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ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

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God's Omnipotence and an Unrepentant Mass Murderer

The Problem of Evil is regularly tied to doubts about God's existence. OUR EDITORIAL looks at an unusual twist given to this 'problem' in the light of the execution of Timothy McVeigh.

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Siberian Nightmare

More than one million men and women inhabit Russia's prisons. NEVILLE KYRKE-SMITH recently visited a number of prisons in Siberia where more than twenty million suffered and died. He found signs of hope among the misery and brutality.

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To Know, Worship and Love

Communicating the Faith is a major concern of Catholic parents, and the principal reason for the existence of the Catholic Education system. TESS LIVINGSTONE reviews a series of catechetical material for children prepared by the Melbourne Archdiocese on the initiative of Archbishop George Pell, now Archbishop of Sydney

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Homosexuality: an unresolved Mystery

Psychologist RONALD CONWAY looks frankly at the reality of homosexuality and homophobia in our society. In this first of two articles for Annals he examines common fallacies about homosexuality and asks if there is a way of meeting the need for love and friendship without condoning seriously sinful behaviour.

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The Myth that Legalised Euthanasia could be Safe

Every euthanasia Bill proposed in Australia and elsewhere has been unsafe. This article by BRIAN POLLARD examines why this is so and describes legal and medical issues ignored by many proponents of mercy killing.



Front Cover: The 'Crossed Keys' Grilling in the Borgia Apartments in the Vatican. The Crossed Keys (in heraldic terms 'keys saltire') recall St Peter's profession of Faith in our Lord, and the Office of the Keys which Jesus committed to Peter and his successors in Matthew 16.13-19. The background is usually red, and sometimes one key is gold and the other silver. Over the keys is the Papal Tiara and below, the arms of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI.

Back Cover: Image of the Risen Christ on the cover of a Book of the Gospels dating from the first half of the 19th century in the collection of St Nicholas's Russian Catholic Church, Kew, Victoria, Australia.

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

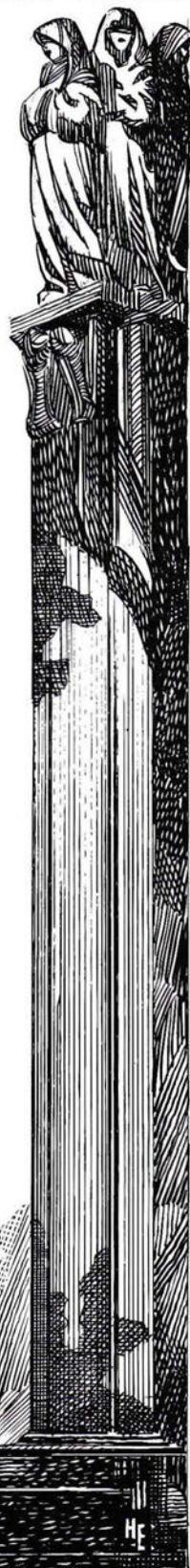
God's ways are not our ways

IF He exists, and He does, why wouldn't he speak to us in simple language, granted our feeble understanding? Why would he want to confuse us with the garish symbols that are the inflatable dolls of contemporary exegesis?

'What shallow pride leads us to put limits to His power, to claim to encompass Him within the boundaries of our experience, and to forbid Him to pass beyond the laws and rules that he has laid down – something He does every time He forgives us.

'But there is a consequence of God's existence, more interesting than any miracle. For if He exists, and He does, then Truth exists. He is this Truth, and it cannot be other than beautiful.'

- *Défense du Pape* by André Frossard, of the Académie française. Editions Fayard, 1993.
Translated by Paul Stenhouse, MSC.



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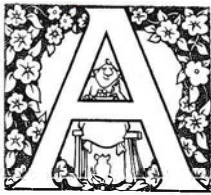
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Timothy McVeigh's death: execution or suicide?

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE AND AN UNREPENTANT MURDERER

The 'problem' of evil, with all the questions asked when loved ones are faced with incurable diseases and unmerited suffering, is regularly tied to doubts about God's existence.

PAUL STENHOUSE looks at an unusual twist given to this 'problem' in the light of the execution of Timothy McVeigh.



AN unlikely spin-off from the much publicised execution of the notorious Oklahoma bomber is a

recent claim by a London columnist of the *Times* that '... God cannot be omnipotent if Timothy McVeigh can choose to defy him'.¹

What illogic drives people to conclude that when something that they expect or want to happen - reward, punishment, healing - doesn't happen, this proves that an all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing God cannot exist?

Timothy McVeigh is hardly breaking new ground with his alleged impenitence before his execution, or with his cruel disregard for the lives of the 168 innocents [including 19 children] who died on April 19, 1995 when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City had its façade blown out by explosives he put there. Regrettably he is only one of a long ignoble line of those who mock God and think they get away with it.

The Psalmist warns us of 'the impious fool' who 'says in his heart "There is no God."' The Psalmist also describes the experience of many of us when he writes, 'As I pour out my soul in distress they ask me all day long, "where is your God?'"

Maurice Baring, [a Catholic writer and heir to the bank of the same name] who was in Russia long before and during the Bolshevik revolution, tells of arriving in a village in the countryside in the early days of the Russian Revolution. He found a

group of Bolshevik functionaries called *Bezbožniks* the 'Godless,' ('without-God-ites') the official Atheists - desecrating the church before the horrified gaze of the villagers.

After looting the building, the chief *bezbožnik* put his foot through an icon of the Blessed Virgin which he had thrown to the ground at the front of the church screaming out: 'See how powerless your so-called God is! I insult his mother and see, he does nothing!' At that the village chief called out 'God may not have done anything, but I am going to,' and raising his rifle, shot him dead.

While sympathising with the feelings of the villagers, we cannot

condone this extreme reaction to the provocative blasphemy and sacrilege of the *bezbožniks*. Our Faith obliges us to seek a more a more reasoned response to the taunts of unbelievers.

Writing in *The Spectator* Matthew Parris says that McVeigh's attitude shows that his death at the hands of the State was willed by him, and akin to suicide. It proves to Parris that 'neither God nor America [can] stop us mucking up our own lives or destroying those of others; they cannot even force us to hang around and take the consequences.' There is nothing in these comments that a reasonable person could object to. It is the conclusion he draws from them that defies logic.

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Freud's praise for cocaine

THE fantastic character of the 'Cocaine Episode' in Freud's life can be appreciated only by comparing the silences in Freud's autobiography with the revelations in Jones's biography. In the spring of 1884 Freud – then twenty-eight – read in a German medical paper that an Army doctor had been experimenting 'with cocaine, the essential constituent of coca leaves which some Indian tribes chew to enable them to resist privations and hardships'. He ordered a small quantity of the stuff from a pharmaceutical firm, tried it on himself, his sisters, fiancée, and patients, decided that cocaine was a 'magical drug', which procured 'the most gorgeous excitement', left no harmful after-effect, and was not habit-forming! In several publications he unreservedly recommended the use of cocaine against depression, indigestion, 'in those functional states comprised under the name of neurasthenia', and during the withdrawal-therapy of morphine addicts; he even tried to cure diabetes with it. 'I am busy', he wrote to his future wife, 'collecting the literature for a song of praise to this magical substance.' One is irresistibly reminded of Aldous Huxley's songs of praise to mescaline; but Huxley was neither a member of the medical profession nor the founder of a new school in psychotherapy.

– Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, London, Pan Books, 1964.

Were he God, it seems that Parris would not tolerate such defiance, so he concludes that God wouldn't. If God *does* tolerate it, then this can only mean [in the logic employed by Parris] that God is not all-powerful; and a God that is not all-powerful is no God.

Parris assumes that McVeigh's final seconds of life were as impenitent as those that preceded. There is no evidence to support this. 'Between the stirrup and the ground,' runs the old saying from England's Catholic past, 'is mercy sought, and mercy found'. Between the injecting of the poison and his last conscious moment, Timothy McVeigh may well

have sought and found a merciful pardon from his God.

But let's assume for the sake of argument that McVeigh remained impenitent up till his last nanosecond of conscious life. Parris [or whoever subbed the article] suggests that the 'message' of this mass-murderer is that 'Man can defy God forever'. 'Defy'? How could McVeigh 'defy' someone who, we are assured by Parris, doesn't exist? 'Forever'? What does 'forever' mean in a material world without God? This is Parris throwing out the cake, and wanting to eat it too. If God doesn't exist, then McVeigh's defiance ended with his last breath, when the

cameras stopped rolling, the microphones were switched off, and the media stopped treating him like a celebrity.

As for 'forever' – this makes sense only in a world where human immortality and the supernatural are as much facts of life as IT and ice-cream. It makes no sense to speak of 'forever' in a material world without God. 'Time' itself will come to an abrupt halt when the last particle of matter disappears in that second 'Big Bang' which, we are told by the materialists, will destroy our universe.

'No wonder, then,' Parris says, 'that suicide is in the eyes of the Church a mortal sin. Suicide is the proof of the impotence of the Divine in the face of free will'. 'Impotence' in the sense that God chooses to respect the free-will of his creatures even when they throw their lives away – yes. 'Impotence,' in the sense that the creature can by his own power pit himself against God and emerge the victor – no.

Put another way, Parris is saying that even God could not force Timothy McVeigh to love him. No Catholic would disagree. McVeigh was free, as we all are free, to love and serve God; or to hate and mock him. But a key element in the dilemma is the fact that free will itself is God's gift.

Does God's not forcing McVeigh to love him show that God is not all-powerful? Far from it. It means that having given McVeigh the gift of free-will God respected his freedom even when he abused it.

'God cannot make us winners if we do not choose to be. By losing we cheat him, and by cheating him we beat him'. A God we can 'beat,' is by definition no God at all. Parris is suggesting that God, if he were truly God, would force us to do his will if he could. This is a contradiction in terms: if God forced us to do his will, we would cease to be human. We would be automata. Claims that our free-will excludes the possibility of God begs the question: where did our free will come from?

Parris would have done well to recall the old saw about 'cutting off your nose to spite your face'. Experience must have taught him

that the only one we hurt by our foolishness is **ourselves**. We certainly don't **beat** God by losing - any more than we **beat** the School System by failing the HSC: or we **beat** Lotto by missing out on the jackpot. A mass-murderer doesn't **beat** the Justice system by being condemned to death. An athlete doesn't **beat** the other competitors by losing the race.

In the metaphorical jargon of former, more human and religious, days we would have spoken of murderers like McVeigh 'offending' God. In a similar metaphorical sense he could be said to have 'hurt' God.

St John tells us that love comes from God⁴ and that God 'is love'.⁵ Unrequited love causes pain in the lover. The pain felt by a loving parent at the deliberate disobedience of a mature child who should have known and chosen better is analogous to the 'pain' felt by God when we sin. We don't 'beat' God when we fail Him and ourselves; we beat only ourselves. And we oblige ourselves to bear the grief that this will inevitably cause us, eternally.

Timothy McVeigh's quoting of 'Invictus' by William Earnest Henley [1849-1903] who suffered terribly from tuberculosis, had a leg amputated and was the model for Long John Silver in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, proves none of the things that Parris claims for it.

'It matters not how strait the gate / How charged with punishments the scroll / I am the master of my fate / I am the captain of my soul' could just as well be an admission of guilt and responsibility, as of impenitence.

Parris's treating of McVeigh like some latter-day Friedrich Nietzsche, and his celebration of McVeigh's alleged 'beating' of God by turning his execution into some macabre suicide, as if he were mad Nietzsche glorying in the death of God, seems a smug exploiting of what was, in reality, a tragic end to a wasted life.

Parris has done us all a favour by admitting that free will makes a difference. But instead of exalting the power that this gives man to defy God [and implicitly, in Parris's thinking, to dethrone God] wouldn't



Do-gooders beware

IT is the custom of the Hindoos to expose dying people upon the banks of the Ganges. There is something peculiarly holy in the river; and it soothes the agonies of death to look upon its waters in the last moments. A party of English were coming down in a boat, and perceived upon the bank a pious Hindoo, in a state of the last imbecility - about to be drowned by the rising of the tide, after the most approved and orthodox manner of their religion. They had the curiosity to land; and as they perceived some more signs of life than were at first apparent, a young Englishman poured down his throat the greatest part of a bottle of lavender-water, which he happened to have in his pocket. The effects of such a stimulus, applied to a stomach accustomed to nothing stronger than water, were instantaneous and powerful. The Hindoo revived sufficiently to admit to his being conveyed to the boat, was carried to Calcutta, and perfectly recovered. He had drunk, however, in the company of Europeans - no matter whether voluntary or involuntary - the offence was committed; he lost caste, was turned away from his home, and avoided, of course, by every relation and friend. The poor man came before the police, making the bitterest complaints upon being restored to life; and for three years the burden of supporting him fell upon the mistaken Samaritan who had rescued him from death. During that period scarcely a day elapsed in which the degraded resurgent did not appear before the European and curse him with bitterest curses - as the cause for all his misery and desolation. At the end of that period he fell ill, and of course was not again thwarted in his passion for dying. The writer of this article vouches for the truth of this anecdote, and many persons who were at Calcutta at the time must have a distinct recollection of the fact, which excited a great deal of conversation and amusement, mingled with compassion.

- Rev. Sydney Smith, *Edinburgh Review*, April 1808.

it be wiser to see in free will a power to respond to God's love and to express gratitude and self-sacrifice, in place of defiance and self-destruction.

I prefer to think that far from 'beating' God, and far from his death being the final insult flung in God's face, McVeigh was 'beaten' by God's

Grace, and freely turned at last in love seeking forgiveness for his sins from his Father in Heaven.



1. Matthew Parris, 'The message of mass murder: man can defy God forever,' in *The Spectator*, July 14, 2001.
2. Psalm 14,1.
3. Psalm 42,3.
4. 1 Jn 4,7.
5. 1 Jn 4,16.

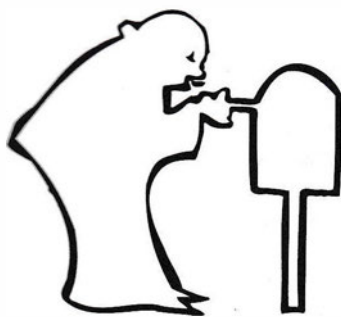
Patent absurdities

IN JUNE 1993, while flipping through his mail, Jack Singer noticed an envelope from an unfamiliar law firm. Singer, an eye surgeon in Vermont, knew of no outstanding complaints against him, but the hazards of unexpected malpractice claims always lurk for any physician. He quickly opened the letter.

Singer was indeed facing a lawsuit – not for some perceived failure but, ironically, because of his success. He had recently perfected a novel technique for removing cataracts, featuring a specially shaped incision that requires no stitches to heal. According to the letter, a surgeon in Sun City, Arizona, named Samuel Pallin had recently patented the same operation. Legalistic language notified Singer that if he continued to perform the no-stitch cataract operation, he would have to pay Pallin royalties of as much as \$10,000 a year.

Singer, who had already begun teaching the new procedure to his fellow ophthalmologists, was stunned as he skimmed the letter. What would the profession come to if practitioners could own the rights to medical procedures? Could such a seeming extortion possibly be legal? At first Singer thought the matter might be a mistake, a misunderstanding between two colleagues that could be cleared up by a personal response. He soon learned otherwise. The case would eventually cost Singer, his clinic and the supporters who contributed to his legal defence fund more than half a million dollars in legal fees.

– 'Patent Absurdities', Seth Shielman, *The Sciences*, Jan/Feb 1999.



Stands Firm

I do enjoy the magazine so much – it stands for all I have been taught as a child. At 80 years of age I see so much change of ideas but this magazine stands firm as a rock in our beliefs. Thank you all.

Blackburn Vic. 3130

MARY MCGOWAN

Hardest to convert

The Catholic Church once taught that there were two kinds of ignorance; invincible ignorance and culpable ignorance, regarding the teachings of the Church. That teaching is maybe now forgotten. The first kind of ignorance is blameless before God; the second, blameworthy before Him. Many Catholics; those at least who profess themselves to be so, reject many, if not all, of the infallible doctrines of the Church, and in doing so reject the teachings of Christ. Therefore, being of the Catholic Faith on their own terms, it would seem in most instances that such Catholics are guilty of culpable ignorance. Amongst the finest Catholics giving unquestioning allegiance to the doctrines of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, are converts from mainly the Anglican Church. The hardest to convert to the Catholic Faith as preached by Christ the Founder of the Church, His mystical Bride on earth, are cradle Catholics: they all too often defy the Pope's teachings on morals and the Sacraments.

Hawthorn, Vic. 3122

JOHN L MAPLESTON

Common Sense

Keep up the good work. I look forward to *Annals* every month, there is a lot of information and good common sense within the covers.

Numimbah via Murwillumbah NSW 2484

ROSINA M FOGARTY

Play by the rules

Occasionally, in the life of a priest you are put in a difficult situation that with grace can provide an opportunity to reveal in a succinct, clear, insightful way a principle of truth.

One such occasion happened to me, recently, when I was in a friendly way confronted by a school friend who said to me: 'The Church ought to change its teachings about things like the permanency of marriage and homosexual behaviour – as it's too difficult today!'

I knew at that moment it would not be wise to argue with my friend, so I changed the subject immediately. I went away and thought how best to answer his question in a way that would be fair and clear for him to understand.

So with the power of God's spirit helping me I decided to write him an answer based on an analogy that he could readily grasp.

My friend at the time was a 1st Grade Rugby Coach, so my analogy went like this. If in the course of a game the players in your side find it too difficult to score tries in the field of play and your goalkicker finds the crossbar between the posts too high – do you complain and write to the

administrators of the game to widen the field and lower the crossbar, or do you train them to play within the perimeters of the game – no matter how confining that may be?

Of course, you would do no such thing. You would just discipline them to play within the perimeters of the game, and if they didn't do that, suggest they do something else with their time.

Well, the Church's teachings based on God's word and her own traditions are something like that – they won't change – we are meant to adapt ourselves to them.

My friend, (God love him) said – 'Thanks, for pointing out to me, I never thought about it according to this logic before.'

Stories are great, for illustrating truths and principles. I hope this one will be of help to someone, as well.

Bankstown, NSW 2200 (FR) MARTIN MAUNSELL

Easy to understand

Sorry I am late this year, hope the little extra helps in this wonderful newsy magazine, it helps so much with one's religion and explains things in a way that is easy to understand. Keep up the great work.

Wynyard, Tas. 7325

GERALD A FLINT



Bidding one's Bedes

AMONG the prayers said in mediaeval churches was one that came to be known as the 'bidding prayer'. This was 'a list of intercessions, read out after the Gospel at Mass,' when prayers were asked 'for the pope, prelates and clergy... for the realm and its prince, pregnant women, husbandmen, the harvest, the sick, pilgrims and benefactors, and lastly for the faithful departed... this was called the Bedes', or praying the prayers. When this sense of the word *bid* went out of use, bidding prayer was thought to mean 'enjoining prayer', or issuing instructions about who and what should be prayed for. After the Reformation this practice disappeared, but has now been revived by the Catholic Church.

– *Uncumber and Pantaloon*, Gillian Edwards.

ABC on the Back Burner

I sent the following letter to the ABC in April.

'Your contribution to TV entertainment has kept me watching "Back Burner" since its inception.

'There have been times when I have felt uneasy about your handling of matters concerning religion, particularly Christianity. However, at Easter time the last segment of Back Burner contained material that would outrage the feelings of most fair minded Australians who were by the very essence of Easter remembering the great act of sacrifice made by Jesus Christ who died for all mankind. To be grateful, yes, but nothing to laugh at.

'It was sick sacrilegious matter of the lowest grade and unworthy of the ABC for letting it go to air. Had a similar slur on the beliefs of Muslims been made in an Islamic country the mind boggles at what treatment would have been meted out to the producers.'

Terrigal NSW 2260 P. MAURICE MALONE JP

Send along a 'sub'

To paraphrase 'Quidam' circa 1896, [one of the pen-names of the Editor's great grand father], 'If you want to get serious, send along a 'sub'.'

Sydney, NSW 2000 ALAN KATEN DUNSTAN

Motherhood 2001

I've been getting the *Annals* for a few years now and always enjoy reading it as it is unashamedly Catholic. While each issue has much good reading, I have to say that I particularly liked the poem *Motherhood 2001* by Frances Hackney in the June 2001 issue. It is really spot on. I'm not denying that it is heartbreaking for a couple who wants children not to be able to conceive them and I have friends who are in that situation. But IVF can never be an answer because it violates the dignity of the person conceived – not to mention that of the parents who become little more than a source for materials for a laboratory experiment.

More worrying is the mindset that IVF engenders. In today's world children are becoming a commodity to be bought and sold at will (witness the surge in surrogacy). Initially it was



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couples demanding access to IVF, now we have lesbians and single women demanding it as their 'right'. Who next? Homosexuals and single men? Not once does anyone mention 'responsibilities', or take time to consider the rights of the children concerned. Of course this mindset is only to be expected when we have a society which has embraced contraception and abortion as acceptable methods of 'family planning'.

Now if you could just get Frances to write a little poem on cloning....

Caboolture, Qld 4510 MICHAEL BYRNE

In the June edition of *Annals Australasia* a poem, entitled *Motherhood 2001?* was printed.

I write to you to share with you my

horror and disgust in my reading of the poem and your printing of such thoughts.

The cynicism, the degradation of women, the lack of sensitivity to parents who cannot conceive a child normally, the 'superior', condescending tone of the poem contributed to an overall felling of severe disappointment within me and a regret that such a poem would receive the prominence it did in a Catholic journal.

It would be my hope that the editors of a journal such as *Annals Australasia* would be more considerate of women, more sensitive in their choice of article, more compassionate towards childless couples. Let us read articles that lift us up, encourage us in our efforts to live the Gospel and inspire us in our promotion of the respect and dignity of every human person.

Croydon, NSW 2132 MAUREEN McDERMOTT

Would not wish to be without it

My *Annals* subscription is due so I am sending a cheque to cover it and a little bit over as a donation to help in your work.

I love *Annals* and would not wish to be without it. I enjoy reading it and learn a good deal too.

It was good to see poetry in a recent issue – more would be welcome I think.

Carseldine, Qld 4034 MARY HUTCHINSON

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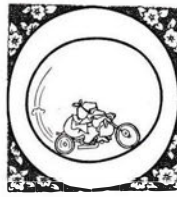
His topic will be: **Chesterton and Eugenics.**

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The Final Fantasy



OTHER movies have been made entirely on computers, but 'Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within' is the first to attempt realist human characters. Not Shrek with his trumpet ears, but the space soldier Gray Edwards, who looks so much like Ben Affleck that I wonder if royalties were involved. The movie, named after a famous series of video games, creates Planet Earth, circa 2065, where humans huddle beneath energy shields and wraithlike aliens prowl the globe. The film tells a story that would have seemed traditional in the golden age of Asimov, van Vogt and Heinlein. But science fiction fans of that era would have wept with joy at the visuals, and they grabbed me too.

Nor for an instant do we believe that Dr. Aki Ross, the heroine, is a real human. But we concede she is lifelike, which is the whole point. She has an eerie presence that is at once subtly urreal and yet convincing. The first closeup of her face and eyes is startling because the filmmakers are not afraid to give us a good, long look – they dare us to admire their craft.

The reason to see this movie is simply, gloriously, to look at it. Aki has dream scenes on another planet, where a vast celestial sphere half-fills the sky. We see New York in 2065, ruined, ghostlike, except for the portions under the protective dome. 'Final Fantasy' took four years to create. A computer animation team, half-Japanese, half-American, worked in Hawaii with director Hironobu Sakaguchi; they shot many of the physical movements and the rotoscoped them, and artists were assigned to specialise in particular characters. The most realistic are probably Dr. Sid and Ryan. It all comes together in a kind of amazing experience.

Is there a future for this kind of expensive filmmaking (\$140 million, I've heard)? I hope so, because I want to see more movies like this, and see how much further they can push the technology. Maybe someday I'll actually be fooled by a computer-generated actor (but I doubt it). The point anyway is not to replace actors and the real world, but to transcend them – to penetrate into a new creative space based primarily on images and ideas. I wouldn't be surprised if the 'Star Wars' series mutated in this direction; George Lucas' actors, who complain that they spend all of their time standing in front of blue screens that will later be filled with locations and effects, would be replaced by computerised avatars scarcely less realistic.

'Final Fantasy' is a technical milestone, like the first talkies or 3-D movies. You want to see it whether you care about aliens or space cannons. It exists in a category of its own, the first citizen of the new world of cyberfilm.

– Roger Ebert. Copyright © Chicago Sun-Times Inc. Reprinted with permission.

The Church reaches out to Russia's Prisoners

SIBERIAN NIGHTMARE

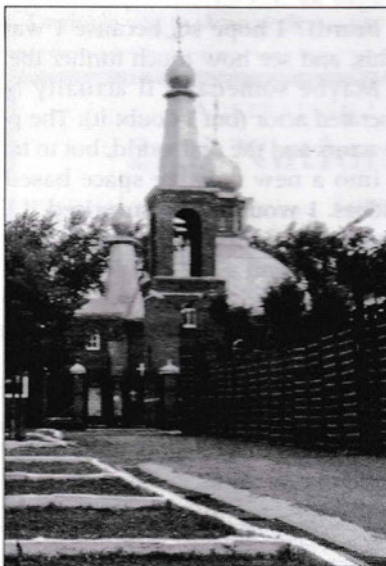
More than one million men and women inhabit Russia's prisons. NEVILLE KYRKE-SMITH visited a number of prisons in Siberia where more than twenty million people suffered and died. He found signs of hope amid the misery and brutality.

JURIJ is serving 20 years for murder. He was a seminarian, his father is an Orthodox priest and his mother an opera singer. Now he is inside a tight security prison with 2,000 other convicted murderers at Niznij Tagil, north of Ekaterinburg in Siberia. Jurij told me: 'The chapel here makes a real difference. It is the only thing of beauty and the only place where prisoners and guards are all the same.' He is the sacristan, and sings superbly when the Commandant orders him, 'Sing for us, now.' The Orthodox chapel was built by the prisoners and offers some hope in a camp which is as grey and colourless as the faces of incarcerated prisoners who endure a strict regime, where physical beatings are commonplace.

Looking into a courtyard from the chapel window I see over one hundred inmates being lined up in the dust of a barbed wire quad, under a watchtower. As I go outside the chapel, a voice from behind a caged grill, at the top end of one block, shouts out over the wall 'Hi - who are you?' I see faces peering out through the mesh and I tell the guy I am from England and that I work for a charity. 'What's your name?' I ask. 'Mikhail, Michael,' he replies, as I remember. 'Are you here for twenty years?' I ask. 'Twenty-five' came the reply. 'Was it murder?' 'Yes, sure - murder.' Just then the Assistant Commandant, in his army fatigue, comes out, looks at me - laughs and then the Commandant joins him signalling the prisoners away from the window, and shouting, 'What do you want? Trouble? Get the hell away from that window or I will sort you bastards out.' Later, over vodka toasts with the Commandant I ask if



Over 2,000 women are prisoners here - in this largest women's prison in Russia - in the Sverdlovsk Region. Two thirds of young people in the area are drug users - heroin being the most common drug - and many of these girls are HIV positive. 10% of the prison population has an incurable TB. Fr Foma runs a programme of drug re-education for the young.



The chapel in a Siberian Prison Camp, in Sverdlovsk Region. It was built by inmates, and is 'the only thing of beauty and a place of peace,' as Jurij, serving twenty years, said.

anyone ever tries to escape. The Orthodox chaplain smiles weakly, whilst the guards roar with laughter and keep banging the table - 'Nyet! Nyet! Nyet!' they repeat, at the best joke they have heard for a long time. I find out later that if anyone ever tries to escape all the inmates are beaten with club truncheons.

This is Russia today - with over one million people imprisoned. Approximately every one man in five, aged between 18 and 45 years, is in jail. There are 53 prisons in the Sverdlovsk oblast alone, with more than 44,000 inmates, that is over 1% of the population of this region. One female prison officer, Lydia, spoke to me in her office, which bizarrely had a copy of a video on Jesus on a shelf just next to a biography on Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the KGB. Lydia has worked for over twenty years at the largest women's prison in Russia, - with over 2,000 inmates - and she told me: 'Yes, it was good we moved to democracy, but it made life more difficult for us here. We had an amnesty last year for many prisoners; nearly 1,000 were released, but many -

perhaps 35% – have returned and we are full again. Many of the girls are HIV positive and the majority of the young women are here because of drug addiction.' In fact, from guards and chaplains I heard estimates that between half to two thirds of young people in the Sverdlovsk region are heroin users, with drugs being transported through the Central Asian Republics. 10% of all prisoners have an incurable TB and life expectancy both inside and outside prison is falling, due also to pollution, alcohol abuse and poverty.

Yet, in this dumping ground of humanity – where the little Tsars of



One of the icons in the chapel, painted by the girls in a women's prison camp, in Sverdlovsk region, Siberia. The face of Our Lady looks like the 'Mother of Sorrows' - with dark eyes - reflecting the suffering of the young imprisoned here.

the mafia run each town and city – it is not just the continuation of gulag prisons from Solzhenitsyn's days that haunt one. Industrial accidents and pollution have been terrible in this area. In a nuclear accident in 1957 (Chelyabinsk-65) a nuclear tank exploded contaminating an area 8 by 100 kms. Twenty-three villages were bulldozed and about 10,000 people moved out, although the accident was not admitted for decades. Five out of the ten Soviet 'nuclear archipelago' secret cities were in this

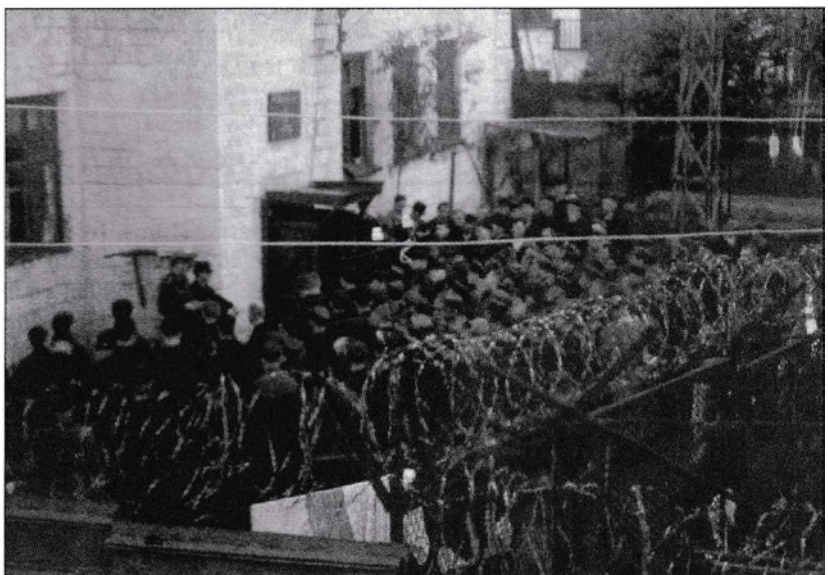


Alexander and Yuri in the chapel library, used by inmates at this prison in Siberia. The Church offers hope and help.

region. Dumping of radioactive wastes in the River Techa and Lake Karachy led to grave health problems in the area. An anthrax leak from Sverdlovsk-17 also killed 64 people in 1979. Just last month the Russian army displayed some biological warheads, which it is using western money to destroy, but meanwhile some of the frightening two million warheads are simply padlocked away in rusty silos here in the Ural Mountains. Another recent agreement has been made that Russia will take radioactive waste here in the Urals for recycling, in an agreement worth about \$20million. If there are dollars involved then it is worth doing, whatever the human or envi-

ronmental cost. The pollution is partly from the nuclear sites, but also from industry and mining; many of the small ponds and hundreds of trees look damaged and polluted. At 7.8 roubles (20p) a litre, petrol (leaded of course) is cheap and there seems no concern for the environment or the impact on the health of the people. One priest told me, 'If you do go to hospital you have to take your own sheets and food, and buy any medicines you need. Just about all babies are born unhealthy or weak, many with asthma and some with cancer.'

However, there is some hope. It may be surprising for some people to learn that the Orthodox are involved in pastoral work and social teaching; it is really encouraging to see some of the work going on in orphanages, prisons and drug centres. Fr Foma



One of the 53 prison camps in Sverdlovsk Region, north of Ekaterinburg, Siberia. Over 2,000 murderers are caged up in this one prison, existing in Soviet conditions. They are just some of 44,000 inmates - 1% of the population - imprisoned in this area of the old gulags.

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Abel is an Orthodox priest in charge of prison chaplaincy and a drug rehabilitation project in the Sverdlovsk diocese. He told me: 'My work is to bring hope and my main task is to help those people who are looking for salvation in Christ to start from where they are now. A parish inside prison should be like a parish outside – a place of freedom. For as Our Lord said if you look for the truth then the truth will set you free. As the Gospel tells us, there is no servant and master – and so it is also good that the administration partake. In the chapel the faithful are all together and there is no separation.'

His ministry stems from the Liturgy, for as he tells me in the prison chapel: 'We remember any intentions at the Liturgy here – a piece of the bread is offered in the name of a wife, mother or friend – and this really helps. Prayers are offered and many people open their hearts to Christ.'

Now Aid to the Church in Need is considering a further project to help fund a chapel truck – a mobile chapel – which could reach the isolated outlying prisons in the north, when they are accessible across the swampy wastes in the frozen winter months.

In Lepley, in the republic of Mordovia, Father Phillip Andrews, a young Catholic priest – originally from Ireland – works in the pastoral care of prisoners; there are over 400 foreigners mainly from African countries, but some also from Vietnam, USA, Germany and the former East European states.

Most of these prisoners are Catholics and have been caught drug smuggling through Russia, whilst others were students from the Soviet 'fraternal countries' who ended up turning to drugs to fund the continuation of their studies after the fall of the Soviet Union. Here the Catholic Church also offers hope – through the work of Fr Phillip who has excellent relations with the Orthodox

On the 13th May last year Bishop Clemens Pickel consecrated a chapel dedicated to the Holy Family; this Catholic chapel was partly funded by Aid to the Church in Need and was the first ever consecration of a Catholic church inside a prison camp in Russian history.

In one prison in Niznij Tagil I met Vladimir who was sentenced to 10 years for major embezzlement – apparently he worked for the Secret Service. Now he is the Sacristan in the chapel built by the prisoners themselves.

Vladimir told me: *The church makes a big change by being here. The church is always open, and our library also, from 6am until 9pm everyday. Prisoners come simply to stand and pray in the chapel, often burdened with concerns about their family. As I am here all day they talk to me and some mates joke with me, saying that I am a priest. I have even been asked by one of the Muslims how he should set about organising a Muslim community! There have been baptisms, weddings and even a funeral liturgy – without the body – for an old prisoner who died. This is a real parish church!*

Here on the edge of Siberia ('sleeping land') it must seem that God slept during the sufferings and deaths of over 20 million people in the gulag camps last century. The people and prisoners still suffer, but at least there is now some Christian hope in a frozen spiritual wasteland where humanity was so nearly crushed.



NEVILLE KYRKE-SMITH is the National Director of Aid to the Church in Need in the UK.

APOLOGETICS AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Archbishop Michael Sheehan
 Co-adjutor Archbishop of Sydney
 Revised and Edited by Father Peter Joseph

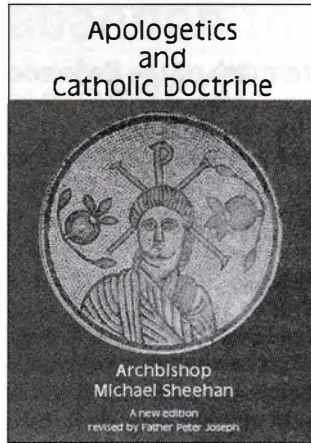
Launched in Sydney by His Grace Archbishop George Pell on 24 July 2001, this long-awaited Catholic classic has already proved to be a runaway best-seller.

Archbishop Pell has commended Father Peter Joseph's work and the book itself to the Church of today, emphasising its freedom from "muddled thinking".

FATHER PETER JOSEPH was born in Wagga Wagga NSW and educated at St Ignatius College, Riverview. He studied for the priesthood at the Pontifical College of Propaganda Fide, Rome. He gained his Licentiate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome in 1992. He was ordained for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in 1992 and served in various parishes.



He is currently Vice Rector and Dean of Studies at Vianney College, the Diocesan seminary of Wagga Wagga. In that position he is also engaged on his Doctorate in Theology with the Gregorian University.



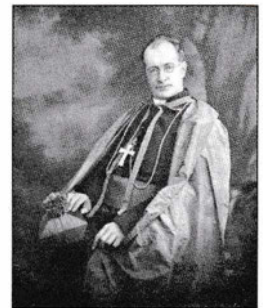
ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL SHEEHAN was a brilliant Maynooth scholar and Co-adjutor Archbishop of Sydney from 1922 to 1937. He was a dedicated promoter of Catholic education and untiring in his scholarly efforts to promote the Faith.

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Reasons for Optimism as East Timor confronts the Future

CAN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR BE VIABLE?

By PAUL STENHOUSE, MSC



On December 7 1975, Indonesian troops invaded East Timor and occupied Dili. Less than two months before, on October 16, five journalists [two Australians, one New Zealander and two British] were murdered by Indonesian troops at Balibo near the border with West Timor.

These killings set the tone for an Indonesian experiment in economic rape and genocide that killed at least 200,000 East Timorese, tried to suppress the Timorese language, culture and traditions, degraded the environment, and caused massive relocation of peoples.

Catholics in East Timor

The Catholic Church in Timor was administered from Macau from 1646 until 1940 when Dili was erected into a diocese. At that time Catholics were 8% of the population [29,889]. By 1972 Catholics had risen to 28% [187,540] out of a total of 674,550. After 20 years of Indonesian rule, by 1994 Catholics were 92% [722,789] out of a total population of 783,086. In that same year Protestants were 3.7%, Muslims 3.1, Hindus 0.6% and Buddhists 0.3%.

In 1994 Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, the embattled and compassionate Apostolic Administrator of Dili, who was soon to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, remarked: 'The situation is as bad as ever ... we live in a scorched land'. His words were to prove prophetic.

On August 30 1999, against impossible odds, a UN sponsored referendum was held to determine the will of the people for the future of the former Portuguese colony. A complete breakdown of law and order followed over the next three weeks.

Aftermath of the Referendum

The murder, rape, systematic looting and arson that followed those elections, when 78.5% voted for independence and 21.5% voted against it, is, like the Santa Cruz massacre of November 1991, a matter of record.

The UN estimates that almost 70% of all private homes, public buildings and civil and commercial infrastructure in the country were torched, damaged or destroyed, and that 500,000 people were displaced in the subsequent reign of terror waged under the aegis of the Indonesian military by pro-Indonesian militias.

'In Dili it would appear,' reported UNAMET on September 11, 1999, 'that virtually every home or building has been systematically looted of its contents and a large proportion of them burned. The central business district has been completely gutted. Militias and TNI [Indonesian] soldiers have been observed over the past few days loading trucks with equipment and supplies taken from these homes, and the dock in Kupang

West Timor is said to be bulging with kitchen appliances for sale. We believe that similar situations exist in other regions such as Aileu, Ermera and Maliana'. The numbers of dead and injured have yet to be made public.

Community Reconciliation

Community reconciliation is a *sine qua non* if a viable nation is to rise Phoenix-like out of the ruins of Jakarta's failed experiment in social engineering and economic spoliation.

Earlier this year I visited mountain communities along the border with West Timor where hundreds of locals trained by the Church are working to re-integrate militia members and their families into communities, many of them devastated as opponents of independence from Indonesia.

Such initiatives appear to be bearing fruit. When the population of Ainaro in southern East Timor was consulted recently about the possible return of militia leader Cancio Lopes de Carvalho and his brother Nemesio, the majority said they were willing to take them back provided they accepted the outcome of the 1999 referendum, and were prepared to face justice. The militia leaders agreed to these terms, and said that they were willing to work towards the reconstruction of the country. If East Timor can continue along this path it will set an unparalleled example of tolerance and maturity to other countries that seem to value vengeance above justice.

East Timor's best Resource - its People

In 1963 Sir Garfield Barwick was quoted as saying that he doubted East Timor's ability to cope with independence. Like the opinions of



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recent commentators, his judgement was doubtless based on the size of the country [only 265 kms long and 92 kms at its widest point], on its alleged lack of natural resources, and its political inexperience.

True, East Timor is one fifth the size of Tasmania, but with almost double the Apple Isle's population. However, it is considerably bigger [14,619 km²] than Singapore [581 km²]. Time alone will tell whether any of the leaders who emerge from the August 30 elections are of the calibre of Lee Kuan Yew.

In 1965 there were plenty of Singapore watchers unwilling to bet on the outcome as this virtually Chinese and Buddhist/Christian enclave tried not to be suffocated by its two predominantly Malay and Muslim neighbours. Singapore successfully exploited its best available resource - its people. Today it is on a par with the most highly developed industrial nations in the world despite its almost complete dependence on neighbouring states for what it consumes.

Australia's debt to the East Timorese

East Timor deserves a fair go. In 1941 Australia was quick to send troops to this technically neutral country to try to stem the Japanese military advance towards the Australian mainland. Though based in Dutch Timor Australians operated in Dili, Baucau and throughout East Timor.

Damien Parer photographed many of Australia's Timorese allies, along with members of 'Sparrow Force' and 'Lancer Force', as they radioed information about Japanese troop and aircraft movements from the mountains of Timor to Darwin in 1941-1942.

In late 1942, 700 Australian commandos and the 2/4th Independent Company tied down a Japanese force of over 30,000 soldiers in the same mountains. On September 23, 1942 while landing supplies and commandos and evacuating the wounded, HMAS Voyager ran aground and had to be destroyed to prevent her being captured by the Japanese.



Never abandon the seat of Catholic unity

YOU [Donatists] see that evil people sat on the Seat of Moses, which was superseded by the Seat of Christ. Yet what they said did good to those who listened. So why have you rejected the Seat of Christ on account of evil people? Return to Peace, to Unity, which did not cause you offence. If I say and do good, imitate me; but if I don't do what I say, then follow the Lord's counsel and do what I say, but don't do what I do. But never separate yourself from the Catholic Seat. In the name of Christ we will go and say many things. To what end? You are quick to condemn us. To this I can only respond: Brethren, consider the matter objectively. Augustine is a bishop in the Catholic Church. He has his burden to carry, and must render an account to God. Say, 'I have learnt good things from him. If he is evil, he himself knows it. If he is good, then even then I do not place my hope in him. For above all else, this I learnt as a Catholic: not to place my hope in men.' You quite rightly reprehend men, if you place your trust in men.

- St Augustine, 354-430 *In Ps. cxvi*, III, 20, 15ff, preached at Hippo, Sunday, November 8, 403 AD.

To speak of East Timor's 'substantial on-going cost to Australia,' as if this were an argument against its viability, would be to ignore the 'substantial on-going cost' to East Timor that Australian intervention in that country caused during World War II.

Many thousands of East Timorese lost their lives at the hands of the Japanese because of Australia's intervention there, and because of their collaboration with the Australian forces. Some put the number of those who died as high as 60,000.

As for East Timor's lack of resources, would the Soharito family

and their cronies in the Indonesian military have been so unwilling to relinquish control if East Timor were a venture capitalist's nightmare?

Would they have invested many hundreds of millions of US\$ in salt and chemical plants, in coffee [estimates vary, but between US\$10 million and 20 million came annually from exports of coffee beans to the US], sugarcane plantations, sugar mills, cement factories and oil and gas exploration and exploitation, to say nothing of hotels, alcohol monopolies, airlines and shipping - if East Timor had no resources or did not have a potentially viable economy?

The fact that much of the infrastructure has been destroyed is no reason to lose confidence in the potential for its eventual development as a viable and independent state.

It may not have the annual revenue over-optimistically projected in 1998 of US\$2 billion from the oil reserves currently being tapped - a royalty payment of over US\$3 million [for the period October 25, 1999 to September 25, 2000] was made to East Timor for the first time on October 19, 2000 - but other fields are being explored. More conservative voices predict that annual revenues of from US\$30 million to \$80 million are possible. Investors need reassuring that East Timor means 'business as usual,' and that the taxation and revenue sharing deals agreed to by the Indonesians will be honoured by the soon-to-be constituted government of East Timor.

Everything depends on the political will of the East Timorese people who have shown their mettle by voting for independence in the teeth of murderous intimidation. They know that on August 30 they need to elect truly democratic rulers who will work for the common good. They won't be able to do this without help. The US promised a \$300 million aid package on December 16, 1999. If Australia continues the pattern of the past 18 months the people of East Timor may well prove the pundits wrong, and Australia will have partly discharged a long-standing debt.



THOUGHT FROM THE LITURGY OF THE DAY



SEPTEMBER

1 Sat *Week 21* Phil 2:16
You are offering the world the word of life.

2 Sun *Week 22* Luke 14:13
When you have a party, invite the poor.

3 Mon *Gregory I* 2Cor 4:6
God has shone in our minds to radiate the glory on the face of Jesus.

4 Tue *Week 22* Psalm 27:14
Hope in the Lord. Hold firm and take heart.

5 Wed *Week 22* Luke 4:42
When daylight came, Jesus made his way to a lonely place.

6 Thurs *Week 22* Col 1:14
In the Son of God we gain our freedom: the forgiveness of our sins.

7 Fri *Week 22* John 8:12
If you follow me, you will have the light of life.

8 Sat *Mary's birthday* Rom 8:30
He justified those whom he called, and shared with them his glory.

9 Sun *Week 23* Luke 14:33
You can be my disciple only if you give up all your possessions.

10 Mon *Week 23* Col 1:27
Christ is among you, your hope of glory.

11 Tue *Week 23* Col 2:10
You find your fulfillment in Christ.

12 Wed *Week 23* Col 3:4
You will be revealed in all your glory with Christ. He is your life.

13 Thu *Chrysostom* Eph 4:7
You have each been given your own share of grace.

14 Fri *The Cross* Num 21:8
If you look at him, you shall live.

15 Sat *Mary's Sorrows* Jn 19:25
Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother.

16 Sun *Week 24* Psalm 51:1
Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.

17 Mon *Week 24* Psalm 28:9
Save your people and carry them forever.

18 Tue *Week 24* Psalm 10:2
When, Lord, will you come to me?

19 Wed *Week 24* Psalm 111:1
I will thank the Lord with all my heart.

Thoughts compiled by Father Michael Fallon, MSC.

20 Thu *Korean martyrs* Mt 11:28
Come to me and I will give you rest.

21 Fri *Matthew* Eph 4:1
Lead a life worthy of your vocation.

22 Sat *Week 24* Luke 8:15
Yield a harvest through perseverance.

23 Sun *Week 25* Luke 16:13
You cannot serve both God and money.

24 Mon *Week 25* Luke 8:17
Nothing is secret, but it will be known and brought to light.

25 Tue *Week 25* Luke 8:21
Hear God's word and put it into practice.

26 Wed *Week 25* Col 3:16
Let the message of Christ in all its richness find a home in you.

27 Thu *Vincent de Paul* Mt 9:36
Jesus felt for them for they were harassed and dejected.

28 Fri *Week 25* Luke 9:20
Jesus asked: 'Who am I for you?'

29 Sat *Michael, Gabriel, Raphael* Psalm 103:21
Give thanks to the Lord, all his hosts, his servants who carry out his will.

30 Sun *Week 26* Psalm 146:8
The Lord raises up those who are bowed down.

Being young and enthusiastically Catholic in today's world

TO KNOW, WORSHIP AND LOVE

Communicating the Faith is a major concern of Catholic parents, and the principal reason for the existence of the Catholic Education system. TESS LIVINGSTONE reviews the series of catechetical material for children prepared by the Melbourne archdiocese on the initiative of Archbishop George Pell, now Archbishop of Sydney.

DESPITE 12 years of Catholic education, I was 29 years old and a visiting fellow at a Cambridge University college before I discovered the difference between the Immaculate Conception and the Annunciation. December 8, in the Michaelmas Term, was a Holy Day of Obligation and the priest at Our Lady and the 40 English Martyrs preached on the difference between the two feast days, conceding that many younger Catholics (with whom the church was packed) sometimes confused them.

My Parish Priest from Australia, visiting England en route to see his family in Ireland was, for once, speechless. Even more so when he returned to his Parish and brought up the subject to several other adults and found he had to enlighten them as well. Before long, he, too preached on what should have been understood by the whole congregation back in primary school.

Another priest was just as stunned when he had to correct a young doctor who asked him why he preached about 'individual irregular Confession' (the word actually used in the sermon was 'auricular') and was new to the young man in a religious context.

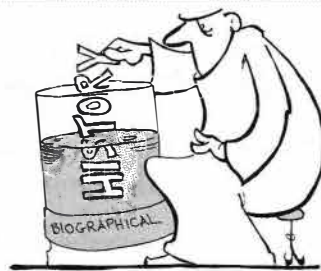
More recently, a young lad flying through Year 12 at a Catholic school in Brisbane told his grandmother, in all seriousness, that he didn't go to Mass because he didn't agree with the Church teaching that sex – all sex, even within marriage – sent you to hell.

It would be easy to fill this entire magazine with such anecdotes, especially from those of us in our 30s and

40s, at secondary school in the 1970s, who were the 'beanbag' Catechetical generation. We remember many religious education afternoons sprawled around the floor listening to profound tapes like John Denver's Sunshine or, in the case of a Sydney friend, now one of Australia's leading publishers, it was Simon and Garfunkel's I Am a Rock. Kahlil Gibran was our hero and the relaxation exercises, supposed to help us discover ourselves, were a welcome siesta from study for exams in subjects that mattered (Religion didn't). Until years later, that is, when I found myself outside Brompton Oratory in London wishing I knew why John Henry Newman mattered or looking at the tomb of Pius X in St Peter's and wondering when he lived.

The underlying problem such true stories betray is achingly familiar and helps explain the mass exodus from religious practice when young people leave school.

For this reason alone, and many others, the Church in Melbourne, the whole of Australia and for that matter the English-speaking world owes a vast debt to two men who have applied their considerable intellects and courage to tackle the problem head on. Early in his time as Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr George Pell (now Archbishop of Sydney), brought Monsignor Peter Elliott home from Rome and appointed him Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education. *To Know, Worship and Love* is the result, and it is outstanding in every way. Soundly orthodox in content, stun-



The art of a good teacher

MANY well-meaning schoolmasters succeed in turning history into something dry and boring, whereas others know how to capture their hearers' imagination. Their secret is quite simple: they follow the example which Tacitus set them a long ago, and intersperse their subject with biographical material. From Tacitus to Ammian, the Roman historian's technique took on an increasingly biographical form. Roman biographers did not so much trace the development of a personality as describe its actual state or going, and by doing so they came – at least in my opinion – very near the mark. The personality of a man is more easily determined from details of his family background and character than from a study of its development, since character is an immutable factor. In this way the biographers of the ancient world supplied us with an extraordinarily objective picture of their imperial masters.

– Ivar Lissner, *Power and Folly*, London 1958

ning in presentation, the comprehensive and detailed series is a real winner with children, parents and teachers. Most importantly, the books go a long way in showing why being a Catholic is great news, a

gift to be treasured. They awaken children's natural curiosity about life and the world in a way that draws them to what the Church has to offer.

Only a parent (or grandparent) who has tried in vain to interest chil-

dren and teenagers in the faith in general and the Mass in particular (and as often as not watched with a mixture of guilt, sadness and despair as they finally give up, too grown up to be 'made' go anymore) will know the value of material which can make the task of handing on the faith achievable, even in a secular and materialistic world.

The first two books in the series lay and set the foundations for the child to enjoy a life-long, intimate relationship with God and are subtitled *The Good Shepherd Experience*. Their inspiration is drawn from a programme, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, developed in Rome in the 1950s by Dr Sofia Cavalletti and Professor Gianna Gobbi, a colleague of Italian educator Dr Maria Montessori. Young children, these academics knew, have a special capacity to experience the presence of God and to develop a conscious and intimate relationship with God, once they are given the guidance and vocabulary to express it.

With a mix of simple scripture, play, signs and symbols and infant education techniques, the early books cultivate the beginnings of a sacramental life and a sense of belonging to the family of the church. The books encourage children to set up a prayer place in the classroom and at home to talk to Him. They introduce, in an age-appropriate way, the Last supper, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, Baptism, Churches and what they contain, the Mass, Jesus' Family, families in general, the Disciples, Mary the Mother of God and the birth of Christ.

Even though these introductory books are for younger children, they are also invaluable in pinpointing gaps in older children's grasp of the faith. These early books added real heart and a much-needed personal touch to my daughter's approach to the subject. Aged 10 and a good Religious Education student at school, she was, for example, amazed by the idea of the shepherd (Jesus) knowing and loving each sheep (every person living, dead and not yet born) by name. As we talked

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about this, it was clear she had not grasped the fact that the Jesus who lived on Earth 2000 years ago and whom the children studied at school was Divine (God) as well as being a Man.

Subsequent books expand on the topics introduced in the early books, teaching and celebrating the Sacraments, prayer, scripture, tradition and later, Church history, parables, miracles, social justice, evangelisation, the Commandments and sin, relationships, parishes, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the reformation, the Papacy, the Real Presence, the Priesthood and Vocations, Grace, the Ecumenical Councils, the Eastern and Orthodox Churches, morality for teenagers, informed consciences, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, outstanding saints as diverse as St John of the Cross and Blessed Mary MacKillop, encyclicals and religious orders – all the time stressing the importance of such knowledge and traditions in the spiritual life of every Catholic.

In a nutshell, any student who went through this course, well taught, would find it very hard to walk away from the faith, and if they were to do so, would be much more inclined to come back.

Several particular features make these books stand out from all others available:

- The prayers and lists at the back of each book. The Year 9 book includes everything from basic prayers to the Stations of the Cross, the Divine Praises, the Angelus, the Mysteries of the Rosary, the Precepts of the Church, the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Sacraments, the 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the seasons of the liturgical year, and details on how to prepare for Penance and Holy Communion.
- The timelines. These are used most effectively, especially for the upper grades. One time line, for instance, stretches from the End of the Second Ice age (13,000 BC) to the time of Abraham (1850 BC) to the reign of King David (1012 BC) to the founding of Rome (753 BC) to the assassination of Julius Caesar (44BC) to the birth of



Worship and charity

EARLY in the 4th century a church in North Africa was confiscated. The official records describe it as 'the house where Christians hold their assemblies' and list the goods seized- '2 gold chalices, 6 silver chalices, a large number of torches, candelabra and oil lamps, 82 ladies' tunics, 38 cloaks, 60 pairs of shoes'. Worship and practical charity were inseparable.

Christ, with scores of other fascinating inclusions. Another Time Line covers the Christian era from the time of Christ to the Year of Jubilee in 2000, taking in significant events major wars, Nazism and Communism, major Marian apparitions, Pius X's condemnation of modernism, the moon landing and major events in the life of Australia. Other timelines cover Ecumenical councils and the Bible.

- **The artwork and photographs.** Full colour artwork, which changes in style in keeping with the age of the children, quadruples the effectiveness of these books. Don't take my word for it – I tried them out on numerous children of all ages and all agreed it was superb. The Queensland children thought the colour drawings of Christ and his followers were far better than the black and white drawings in the Keystones and Crossroads series they use at school. The teenagers approved of the look of their books too; recognising some of the people depicted

like the Pope and some of the Saints of the 20th century, and were fascinated by the superb reproductions of historical religious artworks and one or two fine examples of Aboriginal art. They also found the maps, such as that tracing the journeys of St Paul, most helpful.

- The suggested testing and assignments are thought provoking and encourage the students to do their best and treat them as intelligent, interested participants in the process.
- Family involvement is stressed throughout the series, most of all in the early years, with many exercises involving the child doing something at home with the family, discussing a particular issue at the dinner table or encouraging family prayer including reflecting on and remembering family members who have died.
- Detailed glossaries.
- Effective use of Scripture, interpretation and scripture references.
- Highly informative, practical teaching companions set out activities, provide art materials, and assist with assessment.

The approach used in compiling this series is evident in its name, *To Know, Worship and Love*.

As Monsignor Peter Elliott explained, *To Know* encompasses the

Good advice

'It is your own interest that is at stake when your next door neighbour's house is ablaze.'

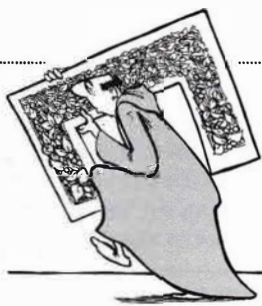
– Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace) - Roman poet (65BC-8BC), Epistles, I, XVIII, 84

traditional cognitive, doctrinal approach to Catechetics, the system that older, educated Catholics would remember from their Catholic schooling days.

To Worship draws from the Kerygmatic style evident in Catechism books in the 1950s and 1960s, such as the *My Way to God* series. It is scripture and liturgy based, all about proclaiming the Gospel, turning our minds and hearts to God in prayer. *To Love* takes in the best of the 1970s and 1980s 'love and life' approach, making religion relevant in everyday life situations and society, bringing the best out in people, respecting the traditions of others, such a particular ethnic communities within the Church, and caring for the natural world. The series teaches tolerance and love. For example, the Year 9 book explains why the Church condemns homophobia, and differentiates between one's sexual orientation and actions. It does not back away from such controversial issues, which is essential in today's world where children are exposed, via the media and internet, to far more than their parents had to face at the same age. While the series does present a solid, core curriculum it also allows teachers some scope for creativity and individuality in presenting the material in the best possible way for their students.

In my view, the richness, content and presentation of these books set them far above others currently used in schools around Australia, such as *Keystones* (published in the Blue Mountains), *Crossroads* (published in Brisbane), *Making Things Right* (San Francisco), and *Called to His Supper* (San Jose). These are primarily activity books, and while parts of them are sound, they are nowhere near as comprehensive as *To Know, Worship and Love*, which has a huge advantage in that it is a continuing series.

Some well-informed Catholics, including some home schooling families, are loud in their praise of the Faith and Life series published in America by Catholics United for the Faith. These, too, are doctrinally sound and extremely detailed. However, their excellent content is not enhanced by a rather dull



Stories worth telling

ON my way to the Abbey I was shown Gilling Castle, Ampleforth's prep school. This is an amazing house, once a seat of the Catholic branch of the Fairfaxes, with a cavernous 14th-century basement, almost untouched, a 16th-century interior above, and an 18th-century facade, all in the grand, buttery stone of the locality. The little boys take their meals in a setting not even Eton or Winchester can match, a great, airy stone chamber from the middle of Elizabeth's reign, with spectacular painted and carved panelling, decorated in the Renaissance manner with ladies and gentlemen holding high revel, and the coat-of-arms of no fewer than 370 local families of note. I have never seen anything like it. Nor had Randolph Hearst. He bought it on the spot, and had it dismantled and packed up for future erection at his grim castle in Wales. But there it remained in its packing-cases while the magnate passed on to higher-or lower-things. The story of how the monks took over the stripped and desecrated house, and eventually got the panelling back and reinstalled it exactly as before – no one would know it had ever left – is nothing short of a miracle, fit to rank among the countless marvels which have marked God's favour to the Benedictines since they were founded in the 6th century.

– Paul Johnson, *The Spectator*, Oct 31, 1998, reflecting on a visit to Ampleforth Abbey.

presentation, which simply cannot match *To Know, Worship and Love* in effectiveness.

Families who use Faith and Life would do well to take a look at Melbourne's effort. They may find it has much to offer that Faith and Life does not, and they may find a combination of the two useful.

While universal in its themes, *To*

Know, Worship and Love is geared to young Australians, and where appropriate, draws on this country's wonderful history.

In fact, such is the vagueness of some social studies teaching today in both primary and secondary schools, some children will probably learn more about world and Australian history from this series.

While packed with factual information, *To Know, Worship and Love* is as much a call to faith as it is an excellent religion studies text. As Monsignor Elliott explained, in some places, as an over-reaction to the 'mushy mushy' Catechetics of the 1970s and 1980s, some parts of the church have reverted to a almost totally factual teaching approach, where Catholicism is presented as a series of points to be learned, rather than as a faith to be lived.

Worrying, too, for many parents of secondary students is the impact of Comparative Religious courses, compulsory in many Catholic secondary schools where Christianity is studied as just one faith tradition, alongside Islam, Judaism and others. Without a good foundation, such subjects can place the Catholic faith of teenagers in grave jeopardy. *To Know, Worship and Love* is as good a foundation as one can find.

Priests and teachers should push hard to get this series into their schools before more young lambs wander astray from the Good Shepherd. If this is not possible in some parts of Australia, parents and grandparents could give their children no greater gifts than these books.

I'll be forever grateful to Dr Pell and Monsignor Elliott for producing this series in the nick of time to help my little girl. It has given Catholics a fighting chance again in what before seemed a losing battle.

Not only should today's students know what the Immaculate Conception means, they might even see a good reason for attending Mass on December 8 whether it is a Holy Day of Obligation or not.

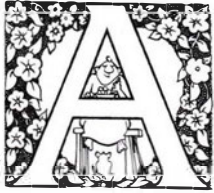


TESS LIVINGSTONE edits Perspectives, the opinion page of *The Courier-Mail* in Brisbane.

Homosexuality in its human context

AN UNRESOLVED MYSTERY

Psychologist RONALD CONWAY looks frankly at the reality of homosexuality and homophobia in our society. In this first of two articles for Annals, he examines common fallacies about homosexuality, and asks if there is a way of meeting the need for love and friendship without condoning seriously sinful behaviour.



As recently as a couple of generations ago, homosexuality was almost an undiscussable issue. When it surfaced into group comment, mixed reactions of bewilderment, fear or moral outrage distorted discussion to the point where level-headedness proved impossible. Orthodox Catholic authorities basing their teaching on scriptural references or the Natural Law theology of the Scholastics have continued to condemn homosexual acts. Yet for some time before making it explicit in the New Catechism it had been recognised that those who experi-

ence a strong erotic attraction to members of the same sex are not morally culpable as long as they strive to remain chaste. Alas, many 'gays' feel that this only partly meets their problem, since it may condemn many of the faithful to a life of loneliness. Heterosexuals are thus envied as virtually privileged by an act of God to marry and have families.

Historically and scientifically the human basis of homosexual orientation is still unclear. The very word 'homosexual' is only less than two centuries old. Reference to acts such as sodomy and other inverted moral behaviour concentrated on what was done rather than what was felt. The condition of homosexuality is separate from the forms it may take.

Hence the position of Catholic orthodoxy forbidding homosexual acts is not as old-fashioned as it sounds, however seemingly severe to some. The danger of errors in alternative teaching remains as great as ever and it has been customary to treat individual cases as a confessional matter.

Today, it has become clear that the feelings and some means of contact between homosexuals do not reflect on their worth as human beings. They are capable of loving as deeply as their heterosexual counterparts. They are as capable of heroism in war and sacrifice in peace and can work as hard and deal as honestly in daily life. Research indicates, moreover, that heterosexual males are nine times more likely to commit a violent crime than their homosexual fellow citizens. Meanwhile rape, defined as an aggressively violent sexual attack, is at least five times more common among 'straights'. Even the notorious reputation homosexuals have acquired for constantly changing sexual partners – their apparent promiscuity – applies chiefly to a hard-core group who have either abandoned moral discrimination through cynicism or despair or who have become unnaturally vulnerable to arousal. It is this group which has figured so prominently in the statistics for AIDS or HIV infection.

For a generation, the world psychiatric body has declared that homosexuality, of itself, is not a classifiable illness. Many of the severe neuroses and impulses toward suicide which have occurred among 'gay' people have developed as a result of acute conflict between sexual impulse and moral scruple, between facing the scorn of family or society and following one's own

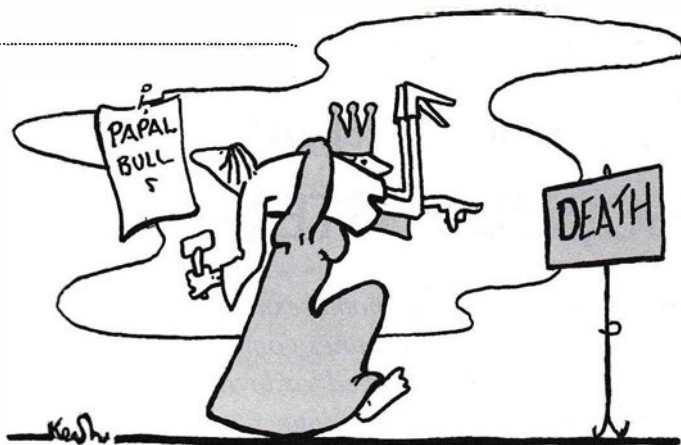
Frailty of scientists

IN the dispute between Galileo and the Jesuit Father Sarsi on the nature of comets we now know that both were wrong, and that Galileo was more wrong than his forgotten opponent. Newton upheld a corpuscularly, Huyghens a wave-theory of light. In certain

types of experiment the evidence favoured Newton, in other types Huyghens; at present we tend to believe that both are true. Leibnitz derided gravity and accused Newton of introducing 'occult qualities and miracles' into science. The theories of Kekulé and Vant Hoff on the structure of organic molecules were denounced by leading authorities of the period as a 'tissue of fancies'. Leibig and Wöhler – who had synthesised urea from anorganic materials – were among the greatest chemists of the nineteenth century; but they poured scorn on those of their colleagues who maintained that the yeast which caused alcoholic fermentation consisted of living cellular organisms.

– Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, London, Pan Books, 1964.





Getting the Taste of the Rack

IN 1570 a Papal Bull, excommunicating Queen Elizabeth, was issued, a copy of which was nailed on the door of the house of the Bishop of London by a young man of good family. He was captured and under torture, confessed to the act. He was of course sentenced to death, and at the place of his crime, he was executed with the usual horrible tortures which the hangman was allowed to carry out.

At this same time, among those who were engaged in circulating seditious pamphlets was a Dr. Story, a man who was noted for his cruelties during the persecutions in the reign of Queen Mary. He was captured and when he found that he was fast in the hands of his enemies, he wrote to Cecil that 'as he was old and decrepit, one iron on his sound leg would be sufficient to hold him', and praying that he might be sent to a comfortable prison, 'that he perished not before his time'. He was sent to the Lollard's Tower, the place where he himself had sent so many victims, and which had been empty since he had lost the power to persecute. At first he bore his fate with courage, but under the terrible pains of the rack, he an old man of seventy, was unable to hold out and confessed the secrets of his treason, was tried and sentenced to death.

At the trial of the Duke of Norfolk in 1572, the principal evidence against him was extorted by the rack applied to witnesses. It was contended that all the confessions had been made voluntarily, but on September 15th, the Queen through Lord Burghley ordered the prisoners 'to be put to the rack, and find the taste thereof'. Sir Thomas Smyth in a letter a few days later date says, 'I suppose we have gotten so mych at this time as is lyke to be had; yet to-morrow we do intend to bryng a couple of them to the rack, not in any hope to get to any thynge worthy that payne or feare, but because it is earnestly commanded unto us'; and yet a few days later 'of Bannister with the rack, of Barker with the extreme fear of it, we suppose we have gotten all'.

— L.A. Parry, *The History of Torture in England*.

drives. It is easy to point to Sydney's annual Gay Mardi Gras as a sign that gays in general have become increasingly without fear or shame. Actually, most homosexuals still remain 'in the closet' and keep their orientation secret for fear of being treated as social outcasts. Homophobia or the aversion to gays is maintained in mainstream society as strongly as ever. A measure of expedient commercial toleration has not yet ripened into tolerance.

The problem of any complex form of psychological deviation from conventional behaviour is that it never rests on an isolated cause. We know that same-sex love, with or without carnal expression, has existed for as long as recorded history. Several manifestations of it clearly fall under the theological definition of activity 'contrary to nature'; others clearly do not. Our recent ancestors often saw homosexuality in a more innocent way than in our over-medicalised epoch. Lord Tennyson's great poem *In Memoriam* dedicated to his dead friend Arthur Hallam is full of deep sentiments which seem homoerotic by today's estimate. There are some passionate letters concerning a loved monastic colleague by St. Anselm, the great 11th century Archbishop of Canterbury which might also raise eyebrows in our day. Yet nobody suggests that either Lord Tennyson or St. Anselm acted out their love in a lewd way. Ironically, it was left to the late 19th and 20th century for us to place all forms of declared same-sex affection under moral suspicion. In Australia, alas, the impoverishment of normal same-sex warmth or tenderness between most men (and indeed among many women) is one of the least attractive legacies of our Anglo-Celtic forbears for whom strong emotion has been often avoided.

Homosexuality varies in development from person to person and categorisation has failed to deal resourcefully with every case.

So far, there is no infallible pill, technique or hormonal corrective which can deal with a clear homosexual inclination without some acute hardship or undesirable side-effects. The old question: 'Is it due to nature

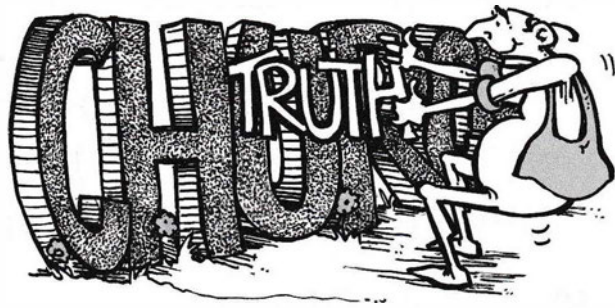
or upbringing' can be answered as 'Both; the proportions of each influence varying from case to case.' There are some deeply confined homosexuals who have felt a powerful tug toward same sex attachment since childhood – some from as young as five to seven years. Others have 'discovered' a same-sex affinity often after some years of ineffective erotic life with a heterosexual partner. Very many do not feel any clear prompting in a deviant direction before mid-adolescence. Among men especially, the spectrum of 'gay' personality is remarkable. Some are big, powerful males having all the conventional interests from sport to a love of gadgetry; others may appear graceful and feminine with obvious inclinations towards the arts and hospitality.

One or two common fallacies about homosexuality need challenging. Usually the condition is neither taught nor caught. Yet it can be confined or re-inforced by growing up in a home where there is strong emotional disharmony and social bigotry, or by a like-minded friend who may be of the same sexual inclination. Usually, however, the belief that a normal person may be finally seduced into behaviour contrary to his or her experienced inclination is mostly false. As the great Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis, points out, the notion that same-sex colleges or boarding schools are particular hot-beds of homosexual conversion has little foundation. 'Crushes' or hero-worship may be passingly experienced but these usually fade with developing maturity. There are, of course, those who experiment with homosexual conduct in an amoral mood of curiosity. Yet everywhere a predominant orientation, one way or the other, will usually prevail.

Can there be a guide to the homosexual enigma which meets the need for love or companionship without condoning seriously sinful conduct: To answer that will require a concluding piece next month which outlines the variations in inverted behaviour both individually and socially.



RONALD CONWAY is a well-known clinical and former hospital psychologist in Melbourne who writes extensively in Catholic and other journals.



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WANXIAN DIOCESAN APPEAL TO REBUILD CATHOLIC CHURCHES SUBMERGED BY THE THREE GORGES DAM

THE YANGTSE RIVER cleaves its way through the centre of China from the highlands of Central Asia down to the Pacific Ocean. Half-way down the river tower the Three Gorges, the gate between Sichuan province and the outside world. For thousands of years the Yangtse, which brought material and cultural benefits to the regions it touched, brought in its wake calamitous floods and great loss of life and property.

To prevent the disastrous floods, the world's largest dam is in the process of being built covering a surface area of 1,000 square kms. The dam will stretch 600 kms in length, from above Yichang to a point below Chongqing. Recent TV coverage in Australia has focussed attention on the project. Six Catholic churches are to be submerged – those of Wanxian, Wuling, Kaixian, Yunyang, Fengjie and Wushan – and many thousands of Catholics are to be relocated far from their traditional religious centres. In addition to churches, there is urgent need for clinics, hostels, kindergartens and convents around the church compounds.

Compensation is to be made - based on 1992 valuation and far from sufficient to cover the cost of purchasing land and erecting new churches and ancillary buildings. In most of the new towns the Catholic Church will need more land than before if it is to continue to carry out its vital work of evangelisation.

Through the generosity of individuals and agencies in Hong Kong and abroad, nearly HK\$9 million has already been raised – sufficient to cover the cost of the land and some preliminary site formation. More than HK\$15 million is needed to cover the cost of construction.

Donations no matter how big or small are much needed and will be greatly appreciated. God will undoubtedly reward with the promised hundred-fold those who devote what they can spare to this work so important for the survival of the Catholic Faith along the banks of the Yangtse River in central China.

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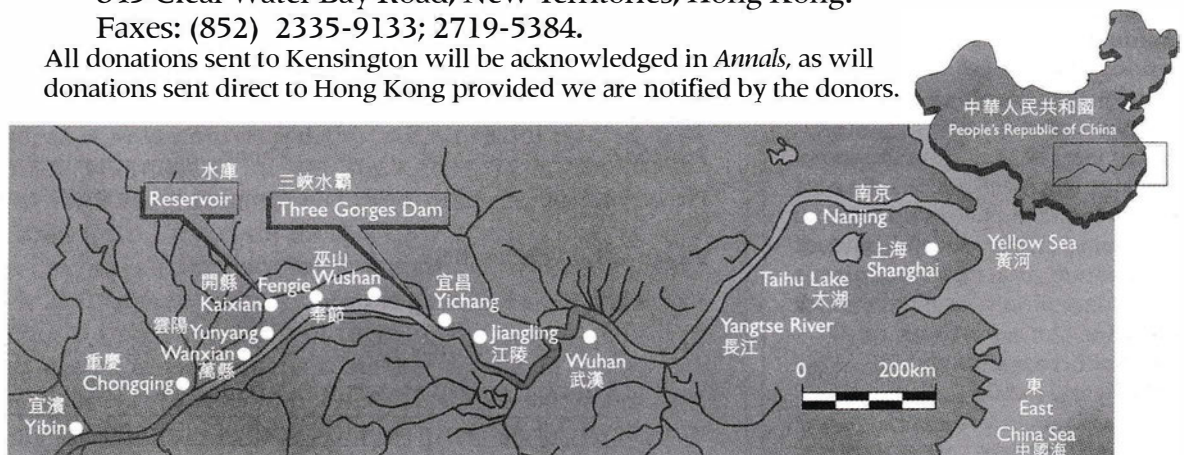
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Global Villages or Global Warming?

GAINING THE WORLD – AND LOSING ONE'S SOUL

By SAM SIMMONDS



WE ARE ALWAYS getting spooked by something, it seems. 'Twas ever thus: whenever or wherever we were born,

there was always some perceived threat to our peace of mind, however ill-defined, to challenge whatever kind of civilisation we enjoy. If from no one else, then from our leaders, irrespective of political regime, dire warnings would be solemnly pronounced, concerning some bogeyman lurking on the horizon, ready to take over and to destroy our way of life. Whether as in Coleridge's 'ancestral voices prophesying war' or some more prosaic alternative, the outlook, apparently, has never been good.

For some of us, the threat may have been 'communism', for others 'fascism', religious intolerance, overpopulation (due to mass immigration by people of 'foreign' racial types), underpopulation (due to lack of mass immigration by people of 'our' racial type), usurpation of our jobs and resultant unemployment, or introduction of exotic diseases - whatever they thought would frighten us into re-electing them. In 21st century Australia it is acutely embarrassing to recall that only a few decades ago, even before World War II, people were seriously talking about the imminent threat from 'the yellow peril' or 'the menace from the near north'. Today we have our own, up-to-date, tailor-made, state-of-the-art, objects of fear and revulsion. Among these, as we go to press, perhaps none is more potentially terrifying than the idea of globalisation.

By any stretch of the imagination, what is meant by this term does represent something vastly different

from what we are used to. It concerns proposals, which even now are being implemented in part, as to how in future we will interact with each other - whether as individuals, commercial organisations, financial institutions, governments, even entire nations; how the human world, no less, should be administered. That's a big agenda and, predictably, it terrifies those of us

who do not understand how it works - which, by the by, is nearly everybody.

Of all the ways by which we are used to being categorised, the most fundamental is our nationality. (After all, what is a passport for? Goodness knows, it's very hard to get one.) True, we can also be classified by state of origin, social status, religion, demographic, occupation - and a census form full of other subdivisions. But for most of us a sense of nationality becomes from an early age the strongest component of our personal identity. Closely allied to this sense, and arising from it, is a growing feeling of patriotism (famously and tellingly described by Samuel Johnson as 'the last refuge of the scoundrel'). And straight after that, if we're not careful, can come xenophobia and nationalist militarism.

We all probably have friends who genuinely fear being over-run by 'the teeming hordes of Asia', or some such, and that hundreds of divisions of, say, the Indonesian army will for some reason suddenly decide to come marching across the trackless desert wastes of our northern states and territories to occupy us. The unlikelihood of this does so little to mitigate our friends' discomfort that it would be a positive unkindness to point out to them that, thanks to the wonders of globalisation, such an eventuality would not just be unlikely, but actually unnecessary. When Australia's financial status can be manipulated and the value of our currency speculated in to our continuing disadvantage, 24 hours around the clock, anywhere in the world, which foreign power would go to the expense of maintaining a standing army to subdue us? What need for the bludgeon blow when our down-



Planned obsolescence

PLANNED obsolescence is one of the more obvious forms of irresponsibility. Waste is inevitable in any form of organisation. But it is a triumph of irresponsibility to elevate waste to a principle in a society which, even though affluent, is still far from providing a minimum decent life for all its citizens.



Witchcraft or hypnotism?

FOR many prehistoric centuries the theories embodied in magic and witchcraft appeared to be strikingly confirmed by events in the eyes of those who believed in magic and witchcraft... The destruction of belief in witchcraft during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was achieved in the face of an overwhelming, and still rapidly growing body of evidence for its reality. Those who denied that witches existed did not attempt to explain this evidence at all, but successfully urged that it be disregarded. Glanvill, who was one of the founders of the Royal Society, not unreasonably denounced this proposal as unscientific, on the ground of the professed empiricism of contemporary science. Some of the unexplained evidence for witchcraft was indeed buried for good, and only struggled painfully to light two centuries later when it was eventually recognised as the manifestation of hypnotic powers.

M. Polányi, *Personal Knowledge*, London. Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1958. P. 168.

fall might be arranged fiscally, not only without a shot being fired, but with hardly a drop - even of ink - spilt? Combine this sort of behaviour with their refusal to trade in our exports and - bingo! - we're stuffed.

Except in special cases, where occupation of 'enemy' territory is considered of paramount importance, shooting wars, the curses of history, should quickly become a thing of the past (except, of course, in the imaginations of Presidents of the United States of America, the arms industry and the gun lobbies).

Our fearful friends have not apparently twigged that this new kind of threat is not only possible but has been going on in some respects and to some degree for quite a long time already. Others have been quicker to appreciate which way the wind is blowing. Which is why large crowds turned out in 1999 and on several more recent occasions to protest at meetings of the World Trade Organisation and loudly to question International Monetary Fund policies

when granting loans to Third World economies.

Why all this angst? What is globalisation, anyway, but just another way of integrating government policies, economies, political movements, cultures - and even, sometimes, military affairs - around the world, for the ultimate good of the greatest number? And what's so revolutionary about that? It's almost forty years since Marshall McLuhan wrote about the 'global village'. Well, now, it seems, it's here. And many people think that's a good thing.

However, there are strong reservations as to the wisdom of the whole idea. As happens so often with social experiments (and, so far, globalisation is only an experiment, no matter what they may tell you), how you personally are affected depends on whether you're helping to drive it or passively trying to cope with its effects - whether you see yourself, as it were, as the doctor or the patient. If the latter, then you may find it hard to shake the suspicion that the quacks

see you as nothing more than a guinea pig in some ill-conceived ordeal by medication.

For the first time in history many large corporations can plan the production of their output on a scale not previously possible. Technology, particularly communications technology, now offers them the option of organising their entire manufacturing process - from basic R & D, through raw material processing, manufacture of individual elements, assembly of parts, packaging, right up to marketing - so that each stage may be accomplished where it is most cost-effective (for the corporation) to do so. This means that the location of the head office is irrelevant to any aspect of the production process, or where the customers live.

Enter the doubts, the qualms, the misgivings. If this is working to the advantage of the corporations - and accepted by the end users of the products, where does that leave those commercial organisations who are now, as they have traditionally been, outside this communications loop? What are the implications for the economies of cities, states, nations that are not part of 'the push'? Where, ultimately, is the future of sovereignty? What (international) value does your nationality have now? Are we to reprint our passports to show not place of birth but, say, General Motors Customer Account Number?

Yet there's nothing new about internationalisation. For millennia, the civilising influence of certain empires and the dissemination of religious ideas have effectively meant globalisation in some form or another. And the interdependence of world economies through investment and trade between countries has long been held as an ideal to be sought after. True, the scope and speed of the globalisation process nowadays is frightening and, yes, the pace of integration is, indeed, dizzying. But you'd think the basic premise would be accepted.

After all, you are now able to buy many of the same goods anywhere in the world. Global broadcasting entrepreneurship - and not least the ubiquitous Internet - facilitates the integration of cultures into a single global culture. For instance,

teenagers around the world watch the same videos, listen to the same music, wear the same clothes. What difference to them (or to the system) what nationalities they are? They are global teenagers. And the financial and commodity markets, equally well co-ordinated (if not better), ensure that price movements in one part of the world are instantaneously reflected in other major markets, so not only can you buy those same goods, you can get them for the same price.

But we have to recognise that our individual economic welfare must increasingly be affected by global market forces beyond the control, not only of our own nation; but any entity outside the domestic political process. That is why the WTO and the IMF have become the target of criticism and protests, some from observers who believe that too many economic decisions have been delegated to these institutions, while others, in contrast, think they should be given greater responsibility for solving the world's social and environmental problems. It is felt by many that they are secretive and unresponsive to the basic needs of whole populations. Still others worry when citizen groups from G7 (or G8, now that Russia has been invited) influence decision-making directly, rather than indirectly through national governments.

By what right do the members of G8 (which a growing number of people are coming to think of as a rich men's club) presume to dictate the terms of survival for less fortunate economies - and call it 'free trade'? What about Africa, in parts of which debt repayment alone vastly exceeds whatever 'crumbs from the table' G8 condescend to provide? And if the only sensible response we can see to this somewhat sinister hegemony is expressed in the old cliché 'if you can't beat them, join them', is that really in the best interests of the future of us all? Or, if the global economy falters for whatever reason, will we all go under?



SAM SIMMONDS is a writer, broadcaster and film and video producer. Sam has worked in all aspects of media in the UK and Australia and runs a media consultancy, Simmonds Media (Australia).



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MEDIA MATTERS

By James Murray

Oz Cheers

Congratulations on being nominated newspaper of the year are in order for the good ship *The Australian* and all who sail in her (not a sexist pronoun but a tribute to the lustrous regiment of women including Sandra Hall, Pat Dasey and, almost forgot, Anna Torv, later Mrs Rupert Murdoch, now Mrs William Mann) who helped to make the national newspaper what she is.

Further congratulations are in order for *The Australian* going internet in its elegant entirety. But overseas readers may not be pleased to see so much of their own syndicated copy coming back to them without further editing or follow-up.

All too often syndicated stories in *The Australian*, particularly literary and showbiz stories, do not include the local achievements of their subjects. In a more serious context, political, economic and scientific stories are not immediately followed-up to provide the local angle.

One example: Rosie Waterhouse reported from London (June 18) that the World Health Organisation had launched an investigation into possible links between mercury based, child vaccines and autism among British children. No comment on the situation in Australia was given then or subsequently.

Fin Birthday

Also up for congratulations on its 50th anniversary: the first national newspaper *The Financial Review*. Of its constellation of editors, the best in your correspondent's opinion, was V J (Vic) Carroll.

One of life's mysteries is why Carroll does not have a regular, editor emeritus column in one of the Fairfax Group publications. If nothing else, writing such a column might prevent his retirement trolley colliding with your correspondent's in the aisles of Woolworths supermarket, Bondi Junction.

Fabulous Rupert

Hercules chasing Mercury is the immediate response to reading Neil Chenoweth's book *Virtual Murdoch* (Secker and Warburg, \$49.95). Beyond praise are Chenoweth's Herculean speed and assiduity in tracking the deals within deals that have made Rupert Murdoch the equivalent of the ancient god of information.

So vivid is Chenoweth's account that it would be unbelievable had he not shrewdly included as an early benchmark details of what happened when Rupert Murdoch's father Sir Keith Murdoch died suddenly at his farm outside Melbourne in 1952. Within hours, on Sunday October 5, Herald and Weekly Times group executive, John Williams (earlier sacked by Murdoch, senior, and later knighted for services to journalism) led a squad armed with jack-hammers into a safe-room. His aim was to try to prove that Murdoch senior had abused his position as group chief executive to create a personal fiefdom including the *Courier Mail*, Brisbane and *The News*, Adelaide (the latter subsequently Intercontinental Media Missile Rupert's launching pad).

Compared to the free-booting flamboyance of that

episode, Murdoch junior's exploits are almost dull. Almost. But not quite. Chenoweth, among many alarms and excursions, recounts how in 1997 a joint task force of taxation shock-troops from Australia, Canada, the US and the UK prepared to track the electronic movement of News Corporation cash flows through such legitimate off-shore banking centres as the Bahamas, the Caymans and the Antilles. The Income Tax Commission of Israel also had a side interest in the matter. According to Chenoweth: 'By 1997, the tax savings that the News Corp accountants had produced in the previous decade were worth a total of \$A2.4 billion in extra profits for News.'

Hercules Chenoweth emphasizes the legality of this. He does not record the final outcome of the joint task force's Augean effort. Possibly even task forces and Hercules can get tired. Certainly, Chenoweth's copy editors did. Literals (typos) abound as do repetitions. And the book lacks a full interpretive structure. Chenoweth sketches one in a reference to nine year old Rupert being sent unwillingly to board at Geelong Grammar School at the behest of his mother rather than his father.

Chenoweth does not follow through on the tantalizing possibility that all of Rupert Murdoch's exploits (on the basis of the child being father to the man) are those of a sad wee fellow trying to console himself for being far from home. But Chenoweth might be the first to admit that his admirable book would give precedence to what Rupert Murdoch once promised: his autobiography.

With a little help from, say, the ex-editors of *The Australian*, Frank Devine and James Hall, and the former obituaries editor of *The Times*, London, Anthony Howard, this work could rival the combined confessions of Casanova, St Augustine and JP Morgan. And be most closely studied in the taxation offices of the world.

Charity hook

The figure of \$2.4 billion mentioned above does linger in the mind, not least because other tycoons and companies also make legitimate, equivalent use of offshore banks for tax avoidance. This, while the Australian Taxation Office is reportedly confident it can recover upwards of \$200 million in taxes from local commercial enterprises run by charities.

The solution seems obvious: treat News Corporation as a charity business not only benefiting the Murdoch family but its thousands of retainers throughout the world (Disclosure: your correspondent has worked for News Limited but this is not an application for re-employment).

Bureau Showbiz

The Australian film industry is currently examining the pros and cons of government subsidy in relation to the industry's longer term viability. One tiny point while the main question is being resolved: most (all?) local films now carry as their main production credit: Australian Film Finance Corporation. This downgrades the efforts of the creative production company involved. Would the David O Selznick production *Gone with the*

Wind have done so well had it carried as its main production credit: Money by Jock Whitney?

More seriously there is simply no way private money is going to flow to film companies as long as the AFFC main credit implies that local movies are essentially quasi-socialist enterprises backed by government funding.

It is not surprising that the corporation's bureaucracy should want to see their collective name in lights. What is surprising is that the relevant minister Senator Richard Alston should not see how negative this is. In cinema, as in publishing, creatives speak to creatives. On your bike, bureaucrats. Or alternatively let the main credit read: Australian Taxpayer Funded in the Faint Fond Hope of Something Decent To Watch while Eating Unsubsidised Popcorn.

Rich Perks

Serendipity can equal the most lethal timing as demonstrated by the release of figures on the entitlements of federal parliamentarians. So rich was the gravy on this train (\$1.5 million per diem for 224 federal polities) it made the entitlements for which trade unionists seek guarantees seem like poorhouse gruel.

Doubtless parliamentarians can put up a strong case to justify their emoluments. But (to use a current mantra) are they world's best practice? According to anti-gravy trainer and independent MP Peter Andren, the Australian figure is roughly twice the Canadian, New Zealand and United States figure and three times the British figure.

Incidentally, the guaranteed entitlements being sought by trade unionists are world's best practice in developed nations other than Australia though there is no equivalent elsewhere to the local practice, summed up in the phrase: 'Not to worry, my brother's Prime Minister.'

Kerry Role

The ABC's 7.30 *Report* is up for restructuring on a state basis. This may mean a change of role for the national anchor, Kerry O'Brien. One possibility: give him his own chat show. This would have a number of benefits. It would enable the ABC to save money by not importing the Michael Parkinson Show. In turn, this would assist Michael Parkinson himself to the retirement he promised long ago to make when he was 50. Finally, it would give O'Brien a role he clearly relishes. Suggested title: *O'Brien Unbuttoned*, based on the fact that for non-political interviews O'Brien invariably takes off his tie and unbuttons his shirt. The number of buttons varies. So far the record is four buttons, scored by that charming novelist Isabel Allende.

Carr for Canberra?

Long shot prediction. If Kim Beazley does not lead Labor to victory in the coming federal election, the party may be tempted to do with NSW Premier Bob Carr what it was prevented by circumstances from doing with his predecessor Neville Wran: that is draft Carr to Canberra and into the federal leadership.

In the meantime, Carr as a former journalist of considerable reputation, should continue to keep a close eye on his government's news-management act after its reference to his State's Independent

Commission Against Corruption.

Time also for journalists to name and profile the government (and opposition) news managers. In the US and the UK, news managers are named not allowed to hide behind the term spokesman, spokeswoman or person. If such naming here leads to a journalist being taken off the drip-feed, out of the loop or whatever, then that, too, should be reported and become the subject of judgment by the appropriate professional unions.

The nexus, covert and open, linking political news managers and journalists (who include ex-news managers) corrupts political due process. Carr's hero Abe Lincoln would not have been a party to fooling more of the people for longer by unscrupulous news management.

And talking of nexuses, there is something intriguing about selected journalists committing themselves to going off-the-record in that discreet gathering of Australian and American movers and shakers known as The Dialogue, set up by businessman Phil Scanlan in 1993.

Journalists named to chatter but not tell at this year's convocation included Geraldine Doogue and Greg Sheridan. The latter waxed so lyrical in *The Australian* about the yabberfest that Andrew Lloyd Jones could have set his words to music.

Apart from anything else, this kind of secret dalliance is bad for the noble art of the leak.

Celtic Forever

The funeral of Cardinal Tom Winning of Glasgow earlier this year drew huge crowds. This was a tribute to his having lived by the official and unofficial mottoes of his city. The official: Let Glasgow flourish (by the preaching of the Word). The unofficial: the stronger someone appears, the harder you tackle.

Cardinal Winning tackled hard on abortion. He also tackled hard on the infamous poll tax when it was introduced by that back to the futurist, Maggie Thatcher. Interred with Cardinal Winning in Glasgow Cathedral were symbols of his office. Plus a ticket to a Glasgow Celtic football game. Most appropriate. The club was co-founded for charity purposes by Marist Brother Walfrid (born Andrew Kerins in Ballymote Co Sligo, 1840). Moreover the traditional nickname of the Celtic stadium is The Paradise.

Apropos, the official colours of the South Sydney Rugby League Club (which has magnificently fought its way back into the competition) are cardinal and myrtle. Does the colour cardinal here have any connection with any cardinal archbishop of Sydney?

Taliban Silence

The detention of aid workers by Afghanistan's Taliban regime on the basis of allegations that they were working as Christian missionaries was reported worldwide. In none of the local reportage seen by your correspondent was there any indication that comment had been sought from the spokesmen of Islamic communities living in Australia. Surely the leaders of these communities would wish to comment on a matter so crucial to the maintenance of the kind of cultural and religious plurality they enjoy?

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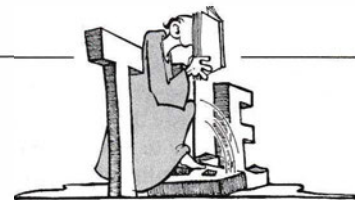
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— Editor, *Annals*

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The upshot of the story

FOR in fact the insensibility is in the critics and not the artists. It is an insensibility not to an accidental incongruity but to an artistic contrast. Indeed it is an insensibility of a somewhat tiresome kind, which can often be noticed in those sceptics who make a science of folklore. The mark of them is they fail to see the importance of finding the upshot or climax of a tale, even when it is a fairy tale. Since the old devotional doctors and designers were never tired of insisting on the sufferings of the holy poor to the point of squalor, and simultaneously insisting on the sumptuousness of the subject kings to the point of swagger, it would really seem not entirely improbable that they may have been conscious of the contrast themselves. I confess this is an insensibility, not to say stupidity, in the sceptics and simplifiers, which I find very fatiguing. I do not mind a man not believing a story, but I confess I am bored stiff (if I may be allowed the expression) by a man who can tell a story without seeing the point of the story, considered as a story or even considered as a lie. And a man who sees the rags and the royal purple as a clumsy inconsistency is merely missing the meaning of a deliberate design. He is like a man who should hear the story of King Cophetua and the beggar maid and say doubtfully that it was hard to recognise it as really a *marriage de convenance*; a phrase which (I may remark in parenthesis but not without passion) is not the French for 'a marriage of convenience,' any more than *hors d'œuvre* is the French for 'out of work'; but may be more rightly rendered in English as 'a suitable match.' But nobody thought the match of the king and the beggar maid conventionally a suitable match; and nobody would ever have thought the story worth telling if it had been. It is like saying that Diogenes, remaining in his tub after the offer of Alexander, must have been unaware of the opportunities of Greek architecture; or like saying that Nebuchadnezzar eating grass is clearly inconsistent with court etiquette, or not to be found in any fashionable cookery book. I do not mind the learned sceptic saying it is a legend or a lie; but I weep for him when he cannot see the gist of it, I might even say the joke of it. I do not object to his rejecting the story as a tall story; but I find it deplorable when he cannot see the point or end or upshot of the tall story, the very pinnacle or spire of that sublime tower.

— G.K Chesterton, *The New Jerusalem*.

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— Editor, *Annals Australasia*.

Riding the Euthanasia Tiger

THE MYTH THAT LEGALISED
EUTHANASIA COULD BE SAFE

Every euthanasia bill proposed in Australia and elsewhere has been unsafe. This article by BRIAN POLLARD examines why this is so, and describes legal and medical issues ignored by many proponents of mercy killing.

FOR some of its enthusiasts, the legislation of voluntary euthanasia is the pursuit of an ideal. Dr Phillip Nitschke, for instance, makes it clear that establishing euthanasia clinics in various states of Australia is primarily directed to gaining public support for law change. Although attempts at introducing such a law have regularly failed throughout the world (with the temporary exception of the Northern Territory), this does not stop others from trying. Success in one place could then be used as a precedent to make success more certain in other places.

A common set of arguments is adopted, namely that, based on opinion polls, a majority of Australians favour this law change, that it would be easy to devise a safe euthanasia law, incorporating sufficient safeguards, and that the chief obstacle lies with weak parliamentarians who will not take a stand against the various Christian churches, of which the Catholic Church is the main culprit, who seek only to impose their will on others.

Not only do they resort to distorted concepts of human rights and the elevation of individual choice to the level of an untouchable virtue, without any reference to what is being chosen (even though in certain other contexts they would instantly agree that personal choice cannot justify certain actions), but they remain resolutely silent on the information contained in this article. There can be only two possible explanations for this silence – either they know of it and suppress it, or they know nothing of it. If the former,

they are deliberately deceitful and if the latter, they are culpably ignorant while posing as experts, since it is all available in the public domain.

The law

It is important to realise that any law to legalise euthanasia would diminish the integrity of existing law by undermining some of its basic principles.

Any euthanasia law would form part of the criminal code. Historically, its statutes are intended to provide justice equally for every citizen, but particularly for the vulnerable in society, and consent is not to be accepted as a defence to violations. In every country, criminal codes govern acts that are thought wrong and so, violations are not wrong because they are illegal – they are illegal because

they are wrong. The principles of law may be ignored, and the resultant law may be valid, but it is unlikely to be safe, because its operation could not be guaranteed to be restricted only to those for whom it was meant.

Nor can justice be safely allowed to rest on personal opinions because they cannot be settled by objective argument, and to the extent that a law might rely on subjectivity, it would be unjust and open to abuse. Yet with euthanasia, the view that another person's life had lost such value that it may be taken on request would always be dependent on the observer's personal values. Some doctors may think life may be taken in certain circumstances, while others would not. Thus, the future life of some of the sick would be decided by a kind of lottery of medical opinion. There are no objective criteria whereby every doctor could form the same view in given circumstances.

Similarly, the principle of equality in criminal law would not be simply altered, but overturned, by euthanasia law. In place of the state's acceptance of its responsibility to protect equally the life of every innocent citizen, without exception, now a group would be defined as having their lives exempt from the general protection offered to all others. In this context, an innocent person is one who poses no threat to others. As for the disallowance of a plea of innocence because the victim agreed, this plea would be implicit in every instance of voluntary euthanasia.

The value placed by law on every innocent human life is such that its intentional destruction is the greatest crime, an expression of the law's acceptance that every innocent



Try the old

IN the modern world we are primarily confronted with the extraordinary spectacle of people turning to new ideas because they have not tried the old. Men have not got tired of Christianity; they have never found enough Christianity to get tired of. Men have never wearied of political justice; they have wearied of waiting for it.

– G.K. Chesterton, *What's wrong with the world?*



What's in a name?

THE word 'totalitarianism' was first used in the twentieth century by Hannah Arendt in a book entitled *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). But the first appearance of the concept, if not the word, occurred in 1835 in Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Chapter VI of Part Four in that work is entitled 'What Sort of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear.' There he says:

'I think, then, that the species of oppression by which democratic nations are menaced is unlike anything which ever before existed in the world; our contemporaries will find no prototype of it in their memories. I seek in vain for an expression which will accurately convey the whole of the idea I have formed of it; the old words 'despotism' and 'tyranny' are inappropriate. The thing itself is new, and, since I cannot name [it], I must attempt to define it.'

— Mortimer Adler, *Adler's Philosophical Dictionary*, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

person has a right to the integrity of his/her life, that is, not to be killed. While human rights are commonly invoked in the euthanasia debate, it is uncommon to find among them the right to the integrity of one's life. Reason would suggest that, in a society where life was highly valued, it would be the first right to be considered.

This right is well articulated in the 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, now co-signed by the governments of over 90% of the world's people. There, it is declared that the right of each person to his/her life is equal, inherent, inviolable, inalienable and deserving of the protection of law. Thus, its integrity is not to be made dependent on its quality at a particular time, there are to be no exceptions and the right may neither be given away nor taken away.

Proposals to legalise voluntary

euthanasia are made on the understandings that safeguards are included and that only life-taking on request is at issue. Common safeguards include the involvement of more than one doctor, and often the inclusion of a psychiatrist, appropriate forms of certification, the absence of coercion, the provision of information necessary to guide informed consent, penalties for wrongful process, time for the patient to reflect, the notification of a coroner and the keeping of suitable public records. It is widely thought, even by lawyers, that such safeguards would be effective in preventing abuse.

Published reports of committees of Inquiry

In the past six years, the reports of five government-sponsored inquiries in four countries into the conse-

quences of legalising euthanasia have been published, where oral and written evidence had been taken from a wide range of community and professional sources. While debates on euthanasia seldom achieve anything more than an exchange of firmly held opinions, all these inquiries reached a conclusion and it was the same conclusion. This was that such law would always be unsafe, because it could never be made free of the possibility that the lives of some others who did not wish to die would be endangered. Unexpectedly, this was decided *unanimously* by three of those committees – including Tasmania, where four of its five members initially supported the concept of euthanasia. Unanimity is indicated below with (U).

These enquiries and their published reports were:

- Select Committee on Medical Ethics, House of Lords, January 1994. (U)
- New York State Task Force on Life and the Law, May 1994, titled *Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in the Medical Context*. (U)
- Senate of Canada, June 1995, titled *Of Life and Death*.
- Community Development Committee, Parliament of Tasmania, June 1998, titled *The Need for Legislation on Voluntary Euthanasia*. (U)
- Social Development Committee, Parliament of South Australia, October 1999, titled *Inquiry into the Voluntary Euthanasia Bill 1996*.

In view of the frequent claim by euthanasia advocates that religious influence plays an unduly weighty role in the debate, it is noteworthy that none of these committees, even those that included members of the clergy, relied on religious argument.

While it is not possible here to discuss the many reasons why those committees all came to the same conclusion, this quote from the Report of the New York State Force embodies much of their thinking:

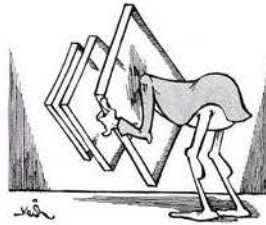
'For purposes of public debate, one can describe cases of (assisted suicide and) euthanasia in which all the recommended safeguards would be satisfied. But positing an 'ideal' or 'good' case is not suffi-

cient for public policy, if it bears little relation to prevalent social and medical practices. No matter how carefully any guidelines are framed, (assisted suicide and) euthanasia will be practised through the prism of social inequality and bias that characterises the delivery of services in all segments of our society, including health care. The practices will pose the greatest risks to those who are poor, elderly, members of a minority group, or without access to good medical care'.

It should now be required of anyone who would in future propose the legalisation of euthanasia to demonstrate familiarity with those reports and to present, if they can, effective solutions to the discovered difficulties in making safe law. If they cannot do that, it must be supposed that the inquiries reached the correct conclusion.

The so-called safeguards found in published draft euthanasia laws will now be discussed briefly and shown how they could be subverted in practice. They were all devised as though the subjects would be fully rational. But in practice, this will be a matter of chance because life-threatening illness can impair the capacity to reason clearly and can produce difficult emotional responses, in both patients and their carers.

- i. Requiring more than one doctor to be involved would provide no protection, unless their competence in terminal care could be certainly known, since two or more doctors who do not know best practice in the circumstances are no better than one. Their professional relationship would also need to be known.
- ii. While the requirement of a psychiatric consultation is intended to detect treatable emotional or mental illness, an analysis of the short life of the Northern Territory *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* revealed that flaws in this gatekeeping function were present, but only became apparent after the Act had been overturned. It is also well known that psychiatrists often find it difficult to diagnose depression in the terminally ill unless they have had specific



Progress of science

A classic case is that of the Abbé Haüy (1743-1822), a humble teacher at the college at Lemoine, whose leisure hours were devoted to collecting specimens of plants and minerals – until a small, embarrassing accident suddenly changed the direction of his interests and his whole life:

One day, when examining some minerals at the house of a friend, he was clumsy enough to allow a beautiful cluster of prismatic crystals of calcareous spar to fall on the ground. One of the prisms broke in such a way as to show at the fracture faces which were no less smooth than those elsewhere, but presented the appearance of a new crystal altogether different in form from the prism. Haüy picked up this fragment and examined the faces with their inclinations and angles. To his great surprise, he discovered that they are the same in rhomboidal spar as in Iceland spar.

He wished to be able to generalise: he broke his own little collection into pieces; crystals lent by his friends were broken; every where he found a structure which depended upon the same laws.

The result was Haüy's *Traité de Mineralogie* which made him a member of the French Academy and a pioneer of the science of crystallography.

Haüy had a favourite pupil, Delafosse, who later became Pasteur's teacher at the *École Normale* in Paris. Under his influence Pasteur took up the study of crystallography; it was in this field that he made his first important discoveries, which contained the germs of his later achievements.

– Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, London, Pan Books, 1964.

training, and that they are not immune in their judgements from involvement in the emotional content of the patient's plight.

- ii. Medical certificates include opinion as well as fact. A potent

source of error is the estimate of future length of life which, even for experts, is often shown by events to be quite inaccurate.

- iv. No way is known whereby coercion by others, including some of whom the doctor may be unaware, may be detected with certainty, while in its subtle forms, it may be easily concealed. As for the doctor, his or her enormous power, relative to that of the patient, can itself be a potent source of coercion, even when this is not overtly intended or recognised.
- v. The provision of suitable information to help patients give informed consent will generally be done in private. No requirement written into law could ensure that this information may not be partial, biased or incorrect, unless an expert observer was always present.
- vi. The requirements of time allowed for the patient to reflect on his/her decision are very variable, sometimes being shorter than those thought necessary to protect against aggressive commercial marketing. Rarely is counselling made mandatory.
- vii. It could not be supposed that penalties for wrongful process could guarantee consistently honourable practice when it is recalled that the doctor will be the chief actor, the sole survivor and the only author of the report to the coroner.
- viii. A requirement to notify the coroner, who will keep public records, while not requiring the doctor to keep, and make available for examination, private records before, during and after the event, as is found in most drafts, puts the safeguards in the wrong order.

Indeed, critical examination of draft euthanasia bills shows that they would, usually at several points, clearly fail to protect every patient, while they would always protect the doctor against civil or criminal action, even when he/she may have acted negligently. More importantly, such abuse would often be easy to conceal.

Even though good palliative care cannot always relieve all distressing

Pity the poor chimney-sweep

AN excellent and well-arranged dinner is a most pleasing occurrence, and a great triumph of civilised life. It is not only the descending morsel, and the enveloping sauce – but the rank, wealth, wit and beauty which surround the meats – the



learned management of light and heat – the silent and rapid services of the attendants – the smiling and sedulous host, proffering gusts and relishes – the exotic bottles – the embossed plate – the pleasant remarks – the handsome dresses – the cunning artifices in fruit and farina! The hour of dinner, in short, includes everything of sensual and intellectual gratification which a great nation glories in producing.

In the midst of all this, who knows that the kitchen chimney caught fire half an hour before dinner! – and that a poor little wretch, six or seven years old, was sent up in the midst of the flames to put it out?

– Sydney Smith, [1771-1845] wit, co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review* and *Anglican Clergyman*, quoted in *The Smith of Smiths*, by Hesketh Pearson, 1934.

symptoms, it would surely be wrong to propose euthanasia for a terminally ill patient who had not received adequate medical and nursing care. Because virtually every survey of palliative care reveals serious shortfalls in training and practice, it could never be assumed that care was always adequate. To overcome this uncertainty, there should be available for expert scrutiny, before euthanasia was carried out, full detail of the care provided for the current illness. Not to require this level of supervision would leave unanswered important questions about competence and probity.

Non-voluntary euthanasia (NVE)

The most dangerous form of abuse of legalised voluntary euthanasia would be the taking of the lives of people who had not consented, called non-voluntary euthanasia. This possi-

bility has only to be suggested for it to generate outrage that doctors could be thought capable of such dereliction and malice, and because it is said there is no evidence to support it. Unfortunately for those commentators, there is published medical evidence, in reputable medical journals,^{1,2,3} that such abuse already occurs, and that it has even been practised more frequently than illegal voluntary euthanasia.

This is because such life-taking is seen as an exercise in beneficence, not malice. Once taking life on request is regarded as a benefit for that person, it can be thought unfair and discriminatory to withhold it from others who are in a similar plight, just because they cannot ask. That view is logical, though erroneous.

The Netherlands. The practice was first discovered here by an official government survey in 1990, though in 1987 the Royal Dutch Medical Association had already declared 'if there is no request from the patient,

then proceeding with the termination of his life is juridically a matter of murder or killing, and not of euthanasia'. When the survey was repeated five years later, the only conclusion that could be drawn about NVE was that 'since 1990, the ending of life without the patient's explicit request seems to have decreased slightly'.

To present the Dutch figures comparatively in a more familiar idiom, an American observer has estimated that, if NVE had been practised in the US at the same rate as prevailed in the Netherlands in 1990, the figure in that year would have exceeded the 'combined total of all deaths from suicides and homicides'. Since then, no measures have been introduced to control it, while authority has actually seemed to encourage it.

United States of America. In 1998, a report was published of the responses of 3,102 physicians to a national survey of attitudes and practices concerning assisted suicide and euthanasia. Where a request for death had been met, it was reported that '54 per cent of the requests for a lethal injection were made by a family member or partner'. Thus, slightly more than half the medical killing carried out in private, reported by some 1,800 doctors, was NVE.

Australia. Sociologists in South Australia reported a survey in 1994, based on an anonymous questionnaire sent to 10% of the medical practitioners in that State. Nineteen per cent of responding doctors admitted they had ended life deliberately, and on 49% of those occasions, they had done so without patient request.

Making an act legal is equated in the minds of many with official approval. If, then, the state legalised voluntary euthanasia and, as a result, community levels of respect for human life were lowered, as undoubtedly they would be, and if the future costs of medical care continued to rise to levels that were thought unsustainable, as undoubtedly they will, and if a 'beneficial' remedy was already to hand, as it would be, then it would be dangerously naive not to suppose that

legalised voluntary euthanasia would merge, sooner or later, into non-voluntary. For the sake of the vulnerable, legalising voluntary euthanasia needs to be seen realistically as the first of two steps in a logical progression.

Conclusion

Public approval for the death penalty has markedly diminished in many countries in recent years. Consequently, many states now will not permit the legal taking of life, even for a convicted serial killer, partly because errors are known to be possible, despite all due care. Where capital punishment is still permitted, great care is taken when dealing with suspected criminals, on account of the risk of wrongful life-taking. They are allowed legal representation, a public trial, strict rules of evidence and, if found guilty, avenues of appeal. In adopting these precautions, the state acknowledges that it has the responsibility to protect innocent life, and that it alone must be that life's ultimate defender.

The community understands and supports those measures. How radically different then would be the case if the state were to enact any of the proposals to legalise euthanasia, of the type commonly put forward, demonstrably open to abuse, and how ruinous for the repute of the criminal law to be seen to be adopting such widely divergent standards, especially when all the victims of euthanasia would be innocent.

If further evidence were needed that law will be unable to tame euthanasia, two recent events should be carefully considered. First, the case of an English doctor, Harold Shipman, convicted of the murder of fifteen patients and suspected of up to one hundred and ninety more, and finally brought to justice only by his own greed, should show even the most sceptical how easy it can be in fact to conceal medical crime carried out in private.

Second, the flaws in the Northern Territory law were only discovered by a singular factor that could never be relied on in future.⁴ The doctor involved in all four cases volunteered the details of the events, known only

to him, and without that, the abuses must have remained forever unknown to others.

Every euthanasia bill proposed to date in Australia and elsewhere has been evidently unsafe, including the one in the Northern Territory. Despite this, undaunted by past failure and unaware of the reasons for that failure, Australian advocates continue to propose unsafe bills, presumably because they do not read the world literature on the subject. As this is being written, this very process is again under way in South Australia, where several such bills have already been defeated, the last only recently. The problem lies in persuading parliamentarians, who like others usually have a sincere personal opinion about euthanasia,

that making safe law regarding human life is a totally different exercise from having an opinion. Sincerity alone is not enough.



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DR BRIAN POLLARD is a retired anaesthetist/palliative care physician with an interest in bio-ethics. This article appeared in *Palliative Medicine*, UK in January 2001. Reprinted with permission.

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Selling Christianity to a sceptical world or Selling the Pass?

BEYOND BELIEF

Traditional Christian Values find themselves under attack from unusual quarters.

Giles Auty examines some of the views espoused by the Anglican Dean of Perth on the subject of same-sex relationships and remarriage of divorced persons.

I commented recently [Annals 4/2001] on the increasingly anti-Christian views aired regularly in the pages of the Australian press.

Where do such views come from – or, to put the whole matter more accurately, – where do such views *seem* to come from?

At one level, of course, Australia has a long history of connection with Marxist politics, a fact commented on long ago by D.H. Lawrence in his novel *Kamrajuroo*.

Unbelief on the attack

To the best of my belief, Marxism has never co-existed peacefully with Christianity in any country in the world. In most, if not all, states ruled formerly by Marxist regimes, Christianity was actively and often brutally repressed. Former communist USSR was typical of such regimes, pursuing a non-stop policy of destruction of churches, monasteries and seminaries.

Those that were possibly too large or too magnificent to destroy – such as St Basil's, the largest cathedral in former Leningrad – were turned into centres for atheist studies. These last attempted to 'prove' that a faith which had survived for nearly 2000 years and which had also contributed mightily to the world's civilisation and culture was based on nothing more than ignorance and superstition and should thus be dismissed with contempt. In Australia, Philip Adams is just one of the highly-exposed propounders of roughly this kind of view. On a good day, Adams may even succeed in convincing himself.

Unfortunately, traditional Christianity is no longer just a subject of secular attack from the credulous

believers or ex-believers in a Marxist 'scientific analysis' of history.

On May 28 an article appeared in *The Australian* under the title *Marriage shouldn't be clergy's business*. Its author was no less a figure than Dr John Shepherd, the Anglican Dean of Perth.

A new critic enters the list

I do not think I have ever encountered more muddled thinking proceeding from the pen of anyone with a doctorate in anything. Indeed, within days, 3 laymen had charitably corrected at least some of the good

Dean's misapprehensions about the nature of Christian belief within the letters pages of *The Australian*.

Hardly to my surprise, Dr Shepherd revealed himself within the first few paragraphs of his text as a fully paid-up believer in the weirdly illogical creeds of post-modernism. To quote Dr Shepherd:

'The first point which needs to be established is that the biblical writers were conditioned by their culture.

'The fact that their writings afford us special insights into the foundations of our faith doesn't mean they are relevant to contemporary culture.'

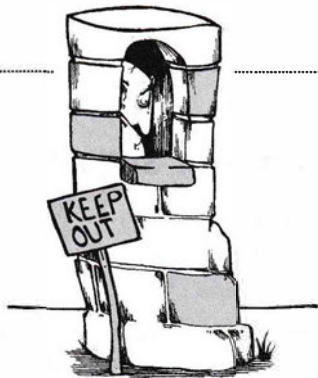
The smell of money

In one of Plautus's plays whose title escapes me the ancient Roman comic author describes how a certain Philematia picks up a mirror (made of silver in those far off days) and is given a towel by Scapha who tells her to wipe her fingers 'lest she be thought to have handled money'. Your editor has strong recollections of the smell of pennies and halfpennies when he was growing up in Australia in the early forties, but never having handled silver or gold was unaware that such metals gave off a peculiar odour. It seems that ancient peoples used to distinguish the fineness of silver and gold by

their smell. And money-changes especially would employ their sense of smell, more than that of touch, when trying to establish the purity of the coin.

– Editor, *Annals*.





The penance for sloth

THE sin which in English is commonly called *Sloth*, and in Latin *acedia* (or more correctly *acedia*), is insidious, and assumes such Protean shapes that it is rather difficult to define. It is not merely idleness of mind and laziness of body: it is that whole poisoning of the will which, beginning with indifference and an attitude of 'I couldn't care less', extends to the deliberate refusal of joy and culminates in morbid introspection and despair. One form of it which appeals very strongly to some modern minds is that acquiescence in evil and error which readily disguises itself as 'Tolerance'; another is that refusal to be moved by the contemplation of the good and beautiful which is known as 'Disillusionment', and sometimes as 'knowledge of the world'; yet another is that withdrawal into an 'ivory tower' of Isolation which is the peculiar temptation of the artist and the contemplative, and is popularly called 'Escapism'.

The penance assigned to it takes the form of the practice of the opposite virtue: an active Zeal. Note that on this Cornice alone no verbal Prayer is provided for the penitents: for them 'to labour is to pray'.

—Dorothy Sayers, in a note to Canto XVIII of Dante's '*Purgatorio*', in the Penguin 1969 ed. of the *Commedia Divina*, p. 209.

But surely if early biblical writers were merely 'conditioned by their cultures', could not much the same argument be advanced against the teachings of Jesus Himself?

After a series of major escapes had taken place some years ago from high-security prisons in Britain, an amusing cartoon appeared of a judge delivering his verdict to a criminal:

'I sentence you to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure or until such time you escape.'

If we merely re-interpret Mosaic law or Christian teachings according to contemporary whim, at what point does this doctrine cease to be Christian at all? If no behavioural constraints exist, no laws do either. In short, we simply escape from any laws which irritate us when we choose.

Dr Shepherd continues:

'If we are to continue to live in the freedom that Christ brought – this is, in the love the Gospels proclaim – I believe we should be accepting and supportive of same-sex relationships and homosexual male and female clergy.'

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To question 'is it all right for a Christian to do this?' the answer must be yes. We are free to love appropriately in our culture as (St.) Paul was free to love within the framework of his.'

While I claim no mandate whatsoever to pass comment on the Anglican faith, Dr Shepherd's arguments seem to me to have more holes in them than a colander. In short, in any dispute between contemporary habit and religious belief, it seems that Anglicans must now bow to the former.

Whatever the nature of Dr Shepherd's doctorate, it is hard to believe that logic or philosophy were included in its ambit.

Try this: 'It is the ultimate absurdity for clergy to be blessing inanimate objects such as restaurants, boats, pharmacies and cricket bats yet deny a blessing to a couple who are concerned enough to request one, divorce or sex notwithstanding.'

At times, it is hard to believe that Dr Shepherd really knows or understands what he is saying. I doubt whether even the greatest fanatic of the sport would claim that a cricket bat has either a soul or any moral sense and therefore can never be in an unsuitable state to receive either blessing or sacrament.

And if it is not the business of the church 'to judge or to impose restrictions upon human relationships' by whose authority should we condemn incest, say, or the seduction of minors?

One presumes Dr Shepherd sees such matters as a role solely for social workers.

But what if the 'culture' of some especially corrupt or decadent contemporary society decreed that incest was now perfectly acceptable, where would Dr Shepherd's loyalties lie then?

Would he simply bow to the prevalent 'culture' of his time and place?

It is hard to accept that religious debate has been allowed to sink to such a calamitous level as this in any civilised country in the world.



GILES ATRY 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 when he became national correspondent for *The Australian*. Currently he is writing for the *Courier Mail*.



The buck stops with us

SOME of you've probably heard the joke about my friend, Jack. If so, I'm sorry. You're going to hear it again, because it helps me make a point.

Jack's a good young Catholic man with money problems. So he goes to church, and very piously and confidently asks God to let him win the lottery. The next lottery drawing comes, and he doesn't win. So he goes back to church and prays even more earnestly – and this time Jack really tells God, in a lot more detail, how desperate he is. The next lottery drawing comes, and he loses again. So he goes back to church again, and now he's begging like he's never prayed before, and just as he's working himself into a frenzy, God whispers to him: 'Jack, please, meet me half way: Buy a ticket'.

God will work miracles, but He wants our cooperation. If the world isn't a better place – if the world doesn't know Jesus Christ – don't blame God. We just need to look in the mirror. Carrying on the work of Jesus is what we're here for. That's why He called us. That's our mission. In fact, the mission statement of the Catholic faith hasn't changed in 2,000 years. It's Matthew 28: 19-20:

Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Simple, direct, no-nonsense. It's the greatest mission statement ever written. Hearing this Scripture so many times in daily life, we can easily become dull to its power.

It's not a suggestion or request. It's a command. It's a mandate. If you say you believe in Jesus Christ, you must preach the Gospel. You must teach the faith. There's no Option B. Jesus doesn't need our polite approval or intellectual assent. He doesn't want our support from the sidelines. He wants us – our love, our zeal, our whole being – because through us He completes the work of salvation, which has never been more urgent for the world than right now.

– Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM of Denver Colorado, *Speaking the Truth in Love*.

By James Murray

The Bank

Writer/director Bob Connolly's film is an anti-bank satire so lacerating that it evokes memories of the anti-smoking documentary involving Marlborough men dying of emphysema which was bought by the tobacco industry to prevent its being more widely shown. This is not to suggest that the Australian banking industry would suppress the Connolly work which involves doing a Barings on a fictitious Australian bank with only a coincidental resemblance to any benign local bank. Anthony Lapaglia plays a banking executive so keen on profit you could use him to shave. David Wenham is a computer whiz determined to take a byte out of him. Newcomer Sibylla Budd is an assistant who ties the film's love knot. But can't quite manage some loose ends of the plot.

The music is by Alan John (not Alan Jones whose banking anthems cost a little more).

Intriguingly Connolly gives most of his principals Irish names, possibly to suggest that the island of saints and scholars has also produced its share of hard-faced, high-powered gombeens. *M*

**A Time for Drunken Horses**

Strictly a camera-action film. Yet in its simplicity it rivals the power of any special effects blockbusters. Director Bahman Ghobadi takes us into a Kurdish region where the inhabitants scratch a hazardous living by smuggling goods from Iran into Iraq.

The realism of the piece extends to the characters who take the names of the non-professional actors. Ayoub Ahmadi is the boy who must look after his siblings, including a tiny, but older crippled brother Madi, when their father is killed. Loving tenderness abounds amid hardship. Ayoub succeeds in at least getting Madi within reach of hope if not a

cure. The drunken horses are in fact mules, given alcohol to help them cope with the cold. No such luck for the smugglers. And no need to give it to an audience. This is a film to warm an ice-flint heart. *M*

**The Pledge**

Director Sean Penn and actor Jack Nicholson are the Rolls and Royce, the Smith and Wesson of filmmaking. And this serial killer piece, based on a work by the Swiss writer Friederich Durrenmatt, is their finest to date. Penn locates the film in Nevada's Monash County (named after General Sir John Monash?). From first frame to last, Nicholson as a decent, veteran cop, gives a performance of rare vintage as his obsession brings him to a startling end. The casting of Robin Wright Penn as a beaten waitress works. But not the casting of Vanessa Redgrave and Helen Mirren. Their star wattage

blows the fuses on their low-power characters.

And in costuming his killer, Penn should have resisted the temptation to put him in clerical garb, reminiscent of Robert Mitchum in Charles Laughton's classic *Night of the Hunter*. Homage-shmorage, it's not original. *R 18+*

**The Tailor of Panama**

Writers love their words. Ask any editor. But when a writer of John Le Carré's high calibre is executive producer of a spy movie based on his own work something's got to give. Unfortunately, it isn't the words, it's the pace of the movie.

The words slow the action even though they are wittily delivered by Geoffrey Rush in the title role and by Pierce Brosnan in a superbly bleak and cynical satire of his James Bond role. Le Carré is notably restrained in adding ingredient sex to his novels. Here as co-scriptwriter with director John Boorman, he opts for a number of bed passages which make a lay-figure of that intelligent actress Catherine McCormick and have absolutely no bearing on the plot. *MA 15+*

**Enemy at the Gates**

This duel for snipers is set against the chaotic siege of Stalingrad, a pivotal battle of World War II, Ed Harris brings plausibility to his part of a Nazi marksman possibly because he essays a clipped, militaristic speech. Jude Law, as the Russki ace, goes for a south London accent that makes him sound like a fugitive bobby from *The Bill*.

Embedded in the film are nuggets of hard information: reinforcements entering the besieged city were issued with one rifle between two, the second soldier being given only a five-clip of ammunition to use when he picked up his fallen comrade's rifle. Almost unbelievable until you remember that when war was declared in 1939, some

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recruits to the British Army trained with broom-handles. Others were armed with pikes. A message for current governments who reduce budgets so that service personnel do not have enough live-firing practice? **MA15+**



Jurassic Park III

Stephen Spielberg's original statement as a movie maker was that he wished to relive the thrills of pre-TV, Saturday matinee movies. He has made good on this. And does it again here. The special effects and stunts are enough to raise a grave cheer from the likes of Johnny Weissmuller, Hopalong Cassidy and Errol Flynn. Sam Neil, lining up with a new team, including William H Macy and Teá Leoni, looks slightly bone weary as palaeontologist Dr Alan Grant. But what palaeontologist doesn't get bone-weary? (This an entry for the Pun of the Year Award). **MA 15+**



Rififi

Re-issue of the best heist movie ever made, directed by Jules Dassin and starring Jean Servais, Robert Manuel and Magali Noel. **PG**



Nurse Betty

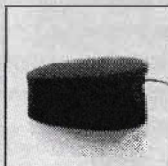
Renée Zellweger simpers, whimpers and beguiles through this unsettling mix of light fantasy and heavy violence directed by Neil LaBute. As the title character, Zellweger seeks to remake her shattered life by driving hell for lather into the world of daytime soaps (sorry), pursued by two killers (Morgan Freeman and Chris Rock) who are after the drugs she does not know she has. Freeman goes sappy over her. Greg Kinnear wins her by turning on his chipmunk charm as the telly surgeon of her dreams. **MA 15+**



Along Came a Spider

Spencer Tracy had it. So does Morgan Freeman: the ability to give weight to material that would float

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away without his presence. In this kidnap mystery, he reprises the character of Dr Alex Cross, cop and profiler. Monica Potter is cunningly cast as an FBI agent to demonstrate that when the French say *cherchez la femme* they mean *cherchez la blonde*. **M**



Sexy Beast

The blunt jokiness of the title is echoed by a shot of Ben Kingsley crouched over in a style reminiscent of Gandhi whom he played to Academy Award applause. Here he is no apostle of non-violence but Logan, a Cockney of case-hardened intensity, arriving at the Spanish villa of retired crim Gal (Ray Winstone) to recruit him for a heist job back in London.

Ian McShane matches Kingsley's performance as the job mastermind. The heist is extremely ingenious, the violence simply extreme. **MA 15+**

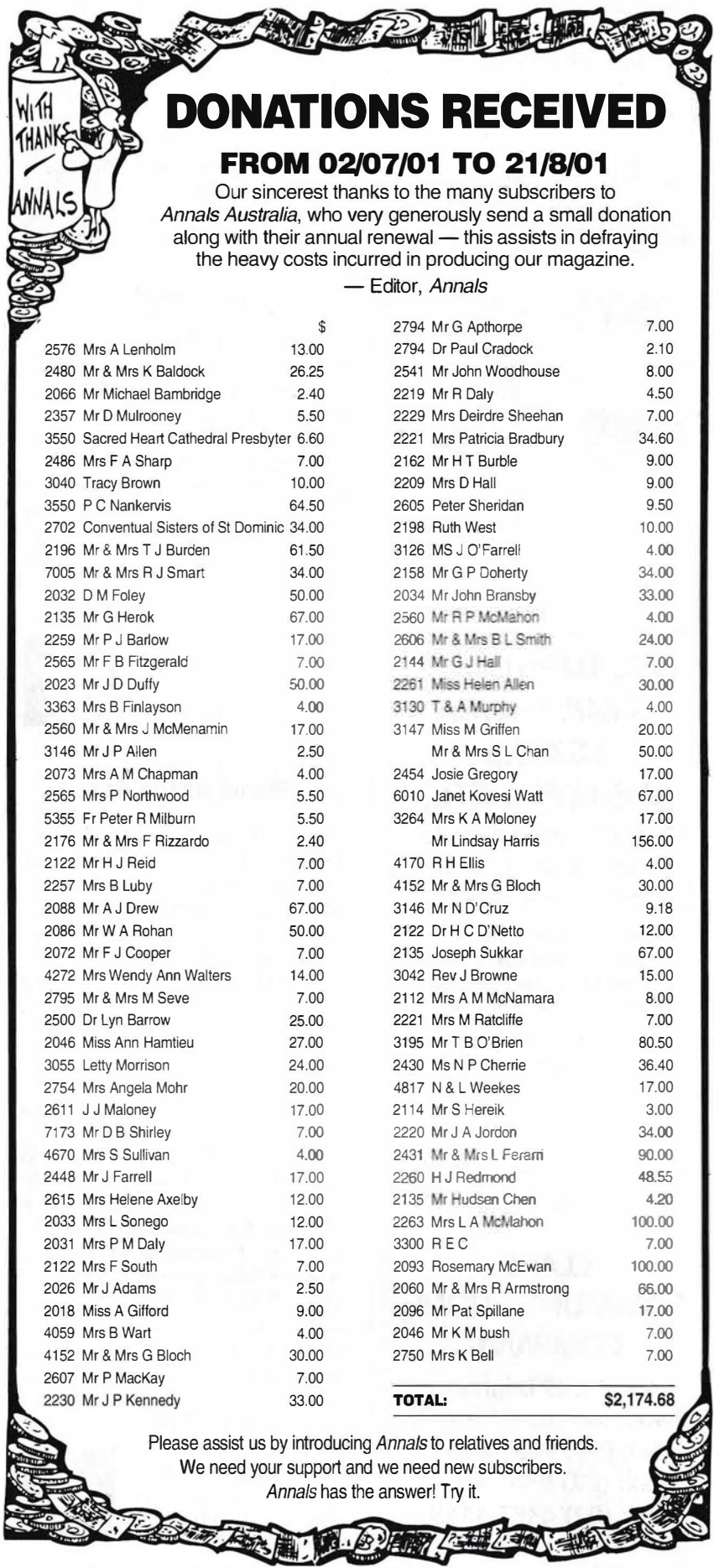


Planet of the Apes

Investment in a solid literary property such as Pierre Boule's work can make a franchise movie director proof, even a director as idiosyncratic as Tim Burton who is fonder of shade than light. Mark Wahlberg stars as an astronaut time-warped to the simian-ruled planet where he is received by his fellow humans as a messianic figure. He is later time-warped back to earth – and a greater shock than he experienced on Planet Ape.

If anything the special make-up is too convincing. Thus we are denied the irony of instantly recognizing Charlton Heston, (human hero of the 1968 production) as an old ape whose wisdom extends to the evil of guns. Similarly Helen Bonham Carter's make up is so impenetrable that little of her upper-class allure shines through. And when Tim Roth appears as the warrior ape, Thade, he looks exactly like, well an ape going ape instead of Tim Roth going for an award for scenery chewing. **MA 15+**





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— Editor, *Annals*

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Crush

Andie McDowell stars in this romantic comedy written and directed by John McKay. She trails echoes of her hit *Four Weddings and a Funeral* as strong as her hank of hair. Indeed an alternative title might have been *Three Biddies, a Funeral Undertaker's Assistant and a Baby*. The movie has picturesque country scenes, cottages and wild, highland flings. Though not as wild as the flings McDowell, playing Kate, a fortyish, spinsterish teacher, has with Jed, (Kenny Doughton), a former pupil risen to be an undertaker's assistant and church organist. Kate's romance causes consternation to her friends, much married Molly (Anna Chancellor) and police inspector Janine (Imelda Staunton). Staunton's stocky, feisty approach creates an image of Chaucer's Wife of Bath. But bawdy though the latter was, she did not resort to the language used by our heroines. *MA 15+*



Final Fantasy: The Spirit Within

The computerised animation is hyper realistic. The story-line less so. The Japanese film-makers rely on the neo-myth of Gaia, personification of the earth as a self-correcting entity, to underpin their space adventure narrative. Nonetheless the movie is replete with startling images. And a sharp lawyer might win damages for a number of real actors, including Ben Affleck and Rachel Griffiths, whose features appear to have provided models for the computer-generated actors. *M*



Evolution

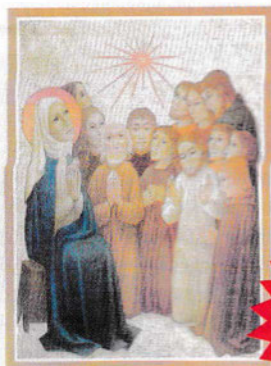
David Duchovny could look intelligent even during the daftest episodes of *X-Files*. He has to try even harder during this comedy of alien invasion. He does so by concentrating on his co-star Julianne Moore and wondering what on earth she is doing in a harum-scarum movie like this. *M*



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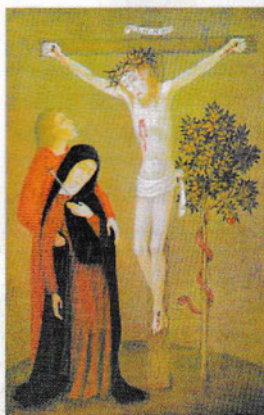
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