

ANNALS

Australasia

Journal of Catholic Culture



2006 - 2
\$3.30*

PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/01005

ANNALS AUSTRALASIA

Journal of Catholic Culture

Volume 117, Number 2 March 2006

[Sunday Year A/weekdays Year I]

Australia's Oldest Catholic Magazine

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

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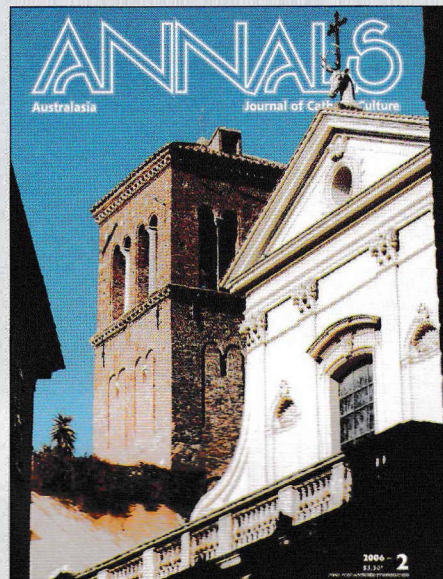
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Front Cover: Just a step or two from the Pantheon in Rome, in the direction of the Piazza Navona [where St Agnes and St Emerentiana were martyred as twelve or thirteen year-old girls in 304 AD under Diocletian], is the Church of St Eustachius [Eustace]. You can easily recognize it because of the stag's head with a cross between the antlers, on the apex of the gable. Eustacius, called Placidus before his conversion, was a soldier in the army of Titus in Palestine, then master of the horse under Trajan. He was martyred, along with his wife and two sons under Hadrian in 118 AD. It is said that one day, while hunting, Placidus saw a beautiful stag which he pursued. As he pursued it, he had a vision of a cross between the antlers, with an image of our Lord on the cross. After becoming a Christian with his family, he took the name Eustachius. He and his wife and sons were roasted alive in a bronze bull on the site where the Church now stands.

Back Cover: Sculpture of St Joseph, Our Lady and the child Jesus, manufactured from volcanic ash deposited by the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. Chevalier Press has a limited number of these 18cm by 14 cm sculptures of the Holy Family. Price: \$20, including postage anywhere in Australia, and GST.

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Executive Editor *Chevalier Press*: **Editor** *Annals Australasia*: Paul Stenhouse, MSC Ph.D; **Artwork**: Kevin Drum. **Layout and Design**: Paul Stenhouse MSC. **Administration**: Peter Macinante; Hendrikus Wong. **Subscription**: Bank/Visa/Master Cards accepted. Please make cheques, money orders payable to The Manager, *Annals Australasia*, 1 Roma Avenue (P.O. Box 13), Kensington, NSW Australia 2033. **Correspondence**: The Editor, P.O. Box 13, Kensington NSW Australia 2033. **Phones**: (02) 9662 7894/9662 7188 ext. 252. **Fax**: (02) 9662 1910, **Email**: annalsaustralasia@nareg.com.au. **Unsolicited material**: We regret that unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Have been at pains to send you this small essay so that, in addition to your faith, you may be put in complete possession of knowledge as well.

- St Barnabas, Epistle 1, Iff, written around 70AD.

Printed by National Capital Printing, 22 Pirie Street, Fyshwick, ACT 2609, Phone: (02) 6280 7477.

Colour Separation Digital Graphic Communications Pty Ltd, Suite 5, Level 2, 51-53 Bourke Rd, Alexandria 2015. Phone: (02) 9669 6144.

ABN 40 938 805 168 Dewey Number: 248-88 AT ISSN 1444-4178. Recommended Retail Price only.

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

An Ancient Hymn For Lent

NOW let us all with one accord,
In fellowship with ages past,
Keep vigil with our heav'nly Lord,
In his temptation and his fast.

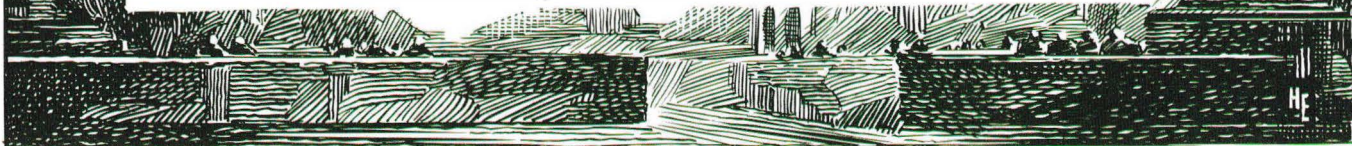
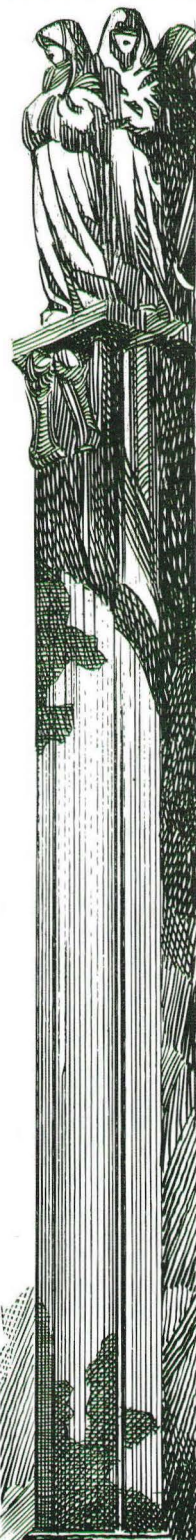
THY grace have we offended more,
By sins, O God, which we deplore;
But pour upon us from on high,
O pardoning One, Thy clemency.

REMEMBER Lord, though frail we be,
That yet Thine handiwork are we;
Nor let the honour of Thy name
Be by another put to shame.

FORGIVE the sin that we have wrought,
Increase the good that we have sought:
That we at length our wand'rings o'er,
May please Thee here forever more.


GRANT, O Thou Blessed Trinity,
Grant, O Essential Unity,
That this our fast of forty days
May work our profit and Thy praise.

- Pope St Gregory the Great [540-604 AD]. This translation is based on one by John Mason Neale [1818-1866] of Gregory's hymn *Ex more docti mystico* used in the Roman Breviary as an optional hymn during Lent.



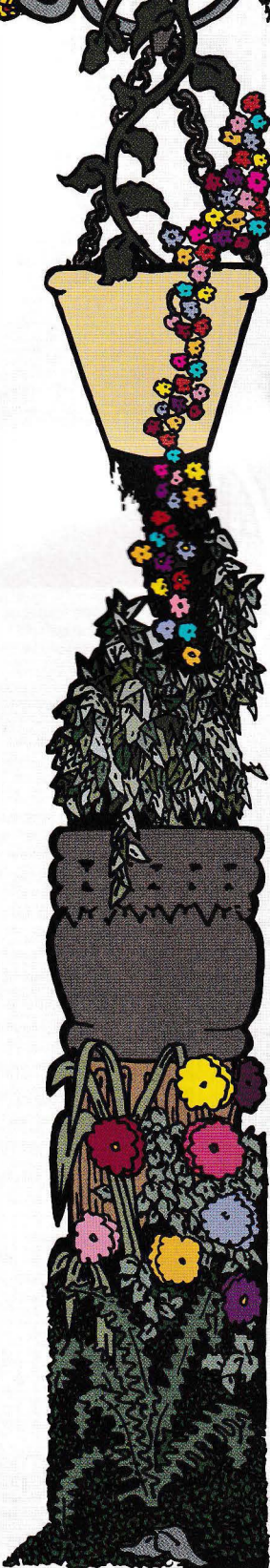


QUEEN OF ANGELS



OUR Lady went into a strange country
And they crowned her for a queen,
For she needed never to be stayed or
questioned
But only seen;
And they were broken down under
unbearable beauty
As we have been.

BUT ever she walked till away in the last
high places
One great light shone
From the pillared throne of the king of all
that country
Who sat thereon;
And she cried aloud as she cried under the
gibbet
For she saw her son.



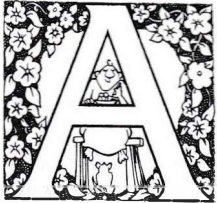
OUR Lady wears a crown in a strange
country,
The crown he gave,
But she has not forgotten to call to her old
companions,
To call and crave;
And to hear her calling a man might arise,
and thunder
On the doors of the grave.

- G.K.Chesterton, *Regina Angelorum* [Queen of Angels]

Dissenting 'Catholics' on the Back Foot

THE ANTI-PELL AGENDA

By PAUL STENHOUSE



HEADLINE
Catholics take Pell complaint to Vatican appeared over a recent article by Linda Morris in *The Sydney Morning Herald* – not usually well known as an objective or reliable barometer on matters religious, and especially Catholic.

The reference to a challenge to 'the teachings of the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal George Pell' on the 'primacy of conscience' would have prepared the cautious reader for the gaggle of usual suspects described by Morris as 'prominent Australian Catholics'.

Among the complainants Morris singles out self-styled 'Catholic' individuals as diverse as Loreto Sister Veronica Brady, Professor Max Charlesworth, Judge Chris Geraghty, Father Frank Martin, and 'historian and broadcaster' Paul Collins.

It is always good to know that *Granny* can be relied upon to make a sound judgement about the 'prominence' and the 'Catholicity' of fellow Australians. Freedom of the Press aside, this does mark a new stage in the bridging of the gulf between Church and Press. Can we soon expect the *Herald* to man [or woman] a Press Gallery in the choir loft of St Mary's Basilica in Sydney?

The *Herald* story critical of Sydney's Cardinal Archbishop emanated from the tireless propagandist machine of Australia's liberal 'Catholic' minority, and took nobody by surprise.

What did surprise, however, was the revelation that Cardinal Pell had been delated to what the *Herald* described as 'the Vatican's powerful doctrinal watchdog ... formerly the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisitions [sic]!'

Certain of the signatories are on record as having in the past shown less than due respect for the Office of

In response to requests from readers, *Annals* offers the following reflections on a matter given much publicity recently in the media. Critics of the Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney have publicly called for an answer to their problems of conscience. As the stakes are high, we hope that this may clarify the issues, and help critics and readers alike to inform their consciences correctly. *Ed.*

of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This filial submission to the authority of the Roman Congregation ['it is difficult for us to know what to do'] must have touched readers who might otherwise have wondered – including the present Holy Father, Benedict XVI

As Cardinal Ratzinger and former Head of the Congregation, the present Holy Father was described by 'historian and broadcaster' Paul Collins as 'a late 20th century inquisitor'¹ holding a view [on the authority of the magisterium of the Church] 'that seem to me to border on heresy.'²

Loreto Sister Veronica Brady, is a professor of literature at the University

of Western Australia. Brady, in an interview on National Radio admitted never having been an 'orthodox' believing Catholic, and having 'always been a crypto Anglican.' Asked if she believed Jesus to be the Son of God, she responded, 'Well I suppose I've got to say he was God in our midst. That's how the story goes.'³

Professor Max Charlesworth's philosophical view that a conscientious ethical decision cannot be made by simply following the guidance of the Church is well known. As is his support for the ordination of women in the Catholic and Orthodox churches, and his claim that the Church regards the decisions of the magisterium as self-justifying and not needing to be interpreted by reference to tradition. His consistent use of the old Protestant tautology 'Roman Catholic' reflects, I suggest, his own preference for the 'local' rather than the 'universal' nature of the Church, and pre-empts the outcome in issues like 'situational ethics' and 'relativism.'⁴

The timing of the *Herald* story is curious. The complaint was sent to the new Congregation head Archbishop [now Cardinal] William Levada, on November 13, 2005. Despite the fact that 'they [the signatories] ha[d] not

No Bibles or Cuddly Toys

BRITISH Midland International has banned flight crews from wearing crucifixes or St Christopher or other medals on flights to Saudi Arabia in case they offend Muslims. Stewardesses must also walk two paces behind male colleagues, have been forbidden to take bibles or cuddly toys and must wear the abaya when they arrive in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia requires women to wear a headscarf and the voluminous kaftan that covers them from head to foot called the abaya in public; the hiqab [or face covering] is optional. Abaya-wearing is enforced by the religious police, the mutawin. There are no Christian churches permitted in Saudi Arabia; Christian vestments, religious articles or books are banned. British Midland rep Phil Shepherd said, '...we have an obligation to respect the customs of the destination country'.

– Sunday Mirror, London Jan 8, 2006.

received an acknowledgement' the *Herald* article goes on to reassure worried readers that an [unnamed] 'group spokesman said that this [delay] was no indication that the Vatican was not taking the complaint seriously'.

If the group genuinely believed this, why go public now? The option of going public [actually, the threat of going public] unless 'the Congregation were minded to take appropriate action' was stated at the end of their letter to the Congregation.

This is all reminiscent of the *Skibereen Eagle* – a weekly paper of minuscule circulation that was published in Cork, Ireland, in the 1860s. Much to the mirth of the more sophisticated London papers, this local newspaper carried a front-page story that began: 'We warn the Tsar of Russia...? Actually it went on – 'and we warn Lord Palmerston'.

In this case our Aussie signatories were warning the Sacred Congregation. And the Pope. With, it appears, predictable results.

The *Herald* ran with the story. And no wonder. Granny relishes tales of Catholic dissent as Usama bin Laden apparently relishes killing 'infidels'; or would relish doctored photographs of George W. Bush with cocaine on his nose and upper lip.⁵

The article was based on a Press Release embargoed until midnight Sunday Feb 19. This contradicts the 'group spokesman' and says that they went public because of the 'apparent failure of the Vatican to respond to their letter'.

But really – what did they expect? A computer-generated acknowledgement? Dealing with complaints originating from any source requires time if they are to be taken seriously; and their being taken seriously depends on the cogency of evidence submitted, and, at least in part, on the credibility of the signatories.

Civil courts can take from three months to three years or more before a case gets heard. I know of a government department in Australia that has waited three years for a reply from other government departments. Are the signatories so 'prominent' and so well-known as 'Catholics' that their mere names [and their dire threat of going public] guarantee that their complaint be taken seriously, and that the wheels of the Sacred Congregation start rolling

Conscience and the Word of God

WHAT is in dispute is not the importance of conscience, but whether conscience must be oriented to truth, to the word of God. Truth is supreme and as the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* said conscience is the proximate norm. If an individual's personal conscience is supreme my conscientious viewpoint is as good as the view of [these critics], and there is no way of resolving the dispute between us. There has never been a traditional Catholic teaching of the primacy of conscience. This was one of the great issues at the Reformation and the word of God remains supreme no matter how uncomfortable this is for the loyal opposition, for Catholic dissenters. A watch or clock is always useful especially when it is telling the correct time.'

– George Cardinal Pell,
Archbishop of Sydney.

immediately their complaint is received?

As their complaints against the Cardinal are now in the public forum, it may be helpful to look at the supporting evidence they adduce for them. I draw a veil over the credibility of the signatories. The Congregation will no doubt look for any signs of special pleading or conflict of interest that might indicate frivolous or mischievous intent.

Four statements of the Cardinal are adduced as 'difficult to reconcile with the teachings of the Church'. Assuming

Man, Master of his Destiny?

WHAT is the home of the heart
set free,

And where is the nesting of
Liberty;

And where from the world shall
the world take shelter

And man be master, and not
with Thee?

– G.K.Chesterton., *The Towers of Time.*

that the statements are faithful to the Cardinal's text, each is concerned with the indisputable fact, in the words of the Cardinal, that 'too many Catholic youngsters have concluded [from teachers who stress the primacy of conscience] that values are personal inventions; that we can paint our moral pictures any way we choose'.

The ethical system resulting from teaching slanted in this way is what is known as 'relativism'. It is erroneous and toxic to faith and morals.

This situation has arisen because the individual conscience – often taken to mean 'what the individual thinks or wants' – is considered by some to be more important than the teaching of the Church.

There is, of course, a sense in which it is true that whatever the individual Catholic thinks or believes 'conscientiously' is morally right. But believing or thinking 'conscientiously' means, in Catholic understanding, that the individual has gone to the trouble, before acting, of accurately and certainly *informing* his conscience: i.e. to find out what the Church teaches on particular moral or doctrinal issues.

If such an individual nevertheless acts contrary to Catholic teaching on these issues, the moral evil committed will be imputed to him unless his ignorance of the error of his conscience is 'invincible'. For ignorance to be 'invincible' it must be involuntary, and beyond the means of the individual to correct, either because it never occurred to the individual to seek the truth that he was obliged to know – a situation that Catholic education was designed to rectify – or because, having conscientiously sought it, he never arrived at the truth.⁶

A majority of Catholics would agree with Cardinal Pell in thinking [as he reportedly stated] that the 'mischievous doctrine of the primacy of conscience has been used to white-ant the Church'.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church to which the claimants appealed against the Cardinal not only does not support the idea of the 'primacy of conscience' – it lists ways in which the white-anting to which Cardinal Pell refers, occurs:

'Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of the autonomy of conscience, rejection

of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity'.

The role of teachers and pastors in helping to inform young consciences correctly and certainly, is pivotal. The 'mistaken notion' of the 'autonomy of conscience' permeates the letter sent by the claimants to the Congregation.

The claimants rightly quote The Catechism [No. 1782] 'Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. And the passage [No. 1790] which says that 'A human being must always obey the *certain* [my italics] judgement of his conscience'.

Pace the claimants, the Catholic Catechism does not say that those whose consciences are *not* certain, and are erroneous, 'must still follow their conscience'. What it says [No. 1793] when speaking of 'invincible' ignorance is that an erroneous conscience is 'an evil, a privation, a disorder'; and that 'one must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience'.

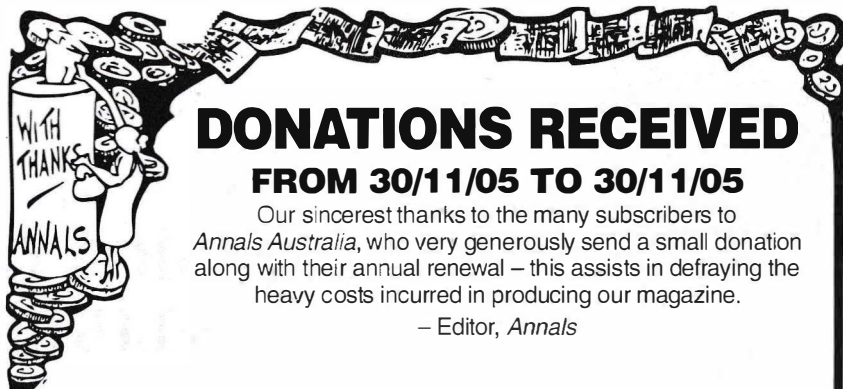
Catholics are *obliged*, in fact, *not* to follow an erroneous conscience. People with erroneous consciences 'who take little trouble to find out what is true and good,' or whose consciences are 'almost blinded through the habit of committing sin' are declared [No. 1791] to be culpable for the evil they commit by following their erroneous consciences.

It is reassuring to learn that the signatories have indicated their willingness to follow the teaching of the Catholic Catechism. As the Catechism is not at variance with the teachings of Sydney's Cardinal Archbishop, they can now, in good conscience, follow the Cardinal. Unless, of course, their real and undeclared problem is with the Catechism.

The Sacred Congregation could be forgiven for thinking that most of those who complained about the teaching of Cardinal Pell did not read very carefully the letter they signed.



1. *The Age*, July 4, 1999.
2. *Papal Power*; Fount Paperback, 1997, p.19.
3. Hilary White, <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2006/feb/06022009.html>
4. *Religious Inventions*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.100, 126, 133-134.
5. *Unholy Alliance*, David Horowitz, Regnery Publishing 2004, p.231.
6. *Catholic Catechism*, St Pauls, 1994, no.1793. Also E. Manganot, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vii, 728 Paris Librairie Letouzey et Ane, 1927.



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– Editor, *Annals*

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European Institutions Criticized

SILENCE AT SUPPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

POLITICAL, civil and Church figures criticized the silence of some European institutions in the face of the grave violations of religious freedom in the world.

The criticism was articulated at a press conference by Mario Mauro, vice president of the European Parliament; by Father Bernardo Cervellera, director of the AsiaNews agency; and by Attilio Tamburrini, director of the Italian section of Aid to the Church in Need.

The three speakers criticized European institutions' lack of attention in the face of the growing phenomenon of violations of religious freedom in many countries.

Mauro observed: 'Religious freedom is a social problem, which serves as a test to measure the level of all liberties within a state; if this one is violated, all liberties are violated.'

Based on his experience as a missionary in China, Father Cervellera lamented the abduction of bishops, who have died in prison or after years of forced labor, the torture and imprisonment of Tibetan Buddhist monks, and the torture of thousands of members of the Falun Gong movement.

For his part, Tamburrini, author of an annual report on religious freedom, mentioned the extent of the problem of religious freedom in the former Communist countries of Europe. He said that commitment to vigilance is needed on the part of international organizations, since it is a question of violations of treaties endorsed by U.N. member-nations.

Mauro contended that the European Parliament is often silent in the face of these enormous violations of the fundamental rights of millions of people and, yet, it makes criticisms 'of an ideological character.' On 30 occasions over the past 10 years, the European Parliament has criticized the Holy See for allegedly interfering with and violating human rights, while Cuba and China have been condemned an average of 15 times for these reasons.

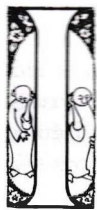
Mauro appealed to European deputies to take into account violations of religious freedom when concluding agreements, including commercial ones, with other countries.

Source: Zenit Catholic News Agency

The Vatican updates its outlook on the history of relations between Christianity and Islam.

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN HISTORY

By WALTER BRANDMÜLLER



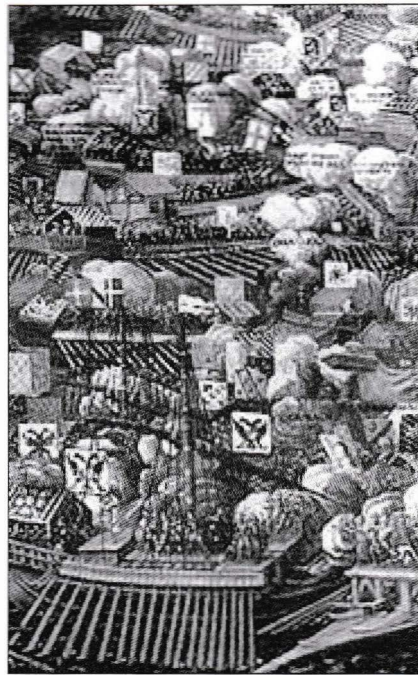
I WILL address the topic of Christianity and Islam by limiting myself to a brief presentation of historical facts, without entering into the specifics of religious and theological dialogue.

This seems useful to me, because the celebration of the fifth centenary of the birth of Pius V was a bit muted, especially in academic circles. The victor at Lepanto in 1571, this pope who had the courage and the energy to construct an alliance of almost all the Christian kingdoms against the Ottoman empire – which was advancing to threaten Europe and had already established dominion over the Balkans – today, precisely on account of the unhappy restoration of hostility between the two worlds – one formerly Christian, and to a certain extent still Christian, and the Muslim world – seems to many to be an obstructing presence best left in the shadows.

The so-called ‘secularism’ that would silence all the monotheistic religions through accusations of fundamentalism, or that exalts dialogue by negating their differences, intends to blot out the age-old conflict that has pitted the two religious communities against one another. Above all, it intends to neutralize the Roman pontiff, who has shown himself capable of blocking the Islamic advance and saving Christian civilization.

Although the two monotheistic religions in question share, among other things and to different degrees, the Jewish tradition – a specialist like Samir Khalil Samir emphasizes how before Mohammed the Arab Jews and Christians called their God by the name of Allah – there are many differences between Christianity and Islam, and the differences are fundamental.

Since their very beginnings, there



The battle of Lepanto, Oct. 7, 1571. The combined Catholic fleets of Spain, Venice, Genoa, Malta and the Papal States of Pius V under the command of Don John of Austria defeated the entire maritime force of Turkey, freed more than 10,000 Christian galley-slaves and destroyed the myth of Ottoman naval invincibility. Lepanto put an end to Turkish dominance in the Mediterranean, and to the threat that the Ottomans posed to Europe.

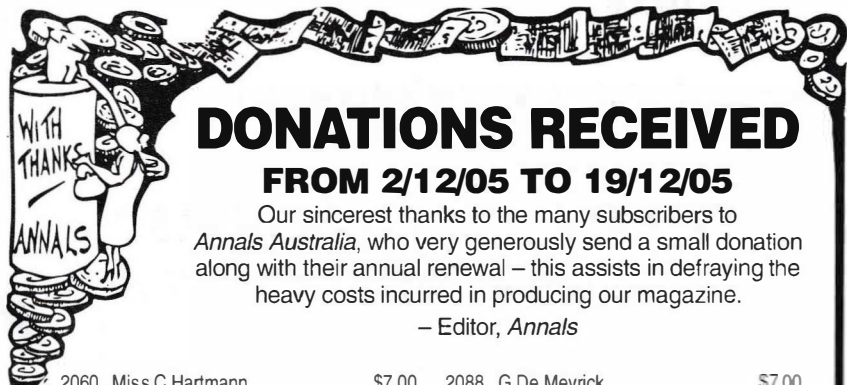
have been differences in how Christians and Muslims think of conversion and the use of violence.

For the Christians, conversion was something that must be voluntary and individual, obtained primarily through preaching and example, and this is how Christianity did in fact spread during its first centuries. Obviously, we must immediately note that this conception of early Christianity underwent changes in later eras, connected with the diffusion of a spirit of religious intolerance in Western culture. John Paul II himself acknowledged that in this regard the Church’s children ‘must return with a spirit of repentance [for] the

acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to intolerance and even the use of violence in the service of truth’ (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 35).

But on the part of the Muslims, from the earliest times, even while Mohammed was still alive, conversion was imposed through the use of force. The expansion and extension of Islam’s sphere of influence came through war with the tribes that did not accept conversion peacefully, and this went hand in hand with submission to Islamic political authority. Islamism, unlike Christianity, expressed a comprehensive religious, cultural, social, and political strategy. While Christianity spread during its first three centuries in spite of persecution and martyrdom, and in many ways in opposition to Roman domination, introducing a clear separation between the spiritual and political spheres, Islam was imposed through the power of political domination.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the use of force occupies a central place in Islamic tradition, as witnessed by the frequent use of the word ‘jihad’ in many texts. Although some scholars, especially Western ones, maintain that jihad does not necessarily mean war, but instead a spiritual struggle and interior effort, Samir Khalil Samir again clarifies that the use of this term in Islamic tradition – including its usage today – is essentially uniform, indicating warfare in the name of God to defend Islam, which is an obligation for all adult Muslim males. Those who maintain that understanding jihad as a holy war constitutes a sort of deviation from the true Islamic tradition are therefore not telling the truth, and history sadly demonstrates that violence has characterized Islam since its origin, and that Mohammed himself systematically organized and led the raids against the tribes that did not want



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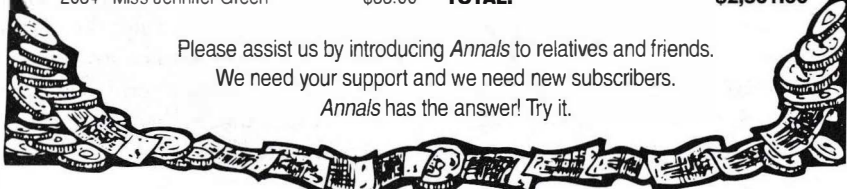
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– Editor, *Annals*

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to convert and accept his dominion, thus subjecting the Arab tribes one by one. Naturally, it must also be said that at the time of Mohammed warfare was part of the Bedouin culture, and no one saw anything objectionable about it.

The interpretation that Muslims today try to make of the crusades – an interpretation that finds many followers among Western historians – also fails to correspond to historical reality.

According to this representation, Western Christians were invaders in a peaceful region that was respectful of the different religions – the Holy Land, which back then was part of Syria – using religious motives to disguise imperialist ambitions and economic interests.

But the idea of the crusades emerged, above all, as a reaction to the measures that the Fatimid caliph Hakim bin-Amr Allah took against the Christians of Egypt and Syria. In 1008, al-Hakim outlawed the celebrations of Palm Sunday, and the following year he ordered that Christians be punished and all their property confiscated. In that same year of 1009, he sacked and demolished the church dedicated to Mary in Cairo, and did not prevent the desecration of the Christian sepulchers surrounding it, or the sacking of the city's other churches. That same year saw what was certainly the most severe episode: the destruction of the Constantinian basilica of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, known as the Holy Sepulcher. The historical records of the time say that he had ordered 'to obliterate any symbol of Christian faith, and provide for the removal of every reliquary and object of veneration.' The basilica was then razed, and Ibn Abi Zahir did all he could to demolish the sepulcher of Christ and any trace of it.

Today in many intellectual circles there is a lot of talk about the religious tolerance shown over many centuries by the Islamic authorities, because – while in terms of the pagan populations the saying 'embrace Islam and your life will be spared' held true, and the pagans who did not convert were killed – the 'people of the book,' the Jews and Christians, were able to continue practicing their religion.

In reality, the situation was much less idyllic: the Christians and Jews could survive only if they accepted Muslim

political dominion and a situation of humiliation, which was aggravated by the obligation to pay increasingly burdensome taxes. So it's no wonder that most of the Christians, even though they were not constrained by force, converted to Islam on account of the constant economic and social pressure. This led to the total disappearance of a form of Christianity that had flourished for more than half a millennium, as in the part of Africa ruled by the Roman empire, the land of Tertullian, saint Cyprian, Tyconius, and above all saint Augustine.

But the biggest difference between Christianity and Islam concerns the crucial issue of understanding the human person.

This is shown by the fact that many Islamic countries have not accepted the declaration of human rights promulgated by the United Nations in 1948, or have done so with the reservation of excluding the norms that conflict with Qur'anic law – which means practically all of them. From an historical point of view, therefore, it must be recognized that the declaration of the rights of man is a cultural fruit of the Christian world, even though these are 'universal' norms, in that they are valid for all. In Islamic tradition, in fact, the concept of the equality of all human beings does not exist, nor does, in consequence, the concept of the dignity of every human life. Sharia is founded upon a threefold inequality: between man and woman, between Muslim and non-Muslim, and between freeman and slave. In essence, the male human being is considered a full titleholder of rights and duties only through his belonging to the Islamic community: those who convert to another religion or become atheists are considered traitors, subject to the death penalty, or at least to the loss of all their rights.

The most irrevocable of these inequalities is that between man and woman, because the others can be overcome – the slave can be freed, the non-Muslim can convert to Islam – while woman's inferiority is irremediable, in that it was established by God himself. In Islamic tradition, the husband enjoys an almost absolute authority over his wife: while polygamy is permitted for men, a woman may not have more than one husband, may not marry a man of another faith, can be repudiated by her

husband, has no rights to the children in case of divorce, is penalized in the division of the inheritance, and from a legal standpoint her testimony is worth half as much as a man's.

So if Islam implied, and still implies, not merely religious membership, but an entire way of life, sanctioned even at the political level – a way of life that naturally involves and prescribes how to act with other peoples, how to behave in questions of war and peace, how to conduct relations with foreigners – it is very easy to understand how the victory of Lepanto guaranteed for the West the possibility of developing its culture of respect for the human person, for whom equal dignity regardless of his condition came to be guaranteed.

If this characterization of Islam is destined to remain unchanged in the future, as it has been until now, the only possible outcome is a difficult coexistence with those who do not belong to the Muslim community: in an Islamic country, in fact, the non-Muslim must submit to the Islamic system, if he

does not wish to live in a situation of substantial intolerance.

Likewise, on account of this all-embracing conception of religion and political authority, the Muslim will have great difficulty in adapting to the civil laws in non-Islamic countries, seeing them as something foreign to his upbringing and to the dictates of his religion. Perhaps one should ask oneself if the well-attested difficulties persons coming from the Islamic world have with integrating into the social and cultural life of the West are not explained in part by this problematic situation.

We must also recognize the natural right of every society to defend its own cultural, religious, and political identity. It seems to me that this is precisely what Pius V did.



MONSIGNOR WALTER BRANDMÜLLER is president of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences. 'Christianity and Islam in History,' was an address delivered at 'Christianity and Islam, Yesterday and Today' conference held at the Pontifical Lateran University, December 2005. Text provided by Sandro Magister. English translation by Matthew Sherry: traduttore@hotmail.com. Copyright © 2005 Chiesa. Reprinted with permission.

The Failure of Communism

PIPES believes its [Communism's] failure was inevitable both because its quest for an egalitarian society required an oppressive master-class whose privilege rendered equality impossible, and because nationalism is a much stronger force than class solidarity. I would add a third reason: Marx was an intellectual crook, who faked, bent, or suppressed evidence to suit his preconceived conclusions. His theory was thus inherently wrong and was certain to fail when put into practice. Not least, Marx's dishonesty deceived all his followers about the wealth-creating power and protean resilience of market capitalism, which thus 'buried' Communism, not the other way round. It is worth noting, because it explains so much, that Communism and capitalism are not polarities. Communism is the application of an artificial man-made ideology. Capitalism is not an 'ism' at all but a natural process which tends to occur at a certain point of human development, thereafter updating itself from time to time, as survival dictates. Darwin can tell us more about it than Marx.

– Paul Johnson, reviewing Richard Pipes, *Communism: A Brief History*, in *Times Literary Supplement*, January 18 2002, p. 11.



MOTHERS TAKE A BOW

A woman named Emily renewing her driver's license at the Clerk's Office was asked by the woman recorder to state her occupation. She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself.

'What I mean is,' explained the recorder, 'do you have a job, or are you just a .?'

'Of course I have a job,' snapped Emily. 'I am mother.'

'We do not list 'mother' as an occupation...'housewife' covers it,' said the recorder emphatically.

I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall.

The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient, and possessed of a high sounding title like, 'Official Interrogator' or 'Town Registrar.'

'What is your occupation?' She probed. What made me say it, I do not know... the words simply popped out.

'I am Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations.'

The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair, and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pronouncement was written in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

'Might I ask,' said the clerk with new interest, 'just what you do in your field?'

Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply,

'I have a continuing program of research, (what mother does not) in the laboratory and in the field'. Normally I would have said 'indoors and out.'

I am working for my Masters, (the whole darned family), and already have four credits, (all daughters). Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities, (any mother care to disagree?) and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it). But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are more of a satisfaction rather than just money.

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove into our driveway, buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants - ages 13, 7, and 3. Upstairs I could hear our new experiment, (a 6 month old baby), in the child-development program, testing out a new vocal pattern.

I felt triumphant! I had scored a beat on bureaucracy! And I had gone on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than 'just another mother.'

Motherhood..... What a glorious career!

Especially when there is a title on the door.

Does this make:

Grandmothers: 'Senior Research Associates in the field of Child Development and Human Relations?'

Great grandmothers: 'Executive Senior Research Associates?'

I think so.

- Associate Research Assistant.

*Is it reasonable to argue for abortion
on the basis of a woman's right over her own body?*

RU-486

By MICHAEL FALLON MSC



THE safety of this drug is obviously an important issue. Who decides on its safety is also an important issue. These are matters that are disputed in the public arena.

However, a more fundamental issue is at stake here. The effect of RU-486 is to terminate the life of an embryo/foetus. It is evident that many people in our society are of the opinion that a woman should have the right to do this, if that is her choice. What values are the people who espouse this opinion upholding? How reasonable is their point of view?

Two values stand out. One is respect for an individual's freedom to choose. Another is compassion. It must often be a truly traumatic experience to find oneself unexpectedly pregnant, especially if a woman is not supported by a strong commitment from the man involved, and feels herself without support from other significant people in her life. It is often traumatic for the man as well. Surely our first response to those who find themselves in this situation must be love, and love that is as practical as circumstances allow. Clearly, it is such compassion that moves some people to support a woman's right to procure an abortion. Some argue as well that abortion can be the simplest and most effective way of removing the trauma and bringing healing and peace. Others argue that the data does not support this.

There are other ways of showing compassion and helping out. There are other choices that the pregnant woman and the others involved can make. Some women, often with significant supportive love, but not always, have chosen to continue the pregnancy. Some have chosen to keep the child. Others have adopted the child out to

loving people who have nurtured the child with joy and the child has matured beautifully. In this, as in all other areas where we humans are involved, things do not always work out for the best, but where genuine love is brought to bear, beautiful things can and do happen.

Even if we assume that people are acting from the best of motives, and are genuinely concerned with the values of freedom and love, the question still remains: Is it right to terminate the life of an embryo/foetus? The values that a society upholds are supported by laws that, for the common good, curtail individual freedom in many areas. Should this be one?

We don't have to prove that we are dealing here with life. Nor do we have to prove that we are dealing with the early stages of human life, and human life that is distinct from that of the mother or the father. An embryo/foetus is not 'a part of the woman's body' as is sometimes

claimed. It is utterly dependent on the mother for its survival, and so is utterly vulnerable, but it is a distinct being.

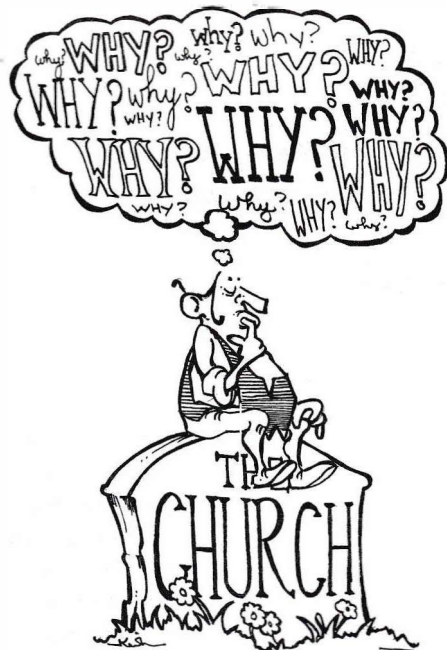
Thanks to advances in medicine, it is rare that a pregnancy is a threat to the mother's life. In these situations we try to save both lives, but if we cannot, we do all we can to save the life of the mother, even if this requires that we terminate the life of the embryo/foetus, which would die in any case if the mother were to die. The vast majority of abortions are not in such a life-threatening situation. Clearly not everyone finds a problem with terminating human life in the early months of a pregnancy. Others judge that we should respect life even in its earliest stages. There are arguments around crime and especially around unjust aggression, where, as a last resort, the only way to defend life is to take the life of an unjust aggressor. But no rational person supports taking the life of someone who is innocent, in order to attain some goal, however attractive. Isn't this what we are doing when we procure an abortion? Some wonder what all the 'fuss' is about since embryos/foetuses are being naturally aborted all the time. In some places infant mortality is tragically high. Does that make infanticide defensible?

We need to ask: How healthy is a society that sees the terminating of innocent life in its early stages as a solution to the problems associated with 'unwanted' pregnancy? It is tragic not to be wanted by one's biological mother and/or father. But a woman/man can come to 'want' what was initially 'unwanted', and there are others, apart from our biological parents, who can 'want' us and love us very beautifully. We need to ask: Is it reasonable to argue for abortion on the basis of a woman's right over her own body when science clearly demonstrates that an embryo/

**A Mediæval
Catholic Mother's
Prayer for her
daughter**

THE Blessing of God may thou have,
and of his Mother bright;
Of all angels and all archangels,
and of all holy wight;*
And that thou may have grace
to wend thy way full right,
to the Bliss of Heaven
where sitteth God Almighty.
Amen

* 'Wight' means 'person'. This prayer of a mother for her daughter, is taken from a MS [Lambeth 853] dating from 1430. Elsewhere in this mediæval Catholic work entitled *How the Good Wife taught her Daughter*, we find the advice: 'Look thou love well thy God, and Holy Church'.



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foetus, while utterly dependent upon the mother, is a separate, living, human being in the early stages of development – a development that continues after birth and right through life?

Some are claiming that those who oppose the procurement of abortion are driven by religious convictions, and that they are trying to impose their views on the community. Certainly, those who believe in a God of love are influenced by their religious beliefs when it comes to how they behave. But the arguments against procuring abortion are based on values that are supported by careful reasoning, not by arbitrary religious prejudice. Pope Benedict XVI in his recent encyclical states clearly (n.28) that the Church does not seek to impose its views on the State, which has the responsibility for making laws for the good of the whole community. However, the Church has the right and the duty to keep before people's minds and hearts the values revealed by Jesus. It is hard to imagine a more important value for a healthy society to uphold than that of respect for life. It is important that the arguments are presented with clarity and compassion. If truth is to prevail, it should be by winning people's minds and hearts. Truth must persuade by its own persuasive power.

As disciples of Jesus let us keep love to the forefront and let us check that our convictions are, indeed, rational, and our arguments clear. If we fail to love, no one will listen. If we are genuinely moved by compassion and are genuinely seeking a way forward that will, indeed, keep society healthy by supporting cherished values, and so help bring true liberation and dignity and peace to people, we can continue to hope that reason, supported by love, will lead to the triumph of truth, the truth that will 'set us free' (John 8:32), the truth that will lead us to 'live and to live to the full' (John 10:10).

Appendix: From Benedict XVI *God is Love* n. 28

The Church's social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being. It recognizes that it is not the Church's responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life. Rather, the Church wishes to help form consciences

in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest. Building a just social and civil order, wherein each person receives what is his or her due, is an essential task that every generation must take up anew. As a political task, this cannot be the Church's immediate responsibility. Yet, since it is also a most important human responsibility, the Church is duty-bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through ethical formation, her own specific contribution towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving them politically.

"The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the State. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not of the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply."



FATHER MICHAEL FALLON MSC is the author of a number of popular commentaries on the Gospels, on St Paul's epistles, the Apocalypse and the Psalms. He is stationed in St John the Apostle Presbytery, Kippax (Holt) ACT.
 website: www.michaelfallonmsc.com

'Liberation' Ideology

ALL that talk about 'liberation' twenty, thirty years ago, all the plotting, all the bodies, produced this, this impoverished broken-down country led by a gang of cruel and paternalistic half-educated theorists.

— Former Vietcong General Pham Xuan An, quoted by Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam*. New York, 1999, p.384.

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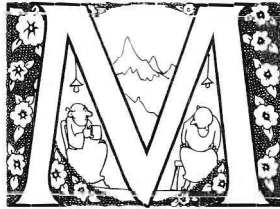
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BOOK REVIEW

Analysis, poetry, prose and prayer: the Gospels of St Luke and St John

NEW LIGHT ON THE GOOD NEWS FROM BARRETT AND BROWN

Reviewed by IAN MACDONALD



MAX Barrett's book is one of those you approach with caution and finish with delight.

He suggests reading the Fourth Gospel in tandem with his work. This reviewer, caught up in the author's wit and scholarship, ignored the advice. But after reading his *vade mecum* read the gospel with fresh insight.

For readers of this magazine, there is no need to elaborate on the lighthearted yet stalwart approach Max Barrett takes to life. He has demonstrated it in his long-running series, *Training for the Olympics*. Oddly, however, another book came to mind, *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Not, it should be emphasised, because of any similarity to the irreverence and magnificent incoherence of the Church of England minister and Tipperary Irishman Laurence Sterne's comic masterpiece but because of the sense *Read John* gave of discovering a highly individual classic where idiosyncrasy, scholarship and reverent faith combine.

At the beginning of his work, Max Barrett refers to modern disputes about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Rightly, however, he does not linger on the matter. The gospel itself is how he'll catch the conscience and the interest of his readers with minor detail such as why Our Lord walked up and down outside the Temple: because he was cold.

Above all, Max Barrett rescues the gospel from being considered pietistically dated by showing how modern its irony is, citing verse 46 of John's opening chapter: 'Phillip's enthused declaration to his friend Nathaniel: "We have found the Messiah... He is Jesus of Nazareth" – a statement which drew from Nathaniel

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the laconic retort: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"' The kind of lively quote journalists hope and wait for in their interviews. It, and others cited by Max Barrett, confirmed for this reader that the Fourth Gospel like its companion gospels grew from an oral culture, were written down and copied, destined to be carried by the Roman Empire's couriers, the British Empire's Morse telegraph, the Soviet Empire's samizdat and the American Empire's emails. In other words, classic reportage with variations of angle, selection and quotation but an overall truth.

Max Barrett also shows vividly how deep was John's knowledge of Hebrew scripture and how this affected his take on the life of Jesus Christ. His is a book that will be read as long as the Fourth Gospel is. Any reservations? The cover, based on a Correggio depiction of St

John, doesn't work. As printed, it looks like something sculpted from chocolate mud cake. But that will only add to the value of the first edition as the work goes into reprints.

By a happy coincidence, Elizabeth Brown's second book also concerns itself with St John's Gospel, sequel to a similar work inspired by St Luke's Gospel. Whereas Max Barrett is into analytical commentary on the gospel text, Elizabeth Brown takes gospel verses as her point of departure for poetry designed to enhance those verses with an eloquent simplicity inspired by a powerful faith as in her reflection on John 18, 15-18, 25-27, entitled *Peter's Denial*.

'I ask myself time and again,

'What could I have done?

'Should I have stayed with my Lord,

'Not left him alone?

'What would have happened if I'd been strong

'And stayed by his side?

'If on that night when put to the test,

'When put to the test,

'My friend I had not denied?

'I thought I knew myself.

'And could have no fear:

'Now I know that outward strength.

'Is only a veneer.

'I learnt a lesson, that sad night;

'It now stands me well.

'Strength of spirit, and of faith,

'Must deep within me dwell.'

What the works have in common is the courage of publication outside the mainstream industry, increasingly dominated by marketers. Too much to call the latter barbarians. But authors such as Max Barrett and Elizabeth Brown have an enduring faith akin to that of the monks and nuns who copied ancient manuscripts and illuminated them during the Dark Ages.



IAN MACDONALD the pen-name of a prominent Sydney journalist and author.

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– Editor, *Annals Australasia*.

The ongoing Iraqi instability

FORGET KHOMEINI AT YOUR PERIL

By PAUL STENHOUSE, PH.D



HE escalating terror in Iraq, like Federal government's efforts to clarify the position of disaffected and disloyal Islamists in the Australian community seem to attract pundits and the politically compromised as casinos attract gambling addicts or the latest investment scam attracts suggestible investors.

Both these issues have been bombarded with words like mortar shells; and with effects often just as unpredictable and unsubtle.

Mark Steyne [*'Listen to the word on the Arab street'* *The London Daily Telegraph* Tuesday November 22] concluded that demonstrations against Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi in Jordan on Thursday November 10 in the wake of a suicide bombing the previous day that killed 30 members of a Sunni wedding party, proved that the terrorist who was their fellow-Jordanian has 'outlived' his 'usefulness' to the jihad. He further implied that this was a vote against al-Qa'ida and bin Laden.

The most that can be argued is that Jordanian Sunni Muslims not unreasonably objected to being targeted by fellow Sunnis; that a Sunni wedding was not the place for Muslim suicide bombers to ply their murderous trade. Some of the protesters in Amman carried placards asking simply 'Why?' Why would Zarqawi target their country, where so many people had supported his jihad in Iraq? It didn't prove that the grieving demonstrators were in principle against a jihad targeting infidels/non-Muslims perceived as threatening Sunni hegemony in the Middle East.

Where were the Jordanian demonstrators over the past 18 months when Iraqi Shi'ite Muslims were blown up almost daily by suicide bombers in mosques, police stations, army barracks,

market-places and at funerals and weddings? Where were the Jordanian demonstrators when at least 16 people were killed and 40 wounded in a blast near a Shi'ite mosque and market north of Baghdad on February 28? Or when one of Shi'ite Islam's holiest shrines was bombed in Samarra on February 22? The Golden Dome and the main building of the Mosque were destroyed. It is said to house the remains of Ali al-Naqi and his son, Hasan al-Askari. A second shrine marks the place where the hidden – or 12th – imam, Al-Mahdi, son of Hasan, went into hiding. 379 people died in the subsequent violence.

Only a day after killing his fellow Sunni Muslims in Jordan, al-Zarqawi reportedly apologised and said that the Muslims who were killed were

not targeted. But there were no non-Muslims at the wedding. The word of a mass-murderer, especially of one who kills in the name of Allah, is a notoriously frail reed to lean upon.

And if he is saying that he does not target Muslims, does this mean that for Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi the Shi'ites his suicide bombers target and kill are not regarded as Muslims? The answer is yes. This is the message from the murder of the defenceless victims he targeted at a Shi'ite funeral, the day after the wedding debacle in Jordan, as he was making his declaration of sorrow to his fellow 'Muslims'.

This would be in keeping with al-Zarqawi's declaring 'total war' on Shi'ites in Iraq in mid-September last year.¹ Some sects of the Wahhabis in Pakistan are reportedly demanding that Shi'ites be declared to be non-Muslims, like the Sunni Ahmadi sect.²

Ongoing hostility between the Wahhabi sect of the Sunni of Saudi Arabia and Shi'ites was the reason for the suspicion among Shi'ite Muslims in 1987 that the deaths of 400 mainly Shi'ite pilgrims killed by troops in Mecca during anti-Western riots were not fortuitous.

'Concentrated in the oil-rich province of Al-Sharqiyah, Saudi Shi'ites form a good part of the kingdom's urban middle class. They are also strongly present in the liberal professions and the private business sector. Yet of the top 400 *government* positions, only one is held by a Shi'ite undersecretary of state. Of the 120 members of the all-appointed Saudi Parliament, only two are Shi'ites. Worse still, the official theological organs of the state, exclusively held by clerics from the Hanbali Sunni school of Islam, publicly castigate Shi'ites as non-Muslims. Courts, controlled by the Hanbali clerics, do not admit testimony by Shi'ites. The same clerics have banned marriages between Hanbali Sunnis and Shi'ites

Another Perspective

'THE Church lives again the life of Christ. It has its period of obscurity and growth and its period of manifestation, and this is followed by the catastrophe of the Cross and the new birth that springs from failure. And what is most remarkable is that the enemies of the Church – the movements that rend and crucify her – are in a sense her own offspring and derive their dynamic force from her. Islam, the Protestant Reformation, the Liberal Revolution, none of them would have existed apart from Christianity – they are abortive or partial manifestations of the spiritual power which Christianity has brought into history.'

– Christopher Dawson (1889-1970),
Beyond Politics (New York: Sheed & Ward,
1939, p.130).

The Example of Muhammad

THE apostle [Muhammad] said, 'Kill any Jew that falls into your power.' Thereupon Muḥayyiṣa bin Mas'ud leapt upon Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant with whom they had social and business relations, and killed him. Ḥuwayyiṣa was not a Muslim at the time though he was the elder brother. When Muḥayyiṣa killed Ibn Sunayna Ḥuwayyiṣa began to beat him, saying, 'You enemy of God, why did you kill him when much of the fat on your belly comes from his wealth?' Muḥayyiṣa answered, 'Had the one who ordered me to kill him ordered me to kill you I would have cut your head off.' Ḥuwayyiṣa replied, 'By God, if Muhammad had ordered you to kill me would you have killed me?' He said, 'Yes, by God, had he ordered me to cut off your head I would have done so.' Ḥuwayyiṣa exclaimed, 'By God, a religion which can bring you to this is fantastic!' and he became a Muslim.

— Ibn Ishāq, biographer of Muhammad. From the Arabic text of *as-Sirat al-Nabawi*, Dar Ehia al-Tourath al-Arabi, Beirut, vol.iii, p.65.

and declared all Shi'ite marriages as 'illegal'.³

In the article in *Asia Times* cited above Sultan Shahin describes how sheikh bin Baz of Saudi Arabia

'is said to have gone to the extent of declaring in an edict that the meat of the people of the book [Jews and Christians] is permissible for Sunni Muslims to eat, but not the meat slaughtered by the Shi'ites'.⁴

According to Amir Taheri, radical Sunni theologians believe that they become 'unclean' even by shaking the hand of a Shi'ite.⁵

Steyne raises a further question in his efforts to justify the intervention of US troops in Iraq: why have there been no demonstrations against the American presence in Baghdad or Mosul?

The answer he suggests, is that most Iraqis support the American presence.

I should like to believe this, but the absence of anti-American demonstrations doesn't prove it. If most Iraqis supported the presence of US and other foreign soldiers on their soil, the murderous 'insurgents' would have nowhere to hide from justice and retribution at the hands of the democratically elected government of Iraq.

Since the fall of Baghdad and the subsequent interim government, new constitution, and now the new government, the Shi'ite hold most of the aces; the continuing acts of terror, mainly aimed at the Shi'ite and the American and coalition forces, proves this to be the case.

The Shi'ite would be foolish to demonstrate to oust the US forces; it was the much hated 'crusaders' [to use al-Qa'ida's favoured epithet] who put legitimate power finally into their hands. Shi'ites are the majority, and for once Democracy makes sense to them, at least in the initial stages of their much longed-for power grab.

The Sunni wouldn't risk taking to the streets to demonstrate when the security forces are — post-Saddam Hussein — in the hands of their traditional enemies. The Sunni policemen who were allegedly tortured by Shi'ite security forces are a timely warning to restive Sunni to keep their heads down.



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While there are US and other non-Muslim forces willing to take the brunt of the Sunni resentment, why should the Shi'ite power brokers [inspired if not led from Iran] upset the *status quo*?

Is it any wonder that the mainly Catholic Chaldaen and Assyrian Christians of Iraq, the second largest minority, have chosen to throw in their lot with the largest minority, the Kurds?

As I write, bewildered commentators in the West who should know better puzzle over the future for a Shi'ite dominated Iraq, and the possibility/probability of all-out civil war.

It remains to be seen if the Shi'ite 'democrats' empowered by George Bush and his advisers, can rein in their extremist elements, resist the temptation to take revenge on their former Sunni overlords, and be an improvement on the secular regime of Saddam Hussein.

The Ayatollah Khomeini, their model and hero, seized power in Iran after the Shah, to a feeble chorus of disapproval from the US, the UK and West Germany, was ousted from Persia in 1979. The Ayatollah's regime proved to be a two-edged sword that cut, and is still cutting deeply, into the hands that by default or by design made his return from exile in France and his subsequent reign of terror possible.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 spawned a revival of radical Islam and began with the seizing of the American embassy by Iranian revolutionaries a million strong chanting, 'Death to America.' To support its hatred of America and the imperial ambitions of radical Islam, the Iranian regime developed long-range missiles and probably nuclear warheads to tip them with. It became sponsor and host to Hizbollah, the largest terrorist army in the world, which in 1983 blew up a U.S. marine barracks in Lebanon, killing 245 servicemen.⁶

Though present indications are to the contrary, let's hope that the US and the West have better luck with a Shi'ite dominated regime in Iraq than they have had with a radical Shi'ite regime in Iran.

1. See MEMRI Special Dispatches No. 987.
2. See *Asia Times*, Sultan Shahin, 'The Shi'ite Sunni Divide', August 26-27, 2003.
3. 'Apartheid. Saudi Style', by Amir Taheri, *New York Post*, May 22, 2003.
4. 'The Shi'ite Sunni Divide'.
5. *art. cit.*
6. David Horowitz, *Unholy Alliance*, Regnery, 2004 p. 110.

No teacher was sent with the First Fleet

THE STATE OF SCHOOLS IN THE PENAL PERIOD

By ALAN KATEN DUNSTAN PhD



ONE of the most important, but nowadays rarely discussed consequences of the Reformation, was the terrible effect it had upon education. Perhaps not surprisingly since the Reformation also introduced the plain people to the delights of unfettered industrial capitalism. So much so that by 1807 *Hansard* could report that very young children who 'were a burden on the rates,'¹ were sold and taken to some cotton mill 'in carts like so many negro slaves' where they were worked for more than twelve-hours a day,² or for as long as they could be kept awake by sadistic overseers.

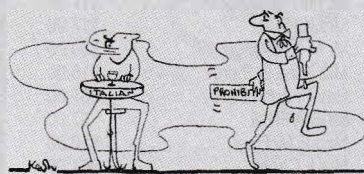
This was a far cry from the heady days of the Venerable Bede [c. 673-735], a Benedictine monk, who besides translating the Gospel of Saint John into Anglo-Saxon and other accomplishments, worked tirelessly to educate young Britons – often in the chantries of the rich wherein Masses could also be said.³ It was a far cry, too, from the days of Alfred the 'Great' [849-901]. The king who, whilst working to defeat the Danes and develop a literate administration, translated Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* and wrote a preface to it. [This Preface remains one of the classics of Anglo-Saxon literature]. He also translated *Regula Pastoralis* by Pope Gregory the Great, and Augustine's *Soliloquies*, writing prefaces for both.⁴ Alfred also brought St. Grimbald (c. 820-908) the Benedictine monk, into England to begin the teaching at Oxford.

There had been an organized system of education operating across Europe from about AD 600⁵ And it was from this base, that, because Latin

'The children [at the Catholic school at Darlinghurst, Sydney,] read and write indifferently, and have a very slight acquaintance with arithmetic. Grammar and Geography appears not to have been taught. Their knowledge of Scripture, and of the catechism also, is but small. The children are not regular nor punctual. They are tolerably clean, but rude and disorderly.'

– Extract from the Report of the Select Committee on Education, 1855.

was necessary for university, Grammar schools developed; Latin being the only grammar known to the West in those days.⁶ Moreover, in the brief span of about two lifetimes from the mid 1400s, over 300 grammar schools were established in Britain so that eventually even small towns could boast of having at least one such school.⁷



Intolerable law

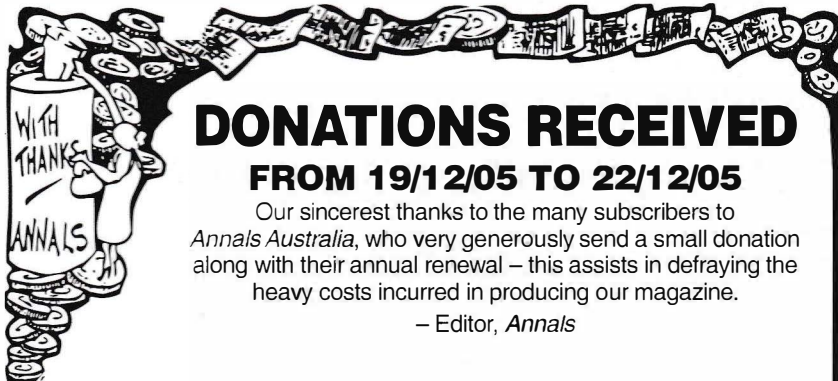
A Prohibition law is perhaps no great hardship to a Puritan Middle-Western farmer, for his religion teaches him that it is wrong to consume alcohol, as the phrase is, anyway. Such a law is clearly intolerable to an Italian, to whom the drinking of wine is part of everyday life and normal manhood, no more wrong than breathing.

– Christopher Hollis. *The American Heresy*.

Beggary by Act of Parliament

This idyll was shattered with the coming of Henry VIII, or more particularly by his daughter Elizabeth I with her attacks [in both England and Ireland⁸] upon recusants.⁹ In these attacks new forms of taxation were raised specifically to destroy the Church of Christ. Catholics who kept the Faith into which they and their fathers and children had been born and bred, suddenly became liable to a year's imprisonment and a fine of one hundred marks for every time they heard Mass.¹⁰ The government double-taxed every man who refused to renounce his religion: it shut them out from practicing law and all offices of power and trust; if a married woman kept away from the church, she might be imprisoned unless ransomed by her husband at ten pounds a month.¹¹ Those in arrears of land taxes would find that the queen was able to seize their personal wealth and two-thirds of their real estate every six months.¹² Broken financially, 'thousands upon thousands were driven out on the roads to beg.'¹³ For the crime of begging, 'Papists' were locked into pillories and exposed to public abuse and ridicule; their heads held still by nails hammered through the ears. Similarly, many recusants were thrown into prisons where they were flogged or had their ears bored with red-hot pokers.¹⁴ [The question as to the background of the convicts transported to eastern Australia from 1788, begins with such events¹⁵].

We should also point out that shortly after Elizabeth's reign, Oliver Cromwell, the 'ultimate Whig hero,' descended upon the land with all the fury that a demented mind could muster.¹⁶ Moreover, following the triumph and enthronement of Whiggery and the



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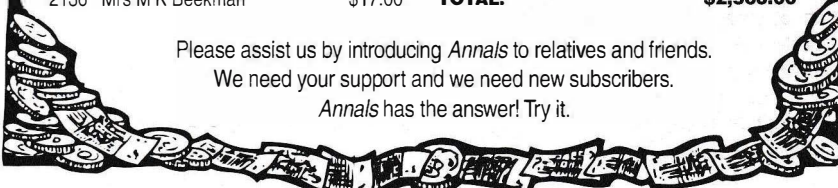
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Money Power in 1688, amongst a swagful of prohibitions, Catholics could no longer attend schools, nor keep schools, nor send their children to be educated abroad.¹⁷

['Botany Bay'] 'O Land of Widest Hope.'¹⁸

I now propose, subject to the patience of the reader, to tie this background to events at Port Jackson. Since successive British Governments had long ago forsaken the idea of mass education and wholly abrogated their responsibility to the victims of the Penal Laws, readers will not be surprised to learn that many convicts were often of a type that the Laws were specifically designed to produce. Thus authorities did not deem it necessary to send a teacher with the First Fleet; nor was any appointed for the next twenty years.¹⁹ Nor was any teacher employed for the education of the children of the marines who guarded the convicts. Also, as a test of the longevity of the Laws, we should notice that Governor Phillip was required to swear oaths against the Stuarts, and Popish Recusants.²⁰ Phillip had also to make the Declaration 'Proscribed by Law': 'That there is not any Transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or in the Elements of Bread and Wine at or after the Consecration thereof by any person whatsoever.'²¹

In the earliest days of settlement the first school was conducted by Isabella Rosson,²² a convict woman who in 1789 gathered a handful of children together and taught them to read and write.²³ Another of the very early teachers was Mary Johnson who arrived in 1791 and lived, married, and died at Parramatta. She had been transported for seven years for stealing goods to the value of three shillings and ten pence.²⁴

In this simplest of civilizations wherein men were flogged for non-attendance at Protestant services, the Church of England 'took no responsibility whatsoever' for the education of convict children.²⁵ Ergo, the Colonial Governor became responsible, with assistance from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts which, in 1793, guaranteed a meagre 10 pounds a year each for up to four teachers.²⁶

The first church and school building was a wattle and daub affair built in

1793 by the Rev. Richard Johnson at his own expense. Here about 150 children paid 4d. a week to learn to read and write, and an extra 6d. a week to study arithmetic. Every pupil was also required to learn the Church of England Catechism, or more precisely Thomas Cranmer's Catechism [copied from the Lutheran] 'which contained sundry additions of his own.'²⁷

Philip Gidley King: Bringing Some Light

King, who came to NSW as Governor in 1800 after serving as Commandant of Norfolk Island, was an excellent choice. In 1794 acting on his own initiative, he had erected on Norfolk Island the first stone-built school in Australia. The completed building was comfortably large; and was used solely as a school-house.²⁸ He built a second school in 1795, largely by taxing imported liquor. Other monies came from those found guilty of selling by other than just weights and measures. Offenders could be fined up to 'five pounds and put in the Pillory for three hours,' with the fines going to the schools.

King also established an orphan school on the Island in which not only were the destitute children taught, they were also fed, clothed and given training in some basic skills. As Governor of NSW, he immediately set about establishing a Female Orphan School for the protection and education of young girls. And at a time when 'children of five and six years of age were being sold by the orphanages and poor-houses in England,' and 'public authorities' carried on a 'slave trade in pauper apprentices,'²⁹ King purchased and adapted Captain Kent's³⁰ house, on the corner of Bridge and George Street, for use as a Female Orphan School.³¹ At that time Kent's mansion was Sydney's largest and finest building. Moreover, the purchase was quickly followed by preparations for building an Orphan School at Parramatta for boys. But capping this was his Proclamation in April 1803 which allowed Father Dixon and his Catholics congregation, for the first time in a British settlement in Australia, to legally celebrate the Mass.

Similarly, at sometime between 1793 and 1806, King permitted one James Kenny, a native of Carlow, Ireland, to conduct the first school

for Catholics in Australia. Kenny, like others, was encouraged with 'assigned' servants [convicts] and rations from the Government Store. Such practices would later be outlawed and sadly labeled 'State-aid'.

Kenny's school was situated in the Rocks in the vicinity of the present National Trust Building and S. H. Erwin Gallery [the old Fort Street Girls' School], and commanded uninterrupted views from the Parramatta River all the way to South Head.³²

In the early penal period almost anyone was free to set-up a school and many did; including Farrell Cuffe³³ who kept both day and evening schools. But although privately run, some called themselves Government schools. In so doing they became entitled to governmental support in return for which they were expected to be open to all and to teach *gratis* the children of the poor; a category that sadly fitted most of the children of convict parents. Over the years such schools gradually and logically, became known as 'public schools.'³⁴

Governors Bligh and Macquarie

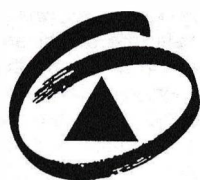
King ended his term in 1806 and was replaced by the irascible Captain Bligh. Thus the question soon became would

he do as well as his predecessor? Besides the Orphan School and one school in Windsor, King had overseen the establishment of three schools in Sydney [including Kenny's] two at Parramatta, one at Toongabbee, and one at Kissing Point, besides several other 'private' schools and 'academies'. Such schools, usually held in private homes, were still fashionable in the 1830s and 1840s. And one in Pitt Street, under the charge of John Henry Rucker, was attended by that son of Irish transportees, Dan Deniehy, the well-known writer, MP and lawyer³⁵ whom Cyril Pearl described as Australia's 'forgotten genius'.

Feeling the pressure from a potential rebel government, Governor Bligh's main contribution to education it seems was the recruitment, by the Rev. Samuel Marsden in England, of the 'pious' Wesleyan schoolmaster John Hosking and his wife, to teach and take over the running of the Orphan School.

However, by the time Macquarie took over in 1810 the settlement's schools were developing into two distinct types. There were the private venture schools that received no financial assistance; and the public schools that were either assisted by government through subsidies on the school buildings and teachers' salaries, or were entirely financed by government. Most public

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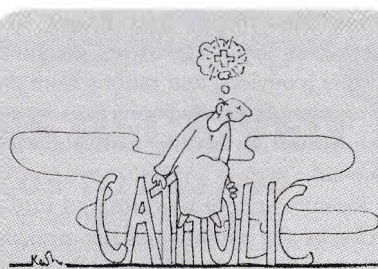
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schools at this time, too, were supervised by clergy of the Church of England. Macquarie extended the number of government assisted schools by subsidizing the construction of school buildings in all the major districts in NSW, and by the time he left, in 1821, there were twenty of these schools. He also ensured that the Church of England maintained its privileged place by introducing into the schools Bell's monitorial system of teaching, a system that gave religious instruction only in accordance with Anglican doctrine.³⁶

Lest this narrative risk becoming overly long, we should now skip ahead to Ralph Darling, whom Eris O'Brien depicted as a governor whose presence caused 'the sun [to] set upon Catholic hopes'. But the historian Brian Fletcher³⁷ has made the point with his customary lucidity, (in effect) that Darling was no worse than his predecessor Sir Thomas Brisbane who attributed every foul deed to Catholics. Nonetheless, in the stiff-necked fashion of his caste Darling decreed that Norfolk Island (abandoned in 1814 and reoccupied in 1825) would become 'the last penal infliction short of death'. Henceforth all convicts sent there were subject to unremitting physical toil in heavy leg-irons. 'All tasks were performed by hand, and horse-drawn implements, such as the plough, were forbidden.' Second and third time offenders were worked in double irons or flogged. And whilst flogging ostensibly was not a death sentence, in reality it very often was. He also ended the practice of permitting convicts to receive land grants on completion of their sentences. And, at the pettiest level, at the Female School of Industry [not to be confused with the Female Factory] where girls between five and eighteen years of age were 'educated' to be servants of the well-to-do; Catholic girls were excluded but not so Jewish girls or the daughters of Dissenters.

In 1828 Catholics numbered over 8,000 in a population of about 36,000; and of all those sent out between 1802 and 1847 around 40 per cent were Irish. And Darling, a typical product of his time, from shame, or from a sense of something lost from within his own tribe, considered Irish Catholics to be 'ignorant in the extreme... bigoted and under the domination of their Priest'.³⁸ In so saying, he became like those whom



Think Positive: try Catholicism

THOSE who convert to Catholicism from some other Christian church are, it is true, expected to understand and to be able to explain their new-found faith to genuine enquirers after truth, but they are not taught nor are they expected, to defame their former religion, or to sit in judgement on those who do not follow them into the Catholic Church. In choosing to be Catholic they increase the breadth and scope of their religious faith: they acquire many elements from the 'Old' pre-reformation Faith' and add them to whatever was positive [and largely derivative from Catholicism] in their former religion. A partial and selective view of Christianity is replaced by a broader and more all-encompassing view. What changes is their understanding and perception of Christianity – and the change is positive.

Those who convert to one of the myriad evangelical bible religions, on the contrary, must generally, it seems, disown their former faith [be it Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Judaism, Buddhism or some other form of Protestantism]. In the case of Christians, they must generally submit to re-baptism. All, whatever their earlier beliefs, are taught and expected to teach in their turn, that their former religion, especially Catholicism, is evil, that the bible is the sole authority for Christian faith, and that the Catholic Church and especially the Pope of Rome is the beast, the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse. In this case, too, what changes is their understanding and view of Christianity – but the change is restrictive and negative. – Ed.

Christ condemned as 'whited sepulchres' of respectability and who, like Phillip Wilde³⁹ called 'the mystical meaning of the wine.'

Floggings, too, were vicious and thus very much low-class affairs that were rarely watched by officers. The flogger was probably a convict and the chief constable of the district, most likely an ex-convict, was responsible for the

infliction of the punishment.⁴⁰ However, when Governor Bourke took over in the 1830s he ordered magistrates to attend the floggings for a month and give reports of what they'd seen. And while his punishment rate did not diminish in comparison with Darling, it was a step toward enlightenment.

In 1836 Governor Bourke likewise announced his intention to introduce the Irish national system of education, a system which was claimed to overcome religious differences. But of course it could not. And since his plan was strongly resisted by the Bishop Broughton, who favoured denominational schools rather than a 'common' system, Bourke was forced to shelve his plans and introduce a scheme whereby the denominational schools were given a government subsidy on a pound for pound basis.

Which brings us to the 1850s, by which time there was considerable disorganization produced by the discovery of gold, and the subsequent difficulty of procuring and retaining good teachers. The control of education had always been in the control of 'intellectuals' from overseas who had little sympathy for, or knowledge of the 'currency' lads and lasses. And this situation was not improved by the appointment of the Englishman William Wilkins, as the czar of education in NSW. Wilkins was 24 years old and had only arrived in 1851. Knowing this, there would be few who'd be surprised to read that although William Denison was governor, it was Henry Parkes [no friend of Rome] who was mainly responsible for his appointment.

Shortly thereafter, full of swagger and revealing the mental baggage he'd brought with him, commenting on the Catholic Orphan School at Parramatta, Wilkins declared that children inherit 'from vicious and abandoned parents, blunted moral perceptions, and minds undeveloped from want of instruction. Their habits are dirty and repulsive, and their manners uncouth in the extreme.'⁴¹ And whilst some might [unkindly] dismiss Wilkins as an 'instant expert', more to the point; was he a disinterested observer? Did he have as they say in modern parlance, 'another agenda'? Father M'Enroe believed the Report was 'fair' only as far as 'short' visits by the inspectors could enable them to be so.

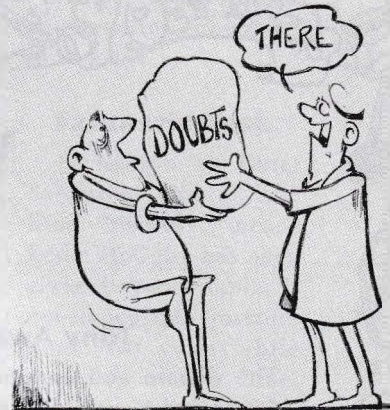
Of the Catholic school at Balmain, Wilkins reaction was one of surprise that classes were held in the Church [St. Augustine's]. He described the Master as 'wholly incompetent' and the school as 'bad in every way'. St. Benedict's Boys' fared only marginally better. The children there read fluently but with 'defective' pronunciation; while at St. Benedict's Girls' and Infants', order was 'maintained by a too free use of the cane'. On the other hand, Castlereagh-Street Girls' which he noted was a private house with no playground and only one water closet, could therefore be fairly be labeled as 'ill suited for its purpose'. He nevertheless found that the children read well, were 'good' at needlework and were 'remarkably clean and well-behaved'.

Meanwhile up the road at Macquarie-Street Boys' where the lads shared a small playground with Macquarie-Street Girls', the children 'were in a deplorable state of ignorance, extremely rude in their manners and dirty in their persons'. He concluded there was neither order nor discipline in this school and that the Master was unfit for his office. He also charged St. Patrick's at Church Hill [falsely] of holding the school 'in a cellar beneath St. Patrick's Church'.

And so the Report went on. But if some Catholic schools were not as efficient as could be wished, the Venerable Archdeacon M'Enroe replied that as a regular visitor to Catholic schools he had never noticed the disorderly children that the inspectors alluded to. He also thought it was a marvel that the Church had been able to keep the schools in operation at all! He called to notice the several localities where Catholic schools had to be discontinued for want of funds, viz. North Richmond, Cornwallis, Kiama, the lower reaches of the Macdonald River, Prospect and Sutton Forest. Moreover, applications for schools had to be refused for the same reason at Kincumber, St. Mary's, South Creek, Warwick, Moreton Bay, Ryde, Goulburn and Sofala, despite the fact that large numbers of Catholic children lived in each of those places. After all, Government funds could only be used to pay teachers and buy books, ergo the Church was dependent upon the voluntary donations of the Catholic community for the erection or repair of school-houses and in providing

Driving Catholics from the Church

THE process that brings Catholics out of the Church and into other religions almost always includes appeals to the intellect. Call these appeals what you will – proselytism, proof texting, or just plain arguing – the appeals work, and they work because they are couched in terms of the duty of Catholics to apply reason to their faith. These Catholics, many of them habitual Mass-goers, have received little intellectual sustenance from their parishes. They are effectively uncatechized. In not a few cases they have been *de* catechized. Private doubts have been thrust upon



them, and they quietly wonder why they should remain in a church whose leaders issue contradictory messages from the pulpit and in the confessional

– Karl Keating, *Nothing But the Truth*, El Cajon Calif. 1999.

requisites for a school population of about 5,600 children. And, as in most things, improvements could only come as the funds at their disposal would permit.

Father M'Enroe concluded his remarks on the Report by pointing out that whilst the situation might be improved by Government, he trusted that the day would never come when secular instruction would be separated 'from the proper religious education of youth', adding, 'as is now virtually the case under the Board of Education in New South Wales' [in 1854].

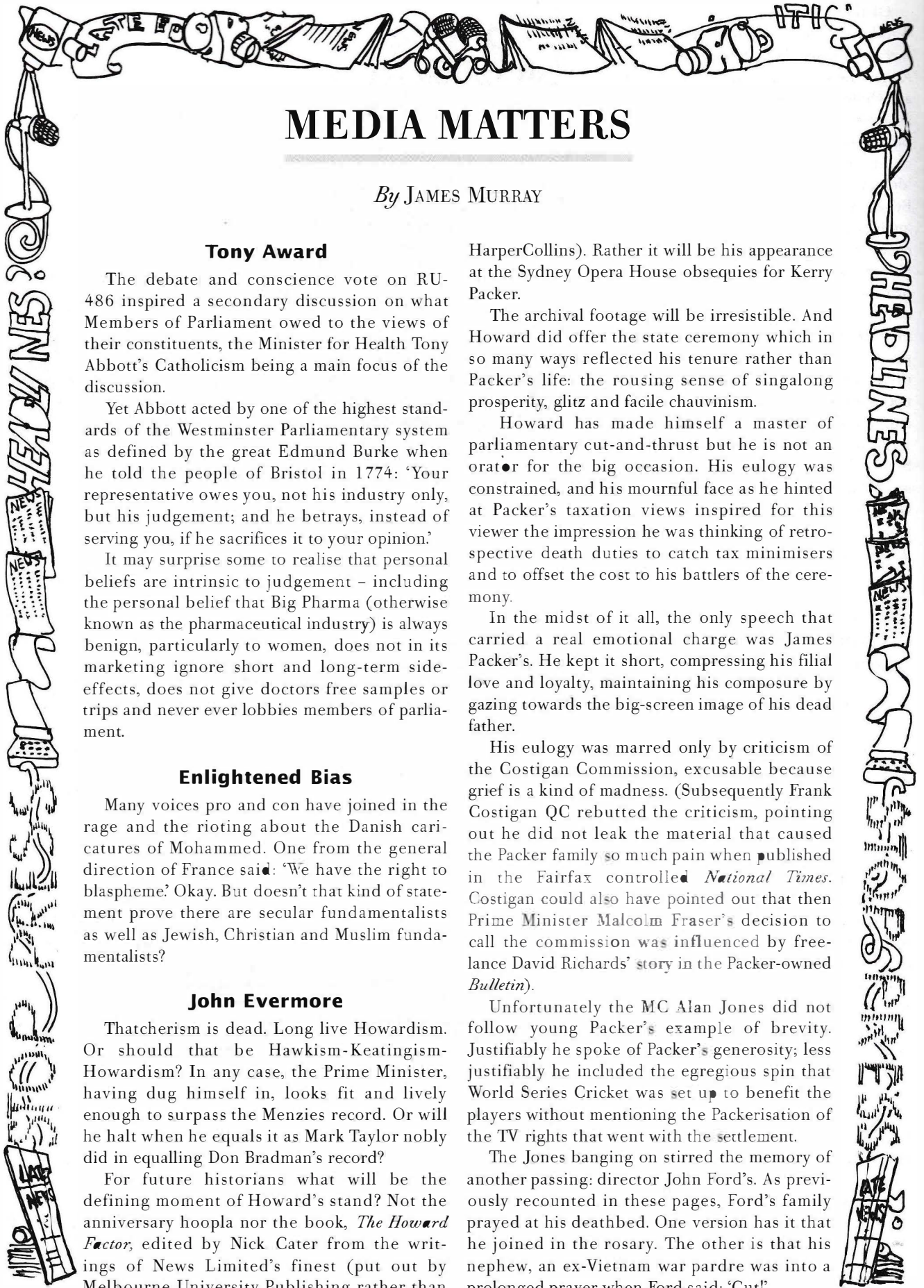


1. Hansard (1807), Vol IX, col. 800. See Vernon Goodin, 'Public Education in NSW Before 1848', *JRAHS*, Pt. II [of four parts], 1950, hereafter referred to as *Goodin*, p. 82.
2. *Ibidem*.
3. C.E.W. Bean, 'The English Public School', *JRAHS*, Pt. IV, 1950, hereafter referred to as *Bean*, p.211.
4. Anthony Cooney, 'England's Darling', *Social Credit Aspects*, Australian Heritage Society, 2003, p. 2.
5. *Bean*, p. 211.
6. *Ibidem*, p. 212.
7. *Ibidem*, p. 212.
8. William Lecky, *History of Ireland*, vol. I. I. 1890, p.170.
9. 'Recusant' a Catholic who refused to attend Protestant services.
10. John Lingard, *History of England*, vol. VI, London, J.C. Nimmo & Bain, 1883 reprint, hereafter referred to as *Lingard*, p. 527.
11. William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation*, Tan Books, 1988 reprint, hereafter referred to as *Cobbett*, p. 357.
12. *Lingard*, p. 527.
13. James Connolly, *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, New Books Publications, 1954 reprint, p. 61. In the same work Connolly also claimed that 72,000 Catholics were hanged as vagrants during Elizabeth's reign, p. 34.
14. *Lingard*, p. 528.
15. A facile argument made mostly by Manning Clark who, like many in the comfortable classes, blamed the poor for their poverty. See his 'Origin of the Convicts...' *Historical Studies*, part 1 & 2 vol. 7, no. 26 & 27 May & November 1956, University of Melbourne.
16. Such Laws were made worse under William III [1689-1702] and Mary [1689-1694], and Queen Anne [1702-1714]. For a fuller explanation see Rev. H.W. Cleary,

The Orange Society, London, Catholic Truth Society, 1899, pp.180-187.

17. Between 1641 and 1652, perhaps 600,000 Irish perished out of a total population of 1,500,000: such was the scale of the Cromwellian devastation. See Patrick Corish, 'The Cromwellian Regime, 1650-1660', in T.W. Moody et al, *A New History of Ireland*, vol. III, Oxford, p. 357.
18. From *Australia*, a poem by John Farrell, c. 1885.
19. *Goodin*, p. 1.
20. See Phillip's Second Commission, *Historical Records of Australia*, 1, I, pp. 2-8.
21. 'By Authority', *The Beginnings of Government in Australia*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1918.
22. Rossen, whilst working as a laundress in London, stole goods to the value of about 12 shillings and pawned them. In court she handed back the pawn tickets and pleaded on her knees a story of distress and begged forgiveness. Her statement concluded with the phrase: 'I leave myself to the mercy of the court.' The mercy shown was transportation for seven years. See *Goodin*, p. 4.
23. Jan Burnswood, *Sydney and the Bush A History of Education in NSW*, Sydney, Dept of Education, 1980, hereafter referred to as *Burnswood*, p. 16.
24. Old Bailey Session Papers, 1788-9, p. 322.
25. *Goodin*, p. 6.
26. *Bonwick Transcripts*, vol. 3, pp. 769-770. See *Goodin*, p. 6.
27. *Cobbett*, p. 155.
28. *HRNSW*, Vol. III, p. 159.
29. C. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, p. 488.
30. Kent was captain of H.M.S. Buffalo, and entertained the Governor and his lady, and others, on board the Buffalo. See *Sydney Gazette*, April 17, 1803. King also returned to England aboard the Buffalo.
31. James Semple Kerr, *Design For Convicts*, National Trust of Australia, 1984, p. 28.
32. *Sydney Gazette*, August 3, 1806.
33. Cuffe, a schoolmaster in King's County, Ireland, arrived in NSW in January 1800 with Joseph Holt.
34. *Goodin*, p. 84.
35. Charles H. Bertie, *Stories of Old Sydney*, Angus & Robertson, n.d. p. 64.
36. *Burnswood*, p. 13.
37. Brian H. Fletcher, *A Governor Maligned*, OUP, 1984, hereafter referred to as *Fletcher*, p. 190.
38. Darling to Bathurst, September 6, 1826.
39. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*.
40. J.B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1983, hereafter referred to as *Hirst*, p. 60.
41. Report of the Select Committee on Education, 1855.

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MEDIA MATTERS

By JAMES MURRAY

Tony Award

The debate and conscience vote on RU-486 inspired a secondary discussion on what Members of Parliament owed to the views of their constituents, the Minister for Health Tony Abbott's Catholicism being a main focus of the discussion.

Yet Abbott acted by one of the highest standards of the Westminster Parliamentary system as defined by the great Edmund Burke when he told the people of Bristol in 1774: 'Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.'

It may surprise some to realise that personal beliefs are intrinsic to judgement – including the personal belief that Big Pharma (otherwise known as the pharmaceutical industry) is always benign, particularly to women, does not in its marketing ignore short and long-term side-effects, does not give doctors free samples or trips and never ever lobbies members of parliament.

Enlightened Bias

Many voices pro and con have joined in the rage and the rioting about the Danish caricatures of Mohammed. One from the general direction of France said: 'We have the right to blaspheme.' Okay. But doesn't that kind of statement prove there are secular fundamentalists as well as Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalists?

John Evermore

Thatcherism is dead. Long live Howardism. Or should that be Hawkism-Keatingism-Howardism? In any case, the Prime Minister, having dug himself in, looks fit and lively enough to surpass the Menzies record. Or will he halt when he equals it as Mark Taylor nobly did in equalling Don Bradman's record?

For future historians what will be the defining moment of Howard's stand? Not the anniversary hoopla nor the book, *The Howard Factor*, edited by Nick Cater from the writings of News Limited's finest (put out by Melbourne University Publishing rather than

HarperCollins). Rather it will be his appearance at the Sydney Opera House obsequies for Kerry Packer.

The archival footage will be irresistible. And Howard did offer the state ceremony which in so many ways reflected his tenure rather than Packer's life: the rousing sense of singalong prosperity, glitz and facile chauvinism.

Howard has made himself a master of parliamentary cut-and-thrust but he is not an orator for the big occasion. His eulogy was constrained, and his mournful face as he hinted at Packer's taxation views inspired for this viewer the impression he was thinking of retrospective death duties to catch tax minimisers and to offset the cost to his batlers of the ceremony.

In the midst of it all, the only speech that carried a real emotional charge was James Packer's. He kept it short, compressing his filial love and loyalty, maintaining his composure by gazing towards the big-screen image of his dead father.

His eulogy was marred only by criticism of the Costigan Commission, excusable because grief is a kind of madness. (Subsequently Frank Costigan QC rebutted the criticism, pointing out he did not leak the material that caused the Packer family so much pain when published in the Fairfax controlled *National Times*. Costigan could also have pointed out that then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's decision to call the commission was influenced by freelance David Richards' story in the Packer-owned *Bulletin*).

Unfortunately the MC Alan Jones did not follow young Packer's example of brevity. Justifiably he spoke of Packer's generosity; less justifiably he included the egregious spin that World Series Cricket was set up to benefit the players without mentioning the Packerisation of the TV rights that went with the settlement.

The Jones banging on stirred the memory of another passing: director John Ford's. As previously recounted in these pages, Ford's family prayed at his deathbed. One version has it that he joined in the rosary. The other is that his nephew, an ex-Vietnam war padre was into a prolonged prayer when Ford said: 'Cut!'



Your correspondent believes Kerry Packer would have followed Ford's second example by pulling the plug on the world's first memorial ceremony for a great gambler in a building funded by petty gamblers and paid for with their taxes.

No Hymn for KP

Music for the Opera House ceremony was conducted by Geoff (Mike Walsh Show) Harvey. In another existence, your correspondent interviewed Harvey who revealed that Kerry Packer and he had an enthusiastic discussion about the potential of a Nine Sunday-evening show to be based on hymn singing – a concept well within Harvey's scope if not Packer's image; Harvey, in his London days, played the organ at Brompton Oratory.

Pity he could not have included a hymn in the ceremony. *Faith of Our Fathers* might have been deemed inappropriate even in these ecumenical days, *Onward Christian Soldiers* a touch non-multicultural. But to link with Rudyard Kipling's *If*, read with finely understated effect by Russell Crowe, there was Kipling's *Recessional*:

The tumult and the shouting dies –

The captains and the kings depart –

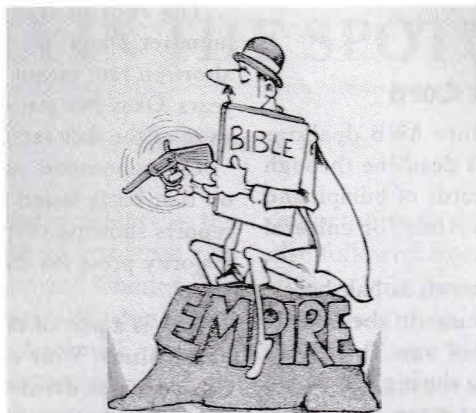
Still stands Thine Ancient Sacrifice,

An humble and a contrite heart.

*Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget – Lest we forget.*

This would also have chimed with Kerry Packer's private bush burial at which the redoubtable Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, said prayers at the request of James Packer who himself may need a few if

he is going to take his eye off the main game, media, and concentrate on swifter one-armed bandits and fast-track home loans.



Unconscious deceit?

HYPOCRISY is the prime charge that is always brought against us. The Germans are called brutal, the Spanish cruel, the Americans superficial, and so on; but we are perfide Albion, the island of hypocrites, the people who have built up an Empire with a Bible in one hand, a pistol in the other, and financial concessions in both pockets. Is the charge true? I think it is; but while making it we must be quite clear as to what we mean by hypocrisy. Do we mean *conscious* deceit? Well, the English are comparatively guiltless of this; they have little of the renaissance villain about them. Do we mean *unconscious* deceit? Muddle-headedness? Of this I believe them to be guilty. When an Englishman has been led into a course of wrong action, he has nearly always begun by muddling himself. A public-school education does not make for mental clearness, and he possesses to a very high degree the power of confusing his own mind. We have seen this tendency at work in the domain of theology; how does it work in the domain of conduct?

– E.M Forester, *Abinger Harvest*, March 1936

mutter. Hilarious. He looks like he's playing ventriloquist to his co-anchor, the ever-articulate Jessica Rowe.

On Nine's *A Current Affair*, Tracy Grimshaw's task of renewal is not made easier by the decision to tizz her up to match the formidably svelte Naomi Robson on Seven's *Today Tonight*.

Grimshaw is a resolute reporter and inter-

Fantastic Task

Promotion to Chief Executive Officer, the Nine Network, means Eddie McGuire has been given irreconcilable, if not impossible, instructions: cut costs while restoring ratings. True, the spin is that Nine is looking to maximise profits rather than maintain its Number One supremacy at any cost.

Nonetheless McGuire's task is equivalent to the one given to new apprentices in the shipyards of his ancestral Scotland: 'Get me a pail of blue steam and a left-handed spanner, an' make it quick, laddie.'

No more than Clyde-built dreadnoughts could be turned in their own length can a television network like Nine be revamped in an instant. But while his longer term solution matures, McGuire should look at the Barbie and Ken Doll aspect of his on-camera people. And the size and configuration of the desk on the *Today* show which makes it difficult for directors and camera operators to frame shots of the desk quartet.

Today anchor Karl Stefanovic is a subtle and effective interviewer. But too often in his ad lib chit-chat with colleagues, he drops into a close-lipped mutter-





viewer. She should be sent out and about more – on horseback if necessary.

Bert (*Family Feud*) Newton? Going, going but an unforgettable performer whose wit and timing needs someone to play off. Too late to team him with his wife, Patty?

Cold Comfort Corn

As the Cole Commission into AWB dealings fights its way to its March 23 deadline through red-tape entanglements, blizzards of bumph and lightning storms of amnesia, time for cultural context.

The facilitation fee, also known as baksheesh, has always been part of business in the Middle East, including the business of war. The classic example: Lawrence of Arabia during the World War I desert campaign that gave the Arabs their independence from the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

At one stage, Lawrence was sent with a million pounds in gold to suborne a Turkish general. The use of gold sovereigns for tactical and strategic baksheesh led to their being called 'St George's Cavalry' from the image of St George slaying the Dragon stamped on them.

And no complaints from sensible Muslims about the image of a Christian saint. Lawrence's Arab bodyguards were paid six sovereigns a month (multiply by a hundred for today's values and compare with the meagre wages of Australian, British, French and Italian service personnel responsible for winning the campaign).

So widespread was the use of sovereigns that a shortage developed. The only immediately available supply was shipped to the Middle East – from the Melbourne Mint.

(Vide: *The Golden Warrior: The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia* by Lawrence James).

Context. Only context. Not an excuse for AWB's corporate bribery. Lawrence's baksheesh was part of an effort to win a war against a hard Turco-German enemy. AWB's bribery effectively subsidised the enemy, Saddam Hussein. The luck of its executives – and of the Howard Government – has been that no Australian service personnel were killed in action against Hussein's forces with what could be described as weapons bought with Australian bribes.

Whatever the findings of the Cole Commission, one step is absolutely necessary: legislation forbidding bribery as part of business deals. The US has such legislation. What's good enough for Australia's most prestigious

free-trade partner, and powerful ally, is surely good enough for Australia.

Vale's Tale

The roof of free speech fell in on Federal member Dana Vale after she said Australia's abortion rate meant it would go Muslim in fifty years. Okay her statistics, applied Australia-wide, were of the daft rather than damned lies variety.

Commentators who totally dismissed her on that basis failed to take account of overseas reports showing that Muslims who attain a local majority press for the implementation of Islamic ways.

This is a part of democracy, practised not only by Muslims. Your correspondent's native city Glasgow was divided between Protestants and Catholics, boozing being the common, rough and tumble folk art which attained its cultural zenith in the secular festival of Hogmanay.

Yet even in Glasgow, there were dry areas where a majority of citizens had voted in local elections against pubs. A less nostalgic example might be The Lebanon. There representation in the parliament was initially calculated on the basis of Christians and Muslim numbers.

When the Christians begot less children than the Muslims, tensions arose about the respective levels of parliamentary representation with explosive results that continue. The Treasurer Peter Costello got it right: 'Demography is destiny.'

That is, first local, second national and ultimately global destiny. Therein lies the double-edge of democracy: it can produce civil liberties different from those on which it was founded.

Acronym Apology

Thanks be to readers with sharp-shooter eyes like defence specialist Michael O'Connor. He has prevented your correspondent floundering deeper in the alphabet soup of Canberra acronyms by pointing out that DFAT does not mean Defence Foreign Affairs and Trade but Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Your correspondent offers his apologies and in mitigation his belief that one day every department in Canberra will be united: DIMADFATEASE - Department of Immigration and Multi-Culturalism Defence Foreign Affairs and Trade Education Arts Science Etcetera... only the Department of the Prime Minister being separate from the nexus and holding a watching brief on which nothing untoward ever appears.

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Vice-President Cheney and Muhammad bin Abdullah

MEDIA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By RUSSELL SHAW



WO unrelated incidents – the hunting accident involving Vice President Richard Cheney and the furor in the Muslim world over the Mohammad cartoons – both spotlight failures of the media that deserve examining.

I'm not a big Cheney fan. I take issue with the Vice President over the war in Iraq and other matters. As for Muslim mobs which take to rioting and burning when provoked, their unspeakable behavior is a painful illustration of why prospects for dialogue with Islam often seem daunting.

But granting all that – what about the media?

Let's start with Cheney. When the Vice President of the United States shoots a friend in a hunting accident, that's news. Cheney's decision to delay telling the press, which presumably was prompted by a need to collect himself, was a surprisingly amateurish mistake for a man who's been in the spotlight as long as he has.

But, that said, the response of the media – column after column, hour after hour, of repetitious news and commentary – was wildly disproportionate to the significance of the event. More than that, the vicious pile-on humor of TV comics and the sheer nastiness of Op-Ed commentators exceeded any reasonable bounds. Cheney, it frequently was said, was out of control. But a lot of the time it was the media that were over the edge.

How to explain that? The competitive dynamics of the media business, where someone who downplays a story others make much of, risks embarrassment or worse, have much to do with it. But something else also was at work.

For various reasons, many people in the elite media do not like the Vice President and the administration in which he serves, and they are happy to do injury to both when the occasion arises. The hunting accident was a glorious

opportunity to trash Dick Cheney. Everything else followed from that.

Now let's turn to the Mohammad cartoons, published in a Danish daily last September, then in some other European papers over the next several months. Angry Muslims aside, their publication has been condemned – by Pope Benedict XVI, for one – and also defended. It's the defenders who worry me.

Part of the heritage of the West, we've heard repeatedly, is the media's right to offend – a right sometimes specified as the right to blaspheme. But the great American constitutionalist Joseph Story concluded in the 19th century that blasphemy is a common-law crime. Doesn't that apply to the press?

For the cartoons' defenders the answer apparently is no. They mindlessly absolutize freedom of the press, arguing, or simply taking for granted, that it's a supreme value that takes precedence over everything else. (Except, possibly, whatever other value or values the absolutizers – absolutizing their own preferences and tastes – choose to treat as privileged exceptions to their rule. For some, the 'right to choose' is a current example of that.)

But freedom of the press, critically important though it is, is an instrumental value, not an absolute. The rationale for press freedom lies in the basic human purposes it's meant to protect and serve: things like truth, justice, community, religion. The bottom line is that those angry Muslims were wrong to riot but right to be outraged.

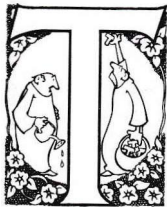
Are these two episodes linked? It would be foolish to push the connection too far, but at least there's this: In a better world, the powerful instrument of press freedom would be entrusted only to those wise enough to use it with self-restraint; in the hands of the ignorant, the arrogant, and the immature it becomes a dangerous weapon.



Angels at the Marriage Feast of Cana

A GARDEN OF DELIGHT

By JAMES MUHREN, MHM

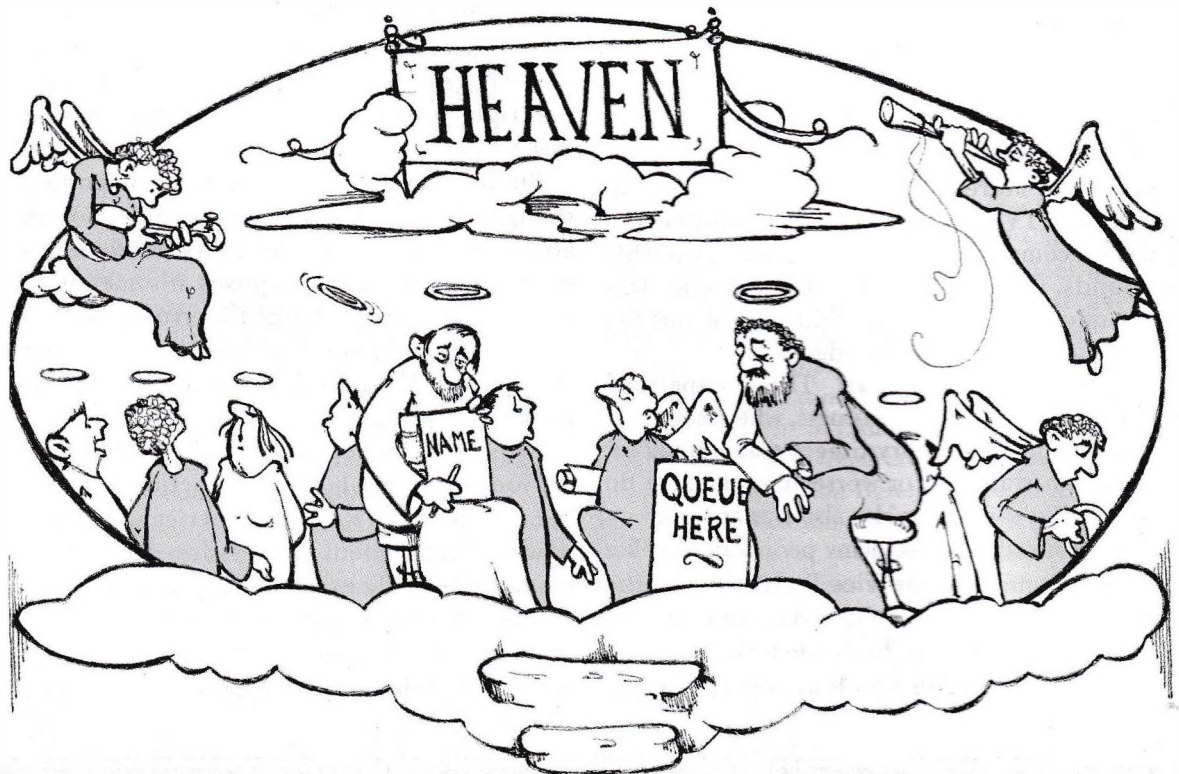


THE cherubs with the flame of a flashing sword who guarded the Tree of Life stayed long enough to make sure that Adam and Eve had put a goody distance between them and the gate of paradise. They clearly could not be allowed to return. But as soon as they were far enough away one of them flashed the sword and crowds upon crowds of cherubs came down. They also enlisted the help of some mighty seraphim. And then they bodily lifted the whole of paradise and deposited it on some distant cloud. The angels all know that the fertile area of land between the Tigris and the Euphrates in Iraq is the actual location of the old paradise. But it is not there anymore. It is up in the clouds to the delight of all celestial horticulturalists.



THESE whimsies of Father James Muhren offer a refreshingly Catholic perspective on heavenly life. We may find theology with a dash of humour, as well as generous servings of faith, hope and charity – all the while drawing the priceless treasury of Catholic tradition and imagination. *Ed.*

You find there flowers and bushes and trees from all over. The archangels and angels dispute who was the first gardener apart from Adam who had to do it for a living. They say it was the angel who unbeknownst to Noah, as a small bird, brought a new olive branch to the ark. Whatever the case may be, ever since, the earth has abounded in splendid plants and flowers of great magnificence. Yet it cannot be compared really with the beauty that is visible everywhere in the heavens of the 'Paradise Cloud.' The reason is clear. The creator had taken such a delight in the first Garden of Eden that he appointed a very knowledgeable Archangel to be in charge. He in turn had gone scouting round to find angels with a particular propensity to growing flowers. They were very happy to be employed on this famous 'Paradise Cloud.' And as they worked



Conscience versus Authority?

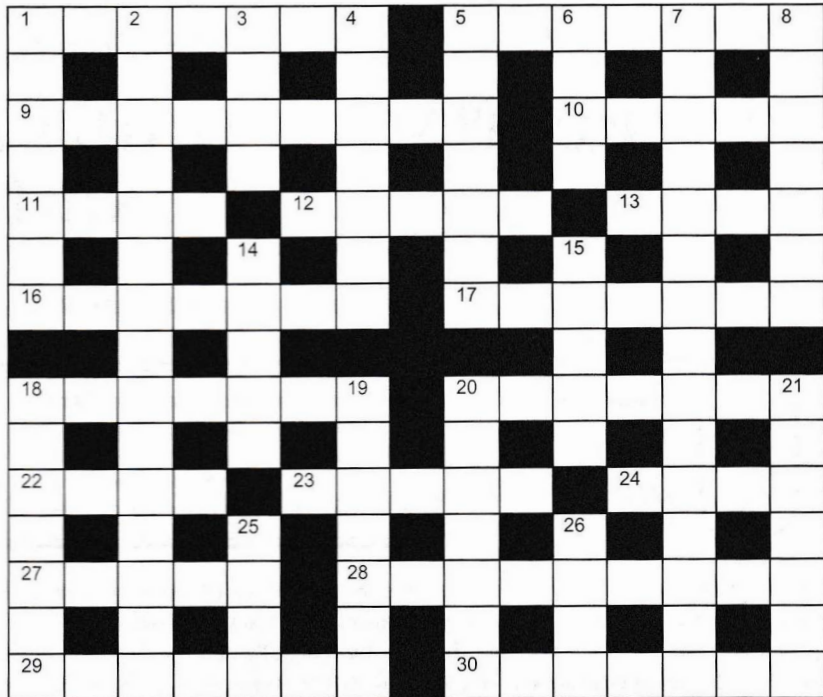
THE well-formed Catholic conscience, as we have just seen, draws light from the Scriptures and Christian tradition as these are understood and proclaimed by the magisterium and witnessed by the lives of good Christian people. It is thus unlikely that faithful Catholics will discover any serious conflict between the teaching of the Church and their particular judgments of conscience or their general approach toward making such judgments.

FURTHERMORE, if a Catholic finds a measure of conflict between some of his or her convictions and the teaching of the Church, this conflict will be *within* that person's conscience, and not a conflict between the person's conscience and an alien authority. This is true because the teachings of the Church – as far as the believing Catholic is concerned – are teachings of a faith he or she has freely accepted and made his or her own. They enter into the formation of the believing Catholic's conscience.

– *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap, Joseph Boyle & William May, Our Sunday Visitor, Indiana.

they sang to a famous earthly tune:
 And we sowed
 And we hoed
 And we turned the earth around
 again
 Up came the stalks and the stems so
 bright!
 For it is a delight to plant the seeds
 and see them grow
 Plucking the beauties to left and to
 right.
 Waltz now you angels,
 Waltz now you angels,
 Praise you the Lord for He is so
 good,
 Waltz around then and dance the
 heavens through
 With all your might.
 Praise you the Lord for he is so
 good.
 Meanwhile, on some chosen clouds
 there were the Latin Schools. If you
 listened carefully you could hear the
 'mensa, mensae, mensae, mensam (the
 table, of the table, to the table, the
 table) with which the youngest angels
 were learning to read and write the
 language in which all the different
 plants were named.

ANNALS CROSSWORD No. 37



ACROSS CLUES

1. Capuchin martyr and saint (feast day 24 April) (7)
2. A person who practices great denial; austere (7)
3. Devoted veneration (9)
4. A moral taint, blemish or slur (5)
5. To sell (goods) for a living (4)
6. An evil spirit or devil (5)
7. Small tract of land surrounded by sea (4)
8. Compunction, pity or compassion (7)
9. High spirits (7)
10. Mosques in Arab countries (7)
11. Violently attack (7)
12. Membership fees (4)
13. Pine for (5)
14. Central part of church (4)
15. One of the seven deadly sins (5)
16. A person who pretends to be what they are not (9)
17. Made of baked clay (7)
18. Put into proper order (7)

DOWN CLUES

1. Eternally (7)
2. An angelic courier (6,9)
3. A person who has power over others (4)
4. Not deceitful, open, genuine (7)
5. Inspiring overwhelming wonder (7)

6. Father of Nimrod the "hunter" (4)
7. The change in the appearance of Jesus (Matt 17:1-3) (15)
8. Express disapproval of; censure (7)
14. A member of an ancient order of priests in the British Isles (5)
15. Artificial; fake (5)
18. To intervene between parties to bring about agreement (7)
19. First Christian martyr (7)
20. Grandson of Herod the Great (7)
21. Saint, known as "The Little Flower of Jesus" (7)
25. Mischievous (4)
26. Blemish (4)

SOLUTION TO NO. 36



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The Paradise Cloud hosted thousands upon thousand of flowers. There were the amaryllidaceae or daffodils, jonquils and narcissuses. An immense great variety of rose, mermaid rose, tea rose, fairy rose, and ramanas rose, and so on. Next came on a special annex cloud named after the foster father of the Lord himself, the lilium or lily which was known over three thousand years ago and is of unsurpassed beauty and popularity. Sometimes the young angels sighed: 'So many names to

learn and to remember!' But then there was the delight to let the name roll off your lips and to astound some visitor saint who was allowed to spend a holiday on the Paradise Cloud. Yes, all is happiness and joy and surprise in heaven and the angels know this better than anybody on earth.



FATHER JAMES MUHREN is a Mill Hill Missionary who has devoted his life to working among the people of Borneo, principally in the Parish of St Mary in Sibiu. He is now retired and living in Holland.

Whitton Rides Again

CUTTING CAMPAIGN AGAINST LEGAL ASININITY

Reviewed by JAMES MURRAY



UNDERNEATH the spreading chestnut tree that is the English Common Law system, a lone figure stands. No, not the village blacksmith but the Australian axeman, Evan Whitton. He may not, like the blacksmith, have large and sinewy hands. Nor are the muscles on his brawny arms as strong as iron bands. But a mighty man is he: five-times Walkley Award Winner, Journalist of the Year (1983), former editor of *The National Times* and Reader in Journalism at the University of Queensland. His previous works include *Can of Worms* (1986), *Amazing Scenes* (1987), *The Hillbilly Dictator* (1989), *Trial by Voodoo* (1994), *The Cartel: Lawyers and their Nine Magic Tricks* (1998).

Furiously he hacks at the trunk of the system which followed the flag and trade throughout the British Empire and lingered there even after the Union Jack was lowered, as in the United States,

Serial Liars: How Lawyers Get the Money and Get the Criminals Off.
By Evan Whitton. www.Lulu-com (e-book
\$US7.50; printed-out version
\$US12.99 plus handling and postage)

or remained stuck on a corner, as in Australia and New Zealand.

Occasionally he uses the blunt end of his axe to thump sucker branches that sprout from the tree's base. But is he making any impression on the tree? *Serial Liars* shows that he is – though it may be a while until the tree ceases to drop its harvest of golden chestnuts for those who roost in its branches like ravens and live in its hollow trunk like squirrels.

Perhaps Whitton's most significant strokes are those in which he emphasises the religious factors in the creation of the truth-seeking focus of what might be called Uncommon Law. He emphasises that it was the Doctor of the Church, John Chrysostom, who laid down the precept that no suspect had to volunteer

guilt but, if accused, must show his innocence if he can. This, Whitton points out, became part of canon law whereas in Anglo-American-Austral Common Law the privilege of the accused to silence as part of avoiding self-incrimination became, and remains, paramount.

Well, not quite. Meticulously Whitton points out that those appearing in the Australian Family Court sub-system have an obligation to open up. Similarly those who appear before such bodies as the Independent Commission Against Corruption have no absolute privilege of silence.

Again it is to a cleric, Agobard, Bishop of Lyons (died 840), that Whitton gives credit for the Church's move to end variations of trial by ordeal through the ruling that in making the deity the ultimate arbiter, the variations involved breaching the biblical prohibition against tempting God. At a church conference in Rome in 1215, delegates 'agreed to end clerical participation in trial by ordeal and to use a truth-based system based on the old Roman law to investigate clerical misbehaviour.

'European courts then changed from the accusatorial system to an investigative (inquisitorial) system but England hesitated.' The hesitation was due to the death of King (Magna Carta) John in 1216, his successor Henry III being only nine. 'The decision on the English system was left to the judges, which effectively meant the cartel, then consisting of a dozen or so lawyers and judges. In 1219, they accepted that trial by ordeal had to end, but rejected the investigative system, and persisted with an accusatorial system.'

As a result, Whitton writes, 'the British Empire – then consisting of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland – had a system which preferred procedure to truth, form to substance, "rights" to

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justice and appearance and legal fiction to reality?

Here he seems to be suffering from a brief attack of computer dozziness. Scotland, under the influence of its Auld Alliance with France, had, and has, a system different from England's, a system essentially inquisitorial, truth based.

Yet given the overall historical context, it is not surprising that Whitton is a partisan for the benefits of the truth-seeking, inquisitorial system, despite the negative connotations of the word inquisitorial. His paen for the Code Napoleon shows that while Napoleon may have lost the battle of Waterloo, he won the campaign to bring greater truth to the administration of justice.

In this context it might be worth remembering that Wellington, victor at Waterloo with not a little help from the Prussian Blucher, also had had his legal triumph. As Britain's Prime Minister, and inspired by memories of the valour of his Catholic Irish soldiers, he was a crucial influence in the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 (though news of its passing does not seem to have reached those who criticise Tony Abbott, alleging that his Catholicism invalidates his right to be a Minister of Health).

Whitton has a connoisseur's eye for antique examples of the law as an ass, yet he is not locked in the past. This he makes clear by pointing out what is happening within the European Union. 'In April 2005, the British Labour Government, headed by barrister Tony Blair was reported to be demanding the right to veto European Union decisions affecting taxation, defence, social security, justice and foreign affairs.

'However, there is talk in Europe and England of "convergence" between the two systems. It seems impossible for a pro-truth system run by trained judges to converge with an anti-truth system run by serial lairs (*sic*), but a small compromise on cross-examination might allow the English legal establishment to claim the inquisitorial system has become more adversarial.

'The suggested compromise is the method adopted by the Hon Gerald Fitzgerald QC and Justice James Wood when they ran major commissions of inquiry in Australia. The commissioner allowed lawyers for suspects to cross-examine for as long he believed they were helping him find the truth, and sat

them down abruptly when they started to use their old tricks to obscure it.'

Surely this is an opportunity for one of the major, or indeed minor, local parties to take the initiative in campaigning for the codification of the Fitzgerald-Wood Compromise (the Australian Trawl?). They might even get the backing of Federal and State police unions given that Whitton records the other Blair, Ian of that ilk, now London Metropolitan Police Commissioner saying: 'We need inclusivity of evidence. If the jury is the light by which freedom shines, why don't we tell them the truth and allow them as adults to weigh the truth?'

Yet for all its asininity, the established Common Law system does have the force of inertia going for it. How to shift it? Both the solicitor Prime Minister John Howard and the barrister Treasurer Peter Costello are bottom-line fetishists. For them, Whitton's compelling argument may well be a 1989 report to the US Congress which stated: 'Excessive litigation has an adverse effect on economic growth, not only in direct costs but in the way the tort system alters individuals' behaviour..'

This quotation, like so many others in the book shows the breadth of Whitton's reading, the aptness of his selection and the force of compression. The work, including acknowledgements and index,

is only 127 pages long – a pamphlet fit to join those put together when press freedom was being forged in the Liberties of Alsatia, later known as Fleet Street.

If the work has a major fault, it is that Whitton does not provide enough linking comment between his points. But in mitigation, he may be trying to avoid the tendentious but lucrative sophistry that pads so many Common Law briefs.

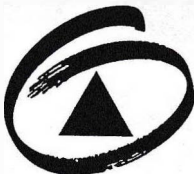
Evan Whitton still has an influential soapbox of the electronic kind on the journal *Justinian* www.justinian.com.au edited by the last cavalier hack, Richard Ackland. But he deserves acclaim as well as space. At least an honorary doctorate of law, perhaps from the University of Queensland where he was Reader in Journalism.

Or what about an honorary doctorate in law from one of Australia's Catholic Universities if only because of his emphasis on the Church's influence on justice being truth, not trick, based in accordance with the mighty Catholic dictum: *Fiat justitia, et ruant caeli*' (Let justice be done though the heavens fall).



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

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Does being 'sincere' give unconditional pardon to wrongdoing?

CULPABLE SINCERITY

By PETER JOSEPH



ADDRESSING *Catalyst for Renewal* in 2003, Cardinal Pell upset many by saying, 'I believe strongly in the importance of individual conscience. It is indispensable ... 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.'

Some accused Cardinal Pell of contradicting the teaching of Vatican II and the *Catechism*. Of course, he did not reject the role of conscience, but he did reject a notion and phrase not found anywhere in Vatican II or the *Catechism* – 'primacy of conscience.'

Cardinal Pell's ideas were further

explained in an address in Cambridge in March 2004 when he said, 'Once upon a time it was pastorally useful, sometimes necessary, to explain the possibility of invincible ignorance among those who differed from us, because of the temptation to presume bad faith in opponents ... Now it is necessary and important for us to argue for the possibility of culpable ignorance, indeed the possibility of culpable ignorance that usually has been built up through years of sin and is psychologically invincible, short of a miracle ... Christian writers at different times have expounded wonderfully on the concept of culpable moral blindness.'

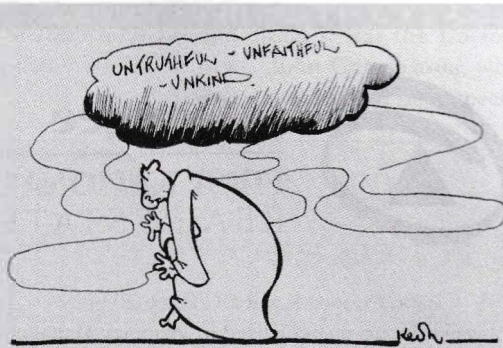
Intellect and will

I would like to explain the Cardinal's position further and go to its basis in traditional theology.

In the classic manuals of Moral Theology (as in the *Catechism* #1735), there were always listed various obstacles to free human acts: the impairments of required knowledge (error, ignorance, inattention) and the impairments to deliberate consent (passion, fear, violence, habits). The basis for this is that the human soul has two faculties: the intellect and the will. The impaired knowledge deprives the *intellect* of some or all of what it needs to judge rightly. The pressures upon the *will* can lessen and, in some circumstances, remove the consent given to the act. That the sources of wrong action are in either the mind or will is behind the popular saying that so-and-so must be 'either a knave (*defect in will*) or a fool' (*defect in intellect*). Or, as moralists often say: you sin by malice (*bad will*) or by ignorance (*defective knowledge*). Everyone blames malice, but is not inclined to blame ignorance. Of course, many sins are not really of malice in the will but of weakness in the will. Rightly, we are all less harsh in our judgements on sins of weakness, committed reluctantly, than on sins of calculated malice.

Self-control

Today, it is widely accepted that the *will* can lose some of its free consent, due to pressure or psychological *maladies*, and so on. No one needs to convince Catholics or anyone else of this idea. But people do need to remember that passions and other pressures do not absolve you of all blame. I mentioned above that passions impair freedom – impair, not destroy. In civil law, certain crimes are recognised as 'crimes of passion', but they are still wrong and you are still punished for them! I always wonder about that fact when people such as Justice Kirby say that celibacy or sexual self-control is impossible. If that were so,



THIS explains all. Be untruthful, unfaithful, unkind; dark the lives of all who have to live under your shadow, rob youth of joy, take peace from age, live unsought for, die unmourned – and remaining sober you will escape the curse of men's pity, and be spoken of as a worthy person. But if ever, amidst what Burns called 'social noise,' you so far forget yourself as to get drunk, think not to plead a spotless life spent with those for whom you have laboured and saved; talk not of the love of friends or of help given to the needy; least of all make reference to a noble self-sacrifice passing the love of women, for all will avail you nothing. You get drunk – and the heartless and the selfish and the lewd crave the privilege of pitying you, and receiving your name with an odious smile.

– Augustine Birrell, *Self-Selected Essays*, London, T. Nelson, 1916.

then presumably every rapist should be acquitted on the grounds that he could not control himself, and that no one can be held by the law to the impossible.

Responsibility for beliefs

Today, there is broadly an idea that sincerity gives complete and unconditional pardon to wrong-doing, and that if you are sincere, you cannot be blamed or punished, unless you do something manifestly wrong such as murder or acts of terrorism. Behind this is the vague idea that your beliefs somehow come to you or are part of you without your own consent, and hence, you are not blameworthy for them. We need to revive, and apply more often, the notion of culpable ignorance. What I am talking about here might be called 'culpable sincerity'. *You are as much responsible for your beliefs as for your actions.* And if your beliefs are wrong, then you are answerable, ultimately to God, on how and why you came to those beliefs: whether you became convinced of them sincerely and honestly, or adopted them through pride, prejudice, affectation, laziness, cowardice, popularity-seeking or whatever other vice impedes the ability to see or face the truth.

Let me explain this by reference to Father Jean Stern, a Czech priest, Jewish convert and Newman scholar in Rome, with whom I did a course on Cardinal Newman at the Pontifical Urban University. Fr Stern posed the question to the class: 'Which is more important – orthodoxy or orthopraxy?' One student answered, 'Orthopraxy, because you will be judged on how you lived.' Another said, 'Orthodoxy is more important, because without orthodoxy you don't know what is orthopraxy.' Father Stern finally answered, 'Orthodoxy is part of orthopraxy.' I think his answer puts it so well. Both the students' answers I mentioned were correct, but incomplete. There is no dichotomy or opposition or choice to make. Orthodoxy is part of orthopraxy. 'This is the work of God' said Our Lord, 'that you believe in Him whom He has sent' (Jn 6:29). Believing is a doing, an action. Beliefs do not come into your intellect secretly by night, and stay by day; you adopt your beliefs, you choose them. In Catholic terminology, when you believe or profess the Catholic Faith, you make an 'act of faith.'

Religious and moral beliefs are taken on in your conscious, active – therefore, meritorious or culpable – waking life. St Paul uses the phrase, 'the obedience of faith' (Rom 1:5; 16:26). Keeping the Commandments is obedience to God in your actions; believing in the teachings and law of Christ is obedience to God with your mind.

How culpable sincerity arises

Culpable sincerity usually arises through an irritation with the demands of moral living. Some people adopt, with malice, a decision that from now on they will do their own thing. Others proceed more gradually, beginning with a rationalisation for something they know is wrong. That becomes a habit, and, like some habits, becomes hard to break. It can even spread, and what began with dissent or wrongdoing in one matter spreads to other matters and becomes an attitude of mind, hard to reject. Like nicotine addicts: when they give up smoking, they do not suddenly feel better; they feel worse, because their system has become so used to it that it is like a part of their nature instead of a foreign body, and is now hard to do without it.

It is certainly difficult to find the truth when your upbringing has been

all confused and full of bad example. But false beliefs contrary to truths taught to you when you were young are usually adopted because they conform to your vices or to a behaviour you would like to adopt. There are people who are sincere and guiltless in their errors, but when they have adopted errors contrary to hitherto held beliefs, they might be guilty of refusing God 'the obedience of faith.'

Physically, if you put out the light in your house, you cannot see where you are going, and are likely to stumble, even if you know your own house well. If *you* put out the light, then it is your own fault if you fall. Morally, if you put out the light – i.e., stop praying, stop studying Christian doctrine, stop informing yourself of the Church's teaching and the reasons for it – then you cannot see where you are going and are likely to stumble. And those falls are your own fault.

Turning off the light: that is what you do when you reject the light of Christ shining through the Church. If you call yourself a Catholic but reject the God-given Magisterium, if you are a member of the Church that Christ founded, His Body, but dissent from her teaching, this can only be because you think you have a higher and superior light to that of the 'Church of the living God,

Indian Catholic Bishops Appalled Ten million girls aborted in India

A bishops' conference official expressed shock at a study in a British medical journal on selective abortions in India and stressed the need for ethics in the health care profession. A recent study published in *The Lancet* revealed that in the last 20 years, 10 million girls were not born in India due to selective abortion.

Although prohibited by law, this practice of prenatal selection and selective abortion is carried out in numerous hospitals and clinics, according to the AsiaNews agency. Bishop Percival Fernandez, secretary-general of the episcopal conference and a former director of St. John's Medical College in the state of Bangalore, stressed the need for 'an ethical system' in the medical profession.

The prelate said he is 'seriously concerned' about the magnitude of the abortion problem in India. 'It is a reflection on the decadent morality of society; people's conscience has been dulled,' he told AsiaNews. 'Aborting a male or female fetus is one and the same crime against human life and the Creator.'

Father Babu Joseph, spokesman for the episcopate, said: 'Remedial measures are to be urgently taken to put an end to this silent dance of death on female fetuses.'

– Source: Zenit Catholic News Agency.

the pillar and bulwark of the truth.' (1 Tim 3:15). There is no higher light; but if you think there is – Freemasonry, Oriental pagan religions, the New Age, your inner lights, whatever – then logically you cannot call yourself a Catholic Christian. When you do so, you are not co-operating with God's grace. God helps Catholics to hold on to Catholic faith and practice. God helps sinners and unbelievers to come to Him. He gives no help to dissenters and sinners to dissent and sin. All that is their own doing and contrary to God's action in their life. When you put out the light, you are responsible for all that follows.

Justifying sins

We all sin, and there is no denying it. But worse than committing any sin is to start justifying the sin and denying it is a sin. That is one of the unforgivable 'sins against the Holy Spirit.' That is why Jesus said that tax-collectors and prostitutes were getting into the Kingdom of Heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees. Prostitutes and so on are usually honest sinners – they know they are doing the wrong thing. They are ripe for repentance. But the Pharisees

judged themselves sinless, and hence their guilt remained (cf. Jn 9:41).

I heard a story years ago of a mother of four who left her family and ran off with another man, while still living in the same town. Her mother said to her, 'I don't know how you do it, how you can live with yourself day after day when your own husband and children love you and need you; I don't know how you do it.' The daughter replied, 'I just don't think about it; that's all.' However repugnant was that reply, it was certainly better – i.e., less evil – than saying, 'I haven't done anything wrong.'

Cardinal Pell said at his Cambridge address, 'Sin darkens the intellect. Old spiritual books used to say that as a commonplace, but today it has been largely forgotten. Those who live conscientiously by the Commandments are better judges of morality than clever people who live in sin ... *Courage* to face the truth, a *desire to know* the truth, and *humility* in accepting it from others or from a higher authority such as the New Testament and official Church teaching, play a greater part in having right moral and religious beliefs than native intelligence or cleverness.' (*Be Not Afraid*, p.298)

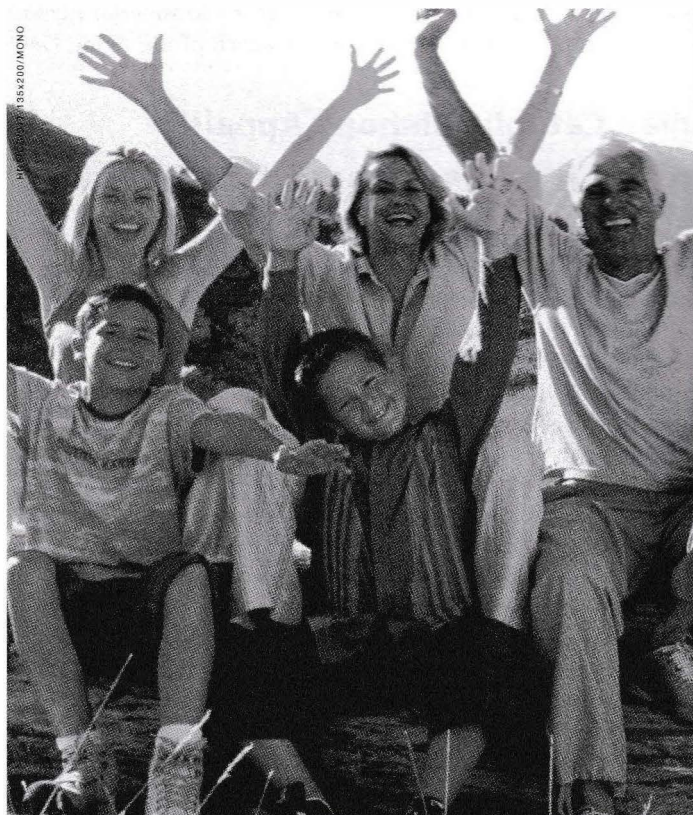
Intellectual pride is a **deadly sin**, and it is the great temptation of scholars and theologians. However much they know and discover, they must ever keep the child-like simplicity and docility that is of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is true: sin darkens the intellect. So it is that you can come to believe your own lies. You can rationalise at the start to justify to yourself your lying, or laziness, or illicit love affair, and you can end up sincerely believing that you are justified in telling lies, that you are owed a living and do not have to work for it, or that your lover's husband is awful to her anyway, so it is not that wrong after all.

Thank God we are not ruthlessly logical in our behaviour; otherwise the acceptance or tolerance of one sin in our life would lead to the acceptance of all sins. But let us who enjoy the gift of faith aim at total consistency on the right side, on the side of Christ who develops and fashions us, under the power of His grace, into better and better likenesses of Himself, the light of the world.



FR PETER JOSEPH S.T.D. is Chancellor of the Maronite Diocese of Australia.



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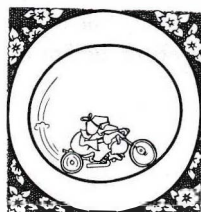
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DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

By MAX BARRETT, CSSR

This is the third in a series of articles that will look briefly at the lives and teachings of those holy men and women who have been honoured down the centuries with the title 'Doctor' of the Church. The title is awarded sanctitatis causa, by the reigning Pontiff.



OCASIONALLY – but only occasionally – one of the saints is declared a *Doctor of the Church*.

This declaration, coming from the Pope, recognises the outstanding value of the saint's writings. Up to 2006 A.D., thirty-three 'teacher' saints have been declared *Doctor*.

What is offered in this series is an introduction to each of the thirty-three, and a sampling of each one's writing.

Cronologically, the earliest of those officially declared *Doctor* is St Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 A.D.). The most recently recognised *Doctor* is St Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897).

Before St Athanasius and after the closure of the New Testament Scripture, there were saints of the 2nd and 3rd centuries who spoke of Christ with their pen. We have already looked briefly at two of these 'Fathers': Pope St Clement of Rome (who died in 99 A.D.) and St, Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 A.D.). A third early teacher-saint was St Polycarp.

St Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (69-155 A.D.)

Early writers declare that Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John, and

that he was burnt alive about the year 155. (One authority says his martyrdom occurred during the reign of the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius. If this were the case, his death would have occurred in 161 or later.)

St Jrenaeus of Lyons (died 200 A.D.) spoke of Polycarp as possessing 'majesty of countenance'.

When St Ignatius of Antioch was on his way to Rome (and martyrdom) he wrote four of his famous letters from Polycarp's cathedral city of Smyrna in Asia Minor. The church at Philippi sent a request for copies. Polycarp forwarded what he had, together with his own covering letter which was highly esteemed and was still being read in the churches of Asia Minor in the lifetime of St Jerome (died 430 A.D.)

According to the 19th Century historian, Ernest Renan, the 2nd Christian century 'saw a veritable pagan propaganda parallel to that of Christianity'. St Polycarp lived through much of this era, and the growth of false teaching so pained the saint that he exclaimed: 'O good God, what sort of era have you preserved me for, that I have to suffer like this!'

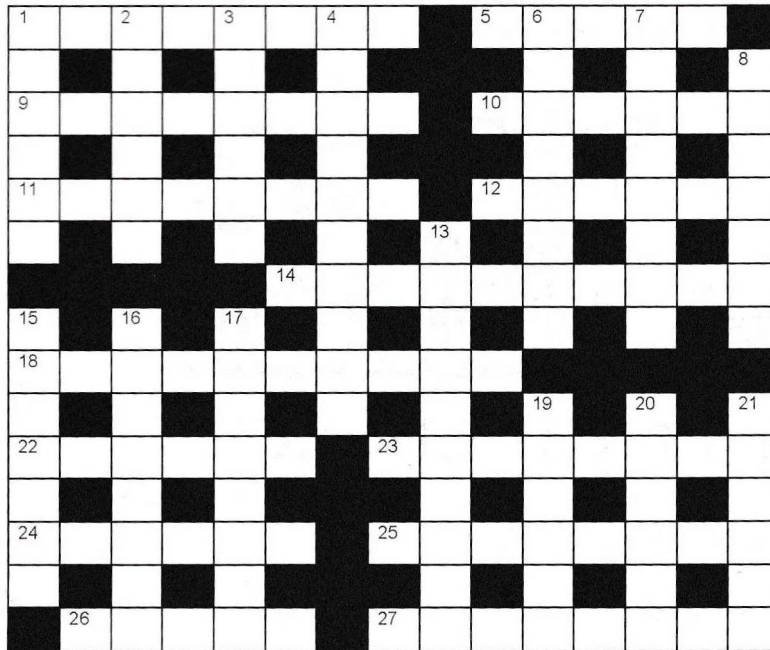
One of the new heresies was that introduced by Marcion who lived in the first part of the 2nd century (about 100-165). Marcion adopted a position which

was strongly anti-Jewish. He rejected the Old Testament Scripture. He declared that Jesus was the son of the good God but not of the Old Testament God. In this respect he was anticipating the Manichean error which held that there were two primaeval sources, one good, one evil.

When St Polycarp visited Rome to discuss (and amicably disagree with) Pope Anicetus on the question of the correct date for celebrating Easter, he chanced to meet Marcion and a group of his followers. The latter challenged Polycarp: 'Recognise us.' Polycarp replied: 'Recognise you? I recognise you as the first-born of Satan.'

Another of these heresies was Docetism which, like the so-called Christian Gnosticism and Manichaeism, was dualist: that is, its adherents contended that there were two ultimate principles: one, the source of good, of light, of the spiritual; the other, the source of evil, of darkness, of matter. The body was matter and was therefore evil. Here the Docetists presented themselves with a problem: if the body was evil, then there was evil in Jesus because he had a body. No, the Docetists replied; Jesus only *seemed* to have a body. ('Docetism' is from the Greek *dokeo*, I seem.) Polycarp, in his forthright, no-nonsense style, wrote of this error:

ANNALS CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No. 4



ACROSS CLUES

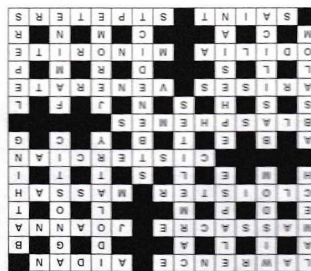
1. Patron Saint of cooks is running water past Quebec (8)
5. Help an Irish missionary (5)
9. After Eucharistic service, race out to slaughter (8)
10. Maid of Orleans not available for Chuza's wife (Luke 8:3) (6)
11. One hundred loiter around southern place of religious seclusion (8)
12. Has Sam returned to where God was tested? (Deut 6:16) (6)
14. Cain is cert to become monk (10)
18. Speaks ill of God after sheep's lamb is butchered (10)
22. Originates from Ram around first of September (6)
23. Revere but never eat characters (8)
24. Patron of those who cannot see first class swimming pool coming back (6)
25. Friar who is underage with tie undone (8)
26. Good living sort sat around in (5)
27. the "Rock's" 16 down (2,6)

DOWN CLUES

1. Church supports crippled father of Noah (6)
2. Almost wish little Dominic has some enlightenment (6)
3. To pass by the Spanish east end of church (6)
4. Nuns reorganising Clare's time (10)
6. Devotion given to hero at railway (8)

7. Sceptic coasting around (8)
8. Graduate to object to what Bathsheba was doing when first seen by David (6)
13. Way little Benjamin gets command for founder of Order of Black Monks (2,8)
15. Sailor Sal O.M. killed by Joab and his men (2 Sam 18:14-15) (7)
16. Fawty, I see, joining a large ceremonial church (8)
17. Person written to by St Paul scatters sheep over Chappell (8)
19. This church Father has Jews losing two points over Rome (6)
20. Celebrity around in time of food shortage (Acts 11:28) (6)
21. The French person doesn't get on with people treated by Father Damien (6)

SOLUTION TO CRYPTIC NO. 4



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To deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is to be Antichrist. To contradict the evidence of the cross is to be of the devil, And to pervert the Lord's words to suit our own wishes, by asserting there are no such things as resurrection or judgment, is to be a first-born son of Satan. So let us have no more of this nonsense from the gutter ...
The next quote illustrates the simple goodness of Polycarp.

Stand firm, then, in **these ways**, taking the Lord for your **example**. **Be** fixed and unshaken in your **faith**. **Care** for one another with a brother's **love**, and make common cause for the **truth**. Give way to one another in the Lord's own spirit of courtesy, treating no one as an inferior. When it is in your power to do a kindness, never put it off to another time, *for charity is death's reprieve.*

Service of Love

ALTHOUGH he knows the answer, the Lord first asks Peter, and not once but a second and third time, if he loves him. Three times Peter affirms his love: three times the Lord charges Peter to be shepherd of his flock.

There is a threefold avowal of love to compensate for the threefold denial. This is because the tongue must serve love no less than it served fear; the threat of death must not seem to have provoked more of a response than the presence of life. Just as the denial of the shepherd gave proof of fear, so feeding the Lord's flock is the service of love.

— St Augustine of Hippo [354-430 AD, Treatise on St John, 123.5. From the Second Reading at Matins, in the *Roman Breviary*, for the Feast of St Nicholas of Bari, December 6.

The account of this Saint's death, composed almost immediately after his martyrdom, is widely accepted as reflecting and/or establishing one of the earliest Eucharistic Prayers in the liturgy of the Western Church.

... So they did not nail him, but bound him ... a whole burnt offering made ready and acceptable to God. Then he looked up to heaven and said: 'O Lord God almighty, father of your beloved and blessed child, Jesus Christ... I bless you for deeming me worthy of this day and hour, that I might take a portion among the martyrs in the cup of Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life both of soul and body in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit Among these may I today **be welcome** before your face as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, our faithful and true God. For all this I praise **you**, I bless you, I glorify you through the everlasting and heavenly High **Priest**, Jesus Christ your beloved Son, through whom may there be glory to you and him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.

After his martyrdom the Christians at Smyrna collected the saint's remains, **'more valuable than jewels and more precious than gold, and laid them in a suitable place, to gather together there every year on the anniversary of his death.'**

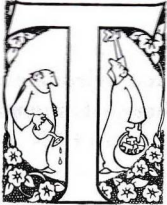


FATHER MAX BARRETT is a Redemptorist priest now resident in Sydney.

Next Month St Justin Martyr.

The Maiduguri riots: Fifty Christians murdered, hundreds injured, forty churches and other church buildings, and hundreds of homes and business premises of Christians razed to the ground

NIGERIAN BISHOPS SPEAK OUT



THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria views with grave concern the killing of scores of Christians, including a Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Michael Gajere, and the wanton destruction of many Christian Churches, homes and business premises in Maiduguri on Saturday February 18, 2006, allegedly following a public protest over an offensive cartoon that was published in a newspaper in far-away Denmark, in September 2005.

Reports reaching us show that when, after several hours, the ominous dust settled over Maiduguri, as many as 50 Christians had been murdered in cold blood, hundreds had been wounded or maimed, 40 Church buildings had been razed, and several hundreds of homes and business premises belonging to Christians, had been destroyed. Included in the destruction spree were the residence of the Catholic Bishop of Maiduguri, and at least six Catholic parish premises.

As has now become usual, these reprehensible acts of savagery that were perpetuated in Maiduguri, as well as the reprisal killings witnessed in Onitsha and elsewhere in the country, have been blamed on faceless hoodlums and extremists. Even that does not make the tragic incidents any less condemnable.

It seems to us that the Nigerian state has once again failed to secure the lives and properties of innocent citizens against the criminally minded in the society. The Police in Maiduguri seem to have been taken totally unaware even when earlier incidents should have warned them that in the prevailing circumstances such an attack on Christians was an imminent possibility in the major cities of Northern Nigeria. Or are we to conclude that they simply looked the other way while the carnage lasted for several hours? Indeed many surviving Christians in Maiduguri are already expressing their suspicion that the Security Agencies in that State were engaged in a criminal conspiracy with the murderers and arsonists. **This is not good for our country.**

What is even more disturbing to us is that nearly one week after such a tragic event that challenges the very basis of our corporate existence, with potentially destabilizing effects on our nation state, the Federal Government has not yet seen fit to address the nation on this tragedy.


In other societies where human lives are regarded as sacred and where governments see it as their foremost responsibility to protect and defend the lives of their citizens, what happened in Maiduguri would not only call for a national day of mourning, but also lead to the willful

resignation or otherwise immediate suspension from office of those responsible for security in the State while a process of investigation and prosecution of the culprits is put in place.

The new dimension of reprisal killings in the South after every major attack on Christians in the North is unfortunate and is to be condemned without reservation. But it is also a sad commentary on the extent to which the ordinary Nigerian has lost faith and confidence in the institutions of State and in the ability or willingness of those in authority to pursue justice, to defend the innocent citizen and to apply the Rule of Law at all times without fear or favour. Something convincing has to be done to stop the ominous growing tendency among Nigerians to take recourse in jungle justice.

No murderer or arsonist should be allowed to hide behind any mask of religion, no matter how highly placed. The recommendations of such a panel, especially as regards punishment for originators and perpetrators, compensation for families of dead victims and restitution for destroyed property, should be seriously followed up and implemented.

We have reasons to believe that the majority of Muslims in this country are peace-loving and law-abiding neighbours and fellow-citizens. We call on them, especially the leaders, to link hands with us in isolating and eliminating from our society all those who promote and perpetrate violent atrocities in the name of the religions that we hold dear. At this point, we expect that the voice of the Muslim leadership be heard loud and clear in condemnation of the crimes of Maiduguri and elsewhere, lest their silence be construed as complicity.

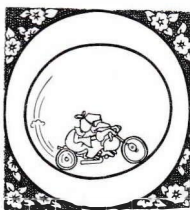
We have already condemned the reprisal killings in the South, and dissociated the Christian community from the violence. In conclusion, we call upon Christians, especially our long-suffering brothers and sisters in Northern Nigeria to remain faithful to Jesus Christ who is the Prince of Peace. We encourage them to constantly struggle with all constitutional means to assert their rights as free citizens in a democratic Nigeria, who can reside and practice their religion freely anywhere in the country. We therefore urge them to avoid violence as incompatible with our Christian faith and with any authentic religion. Let us never tire of conquering evil with goodness, sowing love wherever there is hatred, and overcoming discord with peace. 

REV. FR. GEORGE EHUSANI, Secretary General, for and on behalf of the President, Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, February 24, 2006.

The Existence of God

EVOLUTION AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN

By BRIAN POLLARD



ONE of the pivots around which this topic revolves is whether or not God exists. Since no proof, for or against, acceptable to everyone has been found, the question must remain open at all stages of the discussion of evolution. Though it is often said that the existence of God cannot be proved, this is not so. There are a number of proofs for God's existence, the best known being those formulated by St Thomas Aquinas, chiefly his arguments from cosmological, contingency, teleological, aesthetic and anthropological perspectives.¹ Often described as having been discredited, it would be truer to say they have been disbelieved. Since they are objective, rational and conclusive, why are they disbelieved? There are many possible reasons why a true statement may not be accepted, including a strongly-held opposing ideology, ignorance and the difficulty and complexity of the subject. For others, conviction cannot prevail over prejudice or foolishness.

The proofs are most often criticised because they are said to lack the degree of certainty based on evidence able to be scientifically tested and replicated, as though no other reliable means of certainty were available or acceptable in the ordinary course of human interactions. But that standard of proof is not required or available in most other areas where truth is normally sought. The testimony of reliable, non-collaborating witnesses of integrity is enough for courts of justice, for instance, where processes are open to public scrutiny, to decide in such an important matter as the life of an accused. Daily life as it is actually lived would be impossible if scientific proof were the standard needed for assurance on most matters. The everyday standard

of proof is philosophical, where philosophy is defined as 'the science of common experience' by which truth can be reliably established.²

No truth is safe from human perversity, however, since some find it easy to deceive themselves and seize on any excuse to evade the truth, especially when it is perceived that the consequence of acceptance will involve hardship or humiliation.

No proof, reasonable or otherwise, has ever been provided that God does not exist. Approaching the subjects of this paper, therefore, from a basic premise that God does not exist could only demonstrate prejudice, ignorance or malice. **The truth is that God exists or He doesn't. If a person eliminates from discussion even the possibility of His existence, one can conclude that, for him or her, the search for truth is not a primary issue.**

The theories of evolution

The word 'evolution' requires precise definition because it covers a range of

possible meanings. At its simplest, it refers only to the gradual adaptation of species in response to environmental challenges. For others, it includes theories about the origin of life, and there are several of these. What is called the general theory of evolution includes the development, by natural processes, of living cells from dead matter, plants from living cells, animals from plants, and finally man from animals. It suits some to maintain this confusion about definition, while there remains such a great lack of evidence for many of the claims made for evolution. If the response 'Yes' was given to the question 'Do you believe in evolution?', the questioner would then be able to claim support for many aspects of the subject with which the respondent may have actually disagreed, and the appearance of widespread support for 'evolution' could be maintained speciously.

Though Darwin titled his most notable book 'The Origin of Species', his eventual contribution threw virtually no light at all on the origin of species. His credit rests on his development of the theory that life forms can and do sometimes adapt to meet new circumstances, within limits, an idea encapsulated in the famous dictum 'the survival of the fittest'. But who are the fittest? Obviously, those who survive. To the end of his life however, he conceded he did not know how to explain the origin of life in scientific terms without an appeal to religion. And this should come as no surprise, since events at that remote time are clearly not subject to any scientific scrutiny and the best any of us can manage is reasonable conjecture and informed inference.

It was those who followed Darwin who extended his theory beyond its reasonable limits, by proposing further theories about the origin of life. What we now have is scientists who refuse to



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accept the idea of God because of lack of scientific evidence but who have no reservation about proposing one theory or another for the origin of life, for none of which is there any scientific evidence at all. An ardent Darwinist, Richard Dawkins, realised that 'whatever is the explanation of life, it cannot be by chance'. Consequently, he proposed the idea, soon to become popular, that nature could 'tame chance' through the progression of a sufficiently large series of finely graduated intermediaries. Eventually, he claimed that 'we shall be able to derive anything from anything else'.³

The term 'Darwinian evolution' is imprecise in relation to any particular theory, but now refers to all those that exclude intelligence as a possible cause. Though there are many scientists who believe in God, for many of their colleagues Darwinian evolution has become a veritable odyssey to try to prove that God does not exist. The versions of evolution promulgated by Richard Dawkins and Stephen Jay Gould, for example, have hardly anything in common except their common adherence to philosophical materialism and their mutual dislike for supernatural creation.⁴ Dawkins believed that Darwin 'made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist'. Some Darwinists are quite frank about their anti-religious motives. One of the researchers in a new program at Harvard to study how life began put it this way: 'My expectation is that we will be able to reduce this to a very simple series of logical events that could have taken place with no divine intervention.' One commentator observed that something is seriously wrong when science becomes a project to keep atheists feeling intellectually satisfied.

A full treatment of the areas in which scientists have failed to find the evidence to support their claims is not possible here, but they include the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record, the sudden explosion of complex life forms at the beginning of the Cambrian period, the difficulty of explaining the origin of the genetic code, the limits to change as shown by breeding experiments, the punctuated equilibrium controversy and the importance of catastrophic extinctions. Stanley Jaki was scarcely exaggerating when he said



of Darwinism that it 'among all major scientific theories is the one that claims the most on the basis of relatively the least'.⁵

Two things Darwinists must believe, in order to validate their claims, are that the cosmos is a closed system of material causes and effects and, that science must be able to provide a naturalistic explanation for the known wonders of biological design. It was pointed out in 1990 that since neither of those beliefs is empirically testable, they cannot logically fit into a system that claims scientific support.⁶

A major difficulty in the debate is the tendency of the most vocal and passionate adherents of evolution to lose their perspective and become irrational at every new threat, real or apparent, to what they regard as the sacred core of their belief. To a scientific naturalist, outside of science means outside of reality. Rather than concede the shortcomings of their theories, some of them label their opponents as stupid, Christians are said to be the unthinking dupes of those who would impose on them untenable myths and any concession to opposing evidence is regarded as a failure to support their scientific colleagues. In other words, they behave exactly as they portray their opponents.

That behaviour should not surprise anyone, since the Darwinian revolution was as much about the success of one philosophical worldview overturning another as it was about science. The scientific basis of Darwinism has always been shaky but, early on, many people who were unhappy with the concept of God, realized just how useful Darwin's views could be to their cause and

have carried it beyond the limits of its competence.

What does the Catholic Church teach about evolution? Despite what some of evolution's supporters would claim, Darwinian evolution remains a theory and is not fact, and God's creative role must be acknowledged at various stages. If the theory is to be believed, it must have been God who gave the living thing its capacity to vary, and so ordered its surroundings, and all the influences affecting it, as to make it develop precisely as it did. Science may tell us what a thing is made of and how it came into being but it has nothing to say about what it is, why it exists or what it is for.

Implications of the recent discovery of highly complex biological structures

The evidence for design in nature has been long known, indeed it was the basis of one of Aquinas' proofs for God's existence, no other designer being possible of consideration. Darwin himself was so taken by this observation that he could write 'To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of (optical) aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree'.⁷ But he still struggled with the illogicality of his proposals, being concerned that, if we are nothing but improved beasts, we cannot be sure of any of our convictions and cannot even be sure of the theory of evolution. But he did not take the logical step of abandoning it.

But matters got worse for Darwinists as new techniques for examining the true nature of the micro-biological world became available, to reveal structures which could never have been imagined in earlier years. In 1985, Dr Michael Denton, a scientist, wrote that, if we could enter a single living cell, 'we would see nearly every feature of our own advanced machines: artificial languages and their decoding systems, memory banks for information storage and retrieval, elegant control systems regulating the automated assembly of parts and components, error fail-safe and proof reading devices utilized for quality control and assembly processes

involving the principle of prefabrication and modular construction'. Then he added 'it has one capacity unequalled in our own machines - it is capable of replicating its entire structure within a matter of a few hours'.⁸ Since belief in atheistic evolution requires more faith than belief in God, the author naturally assumed that these revelations pointed to the necessity for an intelligent designer, who at this time would seem only to be God, unless a suitable alternative candidate can be found.

But that is not how many of the activists in the scientific community greeted the new findings. To help understand their response, the following must be kept in mind. In order to keep atheistic evolution intact in the public domain, two principles must be observed: scientists must restrict themselves to those possibilities consistent with philosophical naturalism and they may not refute any element of Darwinism, such as the creative power of natural selection, until and unless they can provide an acceptable substitute. Thus, no matter how compelling the evidence, they may not consider any alternative to Darwinism and they must continue to advocate 'the creative power of nature', a concept for which there is no evidence whatever. Since these are the limitations they have set for themselves, it is reasonable to assume they are not primarily interested in finding the truth, if it happens to lie outside their self-imposed boundaries.

This puts an entirely new face on science for the rest of the community. Over many years, non-scientists have been informed by scientists that the work of science is to speculate about possible facts and then put them to the test by experimentation and possible verification. It was said scientists had no other agenda than to find the facts and then to follow where they may lead. Now, we observe the spectacle of scientists who are alarmed by what their fellow scientists have discovered to be undeniable fact, but who resist the implications of those discoveries. Since they can't do this by scientific means, they have resorted to scurrilous attacks on them personally and on their motives. The reasonable conclusions drawn from the observation of complex design in nature have been labelled as unscientific and as an attempt to

Getting to Heaven

I was testing the children in my Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to heaven. I asked them, 'If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, Would that get me into Heaven?' 'NO!' the children answered. 'If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?' Again, the answer was, 'NO!' By now I was starting to smile. Hey, this was fun! 'Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, and loved my husband, would that get me into Heaven?' I asked them again. Again, they all answered, 'NO!' I was just bursting with pride for them. Well, I continued, 'then how can I get into Heaven?' A five-year-old boy shouted out, 'YOU GOTTA BE DEAD.'

- Contributed by Andy Choong

introduce religion into the debate by deception.

Michael Behe, a biochemistry professor at Pennsylvania's Lehigh University, has described the new knowledge as so unambiguous and so significant that it must be ranked as one of the greatest achievements in the history of science. He explains why some cannot accept this conclusion in the following respectful words:

'The reluctance of science to embrace the conclusion of intelligent design that its long, hard labours have made manifest has no justifiable foundation. Scientific chauvinism is an understandable emotion, but it should not be allowed to affect serious intellectual issues. The history of skirmishes between religion and science is regrettable and has caused bad feelings all around. Inherited anger, however, is no basis for making scientific judgments. The philosophical argument (made by some theists) that science should avoid theories which smack of the supernatural is an

artificial restriction on science. Their fear that supernatural explanations would overwhelm science is unfounded. Further, the example of the Big Bang theory shows that scientific theories with supernatural ramifications can be quite fruitful. The philosophical commitment of some people to the principle that nothing beyond nature exists should not be allowed to interfere with a theory that flows naturally from observable scientific data. The rights of those people to avoid a supernatural conclusion should be scrupulously respected, but their aversion should not be determinative.⁹

The Catholic Church does not interfere with the scientific activities of Catholic scientists, allowing them to conjecture, observe and experiment as they must. She welcomes all truth they may discover, even in pursuit of a theory such as the evolution of the body. The only limitation placed on them is that contained in a message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, when in 1996, Pope John Paul II distinguished between the possibility of the evolution of man's body and the impossibility of evolution of the soul.

Science is increasingly becoming inhospitable to the materialism that has attached itself to it in order to bask in the glow of its authority. And maybe some day it will be science that in its own way points to the spiritual nature of the person and the fact that he, and the world he lives in, has been willed.



In the preparation of this paper, both the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, by Archbishop Michael Sheehan, edited by Father Peter Joseph, 2001, have been consulted.

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2. Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, *First Things*, 159, pp 34-38.
3. R Dawkins. *The Blind Watchmaker*, Longmans, 1986, p 13.
4. PE Johnson. *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*, University Press, Ill, 1997, P114.
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9. M Behe. *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, Touchstone, 1998, Pp 232-253.

DR BRIAN POLLARD is a retired anaesthetist/palliative care physician with an interest in bio-ethics. Most of his professional life was spent in private practice as a specialist physician. He was Director of anaesthetics at Concord Hospital NSW, and founding Director of the Palliative Care Service there.

A Christmas initiative of the Cuban bishops

WELCOMING THE BABY JESUS

By JOHN PONTIFEX



THOUSANDS of people in Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba are rediscovering Catholicism ... and all thanks to a tiny image of the baby Jesus. The mass distribution of little [9cm] figures of the Christ Child is causing a resurgence of interest in Catholicism with reports that 350,000 statues were distributed across Cuba within one month.

A report by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) shows a significant increase in the number of practising Catholics based on the numbers of those receiving Holy Communion weekly.

The statistics were collated with help from Carmelite nuns in the capital, Havana, who bake communion breads for most of the dioceses spread across the island.

As churches across the country report an increase in Church attendance in the wake of the baby Jesus initiative, bishops are convinced they have captured the imagination of the people and are putting together another order for yet more of the sacred figures.

In a message to ACN, which funded the baby Jesus initiative, Archbishop Juan Garcia, who heads up mission outreach across Cuba, president of the Bishop's Conference

of the Cuban Bishop's, wrote that the initiative was the gift of the Holy Spirit: 'We beg ACN for help so that more people can enjoy Christmas with the Baby Jesus.'

'We have had many testimonies praising the figures and so just think what Christmas 2006 could be like if we could have more of them, just think what it could mean for people who want to know Jesus more deeply.'

The initiative is being perceived as a milestone for religious expression in Cuba with reports of no difficulties with the Cuban authorities, through the work of the thousands of voluntary missionaries who distributed the baby Jesus figures across the island.

Many travelled up to 20km by foot, knocking on doors and inviting people to receive the little statue complete with a leaflet explaining the initiative and the significance of Jesus and the importance of the Feast of his nativity.

They also took the opportunity to visit the sick and infirm and bolster community spirit.

For information about Cuba's baby Jesus initiative or to make a donation, contact the Sydney office of ACN on (02) 9679 1929. E-mail: info@aidtochurch.org or write to Aid to the Church in Need, PO Box 6245 Blacktown DC NSW 2148. Web: www.aidtochurch.org



Oliver Twist

He asked for more. But surely he didn't need this one by director Roman Polanski? Not after six versions: the 1922 starring Jackie Coogan in the title role, the 1933 with Dickie Moore, the 1948 David Lean's classic upon classic effort with Alec Guinness as Fagin, a performance surpassed neither by George Scott in the 1982, nor by Richard Dreyfus in the 1997 nor indeed by Barry Humphries in Lionel Bart's stage musical version of the 1960s.

Oddly enough, Oliver did need it. Polanski catches an aspect missing from the other versions: how relatively small the Great Wen of London was so that Oliver's foundling life begins in the country. In addition, Ronald Harwood's script has some bits of business of which the ghost of Dickens might well say: 'Why didn't I think of that?'

Oliver is well-played by Barney Clark, the Artful Dodger by Harry Eden. Bill Sykes by Jamie Foreman, Bumble the Beadle by Jeremy Swift and, topping them all, Ben Kingsley as an insinuatingly villainous Fagin.

PG NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Failure to Launch

Trip (Matthew McConaughey) is a bachelor bold, still living at home. Paula (Sarah Jessica Parker) is the psychologist hired by his mother (Kathy Bates) and father (Terry Bradshaw) to get him to leave home.

The premise is as timely and clever as the ending is predictable but the way between is paved with chuckles because director Tom Dey and his scriptwriters Tom J. Astle and Matt Ember provide truck loads of fresh material for the talented ensemble cast to work with.

In a subsidiary romance, Zoëy Deschanel plays Paula's friend Kit with a wit as dry as sherry – and steals the movie.

TBA SFFV ★★☆☆☆

Goal!

A winner despite its unlikely story line: Santiago (Kuno Becker) a Mexican illegal immigrant living in Los Angeles makes it to St James' Park, Newcastle on Tyne to play for Newcastle United.

Using a story by Mike Jefferies and Adrian Butchart plus a script by Dick Clements and Ian La Frenais, director

ANNALS MOVIES

By JAMES MURRAY

Danny Cannon counterpoints the harshness of bleak training sessions, the tawdry glamour of nightclubs and the glory of winning goals.

Becker does a neat job of faking the moves of a player with the sublime skills and goal-eagerness of the late George Best. Stephen Dillane is Glen Foy, the scout who spots Santiago. Alessandro Nivola is Gavin Harris the scapegrace who leads him astray and back again to the pitch, and the arms of the club nurse Roz (Anna Friel).

Only one reservation: to add to the legendary quality of the story, the producers should have chosen Glasgow Celtic whose fans would have truly appreciated the hero's kissing of his scapular before scoring the winning goal.

Still a sequel is planned which could involve a transfer to Celtic, and a sequel to the sequel which could involve Santiago playing in Australia. Can't wait.

PG SFFV ★★☆☆☆

Candy

Director Neil Armfield opens with a shot of his main characters Candy (Abbie Cornish), a painter, and Dan (Heath Ledger), a poet, on a fairground rotor, pressed spinning against its wall by centripetal force while Casper (Geoffrey Rush) an effete professor on a heroin sabbatical looks down benignly on their loving frolic.

Official Classifications key

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

Annals supplementary advice

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

The shot is vivid, a metaphor for the force that has all three in thrall: delight in life falsely enhanced by drugs of various kinds. Unfortunately Armfield, who co-wrote the script with Luke Davies, author of the original autobiographical novel, does not maintain the vividness.

His debut feature movie becomes yet another junkie vehicle in the line that goes back to Otto Preminger's *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955).

Producer Maggie Fink began working on *Candy* in 1997 so cannot be accused of departing from her creative originality. But the market release timing with *Little Fish* is awkward, a factor emphasised by the casting of Noni Hazlehurst. She had a key role in *Little Fish* as a long suffering mum; in *Candy*, she again plays mum, this time as a control freak.

Hazlehurst is a player of protean skill. Despite this, the similarity of context and character means she runs the risk of becoming the diva of dope opera. Apropos similarity, both *Little Fish* and *Candy* take from the Hazlehurst star vehicle *Monkey Grip* (1982), images of swimming underwater, presumably to reflect a yearning for cleansing.

Essentially Armfield's movie is unbalanced. He has a long wallow in the pseudo-bliss of drug taking and its sordid funding. But the cure of Candy and Dan is effected in short order. Casper? He's a deadset part of the cure. At the end of it all, Candy as acted by Cornish, a player of ethereal toughness, has the unblemished look of novice auditioning for the role of Juliet. 'All that country air,' she murmurs by way of explanation.

Her lines explaining her addiction are even more banal. 'I've been clenching my fists since I was six...' she shrieks during a kitchen row with Mum.

Topping this is the barbarity with which one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever composed is abused to provide background for a drug-induced bliss-out (read stupor) of Candy, Dan and Casper. The music: *Ave Verum Corpus Natum* (Hail, the True Body Born).

Sure, the trio are members of the cultural elite. But nowhere does the script establish a link between the characters and this kind of sacred music.

In other words, for their ecstasy, Armfield could find no musical correlative intrinsic to the drug culture,

not *Puff the Magic Dragon*, not *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* not *Can't Get No Satisfaction*. So he superimposed music from a richer, truer culture. Simple really. Like sewing a patch of antique lace on a pair of greasy denims.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Tristan and Isolde

Ancient Celtic romance, arguably the source of every European romance. The script by Dean Georgaris may be a bit dubious about post-Roman, Celtic Britain, possibly under the influence of producer Ridley Scott whose sense of history is more vivid than exact.

England is used as a synonym for Celtic Britain. And one character in a premature expression of *Land of Hope and Glory* urges the unification of Britain's tribes including the Picts.

But the romance is beautifully framed by director Kevin Reynolds while James Franco and Sophia Myles in the title roles are compellingly charming. English actor Rufus Sewell does rather a nice Sassenach turn as a Celtic prince in Britain. By way of contrast the Scot, David Patrick O'Hara, plays his Irish king like a burly footballer rushing to score a goal or a point.

M NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Match Point

Initially this drama of fatal manners looks like writer/director Woody Allen goes posh. Produced under the aegis of the British Broadcasting Corporation, it has a grand-opera soundtrack and stately homes of England settings. From these strands Allen goes on to fashion a high-tension thriller with enough twists and red herrings to satisfy the Agatha Christie Appreciation Circle.

In cinema terms, think *A Place in the Sun*, and you have the plot: poor guy on the make beds his way upwards. The Allen variation? Ex-tennis pro Chris Wilton (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) coaches the rich Tom Hewett (Matthew Goode). Through Hewett, he meets his sister, English rose Chloe (Emily Mortimer), and his girlfriend. American orchid Nola (Scarlett Johansson).

Chris then becomes the busy bee caught between the two flowers. In relating what follows, Allen has Chris and Nola get up to hanky-panky he himself did not when younger, and starring as well as directing: wet shirts

in a lust-thrashed cornfield – the kind of episode that would have given the young Allen bronchitis if not double pneumonia. He does, however, keep the voyeurism within limits as he does the violence.

He is into pastiche rather than parody. No butler. No fog. There are ghosts and Brian Cox plays the paterfamilias, Alec Hewett, like a PR's spin on a tycoon bound for the House of Lords, bearded, benevolent, unpretentious (he serves the champagne).

Allen even adds a touch of *The Bill* but subtly. He establishes what seems to be a vital clue. Detectives Parry (Steve Pemberton) and Banner (James Nesbitt) miss it, and plodd off mystified. Only later do you wonder whether the clue itself was a phantom.

There are other puzzles. Although Chris Wilton is described as Irish, and although Rhys Meyers is Irish, he speaks with an English accent that would have any real toff adopting a mock Cockney voice and saying: 'Ello, 'Ello, 'Ello. You're not kosher, my son.' (What the Bank of Ireland, which put up the finance, thinks of this will no doubt appear in the annual report).

Johansson as ever scintillates, giving the impression that the camera is an ornithologist's and she the rarest of humming birds. But the acting honours go to Emily Mortimer as Chloe, transforming her shining elegance into a kind of gangly, dim shyness yet providing Chris Wilton with his main chance – and his fate.

M NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Transamerica

Stanley (Felicity Huffman) is passing shyly as Bri, short for Sabrina, while he awaits surgery to enable him to behave more confidently as a woman. The sudden obstacle to this consumation is Toby (Kevin Zegers), Stanley/Bri's unknown son from an early heterosexual encounter.

Toby, for a drug addict and street prostitute, is suprisingly naive. He takes Stanley/Bri at make-up value as a church worker and joins her on a road trip to California where he/she is scheduled to have surgery and he can fulfil his ambition to get into movies.

Writer/director Duncan Tucker paces the deceptions and revelations of their journey with rare skill but sauces his

idyll with moral squalor. Nor does he explain how radical surgery can really cure a condition that is psychological rather than genetic or physical.

But Felicity Huffman's tentative, genteel tenderness disarms criticism. Her Stanley/Bri, woman playing man becoming woman, out-Tootsies Dustin Hoffman in his Oscar-winning take on a man playing a woman. She may well join him as an Oscarite.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★☆☆☆

Capote

Philip Seymour Hoffman gives a tour de force performance – fey, witty and with the voice of a chain-smoking castrato – as Truman Capote who created a new literary sub-genre – and a gi-normous best seller – with his novel *In Cold Blood*, detailing the murders of the Kansas family Clutter by Perry Smith and Dick Hickock in the 1950s.

The movie itself is only so-so; neophyte director Bennett Miller does not sufficiently emphasise his scriptwriter Dan Futterman's debt to Janet Malcolm's book *The Journalist and the Murderer* about the ambivalent relationship between a reporter and a perpetrator in a different homicide.

Malcolm's intro is tattooed on the brain of many hacks. 'Every journalist ... is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse.'

Miller and Futterman could have balanced their movie by creating a part for a writer as flamboyant as Capote – Ken Tynan who famously criticised Capote for his work, making it clear that the cold blood was the latter's not the killers'.

Moreover, *tour de force* performances have their drawbacks; other turns have difficulty competing; Mark Pellegrino and Clifton Collins Jr as Hickock and Smith are left little room to show their stuff.

Catherine Keener is Harper Lee; she gets to drive Capote around but is allowed little action or comment. A double waste; Keener is a player of rare talent; Lee was a writer with an equivalently rare understanding of human nature's underside as she showed in, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

M NFFV ★★☆☆☆

The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada

In *The Missing*, Tommy Lee Jones showed signs of an ambition to take over from John Ford as the bard of the west. He fulfils this ambition as director of *Three Burials* in which he also stars as Pete, a veteran cowpuncher determined to bury the murdered Estrada, a wetback gaucho he has befriended.

Some may find the situation reminiscent of *Lonesome Dove* in which Jones co-starred with Robert Duvall. But with his scriptwriter Guillermo Arriaga, he does add new power, setting the movie in the here and now of the wild borderland between Texas and Mexico – though as director he gives his Pete too many pregnant close-ups of elephantine length.

Cinematographer Chris Menges catches the sweep, majesty and risk of the terrain as Pete traverses it on horseback and muleback, his mission combining loyalty, rough justice and mercy while he is pursued by law officers in four-wheel drives and helicopters

MA 15+ NFFV ★★★★★☆

North Country

Josey (Charlize Theron) leaves an abusive partner to return home to northern Minnesota with her two children. Her old friend Glory (Frances McDormand) urges her to take a job in the local iron-ore mine where she is a union leader. Josey does, despite the disapproval of her mother (Sissy Spacek) and father (Richard Jenkins), himself a miner.

Unlike Glory, Josey is subjected to sexual harassment as are other female workers. She takes a stand against it and is fired. Having established this situation director Nikki (*Whale Rider*) Caro and scriptwriter Michael Seitzman lose focus by making a subsequent court case, turn not on the harassment itself, but on whether Josey had sexual relations with her main harasser when both were high school students.

McDormand is engagingly tough as Glory. Theron, her beauty smudged, convinces as the woman whose courage helped to change the hire and fire laws of Minnesota.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★★★★☆

March of the Penguins

Filmed in the ice deserts of Antarctica, Luc Jacquet's tremendous documentary tells the story of the winter journey that takes emperor penguins unerringly from the sea to their birthplace on the ice to begin a new cycle of reproduction.

Tottering like exhausted infantry coming out of the line, they make their way, blinded by blizzards, buffeted by gale-force winds to their courtship and mating ground. There the females lay single eggs which the males incubate while the females makes a return march to the sea, risking killing by leopard seals to get enough nourishment to feed their chicks when they hatch to begin the life cycle anew.

Morgan Freeman narrates this saga of natural hazard with spare, appropriate eloquence.

G SFFV ★★★★★☆

The Hills Have Eyes

Big Bob Carter (Ted Levine) drives his unhappy family across America on a bonding trip in this new version of Wes Craven's 1977 horror movie, made by the French duo Alexandre Aja and Gregory Levasseur with Craven as producer.

Big Bob and his unhappy family become unhappier, not to say terrified, when they find themselves in an old nuclear testing zone where the natives

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are neither friendly nor nice but mad, cannibalistic mutants.

When they start to pile on the horror, Big Bob's son-in-law Doug Bukowski (Aaron Stanford) does have a mobile phone but says he can't get a signal.

As the screams of their womenfolk rise, neither he nor Big Bob has enough gumption to climb to the top of the nearest hill and try from there. The movie, it should be said, was shot not in Telstraland but Morocco.

MA 15+ NFFV ★☆☆☆☆

Derailed

Jennifer Aniston and Clive Owen star as two strangers on a train, she (ironically as it turns out) a financial whiz, he an ad-man. They seem set for another brief encounter continued in a sleazy motel amid Chicago's notorious hustle.

Enter Vincent Cassel at his most French and vulpine to add blood, violence and blackmail to the Owen character's family life which includes a sick, only child for whose cure he and his wife (Melissa George) have been saving.

Owen is too saturnine an actor to do innocent abroad but he makes a good fist of the suburbanite worm turning without resort to Karate for Idiots. Aniston? Her performance is one of cool, disciplined underplaying, hinting at a hidden depth.

Director Mikael Hafstrom and scriptwriter Stuart Beattie (working from James Siegel's novel) play the variations on the basic plot to their murderous – and surprising – limit.

MA 15+ NFFV ★★★★★☆

Date Movie

Alyson Hannigan is the super-cuddly Julia Jones (get the name play on actress Julia Roberts and fictional character Bridget Jones and you have the tone of Aaron Seltzer and Jason Friedberg's comedy).

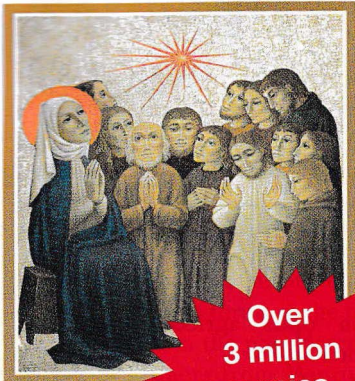
Hannigan's opening, fat-suit dancing sequence is hilarious. Thereafter the movie's plus lies in the trivial pursuit of spotting which movies are being parodied; they range from *Meet the Parents* to *The Wedding Planner*. The negative is that the parodies are gross enough to put the most addicted off their popcorn.

MA NFFV ★☆☆☆☆

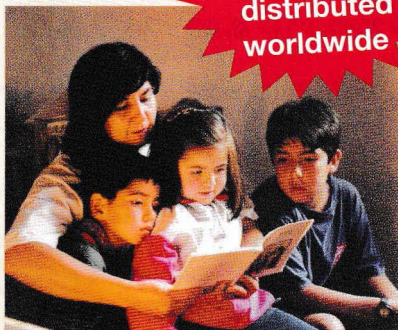
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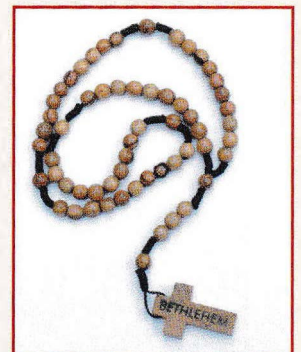
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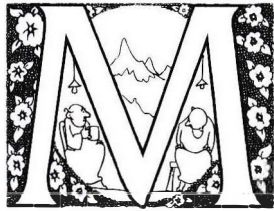
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The Euro versus Sterling, and Allied disunity over Iraq, foretold

A ROMAN COWBOY, AND NO GERMANS AT THE TIGRIS

By PAUL STENHOUSE PHD



MOST of us, at some time in our lives, have had to cope as best we could with zealots on our door steps brandishing bibles, quoting mysterious verses, predicting the world's end, and uttering dire threats against the Pope, Catholicism, Capitalism, Democracy, Communism and World Government – more or less often in that order.

Readers of this splendid journal will

not be unprepared, then, for the revelation that Great Britain's stand against introducing the Euro, and even the refusal of 'Germany' to join the US and her allies in moving against Saddam Hussein in Iraq in recent days, were all foretold around 43 BC in the early years of the emperor Augustus.

The 'fore-teller' to whom we refer was a Roman poet who almost lost his life when defending his farm against one of the veteran soldiers of Augustus who claimed it as payment for his services in fighting Mark-Antony at the battle of Philippi – not unlike what has

happened in recent times under Robert Mugabe and his 'veterans' in Zimbabwe.

Virgil was the poet-farmer:

'Ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus avena carmen, et egressus silvis, vicina coegi et quamvis avido parerent arva colono

gratum opus agricolis at nunc horrentia Martis' –

I am he who once tuned his song on a frail reed.

After leaving the forests I forced the nearby

fertile fields to respond to the demands of the labourers:

a work that farmers love; but now reverberating from war.

He saved his life by swimming a nearby river and hiding from the marauding military-veterans.

The vehicle for these 'prophecies' was not the bible, but a work that in pagan Rome was much loved and admired. It was called, variously, *The Eclogues*, [Selected Verses] and *The Bucolics* [Pertaining to the *Bucolicus* or herdsman – lit. 'cowboy' from 'bu' [= 'bos'] a cow, and 'colere' to tend, to cultivate].

The first book of the *Bucolics* was written in Mantua to thank the emperor Augustus for compensating Virgil for the loss of his beloved farm.

In a particularly happy phrase the poet declares that the Asiatic Parthians will be drinking from the water of the Arar, [a river in Gaul now known as the Saône which tumbles into the Rhône at Lyon in the South of France] and the Germans will be drinking from the Tigris, before the memory of Augustus's countenance [=generosity] fades from his heart:

'aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim

quam nosto illius labatur pectore voltus'

As the memory of that generous act



'Special interest' groups

AMONG many other banes of our lives in these few years since the third millennium began, special interest groups must surely hold pride of place.

Once upon a time, such groups would have been specially interested in promoting stamp collecting, butterfly hunting or raising roses. Now they find their fulfilment in terrorising people into agreeing with them that not being interested exclusively in entomology or philately or rose gardens is a danger not just to the environment, but to our general well-being. I refuse to cry 'down with people who like spiders and snakes, or koalas; who collect coins or grow chrysanthemums,' just because some special interest group calls for a boycott. – Ed.

of Augustus is set indelibly in the delicate ceramic of Virgil's poetry, there seems little hope now that the Parthians will descend on Lyon demanding their best mineral water; or that the Germans could arrive at the Tigris to sample the waters there.

Critics of Gerhard Schroeder's refusal to send German troops to Iraq only show how little they know of the German Chancellor's classical upbringing. He would have had to deal with an irate Roman poet as well as the peace movement back home had he decided to go ahead.

Britain's Tony Blair was under no such explicit dire constraint when he committed troops to the effort to oust Saddam Hussein. However, economists and diplomats must be worrying about a Virgilian thrust at the insularity of Britain when the poet describes the flight of farmers from Mantua in the wake of the soldiers seizing their land:

But now some of us are going hence to thirsty Africa, others to the turbulent river Oaxis in Crete, others to the Britons completely cut off from all the world –

'At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros, pars Scythiam et rapiudum Cretae veniemus Oaxen

*et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*³

Are we stretching the credulity of our readers when we suggest that replacing Sterling with the Euro would give the *coup de grace* to Virgil's poetic licence regarding our forebears? If Tony Blair is to remain in the good graces of Rome's greatest epic poet he will need to keep a close watch on what the Little Old Lady of Threadneedle Street is up to.

For the sake of transparency, may I share a worrying thought with our readers – before some kindly but pedantic person raises it: Virgil also wrote that *the nimble stag will graze in the air before ...* the memory of Augustus's countenance will fade from his memory – *'ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi ...'*

I wonder if the modern-day carriers who transport stags by air, and doubtless provide fodder for the sometimes long journey, realise that they risk spoiling my musings on Virgil and his 'prophecies'. If stags even occasionally

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'pascentur in aethere' – graze in the air – then, who knows, maybe one day we'll find Germans drinking the water of the Tigris.

So let's console one another with the beauty of Virgil's language. At least my whimsy has enabled us to recall how common-place were the great poet's

problems, and to speculate on what might have been ...



1. The original opening lines of Aeneid Book I – seemingly rejected by Virgil's executors. Now the first line begins with the famous *'Arma virumque cano ...'* – / *sing of arms and the man ...*
2. Eclogue 1,62-63.
3. Eclogue 1,64-66.
4. Eclogue 1,59.

