well established, the inevitable happened and we even had laws to outlaw discrimination against people's immoral lifestyle choices and religion.

The next wave of reduced freedom came in the form of anti-vilification laws. While anti-discrimination was based on what people do, vilification laws control what people can say. Governments, often through self-serving government Commissions and Tribunals, became the ultimate 'thought police' that we have seen in countries like Russia and China but never thought we would have in Australia.

Despite the effect these laws would inevitably have on freedom of speech and freedom of religious dialogue, once again church leaders took a conciliatory and compromising position; some even supported such laws in the name of 'human rights'.

Worse, still, is that most Christian leaders agreed to such laws "as long as we [the 'religious'] have an exemption". The Christian principle of 'loving your

neighbour' went out the door and instead it was, 'as long as my backside is safe we don't care about those who do not call themselves Christian or religious'.

This selfish attitude can be seen most clearly in the recent debate over the proposed removal of existing 'exceptions' to such laws in Victoria. Whilst so many in the church stayed silent over the legal recognition and registration of immorality (same-sex relationship registers) and the decriminalisation of murder (abortion), they came out in force to oppose the removal of safeguards given specifically to them about the choices they can make.

It is this attitude that threatens not only our Christian freedom but the freedom of the whole nation in 2010. Until Christians once again become passionate about the Gospel, truly care for others more than themselves and once again get involved in the political process, the freedom which is 'in and through Christ' will be further eroded away by the laws of man, such as the proposed 'Charter of Rights'.

*This article was printed in Family World News - January 2010*

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## Update: Atheist bus ads

Atheist ads are continuing to be posted on buses around the world. The first ads - which said "There's probably no god - so stop worrying and enjoy life" appeared on buses in the UK during 2009.



Atheist ads have recently been posted on the side of buses in Hobart, Tasmania. The ads, which say "*Atheism - Celebrate Reason*", have been organised by the Atheist Foundation of Australia (AFA). Last year the AFA announced that they planned to put this ad (or one that said "*Celebrate reason: Sleep in on Sunday mornings*") on buses in Melbourne but

the proposed campaign was rejected by APN Outdoor, the country's biggest outdoor advertising company. The AFA made a complaint to the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

claiming discrimination.

In Hobart, bus company Metro initially refused to have the ads. The AFA complained of 'discrimination' to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner. The case was resolved in a conciliation session on August 5, 2009. Metro agreed to allow the ads to be placed on buses during 2010.



## Sydney mardi gras - again!



Yes, it's that time of year again!

Over the years we have regularly reported on the Sydney homosexual mardi gras. The parade originally started as a protest march in 1978. However it quickly developed into a street parade complete with elaborate floats and political comment and a festival with a variety of events and exhibitions. The aim was to celebrate the homosexual lifestyle and to advocate for political change.

The event used to be four weeks but this year it has been shortened to 17 days (Feb 19 to March 7). This year the parade is in the middle of the festival on February 27 instead of on the last night. The traditional party which followed the parade will now be held at the close of the festival on March 6.

Soon after starting Salt Shakers we became aware of the mardi gras parade and began expressing concern about the support given to it by politicians and major companies.

Years ago, the mardi gras had major companies such as Telstra and Ford sponsoring the event. A concerted campaign over many years - highlighting the exaggerated crowd numbers and the nature of the event led to the major companies no longer sponsoring the event.

For the past few years the main sponsor was a homosexual dating service. Increasingly we notice that city councils and government agencies are the 'sponsors' of the event, along with homosexual media groups, companies selling alcohol and a few others.

Your letters and action have made an incredible difference over the years.

Your letters also helped get the mardi gras off 'free-to-air' television - Channel Ten and the ABC. After several years with no media presentation of the parade, it actually

appeared on Foxtel Pay TV last year - but people had to pay a significant sum to see the parade on *Main Event*. This year Foxtel is broadcasting it on *Arena*.

### *Messages from politicians*

Over the years some politicians have sent messages of support to the mardi gras.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd sent a message of support to the organisers and his best wishes to participants. He said the event "celebrates the diversity of gay and lesbian culture" as it shares the Australian values of freedom of expression, tolerance and celebration".

Malcolm Turnbull, who they describe as the "former leader of the Opposition" sent a message saying that the mardi gras is "a celebration of equality and hope" that "makes a major contribution to Australia's cultural life". Former NSW Premier Nathan Rees sent a message, as did Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney.

**ACTION:** Write to PM Kevin Rudd - express your concern about his support for the mardi gras Ask him not to support the mardi gras in the future. Also write to Malcolm Turnbull. Send your letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

### *The parade and crowd numbers*

Over the years we have monitored crowd numbers at the parade. The organisers still give exaggerated crowd numbers to the media but they have been reduced over recent years, mostly due to us sending media releases and speaking to reporters about their figures. However, now they are quoted as 'organisers' figures' and the police aren't endorsing them!

We'll be monitoring the crowd figures again this year and report on that next month!

## News & Action

### *NSW: Adoption*

Some good news! The NSW government has announced that they will not change the law to allow same-sex couples to adopt children. In early January, Community Services Minister **Linda Burney** said that there wasn't community agreement on the matter and the government would not follow the recommendation of a bipartisan committee to lift the restriction on adoption by same-sex couples.

The new Premier of NSW, **Kristina Keneally**, is a committed Catholic with strong Christian values, so hopefully this decision means a move toward more conservative values in NSW.

**ACTION:** Write to the new Premier - and Linda Burney - congratulate them on the NSW government's decision NOT to allow homosexual couples to adopt children. Parliament House, Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000.

### *Internet filtering*

The federal government has announced that it will introduce internet filtering - internet service providers will be required to block material that is included in a 'list' of proscribed webpages - this includes pornography rated 'Refused Classification' which includes child pornography.

Under the government's internet filtering proposal, ISPs may offer optional filtering of pornographic material rated R18+ or X.

While it might be good that some objectionable material will be banned, one concern about the filtering proposal is that websites or webpages can be banned without the public knowing. In recent times, we have heard about the censorship of the internet in China where the government bans websites

they deem to be 'unacceptable'.

In a trial of the proposed Australian internet filtering program last year, *Wikileaks* published a list of the sites/pages that were in the 'banned' list. It included one pro-life webpage, on *Abortion TV*, that contained photographs of aborted babies. When another website, *Whirlpool*, placed a link to the page as part of a discussion on the issue, the website was told by ACMA that if they did not remove the link they would be liable to sizeable fines of \$11,000 a day!

Since there will not be a public list of the "banned" websites, a filtering program could end up banning information that is deemed to be 'unacceptable' to the authorities or people administering the system. We need to know who will be responsible, and what accountability/transparency there will be.

### *\* Sexual Health Campaign*

The federal government launched the next phase of its '*National Sexual Health Campaign*' at the start of January 2010.\*

The campaign will again use the slogan "*STIs are spreading fast – always use a condom*" and will "target young people and encourage those who have had unprotected sex to see a doctor to discuss getting tested".

The campaign is part of the Rudd government's response to the rise in chlamydia, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis infections. They are using the term STIs - 'sexually transmissible infections' - rather than calling them 'sexually transmitted diseases' as they used to be called!

The government is spending \$9.84 million on the *National STI Prevention Program*. The campaign even includes a website about STIs.

Perhaps they should try telling young people about the causes of the illnesses and advocate abstinence instead of telling them to use a condom.

\* *Source: Govt Media release, 2/1/2010.*

## Humanism as 'religious instruction'

Jenny Stokes

Humanism proclaims that there is no god and that man is in control. So it would seem rather incongruous that humanism could be taught as part of the **religious instruction program** in primary schools - but that is now about to happen in Victoria.

The Victorian government decided, in late 2009, to allow 'Humanism' to be accredited to be taught in the 'religious instruction' program in Victorian primary schools.

When the Victorian state government took over education in 1872, the churches, who had previously been responsible for education, continued to teach Christian religious education in schools. When the *Education Act* was revised in 2006, a concerted campaign by Christians meant "special religious instruction" was retained.

A number of religions have approval to participate in Victoria's religious education program. The Education Department notes that the approved Christian curriculum operates through *Access Ministries* and that "Catholic, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Bahá'í, Hare Krishna and instructors from other recognised religions" are accredited by a range of agencies.

Currently, parents can request that their children not attend religious instruction or can specify what sort of religious instruction they do. With more religions and ideologies being authorised to provide lessons under the banner of 'religious education', we may see all 'religions' provided at the one time and parents 'elect' a religion for their child to study. This would have a negative impact on Christian religious education.

### **Humanism a 'religion'?**

In recent years, humanists have proclaimed that humanism is not a religion, so it is

ironical to see them ask to be included in the religious instruction program.

When the 'Humanist Manifesto' was written in 1933, the document actually referred to them as "Religious humanists" and the system of belief as "Religious Humanism".

However, when humanists began to call for religion (specifically Christianity) to be removed from the school curriculum in the USA they realised that they needed to distance themselves from the notion of being 'religious'. In 1973, *Humanist Manifesto II* rejected any idea of the supernatural whilst agreeing with the "need to preserve the best ethical teachings" of religions and affirming the "separation of church and state". All references to 'religion' or 'religious' had been removed. A third document, *Humanism and its Aspirations* (2003) [*Humanist Manifesto III*], has no mention of being 'religious'.

### **Humanists & Religious Instruction**

So why would the humanists want to be part of 'religious instruction'?

In short, the ends justifies the means: if they can get children into their humanism classes then they will teach them humanistic ideas and the children won't be doing Christian religious education! The small compromise of being part of the 'religious instruction' program is worth it.

The **Humanist Society of Victoria** has prepared a draft curriculum, called *Applied Ethical Education - Humanism for Schools*. Read it at <http://www.ethicaleducation.net/>

**Please pray** that Victorian children continue to be taught about the Christian faith through religious instruction in schools.

*Humanist Manifesto Documents are available at [www.americanhumanist.org](http://www.americanhumanist.org)*



# Political Parties What do they stand for

## Part three - Minor Parties #2

By Peter Stokes

As stated in Part 2 of this series, there are many 'minor' parties, some with no real chance of being elected. Three such parties that have had some semblance of political success in recent years are the **Christian Democratic Party (CDP)**, the **Democratic Labor Party (DLP)**, and **Family First (FF)**. All three have Christian roots.

In the normal scheme of things in Australia, the only way small parties can hope to turn aspiration into reality is through the Federal Senate or State Upper houses that have some form of proportional representation voting system. A much lower vote (which varies in each state and the Senate) is required to be elected. In the Federal House of Representatives and in State Lower Houses the need to accumulate a vote of more than 50%+ makes success extremely hard - yet not totally impossible with the right candidate who has a good public profile.

Sadly, too many Christians simply enter the race at election time and disappear again. It takes constant exposure through letters to newspapers, charity/service work in the community, or business prominence to come within a bull's roar of a chance at convincing 50% of people to support you.

### **Christian Democratic Party**

The CDP is most active in the NSW and WA state parliaments but there are branches in other states. CDP regularly runs candidates in Federal elections.

Their only elected representative is in the NSW Upper House but they came very close to gaining an Upper House seat in the last WA State election.

CDP was originally formed in 1974 and was called the **Family Action Movement**. The name was changed to the **Call to Australia**

**Party** in 1977. A second name change to '**Christian Democratic Party**' took place in 1997 because people thought that a specifically Christian Party ought to have the word 'Christian' in its name.

After many election attempts the Rev Fred Nile was elected to the NSW Upper House in 1981. Fred was well known as a social reformer before entering parliament. He was the founder of *Festival of Light* in NSW. He now has the honour of being the longest serving NSW State politician.

CTA/CDP has had two sitting members in the NSW Upper House since 1984 when Jim Cameron was elected to join Fred. Elaine Nile was elected in 1988 and served for some time until ill health saw Gordon Moyes

join Fred as her replacement. Sadly, through an unfortunate series of circumstances and a breakdown of communication between Fred Nile and Gordon Moyes, Gordon has left CDP and is now affiliated with Family First. CDP has always been distinctively Christian, with very strong pro-family and pro-life values. They have vigorously opposed the homosexualisation of Australian society and, recently have also taken a strong stand against unchecked Muslim immigration.

### **The Democratic Labor Party**

The DLP is active in many States but their only success of late has been in the Victorian Upper House.

The original DLP was founded by Bob Santamaria in 1954 as a breakaway from the Australian Labor Party. A number of Victorian Catholics were concerned about the direction of the ALP and the increasing influence of Communism in the trade union/ALP leadership.



The Party was officially dissolved in 1978 but a small group of supporters formed the current DLP to continue pressing the values and political presence of the original DLP. Although heavily Catholic, the DLP has many Protestant and non-Christian members who support its values and its support for workers rights.

A number of those involved with the DLP are associated with the union movement, which is probably why Victorian Upper House DLP Member Peter Kavanagh has suggested, "The DLP remains the only political party in Australia which is pro-family, pro-life and genuinely pro-worker."

### ***Family First***

FF was started in 2002 by a group of Christians associated with Paradise AOG Church in South Australia. Andrew Evans, the former senior pastor, became their first elected representative when he won a seat in the South Australian Upper House.

FF now has two representatives in the Upper House of the SA parliament and in 2004 Steve Fielding won a tight race for the last Victorian Senate seat in that Federal election - mainly because of preference votes from the major parties. They also came very close to winning Senate seats in Tasmania and South Australia at that election. This success was not continued in the 2007 federal election - with no FF candidate winning a seat.

Family First has consistently tried to distance themselves from the 'Christian' label, stating that they are socially conservative and their priority is 'Family'. This has led to some confusion about what else they really stand for and also who can stand as a candidate for them.

Clearly, as their name suggests, their first priority is the natural family. The Party is opposed to abortion on demand and any recognition of homosexual relationships. Steve has been a strong voice in the 'global

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warming/climate change' debate calling on Penny Wong to show him the evidence for man-made global warming, a challenge she could not meet to his satisfaction. He subsequently opposed the ETS tax. In South Australia their position on global warming is less than clear with FF supporting a vote for strong emissions targets by 2020.

FF rejects the principle of harm minimisation in the treatment of drug addicts and has also called for the removal of liquor advertising

**All three political parties lean heavily toward Christian values, especially the value of human life from conception and support of the traditional family.**

The danger, though, is that they will compete for a small core of informed Christians who think about how they vote. If they compete in this way, they will negate each other. Yet cooperation seems too hard as each Party has already engaged in criticising the others in a desire to be the 'top dog alternative' Party for Christians.

Unless there is genuine cooperation, which, sadly, seems unlikely, none of them will be a force to be reckoned with.

You have to be elected to really make a difference as a political party. Otherwise you may as well be a lobby group. We have consistently suggested that there seems little chance of a Christian political party becoming a major party in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because you have to appeal to the mainstream voter as well as to Christians.

The danger then, of course, is that you end up like any other Party - compromise becomes the rule not only in decision making but in who stands for the party. Values inevitably slip towards the lowest common denominator, as we have seen with both major parties. More about them in the coming months.

It's not easy being in politics But then who said life was meant to be easy?

### **Anthem flaw**

What is lacking on our National Anthem is there is no mention of God in it. My humble suggestion is that instead of the 2nd line "For we are young & free", we should have "For God has made us free" or "To God we thankful be". The Good Book says that if we acknowledge God He will give us wisdom.

**Ron Lean**, Margate, WA  
*Redcliffe & Bayside Herald* 3/12/2009

### **Miracle of man's second chance**

Well, it's almost Christmas, and my mind travels back 25 years ago to my first Christmas as a Christian. I recall the minister preaching about Easter and how both events were linked, Christmas as Jesus' birth and Easter about His death, and it became clear to me that day that it seems people only enjoy the materialistic side of the festive season.

How easy it is to forget the wonderment and miracle of Christ's life. His birth from a Virgin and His sinless death. Both these events speak of God himself giving mankind a second chance to find ultimate forgiveness at an ultimate cost. God himself chose to die in our place so that we could live for eternity. Too often I see the Christmas message shrouded in material gain and the truth of the Bible is lost, but still this Christmas we are confronted with Jesus. I pray that people on the Gold Coast would give the only honour due to a true King, their hearts in repentance. God bless.

**Warren Williams**, Oxenford  
*Gold Coast Sun* 16/12/2009

### **Watch out for advertisers**

All power to *Kids Free 2B Kids* director Julie Gale for her vigilance over Cotton On's failing to withdraw tots' T-shirts with raunchy slogans ("Boycott call on tot shop", November 19).

All too often retailers wait until the heat is off, then continue on their merry way. Last year the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) directed that signboards offering a spurious solution to men's anxieties about erectile problems be removed.

Weeks later nothing had happened. Finally the advertiser changed one word, which apparently satisfied the ASB, and tried its luck with an even more confronting sign at one site. We must not let advertisers and retailers dictate public standards.

**John Morrissey**, Hawthorn  
*Herald Sun* 23/11/2009

### **Jesus is the reason**

Australia is a Christian nation, our highest thoughts during December must be the reason for this season - the birth of a baby named Jesus.

Please don't make an excuse or refuse to acknowledge the real and true reason for this season, Jesus is the reason.

It is important that Christmas season is celebrated and preserved as it has been for over 2000 years.

**Judith Bond**, Glen Alpine, NSW  
*Macarthur Advertiser* 3/12/2009

### **Battle for the souls of youth**

The violence epidemic is raging out of control in regional areas such as Ballarat, (*The Courier* December 31), as well as the mega city centres. Blaming the police for being unable to control it is unacceptable whilst our government remains addicted to obtaining taxes from alcohol and promoting alcohol soaked activities.

If the monies spent on government funded entertainment were directed at supporting and putting more police on our streets, and if magistrates had the moral fortitude to impose substantial sentences on violent and alcohol fuelled crimes, then there would be a start to making our streets safer for families and innocent people to participate in public activities.

The real tragedy is that we are producing a generation where many will suffer from alcohol-induced brain damage, which will cause much family heartache and create a substantial drain on our already overstretched health and welfare systems.

You don't solve this situation by raising licence fees on pubs and nightclubs, as proposed by our Victorian government - you immediately reduce the hours, sizes and numbers of the booze barns as a first step.

Many of our precious young people are losing their way, their sense of purpose in life, their hope for the future and their ability to function as responsible, productive adults who are able to contribute to our society.

Drowning themselves in alcohol is not a solution, it has become a catastrophe of epic proportions.

This a battle for the souls of our youth not just their bodies.

**Lennyce Westaway** Navigators  
*The Courier*, 4/1/2010

# ACT NOW! R18+ rated computer games

The federal government is conducting an Inquiry into whether R18+ computer games should be allowed in Australia.

When the last review of classification was done, this matter was considered but it was decided not to allow them in Australia.

However, those who want them are still lobbying for them - so the government is conducting an inquiry. It is important that we tell the government about our concerns.

## Overview of situation

Currently R18+ rated computer games - which contain high levels of sex and/or violence - are BANNED in Australia. This includes the very violent game *Manhunt* and *BMX XXX* which features topless riders and video clips of strippers.

A **Discussion Paper** has been released by the government. The 16 page Discussion Paper provides an overview of the situation and presents arguments for both sides.

In your response, you need to answer the question: "Should the Australian National Classification Scheme include an R18+ classification category for computer games?"

A **template** is provided to help you make a submission. Some statements are given and you are invited to respond to each of them.

For instance, one statement is "Adults should not be prevented from playing R18+ level computer games simply because they are unsuitable for minors". You can choose a response ranging from "Strongly disagree" through to "Strongly Agree". [We suggest "Strongly Disagree" for this one!]

The Discussion Paper is posted on our Campaign page for this issue - along with suggested responses: [www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns/583-r18-rated-](http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns/583-r18-rated-)

computer-games-on-the-agenda

**Submissions due: February 28, 2010.**

The government claims it is "not advocating a position". Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor said "We are releasing a discussion paper, rather than proposing a change, so we have an opportunity to gauge all community views on the subject."

However, once you start 'discussing' a topic you are one step closer to change!

## Why don't we want R18+ games?

\* If R18+ rated games are legal, young people will be able to access them.

\* The games are interactive - the player takes on the character and internalises the actions as they play the game.

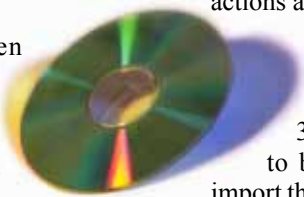
\* Those supporting the availability of such games say that most gamers are over 30, that children won't be able to buy them, that people could import them anyway and that they have a 'right' to watch what they want.

However, just ask them "If you can graphically simulate murdering, raping, mutilating, torturing somebody in a video game, what aspect of your character will be enhanced by doing so?"

The response? There is not one single "benefit" of R-rated games that will enhance or improve character!

## **ACTION**

1. Read the Discussion Paper.
2. Make a submission by February 28, 2010. If can have access to the internet, please use the template. Otherwise, post your response. Send submission/letter to:  
**Email:** [classificationreview@ag.gov.au](mailto:classificationreview@ag.gov.au)  
**Fax:** 02 6141 3488 **Post:** Classification Review, Attorney-General's Department, 3-5 National Circuit, BARTON ACT 2600.



## Combating Christian Paganism

Bill Muehlenberg

While Christian paganism may seem to be a contradiction in terms, it sadly is not. Indeed, there are growing segments of the church which may be better described as pagan than as Christian. Many churches have abandoned biblical truth, and have instead simply latched onto the latest secular trends and fads.

Because belief in truth has been undermined in the surrounding culture, it is not surprising that truth is under attack within the churches as well. Unfortunately, almost any non-biblical belief or agenda can now be found in various circles calling themselves Christian.

Want to introduce homosexuality into the churches? No problem. There are plenty of churches which have long ago given up on the biblical position on that issue. Want divorce to be just as easy as it is in the surrounding secular culture? Easy, that is well under way as well.

Want to try to combine New Age teaching with biblical beliefs? Yep, that too is being done in many churches. Want to argue that all religious traditions are more or less equal, and we must not be too exclusive in our beliefs? All sorts of church groups are running with that one. Sadly, much of the church today has simply succumbed to the spirit of the age

Consider the words of one leading pastor: “There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine’ (Eph. 4:14). There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten path of our forefathers. Thousands

will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true. There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings. There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity.”

Powerful words. But they were actually written by the great English evangelical J C Ryle back in 1877! So this paganisation of the churches is not exactly new, but it seems to be getting more pronounced with

**Many churches  
have abandoned  
biblical truth**

each passing year. And I am not the only one to be greatly concerned about such trends. One of the fathers of modern evangelicalism, J I Packer is equally concerned, and has just penned a new volume in order to turn things around.

Called *Grounded in the Gospel* (Baker, 2010), Packer and Gary Parrett seek to stop the rot by calling Christians to return to sound biblical instruction, including the systematic teaching of Christian doctrine. A recent article in *Christianity Today*<sup>1</sup> explains their concerns:

“Influential theologian J I Packer wants evangelical churches to recover catechesis, or systematic instruction in the essentials of the Christian faith. Packer believes the idea is an alien concept to most evangelicals. ‘We are drifting back into paganism, that’s the truth,’ he said in a lecture last Saturday at St Matthew’s Cathedral in Dallas, according to The Living Church News Service.

“The 83-year-old Anglican priest has co-authored a new book, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*, in which he makes the case that catechesis is a non-negotiable practice

of churches and is of no less value than Bible study and expository preaching.

“During Saturday’s lecture, he said he yearns for ‘Bible-based, Christ-centred, declarative in style’. But recovering catechesis in churches will be a challenge, he added. Earlier, he called it the greatest challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church.”

Packer said it’s “ridiculous to think that no more learning of the faith is necessary after confirmation has taken place. Ongoing learning is part of the calling of the church. It has to be taught in all churches at all times.”

To which I offer a hearty ‘Amen’. I have been continually dismayed and astonished over recent years at just what a dismal understanding so many Christians have of even the most basic of Christian teachings. Many believers could not explain key biblical doctrines, or probably even recite five of the Ten Commandments.

Indeed, how many believers even read their Bibles on a regular basis, let alone study it thoroughly and consistently? And how many are getting sound teaching and biblical exposition in their own pulpits? I suspect that only a small minority of believers today are exposed to regular, systematic biblical teaching.

What many believers are getting today of course is plenty of entertainment. They are getting all sorts of mushy, feel-good pep talks, therapy sessions, how-to-courses (how to feel good about yourself, how to lose weight for Jesus, etc), and lots of bubblegum teaching.

But where is the solid book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter exposition of the Word of God? Where is the systematic teaching of basic Bible doctrines? Where is the emphasis on Bible memorisation and the daily study of Christian truths?

In a society which emphasises image over content, entertainment over teaching, superficiality over substance, and emotions over thought, it is no wonder that the churches have been floundering. They have simply bought into the surrounding culture.

They have thought that a parade of celebrities will do the trick. They have thought that making people feel good is all that is needed. They have thought that telling people what they want to hear, instead of what they need to hear, will suffice.

No wonder our churches are having so little impact, and so many in the world simply yawn – or laugh – at Christianity. No wonder we are making so little headway, and having so little influence.

## Many believers could not explain key biblical doctrines

Why would the world want to come into the churches when all they find there is much of the same? If entertainment and amusement is all we can offer, well, the world can usually do a better job of such things.

Will a renewal of catechesis solve all of our problems? No, but it is surely part of a much-needed makeover of the church today. The importance of doctrine and teaching is splashed all over the pages of the New Testament. If the early disciples needed such systematic training and teaching in biblical truth, then we today certainly do as well.

I, for one, applaud the call of Packer to revitalise a dying, and increasingly pagan, church. The question is, will his call fall on deaf ears? Time will tell, but unless the Western churches decide to start getting serious about their faith – including the importance of biblical doctrine – then the future is looking rather grim indeed.

1. <http://au.christiantoday.com/article/church-is-drifting-into-paganism-says-packer/7485.htm>

Reprinted by permission. Bill Muehlenberg runs **Culture Watch** which comments on current issues: [www.billmuehlenberg.com](http://www.billmuehlenberg.com)

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## 40 Days for Life

### *Life Is For Everyone*

One of the main challenges in the pro-life movement is to change people's perceptions about life, about pregnancy and abortion. Getting people to value life helps people to change their view about abortion.

A highly successful campaign called **40 Days for Life** started in America in 2004. The aim of *40 Days for Life* is to change the culture of death to a culture of life in the minds of people who see the campaign.

**40 Days for Life** starts on February 17, 2010 and concludes on March 28, 2010. **40 Days for Life** is a focused pro-life effort that consists of:

- 40 days of prayer and fasting
- 40 days of peaceful vigil
- 40 days of community outreach

See website: [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com)

Last year, Brisbane ran this very successful campaign. This year, Sydney and Melbourne are also participating.



One of the most public aspects is a peaceful prayer vigil outside a prominent abortion clinic. Melbourne - Fertility Control Clinic, East Melbourne; Sydney - Pre-Term abortion clinic, Surry Hills; Brisbane - Planned Parenthood of Australia, Bowen Hills. The organisers are seeking people to participate in this peaceful witness to life and participate in other activities. At the least, please pray during the 40 days. Register online or contact Fons Janssen, 03 51942340; [fonsforlife@skymesh.com.au](mailto:fonsforlife@skymesh.com.au)

**Melbourne:** [www.40daysforlife.com/melbourne/](http://www.40daysforlife.com/melbourne/)

**Brisbane:** [www.40daysforlife.com/brisbane](http://www.40daysforlife.com/brisbane)

**Sydney:** [www.40daysforlife.com/sydney/](http://www.40daysforlife.com/sydney/)

### *International Campaign*

Read the 2009 international campaign report at <http://www.40daysforlife.com/docs/2009report.pdf> The campaign is held at the same time in hundreds of participating cities in America and other countries.

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## 'Do Not Call' Register

Have you registered your phone numbers with the federal government's 'Do Not Call' register to ensure that you don't get phone calls from companies promoting and selling their products? Phone numbers can be registered if they are primarily used for personal use. You can also register mobile phone numbers.

Even if you register, you can still receive calls from market researchers and organisations acting in the public interest.

If you registered at the start of the scheme in May 2007, the listing of your phone number will run out soon - they expire after three years. You will need to re-register your

phone number if want your registration to continue. If you haven't registered and want to avoid receiving telemarketing calls, register your phone number(s).

To update your registration, phone 1300 792 958 or visit the *Do Not Call* website to update your details and find out more: [www.acma.gov.au/donotcall](http://www.acma.gov.au/donotcall)

PS: If you received an email that mentioned mobile phone numbers being made "public" and being charged for such calls and services, just delete it! It is not relevant for Australia. See ACMA's comment at [www.acma.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?WEB/STANDARD/1001/pc=PC\\_311873](http://www.acma.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?WEB/STANDARD/1001/pc=PC_311873)

## Mother loses custody of daughter

An American court has ruled that Lisa Miller must hand over her daughter to her former lesbian partner.

Lisa is the biological mother of Isabella, who is now 7 years old. Lisa gave birth to Isabella through artificial insemination while still living in a civil union with Janet Jenkins in Vermont in 2002. Jenkins has no biological connection with Isabella.

About a year later, Lisa left the lesbian lifestyle and became a Christian. She moved out of the home she shared with Jenkins and took her daughter with her - they now live in the state of Virginia.

When Jenkins sued for custody, a court initially ruled that the child should have access visits with Jenkins. When her daughter was distressed by the visits, Lisa stopped allowing the access visits. During the visits Isabella was exposed to the lesbian lifestyle and was frightened by Jenkins saying she planned to remove her from her mother and move her interstate.

Jenkins took legal action to try and gain custody in the courts in Vermont, where she lives. In November 2009 the Vermont court ruled that full custody of the daughter be given to Janet Jenkins.

Lisa was ordered to hand over her daughter by January 1st, 2010.

Lisa's lawyer Mathew Staver, chairman of *Liberty Counsel*, made an appeal against the decision in Virginia, asking that the decision not be enforced in Virginia.

Lisa Miller didn't hand over her daughter on January 1, 2010. It seems that Lisa and Isabella have gone into hiding - they haven't been seen since late November 2009. Jenkins has now brought contempt of court proceedings against Lisa Miller for failing to comply with the court's ruling. (Heard in a Vermont court on January 22, 2010)

What have things come to when a mother loses custody of her biological child? It really does show where the world is heading. Please pray for Lisa and Isabella as they deal with this situation and appeal against this decision.

***For more information...***

**Only One Mommy Facebook Group:**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=81022155363>

**Liberty Counsel page:** <http://www.lc.org> - search "Lisa Miller"



### RESISTANCE THINKING

After a break over the Christmas/New Year period, *Resistance Thinking* is back in full swing again. Cameron Spink, the RT co-ordinator, is posting articles and movie reviews on the RT website and sending a weekly email about the latest articles and

forum topics.

Please have a look at the RT website and let your young adults know about it. Encourage them to get involved - getting the emails, making comments or even writing articles and movie reviews!

**[www.resistance thinking.com](http://www.resistance thinking.com)**



## Prayer Update

### *Parliaments and MPs*

Please pray for federal and state Members of Parliament as they begin a new year of deliberations. Pray that they will make responsible and wise decisions.

### *Prime Minister*

Pray for wisdom for Kevin Rudd and his Cabinet as they lead the nation.

### *Opposition Leader*

Pray for Tony Abbott, federal Leader of the Opposition. Pray that he will be able to discern the key issues. Pray that he will be able to deal effectively with the media.

### *Elections*

During 2010 the federal election will be held. Start to pray about the future of our nation and how you might vote. Investigate the policies and platforms of the various political parties.



### *Issues*

Pray about all of the issues mentioned in this edition of the journal - pregnancy support, paganism in the churches, atheism, sexual health, internet filtering and so on.

Please also pray about all those matters that affect society that we haven't mentioned this month.

**Join us for Prayer and Breakfast**  
Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers  
**NEW TIME - 7.30 am every Thursday morning at SALT SHAKERS**

## Prayer for Religious Freedom

While Muslim leaders are criticising the Swiss vote to ban the construction of minarets in Switzerland, Christians in some Muslim-majority countries face severe restrictions on the building and repair of churches. In countries such as Saudi Arabia and the Maldives there are no church buildings at all. In a number of other countries, there are church buildings for foreigners but none for the indigenous Christians themselves.

The referendum decision on November 29, 2009 in Switzerland is beginning to have ramifications in other countries around the world. In Egypt, there has been a huge outcry against the Swiss decision, which

concerned only minarets, not mosques themselves. But Egypt is a country where it is normally extremely difficult for Christians to get permission to build new churches or even repair the existing ones. Christians are forced to travel long distances to worship or must meet in secret in their homes due to an insufficient number of church buildings. Furthermore, recent months have seen a spate of attacks on church buildings.

Pray for all Christians who are living in countries where they are the minority faith and facing such prejudice against them. Pray that they may know the peace and guidance of the Lord Jesus.

[*Barnabas Fund Prayer Focus*, Jan 2010.]

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

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## Pregnancy Support Helpline Scrapped

The federal government has decided to abolish the *National Pregnancy Support Helpline*. The helpline, which has helped thousands of women to obtain support during their pregnancy, was an initiative of the Howard Coalition government - in particular it was a response to concerns about the high abortion rate in Australia.

The service provides non-directive counselling that enables a woman to explore ALL the options - proceeding with the pregnancy and raising the child; proceeding with the pregnancy and adopting the child; and abortion.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon claims that few women use the service - there were 1438 calls between January and October 2009 with 930 calls about unintended pregnancy and 95 calls from women unsure about whether to continue with their pregnancy.

However, for all those women the service has provided valuable assistance. If there had been additional promotion of the service more women might have actually known about it and used the service.

The government has announced that they will replace the service with a new perinatal helpline and make it available to all parents. The new helpline would “offer a broader

range of information, advice and referral services, not just for pregnant women but new parents and their families”. The service will provide assistance for women suffering depression after the birth of a child or grieving after a miscarriage.

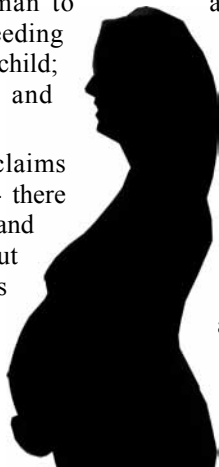
The new helpline would start on July 1, when the existing helpline would cease, as part of a \$120.5m maternity package announced in the budget.

While the new helpline will undoubtedly provide a helpful service to parents, it is vital that it continue to provide a counselling service to pregnant women who need help and support with their pregnancy.

Details about the National Pregnancy Support Helpline are at <http://www.health.gov.au/pregnancyhelpline>

**ACTION:** Please write to PM Kevin Rudd and Health Minister Nicola Roxon. Parliament House, CANBERRA, ACT 2600.

Ask them to ensure that the *National Pregnancy Support Helpline* is continued - or that the new perinatal helpline INCLUDES the provision of counselling for pregnant women who are unsure of how to respond to their pregnancy.



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## Promoting a pro-life message in Victoria

Mrs Jan Kronberg MLC will speak about this important topic at **Endeavour Forum's 31st birthday meeting**.

Jan was very vocal in speaking against the recent abortion legislation in Victoria.

**Date and Time:** February 5, 2010 at 7.30 pm.

**Venue:** St Patrick's School Hall, Childers St, MENTONE, Victoria 3194.

The meeting will be followed by supper. All welcome, \$10 donation appreciated.

RSVP essential for catering: Prue Oldham, (03) 9583 6835 or Margaret Butts, (03) 9589 5039.

## Islam - Minarets banned in Switzerland

The Swiss people have voted to ban the building of minarets on mosques in Switzerland. Minarets are towers on mosques which are used to broadcast the Muslim 'call to prayer'.

In the referendum, held in November 2009, 57% of the people voted against the minarets. The Swiss People's Party, which is concerned about immigration levels, had called for the referendum to be held.

Muslims in Switzerland were upset by the referendum vote. One Muslim, Hafid Ouairi, a former spokesman at the Geneva Mosque, appealed to the European Court of Human Rights. He alleges that the ban

violates his rights to freedom of religion and freedom from discrimination under the *European Convention on Human Rights*.

Others have also objected to the ban: the Swiss parliament voted to ask the Swiss people to reject the ban, some church groups opposed the ban, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay condemned the ban saying it was a form of religious discrimination and two lawsuits have been filed in the Swiss Supreme Court challenging the legality of the ban.

Report: JURIST, 16/12/2009, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minaret\\_controversy\\_in\\_Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minaret_controversy_in_Switzerland).

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## Copenhagen and climate

The international climate conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009 failed to reach agreement on a binding treaty to reduce emissions.

Two events had a significant impact in the weeks prior to the conference: 'Climategate' - the leaked emails from the University of East Anglia climate research group - and the revelation by Lord Monckton about the proposals in the draft treaty to establish an

international government to implement the treaty as well as the amount of the huge 'climate debt' to be paid to poor nations.

At the close of the conference international leaders (including Kevin Rudd and Barack Obama) jetted into Copenhagen to try and 'rescue' the negotiations. A statement was released but it is not specific and is not legally binding.

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## PWR appoints a Muslim as Chair

The Parliament of the World's Religions has appointed a new Chair. The new appointee, who began his role in January 2010, is a Muslim - Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid.

Mujahid is an imam in Chicago and is the president of *Sound Vision Foundation*, which produces *Radio Islam*, America's only daily Muslim call-in talk show.

The PWR obviously plans to continue to deal with issues such as climate change.

Mujahid said "As we deal with issues of poverty and climate change, we'll be nourishing all of our discourse with the perspective of Indigenous people—who happen to suffer the most from the excessive consumption that drives ruthless economic development."

He was introduced at the closing session of the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Melbourne in December 2009.

## World News

### *New York: same-sex 'marriage'*

The New York Senate defeated a bill to allow same-sex 'marriage' on December 3, 2009. **The vote was 38 to 24.**

This follows a vote by the people to overturn the state of Maine's same-sex marriage law in November 2009. The law was passed by the legislature and signed by Democratic Governor John Baldacci in May 2009.

Homosexual activists are now trying to get legislation allowing same-sex unions passed in New Jersey before the current governor leaves office.

### *US: Live nativity & Supreme Court*

A nativity scene, with live actors playing the key roles, was displayed on the public footpath in front of the United States Supreme Court on December 19, 2009.

The display, which was sponsored by **Faith and Action** and the **Christian Defense Coalition**, was part of a "nationwide campaign to confront the erosion and hostility toward public expressions of faith especially during the Christmas Season."

The display was part of *Operation Nativity* and the *Nativity Project* which promote manger scenes on both public and private property. (CNW, 18/11/2009)

### *USA: Lesbian bishop*

The Los Angeles diocese of the Episcopalian (Anglican) Church has just elected a lesbian to be a bishop. This follows the election and subsequent ordination of open homosexual Gene Robinson as a bishop in New Hampshire in 2004.

**Mary Douglas Glasspool** was elected in



December - the appointment now has to be confirmed or rejected by diocesan bishops and diocesan standing committees.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams called on American Anglicans to block the appointment of the lesbian bishop.

Please Pray that the appointment is rejected.

Meanwhile, on November 18, 2009, the Lutheran Church of Sweden also ordained its first lesbian bishop, **Eva Brunne**.

### *UK: Abortion*

More than 20,000 women under 25 had repeat abortions during 2008 in the UK. Of those, 5,000 were teenagers. [Tel, 7/12/2009]

### *USA: Lutheran Church*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is suggesting that the Bible isn't the last word on homosexuality.

Bishop Mark Hanson said, "the understanding we have of homosexuality today does not seem to be reflected at all in the context of the biblical writers."

Therefore, he said, Lutherans should consider more modern views on sexual orientation.

In August 2009, the ELCA lifted its ban on partnered homosexual and lesbian clergy - in response some traditional congregations decided to withhold funds and begin forming a separate denomination.

### *Gulf Monetary Council*

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar are to create a Gulf Monetary Council that will evolve quickly into a full-fledged central bank. It is based on Europe's monetary union - which took 40 years to launch a currency - the euro! Will another currency result from this new Council?

## Ministry News

As mentioned in the Editorial, Peter and Jenny had a break over Christmas/New Year. This meant they could think about other things - unexpectedly, this included buying a new house and preparing to put their existing home on the market. More about that in future editions.

Cameron has settled in to the leadership of Resistance Thinking well. Please pray for him as he generates articles and maintains the information on the web site which is currently undergoing a face lift.

Nicole, who worked in our admin department last year has returned to Sydney and we wish her well in her studies. She will remain actively connected to us through her blogging on the *Resistance Thinking* web site.

Many of you will know Neil Ryan who was on our Board for more than ten years with his wife Dawn. Neil has been having treatment for cancer for some months now but there is no improvement. Please pray for them both as they go through this very tough time.

Peter spoke at Mount Cathedral Baptist Church at Buxton near Marysville in December where we have many lovely friends still struggling to put their lives back together. As the nation remembers Black Saturday, one year on, please pray especially for the Christians in the area as they not only reshape their own lives but minister to others in very difficult circumstances.

Thank you for your continued financial support without which we could not keep you informed and help you ***Make a Difference*** in your community.

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

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
5	mardi gras	Kevin Rudd, Malcolm Turnbull	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	NSW - adoption	Premier Kristina Keneally, Linda Burney	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	R18+ computer games	Submission by February 28, 2010	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Pregnancy Support Helpline	Kevin Rudd, Nicola Roxon	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **SALT SHAKERS On the Web - [www.saltshakers.org.au](http://www.saltshakers.org.au)**

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**21 Reasons Why Marriage Matters**

Marriage is under threat in Australia today so this new, updated Australian version of research material from the Institute for American Values is vitally needed to spread the important message to young people that 'Marriage Matters'.

Professionally produced, with great photos, this should be in every home with teenagers.

**Special \$5**

**Special - purchase this & 21 Reasons Why Gender Matters**

**Buy Both for \$8**



**Purity in the age of Porn** - From Matthias Media

Sadly, we not only live in a sex soaked society but also one that is telling our young people that pornography is OK. The sad truth is that it is highly dangerous, and can affect not only those involved but any relationships they have. It is also extremely addictive.

This small book takes a clear and unambiguous look at the issue and its dangers, discusses the issue of 'sexual immorality' and gives advice about avoiding the porn traps of the online world.

Don't wait till it is too late - help your young people understand the dangers before they become addicted.

**Special \$4**



**Atheism is *probably* definitely wrong** - from Matthias Media

"There is a new breed of Atheist in town, or at least that's the claim being made by the so-called 'New Atheist'.

The 'newness' is the argument that only a scientifically-grounded Atheism can ensure the future of humanity."

With the World Atheist Conference soon to be held in Melbourne we need to know about this 'new' Atheism so we can effectively discuss the truth with atheists, and anyone else who raises the question.

**\$2.50**  or **Special offer 5 for \$6.50**



**Praying for the GOVERNMENT** by Derek Prince

**\$5**

This excellent small booklet explains how best we can pray for our government.

Paul says in 1 Tim 2:1-2 "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority,"

Praying for governments is the FIRST thing we must do in terms of 'social action'".



**LIFE ... An amazing beginning.**

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