



# NOTES & COMMENTS

## COMBAT SEXISM KIT

Recently the Sydney Media have focused on a set of school materials. Called "The Combat Sexism Kit" it purportedly deals with sexism and sexuality.

The Kit is designed to help radically change our social structures. It says in the rationale that:

"Power in our society therefore, resides with white, middle class eurocentric, heterosexual men. Our education institutions, like all our other social institutions perpetuate and support this structure. Further, our schools while supporting this power hierarchy are themselves microcosms of the society at large.

"Hence as we see it, the role of educators is to analyse and eradicate this structure.

"The concept that schools should reflect the mores of the community is indisputably abrogating responsibility as educators. These mores are racist, heterosexual and worker exploitive.

"So why produce a kit for schools?

"Accepting the concept that it is the responsibility of educators to analyse and eradicate the present social structure, we believe that this can only be done from a position of awareness and knowledge, and to do this, we believe that information and different perspectives must go into the schools. This is not happening.

"This kit is an attempt to do that."

They may feel society needs revolutionary change but we question their right to attempt this through school children. It is our belief, at the Sydney Board of Education that parents have the prime responsibility for the education and development of their children.

The school should therefore be educating the children in a way that shows the responsibility towards parents and respect for the integrity of the pupils.

The course includes explicit descriptions of woman masturbating and oral intercourse. It offers many sexual options for woman but gives no guidance within a value framework similar to that of the pupil's parents.

Anglican Board of Education, Sydney.



# ON & OFF THE RECORD

By David Hewetson

## POWERFUL "ABSURDITY"

"You don't mean to tell me that you still believe all that stuff? I didn't think it possible in this day and age for anyone with intelligence to go on accepting those old myths and superstitions."

So goes the litany of unbelief. And with it the funny idea that time and modernity has somehow made us wiser than those who went before us. The passage of time has certainly increased our fund of knowledge; "progress" (a mixed blessing) has certainly meant that we have left behind a lot of ideas that once seemed plausible enough. But wisdom is another matter and comes from another quarter. It is not always found where there is an abundant supply of knowledge or even intelligence. Sometimes, alas, these things (or at least confidence in them) appear almost to obscure it.

### WHAT MEN THINK OF GOD'S MESSAGE

Some men think the "word of the Cross" is nonsense. That He who is supposed to have made the universe should have been involved in the ignominy of the crucifixion is, they feel, absurd. Other men, however, claim that this self same message is power.

Its rationale lies in what it has done for them despite what other men may think of it. It has quietened their consciences, released them from evil habits, removed their alienations, and they are convinced that the might of God is released in it in a unique manner.

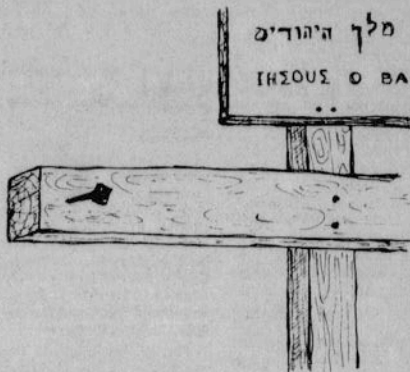
Some men demand proof. The Jews, in Paul's day, insisted that the message he declared be accompanied with powerful "signs" to validate it. As they waited for their Golden Age every tin-pot claimant to Messiahhood promised to dry up the Jordan, bring down the walls of Jerusalem or give some similar proof that he was genuine. They were scandalised at the Christian declaration that God was supremely present in the crucifixion. The very idea that he could be executed like a common criminal was, they said, utterly repugnant.

Some men trust their own opinions. The Greeks of Paul's day sought wisdom. They had a strong conviction that the mind was the panacea for all human ills. But when their restless minds were presented with the Christian message they found it totally unacceptable to thinking men. To them the gods in their apatheia were above and beyond suffering of all kinds, let alone incarnation or execution. Perhaps they were most insulted by the fact that whilst their speculative minds made their way "up" into the eternal realm in search of truth, Christians insisted that Truth Himself had come "down" (and down a very long way, even as far as the cross) to confront and redeem them.

Those who demand proof or who insist that God fit his message to their own opinions and presuppositions are, in

fact, making *self* and not God their focus. They have determined what God might or might not do, and are thus unable to accept what He has done.

In this regard nothing has changed much, and through the long centuries from Paul's time to our own this has been the big obstacle to belief.



### WHAT GOD THINKS OF MAN'S OPINIONS

God rejects human cleverness. This is particularly unpalatable to modern man. But by making himself the centre of his own thinking processes man has entered an unreal world in which he cannot think his way to God. Expert thinkers, the "wise, the scribe, the debater", as Paul called them (we could add philosophers, scientists, etc), cannot discover God through their own disciplines. Many of them, because they can see only their own narrow field, conclude therefore that he is not there at all and that our message is a myth that has outlived its usefulness.

God uses "nonsense" to rescue men! What the intelligentia write off as absurd actually does for us what they cannot do and in a way that they find bewildering. The cross opens up the way into the very heart of God, to His seeking, saving and reconciling love. It is the one "nonsense" that rescues men, even Jews and Greeks and their modern counterparts, if they are prepared to open themselves up to it.

### DIVINE STRATEGY

God has used the folly and weakness of the cross to outmanoeuvre the proud pretensions of men. He has contradicted our ideas about Himself and about humanity. And those who have accepted His message have often been a classic illustration of this strategy. "Few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing," said Paul to his Corinthian friends. And men like Celsus were much less complimentary: "wool dressers, cobblers and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons... like a swarm of bats — or ants creeping out of their nests — or frogs holding a symposium round a swamp — or worms in convective in a corner of mud."

But the fact is that human knowledge is only very partial. To us it looks enormous and we become so intoxicated with it that it distorts our judgment. God finds "fools" easier to deal with for they have one saving grace — the one thing they do know is that they know very little. They are open to God and ready to hear him speak in his own unique way.

So when the preacher brings his message he must follow God's example. He must use an apparently weak message. He must abandon all attempts to talk people round with smart language or clever argument.

He must place the cross firmly in the centre of what he says, and he must, like his Master before him, become totally vulnerable, weak and trembling.

Then, and then only, is it possible that men will be persuaded by God. Their faith will rest in His power and not in man's talk; and they will find that what others call folly is actually mighty and meaningful.

## MU at Bishopscourt

On Tuesday, the 19th September, at the kind invitation of Lady Loane, 250 members of the Mothers' Union spent a happy day at Bishopscourt. Lady Loane and Executive members escorted parties through the house, pointing out the many historic and beautiful furnishings, some of which stand in their original home which was built for Thomas Sutcliffe Mort.

After lunch, which had been served picnic-style on the lawn, Mrs Jull, our Commonwealth President, and Mrs Robinson, Sydney Diocesan President, strolled through the groups, chatting informally.

Mrs Robinson then addressed the gathering, thanking Lady Loane for her generosity in opening her home and garden, and introducing and welcoming Mrs Jull, who spoke of the acceleration of change which had taken place in our time and the restlessness and discontent all around us.

As Christians we believe that The Mothers' Union is a stabilising influence on society and, after 100 years has emerged stronger than ever.

She went on to speak about the arrangements for the first World Conference on the Family to be held in Brisbane in July next year, and ended her address by challenging us to go out like the disciples and stir up the community to see the importance of stable Christian Family Life. If we use this power, what could be achieved!

# ALL-INDIA CAMPAIGN

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**... DIVORCE**

**THE BIBLE AND THE LAW**

John Wade and B. Ward Powers

John Wade, lecturer in Family Law and B. Ward Powers, Theologian and former Commonwealth Film Censor explore one of the big questions of our decade. Contains a thorough analysis and critique of the Family Law Act (now due for revision by the Australian Parliament) from a Christian point of view.

Contents that the Church has mistakenly added marriage breakdown to the list of unforgivable sins in its desire for theological precision, and takes a fresh look at the teaching of Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, the Word was God.

# GOOD NEWS

30 OCT 1978  
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

FROM THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLER

# ROYAL

# BIRTH

# PANIC

JERUSALEM (Monday).— The palace issued a statement late today on the search and destroy mission to Bethlehem of the crack palace commando unit. The officer in charge spoke of a conspiracy to usurp King Herod's throne

by an obscure pretender born in the city of David. His orders are to seal the town, and execute all male babies under two years of age. The unsuspecting southerners are expected to react angrily to these severe measures.

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# TOP ASTROLOGERS SEEK PRINCE

JERUSALEM (Wed.)— This morning the visiting star-gazers met in a closed session with King Herod. Since the arrival of their rich caravan from the Far East, speculation has mounted over the reason for their presence in the city.

Traffic at the East gate choked to a standstill late yesterday as the heavily laden camels drew curious stares. The locals were open-mouthed at the exotic ornaments, the strange clothing, and yellow skin of the foreigners, but mostly at the open display of fabulous wealth. The tired beasts bore disgustingly generous cargoes of gold in ingots, and rare fragrances of frankincense and myrrh.

These items are commanding top prices on the current depressed market.

Our foreign correspondent was able to find out sketchy details of their background and plans. Undisputed leaders in the field of astrology in their own country, these Oriental aristocrats are convinced, from the stars, that a Jewish prince has recently been born. The conjunction of Jupiter

and Saturn suggests a really remarkable ruler. Remarkable enough to prompt them to hazard the journey of several thousand kilometres, and to bring extravagant gifts to "worship" their Prince.

## King Hostile

Usually reliable sources inside the palace report a worried King Herod, behind the officially polite reception. Herod and his advisers

were puzzled, to say the least, at the news of the birth of a prince of the Jews. The king is said to have winced visibly at the reminder of his own non-Jewish ancestry.

Confusion reigned as the bewildered astrologers wondered why there was no new-born Jewish king in the royal Jerusalem household. The tension was taken out of the situation, finally, by an enterprising public servant, who remembered that the place of birth of the Messiah (the Jews' Saviour) was supposed to be Bethlehem in the state of Judea, according to an ancient prophecy of Micah.

## Wise Men Packing

Undaunted by this unexpected turn of events, the strangers this afternoon were highly optimistic of completing their mission. They set off later this evening to travel through the night to the small southern town.

## AGED MUTE PRIEST SPEAKS

A relieved reverend today chatted with our church reporter about the harrowing ordeal he and his wife have been through in these past months. Unable to utter a syllable for over nine months, the elderly minister was understandably talkative.

It all began when Rev. Zechariah's turn for temple service came up. He was lighting the incense at the incense altar, as he had regularly for many years, when he was startled by something (or someone) standing near the right side of the altar. He felt his heart muscle flutter as surprise gave way to stark terror.

### HALLUCINATION?

The strange being, semi-human, with a warm aura about the head, identified himself as Gabriel, an angelic messenger from God. He warned the priest that his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a special baby boy. The baby was to be named John.

Zechariah reminisced today about this bolt from the blue. Both he and his wife are in their seventies, a childless couple, till this fateful visit. The senior minister frankly did not believe it. Sensing his doubt, the "angel" added that a further sign of the message would be a temporary dumbness, till the baby was born. When he left the temple precinct, he was obviously stunned. The congregation waiting in the courtyard watched in amazement as he made wild hand signals, pointing to his mouth, inside the temple, up to the sky, then covering his head in confusion.

The bishop offered him compassionate sick leave, but he insisted on finishing his tour of duty.

### AMAZING PREDICTION

In an uncanny fulfilment of this "prophecy" Elizabeth became pregnant not long after, and recently was delivered of a strapping baby boy. What did they call him? John!

Zechariah patted the baby on the head, as we sat in the sparsely furnished lounge room. At the naming ceremony Zechariah wrote on a slate "His name is John." This broke the jinx and from then on he has been able to talk quite normally.

The usually staid, composed priest described another puzzling happening associated with the child. At the naming ceremony, he felt himself swept up into an ecstatic trance, and the Spirit of God filling him, inspiring a startling prophecy. It began:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David . . ."

Then, actually addressing the babe in his arms, Zechariah said:

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways."

### MORE TO COME

The prophecy mentioned that this would happen "when the dayspring will visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Zechariah has a strong feeling that this "dayspring" refers to another baby born miraculously. Leaning forward, in a hushed whisper, he said he thought that his young niece, Mary of Nazareth, was to give birth to an even more remarkable baby, who would possibly be the Messiah himself.

A check of the fashionable maternity hospitals revealed no one of that name.

# PEACE CHILD



Canadian missionary, Don Richardson, describes the savage rites of Stone Age New Guinea tribesmen in his best selling book "Peace Child." These people glorified treachery as a way of life. They revelled in luring other natives in to their village under the guise of friendship, only to kill and eat them. There was constant conflict with neighbouring tribes.

When Don, and his wife Carol, came to them with the story of Jesus, they were shocked at the reaction. When they listened to the way Judas betrayed Jesus, there were howls of glee as the native people applauded their hero figure JUDAS! Don and Carol were at a loss to know how to get the message across that the real hero was Jesus. They were stumped, until an incident occurred in the tribe that gave them a clue.

Two warring tribes came to the point where they needed to negotiate a halt to the fighting, and their culture demanded that it happen a certain way. A small baby was taken from its mother and given to a woman in the opposing tribe. The warriors all lined up and touched the child, thus guaranteeing the truce. As long as the "peace child" lived, the tribes were bound to maintain peace. The worst crime conceivable to them was that someone should betray and murder the "peace child."

Don saw the similarity, and eagerly told them that Jesus was God's "peace child." God had sent His Son to make peace with man, for the angel had announced "peace on earth" at Jesus' birth, and Judas had betrayed the "peace child." The light dawned in darkened hearts, and many reached out in faith to touch God's peace child, Jesus.



WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

# Scenes from Christmas Past

## 1919

Japanese Christian leader Toyohiko Kagawa, leaves the comfort of his quarters at Kobe Seminary, on Christmas Eve, to live in the city's notorious slums, in an effort to share the love of God with people living in filth and squalour. He shares his six foot square house with many needy people through the years, contracting an eye disease from one man, that robs him of much of his sight. That first Christmas Jesus came to live in mankind's slums, and finished up taking our disease of sin on himself.

## 1943

Scottish padre, Ernest Gordon, joins 2,000 allied prisoners working on the infamous Burma railway, in a simple jungle Christmas service. A lone U.S. Air Force reconnaissance bomber flies over during the carol singing, helping to lift the men's spirits out of grinding misery to hope. Jesus' birth was announced by angels as bringing "peace on earth." Man has the peace of God in his heart when he knows Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

## 1955

Five American missionaries in Ecuador make last minute preparations on Christmas Eve 1955, for their daring mission to an Indian tribe that has never heard the good news of Jesus. Their tribal name "Auca" means "savage". Within days all five have been brutally butchered by the very people they have come to show the love of God. Ironically, it is their deaths that finally convince the Aucas of the truth of their message. Many Aucas later put their trust in Christ. Some would die taking the message of Christ to downriver Aucas. The cradle of Bethlehem is overshadowed by the cross of Calvary, for it is Jesus' dying for us on the cross that is God's final proof of his love for us. God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

# ANCIENT PEOPLE SEE CHRISTMAS STAR



Rev. Ivan Jordan, from Tasmania, is a missionary to the Warlpiri tribe in Central Australia. Here he is pictured with a local church leader, Jerry Jangala, Jerry's son, and another boy. The Warlpiri Christians have developed corroborees to dance, sing, and act out stories from the gospels. The decorated shields tell the story in symbols.

The right shield tells the story of the birth, life, and death of Jesus. The three semi-circles represent God (three in one), who comes down to be born (1st circle). The footprints show the movements of Jesus' life, the way a native tracker would understand them.

The ancient inhabitants of Australia have only recently (considering their long history) heard the good news about Jesus. Other ancient people, living at the time of Jesus' birth, have left records in their histories of sightings of a strange star. Writing in a recent issue of the "Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society" three British astronomers report on their research into ancient astronomical records kept by Chinese and Korean astronomers some two thousands years ago. They think they may have lighted on the star of Bethlehem, till now known only from the Bible.

They found reports of a sudden bright star appearing at the right time and in the right place to have been the one mentioned in Matthew's gospel. The ancient astronomers report an apparently stationary object visible for over 70 days, with its time and position specified. This may well have been a nova, the sudden flaring of a new star.



TODAY'S PHOTOGRAPH OF BETHLEHEM

A thousand years ago King David was born in this sleepy little hamlet, and nothing has ever happened here since! This dusty settlement seems an unlikely choice for the birthplace of a new king.

The town is unusually crowded as thousands of family groups, many direct descendants of King David, have swelled the population, surging in to the town to register in the Empire-wide census.

Thousands have been up-rooted and displaced by clause 5(A) of the Act requiring registration at the home town of one's ancestors.

Spokesman for the Innkeepers Association reports capacity bookings. Especially hard hit are the young marrieds. Many have been forced to accept makeshift accommodation ranging from sharing rooms, renting barns and stables, to sleeping in public courtyards. There are the usual casualties of such mass social movements, the feeble and infirm, the very old, and very young, pregnant women and nursing mothers.







