

U S T L I N

Presbyterian

THE M A G Z I N E O F T H E P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H O F U S T L I N

june 1999

Divorce

shattered lives



Training kids to kill • Unequally yoked • Church directory



The

Trinitarian Bible Society (Australia)



*Is pleased to announce a series of meetings
to be addressed by a distinguished and dynamic speaker from Northern Ireland*

*Rev David Silversides ministers to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland
Loughbrickland congregation and is also a Committee member of the Northern Ireland branch of the
Trinitarian Bible Society. God willing, the schedule of meetings is as follows:*

Date	Meeting	Venue	Address	Time	Subject
15.6.99	Adelaide Auxiliary	Bible Presbyterian Church (church hall)	496 Magill Road, MAGILL	7.30 P.M.	"Why should we still use the Authorised Version"?
16.6.99	Clarence River Auxiliary, NSW	Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland building	Fitzroy Street, GRAFTON	7.30 P.M.	"God that cannot lie"
17.6.99	Brisbane Auxiliary	Virginia Presbyterian Church (church Hall)	Cnr. Sandgate Road and Gympie Street, VIRGINIA, BNE	7.30 P.M.	"Interpreting the Word of God"
18.6.99	Sydney Meeting	Hawkesbury-Nepean Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (church Hall)	Mt Druitt Road MT DRUITT VILLAGE	7.30 P.M.	"Can I trust the Bible in my hand"?
19.6.99	Melbourne Meeting	Ashwood Community Hall	21a Electra Avenue ASHWOOD, (Melway map ref 61 A11)	2.30 P.M.	"Guidance through the Word of God alone"
21.6.99	Perth Meeting	Independent Presbyterian Church building	16 Mint Street, EAST VICTORIA PARK (Mint St runs from Albany Highway through to Shepparton Road)	7.30 P.M.	"The New International Version - is it reliable"?

Please plan to join us for a challenging and thought-provoking time of fellowship at one of these meetings

For further information please contact Calvin MacKenzie, P.O. Box 123, MT PLEASANT, NSW, 2749
'Phone or Fax: 0247 290477

The Word of God Among All Nations ----- The Word of God Among All Nations

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS at St John's, Warrnambool

GUEST SPEAKER

Rev David Jones

(St John's, Hobart) will speak at all Services on

"Entering the Promises of God" - Messages from Numbers

SUNDAY, JUNE 27

10am Worship
7pm Communion
Rt Rev John Woodward
(Moderator PCV)

MONDAY, JUNE 28

7pm Celebration
Mix of Old and
New Worship

TUESDAY, JUNE 29

150th Anniversary Day
7pm Worship & Supper
Cutting of the Cake
Launch of
"Between Two Rivers"

"BETWEEN TWO RIVERS" is an 80 page history of St John's with coloured photographs on the front & back covers, and b/w photographs inside.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy the cost will be \$10 per copy (+\$1.50 postage if required).

Please place your order at the Church Office: 15 Manifold St., Warrnambool, VIC 3280

June 1999
No. 505

AUSTRALIAN
Presbyterian

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA



EDITORIAL

One flesh becomes two 4

DIVORCE

The cast aways 5

Dee Gronlund tells the stories of three women – and how the church failed them.

We can help 6

What the trio hoped the church would do

Home alone 7

Ken Crispin has 10 tips for newly single parents

Triumph of hope 9

Can divorced Christians remarry? More often than many think, suggests Peter Bloomfield

God's new glue 10

Adultery need not be the end, counsels Paul Beringer



DEVOTION

Exalted among the nations 12

John Piper puts missions in perspective

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Presbyterian churches, state by state 13

NEWS

Home Front 17

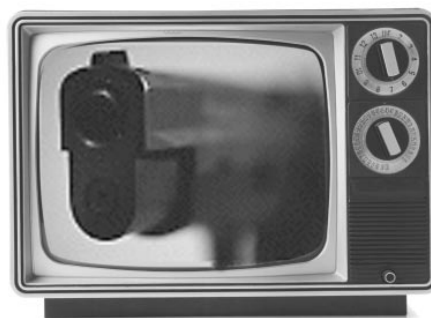
Across Australia 18

World News 19

VIOLENCE

Training kids to kill 20

Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman shows how children unwittingly undergo the same indoctrination as American soldiers.



PRAYER 26

LETTERS 27

ESSAY

Unequally yoked 28

Why shouldn't Christians marry unbelievers? John Wilson explains.

THE AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN: The national magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Acting editor-in-chief: Robert Benn. Editorial committee: Robert Benn (NSW), Stuart Bonnington (WA), Peter Hastie (NSW), Guido Kettniss (Queensland), Barney Zwartz (Victoria). Graphic Design: Sandra Joynt for A&J Moody. Advertising and subscription inquiries: Walter Bruining, 3 Durham Rd, Kilsyth 3137; Phone: (03) 9723 9684. Subscription: \$32 a year; bulk (minimum of five copies to one address) \$29 each. Overseas: \$A43. Office: 3 Durham Rd, Kilsyth 3137. Phone: (03) 9723 9684. Fax: (03) 9723 9685. Email: austpres@bigpond.com Printed: Newsprinters Pty Ltd, Melbourne Road, Shepparton 3060. Published: Monthly except January by the National Journal Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Australia; Convener Robert Benn. Opinions expressed are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the PCA, the editor or the committee. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement. Contributions: Submitted articles are welcome. The deadline is the first of the previous month. Donations are always welcome. Print Post approved 34918100384.

When one becomes two

Of all the storms which can burst upon one's life, the crisis of divorce is probably the most destructive. There is no other experience, apart from a sudden and tragic bereavement, that has such power to generate the deepest and most intense emotions.

While sudden death delivers an enormous blow that can leave a person reeling for years, it does at least have a note of finality. But the effects of divorce linger like a chronic infection, leading to ongoing pain and suffering. The grief and turmoil does not stop when the Family Law Court pronounces its decree of dissolution. It can continue for years afterwards while a couple battles in court, trying to get a satisfactory property settlement, better custody orders, or a proper payment for child maintenance.

The dimensions of dysfunctional family life in Australia are huge. It costs the Federal Government some \$3 billion a year



Robert Benn

in the form of social security payments, family court costs, legal aid, child support and taxation rebates. This figure does not include expenditure on emergency accommodation and the homeless allowance. This is the social cost.

But there is a spiritual cost as well. Divorce not only cripples its immediate victims, but it harms the mission of the church as well. According to the Scriptures, divorce is harmful and disruptive to the ris-

ing generation. It is seen as an obstacle to the discipling of godly children (Mal. 2: 15). The church is often perceived as less than compassionate to the plight of divorcees and their children. While those who have suffered bereavement are surrounded by family and friends, those whose marriages break up are often treated with suspicion and sometimes disdain.

Again, the church is quick to offer counselling to those who are struggling with the grief of bereavement, but not much is forthcoming for those who are passing through the crisis of marital breakdown. Instead, divorcees often feel that they have been tried and condemned by the church. All that they hear is that divorce is terribly sinful.

This issue of *Australian Presbyterian* is designed to provide constructive help to those who face marital and family conflict. John Wilson examines the issue of choosing one's life partner: should a Christian ever marry an unbeliever? A mixed marriage can be a fertile ground for serious disagreements about fundamental issues. We need to know the risks involved.

Dee Gronlund examines how the church has responded to three Christian women at their point of need. There are lessons to learn here, as well as a number of suggestions for more appropriate pastoral care. Adultery is often a factor in many marriage breakdowns. But does it have to be? Paul Beringer suggests what is needed if a marriage threatened by unfaithfulness is to be saved.

Another question that agonises many divorcees is: "Can I get married again?" Wherever they turn in the church, they seem to get different answers. Peter Bloomfield takes a fresh look at this confusing issue.

Ken Crispin offers some sane suggestions from his extensive legal experience for helping innocent victims of divorce – children.

We hope this issue is compelling and useful reading both for those who have been hurt, as well as for all those who can help. Read on.

Robert Benn

Convener,

National Journal Committee 



L'Abri Fellowship

CONFERENCE SERIES

JULY 1999

What in the World is Real?

*An exploration of today's world views
from a Christian perspective*

The work of Francis Schaeffer continues through L'Abri Fellowship. A series of conferences will be held in July at venues around Australia.

The conferences will be an opportunity to hear speakers from L'Abri Centres, Wim & Greta Rietkerk - Netherlands, Jock McGregor - England and Frank Stootman - Australia, who carry on with Schaeffer's teaching and challenging thinking.

Lectures and Workshops include:

- The Christian Mind
- Can Reality have Absolutes?
- The Death of Modernism and the Rise of Despair
- Postmodernism - Panacea or Pandora's Box?
- The Greatest Event in the Last 1000 Years
- If Only I Could Believe?
- Isn't Religion an Escape from Reality?
- Generation X - A Lost Generation?
- Image and Reality in Society

For Information & Registration:

QLD	2-4 July	Kim Dale	07 5545 2041
NSW	9-12 July	Heather Stootman	02 4658 0227
SA	15-17 July	Randal White	08 8390 1601
WA	19-20 July	Julian Bull	08 9495 2219
Vic	19-20 July	Nigel Jarvis	03 9773 4189

For worse

Three tales of pain show how the church sometimes fails.



Lyn's story hits like a bomb shell. Her life was like that of many ministers' wives. She kept busy looking after three young children and supporting her husband, Greg: "I was the minister's wife going to church twice on Sundays ... doing all the right things."

When Lyn suspected Greg was having an affair with a married woman elder in their church, she desperately hoped her fears were untrue. Greg told her she was going mad and needed to see a psychiatrist.

Acting on intuition, Lyn eventually confronted him with the false claim that someone had told her about the relationship. Even then she hoped he would deny it. But, believing his secret was out, her husband admitted it.

"He was angry with me for not accepting it," says Lyn. "He wanted me to forgive him and realise that, even though he didn't love me, he didn't want to hurt me ... It was quite strange." When she could not accept what had happened, Greg became physically violent: "I was sleeping in the spare room, on a mattress on the floor, with a hammer under the pillow ... I was that scared!"

A minister friend asked why she was staying there under those conditions. "That



Dee Gronlund

snapped me out of it," Lyn said. "It was very bad for the children." After two weeks of consideration she left, taking her young children with her.

And what was the church's response? "I experienced no understanding no help financially, no help to find somewhere to live. In fact, I had abusive phone calls from church people saying 'Why did you leave your husband?', 'You just imagined all this! Do you really believe it happened?'" She sadly reflects that, as time went on, "no one came – except for one couple – to ask how I was managing. Was I able to feed the children? ... Yet people were bringing Greg casseroles! They were helping him with washing. Meanwhile, I was looking after three little children, travelling to and from work, trying to stay awake during the day to make a living."

Although her church's attitude was extremely painful, Lyn realises that the congregation was also in shock, just as she was. More astounding was the reaction of the wider church administration and head office. They showed no sympathy for Lyn's situation, but readily embraced her husband. Greg was quickly given another pastorate.

"I actually went to the management and asked, 'How could you just move him to another church? What does that say to my children? What does that say to me?' The woman I spoke with became quite aggressive, saying how dare I suggest that they should sack him. I said, 'I'm not saying you should sack him, but perhaps he should be suspended for a while. He's actually admitted he had the affair.' She replied, 'He said he was wrong and we're willing to forgive!' What can you say to that?"

But that was not the last the administration would hear of Greg's misconduct. A few years later, after he was moved to a country church, he had another affair – this time with a married woman in his pastorate. He was then asked to resign. Lyn says: "Even when it came out the second time, he still couldn't understand why he should stand down."

Lyn's bewilderment arises out of many factors. But a big issue for her was feeling that she and her children were the innocent victims of the marriage breakdown, yet she was given no assistance. "How could they give me no financial support, no moral support, no help to find somewhere to live ... nothing. But they were protecting him ... He was on a full salary. He had a beautiful house (the manse) to live in..."

"I felt betrayed by the church ... I had to leave my home, my church, I was bereft of my neighbourhood friends. And what could I say to my children when he continued to be a minister? It's exploded my whole vision of what it is to be a minister of the gospel."

And what of the elder involved in the affair? "She is still continuing as an elder. They didn't ask her to stop. It was like I didn't exist. I thought I was a member of that congregation. Everything continues - except I was a nuisance."

Karen, the mother of two children, does not mind sharing her story. She believes the church should be held to account for their response to people experiencing breakdown in their marriage. She shakes her head at the handling of the situation with her husband Rick.

"We had separated before but received quite a few phone calls from people in the church saying that we were out of line and totally sinful. And to get back together." A church counsellor advised Karen to seek God, overcome the hurts, and reunite.

So Karen and Rick tried. "It was a total failure. He would go six months without even communicating with me. He would sleep in another room. If we had to attend a function at church, he would sit in the row behind me ... he wouldn't walk with me. There was no affection."

And Rick had not actually come back to live with Karen - he just spent a lot of time at their place while keeping his own flat. "I fed him, I paid for his deodorant and shampoo because he'd always shower here, I bought him clothes. But he never took me out, never did things with me. Yet he went on a deep sea fishing trip with his mates, he'd go out to jazz clubs - and wanted to continue dating female friends. I realised he was living this high life while I was basically supporting him financially."

After some months, frustrated and angry, Karen asked Rick to leave.

During this time the church did little to help the family. The church counsellor was overloaded with work and could not see the couple. She referred Karen to a home group leader. This woman said that God had told her she should speak to Karen and Rick. But it never happened. Whenever Karen contacted her she was too busy.

After Rick left the home group leader advised the counsellor she had better speak with Karen. "I told her there was no way I would go to counselling or have the church involved." Why? "Because I had been given the run-around by the church for 12 months. I had had enough!"

Bev had been married for nearly 15 years when she separated. Her husband, Alex, went through a so-called mid life crisis. "He behaved like a 19-year-old," says Bev. He withdrew from our marriage, then he had a 'coming out' and went about doing everything he wanted to do to redeem his 'wasted life' married to me." This making up for lost time included staying out until all hours, and living a completely separate life, as well as asking Bev to move out. "He believed he needed to be married ... he just thought he needed to be married to someone else - someone more 'compatible'."

Alex's behaviour continued for more than a year, during which time their minister


visited the couple to try and bring about a reconciliation. Yet Bev believes he was not qualified for the task: "He never brought the matter to a head. And so this only contributed to prolonging the agony." Eventually the minister suggested they seek professional counselling, something Bev thinks he should have recommended sooner.

Bev says this was not very successful because Alex was only interested in blaming her for their problems, and was prepared by now to live separately under the same roof permanently. At this time, Bev sought legal advice, unable to endure the situation any longer.

Today, Bev still does not know why the elders did not take up the issue of their marriage problems. She had made every effort to follow Christian guidelines and avoid taking the matter into her own hands. As well, she had sought advice from the elders and minister before taking each step. "No one was batting for me. I was the one who reached out for help but their silence was saying something."

As an example of their inaction, Bev recalls a time when she called an elder to their home after her husband had been verbally aggressive: "He poured out abuse about me. I asked the elder later if he believed what Alex had said and he replied 'No'. Yet no one ever called him to account. No one ever said to him that his behaviour was unacceptable."

Bev feels cheated by her church: "I felt betrayed that they didn't step in with strength, but left things flapping in the wind. My pain was prolonged far too long because of their reluctance to take a stand."

Each woman comes from a different denomination, and the name of each has been changed. Dee Gronlund is a part-time writer who worships at Ringwood, Vic. 

Each of these three women had very definite ideas about what the church could do to support people experiencing marital anguish and breakdown.

Lyn: "I feel a support group of minister's wives who have been in the same situation would be a great help. I had to leave my home, I was bereft of my church, I had lost my neighbourhood. I felt betrayed. I'm sure I'm not the only minister's wife who's had this problem. There should be some moral support."

"There should be a fund set aside for families in this predicament. Something the church could use at its discretion to help people re-establish themselves."

What the church can do

Karen: "The biggest thing for me would be for the church not to have a 'grading system' on sin. Being divorced isn't any worse than any other sin. I think they could extend grace and concentrate on restoring people - not condemning and isolating them. Because I never felt condemned or unloved by God, but I felt like that in the church."

"Counselling should be available. And prayer and pastoral support, because I didn't experience any of that. They could

run divorce recovery courses. These are not very common.

"The children should have mentors - male or female role models who take an interest in them. Also, practical things such as helping around the house, little things to make people feel they're part of the body and not cut off. Church activities should not be too expensive, so these families can join in - money often means that they can't take part."

Bev: "The issue of separation and divorce is not going to go away. Yet the church often doesn't have a clear stand. I think they should have a clear statement or policy on how they are going to deal with marriage break down. And they should act on it!"

Cast adrift

Parenting after divorce is a minefield. But there are maps, writes Ken Crispin.

Being a single parent – or a divorced parent with custody of the children – isn't easy. After years of marriage you may be thrust into it quite unprepared for a host of problems you have never even considered.

Those problems will have to be resolved at a time when you are perhaps still distraught from the break-up of your marriage and uncertain what the future may hold. You may have consoled yourself with the thought that at least you'll have the children – only to find that they are so upset and badly behaved that they feel more like a millstone than a life raft. You may see each outburst of distress or bad behaviour as a further indication of the harm suffered through the marriage's failure.

Don't despair. There are things you can do.

1) Tell the truth in love. It is usually better to tell a child the truth, even if it is unpalatable, than to let him cling to hopes or dreams which you know will not be realised. If the other parent is not likely to return then don't pretend that he is. The child may be upset to think that Dad is not coming home again but, in the long run, that distress cannot be avoided, and your pretence may merely prolong the anguish and undermine the child's trust in you. If your child comes home and finds you in tears or obvious distress don't brush aside questions with a brave "Nothing!" Tell him truthfully that you are upset about the separation or about whatever has caused your distress. A child who is at all perceptive is not likely to believe that there is nothing wrong, and brusquely dismissing questions may simply provoke speculation about all kinds of terrible things which may be far worse than the truth.

This general principle may sometimes have to give way, however, when questions are asked about the cause of the separation or about the other spouse. If your 12-year old daughter wants to know why Daddy doesn't live at home anymore, replying that "he would rather live with that tart with the blonde dye in her hair than his children" will prove unhelpful. It should be noted that the biblical injunction is not merely to tell the truth but to speak it with love.

2) Don't criticise your former spouse in front of the children. When you have been badly hurt it's natural that you should feel



PHOTOGRAPH: THE AGE

angry and upset and that you should talk to other people about the way you feel. It can be very important to get things off your chest, and it is natural to complain to the children about the other parent. There may be a subconscious desire to evoke their sympathy and support. If custody proceedings are still pending there may be a desire to win the children over to your side.

This problem can become very serious. It sometimes blossoms into a tug-of-war in which each parent desperately tries to pull the children in his or her direction. Of course, the children feel the strain, often suffering quite severe emotional or psychological problems and sometimes losing all respect for both parents. The merits of the marital conflict are not the business of the children. Furthermore, it is almost invariably in the children's interest that they maintain a positive relationship with both parents. If you are wise, you will foster that relationship no matter what your feelings may be for your former spouse.

3) Don't interrogate your children about your former spouse. Family court proceedings are sprinkled with affidavits in which a parent sets out comments by the children about things the other spouse has said or done. Such comments are usually inadmissible, and when the matter is finally heard a judge usually orders that they be struck out of the affidavit. The practice is grossly unfair. It involves using a child to spy on his mother or father, and can only cause trouble in the long run. It may make the former spouse bitter, leading him to suspect his child and censor mentally everything he says in the child's presence. It may even evoke great resentment in the

child himself if and when he realises that he has been used in this fashion.

4) Don't try to be more than a good mother or father. Remember that your children have two parents, notwithstanding the separation or divorce. Many single parents try to crowd out the other parent, whether deliberately because of hostility – the feeling that the other parent forfeited the right to consideration – or simply in trying to fill both roles because the other parent is absent. Of course a single parent assume some of the jobs formerly done by the other parent. Yet there is a fine line between carrying out some of the other parent's jobs and taking over the other parent's role entirely.

5) Don't try to compensate for the separation by relaxing normal parental restraints. This may be characterised by discussing everything rather than laying down rules and by persistently trying to participate in the games and activities which the children pursue – like a mate instead of a parent. In the long run this erodes respect for the parent and, sometimes, causes resentment of the intrusion. Children have many friends. They have little need of one more. What they do need is the security of a parent who will stand firm like a rock in a storm and will set the parameters for their behaviour. When the children can only live with either their father or their mother it is doubly important that the custodial parent fulfil his or her parental role and refuse to be sidetracked by some trendy concept of mateship.

6) Don't promote any of your children to the role of co-parent. It is easy for a mother to slip into the habit of telling the young son that he will have to be "the man of the house" now that Daddy has gone. It is equally easy for a father to encourage a daughter who is helping him with the cleaning and cooking by telling her that she has taken over from her mother. While these compliments are well-intentioned they sometimes impose an enormous weight of responsibility on the child. It is one thing for a child to take over particular jobs that he feels confident to handle. It is altogether another to feel that he has to fill the shoes of his father in terms of overall responsibility.

7) Don't be embarrassed about your children's nostalgia for times when you

were all together. During the marriage there will have been happy times that the children may look back on with great affection. They may have photographs, souvenirs or mementos of those occasions which mean a great deal to them. Don't take those things from them or make them feel that they are unable to talk about them in your presence. At a time of distress a child needs to be able to look back on happy times, and such memories add cohesiveness to the child's life. Now that his parents are separated he may lead two separate existences. It may be important to him to be able to relate those existences to the time when you were all together. The fact that he is nostalgic for times shared with your former spouse does not mean that he doesn't love you or that he wishes to leave you and live with that parent.

8) Anything your children may perceive as a threat to their security should be discussed with them openly. Any man introduced to them by their mother, for example, may well be regarded as a potential surrogate father. The reactions of children may range from noisy and perhaps embarrassing curiosity to overt hostility but, whatever the reaction, there will be an underlying question, "How is this going to affect me?" Unhappily, that question is rarely asked in a direct manner and, consequently, it is usually left unanswered. It is usually better to offer some explanation than to leave your children to speculate.

9) The position of your former spouse in relation to salvation calls for particular sensitivity. Children have a knack of asking questions that take your breath away, "Why isn't Daddy a Christian?"; "Does that mean that Daddy will go to hell when he dies?" If you are not careful you can provoke a sense of outrage and of bitter resentment not only against you but against God. You can also cause your children enormous anxiety and the sense of utter despair at the thought that the father whom they love so much being eternally damned. Yet to lie may be equally dangerous because the children may blithely raise the matter with your former spouse only to have everything that you told them contradicted. Some Christian parents tell the children they don't know and to take it up with the spouse concerned. That inevitably leads to the other parent being asked whether he is a Christian and, if the answer is no, to a theological debate for which the child is ill-equipped either intellectually or emotionally.

There appears to be no perfect answer to this problem but the course which I would suggest as involving the least risk is to simply tell the child that all you can really say is that God loves the other parent very much. You can explain that you really don't know whether he has actually become a

Christian or not because that is a matter between him and God. No matter what your private opinion may be, that much is true.

Which of the people in the crowd would have given the dying thief on the cross any chance of the salvation Jesus promised him had they not heard the actual words spoken?

It is usually better if the child is encouraged not to speak to the other parent about a Christian commitment. Any number of reasons can be given for that request. For example, you might be able to say to a child, "Look, I don't want your father to think that you only want to see him because you want him to become a Christian. He wants you to see him because you love him." Whatever the explanation the child can usually be diverted by being encouraged to pray for his father (or mother) instead.



10) Ask for help if your children don't settle down after the divorce. Children vary in the extremity and duration of their emotional reactions to the separation and divorce of their parents. Like the adults, they go through various emotional stages involving shock, adjustment and, ultimately, establishing a new lifestyle. During the initial period of emotional upheaval a whole host of behavioural problems may become apparent. Don't be concerned about that. It is perfectly normal. As the child adjusts to the new situation those behavioural problems usually evaporate. Most children seem to settle down reasonably well within the first year after the separation. If one of your children does not settle down in that time then there may be an underlying problem.

Sometimes the problem is created by a single unresolved question. The question may be relatively straightforward. A child may feel that his father or mother doesn't love him any more. "If she did she would never have left." Another child may be plagued by something a little more complicated. He may ask for example, "How can I trust God when he lets this sort of thing happen?" Problems of that kind can often be resolved quickly and painlessly by an

experienced counsellor. Occasionally a child exhibits some more serious kind of personality disorder. That is comparatively rare and when it does occur can usually be identified by a trained counsellor who can then offer advice.

Parents without custody of their children have different but equally real problems to handle. Here are two suggestions which might help:

First, don't try to buy your children with expensive presents and exotic outings. Often non-custodial parents seek to cement the relationship with their children by buying them trail bikes, video cassette recorders, computers and other expensive presents. Others seek to achieve the same thing by trying to make each access period the occasion of a visit to a circus, a lion park, aquatic carnival or some other place intended to produce great excitement or interest. This often makes the custodial parent suspect you are trying to buy the affection of the children to get custody. It will also produce problems for you because you will be unable to sustain the initial burst of excitement and will be forced to cope with unrealistic expectations which you yourself have created. A good long-term relationship must be based upon mutual love and affection rather than the provision of exciting things.

Second, try to make them feel your house is their other home. If you do not have custody of your children, you may find it adds some measure of security to your relationship with them if they can see you at your home and, preferably, if they can keep some clothes or toys there. The presence of such things in your home will be a tangible promise of further visits. Unless the children are very young it will usually be helpful for them to stay overnight at regular intervals. If you have a spare room you might allocate it specifically to them. Don't ignore them but don't go out of your way to pamper them. There will be an air of artificiality about the kind of treatment which may prevent them from feeling at home. Let them help by doing chores or participate in whatever you are doing.

Whether you have custody or not, remind yourself frequently that your responsibility is simply to care for your children. God does not expect you to carry them around on your back as a burden. He has not only forgiven you your mistakes, he has heard your prayers for your children and will nurture them in the years to come.

*Justice Ken Crispin is a judge of the Supreme Court of the ACT. This is an edited extract from his book *Divorce: The Unforgivable Sin?* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1988, currently out of print).*

A new covenant?

It can be right for divorced Christians to remarry.

Sally's husband just walked out and left her for someone he considered prettier. He abandoned her with two young children. He shows no remorse, refuses to talk, and already has a baby with his new partner. Sally has met a soul-mate called John. He suffered a similar blow when his wife left him for someone wealthier. They both asked my advice as a Christian pastor: "Can we get married again?"

Edith and Ross were not Christians when they married. Both have changed a lot. Edith has been converted. Ross has become hardened and a drinker. Their marriage is an empty sham. They merely live under the same roof. He wants her to stay, but on his terms. That means he will continue to treat her like dirt. There is no affection, no companionship, much verbal abuse and denial of her dignity, and a regular black eye after each Saturday night on the grog. No wonder Edith sobs: "Can I get married again?"

I thought I'd seen it all until Sue rang me. She and Craig were newlyweds, just five months ago. They seemed so happy and he treated her very well. But Sue knew something wasn't quite right. He was secretive about some things and acted suspiciously. But Sue put it down to a mere personality quirk and didn't dwell on it. The horrific facts only emerged when Craig was arrested. It turns out he was already a convicted paedophile when he married her and was still offending. He didn't deny it, and assured Sue his love for her was always different and special. She was devastated. "I can't stand him touching me! He is vile! The marriage is over, but I don't want to be alone. Can I ever get married again?"

Surely we feel their pain. There are thousands like them all around us, refugees from smashed-up marriages. They have been deceived and betrayed, used and defiled. They are broken, suffering, stigmatised people.

Tragically, their wounds are often made worse by the reception they get from Christians. Over and over again I've had to pick up the broken pieces of people hurt by well-meaning but ignorant advice. It goes like this: "Divorce is a sin, always wrong, and only allowed in cases of adultery. Remarriage after divorce is forbidden, in fact



Peter Bloomfield

it is actual adultery because divorce does not really end a marriage. In God's sight it still exists."

Worse, people are assured that this is what the Bible teaches. No wonder divorcees feel like lepers. Innocent parties are made to feel like sinners who can't be forgiven. The gospel appears odious, sentencing them to a life of solitary confinement.

At first sight the Bible's big picture on divorce and remarriage appears difficult and complex. But, in summary, it does grant Sally, Edith, and Sue the relief of divorce and the freedom to remarry. Moses deals with Sally's case in Deuteronomy 24. Men were just walking out on their wives over trivialities: someone prettier, a better cook, whatever. Divorces were a fact of life. Moses neither sanctions nor forbids them. In lamenting the hardness of men's hearts, he legislates against certain abuses involved. It is clear that even these divorces did actually end the marriages. Women like Sally are free (even expected) to remarry, so Moses

refers to her at some time in the future as "another man's wife". And "her former husband" is forbidden to "take her again to be his wife". This is meaningless if Sally and her ex-husband are still actually married in God's sight.

Edith's case is covered in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. The willingness of Ross to continue the marriage on his terms is not what the text means. He should demonstrate that he can carry out normal marriage obligations. Desertion is a ground for divorce. And physical desertion is not the only desertion in mind. The technical quibble that he hasn't actually thrown her out of the house does not salvage a wrecked marriage. He hasn't thrown the dog out either. Edith is not bound to keep up appearances. A wife-basher and abuser is not a husband.

Sue's case is covered in Matthew 5:27-32. Our Lord here comes to the aid of victims of different kinds of sexual immorality (porneia). Adultery is only one of many forms of the "sexual immorality" that Jesus refers to on this occasion. If victims like Sue remarry, they are not committing adultery. Craig has broken their marriage bond by his sexual immorality. Sue's divorce from Craig is both a legitimate and a gracious relief. Even if he'd divorced her for no good reason, she is free to remarry. What Jesus has in mind is that she is being made to suffer the stigma and consequences of adultery as if she were guilty of it. However, she is not. Jesus is not blaming

Oberammergau – Passion Play 2000

Opportunity of a Christian Lifetime
Only Once Every 10 Years

<p>Rev. Ken Anderson Depart: 30 May 2000 22 Days Featuring: Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland + Passion Play</p>	<p>Rev. Cec Schloss Depart: 1 June 2000 31 Days (with options) Featuring: England, Israel, Scotland, Aerial, Ireland, Europe, + Passion Play</p>	<p>Rev. Dr. Low Born Depart: 3 July 2000 35 Days (with options) Featuring: England, Israel, Scotland, Ireland, Europe, + Passion Play</p>	<p>Pastor Graham Caralake Depart: 12 July 2000 17 Days Featuring: Israel, Europe + Passion Play</p>	<p>Rev. John Pearson Depart: 9 Aug. 2000 24 Days Featuring: Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Europe + Passion Play</p>	<p>Rev. Tom Rautava Depart: 17 Sept. 2000 22 Days Featuring: Passion Play, Europe, Places of the Resurrection + Musical Groups</p>
--	---	--	--	---	---

Call Now Toll Free 1800 07 4426
INNER FAITH Inner Faith Travel

Back from the brink

*Marriages can recover after adultery, but it's never easy.
Paul Berenger outlines what's needed.*


her or her new husband with any sin. His point is that wrongful divorce causes atrocious injury to innocent parties. They are made to suffer the stigma of unfaithfulness. Jesus speaks in defence of these divorced and remarried people, not as their accuser.

It is time for the church to take stock. Are we well-versed in the whole big picture? Are we giving the proper gospel response to suffering people? Are we sentencing innocent victims of wretched marriages to solitary confinement without relief? People like these can get married again, and we need to tell them why, and reassure and comfort them. It is not they who have a low view of marriage, but their offending partners.

Let us beware of being entirely negative about divorce, having nothing but condemnation for divorce and divorced persons! We must grapple with the fact that God is a divorced person! He says: "For all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce" (Jeremiah 3:8). Almighty God has sued for divorce and put asunder a former unity. Obviously then, divorce is not necessarily evil in itself. Can God do evil?

Also, there is a distinction between an undesirable thing and an evil thing. Divorce is undesirable even in Jeremiah 3:8, but it is more desirable than the alternatives. Our God does some things which give him no pleasure, yet he is right and holy to do them. So, we in the church can expect the same ethical issues as we try to apply the word of God to a sin-cursed humanity. Divorce is undesirable, but it is better than many other scenarios, such as leaving a woman kissing a deceitful and unrepentant paedophile, or being treated like a punching-bag, or thrown on the scrap-heap.

We must distinguish divorce (always undesirable but not always evil) from the human behaviour which caused it (evil). It is too easy to become unbalanced and emotional and to think that Malachi 2:14 is the last word on divorce ("I hate divorce says the Lord"). We regard marriage as a sacred covenant bond meant for life, therefore we reject views on divorce that make it all too easy. However, we realise that even God has divorced, so we cannot sweep the topic aside with one simplistic quote of a text!

*Peter Bloomfield is author of *Divorce: The Big Picture* (Brisbane: Presbyterian Church of Queensland, 1995). available from the Brisbane church office or from Peter.* 

It was a night that John and Deborah would never forget. For several months, Deborah had not been her normal happy-go-lucky self. She had become quiet, sullen and withdrawn. John, her husband, had noticed a coldness creeping into their relationship as Deborah pushed him away. She resented even his smallest expressions of affection.

Only months before she'd got a cordless phone, and seemed to take a lot of calls out on the patio or down at the bottom of the garden from her easy chair. On this balmy evening, Deborah was down in the garden speaking in whispered tones when her teenage son, Paul, accidentally picked up the extension in the kitchen. What he heard shocked him. His mother was having a conversation with a manager in her office, Brendan, and they were speaking with a degree of intimacy that was only appropriate for a married couple. Further, their conversation was laced with explicit sexual comments.

Paul was dumbfounded. He motioned to his father to listen to what was being said. John held the receiver to his ear for a minute. Then he spoke to let them know that he was on the line and had heard their conversation. There was an eerie silence for several moments, and then Deborah switched the phone off. John walked out into the garden to confront his wife. Deborah was speechless, white with shock. What was the next move?

If only it was as easy as saying, "Deborah, I forgive you; let's pretend it never happened". But the real world is not like that. John and Deborah have some enormous problems to overcome. Achieving true reconciliation and rebuilding the trust they once had can't be short-circuited. If they think that they can get on with their lives as if nothing had happened, they are placing themselves at great risk. However, if they can honestly face the problems that Deborah's adultery has caused and look to God for help, they can start to put the past behind them.

But where do they start? Let's think of Deborah for a moment. Her first step has to be to end her affair. She has little option but to resign from her job because it is virtually impossible for her to turn a sexually involved relationship into a non-sexual one. Further, if she goes back to the office she is putting herself in a vulnerable position because she is placing herself under the direction of her boss, Brendan. That has to end immediately. If Deborah is genuine, she will cut off all contact with him and plan never to meet him again. That's what "repentance" means in this situation.

But Deborah must not only repent; she must also believe. Believe what? Believe that God can still show her grace and forgiveness despite being caught in an affair. We are reminded of the wonderful truth in 1 John 1:9 that "if we walk in the light ... we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son purifies us from all sin".

The challenge for Deborah is to believe that this can be true for her. She must not allow herself to be crippled or controlled by what others may think or say. If Deborah can say to herself: "I'm determined to put things right with God and my husband and forget what others think. I'm going to stay totally focused on the love of the Lord Jesus and what He has done for me," she's on the right track. This is the one fixed point that will help her to continue the restoration process.

However, Deborah is not the only one with problems. John is now faced with a number of agonizing difficulties. The first one is his anger and bitterness. If he reacts the wrong way to Deborah's unfaithfulness, he can miss the grace of God and bring trouble to many other people (Heb. 12:15). Unless he can deal with his rage, there is little hope for their relationship. Trying to rebuild a marriage in the presence of bitterness and biting sarcasm will be as successful as building a family home on a chemical waste dump. The toxic shock will destroy everyone.

Of course, John is justifiably angry at his wife's behaviour. But he must also realise that he can't restore his marriage without offering Deborah genuine forgiveness.

Unfortunately, forgiveness doesn't usually occur until the anger has been dealt with first. That can be difficult because Christians have often been taught to repress their anger. John needs to be able to tell Deborah face-to-face how he has been hurt. He may even have to go through the process several times as layers of anger and resentment emerge. Until it comes to that point, neither of them is likely to move towards genuine forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the critical issue if their relationship is to be restored. When one party has been unfaithful to the other, this is the biggest hurdle to jump over. It may surprise some of us to realise that John should not be too quick to forgive. If he were to say that evening, "I've forgiven you, Deborah. It's no longer a problem", then warning bells should start to ring. It's easy to deny our feelings, but this can be very destructive.

We need help in understanding forgiveness. It is never excusing sinful behaviour. It is right for John to feel deeply hurt and to acknowledge and express those feelings so that they can be resolved in a godly manner through repentance, confession, forgiveness and reconciliation. Ultimately, forgiveness is surrendering his right to hurt Deborah back. Forgiveness has nothing to do with feelings. It is a commitment of the will to renounce all rights to retaliate, and to do so daily with the help God gives him.

Having a spirit of forgiveness and being prepared to offer forgiveness are prior steps to actually granting a person forgiveness. The last cannot and should not occur until there is repentance on the part of the unfaithful partner (see Luke 17:3). These distinctions are important if we are to understand the teaching of Jesus on this matter, and if we are to avoid the pitfalls of short-circuiting reconciliation or laying false guilt on the person who has been betrayed.

Jay Adams in *More than Redemption* makes the helpful point that granting forgiveness is like a covenant where the person pledges three things: 1) I will not dwell on the offence in my mind 2) I will not bring the offence up in your presence 3) I will not tell others of the offence.

Deborah, for her part, has to show that she is taking responsibility for what she has done and is prepared for John to tell her how her sin has impacted their marriage. Simply being ashamed or filled with remorse is not enough; that can be worldly sorrow that gets them nowhere (2 Cor. 7:10).

Once John has forgiven Deborah, the next issue they have to face is the rebuilding of their trust. This will not be easy. Deborah


managed to hide her adultery with Brendan only by fabricating story after story. She became a practised liar, so rebuilding trust with John is going to be tough. It won't be restored instantly; life just doesn't work like that. But it can be recovered by the grace of God. Jesus was able to forgive Peter after his betrayal (John 21:15). So if John seeks God's help, he can find the strength to restore Deborah too.

What of their long-term future? That's not a matter that should concern them right now. Their immediate need is to simply deal with the emotions and circumstances of the moment. This means that they have to be prepared to do whatever God wants, no matter how difficult or painful. Having a Christian counsellor who in a spirit of gentleness and humility will keep them both on-track is very helpful (Gal. 6:1-3). A Christian counsellor can play a valuable role in helping both John and Deborah face up to their individual contributions to the marriage crisis. One question that the counsellor can help them answer is: "What part did I play in helping the unfaithfulness to occur? What do I need to put right so that such a situation never happens again?"

One of the advantages in seeking a competent Christian counsellor is that a neutral party can ensure that both John and

Deborah hear what the other one has to say. Most people find it hard to share feelings without fear of being misunderstood, mocked or disregarded. It is pretty clear that people who have been hurt will not engage deeply with one another without skilled outside support. There is so much pain and intense emotion that they need someone to referee the feelings and give them permission to express their anguish. Often they feel that they can't say what they want to because they may damage an already fragile relationship. This is where a counsellor can help.

In the shock of discovering the dark side of their marriage, John and Deborah are asking "can our marriage ever be strong again?" It can. Where sin abounds, grace abounds even more (Rom. 5:20). If John and Deborah work through their grievances, face the pain involved and repent of their individual contributions to it, their marriage can become strong again. This is especially true if new and strong foundations are established out of the pain of failure with God's enabling.

Paul Beringer is the Minister of Plumpton Presbyterian Church, NSW. He was previously superintendent of Ministry and Mission for the NSW Presbyterian Church. 

permanent trustee

Our mission: to magnify God

Missions exist because worship doesn't.

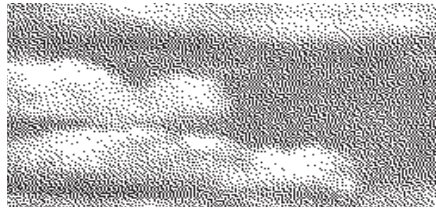
Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal in missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" (Psalm 97:1). "Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!" (Psalm 67:3-4).

But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out "Let the nations be glad!" who cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the Lord ... I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praise to thy name, O most High" (Psalm 104:34). Missions begins and ends in worship.

If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served and God will not be duly honoured. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God. When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will

IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD



shine to the most remote peoples on earth. And I long for that day to come!

Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centred on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to "declare his glory among the nations" (Psalm 96:3). Even outsiders feel the disparity between the boldness of our claim upon the nations and the blandness of our engagement with God.

For example, Charles Misner, a scientific specialist in general relativity theory, expressed Albert Einstein's scepticism over the church with words that should waken us to the shallowness of our experience with God in worship: "The design of the universe ... is very magnificent and shouldn't be taken for granted. In fact, I believe that is why Einstein had so little use for organised religion, although he strikes me as a basically very religious man. He must have looked at what the preachers said about God and felt that they were blaspheming. He had seen much more majesty than they had ever imagined, and they were just not talking about the real thing. My guess is

that he simply felt that religions he'd run across did not have proper respect ... for the author of the universe."

The charge of blasphemy is loaded. The point is to pack a wallop behind the charge that in our worship services God simply doesn't come through for who he is. He is unwittingly belittled. For those who are stunned by the indescribable magnitude of what God has made – not to mention the infinite greatness of the One who made it – the steady diet on Sunday morning of practical "how to's" and psychological soothing and relational therapy and tactical planning seem dramatically out of touch with Reality – the God of overwhelming greatness.

It is possible to be distracted from God in trying to serve God. Martha-like, we neglect the one thing needful, and soon begin to present God as busy and fretful. A.W. Tozer warned us about this: "We commonly represent God as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world ... Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God."

God is the absolute reality that everyone in the universe must come to terms with. Everything depends utterly on his will. All other realities compare to him like a rain-drop compares to the ocean, or like an anthill compares to Mount Everest. To ignore him or belittle him is unintelligible and suicidal folly. How shall one ever be the emissary of this great God who has not trembled before him with joyful wonder?

This is an extract from Let the Nations be Glad by John Piper (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

Bethel Funerals

The caring Australian alternative

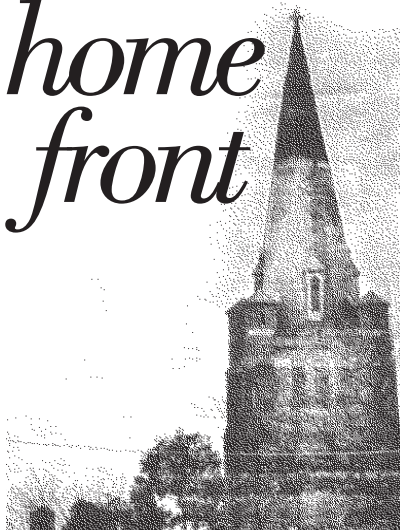
A unique Christian Funeral Company supporting the work of missions

24 hour 7 day service Pre-arranged and Pre-paid Funerals
Phone: 03 9877 9900 (all hours) fax: 03 9877 0544



SERVICING ALL SUBURBS

home front



Gospel for the New Age

The Festival for Mind Body and Spirit, held twice yearly at Sydney's Darling Harbour, is reckoned to be the largest New Age festival in the world, catering to around 100,000 visitors. In May this year, Christians mounted a booth under the theme, "It Takes Resurrection Power to Ride Life's Roller-coaster". The stall was sponsored by Community of Hope, whose co-founder Philip Johnson lectures at Sydney's Presbyterian Theological Centre. "We chose the resurrection theme not just because of its biblical importance, but also because the message resonates with today's spiritual seeker," Mr Johnson said. He quoted the recent Australian Community Survey, which showed that 43 per cent of Australians believe in the literal resurrection of Jesus, and 36 per cent are open to the possibility of it.

Students from the theological centre helped man the stall with helpers from the Morling Baptist Theological College and Castle Hill Anglican Church. Ross Clifford, of Morling College, said: "This is the place where today's trainee pastors must be if they want to know how to minister in a post-modern, neo-pagan, New Age world. Australia is a mission field, and we must live and serve as missionaries if we are serious about reaching this land."

New hymn book

A second edition of the Australian Hymn Book will be launched at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Parramatta, on 21 June, by the Governor-General, Sir William Deane. Two Presbyterian representatives worked on the review committee. Contact Heather Moen-Boyd, who was one of them, for more details: (02) 9871 8278.

East coast bears fruit

The Queensland State Assembly has taken steps to start five new churches this year, while in NSW two new churches at East Lismore and Central Sydney are both growing rapidly. The Presbytery of the Central Coast has formed a new parish called Westlakes, near Toukley and Gosford.

Roving inland

Laurie and Gwen Peake work in SA in the 'Flynn Patrol'. Mr Peake reports: "We have been over almost all pastoral South Australia from Morgan to Alice Springs, from Innamincka to the Gawler Ranges, three times ... We spend up to 19 days in the month on the road and make an average of 55 property calls a trip. In all we have 280 different properties on our records which we aim to visit twice a year. We have 350 records of families on properties or individuals we meet along the road and expect to meet again, like gradermen, dingo trappers, rooshooters, mailmen, geologists, national park rangers etc. Remembering all of those names is quite mind boggling!"

Cameron on homosexual marriage

The Southern Cross reports that Dr Peter Cameron, former principal of St Andrew's College, Sydney University, has been appointed to a commission to look into the question of church blessing on same sex marriages. Bishop Holloway, Primate of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and responsible

for Cameron's appointment, was an outspoken critic of the Lambeth Conference's stand on the issue in 1998. The bishop resigned his candidacy for the Scottish Parliamentary elections so that as Primate, he could campaign against what he sees as a fundamentalist takeover of the Anglican Communion. Dr Cameron was found guilty of a charge of heresy by the Sydney Presbytery, after a 1992 speech in which he challenged the authority of Scripture.

150 years of witness

Effective cooperation in gospel witness was the legacy of the United Evangelical Church 150 years after its establishment, according to the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, Rt Rev. David Secomb. He was addressing the thanksgiving service on 1 May, celebrating the sesqui-centenary of the United Evangelical Church, founded in Brisbane in 1849. Mr Secomb said that with the coming of the new millennium, the need for evangelical witness was urgent and the United Evangelical Church provided a model of how the churches could work together again without compromise.

The United Evangelical Church was composed of Baptist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian migrants who had been brought to Queensland in an ambitious migration scheme by Dr John Dunmore Lang. Earlier residents of the district also made up this church which was led by the Baptist minister, Rev. Charles Stewart, the chaplain on the first of Dr Lang's three migrant ships, the Fortitude. After six years of influential ministry, the church was dis-

Presbyterian Theological Centre – Sydney

77 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood, NSW 2134

Eliza Ferrie Lectures – 16-20 August, 1999

"The History of Australian Evangelicalism"

Day-Time Lecture Series

"History of Australian Evangelical Christianity in International Perspective."

The lecturer will be **Dr Stuart Piggin**. This lecture series can be credited towards an MA (Theol). For those who wish to audit only, it is essential that you register.

Be early to avoid disappointment as there are limited spaces.

Registration is essential for all Daytime lectures and closes on **16 July 1999**.

Evening Lecture on Wednesday 18 August 1999 at 7.30pm

"John Dunmore Lang: Radical Loose Cannon or Conservative Evangelical?"

The lecturer will be **Dr Mark Hutchinson**.

This is a public lecture and is open to all who wish to attend. Bookings are not necessary.

For bookings and further information please contact Susan Finlay:

Ph: (02) 9744 1977 Fax: (02) 9744 5970 Email: adminptc@ptcsyd.wow.aust.com

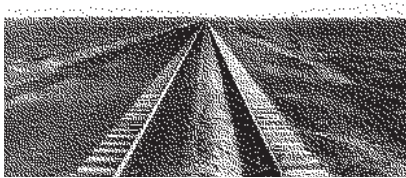
banded to allow for the establishment of the three denominations.

Mr **Angus Edmonds**, principal of Emmanuel College, University of Queensland, Spoke of Dr Lang's vision for "Cookland" and **Rev. Dr David Parker** of the Baptist Church spoke about the life of Charles Stewart and his ministry in Brisbane.

The service – attended by official representatives of all three denominations – was held in the historic Ann Street Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, a site occupied by this congregation since the time of the United Evangelical Church.

An illustrated book featuring expanded versions of the historical addresses, *Fortitude: Dr Lang's Vision for Queensland and the United Evangelical Church*, is available from BHSQ Publications, 98 Yallambee Rd, Jindalee Q 4074 for \$8 plus \$1.10 post. For details, phone 07-3376 4339.

across australia



5000 tongues to sing

Language Recordings International, Australia, reports that Scripture and gospel messages have been recorded in 5000 languages around the world. With continuing work recording new languages, and the task of replacing older recordings, LRI is looking for 10 people to learn recording. Another 20 are needed for a short journey through PNG to visit seven remote language groups in the Gulf Province in November and December this year. For more details, contact Alex Shaw on email: alexshaw@ozemail.com.au

CHRISTIAN SINGLES

All ages & denominations WELCOME!

Send for **FREE** colour brochure to:

5 Grange Ave MARYLAND 2287

Ph/Fax: 02 49 555 445

Immigration department failure

The case highlighted by Senator Harradine of a Chinese woman deported from Australia to China where she faced a forced abortion in late pregnancy, reveals serious deficiencies in Australia's Immigration Department, according to **Help International**. The agency says Australia needs laws like those of the USA to ensure a this never happens again. Help International is involved with two centres in China where young unmarried women can come to have their babies as an alternative to abortion. Through counselling, the women are helped to decide whether to keep their baby or have it adopted. The centres are staffed by dedicated Christians, and have been in operation for a number of years. Help International can be contacted at PO Box 5933, GCMC, Qld 9726.

Sonrise 2000

Evangelist **Bill Newman** is arranging a conference at Brunswick Heads in NSW for 1 January 2000, to pray in the new millennium. The event is billed as 'Sonrise 2000', and aims to focus Christians to pray for the nation. For more details, email: smiths@key.net.au

Suicide antidote

Stephen Atkins Music Ministries reports hearing from listeners to Stephen's music that Christian music prevented them from committing suicide. His songs *Someone to Love*, and *Love Never Fails* have received special mention for helping teens find Christ at times of personal crisis.

A Hmong voice

Voice of the Martyrs held its annual conference at Caringbah and Maitland early in May. VOM has financed the printing of the first Hmong-language Bibles, destined for distribution in Laos and Vietnam. The Communist governments of these countries forbid the Hmong people from reading anything in their own language. The Bible is especially banned. The translation has been developed over many years under the auspices of the United Bible Society.

Nile re-elected

Rev. Fred Nile, representing the New Christian Democratic Party, was re-elected to the NSW Upper House for a further eight-year term. Mr Nile polled fifth in the primary vote, out of eighty parties. He

emphasises the importance of the Upper House, when "the ALP can ram a bill through the Lower House with no debate in two minutes".

Wayside opposition

Strong opposition to the "shooting gallery" drug policy of **Rev. Ray Richmond** and the **Wayside Chapel** in Kings Cross has come from a wide section of the Christian community. **Rev. Fred Nile** suggested the approaches may breach NSW Criminal Law which prohibits "aiding and abetting the self-administration of a prohibited drug". The **Very Rev Boak Jobbins, Dean of Sydney**, said "It is a matter of whether church leaders should break the law and circumvent the public debate that is currently under way ... I question whether it is right for the supporters of the Tolerance Room to engage in civil disobedience. For the Church, law breaking is the last resort in extreme circumstances of injustice and oppression, not the first step". The NSW Council of Churches has supported the Dean's view.

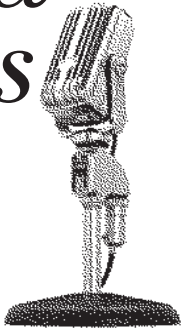
Swedish drug expert Eva Branmark has warned the heads of churches against supporting the prescriptive use of narcotics and safe houses as an approach to the drug problem. Sweden's Minister of Drug Policies and Prevention since 1989, she is in a position to report on long-term effects. She told a combined churches and agencies meeting: "Compared to the primary goal of abstinence, the 5.2 per cent success rate of the European trials is abysmal." She reported no decrease in delinquency from the trials, and said criminal activity among participants actually increased. "We should not expect any significant long term benefits of these projects."

Thanks chaps

The role of Queensland's school chaplains was celebrated from 23 to 29 May. Scripture Union employs 69 chaplains in 75 schools. These chaplains work in partnership with local schools, churches and communities.

SU's Queensland state director, **Dr Jim Rawson**, said Chaplaincy Week offered a chance to applaud the tireless efforts of chaplains and recognise the vital contribution they made to the community. "Chaplains dedicate their time and work to helping students work through serious issues that are affecting them – like relationships, family breakdowns and grief," he said.

world news



TWR is beaming

Trans World Radio has dedicated a powerful new short wave transmitter in Guam, enabling better beaming of programmes into South East Asia, China, and other areas. In China today there are 850 million radio sets. The Hong Kong-based ministry of TWR receives responses from all over the area, including lonely pastors who can't read but gain nourishment over the radio waves. For details of TWR in Australia, write to PO Box 390, Box Hill, 3128.

Kosovo carers

In Tirana, Albania, **Help International** is just one of many Christian agencies from around the world struggling to cope with the flood of refugees from Serb genocide. The mayor's assistant in the town told aid workers: "You Christians are the only ones we trust to work with the refugees in an honest manner. I kiss your feet for doing this work." The crisis has given local churches a huge opportunity to demonstrate practical Christianity, and they are having a major impact on the refugees and local communities. For more information, contact Don Gillespie on (07) 55594 1160.

Bible Society in Belgrade

NATO missiles have exploded near the **Bible Society** offices in Belgrade, according to the secretary, Zvonimir Smiljanic. "Christians are terribly sad and concerned," he said. "Like Christians in other countries, we do not want this confrontation and are praying for peace". The Bible Society is working with the churches in trying to get the Bible to people in what for many is turning into a time of spiritual crisis. But difficulties abound. Funds from outside have been cut off, and accounts frozen.

Indian opposition

A senior Vice President of the BJP party in India has abused Christians, claiming that "Congress President Ms Sonja Gandhi has the Christian mafia backing her". Serious anti-Christian propaganda is appearing at many points in the country. Provocative hoardings against Christianity appeared overnight in Mysore. The BJP leadership seems to have concluded that its fall from power was the outcome of a Christian conspiracy hatched by the US Government and missionaries. News agency Vishwa Samwad Sudershan reported that in 1993 the Vatican chalked out a plan to plant a church in every PIN-code area and put a Bible in every house by the year 2000. It complains that there are districts where the Christian population has increased by 40 per cent. Meanwhile, the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation has intensified its probe into the murder of Australian missionary **Graham Staines** and his two sons.

Tribal Christians recant

Seventy tribal Christian families were 're-converted' to Hinduism in a mass ceremony during April. Under duress, the illiterate tribal people made thumb marks on a contract which said they had re-converted to Hinduism of their own free will. In an address to the gathering, the leader (Shankarachaya) lambasted Congress President Sonja Gandhi for "her attempt to bring India under Christian rule. These programs should be an eye-opener for her. The Hindu religious leaders are taking steps to protect their faith," he thundered.

Hindu violence "long-planned"

An independent fact-finding team in India reports that the anti-Christian violence by Hindu fundamentalists in the Dangs district of Gujarat was planned as far back as 1990. Meticulously executed since 1997, "it is causing inestimable damage to the secular fabric in the state", the report concludes. Released in April in New Delhi, the report of the **Citizens' Commission** – including academics, lawyers and journalists – describes the attacks on Christians as a test case for a larger Hindu agenda for the country. The team documented every episode of intimidation and violence by mobs on poor unarmed tribals in the area, and the callous passivity and indifference of the police and administration toward outbursts of communal frenzy. According to the report, the local government is continuing to target and victimise Christians.

Hamas "jihad" on Ambon

A thousand members of the militant Muslim group Hamas were flown into Ambon by helicopter in January, ostensibly to conduct relief but actually to carry out jihad, claims **Dr Nick Rajaware**, former head of the Synod of the Maluku Protestant Church. Most local papers throughout Indonesia have blamed Christians for starting the Ambon riots that led to the deaths of at least 200. Christians throughout the country have been shocked at the pro-Muslim bias of the media.

Capital of atheism

Berlin is the world's most atheist capital city, claims Protestant Bishop for Berlin, Wolfgang Huber. At a gathering of 130 evangelical leaders, Bishop Huber said that while the church there had 1.3 million members, one per cent every year cancelled their membership in the state church. From the year 2000, Berlin will have an office of the Association of Free Churches.

Two billion in 2000

Christianity will pass the two billion mark in the year 2000, according to US religious statisticians **David Barrett** and **Todd Johnson**. Muslims are the second largest religious group, with 1.19 billion, followed by Hindus with 774 million, and Buddhists with 358 million.

Encouragement in Iran

Christians in Iran have been encouraged by **President Khatami**, who recently told Iranian Assyrian and Armenian churches of his commitment to protecting Christian minorities. Later he made a public statement in which he declared that "all heavenly-inspired monotheistic religious minorities" are respected by Islam, and must enjoy the freedom they need to exercise their religious festivals in Iran.

Bibles in Palestine

The first Christian bookshop in the Gaza strip opened in March, as the realisation of a five-year dream by Jordanian Christian **Labid Madanat**. "From today, anybody in Gaza can walk into a store and buy a Bible for himself!" declared Madanat, who is also director of the Bible Society of the West Bank. The store has been officially authorised by the Palestinian Authority, to import Bibles and Christian books.

Trained to kill

David Grossman explains how the media condition children to pull the trigger.

I am from Jonesboro, Arkansas. I travel the world training medical, law enforcement, and United States military personnel about the realities of warfare. I try to make those who carry deadly force keenly aware of the magnitude of killing. So here I am, a world traveller and an expert in the field of “killology”, and the largest school massacre in American history happens in my hometown of Jonesboro, Arkansas. That was the 24 March 1998 schoolyard shooting deaths of four girls and a teacher. Ten others were injured, and two boys, ages 11 and 13, are in jail, charged with murder.

I spent the first three days after the tragedy at Westside Middle School, where the shootings took place, working with the counselors, teachers, students, and parents. None of us had ever done anything like this before. I train people how to react to trauma in the military; but how do you do it with kids after a massacre in their school?

Virus of violence

To understand the why behind Jonesboro and Springfield and Pearl and Paducah, and all the other outbreaks of this “virus of violence”, we need to understand first the magnitude of the problem. The per capita murder rate doubled in this country between 1957 – when the FBI started keeping track of the data – and 1992. A fuller picture of the problem, however, is indicated by the rate people are attempting to kill one another – the aggravated assault rate. That rate in America has gone from around 60 per 100,000 in 1957 to more than 440 per 100,000 by the middle of this decade. As bad as this is, it would be much worse were it not for two factors. First is the increase in the imprisonment rate of violent offenders. The prison population in America nearly quadrupled between 1975 and 1992. According to criminologist John J. DiIulio, “dozens of credible empirical analyses ... leave no doubt that the increased use of prisons averted millions of serious crimes.” If it were not for our tremendous imprisonment rate (the highest of any industrialised nation), the aggravated assault rate and the murder rate would undoubtedly be even higher.

The second factor is medical technology. According to the US Army Medical Service Corps, a wound that would have killed nine

Why are kids shooting their classmates? David Grossman is a military psychologist who coined the term killology for a new interdisciplinary field: the study of the methods and psychological effects of training army recruits to circumvent their natural inhibitions to killing fellow human beings. Here he marshals unsettling evidence that the same tactics used in training soldiers are at work in our media and entertainment. This article was written before the school massacre at Columbine, Ohio, in April, which raises with new urgency the question: Are we training our children to kill?

out of 10 soldiers in World War II, nine out of 10 could have survived in Vietnam. Thus, by a very conservative estimate, if we had 1940-level medical technology today, the murder rate would be 10 times higher than it is. The magnitude of the problem has been held down by the development of sophisticated lifesaving skills and techniques, such as helicopter medevacs, emergency phone operators, paramedics, CPR, trauma centres, and medicines.

However, the crime rate is still at a phenomenally high level, and this is true worldwide. In Canada, according to their Centre for Justice, per capita assaults increased almost fivefold between 1964 and 1993, attempted murder increased nearly sevenfold, and murders doubled. Similar trends can be seen in other countries in the per capita violent crime rates reported to Interpol between 1977 and 1993. In Australia and New Zealand, the assault rate increased approximately fourfold, and the murder rate nearly doubled in both nations. The assault rate tripled in Sweden, and approximately doubled in Belgium, Denmark, England-Wales, France, Hungary, Netherlands, and Scotland, while all these nations had an associated (but smaller) increase in murder. This virus of violence is occurring worldwide. The explanation for it has to be some new factor that is occurring in all of these countries. There are many factors involved, and none should be discounted: for example, the prevalence of guns in our society. But violence is rising in many nations with draconian gun laws. And though we should never downplay child abuse, poverty, or racism, there is only

one new variable present in each of these countries, bearing the exact same fruit: media violence presented as entertainment for children.

Killing is unnatural

Before retiring from the military, I spent almost a quarter of a century as an army infantry officer and a psychologist, learning and studying how to enable people to kill. Believe me, we are very good at it. But it does not come naturally; you have to be taught to kill. And just as the army is conditioning people to kill, we are indiscriminately doing the same thing to our children, but without the safeguards.

After the Jonesboro killings, the head of the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Juvenile Violence said children don't naturally kill. It is a learned skill. And they learn it from abuse and violence in the home and, most pervasively, from violence as entertainment in television, the movies, and interactive video games.

Killing requires training because there is a built-in aversion to killing one's own kind. I can best illustrate this from drawing on my own work in studying killing in the military.

We all know that you can't have an argument or a discussion with a frightened or angry, human being. Vasoconstriction, the narrowing of the blood vessels, has literally closed down the forebrain – that great gob of gray matter that makes you a human being and distinguishes you from a dog. When those neurons close down, the mid-brain takes over and your thought processes and reflexes are indistinguishable from your dog's. If you've worked with animals, you have some understanding of what happens to frightened human beings on the battlefield. The battlefield and violent crime are in the realm of midbrain responses.

Within the midbrain there is a powerful, God-given resistance to killing your own kind. Every species, with a few exceptions, has a hardwired resistance to killing its own kind in territorial and mating battles. When animals with antlers and horns fight one another, they head butt in a harmless fashion. But when they fight any other species, they go to the side to gut and gore. Piranhas will turn their fangs on anything, but they fight one another with flicks of the

tail. Rattlesnakes will bite anything, but they wrestle one another. Almost every species has this hardwired resistance to killing its own kind.

When we human beings are overwhelmed with anger and fear, we slam head-on into that midbrain resistance that generally prevents us from killing. Only sociopaths – who by definition don't have that resistance – lack this innate violence immune system.

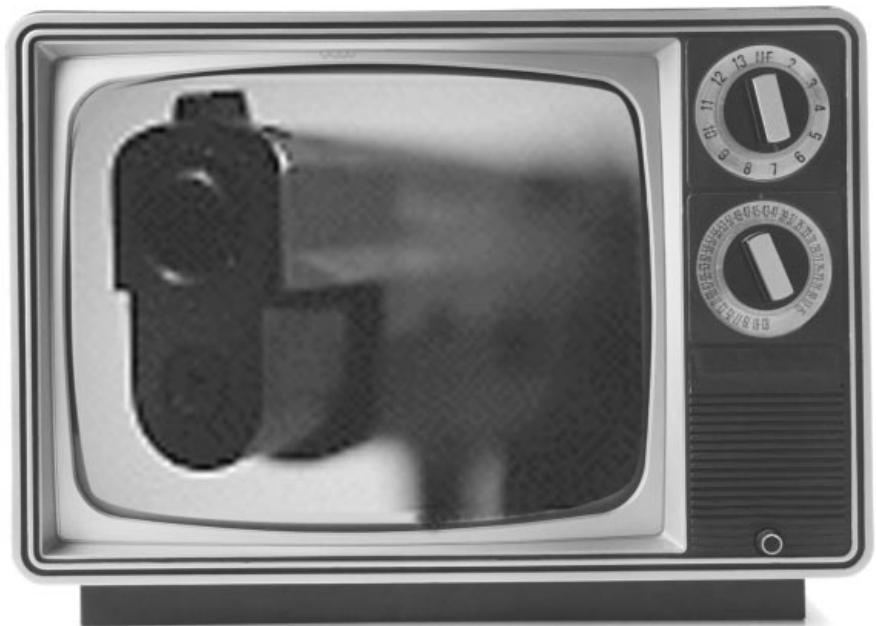
Throughout human history, when humans fight each other, there is a lot of posturing. Adversaries make loud noises and puff themselves up, trying to daunt the enemy. There is a lot of fleeing and submission. Ancient battles were nothing more than great shoving matches. It was not until one side turned and ran that most of the killing happened, and most of that was stabbing people in the back. All the ancient military historians report that the vast majority of killing happened in pursuit when one side was fleeing.

In more modern times, the average firing rate was incredibly low in Civil War battles. Patty Griffith demonstrates that the killing potential of the average Civil War regiment was anywhere from five hundred to a thousand men a minute. The actual killing rate was only one or two men a minute a regiment.

At the battle of Gettysburg, of the 27,000 muskets picked up from the dead and dying after the battle, 90 per cent were loaded. This is an anomaly, because it took 95 per cent of their time to load muskets and only 5 per cent to fire. But even more amazingly, of the thousands of loaded muskets, over half had multiple loads in the barrel – one with 23 loads. In reality, the average man would load his musket and bring it to his shoulder, but he could not bring himself to kill. He would be brave, he would stand shoulder to shoulder, he would do what he was trained to do; but at the moment of truth he could not bring himself to pull the trigger. And so he lowered the weapon and loaded it again. Of those who did fire, only a tiny percentage fired to hit. The vast majority fired over the enemy's head.

During World War II, US Army Brigadier General L. A. Marshall had a team of researchers study what soldiers did in battle. For the first time in history, they asked individual soldiers what they did in battle. They discovered that only 15 to 20 per cent of the individual riflemen could bring themselves to fire at an exposed enemy soldier.

That is the reality of the battlefield. Only a small percentage of soldiers are able and willing to take part. Men are willing to die, they are willing to sacrifice themselves for their nation; but they are not willing to



kill. It is a phenomenal insight into human nature; but when the military became aware of that, they systematically went about the process of trying to fix this "problem". From the military perspective, a 15 per cent firing rate among riflemen is like a 15 per cent literacy rate among librarians. And fix it the military did. By the Korean War, around 55 per cent of the soldiers were willing to fire to kill. And by Vietnam, the rate rose to more than 90 per cent.

Desensitisation

How the military increases the killing rate of soldiers in combat is instructive, because our culture today is doing the same thing to our children. The training methods militaries use are brutalisation, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and role modeling. I will explain these in the military context and show how these same

factors are contributing to the phenomenal increase of violence in our culture.

Brutalisation and desensitisation are what happens at boot camp. From the moment you step off the bus you are physically and verbally abused: countless push-ups, endless hours at attention or running with heavy loads, while carefully trained professionals take turns screaming at you. Your head is shaved, you are herded together naked and dressed alike, losing all individuality. This brutalisation is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitised to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world.

Something very similar to this desensiti-

YOUTH TRAINER



The NSW "Youth Ministry Training" with the endorsement of the NSW Reformed Churches invites applications for the position of **NSW YOUTH TRAINER**.

This position involves facilitating the growth of youth ministry across the NSW Reformed Churches, specifically giving attention to leadership training, resourcing, networking and coordinating key youth events.

Hours and conditions are negotiable.

This position will commence **August 1, 1999**.

A detailed job description is available on request.

Applications close: June 30, 1999

Apply to Secr. – Mal Forrest 5 Kilpa Place ST IVES NSW 2075.

Phone (02) 9577 9716

sation toward violence is happening to our children through violence in the media – but instead of 18-year-olds it begins at the age of 18 months when a child is first able to discern what is happening on television. At that age, a child can watch something happening on television and mimic that action. But it isn't until children are six or seven years old that the part of the brain kicks in that lets them understand where information comes from. Even though young children have some understanding of what it means to pretend, they are developmentally unable to distinguish clearly between fantasy and reality.

When young children see somebody shot, stabbed, raped, brutalised, degraded, or murdered on TV, to them it is as though it were actually happening. To have a child of three, four, or five watch a “splatter” movie, learning to relate to a character for the first 90 minutes and then in the last 30 minutes watch helplessly as that new friend is hunted and brutally murdered is the moral and psychological equivalent of introducing your child to a friend, letting her play with that friend, and then butchering that friend in front of your child's eyes. And this happens to our children hundreds upon hundreds of times.

Sure, they are told: “Hey, it's all for fun. Look, this isn't real, it's just TV.” And they nod their little heads and say okay. But they can't tell the difference. Can you remember a point in your life or in your children's lives when dreams, reality, and television were all jumbled together? That's what it is like to be at that level of psychological development. That's what the media are doing to them.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* published the definitive epidemiological study on the impact of TV violence. The research demonstrated what happened in numerous nations after television made its appearance as compared to nations and regions without TV. The two nations or regions being compared are demographically and ethnically identical; only one variable is different: the presence of television. In every nation, region, or city with television, there is an immediate explosion of violence on the playground, and within 15 years there is a doubling of the murder rate. Why 15 years? That is how long it takes for the brutalisation of a three to five-year-old to reach the “prime crime age”. That is how long it takes for you to reap what you have sown when you brutalise and desensitise a three-year-old.

Today the data linking violence in the media to violence in society are superior to those linking cancer and tobacco. Hundreds of sound scientific studies demonstrate the social impact of brutalisa-

tion by the media. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that “the introduction of television in the 1950s caused a subsequent doubling of the homicide rate, i.e. long-term childhood exposure to television is a causal factor behind approximately one half of the homicides committed in the United States, or approximately 10,000 homicides annually.” The article went on to say that if, hypothetically, television technology had never been developed, there would today be 10,000 fewer homicides each year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer injurious assaults (10 June 1992).



Classical conditioning

Classical conditioning is like the famous case of Pavlov's dogs, who learned to associate the ringing of the bell with food. Once conditioned, the dogs could not hear the bell without salivating.

The Japanese were masters at using classical conditioning with their soldiers. Early in World War II, Chinese prisoners were placed in a ditch on their knees with their hands bound behind them. And one by one, a select few Japanese soldiers would go into the ditch and bayonet “their” prisoner to death. This is a horrific way to kill another human being. Up on the bank, countless other young soldiers would cheer them on. Comparatively few soldiers actually killed in these situations but, by making the others watch and cheer, the Japanese were able to use these kinds of atrocities to classically condition a very large audience to associate pleasure with human death and suffering. Immediately afterwards, the soldiers who had been spectators were treated to sake, the best meal they had had in months, and to so-called comfort girls. The result? They learned to associate committing violent acts with pleasure.

The Japanese found these kinds of techniques to be extraordinarily effective at quickly enabling very large numbers of soldiers to commit atrocities in the years to come. Operant conditioning (which we will look at shortly) teaches you to kill, but

classical conditioning is a subtle but powerful mechanism that teaches you to like it.

This technique is so morally reprehensible that there are very few examples of it in modern US military training; but there are some clear-cut examples of it being done by the media to our children. Our children watch vivid pictures of human suffering and death, and they learn to associate it with their favourite soft drink and sweets, or their girlfriend's perfume.

After the Jonesboro shootings, one of the high school teachers told me how her students reacted when she told them about the shootings at the middle school. “They laughed,” she told me with dismay. A similar reaction happens all the time in movie theatres when there is bloody violence. The young people laugh and cheer and keep right on eating popcorn and drinking pop. We have raised a generation of barbarians who have learned to associate violence with pleasure, like the Romans cheering and snacking as the Christians were slaughtered in the Colosseum.

The result is a phenomenon that functions much like AIDS, which I call AVIDS – Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS has never killed anybody. It destroys your immune system, and then other diseases that shouldn't kill you become fatal. Television violence by itself does not kill you. It destroys your violence immune system and conditions you to derive pleasure from violence. And once you are at close range with another human being, and it's time for you to pull that trigger, Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome can destroy your midbrain resistance.

Operant conditioning

The third method the military uses is operant conditioning, a very powerful procedure of stimulus-response, stimulus-response. A benign example is the use of flight simulators to train pilots. An airline pilot in training sits in front of a flight simulator for endless hours; when a particular warning light goes on, he is taught to react in a certain way. When another warning light goes on, a different reaction is required. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response. One day the pilot is actually flying a jumbo jet; the plane is going down, and 300 people are screaming behind him. He is wetting his seat cushion, and he is scared out of his wits; but he does the right thing. Why? Because he has been conditioned to respond reflexively to this particular crisis.

When people are frightened or angry, they will do what they have been conditioned to do. In fire drills, children learn to file out of the school in orderly fashion. One day there is a real fire, and they are

frightened out of their wits; but they do exactly what they have been conditioned to do, and it saves their lives.

The military and law enforcement community have made killing a conditioned response. This has substantially raised the firing rate on the modern battlefield. Whereas infantry training in World War II used bull's-eye targets, now soldiers learn to fire at realistic, man-shaped silhouettes that pop into their field of view. That is the stimulus. The trainees have only a split second to engage the target. The conditioned response is to shoot the target, and then it drops. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response – soldiers or police officers experience hundreds of repetitions. Later, when soldiers are on the battlefield or a police officer is walking a beat and somebody pops up with a gun, they will shoot reflexively and shoot to kill. We know that 75 to 80 per cent of the shooting on the modern battlefield is the result of this kind of stimulus-response training.

Now, if you're a little troubled by that, how much more should we be troubled by the fact that every time a child plays an interactive point-and-shoot video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex and motor skills.

This process is extraordinarily powerful and frightening. The result is ever more home-made pseudosociopaths who kill reflexively and show no remorse. Our children are learning to kill and learning to

like it; and then we have the audacity to say: "Oh my goodness, what's wrong?" One of the boys allegedly involved in the Jonesboro shootings (and they are just boys) had a fair amount of experience shooting real guns. The other one was a non-shooter and, to the best of our knowledge, had almost no experience shooting. Between them, those two boys fired 27 shots from a range of more than 100 yards, and they hit 15 people. That's pretty remarkable shooting. I've run into these situations often – kids who have never picked up a gun in their lives pick up a real gun and are incredibly accurate. Why? Video games.

Role models

In the military, you are immediately confronted with a role model: your drill sergeant. He personifies violence and aggression. Along with military heroes, these violent role models have always been used to influence young, impressionable minds.

Today the media are providing our children with role models, and this can be seen not just in the lawless sociopaths in movies and TV shows, but it can also be seen in the media-inspired, copycat aspects of the Jonesboro murders. This is the part of these juvenile crimes that the TV networks would much rather not talk about.

Research in the 1970s demonstrated the existence of "cluster suicides" in which the

local TV reporting of teen suicides directly caused numerous copycat suicides of impressionable teenagers. Somewhere in every population there are potentially suicidal kids who will say to themselves: "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV, too."

Because of this research, television stations today generally do not cover suicides. But when the pictures of teenage killers appear on TV, the effect is the same: Somewhere there is a potentially violent little boy who says to himself, "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV too."

Thus we get copycat, cluster murders that work their way across America like a virus spread by the six o'clock news. No matter what someone has done, if you put his picture on TV, you have made him a celebrity, and someone, somewhere, will emulate him. The lineage of the Jonesboro shootings began at Pearl, Mississippi, fewer than six months before. In Pearl, a 16-year-old boy was accused of killing his mother and then going to his school and shooting nine students, two of whom died, including his ex-girlfriend. Two months later, this virus spread to Paducah, Kentucky, where a 14-year-old boy was arrested for killing three students and wounding five others.

A very important step in the spread of this copycat crime virus occurred in

plc

Stamps, Arkansas, 15 days after Pearl and just a little over 90 days before Jonesboro. In Stamps, a 14-year-old boy who was angry at his schoolmates, hid in the woods and fired at children as they came out of school. Sound familiar? Only two children were injured in this crime, so most of the world didn't hear about it; but it got great regional coverage on TV, and two little boys in Jonesboro, Arkansas, probably did hear about it.

And then there was Springfield, Oregon, and so many others. Is this a reasonable price to pay for the TV networks' "right" to turn juvenile defendants into celebrities and role models by playing up their pictures on TV? Our society needs to be informed about these crimes, but when the images of the young killers are broadcast on television, they become role models. The average pre-schooler in America watches 27 hours of television a week. The average child gets more one-on-one communication from TV than from all her parents and teachers combined. The ultimate achievement for our children is to get their picture on TV. The solution is simple, and it comes straight out of the suicidology literature: the media have every right and responsibility to tell the story, but they have no right to glorify the killers by presenting their images on TV.

Unlearning violence

What is the road home from the dark and lonely place to which we have traveled? One route infringes on civil liberties. The city of New York has made remarkable progress in recent years in bringing down crime rates, but they may have done so at the expense of some civil liberties. People who are fearful say that is a price they are

willing to pay. Another route would be to "just turn it off"; if you don't like what is on television, use the off button. Yet, if all the parents of the 15 shooting victims in Jonesboro had protected their children from TV violence, it wouldn't have done a bit of good. Because somewhere there were two little boys whose parents didn't "just turn it off".

On the night of the Jonesboro shootings, clergy and counsellors were working in small groups in the hospital waiting room, comforting the groups of relatives and friends of the victims. Then they noticed one woman sitting alone silently. A counsellor went over to the woman and discovered that she was the mother of one of the girls who had been killed. She had no friends, no husband, no family with her as she sat in the hospital, stunned by her loss. "I just came to find out how to get my little girl's body back," she said. But the body had been taken to Little Rock, 100 miles away, for an autopsy. Her very next concern was "I just don't know how I'm going to pay, for the funeral. I don't know how I can afford it." That little girl was truly all she had in all the world. Come to Jonesboro, friend, and tell this mother she should "just turn it off". Another route to reduced violence is gun control. I don't want to downplay that option, but America is trapped in a vicious cycle when we talk about gun control. Americans don't trust the government; they believe that each of us should be responsible for taking care of ourselves and our families. That's one of our great strengths – but it is also a great weakness. When the media foster fear and perpetuate a milieu of violence, Americans arm themselves in order to deal with that violence.

And the more guns there are out there, the more violence there is. And the more violence there is, the greater the desire for guns.

We are trapped in this spiral of self-dependence and lack of trust. Real progress will never be made until we reduce this level of fear. As a historian, I tell you it will take decades – maybe even a century – before we wean Americans off their guns. And until we reduce the level of fear and of violent crime, Americans would sooner die than give up their guns.

Fighting back

We need to make progress in the fight against child abuse, racism, and poverty and in rebuilding our families. No one is denying that the breakdown of the family is a factor. But nations without our divorce rates are also having increases in violence. Besides, research demonstrates that one major source of harm associated with single-parent families occurs when the TV becomes both the nanny and the second parent.

Work is needed in all these areas, but there is a new front – taking on the producers and purveyors of media violence. Simply put, we ought to work toward legislation that outlaws violent video games for children. There is *no* constitutional right for a child to play an interactive video game that teaches him weapons-handling skills or that simulates destruction of God's creatures.

The day may also be coming when we are able to seat juries in America who are willing to sock it to the networks in the only place they really understand – their wallets. After the Jonesboro shootings, *Time* magazine said: "As for media violence, the debate there is fast approaching the same point that discussions about the health impact of tobacco reached some time ago – it's over. Few researchers bother any longer to dispute that bloodshed on TV and in the movies has an effect on kids who witness it" (6 April 1998).

Most of all, the American people need to learn the lesson of Jonesboro: Violence is not a game; it's not fun, it's not something that we do for entertainment. Violence kills.

Every parent in America desperately needs to be warned of the impact of TV and other violent media on children, just as we would warn them of some widespread carcinogen. The problem is that the TV networks, which use the public airwaves we have licensed to them, are our key means of public education in America. And they are stonewalling.

In the days after the Jonesboro shootings, I was interviewed on Canadian national TV, the British Broadcasting

K. M. SMITH
Funeral Directors – since 1877

53 BROOKES STREET, BOWEN HILLS

TELEPHONE (07) 3252 2031

1- 1/182 Bay Terrace, Wynnum, (07) 3548 4133

For prompt courteous and considerate attention to your Funeral requirements we are available 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

Our Head Office is located at 53 Brookes Street, Bowen Hills – with ample off-street parking available. If it is more convenient, our trained staff will make funeral arrangements in your home. If you prefer, the arrangements can be made by telephone.

FREECALL 1800 819 938

To: K.M.Smith, **Freepost 202**, PO Box 2170, Fortitude Valley, Qld, 4006

Please send me information on pre-arrangement of Funerals.

Name:

Address:

Company and by many US and international radio shows and newspapers. But the American television networks simply would not touch this aspect of the story. Never in my experience as a historian and a psychologist have I seen any institution in America so clearly responsible for so very many deaths, and so clearly abusing their publicly licensed authority and power to cover up their guilt.

Time after time, idealistic young network producers contacted me from one of the networks, fascinated by the irony that an expert in the field of violence and aggression was living in Jonesboro and was at the school almost from the beginning. But unlike all the other media, these network news stories always died a sudden, silent death when the network's powers-that-be said: "Yeah, we need this story like we need a hole in the head."

Many times since the shooting I have been asked, "why weren't you on TV talking about the stuff in your book?" And every time my answer had to be, "The TV networks are burying this story. They know they are guilty, and they want to delay the retribution as long as they can."

As an author and expert on killing, I believe I have spoken on the subject at every Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions Club in a 50-mile radius of Jonesboro. So when the plague of satellite dishes descended upon us like huge locusts, many people here were aware of the scientific data linking TV violence and violent crime.

The networks will stick their lenses anywhere and courageously expose anything. Like flies on open wounds, they find nothing too private or shameful for their probing lenses – except themselves, and their share of guilt in the terrible, tragic crime that happened here.

A CBS executive told me his plan. He knows all about the link between media and violence. His own in-house people have advised him to protect his child from the poison his industry is bringing to America's children. He is not going to expose his child to TV until she's old enough to learn how to read. And then he will select very carefully what she sees. He and his wife plan to send her to a daycare centre that has no television, and he plans to show her only age-appropriate videos. That should be the bare minimum with children: Show them only age-appropriate videos, and think hard about what is age appropriate.

The most benign product you are going to get from the networks are 22-minute sitcoms or cartoons providing instant solutions for all of life's problems, interlaced with commercials telling you what a slug you are if you don't ingest the right sugary

substances or wear the right shoes.

The worst product your child is going to get from the networks is represented by one TV commentator who told me: "Well, we only have one really violent show on our network, and that is *NYPD Blue*. I'll admit that that is bad, but it is only one night a week."

I wondered at the time how she would feel if someone said: "Well, I only beat my wife in front of the kids one night a week." The effect is the same.



Education about media and violence does make a difference. I was on a radio chat show in San Antonio, Texas. A woman called and said, "I would never have had the courage to do this two years ago. But let me tell you what happened. You tell me if I was right. My 13-year-old boy spent the night with a neighbour boy. After that night, he started having nightmares. I got him to admit what the nightmares were about. While he was at the neighbour's house, they watched splatter movies all night: people cutting people up with chainsaws and stuff like that. "I called the neighbours and

told them, 'Listen: you are sick people. I wouldn't feel any different about you if you had given my son pornography or alcohol. And I'm not going to have anything further to do with you or your son – and neither is anybody else in this neighbourhood, if I have anything to do with it until you stop what you're doing'."

That's powerful. That's censure, not censorship. We ought to have the moral courage to censure people who think that violence is legitimate entertainment.

There are many other things that the Christian community can do to help change our culture. Youth activities can provide alternatives to television, and churches can lead the way in providing alternative locations for latchkey children. Fellowship groups can provide guidance and support to young parents as they strive to raise their children without the destructive influences of the media. Mentoring programs can pair mature, educated adults with young parents to help them through the pre-school ages without using the TV as a babysitter. And most of all, the churches can provide the clarion call of decency and love and peace as an alternative to death and destruction, not just for the sake of the church, but for the transformation of our culture.

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman, an expert on the psychology of killing, retired from the US Army in February 1998. He now teaches psychology at Arkansas State University, directs the Killology Research Group in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and has written On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society (Little, Brown and Co., 1996). This article is reprinted from Christianity Today, 10 August 1998. ap

Presbyterian Theological Centre – Sydney

77 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood, NSW 2134

Eliza Ferrie Evening Lecture

“John Dunmore Lang: Radical Loose Cannon or Conservative Evangelical?”

Dr Mark Hutchinson

Wednesday 18 August 1999 at 7.30pm

In this lecture, which coincides with the bicentenary of the birth of this controversial Presbyterian leader of colonial NSW, Dr Hutchinson will explore something of Lang's enigmatic personality and his spiritual legacy.

All Welcome

No registration necessary.

Further details please contact Susan Finlay:

Ph: (02) 9744 1977 Fax: (02) 9744 5970 Email: adminptc@ptcsyd.wow.aust.com

prayer

JUNE 1999

- 21 Margaret Price from St. Andrew's, Canberra, ACT; co-ordinator of WEC (she served in Borneo 1972-83).
- 22 Lismore parish, far north NSW, including Wyralla and Nimbin, and Southern Cross Presbyterian Church, East Lismore; about 310 communicants, about 50 children and youth, 20 elders; Peter & Marilyn Playsted, Steve & Rosalind Cree.
- 23 Christian witness in densely populated and very poor Haiti, in the West Indies - 7 million people (nominally 73% RC, 26% Protestant, but deeply influenced by voodoo spiritism)
- 24 Emeritus ministers and other retired church workers - their health, welfare and continued service.
- 25 Gregory & Rosemary Braid with 4 children, from Boort, Vic; serving in South Asia - studying language and working in a school library.
- 26 Byron Bay - Mullumbimby parish, far north NSW; 2 congregations, about 95 communicants, about 45 children and youth, 9 elders; Les and Debbie Tattersall, Jon and Ruth Nuttall.
- 27 Douglas & Jeanette Bennett & daughter from Woolsthorpe, Vic; assisting 5 local translators of the Awad Bing New Testament, PNG with WBT.
- 28 The historic Campbelltown parish, south-west Sydney; about 120 communicants, about 40 children and youth, 5 elders; Gregory & Mignon Goswell, Adrian & Sue Lee.
- 29 Granville & Denny Pillar from Gosford and Burwood, NSW; missionary candidates preparing at Bible College to go to Africa.
- 30 Presbytery of Hawkesbury, western Sydney; 16 parishes, 8 home mission stations, totalling 28 congregations

with 1660 communicants, 490 adherents, 7905 children and youth, 140 elders; 9 emeritus ministers, 3 missionaries, 2 chaplains, 1 deaconess and several other ministers; Mick Quirk clerk.

JULY

- 1 Robert Benn APWM, National Director, visiting various states, and taking part in the Presbytery of Rockhampton retreat.
- 2 Bible Society work in Kenya (36 million people, 51 languages) where there is great demand, and production of the Kiswahili study Bible.
- 3 Dr Wendy Bourke and husband Lex from Nambour, Qld, serving with Interserve for 6 months to September 1999 at Khatmandhu, Nepal in psychiatry and teaching.
- 4 Woy Woy parish, Central Coast NSW; about 55 communicants, about 10 children and youth, 5 elders; Jamie and Jenny Newans.
- 5 NSW General Assembly meeting this week - moderator, clerk, all office-bearers, the debates and fellowship.
- 6 Church & Nation Committee of the NSW Assembly - Peter Moore & Peter Greiner, and the preparation of papers on public issues.
- 7 Graham & Sandra Chipps and children from West Leederville, WA; pastoring International Christian Fellowship in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (mainly expatriates) and lecturing and teaching.
- 8 Gordon Dunkley and all staff at PCQ Church Offices, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane.
- 9 Ron & Maryanne Fowler and two children from Tuggeranong, ACT & Burwood, NSW; serving at WEC, NSW headquarters in Strathfield.
- 10 Presbytery of Ballarat; 9 parishes, 1 home mission station, totalling 18 congregations with 470 communicants, 85 adherents, 130 children & youth, 42 elders, retired ministers;

Bruce Riding clerk.

- 11 Bassandean parish, Perth; about 35 communicants, about 15 children & youth, 3 elders; Michael & Maureen Charles.
- 12 The ministry of the OM ship "Doulos" in Sydney 5-26 July.
- 13 Steven Mannyx from Engadine, NSW, working in Turkey with Student Life (Campus Crusade) until about March 2000.
- 14 Full-time (J Davies, P Cooper, C Balzer, I Smith) and part-time faculty of the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Burwood, NSW, and the 26 candidates (11 final year) and the private students.
- 15 Barbara Sayers from Gosford, NSW; based in Cairns; translation consultant for Aboriginal languages; with WBT since 1961. She was involved with the Wik Mungkan scriptures, Aurukan.
- 16 Christian witness among the 17 million people of the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan (40% Muslim, 33% non-religious, 25% Orthodox, 1% Protestant, including some Koreans), mostly very poor.
- 17 Nicky Stock from Mitchelton, Brisbane, husband Dale (USA) and 2 children, working among 4 Hindi tribes near Hyderabad, Pakistan, with Interserve.
- 18 PCV Trusts Corporation and other financial authorities - Duncan McGregor, Peter Philips, David Palmer.
- 19 Caulfield-Elwood parish, Melbourne - 3 congregations; about 55 communicants, about 40 children & youth, 8 elders; Stephen & Ai Ling Tay, John & Young Bok Cho.
- 20 Presbytery of Hastings, NSW; 6 parishes, 3 home mission stations, totalling 19 congregations with 885 communicants, 230 adherents, 225 children & youth, 65 elders; 1 other minister under jurisdiction; Noel Foreman clerk.

AUSTRALIAN Presbyterian

Subscription form

Please send me *Australian Presbyterian* magazine ...

- 1 year subscription (\$32) 2 year (\$55) 3 year (\$75)
 bulk (minimum of five copies to one address) (\$29 each.)
 _____ number of copies
 Overseas: \$A43 per year. Donation.

Deliver to:
 Name
 Address
 City/Suburb
 State Pcode
 Country
 Phone

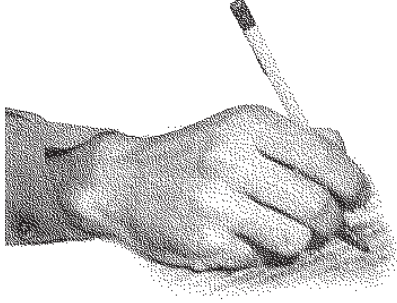
Payment Details

Please find enclosed
 Cheque/money order to *Australian Presbyterian* for: \$ _____
 Please debit \$ _____ from my
 Visa Bankcard Mastercard
 Account number:
 Expiry date: ____/____ Name on Card _____
 Signature _____

Please send completed forms to:

Australian Presbyterian 3 Durham Rd, Kilsyth 3137
 Phone: (03) 9723 9684. Fax: (03) 9723 9685. Email: austpres@bigpond.com.

letters



Higher education

We have followed with interest the debate on Christian education in your magazine, and, as a professional couple with a young family, are aware of the challenges and opportunities of both secular and Christian education. Readers who are concerned about the issue of a Christian approach to assessing current issues and thinking, either for themselves or their older children, may be interested to know of a body called ACHEA (Association for Christian Higher Education in Australia Inc.) which tackles issues from a Christian perspective and with viewpoints from mature Christians working in the community. *Lookout!*, a weekly broadsheet, is posted at www.achea.edu.au/~studfac, and a printed magazine *ACHEA Update* covers issues in more detail. A recent Update contains Reflections of a Christian Educator by Douglas Peck, principal of Plenty Valley Christian College. This medium is primarily aimed at students of higher education, but really none of us ever stops learning, do we? For enquiries about past issues, contact the editorial office at 358 Mountain Highway, Wantirna 3152.

Congratulations on your magazine! The articles are not only relevant and succinct, but being based on scripture are a wonderful guide to us all. We pray for God's continued inspiration and blessing on your editorial staff and on all who read these challenging articles.

*Christine Modra
Colac, Vic*

Schools: a ministry

I was delighted to see the debate on Christian schooling (*AP*, February). Neil Benfell comments on the debate regarding Anglican schools in Sydney. Christian schooling is enjoying attention almost unknown in the past. It seems that Sydney Anglicans realise what extraordinary min-

istry opportunities exist in their schools and the diocesan leaders are keen to encourage and support this ministry.

The real issue, then, is how to support and encourage this ministry. Clearly a Christian head desirous and capable of furthering ministry in the school and supported by a school council committed to seeing its school as an integral part of the ministry of the church are essentials. To attempt to legislate beyond that, as some have suggested, seems to me to be futile. The church hierarchy needs to ensure that it appoints to its councils men and women who have the commitment mentioned above.

Paul Burgis in his article shows that he has developed a Christian world view and against this background he recognises that all truth is God's truth and so is able to deal with the big issues that teenagers present. There is a real need to challenge Christian teachers to think beyond the secular world view.

How do teachers wishing to serve in Christian schools develop such a framework to inform their teaching? If Christian schools are to fulfil the expectations that their churches are now rightly placing on them, the churches themselves need to put resources into some form of Christian teacher training.

*Riley Warren
Headmaster
Macarthur Anglican School*

A human effort

The editorial and articles on church planting (*AP*, March) were interesting but something further needs to be said. Hyperbole and sensationalism seemed to have been emphasised by some of these writers. Jealous for God by Ian Smith was an excellent piece, but I am sad to say that I feel that other articles were charged with a lot of worldliness and human effort. It is a warning to be alert to what is going on with our leaders in the church, who are called to be the "watchmen on the walls of Zion". None of these articles mentions clearly our dependence on God to build his church.

I am particularly troubled by the David Thurston interview. David seems a man full of zeal, but he is also market and numbers-oriented. But numbers and marketing hype are not spiritual indicators.

In the days of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel there was only a remnant of people belonging to God. Looking at the churches in Revelation we see only two churches Smyrna, and Philadelphia, with not a word of reproof from the Lord against them. They were lovers of God's Word and intent on keeping it. They were

also small. The church at Smyrna was composed of poor people with nothing like the numbers or prestige that the church in Laodicea had. They were poor but rich. Remember also when our Lord preached the deeper truths, only a few of his disciples remained. Church growth and church-planting are not meant to be conducted like business deals put together by Amway salesmen.

Our God-called leaders must repent of their own imagination, of their own "hype" and of their own puffed up pride, and truly come together with humble hearts before our Lord and ask for forgiveness, direction and guidance. A vibrant and alive church is one where the peoples' whole desire is to glorify and honour God alone and where they are being fed the bread of life through a man who preaches the full counsel of God without compromise because he knows he is accountable to God for the sheep in his care.

*Sue Osborne
East Roseville*

Lord over all

It has been said that a true Church is always reforming. On that basis may I suggest a reformation in the use of the term "Yahweh" to designate God. Although both Calvin and Luther declare that the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton is Jehovah, they are both clearly wrong. For Jesus quotes Psalm 110.1 which contains the tetragrammaton and used the word "kurios" which means He used the word "Adonai" in Hebrew as the Jews did. Nowhere does Jesus rebuke the Jews for mispronouncing the Divine name but obviously agrees with them. Let us therefore drop the usage of Yahweh and Jehovah and simply say Lord as Jesus did.

*Neil Cadman.
Norman Park, Qld*

Arncliffe Studios

Third generation since 1906
Stained Glass • Windows/Leadlights
Design and Restoration

*K J Little,
17 Barden St, Arncliffe, NSW, 2205
Phone (02) 9567 7348*

Unequally yoked

Pitfalls and problems lie ahead for Christians who marry unbelievers.

It's a bit like getting caught in school detention. Sometimes it's your fault that you're there. No arguments with that – you did it! Other times it's the rowdy element of the class that dragged you into it via the dreaded “blanket detention”. As you sit there, brooding, you realise how unfair it is to be caught in this dilemma when it really was not your fault.

Similarly, there are two ways to be caught in the awkward bond of an unequal yoke. The first is to walk into it with eyes open, knowing the risks but pretending that you can overcome. The second is by your own conversion after marrying. This article addresses the first scenario; the second will be addressed in the July *AP*.

The excitement of finding a true “soul-mate” and the thrill of being genuinely loved temporarily minimise all known obstacles to a mixed marriage.

At this early point in their relationship, the couple is in what salespeople call the “buying mood”. Have you ever noticed how powerful this impulse is when you're strongly attracted to something that you need? A person in the “buying mood” often fixates on a single characteristic of the thing that he wants, and blocks out all its drawbacks. Real estate agents know all about this weakness which psychologists call blockage.

A woman will buy a house because she falls in love with the kitchen. Alternatively, a man will go ahead with the purchase of a home because he likes the study and the garage. It happens all too often in marriage, especially when a believer is captivated by the irresistible appeal of one trait of the non-Christian partner. The assumption that carries the couple along is that their deep love and commitment to each other will conquer any problem.

Before the wedding day promises and promising signs give the believer hope. But inevitably it's false hope. Church attendance wanes soon after marriage and promises of “taking it seriously” are forgotten.

Jennie (not her real name) ruefully told me: “I should have been wiser. He was so positive toward me, so affirming and full of promises. He said that he'd sort it all out with me, that he'd attend with me and sup-



John Wilson

port me. At first he did support me in my attendance. Now, it's not even that!”

Did it show gradually? Jennie replied: “It was almost instantaneous. There was no sorting it all out with me. The first Sunday back from the honeymoon he had an excuse – something about getting the car ready for work! While he was at first supportive of my need of faith, that's now turning to flippancy and even sarcasm. Why didn't someone warn me?”

Scripture does warn Jennie, and all of us. Scripture clearly teaches that a believer should not marry an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14). How much clearer do we need it?

In the book of Deuteronomy (22:10), the people of Israel were forbidden to yoke the ox with the ass. Why? It would be such a sight! They are so different (both in size and strength) that the sight of them tied together in the paddock would make us laugh. They could not work together with any sense of harmony or productivity. Perhaps it was this teaching that Paul had in mind when he said, in 2 Corinthians 6:14 “*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?*”

If you still have a choice – don't do it.

“What you're saying to us is so harsh!” complained Ian. He was standing, now, his body language taking a more threatening position. In fact, Ian was seething with anger. The temperature in my study was rising, the atmosphere decidedly uncomfortable. “You expect us, after going together for two years now, to quit? Just because I don't profess the same commitment to this “born again” stuff as Marie?”

I admit that at that moment I was not enjoying being a pastor. How I wished for a time-warp. To go back to their first date


and make my protest to them before they started going out. There is strain on the pastor in these situations. It's costly to hold to Scriptural principles. Compromise and a little fancy footwork seem attractive (the elders wouldn't have to know!). Then the threat emerges: “What are you running here?” boomed Ian. “The church down the road will marry us.” Sometimes it's costly to stand firm.

The time to address this question is at the beginning of relationships. The people to talk this over with are your young teenagers, the 13, 14 and 15-year-olds. We should allow our teens to mix with Christian young people and to go to youth groups where there are plenty of young people committed to Jesus Christ. Our advice to the young is: don't go out with anyone who is not fully devoted to Christ. The pain is not worth it. The possibility of backsliding in the faith is lurking very near.

We must advise our teens about forming personal intimacy with a non-Christian. Extending the 2 Corinthians 6:14 principle backwards implies that if it's wrong to marry an unbeliever, then it's wrong even to date. This means that to allow a deepening and special relationship to grow between a Christian and a non-Christian is wrong.

Husband and wife are to be a team, a partnership, serving the Lord together in unity and with harmony. This is not possible in a mixed marriage. Marrying an unbeliever will strain your marriage, tear your heart from devotion to the Lord, and bring trouble and confusion on your children.

Next month John Wilson considers the lot of those who are unequally yoked because they were saved after marrying.

John Wilson lectures in practical theology and church history at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne. 

Reply Requested

We are looking for advertisers.

If you are looking for a Christian employee, service or wish to publish an event, please reply to this advertisement by ringing or writing to Mr Walter Bruining at the Australian Presbyterian office.

(03) 9723 9684