

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

2011 - A Year of Opportunity

“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next.

It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”

C S Lewis

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Editorial

Welcome to 2011

We would like to say to all our readers 'Happy New Year!', but we should also say - 'If you thought 2010 was a bad year for this nation, think again, 2011 could be worse!'

Not a nice way to start the first editorial, but the truth is always better than deception.

Why do we think that 2011 could be worse than 2010? Because those opposed to Christianity and Christian values are intensifying the battle. As I [Peter] said to a journalist last year, "One could be forgiven for thinking, 'they protesteth too much'". When he asked that great question, "What do you mean by that", I said that I think they know they are losing the battle.

The evidence FOR God is mounting - as science tries to find the secrets OF life they are actually finding the secret TO life: God - the designer of all creation.

But they don't want that answer so they will dismiss it and try to discredit the obvious and promote the ridiculous. But our faith is in THE ONLY Living God and His Word.

Many may deny He exists but HE sees the beginning and the end and everything in-between. We may be shaken but He is never shaken. He knows how to bring us through even the worst of situations, but only if our faith is not shaken.

In fact, if the church in Australia really rose to its full potential this year we could indeed end the year rejoicing rather than feeling dejected. With His strength, and through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we can make a difference. God can turn this nation from potential disaster to triumph.

In our December Journal we printed an article, titled 'Empowered by Praise', in which Michael Youssef said, "When we

stand in the midcourt of praise, we line up with the heavenly hosts. We are at home with God, and God is at home in our praise". That is not a place of despair but a place of hope.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

That is what our nation needs right now - Christians with His power, true love and a sound mind, guided by His Word.

It was that spirit of power, true love and a sound mind that freed the world from Nazi Germany in 1945, when many had given up. It was that same Spirit of power, true love and a sound mind that started the fall of the USSR in 1989, and it is that same Spirit of power, true love and a sound mind that can stop this nation from self-destructing.

2010 was not a good year in many ways, but it was not as bad as it could have been either. On the political front, the resurgence of 'conservatism' saw some dramatic changes in the Federal parliament, although the eventual outcome of that election was not as good as it could have been; hence the problems will grow in 2011.

In Victoria, the political outcome was somewhat better. Not so much because a particular Party won, but because the political balance swung back from the fatal edge of destructive humanism.

The restoration of Australia cannot come from politics, and it certainly will not come from political correctness or humanism.

BUT it can come through a vibrant, active Christian community that is determined to make its Biblical voice heard - that is prepared to 'Make a Difference' using His Power and His Word!

Yours in Christ Jesus
Peter and Jenny Stokes



No “Lost” Books

By Greg Koukl

Has archaeology unearthed ancient biblical texts that cast doubt on the current canon of Scripture? Is it possible that Christians don’t have the true Bible?

Browsing through the religious section in your local bookstore, you’re likely to stumble on a handful of titles that suggest the discovery of “lost books” of the Bible. Generally, these represent works that were “politically incorrect” according to the theological notions of the time. Branded as spurious by early church leaders, they were discredited and destroyed. Luckily, a handful of copies survived. Archaeologists have rescued these previously “lost books” of the Bible. The Gospel of Thomas, unearthed in the Nag Hammadi library in Upper Egypt in 1945, would be an example.



Invariably, this sends a jolt through the system of the conscientious Christian. Could it be that archaeology has unearthed ancient biblical texts that cast doubt on the current canon of Scripture?

Is it possible the Bible that Christians have is incomplete?

It may be hard to believe, but this question can be answered without ever reading any of the books in question. No research needs to be done, no ancient tomes addressed, no works of antiquity perused.

Curiously, the entire issue can be answered by a close look at one word: *Bible*.

The Bible Divine

The whole question of alleged lost books of the Bible hinges on what one means by the word “Bible.” It can only mean one of two things, it seems to me.

There is a religious understanding (or

definition) of the word, and there is a more secular definition.

When one asks an Evangelical Christian what the Bible is, he’s likely to say simply, “It’s God’s Word.” When pressed for a more theologically precise definition, he might add that God superintended the writing of Scripture so that the human authors, using their own style, personalities and resources, wrote down, word for word, exactly what God intended them to write in the originals. This verbal plenary inspiration is a vital part of the Christian definition of the word “Bible.” The key concept for our discussion is the phrase “exactly what God intended them to write.” A critical element of this understanding of “Bible” is the idea that God was not limited by the fact that

human authors were involved in the process.

Man’s Mistakes

A common objection to the notion of inspiration is that the Bible was only written by men, and men make mistakes. This complaint misses the mark for two reasons.

First, it does not logically follow that because humans were involved in the writing process, the Bible must necessarily be in error. Mistakes may be possible, but they’re not necessary. To assume error in all human writing is also self-defeating. The humanly derived statement, “The Bible was written by men, and men make mistakes,” would be suspect by the same standards. The fact is, human beings can and do produce writing with no errors. It happens all the time.

Further, the challenge that men make mistakes ignores the main issue—whether

or not the Bible was written only by men. The Christian accepts that humans are limited, but denies that man's limitations are significant in this case because inspiration implies that God's power supersedes man's liabilities.

A simple question—Columbo style—serves to illustrate this: “Are you saying that if God exists, He's not capable of writing what He wants through imperfect men?” This seems hard to affirm. The notion of an omnipotent God not being able to accomplish such a simple task is ludicrous. If, on the other hand, the answer is “No, I think He is able,” then the objection vanishes. If God is capable, then man's limitations are not a limit on God.

The divine inspiration of the Bible— if we can offer good reasons the Bible was from God to begin with— automatically solves the problem of human involvement. If God insures the results, it doesn't matter if men or monkeys do the writing, they will still write exactly what God intends. That is part of what it means for the Bible to be divinely inspired.

The important thing for our purpose here is not to defend the notion of divine inspiration, but to understand that God's authorship and supernatural preservation are necessarily entailed in the *first definition* of the word “Bible.” The Bible is the 66 individual books contained under one cover that are supernaturally inspired by God, and are preserved and protected by His power. On this understanding, man's limitations are irrelevant.

The Bible Secular

The *second definition* of the word “Bible” is not religious, and therefore assumes no supernatural origin for the Scripture. This view says that while Christians treated the Scriptures as divinely inspired, they were mistaken. The Bible merely represents a

human consensus, a collection of books chosen by the early church to reflect its own beliefs.

A book that didn't make the cut was rejected for two basic reasons: Early Christians couldn't trace authorship to an Apostle or eyewitness accounts, and the theology differed from what had been handed down from the Apostles. Christianity is no different from other religions that have collections of authoritative writings. Even individual professions identify certain books—“bibles,” if you will—as official representations of their respective fields. The Bible, then, is in that category—merely a collection of books chosen by the early

church leaders to represent their own beliefs.

So we have two possible meanings for the word “Bible,” a supernatural one and a natural one. Either the Bible is divinely given and divinely preserved—the conservative Christian view—or it's merely a

human document representing the beliefs of a religious group known by the label “Christianity”—the view of just about everyone else. Given either of these two definitions, could any books of the Bible be lost?

No Lost Books

Start with the first meaning, the supernatural definition of the Bible. Is it possible that books could be lost from a Bible of this sort? The answer is certainly no. Remember, on this view God Himself is supernaturally preserving and protecting the integrity of His work.

Regardless of whether the Christian claim about inspiration is accurate or not, it is obvious that on this definition it is not possible God would misplace His own book. The “lost books” thesis would thus be reduced to, “Certain books that almighty God was responsible to preserve and protect

Could any books of the Bible be lost?

got lost.” This is silly. The view makes God both almighty and inept at the same time. If the Bible is in fact the inspired Word of God, then the power of God Himself guarantees that no portion of it will ever be lost.

There will always be a fully adequate testimony of His Word in every generation.

Could there be lost books given the second definition? What if Christians are wrong in attributing God’s stewardship to the Scriptures?

What if the Bible ultimately turns out to be merely a product of human design? If that’s the case, then the term “Bible” refers not to the Word of God (the first definition), but to the canon of beliefs of the leaders of the early church (the second definition). Is it possible that books could be lost from a Bible of this sort?

The answer again is certainly not. The “lost books” thesis would be reduced to this: “Early church leaders rejected certain books as unrepresentative of their beliefs that they actually believed reflected their beliefs.” If the Bible is a collection of books the early church leaders decided would represent their point of view, then they have the final word on what is included. Any books they rejected were never part of their Bible to begin with, so even by the second definition, “lost books” of the Bible would be a misnomer.

Consider this scenario. You decide to write a book about your personal beliefs drawing from stacks of notes containing reflections you’ve collected over the years. After recording the ones you agree with, you discard the rest. Later, someone rummaging through your trash comes upon your discarded notes. Could he claim he’d stumbled upon your lost beliefs?

“No,” you respond, “these were not lost. They were rejected. If they were really

my beliefs, they’d be in the book, not in the garbage.” It’s ironic that “lost books” advocates often point out that rediscovered texts were missing because the early Church Fathers suppressed them. It’s true; they did. Critics think this strengthens their case, but it doesn’t. Instead it destroys their position by proving that the “lost books” were not lost but discarded, rejected as not representative of Christian beliefs. Therefore, they did not belong in the Christian Bible. If they never were in the Bible in the first place they couldn’t be lost from the Bible.

Recall Vote?

Another approach to Scripture is worth mentioning. Some academics, like those of the Jesus Seminar, reject the idea that the Bible has supernatural origins.

Since the Bible is just man’s opinion anyway, why not have a recall vote? Amend the text to fix what is now considered defective or out of step with the times.

Such a reshuffling of the biblical deck—tossing out some books and including others to reflect what the church currently believes about spiritual truth—is certainly an alternative on a naturalistic view of the Scripture.

If the members of the Jesus Seminar want to include the Gospel of Thomas in their bible, they’re welcome to. Keep in mind though, they would not be restoring a “lost book” of the Bible, but merely redefining the canon to fit modern tastes.

Regardless of how you view the Scripture—as supernatural or as natural—there is no sense in which there could be lost books of the Bible. If the Bible is supernatural—if God is responsible for its writing, its transmission, and its survival—then God, being God, doesn’t fail. He doesn’t make mistakes, He doesn’t forget things, and He’s not constrained by man’s limitations. God

**Then God,
being God,
doesn't fail.
He doesn't
make
mistakes**

can't lose His lessons.

However, if the Bible is not supernatural—as many will contend, especially those who claim to have found lost books—one faces a different problem.

By what standard do we claim these are bona fide lost books of the canon of the early church?

If, from a human perspective, the Bible is that collection of writings reflecting the beliefs of early Christianity, then any writings discarded by the church fathers are not books of their Bible by very definition.

Has archaeology unearthed previously unknown ancient texts? Certainly. Are they interesting, noteworthy, and valuable? Some. Are they missing books of the Bible?

The answer is no. Two thousand years later, the rediscovery of something like the Gospel of Thomas may be archaeologically significant. It might be a lost book of antiquity, a great find, even a wonderful piece of literature.

But it is not a lost book of the Bible.

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Greg Koukl runs *Stand To Reason* - a US ministry which 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.

www.str.org

NSW Election

The New South Wales election will be held on **Saturday 26 March 2011**.

Many commentators and media reports have noted that the Labor government in NSW has become increasingly unpopular with the public following various scandals. Some are already predicting a win for the Liberals/Nationals. With the changing vote towards the conservatives in the federal election (gaining a number of seats but not quite winning government) and the win by the Coalition in Victoria, this could well be part of a trend.

From a Christian perspective, we are concerned with some policies of Labor - including the introduction of same-sex adoption laws last year.

Christian Values Checklist

The Checklist will be published in February or early March. It will be posted on our 'NSW Election' webpage and sent on our E-News.

Representation

Every NSW voter has ONE Member in the Legislative Assembly - there are 93 electoral districts. However, ALL 42 Members in the Legislative Council represent every voter.

Information

Our webpage with links for the NSW election is at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/issues/politics/757-2011-nsw-election>

The NSW Electoral Commission website is at <http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au/> It has information about candidates and voting.

Checking your electorate

You can check your electorate details (federal/state/local) at the Australian Electoral Commission: <https://oevf.aec.gov.au/> OR phone 13 2326.



News Update

Transsexuality & the military

The *Australian Defence Force* (ADF) has confirmed that they will pay for the full cost of transsexual surgery for a male Captain who wants to become a woman.

It is estimated that the procedure would cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000.

Captain Matthew Clinch, who is already living as a woman, plans to become 'Bridget' and wants to return to the same job. The ADF has confirmed that he will be allowed to continue in the same role - with the exception of fighting in combat. Matthew is married and has two daughters; his wife is supporting his change.

The ADF has abandoned its policy that said "a person undergoing or contemplating gender reassignment cannot be considered suitable for service in the ADF because of the need for ongoing treatment and/or the presence of a psychiatric disorder." This is despite there being no evidence that transsexualism is anything other than a psychiatric disorder.

Of course, the taxpayers are the ones who will be paying for the surgery!

WA: prostitution

The Western Australian government is considering making changes to the laws regarding prostitution. The proposed new law aims to remove brothels from suburban areas but allow them in 'industrial' areas. Brothels could be allowed within 100 metres of residential areas or 200 metres of protected areas such as churches or schools. Police will also get more powers to shut down 'illegal brothels'.

We oppose any legalisation of brothels
- in Victoria, when brothels were legalised

the number of legal brothels soared - as did the number of illegal ones. All prostitution demeans women - and men.

ACTION: If you live in WA, please contact your MPs - 1 in Legislative Assembly, 5-7 in Legislative Council. Also write to Premier Colin Barnett and AG Christian Porter. Ask them to oppose any legalising of brothels/prostitution. Send letters to Parliament House, GPO Box A11, Perth WA 6837. More Details: see our website's Campaign page.



NSW - Prostitution

NSW now has 271 legal brothels, - more than Victoria and Queensland combined. In Sydney alone, there are 244 legal brothels, with a further 90 complaints about "suspected" illegal brothels. By comparison, all of Victoria has just over 90 legal brothels, while Queensland has 24.

A report by the *Government Interagency Brothels Taskforce*, involving four separate agencies, revealed the figures in March 2010 but they've only just become public. In November, a *Daily Telegraph* reporter wrote, "It is believed the Government has been reluctant to release them because they are seen as political dynamite ahead of next year's state election."

The statistics in the report show there are 150 illegal brothels in NSW, with hundreds more believed to be unreported. Several industry figures estimate that there are at least 10,000 sex workers in NSW.

The journalist writes "What is more alarming is that these numbers may be just the beginning. Just 56 of the state's 152 councils - or just over a third - responded to the survey by the NSW Government. The state's other 96 councils refused."

This is another clear example that legalising immorality simply allows it to prosper and become a cancer on our society.

The Church/Porn Connection

Awareness – Lust, A Hidden Pandemic

by Scott Morgan

By the time a person reaches 21 years of age, Barna's research estimates they will have viewed more than 2,000 hours, on average, of pornographic images that reduce the dignity and value of human life. (Barna, 2010, *Media Exposure, Addiction*). There is no distinction between Christian and non-Christian, except that it is something Christians are loath to admit.

Unlike drug or alcohol addictions, which have obvious physical evidence and consequences, a person addicted to lust can appear to be "all together".

What makes lust much more powerful and insidious than other addictions is that lust consumes through the eyes and creates a "hit" through the thoughts. Like other addictive agents, lust causes a drunk-like state resulting in disconnection from self, God and others.

In 2003, Charles Swindoll wrote in *An Open Letter Concerning the #1 Secret Problem In Your Church*, 'Our church is in significant trouble ... This trouble concerns a severe disease that is eating away at our congregations, perhaps even some of our own leadership, from the inside out ... The problem is pornography.'

It is difficult to identify any response to Swindoll's observation because very few talk about the issue of lust, and it is this lack of openness that enables the problem to persist.

Lust is like a plague that has broken out around the world. It affects men and women, young and old, both Christian and non-Christian alike. The church is not immune.

All forms of technology promote sexual

images. It is everywhere: TV, magazines, internet, billboards, mobile phones, iPads, and, in people's thoughts. It is unavoidable and relentless. While technology brings positive change in the way we communicate, it has a downside: anonymity and easy access to an endless supply of pornography. This makes everyone, particularly young people, extremely vulnerable.

Yesterday's lust does not satisfy today's appetite. A person struggling with lust will always find at some point their lust will want more and different. It is not uncommon for a person to feel disgusted at the sight of certain kinds of pornography and say, 'I will never look at that or do that' but then find they engage in it at some stage.

In order for a person to maintain the illusion that they are still in control of their lust, they try to create a new invisible line they vow never to cross, only to find themselves pulled across this line. Almost seemingly against their will, they find themselves hopelessly enslaved to lust.

Crossing 'the line' often contradicts a person's values, morals and spiritual beliefs, causing intense shame and guilt that pulls them further into themselves, and leaves them further exposed and vulnerable to lust temptation.

Because the male brain, in particular, is wired "visually", pornography is incredibly powerful. Some find themselves hooked from the very first pornographic image they see.

Because the male brain, in particular, is wired "visually", pornography is incredibly powerful.

A person addicted to lust loses the power to say no. They also become powerless over what the image does to their thinking, emotions, and self-esteem. Left to their own devices, they continue to progress into more and more destructive forms of lust and “acting out”, leading to ever worsening consequences.

They may be able to stop for a period of time in their own strength; however, the mental obsession to lust will eventually win.

Once a person opens themselves to that ‘one’ lust image, it sets off an unstoppable craving for more that has to be satisfied, sometimes leading to hours and hours in front of the computer looking for the perfect image.

Unfortunately, some Christian teaching adds to the problem. Scriptures like ‘we are more than conquerors through him who loved us’ (Rom 8:37) and ‘forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead’ (Phil 3:13), are used as “faith” statements to cover up or deny the behaviour and guilt, as though it did not exist. This results in the underlying issues of the addiction remaining unresolved, and leaving the person a target for the next image that eventually comes along with further destruction.

It is not uncommon for people trying to overcome lust temptation to try and ‘fight’ lust. However, if a person has lost power over lust, no amount of fighting will prove successful. Lust will always win.

If there is no human means to overcome lust successfully, then ultimately God’s power

is the only source of progressive victory. Yet these people earnestly pray and seek God’s help, seemingly with no effect.

The problem is ‘how’ to access God in a way that gives power over the compulsion to view and then act on the lust images. A key is to admit the powerlessness over lust to one’s self and others (James 5:16), and start surrendering the addiction, and self, to God who has the power to overcome the spirit of lust.

God’s ‘power is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor 12:9). God promises hope and a future (Jer 29: 11-13). Those who ‘seek’ Him with all their heart find him (Jer 29: 13-14).

Acknowledging the truth is the first step toward recovery. Jesus says, ‘...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’ (Jn 8:32). Acknowledging that truth and being honest with God and a trusted friend, mentor, pastor, or counsellor, is the first step.

Just as Charles Swindoll suggests that this ‘severe disease’ is eating the body from the inside out, facing it from the inside out is paramount.

By surrendering to God’s goodness, and journeying with Him in the area of lust, we can move into true freedom and intimacy with Him, others, and ourselves.

Scott Morgan has a degree in Christian Counselling and is in Christian ministry as a counsellor. He is part of Life Builders Inc, Vermont, Victoria.

Endeavour Forum Meeting - 32nd Birthday

Date & Time: Friday, 4th February 2011 - 7 pm.

Venue: Mannix College, Monash University, Wellington Rd., Clayton, Vic.

Guest speaker: **Senator Guy Barnett**, (Lib, Tas) - “Defending Marriage”.

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

RSVP essential: Mrs. Prue Oldham, (03) 9583 6835

Lower limits, fewer accidents

If hard core drink drivers are not deterred by lower BAC limits, their vehicles should be confiscated and they should undergo compulsory rehabilitation. Lower limits will benefit everyone, since any amount of alcohol reduces capacity for quick reaction and sound judgement.

Feeling sorry for yourself because the law stops you from drinking alcohol? My heart bleeds for you. You haven't discovered how many far better drinks are available. Shop around for some really healthy drinks, and think of all the people (including yourself) who'll be spared the suffering caused by alcohol-related violence, accidents and disease.

Christina Naylor, Mayfield, NSW
SMH, 1/1/2011

Respect for authority needed

Reducing the legal limit of blood alcohol to .02 is a typical legalistic reaction, "Pass another law." There are two matters in our culture that need attention rather than increasing the pressure of obeying the law.

Firstly respect for authority and the law needs to be repaired. The perception that punishment follows the crime with certainty has been lost in the political correctness of no smacking. In this environment the attitude that "the only crime is getting caught" has snowballed.

The other misconception that needs correction is that alcohol is an essential ingredient of every activity.

Ron Fischer, Sebastopol
Ballarat Courier 11/12/2010

Reason for season

Are you busy shopping for gifts, wrapping paper, food, yet too busy to stop and think of the real reason for this season?

Strange, isn't it, that most of us give gifts to everyone, except the One whose birthday we celebrate.

The greatest Christmas gift ever given was the birth of a baby, named Jesus Christ.

Australia's heritage is strongly rooted in Christian traditions.

Let us keep Jesus Christ of Christmas alive and the central reason for the Christmas season.

Judith Bond, Glen Alpine NSW
Macarthur Advertiser 5/12/2010

Ten o'clock closing

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*, 16/11/2010) 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

Sex, a private business

While in Shepparton enjoying a family Christmas I was intrigued to read Tammy Mills piece expressing the views of Damien Stevens. (Diversity draft 'ignores' group - Shepp News 28/12/10)

It seems to me that the homosexual community are confused about what they want. One minute they talk of equality, the next they, in this case through Damien, complain they are being 'ignored' because there is no specific mention of them in a government document.

Surely 'inclusion' means you do not need to be specifically mentioned but simply treated as people like everyone else.

For most people, sex is a small part of who they are, yet same-sex attracted people want to thrust their sexual choices in everyone's face. If same-sex attracted people stopped talking so much about their sexual choices in terms of their 'identity', perhaps we could all forget the unnatural things they do and simply treat them as people.

After all, what you do in the bedroom is supposed to be your 'private business'.

Peter Stokes, Melbourne
Shepparton News 7/01/11

Tasmania - Surrogacy Bill

by Jenny Stokes

The Tasmanian government is planning to introduce a bill that would legalise surrogacy and provide 'parentage orders'.

The government has released a draft Bill and is asking for submissions - they close on February 4, 2011.

Currently surrogacy arrangements are void and unenforceable in Tasmania. The proposed Bill would legalise altruistic surrogacy (where no 'payment' is made to the birth mother except for 'expenses'). Commercial surrogacy would still be banned in Tasmania.

The government says this Bill will also provide a "legal mechanism for the parentage of a child born as a result of a surrogacy arrangement to be transferred from the birth mother to the intended parent or parents."

The Bill would allow a single person to undertake a surrogacy arrangement and apply for a parentage order to the court (Part 4, Section 12).

The Bill allows people who are spouses to make a 'joint' application for a parentage order. The Bill defines 'spouse' to include people who are married OR those who are in a significant 'relationship' - both registered and unregistered (*de facto*) relationships between two people of any sex. So the surrogacy bill would also apply to same-sex couples.

We are concerned about any surrogacy arrangements, no matter how well-intentioned they might seem to be. Extending these to allow single people and same-sex couples to have surrogacy and parenting rights is not in the best interest of children who need a mother and a father.

The adverse effects on the child, and the birth mother and her family cannot be lightly dismissed. Following the introduction of donor sperm for conception and IVF, the group 'Tangled Webs' was set up - they are concerned about donor conception and the implications of children not knowing or living with their biological parents. Those problems will undoubtedly also be present in surrogacy arrangements, where the child will probably never know their birth mother.



This is another example of the 'domino effect' - one state passes a law, other states soon follow! The Tasmanian government notes that other states (Victoria, NSW, SA, Queensland, WA and the ACT) "have all passed legislation in recent years to allow and regulate surrogacy and to provide

a legal mechanism for the transfer of the parentage of the child from the birth mother to the intended parents."

They just claim to be 'catching up'!

Submissions close **Friday February 4, 2011.**

ACTION: If you live in Tasmania, please make a submission. Please oppose the legalisation of surrogacy and the proposed parentage orders.

Your comments on the Bill can be sent to the Office of Legislation Development and Review, Department of Justice, GPO Box 825, Hobart 7001.

Visit our 'Campaign Page' to read the proposed draft Bill and find out more. <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns/770-tasmania-surrogacy>

Ensuring Freedom: Christianity and the Concept of Separation of Powers

By Augusto Zimmermann

The Frenchman Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, was one of those great philosophers of the eighteenth century who sought to investigate the nature of laws as applied to humans as physical beings and their respective societies. He spent nearly two decades writing *L'Esprit des Loix* (*The Spirit of the Laws*), which was published in 1748 and was first translated into English in 1750. The book soon became enormously popular, most notably amongst Americans during debates over the ratification of the

United States Constitution. Those who supported the Constitution and those who opposed it relied heavily on his lessons for their arguments. With the exception of the Bible, Montesquieu's book was cited more than any other in American political works prior to and following the revolutionary periods of 1760–1805. The first chapter of this political treatise was entirely dedicated to the following description of the nature of laws in general:

Laws, in their most general signification are the necessary relations arising from the nature of things. In this sense all beings have their laws.

They who assert that a blind fatality produced the various effects we behold in this world talk very absurdly; for can anything be more unreasonable than to pretend that a blind fatality could be productive of intelligent beings?

God is related to the universe, as Creator and Preserver; the laws by which He created all things are those by which He preserves them. He acts according to these rules, because He knows them; He knows them,

because He made them; and He made them, because they are in relation to His wisdom and power.

Particular intelligent beings may have laws of their own making, but they have some likewise which they never made. Before there were intelligent beings, they were possible; they had therefore possible relations, and consequently possible laws. Before laws were made, there were relations of possible justice.

..both the physical natural law and the moral natural law are derived from God.

We must therefore acknowledge relations of justice antecedent to the positive law by which they are established: as, for instance, if human societies existed, it would be right to conform to their laws; if there were intelligent beings that had received a benefit of another being, they ought to show their gratitude; if one intelligent being had created another intelligent being, the latter ought to continue in its original state of dependence; that an intelligent being who

had done harm to another, ought to suffer requital; and so on.

Montesquieu saw the natural law as encompassing a superior law instructing humans to distinguish right from wrong, to form their consciences and to guide their actions according to the right path. He argued that human societies also create their own laws, averring or declaring that such laws, being the product of mere human will, can be either just or unjust. However, the abuse of positive law is essentially the abuse of authority, and so it does not negate the intrinsic goodness of the natural law. Of all existing laws, Montesquieu contended, the natural law is superior and antecedent to

any other law, and the subjection to natural law does not constitute a restriction upon individuals and societies, but it is rather a prerequisite for their healthiest functioning.

Montesquieu, however, acknowledged that positive laws must vary from time to time, from place to place, according to economic, cultural and geopolitical circumstances. This observation does not make of him a legal positivist. Rather, Montesquieu was only commenting on the fact that sociological factors are important to clarify the distinct nature of societies and their particular laws. The legislator must thereby take local habits and customs into account before enacting any positive legislation. The argument that positive laws shall reflect the condition of life of those who live by them earned Montesquieu the deserved title of ‘father of legal sociology’.

But it goes without saying that Montesquieu also believed that both the physical natural law and the moral natural law are derived from God. Although the physical world has no other choice but to obey the laws of physics and electromagnetism, humans are free to disobey even the laws created by them. Montesquieu acknowledged that, indeed, ‘constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go’. To prevent this, he added, ‘it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power’. From here, it can be seen that a vital assumption

upon which Montesquieu’s notion of separation of powers is based is that humans are sinful, and will inevitably contravene the laws of God. That Montesquieu believed the division of powers to be fundamental to counteract the concentration of power because he regarded people to be inherently corrupt and self-centred, is observed in the following statement:

Man, as a physical being, is like other bodies governed by invariable laws. As an intelligent being, he incessantly transgresses the laws established by God, and changes those of his own instituting. He is left to his private direction, though a limited being, and subject, like all finite intelligences, to ignorance and error.

Montesquieu’s theory of separation of powers rested upon the religious belief that an unrestrained human heart moves towards moral and civil degradation. Therefore it was logical for him to hold that society is safe only if governmental power does not entirely rest in the same body or authority. With the power divided, if one branch were to become corrupt, the others may still be able to check its wayward influence. This sinful nature of humans, prominent in the works of Montesquieu, and a central concept in Christianity, not only justifies but necessitates the separation of powers that was adopted by the American Founding Fathers. It therefore comprises a fundamental element of Western constitutionalism.

****NEW TIME** 7.00 am every Thursday**

Join us for Prayer & a light breakfast

Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers

At SALT SHAKERS Office

1 hour of prayer then breakfast

Feel free to leave when you must

Prayer Update

As the Parliaments of the Nation and the States resume, we must pray for each MP and each Senator/Upper House Member.

They cannot function effectively without God's power and His values. No issue is outside the Christian Worldview - all issues need Godly responses. Yet many of those who lead this nation, including our Prime Minister, reject the very notion of a God who cares for them or this Nation.

Sadly, this is the mess we have got ourselves into and it will take a lot of prayer to get us out of it. Pray for the conversion of ALL those in positions of authority. Tall order? Yes, but not beyond the realms of possibility to an all powerful GOD.

NSW: Election

The NSW election will soon be upon us and the results will affect the whole nation because what one state does today another does tomorrow.

Pray that intelligent and eloquent Christians - people who are committed to serve God before man or the Party - will stand for election and WIN.

SA - Same-sex parenting

The SA government is reviewing the issue of same-sex parenting.

- The chairman of the SA 'Social Development Committee' which is doing the review is a homosexual. Pray for his repentance and conversion.
- Pray that the committee will reject the idea of same-sex parenting.
- Pray for boldness for Dennis Hood (Family First) who is on the committee.

SA: Prostitution

SA is also considering the expansion of prostitution. Pray that they will not do so, that they will see the error of legitimising sexual immorality, and respond appropriately.



Euthanasia

The Greens continue to push euthanasia across the country, in State and Federal parliaments.

Thankfully the SA euthanasia bill was defeated – no final vote was taken – but the vote would have been 12 to 9.

In Tasmania, the Labor Attorney-General has said she will introduce a revised euthanasia bill, and the SA Health Minister said he would also propose a revised euthanasia bill in 2011.

- Pray that all Euthanasia Bills are defeated wherever they appear.
- Pray that Christian MPs across the country will be able to persuade their colleagues not to support euthanasia.

Same-sex 'marriage'

The Greens and Labor are also pushing same-sex 'marriage' at both State and Federal level

- Pray that Christians, MPs, and the community generally will stand against any changes to the Marriage Act.
- Pray that the Australian Labor Party does NOT endorse same-sex 'marriage' at its proposed National Conference this year.
- Pray that Christians will understand the danger of legitimising same-sex 'unions' of ANY sort.

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

Reviews of 'Classification' System

By Cameron Spink

This year will see the federal government re-evaluate the classification of different entertainment formats including film, computer games and magazines.

At the moment films, computer games and magazines are censored by use of Guidelines made under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*. The Guidelines place movies into categories depending on the impact of what are known as 'classifiable elements' – these are themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity. Depending on how mild or strong these elements are films will fall into these categories:

- **G:** General (very mild elements)
- **PG:** Parental Guidance (mild elements)
- **M:** Mature (moderate elements)
- **MA15+:** Mature Accompanied (strong elements)
- **R18+:** Restricted (high elements)
- **X18+:** Restricted (sexually explicit)
- **RC:** Refused Classification

The classification of computer games follows the same Guidelines but the 'restricted' category is currently not allowed (so anything above MA15+ is refused classification).

Unfortunately, over the years the Guidelines have become increasingly liberal, with the 'G' category, once considered as 'safe' for children to watch, now allowing nudity so long as it is "justified by context" and drug use, so long as it is "implied only very discreetly and justified by context". Sex is allowed if it is "very mild and very discreetly implied and be justified by context"!

With these elements being allowed, we

shouldn't leave a child alone to watch a 'G' movie we haven't seen!

Magazines are categorized as:

- **Unrestricted** – "does not offend a reasonable adult".
- **Category 1** – Restricted (at least 18 yrs) – distributed in sealed wrapper.
- **Category 2** - Restricted (at least 18 yrs) – not publicly displayed.

• Refused Classification

Last month, Attorney-General Robert McClelland issued a press release stating that he was going to ask the *Australian Law Reform Commission* (ALRC) to review the classification Guidelines as it had been

twenty years since they had evaluated them. Currently many types of media such as TV, the internet, advertising and music are beyond the scope of the classification Guidelines.

However, in addition to this review, the Senate is conducting an Inquiry into the whole classification scheme and not just the Guidelines. Some of the things the Inquiry is going to consider include (with our comment on each):

- *serial classifications for publications* – Salt Shakers maintains that each individual magazine edition should be submitted for classification, not merely be rubber stamped because of 'serial classification'.

- *The display of restricted publications and films* – It is necessary to keep the restricted media from being seen and purchased by children and those who would be offended by them. We also

believe that 'Unclassified' material such as *Playboy* magazine should not be publicly displayed - in order to protect children.

- *The role of artistic merit* – this is given too



much leniency and this consideration should be limited when classifying.

- *Music videos* – we believe these should be classified under the Guidelines. At the moment they are not regulated.

- *Preventing the sexualisation of children* – this is a most important consideration and one that begs the question as to how nudity in G-rated films can be justified by context.

The Inquiry has listed 15 points to be investigated, in addition to the Guidelines themselves. We've posted a more detailed response on Salt Shakers Campaign page (<http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns>) with links to the Inquiry.

It is also important to recognise that even though a movie or game may have classified elements that only reach, for example, a 'moderate' level individually, the combined impact of all these elements with a 'moderate' rating is much greater. For example, if a film has 'moderate' sex scenes, drug use, nudity and language, each of which would qualify for an M rating, the



film itself should have a higher rating.

In addition, a game may have a 'moderate' level of violence, but the player is interacting with violence consistently for many hours. Because of this, the combined effect of the game would exceed the M-rating.

Furthermore, Salt Shakers is of the opinion that television programs should be vetted under the Classification scheme. At the moment their classifications all occur within the industry and this is monitored by the *Australian Communications and Media Authority*. Such a position is ineffective for consistent classification.

ACTION: This Senate Inquiry is receiving submissions until the 4th March. Please visit our Campaign page and send a written submission to:

Committee Secretary, Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee, PO Box 6100, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

Or email as a pdf or Word document to legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

USA President advances homosexuality

It was an interesting year for politics in the USA. President Obama made many promises when running for President - mostly about welfare, health reform and advancing homosexual 'rights'.

He battled all last year to legitimately change the ethos of the US Military by allowing homosexuals and lesbians to be 'open' about their sexual choices. His Bill finally won through on the last day of sitting for 2010. He probably knew that, if he did not win then, things would become even more difficult following a resounding win by the more conservative Republican Party in the November 22 Mid-Term elections.

He was not so open about two appointments he made during the year. Presidents have the

opportunity to independently appoint people during what is called the 'Recess' - when the Senate is not sitting. At other times all appointments must be ratified by the Senate.

Twice last year Obama used this time to install openly homosexual people - Richard Soriano as assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, and lesbian law professor and activist Chai Feldblum to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Both appointments, and the shift in military policy, enhance President Obama's pre-election promises to advance the normalisation of homosexuality. He has also held dinners at the White House to applaud homosexual lobbyists.

Understanding the difference between liberal and conservative

‘A young woman was about to finish her first year of university. Like so many others her age, she considered herself to be very liberal minded, and she was very much in favour of higher taxes to support more government programs – in other words, the redistribution of wealth.

She was deeply ashamed that her father was a rather staunch blue-ribbon conservative, a feeling she openly expressed. Based on the lectures that she had attended, and the occasional chat with a professor, she felt that her father had for years harboured an evil, selfish desire to keep what he thought should be his.

One day she was challenging her father on his opposition to higher taxes on the rich and the need for more government programs.

The self-professed objectivity proclaimed by her professors had to be the truth, and she indicated so to her father. He responded by asking how she was doing at university.

Taken aback, she answered rather haughtily that she had a 90% average, and let him know that it was tough to maintain, insisting that she was taking a very difficult course load and was constantly studying, which left her no time to go out and party like other people she knew. She didn't even have time for a boyfriend, and didn't really have many university friends because she spent all her

time studying.

Her father listened and then asked, “How is your friend Audrey doing?” She replied, “Audrey is barely getting by. All she takes are easy classes, she never studies and she barely has a 50% average. She is so popular on campus; university for her is a blast. She's always invited to all the parties, and lots of times she doesn't even show up for classes because she's too hung over.”

Her wise father asked his daughter, “Why don't you go to the Dean's office and ask him to deduct 20% off your average and give it to your friend who only has 50%. That way you will both have a 70% average, and certainly that would be fair and equal.”

The daughter, visibly shocked by her father's suggestion, angrily fired back, “That's a crazy idea, how would that be fair! I've worked really hard for my grades! I've invested a lot of time, and a lot of hard work! Audrey has done next to nothing toward her degree. She played while I worked my tail off!”

The father slowly smiled, winked and said gently, “Welcome to the conservative side of the fence.”

If anyone has a better explanation of the difference between conservative and liberal, I'm all ears.’

PS: This story did the rounds on the internet prior to the 2010 federal election; and some details had been changed to make it more 'Australian'.

We reprint it here because it is a good illustration about the difference between 'sounding nice' and actually being willing to put into practice what we preach.

Of course, it also points to a real difference between the so-called left and right of

political philosophy. It has been said that the left are good at spending other peoples' money. So too can many Christians who sing a similar song.

While Biblical Christianity certainly encourages us to 'help those less fortunate than ourselves' it does not force or manipulate. Biblical generosity must come from the heart, not from forced taxation.

Brian McLaren: 'Emergent' & Homosexuality

by Jenny Stokes

Brian McLaren is a leading figure in the US 'Emergent Church' movement, which was, in essence, a misguided response to the 'seeker sensitive' church growth movement, typified by Bill Hybels of Willow Creek and Rick Warren of Saddleback.

'Emergent church' groups have focused on experiences such as 'contemplative' and 'centering' prayer as well as 'mystical' experiences including labyrinths.

We have long had concerns about the theology of many 'emergent' writers. Some of their books have adopted a 'postmodern' approach and actually question the truth of the Bible and many of the classic doctrines of Christianity.

McLaren's latest book, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith*. In a review for *Christianity Today*, Scott McKnight, said the book "must be understood as his latest iteration of a project of deconstructing the old and reconstructing a new kind of Christian faith."

McKnight says, "Unfortunately, this book lacks the 'generosity' of genuine orthodoxy and, frankly, I find little space in it for orthodoxy itself. . . it's a rehash of ideas that grew into fruition with Adolf von Harnack and now find iterations in folks like Harvey Cox and Marcus Borg. For me, Brian's new kind of Christianity is quite old. And the problem is that it's not old enough."

On homosexuality

McLaren has long criticised those who oppose the acceptance of homosexuality. In January 2006, McLaren called for a 'moratorium' on the issue: "Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements. In the meantime, we'll practice prayerful Christian dialogue, listening respectfully, disagreeing agreeably.

When decisions need to be made, they'll be admittedly provisional. We'll keep our ears attuned to scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, psychology, genetics, sociology, and related fields. Then in five years, if we have clarity, we'll speak; if not, we'll set another five years for ongoing reflection."

But McLaren didn't wait the full five years before making his own pronouncement! As Denny Burk, Associate Professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, points out, McLaren discussed the issue in *A New Kind of Christianity*: published in 2009, just three years later.

Burk states, "McLaren argues that traditional evangelicals need to abandon their 2,000-year old ethic on homosexuality. He pillories their beliefs as "fundasexuality," which he defines as a "reactive, combative brand of religious fundamentalism that preoccupies itself with sexuality ... It is a kind of heterophobia: the fear of people who are different."

'Different' in this case means homosexuality which is clearly defined as a sin throughout the Scriptures. A fact McLaren wants to ignore. In March 2010 McLaren wrote in the *Washington Post*, "Most of my good friends sincerely and passionately hold the strict conservative view on homosexuality with which we all were raised. They can't understand **why I don't stand side by side with them on this issue any more.**"

Was the proposed moratorium simply an attempt to get the church to stop talking about the issue whilst those promoting it continued on with their aggressive advocacy of trying to get the evangelical church to change their mind?

What do you mean by that?

World News

UK: sexualisation

The UK's coalition government has ordered an independent review to ask whether retailers and broadcasters should be under new restrictions to curtail the sexualising of children. The review will be done by the Mother's Union under the Education department. It is the fourth government inquiry into the 'sexualisation of children' in two years! [LSN, 9/12/2010]

Let's hope this one comes to some conclusions that get implemented!

Austria: Free speech?

You might think, like we did, that **yodelling** is part of the traditional culture in Austria.

However, in a further blow to sensible freedom of speech, an Austrian judge has imposed a fine of 800 euros (A\$1069) on a 63-year-old man, Helmut Griese, for yodelling whilst **mowing his lawn**. [Kronen Zeitung, 15/12/2010]

Why was he fined? His Muslim neighbour objected - the Muslim was in the middle of his prayers and claimed the neighbour was mocking and imitating the call of the Muezzin (the Muslim who performs the Islamic call to prayer)!

What will be next?

Developing nations and EU

Seventy-nine developing countries from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific islands recently rejected attempts by the *European Union* to add "sexual orientation" to an existing treaty. [CFAM, 30/12/2010]

The treaty is an economic development pact between the developing countries - acting as the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (*ACP*) - and the *European Union* that allows for the sides to revise the agreement

every five years. Earlier this year, during treaty revision negotiations, the EU tried to insert language on "sexual orientation" as a category of non-discrimination. This was repeatedly rejected by the developing nations and was struck from the final version of the revised agreement.

The ACP sent a letter to the European Parliament demanding that the EU stop pushing its homosexual agenda on developing countries. The Secretary-General of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly delivered a letter to the European Parliament in late October, stating that it "is urgently appealing to the European Union to refrain from any attempts to impose its values which are not freely shared in the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership", a reference to the "sexual orientation" language proposed by the EU. The letter also noted, "the Partnership can work and be fully functional with due respect for the social differences and cultural diversity of the two Parties."

Well done to the ACP for standing up to the EU on this matter!

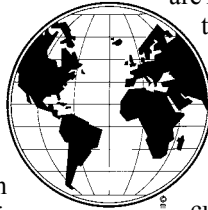
Planned Parenthood and sex

Planned Parenthood's Web site has announced the group is preparing to launch "**Real Life. Real Talk**", a "social change initiative" across the USA to end the "stigma and shame about sex" in American culture. The project aims to teach parents and caregivers, by running workshops, how to educate children about sex - from birth. And it recommends telling teenagers about masturbation, oral sex and "where to go for help to prepare to be sexually active."

Planned Parenthood receives \$363.2 million in US government grants and contracts!

Elton John - surrogate child

Singer Elton John and his civil partner David Furnish have been named as 'parents' of a child born to a surrogate mother in California - at a cost of more than £100,000.



Ministry News

Firstly, a big ‘Thank You’ for all the Christmas greetings and best wishes for the New Year we received. We know you will understand that it is impossible for us to reply to everyone individually.

Secondly, another big ‘Thank You’ to all those who helped us through the financial down time of Christmas. We made it through but, as you will know, we rely on the month by month giving of so many to stay ahead of the many bills we get for rent and other expenses that are so vital to help us do what we do.

Then there are the staff we need to pay to ensure we can produce the materials that so many of you tell us are important in helping you ‘Make a Difference’ in your church,

community and the Nation.

Finally, the challenge for this year, as in every one of the 16 years we have been operating, is to be able to stay ahead of the ‘opposition’. This is a constant challenge and requires a great deal of research, including venturing into places many of you would not wish to, or dare to, go to find out what satan is up to. For this we need your constant prayers.

Please pray for our protection against the influences of darkness, as well as for wisdom and discernment for us.

We cannot cover every issue, so we ask for you to pray that we might be discerning about what issues are the most important, and thus need to be relayed to you. God is in overall control, but He needs His troops ‘on the ground’ to be ready to respond so that others will know what is right and what is wrong.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
7	WA - prostitution	MPs (1 + 5-7); Premier, Attorney-General	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Tas - Surrogacy	Submission to Inquiry on ‘Surrogacy’	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Classification System	Submission to Senate Inquiry	<input type="checkbox"/>

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POST FREE New year specials



Special offer - Post free \$45

Liberty to the Captives & The Third Choice by Rev. Mark Durie

'Liberty', and it's companion volume 'Third Choice', have been prepared as resources for use in Christian ministry contexts. Providing teaching on Islam, Jesus and the Cross and resources for securing spiritual freedom from the legacy of Islam, both for those who have lived as non-Muslims under Sharia conditions and for those from a Muslim background who choose to follow Christ.



Special 'post free' price \$20

What some of you were: stories about people and homosexuality by Chris Keane

Chris ran Liberty Christian Ministries in Sydney for many years helping people with unwanted homosexuality to leave their sexual addiction behind.

Despite what the media and homosexual activists, say, many homosexuals change their sexual identity. In this book, some of them share their struggles and the way God has brought about this change in their lives. You will also read how family members have coped with having a homosexual, lesbian, or transsexual person in their family.



Twin pack - Posted \$6.50

10 week Little Feet lapel pins & a Baby Model

Remind people what they and their feet looked like at just 10-12 weeks after conception.

Lapel pins are a discreet conversation starter. Many will ask "what are they?"

The baby models have saved lives. Have one ready to show a young friend, relative or even a complete stranger that thinks abortion is a woman's right and more babies will get to take their first breath of fresh air.



5 Posted for \$2
20 Posted for \$5

GREAT youth groups, Christian schools resource

100% safe Pamphlet:

Folded up and enclosed in plastic to resemble a 'condom'.

In our sexualised society, young people need to receive the abstinence message, and information about the dangers of promiscuity, in ways they can understand.

This project was developed with that in mind by a Melbourne Pastor.

Please note - these prices are ONLY available while current stocks last

All prices include GST - Prices as at February 2011 - Prices may change without notification - ****ALL prices include postage****

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