

Salt Shakers

Helping Christians make a difference

“As a farmer, if you want to grow a good crop,
you have to first till the soil
in which a crop is grown.

The crop of freedom, of democracy, of all of the
good things that we take for granted in our lives,
is in fact Christianity,
and yet our society has moved away from it and
so little understands now the soil in which the
crops of freedom are grown,
that I do not believe we can expect to continue
to grow those crops.”

John Anderson

Former Deputy Prime Minister
and Leader of the National Party

May 2011 AD

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Editorial

Over the last two months some emails have circulated in Australia about a medical waste company, run by Christians, doing the wrong thing, and a number of our readers have asked why we have not mentioned the issue.

Firstly, when we were approached about what people had 'supposedly' discovered we said, 'get the facts right, talk directly to the people concerned - do not go public'. This was based on Jesus' own words in Matthew 18 about how to deal with issues relating to a brother or sister who is seemingly doing the wrong thing.

Jesus calls us to go to them personally, to talk it through, so one brother can privately give wise counsel to another. If that is not successful in changing attitudes, the advice is to try again with one or two others, again privately. If they still refuse to heed wise counsel the next move is to speak, again privately, with their pastor and then to leave it with him to deal with. This, of course, also underscores the importance of us all being accountable to a pastor or elder, and the importance of being part of a fellowship of believers. That should always be the way we handle issues that are not being publicly advocated as a Christian position.

Yes, there have been a number of times when we have unashamedly publicly criticised false teaching or errors of judgement that are publicly stated positions because they adversely affect the witness of the church body and undermine the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet, even in those already public situations we try, where possible, to take the same initial course of action - going to the people concerned and discussing the issue to try to persuade them

to change their position by reference to the Bible. We will continue to take such action on public matters that clearly undermine the Scriptures.

But when a position, action, or, as in this case a private business practice is uncovered, one that is not publicly 'promoted', and may in fact even be unknown to the Christians involved, Jesus' words must be followed to the letter. There can be no excuse for simply 'telling the world' about the faults of another brother or sister or the company they run.

Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Galatians, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently". (Ch 6 v1-2) Gently being the operative word.

The pro-life organisation which initially came to us did the right thing and commenced private discussions. Those discussions are still continuing and changes have been made by the business. Unfortunately, some other people did not follow that Scriptural course of action before making public comment. Even worse, perhaps, is that they also engaged in 'guilt by association' and named people and churches, as though they were directly responsible for the actions of the Company. These 'guilt by association' accusations are totally unacceptable.

As James states, "My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins." (Ch 5:19-20) This should always be our aim - not publicly shaming them, but bringing them back to a right relationship with the Lord.

Yours in Christ Jesus
Peter and Jenny Stokes



Human Rights - what are they?

by Peter Stokes

I have agonised for a long time about what the terms ‘social justice’ and ‘human rights’ actually mean. They are such commonly used terms that I almost feel guilty for not knowing what people mean when they use them.

Also, they are so often intrinsically linked together in peoples’ comments that one could be forgiven for thinking they are much the same thing.

If ‘social justice’ and ‘human rights’ are things that should apply to everyone, why don’t we all know exactly what they are?

I am forced to ask the questions, “What do you mean by that?” and “If there are basic ‘rights’, who decides what they are and how can they be added to?”

We constantly hear about human rights being promoted by the United Nations, but even they are not ‘united’ in agreement about what human rights are. In fact, they can never really decide anything, so everyone compromises.

So what are ‘human rights’?

It seems there are two types of ‘rights’, one group are ‘natural rights’ - which should therefore be self-evident and universal, not contingent upon government laws, customs, or the beliefs of any particular culture, society or ruling elite.

Surely, then, the most basic ‘natural’ human right should be the right to be born?

But even that isn’t a ‘right’ according to the ACT government, which deliberately stated in their *Human Rights Act* that the “right to life ... applies to a person from the time of birth” - not from conception. Thus the *Human Rights Act* actually protects those who deliberately want to take away that

most basic of human rights - to be born.

If to be born alive is not a ‘natural human right’ can anything be?

The other sort of rights are ‘legal rights’ or ‘statutory rights’. These are bestowed by a particular government on the people they govern.

But we can’t call them ‘natural’ human rights because man decides what they are and they don’t apply to everyone. If they did apply to everyone then they should cease to be ‘legal rights’ and become ‘natural’ rights.

In fact, the whole notion of ‘rights’ is a human construct.

The Bible does not talk of ‘human rights’ but it does talk about ‘human responsibility’ to ‘love your neighbour’ and ‘do to others as you would have them do to you’ (Luke 6).

In other words, the most important ‘social justice’ and ‘human right’ is the ‘responsibility’ to treat other people as you would like to be treated.

That would, of course include the right to be born, because we have been born.

‘Human rights’ and ‘social justice’ might be fine-sounding terms, but unless we are sure we know what they mean they are pointless and will always be open to manipulation.

Recently I read an interesting article titled, *The Injustice of Social Justice*, by Ben O’Neill. Now I don’t know Ben but I would like to meet him. Clearly, he agonises over these same questions.

He says in his article, “Every once in a while, something comes along that perfectly encapsulates the idea of so-called “social justice” in action... I am referring here to



a recent video made for the 'World Day of Social Justice' in which students and teachers complete this sentence: "Everyone has the right to..."

"The video is a colourful montage of possible completions to this sentence, set to some pleasant easy-listening music... showing their answers written on their hands, arms, and feet. The people in the video give answers consisting of all manner of desirable things, from knowledge, justice, love, compassion and truth, to health care, education, food, clean water, nutrition, shoes, dancing, rock-and-roll, and even lollipops and ice cream."

That's right - they allowed the children to think 'social justice' meant the 'right' to have lollipops and ice cream!

Around the same time that I read Ben's piece I also read a media release from Hillary Clinton - representing the government of the

United States of America. She said. "Gay rights are human rights and human rights are gay rights." (By the way, 'Gay' is not a word we normally use but, in this instance, we have to know exactly what Hillary is talking about.)

For Hillary, the full endorsement of homosexual rights has become part of what it means to support "human rights". Anything less is simply unacceptable.

So, from young children to the most powerful government in the world, 'human rights' have more to do with what 'we want' than... well, anything else!

Human rights are clearly not about those basic 'essentials' that underpin being human, like being born, but about ice cream and being 'free' to be immoral.

Hillary's comment followed the passing of a UN initiative, signed by more than 80 countries, urging the international

community to end violence against homosexual, bisexual and transgender individuals.

She also said, "Today, 85 countries from every region of the world joined together in a historic moment to state clearly that human rights apply to everyone, no matter who they are or whom they love."

Not so fast, Hillary - While it is right to say, "people should not get beaten up" because of who they love, that 'right' as you put it, should exist for everyone, not just homosexuals. Besides, most countries already have laws against assault of any kind against anyone.

After all, it is not only same-sex attracted people who get beaten up because of

who they love, heterosexual men get

beaten up by other

heterosexual men

because they love

another bloke's

ex-girlfriend, and

heterosexual women

get beaten up by men for all sorts of reasons.

The granting of new 'human rights' is seen as 'progressive' by those on the ideological 'left', who appear to have little idea about what being a human "made in God's image" is really about.

Perhaps that is why many who call themselves Christians so often seem to skew the real work of the church from preaching the Gospel, calling people to repent of their sin, as did both John the Baptist and Jesus, towards 'progressive human rights and social justice'. They often seem totally unaware that true justice can only be based on God's righteousness.

Our previous Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, who persistently pushed his 'Christian credentials' even stated that the "starting point with Christianity is social justice" - he went on to support changing 84 Australian laws to give "equality rights" to homosexual

Justice?

relationships.

Sadly, it is not only politicians who get confused about what justice really means. Jim Wallace of the Australian *Christian Lobby* stated that he supported ‘justice for homosexuals’ when asked about the changes to those 84 laws.

How can there be justice for immorality?

Yet, today, these perceived ‘human rights’ normalise same-sex relationships which God called sin.

By mixing justice and ‘rights’ we actually undermine both.

Without God’s righteousness underpinning our social concern we become unjust. This is even more important in recent times, as governments, rather than not for profit Christian groups, have increasingly taken on the ‘social justice’ role of providing for those who are disadvantaged.

Ben O’Neill puts it this way, “...since the program of social justice inevitably involves claims for government provision of goods, paid for through the efforts of others, the term actually refers to an intention to use force to acquire one’s desires. Not to earn desirable goods by rational thought and action, production and voluntary exchange, but to go in there and forcibly take goods from those who can supply them!”

So much of today’s ‘social justice’ talk and the demands for ‘my rights’ are really a call for the forced redistribution of wealth, a selfish demand to make others accept something they would otherwise not accept.

This type of thinking has deceived many people, both within and outside the Christian church. Not only individuals, but many denominations and nations have fallen for this ‘rights’ and ‘justice’ deception.

Hillary Clinton spilt the beans when she said... “Countries around the world participated [voted for the UN anti-violence mantra], including many that had never previously supported such efforts.”

The mantra of ‘rights’ is one of satan’s key strategies to undermine God’s values.

Yes, there is a natural human ‘desire’ to be loved, as well as human desires for things we want such as ice cream or to own a Jaguar Mk3, but they must not be confused with ‘rights’.

Finally, another quote by Ben O’Neill from a different article titled *Inflating Away Our Human Rights*....

“These bogus “human rights” are not just the products of a misunderstanding of the nature of rights; they are actually a means for subverting genuine rights.”

This is so very true of most, if not all, of the so-called ‘rights’ now being

claimed.

If Christians would take the words of Paul in Romans 1 seriously they would not fall for such deceptions:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen.”

Hosea wrote “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” of God and of good and evil. They are not destroyed from a lack of ‘rights’.

As Christians we need to be very discerning about the call for ‘social justice’ and ‘human rights’.

MY
RIGHT!

News & Action

Senate: Territories powers

Last month we reported that the Senate sent the Greens' Bill off to a Committee. The Bill would remove the Commonwealth's power to override any laws made by the Territories (ACT, NT and Norfolk Island).

The *Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee* was supposed to report by 28 March. However, the Senate has granted an extension to May 4, 2011. We could pray that the Bill stays stalled in the Committee!

ACTION: Meanwhile, we should be prepared for when the Bill is debated in the Senate. Please contact your 12 Senators (2 in ACT/NT). Ask them to vote against Senator Brown's Bill. Please also write to Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott. Post letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600. Details at <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/parliamentmps/79-federal> - or phone the AEC 13 2326.

Real Choices Conference

Melissa Ohden, who survived an abortion, will be the keynote speaker, along with Dr Priscilla Coleman, at the *Real Choices Australia (RCA)* Conference in Sydney from May 13-15, 2011. Linda Broekman from *Life Network* will speak on social norms and the negative language/attitudes about what society calls "unacceptable" pregnancies - for example, too old, too young, too many children. For full details see the RCA website <http://realchoices.org.au/> or phone them on 1300 886 017.

SA - Euthanasia

Labor MP Steph Key pushed through the second reading of her bill [*Criminal Law Consolidation (Medical Defences—End of Life Arrangements) Amendment Bill*

2011] which is aimed at providing 'medical defences' to doctors who might be accused of ending a patient's life prematurely.

The Bill was debated ONE sitting day after the Bill was put into Parliament and was passed "on the voices".

Ros Phillips of *FamilyVoice* reported that, on 7 April when the Bill came to be considered in the 'Committee stage', Steph Key asked for **debate to be adjourned until Thursday 5 May**. Ros says that the media coverage the day before highlighted the concerns many people have about the flawed Bill. She noted that many prominent Adelaide doctors had opposed the Bill.

ACTION: Please pray that the Bill is defeated. If you live in South Australia please contact your MPs (1 in House of Assembly and ALL in the Legislative Council - ask them to oppose this Bill.

WA: Prostitution

The WA government is continuing with its proposed legislation to legalise brothels. If you live in WA, please contact your MPs. See last month's journal for full details.

Tasmania: Overseas 'marriages'

As of April 1, 2011, 'marriages' between two people of the same sex performed overseas are now recognised in Tasmania under their 'Relationship Register' legislation. This recognition is automatic - the couple does not have to register again.

Emissions and global temperature

Julia Gillard is still pushing the carbon tax. When Tim Flannery was asked what the effect on global temperature would be if Australia cut emissions by 5% by 2020 (the government's target) he said it would be a "very, very small increment" - and it would take 1000 years! Lord Monckton provided the answer (using IPCC data): 0.00005 degrees Celsius!



Multiculturalism in Australia

by *Jenny Stokes*

The policy of ‘Multiculturalism’ was introduced to Australia by the Whitlam government in 1973. Al Grassby, as Whitlam’s Immigration Minister, was known as the “father of multiculturalism”.

When Liberal Malcolm Fraser became Prime Minister in 1975, he carried on the policy of “multiculturalism”. It was continued by the Hawke and Keating governments but was dropped as official policy by the Howard government in 2007 when they removed the term from the Department of Immigration’s name and replaced it with the word ‘Citizenship’.

Kevin Rudd revived the word when he was the Prime Minister, adding it to the title of the ‘Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship’. It didn’t take Julia Gillard long to abandon the word. In September 2010, she removed the word ‘multiculturalism’ - making the position ‘Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship’.

It has now changed again. The official title is now “Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs”.

Why did it change?

Because various ethnic groups protested that the word ‘multicultural’ had been removed! And no-one else said anything - so Julia Gillard responded by re-instating the word and recently made public statements endorsing the principle of multiculturalism.

Federal Minister for Immigration, Chris Bowen, gave a major speech on February 16, 2011 endorsing multiculturalism. It was at that time a formal Inquiry into ‘Multiculturalism’ was announced - to

be conducted by the federal Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Migration. Submissions to the Inquiry closed on April 8, 2011.

Why is ‘Multiculturalism a problem?

Multiculturalism encourages people to retain their own ethnic, cultural and religious background, rather than encouraging them to become ‘Australians’.

Prior to the Second World War, most migrants to Australia were from Britain and

Europe. After the war, many people came from southern Europe, particularly Italy and Greece. In most of these cases, the people came from nations which had a Christian heritage and belief structure.

In recent years, migrants have come from many nations - more importantly, they have come from nations with different worldviews and

religious backgrounds. Immigrants from Vietnam and China have been prepared to integrate into Australia and contribute to the nation. However, the recent increase in immigration from Islamic nations has caused some problems, since Islam is a total political and religious system that takes precedence over the host nation.

Greg Sheridan from *The Australian*, wrote an insightful feature article in April titled How I lost faith in multiculturalism.

He explained how, in 1996, he had fully endorsed ‘multiculturalism’, writing “There is nothing in multiculturalism that could cause any worry to any normal person.”

Now he says he has changed his mind. The four factors he identifies are compelling:



* *watching the debate unfold about the illegal immigrants who come to Australia by boat;*

* *a month in Europe researching and writing about immigration issues;*

* *30 years reporting on political Islam in Southeast Asia and the Middle East;*

* *and, above all, living for nearly 15 years next door to Lakemba in Sydney's southwest, the most Muslim suburb in Australia.*

Read more about Multiculturalism and the Inquiry on our website - see <http://www.saltshakers.org.au/take-action/campaigns/821>

ACTION: Please contact your federal MPs and Senators, as well as Tony Abbott and Julia Gillard and Immigration Minister Chris Bowen. Send letters to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

Point out that we need to encourage people to integrate and to be Australians - not just to cling to their previous cultural, ethnic and religious identity. Explain that our Christian heritage is what makes Australia a great nation and encourage them to promote it.

Watch our video report on 'Multiculturalism' on our website.

ACT: Transgender Inquiry

The ACT government has asked the ACT **Law Reform Advisory Council (LRAC)** to conduct an Inquiry into "the legal recognition of transgender and intersex members of the ACT community". Attorney-General Simon Corbell "asked the Council for detailed advice on whether any changes to the Territory's current law are needed to ensure the protection of human rights".

Of course, that means they're looking to see if they have missed giving them some rights. Their obvious intention is to change the law if they think all 'rights' have not been given to them.

We must remember that there is a huge difference between **intersex** conditions, where people are born with a physical condition and some ambiguity of knowing whether the person is male and female, and **transgenderism**, where the person thinks they should be the opposite gender.

ACT transgender rights group *Gender Agenda* say they want the Inquiry to consider a wide range of issues: "recognising changes of sex, but also

broader issues relating to discrimination protection and protection on the basis of gender expression rather than gender identity."

The LRAC Inquiry page says that the Attorney-General has also asked the LRAC to examine the ACT's anti-discrimination laws. Yes, this Inquiry is all about 'rights'!

The 'Terms of Reference' for the Inquiry have been published on the ACT Justice Department's website. The *Law Reform Advisory Council* says they will consider advice on 'gender identity' from the *ACT Human Rights Commission*. The Commission recommends changing the law to only require 'sex affirmation treatment' for transsexuals rather than the current requirement to undergo 'sexual re-assignment surgery'. The LRAC says they will 'provide opportunities for public comment' as the Inquiry proceeds.

ACTION: If you live in the ACT, please monitor this Inquiry. See the 'Campaign page' on our website for full details and links.



Challenge to 'Christian Education'

Christian education in schools is under threat in Australia, with an increasing number of individuals and organisations objecting to Christian education in schools. A network of 'multi-faith' academics has recently been formed to lobby governments. The **Religions, Ethics and Education Network Australia** says that religious education in state schools must be replaced by a 'multi-faith' version that includes different ethical traditions and be taught by trained teachers rather than volunteers. They want it included in the national curriculum. The group includes academics Gary Bouma and Anna Halafoff from Monash University and Cathy Byrne and Marion Maddox from Macquarie University. *The Age's* religion writer Barney Swartz says they "claim the current model is exclusivist and at odds with government aims to promote social inclusion." (*Age*, 7/4/2011)



Victoria - SRI and CRE

The Victorian Education Act provides for the teaching of **Special Religious Instruction (SRI)** in the school curriculum. Most of the 130,000 children taught SRI are doing **Christian Religious Education (CRE)**. *Access Ministries* provides the curriculum and co-ordinates the volunteers who teach 124,000 children in schools.

Other faith groups provide SRI - Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Baha'i faiths, as well as Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

In 2009, the *Humanist Society of Victoria* were refused permission to teach 'ethics' in SRI. Now three parents, who claim that children who opt out of SRI are being "discriminated against", have lodged a complaint with the *Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission*. A 'grassroots' organisation called *Fairness in Religion in Schools* has

been set up to protest about SRI and the provision of CRE in schools by *Access Ministries*. They have obtained a legal opinion which suggests that SRI in schools "infringes both the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* and the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*". The group were even more upset when the Victorian government recently gave *Access Ministries* \$200,000 for training volunteers.

ACTION: It's important to let the MPs know that we support Special Religious Instruction - and in particular Christian Religious Education - in schools. Please write a letter of support for CRE to the Premier, Ted Baillieu, the Minister for Education, Hon Martin Dixon, and your own local MP. For names/details see our website or phone 13 23 26. Send letters to Parliament House, Melbourne Vic 3002.

NSW - Ethics classes

Ethics classes are now being run in NSW primary schools as an 'alternative' to Scripture classes. This began as a 'trial', but legislation was passed in December 2010 allowing Ethics classes to be run at the **same time** as Scripture classes.

The Sydney Anglican diocese has estimated that, in the ten NSW schools where the trial was conducted, the Scripture classes lost about 47 per cent of enrolled students to the Ethics class. In some cases children are taken to the 'Ethics class' and then asked to leave if they want to go to the Scripture class!

ACTION: Please write to the new NSW Premier, Barry O'Farrell and the Education Minister Adrian Piccoli. Ask that they legislate to remove Ethics classes from NSW schools. Send letters to Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Marital values

Well, it appears the further this country alienates itself from Biblical truths, the further we find ourselves embracing gross immorality.

Not only are we eroding moral values that have kept nations like ourselves from behaving like unrestrained beasts, we find that a minority of people deviating from the accepted standards of decency, coercing and intimidating those who view marriage to be sacred and between a man and a woman only, and looking upon time-honoured standards as though they are a hindrance to their sexual adventures.

We must get one thing straight, at least, for all those been deceived, homosexuality is not normal in that it perverts the user's mind and body and denies the God-honoured value of sexual intercourse that is between man and woman for the sole purpose of procreation. So we have, today, Bob Brown of the Greens pursuing the final legitimacy of immorality by desiring the implementation of marriage endorsed by the Church before God to be offered on the altar of gross deviancy – this, I am afraid, is tantamount to spitting in the face of God and trampling his holiness underfoot.

W Williams, Oxenford

Gold Coast Sun 16/3/2011

Same-sex marriage

While I congratulate David van Gend for his article "SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: Elton John and the new stolen generation", and for speaking against same-sex marriage, I would like to point out that it is not 'marriage' that gives same-sex people the right to have children and form a 'family'.

Neither will saving 'marriage' itself save children from being 'stolen' from their biological parent or parents - because this is already happening here in Australia.

The new 'stolen generation', is being caused because we allow same-sex people access to donated sperm and eggs, and to IVF and surrogacy, not same-sex 'marriage'.

We can ONLY stop this new 'stolen generation' by showing that same-sex relationships are inherently unnatural and simply wrong. Indeed, that ought to be obvious to anyone who looks at biology and/or the anatomy of the human body.

Information the key

I am very concerned about Labor's plans to introduce a carbon tax.

I would like to ask Member for Bendigo Steve Gibbons to do due diligence for the people of Bendigo before he decides to support this tax.

As our representative can he please find out accurate information on how this tax will affect Bendigo.

Will the government be installing a solar panel factory in Bendigo from this money? What will be the impact on farmers? Farmers and agriculture has so far had very little input.

Our community is largely dependent on petrol for transportation. Will all other petrol excises be removed when this new tax comes in?

Will the Labor government return their recently removed pledge of \$500 million dollars to the regional rail link to help commuters use less petrol?

What difference will this tax have on Australia's climate? Where is the money going? What percentage of the tax will actually be spent on doing anything for the environment?

As a representative of the Bendigo region I ask that Mr Gibbons find out the impact of Labor's carbon tax on us as a community because failing to do so could mean that Bendigo becomes a poor man's hovel instead of the thriving place it is now.

Pieta McLean, Kangaroo Flat

Bendigo Weekly 18/3/2011

Human genitalia are clearly 'designed' for heterosexual sex, as is the human reproductive system.

One could genuinely ask why God would design a biological reproductive system that requires a man and a woman to produce a child if those children did not unequivocally need to be raised by both a man and a woman. Once we come to understand that, the obvious conclusion has to be that we must not only oppose same-sex marriage but ANY legal recognition/normalisation of same-sex relationships and we must oppose ALL access by same-sex people, and indeed non-married heterosexuals, to ANY artificial creation of children.

Peter Stokes Wantirna Victoria

News Weekly 02/04/2011

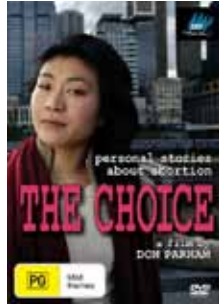
The Choice - stories of abortion

Don Parham's film, *The Choice*, is a one hour television documentary about the complexities and consequences of abortion, screened on SBS-TV in Australia in 2006.

Built around six intimate personal stories, it gives us an insight into how real people make the grave decision to have an abortion and how they feel about it afterwards.

The Choice reached a wide general audience on SBS that would not normally be exposed to any material sympathetic to the pro-life position but, in this film, all points of view are heard.

The Choice is suitable for educational, counselling, youth and small group use. It is also suitable for any people of goodwill with an interest in the subject, including



those who have not yet made up their mind about abortion.

The DVD also includes ATOM School Study Guide, Release Script & Press Kit.

For more details, visit Don's website http://www.parham-media.com/docos/thechoice/tc_index.htm - more information on the film, video clips of excerpts and, online orders of the DVD.

Don Parham recently showed his ongoing commitment to the pro-life cause by producing a powerful *YouTube* video for Pro-Life Victoria which was successfully used in the Victorian election campaign of 2010. The video, titled *A Story About Life*, featured abortion survivor Melissa Ohden and MP Peter Kavanagh.

Funding missions through Steer

As Christians, it is vital that we support mission work, the preaching of the gospel and the upholding of God's Word.

Steer provides a simple and effective way for you to multiply your giving to mission and outreach both overseas and in Australia.

Many mission and Christian ministries lack the resources to be as effective as they can be. **Steer** is a not-for-profit, mission support organisation that was established in 1961. In the past 50 years Steer has distributed \$47 million (equivalent to almost \$70 million in today's value).

How does Steer distribute funds?

Steer operates very simply and effectively:

- * Mission supporters place income-earning assets with Steer for as long as they wish.
- * Steer uses these assets to generate income, which is income-tax exempt.
- * Because of Steer's tax exempt status,

100 per cent of the income earned is able to be distributed.

* The mission supporter is invited to suggest the mission or outreach organisation(s) to which the income earned is sent.

* Steer does not deduct administration fees.

Steer has five programs for distributing funds: Interest Free Loans, Rental Properties; Livestock or Produce Farming; Crop Farming and Family/Discretionary Trusts.

Salt Shakers has sometimes received funds distributed by Steer, and we are thankful to our supporters who choose to allocate funds to us in this way.

To find out more about Steer, visit their website www.steer.org.au or contact our office on 03 9800 2855.



Signs and Symptoms

by *Dr Arthur Hartwig*

Do we live in a sick society? Little more than a casual glance is enough to suggest we do.

What do we see?

Behavioural problems due to our much vaunted 'autonomy': child abuse; rape; domestic violence and other forms of anti-social behaviour; youth suicide; drug dependence; a Culture of Death promoting both abortion and euthanasia.

A triumph of the 'Therapeutic', where for every problem there is, or is supposed or claimed to be, an 'easy answer' - whether it be a pill, a potion, some Government action or someone else's responsibility.

All of these suggest there is in each of us an empty space we are trying desperately to fill. Some might even say we are a nation of idolaters, worshipping the wrong gods - of wealth, of power, of independence, of busyness, of sport, of sex, even of chemicals - in an endeavour to fill some fundamental, albeit ill-defined and poorly understood, need.

Something has gone wrong, dreadfully wrong, and somehow we feel responsible.

But how?

We know only too well our 'wants' which are never completely satisfying. We don't know our 'needs' so well.

What are our needs? I suggest we have, broadly, three needs.

1 We need to be loved unconditionally.

2 We need to be convinced we are unconditionally important/worthwhile/special to at least one other.

3 We need to know that unconditionally we are not alone to face life's problems.

None of this comes automatically. To love is to suffer, and the suffering is not always pleasant. In real love the stakes are high: it is risking all. The world does not owe us either a living or peace within.

So! What can we do? There is a void to be filled, a pain to be dulled; and analgesia is sought in a variety of ways, to some of which I have alluded. Perhaps the most common is drug use, or abuse of alcohol. Drug abuse can be defined as the use of substances which cause persons to act other than normally under prevailing circumstances.

Is there anyone, other than the young, who does not know, or know of, someone who uses some 'recreational' chemicals? Why do they use them?

Perhaps too simple an answer is "Because they decide to do so."

We all have at times a need to relax, to unwind, to have fun or to escape; it is recorded even of the Lord Jesus, that after the beheading of John "He departed from there by boat to a desert place by Himself".

Some escapes build up; others tear down. So! Why drugs?

Initially the taking of drugs is often an experiment; maybe because of peer pressure, of advertising, or even to hurt someone else. We forget that advertising is to sell a product, even a 'way of life' or a political philosophy; usually to another's benefit or advantage. Thus ads never show an overweight person in designer jeans, or feature someone in hospital when

**All of these
suggest there
is in each
of us an
empty
space we
are trying
desperately
to fill**

advertising a cigarette.

If initial drug use is an experiment, why do people continue to use that drug? An all too simple answer is

- (a) they cannot decide not to;
- (b) they no longer have the ability or resources to follow through their decisions;
- (c) the perceived need for the drug persists or has become greater;
- (d) the resultant effect is known and desired.

We cannot will ourselves out of certain behaviour patterns and into others. However

overweight we might be, we can all find a dozen reasons why, under certain circumstances, we should have “another piece of pie”.

It has been said that the greatest achievement of Christianity was its emphasis on the importance of the individual; in effect that we are all equally important in the sight of God irrespective of our place in society or of the colour of our skin. This certainly leads to significant changes in communal attitudes; but in the ‘cult of the individual’ it has become a twentieth century heresy, especially with the relevant development that everything is judged in light of the ‘well being’ of each recipient or participant.

Those who want fulfilment, empowerment, or control, have little time or encouragement to give or to receive the unconditional love needed; little time to consider the age old question “Why am I here?”.

Well! Why am I here?

The old catechisms asked such a question

and answered “to know, to love and to serve God in this life and to enjoy Him forever in the next”.

If, or when, we face that question we get the answer wrong, we get everything else wrong also. In all our promotion of empowerment, fulfilment, self-esteem and self-actualisation we should know what we are doing. We are rejecting the very heart of what it means to be a Christian - “the disciple is not above the master”, “the first shall be last and the last first”, “Take up your cross and follow Me”. Jesus was relentless; He is still relentless.

**Why am I here?
“to know,
to love and to
serve God
in this life and
to enjoy Him
forever in
the next”**

As individualism has ascended moral responsibility has diminished; though disinclination to accept responsibility has a very long history. Especially when coupled with culpability there seems a near universal rejection of both.

One can but speculate how many of our recent problems could have been lessened by the early acceptance of responsibility, whether those

problems be financial, health, civic or individual. For example, who accepts the responsibility of an unplanned pregnancy? Where lies the remedy? In political action? In legislation? In a religious revival? I suggest it begins in the heart and mind of each of us, especially when we wonder “Why am I here?” Personal moral accountability is the electrified rail that no politician wants to touch, and few preachers recognise. Seemingly few know what it is. Apparently it is all too true that a country’s thinking is in ruins long before the resultant decline is obvious.

Prayer Update

Members of Parliament

Pray for federal and state Members of Parliament as they make decisions and serve their electorates.

Pray especially for the Christians in state and federal Parliaments - that they might be strong in their faith as they deal with controversial issues. Pray that they will have influence in the direction of the political parties.

Prime Minister and Premiers

Pray for Julia Gillard as Prime Minister and for the State Premiers and the Territory Chief Ministers. Pray that they will have God's wisdom in their decisions.

Chaplaincy challenge

The High Court will hear the challenge being

made by Queensland parent, Ron Williams, against the federal funding of chaplaincy on May 10-12. Please pray that the challenge is not successful.

Issues

There are many challenges: same-sex 'marriage', euthanasia (SA, Tas), Christian Religious Education, prostitution (WA), Christian Religious Education and so on. Please use the Journal to pray effectively for each of these challenges confronting our nation.

The church

Pray that churches and Christians will stay true to the Word of God and not be swayed by liberal theology and unbiblical ideas that are becoming increasingly prevalent.



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

Christians in the Middle East

The continuing conflicts in the Middle East and Libya are causing a great deal of stress for Christians living in those countries, and persecution is increasing.

The media initially reported that this was a move for 'democracy'; however the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic group currently banned in Egypt, is active in the protests and many people are calling for shari'a law to be implemented.

Christian Copts in Egypt are being threatened by the increasing presence of shari'a law.

Mark Durie, author of *The Third Choice*, about dhimmitude, writes "the Copts are

being pressured to assume the time-warped status of dhimmis, a captive people in their own native lands, whose status is to be tightly circumscribed by traditional shari'a law."

Mark notes that the "dhimma pact, which determined the status of non-Muslims after Muslim conquest and occupation, includes specific regulations limiting the construction, repair and maintenance of churches, as well as the public display of religious symbols and public performance of rituals."

Please pray for the protection of Christians in these nations.

Banning 'apps' - who decides?

There are now more than 250,000 'apps' (applications) available for 'smartphones', *iPhones* and *iPads*.¹ Apps for newspapers, entertainment sites, organisations and more. Even the recent NSW election had an app available on the *iPhone* 'App Store'!

That's so you can keep up with the very latest and get instant access to websites whilst you are moving around!

Apple (the maker of the *iPhone* and *iPad*) sometimes censors which apps are allowed. Even if your app is initially approved, it could be banned if someone complains. *Apple* claims it is their technology, and they are responsible for the content of the apps.

In November 2010, *Apple* banned the app for the *Manhattan Declaration*, which affirms the sanctity of life, the historic understanding of marriage, and religious liberty. Even when 46,000 people signed a petition asking *Apple* to reinstate the app, *Apple* rejected the request.²

The latest banned app is from *Exodus*, a worldwide organisation that helps people deal with feelings of same-sex attraction. The app was aimed at "helping those struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction to live a life congruent with biblical teaching."³

Apple originally accepted the app - it was available on the App Store from mid-February 2011. *Apple* gave it a 4+ rating, denoting that the app contained no "objectionable content." In their description of the app on the 'App Store', *Exodus* said, "With over 35 years of ministry experience, *Exodus* is committed to encouraging, educating and equipping the Body of Christ to address the issue of homosexuality with grace and truth."

However, when homosexual activists at *'Truth Wins Out'* heard about the app they started a protest, calling for the app to be banned. They organised an online petition, at *change.org*, calling for *Apple* to remove the app, claiming it was offensive. The petition grew to more than 157,000 signatures by the end of March.

Apple responded by cancelling the app on 23 March, 2011. An *Apple* spokeswoman said the *Exodus International* app "violated our developer guidelines by being offensive to large groups of people." Meanwhile, *Apple* has hundreds of apps specific to the homosexual community and has the *Gay Christian Network's* podcasts on its iTunes store.

The real question is, 'Who should decide what 'apps' are acceptable?'

Commentator John Gruber says that *Apple* revised their Guidelines for apps in September 2010, saying, "We will reject Apps for any content or behavior that we believe is over the line."

Gruber responds "What line, you ask? Well, as a Supreme Court Justice once said, 'I'll know it when I see it.' And we think that you will also know it when you cross it."

Apple says "We view Apps different than books or songs, which we do not curate. If you want to criticise a religion, write a book."⁵ In the meantime, if you want to say anything religious, don't hold your breath for *Apple* to allow you to have an 'app'.

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2. http://www.christiantoday.com/article/gay_activists.petition.apple.to.remove.exodus.app/27661.htm
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Buddhism - and our response: Part 2

In this final part of his article, Pastor Steve Cioccolanti writes about Buddhism and Love, and reflects on the popularity of Buddhism and our response...

Buddhism & Love

Because Buddhism adapts itself to the Christian foundation of its host countries, it comes as a surprise to most Westerners that Buddhism teaches against love. In Buddhism, love is one of the causes of suffering (*tukka*). Love is one of 3 bonfires or greatest sins of Buddhism. Love is the fourth fetter that stands in the way of Buddhist enlightenment. Western converts who learn that Buddhism teaches against love, specifically loving a woman, choose not to emphasize it and opt to let their Christian influence hide and override this core teaching. Christianity exalts love because Jesus said the greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbour.

Among Buddhist nations, it is common for people to marry for reasons other than 'love'. Buddhist parents can scorn a young man or woman who has "fallen in love," because marriage has little to do with love. It is commonly reported that many men in Asia do not have sexual intercourse with their wives, but go and find sexual satisfaction elsewhere. Love, then, is no basis for sex. It is only the Bible that says a man and woman should love each other, marry, then enjoy sex within the God-given boundaries of marriage. Western society owes a great debt to the Christian foundations of "love God" and "love thy neighbour."

In Buddhism, love is an enemy. In Christianity, love is the highest virtue, for 1 John 4:8 says, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is Love."

Buddhism's Popularity

Most Buddhists have not studied their own religion and would not be able to articulate why their lives, families and nations are so different from Christian ones. Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka are very different from Australia. In these countries, Buddhism has been passed down as a tradition that must be accepted without question. They were never given a real choice; therefore I do not reveal any of these things for you to judge others. They are not against us, and I am not against them. I love Buddhists. The majority of Buddhists I know are nice people who have suffered much and heard little about Christianity.



Coming to Australia is an opportunity for them to explore what makes Australia great and what makes Australians fair, easy-going and freedom-loving people. Pastors and churches ought to be ready to help our Buddhist neighbours settle into our society and if they are open, share the Christian Gospel they have likely never heard even once in their entire life!

I am sometimes asked, "Why are Australians interested in Buddhism?" or the broader question, "Why are Westerners attracted to Eastern religions?" There are many factors we can discuss, and I've delved into more details in my book *From Buddha to Jesus: An Insider's Perspective on Buddhism & Christianity*, but, for the purpose of this article, I want to emphasize something rarely heard in public forums: Westerners are drawn to Eastern religions because there is freedom of religion in the West!

The reason most Easterners are not Christian is because they have not heard much about Christianity, and the little they hear is full of secular TV's misinformation. They are

more likely to have heard about *The Da Vinci Code* than the true Gospel of Christ. The wealth and depth of Christianity is censored from their population in education, literature and TV.

We must remember that freedom of religion is largely the product of Christianity. Christian leaders who founded the legal systems of Australia, America, Canada and Europe all believed God made us free moral agents, and we should be able to exercise free choice, even the choice to reject Christ and die with our sins unforgiven.

But the concept of free speech is utterly foreign to non-Christian countries. Should anyone doubt that, simply go abroad and try to criticise the government of any Buddhist or Muslim country. You will find out there is no such thing as free press or free speech where non-Christians are the majority. Nearly everything is censored. Non-conformity is secretly monitored and tightly controlled.

A certain man who had been a Buddhist monk for 8 years converted to Christianity and became a Christian pastor. He wrote a book about his experience and it was immediately banned in his home country. It is out of print. But when atheists write books like *God is Not Great* or *The God Delusion*, why is it that no Christian seeks to ban it? Because freedom of religion is a uniquely Christian value! By not understanding this, we will forfeit the rock of free press and free speech for the cheap brick of false multiculturalism and false tolerance.

I can only add my limited experience as I love Buddhists and am actively involved in raising up believers who will not be fearful of Buddhists, but go and love Buddhists in a way that they understand. Knowing that Buddhists read my book and get saved, some people in non-Christian countries

have tried to censor *From Buddha to Jesus*. From a Christian point of view, they don't play fair in an open forum of ideas, but resort to restriction of information. They don't tolerate differences the way Christians do. They don't respect the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18* that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief..."

The main way that some religions have been able to claim the minds of millions is that they have prohibited their people from really knowing about other religions. Book banning, Internet policing and state control of information are how people are kept homogenous and under control.

They view Christian freedom as excessively liberal, and in some ways they may be right. Our freedom means all ideas are on the table and in the open market. We are free to be good, and we are also free to reject what someone else thinks is good. We are free to elect a political party, and we are free to reject a political party. We are free to be Christian, and we are free to reject Christianity. But if we do so, let's not forget that this Christian freedom we exercise exists mainly in Christian countries! How blessed we are to have Christianity as our nation's foundation and freedom-loving Christians as the majority of Australia!

Pick up a copy of Steve's unique and insightful book *From Buddha to Jesus: An Insider's Perspective of Buddhism & Christianity* at Koorong, Word, or order online at www.BuddhaBook.org - or check the price at www.bookdepository.com



Transcendental Meditation in Schools

With all the talk of getting religion out of schools, in the United States and in Australia, you might be surprised to learn that there is a worldwide push to include 'Transcendental Meditation' in schools.

What is 'Transcendental Meditation'?

Transcendental Meditation, or TM as it is popularly known, was developed by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Although its promoters often claim it is 'scientific' and 'not religious', TM came out of Hinduism and other Indian religious philosophies and promotes Eastern forms of meditation.

The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi studied under Hindu guru Swami Brahmananda Saraswati; after he died in 1953, the Maharishi began teaching Transcendental Meditation in 1955. He did a series of world tours starting in 1958, promoting and teaching Transcendental Meditation in the UK, the USA and Europe. The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi promoted levitation and 'world peace', and started the 'Natural Law Party'.¹

In the late 1960s, the Beatles were influenced by their meeting with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and later travelled to visit him in India.

Promotion of TM

The two remaining Beatles, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, are still promoting TM. In 2009, they sang at a benefit concert in London for a charity set up by **David Lynch**, the film-maker, called *The David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace*. Paul McCartney said "It started for us when we met the Maharishi in India, and it's going to get bigger and bigger and rule the world."²

The aim of this organisation is to bring Transcendental Meditation to one million schoolchildren around the world! They

claim it will help children to 'relieve stress'.

In December 2010, Lynch announced a new initiative, to provide 10,000 US veterans with 'meditation training'. He gave \$100,000 to launch *Operation Warrior Wellness*, to help them overcome Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other war-related illnesses through transcendental meditation, which he says creates "professional peacemakers."

TM in schools

TM is already being taught in some schools - the Foundation says their method is taught in "hundreds of public, charter, and private schools throughout the United States and around the world". Recently, the *Rutherford Foundation* was successful in getting school officials at an Illinois high school in the USA to stop organising and leading students in Transcendental Meditation exercises during class time and as part of the honors English curriculum because it was "religious".

Here in Australia, the *Maharishi School in Reservoir, Melbourne* (established in 1997) already teaches Transcendental Meditation.

A 2009 proposal to teach TM at Beerwah High School in Queensland was stopped following community concerns: 35 teachers were trained in TM techniques with the intention of teaching year 9 students to practise Transcendental Meditation. The course was voluntary and was mostly paid for by the David Lynch Foundation.

What is being taught in your school? If 'relaxation techniques' are being taught, what is really involved?

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1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharishi_Mahesh_Yogi
2. *The Times*, April 6, 2009.
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4. 'Community' complains about school meditation, *Sunshine Coast Daily*, 15/9/2009.



World News

Marriage and Divorce in Holland

Same-sex 'marriage' was legalised in The Netherlands on April 1, 2001. Ten years later, despite the fact that they can legally 'marry', only 27% of all homosexual couples are 'married' (14,813 couples) compared to 80% of the 4.1 million heterosexual couples.

When it comes to divorce, the latest statistics show that 1% of divorces are of homosexual couples. Given that homosexual 'married' couples make up only 0.449% of all married couples, this means that homosexual couples are divorcing at a rate that is twice the rate of heterosexual couples. [Radio Netherlands Worldwide, Dutch News, 28/3/2011]

Iran: blasphemy trial

In Iran, Pastor Behrouz Sadegh-Khandjani, Mehdi Furutan, Mohammad Beliad, Parviz Khalaj and Nazly Beliad were sentenced in 2010 to one year in jail for "crimes against the Islamic Order". They were recently released on bail after serving eight months of their sentence and are appealing against the judgement.

At the time of their arrest, the Christians were also charged with blasphemy, apostasy and holding political meetings. After being jailed for crimes against the Islamic Order, the group had presumed the other charges had been dropped. However, it was revealed in March that they are to stand trial for blasphemy at a lower court. The trial was adjourned until April 12 to give the prosecution more time to gather evidence.

[*Christian Today*, 6/4/2011]

Please pray for these people. Please also

pray for Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who is in prison in Iran awaiting an appeal against his death sentence for apostasy.

USA: Planned Parenthood funding

With just hours to spare, a shutdown of the whole US government was averted when Democrats and Republicans agreed on a deal to provide funding for the government.

Republicans had expressed concern about the USA's huge debt. The Republicans in the lower house had voted to stop funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the USA, but President Obama had said he would oppose that move.

In the final agreement, on 8 April, the Republicans didn't manage to cut the funding for *Planned Parenthood*.

However, the budget was cut by \$38 billion and the Speaker, Mr Boehner, said in a statement that the agreement included a "restriction on abortion financing in Washington".

EU Demographics

A study produced by *Eurostat*, the statistical office of the **European Union**, reveals that between 2003 and 2009 the average fertility rate of the twenty-seven countries making up the EU rose from 1.47 children per woman, to a level of 1.60. This is well below the replacement level of 2.1, which is the average number of children per woman needed to keep the population size constant in the absence of migration flows.

The *Third Demography Report*, published on April 1, 2011, found that about 5 million children are born each year in the EU, and about 2 million people immigrate from outside countries.

The report concludes that an aging population, low fertility rates, increasing life expectancy, and continuing high immigration will present the EU with a serious demographic challenge in the future.

[*Lifesite*, 11/4/2011]



Ministry News

ADVANCE NOTICE

SALT SHAKERS ANNUAL DINNER will be held on Saturday 24 September 2011.

Our Guest speaker will be Stuart Robinson who will speak on 'The Challenge of Islam'.

This will be a great night to meet and fellowship with other 'Salt Shakers' and hear more about Stuart's worldwide ministry.

BOOK THE DATE NOW - Full details and a booking form will be circulated with our next Journal.

We are constantly thankful for the many people who support this Ministry but at times we don't know who you are. This mainly occurs when people make direct

bank deposits and do not put a name on their deposit.

PLEASE do two things when making a bank deposit to our account - where possible, and we know this is difficult with some bank forms, put your surname on the deposit form AND send an email to admin@saltshakers.org.au - NOT to Peter or Jenny as they can get caught up in the volume of mail they get.

Please give us your name, the name of the bank and the date and amount of the deposit in the email so we can match up all the details. Hopefully this will mean we will not send reminder notices to generous people.

PLEASE keep praying for us all, but especially for Jenny and Peter who continue to have health problems, and Cameron, as he produces videos for Salt Shakers and Resistance Thinking.

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	SA - Euthanasia	Contact MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Multiculturalism	PM Gillard, Tony Abbott, MP and Senators	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	ACT - Transgender Inquiry	Monitor Inquiry	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Christian Education	NSW & Vic - contact MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>

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