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**'Marriage is an institution given by God, not a project fashioned by culture.'**

C. Ash, *Marriage. Sex in the Service of God*, 66.

## AUSTRALIA AFFIRMS MARRIAGE, AS HUMANITARIANISM FAILS

**O**N 19 SEPTEMBER, PARLIAMENT DEFEATED A BILL attempting to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex partnerships. The bill was soundly defeated, 98-42, with the Liberals honoring their election promise to stand against such changes, and some 40% of voting Labor parliamentarians joining them.

This is an historic affirmation of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. It comes as the political campaign for gay rights (which lies behind the bill's promotion) is reaching new heights elsewhere. When Ugandan parents complained about High School literature distributed by the UN, because it endorsed

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## DIG IS NOT JUST A TREE IN A DESERT SOMEWHERE

**Pete Tong**

**I**N APRIL THIS YEAR 250 TEENAGERS FROM 10 CHURCHES gathered at Merroo Conference Centre for a fully residential youth conference. The conference aimed to be thoroughly evangelical where the Scriptures were read and taught in a variety of ways over the weekend. Primarily there were 6 expository talks on the book of Titus given by leaders of the attending youth groups. After each morning session, discussion groups provided a forum for youth to ask questions, discuss and respond to the Word. These were led by leaders from the youth groups and provided an excellent way for youth from different parts of Sydney to get to know one another.

Another aim of the conference was to have a high level of involvement from each group attending. So, each group was asked to bring along a video interview of 'an older saint' from their local church. This was a small way of beginning to apply Titus 2 and the encouragement for young Christians to look for role models in their older brothers and sisters. Each group had also been allocated a



portion of the Bible memory verse (Titus 2:11-14) to teach over the weekend.

On the last day, suggestions for a permanent name for the conference were welcomed from high schoolers and leaders. From many, many suggestions, the name DIG was chosen because on this conference we DIG into God's Word. DIG will run again in 2013. 🍌

# HANGING LOVE FOR ALL TO SEE

Steve Carlisle



**"I LOVE YOU"**. SUCH A STATEMENT has been written in spray paint on many second hand bed sheets over the years, and hung on bridges all over Sydney and beyond. This method of communication has been used to demonstrate everything from first love through to engagement and anniversaries.

People will go to various lengths to demonstrate their love for another person.

God is a God who also shows love. God demonstrates his love for the human race when he sent his Son to the world to be strung up and crucified. Paul says of this, 'God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' Romans 5:8

Treated with all the dignity of a second hand bed sheet, Jesus is strung up, and his brutally disfigured body, which aches in agony from life to death, is a sign saying to us, 'I love you'. God is showing his love for us at the cross. At the cross, sinners can be justly forgiven in an act of eternal love

from creator to creatures like us. This is an amazing gift to us.

However he did this for us not while we were reciprocal in love to him, nor when we felt favorable towards him, but he showed us his love while we were rebellious sinners who had continually walked away from the obvious displays of his kindness, providence, and grace. He showed his love while we were still sinners.

The bed sheet on the bridge flies under an assumption that the love declared is mutual, or else the writer risks rejection. God, however shows his love for us in Jesus when, in our nature, we show no love towards God. His death on the cross is a declaration of love like the world has never seen, nor will see again. The cross is the ultimate demonstration of love. 🙏

**His brutally disfigured body, which aches in agony from life to death, is a sign saying to us, 'I love you'.**

## CAPTIVATED, DELIGHTED, EXCITED!

Alison Blake



**I**T WAS A SATURDAY AFTERNOON, mid winter. I was reading the Bible, preparing to teach our delightful under three year olds the next morning. As I read, my daughter excitedly interrupted me, clutching her laptop. 'Look at this Mum! It's the trailer for the new "Les Miserables" movie! You have to look at it - you'll love it, it's fantastic!'. But she changed gear, when she saw I was reading the Bible, saying "If you weren't reading the Bible, I'd say this was more exciting".

Did you catch that attitude? The gold of God's Word is more exciting than whatever is currently captivating you! The writer of Psalm 119 is captivated and delighted by God's rich, precious, wondrous, fully trustworthy decrees and promises! God's Word gives life and insight, it comforts, strengthens, refreshes and sustains him. Have you found yourself, like the psalmist, in awe of God's Word?

He commits himself to reading it, and to prayer. He makes it his business to reflect on and remember the delightful words of God. He stays focussed on God's promises assuring him of his coming salvation. His

prayer is for a whole body response to God's Word—an understanding mind, footsteps that do not stray but are directed by God's decrees. He asks for eyes open to the wonders of God's Word, turned away from what is worthless. He asks that the word of truth would not be snatched from his mouth, that his heart would be turned to love God's word and not himself.

We re-arrange work rosters and cancel appointments and organise childcare to ensure we don't miss a musical, a birthday, a concert, a footy final. Pray that your church family will relish opportunities to hear and read God's word—privately, with our families, with interested unbelievers, in small groups, weekly at church. What choices will you make this week to ensure you don't miss out on experiencing the delight of hearing God speak to you? 🙏  
*Alison Blake delights in God's Word in Sydney's southwest.*

**The gold of God's Word is more exciting than whatever is currently captivating you!**

## EDITORIAL

# WHY ARCHBISHOPS MUST LEAD THEOLOGICALLY

ONE OF THE ABIDING MEMORIES OF ARCHBISHOP Peter Jensen when he leaves his archepiscopate will be his 10 September performance-under-fire on Q&A (ABC: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s3581623.htm>). His sensible, informed, and compassionate input into questions about Asylum seekers warmed viewers up. Then came his calm and considered responses to questions and statements hurled in his direction, that varied in tone from incredulous or neutral, through mocking and impolite, through to heated and even vociferous. Jensen explained biblical submission non-defensively; attracted further flack from tactfully supporting fellow Christian-in-the-public-eye, Jim Wallace, for comments about health statistics in the homosexual community; and constantly appealed for a reasoned discussion of the issues. When given the last word he shared a simple statement of the gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ.

A constant mistake in Sydney is to assume that everyone holds the same theological positions. But of course, this is just not true. There is a very great difference, for example, between 'justification by faith' as understood in the Reformation tradition and its reconfiguration in the hands of 'new perspective on Paul' slash 'Federal Vision' proponents; grace is not legalism; gospel work is not community building; Protestantism is not sacramentalism etc.

The most important question in 2012-13 as we seek our next Archbishop will be, 'what is the shape of his theology?'; the second: 'how does that theology shape his life and ministry?'

The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney must provide firm, clear, and gracious theological leadership, for the sake of Sydney's Anglicans. But also for the sake of the wider public, still so much in need of the gospel of Christ. ☪

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## AUSTRALIA AFFIRMS MARRIAGE, AS HUMANITARIANISM FAILS

homosexual practice, the Ugandan Government responded with proposals to publicly stand against it. As a result, the USA and the UK Governments threatened to withdraw millions of Dollars/Euros of humanitarian aid to Uganda.

This is in line with a change in US foreign policy. According to Hillary Clinton's Human Rights Day speech (6 Dec 2011), 'The Obama Administration defends the human rights of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] people as part of our comprehensive human rights policy and as a priority of our foreign policy'.

Giving equality to LGBT people 'is now one of the remaining human rights challenges of our time'.

Although her appeal against violence, murder, and deprivation of services from LGBT will automatically be endorsed by Christian people—and perhaps even decriminalization—the global push for changes in the

definition of marriage has been fought under the rhetoric of 'rights', and this new USA push therefore ought to raise appropriate alarm. Especially when it seems like 'marriage equality' groups may be able to draw upon a new Global Equality Fund 'that will support the work of civil society organizations working on these issues around the world' by 'helping them record facts so they can target their advocacy, learn how to use the law as a tool, manage their budgets, train their staffs, and forge partnerships with women's organizations and other human rights groups'.

Over \$3 Million will seed-fund the GEF, but this is a drop in the ocean. Muti-millions of humanitarian aid will be clawed back when countries such as Uganda are punished for publicly expressing a different set of values than those now actively promoted by Western superpowers and by the United Nations. ☪



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containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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# REJECT SECOND BITE AT PARISH RELATIONSHIPS AMENDING ORDINANCE

Zac Veron



**T**HE FORTHCOMING SYNOD of the Sydney Diocese will be given another opportunity to debate an attempt to amend the Parish Relationships Ordinance, after the Archbishop declined to give assent to the bill following last year's close vote. I pray that, as this amending ordinance

undergoes greater scrutiny in October, the Synod will decline to pass one key proposed measure. Currently, four years must pass from the appointment of a Rector before a Regional Council may direct a review of his license. This ordinance proposes to reduce that time to two years.

The danger the Synod faces here is to accept an amendment that is intended to assist churches, without fully appreciating any unforeseen negative implications that may flow. There are many disadvantages or dangers in reducing the current four years, which are stipulated in the Ordinance, to two. Here are four reasons not to amend the Ordinance:

## 1. Dying parishes need change that may generate conflict with those who resist change

Our Diocese has parishes that urgently need new life breathed into them. They are dying. If and when these parishes become vacant we will need to deploy suitable men to lead those churches forward. We need many brave rectors to accept that challenge. This, by definition, will require the generation of effective change. This change will necessarily result in tension and sometimes conflict. This necessary change will upset some people—perhaps, even the number of church members (65%) and two wardens required to enact the Parish Relationships Ordinance!

How many clergymen will take on some of our more difficult parishes (where change must be made or the church will die) if within two years a significant group with a divergent view can use this ordinance to try to get rid of their new minister? This will surely inhibit the implementation of the necessary changes.

There are several well-known and respected clergymen in the synod who have led their churches through significant change, which has then generated extraordinary growth! Some of them upset a significant group of parishioners along the way, but today we uphold them

as models for others to follow. By four years into the job it was clear they were good ministers, well suited for the position. Yet some of their church's members were unhappy even then. In some cases, most of the church members were unhappy in the initial two years. Some of these good ministers may have been caught out with this ordinance if it was in place at the time, and especially with the two-year provision. For some of these men, fearless attempts were made by some disgruntled people through appeals to bishops, to force their dismissal. Imagine how the flourishing ministries at some of our model parishes would look now if those attempts had succeeded!

Two years is two years too early. We need to back our good men in

the field to prove their worth and their "fit" for the position, while finding some other persuasive means or using current ordinances to encourage unsuited ministers to move on. That is one big reason Synod set the time at four years when we approved this ordinance in the first place back in 2001. Let's stick with four years and reject a second bite at amending the Parish Relationships Ordinance.

## 2. Why give bishops more power?

We can all thank God that we currently have good and godly regional bishops. However, there is no guarantee that this will always be the case. Why give more power to regional bishops? The last decade has seen a consistent centralist trend in the Sydney Diocese. All bishops' offices have become more powerful. A great Archbishop in whom we have had great confidence has led us. He has united the Diocese and inspired us to each play our part in mission. Along the way, partly because of the strong confidence we have in our leader, we have allowed more authority to be delivered to 'the centre'. I for one believe this trend needs to be reversed to safeguard the primacy of the parish in our Diocese's polity. Accepting the proposed amendment chips away at this and hands even more power to the centre.

**Two years is two years too early. We need to back our good men in the field to prove their worth and their "fit" for the position.**



Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

The Rev Charles Simeon, Rector of Holy Trinity Cambridge from 1783 to 1836.

The wardens complained about the Bishop's appointment of him and attempted to hinder his ministry by locking the building and pews.

### 3. There are no compelling reasons to change

The advocates of the proposed amendment have in the past failed to provide compelling reasons and concrete examples of how the current Ordinance has failed us and why change is needed. If there is a problem of unsuitable rectors being appointed to parishes, give us examples. If there are two or three examples, could nothing else have been done? If we have a problem here, why did they get appointed in the first place, through a comprehensive process, in which the regional bishop has a pivotal role? If there have been some genuine examples of rectors who should be moved on, why wasn't the existing Ordinance

used after their fourth anniversary? If the system isn't significantly broken then don't try to fix or tamper with it! Even in the debate last Synod the movers admitted that the ordinance is rarely if ever used.

### 4. We have a city to win for Christ!

This whole exercise of debating this Ordinance is inward looking and a distraction from our mission. We are deploying some of the most talented and highly trained clergy that the world has ever seen, in a mission field that is becoming increasingly hostile to the gospel of Jesus. I for one don't want to make things any more difficult for the brave ones who are prepared to make the tough decisions to bring new life into some of our churches, so that they can advance the cause of the gospel in their local area. We have a city to win for Christ. Along the way, some people will get upset. Let's look after church members who would prefer a different rector to lead them, in ways that do not potentially punish a good rector who has his energies focused both inside and outside the walls of the local church building. 🗨️

*The Rev Zachary Veron is CEO of Anglican Youthworks*

## Legislation that can be used to hold a minister to account, or 'Enough is Enough!'

Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1902 – Article 3(4)	Grants synod the authority to pass ordinances that can suspend or revoke a clergyman's license upon being heard in a tribunal
Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961 – Chapter IX	Authorises a diocesan tribunal to hear cases against clergy involving charges of breach of faith ritual ceremonial or discipline
Incapacity Ordinance 2001	Authorises a commission to hear accusations against clergy on grounds of being incapable of carrying out their office. The commission may recommend to the Archbishop that a license be revoked
Discipline Ordinance 2006	To deal with complaints of misconduct among clergy and church workers
Grievance Policy and Procedure	A procedure to be followed in the event of a church member having a grievance against a clergyman or church worker
Parish Disputes Ordinance 1999	Where a parish council or more than 12 parishioners are in dispute with minister
Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001	Where there is a serious breakdown in relationship between the minister and the majority of the parishioners which may lead to a license review
Parish Administration Ordinance 2008	Where the minister is accused of not properly fulfilling his obligations as outlined in the Parish Administration Ordinance

# CASE STUDY: CENTENNIAL PARK — A GROWING MINISTRY TAKES TIME

Gav Poole

**Dean Phillip Jensen was Rector of Centennial Park from 1978 to 2003. During this time this ministry grew to what may be described as one of the most significant and far reaching ministries this diocese has ever seen. It was not always apparent however that this would be the case and Phillip's early days were a struggle. His vision, theology, and ways of doing things were not always popular and he often found himself at odds with people at the church. Protective tenure ensured that he survived those early days. The ACR interviewed Phillip to obtain an insight into what those times were like.**

**ACR: Phillip, thanks for agreeing to be interviewed. Can you give us a brief description of how the Parish of Centennial Park changed in the 25 years you were there? How were you initially received by the church?**



From the end of WWII until the middle of 1970 the church at Centennial Park had been low in numbers, stretched financially with old deteriorating buildings and listed by the inner city committee as one of the places to close and sell. Rectors, not the least my immediate predecessor John Cashman, had tried valiantly to find new ways forward but without much success. When I was appointed, there were about 35 people attending—8 at 8:00am, and the rest at the mid morning gathering. As the building holds about 300 people the gatherings were relatively depressing.

In 1975 I had become the Chaplain at UNSW and taken over the Uni Church. That first year was very difficult with considerable protest about the nature of my appointment by the Archbishop of the day. It led to great conflicts, complaints and even petitions taken up against me. By the end of 1977 this had all blown over and the congregation had grown to around 150 members and we needed a new venue. I became the Rector of St Matthias in 1978 so we had a venue for the evening student congregation and I took responsibility for the morning congregations

**ACR: At what point was it obvious that you had a difficult road ahead?**

1978 was again a year of tumultuous complaint and, though I had been nominated by the usual procedures and the Archbishop had offered me the parish, two of the

parish nominators were not happy with my appointment and wanted somebody else. About half of the congregation members protested vigorously to the Archbishop against my appointment. There was an exchange of very unpleasant letters between them and the Archbishop and considerable conflict when I first arrived. Most of the complainants left and some of the married students took their place in the morning church.

**ACR: What was the low point? Were there times you could have given up?**

Low point? There was no single point. It was constant harassment for a number of years, not dissimilar to the opening years of my ministry at the Cathedral.

It wasn't in my make up or disposition to want to give up. There were times when it was very hard and it no doubt affected me and my family personally.

**ACR: How long was it before the ministry was on the track you had hoped for?**

The uni ministry took more than 4 years to develop. I was appointed at the uni on a 4 year contract but discovered it took more than 4 yrs to actually understand and develop the patterns of ministry that could make progress in the uni context. The parish took very much longer. It took a dozen years to develop a Sunday School and 20 years to develop a youth fellowship. When you are starting from scratch—or because of opposition, from behind scratch—the early years are difficult and it is hard to see the way forward.

**ACR: What enabled you to keep going?**

Without the backing of the Archbishop of the day and the security of tenure that he maintained, I would never have been able to continue in either the Uni Church or St Matthias. By the time I had finished 25 yrs later St Matthias and the Uni Church had planted more than 15 congregations we had filled the St Matthias building repeatedly and were ministering each week to nearly 2000 people.

**ACR: If you had the chance, would you do it all again?**

I don't know. I have no idea what life would have been like if I hadn't done it. The joys of Christian fellowship outweighed the pains of personal confrontation. God's encouragement with people's conversions keep one buoyed through all manner of difficulties. It is a little bit like the question if the sun didn't rise yesterday. Yes, I don't live in regrets and rejoice in the ways God has been kind to use me. ☺

# A LICENSE TO CHILL?

Gavin Poole



**W**HEN I TOOK ON THE ROLE of minister at Cherrybrook I received a licence from the Archbishop. It is a good thing I checked my mail that day because it is an important document that helps me to do my ministry. It's just a piece of paper but it contains the authority I need to carry out my role.

The first thing I notice is that it is from the Archbishop. It is not from the congregation or the presbytery. We are episcopal, that is led by a Bishop. The nominators from my church and regional bishop played a key role in finding me and recommending me but they did not appoint me—the Archbishop did.

The other thing I notice is that it contains some serious responsibilities—to perform the office of minister, read the common prayers and other ecclesiastical duties belonging to the said office. I find it humbling.

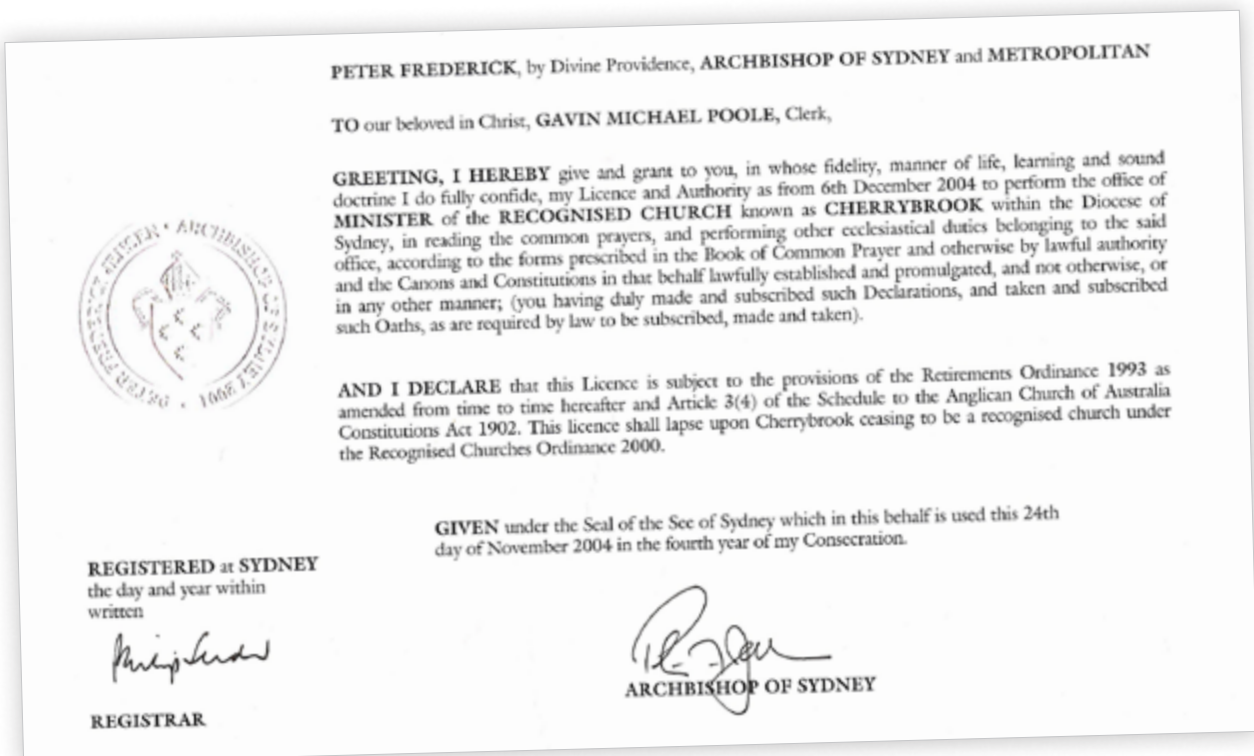
Surprisingly, by the standard of the secular corporate world, there is no sunset clause. It is an open ended tenure and can only be terminated by retirement. There is however a reference to a part of the 1902 constitution which gives the synod power to determine by ordinance the means by which a license may be suspended or revoked. It pays for me to know the various ordinances that this applies to (eg. The Discipline Ordinance, Parish Relationships Ordinance etc.). This is a protected tenure which means that the only

way I will leave is by resigning, retiring or if a severe event results in a case being heard before a tribunal. My business colleagues, whose employment is subject to regular reviews of their performance are often aghast at this arrangement. 'It's not the real world', they will complain.

Such protected tenure is enjoyed by some appointed to academic or judicial roles. It is designed to allow a person to exercise authority without being subject to inappropriate pressure or interference from the society they serve. This means I can teach what I believe to be true without fear of recrimination or pushback from the congregation (or worse still losing my ministry). If I thought my position was subject to review by my congregation, I may think twice before teaching something that is true but unsavoury or unpopular. It still wouldn't feel good to have people leave the church but at least I can have more confidence to be uncompromising in proclaiming the truth.

There are other alternatives. For instance, the Melbourne Diocese provides fixed term appointments whereby the Vicar (vicarious for the Archbishop) is granted a fixed term appointment for 10 years with the possibility of extension. The Uniting Church of Australia is similar but works on a 5 year basis.

There has been a level of uneasiness with our form of polity. Some see the merits and others wish that ministers could be held more accountable. There have been instances where the congregation would like to see a minister move on but he has held his ground and determined to stay.



The diocese has conducted various reviews including a report received by Synod in 1997 and another in 1999. More recently a committee was formed to establish a Grievance Policy and Procedure, which was adopted by the synod in 2011. The issue of unpopular ministers was again addressed in that report. From these committees have come a number of new ordinances which attempt to clamp down on tenure and foil a minister's unilateral decision making and teaching. The bill amending the Parish Relationships ordinance is one such legislation. Therefore the clause in my license that refers to the 1902 constitution is becoming more and more loaded as ordinances that restrict tenure are adopted. With recent innovations, the minister's authority could now be best described as 'protected tenure but ...'

In reality, a minister would be a fool to abuse the protection of tenure. The church is the body of Christ and each part of the body must listen to the other parts. To think that God is speaking through one man is arrogant in the extreme and bordering on a magisterium. The model of leadership that Jesus demonstrated is one of servanthood and he decried those that lord it over others (Mark 10:42-45). All ministers have gone through a process of rigorous selection and most ministers that I know desire to get along with and love their congregation. In a perfect world, tenures

and ordinances would not be necessary. We would be governed by the one law of love.

I will be voting against the attempt at this year's synod to reduce the licensing review moratorium to two years. A minister needs time to establish his ministry and this should be done without interference from any diocesan body. Any flourishing ministry that I know of took longer than that to get a footing. The task is even harder if the minister has to undo years of a limp or unhealthy ministry. He needs a fair go!

Review after review has concluded that protected tenure is the best form of governance.

It's not perfect. It can lead to frustration and conflict but the alternatives, such as fixed term appointments, contracts or employment, lead to weakening the preaching of the gospel. The focus should not be about the rights of the minister or the congregation. The focus should be on the gospel of Jesus Christ and guarding the good deposit (2 Timothy 1:14). The system that is best is the one that promotes the unencumbered local preaching of the gospel. 🗣️

**A minister needs time to establish his ministry and this should be done without interference.**

## WHAT'S IN A WORD? SOME OF THEM JUST SEEM TO SMELL TOO BAD

**Peter Bolt**



**A** ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME MAY still smell as sweet, but once a word smells bad, the stench is hard to shake. September in Sydney saw the press in a self-righteous flurry because new Anglican brides could now choose to submit to their beloved.

The problem is not with the meaning, or denotation, of the word. After all, to submit is a normal part of life, and part of the give and take of relationships. The problem is the nuance, the connotation, of the word.

A psychopath, someone with no feelings, for example, fails to register an emotional response to the simple mention of the word 'rape'. Normal people automatically react, for this word is loaded with negative connotations.

Experiencing bad relationships can even make the ordinary word 'submit' smell bad. Feminist ideology fuels

the fire, and political correctness takes no prisoners. The word just has to go.

Bad childhood experience can also make the word 'father' smell. These negative nuances can then be felt when the living God invites us to cry, 'Abba, Father'. However, once a person comes to know the gracious love of the Heavenly Father, life is enriched in every direction by his Fatherly goodness, and this brings new and overwhelmingly positive nuances to the word. That is, the language of God's fatherhood is reformatory, it actually helps us to see things completely anew.

Now there's a thought. Since the Bible (not just the new prayer book) calls upon wives to submit to their husband's love, 'as to the Lord', perhaps this holds the key. Perhaps it might even be reformatory. In the context of Christ's great love, is there hope even for this new Rose, by the same old name? 🗣️