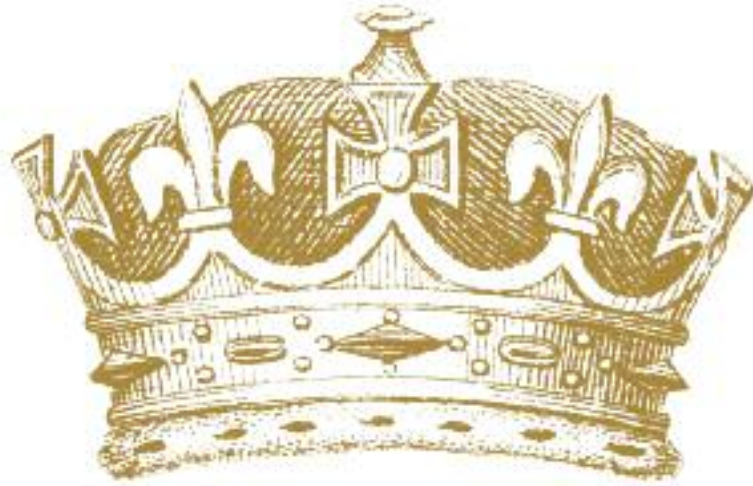


A U S T R A L I A N

Presbyterian

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

MARCH 2011



Messiah

**Anointed, expected,
misunderstood...**



PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL CENTRE SYDNEY **ELDERS TRAINING** PROGRAMME 2011



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Morning Tea (10:00-10:30) Personal and Pastoral Strand (10:30-11:00)
Lunch (11:00-11:30) Leadership and Management Strand (11:30-12:00)
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E D I T O R I A L

When Jesus once asked Peter: "But who do men say that I am?" Peter replied with the confession that has become the standard of every true disciple, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt. 16:16).

Naturally, our curiosity is aroused by the specific term that Peter used when he referred to Jesus as "the Christ". For those in the first century the answer was self-evident. The term, "the Christ", was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, "Messiah" which meant "God's anointed".

But anointed for what? In Jewish tradition, anointing with oil was normally reserved for special acts of consecration to the offices of prophet, priest and king. In a way that, even at this stage, Peter himself couldn't fully understand, Jesus embraced and exhausted in Himself each of these different offices. Earlier in Israel's history Melchizedek had combined the offices of priest and king. Later on, David assumed two of those offices in taking the throne and exercising a prophetic ministry. However, it remained for Jesus to subsume all these offices in His own Person, which perhaps explains that enigmatic phrase in the Psalms where David says of the Messiah that he is "anointed above his fellows" (Ps. 45:7).

Now the appearance of the Messiah was a matter of supreme significance to the Jews. Charles Briggs, in his book, *Messianic Prophecy* (1886), says: "Messianic prophecy is the most important of all themes; for it is the ideal of redemption given by the Creator to our race at the beginning of its history, and it ever abides as the goal of humanity until the divine plan has been accomplished." Brigg's statement suggests that God has a predetermined plan of redemption, culminating in the revelation of a Saviour, which He announces beforehand in the Scriptures.

Of course, this explains why Jesus introduced His disciples to a distinctive, Messianic hermeneutic following His death and resurrection. He opened the disciples' minds to a new way of reading Scripture when He said: "Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). If we are to read the Bible and make sense of it, we must make the study of Messianic prophecy a priority.

Peter Hastie 



Jesus the Messiah

FROM ISAIAH TO VESPASIAN, THE DAVIDIC KING IS UNDERSTOOD.

Dr Bruce Winter has been the principal of the Queensland Theological College at the University of Queensland in St Lucia, Brisbane, since 2006 when he left Tyndale House, Cambridge, where he had served as warden since 1987 and as director of the Institute for Early Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World.

Dr Winter was a Fellow of St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge, and is a Visiting Research Fellow (2006-2011). He has also served as a member of the university's Faculty of Divinity, lecturing on Thomas Cranmer, and archaeology and the New Testament, as well as supervising PhD candidates. He has also served as a lecturer at Moore Theological College, Sydney, and Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

Dr Winter's main areas of interest are in New Testament studies, theology, apologetics and ethics. To this end he has undertaken research which is designed to benefit the academy and the church. His special interest is in the intersection of the Word of God with its ancient setting and its significance for contemporary thinking about the church and its relationship with modern society.

He is the author of numerous journal articles and has published or edited several books such as *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, Eerdmans, 1994; *Seek the Welfare of the City*, Eerdmans, 1994; *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women in the Pauline Communities*, Eerdmans, 2003; *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*, Eerdmans, 2000;



Bruce Winter
talks to
Peter Hastie

and *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement*, Eerdmans, 2001.

He lives with his wife, Lyn, near Bribie Island north of Brisbane.

Josephus, in his book, *The Wars of the Jews*, says that there was a strong belief among the Jews in the first century AD that a ruler of the world would one day arise from Israel. What exactly did Josephus mean, and how widespread and deeply held was this belief?

We need to remember that when Josephus wrote *The Wars of the Jews*, Israel had effectively ceased to exist as a nation. When Josephus died soon after AD 100, Israel had been without any boundaries and without any king for more than a quarter of a century.

Although Josephus was a Jew and had earlier fought against the Romans, he was freed by the emperor Vespasian when he predicted that Vespasian would soon become emperor. He subsequently became a client of Vespasian and spent most of his time serving the Romans as a mediator and interpreter in their dealings with the Jews. After the war, Josephus returned to Rome and enjoyed the patronage of the Roman emperors. He did much of his writing from a grace-and-favour apartment in Rome that the

emperor Domitian had given to him.

Interestingly, the Roman emperor's titles were very similar to that of the Messiah. They included expressions such as "Ruler of the world", "Lord of the seas" and similar terms. Josephus was very astute and knew how to protect his own interests. He was also influenced by the Old Testament and the idea that the ultimate ruler of the world would arise in Israel itself. He may have been currying favour with Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian, by mentioning this belief. After all, Vespasian had conquered Galilee with his legions and crushed the Jews. He was a world ruler who had won significant victories in Israel. Josephus was certainly adept at playing political games and looking after his own interests. Regardless of whether he did or not, there certainly was a common belief in the first century that the Messiah would soon arise in Israel.

Was the belief in a world ruler arising from among the Jews an idea that was known outside of Jewish circles? If so, how far had it spread?

Yes, it was. For example, Tacitus in his *Histories* (5:13) and Suetonius in *The Twelve Caesars* (Vespasian 4:5) both refer to a time when men from Judea would rule the world. No doubt Vespasian thought of himself in terms of the messianic prophecy in Numbers 24:7, but he was probably aware of other ways that the "ruler oracle" could have been interpreted.

There was certainly a strong feeling of anti-Semitism in Rome in reaction to Jewish nationalism. The Romans took a

dim view of Jewish attempts to rebel against their rule. They made the Jews pay the pagan temple tax in Rome as a way of keeping them under control. The idea that a future world ruler would arise from Israel only added to their concerns about the Jews.

How seriously did some of the Roman emperors, like Vespasian, Domitian and Trajan, take the view that there was a world ruler who was supposed to arise from the Jews?

I think they took it seriously. Each one took the view that, as emperor, he was a god, or at least the son of a god. They were meant to rule. They assumed all the titles which Jesus had, such as “Saviour of the world” and “God manifest”. They certainly had inflated views of themselves which they were keen to push on others. For instance, you could not speak to Domitian without calling him “Lord”, and because the emperors were keenly aware of the dangerous nature of Jewish nationalism, they instructed their proconsuls to keep a careful watch on the Jews throughout the Diaspora.

We know that Vespasian regarded the prophecy of a Jewish world ruler with concern. No doubt this was one of the reasons why he took part in the destruction of Jerusalem. He was well aware of the danger to Rome that any claimants to the throne of David would pose, so he wanted to destroy not only Jerusalem and the Temple, but also the remaining members of David’s house.

In regard to Domitian, he certainly discriminated against the Jews. He ordered the execution of the descendants of David. He actually had some Jews from the house of David brought to Rome for questioning. When he met them, he asked specific questions about their connection to the house of David and “for information about Christ and His kingdom”(Eusebius *HE* 3.19). I think this suggests that Domitian took very seriously the potential threat of a Davidic ruler.

In the case of Trajan, we know that he endorsed the persecution and killing of Christians who were not Roman citizens, especially those who had connections with the house of David. The Romans were always alert to the possibility of future uprisings, especially when they had conquered another kingdom. They usually rounded up the ruler’s family and killed them to prevent

any future threats to their rule.

Where exactly did the belief come from, that is, a belief in this world ruler? Was it a biblical source? And what was actually meant by the term “anointed one”, or “Messiah”?

The Jewish hope of a coming ruler and Messianic figure is certainly found in the Old Testament. In fact, the first hint of it can be found in the idea of a promised “seed”, especially as the idea



IT’S THE LOSS, THE TERRIBLE LOSS OF THE PROMISED LAND THAT IS THE MAJOR DRIVER BEHIND THE JEWISH HOPE FOR THE MESSIAH.

develops through God’s promise to Abraham that through his “offspring” all the families of the earth will be blessed. Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians that the promise was of a “seed”, singular (Gal. 3:16). This gave rise to the belief that God’s blessing would come to all the nations through the work of some future individual.

As the Scripture unfolds, Moses speaks of a future prophet even greater than himself who will declare God’s will to us (Deut. 18:14-22). Then we have the prophecies in Isaiah which speak of the Messiah in terms of being an everlasting king as well as a servant who suffers for the sin of God’s people (Is. 9:1-7; Is. 52:13-53:12). These few references give us some idea of what He will do and what He will be like.

Now the term anointed one is, well, really you’re anointed because you’re appointed. So the anointed is the appointed and the task that He’s been set aside for by God is a very specific task in the unfolding history of salvation. So that’s basically what Messiah means; it simply means anointed and empowered for the appointment that God has given Him.

Does the Bible give us any reasons as to why such a figure – a Messianic

figure – needs to come into the world? What particular needs among the Jews gave rise to the idea of a Messiah?

Much Jewish thinking about the Messiah related to the loss of the Promised Land and the kingdom. When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 587 BC they took the king captive, exiled the people and seized the land. The kingdom was lost. The prophets declared that the disaster was due to the people’s covenant unfaithfulness and sin. So the Jews were looking for someone who was anointed by God, as all the kings of Israel were, who could actually restore the Promised Land to the nation. Of course, if this were to happen, the Messiah would have to deal with the causes for the loss. He would have to deal with the people’s sin and the curse that was imposed on them because of their inability to keep God’s covenant.

So, it stands to reason that if you’ve lost the visible promises of God – of a land that is blessed with prosperity and flowing with milk and honey – if you’ve lost that and you’ve lost the king who could possibly win it back, then you are faced with a huge problem: How can you ever recover the Promised Land? Obviously you need a king who will remain utterly faithful to God’s covenant and who will be able to overcome God’s enemies and recover the land. That’s how I see it; it’s the loss, the terrible loss of the Promised Land that is the major driver behind the Jewish hope for the Messiah. And this sense of loss was only intensified because, from 587 BC onwards, indeed right to the first century, there really was no established king who was a son of David.

Is the Messianic idea actually earlier than 587 BC?

Well, the idea of God’s anointed King is there. Certainly there were earlier prophecies about the Messiah because, as Amos reminds us, “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Before the land of Israel was ever lost, God gave prophecies as to what the next step would be in terms of the restoration of the land. So, of course, I believe that the prophets were preparing God’s people quite early on about their need for a Messiah. These earlier prophets such as Amos, Micah and Isaiah were simply disclosing God’s secret plan to His servants in advance.

Are there indications of the Messiah in earlier books, like in the book of Genesis, Numbers and Deuteronomy?

I think there are. For instance, it becomes clear towards the end of Deuteronomy that God must devise a solution so that people's hearts and minds will be able to keep the law. This can only happen by God providing a means of deliverance from people's sin. Just as God had delivered the people from Egypt through Moses, there needs to be an even more fundamental deliverance of the people from their sin.

A Jewish-Christian scholar by the name of Alfred Edersheim said in his book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, that more than 450 passages in the Old Testament have a Messianic application and at least 558 references in the ancient rabbinical writings that support that view. This seems to suggest that the coming of the Messiah was one of the central doctrines, if not the central one, in the Old Testament. Is it?

Although I haven't actually counted the number of passages myself – indeed scholars will differ among themselves as to the exact number of prophecies or allusions to the Messiah there are – I think the idea of the Messiah is certainly present in the Bible from very early on. It is undoubtedly clear from the time of Abraham onwards that God is going to reverse the fall of mankind and living east of Eden. Even when Israel finally arrives in the Promised Land, the Bible tells us that there is still something more that is yet to come.

I don't think there's any doubt about it that in terms of salvation history, the coming of the Messiah for the redemption of mankind is the central hope of the Bible. While I would be more hesitant than Edersheim to identify a precise number of Messianic passages in the Old Testament, the one thing that is clear is that God has a final step in His plan of redemption that is yet to come – and this step is the arrival of the Messiah. When Israel was restored in 1948 there was a lot of talk about this at the time.

Why did the majority of people in Jesus' generation settle on the idea that the Messiah had to be a political or military figure? What gave rise to those expectations?

The reason why people in Jesus' time

thought about the Messiah in political and military terms is because the Scriptures taught that the Messiah was to be the son of David. In other words, He was to be a royal figure similar to David. Now David was certainly a political and military figure. You only have to read his life to discover that he was fully involved in matters of state and war.

At the time of Jesus, Israel was under Roman occupation. It was ruled by foreigners who were hostile to the Jewish faith. The Jews deeply resented foreign-



THE REASON MATTHEW BEGINS WITH GENEALOGIES IS THAT ANYONE CLAIMING TO BE THE MESSIAH HAD TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE STOOD IN THE DIRECT LINE OF DAVID.

ers ruling over them. After centuries of Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman rule, the Jews yearned for a king of their own. At various times in the centuries leading to Jesus' birth they had revolted against their foreign over-lords. The Maccabean revolt was one such rebellion.

As far as the Jews in Jesus' time were concerned, only a political figure qualified as a potential Messiah. This is why the book of Acts names two Messianic pretenders in the first century who rebelled against Roman rule (Acts 5:36-37). At this time, people naturally thought that anyone who led an uprising against the foreign occupiers must be the potential Messiah. This explains why Luke mentions Theudas and Judas the Galilean. Actually, Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that there were more people who were leading rebellions against Rome. So anyone who rose up against Rome at this particular time was a potential claimant to the throne of Israel.

The Gospels tells us that there was definitely a heightened Messianic expectation at the time of Jesus' ministry.

That's why the Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin went to question John the Baptist. They sent a delegation to ask him, "Are you the Messiah?" Of course, all this interest in the coming Messiah raises questions about Jesus. Is He the one who is to come? This explains why there is so much controversy surrounding His ministry. The people of Israel were desperate to find someone who claimed to be the Messiah.

Was the number of people who claimed to be Messiah in the first century greater than in previous times? You've mentioned that it was a time of heightened expectation.

Yes, first century Israel was alive with Messianic expectation. It reaches even greater heights in the time of the Emperor Gaius (Caligula), who once put a pagan statue into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. I think this explains why there was a surge of Messianic fervor during his reign. On the one hand, the Roman emperors were claiming to bring in a rule of universal peace and prosperity. On the other hand, the Jews were saying that such pagan rule, whatever its material and political benefits, fell far short of God's ideal rule under the Messiah.

Did the Roman emperors think of themselves in terms somewhat similar to the Messiah?

Yes, they did. Under the emperor Augustus, the Romans had brought universal law and order to the world. The world had not experienced such a state before and people spoke about the Pax Romana (the Roman peace) in almost Messianic terms. Some of the poets who wrote about Augustus described him in terms that sounded as though they came straight out of the book of Isaiah. The Pax Romana sounds very much like the Messianic peace.

Apart from the fact that many people believed that the Messiah must be a political or military figure, were there any other views about who the Messiah had to be?

I think the critical thing for anyone who claimed to be the Messiah was that he had to prove that he was in the lineage of David. The Messiah was always spoken of as David's son; in other words, he came from David's house or royal line. That was crucial. As you know, Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy. The reason why it begins this way is

that anyone claiming to be the Messiah had to demonstrate that he stood in the direct line of David. Again, it was also crucial that he had to prove that he was the promised “seed” of Abraham. And, of course, in Matthew 1 Jesus gets a tick in both boxes.

So why did people turn on Jesus and reject Him as their Messiah? Was it that He didn't fit their stereotype?

Well, He certainly didn't fit their stereotype. Jesus' ministry did not fit their expectations in the way that the Messiah was going to deliver Israel. For a start, Jesus' diagnosis of man's problem was not a popular one. He tells us in Mark 7:14-15 that all our problems are located within us, not outside us. Jesus says “Nothing outside a man can make him unclean by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean.” In other words, Jesus locates the problem in the human heart. Now this view of human nature was not popular among most of the Jews. Many of them disagreed with Jesus' diagnosis of the human condition.

Then again, Jesus confronts them with a proposal for a different kind of kingdom to the one they were dreaming about. They equated the kingdom of God with the nation of Israel. For them, everything would be perfect and according to God's will if a Davidic ruler ascended the throne and threw the Romans out of the country. In other words, they saw their deliverance in purely political terms. Salvation in their eyes meant that they got a better form of government.

This is why so many Jews were shocked when Jesus did not lead an uprising against Rome when He came into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They thought He would seize power and ascend to the throne. Instead, within a few short days, He was standing before the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate.

I think it's clear that the reason why people rejected Jesus is that His diagnosis of the human predicament was not in keeping with theirs. They had a very superficial diagnosis of the human condition, much like modern day Marxists and others. They believe that if you change a person's circumstances and put them in a better situation, then all their problems will disappear and they will reach their full potential. Jesus said, “No, this is simply untrue. Man's problem lies in the heart. If we are to experi-

ence true salvation then our hearts must undergo a radical change.” The Pharisees, on the other hand, said that man's problems come from outside of himself. They believe that we could live our best lives now in the earthly kingdom of Israel.

The apostle Peter seems to suggest that the most persuasive line of evidence that Jesus is the Messiah is to be found in the prophetic Scriptures. Does that mean that the divinely inspired Scriptures are a sounder basis for faith in Christ



SOME THINGS MUST HAVE BEEN A PUZZLE TO THE PROPHETS WHO WROTE THEM. THEY DIDN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THEY WROTE AND, INDEED, THEY COULD NOT HAVE.

than other things such as signs and wonders?

Yes, the testimony of the Scriptures is a sounder basis for faith than so-called signs and wonders. I find it interesting in 2 Peter 1:19-21 that the apostle tells us that he actually heard God's voice from heaven on one occasion telling him that Jesus was God's own beloved Son with whom He was well pleased. In other words, God was declaring directly from heaven that Jesus was the Messiah. However, Peter goes on to say that despite the fact that he had heard an audible voice from above, he had an even more reliable testimony in the prophetic word. He says, “And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention.”

As far as Jesus was concerned, the prophetic witness in the Bible is of the utmost importance in understanding His ministry. After Jesus' resurrection, He explains His life, death and resurrection to His disciples from the Scriptures on several occasions (Luke 24:7, 25, 26,

44, 46). Indeed, He is at pains to show them that an essential part of the Messiah's ministry is that He should suffer. So Jesus proves conclusively to His followers that He is the Christ by demonstrating how He fulfills the prophetic Scriptures.

Of course, we also see that miraculous signs are given to confirm the written word. However, Peter does make it clear that the words of the prophets are a sounder basis for a faith in Christ than anything else, including special experiences which may involve hearing voices from heaven. When Jesus explains that He is the Messiah to people after His resurrection, He takes them to the words of the prophets. I think this indicates that if we are going to defend Jesus' status as the Messiah then the best place to start is with the references to Him in the prophets.

When people back away from looking at these Messianic prophecies and try to find evidence for believing that Jesus is the Christ in other areas, are they going against the apostolic grain?

Well, to some extent they are. The Scriptures have their own unique power which is something that Christian apologists sometimes tend to forget. The Bible has its own spiritual authority and persuasive effect. John Calvin understood this better than most. He asked the question, “How do you know that the Bible is the word of God?” “Well,” Calvin said, “When you read the Bible you will hear God the Holy Spirit speaking to you. The Bible has this unique power to address you.”

Of course, one of the important things that we need to do in apologetics is to clear away some of the common objections that people have towards the Bible. Here I am thinking of prejudices that may prevent them from listening. However, the real need is to get people back to reading the Bible and, especially in view of Peter's comments, reading the many prophecies about Jesus Christ that we find within the Scriptures. Jesus shows us how important this process is by going over all these prophecies with his disciples in the time after his resurrection. He shows them that “both in the law of Moses and the Psalms, and the prophets, all that is written about Me has been fulfilled” (Luke 24:27,45).

So if we want to show people that Jesus is the Messiah, we can take a leaf out of Jesus' book by going back to the

text of the Old Testament and showing them how the Prophets speak in great detail about Him, especially His death and resurrection. We need to be careful that our apologetics don't simply consist of well-constructed and sophisticated arguments for the existence of God and omit the importance of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Of the hundreds of prophecies that can be found in the Old Testament about the Messiah, some, on the surface at least, appear to be contradictory. For example, some proclaim that He will be a king who rules over an everlasting kingdom whereas others say that He will be a suffering servant who dies. How do we reconcile these prophecies?

I'm sure there must have been people in Isaiah's own day who would have been scratching their heads at the time he wrote his prophecies. For instance, at one time he is talking about a Davidic king who will have an everlasting reign and, as well, he has several prophecies that indicate that this Messianic figure will suffer and die for the transgressions of the people. That certainly wasn't on the radar of pious and reflective Jews at the time, or indeed, in subsequent periods.

Nevertheless, they're in the Scriptures, and some things there must have been a puzzle to the prophets who wrote them. They didn't fully understand everything they wrote and, indeed, they could not have understood it all. At least, that's the implication that the apostle Peter draws from some of their statements (1 Peter 1:10-12). The way believers have handled these apparent contradictions in the past is similar to the way that we deal with them today. We take a smorgasbord approach; we take the bits we like and sometimes pass over the bits that we don't find amenable or existentially relevant at the present time.

We've dealt with the issue of when the Messiah first appeared in the Bible. Which texts in the Old Testament do you think are most determinative for the development of the notion of the Messiah?

The texts which hit me immediately are all to be found in the book of Isaiah. There are three things that Isaiah says about the Messiah that are of enormous significance. He tells us in 7:14 that His birth would be different – He will be born

from a virgin. Then in 9:6 he says that His person will be different – His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Then Isaiah tells us in chapter 53 that His death will be different – He will be crushed for our iniquities.

Are you saying that His death was unlike any other death? It didn't happen as an accident or as a result of natural causes?

Yes, that's exactly what Isaiah is saying. It was not like any other death. Isaiah says that He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our



EVEN ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS DEATH, THE DISCIPLES STILL HADN'T WORKED IT OUT. AND YET SUDDENLY, THEIR HERMENEUTIC OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS COMPLETELY REVOLUTIONISED.

iniquities, the chastisement that brought us peace was upon Him and by his stripes we are healed. I think Isaiah is making it quite clear that His death was not due to natural causes or an accident, but it was directly related to the forgiveness of our sins.

So, for me, the book of Isaiah contains the most significant statements about the person and work of the Messiah. He points out that His birth, person and death will be three distinguishing features of His life and ministry.

Are there any special or unique features that seem to characterise Messianic prophecies?

I think the distinctive feature of Messianic prophecy is that it's God who initiates the whole process. It's not as if it's initiated from below by Israel. Only God can save Israel from Egypt; only God can save Israel from its enemies and oppressors. It is this theme of divine salvation – that only God can save – that's

the distinctive feature about the Messianic prophecies. They are always a word from God as to what He is going to do.

Many rabbis today do not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Is there some reason for their rejection of him?

Apart from the Bible, the rabbis also refer to the Talmudic and Midrashic commentaries, which are a vast body of literature. In the Scriptures and in their own commentaries, they are faced with passages from Isaiah that actually speak about the suffering servant. Many of these passages are quite perplexing to them.

It just seems to me that they are unable to reconcile the idea that He is the supreme ruler with the fact of His sufferings and death. They can't put the two things together because, as Paul says, the Jews seek a sign and the sign they're seeking is not the sign of the crucified Messiah. The Greeks, on the other hand, are looking for a salvation that appeals to human wisdom, but the Jews are all the time looking for some defining miraculous sign that will point conclusively to Jesus as the Messiah. So their writings show the confusion – they've lost the land, the temple – they've lost everything. They are searching for any interpretation of the ancient texts that will help them to understand their plight but their exegesis is very much wanting in regard to some of the texts, especially Isaiah 53, that discuss the Messiah.

Were there particular reasons why Jewish scholars ignored many of their theological traditions and actually turned against Jesus?

I think some of the rabbis have recognised that Jesus fulfills certain aspects of the Messianic prophecies, but the whole idea of a Messiah who was hung on the cross is a major problem for them. They ask, "How could God's anointed servant be cursed by God?" It's the offence of the cross that is the problem for many Jewish scholars. Of course, the Islamic world gets around the death of Jesus by saying that it actually never occurred. He didn't die on a cross; He's just the great prophet. However, for Jewish scholars, the offence of the cross is their great stumbling block. They just can't comprehend the atoning death of Jesus without the revelation of the Spirit.

Some people say that the early Christians tried to impose the idea of a Messiah upon the Old Testament so they'd have grounds for putting forward Jesus as the best candidate. What's your view on that?

I think it's a naïve suggestion. It ignores the fact that the first Christians struggled for some time to understand not only that Jesus is the Messiah, but also how He intended to perform His role as Israel's Saviour. For instance, the apostle Peter only comes to realise that Jesus is the Messiah in Matthew 16:16. Further, Jesus reminds him that he didn't arrive at this conclusion on his own, "For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven" (16:17). It is clear that Jesus knows who He is but even well into His ministry, His disciples are struggling to understand exactly how He is meant to fulfill the Messianic hopes of the Old Testament.

Again, even after His death, Jesus' disciples still had not put all the pieces of the puzzle together. Luke tells us that while some of them were on the road to Emmaus, they were discussing how it was possible that the Messiah should die to redeem His people.

I find it most interesting that none of the disciples expect Jesus to die, even when they discover He's the Messiah. Perhaps this explains why Jesus constantly reinforces the point that as the Christ, He must also suffer and die. Even on the night before His death, they still hadn't worked it out. And yet suddenly, in the post-resurrection period, their hermeneutic of the Old Testament is completely revolutionised. How do we account for this? It has to be that Jesus explained to them quite exhaustively why the Messiah would suffer. Only then do they begin to understand that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.

So the idea that they planned to foist their own understanding of the Messiah upon the Old Testament and proclaimed Jesus as the candidate who best fitted the description is simply not borne out by any of the evidence. What the New Testament reveals is that the disciples did not have a clear understanding of the role of the Messiah up until the time of his resurrection. The view that they had an elaborate strategy to put forward Jesus as the candidate who most closely fulfilled all the Biblical data can't be sustained.

Are you saying that the 40-day period after the resurrection was when Jesus helped them to understand the full meaning of the Scriptures with respect to the person and work of the Messiah?

Absolutely. We learn from Luke that in the 40 days after the resurrection, Jesus opened the disciples' minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Throughout this period He spent His



JESUS SHOWED THEM HOW ALL THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES TESTIFIED ABOUT HIM. ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK AT THE WAY THAT JESUS INTERPRETED THE TEXTS.

time with them explaining how the law, the prophets and the psalms were fulfilled in Him. In particular, He explained the necessity of His sufferings and death, His resurrection and the message of the Gospel that had to be proclaimed to all the nations. So in this 40-day period, He sorts everything out. He gives them the definitive interpretation of His ministry as the Messiah.

With the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, along with all its genealogical records, has it been possible since that time to prove anyone else has a better claim to being Messiah than Jesus?

No. When the temple was destroyed, so were all its records. Since that time, no one has been able to show from the ancient records that they come from the line of David. Even at the time of Jesus, and in the years following, there were people who rose up against Rome and made Messianic claims. But as far as I know, none could actually establish they were of the house and lineage of David.

So it's been a theological impossibility ever since?

That's right. If God wants to destroy the records so that people can't be led up the garden path, that's fine by me.

So in the providence of God, the search for a Messiah was brought to a screaming halt, simply by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem?

Yes, that's true. After Christ died and was raised again, the temple had fulfilled its purpose. God's presence was no longer in the temple. The presence of God is now tabernacled in His Son and in the church. It can't be found in any temple. This explains why God allowed the temple and its records to be destroyed. Everything that they had pointed to was now fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The temple and genealogies no longer served any useful purpose.

How did the early Christians prove that Jesus was the Messiah?

Well, they followed the method of scriptural interpretation that they learnt from Jesus. He showed them how all the Old Testament Scriptures testified about Him. All they had to do was look at the way that Jesus interpreted the texts that spoke about the Messiah, and how those verses that they had previously ignored were now fulfilled in the person of Christ. From the post resurrection period onwards, the apostles took the Old Testament as the basis for their proclamation and defense of Jesus as the Messiah. In doing so, they interpreted it in the same way as Jesus did. They did not engage in individual interpretations. They presented the interpretation that Jesus gave and taught.

If Jesus is the Messiah, how should we respond?

The first thing that we should do is submit to His rule, deny ourselves everyday and take up our cross. To "take up our cross" means we must be like a person who's coming to the end of his/her life. Our life on earth is not the ultimate reality; our ultimate destiny is either heaven or hell. They're the realities that matter, not the present one.

Second, we must follow Him because Christ has died for our sins. That's how we should respond. It's amazing that the remedy of mankind's problem is initiated by God who allows His only Son to be delivered up for our sins. This means that every Christian needs to be a disciple of Jesus.

Undercover boss

JESUS IS EVERYWHERE IN THE PSALMS, BUT SOMETIMES DISGUISED.

Jared Hood

Jesus was the first undercover boss. So says a church sign near where I live. It is a Christmas message, but what a great description of Jesus in the Psalms. In the Psalms, Jesus is the undercover boss!

The Church has always believed that the Psalms speak about the Messiah (the Christ), but *how* and *where* do they speak about Him? There are two views at large: a popular and an academic one.

Popularly, many think only a select group of Psalms are about the Christ. The Psalms so cited in the New Testament are Messianic. Psalm 22 stands out. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," Jesus said from the cross. The psalm prophetically adds, "They pierced my hands and my feet"; "My bones are out of joint"; "They divide my garments among them".

Calamity strikes, though, with the complexity of Psalm 69, for example. The New Testament uses both verses 9 and 21 of Christ. "Zeal for your house has consumed Me" and "For my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink". But what of verse 5? "My sins are not hidden from you"? Christ did not sin! How can Psalm 69 be Messianic? The popular view is not robust enough to cope. We need to know more than *which* texts are Messianic. We need to know *how* they are Messianic.

Some academics have recently claimed a solution. No Psalms are Messianic. They were originally only about King David and his heirs. The Jews invented Messianic belief quite late, it is said. Under the thumb of the Greeks and Romans, they began to long for a royal saviour. They re-read the Psalms to match their hope.

Jesus and the apostles followed suit, we are told. Peter taught that Psalm 16 was about the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-31. David was a prophet, no less). However, Psalm 16 is clearly only about David. Peter was re-reading it in



WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT OF A TEXT HAVING A HIDDEN, DIVINE MEANING? GOD DECLARES THE FUTURE OPENLY AND IN ADVANCE.

the light of the resurrection.

Some will say, God means more by a text than what the human author meant. David meant one thing, but God meant something extra. This is the *sensus plenior*. A text has a "fuller meaning".

Sensus plenior is an alien principle in evangelical thought. The Reformation was built on a literal reading of the text (with due regard for genre). A Bible text will have many, rich applications, but still only one meaning.

What would be the point of a text having a hidden, divine meaning? God declares the future openly and in advance (Isa. 41:22-26), not in a code that we have to wait 1000 years to crack. If God's voice does not equate with the prophets' voices, how would we ever know what He was saying? The whole purpose of Scripture is for God to communicate through human beings to human beings, in the ordinary manner of human beings. Hence the incarnation.

Which psalms are Messianic, then? More importantly, *how* is Christ the undercover boss of the Psalms?

First, the New Testament cites at least Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 102, 109, 110 and 118 as Messianic. This is just the start of the journey.

Secondly, Psalms 1 and 2 are introductory Psalms. We read the whole Psalter through this lens. What is Psalm 2 about? It is about the "Son", who is overtly called "My Messiah" (or "My Anointed One", v. 2 – a substantive adjective). He is also the King (v. 6) within the terms of the Davidic covenant (v. 7). This King will judge the nations, but saves all those who put their trust in Him (v. 12).

Who is the King of the whole Psalter, then? Is it David? Psalm 2 says it is the Messiah. The term king, and the theme of reigning and judging, are the triggers for us to see that a Psalm is about the victorious Messiah. When we come to the "King" of Psalm 45, we know it is the Messiah. Furthermore, we are stunned when we see that the Psalm also says that this King is God! The Messiah is divine! (See Heb. 1:8. Cf. Ps. 102:25-27 and Heb. 1:10-12. God, the Lord, the Creator, is the Son.)

Thirdly, we readily take Psalm 22 as Messianic. The New Testament teaches us this, but also we know that David did not go through the torments that the Psalm describes. When were David's garments divided by lot? This Psalm is so embarrassingly prophetic, that some medieval Jewish scribes amended the text: "Like a lion my hands and feet"! The discovery of the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls put flight to that fancy. "They pierced my hands and feet".

Why quarantine the themes of Psalm 22 to that Psalm alone? The righteous sufferer appears throughout the Psalter. Suffering is another trigger for us to see that the Messiah is in view. A friend betrays Him – even one with whom He ate bread (41:9). This, too, is about the Christ. We thought these were David's sufferings, but we realise we are looking at the Christ.

This brings us back to the question. How can Psalm 69 be about the Christ, since it contains a confession of sin from

David? Matthew Henry states it the best. Of Psalm 16, he says, "This psalm has something of David in it, but much more of Christ." This is the key. There is no either-or. It is both-and. David's experience reflects the Christ's resurrection, and the Christ's resurrection echoes into David's experience. The Psalms are often about David and Christ at the same time.

This is typology. David was a picture or type of Christ. Just as the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb in the temple was a type of the sacrifice of the Son of God, so too was David's suffering.

For typology to work, the real David must be really there. Even his sin must be in the picture. Bruce Waltke helpfully calls these Davidic elements the "eggshells". We can pick David's sin as the eggshells, because they actually clash with Psalter's picture of the Messiah. The Messiah is righteous (see below), but David is sinful. That is the same picture given through the whole Bible. The lamb is unblemished, and dies for the sins of God's people.

Eggshells are not just the leftovers. David's sin forms a typological contrast with Christ. Typology can be both comparison and contrast (see Rom. 5:15, 19). David's sins highlight Christ's purity and our need of Him.

This is not the *sensus plenior*. This is intentional typology. David knew what he was writing. He knew he was a type of the Christ. He wrote about himself, but even as Peter says, David was a prophet. He "knew" (Acts 2:30). We struggle with this so much. He knew!

He knew his trials and victories were a grand mosaic of the sufferings and glory of the Son of God. He knew his place in the covenant. He knew the ancient promise of a Saviour, and he knew it was coming true in his family line. The covenant with him (2 Sam. 7) was really about his greater Son (Ps. 2:7). David was an anointed king (2 Sam. 23:1), but he looked past himself to the anointed king (Ps. 2:2).

To be sure, David did not see as we see. The prophets knew what they knew, but how they longed to know more (1 Pet. 1:10-12)! David knew that the Messiah would ascend into the heavenly realm (Ps. 68:18). That is a lot to know! Still, he did not foresee Jesus of Nazareth ascending from the Mount of Olives with His disciples looking on. David had a da Vinci sketch, but not the completed masterpiece. Psalm 68:18

means no more than what it says.

In sum, the New Testament gives the key to the Psalter. It tells us to look beyond David. In the suffering "I" and the reigning "King" of the Psalter, see the Christ! Christ is the undercover boss, and his "disguise" is David. God does not intend on hiding the Christ from the believing eye, though. Do not be fooled by the disguise! Have the Christ first in your mind.



THE GOSPELS TELL US WHAT HE DID. THE EPISTLES TELL US WHAT IT MEANS. TURN TO THE PSALMS, THOUGH, TO KNOW HIS HOPES AND FEARS, HIS TRUST AND LONELINESS.


The Psalter is glorious literature, then! It is the most intensely typological material of the Old Testament. Think of the implications. When we feel the Psalms so well describe our current difficulties, we do not merely identify with poor old David. We identify with the suffering Christ.

Where do you look when you want to know the inner life of the Messiah? The Gospels tell us what He did. The Epistles tell us what it means. Turn to the Psalms, though, to know His hopes and fears, His trust and loneliness. Truly, He was tempted in all points as we are, yet

without sin. Truly, the Psalms are "the Word of Christ" and good for the Church (Col. 3:16).

Pervasive typology explains the constant assertions of righteousness in the Psalter. "You have tested Me, and will find nothing" (Ps. 17:3). "The Lord has rewarded Me according to My righteousness" (Ps. 18:24). This is the Messiah's righteousness. David often was obedient, too, through faith, and he rejoiced in that. Still, he sinned. The Messiah brings the kingdom of peace, blessing and righteousness to Israel.

Pervasive typology exists at another level. What does the Christ do after His resurrection? "I will declare your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly I will praise you" (Ps. 22:22). The resurrected Messiah is the great worship leader (see Heb. 2:12). The Psalms are His worship songs! He calls us to worship (Ps. 30:4). He prays for us (Ps. 125:4). He issues priestly blessings (Ps. 125:5). He leads us in our repentance (Ps. 51). He preaches the sermon (Ps. 1). He will lead us in worship through all eternity.

The Christ is the undercover boss of the Psalms. The Spirit of Christ inspired the Psalms. The typological Christ speaks in the Psalms. The incarnate Christ sung and still sings the Psalms. They were written by Him, about Him and for Him – He who is our prophet, priest and king. See less of David, and more of the Christ. 



Jared Hood lectures at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne.

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The One foretold

WHY JESUS IS THE LONG-ANTICIPATED MESSIAH.

Bob Mendelsohn

Ask Jewish people about their belief in a personal *Messiah*, and you will be met with an array of images from ultra-orthodox Jewish people circle-dancing in fur hats and long coats to people who reply dismissively, "If he (the Messiah) were going to come, he should have come long ago. It's too late now."

The idea of a Messiah is historically Jewish. However, it is remote to most Jews in Australia today. Seventy years ago, the idea of a messianic hope was wrapped up in anti-Hitler rhetoric. Hope of a coming Messiah became the hope of general salvation from the death camps. It also became mingled with hopes of the creation of the land of Israel.

Today, there is an ongoing dispute within Judaism over the meaning of "messiah". For some within traditional Judaism, the Messiah is seen as an "anointed one" (the literal translation of the word "messiah"), descended through the line of King David, who will gather the Jews back into the land of Israel and usher in an era of peace.

Since about 1880, liberal Jews have equated the coming of the messianic age to a new, stable era of world peace. However, most of them do not believe



THESE FOLLOWERS WERE SO CLOSE... HOWEVER, THEY WERE WRONG ON THE CRITICAL POINT – IT WAS NOT THE RABBI FROM BROOKLYN.

that such an era will be associated with the sole rule of a personal Messiah.

A new development in Jewish messianism occurred in 1994. A rabbi died in Brooklyn, New York. That's not exactly news, as there are half a million Jewish people who live in that borough of New York City – many of whom are rabbis. And each year many rabbis die. However, 1994 was different. Menachem Mendel Schneerson was the leader of the ultra-Orthodox sect known as the Lubavitcher chassidim, and some of his followers claimed, and continue to claim, that he was the Messiah.

When he died that summer, tens of thousands of his followers gathered in New York to honour him and to await his resurrection, believing that he would rise from the dead within four days. Why? The rabbis teach that the spirit of a man hovers over a corpse for three days (Genesis Kabbah 100:7) and on the fourth day, the spirit dissipates. So there, at his grave, throngs of people waited in anticipation of his rising, only to be disappointed, leaving with their heads hanging down on the fourth day.

These followers were so close. Yes, the Messiah would die! They were also right in another regard – the Messiah would rise from the dead before the

fourth day. However, they were wrong on the critical point – it was not the rabbi from Brooklyn.

Jacob Neusner, in his book, *Judaisms and Their Messiahs*, reminds us that in Jewish tradition, the term "messianism" historically refers to "a man who at the end of history, at the eschaton, will bring salvation to the Israel conceived by the social group addressed by the way of life and worldview of that Judaism". The Messiah would be anointed with holy anointing oil and would rule the Jewish people during the messianic age (the Hebrew word, *mashiach* – "anointed" – is the same as the Greek word *Christos*).

However, a difference has emerged between Jewish and Christian understandings of the Messiah. William Scott Green classifies "Jewish messianism as national, ethnic, political and material, while Christian messianism is universal, cosmopolitan, ethical and spiritual".

Many Jewish people have claimed to be the Messiah, or have allowed others to tout them as such. They include:

Simon of Peraea, a contemporary of Y'shua (Jesus), a slave of Herod the Great, who rebelled against and was killed by the Romans.

2) Theudas, who had 400 followers. He was killed and the 400 dispersed.

3) Menahem ben Judah, another Jesus contemporary, son of Judas of Galilee, who took part in a revolt against Agrippa II before being slain by a rival Zealot leader.

4) Vespasian, c.70, according to Josephus.

5) Simon bar Kosiba (about 135 CE), led a Jewish revolt before being defeated in the Second Jewish-Roman War. Rabbi Akiba called him 'Bar Kochba' as a reference to his being Messiah (Numbers 24.17).

6) Moses of Crete (about 470), who convinced the Jews of Crete to attempt

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to walk into the sea to return to Israel, and disappeared after that disaster!

7) Serene (around 720), who claimed to be the Messiah and advocated expulsion of Muslims and relaxing various rabbinic laws. He was arrested and forced to recant.

8) Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), an Ottoman Jew who claimed to be the Messiah, but then converted to Islam. He still has followers today in present day Turkey and the former Ottoman Empire.

9) Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), the chabad rabbi who tried to “prepare the way” for the Messiah. An unidentifiable number of his followers believe him to be the Messiah.

According to Green, “there are 38 times in the OT where the noun “mashiach” is used. It applies twice to the patriarchs, six times to the high priest, once to Cyrus, and 29 times to the Israelite king, usually Saul or David.”

Most Christians understand the mashiach, the future Israelite king, to be the Messiah, the Saviour Jesus. This is supported specifically in Psalm 2:2 where it states, “The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed.” Another such reference to the Son of God, Y’shua (the original Aramaic name for Jesus), is found in Psalm 45, which is also quoted in the book of Hebrews, “You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows” (Ps. 45:7, Heb. 1:9). The picture painted here is one of anointing, mirrored by the actions of Y’shua’s early ministry.

For example, this is evident in the first sermon Y’shua gave in the synagogue: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners” (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18). The word “anointed” here is the word mashiach.

The most clear-cut biblical reference for a Messiah is found in Daniel. In chapter 9, verses 25 and 26 we read, “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and 62 weeks; it will be built again, with plaza

and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the 62 weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”



MANY REFERENCES IN THE TALMUD COUNTER THE ARGUMENT BY MODERN RABBIS THAT ISAIAH 53 IS ABOUT THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

Here we see the messianic timeline laid out that indicates the time of the death of Messiah (“cut off”). Maybe that’s why so many rabbis don’t allow their students to read Daniel 9 until they are 30 years old.

The most quoted biblical passage by Christians in support of the Messiahship of Jesus is Isaiah 53. While the word “messiah” is not used specifically, Jesus’ life, ministry, healing, crucifixion and resurrection are foretold. Nevertheless, some rabbis will counter that this is simply a reference to the Jewish people. Rabbi David Rosen in the book, *The Christian and the Pharisee*, writes, “for me it is obvious that Isaiah 53 refers to the children of Israel”. He continues, “our understanding of what Isaiah is saying is that if one is chosen by God... then all that is hostile to the godly and the goodly will be hostile to you!”


Mordecai ben Samuel gave a sermon in 18th century Poland, called Sha’ar ha’malek. In it he gives an eloquent apology for itinerant preachers and identifies them with the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. “Let no one say that these emissaries go forth to speak only because of the coins they will be given. Certainly not! ...Therefore God arranges things so that they will be economically afflicted. It is as the verse says, ‘He is wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities’ (Isa.

53.5). God crushes them so that they will go forth in their need and serve as the world’s oars, bringing people toward the goal.”

The Targum Jonathan by Jonathan ben Uzziel (an early translation of the Biblical text, somewhat like the Living Bible to modern Christians) reads Isaiah 53 as “Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper.” While Rabbi DY Abarbanel did not agree with ben Uzziel, around 1500AD he wrote, “Jonathan b. Uzziel interpreted it in the Targum of the future Messiah, but this is also the opinion of our learned men in the majority of the midrashim.”

Even the Zohar, a Jewish mystical book, which dates to about 100-200AD, makes certain statements which “have an obvious reference to the Isaiah passage”. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says, “The Zohar in this quotation quotes from Isa. 53 and referred the passage to the Messiah himself. The passage further makes Israel distinct from the one referred to in the Isaiah passage.”

There are many other references in the Talmud that are available to counter the argument by modern rabbis that Isaiah 53 is about the Jewish people. Despite what Jewish writers may say today, there is a strong tradition within Judaism that regards Isaiah 53 as messianic and which points to an individual who suffers for His people.

The point is that Messiah is foretold through the record of the Older Testament, and we would do well to listen, learn and believe all that the prophets have spoken. 



Bob Mendelsohn is Australian director of Jews for Jesus.

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Discordant worship

THE SENSUAL REPLACES THE SPIRITUAL AT A TERRIBLE COST.

Iain Murray

When interest in the churches begins to centre round the visual and the sensual it is commonly a sign of impending apostasy. By “sensual” I mean that which appeals to the senses of man (sight, smell, hearing), as opposed to “spirit”, that is, the capacity that belongs to those born of the Spirit of God. Hence the antithesis, “sensual, having not the Spirit” (Jude 19).

Sensual is also translated “natural” or “worldly”; the meaning is the same. It does not take regeneration to give the sensual or the aesthetic a religious appeal to the natural man or woman.

In the Old Testament the people of God were in measure taught by their senses as God imposed the form of worship. As a check against any misuse of that means of teaching, no additions to or subtractions from it were allowed. But with the finished work of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, a momentous change took place. The church was raised to the higher privilege of worship in “spirit and truth” (John 4:24). She belongs to the “Jerusalem which is above” (Gal. 4:26).

The observation of W. H. Griffith Thomas, writing on spiritual worship, is true: “It is the universal experience of Christian people that the more the senses are attracted, fascinated, and occupied, the less room there is for the action of the soul. The teaching of Christian history points very clearly to the fact that simplicity of outward ceremonial has been usually unaccompanied by the reality of the inward spirit of worship.”

This is where the neglect of church history and Scripture has serious consequences for many contemporary evangelical churches. In the 1960s, at a time when the churches were losing their hold on young people, it was believed that a new way of renewing contact with them was to be learned from the contemporary culture. Music appeals to



AN APPETITE IS BEING FED WHICH IN THE PAST HAS LED TO THE VERY ABANDONMENT OF THE GOSPEL... THE SPIRITUAL WILL NOT LONG REMAIN.

all, and why not make use of the new style of music and accompaniments which had become so popular? After all, music has to be neutral, so why not make it an ally?

Some put it more strongly. James Ryle “prophesied” that “God is getting ready to anoint Christian musicians with the same anointing that was given to the Beatles”, and he attributed to God the words, “I had a purpose, and the purpose was to usher in the charismatic renewal with music revival around the world”.

Few warning voices were to be heard. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was almost alone in the 1960s in England when he warned against “the increasing tendency at the present time” to use music to produce emotion; the justification being that music can make people happy, and when people feel happy they will find Christianity more acceptable.

When an older generation sometimes expressed misgivings at the change this thinking had brought into public worship, they were told not to put their wishes before those of the outsiders whom the church needed to win. Few saw the danger pinpointed by Lloyd-Jones: the impression of music on

natural feelings was being confused with spiritual truth. “Because it (music) is performed in connection with a religious service or by Christians, people imagine and persuade themselves that they are feeling the truth. But they are not. This feeling has no direct connection with what they have believed.”

The Reformers rejected the paraphernalia of musical accompaniments, not because they did not appreciate the place of congregational song but, on the contrary, because they wanted its restoration to New Testament simplicity. In the words of Calvin: “In gospel times we must not have recourse to these, unless we wish to destroy the evangelical perfection, and to obscure the meridian light which we enjoy in Christ.”

The change in public worship in evangelical churches is not the harmless thing it is thought to be. “So long as there is good preaching”, it is said, “we need not be overly concerned.” We ought to be concerned! An appetite is being fed which in the past has led to the very abandonment of the gospel. When satisfying the “natural” becomes acceptable in churches, the spiritual will not long remain. As the Protestant martyr Hugh Latimer warned, “When candles go up, preaching comes down.”

That music has great prominence in modern society is not in doubt. Nor is it the first time that such attention has been given to music in periods of decadence.

Accommodating the churches to contemporary culture may increase numbers (for a time); it has never led to a spiritual awakening. Unless there is a God-given change, it is to be feared that we will see in evangelicalism a developing apostasy. ap



Iain Murray is a noted Christian author. This is an edited version of an article that appeared in The Banner of Truth.



Word to the wise

20 DAILY BIBLE STUDIES IN PROVERBS 27-31; OBADIAH; 2 AND 3 JOHN

The book of Proverbs is really just plain common sense. Those written by Solomon are the words of a godly man who has had to learn the hard way the large discrepancy between what we know clearly in our heads is right and best (common sense) and where we allow our hearts to lead us in response to our sinful desires. We are all masters at rationalisation. It is the sort of internal conflict Paul is talking about in Romans 7:7-24. Even if the Bible didn't tell us we needed a Saviour, someone who could rescue us from this death-trap, ordinary logic, based on our sad personal experiences, should have led us to this conclusion. Agur actually gives us a hint about this truth in Proverbs 30:4!

So, one way or another, the Old Testament is preparing us for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. He is the only solution to God's *eternal* covenant with His chosen people Israel, His church. Obadiah reassures us about how committed He is to that covenant, and what He is prepared to do to ensure His church will receive the inheritance promised in it. God will bring certain judgment on any who oppose His church.

At the close of the New Testament the Apostle John reminds us of the unchangeable truth bound up in this Messiah as he encourages us to hold fast to this truth, both by defending it against false teaching, and by supporting those who proclaim it, all in the context of sacrificial, self-giving love.

May these studies help us to see more clearly who Jesus is and why He came, and so to live in obedience to His Word.



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

DAY 1

Do you need an 'I' test?

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 27:1-7

THE POINT At the heart of all our problems in life is our sinful nature with its desire to have everything revolving around "me". Adam and Eve were not satisfied with being the CEOs of a God-centred world, they wanted to take God's place in a self-centred world.

THE PARTICULARS

- The more experience we have of life the more we come to realise we are not really "masters of our own destiny"; too many things outside our control interrupt our intentions and remind us of the wisdom of adding "God willing" to all announced plans (1).
- Boasting, aggravation and jealousy all have their source in

self-centredness: recognising our achievements is for others to do; weighing others down with destructive criticism is just a subtle way of building ourselves up at their expense; and attitudes or actions stemming from envy are more destructive of harmony than even flying into a rage. Sin is an insidious enemy (2-4).

- Love only has value if it is expressed openly, and is genuine; sometimes such genuine love has to be tough and frank (5-6).
- Only when we realise our spiritual poverty before God will we hunger for the salvation He has provided (7; cf Mark 2:17).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What light does 1 Corinthians 13 throw on these verses?

DAY 2

Is blood thicker than water?

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 27:8-16

THE POINT The ease with which we can communicate has improved beyond my wildest dreams in my lifetime (1940); but our skill in relating has gone backwards. Why is this so? Yesterday we reflected on our core "I" problem which is where it all starts; today Solomon has some wise practical advice on how to get along with each other. He knows it isn't easy, and that it has a lot to do with holding different tensions together in a very delicate balance.

THE PARTICULARS

- God has designed us as individuals to live in, and derive benefit from, human society. The basic unit of this society is the nuclear family: we ignore this to our peril (8); but we must

also see the danger in being over-insular at the expense of good friendships (10); and then again, we need to be wary about presuming too much upon our neighbour's kindness and forbearance (14)! On top of all this, we need to be careful not to let our behaviour make the nuclear family 'nest' unbearable for others (15-16)!

- The ingredients that will make all this work are thoughtfulness, generosity and patient listening and responding (9, 11-12).
- Loose morals do not usually encourage trustworthiness (13).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What are the main causes of relationship breakdown today?

DAY 3

You must be born again

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 27:17-27

THE POINT The new birth (John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:23) is both necessary, and effective. Without it, fallen Man can never be what God requires; with it, correction and growth are the expected outcome.

THE PARTICULARS

- We should see all friction in relationships as an opportunity, if used wisely, for character development (17; cf Rom. 5:3-4).
- Desirable relationships and business enterprises need constant maintenance; this principle is especially true when applied to the exercise of pastoral care in the Body of Christ (18, 23-27).
- Our spiritual condition is reflected in what proceeds from

our heart; a heart at peace with God will consistently reflect His nature in thought, word and action (19; cf Matt. 15:17-20).

- It is part of the effects of the Fall that satisfaction can never be found in the visible, material world which, of itself, leads only to decay/death (20; cf 2 Cor. 4:16-5:7; Eph. 4:19).
- Praise from others is encouraging, but if not wisely and humbly processed it can become our ultimate undoing (21; cf Luke 6:26).
- Discipline alone can't cure the unregenerate, foolish heart (22).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What aspects of your life do these verses challenge most?

DAY 4

Two ways to live

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 28:1-10

THE POINT The righteous and the wicked are on completely different paths.

THE PARTICULARS

- There are many points of contrast between the man who rejects God's ways and His right to rule (the wicked), and the man who acknowledges God and seeks to obey His word (the righteous): the one is anxious and fearful, and the other steady and brave (1); the one is influenced by the approval of the crowd, but the other is prepared to expose wrong and stand against it (4); the one has no fixed moral framework to guide him, while the other does (5); the one is intoxicated by greed that can ruin his family reputation, while the other is

able to maintain a good name (7).

- Similarly, nations/societies differ: the one lacks strong, stable leadership and is characterised by corruption, while the other is governed well with the people content and prosperous (2-3).
- The outcomes of the two ways are also in stark contrast: in God's economy the righteous are "richer" than the wicked (6, 8).
- God blesses those who walk in His ways, but allows those who reject them to reap the consequences (9-10; cf Rom. 1:18ff).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Can you think of specific examples where these truths are borne out in our own present society, individually and nationally?

Come worship with us!

IF YOU ARE PASSING THROUGH OR MOVING NEARBY, FEEL FREE TO RING THE MINISTER, CLERK OR ELDER. FIND US ON THE WEB AT: <http://www.presbyterian.org.au/states.htm>

NORTHERN TERRITORY

DARWIN

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

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

CANBERRA, BELCONNEN

Cnr Gatty St. & Ross Smith Cres, Scullin.
Sunday Service 10:00 am
Elder: Mrs J. Cram (02) 6278 7379

CANBERRA, FORREST (St Andrew's)

1 State Circle (opp Parliament House).
Service Times: 9.30am. & 7.00pm.
Church Office: (02) 6295 3457

CANBERRA, TUGGERANONG

Isabella Plains Early Childhood School, cnr
Ellerstone Ave & Noorooma St, Isabella
Plains. Worship Service & Sunday School
10.00am. Evening service 6pm.
Session Clerk: 6296 5216.

NEW SOUTH WALES

ANNANDALE-LEICHHARDT

Hunter Baillie, Johnston & Collins Sts.
10.00am. Rev. Peter Dunstan (02) 9810 7869.

ARMIDALE (St. Paul's)

Faulkner St, 9.30am. & 7.00pm.
Rev. David M. Seaman (02) 6772 3093

ASHFIELD

Liverpool Rd. & Knox St. 10.15am & 6.00pm
Rev. Peter Hastie (02) 9798 6572.

BEACON HILL (St Andrew's)

244 Warringah Rd. 9.00am. & 7.00pm.
Rev. Trevor Cheetham (02) 9451 5076.

BEECROFT

Mary St., 8.45am. 10.30am. & 5.30pm.
Rev. Paul Cooper (02) 9876 2478.

BEGA — EDEN

Bega — 25 Upper St. 9.30am.
Contact: Mrs M. Cochrane (02) 6492 2949

BONDI

Cnr. Castlefield & Miller Sts.
10.00am & 6.00pm.
Rev. John Graham: (02) 9130 6607.

BONNYRIGG

Western Regions Chinese Church
14-16 Bibbys Place. 9.30 am. (English) &
11.00 am. (Mandarin)

S.Clerk: Stanley Chen (02) 9753 2073

BOWRAL

Cr Bendooley & Wingecarribee St. 9.30am.
Kids' Church: 9.30 am. 1st & 3rd Sunday
Sess. Clrk: Mr Peter Boggs, (02) 4861 3079.

BURWOOD (St. James)

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am
Rev. David Maher (02) 9744 6542

BURWOOD CHINESE

46-48 Belmore St. 9.15am & 11.15am
(Cantonese) 10.30am & 5.00pm (English).
Church Office: (02) 9715 3889. Rev. Dennis
Law (Senior Minister) 0414 812 776.
Rev. Eugene Hor (English Associate) 0414
992 106. Mr Joe Lin (Chinese Assistant)
0405 203 064. Miss Amy Leong (Youth &
Children's Worker) 0415 777 829. Mr Peter
Hughes (P/T Youth Worker) 0404 949 190.

CAMPBELLTOWN

34 Lithgow St. 8.30 am. 10.00 am.
Samoan service 12.30 pm.
Rev. Jim Elliot (02) 4625 1037.

CARINGBAH

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

CASTLE HILL

247 Old Northern Rd. 9.30am & 6.00pm.
Rev. Moses Hahn (02) 9634 2911.

CHATSWOOD

St Andrew's, Anderson St. 9.00am, 10.30am
& 6.30pm. Rev. Jeff Read (02) 9419 5932
(W), (02) 9419 7349 (H). Ass. Rev. Warren
Esdale.

CHERRYBROOK

John Purchase Public School Hall,
Purchase Road. Service: 9.30 am.
Rev. Stephen Fong (02) 9875 4894

CHINESE CHURCH

Cnr Crown & Albion Sts. Surry Hills.
English 9am & 5pm / Cantonese 10.30am /
Mandarin 9am / Bilingual Service 12noon /
Sunday School 9am & 10:30am / Youth 9am.
Church Office (02) 9331 4459. Rev. David
Tsai (02) 9747 4845 or 0408 5516 606.

COFFS HARBOUR

187 Harbour Dr. 8.00am & 9.45am.
Harbourside Evangelical Church: 5.00pm &
7.00pm.

Rev. Jamie K. Newans (02) 6652 3183

CORNERSTONE

@ Concord: Meets Concord Public School
9.30 am. Cnr Burwood Rd. & Stanley St.
Concord. Rev. Mark Powell (02) 9702 5281
@ North: Meets Eastwood Heights Public
School 9.30am. Lincoln Street, Eastwood.
Rev. C. S. Tang (02) 9688 7880.

COWRA

46 Macquarie St.
Rev. David Stone Ph (02) 6342 1467.

CRONULLA

13 Croydon St. 9.30am.
Rev. Russell Stark (02) 9523 5875.

EAST MAITLAND

George St. 9.30am. **Beresfield:** Beresford Ave.
7.45am. **Raymond Terrace:** Irrawang St.
9.45am. Pastor Gordon Peden (02) 4932 0370.

EPPING

Bridge & Rawson Sts. 9.00am, 10.30am &
6.30pm. Rev. Matthew Oates (02) 9876 1188.

FORSTER/TUNCURRY

Bruce St. Forster, 9.30am, 6.00pm.
Rev. Jason Summers (02) 6557 5047

GLEN INNES

Heron St. 11.00am & 7.00pm.
All ages study groups 9.30am.
Pastor Lance Jackson (02) 6732 5707

GOSFORD

14-16 Young St. West Gosford. 8.00am.
9.45am. 6.30 pm. Rev. M. Cropper
Office: Ph (02) 4323 2490.

GOULBURN (St Andrews)

Clifford St. 9.00am. 7.00pm 2nd & 4th
Sundays. Also **Taralga, Crookwell** and
Tuena. Phone: (02) 4821 3115.

GRANVILLE/MERRYLANDS

Granville: 14 Hutchinson St. 9.30am and
11am. Chinese language. Rev. P. Tamsett 9760
0900. Merrylands & Monitor's Rd. 10.30am
P. Magee 9863 3391. Canley Heights: 3 Derria
St. Inquiries 9609 7384. East Parramatta:
Inquiries B. Frost 0433 908 130.

GRIFFITH

Opp. Collina Oval, Blumer Ave. 9.30 am.
Manse: (02) 6962 4827.
Dr L. Thorpe (02) 6962 1934

HURSTVILLE

Cnr. Park Rd. & McMahon St. 9.30am &
5.30pm. Rev. Kevin Murray (02) 9580 1425.

KIRKPLACE

Meets at 9.30am at 12-16 Derby St,
Kogarah. Rev. Steve Chong (02) 9587 1081.

KOREAN, SYDNEY (Young Nak)

7-9 Manson St, Telopea. 9.30am. 11.00am.
3.00pm. S.Clerk (02) 9816 3807

MAROUBRA

8 Robey St, 10.00am. 7.15pm.
Chinese Service, 4pm.
Rev. Johnnie Li (02) 9349 1312

MITTAGONG

Mittagong Presbyterian Community Church.
Cr Alice & Edwards Sts. 9.00am. Sess Clrk
Mr John Currie, (02) 4872 4293.

MOREE (St Andrew's)

Cnr Albert & Auburn Sts, 10.00am.
Tel. (02) 6752 1083

MORUYA

31 Evans St. 9.00am.

Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

MOSMAN (Scots Kirk)

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

Rev. Adrian de Graaf (02) 9969 6101.

MOSS VALE

7 Browley St 9.30am & 6.00pm

Rev. Steve North (02) 4869 4795.

MURWILLUMBAH

16 Wollumbin St. 9.00am & 6.30pm.

Church Office (02) 6672 2226.

NAROOMA

1 Farncombe Ave. 11.00am.

Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

NEWCASTLE (St Andrews)

Cnr. Laman & Auckland Sts 9.30am &

6.00pm. Office: (02) 4929 2857

NEWCASTLE EAST (St. Philip's)

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

Stockton: 10.30am Wednesday.

Rev. John Macintyre (02) 4929 2379.

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

NORTH SYDNEY-GREENWICH

(St Peter's) 234 Blues Point Rd. 10.00am &

6.45pm. Wednesday 1.15pm.

Greenwich: (Taylor Memorial)

86A Greenwich Rd. 10.00am.

Rev. Dr Stephen Pym (02) 9460 9637.

ORANGE (St James)

Cnr Anson St. & Matthews Ave. 10.00am.

Rev. Robert McKean (02) 6362 6304

PARKES/FORBES/PEAK HILL

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

Forbes: 9.00am. Peak Hill: 9.00am 1st

Sunday. Rev. Craig Bland (02) 6862 2730

PENRITH (St Andrew's)

Doonmore St. near High St, 9.00am, 10.30am

& 7.00pm.

Rev. William Morrow (02) 4721 2440.

PORT MACQUARIE (St Andrew's)

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

Rev. S Donnellan (02) 6582 2505

RANDWICK

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

Rev. Grant Thorpe (02) 9399 3183.

REVESBY

Cnr Tower St & Eastern Avenue,

Service: 9.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Dr Peter Barnes (02) 9774 5740.

ROSE BAY (St Andrew's Scots)

Cnr Dover Rd & Carlisle St.

Service times: 10.00am.

Rev. Martin Spadaro (02) 9388 1206(O).

SOUTHERN CROSS

Park Ave. East Lismore. (02) 6621 3655.

SPRINGWOOD

160 Macquarie Rd. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.

Winmalee : 481 Hawkesbury Rd. 9.00am.

A. Min. Mark Armstrong (02) 4751 1188

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

SUTHERLAND

Cnr Flora & Glencoe Sts. 9.30am & 5.30pm

Rev. Andrew Clausen (02) 9521 2361

SYDNEY (Scots Church)

44 Margaret St. Sydney. Sun: 10.30 am.

Wed: 1.15pm. Rev. Adrian Van Ash

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

TAMWORTH (St Stephen's)

Cnr Matthews & Crown St. 9.00am &

6.30pm. Moonbi 9.00am.

Rev. Stuart Andrews (02) 6765 8754.

Tamworth Community Presb Church,

St Stephens, Cnr Matthews & Crown St.

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

TAREE

Albert St. 9.00am.

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

TERRIGAL (Scots Kirk)

2 Willoughby Rd. 9.00am.

Rev. Glenn Samuel (02) 4385 2240

TOULKLEY

Cnr Hargreaves St and Victoria Ave.

9.30am Morning Worship

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

Rev. Rex Swavley (02) 4392 9904.

TUROSS HEAD

277 Hector McWilliam Dr. 9.00am.

Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

WAGGA WAGGA SOUTH

60-62 Coleman St. Turvey Park

9.00am & 10.30am.

Rev. Sandy McMillan (02) 6925 1228.

WAHROONGA

Wahroonga Presbyterian Church,

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

Rev. David Yu (02) 9489 3302.

WEE WAA

Mitchell St. (02) 6795 4259

WENTWORTH FALLS (St Andrew's)

Falls Rd. 9.00 am.

Session Clerk: Mr J. Grant (02) 4759 1998

WEST WYALONG (Home Mission Station)

Pioneer Memorial, Court St. 10.30am.

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

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

Last Sunday 7.00pm. Contact Mrs Helen C.

Husking, Session Clerk (02) 6972 2143.

WOLLONGONG (St Andrew's)

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

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

WOONONA

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

WOY WOY

118-120 Blackwall Rd. 9.00 & 10.30 am.

Rev. K. Rathbone (02) 4342 2856.

VICTORIA

ARARAT

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

Rev. Ian Hutton (03) 5352 4054

ASHBURTON

Junction of High St. and High Street Rd.

near Warrigal Rd. 10.15am.

ASPENDALE

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

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

AUBURN

Cnr Rathmines & Station Sts Hawthorn East

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

BAIRNSDALE

159 Nicholson St. 10.00am.

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

Rev. Gary Stephens (03) 5153 1669

BALACLAVA

106 Hotham St. & Denman Ave. 9.30am.

Rev. Bob Thomas 0417 592 646.

BENDIGO (St John's)

Forest St. 10.30am & 6.30pm (1st, 3rd & 5th

Sun.) Rev. Philip Burns (03) 5443 6189.

BLACKBURN

53 Gardenia St. 11.00am.

Rev. P Locke (03) 9725 6417

BRIMBANK

Sydenham Community Centre

Cnr, The Community Hub & Overton Lea

Blvd, 10.00am each Sunday.

Rev. Peter Owen (03) 9307 6583.

BUNDOORA

Bundoora Hall, Noorong Ave. 10.00am &

6.00pm. Office: Mrs M. Goodson (03) 9457

4962. www.bpc.org.au

BURWOOD

(Chinese Presbyterian Church) 11.00am.

Cnr. Greenwood & Tennyson Sts.

Rev. Dr John Elnatan (03) 9801 7645.

CAMBERWELL- Trinity

cnr Riversdale & Waterloo Sts. 10.00am.

Rev. Philip Mercer (03) 9882 8102

CAMPERDOWN-TERANG

Terang: 155 High St.

Camperdown: Cnr Campbell & Brooke Sts.

Session Clerk: T. Fleming (03) 5594 8231.

CANTERBURY

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am. & 7 pm.

Rev. Grant Lawry (03) 9836 4601.

CANTERBURY JAPANESE

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am

Rev. Shojo Tsuchihira (03) 9511 0421.

CAULFIELD-ELWOOD

Caulfield: Neerim/Bambra Rds. 11.15am.

Elwood: Scott/Tennyson Sts. 9.15am.

Rev. Phillip Chang (03) 9505 3013.

CHELTENHAM Pioneers' Presbyterian

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

Rev. David Brown (03) 9583 2785.

CLIFTON HILL

Cnr Michael & McKean Sts North Fitzroy.

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

COLAC (Scots)

90-94 Armstrong Street. 10.00am.

Rev. Marvin Hagans H: (03) 5250 4360

O: (03) 5231 2398

CRANBOURNE/LYNDHURST

Cranbourne: Cnr Russel & Sladen Sts

10.00am weekly.

Lyndhurst: 214 Westernport Hwy (entry

frm Pyramid Pl) 2.00pm 2nd & 4th Sunday of

Mth. Mod: Rev. Bill Medley (03) 9786 2976.

CROYDON HILLS

Maroondah Community Centre, Brentnall

Rd, Croydon (next to Maroondah Secondary

College). 10.00am.

Rev. Matt James (03) 9725 5370.

DANDENONG

51 Potter St. 10.00am.

Rev. John Rickard (03) 9792 4252.

DONVALE

Cnr Springvale Rd & McGowan St Donvale.

8.30am, 10.30am & 6.30pm. Rev. Gerald

Vanderwert (03) 9842 9493. (03) 9841 7020 (O)

DROMANA-MORNINGTON

St Andrew's, Gibson St. 9.00am.

Mornington (The Chapel) Cnr Strachans Rd.

& Nepean Hwy. 11.00am.

Rev. Dr Michael Wishart (03) 5975 9514.

DROUIN

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

Rev. Mark Smith (03) 5625 4112.

ELTHAM

23 Batman Rd. 10.00 am

Rev. Don Elliott (03) 9439 9720

ESSENDON

Cnr Wilson & McPherson Sts. 9.15am &

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

FLEMINGTON

Norwood St. 9.30am.
S. Clerk Miss R. Anstee (03) 9650 9903.

FRANKSTON

30 Radiata St. 10.30am & 6.00pm.
Rev. Bill Medley (03) 9786 2976.
Session Clerk: Mr John Disney 8707 0462.

GEELONG (St. George's)

Cnr. Latrobe Tce & Rylie St. 10.00am.
Ministers: The Very Rev. Dr Allan Harman (03) 5255 2134. Rev. Peter Wilding (03) 5281 1723.

GEELONG NORTH

60 Victoria St. 10.00am.
Rev. Darren Middleton (03) 5278 1887.

GEELONG WEST (Scots)

Cnr. Pakington & Waratah Sts. 10.00am.
Clerk: Mr J. R. Diffen (03) 5264 8080.

GISBORNE (St Andrew's)

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

HAMILTON

St Andrew's, Gray & McIntyre Sts. 10.00am. & 5.00pm. (last Sunday of month)
Rev. David Schultz (03) 5562 7777.

HAWTHORN

580 Glenferrie Rd. 11.00 am. & 7.00 pm.
Rev. Graham Nicholson (03) 9819 5347.

HEATHMONT

Cnr. Waterloo St. & Canterbury Rd.
Heathmont 10.00am.
Rev. Andrew Venn (03) 9870 5182.

HORSHAM

16 Kalkee Road 10.00am & 7.00pm.
Rev. Willem Vandenberg (03) 5382 3735.

KANGAROO GROUND

265 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd. 9.30am.
Rev. Rod Scott (03) 9763 4248.

KOREAN MELBOURNE

16 Walnut Rd. North Balwyn. 11.00am & 2.00pm. Rev. Stephen Kim 0430 136 155.

LEONGATHA

Cnr. Bent & Turner Sts. 10.00am.
Session Clerk: (03) 5662 2107

MALVERN

161 Wattletree Rd. 10.30am. & 5.00 pm.
Rev. Philip Daffy (03) 9509 7373.

MELBOURNE

The Scots' Church, Cnr. Russell & Collins Sts. 11am & 5.30pm. Wed. 1.00pm. 10.30am (Indonesian Service) Werner Brodbeck Hall, 156 Collins St.
Rev. Douglas Robertson (03) 9650 9903.

MELTON

Mowbray College, Centenary Ave. 10.00am.
Rev. Phil Simmonds (03) 9747 8195.

MOE — YARRAM

Moe: 34 Fowler St. 10.00am.
Yarram: Cnr. Dougherty & Montgomery Sts. 2.00pm.

NOORAT

Cnr Mc Kinnons Bridge & Glenormiston Rds. 10.30am. Rev. Miles Fagan (03) 5592 5220

NUMURKAH

58 Saxton St. 11.15am. **Tallygaroopna:** Victoria St. 9.30am. **Cobram:** Cnr High and Pine Sts. (Anglican Church) 2.30pm.
Rev. Frank Savage (03) 5862 1621.

Yarram: Cnr Dougherty & Montgomery Sts. 2.00pm.

RESERVOIR (St. Andrews)

81 Edwardes St. 10.00am.
Session Clerk 9497 4785.

ROCHESTER

Cnr Victoria St. & Echuca Rd. 10.30am & 7.30pm (1st Sunday of the month).
S. Clerk – Mr Jeff Broad (03) 5484 6284.

ST KILDA

Cnr Alma Rd. & Barkly St. 11.00am & 7.00pm. Rev. Bob Thomas 0417 592 646.

SHEPPARTON

Cnr. Hayes & Leithen Sts. 9.00am. & 7.00pm. Also Stanhope, Kyabram.
Rev. Kyung Ee (03) 5831 6494.

SOMERVILLE

Cnr Jones Rd. & Park Lane.

SORRENTO-RYE

Sorrento: St Andrew's, Kerferd Avenue 11.00am. Rye: Cnr Collingwood & Lyons Sts. 9.15am. 6.00pm.
Rev. John Brennan (03) 5985 6492

SOUTH YARRA

621 Punt Rd. 10.30 am. & 5.30 pm.
S.Clerk: Mr J. Adlawan (03) 9808 7391.

SUNSHINE

McKay Memorial, Anderson Rd. 10.00am. & 6.00pm. Rev. John Cho (03) 9311 1661.

SURREY HILLS (St Stephen's)

Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 10.15am & 6.00pm. Family Services 6.00pm (2nd & 4th Sunday). Rev. Chris Siriweera (03) 9833 3306.

Deaf Presbyterian Church

Canterbury & Warrigal Rds. 2.00pm.
Rev. Tony Salisbury (03) 9551 3634
(Mod. Rev. Chris Siriweera (03) 9833 3306)

WANGARATTA – REGIONAL PARISH

Wangaratta, 158 Rowan St. 11.00am & 5.00pm (9.00am 1st Sunday)

Yarrowonga, 47 Orr St. 8.45am (11.00am 1st Sunday). **Myrtleford,** 78 Standish St. 7.00pm (5.00pm June, July, August).

WARBURTON

3471 Warburton H'way. 10.00am.
Brian Harvey (03) 5966 2309.

WARRNAMBOOL (St John's)

Warrnambool: Spence Street. 10.00am (Includes Children's program) & 5.00pm (in the church hall Princess St).
Office: (03) 5562 2029.

South Warrnambool: MacDonald St. 9.15am. Woodford: Mill St. 11.00 am.

Rev. Ben Johnson (03) 5562 2029.

WEST FOOTSCRAY

141 Essex St. (Scots) 10.00 am.
Session Clerk: Ms J Swift (03) 9687 5701

WILLIAMSTOWN (St Andrew's)

87 Cecil St. 10.00am.
Rev. Bruce Riding (03) 9397 5338

WOORI YALLOCK

1363 Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Rd. 9.30am.
Rev. Dean Carroll (03) 5964 7563.

WYNDHAM

116-120 Blackforest Rd. 10.00am.
Pastor Shane Cassidy (03) 9974 2024

QUEENSLAND

ACACIA RIDGE

Cnr Mortiner & Beaudesert Rds. 9:00am & 6:00pm. Rev. Daniel Bigg, (07) 3277 0010 (O), (07) 3711 5410 (H).

ASCOT

68 Charlton St. (Near Airport).
Nundah: 14 Rode Rd

Rev. Guido Kettmiss (07) 3216 4151.
Asst. Rev. Teddy Woo (07) 3865 4185

ATHERTON (Tablelands)

Cnr. Alice & Jack Sts. 10.00am & 6.00pm.
Rev. Cameron Wills (07) 4091 7203.

BALD HILLS

58 Strathpine Rd. 9.00am. & 6.30pm.
Rev. John Trappett (07) 3103 6144.

BRISBANE KOREAN

122 Allingham St, Kuraby 9am & 11am.
145 Ann St. 2.30pm.
Rev. Dr M. M. Y. Kim (07) 3300 3132

BRISBANE (St Paul's)

53 St Pauls Tce. Spring Hill.
Rev. A. Gardiner (07) 3831 7458(O).

BUNDABERG

Cnr Water & Alice Sts. 9.00am & 7.00pm.
Rev. Wallace Brown (07) 4151 4766.

CABOOLTURE

24 Cottrill Road. 9.00am & 6.00pm.
Rev. John Nicol (07) 5499 1977 (office) 0418 876 634 (mob.)

CAIRNS

87 Sheridan St. 9.00am. & 6.30pm.
Korean 11.00am. Cook Island 11.00am.
Rev. Harry Oh (07) 4051 2238.

CALLIDE VALLEY

Biloela: Cnr. Kariboe & Melton Sts. 10.00am. Jambin: Three Ways 8.30am.
Rev. Gaius Goh (07) 4992 1441.

CHARLEVILLE/BLACKALL

78 Galatea St. 9.00am.

CLAYFIELD (Scots Memorial)

29 Bellevue Terrace, 9.30am & 6.30pm.
Rev. Andrew Richardson 0423 160 412

COORPAROO

Emlyn St. 10.00am.
Rev. Phil Case (07) 3397 8793.

CREEK ROAD

Presbyterian Ministry Centre. 1541 Creek Road (cnr Fursden Road). Carina 8.30am, 10.30am & 6.30pm. Centre: (07) 3398 4333. Rev. Steve Cree (07) 3398 4333

DECEPTION BAY-BURPENGARY

Peace Presbyterian Church. 9.30am. 155-157 Maine Terrace, Deception Bay.
Rev. John Gilmour (07) 3203 2526.

GLADSTONE (St Andrew's)

Goondoo & Bramston Sts. 10.00am.
Benaraby: O'Connor Rd. 8.00am.

Calliope: Dawson H'way (Stirrat St.) 2nd Sunday 9.30am; 4th Sunday 8.00am.
Ph: 4972 1058.

GOLD COAST (I)

Arundel: 132 Allied Drive 9.00am & 10.45am. (07) 5571 5676.

www.arundel.org.au

Robina: Cnr University & Cottesloe Drives 10.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416

GOLD COAST (II)

Mudgeeraba: Cnr Mudgeeraba Rd & Regency Pde. 9.00am & 6.30 pm.

Rev. Ray Evans (07) 5573 1458.

GRACEVILLE

12 Bank Rd, Graceville, Brisbane. 9.30am and 6.30pm. Rev. David Secomb (07) 3122 9561. davidsecomb@inet.net.au

HELENSVALE (Northlinks)

1 Shepparton Road – 9.30am.
Rev. John Evans (07) 5580 1367.

HERVEY BAY

5 Denman's Camp Road, Scarness. 9.30am & 7.00pm. Rev. John Roth (07) 4124 7018.

IPSWICH

Cnr Limestone & Gordon Sts. 9.30am, 10.00am & 6.30pm. Rev. Scott Muir.
Forest Hill: Church St, 9.00am. Office: (07) 3281 7201, Fax: (07) 3202 2571.

ITHACA

100 Enogerra Tce, Paddington.
Service: 9.30 am. 6.30pm.
Rev. Robert Herrgott (07) 3300 6158.

MACKAY

Cnr Harvey St. & Evans Ave. Nth Mackay.
8.30am & 6pm each Sunday.
Rev. Gerhard von Tonder.

Sarina: Sarina Beach Rd. 10.30am each Sunday; Ph. (07) 4957 2835.

MARANOVA

Roma: Queen Street 9.00am.

MAROOCHYDORE

45 Okinja Road Alexandra Headland 9.00am & 7.00pm. Rev. Jens Norved.
Church Office (07) 5443 7073.

MARYBOROUGH

523 Alice Street. 9.00am (& 5.00pm first Sunday). Pastor John Vanderwal.

MILES

Cnr Warrego and Leichhardt Highways
9.00am. Rev. Walter Jones (07) 4627 1180.

NORTH PINE

57 Old Dayboro Rd. Petrie. 9.00am & 6.30pm. Rev. P. Cornford (07) 3285 2104.

REDCLIFFE PENINSULA

WoodyPoint, Cnr. Ellen & Hawthorne Sts.
9.30am. & 6.00pm. Scarborough: Jeays St.
8.00am. Rev. Peter Whitney (07) 3284 2578.

ROBINA

Cnr Cottesloe & University Drs.
Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416.

ROCKHAMPTON (Fitzroy)

St. Stevens – Burnett St. 8.30am & 6.30pm
John Knox – Rundle St. 10.00am
Mt Morgan: St Enoch's, East St. 4.00pm.
Rev. Jon Chandler (07) 4922 1825 (O)
(07) 4922 1540 (A/H)

SANDGATE

Loudon St. 9.00am & 6.00pm.
Rev. D.K. Ashman (07) 3269 1231

THE GAP

The Gap High School Auditorium
1048 Waterworks Rd, 9.30am.
Rev. Chris Perona (07) 3300 2987

TOOWOOMBA NORTH (St David's)

Mary St. Also at **Geham**.
Rev. Andrew Clarke (07) 4632 8027.

TOOWOOMBA SOUTH (St John's)

Cnr Cranley & Geddes Sts. 9:30am, 6pm.
Rev. Graeme McKay (07) 4635 4560
Murphy's Creek, Thor St 9:30am.
Westbrook, Westbrook Hall, Main St. 9am.

TOWNSVILLE (Willows)

26 Carthew St. Kirwan 8.30am, 11.00am & 6.30pm. Rev. David McDougall (07) 4723 1232.

TOWNSVILLE (St Andrew's)

113 Wills St. City. 9.00am & 6.30pm.
Rev. Peter Barber (07) 4771 2460.
Asst. Rev. Kwang-Ho Song (07) 4778 3823.

WEST TOOWOOMBA

Cnr Greenwattle & South Sts. 7.45am, 9.30am & 5.45pm. Rev. Esa Hukkinen

(07) 4613 6691, (07) 4633 4188 (O).

WINDSOR

60 Maygar St. 8.30am.

Wilston: 28 Macgregor St. 9.45am.

Rev. Stuart Atkinson (07) 3356 4124.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ALBANY

Spencer Park School Hall, Reidy Drive,
Spencer Park. 10.00am & 4.00pm. Chris
Woonings Ph: 0428 665 123.

BASSENDEAN

14-16 Broadway. 9.30am.
Rev. Ross Fraser (08) 9248 3252.

BICTON

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

FREMANTLE (Scots)

90 South Tce. Worship & Sunday School
10.00am & 5.00pm. Rev. Stuart Bonnington
Word on Wednesday 12.30pm
(08) 9398 1304 Off. (08) 9336 6542

MANDURAH

Cnr Sutton and Gibson St 10:00am
Rev. Paul Bloomfield (08) 9319 0706.

WEST LEEDERVILLE (Henderson Memorial)

Cnr Kimberly & Ruislip Sts. 10.30am.
English & Japanese Service 1.00pm.
Rev. Steve Young (08) 9448 8755.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE (St Andrew's)

92-98 Archer St. North Adelaide. 10.30 am.
Rev. Chris ten Broeke.
Session Clerk Mr D. Niven (08) 8381 4615.

ELIZABETH

106 Goodman Rd, Elizabeth South. 9.30am.
Rev. Kevin Stow (08) 8284 1719. Session
Clerk: Mr Bob Arstall (08) 8825 5226.

LARGS NORTH

Brenda Terrace. 11.00am.
Pastor Raymond Brewer (08) 8263 9692.

MILLCENT

Cnr Fifth & Sixth Sts. 10.30 am.

Also **Rendelsham**

MT BARKER

36 Hutchison St. 10.00 am.
Pastor Robert Finster (08) 8391 2270.

MT GAMBIER

Allison St. 10.00 am. 5.30 pm. Also Allendale,
Nelson (Vic). Rev. Gary Ware (08) 8723 9028.

NARACOORTE

Church St. 10.00am.

NORWOOD (St Giles)

79 The Parade. 9.15am & 7.00pm.
Session Clerk Tom Morgan (08) 8331
3499.

PARA HILLS

174 Maxwell Rd. 10.15am & 5.00pm. Rev.
Damien Carson (08) 8264 4607 (Office)
(08) 8262 7680 (Home)

PENOLA

Portland St. 9.30am.

PORT AUGUSTA

Jervois St. 10.00 am.
Barry Rossiter (08) 8642 2059.

SEACLIFF

Kauri Pde. Seacliff. 9.30am.
Rev. S. Slucki (08) 8296 1581.

WHYALLA

28 Ramsay St. 10.00 am. S/Clerk
H. Mashford (08) 8645 0818.

TASMANIA

CORNERSTONE (Hobart) 10.00am.

"The Philip Smith Centre", 2 Edward St,
Glebe. 5pm "Night Church" @ "The Cupping
Room", 105 Murray St.
Rev. Campbell Markham (03) 6234 4719.

CROSSROADS 5.30pm.

"The Philip Smith Centre", 2 Edward St, The
Glebe. H.M. Dan Shephard (03) 6234 8207.

DEVONPORT (St Columba's)

13 Edward St. 10.00am. Don: Waverley Rd.
2.00pm (1st & 3rd Sundays).
Rev. Steve Warwick (03) 6424 6066

HOBART (St John's)

10.00am & 6.30pm. 188 Macquarie St.
(03) 6223 7213.

Rev. Robert White (03) 6229 7657

Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

LAUNCESTON (St Andrew's)

Civic Square. 10.00 am & 5.00 pm.

Church Office: (03) 6331 5412

Rev. Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315 412

MONTROSE

Cnr. Islington Rd. & Walker St. 10.00 am.
Mod. Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

MOUNT STUART

10am "The Community Hall", Byard St.
Rev. David Jones (03) 6223 4701.

RIVERSIDE

Eden St. 10.45am. Glengarry: 9.15am.
Frankford H'way. Winkleigh: 9.15am, 2nd
Sunday. Rev. Norman Shellard (03) 6327 2967

ROKEBY

Presby. Community Church, Tollard 9.30am &
6.00pm. Clerk David Turner (03) 6247 7971.

SCOTTSDALE

George St. 11.00am. Bridport: Westwood St.
9.00am. Pastor Greg Munro (03) 6352 2527.

STANLEY (St James)

Fletcher St. 10.30am.

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

ULVERSTONE (St Andrew's)

65 Main Rd. 10.00am.

Rev. Charlie Kennedy 0400 228 241.

WEST TAMAR (Auld Kirk)

50 Auld Kirk Road Sidmouth 10.00am.

Caveside Road Mole Creek 2.00pm.

Pastor Ian Partridge (03) 6330 3702.

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

**Facsimile the AP office on: (03) 9723 9685
or E-mail us at: aus-pres@bigpond.net.au**

The Annual Fees are:

Congregations under 50 \$45.00 plus GST

Congregations 51 -99 \$55.00 plus GST

Congregations 100 or more \$65.00 plus GST

DAY 5

All the ways of man...

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 28:11-18

THE POINT Adam was not content with just being like God, he wanted to be God. The more humanism is allowed to pervade the thinking of a society the more dysfunctional and unhappy it becomes.

THE PARTICULARS

- Money might lead to influence, but it also leads to an arrogance that fails to impress even the least influential godly man (11).
- Similarly, good, godly government makes for a contented, stable society which is never realised under a harsh dictatorship; instead the tyrant loses control of himself and his appetite for money and power, causing his own untimely demise (12, 15-16).

• It is always better to acknowledge our sinfulness before a holy God and thus be in a position to receive His forgiveness because He is also merciful; the cross of Christ proves that God is both holy and forgiving; true peace and joy can only be found in a proper understanding of it (13-14; cf Psalm 130:4, 1 John 1:5ff).

• Nevertheless, a clear conscience is the best option for a relaxed, trouble-free existence; we should therefore do everything in our power to walk in God's ways, taking special care to place the same value on human life that God does (17-18; cf Luke 12:6-7).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How can we best counteract the rising tide of humanism today?

DAY 6

Honesty is the best policy

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 28:19-28

THE POINT There are many indicators of the obsessive self-centredness of our society: the degree to which our economy depends on the making of money out of money instead of useful labour; the lack of concern for the poor and disadvantaged; a lack of honesty in relationships and business as a means of personal gain. The result is an unstable society in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, where there is a lack of trust and contentment and a shortage of volunteers, and where charitable causes that once prospered struggle to survive – much like our own today!

THE PARTICULARS

- There is nothing more God-honouring (because it fits the way He designed us, individually and collectively) than good,

honest work and fair dealing. Chasing after dreams (Lotto, Scratchies, etc?) is the foolish path to ruin (even if we might win!) (19-21).

• God also designed us to share all the gifts and resources He has given us; to fail to do so is to forfeit His blessing (22, 25-27).

• A loving rebuke is hard, but always gives the best outcome (23).

• Self-justifying failure in God-given duty equates to murder (24).

• Good, beneficial government comes from godly leadership (28).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How do Matt. 5:19-48 and Jam. 2:1-13 exegete this passage?

DAY 7

God's ways are always best

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 29:1-8

THE POINT The points made in this passage are a repetition and extension of those made in Chapter 28. We all need such reinforcement!

THE PARTICULARS

- It is important to provide rebuke where necessary (28:23), and therefore fatal to let pride reject such rebuke from others (1), or to flatter when it is really a rebuke that will be more benefit (5).
- The lesson of verse 2 (cf 28:28) was one that Solomon's son, Rehoboam failed to learn, to his own sorrow (1 Kgs 12:1-16).
- Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) bears out the basic lesson of verse 3 while enlarging upon it with the

gospel truth about the healing power of repentance-and-forgiveness.

• The Bible makes it abundantly clear that our God is a God of justice, and that He requires His creatures, created in His image, to reflect His fairness in everything they do, from rulers down. He regards those who fail to do so as "the wicked" because of the devastating effect it has on individuals and society (4, 6-7).

• In the Bible, the "mockers" is the stereotypical man who ridicules God's revealed Word and ways, causing dissension and strife in society; the "wise" man is the exact opposite (8).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Why are we so slow to learn that God's ways are the best?

DAY 8

Important, timely warnings

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 29:9-17

THE POINT Militant Atheism seems to be on the increase in our society. The more clearly and forthrightly the Gospel is proclaimed, and the more effectively it impacts people's lives, the more vehement (often to the point of irrationality) the opposition to it becomes.

THE PARTICULARS

- Confidence in God's revealed truth enables us to remain calm, and so be more effective, in the face of active opposition (9-11).
- Corruption in government is not uncommon and will ultimately and inevitably lead to its demise. The truth of this fact has been borne out ad nauseum throughout human history

(12, 14, 16).

• We are all made in God's image and are wholly dependent on Him for everything we have and everything we are; it is foolish to think, and therefore behave, as if this were not the case (13).

• We are now reaping the harvest of over 50 years of believing the lie that corporal punishment is detrimental to the positive personal development of a child. It is now obvious that the opposite is the case, but we fail to correct the error (15, 17).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- In what specific ways can you see the relevance of these verses being demonstrated around us today? What can we do, either individually and corporately, to address this whole problem?

DAY 9

Man's way, or God's way?

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 29:18-27

THE POINT The Bible gives us only 2 life options: our way or God's way.

THE PARTICULARS

- God reveals Himself and His will for us clearly in Creation, in His Word, and in Jesus. If we ignore any or all of these, if we fail to acknowledge and align ourselves to His "big picture", His "vision" (KJV), we become a law to ourselves, doing whatever seems best and right in our own eyes (cf Judges 21:25), and we "perish" (KJV), missing out on His intended blessing for us (18).
- Information alone is not able to change our wayward, sinful hearts (19); we are often so busy expressing our own views

that we cannot hear what God is saying to us (20); our self-centred pride and arrogance lead us to dislike correction (21), to cause strife by venting our anger on any who dare to differ from us (22), or to lose the respect of others completely (23).

- There is a clear division between those who put God first and those who put Man first (27). Identification with the latter will entrap us entirely (24-25a), but with the former will lead us to a life of safety under God's just and sovereign rule (25b-26).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- In terms of our response to the Gospel, how does Paul's point in Romans 6:12-23 expand on what Solomon is saying here?

DAY 10

Timely warnings

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 30:1-9

THE POINT We might know little about Agur, or his disciples Ithiel and Ucal, but 21st Century Man would do well to heed to his words of wisdom here. As we build our "Tower of Babel" using the smart "bricks" of our advancing technology and the "bitumen mortar" of our God-denying secular humanism we are becoming more alienated from, and unable to communicate with, the God who made us for Himself; and so we invalidate our true identity as beings formed in His image.

Let us heed Agur's wise counsel:

THE PARTICULARS

- He acknowledged his own intrinsic ignorance before the God who alone is holy, ie beyond our grasp and whom we can never

contain within our very limited framework (2-3; cf Romans 11:33-36). Modern Man creates his "god" in his own image.

- He saw God's unequalled power at work on earth in the forces of nature around him (creation, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes) and he knew this must come from outside Creation (4).
- He hinted that this God's "Son" would visit His Creation (4).
- He acknowledged that God has clearly and savingly revealed Himself in His perfect, infallible written Word, the Bible (5-6).
- He saw deceit and materialism as two serious threats to the future welfare of Mankind – as we should also note today (7-9).

DAY 11

The roots of ruin

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 30:10-17

THE POINT God has revealed in His Word the basis for a well-functioning, happy society; human wisdom ignores His teaching to its peril.

THE PARTICULARS

- Whistleblowing is often necessary where there is suffering caused by ongoing injustice, but the whistleblower needs to be sure of his evidence and careful of his own heart and motives lest the whole process backfire on him to harm him (10; cf 12).
- The 5th Commandment (Ex. 20:12, cf Eph. 6:1-3) encapsulates the Bible's clear teaching about parental respect and authority; every society – and this is especially true of ours –

seriously degenerates when this teaching is ignored (11, 17).

- Hypocrisy and arrogance are difficult to correct and contribute greatly to the spiritual decline of any society. Jesus spoke very strongly against the religious leaders of His day concerning these things (cf Matthew 23), but they not only failed to hear or respond to His rebuke, they viciously opposed Him (12-14).
- Power obsesses those who thrive on the blood of the vulnerable (14) but they are never satisfied; their craving is both menacing (death and fire) and desperate (infertility and drought) (15-16).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Read Psalm 119:129-136. Does this describe your attitude?

DAY 12

The slippery slide to sin

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 30:18-23

THE POINT The style of expression, "three things ... four ...", indicates a list that is representative but not exhaustive. Here we are reminded of more things that lead inevitably to unstable government.

THE PARTICULARS

- An eagle glides easily and naturally in the sky, as does a snake across a rock or a ship through the ocean; God has designed us also in such a way as to experience the natural pleasure of sexual relationships as something that "just happens" – the "this-is-bigger-than-both-of-us" syndrome (see Genesis 2:20-25). The trouble is, the syndrome is too often really a sin-drome as the "naturalness" of it is allowed to over-

ride the clear boundaries God has also laid down for it. Our society has totally rejected the boundaries and so glides naturally into accepting adultery as something that "just happens" and then "wiping its mouth" and saying, "I've done nothing wrong" (18-20).

- Other things that contribute to the ongoing disintegration of a society are: committing the responsibility of rule to people who lack the necessary qualities of statesmanship and leadership; undisciplined, intemperate gluttony; and lack of sacrificial, self-giving love, commitment and faithfulness in marriage (21-23).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are Christians making a strong enough stand in these things?

DAY 13

Humble, servant leadership

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 30:24-33

THE POINT God has built into the very fabric of Creation some important principles for our edification, if only we would pay heed to them. One is the way He uses small and seemingly insignificant things to contribute to the fulfilment of His purposes (cf 1 Cor. 1:26-29). Another is the way He distributes gifts for leadership that are to be recognised and used appropriately and wisely for the common good (cf 1 Cor. 12:12-27).

THE PARTICULARS

- We all have much to learn from tiny ants in terms of diligence and industry in the humdrum of our daily routine (25; cf. 6:6).
- Rock badgers teach us to optimise even meagre resources

- (26).
- Locusts teach us the value of good order and government (27).
- Lizards teach us not to get carried away by social status (28).
- Good, wise leadership and rule, as God ordains it, is important for the smooth functioning of society (29-31; cf Rom. 13:1-7).
- Humility is the key. “Humility, the undercurrent of this chapter, which has already commended itself (directly or by contrast) as reverence (1-9), restraint (10-17) and wonder (18-31), is finally manifested as peaceable behaviour (32-33)” (Kidner).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Is humble, servant leadership lacking in the Church today?

DAY 14

Privilege and responsibility

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 31:1-9

THE POINT No more is known about King Lemuel or his doting mother than what is here. Nevertheless, the principles expounded hold true for all whom God endows with authority (cf Romans 13:1).

THE PARTICULARS

- His mother reminds Lemuel of two things he has probably never been allowed to forget: that he is precious to his mother (“son of my womb”); and that she has dedicated him to God (“son of my vows” – “Lemuel” means “belonging to God” and could even be intended as a nom-de-plume for any of Israel’s kings) (1-2).
- With privileged position comes special responsibility. The

common man who has little to live for may use alcohol to drown his sorrows if he so chooses (as so many do) (6-7), but the king must not succumb to the temptations of women and wine (3-4) in order that he might stay active and alert, saving all his energy and power to maintain God’s justice and uphold the rights and cause of the vulnerable, the poor and the powerless (5, 8-9).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Some of “those who cannot speak for themselves” are the unborn child, the abused wife or child, the person caught in a cycle of poverty, the Christian trapped by a cruel, persecuting regime, etc. How much are we doing to “speak up” for them? (8)

DAY 15

The A-M of a happy home

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 31:10-22

THE POINT The remaining 22 verses of Proverbs form an acrostic, each one beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Their common purpose is to extol the Biblical view of womanhood. The pattern God lays down in His Word for the ideal nuclear family sees the wife and mother totally committed to running the home and caring for her husband and children. Because of the wholesale devaluing of this high and holy calling today, it is essential that God’s people take passages like this seriously if we are to be the potent salt and light that will impact our own society. This requires the sort of radical and costly action that does not sit comfortably with our own generation. But can we afford to neglect

such a basic thrust of Scripture in terms of the different, complementary functions given to men and women?

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Is the ideal wife portrayed here as a “second-class citizen” who can be treated as a servant at her husband’s beck and call?
- List the various responsibilities entrusted to the “wife of noble character”. Is home-making, according to the Biblical template, a fulfilling calling exercising the special creative gifts God has given to women as creatures made in His likeness and image?
- How have husbands contributed to the breakdown of God’s template for the happy home? How can this be addressed?

DAY 16

The N-T of a happy home*

THE PASSAGE

PROVERBS 31:23-31

THE POINT It is interesting that in this second half of the pattern God lays down for the making of a happy home, everyone is a winner – the wife and mother is praised by her family and the community, the husband and father is blessed and respected in the home and in the market place, and the children are happy and contented.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What particular function is entrusted by God to men (23)?
- What kind of activity does the woman engage in that results in her being “clothed with strength and dignity” (24-25)?
- Can you think of examples in the Bible (both OT and NT) where women have spoken with wisdom and faithful instruction

- (26)?
- Do children and husbands today express enough appreciation for the hard, devoted work of their mothers and wives (27-29)?
- How much are we influenced today, by advertising and glossy magazine articles about celebrities, into emphasising “image” or worldly recognition/acceptance instead of the inner beauty of a quiet godly life of devotion to family (30-31; cf 1 Pet. 3:1-6)?
- Is this picture of the home typical of what we experience in our society today? Where did we start to lose direction? Is there a way back? What changes in our thinking/lifestyle are needed? (*The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet is Tau)

DAY 17

He came, Esau He conquered

THE PASSAGE

OBADIAH 1:1-7

THE POINT The sad story of the bitter struggle between the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:19-34; 26:34-28:9; 32:1-33:17; 36:1-43), serves as a perpetual reminder that God makes a clear distinction between those who are His by His sovereign electing grace and those who are rejected through disobedience and the despising of His covenant love (cf Gen. 25:34; Mal. 1:1-4; Rom. 9:10-13; Heb. 12:14-17). Edom, the nation that came from the descendants of Esau, showed constant hostility towards God's chosen people Israel (the descendants of Jacob), either by refusing to extend hospitality or by gloating over their misfortunes (eg Num. 20:14-21; Ps. 137:7; Ezk. 25:12, 35:5). Obadiah ("Servant of Yahweh"), about

whom we know very little as he cannot be identified with any of several other OT characters of this name, is given the task of pronouncing the LORD's judgement on Edom for all their mistreatment of Israel.

THE PARTICULARS

- With arrogance and pride, Edom relied on its physical location in the rugged area south of the Dead Sea for its security (1-4).
- Edom had failed to allow for the destructive forces of political intrigue and internal betrayal that would be its undoing (5-7).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How is Edom typical of our society? What warning is here?

DAY 18

The Kingdom will be the LORD's

THE PASSAGE

OBADIAH 1:8-21

THE POINT The God who entered into a Covenant of Grace with Jacob and his descendants is a God of mercy and of justice. The Covenant of Grace is only possible because of His mercy, but it is also guaranteed because of His mercy. His mercy is extended to those outside the Covenant as they share in the blessings of his common grace – the provision of life and health and daily food to all men as the sun rises on the evil and the good, and the rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt. 5:45). But there is a limit to the mercy expressed in common grace, and the time will always come when God's justice must be satisfied, the Day of reckoning

when men will receive in kind what they have meted out to others, when they will be treated in exactly the same way they have treated others. The Covenant of Grace is sealed with the blood of Christ, so that for those protected by that Covenant God's justice has been satisfied by being poured out on Him instead. Obadiah's pronouncement of Judgement on Edom (Esau) and the deliverance of Israel (Jacob) foreshadows the Day of the LORD for all nations when Jesus returns. It will be terrifying, but there will be no questioning of God's justice.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Note how clearly God's Judgement on Edom equates to their treatment of His Church. How will our nation fare? Why?

DAY 19

Truth and Love

THE PASSAGE

2 JOHN 1:1-13

THE POINT At the end of his long and arduous pilgrimage, the Apostle John is concerned about two things: that those who profess Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, should love each other with the love of Christ in obedience to His command; and that they should hold fast to the truth that has been revealed in Him. He is reflecting what Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (4:15). This is a timely warning. The 2 areas in which the Church seems to fail the most are in our lack of really genuine love for each other, and in our compromise with the world's way of thinking in the cause of tolerance and peace.

THE PARTICULARS

- God's truth, revealed in His Word and in His Son, is eternal truth – it doesn't change with Man's ideas and "wisdom" (1-2).
- Truth and love are inseparable; walking in love and walking in the truth are the same thing, they are both about being obedient to God's commands as given through Jesus and Scripture (3-6).
- Satan's deceptive schemes are an ever-present force around us; we need to recognise this, and persistently oppose them (6-11).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- How should we deal with Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses?

DAY 20

Hospitality

THE PASSAGE

3 JOHN 1:1-14

THE POINT As 2 John was probably written to a specific body of believers ("the chosen lady and her children"), so 3 John was written to a specific individual, Gaius. Much of the message of these two letters is the same, concerning the importance of love and truth as distinguishing marks of God's elect people. But, as 2 John warns against the danger of extending hospitality to impostors and false teachers, so 3 John commends the model of hospitality Gaius is showing to itinerant Christian workers who would otherwise have some difficulty coping with the immoral culture of the Roman travel industry. Such hospitality stems from a self-giving attitude, unlike "control-freaks" such as Diotrephes.

THE PARTICULARS

- John was concerned for the physical and social well-being of fellow believers as well as their spiritual health (1-2).
- Gaius' hospitality to strangers was evident to all, and was the practical expression of his walking in love and truth (3-8).
- Diotrephes' egotism led to irrational autocracy which then even called into question the genuineness of his faith (9-11).
- In contrast, Demetrius' witness was truth impersonated (12).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Are you a Gaius, a Demetrius, or a Diotrephes in your church?



news

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTCHURCH

Australian Presbyterian Moderator-General David Jones has written to fellow Presbyterians in New Zealand, assuring them of Australians' prayers in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake experienced by the people of Christchurch last month.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has sustained damage to church buildings but to date there is no report of serious injury or loss of life.

Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand has a congregation in Ashburton and the people there prepared themselves to receive refugees from Christchurch.

Mr Jones asked Australians: "Please uphold the rescue workers and medical staff in your prayers. Pray for those still trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings and pray for those who have lost loved ones, that they may receive comfort from the Lord through His people and through His word."

IRANIAN CHRISTIANS ARRESTED

More than 70 Christians were arrested in Tehran and the western city of Mashhad in the early hours of 26 December 2010 in a crackdown on Iran's house church movement.

Armed, plain-clothes special security officers forced their way into the homes of Christians while they were asleep. Dozens of Christians, many of them converts from Islam, were verbally and physically abused before being handcuffed and taken for interrogation. Among those arrested were house church leaders, married couples (two of whom were separated from young children) and a number of young single women.

Some of the detained were later released after signing statements that they would no longer take part in Christian activities. Davood Kaboli, 31, said, "They have made it impossible for Christians to gather. They want to create fear so we abandon Christianity."

The Governor General of Tehran Province, Morteza Tamadon, confirmed on January 4 that a number of Christians had been arrested. He

described house church worshippers as "deviants" and "parasites" and warned of further arrests.

AFGHAN CONVERT RELEASED

Afghan convert to Christianity Said Musa has been released from prison, where he was under threat of execution for apostasy, after months of vigorous campaigning.

Barnabas Fund has been engaged with others in high-level international diplomacy on Said's behalf, and earlier this month launched a public campaign to intensify pressure for his release. More than 8000 people signed an online petition.

The organisation recently received reports that Said is now safely out of Afghanistan. Before his freedom was finally secured Said had reportedly refused an offer of release if he would write a statement regretting his conversion to Christianity. He said: "I laughed and replied, 'I can't deny my Saviour's name'. Because my life is just service to Jesus Christ and my death is going to heaven [where] Jesus Christ is. I am 100% ready to die. They pushed me much and much. I refused their demands."

BHUTAN: FREEDOM PROMISED

Bhutan officials have given assurances that freedom for Christians to worship "within the cultural norms" of the tiny Buddhist nation in the Himalayas will not be violated, but they remain ambiguous on whether and when the miniscule community will obtain legal identity.

The cultural norms include a prohibition against proselytising. But Bhutan Minister for Home and Culture Lyonpo Minjur Dorji said there were provisions in the Constitution that could be interpreted as allowing room for Christianity.

Compass Direct

MUSLIMS ASKED FOR HELP

The apostolic vicar of Tripoli has approached Muslim organisations to ask for protection for the small Christian population in the country.

Franciscan Bishop Giovanni Martinelli said he had asked the Red Crescent and other organisations to protect Catholic hospitals, churches and convents. During Libyan violence, many

Christians have gone to churches to pray for peace. Hospitals and health centres have been inundated with people injured in the street clashes.

There are around 70,000 Catholics in Libya (1.8 per cent of the population) served by eight Catholic priests and about 100 religious sisters.

40,000 RALLY FOR BLASPHEMY

Some 40,000 people joined Pakistan's main opposition religious party, Jamiat-e-Islami, along with seven other parties, in a rally in defence of Pakistan's blasphemy laws on January 30, opposing any amendments.

The protesters demanded that the government reject western influence and criticised Pope Benedict XVI for joining the West in what they claim is "propaganda against the Muslim state".

The Pope had led international calls to show mercy towards Asia Bibi, the 45-year-old Christian woman and mother-of-five, who denies insulting the Prophet Muhammad during an argument in a Punjab province village in June 2009.

The leaders threatened to stage a "long march" if any changes were made to the blasphemy laws. Jamiat-e-Islami leader Syed Munawar Hussain warned if any amendments are made to the blasphemy law, neither parliament will remain, nor assemblies will exist. He said Pakistan cannot be prevented from revolutionary waves created in the Muslim world.

Assist

HINDU MURDERER JAILED

India's Supreme Court has rejected the bail order for Hindu nationalist Orissa state legislator Manoj Pradhan following his conviction in the murder of a Christian, Parikhita Nayak. Pradhan, of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was convicted on June 29, 2010 of "causing grievous hurt" and "rioting" and sentenced to seven years of prison in the murder of Nayak, of Budei village.

In its decision on January 25, the Supreme Court ordered the High Court to reconsider its decision to grant him bail. Pradhan had been granted bail by the High Court on July 6 on the grounds that he won state assembly election in April 2009. On September 9, 2010, he was convicted in the murder of Bikram Nayak, for which he was sentenced to

six years of prison. He received bail within 40 days of that conviction.

Parikhita Nayak's widow, **Kanak Rekha Nayak**, had challenged the granting of bail before the Supreme Court. Nayak's petition argued that, because of his position, Pradhan intimidated witnesses outside of jail, including her.

Compass Direct

INDONESIA: INCIDENTS RISE

Violations of Christians' religious freedom in Indonesia jumped from 12 incidents in 2009 to 75 last year, according to a report from the **Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace**. Setara Institute researcher **Ismail Hasani** said last month that 43 incidents involved attacks on churches and other security threats, the sealing of worship venues and prohibition of activities, among other violations.

Other incidents among the 75 violations included keeping churches from

establishing places of worship and banning services and other religious activities. In previous years most religious freedom violations overall have occurred in West Java Province, and that trend continued as Setara recorded 91 incidents against Christians and other groups in 2010.

"West Java, besides having a history of radicalism, is a region that also has thriving hard-line Islamist organisations that have special agendas such as enforcement of sharia [Islamic law] and eradication of immorality, besides being anti-Christianisation and anti-proselytising," Hasani said.

BOOST FOR NATIVITY CHURCH

Palestinians have submitted an application to the **UNESCO heritage committee** asking that the **Church of the Nativity** in Bethlehem be granted World Heritage status. The church was built 1700 years ago on what is believed to be the site of Jesus' birth. It sits today

within the West Bank, under Israeli occupation.

Palestinian Authority Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Khoulood Daibes said: "This step is part and parcel of our plan to end the [Israeli] occupation and build the institutions of the state of Palestine.

The **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in the Old City of Jerusalem has enjoyed UNESCO World Heritage Status for the last 30 years but the Church of the Nativity remains off the list because Palestine is not a recognised state. Both churches are visited by millions of pilgrims each year, with the Church of the Nativity expected to welcome two million visitors through its doors in 2011 alone.

Christian Today

EGYPTIAN MONASTERY ATTACKED

For the second time, Egyptian armed forces have stormed the old 5th century **St Bishop monastery in Wadi el-Natroun**, 110 kilometers from Cairo.

According to the *Assyrian International News Agency*, live ammunition was fired, wounding two monks and six Coptic monastery workers. Several sources confirmed the army's use of RPG ammunition. Four people have been arrested, including three monks and a Coptic lawyer who was at the monastery investigating the army attack.

The forces used five tanks, armored vehicles and a bulldozer to demolish the fence built by the monastery last month to protect themselves and the monastery from the lawlessness which prevailed in Egypt during the January 25 uprising.

LAOS: CHRISTIANS SUFFERING

Sixty-two Christians driven from their village to crude shelters at the edge of the jungle in **Saravan Province**, Laos, are at a "critical stage" from lack of food and water, an advocacy group has warned.

"The wells are drying up as they are going into the dry season, and their food supplies are exhausted" after villagers thwarted their attempts to plant new crops, said a source from **Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom**. "The authorities have successfully gotten them into a situation where they feel defeated."

Officials marched 11 Christian fami-



New ministry roles in the PCV

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria's Ministry Development Committee is seeking suitable candidates for the following roles:

Intentional Interim Minister

The IIM is a new role created by the PCV to provide specialised ministry for a parish during a time of vacancy. This will include helping the vacant parish to deal intentionally with unresolved issues, conflicts or difficulties, and to encourage a fresh vision and strategy for ministry, before the selection process for a new pastor is commenced.

An IIM serves exclusively in one parish for a period of no longer than two years.

Successful applicants will be:

- Ordained Ministers of the PCA, preferably with at least 5 years experience in parish ministry
- Able to demonstrate proven skills in serving a parish under stress
- Experienced and trained in conflict resolution (or prepared to train)
- Able to accept the conditions of a limited-term appointment

Salary is ordinarily 120% of the minimum declared by the Assembly.

District Interim Moderator

The PCV has designed the new role of District Interim Moderator to provide moderatorial oversight to a number of parishes in a defined area, relieving ministers with their own charges of this additional burden of responsibility.

Successful applicants will be:

- Ordained Ministers of the PCA
- Capable of administering essential church oversight to a number of charges and home mission stations as interim moderator or moderator
- Able to demonstrate proven experience as a parish pastor
- Available for extensive travel and overnight stays away from home
- Able to multi-task
- Comfortable with multiple points of accountability

For a position description for either of the above roles please email ministry@pcvic.org.au, or call (03) 9655 1406.

To discuss a position or quickly register interest ring our Ministry Development Director, Rev Dr Robert Carner, on 0419 780 810.

We also have multiple opportunities for ministry in rural Victoria. Some are part time allowing for bi-vocational ministry, graduate students who are called to ministry but need time for study, or retired ministers who desire to engage in pastoral work on a part time basis.

We seek ordained men as well as those who are called to ministry but not ordained who are willing to consider Home Mission Service.



lies out of **Katin** village in Ta-Oih Province at gunpoint in January 2010 after they repeatedly refused to give up their faith. The officials left them to find shelter about six kilometers (nearly four miles) outside the village and confiscated the Christians' homes, livestock, and essential registration documents.

Compass Direct

HONDURAS: PASTOR MURDERED

The murder of a prominent pastor in **San Pedro Sula**, Honduras, last month has focused attention on that country's alarming murder rate and the regular threats that Christian workers there receive.

Pastor Carlos Roberto Marroquín, 41, was shot to death by two assailants as he walked his two dogs on February 21. Authorities said the gunmen asked him for his cell phone, shooting him when he resisted.

Whether the high-profile pastor was targeted as a Christian leader for the murder-theft is a matter of conjecture; such killings are common in Honduras for people of all religious beliefs, and although he had received death threats, those too are not unusual for Christian leaders in the country.

PIRATES KILL AMERICANS

A California couple kidnapped by Somali pirates after seizing their yacht in the Indian Ocean, have been killed by their captors. The pirates also killed two other American hostages, it was reported last month.

Jean and Scott Adam, former residents of Newport Beach, were shot aboard their 58-foot sailboat *Quest* off the coast of Somalia, authorities said.

Two of the pirates were killed, and 13 were captured during a rescue attempt, according to various news reports. Also killed were **Phyllis Macay** and **Bob Riggle** of Seattle.

The Adams, a retired couple, had been sailing around the world for more than seven years distributing Bibles.

FIGHT FOR MARRIAGE

The **Australian Christian Lobby** is calling for Government to rule out repealing the Marriage Act after **Australian Human Rights Commission president Catherine Branson QC** confirmed the commission supported homosexual marriage.

ACL **managing director Jim Wallace** said Ms Branson's comments in a **Senate Estimates Committee** meeting about supporting homosexual marriage in "broad terms" as a way to remove discrimination, was not addressing the real issue behind the push for homosexual marriage, and perpetuated the myth there was discrimination against homosexual couples.

"We do not see denying homosexuals' marriage as an issue of discrimination. Discrimination was removed in 2008 when the Government gave homosexual couples the same entitlements as opposite-sex de facto couples," he said.

The reform amended 84 Commonwealth Laws in a wide range of areas including social security, medicare and educational assistance, providing equality under Commonwealth law.

CUBAN DISSIDENT FREED

A prominent Cuban political prisoner has been released by Cuban authorities under a deal brokered by the **Roman Catholic** church.

Hector Maseda is the latest dissident to be freed by the communist government in Cuba, the BBC reported. Maseda, 68, was among 52 dissidents Cuba's communist government agreed to free last July, but his release was delayed until now because he refused to go into exile in Spain. He has now been allowed to return to his home in Havana.

Assist

EASTER EGGED ON

British supermarkets have agreed to stock the first Easter egg to mention Jesus on the box

Although more than 80 million Easter eggs are sold each year in Britain, it is only now that an Easter egg has been made available making any meaningful reference to the Christian festival.

Supermarkets initially refused to stock **The Real Easter Egg** but returned after a campaign backed by the **Church of England's Bishop of Manchester** made national headlines.

Morrison's, Waitrose, Co-op and **Booths** have agreed to stock a limited "trial listing" of the Real Easter Egg in their largest supermarkets.

When church schools, churches and individuals were invited to place early mail orders for the eggs last October, more than 70,000 were ordered in the first few weeks.

DEMOCRACY A DREAM: COPTS

The leader of **Coptic Catholics** in Egypt has spoken of an "historic opportunity" for the people, describing how the country now stands on the brink of achieving the "dream" of a democratic system.

Cardinal Antonios Naguib, Patriarch of Alexandria, welcomed the interim military regime's stated aim of dismantling the autocratic style of government built up over 30 years by **Hosni Mubarak**, who resigned as president on February 11.

Signalling his strong support for the first declarations of the temporary administration which replaced Mubarak's regime, Patriarch Naguib highlighted the importance of the new government's commitment to a civil system of government.

Speaking from Alexandria in an interview with **Aid to the Church in Need**, Patriarch Naguib said: "Moving towards a civil, democratic government, rather than a religious or a military one, has been our hope for a long time – it has been a dream."

The patriarch went on to underline the new government's pledge to hold elections.

Also giving their support for recent political developments were other Coptic bishops in Egypt who said that both Muslims and Christians were uniting behind the movement for change.

Bishop Antonios Mina of **Giza** said: "For the last few decades there has been a lack of freedom. It was not human. We are pleased with what has happened for it gives us the opportunity for a fresh start."

Meanwhile, **Bishop Ibrahim Sidrak** of **Minya** diocese told *Aid to the Church in Need*: "Mubarak and his regime did not understand the calls for change that have been going on for five years or more. We are now facing a situation that is critical in a number of ways – politically and socially."

Both the bishops and the patriarch stressed that the new government's top priorities were ensuring security and tackling the country's huge social problems.

Patriarch Naguib said: "The social problems in Egypt are so many and so

huge that they cannot be solved in one go. It will take time.

"The country does not have an unending amount of treasure to enable an immediate improvement in the standard of living."

Patriarch Naguib downplayed fears that political uncertainty would play into the hands of extremists and groups such as the political movement, the Muslim Brotherhood.

He said: "If the Muslim Brothers enter into the framework of a civil society as a party with a very clear programme they are as welcome as any other political party. However, if they want to transform Egypt into a religious country with Sharia law then I think that not only the Christians but more than half the population will not accept that."

Ekklesia

BLASPHEMY: 1000 CHARGED

Since 1986, 1058 people – 456 Ahmadis (a Muslim sect), 449 Muslims, 132 Christians and 21 Hindus – have been charged under Pakistan's blasphemy laws, according to data collected by **Life For All**, a non-government organisation working for the repeal of the laws.

According to **Rizwan Paul**, executive director of LFA, about 80% of all these cases have been registered in only eight districts of central Punjab.

The worst part, Paul said, is that so far 38 accused "blasphemers" (16 Christian, 15 Muslims, five Ahmadis and two Hindu) have been killed extrajudicially.

"Twenty-seven of them have also been killed in these districts. The killing of nine blasphemy-accused in police custody or jail also took place in this part of the country," says Paul.

He believes that in most cases, the blasphemy accusations are used by people for settling personal vendettas and disputes over property or business or to discriminate against minorities.

General Zia's dictatorship and affluence (both came to the region in late 1970s) instigated intolerance in central Punjab, he said.

"Both factors, combined with the Afghan war, played an important role in extending the reach of religious fundamentalists to the area," he said.

"It is not easy to pinpoint one reason for the radicalisation of central Punjab over the years," says **Muhammad Amir**

Rana, director of the **Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies** and editor of the quarterly research journal *Conflict and Peace Studies*.

He says, "We also need to check the demography of Christian minorities in Pakistan. More than 50 per cent of total Christians and majority of Ahmadis of Pakistan live in these seven to eight districts of central Punjab.

"Religious parties always play a very important role in blasphemy cases," he said.

Sabiha Shaheen, executive director of **Bargad**, an NGO, believes urbanisation and media play the most important role in radicalising society in central Punjab.

"Urbanisation," she said, "has been providing opportunities to minorities for upward social mobility, which is resulting in awareness about individual rights in society. The feudal mindset has not accepted it. Increasingly radicalised mullahs are helping landowners in rural areas and traders in urban areas to maintain their stranglehold over minority workers."

CATHOLICS SCAMMED

By Barney Zwartz

Catholics have been warned: If they get a phone call from a bishop claiming to be stranded in the Philippines unable to pay his airport tax – "could you just send a few hundred dollars" – it's almost certainly the ecclesiastical equivalent of the famous Internet Nigerian letters scam.

The Pope's ambassador to Australia last month sent an email to all Catholic bishops, clergy, religious congregations and institutions, warning them about financial scams that claimed Vatican authority.

The two-paragraph letter from **Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto** says the email scams falsely refer to heads of dicasteries (Vatican departments) and other church authorities.

"Such scams solicit financial support in favour of exceptional situations or fictitious projects. They also ask for monetary transfers that involve money laundering resulting from illicit dealings."

Archbishop Lazzarotto says if Catholics are suspicious of any request purporting to come from Vatican officials they should check with his office.

In one case a decade ago, a hoaxer had a letter apparently from the **Archbishop of Kinshasha** in the

Congo. It said the bearer was the archbishop's nephew, that his mother (the archbishop's sister) had died, and could Catholics help him return to Africa for the funeral.

He took a taxi from Sydney to Bathurst to collect funds from the bishop but was met by the Fraud Squad. He had a Vatican directory, a portable fax machine, and several forged letterheads.

Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference general secretary Brian Lucas said there were many schemes where people tried to use church agencies and the names of senior church officials to extract cash.

"We want to support genuine charitable initiatives, but at the same time one has to be worldly wise about verifying the authenticity of these requests," Father Lucas said.

The Age

VIOLENCE – AND GROWTH

By Helen Bako

There were rumours in Nigeria that the Christmas Eve bombings in **Jos** and **Maiduguri** could have been a "dress rehearsal" for a more devastating attack on New Year's Eve or more likely New Year's Day. Sure enough, on December 31, 2010, another bomb went off at the **Mammy Market** in the **Sani Abacha** army barracks.

Militant Muslim group **Boko Haram** claimed responsibility and vowed to carry out more attacks. Many Christians in northern Nigeria feel that the threat to the church in Nigeria is not taken seriously by the Nigerian government and much of the world.

The media, when making reference to Nigeria, often says, "Nigeria, a country of 150 million people, is almost evenly split between Muslims in the north and the predominantly Christian south." But there are many tribal groups in northern Nigeria that were never conquered by the Muslims, and millions of Christians who are indigents of Northern Nigeria.

Although the Hausa and Fulani are the largest tribes in the north and are considered to be totally Muslim, there are tens of thousands who have turned to Christ and who are openly worshipping in Christian churches. Most of these have endured threats and attacks, been rejected by their families, have lost their homes and are in danger of being murdered.

Some of them go into hiding after their conversion, but many boldly witness to other Muslims. One such group is known as **Bazata**, and the founder, **Yakubu Gidado** was once a Muslim who accepted Christ in Jos in 1980. In 1991, he became a full-time evangelist who has since dedicated his life to winning Muslims to Christ. He named his ministry Bazata, which means "unexpected". Bazata's method of evangelism is through the use of drama, films and gospel music in the traditional Hausa style. About four million Muslims also watch Gidado's 30 minute-long evangelistic weekly TV program in their homes.

The church is growing at a phenomenal rate in Africa. In 1900, there were 10 million Christians and in 2000, there were 360 million. By 2025 it will be 630 million, and missiologists say that 1000 new churches are planted every week in Africa.

ECWA is one of many denominations in northern Nigeria. Formally known as **Evangelical Church of West Africa** (ECWA), it is now known as **Evangelical Churches Winning All**

and is one of the largest Church denominations in northern Nigeria. It has the largest evangelical missionary organisation in Africa, the **Evangelical Missionary Society**, with more than 1200 missionaries working in unreached areas.

Assist

PROTESTANTS 'KNOW LESS'

By Audrey Barrick

Compared to atheists and agnostics, Protestants are less knowledgeable of the teachings, history and figures of major world religions, a new survey reveals.

Out of 32 religious knowledge questions asked by the **Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life**, atheists and agnostics had on average 20.9 correct answers while Protestants as a whole answered 16 correctly.

Jews and Mormons also scored high with 20.5 and 20.3 correct answers, respectively.

When it came to Christianity, however, white evangelical Protestants were among those with the highest levels of

knowledge. They scored 7.3 out of 12 on questions related to the Bible and Christianity. Mormons were the only ones to score higher, with 7.9.

The findings are based on a poll conducted in 2010 among more than 3400 Americans aged 18 and older.

Some of the questions asked included identifying: **Mother Teresa's** religion; the dominant religion in Pakistan; the figure who inspired the Reformation; which religion teaches that salvation comes through faith alone; and whether public school teachers can read from the Bible as an example of literature.

The survey showed many people knew little of their own religion. More than half of Protestants (53%) could not identify **Martin Luther** as the person who inspired the Protestant Reformation. 45% of Catholics do not know that their church teaches that the bread and wine used in Communion do not merely symbolise but actually become the body and blood of Christ, while 43% of Jews do not recognise that **Maimonides**, one of the most venerated rabbis in history, was Jewish.

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True esteem

IS HUMILITY THE MOST PARADOXICAL BUT MOST ESSENTIAL VIRTUE?

Barney Zwartz

In 1880, a more religious age, *Punch* magazine ran a delightful cartoon of a pompous bishop patronising a pageboy. He says: “Who is it that sees and hears all we do, and before whom even I am as but a crushed worm?” The page tentatively suggests, “The Missus, my Lord!” The proud prelate clearly did not see himself as a crushed worm, as the “even I” proves. His apparent humility was really a form of condescension that the boy punctured.

Humility, properly understood (as the bishop did not), is perhaps the paramount Christian virtue, one the faithful are reminded of at this time of the year as they contemplate the remarkable claim that God himself took the form of a helpless infant.

Yet to the self-assertive culture of the modern West, humility – improperly understood – is contrasted with self-esteem and placed near the summit of the vices. Self-esteem is then presented as perhaps the paramount secular virtue, from which all blessings flow. These two attitudes are sometimes seen as mutually exclusive, with champions of the one deriding the other as providing a distorted picture of both self and society. In a post-Christian age, can humility be rescued to flourish alongside self-esteem as a desirable quality?

Enlightenment philosopher David Hume was chief prosecutor of humility, listing it with celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, silence and solitude as part of “the whole train of monkish virtues [which are] everywhere rejected by men of good sense”.

Hume regarded humility as either real or pretended self-abasement, and didn’t like either. As Australian philosopher Brian Scarlett observes, there are two traditional objections to humility: that it exalts false belief – we think of ourselves as less than we are – and that, if taken seriously, it would paralyse us and render us incapable of doing good.



LACK OF HUMILITY AND LACK OF CONCERN FOR OTHERS ISN'T JUST AN INDIVIDUAL TRAIT, IT'S THE WAY SOCIETY HAS GONE.

**Patrick McGorry,
2010 Australian of the Year**

An extreme version, Scarlett says, is the Rule of Benedict, followed by Benedictine monks. “There are 12 degrees evidently. The seventh is that a monk should declare and sincerely believe that he is lower than all the others, which obviously can’t be true for all of them.”

In *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens provided us with the literary paradigm of the humility Hume despised in the character of Uriah Heep, the ever so ‘umble, hand-rubbing, black-clad, spindle-shanked personification of insincere self-effacement masking unpleasant ambition.

There is no doubt that Christians have fallen prey to this counterfeit humility, but it is far from their ideal – which has another personification, as Paul tells us in the letter to the Philippians. He writes: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross” (chapter 2:6-8, Authorised Version).

At the end of His life, too, Jesus was deliberately humble, “a lamb to the slaughter” who did not defend Himself or resist.

Jesuit theologian Bill Uren says there are justly admired secular counterparts. He cites Thomas More, jailed Chinese democracy activist Liu Xiaobo who recently won the Nobel peace prize, Burmese heroine Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela as “Christ-like figures who for their principles went to these extremes”.

“The thing to remember about humility is that it comes from the Latin *humus*, meaning ground. It’s someone who is grounded, has a proper esteem of their own worth and recognises that so much of it is gifted from God,” Uren says.

For Sydney Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen, humility is the opposite of pride. “Pride is the declaration of independence, of self-assertion, unwillingness to rely on God. Humility is therefore a humble dependence on God. It starts with our relationship with God Himself,” he says.

Humility towards God expresses itself in humility towards others in two ways, he says. Firstly, it requires being other-centred rather than self-centred and, secondly, it recognises that we depend on each other – we should be willing to receive the gifts others bring us and also be willing to serve them with the gifts we have.

This links with proper self-esteem, because a psychologically healthy and balanced life does require a sense of one’s own worth and capacities, Jensen says. “The connection with humility is that we learn self-esteem from others – we can’t manufacture it by telling ourselves we are wonderful. We learn on the faces of other people to value ourselves as we ought, and that will include

rebuke as well as praise.”

Leading Australian philosopher Tony Coady sees humility as a form of realism, which involves recognition that we are not as uniquely important as we tend to believe. “That doesn’t involve any self-loathing or self-abnegation, but recognising that whatever capacities and skills you have, others have more and better forms, and others again have quite different skills important for the human community.”

Coady also defends self-esteem as containing an important truth. We need an accurate picture of our capacities, avoiding self-loathing, because misinterpreting our gifts by denigrating them is as bad as misinterpreting by overestimating them.

The “enormous emphasis” on self-esteem counterbalances indoctrination to think of oneself as unworthy. “Racism and sexism have had a very bad effect on people’s self-confidence. And some concepts of humility have worked in the interests of oppressive regimes, political or spiritual. They have been geared to people accepting an assigned status in society and accepting whatever the ruling power, social or political, dictated. It’s not part of humility to be squashed down. Anything that makes people craven can’t be a genuine virtue.”

More than that, humility might be essential for human happiness. “O Lord, it’s hard to be humble, when you’re perfect in every way,” sang country star Mac Davis. There is a strand of modern psychology, generally found in self-help books, that encourages us to see ourselves this way, but it is a long way from a healthy self-esteem, insists psychiatrist Patrick McGorry. The mental health expert and 2010 Australian of the Year is concerned at the modern focus on the self. “That’s a different issue from self-esteem, which is a healthy concept. Lack of humility and lack of concern for others isn’t just an individual trait, it’s the way society has gone,” McGorry says.

He criticises self-absorption as the besetting sin of the baby boomers. “You see this with ageing hippies like myself. Our generation has been so self-preoccupied, whether it’s meditation or consumerism.” His cure, and the secret of happiness, is a focus outside self, be it family or caring for strangers. “The idea of service may be old-fashioned, but it’s a good legacy and it’s alive and well.”

Psychiatrist Michael Dudley agrees

happiness follows helping others rather than acquiring goods or focusing on one’s own conflicts, or the best possible psychological adjustment as advocated by self-help books. But Dudley, a senior lecturer in psychiatry at the University of NSW, goes a step further, suggesting spirituality is also essential. “The notion of a healthy social and emotional life comes from a lot of things that give people a sense of who they are, so that some sort of spirituality is crucial to that, to give them a sense of value and of purpose and of connection to others,” he says.



HUMILITY IS THE MOST PARADOXICAL OF VIRTUES. IT IS CONSTANTLY IN DANGER OF SUBVERTING ITSELF AND TURNING INTO ITS OPPOSITE, PRIDE.

Humility is part of that – it links with mental health by not needing to be defensive or admired. “Humility is to know one’s own value, to stand with people who are marginalised and to stand out against the crowd. It’s a deeply internalised sense of agency and purpose that really stands out when there’s something to be stood for.”

Catholic thinkers, with their historical affinity for Aristotle, are inclined to find humility in his “golden mean”. They invoke the megalopsychia, or great-souled man, who is the golden mean between vanity and false modesty or pusillanimity. But Aristotle’s society did


not esteem humility, and the great-souled man disqualifies himself by insisting on receiving all the recognition he is due. He could never be a modern sportsman, wittering on about “the boys” (“the boys played well”, “I’m just pleased for the boys”), for which the only thing to be said is that self-deprecation is better than self-aggrandisement.

Humility is the most paradoxical of virtues. It is constantly in danger of subverting itself and turning into its opposite, pride. You cannot discipline yourself by effort of will to be more humble, and as soon as you seek to recognise it in yourself you lose it, unlike courage or prudence or temperance.

Melbourne University philosopher Christopher Cordner is reluctant to call it a virtue at all, though it is certainly an excellence. “A virtue sounds like something you can set yourself to develop, you can regard yourself as having improved because you’ve developed more of it,” Cordner says.

“I’m inclined to say it’s not something someone can be aware of in oneself. It’s a certain sort of self-forgetfulness, an attentiveness to what is not you. One can turn that into a poisonous project as well – ‘I am nothing’ – but that’s because once again the thought is about you.”

It seems humility may be becoming fashionable again. What 18th-century Anglican wit Sydney Smith said of man’s natural benevolence – “A never sees B in distress without thinking that C ought to relieve him directly” – applies just as much to humility. If religion exhorts us to wish for others what we wish for ourselves, in this instance we should wish for ourselves what we wish for others. ⁴²

 **Barney Zwartz** is religion editor of *The Age*, where this article first appeared.

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letters

CLIMATE: ACT NOW

Thank you to David Palmer and AP for the article "Climate Questions" (February). David made many good points, however I feel that one point has been overlooked in the debate about climate change and whether it is necessary to change Western man's activities. David did elaborate on what could or should have been the lead up to this point which has been lacking in every such article I have read, or program I have listened to.

David, acknowledging that it is by God's providence that our forebears rose from poverty as a result of the use of fossil fuels, goes on to say that the developing countries need cheap and plentiful energy so that they can rise from "abject poverty into the better lives we lead".

What is this "better life" we lead? Does David mean a life of consuming the world's dwindling resources with more and more gadgetry, and of having so much food that most of us are overweight and we can throw left overs in the bin? Is it a "better life" when we bury and burn many reusable resources so that we can have newer (and often bigger and more) goods, and we set up economies which have to grow to survive, and they survive on increasing carbon footprints? Are we really giving God the glory when we accept these things as "better"? Are we being good caretakers of the creation He has ordained us to rule over?

The point I feel is missed is that we do need to change our activities because we are heading down an unsustainable path, and especially when there is a risk that in the process we are changing the climate to our detriment. Rather than rejoicing in this unsustainable living standard shouldn't we be focused on sustainable standards for the whole world? This drastic change would be at the expense of our current living stan-

dard, but do we really need it?

David concludes that when our Lord Jesus comes again all wrongs will be put to right and the whole of creation will flourish in ways unimaginable. My prayer is that while we wait we will glorify God in the way we live and the way we enable our neighbours worldwide to live.

*Rosemary Zurrer,
Longwarry, Vic.*

CLIMATE: TOUGH QUESTIONS

Good on David Palmer for again asking some tough questions (AP, February).

How worried should we be by climate change? Fortunately, for those of us who study and know earth processes, the answer is very clearly – "not nearly as much as many in the media and political circles are".

Take the issue of water. As a professional risk management planner and water conservationist for over three decades, I strove within government to resist the vain dream of man's ultimate power over water before false fears of water shortages built the largely unnecessary desalination plants. Our Creator has reminded Australia over this last summer that He can provide.

Take carbon dioxide. While the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere remains the rate limiting factor for photosynthesis, and nearly every leaf on the planet provides evidence of that, I see no reason to worry too much about the very low levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Does trust in God automatically mean you and I have an excuse to not be concerned at all about our impact on the planet? No, clearly not.

*John Modra,
Colac, Vic.*

NAILING OUR COFFIN

The "Rejoice with Catholics" letter by W.J. Fraser (AP, December 2010) is

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another nail in the coffin of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

It's a spit in the face to the Reformers who gave us the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *The Larger & Shorter Catechisms* and led us out of the clutches of Rome.

Instead of using the Mary MacKillop canonisation as an opportunity to teach the truth about sainthood and to throw light on the gospel you capitulate with the heresies of Rome and place the gospel in darkness.

Why don't you teach us about the destructive teachings of Roman Catholicism, Freemasonry (or aren't we allowed to mention that), and liberal theology.

I want to be taught the pure gospel!

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. "

*Tony Di Bernardi,
Morwell, Vic.*

A TIME TO GRIEVE

Rather than rejoicing with Catholics over the canonisation of Mary McKillop, as suggested by William Fraser (*AP*, December), this event should deeply grieve us and drive us to renewed prayer that God may open their eyes. Should we rejoice when a church leader once again denies the truth that *all* true believers are saints, that is, set apart for God? Should we rejoice when one more false god is added to the list?

I have no doubt that Mary herself would cringe at the thought of being a god, but Scripture tells us clearly that we are to pray to God alone, through Christ alone. Roman Catholics are encouraged to pray to these so called saints, or at best to pray through them, when Scripture tells us that the way to God is now completely open to us, we may

come to Him directly through Christ.

I grieve over the fact that the Roman Catholics continue to be deceived, but I grieve even more at the blindness of Presbyterians who long for an outward unity based not on God's truth but on deception.

*John Zylstra,
Maclean, NSW*

IDOLS DETHRONED

Whereas there have been many great articles and interviews which we have appreciated recently, may I say that the interview with Mike Goheen "Dethroning the Idols" – on worldview – was exceptional (*AP*, August, 2010). Exceptional in the sense of its current relevance, its present importance, for the Lord's people.

I trust I am not alone in hoping there may be some way it may be circulated more widely in our denomination and the Christian community. I think it is very important.

*Neville Taylor,
Eight Mile Plains, Qld*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Thank you to all at *AP* for your work and continuing commitment to spiritual growth and encouragement.

I really appreciate the consistent high quality of your magazine and pray for growth in circulation and support from the Presbyterian/Christian community

(not mutually exclusive).

I was introduced to your magazine by my previous Pastor Don Geddes, bless him.

Please be encouraged, you are making a difference.

*Dale Sypott,
Mudgeeraba, Qld*

GENESIS, AS WRITTEN

Thanks for the excellent articles by Dr Noel Weeks and Dr Phil Burcham (*AP*, February), supporting a recent, completed, sinless, deathless, six-day creation, as in Genesis 1 and 2. This is foundational to the gospel.

The first Adam's sin brought condemnation, suffering and death to man and creation. The last Adam's sacrifice gives righteousness and a new creation. Theistic evolutionism popular today is contrary to historical and scientific facts, obscures God's mighty power, wisdom and love, and undermines the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. May more of our theologians have their eyes opened.

*Frank Savage,
Hastings, Vic.*

The opinions published in AP letters are not necessarily endorsed by the editorial committee.



Correction: It was wrongly stated for 17 Feb. that Wahroonga charge, northern Sydney is vacant but in fact David Yu has been there for two years. Pray for him and the about 75 c&a, (communicants and adherents) 35 yf (younger folk – Sunday School and Youth) and 6 e (elders).

MARCH 2011

- 21 Presbyteries of Darling Downs & North Queensland greatly affected by destructive river flows and cyclone.
- 22 Spiritual, emotional and material recovery from the February earthquake in Christchurch, NZ.
- 23 Stability and Christian freedom in Egypt, Libya and other mid-eastern countries.
- 24 Riverwood charge with about 65 c&a, 40 yf and 5 e. Ian Stenhouse.
- 25 Kerang charge with about 50 c&a, 15 yf and 2 e. Rudi and Heila Schwartz.
- 26 A. & T. Banks Korea MP (mission partners – the Australian Presbyterian World Mission) workers from Sydney with OMF International involved in SE Asia.
- 27 Church plant at Merigandan, Qld.
- 28 Macquarie chapel charge near Macquarie University northern Sydney with about 355 c&a, 70 yf and 20 e. Richard and Wendy Quadrio, Duncan Robinson.
- 29 L & Tan MP workers from Sydney

with OMF International in SE Asia.

- 30 David Cook and other Bible College staff.
- 31 The application of principles to stir up the embers of somnolent churches into a flame.

APRIL 2011

- 1 Presbytery of Riverina NSW – 3 charges and 1 home mission totaling 8 congregations, 1 retired minister, D. Hayes clerk.
- 2 Wallondilly charge (Tahmoor) south of Sydney with about 60 c&a, 35 yf and 5 e. Joshua Jung.
- 3 Gordonvale Babinda charge with about 45 c&a, 15 yf and 4 e. Bruce Harrison.
- 4 Eltham charge northern Melbourne with about 105 c&a, 12 yf and 5 e. Don and Anne Elliot, Max Walker.
- 5 Browns Plains charge southern Brisbane with about 150 c&a, 60 yf and 6 e. Danny and Desley Mihailovic.
- 6 Ministers and sessions planning their Easter activities.
- 7 Hamilton charge western Vic. with about 123 c&a, 10 yf and 6 e. David Schultz.
- 8 The work of “Industrial” chaplains (who may work among white collar staff).
- 9 Pray for the moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy in Gisborne charge with about 25 c&a, 23 yf and 3 e.
- 10 Pray for the moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy in Bicton charge Perth with about 110 c&a, 20 yf and

3 e.

- 11 Robyn Davies MP worker from Strathfield with Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL in PNG involved in training people to use the Scriptures she and Elizabeth Fritzell translated.
- 12 Bexley-Rockdale charge southern Sydney with about 125 c&a, 70 yf and 2 e. Ewen Brown.
- 13 W & D Fittel, A & M Shanks, evangelistic workers from Qld with OAC ministries.
- 14 Mayfield Samoan charge with about 70 c&a, 103 yf and 13 e. Setu and Fasinoala Amosa.
- 15 Robert and Lucy Quinn MP workers from Campbelltown NSW with AEE involved in training koorie people for ministry.
- 16 Castle Hill charge with about 130 c&a, 12 yf and 9 e. Moses Hahn.
- 17 Pray for the moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy in Scots church Geelong West Vic. with about 60 c&a, 5 yf and 6 e.
- 18 Hamilton charge Newcastle NSW with about 193 c&a, 15 yf and 65 e. John and Lynne Webster.
- 19 Church plant at Eatons Hill, Brisbane.
- 20 Presbytery of Gippsland, eastern Vic. – 3 charges and 3 home mission stations with about 530 c&a, Gary Stephens clerk.



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books

Faith Unfeigned

John Calvin, trans. by Robert White
Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010.
Reviewed by Peter Barnes

Calvin was most reluctant to publish his sermons, as he considered them too localised to be of more general worth. However, the exception to this rule concerns the so-called *Four Sermons* – on Psalm 16:4; Hebrews 13:13; Psalm 27:4, and 27:8 – which were preached in 1549 and then revised and published with an exposition on Psalm 87 in 1552. They all deal with the recurring problem of the Reformed Christian’s obligation to worship in a godly way despite the hostility of Roman Catholic authorities. Robert White has done us a wonderful service in translating them, published now as *Faith Unfeigned*.

In dealing with those whom he called “Nicodemites” – evangelical believers who still attended the Catholic Mass for reasons of safety – Calvin could be both blunt and compassionate. He declared: “I must speak in even cruder terms to such blockheads. They hold that disguise is legitimate when one is among the papists.” To Calvin, the Mass is “like a harlot who passes herself off as a virtuous woman by sheltering under her husband’s good name”.

Yet he could also write to a friend: “Yet I am not so excessively severe as to condemn all Christians who do not quit their country when subject to such bondage, as if I completely despaired of their salvation. I would, however, urge them at the very least to make a careful reckoning by honestly examining their consciences, and by truthfully recognizing how far they are from serving God as they should.”

This is a perennial topic, in one form or another, in the life of a Christian, and Calvin is as insightful as ever in these sermons.

Peter Barnes is books editor of AP.

The Case for Traditional Protestantism

Banner of Truth, 2004.

When Grace Comes Alive

Christian Focus Press, 2003.

Terry L. Johnson

Reviewed by Stuart Bonnington

Terry Johnson is the senior pastor of the 250-year-old Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah Georgia. He is also the author of a growing number of books which are setting a new standard in terms of the fresh statement of historic Presbyterian theology, applied practical theology and simple but very profound preaching and teaching.

Johnson has published *When Grace Comes Home*, in which he explains the “difference the doctrines of grace make to your life”; *When Grace Transforms* about the “character Christ’s disciples envisioned in the Beatitudes”; and *The Family Worship Book* (all Christian Focus Press) among other works.

Recently he wrote *The Case for Traditional Protestantism*, subtitled “the solas of the Reformation”. This is not an appeal for a reactionary Protestantism but rather a very clear and simple call for the church to remember the power and the potency of the great central teachings of the Reformation.

There is real spiritual depth on every page, yet in such an accessible form. History is woven together with theology and finds expression in heartfelt application. No doubt the book began as sermons at the IPC in Savannah.

When Grace Comes Alive certainly began this way, being a sermon series on the Lord’s Prayer delivered between July

1999 and July 2000 in the midst of a sermon series on Matthew. It demonstrates admirably a great aim of Reformed thinking, living and praying, the public ministry of preaching and teaching, in calling sinners to Christ, in building up Christians in their faith and in seeing them move forward in witness, service and ministry.

These two books by Terry L. Johnson are superb. Don’t miss them.

Stuart Bonnington is minister of Scot’s Kirk, Fremantle.

Let’s Talk About Parenting

Tony and Judy Willis
Sydney: Anglican Youthworks,
2010.

Reviewed by Peter Barnes

This is only a short work – fewer than 100 pages – but it covers 10 areas of concern in parenting, and raises a great many issues. It is necessarily brief, but there is much wisdom and true empathy in this book. Advice extends from choosing pets (e.g. a cockatoo can live for 70 years) to toilet training (it is more easily done in summer). Regarding schooling, the Willises have some sensible things to say without being very directive.

As becomes modern evangelicals, they take a step backwards regarding corporal discipline, and there is more than a hint that it is the easy way out. A closer reading of the book of Proverbs might reveal that it has a place in God’s scheme of things, to point children away from evil and towards righteousness. Having said that, there is much in this book to encourage and help young parents beginning the difficult task of raising children in today’s world.

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Useless idols

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR ABOUT HEROES. THEY ARE NOT TODAY'S CELEBRITIES.

Peter Barnes

Recently I was watching the evening news on television, and becoming increasingly irritated at the rot that was being passed off as newsworthy. Virtually all the news was gossip about celebrities. The antics of film stars and drunk footballers are hardly what make the real world go round.

Celebrities, heroes and personalities have come in all shapes and sizes down through the age, but they seem to be converging these days to one common factor: one need not do anything worthwhile, just being famous is enough. On 25 February 1956 Nikita Khrushchev, of all people, delivered a stinging attack "On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences" to the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It purported to be an attack on the Stalin cult, and a call to return to the principles of Leninism. Actually, those being oppressed and lied to by Leninism saw little difference in being oppressed and lied to by Stalinism. The cult of personality has continued unabated in all parts of the world, whether professedly free or authoritarian.

Indeed, there seems no end to it. Recently Keith Richards, the guitarist from the Rolling Stones, published his autobiography. It tells of a life of stealing, drug dealing, promiscuity, and violence. A journalist was threatened that he would have his hands smashed if he mentioned Richards' acne. Our hero meant what he said as his practice was to carry a knife and illegal guns and ammunition with him.

His daughter was raised by her mother, as neither Richards nor his junkie girlfriend could care for her. When his second son died in infancy, Richards did not return home for the funeral. He does not know where the little fellow is buried, or even if he is buried. All this is par for the course, but the Conservative Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, was so moved by



IF WE DO NOT LOOK TO IMITATE WORTHWHILE HEROES, WE WILL PURSUE UNWORTHY ONES. SCRIPTURE WARNS US AGAINST LOOKING TO THE WRONG KIND.

Richards' exploits that he has called for the guitarist to be knighted – Sir Keith Richards alongside Sir Michael Jagger. "Bizarre" seems too weak a word to describe such a suggestion.


Lytton Strachey promoted the policy of doing demolition jobs on eminent people. This was not some new insight gleaned by adherence to the new critical historical standards. Before Strachey wrote his *Eminent Victorians*, Charles Spurgeon had warned that "Hero-worship is a kind of idolatry, and must not be encouraged".

It is intriguing and instructive that the Bible goes both ways regarding people to imitate and admire. Responding to the party-spirit which had infected the Corinthian church, Paul laments that there is a group that followed him, a group that followed Apollos, a group that followed Cephas (Peter), and a pretentious group that supposedly followed Christ (1 Cor. 1:12). This kind of Christian celebrity cult was intolerable to Paul. Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for them, and they were not baptized into his name. Paul would have joined in with Charles Wesley's hymn:

*Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void;
Names and sects and parties fall;
Thou, O Christ, art all in all!*

There is no room in the church for a celebrity cult.

Yet there is room to imitate worthy Christian models. Paul even urged the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16), and he told the Philippians: "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Phil.3:17).

Hebrews 11 is an honour role of the Old Testament saints, which omits the blots on their CVs, in order to give us examples to follow. The warts in the painting – to cite Oliver Cromwell – are there in the history, but not reproduced in Hebrews 11. If we do not look to imitate worthwhile heroes, we will pursue unworthy ones. Scripture warns us against looking to the wrong kind of celebrities in order that we might learn from the right ones. 



Peter Barnes is minister of Revesby Presbyterian Church, Sydney.

