

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

**The starting point of Christianity is the death
and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

**The starting point for the Mission of
the Church is**

Then Jesus came to them and said,
“All authority in heaven and on earth has
been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to
obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28: 18 -20

July 2010 AD

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Editorial

With a federal election heading our way we all need to re-read Romans 13 about the role and responsibility of ‘governments’ which, interestingly, follows chapter 12 on personal responsibility. It seems to us that many Christians and politicians get the two chapters very confused these days.

How many times have you heard it said that “the starting point with Christianity is a theology of social justice”? Not only church leaders, but also politicians, like the current US President, and even our own Prime Minister Mr Rudd, have claimed that to be so. They then try to show how important ‘social justice’ is to them, often relating that back to their party being more in tune with this thinking than their opponent’s party.

Whenever we put out a **Christian Values Check List**, prior to an election, we receive criticism from some Christians because we do not deal with ‘social justice’ issues (the poor, unemployed, welfare, refugees, etc). At the last election we even saw ‘Overseas Aid’ thrown into this mix as some Christian groups made it an election issue.

Yet, if we correctly read Romans 12 and 13 we will see that social justice is far more a personal (Romans 12) issue and that the role of government is to protect the people and punish those who do harm.

Could it be that this obsession with conformity to this ‘Social Justice’ theology is simply a new way of striving to earn salvation? Just as Jewish leaders, following their return from captivity in Babylon, put so much emphasis on the ‘Law’, even adding new, man-made laws to the Pentateuch to try to earn righteousness and acceptance by God. Is this why many now say we must all be engaged in it or we are not “Christian”?

Righteousness and justice do not come from

us, they come from God and are about God – we gain salvation not by works but through faith in Christ. Works become a by-product of that faith.



We would contend that conformity to a ‘theology of social justice’ is simply not Biblical because we are clearly told in Scripture that different gifts are given to different people.

Does this ‘good works’ theology actually get respect from the community? Sadly, we don’t think so. If the following comment is anything to go by it certainly doesn’t.

James of Bacchus Marsh posted the following on a web article about a pastor who wanted to win a million dollars to help people overseas...

*“Feeding the poor children throughout South East Asia...Why! Why should we be the ones to do that.. What’s wrong with their Governments getting off their b*** and doing what they are supposed to be doing....All our do gooders are making it easier for these countries. They laugh at us.....We only do it to feel good.....About ourselves....It always annoys me when people are running off on these do good missions if you want to feel good. Help is needed here....Charity begins at home.”*

Now, you and I may not agree with James, but this is the type of response the new ‘social justice theology’ gets. Is it any wonder Jesus actually said in Matthew 28 “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,” rather than “Go, feed the poor”?

Yours in the service of Jesus Christ
Peter and Jenny Stokes

Enough to make you go Gaga!

Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta is a name very few people know. However, with the stage name **Lady Gaga** she has become the biggest draw card in pop music. Like Madonna and David Bowie she sees herself as a pioneer of a new style of music. Indeed, she has created quite a stir in the limited time she has been creating catchy tunes most suited for the club dance floor. More than fifteen million copies of her two albums have been sold to date and she was named in the most recent *Time* Magazine's '100 most influential people'. Not bad considering she only recently turned twenty-four years of age.

While her music may seem like shallow dance tracks, the really sinister nature of Lady Gaga's music is revealed in her music videos. Her first single *Just Dance* seemed innocuous enough except, perhaps, for its encouragement for listeners to drink and dance their troubles away. However, by her second single, *Poker Face* danger signs began appearing. This song is partly about Gaga's experience with bisexuality and has very crude sexual imagery in the lyrics of the song. A message is hiding behind that computerised voice.

The music industry is notorious for its very confusing and graphic music videos. Cue Lady Gaga's *Paparazzi*. This 7 minute 47 second music video starts with Gaga having sex with, presumably, her boyfriend. The clip proceeds to reveal her boyfriend pushing her off the balcony and Lady Gaga poisoning and killing him in retribution. This violence theme is continued in her more recent music video *Telephone*. With Beyoncé in toe, Lady Gaga goes to

by Cameron Spink

a restaurant and kills all the patrons with poison.

Certainly the most disturbing clip of Lady Gaga's career to date is the one for her new single *Alejandro*. The movie begins with two minutes of regimented soldiers dancing. There is a slight reference to the homosexual community in their attire and the way they dance (perhaps suggesting the defensiveness of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) political fight). While this is disappointing, it is not unexpected. After all, Lady Gaga attributes much of her success to having LGBT support.

It is in the second verse of *Alejandro* where this clip becomes really inappropriate. The scene is set in a military-styled dormitory with Lady Gaga and men in their underwear.

There is again further reference to the LGBT community with some of the men wearing high heels. There is obvious imagery of bondage with Lady Gaga holding ropes tied to the beds the men are writhing on.

As the song continues this scene deteriorates into Lady Gaga mimicking highly sexualised acts with the men in a sadomasochistic style. While this is shocking, the clip ends more contentiously with Lady Gaga, dressed in a nun's costume, being physically abused until she concedes to having sex.

It is frustrating to see someone with power over young minds abusing that power. However, this is not the first time sexual and religious imagery have been used to provoke a response (Madonna's *Like A Virgin* comes to mind). However, Madonna's attempts



to be contentious pale in comparison with Lady Gaga's. Not only does Gaga make reference to the Illuminati (for instance by covering one eye and employing mind control imagery) she also tries her best to be sacrilegious (in *Alejandro* she swallows Catholic rosary beads and carries the Sacred Heart in front of a funeral procession).

This clip reveals the dangers of a lack of classification for music videos. If *Alejandro* was a movie it would receive a classification of probably MA15+ or probably higher.

Lady Gaga may have been trying to display her struggles between the LGBT community and religion. However, any message she could have possibly displayed is lost with the perversity of the music video. The sexual imagery and violence themes are overwhelming and crude and extremely inappropriate for the majority of Gaga's target audience (teen girls).

While this video clip may not get played on *Rage*, the ABC's music video show, it will still attract the interest of many young people and others who seek out music by

Lady Gaga on You Tube and elsewhere on the internet.

However, since Lady Gaga's *Telephone* has been featured on *Rage* (played on June 11, for instance), it may only be a matter of time before the latest clip for *Alejandro* is shown on *Rage*.

The danger of *Alejandro* is that it aids in the desensitisation of children and teenagers. The ramifications go well beyond one woman's attempts to sell records.

Cameron Spink is the co-ordinator of Resistance Thinking, our youth project.

Cameron writes articles and posts them on the Resistance Thinking website. He sends out a weekly Resistance News and runs a forum on current issues. Why not encourage your young adults and teenagers to subscribe to receive the emails? The aim is to help young people gain a Biblical worldview.

Check out the Resistance Thinking website: www.resistancethinking.com

More music to be aware of ...

Lady Gaga's video clip is the latest in an increasingly sleazy and sexualised approach to music videos. Madonna, perhaps, led the way in this genre and Kylie Minogue has had increasingly sexualised music videos in recent years.

However, a recent music video by *Christina Aguilera* is extremely sexualised and suggestive, as well as being sadomasochistic. Some commentators have compared the sexual overtones in the video clip to Lady Gaga's latest music video.

The song, called *Not Myself Tonight* talks of being "out of control". In the video, Aguilera is shown in simulated sex positions with a man and then a woman and in group sex situations with bondage. One verse says

"Cause I'm doing things that I normally won't do, the old me's gone I feel brand new and if you don't like it" (expletive deleted!). She then goes on to say that the next morning she will be back to normal - but of course, we can't just 'remove' the consequences of our actions in that way!

One of the dangers is that Aguilera is promoted as being a 'nice girl' - she recently sang the *Star Spangled Banner* during the finals series of the NBL in the USA.

That means young people will see her and be encouraged to listen to her music. This music video has also been shown on the ABC's *Rage* program. If you have children and teenagers, please monitor what they are listening to and watching!

Politics in Australia

DON'T VOTE FOR MR RUDD OR MR ABBOTT, unless you live in their electorate!

As we approach another Federal election it is important that we properly understand our political system.

Attempts are being made to draw us towards a less democratic, 'republic' style, political system. We need to resist this for the sake of our nation and every individual in it.

As we have pointed out before, this is not the USA where they have a directly elected President with specific individual powers, including a veto on legislation.

When we concentrate on the 'leaders' of the political parties we distort our democracy. All MPs have one vote and ONLY your own elected representative is responsible to directly represent you.

The recent unhealthy concentration on Party Leaders, such as the 'Make it Count' event run by the *Australian Christian Lobby*, and the various polls that keep talking about 'preferred Prime Minister', simply lets every other MP off the hook.

We have ABSOLUTELY NO GUARANTEE that Mr Rudd or Mr Abbott will be the Leader of their Party following the election.

Even before the election is announced we have heard rumours of a possible change of leadership in the Labor Party (as many people are unhappy with Mr Rudd's leadership), and in the last 3 years we have seen three different leaders of the Liberal Party. These men, Rudd and Abbott, like to think they are special but, sadly, neither has shown the sort of leadership that we should expect from a Prime Minister, let alone someone who has the capacity for wielding the sort of responsibility to be a President.

Where have the Statesmen gone?

Despite having said they are not 'Presidents',

by Peter Stokes

they are expected to represent the nation on the international stage as the nation's leading politicians, but, sadly, neither has shown the statesmanship to carry even that 'figurehead' role appropriately, nor has the current Governor-General.

Is it any wonder many Australians are finding it difficult to respect politicians and even the office of Prime Minister today, let alone vote for a major Party?

Unfortunately, the Greens will potentially pick up a lot of 'disgruntled' votes from people who have no idea what social engineering they would undertake if they held the balance of power in either House.

It is vital that people know what all the Parties actually stand for, not what they SAY they stand for. 'Make it Count' gave just two of them a platform to promote themselves to a particular audience. We would be naive at best if we thought they would not say what they thought WE wanted to hear. Especially, how good they are. BUT they are not 'our' own representatives and neither will enter into dialogue with you personally, unless you live in their electorate.

We must not be fooled by rhetoric or spin pitched at us. We must all do our homework to find out what the party policies are, as well as what OUR candidates' values and standards are. Will they simply follow the 'Party' line? What are their personal values? Will they listen to you?

Our MPs, at all levels of politics, are called to serve and lead according to God's word, DO THEY KNOW AND ACCEPT THAT RESPONSIBILITY? Do they know that? Will they accept that responsibility? That is what we must find out before voting.



News Update

NSW: Protecting unborn babies

NSW woman Brodie Donegan has called for justice concerning the death of her 3 month-old unborn baby, Zoe Ball. The baby died when Brodie was hit by a car driven by an alleged drug-affected driver. Brodie was 32 weeks pregnant.

Brodie said she was told the law didn't recognise her unborn child as a person. She was told the police could not lay charges because the baby 'had not drawn a breath'.

Rev Fred Nile MLC, Leader of the Christian Democratic Party, said that the law was changed in 2005, with the Parliament passing the *Grievous Bodily Harm Bill* which introduced legal recognition of unborn babies 8 weeks (56 days) or older.

Fred recently introduced a new Bill to "eliminate the 8 week limitation and allow the courts to take into account each individual case where an unborn baby is killed." He went on to say "The police are wrong to say they will take no action because the unborn baby has not drawn breath. That excuse is no longer relevant because of this new law. If the issue of 'intent' is an obstacle then I will include that provision in my Bill to protect the unborn children of NSW."

Recognising the life of unborn children through the law in this way helps to affirm that they are indeed a living human being!

Victoria: Late-term Abortions

Peter Kavanagh, DLP Member in Victoria's Legislative Council, recently moved a motion to ask the parliament to investigate the recently released 2007 annual report of the *Consultative Council on Obstetric and Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity* which showed that 54 out of 181 late term foetuses

who were aborted for "abnormalities" (at around 26 to 28 weeks) **survived late term abortions** but all of them in the period studied died "post-natally". That means they were born alive and later died!

He asked that the parliament "require the *Family and Community Development Committee* to inquire into, consider and report on the post-natal deaths of babies born alive in Victoria after failed abortions."

Election - sign up!

The Australian Electoral Commission recently noted that NEARLY half of 18-year-olds and one-third of 19-year-olds are not enrolled to vote.

With the federal election coming up soon, it's important that young people (and everyone else!) are enrolled - this will be a very significant election and voting is one way we can have our say in the affairs of the nation. Please encourage all the young people (and others) you know who aren't enrolled to enrol now!

Uniting Network

The ***Uniting Network***, the group in the Uniting Church advocating for full acceptance of homosexuality, recently held a conference called *Daring to Join*.

At the conference they held a workshop on developing a 'Sacred Union Liturgy'. Later in the conference they held a "Sacred Union Ceremony" so that people could make a 'commitment' to their same-sex partner.

Unfortunately, this group continues to influence the policies of the Uniting Church in this area. Those in the Uniting Church who are trying to stay true to Biblical values face an uphill battle. Many of them have joined the *Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia*. See their website at <http://www.confessingcongregations.com/>

Please pray for the leaders and members of the ACC.

Atheists and ‘non-belief’

Greg Koukl of *Stand to Reason*, wrote the following insightful article about atheism in their June newsletter..

Atheists no longer believe there is no God, apparently. Instead, they merely lack belief in the divine. They are not un-believers. They are simply non-believers. And non-belief is not a claim, so it requires no defense.

This, atheists think, makes their job easier by relieving them of any responsibility to provide evidence for their view, er...their non-view. After all, no one is obliged to give evidence for the non-existence of fairies. Thus, atheism secures the inside lane as the default view for reasonable people. Or so atheists claim.

For example, if you asked me which Rugby team was the best in England, I wouldn't know where to start. Since I have no interest in the question and no information on the issue, I cannot form a belief one way or another. Because I have no beliefs about the quality of Rugby competition in the UK, I am truly a non-believer regarding the question. I am neutral.

This is not the case with atheists. It's true, atheists have no belief in God, but they are not neutral on this question.

For an atheist to enter a debate, he has to take a position. If he takes a position, he asserts a belief. And when he asserts a belief, he makes a claim. When he advances an argument, presumably he believes the conclusion that flows from his own reasoning. Theists say there is a God, and atheists argue they are wrong. This is not neutrality.

To say you do not believe in God is very different from saying you lack belief about

God. Anyone who has a point of view has a belief. And atheists have a point of view. This makes them believers of a very particular stripe: They believe God does not exist.

There's another problem, though, that apparently has escaped the notice of those atheists who claim the high road of reason as their own. Given any point of view (for example, "God exists"), there are only three possible responses to it. You can affirm it ("God does exist"), you can deny it ("God does not exist"), or you can withhold judgment ("I don't know"), either for lack of information or lack of interest.

**Anyone who
has a point
of view has a
belief**

In the God debate, the first is called a theist (of some sort), the second an atheist, and the third an agnostic. The alleged non-believers in question here are neither theistic nor agnostic. Only one logical option remains: They deny

God exists, which is why they are called atheists to begin with. An atheist (a = not, theist = regarding God) is a person who holds there is not a God. That is an active claim, not a passive non-belief.

About Stand to Reason

Stand to Reason aims to make ambassadors for Christ, trained in knowledge, wisdom and character. *Stand to Reason* "trains Christians to think more clearly about their faith and to make an even-handed, incisive, yet gracious defense for classical Christianity and classical Christian values in the public square."

Check out the *Stand to Reason* website www.str.org

Sign up to receive their emails and listen to Greg's weekly broadcast - these can be downloaded in mp3 format.

Legalisation of prostitution

Prostitution is on the agenda in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. On the other hand, Victoria, which has already legalised prostitution, is placing further restrictions on brothels and the trafficking of women.

We know that prostitution is against God's instruction for sexual morality; the Bible tells us sex should only be within a marriage between a man and a woman. Prostitution exploits women and demeans men and families. However, society is increasingly normalising and legalising activities that it once considered 'sinful'.

Some states have already legalised prostitution and others have partial legalisation of the sale of 'sexual services'.

Victoria legalised prostitution in 1994. Those advocating for the legalisation of brothels argued that this would ensure police and health checks could be carried out, prostitution would be reduced, criminals would be removed from prostitution, the trafficking of women to be used as 'sex slaves' in brothels would be stopped and the prostitutes would be 'protected'.

Did it work?

In a word, 'NO!'

Prior to legalisation, there were an estimated 50 illegal brothels in Victoria. A recent report on prostitution commissioned by the Minister for Consumer Affairs found that there are 95 legal brothels and 1,700 registered single operators. There are also a large number of illegal brothels - with estimates ranging from 70 to over 300 (a claim made by the adult entertainment industry which is lobbying for police to close them down).

Numerous court cases have resulted from finding 'trafficked' women working in brothels and criminal elements are reported

by Jenny Stokes

to be operating, even in the 'legal' brothels.

Street prostitution has also grown and is an increasing problem for residents in St Kilda. In 2002, the local Council and the state government considered creating 'tolerance zones' where street prostitution would be allowed. However, the proposal was dropped - mainly due to action by residents. Residents wanted enforcement of the law by police to stop prostitution on the streets - but nothing happened!

Recently, some concerned residents in St Kilda launched a campaign and a website calling for the police to deal with the prostitution in their streets. They want on-the-spot fines for men who are using the street prostitutes. Check out what this group of concerned residents is doing - 'Sexploitation' - www.sexploitation.biz

Western Australia

Prior to the last WA election, the then Labor government planned to legalise brothels in WA, but the legislation was never passed. The Liberal Party promised to 'deal with' the issue after the election.

At a recent (8 June) community forum in Perth, Attorney-General Christian Porter announced that he would issue a *Green Bill* on prostitution before the end of the year.

Family Voice reports "Mr Porter said his Bill would set up a licensing system for brothels in non-residential areas approved by the State Government and local councils, while giving police new powers to act against unlicensed brothels." Sounds like Victoria!

FamilyVoice Australia policy officer **Richard Egan** was at the forum, and like many in the audience, was unconvinced. He said "People who had experienced police refusal to act on complaints about existing

brothels – including one established next door to a women’s sexual assault referral centre – were not persuaded that anything would really change under Mr Porter’s proposal. If police refuse to enforce the existing law and the Barnett government does nothing, why should we believe police will do their job under the new laws?”

Mr Egan rejected the government’s argument that the plan would ‘accommodate the market demand for prostitution by setting up a system of licensed brothels in certain non-residential areas’. He said “this plan ignores the harm prostitution does to the community and to all those involved. No system of legal brothels anywhere in the world has eliminated child prostitution, drugs and trafficked women - rather, the reverse.”

ACTION: If you live in Western Australia, please write to Attorney General Christian Porter, the Premier Colin Barnett and your own MPs. Ask them not to support the legalisation of brothels - ask them to ensure that the current laws are enforced. MP details on our website.

South Australia

In South Australia, Labor MP Steph Key has announced that she will introduce a private member’s bill into the South Australian parliament to ‘decriminalise’ - that is, legalise - prostitution in SA. She made the announcement at a rally organised by SA prostitutes. She plans to have draft legislation ready by the end of the year and wants a ‘conscience vote’ on the issue.

The Minister for Women, Gail Gago, Greens MP Tammy Jennings and Liberal MP Michelle Lensink also called for ‘reform’ of the prostitution laws at the rally.

ACTION: If you live in South Australia, it is important that you contact your MPs to ask them not to support the legalisation of prostitution in South

Australia. You have ONE MP in the House of Assembly but ALL the Members of the Legislative Council represent you, so please contact all of them!

Northern Territory

Meanwhile, in the Northern Territory, the *NT Sex Workers Outreach Program* organiser Seranna Shutt is calling for the legalisation of brothels. Her reason? To promote “health and safety”.

Victoria

The Victorian parliament passed legislation in February 2010, placing more restrictions on prostitution: increased health requirements, signs about ‘sexual slavery’ on display in brothels, more penalties for illegal brothels, people found using illegal brothels to give their name and address, enabling officers to investigate illegal brothels and so on.

Recently the Victorian parliament’s *Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee* has released their report from their Inquiry into *People Trafficking for Sex Work*.

Their 27 recommendations are wide-ranging: they include the establishment of a Unit in the Attorney-General’s Department to monitor and regulate the sex industry and particularly to monitor trafficking, and the establishment of a *Sex Trafficking Advisory Group*. They recommend that “intentionally, knowingly or recklessly obtaining sexual services from trafficked women is criminalised in Victoria” as well as increased penalties for brothels that use trafficked women. Report at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dpcp/default.htm>

Whilst these initiatives clamp down on some practices, this is like trying to shut the door after the horse has bolted. It ignores the impact of using ‘non-trafficked’ women as prostitutes and the overall negative impacts of prostitution on our society.

Taxpayers finance parental leave

Susie O'Brien resorts to invective in describing pro-family organisations, including Endeavour Forum, as a militant mafia ("Maternal pay is not for all", Opinion, June 2).

However, she compounds the fiction that the Government's paid parental leave is a work entitlement rather than a taxpayer-financed benefit similar to the baby bonus.

The Government has been seduced by feminists to make PPL look like a "work entitlement", but it is not.

The payment does not come from the profits of employers, but from the Government via taxpayers, including the hapless husbands of full-time mothers.

Susie O'Brien would do well to consider news items such as the report this week that showed the children of "working" mothers suffer more from obesity than the children of stay-at-home mothers ("Obesity – mum's the word", May 31).

Should we refer to "working" mothers as the "fat mafia"?

Babette Francis, Endeavour Forum, Toorak
Herald Sun 2/6/2010

Carbon dioxide not the cause of change

Jim Brown is right in asserting that both Liberal and Labor have lost their way in relation to the issue of climate, (*The Courier*, June 4th) but it is the Green's crazy climate claims that are right off the planet.

Carbon dioxide is not, and never has been, the real issue regarding climate change. The climate does change and always has, with both major and minor adjustments taking place, such as the Roman and Medieval warm periods and the mini ice age just a few centuries ago. Swings lasting a few decades occur within those major movements.

Currently, the brief minor warming phase appears to have ceased, and recent research indicates a cooling trend over the next few decades.

U.S. meteorologist, Anthony Watts, and Aussie based climate scientist, cancer researcher and author of *Solar Cycle 24*, David Archibald, are actually visiting Ballarat later this month (June 26th) and would be delighted to share their research findings with people who are willing to look beyond the media hype and political posturing.

David G Westaway Navigators Vic
The Courier 05/06/2010

Minister sponsor of abortion bill

I read in *The Advocate* (March 31) that the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Maxine Morand visited here recently to tour the Daylesford Community Child Care Centre.

Ms Morand is also the local member for Mount Waverley and she has come under criticism in both of these capacities as the sponsor of the Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008 (now Act) under which so many children have been, and are being, deprived of their lives while at their earliest stage of development.

How ironic and what a controversial and contradictory choice for the ministry for which she is responsible.

I notice also that in her tour of the centre, she was accompanied by the local Member for Ballarat East Geoff Howard.

He, too, voted in favour of the 2008 Abortion Bill, and in so doing said yes to the legislation which has led to the loss of so many innocent unborn.

John A Gill, Mount Waverley
Daylesford Advocate 2010

Anti-discrimination concerns

I have always been unhappy with anti-discrimination legislation, and even more so now that the Equal Opportunity Bill 2010 has passed both houses of the Victorian parliament.

Alleged discrimination cases are dealt with by a tribunal, not a court. There is no jury of "twelve good men and true" of our peers to decide our guilt or innocence. It's a set up! Whatever happened to our long-standing right to a trial by jury?

C Heyward, Watsonia
Family Voice June 2010

Abstinence pays

No, it is not unprotected sex that stops the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is abstinence. There is a huge difference. Get it? I do.

Judith Bond, Glen Alpine, NSW.
Campbelltown Advertiser, 2/6/2010.

Judith has already had 19 letters published this year - Congratulations!

TV programs and ads

There is so much on television that doesn't reflect a Biblical worldview.

That raises the questions "Just how much TV do we watch?" and "What TV programs do we watch?" and "What programs do our children watch?"

As Christians we are to be very discerning about what we do. Frequently, the following verse comes to mind: Paul writes to the Philippians (4:8) "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.*"

The question is, are we thinking (or dwelling) on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable?

TV Programs

Over recent years the standards and themes in television programs have declined markedly. In particular, we've noticed the addition of a homosexual character or a homosexual couple into what might formerly have been thought of as comedy or drama shown at times when children might be watching. One such program was *Will and Grace*, with a homosexual character featured prominently.

Last year *Home and Away* featured a lesbian relationship and *Packed to the Rafters* addressed the issue of lesbian parenting with a same-sex couple.

This is a far cry from television shows such as *The Brady Bunch* or movies like *The Sound of Music*.

The latest such program is ***The Modern Family***, shown on Channel 10 at 8 pm on Tuesday nights. In *The Modern Family*, the extended family includes a father in his late 50s with a young Hispanic wife,

her son, his grown up son who is married with two children and a second son who is homosexual, his partner and their adopted Vietnamese baby girl.

The blurb for the program says "The modern family isn't that different to your family".

However, the program suggests that Phil, the married son, has "no parenting skills" whilst the homosexual couple are portrayed as 'loving'. One starts to think there might be an underlying agenda at work.

Advertisement for affairs

Advertisements are also a way of changing moral standards in the community.

Earlier this year a US company called **Ashley Madison** launched an Australian operation. This company promotes affairs between married people - they encourage people to join their website and actively look for people so they can cheat on their husband or wife.

There was some media coverage when the company was launched a few months back.

However, when *Ashley Madison* decided to advertise on TV in early June during *Underbelly*, more than 50 people complained to the Advertising Standards Board (ASB). The ad featured a man and a woman getting into bed with each other... A message appeared "*This couple is married*" followed by another message "*But not to each other.*"

Then a final message appeared "*Life is short. Have an affair*" on top of the Ashley Madison web address.

The ASB is yet to rule on the complaints.

Be discerning!

So next time the TV is on, think about the programs and the adverts you're watching and the influence they can have on your family!



Violence and Tyranny

Violent protests, interspersed with much shouting of abuse and obscenities, have become a familiar sight in our present world. Sponsored and organised by the usual leftist groups – inter alia the *Socialist Alliance*, various “green” groups, labour unions, and known Marxist advocates – the protesters make a hue and cry about “human rights”, the environment, world peace, opposition to “capitalist exploitation” and so on. While ostensibly committed to “non-violence” the protests all too often end with exactly that: as we saw in September 2000 outside the Melbourne Conference Centre, or more recently in the G20 riots and the swathe of destruction left after that episode. Police-baiting, followed by the ritual howls about “police brutality” are also quite frequent, while the protesters rampage across city streets, hurling abuse at anyone who dares oppose them.

In a previous article, I argued that both Communism and Nazism were variations on the same leftist theme: the former saw the revolution as the outcome of a class struggle, the latter as the outcome of a race struggle. In both, as can be seen respectively in Communist rhetoric and in *Mein Kampf*, “struggle” was the operative term. Inevitably this was violent struggle: beginning with Marx’s dictum, “Everything that exists deserves to perish”, his more ardent disciples have espoused violent struggle in advancing their vision towards Utopia. One can see immediately the basis for this vision in Social Darwinism: the evolution of an inevitable earthly paradise through struggle, the reign of tooth and claw, and the extinction of deficient sub-species deemed “unfit to survive”.

by Murray Adamthwaite

While classic Marxism saw this process as an inevitable historical necessity, Lenin and his many disciples were not that patient: they believed that they and their cohorts could push it along. Hence, the resort to violence. In the case of Lenin, architect of modern history’s first despotic “utopia”, violence was the priority, and anything of beauty or tenderness, such as love and music, stood in the way of that programme of violence. Hence, he rejected them with scorn. In more

Marx’s more ardent disciples have espoused violent struggle in advancing their vision towards Utopia

recent times the *Weather Underground* (WU) and its leader Bill Ayers (now an associate and confidant of President Obama) on one hand advanced their cause through violent actions, such as bombing of a whole series of government buildings including the New York City Police HQ, the Pentagon, and the Haymarket Memorial in Chicago. In the manifesto

of the WU they stated: “Socialism is the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the eradication of the social system based on profit ... Without mass struggle there can be no revolution. Without armed struggle there can be no victory.” On the other hand, for Ayers and co romantic love, marriage, and personal intimacy were anathema. Instead, the organisation committed to group sex and “national orgies” to subsume the individual to the collective.

Another rationale for violence with the Left is its vision of the revolutionary utopia to be established on the ruins of the old order, “the (dreaded) bourgeoisie”, as seen in the manifesto of the WU. There is a pathological hatred of the middle class,

while the Left professes to be champions of “the poor”. For the radical leftist the deaths of bourgeois reactionaries as a preliminary to the Communist utopia were simply a regrettable but necessary step: human blood purifies the earth. At the height of the (contrived) Soviet famine of 1932, which killed both poor and upper levels, Lady Astor, travelling there with G B Shaw, politely asked Stalin, “How long are you going to go on killing people?” He then replied, “As long as necessary!” Lady Astor nonchalantly changed the subject.

Nor is this a thing of the past: we find the same antipathy for the middle classes among today’s left. The Khmer Rouge capture of Cambodia in 1975 met with applause from Western leftist intellectuals, yet many of those who perished in Pol Pot’s “Killing Fields” were the mainstay of that society: doctors, architects, and professional people of all persuasions, who did not fit with the “plans” of the Cambodian dictator. In similar vein, that is partly why the Left hates America: she is affluent, industrious, and capitalist – the very antithesis of what the Left sees as the building blocks for a socialist society.

In regard to the poor, despite the leftist rhetoric, they are merely a convenient tool, a human shield, for the Left to advance its path to political power, just as in public it will also speak effusively about ‘peace’ and ‘justice’. History bears this out. In Stalin’s purges the kulak peasantry – the poor – suffered untold miseries as they were murdered by the millions. Yet Leftist intellectuals of the time adored the dictator: Joseph Davies, American ambassador to the Soviet Union prior to World War II, believed that no human being deserved greater respect than Joseph Stalin.

More lately French intellectual Jean-Paul Sartre led the apotheosis of Fidel Castro, praising him as embodying the whole island (of Cuba). But Castro, too, was a

mass murderer – of many of Cuba’s poor. Then we witness the current idolising of Castro’s chief executioner, Che Guevera, who has authorised and often supervised more than 15,000 executions, many of whom were poor people. How often have we witnessed leftist protesters wearing T-shirts bearing his image, prominently featured at demonstrations!

“But,” protests someone, “we do not condone the violence of these totalitarian regimes. We seek the peaceful transformation of society into a just one where equality reigns.” So runs the “social justice” line from leftist groups, including churchmen. That indeed was the reason for the foundation of the Fabian Society: adoption of the ideals and goals of leftist, socialist theory, but rejection of violence as the means.

They may say this from one side of the mouth, but from the other there is admiration of brutal dictators. As recently as last year, Anita Dunn, Communications Director for Obama’s administration, at a high school graduation, praised Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese Communist dictator responsible for wholesale purges and mass murders in the millions, declaring him as one of the figures of history she “looks up to most”. That is in line with the adulation from the left at the time of Mao’s death in 1976, despite that for him “power flows from the barrel of a gun”.

The reports at the time in the Melbourne *Age* prominently featured this slogan, but still wrote effusively about his achievements for the Chinese people. Meanwhile, pursuit of totalitarian political power remains the goal of the Left. Yes, the Fabian ilk may eschew violence, but meanwhile the antics of leftist agitators continue, while their “non-violent” counterparts stand by, and Saul-like, hold their coats.

Murray Adamthwaite has a PhD in Ancient History and a degree in theology and is a member of Salt Shakers Reference Panel. Website: <http://www.archist.com.au/>

mardi gras troubles and 'queer' politics

The Sydney mardi gras organisers recently announced that they made a \$400,000 loss from their 2010 event. [MCV, 28/4/2010]

The organisers of the *new mardi gras (NMG)* made a decision to split the street parade and the major party this year which resulted in considerable disagreement within the homosexual community. The organisers also reduced the length of the festival to two weeks.

The party only had 11,000 participants this year as more people chose to participate in the parade.

They certainly didn't stay in Sydney for the whole two weeks of the festival.

Even though they've made a loss this year, we can't start celebrating the demise of mardi gras just yet.

Apparently over the past four years, they had built up a considerable surplus, leaving them with a current surplus of \$1.6 million, despite this year's large loss.

The loss is even more extraordinary when we consider the fact that the NSW government contributed \$250,000 to the mardi gras for the festival. That's an enormous amount of money - without it the loss would have been even greater. Homosexual activists are already calling for a bigger contribution from the government.

There has also been dissension within the homosexual community about decisions by the NMG Board about who can participate and who can't.

Animal Liberation NSW were told by the organisers in a letter that they weren't 'queer-orientated' and "weren't queer enough". They were still refused entry when they changed the name of their entry to *Sydney Queers for Animal Rights*.

One homosexual writer suggested that

another reason for refusing them entry was the fact that mardi gras held two events that exploit animals - a Dinner at Taronga Zoo and a day at the horse races at Randwick.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that the IKEA float included six actors who were paid \$400 each to sit almost naked in a hot tub on the IKEA float and act as though they were homosexual!

The animal activists were even more incensed about that - since they claimed 80% of their participants were homosexual.

'Queer' and 'poof'

If we used the terms '*queer*' or '*poof*' we'd be accused of being homophobic or worse. But it seems that it is OK for homosexual groups to freely use these terms.

Here are some examples...

Another interfaith conference, called *Common Dreams 2*, was held in Melbourne during May 2010. One speaker was Rev'd Margaret Mayman, the senior minister at St Andrews on The Terrace Presbyterian Church in Wellington, New Zealand.

As well as talking about 'progressive faith', she gave a lecture titled "*Queer Spirituality and Politics*". [MCV, 7/4/2010]

Then there is the 'Queer Film Festival' in Melbourne and the Melbourne University Student Union's 'Queer Department'!

Regarding the word 'poof', we note the recent formation of **Poofs 'n' Politics**, a group that aims to get the homosexual community more involved in politics".

The group has been formed by three homosexual community leaders in Melbourne to "shine a spotlight on issues that matter to the community" and they're conducting a survey among homosexuals.

[*The Star*, 15/4/2010]



Prayer Update

Federal Election

The federal election could be as early as August, but will almost definitely be held this year.

Please pray for all candidates that they may present their policies and personal views honestly and fairly to the public and that they will diligently serve their constituents, not just themselves.

Winter recess

State and federal parliaments generally take an extended break over the winter period. Some MPs travel to investigate other nations and political processes whilst some take some time out with their families.

Pray that they will be refreshed during this time. Pray that those who know God and say they are Christian will reflect on their faith - and that those who don't know God personally will be drawn to Him by the Holy Spirit.



Voting

Pray that people will register to vote in the election - and pray that everyone will carefully analyse the policies of the political parties before deciding how to vote

Churches

Please please pray for churches - pray that church leaders would preach the true gospel of faith in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection rather than 'another gospel'.

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

Pray for Christians in Afghanistan

Christians in Afghanistan are being persecuted for the faith. Numerous attacks have occurred following the screening of a documentary about Christian converts on television.

Afghan Christians living in India have written an Open Letter to Christians around the world, asking us to pray for them in their difficult situation. They also ask us to contact our federal government and ask them to speak up to stop the persecution.

The new Afghanistan constitution says it is based on the law of Islam - and Islamic law calls for the killing of apostates, those who turn away from Islam. We need to ask that these provisions are removed from the Afghanistan constitution and that Christians are protected. After all, our soldiers are working hard, and some are being killed, to protect Afghanistan.

Please pray and act - we've given more information, and posted a link to the letter, on the front page of our website.

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

Sharia finance for Australia

by Jenny Stokes

The federal government is actively promoting the introduction of *sharia finance* in Australia. (It can be spelt *shari'a* or *shariah* and is also known as *Islamic finance* or *sharia-compliant finance*)

This is finance that is deemed to be suitable for Muslims. In Islam, the Qur'an bans the payment of interest and so 'sharia finance' is used to avoid the payment of interest, as well as a range of other financial arrangements. For example, if a house is purchased, the Islamic finance organisation purchases the house and then re-sells it to the Muslim buyer at an increased price, which covers an amount similar to the normal 'interest', which is then paid off over a set time. Another version is that the organisation owns the house and the Muslim 'leases' the house from the institution.

So what is the problem with sharia finance? Sharia finance will introduce a **parallel financial system** into Australia, as part of the culture of pluralism and multiculturalism. Muslims are also lobbying for a parallel legal system as well as a parallel food system under 'halal' food laws.

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, of the Barnabas Fund, warns in his recent book *Understanding Sharia Finance* that sharia finance is being used as a means to encourage Western nations to adopt sharia law.

In a review of Patrick's book, Bill Muehlenberg says that Patrick points out "sharia-compliant finance is simply part of the wider move to set up sharia law in the West, which in turn is part of the larger goal of global Islamic domination."

Bill writes "A separate Islamic economic system in Western nations is part of the push for a separate political and legal system. Committed Muslims see sharia law as the

only true law, and consider Western, non-Islamic laws to be heretical. Thus the push for separate spheres of Islamic sovereignty."

Patrick, who is a former Muslim himself, reveals that the establishment of sharia finance is a reasonably recent development and that it was a militant Pakistani Islamist who initiated this type of finance. He writes, "The concept of an Islamic economy was integrated into the discourse of the Islamist struggle to weaken the West in preparation for the ultimate phase of establishing Muslim political hegemony in the world."

Patrick continues, "Islamic economics became an efficient weapon in the hands of Islamists planning for Islam's domination of the world-system in

all fields: political, military, economic and cultural. For them, the establishment of a worldwide universal Islamic state under sharia is God's command to Muslims of all generations and the real aim of jihad."

Now sharia finance is being promoted here.

Sharia finance in Australia

In Australia, in February 2010, the Trade Minister, Simon Crean, launched a booklet published by the Australian government called *Islamic Finance*.¹ It has been produced by *Austrade* (part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade).

The media release said "The booklet *Islamic Finance* provides a detailed explanation of the opportunities that booming Sharia-compliant investment and banking offers Australia's financial services sector."

In the booklet, the 'opportunities' for the expansion of Islamic finance in Australia are explored - including attracting more international banks and Islamic banks to



Australia to provide the finance, Australian banks providing sharia-compliant finance, funds managers doing Islamic finance and so on. The booklet then looks at a wide range of trade areas in Australia and ways they could 'benefit' from or use sharia or Islamic finance!

Banking institutions are starting to look at providing sharia finance - on the same day the *Austrade* booklet was launched, *Westpac* launched its "Special Interbank Placement for Islamic institutions" to provide sharia-compliant finance.

Since that launch in February the government has gone into overdrive in a quest to promote Islamic finance in Australia.

The main person giving speeches to promote sharia finance is the **Assistant Treasurer Senator Nick Sherry**. In late March 2010, he told fund managers that Australia wanted to develop Islamic finance, which was estimated globally at \$US729 billion in 2007. He said the government sees it as an alternative source of capital for Australian business and consumers.

In late April, Nick Sherry visited the Middle East - the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain - where he "held four days of strategic talks with senior Ministers, officials, regulators, central bankers and finance industry figures focused on Islamic finance, banking and insurance."³

During the visit, Senator Sherry also "led a trade delegation made up of representatives from Australian and international financial institutions, major law firms, funds management companies, investment houses and the superannuation sector."³

At the same time Senator Sherry and the Minister for Financial Services, Corporate Law and Superannuation, **Chris Bowen**, announced that the *Board of Taxation* would conduct a review of "the tax treatment of Islamic finance in Australia". He said this

would be "a comprehensive analysis of Australia's tax laws to ensure that, wherever possible, they do not inhibit the provision of Islamic finance, banking and insurance products."³ The terms of reference for the review were announced on May 18, 2010 and a report is due by June 2011.³

On May 27, Senator Sherry launched a booklet called *Demystifying Islamic Finance: Correcting Misconceptions, Advancing Value Propositions* - it outlines 15 frequent misconceptions and 10 main value propositions of Islamic finance. The book was published by a Malaysian company, Zaid Ibrahim & Co, which is promoting Islamic finance.³



In his speech, Senator Sherry mentioned that he had just come from an **Islamic Finance Boardroom Lunch** hosted by the law firm Clayton Utz - this was yet another promotion of sharia finance. He was also very critical of the 'nasty people' who had

written to him objecting to the government's support for sharia finance.

In addition to encouraging Islamic finance operations, he said that the Minister for Financial Services Chris Bowen has "launched a cross-government process to review the regulatory environment with a similar goal of flattening out any inhibitors to Islamic finance operations in Australia."⁴

On June 8, Senator Sherry gave the keynote speech at the **2010 Islamic Finance Conference**, in Melbourne, where he again promoted the benefits of Islamic finance to Australia.

So what sort of changes might be made to our laws?

Federal tax laws are complex, but the government's intention is to ensure the laws encourage sharia finance and don't inhibit it. One change that is being lobbied for by Islamic groups is for state governments to

legislate regarding stamp duty. Since, as we explained above, when a house is purchased the finance organisation buys it and then sells it to the Muslim buyer, TWO lots of stamp duty would be payable. Victoria changed the stamp duty law in 2004, after lobbying from Muslim groups, so that only one lot of stamp duty is paid.

At present, there are only a few small groups offering sharia finance in Australia. One of these is the Muslim Community Co-operative (Australia) Limited (MCCA). However, their Powerpoint presentations highlight the value of the global Islamic finance industry and encourage the government to promote Islamic finance initiatives. They are also investigating becoming a bank themselves.

The introduction of sharia-compliant finance in Australia is just another step in

the introduction of sharia law in our nation.

ACTION: Please write to **Senator Sherry, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition leader Tony Abbott and your local MP** to express your concern about the introduction of sharia-compliant finance into Australia. Send letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

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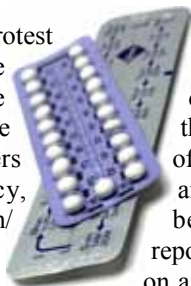
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USA: The Pill Kills

The Pill Kills is a Coalition of 27 pro-life groups in the USA, formed to highlight the medical risks associated with taking the oral contraceptive pill.

They hold an annual event called 'Protest the Pill Day' where participants are encouraged to wear distinctive lime green T-shirts displaying the message 'The Pill Kills' and hold up posters "outside of your local pharmacy, Planned Parenthood facility (abortion/family planning), doctor's office or at a busy intersection."

The 'Protest the Pill Day' for 2010 was held on Saturday June 5. This year the focus was on how the Pill kills the environment. In 2008 their campaign focused on how 'The Pill kills babies' - highlighting the possible abortifacient effect of the Pill. In 2009, the focus was 'The Pill kills women' which highlighted the medical side effects and risks of the Pill.



Regarding the environment, the group is highlighting how contraceptive pills contain estrogen and this is finding its way into our waterways and adversely affecting the fish as well as the water.

The Coalition notes "A five-year study done by the Environment Agency in the United Kingdom suggests that half of the male fish in lowland English rivers are "developing female characteristics because of pollution." As the BBC reported, "Scientists blame the pollution on a 'potent' form of oestrogen found in urine from women using the contraceptive pill, which may be flushed through sewage works and into rivers." In 2002, the United Kingdom declared hormonal birth control a type of pollution."

For more information, and research on how the Pill harms women, babies and the environment, visit 'The Pill Kills' website at <http://www.thepillkills.com>

World News

USA: Evangelicals & abortion

The *National Association of Evangelicals* recently adopted a resolution on abortion. The NAE said this was “an effort to pursue common ground towards reducing the number of abortions” that will “explore practical and realistic approaches to curtail” abortion. [NAE, 20/5/2010]

The media release says the NAE “actively, ardently and unwaveringly opposes abortion on demand” BUT goes on to say: “However, we do not dismiss those who do advocate for legal access to abortion as unconcerned for human life or unworthy of our respect and attention.”

“Common ground” is often used by people who want to negotiate a position with those who support abortion - such as Mr Obama.

Mexico: Morning after pill

The Supreme Court of Mexico has ruled that the abortifacient ‘morning after pill’ must be distributed by all hospitals in Mexico, public and private. A Supreme Court Minister stated that officials who refuse to comply with the ruling may be removed from their positions, prosecuted, and imprisoned!

Argentina: same-sex ‘marriage’

Argentina’s government has announced plans to legalise same-sex ‘marriage’. Two evangelical protestant groups have protested against the proposal. The two groups, the Christian Alliance of Evangelical Churches (ACIERA) and the Pentecostal Evangelical Confraternity Federation (FECEP), reportedly include 12,000 different churches in the country. On May 31, the groups held a rally in front of the

Congressional Palace in Buenos Aires to publicize their campaign and make their dissent known to legislators.

UK: Abortion and IVF

A report from the UK has spoken of approximately 80 abortions performed in the UK each year, terminating pregnancies that came about by IVF treatments.

These are not for reasons of possible deformities of the child - rather they are abortions carried out for **social reasons**. These are women who were desperate to get pregnant and used expensive and invasive IVF techniques. Surely it is a sign of the sick state of our society that they chose to kill these babies for ‘social’ reasons!

UK: Children and rape

Family groups have criticised an “educational pack” containing information about rape, pornography, prostitution, female genital mutilation, forced marriages and human

trafficking, which has been produced by a UK group called **Rape Crisis** at a cost of £100. [LSN, 31/5/2010]

The program is aimed at children as young as 11 in Britain’s schools. The program’s co-ordinator said the program wasn’t aimed at supporting sexuality or pornography but critically evaluating it. However, teaching young children about such sexually explicit subjects, and encouraging discussions and role plays will inevitably lower inhibitions about such behaviour.

UK: Animal-human embryos

The UK’s *Motor Neurone Disease Association* has announced it will donate £800,000 to fund human/animal “hybrid embryo” cloning research by the same Edinburgh University team that created “Dolly” the cloned sheep.



Ministry News

Thank you to all our financial supporters for making it possible for us to continue to produce this Journal, look after the web sites and send out the emails we do to keep so many people informed.

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Some people send anonymous donations, often as direct Bank payments, that we cannot trace and receipt - we ask that whenever you send us money, please identify who is sending it.

You can say 'no receipt necessary' but it certainly assists us to be able to account for the source of monies, especially as we

do not want to send anyone an overdue subscription notice when they have already invested into this Ministry - often well over our normal subscription amount.

Peter and Jenny have a number of invitations to speak at conferences and churches in the second half of this year, but can still fit in others if requested.

They are also taking a week's 'rest' during July in the warmer, northern, regions of this Great South Land. Please pray that they will indeed have a rest and be able to stay away from issues and politics.

If you would like them to speak at your church or group about the issues affecting society, and/or to run a worldview school, please contact the Office for available dates.

Please continue to pray for our video production project as it develops.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
5	Politics	Research party polices and federal candidates' values	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Prostitution	WA and SA - contact MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Sharia finance	Write to various MPs as listed	<input type="checkbox"/>

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A life worth keeping	Abortion	6.00	1.00	1
A life worth living	Euthanasia	6.00	1.00	1
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Is there really a God?	Creation	2.00	0.50	1
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When a loved one says I'm gay	Homosexuality	5	3.00	15

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3 Sisters: evidence for Noah's flood	Creation	0.50	0.10	86
A Biblical Perspective on Prostitution	Prostitution	0.75	0.10	20
AIDS: Facts vs fiction	Homosexuality	0.75	0.10	11
Being Gay is a choice	Homosexuality	0.75	0.10	10
Do Christians belong in politics?	Christian life	0.75	0.10	9
Help for pregnant teens	Abortion	0.75	0.10	12
Homosexual sex and homosexuals	Homosexuality	0.75	0.10	16
Most endangered species	Abortion		0.10	Many
Some modern scientists who oppose evolution	Creation	0.50	0.10	75
The First Duty of Fatherhood	Christian life	0.50	0.10	25
The living victims of abortion	Abortion		0.10	Many
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