

A U S T R A L I A N

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Wilberforce

Breaking the shackles

PETER BARNES | FAITH-FULL FATHERS | BEWARE COMPLACENCY

“ [SOME SERMONS] ARE LIKE A

DROPPED LEMON

MERINGUE PIE

- THEY SPLATTER OVER EVERYTHING, BUT

HIT NOTHING VERY HARD”

- HADDON ROBINSON

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E D I T O R I A L

While there will always be controversy amongst Christians over the extent to which believers should be engaged in political issues, there should be no dispute at all that Jesus calls His disciples to be involved meaningfully within the wider community in which they live.

If words mean anything, then Christ's words, "You are the salt of the earth", remind us that the Christian's life is not meant to be lived in isolation. Salt was used as a preservative in the ancient world and was essential in foods to prevent putrefaction. To function at all, it first had to come into contact with whatever it was that it was supposed to preserve. In this sense, Jesus meant that every Christian is sent into the world to arrest the influence of sin and to ensure that the world does not spiral into moral chaos and corruption. Salt was also important in another sense too; it provided savour to food. It was meant to make it more tasty and inviting.

It is in this capacity as the "salt of the earth" that Christians have made some of the greatest contributions to the well-being of their fellow human beings. Perhaps the foremost is William Wilberforce, who has become famous for the crucial role that he played in abolition of the British slave trade. His signal achievement in bringing this iniquitous traffic in human suffering to an end has been described by one British historian as "one of the turning events in the history of the world". But his influence did not stop with protecting and sanctifying human life; he was also had a deep compassion for animals too – he was one of those instrumental in founding the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In our day there are many causes and movements that claim to ennoble life, but the distinguishing feature of Wilberforce's contribution was that it was grounded in the gospel. His hatred for slavery was based on the equality of all people before God, that there is "no...slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:11). Wilberforce realised that flight from the public square was not an option. His duty was to be "salt".

Peter Hastie 

A portrait of William Wilberforce, a prominent 18th-century English abolitionist, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat, holding a quill pen. The background is a dark, atmospheric scene with a red curtain and a landscape.

The great reformer

THE DWARFISH WILBERFORCE WAS A CHRISTIAN GIANT.

Dr Peter Barnes is a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. He serves in Sydney's west in the parish of Revesby. He is also lecturer in Church History at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney. He has formerly served as missionary/theological educator in Vanuatu and has been deeply involved in the cause of Christian education.

Peter has had a long-standing interest in church history and undertook a doctoral dissertation on the history of the Presbyterian Church of NSW. He also has an intense interest in Scripture and biblical theology. He has written several Old and New Testament commentaries, *Both Sides Now – Ecclesiastes and the Human Condition*, *Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, *Knowing Where We Stand – The Message of John's Epistles* as well as *The Milk of the Word* and a book on abortion, *Open Your Mouth for the Dumb*. He has published a number of articles on William Wilberforce and is in the process of completing a major work on Athanasius, the early church father.

Peter is married to Lynette and they have six children.

Peter, the Proverbs tell us that the memory of the righteous is a blessing (Proverbs 10:7). What place should the study of great Christian leaders and philanthropists have in the overall task of history or history writing?

I think it should have an important place. Paul tells Titus that Christians should always “devote themselves to doing what is good”. “These things are



Peter Barnes
talks to
Peter Hastie

excellent and profitable for everyone,” he reminds us (Titus 3: 8, 14). He also urges us to imitate mature Christians. He exhorts the Corinthians, “follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). In the Greek it sounds like “Mimic me, as I mimic Christ”. One thing we learn as we investigate the lives of other Christians is that we are all sinners saved by grace. This doesn't detract from the greatness of people that God has used in a special way, such as William Wilberforce. The memory of him is truly a blessing.

We are blessed by his life as we see how he bounced back from disappointment. He was never shattered by it. He saw God's sovereign hand in everything. When he suffered political setbacks, his attitude was “if we lose this year, we can try again next time”.

He is also an example of shrewdness and patience. He was never a bull at a gate in seeking change. He always acted consistently with his Christian principles. He followed Solomon in this respect, who said, “the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure for every matter” (Ecclesiastes 8:5, 6). He also persevered against great odds and never became weary in well-doing.

I think he was also a model family man. Studying his life is not just an intellectual experience; it's a spiritual one as well.

Why do you say that? What are the things about him that you find so appealing or worthy of emulation?

William Wilberforce has been rightly regarded as one of the greatest reformers in history. He led the 20-year struggle to abolish the British slave trade as well as playing a leading role in many other philanthropic projects. He was involved in funding hospitals and schools with his own money and brought about changes to child labour laws and the education of the blind and the deaf.

The important thing to remember about him is that his deep concern for helping others arose out of his devotion to Christ. He was a genuine Christian. He had more than a Christian worldview; one of the Bible passages that he often referred to was the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. He identified strongly with the cry of the tax collector, “Lord have mercy on me, a sinner,” or more accurately, “God be propitious to me, the sinner”. He was committed to the position, “This is where I stand, or I stand nowhere.” This is a recurring thought in his journals and his letters. That is how he understood himself. In this sense, he put pastors to shame. He knew all of Psalm 119 off by heart as well as many of Paul's letters. He worked hard at understanding Scripture in his own personal walk with God. So his faith in Christ was at the very heart of his life.

Is it true that he went on very long walks and would spend most of his time memorising the Bible as he went?

Yes, that's right. He also suffered a lot of ill health and spent some time taking medicinal baths, where he would read a book. One year he wrote, "I was memorising Paul's epistles..." in Bath.

Do you mean the city of Bath in England?

Yes, that's right. He went to Bath to recuperate in the special spring waters there.

What kind of personality did he have?

He was a very ebullient fellow. He was a chatter box by nature and people responded to him quite well. He was the life of the party and he had to curb that. He says in his private journals that he had to struggle with it. He realised that, along with these gifts, he would also be tempted to vanity. So he was conscious of his vulnerabilities.

He could also be devastating in his use of sarcasm and he had to learn to contain himself. This didn't mean that he was wimpy though. He was a real wordsmith. I don't think his book, *A Practical View of Christianity*, is one of the most elegant pieces of prose that I have read; however, he was a brilliant orator.

He has been described as the greatest reformer in history. Can you explain why he earned this title?

I think that on any measure the abolition of the slave trade in Britain is undoubtedly a monumental achievement. It has been described as one of the landmark events in the world. When the British Parliament finally abolished the slave trade, Beilby Porteus, the Bishop of London, wrote "they welcomed him with applause such as was scarcely ever before given to any man sitting in his place in either House of Parliament". So clearly, Wilberforce's achievement was great.

Nevertheless, it's important to recognise that he didn't abolish the slave trade single-handedly. He was instrumental in abolishing it and was a key figure, but there were many others involved as well. Again, we shouldn't embellish his achievements. It would be wrong to say that before the abolition of the British slave trade, people treated each other abominably and that afterwards there was a wonderful transformation. Slavery, in a number of forms, still continues and the 20th century has seen an enormous number of victims in this regard.

I think the significance of Wilberforce's achievement is that he accomplished his objectives in an intelligent and godly way. And further, what he accomplished has been enduring. There are not too many people who can look back over their lives and say that.

Finally, William Wilberforce reminds us that it's possible for Christians to play a constructive role in public life. You don't have to descend to the lowest forms of politics. He knew that more than anybody.



SLAVERY, IN A NUMBER OF FORMS, STILL CONTINUES AND THE 20TH CENTURY HAS SEEN AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF VICTIMS IN THIS REGARD.

Would you agree with G. M. Trevelyan that the abolition of the British slave trade was "one of the great turning events in the history of the world"?

I think Trevelyan was influenced to some degree by a progressive view of history. Some historians read history this way and have a tendency to believe that the 20th century was an improvement on earlier ones. As G. K. Chesterton once said, this reading of history is "the story of how we became the marvelous mugs that we are".

There is no doubt that Wilberforce showed enormous courage in working to abolish the slave trade. It was an incredibly powerful institution. C. S. Lewis points out that there are plenty of people who are fearless in chopping the head off of a dead giant but they don't tread on the corns of a living one. The main danger in seeing the abolition of the British slave trade as a great achievement is that it can actually make us blind to what is going on now. Slavery still exists in a variety of forms. The sex trade is a form of slavery and it's huge.

Nevertheless, the fact that Wilberforce was able to bring the

institution of slavery to an end was a momentous achievement. Again, I think it was significant in British politics that a Christian parliamentarian, more than anybody else, was able to bring about such a sweeping change in people's attitudes, and subsequently in legislation.

Would it be correct to say that Wilberforce challenged the conscience of the age and humanised Western culture?

Yes, but only for a little while. All human achievements are fragile. It would be wrong to claim that he introduced Utopia. A truer estimate of him is that he was a profound influence for good, decency, honesty, faith and truth. It is not only what he achieved but how he achieved it. He was essentially a humble man.

Did he transform Western culture? Again, abolishing an evil institution doesn't necessarily affect the character of those who have been involved in it, whether we are thinking of the perpetrator or the victims. People who are released from slavery don't necessarily become Christians. And slave owners don't necessarily renounce oppressive attitudes. We are all slaves to sin until we encounter Christ. Being released as a slave doesn't alter the state of one's heart. Having said that, there are still many people who enjoy freedom and a better quality of life today because of Wilberforce's work.

Apart from his desire to overcome the appalling conditions in which slaves lived, and the terrible way in which they were treated, was Wilberforce driven by any underlying theological motive?

Yes, he strongly believed that Christians should "love their neighbor as themselves". He only ever wrote three books. The first of these was *A Practical*

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View of Christianity in 1797. Then in 1806, he wrote a long letter entitled, *A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*. I have downloaded it from the net and it's about 400 pages. Then in 1823 he wrote the much shorter *An Appeal to the Religion, Justice and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire on Behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies*. So he was not someone who wrote a lot of books.

Although Wilberforce was an amazing orator, he was less able as a writer. His writing is solid, but it doesn't shine in the same way as his speeches. In opposing slavery, he grounds his opposition in passages from the Bible such as there being "no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:11). He also refers to Micah 6:8 in relation to our duty to "act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God". As I've already mentioned, he referred constantly to our need to love our neighbor as ourselves. These were the three main passages that he used as the foundation for his anti-slavery campaign.

Did he experience any Christian influence as a child?

Yes, he did. Shortly after his father's death, he was sent to live with his uncle William and his wife Hannah in Wimbledon, London. He lived with them for a couple of years and came under their Christian influence. They were called Methodists. It was while he was living with them that he came to know John Newton who used to regularly visit the Wilberforce home to conduct what he called "parlour preaching". During this period, Wilberforce became quite sympathetic to Christianity. His mother was scared that he was going to become a Methodist so she went and retrieved him and brought him back to Hull in Yorkshire.

It wasn't until his mid-20s that he became a Christian and returned to his Methodist principles. This reminds us that there are things lodged in a child's mind that you or I don't know about. Sometimes God uses them. It was around this time that he turned to Newton to ask him for spiritual advice. He was still a bit awkward about it. He wrote to Newton, "Can I see you on Wednesday?" However, he was horrified that someone might see him going to Newton's house so he was dropped some way off and then walked the rest of the

distance with his head down. It was an indication of how evangelicals were held in very low regard at the time. Newton remembered him after so many years and was a wonderful pastor to him.

During his teenage years, he drifted from the faith into skepticism through schooling and social



ALL HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS ARE FRAGILE. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO CLAIM THAT HE INTRODUCED UTOPIA. HE WAS A PROFOUND INFLUENCE FOR GOOD, DECENCY, HONESTY, FAITH AND TRUTH.

activities. Are there any lessons here for parents?

I think bad company corrupts good morals. We become like the people we are with. It's very hard to swim against the tide. Of course, his mother was not a Christian. She made every effort to minimise the influence of Christianity upon him. The influence of his uncle and aunt, who were evangelical, seemed to be lost, but not entirely. God still had his plans for Wilberforce. So I think there are two lessons here: first, make sure that your children are exposed to good Christian influences and beware of their non-Christian friends and what they are doing; and second, don't ever lose hope because that which is sown early may yet bring forth fruit. John Newton is a good example of this, as was William Wilberforce.

He attended St John's College at Cambridge, which had a reputation for immorality and hard drinking. What influence did college life have on him?

It was all bad. He talked about his experience in terms of the Shakespearean expression, "shapeless idleness". He could have drifted on in a pointless existence. He didn't have to go to lectures; his course of study wasn't

very demanding. He had a lot of money and he could afford to bumble his way through life.

Is this where he met William Pitt, the future Prime Minister?

Yes, he met Pitt there. Pitt was not a Christian but he was certainly a stabilising influence on Wilberforce.

Did Pitt influence him to enter politics?

Yes, he did. Actually, their influence was mutual; it went both ways. However, Wilberforce was never in Pitt's pocket. After Wilberforce was converted he prayed for Pitt's conversion. At one stage he took him to a service in London where Richard Cecil was preaching. Wilberforce was thrilled by the sermon that he heard, and thought to himself, "Oh, thank God that Cecil has preached the gospel so clearly." He couldn't wait to get out and talk about it to Pitt. When he spoke to him after the service, Pitt said, "I have no idea what that man was talking about." This reminds us that hearing the gospel and believing it are two different things. Only the Spirit can open our eyes and lead us to faith.

Pitt was a very intelligent man. He became Prime Minister at the age of 24. Yet he had no idea of the true meaning of the gospel. Although he died as a young man, when he felt his life slipping away, he actually called for the sacrament and seems to have died with an indication of Christian faith. I think this indicates the lasting influence for good of Wilberforce upon him. In the same way, Pitt was a stabilising influence on Wilberforce and directed him towards politics where he was ultimately used by God.

Did Wilberforce have any signs at an early age that he would rise to great heights in public life?

He certainly had an affable and engaging personality that is one of the essentials for those who play a prominent role in public life. He also had a wonderful singing voice. He could entertain people and tell stories. He was the life of the party.

It is said that he wrote a letter to one of the local newspapers when he was 14 denouncing the slave trade. I assume that is true, though some have doubted the story. This indicates that there was a serious side to Wilberforce at an early age, even when he was away from the influence of his uncle and aunt.

He seems to have been a natural

leader, but without the dominant characteristics of Pitt. He was almost dwarfish in size and a bit misshapen. People like this are not always obvious leaders. Pitt was about a foot taller than him and looked like a leader.

Also, Wilberforce grew up with an independent mind and spirit – you couldn't buy him. He remained politically independent all the way through his parliamentary career and never held ministerial office. When Pitt was in office he couldn't offer Wilberforce a position in the cabinet because Wilberforce wouldn't accept it. But I think there were signs of this spirit of independence in him even as a child.

Why did he seek a parliamentary career and not follow his father into business?

I think it was just the influence of being with Pitt and wanting to do something. Pitt was powerfully connected. His father had been Prime Minister as well. Wilberforce doesn't seem to have had any great flair for business. Actually, I don't think he had any talent that way. Pitt seems to have been of the same mind as well.

How do we account for him winning a seat in parliament at the early age of 21? What did he do to get in if he was "dwarf-like" and only recently graduated from Cambridge University?

Well, I guess it wasn't totally unusual. They often didn't have elections. Voting was quite different in those days as well. For example, there might have only been a thousand or so people who may have voted in his electorate. Further, parliamentarians weren't paid. If you stood for Parliament, you had to have independent means. Wilberforce had enough money. He spent between £8000 and £9000 (perhaps \$1 million in today's terms) to win the contest.

We live in a different age. It's hard to imagine how someone like him could be elected today. It's not impossible of course, but it would be difficult.

What part did his personal wealth play in his political and philanthropic roles?

As I have said, he was extremely wealthy. He wasn't paid as a parliamentarian. Nevertheless, he was very generous. When Charles Wesley died, Wilberforce provided for his widow, Sarah, for nearly 20 years until she died

in 1812. He gave away a lot of his money.

One of those who benefited from his generosity was Hannah Moore, the writer. She did a lot of work with Sunday schools and Christian education. He said, "You do the work and I will finance it." Basically, he gave her a blank cheque. He saw the need because the gospel was not being preached to the rising generation. He was very generous but wealthy enough to keep himself going. Anybody in parliament had to be reasonably well-off.

What were the circumstances of his actual conversion?



WILBERFORCE HAD ENOUGH MONEY. HE SPENT BETWEEN £8000 AND £9000 (PERHAPS \$1 MILLION IN TODAY'S TERMS) TO WIN THE CONTEST.

Wilberforce had decided to take a trip to Europe for a couple of months and he invited Dr Isaac Milner, a former tutor at Cambridge University, to be his travelling companion. Milner was a devout Christian and an evangelical. Wilberforce later said that if he had known at the time how evangelical Milner was, then he wouldn't have gone with him. Interestingly, Milner was a relatively quiet man who was not given to forcing his views onto others. Wilberforce was with him for some time before they began some serious discussions about Christianity. Had Milner been more outspoken, he may possibly have alienated Wilberforce. However, when Wilberforce got to know him, he appreciated his sincerity and friendship and they began studying the Greek New Testament together.

Is it true that they were reading Philip Doddridge's book, *The Rise and Progress of Religion and Soul*?

Yes. Actually, they read a number of books together, which led them to

reading the New Testament in Greek. Today they would probably be regarded as fanatics, but in that sense it was a step-by-step thing. Wilberforce did not have an immediate "Damascus road" conversion at all. In one sense, he was drawing on what he already had. All this took place over several months of travel in Europe.

After his conversion he underwent a crisis and he was torn as to whether he should stay in politics or pursue a calling in the Christian ministry. How did John Newton, the former slave trader and Anglican minister, help him resolve this issue?

Wilberforce went to see Newton secretly. It was like Nicodemus coming to see Jesus at night. Newton was very wise. He knew that if Wilberforce entered the ministry, his gift of oratory had the potential to move thousands. However, Newton saw that he was established in politics and said, "You can serve God there."

Now Newton was not an overly political character. There are quite a few references in his letters where he doesn't seem to like politics very much at all. Nevertheless, he was certainly convinced that Wilberforce was in the right place and could do a lot of good. By that time, Newton had come out against the slave trade. After Newton's conversion, he didn't immediately attack the slave trade as unchristian. It was only some time later that he began to speak against it publicly. Then he says, "I just don't know how I could have been involved with it, but I was". He convinced Wilberforce to remain in politics, although I don't think Wilberforce needed a lot of convincing on the matter.

How did his conversion affect his political program? Did it change significantly from the time he became a Christian?

I think Wilberforce's new-found faith gave him vigour and direction. He knew how to conduct himself in the world. He also knew how to win in the right way. He really was a marvelous character in the way that he could combine these two qualities.

Sometimes I watch Q&A on the ABC and it depresses me, especially when Christians lack forthright answers. A few weeks ago Tony Abbott gave an atrocious answer on the subject of same-sex marriages. He completely capitulated and threw all his ammunition about God

overboard and then tried to construct an argument that condoned loving homosexual unions while denying them the right of marriage. There was also a weak response recently by so-called Christians on the subject of euthanasia. It took a Muslim woman to give the only clear and forthright answer. She said that “God – Allah – is the giver of life and the taker of life so euthanasia is not on the table.”

Wilberforce would have answered in the same forthright way. Unfortunately, many Christians now think, “I am not allowed to mention God in the public square.” So they try to mount a lot of arguments that invariably avoid any mention of God. In doing so, they lose the battle. Wilberforce combined both. He asserted his faith and provided substantial reasons. He never lost his political capacity to be as wise as a serpent while walking as innocently as a dove. He did those two things better than most people.

Wilberforce said, “God has set before me two objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of the manners”. What did he mean?

He meant what Shakespeare meant, “manners maketh the man of morals”. When your grandmother said to you, “manners maketh the man”, she was thinking in terms of etiquette. She meant, “Peter, eat with a knife and fork and blow your nose properly.” However, this is not what Wilberforce or Shakespeare meant. When they referred to the reformation of manners, they were thinking of the reformation of the morals of the whole society. The suppression of the slave trade was part of that, but there were other things that he had in mind too. He made this declaration in 1787, and this is where he saw very clearly that God had put him on the earth to accomplish these two great objects within his country.

Wilberforce wrote a very famous book, *A Practical View of Christianity*. What was the impact of that book on British culture?

The book sold well and was translated quite quickly into a number of other languages. At the time, Wilberforce wasn't sure whether it would be a successful publishing project or not. However, it proved to be, and touched a nerve in British society. Many people bought it and read it thoroughly.

One person who read his book who was quite influential was Edmund Burke. Burke was a famous writer and politician. He was Irish and Protestant. He virtually finished the book and died. Incidentally, the two weren't connected! Wilberforce shared a lot of views with Burke. Burke was not simply a conservative, and neither was Wilberforce. They were both prepared to cross the floor.



WILBERFORCE HAD MANY OF THE QUALITIES NECESSARY TO BE THE PRIME MINISTER. HOWEVER, HE REFUSED TO TAKE OFFICE AT AN EXECUTIVE LEVEL.

Could Wilberforce ever have become Prime Minister? Why didn't he?

Wilberforce had many of the qualities necessary to be the Prime Minister. However, he refused to take office at an executive level. He felt that assuming such a role would take away his Christian freedom to respond to issues. So, he resolved never to seek high office.

Was this due to the fact that he was seeking first the kingdom of heaven?

I think so. I don't think Wilberforce ever believed that it was impossible for a Christian to be a Prime Minister, but he believed that God had given him a special role and that to seek high political office would be a diversion for him. I am not sure, and Pitt says this, that he would have been the normal sort of Prime Minister. He is different from Pitt in that he was too much of a maverick. He had a clear set of spiritual priorities and he didn't want his own earthly ambitions to get in the way of them. Further, I don't think that he would have particularly enjoyed the responsibilities of a Prime Minister. He was more focused on causes than politics. It is significant that one of his favourite biblical verses was Colossians 3:2, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that

are on earth”. It is the heavenly minded who achieve most on earth.

What role did Wilberforce attribute to works in the Christian life, especially in the realm of social justice?

Wilberforce believed that a true and justifying faith inevitably led to a life of good works. He was passionate about preaching the gospel as well as helping the poor, the downtrodden, the abused and the disadvantaged. He believed both were necessary. Unfortunately, as a reaction to the social gospel which was preached earlier in the 20th century, many evangelicals have abandoned the public square. This represents a retreat from previous evangelical engagement in this area.

I think the liberals have played this pretty cleverly. They have said, “We are going to get involved in social justice issues to make the gospel relevant”. They have forced unthinking evangelicals to say, “Well, the public arena belongs to the devil so we will stay away from it”. It is almost a Manichean view of the world. The problem with the liberals is not that they issued calls for justice, but that they didn't understand the gospel in the first place. Wilberforce didn't labour with that difficulty. He knew the gospel, and being active in good works was just a natural part of it.

How long did it take for Wilberforce to attain his first goal of suppressing the slave trade?

He first went into Parliament in 1780 and then he achieved his goal 27 years after that. That's 27 years after he first entered Parliament and 20 years after his declaration of 1787. He was very shrewd. He didn't move a motion against the slave trade every year. He wanted to, but because of the French revolution he was a bit wary, and he was again wary during the early years of the Napoleonic wars, around 1800-1804. But essentially it was on the table and people knew that he was gathering information, pressing the issue and preparing all the while for the final resolution.

Now we mustn't forget that while Wilberforce was successful in abolishing the British slave trade, he wasn't able to abolish slavery itself. That didn't come until 1833, eight years after Wilberforce had retired. He heard about it and two days later he died. He was aware that it had happened and rejoiced. Not just the

trade, but that slavery itself within the British Empire had been abolished.

What do we learn from his endurance?

He stuck at it, didn't he? Every one of us has patches where we wonder which way is up. At one stage, Wilberforce almost forgot that he had a soul through overwork and ill-health. Life, at times, was a great struggle for him. Nevertheless, he knew how to bounce back from disappointments; and when he did rebound, he was able to rebound without bitterness. People have things happen to them and they become bitter about it. He was certainly disappointed when he lost votes in the Parliament and people who were supposed to support him didn't. However, he harboured no bitterness over it.

It is said of Wilberforce that "good causes stuck to him like pins to a magnet". What other philanthropic projects, apart from abolishing the slave trade, engaged his attention?

There were a lot. I think at one stage he was instrumental in founding or supporting something like 69 different societies, including the Bible Society, the National Gallery, the RSPCA, the Blind Society, to mention just a few.

What was the Clapham Circle, and how did it begin? How did the friendships of this circle form the great basis for all that it accomplished?

The Clapham Sect was not a cult. It was a group of evangelical Anglicans who lived around John Venn's parish at Clapham which was then only a little bit out of London. Now it has been swallowed up into the greater urban expansion. They would meet and discuss spiritual and theological issues and how they could make an impact on society. So a number of very capable people came together in that group. It was a rather loose group in one sense. Their aim was to sharpen themselves spiritually, to take the Christian faith into the public arena, and to extend the influence of Christianity throughout society.

Is Wilberforce a model for the use of Christian wealth?

Yes, most definitely. He has it and he uses it well. It is Ephesians 4:28, isn't it? "Work; do something useful, so you have something to share with those in need." He would have agreed with Wesley,

"Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." He didn't splash money around wildly, but he used it in a very generous and Christian way.

Did the pressures of politics affect his family life much?



HE FOUNDED OR SUPPORTED SOMETHING LIKE 69 DIFFERENT SOCIETIES, INCLUDING THE BIBLE SOCIETY, THE NATIONAL GALLERY, THE RSPCA AND THE BLIND SOCIETY.

I think his hard work did, but he seems to have always had a good relationship with his children. His oldest son, William, lost all his money and eventually became a Roman Catholic. Samuel became the Bishop of Oxford, and famously debated "Darwin's

Bulldog", T. H. Huxley, on evolution. He was nicknamed "Soapy Sam". He didn't have the cut and thrust for public argument, but like his father he was very capable. People might identify him as an evangelical today, but I think he was more of an orthodox Anglican, who was not particularly high or low in his churchmanship.

Can we estimate the effect of his life? In what way did the United Kingdom and its Colonies become different as a result of his life and work?

His effect was profound in simple things like family devotions. A lot of people followed his example in that area. He used to gather his family together, read the Bible to them, and then they prayed.

He and John Newton were the ones who pulled the strings to get the first chaplain to Australia. His name was Richard Johnson. He was a very attractive figure in his relations with Aboriginal people. Newton called him the patriarch of the Southern Hemisphere. He came here with not a hint of any paternalism toward indigenous people. He actually adopted an aboriginal girl and she ran away, but he looked after her properly. There was a bit of Wilberforce in him – or the Spirit who indwelt Wilberforce also indwelt Johnson. ap

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Rude yet refined

IT TAKES BOLDNESS AND BEAUTY TO REFORM A NATION'S MORALS.

Peter Moore

Most of us know William Wilberforce as the independent member of the House of Commons who led the charge for the abolition of slavery. It is an inspiring story of faith in God and amazing perseverance, coupled with both tender human feelings and astounding integrity.

But most of us don't know of Wilberforce's campaign to refurbish the morals of the empire. And we don't know that in the course of that, this delightful human being wrote one of the rudest books of Christian history!

The full title of William Wilberforce's classic work and personal manifesto was *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of This Country Contrasted with Real Christianity*. (They sure knew about "snappy titles" in those days!)

I hope it might inspire you to read something of this book, and Wilberforce's approach to his life as an independent British politician. My goal in this article is to encourage Christians who yearn for a transformed culture, and insist that we are called to be both beautiful as well as bold, friendly as well as forthright, charming as well as challenging. Or as the apostle Paul might say, we are called to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

As a young politician – elected to Parliament at 21 – Wilberforce was known as a wonderful companion and enchanting orator. Even at this tender age – years before his "evangelical awakening" – when he offended people with his ideas, they were nevertheless charmed by the man who held them.

His friend William Pitt said that he had "the greatest natural eloquence of all the men I ever knew". His biographer Garth Lean explains in *God's Politician* that "Wilberforce did not contrive or even always prepare his speeches in detail. He used a conversational style...



THIS DELIGHTFUL MAN
WROTE ONE OF THE RUDEST
BOOKS OF CHRISTIAN
HISTORY, ACCUSING THE
ENGLISH MIDDLE AND
UPPER CLASSES OF BEING
FALSE CHRISTIANS.

His diction, wrote a Parliamentary reporter, 'was so distinct and melodious that the most hostile ear hangs on them delighted. Then his address is so insinuating that if he talked nonsense you would feel obliged to hear him'. His warmth of feeling moved Members' hearts as well as their heads."

By the age of 24, his friend William Pitt was Prime Minister, and humanly speaking it must have seemed that Wilberforce was destined for equal greatness. But unexpectedly, on a trip to Europe (with, of all things, an English clergyman as company), the young Wilberforce was converted to orthodox evangelical Christian faith. This means that at the age of 25, Wilberforce found himself believing in God, and holding theological convictions that were minority views among most of the clergy of his day. Certainly they were a great rarity in England as a whole. William realised as a leader of society, and a prominent MP, he ought to do something with these convictions.

For two years, he grappled with this, at first rather grimly, but then with an increasingly obvious joy. As he continued to reflect on God's will for himself

and his country, two great projects came to him. First he famously resolved to give himself to the abolition of the slave trade. But secondly, and perhaps less well known, the young evangelical resolved to conduct a campaign for the reformation of the morals of his age.

In any event, on 28th October 1787 Wilberforce summed all this up in his journal "God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners." This article looks at how Wilberforce went about this second object.

Wilberforce's campaign began with the help of the Prime Minister and dear personal friend, William Pitt, in encouraging George III to reissue the Proclamation for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue and for the Preventing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality which like his predecessors since William and Mary, George had issued when he became King. In the case of William and Mary it had meant something and had been followed up with real social action but since then it had become a form rather than a matter of significance. However in the reissued form the King included a new Preamble, noting "the rapid progress of impiety and licentiousness, and that deluge of profaneness, immorality and every kind of vice which, to the scandal of our holy religion, and to the evil example of our loving subjects, have broken upon this nation".

Next came Wilberforce's campaign to establish a mechanism for enforcing this Proclamation. He canvassed and gained the support of leading figures who comprised with him a Proclamation Society. One of the chief roles for the society would be the prosecution of crimes (which at the time were not a concern of the state, but had to be done by victims or private citizens: hard to do unless you were wealthy.) The society would also

place political pressure on magistrates to conduct themselves with legal diligence. Generally there would be a campaign for moral reform.

Wilberforce did all this while resisting the temptation to make this a thoroughly religious movement. He felt it would be shrewd to gain leadership in all this from the irreligious and even those who themselves breached the Proclamation's standards. However the driving force in the Proclamation society would be fellow evangelicals like Edward Eliot, Hannah More and the like.

Wilberforce was mocked and opposed by some, but the society and its work struck a chord in many places in England. Many magistrates were clearly dissatisfied with the current state of the land, and they rose to the challenge.

Leading evangelical Hannah More wrote two important books addressed to the leading classes of England which, along with Wilberforce's *Practical View*, struck a chord. As many of the drinking houses were reformed and licensing laws tightened, more of the masses, and even some aristocrats began to go to Sunday church. Lean attributes the moral rigour of the Victorian age to all this. In the years that followed, many of the children of aristocrats (including Princess Victoria), rebelled against their parents' depravities and, despairing of what their parents' irreligion had produced, began to take Christian teaching and morality seriously.

Within two or three years after Wilberforce found his vision for the reformation of the nation's "manners" – at least by 1789 – he considered writing a personal manifesto. However at this early stage he rejected the idea, for he was sensitive to the possibility that "dread of an over-righteous man would deter people" – thinking here especially of his friend Pitt, but also the King himself. Pitt – and of course the king – had been crucial in Wilberforce's first step in seeking the reissue of the Proclamation which took place on 1st June 1787. If the Proclamation were to have its intended effect, it was vital that it not be compromised by any taint of religious "enthusiasm".

By the middle of the next decade, the tide had shifted towards publication. The danger of undermining the work of the Proclamation Society had passed, and now Wilberforce's chief concern was to be heard for the evangelical Christian that he was. He believed that it was

imperative that his ideology be made plain to his countrymen, but particularly it seems, to his fellow Parliamentarians. Wilberforce believed that unless the heart of England was changed by the gospel, its outward moral condition could not be made healthy.

The primary audience to which he addressed his book were the leading members of society and the middle class



**WILBERFORCE RESISTED
THE TEMPTATION TO MAKE
HIS A THOROUGHLY
RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT.**

(as evidenced by the book's title.) "The main object... is not to convince the Sceptic, or to answer the arguments of persons who avowedly oppose the fundamental doctrines of our Religion; but to point out the scanty and erroneous system of the bulk of those who belong to the class of orthodox Christians, and to contrast their defective scheme with a representation of what the author apprehends to be real Christianity."

Thus, *A Practical View* was one of the rudest books written. It accused the great bulk of English middle and upper classes of being false Christians, and indeed, because they did not live true to evangelical faith, they were not Christians at all!

Understandably, Wilberforce's publisher was diffident about success. Even his old mentor, the clergyman Isaac Milner who had led him to Christ on that trip to Europe, tried to dissuade him from it. He thought it a lost cause. However Wilberforce pressed on with the plan. The publisher was finally willing to do a print run of 500 copies, provided Wilberforce put his name on it.


However because of Wilberforce's personal credibility, right from the very beginning the book was a tremendous success. The first print run sold out in days. Within six months, there had been five different editions and a total of 7500 copies sold, which in those days made it a best-seller.

From the early days it was read and reprinted in great numbers in North America and in India. By 1826 it had gone through 25 editions, and had been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German. In 1838 his sons Robert and Samuel wrote that "its circulation was at that time altogether without precedent".

John Newton, the retired slave captain become clergyman, wrote that "I deem it the most valuable and important publication of the present age... I

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shall be glad to look to you (at least to your book)... to strengthen my motives for running the uncertain remainder of my race with alacrity.”

Famous Irish statesman Edmund Burke spent most of his final two days reading it, and said that it had given him “unspeakable comfort... If I live, I shall thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world”.

The main theme of the book is that there is only one true form of Christianity, and that is not the nominal and comfortable religion of the bulk of Englishmen, but rather evangelical Christianity, which takes seriously the Bible and its doctrines of sin, judgment, and salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Wilberforce wrote: “Thus have we endeavoured to trace the chief defects of the religious system of the bulk of professed Christians in this country. We have pointed out their low idea of the importance of Christianity in general; their inadequate conceptions of all its leading doctrines, and the effect thereby naturally produced in relaxing the strictness of its practical system; more than all, we have remarked on their grand fundamental misconception of its genius and essential nature. Let not therefore the difference between them and true believers be considered as a minute difference; as a question of forms or opinions. The question is of the very substance of Religion; the difference is of the most serious and momen-

tous amount. We must speak out. Their Christianity is not Christianity... Let them no longer then be deceived by names in a matter of infinite importance: but with humble prayer to the Source of all wisdom, that He would enlighten their understandings, and clear their hearts from prejudice; let them seriously examine by the Scripture standard their real belief and allowed practice, and they will become sensible of the shallowness of their scanty system.”



**WILBERFORCE'S
IMPECCABLE INTEGRITY
EARNED HIM THE PERSONA
OF 'CONSCIENCE OF
THE NATION'.**

Wilberforce was a man of tact. He could be shrewd in his handling of reform. In his efforts to correct the manners of his country through the Proclamation Society, he took care not to taint the society with any obvious connection to religious enthusiasm. Thus, in a way, he concealed something

of his own Christian motives in this work. However he still acted with integrity for his goals for the society were always open, and were shared by his partners, even if they did not share his theological convictions.

However, Wilberforce always refused to act corruptly through trading influence. Thus he would not support a measure in Parliament, for which he had no taste, merely for the sake of gaining support from its promoters, for one of Wilberforce's own projects. This impeccable integrity earned him the persona of “conscience of the nation” and had a happy correspondence with his own naturally pleasant manner, which made him such an attractive conversationalist and delightful orator.

It seems to me that part of his need for this manifesto – and I note here in particular that there were things in the book which he felt he had not been able to tell his friends, (even a friend as good as Pitt) – came from the fact that though this book must have been incredibly insulting, Wilberforce was not an angular person: he loved people and his natural impulse was to please and encourage them rather than insult and rebuke them.

Despite his campaign for the reform of “manners”, Wilberforce insisted that the best way to pursue a healthy state and society, is “to cultivate... real Christianity... since humanly speaking, we must either have this or nothing. Unless [real Christianity] can be in some degree restored, we are likely to lose not only all the advantages which we might have derived from true Christianity, but also to incur the manifold evils which the absence of all religion would bring.”

In conclusion, “the best wish that can be made for [any] country, by one who is deeply anxious for its welfare” is for true evangelical Christian religion to prosper and spread its influence.

I suggest that Wilberforce is a model of how all gospel-loving Christians should see ourselves. We should love our neighbour by presenting the gospel with bold words and a beautiful life: through the power of the gospel renewing us, we shall at the same time be both rude and refined!

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Peter Moore lectures in
*Systematics and Pastoral
Theology at the Presbyterian
Theological Centre, Sydney.*

The challenge continues

LESSONS IN POLITICAL ACTIVISM FROM THE ABOLITIONISTS

Jim Wallace and Lyle Shelton

In 2007, the church in Australia got to know William Wilberforce. The movie *Amazing Grace* was released in cinemas to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire.

It brought to life the story of this 18th century Parliamentarian, his team of anti-slavery activists and their political struggle to end this brutal oppression of African negroes.

It was the greatest human rights win by political activists in history but it seems, having enjoyed the movie, Australian Christians have moved on without realising the enormous scope of what was achieved and how we might apply its lessons today.

Amazing Grace, of course, was the hymn penned by the former slave ship captain John Newton who found Christ and inspired Wilberforce.

It is worth pausing to let sink in the magnitude of the abolitionists' political achievement. A small band of Christian activists turned the global superpower of the day from economic dependence on slavery to abhorrence of it and the banning of it within a lifetime. They reversed hundreds of years of entrenched practice.

So how did they do it and what can we learn from their political strategies in an age where Christians are unsure about engaging politics and culture? The first thing is to understand what motivated their political action.

The human rights of the black person were not championed by the trendy Enlightenment thinkers of the day such as Tom Paine who, through works like *The Age of Reason*, were seeking to undermine Christianity and postulating the utopian political philosophies of the bloody French Revolution.

Instead, the movement to abolish slavery grew almost exclusively from those on the fringes of British society who through their discovery of a per-

THE DEPLOYMENT OF EVIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT AND IN THE MEDIA WAS ESSENTIAL TO CHANGE PUBLIC OPINION AND BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR FOR POLITICAL CHANGE.

sonal relationship with Christ and engagement with the Bible and prayer were impelled to take political action against injustice.

A well-known secular journalist and author of books on human rights, Adam Hochschild, whose book *Bury the Chains* documents the British struggle to abolish slavery, openly acknowledges the impact of what became known as Evangelicalism in the movement for abolition. He rightly says it "arose among Anglicans who felt that their Church was Christian only in form".

What is fascinating is that Hochschild, while acknowledging Wilberforce's crucial place as the Parliamentary champion in the battle for abolition, shines a light on the activists who led the grass roots movement for change. He charts the origins of the struggle to the Quakers – a fringe group of dissenting Christians who refused to serve in the armed forces or pay taxes. Of them he says: "Only a single small religious denomination, with fewer than 20,000 members in all of Britain, had officially come out against slavery."

In the environment of nominal 18th century British Christianity, the revivalists George Whitfield and John and Charles Wesley travelled hundreds of thousands of miles on horseback through the English countryside preaching, often in open fields, to the masses.

The flame of faith they lit through Biblical preaching and inspirational hymn singing revolutionised many Anglicans, including Wilberforce, and

was the distinctive of nearly all the key players in the abolitionist political movement.

Upon his conversion from cultural Anglicanism to what he termed "real Christianity" (he never left the Church of England), Wilberforce faced a dilemma – leave the "worldly affairs" of Parliament and follow a life of piety or remain. John Newton, himself now an Evangelical preacher, gave pivotal advice. "The Lord has raised you up for the good of His church and for the good of the nation," he wrote to the young man. Wilberforce stayed in Parliament.

Wesley, who suffered terrible persecution from the Church of England hierarchy, had published his own tract opposing the slave trade well before the cause was popular. Three days before his death at 87, he felt an urge to write what is thought to have been his last letter. It was to the young Wilberforce, by this time fighting the good fight in Parliament and about to suffer what would be one of many crushing political defeats for the cause. From his death bed the old man described slavery as "the scandal of religion" and famously urged Wilberforce to "be not weary of well doing".

Apart from the motivation of "real Christianity" – the topic of a book Wilberforce later wrote – the relentless gathering of evidence against the slave trade was a key strategy crucial to the ultimate political victory.

A catalyst for the early momentum of the movement was a prize-winning essay written by Thomas Clarkson in a prestigious Cambridge competition. Clarkson joined Quakers and a handful of Evangelical Anglicans in the fledgling Abolition Committee which eventually convinced Wilberforce to be their champion in Parliament.

Hochschild says: "For many years Clarkson would be the movement's sole full-time organiser", braving death

threats as he “prowled the docks” of slave port cities such as Bristol and Liverpool talking to sailors and gathering evidence that could be used in Parliament and public debate against the trade. While only a young man, Clarkson almost wore himself out as he travelled 35,000 miles on horseback – sometimes with a body guard – in pursuit of the truth.

Another Wilberforce collaborator, Zachary Macaulay, a member of the famous Clapham community of friends, was an expert researcher and ensured Wilberforce had documentary evidence at his fingertips.

The deployment of evidence in Parliament and in the media was essential to change public opinion and bring pressure to bear for political change, as were a range of high profile public figures who lent weight to the cause.

From his university days, Wilberforce had become a close friend of William Pitt who was to become Britain’s youngest Prime Minister at 24 and steered the nation competently during wartime against the French. While Pitt did not become an Evangelical, he encouraged Wilberforce and even moved a motion in Parliament on behalf of abolition. In what is a maxim for executing any political strategy, Pitt told Wilberforce: “Don’t lose time or the ground will be occupied by another.”

While passionate about his faith, Wilberforce was at pains not to let his religious enthusiasm damage his friendship with Pitt and other establishment figures nor did he let it undermine his credibility as a respected Parliamentarian.

Hannah Moore, a famous literary figure, lent her writing skills and social influence to the campaign. During her lifetime Moore’s novels outsold those of Jane Austen many times over – such was the calibre of celebrity enlisted.

Josiah Wedgewood, famous to this day for fine china, was also involved. He pioneered the “political button”, mass producing a ceramic stick pin with the image of an enchained negro and the poignant question “Am I not a man and a brother?”

Local committees organised massive petitions which, in all, were signed by half a million British subjects. The activists also understood the power of humanising the political debate. The autobiography of a freed African slave, Olaudah Equiano, was published in 1789. They brought to media attention

the scandal of the slave ship Zong, where the captain Luke Collingwood ordered 133 sick slaves thrown overboard knowing he could claim insurance on jettisoned “cargo”. Graphic details were revealed of squalid conditions aboard slave ships where men and women were forced to lie in cramped conditions for months below deck wallowing in each other’s faeces.

On learning the truth, Wilberforce wrote in his diary: “I am permanently hurt about the slave trade”.

Their advocacy on behalf of the oppressed cut Britain to the quick until the dam finally burst in 1807.

BY ANY MEASURE TODAY’S INJUSTICES, SANCTIONED AND TOLERATED BY OUR PARLIAMENTS, DEMAND NO LESS OF OUR ATTENTION THAN THE INJUSTICES THE SLAVERY ABOLITIONISTS CONFRONTED.

Wilberforce had introduced a Bill to end the slave trade 12 times in the preceding 15 years, before he tasted success.

However, the battle did not end with halting the trade. Abolitionists now set their sights on emancipation of all slaves in the British Empire, particularly in the sugar plantations of the West Indies.

In 1825 Wilberforce retired from Parliament but continued to speak out. There were others in the House who continued his legacy. Just months before his death in 1833, Wilberforce received news of the success of the emancipation bill. The political deal that secured freedom came at a price which some purists in the abolition movement found distasteful. Compensation of a massive 20 million pounds sterling was to be offered to the plantation owners for up to half the market value of their slaves.

Understanding how politics worked, Wilberforce was not concerned. “Thank God,” he said, “that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty million sterling for the abolition of slavery.” A year later, with Wilberforce now dead, emancipation came into effect, freeing 800,000 slaves in the British Empire.

The historian G. M. Trevelyan wrote: “On the last night of slavery, the negroes

in our West Indian islands went on to the hill tops to watch the sun rise, bringing them freedom as its first rays struck the waters”.


By any measure today’s injustices, sanctioned and tolerated by our Parliaments, demand no less of our attention than the injustices the slavery abolitionists confronted. Like the slave traders of old who said boarding a slave ship out of “barbaric” Africa was the happiest day of a negro’s life, today’s legal brothel owners win Australian State parliamentarians over by telling them that life for our young women in their brothels is fine.

The monumental achievement of the abolitionists in forcing Western civilisation (other European countries soon followed Britain’s lead) to recognise the black African as human – as a brother – has not stopped us today from failing to extend social inclusion to our unborn, who are aborted at a rate of around 90,000 per year. Like Captain Luke Collingwood’s insurance, Medicare is the underwriter of abortion.

And despite recent heroic wins in weaning some of the large chocolate manufacturers off cocoa beans produced by child slave labour, slavery itself remains a blight on our planet 200 years after Wilberforce – although thankfully, not condoned by most governments.

Sex trafficking of young women and girls, fuelled by the globalisation of post-1960s values, is rife while rich nations continue to drag their feet on their promise to halve world poverty by 2015 through the Millennium Development Goals.

While today we face these and other big injustices, it is arguable that the obstacles to overcoming them are no greater than the obstacles faced by Wilberforce and his band of activists. The ingredients for political success employed by our abolitionist heroes are available to us today. Courage, persistence, evidence gathering, networking, grass roots activism and above all “real Christianity” brought political change in their day.

A way has been charted and we should not shirk following in their footsteps in the face of today’s injustices. 

Jim Wallace is managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby and Lyle Shelton is chief of staff.



A balanced gospel

20 DAILY BIBLE STUDIES IN LUKE 4:22–6:49 AND TITUS

Powerful movements of God's Spirit in the history of the church have always been accompanied by social action that has had a profound effect on whole societies, even on those not personally touched by the Holy Spirit's power in conversion. Our (rightful) emphasis and insistence on salvation by grace alone carries with it the danger of failing to recognise the impact saving faith should have on daily living.

Our own society desperately needs such an impact, something that demonstrates what it means for the followers of Jesus to be effective salt and light, penetrating every aspect of daily life. How did Jesus approach the task of bringing in the Kingdom of God? What resources did He gather and use? More importantly, what are the basic truths He came to reveal? What effect did He expect them to have on people's lives? Have we already drifted some distance from Jesus' teaching? Are we faithfully telling our generation what Jesus taught, while our lives are sending out quite a different signal?

This month we will look at some chapters in Luke's Gospel to remind us of how Jesus operated, and then at Paul's letter to Titus where he concludes: "And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone... Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives" (3:8b, 14).



Bruce Christian is a former Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

DAY 1

Predictable reaction

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 4:22-30

THE POINT Most of us experience a vastly different reaction to our efforts from those who know us well compared with those who only see our “public” side. The difficulty Jesus had with the home-town crowd is that they had already made up their mind that He could not be God’s Messiah because they knew Him as the little boy who had grown up helping His father in the carpenter shop. Even if they saw His miracles they still would not believe. The final insult for them came when Jesus referred to some Old Testament instances where God did miraculous things for despised foreigners outside the Covenant instead of for His own people!

THE PARTICULARS

- In spite of their feelings, the people could not help being

impressed by, and attracted to, Jesus’ bearing and teaching. (22)

- Jesus had/has no ministry to those who had/have minds closed against Him; nothing would/will ever convince them. (23-24)
- The OT is full of embarrassing (to the Jews) examples of God’s active concern for the welfare of His Gentile “enemies”. (25-27)
- The Jews couldn’t harm Jesus before His appointed time. (28-30)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do you have any preconceived ideas that prevent you from fully accepting God’s revelation about Jesus in the Gospels?

DAY 2

Staking out the territory

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 4:31-37

THE POINT The prince of this world (John 12:31) had long laid claim to the hearts of men. But now his territory is being challenged by the promised Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 41:14, 43:14, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7, 54:5). He recognises the true identity of Jesus when Jesus’ own countrymen fail to do so. Evidence that God’s Kingdom has truly come is overwhelming and conclusive.

THE PARTICULARS

- Jesus’ hearers recognised the clear authority in His words. (32)
- The man had a specific affliction of demon-possession. The presence of Jesus brought out a reaction of terror from within him (as it did with many others in a similar condition through-

out Jesus’ earthly ministry) because the devil knew that the battle-lines were drawn. But he did not intend to surrender without a fight, causing as much havoc as possible in the process. (33-35)

- Jesus had authority to command the demon’s expulsion. (35-36)
- The common people, as well as the evil (“unclean”) spirits, saw clearly what the Jewish authorities refused to acknowledge, so the news about Jesus spread very quickly throughout the area.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- The Gospels distinguish clearly between demon possession and other illnesses. Why is exorcism significant in Jesus’ ministry?

DAY 3

Balance in ministry

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 4:38-44

THE POINT For several reasons, it would have been tempting for Jesus to specialise in a spectacular ministry of exorcism: it would have been impressive and attract large crowds; the demons were His best publicity agents because they were not slow in revealing publicly His true identity; Satan would have been put in his place, and disturbed people made whole. But this wasn’t God’s way. Jesus reinforced this when He faced the temptations in the wilderness (4:1-13). The Father’s way led to a cross of shame; it required patience to wait for the proper time; it involved long periods of time alone with the Father in prayer; it needed hearts to be changed from the inside through repentance-and-faith, which in turn meant

widespread preaching/teaching. No, ministry in God’s way requires balance and involves hardship.

THE PARTICULARS

- In spite of His busy schedule and the pressure it placed on Him, Jesus did not lose sight of the needs of the individual. (38-40)
- The demons not only recognised Jesus as the Holy One, but also as the Christ (the promised “Anointed One” or Messiah). (41)
- Jesus made prayer and public preaching His top priority. (42-44)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Has the Church today lost the right balance in ministry? How?

DAY 4

Fishers of men

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 5:1-11

THE POINT It is no coincidence that Simon, the ben-Zebedee brothers, and some of the other first disciples were fishermen. Their boats made excellent pulpits for large crowds because the water both gave Jesus space and allowed good sound wave transmission. The occupation itself provided a good illustration of what this new calling as followers of Jesus would involve. Lastly, Jesus calls ordinary people engaged in their lowly tasks to come and experience God’s mighty power working through them as they respond in obedience to His call. (cf 1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

THE PARTICULARS

- This wasn’t the first contact the fishermen had had with Jesus (cf 4:38, Mark 1:16-20, John 1:35-42), but it was what

finally convinced them to leave everything to follow Him full-time.

- Simon had come to realise the wisdom in doing whatever Jesus said, no matter how illogical it might seem at the time. (5)
- The productivity of all our time and effort is in God’s hands. (6) The task He calls us to is bringing others into His Kingdom. (10)
- We can’t appreciate God’s power fully until we recognise our own frailty and unworthiness; we can’t take His glory from Him.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What specific truth is God teaching you in this passage today?

DAY 5

Honest faith

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 5:12-16

THE POINT Jesus said that faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:20, 21:21), but we find it hard even to move a molehill before it becomes a mountain! So this leper's approach is very encouraging. He is not short of faith, but he just doesn't know whether or not Jesus actually wants to heal him. What if it is part of the divine will that he remain a leper? The point Jesus wanted to stress with the mustard seed comparison is that getting my prayers answered has more to do with where I direct my faith than with how much of it I have. I like the story of the famous prayer warrior who responded to the "Dorothy Dix" question, "Do you believe in the power of prayer?", with, "No I don't. I believe in the

power of God, and therefore I pray."

THE PARTICULARS

- The depth of the man's faith was demonstrated by his penitence and humility. In contrast we sometimes try to make a show of how much faith we have by reciting our prayer achievements.
- Jesus has power to cure an incurable disease like leprosy with the simple touch of His hand and the words, "Be clean".
- The more "success" Jesus had, the more he spent time in prayer.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What do we learn from Jesus' instructions to obey Moses (14)?

DAY 6

Just dropping in on Jesus

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 5:17-26

THE POINT Although the Bible indicates a clear connection between illness and sin, the story of Job shows that a specific ailment may not necessarily be the result of a sin committed by the afflicted person. Jesus Himself makes this point in John 9:3. In the case of the paralytic it seems there was some connection between the condition of his body and the condition of his heart before God. But the point Jesus is making is that it is more important to be made whole spiritually (ie to have our sins forgiven) than to be cured physically. The physical healing here really only served to prove to the crowd that Jesus did have power to forgive sin.

THE PARTICULARS

- The faith of the man and friends was practical and persistent, not just a hollow sentimentality; unlike him, it had legs.
- The man knew Jesus could help him, but Jesus knew more than he did just how much and what sort of help he needed. Turning to Jesus in faith usually gives us more than we bargained for.
- Jesus' demonstrated proof that He has power to forgive sins (a right that belongs to God alone) reinforced His unambiguous claim to be God – a point certainly not lost on the Pharisees.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Have you laid your entire sinful, broken life at Jesus' feet?

DAY 7

Inheriting Levi's genes

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 5:27-32

THE POINT Conversion is not about what we were, but about what we become. The Jewish leaders generally could never grasp this. They were interested in what they were, or at least what they thought they were. Jesus had come to transform broken, messed up sinners into beautiful, healthy saints. We can't participate in this process unless we first see we need it. Would I subject myself to the trauma of plastic surgery if I thought I was Adonis incarnate? Ex-Pharisee Paul sums it all up in 1 Timothy 1:15.

friends.

THE PARTICULARS

- No one is excluded from the call to leave everything and follow Jesus because of an "iffy" background, business or set of

- Jesus can change people instantly – as He did in the case of Levi.
- The change in Levi/Matthew (cf Mt. 9:9-13) was radical. The first thing he did was introduce his current friends to Jesus.
- The reaction of the Pharisee sect to Jesus' attendance at Levi's little exercise in hospitality-evangelism exposed their basic problem (see 18:9-14). While ever they thought they were a cut above the "sinners" they would never find salvation in Christ.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do you still have any non-Christian friends? What pro-active effort do you make to introduce them to Jesus? Is it working?

DAY 8

Life and death don't mix

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 5:33-39

THE POINT God's Plan of Salvation from all eternity had its focus on Jesus. This is what the New Testament has in mind when it refers to Jesus as "the Lamb that was slain from the creation/foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). God's revelation of Himself and His Covenant with His Elect in the OT has no value apart from Jesus. The whole sacrificial system is ineffective and meaningless on its own; it only procures forgiveness because it anticipates His perfect sacrifice on the cross. But the religion of the Pharisees, Judaism, had become quite different from this. It claimed to be based on the OT Scriptures but it had missed the heart of the matter. That is why they didn't recognise Jesus when He came. That is why

Jesus had to declare that His Good News could in no way be accommodated in Judaism. It had its source in the Scriptures themselves, not in their man-centred interpretation.

THE PARTICULARS

- Jesus came to bring life and joy to people plagued by dead religion; He came to relate to them as a bridegroom to His new bride.
- Trying to combine the Gospel and Judaism would destroy both.
- The Pharisees were too set in their ways to accept Jesus. (39)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What different warnings are there here for the Church today?

DAY 9

Jesus and the Bible

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 6:1-11

THE POINT Luke now gives us an ideal practical example of what Jesus meant by the bridegroom/wine/patch illustration above.

THE PARTICULARS

- Jesus occupied Himself on the Sabbath in the way God intended in the 4th Commandment: He met for worship with other believers who had taken time off from their regular work for rest.
- Jesus knew the real purpose of the 4th Commandment: to remind us of our total dependence on Him by desisting from all normal income-producing pursuits on His special Day and relaxing and enjoying His presence and His creation. To make

use on this Day of His special provision for hungry travellers (Deut. 23:25), or as an opportunity to help someone in need (say, of healing), had nothing to do with the point of the commandment.

- The Pharisees' regulations showed a total misunderstanding of the intention of the 4th Commandment, and therefore of the true message of their Scriptures (cf Jn 5:39, 2 Cor. 3:15).
- By referring to Himself as "the Son of Man" and "Lord of the Sabbath" Jesus was claiming to be God (5; see Daniel 7:13).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- We can't truly grasp who Jesus is or why He came without understanding the whole Bible; we can't truly understand the Bible without Jesus.

DAY 10

The cost of discipleship

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 6:12-26

THE POINT Jesus is about to give His followers the manifesto of His "new-wine" Kingdom. It will set them back on their heels because of its unexpected content. Most of them had gathered to Him from miles around because of the power that seemed to radiate from Him, power that could heal all their diseases and calm their disturbed spirits. He had the world at His feet ... but He was quite direct in telling them that His Kingdom was about persecution, poverty, hardship, hunger, rejection, and being misrepresented. It was hardly an encouraging pep-talk for potential recruits!

THE PARTICULARS

- Even Jesus, the divine Son of God, devoted a whole night to

solitary prayer before choosing His twelve apostles-in-training.

- Jesus had power to heal every effect caused by sin in the world.
- Jesus confronted potential devotees with off-putting truth. (20)
- The overarching reality about Jesus' Kingdom is that it turns the world's thinking completely upside-down at every point.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How much is the Church today motivated by the world's marketing/recruiting methods rather than those of Jesus? Is it any different when it comes to measuring success? Are we happier when the media congratulates us or when it ridicules us?

DAY 11

The cast of discipleship

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 6:27-36

THE POINT One of the most destructive forces in the world today is revenge, from suing each other when things go wrong, through actively hurting each other when families break up, to going to war or terrorising each other in an endless pay-back loop. Jesus warned His followers about what treatment to expect from the world if they joined His side; now He tells them how to respond to this treatment. This teaching is no less surprising than yesterday's!

THE PARTICULARS

- Jesus not only disallows revenge in His Kingdom, He demands that personal abuse and ill-treatment be responded to not only with positive, genuine love but a practical generos-

ity of spirit.

- Jesus' "golden rule" in all of this is: Sit down and think out how you would like other people to treat you (eg you would like them to make allowances for your weaknesses, or give you the benefit of the doubt in a dispute, or forgive you when you make a silly mistake); now go and do exactly the same for them! (31)
- The average "sinner" manages to keep his desire for revenge under control; he is also quite capable of meeting kindness with kindness. Only the redeemed sinner can answer hate with love.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What 2 reasons does Jesus give for His demands (35, 36)?

DAY 12

Jesus, the only true teacher

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 6:37-42

THE POINT In these simple, direct words Jesus exposes the sinfulness of the human heart. By judging others and pointing out their faults (whether vocally or just mentally) I acknowledge there is a standard, but I'm not prepared to measure my own behaviour by that standard, and I certainly hope God doesn't. In fact, I hope He will forgive me ... and then I fail to forgive my brother! Paul develops this theme in Romans 2-3 to show that every human being is without excuse and stands condemned before God. The good news is that God has provided a solution (the only one) in Christ (Romans 3:21-26).

Jesus hinted at this fact here in verses 39-40: human wisdom, blinded by sin, can only lead to disaster; he, the only true

teacher, unaffected by this sin but seated above it, can enable the penitent sinner (student) to share in the eternal life that is found in Him (see John 1:4, 12f).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are you pleased you are not one of the hypocrites Jesus is describing in this passage? (Be careful – this is a trick question!)
- In dealing with us, God is happy to use the same criteria/rules we use on others. Do you like this arrangement? What 2 options are open to you in this dilemma? (Ans: 1. Change the way you treat others; and 2. Cry out to God for mercy and look up to Christ on the cross, taking God's just punishment in your place.)

DAY 13

Jesus, the only foundation

THE PASSAGE

LUKE 6:43-49

THE POINT Band-aids don't heal. The problem of our sin must be dealt with at the very core. If this is not done, our pretence of religion will eventually be seen to be a fraud ... with disastrous results.

THE PARTICULARS

- Jesus (in fact the whole Bible) sorts men into only two groups: good and evil, godly and ungodly, righteous and wicked. It is true that a man's life-style – his behaviour, not just his words – doesn't determine which group he is put into, but it is a clear and reliable indicator of which group he is already in.
- Pious talk is useless unless accompanied by true obedience.

- The relative fate of each house had nothing to do with the actual construction of the house itself; it was decided by the sort of foundation on which the house was built (in context, "well built" in verse 48 must be a reference to the foundation).
- Our earthly lives will be thoroughly tested on Judgement Day. Only those founded on Christ, as evidenced by obedience to His word and not just outward profession, will withstand the test.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What aspects of the tree/house illustrations emphasise the importance of obedience? What aspects emphasise faith? (Read John 15:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 to help with this.)

DAY 14

Our eternal hope

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 1:1-4

THE POINT Because of what Paul wanted to say to Titus in this letter, he establishes, in a long introduction, his credentials for doing so, the eternal validity of the Gospel he preaches, and God's electing grace that guarantees the effectiveness of his preaching.

THE PARTICULARS

- The apostles (sent ones) saw themselves also as Jesus' bond-slaves. (1; cf Rom. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, James 1:1, 2 Pe. 1:1)
- Paul's fundamental task was to draw out the faith of those whom God had already called (his elect), bring them to a deeper knowledge of the truth, and so lead them to godly living (1).

- Faith and knowledge would be empty and academic if it weren't for the fact that they rest firmly on the hope of eternal life (2).
- The message of the Good News of Jesus the Saviour is as old as time itself. It has been part and parcel of Creation itself – ie God promised it when time began (cf Revelation 13:8) – and this God, by His very nature, cannot lie (2); moreover, this Gospel is made known through Paul's preaching of it at the express command of our saving God (3). Paul's claim has strong implications for the inspiration and authority of Scripture as God's Word written!

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How important to the Gospel is a strong doctrine of Scripture?

DAY 15

Leadership matters

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 1:5-9

THE POINT Clearly Paul saw that the future of the Church's health and strength rested in the quality of its leadership. It seems that he is writing this letter primarily to drive this point home to Titus.

THE PARTICULARS

- It is amazing that the small island of Crete in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea should be so impacted by the gospel already that Paul instructs Titus to "appoint elders in every town"! (5)
- Appointing elders is a high priority for Church planting. (5)
- The elder (his office) should be an overseer (his function). (5-7)

- An elder should have a credible public witness: blameless and upright (ie having nothing to hide from the media); not inclined to be drunk, violent, dishonest or greedy; kind to those in need.
- An elder should have a credible witness at home: a one-woman man; presiding over a covenant family with children who don't discredit the Gospel; always honouring the Lord in all things.
- An elder should have a godly witness in all his relationships: not be a forceful pain-in-the-neck or have a short fuse; be kind.
- An elder should have a good, accurate and trustworthy grasp of the Christian faith, both in his head and in his heart and life.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Do we emphasise these things enough when choosing leaders?

DAY 16

No compromise

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 1:10-16

THE POINT The Gospel made such an impact on Paul's understanding of God, His grace and His provision of Jesus as Messiah and only Saviour in fulfilment of all His promises, that he became quite emotional in his opposition to any fellow Jews who failed to make this same clean break with the past. He had to warn Titus not to let them undermine the witness of the Church in Crete.

THE PARTICULARS

- Paul was prepared to label any Jew who failed to see how the Gospel had completely removed circumcision as the covenant sign as a deceiving rebel who must be silenced totally. (10-14)
- Their influence was not just another viewpoint among

Church members, but was undermining the faith of whole families. (11)

- Behind wrong doctrine there is often a financial motive. (11)
- Cretans were notorious for dishonesty and base depravity. The Gospel must impact such a culture without compromise. (12-14)
- If there isn't a definite break with our old, corrupt ways we leave ourselves open to hypocrisy, inconsistency, disobedience and an incapacity for anything that might please God. (15-16)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Is the Church sometimes too slow to let the Gospel fully change a culture? Are we compromising with our own culture?

DAY 17

Good relations

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 2:1-10

THE POINT A significant feature of our own society is a loss of respect for authority, together with a reluctance to recognise God-given distinctions in the pursuit of an egalitarian ideal. Paul sets out role descriptions to help us behave and relate in a godly way.

THE PARTICULARS

- Good, healthy relationships are the result of good theology. (1)
- Older men must earn the respect belonging to them by exhibiting a healthy, robust faith, accompanied by genuine love for others, persistence in adversity, and a quiet, even temper. (2)
- Older women must show respect in all their relationships, and use their faculty of speech for positive not negative purposes; they especially must set their daughters a godly example. (3-5)

poses; they especially must set their daughters a godly example. (3-5)

- Young women's prime responsibility is in the home: to recognise the headship of their husbands, to be devoted to them and their children, and to be good models of purity and self-control. (4-5)
- Young men should join with their fathers as good witnesses to everyone of trustworthiness, integrity and self-control. (6-8)
- An employee's witness includes full respect for the boss. (9-10)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• In what ways has the thinking of our society moved away from these Biblical principles? How can we undo past mistakes?

DAY 18

Saying 'No' to ungodliness

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 2:11-15

THE POINT Paul is concerned that Titus should challenge the churches on Crete to take seriously their profession of faith. To be salt and light, Christians must be distinctively different from the society in which God places them, so that observers will identify them clearly as "Jesus" people, waiting, ready for their Lord to come.

THE PARTICULARS

- An amazing discovery for Paul (a Jew) to make was that God's saving grace wasn't just for His own people but for all men. (11)
- Although grace is a gift, it commands a response of disciplined, godly living in a society bent on satisfying every whim. (12)
- This response is made easier if we focus our attention on the Lord's Return, waiting in hope for Him. It is then that we will experience true happiness, when God Himself once again comes among us in the person of His Son, our Saviour/Messiah. (13)

Lord's Return, waiting in hope for Him. It is then that we will experience true happiness, when God Himself once again comes among us in the person of His Son, our Saviour/Messiah. (13)

- Jesus' purpose in redeeming us was not only to deliver us from bondage to sin, but to make us pure and holy, united with Him in His ministry of goodness to the outcast and oppressed. (14)
- God's servants in ministry must speak out with conviction. (15)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• Do your non-Christian friends identify you with the ideal they have of Jesus? What will Jesus find you doing when He comes?

DAY 19

Saved ... to do good

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 3:1-8

THE POINT For 2,000 years the Church has been plagued by two errors that might be summed up by the terms "cheap grace" and "works righteousness". The one is so busy avoiding any idea that our good works contribute anything at all to our salvation that it discourages efforts toward godliness; the other is so concerned about earning God's approval that it fails to see the need for grace. Paul argues constantly in all his letters that it is a case of "both/and", not "either/or", as these few verses make clear.

THE PARTICULARS

- The elements of a credible Christian witness in a fallen world include: submission/obedience to government authority; good citizenship; building/maintaining good working relationships in our speech and action; being kind; and being humble. (1-2)

citizenship; building/maintaining good working relationships in our speech and action; being kind; and being humble. (1-2)

- It is good to reflect on what God has actually saved us from. (3)
- Our salvation is based on grace and mercy alone, completely independent of any (even potential) good deeds; the whole being born again operation is done by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. (4-7)
- Trusting in God must be accompanied by doing good. (8)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• How accurately does your life reflect your profession of faith? What difference is belief in Jesus making to the way you live?

DAY 20

Marks of the Church

THE PASSAGE

TITUS 3:9-15

THE POINT At the end of this letter (14) Paul refers again, for the sixth time, to the importance of "doing what is good" (cf 1:16; 2:7,14; 3:1,8). Coupled with his emphasis throughout this short letter on the importance of right doctrine, we see once more his concern that right belief and right practical expression of it must always go hand in hand. Consistency of belief and practice is a mark of a true Church, as is a genuine pastoral concern for one another.

THE PARTICULARS

- A church that "majors on minors" will fail. The minor issues are usually things that lead to division, and the sort of people who emphasise them tend to be divisive by nature; they contrast with people who exhibit the qualities listed in verse 2. (9-11)

trast with people who exhibit the qualities listed in verse 2. (9-11)

- Divisiveness has its source in man's sinful, fallen nature; like any sin, it must be dealt with quickly and decisively. (10-11)
- In spite of his own continuing difficulties (cf eg 2 Corinthians 11:23-29), Paul always had a deep, personal concern for the welfare of others, even, and especially, those far away. (12-15)
- God designed us, redeemed us, and called us to be useful, not idle; the Church in Crete needed to understand this. (14, cf 1:12)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

• How good are you at keeping in touch with fellow-labourers?



news

CHURCHES BACK RESEARCH

Denominations from every state and territory in Australia and representing most Australian church attenders have signed up for the 2011 **National Church Life Survey**.

They will be provided with individualised feedback from the survey that continues to be a rich resource for church leaders to use for the benefit of their people and for planning, outreach and advocacy.

From September to November 2011 each participating church will be given a "Survey Month" to complete the survey and they will receive their individual feedback and analysis within a few months.

Denominations that have already indicated their intent to take part include the **Anglican Church, Australian Christian Churches (AOC), Baptist Churches, Catholic Church, Christian Missionary Alliance, C3 Churches (CCC), CRC Churches International, Christian Outreach Centres, Church of the Nazarene, Churches of Christ, Congregational Churches, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, Christian Reformed Churches, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventist, Uniting Church, Vineyard Fellowship, Wesleyan Methodist Churches**, and the **Worldwide Church of God**.

Around 400,000 attenders in 7000 churches in 22 Christian denominations took part in previous National Church Life Surveys in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006.

MUSLIM MOBS IN EGYPT

Egyptian Muslim mobs are seething against the country's Christians following an **Al-Jazeera** television report that the Christians were aligned with Israel and stockpiling weapons in preparation for attacking the Muslims.

Fears for the safety of the Christians are growing after a series of violent threats and mass demonstrations against them, according to the **Barnabas Fund**, a Christian advocacy and charitable organization based in

Britain. Muslim rage was ignited last month when Al-Jazeera aired the accusations against the Christians. In addition, the Barnabas Fund reported, the anger is being fuelled by rumours circulated by Islamist leaders that Christians are kidnapping and torturing women who had converted to Islam.

At least 10 mass Muslim demonstrations by crowds numbering in the thousands took place against Christians last month. A previously unknown group called **Front of Islamic Egypt** vowed that the Christians would experience a bloodbath.

Arutz 7

NEW BIBLE CHIEF

Dr **Greg Clarke**, a founding director of the **Centre for Public Christianity**, a well-known author and speaker, and a guiding voice in many cross-denominational Christian projects, has been appointed the new CEO of the **Bible Society in Australia**.

Dr Clarke said, "I am humbled to be given this opportunity and look forward to working with existing senior management and their staff as we focus on creating a truly national operation. The contribution of the Bible Society in Australia has been outstanding over the last 200 years and I feel confident that the new structure will serve the aims and objectives of the organization most appropriately."

LAWYER'S FAMILY BUTCHERED

Islamic extremists have killed a Christian lawyer, his wife and their five children in north-western Pakistan for mounting a legal challenge against a Muslim who was charging a Christian exorbitant interest, local sources said.

Police found the bodies of attorney and evangelist **Edwin Paul**, his wife **Ruby Paul** and children aged 6 to 17 on September 28 at their home in Haripur in the North-West Frontier Province, according to Haripur Station House Officer **Maqbool Khan**. Paul had taken up the case of **Robin Mehboob**, a Christian taxi driver in Haripur facing a 500% interest on a loan from influential Muslim lender **Noor Khan**. Khan allegedly has been working with Islamic extremist groups to drive Christians out of the area, taking over their properties by charging exorbitant interest or leveling death threats.

Compass Direct

CHRISTIANS HELD HOSTAGE

Twenty-five Muslims are reported to have burned down 10 Christian homes, leaving 80 Christians homeless in Goda district of Jimma, Ethiopia.

According to **International Christian Concern**, the attackers, who were led by a local government militia, also set fire to Christians' barns killing their animals and destroying their harvest.

"The assailants asked the Christians to leave their homes and told them, 'We will show you what we are going to do to your homes and if you inform this to anyone we will burn you the way we burn your homes.' Then they set the Christian homes on fire and began celebrating by singing near the burned homes," said a Christian leader in an interview to ICC. The attackers then prevented the victims from leaving the village for 16 days.

Assist

CALL TO PROTECT FREEDOM

Christian Solidarity Worldwide has called upon the **Indonesian Government** to safeguard religious freedom and pluralism in the wake of attacks on Christians and Ahmadiyya Muslims in the country.

The **Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace** says that at least 30 attacks on churches have been reported so far this year, with extremist Islamist groups targeting churches in West Java in particular. The Ahmadiyyas, a Muslim sect, are also facing challenges to their religious freedom after Indonesia's **Minister for Religious Affairs, Suryadharma Ali**, suggested they should be banned.

The **Forum of Religious Freedom Solidarity**, a coalition of religious

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human rights and religious organisations in Indonesia, have voiced concern over the threats to religious freedom. The coalition held a peace march to the State Palace and delivered a letter to **President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono** in which they called upon the government to protect religious minorities and defend religious freedom.

Christian Today

BAPTISTS, PROTESTANTS AGREE

The **European Baptist Federation** and the **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe** have signed an agreement committing the two organisations to closer collaboration.

The agreement was signed at a meeting of the Baptists near Rome recently by its **General Secretary, Tony Peck**, and the **General Secretary of the CPCE, Michael Buenker**.

The two organisations are now “mutually cooperating bodies” and will attend each other’s council meetings and general assemblies. The agreement also binds them to regular joint meetings and consultations to explore points of common interest and concern.

Peck welcomed the agreement as a “clear sign of closer cooperation”. “Both branches of the Reformation have much to give to each other and much to receive from each other,” he said.

Christian Today

TEACHER FORCED TO FLEE

Authorities in the Maldives have had to transport a Christian teacher from India off one of the Islamic nation’s islands after Muslim parents of her students threatened to expel her for “preaching Christianity” because she drew a cross on the blackboard to demonstrate the points of the compass.

On September 29 a group of angry Muslim parents stormed the government school on the island of

Foakaindhoo, in Shaviyani Atoll, accusing **Geethamma George** of drawing a cross. Administrators at the school set up a committee to investigate the allegation, but parents did not wait for the finding that she had only drawn a compass, threatening to “tie and drag her off of the island”. Officials removed her immediately before she was attacked.

Preaching or practising a non-Muslim faith is forbidden under Maldivian law, which does not recognise any faith other than Islam.

Compass Direct

CHRISTIANS ACQUITTED

An Algerian court has acquitted two Christian men of eating during Ramadan in spite of a prosecutor’s demand that they be punished for “insulting Islam”. Authorities on August 12 arrested **Salem Fellak** and **Hocine Hocini** for eating lunch on a private construction site where they were working during Islam’s month of fasting during daylight hours.

Officers at a nearby police station saw the two men eating and confronted them for not fasting. When police realised the two men were Christians, they accused them of insulting Islam.

However, the judge at the court in **Ain El Hamman**, however, dismissed the case since “no article [of law] provided for a legal pursuit” against the two Christians, according to the BBC.

Compass Direct

PRAYERS FOR JERUSALEM

An estimated 100 million people worldwide prayed for peace in Jerusalem on Sunday October 2. The eighth annual **Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem**, which takes place on the first Sunday of every October, united some 300,000 churches in 175 nations to intercede in prayer on behalf of Jerusalem, Israel, and its inhabitants. The event is the largest Israel-focused prayer event in history.

“We are living in challenging days, when Jerusalem is under tremendous pressure on all sides,” said **Robert Stearns, Eagles’ Wings** founder and co-host of the prayer day.

“The prayers of faithful people on her behalf will make a difference, especially as Christians and Jews from the nations, along with Arab Christians and Jews from Israel, stand together in Jerusalem on October 3.”

Christian Today

VATICAN OPPOSES PRIZE

A Vatican official has voiced anger over the decision to award the **Nobel Prize for Medicine** to the pioneer of IVF. **Bishop Ignacio Carrasco de Paula**, president of the **Pontifical Academy for Life**, said it was “out of order” to award the prize to **Professor Robert Edwards**, who produced the first “test tube baby” in 1978.

“Without Edwards, there would be no market for human eggs; without Edwards there would not be freezers full of embryos waiting to be transferred to a uterus, or, more likely, used for research or left to die, abandoned and forgotten about by all,” he said.

Professor Edwards was selected by a panel in Sweden who said his work had brought joy to infertile people the world over. IVF is opposed by the Catholic Church, which argues that the creation of life is a marriage act that should not be subject to the involvement of a third party.

Christian Today

COUNCIL TO BAN BROTHELS

Parramatta City Council, in Sydney, has voted to ban all brothels and sex-related services as an acceptable land use and urged all other Australian councils to follow their lead.

Australian Christian Lobby spokeswoman Michelle Pearse said the council had taken a clear stand in favour of the best interests of the local community by becoming the first council in NSW to defy the NSW Government’s planning requirements which impose brothels on local communities despite compelling social concerns.

“Legalising brothels has been a clear failure everywhere it has occurred,” Ms Pearse said. Instead of pursuing a failed policy initiative, State Governments should be considering the Swedish model of prostitution control which treats prostitution as a form of abuse against women and prosecutes the purchaser of sex.

TURKISH CHRISTIANS FINED

After four years of legal battle in a Turkish court, a judge acquitted two Christians of insulting Turkey and its people by spreading Christianity, but not without slapping them with a hefty fine for a spurious charge.

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Four years ago, gendarmerie officers produced false witnesses to accuse **Turan Topal**, 50, and **Hakan Tastan**, 41, of spreading their faith and allegedly "insulting Turkishness, the military and Islam". At the Silivri court an hour west of Istanbul, **Judge Hayrettin Sevim** on October 14 acquitted the defendants but found them guilty of collecting information on citizens without permission and fined them \$A3200 each.

Compass Direct

SAUDIS CHARGE EXPATS

Authorities in Saudi Arabia have charged 12 expatriates from the Philippines and one from France with proselytising. Saudi religious police raided a Mass for 150 expatriates, and arrested the Christians, a Philippines embassy spokesman said.

In Saudi Arabia, the public practice of non-Muslim religions is strictly prohibited. Non-Muslims are only allowed to gather in homes for private religious services though the country's **Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice** has been known to conduct raids on private non-Muslim religious gatherings as well.

Apparently about 100 people were detained, but only 13 were arrested as there wasn't enough room at the police station.

ISRAEL INVITES CHILEANS

Israeli Tourism Minister **Stas Misezhnikov** has invited the 33 recently rescued Chilean miners and their wives to visit the Holy Land this Christmas. "Your bravery and strength of spirit, your great faith that helped you survive so long in the bowels of the earth, was an inspiration to us all," he wrote.

"It would be a great honor for us to welcome you as our guests in the Holy Land. This December, Christians around the world – and here in the Land of Jesus – will celebrate Christmas. During that time, we welcome tens of thousands of pilgrims and we would be pleased to offer you this uplifting and extraordinary experience, as our guests."

As a country Chile is very Christian, approximately 87% of the population, or almost 15 million people are of the Christian faith. According to interviews with many of the rescued men, that faith played a very important role in their survival.

Assist

DOCTORS OPPOSE EUTHANASIA

The **Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship of Australia** ethics committee has opposed moves to legalise euthanasia in Australian Parliaments.

Executive Officer **Dr Michael Burke** stated: "We affirm the dignity of all human beings and are committed to the relief of suffering and the provision of compassionate care in partnership with our patients and their loved ones. We firmly oppose any intervention which intentionally hastens death as a means of relieving suffering."

The association's website explains that while members do not oppose withdrawing futile treatment which artificially prolongs life in those whose death is inevitable and imminent, as Christians they believe the role of the physician is to first do no harm.



CHRISTIANS FINED OVER GAYS

The recent ruling of the **Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal** (VCAT) to fine a youth camp owned by a Christian organisation for seeking to operate in accordance with its religious creed and ethos has set a dangerous precedent for religious freedom in the state, according to the **Australian Christian Lobby's** Victorian director, **Rob Ward**.

"The decision of VCAT to fine **Christian Youth Camps Ltd**, established and owned by the **Christian Brethren**, for refusing to accommodate **Cobaw Community Health Service's Way Out** project, which supports same-sex-attracted young people in rural areas, was a clear case of rights ideology triumphing over common sense," Ward said.

"Although the state has a legitimate obligation to protect its citizens' right to equality and freedom from unreasonable discrimination, it is equally obliged to protect the rights of religious believers to live in accordance with their genuinely held religious beliefs, as individuals and in community."

He said the state's **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006** gives every person the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion

and belief, including the freedom to demonstrate his or her religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching, either individually or as part of a community, in public or in private.

"It would appear that VCAT has overlooked the Government's own directive to protect religious freedom in order to elevate equal opportunity to the top of the human rights pile," Ward said.

Ward said that the Government and its human rights bureaucracy must do more to assure religious believers and faith organisations that it takes seriously their fundamental human rights to live and operate in accordance with genuinely held beliefs.

STEM CELL BREAKTHROUGH

By Eric Young

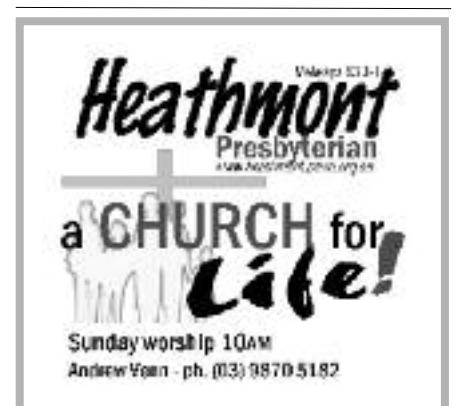
Christian medical professionals are hailing the latest breakthrough in stem cell research, claiming that it further proves that the destruction of embryos is unnecessary to find cures for disease.

Last month, a team of researchers announced a new technique that can quickly and more efficiently create safe alternatives to human embryonic stem cells.

The new method uses synthetic RNA to drive the expression of stem cell-inducing proteins without irreversibly altering the cells' genetic material.

The resulting stem cells then are able to recapitulate the functional and molecular properties of human embryonic stem cells, and therefore can be transformed into specialised cells to treat disease.

Unlike current methods that use viruses to deliver the genes that "reprogram" a cell into a stem cell, the new method poses little risk of cancer as RNA does not become part of the cell's genome. The resulting stem cells are also generated at much higher efficiencies than standard virus-based techniques



and in half the time.

"This breakthrough validates many other significant proofs of the therapeutic promise of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) and adult stem cells," said **Dr David Stevens**, CEO of the 16,000-member **Christian Medical Association** (CMA) in the US.

"Compared to the speculative, controversial and dangerous embryonic stem cell research that the [Obama] administration insists on funding illegally, iPS cell and adult stem cell research is a cheaper, faster, safer, more efficient and quicker path to the cures we need."

The research was led by **Derrick J. Rossi** of the **Children's Hospital Boston**, whose team of researchers spent more than a year developing the synthetic, chemically-modified RNA. He said the new technology has the potential to impact research far beyond the field of stem cells.

Christian Today

HEROD DISCOVERY

By Michael Ireland

A "royal box," built at the upper level of **King Herod's** private theater at **Herodion** in Israel may lend further evidence of the Judean King Herod's lavish lifestyle.

The royal box has been fully exposed in recent excavations in the framework of Herodion's National Park at the eastern edge of **Gush Etzion**. The work has been conducted by **Professor Ehud Netzer** under the auspices of the **Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute of Archaeology**, according to a media release from Israel's Ministry of Tourism.

"What an amazing discovery, a discovery that continues to prove that Israel is indeed the land of the Bible," said **Haim Gutin**, Commissioner for Tourism, North and South America. "Every step you take in Israel the Bible comes alive, and every stone reveals another page of history."

The theatre is located halfway up the hill close to Herod's mausoleum, whose

exposure in 2007 aroused worldwide attention. The highly decorated, relatively small theatre was built about 15 BC, the year **Marcus Agrippa** (second in the hierarchy of the Roman Empire) visited, according to Professor Netzer.

The royal box (measuring eight by seven meters and about six meters high) is the central space among a group of rooms attached to the upper part of the theatre's structure. This impressive room undoubtedly hosted the king, his close friends and family members during performances and was fully open towards the stage.

Its back and side walls are adorned with an elaborate scheme of wall paintings and plaster moldings in a style that has not been seen thus far in Israel; yet, this style is known to have existed in Rome and Campania in Italy during those same years. Netzer concludes, therefore, that this work was executed by Italian artists, perhaps sent by Marcus Agrippa, who a year before his visit to Judea met Herod on the famous Greek island of Lesbos.

The royal box site will be opened to the public after a special protective structure is built around the room, while the theater itself will undergo partial restoration.

Assist

DRUIDS GIVEN STATUS

By Michael Ireland

Britain has recognised Druidry, an ancient belief system that regards nature as its supreme being, as a religion for the first time and given it charitable status.

"There is a sufficient belief in a supreme being or entity to constitute a religion for the purposes of charity law," declared the **Charity Commission for England and Wales** in response to the **Druid Network's** application.

CNN said the decision will give the neo-pagan religion, known for its cloaked worshippers at Stonehenge and other sites, tax advantages and is expected to lead to broader acceptance.

"This has been a long hard struggle taking over five years to complete," said the Druid Network, which is based in England, in a statement on its website.

CNN quoted **Marty Laubach**, Associate Professor of Sociology at **Marshall University** who said that in some ways, Druidry in Britain is catching up to Druids and other neo-pagans in the United States, which already provides tax-exempt status for religious groups.

CNN reported that the British commission noted that Druidry "is animistic and based on a belief that everything has a spiritual dimension". It also said that the religion recognises deities within nature and conducts worship ceremonies.

It added that the Druid Network, which has about 350 members, sought charitable status for "the advancement of religion for public benefit and no other purpose", the commission said in its ruling.

Britain's Druid Network says public misconceptions about some of its practices persist. "While sacrifice is a core notion within most spiritual traditions, within Druidry it is confused by historical accounts of the killing of both human and animal victims," the network said in its application to the British commission. "No such practice is deemed acceptable within modern Druidry."

Assist

YOUNG 'NOT HOSTILE'

Young people have not inherited a rebellious hostility to their parents' beliefs, although for many of them religion is irrelevant for day-to-day living, says a new report.

The two key findings are outlined in a book entitled *The Faith of Generation Y*, by **Sylvia Collins-Mayo** (a sociologist of religion), **Bob Mayo** (a parish priest in West London), **Sally Nash**, director of the **Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry**, and **Anglican Bishop of Coventry Christopher Cocksworth**, who has five "Generation Y" children

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Reporting a study of more than 300 young people in England aged between eight and 23, who attended Christian youth and community work projects in England, *The Faith of Generation Y* provides an empirically grounded account of the nature of young people's faith – looking into where they put their hope and trust in order to make life meaningful.

The findings from the study suggest that for most young people faith is located primarily in family, friends and their selves as individuals. "For the majority, religion and spirituality were irrelevant for day-to-day living; our young people were not looking for answers to ultimate questions and showed little sign of 'pick and mix' spirituality," says Sylvia Collins-Mayo.

"On the rare occasions when a religious perspective was required (for example, coping with family illnesses or bereavements) they often 'made do' with a very faded, inherited cultural memory of Christianity in the absence of anything else," she said.

The 2001 UK census found that 62% of young Britons still call themselves Christian, compared to 71% of the population as a whole. Researchers say that this is more a cultural than a religious statement.

Ekklesia

SUDAN REFERENDUM NEAR

By Success Kanayo Uchime

Christians in Sudan, especially the southern part of the country, are soliciting prayers for the January referendum that will determine whether the largely Christian south should become independent from the north.

Open Doors UK and Ireland, a Christian group serving the suffering church, said in a report that its co-workers in Southern Sudan explained that

conflicting views between the political leaders pose a serious concern for the church, and have asked Christians around the world to lift them up in prayer.

Open Doors noted that, on October 4, 2010, police in Khartoum evicted the staff of an evangelical church from its events and office site, aiding a Muslim businessman's effort to seize the property. An unnamed elder said church leaders believe the property grab came in anticipation of the proposed referendum.

According to the report, with the April 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections completed, southern Sudan is preparing to hold a referendum and that members of the **United Nations Security Council** have promised support for the referendum - the first of its kind in the country's history.

"Although designed to ensure democratic transformation in Sudan, years of delays caused by unresolved issues of race, religion and resources have worried observers. One such issue is the demarcation of the disputed north-south border, along which most of Sudan's oil wealth lies," the report stated.

"Please pray for a peaceful solution to the dispute concerning the border demarcation. That the referendum commission will be formed in time to organize the January vote and that the church will play an active role in peace-making and be strengthened to withstand the threat still posed by the influence of the Islamic government in Khartoum," it also said.

Assist

CHURCHES FIGHT FEAR

By Annegret Kapp

In times of exploding budget deficits and unemployment figures, migrants are often used as scapegoats for all the ailments and failings of society.

In such a context it is the task of the church to uphold the human rights and

dignity of all, the members of the **World Council of Churches (WCC) Global Ecumenical Network on Migration** have insisted during their annual meeting.

"We believe that churches have the mandate and the biblical mission to foster the creation of a society where all peoples of the planet enjoy the gifts of God, created for all, in the spirit of love, justice and equality," **Seta Hadesian** reminded fellow members of the global network, which met in Geneva recently. Hadesian is the director of Diakonia and Social Justice at the Middle East Council of Churches.

The Global Ecumenical Network on Migration comprises members drawn from churches, church-related organisations and ecumenical bodies working on migration. It aims to deepen their understanding of global migration issues, set priorities, pool their advocacy resources and better impact upon global policy discussions.

One of the obstacles to the churches' vision is, according to **Franca Di Lecce**, director of the **Service for Refugees and Migrants of the Federation of Evangelical Churches** in Italy, that "contemporary societies are dominated by fear".

Reflecting on her experiences in Italy, Di Lecce said that the church needs to draw attention to the hidden logic behind migration policies. It is "a logic of war" that serves to hide "the failure of government" to provide "security, work, justice, peace and development".

For Di Lecce, promoting security really means "to promote legality, to punish organised crime, corruption, to combat unemployment and poverty through policies of social, economical and cultural inclusion directed towards all citizens, migrants and local people." Instead, security is often used as a slogan stigmatising migrants.

World Council of Churches

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Faith-full fathers

GREAT CHRISTIAN LEADERS SHOW HOW VITAL IS THE FATHER'S ROLE.

Phil Burcham

Last month in *AP* we explored the thought-provoking “Defective Father Hypothesis” advanced by US academic Paul C. Vitz in his 1999 book *Faith of the Fatherless*. This theory identifies the childhood absence of an effective father due to bereavement, abuse or abandonment as a strong predisposing influence towards adult unbelief. To support his theory, Vitz points to the life stories of such leading atheists as Jean-Paul Sartre, Bertrand Russell and Friedrich Nietzsche to conclude that the childhood absence of a loving paternal influence inclined these individuals to reject the transcendent Heavenly Father of historic Christianity.

Beyond illuminating the worldview choices of leading atheists, the “Defective Father Hypothesis” also sheds helpful light on the likely origins of the New Atheist resurgence of the past five years. To the millions of alienated Westerners reared in the broken families that litter our social landscape in the wake of the Sexual Revolution, the key New Atheist conviction that a godless world is unjust and unguided gels naturally with their jarring experiences of life in fatherless homes.

Although a causal link between fatherlessness and atheism seems plausible, Professor Vitz recognises that his theory would be strengthened by control data suggesting that positive experiences of fatherhood accompany a strong commitment to Christian theism. As Vitz notes, “It is possible the evidence of defective fathering in the lives of atheists is simply a reflection of the social conditions of the time. What is required is a comparison of the atheists with a control group of theists.”

To assemble this reference group, Vitz explores the family backgrounds of leading believers from a variety of historical and ecclesiastical settings, focussing mainly on apologists who defended the faith amid opposition from the prevail-

MARTIN'S COURAGEOUS ENERGY IN REFORMING THE 16TH CENTURY GERMAN CHURCH PROCEEDED FROM THE STABLE FOUNDATION OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS GOD-FEARING, DILIGENT FATHER.

ing elite of their times. By delving into the family histories of such eminent churchmen as Blaise Pascal, Edmund Burke, William Paley, Joseph Butler, John Henry Newman, G.K. Chesterton and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Professor Vitz shows convincingly that each of these individuals enjoyed healthy relationships with their fathers.

While Vitz mainly seeks support for his theory at the Anglo-Catholic end of the church spectrum, a case can be made for similar patterns prevailing in the family backgrounds of many great Evangelical and Reformed leaders. This article explores the personal histories of three significant Evangelicals – Martin Luther, Hannah More and Gresham Machen – to determine whether positive relationships with their fathers preceded their emergence as confident, publicly-assertive reformers and apologists.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Popular accounts of the life of this great Reformer often emphasise the tensions between Martin and his father Hans. An upwardly mobile yet strict copper miner, Hans clearly wanted a more rewarding future for his son than a life of spiritual servitude within a monastic order. Consequently popular accounts often convey the impression that he primarily opposed Martin's entry into the Augustinian Cloister at Erfurt because he feared an impoverished monk could not support his parents in their old age.

Those who have carefully studied Luther's substantial personal writings have concluded that the distress shown by Hans over his son's decision to become a monk was likely rooted in deep spiritual concerns. The great Scottish church historian Thomas Lindsay, for example, noted that “Luther always mentions his father with great reverence”. In Lindsay's estimation, Martin's writings reveal Hans as “a man of quiet, deep piety, but one who thought that God could be best served in the common citizen's life, and who heartily despised monks, men ‘full of cant and hypocrisy’.” Martin would later regret not paying closer attention to his father's concerns.

Martin's reaction on learning of Hans's death revealed the significant depth of this father-son relationship. Seizing his copy of the Psalms, he retreated to his study for a day of solitary, tear-drenched grief. “I was shaken in the innermost parts of my being,” Luther wrote, “so that seldom if ever have I despised death as much as I do now.”

There is little doubt that Martin's courageous energy in reforming the 16th century German church proceeded from the stable foundation of a healthy relationship with his God-fearing, diligent father. As Professor Lindsay concluded, the spiritual origins of the Reformation are best sought “in pious Christians like Hans and Margarethe Luther, who taught the boy within the family circle the evangelical truths he was afterwards to thunder forth from the Wittenberg pulpit.”

Hannah More (1745-1833)

Following Hannah's promising start as a playwright and member of the “Bluestocking” literary set, the vivacious young writer underwent a profound conversion that saw her flee the hollow theatrical scene in London and return to her Bristol homeland. Together with her sisters, she established a network of schools that brought unprecedented educational

opportunities to the impoverished families of the Mendip Hills.

Urged by John Newton to “wield a consecrated pen”, Hannah used her writing talents to greatly extend the cultural impact of the 18th century Evangelical Revival, directing a series of compelling pamphlets against the transatlantic slave trade as well as the wave of revolutionary atheism that swept Europe after Robespierre’s Reign of Terror in France. Assembling a sizeable library of revolutionary propaganda, Hannah studied their style and content carefully, identifying weaknesses in the atheist worldview so as to strengthen her own apologetic arguments.

Published as affordable “chapbooks” that were carried by door-to-door salesmen or distributed by charitable agencies, Hannah’s homely, unaffected pamphlets conveyed a simple, down-to-earth Christian vision which profoundly dented the appeal of revolutionary atheism for the average Briton. In the estimation of *The Eclectic Review*, one of Hannah’s most widely-circulated pamphlets, *Village Politics* (1793), “had most essentially contributed, under Providence, to prevent a Revolution”.

Hannah’s close relationship with her father Jacob More provided a solid launching pad for her remarkable work as a Christian apologist. A High Church Anglican and committed Tory, Jacob had homeschooled his prodigious daughter, teaching her poetry, Latin, Greek and mathematics. Biographers Jeremy and Margaret Collingwood place particular importance on Hannah’s upbringing, noting that she “was fortunate to have enjoyed such a good relationship with her father... She would need this stable background to cope with the flattery as well as the vilification she would meet in response to her work and writings”.

Hints of her strong relationship with Jacob appear in Hannah’s meditations on the Lord’s Prayer: “Of all the compellations by which the Supreme Being is designated in His Holy Word, there is not one so soothing, so attractive, so interesting, as that of Father. It fills the mind with every image that is touching, and the heart with every feeling that is affectionate. It inspires fear softened by love, and exhibits authority mitigated by tenderness.”

Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

For many of us today, cognisant of the havoc theological liberalism inflicted, swinging like a wrecking ball through

early 20th century Protestant institutions, the astonishing sway this movement held over Western minds in the early 1900s is hard to fathom. To Gresham Machen, a bright young Baltimore graduate undertaking further study in Germany, the heady modernist cocktail dispensed by the Professor of Dogmatics at Marburg seminary, Wilhelm Herrmann, was highly intoxicating. Writing home to his devout and concerned Presbyterian parents, Gresham gushed in 1905: “In New England those who do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus are, gener-



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Hannah More

ally speaking, religiously dead; In Germany, Herrmann has taught me that that is by no means the case.” Gresham was well on his way to becoming a statistic.

By the grace of God however, thanks to several influences, Machen escaped such a sad fate. These included the earnest letter-writing efforts of his parents, as well as input from the elder statesman of American Calvinism, B.B. Warfield. Following a return to Princeton, Gresham gradually recovered a strong confidence in the divine origin of Scripture as well as a convictional commitment to historic evangelical beliefs. Emerging as a leading critic of the liberalism that was sweeping Presbyterianism in the Northern States, in the early 1920s Machen published two significant books – *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* and *Christianity & Liberalism*. These books helped lay the foundations for the recovery of Evangelical scholarship that occurred later in the 20th century.

Despite the indignity of being

defrocked by the liberal-dominated Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1935, Machen implemented many far-reaching initiatives that helped galvanise the believing Reformed-Evangelical remnant in the USA. His rich legacy includes the establishment of Westminster Theological Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Gresham’s strong relationship with his father Arthur had prepared him for these important roles, and it is likely Arthur had nurtured his spiritual development from infancy. An excerpt from a childhood letter from Gresham to his mother reveals one side of his father’s input: “It seems to me that sundays get nicer and nicer becous Poply [i.e. Arthur] reads me in pilgrime progres and hears me my cattercism, and I like it very much.” Gresham’s spelling, in case you are wondering, improved greatly with age!

Late in life, Machen reflected on the good example Arthur had set when modelling an authentic Reformed spirituality. “My father,” he wrote, “was a profoundly Christian man, who had read widely and meditated earnestly upon the really great things of our holy faith. His Christian experience was not of the emotional or pietistic type, but was a quiet stream whose waters ran deep. Every Sunday morning and Sunday night, and on a Wednesday night, he was in his place in church, and a similar faithfulness characterised all his service as an elder in the Presbyterian Church.”

For those raised in Christian homes, the transition from childhood faith to adult discipleship is rarely event-free. Each of the three Evangelical leaders surveyed above experienced deep crises during this phase of life. Nevertheless, having been raised in environments shaped simultaneously by the love and discipline of faithful fathers, the spiritual challenges attending the onset of adulthood failed to overwhelm their childhood belief in God.

By contrast, for individuals reared in fatherless homes, the rocky experiences of early adulthood often precipitate an angry rejection of childhood faith. Clearly, by fostering spiritual resilience, fathering has profound eternal consequences. ap



Professor Phil Burcham is an elder at Scots church in Fremantle.

Beware complacency

‘SOCIAL INCLUSION’ COULD COST AUSTRALIA ITS HERITAGE.

Vickie Janson

If it had not been for my Egyptian friend, Hekmat, I might still be wondering what to think about Islam and its claims to be the Abrahamic faith. Hekmat was an ordinary mum, just like me, and our sons were best friends. We had endless coffee mornings as the boys wandered between our homes, kitchens and sleepovers. We were deeply and seriously integrated.

I hadn't thought much about evangelism, but as time went on, I began naturally sharing what the Lord had done for me. I could see this was stirring up faith in Hekmat. I became excited. But things were not as they seemed. I'd stirred up jealousy all right, but this jealousy turned Hekmat to the faith of her fathers; and so began my journey into Islam.

It really began with September 11 and the destruction of the World Trade Centre. It was then Hekmat adorned herself in the full Islamic dress and began to give us tapes, videos and DVD's about Islam. This is called *dawah*, the invitation to Islam, and it is very aggressive in Australia.

She invited my husband and me to many public lectures to hear Islamic clerics; we attended mosque open days, seminars, community events, and private social gatherings. We had the "brothers" come to our house to "give us the evidence". Hekmat and the community really wanted us to join the Umma, the Islamic community. And we grew to love these people. We longed to reach them.

But all the while, we were listening to another voice; the *voice* that divides the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. This voice enabled us to understand the claims of Islam and the plans of Muslims for Australia.

This voice consistently prompted us to love Muslims, yet resist Islamisation by way of sharia compliance (Islamic law). No laws are more binding, especially to Muslims, than religious law. In Victoria we observed increasing sharia



THIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM IS AN ATTEMPT TO MUTE THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE AND WESTERN HERITAGE OF AUSTRALIA.

compliance veiled as "religion" for the public (making this acceptable), and saw this as a move to a growing Islamisation. And it was Hekmat's compliance with this that moved our relationship from one that was seriously integrated to hopelessly segregated. Ultimately, submission to Islam was the only option offered us and one we had to decline.

Today, the call to prayer from the minaret stretches across the nations, silencing the church bells in its wake. While we can still hear those bells in Australia, we need to be vigilant and consider the voice of Islam that vies for our attention. Its call for submission is now being perpetuated in the name of "social inclusion".

Am I being too dramatic? Not if the church *is* being silenced where the minaret has the air space. Not if this call *is* making headway in Australia. The signs on the ground should concern us.

Elsewhere in the world, Islam is a growing force. There's government-enforced deregistration of churches in Azerbaijan and Christians detained without legal representation in Iran. There's police turning a blind eye to mob attacks of Christians in Indonesia. And, according to a 2008 report by the Association of Chief Police Officers,

17,000 British women are subjected to honour-related violence, including murder every year. The silencing of the church through Islamic legal means is taking place by stealth.

And the same call goes out in Australia often funded by unwitting taxpayers. The recent *Muslim Perspectives* curriculum project, which aims to include Islamic content in every school subject, calls for sensitivity over non-Islamic religious celebrations, especially Easter and Christmas. This involvement in the Australian curriculum is an attempt to mute the Christian message and Western heritage of Australia. A regional Asian and Islamic perspective is favoured. We are told to turn from the West to the East for a new national identity.

Then there's Victoria's vilification laws. They've been used to silence open discussion about Islam. All representations of Islam in Victoria are now invariably positive. And the government's commitment to invest in *Sharia* (Islamic) finance has slipped under the public radar with any opposition quickly silenced.

I have many questions. Does embracing Muslim people require Australia to embrace Islam? Is it true that Islam only contributes positively to our social capital? What's positive about kindergartens offering only *halal* (Islamically approved) food, universities with Muslim-only toilets and prayer rooms, controlled gender segregation in public lectures and swimming pools, and Islamisation of business and finance? What message is this sending?

Isn't Australia's willingness to meet *sharia* standards unwittingly serving a publicly stated extremist Islamist agenda, the imposition of an Islamic state? Isn't passively accepting foreign beliefs and laws undermining our own?

Sally Neighbour, an Australian commentator on Islamic extremism, dis-

counts the relevance to the Australian context of the growing tensions and social problems we see in Europe. Simply put, because Muslims were welcomed to Australia under a policy of multiculturalism and equal opportunity, we should expect a different outcome here than we see in our older brother Europe.

This, of course, puts the responsibility of genuine integration entirely upon the host nation. It's the circumstances of how we receive immigrants that will determine a positive or negative outcome. And the erroneous premise supporting unfettered immigration is that Islam doesn't conflict with democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and Western notions of equality.

In discounting Ayaan Hirsi Ali's warning about Islam in Australia, Neighbour notes the glaring differences between Australia and Somalia: "Forced marriage, enslavement of girls and the pre-Islamic practice of clitorrectomy," which she claims "thankfully have no place here." She concludes: "Besides, 38% of Australia's Muslims... are Australian-born."

Let me address some of these issues and let you decide. The British Forced Marriage Unit as of 2008 handled approximately 400 cases a year of forced marriage with girls as young as 11. A documentary was aired this year highlighting the wedding of a 14-year-old girl in New Zealand. The Muslim community who were fully aware of her age attended this wedding. No doubt they were also aware of New Zealand law on the matter.

By the girl's own admission, she was kept as a slave and she's not an isolated case. If these things are realities in Britain and New Zealand, can we honestly expect that Australian citizens are not falling victim to these practices? How are we to protect our Muslim citizens from such sharia practices?

And what of the practice of clitorrectomy? There are 11 Victorian FARREP service providers (Family and Reproduction Rights Education Program). They are responsible for educating about the health consequences of female genital mutilation and Australian law regarding this practice. How effective this education is with communities that rarely go outside their own is unknown.

But the University of Newcastle's professor of perinatal and infant psychiatry,

Dr Louise Newman, said some doctors were being approached to perform the procedure and "we know it's happening here ... the majority are done in the home in a traditional way".

Let's hope that traditional way isn't the same as Ayaan Hirsi Ali's experience with a pair of scissors, a needle and



THIS IS NO TIME TO SELL OUR BIRTHRIGHT BY PLACATING THE STRIDENT DEMANDS OF A MINORITY THAT WOULD REDUCE OUR FREEDOMS.

thread and the strong grip of the religious official to keep the patient still! Sadly, the *Daily Telegraph* ran the headline "Barbaric surgery plan for baby girls" (May 28, 2010), which noted that Australian doctors were going to discuss

backing "ritual nicks" – a modified form of genital mutilation. It seems if we stand for nothing, we'll fall for anything.

At the moment, the popular line is that female genital mutilation is either pre-Islamic or un-Islamic. Yet under the Shafi'i school of Islamic law, it is mandatory and likewise the Hanbali school teaches this is mandatory in certain areas. Sharia, in this instance, is an enemy to human rights, to freedom and to equality.

Because Islam is both missional and political it requires both a missional and political response. Australians should be slow to bow to everything dished up in the name of social inclusion. The Judeo-Christian heritage values freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law, which have all served us well. This is no time to sell our birthright by placating the strident demands of a minority that would reduce our freedoms. We need to hear the other *Voice* and value what makes us distinct. AP



Vickie Janson is a Christian who lives in Melbourne and is the author of the book, *Ideological Jihad*.

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NOVEMBER 2010

- 21** Granville Pillar *MP* (mission partners the Australian Presbyterian World Mission) worker from Newcastle NSW returning to Hungary to lecture in education.
- 22** Jumpstart Schoolies camp, Stradbroke Is, Qld.
- 23** Rhonda & Rhys Hall *MP* workers from Castlemaine and South Australia with Pioneers involved in preparing messages for broadcasting in Sudanese language.
- 24** Mt Stuart ch (charge) Hobart – leadership of elders while the minister David Jones is often away fulfilling his role as Moderator General.
- 25** Vacant Swan Hill ch Vic. with about 45 c&a, (communicants and adherents) 35 yf (younger folk – Sunday School and Youth) and 1 e (elder).
- 26** Vacant Finley ch, sthn NSW – 3 cngs incl Tocumwal and Berrigan with about 205 c&a, 85 yf and 7 e.
- 27** God's wisdom and overruling in the Victorian election today.
- 28** Presbytery of Penola SA – 3 ch totalling 9 cngs with about 380 c&a, 85 yf, 1 retired minister. C. Bain clerk.
- 29** James & Lee-ann Hanson *MP* workers from Drummoyne, Sydney with OMF International in east Asia involved in language learning and encouraging local Christians.
- 30** Canberra – St Andrews ch incl also Weston Creek with about 620 c&a, 20 yf and 43 e. Joy and Arnold Bartholomew.
- 31** Relief and Christian ministry among the millions affected by floods in Pakistan, and the tsunami and volcanic eruption in Indonesia.

DECEMBER 2010

- 1** Largs North app ch, Adelaide, with about 25 c&a and 2 e. (Raymond Brewer)
- 2** The GAA College and state Committees on ministerial training.

- 3** Drs Daniel & Esther Win *MP* workers from Penshurst, Sydney with Campus Crusade for Christ Global Aid Network involved in disaster relief.
- 4** Epping ch Melbourne with about 45 c&a, 5 yf and 2 e. Tony Parle.
- 5** Kenmore ch western Brisbane. Steve Blencowe.
- 6** Vacant Junee hm stn, sthn NSW with about 90 c&a, 20 yf and 7 e.
- 7** A Kowalenko *MP* wkr from Parramatta City ch, Sydney with European Christian Mission in Portugal involved theological education.
- 8** Canaan Korean ch, Petersham Sydney with about 40 c&a and 12 y. Won-Hyoung Moon.
- 9** Presbytery of Melbourne West – 5 ch and 4 hm stns totaling 10 cngns with about 715 c&a, 50 yf, 2 min U J, Richard O'Brien clerk.
- 10** Brimbank app ch, Melbourne with about 20 c&a and 2 e. Peter Owen.
- 11** Alex & Sybil Shaw *MP* workers from Epping, Sydney with Global Recordings Network – Alex: Convener of *MP* and training recordists; Sybil: recording, editing and distributing Christian messages in unwritten languages.
- 12** Cronulla ch, Sydney, with about 110 c&a, 40 yf and 5 e. Russell Stark.
- 13** Gladstone ch, Qld with about 100 c&a, 30 yf and 5 e. David Secombe.
- 14** Vacant Cessnock-Kurri Kurri hm stn NSW Hunter valley with about 80 c&a, 24 yf and 4 e.
- 15** Ron & Jean Lyons *MP* workers from Cairns, involved in encouraging Christian leaders in Weipa, Aurukun and Mapoon, N. Qld.
- 16** Cherrybrook ch, nthn Sydney with about 60 c&a, 10 yf and 5 e. Stephen Fong.
- 17** St Georges ch Geelong with about 85 c&a, 5 yf and 7 e. Allan Harman, Peter Wilding.
- 18** John and Keit Leung *MP* workers from Burwood, Sydney assisting indigenous church leaders in East.
- 19** Pty (Presbytery) of North Qld – 5 charges and 4 hm stns totalling 11 cngns with about 735 c&a, 325 yf, 3 rtd min, 1 min U J, Gregory Watt clk.
- 20** Botany-Mascot hm stn Sydney with about 40 c&a, 10 yf and 2 e. Noah Nam.

- 21** Dion & Annette Bremner *MP* workers from Dalby Qld with WEC International involved in strategic planning.
- 22** Vacant Middle Clarence ch, far nthn NSW – 2 cngns: Sth Grafton and Ulmarra – with about 175 c&a, 15 yf and 8 e.
- 23** Clayton ch Melbourne with about 145 c&a, 40 yf and 14 e. Michael Jensen.
- 24** Riverwood ch Sydney, with about 65 c&a, 40 yf and 5 e. Ian Stenhouse.
- 25** Praise God that the Word became flesh; pray that this message will come home to many today.
- 26** Safety and spiritual benefit for all on holiday.
- 27** PYV Camp Forest Edge until Sat. Andy May from Bundoora speaking on Ephesians. Also pray for Family Missions around the nation.
- 28** Riverwood ch, sthn Sydney with about 65 c&a, 40 yf and 5 e. Ian Stenhouse.
- 29** Sandy *MP* worker from Epping, Sydney involved in family ministry in East Asia.
- 30** Those facing changes of work and location in 2011.
- 31** Presbytery of Sydney 21 ch, totaling 23 cngns with about 3540 c&a 135 yf, 3 rtd min, 14 min U J, 2 school chaplains, 1 chaplain to the aged, 2 deaconesses, 3 theological teachers.

JANUARY 2011

- 1** North Adelaide app ch with about 65 c&a, 15 yf and 6 e. Chris ten Broeke.
- 2** Communities and churches severely affected by planned cuts to water available for irrigation.
- 3** Carisbrook hm stn, Vic. incl Castlemaine with about 65 c&a, 12 yf and 3 e. John Gething.
- 4** John and Keit Leung *MP* wkrs from Burwood, Sydney assisting indigenous church leaders in East Asia.
- 5** Deception Bay hm stn, nthn Brisbane, with about 50 c&a, 12 yf and 4 e. John Gilmour.
- 6** Grenfell ch wstn NSW with about 55 c&a, 7 yf and 4 e. Bern Merchant.
- 7** Daylesford app ch with about 7 c&a and 1 e Mark Crabb.

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Rest in God
 Iain Murray
 Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010
Reviewed by Peter Barnes

Tackling the Sabbath issue resembles tackling the music issue in modern evangelicalism – it is a recipe for conflict and misunderstanding. It is clear that something is seriously wrong in the contemporary church, but not so obvious what it is exactly. So often the issue is presented in terms of the ending of any Sabbath observance or a keeping a list of rules regarding it – and no view in between.

Iain Murray has produced a helpful booklet on the subject which argues that there is a continuity between the Old and New Testaments on the issue. I was intrigued by J. H. Merle d'Aubigné's admiration for British observance of the Lord's Day in 1845, although he added, "or the Sabbath as they term it, I think, improperly". It would have been good to tease out the reason for the adverb.

Interestingly, whereas Martyn Lloyd-Jones argued in his sermons on Ephesians that "you cannot make a man observe the Lord's Day by Act of Parliament; that is not the way to do it", Iain argues that the civil law ought to be involved in maintaining the Lord's Day. There are, of course, perfectly good reasons for the state to close the shops on Sunday, and curb commerce and industry.

Iain does not really deal with Romans 14:1 and Colossians 2:16-17, but the fact that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance from Genesis 2:3 has considerable ramifications for present-day commitment to the Lord's Day. He does point out that heads of households need to seek to make Sunday a day that is bright and happy. Even on the level of social har-

mony and well-being, modern Western society has lost much by making every day and week a matter of 24/7.

Peter Barnes is books editor of AP.

**Stronger than the Sword:
 Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake**

Faith Cook
 Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2010
Reviewed by Mignon Goswell

This is the third of Faith Cook's historical novels set in England over the period from 1645 to 1688. England was in the grip of religious wars and intolerance when Dissenters were persecuted. The fictitious storyline centres on Hugh Wilmot (a royalist cavalryman) and the Wilkes family (farmers and faithful, godly people). Their lives begin to be intertwined when Nicholas Wilkes saves Hugh from death on the night that his own son is seriously injured during a battle with the Royalist army. The contrast is drawn between Hugh and the Wilkes family in their social station, political persuasions, religious convictions and family relationships. The injunction of Jesus to love your enemies and the power of salvation that makes all believers one in Christ are themes developed in the book.

Real historical figures such as Sir Matthew Hale and Joseph Alleine and genuine historical events such as the Black Death and the Great fire of London are interspersed with fictitious characters and events that reflect those that could have actually occurred in the time period. Thus, while becoming involved with the central characters in this book, the reader is also learning about the actual time in which this story is set.

Cook is keen to show us the strength of the Christian faith that people of those times needed to have. As in her other books, her stated desire for readers of *Stronger than the Sword* is that it may "strengthen our own courage and determination to remain faithful to the truths

of Scripture, cost what it may".

Many adults and teenagers will find this an engaging novel. It has action, sorrow, conversion experiences and historical insight. It is a good adjunct to Cook's larger, comprehensive biographies such as that of John Bunyan (*Fearless Pilgrim*). In *Stronger than the Sword* the reader gets a sense of these troubled times in a dramatic and easily digestible form.

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

**The Gospel for Muslims:
 An Encouragement to Share
 Christ with Confidence**

Thabiti Anyabwile
 Chicago: Moody, 2010
Reviewed by Peter Barnes

Thabiti Anyabwile is a Baptist pastor who is a former Muslim. This is an informative and helpful book, written in a good spirit. Anyabwile deals with the gospel, and then how to present it to a Muslim.

He urges us to press home the issue of sin, because Muslims tend to think in terms of mistakes. Sin is seen as something more or less external rather than something that is deeply horrible. He tells of one Muslim who was particularly struck by Jesus' words in Matthew 9:12-13, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: *I desire mercy, not sacrifice*. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Once sin was taken seriously, the Muslim realised that he needed a Saviour more than a prophet.

This is not a mine of information, but for Christians looking for an encouraging place to start in order to bring the gospel to their Muslim friends, it is ideal.

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Time well wasted

WHY YOU NEED DOWNTIME AND HOW TO SPEND IT

John Ortberg

Most pastors don't waste enough time.

At least that's my conviction. But wasting time well is an acquired skill, because there is good wasting and there is bad wasting. Bad time wasting is the hang around/watch TV/perform random online search kind that leaves you with less life than you started with. You may be doing it right now. I don't need to say any more about that, except to stop.

The good kind of time-wasting will actually lead you to be more connected with God and more full of life. But it's hard to engage in, because there are always more pressing matters. This isn't really wasting time, of course, but our culture makes it feel as though it is.

There are three categories for these well-wasted times.

First is the discipline of solitude. I used to think that solitude would involve pure, unadulterated prayer and intense spiritual activity; and because it is not, I never do solitude without a sense of wasting time. I have learned that wasting time is fundamental to solitude. People often want to know what you're supposed to do when you go into solitude. But this is the wrong question. The point of solitude is what you don't do.

Spiritual disciplines can be categorised as practices of abstinence and practices of engagement. In abstinence I refrain from doing what I normally do. In engagement I practise what I normally do not do.

Solitude is essentially a discipline of abstinence. In solitude I withdraw from relationships and noise and stimulation and see what there is when I am alone with God. The point of solitude is not what I *do* — it is what I *don't* do. I get away from all the voices and demands of my life and find out about what my little life is like when all the distractions are removed.

The primary gift I find in solitude is freedom. After time alone, I begin to remember that what other people think



**IF YOU ARE GOING TO
CREATE, YOU NEED SOME
TIME TO CHEW THE GRASS
AND STARE INTO SPACE.**

of me really matters very little. Those people all have their own lives; they will all die one day and take their applause and criticisms with them. I'm always aware of this, but in solitude I come to feel it deeply. I feel a sense of peace that I treasure. A Bible or a journal may be fine for solitude, but they are not necessary. The primary thing to remember about solitude is just don't do anything.

(Interestingly enough, the Sabbath was described in Exodus in terms of "not-doing"— "on it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals...")

A second form of time-wasting is musing, or listening. Here I bring before God what I am concerned about. Often for me it involves either family or ministry. I am worried about one of my children. I am concerned about the health of my team. I am unsure about whether our ministry is functioning well.

I spread these out before God, and then I listen. This listening is a form of prayer, but it is prayer that involves thinking and imagination and asking questions. Often I will ask God at the beginning of it for wisdom regarding next steps to take. I might write some ideas down. It will often lead to plans.

It's important not to mix up solitude as a discipline with planning or musing. When I plan, I am hoping for an outcome. But by its nature, solitude as a practice requires letting go of all outcomes. When I am engaging in solitude for God's sake, I am not trying to get anything out of it; the pressure of wanting something keeps me from the very freedom God wants to give. But when I am musing over a concern, I am very much hoping for some next step to take.

The third kind of time wasting is production enhancement, and the best example is a cow. A cow is a miracle on four legs, producing milk that fuels all kinds of people. But if you look carefully at a cow through the day, it looks remarkably unproductive. It spends hours chewing and then re-chewing. It takes less than five minutes to download the milk that it took 24 hours to produce.

But when you're creating milk, you just can't make it go any faster. There are limits in the creativity game.

If you are going to create, you need some time to chew the grass and stare into space.

For me, production-enhancement time wasting usually involves some activity that I love just for its own sake. I read history. I go to the ocean and stare at the waves. I do a crossword puzzle. I call up a friend. I put a fire in the fire pit outside. I play the piano.

How do you waste time badly? How do you waste time well? Are you wasting time adequately? If you find yourself feeling inwardly free, if you find yourself with all the ideas you need for planning, if you find yourself in a creative ferment, then you should probably stick to your current schedule. If not, you might want to re-think how you're wasting time. **ap**

John Ortberg is editor at large of *Leadership* and pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in California. This article is republished from *Christianity Today* magazine.