

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

For to us a Child is born, to us a
Son is given; And the government
will be upon His shoulders.

And His name will be called Wonderful
Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

December 2010 AD

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Editorial

Is it really Christmas already?

We are sure many of you are asking that question because the years seem to go faster and faster. Some say it is a sign we are getting older; we think it is because life itself is so crowded with 'stuff' and activities these days.

This year has certainly been no exception: in fact it had some really big surprises for us. Little did we know, this time last year, that we would be moving house and we now praise God for that move and the wonderfully relaxing surroundings we go home to.

Neither did we think that 2010 would be the year for leaving Crossway Church after 26 years. We now praise God for His leading us to a small, but faithful and very Biblical, church close to home in the hills. A church where we can continue to grow under good Biblical teaching, which is so vital if we are to be led by God and hold on to our faith in the constant cut and thrust of today's world. Sadly, there is far too much of man and way too little of God in so many churches today.

An example is an email I recently received from a 'Rev Dr' who said, "I am greatly dismayed at the literaist (sic) interpretation (sic) of many Bblical (sic) texts in Salt Shakers - Position Paper opposing Same-sex Civil Unions and Relationship (sic) Register'. There are other understandings of these texts and the ones that you quote do not refer to smame (sic) sex relationships at all! The logic of you (sic) arguments that jumps from 'sin; (sic) to 'Homosexuality' (sic) is spurious to say the least. The Biblical position is not as you state it at all!"



If this is the quality of some Rev Drs today it is no wonder the church is so ridiculed by society and so void of influence.

The words of Jesus, from Matthew 5 v 13, resounded in my ears when I read that. "But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

If we can't trust God's Word, we are left with man's thinking - what sort of faith is that?

Whatever your views about Christmas - which we know range from making the most of it to wishing it wasn't happening - we can't really avoid it.

So we can at least use the opportunity to talk about who's birth we are celebrating and point out that this is not the end of the story.

We need to tell a world that is seemingly spiralling out of control that indeed Christ came to earth (all-be-it maybe not in December) for a purpose: To offer mankind a way out of the spiral of sin and death.

As we heard a speaker say recently, 'everyone lives for eternity - but there are two different ways to spend it'.

The message of Christmas is that there are indeed TWO ways to spend eternity - in Heaven or in Hell.

Hell is a real place - where people are totally separated from the Creator of the universe.

It is our job, if we know the Lord, to pass on the message, NOT keep it to ourselves.

We trust that you have a happy Christmas and a very good new year full of unexpected blessings from our heavenly Father.

Yours in Christ Jesus
Peter and Jenny Stokes.



Empowered by Praise

In 1990, my family faced a tremendous time of testing and trial. Both my wife and my oldest daughter were admitted into the hospital for different reasons. The situation facing us was serious.

Being a pastor gave me little advantage in getting my prayers answered. In fact, it added an even greater responsibility because I was in the spotlight.

During that stretch of time, Daniel's experience in the lion's den was crystallized in my mind. I realized that Daniel was not saved from the den of lions; he was saved in the den of lions. (Daniel 6)

Every moment of that long, dark night Daniel spent trusting God. It was the Lord who kept the lions' mouths closed. Daniel remained in apparent danger until the morning's light when the Kings guards pulled him from his prison, and so it is with us. I have learned the value of praising God even in the midst of dark trials.

I also believe that no matter how serious the problem, God has a purpose for the difficulties we face.

We can praise Him for His faithfulness. Most of us have little difficulty praising God in times of peace and joy. It is easy to thank Him when we are on the receiving end of His blessings.

However, few of us are accustomed to praising God before the blessing arrives. It is even harder to praise Him when our world has been turned upside down by a sudden trial or tragedy, but that is what God's Word instructs us to do – we are to praise Him even when it seems impossible.

When we stand in the midcourt of praise, we line up with the heavenly hosts. We are at

by Dr Michael Youssef

home with God, and God is at home in our praise. Today, I can testify to the effective power of praise and prayer in times of great testing. Both my wife and daughter are living examples of God's healing power.

Praise Teaches Us to Worship God

Praise refreshes us in times of despair, and prepares us for worship. We will never be fully equipped to serve the Lord until we learn the principles of praise and how they apply to our lives as believers. When we put on the garment of praise, we position ourselves for blessings. We clothe ourselves

in heaven's atmosphere because we do what the angels in heaven are doing around the clock.

We praise God because He is worthy of all praise. When we gain even a glimpse of who God is, we are bound to praise Him even more. We are awestruck by

His sovereignty and captivated by His holiness and infinite power. We become aware of His providence, goodness, and mercy. The more we know about God, the more we want to praise Him and abide in His love.

God Saves Us for His Glory

We are saved by God's loving grace. Once we come to Him, seeking forgiveness and salvation, God pours out His grace on our lives. We are sealed with a seal of His ownership and the inheritance we gain is far more valuable than any of the earthly riches we acquire on this side of heaven.

If we asked the apostle Paul the purpose of our redemption, he would tell us, "the praise of God's glory." Have you ever thought of your life as a vessel of praise to the Lord?

When we make a commitment to obey

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He is worthy
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God, we honour and praise Him with our obedience. Through prayer, we praise God with our devotion. When we show kindness to one another, we are living lives of praise and reflecting His love to others.

Satan hates praise, and he will do anything to stop us from glorifying God. He knows that God indwells the praises of His people. He also understands the power of praise.

When our eyes are set on Christ through praise, we will gain a mighty victory as we submit our lives and hearts to Jesus Christ – the King of kings and Lord of lords!

Praise Equips Us for God's Service

Praise changes the atmosphere of our trials. Those who know the secret of praise understand that feelings of depression, fear, doubt, and worry vanish in the wake of prayer and praise.

Both of these change our attitudes because they require us to lift our eyes up to God and trust Him for the victory. Feelings of bitterness, resentfulness and fear flee when we praise the Lord for who He is and what He has done for us.

Praise lifts the eyes of our hearts to heaven – the very place where God abides. Our lives are changed. We may be tempted to yield to fear or doubt, but we have the power through the Holy Spirit to say no to every dark thought and temptation.

Our praise to God acknowledges His

authority over our lives. This is because in times of praise, we submit ourselves to Him for His glory and purpose. Our humility and courage to trust God demonstrate our dependency on Him alone.

Even a few words of praise that are spoken from the overflow of a humbled heart are a sweet aroma to the Lord. The psalmist reminds us that we can “enter God’s court with praise” (Psalm 100). Some people have a habit of entering His presence with a shopping list to be recited in prayer. Their words are not words of praise, but only express personal needs and desires.

When we fail to praise God, it is as if we have entered a home without properly greeting the host. We walk through the door and head straight for the kitchen, open the refrigerator and say, “I am famished, what do you have to eat?”

Instead, take time to enter God’s courts with praise and adoration. Express your love and devotion to the Saviour and your gratitude for His faithfulness and gift of salvation. Practice praising God each day. Glorify His name, and He will bless you with the fullness of His presence.

*Dr Michael Youssef runs **Leading the Way**, a ministry devoted to spreading the gospel. See <http://www.leadingtheway.org>*

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Once a week**

**Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers
Starts again - Thurs 27 Jan 2011 - 7.30 am at the office**

Marriage under attack

by Peter Stokes

Marriage has been under attack since Lionel Murphy made divorce easier in the 1970s. Then came the giving of benefits, once reserved for marriage, to *de facto* couples and more recently to same-sex ‘couples’.

The final blow to marriage, an institution created by God and endorsed throughout history as the foundation of society, will be the granting of ‘same-sex marriage’.

Yet, this push has little to do with marriage and a great deal to do with false notions of ‘equality’. Ironically, Aristotle stated a long time ago that, “The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal.”

Same-sex relationships completely destroy God’s idea of ‘complementarity of opposites’. He created man and woman, He designed opposites to attract and come together for personal fulfilment, for mutual fulfilment and for the creation of the next generation. Marriage ‘God’s way’ also gives children the appropriate nurture of a mother and father to learn how to interact with the rest of society.

None of these things are possible in same-sex relationships, despite the rhetoric we often hear from those with a personal interest in promoting same-sex relationships.

Sadly, they usually have no understanding of God’s creation order and totally dismiss copious social science studies which show that married couples generally live longer, are healthier, happier, and often even wealthier than non-married people.

Social science studies also clearly show that children need the balanced nurture and development of a mother and a father. This is simply not possible with two mummies or two daddies.

Yet, if the Greens, activist group *GetUp*, a growing number of Labor politicians - now including lesbian Penny Wong - and even some Liberal politicians have their way, marriage, which is often described by them as simply a ‘tradition’, will be destroyed in the name of ‘equality’ and ‘my rights’.

The push for same-sex marriage denies reality. It is driven by myths, innuendos, selfishness and immorality. It denies biological and anatomical facts and completely dismisses any notion of truth.

Part of the battle to undermine marriage has been to claim that it is a “failed institution”, and even those clamouring for same-sex ‘marriage’ talk of it being a failure!

I was at a Human Rights ‘Roundtable’ recently and the issue under discussion was a federal anti-discrimination law based on sexual orientation and transgenderism. I was one of only 4 people speaking against this idea among about 40 people supporting it. When the issue of same-sex ‘marriage’ came up, one participant said “Why do we want a failed institution?”

Yes, marriage has certainly been damaged by heterosexuals, but it is far from a ‘failed institution’. In Australia there are approximately 4.5 million married couples and around 110,000 new marriages each year. Sadly, there are about 50,000 divorces in any one year - but that is just 1.5% of ALL marriages, as most marriages continue!

So, where does that statistic we so often see come from that says “50% of all marriages break down each year”?

Statistics can be made to lie, and if you want

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to destroy something lies are useful.

Truth is always the first casualty in any battle and this one is no different. Those undermining marriage simply say 110,000 marriages each year and 50,000 divorces, that means nearly 50% fail.

Even if we use a true statistic that says a person marrying today has a 30% chance that their marriage will end up in divorce "at some time in the future" we get an impression of failure - instead we should focus on the positive, which is that 70% of ALL marriages last a lifetime!

That is the statistic we need to be telling our young people.

Unless we tell the truth, understand the statistics and refute the lies, our children will be the inheritors of a confused world where man and woman, male and female, mummy and daddy have no meaning. Where there is no idea of what it means to be in a truly loving relationship of opposites and we will have a society that knows no boundaries. If we normalise the abnormal the whole of society will suffer.

Socrates said, "Only the extremely ignorant or the extremely intelligent can resist change." When it comes to normalising same-sex relationships, it is being driven by those ignorant of God's truth and, all too often, the intelligent are too afraid to speak the truth.

To accept half measures, such as legal recognition through same-sex relationship registration of any type, is simply counter-productive. History shows that giving ground in this way assists the push for same-sex marriage; it does not hold it back, because it is really a push for 'equality'.

While our brothers and sisters in Christ are being persecuted simply for their faith in so many countries, the least we can do is face ridicule or even persecution for standing up

for what is right and true.

WE MUST VOICE OUR OPPOSITION, but we must do so intelligently. We must be able to say why marriage is so important to society and we must be able to combat the rhetoric of the homosexual lobby.

Same-sex relationships are either right or wrong - they cannot be half-right and half-wrong. Homosexuality is either natural or unnatural.

Same-sex individuals deserve 'equality' as individuals, but not equality of their wrong relationships. On page 8 of this journal we have reprinted a paper giving 13 myths about homosexuality. They clearly show that we have been seduced by lies.

God has offered, and will continue to offer, healing and wholeness to those homosexuals, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people who repent, just as He will those heterosexuals who repent of sexual immorality, or any other sin - but repentance IS required.

We can be part of the solution, or part of the problem by our silence. What part will you play?

ACTION: The federal government recently passed a motion asking MPs to 'consult their constituents' about this issue. Please contact all your State and Federal MPs and Senators. Tell them you do not support same-sex 'marriage' or legal recognition of same-sex relationships. Keep it short and don't denigrate homosexuals - just give your arguments. We suggest you give a good reason why maintaining marriage only between a man and a woman is so important and then use just 2 or 3 of the 13 Myths. Write to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. See our website for MP names and details.

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News Update

NSW - Surrogacy

On October 21, the NSW government introduced legislation to give full recognition to parents using altruistic surrogacy arrangements, including the ability to 'adopt' the children and be registered as 'parents'. The legislation also applied to singles and same-sex couples.

Just one week later, the legislation was debated by the Legislative Council and passed by 24 votes to 9 votes. The Surrogacy Bill 2010 was then passed by the Legislative Assembly on 11 November by 53 - 27.

One week doesn't allow much time for MPs to 'consult' with constituents or for constituents to contact their MPs! Governments need to give more time for consultation on these important matters.

Alcohol and violence

Over the past few years the incidence of violence on the streets late at night in Melbourne's CBD has risen alarmingly. Much of the violence is centred around the nightclub areas and is fuelled by alcohol.

The real solution is to make the clubs close earlier. Some venues open all night and this makes the problem much worse.

It isn't just a problem in Melbourne. In March 2010, a Queensland parliamentary committee analysing alcohol-related violence recommended that trading hours on weekdays be reduced. They suggested that the closing time should be midnight and that venues should close no later than 2am in entertainment precincts and 1am elsewhere, even with a special 'extended hours' permit.

That's a good proposal to reduce alcohol-

related problems. Raising the age for alcohol consumption would help, as would banning alcohol advertising and educating young people about the dangers of alcohol.

Read the Queensland Report: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/documents/larc/reports/Report%2074.pdf>

Shepparton brothel to open

We've previously reported on the lengthy campaign undertaken by Shepparton (Victoria) residents to stop a brothel opening in their city. Community and Christian groups fought the proposal.

In 2005, the *Greater Shepparton City Council* approved plans for the 24-hour brothel. The residents went to VCAT to try and stop the brothel but VCAT dismissed their appeal and approved the brothel proposal in May 2006. [ABC, 31/5/2006]

The Shepparton residents then appealed to the Supreme Court but were unsuccessful.

The brothel building is now almost complete and will open on January 1, 2011.

We congratulate the residents of Shepparton who fought hard to stop this brothel opening. We must remember that the important thing is to 'stand' and oppose such developments - there is no guarantee that we will win!

SA: Euthanasia Bill

Greens MP Mark Parnell and Labor MP Steph Key recently co-sponsored a Bill to legalise euthanasia. The Bill was voted on by the Legislative Council on 24 November. Thankfully, it was defeated "on the voices" - the vote would have been 12 - 9.

Tasmania: Charter of Rights

A consultation is underway about a '*Charter of Rights*' for Tasmania. The feedback date has now been extended to **14 January, 2011**. Tasmanians, please see the Insert (and the Campaign page on our website) for full details.



Common Misconceptions About Same-Sex attraction

Dr Neil Whitehead is a research scientist from New Zealand who has researched and collated scientific data regarding same-sex attraction for many years. He has written the book *My Genes Made me Do It*, which counters the idea that same-sex attraction (SSA)/homosexuality is genetic.

The book, which is regularly updated, is available on his website:

<http://www.mygenes.co.nz>

This article by Neil Whitehead addresses the most common misconceptions about SSA...

1. SSA people are 10% of the population

No academic would agree. Numerous surveys in many countries show that (including bisexuals) homosexuals are 2-3% of the population and lesbians are 1-2%.

2. SSA relationships are as stable and long-lasting as those of heterosexuals

Homosexual relationships last about 2½ years for both homosexuals and lesbians, whereas even in the divorce-prone USA a heterosexual couple has nearly an even chance of reaching their silver wedding anniversary (25y).

3. SSA people are extremely promiscuous

Both homosexuals and lesbians have 3-4 times as many partners as heterosexuals (comparison of medians).

4. Homosexuals and lesbians are psychologically on par with heterosexuals

A good rule of thumb is they have 3 times as many problems. All are prone to suicide attempts. Otherwise problems are mostly depression and other mood disorders for men and substance abuse problems for women, though there are many others.

5. SSA psychological problems are a result of societal discrimination and rejection

Very little evidence has been found for

this. Whether in tolerant and accepting environments or in intolerant ones, the incidence and type of psychological problems remain about the same.

6. Homosexuals are born that way

From four studies (2000-2008): if an identical twin has same-sex attraction the chances that the co-twin has it too are only about 11% for men and 14% for women. This means that factors the twins have in common, such as genes and upbringing are mostly not responsible – individual and idiosyncratic responses to random events and to common factors predominate.

7. SSA people say they have been this way ever since they can remember

The mean age of first same-sex attraction is 10 and two thirds of the ages of first attraction are in the range 6-14 years. It is therefore highly atypical that same-sex attraction is an earliest memory. What is probably being remembered are early longings to belong, emanating from feelings of insecurity and difference.

8. SSA people choose this lifestyle

There can be little informed, responsible choice involved if first attraction is about age 10. At that age no-one chooses lifetime sexual orientation or lifestyle in any usual sense. SSA is discovered to exist in oneself rather than chosen.

9. Nobody knows how SSA develops

Many SSA people do, being able to trace it to early experiences of sexual abuse, reactions to breakdowns in family relationships, exclusion from same-sex peer groups, porn. Others are not used to thinking about predisposing circumstances and have no idea how their homosexual orientation developed – just as most heterosexuals have no idea how they became heterosexual. There are many paths, each relatively minor

in the overall picture, but very important to those individuals whom they affect.

10. SSA cannot be changed

About half of the homosexual/bisexual population spontaneously (in a non-therapeutic environment) move towards heterosexuality over a lifetime. About 3% of the present heterosexual population once firmly believed themselves to be homosexual or bisexual. Sexual orientation is not set in concrete.

11. Anyone saying change is possible belongs to the extreme religious right

Neutral academic surveys show there is substantial spontaneous change.

Members of the extreme religious right are more likely to condemn homosexuals for their orientation than suggest they can change.

12. Therapy producing change in sexual orientation is damaging

Three published surveys and a PhD thesis sought people with SSA who experienced

changes in therapy which were satisfactory to them. One survey sought the views of those who had found therapy damaging. Accurate relative percentages of helped and hurt in these therapies is not known.

13. Private sexual acts do not affect society

Private sexual acts leading to procreation are the foundation of society. Male homosexual sex is medically risky and has an impact on insurance and health systems therefore ultimately affecting everyone's pocket. Surveys put the number of practising homosexual/bisexual men who are married at about 15%, putting wives at risk.

Dr NE Whitehead, Ph D., July 2009, www.mygenes.co.nz

Please note: We have changed the words 'gay & gays' for 'SSA or homosexual' throughout this paper.

This paper is available as a pdf document on Neil Whitehead's website: <http://www.mygenes.co.nz/Misconceptions.pdf>

Food for thought. . .

In 2005, after Canada legalised same-sex marriage, then-Prime Minister Paul Martin commissioned a study by three law professors to debunk any notion that legalising same-sex marriage would lead to polygamy.

Big mistake. The study recommended that Canada repeal its anti-polygamy law.

"Why criminalise behavior?" study co-author Martha Bailey explained. "We don't criminalise adultery." Now civil-liberty groups are wondering if maybe polygamy should be legal! (Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2010/11/27/INQ11GEP3E.DTL>)

Salt Shakers Website

Have you checked ***Salt Shakers*** website lately? We regularly add the latest news and information on a range of topics.

There is a lot of information about homosexuality - including links to Neil's website and NARTH (*National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality*).

We have pages on how to find and contact your MPs as well as information and links

for making a complaint about film, TV and advertising.

Why not bookmark our website (or make it your home page) so you can check it regularly!

We send current information by email. If you don't receive our ***E-News***, sign up by sending Peter an email - include your name/address/ph no - peter@saltshakers.org.au



Involuntary death fear

I have nursed in palliative care units in Melbourne when human life was precious and doctors abided by the Hippocratic oath and patients were given effective pain relief. Medicine today has progressed so that palliative care is even more effective.

Despite this, many are promoting euthanasia as being the preferred option.

Medical and hospital personnel are in danger of being forced to legally kill patients if euthanasia becomes law.

We should be warned by the Dutch experience where voluntary euthanasia has led to involuntary euthanasia.

The relevant figures are available to anyone interested.

In the coming election euthanasia is part of the official policy of the Greens party, as evidenced by the proposal by Bob Brown to change the current law.

Pauline Hanrahan, Warrnambool
Warrnambool Standard 15/11/2010

"Gillard must be praying ---" suggests Josh Gordon (*Sunday Age* Sept 26).

I suppose that, when all else fails, even an avowed atheist might resort to prayer, but to whom would she pray?

Ron Fischer, Ballarat
The Sunday Age 28/11/2010

We're facing power shortages

With many Victorian families struggling to meet soaring electricity charges, there is a massive elephant in the room that politicians are reluctant to acknowledge.

The Greens want to shut down all baseload coal-fired electricity generation. Labor wants to shut Hazelwood and increase the population of Victoria by a million by 2020. Solar panels and wind turbines cannot supply Victoria's baseload power needs, and the inevitable response must be reducing demand for electricity by measures such as banning airconditioners, massive increases in electricity charges and rolling blackouts such as in California.

James Bowen, Glen Waverley
Herald Sun 20/11/2010

Gay marriage is not normal

What nonsense, Susie O'Brien ("*Gay marriage must get nod*", *Opinion*, November 16).

The people who want to force change on everyone else, in this instance the 2 per cent who identify as homosexual/lesbian (LaTrobe University Sex in Australia survey), should be the ones to show why everyone else should change their opinion. No society has ever "normalised" same-sex attraction and nothing has changed to make normalisation necessary or desirable.

Peter Stokes, Wantirna
Herald Sun 17/11/2010

John Hamilton's "Nothing wrong with boot camp" (*Opinion*, November 18) says it all. Anyone with an ounce of common sense knows a bit of discipline never hurt anyone.

Roger Marks, Drouin
Herald Sun 20/11/2010

Alcohol claims pride of place in our lives

Ten o'clock closing of hotels was the thin edge of the wedge of extended trading hours. Hotels were then the only liquor outlets, now we have former supermarkets that were badged as "Fresh food people" being rebadged as "Liquor" as though alcohol was more important than fruit and milk. Certainly, as Bruce Guthrie points out in his article (*The Courier*, November 16) we have a problem.

Those who opposed the relaxation to ten o'clock were branded as "wowers" for seeing the reality that "civilised" drinking would become uncivilised.

Whether increased penalties will go anywhere near solving the problem is a moot point. The attitude of thumbing the nose at the law is as deeply entrenched as the perceived desirability of getting blind drunk. The link between misdemeanour and crime on the one side and punishment on the other has been lost. That has come about by the veto on the smack in the arsenal available to child-raisers.

Ron Fischer, Sebastopol 3356
Ballarat Courier 22/11/2010

Drug Injecting Rooms

by Jenny Stokes

New South Wales established a 'trial' drug injecting room in Kings Cross in 2001 at an initial cost of \$4.3 million.

Nine years later, the Labor government proposed legislation to make the '*Medically Supervised Injecting Centre*' permanent. The legislation was passed by both houses of parliament in late October, 2010.

Why did it take so long to make it permanent?

There has been a lot of controversy about whether it has helped - or whether it made the drug situation worse! And the government was concerned about legal action if they made the room a permanent, 'approved' fixture.

Has the drug injecting room helped?

The injecting room encourages drug addicts to take illegal drugs, by providing an 'approved' place to take them. However, research reported by *Drug-Free Australia* shows that "On average one out of every 35 injections per user was in the injecting room". That means they do most of their injecting of drugs elsewhere.

Drug addicts who use the injecting room are still buying their drugs illegally on the street. Police ignore drug sales in the vicinity of the injecting room! The *International Narcotics Control Board* (INCB) specifically singled out the Kings Cross injecting room trial as being in breach of the international conventions against illicit drug use, citing this aspect in their report.

Overdoses occur more frequently in the injecting room, partly because users take more risks as they know they can get 'help' if they overdose. The *DFA* research paper says "Based on the overdose figures published by the *Medically Supervised*

Injecting Centre (MSIC) the overdose rate in the injecting room was 36 times higher than on the streets of Kings Cross."

In June 2010, the *Burnet Institute* in Victoria proposed the establishment of drug injecting rooms, including a 'mobile' service.

We fought that battle back in 1999, when Steve Bracks, as Labor Opposition leader, promised to establish FIVE injecting rooms if elected. We helped establish the ***Community Coalition for a Drug-Free Society*** - attending public meetings and campaigning against the proposal.

The result? The injecting rooms never saw the light of day.

New South Wales has now gone further by formally establishing the Kings Cross drug injecting room. One NSW Liberal candidate expressed concern that this move would lead to the Labor government establishing an injecting room in Cabramatta.

Probably the worst thing about the injecting room in NSW is the fact that it is run by the Uniting Church. They claim to be helping people, but the existence of the room, especially once it is 'approved' by the government, simply tells drug addicts that the government supports their use of drugs. When people enter the room to take drugs they're not in a state of mind to think about getting help and stopping their drug-taking. Read the 4-page *Drug-Free Australia* booklet at http://www.drugfree.org.au/fileadmin/Media/Global/2010_Update_Injecting_Room.pdf. They've also published a 69-page 'Detailed evidence' http://www.drugfree.org.au/fileadmin/Media/Reference/DFA_Injecting_Room_Detailed_Research.pdf



Homophobia - harassing the truth

by Cameron Spink

Compromising is a key element in an election campaign. Unfortunately, in his attempt to satisfy the “pink vote” in the recent Victorian election, Premier John Brumby effectively placed those who speak with Bible-based truth into the firing line.

On 23 October, the Brumby Labor Government promised wide-ranging support for many GLBTI (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex) causes. In all, \$2.5 million was promised, to satisfy the

homosexual lobby groups. Many of the programs given funding are already being supported, but Brumby fitted it into one neat, media-friendly, package. [Media Release - <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/newsroom/12458.html>]

Apart from the ethical issues of financing lobby groups, there was something more ominous about this promise from the Brumby Government. As part of the package they promised to **“strengthen laws against homophobic harassment”**. This promise might seem innocuous enough; however, the ramifications are very significant.

The term “homophobic harassment” law really means a form of ‘vilification’ law based on ‘sexual orientation’. Vilification laws for homosexuality were discussed in Victoria when the, then, Bracks Government was fashioning the 2001 *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act*. At that time, ‘sexuality vilification’ laws were rejected by the government - they said they would see how the race and religion law worked first!

So what does ‘homophobic harassment’ mean?

The Labor government didn’t specify what it means, but we do know what homosexual groups are advising the government to

do. The Labor government had already established two advisory committees on homosexual issues – to advise the Health Minister and the Attorney General. These Committees are made up of homosexuals and people who are supportive of the homosexual cause. The two Committees formed a ‘Joint Working Group’ and wrote a report on ‘homophobic harassment’ for the Attorney General - called *With Respect*.

“spreading rumours, outings, words of abuse, denigration or contempt”

The Report goes to great lengths to define what ‘harassment’ means - which can include “spreading rumours, outings, words of abuse, denigration or contempt”. From their report, they recommended that harassment should have a wide interpretation and that anything that **“offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules another person”** should be construed as harassment.

The problem with such a definition is that it is too concerned with the effect of the action upon a person and has no regard as to the intentions of the offender. Any number of things can offend or insult another person. Suddenly an individual is muzzled because what they say about homosexuality may be construed as offensive.

Such laws are not necessarily limited to comments about an ‘individual’ but can apply to comments about homosexuality itself, if the person thinks they are ‘offended’ by the statements. We have seen similar legal arguments in cases brought under the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act* as to whether criticism of the ‘religion’ is covered by the RRTA. Such a definition of ‘homophobic harassment’ undermines ideals such as freedom of speech, opinion

and, most importantly, religion.

The *With Respect* Report deliberately goes out of its way to prohibit religions from having any position regarding homosexuality. The Report states that harassment can occur “on toilet walls or tabloid newspapers or Facebook and SMS, in schoolyard taunts **or calculated sermons...**”.

This effectively prevents ministers from speaking the truth under sufferance of being accused of ‘homophobic harassment’. It also places constraints upon any doctrinal teachings on the matter of homosexuality.

If, for instance, someone was to quote “*In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error*” (Romans 1:27) they would immediately feel the wrath of the law if someone felt that they were offended by the apostle Paul’s letter.

It should be hoped that such a verse would be used in a constructive manner in highlighting the wider context of men turning away from God as well as homosexuality itself, however, the proposed idea of “homosexual harassment” does not cater for someone’s intentions. A minister could be well-meaning but still be capable of “harassment” and, if the Joint Working Group had its way, breaking the law.

Ambit claim by homosexuals

This proposal regarding ‘homophobic harassment’ laws by the homosexual community in the *With Respect* Report is an AMBIT CLAIM – in other words they are asking for everything they want – knowing that the government might not give them everything they are asking for. The government might decide not to include the words ‘insult or offend’ but still legislate on

the matter of ‘inciting hatred or contempt’.

That’s EXACTLY what the Labor government did with the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act*. The initial proposal included the ‘offend or insult’ clauses as well as ‘inciting hatred’ etc. When some groups complained about the inclusion of ‘offend or insult’, the government backed off and removed those – but still passed the legislation banning ‘inciting hatred’ etc. That made the government look good – as if they were listening to the people... but we still got a BAD law!

We oppose any vilification or ‘homophobic harassment law’, because it undermines free speech and freedom of religion.

Exceptions

The *With Respect* Report proposes that there should be some exceptions. These include “statements made in good faith for academic, artistic, scientific or research purposes; or in the public interest”. The Report **specifically recommends that there should be NO exception for religion or religious organisations** – though they do say that ‘if’ an exception is to be considered by the government it should ONLY be for “religious instruction”.

Again, the Joint Working Group is putting in an ‘ambit claim’ – if the government agrees with them, the groups will effectively shut down religious objections. However, if the government does give some ‘exception’ for religion they know that groups will have to ‘justify’ their ‘exceptions’ at the *Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission* and in the Tribunal.

We need to remember what happened in the debate on the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act*. Many Christian organisations said ‘give us an exception’ for religious discussion and otherwise supported the proposed law. So that’s what the government did – but exceptions are not worth much at all. If someone makes a complaint against you,

you have to PROVE why the exception should apply. As *Catch the Fire*, Daniel Scot and Danny Nalliah found out, and as *Christian Youth Camps* found out, there is no guarantee that the exception will apply!

Political ramifications

The Victorian Labor Government, by saying they would “strengthen laws against homophobic harassment”, was participating in their own type of discrimination - they were prepared to make these proposals to gain the Greens’ support, as well as support from people who may otherwise vote for the Greens, in order to win the State election.

The homosexual community only makes up a very small minority of voters - it was to their sympathisers that the Brumby Government was pandering. We should love

homosexuals like we love any other person. However, we should never compromise on the truth of the gospel in order to appease anyone’s sinful nature.

Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are vital in our society. If ‘homophobic harassment’ or vilification laws based on sexual orientation are enacted, our freedom of speech and freedom of religion will be even more restricted.

Fortunately, with the defeat of the Brumby government, we have averted the threat of this law in Victoria for the time being - but we must remember “Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty”.

Cameron Spink is the co-ordinator of Resistance Thinking and has just completed his law degree.

Victorian Election - Early Round-up

We held our Journal back a week in order to report on the Victorian election and thankfully, three days after the election, we are able to report the Liberals won even though we do not yet have a final result.

After eleven years of Labor, many Victorians clearly felt it was time for a change, but it was just too close to call on the night. The Liberal/Nationals coalition now appear to have 45 seats (out of 88) and Mr Brumby has conceded defeat.

Perhaps the best news of the night is that the Greens did not get any seats in the Legislative Assembly. Clearly, outing themselves as ‘social engineers’ rather than concerned environmentalists at both Federal and State levels by pushing the same-sex ‘marriage’ issue seems to have worked against them in Victoria with a much smaller vote than expected.

It would be nice to think that the people of Victoria had sent a message to the Brumby Government about their terrible social engineering - their appalling endorsement

of abortion to full term, their pandering to immoral lifestyles and the removal of a great deal of freedom through anti-discrimination/vilification legislation - but sadly, we don’t think we can be that certain that the average Victorian, let alone the average Christian in Victoria, really sees the danger in such legislation. They will one day, and all we can hope is that it is never too late to turn these things around.

We have a big job ahead. We all need to decide to get to know our new, or re-elected, representatives. We need to show them the face of the majority and encourage them to support Christian, family values.

We need to show the Liberals that the way to stay in government for more than four years is to strongly support those same Christian and family values and to claw back the lost ground. We also need to tell them that if the cost of electricity, water and other basic services continues to rise they will be seen to be supporting the ‘Big end of town’ and to not care about families.

Prayer Update

* Praise God that the Victorian government which gave us the worst abortion laws in the Western world and endorsed sexual immorality through a Relationship Register has been soundly defeated.

* Please pray for all the new Victorian MPs, the new Premier and the new government.

* Pray for all Federal Members and Senators who have a break over Christmas - pray they have some quality time with their families and that those who don't know the real meaning of Christmas will find it.

* Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict our

Prime Minister of her sinful relationship and that she will repent.

* Continue to pray that 'the Christian church' in Australia would give wise leadership to MPs. Surely this is a time for Christian values, with good Biblical justifications, both moral and social, to be promoted by Church Leaders and Christians.

* Pray that the Church will have a clear vision for the future direction of Australia as a CHRISTIAN NATION, rather than surrender to what is referred to as 'secularism' but which really means humanism.



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

Papyrus and other stories from our travels

Kerrie Ternes, our administration manager, writes about her recent travels...

My husband, Geoff, and I have recently returned to Australia from our first trip overseas – to the Middle East.

We joined a Christian tour by **MECO** (Middle East Christian Outreach) of 45 people from Australia and New Zealand travelling to Syria, Jordan, Israel and Egypt to see the tourist sites, particularly those pertaining to the Bible, and specifically to meet with, hear about their work and conditions and encourage Christian workers where it was safe to do so.

For three weeks we followed in the steps of Abraham, Paul, Jesus and His family and disciples to end our tour in Cairo, Egypt.

As you know, life is not easy for Christians in Egypt. One of the Christian workers we met operates a small business producing papyrus products – scrolls and bookmarks, using the traditional methods and printing

Bible verses on them. He employs a family to grow and reap the papyrus, another worker to make the sheets out of the papyrus, another to print the Bible verses on them, another to make the wooden spindles for the scrolls and yet more workers to make the packaging.

We have a limited number to sell as special Christmas presents, which will also help Christian work in Egypt. The scrolls are \$15- (posted) and the bookmarks are \$5- (posted). Please use the cover sheet to order. More on our trip another time.



The Menace of Radical Secularism

By Augusto Zimmermann

Unfortunately, it appears to me that the unique contribution of Christianity to the development of Western constitutionalism has been deliberately obscured in more recent times. Despite the historical record, today's Western societies are largely viewed as 'secular', and a general perception appears to suggest that Christian philosophy should have no bearing on the law. As a result, our Christian heritage is almost never mentioned, much less promoted, in the political and intellectual discourse. When

it is mentioned among public figures, these principles are often the object of criticism or contempt.

This undeniable anti-religion sentiment has now evolved and is currently used to downgrade the long-established Christian background of Western constitutionalism. Many westerners are now convinced that there should be no relationship between 'religious' values and their countries' legal systems. Were this to be the case, the road

would be open not just to the rejection of our Christian heritage but also to the suppression of 'religious' opinion, which would be anything but authentic democracy.

The idea of an entirely secular public square has achieved significant academic support in western societies. The idea is that everyone ought to support their positions about law, politics, and public policy on non-religious grounds. This limitation of public debate to only 'neutral' secular rationales is thought necessary to preserve civil discourse.

One of the most notable proponents of the secular view was the late legal-political philosopher John Rawls, who advocated

that religion cannot be part of the public discourse, for religion involves metaphysical beliefs and positions not capable of rational discussion. Rawls contended that we should 'bypass' religion and try to dialogue on matters of 'overlapping consensus.' The American legal-political philosopher Ronald Dworkin has articulated the same philosophy when he commented that the liberal state 'must be neutral on... the

question of the good life... [P]olitical decisions must be, so far as is possible, independent of any particular conception of the good life.'

These proponents of the neutral public square believe that it is possible to detach citizens from their religious convictions, and that their reasoning abilities are capable of being exercised in a religiously neutral manner. Behind the secularist approach and the desire for a neutral, secular public square lies the

assumption that traditional religious beliefs are fundamentally subjective, divisive and irrational. In large measure, this is what explains the radical secularist support for an 'impregnable' wall of separation between church and state. Since traditional religions are deemed 'divisive' and 'irrational', radical secularists demand that these religions be limited exclusively to the realm of private conviction. Consequently, a citizen's religious conviction should be 'privatised' and excluded from public debate. Cardinal George Pell has commented that the foundations for such 'secular democracy' appear to rest upon 'the invention of a

**Proponents
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wholly artificial human being who has never existed, pretending that we are all instances of this species.’

It appears to me that the new form of secular fundamentalism that we have witnessed in more recent times constitutes a radical attempt to redefine what it really means to live in an open and democratic society. As seen above, radical secularism amounts to an unconstitutional attempt to privilege one form of religious discourse over another. Although these radical secularists are intent upon eliminating Judeo-Christian traditions, their rejection of religion does not necessarily mean that they have rejected all types of faith. As Cardinal Pell commented in his 2009 inaugural term lecture at Oxford Divinity School, the limited scope that secularists are prepared to concede to traditional beliefs is actually based on their own religious assumption that human beings have created God, and not that God has created human beings. Thus, even when secularists presume to have banished ‘religion’

from the public square, they have done no more than to infuse it with their own religious worldview. In other words, they have privatised all religions except their own, which they have actually privileged above all others.

If religion is defined as that which posits a transcendent deity, secular humanism is not a religion. But if religion is defined more broadly, in a way that includes non-theistic worldviews like Buddhism and Confucianism, then this concept certainly applies to secular humanism. Indeed, for purposes of protecting the free exercise of religion, the US Supreme Court has recognized as religious various belief

systems that do not include the existence of God. In a famous footnote in *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961), the court listed a number of ‘religions . . . which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God,’ including ‘Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others.’ Similarly, the High Court of Australia has commented that the definition of religion must not be confined only to theistic religions but that such definition should also include non-theistic religions.

There is nothing in the written constitutions of Western societies to justify the denial of equal rights to free speech on religious grounds. To the contrary, as mentioned before, Western constitutionalism owes much to the influence of Christianity on its development. The bottom line is that it is utterly impossible to create a religiously neutral public square unless religion is defined in such a way as to exclude certain groups. Indeed, anyone who views

the moral obligation of Christians to act according to their own convictions as something that disqualifies them from political life appears to actually be promoting an intolerant form of secular fundamentalism.

Dr Augusto Zimmermann teaches law at Murdoch University, Western Australia. He holds a PhD from Monash University as well as a LL B (Hons) and a LL M cum laude from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro. Dr Zimmermann is also President of the Western Australian Legal Theory Association (WALTA).

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Halal food - Barnabas Fund campaign

Earlier this year we wrote about ‘halal’ food, outlining the implications for society in general and for Christians in particular.

We described the ‘halal’ slaughter methods used by Muslims, which include a prayer to Allah, and also noted how a growing number of companies are having their food certified, and labelled, as ‘halal’ by various Islamic groups. Later, we reported that some companies are obtaining halal certification (and paying a fee for this) but not telling consumers that the food is ‘halal certified’.

Barnabas Fund, in the UK, led by Patrick Sookhdeo, have recently launched a campaign, called **Operation Nehemiah (ON)**, to work toward the “spiritual transformation of the UK”. ON is highlighting the growing use of halal food and the religious and social implications.

Barnabas Fund writes, *“Islamic halal food and other halal products are occupying a growing place in Western society and the UK in particular. They are now made available through numerous restaurants and retail outlets, and in many government and public institutions. Often they are offered without the knowledge of consumers and without the provision of alternatives.*

“While we affirm the freedom of Muslim people in the West to follow their own religious practices, including the consumption of halal food and other products, we believe that the freedom of non-Muslims not to follow Muslim practices should also be respected – and that it is being infringed by the rapid spread of halal goods.”¹

They say Christians should be concerned about:

- The denial of choice to consumers, unless food is labelled and alternatives provided;
- The commitment of many Muslims to Islamic mission (da‘wa) and the Islamisation of their non-Muslim host societies, which includes the imposition of Islamic practices on non-Muslims, and of which halal food is a major instrument;
- The cruelty to animals allegedly involved in halal-compliant methods of slaughter;
- For Christians in particular, the Biblical teaching on the eating of foods associated with non-Christian religious practice and its spiritual and social effects within the Christian community.

Barnabas Fund has now launched a petition² expressing concern about halal food - we encourage you to **sign it online...**

1. Article: <http://www.barnabasfund.org/Operation-Nehemiah-stopping-the-spread-of-halal.html>

2. Operation Nehemiah and halal petition: <https://barnabasfund.org/AU/Act/Campaign/Operation-Nehemiah/>

Supporting Barnabas Fund

Barnabas Fund helps persecuted Christians around the world. Perhaps, as part of your Christmas celebration, you might consider supporting *Barnabas Fund* so they can help Christians in Islamic majority nations share in the joy of Jesus’ birth. They have a special ‘Barnabas Gift’ program to enable you to give a gift to others - see <http://barnabasfund.org/AU/Donate/Barnabas-Gifts/>

World News

Amazon and paedophilia

Many people criticised *Amazon* (the online bookseller) during November when it was revealed that *Amazon* was selling an electronic book, self-published by an 'unknown author', called *The Paedophile's Guide to Love & Pleasure: A Child-Lover's Code Of Conduct*.

The book went online at the start of November. By the middle of November the outcry was so great, with people opposing the book on *Facebook* and *Twitter*, that *Amazon* decided to stop selling the book. They had previously defended the book on the grounds of 'free speech' but eventually bowed to public pressure. [*Aust*, 13/11/2010]

Of course, a threat of a **boycott** of *Amazon* was very significant and undoubtedly influenced their decision!

This is the sort of action that gets results!

Ironically, the publicity increased sales. Before the controversy, the author had sold ONE copy - it then moved up the sales rankings on *Amazon's* Kindle store from No 58,221 to No 96!

UK: Christian freedom

Another case of a Christian being penalised for her beliefs. Sheila Matthews is a Christian doctor in the UK. Sheila was on an 'adoption panel' and, because she believes that children are best placed with a mother and a father, she asked to abstain from voting on whether children should be placed with homosexual couples. *Christian Concern* reports "This resulted in her being dismissed as a medical adviser by Northamptonshire County Council. After a campaign led by *Christian Concern* she

was reinstated in her job, yet she was no longer allowed to continue as a full member of the adoption panel. Sheila resigned in March 2010 because she felt that she could no longer work somewhere where she was denied the opportunity to fully use her skills. She has effectively been excluded from practising her vocation due to her Christian views."

Sheila is now planning to take her case to the European Court of Justice.

Please pray for the outcome of this important case and pray that Sheila will be allowed to express her Christian faith in her work.

What next?

In Canada, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is conducting a survey this month, which asks students to disclose their **gender** (four choices) and **sexual orientation** (nine choices)!

The survey also asks questions about ethnicity, religion, parents' employment and bullying. [*Family Edge*, 16/11/2010]

Students in Grades 7 to 12 will be given the survey. For children in junior kindergarten to Grade 6, parents will be asked to fill it in.

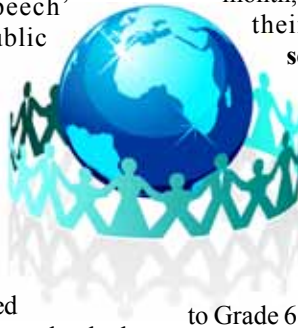
Although proponents of the survey claim it is "voluntary", the onus is on parents to 'opt-out' in writing if they don't want their children to participate.

The survey is supposed to be anonymous - but each form is tagged with a code that can be traced back to the individual child! So much for privacy!

UK: The name Mohammed

The name 'Mohammed' (and its variations in spelling) is now the most popular name for boys born in the UK!

That shows the growth of Islam in the UK - as well as the fact that many Muslim parents name their sons after the Islamic prophet.



Ministry News

The end of the year! With a federal election and a Victorian state election (and others earlier in the year) it has certainly been a very busy year for us. With the NSW election early next year it will undoubtedly continue to be busy in 2011.

Throughout the year we have continually battled a range of ungodly legislation at federal and state levels.

Sometimes people ask 'Isn't there any GOOD news?' Yes, we know it might seem like there is a lot of bad news, but the truth is there are a lot of groups and governments promoting immoral policies and we need to tell you about them. That's our role. If it seems tough for you, please spare a

thought - and a prayer - for us as we monitor what is happening, report on it and take action ourselves!

We do like to report on good things, and the positive results of action taken, so please share your stories with us!

We appreciate your ongoing prayer and financial support. Please pray for Salt Shakers' finances. It is often a difficult time financially for our ministry over December and January, as people are busy with Christmas and holidays.

Please pray for our staff as they take some time off over the Christmas period. The office will be closed from Friday 17 December and will re-open on January 4, 2011.

We pray that you will have a joyous time as you celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

JUST ONE Action item! That's because we want EVERYONE to write to all their federal MPs and Senators on this important issue.

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	Same-sex 'marriage'	Federal MP, 12 Senators, PM Julia Gillard, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott	<input type="checkbox"/>

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P O Box 6049

WANTIRNA Vic. 3152

Phone (03) 9800 2855

Fax (03) 9800 2655

Email: admin@saltshakers.org.au

Our office is located at: Suite 4, 675 Boronia Rd, Wantirna, Vic. 3152

Issues & after hours contact

Mobile: Peter 0413 084 145

Jenny 0413 084 146

Email: peter@saltshakers.org.au

jenny@saltshakers.org.au

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Christmas Specials



Would you like to support a Christian worker overseas while giving a unique gift for Christmas? Salt Shakers is offering you a chance to do this with (Real) Papyrus scrolls and bookmarks handmade in Egypt in the traditional method.

Limited stock available for Christmas.

The scrolls and bookmarks come in each of 4 designs:

	Rice	Cross	Leaf	Ten Com- mandments	Total number ordered	Posted cost per item
	Trust in the LORD with all your... Proverbs 3:5-6	As for me and my house we will... Joshua 24:15	The LORD bless you and keep you... Numbers 6:24	I, You shall have no other gods... Exodus 20:3-17		
Scroll						\$15
Bookmark						\$5
Total \$						

Please see article in December Journal on page for more information.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

Salt Shakers PDF Journal, by email, for **just \$10 for the year** (normal price \$25)

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

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

As a **subscriber** to our Monthly Journal we invite you to give **gift subscriptions** for just **\$10 each**.

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

How easy is that? Forget the incessant Christmas shopping, just phone through your order on (03) 9800 2855 with your credit card details or complete the attached form and your gift will be on the way before Christmas. (Offer closes December 17)

All the details we require are listed on the form below. Payment by CC, Direct Deposit or Cheque - see below.

YES - I want to give a Christmas gift subscription to the following people:

Please remember to put **your name** and payment details below.

1st Person to whom a gift subscription is to be sent:

Name Email address

Address..... PC..... Ph.....

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