

EDITORIAL – ASCENSION DAY

This May we could once again remember Ascension Day. The ascension, that is, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, 40 days after His resurrection from the dead. And this ascension, we all know, was to heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God, through Whom the Father governs all things.

A short look at Christ's government in our Church and in our personal lives reveals much reason for thankfulness. Church life has continued in peace and security, with the solemnisation of marriages, children entrusted to the care of God fearing parents and office bearers ordained for the oversight of the flock. The preaching, Sacraments and the study of God's Word could also continue unobstructed. This issue of Contender also contains positive reviews of a recent meeting of the Social and Political Youth Club and the Albany Congress in Easter. Evidence of the freedom enjoyed by Christian's in this country and the ongoing activity among young people in our Churches. At a more personal level, Christ could also continue to lead you and me by His Word and Spirit to repent of our sins every day again. He has worked renewal in our lives so that we strive to serve Him. All these aspects of Christ's government push us to thank and praise the Lord.

The Apostle John saw a magnificent vision while on the Island of Patmos that relates to this topic of thankfulness for Christ's government. John saw 24 elders, four living creatures, innumerable angels and in fact the whole totality of creation praising the Lamb. Recorded for the Church in Revelations 5: 8-14 it is truly a symphony of voices (a concert if you will) that needs to be echoed by us today.

It begins with a small group of 28 persons, clustered around the throne of the indescribable Father; 24 elders and four living creatures. When the Lamb takes the scroll they sing a new song saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5: 9, 10).

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This scroll which they are speaking about was described by the Apostle John earlier in verse one of this chapter. It was a scroll overflowing with plans and details, *“written inside and on the back,”* and bearing high authority and secrecy, *“sealed with seven seals”*. The close parallel with a scroll in Daniel 12:4 and the chapters of Revelation that follow make it clear that on this scroll is written God’s plan and destiny of the world. The apostle John recognises the significance of this scroll. When the call goes out to all creation for someone worthy to open this scroll and set into motion its contents and no one comes, John weeps. No one is able to take the scroll from the hand of the Father except one whom an elder calls *“the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David”* (Rev. 5: 5). When John looks for this lion, he sees not a lion but a Lamb.

These 28 persons sing out to the Lamb “You are worthy”. It is an imperial greeting. What one would say in ancient times welcoming an Emperor returning home victorious. The Lamb is a King! As a King He is able to take action, is able to set into motion the plan for the World by taking the scroll and opening the seals. The song continues to give the reason why the Lamb has this authority. “You were slain, and have redeemed us by your blood.” Christ’s authority to execute this plan did not come without cost. This plan contains wonderful blessings for God’s people and our sins were a barrier to these blessings. Our sins were a debt that had to be paid. The sacrifice of Christ the innocent Lamb paid that debt. The heavenly choir rejoices for we were redeemed *“to God”*.

Where does that leave us who still live on this earth? The 24 elders and four living creatures say something about our new position. We are *“Kings and Priests to our God.”* These are titles we know well from the Heidelberg Catechism. As Kings we *“fight with a good and free conscience against sin and the devil in this life and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures.”* As a priest I *“Present myself as a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him”* (Heidelberg Catechism Lord’s Day 12).

From the original 28, the choir of heavenly singers grows to include many angels, an innumerable host: *“ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands”* (Rev. 5: 11). They sing in a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5: 12).

The term “to receive” might seem to suggest that seven qualities of the Lamb described by the heavenly choir are things that He would obtain in the future. Yet clearly this is not the case. For the Lamb already had all these things. For example, the Lamb was earlier described as having 7 horns and 7 eyes symbolising the completeness of His power and wisdom. The heavenly choir merely affirms His worthiness.

At this stage in John’s vision, the cry of praise begun by the 24 elders and the four living creatures and taken up by innumerable angels spreads like wild fire. To the furthest corner of the earth, the highest height of heaven and the deepest part of the sea this song of praise spreads. God’s work has universal consequences. Persons are redeemed “Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” verse 9 said. Therefore God’s work receives a universal response of praise. John hears from all creatures a roar of acclamation as it rises to heaven.

“Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever” (Rev. 5: 13).

The mass choir of all creation offers up praise to God not on account of something temporary. God is a God that does not change. The four attributes ascribed to Him: Blessing, honour, glory and power, are his “forever and ever!” God’s plan for our lives, for the whole world, is secure and will also not be changed or undermined.

When this universal song is silent the four living creatures say “Amen” and the elders fall down and worship Him. Amen is a word we also know well: It is true. It is certain.

Knowing it so well brings with it the responsibility to join in. When we sing songs, pray, speak with others, and in fact with our whole lives we, too, must echo the praise and thanksgiving of the Heavenly choir for Christ’s government over our lives.

AREND WITTEN

DO YOU EVER BLASPHEME?

I'm sure that when we read this title we will answer with a resounding "NO!" Of course we don't blaspheme! That's only for those people 'out there' in the world who have little or no regard for God. Perhaps when we hear the third commandment being read out in Church, we kind of switch off and think: "This doesn't really apply to me." Do I ever "take the name of the LORD my God in vain?" Do I remember that God will not hold me "guiltless" if I take His name in vain?

Perhaps there are other commandments to which we apply the same mentality. For instance, we hear the sixth commandment: "You shall not murder." Me, murder someone! Come on! But if we read our catechism (Q & A 106) then we realise that Jesus has taught us that "by forbidding murder God teaches us that He hates the root of murder, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge, and that He regards all these as murder." Yes, now the list comes a lot closer to home. Now we can all humbly admit that characteristics listed above often belong to us too.

But I'd like to focus on blasphemy. Do we ever blaspheme? Let's be clear on what we mean by "blaspheme". It is to "use religious names irreverently; treat a religious or sacred subject irreverently" (Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary). I'm sure we agree that we don't literally blaspheme. But the Catechism also lists things such as abusing the Name of God, cursing, perjury (telling lies), or unnecessary oaths. Perhaps we still feel we are doing quite OK? We don't curse, we don't tell lies in court, and we don't use unnecessary oaths like the Jews did in the time when Jesus was on earth.

However, now comes the difficult part. The catechism also tells us that God requires us not to share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. The proof texts listed deal with the omission of telling the truth about someone swearing an illegal oath. But we could take this thought further. If someone blasphemes do we do something about it, or do we become a literal "silent bystander"? If you work with someone who

blasphemes, do you allow his words to go unnoticed and God to hear His Name abused? After all, when we read the dictionary definition above, using God's Name as a curse or exclamation of surprise (as people often do) can hardly be called a reverent use of God's Name!

The Catechism steps up a gear now. Q & A 100 states that the blaspheming of God's Name is such a grievous sin that God is also angry with those who do not prevent and forbid it as much as they can. In fact, "no sin is greater or provokes God's wrath more than the blaspheming of His name" (A. 100). In the Old Testament those who blasphemed were stoned to death (Leviticus 24: 16). Imagine this still happened today! Why was God so strict about the use of His Name? "God's Name was a gift of grace to Israel. Not through an idol, but in the Name, Israel had access to God in worship. God's Name is therefore to be revered" (New Geneva Study Bible, notes on Ex. 20: 7, pg 123). God's Name was not the same as our names. It represented God's being and "person". By rubbing God's name in the dirt, you effectively also rub God in the dirt.

What about us? We perhaps still think that we don't really blaspheme. We do not deserve to be stoned to death, do we?

In answering this question and as a final thought I'd like to raise one more practical application of this commandment. If I take the liberty of generalising, I don't think I'm wrong in assuming that many of us spend quite a few hours every month (week?) watching movies. Most movie producers have little or no regard for God. As a result, movie characters frequently blaspheme God in various ways. I do not need to give examples. A "G" or "PG" rating means nothing when it comes to blasphemy. On many occasions I have taken out a bunch of movies to watch, only to discover that perhaps one or two out of seven did not contain some sort of blasphemy. Do you notice the same thing?

The next question is, what do we do about it? Do we simply shake our heads, "tut tut" with our tongue,

and say “What a pity that they blaspheme”? If we carefully re-read our Catechism, then I’m not really sure if this kind of reaction is good enough. It states that “no sin is greater or provokes God’s wrath more than the blaspheming of His Name...” and that “God is angry also with those who do not prevent [blasphemy] and forbid it as much as they can” (Q&A 100). Well, if that’s what God thinks about blasphemy, then by what right do we think that we can sit there listening to God’s Name being thrown about in the most irreverent way?

You might be thinking “Well, that means we can hardly watch any movies because they nearly all have blasphemy.” Yes, you are probably correct. Perhaps this is Satan’s modern method of getting into our homes and destroying the reverence of God’s Name. As a result, we cannot just watch any movie. Even if we’re half-way through, and we’re totally enthralled with the story-line, we must learn to press the “STOP” and “EJECT” buttons on our remote. Yes, it’s hard. Very hard! We may feel very limited and hard done by. Maybe this is the kind of persecution we have to endure. It’s not a physical persecution – prison, fines, beatings, execution – but a spiritual and mental warfare. Every time we sit down on our comfy couches and watch a movie, Satan may be tempting us to disdain the awesome Name of God. And every time again, God calls us to make choices that are pleasing to Him. What do you prefer: that we watch a 90 minute movie and grieve our God, or that we miss out watching a 90 minute movie and please our God?

God’s Name is just as awesome and meaningful today as it was for Israel. At the name of Jesus every knee will bow and confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2: 10-11). We have salvation through the knowledge of that Name – Jesus (Saviour). And God the Holy Spirit is invisible and mighty, moulding our hearts just like the wind moves and bends trees. God the Father is the supreme Creator and Commander of all things. His majesty and power make Him unapproachable for all living beings, except those who come through the Name of the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, please read God’s warning to us in Hebrews 10: 26-31: “For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and fiery indignation which

will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people’. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Do we still want to be associated with anything that has to do with blaspheming God in any way? Food for thought...

ANDREW KROEZE

ANZAC POEM

By Amy-Jo Wagenaar and Kym vander Stoep

ANZAC day is a memory
A memory of the first war,
It started in Gallipoli
On the Turkish shore.

They wanted to surprise the Turks
But all the while the Turks were waiting,
As they rowed to shore in the murk
The water and the ground around them started
vibrating.

The troops struggled to find cover
And they were batted with bullets and bombs,
The Gallipoli Peninsula they did recover
Many ANZACS died as well as many Poms

Every year on ANZAC day
We now remember those women and men,
Who died in all different ways
We hope and pray it never happens again.

ANZAC ADDRESS HELD AT JCCC

The date, April 25, 1915, marks Australia's baptism of fire on the plains of Gallipoli, Turkey. It is on this day that the Australian and New Zealand forces, better known as the Anzacs, landed on the Turkish peninsula in the biggest military landing in history up to that time. And today we have come to commemorate that day and to pay tribute to the thousands of Australians who gave their lives in warfare to fight for freedom.

When you read the various accounts of the Gallipoli landing, it is clear many mistakes were made. They started off wrong by underestimating the Turkish forces and landing on the wrong beach, a beach with hilly, rough terrain lined by Turkish machineguns. When the Anzac soldiers landed on the beach, Turkish machineguns unrelentingly fired upon them, decimating the Anzacs, some not even making it out of the boats and onto the shore. The pain, suffering, and horrors of war that the Anzac forces experienced are unimaginable, but the amazing heroism, mateship, and determination of these soldiers in this time of pain and suffering is even more notable and amazing. The essence of Gallipoli is that, despite severe adversity and defeat, the Australian spirit prevailed.

It was at Gallipoli that the young Anzacs found mateship and showed the world through their heroic deeds and courageous outlook that they were fine fighting men. Even their enemies, the Turks, were impressed by the skills and amazing bravery and determination of the Anzac forces. The patriotism and sorrow that followed Gallipoli marked the birth of a nation and showed to the world that Australia had come of age and that as a military and as a people that Australia was truly one nation. When we come together on April 25 each year, this spirit of national unity is reignited.

There is reason for thankful commemoration on this day, even despite the great loss of life. In this day and age we live in freedom, a freedom which was bought at a great price, the lives of those brave Australian soldiers who fought in the World Wars as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. We ought to be thankful that we are able to live in freedom as children of God, being able to worship and serve Him in peace. We do not live in a country where churches are closed down or where the preaching of God's Word is outlawed. Nor do we live in a country where the church is forced to be a mouthpiece of those who rule over us. We should indeed be thankful for this even more so because this freedom is a gift from our

Heavenly Father, and not any merit of our own.

Freedom is a very precious gift that God has given to us. Many people around the world live under tyrannical rule and are unable to serve God and resort to worshipping God in secret or even not worshipping God at all! But we have the blessing of religious freedom: being able to worship God without hindrance or severe persecution. We ought to be thankful for this freedom, but how often are we really thankful for this freedom? It is not difficult to give thanks to God after deliverance from distress or trouble, but how long does this thankfulness last? For this reason also it is good to commemorate Anzac Day, not to boast of men and what they have done, but to see God's plan in history. Through the commemoration of the World Wars as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars we should not boast about heroic deeds of men, but rather take in pride in God and see His hand throughout all of history. In the end it is God who brought about freedom, through means of wars and soldiers.

Through the World Wars as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars, freedom was won enabling Christ's Gospel work to continue. This freedom is often used as an opportunity to live it up, but it shouldn't be used for this but instead should be used to serve God and to spread the Gospel. God continues to give us freedom to preach and teach the Word of God, to spread the Word of God, and to live our freedom that we have graciously received. Freedom not only has a price, it has an obligation. As Christians it is our obligation to use this freedom to spread the Gospel and further God's Kingdom.

In conclusion, we ought to commemorate Anzac Day in thankfulness to the Lord that we too can still serve Him in freedom. Let us also keep in mind the Australian soldiers that are at work at home and abroad. War is a terrible thing, arising from the sinfulness of man. And yet we may be thankful for deliverance from evil and the gift of freedom from God, knowing that God protects and guides His people. Let us thank God for his gift of freedom to us and let us remember today and everyday to use this freedom to the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom.

CHRIS STEENHOF

A LOOK-IN AT INSIGHT

I read somewhere that the most important thing about prophets is not that they have *foresight* or *hindsight*, but that they have *insight*.

Think about that for a minute. Apart from being a clever use of wording, there's an important piece of instruction there, just waiting for you to soak in and apply. It's important because, according to the catechism, you are a prophet. So, what does that statement really mean?

Prophetic *hindsight* (looking into the past) is important because it helps you to view past events in an appropriate (Scriptural) light. You use hindsight when you think about events as they've happened either recently, right through history, or as they happen. It helps you understand the tragedy of yesterday or the day before.

Foresight (looking into the future) is important because it helps us to avoid trouble and it gives hope for the future. *You* have foresight, because you know what lies ahead, you know what God's eternal plan is, and you even know your own eternal destiny...

But *insight* is the most important, because it helps you to *understand* what you learn from hindsight and foresight. It helps you to understand better what God has done, is doing and will do. More, insight helps you to better understand why.

Having it means you will be able to make sense of what God has told you in His Word. And the very real result of having insight is that you will serve Him better tomorrow than you did today.

And that's why it's called *insight* – because you look *into* an event and understand it as being part of a big picture, a picture bigger than any non-believer could possibly imagine. It's a picture which is part of history, or better yet, His story.

Insight is therefore very important.

Tragically, it's also becoming more and more rare.

Why so? Because fewer people get hold of it. You see, people nowadays visit the wrong places in their search for this commodity. But it isn't available in your local video store, or at your local drive through. It's a pity, but you can't buy a bucket full when you're filling up with fuel. Music shops are notable because of their lack of access to it, and the clothing store is yet to be opened which gives out free samples.

No, insight is available from only one place – the Word. And there it is given out liberally, freely, and with urgency. But you've got to put in effort to get it – it means you need to study. And that's why it is becoming so rare. Because so many of God's children don't. Do you?

But let me share with you an ominous warning, a warning which you'll find in Hosea 4:6. God tells us "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being a priest before me..."

Destroyed!! That's pretty strong language!! And it's no joke.

So, if you are truly a Christian, and if you take your three fold task of prophet, priest and king seriously, then you have a task to fulfill. You have a challenge to answer.

For, how are you ensuring that you have insight? Are you studying God's Word? Do you attend club, or are you attentive in class? Are you ensuring that you really understand what it is God is saying to you when you read personal passages? (Or don't you read the Bible at all?)

And how is your insight demonstrated? Is your behavior God-honouring? Your dress style? Your language?

Do you *have* insight? Because if not, then come the last Day, you'll be left out of sight.

ERIC DEKKER

ON THE OTHER HAND

What does it mean to be "Contented"? Is it possible to find true contentment in this life? Are there different types of contentment?

Here is a story which may give somewhat of an answer to the questions.

One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what we would consider a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The wealthy young man replied:

"I saw that we have one dog and they had four.

We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden, but they have a creek that has no end.

We have imported lanterns in our garden, but they have the stars at night.

Our patio reaches to the front yard, but they have the whole horizon.

We have a small piece of land to live on, but they have fields that go beyond our sight.

We have servants who serve us, but they serve others.

We must buy our food, and who knows how old it is, but they grow theirs and eat fresh every day.

We have walls around our property to protect us, but they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective an incredible thing?

A story such as this makes you want to give thanks for everything you have, instead of worrying about what you don't have.

So, perhaps contentment is something which will only come with a change in the state of your heart, rather than in the accumulation of possessions.

Do you agree?

Send thoughts to eric.dekker@frsa.asn.au

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

On the day of the Pope's funeral, where millions were gathered, this thought was written. It helps to put things in the correct perspective:

"He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless" (Isaiah 40: 23). Is this not what God has done to Pope John Paul II?

"His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish" (Psalm 146:4). Indeed, God has brought to nothing a man who had such strong influence on this earth. But what influence will he have after this life?

Where does the pope receive his authority from, to interpret the Bible however he chooses? Has God not said that He will punish all those who change His Word (Revelations 22:18, 19)? Indeed, Pope John Paul II

will receive a punishment for giving himself more authority than the Word of God.

Would it not in this time be fitting for the Roman Catholic Church to turn to God as a leader? Since God is so much more powerful than any mortal man, it would indeed be fitting. For, *"Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"* (Psalm 121:4).

God will never leave His people alone. He does not even require anything from us, not good works or any other thing we can do, for *"the just shall live by faith"* (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17). Is this not such a rich comfort for us, for we know that we can not even begin to pay off our debts, but only add to them daily. We may rest safely in Christ who graciously forgives us our sins.

DAMIEN SCHOOF

SPYSC – UNIONS AND STUDENT GUILDS

Mr Bert Veenendaal, a professor at Curtin University, spoke about unions and student guilds at a recent SPYSC meeting. His speech focussed in particular on whether we as Christians can join these organizations.

Mr Veenendaal told the meeting that following the introduction of legislation by the Western Australian state government in December 2002, university students in WA are now levied 'amenities and services fees' in addition to their normal course fees. In most cases, large proportions (if not all) of these fees are passed on to student guilds. With guild membership carrying a number of benefits, usually in the form of discounts and access to guild services, the temptation to refrain from withdrawing membership from student guilds is very real. However, Biblical instructions regarding how we are to work, as well as the clear anti-God position of the guilds, means that being a guild member and a Christian is an incompatible combination.

God's Word provides us with the foundation for our daily work, including our studies. Having created man, God commanded him to have dominion over the earth, and gave man capabilities to carry out this task. Hard work, we read in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, is a biblical virtue: "... if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." We are to do all things, work included, "...heartily, as to the Lord and not to men..." since it is God who gives us our reward (Colossians 3:23,24). Our work is thus one way in which we glorify God. We work, not only to provide for our own needs, but also for those of the needy. Out of thankfulness to God, we must do our work heartily, with an enthusiastic attitude.

In addition to teaching us why and how we must work, the Bible also instructs us about the appropriate relationship between employers and their employees, or – in the case of students – between them and their institution of learning. By signing a contract or enrolling in a course we are entering into an agreement, and thus have an obligation to fulfil. In Colossians 3:22 Paul instructs bondservants to obey their masters "... not with eye service... but in sincerity

of heart...". In 1 Peter 2:18 the slaves amongst the Dispersion are told not only to submit to gentle

masters, but also to those who are harsh. Should things go wrong, and we need to terminate our work or study, we can do so; but we must maintain the right attitude and abide by the terms of withdrawal agreed to in our contract. Rebellion, or taking up arms, is not an appropriate response.

Unions, under their various guises, all fall in contrast with these Biblical attitudes towards work. Their purpose is to protect the interests of their members at all costs. Unions can be traced back even to the craftsmen guilds in the New Testament. In Acts 19 we read about Demetrius, an Ephesian silversmith who made shrines of Diana. When the Ephesian idol industry began to suffer as a result of Paul and his companions' preaching, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen stirred up a riot in Ephesus. Australia's first union, the AWU, was set up in 1886. Its motto, "unity is strength", is a far cry from the humble work attitude extolled in the Bible.

In Western Australia, most unions are represented by UnionsWA, formerly the Trades and Labour Council of WA. This body provides workers with industrial relations advice, representation, and union training. Student guilds are unions that endeavour to defend the 'rights' of students. Guilds wield considerable power and influence in their universities. They sit, and have voting rights, at many committees and boards. They also operate (usually with monopoly control) many campus services, and register all student societies (religious included) that seek funding or facilities. With huge budgets, running into millions of dollars, they organise social events on campus. Under the auspices of special committees and offices, they defend (read 'actively promote') the rights of 'oppressed minorities', notably women and homosexuals. Guilds thus not only go against the work ethic promoted in the Bible, but they are blatantly anti-God in their activities.

Concrete evidence of this can be found in the specific policies, not only of the individual guilds, but of the National Union of Students (NUS), with which all student guilds are affiliated. In general their unbiblical principles are not usually evident in their written constitutions (although these certainly make no mention of God) but in the policies and regulations that provide the basis for their day-to-day operation. Extracts from the NUS constitution (shown at the SPYSC meeting), for instance, stipulate how committees and departments - including women's and queer (homosexual) departments - are to run at each university. The NUS also publishes a number of policies, the godlessness of which can be illustrated in their 'queer policy'. This policy not only promotes homosexuality, but it condemns "heteronormativity" (the belief that a normal sexual relationship is between a man and a woman) because it "oppresses and represses gays and lesbians." The NUS action plan promises to promote "queer visibility campaigns nationally" and encourages all member guilds to establish "sexuality rooms" which are "not deprived of suitable funding."¹ Similar godless documents are published by the NUS in support of 'women's issues' (feminism), the environment and the republican movement. Both individual guilds and the NUS actively engage in political action, such as protests and lobbying, to promote these opinions beyond the reach of university campuses. The influence of student guilds thus extends far beyond simply providing students with services (such as cafeterias, medical centres and financial assistance) and reaches into the social, political, religious and ethical areas of student life.

Students' obligation to pay guild fees has fluctuated over the last decade. Currently, all students must pay a compulsory 'amenities and services fee,' which the universities pass on to the guild by default.² Although students can opt-out of the guilds, they may no longer divert their fees to charitable organizations on the ground of conscientious objection. For those that do opt out, they must still pay the 'amenities and services fee', but the university decides how it will be spent. In most cases, the universities have made a decision to

¹ <http://www.unistudent.com.au/about/files/queer.pdf>
Not surprisingly, the document lists VSU as a "significant obstacle in organizing queer campaigns."

² At The University of Western Australia the fee proceeds are also distributed to the recreation centre.

provide it to the guild anyhow, towards the delivery of services on-campus. All students may resign from the guild at any time, although the possibility of resignation is little advertised and the procedures are usually unclear.

With the re-election of the Coalition government, the issue of Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) has resurfaced. The Howard government will hold a senate majority by June, meaning that legislation on the issue should be able to pass unopposed through both houses of parliament. The legislation is expected to come into effect in 2006, meaning that forcing a student to join a guild or pay any fees for non-academic services will be illegal. The federal legislation will override existing state government legislation, and the federal government will enforce the law by slashing federal funding from universities who break it.

Guilds and the NUS are currently campaigning heavily against VSU. They recognise that their funds will be drastically cut, and that as a result they will lose resources to promote their radical social and political agendas. One pamphlet from the Curtin student guild (shown at the SPYSC meeting) depicted Brendan Nelson, the federal education minister, as a horned devil.

Against this backdrop of the guilds' ideologies and activities, our response to guilds is clear. As reformed covenant children our first obligation is to God. Guild values are clearly anti-God values, and many ungodly trends in society began on university campuses. By refusing to join guilds, even though we must pay the fees, we make the universities accountable for the way our money is spent. In spite of the incentives to join university guilds, we must keep in mind the high spiritual cost of joining these organizations. After all, isn't being different from this sinful world (and suffering ridicule as a result) what our life as Christians is all about? Many of our grandparents fought against the unions, and God blessed and provided for them. Let's remember to study and work as God's covenant children. *"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* (Colossians 3:17).

LAURENCE VAN DER PLAS

LEST WE FORGET

By Heidi Muilenburg

His once strong body
Lies weak on the bed.
‘Nurse’ says he,
‘How long ‘til I’m dead?’
His brown eyes are pleading
And they soon fill with tears
‘Please nurse,’ he whispers
‘Don’t say it’s near.’
I lower my eyes
I cannot truthfully say
That the handsome young soldier
Will see the next day.
He seems to sense
What my answer will be
As his sigh is resigned
And he reaches for me
‘It was awful’ he says
‘All brute, blood and gore,’
And he proceeds to tell me
His account of the war.

*“We all thought that war would be great, would be
glorious
The Turks would surrender and we’d be victorious.
But none of us realised what lay ahead
The horrors of war and numberless dead.*

*Our spirits were high but the situation doomed,
As we arrived at the beach while Turkish cannons
boomed.*

*All of us scrambled to get out of harm’s way
But two thousand men were lost that first day.*

*The Turks knew we were coming and had primed
themselves well
The combat was brutal as they rained us with shells
We woke and slept to machine gun rattle
We were all of us equals in a nightmarish battle*

*We soldiered on in a war corrupt and wrong
The days were torture and the nights were long
I could only watch as mates fell by my side
I could only watch as they were struck down and
died.*

*And now what are we, what have we become?
Another name on a list, another man with a gun?
Only those who’ve experienced can ever see
The horrors of war at Gallipoli.”*

The young man is spent,
He closes his eyes
Takes his last breath
And quietly dies.
But his message remains
And cannot be ignored
We must never forget
Those who died in the war.



CONGRESS RESULTS

Throughout the Congress weekend we were blessed with fine weather and on Monday, awesome sunshine. We can see God's hand in our weather as only three days after Congress, Albany got flooded. Rain fell from Wednesday afternoon until Saturday morning, a total of 60 hours and 250mm. Clearly God takes care of us and allowed us an enjoyable and safe weekend.

A big thank you to everyone who attended, and for making it such a great weekend. Also much appreciation to everyone who put in an effort to make this Congress such a success. This includes; the dish dryers, the chair movers, floor sweepers, pizza carriers and everyone who was ready with a smile or a laugh. Thanks heaps!

Because we had such a good turn out for congress, we ended up with a profit, most of which we've donated to the Albany Pregnancy Support Group. This is a non profit Free Reformed run organisation which teaches Christian morals about relationships in public schools. They were very excited and happy with the donation.

Here are the long awaited car rally results! Well done!

The Committee-Kathryn vanderSchaaf, Charlene Hordyk, Vivian Bax

1. Gerald Versluis, Clint Bergsma, Rachel Dekker, Keira Huizinga	93%
2. Ashley Schoof, Laurance vanderPlas, Ben Schoof, Brendan Pitlo	90%
3. Jeremy Vermuelen, Heidi Bergsma, Carl Bruning	88%
4. Arend Witten, Kylie Bruning, Kellie Spaanderman, Bruce t'Hart, Chloe Hart	87%
4. Ben Dobbe, Alyssa Hordyk, Stacey Plug	87%
5. Danny vanDongen, Walter vanDongen, Sally vanDongen, Berdina Ballast, Melanie vanderWal	86%
6. Sara Plug, Dean Diek, Steve Bosch	85%
7. Larry Huizinga, Ermin Veurink, Diana Huizinga, Kate Terpstra	82%
8. Amy deVos, Alisha Hart	76%
9. Alison deJonge, Tamala Cooper	74%
10. Siebe vanDyk, Greta Ballast, Kieran Diek, Gerrit Ballast	73%
11. Linden Versluis, Kylie Kroeze, Jessica Kroeze, Cheree Veurink, Jeremy Spaanderman	70%
12. Luke Broere, Ali Byl, Mick vanderLaan, Evelyn Byl, Colleen vanDongen	69%
13. Jordan Brouwer, Misty vanDyk, Kimberley Brouwer, Paul Mulder, Rodney Mulder	68%
14. Sam Groenewald, Lisa deMan, Sarah Heys	67%
15. Jody Dykstra, Drew Ryder, Reuben Dekker	66%
16. Erik Plug, Ruurd Offringa	64%
17. Boetie Kampman, Ollie Bax, Quint Kleyn, Tim Broere, Clint Reitsema	63%
18. Jamie t'Hart	60%
19. Chris Bruning, Jared Bouwman, Scott Luyten, Desmond Vermuelen	59%
20. Cameron vanRongen, Fred Ballast, Doug Postuma	19%
21. Ben Bergsma, Bassi Groenewald, David vanDelden	1.3%

From the Car Rally Committee...

Thanks to everybody who did the car rally, you had a pretty good imagination with the Rock and Road names. To Linden, Jessica, Kylie, Cheree and Jeremy, yours gave us the biggest laughs.

Sorry some people included CopyRights on their pictures so we cannot publish them. However great artistic skills all the way through... (continued on back page)

Just to all those that think that the Harbor at the bottom of York Street is Oyster Harbor, we'd just like to let you know that it is not. It is actually Princess Royal Harbor.

The letters of 'Thomas Stanley Road' actually add up to 210. Good work to 'Ben, Brendan, Laurance and Ashley,' and 'Jeremy, Heidi and Carl' and 'Alisha and Amy' the only 3 cars to get this right. Also to 'Jordan, Misty, Paul, Rodney and Kimberley' who would have got this if they added up their numbers and to all the other cars that had the correct numbers but just added up wrong!!!

It was amazing to see that we all had the same 'bad taste' and picked number 30 Festing street as a gross coloured painted house-purple and orange.

Over all nice work everyone!!!

The Committee-Kathryn vanderSchaaf, Charlene Hordyk, Vivian Bax

Aim:

Romans 12:2 teaches all of God's people:

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

This magazine will encourage its readers to earnestly contend for the faith, and to think and act biblically, in the good traditions of the Church of all ages. Its basis is God's word, as the Church confesses in the Three Forms of Unity. It is intended for the younger members of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, and is produced in co-operation with the Una Sancta. Subscription to the Contender is automatic with subscription to the Una Sancta.

It is not meant to be exclusively for unmarried members who still attend the Youth Bible Study Clubs, but for all those who fit within the loose parameters of 16 to 30 years of age.

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