

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

Which side are you on?

**A wise man's heart directs him
toward the right,
but the foolish man's heart directs
him toward the left.**

Ecclesiastes 10:2

**And He will set the sheep on His
right hand,
but the goats on the left.**

Matthew 25:33

April 2011 AD

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Editorial

Each month we think how nice it would be to have an encouraging editorial to start our Journal, one that talked about the good things that are happening. In fact, people sometimes write and say ‘Why not talk about the good things instead of the bad, because it is so depressing to read all that bad news?’

Perhaps the hope is that if we don’t read about the bad, it will mysteriously go away.

Sadly, evidence shows that the reverse will happen; it would simply allow the bad things to increase at a faster rate. As Edmund Burke stated many years ago, “Evil triumphs when good people do nothing”. We could add that ‘people do nothing when they turn a blind eye to the bad things’.

Of course, it is hard to turn a blind eye these days with 24 hour news services giving us ‘instant’ reports of everything bad that is happening around the globe, especially when they are shown 20 times over.

Somewhat ironically, we said in our first editorial this year, “If you thought 2010 was a bad year for this nation, think again, 2011 could be worse!”

In January, it was the floods in Queensland and half of Victoria, and bush fires in WA.

In February, it got worse with continued rain and floods in Queensland and Victoria, and in New Zealand when an earthquake devastated Christchurch. Then came March. As we write this editorial, the death toll from Japan’s earthquake and tsunami continues to rise and every indication is that it will continue to do so, not just for days but possibly for weeks to come.

What should our response be to all this?

Firstly, we need to keep all these events in a proper perspective. Such things have always

happened and they will continue to do so until Christ returns.

We must not treat such events lightly and we should not underestimate the problems, including the loss of life, but we do need to keep them in perspective.

Secondly, don’t believe everything you read or hear in the media. Sadly, sensationalism is often used to keep you watching and reading. How often do we hear ‘first with the news’ as though we need to hear about everything the minute it happens?

With the Japanese earthquake it was a relatively small part of Japan (a country much bigger than Britain), that was badly affected, but the media reports seemed to suggest the whole country vibrated to a standstill. We heard and saw, over and over again, about the explosions at ‘nuclear power plants’ but that was just one plant with six reactors, out of 54 nuclear reactors across Japan.

Lastly, we need to remember who is in control - it is not man and we can never ‘save the planet’.

No tax on carbon dioxide can ‘save the planet’, nor can shutting down all forms of fossil fuel use. All they will do is cause great hardship to the people with the least, and put more money in the pockets of governments.

New technology is not bad and neither is making money, as long as both are done legitimately for good reasons and not to the detriment of others, especially families and the poor who are already doing it tough.

We must remember that God is in control. That may be simplistic to those who do not believe in God, but God says, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

Yours in Christ Jesus
Peter and Jenny Stokes



Civil Government: a Biblical View

By Murray Adamthwaite PhD

During the past century we witnessed a massive increase in the role of government, and a corresponding increase in the scale of taxation to support this growth of government programmes.

In Australia, prior to World War 1 the States collected income tax at low, and varying, rates, with most government revenue collected through indirect taxation. When NSW introduced income tax in 1895, the rate was just six pence in the pound.

Legislation passed in 1915 gave the federal government the power to collect income tax and distribute revenue to the states but it was only in 1942 that the Commonwealth passed laws that enabled all income tax to be collected by the federal government.

The amount and proportion of income tax has increased over the years to the massive scale of taxation we see today. Much of this has come about through demands from the populace at large, or through agitation from various interest groups, or politicians at election time. Few seem to realise – or care – that the money must come from somewhere!

Another appalling feature of the past century has been the emergence of totalitarian governments and political philosophies: Communism, Fascism, and today's political left – more accurately called "Statism". State tyranny has manifested itself in the hard forms of Hitlerian Nazism, or Maoist Communism on one hand, and on the other we have the softer but more insidious "Nanny state" brand of tyranny in the West, whereby the state intrudes into people's

lives in a multitude of ways, controlling what we say, what we eat, where we travel, what kind of car we drive, what we can grow in our gardens, what kind of light bulbs we use to illuminate our homes, to specify a few.

This growth in the role and powers of the state invite an examination of the Biblical teaching, which this series of articles will seek to elucidate.

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What is Civil Government?

It is vitally important to know precisely what we are talking about, or confusion will arise from the outset. I propose this definition: "a group of people, headed by one person or a smaller group, which exercise coercive powers over the rest of the people in a body politic or social entity, for the welfare and good order of that society and for the restraint of evil." This at one time defines the legitimate role of government, and at the same time its limitation. A study

of relevant Scripture texts will bear this out.

Origin of Government

Here is a vitally important question, since our view of when, and for what purpose, civil government began will dictate our view of its role and powers in the present, and indeed, its justification for existence.

One very popular secular theory is that of the "social contract", whereby private individuals agree together to surrender certain powers to a central authority for promotion of the common good. A standard objection to this theory has

been the historical evidence for such a mutual compact, which does not exist. To the counter-objection that every election involves a contract, the answer is simple: the issue at an election is not whether to have a government at all, but merely *which one*, whether Labor or Liberal, or (in the USA) Democrat or Republican.

The first indication of civil government in Scripture occurs in Genesis 9:6, where after the Great Deluge God grants to man the power of lawful punishment over his fellow man when the latter commits crime, even to the point of capital punishment: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His image.” From this awesome power we may legitimately argue from the greater to the lesser: capital punishment for murder, therefore smaller punishments for misdemeanours short of that. It also applies to animals: “from every beast I will require it, from every man, from every man’s brother.” (Gen 9:5). We can think here of vicious animals (pit-bull terriers, wolves, large felines, even sharks) which are put down, or hunted down – as they should be – when people’s lives have perished because of them. But, of course, the “green” movement rejects the notion of man made in the image of God, and so they often value animal life above that of humans.

Why is government appointed so much later in human history than other institutions, for example, marriage (Gen 2:24-5)?

Reply: This appointment of government comes after the Flood as a specific Divine initiative to control man’s violence and corruption. The pre-Flood world was noted in particular for its violence (Gen 6:11), and because now God promises not to send another Flood He institutes civil

government to restrain those violent and corrupt tendencies; He gives to men powers over his fellows to that end.

Does this mean that civil government did not exist before the Flood?

Indeed! In the beginning man was created to live under the direct rule of God, in humble but loving fellowship. When man fell into sin, and was driven out of Paradise, God endured (“strived with”, Gen 6:3) the growing tide of human corruption for a long

period, until Divine patience ran out. Men could/would not endure God to rule over them, and chaos reigned as a result.

This view is in contrast to that common view which would see civil government in the original creation, in Gen 1:26, 28, where man is given dominion over the fish, the birds, and the land animals. However, the vital component is lacking: he is not there given dominion or authority over his fellow man. It is gratuitous inference to see any

extension of dominion at that point.

Implications of the Above View

Several things flow from this exposition:

1. Civil government is a Divine institution, and its powers derive from God and not men (Romans 13:1). Hence those powers are not to be found in a “social contract” by “the consent of the governed”, or in some authoritarian elite.

Still less do they flow from the idea that might is right, and power is its own justification. Yet this latter notion has pervaded secular theories of the state; in fact, without going through the various theories and showing it in each case, it can be asserted quite definitely that all secular justifications of government are at root, simply assertions of brute force. One example is in Rousseau’s social contract:

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under his approach the majority lorded it over the minority, even a 49% minority, which was then “forced to be free”!

2. Since powers come from Divine grant, that is both the conferral and the limitation of power. That is, the powers which God confers for government are such as to fulfil its Divine mandate and legitimate tasks and no more. In short, the Biblical teaching is of limited government with limited powers.

It is striking, by contrast, that secular theorists of government cannot help but see it in all-or-nothing terms: they cannot cope with the notion of limited powers. It is no accident that the twentieth century, as it abandoned the God of Christianity, moved towards totalitarianism.

3. Civil government is a necessary evil. It was not part of God’s original blueprint for human society, but was instituted because of human corruption, vice, and violent tendencies, an institution to make life liveable in a fallen world.

In the words of James Madison, one of the authors of the American Constitution and America’s fourth President, “If we were all angels, we would not need civil government”.

In saying “necessary evil”, however, we must stress both the adjective and the noun. Not merely absolute monarchies, dictatorships, one-party states and so on are evil, but government by its nature is evil, even at its most benign, since it imposes an unnatural and unoriginal burden on man’s life in this world. By the same token it is necessary, because otherwise anarchy would reign, and society would be chaotic, full of predators, and profoundly unsafe.

4. Taxes for the support of government and its various functions are in order and legitimate (Romans 13:6-7) but, because of the limitations of power, taxes are only due

for those legitimate tasks.

To anticipate a point here, we may take a cue from the Old Testament, at least as a guideline: the Israelite theocracy imposed a 10% tithe, plus some other contributions, to support the elders and the religious functionaries who had both religious and civil duties.

When the monarchy was instituted in Israel, the kings imposed taxes in addition

to tithes, but I will discuss that issue in a subsequent article. But for the present, translated into modern terms, one could say that legitimate taxation by government could be perhaps 15% - at the very most 20%; the rest is theft.

On this formula, or something like it, taxation today has indeed long passed the proportion of legalised theft, and always on the pretext that “We need the money” for this, that, and the other programme, irrespective of whether that programme is a legitimate part of the function of government.

However, we digress beyond the scope of this initial exposition. A further article will explore Biblically what the proper and legitimate functions of government are, and draw lessons for today. Suffice it to say for the present that with a “necessary evil” view of government one should not therefore overvalue its status or role, but keep it within bounds. It is not here to create a utopia. Moreover, the Christian should certainly not in any way deify it: it is not “the god from whom all blessings flow”.

To Be Continued...

This is the first part of a three-part series.

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Murray has a website with articles and information: archist.com.au

Murray is on Salt Shakers Reference Panel.

**Civil
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News & Action

Territories' powers

Greens Senator Bob Brown has been trying to get a Bill passed that would allow Territories to pass legislation that is not subject to being overturned by the Commonwealth government.

On 2 March the Senate referred the Bill, the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment (Disallowance and Amendment Power of the Commonwealth) Bill 2010* for "inquiry and report".

The Bill would amend the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* to repeal the provision which enables the Governor-General to disallow, or recommend amendments to, any Act made by the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly. Bob Brown proposed further amendments that would make the same changes to the operation of NT and Norfolk Island laws.

How long did they give for submissions? EIGHT DAYS! Yes, submissions closed on 10 March. The Committee was asked to report on the matter by 21 March.

One concern regarding this legislation is that the "stated object of the Bill and the amendments is to give exclusive legislative authority for the three territories to their local legislatures." The consequence of this law would be that the Territories could pass legislation - for instance, legalising euthanasia and homosexual 'marriage' - that the Commonwealth could not overturn.

ACTION: Please contact your 12 Senators (2 in ACT/NT). Ask them to vote against Senator Brown's Bill. Post letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.

Details of Senators at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/parliamentmps/79-federal> - or phone the AEC 13 2326.

Marriage Update

It is vital that we contact our federal MP and 12 Senators on this important issue of homosexual 'marriage' to tell them that we oppose any change to the *Marriage Act* to allow homosexuals to marry.

The homosexual lobby and *GetUp!* are VERY active in getting their members to lobby the MPs. So we must contact our M P s as well to give our message.

ACTION: Please contact your federal MP, 12 Senators, PM Julia Gillard, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and Nationals Leader Warren Truss. [Names and details - see above.]

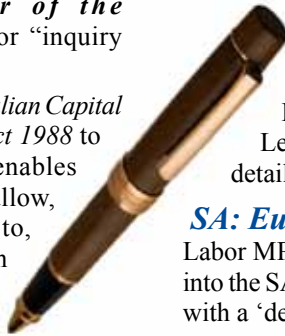
SA: Euthanasia and murder

Labor MP Steph Key has introduced a Bill into the SA parliament that provides doctors with a 'defence' if they kill someone.

Ros Phillips, of *FamilyVoice*, says the Bill "would allow some doctors to get away with murder. Earlier Bills have set up a scheme for legalised euthanasia. But Steph Key's Bill sets out a series of defences for doctors who kill their patients, or who actively counsel and aid them to commit suicide. It would allow a doctor to escape any penalty by claiming that the doctor had given a patient a lethal dose of drugs because the patient found life intolerable and expressly requested to be killed."

The Bill is called *Criminal Law Consolidation (Medical Defences—End of Life Arrangements) Amendment Bill 2011*.

ACTION: If you live in SA, please contact your MP in the House of Assembly and ALL MPs in the Legislative Council. Ask them to oppose this Bill. For names and details go to <http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Members/Pages/Members.aspx>



Buddhism - and our response: Part I

Steve Cioccolanti is a pastor in Melbourne. Steve provides an insightful account of Buddhism and how we should respond...

Multicultural Australia

Australia is fast becoming a multi-cultural nation. I love it, since I am the product of a multicultural family – I’m half-Australian, half-Thai. I also believe it’s a great opportunity for us to welcome others into the Australian way of life. Something about us attracts foreigners to risk their lives to cross the oceans to be here, and I don’t want to risk giving that up in the name of the politically correct version of multiculturalism. We do not live in “Multiculturia” – we live in “Australia”! Let’s not apologize for it!

My family is not only a mix of Asians and Caucasians, it is also a mix of four major religions: Buddhist, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant. I had intimate encounters with all four before discovering Jesus Christ as my Lord and becoming pastor of *Discover Church* in Melbourne.

I believe this experience affords me a right to comment on true “tolerance”, by which I mean real respect borne out of understanding, not wishful thinking.

Tolerant Australia

We can only have true tolerance if we understand each other. A fact that we all must understand – like it or not – is that Australia is a Christian majority nation, imbibed with Christian values, and flying a flag that bears the Christian Cross no less than 4 times (the 3 crosses of the Union Jack – St George’s, St Andrew’s and St Patrick’s – plus the Southern Cross).

If asked, “Which is the second largest

religion in Australia?” most Australians I’ve polled in churches will say: ‘Islam’.

Incorrect! It’s Buddhism. Though second by a long shot, Buddhism is now our country’s second largest religion not only in absolute numbers, but also in percentage growth. According to the 2006 Census, the number of Buddhists in Australia grew by 107% in 10 years! Add to that the fact that many “non-religious” Australians say they are more interested in Buddhism than Christianity, then the growth of Buddhism may be eclipsing the growth of Islam and

I had intimate encounters with all four religions before discovering Jesus Christ as my Lord

any other religion in a significant way. It is far more likely, in my humble opinion, that the average Australian would convert to Buddhism than to Islam. Couple the rise of Buddhism with the decline of both Judaism and Christianity, and we have a trend that Bible believers would be foolhardy to ignore!

We must understand Buddhism, but not from an academic point of view. You can get that kind of information off the internet

from *Wikipedia*. That kind of information also makes little difference to promoting the welfare of our society, since every Australian is entitled to believe what he/she wants to believe. No, we must understand Buddhism from a social, spiritual and political perspective, because that is what will shape our society and our children’s future.

The Introduction of Buddhism

Buddha was a spiritual teacher who was born in India roughly 2,500 years ago. Not a single nation on earth is built on the foundation of Buddhism. Not a single nation ever will be. In fact, Buddhism is the only major religion in the world that has died in

its country of origin - India. Buddhism is a religion that is introduced to a country, is always foreign (unless you are northern Indian), and can win converts only by adapting itself to the pre-existing beliefs of the locals.

For Westerners, that foundation is Christianity and science. To appeal to them, Buddhism speaks of 'love' - since love is the first commandment of Christianity - and comes across as being 'scientific'. This is despite the fact that Buddha taught that love causes suffering and impedes enlightenment. In other countries, Buddhism doesn't emphasize love or science in any way. Buddhism always sits upon another foundation of beliefs - and that alters depending on the country.

Buddhism & the Sexes

In the West, we consider it manifest truth that people are equal regardless of gender and race, because God created both man and woman in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26).

Western converts to Buddhism must build their version of Buddhism on this Christian foundation, otherwise it could never be accepted here. They claim there is equality of the sexes in Buddhism, but, as an insider, I can tell you that no such thing can be found in the teachings of Buddha. Women are not treated the same as men. Women have more rules to follow than men. Buddha gave 227 commandments to Buddhist men, but 311 commandments to Buddhist women.

One Australian convert to Buddhism countered this with his own belief that the 311 commandments are actually better for women because they give women more protection. This is twisting Buddhism to suit his Western assumption of gender equality and taking Buddha's teaching out of its historical context.

Easterners who learned Buddhism in school know that the very reason Buddha

gave more commandments to women was he did not want them to become nuns. He was approached about whether or not women could enter the *sangha* (religious community) and with great reluctance he conceded. But by giving women more commandments than men, he made it virtually impossible for women to become nuns and attain enlightenment. Why is the concept of Buddhist "nuns" still taboo in Asian countries? Women who call themselves nuns are usually not fully ordained and do not have the same status as Buddhist monks (*bhikkhus*).

The reason women are prohibited from becoming nuns, or discouraged from becoming one, is that in Buddhism women are viewed as a hindrance. When Buddha was meditating under the Bo Tree, three demons came to tempt him - Naga, Tanha, and Ahradi. All three appeared in the form of women. They were the personifications of jealousy, lust and evil cravings. Women are seen as the impediment to spiritual enlightenment, that is why Buddha had to leave his wife to attain enlightenment and all monks have to vow celibacy.

In both Judaism and Christianity, marriage is considered holy and is one qualification for ministry. Jewish tradition required Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin to be married. Jesus chose some married men to be His twelve disciples (Matt 8:14, 1 Cor 9:5). Three times Paul listed one qualification to become a Christian minister as "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). Being celibate like Jesus or Paul was the exception, not the norm. In God's design, marriage helps men mature spiritually and a happy marriage qualifies men to spiritual leadership, such as being bishop, elder or deacon.

Buddhism & the Family

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) tells us, "And we all, with unveiled face, BEHOLDING the



glory of the Lord, are BEING transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another...”

In other words, we become what we behold. We become who we follow. It’s a powerful principle that explains more than all of psychology, sociology and the economy!

Why is there more infidelity, HIV AIDS, transvestites, child prostitution, and sexual slavery in Buddhist Asia than in the Christian West?

Politicians who don’t understand that nearly all human behaviour has its basis in worldviews miss the obvious. They blame economics. But poor economics has not made Latin Americans sell their children into the sex trade or caused rampant sexual diseases. Blaming poverty is too simplistic. Worldview is what defines a people. People become who they follow.

Who do Buddhists follow? A man who at the age of 29 not only left his royal palace in search for truth, but also abandoned his wife, Yashodara, and newborn son, Rahula. We can believe the best of Buddha, he probably did this with sincere intentions; nevertheless his actions left a widow and an orphan without



a dad. Buddhist families have an extremely high rate of infidelity (evidenced by the high rate of HIV AIDS and other STDs) and absent fathers (evidenced by the high rate of broken young men who turn to gangs, drugs, transvestism and other self-destructive behaviour). Whereas the Australian family motto may be, “The family that plays together stays together,” no such motto prevails in Buddhist nations.

Too many Buddhist men neglect their wives and children . Why? 2 Corinthians 3:18 tells us: we become what we behold most. For Australia to survive and thrive, we must protect the basic building block of society – the family. Politicians and voters must understand that marriage and family are the inventions of God. It stands to reason that nourishing a core belief in God is best for our families and children’s future.

Next month: Part 2 - Buddhism and love, Buddhism’s popularity and our response. Steve is the pastor of *Discover Church* in Melbourne. He has written a book about his life titled ‘*From Buddha to Jesus*’ - available from Koorong, Word or online at <http://www.buddhabook.org/>

Surrogacy in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Parliament is set to debate surrogacy laws during April. The *Surrogacy Bill 2011 & Surrogacy (Consequential Amendment) Bill 2011* – will be debated in the House of Assembly from April 5.

Some of our concerns about surrogacy:

- the commodification of children
- destroying the ideal - for children to be brought up by their biological parents
- the problems for the birth mother in relinquishing the child and the impact on her other children.
- the use of donated material that destroys the bond between parent and child.

- the use of expensive IVF procedures to facilitate surrogacy arrangements.
- calling people ‘parents’ who have no biological connection to the child.
- the ability for homosexual couples to use surrogacy and IVF to have children.

ACTION: If you live in Tasmania, please write to your Members of Parliament, the Premier Lara Giddings and Opposition Leader Will Hodgman. Each Tasmanian voter has five members in the House of Assembly and ONE Member in the Legislative Council. Send letters to Parliament House, Hobart, Tasmania, 7000.

An orphan's story a truly uplifting one.

What an uplifting article about John O'Connor's upbringing in the Ballarat Orphanage. (*The Courier*, Feb 19)

Like John, my mum was placed in the orphanage by a mother who couldn't support her. In her case it was because of being a World War I widow.

Mum used to relate a variety of stories about her childhood in "the home", some of them quite hilarious, others telling of the caring nature of the staff, but mostly about the great mates with whom she grew up.

Naturally, there were the occasional "bossy boots" but the kids seemed to devise ways to get their own back on them.

I actually commenced my teaching career as a member of the staff at the orphanage school back in 1961 and have fond memories of that era.

Over the years I have met a number of "orphanage kids" who have become exemplary citizens, just like John O'Connor.

David G Westaway, Navigators, Vic
The Courier 22/2/2011.

There is plenty of evidence that 'short can be sweet' when it comes to having letters printed in the newspaper this month.

Mistaken

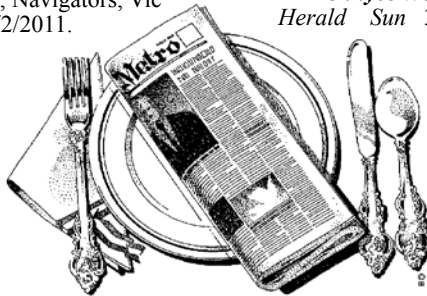
The belief that Melissa Keevers and Rosemary Nolan have that they can successfully raise a family flies in the face of research released last week that children who lived with their biological father were better equipped for life than those who didn't.

Ron Fischer, Ballarat
Sunday Herald Sun 13/03/2011

50/50

Thank goodness not all young mothers whinge about child rearing ("Mum's a zombie", March 3). Some are actually stimulated by the exuberance, enthusiasm and energy of their kids. Enjoy them - they grow up very quickly.

Lennyce Westaway Navigators Vic
Herald Sun 3/02/2011



No place at march

I am both saddened and disappointed to read that Premier Ted Baillieu and Lord Mayor Robert Doyle spoke at the launch of a gay and lesbian function.

What sort of message are we giving our young people when these leading citizens openly attend such events and when our Chief Police Commissioner and his predecessor were involved in similar events.

We do not have the right to condemn individuals - indeed we should show love, forgiveness and reconciliation, but we do have the responsibility to condemn those practices that can influence our youth away from God's principles.

M Lloyd, Drouin
Warragul Gazette 8/2/2011

50/50

Why in 21st century Australia is our government still funding and promoting separatism?

Cultural groups should pay for their own activities and not expect the public purse to finance them.

David G Westaway, Navigators Vic
Herald Sun 3/03/2011

Reasons are wrong

The Greens are right about the world getting hotter. Their reasons are wrong. It is outlined in 2 Peter 3:10 and elsewhere. Sadly the ginger puppet looks set for a scorching on at least three counts, under Revelation 21:8. Oh Dear!

Geoff Pickering, Gympie
Gympie Times 5/03/2011

Planned Parenthood and abortion

by Jenny Stokes

'*Planned Parenthood*' is generally known as being one of the largest abortion providers in the world. When considering '*Planned Parenthood*', we need to distinguish between '*Planned Parenthood*' in the United States and the *International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)*. The *IPPF* describes itself as "a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all." The *IPPF* is a 'non-governmental organisation' (NGO) - they work with various United Nations bodies and governments.

The *IPPF* has 96 Member Associations in and work in 170 countries. In Australia, the accredited member association is "***Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia***".

The 'About Us' section on the *IPPF* website [www.ippf.org] says "Approximately 36 million visits a year are made to over 58,000 *IPPF* facilities worldwide." The *IPPF* provides gynaecological care, treatment of STDs, contraception - and "abortion-related services".

The largest member association is in the United States - the *Planned Parenthood Federation of America*, usually just known as '*Planned Parenthood*'.

In the USA, *Planned Parenthood* run more than 800 clinics through 84 member affiliates. They reported that their clinics performed "332,278 surgical and medical abortions in 2009". Their annual budget is more than \$1 billion: about a third comes from "clinic income" - including abortions, a third from government grants and contracts and the remainder from private donors and trusts.

Last month we reported that, following revelations about the real activities of *Planned Parenthood* in the USA (such

as trying to cover up sex trafficking, offering abortion to minors, engaging in life-threatening botched abortions, breaking various laws, and seeking to discredit whistleblowers), the US House of Representatives voted to stop funding going to the organisation. The Bill, called Continuing Resolution HR 1, which was part of the overall Budget Bill, then went to the Senate - which defeated the resolution by a vote of 44-56. President Barack Obama

has indicated he will veto a Continuing Resolution that funds the federal government but cuts funding for *Planned Parenthood*.

Australia and Planned Parenthood

In 2009, the Rudd Labor government changed the law regarding the use of AusAID funding - this means our overseas aid funds can now be used for abortions overseas.

One of the NGOs that receives funding from AusAID for this purpose - doing abortions overseas - is the *International Planned Parenthood Federation*. The Australian government has given *IPPF* \$9 million in funding to the *IPPF* (and \$63,426 to *Marie Stopes International*, another abortion provider, for their work in Mongolia).

This money should be used for maternal health, emergency food and other worthy causes - not for abortion.

ACTION: Please write to federal Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott. Ask that no AusAID funds be given to *Planned Parenthood* for any reason. Send letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600.



Service or Cynicism?

A young Christian's reflections on the Australian Public Service

by *Isaac T Overton*

Is God Lord over all of His Creation or not? This question is central when considering how (or if!) Christians ought to think about the public service, policy and government more generally.

So, how should we be thinking about the public service? How big should it be? What should and shouldn't it be doing? Does the government have the right to tax at will and spend at will? Is it ethical for Christians to be taking part in administering these policies? What influence should our faith have on all of this? Is God Lord over the public service and if so what should that look like?

As a young Christian working in the Australian Public Service, these are all issues that I have wrestled with as I have been confronted with the daily business of public administration.

It is easy to get disheartened and grow cynical – particularly when you're watching government from the inside. Politicians stand up for what will get votes rather than for what is right; policies and programs pour millions of dollars into the social problems of the day promising salvation but delivering failure and incurring debt. It is easy to doubt that meaningful Christian service is possible in this area.

How are we supposed to understand government? And how then should we live in obedience to the Lord when it comes to working in government or engaging with government?

To start with, there is no doubt that God created man to rule over creation. Before the fall, the mandate was to "have dominion" under God (Gen 1.26; Ps 8.6). Human rule

in creation is not a necessary evil, it was one of God's original purposes for mankind – to rule as stewards under Him in recognition of His total rule over everything.

When we consider then the place of civil government more specifically, we see from God's Word that it is one of the extensions of the original mandate to rule, introduced to control the consequences of sin. Romans 13 clearly teaches us of the legitimacy of the government as it is "ordained of God", an institution man is to use under Him – albeit the focus of government is now one which is also to recognise and deal with the reality of sin in a fallen world.

The argument has been made that Romans 13 shows that the matter of government is something that should not concern the Christian,

that it is all in God's hands and that we should take a fatalistic approach of 'whatever shall be shall be'. Such a position grants the state autonomy.

Is this what the Word is saying?

Frankly speaking, no. Verses four and six of that chapter use the term 'minister', that is, the state is God's servant. This term in New Testament and Old is one which implies implicit obligation to obey God (2 Chronicles 31:2; Exodus 28: 34-45; Acts 13:2; Rom 15:27; 2 Cor 9:12). This ministry of the state, according to the text, is not to be unwitting on the part of the government. It is to be a self-conscious awareness of Christ's lordship – clearly showing that governments are then answerable to God for disregarding Him.

It is important then to grasp that just as

**The state
is God's
servant**

each person is required to recognise the one true and living God in their lives, so too mankind corporately is required to recognise God as God – including in matters of civil governance. Government, and by implication the Australian Public Service, should be exercising their rule in a way that honours and obeys God.

There is no doubt that our forbears recognized this, as the preamble of our Constitution says: “Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth” .

This nation was once a Christian nation, and in many ways we still enjoy the blessing of that heritage. But the western church, and consequently society itself, has lost sight of the lordship of Christ as it applies to national public life. Colossians 1 verse 16 tells us that all things were created by Him and for Him (including government), and verse 20 instructs us that it is His will to reconcile all things (including government) in terms of His salvation plan.

As His covenant people, we are to view all of creation in these terms; we are to preach the gospel unto all nations (Matt 28: 19) recognising the crown rights of the Lord Jesus over all things.

The question, then, becomes: ‘What should government look like if it is honouring the Lord?’ And perhaps more particularly, ‘How should we then live when it comes to government, the public service and our part in it?’

We have fallen far from our godly beginnings as a nation. Our Prime Minister is a

publicly declared atheist, our government is implementing policies which seem to be replacing the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of state. We no longer recognise the providence of God and the Biblical boundaries that He has given us for the institution of government. We are witnessing the humanistic reconstruction of our nation day by day. As one commentator put it, we are living in the ‘new Babylon’ .

As I have wrestled with serving in an ungodly governmental system, I have been tested and almost came to the point where I

thought that I must leave because of my convictions on what God required of government.

While pondering my situation, I couldn’t help but begin to meditate on some of the Old Testament people: Joseph, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and others. It struck me that each one had faced the same situation that I have now found myself in. They were all servants of God called to serve in an ungodly governmental system.

I take encouragement in seeing the way that God took Joseph from the prison to the palace for His glory and the blessing of nations. I see the importance

of prayer as Esther demonstrated it in her approach to the king. I am instructed by the wisdom of Nehemiah as he undertook the restoration of godly culture under the very nose of king Artaxerxes. I am challenged by the faithfulness of Daniel when he was faced with the choice of bowing to ungodly policy or remaining faithful to God.

In Jeremiah 29, the prophet brings the message of the Lord to the people in Babylon: “So says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried

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away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; build yourselves houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take wives, and have sons and daughters... And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace of it you shall have peace”.

In this new Babylon, our calling is the same. The Lord has placed us in this time and place in history, and it is our part to obey. Work hard in your callings, raise godly families, be productive to the glory of God in all things.

Seek the peace of the city, pray to the Lord for our country and our leaders. Write letters to your local politicians challenging them to speak up on policies which ought not be there. Recognise that Christ is Lord, and live all of life in terms of His lordship.

**This means
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servants**

In government, this means that there is definitely a need to have godly public servants – even though they will be working in a godless political system. But just as the Old Testament saints did, there is opportunity and indeed obligation to serve faithfully. Who knows what service the Lord might have for you there? Who is to say that He may not use you mightily for the blessing of the nation and the proclamation of His glory?

So, is God the Lord over all of His creation? Are we to honour Him in the area of policy and public administration? Christ’s kingship has been proclaimed (Matt 28:18) and it is our part to recognize this and start living in terms of it - not just in politics and policy, but in every sphere of our lives.

Prostitution in WA

The Western Australian government is considering legalising brothels in industrial and commercial areas. The legislation will be debated very soon. It is vital that we act now to prevent the introduction of ‘tolerated prostitution zones’ as they will only serve to legalise the abuse of women in WA.

It is important to challenge the myth that women will be safer in legalised brothels than in unregulated ones. The literature and research do not support that contention.

The truth is that legalising brothels tells society that prostitution is ‘OK’ and the reality is that more women will be drawn into the prostitution industry. Melissa Farley writes about *The Real Harms of Prostitution* on the website www.prostitutionresearch.com.

**Legalising
brothels tells
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‘OK’**

com. She says “In prostitution, men remove women’s humanity. Buying a woman in prostitution gives men the power to turn women into a living, breathing masturbation fantasy. He removes her self and those qualities that define her as an individual, and for him she becomes sexualized body parts. She acts the part of the thing he wants her to be.”

ACTION: If you live in WA, please contact your MPs NOW - ask them to oppose the legalisation of prostitution and brothels. Point out the harm done to women by prostitution. Contact your one MP in the Legislative Assembly and your 5-7 MPs in the Legislative Council. See names/details at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/parliamentmps/85-western-australia>

Prayer Update

Natural disasters

We need to continue to pray for those affected in so many ways by the natural disasters here in Australia as well as those in New Zealand and Japan.

Middle East and Africa

Pray for all those affected by the unrelenting unrest in the Middle East and Africa. The 'West' naïvely talks of democracy despite there being a slim chance that this is actually about democracy and a strong possibility that it is an Islamist push for power.

The Greens' social engineering

Please pray that the Greens will experience a backlash to their unrelenting social engineering - especially their attack on marriage and their push to legalise euthanasia in many states.

ALP

Please continue to pray that the ALP will not bow to the Greens or those within their own ranks who support same-sex 'marriage'.

Pray that the ALP National conference will not undermine marriage

in November. This is still a long way off but we need to consistently pray on this issue. Please pray that ALL Christians will stand against any change to the *Marriage Act*.

New NSW government

Pray for the new NSW government. As we write this we do not know for certain who that will be, but by the time you read this it should be very clear.

Pray that political integrity will be re-established in NSW and across the nation.



Please note this change
7.00 am last Thursday of each month only
Join us to Pray for our nation, its leaders and Salt Shakers
followed by a light breakfast - at SALT SHAKERS Office

School Chaplaincy

The High Court will hear the challenge against the federal government's funding of school chaplaincy programs on May 10-12. The case has been brought by Queensland parent, Ron Williams.

For accurate information about the High Court challenge and the benefits of the School Chaplaincy program, see the special website: <http://www.supportschoolchaplains.com.au>

Please pray for *Scripture Union Queensland (SU QLD)* and other groups who are fighting this challenge.

National Prayer Day

SU QLD has asked that individuals and churches pray about the High Court challenge and the future of chaplaincy on **Sunday 1 May**. Please email prayer@suqld.org.au for more information and resources.

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

A book and a booklet about Islam...

Order them using our Journal cover sheet.



Breaking Through the Barriers - Rosemary Sookhdeo

Reviewed by Kerrie Ternes...

Rosemary, together with her husband, Patrick Sookhdeo, has been ministering to Muslims in Britain since 1975. This book is a handbook for those interested in evangelising Muslims for Christ.

Chapters such as *How to Start Sharing with Muslims*, *How to Understand my Muslim Neighbour* and *Pointers in Your Evangelism to Muslims* are an encouragement to connect with the Muslims with whom we come in contact during our daily lives, here in Australia. These chapters include anecdotes drawn from the experiences of Rosemary and Patrick. The illustrations help to underline the advice being given in the particular chapters. We can learn from the mistakes and experiences of others.

Part II of the book includes an overview of what Muslims believe compared to

what Christians believe about God versus Allah, Jesus versus Isa and the Holy Spirit. It also details much of the superstition encompassed by Islam and the spiritual warfare required through prayer to deal with the demons exposed in Islam.

A most helpful chapter is devoted to *Barriers Hindering Muslims from Coming to Christ* and strategies for Christians to be mindful of when attempting to draw Muslims to Christ. In this chapter, for example, much time is spent on the Christian theology of the Trinity (and our Triune God) which is a particularly difficult concept for our Muslim friends and one which Rosemary suggests is not introduced at the start of a conversation.

The book concludes with an appendix comparing Islam and Christianity – a helpful tool in the evangelisation of Muslims.

The Challenge of Islam - Stuart Robinson

Rev Dr Mark Durie writes...

“Mostly only those who have lived within Islamic communities and have studied their primary documents (Quran, Hadith and Sira) can appreciate what is happening as revivalist classic Islam spreads its message and activities around the world.

“Western Christian religious leaders, preoccupied with domestic issues internal to their own movements, mostly don’t understand. Some hope the whole issue will just go away. Others with a more universalist outlook imagine that with minor cultural adjustments, we can all live happily together forever after.

“This booklet is an attempt to help the busy reader to understand what is happening

and in general terms, how Christians need to respond. Not to do so could mean that our children, or more certainly our grandchildren, may grow up not in countries which for centuries have been sustained by a Judeo-Christian worldview, but in those increasingly dominated by Islamic ideology.

“In *The Challenge Of Islam*, Stuart Robinson issues a clarion call to Christians everywhere to wake up, open their eyes to the gathering storm clouds of a global Islamic resurgence, and determine to make the Great Commission their first priority. To ignore this timely and urgent call is to sow a bitter harvest for future generations, but those who heed it will reap the reward of participating in one of the most phenomenal Gospel harvests the world has ever seen.”

Foster care complaint dismissed

Some good news!

The long-running complaint made by two homosexual men against Wesley Mission (in NSW), for not allowing them to foster a child, has been dismissed.¹

The two men applied to foster a child through a *Wesley* foster care agency, *Dalmar Services*.

The agency refused their application and the two men made a complaint of discrimination against *Wesley Mission* under NSW's anti-discrimination laws.

The *Anti-Discrimination Act* allows an exemption for "any act or practice" of a religious body that conforms to that body's doctrines. At the initial hearing, *Wesley* had claimed that they followed the religion of "Wesleyanism" and that homosexuality was against the doctrines of their faith.

The *Anti-Discrimination Tribunal* decided that the religion of Wesley Mission was either "Christianity" or the "Uniting Church" and that in both cases the matter of opposing homosexuality was not a doctrine of the church - especially since some Christians and some Uniting Churches accept homosexuality!

The ADT initially awarded the couple \$10,000 and ordered the charity to change its practices so it did not discriminate.

Wesley appealed against the decision - and the appeal panel set aside the decision and ordered the Tribunal to re-consider the matter, this time considering the question of doctrine in a broader manner and considering the religion of Wesleyanism. In particular, they had to consider the question "Is the belief that a monogamous heterosexual partnership within marriage is both the norm and ideal a doctrine

By Jenny Stokes

of 'Wesleyanism'?

The NSW *Administrative Decisions Tribunal* handed down their decision to dismiss the complaint on 10 December 2010. However, the media only reported about the decision on 27 December!

That's when everyone is on holiday - and no-one is thinking about these sorts of issues.

The Tribunal said that it was bound to reject the complaint because of the broad exemption regarding religious groups allowed by the *Anti-Discrimination Act*. However, the Tribunal then went on to say that the Parliament may want to revise those laws!²

The NSW government and Opposition both immediately ruled out making any changes to the religious exemption in the Act.³

The Australian reported that 'a spokesman for NSW Attorney-General John Hatzistergos said that the legislation struck the right balance between protection from discrimination and the right to religious freedom'.

When the same-sex adoption law was passed in NSW last year, the law allowed church agencies to refuse to give homosexual couples children to adopt.

So, for now at least, charitable agencies in NSW can continue to refuse to give homosexual couples children for foster care and adoption.

Endnotes:

1. *Church free to ban gay foster parents after NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal ruling*, *Daily Telegraph*, 27/12/2010.

2. *Decision*, <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/nsw/NSWADT/2010/293.html>

3. *Leaders unmoved by tribunal's hint to amend gay exemption*, *Aust*, 28/12/2010.



UK High Court: Christian beliefs “harmful”

The **UK High Court** handed down a judgment on 28 February, 2011 that set off alarm bells throughout the Christian community in Britain.

Two judges, Lord Justice Munby and Mr Justice Beatson made a judgement, in a case concerning foster care, which stated that Christian beliefs on sexual ethics may prove ‘inimical’, or harmful, to children.

The case involved the dispute between married couple Eunice and Owen Johns and the Derby City Council. The Johns’ application to provide foster care was blocked because they were not willing to promote homosexual ideals to young children. The couple took the case to the High Court, seeking a ruling that they be exempt from promoting the practices because of their Christian moral beliefs.

The **Christian Legal Centre (CLC)** defended the Johns in the court case. Following the decision against the Johns, the CLC stated:

“The judgment strongly affirms homosexual rights over freedom of conscience and leaves the Johns currently unable to foster a child as desired, despite their proven track record as foster parents. There now appears to be nothing to stop the increasing bar on Christians who wish to adopt or foster children but who are not willing to compromise their beliefs by promoting the practise of homosexuality to small children.

“The summary contained in the judgment sends out the clear message that orthodox Christian ethical beliefs are potentially harmful to children and that Christian parents with mainstream Christian views are not suitable to be considered as potential foster parents.”

The Judges also upheld the submission made to the court by the **Equalities and Human Rights Commission**. The **EHRC** contended that there is a risk of children being “**infected**” by Christian moral beliefs.

The **CLC** said “Suggesting that Christian moral beliefs on sexual ethics could ‘infect’ children is an extraordinary position for a statutory body to take. It is also deeply insulting both to the Johns, who have a proven track record of successfully raising children, and to Christians in general.”

Here are some of the judges’ statements:

- *That if children are placed with parents who have traditional Christian views like the Johns “there may well be a conflict with the local authority’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked-after children” (Para 93)*
- *There is a tension between the equality provisions concerning religious discrimination and those concerning sexual orientation. Yet, as regards fostering, “the equality provisions concerning sexual orientation should take precedence” (Par 93)*
- *That there is no religious discrimination against the Johns because they were being excluded from fostering due to their moral views on sexual ethics and not their Christian beliefs (Para 99).*

But how can the Johns’ moral views be separated from their religious beliefs?

The Johns’ barrister, Paul Diamond, has advised them not to appeal - he feels there is no chance of success since the Equality laws are opposed to Christianity.

An overview of the case and the judgement is on the **Christian Legal Centre** website: <http://www.christianlegalcentre.com/view.php?id=1248>



World News

UK: Sex Education

The *Christian Institute* has released a 29 page report called **“Too Much, Too Young”**, which maintains that children in the UK are being given information that is far too explicit at a young age.

The Report analyses what is being taught to primary school-aged children in the UK. One book describes intercourse, and provides definitions of the words “erection,” “orgasm,” “masturbation,” and “prostitute.” Another book for children aged 7+ discusses the topic “straight and gay”.

The Report also includes advice for parents on taking action in the sex education debate.

Read the Report at the *Christian Institute*:
<http://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/downloads/toomuchtooyoung.pdf>.

UK: Abortion and pregnancy

In the UK, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has made a recommendation that pregnant women should be told that having an abortion is safer than proceeding with a pregnancy to full term! The draft guidance was drawn up by 18 senior gynaecologists, nurses and abortion providers.

In the draft document, the RCOG cites statistics for maternal deaths and injuries from complications of childbirth. However, the RCOG has not included the considerable risks of post-abortion syndrome.

The RCOG has previously advised that abortion is safer than pregnancy. Their

current advice on abortion, posted on their website, asks ‘How safe is abortion?’ and says ‘For most women an abortion is safer than carrying a pregnancy and having a baby.’ The webpage lists some of the possible physical consequences of abortion, but doesn’t mention psychological complications. They also assert that “Research evidence shows that having an abortion does not increase your risk of developing breast cancer” - this is despite the considerable evidence collected by Professor Joel Brind and documented on the website <http://www.bcpinstitute.org/home.htm>

However, this time the RCOG has gone further, recommending that all pregnant women should be given the advice, not just women who are considering abortion.

RCOG website, ‘Abortion Care’ <http://www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/about-abortion-care-what-you-need-know#safe>

UK: Family and happiness

A major survey, called *Understanding Society*, has found that “life satisfaction is higher for those [children] living with both their biological parents”.

The survey also found that “not living with both natural parents has a greater negative impact on a young person’s life satisfaction than their material situation”.

The study, a £50 million, government-funded study, questioned people in 14,000 households. It is being conducted by academics from the universities of Essex, Oxford, Warwick and Surrey.

Results of Study- Read full report & Summary at <http://research.understandingsociety.org.uk/findings/early-findings>



Ministry News

During early March we assisted with the preparation of another pre-election 'Christian Values Checklist' (CVCL) to help Christians better understand the political landscape. This year it is only NSW going to the polls - unless there is an early federal election, that is.

Next year there will be three - Queensland first, then the NT and ACT.

Each CVCL takes a great deal of time to prepare but, as they are widely sought after prior to an election, the effort is worthwhile.

We receive a lot of good feedback, as well as some criticism, of course. Usually the latter is from people who have differing views from us, but also from people with specific

interest issues that we did not have listed.

Our aim, as with all the issues we deal with, is to present a Biblical perspective to questions that are all too often missing from pre-election debates.

We continue to be challenged by the pace at which the same-sex 'marriage' debate is moving, not just here in Australia but throughout most Western countries.

Please pray for wisdom as we discern which issues to deal with, which ones to highlight for urgent action through our E-news emails and which ones require more in-depth analysis through our monthly Journal.

If you are not receiving both the Journal and E-News you will be missing out on vital information about important issues - the ones we cannot turn a blind eye to, as mentioned in our editorial.

PLEASE keep praying for us all.

ACTION checklist: Tick the box as you complete the task

Page	Topic	Action / People to write to	Done
6	Territories' powers	12 Senators for your State	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Marriage	MP, 12 Senators, PM, Opp Leader, Nats leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
6/9/14	SA/Tas/WA	Various State legislation - contact MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	<i>Planned Parenthood</i>	Julia Gillard, Kevin Rudd, Tony Abbott	<input type="checkbox"/>

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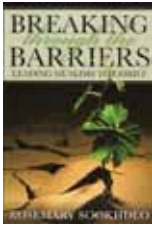
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Breaking Through the Barriers by Rosemary Sookhdeo

The Challenge of Islam by Stuart Robinson

See the reviews of these two books on Page 16 of our April Journal.

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Praying for the GOVERNMENT by Derek Prince

This small booklet explains HOW the church should function as Salt & Light and WHY we need to pray for our government. Focusing on many Bible passages, but especially 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If My People" and 1 Timothy 2 "First of all pray for Kings and all those in Authority", Derek guides us to a better understanding of our social and political responsibility through prayer and then action.

If you think you can do nothing about the sad direction our nation is going, think again, because doing something simply starts with prayer.

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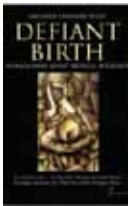


When a Loved One Says, "I'm Gay"

by Focus on the Family

An excellent booklet to help you understand the confronting issue of a family member who thinks they are same-sex attracted - (SSA - homosexual, lesbian or bisexual)

The aggressive 'normalisation' of same-sex attraction will lead many young people into sexual experimentation and thus sexual confusion. It is vital that parents respond with LOVE but also with a correct understanding of the nature of this psychological problem. Remember, nobody is BORN SSA and it is 'changeable' with the right help.



Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics

by Melinda Tankard Reist

Melinda Tankard Reist "presents stories of defiance in this book to challenge our general notions of what is a 'good' mother and what makes for a 'happy' baby.

They lay bare how simplistic - even dangerous - are offers of 'choice' when society limits the childbearing options for women and judges anyone less than 'perfect' as potentially disposable" Dr Abby Lippman, Board Chair of Canadian Women's Health Network.

Special \$25 posted

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