

A U S T R A L I A N

# Presbyterian

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

september 2010

## The public square

> **Get involved...**

BRUCE WINTER | KEVIN ANDREWS | A LORD WHO RULES

"5 MINS INTO THE SERMON,

I KNEW I WAS IN TROUBLE...

ONE GUY IN THE FRONT BEGAN TO SNORE

WORSE,

HE DIDN'T DISTURB ANYBODY."

- HADDON ROBINSON

The Bible isn't boring.

Sermons don't have to be either.



Arrest people's attention. The SMBC Certificate in Preaching.  
A 12-month course for a lifetime of impact.  
[www.smbc.com.au](http://www.smbc.com.au) or (02) 9747 4780.

SMBC | SCHOOL OF  
Sydney Missionary & Bible College PREACHING



Jeof Falls



Duncan Parker

While many in the Presbyterian Church know us through our work as Trustees of the NSW Property Trust and Trustees Investment Fund, quite a few might not be aware that we manage an Australian equity fund for the benefit of a range of private investors. The fund was established in October 2007 at the height of the Australian equities boom, which was not the easiest time to start a fund. But, we have found it a blessing as we have satisfied our investors with returns above the S&P/ASX 200 index since its inception.

It is a long-term value fund that only invests in Australia's strongest companies; has an ethical filter; is not leveraged in any way and does not use any hedging or other derivatives. In other words, it is a conservative fund, which some would say mirrors our two personalities.

Give us a ring if you would like to hear more about the fund's philosophy and investment approach.



Jeof Falls - 0417 922 064; [jeof.falls@measuredinsights.com](mailto:jeof.falls@measuredinsights.com)

Roger Duncan Parker - 0417 775 875; [rdjp@iprimus.com.au](mailto:rdjp@iprimus.com.au)

Please note this neither constitutes a financial services. While we would like to provide you with information about the equity fund that we manage. Before making any investment decision, you need to consider (with or without the assistance of an adviser) whether the information is appropriate to your needs, objectives and circumstances. Applications for investment in the fund will only be accepted on the basis of an application form. While the above graph accurately reflects the performance of the fund since its inception, the future performance of the fund is not guaranteed and will vary in response to market conditions.

**THE PUBLIC SQUARE**

- 4 Get stuck in: Bruce Winter
- 10 Shaping the nation: Kevin Andrews
- 13 Good citizens: Mark Powell
- 25 Talking it through: David Palmer

**BIBLE STUDY**

- 15 Back to basics  
20 Bible studies in 1 Peter

**CHURCH DIRECTORY**

- 17 Every Presbyterian church, state by state

**NEWS**

- 26 News
- 28 On the Agenda

**CHURCH**

- 31 A Lord who rules: Mark Galli

**SERVICE**

- 33 Helping hand: Ruth Powell

**PRAYER**

- 34

**BOOKS**

- 35 The Rage Against God: Peter Hitchens  
Anne Bradstreet: Faith Cook

**BACK PAGE**

- 36 A Tale of Two Verses: Peter Barnes

**E D I T O R I A L**

**J**esus prayed that His disciples would be *in* the world but not *of* it. Tertullian, the early Christian apologist, suggested that this meant that Christians should disengage from non-Christian society and live in relative isolation from it. His famous quip, “What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?”, became a rallying cry for many who believed that Christians have no meaningful role to play in public life.

But is this so, and was such an approach typical of the apostles? Some have said so. For instance, it has been suggested that the leaders of the early church encouraged believers to stand aloof from public life. Some have construed Paul’s command to the church in Thessalonica to “live quietly” and “to mind your own affairs” (1 Thess. 4:11) in this light. They see it as a reference to political quietism and withdrawal from the public square.

However, against such an interpretation is the model for Christian living in a pagan society that we find in Jeremiah 29:7: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” This is a model for church engagement where believers pray for their society and contribute to its well-being. In this case, the exiled Jews were urged to work and pray for the welfare of the city of Babylon. Although Babylon was essentially hostile to their faith, nevertheless they had a duty as God’s people to establish themselves within the city and to advance its prosperity.

We find the same call to Christians in the New Testament. The apostle Peter, for instance, in the face of undisguised discrimination and hostility toward the church, encouraged its members to “bless” those who opposed them and to be “devoted to doing good” and “pursuing peace” (1 Pet. 3:9, 11). This particular approach is grounded in the goodness and faithfulness of God as well as the imitation of Christ.

In this issue of *Australian Presbyterian* we pay special tribute to the work of David Palmer and Bruce Winter, who in their own distinctive ways have called the Presbyterian Church of Australia to reclaim a constructive role in the public square.

Peter Hastie 

# Get stuck in

GOD CARES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CITY. SO MUST WE.

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

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

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

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



**Bruce Winter**  
talks to  
**Peter Hastie**

2000, and *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement*, Eerdmans, 2001.

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

**Bruce, it's not unusual to find some Christians with a very cynical view towards government in particular and non-Christian society in general. How should Christians think about the world of human society?**

Christians must begin with the proposition that every aspect of human society is part of God's world. God cares deeply for the world in which we find ourselves. We learn from the doctrine of providence that God upholds the universe and sustains it moment by moment. Jesus tells us that God causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike. In other words, the whole world belongs to God and He has mercy on believers and unbelievers alike. Although He shows saving grace to those who belong to the church, He extends common grace to everyone. This means that God is interested in all of human society and he constantly shows His love and kindness to people everywhere. The Bible makes it clear that He cares for every nation under heaven.

**How important should Christians**

**consider their relationship to the wider society in which they live?**

Christians must be vitally interested in their relationship to the wider society in which they live. This is one of the major points that the apostle Peter makes in his first letter. After he warns believers about the danger of allowing fleshly lusts to wage war against their souls (1 Peter 2:11), he immediately turns to the important subject of how Christians must relate to the non-Christian community in which they live. He reminds them that their first duty is to be engaged in good deeds towards their neighbours (2:12). This is how they glorify God. In other words, Christians must be concerned about how their witness impacts the public square.

Christians often forget that God cares for the welfare of the city. We discover this principle in the book of Jeremiah where the prophet tells the exiled Jews to pray for the city of Babylon. He also tells them to do good in their new community (Jer. 29:7). The same principle applies in the New Testament. The apostle Peter reminds believers that they need to respect governing authorities and those who are responsible for other institutions. He says it is God's will that by doing right they silence the ignorance of foolish men (1 Peter 2:15).

Likewise, in Romans 13 the apostle Paul issues a call to Christians to respect the governing authorities and he commands them as individuals to do good to others. He says, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (13:8). I think it is quite clear from both

the Old and New Testaments that Christians cannot adopt an uninterested approach to their societies. They must be concerned for the world beyond the church.

**There seems to have been some debate in the early church about how Christians should interact with non-Christian society. What were some of the more prominent views on this subject within the early church?**

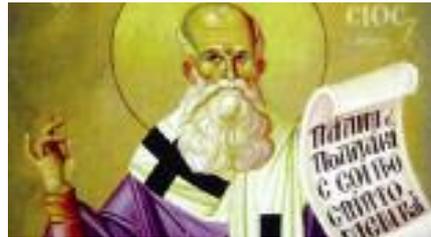
One important point of view is represented in the *Epistle to Diognetus* which comes from the second century. The writer says that Christians “inhabit Greek as well as barbarian cities... following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, displaying to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life... They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass those laws by their lives. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners.” He goes on to say that while Christians find themselves in the flesh, they do not live according to the flesh, which is a clear reflection of the views that the apostle Peter expresses in chapter two of his first letter. While Christians are in the world, they are not of it. This may seem to be a paradox in some ways, but we should not understand it as though Christians are meant to withdraw from the world altogether.

**Given that citizens in the Roman world were expected to worship the gods, and be taught paganism in their schools, was Tertullian right to say in his *Apology*, “Nothing could be more alien to us than the state”?**

Tertullian was a very great apologist, but at that particular point, he wasn't reflecting Paul's views about government in Romans 13. The apostle Paul tells us that, “every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority, has opposed the ordinance of God” (13:1-2). Nevertheless, we can also see that Paul did establish some boundaries with respect to idol worship. In 1 Corinthians 10, for example, he forbids them to participate in communal meals in idol temples. So we see that certain clear limits were estab-

lished that governed how Christians should participate in this world.

Further, the ruling of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, which identified Christianity with Judaism, made it a lot easier for Christians to cope with idolatry (Acts 18:12,14-17). Jews were given certain exemptions under Roman law from participating in pagan idolatry. During this particular period at least, Christians enjoyed a certain measure of exemption from Roman rites.



THE CHURCH FATHERS WERE ENGAGED IN A SUBSTANTIAL POLEMIC AGAINST FORCES THAT WERE VERY HOSTILE TO CHRISTIANITY.

**Nevertheless, were there some “no-go” zones for Christians in Roman society? For instance, given that pagan worship penetrated so many levels of society, could Christians actually work in the government or fight in the army? If Christians are meant to flee idolatry, how could they work in these areas?**

The answer of the New Testament is that while it might have been difficult to have served in some of these areas, it was certainly not impossible. For example, a man called Erastus was in charge of the administration of the city of Corinth. Paul tells us that he was a Christian. It is estimated that the city of Corinth had a population of around 100,000 people. Erastus had obviously allowed his name to go forward for this position and had been elected to public office. We have a significant inscription from the period that records the benefaction he gave upon receiving public office. We know he was responsible for a whole year for the running of the city. He sends his greetings in Romans 16 to the Christians in Rome. This instance of a Christian standing for public office demonstrates that it was possible, in Paul's eyes at least, for Christians to stand for an important political role in the first century. I imagine that this

opportunity existed for Erastus to serve his community because, under Gallio's ruling, he would have been exempted from having to be involved in any pagan activities. Nor should we forget that Erastus is someone whom Paul commends.

**Do we have any idea from documents in the first century, like social registers, which social class Christians tended to come from? Some scholars have suggested that Christianity sprang mainly from the lower classes.**

Yes, but that's incorrect. The view that Christianity was a lower class movement arose from a German professor of New Testament in Berlin. He proposed that idea when he joined the German Workers Party. He formed his view on a selective reading of the New Testament.

Interestingly, Professor Edwin Judge, a prominent ancient historian from Macquarie University, has performed a valuable service by showing that a large number of Roman names in the New Testament indicate that many of these people had significant status. For example, a man by the name of Gaius, is the host to all of the church in Corinth and entertains them in his home. We have enough Roman names recorded in Paul's letters to remind us that while Paul said, “Not many of you were wise, not many of you were powerful or of noble birth,” he did not say, “not any of you.” There were obviously Christians of significant status and great wealth in the early church. We meet people like Phoebe, who was a patron of many and supported Paul in his ministry. Again, we meet wealthy people involved in business like Lydia from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16). In other words, the church is made up of people from a number of different social strata. Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Christianity was a lower class movement.

**How are we meant to understand some of the strong statements by church fathers like Clement of Alexandria in favour of disengagement from Roman society with other statements in the Bible that talk about seeking the welfare of the city and honouring the Emperor?**

We need to remember that the early church fathers were engaged in a substantial polemic against forces that were

very hostile to Christianity. Given the intensity of persecution, it is not surprising that many of these Christian writers dwelt on the more alarming aspects of pagan Roman culture. This is perfectly understandable. However, when you have your back to the wall, it is sometimes difficult to maintain a completely balanced approach. We find the balance in the writing of the apostles who are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

One aspect of a Christian's responsibility to the wider society which is stressed by the apostles is the need for believers to be benefactors in the context in which they find themselves. The apostles do not call for the disengagement of the church from their society. For instance, the apostle Peter tells Christians that when they are being publically discredited, they are nevertheless to do good in the public domain. He says that it is "by doing right that you silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15). He reminds them that if they are publically declared benefactors, that is, that they are good and noble persons, this will in many ways enhance the standing of the Christian movement. I think it's quite clear that the apostles, at least, were not in favour of encouraging Christians from disengaging with their communities.

**You have used the term "benefactor" on a number of occasions. Was it a specific term that was used in the ancient world to describe someone who had reached a certain status in the community?**

Yes, it was. They were given the title "good and noble". This title was given to someone who had actually given something to his community. Usually, this was in the form of money to erect buildings or enhancing public parts of the city.

I had a friend in the United States who took this idea of benefaction seriously. When he was constructing an enormous building in his city, he gave half the land it occupied to the local authorities and the city honoured him for his generosity. The city was impressed that a Christian man should forgo the money that he could have secured if he had put the land up for sale. I think the principle of benefaction still holds today. If a Christian is generous towards his community, it speaks powerfully to non-Christians.

**Is the idea of seeking the welfare of the city one that has a very long pedigree?**

Yes, it has. It certainly goes back before the time of Jeremiah. We see the principle at work in the life of Joseph. In Joseph we discover that God really cares for the nations of the earth and that He provides for their basic needs. As you know, God raised Joseph to a position of great power and took decisive action which prevented widespread famine in the ancient world and the economic ruin



**IF A CHRISTIAN IS  
GENEROUS TOWARDS HIS  
COMMUNITY, IT SPEAKS  
POWERFULLY TO NON-  
CHRISTIANS.**

of Egypt. We have another example in the book of Daniel. There we see that God called Daniel to a position of high office within a pagan empire so that he could further the welfare of that nation as well as the welfare of God's own people.

**Are Joseph or Daniel compromised in any way by this involvement?**

I don't think Daniel was compromised *per se* in accepting high office in the Babylonian empire. His prophecy makes clear that he drew certain parameters for himself, beyond which he would not go. For example, he was not prepared to compromise on the issue of emperor worship. Throughout his many years in office he certainly helped the king and most definitely played an important role in God's purposes for Israel.

Another prophet who reminds us that God is concerned for non-Christian cities is Jonah. We read in his prophecy that God says, "Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (Jonah 4:11).

**So when did the idea that believers should disengage from their societies first become popular?**

It was probably from around the end of the first century AD when Christians experienced terrible persecution under the Roman emperor Domitian. Domitian forced Christians to worship him as a god as part of the imperial cult. This hadn't happened during the reign of the Julio-Claudians in the first 60 to 70 years of the first century. During this period the Roman Empire enjoyed a period of relative peace and the Christians were able to contribute to their societies and become actively engaged in seeking their welfare. By the time that the Apostle Peter wrote his first letter, Christians were beginning to experience difficulties. Nevertheless, Peter never called upon them to withdraw from society.

The New Testament provides us with three perspectives on the State. First, in Romans 13 Paul seems to be speaking to a situation where the *pax Romana* (the Roman Peace) prevailed. Second, in 1 Peter we sense that Christians are finding increasing problems in their relationship with the state. And finally, in the book of Revelation, the emperor seizes the throne of God and sets himself up in opposition. Christians have to gauge which position they find themselves in and act accordingly.

**Are you saying that a Christian's relationship with the state may not be the same in every society? For example, would someone living in Saudi Arabia have a different approach to resolving issues than somebody living in Australia under a secular government?**

Yes. I think we would take a different approach to how we deal with the state depending on where we find ourselves. The differences may not be all that great but they will be determined by the degree of difficulty that we have in our dealings with the state. It is called a "refraction of ethics". In favourable times a Christian may be able to do more in society than in times of persecution.

**Were there certain social conventions in the ancient world of which Christians had to be aware?**

Yes, there were a number. One of the most interesting was the patron/client relationship. Patrons were wealthy and powerful individuals who used their

money to buy followers (who were called clients). Clients were basically “paid poodles”. The clients did the patron’s bidding. They were expected to be at his home in the morning when he came into the public area of his house. They gave him an official greeting and then followed him around wherever he went that day. They were his political agitators. They followed him even to the baths. The patrons were people who played a major role in the politics of the cities. Clients were expected to spend their whole life involved in furthering the desires of the patron. They didn’t do any real work as such. This is why Paul says in 2 Thessalonians that if Christian people are not willing to work (because they are clients) then they shouldn’t eat. Christians were meant to withdraw from this sort of relationship. The idea also comes out in 1 Thessalonians where Paul tells Christians to get on with their own work and not be busy-bodies.

**So Paul isn’t dealing with people who are unemployed when he says, “If a man won’t work, he shouldn’t eat”?**

No, he isn’t. Incidentally Margaret Thatcher, the former British Prime Minister, made the great mistake of misquoting this text at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. She said, “If a man doesn’t work, let him not eat.” She should have said that the actual translation from the Greek says, “If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either” (2 Thess. 3:10). Paul is addressing a very different situation to someone who is unable to work because he is unemployed. Paul was only referring to people who had made a deliberate choice not to work. This is a very different situation from a person who is unable to work because of a business failure, or who suffers a disability, or needs further training to obtain a job.

**Do we have any indications in the New Testament that Christians were meant to play an active role in society? For instance, do the apostles teach a need for civic responsibility and direct involvement in public life?**

Paul’s statements in Romans 13 about Christians “rendering to all what is due to them”... “and owing nothing to anyone except to love one another” (13:7, 8) certainly talks of being a benefactor to one’s community. Then in

Romans 16:23 we find the reference to a Christian, Erastus, who is the city treasurer of Corinth; Paul seems to speak approvingly of him. There is also the reference in Paul’s letter to Titus where he makes the point that Christians are to devote themselves to good deeds. He says this repeatedly throughout the letter (2:14; 3:1; 3:8 and 3:14). The good works that Paul speaks about here are not simply a reference to specifically religious acts like prayer and Bible reading. They are an exhortation for Christians to be involved in doing good within the wider community.



IT WAS NIETZSCHE WHO SAID, ‘CHRISTIANS HAVE TO SHOW ME THEY ARE REDEEMED BEFORE I WILL BELIEVE IN THEIR REDEEMER.’

**What exactly is meant by “doing good”? Is it related specifically to religious activities or does it have a wider reference?**

I think it is meant to be understood in the wider sense so that it refers to our contribution to the community at large. In whatever context we find ourselves, we should be looking out for people in need. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that if someone is begging you for help, then you are to give to them (Mt. 5:42). Further, Paul makes it clear that God has created us to do good works. It is good for everyone in a community to be helping and looking out for the interests of others. Then, of course, we have Paul’s exhortation in Titus 3:14, “Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful”. So, contrary to the thinking of many Christians, we should be involved in other people’s lives and concerned to do what good we can. Everything that God did was good, and Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38), so as Christians we should be

doing no less.

**Is there any particular reason why the apostle Paul stressed the importance of good works to Titus while he was in Crete?**

The culture in first-century Crete was very hedonistic. They were big drinkers and drunkenness and alcoholism were rife. They had drinking clubs to which people would bring 15 gallons of wine, often once a month. It was also a sexually explicit culture in which people used dangerous aphrodisiacs, sometimes to the point of death. The general culture of Crete was highly promiscuous and self-indulgent and people were just concerned about themselves. It’s not surprising that Paul tells Titus to give himself to the welfare of others and to be zealous for good works.

**Is there some reason why Paul exhorts the church to be devoted to good works before he says anything about direct one-on-one evangelism? Is that a deliberate strategy in Paul’s ministry?**

Yes, I think that it is deliberate on Paul’s part. He knows that people need to see the works before they take notice of our words. It’s hard to impact a self-indulgent culture if we show no sign of being different. It was Nietzsche who said, “Christians have to show me they are redeemed before I will believe in their Redeemer.” I think Nietzsche’s comment is consistent with Paul’s line of thinking. Of course, it is important that Christians must be sound in their doctrine, but we must also be focused on the lives of other people. It will have a remarkable impact if we do so.

**What were the main areas in public and social life that the New Testament writers identify as key opportunities for Christians to make some sort of contribution?**

The New Testament shows Christians being concerned for the sick, the disabled, the troubled, as well as the care of the widows and orphans. Widows were people who had no one to support them; orphans and the hungry found themselves in the same position. In the Gospels we frequently see Jesus showing compassion for people in these various predicaments. He was concerned to deal with need wherever it arose. It seems to me that Christians should be committed to that sort of focus.

**Is there some underlying motive for Christians to serve in this way, apart from the specific example of Jesus?**

Yes there is. Paul makes it clear that Christians are indebted to the mercies of God. Since we have been so wonderfully treated by God, there is a call upon us to adopt a different lifestyle which is focused on serving other people. There is a clear command in the New Testament that we must give a higher priority to the needs of others than our own. Paul emphasises this in his letters to the Corinthian church where he reminds them that a Christian thinks in terms of responsibilities rather than rights. He says that he seeks to please others in everything he does. He does not seek his own advantage. Paul always seeks the advantage of other people in the hope that they may be saved. If people see Christians' good works, then this may prompt them to realise that something supernatural is taking place because sacrificial conduct is so counter-cultural and contrary to human nature.

**In various periods of church history, believers have withdrawn from society and its institutions and have devoted themselves exclusively to church interests. Do you have any comments on this tendency in light of the New Testament?**

My understanding of the New Testament is that it doesn't regard the Christian church as a gated community. Christians are always concerned for the welfare of the outsider. Church buildings should always have doors that are open to the outsider so that they can come in and hear the gospel being preached and experience God's power and grace in the midst of the worship service. Paul hints in 1 Corinthians 14:25 that some unbelievers will be converted through this open door policy. This explains why the church must always welcome outsiders, and pastors must preach with passion.

It is true that there have been times when Christians have withdrawn from the culture altogether, and other times when they have become deeply involved in it, sometimes at the expense of the gospel. However, this doesn't mean to say that because there have been swings from one extreme to another, there isn't a balance presented in the New Testament.

**We occasionally hear calls within**

**the wider church that Christians should get out of the work in hospitals, or aged care or adoption and focus exclusively on evangelism and church planting. Is this a New Testament perspective?**

I find it hard to reconcile this suggestion with the deep sense of compassion that Jesus had for human need. If we call ourselves Christ's disciples, then we need to follow His teaching and example. Being Christ's disciple commits me to being concerned for people in need. I remember coming across a little girl in London who was begging. It almost moved me to tears when I thought that



**WE SHOULD BE ASHAMED THAT THE CHURCH OFTEN SEEMS SO INDIFFERENT TO PEOPLE IN GENUINE NEED.**

this was someone's daughter. I went and bought her lunch. Of course other situations have moved me as well. Often we don't know their stories and we don't know all their needs, but we cannot remain indifferent to their suffering. It is said that Mother Theresa was horrified when she went to London, such a huge financial centre, and saw so many people begging on the streets.

We should be ashamed that the church often seems so indifferent to people in genuine need. After all, God sends the rain to fall on the just and the unjust and constantly sustains the universe by His powerful word. Since the Lord cares for these people in His providence, we can't just say, "Our sole purpose is just to preach the gospel". Anyone who reads Paul's letter to Titus and 1 Peter knows how important good works are as pre-evangelism. Good works actually go hand in hand with preaching the gospel. Since God is good and merciful, we need to do these things hand in hand with preaching the Good News.

**How involved should Christians**

**become in social justice issues? Are there certain limits to their direct involvement?**

My own belief is that Christians, wherever they discover abuse or discrimination, should take up the cause of the weak. I know Christian lawyers who are deeply concerned about these questions of injustice. And so they should be. God is just and He hates unfairness. Indeed, any injustice invokes His anger and Christians should have a similar response to matters of injustice. If Christians are involved in particular callings where they have the opportunity to remedy injustice, they should do so.

I read a sermon that the English preacher Charles Simeon gave in 1803. Simeon preached to all the English judges on one occasion and stated that there are two things that are totally unchristian: first, the settling of disputes by duels in which people can be shot and killed, and second, slavery. Simeon had a very strong social conscience at that point. He and William Wilberforce fought hard for the abolition of slavery. I think Christians should be always concerned where issues of unfairness arise.

**The ancient world was a corrupt and pagan society. It had easy divorce, abortion on demand, slavery and prostitution. What was the church's attitude to these first century practices?**

The New Testament forbids Christians to be involved in any of these things. There were real temptations for Christians in the first century. In the Roman world, sexual immorality was regarded as part of one's manhood. Even in the church, many young men thought it was all right to use prostitutes as an "after dinner" practice because it was regarded as acceptable in the wider society. When a man received his toga, these kinds of activities became normal. Many women in the first century did not look forward to pregnancy because they didn't want to be left with stretch marks, so they often chose abortions which were very dangerous.

**Over the last 30 years or so, many churches in the West have become actively engaged in politics as they have tried to redeem the culture in which they are living. To what extent is it legitimate for a church**

**to be involved in politics, or should it stand apart from the political process?**

I think there are some moral issues which are so serious and decadent that the church needs to speak out against them. The church should always be an advocate for the oppressed and those who are victims of abuse and unjust discrimination — for example, sex-trafficking. In some countries there is evidence that women are specifically brought there and are caught up in the slavery of prostitution. I think Christians ought to be speaking up about that. It is an assault on the essential dignity of their humanity. Again, William Wilberforce was right to oppose the wholesale trafficking of Africans in the slave trade.

However, opposing such obvious abuses is one thing; trying to create a so-called Christian nation is another. I think the latter is unrealistic. For example, Americans have said for a long time

that they are one nation under God, but they haven't done very well in terms of preventing materialism or stopping widespread financial abuse. I don't think it's helpful for Western countries to call

themselves Christian nations because that allows countries which are Islamic to form the wrong idea of what constitutes Christianity.

It is right for Christians to speak out on the great moral issues of the day. I would like to think that Christians are at the forefront of trying to solve the problem of abortion and helping those who have been caught up in it. I also think that Christians should be speaking out about God's concern for the created order. On the other hand, it is not enough to become preoccupied with transforming our culture so that we can call ourselves a Christian nation. I believe that will lead us to depart from the gospel perspective. Once we understand that the ultimate problem that we face is not climate change but the coming wrath of God, handing out bandages and more money to alleviate social problems is not enough. Alongside doing good to our neighbours we must be preaching the gospel. AP



ONCE WE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR ULTIMATE PROBLEM IS NOT CLIMATE CHANGE BUT THE COMING WRATH OF GOD, HANDING OUT BANDAGES IS NOT ENOUGH.

**sanders**  
**NOONAN™**  
 REAL ESTATE SERVICE

A BUSINESS BASED ON:  
**INTEGRITY + SERVICE + RESULTS**

**CALL 02 9570 9999**  
 Ask for Mike Noonan and mention this ad.  
 Email: [mike.noonan@sandersnoonan.com](mailto:mike.noonan@sandersnoonan.com)

**[www.sandersnoonan.com](http://www.sandersnoonan.com)**

**Visiting Ballarat?**

Worship with us at  
 Ebenezer Presbyterian Church.  
 Every Sunday 10.30 am.  
 214 Armstrong Street South.  
 Rev. Dr John Woodward  
 Phone: (03) 5334 2909

**GAA  
 CHRISTIAN  
 EDUCATION  
 RESOURCES**

Available from  
 PTC Media,  
 684 Elgar Road,  
 Box Hill North VIC 3129  
**PHONE:** 0400 880 515  
**EMAIL:** [ptcmedia@presbyteriancollege.org](mailto:ptcmedia@presbyteriancollege.org)  
**FAX:** 03 9898 9872

Please make  
 cheques payable to  
*Presbyterian Church  
 of Victoria*

All prices quoted are  
 inclusive of GST. Unless  
 stated all orders plus  
 postage and handling.

**AT THE COALFACE**  
 An introduction to  
 Presbyterian Eldership  
 \$6.60  
 Including 5 studies on 1 Timothy

---

**MAKING FRIENDS  
 FOR LIFE**  
 A workbook for small group  
 evangelism  
 10 studies on Philippians. \$8.50

---

**WESTMINSTER  
 CONFESSION OF FAITH  
 CENTURY — STUDY  
 EDITION**  
 \$15 + \$3.50 pp.  
 6 copies for \$105 posted

---

**WESTMINSTER  
 CONFESSION OF FAITH**  
 Pocket size \$4.40  
 Bulk prices for 10+ copies

---

**CHRISTIAN  
 COMMITMENTS**  
 5 studies for communicant mem-  
 bership. \$7 each 10 copies for \$55

# Shaping the nation

TEN WORDS ON HOW CHRISTIANS CAN INFLUENCE POLITICS

*Kevin Andrews*

**W**hat should Christians do to be heard in the public square? I present my own suggestions in the form of a Decalogue.

## **First, Christians should pray**

For Christians, prayer is all-powerful. Accordingly, all Christian endeavour in the political realm should be guided and aided by prayer.

## **Second, Christians have a right – and a duty – to be heard in the public square**

The Christian voice is as valid as any other in the public square. In a democracy, all citizens have the right – indeed, the responsibility – to voice their thoughts in the polity. Given the underlying Christian basis for much of western civilisation, Christians have a duty to engage in public debate. Those who argue that Christians – and people of religious belief generally – should confine themselves to religious forums conveniently ignore the genesis of our civilisation.

Western civilisation flourished because of Judeo-Christian values. This is not to say that other values have not been important, but it is to remind ourselves that Christianity was not at the periphery of our progress: it was at the core.

It is my belief that a society cannot long survive without a shared or common morality which includes a conviction in its own destiny and worth. History teaches us that where a society is at war with itself about its values, it loses the vitality necessary to prosper. It also is weakened against outside enemies, which, in this global age, may have an internal presence. Christianity can survive without western democracy. It is doubtful that western democracy can prosper in the absence of the Christian values that underpin it.

## **Third, Christians should adopt a**



CHRISTIANITY CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT WESTERN DEMOCRACY. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT WESTERN DEMOCRACY CAN PROSPER IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN VALUES THAT UNDERPIN IT.

## **principled approach to public affairs**

Christianity professes a set of values about how we should live together. Love of neighbour, charity, respect, toleration, and justice are central to Christianity. Christians should respect those values in any political campaign in which they are engaged, otherwise their actions betray the very civilisation they seek to foster. From time to time, we hear of threats being made to politicians as part of a campaign. This is unacceptable, not just because it is un-Christian, but it is usually counter-productive.

This does not imply lack of criticism, plain-speaking, or muted responses to topical issues. It does mean that policies rather than personalities should be the focus of attention. Moreover, Christians should remind public officials that their role in public life is to empower others, not to accumulate and exercise power over them. Wherever possible, their actions should seek to enhance the dignity of the individual and his or her liberty. Of necessity, empowering the individual limits government, without forgetting that the protection of the poor and the vulnerable are pivotal political challenges.

## **Fourth, Christians should affirm public office as a noble calling**

This is not to say that public officials always act nobly. But it is to recognise that public office is a service to the community which involves stewardship of the commonwealth of the nation. I have the sense on occasions that some Christians regard politics as unclean or unsavoury, and therefore to be shunned: Better to proclaim the Christian message with purity than engage in the untidy, often chaotic world of politics.

Many of us have probably seen the movie, *Amazing Grace*, which was released to mark the bicentenary of the 1807 vote in the House of Commons to abolish the slave trade. It depicts the struggle for over 20 years by the abolitionists, led by William Wilberforce, to overcome this evil.

After being elected to Parliament in his early 20s, Wilberforce was recruited by the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and became their Parliamentary leader. The film depicts a tension in the mind of Wilberforce between serving his religious cause and serving the nation through Parliament. Without Wilberforce's Parliamentary leadership, the slave trade would have continued.

Good leadership acknowledges that virtue is of intrinsic interest to secular society, without which we are incapable of enjoining the cohesion required for stable and civilised communities.

## **Fifth, Christians should understand the political system**

If Christians wish to influence political outcomes, rather than be prophetic voices, they must understand how the political system works. I never cease to be amazed, for example, by the number of organisations that make submissions in the weeks and days before the annual Budget, when, in fact, the process commences the previous year and is largely

finalised a month before the accounts are delivered.

We must remember that the destiny of any politician in a democracy is bound up with the interests of his or her constituents. Christians who wish their voice to be heard need to raise their interests with politicians. The most effective way of doing this is in person, yet few do so. In order of impact, a visit to a Member of Parliament far outweighs a letter. It involves a personal commitment of time and energy which is recognised. Equally, a hand-written letter has more impact than an email, which can be easily generated and distributed widely.

A regular visit to an MP builds a rapport, even if the MP doesn't (initially) share your views. It forces him or her to listen, and to explain his or her own position. If a few people visit, it reinforces the impression that many more people share the same concerns.

It also builds a persistent presence which is effective. The most effective lobbyists, in my experience, are those who make an effort to visit me regularly. What they are doing is building a relationship and educating me about their cause. These visits are usually short – often no more than 10 minutes – but they leave me with a page or two summarising their views about ongoing interests.

In my experience of almost two decades in public life, very few Christians have visited me, and very few congregations or churches have lobbied me about issues. If your voice is not being raised directly with your MP, somebody else's is.

Members of Parliament are human beings and appreciate the same affirmation and encouragement that other people do. In my experience, few people ever express their gratitude when a Member of Parliament has voted for a measure for which they have lobbied.

**Sixth, Christians should know what they want to achieve**

Politics is about actions. Indeed, it is the fate of public officials to be judged by outcomes, not intentions. Christians need to know what they want to achieve. This may sound obvious, but I have observed over the years that many groups have only vague ideas of what they want, without precise goals. You need to know what "success" looks like.

Knowing what you want to achieve

involves knowing what you wish to defend, and what you wish to change. It involves looking ahead to the issues which might arise, and putting in place strategies to address them.

**Seventh, Christians need to be well-researched and relevant to be persuasive**

There is an old saying that good politics involves good policy. Sir Robert Menzies was quoted as saying that if you



**VERY FEW CHRISTIANS HAVE VISITED ME OR LOBBIED ME ABOUT ISSUES. IF YOUR VOICE IS NOT BEING RAISED DIRECTLY WITH YOUR MP, SOMEBODY ELSE'S IS.**

get the policy right, the politics will generally follow. We can all think of examples of poor policy resulting in poor politics.

This means that Christians need to be engaged in the policy debates. However, they need to employ the appropriate expertise. Religious leaders can appeal to moral and ethical reasons for certain behaviours and courses of action. That is their expertise. However, if they wish to be engaged in the policy detail, they need to use the expertise of the particular subject matter. A particular rate of taxation, for example, or a level of interest rates, or a model of welfare, most often involves economic arguments. If the issue is economic, then economic discussion needs to be engaged. Otherwise, the Christian voice will be ignored. This is not to say that economic discussion should not be informed by Christian principles.

**Eighth, Christians should use effective political measures**

On almost every day that the National Parliament is sitting, there is a rally on the lawns at the front of the building. Sometimes there is more than one. Yet most Members of Parliament

would not know that the rallies were happening. If the purpose of the rally is to build camaraderie amongst the supporters for a cause, it might be successful. If it is to influence public policy, most are futile.

An effective political campaign needs to use appropriate language, arguments and measures. What will move votes is the ultimate question. The answer is quite simple: a significantly large number of constituents making their views known directly to their Members of Parliament. This means that Christians need to be organised if they are to have an impact.

They also need to be involved in the political system. In a western democracy like Australia, that means joining a political party. I often hear Christians complain to me about the policy or direction of political parties, but when I inquire as to whether they are a member of a party, most answer "no". Political parties are more or less democratic entities. In the end, their policies and their candidates for office reflect the

**Pioneers Presbyterian Church  
Cheltenham**

**Outreach Worker  
Wanted**

Cheltenham is an established congregation (150 years) in a bayside suburb of Melbourne. The congregation is a mix of old and young, and is seeking to grow numerically as well as spiritually. It has excellent facilities after extensive renovations.

We are seeking someone to do the work of an evangelist, to train and encourage others in this, to build on the already existing contacts and ministries as well as establishing and conducting other means of outreach.

He will need be of reformed convictions, be a capable communicator and organiser, be a team player, be experienced with good references and able to serve in a conservative but developing context.

This is a positive opportunity for a ministry worker, a new graduate, an experienced "lay" person or someone who prefers collegiate ministry. Ordained ministers are also welcome to apply.

**For further information please contact the minister:**

Rev. David A Brown  
P.O. Box 2815 Cheltenham 3192  
Ph. 03 9583 2785  
Email: dar.brown5@gmail.com

views of their members. Yet fewer than 100,000 Australians are members of a political party.

**Ninth, Christians need to be collaborative**

There is an old expression in politics that “disunity is death”. It applies equally to political campaigns. Disunity involves the loss of a common goal. Often it is motivated by self-interest and power. It will always be exploited by opponents. It undermines morale, blunts a message, and creates a sense of confusion. Confidence is sapped amongst supporters and those you wish to persuade to your cause. Disunity is one of the most powerful corrosives in the polity.

Conversely, collaboration can be affirming and effective. Building coalitions of supporters is a central task in most political campaigns. It doesn't mean that real differences, in belief for example, should be put aside. They need to be recognised and named in any effective coalition-building exercise. But common causes can be developed from open, frank and trusting conversations.

In this regard, I use the US example of Richard John Neuhaus, who died in January 2009. Neuhaus was influential in debates about religion and public life in all their forms, particularly with respect to policy formulation on major issues such as stem-cell research and same-sex marriage. Initiatives along these lines, of which there are some in Australia, can play a similar role. They

need to be created, expanded and supported.

**Tenth, Christians need to persevere**

I mentioned William Wilberforce earlier. His battle to abolish the slave trade lasted a political lifetime with many setbacks along the way. An



**WILLIAM WILBERFORCE'S BATTLE TO ABOLISH THE SLAVE TRADE LASTED A POLITICAL LIFETIME WITH MANY SETBACKS ALONG THE WAY. AN EFFECTIVE VOICE REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE.**

effective voice requires perseverance. As Winston Churchill famously said: “Never, ever, ever, ever give up”.

Because politics is the art of the possible, it often involves incremental change. Indeed, the greatest force in politics is inertia. For some, incremental change can be problematic. In bioethics, some people have argued that an

improvement to what they regard as bad legislation is unethical, as the harm, although diminished, still exists. Not only do I disagree with this attitude, it is usually self-defeating, as change usually is only achieved incrementally.

If Christians wish to achieve outcomes in the public square, they also need to support those public officials who stand up for Christian values. In a world of political spin, it is easy to claim Christian values. The test of whether a person supports Christian principles is how they vote.

Politicians who have had the courage to voice the concerns of Christians in the public square require practical support, such as joining a political party and/or assisting with campaigns, to take a topical example. Most candidates for office struggle to find enough people to do simple things like hand out “How to vote” cards on polling day. Practical assistance for the politicians you support is affirming, encouraging and necessary.

**Conclusion**

Christians need to have a voice in the public square if Christian values are to be reflected in the policies of elected governments. This requires a clear vision, a plan of action, commitment, organisation, perseverance, and collaboration. It requires engagement with the political system. Most of all, it requires a belief that our way of life and our society has been enhanced by Christianity and will continue to be so in the future. 

*A tradition of Christian Care & Concern*

Our professional staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support you during this difficult time in your life. We will listen to your needs – and guide you through.

- Serving all of Sydney
- Compassion & Understanding
- Australian Owned
- Pre-paid Funerals available




**Christian Funerals of Sydney**

Member of the Funeral Directors Association of NSW

**24 Hour Care Line 8883 4561**

In association with Hill's Family Funerals [www.christianfuneralsofsydney.com.au](http://www.christianfuneralsofsydney.com.au)



**The Hon Kevin Andrews** is the Federal Member for Menzies in Victoria. He was Minister for Immigration and Citizenship in the Howard government, as well as the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. He practiced previously as a barrister and maintains a keen interest in bioethics.

**CHRISTIAN SINGLES**

*Any nice singles can join!*

Send for **FREE** colour brochure:  
 PO Box 122 WALLSEND 2287  
 Ph/Fax: 02 4955 5445  
[www.christiansingles.com.au](http://www.christiansingles.com.au)

# Good citizens

THE CITY'S PEACE AND PROSPERITY IS OUR BUSINESS.

**Mark Powell**

**E**arly Christians exercised an enormous influence for good within the societies in which they found themselves. For instance, Rodney Stark, an American sociologist of religion, writes that “Christianity served as a revitalisation movement that arose in response to the misery, chaos, fear, and brutality of life in the urban Greco-Roman world... Christianity revitalised life in... cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments... To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective... services.”

Of course, while it is true that Christianity in its purer forms generally ameliorates social conditions, Christians always face a struggle in their engagement with society. There is a consistent tension that every Christian faces, and that is to be *in* the world but not *of* it (1 John 2:15).

**T**his is beautifully expressed by an anonymous second-century Christian in *The Epistle to Diognetus*: “They reside in their respective countries, but only as aliens, they take part in everything as citizens and put up with everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their home and every home a foreign land. They find themselves in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh.”

This letter provides us with an excellent paradigm for how we are to understand our responsibilities in this present world as disciples of Jesus. While Christians have experienced the



**WE HAVE TOO NARROWLY  
DEFINED WHAT IS MEANT BY  
A ‘GOOD WORK’,  
NARROWING IT DOWN  
ALMOST ENTIRELY TO THAT  
OF PREACHING AND  
EVANGELISM.**

power of the age to come, they have not yet arrived in the Promised Land; rather, they live as exiles in a foreign land (1 Pet. 2:11). Christians are a dislocated people who long for an “Eternal City” located in the new heavens and earth (Heb. 13:14).

Since this is so, passages such as Jeremiah 29:6-7 take on special relevance and significance. Here Jeremiah urges the Jewish exiles in Babylon to “build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

What is particularly striking about these instructions is that they urge God’s covenant people to seek the good of a pagan city. Tim Keller, in his recently produced course, *Gospel in Life*, has a helpful commentary on this passage. He says that, on the one hand, the Babylonians had an “assimilation policy” where the people were to move

into the city so that they would lose their distinctiveness and identity. On the other hand, false prophets like Hananiah tried to persuade the people to remain apart from the city in order to keep their spiritual identity and purity. However, the Lord commanded the prophet Jeremiah to urge the Jews to live in the city without abandoning their identity. Keller says, “In fact, God calls them to move in and serve the city *out* of their unique spiritual identity.” In terms of practical application, there are several lessons for us to learn through their example.

**F**irst, life this side of heaven means being involved in a variety of lawful occupations within our communities. Christians are not meant to be an exclusive sect within our communities. We are to live in our communities, shoulder-to-shoulder with our neighbours, and participate in the normal social networks.

Second, we are to seek the welfare of our communities and strive to ensure their prosperity and well-being. This is a call for Christians to be responsible citizens who are known for their unselfish service to the wider society. Christians should be glad to assist in their local neighbourhoods through volunteer services and by involvement in community projects.

What’s more, rather than being a distraction or “necessary evil”, work itself is a spiritual duty and act of worship (Gen. 2:15; Eph. 6:5-7; Col. 3:22-24 and especially 2 Thess. 3:6-15). This was the great insight of the Protestant Reformation. The reformers believed that there was to be no divide between the “sacred” and the “secular”, but that all work was to be done to the glory of God, whether it was performed by the monk or the milk maid (to use Luther’s expression).

Further, this mandate extends to the relational dimensions of life as well, such

as marriage and the procreation of children. It might sound obvious but these are both good and godly things to pursue (1 Tim. 4:1-4; 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 2:15). There is a growing tendency within society and even in the church to see children as a burden rather than a blessing. This is particularly evident in the declining birth rate where even Christian “warriors” have settled to go into battle with fewer “arrows in their quivers” than they might have decided to have in the not-too-distant past (See Psalm 127:3-5).

**F**inally, the believers living in exile are told by God’s prophet to “seek the peace and prosperity of the city” and especially “to pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers then you too will prosper”.

It is this particular aspect that is picked up by the apostle Paul in his instructions to his young apprentice Timothy: “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

What is particularly striking here is Paul’s instruction that we are to pray first and foremost for the governing bodies which have been placed in authority over us. Interestingly, Paul makes no distinction between authorities who may be Christian and others who are not, nor does he discriminate between those who are friendly and those who may be hostile.

What is noteworthy in both Jeremiah 29 and 1 Timothy 2 is that this is said to result in the peace and prosperity of the city in which we live, with the apostle Paul linking it directly to the salvation of the unbelieving people around us.

In view of this emphasis in both the Old and New Testaments, it is worthwhile asking the question, “Is prayer for the welfare of our communities a consistent priority in our churches? What’s more, is it common place in our own personal prayers to God? I suspect that many Christians have lost this focus when it comes to praying for our leaders. In fact, “knocking down the tall poppy” seems to be one of our worst cultural traits!

I wonder if a large part of our problem in this regard is that we don’t

really believe that our prayers have any direct and tangible influence over our leaders and their work of policy development and administrative action. A passage such as Proverbs 21:1 provides great encouragement for us at this point: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases.”

In the other major passage within the New Testament which addresses this particular topic (Romans 13:1-7), we are exhorted to do exactly the same type of things but with more detailed application. Paul instructs believers to



**WE NEED MEN LIKE DANIEL  
AND WOMEN LIKE ESTHER  
WHO WILL BEAR WITNESS TO  
THE LIVING GOD AND BRING  
INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON  
OUR COUNTRY.**

*submit* to whatever governing authority we have over us because it has been established by God. To rebel against this authority is to rebel against something that the Lord Himself has instituted. As such, the government is God’s *servant* to do us good if we obey, and to punish us if we do not (see chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession). Practically speaking, this means that we are to pay our taxes, give revenue, offer respect and treat rulers with honor.

All of this is really only a brief sketch of the relationship that a Christian disciple should have to the State. Bruce Winter’s *Seek the Welfare of the City* is a very helpful book which provides illuminating insights into Paul’s comments about the common Christian mindset towards pagan society and its rulers. In particular he argues that there was a pervasive “civic mindedness” amongst the members of the early church.

One of the most helpful examples that he adduces from Paul’s writings is that of Erastus. In Romans 16:23b we are told that he “is the city’s director of public works”. Winter explains that this

was the ancient honorary office of the *aedile*. He outlines the responsibilities involved with this office as well as the legitimate public prestige that was associated with it.

What is surprising, though, is that this same figure is mentioned in Acts 19:22 as well as 2 Timothy 4:20. Winter explains the implication as follows: “Erastus was a Christian of substantial financial means, active in two spheres. After he ‘ministered to Paul’ in Ephesus as part of the apostolic team he was sent into Macedonia to the churches. He subsequently engaged in civic duties in Corinth ... If this is correct, then there was no dichotomy in the thinking of the early church between the gospel/church ministry and seeking the welfare of the city of Corinth as benefactors.”

In this regard we are reminded of the ministry of men such as William Wilberforce, Abraham Kuyper and our own John Dunmore Lang. These were all men of vision and extensive social action as well as being committed to political involvement. Under God’s good hand they also brought about much needed change and developed administrative structures that aided the good governance of their societies.

**T**he problem today is that we have too narrowly defined what is meant by a “good work”, narrowing it down almost entirely to that of preaching and evangelism. Indeed, there is almost a “dualism” operating – if not theologically in our thinking, then definitely in the outworking of our practice – that involvement in the public life of our society is at odds with the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4). Surely though, the responsibility to “prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph. 4:12) is larger than just these two things. Our good works should, and indeed must, also overflow into the public sphere.

We need men like Daniel and women like Esther who will bear witness to the living God and bring godly influence to bear on the political and social life of our country. It is only when we do this that our society may experience the “peace and prosperity” through which men will be saved and the name of the Lord might be truly glorified. 



**Mark Powell** is one of the ministers of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Burwood, Sydney.

# Back to basics

20 DAILY BIBLE STUDIES IN 1 PETER

Our society seems to be moving further and further away from God's Word. Human wisdom is becoming more and more the basis for the way we relate and function with each other – and that means wisdom that puts “self” at the centre. My moral standards, my definition of marriage, my business ethics, my understanding of family dynamics, the way I use my resources of time and money, etc, are determined by my needs, what works for me. In fact, we are becoming more like the society in which the early Church found itself. To the majority of people in our society, Biblical morality and ethics are as foreign as they were in the ancient Roman Empire. This trend became even more obvious in the changing voting pattern at our recent federal election.

God's Word changed first century society through the faithful witness of the followers of Jesus. But this change was not brought about by comfortable armchair theorising. It was brought about through rejection, suffering and persecution, through Jesus' followers living out the teaching and example of their Master. The apostle Peter had observed first hand how his Lord had ushered in the Kingdom of God, the only way human society can really work because it follows the Maker's instructions. It was not through political power or military might; it was through rejection, suffering and death – through appearing to let injustice get the upper hand.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter wrote this letter to soldiers at the front line of the battle for the Kingdom of God. That's where we are today. God can change our society, but it won't be without cost to us. We will find many things unpalatable, unfair. We won't want to go down that path. But Peter reminds us that it is the path Jesus took, and he is calling us to follow.



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

**DAY 1**

***Aliens in the world; known to God***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 1:1-2**

**THE POINT** In addressing his readers Peter reminds them that they belong to the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that everything that is happening to them is in His hands for their ultimate good.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- As an apostle “sent out” by Jesus, the Messiah, Peter wrote with authority to the Church scattered through west Asia (Turkey).
- Peter reminds us that we belong to God because of His electing grace, not as a result of the exercise of our own “free” decision.
- Because God is sovereign and eternal, His “foreknowledge” must be active not passive, and therefore be an integral part of

His “electing”. The Arminian view that God “chooses” us because He knows beforehand that we will first choose Him does not do justice to the sense of the whole text (cf also Romans 8:28-29).

- In the original, “chosen” in v.2 is attached to “strangers” in v.1, so that the Father’s foreknowledge and the Spirit’s sanctifying work refer to the “scattering”. Our struggles are within God’s sovereign plan, and are intended for making us more like Jesus!
- God’s purpose is for us to live our whole lives in obedience to Jesus who shed His own blood to save us and purify us from sin.

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- How can these verses help when you doubt God’s providence?

**DAY 2**

***Rejoicing in hope?***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 1:3-9**

**THE POINT** Peter encourages us to look at our present sufferings in the light of the bigger picture of God’s saving grace. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the reality and certainty of heaven are the things that matter most, and it is in this now “invisible” context we will see the true and lasting value of God’s refining process. The fact that we have been “born again” is cause for great joy.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Reflecting on all our merciful God has done fills us with praise and joy: the gift of being born again; having a hope that is always alive, fresh and growing because Jesus has conquered death; being sure of heaven for all eternity; knowing that, by

trusting in Jesus, His power will keep us safe until He returns (3-6a).

- Suffering grief and trials should move us to rejoice because it is through these that our faith is proved genuine and durable (even more so than the refining of gold!); this will bring praise, glory and honour to Jesus when He comes again, as He surely will (6-7).
- We put our trust in Jesus in order to have the hope of eternal salvation; we love Him because He died in our place; the fact that we can’t see Him in no way diminishes our great joy (8-9).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- How does the reality of your faith stand up under trial?

**DAY 3**

***More privileged than angels***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 1:10-12**

**THE POINT** The glorious salvation we experience through faith in Christ is not just a New Testament concept: the Old Testament prophets had been inspired by the Holy Spirit, ie the Spirit of the pre-incarnate Christ, to anticipate the death and resurrection of the promised Messiah. But they knew they could only ever look forward to the future coming of this reality, and therefore knew that those who would actually experience it were in a far more privileged position than they, and even than angels. Peter was keen that his suffering readers would realise this and so be greatly encouraged in the midst of all their difficult trials.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- The one thing that marked off the Old Testament “prophets” was their preoccupation with God’s promised gracious provision of a suffering Saviour to be the Messiah King (cf Genesis 22:8 and John 8:56; Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Hebrews 11:39-40). They knew what they could see was but a faint shadow of the future event.
- The preaching of the early apostles (including Peter himself) was connected to, and in full harmony with, God’s revelation of His Plan of Salvation in the Old Testament Scriptures.

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- What do we lose if we ignore the OT’s testimony about Christ?

**DAY 4**

***So be holy in all you do...***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 1:13-16**

**THE POINT** The Church today needs to be stirred from its lethargy and from its preoccupation with being relevant to the point that it seems no longer to challenge the ungodliness of society. We must stop and think seriously about what it means to be God’s people.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Peter points out that Christianity is neither mindless (observing rituals mechanically) nor academic (ideas without application) but involves us in thoughtful action. Our attitude to all of life should be as a person gathering up his loose clothing so that he can be more disciplined and efficient as he goes about his tasks. There’s no place for sloppy thinking in the

Christian race! (13).

- We should always bear in mind what will happen as we stand before God on the day when Jesus returns. The thought of being a trophy of His grace should spur us on to greater effort (13).
- God’s holiness sets Him apart from sinful man. Holiness carries with it the idea of separateness, “otherness”. When He calls on His chosen people to “Be holy as I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44-45) God is emphasising the difference between us and the world from which He has redeemed us, to obey Him as little children (14-16).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- What part of your thinking needs to be streamlined for action?

# Come worship with us!

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

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### DARWIN

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

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### CANBERRA, BELCONNEN

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

### CANBERRA, FORREST (St Andrew's)

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

### CANBERRA, TUGGERANONG

Isabella Plains Primary School, cnr  
Ellerstone Ave & Noorooma St, Isabella  
Plains. Worship Service & Sunday School  
10.00am. Evening service 6.15pm (light  
meal @5:45pm).  
Mike Pittman (02) 6292 6772.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### ANNANDALE-LEICHHARDT

Hunter Baillie, Johnston & Collins Sts.  
10.00am (6.30pm 1st Sunday only.)  
Rev. Peter Dunstan (02) 9810 7869

### ARMIDALE (St. Paul's)

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

### ASHFIELD

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

### BEACON HILL (St Andrew's)

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

### BEECROFT

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

### BEGA — EDEN

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

### BONDI

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

### BONNYRIGG

Western Regions Chinese Church

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

S.Clerk: Stanley Chen (02) 9753 2073

### BOWRAL

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

### BURWOOD (St. James)

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

### BURWOOD CHINESE

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

### CAMPBELLTOWN

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

### CARINGBAH

393 Port Hacking Rd. South. 9.30am & 6.30pm.  
Rev. Darren Middleton (02) 9540 4469.

### CASTLE HILL

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

### CHATSWOOD

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

### CHERRYBROOK

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

### CHINESE CHURCH

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

### COFFS HARBOUR

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

Rev. Jamie K. Newans (02) 6652 3183

### CORNERSTONE

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

### COWRA

46 Macquarie St. Also Gooloogong, Morongla.  
Rev. David Stone Ph (02) 6341 2991.

### CRONULLA

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

### EAST MAITLAND

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

### EPPING

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

### FORSTER/TUNCURRY

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

### GLEN INNES

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

### GOULBURN (St Andrews)

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

### GOSFORD

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

### GRANVILLE/MERRYLANDS

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

### GRIFFITH

Opp. Collina Oval, Blumer Ave. 9.30 am.  
Rev. Peter Gobbo (02) 6962 4827.  
Dr L. Thorpe (02) 6962 1934

### HURSTVILLE

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

### KIRKPLACE

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

### KOREAN, SYDNEY (Young Nak)

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

### MAROUBRA

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

### MITTAGONG

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

### MOREE (St Andrew's)

Cnr Albert & Auburn Sts, 10.00am.

Tel. (02) 6752 1083

**MORUYA**

31 Evans St. 9.00am.  
Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

**MOSMAN (Scots Kirk)**

Belmont Rd. (nr Military Rd), 9.00am.  
Rev. Adrian de Graaf (02) 9969 6101.

**MOSS VALE**

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

**NAROOMA**

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

**NEWCASTLE (St Andrews)**

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

**NEWCASTLE EAST (St. Philip's)**

48 Watt St., 10.00am. Surfside: 7.00pm.  
Stockton: 10.30am Wednesday.  
Rev. John Macintyre (02) 4929 2379.  
Asst: Rev. Jon Nuttall (02) 4928 3410.

**NORTH SYDNEY-GREENWICH**

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

**Greenwich:** (Taylor Memorial)

86A Greenwich Rd. 10.00am.  
Rev. Dr Paul Logan (02) 9955 1662.

Rev. Dr Stephen Pym (02) 9460 9637.

**ORANGE (St James)**

Cnr Anson St. & Matthews Ave. 10.00am.  
Rev. Robert McKean (02) 6362 6304

**PARKES/FORBES/PEAK HILL**

Parkes: S. School 10.00am; Service 11.00am.  
Forbes: 9.00am. Peak Hill: 9.00am 1st  
Sunday. Rev. Craig Bland (02) 6862 2730

**PENRITH (St Andrew's)**

Doonmore St. near High St, 9.00am, 10.30am  
& 7.00pm.

Rev. William Morrow (02) 4721 2440.

**PORT MACQUARIE (St Andrew's)**

Cnr William/Munster Sts, 9.00am., 10.30am  
Rev. S Donnellan (02) 6582 2505

**RANDWICK**

Alison Rd. & Cook St. 10.00am. & 5.00pm.  
Rev. Grant Thorpe (02) 9399 3183.

**REVESBY**

Cnr Tower St & Eastern Avenue,  
Service: 9.00am & 6.30pm.  
Rev. Dr Peter Barnes (02) 9774 5740.

**ROSE BAY (St Andrew's)**

Cnr Dover Rd & Carlisle St.  
Service times: 10.00am & 6.00pm.  
Rev. Rod Mallison (02) 9388 1206(O).

**SOUTHERN CROSS**

Park Ave. East Lismore

**SPRINGWOOD**

160 Macquarie Rd. 10.30am. & 6.00pm.  
Winmalee : 481 Hawkesbury Rd. 9.00am.  
A. Min. Mark Armstrong (02) 4751 1188  
(O). Rev. Keith Walker (02) 4751 1188 (O).

**SUTHERLAND**

Cnr Flora & Glencoe Sts. 9.30am & 5.30pm  
Rev. Andrew Clausen (02) 9521 2361

**SYDNEY (Scots Church)**

44 Margaret St. Sydney. Sun: 10.30 am.  
Wed: 1.15pm. Rev. Adrian Van Ash  
(02) 9299 7490 (O) (02) 9817 0587 (H).

**TAMWORTH (St Stephen's)**

Cnr Matthews & Crown St. 9.00am & 6.30pm. Moonbi 9.00am.  
Rev. Stuart Andrews (02) 6765 8754.  
Tamworth Community Presb Church,  
St Stephens, Cnr Matthews & Crown St.

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

**TAREE**

Albert St. 9.00am.  
Rev. Paul Harris (02) 6552 1082(O).

**TERRIGAL (Scots Kirk)**

2 Willoughby Rd. 9.00am.  
Rev. Glenn Samuel (02) 4385 2240

**TOUKLEY**

Cnr Hargreaves St and Victoria Ave.  
9.30am Morning Worship  
6.00pm 2nd Sunday Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec.  
Rev. Rex Swavley (02) 4392 9904.

**TUROSS HEAD**

277 Hector McWilliam Dr. 9.00am.  
Rev. Peter Pallett (02) 4474 2186.

**WAHROONGA**

Wahroonga Presbyterian Church,  
Cnr. Illoura Ave. & Stuart St. 9.30am.  
Rev. David Yu (02) 9489 3302.

**WAGGA WAGGA SOUTH**

60-62 Coleman St. Turvey Park  
9.00am & 10.30am.  
Rev. Sandy McMillan (02) 6925 1228.

**WEE WAA**

Mitchell St. (02) 6795 4259

**WENTWORTH FALLS (St Andrew's)**

Falls Rd. 9.00 am.  
Session Clerk: Mr J. Grant (02) 4759 1998

**WENTWORTHVILLE (St Andrew's)**

7 McKern St. 9.00am & 5.00pm.  
Rev. Luke Tattersall (02) 9863 8366.

**WEST WYALONG** (Home Mission Station)

Pioneer Memorial, Court St. 10.30am.  
**Barmedman:** 1st & 3rd Sunday. 9.00am.

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

Last Sunday 7.00pm. Contact Mrs Helen C.  
Husking, Session Clerk (02) 6972 2143.

**WOLLONGONG (St Andrew's)**

Cnr Kembla & Burelli Sts. 9.45am & 6.00pm.  
Rev. Granville Pillar (02) 4226 1725(O).

**WOONONA**

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

**WOY WOY**

118-120 Blackwall Rd. 9.00 & 10.30 am.  
Rev. K. Rathbone (02) 4342 2856.

**VICTORIA**

**ARARAT**

330 Barkly St (Cnr Albert St). 10.00am.  
Rev. Ian Hutton (03) 5352 4054

**ASHBURTON**

Junction of High St. and High Street Rd.  
near Warrigal Rd. 10.15am.  
Rev. Peter Orchard (03) 9889 6034.

**ASPENDALE**

Cnr Station St. & Lyle Grv. 9.00am. &  
6.00pm. Rev. John Dekker (03) 9587 0661.

**AUBURN**

Cnr Rathmines & Station Sts Hawthorn East  
10.00 am. Rev. Trevor Cox (03) 9882 5256

**BAIRNSDALE**

159 Nicholson St. 10.00am.  
1st of Month 5.00pm. S/school 9.00 am.  
Rev. Gary Stephens (03) 5153 1669

**BALACLAVA**

106 Hotham St. & Denman Ave. 9.30am.  
Rev. Bob Thomas 0417 592 646.

**BENDIGO (St John's)**

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

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

**BLACKBURN**

53 Gardenia St. 11.00am.  
Rev. P Locke (03) 9725 6417

**BRIMBANK**

Sydenham Community Centre  
Cnr, The Community Hub & Overton Lea  
Blvd, 10.00am each Sunday.  
Rev. Peter Owen (03) 9307 6583.

**BUNDOORA**

Bundoora Hall, Noorong Ave. 10.00am &  
6.00pm. Office: Mrs M. Goodson (03) 9457  
4962. www.bpc.org.au

**BURWOOD**

(Chinese Presbyterian Church) 11.00am.  
Cnr. Greenwood & Tennyson Sts.  
Rev. Dr John Elnatan (03) 9801 7645.

**CAMBERWELL- Trinity**

cnr Riversdale & Waterloo Sts. 10.00am.  
Rev. Philip Mercer (03) 9882 8102

**CAMPERDOWN-TERANG**

Terang: 155 High St.  
Camperdown: Cnr Campbell & Brooke Sts.  
Session Clerk: T. Fleming (03) 5594 8231.

**CANTERBURY**

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am. & 7 pm.  
Rev. Grant Lawry (03) 9836 4601.

**CANTERBURY JAPANESE**

146 Canterbury Rd. 10.30am  
Rev. Shojo Tsuchihira (03) 9511 0421.

**CAULFIELD-ELWOOD**

Caulfield: Neerim/Bambra Rds. 11.15am.  
Elwood: Scott/Tennyson Sts. 9.15am.  
Rev. Phillip Chang (03) 9505 3013.

**CHELTENHAM Pioneers' Presbyterian**

8 Park Rd. Cnr. Charman Rd. 9.30am.  
Rev. David Brown (03) 9583 2785.

**CLIFTON HILL**

Cnr Michael & McKean Sts North Fitzroy.  
10.45 am. Rev. Peter Phillips (03) 9346 8044.

**COLAC (Scots)**

90-94 Armstrong Street. 10.00am.  
Rev. Marvin Hagans H: (03) 5250 4360  
O: (03) 5231 2398

**CRANBOURNE/LYNDHURST**

**Cranbourne:** Cnr Russel & Sladen Sts  
10.00am weekly.

**Lyndhurst:** 214 Westernport Hwy (entry  
frm Pyramid Pl) 2.00pm 2nd & 4th Sunday of  
Mth. Mod: Rev. Bill Medley (03) 9786 2976.

**CROYDON HILLS**

Maroondah Community Centre, Brentnall  
Rd, Croydon (next to Maroondah Secondary  
College). 10.00am.  
Rev. Matt James (03) 9725 5370.

**DANDENONG**

51 Potter St. 10.00am.  
Rev. John Rickard (03) 9792 4252.

**DONVALE**

Cnr Springvale Rd & McGowan St Donvale.  
8.30am, 10.30am & 6.30pm. Rev. Gerald  
Vanderwert (03) 9842 9493. (03) 9841 7020 (O)

**DROMANA-MORNINGTON**

St Andrew's, Gibson St. 9.00am.  
Mornington (The Chapel) Cnr Strachans Rd.  
& Nepean Hwy. 11.00am.  
Rev. Dr Michael Wishart (03) 5975 9514.

**DROUIN**

Church St. 9am. 10.30am. 7.00pm.  
Rev. Mark Smith (03) 5625 4112.

**ELTHAM**

23 Batman Rd. 10.00 am  
Rev. Don Elliott (03) 9439 9720

**ESSENDON**

Cnr Wilson & McPherson Sts. 9.15am & 7.00pm. Rev. Peter Phillips (03) 9346 8044.

**FLEMINGTON**

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

**FRANKSTON**

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

**GEELONG (St. George's)**

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

**GEELONG NORTH**

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

**GEELONG WEST (Scots)**

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

**GISBORNE (St Andrew's)**

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

**HAMILTON**

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

**HAWTHORN**

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

**HEATHMONT**

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

**HORSHAM**

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

**KANGAROO GROUND**

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

**KOREAN MELBOURNE**

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

**LEONGATHA**

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

**MALVERN**

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

**MELBOURNE**

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

**MELTON**

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

**MOE — YARRAM**

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

**NOORAT**

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

**NUMURKAH**

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

**Yarram:** Cnr Dougherty & Montgomery Sts. 2.00pm.

**RESERVOIR (St. Andrews)**

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

**ROCHESTER**

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

**ST KILDA**

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

**SHEPPARTON**

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

**SOMERVILLE**

Cnr Jones Rd. & Park Lane.

**SORRENTO-RYE**

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

**SOUTH YARRA**

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

**SUNSHINE**

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

**SURREY HILLS (St Stephen's)**

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

**Deaf Presbyterian Church**

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

**WANGARATTA – REGIONAL PARISH**

**Wangaratta**, 158 Rowan St. 11.00am & 5.00pm (9.00am 1st Sunday)  
**Yarrowonga**, 47 Orr St. 8.45am (11.00am 1st Sunday). **Myrtleford**, 78 Standish St. 7.00pm (5.00pm June, July, August).

**WARBURTON**

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

**WARRNAMBOOL (St John's)**

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

South Warrnambool: MacDonald St. 9.15am.

Woodford: Mill St. 11.00 am.  
Rev. Ben Johnson (03) 5562 2029.

**WEST FOOTSCRAY**

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

**WILLIAMSTOWN (St Andrew's)**

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

**WOORI YALLOCK**

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

**WYNDHAM**

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

**QUEENSLAND**

**ACACIA RIDGE**

Cnr Mortiner & Beaudesert Rds. 9:00am & 6:00pm. Rev. Daniel Bigg,

(07) 3277 0010 (O), (07) 3711 5410 (H).

**ASCOT**

68 Charlton St. (Near Airport).  
Nundah: 14 Rode Rd  
Rev. Guido Kettmiss (07) 3216 4151.  
Asst. Rev. Teddy Woo (07) 3865 4185

**ATHERTON (Tablelands)**

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

**BALD HILLS**

58 Strathpine Rd. 8.30am. & 7.00pm.  
Rev. Peter Bloomfield (07) 3261 4305.

**BRISBANE KOREAN**

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

**BRISBANE (St Paul's)**

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

**BUNDABERG**

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

**CABOOLTURE**

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

**CAIRNS**

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

**CALLIDE VALLEY**

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

**CHARLEVILLE/BLACKALL**

78 Galatea St. 9.00am.

**CLAYFIELD (Scots Memorial)**

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

**COORPAROO**

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

**CREEK ROAD**

Presbyterian Ministry Centre. 1541 Creek Rd (cnr Fursden Rd). Carina 8.30am, 10.30am & 6.30pm. Centre: (07) 3398 4333. Asst. Rev. Jens Norved (07) 3396 1185. Japanese Service 1.30pm. Des Soares (07) 3892 5912.

**DECEPTION BAY-BURPENGARY**

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

**GLADSTONE (St Andrew's)**

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

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

**GOLD COAST (I)**

Arundel: 132 Allied Drive 9.00am & 10.45am. (07) 5571 5676.  
www.arundel.org.au  
Robina: Cnr University & Cottesloe Drives 10.00am & 6.30pm.

Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416

**GOLD COAST (II)**

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

Rev. Ray Evans (07) 5573 1458.

**GOLD COAST (III)**

Christ Church: Currumbin Primary School, Phillip Street, Currumbin – 9.30am.

Rev. Alan Radloff (07) 5530 5758.

**HELENSVALE (Northlinks)**

1 Shepparton Road – 9.30am.

Rev. John Evans (07) 5580 1367.

**HERVEY BAY**

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

**ITHACA**

100 Enogerra Tce, Paddington.

Service: 9.30 am. 6.30pm.

Rev. Robert Herrgott (07) 3300 6158.

**IPSWICH**

Cnr Limestone & Gordon Sts. 9.30am,

10.00am & 6.30pm.

Forest Hill: Church St, 9.00am. Office:

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

**MACKAY**

Cnr Harvey St. & Evans Ave. Nth Mackay.

8.30am & 6pm each Sunday.

**Sarina:** Sarina Beach Rd. 10.30am each

Sunday; Ph. (07) 4957 2835.

**MARANOVA**

**Roma:** Queen Street 9.00am.

**MAROOCHYDORE**

45 Okinja Road Alexandra Headland 9.00am

& 7.00pm. Church Office (07) 5443 7073.

**MARYBOROUGH**

523 Alice Street. 9.00am (& 5.00pm first

Sunday). Pastor John Vanderwal.

**MILES**

Cnr Warrego and Leichhardt Highways

9.00am. Rev. Walter Jones (07) 4627 1180.

**MONTO**

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

Sunday). Kalpowar: 5.30pm.

Pastor Elton Wiltshire (07) 4166 1441.

**NORTH PINE**

57 Old Dayboro Rd. Petrie. 9.00am &

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

**REDCLIFFE PENINSULA**

WoodyPoint, Cnr. Ellen & Hawthorne Sts.

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

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

**ROBINA**

Cnr Cottesloe & University Drs.

Rev. Kevin Ridley (07) 5571 1416.

**ROCKHAMPTON (Fitzroy)**

**St. Stevens** – Burnett St. 8.30am & 6.30pm

**John Knox** – Rundle St. 10.00 am.

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

(07) 4922 1540 (A/H).

**SANDGATE**

Loudon St. 9.00am & 6.00pm.

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

**SPRINGSURE**

Charles St. 9.00am. **Emerald:** Cnr Ruby &

Egerton Sts., 11.00am. Mr Mervyn Blake

Phone (07) 4984 1550.

**THE GAP**

The Gap High School Auditorium

1048 Waterworks Rd, 9.30am.

Rev. Chris Perona (07) 3300 2987

**TOOWOOMBA NORTH (St David's)**

Mary St. Also at **Geham.**

Rev. Andrew Clarke (07) 4632 8027.

**TOOWOOMBA SOUTH (St John's)**

Cnr Cranley & Geddes Sts. 9:30am, 6pm.

Rev. Graeme McKay (07) 4635 4560

Murphy's Creek, Thor St 9:30am.

Westbrook, Westbrook Hall, Main St. 9am.

**TOWNSVILLE (Willows)**

26 Carthew St. Kirwan 8.30am, 11.00am &

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

**TOWNSVILLE (St Andrew's)**

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

Rev. Peter Barber (07) 4771 2460.

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

**WEST TOOWOOMBA**

Cnr Greenwattle & South Sts. 7.45am,

9.30am & 5.45pm. Rev. Esa Hukkinen

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

**WINDSOR**

60 Maygar St. 8.30am.

**Wilston:** 28 Macgregor St. 9.45am.

Rev. Stuart Atkinson (07) 3356 4124.

**PORT AUGUSTA**

Jervois St. 10.00 am.

Barry Rossiter (08) 8642 2059.

**SEACLIFF**

Kauri Pde. Seacliff. 9.30am.

Rev. S. Slucki (08) 8296 1581.

**WHYALLA**

28 Ramsay St. 10.00 am. S/Clerk

H. Mashford (08) 8645 0818.

**TASMANIA**

**CORNERSTONE (Hobart) 10.00am.**

"The Philip Smith Centre", 2 Edward St,

Glebe. 5pm "Night Church" @ "The Cupping

Room", 105 Murray St.

Rev. Campbell Markham (03) 6234 4719.

**CROSSROADS 5.30pm.**

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

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

**DEVONPORT (St Columba's)**

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

2.00pm (1st & 3rd Sundays).

Rev. Steve Warwick (03) 6424 6066

**HOBART (St John's)**

10.00am & 6.30pm. 188 Macquarie St.

(03) 6223 7213.

Rev. Robert White (03) 6229 7657

Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

**LAUNCESTON (St Andrew's)**

Civic Square. 10.00 am & 5.00 pm.

Church Office: (03) 6331 5412

Rev. Peter Thorneycroft 0438 315 412

**MONTROSE**

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

Mod. Rev. Rod Waterhouse 0438 555 983.

**MOUNT STUART**

10am "The Community Hall", Byard St.

Rev. David Jones (03) 6223 4701.

**RIVERSIDE**

Eden St. 10.45am. Glengarry: 9.15am.

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

Sunday. Rev. Norman Shellard (03) 6327 2967

**ROKEBY**

Presby. Community Church, Tollard 9.30am &

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

**SCOTTSDALE**

George St. 11.00am. Bridport: Westwood St.

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

**STANLEY (St James)**

Fletcher St. 10.30am.

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

**ULVERSTONE (St Andrew's)**

65 Main Rd. 10.00am.

Rev. Charlie Kennedy 0400 228 241.

**WEST TAMAR (Auld Kirk)**

50 Auld Kirk Road Sidmouth 10.00am.

Caveside Road Mole Creek 2.00pm.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**BASSEDEAN**

14-16 Broadway. 9.30am.

Rev. Ross Fraser (08) 9248 3252.

**BICTON**

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

**FREMANTLE (Scots)**

90 South Tce. Worship & Sunday School

10.00am & 5.00pm. Rev. Stuart Bonnington

Word on Wednesday 12.30pm

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

**MANDURAH**

Cnr Sutton and Gibson St 10:00am

Rev. Paul Bloomfield (08) 9319 0706.

**WEST LEEDERVILLE (Henderson Memorial)**

Cnr Kimberly & Ruislip Sts. 10.30am.

English & Japanese Service 1.00pm.

Rev. Steve Young (08) 9448 8755.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**ADELAIDE (St Andrew's)**

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

Rev. Chris ten Broeke.

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

**ELIZABETH**

106 Goodman Rd, Elizabeth South. 9.30am.

Rev. Kevin Stow (08) 8284 1719. Session

Clerk: Mr Bob Arstall (08) 8825 5226.

**LARGS NORTH**

Brenda Terrace. 11.00am.

Pastor Raymond Brewer (08) 8263 9692.

**MILLICENT**

Cnr Fifth & Sixth Sts. 10.30 am.

Also **Renderlsham**

**MT BARKER**

36 Hutchison St. 10.00 am.

Pastor Robert Finster (08) 8391 2270.

**MT GAMBIER**

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

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

**NARACOORTE**

Church St. 10.00am.

**NORWOOD (St Giles)**

79 The Parade. 9.15am & 7.00pm.

Session Clerk Tom Morgan (08) 8331

3499.

**PARA HILLS**

174 Maxwell Rd. 10.15am & 5.00pm. Rev.

Damien Carson (08) 8264 4607 (Office)

(08) 8262 7680 (Home)

**PENOLA**

Portland St. 9.30am.

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

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

*The Annual Fees are:*

*Congregations under 50 \$45.00 plus GST*

*Congregations 51 -99 \$55.00 plus GST*

*Congregations 100 or more \$65.00 plus GST*

DAY 5

... For you were redeemed...

THE PASSAGE

1 PETER 1:17-21

**THE POINT** God's grace is our only hope. Such a truth is built into the very fabric of the Universe God created. But because God's grace is established on the shedding of Christ's precious blood, more precious than gold, we ought to live holy lives, pleasing to Him.

THE PARTICULARS

- Human wisdom without rigorous evaluation can lead to empty, mindless traditionalism, just as had happened to Judaism (18b).
- This produces a bondage from which we need to be released by the payment of a ransom. No human resource can ever pay this ransom, only the sacrifice of Christ, God's perfect Lamb(18-19).

- This was always God's Plan for dealing with sin, even when Creation itself was still an idea on God's drawing board (20).
- Our hope therefore must be in God alone, and we take hold of it by putting our faith in Jesus who died and was raised from the dead and glorified; this is the essence of Christian hope (21).
- All this being so, our life on earth is as aliens, pilgrims on the way to our true home in heaven. Because we will be there with a holy Father (16), we should live out our days here in awe of Him, not presuming on His grace or expecting favouritism (17).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Does the pursuit of holiness deny the need for grace? Why not?

DAY 6

Spiritual progress

THE PASSAGE

1 PETER 1:22-2:3

**THE POINT** The Christian life is a process that balances the encouragement of past progress with the challenge to press forward, the sort of issue Paul is wrestling with in Philippians 3:7-16. We see Peter doing the same here: "Now that you have purified yourselves ... Therefore rid yourselves of ...", and "... you have sincere love ... love one another deeply ...". Behind it all is redeeming grace.

THE PARTICULARS

- To avoid misunderstanding the Gospel it is important to see how the different truths expressed in this passage hold together logically and chronologically:

1. God takes the initiative; we are born again by His "living and enduring word", in spite of our own native frailty; (23-25)
2. like babies at the breast we get a taste for the goodness of this new-found salvation and so desire to feed and grow; (2-3)
3. we have a part to play in this growth by obeying God's truth (his Word), by exercising sincere brotherly love, and by getting rid of our old ways that are part and parcel of an unregenerate heart: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. (22, 1)

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What encouraging spiritual progress have you made lately?
- What challenges do you face in putting off your old nature?

DAY 7

'Third Temple' under construction

THE PASSAGE

1 PETER 2:4-8

**THE POINT** Peter's name meant "rock/stone", and Jesus' pun on this to refer to the solid foundation and permanence of His Church would not have been forgotten by the disciple (Matthew 16:18). Many times in the OT, "rock" is used to pre-figure Christ the Messiah (eg Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16, and see 1 Corinthians 10:4). Peter picks up this theme to inspire the scattered and persecuted Church to recognise who they are in God's sovereign plan.

THE PARTICULARS

- Peter draws the following different inferences from the OT's use of the "rock/stone" imagery:
  - Christ is not a "dead" stone as was used in the old Temple,

but a "living" one; having conquered death, He lives forever. So we are living stones comprising His new "temple". The Church is both the temple itself, and the priesthood that validates it (4f).

– Christ is both the precious cornerstone that governs the shape and position of every other stone, and the capstone in the centre of the arch that holds the whole building together (6f).

– those who should have identified Jesus as the keystone rejected Him and tripped over Him instead – just as God intended (7f).

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- What rough edges need to be removed for you to be a good fit?

DAY 8

The Church a lighthouse

THE PASSAGE

1 PETER 2:9-12

**THE POINT** Peter now changes the imagery slightly from the temple building to the priesthood (he had hinted at this in verse 5) and the nation. The Church, God's elect, redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, is the new Israel, the new Chosen Race, commissioned with the task of proclaiming His praises to a dark and lost world.

THE PARTICULARS

- Peter uses the language of Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 7:6, 10:15, Isaiah 62:12, Hosea 1:9f, 2:23 etc. to confirm that the Church has now replaced Israel, with the implication that all the promised blessings there have also been transferred across to us (9-10).

- God's purpose for His Church is that we should make known to everyone what He has done, bringing us out of the darkness of godless despair to share in His amazing light (9, cf Isaiah 9:2).

- Peter is aware of the bad treatment the followers of Jesus will receive from a world that is opposed to God's rule and His ways, but he urges 2 things on us: (a) not to get caught up in their lust-feeding pursuits that attack man at the very core of his being; and (b) to keep on doing what is right in spite of false accusations so that God will be rightly honoured in times of revival.

TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY

- Is the way we do church today too much like the world's way?

DAY 9

*The Church a saltshaker*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 2:13-17**

**THE POINT** The Church must function as salt as well as light (cf yesterday). God's people must do all they can to make human society function as God intended it to, to preserve it and bring out the best in it as salt does to food. It is interesting that Peter is writing this in the time of Nero, at whose hand he himself would die. It is also interesting that Peter himself had defied the authorities for the sake of the Gospel in Acts 4:18-20! These two realities give us the broad context in which to interpret his exhortation here.

**THE PARTICULARS**

• Peter realises with Paul that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1, KJV). God uses them to carry out His

purposes, mainly to uphold what is right and to punish what is wrong, but also to reinforce the message of the cross and its implication for believers, as we will see later in this letter.

There is no clearer proof of the wisdom of v. 15 than Jesus' own life and passion! God will vindicate good men and expose tyrants.

- It's sad when Christians use "grace" to excuse dodgy behaviour; being God's servant means submitting to all His commands (16).
- The verbs of vs 17 are important: the same one (honour/show respect) applies to king and people alike; a more demanding one (love) to fellow believers; the most demanding (fear) to God!

DAY 10

*The Church a martyr (witness)*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 2:18-21**

**THE POINT** The English word "martyr" comes from the simple Greek word "to bear witness" that doesn't necessarily carry with it the idea of suffering/dying; but for Christians, witnessing has often led to these things. God has established hierarchies for the good ordering of society and family, and as a model of our relationship to Him. The equivalent of slaves/masters in our society would be employees/employers and this is the context in which we should apply this Scripture today. For those who are having a tough time at work (or some other equivalent situation) this is a hard teaching to accept, cutting across everything we believe about justice and fair play. But Peter points us to the example of Jesus, the one

he himself had watched being treated so unfairly – mocked, flogged, insulted, spat on, crucified – all for being good!

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit Peter is telling us to submit to those who have authority over us in our daily grind without appeal to fairness (18). This might be the most effective way we have of being Christ's witness ("martyr") in the workplace (19)! There are no Brownie points for accepting valid penalties (20).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- Is there a case for our being active in seeking justice on behalf of others who are being treated unfairly (see Psalm 82:1-4)?

DAY 11

*The example of the Saviour*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 2:21-25**

**THE POINT** No matter how much we struggle with all the ethical issues that are stirred up in our minds by what Peter is demanding of us, we cannot ignore the example of Jesus, the one who calls on any person who wants to be associated with Him to "deny himself and take up his cross daily (ie in his ordinary, humdrum existence) and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

When we think we've been unjustly treated we can't always claim to be above reproach – but Jesus can. In any situation we haven't received the very worst that men can do – but Jesus has. And He accepted it, leaving the fight for justice in the hands of the One to whom justice belongs. He suffered all this for us; what are we prepared to suffer for Him?

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Jesus' death was substitutionary – He died in our place. But this does not exclude the fact that He also died as an example (21).
- Jesus' secret was His total acceptance of, and unquestioning submission to, everything the Father had sent Him to do (23).
- Jesus was able to die for our sins because He had none of His own (22). His death for us heals us and puts us right with God; we are now able to live in God's way (24) with His help (25).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- Does reflecting on Jesus' suffering help you follow in His steps?

DAY 12

*... but God looks on the heart*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 3:1-7**

**THE POINT** The family is another God-given institution with a prescribed universal authority structure; societies reject it at their peril.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Wives are to recognise that God has designed the family with the husband as the head, just as Christ is the head of the Church (Eph. 5:23). Wives are to accept this God-given authority structure willingly, as employees should in the workplace (1).
- In the light of God's design for the family, "lifestyle evangelism" is one of the most appropriate and effective ways for believing wives to lead their unbelieving husbands to faith in Christ (1).

- Aspects of this approach include: moral purity (2), respect (2), and greater attention to the lasting "inner beauty" of such things as gentleness and quietness than to short-lived external beauty that depends so much on superficial material attachments (3-4).

- Sarah's submission to Abraham as head is a good example (5f).
- Husbands, as the head, are not told to rule but to be tender, considerate and protective. In terms of saving grace, their wives are their equal (cf Gal. 3:28). Nor will God listen to tyrants (7).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- Do women today struggle with vs 1 because men ignore vs 7?

DAY 13

*Why God's way is best*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 3:8-17**

**THE POINT** There is much angst and alienation in our society because we are losing our life skills. Greed and selfishness combined with post-modern rejection of God's truth and moral code leave us on very shaky ground. Peter here gives the Church a strategy for making a difference, for being salt and light in this otherwise doomed situation. It is so radically different from how our society thinks that we will find it neither easy nor natural. It will draw opposition (14), but it will also attract opportune enquiries (15).

**THE PARTICULARS**

• Many of Peter's points here derive from what he heard Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5); he also quotes

Psalm 34:12-16 to make his point, which can be summarised:  
 – seek harmony (8); hold your tongue (10); be a peacemaker (11);  
 – show sensitive love and compassion (8, 15b); be humble (8); be genuinely forgiving, even blessing your opponents (9).  
 • Blessing flows from doing good (9,12f). Even if suffering results there is no cause for fear because God's blessing is there (14). Suffering inside God's will beats suffering outside it (17).  
 • Once the Lordship of Christ is our established mind-set, and we are committed to walking in His ways, people will ask us why, and even our critics will end up with egg on their faces (15-16).

DAY 14

*As it was in the days of Noah...*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 3:18-22**

**THE POINT** Peter reflects on the parallel between his scattered readers and Noah. Like Noah and his small family of eight, they were a faithful few, witnessing to, and being treated unjustly by, a godless, evil, mocking world. God, the righteous Judge, will act again.

**THE PARTICULARS**

• There is a finality/completeness about Christ's death for sin – it was once-for-all-time (not once-for-all-people). Because He had no sin of His own, His death could deal fully with our sin, and so through His death we can be reconciled to God (18).  
 • Jesus suffered physical death on our behalf, but now, through His resurrection and ascension, He lives in the spiri-

tual realm where He rules over all things (18, 22; cf also Romans 8:11).  
 • Because the Spirit's realm is eternal (ie not confined by time), the crucified/risen Christ was preaching through Noah to the sinners of his day, while he was building the ark. Their sin, as for all the lost for all time, was the rejection of God's gracious provision of salvation in Christ (19-20; cf also Romans 3:25).  
 • Mention of the Flood points to baptism, the outward symbol of God's saving grace and inner cleansing work in us in Christ (21).  
**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**  
 • Are we faithful witnesses today, warning of God's Judgement?

DAY 15

*Strangers in the world*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 4:1-6**

**THE POINT** Peter wants his readers to know that their suffering for Christ is worthwhile, in this life as well as in the next, since everyone must give account to God. It requires conscious, determined effort ("arm yourselves"), but Christ has set the example for us.

**THE PARTICULARS**

• Physical suffering for Christ's sake both demonstrates a determination to make a clean break with sin (regardless of the cost), and enables us to resist temptation in a way that a life of ease and pleasure does not (cf the Church in times of prosperity) (1-2).  
 • Verse 3 is a good description of our society. We need to

make a conscious break with its ways, and be prepared to put up with the jibes that will follow (especially from the media!) (3-4).  
 • Everyone is under God's judgement, especially those who mock God's people, not only during this present life but also beyond. Death is not an escape from judgement, as many might hope (5).  
 • Even believers (those to whom "the gospel was preached") suffer physical death in the same way as unbelievers ("according to men"), but they will inherit eternal life on Judgement Day ("live according to God in regard to the spirit") through the gospel (6).  
**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**  
 • How do you react to derogatory labels like "wowser", etc?

DAY 16

*If Jesus came back today...*

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 4:7-11**

**THE POINT** One of the strongest messages of the NT is that we are living in the Last Days. Everything needed for the salvation of God's chosen people is now completed. The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ is therefore always "near" in the sense that nothing else has to happen first. Peter had heard Jesus' many parables and warnings about being ready when He comes, and His cry from the cross: "It is finished". So he urges his readers to be ready. Everything we do ought to be done as if Jesus might come today.

**THE PARTICULARS**

• Nothing is more obstructive to prayer than a fuzzy, unfocussed mind; nothing is more conducive to a disciplined mind

than the thought that at this very moment Jesus might appear in glory (7).  
 • Christians ought to keep informed about current events in order to be effective in prayer for the needs of our confused world (7).  
 • In Christian groups, if love is strong, offences are more readily forgotten; where love is lacking there is an unhealthy preoccupation with fault-finding and nitpicking (8, cf Prov. 10:12).  
 • God has distributed different gifts among us so that we might pool them, without grumbling, for the common good (9-11).  
**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**  
 • What motivates your serving in your Church fellowship?

**DAY 17**

***Time to refine the Church?***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 4:12-19**

**THE POINT** Peter had been taught a painful lesson at Caesarea-Philippi (see Mark 8:31-38). It is a lesson with which his readers were still trying to come to grips. It is a lesson the affluent Church today must learn, maybe the hard way: suffering and persecution are par for the course for those who would faithfully follow Jesus.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- If we really accepted Jesus' teaching, we wouldn't be surprised at the way the world (eg the media) treats His Church (12).
- Jesus had made clear that true joy and blessing come, not from prosperity, but from persecution (13-14, cf Mt. 5:11-12).
- Suffering has no value in itself. There's nothing commend-

able in suffering for being bad (even in "minor" things like being a busy-body); but suffering for Christ's name is actually an honour, and an opportunity to experience His faithful care (15-16, 19).

- Our holy God will purify His Church. This, although painful at the time, will have a positive, beneficial outcome. His judgement of the wicked, however, will be devastating and final (17-18).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- Do preaching/evangelism today reflect what Jesus made clear about discipleship and suffering for all who seek to follow Him?
- Is it honest not to warn people about the cost of discipleship?

**DAY 18**

***A word to elders***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 5:1-4**

**THE POINT** Peter's warning to the scattered Church, that its suffering could well be the beginning of a refining process (4:17-18), leads him to address the leaders. God's dealing with His sinful people in the OT often began at the top where much of the blame lay (eg Ezekiel 9:6) – privilege brings responsibility and accountability.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Peter isn't admonishing the elders in a vacuum; he himself is one of them, but he can speak with some feeling and authority because he was present to see the Chief Shepherd face His suffering (1).
- Faithfulness in leadership through our present suffering

leads to eternal glory when Jesus returns; no cross, no crown (1, 4).

- Peter's practical instruction to elders includes:-
  - to function as shepherds/overseers over God's flock (2).
  - to be positive, obedient and enthusiastic servants of God (2).
  - to make sure their position is not (ab)used as an opening for material gain or as a power base for their own agenda (2, 3).
  - to be a role model in every way to others in the Church (3).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- How can we avoid using positions of leadership as platforms for power instead of opportunities for humble service?

**DAY 19**

***What happened to humility?***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 5:5-7**

**THE POINT** Submission is not a popular concept in our society today. We tend to be more concerned with exercising our rights than with meeting our obligations, with how to manipulate situations to improve our personal standing and influence rather than looking for better ways in which we can serve others for their benefit, regardless of what it might cost us in terms of status or comfort. Peter encourages us to reflect on how God views us, how He sees our striving for status and all its accompanying anxiety.

**THE PARTICULARS**

- The office of "elder" carries in its name the idea that the sort of wisdom and experience needed for good leadership in the

Church comes with the passing of years. Peter suggests that the young should recognise this and take their lead from those who are older. Sadly, this biblical thinking has little currency today (5).

- God is the mighty sovereign over all things. Because He has declared His opposition to the proud (Proverbs 3:34), humility is the best policy. Humility, therefore, should be our obvious feature (clothing), governing all our relationships (5-6).
- God will vindicate us in due course; we need not worry (6b-7).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- Is there a close connection between anxiety and lack of humility?

**DAY 20**

***United we stand***

**THE PASSAGE**

**1 PETER 5:8-14**

**THE POINT** Peter closes his letter with a deep sense of love and concern for the spiritual welfare of his readers. He knows what they are going through, and how the devil will use their suffering to try to destroy their faith. But he also knows that this can't happen because God, in His unadulterated grace, has planned something better for them. Even their suffering is a vital part of the plan!

**THE PARTICULARS**

- Because of the way the devil operates we can't ever afford to drop our guard. This requires conscious self-discipline (8).
- There is real spiritual value in Christians taking a united stand against the devil's attacks (9). Conversely, if we falter,

others will find it harder to "stand firm" in their faith (9).

- We can always trust God to use our trials for our ultimate benefit, bringing us through times of loss to restoration (10).
- Peter encourages his readers with greetings from those with him ("Babylon" is code for Rome); Christian love is vital (12-14).

**TO PONDER ... AND TO PRAY**

- How can we best help our brothers and sisters in Christ who are being severely persecuted today? Is it enough just to pray, or do we need to look for ways to let them know we are praying for them? How would this also help us in our spiritual battle?

# Talking it through

A THREE-DAY EVENT IN MELBOURNE BROKE NEW GROUND.

*David Palmer*

**A** very exciting and enriching experience was had by the 250 registrants to the first Victorian Church & Nation Committee *Religion in the Public Square* Colloquium, held over three days in late July in the Robert White Hall in Melbourne.

They ranged in age from the early 20s up, and attendances at any given time over the three days varied between 110 and 175. About 30 came from interstate – Tasmania, South Australia, NSW, ACT and Queensland. Possibly as many as a third were non-Presbyterians with many Catholics in particular attending.

Some have been puzzled as to why we called the event a colloquium and not a conference. According to the Macquarie Dictionary, a colloquium is defined as a meeting for the purposes of discussion. We tried to achieve this through the question and answer sessions and the hour-long, so-called roundtable at the end of each day. However, because of the great interest engendered by the papers and the numbers attending, the time allocated to question times and roundtable left some disappointed in not being able to put their questions.

The idea for the colloquium rested on a number of desirable objectives: a conference targeting the lay members of the church which would cover a variety of matters of ethical importance to lay members; the desire to demonstrate to Christians that we have defensible positions across a broad range of issues worth addressing and to do so in a public forum; an opportunity to showcase informed, articulate persons to the forefront of their professions both within the Presbyterian Church and from outside.

Further, it provided an opportunity to demonstrate that the church has more than one voice with which it can and indeed must operate within the public square. These four voices – the prophetic, academic/professional, per-

**FOR ONCE THE HUMAN RIGHTS INDUSTRY HAD TO TAKE NOTE OF CHRISTIAN CONCERNS POLITELY BUT POINTEDLY EXPRESSED.**

suasive and artistic were all on display throughout the course of the three days.

We sought a keynote speaker and found someone in Professor Scott Rae from Biola University, Los Angeles who exceeded all our expectations. Dr Rae proved knowledgeable, a leader in his field. He spoke plainly and clearly while his modest American manner made him endearingly accessible and acceptable to all.

Once we knew Dr Rae's strengths lay in business, pro-life and bio-technology ethics we were able to pair local speakers with him. In all 23 papers were presented by 18 different speakers. One of the themes our ministers heard repeatedly was the need for them in their preaching to address the ethical issues our people experience in their daily lives, especially in the workforce. All sessions, including the question and answer periods and end of day roundtable, are available through *The Reformers Bookshop* in MP3 format at a cost of \$20, whilst the papers presented and Power Point presentations are offered free of charge with the purchase of the disc.

**A** highlight was a segment on freedom of religion in which the heads of the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission were pitted against our own champions in the persons of noted Catholic ethicist Nicholas Tonti-Filippini and two legal academics, Professors Patrick Parkinson and Nicholas Aroney, the latter a Presbyterian elder from Queensland. The room was packed for

this segment and at the end, the consensus was that the risk was one well taken. For once the Human Rights industry had to take note of Christian concerns politely but pointedly expressed.

However, it is fair to say that the Victorian Commission and the Presbyterian Church take a different view on how the religious exception clauses in the new Equal Opportunity Act should work. The fact that this has been clearly articulated is a worthwhile gain. It was agreed that there would be consultation between the Commission and ourselves and our allies, including the Christian schools, on the operation of the exception clauses in the new Victorian Act.

Another highlight was exploring a Christian world and life understanding that drew upon our own Reformed tradition – Calvin's two kingdom theology and the later Dutch tradition associated with Abraham Kuyper.

**W**e have received many, many expressions of gratitude and commendation, and I will conclude by quoting several: "What a great Colloquium. So professional. So stretching of thinking. Such quality presenters. Thank you for doing so well." "Thank you for a wonderful stimulating colloquium." "Just thought I'd say that the Colloquium was great. It's probably one of the first times we feel like the denomination is engaging directly with some of these important issues in society. It was also good to be around other like-minded people."

Which state will organise the next *Religion in the Public Square* Colloquium? 



**David Palmer**, convener of the Victorian Church and Nation Committee, was chief architect and organiser of the colloquium.



## news

## CATASTROPHIC FLOODS

**T**he **Presbyterian Church of Australia's Mission Partners** family working in Pakistan reports that it may be months before the water dissipates in the flooded areas, and the need is desperate. They report "A friend of ours is about to help 500 families, with average numbers of eight persons, in one of the worst-affected areas. We are encouraged to know that PCA will send support at some stage, and maybe some others too."

"Many desperate, poor people have got to — in the last few days. They are camping beside the main road, no shelter, mostly no or little food, nominal Christian sweepers and Hindus (minority) plus Muslims, cold at night, 'camping' without anything on the ground, clothes they are wearing only as from very hot part of the country, without cooking utensils or something to cook, etc."

According to **Moderator General Robert Benn**, there has already been a generous response from some Australian congregations, but more is sought by September 30. Contact the office of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria for information on how to donate, (03) 9650 9311.

## CHRISTIANS MISSING AID

**A**s flood crisis worsens, Pakistan church leaders are warning that Christians are missing out on aid. **The Bishop of Peshawar Humphrey Peters (Church of Pakistan)** has told the **Barnabas Fund** that Christians would receive hardly anything from international aid unless it was directed to them.

## FEARS IN INDONESIA

**I**ndonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, celebrated its 65th Independence Day on August 17 amid a widespread sense of distrust in the government's ability to check attacks on churches by Islamist groups. Muslims and Islamic organisations, Buddhists and Hindus joined hundreds of Christians for an ecumenical worship

service near National Monument Square in Jakarta to protest "government inaction" over attacks on Christians and "forced closure of churches", reported *The Jakarta Globe*.

They had planned to hold the service outside the State Palace, but the government prohibited it due to preparations for Independence Day celebrations, the daily reported. "Why did it take **President [Susilo Bambang] Yudhoyono** so many days to speak against the attacks?" asked the **Rev. Dr SAE Nababan**, president of the **World Council of Churches from Asia**.

"Such carelessness can be dangerous for our democracy. Officials must not forget that they are accountable to the people." Nababan was referring to President Yudhoyono's call for religious harmony a day before the month-long Islamic festival of fasting, Ramadan, began on August 11. It came only after a fifth attack on the **Batak Christian Protestant Filadelfia Church (HKBP Filadelfia)** in Bekasi city, a suburb of Jakarta.

## FRAME'S BOOK PRIZE

**L**osing *My Religion*, **Bishop Tom Frame's** masterful survey of changing religious belief, identity and behaviour in Australia, has won the **2010 Australian Christian Book of the Year**. The awards were announced on August 10 at a gathering of writers, publishers and readers in Melbourne.

Second prize was won by the internationally acclaimed book, *The Trellis and the Vine*, by **Colin Marshall & Tony Payne**. The mature and gritty first novel, *Desolate Beauty*, earned **Trudy Adams** third prize.

**Jack Burnham** won the **Young Australian Christian Writer Award** for an unpublished manuscript by an Australian under the age of 30, and **Sarah Longden** won the **Australian Christian Teen Writer Award**.

## JULIA ROBERTS A HINDU

**P**opular Hollywood actress **Julia Roberts** says she is now a "practising Hindu".

The 42-year-old actress disclosed to US fashion magazine *Elle* that she and her family regularly worshipped at a Hindu temple with their children.

"The entire Roberts-Moder family goes to the temple together to 'chant and pray and celebrate'. I'm definitely a

practising Hindu," said Roberts, who was born to Catholic and Baptist parents. Roberts is believed to have converted while shooting her new film, *Eat, Pray, Love* in which she plays a woman who goes on a year-long cultural and spiritual trip to India, Italy and Bali.

*Christian Today*

## CHRISTIANS FLEE CHARGES

**T**hreats of "blasphemy" charges in two provinces in Pakistan have sent a Christian cleaning worker and a young inter-faith couple into hiding. In Chishtian, Bahawalnagar district in Punjab Province, Muslim extremists accused cleaning worker **Tanvir Masih** of **New Christian Colony** with blasphemy after they found him using a broom whose handle was covered with a pharmaceutical firm's advertisement cards bearing a verse from the Quran that read "God is the best healer!"

As Masih came out of the clinic, he found irate Muslims had thronged the road, and he made a sprint for his life; since then no one has seen him or his family there.

In Karachi, Sindh Province, the Muslim in-laws of a 33-year-old Christian man threatened to charge him with blasphemy — and kill his wife for suspected apostasy — after he refused to divorce her, the Christian man informed *Compass*. **Shahbaz Javed** secretly wed **Mehwish Naz** in a civil court in October 2008.

*Compass Direct*

## TORTURED LAWYER HONOURED

**C**hinaAid is reporting that at the annual **American Bar Association** conference, held in San Francisco on August 6, 17-year-old **Grace (Ge Ge)** smiled as she walked to the podium to accept the **International Human Rights Lawyer of the Year Award** on behalf of her missing father, **Gao Zhisheng**.

"I am so very proud of my father," she said. "This is the first time that this award [has been] granted to a Chinese person. If my father knew that I accepted this award for him, he would be very happy."

Reliable sources in China recently confirmed that Gao Zhisheng was severely tortured last year in Xinjiang, following his family's escape to the United States. After briefly resurfacing this March, Gao Zhisheng was able to

talk to his family and visit his brother and father-in-law, before being kidnapped again by the authorities from Beijing. No one has seen or heard from him since April 20.

### INDIAN GIRL RESCUED

Nearly two years after large-scale anti-Christian violence broke out in India's Kandhamal district, Orissa state, a team working against human trafficking last month rescued a 16-year-old Christian girl – one of at least 60 people sold into slavery after being displaced by the 2008 attacks. The recovery in Delhi of the girl represented the cracking of a network that has trafficked Christian girls and women from Orissa to the national capital, sources said.

The girl, whose name is withheld, is a tribal Christian who was sold into slavery along with her 19-year-old sister and two other girls, all victims of the 2008 violence; they were trafficked from the Daringbadi block of Kandhamal district to the capital in December 2009, according to the Human Rights Law Network. Her sister and the other two girls remain missing.

*Compass Direct*

### LEBANESE DROP SHOW

A program about Jesus filmed from an Islamic perspective was cancelled by two Shi'ite Muslim television stations in Lebanon last month. According to the *Ekklesia News Service*, the decision was made on August 13, after it was agreed that the program might incite sectarian conflict and unrest in the country.

The 17-episode series, produced in Iran, portrays Jesus as a prophet and a teacher, but not Son of God, according to the Muslim faith.

Ekklesia said Al-Manar, a television station run by Lebanon's powerful militant group, **Hezbollah**, and the **National Broadcasting Network, NBN**, started airing the series at the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. But clergy and politicians from a Christian background objected, including the Catholic **Maronite Archbishop Bechara el-Rai**.

### TANZANIANS BARRED

Christian university students on the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar, a predominantly Muslim area off the coast of East Africa, have been denied the right to

worship, while on another part of the isle a Christian leader has been jailed. Sources said **Peter Masanja**, an evangelist in Zanzibar's southeastern town of Paje, was arrested by security agents some time in early August.

At **Zanzibar University**, a private school in Tunguu 18 kilometers from Zanzibar Town, Islamic administrators have denied Christian students freedom of worship while retaining that constitutional right for Muslims, said **Samson Zuberi**, **Christian Union** students coordinator. Three student Christian Union leaders have protested to school officials and threatened to go to court over the discrimination, he said.

### WCC LINKS TO PENTECOSTALS

The **General Secretary of the World Council of Churches** has spoken of the common call shared by Pentecostals and ecumenists in fulfilling God's mission.

"It is my deep conviction that the member churches of the WCC, some of which are Pentecostal, need the closer bond to the Pentecostal churches you represent and it is my humble conviction that you need us," said the **Rev. Dr Olav Fykse** during last's month's **Pentecostal World Conference** in Stockholm.

It is the first time a general secretary of the WCC has delivered a formal greeting to the Pentecostal World Conference.

*Christian Today*

### HISTORIC SERVICE IN TURKEY

Turkey allowed Christians to hold a rare service at a politically sensitive monastery for the first time since the modern-day country's creation nearly nine decades ago.

The Mass at the ancient monastery of **Sumela** near the Black Sea was led by **Patriarch Bartholomew I**, the spiritual leader of the world's Eastern Orthodox Christians, on August 15.

More than 1500 pilgrims from Greece, Russia and other countries travelled to the Byzantine-era monastery for the emotional, three-hour service – the first of two that Turkey's government has permitted this summer.

Some observers believe that the move is part of the Turkish government's effort to improve its public relationship with ethnic and religious minorities amid its bid to join the European Union. There are only 2000

Orthodox in Turkey's 72 million population.

*Christian Post*

### IRANIANS IN MASS ARREST

A group of new Christian believers have been rounded up and arrested by security forces in a northern province of Iran. According to reports received by *Farsi Christian News Network*, on Thursday, July 18, a group of 15 newly-converted Christians, who were traveling to the provincial town of Bojnord to meet and to fellowship with the believers of that town, were arrested in the city of Masshad, the capital of the North Eastern province of Khorasan.

The security forces had previous knowledge of this trip and in a coordinated effort forced the bus, carrying the 15 Christians, to be stopped en-route to their destination and after boarding the bus arrested everyone.

*Assist*

### COURT HALTS GAY WEDDINGS

California's same-sex weddings have been called off again – at least until next year. A US federal appeals court has put gay marriage in the state on hold indefinitely, interrupting the wedding plans of scores of couples who were preparing to exchange vows when a temporary hold was set to expire last month.

The brief order by a three-judge panel of the **9th US Circuit Court of Appeals** prevents an early showdown on the marriage question at the US Supreme Court. Supporters of same-sex marriage said they would not appeal the order.

A US District Court judge decided on August 4 that California's Proposition 8, which banned gay marriage, violated the Constitution and later ordered same-sex marriage to resume today unless a higher court intervened. The panel's decision gave no explanation for overturning the judge's order directing the state to once again marry same-sex couples.

*Los Angeles Times, Tribune Media*

### RIGHTS RECORD ATTACKED

A group of eminent global leaders that includes **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** and **Jimmy Carter** has hit out at the Sri Lankan government over its poor human rights record.

**The Elders** criticised the Sri Lankan

government for its “clampdown on domestic critics and disdain for human rights” since the end of the civil war between government forces and the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam** in 2009.

They also voiced concern over the “deafening global silence”. “The ongoing persecution and disappearances of human rights activists, journalists and government opponents is truly terrifying,” said Archbishop Tutu, chairman of the group, which was founded by **Nelson Mandela**.

*Christian Today*

## DALITS PROTEST

**A** church council fighting for the rights of Dalit Christians in India called on churches and Christian organisations to observe August 10 as “Black Day”. It was on August 10, 1950, that a presidential Order prevented “low-caste” Christians from enjoying the economic and educational benefits authorised by the government for those of the Hindu faith.

The **National Council for Dalit Christians** says a Black Day should be observed by the church on account of discrimination suffered by Dalit Christians on the basis of paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes Order) 1950.

“You may like to observe the day in any appropriate symbolic manner including hoisting a black flag in the premises of churches and institutions, holding rallies and public meetings, submitting memoranda and organising Press Meets on the ongoing injustice,” said a note from the organisers.

The 1950 Order made reservation in education and jobs available to those from low-caste that follow Hinduism. It was later modified to include Sikhs and Buddhists, but still excludes Christians and Muslims. There are about 20 million Dalit Christians in India.

*Christian Today*

## TALIBAN KILL MEDICS

**E**ight foreigners and two Afghans have been found shot dead next to abandoned vehicles in the north-eastern Afghan province of Badakhshan, officials say, according to a BBC report. It says the foreigners are believed to be six Americans, one Briton and a German, who worked for an international charity providing eye care and

medical help.

The Taliban have said they were behind the attack. **Zabihullah Mujahid**, a Taliban spokesman, said Bibles translated into Dari had been found, the BBC said. The Taliban spokesman told the *Agence France Presse* news agency: “One of our patrols confronted a group of foreigners. They were Christian missionaries and we killed them all.” He later told the *Associated Press* they were “spying for the Americans”.

Two of the foreigners worked for the **International Assistance Mission** (IAM), two were former IAM workers and the others were affiliated to other organisations. IAM executive director **Dirk Frans** denied they were missionaries.

*Assist*



## STEM CELL RULING

*By Gardiner Harris*

**A** federal district judge last month blocked **US President Barack Obama's** 2009 executive order that expanded embryonic stem cell research, saying it violated a ban on federal money being used to destroy embryos.

The ruling came as a shock to scientists at the **National Institutes of Health** and at universities across the country, which had viewed the Obama administration's new policy and the grants provided under it as settled law. Scientists scrambled to assess the ruling's immediate impact on their work.

“I have had to tell everyone in my lab that when they feed their cells tomorrow morning, they better use media that has not been funded by the federal government,” said **Dr George Q. Daley**, director of the stem cell transplantation program at **Children's Hospital Boston**, referring to food given to cells. “This ruling means an immediate disruption of dozens of labs doing this work since the Obama administration made its order.”

In his ruling, **Chief Judge Royce C. Lamberth of Federal District Court for the District of Columbia** wrote that his temporary injunction returned federal policy to the “status quo,” but few officials, scientists or lawyers in the

case were sure immediately what that meant.

Officials at the health institutes said that lawyers at the **Department of Justice** would interpret the ruling for them.

The judge ruled that the Obama administration's policy was illegal because the administration's distinction between work that leads to the destruction of embryos — which cannot be financed by the federal government under the current policy — and the financing of work using stem cells created through embryonic destruction was meaningless.

In other words, the neat lines that the government had drawn between the process of embryonic destruction and the results of that destruction are not valid, the judge ruled.

For scientists, the problem with the judge's reasoning is that it may render all scientific work regarding embryonic stem cells illegal — including work allowed under the more restrictive policy adopted by **President George W. Bush** in 2001.

## 'TERRORIST PRIEST' DENIED

**T**he **Roman Catholic Church** in Ireland has insisted that it did not cover up the suspected involvement of a terrorist priest following the release of a damning report into the **Claudy** bombing, in which nine people were killed when three car bombs exploded in Londonderry in 1972.

In a joint statement, the **Archbishop of Armagh Cardinal Sean Brady** and **Bishop of Derry Seamus Hegarty** said they accepted the findings and conclusions of the report released last month by **Al Hutchinson, Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman**.

A senior officer in the **Royal Ulster Constabulary** (RUC) admitted to the then **secretary of state William Whitelaw** that he feared civil unrest would ensue if he arrested the suspected mastermind of the attacks, **Father James Chesney**.

The priest was transferred to a parish in County Donegal following talks between Whitelaw and the then head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, **Cardinal William Conway**.

Father Chesney has always been a key suspect in the bombing but was never questioned or charged and died in 1980 at the age of 46.

Mr Hutchinson said: “With regard to

the role of the Catholic Church, when informed of the level of concerns others had about one of their priests, they challenged Father Chesney about his alleged activities, which he denied. In the course of this enquiry the Police Ombudsman's investigation found no evidence of any criminal intent on the part of any Church official."

He questioned, however, whether it had been right of the Government and the Catholic Church to agree to police inaction over the priest's role.

Cardinal Brady and Bishop Hegarty said it was "shocking" that a priest could be a suspect in such an attack and that the case should have been "properly investigated and resolved during Fr Chesney's lifetime".

"We agree with the police ombudsman that the fact this did not happen failed those who were murdered, injured and bereaved in the bombings."

*Christian Today*

**PRAYER AIDS LOVE: STUDY**

By Jackie O'Neal

**Donna St George**, writing for *the Washington Post* on August 12, has featured what is described as "the first major look at relationship quality and religion across racial and ethnic lines".

St George said that researchers

reported a "significant link between relationship satisfaction and religious factors for whites, Hispanics and African Americans". The study she was referring to, appears in this month's issue of *the Journal of Marriage and Family*.

According to St George, the research found that 40% of blacks in marriages and live-in relationships who attended religious services regularly had a partner who did the same, compared with 29% of non-Hispanic whites, and 29% of Hispanics.

The story went on to say, "White couples, in general, reported greater relationship satisfaction than other groups, presumably because of income and educational advantages, the study says. But the racial gap lessens when religious similarities come into the mix."

**W. Bradford Wilcox**, director of the **National Marriage Project** at the **University of Virginia**, and the study co-author, told *the Washington Post*, "What this study suggests is that religion is one of the key factors narrowing the racial divide in relationship quality in the United States."

The strongest difference-maker for couples was spiritual activities such as praying or reading the Bible at home.

"Praying together as a couple is something that is very intimate for people

who are religious," Wilcox went on to say. "It adds another level of closeness to a relationship."

St George also reported that in the whirlwind of daily life, prayer is also a moment to connect. But when one partner attends services regularly and the other does not, relationship satisfaction is lower.

"Two non-religious partners are more content together than partners with different practices, the study says," she wrote.

"The study's results are based on a recent analysis of a 2006 US survey of 1387 adults ages 18 to 59. Nearly 90 percent were married, and the others were living together," stated St George in her story.

"The authors noted limitations of the study, such as relying on interviews with one partner rather than both. They controlled for income, age and education but not for other factors that might lead to relationship satisfaction, such as personality traits."

*Assist*

**'HATE' CHRISTIANS TARGETED**

By Michael Ireland

**A** new report by the British think-tank **Civitas** ([www.civitas.org.uk](http://www.civitas.org.uk)) says white British Christians are being

An Australian Christian Alternative...

Committed to pastorally care for grieving families

All profits support the work of missions

24Hr 7 Day Service  
Servicing the Metro & Country Areas

**Bethel Funerals**

Head Office - Victoria  
2d Cochran Street, Mitcham 03 9873 8866

Branch - Victoria  
35 Dava Drive, Mornington 03 5975 1955

Branch - Queensland  
134 Hartford Street  
Upper Mt Gravatt 1 300 238 435



During another aimless sermon, Obadiah goes into spasm and impales himself on his chair.



Frans AND Jam

**DARWIN**

Northern Territory's only Presbyterian Church

meets at Kormilda College  
10 am Sundays

Pastor: Rob Duncanson  
PH. 08 8945 7878

[www.darwinpresbyterian.org.au](http://www.darwinpresbyterian.org.au)

unfairly targeted for hate crimes compared with minority groups.

According to a report by **Christopher Hope**, Whitehall editor of Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper, the study argues that new hate crime legislation is restricting freedom of speech, and has effectively introduced a new blasphemy law into Britain by the back door.

Hope writes that a foreword attached to the main report, "A New Inquisition: religious persecution in Britain today", argues that prosecutors and police are unfairly singling out alleged crimes by white Christians, while ignoring other similar offences by minority groups.

The Civitas report says: "Some police forces and the **CPS** [Crown Prosecution Service] seem to be interpreting statutes in favor of ethnic and religious minorities and in a spirit hostile to members of the majority population, defined as 'White' or 'Christian'."

The report's authors said it is "legitimate to ask" whether these agendas are being driven by "sectarian groups" within either police forces or inside the CPS.

The Civitas report claims "there is evidence of biased application of the law", citing the case of a Muslim man who sprayed the words "Islam will dominate the world — Osama is on his way" and "Kill Gordon Brown" on a war memorial in Burton-Upon-Trent.

He was prosecuted for criminal damage — "that is neither a racially nor a religiously aggravated offence". The CPS had argued that, "the defacing the memorial did not attach to any particular racial or religious group" despite the fact that the monument was "a Christian and British memorial, carrying Christian and British symbols."

"People who read the story found themselves thinking that, if a non-Muslim had defaced a Muslim building the system would have thrown the book at him."

This incident is compared with that of a Christian couple in Liverpool, Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang, who were prosecuted and then cleared last December of a religiously aggravated hate crime after a strongly worded discussion with a Muslim guest at their hotel about the relative merits of their respective religions.

Hope writes that Civitas questions whether the CPS's decisions are being influenced by an internal staff association called the **National Black Crown Prosecution Association**, which has in the past received tens of thousands of pounds from the CPS.

Assist

## STUDENTS WANT RE

**Y**oung people are "clamouring" for deeper understanding of religious perspectives, says the **Church of England's Head of School Improvement, Nick McKemey**.

The number of students taking the **Religious Education GCSE** (general certificate of secondary education) had increased for the 12th year in a row, according to figures released last month from the Church of England.

Some 188,704 took the RE GCSE this year, up 3.5% on 2008 figures. Results showed that 73.1% achieved a grade between A\* and C.

RE is in the top 10 league table of subjects in terms of the number of candidates and the number of students taking the course is growing at a rate faster than mathematics and history.

Although the number of students taking the GCSE short course dropped by 2.4 per cent in the last year to 279,954, the proportion taking it rose slightly against other short course options.

Mr McKemey said: "Young people are clamouring for a deeper understanding of religious perspectives on issues of the

day and how moral and ethical questions are considered by the major faiths," he said.

"Twelve years of organic growth in student numbers cannot be ignored. This is a phenomenon that indicates students' appreciation that exploring faith and belief helps them to understand the world and become better global citizens."

The Church of England's **Chief Education Officer, the Rev. Janina Ainsworth**, said: "Young people are clearly indicating their growing interest in a humanities subject that encourages them to explore different viewpoints, and understand more about their culture and that of their neighbours."

"The growing popularity of Religious Studies remains one of post-16 education's best kept secrets. It's rather an inconvenient fact for those who seek to portray the world in purely secular terms, and who like to suggest that young people have no interest in religion."

*Christian Today*

## CHRISTENDOM 'OVER'

By Jenna Lyle

**T**he new principal of the **International Christian College** says the end of Christendom is the biggest challenge facing the church in the West.

**Richard Tiplady**, who took up the post last month, says Christians need to re-think church in a post-Christendom and increasingly plural context.

"The biggest challenge we have to face in the West in our mission is to accept that Christendom is over. That we are no longer in a privileged position of power in society and that we do ourselves no service — we do the gospel no service — to clamour to bring it back," he says.

"I think that means we need to think again about how we live as Christians, the purpose of Church, discipleship, and the function of church leadership," he said.

Tiplady spoke of his passion to see a new generation of Christians released and growing in ministry and even more lives transformed by the Gospel.

"We need to be training Christian leaders who are going to be able to navigate that environment, able to lead God's people to be comfortable with it and faithful to God in a new landscape."

*Christian Today*

## Discount Offer

For a limited time all new subscriptions, or new gift subscriptions to the *Australian Presbyterian* magazine are available for \$15 + GST for the first 12 months (a saving of \$22 on the regular price).

Pass this offer on to your friends, or give a Gift Subscription today, so that: "All may be informed, encouraged and equipped to serve Christ in the world"

**Contact:** Australian Presbyterian Office

P.O. Box 375, Kilsyth, VIC 3137

Phone: (03) 9723 9684 Fax: (03) 9723 9685

Email: [manager@ap.org.au](mailto:manager@ap.org.au)

# A Lord who rules

THE CHURCH IS NOT A PLACE WHERE WE SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE.

*Mark Galli*

**I**t's interesting when a teenage agnostic and a federal judge understand the nature of the church better than do some church staff.

A plaintiff known as Doe 2 recently said that if s/he had to attend a high school graduation ceremony in a Christian church, s/he would be "forced to submit to a religious environment that ... will make me feel extremely uncomfortable and offended".

Doe 2 (as in "John Doe") was one of five plaintiffs who sought an injunction against Enfield Public Schools, Connecticut, to prevent them from holding the graduation ceremony in First Cathedral, a Christian church. The judge granted the injunction, in part because she agreed that there was the "likelihood of irreparable harm" coming to the plaintiffs.

That phrase — "the likelihood of irreparable harm" — made me laugh when I first read it, but after examining the ruling, I understood. Doe 3 is Jewish and said s/he would not have attended the ceremony because s/he would "feel that the Cathedral is proselytising its Christian beliefs ... through its scriptures and symbols." A high school graduation is indeed an important cultural marker, so one can empathise with how deeply disappointing it would be to miss it.



**THOSE WHO SPEND TIME IN CHURCH REALLY DO RISK EXPERIENCING IRREPARABLE HARM – FOR ONE THING, THEY'LL HAVE TO DIE TO SELF.**

But as I thought about it, I realised the judge said more than she knew, because it is true that those who spend time in church really do have the likelihood of experiencing irreparable harm — for one thing, they'll have to die to self. After all, it is the sovereign sphere of another Lord, who, like his title implies, makes unreasonable demands on His servants: expecting them to give away their wealth and to love their enemies.

**T**he sovereignty of this Lord is announced in many ways in churches, in word and sacrament, to be sure. But it's also proclaimed visually.

Take First Cathedral, whose main sanctuary seats 3000. As court documents rehearse, a large cross rises above a stained glass cupola on the Cathedral's roof, and "is visible from all angles of the Cathedral's surroundings." In other words, you can't miss it. Above the main entrance doors there is a large cross (about 10 by 25 feet) embedded in the window panes. Stairs that lead from the lobby to the sanctuary are divided by a large fountain whose jets supply water in the shape of a cross. There are also numerous wall hangings in the lower and upper hallways on the way to the

sanctuary, as well as in the lobby, including pictures of the birth of Jesus and a framed poster of the Lord's Prayer.

In the sanctuary, a large stained glass panel hangs behind the stage, the central figure of which is a large cross. This is flanked by two large banners, one of which states, "Jesus Christ is Lord" and includes such words as Saviour, Redeemer, Deliverer, Truth, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

In other words, it's a *Christian* church.

The Cathedral said it would try to cover up most of the symbols for the graduation, but it would have been impractical to hide all the signs of Jesus' lordship. That makes sense. Jesus has this impolite way of making His authority known, even when we're

**PresData Services**  
Web Hosting

#### Did you know?

Mike Wharton (PresData Services) is offering Australian PCA Churches website and email hosting for \$135.00 (plus GST) per year?

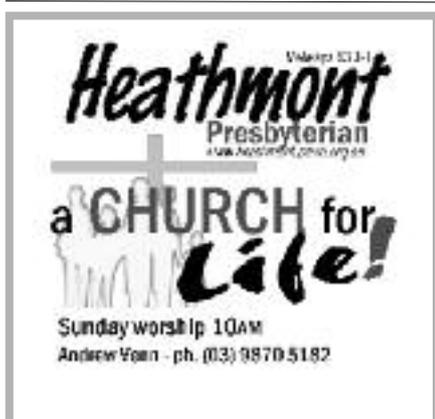
- 1 Gig Storage
- 20 email accounts
- unlimited redirects
- 2 Gig Bandwidth per month
- 24x7 FTP access

You can have your site hosted and manage the site yourself using direct FTP access. You create your site — you control the site.

Website development is also available... ask for a quote.

For more information contact:

Mike Wharton  
**Phone:** (03) 9580 5940  
**Email:** mwharton@pcvic.org.au  
**Website:** presdata.com.au



trying to shoo Him away so we can have a decent, secular event.

Does 2 and 3 got this. The pastor of the Cathedral didn't. He said that while there is "considerable art" around the building, "most of it is not religious at all". Either he was misquoted, or the court's description of the church was inaccurate, or — God forbid — the pastor doesn't understand the meaning of the cross.

But the sentiment is not unheard of. In fact, some evangelical churches pride themselves on eschewing any Christian symbols whatsoever. A few do so to honor the biblical prohibition against graven images. All well and good. But most of these churches, unlike their Lord, abolish the cross only because it's not a friendly symbol.

**D**ays before the Enfield court case was decided, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a piece titled "Graduations at church cause unease". It described how many schools hold their graduation ceremonies in one particular megachurch in the metro area because, as one participant put it, it doesn't feel like a church. The absence of any visible sign of the church's Lord is apparently a point of honor for this congregation. According to the article, one of its staff said the lack of crosses and other Christian iconography "makes the space more welcoming for newcomers and more conducive for secular events".

"We don't want people to get hung up on that kind of thing," he said.

During its weekly services, he said, the church preaches the Word ("We want people to hear the word (of God)"), but all in all, "we try to make it an environment where people would be comfortable to sit and listen."

Making people comfortable is a good thing, part of Christian hospitality. But does it strike anyone else as odd how reticent many churches are to make it plain to visitors that when they enter the church, they are entering a sovereign state where someone besides the State is Lord?

In my younger years, I was an associate pastor of an English-speaking church in Mexico City. The church ministers to missionaries, business



**MANY CHURCHES ARE RETICENT TO MAKE IT PLAIN THAT WHEN PEOPLE ENTER THE CHURCH, THEY ARE ENTERING A SOVEREIGN STATE WHERE SOMEONE BESIDES THE STATE IS LORD.**

people, and diplomats and their families. I once made a pastoral call on the economic attaché to the U.S. Embassy in his office. When I stepped into his office, there was no mistaking who was sovereign there. A large American flag hung off to the side of his massive desk, and a picture of the President of the United States hung behind. The embassy official was very cordial to me, and did indeed make me feel comfortable as we sat for coffee in a

little receiving area at the front of his office. But there was no mistaking whom my friend served, and who was lord of that office.

There was a time in the church's life when people were killed for stating or symbolising their allegiance to another lord besides Caesar. One can understand why some would flinch and stick their cross necklace under their toga, or meet secretly in places (like catacombs) bereft of Christian symbols. Caesar had no patience with people whom he suspected served another. And yet most did not flinch, and most continued to affirm in word and symbol the church's earliest creed: Jesus is Lord.

Today, when there is no risk to symbolising one's allegiance to another Lord besides Capitalism or Democracy or America, why are we so hesitant to do so? Why is it that in the one place where we have the right and opportunity to proclaim the Lord of the kingdom of heaven, so many of us want to make it a place that is "conducive to secular events"?

And why is it that church staff, called by God to enable the proclamation of Jesus' lordship, cannot grasp what a high school agnostic and federal judge understand — that Christianity is ruled by a Lord who has a habit of making people feel uncomfortable and offended because, yes, He demands their unqualified allegiance? **ap**



**Mark Galli** is senior managing editor of *Christianity Today*, where this article first appeared. He is author of *Jesus Mean and Wild: The Unexpected Love of an Untamable God* (Baker).



## Full-Time Ministry Position Acacia Ridge Presbyterian Church

We are an established suburban Brisbane church in Queensland. Our vision is to be a vibrant and passionate Christ-centred church community. And our mission is to grow in Christ, equip through Christ, serve like Christ and reach others with Christ.

### Expanding our ministry team.

We are seeking a qualified person to join our ministry team and work in the equipping and serving aspects of the mission. This position is permanent full-time. The suitable person will need to be a team player with theological qualifications, a commitment to expository preaching and have a love for Jesus and his people.

For more information and an application package, please visit our website:

<http://www.arpc.org.au/jobs/>

or contact Dan Bigg on 07 3711 5410 or 0414 340 703

## Visiting Melbourne?

Worship with us at South Yarra  
Presbyterian Church  
621 Punt Road  
Every Sunday 10.30am & 5.30pm.  
Pastor: John Stasse  
Phone: (03) 9931 1546  
(Less than 3 kms from CBD)

# Helping hand

CHURCH VOLUNTEERS ARE A BLESSING TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY.

*Ruth Powell*

**F**ar from being inward-looking and focused only on their own church group, church-going volunteers are part of society's powerful, invisible safety net.

National Church Life Survey (NCLS) Research has found that church attendees are more likely to be volunteers than the general community (57% vs 35%). In addition, volunteering within the congregation is strongly related to volunteering beyond it, with many people volunteering in both the congregation and the community.

This is because of widely-known Christian messages about helping others in need, because church attendees are reminded of those messages and because most churches provide structured opportunities for volunteering, such as congregation-based activities in welfare and social justice.

In fact, the middle-aged well-educated female churchgoer is very likely to be one of Australia's many volunteer heroes.

Information about the voluntary activities of church attendees across Australia was collected as part of NCLS Research's National Church Life Surveys in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006. An analysis of that data was published last year in the *Australian Journal on Volunteering*.

Associate Professor Rosemary Leonard from Social Justice and Social Change Research and Associate Professor Richard Ollerton, School of Computing and Mathematics from the University of Western Sydney, are working with Dr John Bellamy from NCLS Research on a project funded by the Australian Research Council to examine the contribution of church goers within their congregations and the wider community.

The findings showed that churchgoers not only contribute to their own groups but also to communities generally. As well as the fact that overall rates of volunteering were higher among Christian church attendees than for the general population, these rates were rel-

**THE MIDDLE-AGED WELL-EDUCATED FEMALE CHURCHGOER IS VERY LIKELY TO BE ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MANY VOLUNTEER HEROES.**

atively stable across the years.

The strongest finding in their paper "Volunteering among Christian church attendees 1991-2006" was the positive relationship between volunteering within and beyond the congregation for all denominations and all years. It suggests that volunteering within the congregation is not an obstacle to volunteering in the community; indeed, quite the contrary.

Examining denominational differences in volunteering within and beyond the congregation, they found that, after demographic differences were taken into account, Pentecostals volunteered more hours within the congregation and Catholics (on average) volunteered fewer. Mainstream Protestants had much higher rates of involvement in community groups.

**T**he significant contribution of churchgoers to Australia's volunteer workforce means church leaders should pay close attention to references to volunteering in the Productivity Commission's report on the not-for-profit sector.

The implications of the Productivity Commission's comments about recruiting, managing, training and retaining volunteers will be important for those who depend on volunteers within churches and those who rely on volunteers for mission in the wider community.

The Productivity Commission report, released in February, found that 4.6 million volunteers worked with not-for-profits (NFPs) with a wage equivalent value of nearly \$15 billion.

NFPs had reported rising costs of

recruiting, managing and training volunteers. Minimum qualifications, occupational health and safety, food safety, security checks, and public liability insurance added to those costs.

Increasing professionalisation was thought to be crowding out voluntary effort in community services and education.

The Productivity Commission found that values such as the belief in the importance of helping others and the belief in "what goes around comes around" were important motivators of volunteering, making recognition and continual reinforcement of the contribution of volunteers valuable in retention.

It said that although 80% of volunteers in a recent survey reported that "knowing that my contribution would make a difference" was the most important factor in the decision to volunteer, 36% had not received any recognition for their work in the past month, suggesting an avenue for organisations to improve retention of volunteers.

Volunteers who understand and believe in the mission of an organisation were more likely to continue volunteering.

The Productivity Commission referred to research that found that young volunteers were more likely to volunteer as a way of building their own skills for future job opportunities, to support organisations with a clear mission that is attractive to them, and in roles supporting young people.

As older volunteers contribute more hours, population ageing is projected to increase volunteering. However, NFPs will have to accommodate the changing desires of the baby boomer generation for flexibility and interesting roles. 



**Dr Ruth Powell** is director of NCLS Research.



**SEPTEMBER 2010**

- 21** Evangelical ministers of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania, western Romania, where Graham Bradbeer, chaplain of Scotch College Melbourne taught theology on recent long service leave.
- 22** The residents, staff and Christian ministry in the 36 Presbyterian facilities for the aged in all states.
- 23** Paul and Carol Lukins *MP* (*MissionPartners* – the Australian Presbyterian World Mission) workers from Condobolin NSW in Ethiopia with SIM International involved in agricultural work and church planting among the nomadic Mursi people.
- 24** Revesby charge southern Sydney with about 85 c&a (communicants and adherents) 20 yf (younger folk – Sunday School and Youth) and 7 e (elders). Peter and Lynette Barnes.
- 25** Sue Poynter *MP* worker from Canterbury, Melbourne in Japan with OMF International involved in music and bible studies, particularly outreach to Japanese women; Sue recently lost her mother.
- 26** Pupils, staff and council of Casino Christian Community school, Casino, far northern NSW. Philip Johnson principal.
- 27** SEQ Fun and Adventure camp, John Mansfield director and NQ extreme camp, David Hopper director – both this week.
- 28** Ryde charge Sydney with about 80 c&a, 25 yf and 5 e. Dave and Lisa Woollcott.
- 29** Presbytery of Sydney South – 15 charges and 3 home mission stations totaling 21 congregations with about 1360 c&a, 470 yf, 6 retired ministers,

4 under jurisdiction, 1 deaconess. John Rolland clerk.

- 30** Canberra St Andrews charge, 2 congregations including Weston Creek with about 525 c&a, 20 yf and 3 e. Joy and Arnold Bartholomew.

**OCTOBER 2010**

- 1** The fullest use of the contents of a 40 foot and a 20 foot container sent to Malawi from Victoria with articles for orphans and other needy people and theological colleges.
- 2** Berry charge NSW south coast – 2 congregations including Shoalhaven Heads with about 75 c&a, 20 yf and 5 e. Ted and Joyce Brooker.
- 3** Cairns charge north Qld with about 170 c&a, 70 yf and 8 e. Harry and Morna Oh.
- 4** Epping Vic. charge with about 45 c&a, 5 yf and 2 e. Tony and Joyce Parle.
- 5** Acacia Ridge charge southern Brisbane with about 170 c&a, 90 yf and 9 e. Daniel and Christine Bigg.
- 6** The GAA committee (Allan Harman convener) on relations with other churches including with other Reformed Churches such as the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (“Free Church”).
- 7** Pray for the Interim Moderator, preachers and filling of the vacancy in Camperdown-Terang charge Vic., 3 congregations including Garvoc with about 80 c&a, 10 yf and 4 e.
- 9** Presbytery of Maroondah, Melbourne – 5 charges and 4 appointment charges with about 770 c&a, 335 yf, 7 retired ministers, 2 under jurisdiction, 2 theological

teachers, 3 ministry development, training and youth workers. Doug Fraser clerk.

- 10** Scottish Reformation Conference (1560) today and tomorrow at PTC, Burwood, Sydney.
- 11** Southern Patrol WA including Albany congregation. Chris and Sandra Woonings.
- 12** Geelong North charge Vic. with about 30 c&a, 17 yf and 1 e. Darren Middleton recently inducted and the Caringbah charge southern Sydney with about 135, 17 yf and 4 e made vacant by hi transfer. Peter Barnes interim moderator.
- 13** Rockhampton St Andrews charge Qld with about 100 c&a, 30 yf and 10 e. Mike and Corinne O’Connor.
- 14** Scottish Reformation commemoration tonight, Scots Church, Sydney, with Sinclair Ferguson.
- 15** Croydon Hills appointment parish Melbourne with about 55 c&a, 35 yf and 4 e. Matthew and Kathryn James.
- 16** Cherrybrook charge northern Sydney with about 60 c&a, 10 yf and 5 e. Stephen Fong.
- 17** The patients and staff of St Andrew’s Hospital, Toowoomba, Qld.
- 18** St Andrews charge Newcastle with about 170 c&a, 15 yf and 14 e. David and Carolyn Campbell.
- 19** Presbytery of Canberra – 6 charges and 4 home mission stations totalling 16 congregations with about 1395 c&a, 175 yf, 4 retired ministers, 1 defence chaplain, 1 deaconess. Peter Davidson clerk.
- 20** Botany-Mascot home mission station Sydney (1 congregation) with about 40 c&a, 10 yf and 2 e. Noah and Sarah Nam.



AUSTRALIAN  
**Presbyterian**

# Subscription form

**Please send me Australian Presbyterian magazine...**

- 1 year subscription (11 issues) (\$38.50 inc. GST)
- 2 year (\$70.40 inc. GST)
- Overseas: \$A45 per year       Donation
- Magazine Missions               Gift Subscription

**Deliver to:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ City/Suburb \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ P.code \_\_\_\_\_  
 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 PO Box 375, Kilsyth VIC. 3137  
 Phone: (03) 9723 9684. Fax: (03) 9723 9685. Email: manager@ap.org.au



books

**The Rage Against God**

Peter Hitchens  
Zondervan, 2010  
Reviewed by Peter Barnes

**P**eter Hitchens is the brother of the bigoted atheist Christopher Hitchens who wrote *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. Sadly, Christopher is now dying of cancer. Peter has shared all of Christopher's angry views, but God has brought him to faith in Christ.

There have been few books that I have found more stimulating and encouraging than this account of Peter's pilgrimage. At 15 he set fire to his Bible on the playing fields of his Cambridge boarding school, having come to the view that it was "the enemy's book". In a defiant mood, he refused to go to his grandfather's funeral.

The atheism of the Hitchens' brothers was fierce if not well informed. Peter was cured of it as he encountered the reality of atheism and evil. He lived in the USSR for over two years, where informers were everywhere; abortions outnumbered live births; windscreen wipers could not be left on cars because they would be stolen; and enormous state power combined with militant egalitarianism.

In 1922 the Soviets banned the teaching of religion to children – something Christopher Hitchens has also advocated. Peter came to see through the horror of it all: "The biggest fake miracle in human history

is the claim that Soviet Russia was a new civilisation of equality, peace, love, truth, science, and progress."

One need not be convinced of all that Hitchens writes. He sees World War I and World War II as "all but destroying British Christianity", when, in fact, the rot had set in well before 1914. The churches have brought their decline upon themselves. Also, he is very attached to free will as a doctrine. However, his warning that Britain, for example, is fast becoming a coarse, debased, and mannerless society is timely indeed. His thesis is that "in an age of power-worship, the Christian religion has become the principal obstacle to the desire of earthly utopians for absolute power".

Peter Hitchens finishes with the moving words of T. S. Eliot, that "the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time". This account is a wonderful illustration of that truth.

*Peter Barnes is books editor of AP.*

**Anne Bradstreet:  
Pilgrim and Poet**

Faith Cook  
Evangelical Press, 2010  
Reviewed by Mignon Goswell

**A** new Faith Cook biography is eagerly anticipated by the many who have read her previous books. Here she turns her attention to the first published poet in America, an honour indeed especially for a woman in those years!

Anne Bradstreet left her homeland of England at the age of 18, along with other members of her family and friends, because of her Puritan convictions.

Often facing ill health herself and dealing with many challenges in raising a family in her new homeland of America, Anne turned to writing poetry as a way of using her talents and expressing her deepest thoughts.

In this biography Cook captures both the backdrop of unfolding events in England and Scotland under the kingships of James I and Charles I and how this impacted on the people far away in America, whose lives were in many ways still bound up with people in the homelands.

Anne's life and writing reflect the harshness of the 17th century when many children died as infants, mothers died in childbirth, people could not travel easily to see loved ones, disease was often untreatable and people were vulnerable to financial and agricultural crises. The marriage was happy, but Anne's husband was often away for long periods, leaving her to deal with home and business. Her writing was a refuge and consolation and gave her added purpose.

There are extracts from many of Anne Bradstreet's poems included in this biography. This caused me to go to other sources to read more of the poetry of a woman who was previously unknown to me. As a skilled biographer, Faith Cook brings us into the life of the person she is writing about. As well, she depicts the American colonies in their infancy, showing how they developed the traits that were to be its distinguishing marks.

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

*All books reviewed are available from the Reformers Bookshop – Phone: (02) 9569 9857 or visit [www.reformers.com.au](http://www.reformers.com.au)*

the dobbos



Uplifting Christian music for the whole family on our new CD!

CDs available from [www.thedobbos.com](http://www.thedobbos.com)

or ph: (02) 4448 8424

First 200 sales donated to PIM

**TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CAMBERWELL  
125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

An invitation is extended to all past members and friends of Trinity Church Camberwell to attend a service of thanksgiving to mark the 125th anniversary of the commencement of the congregation, to be held on **Sunday, 10th October, 2010, starting at 10.00am.**

The Moderator General, the Very Rev David Jones, will be the guest preacher.

A spit roast lunch will be served in the Hall afterwards.

**RSVP** on (03) 9882 8102

or email to [Office@trinitycamberwell.org.au](mailto:Office@trinitycamberwell.org.au)



# A Tale of Two Verses

THEIR USE OVER TIME PROVIDES A SOCIAL HISTORY.

*Peter Barnes*

**I**n many ways the history of the last century or so can be illustrated in the relative fortunes of two Bible verses: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16) and “Judge not that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1).

H. A. Ironside, who died in 1951, referred to John 3:16 as “the greatest text in the Bible”. Martin Luther called it “the gospel in miniature”, and died in 1546, reciting it over and over. Who knows how many sinners down through the ages have drawn peace and comfort from this verse as they faced death and the judgment of God?

Matthew 7:1, on the other hand, is much misused. Even in the 19th century J. C. Ryle commented that “it is possible to press the words of the Bible so far that they yield not medicine, but poison”. Our post-modern society has twisted and strangled this text to death. Carl Rogers built a whole system of psychology and a method of counselling around his misunderstanding of this verse. That is how non-judgmental counselling came into being, where the counsellor does not say anything, but just listens. It would be as effective, and a lot cheaper, to talk to your dog.

Leo Tolstoy thought that “judge not” meant that we must abolish law-courts and the whole legal apparatus. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission thinks that it means that nobody is allowed to criticise homosexuals – but you can criticise fundamentalists because they are judgmental.

The sinner under conviction of sin reads John 3:16 or hears it expounded, and is moved that God could love such a world as this, where “the whole world lies in the power of

**WE COULD CONSTRUCT THE MOST EXALTED ETHIC FROM OUR STANDARDS FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR, AND THE MOST DEGRADED ETHIC FROM OUR OWN CONDUCT.**

the evil one” (1 John 5:19). He knows that he is perishing, and in the words of Henry Martyn: “If men deserved to perish, they could not be worthy of His love.”

But God does *love*. He loves because He loves; His love is gracious; it is not earned. Because He loves, He gives. Indeed, He gave His only begotten Son and offers Him to the whole wide world: “Here is everlasting life won by My Son. Believe in Him, and He is yours, and everlasting life is yours.” The best in heaven is offered to the worst on earth.

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One,*

*There is life at this moment for thee,  
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,*

*Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.*

**H**ere is free justification by God through His Son for all who repent and believe in Him.

Does this love take away our capacity to judge? Hardly! Jesus tells us not to judge, but He also tells us not to cast our pearls before swine (Mt. 7:6), which requires some ability to discern who are the pigs. He goes on to warn about false prophets who appear in sheep’s clothing (Mt. 7:15-20), which, again, requires some measure of judgment. Elsewhere, Jesus tells us: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (John 7:24). There is to be a judgment exercised with regard to true

doctrine and clear ethical commands. A person who does not believe in the resurrection of Christ is not a Christian. An unrepentant sinner is outside the kingdom of God. We are forbidden to judge mannerisms or secondary issues. And we are not to be harsh and unlovely in our manner. Be critical but not hypercritical.

It was Vinet who said that one could construct the most exalted ethic from every man’s standards for his neighbour and the most degraded ethic from every man’s own conduct. We excuse our pride, other people’s pride really annoys us; we excuse our selfishness, other people’s selfishness is intolerable; we excuse our bad temper, other people should be able to control theirs.

Jesus is not telling us that we cannot exercise any moral judgment. He is telling us not to judge wrongly, and especially not to judge others more harshly than we judge ourselves. We can pick the speck out of our brother’s eye, but only after we have taken the log out of our own eye (Mt. 7:3-5). John Chrysostom put it well: “Correct him but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines.”

So many who misuse “Judge not that you be not judged” think that moral indifference is the same as humility. This becomes an exercise in self-justification. True humility is Spirit-given, and it accepts God’s free offer of salvation through His Son. The result is a right capacity to judge, and so John 3:16 and Matthew 7:1 belong together in Jesus’ revelation to His people. ap



**Peter Barnes** is minister of Revesby Presbyterian Church, Sydney.