



the presbyterian banner

October 2013

*The waters nourished it, deep springs made it grow tall;
their streams flowed all around its base
and sent their channels to all the trees of the field.*

Ezekiel 31:4

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Editorial

In his book *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer makes the following assertion about the fatherhood of God: "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God... Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption."

For example, as you study the spiritual power behind Islam and wonder how this spiritual power influenced Muhammad's theology, this will come to your attention. You see, Islam's god is never described or known as "Father", but in Christianity God is known as Father. Whether from a simply doctrinal point of view, or from a spiritual and relational point of view, we soon realise something about Muhammad's relationship with his god: the spiritual power behind Islam never gave Muhammad the intimate love that a father gives his son. That is why Muhammad never called that spiritual power "father". He simply did not know it that way. The relationship between Muhammad and his god was one of a slave to his master, with obedience, rather than love, being the primary impulse.

This shows us the difference between fear and faith. For it is by faith we know we have a loving heavenly Father who keenly seeks to forgive and restore his contrite children. Through fear, however, we can never know if what we have done is acceptable enough. This is also what differentiates a true believer from the other religions and from the cults and sects. Ask any of them how they know they are right with God and invariably "obedience" of one kind or another will come up in their answer. They won't talk about being saved simply by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. That is because they simply cannot!

Perhaps that's a good question to ask of yourself right here and now: Am I going into heaven because of what I think I've done or haven't done, or only because of what God has done in his Son?

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.
Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves
be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

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Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred.

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Religion & Politics

Considering Romans 13:1–7

It's often said that there are two subjects to avoid in polite conversation – religion and politics. A warning: I'm going to be impolite. My subject is religion and politics. The apostle Paul addresses these subjects in this chapter. Since the beginning of chapter 12 the apostle has been teaching us how we should live as Christians. He has taught us about our relationship to God (12: 1-2); our relationship to ourselves (3-8); to one another (9-16) and to our enemies (17-21).

Now in this chapter he instructs us in our relationship to the state and to governing authorities.

Between the time of writing and the time you read this article I anticipate a general election and a change of government. Perhaps it would be wise to wait and see what the new government will be and who the new Prime Minister is? I'm not game to predict the outcome. The opinion polls at the minute are 50/50. However, no matter the outcome, no matter what colour the new government will be, I'm confident I won't need to change a thing. The remarkable thing about these instructions is that they embody principles that apply no matter what kind of government we have, no matter who is in government, no matter where or when we live. These are universal and timeless principles.

The relationship between the church and state has been a thorny one down through history. Different positions and political theories have been held. These can be expressed as follows:

Erastianism – currently in China and Russia. This is the theory that the state is supreme and controls the church.

Theocracy/clericalism – popular in the middle ages and in Muslim counties today. This is the theory that the church should dominate and determine the state.

Strict Separation – this is the popular view today. This is the belief that church and state are totally separate entities.

Partnership – this is the view that church and state should recognise

each other's distinct God given roles and responsibilities in a spirit of mutual support. This is the position which best accords with the Bible's teaching. There are two legitimate powers (civil and spiritual); they are different but there are areas of overlap. Jesus stated it concisely in answer to a curly question when he said, '*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's*' (Matt. 22: 21). This is the

Romans 13: 1-7

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

position we adopt in our church. We sometimes refer to it as the 'Establishment Principle.' Every office bearer in our church is asked: -

'Do you believe that Church and State are distinct and separate institutions, that both are accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ...that the mutually helpful relationship between Church and State does not imply subordination of one to the other in its own

George Ball

sphere, and, in particular, that the civil authorities have no jurisdiction or authoritative control in the spiritual affairs of Christ's Church?' Church and State are two distinct divine institutions, each independent in its own sphere, but ought to cooperate for the glory of God and the welfare of society.

Andrew Melville's famous admonition to James VI of Scotland in 1596 illustrates the point. Melville apparently took the king by the sleeve and told him to listen to what the ministers had to say.

'Sir, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the church, whose subject James VI is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life, which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Permit us then freely to meet in the name of Christ, and to attend the interests of that church of which you are a chief member.'

As Christians we are both members of the church and citizens in the state. So what kind of citizens should we be? What should we do and not do?

1. We Should Recognise the Authority of Government (1-2) '*There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God*' (1). '*By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth*' (Prov. 8: 15-16). The

power of government does not come from the electors; or from its leader; but fundamentally and ultimately its power is from God. Even governments that we have not elected or endorse are there by God's authority. Remember

the words of Jesus to Pilate, **'You would have no power (authority) over me if it were not given to you from above'** (Jn 19: 11). Even the positively wicked government of Babylon was there by God's command to do His will (cf. Hab. 1). A.A. Hodge wrote, **"Some have supposed that the right or legitimate authority of human government has its foundation ultimately in the 'consent of the governed,' 'the will of the majority' or in some imaginary social pact."**

Any authority that government has is from God. All authority proceeds from God. He has delegated his authority to the civil government – in whatever form it may take – for our good. The Bible nowhere legislates the particular form of government – whether monarchy, republic, democracy, dictatorship, or whatever. Many today believe that democracy has come down to us directly from heaven. I think we would have difficulty supporting that belief biblically. The government's authority, however, is not absolute. It is not free to do whatever it likes. There are limits and boundaries to its jurisdiction. The government has no authority, for example, to dictate what parents teach their children at home; the government has no authority to dictate to the church how it should or should not worship. The government should not dictate who the church should employ, and so on. While under all ordinary circumstances we should recognise and submit to the government's authority there may be occasions for civil disobedience if the government requires us to do something contrary to God's commands.

Just as we should recognise the God given authority of government – so those who are in government should also recognise that their authority ultimately comes from God. Their mandate is not from the people, nor from their majority, but from God. Our Prime Minister, whoever he will be in October this year or next year or any year, has a moral obligation to acknowledge that the authority of his government is from Almighty God. The message of Psalm 2 emphasises the foolishness and futility of rejecting the Lord's righteous rule exercised

through His anointed Son, Jesus Christ.

2. We Should Recognise the Responsibility of Government (3-4)

The ruler is described as, 'God's servant' (4a, 4c and 6). The word used is 'diakonos' (verse 4) and 'leitourgos' (verse 6: servant/minister). The concept survives today when we call our government officials, 'public servants' i.e. they serve civilians. Stott writes, **'Those who serve the state as legislators, magistrates, police, social workers, or tax collectors are just as much 'ministers of God' as those who serve as pastors and teachers and evangelists.'** Is that how we think of them? Is that how they think of themselves? Rulers are servants of God – to serve the people.

We should understand that Paul is not developing here an advanced theory of civil government. That's not his purpose. He emphasises however, two responsibilities of government that have relevance to believers. Governments may do many other things – but they ought to, at least, do these i.e. **'To promote and reward the good and to restrain and punish the evil'**. Peter also agrees; **'be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good'** (1 Peter 2: 13-14). Government exists to serve the good of the people. The Westminster Confession states, **'God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory and for the public good'** (23:1). The good should not be narrowly defined as the economic and material good – but what is altogether good – which includes the moral and spiritual good. That's the question every government should be asking itself everyday: 'Is this for the overall good of the people'? Is, for example, legislating for same sex marriage good?

It is the state's duty to punish the wrongdoer – the murderer, the thief, the fraudster, and all who commit a

crime. We as individuals have not the authority to take the law into our own hands (cf. Rom. 12: 19). That's what the state is for. The state is an instrument of God to curb and punish evil. The state 'bears the sword' (4). This was no mere metaphor – but literal. It's the ancient equivalent, I suppose, of the cop's revolver. The phrase implies that the state has authority to use force (though not excessive) and physical punishment when required. It's also implied that the state has authority to impose the severest sanction of all – capital punishment. God justified capital punishment in Gen. 9: 5-6. Paul in Acts 25: 11 recognised this authority as he stated before a Roman tribunal, **'If I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die.'**

The sword also implies that the state has authority to defend itself against a hostile aggressor. **'The state may lawfully wage war upon just and necessary occasions'** (WCF 23: 2 and cf. Luke 3: 14, Matt. 8: 9-10, Acts 10: 1-2). Because of nuclear capability nowadays, every effort should be made to solve political differences by political means.

3. We Should Fulfil our Duty as Citizens (1, 6-7)

There are some who view the state as a necessary evil and therefore want little to do with it. That's hardly a biblical position. As Christians we are called to be good citizens. We are required, under all ordinary circumstances, to submit to all the laws and requirements of the state (1). Why? Because the powers that be are ordained by God; because it's the way to avoid punishment (3); because our conscience tells us to obey (5).

There may however be occasions, as noted above, when a Christian will have to disobey. Whenever laws are enacted which contradict God's law; or when the State is asking us to do something immoral. There are some notable examples in the Bible: e.g. the Hebrew midwives who refused to obey the command of Pharaoh to

kill the baby boys (Ex. 1: 17). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar when he issued an edict that all his subjects should fall down and worship the golden image (Dan. 3). Daniel refused to stop praying despite Darius' decree (Dan. 6). The apostles refused to stop preaching despite the ban from the Sanhedrin (Acts 4: 18ff).

'In modern history during the Nazi era Christians were faced with a devilish state with anti-Christian and anti human practices. German citizens were commanded to have no dealings with the Jews...Corrie ten Boom and her family were right to hide Jews and thus try to save their lives...Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right to speak out against Hitler, organise an underground church and strengthen its opposition and witness...Martin Niemoeller was right to go on preaching the truth even to the point of being imprisoned for it. Another minister visited him in jail and argued that he could be set free if only he kept quiet about certain subjects. 'So why are you in jail?' he concluded. Niemoeller replied, 'Why aren't you in jail?' (Quoted in Boice). We have a duty to speak out against racism, government and corporate corruption, abortion and all other moral evils of our day. The church should act as the moral conscience of the nation (cf. James

5: 1-6).

Let's face it: many of our leaders are not great moral examples. Must we submit to and respect them? This was also the apostle's dilemma. The emperor Nero at this time was a 17 year old stripling. Could you have much respect for a pimply teenager? Listen to the Confession again: **'infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them'** (WCF 23: 4). We are to respect the office. We, no doubt, were disappointed about many aspects in the personal life of our first female Prime Minister. But there is no doubt she was the subject of much personal vilification and shameful abuse which was unworthy of her office. Peter says, **'show proper respect to everyone: love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.'** (1 Peter 2: 17).

No one likes paying taxes. But as citizens we have an obligation before God to pay taxes (6-7). Tax is a legitimate debt we owe. Yet there are many tax dodgers. (Did you know that an average of 1.2 million tax payers fail to lodge a tax return each year? Did you know that the ATO is the 2nd biggest government employer – with 20,000 employees?). Did you know that Jesus paid tax? He said, **'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'** When Jesus said

that, 'He gave to the state a legitimacy it had never enjoyed before, and set bounds to it that had never yet been acknowledged.' (Lord Acton).

As citizens we ought to pray, **'for kings and those in authority that we may live peaceful lives in all godliness.'** (1 Tim. 2: 1-2). Surely this is one of the most neglected tasks of Christians? If we prayed as fervently and as frequently for them as we criticised them it would do much more good! We should be careful how we speak of our leaders. Beware of bashing politicians as the world is fond of doing. We ought to commend them when they do good and inform them when they do wrong; but we must always pray for them.

Finally, as good citizens we should be witnesses to the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Christians make an enormous contribution to society by actively living for Christ – they are effectively salt and light. We all want a better society. We can't have a better society with better people. It's only the gospel that can change people for good. Jesus said, **'you shall be my witnesses.'** The greatest asset the nation has is a faithful church throughout the land. That's one good reason why the state should be supporting and protecting it – it's for the public good.

The Past for Today

The PCEA (5) Rebuilding & Renewal 1900-1963—Part 2

Rowland Ward

In this installment we look at some other matters that consolidated the organisation of the church.

(4) New South Wales

The property of the church from its beginning in 1846 was held by local trustees who could be prone to switch church allegiance and take the property with them notwithstanding the trust deeds. It was also expensive and time-consuming to register new trustees in place of those who resigned or died – £50 upwards was

typical. In 1918 the PCEA Synod secured an Act of the NSW Parliament to incorporate the church so far as property holding was concerned. The Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of Synod and their successors in office became a corporate body entitled The Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia. Property was vested in the corporate body and was held on behalf of the various congregations. The powers were rather limited, presbyteries were not mentioned, and some well-intentioned changes

from what was requested were made in the NSW Legislative Council at the insistence of the Hon. John Garland, who was incidentally the legal advisor to the PCNSW. These changes were to cause difficulty later. Nevertheless this was an important step, and put property holding on a secure footing. [The Synod of 2013 unanimously approved a revision of the Act to bring it up to date generally in line with the Victorian legislation.]

(5) Victoria

The Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia became incapable of presbyterial action early in the 20th century and several properties languished disused, or used by others, chiefly that at Morphett Vale. The fear that the church in Victoria might also die out was a major factor in convincing the three Victorian ministers (Graham, Robinson and McIntosh) that they should become part of the PCEA.

There was another factor identified by Rev Arthur Allen (1902-58) of Geelong and from 1944 of Sydney, who was a great friend of the late F. Maxwell Bradshaw (1910-92), the pre-eminent barrister in the area of trusts and himself an old-school Presbyterian elder who had become honorary legal advisor to our church in 1943. The Federation of 1913 was well-intentioned but legally fraught. As a mere conference it would have been in order but it went further, involving an Assembly supreme over the co-operating churches. This created trust issues since the trust deeds

of the co-operating churches required their respective Synods to be acknowledged as supreme. The best option, given the then tenuous state of the FPCV, was for that church to become fully part of the PCEA. On 2 April 1952 the PCEA Synod unanimously enacted and ordained that:
 "1. The Synod approve a union of the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria and the Presbyterian

The Victorian Church unanimously resolved similarly. Guided by Mr Bradshaw, the needed formalities were dealt with. They included legislation of Synod 1952 reverting to the Questions and Formula of subscription dating from 1846, and an Act of the Victorian Parliament (#5691, 1953) incorporating The Trustees for Victoria of the Presbyterian Church of East-



Union of FPCV with PCEA November 1953. Front (L to R): Rev I. L. Graham, Rev M. C. Ramsay, Hector McPherson (Richmond/Brunswick Rivers), Rev A. Allen, Harald C. Nicolson (St Kilda), Rev J. A. Harman. Back (L to R): Charles J. Green (Maclean), Gordon R. Anderson (Grafton), Rev A. D. McIntosh, Rev S. N. Ramsay, Alfred M. McLean (Geelong), Rev Kenneth MacRae (Stornoway FCS), Rev J. A. Webster, Robert Allen (Sydney), J. E. 'Ted' Hockett (Hastings), Charles A. McMillan (Hamilton). No elders present from the Hunter or the Manning.



F. Maxwell Bradshaw

Church of Eastern Australia on the basis of the principles held by the Free Church of Scotland following the Disruption.

2. The Synod declare that the principles of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia are identical with those of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843 following the Disruption and on this understanding approve the implementation of the above mentioned union by the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria being received into the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia."

ern Australia. The union was duly accomplished with great harmony on 25 November 1953. [The Act of Parliament was brought right up to date in 2012.]

(6) South Australia

The problem of the South Australian property had to be addressed. This occurred much later than the 1950s but is noted here for convenience. The PCEA was equivalent to the FPCSA in point of doctrine but the continuing PCSA, the minority which continued outside the Uniting Church formed in 1977,

was nearer in geographical terms. The Uniting Church considered it incorporated with the PCSA, therefore giving it an entitlement. The Morphett Vale church had been leased to the PCSA 1921-29 and occupancy continued after 1929. However, without a title the PCSA was not willing to invest money in the property and it was disused in the 1970s. Following agreement from the PCEA Synod in 1983, the writer negotiated a settlement in December 1987 by which legislation would be sought from the South Australian Parliament so that marketable titles could be secured, the properties sold and the net proceeds divided between the three claimants. It

took a lot of time, particularly on the part of the negotiators in South Australia, but the obstacles were overcome, the Act was secured in 2001, the properties were disposed of, and the sum of \$78,000 was received by the PCEA in 2006.

The old John Knox Church (1856) and school-house (1870) in William Street, Morphett Vale, are heritage listed.

They are to be restored as part of a residential development project on the surrounding land. The other still existing building (now restored) is the small Free Presbyterian chapel (1858) in Sturt Street, Robe. It was used by



Former Free Presbyterian chapel, Robe

other churches in the early days, also as a Mechanics' Institute and a private school. In the 1890s it became the property of the adjoining St Peter's Church of England.

Life under the Banner

Kevin Rudd & "Marriage Equality"

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made a big splash during the recent election campaign, when on the television show "Q & A" he responded to a pastor's challenge about his changed position on homosexual marriage.

The Exchange

The following are excerpts from a transcript of the exchange as recorded by the Bible Society (<http://www.biblesociety.org.au/news/rudd-on-qanda-transcript>).

PASTOR MATT PRATER: "...You seem to keep chopping and changing your beliefs just to get a popular vote with regards to things like marriage...."

PRIME MINISTER KEVIN RUDD: "Well on the question of marriage equality, you are right. I took a position...because I concluded in my conscience, through an informed conscience, and a Christian conscience—it was the right thing to do. And let me tell you why.

"Number one: I do not believe people when they are born choose their sexuality. They are gay if they are born gay....

"Secondly: If you accept that it is natural and normal for someone to be gay because that is the way they are, then it follows from that, that I don't think it is right to say that if

these two folk here who are in love with each other, and are of the same gender, should be denied the opportunity for legal recognition of the duration of their relationship by having marriage equality...."

MATT PRATER: "...Jesus said, 'A man shall leave his father and mother' and be married and that is the Biblical definition. I just believe in what the Bible says...."

KEVIN RUDD: "Well, mate, if I was going to have that view, the Bible also says that slavery is a natural condition.

"Because St Paul said in the New Testament 'Slaves be obedient to your masters', and therefore we should have all fought for the confederacy in the US Civil War. For goodness sake, the human condition and social conditions change. What is the fundamental principle of the New Testament? It is one of universal love. Loving your fellow man....

"And therefore I go back to my question. If you think homosexuality is an unnatural condition, then frankly I cannot agree with you based on any element of the science. And therefore if a person's sexuality is as they are made, then you have got to ask the second question. Should therefore their loving relationships be legally recognised? And the conclusion I have reached is that they

should.

"And on the question of chopping and changing, I wrote a 2,000 or 3,000 word essay, stuck it online... so everyone would know why I had changed my position and the reasons for it. And it was the product of many many months and years of reflection. In good Christian conscience."

Kevin Rudd, the Theologian?

Roy Williams, in an article printed in the August 2013 issue of "Eternity," writes, "Rudd's knowledge of Christian doctrine and history is extensive, and his everyday speech is littered with religious phraseology. When I interviewed him at his office in Parliament House in November 2012 he told me he had just embarked on a project to study Luke's gospel in the original Greek, so as better to understand the nuances of the gospel writer's message."

Later in this same article, Williams makes reference to the essay Rudd wrote regarding same-sex marriage. "While upholding the right of Christian churches and other religious bodies to continue to define marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman, Rudd argued that 'the secular Australian state should be able to rec-

ognize same-sex marriage.’ ‘Many Christians will disagree with the reasoning I have put forward,’ he acknowledged. ‘I respect their views as those of good and considered conscience. I trust they respect mine as being of the same. In my case, they are the product of extensive reflection on Christian teaching.’”

It is not my purpose to judge Mr Rudd’s motives in coming to the conclusion that he does. We can take him at his word when he testifies to extensive reflection on this issue. However, the quality of that reflection, and the consistency of his current position with biblical Christian teaching, well, that is problematic, to say the least.

Many of the assumptions he makes and the conclusions he draws, as reflected in his brief exchange with Pastor Prater, demonstrate serious flaws.

Is Homosexuality a Natural Condition?

Are some people born homosexual? To be honest, I’m not entirely sure how to answer this question. My own experience in knowing men who have come out of the homosexual lifestyle and gone on to become godly family men and pastors, this says to me that, at least for some, homosexuality is a condition that can be changed. It also seems to me that claims about the science behind homosexuality being a natural condition have more to do with promoting an ideological agenda than actual empirical evidence. But just for the sake of argument, let’s assume for a minute that some people are in fact born with a predisposition toward homosexual tendencies. Would this legitimize homosexual behavior? Not at all. We confess that the fall into sin has distorted every aspect of our being. We are totally depraved in the sense that everything about us is tainted by sin. So much so, that we are dead in sin and completely incapable of any good in and of ourselves.

This being the case, it only makes sense to say that sin has distorted us so much, its devastating effects reach right down to our genetic makeup.

The Bible makes it clear: homosexual behavior is a sin, just as illegitimate sexual relations between men and women are sin. If a person were

genetically inclined toward homosexuality, this would no more legitimize sinful behavior on his part than my own genetic inclination towards heterosexuality would legitimize adultery and other forms of heterosexual sin.

Regardless of where a person’s homosexual inclinations find their roots, we do those who struggle with this no favor by saying that it’s perfectly fine for them to do whatever they feel they are inclined to do. Instead, we must lovingly walk beside them to help them in their difficult fight against sinful temptations.



Pastor Matt Prater

Is Fighting for Same-Sex Marriage the Moral Equivalent of Fighting against Slavery?

Kevin Rudd stated that the Bible says that slavery is a natural condition. Since no verse actually says this, perhaps he meant to say that the Bible assumes that slavery is a natural condition.

He also says that if we believe what the Bible says about slavery, we would have fought for the confederacy in the US Civil War. Aside from the fact that it’s rather silly to speak of Australians taking sides in a civil war fought in a distant country before our Commonwealth was even established, is he nevertheless correct in his assumptions about the Bible and slavery?

You could say that the Bible assumes slavery in the ancient cultures of its day in the same way that it assumes polygamy. Polygamy as an institution was a distortion of the way that God created marriage to be, namely, a monogamous relationship. Yet, the Bible seems strangely silent at points where polygamy is evident, even calling one well-known polygamist a man after God’s own heart. Still, the obvious thrust of Scripture is

against this practice, and so Christians have rightly rejected it. (Incidentally, it’s interesting to note that even in polygamy, marriage is still a relationship between one man and one woman. The distortion results from people being involved in more than one marriage at the same time.)

Similarly, slavery as an institution resulted in a distortion of the way the people were called to view other people, namely, as fellow image bearers of God, fundamentally equal in his sight. As the apostle Paul says very clearly in Ephesians 6:9, shortly after calling

on slaves to be obedient to their masters, “Masters... stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”

It was because of this important biblical principle of fundamental equality among all human beings that Christians were at the forefront of the abolition movement. On the other hand, those who advocated for the continuation of slavery were completely un-biblical in their rejection of this equality.

So, is fighting against discrimination against those who are given up to “dishonorable passions” (Romans 1:26) the moral equivalent of fighting against an institution that violates basic human equality? I think not.

Has the Human Condition Changed since the Writing of the Bible?

The simple answer to this question is: No. Human nature is still the same. We’re still sinners. We are still unable to earn our way into heaven in our own strength. We’re still dead in sin, unable to make ourselves alive. We’re still in need of the mercy and grace of God, apart from which we are lost and without hope.

Believing that the human condition is changed since the time the Bible was written is more the result of cultural arrogance and believing in societal evolution than the result of an accurate assessment of contemporary human nature.

Should Changing Social Condi-

tions Alter the Way We Read the Bible?

There are basically two approaches that we can take with respect to reading the Bible. We can place ourselves under it in humility and submission, believing what it says, whether we happen to like it or not. Or we can place ourselves over it in arrogance, imagining that if it doesn't say what we think it should say, it must be wrong.

Mr Rudd's argument assumes the latter approach. Here's what is basically saying: IF you argue for the Bible's outdated definition of marriage, THEN you must also be in favour of slavery, and SINCE we don't believe what it says about slavery, THEN we don't have to adhere to what it says about marriage being between a man and a woman. Aside from being wrong about slavery (as I argued above), his fundamental approach is one of standing in judgment over the Scriptures, picking and choosing what we want to believe in it, rather than humbling ourselves before it.

Dealing biblically with changing social conditions should not be a matter of changing our teachings to fit with what is socially acceptable. Rather, it should be a matter of analyzing our social conditions in the light of Scripture, rejecting that which is not in accord with what God has to say in his unchanging Word.

Is Universal Love the Fundamental Principle of the New Testament?

If "loving your fellow man" is in fact the fundamental principle of the New Testament, then the Christian religion is really no different than many other religions. But the gospel is not about how we treat each other. Rather, the gospel is about Jesus Christ. The gospel is about how he died on the cross as an atoning sacrifice to pay the price for the sins of his chosen people. The gospel is about how Jesus Christ rose from the dead and appeared to many witnesses. The gospel is about undeserved grace demonstrated to sinners because of Christ's perfect obedience, to the glory of God! When it comes to the gospel, the Christian faith is entirely unique. Our

faith is not like that of most other religions that are based on human effort and merit. It is not about our love. It is about God's love.

As far as I'm concerned, what Kevin Rudd said about love for our fellow man being the fundamental principle of the New Testament, is more dangerous than anything he said about same-sex marriage (and of course, what he says about same-sex marriage is extremely dangerous). This gets to the heart of our faith. Seeing love for others as the heart of the gospel, rather than our response to the gospel, invariably results in a false gospel.



Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

What about the Term: "Marriage Equality"?

Personally, I find the use of the term "marriage equality" somewhat disingenuous, and even a bit ridiculous. It's an attempt to use words in a deliberately provocative and distorting manner in order to promote a specific agenda.

It is said that fighting discrimination means we must support "marriage equality." I may as well argue that as a male, I find it discriminatory that I cannot be a mother. Come on men, let's fight for "motherhood equality"! We can argue about what motherhood and fatherhood each mean. We can consider various ways in which my role as a male parent is similar to that of a mother. But we cannot change the fact that, by definition, as a male parent, I am a father, and not a mother. Similarly, we might talk about the status that committed homosexual relationships should have in Australian law. We can work through the various political issues that are involved in all of this. But we can't change the fact that, by definition, a

marriage is between one man and one woman.

Can Christians promote same-sex marriage "in good Christian conscience"?

Mr Rudd asserts that he respects the views of those who in good conscience disagree with his reasoning. He trusts that those who disagree with him will in turn respect his views, maintaining that he holds them "in good Christian conscience."

While it is not my place to judge his relationship with the Lord, I cannot respect his views on this matter. I cannot say that his views are an

acceptable expression of legitimate Christian teaching. Whether or not our conscience leads us to a particular perspective is ultimately beside the point. In fact, taking this approach is dangerous. We are not followers of Jiminy Cricket, "letting our conscience be our guide" (a quote from the 1940 movie, *Pinocchio*). We are followers of Jesus Christ, and it is his truth that should be our guide.

I recognize that this is a difficult issue. I would also recognize that while we must call sin sin, the church should be about more than just simply condemning certain behaviors (as legitimate as this is). We must actively be involved in walking beside sinners, showing love to them, and pointing them to the restoration and reconciliation found in Jesus Christ.

But at the same time, maintaining that there can be legitimate difference of opinion on this matter does not do justice to the importance of the issues involved here. Our understanding of marriage is at stake. Our understanding of the Bible is at stake. Our understanding of the gospel is at stake.

May we stand firm against the prevailing winds of false doctrine that blow in our culture. May we stand firm on the rock of Jesus Christ, the Savior who offered himself up for his bride, the church.

Doctrine in the Banner

Original Sin

Andre Scheepers

Original Sin is a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith and yet so many Christians today either reject this truth or simply don't understand it. In this article I want to look at original sin and its effect on salvation. It is important to understand that to get the doctrine of original sin wrong, will affect other important doctrines such as man's fallen nature, the atonement, sovereign grace, the Gospel and its presentation. Original sin means that due to the fall in the Garden of Eden, God legally imputes to us Adam's guilt and we inherit his corrupt constitution.

This distortion of original sin was started by a man called Pelagius in the fourth century who in many respects is the founder of what we call, "universalism." His basic argument against Augustine was that if God commands us to do something, then we must have the power and moral ability within ourselves to do it. In other words, a person's obligation is relative to one's ability. If God commands all those who hear the gospel to believe (obligation) then they must have the ability to believe. Since God calls on everyone to repent it means that everyone can believe—everybody in their fallen state can receive the gospel.

Pelagius' teaching has produced many other related positions, two of which are Arminianism and Amyrildianism. These positions basically teach that Jesus died to save everyone. They hold to a position called, "universal redemption." They teach that Christ paid a general ransom for all; that He died to redeem all and every one, whereas the scriptures teach the opposite, namely that the cross secured the full salvation of all for whom Christ died. Basically, any universalist approach to salvation stems out of a wrong notion of original sin.

Pelagianism summed up

In a nutshell Pelagianism can be described as follows:

a) There is no hereditary principle of sin. Pelagius said that everyone is born in the same state of innocence in which Adam was created. In this context, sin is seen simply as a choice of evil. Pelagius said that there is no

such thing as original sin. Adam's sin affected Adam only. There is no transmission or transfer of guilt or corruption to the progeny of Adam and Eve. Pelagius believed that it was possible to live a life of moral perfection without any help from the grace of God. He claimed that grace facilitates righteousness. The word, "facilitate" means to help; to make a thing easier. It is this key, distinct term of "facilitation" that has both corrupted the doctrine of original sin and given birth to Arminian free-willism.

b) The unregenerate person has the ability to choose salvation for himself. The implication of this teaching is that the nature of sin consists only in deliberate, and as it were, momentary choices of evil. This results in a denial of the absolute necessity for divine grace in human redemption.

To start with, we need to understand that original sin is not referring to the first sin of Eve, but rather to the result of the first sin. It refers to our inherent corruption. The Bible teaches that as a consequence of Adam's fall, every person is in a condition both of deprivation (the loss of original righteousness) and depravity (the existence of an evil principle). David says he was conceived in sin (Ps 51:5). We are not born in a neutral state of innocence, but we are born with a sinful, fallen condition and a natural bias for sin.

The Confession of Faith

WCF 6.4. *From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.*

The confession is saying that the natural man cannot respond to God in and of himself—he is utterly indisposed and disabled! A "disposition," as stated in the article, denotes a condition of the heart, out of which behavior flows. Our sinful actions proceed out of our innate sinful nature. We sin because we are born sinners. Concupiscence (the desire to sin) stems out of a fallen nature. The Bible calls us sinners, not merely because we commit sins, but because we are by nature sinful. Original sin refers to our moral condition from which all our actual behavior flows. The condition

of fallen humanity is one that Augustine would describe as, the inability to not sin.

WCF 9:3. *As a consequence of his fall into a state of sin, man has lost all ability to will any spiritual good related to salvation. In his unregenerate state he is completely opposed to that spiritual good, and dead in sin. Hence he is not able, by any strength of his own, to convert himself, or even to co-operate with God that he might be converted.*

Original sin has rendered Adam's race as spiritually dead—he has lost all ability to will any spiritual good related to salvation. This means that the sinner cannot co-operate with God or in anyway apply himself to salvation. Like Lazarus, the natural man is spiritually dead and the Holy Spirit has to resurrect him. There is no place for some kind of synergism as the Arminian teaches.

The source of our faith

The principle of sovereign grace is crucial to our understanding of salvation and is best highlighted in the answer to the following question—*what is the source of our faith?* Is it the God given means whereby the God-given justification is received, or is it a condition of justification, which is left to man to fulfill. In this connection listen to what world famous evangelist, Billy Graham says, "God does ninety nine percent of it but you still must do that last one percent." But this is plain error. It is not that we are offered salvation and that we will be born again if we choose to believe. This makes faith a condition. The sinner's entire salvation is by free and sovereign grace only. The principle of 'faith alone' can only be rightly understood if it is first anchored in the broader principle of 'grace alone.' Paul teaches that faith is a gift; **for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God** (Eph 2:8). The fact that God regenerates us means that even the faith that receives Christ for justification is itself the free gift of a sovereign God. A proper concept of original

sin demands that the application of salvation be through God's grace alone. It necessitates the effective calling of the elect, not by some arbitrary procedure, but as a gracious activity by which the salvation purchased by Christ actually becomes the possession of those sinners to whom it pleased the Lord to grant salvation. Christ's death ensures the calling and keeping of all those whose sins He bore. Christ died to infallibly secure the salvation of His people. The cross saved; the cross saves! This is the heart of true Evangelical faith. The truth is that we are 100% dependent upon the monergistic work of regeneration in order to come to faith and that faith itself is a gift of God; **no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him** (Jn 6:44).

Semi-pelagianism (Arminianism) admits that due to the fall, all parts of our humanity have been weakened, so much so that without the assistance of divine grace nobody can possibly be redeemed. Yet it still allows for this 1%. Why this contradiction? Because of its universal emphasis on redemption. It still insists, that while we are fallen creatures, we are not so fallen that we don't have the ability to accept or reject the grace when it is offered to us. It admits that the will is weakened, but denies that it is enslaved. Arminianism says that all of humanity still have a core of righteousness in them to choose and believe on Jesus Christ.

A crucial doctrine

Original sin is a critical doctrine for a correct understanding of the Gospel and cannot be compromised. A renowned theologian writes, "*virtually every church in the historic world at some point in their history and in their creedal development articulates some doctrine of original sin. So clear is that to the biblical revelation that it would take a repudiation of the biblical view of mankind to deny original sin altogether.*" (R.C. Sproul)

In case you miss the importance of this doctrine, listen to some other church confessions.

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us,

that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will. (39 Articles of the Church of England, Art. 10.)

All men are conceived in sin, and born children of wrath, indisposed to all saving good, propense to evil, dead in sins and the slaves of sin, and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to correct their depraved nature, or to dispose themselves to the correction of it. (Articles of the Synod of Dort 3.3.)

Original sin is a powerful biblical truth. The confessions rightly teach that man cannot co-operate with God to bring about conversion. It is man's pride and sinful nature that causes him to suppose that he can contribute to his salvation. Whereas Arminianism assumes the sinner can co-operate with God by first exercising faith and then the Holy Spirit will give the person a new birth, Jesus emphatically tells us (John 3) that regeneration is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. A spiritually dead person cannot in any way respond or contribute to his salvation. God sovereignly, first, has to make the person alive and give to him/her the gift of faith in order to believe.

Paul taught that through one man's trespass death came into the world and that through Adam's disobedience all have died (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21–22). As a result of Adam's sin, God imputes to his posterity his guilt and sin. Communion with God is broken and the adamic race dies spiritually and become wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.

This defilement is called, "total depravity." Total depravity doesn't mean that the sinner is as bad as s/he can possibly be, but that every trace of moral rectitude has been lost in fallen humanity. Every part of man's life is affected by sin. His will, mind, emotions and heart have all been contaminated by sin. Corruption involves moral and spiritual blindness, as well as hardness of heart and vile affections (1 Cor 2:14; Eph 4:18).

Federalism

The way in which original sin is dealt with in our salvation is through the principle that theologians call, "federalism." Federalism emphasizes the representative character of Adam. As federal head, it means that Adam acted as the representative head for

the human race. The WCF 6:3 states, "*they being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.*" Paul says (in Rom 5:19) that, **by one man's disobedience many were made (constituted) sinners.** Jesus, the second Adam, likewise fills a representative function by entering into solidarity with His people through the incarnation. In terms of His work on the cross, He is our substitute, standing in our place. The principle on which Adam's guilt and punishment comes upon us is the same principle upon which the righteousness of Christ is charged to the account of those who believe on Him (Rom 4:6). To reject this principle of representation before God is to negate the representative redemption won for us by Christ.

The vital importance of this doctrine

In closing, do not make the mistake of thinking that to err on original sin isn't serious. It is! Let us remember that the Arminian view on original sin is the overwhelming majority report today in professing evangelical circles. In a George Bama poll more than 80% of 'professing evangelical Christians,' in America expressed the Pelagian belief that, "*God helps those who help themselves.*" Put simply, the church is immersed in this false teaching because it holds to a false notion of original sin.

Universalism, the idea that it is God's desire to save everybody, stems from a defective understanding of the nature of sin in fallen man. It robs God of His grace and denies the absolute necessity for God to sovereignly save His people. To get original sin wrong will directly impact on the doctrine of human nature and will produce a gospel that merely says, "Jesus wants to save everyone," or "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and He will give you a new birth." What an obnoxious weed Arminian free-willism is! Pray God will deliver His church from this serious unbiblical error and renew our mindset according to the truth of His Word.

Children under the Banner

*From: 'Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheet',
by Betty De Vries, [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
Baker Books, 1998*

Two Promises

There are two special promises in Hebrews 13:5-6. Try to discover what they are without looking in your Bible. Start at the arrow and work around each circle, using all of the letters except Z, Q, X, and C.





Prescribed Search / Youth Work

OCTOBER 2013

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8)

2 CORINTHIANS chapter 5

1. What do we still have even if our earthly house be dissolved [destroyed]?
2. Why was Paul willing to be absent from the body?
3. For what purpose will we all appear before the judgment seat of Christ?
4. Why did the love of Christ constrain the apostles? (2 verses)
5. What things have changed in the one who is in Christ?
6. Why was Christ made sin for us?

chapter 6

7. Why should we not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers? (2 verses)
8. Write out verses in Lev. 26 and Is. 52, quoted by Paul, where it is said that God will walk among his people but they are to come out from the world.

JUNIOR

LUKE chapter 23

1. When Pilate had examined Jesus, did he find any fault in him?
2. Where was Jesus crucified, and what did he say when they crucified him? (2 verses)
3. What was Jesus' answer when the malefactor [criminal] said, "Lord, remember me"?
4. What did Jesus say after he had cried with a loud voice?

Please send the answers to:
Mrs I Steel
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Missions in the Banner

'Taking the Message of Life to Seafarers'

The Seamen's Christian Friend Society

Men have always gone down to the sea in ships to do business in great waters. The power of God is often apparent in the sea, and it is recorded that when faced with that power, seafaring men would often call upon their gods to save them. The Psalmist, in his day, called on men who were delivered from dangers at sea to give glory to God. Jonah 1:5 & Psalm 107:23-24 Men still go down to the sea in ships to do business in great waters but now the likelihood of their safety being threatened is far less, because they now sail in steel-hulled, diesel-engined vessels that mostly can withstand great storms.

Nevertheless, even today, seafarers still face the possibility of injury or even death as a consequence of severe storms, of on-board fires, collisions, stranding, structural failures and, in some parts of the world, piracy.

Life for Seafarers

Life for seafarers is hard, lonely and dangerous. The majority of seafarers are contracted to work on board their ships for periods between 6 and 9 months at a time. They then normally spend 2 to 3 months at home, without pay, before leaving to join another ship. Ships typically spend 85% of their working lives out at sea, voyaging from one port to another. During that time, because of the high cost of satellite communications and the fact that seafarers are only allowed limited access to email, they have only minimal contact with their families. Times in port are invariably short, perhaps 24 hours, and always busy. As a consequence there are few opportunities to go ashore.

Overall seafarers tend to be largely inaccessible, unseen and forgotten. They have very few opportunities to hear the Christian message and therefore, they are

one of the world's unreached people groups.

Taking the Message of Life to Seafarers

The Seamen's Christian Friend Society (SCFS) is an interdenominational International Christian mission that is committed to *'Taking the Message of Life to Seafarers.'* It has two broad aims:

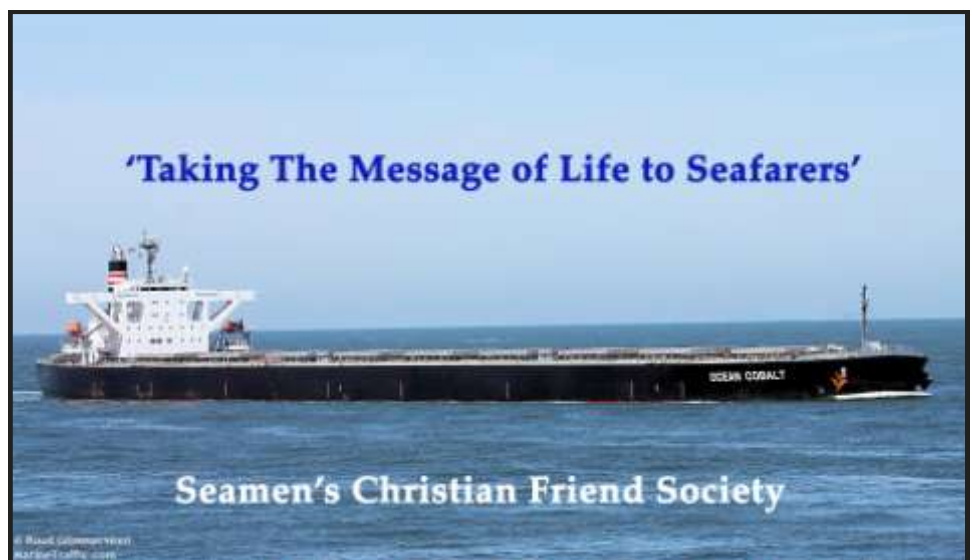
- (1) To engage in personal evangelism amongst non-Christian seafarers on board merchant ships while they are in port;
- (2) To provide pastoral support and resources to Christian seafarers to enable them to also engage in personal evangelism amongst non-Christian seafarers on board their ships.

SCFS in Australia

In 2000 the International Director of the SCFS invited Rob Flinders to establish an SCFS ministry in Australia, a country where the SCFS had not previously been represented.

Rob, having spent 12 years in the British Merchant Navy, followed by a period of 20 years instructing professional mariners at Sydney Technical College and then together with his wife Greta, 3 years managing a Seafarers Centre in Port Hedland in North West Australia, was ideally suited for the task.

Today, Rob heads up a small group of port missionaries in Australia who are *'Taking the Message of Life'* to seafarers in ports at Gladstone and Brisbane



The SCFS endeavours to achieve its aims by visiting seafarers on board their ships while they are in port. SCFS representatives, called port missionaries, offer free Bibles and Bible Correspondence Courses and other Christian literature to seafarers who are willing to learn about the Christian faith. SCFS port missionaries also provide practical help and hospitality to seafarers whenever possible.

in Queensland, Port Botany and Port Kembla in NSW and, until recently, Adelaide in South Australia.

There are over 60 commercial shipping ports in Australia but at the majority of these there is no evangelical witness to seafarers. There is especially a need for labourers to go out into the harvest amongst seafarers on board ships in the busy ports of Newcastle, Melbourne and Adelaide.

SCFS port missionaries give their time voluntarily and are either self-supporting or partially supported by churches and Christian individuals.

The Message of Life

Container ships, oil and gas tankers and bulk carriers, some 300 metres or more in length, typically have a crew of twenty seafarers. Most seafarers are able to communicate in English and it is quite common to find men from four or five different countries working together on the one ship, sometimes more. Often the ships' officers are from countries in Europe



with other crew coming from countries in central and SE Asia. Bibles and Bible Study Courses, both in English and some other languages, are offered to seafarers, free of charge. Most of the Courses used by the SCFS have twelve lessons. The lessons contain numerous Bible references and the seafarers are encouraged to find and read these references in their Bibles as they study. Each lesson is followed by a short test comprising ten questions, sometimes in a false/true format but more usually in a multiple-choice format.

Once a seafarer has accepted a Bible and a Bible Study Course, the port missionary who supplied the course will give an undertaking to visit that seafarer again when his ship returns. Container ships, such as those that visit Port Botany for example, operate at high speeds to tight, well-publicized schedules. As a consequence there is a high degree of predict-

ability about the voyages of these ships.

If, for example, the seafarer is working on board a container ship trading between ports in Eastern Australia and ports in SE Asia, he can expect to see the port missionary who supplied his Bible Course, every 35 days. This is the typical voyage duration for ships employed in this trade. When the ship returns to his port the Port Missionary will visit the ship, find the seafarer and collect his Bible Study course if it has been completed. The port missionary will then endeavour to mark the seafarer's course before the ship sails. He will also try to spend some time with the seafarer to correct any misunderstandings, to offer him another Bible Course and to counsel him about his relationship with Christ.

Providing friendship to seafarers who spend long periods away from their families and friends, and helping and encouraging them to study the Word of God, often leads to the formation of warm personal relationships with those seafarers. This in turn facilitates dialogue between the port missionary and the seafarers about the gospel.

During the first 8 months of 2013, over 400 Bible Study courses were completed and returned for marking to SCFS port missionaries by seafarers on ships visiting Australian ports. There is a wide-open door for the Word of God amongst these men of the sea. There is evidence to suggest some of the seed sown in this way is falling into good soil. Some seafarers have made professions of faith while on board their ships and some of them, after 'returning home to their friends and telling them how much the Lord has done for them' (cf. Mark 5:19), have seen their wives and children also make professions of faith in Christ.

Further, some seafarers who were drawn to Christ on one ship now lead Bible Study groups for their crew mates on other ships.

Christian Seafarers taking the Message of Life to other Seafarers

Rob reports that he is currently providing encouragement, support and resources to 15 or so Christian seafarers who are conducting weekly evangelistic Bible Studies on their ships. One of these men is Roger.

Rob first met Roger, a Chief Engineer, in 2003 when Roger was working on board a container ship that visited Port Botany. It is now ten years since Roger was in Sydney, and during that time Roger has mostly been working on bulk carriers that do not come to Sydney.

Despite this, Rob and Roger, as



brothers in Christ, have maintained contact with each other via email, letters and telephone calls.

Unlike container ships, bulk carriers do not operate on regular schedules. As a consequence, the men on board these types of ship often do not know more than a week or so in advance where their next voyage will take them.

Last year Roger spent 9 months working on *Ocean Cobalt*, a large 'Cape Size' bulk carrier. During those 9 months, *Ocean Cobalt* visited 8 different countries and sailed a distance of over 60,000 nautical miles.

Far more importantly, however, while Roger was on board, he led 15 crew members through two Bible Study courses and another 12 crew members through 3 Bible Study courses. Because of Roger's commitment to the Great Commission, 27 men received sustained exposure to the Word of God, exposure they might not otherwise have received. For the duration of their contracts Christian brothers like Roger have little or no opportunity to attend public worship, to enjoy Christian fellowship and to receive Christian teaching. Despite this, with support and encouragement from the SCFS, they are faithfully proclaiming Christ out on the high seas! SCFS is conscious that these brothers who hold forth the *Word of Life* to other crew members on their ships, need themselves to be fed spiritually. For this reason SCFS endeavours to support

these men by providing them with sound Christian teaching so that they too can grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The work of the SCFS in Australia is funded by donations to cover



the cost of purchasing Bibles, Bible Study Courses and other supporting resources. International postage and courier services constitute a significant part of the costs involved in getting the *Word of Life* into the hands of seafarers

who do not regularly visit Australian ports.

The apostle Paul wrote *that '... all over the world the gospel is bearing fruit and growing ...'* (cf. Colossians 1:6). One of the places where the gospel is bearing fruit and growing is out on the high seas!

Your prayerful support for the work of the SCFS as it endeavours to bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to these men who go down to the sea in ships, would be sincerely appreciated.

Rob and his wife Greta are members of St Georges PCEA congregation in Sydney. Should any Congregation or Mission Society wish to invite Rob to visit and make a presentation of the work of the SCFS, or wish to obtain further information, please contact Rob by telephone on (02) 9666 3072 or by email at rob.flinders@scfs.org

Churches in the Banner

Ladies of Knox

A fellowship outing to Olinda in the heart of the Dandenong Ranges, by the Knox ladies, took place on the 3rd of July.

The participants enjoyed a cool, but sunny and fine day. Some took part in the activity of a long walk in the beautiful Rhododendron Gardens, while others visited the local art gallery and shops. One of our congregation's families

also joined in for the walk in the gardens.

The cheerful group then made their way to the Olinda Tea

House for a very nice lunch. Afterwards, some paid a visit to the garden's shop, which helps fund the Rhododendron Gardens, a Parks Victoria garden that allows free entry. A most enjoyable time was had by all, with a suggestion for a similar fellowship occasion in the Spring.

