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4

The Catholic Church after Vatican II

In working to protect and present to our world the core of Catholicism, the tradition, written and unwritten, bequeathed to us by Jesus and the Apostles, we are acknowledging that these are substantive matters. ARCHBISHOP GEORGE PELL of Sydney looks at the Catholic Church since Vatican II and shares his optimism with us.

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An Official Look at New Age Religion

Annals asked IAN MACDONALD to review a timely analysis of New Age teachings and practice issued by two of the Sacred Congregations of the Catholic Church in Rome.

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Jazz – the Divine Spark

Leonard Bernstein said that there was always a note of sadness in even the most uproarious Dixieland ensemble, and there was always a note of hope or even defiance in even the bitterest blues. RICHARD HUGHES, one of Australia's best loved Jazz musicians looks into the soul of Jazz.

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Building Problems in Bithynia

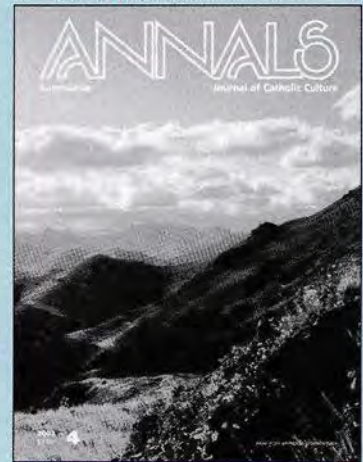
Annals continues its series of article on Latin. PAUL STENHOUSE reveals how this ancient and beautiful language offers a key to a world that to many of us is a closed book, and provides untold delights in the process.

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Narrowing Horizons

Why is it, asks GILES AUTY, that so many western would-be intellectuals continue to have a sneaking admiration for Communism – a system of social engineering which was not just murderous and oppressive but also deeply hostile to Christianity.

Cover photos: © Jacob Majarian



Front and Back Covers: A panoramic view of the mountains of northern Nagorno Karabakh in late spring. Karabakh was cut off from Armenia and ceded to Azerbaijan by Stalin, and the territory is now claimed back by Armenia. Armenia was the first nation state to embrace Christianity when Gregory the Illuminator carried the faith there in 301 AD. Before he set out for Armenia, Gregory visited Rome and received the blessing of Pope Marcellinus [296-304], the 28th successor of St Peter and a predecessor of Pope John Paul II the 263rd successor of St Peter, whose love for Armenia and the Armenians is well-known.

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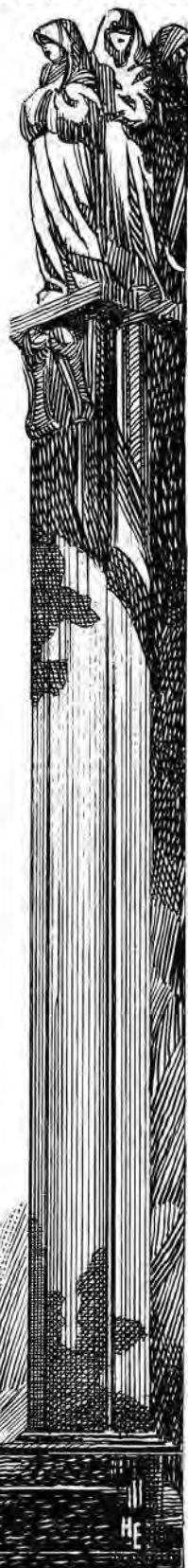
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Oscar Wilde finds his way home



It was Robert Ross who made the decision to call a priest to Wilde's bedside as he lay dying. At first he had hesitated, unsure of Wilde's wishes. Long before, Wilde had said that 'Catholicism is the only religion to die in' and his confession of regret, three weeks before his death, that he had not been permitted to become a Catholic as a child, must have helped convince Ross of the dying man's desire. Ross was aware that Wilde had 'kneeled like a Roman' to a priest in Notre-Dame in Paris and had displayed similar humility to a priest in Naples. In addition, Wilde had been moved by a recent visit to Rome in which he had been blessed by the Pope. Finally, on 29 November 1900, the day before his friend's death, Ross made up his mind to get a priest to his bedside. He rushed to the Passionist Fathers and brought back Father Cuthbert Dunne. Ross asked Wilde, who was unable to speak, if he wished to see Dunne and Wilde lifted his hand in assent. Father Dunne asked Wilde if he wished to be received into the Church and he once more held up his hand. He was then given conditional baptism, after which Father Dunne absolved and anointed him. The following afternoon he died.

— Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000, pp. 6, 7.

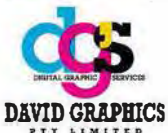
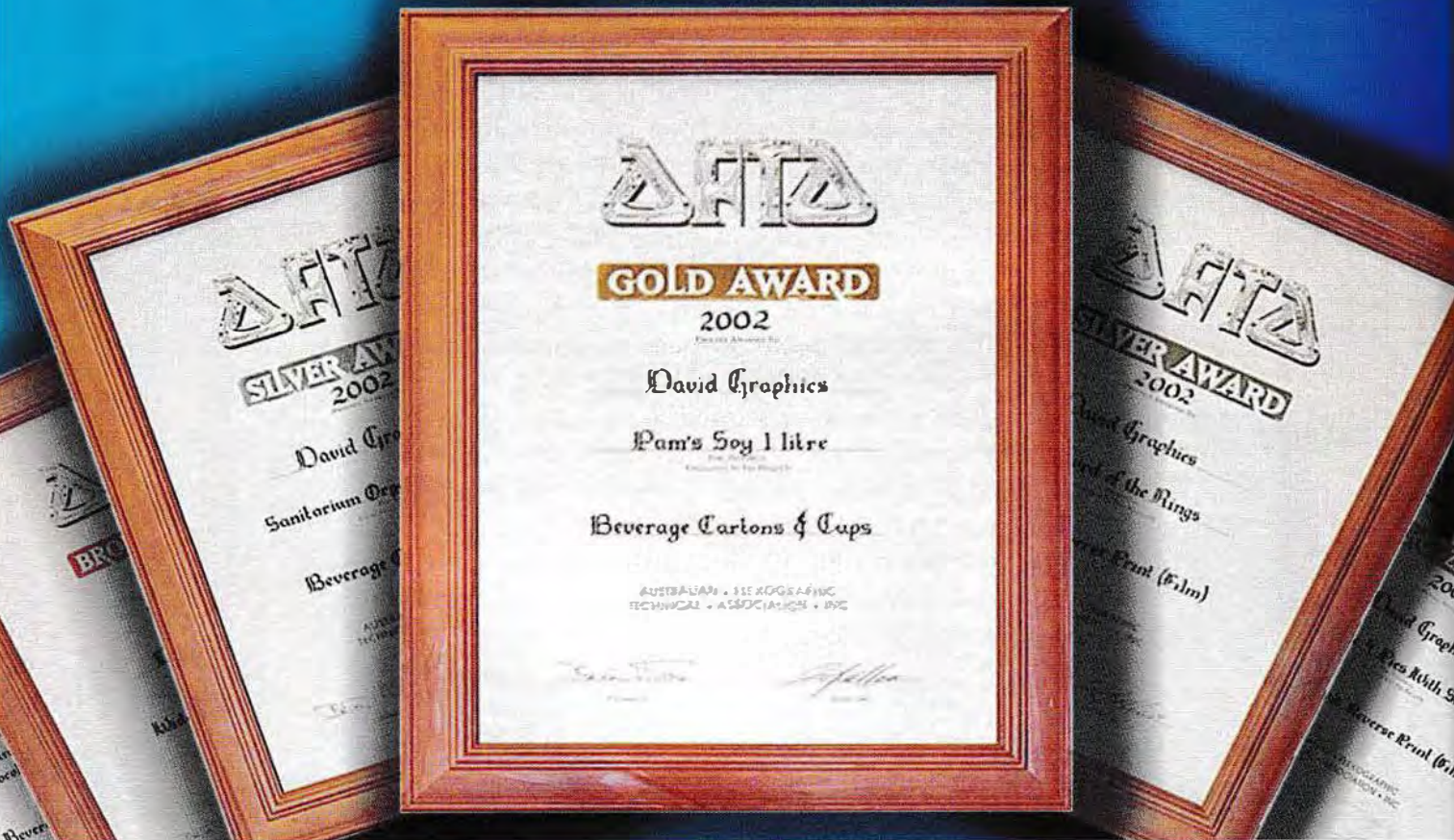




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IN MEMORIAM

TONY EVANS *remembers how he nearly met Mr Belloc*

ALTHOUGH I was too young to remember the day that Chesterton died in 1936, the day when Hilaire Belloc died, Thursday, 16th July 1953, remains vividly in my mind.

In those days when BBC radio in England was still the only mass medium, news bulletins gave updated reports on Belloc's condition over the three days he lay dying in a Franciscan nursing home in Guildford. We learned that he had fallen in his study at his home, Kingsland, near Horsham on the previous Sunday. Although the bulletins didn't say he was dying, we knew that the end was near. Cycling each day to work, aged 21, I was much affected.

Although Belloc had not published any books for eleven years and had remained a recluse – a 'private gentleman' as A.N. Wilson describes him in his biography – he was still a major literary figure and someone of importance. I didn't actually hear of the death until sometime on Friday because his end came on the previous evening. I was determined to be at the funeral because the lovely church of Our Lady of Consolation at West Grinstead where he was to be buried was not far from where I was working in Brighton. In the event I could not go. This has always been a matter of deep regret for me.

While I can't claim that I read Belloc in my cradle I was hardly out of it before I came under his spell. My boarding school in Sussex did not possess a central library as all schools do now, but each classroom had a glass cabinet holding a selection of good classics which we were encouraged to read. Whenever it rained (often) or when it snowed (sometimes), or a master was prevented by illness from giving a lesson, we had periods of 'silent reading', silent reading figured large in our curriculum.

And that is how I read *The Four Men* in the small blue Nelson edition. At the age of twelve it seemed pure magic; although I don't think I followed all the arguments, nor did I understand that the four men were four different aspects of the writer's character.

Our English teacher, a Belloc reader, promised that Mr Belloc, who lived in the same county, would visit the school. But even then, towards the end of World War II, he was old and probably the idea of visiting a lot of scruffy, ignorant schoolboys would not have appealed to him.

Another schoolmaster, who taught us sailing on Chichester Harbour after the war, declaimed Belloc's poetry, essays and excerpts from *The Cruise of the Nona* as we sheltered in leaky tents, waiting for the rain to clear.

I was hooked. I bought my own Bellocs, cheap editions from second-hand bookshops and I discovered Distributism. Belloc became my hero much as pop stars

become the heroes of today's youth (but they surely, with much less justification).

In maturity I discovered the warts: his belligerence, his intransigence, and his bullish dismissal of those who disagreed with him. He might have been a difficult man to live with. But I forgive him all these for his poetry, his fearlessness, his defence of the Faith, and the clarity and elegance of his prose. It has been said that among his hundred and more books, some of them were pot boilers, and repetitive; but he never wrote a bad sentence. Who can read the opening sentences of *The Path To Rome*, and the opening essay in *Hills and The Sea*, or the introduction to *The Old Road*, or the voyage through Bardsey Sound in *The Cruise of the Nona*, and not feel like the wedding guest in *The Ancient Mariner* compelled to continue reading on.

I was determined to meet Belloc. The chance came when I joined two fellow enthusiasts walking on the South Downs from east to west. We walked late into the night declaiming as much of Belloc as we could remember. Finally we rested in a haystack near Storrington not far from Belloc's home. We breakfasted on fresh bread from a bakery and arrived at Kingsland about 10 in the morning.

The three of us, scruffy, unshaven and with straw in our clothing, aroused the suspicions of Reginald Jebb, Belloc's son-in-law, who came out of the house and curtly asked us our business. He soon learned that we were friends rather than foes and invited us inside. We sat in Belloc's study, a large oak-beamed room with an ingle nook, oak furniture and threadbare carpet. Jebb had been a headmaster and was sympathetic to young literary enthusiasts whom, he probably felt, deserved encouragement. He called his wife, Eleanor, Belloc's daughter who brought us scones and tea.

As exciting as it was to sit in Belloc's study and talk with his family we could not be satisfied until we had met our hero. Jebb told us he was upstairs in his room and that he would ask him if he would come down to speak with us.

When Jebb reappeared he was alone; the news he brought was disappointing. Mr Belloc was not very well that day and would have to remain in his room. To help us over our disappointment he took us on a tour of the old house described in detail by Belloc's biographers. As we parted from Eleanor and Reginald Jebb he advised us that it was better that we young men should carry with us an image of Belloc as he was in his active period and not see him in his shuffling, decrepit last years.

As it transpired, it was not 'last years', but last months. Less than a year later, while at work in Brighton, I learned that Hilaire Belloc, the man I nearly met, had died.

TONY EVANS was a producer with the ABC for many years. He is now a freelance writer living in W.A. He has published three historical biographies, and is a successful playwright.

Grounds for optimism

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AFTER VATICAN II

By working to protect and present to our world the core of Catholicism, the tradition, written and unwritten, bequeathed to us by Jesus and the Apostles, we acknowledge that these are substantive matters. ARCHBISHOP GEORGE PELL of Sydney looks at the Catholic Church since Vatican II and shares his optimism with us.



THE Second Vatican Council was the largest restructuring in Catholic history for at least 400 years, since the Council of Trent 1545-1563 responded to the challenge of Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Indeed there are not too many useful parallels even in the fifteen hundred years before the Council of Trent.

Vatican II was also followed by a dramatic downsizing in some western countries such as Holland, and French-speaking Canada, a collapse of faith and practice which was also unequalled for hundreds of years; in fact the immediate parallels are the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789 or the exodus into Protestantism in the sixteenth century.

The Second Vatican Council was a momentous event in Church life changing Catholic life in Australia irreversibly. None of us would want to go back completely to Catholic life as it was before the Second Vatican Council. Its reforms in many cases are now taken for granted and young Catholics often imagine that life in the Church was always like this. In fact the Second Vatican Council would probably rank in their subconscious, if not their unconscious, with the Council of Trent. The Council was also followed in Australia by all sorts of unplanned and unanticipated events. On the negative side these include the departure of many priests and religious, the collapse in vocations, the decline in Church going and the spread of doctrinal and moral confu-

sion. Many positive developments were planned (and I will touch on those later) and achieved but a couple of unplanned positive developments are the rise of the charismatic movements and the growth of the so called New Movements such as the Emmanuel Community or the Neocatechumenal Way.

1962-1965 the Years of the Second Vatican Council

The Bishop of Ballarat, Dr. James Patrick O'Collins sent me to study theology in Rome in September 1963. Therefore I was not in Rome for the funeral of Pope John XXIII nor for the enthronement of Pope Paul VI. Obviously too I missed the first session of the Council but I was there as a student for the last three sessions, being present in St. Peter's

Square for the closing ceremony and being smuggled in on one day to help the clerical assistants during an actual session of the Council.

Many of the Australian Bishops had thought that the Council would be over in a few months, after adopting a few house-keeping measures. There was almost no public pressure in Australia beforehand for a great reforming Council and this was true of Catholic opinion throughout most of the world and certainly the English speaking world.

The Council was an exciting time. Pope John XXIII in his opening address had spoken against the prophets of doom and of the need to express the ancient truths in new ways. During the first session some of schemata prepared by the Roman Curia were rejected. There was a mounting enthusiasm for change, fanned by effective use of secular and religious press. There was then a large group of significant and important theologians most of them from Northern or Central Europe. Such names include Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx, Karl and Hugo Rahner, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Jean Danielou. The last three were to become Cardinals and the first two were eventually censured by the Church. One of the later books about the Second Vatican Council was headed 'The Rhine flows into the Tiber'.

Naïve young students like myself expected a new Pentecost. Catholic confidence was high with the first Catholic President of the United States, John F. Kennedy (we knew nothing then about his personal

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weaknesses) and the leaders of France and West Germany, General De Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer were both practising Catholics. The Cuban crisis had been successfully surmounted. Vietnam had not yet been lost and student unrest and rebellion would not culminate until the student revolutions of 1968, which nearly brought down the French Government. De Gaulle only remained in power with the help of the Communists.

This optimism quickly turned sour. Pope Paul VI's 1968 ruling which reaffirmed the traditional Church opposition to artificial contraception provoked massive public dissent, whose consequences we are still experiencing. Ironically Pope Paul's affirmation of the unitive and procreative goals of marriage set the scene for Pope John Paul II's theology of the body which speaks so powerfully to young adults today. Incidentally most of the students from Australia and New Zealand who were studying with me in Rome for the priesthood, a highly talented group of men, either chose not to be ordained or left the priesthood after ordination. The percentage who still remained would probably be less than 10%. For some of my friends an enthusiasm for reform turned into a radical dissatisfaction with the status quo, a disdain for the past and a sense of superiority towards those old fashioned people attached to older ways. It was the first indication to me that the way forward might not be as straight forward or pleasant as I had expected.

The Achievements of Vatican II

The achievements of Vatican II are of course contained in the Conciliar Decrees, inspired by the two basic motifs of 1) a return to the sources i.e. Scripture and Tradition, 'resourcement' and 2) 'aggiornamento' an Italian word meaning to bring things up to date.

For the first time a Council spoke about the role of the Church in the world and urged all Catholics to dialogue, not anathematize developments around them. It urged them to



Seek first the kingdom of heaven

IN like manner, the other pains and hardships of life will have no end or cessation on earth; for the consequences of sin are bitter and hard to bear, and they must accompany man so long as life lasts.

To suffer and to endure, therefore, is the lot of humanity; let them strive as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which beset it. If any there are who pretend differently who hold out to a hard-pressed people the boon of freedom from pain and trouble, an undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment the delude the people and impose upon them; and their lying promises will only one day bring forth evils worse than the present.

Nothing is more useful than to look upon the world as it really is, and at the same time to seek elsewhere, as We have said, for the solace to its troubles.

— Pope Leo XIII, [1810-1903], *Rerum Novarum* [On Capital and Labor], 1891.

engage with the world rather than to retire into a ghetto. In retrospect this now seems to reflect an excessive optimism and over confidence. Practising Christians are everywhere in a minority, and in the English-speaking world baptised Catholics are also in a minority. We are regularly swamped and battered by the consumer society in which we live.

One of the most important developments to follow from the Council was the development of the Catholic participation in Ecumenism, a social benefit in Australia as well as something that is doctrinally essential for the different followers of Jesus Christ. Friendship and co-operation are far preferable to the hatred and violence of e.g. Northern Ireland. The Council also urged regular dialogue and good relations with the other great religious traditions, an approach which is now under new pressures with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The Declaration on Religious Liberty, which espoused the view that the State cannot compel people to follow Catholic truth; which recognises people's civic rights to choose the truth as they see it, was also a significant development. The consequences of this civic

doctrine are also now being wrestled with within Church life.

The most immediate consequence to follow from the Council was the introduction of the celebration of the Sacraments in the vernacular languages, rather than Latin, something the Council itself never decreed and which Pope John XXIII did not foresee.

● Often the major achievement of the Council is described as the doctrine of the collegiality of bishops, the explicit recognition that as successors of the apostles bishops share leadership of the universal Church, with and under the Pope, the successor of St. Peter. The Council immensely strengthened the position of the Bishops and had the consequence of internationalising the Roman Curia. Nearly all the cardinals leading the Roman Curia now have many years of pastoral experience in their home dioceses. Unfortunately there was not a corresponding development in the theology of the ministerial priesthood.

Another important but under noted development was the espousal of the role of the laity, of the rights and responsibilities that follow from

baptism. This was first apparent in the order of chapters in 'Lumen Gentium', the constitution on the nature of the Church where the dignity and role of all the baptised was discussed before that of the clergy. Here the Council has been followed by wonderful but perhaps unexpected fruits, and not only in the parish councils and school boards which are now commonplace.

There is no doubt that this was a reforming Council but the Council preferred to use the term renewal 'Ecclesia Renovanda' rather than the term reformation used by Luther. Perhaps in the light of our present troubles an even better title would be 'Ecclesia Semper Purificanda' that is a Church always in need of purification.

Where Are We Now?

It is now more than forty years since the start of the Second Vatican Council. The number of Catholics in Australia is still increasing, with a rise of 202,000 between the 1996 – 2001 censuses. There are increasing demands on nearly all Catholic agencies. Catholic school numbers are rising as is the number of aged care facilities, while hospitals continue strongly. The Catholic Centacare agencies still make an enormous contribution to healing in our society. As a bishop I am one of the few privileged people who regularly visit many of our different parishes and institutions. Very few if any of our Catholic parishes are dead or dying. In many places they are strong and vibrant communities, which figure very rarely in the public media. Vocations to the priesthood are now almost adequate in some of the major Catholic Archdioceses, although in other places numbers continue low. Unfortunately many Religious Orders are dying, their demise welcomed by some of their members. I am told that one or two Orders have already formally decided to take no more novices. Although many religious are retired, members, young and old, still contribute magnificent service to the community. This has to be replaced in some way if the Church's contri-



Christianity and Nationhood

ITS [Islam's] culture (is) not one of translation but of assimilation. This is a point which Lamin Sanneh has made effectively in his much-discussed work *Translating the Message* but, interestingly, it was made already by an observant Arab in the sixteenth century who became a Christian and a monk of Dabra Libanos in Ethiopia. Enbaqom wrote his *Anqasa Amin*, 'The Door of the Faith', in 1540 during the Jihad of Grañ. It was an apologetic work comparing Islam and Christianity to prove the superiority of the latter and one of his most interesting arguments was that the Qur'an is the book of a single language, Arabic, while the Bible exists in twenty languages and he cites many of them to prove that Christianity can be at home anywhere. Enbaqom put his finger on a quite crucial divergence between the two religions. The Muslim attitude to the Qur'an made translation almost impossible. For the religious person it has to be read, recited out loud five times a day, or listened to in Arabic. In consequence the whole cultural impact of Islam is necessarily to Arabise, to draw peoples into a single world community of language and government. And this is what it did. Even the language of Egypt disappeared before it, except as a Christian liturgical language. Nations are not constructed by Islam but deconstructed. That is a fact of history but it is a fact dependent upon theology. Recognition of it should make it all the clearer that the construction of nations within the Christian world was not something independent of Christianity but, rather, something simulated by the Christian attitude both to language and to the state.

— Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

bution to the Australian community is not to be radically reduced. The new lay movements which flourish in some countries overseas have not had equal growth here, but we have some vigorous youth groups and increasing numbers have gone to the World Youth Day and experienced either genuine conversions or a strengthening of existing faith. Approximately seventeen percent of

Catholics still worship at Sunday Mass, a number which has fallen from approximately fifty plus percent forty or fifty years ago. We still have formidable strengths in many areas, quite unmatched in all the other main line Christian Churches. Many of our Catholic ethnic communities remain particularly strong.

Catholic liberalism seems to be dying and there are only small pockets of Catholic radicals. It is hard to find a practising Catholic dissident under fifty years of age. There are a few people in Australia who speak loudly of 'loyal dissent', a new category which has been introduced into the conversation since the Council. When does loyal dissent become unacceptable disloyalty?

Catholicism teaches that Christ is the son of God who came to redeem and save us and explain to us the secrets of this life and the next. His teaching has a unique authority. We regard it as divinely revealed rather than simply the work of human intelligence.

For any religion which claims to be divinely revealed there are two burning questions 1) what is the essential core of belief and practice that must be preserved in any restructuring and updating? 2) what is necessary for continuing or increasing spiritual vitality? These questions are different and the answers are not entirely the same.

The nub of the difficulty is identifying where the legitimate diversity in non essentials begins after the unity which is necessary in essentials. At every level of course there should be charity.

From the first days of Christianity a hierarchy of truths has been recognised with fundamental truths enshrined in either the baptismal promises or in the creeds said at Mass e.g. the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed.

The category of loyal dissent now means that many want to stay as full communicant members of the Catholic Church while rejecting specific doctrines of faith and morals that nearly everyone would have regarded as essential in the past. Examples from my own limited experience of such doctrines include the denial of the divinity of Christ,

claims that abortion and euthanasia can be legitimate, that homosexual activity and pre-marital sexual activity generally should also get a tick. Other possibilities which are urged are the reception of communion after divorce and remarriage, and women priests. Yet a further category would touch on the issues of artificial contraception and married clergy.

Why and how have we arrived at this situation? George Weigel, the author of the best biography of Pope John Paul II claims that theologians today learnt from the fate of Charles Davis who left the Catholic Church round about Christmas time 1966 over important doctrinal differences. He disappeared from public view, being mentioned publicly only at his death some years ago. Weigel suggests that dissident theologians have learnt from this and believe they can get much more publicity for their views while remaining in the Catholic Church. There is no doubt that many, perhaps all of them, want to reform the Church in major areas, to make it more 'acceptable', to bring it closer to the spirit of the age. And one of the enabling mechanisms for this has been the appeal to primacy of conscience.

Conscience

I believe strongly in the importance of individual conscience. It is indispensable. I have already endorsed the Second Vatican Council document on Freedom of Religion. In the past I have been in trouble for stating that the so called doctrine of the primacy of conscience should be quietly dropped. I would like to reconsider my position here and now state that I believe that this misleading doctrine of the primacy of conscience should be publicly rejected.

Let me tell you a story. At a cocktail party one evening a fairly prominent figure in Australian public life told me that he was not a Christian because he could no longer believe in the Divinity of Christ. I replied that I agreed that he could not be a Catholic while rejecting the Divinity of Christ but it could be possible for him to call himself a Christian, if he

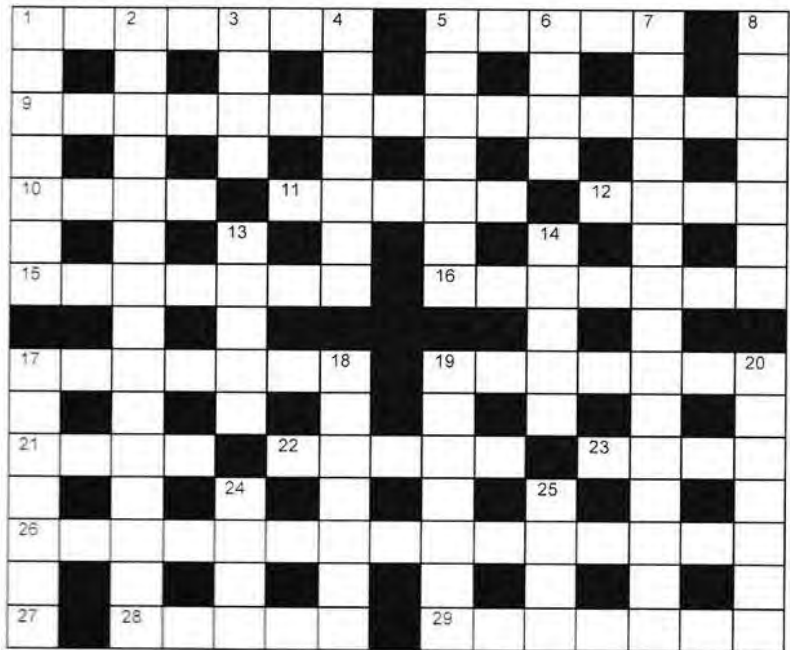
accepted many of Christ's teachings about God and on morality. 'No', he said, 'I do not accept the Divinity of Christ, and therefore I am not a Christian. But I do believe in God and I am not frightened to meet my Maker after death'.

This was a man of integrity. He had reached a wrong conclusion, but there was every indication that he had come to this decision honestly and honourably. I admired his integrity. He acknowledged that he stood under the truth, that he would answer to God, and that he had to

take the consequences of his position for his membership of the Catholic Church. This was an appropriate exercise of individual conscience, even though, as I mentioned, the conclusion was mistaken.

In Chapter 3 of the first letter of St. John, read at Mass some weeks ago, St. John spells out the link between conscience and the commandments, between freedom and truth. He explained that the way to love God is to follow his Commandments. This is basic. Christians have no entitlement to

ANNALS CROSSWORD No. 14



ACROSS CLUES

1. Fast (7)
5. A Muslim fighter against infidels (5)
9. In a manner affecting piety; self-righteously (15)
10. Animal; symbol of St Mark (4)
11. Compassion; courage (5)
12. Second son of Adam (4)
15. Threatens with violence (7)
16. A form of worship in church (7)
17. What the apostles were able to speak in after Pentecost (7)
19. Formal title of the Pope (7)
21. Father of Nimrod (Gen 10:8) (4)
22. Freedom from war (5)
23. Nimbus (4)
26. Better known name of Giovanni di Bernardone (7,2,6)
28. Father of Judas (5)
29. Where Paul met Aquila (Acts 18:12) (7)

DOWN CLUES

1. Son of David and Maacah (2 Sam 3:3) (7)
2. Made by God on the fourth day (3,4,3,5)
3. Fifth book of the New Testament (4)
4. Old Testament book following Leviticus (7)

5. A title for head of a religious order (7)
6. Old Testament prophet (4)
7. Disobedience (15)
8. Allegiance (7)
13. Yiddish word for synagogue (5)
14. To make amends (5)
17. Diplomatic; discrete (7)
18. A child of one's spouse by a former marriage (7)
19. Conducive to peace; conciliatory (7)
20. Unwise; silly (7)
24. A swindle (slang) (4)
25. Former Russian ruler (4)

SOLUTION TO NO. 13



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define sins out of existence, to deny or ignore fundamental teachings of faith, by claiming that their consciences are free or that they believe in the primacy of conscience. There is no substitute for personal sincerity, and we honour striving for the truth. But our consciences can be mistaken, sometimes mistaken through our own fault. And in any event we have to take the public consequences for our positions. It will not help me in a court of Law to claim that I did not realise I was driving on the right hand side of the road!

It is somewhat misleading also to claim that our conscience is free. Free for what? We do not boast that we are free to tell lies, although usually lies do not put people in gaol. Neither do we boast that we are free to read our watch in anyway we like, to get the time wrong intentionally. So too with conscience. Conscience is at the service of truth; it stands under God's word. Conscience has no primacy. Truth has primacy. The Word of God has primacy. When basic Catholic and Christian doctrines are explicitly and sometimes publicly denied, basic questions of personal integrity then have to be answered. I believe that the mischievous doctrine of the primacy of conscience has been used to white-wash the Church, used to justify many un-catholic teachings, ranging as I mentioned from denying the Divinity of Christ to legitimising abortion and euthanasia.

The so-called primacy of conscience offers no useful way forward in our current dilemmas.

What Is To Be Done?

I was born during the Second World War. As a youngster I can remember my mother explaining to me what a shock it was when the British base at Singapore fell to the Japanese, probably the greatest defeat in British military history. The Japanese came down the Malayan peninsula while most of the big British guns faced out to sea.

A similar thing happened with the old Chinese empire. For hundreds of years they were concerned about the approach of enemies from the west

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and the north. Hence the Great Wall of China. In the nineteenth century Europeans invaded from the East, they came in from the sea.

Those Christians who believe that the fortunes of Christianity can be revived by conforming basic teachings of faith and morals more closely with the spirit of the age are like the British and Chinese of old; their defences are facing in the wrong direction. Similarly those within the Christian Churches, liberals or radicals, who are struggling to eliminate many important Christian moral teachings are damaging fellow Christians; something like friendly fire in a war. There can be no retreat from the basics of the Apostolic tradition of faith and morals, although we must continue to penetrate it more deeply in dialogue with the modern world and with new and developing insights from a variety of modern and ancient disciplines like philosophy, medicine and psychology.

For many this is counter-intuitive.

However it is interesting to chart the areas where there is Christian vitality today, especially among young people. This is overwhelmingly where the fullness of the Christian tradition is taught, where the call to repentance and belief following the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. This is already true in Australia.

Undoubtedly the major challenge is with young people and with middle-aged people. Many of those have not been adequately introduced to the basics of the Catholic tradition. In fact a contemporary temptation is to rely on someone else to be teaching the basics so that in fact these rudimentary truths are not explained strongly and clearly at all. Such basics include: 1) the teaching that the one true God, Father Son and Spirit, loves us, especially when we are in trouble; 2) that Jesus Christ the only son of God redeemed and saved us through his teaching, suffering, death, and resurrection; 3) that there is one true Church led by the Pope and the bishops, although we work happily with our sister Churches such as the Orthodox and with the other Christian denominations; and 4) that Christ calls us to follow him. In other words Catholicism is primarily a religion concerned about worship, service, and right personal conduct. On too many occasions the principal energy of some Catholics has been diverted into other areas; for example, nationalism, being successful, keeping the organisation running efficiently, concern for social justice or ecology or life issues or feminism. It is not too difficult for the primary religious call to be misplaced.

It might also be an appropriate time to say a few words on the sexual scandals that have beset the Catholic Church. Their gravity cannot be ignored or underestimated, but I believe that these abuses and crimes (and the way they have been dealt with) are symptoms of malaise and confusion, evidence of personal sin and evil rather than evidence of widespread corruption. We must continue to face up to the truth, and deal justly with complaints. We should also acknowledge that only a small minority are offenders. Clear

moral standards are a help to everyone in avoiding sin and to superiors in enforcing discipline. People, religious and irreligious, are correct to insist that we practise what we preach. It is not clear to me that mandatory celibacy is a major cause of paedophilia, most of which occurs in family situations. But bishops and religious superiors must continue to be vigilant against all misdemeanours, especially with children but also with adults.

Another important issue is women in the Church: The position of women in the Church continues to be vexed, even though most Catholic church-going women in Australia are not opposed to Church teaching against women priests¹. There is some anecdotal evidence that religious practice is as unpopular among young Australian Catholic women as it is among young men², a finding (if confirmed) which would be unprecedented in sociology. However we shall see continuing change here as the Western birth rate continues to fall and population numbers decrease radically in Europe.

As in the Roman Empire the Catholic Church will have new opportunities to give leadership on the emancipation of women from the constraints of a permissive and anti-child society, protecting women who choose not to enter employment and encouraging flexible working hours so that mothers with children can continue in the work force.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly the best known exponent of the Vatican II exhortation to dialogue with the worlds of popular culture and contemporary thought is Pope John Paul II. In many areas from philosophy through his great moral encyclicals to the theology of the body he has broken new ground and changed the parameters. It is quaint to see a few commentators repeating positions fashionable in the 1970s and imagining that these continue at the centre of discussion and development.

Some talk also as though a change in the balance of power between the Roman centre and individual

dioceses or bishops' conferences would radically enhance the preaching of the gospel and the number of personal conversions. This would be as effective as the Chinese stationing most of their troops in Sichuan to protect their Eastern seaboard.

Modern communications and travel have changed the way the Roman Curia and the Catholic world interact. These changes will continue. I even have a cautious optimism that some such changes could benefit Catholic life. My opposition to the suggestion that the political notion of subsidiarity, built on the premise that all power comes from the people, can be usefully applied to Church life does not betoken an opposition to gradual development, provided the special role of the Successor of St. Peter is preserved. Even baptismal power comes from God and the priestly authority to teach, sanctify and govern comes from ordination, the sacrament of orders, not from majority opinion, especially when most of these are not regular worshippers.

The Church always needs purification (*semper purificanda*), especially through prayer and penance. All suffering, including the humiliation of public scandals can be used as occasions for learning and improvement, for doing better, much better.

Some Catholics, even senior students in Catholic schools, might not believe in the divinity of Christ, the special status of the sacraments, the Real Presence, the authority of the Pope. They might accept the legitimacy of abortion, euthanasia, and every form of adult sexual activity. In many cases we are powerless to prevent this. But they should not be so mistaken to imagine these are legitimate Catholic teachings. Clear Catholic teaching is needed.

In working to protect the core of the Catholic tradition of faith and morals, the tradition bequeathed to us from Christ and the apostles, one is not playing at cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers. Whatever our position these are substantive issues, worthy of discussion and debate.

Over two thousand years the

Catholic Church has weathered persecutions, storms and trials, enemies from within and outside. Secularism will prove a more enduring challenge than Communism and the lethal influences on Catholic life, the acid rain, are coming from the society around us.

In the nineteenth century the philosopher Nietzsche claimed that the newspaper had replaced daily prayer. Later T.V. replaced the newspaper and now the Internet is replacing T.V.! Last century G.K. Chesterton wrote that man has always lost his way, but modern man has lost his address.

The Western world is more and more preoccupied with self, extolling personal autonomy, obsessed with self-realisation. People are urged to turn inwards, to confront the emptiness with clichés from the New Age or the sophistication of Eastern religions.

Catholicism strikes out in a different direction. The Vatican II constitution on the Church in the World (par.22) insists that the human mystery is only intelligible in the light of Christ. 'Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from his gospel they overwhelm us'. Christ and the Catholic tradition call us to faith, hope and love, to an eternity of happiness won through Christ's death and resurrection. The Church reminds us of the necessity of community, of the moral law, natural and revealed; reminds us too that we need to worship and pray regularly.

Membership of the Catholic Church is a wonderful honour. We belong to a proud community of worship and service; flawed and sinful certainly, always in need of purification, but a tradition of truth, beauty and unselfish love.

This is why the Catholic Church has survived and continues to prosper; even in Australia.



Address to Catalyst for Renewal, St Patrick's, Church Hill, Sydney, Friday, May 30, 2003

1. *Woman & Man: One in Christ Jesus* (Report on Participation of Women in the Catholic Church). Harper Collins:1999 p.145, table 5.2.
2. Catholic Church Life Survey 1996 (CCLS96)

Few tears shed at the end of an era

A GREAT BELFAST SHIPYARD WITH AN UGLY PAST

KEVIN HILFERTY reflects on the closure of the Harland and Wolff shipyards on the banks of the river Laggan. No Catholic could hope to find a job there, and those who did risked having rivets and tools and worse dropped on them. The shipyard that built the Titanic has foundered on its own metaphorical iceberg, and sunk, like a doomed ship.



THE great white hull of the P & O liner Canberra towered over the Belfast waterfront from the stocks of the Harland and Wolff shipyard as my Glasgow-bound overnight ferry steamed by. Disfiguring the side of the ship, in black letters two metres high, were the anti-Catholic slogans beloved of the Ulster Protestant working class.

"To hell with the Pope!" was one, "No Popery here" was another along with that old favourite, "No Surrender!"

Back at my desk in London a few days later, I telephoned the head of P & O's public relations, a prince of the Czarist royal family. I pointed out that photographs of the slogans on the company's fine new ship, being built for the US and Australian cruise trade, would not go down well in their target markets. He agreed and within days the ship was gleaming white again.

I recalled this episode when I read recently that Harland and Wolff had completed its last vessel, Ship 1,742, bringing to an end 150 years of shipbuilding on the banks of the River Laggan.

The shipyard's history encompasses everything that is mean and ugly about community relations in Ulster. It was a vast enterprise, employing at its peak 35,000 workers and turning out liners, cargo ships and oil tankers. During World War 2 it built 120 warships including six aircraft carriers, despite German bombing. Its two giant cranes, Samson and Goliath, were clearly visible from the Catholic suburbs of West Belfast, across the city

with their high level of unemployment. Yet the West Belfast men knew there would be no work for them at the busy shipyard. This was because the Protestant management and workforce agreed that Catholics would not be employed there.

Those few Catholics who managed to get jobs suffered discrimination – and worse. In times of high tension the Catholic workers were expelled and during the terrible riots of the early 1920s, some of them were killed. Others had rivets and tools dropped on them from on high. In one of his poems, Seamus Heaney wrote of a worker:

*That fist would drop a
Hammer on a Catholic –
Oh yes, that kind of thing
Could start again*

Keeping Catholics out of the yard was about the only thing on which the management and workforce could agree, along with badgering the Westminster Government for financial handouts. Despite the demand for ships during the wartime crisis years, the workers regularly went on strike for higher pay; Winston Churchill described one dispute as shocking.

In post-war years the yard

demanding vast Government subsidies to enable it to compete against Asian shipbuilders. The Labor Prime Minister Harold Wilson resented this and described the loyalist workers as "spongers."

The workers took to the streets again in the 1970s for political purposes, joining other loyalists in strikes and demonstrations against the Westminster Government's tentative plans to reform the Stormont Government.

I remember people from the old Northern Ireland Government telling me that the shipyard was a shining example of the long industrial history, work ethic and trade skills of the Belfast workforce. To the Catholic community of Belfast it was a bastion of sectarian discrimination and a throwback to a vanished imperial past when Harland and Wolff ships sailed the world's trade routes which were patrolled by Belfast-built warships of the Royal Navy. They will shed few tears over the yard, for the last 40 years a drain on public funds that could have been better spent.

When Ship 1742 steamed away, there were fewer than 200 workers to be paid off at Harland and Wolff. The shipyard site will be bulldozed and apartment blocks and office towers built on which is to be called the Titanic Quarter. This is named after the most famous ship ever built by Harland and Wolff, which bit an iceberg and sank in the North Atlantic in 1912 with 1635 passengers and the ship's designer, Thomas Andrews.

I hope the Titanic Quarter enjoys more success than the liner for which it is named.

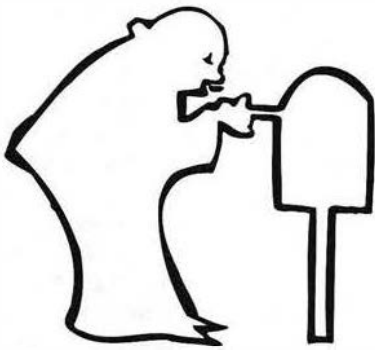


KEVIN HILFERTY is a much-travelled Sydney journalist.

Catholicism

COMPARED with it, all the successive philosophies that men have worked out since are mere ephemeral things of a day that have become for us objects of mere historical interest – in the face of the uncertainty and confusion, muddled thinking and contradictory ideas that abound in modernist circles its tenets stand out with clarity and precision?

– J.H. Randall, an American critic of Catholicism, quoted in Arnold Lunn and C.M. Joad, *Is Christianity True?* p. 327.



Appreciation

I just wanted to let you know how I appreciate reading 'Annals Aust.', which in my opinion expresses history and current topics much better than the media at large. Thanks.

Miranda NSW 2228

SANDRA KELLER

No need for inclusive language

Bless you and all your wonderful workers and may you continue to enlighten, strengthen, stir the members and stir up the blood of Catholics here and overseas. Many a time I was going to write my reaction to pieces in *Annals* throughout the year, e.g. the mad feminists that believe they speak for all women, really get me going. I love being a Catholic woman in today's church and I don't need inclusive language to know that God is speaking to me, as well men. Mankind means us all, and I know that Father God loves me - Kim, wife, mother, grandmother, friend, daughter.

May Father God continue to love you too and our misled feminist sisters.

Cooktown Qld 4871

KIM BUDD

Bishop Gibney's Pectoral Cross

Your last edition of *Annals Australia* was as usual a very enjoyable and interesting read. I was particularly taken by the article on Bishop Gibney and the siege of Glenrowan.

In 1903, Bishop Gibney was given a piece of Kalgoorlie gold which had been made into a Pectoral Cross for his use. After his death, the Cross was bequeathed to the Christian Brothers to give to their first Australian past student who was ordained a Bishop.

The first Australian born Bishop was Basil Roper in Toowoomba who in turn left it to the Diocese where it still is kept.

Taringa QLD 4068 BROTHER TIM SCOTT, CFC

Good and bad

When my respected former colleague Kevin Hilferty referred to his 'old boss' Ezra Norton as a 'noisy, unpleasant drunk' I could not but think of Will Shakespeare's words 'the good men do dies with them' or some such sort.

While I've no desire to gild the lily (or punter's boot) I'd put up another side of the demon publisher.

True he could be ruthless and extremely unpleasant (especially to the ten journalists I saw him sack one afternoon). I suppose some of us more obscure scribes missed out, but thought it was fitting that the ones to go had looked down on us from their lofty heights as 'pick and choose story' jourmos.



It was in the collection of evidence that the mingled atrocity and absurdity of the system became most obvious. Not only was the fabric of a case often built up on the allegations of the hired creatures of the Government, but the existence of the rack gave a preposterous twist to the words of every witness. Torture was constantly used; but whether, in any particular instance, it was used or not, the consequences were identical. The threat of it, the hint of it, the mere knowledge in the mind of a witness that it might at any moment be applied to him - those were differences merely of degree: always, the fatal compulsion was there inextricably confusing truth with falsehood.

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

My point is that Ezra had a compassionate side as well as his nasty efforts.

When I came out of the army, just back from New Guinea, I had been working at the Mirror just three weeks when I went down with an attack of malaria that kept me off work for six weeks. I didn't expect to be paid and most employers would have said such a short term worker wasn't entitled to it ... but Ezra Norton personally instructed that my pay be made up for all that time off. The similar charity (for it was no less) applied to other ex-servicemen on his staff.

Ezra was like the rest of us ... good and bad, sinful strugglers. How many know that he became a Catholic and was buried as one? On a trip back, on a liner, from the USA, a fellow passenger was Cardinal Norman Gilroy and Ezra asked him for instruction. His Eminence said that he could not do that personally and referred him to Rev. Dr Leslie Rumble, MSC. The result was that Ezra was received into the Church. That I know because both Cardinal Gilroy and Dr Rumble confirmed it with me.

Like the late Bea Miles whose eccentricities are always called up, the good things done are forgotten. Bea, who also became a Catholic, was quite a charitable lady when housed by the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Another who became a Catholic while under the Sisters' care was the poet and story writer Will (not Henry) Lawson.

Bensville NSW 2251

KEN SCULLY

[Kevin Hilferty replies: As always, old colleague Ken is quite right about Ezra Norton. Like other rich men of his era, he combined acts of kindness towards his workers (and executives) with outbursts of rage which led to regular Friday afternoon sackings. He began his education at Scots College which he found hard to take so he completed his school years happily at CBC, Waverley. After being diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1966, he became a Catholic - there is hope for us all. My only glimpse of Norton is of him behaving badly in a bar; it remains in my memory bank.]

OOPS

I never thought I would have to comment on a mistake in one of the *Annals* articles. I eagerly await each edition and enjoy the excellent and informative presentation of what I

consider is the best Catholic publication in Australia.

However Laurence Bayliss MSC, in his review of the Genesian production of *King Lear*, states 'the Genesians are the only Catholic performing arts group in Australia'.

Here in Adelaide the Therry Dramatic Society (named after the pioneer priest John Joseph Therry) has been presenting productions for sixty years.

It was founded by the late George Walton in Melbourne in 1937. Branches were later opened in Sydney, Ballarat, Perth and Adelaide (1943). I had the privilege of being president of the Adelaide society from 1948-1952.

However the Adelaide group is the only surviving Therry Society in Australia and, as it faces its 60th birthday on 8th September, can be very proud of its theatrical achievements and the important part it has played in the Catholic community of this city.

Brighton SA 5048

HAROLD MONEAR

Conversion Stories

I am collecting stories about conversions to the Catholic faith. It is of particular interest if the person comes from a fundamentalist or cult-type background. Anyone who is interested in being part of this project may write to me at 15 Robb Drive, Romsey, Vic 3434 or ring me on (03) 5429 5907.

Romsey Vic 3434

MARGARET HOGGATE

Bears and Apostles

I read with great interest your Editorial titled 'Cambridge Spies and Marxism's Post-Modernist Front'.

Today in Cambridge the dining/drinking societies still prosper. The 'Apostles' dining club cum secret society still exists in Cambridge today. Kings' College today would be described as a "diverse and tolerant community".

On 6 March 2003, I returned to St. Edmund's College, Cambridge for a reunion of the dining club cum secret society that I was a member of during my time at Cambridge, the 'Bears'. St Edmund's is a Catholic College founded by the Duke of Norfolk. Archbishop Pell was a visiting scholar at the College during the 1980's.

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Membership of the Bears is by invitation only, followed by an initiation. All the members of the Bears have names chosen by the current bears in residence (usually no more than 12 members per year). My Bear name is 'Canberra'. There are at least two priests who have been members over the last twenty years.

The most amazing thing about Cambridge is the way in which the institution has been able to retain so many unique idiosyncrasies that seem unusual in today's world. These traditions are the basis of the successful seven hundred year old University that Cambridge is. Like the prayer in Latin at formal hall. Or the compulsion that gowns be worn at all formal events. Or the snobbery

that Oxford be referred to as 'the other place'.

I am proud to say that that the Bears are the pre-eminent social and sporting society within the University. In the past decade the society members have included rowing and rugby internationals as well as many great scholars from Britain and elsewhere. Let us hope that the members of the Bears do not disgrace their families, their college, their University and their country in the way members of 'the Apostles' did.

Brisbane Qld 4000

DOMINIC KATZER

Standing One's Ground

Bravo to the gutsy Catholic secondary college principal who stood his ground over the showing of a film which depicts what actually happens in an abortion. He eschewed the 'head in the same ethics' of the arrogant trendies, both secular and religious.

Young people well before year 11 are encouraged in the main by an 'anything goes' sex education system which does not want to spoil their fun by implying a personal responsibility factor by the participants. This sad to say, is often aided & abetted by some naive and/or compliant parents who have enough on their minds already just trying to enjoy themselves!

In the 21st century surely one of the basic tenets of a well rounded education is to bring all aspects forward for the students to study, and I could not see any senior student, exposed as they are to the nature of the world in which we live, being unable to cope with what really happens in an abortion. This violent procedure not only kills a developing human being, but destroys the physical and psychological well-being of the mother at whatever her age and station in life she is at the time it takes place.

A current shock-jock microphone baron, along with his peers of the camera waving ilk, all earn their caviar & cream by whipping up mindless controversies to try to keep up an 'interest' factor in their otherwise mundane programs; but he had to try to weigh in on the argument because any chance to take a swipe at

the Catholic Church is not one to be missed, irrespective of what matter is being discussed. It is quite likely that he himself wouldn't have a clue, or even care, as to what happens in an abortion.

This brings me to another point. The time is long overdue when Catholics have to be so well-mannered (timid perhaps?) that they are afraid to tackle these self-opinionated media gurus. Just withdraw from their 'influence' (as did the school principal) watch their ratings drop, earnings go down and lo & behold, the once household name is no more and they have to scramble to get a job, or work on late night radio! Talk about once mighty but now fallen!

Frankston Vic 3199

MAUREEN FEDERICO

Bold Claims

I was a little surprised to see such a staunch defender of tradition attack the traditions that have grown up in using electronic mail (*e-mail*).

One must remember that e-mail has been around longer than the *Novus Ordo* Mass. The Internet has its origins in 1969 when several computers were connected. Messaging was quickly developed.

The speed of this medium allowed users locally to send each other shon messages and receive replies quickly. Thus, it was more akin to a conversation. The desire for speed lead to abbreviations, and the fact that often several messages were exchanged meant that formal greetings fell into disuse.

The other factor was between institutions and countries the rate of information that could be passed (*bandwidth*) was somewhat less than what most people experience with their standard modems today. To give an example, most people have access to a 56 kb/s modem to access their e-mail. In 1990, Australia's international Internet connection, between Melbourne University and the west coast of the USA, was a single 64 kb/s line.

That meant all e-mails and file transfers and other traffic in and out of Australia was restricted to something like a standard domestic modem. Thus, e-mail was kept short to aid its speed.

To add a complication to this, in the early days of e-mail one did not just specify an e-mail address and send it off. One had to indicate all the mail servers that would handle the e-mail *en route*. Thus, to add a long, florid and elegant greeting for typically short messages was considered a little excessive.

The technology has improved, but the traditions of our electronic past linger.

I would be interested to investigate further your bold claim that the keeping of Latin in The Austrian Empire would have prevemed the French Revolution five years later.

Carnegie VIC 3163

(DR) B.D. COLBERT

A play called Adam

Within a hundred years of the 1066 Conquest an unknown Anglo-Norman scholar wrote a trilogy he called *Adam*, after the first of its parts. Reminiscent of classical Greek tragedy, his play is a peak achievement of the European theatre.

Adam consists of three short plays very different in structure and mood. The author intends them to set the tone for a dawn-to-dusk Holy Day celebration on Septuagesime. He describes the elaborate stage to be erected in front of the church and the music they are to retain from the liturgical Office of Readings they replace.

'Adam and Eve' and 'Cain and Abel' enact the Paradise story, while 'The Prophets' dramatises a popular sermon. The three play as one. At their end, players and spectators move straight into the church for the usual solemn mass, singing 'Pange, lingua, gloriosi lauream cenaminis' -

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an ancient Easter march that skilfully relaxes the tension built up by the three plays.

Townpeople and pilgrims sense in procession and mass the triumphant return to Paradise of 'Pharisees and Saracens, Scribes and Greeks' - as Loyal Love told Piers Plowman two hundred years later. And with memories of the First Crusade still fresh, perhaps the salvation also of Marlowe's 'heathens who practice the discipline of arms and chivalry [that] fashions men with true nobility'.

Mass over, off to the fair-ground for the afternoon to enjoy meat and drink and all the merry diversions of a mediæval Holy Day kept between Twelfth Day and Ash Wednesday. Carnival time.

Kew Vic 3101

JOHN W. DOYLE, S.J.

Giving us 'curry'

In *Annals* (Oct '02) you gave a little dissertation on the word 'curry'; its derivation and meaning and you wrote 'do we call that hot powder cury because it tickles or inflames or does some *Annals* reader know another origin of the word?'

Sorry Father, it has nothing to do with its usual meaning, e.g. to use a curry comb or to curry favour. One of the glories of the English language is its willingness to take words from other languages. In fact English is one of the great borrowing tongues deriving at least half its common words from non-Anglo-Saxon stock. And many of the words we adopt are so artfully anglicised that it is hard to believe that they are not native.

Curry, in the gastronomic sense is one of these! It comes from the Tamil (or Dravidian) language in which it is spelt "Kari" - a dish of meat cooked with bruised spices and turmeric.

Coogee NSW 2034

JACK MASON

Wonderful

Your magazine is wonderful, so keep up the good work.

Kent Town SA 5071

SR. JUDY GURNEY

(Readers' comments are welcomed, not just on material that appears in *Annals*, but on issues that concern the Catholic and the wider community. Please keep your letters short. They may be edited if too long. Always print your full name and address, and include a day-time phone or fax number or e-mail address at which you can be reached. Editor, *Annals*.)

In training for the Heavenly Olympics

THE MEETING OF EVANGELICALS

Every day more than 1 million passengers travel in 1458 carriages over the 2,060 kms of railway tracks around New South Wales. This is the sixth in our series of articles

by FATHER MAX BARRETT CSSR on commuter extraordinaire Joseph Meagher.



IT WAS unusually – one might say, almost unnaturally – quiet in the lead carriage of the 8.05 out of Cronulla. The family of Joe Meagher had put on a delightful little birthday party the previous evening, and Joe had some catching up to do on sleep.

It was not an interminable quiet. A young man toting an earnest expression and an enormous Bible gave a discreet cough, and from the range of several millimetres whispered into the sleeper's ear: 'Pardon me. I wonder –'

Joe started, withdrew his head a fraction in order to get his neighbour in focus and was instant affability.

'Pardon? No pardon required. I believe I heard you say you wonder. That makes us kindred spirits. We know the world is filled with the glory of God. His grandeur flames out, like shining from shook foil. Ah, I can see I took the words out of your mouth. I think it was Elizabeth Barrett Browning who said

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with
God.*

*But only he who sees takes off his shoes.
The rest sit round and pluck
blackberries.*

Let's try to avoid self-righteousness, but we know there's more to life than gobbling wild fruit.'

The young man opened and closed his mouth several times, rather like a fish in the fishbowl, and made about as much noise as the piscine species.

'Look at the delicacy of these fleecy morning clouds. Here, sit by the window; soak up the splendour.' And before you could say 'Are you saved' they had exchanged places.

Joe Meagher didn't ordinarily relinquish his favourite seat; but the young zealot had given a few twitches as though planning to carry his message elsewhere. Now there was about as much chance of getting past Joe as of escaping through the sealed glass pane.

'You were about to ask me do I accept the Lord Jesus as my personal saviour. Indeed I do. You were about to ask me do I take seriously the Lord's injunction to pray always. Again, emphatically yes. A moment ago my prayer had been taking the form of gentle sleep. But now, bless you, we have the chance to pray together.

'You know the Our Father? Of course you do. And the Hail Mary? You don't. YOU DON'T? Ah, words fail me.'

At 'Words fail me' an assortment of titters, gulps and harrumphs went through the carriage. The word-failure lasted all of five seconds.

'Now, if I might borrow that fine Bible for a moment ... Good grief! You could easily get a hernia from ... Ah! Here we have it: Luke, Chapter 2, verse 28: "And the angel being come in addressed Mary; Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with you." Get it? Hail Mary, full of grace. the Lord is with you. Now we scuttle across a dozen verses ... Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and, da-dum, da-dum, da-dum. Got it: verse 39: "And Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit (Filled with the Holy Spirit, mark you) said: How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me ... You are the most blessed among women. and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Read St. Luke and you'll soon know the Hail Mary.

'Now, in the Rosary prayer, we start with the mystery of the Incarnation ... the mystery of God's overwhelming love ... when God sought the consent of his creature, a consent readily given ... and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ...

'Look, I don't know how you pray the first Joyful Mystery ... er ... What did you say your name is? Elmer? I don't know how you pray the first Joyful Mystery, Elmer, but I like to dwell on the peerless opening to St. John's Gospel. Let's riffle across to John, Chapter One.'



THE GENESIANS

Murder in Kent Street

The setting is Lord Rancour's country house on an island in the English lake district in the spring of 1935. Enter all the usual suspects for a weekend in the country. Then the murders begin and most definitely "Something's Afoot." This is the new play being presented by the Genesians. It is directed by Roger Gimblett in association with Joyce Birch at a cracking pace in a cleverly constructed set, very English and thirties.

This is an ensemble piece and the Genesians have always been noted for their splendid ensemble work and this presentation is no exception. It is a murder spoof, and as always there are the familiar characters – maid, butler, ingénue, doctor, colonel, and, of course, the Margaret Rutherford-type woman who tries to solve the mystery. And as usual, most of the characters are murdered! It is also a musical! Not that there is a "hit" song – but there are plenty of rollicking tunes, and the cast seem to have lots of fun belting them out.

The orchestra has been pre-recorded. The sound operator (Sarah Morrissey) must have used great concentration to cue in not only the orchestra but many other sounds from birds twittering to a fierce storm!

The cast of 10 seem to enjoy themselves enormously, overplaying at times which only adds to the fun the audience has. It would be unfair to single out any cast member in particular. They all act well, and sing and dance to the best of their ability.

"Something's Afoot" is playing at the Genesian Theatre, 420 Kent St., Sydney on Friday and Saturday at 8pm and on Sunday at 4.30pm until June 28. Bookings 9645 1611 website www.genesiantheatre.com.au

– Laurence Bayliss, MSC

At this point, Elmer had partially recovered his voice and was all for recovering his Bible. 'After all,' he pointed out, 'it is my Bible.'

'Your Bible?' Joe echoed reproachfully. But isn't it our Bible? Would you withhold the word of God from me?'

'Of course not,' came the agitated reply. 'I mean, yes, I would,' and Elmer made to snatch back his property. He made two discoveries: (1) that the elderly man with the tousled hair had surprising strength in his hands; (2) that the final chapters of Matthew's Gospel and the beginning of Mark up to Chapter 3, verse 4, had come away in his hands.

Joe had decreed the opening of John's Gospel, and the opening of John's Gospel it was.

'In the beginning was the Word. Dear God! This is majestic stuff. The Word was with God and the Word was God ... John Baptist came. He was not the Word; his glory was to give witness to the

Word whom he called 'the lamb of God'.

'Now we come to the sad part. Many would not accept the Word. But to all that did accept him, he gave power to become children of God, to all who believed in the name of him who was born (Doesn't this stuff grab you!) who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man BUT OF GOD HIMSELF.

'Elmer, you're looking flushed, and that's as it should be. Our saviour, born of God himself, and of Mary. That's why you so reverence Mary; because she is the virgin mother of the Father's only Son ...

'No doubt you have often wondered – as I have often wondered – why the Rosary is called a Marian prayer. Granted, there are ten Hail Marys to each decade; but they simply hold together our meditation on the awesome mystery, the incomparable gesture of divine intimacy whereby God became one of us, to save us ...

THE ENTERTAINER



Check the source

AN exulting crowd at an execution is a collective crime in itself. The ghouls clustered around the Tower when St Thomas More was beheaded. They were back again at Oxford to see the pathetic, perjured Thomas Cranmer burned alive, and then again to howl their imprecations at St Edmund Campion when he was hanged and, still alive, disembowelled. In the Royal Academy show of Van Dyck's works there are remarkable images of that great and troubled man Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. 'Black Tom' was, next to Oliver Cromwell, the greatest Englishman of his age, who served the undeserving Charles I mightily, only to be abandoned by the King in his hour of need. He became the most unpopular man in the country, feelings being whipped up by Puritan divines and scurrilous pamphleteers, the distant forebears of the tabloid journalists of today. Condemned to death by a show-trial in the Lords, he was dragged to Tower Hill through a screeching mob and executed in front of the largest collection of people ever to assemble at that bloodstained place. They set up a deafening catervaul of joy when his handsome head was severed from his shoulders. Such disgraceful scenes punctuated our history in the grand old days when we were a noble nation. Now that we are puny and base they re-enact themselves in farcical but nonetheless ugly newsprint vendettas against pantaloon villains like Archer. He has already been punished by having all that he wriggled and panted for taken away from him. Let us turn, rather, on the real sources of evil in our society, of whom there are plenty.

– Paul Johnson, *The Spectator*, December 4, 1999

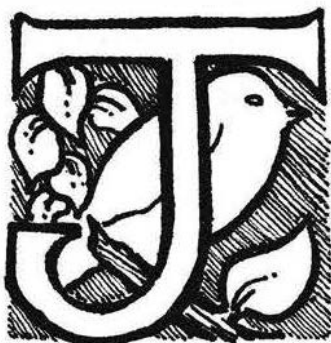
'So we say one Our Father and ten Hail Marys, reflecting on that mystery of divine love, wonderingly. Yes, that's exactly what you said: wondering ... Let's say the first decade of the Rosary together. No? This is your stop? Well, thank you. Thank you for making my day. Thank you for – what do we say these times? – for meaningful dialogue.'

Joe lapsed back into his pleasant dream. Elmer, near collapse, went in search of a restorative cranberry juice.



– [TO BE CONTINUED]

THOUGHT FROM THE LITURGY OF THE DAY



JULY

1 Tuesday Week 13 Mat 8:25
‘Save us, Lord, we are going under.’ ‘Why are you frightened, you of little faith?’

2 Wed Week 13 Psalm 34:7
The angel of the Lord is encamped around those who revere him, to rescue them.

3 Thursday Thomas John 20:27
Give me your hand, Thomas. Put it into my side. Cease your doubting and believe.

4 Friday Week 13 Mat 9:13
I want mercy, not sacrifice.

5 Sat Week 13 Mat 9:16
People do not pour new wine into old wineskins.

6 Sunday Week 14 2Cor 12:9
My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.

7 Monday Week 14 Gen 28:16
Truly, the Lord was in this place and I did not realise it.

8 Tues Week 14 Mat 9:38
The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.

9 Wed Week 14 Psalm 33:11
The designs of the Lord shall stand for ever, the plans of his heart from age to age.

10 Thursday Week 14 Mat 10:7
You received freely; give freely.

11 Frid Benedict Psalm 119:34
Train me, Lord, to observe your law, to keep it with my heart.

12 Sat Week 14 Psalm 105:4
Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.

13 Sunday Week 15 Eph 1:4
The Father chose us in Christ to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence.

14 Mon Week 15 Mat 10:39
If you find your life, you will lose it. If you lose it because of me, you will find it.

15 Tue Bonaventure Eph 3:16
May the Father strengthen you in your inner being through the power of his Spirit, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

16 Wed Week 15 Mat 11:27
No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

17 Thurs Week 15 Mat 11:30
My yoke sits easy, and my burden is light.

18 Friday Week 15 Isaiah 38:16
For you, Lord, my heart will live. You gave me back my spirit.

19 Sat Week 15 Mat 12:20
He will not break the crushed reed, nor put out the smouldering wick.

20 Sunday Week 16 Mark 6:30
Come away by yourself to some lonely place and rest for a while.

21 Mon Week 16 Psalm 95:7
If today you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

22 Tues Magdalen Psalm 63:1
● God, you are my God, my soul is thirsting for you.

23 Wed Week 16 Exodus 16:4
I am going to rain down bread for you from heaven.

24 Thurs Week 16 Daniel [Prayer of Azariah verse 32]
Blest are you, O God, who gaze into the depths.

25 Friday James Mat 4:22
They left their father and the boat immediately and followed Jesus.

26 Sat Joachm&Ann Mat 13:16
Happy are your eyes because they see.

27 Sunday Week 17 Eph 4:6
There is one God who is Father of all, who comes through all and who is in all.

28 Mon Week 17 Psalm 106:1
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.

29 Tues Martha Psalm 34:5
Don't be ashamed. Look to the Lord and be radiant.

30 Wed Week 17 John 15:15
I call you my friends, for I have made known to you all that the Father has told me.

31 Tue Ignat Loyola 1Cor 10:31
Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God.

Thoughts compiled by Father Michael Fallon, MSC.

'Reducing the number of those who eat at humanity's table'

AN OFFICIAL LOOK AT THE NEW AGE RELIGION

Annals asked IAN MACDONALD to review a timely analysis of New Age teachings and practice issued by two of the Sacred Congregations of the Catholic Church in Rome.



HERE should be more of this: succinct summation of key tendencies of our notably trendy times; in this case the tendency to use the term New Age as a giant dillybag for a wide-ranging assortment of religious and quasi-religious practices and aspirations, including gnoticism, theosophy, neo-druidism, witchcraft, shamanism, re-birthing, re-incarnation, channelling, feng-shui and transcendental meditation.

The work totals only 110 pages, including glossary, resources and notes, reflecting both the fact that anonymous writing can be incisive (as witness *The Economist*) and the Scots saying, 'Good gear goes in small bulk'.

Apropos Scots, it came as a surprise to this reviewer, who had always associated New Age with the 1960s musical *Hair* and its hit-song *The Age of Aquarius*, to learn from the notes that the term was already in use in 1900 in the title of *The New Age Magazine*, published by the Ancient Accepted Scottish Masonic Rite in the southern jurisdiction of the United States of America; thus it is a term from Dixiedom rather than Hippiedom.

It is a measure of the work's informed approach that this kind of information did not go into the main text. This is no tirade. It is a cool attempt to define the zone where New Age claims touch and challenge orthodox Christianity.

The business and workplace focus of New Ageism is wide. It ranges from Erhard Seminar Training (EST) in California to Spirit of Business retreats in Findhorn, Scotland. Worth noting that both places were

Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life: A Christian reflection on the 'New Age'

By the Councils for Culture and for Interreligious Dialogue

St Pauls Publications

PO Box 906 Strathfield NSW \$9.95

once the focus of heroic Christian missionary endeavour.

Of the business focus, the authors write: 'So it is clear that people involved do seek wisdom and equanimity for their own benefit. But how much do the activities in which they are involved enable them to work for the common good. Apart from the question of motivation, all these phenomena need to be judged by their fruits, and the question is

whether they promote *self or solidarity* not only with whales, trees or like-minded people, but with the whole of creation – including the whole of humanity.'

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

New Agers, following the astrological signs of the Zodiac, see the Age of Pisces giving way to the Age of Aquarius. The first, possibly through facile identification with the Christian fish symbol, is perceived as Christian, the second as humanistic. In one view, Jesus is merely another spiritual master who like Buddha, Moses and Mohammed has been penetrated by the cosmic Christ or christic energy. In another, the dawning New Age will be peopled with perfect androgynous beings, totally in command of the cosmic laws of nature, beings who have found the divine within themselves.

'In this scenario,' the authors point out, 'Christianity has to be eliminated and give way to a global religion and a new world order.'

The Benedictine focus on work as prayer helped to fructify the earth and demonstrated that care for the earth is integral to Christianity. Not surprisingly, therefore, the authors write: 'Care for the environment in

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— Editor, *Annals*

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general terms is a timely sign of a fresh concern for what God has given us, perhaps a necessary mark of Christian stewardship of creation but "deep ecology" is often based on pantheistic and occasionally ghostic principles.'

'Deep ecology' surely includes the notion of Gaia, the earth as a sentient mother, capable of self-healing wounds, such as man-made erosion, deforestation and pollution.

Neatly the authors tell the gospel story of Jesus talking at the well to the Samaritan woman to emphasise that He is also integral to the Age of Aquarius as the bearer of the water of eternal life.

Or as Pope John Paul II is quoted as telling a group of American bishops: 'Pastors must honestly ask whether they have paid sufficient attention to the thirst of the human heart for the true "living water" which only Christ our Redeemer can give.'

Throughout the work there is a cautionary note, and it is apt. New Agers may see their synthesising of beliefs as progressive. But arguably it is as regressive as more or less successful attempts in places as disparate as Haiti, Brazil and Africa to amalgamate various forms of magical and voodooistic indigenous practice with Christian elements.

Reference is made to the need to use the Church's own networks and its music. Here an eloquent passage on the appeal to New Agers of Plain Chant (little used since Vatican II), not to mention incense and bells, might have been in order. But as noted above, this is a cool (and tactful) work.

The authors conclude by citing a New Age comparison of traditional religions with cathedrals and New Ageism with a worldwide fair, a comparison, it might have been noted, that owes something to the fact that cathedrals were, and still are, central to many fairs.

'Christians,' they write, 'must issue forth from the cathedral, nourished by word and sacrament, to bring the Gospel into every aspect of everyday life — "Go! The Mass is ended!"

In this work, they have set an admirable example.



DIOCESE OF WANZHOU

(Formerly Wanxian)

'Three Gorges' Appeal

ANNALS has been asked by Dr Audrey Donnithorne in Hong Kong to thank in a special way all who helped contribute to the re-locating and re-building of Catholic churches and other parish infra-structure that will be inundated when the new Three Gorges Dam is finished. The dam reservoir will be 800 km long, and 1,000 sq.km surface area. Over 1 million people will be displaced, 800,000 of them in the Wanxian Prefecture.

The Appeal is now closed, as the building programme nears completion and the funds needed for the considerable work, are almost in hand.

Since the formidable task of relocating and rebuilding these six small Catholic communities along the Yangtse river commenced, the great Bishop of Wanxian Mathias Duan has died. He had ruled the diocese since 1949. His coadjutor, Bishop Joseph Xu has succeeded him.

Annals is proud to have been able to help in some small way, in supporting our fellow Catholics who live along the Yangtse river in China.



The late Bishop Duan and some of his parishoners outside the old Cathedral, soon to be covered by the waters of the dam.

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Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Gongping

'The sun's gonna shine in my back door one day'

JAZZ – THE DIVINE SPARK

Leonard Bernstein said that there was always a note of sadness in even the most uproarious Dixieland ensemble, and there was always a note of hope or even defiance in even the bitterest blues. RICHARD HUGHES, one of Australia's best loved Jazz musicians looks into the soul of Jazz.



IT WAS a menacing, copper-coloured sky in Melbourne at 6am on Monday, December 25, 1944. One thought uneasily of bushfires or a severe thunderstorm. Before I went to the seven o'clock Mass at St Mary's, East St Kilda, I had received as a Christmas present my very first jazz book, 'Jazzmen'. I confess that it distracted me during Mass, for I still had images in my mind of the photos I had seen in my first excited and exciting dip into this handsome Harcourt & Brace publication.

Of Buddy Bolden, for example, of whom I had read but whose whole being was so shrouded in myth as to make him literally fabulous. I had almost begun to wonder whether Bolden and such musicians as Freddie Keppard – like Bunk Johnson, also photographed – had actually existed. Bolden was the first jazz trumpeter and was followed by Johnson and Keppard and then by King Oliver and Louis Armstrong.

It was the photo of Armstrong on the dust cover that was one of the inspiring visual qualities of this book. There he was pointing his trumpet to the sky, in which shone a star.

This striking image reminded me of a scene from the film 'Syncopation', which was based very loosely on the early life in New Orleans of Louis Armstrong. The name of the trumpeter in the film was Rex and one night, watched by Connee Boswell, Rex points his instrument to the sky and says: 'I'm going to move that star.' And he plays some noble phrases, some celestial clarion call,

and for a split second the star did seem to move. Or so it had seemed to me when I saw 'Syncopation' in April 1943 – two weeks before Easter, three months before my 12th birthday – saw it with my classroom friend from Christian Brothers College, St Kilda (When The Saints Marching In), Barry Oakley, who was later to become literary editor of *The Australian*.



Truth stronger than anger

'HE [Sir James Mackintosh] could not hate,' said Sydney; 'he did not know how to set about it. The gall-bladder was omitted in his composition, and if he could have been persuaded into any scheme of revenging himself upon an enemy . . . it would have ended in proclaiming the good qualities and promoting the interests of his adversary. Truth had so much more power over him than anger, that (whatever might be the provocation) he could not misrepresent, nor exaggerate.'

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

It had been about this time in 1943, two years after I became interested in jazz, that I had come to realise that there was far more to this crazy, noble music than at first met the ear.

That front-cover photograph of Armstrong flashed back to me when I heard Bishop Fulton Sheen at the Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne in 1948.

The bishop delivered a transfixing denunciation of communism. Would I could remember the exact words of that superb oration! Concerning the destructiveness of communism, the message came through loud and clear. 'Can you build anything down?' Bishop Fulton Sheen began his peroration thus and proceeded along these lines. 'One can only build up – up beyond the planets and beyond the stars, beyond the very firmament, up beyond the vault of Heaven, ever upward and onward, and UP TO GOD.'

I often think of these stirring words when I hear the introduction Louis Armstrong plays on his 1928 record of West End Blues.

Simone Weil, the French religious thinker and mystic, believed that God inspires every 'first-rate work of art, though its subject may be utterly and entirely secular'.

West End Blues is one such 'first-rate work of art'.

So, too, I believe, is the piano solo by Albert Ammons, one of the great Chicago blues players, of Boogie Woogie Stomp. I forget the name of the critic who wrote that Beethoven would have admired this piano *tour de force*, but it was William Russell in 'Jazzmen' who wrote that 'chorus after chorus flows from his agile and tireless fingers ...

The secret is in the joyful flame which burns within Ammons'.

Anton Schindler, Beethoven's secretary, has told how his master (for some, THE master), said on his deathbed of Schubert's songs: 'Truly he has the divine spark.'

The 'divine spark' I detect in several jazz works, especially in those of the three supreme geniuses of jazz - Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and Duke Ellington.

Heaven forbid that this trifling piece should be deemed a pro-Catholic diatribe, but Louis Armstrong did tell me joyously of his audience with Pope Pius XII. Sidney Bechet's widow told me how that self-taught master of the soprano saxophone and clarinet would say the rosary every night (admittedly only after he had been told he had cancer) and Ellington told me with what seemed to be almost personal pride how one of his former trombonists, John Sanders, has been ordained a priest. (He's now Monsignor John Sanders and he was seen and heard on the Ken Burns jazz series on television last year).

Some of the most reverential music I have ever heard is Winin' Boy Blues, a piano solo and vocal by the New Orleans pioneer, Jelly Roll Morton. The record producer and the engineer had an anxious 30 seconds when Morton, after having sung affectingly and deeply movingly two choruses, seemed to go into a trance and - obviously inspired - began humming and murmuring the melody of this old New Orleans air. Should they let him continue or should they give him a nudge and point to the clock?

They needn't have worried. The old pro had his head above the clouds as he described the Olympian heights, but his feet were tapping on the floor and his hands were on the keyboard and, after an almost whispered aside, he sang and played the last four bars and finished on time to produce a masterpiece.

Head above the clouds, feet on the ground.

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music. The composer-conductor Leonard Bernstein said that there was always suggestion of sadness in even the most uproarious Dixieland ensemble and there was always a note of hope or even defiance in the bitterest blues.

(The sun's gonna shine in my back door one day' - just as the sun began to shine through the stained-glass windows of St Mary's, East St Kilda, during 7am Mass on Christmas Day, 1944, and the portents of storm and doom gave way to a bright, beautiful and glorious sunny day.)

Or, as Father G. V. Kennard, who was instructor in philosophy at Loyola University Los Angeles wrote:

'The expressiveness of jazz does not lie in its power to evoke emotion. Art does not reproduce the feelings; it gives them form ... Art does not put us at the mercy of our emotions; it produces an insight that enables us to look through them ... Jazz responds to a void in modern man ... In the jazz perspective, man is neither solitary hero nor tragic absurdity'.



RICHARD HUGHES is a journalist and jazz pianist who has a fortnightly radio program starting at 10pm on Sundays on 2MBS-FM (102.5 on the dial). The program - Speak Easy And Swing Hard - will on July 13 have the sub-title The Divine Spark and will consider Simone Weil's belief concerning the sacred provenance of 'fast-rate art' and will include all the records mentioned in this article.



The fly and the dog

I BELIEVE we can nowhere find a better type of a perfectly free creature than in the common house fly.

Not free only, but brave; and irreverent to a degree which I think no human republican could by any philosophy exalt himself to.

There is no courtesy in him; he does not care whether it is king or clown whom he teases; and in every step of his swift mechanical march, and in every pause of his resolute observation, there is one and the same expression of perfect egotism, perfect independence and self-confidence, and conviction of the world's having been made for flies. Strike at him with your hand; and to him, the mechanical fact and external aspect of the matter is, what to you it would be, if an acre of red clay, ten feet thick, tore itself up from the ground in one massive field, hovered over you in the air for a second, and came crashing down with an aim.

That is the external aspect of it; the inner aspect, to his fly's mind, is of a quite natural and unimportant occurrence – one of the momentary conditions of his active life.

He steps out of the way of your hand, and alights on the back of it.

You cannot terrify him, nor govern him, nor persuade him, nor convince him.

He has his own positive opinion on all matters; not an unwise one, usually, for his own ends; and will ask no advice of yours. He has no work to do – no tyrannical instinct to obey. The earthworm has his digging; the bee her gathering and building; the spider her cunning network; the ant her treasury and accounts.

All these are comparatively slaves, or people of vulgar business. But your fly, free in the air, free in the chamber – a black incarnation of caprice – wandering, investigating,

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flitting, flirting, feasting at his will, with rich variety of choice in feast, from the heaped sweets in the grocer's window to those of the butcher's backyard, and from the galled place on your cab horse's back, to the brown spot in the road, from which, as the hoof disturbs him, he rises with angry republican buzz – what freedom is like his?

For captivity, again, perhaps your poor watchdog is as sorrowful a type as you will easily find. Mine certainly is. The day is lovely, but I must write this, and cannot go out with him. He is chained in the yard, because I do not like dogs in rooms, and the gardener does not like dogs in gardens.

He has no books – nothing but his own weary thoughts for company, and a group of those free flies whom he snaps at, with sudden ill success. Such dim hope as he may have that I may yet take him out with me, will be, hour by hour, wearily disappointed; or, worse, darkened at once into a leaden despair by an authoritative 'No' – too well understood.

His fidelity only seals his fate; if he would not watch for me, he would be sent away, and go hunting with some happier master: but he watches, and is wise, and faithful, and miserable; and his high animal intellect only gives him the wistful powers of wonder, and sorrow, and desire, and affection, which embitter his captivity. Yet of the two, would we rather be watchdog or fly?

Indeed, the first point we have all to determine is not how free we are, but what kind of creatures we are. It is of small importance to any of us whether we get liberty; but of the greatest that we deserve it. Whether we can win it, fate must determine; but that we will be worthy of it, we may ourselves determine; and the sorrowfullest fate, of all that we can suffer, is to have it *without* deserving it.

– John Ruskin, 1819–1909, *The Queen of the Air*, 1869, III, 148–150.

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Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt

THE RELIGION OF WESTERN GUILT

R.J. STOVE



WHILST the observation is hardly original, it still deserves emphasising: America's finest, most courageous university presses are the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries' nearest equivalent to those mediaeval monks who kept civilised scholarship's lamp burning while, outside the cloisters, Goths and Huns rampaged. Such presses have placed all of us who care for the life of the mind into an intellectual and moral debt that we have no chances of repaying. As a good example of what they can achieve – not just in terms of disseminating sharp and astute prose, but in conveying it via fine, clear, typo-free print on satisfyingly opaque paper – we need only examine *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt*. This quietly and learnedly devastating appraisal of Political Correctness in all its forms has been undertaken by a professor from the Department of Political Science at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania.

The author's subtitle carries even more weight than does his title: for Political Correctness is indeed a religion in its own right, albeit an awe-inspiringly twisted and intellectually worthless one. This blindingly obvious truth has yet to be perceived by most Australians, whose knowledge of religion in general is even more embarrassing than their practice of it. But for Professor Gottfried, who has publicly called himself 'a Jewish agnostic', it constitutes the foundation of his entire analysis. The sainthood ascribed to Martin Luther King, and the crucifixion imagery in which America's New Class couched its descriptions of Matthew Shepherd – a Wyoming homosexual

Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: toward a secular theocracy
by Paul Edward Gottfried
Columbus, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2002, 200 pp and index.

murdered in 1999 – demonstrate in themselves Professor Gottfried's point (pp. 58-59). To quote his own trenchant words (p. 15):

'Neither social engineering as a political project nor the victim-therapy practised and exported by the American political class would be enjoying its present status without a deformed Protestant culture. The stress on

individual salvation, unmediated by ecclesiastical authorities, prepared the way for a late modern society, without strong communal ties or respect for a collective past.'

Professor Gottfried furnishes especially instructive statistics on a topic much discussed in the United States but much underestimated elsewhere: the collapse, over the last half-century, of America's mainline Protestant denominations. Of these, only Lutheranism has survived more or less adequately, helped along by geographical concentration (the Midwest) and ethnic particularism (today's active Lutherans tend to have nineteenth-century German and Scandinavian immigrants as ancestors). The others, proverbially powerful as recently as the Nixon era, have since suffered such severe haemorrhages that they amount to little more than a joke. Nowadays the novels of John Cheever, John Updike, James Gould Cozzens and other such chroniclers of upper-class WASP *Angst* read like period pieces, much farther from contemporary Americans' concerns than anything in Boccaccio or Rabelais.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodists all lost up to a third of their immediately post-war membership (pp. 39-40). Conversely, Pentecostal churches and other fundamentalist types of Protestantism appear permanently huge – America now has sixteen million Christians who identify themselves as Southern Baptists – and are without doubt impressively young: their congregations are almost all under fifty. Professor Gottfried, content to note this phenomenon, makes no comment on whether or not he considers it desirable.



WORKING as a writer in the country might be thought a protected existence. In fact, it is the opposite. The cruelties and idiocies of the world are neither held-off by virtue of some kind of impregnable natural innocence, nor do the immutable processes of the agricultural year create a fatalism which stops one from thinking. But the myth remains and is nourished *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, Agricolas! Quibus ipsa prouul discoribus armis, wrote Virgil.* (How blest beyond all blessings, are farmers, if they but knew their happiness! Far from the dash of arms!) That probably began it, paired as it was by generations of small boys.

The clash of arms and clashing of all kinds are now, of course, delivered to remote fields with the unmost promptitude and efficiency. They can be heard with a clarity often unknown to cities, due, maybe to the listening silence of such an environment.

– *The Listener*, Dec 24, 1970.

Historian Philip Jenkins – whom Professor Gottfried rightly respects, and lavishly quotes – has maintained, in his recent investigation *The Next Christianity*, that this development is all to the good. Let a hundred Pentecostal flowers bloom (argues Professor Jenkins), and they will simply crowd out the whining feminists, crypto-atheists, and sodomites who now rule Western ecclesial bureaucracies. Those of us who lack Professor Jenkins' natural generosity of soul may continue to differ. There remains little indication that fundamentalist Protestant doctrine has shed its vociferating anti-intellectualism; or that it has arrived at any philosophy of government more nuanced than good old-fashioned sixteenth-century German peasant wars; or even that its spectacular recent surges of popularity (above all in Africa and South America) amount to much more than a plutocratic status-symbol, the notionally theological equivalent of owning Nike shoes or Jennifer Lopez CDs.

How much is Political Correctness really a type of 'Protestant deformation'? The inroads it has made among American Catholics are, as Professor Gottfried's evidence shows, alarming; but they do not much affect his basic thesis either way. After all, every basic tenet of mainstream Catholic administration in America – flag-waving hubris; sovereignty of the people; limitless social *arrivisme*; above all, the shunning of contemplative orders in favour of ill-disguised Muscular Christianity – was condemned as heretical by Pope Leo XIII as long ago as 1899. Professor Gottfried points out that wherever two or three leftists are gathered in America, Catholics have traditionally been in the midst of them. He drives home the enlightening contrast between their outlook and that of their co-religionists in pre-modern Québec, which for fifteen of the twenty years from 1939 to 1959 was a parliamentary theocracy under Premier Maurice Duplessis. Among the Québécois, divorce as well as contraception remained illegal; publicly sanctioned abortion, naturally, remained unthinkable; while –



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for all the alcoholic and sexual vagaries that marked Duplessis' private life – censorship of books, magazines and films remained draconian. (If such rigour left Québec's intellectual activity crippled beyond rescue, Professor Gottfried supplies no evidence of such damage.)

But this tome's insights range well beyond the Western hemisphere. Scrutinising Europe, Professor Gottfried finds overall confirmation for his argument: the loudest protests in favour of religious schools' right to keep crucifixes on display – a right that even Hitler had once conceded – came from German Catholics, while all conceivable forms and most hitherto inconceivable forms of ethical chaos have been endorsed in the last decade by leather-lunged German Protestant officials. Today (this assertion is so astounding that one must read the relevant sentence again and again before believing it, but Professor Gottfried affords no reason for scepticism) more Germans are rotting in prison for 'hate crimes' than were ever gaoled for anti-Communist endeavours by East Germany's 1980s Stalinists (p. 44). Against such 'hate crime' witch-hunts, Mediterranean Europe, however degraded in other cultural respects, has thus far largely held out.

An essential technique of those witch-hunts, wherever they occur, is the medicalisation of political

dissent. You need never confront, let alone refute, a single argument if you can demonise the arguer as 'homophobic', or 'sexist', or best of all – why not, since it worked for Andropov's KGB? – mentally disturbed (p. 95). Professor Gottfried rightly stresses the indispensable role played in this form of intellectual corruption by the Frankfurt philosophical school, principally renowned through what could well be the most pernicious book published anywhere in modern times: T. W. Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). This *olla podrida* of whimsy, parochialism, Marxist sermonising, and energetic fraud makes Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* seem like the last word in nuclear physics, but generations of political 'scientists' – not all of them Soviet stooges – managed to take it seriously. (The Adorno-Horkheimer laboratory's cutting-edge research techniques included a delightful *bizarrie* called the F-Scale, F signifying 'Fascist'.) Far from having confined such drivel to academe, the comedians responsible for *The Authoritarian Personality* wrapped their ravings – fortunately for their bank balances – within the language of democracy and human rights: language which, of course, in the American context can never fail.

Nor did trivia like the Berlin Wall's collapse deter for more than a passing moment Adorno's and Horkheimer's successors, who spouted similar universalist shibboleths even as they junked the Frankfurt gurus' Marxist baggage. Francis Fukuyama, that *reductio ad absurdum* of the one-world government brigade – a *reductio* as loftily indifferent as ever to whether one-world government's nerve centre is atheist Moscow or atheist Manhattan – has boldly gone where no secular utopian has gone before. In a 1999 article cited with understandable distaste by Professor Gottfried (whose German-Jewish father escaped only by good luck from the Nazis' extermination-machine), Fukuyama dismissed the entire bloodbath of twentieth-century warfare as perhaps 'the price paid for a situation in which forty

per cent of the world's population live in politics that can reasonably be labelled democratic' (p. 77). Shades of Screwtape's advice to junior devils: 'Democracy is the word with which you must lead them by the nose.'

Professor Gottfried's pessimism as to whether campaigns against 'the politics of guilt' can achieve more than the most trifling and transient victories takes particularly eloquent form when he discusses the moral cowardice by which America's establishment Right – let us pray he never has to endure Australia's – eulogises black supremacism for fear of being called 'bigoted'. 'Not even quotas and affirmative action in education', he writes (pp. 116-117), '... have aroused a national opposition as noticeable as what is counterpoised on the other side.'

If the tiniest glimmer of hope is nevertheless admissible in such circumstances, it probably depends upon two factors of which Professor Gottfried says nothing. First, the collapse – unmistakable to every American outside New York City, and fairly obvious to most of the citizenry even there – of Freudianism: which by its unstoppably blazing hatred of Christendom supplied much of Political Correctness' rocket-fuel, as it were, within the American empire. Secondly, generational change. Cannot the malice of a Clinton and a Blair (to say nothing of these villains' abject apologists in the English-speaking world, many of whom now insolently call themselves 'conservatives') be attributed to the typical baby-boomer's craving for one last exercise in global destruction before shades of the nursing-home begin to close on him? It is surely notable – although in itself it fails to prove anything – that the most cordial loathers of the Clinton-Blair mindset are overwhelmingly in their twenties and thirties. From this age group has come, according to opinion poll after opinion poll, the firmest support for John Howard's tough stand against illegal immigrants. From this age group has come the most conspicuous fervour, not merely for the abovementioned Southern Baptism, but – both in Australia and abroad –



Are the facts 'wrong'?

'VERIFICATION by experiment' can never yield absolute certainty, and when it comes to controversial issues the data can usually be interpreted in more than one way. The history of medicine is full of obvious and distressing examples of this. In physics and chemistry too, the best we can do by so-called 'crucial experiments' is to confirm a prediction – but not the theory on which the prediction is based (see below, pp 272-9); and scientific controversies about the interpretation of experimental results have been just as passionate and subjective as controversies between theologians or art critics. If a hunch is drastically contradicted by experiment, it will of course be abandoned. But, by and large, scientists are inclined to trust their intuitions; and if confronted with experiments which give ambiguous or divergent results, either to declare – as Einstein once did – that 'the facts are wrong'; or – as Hobbes did – that 'the instance is so particular and singular, that 'tis scarce worth our observing'; or to resort to the standard phrase that the unfavourable experimental result is due 'to unknown sources of error' – hoping that some day, somehow, it will all work out. Modern theoretical physics lives to a large extent on that hope. Thus verifiability is a matter of degrees, and neither the artist, nor the scientist who tries to break new ground, can hope ever to achieve absolute certainty.

– Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, London, Pan Books, 1964, p. 215.

for traditional Catholicism. Straws in the wind? Perhaps no more than that; but all straws of one provenance, all indicating wind from one direction, and all capable (if their travel keeps up) of inducing profound fear in secular theologians.

By now there should be no doubt about Professor Gottfried's expertise, breadth of reading, courtesy towards antagonists as well as towards allies, and diagnostic skill. Before the Internet's advent, tributes to his accomplishments would have been largely meaningless in an antipodean

magazine, so forlorn were all aspirations for obtaining any books that lacked a British or Australian distributor. These days, when owning a modem and pressing a few buttons makes available all the stocks of Amazon or Barnes & Noble (to say nothing of less celebrated American booksellers), there need be no excuse for doing without Professor Gottfried's terse yet dense production. It is not cheap, but it represents very good value for money.



R.J. STOVE is a well-known contributor to Australian literary and political journals.

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MEDIA MATTERS

By James Murray

Showbiz Cheek

The recent three-part BBC/ABC series *Hollywood* was notable for at least trying to lift a corner of the long, long red carpet under which the American film business hides its secrets. And it did inspire a thought on the incongruity of the judgemental ascendancy of this suburban Babylon which has more shonks, money launderers, budget benders, book cooks and con artists per block than Chicago ever had.

Paul Johnson's book, *Intellectuals*, drew attention to the incongruous discrepancy between the private behaviour of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Jean-Paul Sartre *et al*, and the ideals they preached in their various tracts.

Perhaps it is time for a similar critique on movie industry apparatchiks who from their peculiar milieu can judge business, politics and churches so harshly. One difficulty is that hypocrisy is now seen solely as defect of the religious. Those who live without morality can scarcely practise hypocrisy at least as defined by Oscar Wilde: the tribute vice pays to virtue.

Howard's Humpty

In the March 2002 issue, your correspondent compared the Governor-General, Peter Hollingworth with Cardinal Wołsey and quoted the nursery rhyme that defines Wołsey's fate: Humpty Dumpty.

So it has proved. All the king's horses and all the king's men, or more exactly all the high-priced spin doctors, couldn't put Peter Hollingworth together again. As for the architect of the folly John Howard, he can still rebuild reform from the ruins if he can put aside mulishness (that is, stupidity cum stubbornness), submit to the weight of public opinion and forego the prerogative that the Governor-Generalship is in the sole gift of the Prime Minister.

It is a prerogative of convention, as is the prime ministership, not of the constitution, and it led to an appointment that should neither have been offered nor accepted.

The Labor Opposition joins the reform push, remembering that it was Gough Whitlam's

exercise of the prerogative in John Kerr that made 1975 the *annus horribilis* of the party's history from which manifold ills still flow.

Tough Treatment

That said, not all the hard rain that fell on Peter Hollingworth was justified. The rape allegation made against him by the unfortunate Annie Jarmyn (and her no-win, no-fee lawyers) was investigated by journos, could not be stood up and accordingly was not published. When lawyer-intellectual MP, Lindsay Tanner, abused parliamentary privilege to re-open the can of worms, it would have been refreshing if one media outlet had cried: 'Enough already. The worms haven't got a wriggle in them.'

Instead, the pack was off and running, sniffing out rumours, seeking quotes, being checked on quote refusals. Not that there were many refusals. The most exemplary came from Australian Defence Chief, General Peter Cosgrove. Others were less discreet, clearly under the impression that eminence, like noblesse, obliges. Not so. The pack needs only enough quotes to build a story, and will even share them. Great fun pack-hunting. Your correspondent has done some. But not always great journalism.

Out with Spinners

Apropos spin-doctors. Clerics should eschew them, and the higher priced they are the stricter should be the eschewment. Much better to give the money to the poor, or send a refreshing pot of tea or stoup of ale to doorstepping hacks.

Spin-doctors may work efficiently for the three great Bs: bankers, brokers and businessmen, they do not work well for those whose life is dedicated to the truth, for spin-doctors play both ends against the middle, that is, while representing a client they also seek to build themselves and their expertise to the media. Not always successfully. Many hacks despise and envy spin-doctors and will do them (and their clients) down whenever and however they can.

The above is inspired by reports that Peter Hollingworth paid someone called Andrew

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Reynolds \$750 a day (ex-GST) for PR services rendered. If true, it will be said of Peter Hollingworth, he spun himself out. He will surely recover, however, wiser and more empathic, possibly with the Brotherhood of St Lawrence where his work for the poor deservedly made his reputation.

Stout Notion

Nothing is more neuralgic than the collapse of a stout notion. Your correspondent experienced the pain on reading that women journalists were not paid the same rates for equal work as their male colleagues. All his working life, he has been under the impression they were, and has accordingly allowed them to buy him drinks.

But the source was cast-iron: a Sally Jackson piece in *Media* (*The Australian*, May 22) Analysis of census data constituted the evidence. And Jackson sought further confirmation.

At Castle Murdoch, chief editorial executive John Hartigan, usually a model of succinctness, went to waffle. At Castle Fairfax, editor-in-chief Mark Scott didn't really address the question, possibly because he's still on L-plates. Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance federal secretary Chris Warren did a nice line in sociological philosophising.

No comment was recorded from Castle Packer. Pity. It might have done something to restore the notion. Kerry Packer, despite his fearsome reputation, is a generous employer and has a higher ratio of women to men on his staffs.

Surely Hartigan, Scott and Warren should have been able to reach for their computers and pull up a spreadsheet showing the whogets-what of the matter? For media entities that have editorialised so eloquently (and critically against others) on women's rights to be derelict on equal pay lies somewhere between Hypocrisy Hill and Humbug Hollow.

ABC of Tirade

Minister for Communications Senator Richard Alston seems to have had second (and better) thoughts about his tirade against the ABC's 'anti-American' coverage of Gulf War II.

His initial quote list was intriguing. Yes, there were tendentious quotes, even quotes that could be described as lefty, an epithet now largely meaningless. But war by its nature is a breaking story; reporters under deadline do not always have the luxury of second thoughts.

It is doubtful also that the American allies

would see the list as evidence of vicious anti-Americanism, for they know that even by the odd standards of war-making, this one was bizarre: pre-emptive in pursuit of shifting objectives - seizing weapons of mass destruction and/or regime change and/or interdicting fundamentalist-Islamic, global terrorism.

The dominant power of the United States lies in the paradox that not to be anti-American when necessary is un-American; no polity has made more of a civic virtue of self-criticism. Australia, by contrast, is not deeply into such criticism, hence a sensitivity about America more sedulous than America's own. Contemporary Americans have lurid terms for this kind of reaction; their founding fathers might have labelled it sycophantic.

More intriguing than the quote-list content was its provenance. It bore the prints of the kind of hack, or hacks, who take the higher wages available to government apparatchiki (*Liberal, Labor, et al*) as a career move that can see them returning to mainstream media including the ABC in enhanced roles.

It these apparatchiki who, carp-like, muddy the streams of truth, not the ABC's working journalists, even those whose worldview would be better described as agin' the government, contrarian or dopey than lefty.

In singling out the ABC's head of news and current affairs, Max Uechtritz, for reportedly calling the US military, 'lying bastards', Alston demonstrated a naivete ill-suited to a politician of his status. Uechtritz, to use an Americanism, is a straight arrow. And, of course, the US military lie. So do other military. If they did not, many historians would be workless; military history is in large measure the correction of lies, once deemed tactically or strategically necessary.

If Alston's tirade was triggered by the ABC decision to cut its children's digital TV output, he has strong mitigation. The decision is bean-counting as self-destruction. The digital output was the means by which the corporation could have ensured the support of a new generation just as the long-running *Argonauts* radio programme begot a generation, some of whom remain the ABC's oldest and boldest supporters.

Sharp Practice

Many journalists know Janet Malcolm's scalpel of a book, *The Journalist and the Murderer*. More people in public life, businessmen, clerics and politicians, should read it. Its key is in its intro paragraph: 'Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows



that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or lonelines, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse . . .'

Malcolm was writing about the American author Joe McGinniss whose *The Selling of the President*, 1968 put him into stellar orbit. He sought to repeat the trick through a deal with Jeffrey MacDonald, a Special Forces medico accused of killing his wife and two daughters. MacDonald spoke freely, believing McGinniss thought he was innocent. McGinniss came to believe he was not, and said so in his book, a view shared by a jury. MacDonald then sued McGinniss from jail and won substantial damages from another jury.

This may seem far from local hackdom. But there is another quote-worthy passage in Malcolm's book: 'The journalistic encounter seems to have the same regressive effect as the psychoanalytic encounter. The subject becomes a kind of child of the writer, regarding him as a permissive, all-accepting, all-forgiving mother, and expecting that the book will be written by her. Of course, the book is written by the strict, all-noticing, unforgiving father.'

Maxine McKew is no unforgiving father but she is certainly strict and all-noticing, a Madame Defarge knitting brilliant wordage for *The Bulletin* as the guillotine falls on another of her erstwhile luncheon companions. Kim Beazley was the latest to see himself as a kind of child of the writer when he indulged his daydreams of returning to the Labor leadership. Before him was Mark Latham and before him John Della Bosca.

The fact that so far her big scalps have all been Laborites raises the suspicion that the Malcom effect was reinforced by belief that McKew was onside through her partner, Labor ex-chieftain Bob Hogg.

An unworthy suspicion. Maxine McKew is the country's best print-television interviewer. Why she has not been Bulletin-Nine Network packaged to anchor the *Sunday* programme is another Castle Packer mystery.

Erse Lesson

Out of Ireland, a lesson for Australia's International Counter-Terrorism Co-ordination Group, headed by first anti-terrorism ambassador Nick Warner, and for the new National Security Division within the Prime Minister's Department, involving 15 federal agencies plus state units. The lesson: dangers inherent in turf wars between anti-terrorism agencies.

As noted in last month's issue, London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir John Stevens found that British police and army officers (members of the covert Force Research Unit) in Northern Ireland conspired with loyalist paramilitaries in the summary execution of suspected IRA members (and even non-members) during the 1980s and 1990s. Criminal charges have been recommended against 23 serving or former police and army officers.

The context was inter-agency rivalry. The Force Research Unit, MI5, MI6, Military Intelligence, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and covert operators from the British Special Air Service Regiment had their own game plans which did not always include civil liberties. Thus, despite ostensible control by political masters in organisations ranging from No 10 to the Defence Ministry, and constant media scrutiny, too many spooks made a lethal stew.

Such malign outcomes are, of course, linked to the length and intensity of any anti-terrorist campaign. The campaign against fundamentalist-Islamic terrorism is relatively in its early stages. But it is likely to last for a long time. All the more reason for precautionary measures to be taken sooner rather than later.

Worth noting also: reduction of established civil liberties as part of anti-terrorist strategy is a victory for terrorists whose activities are focused on cutting civil liberties or altering their nature.

Hark the Lark

For its 40th anniversary dinner, the Australian Society of Authors contrived a rare jape: inviting Tom Keneally to address it but omitting any of his works from its list of 40 best Australian books. To be precise 500 of 3000 members who voted omitted Keneally while giving places to five Patrick White works. Talk about gluttons for verbiage. Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* led the field and we won't quarrel with that, though history may. But any list that omits Tom Keneally's *Bring Larks and Heroes* isn't a list, it's a desist-you-dills.

Keneally's address was on the need to preserve local literature against what might be called globalit. Irony here: some of his finest works including *Schindler's Ark* could be defined as globalit. Indeed it may be that his international success told against him with his (nominal) peers.

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Bare Geniuses

IF an appointment as Governor-General often carries in itself the seeds of corruption even for men who possess outstanding mental and moral capacities, what is to be expected from persons who start their term of office handicapped by many shortcomings? And assuming for a moment that the King is always correctly informed when he appends his exalted name to the deed in which he professes to be convinced of the 'loyalty, zeal and ability' of his appointed Lieutenant; and assuming that the new Viceroy is loyal, zealous and able ... the question still remains whether that zeal, and more especially that *ability*, are present in him to a *degree* sufficiently raised above *mediocrity* to meet the requirements of his high calling.

For the question cannot be whether the man who leaves the King's council chamber in The Hague as a newly-made Governor-General *then* possesses the ability which will be necessary for his new office ... that is *impossible!* The expression of confidence in his ability can only amount to the opinion that at a given moment, in an entirely new sphere of activity he will know, as it were by inspiration, what he cannot have learnt in The Hague. In other words: that he is a genius, a genius who must all at once know and be able to do what he did not know and could not do before. Such geniuses are rare, even among persons who enjoy the favour of kings.

As I am speaking of geniuses, it will be realised that I wish to pass over what might be said about a great many Governors-General. Also, I should be loth to introduce into my book pages which would jeopardise its serious purpose by exposing it to the suspicion of scandalmongering. I shall therefore not give particulars that would refer to specific persons; but I think I can give the following diagnosis of the condition of Governors-General in *general*. *First stage*. Giddiness. Intoxication with incense. Conceit. Immoderate self-confidence. Disdain for others, especially 'old Indies hands'. *Second stage*. Exhaustion. Fear. Dejection. Craving for sleep and rest. Excessive confidence in the Council of the Indies. Homesickness for a country house in Holland.

In between these two stages - perhaps even as the cause of the transition - there are attacks of dysentery.

- Max Havelaar, or the Coffee Auctions of a Dutch Trading Company, by Multatuli, pen-name of Eduard Douwes Dekker. First published 1860.

Shonky work, Crumbling Stone and Worthless Buildings

BUILDING PROBLEMS IN BITHYNIA

By PAUL STENHOUSE



OME people, looking back on the past find themselves rather like François Jacob, the famous French Nobel Prize-winning scientist who was born in 1920.

When he searched his memory he found it difficult to recognize himself as a youth, and compared himself looking back on his early years, to a bird 'contemplating the shell he has just broken out of, saying, "Me? In there? Never!"'.¹

If that is the experience of people who look back over such a relatively short space of time, one can sympathise with those whose school curriculum never included ancient history. How are such as they to cope with someone born not in 1920, like François Jacob, but in 61/62 AD like Caius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, [known as Pliny the Younger]?

It humbles us to realise that Ezechiel, the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes who wrote in Hebrew, in the third century before Christ, knew as we sometimes forget, that 'there is nothing new under the sun'.²

Pliny was called 'the Younger', because his uncle and adopted father was the famous natural historian Caius Plinius Secundus [the Elder] who died from the effect of gasses emitted by the eruption of Vesuvius in August 79 AD.

As he is more than likely an ancestor of some of our readers, just as many of his contemporaries would be, it more than repays our trouble to look at some of the issues he faced as Imperial Legate in Bithynia from 111 AD and how he dealt with them.

Most of them are still issues that many of us have to face today and it may help to see how our remote relatives coped.

Take Nicaea for instance. This bigish town in what is now Northern Turkey, was evidently in

the middle of a building boom. A new theatre was almost finished, basilicas and colonnades had been planned and the money promised, but not much had been done, a gymnasium had been burnt down and was in the process of being rebuilt, and if that weren't enough of a headache for the Legate, nearby, the people of Claudiopolis were busily excavating Baths in a depression at the foot of a mountain.

A shadow lay over all these works, and poor Pliny who was an amiable Legate, needed advice from

the Emperor. Unlike the director of *The Gladiator* he had to do more than call in computer programmers who would create the illusion of a theatre. He was battling an illusion, and feared that 'in our anxiety to save what had already been spent, we would be throwing good money after bad' – *ne, dum servare volumus quod impensum est, male impendamus quod addendum est.*³

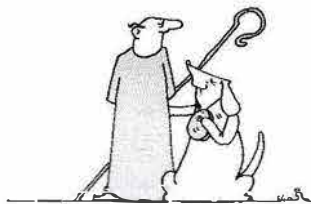
The problem was one all too familiar to State and Federal treasurers in our own day: even though the accounts hadn't yet been audited [*neque enim ratio operis excussa est*] he feared that the cost of the theatre would exceed ten million sesterces – and all for nothing [*vereor ne frustra*].

His fears were better founded than the theatre itself: 'immense cracks had appeared' [*ingentibus enim rimis desedit et hiat*] either because of the 'soft and moist earth' [*solum umidum et molle*] or because 'the stone was crumbling' [*sive lapis ipse gracilis et putris*]. As for the buresses and foundations, Pliny found them 'expensive and worthless' [*non tam firmae mihi quam sumptuosae videntur*].

Monies had been 'pledged from local people' [*ex privatorum pollicitationibus*] towards the cost of the basilicas [quadrangular buildings with 2, 3 or 5 aisles] that formed part of the 'theatre' but so far nothing was forthcoming.

Not keeping such promises must have been common in Pliny's time, for one of the laws passed by Trajan obliged either the person who promised the money, or his heirs, to cough up the money; or else.⁴

The Gymnasium that had been burnt down was being rebuilt 'roomier and more spacious' [*numerousius laxiusque*]. According to Pliny the work was poorly planned [*inconpositum*] and the money that had been granted 'would in all likelihood be wasted' [*periculum est ne parum utiliter*].



Faithful friend

AT the beginning of the last century a very interesting little record of the early years of the Basilica was brought to light in the shape of a bronze tablet pierced through on either side, and with an inscription engraved on it. De Rossi believes that this little tablet was hung round the neck of a watch-dog which belonged to the Basilica, and which was in charge of a shepherd called Felicissimus. The inscription runs, 'Ad basilicam Apostoli Pauli et DDD NNN (i.e. tritum dominorum nostrorum) Felicissimi Pecor(arii)' – '(I belong) to the Basilica of St Paul the Apostle, rebuilt by our three sovereigns: I am in charge of Felicissimus the shepherd'; so we may construe the sentence. Such inscriptions were often engraved on the collars of dogs and of slaves in order that their ownership might be known.

– Herbert Thurston, *The Holy Year of Jubilee*, 1900. The 'three sovereigns' refers to Valentinian II, Theodosius and Arcadius, in 368 A.D. The inscription is fourth century.



Subduing Ireland

To subdue Ireland in a context of war with Spain and of the growing pressures of both the Counter-Reformation and Protestant nationalism could only be done reliably by Protestants. Though in the past the crown had always largely relied upon the presence of the Old English to see its policies through, their religion now made them inherently unreliable. Why did they not follow the new religion of the English? The fact that they did not might be thought to suggest how qualified their Englishness had become, and yet one can as well ask the same question of Lancashire or of Richmondshire, Swaledale and Nidderdale in Yorkshire, areas which still had what may well have been a Catholic majority in the 1590s. Only enormous government pressure could push Protestantism forward in such places. English Catholics, whether in England or in Ireland, went on refusing to see national loyalty in religious terms. The religious effectiveness of the Counter-Reformation now appears far greater than that of the Reformers in places where ordinary people remained attached to their traditional beliefs and practices. In English Ireland local government remained too much in the control of Catholics, parliament included, for the sort of squeezing of recusants which was just possible in Lancashire to work. Moreover for Counter-Reformation priests trained on the continent, the Old English in their towns were an easier primary target than the pure Irish. They were in consequence coming to represent a genuinely Counter-Reformation form of Christianity.

- Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.



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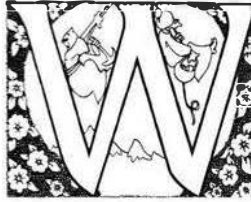
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'Shade is [the Director's] thing, the darker the better'

THE MAGDALENE SISTERS

Reviewed by JAMES MURRAY



WRITER /
DIRECTOR
Peter
Mullan's
movie won
the Golden
Lion Award

at last year's Venice Film Festival. Result 1: a pro and contra furore inside and outside the Church. Result 2: reviewers, in the spirit of man bites dog or possibly flea bites trainer, focused on the furore rather than the quality of the movie.

The Magdalene Asylums were established in the Victorian era of practical charity to care for women in trouble and distress. And this is a scarifying take on them. But the take is narrow. Mullan sets it in Ireland in 1964, and frames it as if it were a documentary while maintaining it is fiction. He also gives himself, Hitchcock-style, a bit part as a harsh, drunken father. Unlike Hitchcock, he is no master of light and shade. Shade is his thing, the darker the better. And he does not use a nutcracker when a sledge-hammer is available.

Thus as a break from the asylum's laundry work, the superior, Sister Brigid (Geraldine McEwan), organises a movie show, and the movie is (wait for it) *The Bells of St Mary's*.

Mullan intercuts its close-ups of Ingrid Bergman as a weeping, beatific nun with close-ups of Sister Brigid weeping also. Hypocritical tears? Or tears of regret that she didn't become a star who bolted from her husband for a wee, married Italian director called Rossellini who inflicted on her his worst movie, *Stromboli*?

Certainly Sister Brigid is not beatific. As McEwan plays her, teetering on a high, fine line between caricature and Oscar-worthy histrionics, she is a harridan, driven by, well, the root of all evil: the love of money which, despite its

loss of purchasing power, still drives so many.

She does not appear, however, to want to spend the money on herself nor on furthering the work of her order (Mullan inserts a jokey reference to the care of African lepers). She counts banknotes, puts them in biscuit tins and seals them, a scene inadvertently reminiscent of a movie-maker closing lucrative cans of film with gaff tape.

Sister Brigid dominates. Ranged against her are three young women Margaret (Anne Marie Duff), victim of a wedding-party rape, and

consigned to the asylum to hide the family shame: Rose (Dorothy Duffy), whose illegitimate child has been taken from her, and Bernadette (Nora-Jane Noone), an orphan, deemed too flirtatious.

Their performances are impeccable. Duff has the advantage of the film's powerful opening scene: the wedding party with guests listening to a priest, rapt in a folk-song. Mullan does spare the bardic priest intercuts with Bing Crosby as Father O'Malley singing *The Bells of St Mary's* theme song.

He spares him little else, making him sweaty and shifty in response to the rape, and Margaret's driver on her trip to the asylum Another priest pushes the adoption of Rose's infant. A third priest, introduced filming a sunlit sports day, turns out to be a dark, sexual predator whose victim Crispina (Eileen Walsh) is another unmarried mother and simple with it. Margaret organises his naked comeuppance during a Corpus Christi ceremony.

Strong, tabloid stuff, redolent of that most facile of condescensions – condescension of the present to the past. Or perhaps it is love-hate, deriving from Mullan's own background: Glasgow-born, baptised and bred, of Irish Catholic parents.

In response to criticism, he has been quoted as saying that he is not a great enough artist to make it all up. No need. The hard facts had already been revealed definitively in Dr Frances Finnegan's book, *Do Penance or Perish*. This inspired a Channel 4 TV documentary, *Sex in a Cold Climate* and a BBC TV film, *Sisters*.

Inevitably Mullan's take, because of its narrowness, and what Yeats called passionate intensity, lacks historical, psychological and social context. He does not clarify the origins of the asylums in 19th century Britain. Nor were all of them controlled by nuns.



Seen but not heard

IDON'T think you can learn to be a good conversationalist. Of course, the reason why nobody talks in England is because children are taught manners instead of conversation. The French talk beautifully on all sorts of subjects, but the English are shushed from the age of about two, and told to shut up and not be silly, and not talk out of turn, and, although their conversation is always far more interesting than the schoolmasters who are teaching them, they're not encouraged to talk back to the schoolmaster, and some schoolmasters don't let them talk at all. In England, if you want to talk, if you're a child, you have to raise your hand. It's like when you want to go to the lavatory – they're both considered by schoolmasters rather disgusting habits, talking and going to the lavatory.

– Robert Morley, [1908-1992], well known English actor. *The Times Literary Supplement*, Sept 18, 1975.

Moreover placing illegitimate children for adoption was once widely accepted policy, not only in Ireland, but throughout the rest of Europe, America and Australasia. It has been transformed to the progressive policy: more abortions, early and late, than adoptions or maternal care.

And when family structures are inadequate, or break, social welfare is difficult and hazardous. For examples, look no further than reports on local state welfare departments throughout the world.

Mullan seems to have no sense that everyone, including nuns, working in institutions of care, is on a front-line. And morale breakdowns occur more among front-line units than in back areas. His film may succeed as agitprop documentary. As art it fails; it does not evoke cathartic pity for all.

The movie's power has a parasitic quality whereby the ephemeral depends on the eternal. First, Mullan plays off the perdurable image of the Catholic Church, millennial bastion of faith in Jesus Christ, a faith which continues to inspire self-sacrifice and service to others. Second, and ironically, he plays off Hollywood's sentimentalised image of Ireland.

Thirty thousand women passed through the Magdalene Asylums in Ireland, say the final credits; this over the long period until final closure in 1996. The implication is that all endured fates similar to those of Mullan's characters.

Nonetheless a hard tally. But surely it should be balanced against the good done by volunteers in the front-lines of caring even at the risk of failure? There is, of course, a safe alternative: passing by on the other side as did those who preceded the Samaritan on the road to Jerusalem.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆★

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Please see page 19 for a report on the rebuilding of these six Catholic Communities.

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— Editor, *Annals*

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A different view on the Anti-War demonstrations

NARROWING HORIZONS

By GILES AUTY



TO what extent do overseas journeys genuinely broaden most people's minds these days especially now that travelling has become so easy?

Unfortunately, for a country as isolated as Australia, lack of genuine curiosity about the real nature of foreign countries and their methods of government can easily give rise to dangerous misconceptions.

I think we saw this in the prelude to and unfolding of recent events in Iraq where a pervasive spirit of anti-Americanism tended to blind many to the nature and faults of other world regimes. There was even a somewhat unreal impression given by a number of commentators that some superior form of political and economic system was waiting in the wings which could, at a stroke, sweep away the supposed inadequacies of western democracy and capitalism.

To the more extreme student militants who took part in violent anti-war demonstrations in Sydney there was little doubt that this unnamed system would be some novel variant of communism.

How naïve can they get?

Between 1917 and 1989, communist regimes worldwide showed themselves to be the most murderous and inhumane in human history with 100 million deaths being brought about through purges, massacres, genocides, starvation and the systematic use of prison camps as tools of political terror.

Thus 18 million people – roughly the present population of Australia – passed through the death camps or 'gulags' which Stalin introduced in 1929.

One sight that saddened me especially during the recent anti-war demonstrations was of thousands of

very young Australian schoolchildren allowed – or persuaded – by their teachers to march under the ubiquitous banners of CND.

Following the collapse of soviet communism in 1989 it has emerged, through the opening up of previously secret archives, that CND – the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – was financed directly from Moscow.

This was of no particular surprise to some of us whose personal experience suggested cogent historical reasons why this should be so.

It could be said that the world and what it demanded of its young people was fairly different 50 years ago.

Thus a dozen or so English lads from the area of my own rural birthplace in Kent were ambushed and shot up at that time fighting the

communist insurgency in what was then called Malaya. Like me they were doing 2 years compulsory national service, but unlike them I was posted to a camp a kilometre from the border of the Russian Zone in Northern Germany.

Much of our work there consisted of practising the tactics we would use in the very possible event of a Russian attack. Their armoured divisions and military manpower outnumbered ours in our sector by more than six to one.

What was to prevent their massive superiority in military might from crushing our forces and then from seizing control of the remaining democracies of Western Europe, making them mere satellites of Soviet power as had happened already in the states of Eastern Europe and the Balkans?

In a military sense, what were our options?

Probably our only credible tactical response in the event of invasion was to flood large areas of Northern Germany and Holland by breaching dams and thus to drive their vastly superior armour down a narrow corridor where we might hope to halt it temporarily before attacking it with nuclear weapons.

These were in fact the precise tactics we practised in a massive military exercise – also involving Dutch and Belgian forces – which took place early in 1954 on the Dutch border. Without our known capacity to use nuclear weapons, Britain and the remaining democracies of Western Europe were simply sitting ducks.

I continue to believe that our known possession of nuclear weapons saved us at the time but strongly doubt whether any Australian schoolchildren or their teachers have any inkling of such a fundamental historical fact.



CANNABIS smokers have long had less cause to fear the police than have alcohol drinkers. While they can puff away at their joints to their hearts' content before driving home after a party, drinkers have to watch every sip. So far as alcohol is concerned zero tolerance has long been practised, with plans afoot, through random breathalysing, to tighten the screw even further. Every day perfectly respectable citizens, whose livelihoods depend on the use of their car, have their driving licences taken away for being ever so slightly over the limit.

– Peregrine Worsthorne, *The Spectator*, Feb. 19, 1997

So what would have happened to all of us in Western Europe if we had fallen under communist control?

One immediate consequence, which occurred wherever communism took root, would have been the effective suppression of all forms of Christianity.

If you are in any doubt about other consequences try to obtain a copy of *The Black Book of Communism*, published originally in French, but republished five years ago in an excellent English translation by Harvard University Press.

It would be impossible, after reading this huge and deeply worrying book, to retain even the slightest illusion about what life under communism would really have been like.

In my own case I also travelled in communist countries prior to 1989 and saw something of life in these for myself.

Why is it then, leaving ignorance and perversity aside, that so many western would-be intellectuals continue to feel at least a sneaking sympathy for a system of social engineering which was not just murderous and oppressive but also deeply hostile to Christianity? Do they hate Christian values that much?

As I write, a new television series made by the BBC has just begun to be screened in Britain. This is not only grossly cavalier with the historical facts but attempts to glamorise and even glorify the deeds and ideologies of the 'Cambridge Spies' – Philby, Blunt, Burgess, Maclean et al – whom the less deluded among us regard simply as traitors who sold valuable western military secrets to Russia.

I am certainly no militarist and felt nothing but sympathy for all the ordinary inhabitants of countries where communism took control.

But why do we continue to show misplaced sympathy for their former rulers and the regimes these people instituted?

Ignorance is by now a lame excuse, especially from those who enjoy the benefits themselves of living within the freedoms and prosperity of western democracies.



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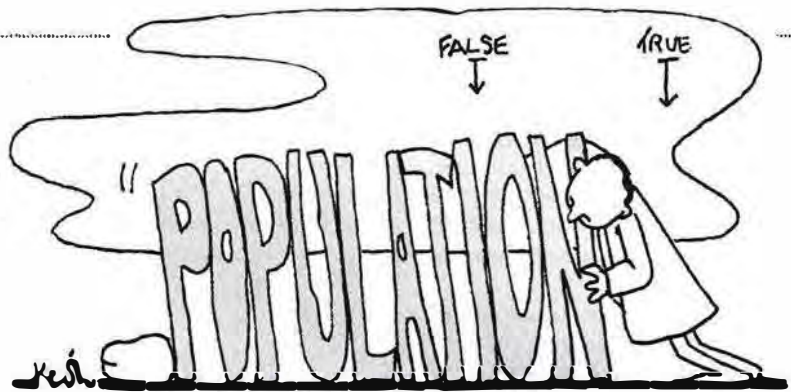
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How many Catholics in Merrie England?

POPULOUSNESS is a thing not to be proved by positive facts, because there are no records of the numbers of the people in former times, and because those which we have in our own day are notoriously false; if they be not the English nation has added a third to its population during the last twenty years! In short, our modern records I have, over and over again, proved to be false, particularly in my Register, No.2 of volume 46. That England was more populous in Catholic times than it is now we must believe, when we know that in the three first Protestant reigns thousands of parish churches were pulled down, that parishes were united in more than two thousand instances, and when we know from the returns now before Parliament, that out of 11,761 parishes in England and Wales, there are upwards of a thousand which do not contain a hundred persons each, men, women, and children. Then, again, the size of the churches. They were manifestly built, in general, to hold three, four, five or ten times the number of their present parishioners, including all the sectarians. What should men have built such large churches for? We are told of their 'piety and zeal;' yes, but there must have been men to raise the buildings. The Lord might favour the work, but there must have been hands as well as prayers. And what motive could there have been for putting together such large quantities of stone and mortar, and to make walls four feet thick, and towers and steeples, if there had not been people to fill the buildings? And how could the labour have been performed? There must have been men to perform the labour; and can anyone believe that this labour would have been performed if there had not been a necessity for it? We now see large and most costly ancient churches, and these in great numbers too, with only a few mud huts to hold the thirty or a hundreds of parishioners. Our forefathers built forever, little thinking of the devastation that we were to behold! Next come the lands, which they cultivated and which we do not, amounting to millions of acres. This anyone may verify who will go into Sussex, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire and Cornwall. They grew corn on the sides of hills which we now never attempt to stir. They made the hill into the form of steps of stairs in order to plough and sow the flat parts. These flats or steps still remain and are, in some cases, still cultivated; but in nine cases out of ten they are not. Why should they have performed this prodigious labour if they had not had mouths to eat the corn? And how could they have performed such labour without numerous hands? On the high lands of Hampshire and Devonshire there are spots of a thousand acres together which still bear the unfaceable marks of the plough, and which now never feel that implement. The modern writings on the subject of ancient population are mere romances, or they have been put forth with a view of paying court to the government of the day.

- William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation*. The Author, a Protestant, wrote his history between 1824 and 1827.

Whale Rider

Director Niki Caro realises on film the simple splendour of Witi Ihimaera's book, in turn based on the Maori legend of an ancestor carried ashore on a whale after one of the long, heroic voyages from Hawaii to Aoteroa by which the Maoris outdid the Vikings in star-following, ocean-going valour.

Pai (Keisha Castle-Hughes) is the girl faced with the challenge of persuading her grandfather Koro (Rawini Paratene) that she has the right stuff to succeed him in default of a male heir.

Castle-Hughes, in her first movie, gives a performance of sustained courage and pristine charm. She has the advantage of support from a veteran cast, led by Paratene who personifies chiefly dignity.

Caro and her director of cinematography Leon Narbey capture the sweeping beauty of the landscapes and seascapes around Whangara to reinforce the sense of an ancient legend still powerful in the 21st century. All in all: a whale of a tale.

PG SFFV ★★★★★

Anger Management

Adam Sandler is sentenced to a course of anger management. Jack Nicholson is appointed to administer the correction. In addition, Sandler needs acting lessons. Jack Nicholson gives them. Laugh a minute? More like every half-hour.

M 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas

Cartoon version of one of the world's oldest adventure stories. As with the foregoing cartoon, a strong cast of voice-actors adds adult appeal. But the strength of the narrative line is blurred by the introduction of Eris, goddess of chaos (Michelle Pfeiffer). Brad Pitt voices Sinbad; Joseph Fiennes, Proteus; Dennis Haysbert, Kale and Catherine Zeta-Jones, Marina.

G SFFV ★★☆☆☆

By James Murray

Animatrix

Is a series of nine short films designed to showcase the anime style pioneered by Japanese artists. It is also a generous tribute by the Wachowski brothers to the style that helped to fire their own flights of philosophy.

By design or inadvertently, the nine films provide a more enthralling experience than *Matrix: Reloaded*.

M 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Russian Ark

Director Alexander Sokurov's sustained, single 96-minute take (shot on a 100-minute digital-video reel) makes us like ghosts viewing three centuries of Russia's past. And what a past. The splendiferous art collection of St Peterburg's Hermitage Museum (including El Greco, Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyk and Canova) provides a backdrop for a polka to the music of time in which we are led by the fey Marquis de Custine (Sergey Dreiden) with Sokurov as his unseen interlocutor.

Intriguingly at one point de Custine stresses the importance of Catholic doctrine and the Bible. Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and Czar Nicholas II drift in and out of frame as do modern young Russians.

Sokurov and his huge cast celebrate the glory and the terror of Russian history, and by extension all human history. In so doing, they have created a film fit to share the definition masterpiece with so many of the art works in the museum.

G SFFV ★★★★★

The Good Thief

Is Bob (Nick Nolte) who, amid the blur of heroin and gambling addiction, opts to recruit a gang for a last heist involving Monte Carlo Casino and a hidden collection of old masters. His shadow is a sympathetic but tough cop Roger (Tcheky Karyo); his preoccupation is rescuing a

teenage Bosnian prostitute Ann (Nutsa Kukhianidze).

Writer/director Neil Jordan's film is a tribute to Jean-Pierre Melville's 1955 thriller *Bob Le Flambeur* (based on Flambeau, the arch crim in GK Chesterton's *Father Brown* stories?). Jordan overdoes the seedy nightclub milieu, loses plot focus yet restores tension for the final heist sequences.

Nolte, looking more and more as if carved with a jackhammer from Mount Rushmore, is a formidable hero. Kukhianidze has a lambent charm that will shine again. And Ralph Fiennes is cast as an international art dealer so scruffy he looks more like the progenitor of glitzy, contemporary pornographers: the dirty-postcard seller in old Port Said.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

The Dancer Upstairs

John Malkovich's debut feature as director opens with an obscure road sequence that clarifies into a white-hot take on a corrupt Latin American nation under terrorist threat from a movement led by Ezequiel (Abel Folk), self-styled 'Fourth Flame of Communism'. Scripted by Nicholas Shakespeare from his own novel, it tells of Ezequiel's pursuit by an honest cop Agustin Rejas (Javier Bardem), a hunt that brings him into contact with a ballet teacher Yolanda (Laura Morante) who may have more than dance in mind.

Malkovich is superlatively served by his cast. He ends on a subtle, telling note: the colour of the dance dress worn by Agustin's daughter's is deepest red, the colour of the people's flag; in other words resort to revolution and terror will continue as long as social justice does not prevail against greedy corruption.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

The Lizzie McGuire Movie

Rome stars in this comedy. Too much to call it divine but it is an amiable teen effort with more twists than a plate of spaghetti. The Eternal City's supporting players

include Hilary Duff, a US cable television phenomenon yet to hit local channels. Duff can sing, dance and show the kind of teeth that make toothpaste commercials seem nicotine-stained.

She doubles the title role of Lizzie, on high-school study tour, with that of Isabella, an Italian popstar. As Lizzie, she becomes involved with Paolo (Yani Gellman), Isabella's former partner. Only one player can compete with Duff: Alex Borstein as Ms Ungermeier, the no-nonsense but lots of fun tour leader. Ingenious use is made of a cartoon figure to voice Lizzie's stream of consciousness. Look out for Lizzie McGuire II, III, IV, if not MDCLVI. Kindly children will raid their piggybanks and take their parents and/or grand parents.

G SFFV ★★★★★

The Good Girl

Jennifer Aniston is appropriately sonambulistic here: she is living the dream of many television players who seek to prove that they are like, real movie actors, not just mannikins who for a million or so per ep hold the ads apart on the idiot box. She plays Justine, a check-out chick, in the Retail Rodeo supermarket which, it must be said, has little of the excitement of Woolworths or Coles as customers spend their Costello tax cut of four dollars a week.

Into the Rodeo and her life comes a new employee (Jake Gyllenhaal) who calls himself Holden after the hero of Jerome David Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. Will his arty yearnings prove more attractive to Justine than the painting of her husband Phil (John C. Reilly)? House painting, that is (the day job of Brendan Behan who Reilly was born to play).

As put together by writer Mike White and director Miguel Areta, the result is not totally predictable. And yes, Aniston can do what she's been doing for years on the box: act.

M 15+ NFFV ★★★★★

Help! I'm a Fish

Ingenious cartoon about Fly, Stella and Chuck, children who meet

Official Classifications key

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

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an amiably nutty scientist (aren't they all?) Professor Confusius. The latter, pursuing a defence against the rising of the seas, concocts a potion which turns people into fish.

The children swallow it, are duly transformed into a fish, a starfish and a jelly fish, and are off on more adventures than Captain Nemo and his merry men in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. For adults, as in many recent cartoons, the voice actors are a main attraction. Terry Jones voices Professor Confusius and Alan Rickman does Jo, a pilot fish who wants the potion to give himself human characteristics.

Involved in the production was the Irish animation studio Terraglyph. Only an over-intrusive, not to say deafening, sound track mars the work.

G SFFV ★★★★★

Personal Velocity

Short-stories by Somerset Maugham formed the basis of the successful movies *Quartet* (1948) and *Trio* (1950). Writer/director Rebecca Miller (daughter of Arthur Miller) has updated the formula with a compelling digital-video production based on three of her own narratives about women in trouble.

Kyra Sedgwick, Parker Posey and Farouza Balk play the women with scalpel precision Posey's take on an upwardly mobile editor (cookbooks

to literature) is particularly sharp. Miller is clear-sighted enough to show the extent to which the travails of her characters derive from their broken family backgrounds.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★★★★

X-Men 2

Comic books, once a cheap source of fun, have taken on multi-million dollar status as block-buster movies with superlative casts to match. This one includes the great Shakespearean actors Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen as respectively super telepath Professor Charles Xavier and arch-villain Magneto. Hugh Jackman is the steel-clawed Wolverine.

Director Bryan Singer controls the menagerie of humans and mutants who in their ability to change shape, throw thunderbolts, et cetera, are futuristic versions of Celtic, Greek and Roman mythological originals. But in the end, the special effects wag his tale.

M 15+ SFFV ★★★★★

Ripley's Game

Sequel to *The Talented Mr Ripley* that re-introduced the work of Patricia Highsmith to the cinema. As always with Highsmith, the characters are morally ambivalent. And since no one does ambivalence better than John Malkovitch, he replaces Matt Damon in the title role. Result: the movie is superior to the earlier work. Malkovitch's Ripley is domesticated, even uxorious. He cooks. He sews. And he weaves plots. Picture-framer Jonathan Trevanny (Dougray Scott) finds himself caught in one with lethal consequences.

Director Liliana Cavani, who co-wrote the script with Charles McKeown, uses the beautiful Italian locations as if remembering the line 'where every prospect pleases and only man is vile'.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★★★★

Phone Booth

Phone booths (or boxes) are coffin-like. Writer Larry Cohen plays

on this with his nail-biter script about a dodgy publicist Stu Shepard (Colin Farrell), trapped in one of New York's last working booths by a call from an unseen sniper (Keifer Sutherland) whose voice has the omniscience of doom.

Director Joel Schumacher enables Farrell to give a bravura performance: brash going on petrified going on penitence for the flakiness of his treatment of his wife Kelly (Radha Mitchell) and mistress Pamela (Katie Holmes). Forest Whitaker is Captain Ramey, the cop on whose decisions Shepard's life depends. Classic unity of place and time matched with classic performances.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆

Marie-Jo and her Two Loves (Marie-Jo et Ses Deux Amours)

Director Robert Guedeguan quotes Dante at the start of his love-story. And with exemplary respect for the seeming ordinariness of his characters, he takes us into their lives in his birth city of Marseilles, bustling, sunlit and haunted by the ghosts of the Anzacs for whom it was the first landfall in France before they entrained for the Western Front and death.

Marie-Jo (Ariane Ascaride, Guedeguan's wife) works as a hospital driver and keeps the books for her beloved husband Daniel (Jean-Pierre Darroussin), a builder. She also keeps a secret: her affaire with ship's pilot Marco (Gerard Meylan).

Even Euclid might find it difficult to contrive a fresh perspective on the eternal triangle. Guedeguan does. Ascaride displays a dancing allure as a woman caught in an adulterous trap of her own desiring. Guedeguan's resolution of the irreconcilable is Dante-esque, creating a sense of redemption through final sacrifice.

M 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆

The Core

Planetary disaster movies don't come any more catastrophic than this: earth's molten core ceases to

spin, upsetting its electro-magnetic field. The first dire consequences: people with heart pace-makers drop dead. We are in the 21st century. The solution is 19th century or more exactly that of Jules Verne, first master of science fiction: an expedition to the centre of the earth.

But where Verne took us on a tweedy hike, director Jon Amiel (and scriptwriters Cooper Layne and John Rogers) give us the full, high-tech deal aboard a worm-like inner-spacecraft named Virgil (Dante's guide in the underworld). His crew: geophysicists Josh Keys (Aaron Eckhart) and Conrad Zimsky (Stanley Tucci), Virgil's inventor Ed Brazzleton (Delroy Lindo), nuclear physicist Sergei Leveque (Tcheky Karyo) and terranauts Commander Robert Iverson (Bruce Greenwood) and Major Rebecca Childs (Hilary Swank).

Swank lives up to her name, all bright eyes and flashing teeth. But Lindo and Tucci (in a fireproof wig) steal the movie as rival scientists. And for all its fiction, the movie does convey a dread sense of the earth's fragility plus an equivalent fear of human solutions.

M 15+ SFFV ★★☆☆

Kangaroo Jack

Anything Skippy could do, the animatronic roo in this comedy can do better. Which is not to say that Jerry O'Connell and Anthony Anderson are finer actors than the Skippy stalwarts, Ed Devereaux and Tony Bonner, only better paid.

Connolly and Anderson play buddies, Charlie and Louis, who

find themselves in deep trouble after Kanga Jack takes off with the wad of gangster money they have been commissioned to deliver (a situation based on an Australian urban myth).

The characters are carved from mulga wood. The comedy is so broad you half expect Paul Hogan to make an appearance as Crocodile Dundee. But he might have been too expensive for producer Jerry Bruckheimer who seems to prefer spending money on vehicles to crash.

PG SFFV ★★☆☆

The Matrix: Reloaded

Reloaded with what? More hokum. But that's unfair to the coruscating special effects. Okay. It's hyper-hokum. Essentially the Wachowski brothers, Larry and Andy, have recreated the old and enthralling genre defined in the phrase, 'With one bound he was free.' Except they multiply everything. So make it one thousand bounds. These are enacted in bouts of violence ballet, inter-cut with smashing, car chases and verbal jousts of eclectic philosophising. But while aspiring to an admirable mythic status in their tale of Zion, under attack from lethal machines despatched by the ultimate computer Matrix, the Wachowski's fail to provide a strong narrative line.

As the messianic Neo, Keanu Reeves shows yet again what an impressive actor he is (in the school of John Wayne). Carrie-Anne Moss is his inamorata-guardian Trinity, dressed in what appears to be black-strap licorice. Hugo Weaving devas-tates as Neo's nemesis Mr Smith, who can really go to town in multiples of himself. Laurence Fishburne reprises his Morpheus role but looks as if he is dreaming of playing Othello.

The movie ends with a caption 'To Be Concluded'. Make it soon.

M 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

Conundrum of a title. Unlocked, it becomes a movie, finely crafted by



writer/director Dai Sijie based on his best-selling novel that reveals the true nature of Mao Zedong's revolution, during which millions of Chinese perished while many Westerners sang its praises rather than a requiem for the dead.

It opens with the arrival at a mountain village of two young students Luo (Chen Kun) and Ma (Liu Ye), scheduled for re-education as the offspring of bourgeois reactionaries.

The headman (Wang Shuanbao) examines their gear. After a brief, too tempting reading from a tattered cookbook, 'First take a chicken ...' he burns it (the book). He is about to do the same with Ma's violin when persuaded to allow one tune. The villagers are enchanted to hear Mozart for the first time. But the headman is still suspicious, demanding to know its title. 'Chairman Mao thinks of Mozart' is Luo's persuasive reply.

But how does Balzac fit in? His are among a cache of foreign works that the students use to teach the Seamstress (Zhou Xun). Balzac is not the only French element. The relationship between the two students and the Seamstress echoes that of the trio of passionate friends in *Jules et Jim*.

M 15+ NFFV ★★★★★

The Man Without a Past (Mis vailla meneisyttä)

Film-maker Aki Kaurismäki's new work is a sad delight, set in another Finland, not the Finland of clean-cut design, snowbound reindeer or shimmering lakes. This is the Finland where an old shipping container is a step-up in accommodation. Yet not Finland. Wherever market forces not only try to rule but to bully.

Into this world comes M (Markku Peltola), amnesiac as the result of being beaten almost to death. He is aided by people as bereft as himself and meets Irma (Kati Outinen). She is a Samaritan in uniform – the uniform of the Salvation Army which with its practical charity and music provides a saving element.

Peltola, with a face on him like an intelligent axe, dominates by self-

containment. Outinen is no conventional beauty, nor for that matter an unconventional beauty. She is simply a great actress who bodies forth stern kindness turning to tenderness.

Others in the small cast are equivalently compelling. The spirit of the work is in a couple of lines of dry, spare dialogue. A tradesman links M's container to the local electricity supply.

M: What do I owe you?

Tradesman: If you see me on my face in the gutter, turn me on my back.

See it and weep while laughing.

M 15+ SFFV ★★★★★

The Crime of Padre Amaro

Carlos Carrera's film is another parasitic play off the Catholic Church's historic prestige. His focus is on the fatal affair between the young Padre Amaro (Gael Garcia Bernal) and an even younger parishioner, Amelia (Ana Claudia Talancon).

The film, set in modern Mexico, is based on a 19th century novel. This shows in the kind of anti-clericalism which later exploded throughout 1920s Mexico in the campaign by Communist revolutionaries to destroy the Church by rape, pillage and murder, a campaign chronicled in Graham Greene's *The Lawless Roads*. And a campaign that failed.

Furthermore *el gringo* Greene in his novel, *The Power and the Glory*, shows a greater understanding of the moral problems of a priest who breaks his vow of celibacy than does Carrera who is deadset on a soft-porn picture of clerical ambition so ruthless that it will stop at nothing, even an abortion leading also to the death of the mother.

Ludicrous 19th century melodrama keeps breaking through the 21st century veneer of cynicism. At

one point, Padre Amaro is involved in damage control after a newspaper reports that his parish priest has accepted donations for a new hospital from a local drug baron.

The newspaper's editor is as tough as, well, a newspaper editor, until Padre Amaro warns that one phone call from his archbishop will kill all the advertising in the newspaper. Does the editor yell? 'Hold the front page. We've got a funny one about a delusional archbishop.' No way, he concedes defeat.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆★

The Rage in Placid Lake

Writer/director Tony MacNamara's punny title refers not to a location but to the lead character Placid Lake (Ben Lee), offspring of a vintage hippy couple (Miranda Richardson and Garry McDonald). Placid, following a long line of children, rebels conservatively against parental outrageousness. He is aided, abetted by Gemma Taylor (Rose Byrne).

Richardson, presumably cast for box-office appeal, overdoes the facial twitching, result no doubt of growing up in a family where mumming was the everyday means of expression. McDonald still trails vestiges of his most brilliant caricature, Norman Gunston. Lee, a rock muso of repute, lacks the sardonic edge that Noah Taylor might have brought to the part. Byrne? Enchanting.

McNamara is a witty writer. But as director he has forgotten that comedy depends on speed and that more or less obscene episodes slow the pace and mute the laughter.

M 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆★

Fat Pizza

This is the one with everything, a dish so gross it would make even Gargantua reach for the bicarbonate of soda. Paul Fenech who cooked it all up (writer/director/star) has a Puckish wit but has chosen to play Caliban. And in time to come, like other ethnics whose comedy involves playing off prejudice, may realise that it also involves connivance with prejudice.

MA 15+ NFFV ★☆☆☆☆

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— Editor, *Annals Australasia*.

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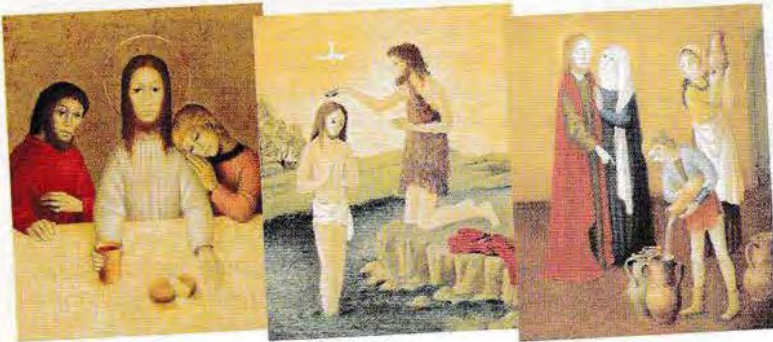


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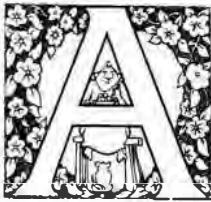
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'Investing,' or 'Speculating'?

FAIR SHARES?

By SAM SIMMONDS



ACCORDING to Mark Twain, who knew a thing or two – and liked to pass them on, while also making us laugh – there are two times in life when we should not speculate: when we can't afford it, and when we can. But, like all

pieces of advice meant to be 'good for us' (and this one is from Twain's 1894 book, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*), we can safely ignore it by redefining its terms so as to permit us to go our own sweet way after all. Thus, if there is something in which we insist on wasting our hard-earned cash, we can deftly replace the word 'speculation' (which always has poor connotations) with the much

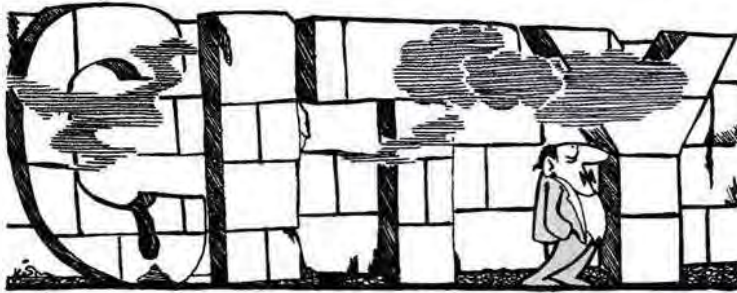
more upbeat 'investment' (which sounds more constructive). In truth, the two concepts are so very nearly identical that no practical purpose is served by separating them.

There has never been (except with the benefit of perfect hindsight) such a thing as a 100% safe investment. There is not now. There is no likelihood of one materializing at any future date. And you can bet on that!

The trouble is that, whereas it is the easiest thing in the world to lose your entire invested stake through no fault of your own, it is also possible that one outrageous piece of speculation can make you very rich, despite your having done nothing to achieve that except throw money in its vague direction. So we simple folk are pretty easy to hook, our motive – frequently, though not always – being greed, pure and simple. There are, however, folk operating in similar ways and in the same places as ourselves (though with considerably greater resources than ours) who are not that simple.

Some of us enjoy the occasional game of cards and, to make the evening more interesting, we agree to play for a small ante and, say, a few cents per point. This does not make us feel 'big time' but it does add a certain piquancy to the game and may produce, at least for the seniors among us, the momentary illusion of being in the company of the Steve McQueens, Edward G. Robinsons and other *film noir* memorables of yesteryear.

Consider for a moment being invited – indeed, offered incentives – to join such a game, but one in which rules may vary at the whim of the dealer (who will never be you, unless you are prepared to increase your stake a thousandfold); where the winnings may be summarily divided in previously undisclosed ways (including sponsoring the croupier – or one or more of the



Pity the Architect

ALL lovely architecture was designed for cities in cloudless air; for cities in which piazzas and gardens opened in bright populousness and peace; cities built that men might live happily in them, and take delight daily in each other's presence and powers. But our cities, built in black air which, by its accumulated foulness, first renders all ornament invisible in distance, and then chokes its interstices with soot; cities which are mere crowded masses of store, and warehouse, and counter, and are therefore to the rest of the world what the larder and cellar are to a private house; cities in which the object of men is not life, but labour; and in which all chief magnitude of edifice is to enclose machinery; cities in which the streets are not the avenues for the passing and procession of a happy people, but the drains for the discharge of a tormented mob, in which the only object in reaching any spot is to be transferred to another; in which existence becomes mere transition, and every creature is only one atom in a drift of human dust, and current of interchanging particles, circulating here by tunnels underground, and there by tubes in the air; for a city, or cities, such as this no architecture is possible – nay, no desire of it is possible to their inhabitants.

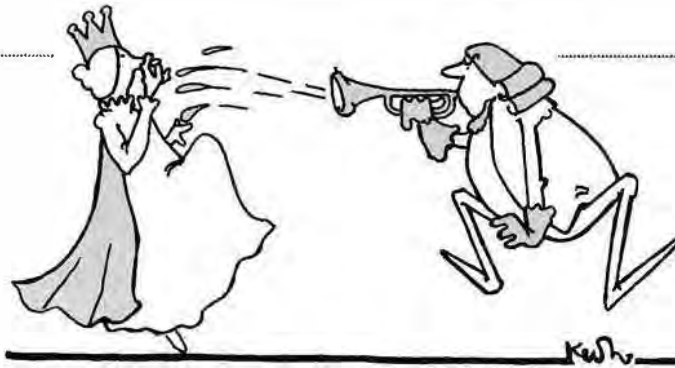
– John Ruskin, [1819-1900] 'Study of Architecture', in *On The Old Road*, I, 277.

players – at the roulette table behind you); where the 'high rollers' (including the dealer) may, at any time at their absolute discretion (but in accordance with an arrangement to which you were not privy), remove a substantial percentage of all the chips on the table, cash them and leave; and occasional other 'wild card' surprises. Such 'gambling hells' operate in every major city in the world, within exquisitely respectable establishments known as 'Stock Exchanges'.

Most of the activities in such establishments are, one need hardly say, of a highly proper nature and, indeed, are rigorously supervised so that they remain so. But it is not possible for the good burghers of, for example, the ASX (the catchy, kicky, 'sexy' initialism of that august body known in full as the Australian Stock Exchange), to enter the minds, and be party to the commercial deliberations, of every director and executive of every company to which they offer a listing. It is not, by and large, the administrators of the ASX who are responsible for the blurring of the distinctions between investment and speculation. It is the boards of directors of the companies themselves who, seemingly desperate for our dollar, dangle their corporate carrots before us donkeys.

The familiar words *caveat emptor* are, as for many a good hymn, only the start. The full legal maxim, all of which is as true now as it was two millennia ago, runs: *Caveat emptor, quia ignorare non debuit quod ius alienus emit*, which translates, as many an Annals reader will know, as "let a purchaser beware, for he should not be ignorant of the nature of the property which he buys from another party". Considering the wisdom of this from within the ASX context, for *emptor* we could also mentally substitute, as appropriate, the words *vendor*, *mercator* and a whole variety of other translations for such traders.

The real point of this piece of good advice – one of which Mark Twain might have been blissfully unaware – lies in the words 'nature of the property'. Because that is what you, as a potential, willing – even eager – investor, may never get to



The 'Monstrous Regiment of Women'

IN 1557/1558 Knox was composing his 'First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women'. In England and in Scotland were a Catholic Queen, a Catholic Queen Mother, and the Queen of Scotland was marrying the idolatrous Dauphin. It is not worthwhile to study Knox's general denunciation of government by ladies; he allowed that (as Calvin suggested) miraculous exceptions to their inability might occur, as in the case of Deborah. As a rule, a Queen was an 'idol', and that was enough. England deserved an idol, and an idolatrous idol, for Englishmen rejected Kirk discipline; 'no man would have his life called in trial' by presbyter or preacher. A Queen regnant has, *ex officio*, committed treason against God: the Realm and Estates may have conspired with her, but her rule is unlawful. Naturally this skirl on the trumpet made Knox odious to Elizabeth, for to impeach her succession might cause a renewal of the wars of the Roses.


– Andrew Laog, *John Knox and the Reformation*, 1905. Knox was the founder of the Presbyterian religion. 'Regiment' means 'regime'.

know. Yes, you can, through your stockbroker or other financial advisor, access the official statistics about a particular company; the extent of their capitalization and assets; their trading history; and the latest speculations about their prospects, based on all that. But (if you can handle any more advice) before acting thereupon, make sure you refer to paragraph 2, above.

Recent scenes from Annual



General Meetings (that had of old been orderly to the point of tedium) attest to the fact that shareholders are furious at the cavalier fashion in which they feel they have been treated by those to whom, in many cases, they have entrusted their life savings – and they insist, quite rightly, in saying so. Yet the company directors routinely defend their actions by explaining how they sought to satisfy the shareholders in all things, virtually to the point of destroying the very principles for which the company was founded (see previous articles in Annals on this topic). *If the directors are only looking at the investors – and the investors only at the directors – who is minding the store?*

And let us say nothing here about 'insider trading'. No, when in doubt, see paragraph 2, above. It may be all you need. 

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