

# ANNUALS

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Journal of Catholic Culture



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# ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

*Journal of Catholic Culture*

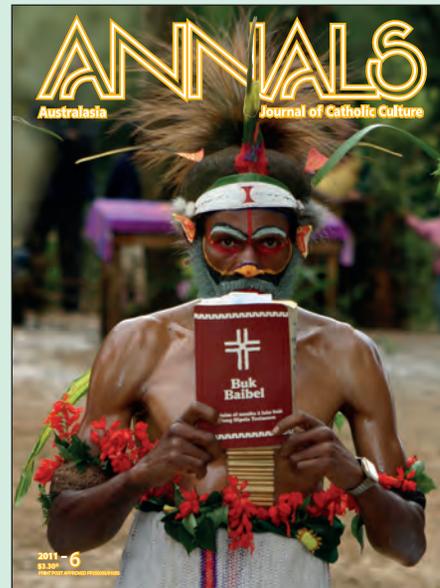
Volume 122, Number 6 August 2011

[Sunday Readings at Mass: Year A/weekday readings: Year I]

*Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine*

Published by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) since 1889.

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*Front Cover:* The lector carrying the Bible in procession at Mass on Pentecost Sunday this year at the small outstation of Nol, in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Nol is about two and a half hours from Mendi, on a largely unmade road that winds around through luxuriant jungle, with well-kept gardens, and people, everywhere. Situated in a picturesque valley, Mendi is the centre of a diocese cared for by American Capuchin fathers and brothers. There are more than 74,000 Catholics in the diocese. See our editorial in this issue: 'Epaulettes and Threads of Gold in Papua New Guinea'.

*Back Cover:* A selection of booklets available from Chevalier Press. They are ideal as Christmas or birthday gifts or as gifts for relatives and friends interested in the Catholic Faith, for RCIA groups following catechism courses in preparation of baptism at Eastertime, or as school prizes.

Cover Photo: Paul Stenhouse

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**G**IVE us the grace to see what we have to do, and the strength to do it.

- From *The Roman Missal*, Collect at Mass for Week I of the Year.

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In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

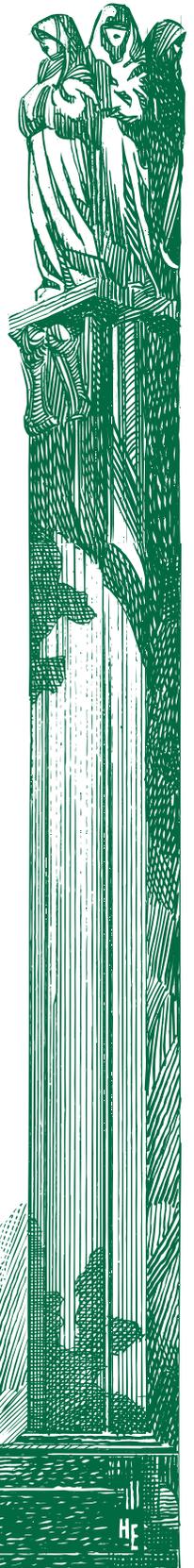
## TURN TOWARDS GOD, NOT AWAY FROM HIM

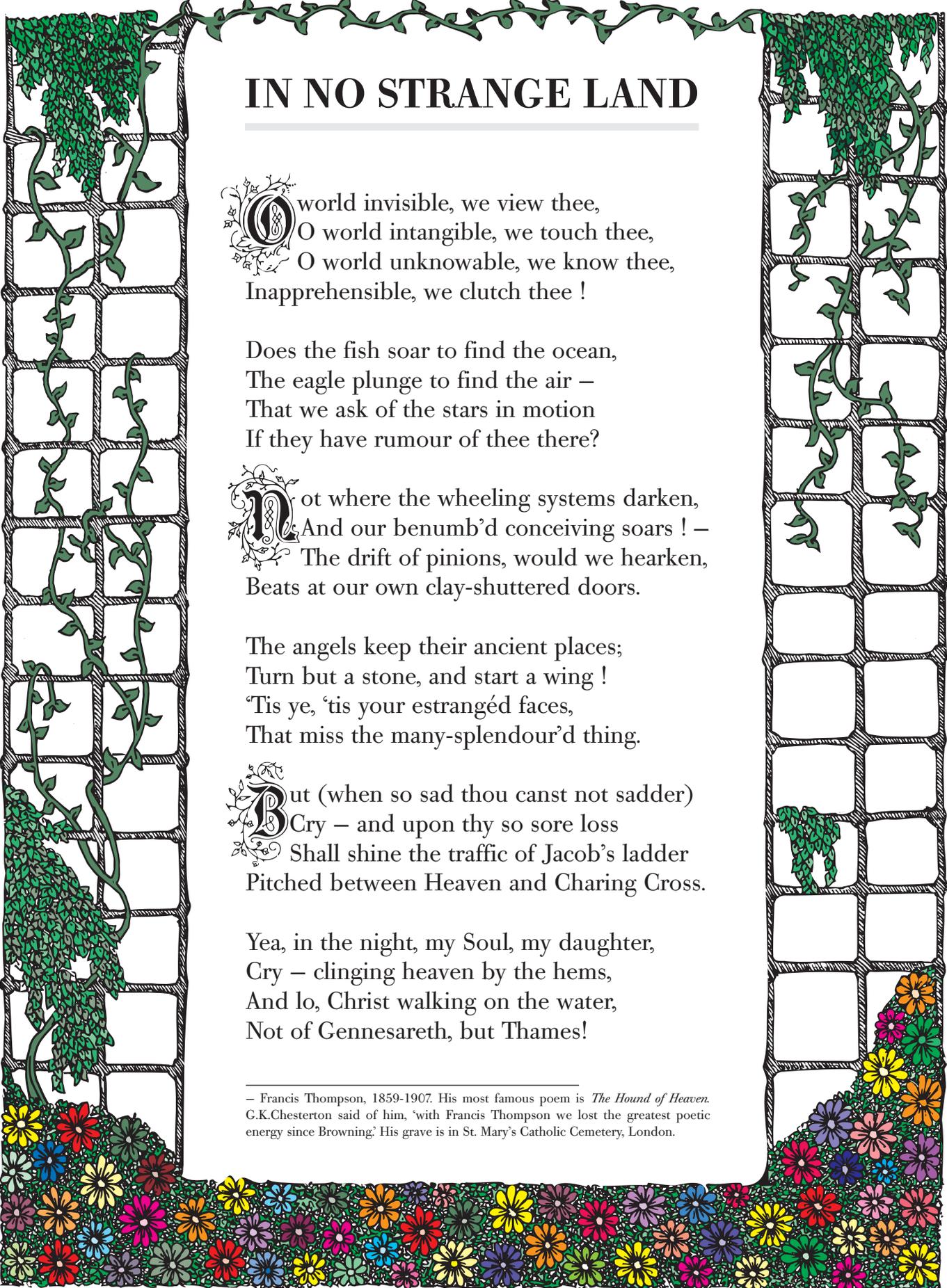
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For even though the fig does  
not blossom,  
nor fruit grow on the vine,  
even though the olive crop fall,  
and fields produce no harvest,  
even though flocks vanish from  
the folds  
and stalls stand empty of cattle,  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord  
and exult in God my saviour.  
The Lord my God is my strength.

– The Canticle of the Prophet Habakuk, iv,15-19





## IN NO STRANGE LAND

**O** world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee !

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air –  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumour of thee there?

**N**ot where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumb'd conceiving soars ! –  
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing !  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,  
That miss the many-splendour'd thing.

**B**ut (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry – and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
Cry – clinging heaven by the hems,  
And lo, Christ walking on the water,  
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

---

– Francis Thompson, 1859-1907. His most famous poem is *The Hound of Heaven*.  
G.K.Chesterton said of him, 'with Francis Thompson we lost the greatest poetic  
energy since Browning.' His grave is in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, London.

*I am in New Guinea, and there, with the Grace of God, I will remain.*

– Bishop Henri Verjus MSC, died November 13, 1891, aged 32

## EPAULETTES AND THREADS OF GOLD IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

*By* Paul Stenhouse, MSC



Recently I spent several weeks visiting some of the coastal and mountainous dioceses of Papua New Guinea [PNG].

I accompanied two dedicated lay people from the Project and Information departments respectively of the German-based International Catholic Charity 'Aid to the Church in Need'.

Papua New Guinea, Australia's nearest neighbour and one of the most beautiful, and the least explored countries in the world, has a population of almost seven million people. Between them, the people of Papua New-Guinea speak eight hundred-and-fifty different languages, with roughly the same number of tribal and traditional communities.

The Catholic Church, with a presence throughout the entire country, is the largest Christian Church in PNG, with almost 30% of the population. This hasn't happened overnight; nor was it achieved without great sacrifice and hardship.

Tertullian's remark that the 'blood of martyrs is the seed' of Faith has been borne out by the remarkable history of the spread of Catholicism in this mysterious and fast-disappearing Paradise.

### **1843: First attempt to establish the Catholic Church in PNG**

In 1843, the fathers of the Society of Mary [SM] known as the Marists had accepted responsibility for two new Vicariates Apostolic created by the Holy See: Melanesia and Micronesia.

Melanesia comprised the whole of



Madonna and child Jesus  
in Kiunga Cathedral

what was then known as New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, the Louisiade archipelago and the Solomon Islands. Micronesia was a great rectangle that extended east to include the Marshall Islands and the Gilbert Islands, now known as Kiribati.

The two new Vicariates came into being on July 16, 1844 and the newly-appointed Vicar-Apostolic Jean-Baptiste Epalle SM with seven priests and six lay brothers set sail from Europe in February 1845.

On December 1 they reached the Solomon Islands, and on December 16 Bishop Epalle led a party ashore on the island of San Isabel. Four hours later the party returned carrying the dying bishop – his head smashed in by blows from a native club.

By 1848 eighteen of these Marist missionary priests and brothers were either dead or too ill to continue. Four

of them had been killed by natives in New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands; others had died of fever, or had become disheartened by the dangers and the hardship. The surviving Marists – three priest and three lay-brothers – decided to centre their operations on Woodlark Island, half-way between the Solomons and New Guinea.

Father Jean-Claude Colin, founder of the Marists, eventually had to abandon the Vicariate of Melanesia, and by the time the Sacred Congregation had responded to his appeal, Bishop Collomb SM, successor to Bishop Epalle, and Father Villien SM, had also died.

### **1852: Fresh attempt to establish a Mission**

In 1852 Missionary priests of the Foreign Missionaries of Milan [FMM] accepted responsibility for the twin Vicariates, and seven of them reached Woodlark Island in October of the same year.

In January of 1855 Father Giovanni Mazzucconi went to Sydney for health reasons, and during his absence Brother Corti died, and the mission had to be abandoned. The five remaining missionaries then sailed to Sydney but five days before they arrived, in August 1855, Father Mazzucconi, unaware of what had happened and with his health restored, had left to return to Woodlark. His ship ran on to a reef and all on board were massacred by the natives.<sup>1</sup>

These first attempts by the Marists and Foreign Missionaries of Milan to set up missions in Melanesia from 1843 to 1855 were also the first attempt at European settlements in what is now known as Papua New-Guinea.



Part of the Congregation at Nol

### 1881: First successful landings in New Guinea

It wasn't until twenty-five years later, early in 1881, that Father Jules Chevalier, founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart [MSC], was approached by the Holy See to set up a mission in New Guinea, accompanying what was later to prove to be the ill-fated *New France* colony of Charles du Breil, Marquis de Rays.

The first MSC party left Barcelona on September 1, 1881 and they did not arrive at their destination, New Britain, until the Feast of St Michael in the following year.

The foundation of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea officially dates from the moment Father [later

Archbishop] Navarre MSC, and Father Cramaille MSC and Brother Mesmin Fromm MSC landed on the island of Matupit, New Britain, in sight of a smoking volcano, on September 29, 1882.

However, it took until June 30, 1885 for Father [later Bishop] Verjus, MSC and Brothers Salvatore and Nicolò MSC, to manage to make landfall on Yule Island, with the help of Captain Ned Mosby<sup>2</sup> who virtually had them smuggled into New Guinea because of a ban on vessels entering what had become the *British Protectorate of New-Guinea*. French and Catholic missionaries were not welcome under the prevailing policy of 'Spheres of Influence' which divided Papua New Guinea between Britain and Germany.

### Bishop Henri Verjus, MSC

The first Father Verjus heard of his appointment as Vicar Apostolic of New Britain was on June 29, 1889 when he and Brother Brünner, exhausted from cutting timber in the forest at Nabupaka to fire the kilns to make bricks to build a convent for the sisters, took a break, and he picked up an old Australian newspaper.

The bull of appointment reached him only on August 21 and the ordination ceremony was scheduled for September 22.

The sisters set to, trying to make some episcopal vestments from oddments of clothing donated by well-wishers to be given to the local people. They even managed to embellish the vestments with some gold thread that they extracted from the epaulettes of a discarded fireman's uniform.

Bishop Verjus had only two more years to live, but I don't doubt that the gold braid from those epaulettes was God-given, and a testimony to the value of the sacrifices of the missionaries who over the years would give their lives for their beloved people of Papua New Guinea.

The isolation, physical danger, and long distances may be less of an issue today – small commercial planes can now bring you to a destination that once would have taken three weeks of trekking through jungle and up and down mountains – but missionaries still face daunting obstacles as they strive to bring the light of the Gospel 'to those who sit in darkness, and the shadow of death,' and to guide their feet 'in the Way of Peace.'<sup>3</sup>

### 2011: Archdiocese of Port Moresby

The Archdiocese of Port Moresby, which once was the Vicariate Apostolic of Port Moresby, was our first port of call.

The Catholics of Moresby today represent 36% of a population of just over half-a-million. In the evening we met Archbishop John Ribat MSC.

This gently-spoken prelate has to guide his 185,000 Catholics through a minefield of the usual problems that affect urban areas elsewhere in the world – drugs, alcohol, homelessness, poverty, crime, poor healthcare, and high unemployment.

The latter problem is exacerbated by the fact that Moresby is plagued by graft and corruption at the highest level. Yet because it is the capital of the country and its largest city, it acts as a magnet to many young and poor people from the coast and the mountains who come seeking work. They swell the already inflated numbers of the unemployed – estimated in 2004 to be from 60 – 90%.<sup>4</sup>

### Diocese of Vanimo

After Moresby, our next stop was the coastal diocese of Vanimo. If Moresby the capital has major problems, remote centres like the ones we were visiting could scarcely escape them.

Nevertheless an air of optimism and Christian hope pervaded all the dioceses that we visited.

Vanimo was no exception. Its dynamic bishop is Msgr. Cesare Bonivento. He is a member of the Pontifical Institute for the Foreign Missions [PIME] – from Italy.

His diocese shares a common border with the Indonesian Province of Irian Jaya – formerly Dutch New Guinea.

Keenly aware of the need for priestly vocations, the bishop is promoting Minor Seminaries in PNG, convinced that if 16-year-olds can enter and win Talent quests, and opt for a career in pop music in their teens, then 16-year-olds can also opt for a life devoted to our Lord and the care of his flock. The logic seems flawless.

The Minor Seminary is in an idyllic setting, with a private beach. Two priests from India look after the formation of the students, and Bishop Cesare himself does some teaching along with three other teachers.

His faith-filled confidence in the future is irrepressible. The Major Seminary has a fine library and competent staff. It has eighteen students, five of whom are due for diaconate – God willing – within twelve months. The bishop has high hopes.

### Diocese of Daru-Kiunga

Like Vanimo, the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga, to the south-west in the Central Highlands, once part of the Vicariate Apostolic of Port Moresby, shares borders with Irian Jaya, and shares also the problems associated with caring for the sick and penniless refugees that

periodically cross the border into PNG from the Indonesian Province to the west.

The island of Daru, which was the original diocesan centre, and the capital of the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, is located near the mouth of the Fly River. It is on the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria and one of the few Torres Strait Islands that does not belong to Australia. Daru is only 195 km from the tip of Cape York – just a little further than the distance from Sydney to Goulburn.

The mountainous character of this diocese makes transporting goods and people from Moresby or the Coast very expensive.

Bishop Gilles Côté, a Canadian De Montfort missionary, is desperately in need of a flat-bottomed boat to bring supplies the seven hundred kilometers

up the Fly River to his present headquarters at Kiunga.

A feature of all the dioceses we visited was the number of local people attending morning week-day Mass in the Cathedral, the well-appointed health and HIV Aids clinics, the number of schools – elementary, upper primary, secondary and technical – and the dedication of the sisters and lay people who teach [there are over 300 lay teachers in Daru-Kiunga] often in very remote places where no plane or boat can reach and where roads are virtually non-existent. In any case, the diocese of Kiunga has no plane or boat.

Most Dioceses also have a Centre which cares for the handicapped and the physically and mentally disabled. We attended a moving tribute to Sister Pierrette, a De Montfort nun who is a key figure in the Callen Centre at



Bishop Gilles Côté of Daru-Kiunga. His mitre is decorated with bird of paradise feathers.



Bridge on the way to Nol, in Mendi

Kiunga. While the rain poured down, young mothers with their little ones, many of them handicapped physically or mentally, sat with us under a canvas shelter while blind, deaf and disabled children and adults sang, danced and performed dramas and mimes that left hardly a dry eye among the spectators.

### **Archdiocese of Mount Hagen**

From Daru-Kiunga we flew to Mount Hagen, the third largest city in PNG, named after an extinct volcano not far from the city. The volcano, the second highest in Papua New Guinea, took its

name from a German colonial officer, Kurt von Hagen.

Here we were met by Bishop Douglas Young, SVD, a Queenslander who is quietly impressive and energetic leader of the more than 160,000 Catholics in the diocese.

There are 23 parishes in the Archdiocese, and 115 outstations. Each parish has a priest in charge.

After viewing the site of a new church in a beautiful but remote area via roads that were full of deep potholes and, in places, barely passable, we visited the diocesan Seminary of the Good Shepherd, and met its Rector Father Clement Papa, who showed us the complex which has a beautiful setting, and a fine library. There are twenty-three seminarians.

The Church in Mount Hagen has a popular radio station that broadcasts Catholic programmes, religious music and topical interviews to a wide local listening audience. Trinity FM 98.1 was set up by Bishop Douglas's predecessor, Msgr. Michael Meier, SVD in 2003. It is manned by volunteers whose professionalism is impressive.

### **Diocese of Mendi**

After five and a half hours of tortuous driving along allegedly sealed but very potholed roads that challenged every spring in our vehicle, and most of the bones in our spines, Father Dariusz Kaluza, Administrator of the diocese, brought us to our final destination – Mendi – in the southern highlands.

Beautifully situated in a picturesque valley, this diocese, too, had once formed part of the Vicariate Apostolic of Port Moresby. It had first been surveyed by Father Alexis Michellod, MSC and Brother Jean Delabarre MSC who trekked through from Yule Island.

In 1955 the American Capuchins agreed to send personnel to start a Mission and Father Henry Kusnerik OFM Cap. came that same year to assess the situation.

That the Capuchin Mission has borne abundant fruit is evident from the more than 74,000 Catholics in the diocese.

Bishop Stephen Joseph Reichert, OFM.Cap. was transferred only last November by Pope Benedict to be the Archbishop of Madang; hence, Father Dariusz's role as Administrator.



Canoes on the Fly River

On Pentecost Sunday we accompanied Father Dariusz to NoI, a small outstation along a terrible unmade road that wound round for two and a half hours through luxuriant jungle, with gardens and people everywhere. We came to a bridge over a raging torrent. Structurally the bridge was intact except that many of the planks had been replaced by saplings arranged in a higgledy-piggledy fashion by locals trying to help us get across. The only way to cross the bridge was at high speed – praying that the saplings held steady and that the car would ride over them, rather than pushing them into the river below.

The car and Father Dariusz made it, and the visit was a joy. Hundreds of people attended coming from other outstations round about – too many for the church to hold – so Mass was offered in the open air, with the people seated on logs, or standing. A bush hut provided some shelter for the altar and the celebrants.

Father Dariusz was the principal celebrant and Father Pius [the parish priest], Deacon Alex and I, concelebrated.

Six children were baptised and more than 40 were confirmed this Pentecost. The singing, the dancing and the colourful dress more than offset the persistent rain – though I found the mud an ever-present threat as the procession wended its way to the altar, preceded by the dancers.



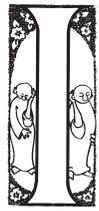
Procession with the Bible in Pidgin English for the Mass readings

I think we all came away uplifted by the experience of Catholic life in north-eastern Papua New Guinea, in its Western Province, and in the Central and southern highlands. And Aid to the Church in Need has a better understanding of the needs of the PNG dioceses, of their history, and of the difficulties they face.

Bishop Epalle's sacrifice in 1845 was not in vain. Nor were the sacrifices of all the missionaries and their lay helpers, many of whom died young from malaria, dengue or blackwater

fever, and sometimes violently from tribal warfare or misunderstandings, from bombing or murder during the Second World War, or at the hands of the Rascals or simply from physical exhaustion and accidents. The fruit of their lives, however short, is there for all to see.

1. For a fuller treatment of this period see *Neither Eagles nor Saints, MSC Missions in Oceania 1881-1975* by James Waldersee, Chevalier Press, Sydney, 1995, pp.3-16 and passim..
2. Not to be confused with Captain John Moresby after whom Port Moresby was named.
3. See Luke 1,79.
4. David Fickling, *The Guardian*, September 22, 2004.

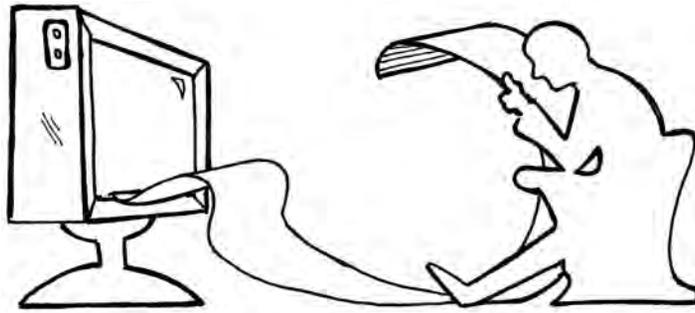


IT IS well known that playing to a home-town crowd gives that added boost to a team by which it can win the game, for the cheers are all on its side. With this in mind, I think I have a way of ensuring that Australia wins even more gold at the next Olympics; we adopt as our national anthem the Beatles' song *Yellow Submarine*. You see, as everyone loves singing along to this song, then those watching an event will be cheering on Australia to win gold, for then, when we come first, our national anthem will be played and all will be able to sing of the joys of living in that distinctively coloured submarine. Why *Yellow Submarine* should be so popular a song across all generations is something of a mystery.

In an interview given in the 1970s, John Lennon claimed that the Beatles' song written about LSD was not, as many think, *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, but *Yellow Submarine*. Apparently the Beatles were all tripping at George Harrison's mansion when George said, "Hey guys, we're all in a Yellow Submarine!" which is, I guess, something someone might say while high on LSD. And yet, despite its origins, *Yellow Submarine* is a song that would make the Wiggles proud; it's young, fun, silly, and, on top of all of that, warm and cosy as well. Much the same can also be said of the Beatles' film of the same name. In fact, much the same can be said of most the art and music that came out of 1960s and early 70s psychedelica. The over-riding impression one gets is of Victorian and Edwardian nostalgia, overlaid with swirling pastels and the sound of merry-go-rounds; add some Tin Pan Alley and a dash of Vaudeville and there you have it, *Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band!*

What runs through a good deal of psychedelica is a yearning for something a long time past. One might even say a sense of sunny days and childhood lost, something that it was hoped would be found again in dropping out and joining a commune. But drugs being drugs all ended up where we might expect them to end up: in violence, greed, and exploitative relationships. Which is why, I guess, so many hippies became such successful movie directors, pornographers and capitalists.

When the drug wears off and the euphoria lifts, one is stung by the recollection of those silly thoughts



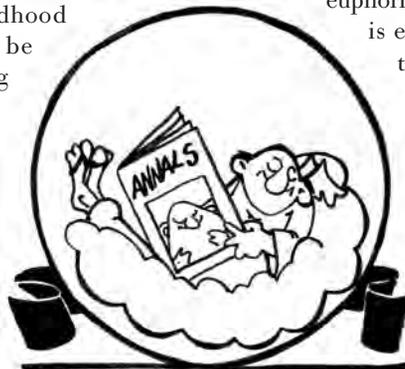
## IN PRAISE OF THE YELLOW SUBMARINE

By ROBERT TILLEY

and now faded and tatty nostalgia. When utopian dreams of building a place of perfect peace and love fall apart then often what arises is a cynicism that can countenance every corruption and injustice. One feels stupid for having believed fairy tales, not realising that one is even more stupid for now believing in the tales of demons and thinking one is now terribly grown-up. One now despises the very thought of a Yellow Submarine, for now the world is empty and devoid of meaning, and what is to be believed in is sex, wealth, power, toys for grown-ups, and drugs that sharpen one's instincts rather than confusing them; drugs designed for the jungle not the carnival – we'll have a nuclear-powered, nuclear-equipped, top-of-the-range submarine thank you very much, and it won't be yellow but a deadly black, and it'll come complete with a gangsta-rap and death-metal sound track. It'll blow that yellow one out of the water!

Psychedelica was merely another form of Pelagianism, the idea that humanity can, without God and grace, reverse the effects of the Fall, the inevitable result being, following the first heady days when all seemed possible, is that the last condition is worse than the first, for cynicism is a good preparation for demonic instruction. But perhaps worse still are those who look with disdain upon all efforts to reform the world, thinking that religion tells them all such endeavour is in vain. Religion does no such thing, but calls us to co-operate with the grace of God and strive to make the world fit for the reception of the City of God. Thus, it is a certain sign that a Christian group is losing its faith when it talks more of relevance than of defiance; it is easier to succumb to gravity than to keep one's grip and keep climbing.

There is defiance in a joy that is not a product of euphoria or fairytales, but knows full well that there is evil, violence, and death. A joy that knows that through Christ's body the Church *all things* will be filled with His glory; a joy that knows that it can work for this. So there you are, in a manner of speaking we *will* all live in a Yellow Submarine!



ROBERT TILLEY has a Ph.D from the University of Sydney. He currently lectures in Adult Education on Philosophy, Theology and History of Ideas. He also lectures in Greek and Biblical Studies at The Catholic Institute of Sydney [CIS] and in literature and theology at Aquinas Academy.

*Refugee Tribunal: forced conversion of Coptic girls in Egypt is 'well-documented' and 'rapidly escalating'*

# PLIGHT OF EGYPT'S COPTS WORSENS

*By Peter Day*



THE Australian Refugee Tribunal has accepted that the practice of abducting and forcibly converting young Coptic Christian women in Egypt to Islam is a 'well-documented' phenomenon that 'occurs on a frequent basis and is rapidly escalating'.

The Tribunal's statements on the incidence of forced conversions comes at a critical time in Egypt, where a powerful coalition of Islamist parties is preparing to face off against secular political forces in parliamentary elections now scheduled for November – the first elections to be held since the fall of the Mubarak government.

The Tribunal's comments come in the form of a statement spelling out at

length the 'decision and reasons' for granting a protection visa to a young Coptic woman from Cairo who had been helping abduction victims resume their lives in the Coptic community.<sup>1</sup>

The young woman, who came to Australia about two years ago as a tertiary student, told the Tribunal that if she returned to Egypt, she would face persecution from Muslims involved in organised abductions. The Tribunal found that the visa applicant had a 'well-founded fear of persecution' resulting from her church activities, in which she had been 'assisting girls who had been brought up as Christians, converted by force to Islam, and [who had] then returned to Christianity'.

The Tribunal heard that the applicant had been threatened because her activities were 'considered hostile by... organised Islamic groups based

in a nearby mosque.' In one incident, a member of one these groups had approached the visa applicant, shown her obscene photographs of a close female friend of hers who had been abducted, and warned her that 'she would be next'.

According to the Tribunal, the applicant was a 'credible witness whose claims are consistent with known country information'. She gave 'clear, coherent and spontaneous responses during the Tribunal's hearing and does not appear to have exaggerated her claims'.

The Tribunal accepted that the applicant would be 'unable to obtain effective state protection' in Egypt from the Muslim groups threatening her, and might even be persecuted by the Egyptian state itself if she sought such protection. If she went to the police, 'she may be accused of assisting Muslims convert to Christianity and for that reason may be arrested by the security authorities...'

According to the Tribunal, arrest for this reason in turn raised 'a very real probability that she would be subjected to serious mistreatment, possibly torture' by the Egyptian security authorities.

The large amount of 'country information' considered and discussed by the Tribunal in its statement includes recent reports from NGOs such as the International Federation for Human Rights, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, and the US Commission for International Religious Freedom. On the basis of this information, the Tribunal found that there had been an increase in anti-Coptic violence since the fall of Mubarak, and that 'police and military forces have failed to adequately protect Christians and their property'.

## Egypt's tenuous hold on Democratic Dream

Tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Egypt's main cities of Cairo, Alexandria and Suez to call on the army to press ahead with economic reforms and speed up the trials of Hosni Mubarak and other leaders of the former regime. They also called for the preservation of the country's "Arab and Islamic identity." Although organised by Islamic parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis, the rally saw the participation of Copts and members of the secular movements that took part in the Jasmine Revolution. Father Rafik Greiche, spokesman of the Egyptian Catholic Church, told *AsiaNews* that the protests were peaceful without any clashes. Without the strong presence of secular groups, such a rally could have appeared very one-sided. However, amidst Egyptian flags and banners hailing the Qur'an, there were thousands of young people shouting slogans in favour of secularism and the country's unity. According to the Father Rafik, it is hard to know what will follow. In his view, the risk is great that radical Muslim groups may take over and kill the country's dream for religious freedom and the separation of state and religion. In fact, it is likely that the Muslim Brotherhood will take advantage of Muslims' obligation to share during Ramadan to press their agenda among poor and uneducated voters ahead of next November elections.

— Source, *Asia/News*

The Tribunal's comments provide significant support for the long-standing campaign of Coptic communities around the world for increased international recognition of human rights abuses against Copts in Egypt.

Recent Coptic protest demonstrations in Sydney have featured striking displays of photographs of young women and under-age girls reported as abducted.

Peter Tadros, a spokesman for the Australian Coptic Movement, said that since January this year there had been an 'alarming' increase in reports of the disappearance of Coptic girls in Egypt, coinciding with the general rise in violence against Copts. He expressed outrage that such crimes are tolerated and sometimes even encouraged by Egyptian security authorities, and that the current military regime in Egypt shows little interest in pursuing the perpetrators.

'Many Copts in Australia have girls from among their own extended families who've been kidnapped and never heard from again,' he says. 'It's heart-breaking.'

Copts, whose number is generally estimated at about ten per cent of the Egyptian population, trace their history back to the Pharaohs, and their Christianity to the first century AD. During the first half of the twentieth century they enjoyed a large measure of practical equality with other Egyptians. But since the 1970s they have suffered from the effects of growing Islamist influence within Egyptian state institutions, the media, the education and judicial systems, and in day-to-day life.

The likelihood of Islamists achieving formal political power in Egypt at elections now scheduled for November is understandably causing unprecedented anxiety among the country's Copts.

The violence mentioned by the Tribunal in its statement included major eruptions against Copts between March and May this year, mainly in and around Cairo. About 30 people were killed and scores wounded in arson attacks on Coptic churches and homes, and subsequent shooting assaults on Coptic protest demonstrators. During this period there were also numerous other well-reported attacks on Copts in the towns and villages of southern Egypt.



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The visa applicant discussed in the Australian Tribunal statement testified that the Islamic groups who threatened her were so-called Salafists – extremists similar to the dominant Wahabbi Muslims of Saudi Arabia. This is consistent with the high levels of Salafist participation reported in the recent anti-Coptic violence across Egypt.

The Salafists are believed to be well-funded from Saudi Arabia, and Salafist preachers attract large audiences in Egypt for sermons vilifying Copts on Saudi-funded cable TV channels.

While Salafists in Egypt have in the past avoided overt politics, Salafist parties have recently been formed to participate in an Islamist coalition led by the Muslim Brotherhood, which most observers expect will emerge as the most powerful force in the new parliament to be elected in November.

In interviews now popping up in some western media, leaders of some of the new Salafist political parties in Egypt take the opportunity to condemn anti-Coptic violence. Based on such statements, some media commentators are forecasting that involvement in the political process will have a moderating

effect on Salafist activities after the elections.

It would seem unwise to count on such forecasts. As one analyst (Shadi Hamid, of the Brookings Institute's Doha Center) recently remarked, 'the more Islamist parties you have, the more they have to compete with each other, and then they're going to want to outflank each other and outbid each other on who is the most Islamist.'

While there has been some respite in recent weeks from the violence, a priest at a Cairo church told Yasmine El-Rashidi of the *New York Review of Books* (July 14 issue) that the apparent calm was 'deceptive'. 'In this very neighbourhood', he said, 'people are still being insulted as they leave church; and we still have young girls disappearing, kidnapped...'

PETER DAY is a regular contributor to *The Spectator* magazine and a former New York and Washington correspondent for *The Australian* newspaper. His articles have also appeared in numerous other major publications, including *Quadrant* in Australia and the *National Interest* and *Weekly Standard* in the United States.

1. The Tribunal statement, dated July 13, was recently posted on the Tribunal's website at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/RRTA/2011/583.html>

# MEATLESS FRIDAYS

By Elizabeth Scalia

**I**N HER stupendous novel *In This House of Bredé*, author Rumer Godden chronicles the pre- and post-Second-Vatican-Council journey of a successful English professional woman who becomes an enclosed Benedictine nun. When the novel's main character, Philippa Talbot, is asked by a co-worker, "but will you be able to be obedient, a stiff-necked creature like you?" she responds rather naively, "I shall find it restful."

For the most part, she does. After a lifetime of settling and deciding matters for others, Philippa takes a kind of refuge in obedience. The vow only becomes difficult for her when it encroaches on a private issue she has managed to hold in reserve, even while trying to make a gift of her whole self, to God.

I was reminded of that while reading about a surprising statement issued last week by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, announcing the intended restoration of the Friday Fast, or, as it is commonly called, "meatless Fridays."

Every Friday is set aside by the Church as a special day of penance, for it is the day of the death of our Lord . . . The Bishops have decided to re-establish the practice that this should be fulfilled by abstaining from meat.

Wrapped as I am in nostalgia, I rejoiced to read this. My mother was such a dreadful cook that our Fridays, with or without meat, were as penitential as any other day of the week, but as a child I had always liked the cultural commonality that set Fridays aside and made them feel oddly, wonderfully *safe* and homey. In our working-class neighborhood the Sunday dinners might vary widely from roast beef to *braciola*, but on Fridays we were all taking cozily meatless meals. If my mother was heating up cans of tuna and cream of mushroom soup, my neighbors were having home-made pizza or scrambled eggs.

There was something comforting about these less-than-formal suppers

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where the modesty of the meal meant that food became incidental to the companionship and conversation which was brought to the fore. If company was coming, all the better – the sense of unity was broadened as our guest dug into the same simple fare as the rest of us.

Within a culture as poorly catechized as our own, though, most Catholics are not even aware that they have *always* been expected to sacrifice something of a Friday. For these people nostalgia alone may not be enough to

re-establish obedience to the Friday Fast. I was a grown woman before a priest told me that the lifting of the Friday ban on meat was not – as I had come to think of it – the equivalent of a doctrinal tooth extraction that replaced something with nothing and left a gaping hole in my understanding. Who knew that the Council's intent was to free the faithful to choose their own, more personally meaningful, sacrifice in remembrance of Good Friday?

Elizabeth Scalia. "The Ego vs Meatless Fridays." *On the Square* (May 24, 2011).

*Recovery from Cultural Amnesia*

# MEMORY'S BLACK HOLE

By Wanda Skowronska



AFTER A traumatic shock, some people forget where they are and even more importantly who they are. Paramedics in screeching ambulances often ask patients their names, to the chagrin of those patients who have not lost their memories and just want relief from pain. But they ask for a purpose, for forgetting who one is or forgetting one's life story is taken as a serious sign of disorder by medical professionals and psychologists and attempts are made to restore what has been lost.

What if the loss of memory is on the level of a society and culture? In *The Western Dreaming* (2001) John Carroll says the western world is in the process of forgetting its major stories. He says that 'the spirit cannot breathe without a story' and that 'Western culture runs on stories starting with Homer's mythic recounting of a few episodes from the tenth year of the Trojan War,' adding that it 'is not just the sacred stories that have faded. In the closing decades of the twentieth century the orthodox life-narratives also crumbled.'<sup>1</sup>

For whatever reason, whether traumatic or ideological, the western loss of the larger and smaller narratives which depicted the horizons of life, is a loss of memory on a grand scale, a sign of some deep disorder. Those suffering from the disorder usually don't know they are suffering, nor what a disorder is, and so many who live in forgetfulness of the historical, theological and philosophical legacy of the west, have no idea that they are wandering the world with amnesia, in a state of cultural Alzheimers. They wander around seeing churches, art and symbols, like dead men walking, not realising what they are seeing.

Pope John Paul II recognised the disorder of the times and approached

the matter, not with condemnation of the sick person but the compassion of a consummate spiritual healer. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa* [2003] he speaks of:

*...the loss of Europe's Christian memory and heritage, accompanied by a kind of practical agnosticism and religious indifference whereby many Europeans give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history.'*<sup>2</sup>

The history of Europe [and western civilisation] is incomprehensible he says, without reference to Christianity and its great periods of evangelisation

which provided the foundations for moral, social and scientific growth in the west. In similar vein Pope Benedict XVI [as Cardinal Ratzinger], in *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, (2004) says that the Pope 'is an advocate of Christian memory' - a reminder to all of the Christian realities in an age of forgetfulness.

One person who is aware of the forgetfulness of the age, particularly within his own profession is the American Catholic psychologist, academic and author, Paul Vitz. In his writings Vitz surveys a century of deconstruction of Christian memory within psychology and western society in general and has patiently worked to retrieve and reconstruct the Christian legacy in a readily comprehensible synthesis.

For example he reminds his peers that the rejection of Judeo-Christian thought in Freudian, behaviourist and humanistic psychological theories is a form of forgetting that amounts to an attempt to extinguish memory itself.

It ignores the fact that everyone has a story and psychology itself has a story. It ignores the fact that the term 'person' itself [presumably whom psychologists wish to heal] owes most of its origin to Christian thought. The very word 'psychology' can be translated as the 'study of the soul' though the term 'soul' is avoided by its theorists.

Just a century ago, Catholic psychologists had no difficulty in engaging in experimental psychology, rejoicing in its discoveries, while retaining an understanding of the human person as a union of a body and a soul. However, not only was the term 'soul' virtually forgotten in modern psychology but also the contribution of many extraordinary Catholic pioneers in psychology was erased from the memory banks.

## Respect based on love

THE MOST pernicious consequences of any philosophy of egoism which is embraced by institutions or by large numbers of people are identified by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as a set of "strategies to reduce the number of those who will eat at humanity's table". This is a key standard by which to evaluate the impact of any philosophy or theory. Christianity always seeks to measure human endeavours by their openness to the Creator and to all other creatures, a respect based firmly on love.

— *Jesus Christ The Bearer of the Water of Life*, an examination of New Age theory and practices, by the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Rome. St Pauls Publications 2003, p.46

Among them were Americans Father Edward Pace [1861-1938] and Fr Verner Moore [1877-1969]. They studied psychology with great interest, particularly the discoveries of Wilhelm Wundt [1832-1920], who started the first psychological laboratory in 1879 in Leipzig. Wundt, who was not a Catholic, was delighted to discuss the papal encyclical *Aeterni Patris* [also published in 1879] with the very Thomistic Fr Pace who had come to visit him. Pace in turn was delighted to discuss it with Wundt and one can only imagine this extraordinary scene where the American and German discuss the latest psychological advances with reference to papal encyclicals.

Pace stayed on in Leipzig to complete a doctorate in experimental psychology. He then returned to America to open the first psychology department in the Catholic university in Washington and taught Fr Verner Moore there.

In the subsequent 'Freudian' era, while Freud chose to ignore the Christian legacy, he nevertheless acknowledged the importance of narrative in each person's life for he had his patients recount their *stories*. As Paul Vitz says, the 'psychoanalyst's interpretation of the past is really a construction...that describes and summarises the client's past' and has 'narrative form'.<sup>23</sup> This is because narrative is a constructive organising principle for human action - 'people make up narratives about their own lives; that is people typically interpret their life as a story or narrative'.<sup>24</sup>

Freud himself used stories to 'explain' human behaviour - in particular the Oedipus myth which indicates that while narrative is important, the interpretation of the narrative is even more so.

Freud's version of reality - that boys love their mothers and hate their fathers has not stood the test of time - not even 100 years - and has been consigned to the dustbin of historical curiosities, even by Freudian psychologists. The Christian narrative by contrast, which states that we are created by God, that each person is a reflection of the *Imago Dei* and has an eternal destiny, has endured for millennia.

## The Most Ancient of Worships

IT SEEMS to me that Catholicism appealed to [Lord] Byron for three reasons. First, it satisfied his lifelong love of tradition. He calls Catholicism "the best religion" because "it is assuredly the oldest of the various branches of Christianity" and because it is "the most ancient of worships". As was the case for Edmund Burke, ideas and modes were to Byron proven and affirmed by their endurance through time, by their having imbued themselves long enough and deeply enough in a society to become genuine traditions. The longer we find a practice is followed, the more reason there would be to assume there is virtue in it. The longer an idea endures, the more reason there will be to believe this idea to be true. And while Byron detested sycophants such as "turncoat Southey" who shift and re-shift their views according to fashion, Byron adored men "of principle" such as Burke, who stick with their convictions through tough times. In Don Juan, Byron's ideal Catholic, Aurora Raby, is a model of courageous resilience.

The second reason for Catholicism's appeal to Byron is the fact that its doctrines bring manifest functional boons to its practitioners. Unlike mere "Cant religious" and "Cant moral" which are "without the smallest influence upon human actions," and unlike "drowsy frowzy" mystic speculation which diffuses itself in useless abstraction rather than in "The public mind," Catholicism's teachings actually do something real in the real human world. As Byron writes (to Thomas Moore, in March 1822): Catholicism is by far the most elegant worship, hardly excepting the Greek mythology. What with incense, pictures, statues, altars, shrines, relics, and the real presence, confession, absolution, there is something sensible to grasp at. Besides, it leaves no possibility of doubt.

— Excerpted from 'Byron, Catholicism and Don Juan XVII,' by David E. Goldweber, *Renascence*, Spring 1997.

One major reason that Freud's version of reality has faded is that, as a story, it offers little hope. Paul Vitz explains that it is not the kind of story that human beings are drawn to and refers to Northrop Frye's *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) to find a framework in which to understand types of narrative.<sup>5</sup> Vitz refers to 'the four great types of stories' which Frye identifies at the basis of all literature - Comedy, Romance, Tragedy and Irony. Vitz says that Freud's emphases are tragic and ironic in contrast to the Christian vision which is at base a romance and a comedy. Vitz points out that the only hope in the Freudian approach is psychoanalysis which provides equilibrium in a tragic acceptance of life's inalterable past, present and future.

The recall of the past is 'corroded by the process of analysis itself' because the person being analysed realises that there are 'no adventurous

solutions à la Indiana Jones' but rather a 'tragic ironic' view of the world' and a final 'heroic, though tragic working through of one's conflicts'.<sup>26</sup> Vitz says that the Freudian patient remains a tragic hero and the narrative weakness of psychoanalysis is that it seriously implies that 'the tragic and the ironic are superior forms of truth...It excludes from life the great truths of hope of purpose of reform' and 'undermines action of any kind'.<sup>27</sup>

One can say that for Freud and the humanistic psychologists, death is an inescapable tragedy for each human being with no meaning apart from total extinction. For the Christian, by contrast, life is a series of travails and suffering which end in a future in God's kingdom where every tear will be wiped away ending, with the 'wedding feast of the lamb' as the finale. Vitz refers to the life of St Paul in this regard:

## Mediaeval Doctor's Insignia

THERE IS required a vigorous examination by some lecture or disputation in which he must answer arguments. And then he has to be approved or rejected by a ballot of the members of the college according as the majority vote. And by the chancellor or vice-chancellor of the university is given him licence to receive the doctorate, either in theology or law or philosophy or medicine, and the power of occupying a chair, of lecturing in universities, disputing publicly, interpreting, glossing, and the like. Then the recipient of the degree, after making a brief speech in praise of the faculty, requests one of his promoters, whom he names and who is present, that the insignia of the doctorate may be given him. And that one rising, after commending the candidate's proficiency in the subject in which he is to receive the degree and commending the doctorate, gives him the insignia: namely, *first* a closed book that he may have that science close and familiar in mind and may keep it sealed from the unworthy and in such respects as it is not expedient to reveal. *Second*, he gives him an open book that he may teach others and make things plain. *Third*, he gives him a ring of espousal to that science. *Fourth*, a cap as a token of aureole or reward. *Fifth*, the kiss of peace.

— St Antoninus, *Summa Theologica* III 5,2,2. Usually quoted simply as *Antonino*, in Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 309. Antoninus, Saint Antonio Pierozzi, also called De Forciglioni was consecrated archbishop of Florence in 1446, and won the esteem and love of his people, especially by his energy and resource in combating the effects of the plague and earthquake in 1448 and 1453. He died on the 2nd of May 1459, and was canonized by Pope Adrian VI. in 1523.

*In many respects the life of St Paul as presented in the New Testament is a romance. His travels, persecutions and successes throughout the Mediterranean world. However, perhaps the better term to describe the adventures of St Paul and every Christian is a pilgrimage. We are all travellers - exiles - journeying through tribulations toward our home.*<sup>8</sup>

Each Christian is a protagonist, who like all protagonists in comedy and romance will emerge triumphant and exalted in the end. Thus the Christian approach to seeing a person's story is to fully acknowledge the suffering and tragedy of the past but to move to transcend it, seeing inner strengths and resilience of the client in the context of soundly based Christian hope.

Vitz himself as therapist has used narrative therapy with great success in his work as a psychologist and has enabled many to see a previously unalterably tragic narrative in a totally different way.

Thus for psychologists as for the western world, the narrative of Christianity is the source of enduring reality and hope. In *Ecclesia in Europa* Pope John Paul II reminded the world of this fact:

*After twenty centuries, the Church stands at the beginning of the third millennium with a message which is ever the same, a message which constitutes her sole treasure: Jesus Christ is Lord; in him, and in no one else, do we find salvation.*<sup>9</sup>

He added that only a God who reveals his plans can tell the whole story that unites this world with the

world beyond. In the end only 'Jesus is able to reveal and bring about the plan of God hidden therein.'<sup>10</sup>

The antidote to cultural amnesia is to restate what has been forgotten, to restate it in a way that speaks to the current era - this post Auschwitz, post gulag, post Christian, post colonial, post modern and post post modern world. Cultural amnesia has only spawned fear of the future, existential fragmentation, loss of solidarity and a vision of life apart from God - consequences of the secularist and subjectivist disorders of our times. The current era is in need of profound healing and is perhaps only too ready to hear what it has forgotten.

At its base the Christian 'story' invites trust - Christ's exhortation to trust in His divine mercy is a cosmic counterpoint to the emphasis on human trust in utopian stories, a counterpoint to the misplaced trust in human leaders, to the betrayed trust by institutional and ideological leaders. Jesus is not a human therapist but with divine empathy heals 'being' at its deepest level and prepares us for the continuing story beyond death. Faith in the God who has revealed the whole story leads to a trust in the only One who can be trusted. Pope Benedict [as Cardinal Ratzinger] puts it succinctly in saying that Christian faith, in its revelation of the true story of our lives, tells us that

*...faith does not offer man some psychotherapy - its psychotherapy is the truth.*<sup>11</sup>

Wanda Skowronska is a registered psychologist who works as a counsellor in inner city schools in Sydney. She has done voluntary work for the Catholic pro life organisation Human Life International, and is a regular contributor to *Annals*.

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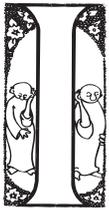
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*However fatuous an idea ... describe it as an example of progress, development, advance, evolution or 'brave' experiment and characterise any who oppose it as regressive, reactionary, eager 'to put the clock back' or conservative.*

# THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF SPIN

by Giles Auty



IT IS A fundamental feature of democracies that ideas and initiatives should sink or swim via a contest of arguments which should take place ideally within a public forum.

Indeed that is why at one time good schools encouraged their pupils to develop the skills needed for public discourse through so-called 'debating societies'.

By such a token, at least, superior ideologies and arguments ought to prevail.

Today, however, the waters of clear and rational debate have generally become sullied regrettably by dishonest rhetoric and political spin.

Just as unfortunately the effects of the latter are further exacerbated by a growing inability among younger voters especially to distinguish between arguments which are basically sound and those which are devious and untruthful.

A whole language which I have long thought of as 'the rhetoric of radicalism' regularly leads the way today in dishonest arguing by presenting initiatives which are clearly or potentially harmful as examples of 'inevitable' progress.

I am sure you can think of as many examples of the latter phenomenon as I, but if you cannot, the notion of gay marriage might serve as a typical instance.

An especially dangerous aspect of the rhetoric of radicalism is that it has effectively captured and enslaved a favourable-seeming language which it exploits for its own political or other purposes. A corollary to this is that opponents of its excesses are left with very scant rhetorical pickings indeed.

Thus however fatuous an idea it is clearly advantageous to describe it as an example of progress, development, advance, evolution or 'brave' experiment and to characterise any who oppose it as regressive, reactionary, eager 'to put the clock back' or conservative.

It is via such rhetorical means, in fact, that much of human society – like the Gadarene swine of old – might be described now not unjustly as making very rapid 'progress' indeed towards a cliff-edge.

It should be a major priority of our educators that they assist the children and young adults in their care to cut a path through thickets of such rhetoric and even – unthinkable by their strange standards at least – to try *to see things for what they are*.

## Does it really matter?

IT [HERESY] is the sin of sins, the very loathsome of things which God looks down upon in this malignant world. Yet how little do we understand of its excessive hatefulness! It is the polluting of God's truth, which is the worst of all impurities. Yet how light we make of it! We look at it, and are calm. We touch it and do not shudder. We mix with it, and have no fear. We see it touch holy things, and we have no sense of sacrilege. We breathe its odour, and show no signs of detestation or disgust. Some of us affect its friendship; and some even extenuate its guilt. We do not love God enough to be angry for His glory. We do not love men enough to be charitably truthful for their souls.

— Father Frederick Faber (1814-1863), *The Precious Blood*.

Such, at least, would be an invaluable service, but today fashionable relativists in Australian education would surely resist such an initiative through a fundamental muddling of truth and opinion in the minds of their charges.

Rhetoric, of course, dates back like democracy itself at least to classical times. Indeed, as Thrasymachus remarks in Plato's *The Republic* "What I say is that 'just' or 'right' means nothing but what is in the interest of the stronger party."

During my lifetime, at least, democracy has nevertheless been hailed regularly as a Western ideal.

Indeed, Western countries as a whole try to lead tyrannical or oligarchic states towards such an ideal of government while, in many cases, failing to recognise sufficiently the erosion of democratic principles that exists within their own boundaries.

In most cases a proliferation of international 'human rights' issues within such national frontiers is to blame.

Generally and genetically, 'human rights' causes are products of secularist post-modernist ideologies such as political correctness and multiculturalism which seek to enforce social behaviour, not via debate, but through increasingly punitive forms of legislation.

Ironically, while underprivileged states may yearn for the processes of democracy, various factions within privileged democracies such as Australia are attempting today to impose their wills increasingly by undemocratic - and often semi-totalitarian - means.

In a recent article on such matters by Janet Albrechtsen in *The Australian* on August 3 its author pointed out

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– Editor, *Annals*

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3147	MR & MRS T G FAHY	17	2121	MR P F CROMBIE	17
5066	MR & MRS M LAGINESTRA	7	2208	F & J SCARRA	67
2086	MR M GILLETT	50	2135	E M & M A ROSS	17
4670	MR & MRS P G BARNES	7	2032	MRS E M HILL	24
2586	MR & MRS R J BERRY	37	2594	MISS M H MCCABE	20
3131	MRS M CROWE	4			
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just some of the tactics used of late here to muzzle free speech: "Over the past few weeks, some on the left have claimed that those of us who have raised questions about multiculturalism, immigration and the relationship between Islam and modernity have blood on our hands for the mass murder in Oslo. Here, murder is used as a muzzle to close down free speech. And this is just the latest addition to a growing list of tactics to curb free speech and even worse, to stifle genuine inquiry.

"Consider the other tricks in recent years. To close down discussion about, say, immigration or border control, you call your opponents racists and point to xenophobia in the community. Opponents are not just wrong they're evil. Their views should not be aired in a civilised society."

As my former colleague at *The Spectator* Mark Steyn rightly pointed out "free speech is not a Left-Right thing. It's a free-unfree thing."

Another trick Albrechtsen points to herself is to exclude certain people from the national discourse: books, ideas and people who challenge the post-modernist status quo are simply ignored.

Unsurprisingly the Germans have a precise word for this process: *totschweigtaktik* or death by silence.

Over the sixteen years in which I have lived in Australia I have become very familiar indeed with such a process myself which is basically why I no longer appear here in the mainstream press.

Indeed that is also why, God and health willing, I hope to return ultimately to Europe where views such as mine are still acceptable currency as well as a recognised part of national discourse.

However, if the editor of *Annals* permits, I am more than willing to continue my reflections in its pages on the problems facing Christians and Christianity in the curious, generally unbelieving - and often unbelievable - world of today.

GILES AUTY was born in the UK and trained privately as a painter. He worked professionally as an artist for 20 years. Publication of his *The Art of Self Deception* swung his career towards criticism. He was art critic for *The Spectator* from 1984 to 1995. He continues to devote himself to his original love - painting. He is a regular contributor

# DOMUS AUSTRALIA

By George Cardinal Pell

SIXTY THOUSAND Australians visit the city of Rome each year, a significant part of the much larger group who come to Europe and usually make London their base. Despite the weather it is easy for Australians to feel at home in London, because of our shared language, common institutions and similar life styles.

Rome is another story, being once the centre of a vast Empire which lasted for six hundred years in Western Europe (and for another thousand years in the Eastern Byzantine Empire of Constantinople, the New Rome) and continuing now as the home of the Pope, the successor of St. Peter and as the centre of the Catholic world. The Italian language is different and so are the habits of mind and the systems of administration.

Many of the Australians visitors to Rome are Christian pilgrims. To help these people get the most out of their time in Italy the Archdiocese of Sydney with three partners, Melbourne, Perth and Lismore (and the support of all the Australian Dioceses) is about to open an accommodation and information centre in Rome, to be called *Domus Australia*, the Latin terms for *Australia House* or an Australian Home.

In Rome one does as the Romans do, so we searched for two years for a suitable property, prepared plans for another two years, while the work of construction also lasted two years.

Incidentally the property was purchased from the Marist Fathers, who run St. Patrick's Church at Church Hill in the C.B.D. of Sydney and were the first missionaries in New Zealand and the Southern Pacific.

On Friday May 27 the builders officially handed over the building so that the fit-out could be completed and the furniture installed. I celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in the beautifully renovated chapel for 150 business people associated with the venture, architects, builders, archaeologists etc, and we then moved to the conference

centre below, set up with translation facilities, for the speeches and formal hand-over.

Australians do not usually celebrate at this stage of proceedings, but it was a very happy occasion and a useful stimulus to complete the works. The official opening will take place in October, when the Australian bishops

will be in Rome to present their five-yearly reports to Pope Benedict.

In 726 a pilgrim centre was opened in Rome for Saxon pilgrims from England. Australia is now joining an ancient tradition.

— Cardinal Pell is Archbishop of Sydney, and Metropolitan Archbishop of the suffragan dioceses of New South Wales, Australia

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*Four hundred years of King James's English Bible. Part III*

# IMPOSING RELIGIOUS CHANGE ON AN UNWILLING NATION

*By* Paul Stenhouse, MSC



THE IRONY of a renegade Catholic son of a murdered Catholic Scottish queen being responsible for consolidating English Protestant dominance over his fellow Celtic-speaking Catholic Scots, to say nothing of the Irish, Welsh, Cornish and Devonians, seems to have escaped the notice of most of the media that are celebrating the fourth centenary of the publication of the English Bible named after James I of England and James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots.

An additional irony, surely, is that the roots of the Tudor monarchs who paved the way for this English and Protestant dominance – Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I – were in Wales, in Penmynydd near Anglesey; and Catholic. St Gredifael, the patron saint of the Tudor family's church in Penmynydd, must find the anti-Catholic and anti-Papal fruits of the War of the Roses, bitter indeed.

## The English people and the Pope

The enduring myth that no amount of scholarship or refutation seems able to dispel, is that all these changes, whose long-term effects we see all around us these days, occurred because of outrage at the Church and hatred for the authority of the Pope on the part of the ordinary people. The claims of the English Protestant Bishop Mandell Creighton have become Divine Writ for many fundamentalists:

There never was a time in England when the papal authority was not resented and really the final act of the repudiation of that authority followed quite naturally as a result of a long

series of similar acts that had taken place from earliest times.<sup>1</sup>

For a thoroughgoing dismissal of this opinion from a fair-minded fellow Protestant with little sympathy for or understanding of Catholicism, see James Cairdner's *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*.<sup>2</sup> There was no general 'resentment'. There was no 'long series of similar acts from earliest times'. That is the truth.

Cairdner could find no evidence of a general dislike in England for Papal authority in Church matters before Papal authority was repudiated by the English Parliament to please Henry VIII.

Nor could he find any evidence for the claim that the nation thought that it would be more independent if the Pope's authority were to be replaced by the King's.

## Henry's New Church

THE very antagonism to which [the Church] was committed by the rancorous hatred of Henry VIII, bound it in some degree to depart widely from whatever depended on papal approbation. And though in its new career and modified independence it professed to be guided by primitive antiquity, it was of necessity influenced by the sentiments and opinions of those classes to whom it was mainly indebted for its new position.

— J. S. Brewer, *The Reign of Henry VIII from his accession to the death of Wolsey*, John Murray, London, 1884, vol. ii, pp.475-476. Brewer was a Protestant.

Had such a general dislike existed, he asks, before political considerations imposed themselves on the spiritual, why was there never any attempt to overthrow Papal jurisdiction before the time of Henry VIII? For the Pope's jurisdiction and power were spiritual – and as he notes – a spiritual power can rule only by the willing obedience of its subjects.

'That Rome exercised her spiritual power by the willing obedience of Englishmen in general, and that they regarded it as a really wholesome power, even for the control it exercised over secular tyranny, is a fact that requires no very intimate knowledge of English literature to bring home to us. Who was the 'holy blissful martyr' whom Chaucer's pilgrims went to seek at Canterbury? One who had resisted his sovereign in the attempt to interfere with the claims of the Papal Church. For that cause, and for no other, he died: and for that cause and for no other, pilgrims who went to visit his tomb, regarded him as a saint. It was only after an able and despotic king had proved himself stronger than the spiritual power of Rome, that the people of England were divorced from the Roman allegiance; and there is abundant evidence that they were divorced from it, at first, against their will.'<sup>3</sup>

## The English People and the Church

What then was really at stake in the ensuing struggle between Church and the King? Adding to the ironies mentioned above, it was not as is generally claimed, a struggle for the independence of the State from the Church; in matters that pertained to Caesar, the State was independent. The struggle that culminated in the Act of Supremacy, and the martyrdom of

untold hundreds of Catholics, was for the independence of the Church from the power of the King.

‘It was essentially the same as in the days of Becket. It was a contest, not of the English people, but of the King and his government, with Rome.’<sup>4</sup>

Gairdner’s conclusion is borne out by more recent scholarship. Eamon Duffy, in his *The Stripping of the Altars*, notes that late mediaeval Catholicism exerted an extraordinarily strong, diverse and vigorous hold over the imagination and the loyalty of the Catholic people of English, commoners and nobles, up until ‘the very moment of the reformation.’<sup>5</sup>

‘Traditional religion had about it no particular marks of exhaustion or decay, and indeed in a whole host of ways, from the multiplication of vernacular religious books to adaptations within the national and regional cult of the saints, was showing itself well able to meet new needs and new conditions. Nor does it seem to me that tendencies towards the “privatizing” of religion, or growing lay religious sophistication and literacy, or growing lay activism and power in gild and parish, had in them that drive towards Protestantism which some historians have discerned. That there was much in late medieval religion which was later developed within a reformed setting is obvious, but there was virtually nothing in the character of religion in late medieval England which could only or even best have been developed within Protestantism.’

Duffy makes the point that the Protestant religion of Elizabethan England was full of continuities with and developments of what had gone before when England was Catholic. It was simply impossible to eliminate from the faith and culture of believers every vestige of belief that they could trace back to the first Christians who brought the Faith to the British Isles.

‘Even after the iconoclastic hammers and scraping-tools of conviction Protestantism had done their worst, enough of the old imagery and old resonances remained in the churches in which the new religion was preached to complicate, even, in the eyes of some, to compromise, the new teachings. The preservation within the prayer-book pattern of the old rites of passage and some of the old forms of reverence made a totally

## A Middle Class Church

RITUAL and ceremonies might be unsafe in the hands of men who, from the days of Tyndall, denounced all subordination of orders, all ceremonies, all habits distinguishing the clergy from the laity; but they could not be unsafe, it was supposed, in the keeping of those who were bound to maintain them, and see that others maintained them. **W** i t h the exception, however; of Laud, if that can be called an exception, and of those who attempted to imitate him, an opposite tendency has been tacitly and steadily advancing with the advance of the Church of England. Deference to the wishes of the great middle classes has, at all times, been the ruling influence in quarters where it might have been least expected. One century after another exhibits the same phenomenon. Whatever of ancient faith or of strict ecclesiastical character the Church of England still retains, it owes to a period antecedent to the Reformation. Its merely popular elements are of later date. Any great divergence from its orbit, by influences external or internal, is of a merely temporary nature; for the same forces which determined its career at the outset will be sure to draw it back again eventually into its original path.

— J. S. Brewer, *The Reign of Henry VIII from his accession to the death of Wolsey*, John Murray, London, 1884, vol.ii, p.478.

fresh beginning an impossibility, doubtless to the relief of most of the population. The voracious lay appetite for religious literature which had already been in evidence in the fifteenth century, and which the advent of printing stoked furiously, continued to be catered for in books and broadsides which, for a time at least, freely employed the old types of religious imagery or passable imitations of it. Yet when all is said and done, the Reformation was a violent disruption, not the natural fulfilment, of most of what was vigorous in late medieval piety and religious practice.’<sup>6</sup>

### The Lincolnshire uprising

That both Religion and Politics were under threat, and that radical change was in the air, was clear to the likes of St Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher who were to give their lives rather than submit to them. Other Catholics both in Church and State initially felt confused and immobilised by the ferocity with which change was imposed. As Gairdner admits

‘As regards national feeling, the people evidently regarded the cause of the Church as the cause of liberty. That their freedom suffered grievously by the abolition of papal jurisdiction under Henry VIII there can be no manner of doubt. ... The immediate effect of the abolition of Papal jurisdiction in England was not a Reformation at all; it was grosser

demoralisation than before. The Reformation, in fact, if we date it from the withdrawal of obedience to Rome, was really, in the main, an immoral movement stimulated by abuses to which Rome itself had been a great deal too indulgent.’<sup>7</sup>

In early October 1536, in Lincolnshire, more than 40,000 commoners and nobles marched to Lincoln Cathedral and demanded the right to continue practising their Catholic Faith, protested against dissolution of the monasteries and the appointment to the council of Cromwell and Rich, and demanded that the religious images of their churches be left untouched.

The Duke of Suffolk chose not to fight, and negotiations were entered into. Then the ringleaders were seized, including the parish priest of Louth, and Makerel, Abbot of Barlings; these latter were hanged at Tyburn. All the other leaders were captured and hanged over the next 10 days, including one Thomas Moygne, a lawyer from Willingham who was hanged, drawn and quartered.<sup>8</sup>

### The Pilgrimage of Grace

In five other counties the insurrection assumed a more formidable appearance. From the borders of Scotland to the Lune and the Humber the inhabitants bound themselves by oath to stand by one another:

‘For the love which they bore to Almighty God, his Faith, the Holy Church and the maintenance thereof; to the preservation of the king’s person and his issue; to the purifying of the nobility; and to expel all villein blood and evil counsellors from His Grace and Privy Council; not for any private profit nor to do displeasure to any private person, nor to slay or murder through envy; but for the restitution of the Church and the suppression of heretics and their opinions.’<sup>9</sup>

This was what became known as the *Pilgrimage of Grace*. Around nine thousand of them set out on October 13, 1536 carrying banners with the five wounds of Jesus on them, and a chalice and host.

In every town they passed through on their way to York which they occupied, the monks and nuns were restored to their monasteries and convents. Among their demands were the suppression of heretical books; the repeal of the statutes that abolished Papal authority in England, bastardised the Princess Mary, suppressed the monasteries, and gave the king the first fruits of benefices. They further demanded that Cromwell the Vicar General, Audeley the Chancellor, and Rich the Attorney General, should be punished for subverting the law and supporting heresy; that Lee and Layton, the visitors of the northern monasteries should be punished for extortion, peculation and other abominable acts; etc.

The king offered the insurgents an unlimited pardon and a promise that their grievances would be discussed in parliament to be assembled at York. None of these promises was kept.

### Cumberland and Westmorland Catholic Uprisings

Then February 1537 saw an uprising in Cumberland and Westmorland called Bigod’s Rebellion because it was led by Sir Francis Bigod, of Settrington in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Robert Aske, a London barrister who had led the Pilgrimage of Grace but had not been involved in this Yorkshire uprising, was hanged in chains from the walls of York Castle as a warning to other would-be ‘rebels’. Two hundred and sixteen nobles were executed, along with six

## Abolition of Papal Power

THE Reformation ... was already in [Henry’s] reign irrevocably established. Its triumph was complete - The abolition of the Papal power, the destruction of those societies where that power had been most vigorously maintained, the transfer of the spiritual supremacy to the Crown, altered the whole position of the Church of England. It was no longer tied to a consensus of doctrine or of discipline involved in the determination of the Pope as the supreme representative of the Catholic Church.

— J. S. Brewer, *The Reign of Henry VIII from his accession to the death of Wolsey*, John Murray, London, 1884, vol.ii, pp.475-476. He was a Protestant.

abbots, thirty-eight monks, and sixteen parish priests.

Whatever may be the judgement of history on the futility or otherwise of these uprisings, they make transparently clear the fact that the schism that Henry caused with Rome was far from popular with the English people – something borne out by the enthusiasm with which Mary Tudor was welcomed as Queen of England on the death of the boy-king Edward VI.

### The Revolt in Cornwall and Devon

I shall conclude this too-brief look at a significant and largely ignored part of English history by referring to the attempts made by the Cornishmen and Devonians to stem the tide of Protestantism.

The introduction of a Book of Common Prayer in English to replace the Latin Missal in 1549 provoked rebellion among the Celtic speaking Catholics of Cornwall and Devon. In June that year uprisings broke out all around Cornwall and thousands of people gathered with their priests at the ancient hill-fort of Castle Canyke near Bodmin.

The revolt spread to Devon, and the day after use of the new book came

into force villagers demanded that their priest don his Catholic vestments and say Mass from the Latin Roman Missal.

By July 1549 around 5,000 Cornish and Devon rebels had gathered. According to Professor Mark Stoyle, of the University of Southampton, among the list of demands the rebels put was one that stated:

‘We will not receive this new service ... but we will have our old service of Matins, Mass, evensong and procession in Latin not in English, as it was before. And so we, the Cornish men, whereof certain of us understand no English, utterly refuse this new English.’

Predictably the rebellion of the Cornishmen and Devonians fared no better than the rebellions of the other English counties we have described above.

The parish priest of St Keverne, in Cornwall, was taken to London, hanged, drawn and quartered and his head stuck on London Bridge.

The parish priest of Chipping Norton was sentenced to hang in chains from his own church steeple until he died.

Clyst St Mary’s mediaeval bridge in Devon was where nine hundred rebels surrendered to Lord Russell’s troops. The English commanders ordered their troops to kill the captives. A contemporary chronicler records that it took just 10 minutes to slit the throats of all nine hundred prisoners.

The Cornish parish priest of St Thomas’s church in Exeter was hanged in chains from the top of his church tower in his Catholic vestments, with a holy water bucket, a pair of rosary beads ‘and such other like popish trash hanged about him’.<sup>10</sup>

*Next month:* Part IV. The Catholic Church and the Bible.

1. *Historical Lectures and Addresses*, Freeport, N.Y. 1903, p.150, quoted James Cairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation*, MacMillan & Co, Ltd, London 1908, vol. i, pp.3-4.
2. *passim*, but see especially pp.4,5ff.
3. *ibid.* p.5.
4. *ibid.*
5. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400 –c.1580*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1992, p.4.
6. *ibid.*
7. *op.cit.* vol.i, pp.6; 380.
8. John Lingard, *The History of England*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1903 vol.v, pp. 82,83; also Baron Halpenny, ‘Lincolnshire Uprising – a Very Religious Affair’ BBC, July 2009.
9. Lingard, *op.cit.*, vol. cit. pp.83-84.
10. See ‘The Prayer Book Rebellion’ Charlotte Hodgeman talks to Professor Mark Stoyle, in BBC History Magazine, vol.11, no.12 December, 2010.

*The old Church with its splendid ceremonials, its constant holidays, its wide waste places of idleness and devotion, its multiplied Orders and intricate ritual, appeared little suited to the altered circumstances of the times*

## THE 'NOBILITY' OF MONEY

By J. S. Brewer

THE DISCOVERY of the New World, the rapid increase of commerce, fostered by the peaceful times of Henry VII and Henry VIII, so disastrous to the men of the sword, raised the small merchant and shipowner into importance. The increasing taste for luxury and the produce of foreign countries poured new riches into the coffers of the tradesman.

Thus it was that everything tended to exalt the middle classes of the nation, as much from their ever increasing wealth and importance, as from the weakness and want of influence in the classes above and below them; the latter of whom still remained stationary, no better than they had been for centuries in all that related to the comforts and improvements of life; admitted to no power, possessing no influence.

To men who were thus indebted for their importance to habits of frugality, activity, and industry, brought less than any other under the direct influence of the Church, and weighing the worth of most things by its money-value, the old Church, with its splendid ceremonials, its constant holidays, its wide waste places of idleness and devotion, its multiplied orders and intricate ritual, appeared little suited to the altered circumstances of the times.

They listened with avidity to proposals for a more beneficial distribution of the Church's property; they began to reckon how the burthens of the State might be shifted from their own shoulders by a new appropriation of ecclesiastical and monastic endowments.

But until now, against any such attempt they had to fear the displeasure of the Church itself and its sovereign

Pontiff, not altogether an empty terror. Nor could they hope for any reforms except through the power and supremacy of the sovereign.

Hence their tendency to exalt the royal authority above all other; their unreasoning loyalty to the Crown, augmented into fanaticism by the vigour, determination, and courage which signalized Henry's proceedings against the Pope and the clergy.

In their minds the King, of necessity, became the representative of the supreme authority in the nation, and they were prepared to support him in the utmost extension of his pretensions. In these reforms they were aided by every device calculated to render the spiritual authority odious and contemptible in the person of its chief representative. It was the policy of Henry, by proclamations, by sermons, by popular appeals, to decry and calumniate adherence to the Papacy, as something unmanly, un-English, and unholy. So the civil authority gained strength in the person of the King, notwithstanding his violence and his injustice. But beyond this, beyond the successful assertion of the prerogatives of the sovereign, which would not have been so readily admitted had the old feudal nobility survived, the Reformation advanced no further in the reign of Henry VIII. The suppression of the monasteries, as the constant assertors of an opposite principle, followed as a matter of course. But their fall and the transfer of their property to the Crown became the easier, because it was a realization of those utilitarian schemes of the middle classes, which appear again and again, for converting ecclesiastical property to secular uses.

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— Excerpt from: J. S. Brewer, *The Reign of Henry VIII from his accession to the death of Wolsey*, John Murray, London, 1884, vol.ii, pp.473-475.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Simon Leys: Essays in truth*

# SUBTLE, NOT SIMPLE

By James Murray



GENESIS was the first essay. Make that *arguably* the first. Such is the breadth and depth of scholarship exhibited by Simon Leys (pen-name of Pierre Ryckmans) that he may well cite a Chinese document that predates Genesis. Which is not to suggest that he is a world heavyweight pedant.

On the contrary, Leys wears his learning so lightly that his writing style is reminiscent of the pugilism of Muhammad Ali (Cassius Clay): 'Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee'. Here it is worth noting that your reviewer half expects to hear Leys ask: didn't the phrase originate with Ali's trainer Bundini Brown?

Leys gives readers the impression he is talking to them as equals. In turn, this suggests why he has such a formidable record as a Sinologist and teacher (Australian National University,

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Simon Leys, *Collected Essays: The Hall of Uselessness*, Black Inc, Melbourne, 2011, hb, rrp \$49.95

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University of Sydney and what might be called external studies of Beijing in which he recorded the truth when many were lost in Maolatry).

Among his students was Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister, currently Foreign Minister and some believe Prime Minister in waiting. Leys reached a wider class through the ABC Boyer Lectures in 1996, and through his novella *The Death of Napoleon* (filmed with Ian Holm in the title role).

His topics are characteristically wide ranging. China gets a whole section; given his enthralling learning, this is not enough. His most invaluable insight is that China's long-lived civilization is the binding force and dynamism of its people.

Among his heroes are Gilbert Keith Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, the fabled ChesterBelloc who took on all comers, including what might be called the WellShaw, its modern version being Hitch.

Chesterton in particular now enjoys greater influence abroad than in his native England. The inexplicability of this might be worth another essay. After all, GKC (pace Edward Lear) can be seen as the original begetter of British absurdist humour, epitomised by *The Monty Python Show*. The line of descent? The New Zealander Ted Kavanagh, a Chestertonian, scripted the BBC radio show ITMA (*It's That Man Again*) which starred comedian Tommy Handley as a kind of Napoleon of Notting Hill. ITMA inspired *The Goon Show* by Spike Milligan and company, and out of *The Goon Show* came *Monty Python*.

For Evelyn Waugh, Leys reserves his most subtle judgments, pointing out that Waugh was above all driven by craftsmanship. He is also at his most eloquent in praise of that force of nature turned writer, Honore de Balzac from whom Shakespeare would have been happy to pilfer plot lines as he did from Plutarch.

Apropos. On Shakespeare as seen by French authors such as Andre Gide, it would have been interesting to read whether Leys thinks Gide's low opinion was less influenced by Voltaire than by ignorance of Shakespeare's being a member of a resistance (or recusancy), which retained loyalty to the old Catholic (and papalist) Faith rather than to the Anglican (and monarchist) version that suppressed it.

Gide's opinion would surely have been modified had he disdained the received view that Shakespeare was a pillar of the Elizabethan and Jacobean establishments (using the word loosely to describe a couple of tottery monarchies).

## A Handful of Dust

AMONG Waugh's works, *The Life of the Right Reverend Ronald Knox* — a biography of the scholarly priest who translated the Vulgate into English — is probably one of the less read; the author had intended it essentially as an act of *pietas* to the memory of a deceased friend. Yet nothing written by Waugh is indifferent; at the very beginning of this book there is an episode of haunting power, which although bearing little relation to the main topic, must obviously have affected Waugh in a very personal way. In a few memorable pages, he describes the death of Knox's maternal grandfather, an Anglican clergyman who ended his missionary life in Zanzibar in a state of total poverty, loneliness and dereliction, under the indifferent and uncomprehending eyes of the natives. This seems to have been a theme that presented special meaning for Waugh. Earlier on, for instance, he once summed up the subject of *A Handful of Dust* as 'the civilised man's helpless plight among savages'. The interesting twist in the latter description is that, if indeed the main character of the novel ends up as a captive in the Amazonian jungle, this final mishap occurs merely as a sort of epilogue — actually the true savages who destroyed his life with mindless cruelty were smart members of fashionable London society.

— Simon Leys, *The Angel and the Octopus*, Duffy & Snellgrove, Sydney 1999, pp.185-186.

No one reading Shakespeare through the prism of Catholic belief can fail to realise that his spectrum is Catholic. (See: Clare Asquith's *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare*).

Quotations abound in the essays. The first thought is to compare Leys to a miner, digging through the overburden of scholarship to find nuggets of gold. Not good enough: make it diamonds amid sludge. Worse.

As an essayist Simon Leys is a great jeweller, creating new settings for the more or less bright, shining quotations of others.

Difficult to choose a quotation by way of illustration of this skill: possibly most apt, at a time when non-believers form quasi-religious mover and shaker congregations, is his setting of three lines by Miguel de Suanunzo (1846-1936), 'Basque, Spaniard, European, universal humanist':

'I suffer at your expense,  
'Non-existing God, for if You were to exist.

'Me, too, I would truly exist.'

Leys uses his essay, *The Imitation of Our Lord Don Quixote*, to set the quotation off by remarking: 'In other words: God does not exist, and the clearest evidence of this – as all of you can see – I do not exist either. Thus, with Unamuno, every statement of disbelief turns into a paradoxical profession of faith. In Unamuno's philosophy, faith ultimately creates the thing it contemplates – not as a fleeting auto-suggestion but as an objective and everlasting reality that can be transmitted to others.'

Black Inc and its founder, Morry Schwartz, enhancer of the classic essay through his publishing of the *Quarterly Essay*, have given Simon Leys the kind of book his work deserves.

Chris Feik edited the collection. Not a typo (literal?) in sight. Such meticulousness, despite spellchecking, is more difficult to achieve with computer setting than with hot-metal printing overseen by those unsung specialists whose formal title was Correctors of the Press.

The essay is an inextinguishable taper. *The Spectator* maintains an unbroken line of descent from the 18<sup>th</sup> century essayists, Addison and Steele. *Quadrant* under its Addison and Steele,

## ANNALS CROSSWORD NO. 66

**Across Clues**

- 1 & 11 across. Final resting place of the poor man in Luke 16:22-23 (8,5)
5. Large stretches of water (6)
10. The mother of Solomon (9)
11. See 1 across
12. Fresh water game fish (5)
13. A Neolithic village in NE Scotland, in the Orkney Islands (5,4)
14. Bulb shaped roofs characteristic of Byzantine and Russian church architecture (5,5)
17. An old prophetess who "prayed day and night in the temple" (Luke 2:36-37) (4)
20. A frame that contains the panes of a window or door (4)
21. Source of water near town of Sychar, where Jesus ordered a Samaritan woman to give him a drink (John 4:5-7) (6,4)
23. Slightly ill; looking a little pale (3,6)
25. Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
27. British post-war artist; works include "Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion"; first name Francis (5)
28. Purpose or goal; aim (9)
29. One of the Apostles (6)
30. Seat of the European commission (8)

**Down Clues**

1. Large sea bird (9)
2. Prefix meaning back or backwards (5)
3. Wavering; irresolute (8)
4. Encounters (5)

6. Highly venomous snakes (6)
7. A promise or pledge of support (9)
8. A department of N France, scene of heavy fighting in World War I (5)
9. Capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina (8)
15. By that very fact or act (4,5)
16. A musical composition based on a religious theme (8)
18. Day celebrated on Nov 1 (3,6)
19. Overwhelms with amazement and wonder (8)
22. One of the women who announced the resurrection to the Apostles (6)
23. The path followed by a planet (5)
24. A device having blades used to lift and propel a helicopter (5)
26. Banishment (5)

**SOLUTION TO CRYPTIC CROSSWORD NO. 65**

C	R	O	A	G	H	P	A	T	R	I	C	K	
V	U	R	O	B	E	O	A						
I	G	N	O	R	A	N	C	E	T	E	N	O	R
N	G	A	E	R	R	F	C						
C	A	S	I	N	O	S	D	R	A	K	E	H	
E		G	T	E	I	R	E						
N	E	P	H	E	W	L	E	O	N	A	R	D	O
T	A		F	N		E	L						
F	A	L	L	I	B	L	E	O	V	E	R	D	O
E	E	M	A	A	I	N	G						
R	E	S	T	I	N	G	D	A	V	I	N	C	I
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E	R	I	C	A	H	I	G	H	L	I	G	H	T
R	N	T	I	I	D	H	S						
R	E	D	E	M	P	T	O	R	I	S	T	S	

© Brian O'Neill December 2011

James McAuley and Peter Coleman, became a more recent redoubt of the form. Lightly disguised, the essay can also be found in editorials, personal columns and reviews of all kinds (theatre, movie, book and sport) as well as in 44-character twitters (*its reductio ad absurdum?*)

Necessarily for review purposes, the collection was read in a couple of sittings. Ideally it should be read in the equivalent of nightcap drams. Not, be it said, single malt because Leys in his

essays is above all a blender – a blender of his own work with that of master wordsmiths against whose timeless benchmarks he is by no means an apprentice.

Indeed Simon Leys stands with those, including Conrad and Nabokov, rated masters of English prose though they came to it as their second language.

JAMES MURRAY is a Glasgow-born Catholic. A Sydney-based writer his career includes ten years in Fleet Street, and contributions to Australia's major publications. He writes *Annals* film reviews, and is the author of our ever-popular *Media Matters*.

*'what I mean is that we ought to go to school again'*

## 'UNLESS YOU BE LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN ...'

By G.K. Chesterton

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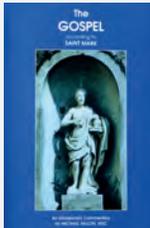
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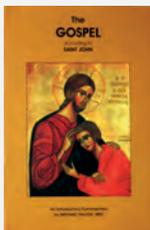
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IN VARIOUS poor parts of London there are excellent institutions called 'Guilds of Play,' in which poor children (somewhat pathetically) sing the songs or dance the dances which were natural to their fathers when England was comparatively free.

Here luckless but lively gutter-snipes, who have never seen anything but chimney-pots, sing old English songs which take for granted the greenwood and the meadow. Nay, the child sings songs in praise of the legendary London, which was paved with gold, in the very entrails of the real London, that is paved with mire.

I once took a Stockbroker, who is a friend of mine, to enjoy this excruciating and poetic irony. We sat on a platform all by ourselves, and in front of us danced a large number of little girls in pointed caps of pink or white cotton, little girls from the London slums, many of them pretty and nearly all of them graceful.

My friend the Stockbroker was much impressed. He had never met the English poor (that is, the English people) before in his life. He did not know that the English poor are polite to excess, and contain many middle-class and aristocratic traditions, being descended from all sorts of people who have been too honourable to get on in the world.

We meet refinement among the poor about five times as often as we meet vulgarity among the rich; and, when we remember how often we meet that, the calculation becomes maddening in its immensity, like the calculations of astronomy.

The Stockbroker, I say, was touched by the instinctive elegance of all the little girls in front of him, and expressed it in the explosive remark that by George! they danced very well. 'Yes,' I said, 'they dance better than we should, you and I. You would not look so pretty in a pink cap. I should not caper and twirl upon my toe with the same agility. Oh, my friend, it is we who need to be taught. The true hope of modern society is not expressed when one Stockbroker sits on a platform looking at a row of dancing schoolgirls. The true hope will only begin when one schoolgirl sits on a platform looking at a row of dancing Stockbrokers.'

It is not enough that I enjoy seeing a child jumping about; I always did. The real Renaissance will only come when the child sees me jumping about, which I never did.

'Come,' I cried to my friend the Stockbroker, 'come, let us begin the divine dance of the future!'

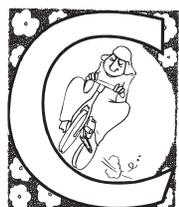
Let all these children come up on to the platform and watch us, while you and I whirl round the room in a symbolic waltz, representing in every fantastic gesture of arm or leg the relations between literature and finance.' My friend the Stockbroker answered: 'I think it would save time if you stated with some clearness what you mean.' 'Very well,' I said, with similar severity and shortness, 'what I mean is that we ought to go to school again.'

— G. K. Chesterton, *The Illustrated London News*, October 16, 1909.

*Saudi Arabia is the key to the expansion of Islamist movements in the Middle East*

## RELIGIOUS DISSENT IN SAUDI ARABIA

By Jude P. Dougherty



ALL IT WHAT you may, 'The Islamic awakening,' 'al Sahwa al Islamiyya,' or simply 'Sahwa,' the movement described by Stephane Lacroix

was absent from the Saudi Arabian landscape until it emerged in the 1990s.

The *Sahwa*, Lacroix finds, must be regarded as a distinctive form of Islamism, a hybrid of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Wahhabi tradition. True, the *Sahwa* was preceded by other movements in the Middle East, notably by the Muslim Brotherhood that emerged in Egypt in 1928.

The Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), created it as an organization to promote the establishment of an Islamic state that would be ruled by Shari'a.

The movement grew rapidly and provided crucial support to the Egyptian revolution of July 1952, the one that brought Gamal Abdel Nasser to power.

Lacroix's time framework for this work begins with the late nineteenth century when Muslim reformism first began to appear, but she is primarily interested in the 1960s and the 1970s, a period that witnessed the development of a vast social movement advancing a modern form of Islam throughout the Middle East. Her study of Islam is further narrowed to that which occurred in Saudi Arabia in the 1970s when an intellectual class began to show hostility to both Sufism and popular Islam.

By Lacroix's account, the intelligentsia became open to Western modes of thinking in the 1970s largely because Saudi Arabia had sent students to foreign universities, at first in Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq, beginning in the 1940s, and later to Western universities. State bureaucratic

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Lacroix, Stephane. *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*. Trans. by George Holoch. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011

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administrations co-opted many of the returning university students. The young intelligentsia, whose training had introduced them to liberal movements, consequently became in many cases nationalistic, leftist, socialist, or communist.

Lacroix finds it worthy of note that liberalization in some quarters first took the form of questioning classical rules of poetry.

Lacroix began her study convinced that Saudi Arabia remains a blind spot in many Western studies of Islamism. 'Although all writers agree,' she writes, 'that Saudi Arabia is the key to the expansion of Islamist movements in the Middle East, few describe the tenor and methods of the influence.' Lacroix thus takes as her task the description and viability of Islam in Saudi Arabia.



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Saudia Arabia is undoubtedly an exporter of Islam, she reports, but it also has to be seen as the recipient of influences emanating from most currents of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Islamic revivalism. The activist movement inspired by Abd al-Wahhab cannot be ignored. In almost all countries of the Muslim world, Islamism arose and developed outside the state. The converse is true of Saudi Arabia where, from the beginning, Islamism was integrated into the kingdom's official institutions. The situation of the Saudi Islamist movement is thus different from that of most Middle Eastern countries because it is not a question of combating a secular regime that relies on a source of legitimacy other than religion.

'What is at issue (in Saudi Arabia) is challenging the monopoly over the divine held by a government based on religion.' Yet Islam in Saudi Arabia is a subject of contention not only between the regime and the Islamists but also among the Islamists themselves and the multiplicity of visions that motivate them. Islam is the primary language in which social rivalries and cultural issues are expressed.

When in August 1990 Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait, the Saudi regime was forced to call upon American troops to protect its territory against a possible Iraqi attack. The resulting presence of foreign troops in the land of Islam's holy places fostered a formidable opposition against the royal family.

Lacroix attributes the Islamic awakening largely to the feeling of anger at the American presence. That presence served as a symbol of the moral and political failure of the Saudi system itself, a presence that continues to motivate multiple protests from the intellectual and religious elite alike.

Lacroix's investigation leads her to a study of Wahhabism, which she admits is difficult to define because, in her words, 'it is not an unchangeable essence but a tradition in motion subject to interpretation and reinterpretation, possessed of no well-defined characteristics.'

The founding moment of the Saudi field of power as it exists today, she dates to the pact of 1744 'joining the

## 'Progressives,' and the Root Causes of Islamic Terror

THERE is much that is clearly wrong with the Islamic world. Women are stoned to death and undergo clitorectomies. Gays hang from the gallows under the approving eyes of the proponents of Shariah, the legal code of Islam. Sunni and Shia massacre each other daily in Iraq. Palestinian mothers teach 3-year-old boys and girls the ideal of martyrdom. One would expect the orthodox Islamic establishment to evade or dismiss these complaints, but less happily, the non-Muslim priests of enlightenment in the West have come, actively and passively, to the Islamists' defense. These 'progressives' frequently cite the need to examine 'root causes.' In this they are correct: Terrorism is only the manifestation of a disease and not the disease itself. But the root-causes are quite different from what they think.

— Tawfik Hamid, *The Wall Street Journal*, Tuesday, April 3, 2007. A onetime member of *Jamaah Islamiya*, an Islamist terrorist group, Dr Hamid is a medical doctor.

sword of Muhammad bin Sa'ud to the religious call of the preacher Muhammad bin al-Wahhab. In the words of Sayyid Outb, 'The sovereignty of God will be restored only when there is a pure Islamic state, based on Shari'a alone.'

Although written before the Middle East uprisings in the early part of 2011, this densely packed and well-documented book may be considered essential reading for anyone attempting to understand the significant role that the Muslim Brotherhood has played and continues to play throughout the area.

From its founding the Muslim Brotherhood has had the dual purpose of fighting foreign occupation and establishing an Islamic state that would apply Shari'a. Several sections of *Awakening Islam* are devoted to the Brotherhood's presence in Saudi Arabia, where it has played an essential role in moral education and, one may say, cultural education generally.

The Brotherhood is noted for its creation of institutes and universities and for the establishment of education programs for the children of the Kingdom. Intellectual elites are attracted to its programs. While its leaders do not shy from an exegesis of the Koran and/or from contributions to Islamic jurisprudence, *creed* is recognized as the exclusive province of the Wahhabi ulema.

Given her richly detailed study of the Islamic awakening, Lacroix seems reluctant to draw any conclusion except that 'the Saudi Islamists and the Sahwa will remain central actors on the kingdom's political stage for years and possibly decades to come.' The reader, however, will recognize the religious ambiguity, complexity, and plasticity of the movement that the author calls 'Sahwa' and the continuing danger that Islam presents for the West.

PROFESSOR JUDE DOUGHERTY is Dean Emeritus of the Philosophy Faculty, Catholic University of America, Editor, *The Review of Metaphysics*, and General Editor, *Series Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, Washington, D.C.

## Faith and Understanding

SAINT ANSELM (1033–1109) was the Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury. He was an Italian, and a medieval philosopher and theologian of note. He wrote :

'I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; rather I believe that I may understand. I believe this because if I didn't believe, I would not understand'

*[Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo, quia, nisi credidero, non intelligam.]*

*Where Shari'a is enforced, people see that it is not a solution'*

# ISLAMIC WORLD IN CRISIS

*By Samir Khalil Samir, SJ*

**F**UNDAMENTALISM is growing in the Arab and Islamic worlds. Increasingly it is seen as a solution to their problems, this according to a world survey that was reported by *AsiaNews*, March 4, 2009. The results show that a majority of people in eight predominantly Muslim countries reject al-Qaeda and attacks on civilians but also oppose US policies in the Middle East and the world.

### **No to bombs or murderers**

The study indicates that 'a very large majority, between 67 and 89 per cent, condemn the use of bombs and killing for political and religious purposes; more than 70 per cent are against attacks on civilians (specifically Americans)'. This means that common sense is still alive and well in the Islamic world. But it is food for thought that at least 30 per cent of respondents are in favour of 'bombs and murderers' who strike at civilians.

### **Sharia and the caliphate**

The study also vetted attitudes towards Islamic law and unity, asking how desirable were the 'strict application of Sharia Law in every Islamic country' and, in the long run, the unification of 'all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state or Caliphate.' Many like it : 65 per cent in Egypt; 48 per cent in Indonesia and 76 per cent in Pakistan and Morocco.

Both the strict application of Sharia and the establishment of a caliphate are very serious issues, but they are also a sign of the crisis that is affecting the Islamic world. ... we must realise that in this day and age a single Islamic state is not possible. It makes no sense. ... There is a plurality of interests even in the most Islamised countries.

### **Searching for a lost dignity**

Muslims should not seek political unity, an area where their interests are

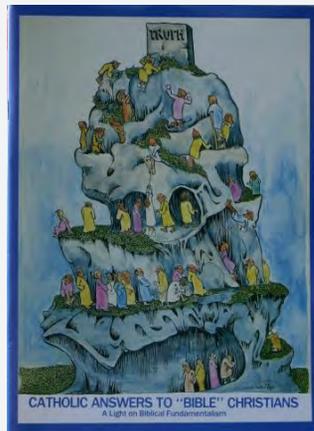
divergent, but should look for it at another level, that of principles and normative values.

As for the strict application of Sharia, that too is a dream. ... Implementing Sharia seems like a solution ... Such a trend is spreading fast – encouraged in part by Western governments, because, increasingly, people around the world are thinking that some form of Sharia is a price worth paying for peace. It is something that is happening in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also in Great Britain, Spain and even Italy.

This will mean closing many girls' schools; a ban on mixed schooling, even for children; no more music; a family law that is unjust for women, etc. Sharia covers all aspects of life but it was established in another time when things were different. It does not take into account changes in outlook, culture and ethics.

There is a desire for ethical improvement and better principles, and Islam seems the solution.

The reality is different. Where Sharia is enforced people see that it is not a solution.



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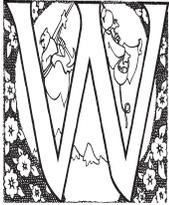
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# TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE RED

By R. J. Stove



WHO can recall Shostakovich's death – which occurred on August 9, 1975 – as if it were last week find it necessarily hard to realise that for today's college students, Shostakovich is as 'historical' a figure as Verdi or Vivaldi. ('Tell us about the Berlin Wall again, Grandpa.') Even the 'Shostakovich Wars' which raged so vociferously among musicologists during the 1990s have largely died down, with the increased awareness that the so-called Shostakovich memoir *Testimony* – which, by its mixture of plagiarism, trivia, and sheer invention, fooled so many of us for so long after it appeared in 1979 – was in toto about as reliable as the Donation of Constantine.

Nevertheless, so much printed commentary has concentrated on Shostakovich's symphonies that his string quartets, constituting a rather more valuable body of work, have tended to be slighted in the literature, however often they are heard in concert and on CD. With this book, Wendy Lesser aims to redress that imbalance, and on the whole she succeeds.

Shostakovich's string quartets – all composed between 1938 and 1974 – represented, it is generally agreed, his private self. Of course, this means innately little in a Communist context. To quote Miss Lesser: 'Even private letters could be intercepted; even private words could be conveyed to the wrong ears.' Still, for the Soviets, string-quartet writing remained, as Miss Lesser neatly observes, 'under-the-radar.' As to exactly why it remained so, Miss Lesser cannot give a definitive response. Who could? Pending a more plausible explanation, we can only assume that Soviet commissars were even stupider than has always been believed, and that it no more occurred to them to hunt down subversion in string quartets than in printed commentaries on chess matches.

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*Music for Silenced Voices: Shostakovich and His Fifteen Quartets*, by Wendy Lesser; Yale University Press, 2011, 350 pp]

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Nor was the string quartet the only genre to escape their scrutiny. When East Berlin's 1950 bicentennial commemorations of Bach's death moved Shostakovich to compose a set of preludes and fugues for solo piano, he included in the result all sorts of

'bourgeois', 'formalist' and 'decadent' musical devices that would have sent the Politburo ablaze with rage if they had occurred in a symphony or cantata.

Helping Shostakovich make his chamber-music mark was the fact that Russia – both before and after 1917 – lacked a portentous quartet-writing tradition, such as characterised Teutonic lands. Great Russian composers had been inclined to ignore the form entirely (exceptions: Tchaikovsky, Borodin), and the automatic Austro-German assumption – at least following Beethoven's death – of metaphysical profundity being inseparable from the quartet medium left no detectable impact east of the Danube. Therefore Shostakovich, like Prokofiev (whose own chamber music has been unduly neglected), could start quartet-writing pretty much with a cultural *tabula rasa*.

It is notable, and duly noted in this book, that he did not turn to quartets until his plans for continued theatrical acclaim had been stymied by the official 1936 condemnation of his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*. The most memorable single indicator of this condemnation was a *Pravda* article (entitled 'Muddle Instead of Music') so insulting and pompous – and, in its boorish way, so skilled at delivering precisely those aesthetic indictments likeliest to make Shostakovich squirm – that rumour attributed the essay to Stalin himself. ('Stalin', the late Joseph Sobran once wrote after sitting through a Shostakovich symphony, 'has been underrated as a music critic. That his reviews were at times unnecessarily severe does not detract from their essential soundness.')

Not that Shostakovich needed Stalin, or governmental terrorism more generally, to be in a constant state of panic. What almost everyone noticed about him, on even the most casual acquaintance, was his overwhelming fear. He once assured Stravinsky, 'I don't know how not to be afraid.'

## Did Muhammad ban Christians and Jews from Arabia?

IN THE first chapter, paragraph 29, of Ibn Hanbal's collection, we find a hadith attributed to Muhammad (I personally doubt its authenticity) in which the prophet of Islam expresses his intention as well as gives an order to his followers to chase Jews and Christians away from the Arabian peninsula until there would be only Muslims left. He stated, 'I shall expel Jews and Christians from the Arabs' peninsula, in order to leave only Muslims'; and again, 'Expel from the Arabs' peninsula the Jews of the Hijaz and the people of Najran [that is, Christians]'. Based on these hadith of questionable attribution, we know that the Khalif 'Umar actually chased Christians and Jews away from the Arabic peninsula in the year 20 of Hegira (A.D. 641).

— Samir Khalil Samir, SJ *111 Questions on Islam*: Ignatius Press, 2002, p. 69, 70.

## Rights and Wrongs

**I** DO NOT want now to discuss the ideology of Germany, nor yet that of Russia which, in rather a different way, is also a repudiation of Christendom. Nor do I want to talk about our own war-aims and peace-aims, and how far we are single-minded about them. All I want to say on this point is that, however deeply we have sinned—and God knows we have done plenty of evil in our time—we have not gone so far as to have altogether lost all claim to stand for Christendom. There is a great difference between believing a thing to be right and not doing it, on the one hand, and, on the other, energetically practising evil in the firm conviction that it is good. In theological language, the one is mortal sin, which is bad enough; the other is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is without forgiveness ... So long as we are aware that we are wicked, we are not corrupt beyond all hope.

— Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos*, an address delivered at Derby on May 4, 1940. This ed. published by Methuen & Co. Ltd. London, 1947, pp. 26, 27.

(This in itself should have made us all sceptical about *Testimony's* depiction of Shostakovich as heroic freedom-loving dissident.) Yet at first, whatever pathetic happiness could be wrung from sustained approval by the Soviet regime, Shostakovich wrung. For years he was Soviet music's Boy Most Likely To — and 'boy' was at first literally accurate: his First Symphony, which he never surpassed or consistently equalled in later orchestral endeavours, appeared to thunderous applause when he had not yet turned 20.

Difficult though it is to credit, he 'had travelled outside the Soviet Union, to Warsaw and Berlin, and had met a number of international musical luminaries, including Darius Milhaud, Alban Berg, and Arthur Honegger.' Miss Lesser convincingly asserts that he would have felt 'complicatedly guilty' — a delicious phrase — 'at how well he was being treated.' The feeling seems never to have gone altogether.

He had, at least in earlier times, true friends rather than mere sycophants. Chief among them was Ivan Sollertinsky, a prodigiously well-educated critic and impresario whose brilliance promised more than, in artistic terms, it delivered. But Sollertinsky died young in 1944, leaving a gap in Shostakovich's life that neither students nor family members could fill.

When the roof fell in for Shostakovich again, once the Zhdanov-led purges got going in 1948, no figure of analogous significance to Sollertinsky made an effort on

his behalf. Prokofiev could hardly intervene, being, metaphorically at least, in the dock himself. (Accounts vary as to whether Sollertinsky was Jewish — Shostakovich was not — but it is significant that the worst periods

## Don't neglect to correct your own life

**W**e shall never be in a position to correct the lives of others as long as we neglect our own. We are wrapped up in the cares of this world, and the more we seem to busy ourselves with external affairs the more spiritually insensitive we become. Holy Church, then, expresses it well when she says of her weak members: 'They have placed me on guard in the vineyards and I have not guarded my own vineyard.' We have been put in charge of the vineyards and we are not even looking after our own, because we are neglecting our own proper ministry, as long as we remain wrapped up in external affairs.

— Pope St Gregory the Great [590-604 ad] Homily, 17,3ff. Quoted *The Roman Breviary*, Second Reading at Matins for Saturday in the 27th Week of the Year.

for Shostakovich also constituted the worst periods for Soviet Jewry: during the 1930s' show trials, and once more in 1948-1953.)

Others could retreat to religion; Shostakovich, never. 'Death is terrifying,' he once said, 'there is nothing beyond it. I don't believe in a life beyond the grave.' Such comments as these indicate that a part of him never really grew out of Soviet youth activism. Against the 'armed cant' of Zhdanov, he thus had no spiritual resources outside his music, and how long the authorities would allow him that particular bolt-hole remained for long unclear. 'If he was not a composer,' Miss Lesser reminds us, 'he was nothing.'

By 1948 Stalin, even at his craziest and most arteriosclerotic, felt no discernible enthusiasm for having Shostakovich killed outright — as veteran conductor Kurt Sanderling noted, 'Stalin wanted to use Shostakovich for prestige' — but Shostakovich could not be expected to know that. Accordingly he reverted to his habitual role, best described by Field-Marshal Haig's words about some English politician or other: 'a feather pillow, bearing the marks of the last person who sat on him.' Since most of us would have been similarly craven if we too had been Soviet helots amid Uncle Joe's old age, we should doubtless temper our distaste for Shostakovich's pusillanimity; and Miss Lesser's compassionate account gives us the wherewithal to do so.

Even Miss Lesser, though, is hard pressed to find either a convincing or an attractive explanation for Shostakovich's 1960 decision to join the Communist Party. By 1960 Stalin had been seven years dead. Khrushchev's attitude to Shostakovich was positively cordial. *Mirabile dictu*, visits to France and America had become possible, without the composer being required to utter more than a statutory minimum of pious lying about the workers' paradise, and without any particular danger of the gulag or a 'car accident' awaiting him when he returned. How the relevant bully-boys managed to force a Party card on him is still uncertain. As Miss Lesser says: 'Perhaps he got drunk and signed something.' He did like his booze, although seldom rendered incoherent by it.

One thing is sure: quite apart from his subsequent physical decline, the shame of getting that card almost killed him and never left him. The words Chesterton once put into Father Brown's mouth depict the post-1960 Shostakovich with chilling perfection: 'Men may keep a sort of level of good, but no man has ever been able to keep on one level of evil. That road goes down and down.'

It did indeed go down and down, as Khrushchev gave place to Brezhnev, and as Brezhnevite rule proved to be less a swashbuckling despotism than a kind of gigantic deep-sleep therapy. Shostakovich's absolute moral nadir came when his signature appeared on *Pravda's* September 1973 denunciation of Andrei Sakharov. Even time-serving zombies have ethical standards, and this act was recognized as being well to the other side of them. Miss Lesser recounts one painful encounter at the Soviet Composers' Union between Shostakovich and theatrical director Yuri Lyubimov (the narrator is Shostakovich's former pupil Edison Denisov):

'When Yuri Lyubimov went by, [Shostakovich] got up to greet him. It was difficult for him to get up: he could hardly walk and then only with the aid of a stick. Struggling to his feet he approached Lyubimov with hand outstretched. But Lyubimov looked him in the eye and, turning away, demonstrably sat down on his own. I asked Lyubimov, 'Why did you do such a thing?' He answered: 'After Shostakovich signed that letter against Sakharov I can't shake his hand: There were many others who felt the same way.'

The prematurely old man, dead at 68, still had some blood in him. He allowed himself one last sardonic grimace when he discussed his Fourteenth Symphony, excruciating in its melancholia: 'I want the audience to leave with the thought: "Life is wonderful!"'

One gathers that nothing in his quartets is quite as likely as that work to induce black despair, but many of these pieces do make painful listening, and, as Miss Lesser takes pains to emphasise, strangely pure listening. Whatever else they are, they are not yahoo rhetoric. No doubt we can play biographical parlour-games with their



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content. (Best known of them is the Eighth Quartet, where the repeated thuds have been solemnly described by certain critics as denoting anti-aircraft fire and, alternatively, as denoting the NKVD knocking on Shostakovich's door. Since these interpretations cannot both be true, the likelihood is that both are false.)

Yet Miss Lesser's descriptions are an antidote against crude reductionism. The one regret they inspire derives from the absence of staff-notation examples. Absent these examples, no exegesis can give us more than a slight clue as to how these compositions sound when – as will sometimes be the case with all but the most erudite chamber-music buffs – we are otherwise unfamiliar with them. Not that Miss Lesser resorts to mere poetical rhapsodising, but the impressions one takes away from her accounts are necessarily indistinct, however clear it is that no other analyst could do better.

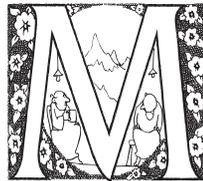
Commentators on Sylvia Plath are notorious for their reluctance to admit the existence of any other writers in world history except Sylvia Plath. Similar monomania afflicts many a commentator on Shostakovich, and while Miss Lesser is too acute a music-lover to suffer from it, one might have wished for a greater concern on her part (there is some) with what Shostakovich's foreign contemporaries – several of whom he acknowledged as stylistic influences – were doing. (She does include a useful discussion of Shostakovich's personal relations with Britten, relations surprisingly amicable, despite linguistic and social barriers.) Overall, nevertheless, given an impossible brief, she has acquitted herself very well indeed, and we should hope for more from her in future.

R. J. STOVE lives in Melbourne and is editor of the quarterly *Organ Australia*. He is also the author of César Franck: *His Life and Times*, scheduled for release by Scarecrow Press (Maryland) during November. A slightly different version of this article appeared in *The American Conservative's* May 2011 issue.

*Full civil rights and religious freedom for all  
...does not exist under Shari'a*

# Shari'a and Australian Law

*By Paul Stenhouse PhD*



MOST AUSTRALIANS concerned about the assimilation of migrants will agree in principle with Attorney-General Robert McClelland MP who is reported as saying on May 18 that 'there was no place for sharia law in Australian society'. He was responding to calls by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils [AFIC] for Muslims to be offered 'legal pluralism'.

He reminded his listeners that 'all applicants for citizenship swear collective allegiance to the people of Australia, and undertake to respect our customs and abide by our laws'.

In February 2008 the Archbishop of Canterbury backed the introduction of Shari'a in Britain. His proposal, along similar lines to the one put by the AFIC, was criticised by, among others, a Muslim Peer, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi. She described the comments as 'unhelpful,' and said that they 'may add to the confusion that already exists in our communities'. She went on: Let's be absolutely clear: all British citizens must be subject to British laws developed through Parliament and the courts'.

Baroness Warsi and Robert McClelland, it seems to me, acted in the best interests of their respective communities – which include Muslims who migrated to, or were welcomed as refugees in, the UK and Australia. They came freely to a secular, Western, non-Muslim country seeking freedom, and a more peaceful life. Had they wanted to live under Shari'a they could have remained in their own country at all costs, or gone to a Muslim country where Shari'a is enforced.

To see the question as one of *religious* law [Islamic] and civil law [Australian law] is to miss the point. Laws of a political, juridical and religious nature are closely inter-connected from an Islamic point of view.

Experience shows that Western legislators who dabble with Shari'a in the hope of assisting the assimilation of Muslims into a secular political society ruled by civil laws, are undermining Democracy.

They are also making it more difficult for Muslims to settle comfortably into a secular society which offers full civil rights and religious freedom to all – something that does not exist under Shari'a.

Father Paul Stenhouse, MSC is editor of *Annals Australasia*. See *The Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, June 5, 2011 :'Remove Offensive "Prophet of Islam" signs – Bishop,' by Damir Govorcin.

*A Case Study in the Shaping of Expert Opinion: Extremism becomes Mainstream*

## ANWAR IBRAHIM AT GEORGETOWN

By Claire Berlinski



**T**HAT WE'RE having a serious discussion at high levels of our foreign policy establishment, about whether the Muslim Brotherhood is moderate should be seen not as a sign that those who say they are might be right, but as a symptom of a pathology in our foreign policy apparatus. It's important to recognize just what has happened to our intelligentsia – our experts, in other words, and to evaluate what they're saying in this light.

One part of it, a plain fact that's poorly appreciated but demonstrably true – not a conspiracy theory at all – is that the Saudis and other Gulf regimes have poured breathtaking amounts of money into American universities and think tanks since the 1970s. The Saudis spend \$4 billion per annum to promote a particular view of Islam. This exceeds the Soviet Union's budget for foreign subversion during the Cold War. A mind-boggling amount goes to funding America's top-tier universities, and of course this has an influence.

Now, I am not claiming that the Saudis have made explicit conditions for the receipt of this money, but I am certainly claiming that people are human. I'm not pure. *Ricochet* has financial backers, too, and you sure won't find me going out of my way to criticize them. When you're talking about Saudi money, though, it doesn't just all balance out in some big marketplace of competition for influence – they have enough to make whole university departments appear overnight. Or disappear; a fact that will weigh particularly on the mind in a recession.

Let's look at just one example – Georgetown. In 2005, Georgetown accepted a \$US20 million donation from Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal,

**T**he Australian continent is part of Asia, and post-war Australians have striven to be accepted by our neighbours as responsible members of the Asian community of nations. We are also part of the Pacific community. Malaysia is a neighbour, active throughout our region. It is regarded as a friend by Australian media and politicians alike. The analysis that follows offers grounds for caution and concern. See *Annals* 1/2011 p.25.

whose money was contemptuously rejected by Mayor Giuliani in the wake of the September 11 attacks. This was used to finance Georgetown's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. (Muslim-Jewish understanding wasn't a priority, I guess.) What does it do with this money? Well, for example, it hosts symposiums such as this one, in 2007: 'Islamophobia and the Challenge of Pluralism' – co-host The Council on American-Islamic Relations [CAIR].

In 2008, Representative Frank Wolf wrote to Georgetown to ask whether 'the centre has produced any analysis critical of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example in the fields of human rights, religious freedom, freedom of expression, women's rights, minority rights, protection for foreign workers, due process and the rule of law.' Georgetown president John DeGioia didn't answer the question directly, but said instead something quite important:

Our scholars have been called upon not only by the State Department, as you note, but also by Defence, Homeland Security and FBI officials as well as governments and their agencies in Europe and Asia. In fact, a number of high-ranking U.S. military officials, prior to assuming roles with the Multi-National Force in Iraq, have sought out faculty with the Centre for their expertise on the region.

Do you see what might ensue from this? Mitchell Bard has provided the most patient and detailed account I've seen of the amount of money flowing from the Gulf to our universities in *The Arab Lobby*. That's a book that should have forever put paid to the idea that it's the Israel lobby running the show, but that idea, alas, dies hard.

So let me point out something that happened recently at Georgetown that should give you a feel for things. This past week, Anwar Ibrahim visited Georgetown for a discussion titled 'Revolution and Democracy in the Muslim World.' He argued there – and this was widely reported in the media – that the United States shouldn't fear the Muslim Brotherhood. It should rather 'engage them,' because it was 'crucial to support peoples' choices in the Islamic world.'

First let's start with the assumption that the Muslim Brotherhood is the peoples' choice in the Islamic world. That alone is an insane and unsupported assertion; we have no evidence of this. A lot of Muslims I know are terrified of them. The idea then goes cheerfully unchallenged in conventional wisdom, although I dare say these Malaysian women would find the idea quite remarkable.

But that's not even the main point. The main point is the way Georgetown billed this speaker. Do you not feel it would have been minimally responsible, since the media covered this event and policy makers no doubt paid attention to it, for Georgetown to have mentioned that where the Muslim Brotherhood is concerned, Anwar is not neutral? That he himself co-founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought [IIIT], a major Muslim Brotherhood think tank in the United States? Don't you think it might be relevant to note that the Justice Department named the IIIT as

unindicted co-conspirators in a crucial terrorism-financing case involving the covert channelling of funds to Hamas through the Holy Land Foundation? Or perhaps they might have mentioned that the survivors of September 11 sued the IIIT for 'rendering material support to radical Islamism?' None of this is a secret; it has been widely reported.

Anwar's affection for and ties to the the most influential Muslim Brotherhood cleric, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, are also extremely well known to those paying any attention at all – that would be 'Hitler didn't finish the job' Qaradawi; that would be 'I encourage the mutilation of women's genitals' Qaradawi; that would be 'Rape victims should be flogged' Qaradawi; that would be 'Kill pregnant Israeli women because their unborn children are future soldiers' Qaradawi. And Anwar's anti-Semitism is so notorious and vulgar that the B'nai Brith has begged US officials to cut ties with him. Wouldn't you think Georgetown would be wary of inviting such a speaker to present the views of 'moderate Muslims' about the Muslim Brotherhood?

And if they did invite him – out of the sense, perhaps, that universities should promote open debate, even with radicals – wouldn't you think they'd *signal* something to the media about their guest's intellectual pedigree by means of a word such as 'controversial,' or 'Islamist,' or anything, really, but 'respected internationally as a leader in interreligious dialogue?'

And you know, Anwar isn't just a one-time guest. He's a distinguished visiting researcher at the university – at the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.

Do you see how crazy this is? Do you see why our experts might be a bit confused? I want to take pains to say that Georgetown still produces important and valuable scholarship, and that I don't believe this is a plot or a conspiracy. But I do think it's a culture – a culture in which you don't point certain things out or ask too many questions, and at a certain point you don't even realize how strange it is that you're not, because extremism has come to seem mainstream.

The above is excerpted from Claire Berlinski's blog Ricochet.

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# MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

## Fated month

October is Rupert Murdoch's Ides of March. Not that he risks Julius Caesar's fate but he does have to face News Corporation's Annual General Meeting in the US. There, due to illegal hacking into private grief for profit at the UK *News of the World*, he is likely to face a challenge to his roles as chairman and chief executive officer.

How will he respond? From entrails (read emails) to hand, your correspondent predicts he will resign as chief executive while retaining the post of chairman.

This will enable him to keep a measure of control over what he considers to be a dynastic, rather than publicly listed, company even though the new CEO is unlikely to be one of his offspring.

And he may well influence a decision to use account-surplus billions, originally budgeted for total control of BSkyB, to buy-back shares, further strengthening his control.

His daughter Elizabeth, having rejected an offer to join her siblings, James and Lachlan, on the board, Murdoch may invite a prestigious American, say war hero and failed presidential candidate, John McCain.

## Character studies

Reviewing Michael Wolff's biography of Rupert Murdoch (*Annals* January/February 2010) your correspondent remarked that Wolff's banging on about singlet-revealing shirts, purple-dyed hair and prostate problems made him feel sorry for Murdoch.

Lear was the prime character evoked. For his appearance before a British parliamentary committee to explain the NOTW debacle,

Murdoch improved his shirt and undyed his hair. He still evoked pity, beset by circumstances yet in denial that they were his ultimate responsibility, a denial instinct with protection of the *raison d'être* of his high-gear career.

The circumstances, it has to be said, are more complicated than anything Shakespeare visited on Lear. Perhaps a literary model closer to Murdoch's Scots ancestry provides more light. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* comes to mind. In that novel, as in James Hogg's earlier *Private*

*Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the protagonist is in a situation where the good in his character is pitted against the bad.

Examples could be multiplied. Suffice it to say Murdoch's first Dr Jekyll newspaper was *The News*, Adelaide, inherited by his family after negotiations with *The Herald & Weekly Times* of which his late father Sir Keith Murdoch had been chief executive.

In *The News*, young Murdoch campaigned vigorously for the release of Rupert Max Stuart, an Aborigine, imprisoned for the killing of a young, white girl.

His Mr Hyde paper is *The Sun* (since he shut down *The News of the World*, much as Mr Hyde got rid of the harlot who disturbed him).

The Jekyll-Hyde duality has been intrinsic to *The Australian* under one of journalism's fastest lines of editors. Among these,

the current editor-in-chief Chris Mitchell is a notable survivor. He has gone for defensive spin of Murdoch more skilful than Fairfax Group Media critical reportage, or of Murdoch's denial of responsibility although his China ventures must have taught him the folk wisdom: 'A fish rots from the head down.'

## Lord Copper and the Foreign Editor of *The Beast*

'THEN there's this civil war in Ishmaelia. I propose to feature it. Who did you think of sending?'

'Well, Lord Copper, the choice seems between sending a staff reporter who will get the news but whose name the public doesn't know, or to get someone from outside with a name as a military expert. You see since we lost Hitchcock...'

'Yes, yes. He was our only man with a European reputation. I know. Zinc will be sending him. I know. But he was wrong about the battle of Hastings. It was 1066. I looked it up. I won't employ a man who isn't big enough to admit when he's wrong.'

— Evelyn Waugh, *Scoop*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1933, p.16



Main factor in the defensive spin has been that an elite, using the isolated NOTW debacle, has mounted a general attack on Murdoch. The fact is that from his advent in London, Murdoch went down market in a style less reminiscent of old Fleet Street than of John Norton, etched in notoriety by the great Cyril Pearl's *Wild Men of Sydney*.

Second factor, without Murdoch his metropolitan and suburban Australian mastheads would not survive. Time will refute this; amid contending information technologies, print will retain market value as the agenda setter, the gold standard of news.

Television, radio and internet coverage of breaking news like the fires of London? That's visual evidence; print is the summing up.

### Trusty guard

Would trust status, as previously suggested here, be effective for at least The Australian? The obvious comparison is *The Guardian*, which through Nick Davies has led investigations into NOTW malfeasance.

There again *The Guardian*, trust controlled or not, used tricks of the trade in nailing Jonathan Aitken on a matter that did not accord with his status: Conservative MP and grandson of Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook of *The Daily Express* (immortalised as Lord Cropper by Evelyn Waugh in *Scoop*).

Moreover Malcolm Muggeridge has left trenchant criticism of how *The Guardian* (then *The Manchester Guardian*) treated his Soviet Union coverage. He had refused to play useful idiot and decided to put his rejected views into a novel. This was kept out of print.

More recently a *Guardian* staffer has admitted to the voyeuristic thrill of hacking when he covering a business story in the public interest.

### Privy counsel

One result of the NOTW debacle has been a campaign for a legal right to privacy. Should there be one? Convention can be stronger than law, for example, the convention of privacy that applies to newspaper proprietors and senior executives within their own companies.

How effective is the convention? Look no further than Murdoch's breach with his wife Anna (nee Torv, now Mann) and his May-December romance with Wendi Deng, their marriage and children. All were reported, of course, but not intrusively even though they were in the public interest if only on the question of whether Murdoch might have been distracted from oversight of his global realm's fiefdoms.

### State grab

Legalised privacy can be seen as an opportunistic means to secure more media control by the State whether here in Australia, the UK or the US. Information technology amplifies the State's tendency to totalitarianism as witness China, lauded for its money-making Communism rather than criticised for its human rights abuses.

In George Orwell's classic *1984*, control is achieved by a television set, which is also a surveillance apparatus. No countervailing media exists. Indeed, mischievously Orwell located his Ministry of Truth in a building resembling the BBC HQ, London where he had worked.

How primitive compared to the digital voter-tracking technology available to both the Australian Government and the Opposition. But not confined to them or this country.

Intriguing that close focus was put on exemption for the technology here only after moves for a media inquiry were begun by the Labor Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and her *de facto co-PM*, Greens leader Bob Brown.

### Heckling hacks

Those who suggest that hacks have always behaved badly may have a point.

They certainly have support: 'I'll rout this lot of most pernicious knaves, for all the privilege of your place. Was ever such impudence suffered in a Government? Ireland's conquered; Wales subdued; Scotland united; but there are some few spots of ground in London...unconquered yet that hold rebellion still. Methinks 'tis strange that places so near the King's Palace should be no part

## Tweets Terror

MEXICAN drug cartels apparently use Twitter and Facebook not only to communicate with one another, but also to spread fear through local communities. Recently in the bloody border town of Reynosa, people associated with one cartel used tweets to terrorize Reynosa by posting messages that created panic among residents and halted normal activities as the threats circulated online. One such message read, "The largest scheduled shootout in the history of Reynosa will be tomorrow or Sunday, send this message to people you trust that tomorrow a convoy of 60 trucks full of cartel hitmen from the Michoacan Family together with members of the Gulf Cartel are coming to take the city and take everyone out alive or dead!" Schools and shops closed that day.

— Alexis Okeowo / Mexico City, Time World, April 14, 2010



of his dominions...Should any place be shut against the King's writ?

Give that commentator an ABC *Insiders* gig. Not possible unfortunately. He was lawyer and dramatist Thomas Shadwell (1642-92). And he was writing about the area known as the Liberties of Alsatia, later Fleet Street, where hacks foregathered along with sundry villains.

Why? Because the right to sanctuary in what were Catholic churches lingered after the Reformation; hacks at risk of ear-cutting or the stocks could avoid arrest by sitting on the frith stool, from the German *friede* – peace. (See *The Journalist's London* by Philip Gibbs).

Press freedom therefore may have been enacted in the US constitution; its earliest proponents were able to practise it in the Liberties of Alsatia under a remnant, Catholic tradition.

So, stirrers may ask, does this mean that Rupert Murdoch, citing his papal knighthood, should take refuge in St Bride's, off Fleet Street?

Impossible. But what a front-page, exclusive pic for *The Australian*.

### Press Church

By an odd synchronicity the Press and the Church are under State attack. Very odd. Both are bulwarks against State totalitarianism to the extent that they maintain a working distance from the State. In the case of the Press, this has been eroded, mainly through journalists shifting between company and State as a cash and career move. In the case of the Church, it is the State that encroaches across the ideal of Church-State separation. Both situations demonstrate that the State is potentially more dangerous to human liberty than any media nexus or religious institution.

## Not just London or Libya

**A**UTHORITIES, already peeved that ordinary citizens have been using Twitter to alert one another to the locations of Breathalyzer checkpoints are now furious that drug dealers are using Twitter accounts to circumvent dragnets and communicate with one another. "Twitter is a serious problem not only to Mexican law-enforcement agencies but to any law or intelligence agencies all over the world, because criminals, drug cartels and terrorist cells are getting more sophisticated in their methods of communication," says Ghaleb Krame, a security expert at Mexico's Alliant International University. Krame says criminal organizations are using Twitter and other social networks to communicate with one another through key words that mean something different to people outside their circles. For example, drug cartels will post videos of corridos, or ballads, about the narco world on YouTube with lyrics that contain subtle clues as to the current hierarchies of gangs — as well as threats.

— Alexis Okeowo / Mexico City, *Time* World, April 14, 2010

### Trade off

Black comedy kept breaking through at the British parliamentary hearing. And that doesn't mean the would-be pie artist. It means Murdoch's admission that he had obeyed instructions to enter No 10 Downing Street by the back entrance. This recalled an ancient, Fleet Street anecdote:

Two reporters in hot pursuit of a big story arrive at an English manor. The butler duly announces their arrival: "M'lord, the gentleman from *The Times* is in the drawing room. The fellow from *The Daily Mail* is at the tradesmen entrance."

And now the chief proprietor of *The Times*, Rupert Murdoch comes to the back door courtesy of a Prime Minister, David Cameron, an old Etonian and TV PR (who as a politician has had a deft way with expenses) but who obviously has not forgotten how aristos should treat tradesmen.

### Dubious privilege

Newspaper proprietors can sight or, if they wish, sub or write their own obituaries. Whether Rupert Murdoch has availed himself of this privilege is not on record.

Given the spread of the hacking scandal to other newspapers, including *The Daily Mirror* and *The Guardian*, his most apt epitaph might make use of a cliché more durable than marble: 'Here lies the tip of the iceberg who was also the most significant part of its base element'

Overly facetious? There's always the writer a newspaperman of Murdoch's calibre would surely have tried to hire, the writer whose by-line was Ecclesiastes: 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?'

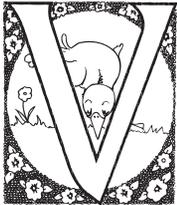
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*Burial ground of the Popes of the third century*

**TREASURE HIDDEN IN THE WINE CELLAR**

*By* Thomas Huntley



VISITORS to Rome are surprised to find how much of the wall built by emperor Marcus Aurelius has survived to the present day.

Rome, in fact, was surrounded by walls at least *six* times: by Romulus, by Servius Tullius, by Marcus Aurelius, by Honorius, by Pope Leo IV and by Pope Urban VIII.

A law dating from 450 BC and observed until the time of Constantine in the fourth century, for hygienic reasons, forbade burial within the city walls. The only exception was made for Vestal Virgins.

As a result, all the Christian burial places in Rome lie underground between the first and third mile stones from the existing wall of Marcus Aurelius. Michele Stefano de Rossi calculated their combined length to be 587 miles.<sup>1</sup>

Early Christians called these underground burial grounds *coemeteria*, ‘dormitories,’ [because they believed that the dead were sleeping there to rise up on the last day]. Sometimes they also used the more generic term *hypogaea* or ‘subterranean places’. The specifically Christian term *cemetery* was not used by the pagan Romans. It is still employed today to describe burial grounds generally; even non-Christian ones.

**‘Cemeteries’ and ‘Catacombs’**

The word ‘catacomb,’ also commonly applied to these underground cemeteries, is a phrase from Greek that means ‘near an excavated place’ or ‘near a quarrie’ and was first used to refer to the underground cemetery of Saint Sebastian where the remains of Sts Peter and Paul were kept for a time to prevent their desecration in the third century.

According to contemporary records, the relics of the twin founders of the Church of Rome were taken from the Vatican and the Via Ostiense ‘ad catacumbas’ meaning, ‘to the cemetery of St Sebastian on the via Appia’ which was built alongside a quarry. The word eventually came to be used to refer to all of the underground cemeteries of the Christians.

**Catacomb of Pope St Callixtus**

Visitors should not miss a chance to visit the celebrated Catacomb of Callixtus on the Via Appia. Actually it is a complex of three cemeteries that have been joined together: the cemetery of Saint Lucina, dating from Apostolic times, in which St Sebastian is buried; that of Anatolia the daughter of the Consul Aemilianus; and that of Saint Soteris, a virgin martyr who belong

to the same family as St Ambrose and who was buried in 304 AD after her martyrdom under Diocletian.

Pope St Callixtus we know of mainly through the writings of his adversary Hippolytus.<sup>2</sup> His early years were spent as a banker but he was ruined by opposition from anti-Christian elements among the Jewish community in Rome who denounced him as a Christian.

After being banished to Sardinia with other Christians, he was freed through the intervention of Marcia the concubine of Commodus, the cruel son of Marcus Aurelius. Callixtus succeeded Zephyrinus as Pope and was killed in 222 AD by being thrown into a well in Trastevere.

These catacombs on the Via Appia are named after him because he founded the cemetery as a burial place for the Bishops of Rome, not because he is buried there. His own body was laid to rest in the catacomb



**S**AINTS are simply souls in heaven. Some people have been so sensationally holy in life that we know they went straight to heaven and so put them in the calendar. We all have to become saints before we get to heaven. That is what purgatory is for. And each individual has his own peculiar form of sanctity which he must achieve or perish. It is no good my saying: “I wish I were like Joan of Arc or St. John of the Cross.” I can only be St. Evelyn Waugh — after God knows what experiences in purgatory.

— Evelyn Waugh, quoted in *Evelyn Waugh, the later years* [1939-1966], 1992.

of Calepodius close to the Church beyond the Janiculum Hill built by Pope Symmachus in 550 AD over the spot where fourteen-year-old Saint Pancratius was martyred in 304 AD.

For centuries the site of the catacomb of Callixtus had lain undiscovered. It was finally found in 1854 because of the convergence of a number of curious facts:

- # one of the Popes in the middle of the third century belonged to a well-known noble family;
- # archaeologist G. B. Rossi visited an Hosteria on the Appian Way;
- # a section of the catacomb where Pope Sixtus II and his deacons Felicissimus and Agapetus were martyred in 258AD was used in the nineteenth century as a wine cellar.

Pope St Cornelius [251-252] appears to have been the only Pope up to the time of Sylvester [314 AD] who belonged to a noble Roman family: the Corneli. He was banished under the emperor Callus to Centumcellae [Civita Vecchia] and brought back to Rome to be martyred on September 14, 252. It was common knowledge that he had been buried in the Catacomb of Callixtus.

So one day in 1854 when Rossi visited an Hosteria on the Via Appia and noticed an inscription on a piece of marble that was acting as a stand for a cask of wine: '... nelii martyris,' he instantly realised that it was part of an inscription from the tomb of Pope St Cornelius. When he told Pope Pius IX of his theory and asked permission to excavate in the area, the Pope thought him to be a dreamer, but nevertheless

gave him the funding and support he needed to investigate.

Rossi started off looking for the schola or little oratory of Sixtus which he knew should be somewhere close to the tomb of Cornelius. He discovered it being used for storing wine. The burial crypts of Cornelius and Caecilia were being used as vaults for storing food.

After he had discovered and identified beyond doubt the

extraordinary Chapel of the Popes containing the tombs of all the Popes of Rome from St Zephyrinus [202-211] to St Caius [284-296] and the tomb of St Caecilia, he reportedly showed them to the Pope with the words: 'This, Holy Father, is the dream of the dreamer.'

## Faith is not a Mood

AS [WAUGH] sank even further into a pathological state of melancholia, he reviewed the bleak landscape of his soul - his spiritual dryness, his emotional loneliness, the dreariness and boredom of his family life, the wretchedness of his own foul temper, the general aridity of his soul' and at the end of a desolate litany of failings, doubts and despondency, he pondered that even the saints did not seem much better off, and yet concluded: 'But to aim at anything less than sanctity is not to aim at all.'

He did not derive much comfort or consolation from his faith: he simply knew it to be true, and that was that. As he explained in a letter to a friend: 'Praying is not asking but giving. Giving our love to God, asking for nothing in return ... Do you believe in the Incarnation and Redemption in the full historical sense in which you believe in the battle of El Alamein? That's important. Faith is not a mood.'

Only his religion could - quite ruthlessly - put this proud man in his humble place; he realistically accepted that, in a theological perspective, his unique talents in the end did not amount to much: 'I cannot think of a single Saint who attached much importance to art ... The Church and the world need monks and nuns more than they need writers ... A youth who is inarticulate in conversation may well be eloquent in prayer ... The Church does not exist in order to produce elegant preachers, or artists, or philosophers. It exists to produce Saints.'

— Simon Leys, *The Angel and the Octopus*, Duffy & Snellgrove, Sydney 1999, pp.187-188.

1. See *Walks in Rome* by Augustus Hare revised by Badderley, 1905 ed. p.275.
2. *Philosophumena*,



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## The Tree of Life

Writer/director Terrence Malick continues both to impress and confound critics. Not that 'easy' or any of its synonyms, 'facile', 'nonchalant' or 'casual' can be applied to his other movies: *Badlands* (1973), *Days of Heaven* (1978), *The New World* (2005) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998). Undoubtedly *The Tree*, its landscape, skiescapes and dreamscapes, shot by cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki, is hallucinatory or mystic (your reviewer's considered preference) and always biographical.

Critics would clarify their interpretation were they to acknowledge directly that Malick's inspiration is specifically Catholic.

In this context, his clues are enhanced. The church rituals attended by his O'Brien family are Catholic. When Mr O'Brien handles a votive candle its glass container is blue, sign of a devotion to Our Lady.

The movie's mysterious flickering image, baffling to many, can be seen as a cinematic version of the 'parted tongues, as it were, of fire' that appeared to strengthen the disciples in their locked upper-room after the death and resurrection of Our Lord. The very name O'Brien may be an ironic joke by Malick. From what little we know of him, his Catholic ancestry may be older than Irish.

Acknowledging Malick as a Rhodes Scholar of Oxford, critics have noted respectfully that he studied Martin Heidegger, a philosopher some associate with Existentialism. Fair enough. But surely the philosopher who inspires the movie's long, evolution sequence is the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin whose most influential work, like it or lump it, is *The Phenomenon of Humanity*.

Brad Pitt, cast against type, and playing against his gossip-mag profile, brings an enduring fortitude to his role as paterfamilias. Jessica Chastain endows the role of his wife with a quality of loving constancy. Sean Penn does what he can as their tortured eldest son, grown to be an architect disillusioned amid glittering towers, and fated to pursue his boyhood self in a dreamscape of ruins.

Could Malick have made his Catholicism more explicit? Undoubtedly. But that would have

## MOVIES

### By James Murray

brought us back to the dreaded word 'facile' and to the parasitic use of Catholic iconography to discredit it.

*The Tree of Life* is a title that echoes The Tree of Jesse (the biblical genealogy of Our Lord) as well as The Tree of Salvation (the cross on which He died).

Why does Malick not make this clear? He is a virtuoso of his medium. As such, he does not explain, he hints, giving his audience credit for comprehension of history's most haunting advent.

PG★★★★SFFV

### The Conspirator

In 1980 director Robert Redford won an Oscar for *Ordinary People* about the impact of death on a family. His new film, set in 1865, widens his scope to cover the impact of Abraham Lincoln's assassination on other ordinary people, the people of the United States, after their Civil War.

With scriptwriter James D Solomon, Redford concentrates on the trial of the alleged conspirators including boarding-house keeper Mary Surratt. He melds British actors James McAvoyn and Tom Wilkinson, who play defence lawyers, with the Americans Kevin Klein as Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Robin Wright as Mary Surratt.

## The Age of Aquarius

THE AGE of Aquarius has such a high profile in the New Age movement largely because of the influence of theosophy, spiritualism and anthroposophy, and their esoteric antecedents. People who stress the imminent change in the world are often expressing a wish for such a change. not so much in the world itself as in our culture, in the way we relate to the world.

— Jesus Christ The Bearer of the Water of Life, an examination of New Age theory and practices, by the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Rome. St Pauls Publications 2003, p.18

To play Surratt, Wright sheds all glamour to become a mother austerely reluctant to defend herself lest she betray her son who is on the run. Her delivery of the line 'I am a Southerner and a Catholic' stops the heart. Her procession to the gallows makes you wonder whether Redford is paying tribute to the execution sequence in *Mary of Scotland* by master filmmaker John Ford (Sean O'Fearna).

*The Conspirator* has a subtext: a comparison between the military tribunal that tried the Lincoln conspirators and the Guantanamo Bay tribunals.

The American Film Company, focused on accurate movie history, backed the movie. Worth imitating. Imagine an accurate take, say on Gallipoli as its centennial approaches.

M★★★★NFFV

### 5 Days of War

Director Rene Harlin bases his thriller on the invasion of Georgia by Russian forces in 2008. Into the brutal reality of the event, he weaves the fiction of a veteran American war correspondent, Thomas Anders (Rupert Friend), who reluctantly rejoins a band of colleagues.

From the fog of war (plus propaganda and disinformation) Anders and his British cameraman Sebastian Ganz (Richard Coyle) obtain clear, digitised footage of an atrocity.

Harlin, Finnish by background and therefore accustomed to invasive force, works from two screenplays, one by Mikko Alane, the other by David Battle. In them, fiction chimes with reality. Editors are not keen on the atrocity footage. It may bleed but it does not lead; the Beijing Olympics dominate news schedules.

Harlin and Director of Cinematography Checco Varese shoot in a rapid-fire style that seems as close to real as it gets without being there. During a six-week shoot in Georgia, they commanded local troops, tanks and gunships provided by President Mikheil Saakashvilli (Andy Garcia in full panache, outplayed only by Rade Serbedjiza as the atrocity engineer, Colonel Demidov, and his fearsome master of arms Daniil (Mikko Nousianinen).

Harlin includes a sequence showing the risks war correspondents take to satellite images of death into the world's living rooms. He dedicates his movie to the 500 correspondents who have lost their lives covering wars large, small and always lethal (RIP).

MA15+★★★★NFFV

### Red Dog

Move over Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, White Fang, Greyfriars Bobbie and any number of other movie pooches, Koko, the Red Kelpie, is coming through in a true outback tale (sorry) which romps to its conclusion and wraps it in sentiment.

Among those co-starring with Koko are Josh Lucas, as itinerant American John Grant, Rachael Taylor as his sweetheart Nancy and Noah Taylor (no relation) as the local pub keeper, Jack, carrying enough whiskers to play Toby Tosspot (otherwise known as Edmund Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister).

Director Kriv Stenders and scriptwriter Dan Taplitz (working from Louis de Berniere's book) give us laughs by the beerglass. Their location is the awesome, iron-ore country round Port Dampier.

The ensemble cast play itinerant workers from all over the world. Oddly no mining company executive appears in any of the Red Dog anecdotes. Nor do any of the original owners of the region.

Encore for Koko? There's always Henry Lawson's funniest short story, *The Loaded Dog*.

PG★★★★SFFV

### The Beaver

Comeback for Mel Gibson in a tragic-comedy directed by Jodie Foster, his friend in need from happier days and the movie version of the 1900s TV series *Maverick*.

Gibson plays Walter Black, boss of a toy company, who suffers from suicidal, clinical depression (aka melancholia or Black Dog). Foster plays his wife Meredith who goes along with his notion of a 'prescription puppet' when he starts interacting and talking (in Michael Caine cockney) through the titular Beaver (which looks like a fugitive from *Sesame Street* or *Hey, Hey It's Saturday*).

## Official Classifications key

G: for general exhibition;  
PG: parental guidance  
recommended for  
persons under 15 years;  
M 15+: recommended for  
mature audiences 15 years and  
over; MA 15+: restrictions apply  
to persons under the age of 15;  
R 18+: Restricted to adults,  
18 years and over.

## Annals supplementary advice

SFFV: Suitable For Family Viewing;  
NFFV: Not For Family Viewing.

Walter, back in form, lifts his company to profit, himself to celebrity. His younger son Henry (Riley Thomas Stewart) loves The Beaver. His elder son Peter (Anton Yelchin) is less enthused.

Here lies the script's major flaw. Peter is involved in a high-school subplot with Norah (Jessica Lawrence who steals scenes even from The Beaver). Mainplot and subplot do not mesh, the hackneyed nature of the second destroying the freshness of the first.

Result: melodramatic crisis. If the movie were a boxing comeback, Gibson would have won only by a technical knock-out, for it is sheer, pro technique, skewing off his personal agonies, that carries him through the brave flaws of Kyle Killen's script.

Okay TKO in a flawed movie. Time for the kind of dualistic roles other troubled actors have played, say *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Spencer Tracy) or *Dr Faustus* (Richard Burton) possibly set in Australia, salvation country for so many.

M★★★NFFV

## The Illusionist (L'illusionniste)

Jacques Tati, like Charlie Chaplin, was a product of the music hall who successfully transferred his talent to the cinema. So the posthumous filming of a Tati script is a major event, presold to

fans of his movies including *Jour de Fete*, *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday* and *Mon Oncle*.

Director Sylvain Chomet deploys his splendid talent for animation to put the script on screen. And it needs to be added that Chomet is an animator of the old school whose art has been challenged by computer-generated images much as painted pictures were by photography.

Chomet relocates the script from Paris to London and Edinburgh. The story line is deceptively simple. In the title role, the animated (or re-animated) Tati comes on under his birth name Tatischeff. He travels to various gigs clutching a single poster. As well as to London and Edinburgh, his gigs take him to a pub in what appears to be the Hebrides. Whether, Inner or Outer, is not made clear.

What is clear is that Chomet's adaptation may have come under the influence of the Alexander MacKendrick classic *Whisky Galore*. Kilted and unkilted figures reel in and out of frame as Tatischeff plays out a forlorn romance with girl he has met along the way.

One reservation: initially the film was to have been live-action, presumably with a French actor impersonating Tati in the title role. Impossible? Robert Downey Junior played Charlie Chaplin to perfection in Richard Attenborough's tribute movie, *Chaplin*.

G★★★★SFFV

## Cowboys and Aliens

Take any number of ingredients from the Western genre, mix with an equivalent number of Space genre ingredients. Add a couple of stars. And what have you got? If you're director Jon Favreau and your stars are Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig, you have a batch of explosive pies with more than four and twenty surprises in them.

Ford plays a cattle baron, Colonel Dolarhyde, Craig a lone gunman, Jake Lonergan who wears a futuristic bracelet, the only clue to a forgotten ordeal. In 1875, they confront each other at Absolution, New Mexico Territory where a mysterious traveller Ella (Olivia Wilde) resides.

Each of our heroes controls a wild bunch. And just when you are thinking something is missing, Favreau brings on an Apache wild bunch like the one

the late Irish-Australian Michael Pate led so often through the Hollywood back-lots.

There's laughter but it's not the uproarious laughter of those classic Western send-ups *Blazing Saddles* and *Cat Ballou*. It's the laughter caused by Western improbabilities colliding with Space impossibilities as the wild bunches ride off in all directions before deciding they must unite against the aliens or perish.

The aliens, it must be said, are a very scary bunch with spaceship back-up superior to broncos but not to Colt revolvers, Winchester rifles, bows and arrows and spears.

Favreau controls an offscreen wild bunch of producers: Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci (the latter pair, the scriptwriters). No prizes for guessing which classic Western Favreau recalls for his final shot.

M★★★NFFV

### Big Mamma's Boy

Romantic comedy so Italian, director Frank Chiero might have shot it on pasta instead of film. It's a pizza crammed with talents most of them provided by producer Frank Lotito who also wrote the script, stars and sings. He is Rocco, a hotshot Italian-Australian real-estate agent whose courtship technique involves suburban mansions, villas and townhouses he is in the process of selling.

All this is unknown to his Mamma played with such exuberance by

Caremelina di Gugielmo that she eclipses the multi-talented Lotito.

Rocco falls in love with a blonde Australian Katie (Holly Valance). Mamma has an alternative Sicilian package for him. Does anyone need to be told Australian blondes are unstoppable even by Italian mamas?

PG★★★SFFV

### Mr Popper's Penguins

Comedian Jim Carey tends to act as if enough is never as good as a feast. When he goes over the top, he stays there. Nevertheless director Mark Waters manages to control Carey's manic spontaneity; due weight is given to the fresh material (inspired by Florence and Richard Atwater's book).

Carey plays a turbo-charged salesman, intent on out-trumping Donald Trump by acquiring Manhattan's Tavern on the Green, its owner played by Angela Lansbury.

His attitude changes when he receives a posthumous gift from his father a heroic explorer. The gift consists of penguins. Not Scottish Penguins, the chocolate biscuit that inspired Tim Tams. Nor English Penguins, literature's greatest paperbacks. Real, live penguins. His assistant Pippa (Ophelia Lovibond) helps Popper deal with the penguins in a Manhattan apartment.

Result: estrangement from his bosses and reconciliation with his wife Amanda (Carla Gugino) and their children Billy and Jane (Maxwell Cotton and Madeleine Carroll). Hovering to make trouble is Clark Gregg as a specialist who wants to put the penguins into the Central Park Zoo.

In resolving all this, Carey demonstrates that the old advice about not acting with animals has lost its validity. Computer imaging means that animals, under total control, must enhance human talent.

Tongue-twister title. Rib-tickling hilarity.

G★★★NFFV

### Larry Crowne

Every supermarket should have one: an assiduous, ubiquitous worker who keeps the shelves stacked and the trolleys arrayed. Larry Crowne played by Tom Hanks is the one until he is fired because, a navy veteran, he does not have the educational qualifications to take him to the next level going forward.

Implausible? Not when men and women become human resources. To make good his deficiencies Larry enrolls at a community college where his key lecturer is played by Julia Roberts.

She, too, has problems which have made her sour not sweet. Her husband (Bryan Cranston) prefers video porn to her. Meanwhile Larry deals with his mortgage broker. In the role, Rita Wilson (Hanks's wife) gives new meaning to the term gold-digging blonde (bottle variety).

Hanks also directs and co-wrote the script with Nia (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) Vardalos.

The stars may be in alignment, but the laughter doesn't equal their combined power. The trouble may be that stars are haunted by other roles. In the case of Hanks, it's Forrest Gump, stalwart, loveable but dim. And perhaps his inexplicable decision to involve himself in the egregiousness of *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* (which he described as 'Tosh').

PG★★★SFFV

### Mozart's Sister

In the library of books about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, his elder sister Maria Anna, also a gifted violinist, harpsichordist and composer, is little more than a footnote.

Yet from that footnote writer/director Rene Feret has created a memoir that is masterly in enhancing her life as an itinerant musician in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe while showing how their impresario father Leopold (Marc Barbe) gave preference to Mozart (David Moreau) over Maria, nicknamed Nannerl (Marie Feret).

Feret opens with an engaging sequence of the Mozart family travelling in their coach, breaking down and finding refuge in a convent guesthouse. There they make friends with the exiled daughters of Louis XV, particularly Louise (Lisa Feret) before travelling to Versailles, its mirrors still unclouded with revolution.

By casting his daughters, Feret may be indulging in nepotism. Their acting is artless but it is an artlessness that charms. He does push the limits of plausibility with a romance between the Dauphin (Clovis Fouin) and Nannerl.

Period authenticity he maintains through costuming, manners and, above all, through the musical score by Marie-Jeanne Serrero, none of Nannerl's works having survived although she spent time conserving her brother's while mothering six children.

PG★★★SFFV

### Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows Part 2

No more Hogwarts Academy. No more the steam locomotive from Kings Cross Station, London.

Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emily Watson) have waved their wands for the last time. Severus Snape (Alan

Rickman) will sneer no more. Professor McGonagall (Maggie Smith) will no longer keep stern nanny watch on Harry. Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) will cease lecturing and Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) will no longer appear noseless in the howlingly implausible plots and counterplots.

Legions of JK Rowling scholars can now start Ph.Ds comparing her written work with the movie version. They will surely agree that hers, like that of JR Tolkien and CS Lewis in relation to *The Lord of the Rings* and to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, was the *sine qua non* of the movie franchise.

If nothing else, JR Rowling ensured that Britain's finest no longer rested between acting jobs; they got cameo roles alongside Harry Potter.

Director David Yates bring the saga to its climactic finale with glints of fine acting and salvos of computer imaging. There are seriously scary moments but account should be taken of the fact that many children have already experienced the scariness on the page and in their imagination.

As readers of the books will know JK Rowling ends on a familial note. This may presage the temptation of box-office gold to produce transgenerational sequels. The above is written in hope rather than certainty, for JK Rowling may be as ensnared by her characters as Conan Doyle was by Sherlock Holmes.

M★★★★SFFV

### **Captain America: The First Avenger**

Early in this thriller there's a sequence in which a puny recruit, Steve undergoes a process of genetic modification. The process hits a snag. For a moment, you imagine that Steve will remain unchanged and emulate fictionally the exploits of another puny recruit, Audie Murphy, the most decorated American infantryman of World War II.

No chance. We are in the United States of Comix at a time when the illusionary science of eugenics was in play: Steve emerges looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger's kid brother. He is now Captain America, complete with a shield and played by Chris Evans in a style where even his amiable grin is muscular. Against him, sauerkraut relish

## **Family in Islam**

AS TO FAMILY life, the family [in Islam] cannot be said to constitute a social unit. The bearer of authority is always one person, usually a man (that is, to outsiders at least). Hence, the priority of men in all spheres of social life is strongly emphasized. This finds a strong expression in Mohammedan Law too. Even in modern society, the behaviour of men may be of an arrogance which strikes us Westerners as strange. Notwithstanding all Western influence, it is understandable that family life will be penetrated last of all. As long as family life does not undergo change, the fundamental mentality of Mohammedan society will not be altered.

— J. H. Kramers, 'In the Shadow of Allah,'  
in *Analecta Orientalia of J. H. Kramers*,  
Brill, Leiden, 1956, p.209.

personified, is Hugo Weaving, as the Red Skull, a villain who, masked or unmasked, aims to be nastier than Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

Director Joe Johnston's tongue is firmly in his cheek. His cast also includes Stanley Tucci as the good German scientist, Dr Abraham Erskine, (suggesting that Johnston is covering the German, the Jewish and the Scottish box-office in one name).

Captain America leads a ragtag team (*The Dirtier Half Dozen?*). This includes an English soldier in a cravat. (writers Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely missed out on commando leader Lord Lovat's carpet-slippers).

Hayley Atwell, playing the love interest, ignores Annie Oakley's advice: 'You can't get a man with a gun.' Tommy Lee Jones comes on as a combat officer, his air of confidence that of an actor earning a paycheque that will enable him to improve his ranch.

The movie was produced by Paramount in co-operation with Marvel Comics. Disney, having taken over Marvel, we are likely to see more of Captain America. What of Chesty Bond who, as ever Australian fantasist knows, really won the war.

M★★★★SFFV

## **Hanna**

Like *Captain America*, *Hanna* is driven by illusionary eugenics. In this case, the superhuman is Hanna, whose gene engineering is enhanced by rigorous training in an arctic wilderness. Her trainer is Erik, a former secret agent (Eric Bana).

Saorise Ronan brings an ethereal, lethal durability to her role while American government agents move in on the forest shack where she lives with her trainer.

Director Joe Wright seeks to legitimise the horrific violence that occurs when Hanna starts to play hide, seek and kill; he makes her favourite reading the folktales of the brothers Grimm.

Those folktales still have a structural plausibility which Wright's take lacks. He has Hanna marvelling naively at fluorescent lighting in one sequence and skilfully hacking into a computer subsequently.

The Grimm linkage may be why Cate Blanchett comes on like a wicked witch who appears to be pining for union with Hugo Weaving's Red Skull in *Captain America*. All in all, the movie looks as if it was based on material that John Le Carre threw into the dustbin years ago.

M★★NFFV

### **Beautiful Lies (De vrais mensonges)**

Francophiles may criticise the English translation of the French title. Apart from this, director Pierre Salvadori's romantic comedy beguiles – especially at a time when its American counterparts tend to rudery.

Emilie (Audrey Tautou) co-manages a hairdressing salon while also trying to manage the life of her mother Maddy (Nathalie Baye), abandoned by her husband for a younger woman.

Irreconcilable tasks? Not in a romantic comedy. The salon rouseabout Jean (Sami Bouajila) secretly loves Emilie and expresses his love by way of an anonymous letter. Initially Emilie chucks it away. Later she sends it to her mother to cheer her up.

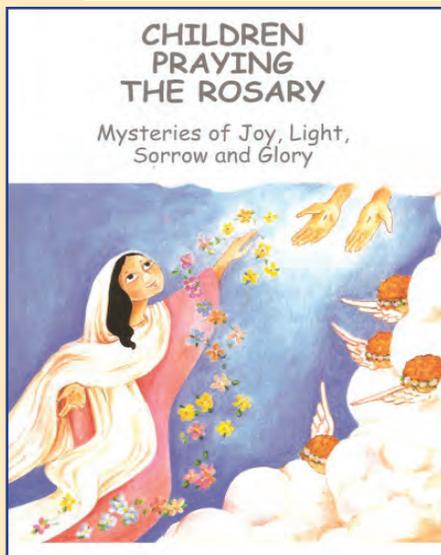
No need to detail the champagne-popping outcomes. Shakespeare used the letter-device to similar enlivening effect in his comedies.

M★★★★NFFV

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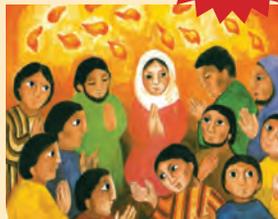
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*Traditional scepticism is being replaced by a deeper and helpless cynicism*

# BIG BROTHER RIDES AGAIN

by Michael O'Connor



IN A RECENT television show featuring Victoria's Highway Patrol, a police officer issued on-the-spot fines of \$239 each to two people for smoking in a car in company with a child. This essentially private activity conducted in private in a family context has now become a punishable offence in the 'nanny' State. When the woman at the centre of the affair directed a torrent of obscenity at the police officer within the earshot of two passers-by, she was fined a further \$239 for abusive language in public. Justified you may well think but, strangely, she could not be fined for abusing the police officer. Apparently, the law regards police as legitimate targets for abuse.

Now I am not nor ever have been a smoker. I accept that smoking can be detrimental not only to the smoker's health but also possibly – not necessarily – to those in close contact with smokers. But it's a bit different from using a gun or knife. It can be obnoxious to others. That said, smoking in public or private may be stupid or thoughtless but is only on the rarest of occasions recklessly and immediately indifferent to the lives of others.

This same government – like most others – has created a string of motoring offences that penalise the stupid or careless. As well as smoking in a car with children in it, leaving a car with keys in the ignition, handbrake off or otherwise unlocked are considered offences under the traffic regulations. The failure to wear a seat belt is penalised as is the use of a mobile phone while driving. But only the latter could perhaps be characterised as reckless. It is no defence for the government to say that these penalties are not recorded as criminal convictions. They are recorded and can result in the loss of licence and perhaps of the

offender's livelihood. The punishment can extend beyond the fine. Thus acts of thoughtlessness, carelessness or stupidity are being punished by the state while, on the other hand, that Victorian government not only legalises infanticide – to wit, full term abortions

of healthy babies – on the whim of the mother but also compels doctors against their conscience to facilitate this murderous act.

The use of legislative fiat, often unenforceable, to state codes of 'acceptable' behaviour brings law into disrepute. In a recent submission, a former head of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals suggested that any failure to 'walk' the dog should be an offence, one that manifestly could not be enforced without the employment of Soviet-style neighbourhood spies. How do we get to this situation where a good idea – wearing a seat belt for example – becomes a matter of compulsion where failure to comply is punished by the state? Only rarely does the Parliament initiate or even scrutinise these laws as they are made. They are usually promulgated as regulations, drafted by public servants and tabled in Parliament where they may be disallowed within a short time frame if the politicians pay close attention. But the politicians are faced with a mass of regulations to be scrutinised and they must demonstrate a high degree of courage to fight for disallowance. Invariably, the new regulations are presented as a public good usually backed by a public relations campaign run by some non-government organisation as well as the government and supported by an uncritical mass media, which is notably incapable of seeing the wood for the trees.

Non-government organisations play a much under-rated role. Many such as the Cancer Council are very well resourced. Any NGO in the health field can call upon substantial public and corporate financial support. Such organisations can therefore afford very professional staff for their operations who work to develop sympathetic support in the public service, the media

## State Control

THINK it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the movement towards State control in every department of life is a universal one and is not to be confused with the political tenets of a party, whether Communist or Fascist. The essential principle of the Totalitarian State was, in fact, asserted by Liberalism before Fascism was ever heard of. What is happening to-day is that the movement towards State control and State organisation has reached a point at which it comes into conflict with the older forms of parliamentary democracy. The vast increase in the numbers of the electorate, the multiplication of political parties and the fundamental character of the points at issue all tend to produce a state of political deadlock which in turn leads parties to look to extra-parliamentary action in order to gain their ends. ... now in fact we do find in every state and not least in our own such a limitation of freedom and increase of State authority taking place owing to the extension of bureaucratic government.

— Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, London, Sheed and Ward, 1935, pp.47-48.

and in Parliament. All such activity is of course perfectly legitimate but in many fields we now find that success breeds enthusiasm for ever more restrictions on personal freedom when Parliament should be calling for and acting with more restraint.

As I write, the prime minister has told Parliament that if nothing is done about climate change, Australia – and presumably the world – will face one metre rises in sea levels and a 2000km shift southwards in climate zones by 2070. Now this is absurd. Such a claim is impossible to prove; moreover it is contrary to human experience. It has much in common with the 1970s Club of Rome's prediction of imminent global starvation or the Cold War's prediction of nuclear winter. Both were products of activist groups that lacked any responsibility for policy but simply played the 'Chicken Little' game – and not always for disinterested reasons. Now, however, we have a situation where the highest authority in the land is playing Chicken Little. At the same time, those who question these unprovable and dubious claims are roundly demonised as 'deniers' and, in some cases, threatened with reprisal. Personally, I believe that climate change is occurring but is of minimal significance and has nothing to do with the activities of humans. Rather it is natural, persistent but also incremental, a normal part of a dynamic planet. What appears to be happening at the political level represents a serious abandonment of fundamental responsibilities by governments accompanied by a growing contempt for the population as a whole.

Scepticism of government is an Australian trait that we used to see as a matter of pride. That seems to be disappearing, at least openly, as the populace is confronted by a blizzard of dubious government and well-financed activist propaganda and a public inability to make itself heard as the organs of public opinion become ever more susceptible to that propaganda. I suspect that, privately, traditional scepticism is being replaced by a deeper and helpless cynicism and a withdrawal into a disconnected private space, a sense of 'leave me alone and I'll leave you alone.'

This sense of disconnection is not ameliorated by what some have seen as

## Coptic Villagers Attacked over Church Bell

**A**N EXCHANGE of harsh words on July 25 between Ruth, a Christian woman, and Gassem Fouad, a Muslim man who had parked his tricycle in front of her home, escalated into assault by the man on Ruth and other Christian villagers, and the arrest of one Copt. After Ruth, who is five months pregnant, was assaulted, a Muslim mob waited for Coptic farmers to return from the fields, where they were intercepted and beaten with iron rods and pipes. Security forces managed to contain the situation. Six Christians, including Ruth and her sister-in-law Hannan, were hospitalized with concussions, head injuries and broken limbs. No Muslim was injured. None of the Muslim perpetrators was arrested. Ruth's husband, Kirillos Daniel, was accused of possessing a weapon -- a rifle found thrown where the Christians were attacked; it has been confiscated. In an interview on CTV Coptic TV, Father Estephanos Shehata, of the Samalout Coptic dioceses, said 'The real reason behind this assault was the church bell, which has greatly angered the Muslims in the village.' He said the dilapidated church in the village of Ezbet Jacob Bebawi, outside Samalout, north of Minya, was given permission to renovate and this was completed last week, and the church bell was reinstalled. 'This is the first time such an incident has taken place in this village,' said Father Estephanos, 'which is 60-75% Christian, and the reason is definitely the presence of the church bell.' Christian villagers believe this assault was premeditated and they fear their church faces imminent attack, especially since Muslims have been slowly congregating in the village, which has a very weak presence of security forces.

— Mary Abdelmassih, *Assyrian International Newsagency*, July 27, 2011.

a dumbing-down of society generally, the result of education theories that insist that pupils seek their own knowledge rather than be taught and a pre-occupation with entertainment rather than learning. There is no doubt that the education system produces some high performers and that the main body of graduates are generally

very capable if only in their areas of specialisation. But that's about all. The level of broad general knowledge about the world and their own society, its basic beliefs and its history and traditions are frankly abysmal. And if the students happen not to seek knowledge for the sake of knowing or of seeking answers to questions peripheral to their interests, they will remain dumb.

The perception that governments and their allies risk is that they will increasingly be seen as bullies. A process, which began as a form of public education is being turned into a legislative programme to enforce certain standards of behaviour. That is, of course, what legislation in many areas is required to do especially in the field of public safety. But to expand public safety to include essentially private behaviour or some dubious form of morality needs to be done with restraint rather than enthusiasm.

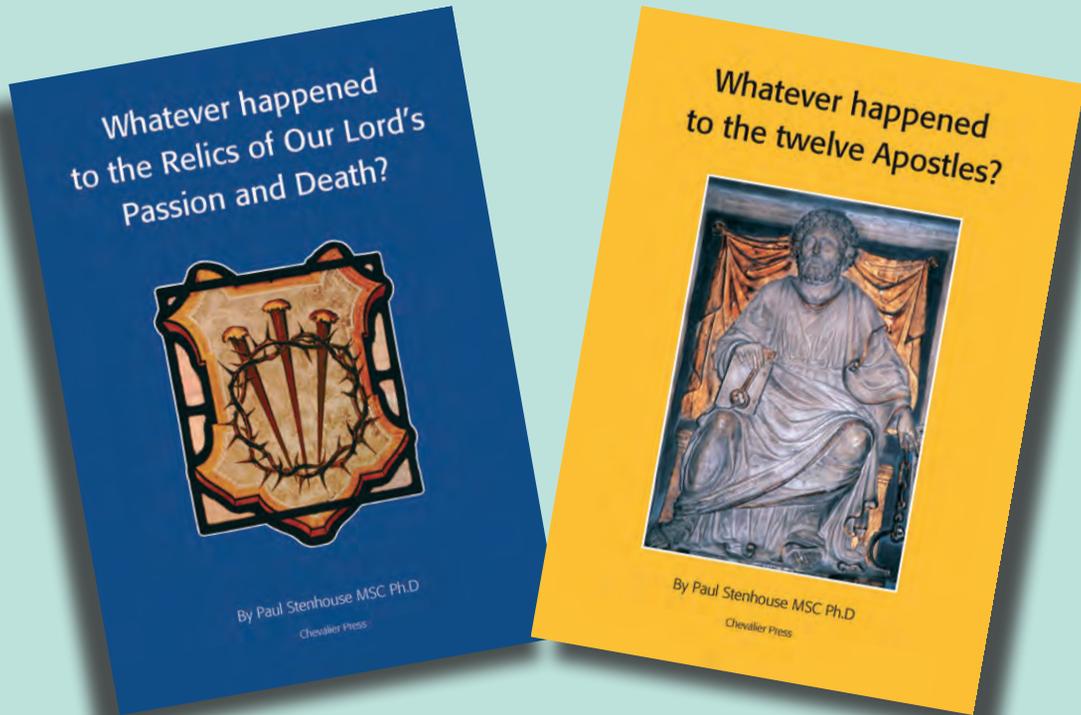
MICHAEL O'CONNOR is a former patrol officer in Papua New Guinea. He also served in the Royal Australian Navy as an intelligence officer.



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