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Doco asks what next for child migrants

VIDEO

Peter Kirkwood



I grew up in the 1950s and 60s in Orange on the Central Tablelands of NSW, thankfully as part of a close and loving family. Weekend activities often included a Sunday afternoon picnic or drive. My father would pack us into the car and we'd head off into the surrounding countryside. I have fond memories of those outings as tangible experiences of the togetherness and nurturing of family life.

About 20 km west of Orange, on the road to Molong, we'd often pass the Fairbridge Farm School. In those days it was explained to us that this institution gave British *orphans*, rescued from poverty in damp cold postwar England, the promise of a better life in sunny rural Australia. But as the video featured here shows, for most of the child migrants housed in its neatly painted wooden buildings, it failed dismally in delivering on those promises.

The Long Journey Home screened on Tuesday evening on ABC1, the day after Kevin Rudd's apology to the Forgotten Australians at Parliament House in Canberra (it is available on ABC [iView](#) until 1 December). It's a poignant case study fleshing out who some of these forgotten children are, and why there was a desperate need for an apology.

The documentary is not a stylistic masterpiece, but there is something gripping in its plain and straightforward story telling, and its honest portrayal of raw emotion. Former residents explain how they were separated at a tender age from their families, some as young as four or five years old, and sent to far-off Australia. This is shocking enough, but worse was to come as they were forced to do long hours of backbreaking farmwork, and many suffered physical and sexual abuse.

It is based on a book written by the best known alumnus of Fairbridge Farm, David Hill. This former head of NSW Railways, Managing Director of the ABC, and sports bureaucrat is living proof that some children seemed to do well under the austere Fairbridge regime, emerging as leaders in society. This is another strength of the documentary that there is a mix of voices and views, and an acknowledgement of ambiguity. Some interviewees praised Fairbridge Farm and those who ran it.

Hill acknowledges that a small minority did do well — of the thousand or so who grew up there during its forty years of operation, a meagre ten went on to university. But, as he points out near the beginning of the documentary, 'The majority of children were short changed on a decent education, socially isolated through their childhood, emotionally deprived, and that's even in cases where there was no sexual or physical abuse. I think most of the children who came through this scheme, particularly those of a younger age, were damaged by the

experience.'

After the heightened emotions surrounding Kevin Rudd's apology, we are now in a slightly messy stage of debate about what to do next. Members of the Forgotten Generation acknowledge the healing power of the apology, and some are arguing for financial compensation.

In an [opinion piece](#) in Monday's *Sydney Morning Herald*, social commentator Hugh Mackay argued that what is missing in discussion surrounding this apology, and the apology to the Stolen Generation, is any notion of forgiveness: 'An apology is more than a declaration; it's not just a message we send to the injured party. It is also, importantly, an appeal to the injured party to forgive us for what we did to them. An apology without a corresponding act of forgiveness is only half the story.'

In response I would say that after years of neglect and abuse suffered by these people, followed by a long period of denial and cover-up, it is appropriate that there is open acknowledgement and an apology for the harm done. Some of the Fairbridge Farm children are mounting a legal challenge to the Fairbridge Foundation, the beneficiary of the sale of the farm in the mid 1970s, arguing they are entitled to some of its funds. This is part of a broader debate about just settlement. Hopefully these steps will form the basis for forgiveness in the future.

Pope skips language of love in Anglicans manifesto

RELIGION

Charles Sherlock

On November 4 each year Australian Anglicans and Roman Catholics pray for one another. It was also when Benedict XVI issued the Apostolic Constitution [*Anglicanorum coetibus*](#) ('Groups of Anglicans').

Writing when it was first announced, I noted that its wording would matter:

Phrased in overly-confident 'Romanista' style ... | it will communicate an institutional, bureaucratic message about unity. It will reinforce the suspicion that ecumenical endeavour means 'return to Rome', rather than the vision of every Christian tradition being converted to the unity which Christ wills.

Written with humility ... | it may just be a sign of the pro-visional which ecumenical endeavour, and this aching world, so desperately needs.

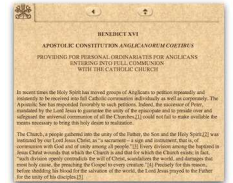
So — which way does *Anglicanorum coetibus* fall?

It gets off to an undiplomatic start: 'The Holy Spirit has moved groups of Anglicans to petition' such a move. No criteria for this maximum-volume claim are given — why not 'Guided by Divine Providence ... |' or 'In the grace of humility ... |' or just 'Christians identifying themselves as Anglicans ... |'? And it was disrespectful for Benedict XVI to describe as 'groups of Anglicans' those who are mostly not so.

The Constitution sets out a 13-point 'normative structure' for Personal Ordinariates, with brief 'Complementary Norms' from the Congregation for the Defence of the Faith (CDF). Few surprises, though understanding the detail requires close checking of the Canon Law references. Even so, I could not determine whether re-confirmation or re-deaconing will be required.

I came to this document looking for signs of a 'pro-visional' approach. Whatever one makes of the 13 points and the Norms, it is the language of the introduction which sets out 'ecclesiological principles' which dashed my hopes.

The Anglican Communion accepts that in a re-united Church the distinctive ministry of the Bishop of Rome will be needed. Yet the language of *Anglicanorum coetibus* presents such a 'blatant' view of the papacy, and such a quantitative view of the unity of the visible Church catholic, as to make dialogue near pointless. In particular, key Roman documents on the



church such as *Lumen Gentium* (LG) are not cited from the official English texts, but re-translated from the Latin in ways that shift their meaning — a disturbing trend.

The second sentence, for example, speaks of ‘the successor of Peter, mandated by the Lord Jesus to *guarantee* the unity of the episcopate’, citing LG 23 and CDF’s *Communio in notio* (CN) 12; 13. But LG 23 says nothing about ‘guarantee’: it concerns the collegiality of the bishops in mission around the Bishop of Rome, and CN 12-13 addresses the powers ‘interior’ to each local church.

The second paragraph states, ‘The Church ... | was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ as “a sacrament — a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all people.”’ The quotation marks are in the original, referenced to LG 1, which describes the Church as ‘in Christ, like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit communion with God and of the unity of the whole human race’. The abbreviated translation may seem innocuous, but moves the language towards a less intimate, tighter view of the Church.

This shift to a tighter understanding continues in the next paragraph: ‘It is the Holy Spirit, the principle of unity, which establishes the Church as a communion’. Again, seemingly innocuous wording, and ‘communion’ is familiar ARCIC ground — but it is another step towards the conclusion that the visible ‘Church’ equals Rome. LG 13 and CN 4 are referenced in support: yet LG 13 is about the *diversity* of ‘genius’ and ‘charisms’ given by God for a ‘catholic unity’ embracing all ‘members of the people of God’, while CN 4 concerns the Church having an ‘open’ sacramentality.

LG 8 is cited with a crucial change of wording: Church as ‘visible society’ and ‘spiritual community’ are not separate, but one complex reality ... *formed from a two-fold element, human and divine*... . LG 8 structures this sentence differently, in a qualitative rather than quantitative manner: ‘*which coalesces from a divine and human element*’, avoiding a false understanding of the Christological analogy which would ascribe divinity to the Church.

I could go into more detail, but conclude by noting the most disturbing re-translation, that of the famous *subsistit* clause of LG 8. The official English version reads:

This is the one (*unica*) Church of Christ which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after his Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd ... | This Church, constituted and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its visible structure (*compaginem*). These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.

Anglicanorum coetibus abbreviates, re-arranges and re-translates this as follows, as its conclusion of the ‘ecclesiological principles’ upon which the Constitution rests:

This *single* Church, which we profess in the Creed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, ‘subsists in the Catholic Church which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. *Nevertheless*, many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside *her* visible confines. *Since* these are gifts belonging properly to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling toward Catholic unity.’

If a student cited a primary text with such meaning shifts in an essay, questions would be raised about academic integrity.

This Constitution moves the pastoral openness of *Lumen Gentium*— recognising the distinctive place of the ‘successor of Peter’ — towards a ‘Rome is right’ mentality that is disturbing and dangerous, not only for Anglicans, but for Roman Catholics.

For a text seeking to set forward unity in Christ, *Anglicanorum coetibus* is mind-bogglingly undiplomatic, disrespectful and uncatholic.

NSW political blood spilled

POLITICS

Tony Smith



When New South Wales Ministers Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald tendered their resignations to Premier Nathan Rees they were obeying conventions established over decades in Westminster type parliaments. In reality, the Premier had asked the two for their resignations last weekend, effectively sacking them. Whatever the reasons that they were given and have since supplied publicly, the immediate political reading of the action was that Rees was moving against disloyal members of Cabinet.

In a state which has had an MP assassinated, a Minister suspected of murders here and convicted of a similar crime overseas, a factional leader bashed savagely outside his Sydney home, and whose parliament has a reputation as a 'bear pit', it is inevitable that commentators will describe political blood being spilled. Unfortunately, where NSW Labor is concerned, such events often invite reprisals.

While a Premier's authority in Cabinet might be based in unwritten rules inherited from Westminster, a Labor Premier's authority has traditionally been restrained by a firm understanding within the Party that Caucus, the party room meeting of Labor MPs, decides the membership of the ministry while the Premier allocates portfolios. In practice, as in many political meetings, the Labor factions will have met previously and decided their candidates for the ministry. Left, Right, Centre and various other combinations claim spots according to their relative successes at election, perhaps modified slightly by any previous agreements.

Liberal and National Party Leaders have always enjoyed a free hand in appointments, and more recent Labor leaders have been attempting to bypass the factions. Following their election victories, both Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Queensland Premier Anna Bligh claimed the right to appoint their ministries. Addressing Labor's State Conference on Saturday 14 November 2009, Premier Rees claimed a similar privilege. Conference supported the Premier, perhaps reckoning that the move might help the Government retain power in 2011.

A Premier must balance many considerations when deciding to sack a Minister. Ideally, a Minister should only be sacked for maladministration or personal impropriety, or perhaps when a stronger candidate is available. Often however, political factors are paramount. It is a firm principle of politics that while you want your friends close, you need to keep your enemies even closer. Former Premier Bob Carr recently advised John Della Bosca finally to put his leadership ambitions aside because continued speculation was creating instability. That instability only increased after Della Bosca's resignation, because once he was outside the Cabinet 'tent', one imperative demanding his loyalty had been removed. Premier Rees has

taken a risk, placing Macdonald and especially Tripodi, beyond the demands of Cabinet solidarity.

Former President of the Legislative Council Meredith Burgmann has suggested that the influence of formal factions was overrated. Rather, Labor is divided into informal groupings she called 'shifting fiefdoms'. This might explain why Macdonald, originally from the hard Left, seems to be a Della Bosca supporter. While he might remain a disaffected presence in the upper house, taking on the factions in NSW really means taking on the Right. Fairfield MP Tripodi supported by Right heavyweights Della Bosca and Eddie Obeid could be an overt threat to Rees very soon.

Tripodi has in some respects led a charmed life. He might well have been sacked over an allegation of sexual harassment or over several allegations of attempting to manipulate development decisions on behalf of mates. A National Party MP had a go at strangling Tripodi in parliament, but he shrugged the attack off nonchalantly. The Right breeds them tough.

Following the sackings, Rees faces two further political problems. Both are matters of perception - one concerns the ethnic vote and the other, paradoxically perhaps, Cabinet solidarity. When the Coalition Opposition targeted Michael Costa, Della Bosca and Tripodi in the 2007 election campaign, Costa accused the conservatives of being against people of ethnic background. All three have now left the ministry, and while there have been no suggestions that they have been forced out because of their backgrounds, their departure could undermine Labor's traditional edge in ethnic support. Certainly, there has been speculation that Rees retained another Minister accused of disloyalty Tony Kelly, because of a need to maintain contacts with rural people.

While Premiers claim that sackings are sometimes necessary for Cabinet solidarity, they do not automatically create stability. Premier Carr lost only one Cabinet Minister in his first term. At a time when several federal Ministers had to resign, this stability showed Carr's effective administration. While Carr later had some trouble with factional appointments to Cabinet, his teams seemed well disciplined. Ministers will contain their personal ambitions if they believe that the Premier is a winner. They want to hold on to Government and its power and perks and recognise that disunity is self-defeating. When a Premier looks like losing, resentments fester and erupt.

Rees now hopes to get on with business in the hope of salvaging Labor's electoral chances in 2011. By acting against two ministers, he has hoped to convey the impression that disloyalty was the source of the government's problems, and that things will now improve markedly. Unfortunately, Rees now has an even more limited pool of experience on which to draw than he had previously. It is a gamble to expect that Government must now become efficient and popular. A Premier can play the disloyalty card only once. Premier Rees will have to hope that he has not thrown away Labor's last chance.

No easy answers to stressed Jewishness

FILMS

Anthony Morris

***A Serious Man* (Rating). Running time: 105 minutes. Director: Ethan and Joel Coen.**

It's 1967, and Jewish uni professor Larry Gopnik (Michael Stuhlbarg) has got the weight of the world bearing down on his shoulders. His wife is set to leave him for the most annoying man alive, a series of anonymous and slanderous letters are threatening his chances for tenure, one of his students seems to be trying to bribe him, his two kids treat him like a combination cash machine and TV repairman, his brother has moved in and keeps babbling about some kind of mathematical gambling scheme he's figured out, his neighbours on either side look like they're up to something devious, and whenever Gopnik turns to his rabbi for help all he gets are long-winded and nonsensical stories. Maybe if he could figure out some meaning behind all this he'd be able to endure. Sadly for him, any kind of higher meaning (or even narrative closure) is currently in short supply.



The Coen Brothers (*Burn After Reading*, *Fargo*, *No Country for Old Men*) are back doing what they do best with this deeply quirky, murkily personal, often hilarious and rarely obvious film. The tone is set with a prologue set in the 19th century. It has the shape of a folktale but without any clear meaning, let alone relevance to the story that follows. The stress placed on Gopnik's Jewishness feels like it might provide some clue to his suffering, but the various rabbis he visits prove to be useless or worse. Perhaps the looming counter-culture might provide a way out of his troubles, but that's a dead-end too. And if you're expecting any kind of tidy conclusion to his struggles and strife, you're in the same boat as Gopnik. Which is probably the Coens' point.

For once in the Coens' recent comedies not everyone here is an idiot, but not being an idiot doesn't help Gopnik much, as his world continues to spiral out of control to the lack of interest of all. His increasingly desperate search for answers — or even just an explanation as to why all this is happening to him — is clearly futile, but what else can he (or any of us) do with our lives? In some ways this could be seen as a rebuke to those critics who've complained that their previous films were populated largely with dimwits: if Larry was only a little more of a dimwit himself, he might be a lot better able to cope with his ordeal.

There's a lot to think about and laugh at in this lovingly crafted film. For some the lack of easy answers could be frustrating. But if you're willing to just go along with the ride, you're bound to enjoy what is one of the Coens' best films in recent years.

Forgotten Hack lacked killer colonial instinct

BY THE WAY

Brian Matthews



John Barton Hack was one of the pioneers of Adelaide and, at first, one of its rising stars, a dynamic figure around the small, bustling settlement from the moment he arrived from his native Cheshire in February 1837.

One of his several civic honours was membership of the Nomenclature Committee — a group of prominent Adelaide men with the task of assigning names to the main streets of the new city. But while his colleagues on this committee, such as Judge Jeffcott (Jeffcott Street) and Robert Gouger (Gouger Street), managed to imprint themselves on the map forever, Hack, despite his advantageous position on the committee, did not. Perhaps this apparent failure to win the full respect of his no doubt rampantly ambitious peers was the first sign of the weakness, the lack of a colonial killer instinct, which would bring Hack down and turn his early and sensational successes into terrible failure.

In the end, he gave his name to an insignificant laneway in North Adelaide and a range of hills and a track near the township of Echunga, a place he singlehandedly established and where he prospered until setbacks, unwise investment, and the ruthless treachery of his 'friend' Jacob Hagen set him on a downward path from which he never recovered.

For fifteen years I lived on Hack Range Road, Hack's meandering, unsealed and nondescript memorial just outside Echunga. That was how Hack and I 'met' and how I came to know his story. One spring morning about a year before I left, I came across a baby kookaburra in the middle of the track. He was sturdy, more than a handful, but couldn't fly. So, stabbed repeatedly by that ungrateful and needle-sharp beak as I scooped him up, I took him home.

I installed him in a spacious, aviary-style cage, gave him watery milk to drink laced with a drop or two of post traumatic brandy, and christened him J B Hack. At last, the original and betrayed Hack had some sort of memorial. And in Echunga, where he should have been honoured. Inside the cage I made JB a shelter and installed rough branches at various levels for perches. Settling in to a diet of worms and raw meat, he flourished. Hack had, so to speak, come home!

Each morning I would call: 'Hack, come on, you fearful Jesuit!' This somehow seemed appropriate because kookaburras have a beady, religious eye. We may, in our anthropomorphic way, assume they are laughing when they utter their famous cry, but kookaburras are too inward, too much taken up with some avian equivalent of St Ignatius's examination of conscience, to indulge in cacophonous, mindless laughter. Cacophonous —

yes. Mindless — no. That's what J B Hack taught me anyway. Daily encounters never habituated me to his unblinking stare of calculating disdain, made the more penetrating because it came via the length of that murderous beak. My idea that we might strike up a master/pet bird relationship, somehow atoning for the nonentity of the original Hack, dwindled in exact proportion with JB's growth to full maturity. The bigger he grew, the more he looked down on me. It didn't help that, thanks to my assiduous provision of perches, he could do this literally.

Periodically, twenty or thirty local magpies would squat on the roof of his cage or cling briefly to the surrounding wire and warble lyrically to each other. He regarded these gatherings with his customary slight, magisterial tilt of the head. Often the magpie visitation would be dispersed by twenty or thirty of the resident kookaburras whose apparently side-splitting mirth JB found equally unimpressive — like a bunch of comedians shouting ever more desperate jokes at a statue.

Our relationship, never close, was further harmed by JB's growing capacity to fend for himself. Lizards aplenty, field mice and several small snakes broached his castle but never left it. Gradually I realised that the gulf between me and nature red in tooth and claw was almost unbridgeable.

With my departure imminent, I contacted National Parks and Wild Life and learnt two crucial things: one, J B Hack — that inscrutable Jesuit — was not a 'he' but a 'she'; and two, had the visitors — whether fellow kookaburra or territorial magpie — managed to get at her they would have torn her to pieces. So JB went to a safer place and I left the Hack Range to its mute, fading remembrance of the much less canny John Barton Hack.

One morning last week I found a young, stranded magpie on the track. I moved it to the temporary safety of the roadside scrub, knowing it was doomed. It stared at me — sadly? 'I can't help you, mate,' I said. 'Nature is red in tooth and claw.' Somewhere I sensed JB's saturnine eye and heard her raucous scorn.

Why universities welcome theological colleges

EDUCATION

Neil Ormerod

Theological education continues to demonstrate a remarkable degree of institutional fluidity. This year has already witnessed the imminent closure of the Brisbane College of Theology (BCT), with its component parts moving in different directions. The Catholic and Uniting Church components entered into a relationship with Australian Catholic University (ACU), and the Anglican with Charles Sturt University (CSU). Now two other theological consortia are facing challenges of different sorts. They point to the continued repercussions of a changing regulatory environment on the sector.



The Adelaide College of Divinity (ACD), founded thirty years ago, is now essentially defunct. Some twelve months ago its constituent colleges, Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Church made a decision whereby the Catholic and Anglican Colleges would have minimal involvement with the consortium structure. This would leave it largely in the hands of the Uniting Church college. They would focus their own energies with the ongoing relationship with Flinders University. This relationship had grown more substantial over the years and offered their students access to government funding, which was not directly available to students in the purely ACD awards.

Now it appears that the Anglican College (St Barnabas') will affiliate with CSU. This is part of a move by a number of Anglican dioceses to consolidate their theological endeavours under a single provider with a single, largely Anglican, curriculum. The Canberra Anglican college, St Mark's Theological College, after brief stints with the Australian College of Theology and Sydney College of Divinity (SCD), joined CSU in 1997. It has since subsumed the United Theological College at North Parramatta (Uniting Church), and more recently St Francis Theological College, the Anglican college of the BCT. Now the Adelaide Anglicans are also signing up with CSU. As such the ACD will no longer be a functioning consortium and will need to recreate itself institutionally if it is to survive scrutiny from its accrediting agencies.

The irony in both Brisbane and Adelaide is that the two Anglican colleges have limited faculty resources. They will look to their previous consortia partners to assist in the delivery of a full theological program to their students. Their credibility as theological providers rode on their ecumenical relationships with Catholic and Uniting Church colleges. A relationship with remote St Mark's/CSU in Canberra does not put lecturers in front of students.

Various Anglican movements are now also affecting the SCD. For many years the Anglican diocese of Newcastle maintained a small operation at Morpeth, training its ministers for various externally assessed awards. After a brief flirtation with St Mark's/CSU the operation

was closed and the property sold. The money has been used to fund a chair in theology at Newcastle University, creating a new theological provider within the university sector (alongside ACU, CSU, Flinders, and Murdoch). It is now public knowledge that the Broken Bay Institute (BBI), the theological college of the Catholic Broken Bay diocese, will be affiliating with Newcastle University.

BBI began life as the Centre for Christian Spirituality at Randwick under the leadership of then Fr David Walker. When he was made Bishop of Broken Bay he moved its operations to his new diocese and renamed it appropriately. It has been with the SCD since about 1994. In that time it has grown from a relatively small operation to be one of the larger colleges of the SCD, generating about 15% of their student load. A key factor in the move was the compact signed between the Anglican diocese of Newcastle and the Catholic dioceses of Maitland-Newcastle and Broken Bay.

The departure of such a significant college from the SCD will have significant financial implications for that consortium. Fresh on the heels of a relatively successful audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), the SCD is now faced with a major problem, one prefigured by AUQA. Among its many recommendations it noted the urgent need for the SCD to 'articulate the membership profile required for its survival as a viable ecumenical theological institution.' It also noted that 'unplanned changes in membership may have major consequences for the interdenominational and ecumenical character of the organisation or may risk SCD's financial viability'. The departure of BBI was hardly planned. Over the past twenty five years the SCD has been something of a revolving door with colleges entering and leaving on a regular basis. While this was tolerable in a previous regulatory environment, with the increasing cost of central administration it is no longer sustainable.

The movement to the university sector of course restores the ancient place of theology as a discipline within a university. But there are dangers in such a move. Theological colleges should be under no illusion that the interest of most of these universities extends beyond the financial. The colleges bring student numbers, and their theologians contribute relatively well to research outputs with minimal investment from the university. Apart from ACU they have no particular interest in theology for its own sake. A decline in student numbers or changes in government funding formulae for research could lead to a colder relationship. The last twelve months has proved tumultuous in the theological sector. The future is not likely to be less so.

Rudd faces ugly story of abused innocence

COMMUNITY

John Honner



At 11.00am yesterday, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, formally apologised to generations of Australians who were subjected to harm in children's homes through the twentieth century.

Some could no longer be cared for in their families, yet were labeled 'orphans'. Others were child migrants, sent out from Britain to have a chance of a better life in Australia. Many lived in a series of residential institutions, from infancy to adolescence, with every move damaging their development.

There are some 500,000 of these 'Forgotten Australians' and 'Lost Innocents'. They all suffered hurt and distress. Many were victims of abuse and assault. Many never experienced a hug. Many were kept separate from siblings. Many never knew until years later that they actually had a mother and a family. All were at risk of attachment disorder and most lived with a fractured identity. Many struggled later in life to develop relationships. Most finished their very inadequate schooling at the age of fourteen and were used as cheap labour.

Many live heroic, resilient lives, holding on to hope. Some, as the Prime Minister acknowledged, 'could not cope and took their own lives in despair'.

They were all innocent.

The survivors have been struggling for recognition, respect, healing and compensation for over a decade. After three Senate Inquiries and unanimous calls to start a healing process — Lost Innocents (2001), Forgotten Australians (2004) and the recent Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians Revisited (2009) — an apology has at last been delivered.

Rudd offered his apology via a carefully crafted speech in the presence of hundreds of former residents of these institutions, some euphoric and some distressed, in the Great Hall of Parliament House. He accepted that this was 'an ugly story' and that 'its ugliness must be told without fear or favour'.

Some of us who worked in or were associated with these children's homes may not like this judgement. The rationalists will heartlessly say we should stop scratching at old scabs, get over it, and move on. The apologists will defensively say that we did the best we could with limited resources, and that it wasn't all bad, that the children were very unruly, and that at least they got three meals a day, and that more child abuse occurs in families than in institutions. The lawyers will probably and allegedly say, 'say nothing'.

It takes heart to be able to listen to a story of grief and abuse, to pass over into another person's life, to feel something of the hurt, and to be there in solidarity until reconciliation slowly builds. It takes truthfulness, too.

Kevin Rudd said 'great evil has been done, therefore hard things must be said'. He drew prolonged (and unselfish) applause when he declared that such systematic abuse should never happen again. He hoped that the apology would become a turning point, and he promised several steps to assist a healing process:

...¢ a process for recording people's stories and experiences, so that the past will be acknowledged and not repeated;

...¢ special status for care leavers in accessing aged care and appropriate aged care support and resources;

...¢ a national service and a national database to track files and help people find and reunite with their families;

...¢ ongoing funding for advocacy groups like [CLAN](#) (Care Leavers Australia Network), the Alliance for Forgotten Australians, the [Child Migrants Trust](#) ;

...¢ a commitment to improve current child protection services, to do everything possible to prevent harm to the 30,000 children and young people in the care of the state in Australia today (see Child Protection Australia 2006-07 at www.aihw.gov.au).

The Great Hall acknowledged the tenacious advocacy of people like Leonie Sheedy and Joanna Penglase from CLAN, and Margaret Humphries from the Child Migrant Trust, but the most moving tribute of all was given to former senator Andrew Murray, a child migrant himself, who contributed so much to the effectiveness of the Senate Inquiries into these matters.

It was a good day for Parliamentary unity. Malcolm Turnbull's response as Leader of the Opposition was pitched much as the Prime Minister's speech, though a little more emotional and a little less measured. Thankfully, neither leader pulled out stories of their own fractured childhood. That would have been a category mistake of monumental proportion: they had a family and an education.

Fittingly and finally, Rudd highlighted the importance of an apology to an even more forgotten group of people: the mothers who lost their children to a system that failed them.

At last, he said, perhaps we can talk not of Forgotten Australians, but of Remembered Australians. Perhaps now, he seemed to be saying, remembering the pain and acknowledging the truth and admitting the failure of the Commonwealth, we can move on.

Perhaps. We may still have a long way to go to protect the ever-expanding generation of children and young people in the care of the state today, particularly in helping them find a

sense of identity and belonging. Christian communities are in a particularly critical position. Past failures in church-run homes have had far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, the government has now become a fastidious regulator of care, and principles of social work set the parameters for the provision of care. On the other hand, the self-sacrificing love that once inspired members of religious communities to welcome 'the orphan and the widow' appears now either to have burnt itself out or to be seeking new directions.

The voices of the Forgotten/Remembered Australians, however, are creating opportunities for new engagement with religious communities and for healing and reconciliation. In some cases this is bearing fruit, as in some collaborative efforts to establish a national data-base and family connection service.

As one former child migrant put it at the apology, 'All we want is a sense of belonging, and that we are loved by somebody.' Secular governments cannot create these relational qualities. Who will?

Opposing Islamic schools

POETRY

P. S. Cottier

Opposing Islamic schools

They might not throw beer bottles
and therefore shatter the tone of the area.
Strip clubs might not reveal themselves
to expose odd bumps hidden in the area.
An ability in mathematics may explode
and calculate the cost to the area.
A window into their faith might creak open
infiltrating veiled thoughts of areas unknown.
Calligraphic graffiti might write itself
and confuse spray-cans of the area.
Their cars are undoubtedly bombs parked
to terrorise honest utes used in the area.
They don't understand tolerance like what we do
and may incite it in the wrong area.
Arabic is not Australian to our ears
and it might sing out and deafen the area.
All in all, it's important that ejakayshun
never darken the brains of this area.

Note: An area is a traditional suburban measurement, bigger than a bread-box, but much smaller than an idea.

Thinking about schools

Have you got her name down yet, they ask,
as if it were on the list of those who will be saved;

the enrolment of my daughter amongst the elect.
Saved from knowing the poor, rather than reading
about them. Prevented from hearing
poverty's bad diction, opening like
a forgotten handkerchief, a lime flower,
snotted into reality's smeared lines.
They are all religious these schools,
these expensive green oases of calm.
Jesus, though, seems somewhat absent,
expelled for breaching uniform rules,
or seen hanging out with the wrong sort,
washing their filthy feet. Send them a voucher
for a pedicure, or sponsor a school overseas.
But they can't sit down with our children,
those ugly loud ones with bad teeth.
We brace ourselves with silver,
cross our palms with exclusion's blind coin.

Missing Melbourne

Alleys don't exist here. Canberra has no use
for backways streets, for furtive tales.
Lies are a different matter, but those
architectural commas, those cobbled
night-cart ways have no place amongst
paradise refined into
quintessence of tedium.
I love my new home's cockatoos,

their hats of lairy scorn, their satire;
sound-beakers of heavy metal
poured into pure blue air.
But I dip my memory's lid
to the Brunswick park
with forty tail-flagged dogs, smaller
than some Canberra backyards.
So much oomph, so much poo,
and bocce, like a kiss thrown
against the deeper green,
speaking of a bigger world
of coincidence and trust.

Ferns

Spiders penelope their way
through reaching looms.
Such heroic epics of spin
composed in shaky lines
as gentle wheels of green
unroll into sighing air.
Ferns flatten into broad roads
of leaf for teamster beetles,
wearing caps of carapace.
Then emerald waves break
over cool mossy rocks,
surfing by feathered shadows.

Climate conversion on the Camino road

ENVIRONMENT

Tony Kevin

'We are called to exercise responsible stewardship of creation, to use resources in such a way that every individual and community can live with dignity, and to develop 'that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God.'

In my parish pew-sheet at Mass the other day, I found this succinct excerpt from the Pope's recent message to delegates, including Kevin Rudd, who attended the United Nations Heads of Government summit in New York.



In what follows, I presume the truth of the latest mainstream climate science: that the world now faces between 2 and 4 degrees rise in global average temperature by 2100 or earlier; that this will have early and dire consequences in terms of sea level rises, desertification, lowland inundations and sharply reduced food-growing potential for the world's burgeoning population; that this global warming is predominantly man-made; and that urgent efforts to curtail fossil fuel combustion in the way humanity runs its electricity and transport systems are vital, if we hope to mitigate and adapt to these global climate disruptions.

To those Australians who reject any of the above presumptions, (and there seems to be a growing number of them), this essay will have limited interest. But many of these people profess Christianity. They might temporarily suspend their disbelief in climate science, to engage with the Pope's words. He clearly sees his obligation to consider the moral consequences of climate science's messages:

'The economic and social costs of using up shared resources must be recognised with transparency and borne by those who incur them, and not by other peoples or future generations. The protection of the environment, and the safeguarding of resources and of the climate, oblige all leaders to act jointly, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the world. Together we can build an integral human development beneficial for all peoples, present and future, a development inspired by the values of charity in truth'. [My italics] .

Australians as a people of Christian heritage know the parable of the Good Samaritan, who put compassion for another human being in distress ahead of his own present comfort and security. The Pope's strong words about leaders' obligations to those who come after us, those who still depend on us as children, and to those who are yet unborn, remind us that the parable has an inter-generational as well as an inter-personal meaning. His words remind us of our obligation to protect the climate security of our children, even at some present-day cost

to ourselves.

The cheapest energy solution — continuing to burn coal - is not a moral solution if it steals our children's climate security from them. Especially when Australia has affordable and technically feasible alternatives to coal.

The Pope's words also cast a different light on those who see the forthcoming Copenhagen meeting as a test whether the world can strike a 'grand global bargain' for sharing and trading the costs of global climate change mitigation and adaptation. Most commentators now correctly forecast that such a bargain is beyond the reach of the Copenhagen negotiators. Some are preparing to pronounce Copenhagen a diplomatic failure, and to go back to business and politics as usual.

But I do not see such an outcome as failure. I see good prospects that Copenhagen will produce a series of loosely linked national commitments to pursue scientifically meaningful national carbon emissions reduction strategies, expressed quantitatively by measuring rods of nations' own choosing, but in ways that will collectively add up to a serious global effort to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions. This may be packaged as a 'global bargain', but in truth it will be more than this.

By abandoning the present market-rationalist preoccupation with striving for international deals in which one nation is not cheated by others into paying more than its 'fair share', the world's leaders may bring other shared values into play: altruism, compassion, and constructive emulation. One sees this already in the different — but mutually supportive — pre-Copenhagen emissions reduction commitments now being announced by the United States, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the EU.

Kevin Rudd's policy framework still strikes discordant notes in this increasing harmony of voices (I think of it as polyphony, rather than a unison choir) now emerging as the likely Copenhagen outcome. Rudd is still locked into increasingly meaningless market trading solutions to carbon emissions (the low-target and heavily compromised ETS, the toothless 20% renewable energy target); a reliance on zero-sum-game rationalist international diplomacy; and recourse to the false dream of coal carbon capture and storage. He clings to this in order to evade the unanswerable moral case for ending burning coal for electricity. Ian McFarlane has now usefully challenged this myth.

In 2010, I hope Kevin Rudd will draw the right moral lessons from the anticipated 'failure' of Copenhagen. I hope that, inspired by the Pope's message, he will get serious about a focussed national emergency strategy to decarbonise Australia's energy systems in the shortest time frame our citizens can afford, and *having in mind our paramount moral obligation to try to defend our children's climate security*; that he will not seek to export Australia's decarbonisation obligations by buying emission rights from poor and badly governed

countries, whose people can least afford to sell them (akin to buying transplant kidneys from living, desperately poor people); that his population and national infrastructure policies will begin to prepare for the certainty of very large numbers of climate change refugees within the next 50 years, whom we will be unable (and morally should not try) to turn away by military deterrence.

In my warm personal response to the Pope's message, I see now that I wrote my latest book on global warming, *Crunch Time*, though its language is secular, with the same intention of evoking feelings of Christian altruism, emulation and stewardship in which I wrote my two earlier books on SIEV X and walking the Camino. Indeed, Chapter 10 of *Walking the Camino* describes my moment of recognition of the global climate and resources crisis, while walking along a busy interstate highway in Spain, crowded with trucks that were passing me every second, blowing me off my feet and filling my lungs with their exhaust gases. I knew then that we cannot go on like this; that we must find radically better ways to safeguard our children.

Rich list needs community sector workers

EDITORIAL

Michael Mullins



The *Australian Financial Review's* annual Salary Review reported last Wednesday on the damage the Global Financial Crisis caused to the pay packets of Australia's best paid executives. CEO remuneration experienced an unprecedented double-digit decline over the past year. Worst hit were Macquarie Group's Nicholas Moore (down an extraordinary 99 per cent), and Rio Tinto's Tom Albanese (down 83 per cent). Bonuses were slashed, and the values of long-term incentive plans were diminished.

It's accepted by many that CEOs and workers are paid according to the importance of the industry or sector that employs them, and to their level of responsibility within it. Best-paid are bankers, mining executives, and others whose job is to ensure increased earnings for shareholders and the national economy. Teachers and welfare workers — who build non-financial wealth — are poorly paid. The clear implication is that educational and human wealth are less important than monetary wealth.

It has been repeatedly suggested that there is an important link between better results in schools and better-paid teachers, and therefore the wages of teachers should be increased substantially.

It follows that the same must be true for those in the welfare and community sector, 87 per cent of whom are women. This has in fact been recognised this month by Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Julia Gillard, who has [agreed](#) with the unions to nationally address the problem of low wages of community sector workers.

Increased remuneration for these people is not about greed. Rather it is offering them the opportunity to afford what similarly talented workers in other sectors take for granted. Among other things, this includes having the number of children they would like, and the option of sending them to a private school.

St Vincent de Paul National CEO John Falzon — who is not on the *Financial Review's* rich list — [stresses](#) the need for appropriate government funding for increased remuneration.

He said: 'Significant portions of the Australian population have been living in a permanent recession, cut off from opportunity and prosperity. It is a sign of a progressive democracy that we would, as a nation, seek to acknowledge those who have been there on the front line with them.'

It is gratifying that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has been critical of the obscenely high remuneration packages of top CEOs such as Telstra's former boss Sol Trujillo. He needs to get

behind the funding of increased wages for the community sector, as part of a recognition of the importance of educational and human wealth to the dignity Australians, and to our international standing.

The sexualisation of boys and girls

PARENTING

Jen Vuk

The models gracing the pages of a recent issue of *Vogue Bambini*, an Italian magazine sold in Australia, couldn't have been more than nine or 10 years old. But in their revealing bikinis and cherry lip gloss they seemed anything but childlike or 'cherubic', as columnist and blogger Mia Freedman writes.



'[The] pre-pubescent girls in this ad ... are portrayed as music video skanks,' the mother of three [writes](#) scathingly at [mamamia.com.au](#).

Freedman quickly explained why her blood boiled so quickly at the sight of the ad. She was in the midst of reading [Getting Real](#): *Challenging the Sexualisation of Girls*, edited by Melinda Tankard Reist. It is a sombre new look at 'how we are eroding what was once the sacred space of childhood with a bombardment of appalling imagery and sexually suggestive ideas'.

The effects of such advertising on girls is well documented. In addition to Tankard Reist's book, recent books on the subject include *The Lolita Effect* by M. Gigi Durham, *So Sexy So Soon* by Diane Levin and Jean Kilbourne and *What's Happening to Our Girls? Too Much, Too Soon — How Our Kids are Overstimulated, Oversold and Oversexed* by Australian researcher Maggie Hamilton.

Hamilton's exhaustive research found that girls as young as nine are worrying whether or not they look sexy or considering having their first Brazilian wax, that at the age of 13 girls were 'sexting' X-rated images of themselves and, by 14, many had already had a staggering number of sexual partners.

As a mother of a toddler son you'd think I'd be breathing a sigh of relief. That by sheer virtue of giving birth to a boy our little family has escaped the advertisers' predatory influences. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although such ads are aimed squarely at girls of all ages (not to mention their cashed-up parents), the advertising net is designed to catch all the pretty children.

'Thong panties, padded bras ... T-shirts that boast 'Chick Magnet' for toddler boys,' write Levin and Kilbourne. 'Hot young female pop stars wearing provocative clothing and dancing suggestively while singing songs with sexual lyrics ... These stars are held up for our young daughters to emulate — and for our sons to see as objects of desire.'

Thankfully, my two-and-a-half-year-old son is yet to fall under the spell of MTV and *Rage*, but in wanting to steer him through the confusion of his own emotions, as well as make sense of the world around him, time is one luxury my husband and I can ill afford, according to the

AMA.

‘Evidence suggests that self-awareness starts to emerge around the age of 18 months, though this remains an area of research and debate. The age or stage of development when a child begins to evaluate their body for acceptability is still being investigated.’

It’s not just the female ideal that’s being peddled, either. ‘Entertainment marketed to boys promotes the ideal of being handsome, muscly and aggressive,’ says the Australian Council on Children and the Media.

Half-naked ingenues and pumped-up bully boys — no wonder we’re seeing an unprecedented number of children with ‘a lack self esteem and confidence’, Dr Joe Tucci, the CEO of the Australian Childhood Foundation warned recently.

Perhaps more worryingly, according to well-known family therapist and parenting author Steve Biddulph, is that this kind of graphic sexuality is often devoid of emotion, attachment, consequences and ‘heart’ — a precarious visual cocktail for an audience with neither the maturity nor the understanding to discriminate.

Case in point. While it’s easy enough to turn a deaf ear to a group of schoolboys no older than nine describing a female classmate as ‘hot’ (a conversation recently overheard by yours truly), it’s not so easy to ignore reports of an alleged sexual assault at a Brisbane primary school on a group of prep-aged girls by boys roughly the same age. Speaking last month on the incident, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg said that in all his 20 years as a child psychologist he’d never come across sexual assault among children so young.

That the road should lead to one of Sydney University’s oldest and most prestigious residential colleges can come as no surprise. The all-male St Paul’s College came under fire earlier this week after it was revealed that past and present residents were involved in setting up a pro-rape website on Facebook.

In speaking on the incident, as well as on the university college system’s perceived ‘culture of ingrained misogyny and an acceptance of rape’, the New South Wales Minister for Women, Linda Burney, hit the bullseye: ‘I am sure that the families are horrified that their sons would have these sorts of attitudes and be involved in this sort of action,’ she said.

Horrified doesn’t cover the half of it.

Do I feel fortunate bringing a boy into this world? Absolutely. I feel blessed being a parent full-stop and revel in each moment of his development. But my role is naturally precarious. While it’s near-impossible — and blatantly craven — to be blind to the pervasive sexualisation, I have no desire to turn into a helicopter parent (after all, one parent’s risk aversion is another’s paranoia).

Thankfully, my husband and I still have a few years up our sleeves before we’re required to

sit our son down for the 'birds and the bees' talk, but that doesn't mean we take our roles as co-custodians of our son's childhood any less seriously. Each day as he grows more aware of the messages around him, we hope to reveal a few home truths of our own; i.e. beauty is subjective, but aggression is not and when a young girl's body is stripped of its innocence then somehow we all lose out.

Silent sojourner

BOOKS

Ted Witham

Sara Maitland: *A Book of Silence*. Granta, 2009. ISBN: 9781847081513. [Online](#)



Silence, according to Sara Maitland, starkly reveals the truth that Christianity is more about emptying oneself and opening the self to God than it is about fulfilling the self.

Maitland feels compelled to live in greater silence, and this book details her journey to learn what silence is through reading about it and experiencing it in different settings. Her reading covers not only traditional Christian accounts of silence, but also the secular accounts of extreme isolation and silence, for example, Richard Byrd alone in a tent in the Arctic winter, or Alexander Selkirk frantically building fences on his desert island.

Maitland's overview of the Christian desert tradition and the traditions of silence in Buddhism is comprehensive, and sometimes wry. Why did the wily Bishop Athanasius put so many words into the mouth of the nearly always silent Anthony in writing his history of the hermit? Answer: because Athanasius needed a mouthpiece for orthodoxy, and he pressed even those who didn't talk into service.

Maitland feels that our culture devalues silence. Our individualism and consumerist need to fulfil ourselves has crowded silence out. So resistance of friends to her plans has itself to be resisted with deeper understanding and the careful explanations in this book.

Maitland worries that we no longer respond to appalling tragedy with silence. We chatter and make busy work when loved ones die. We even applaud in funerals.

She spends six weeks on Skye, a bleak island off the Scottish coast, noting the principal experiences that silence brings: greater intensity of seeing, hearing, smelling; a breaking down of the boundaries of the self; a joy she names 'jouissance'; and hearing sounds and voices.

Maitland then travels to Israel for a desert experience of silence, where she discovers the lassitude and undoing of a sense of time, both of which open her out to an experience of God.

Her third planned experience of silence was in the high country near her childhood home in southwest Scotland. These walks give Sara Maitland a different experience of solitude, because high country below the snow-line is noisy and the scenery sharp and spectacular. All this stimulates clear memories, which she polishes into anecdotes. This experience of silence actually reinforces the sense of ego.

She reflects on these two contrasting experiences: the desert silence helps her to pray; the

mountain solitude helps her to put experience into words. The latter 'silence' is the solitude the artist claims, especially since the Romantic poets gave us the image of the artist as a hero journeying into the self to bring out new creations for the reader or viewer.

Maitland knows she needs these two silences — the desert and the mountain — to fulfil her twin callings to pray and to write. She wonders whether they are compatible with each other. Can she have both, or must she relinquish one or the other?

She buys and rebuilds an isolated shepherd's hut, again in southwest Scotland, to learn how to find both silence and solitude for both prayer and writing.

The contrast Maitland draws between emptying self, the classic Christian goal, and fulfilling the self, the modern Enlightenment project, is provocative.

If silence opens us more fully to the Other then it entails a necessary breaking down of the boundaries of the self. This is one of the problems that Maitland says our modern society has with silence: it fears the disintegration of the self. Maitland argues persuasively that holding on too tightly to the self is madness, because it prevents us from being accessible to God.

Like Maitland, this reviewer feels a vocation to write. Since retirement, and through my deeper immersion in the Franciscan Third Order, I am also rediscovering my vocation to pray. Sara Maitland's book, and the prism of silence she explores, prod me deeper into prayer and more thoughtfully, less frenetically, into writing.

Hillary comes to Pakistan with baggage

THE MEDDLING PRIEST

Frank Brennan

Hillary Clinton came to Pakistan late last month. As US Secretary of State she brought lots of baggage with her.

She worked hard on a three day charm offensive encouraging Pakistanis to engage in a new trusting relationship with the US. She appeared on national television with a panel of four women journalists, answering questions from the all-women audience. She attended town hall meetings and subjected herself to questioning by a university audience described by the local media as 'sceptical (if not borderline hostile)'.



One problem for Obama and Clinton is that Pakistanis cannot trust themselves at the moment, let alone the world superpower which has funded Taliban militants, and then their opponents, depending on the geopolitical reality in Afghanistan.

During the Clinton visit, a car bomb in a bazaar frequented mainly by women shoppers in Peshawar claimed more than 130 lives. The word on the streets was that the terrorists wanted to send a message, not just to the United States but also to the locals, that a woman's place is in the home.

During the last year many girls-schools have been bombed by Taliban members opposed to the education of women. Since Clinton's departure, suicide bombers have been at work in Rawalpindi and Lahore. They have not been targeting foreigners; they have been indiscriminately attacking their own.

All schools in Pakistan are now required to have an armed guard, a metal detector and a security camera. The government has recommended that pre-school for children under five be dropped for security reasons. All over Lahore, school fences are being raised to a minimum of 9 feet in solid brick.

Last Sunday I attended a church service presided over by the Archbishop of Lahore, Lawrence Saldanha. There were armed guards at the entrance to the church, plus nine plain-clothes police placed in the congregation.

Pakistanis do not know who to trust at this time. Christians, who are less than two per cent of the population, have cause to be on edge, for their fears are compounded by ongoing discrimination and a blasphemy law which has had catastrophic consequences.

With coups and increasing Muslim fundamentalism, Pakistan has strayed long past the declaration of its founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah who proclaimed in 1947, 'You may

belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the state.’ The notorious blasphemy law in this Islamic state makes any derogatory remark about the Prophet, even indirectly or by innuendo, punishable by death.

This law has given licence to Pakistanis seeking revenge against each other in the name of religion. On 16 September one young man arrested for blasphemy was killed in police custody. His family had to flee their home and the police claimed that he committed suicide in the cells.

Prior to Clinton’s arrival the Pakistan Christian Action Forum representing all major Christian Churches in Pakistan issued a statement calling for immediate repeal of the blasphemy law:

‘Several incidents in the current year have perturbed the nation where the minority communities were victimised under the false accusation of having desecrated the Holy Quran. Such acts of violence have grown sharply under the pretext of the Blasphemy Law which is blatantly abused to cause harassment and marginalisation of religious minorities, especially the Christians.’

Christians are still terrified by the events of August 2009 when some Muslims were protesting against the alleged sacrilege of the Quran by an illiterate Christian man in the village Korian in the Punjab. About 3000 Muslims went on a rampage through the township of Gojra 7 km away. They destroyed the homes of 140 Christian families. Seven people were burnt alive and another two died later.

Archbishop Saldanha told me, ‘The blasphemy law is the root cause of our problems. It is a law that can be misused at any time. If you are a good Muslim, you cannot be seen to oppose this law.’

Anecdotally one hears stories of the blasphemy law being invoked in all manner of petty feuds and disagreements. Recently a Christian who had upset a Muslim in a gambling game found himself subject to a blasphemy complaint. A group called Minorities Concern of Pakistan have a newsletter which reported in September an interview with some of the Gojra Christians. One man told them, ‘They killed us because we are Christians and we are poor. They were calling us dogs and American agents.’

Most Pakistanis are very wary about the United States, and not just because the US Administration has chopped and changed its allegiances to militant groups in Pakistan. Muslim Pakistanis especially are very mistrustful of those who sponsored the Iraq War and who committed the atrocities at Abu Ghraib.

If things start to improve in Pakistan, greater cooperation between the United States, the civilian government and the Pakistani military may ensure that the Taliban militants and al Qaeda are more contained. But military hardware alone is not going to be the answer.

While some of the best schools in the country have been told they are on hit lists, and while ordinary schools have to close periodically and then expend precious resources on armed guards and security devices, there was a report during the week of Hillary Clinton's visit that enrolments in madressahs had increased by 40 per cent in the last academic year. Graduates of madressahs do not tend to have much sympathy for those campaigning against blasphemy laws. They know nothing of Jinnah's original vision for Pakistan.

This past weekend the Jesuit school in Lahore celebrated its silver jubilee. Inside the school walls and under the watchful eye of the armed guard and security personnel, Christian and Muslim children learn and play together, daily espousing the school motto, 'Unity and Integrity'.

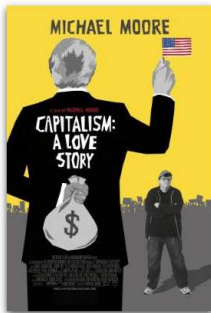
Ordinary Pakistanis are crying out for both. But who do you trust once you walk outside the school gate?

The heroes and villains of Michael Moore's world

FILMS

Tim Kroenert

***Capitalism: A Love Story* (M). Running time: 127 minutes. Director: Michael Moore.**



It's a misnomer to describe Michael Moore as a documentary filmmaker. He makes documentaries only in the sense that *Today Tonight* does investigative journalism. His movies are entertaining first, with information and persuasion a distant second. Certainly they are unlikely to sway anyone who doesn't already agree with his general point.

That's not to say he doesn't land a few well-deserved kicks while he's at it. In his latest offering *Capitalism: A Love Story*, the recipient of Moore's sneakered toe is the corrupt philosophy that has underpinned, particularly, America's finance sector. The love of money is the root of evil, and following the collapse of the global economy under a weight of greed and unregulated markets, Moore is determined to chase the rats out of the rubble.

Moore's world is one of heroes and villains. George W. Bush is a villain. So is Hank Paulson, the former head of Goldman Sachs who, as United States Treasury Secretary, helped orchestrate the US economic bailout. Barack Obama, on the other hand, is a hero: yet to reach his full potential, but whose ability to inspire people to hope and to work towards a better world is an achievement in itself.

All the characters in *Capitalism* fall into similar categories. Among his villains are the real estate agent and self-proclaimed bottom feeder (company name: Condo Vultures) whose ignoble strategy is to target foreclosed homes, and the two Pennsylvania judges who accepted kickbacks for pouring kids into a for-profit juvenile detention centre.

Contrast them with the Michigan sheriff who refused to evict people from their foreclosed homes. Or the Chicago factory workers who lost their jobs in the midst of the economic crisis: refusing to be sent away empty-handed, they staged a good old sit-down protest and managed to secure the entitlements that were owed to them.

These are Moore's heroes. He advocates such grass roots action, and the rejection of apathy, as the only way to get the wealthy and powerful minority to take notice of the plight of the masses ('The peasants are coming!'). His rhetoric is profound, and stirring. And of course he stages a few of his own stunts to hammer the point home.

Some of the stunts miss their mark. In one, Moore attempts citizen's arrests of some of Wall Street's guiltier parties. Of course, he is not permitted into their buildings. So rather than the vicarious satisfaction of seeing these men named and shamed on camera, we get an amusing

montage of Moore smarting off to po-faced security guards.

When Moore's gags do come off, the result is hilarious, and the point well made. His lampooning of politicians from the religious right, and their feeble (in light of the trauma caused by the GFC) claims that capitalism and Christianity are compatible, is a highlight. Moore, a Christian, seems outraged by their misappropriation of his faith. He uses over-dubbed scenes from a film about the life of Christ to take the mickey:

Rich Young Man: 'Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?'

Jesus: 'Pursue the profit motive.'

And I dare the staunchest Moore sceptic not to crack a smile as Moore coaxes one Wall Street analyst to stumble his way through a 'simple' explanation of ludicrously complex stock market derivatives.

All of Moore's filmic theses have their imperfections, that leave him open to rebuke from the right, and that cause those on the left to cringe — he is, after all, seen as their most prominent spokesperson. Notably, he banks on inference, rather than establishing causal links. That plane crash in Buffalo, for example, wasn't *necessarily* due to the pilots being underpaid, although Moore is happy for the circumstantial evidence to stand.

And one can only wonder why Moore chose to employ the comedic character actor Wallace Shawn as his expert to explain the concept of free enterprise. Shawn is best known for his portrayal of the criminal genius Vizzini in *The Princess Bride*. So what if he studied economics at Oxford? He still ended up drinking the poisoned wine.

It is ironic that the maker of a film decrying capitalism has himself done very well out of the capitalist system. Moore doesn't answer this irony, although his commitment to the poor might be answer enough. Fans will know that his empathy has its roots in his working class childhood in Flint, Michigan, a town that was devastated by the closure of the GM plant there. This early taste of social injustice is the red thread that runs through all his films.

Moore describes himself as a patriot, and at the end of *Capitalism*, he declares: 'I refuse to live in a country like this, and I'm not leaving.' With these words he reminds us that he does what he does not just to provoke a reaction, but to provoke action that can bring about change. That, at least, is to be admired.

Jesuit martyrs bolster El Salvador's Left

HISTORY

Jeremy Tarbox

Earlier this year, I volunteered as an Observer in El Salvador's [Presidential Election](#). For the first time in the country's history there was a democratic transition of power: Mauricio Funes, a former journalist, was elected with 51.27 per cent of the vote.



He represents the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the political party of the former guerrilla forces in the civil war, and has dedicated his presidency to the life of Monseñor Oscar Romero, who was assassinated in 1980 for speaking out against the repression and human rights abuses that occurred in the lead-up to the war.

The election took place on 15 March, and the 29th Anniversary of Romero's death occurred on 24 March. That day was charged with symbolism for those who had hoped, prayed and struggled for so long for an improvement in the conditions of the poor majority of the country.

I went to the University of Central America (UCA), *Jose Simeon Cañas*, on that day. It is named after a man who campaigned to end slavery, but is better known for the events of 16 November 1989, when six Jesuit priests and two others were assassinated there.



Five days before their deaths, on 11 November 1989, the FMLN had commenced their final offensive against the military. In response, the top military brass decided to make an example of the UCA Jesuits, who had been some of the strongest voices promoting social justice and human rights in the country.

I thought I had a good understanding of El Salvador's recent history, but my insight was deepened by the people I was living with at the time.

One was a former Salvadoran Catholic priest who had been kidnapped and tortured by the military. The other was a Canadian Lutheran Minister who was imprisoned and accused of the murder of the Jesuits, before being expelled by a government desperate to tell any story except for the reality: that the UCA Martyrs were assassinated by an elite military unit. Under cover of darkness, they had broken into the Jesuits' living quarters, rounded them up and led them outside for execution. They then burnt the neighbouring centre that commemorated Romero's life.

In a cruel twist of fate, the Jesuits' cook had stayed over that night with her 15 year old daughter for the first time: her husband was out of town, and they considered it safer than home. They were terribly wrong.

Ignacio Ellacuria, Ignacio Martin-Baro, Segundo Montes, Arnando Lopez, Joaquin Lopez y Lopez and Juan Ramon Moreno are the Jesuit priests who died that day, along with Julia Elba Ramos, and her daughter Cecilia Ramos.

They are not forgotten. The restored Oscar Romero Centre at the UCA now tells their stories as well. As part of their community service, UCA students explain the lives and struggles of the Martyrs to visitors. Out the back is a commemorative rose garden: a beautiful and peaceful spot today, in contrast to the photos displayed inside, which graphically depict the discovery of the bodies in that same location 20 years ago.



Unfortunately the boundary wall to the garden is topped by razor wire, like almost every wall in the country — the most visible signs of the immense social problems and security concerns that still plague the country.

Beside the Centre is the Chapel. The Martyrs lie in the crypt there, and a painting of them hangs on the opposite wall. The Chapel is a mixture of the hope and despair from El Salvador's history. On the back wall, the Stations of the Cross are represented by sketches of tortured and mutilated bodies found dumped on the streets during the years of the civil war. Opposing this, the altar is filled with the vivid colours of the paintings of Fernando Llorca, El Salvador's most famous artist. He paints hope, with new growth flowing from the hands of Romero.

Jon Sobrino, who was away on that fateful day in 1989, celebrated Mass on 24 March. He had Romero's face stitched on his stole — 29 years later, Romero was still looking out at his congregation.

On 16 November the Chapel will be filled again, like it has been for each of the past 20 years, although this time will be different. In death the UCA Martyrs were made an example of, because they embodied the promotion of social justice and human rights for which the FMLN were fighting. This time, the example of their lives will join with Romero's in shining a light for this first democratically elected FMLN government.

What I learned from El Salvador's Jesuit martyrs

HISTORY

Andrew Hamilton



On the day that six Jesuits — Ignacio Ellacuria, Ignacio Martin-Baro, Segundo Montes, Arnando Lopez, Joaquin Lopez y Lopez and Juan Ramon Moreno — together with the community cook and her daughter, Julia Elba Ramos and Cecilia Ramos, were murdered in El Salvador, I was at Cha Choeng Sau outside Bangkok, at the Jesuit Refugee Service meeting held there.

It was 16 November 1989. We had heard from JRS workers of the suffering and resilience of refugees around Asia. We now looked forward to hear from Jon Sobrino, the El Salvador Jesuit theologian, who had been speaking at another meeting in Bangkok. But at breakfast we heard the dreadful news.

That evening Jon Sobrino did join us for the Eucharist, still in shock. Next morning he read the account in the *Bangkok Post*. A photograph showed one of the dead Jesuits in a room. Jon looked at the photo, and said slowly, 'That's my typewriter: that's my Bible. That is my room.'

A Jesuit visiting from another community had spent the evening and died in Jon's room.

Two years later I spent six months in El Salvador. I wanted to understand Latin American theology and to visit the communities of refugees who had returned from camps in Panama, Honduras and Nicaragua. In the theological library where I worked there were still bullet marks in the walls from the night of the murder. In many communities there were other relics — the stole worn by Fr Martin Baro, and so on.

The Jesuits were still bearing the weight of their loss. They were determined not to allow the deaths to affect their commitments, and were intensely focused. One wit had remarked, 'In 1989 the Salvadorean Army martyred the six Jesuits; in 1990 the six Jesuits martyred the rest of the Province.'

Although I had intended my stay to be a gesture of solidarity with the Jesuits in El Salvador, I came to realise that guests with less than fluent Spanish must have been more of a burden than an encouragement. The Jesuits in El Salvador lived under great pressure, constantly standing up to a government that had turned its arms against its little people, and following Jesus in the midst of a civil war.

Those who were killed were good people, good Jesuits. They were not picture book saints, just ordinary martyrs. I was heartened to hear that one died swearing at the soldiers who had just broken in the door.

It was in the campesino communities that I began to understand the six Jesuits and the theology evolving in El Salvador and other parts of Latin America. The figures of Julia Elba and Cecilia Marisela Ramos, the community cook and her daughter, then came into sharp focus. With that came some understanding.

These communities had been forced to leave the mountainous parts of El Salvador as the army conducted its counterinsurgency campaign. This consisted of sweeping through villages and killing indiscriminately, and more systematically murdering catechists. In this way they hoped to deprive the guerrillas of a population where they could hide and to intimidate its leadership.

The families, all poor, fled and gathered in camps across the border. There they centred their lives around reflection on the Gospels, eventually returning to settle on deserted land. They lived precariously, protected to some extent by foreign volunteers who accompanied them.

In the communities I was given simple tasks where I could not do too much damage. In one community that was preparing to celebrate its 10th anniversary, apart from joining the children in whitewashing the school for the occasion, I was asked to gather the names of their martyrs to remember in the Eucharist.

It was deeply moving. The list grew and grew as each family remembered parents, sons and daughters, many of whom had been catechists. One lady offered the names of her seven sons, describing each, and how he had been killed. When she came to the last, Juan, she wept gently. 'I had such hope in him,' she said.

Harvesting the names made me think of Julia and Cecilia. The Jesuits had died because they refused to regard the poor of El Salvador as expendable, and would not allow those murdered to lie forgotten. They kept memories and hopes alive. Julia and Cecilia had thought they would be safer staying the night in the Jesuit house than at home. But the Jesuits had made themselves unsafe by joining themselves to the expendable poor like Julia and Cecilia.

So I began to see the six Jesuits as just some of thousands who had died, represented by the faces of the cook and the daughter.

The theology done in El Salvador, too, was about listening to the Gospel through the lives and the simple words of the poor, and seeking larger, connected words in which to speak of it. It made sense in the communities that I visited. The learned criticism of it that I had read made no sense, just as the political analysis of the threat posed by the poor of El Salvador made no sense. It all began and ended in the wrong place.

The message I learned from Julia and Cecilia and the six Jesuits who died, and from the theology that honoured their faith, is that in the Kingdom of God the first will be last, and the last will be first. If we want to follow Jesus we must be simple among those normally thought

of last, like Julia and Cecilia, and so like Ignacio Ellacuria, Ignacio Martin-Baro, Segundo Montes, Arnando Lopez, Joaquin Lopez y Lopez and Juan Ramon Moreno.

Stars point to brighter future for Forgotten Australians

COMMUNITY

John Honner

I was mowing the lawn last Saturday morning. A strange car pulled up: 'There's a building in Berry that's up for an international prize in architecture. Where is it?'

I had no idea. My neighbour, who knows everything there is to know about Berry, had no idea.



After lunch I googled that a new hall at the Berry Sports and Recreation Centre, designed by [Allen Jack + Cottier](#) of Chippendale in Sydney, had been nominated for a prize in the sport category at the world architecture festival in Barcelona in November. It was one of five finalists, up against the best sports stadiums in the world, including the \$200 million redevelopment of Wimbledon and the \$130 million New York Jets NFL training complex.

Days later, I found that it had won first prize. It cost a little over a million dollars to build. This is a great, a splendid, a wonderful achievement.

I had seen something of the hall being built. It's on the other side of the river, more in the country than in the town, tucked away in a corner of the Moeyan Hill. Long trucks loaded with prefabricated concrete walls, riddled with irregular holes like Swiss cheese, trundled past our house. I thought they were erecting climbing walls for would-be mountaineers with moderate expectations.

Because the driveway into the Sport-Rec Centre prohibits access to the general public, I had no idea what the building was like inside.

But there is one aspect of the new structure that takes my fancy. The nights in Berry are crystal clear and full of stars. The new building, from a distance and when its lights are on at night, looks like a piece of sky has fallen to the earth: in the blackness of the corner of the hillside a wall of stars has suddenly appeared.

There is a not-so-starry back-story that puts these stars in context. Once upon a time, from 1934 to 1977, the Sport-Rec Centre had been the Berry Boys Home, a place for young men who had been made wards of the state.

And this year, indeed this very month, national and state governments in Australia are making formal apologies to those 500,000 Australians who, because their own families were unable to care for them — usually through no fault of their own — were made wards of the state and placed in orphanages, children's homes, and foster care.

Many of these Forgotten Australians suffered emotional and physical and sexual abuse.

Many struggled to find their identity and to develop trusting relationships.

Starry nights. Lonely nights. I remember hearing of a young boy's first nights in an orphanage. He was nine or ten years old. The orphanage was near the South Melbourne Town Hall and the bells in the clock tower would ring out every hour all through the night. Many years later, now an older man, he remembered how he lay awake all night, every night, listening for the bells to ring, counting the hours until dawn.

At the Berry Boys Home, I can imagine the young men looking out the windows at night, watching the stars turn around the sky, defeated by the mystery of their fate, waiting for the sounds of the birds stirring and the cattle waking, 'Like the watchman waits for the dawn'.

Starry, starry night. A healing service for the Forgotten Australians was held in Sydney in September. There wasn't a lot on offer for a memorial, but eventually an agreement was reached with the Botanic Gardens. The people gathered there, however, brought tears and courage and hope.

It's hard to renew a life. It's easier to give new life to old buildings. The secret to both is to leave room for the stars to shine in. And shine out.

What hope does

POETRY

Kevin Gillam

half past believe

(i)

the exhibits of dreams sit
on the mantelpiece
next to the dead clock stuck on
half past believe and
one dried thorny devil with
permanent grin and
as you sleep the sleep of the
lonely clock hands bleed
and thorny devil winks and
pops the cork in the
bottle and with the blue-tac tongue
and absence of lips
eats the note and says she pre-
fers running writing to print

(ii)

you have interest only
in lingering in
that space between wake and sleep,
in licking spoonfuls
of treacle-like fall as the
anaesthetist says
count backwards, climbing that swing

and kicking out and
kicking in and kicking out
'til unhinged at the
tip of arc where gravity
is yet to be etched
by Einstein who winks and asks
'the weight of disbelieving?'

(iii)

but when the sea lets go of
you, when the scent of
brine and weed no longer owns
you, yes, then you rest,
forgotten beside a conch,
the pizzicatti
of rain on your skin, and wind
salves your fret, tides lick
your song as I crawl from the
conch and you blurt 'be
hides inside believe' and then
scrunch up the left side
of your face and I say 'here,
your first lesson in winking ...'

hopes

hope sits dolloped on hori-
zon. hope is found bleeding from
elbows. hope waits for sun on
the eyelids. hope is one let-

ter from open. hope glinting
through opaque stained glass. hope is
satin, is gloss finished. hope
flies above, ahead, beyond.
hope winks at you from shoppe win-
dow. hope beds with cocoons and
compasses. hope is one let-
ter from poem. hope orders
many, pecks at few. hope, and
I have this vision of doves

Sexy vegetarianism could save the world

ENVIRONMENT

Sarah McKenzie



Earlier this year, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) announced their list of the [sexiest vegetarians](#) for 2009. Portia de Rossi, Russell Brand, Christie Brinkley and Orlando Jones were among those nominated, and are all undeniably sexy.

So why is it that when most people think of vegetarians, it conjures up images of shapeless hemp pants, brown turtleneck jumpers and long unkempt toenails? Why is vegetarianism still so unfashionable?

We live in a time when most of us want to be (or at least want to appear to be) environmentally conscious. Forget to take your reusable shopping bags to the supermarket, and you risk being spat upon by your fellow shoppers. Install some solar panels and buy a Toyota Prius, and most people expect to find their Australian of the Year nomination in the post soon. When people buy large, flashy and preferably expensive environmentally friendly products it is seen as a wonderful act of benevolence, a gift to the world.

Tell people that you are vegetarian (probably the single most potent thing you can personally do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption) and you are somehow seen as antagonistic and self-centred.

You'd think vegetarians had made a deeply selfish decision purely to sabotage dinner parties. 'Well what *do* you eat?' the host will ask, exasperated. When surely we should be getting a pat on the back, we vegetarians are more likely to encounter defensiveness, endless 'conversations' demanding we justify our beliefs, and sometimes even palpable hostility.

In answer to your questions: no, I don't think we have a duty to our ancestors to eat meat; no, I don't hanker for a nice juicy steak; no, carrots don't have feelings too. I can't help thinking many of you protest too much.

But who or what is to blame for vegetarianism's image problem?

Partly we have to blame the celebrity chef, food porn, gourmet-at-home culture. High-end restaurants, prime time TV and over-priced celebrity chef cookbooks celebrate meat as the central ingredient in any successful meal. Vegetables are mere bit players.

And it seems the more icky the meat, the better. Nothing says sophistication like a bowl of goose intestines. And if veal and suckling pig aren't young and succulent enough for you, how about duck embryo still in the egg?

It seems that food preparation is no longer about sustenance or even tastiness. Instead it has

become a challenge — and the most challenging of ingredients is surely meat. If you get the wrong cut, fail to slow roast it for the requisite nine hours or, God forbid, forget the thyme sprig garnish, all you'll have is a plate of inedible gristle. Get it right and you might have your husband tipping his head back, scratching his chin thoughtfully and delivering you a cheeky smirk of approval, Matt Preston-style.

Vegetables, on the other hand, are consistent, easy to cook and inexpensive. Where's the fun in that?

But perhaps vegetarianism has failed to win people over because of the widely-held assumption that it requires so much personal sacrifice. If the kind of sacrifices I have made include lowering my risk of getting cancer and reducing my grocery bill, then I'll take the chickpeas please.

As a bonus, I am saving thousands of animals from a life and death of suffering, and helping the health of the planet. In a 2006 UN Food and Agriculture Organisation paper, it was [reported](#) that farming for meat generates 18 per cent of the Earth's greenhouse gas emissions, whereas all the cars, trucks, planes, trains and boats of the world combined account for a mere 13 per cent. How many Priuses will you need to buy to counter that one?

Then there is a prevailing view that vegetarians are somehow morally superior. It is an uncomfortable admission for someone who has always been apologetic about their eating habits, but maybe the truth is that we actually are morally superior. What else can you call it when carnivores put their own laziness ('But it's so easy to just cook a piece of meat and three veg') and selfishness ('But I really like the taste of meat') above the needs of the planet and all its inhabitants — animal and human.

So perhaps us vegetarians are to blame for our own image problem. Sexiness shouldn't be the issue — after all, the meat industry has Sam Kekovich spruiking its wares while we have Sadie Frost. Maybe vegetarians have been too polite, too careful not to offend carnivores. In the current climate change climate, maybe we should be wearing our ethical and environmental credentials loudly and proudly to shame those who still eat meat?

Still, I can't help thinking that it wouldn't hurt to throw out those turtleneck jumpers and Jesus sandals if we really want to win people over to our cause.

Isabel's lessons in humanity

EDITORIAL

Michael Mullins

Yesterday Retired General Peter Cosgrove delivered the first of this year's [Boyer Lectures](#) for the ABC. The choice of Cosgrove was no doubt a tribute to his success at leading the INTERFET peacekeeping force in East Timor ten years ago. It was a fraught moment when nobody was sure how, or indeed whether, the country would be able to rebuild itself after the violent and destructive end to the 25 years of Indonesian occupation. Skillful leadership was required, and Cosgrove is credited with having delivered.



[Interviewed](#) by Geraldine Doogue on Friday, he said that you win a military struggle when you achieve a state of affairs that permits you to leave the locals to take care of the problems that remain. His message is that local citizens with strong leadership skills are critical to fragile nations maintaining security and fostering development.

He also said in the interview that women 'make the most magnificent leaders. They do it in a different style, they find a way of success that is less bull at a gate.'

Such a woman is Dr Isabel Guterres. She came to Australia as a young refugee from East Timor in the early '80s. She obtained health care qualifications and leadership skills before returning to East Timor in 1999 to work with local teams to assist in the development of East Timorese nationhood. Recently the Australian Catholic University [awarded](#) her its highest honour, Doctor of the University, in recognition of her lifetime commitment to justice and service, and especially to refugees.

On receiving the honour, she [said](#) that she derived her humanitarian values from her parents and teachers, as well as the refugee workers who gave her food, shelter and education in Thailand. 'I was just a name and a face, but I was treated like one of them.'

Of the religious and other health and welfare professionals she mixed with in Australia, she said: 'The dedication given to their work inspired me to bring my own talents to those who struggle for justice and for a decent quality of life. Working as a nurse at different types of hospitals ... I learnt in these contexts the spirit of true humanitarian work.'

It is significant that she received the kind of welcome in Australia that gave her a particular set of skills and values that motivated her to return to her homeland to make an important contribution to its rebuilding. Had she been treated differently in Thailand and Australia, she may have opted for a life of greater material wellbeing in Australia. Isabel's story is a lesson in the value of treating refugees with humanity.

