



Lawyers' Christian Fellowship NEWSLETTER

www.lcf.pnc.com.au

December 2001

COMING UP IN 2002

Opening of Law Term Services

29 January 2002

City

St James Anglican Church
10.30am. The speaker
will be Archbishop
Dr Peter Jensen.

Parramatta

Leigh Memorial Uniting
Church, Macquarie St at
9.30am.

The Second Australasian Christian Legal Convention

2-5 May 2002

Bond University Gold Coast



See inside for more
information

THERE ARE NO LAWYERS IN HEAVEN

The Reverend Dr Roger Chilton's provocative topic prompted our chairman Graham Ellis, to request that the dinner knives be handed up prior to his inviting Roger to speak to members of the Fellowship at the annual Christmas Function.

Roger pointed out that he had once practised as a lawyer. In 1980, as a then young lawyer, he was struggling with whether to accept a position as a youth worker. He attended that year's LCF Weekend away where Rev Dr Bill Dumbrell spoke on "*The Role of Law in Created Purpose*". While not reflecting adversely on Dr Dumbrell's talks, which Roger described as wonderful, it was that weekend that he decided that he would become a youth worker. Subsequently he went on to study at Regent College Vancouver and later at Oxford University.

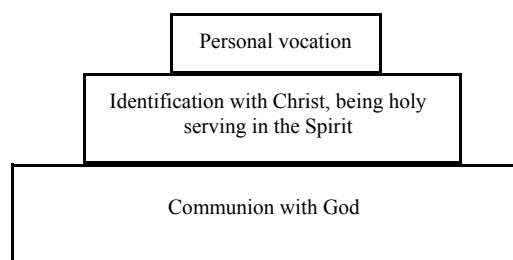
Having selected such a provocative topic Roger assured the members that he would not engage in lawyer jokes but instead chose clergy humour. Fortunately Roger's talk was qualitatively superior to his jokes.

Roger's first point was that the primary reason there are no lawyers in heaven is that our identity is not in what we do but in who we are and who we are in relation to Christ. We should have, what Martin Luther described as a "Gospel confidence in who we are". It is our relationship - in Christ that is important but often society says that our identity should be in what we do. Quoting Augustine of Hippo he noted that we value people by "what they do rather than what they love".

Paul in Philippians 3:8-9 puts it—"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

When we reflect on our lives in Christ do we identify more with Christ now than we did in previous times - or do we look back to our fellowship groups and how close to God we were then. If we do then perhaps we have lost our edge.

Roger was critical of those who see no role for vocation or calling other than that of being called as a Christian. Klaus Bockmuehl described vocation in terms of the following diagram:



(Continued on page 2)

Bockmuehl discerned vocation and calling in three senses and it is in the sense of personal vocation that Roger wished to reflect. He recommended Dr Robert Bank's book *God the Worker* which reflected on the various "vocations" of God - as shepherd, as potter and as craftsman. Quoting Ephesians 5:1 he said that we as imitators of God will also have a vocation. Part of being a Christian in a vocation is not doing wrong things such as not charging exorbitant rents and not using false weights as Jonathon Edwards described in reflecting on the Christian worker. While expressed in the negative these cautions express underlying positives such as being fair in our dealings with others.

Roger took us also to the Esther principle of being raised out of the community for God's work. This is also seen in the encounter between Naaman, the leper who is healed by Elisha in 2 Kings 5, and on being healed desired to worship only the God of Israel for he realises there is no other God. Naaman asked to take as much dirt as a pair of mules could carry because he wanted to take a part of the land of the people of God back with him when he returned to the service of the King of Aram as his general.

In our vocation we should desire to pray like Nelson did before Trafalgar on October 21, 1805:

May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious Victory; and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may his blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.

We should ensure that no misconduct tarnishes our service to our God.

Finally Roger reflected that we should be ornaments. We should be like the great architect Sir Christopher Wren who was described by a contemporary after his death as "an ornament to the age in which he lived" (*His Invention So Fertile - A life of Christopher Wren* by Adrian Tinniswood OUP 2001). We like Wren should seek to add value to the age in which we live by being salt and light. We should be an ornament to the gospel in the age in which we live.

Roger concluded by reading Isaiah 61:

⁷ *Instead of their shame
my people will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
they will rejoice in their inheritance;
and so they will inherit a double portion in their land,
and everlasting joy will be theirs.*

⁸ *"For I, the LORD, love justice;*

*I hate robbery and iniquity.
In my faithfulness I will reward them
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the LORD has blessed."*

THE AUSTRALASIAN CHRISTIAN LEGAL CONVENTION

Following the success of this year's inaugural Convention many were concerned that they would have to wait another two years before the next one. Well it will only have been an eighteen month wait as the next convention will be held from 2nd May 2002 to 5th May 2002.

While the programme is still in the process of being finalised two international speakers have confirmed their attendance.

A key international speaker will be Ken Sande of Peacemakers Ministries. Founded under the auspices of the United States Christian Legal Society Peacemakers Ministries is dedicated to equipping and assisting Christians and their churches to respond to conflict biblically. Ken has applied biblical peacemaking principles to help resolve thousands of conflicts, including business, employment, and family disputes; church divisions; and complex lawsuits. He is a member of the national panel of arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association and has served on the board of directors of the Christian Legal Society in the United States and the Dispute Resolution Committee of the State Bar of Montana. He presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation in Philadelphia. Ken is a Certified Christian Conciliator™ and is the author of numerous resources on conflict resolution, including *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*.



For those interested in learning more about Ken and the ministry of Peacemakers Ministries visit their website at www.hispeace.org. If you wish to hear Ken online visit:

<http://www.lifeaudio.com/ministries/founders/main/talkInfo.jhtml?id=5684>

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The second confirmed international speaker is Sam Ericsson, President and CEO of Advocates International.

An immigrant from Sweden and a Harvard Law School graduate, Sam Ericsson was a partner with a major Los Angeles law firm in the 1970s specialising in complex business litigation with clients that included Ford, American Airlines, Getty Oil and Sperry Univac. He participated in over 50 U.S. Supreme Court briefs on First Amendment and church-state issues while serving as Executive Director of the United States Christian Legal Society in the 1980s. Sam helped draft the U.S. Equal Access Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1984 and led the ten-year effort to establish the "equal access" concept for campus Bible study groups in America.

He was lead counsel in the landmark U.S. case closing the door in 1989 on "clergy malpractice" lawsuits against pastors and churches. Since 1991, he has visited over 40 countries, participated in judicial, human rights, professional ethics and reconciliation conferences in 22 nations, and addressed the U.N. Human Rights Commission on two occasions on the plight of persecuted Christians. He has lectured at 85 law schools, authored scores of articles, co-authored with Lynn Buzzard *The Battle for Religious Liberty*, and served as Editor-in-Chief of the Religious Freedom Reporter.

The Right to be assisted to Die

Diane Pretty, 42, a sufferer of motor-neurone disease, made application to the English High Court in October seeking an order that would permit her husband to assist her in committing suicide without him being liable for a maximum fourteen year sentence under the Suicide Act 1961.

That application was rejected unanimously by the High Court.

An appeal was then taken to the House of Lords. The House of Lords also unanimously rejected that appeal. A copy of that judgment is available at:

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200102/ldjudgmt/jd011129/pretty-1.htm>

Mrs Pretty, whose case relied heavily on European Law, has indicated that she will now appeal to the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg.

Teach them a Lesson

We want them to have self-worth..

So we destroy their self worth.

We want them to be responsible..

So we take away all responsibilities

We want them to be part of our community..

So we isolate them from our community

We want them to be positive and constructive..

So we degrade them and make them useless.

We want them to be kind and loving people..

So we subject them to hatred and cruelty

We want them to quit being the tough guy..

So we put them where the touch guy is respected.

We want them to quit hanging around losers..

So we put all the losers in the State under one roof.

We want them to quit exploiting us..

So we put them where they exploit each other.

We want them to take control of their lives, own their own problems and quit being a parasite..

So we make them totally dependent on us.

Judge Dennis Challeen
Faculty of National Judges College
Making it Right: A Common Sense Approach to Criminal Justice, 1986, Aberdeen, S.Dakota,

Outreach Event

26 February 2002

Members of the Fellowship
are invited to attend
the Christian Business Men Australia
Breakfast
where

His Honour Justice Peter Young QC

Chief Judge in Equity
President of the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship
will share his testimony

for bookings and further details
ring John Conti on 9262 6777

The end of Marriage as we know it?

In an extensive eighty-eight page judgment His Honour Justice Richard Chisholm of the Family Court of Australia has declared a marriage between a person born female but who always considered themselves male (transsexual) and a person born female valid (re Kevin unreported 12 October 2001, SY 8136 of 1999).

In so doing His Honour declined to follow the English decision of Ormrod J in *Corbett v Corbett* (or *se Ashley*) 1970 2 All E.R. 33.

The judgment will be of interest to a number of practitioners for the detailed examination of the nature of sexuality.

No doubt concerns will be raised about the effect of this decision on the nature of marriage. The decision is likely to be welcomed by those who are campaigning for the recognition of same sex relationships as marriage.

Whether it is appropriate that such a significant change to the understanding of marriage should be brought about by judicial activism is another matter which will, no doubt, be the subject of debate.

For those wanting a potted summary of the judgment start at paragraph 327.

GREAT TEACHING ON THE WEB

One of the great benefits of the internet is that it makes available some great bible teaching. To get the benefits of this teaching you need a Real Audio Player or the Windows Media program which comes as part of Windows after Windows 95. The following are a brief selection of recommended teaching:

John Stott, who recently celebrated his 81st birthday, remains a favourite speaker and writer in the Evangelical community. His sermons can be accessed by going to the URL below and searching the archive by selecting him as the preacher:

http://allsouls.gospelcom.net/as_sermon.php

If variety is what you want then Lifeaudio is a site which contains hundreds of sermons and lectures which can be listened to online for free or downloaded for small cost (generally \$2-\$3). A speaker of interest to lawyers is Phillip Johnson, a professor of law at the University of California at Berkley, best known for his book *Darwin on Trial*:
<http://www.lifeaudio.com/ministries/lifeaudio/main/speakerInfo.jhtml?sid=36>

For those interested in a more systematic study the Biblical Training website at www.biblicaltraining.org offers courses by prominent US theologians including a series by Ronald Nash on Christian Ethics, R.Kent Hughes on Romans and Gordon Isaac on Martin Luther. Each series has 10-20 lectures that you can listen to online. There are also a number of series still in production.

Don Carson, Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and author of numerous books is a frequent conference speaker in Australia. Unfortunately little of his material is freely available on the web. However for a limited time a series by him on 1 Peter is available on the net at:
<http://www.soundofgrace.com/audio/sogcast/>

Skipping Christmas

by John Grisham, rrp \$29.95



Have you ever found yourself queuing at the registers at Christmas wondering—why do we do it? Mostly you remind yourself that it is for the kids. But what happens when the kids leave?

If this idle thought has crossed your mind then you might enjoy John Grisham's latest "novlet" a Christmas fable called *Skipping Christmas*. The premise of this novlet is what would happen if you just decide to skip Christmas—no presents, no Christmas party, no shopping, no Christmas dinner, no tree, no decorations—no Frosty on the roof. How would your friends, neighbours and co-workers react?

It is a very American fable as the central character—an accountant, reviews the previous year's Christmas expenditure to discover that his family spent over \$6,000.00 US. There is also a competition to see which street has the best decorations. Each member of the central character's street traditionally placed a giant incandescent Frosty on its roof (its seems that coloured lights is only the beginning).

I must admit after the author's effort in *The Testament* which contained a very clear explanation of the gospel I had great expectations about this book that the true meaning of Christmas might be communicated. Unfortunately the meaning of Christmas in this book is something any humanist would feel at home with. Personally I would stick with *The Testament* as a stocking filler for my non-Christian friends and relatives.

Still it is a short, easy and reasonably humorous Christmas holiday read—and best of all, for those who cringe at Grisham's portrayal of lawyers—there is not one lawyer in this book.

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