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editorial

In every age the Christian faith has sharply distinguished itself from its rivals by affirming the sanctity of human life. St Augustine, in his celebrated work, *The City of God*, claimed that the Roman world, despite its many accomplishments, was spectacularly unsuccessful in protecting the sanctity of the individual. He attributed its failure to the fact that the gods were immoral and despised humanity (Book 2:4-6). In fact, it is no different in the modern world. Contemporary secularism has been powerless to enhance the value of human life as well.

Christianity's great distinctive is that it is life-affirming. Like the Jews, Christians have always believed that man is precious to God because he is made "in God's image" (Gen. 1:27). Further, although human nature has been defiled by the fall, God has emphasised its value and dignity by sending His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us. In the light of the Incarnation, Christians have always placed the highest value on human life and have resisted every attempt to degrade and cheapen it.

In the Roman world Christians took up the fight to protect human life by resisting a number of entrenched cultural practices that flourished in the early pagan environment. Christians were the only real opponents of the widespread practices of abortion and infanticide. While even famous jurists like Cicero condoned them, it was the Christian Church that led the struggle to safeguard the lives of the unborn and the defenceless.

Early Christians also resisted the prevailing pagan norms in their attitudes to suicide. Under the influence of the philosophy of Stoicism, suicide had become acceptable. However, early Christian theologians such as Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianus and Augustine repudiated the practice because it denied God's claim to bestow life and withdraw it according to His good and righteous will.

Today we are witnessing a resurgence of an ancient paganism that has been held at bay by 1500 years of Christian heritage. The need of the hour is for the church to challenge scientific adventurism that cheapens human life and to condemn the degrading practices of abortion, embryo experimentation and euthanasia.

Peter Hastie 

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Brave New World

We face new challenges that only a Christian worldview can truly negotiate.



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He is the author of a number of books, *The Ethics of Commercial Surrogate Motherhood: Brave New Families?* 1994, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* 2000, *Brave New Families: Biblical Ethics and Reproductive Technologies* 1996, *Beyond Integrity: A Judeo-Christian Approach to Business Ethics* with Kenman L. Wong 2004, *Embryo Research and Experimentation* 1997, *Bioethics: A Christian Approach in a Pluralistic Age* co-authored with Paul M. Cox, 1999, *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics* co-authored with JP Moreland, 2000, and *Biotechnology and the Human*



Scott Rae talks to Peter Hastie

Good, 2007.

He is also a consultant ethicist for a number of hospitals in Southern California.

Dr Rae is married and has three boys. He lives in Irvine, California, and when he is not teaching ethics and philosophy, he is coaching his boys' sports teams in soccer, basketball and athletics.

Scott, do you agree with Francis Schaeffer's claim that every culture will be judged ultimately on the basis of how it treats its people?

Yes, I think Schaeffer is essentially correct. However, I would go a little bit further and say that every culture will be judged on the way that it treats its most *vulnerable* people. The "vulnerable" are not just the sick and disabled; it includes them, of course, but I am thinking partic-

ularly of children and the elderly. Although the elderly have always been vulnerable, they are becoming more vulnerable than before.

I think that there is also a case to be made that newborns are becoming more vulnerable too. While we don't have laws that would allow broad-scale infanticide, there has been some discussion in the United States about overturning the "born alive" rule that would allow physicians to finish off botched abortions. Currently this is illegal in America. If a child survives an abortion, then you have to support it; the child cannot be abandoned.

Why are you so worried about the elderly at the moment?

I'm worried about the care of the elderly because of the escalating cost of healthcare. A friend who is a physician said to me some time ago that "there is nothing cheaper than dead" when it comes to caring for people. There was a case just recently in Oregon where a woman with terminal cancer was denied

treatment but was offered the funding to pay for suicide. I think there's no doubt, at least in the United States, that there will be record numbers of the elderly in the next 20 years as the baby boomers hit retirement and then have to face old age.

Do you think that this is going to become the main ethical crisis facing us over the next few decades?

I'm not so sure about that. It's certainly one of the major issues which we will need to deal with. However, there's another one lurking in the not-too-distant future that's already setting off alarm bells.

A growing number of scientists are talking about the remaking of humanity through biotechnology. I believe this is going to be the most pressing issue for some time. Nevertheless, we can't duck the problem that caring for a rapidly growing number of elderly people is a demographic challenge that we are completely unprepared for.

What's going on in biotechnology at the moment that's causing you such concern?

As you know, there have been some rather amazing developments in biotechnology which have enabled researchers to discover new ways to treat diseases. Some of these developments are now being considered not simply as a form of treatment for disease, but as a means to enhance a person's natural traits and gifts. We are now on the verge of altering a person's genes to prolong life or to create some form of artificial intelligence that will possibly expand mental function. There are all sorts of possibilities just over the horizon.

So are you talking about enhancement of a person's natural characteristics?

Yes, that's the ultimate goal for some of these scientists. Some of them want to experiment with drugs and genetic engineering with the aim of re-making a human being. The people who are working to this end are called trans-humanists. I know that what I am talking about probably sounds like science fiction, but some of these enhancements are now becoming more mainstream.

Does this enhancement include boosting physical performance and improving intelligence?

Yes, we are talking about both. Everything is on the table. There are all

kinds of possibilities – physiological and mental. Theoretically, it should be possible to develop better athletes and give people sharper minds. Recent scientific discoveries are opening the door to longer lives, happier souls, and more balanced emotions. All the science is there – the biggest problem we face is a moral one. Our culture is so driven by the idea of personal autonomy that, for the most part, we don't even think about the moral and philosophical issues involved. The average person says, "Well, if it's going to improve someone's life and prospects, then let's go for it!" It is all about the individual. Naturally, as Christians, we approach the issue from an entirely different world view. We are principally concerned with God's will rather than human preferences.

There is nothing cheaper than dead when it comes to caring for people.

Once we believe, as some scientists do, that our lives are genetically determined, do we have any mean-

ingful basis for ascribing value to things like love, friendship, sacrifice and moral values?

Among evolutionists there is an attempt to establish a naturalistic basis for morality. Personally, I don't believe that their attempts to construct a system of ethics will explain a lot of the values that we hold dear. For example, I don't think naturalism offers a plausible explanation for self-sacrifice or compassion, and it certainly doesn't explain why we should forgive. So, while they may be well-intentioned, I think they are going to come up short on a system that has a strong foundation for providing moral values.

Where do we get the notion of the sanctity of life? Is it the result of a Christian worldview or can it be grounded on naturalistic assumptions?

I don't think that you can explain the "sanctity of life" successfully on purely naturalistic assumptions. The only reason that the notion is widely accepted today is that it enjoys widespread cultural acceptance. I don't believe that such an idea can be sustained properly if it is isolated from our Christian intellectual and cultural heritage. For instance, I don't think you can argue that life is intrinsically valuable on

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evolutionary assumptions. It's hard to see how you could justify that there is something about human life that is particularly valuable over against other life forms. At best, I think that we can only say that human life is valuable on a utilitarian basis.

Of course, grounding it on such a basis doesn't get us very far because it then depends on whether it serves a useful purpose to save the person concerned. That could be very bad news at the moment if you happened to be an unborn child or an elderly person with chronic illness. You see, it's possible to make a good utilitarian argument that keeping the elderly alive as long as we do is a bad idea. Certainly, there is no reason to keep an unborn child alive on utilitarian grounds if he or she is not going to be loved.

Can you help us understand why there has been such a dramatic shift in attitudes away from the sanctity of human life in the past 50 years? What has led our society to accept things like abortion, embryo experimentation and euthanasia?

These issues have been forced upon us by new developments in science and technology. Ever since the early 1960s, when it became relatively safe to perform abortions, we have been forced to ask questions about the moral status of the unborn. Before the 1950s no one really doubted that unborn children were valuable. It was just a common sense view.

Again, from the 1970s onwards, a

number of medical advances have made it possible to keep people alive who ordinarily would have died. This has forced us to confront questions about when life really ends. It has also put us in a position where we are forced to define personhood. For example, does the fact that someone has advanced dementia and is perpetually curled up in the foetal position in a nursing home still mean that they are human? Is it possible through sickness or disability to forfeit our humanity? The unusual circumstances today in which we some-

Is it possible through sickness or disability to forfeit our humanity?



times find ourselves have forced us to re-examine our definition of a human being. And what has happened is that we have moved from an "essential" view of a person to a more "functional" one. We are seeing a disturbing trend developing where it's becoming more normal to consider someone as a person by virtue of what they can do rather than by what they are. This is a major shift.

To what extent are these changes being driven by ideology?

People's outlook on life is certainly changing. As secular views of life such as naturalism have become more influential, we find that people tend to think in these newer categories. Now for naturalists, there are no real categories for things like "essences", "natures" and "souls". The typical naturalist really doesn't have much else besides a functional view of human beings. I think this is a big shift from the traditional view in the West that has always seen a spiritual dimension to human identity. However, naturalists tend to reduce our humanity to an ability to perform certain critical functions. It is a very thin and one-dimensional approach to human existence.

What part does the new discipline of socio-biology play in this change of values, and what have been its underlying assumptions about humanity?

This is a huge area. But in a nutshell,

socio-biology and the neurosciences are an extension of a naturalistic worldview into areas which traditionally have been the domain of theology. Scientists who work in these areas commonly ascribe to the brain the sorts of things that Christians would normally ascribe to the soul. Obviously, you don't have to go very far down this route to challenge the biblical and theistic view of a person. I have noticed in recent times that some Christian scholars are arguing that you can be a Christian and yet have a naturalistic view of the person. They don't see any real incompatibility between the two positions because they are teaching that the Bible doesn't demand souls.

Are these scholars evangelicals?

Some of them would probably claim to be. Some of the top folks at Fuller Seminary would fall into this category. People like Nancy Murphy and Joel Green come to mind. In fact, Joel Green has just written a new book, *Body, Soul and Human Life*. He is just one of many theologians who are trying to make a serious attempt at integrating the sciences into their view of theology. Personally, I think they have sacrificed too many of the essentials in their drive to integrate science with theology. I mean, does it follow logically that we can discount the existence of the soul simply because neuroscientists can explain through brain function what happens when people pray, or how religious services lift someone's mood? I don't see how it follows that their observations on brain function capture the whole transaction that's taking place between God and man. They can't rule out the spiritual presence of God in a person any more than religious sociologists can explain the prevalence of religious belief in a community by certain social factors.

Why do many of today's scientists feel that they are free to manipulate human nature?

Well, many of them are obviously imbued with the idea of Francis Bacon that man is the master of nature. Then again, there is the strong cultural drive towards personal autonomy. The combination of these ideas has led people to think that we have the capability to master not only the world but also our own nature and destiny.

I would also add that genetic technologies have encouraged the idea that the core of human identity is to be found in our genome. This is clearly a naturalistic

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manipulation of genetic formation. Nothing of the sort follows from our observation of the genome. Ultimately we are not reducible to anything that is physical.

So I would be very careful about anyone who thinks that he can put all your genetic information on a CD and say, "Hey, this is you!" That's ludicrous.

How is this new approach to human life affecting our approach to death and sickness?

Now that people are starting to look at our humanity in a utilitarian or functional way, this has a serious effect on the way they approach the end of life. Many people now believe that they have the right to determine when and how they shall end their lives. It is the ultimate act of self-autonomy. Some states in the USA are making it possible for people to make these choices. For example, the State of Washington passed an assisted suicide initiative last November. The State of Oregon has one too. Florida is likely to follow because it has a large population of elderly people. A lot of people seem to think that assisted suicide is a win-win situation. Patients think that they are put out of their suffering while society believes that it has saved itself some money on useless medical care. What is there not to love about that?

Well, what is not to love about this is that there is a steady trend from voluntary to non-voluntary assistance for suicide. This is now well-documented in places in Europe where euthanasia has been legalised for some time. What really wor-

ries me about this type of legislation is that once it gets enacted, it is very difficult to police. I mean, how will you know that the procedures were followed if there is some collusion in bringing about a person's death?

The pressure to introduce euthanasia shows no sign of abating. What do you think is going to happen in the future?

I think that there are likely to be increasing calls for its legalisation. There are enormous demographic pressures building as a result of a significant increase of elderly people. The one encouraging sign as the push to legalise euthanasia gains ground is that we are finding that the better we are at treating pain, the less the incidence of requests for euthanasia or assisted suicide. It is a self-evident thing. If we control people's pain, then they want to live. What a surprise that turns out to be! The reason people want assisted suicide is that they are afraid of dying in pain. The good news is that we are capable today of controlling virtually everyone's pain. It is interesting that the proponents of euthanasia never claim that suicide is the more merciful or compassionate approach to suffering. They always argue from the right to die and autonomy. They have to

do this because, apart from a very small number of cases, it is possible to control most people's pain. So, there is just no need for euthanasia. In one sense it is a case of "burning down the barn to roast the pig", as we would say in Texas. Euthanasia is a draconian solution for a real problem. There is no doubt that many people who are facing death are in real pain. That is a major problem. However, the answer is to control people's pain, not to put them to death.

What is going to be the effect on the care of the elderly if euthanasia is legalised? What do you see happening in terms of current health care?

I am not optimistic about what would happen in society if euthanasia becomes an accepted means of dealing with chronically or acutely sick people. I don't think people fully understand that one of the reasons why we have such good hospice care and pain management is because assisted suicide is off-limits. However, I am just not sure what will happen during the next 20 years as very large numbers of elderly people require a high level of health and hospital care. Frankly, I am not optimistic about maintaining good care.

I don't think our legislators appreciate how dangerous it will be in the future to have assisted suicide on the table as one of the options.

Is there a possibility that medical staff might conspire to euthanise certain patients who are very sick?

It's a possibility. Say you and I are part of a medical team and we are having a con-

Society's acceptance of abortion has coarsened our view of the sanctity of life.

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versation about a patient lying in a bed. Who is ever going to find out that we have coerced him? No one is likely to find out. These laws which are supposed to afford some sort of protection are simply not enforceable; breaches of them are also undetectable.

Given all the modern forms of contraception available, is abortion still being practised at significant rates?

You know, it is. It's absolutely tragic. The number of abortions in the USA is currently running around a million each year. It is still used as the birth control of last resort. I don't know if that is because women can't afford the pill or guys don't want to do birth control, but it's widely available.

Tell me, are live births still occurring as a result of abortions of fetuses in the second trimester?

Yes.

So there are little babies who are five months old that are being born alive after an abortion?

Yes. There were, at one particular neonatal ICU ward, children as old as 23 weeks. That is four and a half months.

If an abortion takes place and a child is born alive, what happens?

What should happen is that all measures should be taken to rescue the child. However, what often happens is that the child is killed when they are out of the

womb, or they are abandoned and allowed to die on their own so that the charge of infanticide can be avoided. The law in the United States prescribes very clearly that when abortion fails and the child is born alive, then they have to be given all the treatment necessary for them to be stabilised.

There are significant incentives for an abortion physician to commit infanticide and finish off the botched procedure.

So you are saying that there are instances when that is not happening?

Oh, yes. I think that it's more common than we would want to believe. The norm is probably that the children are abandoned.

When you say abandoned, do you mean that they are just put somewhere out of the way and left?

Yes, they are just put in an out-of-the-way place and left to die on their own.

Does this amount to a conspiracy on the part of staff working there?

It certainly requires their cooperation in not rescuing the child. You need to remember that most of these places where newborns survive abortions are not in neonatal ICUs or high quality care clinics; they are in abortion clinics. The abortion

clinic doesn't have neonatal intensive care facilities on hand – after all, why would they? This means that to obey the law they have to rush the baby to a neonatal ICU which may be all the way across town. Of course, that would be a public relations nightmare for them so there are significant incentives to abandon the child in an abortion clinic or for an abortion physician to commit infanticide and finish off the botched procedure. That is probably more the norm today, but the law was written specifically to prevent both those events.

What are some of the social consequences of wide-spread acceptance of abortion?

I think society's acceptance of abortion has generally coarsened our view of the sanctity of life. What I find interesting is that modern technology is allowing us to view the wonder of a developing child within its mother's uterus while at the same time we have a progressive hardening in our view of the unborn. Thirty years ago it would have been almost unthinkable for a woman to have a baby in the ladies room and then throw it in a trash can.


Two former Nobel laureates, James Watson and Francis Crick, say that a newborn child should not be called human until it has passed a number of tests with respect to its genetic endowment. They say that if it fails one of those tests then it cannot be classed as human. What is your response to that?

Well, if we are going to be consistent with this standard then it seems to me that we have a lot of adults that we need to put to death. There are also a lot of severely disabled and handicapped adults that don't deserve to live either.

So, what they are advocating is really a form of genocide?


Yes, it's a form of genocide. It is genocide against the disabled. Actually, I wonder whether these people have really thought through the social consequences of what they are advocating. For example, it's popular today to talk a lot about value and diversity. Well, here's a classic case of rubbing it out. To say that the disabled and the handicapped do not have valuable contributions to make and ought not to be valued really flies in the face of our emphasis on diversity. I am glad to hear these people say it straight out because it is good that they are not just using euphemisms to mask their real intentions.

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Some ethicists today are saying that we must take seriously the notions of meaningful life and wrongful life in determining who should live. How would they handle people like Helen Keller and Stephen Hawking?

On their criteria, if they were to be consistent, they would have to dispatch them. If people had known that Stephen Hawking was going to be born with the disabilities he now has, he would never have been allowed to be born. And the world of physics would have been poorer because of it. The same goes for Beethoven, incidentally. He suffered profound deafness.

I would love to take an anecdotal survey of the disabled and ask them if they would have been better off if they had never been born. It would be interesting to see what they say. I suspect that they would look at us like we had come from another planet, and rightly so. I think that the question of meaningful life is a silly question to ask someone who is living and flourishing, albeit in a limited capacity.

If doctors make a decision to allow a baby to die because it is suffering from, say, cardiopulmonary problems, is there any reason why they shouldn't make the same decision in an adult? If they decide to assist the adult then what is the basis of making that decision?

That's a good question. See, I don't have an objection to newborns or adults being allowed to die if further treatments are futile. The same is true if additional treatment is more burdensome than beneficial. If you say, "Stop. I'm done. I don't want to live out the rest of my days with tubes down my throat", then you ought to be able to say that. It may actually hasten your death, but so be it.

However, it's different if somebody else starts making those choices for you. I would have a real problem about somebody else saying that for me unless they were representing my wishes and speaking on my behalf.

But I think a person ought to be able to say, "enough", where it is obvious that further procedures are only going to prolong

the suffering with no prospects of recovery. I think it's right and deeply Christian to say "enough" when our position is terminal. If our view of eternity is correct, then what business do you have delaying a loved one's homecoming by hooking him/her up to technologies and tubes that the physicians have deemed are futile?" Again, we can put it like this: "What business do we have in increasing another person's net suffering at the end of his life if the burdens far outweigh the benefits?"

How should Christians be viewing developments in stem cell research?

For the most part, very enthusiastically, because the vast majority of clinical applications are coming from stem cells harvested from non-embryonic sources,



If people had known of Stephen Hawking's disabilities, he would never have been allowed to be born.

which is entirely non-controversial. Incidentally, this is where all the action is.

So are you concerned at some of the current decisions that are being made at a political level to promote embryonic stem-cell research?

Yes, I am. There are a couple of reasons for my concern. First, I don't believe that it is ever justifiable to kill one person to benefit another. I don't think that we should agree with that under any circumstances. A second reason is because so much of the promise of embryonic stem cells lies off in the distant future. In these circumstances I think we are giving people with debilitating diseases false hope that their cure is right around the corner. The simple fact is that it isn't. If the cures were right around the corner then the venture capitalists would be funding this, not the taxpayers.

Is it true that it's far more effective to use stem cells that come from relatives rather than stem cells from the wider population?

That is right, and the reason is that the donor is a match to the recipient. Using stem cells from left-over embryos is virtually useless for treatments because it's like

doing a bone marrow transplant from some guy off the street. He may not be compatible. The good news on embryonic stem cells is that we will be having new discussions on this subject sometime soon because both in Japan and in two places in the United States researchers have reprogrammed adult cells back to a stage where they can harvest stem cells. It happened last year and it was done without using embryos. This discussion about using embryos will be irrelevant in five years.

How important is it for the church to endorse the historicity and integrity of the Genesis record as a means of articulating a defence for the sanctity of life?

That's a good question. Can you sustain the traditional doctrine that man is made in the image of God and also allow for an evolutionary reading of the text of Genesis? Frankly, I am really reluctant to let the camel get his nose in the tent on this issue. I find it very difficult to see how random selection and providence could coexist. It is hard to imagine why, in the providence of God, man, who evinces evidence of the most amazing indications of design, would have been the result of an entirely random process. If it did occur in this way, as William Lane Craig recently said in a debate with Christopher Hitchens, then it would be the most amazing miracle.

As I see it, adopting an evolutionary interpretation of Genesis is an attempt to make two mutually contradictory systems – theism and naturalism – co-exist. I know some Christians, especially scientists, are comfortable with this approach. However, as a philosopher I am not sure that it is possible to be entirely consistent in being a theist and also believing in the process of random selection. Of course, I am always open to any new arguments on the subject, but I'm not holding my breath while I'm waiting. ap

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Purity matters

Staying chaste in a sex-saturated world.

Writing to the church in Ephesus, the apostle Paul gives one of my favorite expressions for Christian holiness: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:1-2). A little further down, Paul gives another priceless calling to Christian sanctification: "Walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:9). Here, in beautiful apostolic eloquence, we read both the why and the how of Christian holiness. First, and most important, is the why: as beloved children of God and in light of Christ's sacrificial love for us. In other words, we are to live pure and holy lives because of who we are to God, "children of light", and in light of what God has done for us. Second, there is the how: by imitating God and by walking in love.

Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5 is a natural place to consider the topic of sexual chastity in general, and among Christian singles in particular. My reason will be plain to anyone who simply reads the chapter. For, in contrast to his call to holiness, Paul cites a litany of examples of the lifestyles that should be unthinkable to God's people, and at the head of the list Paul cites sexual impurity: "But sexual impurity and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints" (Eph. 5:3).

Why, many will wonder, does Paul rank sexual impurity so highly on his list of unthinkable sins? Some may argue that this must have been a special problem among the Ephesian church. The problem with such an answer is that in other lists of deadly sins Paul also places sexual sin first (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:19-21, and 1 Thess. 4:3). Likewise, Paul speaks with a passion against sexual sin in many of his letters, going so far as to urge the Corinthians not even to associate with professing Christians who were sexually immoral (1 Cor. 5:9-11). In his opinion – more than that, in God's eyes as revealed to us through the apostle – sexual immorality is so antithetical to a Christian profession of faith that the two simply may not be considered together: "You may be sure of this," he writes, "that

**Richard D.
Phillips**

everyone who is sexually immoral or impure... has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5).

Isn't this a little over the top? Some may wonder. Isn't greed a more harmful sin? Isn't pride, as C.S. Lewis said, "the anti-God state of mind"? "We know it's wrong to have sex out of marriage," they

One typical mistake made by Christian singles is to ask "how far can we go?" The very question reveals a problem.

say, "but is it so evil to share physical love with another lonely soul?" In answering this, I want to steer clear of the idea that virginity is the sum and substance of all holiness. Most of us have known prideful, mean-spirited virgins who were anything but holy. Nor would I want to downplay the deadliness of sins of malice, on a personal or societal level. But if the Bible is to be our guide, we need to take note of the precedence given to sexual sin in the concern of the New Testament.

According to the Bible, sexual immorality is a very grave sin that strikes at the core of the Christian spirit of holiness. Moreover, since sinful sensuality happens to be at the very heart of popular Western idolatry, our witness as followers of Christ amounts to little if we are unable to keep our lips from the poisonous trough from which the pagans are drinking. Therefore, the issue of sexual purity is a very grave one among Christians of all kinds – especially singles – and a vital one for our witness to the gospel.

It is my experience, both as a Christian who married at age 32 and as a pastor to single Christians for several years, that

very few Christian singles are engaged in the kind of rampant sexual immorality common to the broader culture. (If you are, then please read 1 Corinthians chapters 5-6, turn to our Saviour for forgiveness, and seek the grace to repent, which He will surely give.) Instead, most sexual sin among Christians takes place in the context of dating.

There are a number of reasons why Christians fall into sexual sin during dating. First, many of us were converted as young adults, and the habits of sexual sin were long formed before we turned to Christ. Therefore, our ideas of dating simply involve a fair amount of sexual contact. I remember being this way when I was first converted: I somehow thought it was my duty to make out with my date! Second, single adults have sex drives just like everyone else. Therefore, as a dating relationship becomes more emotionally close the combination of sexual desires and emotional intimacy lead into sexual sin all too naturally (and quickly).

But a Christian approach to dating differs from the society's approach most directly when it comes to sexuality. For most people today, intimacy means little more than having sex. Couples meet and immediately begin enjoying sexual intercourse. To do otherwise is to go against nature, people widely assume. Moreover, they believe that sex will serve as a foundation for love. This goes a long way towards explaining why so many marriages, built on no stronger foundation than sexual thrills, end in divorce soon after the flames of passion have died down.

Similar thoughts influence Christian singles. They desire a love relationship, and it was God who gave this desire. Perhaps, they are tempted to think, this good cause will be advanced by cutting the corners on obedience to God's Word. Moreover, their sexual desires are screaming at them, especially in opportune settings. But while it may be understandable that people with no relationship to God fall into the trap of sexual sin, for Christians to dishonour their love relationship and to offend God's holy nature by falling into sexual

sin should be unthinkable. God gave sex to be the servant of love and never its master. Therefore, sexual intimacy must always flow from the love commitment of marriage and from the holy love of our heavenly Father.

Christian singles fall into sexual sin for a number of reasons. They let their guard down. They toy with temptation. Some think it really isn't so great a sin. Others don't understand that their sinful sexual experiences will come with them into marriage. Still others – many others, I am afraid – enter into sexual sin in dating for the simple reason that they have not taken the disciplined steps needed for their relationship to remain sexually pure.

One typical mistake made by Christian singles is to ask "how far can we go?" The very question reveals a problem (and the likelihood that the person asking it has already gone too far!). But since so many wonder, the most honest response to the Bible's teaching is "not very far at all". Too many Christians believe that so long as full-scale sexual intercourse is resisted, other forms of sexual interaction are acceptable. But this is neither wise nor consistent with the Bible's teaching.

Consider 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, which says, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour; not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God." Does that sound like we should be asking, "How far can we go?" At the heart of such teaching is that Christians should cultivate, not undermine, bodily self-control. Christians are to treat their bodies as objects of honour before the holy God who sees sexual intimacy as a high and holy gift. Should we toy with sex? Or would it not be much better to treat our own body – and the body of our dating partner – as a holy and honoured object, not to be used for unconsecrated pleasure?

The message to Christian singles is clear: God calls you to abstain from sex, not to toy with it. In doing so, you cultivate a holy relationship that is focused on pleasing God – a characteristic that is essential to a godly marriage – and you give honour to yourself and your partner. If you find it necessary to engage in sex – and you may think that you do – then you should get married (see 1 Cor. 7:9, which makes this very statement). Not that you should "just get married in order to have sex", but that you should

devote yourself to the committed love that God desires to result in marriage, one of the benefits of which is the privilege of sexual union.

Just as God calls the man to lead the marital relationship, God calls men to take the lead in the sexual purity of a dating relationship. In this way, a man begins to love his potential bride as Christ loved the church, presenting her undefiled to the Lord (Eph. 5:25-27).



The problem is that many single Christian men are simply too selfish, spiritually immature, or emotionally wounded to step forward into marriage.

Lust is a major problem for single men, and many Christian men struggle with the temptations of pornography and other sexual sins. In this way, they dishonour God, grieve the Holy Spirit, and largely ruin their witness of the gospel before the world. According to the Bible, such men need to pursue marriage with a godly woman (see again 1 Cor. 7:9). This is God's provision for a healthy sex drive.

The problem is that many single Christian men are simply too selfish, spiritually immature, or emotionally wounded to step forward into marriage. This is why huge numbers of godly women struggle with an unfulfilled, God-given desire for marriage. What God wants is for our sexual needs to motivate us toward marriage. So the answer for a great many single Christian men (not all,

to be sure) is to move past their selfishness, immaturity, and pain, to trust God and seek His grace to offer committed male love and enter into the covenant relationship of marriage. Marriage is never a cure-all to our problems, but it happens to be God's particular provision for a man's need of companionship and sexual fulfillment. As God said back at the beginning, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18).

Godly male leadership is also essential during the dating process. A Christian man should be up-front about his commitment to sexual purity and should actively take steps to avoid sin. This means that he should take the lead in ensuring the couple is never in a situation that is calculated towards sexual sin. For instance, a Christian dating couple should never be alone for an extended period of time in one another's home. They should not go on over-night trips alone. A Christian man should always look upon his dating partner as his potential wife and mother of his children (or else the wife of another Christian brother, who may well be dating his potential wife at that very moment). He should put her spiritual well-being ahead of his own desires at all times. In other words, he should love her. He should love his future marriage. He should love his future children. And, above all, he should love God and the witness of His gospel in our sexually-depraved world.

But how will a woman feel about this? She will feel cherished! She will feel safe. She will feel pure before God. And she will feel love for such a Christian man.

Richard D. Phillips is minister of Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina. This article was first published in Reformation 21.

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Test-tube values

The bioethical battle is increasingly bypassing Christian concerns.

The publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics* (OUP, 2009) in paperback is an opportunity to educate ourselves as concerned Christians about the latest developments in bioethics, and to learn the philosophical views being expressed in their support and defence. The book consists of 30 sizeable articles, each by experts in the field. For the sake of this review-article we will select those topics that particularly challenge Christian beliefs and ethical principles.

As the editor remarks, "Methodology has been a central theoretical issue since the very beginning of bioethics." There was the hope that one normative ethical method would apply across the discipline but most bioethicists have resigned themselves to the plurality of methods now used. These include utilitarianism, natural law, virtue ethics, feminist ethics, principlism, and deontology. These are largely secular methods that do not take religious beliefs into consideration in spite of the strong representation by theologians in the early years of bioethics (a fact acknowledged by the editor). As a result, an increasing number of evangelicals are adopting some form of natural law theory as a way of gaining a foothold in the public debate, especially in America.

Of the generally recognised moral principles in bioethics, none has exercised so great an influence as autonomy. This can be simply defined as the patient's right to choose and refuse treatments.

Autonomy has had a disproportionate influence over issues like abortion (the right of the mother to choose), reproductive technologies (the right of infertile couples to create, lose or freeze embryos), and physician-assisted suicide (the right of the patient to choose death).

A moral equilibrium requires autonomy to be restrained by other equally deserving principles like justice and benevolence. Then the immediate interests of the individual would not override the long-term interests of the group and other interested parties. The writer concedes: "If there is a danger inherent in bioethics today – and I am convinced that there is – it comes from an excessive emphasis on autonomy and too little



Douglas Milne

appreciation of human interdependence and mutual responsibility."

One controversial expression of autonomy appears in the call for genetically enhancing our children through biological interventions that would make them stronger, smarter, more gifted and perhaps even more sociable. Julian Savulescu argues that enhancement is a moral obligation

From a Christian perspective, euthanasia is a moral failure to entrust ourselves, body and soul, into the hands of a faithful Creator.



since we ought to make choices that make it possible for individuals to live a better and more gratifying life.

In the near future it will be possible to make genetic changes on embryos and so secure a better and brighter future for our children. For Savulescu, this is rational evolution and an acceptable form of modern eugenics. "To be human is to be better." Genetic enhancement, however, is qualitatively different from other types of physical and environmental enhancement that the author chooses to use as parallels. Genetic enhancement is intervention in human nature itself and invites decisions about the kind of people we want ourselves and our children to be.

The subject of death figures largely in the Christian faith for a number of reasons. Death came into God's good creation due to the entrance of sin (Rom. 5:12); the gospel finds its centre in the death of the Founder of Christianity (1

Cor. 1:18), and through His resurrection Jesus Christ has put an end to death for all His people (1 Cor. 15:56-57).

The *Bioethics Handbook* raises three separate issues relating to human death and dying. First, there is the modern medical difficulty of defining death, deciding what physical criteria constitute death and whether we need to look for new terminology to accommodate the complexities of life and death in the modern intensive care unit.

The biblical, Christian view is that death occurs whenever the spirit leaves the body. In previous times this was signalled by the failure of the leading organs (heart, lungs and brain) which normally happened simultaneously. Because of modern medical powers of resuscitation, artificial ventilation and other interventions death and dying are no longer so straight-forward. The ability to transplant organs from one person to another, and the growing worldwide waiting-list for such organs, has further complicated the issue.

One result has been the new criterion of "brain death" which is when the cognitive and integrative functions of the brain have ceased. The brain-dead person breathes artificially and will never wake up. Is that person dead in the religious sense and how can it be proved?

Second, there is the question whether through anti-aging drugs it may become possible to defer death and significantly extend the human lifespan well beyond present averages. Secular bioethicists call this "earthly immortality" to differentiate it from religious immortality that necessitates belief in an after-life.

The related question is whether this would be a good thing to do or to choose (were it to become possible). Since Christians are called to alleviate, in ethical ways, the suffering of the world, does this mean that they should support the medical research that would lead to extending human life, and avoiding death with its many horrors, perhaps indefinitely?

Third, philosopher Gerald Dworkin gives a new twist to the case for legalising physician-assisted suicide. The basis of his case is the present law, which is now

deeply embedded in medical practice, which gives patients the right to refuse further life-sustaining treatment (food and water). How does this right to die differ morally from physician-assisted suicide? They are both grounded in the moral principle of patient autonomy, both are open to abuse by other parties and in both cases the physician makes a decision that results in the death of the patient.

In response, it needs to be pointed out that there is a large body of literature of both a philosophical and a non-philosophical kind, that argues that all taking of life (assisted or not) of innocent persons is morally wrong. From a Christian perspective, physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia is a moral failure to entrust our selves, body and soul, into the hands of a faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4:19).

Perhaps no subject is of more far-reaching ethical significance in bioethics than the status of the human embryo. The view a person takes on this subject will determine their attitude to embryonic stem cell research that destroys embryos in the interests of future, possible cures for crippling and life-threatening diseases and disabilities like Parkinson's disease.

In the interests of such research, and making use of utilitarian reasoning, a majority of bioethicists argue that even the promise of life-saving cures justifies the large-scale expenditure of embryos. This is not to say (so the argument goes) that we may treat these embryos as mere tissue that we can experiment with or dispose of as we choose. Rather, we should treat human embryos with respect in the same sort of way that we respect human remains, for their symbolic value as memorials of human existence. In the case of human remains this is a remembering of a person who has gone; in the case of embryos there is a looking forward to a person who will be.

The writer Bonnie Stock recognises the contribution of the Judeo-Christian moral and legal tradition in the West that has given worth to all human beings as God's image-bearers. However, as a secular thinker, Bonnie Stock, who is also the editor of the *Handbook*, chooses to distinguish between a biological human being (an embryo) and a human organism with sentience, interests and rights (an adult person).

She argues against the belief that conception is the starting-point of the human organism because of the complexity of conception and the possibility of twinning up to fourteen days after

conception. In response we may argue that conception is not so complex that we cannot identify syngamy when the two gametes have fused into a single cell embryo, twenty four hours or so after the penetration of the egg by the sperm, as the point of human animation. And in spite of the mystery of twinning, we may at least speculate that the original embryo, in effect, clones itself to form a second self.

The following sentences from the same writer might well have been written in praise of the full humanity and selfhood of the early embryo. "A human embryo is something special, and a source of awe, precisely because it contains within itself the capacity to develop into a complete human being." "Moreover, human embryos are part of the human story, because every living human person began life as an embryo." "If the entire life of a human being has intrinsic value, then it is reasonable to accord value to the very beginning stages of that life." The answer to embryonic stem cell experimentation is a more noble and ethical view of the embryo, and the pursuit of alternative sources of totipotent stem cells.


The answer to embryonic stem cell experimentation is a more noble and ethical view of the embryo.

Some other issues and questions of great interest treated in this volume are mental disorder and moral agency, policy-making in pluralistic societies, organ transplantation, feminist dilemmas over payments for reproductive labours, biobanking, therapeutic cloning, pharmacogenomics, animal experimentation and bioterrorism.

Several general lessons emerge from reviewing this publication. One is the growth of bioethics to include global issues like health and pandemics, which is something of a return to the original environmental concerns of bioethics in the 1970s.

Second, we need to appreciate the inter-disciplinary nature of bioethics, as a common field of interest and participation by scientists, lawyers, health-professionals, social scientists, philosophers, ethicist, even theologians.

However, third, and chiefly, it is the secular epistemology and beliefs that pervade this *Handbook* that make the most lasting impression on the reader. Religious views are sometimes mentioned but they are largely discounted as a source of moral wisdom. More favoured is a rational and pluralist approach that frees bioethics from the unwanted restrictions and controversies of religious dogma. Here lies the main challenge of the *Handbook* as well as the field of bioethics, for concerned Christians.

Professor Douglas Milne is principal of the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne. 

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Christ alone

Why indulgences are still a bad idea.

‘Why are we bringing it back?” asked Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of Brooklyn, who has embraced the move [to revive the practice of indulgences]. “Because there is sin in the world.”

Thus wrote Paul Vitello, reporting on the pope’s decree of indulgences to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the apostle Paul’s birth (“For Catholics, a Door to Absolution Is Reopened,” *New York Times*, February 9, 2009). Until this June, Roman Catholics were able to receive credit up to full (plenary) exemption from purgatory in fulfillment of various good works.

The practice of indulgences is based on the ruinous error that anything short of the perfect righteousness that God requires and gives freely in His Son can satisfy God’s holiness. The situation would surely have been hopeless had the

**John Calvin
with
Knox Bucer-Beza**

very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to Him. Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to assume our flesh. He fulfilled all righteousness for us, bore our sins — all of them — and rose triumphant for our justification. For all who trust in Christ, there are no debts left on the ledger at death. Christ, not the church, possesses and dispenses the treasury of merits.

We are called innovators, but whoever knows that this preaching of Paul is ancient ... will find nothing new among us.

We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is “of

Him”. If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in His anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in His dominion; if purity, in His conception; if gentleness, it appears in His birth. For by His birth He was made like us in all respects that He might learn to feel our pain. If we seek redemption, it lies in His passion; if acquittal, in His condemnation; if remission of the curse, in His cross; if satisfaction, in His sacrifice; if purification, in His blood; if reconciliation, in His descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in His tomb; if newness of life, in His resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of all blessings, in His kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to Him to judge. In short, since a rich store of every kind of good abounds in Him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.

Christ is not a means to an end. He is

not merely a great example to imitate, an important bridge to cross from wrath to grace so that we may go on to other mountains to climb for spiritual blessings. He is the source, the means, and the destination. The apostle Paul does not say that Christ was sent to help us attain righteousness but to Himself be our righteousness. When we say these and like things, our adversaries interrupt and complain that in this way we shall subvert some blind light of nature, imaginary preparations, free will, and works that merit eternal salvation. For they cannot bear that the whole praise and glory of all goodness, virtue, righteousness, and wisdom should rest with God. We are called innovators, but whoever knows that this preaching of Paul is ancient, that “Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification”, will find nothing new among us.


Justification — that is, the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of His righteousness to sinners through faith alone — is the principal hinge by which true religion is supported. It is not one doctrine among many, but the sum of all piety. Whenever the knowledge of it is taken away, the glory of Christ is extinguished, religion abolished, the church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown.

The sum of the matter then is this: that if salvation depends on the keeping of the law, or any works — either done by us or even within us by the Spirit—then the soul can entertain no confidence. The law generates nothing but vengeance; it cannot bring grace. But the faith that clings to Christ for justification also receives sanctification, which is begun in this life and perfected in glory. The good news is that throughout the Christian life, God will perform this sanctifying work precisely because the believer is already justified and regarded as fully acceptable in the sight of God.

John Calvin is the author of The Institutes of the Christian Religion and many other writings, which were excerpted and paraphrased for this column, which was first published in Christianity Today magazine.

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The narrow path

**20 daily Bible studies on
Psalm 119**

‘How can a young man keep his way pure?” asks the Psalmist (119:9). He was only too aware of the constant pressure of a corrupt and depraved world on his fallen, sinful heart! Although he had hidden God’s Word in his heart (119:11), and made it the light for his feet (119:105), the temptations of the world were still there.

That same world is still putting the same unrelenting pressure on us, individually as Christians, and collectively as His church. But the theatre of war is more complex today, and the rules of warfare more subtle and difficult. It is not just a case of choosing to do what is right and refusing to do what is wrong; it involves maintaining that right is right and wrong is wrong – that there is sinful behaviour for which God will hold both individuals and nations accountable.

As Christians, therefore, we have an inescapable, God-given responsibility to warn others about the consequences of neglecting and rejecting God’s way. That is clear. Nor can we help but feel upset when God’s laws are as blatantly flouted as they are today (cf 119:136).

History has shown us that the outcome of ignoring the Manufacturer’s instructions is always disaster. A more obvious example is the sociological problem of gender imbalance now being reaped in China as a result of their “one child” policy. May a month in Psalm 119 be a timely reminder to all of us of the need to listen to, and live out, God’s written Word (Psalm 119:4-5)!

Bruce Christian ▶

DAY 1

An undivided heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:1-8

THE POINT True happiness, surviving the worst of circumstances, comes from total, undivided commitment to the God who made us in His image. It involves perfect conformity to His ways as revealed in His written Word. We should be satisfied with nothing less.

THE PARTICULARS

- True fulfilment in life, functioning daily as we were designed to function in peace and harmony with ourselves and others, comes by actively obeying all that God has revealed to us in His Word.
- Living always in obedience to God's Word makes us blameless in His sight, in perfect fellowship with the source of all we are.

- Seeking God with all our heart and obeying His Word are two inseparable things – we can't profess one without the other.
- We must not let the reality of our fallen nature, or the wonder of God's redeeming grace in Christ, be an excuse for even slight sinful behaviour. Jesus said: 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled' (Matthew 5:6).
- The Psalmist recognises his need for help and mercy in his efforts.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How can we keep a true balance between grace and obedience? What are the signs of imbalance either way? What about you?

DAY 2

A Word-filled heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:9-16

THE POINT The Bible ought to be our greatest treasure because in it the one, true, living God, who created us especially for Himself, speaks to us personally. Sin, therefore, will try to keep us from God's Word – but God's Word is able to keep us from sin!

THE PARTICULARS

- Obeying God's Word for its own sake (ie trying to live by the letter of the law) is not the real issue; it is seeking God Himself through His Word. Jesus said: "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). Our love for God comes first.
- Maintaining purity of life is a real issue (and struggle) for the

young man (and woman) today. The Scriptures are intended to be our main source of help in this – we neglect them to our peril.

- We need God's help not to drift away from keeping His Word.
- Our interaction with the Bible should include the following:
 - memorising it ("I have hidden your Word in my heart");
 - learning from it ("teach me your decrees");
 - talking about it ("with my lips I recount all your laws");
 - thinking it over and getting excited about it (cf Psalm 1:2).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What are you really doing to hide God's Word in your heart?

DAY 3

An enlightened heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:17-24

THE POINT God's people are strangers, out of place in this dark world. God has provided us with a map and handbook to enable us to survive and overcome the difficulties. He also enables us to understand His written instructions through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor, in our hearts. As this happens, so we have a greater desire in our hearts for God's Word.

THE PARTICULARS

- So clearly is God's blessing the essence of true, meaningful life that we ought always to resolve to live in total obedience to it.
- Without the Holy Spirit's help the words of Scripture are

only words; we need Him to open our eyes (cf 2 Corinthians 3:15-17).

- In the world, God's people are like foreign tourists; without God's map we're lost and confused by the world's strange ways.
- The better we know God, the more hungry we are for His Word and the more we rejoice in its beauty and its wisdom.
- God's Word is a sword against all who disregard its teaching, and a shield protecting all who are ridiculed for obeying it.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do you look forward to your time with God each day? Are you conscious of, and grateful for, the Holy Spirit's ministry to you?

DAY 4

A struggling heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:25-32

THE POINT The godly person is not immune to the struggles and trials of this life. But with God's written Word as his comfort and guide he is able to meet whatever difficulties confront him with confidence and honesty. By setting the course of his life by the Scriptures, and being careful to maintain that course by constant reference to them, he is free to live his life to the full in spite of setbacks.

THE PARTICULARS

- God has promised in His Word that if we put our trust in Him our lives are secure for all eternity (eg Psalm 23). Therefore, even when we are really down we can claim this promise.

- God wants us to tell Him all about our struggles in prayer. He answers our prayers by speaking to us through His Word.
- God's grace is made most real to us through His Law. We might deceive ourselves by thinking we can earn our salvation by our obedience, but then we miss out on His gracious provision (29).
- The psalmist's struggle is met by a new resolve to have a mind-set totally committed to God's way (30), to hang on to that commitment no matter what (31), and to run freely in that way (32).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How careful are you to check your course by God's compass?



Come worship with us!

If you are passing through or moving nearby, feel free to ring the Minister, Clerk or Elder.
Find us on the Web at: <http://www.presbyterian.org.au/states.htm>

northern territory

DARWIN

Kormilda College 10.00am.
Rev. Rob Duncanson (08) 8945 7878.

australian capital territory

CANBERRA, BELCONNEN

Cnr Gatty St. & Ross Smith Cres, Scullin.
Sunday Service 10:00 am

Elder: Mrs J. Cram (02) 6278 7379

CANBERRA, FORREST (St Andrew's)

1 State Circle (opp Parliament House).

Service Times: 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Church Office: (02) 6295 3457

CANBERRA, TUGGERANONG

Isabella Plains Primary School, cnr Ellerstone Ave & Noorooma St, Isabella Plains.

Worship Service & Sunday School 10.00am.

Evening service 6.15pm (light meal @5:45pm).

Mike Pittman (02) 6292 6772.

new south wales

ANNANDALE-LEICHHARDT

Hunter Baillie, Johnston & Collins Sts.

10.00am (6.30pm 1st Sunday only.)

Rev. Peter Dunstan (02) 9810 7869

ARMIDALE (St. Paul's)

Faulkner St, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.

Rev. David M. Seaman (02) 6772 3093

ASHFIELD

Liverpool Rd. & Knox St. 10.15am & 6.00pm

Rev Peter Hastie (02) 9798 6572.

BEACON HILL (St Andrew's)

244 Warringah Rd. 9.00am. & 7.00pm.

Rev. Trevor Cheetham (02) 9451 5076.

BEECROFT

Mary St., 8.45am. 10.30am. & 5.30pm.

Rev. Paul Cooper (02) 9876 2478.

BEGA — EDEN

Bega — 25 Upper St. 9.30am.

Contact: Mrs M. Cochrane (02) 6492 2949

BONDI

Cnr. Castlefield & Miller Sts.

10.00am & 7.00pm.

Rev John Graham: (02) 9130 6607.

BONNYRIGG

Western Regions Chinese Church

14-16 Bibbys Place. 9.30 am. (English) &

11.00 am. (Mandarin)

S.Clerk: Stanley Chen (02) 9753 2073

BOWRAL

Cr Bendooley & Wingecarribee St. 9.30am.

Kids' Church: 9.30 am. 1st & 3rd Sunday

Sess. Clrk: Mr Peter Boggs, (02) 4861 3079.

BURWOOD (St. James)

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am

Rev. David Maher (02) 9744 6542

BURWOOD CHINESE

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am & 11.15am

(Cantonese) 10.30am & 5.00pm (English).

Church Office: (02) 9715 3889.

Rev. Dennis Law 0414 812 776.

Rev. Eugene Hor 0414 992 106.

Mr Joe Lin 0405 203 064. Miss Amy Leong

0415 777 829 (Pastoral worker)

CAMPBELLTOWN

34 Lithgow St. 8.30 am. 10.00 am. 6.30 pm.

Rev. Jim Elliot (02) 4625 1037.

CARINGBAH

393 Port Hacking Rd. South. 9.30am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Darren Middleton (02) 9540 4469.

CASTLE HILL

247 Old Northern Rd. 9.30am & 6.00pm.

Rev. Moses Hahn (02) 9634 2911.

CHATSWOOD

St Andrew's, Anderson St. 9.00am, 10.30am

& 6.30pm. Rev. Jeff Read (02) 9419 5932 (W),

(02) 9419 7349 (H). Ass. Rev. Warren Esdale.

CHERRYBROOK

John Purchase Public School Hall,

Purchase Road. Service: 9.30 am.

Rev. Stephen Fong (02) 9875 4894

CHINESE CHURCH

Cnr Crown & Albion Sts. Surry Hills.

English 9am & 5pm / Cantonese 10.30am /

Mandarin 9am / Bilingual Service 12noon /

Sunday School 9am & 10:30am / Youth 9am.

Church Office (02) 9331 4459. Rev. David

Tsai (02) 9747 4845 or 0408 5516 606.

COFFS HARBOUR (St Andrew's)

187 Harbour Dr. 8.00am, 9.45am & 6.30pm

at Harbourside Evangelical Church.

Rev. Jamie K. Newans (02) 6652 3183

CORNERSTONE

@ Concord: Meets Concord Public School

9.30 am. Cnr Burwood Rd. & Stanley St.

Concord. Rev. Mark Powell (02) 9702 5281

@ North: Meets Eastwood Heights Public

School 9.30am. Lincoln Street, Eastwood.

Rev. C. S. Tang (02) 9688 7880.

COWRA

46 Macquarie St. Also Gooloogong,

Morongla. Ph (02) 6342 1467.

CRONULLA

13 Croydon St. 9.30am.

Rev. Russell Stark (02) 9523 5875.

EAST MAITLAND

George St. 9.30am. Beresfield: Beresford Ave.

7.45am. Raymond Terrace: Irrawang St.

9.45am. Rev. J. Buchanan (02) 4933 7443.

EPPING

Bridge & Rawson Sts. 9.00am, 10.30am &

6.30pm. Rev. Matthew Oates (02) 9876 1188.

FORSTER/TUNCURRY

Bruce St. Forster, 9.30am, 6.00pm.

Rev. Jason Summers (02) 6557 5047

GLEN INNES

Heron St. 11.00am & 7.00pm.

All ages study groups 9.30am.

Pastor Lance Jackson (02) 6732 5707

GOULBURN (St Andrews)

Clifford St. 9.00am. 7.00pm (2nd & 4th

Sundays). Also Taralga, Crookwell and

Tuena. Rev. Chris Balzer (02) 4822 2344

GOSFORD

14-16 Young St. West Gosford. 8.00am.

9.45am. 6.30 pm. Rev. M. Cropper

Office: Ph (02) 4323 2490.

GRANVILLE/MERRYLANDS

Granville: 14 Hutchinson St. 9.30am. Rev. P.

Tamsett 9760 0900. Merrylands & Monitor's

Rd. P. Magee 9760 2362. Canley Heights: 3

Derria St. 9609 7384. East Parramatta:

Inquiries B. Frost 0433 908 130.

GRIFFITH

Opp. Collina Oval, Blumer Ave. 9.30 am.

Rev. Peter Gobbo (02) 6962 4827.

Dr L. Thorpe (02) 6962 1934

GUNNEDAH

Marquis & Barber Sts. Boggabri: Court

House (02) 6742 0551

HURSTVILLE

Cnr. Park Rd. & McMahon St. 9.30am &

6.30pm. Rev Kevin Murray (02) 9153 8176.

KOGARAH

Meets Carlton School of Arts — 9.30am.

2 Short Street.

Mr Steve Chong (02) 8012 6837 (H).

KOREAN, SYDNEY (Young Nak)

7-9 Manson St, Telopea. 9.30am. 11.00am.

3.00pm. S.Clerk (02) 9816 3807

LEETON

Cnr. Sycamore & Cypress Sts. 10.00 am.

Rev. Richard Keith (02) 4272 9407

MANLY (St Andrew's)

Raglan St. & Augusta Lane. 9.00am.

Rev. Derek Bullen (02) 9976 2801

MAROUBRA

8 Robey St, 10.00am. 7.15pm.

Chinese Service, 4pm.

Rev Johnnie Li (02) 9349 1312

MITTAGONG

Cr Alice & Edwards Sts. 9.00am. Sess Clrk

Mr David Hocking, (02) 4869 3118.

MOREE (St Andrew's)

Cnr Albert & Auburn Sts, 10.00am.

Tel. (02) 6752 1083

MORUYA

31 Evans St. 9.00am.

Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

MOSMAN (Scots Kirk)

Belmont Rd. (nr Military Rd), 9.00am.

Rev. Adrian de Graaf (02) 9969 6101.

MOSS VALE

7 Browley St 9.30am & 6.00pm
Rev. Steve North (02) 4869 4795.

NAROOMA

1 Farncombe Ave. 11.00am.
Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

NEWCASTLE (St Andrews)

Cnr Laman & Auckland Sts 9.30am & 6.00pm.
Office: (02) 4929 2857

NEWCASTLE EAST (St. Philip's)

48 Watt St., 10.00am. **Surfside:** 7.00pm.

Stockton: 10.30am Wednesday.

Rev. John Macintyre (02) 4929 2379.

Asst: Rev. Jon Nuttall (02) 4928 3410.

NORTH SYDNEY-GREENWICH

(St Peter's) 234 Blues Point Rd. 10.00am.
& 6.45pm. Wednesday 1.15pm.

Greenwich: (Taylor Memorial)

86A Greenwich Rd. 10.00am.

Rev. Dr Paul Logan (02) 9955 1662.

Rev. Matthew Oates (02) 9405 2235.

ORANGE (St James)

Cnr Anson St. & Matthews Ave. 10.00am.

Rev. Robert McKean (02) 6362 6304

PARKES/FORBES/PEAK HILL

Parkes: S. School 10.00am; Service 11.00am.

Forbes: 9.00am. Peak Hill: 10.00am.

1st Sunday. Rev. Craig Bland (02) 6862 2730

PENRITH (St Andrew's)

Doonmore St. near High St, 9.00am. &

7.00pm. Rev William Morrow (02) 4721 2440.

PORT MACQUARIE (St Andrew's)

Cnr William/Munster Sts. 9.00am., 10.30am

Rev S Donnellan (02) 6582 2505

RANDWICK

Alison Rd. & Cook St. 10.00am. & 5.00pm.

Rev. Grant Thorpe (02) 9399 3183.

REVESBY

Cnr Tower St & Eastern Avenue,

Service: 9.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Dr Peter Barnes (02) 9774 5740.

ROSE BAY (St Andrew's)

Cnr Dover Rd. & Carlisle St.

10.00am & 6.00pm.

Rev Bruce Christian (02) 9388 1206(O).

SOUTHERN CROSS

Park Ave. East Lismore

Rev. Stephen Cree (02) 6621 3655

SPRINGWOOD

160 Macquarie Rd. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.

Winmalee : 481 Hawkesbury Rd. 9.00am.

A. Min. Mark Armstrong (02) 4751 1188 (O).

Rev. Keith Walker (02) 4751 1188 (O).

SUTHERLAND

Cnr Flora & Glencoe Sts. 9.30am & 5.30pm

Rev Andrew Clausen (02) 9521 2361

SYDNEY (Scots Church)

44 Margaret St. Sydney. Sun: 10.30 am.

Wed: 1.15pm. Rev. Adrian Van Ash

(02) 9299 7490 (O) (02) 9817 0587 (H).

TAMWORTH (St Stephen's)

Cnr Matthews & Crown St. 9.00am &

6.30pm. **Moonbi** 9.00am.

Rev Stuart Andrews (02) 6765 8754.

Tamworth Community Presb Church,

St Stephens, Cnr Matthews & Crown St.

10.30am Rev. David Hassan (02) 6765 2865.

TAREE

Albert St. 9.00am.

Rev. Paul Harris (02) 6552 1082(O).

TERRIGAL (Scots Kirk)

2 Willoughby Rd. 9.00am & 6.00pm.

Rev. Glenn Samuel (02) 4385 2240

TOUKLEY

Cnr Hargreaves St and Victoria Ave.

9.30am Morning Worship

6.00pm 2nd Sunday Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec.

Rev. Rex Swavley (02) 4392 9904.

TUROSS HEAD

277 Hector McWilliam Dr. 9.00am.

Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

WAHROONGA

Wahroonga Presbyterian Church,

Cnr. Illoura Ave. & Stuart St. 9.30am.

Rev. Murray Fraser (02) 9489 3690

WAGGA WAGGA SOUTH

60-62 Coleman St. Turvey Park

9.00am & 10.30am.

Rev. Sandy McMillan (02) 6925 1228.

WEE WAA

Mitchell St. Rev. Mark Powell (02) 6795 4259

WENTWORTH FALLS (St Andrew's)

Falls Rd. 9.00 am.

Rev. Keith King (02) 4784 1255

WENTWORTHVILLE (St Andrew's)

7 McKern St. 9.00am & 5.00pm.

Rev. Luke Tattersall (02) 9863 8366.

WEST WYALONG

Pioneer Memorial, Court St. 10.30am.

Barmedman: 1st & 3rd Sunday. 9.00am.

Mirrool: 3rd Sunday. **Tallimba:** Contact

Minister. **Weethalle:** Last Sunday 7.00pm.

Mr. Graham French (02) 6972 2143.

WOLLONGONG (St Andrew's)

Cnr Kembla & Burelli Sts. 9.45am & 6.00pm.

Rev. Granville Pillar (02) 4226 1725(O).

WOONONA

7 Gray St. Rev Peter Currie (02) 4284 4057.

WOY WOY

118-120 Blackwall Rd. 9.00 & 10.30 am.

Rev. Keith Rathbone (02) 4342 2856.



ARARAT

330 Barkly St (Cnr Albert St). 10.00am.

Rev. Ian Hutton (03) 5352 4054

ASHBURTON

Junction of High St. and High Street Rd.

near Warrigal Rd. 10.15am.

Rev Peter Orchard (03) 9889 6034.

ASPENDALE

Cnr Station St. & Lyle Grv. 9.00am. &

6.00pm. Rev. John Dekker (03) 9587 0661.

AUBURN

Cnr Rathmines & Station Sts Hawthorn East

10.00 am. Rev. Trevor Cox (03) 9882 5256

BAIRNSDALE

159 Nicholson St. 10.00am.

1st of Month 5.00pm. S/school 9.00 am.

Rev. Gary Stephens (03) 5153 1669

BALACLAVA

106 Hotham St. & Denman Ave. 9.30am.

Rev. Tony Johnson (03) 9527 3270.

BENDIGO (St John's)

Forest St. 10.30am.

Rev. Philip Burns (03) 5443 6189.

BLACKBURN

53 Gardenia St. 11.00am.

Rev P Locke (03) 9725 6417

BRIMBANK

Sydenham Community Centre

Cnr, The Community Hub & Overton Lea

Blvd, 10.00am each Sunday.

Rev. Peter Owen (03) 9307 6583.

BUNDOORA

Bundoora Hall, Noorong Ave.

10.00am & 6.00pm.

Admin: Mrs M. Goodson (03) 9457 4962.

BURWOOD

(Chinese Presbyterian Church) 11.00am.

Cnr. Greenwood & Tennyson Sts.

Rev Dr John Elnatan (03) 9801 7645.

CAMBERWELL- Trinity

cnr Riversdale & Waterloo Sts. 10.00am.

Rev. Philip Mercer (03) 9882 8102

CAMPERDOWN-TERANG-GARVOC

9.30 am Aug — Jan. 11am Feb — July

Terang: 1 Warmambool Rd.

Camperdown: Campbell & Brooke Sts.

Garvoc: 2:30pm. 2nd & 4th Sunday.

Pastor Bernie Thomas (03)5592 1041

CANTERBURY

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am. & 7 pm.

Rev. Grant Lawry (03) 9836 4601.

CANTERBURY JAPANESE

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30 am

Mr Simon Crittle (03) 9833 6007.

CAULFIELD-ELWOOD

Caulfield: Neerim/Bambra Rds. 11.15am.

Elwood: Scott/Tennyson Sts. 9.15am.

Rev. Phillip Chang (03) 9505 3013.

CHELTENHAM Pioneers' Presbyterian

8 Park Rd. Cnr. Charman Rd. 9.30am.

Rev. Daid Brown (03) 9583 2785.

CLIFTON HILL

Cnr Michael & McKean Sts North Fitzroy.

10.45 am. Rev. Peter Phillips (03) 9346 8044.

COLAC (Scots)

90-94 Armstrong Street. 10.00am.

Rev. Marvin Hagans H: (03) 5250 4360

O: (03) 5231 2398

CRANBOURNE/LYNDHURST

Cranbourne: Cnr Russel & Sladen Sts 10.00am

weekly - **Lyndhurst:** 214 Westernport Hwy

(entry frm Pyramid Pl) 2.00pm 2nd & 4th

Sunday of Mth. Mr Alex van der End

(03) 5996 1024. cranbourne.pcvic.org.au

DANDENONG

51 Potter St. 10.00am.

Rev. John Rickard (03) 9792 4252.

DONVALE

Cnr Springvale Rd & McGowan St Donvale.

8.30am, 10.30am & 6.30pm.

Rev Gerald Vanderwert (03) 9842 9493. (03)

9841 7020 (O)

DROMANA-MORNINGTON

St Andrew's, Gibson St. 9.00am.

Mornington (The Chapel) Cnr Strachans

Rd. & Nepean Hwy. 11.00am.

Rev. Dr Michael Wishart (03) 5975 9514.

DROUIN

Church St. 9am. 10.30am. 7.00pm.

Rev. Mark Smith (03) 5625 4112.

ELTHAM

23 Batman Rd. 10.00 am

Rev. Don Elliott (03) 9439 9720

ESSENDON

Cnr Wilson & McPherson Sts. 9.15am &

7.00pm. Rev. Peter Phillips (03) 9346 8044.

FLEMINGTON

Norwood St. 9.30am.

S. Clerk Miss R. Anstee (03) 9650 9903.

FRANKSTON

30 Radiata St. 10.30am & 6.00pm.

Rev. Bill Medley (03) 9786 2976.

Session Clerk: Mr John Disney 8707 0462.

Elder: Mr Andrew Bilyj

GEELONG (St. George's)

Cnr. Latrobe Tce & Rynie St. 10.00am & 7.00pm. Interim Moderator: The Very Rev. Dr Allan Harman (03) 5256 2134.

GEELONG NORTH

60 Victoria St. 10.00am.

Session Clerk: Bert Stasse (03) 5241 4097.

GEELONG WEST (Scots)

Cnr. Pakington & Waratah Sts. 10.00am.

Rev. David Assender (03) 5249 5508.

Clerk: Mr J. R. Diffen (03) 5264 8080.

GISBORNE (St Andrew's)

Fisher Street 10.30am & Evening service last Sunday of month 5.30pm (7.00pm Summer daylight savings)

HAMILTON

St Andrew's, Gray & McIntyre Sts. 10.00am. & 5.00pm. (last Sunday of month)

Phone: (03) 5572 1009

HAWTHORN

580 Glenferrie Rd. 11.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

Rev. Graham Nicholson (03) 9819 5347.

HEATHMONT

Cnr. Waterloo St. & Canterbury Rd.

Heathmont 10.00am.

Rev. Andrew Venn (03) 9870 5182.

HORSHAM

16 Kalkee Road 10.00am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Willem Vandenberg (03) 5382 3735.

KANGAROO GROUND

265 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. 9.30am.

Rev. Rod Scott (03) 9763 4248.

KOREAN MELBOURNE

16 Walnut Rd. North Balwyn. 11.00am &

2.00pm. Mr Stephen Kim 0430 136 155.

LEONGATHA

Cnr. Bent & Turner Sts. 10.00am.

Session Clerk: (03) 5662 2107

MALVERN

161 Wattletree Rd. 10.30am. & 5.00 pm.

Rev. Philip Daffy (03) 9509 7373.

MELBOURNE

The Scots' Church, Cnr. Russell & Collins

Sts. 11am & 5.30pm. Wed. 1.00pm.

5.15pm (Indonesian Service)

Rev. Douglas Robertson (03) 9650 9903.

MELTON

Mowbray College, Centenary Ave. 10.00am.

(03) 9747 8195.

MOE — YARRAM

Moe: 34 Fowler St. 10.00am.

Yarram: Cnr. Dougherty & Montgomery Sts.

2.00pm. Rev Jared Hood (03) 5127 1296.

NOORAT

Cnr Mc Kinnons Bridge & Glenormiston Rds.

10.30am. Rev. Miles Fagan (03) 5592 5220

NUMURKAH

58 Saxton St. 11.15am.

Tallygaroopna: Victoria St. 9.30am.

Cobram: Cnr High and Pine Sts. (Anglican Church) 2.30pm.

RESERVOIR

81 Edwardes St. 10.00 am. & 7.00 pm.

Rev. Ross Tucker (03) 9460 9523

ROCHESTER

Cnr Victoria St. & Echuca Rd. 10.30am &

7.30pm (1st Sunday of the month).

H. Missionary – Pastor Steven Arbuckle.

S. Clerk – Mr Jeff Broad (03) 5484 6284.

SEAFORD

(St Barnabas Anglican Church)

Corner of Park St & Margaret Ave. 11.00am.

Rev. John Dekker (03) 9587 0661.

ST KILDA

Cnr Alma Rd. & Barkly St. 11.00am &

7.00pm. Rev. Bob Thomas 0417 592 646.

SHEPPARTON

Cnr. Hayes & Leithen Sts. 9.00am. &

7.00pm. Also **Stanhope, Kyabram.**

Rev Kyung Ee (03) 5831 6494.

SOMERVILLE

Cnr Jones Rd. & Park Lane.

Rev. Ian Brown (03) 5977 5469.

SORRENTO-RYE

Sorrento: St Andrew's, Kerferd Avenue

11.00am. **Rye:** Cnr Collingwood & Lyons

Sts. 9.15am. 6.00pm.

Rev. John Brennan (03) 5985 6492

SOUTH YARRA

621 Punt Rd. 10.30 am. & 5.30 pm.

S.Clerk: Mr J. Adlawan (03) 9808 7391.

SUNSHINE

McKay Memorial, Anderson Rd. 10.00am. &

6.00pm. Rev. John Cho (03) 9311 1661.

SURREY HILLS (St Stephen's)

Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 10.15am &

6.00pm. Family Services 6.00pm (2nd & 4th

Sunday). Rev. Chris Siriweera (03) 9833 3306.

SURREY HILLS (St Stephen's)

Deaf Presbyterian Church

Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 2.00pm.

Rev. Tony Salisbury (03) 9551 3634

(Mod. Rev. Chris Siriweera (03) 9833 3306)

WANGARATTA – REGIONAL PARISH

Wangaratta, 158 Rowan St. 11.00am &

5.00pm (9.00am 1st Sunday)

Yarrowonga, 47 Orr St. 8.45am (11.00am 1st

Sunday). **Myrtleford,** 78 Standish St. 7.00pm

(5.00pm June, July, August).

Rev. Neil Harvey (03) 5721 6444

WARBURTON

3471 Warburton H'way. 10.00am.

Brian Harvey (03) 5966 2309.

WARRNAMBOOL (St John's)

Warrnambool: Spence Street. 10.00am

(Includes Children's program) & 5.00pm

(in the church hall Princess St).

Office: (03) 5562 2029.

South Warrnambool: MacDonald St. 9.15am.

Woodford: Mill St. 11.00 am.

Rev. Ben Johnson (03) 5562 2029.

WEST FOOTSCRAY

141 Essex St. (Scots) 10.00 am.

Session Clerk: Ms J Swift (03) 9687 5701

WILLIAMSTOWN (St Andrew's)

87 Cecil St. 10.00am.

Rev. Bruce Riding (03) 9397 5338

WOORI YALLOCK

1363 Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Rd. 9.30am.

Rev. Dean Carroll (03) 5964 7563.

WYNDHAM

116-120 Blackforest Rd. 10.00am.

Pastor Shane Cassidy (03) 9974 2024

Rev. Cameron Wills (07) 4091 7203.

BALD HILLS

58 Strathpine Rd. 8.30am. & 7.00pm.

Rev Peter Bloomfield (07) 3261 4305.

BRISBANE KOREAN

145 Ann St. 8.00am. 12.00 noon, 7.30pm.

Rev. Dr M. M. Y. Kim (07) 3300 3132

BRISBANE (St Paul's)

53 St Pauls Tce. Spring Hill.

Rev. A. Gardiner (07) 3831 7458(O).

BUNDABERG

Cnr Water & Alice Sts. 9.00am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Wallace Brown (07) 4151 4766.

CABOOLTURE

24 Cottrill Road. 9.00am & 6.00pm.

Rev. Don Kennedy (07) 5498 6253

CAIRNS

85 Sheridan St. 9.30am. & 6.30pm.

Korean 11.00am. Cook Island 12 noon.

Rev. Harry Oh (07) 4051 2238

CALLIDE VALLEY

Biloela: Cnr. Kariboe & Melton Sts.

10.00am. **Jambin:** Three Ways 8.30am.

Rev. Gaius Goh (07) 4992 1441.

CHARLEVILLE/BLACKALL

78 Galatea St. 9.00am.

CLAYFIELD (Scots Memorial)

29 Bellevue Terrace, 9.30am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Andrew Richardson 0423 160 412

COORPAROO

Emlyn St. 10.00am.

H. M. Phil Case (07) 3397 8793.

CREEK ROAD

Presbyterian Ministry Centre. 1541 Creek Rd

(cnr Fursden Rd). **Carina** 9.00am & 6.30pm.

Centre: (07) 3398 4333. Ass. Rev. Jens Norved

(07) 3396 1185. Japanese Service 11.30am.

Jack & Keiko Marshall (07) 5501 9220.

DECEPTION BAY-BURPENARY

Peace Presbyterian Church. 9.30am.

155-157 Maine Terrace, Deception Bay.

Rev. John Gilmour (07) 3203 2526.

GLADSTONE (St Andrew's)

Goondoon & Bramston Sts. 10.00am.

Benaraby: O'Connor Rd. 8.00am. **Calliope:**

Dawson H'way (Stirrat St.) 2nd Sunday

9.30am; 4th Sunday 8.00am. Rev. D. Secomb

(07) 4972 1058 (O); 4972 1057 (H).

GOLD COAST (I)

Arundel: 132 Allied Drive 9.00am &

10.45am. (07) 5571 5676. www.arundel.org.au

Robina: Cnr University & Cottesloe Drives

10.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416

GOLD COAST (II)

Mudgeeraba: Cnr Mudgeeraba Rd &

Regency Pde. 9.00am & 6.30 pm.

Rev. Ray Evans (07) 5573 1458.

GOLD COAST (III)

Christ Church: Currumbin Primary School,

Phillip Street, Currumbin – 9.30am.

Rev. Alan Radloff (07) 5530 5758.

HELENSVALE (Northlinks)

1 Shepparton Road – 9.30am.

Rev. John Evans (07) 5580 1367.

HERVEY BAY

5 Denman's Camp Road, Scarness. 9.30am

& 7.00pm. Rev. John Roth (07) 4124 7018.

ITHACA

100 Enogerra Tce, Paddington.

Service: 9.30 am. 6.30pm.

Rev. Robert Herrgott (07) 3300 6158.



ASCOT

68 Charlton St. (Near Airport).

Nundah: 14 Rode Rd

Rev Guido Kettmiss (07) 3216 4151.

ATHERTON (Tablelands)

Cnr. Alice & Jack Sts. 10.00am & 6.00pm.

IPSWICH

Cnr Limestone & Gordon Sts. 9.30am, 10.00am & 6.30pm.

Forest Hill: Church St, 9.00am.

Office: (07) 3281 7201, Fax: (07) 3202 2571.

MACGREGOR

268 Padstow Rd. Eight Mile Plains 9.00am.

Pastor Ross Wilson (07) 3272 6265

MACKAY

Cnr Harvey St. & Evans Ave. Nth Mackay.

8.30am & 7pm. **Sarina:** Sarina Beach Rd.

9.30am each Sunday; Ph. (07) 4957 2835.

MARANOVA

Roma: Queen Street 9.00am.

Rev. Walter Jones (07) 4622 1158

MAROOCHYDORE

45 Okinja Road Alexandra Headland 9.00am

& 7.00pm. Rev. Peter Barber & Church

Office (07) 5443 7073.

Rev. Keith Mayers (07) 5445 9209.

MARYBOROUGH

523 Alice Street. 9.00am (& 5.00pm first

Sunday). Rev. David Newman (07) 4123 1212

MONTO

Bell St. 10.00am. **Abercorn** 11.45am. (1st

Sunday). **Kalpovar:** 5.30pm.

Pastor Elton Wiltshire (07) 4166 1441.

NORTH PINE

57 Old Dayboro Rd. Petrie. 9.00am &

6.30pm. Rev P. Cornford (07) 3285 2104.

REDCLIFFE PENINSULA

WoodyPoint, Cnr. Ellen & Hawthorne Sts.

9.30am. & 6.00pm. **Scarborough:** Jeays St.

8.00am. Rev. Peter Whitney (07) 3284 2578.

ROBINA

Cnr Cottesloe & University Drs.

Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416.

ROCKHAMPTON (St Andrew's)

51 Denham St. (cnr Alma Lne) 9.00am. &

6.00pm. Rev C. Kennedy (07) 4922 8241.

ROCKHAMPTON (John Knox)

Rundle St. 10.00 am. & 7.30 pm.

Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)

(07) 4922 1540 (A/H).

ROCKHAMPTON (St Stephen's)

Burnett St. Nth Rockhampton, 8.30am.

Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)

(07) 4922 1540 (A/H).

Mt Morgan: St Enoch's, East St. 4.00pm.

Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)

(07) 4922 1540 (A/H).

SANDGATE

Loudon St. 9.00am & 6.00pm.

Rev. D.K. Ashman (07) 3269 1231

SHAILER PARK/CORNUBIA

99 Bromley St. **Cornubia.** 10.00am &

6.00pm. Rev. Don Geddes (07) 5522 8982.

SPRINGSURE

Charles St. 9.00am.

Emerald: Cnr Ruby & Egerton Sts.,

11.00am.

Rev. B. J. Harrison (07) 4984 1550.

THE GAP

1195 Waterworks Rd, 9.00am.

Rev. Chris Perona (07) 3300 2987

TOOWOOMBA NORTH (St David's)

Mary St. Also at **Geham.**

TOOWOOMBA SOUTH (St John's)

Cnr Cranley & Geddes Sts. 9.30am, 6pm.

Rev Graeme McKay (07) 4635 4560

Murphy's Creek, Thor St 9.30am.

Westbrook, Westbrook Hall, Main St. 9am.

TOWNSVILLE (Willows)

26 Carthew St. Kirwan 9.30am, 11.00am &

6.30pm. Rev. David McDougall (07) 4723 1232.

TOWNSVILLE (St Andrew's)

113 Wills St. City. 9.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Peter Barber (07) 4771 2460.

Ass. Rev. Kwang-Ho Song (07) 4778 3823.

WEST TOOWOOMBA

Cnr Greenwattle & South Sts. 7.45am,

9.30am & 5.45pm. Rev. R. Sondergeld

(07) 4633 4000 (H), (07) 4633 4188 (O).

WINDSOR

Maygar St. 8.30am. **Wilston:** Macgregor St.

10.15am. **Newmarket:** Wilmington St.

6.00pm. Rev. Stuart Atkinson (07) 3356 4124

PARA HILLS

174 Maxwell Rd. 10.45 am.

Rev Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841

PENOLA

Portland St. 9.30am. Rev. Alan Clarkson (08)

9739 6490. Also **Dergholm, Kalangadoo**

PORT AUGUSTA

Jervois St. 10.00 am.

Barry Rossiter (08) 8642 2059.

SEACLIFF

Kauri Pde. **Seacliff.** 9.30am.

Rev. S. Slucki (08) 8296 1581.

WHYALLA

28 Ramsay St. 10.00 am.

S/Clerk H. Mashford (08) 8645 0818.

I.Mod. Rev. Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841.

western australia

BASSENDAN

14-16 Broadway. 9.30am.

Rev. Ross Fraser (08) 9248 3252.

BICTON

Harris St. & View Tce. 9.30am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Andrew Robinson (08) 9339 3542

FREMANTLE (Scots)

90 South Tce. Worship & Sunday School

10.00am. Rev. Stuart Bonnington

(08) 9398 1304 Off. (08) 9336 6542

MANDURAH

Cnr Sutton and Gibson St 10:00am

Rev. Paul Bloomfield (08) 9319 0706.

WEST LEEDERVILLE (Henderson Memorial)

Cnr Kimberly & Ruislip Sts. 10.30am.

English & Japanese Service 1.00pm.

Rev. Steve Young (08) 9448 8755.

south australia

ADELAIDE (St Andrew's)

92-98 Archer St. North Adelaide. 10.30 am.

Rev. Chris ten Broeke.

Session Clerk Mr D. Niven (08) 8381 4615.

ELIZABETH

106 Goodman Rd, Elizabeth South. 9.30am.

Rev. KKevin Stow (08) 8284 1719. Session

Clerk: Mr Bob Arstall (08) 8825 5226.

LARGS NORTH

Brenda Terrace. 11.00am.

Rev. Raymond Brewer (08) 8263 9692.

MILLICENT

Cnr Fifth & Sixth Sts. 10.30 am.

Rev. Alan Clarkson (08) 9739 6490.

Also **Rendelsham**

MT BARKER

36 Hutchison St. 10.00 am.

Pastor Robert Finster (08) 8391 2270.

MT GAMBIER

Allison St. 10.00 am. 5.30 pm. Also **Allendale,**

Nelson (Vic). Rev Gary Ware (08) 8723 9028.

NARACOOORTE

Church St. 10.00am.

Rev. Andrew Gall (08) 8762 1035.

NORWOOD (St Giles)

79 The Parade. 9.15am & 7.00pm.

Rev. Dr Reg Mathews (08) 8395 7841

tasmania

CORNERSTONE (Hobart) 10.00am.

"The Philip Smith Centre", 2 Edward St,

The Glebe. Mount Stuart 10.00am:

Mount Stuart Hall, Byard St, Mount Stuart.

Rev. David Jones (03) 6223 4701.

CROSSROADS 5.30pm.

"The Philip Smith Centre", 2 Edward St, The

Glebe. H.M. Dan Shephard (03) 6234 8207.

DEVONPORT (St Columba's)

13 Edward St. 10.00am. **Don:** Waverley Rd.

2.00pm (1st & 3rd Sundays).

Rev. Steve Warwick (03) 6424 6066

HOBART (St John's)

10.00am & 6.30pm. 188 Macquarie St.

(03) 6223 7213.

Rev. Robert White (03) 6229 7657

Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

LAUNCESTON (St Andrew's)

Civic Square. 10.00 am & 5.00 pm.

Church Office: (03) 6331 5412

Rev. Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315 412

MONTROSE

Cnr. Islington Rd. & Walker St. 10.00 am.

Mod. Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

RIVERSIDE

Eden St. 10.45am. **Glengarry:** 9.15am.

Frankford H'way. **Winkleigh:** 9.15am, 2nd

Sunday. Rev. Norman Shellard (03) 6327 2967

ROKEBY

Presby. Community Church, Tollard 9.30am

& 6.00pm. Clerk David Turner (03) 6247 7971.

SCOTTSDALE

George St. 11.00am. **Bridport:** Westwood St.

9.00am. Pastor Greg Munro (03) 6352 2527.

STANLEY (St James)

Fletcher St. 10.30am.

I.M. Rev. Steve Warwick (03) 6424 6066.

ULVERSTONE (St Andrew's)

65 Main Rd. 10.00am.

Rev. Charlie Kennedy 0400 228 241.

WEST TAMAR (Auld Kirk)

Sidmouth 10.00am and Mole Creek 2.00pm.

Clerk: Steve Buckland (03) 6396 3213.

To register your church in this section of AP is an easy, low cost exercise.

Facsimile the AP office on: (03) 9723 9685

or E-mail us at: aus-pres@bigpond.net.au

The Annual Fees are:

Congregations under 50 \$45.00 plus GST

Congregations 51 -99 \$55.00 plus GST

Congregations 100 or more \$65.00 plus GST

DAY 5

A sanctified heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:33-40

THE POINT The temptation to seek pleasure and fulfilment in the things of this world will always be with us, right to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. Although we know from (often bitter) experience that they are generally “worthless”, and even destructive, we still need God’s help to avoid falling into their trap. The principal way God provides this help is through His written Word.

THE PARTICULARS

• The words of Scripture are of no value in shaping our lives unless God Himself teaches, enlightens and directs us through them.

- The outcome of the Holy Spirit’s ministry to us through the words of Scripture is wholehearted obedience and joy.
- Reading and meditating on the Scriptures turns our hearts/eyes away from the attractions of the world and towards the Lord.
- Scripture is a powerful antidote and cleansing agent for when we are feeling weakened and stained by the world. It reminds us of how our sin and disgrace are removed and we are made whole by the righteousness supplied to us through Christ.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• What “selfish gain”/“worthless things” are you finding particularly attractive at the moment? – Take it to the Lord in prayer!

DAY 6

A confident heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:41-48

THE POINT In Acts 4:29 the disciples asked the Lord for “great boldness” to speak out His word before the authorities who were opposing and persecuting them. Their confidence in God’s Word (they had just quoted Psalm 2 concerning Jesus!) gave them courage to “answer the one who taunts me” (42) and to “speak of your statutes before kings” (46), reflecting the sentiments of this part of Psalm 119. “I’m not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend His cause; maintain the glory of His cross and honour all His laws.”

THE PARTICULARS

• God fulfils the promise of His covenant love and salvation in the coming of Jesus, the one who is the LORD (Jehovah –

compare Isaiah 44:6 with Revelation 1:17-18). Knowing this gives us confidence to speak out against all who deny and reject Him.

- God’s “word of truth” is the absolute foundation of everything we believe. If He takes that away from us we have nothing.
- When we realise the foundational importance and preeminence of God’s Word it becomes our delight and liberating power.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What part does the Bible play in your witnessing for Christ?
- How can your witness become more confident and effective?

DAY 7

A remembering heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:49-56

THE POINT The psalmist finds himself in a world where wickedness reigns. God’s Word has been forgotten by the society in general and the few who still seek to live by it are openly ridiculed. It’s not unlike our own times. He teaches us to take comfort in the Lord who has committed His promises to writing. They now stand firm as a record, a reminder to both the Lord and His people.

THE PARTICULARS

- God encourages us to remind Him of the promises He has given us in His Word and which are the basis of our hope and comfort.
- The mocking that comes from unbelievers (or even from nominal Christians who deny the authority and infallibility of

the Bible) ought never to deter us from standing firm for the truth.

- It is not unnatural for Christians to feel indignation and horror when the clear teaching of the Bible is rejected and opposed.
- God’s Word might be “ancient”, but it has stood the test of time.
- God’s Word and character are the refuge and song of the Christian.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• In what specific matters does our society reject God’s Word and ridicule those who uphold it? Use this section of Psalm 119 as a prayer as you grapple with these issues in your daily walk.

DAY 8

A determined heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:57-64

THE POINT The psalmist has made a positive, conscious decision to make God’s Word the basis and guide for every part of his life. He has reflected on everything he does and has promised to bring everything into conformity with God’s ways without hesitation. He has made this his firm resolve even if he is severely persecuted for it. The blessings that flow from this action are to know God as his eternal inheritance, to be confident of His covenant love, and to experience the close fellowship of other believers.

THE PARTICULARS

• Obedience to God’s Word gives us assurance of the inheritance (“portion”) that He promises us through Christ (cf Matt.

25:31ff).

- God calls us to seek His face with all our heart (cf Deut. 6:4ff).
- We must let nothing delay us in obeying God’s Word (Lk 9:57f).
- Bringing our lives into conformity with God’s Word doesn’t just happen automatically. We need to make a concerted and constant effort (even by getting up at midnight if necessary!).
- Following God’s way makes us friends with fellow-believers from every part of the earth because it is filled with His love.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• How does the psalmist differ from the man in James 1:23-24?

DAY 9

A chastened heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:65-72

THE POINT When the Lord disciplines us we can react in one of two ways. An arrogant man will turn against God and learn nothing. He will become more entrenched in his ungodly way of thinking. A humble man will praise God for His goodness and the love that inspired the discipline (cf Hebrews 12:6). He will then be more determined to learn the valuable lessons God intended to teach.

THE PARTICULARS

- Although we are rightly only God's servants He has promised to do for us what is good. Obedience brings its own blessings.
- God's Word enables us to discern what is good, as opposed

to the ways of the world which only lead us into error and strife.

- God uses affliction (sickness, disaster, setback) as a teaching device, meant only for our ultimate good (see Hebrews 12:4-11).
- Discipline is good because it keeps us from going astray.
- The Scriptures are the very words from God's mouth to us His children – they ought to be our most treasured possession.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How do you react when something goes wrong in your life? Do you blame God? Do you question His goodness? Do you delve deeper into His Word to see what lesson(s) you need to learn?

DAY 10

A submissive heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:73-80

THE POINT The Hebrew letter that begins each verse in this section is the tiniest one which Jesus said would not disappear from the Law until everything was accomplished (Matthew 5:18). Read these 8 verses again as if you were Jesus. He was God's perfect man, reflecting His image without blemish. His mission on earth was to submit to the Father's will, to live by His Word. All God's people rejoice to see Him. It pleased God to afflict Him for us (cf Isaiah 53:10). He was ill-treated without cause. All who fear God turn to Him. He alone gives the true meaning to Scripture.

THE PARTICULARS

- God made us; He knows what's best for us; He has revealed

it in His Word; His Holy Spirit enables us to understand His Word.

- We are most effective as ambassadors for Christ when we are living in total obedience to His commandments (cf John 15:7-8).
- Affliction is God's loving discipline. Through it we learn both His ways and the comfort He is able to give us (cf 2 Cor. 1:3ff).
- If wrongly accused or mistreated we must remain true to God's Word, leaving Him to vindicate us in due course (1 Peter 2:20ff).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do you find it hard to be Christ-like when treated unjustly?

DAY 11

A waiting heart

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:81-88

THE POINT Although God promises never to test us beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Peter 2:9) it is a common Christian experience to feel like the psalmist in this section. He knew he was safe because he knew God's Word is trustworthy. But just how long would he have to wait? How long must he endure the injustice of persecution to within an inch of his life? It is Bible passages like this that help us to get our own perspective right.

THE PARTICULARS

- The psalmist is not afraid to admit he's struggling with God's seemingly unfair providence although he firmly trusts His word.

• The psalmist doesn't doubt his ultimate salvation; it's the waiting for it he finds difficult. "Patience" is the "fruit of the Spirit"!

- The psalmist was aware that his body was cracking up like an old wineskin that had hung above the fire too long; but his mind was still alert with the Word he had hidden in his heart (v.11).
- The psalmist knew that the only source of his life was the God whose covenant love and revealed truth sustained him daily.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What do you do when you are feeling discouraged and it seems God has forgotten you? Do you seek comfort in His Word?

DAY 12

God's magnificent Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:89-96

THE POINT The God of Creation, our God, is a God who communicates. He is inseparable from His Word. He spoke and everything came into being from nothing. He made us in His image and communicates with us in words, through His Word. Jesus is the Word made flesh, God communicating Himself to us in human form (John 1:1-14). So the psalmist reminds us that God's Word is eternal, that it is established at the heart of everything that is, and that its perfection exceeds any created thing. It is no wonder that he delights in it and sees it as the means by which he is preserved.

THE PARTICULARS

- God's Word, and therefore His faithfulness, last forever; God

never changes (see Isaiah 40:8, Matt. 5:18, 24:35, 1 Peter 1:24f).

- Once God's Word has become an established part of our daily lives we realise how lost and dysfunctional we'd be without it.
- Just as God communicates to us through His Word, so His Word becomes the means by which we are assured we belong to Him.
- God's Word is infallible – we must always submit to it as such.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are you fully committed to the infallibility and authority of the Scriptures? Are they at the heart of all your thinking and doing?

DAY 13

God's nourishing Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:97-104

THE POINT Man was made in the image of God and given a physical body in which to live on the earth in time and space.

He was given wonderful, satisfying physical food to sustain his body, and communication with God through His word for his spiritual nourishment. To develop as a whole person we need both these sources of nourishment. Jesus confirmed this when He was tempted by Satan to make the thrust of His mission the physical aspect: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread". He replied, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4, Deut. 8:3). The psalmist knew this reality.

For him, the daily intake of God's Word was as necessary, as

helpful and as satisfying as eating.

THE PARTICULARS

- The psalmist loved God's Word so much that it occupied his thought life throughout the whole day. God's Word was his "pantry/frig" for spiritual snacks, insight, wisdom and guidance.
- With this "diet" he eclipsed his "personal trainers" (cf Daniel 1)!
- He not only read and meditated on God's Word – he acted on it.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What occupies your thought life mostly throughout each day? To what do you turn for inspiration? or strength? or pleasure?

DAY 14

God's GPS Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:105-112

THE POINT Many aspects of modern life are very confusing and we feel very insecure about the future. What career should I follow? Whom should I marry? How many children should we have? Where should we live? Where should I go to church? Should I spend money on this trip? this car? this "luxury"? Our decisions can have far-reaching, life-changing consequences. Some of us may even be wishing we could go back in time and decide differently. It seems the vast majority of us now have a GPS fitted in our car to deliver us easily, efficiently and unruffled to our destination. God's Word is life's perfect GPS – all we have to do is follow!

THE PARTICULARS

- God's Word can light up the path in front of us so that we

don't stumble or fall into traps being set for us by our adversary, the devil (or any of his human agents), determined to trip us up.

- The psalmist had already resolved firmly to make God's Word his guide; at each of life's turns he did not have to decide "Will I follow what it says?", only, "How will I follow what it says?"
- With God's Word as my guide I can "take my life in my hands"!

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Where would you place a GPS in your car? If God's Word is to be an effective GPS for your life how often must you look at it?

DAY 15

God's reliable Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:113-120

THE POINT Man's quest for knowledge, for understanding the meaning of life and the universe, has achieved some great scientific advances. But none of this has enabled us to bring peace and prosperity to our world – in fact, we seem to be getting worse. Our theories and schemes and plans are so unreliable; the "human" factor always ruins them. God's Word, however, remains wholly reliable.

THE PARTICULARS

- Even our best mates can let us down (or we can let them down) through inconsistency; but God's Word never lets us down.
- We can set up all sorts of mechanisms to protect us against the pressures of life, to give us some sense of security in a hos-

tile world, but in the end they always fail. God alone is a reliable refuge, and He protects us through faithfulness to His promises.

- Men may deceive themselves by trying to justify unbelief, but in the end it won't hold up and they are subject to God's rejection.
- Persistent obedience to God's commandments often requires dissociating ourselves entirely from those opposed to God's ways.
- The better we know God's Word the more we are in awe of it.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- In what ways is secular humanism "double-minded" and "vain"?

DAY 16

God's divisive Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:121-128

THE POINT (Post-)Modern man can't tolerate intolerance.

He's absolutely sure there can be no absolutes. He has a black-and-white belief that there can only ever be different shades of grey. He knows he is right when he says that there is no "right" and "wrong", just my opinion and your opinion; what's "right" for me need not be "right" for you. In stark contrast, the man of God acknowledges that the God of Creation has revealed Himself clearly and infallibly in the Bible and defines what is right and what is wrong, what is acceptable to Him and what courts His wrath. It is understandable, therefore, why the world hates and opposes the man of God (cf John 15:18-25). But God's Word is our defence.

THE PARTICULARS

- God has promised to protect us; we can trust Him to do so.
- God who has spoken in His Word enables us to understand it.
- As we become more committed to, and impassioned with, God's revealed truth, so we will loathe the sin in society around us.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Verse 126 is a very appropriate prayer for us to pray today. If God did act, what might the outcome be for our society? for the Church (cf 1 Peter 4:16-19)? in your life (cf Hebrews 4:12-13)?

DAY 17

God's captivating Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:129-136

THE POINT There is a beautiful structure to this section of Psalm 119. See if you can follow the steps verse by verse: since God's Word is wonderful it urges obedience; obedience leads to understanding (cf Jn 7:17); understanding inspires devotion; devotion reveals the need for mercy; the gratitude for mercy gives a new desire to be rid of sin; to achieve this requires a release from the pressure of a sinful, hostile world; such a release is met by the approval and presence of God Himself; at this climax point there is the realisation of how God feels about holiness, His Law, and sin. The psalmist wants God's Word to carry him on this upward path.

THE PARTICULARS

- God's Word is a "wonder" (same word as used in Isaiah 9:6).
- Love for God's Word leads to hatred of sin and a greater desire for holiness; they all increase or decrease simultaneously.
- It is God's nature to show mercy to those in His covenant love.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Is your daily Bible reading a chore or eagerly sought delight?
- Are you captivated by God's Word as you read it each day? Does this lead you to greater obedience to it, understanding of it, a desire for holiness and a hatred of the sin around you?

DAY 18

God's righteous Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:137-144

THE POINT The key to this section is verses 137 and 142.

The Hebrew word for right(eous)(ness) begins with the letter that opens each of the 8 verses. God's righteousness is fundamental to His essential character – it does not, and cannot, change. Therefore God's Word is always true – it cannot be otherwise (cf Romans 3:4).

THE PARTICULARS

- The modern tendency to question the authority and authenticity of parts or all of Scripture, submitting it to the authority of science, or human philosophy, or popular opinion, or a sinful self-serving lifestyle, is totally foreign to Scripture itself. God

not only graciously gives us His Word, He authenticates it to us.

- Upholding the authority and infallibility of Scripture in a sinful world, where arrogant man usurps his Creator, has never been an easy task – it was wearing the psalmist out. Take heart!
- When the world is despising us as "mindless fundamentalists" because we believe the Bible is true we can find comfort in it.
- We delight in God's Word because it gives us life (cf Matt. 4:4).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What is wrong with the view that the Bible has lots of good teaching in it (the bits we like!) but that other parts are wrong?

DAY 19

God's saving Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:145-160

THE POINT In spite of the confidence he has been expressing up to this point the psalmist is still struggling against the strong tide of popular opinion that disregards a Book that means so much to him. We can readily identify with how he feels because of the way the media today treats the Bible and those who stake everything on its truth. The unjust (and even illogical and unscientific) bias that is used to influence society against God's truth can be very discouraging. It is not life-threatening for most of us (yet) but it was for the psalmist and it was for the Reformers, and it is in some countries today.

Rather than deterring the psalmist from his commitment to God's Word the situation only drove him deeper into it

because it was all tied up with his salvation.

THE PARTICULARS

- Crying out to God in prayer, obeying His Commandments, trusting in His promises, and relying on His redeeming love and grace to save us, are the basic ingredients of the pilgrim's life on earth.
- Our salvation is through Christ, the Living Word; but we only know of Him through His written Word. We grow in our walk with Him, and become more like Him, through feeding on His Word.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Has Psalm 119 been challenging your devotional life? ... So...?

DAY 20

God's sustaining Word

THE PASSAGE

PSALM 119:161-176

THE POINT In these final 2 sections the psalmist continues the theme of salvation taken up in the previous 2 we looked at yesterday.

THE PARTICULARS

- The psalmist is more overwhelmed by God's Word than he is even by the treatment he receives from unjust tyrants.
- God's Word is like a discovered treasure (cf Matthew 13:45f).
- God's Word is the psalmist's constant, all-day joy and peace.
- Three things inspire obedience to God's commands: the hope of salvation; a love of them; knowing nothing escapes His notice.
- More than anything the psalmist seeks a deeper understand-

ing of God's Word and the experience of His promised deliverance.

- God's Word produces in us a response of praise.
- Although salvation is by grace alone, there's a close connection between longing for salvation and delighting in God's Law (175).
- Psalm 119 began with the blessing on the blameless and finishes with a repentant sinner's cry for mercy. The more involved we get with the Bible the more aware we are of our need for grace.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- The law teaches us how to live – and shows us our need of Jesus.



Across Australia

MBE arrives posthumously

The late **Rev. F.W.F. White** was made a Member of the British Empire by King George VI in 1946 for gallant and distinguished service in Burma, his family has just discovered. His daughter, **Mrs Marion Andrews**, has been researching her father's war service and received an email from the **Gurkha Museum** in England asking, "Did you know your father was awarded an M.B.E?"

She pursued the matter, and got a letter from **Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Matheson** postmarked **Buckingham Palace**, confirming the award and saying authorities had been unable to trace his whereabouts.

In 1943, the commander of the **British Military Mission** in Chungking, China approached **Bishop Frank Houghton**, general director of the **China Inland Mission**, asking for two of his men who could assist the war effort with knowledge of language and culture. Missionaries **Frank White** from Australia and **Ted Holmes** from Canada volunteered and were seconded to the Indian Army. Frank White was made a captain in the 6th Gurkha Rifles. For more details, visit <http://mychinamystery.blogspot.com/>

Rev. F.W.F. White served the Presbyterian Church in Queensland and Tasmania and at Inverell and Walcha in New South Wales in retirement. He was **Moderator of Queensland** in 1980-81.

Presbyterians honoured

Three people with Presbyterian connections were among those given awards in the **Queen's Birthday 2009 Honours List**.

Member (AM) of the Order of Australia: **Emeritus Professor Bruce Edgar Mansfield**, NSW, for service to education as an administrator and academic in the fields of theology and history. Professor Edgar served as chairman of council at the **United Theological College**, 1997-2002; council member, 1988-2002; and assisted the college to amalgamate with **St Mark's Anglican College**, Canberra, to form the **School of Theology at Charles Sturt University**. He was also a member of council at **Knox Grammar School**, 1975-

1989, and a member of **Pymble Uniting** (formerly Presbyterian) Church, for more than 60 years. He is elder emeritus there.

Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia: Mrs Lucy Kathleen Germon, NSW, for service to the community of **Gloucester**. Mrs Germon has been an active member of various local organisations since the 1950s. Her roles have included president, **Quota International**, Gloucester, 2004-2005, and member, for 27 years; inaugural member, **Gloucester Westpac Rescue Helicopter Support Group**, 1998-2009, and member of the **PWA (Presbyterian Women's Association)** and **Gloucester Meals on Wheels**.

Mr Ronald Wilson Pilkington, Qld, for service to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. Mr Pilkington served as **moderator, Presbyterian Church of Queensland**, 1991-1992 and 2004-2005, as a member since 1970, treasurer, 1987-2004, elder, since 1956; chairman, **Finance and Administration Board**, 1985-2004, and as a member of **Commission of Assembly**, 1985-1986 and since 1996. Other roles include director, **Prescare**, 1999-2004, director, **Fairholme College**, 1987-2004, director, **Ann Street Presbyterian Church Trust** and **Peirson Memorial Trust**, since 1982, lay preacher, Ann Street Congregation; hospital visitor; pastoral visitor and Bible Study Leader, and member of the **finance committee, Presbyterian Church of Australia**.

Rethink abortion: PCA

The **Presbyterian Church of Australia's Church and Nation Committee** has appealed to the **Federal Government** to re-think its views towards abortion.

Moderator-General Robert Benn, said the church deeply regretted and was profoundly disappointed by the Government's decision to overturn the family planning guideline established by the previous government, which directed overseas development assistance program dollars to promote pre and neo-natal life and not in utero death.

"We appreciate both the Prime Minister's personal expression of opposition to this guideline change and the Foreign Minister's stated preference that funding be directed to support the living," he said.

"Nevertheless, we believe that those who will benefit are those with a vested financial/ideological interest in tendering for and providing termination services

and not those vulnerable women and families to whom we now export the temptation ("choice") to opt for a "quick fix" solution to their "unwanted" (or surprise) pregnancy.

The committee has written to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

The Pulse

Becroft centenary

Becroft Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 100th year but in fact, the congregation is a little older than the church building.

The first service was held on April 5 1903 at Ravenhurst School Hall, with 29 people attending. It was during that first year that the present site in Mary Street was purchased for 50 pounds, but the church building wasn't completed and opened until February 13 1909.

The Becroft Presbyterian Church has been served by nine ministers in its 100 years – **J.A.R. Brotchie**, **A.M. Ogilvie**, **S. Watson**, **H. Durbin**, **H. Perkins**, **J. Mullan**, **D. Robson**, **M. Levin** and now **Paul Cooper**.

PTC enrolments up

Enrolments at the **Presbyterian Theological Centre**, Sydney, have increased by more than 17 per cent over last year and the classrooms are often close to overflowing.

More than 160 students are enrolled for some form of formal study.

Forty students and faculty and their wives and husbands attended a retreat at **Cronulla Presbyterian Church** on Saturday March 7 and the graduation and commencement service was held at **St James Church, Burwood**, on Wednesday March 10. **Theological Education Committee convener Robert Benn** spoke to new students.

The Pulse

Church opposes Easter gambling

Moderator-General Robert Benn joined the chorus of opposition to **Tab Corp's** plan to open its outlets in Victoria and NSW on **Good Friday** this year.

Mr Benn said he was saddened to hear that gambling was to be allowed on a day which had been set aside as a public holiday in recognition of the death of Christ.

"This, along with news that around 80 stores including **Myer**, **David Jones**, **Kmart**, **Freedom** and **Officeworks** are seeking permission to trade on **Easter**

Sunday and Boxing Day, sends a message that Good Friday is just the same as any other day of the week,” he said.

Mr Benn congratulated **Victorian Premier John Brumby** for identifying Good Friday as a sacred day.



Around the World

Reformed bodies plan merger

Coinciding with the 500th anniversary of 16th century reformer **John Calvin**, a meeting between leaders of the world’s two largest Reformed church bodies was held last month to plan their merger.

The executive committees of the 75 million-member **World Alliance of Reformed Churches** and the 12 million-member **Reformed Ecumenical Council** convened in **Geneva**, where Calvin promoted the Protestant Reformation and urged visible unity among the reformers.

“This move towards unity is a fitting tribute to Calvin by his modern day heirs,” said **Peter Borgdorff**, president of the REC, in a statement.

The bodies discussed the structure and budget for the new global communion – which will be known as the **World Communion of Reformed Churches** – as well as plans for the **Uniting General Council** in June 2010, when the merger is expected to be formally approved.

Christian Post

Torture in China

A U.S. government body cited increased harassment, imprisonment and torture of members of unregistered religious groups in China last year, which a Chinese official roundly denied. After the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** last month recommended China remain on the **U.S. Department of State’s** list of the world’s worst violators of religious freedom, a spokesman for China’s **Foreign Ministry** said USCIRF’s report was “an attempt to smear China”.

The commission acknowledged that “the freedom to participate in officially-sanctioned religious activity increased in many areas of the country,” but noted that abuses of members of unregistered religious groups had extended to a small handful of lawyers who dared to defend

them. In at least 17 provinces, some 764 Protestant leaders and house church members were arrested last year, 35 of whom were sentenced to prison for a year or more, the report said.

According to the state department, the total number of Protestant house church members and “underground” Catholics arrested last year may be in the thousands. Religious freedom also deteriorated significantly in **Uyghur Muslim** and **Tibetan Buddhist** regions over the past year, according to the commission report.

Compass Direct

Nigeria ‘among worst’

The annual report by the **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom** designated Nigeria as a country of particular concern for “tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of religion”.

According to a media release from **International Christian Concern**, Nigeria has been plagued by religious violence since 1999 when Sharia law was introduced in the northern part of the country.

ICC says that since then the Christian minority in northern Nigeria has been more severely persecuted by Islamic extremists. Muslim radicals have been killing Christians, burning down churches, and forcing Christians to flee their homes. ICC suggests that authorities in Nigeria have failed to stem this recurring violence.

It says that the report by the commission expressed concern that “years of inaction by Nigeria’s federal, state and local governments have created a climate of impunity, resulting in thousands of deaths.”

The commission report indicates the role of countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan in fueling the violence by building mosques and Islamic religious schools in which an extreme version of Islam is preached.

Ready for revival

The new president of the **Baptist Union of Great Britain** has challenged Baptists to prepare for the revival of the church in Britain. The **Rev. Kingsley Appiagyei** was inducted in his new role before some 2000 Baptists at the national assembly last month.

The assembly ties in with celebrations taking place this year to mark 400 years since the formation of the first ever

Baptist church in Amsterdam.

Reflecting on the place of the church in today’s society, Mr Kingsley said in his presidential address: “Unfortunately today, in our own nation, the church has almost been taken captive. Anything today that is distinctly Christian is now regarded as offensive to non-Christians and therefore must be removed.”

Mr Kingsley offered a message of hope, however, telling the UK’s Baptists to become “an expectant community... There will be a revival and a fresh awakening.”

Christian Today

Chinese leaders forgive

Eighty Chinese Christian leaders have released an unprecedented statement on the June 4 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, calling for forgiveness, repentance, truth, justice and reconciliation.

In a news release, **ChinaAid** said the majority of the signatories were directly involved with the students’ movement. Up to 3000 were killed when the Government sent in tanks to kill demonstrators, and more than 10,000 members of the student movement were later sentenced to death.

ChinaAid said in their statement, the Christian leaders articulate how the massacre “awakened our sense of social justice as intellectuals and shattered our dreams of utopia on earth”. Through this crisis, they saw they were not “entirely innocent bystanders of the sins and tragedy”.

The signatories also urge Chinese authorities to investigate the massacre; fully disclose the truth; find the perpetrators; commemorate the massacre and compensate and care for the victims’ families.

Assist

Talk about money: EA

Churches are failing their members and communities by avoiding talking openly about money and debt, says the **Evangelical Alliance**, which organised a seminar on the topic last month with input from **Credit Action** and the **Church of England**.

The Alliance wants to equip churches to avoid shying away from money taboos and to address financial issues directly, particularly in the current financial climate. The sessions were led by **Chris Tapp**, director of Credit Action and **John Preston**, the **National Stewardship and Resources Officer** for the Church of England.

Chris Tapp commented: "Money is generally seen as a very private subject and this all too often leads to reluctance on the part of churches in discussing financial matters. However it is an absolutely crucial issue for Christians to tackle, especially today when so many in our churches and communities are struggling desperately with money and debt issues."

Christian Today

Stop fighting, churches told

A Church of Scotland body claims that Scottish public life would benefit if congregational conflict could be overcome and admits that churches need to become part of the solution rather than the problem when it comes to angry disputes.

Following initial discussions on how to resolve conflict in congregations, the major Presbyterian denomination's **Ministries Council** says a far wider vision has started to emerge as to how men and women may address their own inner conflicts as well as those which affect their common life and that of their communities.

The council's report to last month's **General Assembly** conceded that currently Christian communities can be places of dispute and anger rather than places of peacemaking and reconciliation. One example was arguments over sexuality and gay ministers.

Sri Lanka seeks help

An outreach of the church in **Sri Lanka** has been approached by the government there to help provide assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the long-running conflict which recently ended in a government victory over the rebel **Tamil Tigers**.

According to an email report, obtained by *ASSIST News*, from **Karen Dey** who heads up **New Living Ministries International**, camps in Jaffna were overrun by refugees fleeing the conflict.

"We were contacted by the local authorities in charge of the camps requesting urgent assistance into the camps. There are now 12 camps with between 200 and 1700 people each," she said.

"Many of these people have been hiding in bunkers for months and are traumatised, exhausted and severely malnourished. The camps are severely overcrowded and unable to meet the basic food and shelter needs of those who are arriving. Most of the camps are without

decent water and sanitation facilities. Those detained in these camps, which are surrounded by barbed-wire fences, are denied their liberty or freedom. They are not allowed to leave the camps, and visiting is severely restricted. By God's grace our church has been able to enter many of these camps now."



On the Agenda

MP: Renounce apostasy code

By Barney Zwartz

A Federal MP has called on Australian imams to renounce the death penalty for Muslims who convert to other faiths. In a speech to Parliament **Luke Simpkins**, the **Liberal MP for Cowan** in Western Australia, said any religion that promoted or justified the persecution of apostates (people who renounce their religion) could not be considered true or genuine.

"It is neither right nor legitimate for any religion to justify threats, punishments and persecutions of those that choose to leave one religion for another."

Saying it was surprising how often people in his electorate raised concerns about Sharia law with him, Mr Simpkins asked about the attitude of Australian Muslim leaders. "Surely condemnation of such barbarism can be expected?" he said.

He cited many cases in the Middle East of converts to Christianity being killed, including by family members, but not in Australia.

One Muslim leader who did not want to be named said it was an ignorant request and a political stunt. "Is he the arbitrator of true religion or is God? It's in the Koran. He's asking for something that forms the heart of Muslims to change, and that's not going to happen."

He said apostasy to Islam was like treason to a state, with the Koran as the constitution. "The United States has capital punishment for high treason - does that mean it's not a true state? Is he demanding the US change its constitution? Of course not."

However, **Australian Federation of Islamic Councils president Ikebal Patel** said he did not believe sharia dictated the death penalty for apostasy, though it did happen in some countries.

"In Islam there is freedom of choice in

religion. There is no compulsion. Religion is a personal thing, it's your own domain, your personal choice," Mr Patel said.

Crisis boosts child labour

Aid and development agency **World Vision** has warned that the continuing global financial crisis and the damage it is causing local economies is forcing more and more children around the world into the worst forms of child labour.

"Poverty drives people to desperate measures. And in dire situations, children become one of two things: a source of income or a drain on the income," **Jesse Eaves**, World Vision's **policy adviser for children in crisis**, has told *The Christian Post*.

Eaves says that as demand from the West falls and the number of export-driven jobs decreases amid the economic downturn, businesses in countries like Cambodia, India and Thailand are likely to lay off workers without warning, forcing families to find other income sources through their children.

In Cambodia, Eaves noted, 72 per cent of children in brick factories say they are there because their parents cannot afford to buy food. In Phuket, Thailand, World Vision reports a dramatic increase in local and migrant children searching for work in tourist bars and clubs. On the east coast of India, children are making gravel, smashing rocks in temperatures of nearly 40 degrees for up to 16 hours a day.

Already, 126 million children in the world are working in hazardous conditions and 1.2 million are trafficked and exploited every year as child labourers, Eaves says. Sexual exploitation is the most common form of human trafficking followed by forced labour and child soldiers.

Taliban targets Christians

By John Malhotra

The **Taliban** has turned on Christians with a vengeance for the ongoing army offensive against the Islamic militants in Pakistan.

Furious over the US and Pakistan's military operations in Swat Valley, the Taliban attacked a Christian colony, causing fear and panic among its members and forcing them to join 200,000 others fleeing the town.

In Karachi, a growing foothold of the Taliban, there were reports of an attack on

a Christian slum by extremists.

Pastor Salim Sadiq of Holy Spirit Church in Karachi told *Christian Today* that Christian homes were pounded by Islamic extremists who have vowed to avenge for “the suffering of their brotherhood in NWFP area”.

“They barged into our homes shouting ‘death to infidels’ and beat us, hurling murderous threats if we don’t convert to Islam,” Sadiq recalled.

He lamented, “Christians have no voice here. We have been suffering from ages like this under the staunch Muslim militants who rape our daughters, burn our churches and raze down our homes.”

“Although the majority of Muslims need not worry about the military offensive on Taliban, for Christians who are so microscopic and fragile, it is a serious concern, as it will amplify the Taliban and foment dreadful violence on us,” he added.

Sadiq predicts that a violent wave on Christians is imminent.

The Rev Richard D’Souza of St Jude Church in Karachi says “there is a lot of feeling of fear by all the minorities”, according to *The Associated Press*.

After young Christians protested against anti-Christian graffiti on St Jude Church’s walls, 25 men went on the ram-

page, beating Christians, pelting stones and setting fire to homes. An 11-year-old boy was killed during the violence.

“The police never helped. None of us had weapons. The police just stood there,” 26-year-old **Imran Masih**, who spent 10 days in the hospital after a bullet pierced his neck, told *AP*.

‘More anthems, less hugging’

By Anne Thomas

A new survey has suggested that men who go to church would like less hugging and holding hands and more singing of anthems and “proclamational” songs.

A survey of 400 readers of Christian men’s magazine *Sorted* found that 60 per cent of men did not like flowers and embroidered banners in church. Around 52 per cent also said they were not too keen on dancing in church either.

The survey suggested that men were uncomfortable with physical contact such as holding hands and with activities such as sitting in circles to share their feelings.

Almost 60 per cent of the respondents said they enjoyed singing in church, but many added comments saying they preferred anthemic or “proclamational”

songs over emotional love songs.

Sermons and talks were popular with respondents, with 72 per cent saying they were the best part of the service.

Steve Legg, *Sorted* editor and publisher, said, “Jesus recruited a bunch of 12 ordinary blokes before He began his ministry proper. They spent three years together doing stuff. He sat down and ate with them and built relationships,” reports the *Daily Mail*.

Legg said: “I often walk into churches and they are like Laura Ashley showrooms with all these flowers and banners and tissues. Men just don’t feel comfortable with that. Certainly, with the singing, I am fed up with singing these sentimental lovey dovey songs. On the football terraces we are very passionate, chanting and cheering, and we want more songs like that. We want fewer girly songs.”

Sorted provided a list of 10 hymns likely to prove a hit with male worshippers: *Onward Christian Soldiers*; *And Can It Be*; *Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer*; *All People That On Earth Do Dwell*; *Be Thou My Vision*; *How Great Thou Art*; *Amazing Grace*; *Eternal Father, Strong To Save (For Those On Peril On The Sea)*; *Our God Reigns*; *Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind Forgive Our Foolish Ways*.





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Here we stand

Christians must again be ready to battle for religious freedoms in a secular world.

In my previous article, "Freedom under threat" (December 2008), I alerted *AP* readers to the then recently announced Freedom of Religion and Belief in the 21st Century Project (FRB Project) being run by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

In that article I made the point that "the FRB Project offers the church the opportunity to press for genuine freedom of religion in legislation".

In this article I wish to give an update on the FRB Project and also on moves by the Victorian Government to drastically scale back the ability of religious institutions in Victoria, including faith-based schools, to order their affairs consistent with their religious beliefs and practices.

Crowding in on all of this is the National Human Rights Consultation being run by a committee headed by Jesuit priest Frank Brennan. I will have more to say about this consultation and its likely impact in the July *AP*.

The commission received 1937 submissions to the FRB Project, of which 1799 were from individuals. The remaining 138 came from organisations of which 10 described themselves as atheist, humanist or secular, four from Muslim organisations, three from Pagan organisations, two each from Sikhs and Jews, one from Bahais and 91 submissions from Christian organisations. Additionally, Muslim youth groups and the Council of Imams have had a separate point of entry into the FRB Project.

Following the announcement of the FRB Project, with the memory of the failure of the leadership of Victoria's churches to oppose the introduction of Victoria's now notorious religious vilification legislation, church representatives and lawyers working with the Australian Christian Lobby met to identify the main areas of concern and to develop responses that could then be made available to the broadest possible cross-section of Australian churches to help them make submissions.

The large number of church-based submissions to the FRB Project is an indication of the effectiveness of this approach. Having viewed a good many of the submissions, it is fair to say that with



**David
Palmer**

the exception of the Uniting Church submission, a net can be easily thrown over these submissions with respect to the concerns raised and solutions proposed. The list includes the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the standing committee of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia as well as its state bodies, the NSW Council of Churches and the submission from the Ad Hoc Interfaith group in Victoria which was initially drafted by myself and garnered many signatures across the Catholic-Protestant-Orthodox spectrum.

In addition to these submissions, representatives of Church and Nation Committees in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania attended public forums, while in Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, groups of church representatives met for consultations with the researchers appointed to the FRB Project. Paul Sadler, CEO of Presbyterian Aged Care attended the meeting in Sydney while I convened the meeting in Melbourne.

So what kinds of things have the churches been saying to the researchers for the FRB Project and what can we expect to be the outcome?

Before answering that question, we must first consider the situation in Victoria where a review of the exception clauses in the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 is concurrently under way, with implications for the law in other states.

Every state has an equal opportunity

act, in some states also known as the anti-discrimination act. The purpose of the Victorian Act – and those of other states will be similar – is to promote recognition and acceptance of everyone's right to equality of opportunity, to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people and to provide redress for people who have been discriminated against, including sexually harassed. In the Victorian legislation there is a long list of attributes on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited. Included in the list are such matters as a person's sex, marital status, religious belief or activity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Everyone knows that churches, Christian schools and other faith-based institutions engage in discrimination. Examples include male-only clergy in a number of churches, unmarried clergy in the case of the Catholic Church, the requirement of Christian faith for employment in a Christian school, and so on.

So how can this happen? The answer lies in the so-called exception clauses contained in the various state Equal Opportunity Acts. The Victorian Act has three such clauses – sections 75-77. These apply to religious bodies, including the training of their ministers, to educational institutions "conducted in accordance with religious beliefs" and, at a personal level, to the provision of goods and services.

In other words, as an example, the exception clauses allow Christian schools to foster an educational environment that reflects the choices made by families to have their values and beliefs supported. Teachers not only teach the particulars of their subject but they are also role models, along with all the school's staff, in demonstrating the value and relevance of the religion itself. For these reasons, it is highly relevant to their employment that they share and faithfully practise the religious beliefs of the school and can model these to students. In this way, the exceptions provided in the legislation protect religious freedom for the school, the parents and their children.

It goes without saying that many groups are deeply opposed to religious

Everyone knows that churches, Christian schools and other faith-based institutions engage in discrimination.

bodies and faith-based schools possessing the right to discriminate on the basis of religious faith: secularists, atheists, teacher unions, the gay and lesbian lobby, the various Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissions, as well as large sections of the media and academia. Victoria may be the epicentre for such opposition but the opposition is undoubtedly present in all states.

So, the question becomes, can the exceptions be removed or trimmed down? The answer is yes, they can.

In Victoria a committee of the Parliament now has before it a list of options which would allow the Government to propose changes to the exception clauses, for example removing the exception that allows a Christian school to have a Christian-only employment policy.

It is particularly galling that the justification for such proposals to limit these freedoms largely lies in the application of the scrofulous section 7 of the recently enacted Victorian Charter of Rights. It is worth pointing out this is the charter that many are now proposing as the model for an Australian Charter of Rights. I will develop this point in my second article.

This brings us back to the FRB Project.

What we argued for in the Presbyterian Church of Australia submission was:

- an affirmation, on the basis of our Christian heritage, that we believe strongly in the principle of freedom of religious persons and groups to put their religious beliefs into practice.
- attention drawn to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) as providing, within clearly defined and objective limitations, strong endorsement for freedom of conscience, thought and religion, and in particular the recognition of the communal nature of religion, the right of religious persons to engage in the public domain, and the right of parents "to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their

own convictions".

- objections were raised against recent Victorian legislation that infringes the right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion.

- rejection of a 1998 HEREOC proposal for a religious freedom act.

- rejection of any suggestion that Muslims obtain preferential treatment not available to other immigrant groups – freedom of religion should apply indiscriminately to all people of any religion.

- a request that current exemptions for faith communities and faith-based schools from anti-discrimination laws must be preserved and extended to ensure that freedom of positive selection is maintained, i.e., the right to advertise for and select staff sharing the beliefs, values and codes of conduct of that faith based school, organisation or community.

Our freedom to practice our religion was a hard fought battle in times past; we now face a huge challenge. We need to be united, calm, reasoned and determined.

The Presbyterian Church of Australia submission is a well-argued 25-page submission and may be found at <http://www.canfederal.presbyterian.org.au/GAA%20PCA%20Submission%20Final.pdf>.

What is the likely outcome of the FRB Project?

The first point concerns process. The Australian Human Rights Commission commissioned the Australian Multicultural Foundation to prepare a report for its consideration. The principal researchers are Professors Gary Bouma and Des Cahill and Dr Haas Dellal. All submissions are made to these men and they are required to make their report to the commission by March 2010. It is then for the commission to determine its own recommendations to government. The commission for some time has been working with Muslim community groups, and we believe input from these groups will have a bearing on the commission's recommendations.

While the researchers have a reputation for advancing the interfaith agenda and have given expression to more liberal and moderate interpretations of religious belief, they are also acutely aware of the advancement of aggressive intolerant secularism. They have a genuine concern for

freedom of conscience, thought and religion. This does not mean they are overly sympathetic to evangelical religion. The commission however will reflect more the interests of aggressive intolerant secularism but with some regard to the interests of minority groups which in this case substantially means Muslims and indigenous people.

The most likely outcome of the process, though I may well be proved wrong, is that there will be no recommendation for Victorian-style religious vilification law involving the use of tribunals to perpetuate inter-religious conflict. However there may well be a proposal for religious hatred legislation based on incitement to hatred actionable in the criminal courts only and, almost certainly, it will be left to a federal charter of rights to include provisions for freedom of conscience, thought and religion. There will also be a raft of recommendations to further the interfaith agenda.

In all of this we will need to be vigilant, prayerful and strategic, employing the four voices of the church that I have previously discussed (*AP*, November 2008). The battle over the exception clauses in Victoria will be hard fought and led by the Catholics. Fortunately, in participating in the public domain on matters of common interest, the days of denominational isolation are over with a readiness to cooperate across boundaries, and with the Australian Christian Lobby providing significant support, not least logistically. Please pray for all of us engaged in the front line, and this includes our Moderator General, state Moderators and the state-based Church and Nation committees and their conveners.

Our freedom to practice our religion was a hard fought battle in times past; we now face a huge challenge to maintain those freedoms. We need to be united and we need to be calm, reasoned and determined. We need to convince the broader Australian public that our cause is just. Above all, we need to remember that our cause is in the hands of Almighty God who knows best of all. We can trust Him to overrule all things, even our failings and mistakes, for good.

In next month's *AP*, I intend giving attention to the matter of a possible national Charter of Rights and the reasons why we might oppose such a charter, even though it may include provisions for freedom of conscience, thought and religion.

David Palmer is convener of the Victorian Church and Nation Committee. 

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In recent decades, there has been intense wrestling with what it means to be a man or woman. What are the differences between us? How can we rightly enjoy them? In particular, what impact will those have on our ministries in church?

The General Assembly of the PCA has been working through this question too. On Friday evening and Saturday October 23 and 24, the General Assembly Committee on Women's Ministry will be holding a national conference called Flourish for all Presbyterians to consider it. There will be teaching components and opportunity for everyone to contribute.

This conference is for all Presbyterians, male and female, because men and women are not independent of each other (1 Cor. 11:11f). At the heart of Scripture is relationship. To facilitate the ministry of women, all our leaders need to be involved at the conference.

How you can help make Flourish a success

- Pray for wisdom for us as the plans develop.
- Contact the conference registrar to arrange for brochures to be sent to you so you can encourage many from your congregation to come.
- Encourage your leadership team to put this item on the church calendar.
- Put it in the upcoming events in your church newsletter.
- Give feedback if you cannot attend.
- Billet country and interstate conference attendees.
- Volunteer to help with things on the day.
- Give a donation to subsidise those who otherwise could not afford to come.

Ngairé Moore

Craig Tucker is the keynote speaker. He is an engaging preacher who carefully handles God's Word. The ministry team he heads up at Drummoyne (NSW) has women in key leadership roles. His first talk "The Renewed Community – male and female – How the Cross Changes Everything" is after dinner on Friday evening. On Saturday, Craig will speak on "The Gathered Community – 1 Corinthians 11 & 14".

Presenters from four states will offer various workshops on a range of issues. For example, Bruce Winter from Queensland Theological College will discuss "Women in the Church – the New Testament in its Historical Context". Other workshops include employment of female workers, involving women more in leadership and specific skilling of women by women in many areas of ministry.


Carmelina Read, Dean of Women at the Presbyterian Theological Centre

(NSW), will lead a seminar for women only, on Genesis three. "My talk is firstly on how the fall in Genesis 3 has affected the roles of men and women. Then I look at Jesus. He has come to restore God's complementary design for the way men and women relate to one another," she says.

Much debate has occurred at Assembly level on the role of women. Less has been done in a broader denominational setting. Flourish is an opportunity for men and women of congregations to work on the implications of Genesis 1 to 3. People misunderstand God's plan for the headship of men and submission of women in marriage (and its flow-on effect in the church). It was God's perfect plan for how men and women were to relate in Eden before the Fall.

Be involved in shaping the future of our denomination. If you are from the country or interstate, why not plan to bring a group? If you are from the city, consider opening up your home for billets.

"Flourish" will be held at the Chinese Church Surry Hills. Brochures should be in churches this month. For further information contact our Registrar, Gillian Gilchrist on 0410 159 515, PO Box 4183, Winmalee 2777 or see the website www.gaawomensministry.com

Ngairé Moore, a member of the General Assembly Committee on Women's Ministry, also serves as is a member of the organising committee of the Flourish conference. 



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Letters

Unscriptural practices?

The letter of Steve Davis (*AP*, April) is an addition to the already numerous examples which indicate a departure from Scripture as a sure foundation.

It is God Himself who repeatedly and clearly declares in the Scriptures His lofty standards for the leadership of His church. It is God's imposition. To embrace, to accept, to strive for anything less is disobedience. To rebuke and admonish and call to account is not denigration in Scriptural terms.

When the prophets called Israel to account did they denigrate the faithful remnant, the Israel within Israel? Perhaps Peter Hastie in his April editorial commits denigration when he states "we expect better of evangelical theologians" referring to Rick Warren et al. (I think Peter Hastie is too generous.) There is the stench of the Laodicean church "...and have need of nothing" in the letter in the defence of "...members of the ministry

who labour in the Lord around the clock". This ministry needs no defence if it is in the Lord. This ministry would be aware of shortcomings and unworthiness and would declare so and address these matters.

This ministry may take Steve Davis to task scripturally by stating "we are unworthy servants and are doing only what is required". If the denomination tolerates churches which are aptly described in my letter; if the ministers of the denomination tolerate Freemasonry in its leadership, the Presbyterian Fellowship and its subversive and ungodly agenda and use and extol programmes produced by Rick Warren, the Alpha course and the gospel-centred church material; if the denomination tolerates a church depicting an abundant life in Christ with a picture of a family – adult male and female and two children at the water's edge on a beach – tolerates a church promoting its services with "interest spots" (which are advertisements for literally anything) and "helpful messages"; if the denomination tolerates a respected elder publically promoting Barack Obama as a hopeful sign for global peace – all of which are demonstrably incompatible in whole or part with a biblical Christianity – then the denomina-

tion and its leadership cannot assume for itself the foundation of Scripture.

*Stan Gliszczynski,
Portland, Victoria*

Denomination in decline?

Steve Davis (*AP*, April) condemns Stan Gliszczynski for calling attention to the disparity between what the Presbyterian Church teaches and what it practices. Stan may have gone a bit far at times but not too far, for the Lord added daily to the early church but daily takes away from the Presbyterian Church.

Consider:

The early church grew on prayer. How many ministers build their churches on social activities? The preaching recorded was to the unconverted, making God's Word known to those outside the church. How many ministers preach to the unconverted? How many display the Word of God outside and change it weekly? How many talk to those passing by, when they change it? How many do not go into schools to teach the children? How many give out tracts? How many go into the streets or shout the good news from the housetops as commanded?

How many ministers use the con-

FROM THE MODERATOR – GENERAL IN REGARD TO CHURCH PLANTING IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



'The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else – not crusades, outreach programmes, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes – will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.' (T. Keller)

Perth is currently growing at an unprecedented rate. People are moving to the Capital of Western Australia from all over Australia and the world. The West Australian General Assembly has developed a METRO-WIDE STRATEGY which seeks to respond to this growth and has as a key component, the planting and establishment of at least five new congregations. The West Australian General Assembly has declared that under the METRO-WIDE STRATEGY, the next area for church extension work will be in the Rockingham district, half an hour drive south of Fremantle on the coast. The Presbyterian Church in Western Australia is marshalling its own resources to launch a new effort in church planting but it also needs the help of the wider Presbyterian Church in this great task. (More details on the METRO-WIDE STRATEGY can be obtained from the Clerk of WA Assembly, Mr. Glenn Muskett on 08-9339 9400 ceo@braemarhomes.com.au)

I would invite you to pray especially for a suitable church planter to be raised up and for a suitable, committed and supportive core group to come together.

The 2007 General Assembly of Australia authorised the Moderator-General to coordinate an annual appeal during 2008, 2009 and 2010 to raise funds from across the Presbyterian Church of Australia to provide for the opening, staffing and development of a new church planting congregation in metropolitan Perth. The new church (the Lord willing) in the Rockingham district will be the recipient of the funds raised. Gifts can be sent to 'GAA WA Church Planting Appeal' c/- PO Box 2196, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012 with cheques made out to 'Presbyterian Church Funds'. A covering letter should state that the gift is for the 'WA Church Planting Appeal'. The GAA WA Church Planting Appeal will be placed before the Lord's people in our Church in a number of different forms.

Thank you for taking time to read this Communication. I would ask that we work together to ensure a very generous response to this call for gospel partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia.

ROBERT BENN, Moderator-General

temptible expression "King Jesus" instead of "the King, Jesus"? How many ministers and those under their care use the expression "awesome" to describe anything at all? How many tell jokes, or play with puppets in the pulpit? How many flatter? How many love the sycophant?

How many preach in the power of God: the outsider declaring that truly God is in you; or use a microphone and deny the six-day creation? How many recognize the Spirit's presence and authority?

What change has the Presbyterian Church made on society; in Sydney, Melbourne or elsewhere?

*Neil Cadman,
Norman Park, Qld*

No Ichabod here

Concerning Mr Stan Gliszczynski's letter, entitled "Delight — and despair", is "Ichabod" really write large over the Presbyterian church?

Who is most interested in our growth and maturity? Who is able to bring it to pass? If it's entirely up to us, we're done for. But it's not. God is committed to our growth. He who began a good work in me shall continue it until the day of Christ's return. Together. He, through His Spirit working in me to will and to do

what pleases Him. Me, working out my salvation with fear and trembling. He, mapping out the route, and blazing the trail. Me, walking it, keeping my eyes not on the track, but on its author and finisher.

Is Ichabod writ large over the Presbyterian (or any other) church? I think not. The stone that becomes a mountain filling the whole earth was not cut by human hands, nor grows by human effort. As it was in the early days of the church, it is now, namely that "God added to their number those who were being saved".

Brothers and sisters, let us encourage the church while we may freely do so. We already have enough opponents; many there are, already, who actively seek opportunities to point out our many failings. And yes, when we look entirely with the eye of flesh, we see no glory. But by whose standard are we to judge? What measure is appropriate? God sees better than all of us. By this all shall know that we are Christ's disciples, if we love one another. Exercise discernment, yes, but do not knock down what God is building up. And rather than cry "Ichabod", let each of us daily work out our salvation in fear and reverence, to the glory of God.

*Bruce M. Axtens,
Willetton, WA*

Engaging with Islam

A friend of mine, whose name ought to remain unspoken for his safety, described Islam as a "false religion": Yes! But how would you define false religion? I would describe it as one where there is a clear God-given Charter which has been officially rejected.

Islam was given the Torah and the Gospels but denies their veracity and so effectually rejects them. (This of course is the written Word.) Islam speaks of Jesus but rejects the signs and titles concerning Him. (This is the Word incarnate.) Islam reveres the teachings of its Prophet yet some of his words also they choose to hide. This is not just false religion, like a cargo cult; it is apostasy.

Since God has chosen to give the descendants of Ishmael (and their followers) the Scriptures I, for one, cannot condemn them. But I do accuse the relatively few in Islam who teach a false message of salvation by murder and hatred. This is the abomination they call "holy Jihad". It is only one of many, and they work against God's saving grace for millions worldwide.

Yes! Engage with Muslims, pray for Muslims, but be wary of their teachers!

*Michael Wilkin,
Gladesville, NSW*

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Books

Practice Makes Perfect

Anthony E. Bird
Evangelical Press, 2007.
Reviewed by Bob Thomas

The Letter of James has tended to suffer one of two fates. Because of its strong emphasis on the necessity of living out the Christian faith in demonstrably practical ways, the more doctrinally oriented have tended to overlook it or even deride it. Thus Luther called it “the Epistle of Straw”. On the other hand, those of a practical, activist bent, have taken delight in James’s espousal of down-to-earth, practical, sleeves-rolled-up Christianity.

A colleague of mine, believing that I put too much emphasis on upholding right doctrine, once challenged me to preach a series of sermons on James. I took up the challenge, to my own and hopefully my congregation’s spiritual benefit. But oh how I wish Tony Bird’s commentary had been available back then!

While for some, “faith” is a “being” word (a noun) and for others “faith” is a “doing” word (a verb), Tony Bird shows that for James, “faith” is a gerund (a noun and a verb at one and the same time). He carefully unravels and lays out the various strands of James’s teaching and where necessary neatly assembles the evidence for the traditional view of the critical questions in James, such as the authorship. His many historical, classical and poetic allusions, combined with contemporary illustrations (Betty Cuthbert rates a mention) and a fluid style are reminiscent of William Barclay. But a greater than Barclay is here. There are no ifs, buts and maybes, no questioning of received wisdom to leave the reader wondering if ‘it ain’t necessarily so’. The reader of this commentary is gently assured of the veracity, authority and relevance of the quantitatively small but qualitatively major Letter of James.

To sum up the helpfulness of this commentary for Christians in their devotions and its usefulness for pastor/teachers in their ministry, let the author speak for himself: “What is remarkable about this letter is the glorious vision it presents of God, the descriptions of whom are both extensive and breathtaking. Reading it ought to drive us to contemplate afresh the wonder of God and then lead us to

worship Him. In fact the more we entertain true and great thoughts about Him, the more we shall be in a position to face the trials of life, the attractions of the world, the ongoing battle with sin and the unrelenting hostility of the Evil One. In addition we shall be better equipped to do what His Word says: to be practical Christians who make a useful contribution to the church of Jesus Christ.”

We heartily commend this commentary, and eagerly await further volumes from its author.

This review is reprinted from New Life magazine. Bob Thomas is a former Moderator-General of Australia.

Works

Andrew Fuller, edited by Andrew Gunton Fuller
Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1841, reprinted 2007.

Reviewed by Peter Barnes

This is a massive volume of a little over 1000 pages. Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) is perhaps best known as a friend and supporter of his fellow Baptist, William Carey, and the author of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, published in 1785 with the explanative subtitle: *The Obligation of Men Fully to Credit, and Cordially to Approve, Whatever God Makes Known, Wherein is Considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of Those where the Gospel Comes in that Matter*. The subtitle of the second edition, in 1801, was an improvement: *The Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*. Fuller’s foray into print led him into controversy with Hyper-Calvinists on the one hand and Arminians on the other.

Fuller also took on the Socianism of Joseph Priestley and the Deism of Thomas Paine, and, for good measure, wrote *Strictures on Sandemanianism* (the belief that faith is simply intellectual assent, with the affections uninvolved) in 1810. He lived for 62 years, serving for the last 33 of them as the pastor of Kettering. His capacity for work was prodigious; indeed, William Wilberforce once described him as “the very picture of a blacksmith”.

The *Works* indicate the wide range of Fuller’s interests, from the conversion of the Jews to various pastoral matters, but most of all they reveal Fuller’s warm Christ-centred spirituality.

Peter Barnes is books editor of AP.

Stars in God’s Sky
Short biographies of “extraordinary, ordinary Christians”

Faith Cook
Evangelical Press, Darlington, England, 2009.
Reviewed by Mignon Goswell

Here is yet another enthralling compilation of short biographies of people who could be described as being “behind the news”. Faith Cook delights in bringing to our attention Christians who may be less well known or have not had major biographies written about them.

In all there are 10 short biographies. Among them is John Foxe, the man behind the famous *Foxes Book of Martyrs*, John Gifford (John Bunyan’s first minister) and women such as Fanny Guinness and Susannah Harrison. This book is ideal to read as part of a quiet time or to give to a teenager or to an adult interested in the history of God’s people. It is wonderful to be reminded that we have a wealth of precious stories to discover about those who have gone before us.

We can but stand in awe of Christians in earlier times who suffered illness or ill treatment or dealt with the death of children or who worked so hard that their health broke down. There are, of course, those who still undergo these trials today. A knowledge of Christians such as Cook writes of from previous generations can only be an inspiration for the present.

A verse from Daniel chapter 12 is quoted at the beginning of the book. “Those who turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars of heaven for ever and ever”. What a joy to ponder that one day we “ordinary” Christians throughout the centuries will meet!

Mignon Goswell is manager of PTC Media at the Presbyterian Theological College in Melbourne.

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Immoral moralism

Rugby League's scandal shows we are moralistic, but not moral.

The well-publicised rugby league scandal about players involved in group sex has provided an insight into how modern secular Australia views issues of sexual morality. Almost all expressed some kind of outrage, either at the players or at those who were outraged at the players. Peter FitzSimons has long prophesied regarding those involved in rugby league: "If they carry on as if it were 30 years ago, then the 21st century will shut them down."

According to FitzSimons, we are moving out of the Neanderthal age of the late 20th century (when men did not respect women) into the age of universal enlightenment in the 21st century (when, enlightened by feminism, men will respect women) – a common and not entirely convincing view of history and ethics.

Even worse was the analysis of one professional footballer who suggested that much of the trouble could have been avoided if the players had put the woman in a cab afterwards and thanked her instead of slinking off. His conclusion was "It's how you treat them afterwards that covers a lot of that stuff up". It is difficult to respond to insensitivity as hard-core as that, except to point out that there are those of whom the Scripture speaks who have their consciences "seared" (1 Tim. 4:2).

Yet more disturbing, and ultimately more ludicrous precisely because it has the appearance of being more intelligent, was the suggestion of Adele Horin, who agreed with an American expert on date rape, Professor Mary Koss, that anything is allowable provided there is mutual pleasure.

The response to the whole sordid episode was almost as sordid as the episode itself. Human beings are inherently moralistic, but not inherently moral. To those with eyes to see, we are surely living in a culture which has no clear way of answering the question, what is right and wrong? The Bible's answer is clear: "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). God has made His law known. When we break that law, that is sin. Hence, when God told



Peter Barnes

Israel what to do and what not to do in the Promised Land, He punctuated His commandments with the oft-repeated statement: "I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:4, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37). In knowing the Lord, we know what to do, how to behave, what constitutes what is right and what constitutes what is wrong.

The response to the whole sordid episode was almost as sordid as the episode itself.

mutual pleasure. The whole thing has been a shambles. As T. S. Eliot commented, "human kind cannot bear very much reality". Even more to the point is Thomas Mann: "Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil."

How different is God's Word! As Nehemiah sought to stop the oppression of the poor in Jerusalem, he appealed to conscience (Neh. 5:9a, "The thing that you are doing is not good"), to the fear of God (Neh. 5:9b), and to Israel's testimony before a watching world (Neh. 5:9c). In Ephesians, Paul can appeal to Christians on the grounds that we are members one of another (4:25), that we do not want to give an opportunity to the devil (4:27), that we do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30), and that God has forgiven us in Christ (4:32). We will want to imitate God in Christ (5:1-2) who gave Himself for His people (5:25-27), bearing in mind always that "the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (5:6). It is simply "right" that children obey their parents (6:1), and blessing will come of it (6:3). Ultimately, we shall all appear

before the Lord in the judgment, and there is no partiality with Him (6:5-9). Paul declares: "We aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man" (2 Cor. 8:21).

God appeals to the total person, and His claims upon us are powerful and convincing. The world can only appeal to part of the truth, and its claims are weak and embarrassing. There is some overlap, of course. The husband is to love his wife as his own body because he who does so loves himself and contributes to his own welfare (Eph. 5:28-29).

The world has some limited capacity to judge right and wrong, but the operative word is "limited". When the pressure is on, it becomes every man for himself. Human beings are inherently moralistic. We think in terms of right and wrong. Even when we are wrong, we will seek to cloak that with the vocabulary of what is right. We do not lose our tempers, we stand up for our rights; we do not engage in sexual impurity, we show our sexual maturity; we do not steal, we only take what is rightfully ours; and we are not selfish, we are only looking after number one.

Yet worldly moralism is bereft of truth and power. It is the God of the Bible who reveals to us what is right and wrong, and gives us the standard by which we are able to judge all other standards. Most importantly, we are able to judge ourselves, and see clearly our need for grace.

Peter Barnes is minister of Revesby Presbyterian Church, NSW.

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