

More on Impact

There is much discussion in the media on the relationship between church and government. Obviously, with the Federal election coming up soon, we will be hearing a lot more.

The question still arises as to where our nation is heading. Are we 'the great Southland of the Holy Spirit'? In what ways should we expect the church to have an influence on where we go as a nation?

The article on this page challenges us to consider how effective we are as the church in Australia. Clearly, we are not doing very well in influencing our nation – even the churches we think are doing well have questionable real growth.

Maybe there are still some things we need to be doing better! And maybe there is still the challenge to consider how we can do it together – in unity, and prayerfully, with godly leadership.

More food for thought!

Christ is All!

David Bartlett,

Editor and Network Convenor

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Churches Struggle As Old Guard Promoted To Glory

From the Australian Prayer Network

The number of Australians identifying themselves as Christian will plummet over the next 20 years as an ageing generation of dedicated churchgoers dies out, analysis of census figures shows. Painting a bleak future for the Christian faith, the Christian Research Association predicts the ranks of non-believers will steadily grow while there will not be enough young converts to replace elderly congregations. The research also questions one of the few success stories of Christianity, the Pentecostal churches, challenging assertions that they are hotbeds of Christian recruitment.

The association's senior researcher, Philip Hughes, said the bulk of growth in Pentecostal churches came from the natural growth of families as churchgoers married and raised their children in the faith. The number of converts was being offset by those who drifted out of the church. Dr Hughes said rates of Christian identification were likely to fall to less than 60 per cent by 2025, reflecting declining interest in religion and spirituality in general. But present trends did not imply that the decline would continue until churches ceased to exist. The rate of Christian adherence was likely to settle at 50 per cent within 30 to 40 years, depending on immigration patterns.

"Denominational leaders should be concerned about the

census figures," Dr Hughes said. "Even those denominations showing the greatest growth are not doing very well. Given all the effort that is put into evangelism among the Pentecostals, a net growth by conversion, apart from births, of 13,800 people in 10 years across Australia by all the Pentecostal churches combined is not great growth."

Dr Hughes said there was no evidence that the decline in church attendance detected in the 2006 census might be arrested as baby boomers with more time on their hands considered returning to the church in their retirement. The Salvation Army and the Uniting Church, with ageing congregations, were among the Christian groups to have suffered the greatest decline. The Uniting Church also appeared to be suffering from divisions over homosexual ministers. Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam boasted the fastest growth.

The greatest growth of any Christian denomination was for the evangelical Christian Brethren Assemblies, which has no formal links with the Exclusive Brethren.

APN Editors note: All the above of course could be turned on its head at any time should the Holy Spirit decide to breath new life into and through His Church. It is for that we must pray as without Him the Christian Church in Australia is destined to a period of increasing irrelevancy and rejection by the people of this great land.

Source: Compiled by APN from media reports

Special Letter To Pastors/Ministers From The Australian Prayer Network

Dear Fellow Christian Leader,

The Australian Prayer Network is delighted to announce and support an exciting development resulting from the Australian Christian Lobby joining forces with the Compass Foundation to launch a new training program called Compass Australia

<http://www.compass.org.au/>

There are a plethora of great Christian courses in the marketplace that focus on leadership, worldview and discipleship. However, the team at Compass and ACL believe there is a gap. This gap is to identify, train, equip and mentor high capacity, passionate Christian students and recent graduates, who will be at the top of their profession in 20 years in strategic areas such as politics, law, the media, science, education, the arts and philosophy.

The Compass program aims to strategically inform, inspire and challenge the brightest of the next generation to achieve maximum effect for Christ in their chosen profession. In the next 20 years we want to see thousands of passionate, motivated, networked, and well equipped leaders specifically trained and released into strategic areas of our nation.

Due to the very selective nature of the Compass program, only Christian leaders in positions of authority will be able to nominate students to attend. This is why this letter is being directed only to people in positions of leadership on our membership database. Students cannot

nominate themselves. They will need you as a Christian leader to nominate them online via www.compass.org.au/nominations. You may be able to name 2 or 3 students now in your church who should be part of this program.

The first Compass conference starts 20-27 January 2008 and nominations are now open at <http://www.compass.org.au/>. This website also contains more information about the program, the speakers, the cost and the vision.

If you are interested in encouraging someone you know to attend, a letter from ACL Managing Director Jim Wallace as available on the web site referred to above. You could use this letter to assist you in discussing the course with them. Make sure however you officially nominate them at www.compass.org.au/nominations

This program has the potential to have an important impact on the future leadership of our nation. I would encourage you to think carefully about whether you can have a part in that through making nominations.

Brian Pickering
National Coordinator
Australian Prayer Network

The Rationale For Government

For a general appreciation of the function of government there are three passages it is particularly useful to consider alongside each other: Romans 13: 1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. These verses articulate a number of principles, including the following.

Firstly, government is something that God has ordained and which is thus good. There is no place in the Bible for any would-be Christian anarchist.

Secondly, the role of government is to provide a framework that restrains evil and promotes righteousness.

Thirdly, there is a very clear link between righteous government and the Church freely proclaiming the gospel. Specifically, far from there being a paragraph break, there is not even a full stop separating 1 Timothy 2:1-3 (which define good government) from verse 4 which states that God 'wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.' This reference to evangelism is not random but demonstrates how properly functioning government is positively related to a properly functioning Church. Thus whilst there can be no doubt that, in his grace, God has allowed significant church growth in countries experiencing political oppression, God's best for church growth is not government oppression.

[From an article by Daniel Boucher 'A Challenge to Political Involvement' SU 'Encounter With God' Oct-Dec 2007]

Sponsorship of "Pastors' Link"

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● **Pastors' Prayer Breakfast**

The next Pastors' Prayer Breakfast will be held on Friday 26th October at the Woonona

couples, no matter what stage of marriage they are in. Please don't miss this great opportunity
When: Saturday 17th

"A congregation with purpose is a vibrant congregation, and giving church members a world Christian perspective is a great way to give

What's coming up in the Illawarra

Be part of these events with pastors supporting each other, and promoting a more effective witness in the Illawarra

Presbyterian Community

Church (Gray St.). Meet at 6.45 am ready for breakfast, and then for prayer from 7.30 am to 8.30 am. Breakfasts are held on the last Friday of each month at various locations.

See page 4 for more details and more information about breakfasts.

November: 9am to 5pm

Where: Lighthouse Church Wollongong

Cost: \$95 per couple [Cost includes morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and manual/resources for the day]

A program for children shall also be provided at a cost of \$10 per child. (or \$15 for two or more children)

Registrations close Sunday

11th November, 2007

Register via Lighthouse Church office, or contact Ross.Stewart@lighthousechurch.com.au for more information about the seminar

them purpose. As they understand how the gospel is penetrating the world, so they can be lead to involvement in penetrating their own community. IMD is a perfect opportunity to develop that global perspective, and thus provide a meaningful foundation for future local ministry. If you value growth in your people, it is worth getting them involved in IMD."

Rev. Dr Bruce Dipple. SMBC.

● **Survival Skills for Healthy Families**

"Survival Skills for Healthy Families" is a 12 hour family education program presented in six two-hour sessions. The course focuses on teaching patterns and skills that support family life. Single parents and step-family concerns are included and the whole family (over 8 years of age) is encouraged to attend, including grandparents or other family members having involvement.

The course will commence in Wollongong on Thursday 25th October at Anglicare Illawarra, 152 Keira Street, Wollongong. Cost is \$88 for the whole family.

Further information available from Denise Perkins 4228 9612, dperkins@aglicare.org.au

● **Christmas Outreach Events in the Illawarra**

No doubt there will be plenty of regional events held in the lead up to Christmas this year. So far, the only one listed on the Pastors' Network website is:

● **Carols by the Harbour (Shellharbour) - 22nd December**

Presented by Shellharbour Area Ministers Association.

For more details contact Lloyd Ollerenshaw email: lollerenshaw@optusnet.com.au

{If you have other events planned in your area, please let the editor know}

● **IMD 2008 23rd & 24th MAY 2008**

Make Illawarra Missions Day 2008 a part of your church calendar and introduce your church to a biblical & global mission perspective. Help your people become world Christians.

● **Scripture Union Staff Worker Position - October 2007**

"Putting Jesus back in the picture in state schools".

Exciting part time position for Organiser/Facilitator of voluntary schools workers.

Scripture Union NSW is looking for a 2-days-a-week staff worker, to set up and develop ISCF groups and SUPA-Clubs in the Illawarra and South Coast.

Do you enjoy generating energy in volunteers?

Could you work with teachers, parents, church youth workers, school principals?

"... big questions, .. real issues .. God is using ISCF to reach people with his Son." - Andrew Stevenson, Illawarra ISCF Leader.

For position description and application form contact

Bruce Boyle, Schools Ministry Coordinator, SU NSW, Phone 8876 1111, email bruceb@nsw.su.org.au or Harry Cotter, SU Illawarra Action Team, Tel 4285 9320, email hocotter@bigpond.com

● **A Day To Treasure: Marriage Enrichment Seminar**

A Day to Treasure is a marriage enrichment seminar hosted by Oz FamilyLife. It is designed to give your marriage a quick tune-up by providing practical, biblical ideas to resolve conflict, build a strong relationship and enjoy family life.

This seminar is highly regarded, and is suitable for all

● **Advanced 'Perspectives' Course**

The New Advanced Perspectives Course 2008 starts 21 Feb 2008.

REQUIREMENT: must have completed Standard Perspectives.

The 2008 course will be held on Thursday nights from 7:00 – 9:30 PM and runs for 13 weeks.

Location to be advised

We ask you to inform and encourage members to join the class as it studies the four foundational perspectives of missions: Biblical, Historical, Cultural, Strategic.

This course is widely used and recommended by major mission organizations.

Total Cost: \$130 (Course notes) Reader \$50 (if required) offers great value for money, spiritual growth and training for service.

N.B. A PowerPoint Slide is available on Pastors Network Events Web site.

Co-ordinators: John Vidler 4261 4518
Email: vidlerjl@tpg.com.au
21 Myee Street, Kanahooka, 2530]

● **Standard 'Perspectives' Course**

Commences 24 July 2008.

Looks at the four foundational perspectives of missions: Biblical, Historical, Cultural and Strategic. Thursday nights for 13 weeks.

For more details, contact John Vidler phone 4261 4518 or [email](mailto:vidlerjl@tpg.com.au)

● **WYD Wollongong**

The Catholic Church in the Illawarra is holding a number of events at the end of 2007 and into 2008 as part of the "World Youth Day" (WYD) programme.

The following items are given for information:

WYD Wollongong - Battle of the Bands - 24 November 2007. Unicentre, University of Wollongong - from 7 pm. to 11 pm.

WYD Wollongong - Journey of the Cross and Icon: 8 - 9 December 2007

WYD Wollongong - Journey of the Cross and Icon: 25 March -

5 April 2008 - Includes 'The Light of the Cross' Festival (at WIN Stadium?)- 4 April 2008

WYD Wollongong - Days in the Diocese: 10 - 14 July 2008 - Includes 'The Great Aussie BBQ' - 12 July 2008

WYD: 15 - 20 July 2008

See www.wyd08wooll.org for more details

Illawarra Pastors' Network Information

● **Illawarra Pastors Prayer Breakfasts for 2007**

The next **Pastors' Prayer Breakfast** will be held on **Friday 26th October at the Woonona Presbyterian Community Church (Gray Street)**. Meet at 6.45 am ready for breakfast, and then for prayer from 7.30 am to 8.30 am. Breakfasts are held on the last Friday of each month at various locations. (* If you would like to sign up as a host for 2008, let David know!)

● **Illawarra Pastors' Network**

Illawarra Pastors' Network Coordinator: David Bartlett

David is a pastor to pastors, is available as "an ear to listen", to pray with you and support you in ministry.

David is also available to come to your church to **preach and share vision** on areas such as unity and impacting the region. Phone David on 42836845 or email: david@illawarrapastors.org.au

[If you would like to **support** David's ministry, cheques can be made out to **Illawarra Pastors' Network** (with an indication that it is for support) and sent to Illawarra Pastors' Network, 3/119 Campbell St, WOONONA 2517, or payments can be made directly to the **Illawarra Pastors' Network account** through the **IMB (BSB No. 641-800 Account Number 200127259)**].

Network Servant-Leaders: David Bartlett, Peter Currie, Warwick Marsh, Robin Nance and Lloyd Ollerenshaw.

● **On The Illawarra Pastors Email List?**

Do you receive regular email updates, reminders or information from the Pastors Network? If not, and you would like to, **please send your email address to the Convenor**, David Bartlett, and your email address will be added to the mailing list. [Note: The list is confidential and not released to anyone. Information may be sent to the Convenor for forwarding or putting on our website.]

● **The Illawarra Pastors' Network Web Site**

For an update of Events, Breakfasts, and details concerning the Network, check the web site www.illawarrapastors.org.au

● **The Illawarra Pastors' Link**

is produced by the **Illawarra Pastors' Network**, as a service to the Body of Christ in the Illawarra Area and is published monthly.

Send any information about events, concerns, resources, needs, ideas that might be relevant to the wider Body of Christ and His ministry in the Region to:

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