



1959-2009

Lawyers' Christian Fellowship Newsletter

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fifty years serving God in the legal profession

JANUARY 2009

OPENING OF LAW TERM SERVICES

MONDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2009

Sydney **The Hon Mr Justice Peter Young QC** Chief Judge
in Equity

Parramatta **Peter Kell** CEO Anglicare

This year both services feature experienced lawyers. Justice Young is the President of the Fellowship. Those who attended the Parramatta service in 2006 will remember his address on Titus 3:13 (see LCF newsletter July 2006). No doubt this year's address will again challenge the profession. The Archbishop Dr Peter Jensen will conduct the service in Sydney. Peter Kell was the managing partner of Kells Lawyers, a medium sized firm with offices in Wollongong and Sydney, for many years, before taking up his position as CEO of Anglicare.

In recent years it has been disappointing to note that the number of practitioners attending has been in decline at both services. It is a great witness to the broader community that there are Christian lawyers willing to commit their practice of law to God at the commencement of the law term. Make sure you get along and also try and encourage other Christian lawyers to attend.

For details of the times and place see reverse.

A SUREFIRE INVESTMENT *by Philip Yancey*

Historians will look at the year that just ended as a financial tsunami that left in its wake millions of foreclosed homes, bankruptcies, and lost jobs. As if competing to abandon the basic tenets of capitalism, governments threw money at banks, investment companies, and huge insurers in an attempt to restore trust and stanch the flow of capital.

During one of the most volatile periods, a week in which global stock markets declined by US\$7 trillion, I received a call from an editor of *Time*. "You wrote a book on prayer right?" He said, "Tell me, how should a person pray during a crisis like this?" In the course of the conversation, we came up with a three stage approach to prayer.

The first stage is simple, an instinctive cry: "Help!". For someone who faces a job cut or health crisis or watches retirement savings wither away, prayer offers a way to voice fear and anxiety. I have learned to resist the tendency to edit my prayers so that they sound sophisticated and mature. I believe God wants us to come exactly as we are, no matter how childlike we may feel. A God aware of every sparrow that falls surely knows the impact of scary financial times on frail human beings.

Indeed, prayer provides the best possible place to take our fears. As a template for prayers in crisis, I look at Jesus' night in Gethsemane. He threw himself on the ground three times sweat falling from his body like drops of blood, and felt "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." In the midst of that

anguish, however, his prayer changed from "Take this cup from me" to "May your will be done". In the scenes of trial that followed, Jesus was the calmest character present. His season of prayer had relieved him of anxiety, reaffirmed his trust in a loving Father, and emboldened him to face the borrow that awaited.

If I pray with the intent to listen as well as talk, I can enter into a second stage, that of meditation and reflection. Okay, my life savings has virtually disappeared. What can I learn from this seeming catastrophe? In the midst of the financial news, a Sunday school song kept running through my mind:

*The wise built his house upon the rock...
And the wise man's house stood firm.
The foolish man built his house upon the sand...
Oh, the rain came down, and the floods came up*

A time of crisis presents a good opportunity to identify the foundation on which I construct my life. If I place my ultimate trust in financial security or in the government's ability to solve my problems, I will surely watch the basement flood and the walls crumble.

A friend from Chicago, Bill Leslie, used to say that the Bible asks three main questions about money: (1) How did you get it? (Legally and justly or exploitatively?); (2) What are you doing with it? (Indulging in luxuries or helping the needy?); and (3) What is it doing to you? Some of Jesus' most trenchant parables and sayings go straight to the heart of that last question.

As analysts began picking through the ruins of the financial collapse, they started dusting off old fashioned words: greed moderation, integrity, and trust. When executives line their pockets at the expense of employees and shareholders, when banks make speculative loans with little likelihood of payback, when borrowers walk away from good-faith contracts, the system collapses. A functioning economy is held together by a thin web of trust. (If you doubt that, visit a country where you have to pay bribes to get action and must count your change after every purchase.)

The same week that global wealth shrank by US\$7 trillion, Zimbabwe's inflation rate hit a record 231 million percent. In other words, if you saved \$1 million Zimbabwean dollars by Monday,


on Tuesday it was worth \$1.58. This sobering fact leads me to the third and most difficult stage of prayer in crisis: I need God's help in taking my eyes off my own problems in order to look with compassion on the truly desperate.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and we know that heaven will include no homeless, destitute, or starving people. As the stock market dove to uncharted depths, I couldn't help thinking of private colleges, mission agencies and other nonprofits, all of which depend heavily on the largesse of donors.

What a testimony it would be if, in 2009, Christians resolved to increase their giving to build houses for the poor, combat AIDS in Africa, and announce kingdom values to a decadent, celebrity-driven culture. Such a response defies all logic and common sense – unless, of course, we take seriously the moral of Jesus' simple tale about building houses on a sure foundation.


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Sydney
Monday 2nd February 2009

St James Anglican Church
King St (next to Supreme Court) at 10:30am



Parramatta
2nd February 2009

St Johns Anglican Cathedral
Church St, Parramatta
at 9.30am.
RSVP Kirsty Grugan 8023 6700