

# THE AUSTRALIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## NEWSLETTER MAY 2006

### EDITORIAL

#### BYE BYE, MOTHER'S DAY HELLO CHILDCARE CENTRE

If the philosophy of some of our politicians and educators prevail we may well see the demise of Mother's Day, which many of us celebrated during the month of May. Childcare and pre-school centres are currently very much in the news. Funding of this industry features prominently in the Federal Budget, causing much debate and comment.

Our aim in raising the subject is to encourage people to think carefully about the duty of Christians to their offspring, particularly regarding the teaching of the Christian faith and duty to the young.

We are about to be confronted with revolutionary and much faster changes than we have experienced in the past.

Tanya Plibersek, the Labour Party's spokeswoman on child care, and the Member for the inner city seat of Sydney, placed her daughter in child care at 10 months. She stated, "Children go into child care as young as 6 weeks and we should be using that opportunity not just for baby sitting, but developing their minds."

On ABC radio Plibersek said, "Can I say I don't think that pre-school programmes should start only when children are 3 or 4 years old. I think we need to focus our education attention on children in child care from six weeks, when they're first able to go to childcare."

Given the multicultural nature of our society and the anti-discrimination laws in the States, the children will not receive any education of a Christian nature or background. A recent example of anti-Christian bias is the refusal to allow the Gideons to distribute Bibles in hospitals, which may not directly affect children in childcare, but is indicative of "politically correct" thinking, which is applied universally.

Add to this is the appalling practice of showing tiny tots images of families where the parents are two lesbian women or two homosexual men. The excuse given for this practice is that they are showing children that in the real world families can have different forms and we must learn to tolerate the differences.

The advocates of child care use a potent argument in that, as mothers are not at home to instruct and influence their children, this task therefore falls to the professional child minder.

However, this overlooks one important factor. From both the Christian Church's viewpoint, and that of the nation, the success of both have long been tied to the family and home. For centuries the home has been the foundation and source of strength of all societies, and

we are slowly but surely seeing its destruction.

We do not know all the answers to a vast and complex problem, but can advocate that it is time for a combined effort by Christians and Governments.

Perhaps the best way to start is to follow the advice of Luther when he states in his Catechism that it is the duty of the head of the family to teach his household. The hustle and bustle of the modern world has largely rejected this sound advice, much to its detriment. It will be a long road back to a more stable, safe and Christian society, but then every long trip has a small beginning.

#### HOW THE WEST WAS - LOST

The heading does not suggest that this item is about cavalry, cowboys and Indians, as in the old Hollywood film. The statistics below are worth close scrutiny because they reveal an historic trend, which, if not corrected, will spell the demise of Western Culture.

In order to keep a population viable and its culture intact, the rate required to maintain that population is 2.1 children for each woman. At that rate there is no increase or decrease. Some fertility rates are as follows.

COUNTRY	RATE PER FEMALE
Somalia	6.91
Niger	6.83
Afghanistan	6.78
Yemen	6.75
USA	2.07
Ireland	1.87
New Zealand	1.79
Australia	1.76
Germany and Austria	1.3
Russia	1.2
Italy	1.2
Spain	1.1

At the present rates Spain's population will halve every generation. By 2050 Italy's population will have fallen by 22 per cent. In 1970 what we call the Developed World comprised 30 % of the population, and Moslem population was 20%. In 2000 it was equal at 20% each.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the Western World. In Great Britain more Moslems attend a religious service each week than Christians, and other European nations are the same or similar.

For centuries the nations of Europe were the powerhouse that provided the drive and resources that spread the Gospel around the globe. This is now very much diminished.

We know the Word will always be preserved, but it appears that the preservation and spreading of the Gospel is passing to other hands. How this will be done, with what success and in what form is something for the

moment beyond our ken.

In the meantime, we work with joy and hope while it is light, praying that apostate darkness does not descend.

### THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN MOVEMENT

The Intelligent Design Movement (or IDM) has recently gained a lot of publicity. It has sprung from a realisation that there are serious flaws in evolution, and some well known scholars have written of their doubts. Michael Denton wrote a book *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (1985) and Phillip Johnson wrote *Darwin on Trial*, (1991).

Intelligent Design is, like evolution, not something new. It goes back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and William Paley (1743 - 1805) put forward the argument of an inferred divine Watchmaker in his work, *Natural Theology* in 1802.

Whilst there are many well intended people, including Christians, who are looking to ID for answers to combat evolution, the movement's thinking is seriously flawed. Dr. Carl Wieland of Creation Ministries International writes, *"They confront many of the philosophical underpinnings of today's evolutionary thinking. As a movement, they are unwilling to align themselves with Biblical creationism."*

Dr. Wieland goes on to say *"Bringing up the Fall is deliberately, tactically excluded. (However, the Fall was a major event in history that changed everything. The world we are looking at now is a world corrupted by sin, not the original world that God designed). Thus, the Movement's success could very likely be counter productive, by laying the Biblical God open to ridicule and contempt in new ways."*

The Intelligent Design Movement has awakened many people to the realisation that the philosophy of evolution is flawed and that is a step in the right direction, however it, too, is seriously flawed and in many aspects is in conflict with Scripture. It is only a halfway house and the Bible believing Christian can rest assured that what Genesis has told us is correct.

### EVOLUTION - FACT OR FICTION

The philosophy of evolution is actually very ancient. However, when Charles Darwin and evolution burst on the scene it was perceived as something new. The Christian Churches of the day were literally caught on the "back foot," ill prepared and ill equipped to defend Scripture where evolution differed from long-held Christian beliefs.

The 19th and 20th centuries were a time when all mankind's problems could be solved by science in laboratories and fields of research. Material progress could be achieved without bothering about old-fashioned tenets of a disproved Bible. The account of creation was just a story imagined by ancient people like Moses in an endeavour to explain their origins.

Of course, anyone who today reflects for only a few

minutes on the history of the last century will conclude that mankind's lot on this planet is not all that happy, despite computers, cars, television, jet aircraft or weapons of mass destruction.

The philosophy of evolution is now undergoing very close scrutiny and a counter attack is growing in force. In the United Kingdom, USA and Australia there are highly professional organisations composed of men who are leaders in their fields of science. Their research is producing amazing facts about the planet we live on.

In Australia we are fortunate in having bodies such as Creation Ministries International, (formerly Answers in Genesis) and Creation Research, whose research is quite astounding.

Central to the debate regarding evolution is the age of the earth, long regarded as a difficult and complex question for the Bible believing Christian. Some of the recent research on this subject is worth quoting.

In a paper titled *Dating and Ages*, published by Creation Ministries International, the work of Dr. Russ Humphreys is reported as follows, *"The biblical account of origins and history provides a good base for sound science, and long-age beliefs a very poor one. A powerful example of this is the prediction of the magnetic field strengths of various planets and moons made by astrophysicist Dr. Russ Humphreys. Based on Biblical understanding that the Earth and other planets are approximately 6000 years old and that they began as masses of water, (Genesis 1:2, Peter 3:5) he was able to predict these magnetic fields' strengths with astonishing accuracy, as confirmed two years later when spacecraft directly measured the fields. Evolutionary predictions, based on their millions and billions of years beliefs, were totally wrong. The evolutionary worldview proved to be a useless basis from which to make accurate scientific predictions."*

Another interesting and important work is the research into the slowing and stopping of light. Quoting again from *Dating and Age*, *"One major evidence claimed in support of billions of years is distant starlight. However, scientists are coming to realise that there is more to light than meets the eye, and that many things long considered constant may not be so. Recent experimental findings have profound implications for methods used to estimate ages for the universe."*

Of course, it can be truthfully claimed that the Christian follows his faith regardless of the findings, claims, and opinions of the apostate world. However, when under attack it behoves us to be armed with weapons we can legitimately use in defence of that faith.

Our children and grandchildren are inundated with evolution through films, T.V. and the books available to them in schools and libraries. We need to be armed with facts when we are confronted with the false and incorrect theories that are infused into their adolescent minds.

There is a huge amount of valuable information

available. These days it is an easy matter to find it on the "net." For starters we recommend Brisbane based Creation Ministries International. <http://www.creationontheweb.com>

You will be surprised and delighted with the amount of sound and interesting material that can be of use in the Christian home.

### A PURPOSEFUL PRAYER

Our Parliaments commence their sessions with a prayer, usually by a recitation of The Lord's Prayer. This is a practice that goes back a long way in the history of British Parliaments when those elected or appointed to govern were constantly made aware that their stewardship on earth was temporary and ultimately they were responsible to a higher power, the Triune God of a Christian nation.

Listening to TV broadcasts of Parliament one could be excused for thinking that the recitation of The Lord's Prayer is treated by many as not being all that important. Certainly, much of our recent State and Federal legislation has not been influenced by "Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

A Christian pastor in the American State of Kansas, invited to open the State Legislature with prayer boldly threw down a challenge.

When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

*Heavenly Father, We come before You today to ask Your Forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our Spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that; we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism. We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism; We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable; We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbour's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honoured values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of this state and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state of Kansas. Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their*

*decisions direct us to the centre of Your Will. I ask in the name of your Son, The Living Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest. In 6 short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on "The Rest of the Story" on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired. With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that we again can be called one nation under God.

### AELC CAMP

The beautiful Bunya Mountains was the venue for a most enjoyable camp early in April. Over 60 people attended from as far a field as St George, Gympie, Brisbane & Bethania, as well as the closer congregations of Aubigny, Greenwood and Marburg. Half of those present were children and youth, which is an encouraging sign for the future.

Bible Quizzes, hikes, a bonfire with marshmallows, and the Divine Service were some of the activities that kept us occupied. Excellent meals were the order of the day, and it was a welcome treat to have time for relaxing and unhurried conversation with other members of AELC congregations whom we don't see very often. The mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren is a wonderful thing!

Those present were in favour of holding another camp next year, perhaps at a different campsite somewhere in the great South East that's reasonably accessible to our congregations. It would be good if a planning committee could be organised soon, with the approval of the CoC, so that we can begin to prepare for our next AELC Youth and family camp in 2007. But perhaps some don't want to wait that long and might like to make a camping trip out of the weekend of the AELC combined Reformation Day service at Tingoora in late October? Expressions of interest are cordially invited. Please let Newsletter have your ideas as these may lead to even better and programmes and planning.

### MARBURG CONCERT

It was a packed house in the church hall at *Trinity Marburg* for the youth variety concert held earlier this year. Inspired by the wonderful efforts of Greenwood congregation, the parish youth group worked hard to prepare for this night, and the result of their efforts surprised many of us.

The musical and acting talent of the parish youth was simply amazing. Accomplished musical renditions by choristers, flautists, saxophonists, clarinetists, trumpeters, pianists, vocalists were interspersed with plays and skits, jokes and slapstick, including one

particularly well received appearance by *Greenbottle* and friends of bygone radio fame.

A great night was had by all. There is some thought that the old PA system from the church might be put into the hall to provide amplification for future concerts, as a hall full of bodies really absorbs the sound.

### COMBINED AELC SERVICE AT MARBURG

Once again the annual visit to *Trinity Marburg* was well supported by visitors from other congregations in SE Qld, and also even some from Melbourne, who were visiting Hivesville. The parish choir sang well and the large congregation was certainly in good voice. A highlight of the service was the reception of a new congregation, *Eternal Word, Bethania* into the *Marburg/Minden/Lowood* parish, and the peaceful transfer of members from *Marburg* to worship and serve there. Spiritual nourishment through Word and Sacrament was followed by a terrific fellowship lunch.

The guest speaker this year was astronomer *Barry Setterfield*, together with his wife. They dazzled us with their scientific knowledge throughout the afternoon and evening. Although some of it was above our heads, the *Setterfields* succeeded in conveying the impression that the young age of the earth is scientifically provable and that the huge ages of millions of years given to many fossils by scientists can be reduced to the thousands of years of the Biblical account if we follow proper scientific methodology.

Next year plans are being made to invite *Pastor Daniel Preus* of the *Luther Academy* to speak at *Marburg* on the topic of worship and liturgy. *Daniel Preus* together with *Dr Kurt Marquart* (of *Toowoomba* fame), are 2 of the 3 officers of the *Luther Academy*, an organisation dedicated to addressing issues of Christian teaching and life that are of interest to all confessional Lutherans. *Daniel Preus* is also the author of the excellent little book, *Why I am a Lutheran*, which is highly recommended reading for all confessional Lutherans. You can get it at the *Open Book*.

### CONFESSIONAL CONFERENCE AT MANNUM

This conference was held on 6 & 7 May at *Mannum* in South Australia and it is important to note that it was hosted by the *Mannum Congregation*, not the *LCA*. About 200 Lutheran pastors and laity attended including *Pastor Mark Hampel* and *Mr Colin Noll* from *St John's Minden*.

A common adherence to Scripture and the Lutheran confessions was very much apparent amongst those assembled. The gathering was exhorted in key note lectures by *Drs John Kleinig* and *Adam Cooper* and also by *Preacher Dr Greg Lockwood* to contend against the *Evil One* by confessing the faith and the name of *Jesus*, praying, confessing our sins, and receiving the body and blood of *Jesus* in the *Sacrament* etc. We were reminded that in the book of *Revelation* *God* has given the church

much encouragement in her fights against evil; and also that going to church to worship is a mighty way in which evil is defeated. There our consciences are put at rest through the forgiveness of sins, and that is an exceedingly important point, for it is in our conscience that the *Devil* attacks us, trying to make us believe that we are guilty and condemned, trying to make us doubt that *God in Christ* has delivered us and released us from the burden of our sin.

An earnest direction that the *LCA* be guided theologically, not politically, was an underlying theme.

*Pastor Hampel* and *Colin Noll* felt very much at one with these concerned Lutherans still in the *LCA*. They understood our efforts in the *AELC* to be a truly confessional Lutheran Church because that is what they wish the *LCA* to be too. Many of them widely recognise that their confession of the pure Gospel, rediscovered by the *Lutheran Reformation*, summarised in the *Augsburg Confession*, and explicated in the *Book of Concord*, are under challenge. These are at the heart of the *Christian faith* and are experiencing attacks from many quarters.

### WANTED

#### For The *Eternal Word Congregation* at *Bethania*.

**Our new congregation, which has made a good start at *Bethania* in the southern suburbs of *Brisbane* is urgently in need of a LECTERN. There may be someone or some congregation with a *Lectern* surplus to requirements. If so please contact *Owen* or *Dot Ohlson* at 07 3200 3605 or *Newsletter*.**

We appreciate receiving Letters to the Editor. If you would like to comment on anything, please let us know.

Newsletter's Address:

THE EDITOR,  
A.E.L.C. NEWSLETTER  
PO BOX 1312  
RUNAWAY BAY Q 4216  
PHONE/FAX (07) 55290058

EMAIL: [david.mattiske2@bigpond.com](mailto:david.mattiske2@bigpond.com)

This Newsletter is for and on behalf of the *Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church*.

Newsletter Management Committee:

*Pastor Clarence Priebbenow*

*Pastor Peter Ziebell*

*Pastor Mark Hampel*

*Errol Noble*

*David Mattiske - Editor*