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Christians Facing Sin

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Woman (Hebrew *ishah*). Woman, with man, was made in the image of God. 'Male and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27).

welcome...

Sin. This powerful word evokes a plethora of differing images in people's minds. Judgment, fear, love, sacrifice, forgiveness, death, life ...

Yet an even more powerful word is God's Word Jesus, who dealt with sin, once for all when he died on the cross, rose again and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

In the Harry Potter series, the evil character, Voldemort, is rarely spoken of by name. Rather, most refer to him as 'he who must not be named'. In the Christian literary world, we are often more comfortable when sin is referred to in a similar way. 'That which must not be named'! Jesus challenges us to name our sin, repent and turn to him for forgiveness and new life. Although I live in certain hope of a new heaven and earth where sin will be no more, presently, I still struggle with sin and I suspect I am not the only one!

This edition challenges us to name and acknowledge our sins while also encouraging us to confess and celebrate living as a new creation in Christ. These articles reminded me that despite the difficulty involved in confession, repentance and living to the glory of God, it is in fact God who makes all this possible. I pray that, like me, you too might find the articles in this edition not only confronting but also comforting and encouraging!

Maria Brand-Starkey

PS ishah would love to hear from you! We welcome letters, feedback, contributions, prayer and financial support!

ISSUES TO COME...

ISSUE 24:
Neither Poverty
Nor Riches

ISSUE 25:
Picture This:
Christians
and the Arts

our aims

1. To value the Bible as God's inspired Word to us and the ultimate authority on matters of faith and practice, through thinking hard about how the Bible applies to our everyday lives.
2. To encourage women to grow in godliness and maturity in Christ.
3. To equip Christian women to be creative, confident and effective in communicating the gospel.
4. To give women in a variety of roles and situations the forum to think about contemporary issues from a framework of Biblical theology and to articulate their thinking in a manner that stimulates themselves and others to live lives that are more faithful to God's Word.

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Centre: Prickly Pear photo courtesy PDPPhoto.org

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alias: sin

BY BARBARA DEUTSCHMANN

In the post-modern laundering of our language, some words are all but washed out and remain only with Christians. The word 'sin' is one of them. If there is one word which does not fit with the spirit of the age, then 'sin' is it. Redolent with the odour of censure and hypocrisy, the word just does not seem to fit within our conversations about human misbehaviour. 'That is inappropriate,' we say when faced with behaviour that deserves condemnation.

But I want to keep the word 'sin'. I want to argue a case to retain the distinctive truths it holds in its three small letters. Like all words retained in the Christian vocabulary, it tells a truth about our world and about ourselves which we lose to our cost. The word reminds us that we are affected by more than the limitations of creatureliness. There is something at work in the world which is more than just human weakness and finiteness. Our lives are affected by something else, which we call 'sin'. So what is sin, and where did it come from?

► A Man, a Woman and a Choice

It is a curious thing that when the Bible wants to explain the perversity of the world, it tells a story. Where I might want to talk in bold sweeps of rhetoric about global evil and corruption, the Bible begins with a story about a man, a woman and a choice (Genesis 2–3).

Sin begins in the quiet processes of thought and reflection prompted by a question, and emerges in a turning point in the relationship between two people and God: 'Did God really say...?' The crafty serpent approaches the woman (who had not heard the word directly from God; the man had) and plants a question (Genesis 3:1). She repeats what she has heard with a gloss about not even touching the fruit. The serpent then plants a doubt and encourages the woman to enter a discussion about God's motives. When her doubts match what she feels about the fruit ('saw ... that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye', 3:6) she gives in. When Adam fails to

remind her of what God said and joins her in this process, the damage is done. They eat and death enters the world.

This simple story is not so much about failure to obey one law, as about failure to live within the bounded freedom of God. All the trees but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were available to the man and woman (2:16–17). The one restriction was not an arbitrary test but one that required them to live within the limits of their creatureliness, to know the difference between themselves and their creator.

Their sin arose and was made possible by their giftedness. The very qualities which God had given them, their freedom, their sensuality, their intellect, are the ones which made the choice possible and rebellion attractive.

The story shows, too, how sin occurs in human groups. Doubt may rise in one person's mind but actions usually need the encouragement of others. People, especially couples, can collude against God. Ananias and Sapphira, for example, show the process at work in the early church (Acts 5).

Here then in the Genesis story is all we need to know about sin. The rest of the Bible is an elaboration of humankind's struggle to live within the bounded freedom of God and God's gracious response.

► Cooperating in Corporate Sin

So far, so good. Sin is conceived in the human heart and confirmed in cooperation with another. It is easy to recognise its results in damaged people and broken relationships. But it does not stop here. Sin goes on to infect organisations, corporations, governments and multilateral alliances. James Hardie, while withholding information from shareholders and employees, set up an underfunded compensation foundation for its asbestos-affected employees and customers. Multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund demanded inappropriate

debt repayments which subsequently deprived citizens of poor countries of basic services.

While we may readily identify the sin of organisations and governments, we little recognise our collusion. The morning coffee we enjoy which we bought through the unfair international trading practices, our car which contributes to global warming which then impacts especially on poor countries, and our superannuation investments which can resource the bad practices of corporations, may all testify against us. We are inextricably involved in sinful practices. While sin is conceived in individual thoughts and inclinations, it takes shape in corporate practices in which we are all enmeshed. Couples, partnerships, families, organisations and societies all develop behaviours which collude against God.

Our excessively individualised idea of salvation can help little with this dilemma. While we readily identify Christ's redemptive work for individual (read: private) sin, we fail to see how his work applies corporately. The place to begin is to recover a larger picture of God's redemptive work in the world.

► Consequences of Corporate Sin

'As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"' So begins a long, drawn-out account of Jesus' healing of a man. The length and the context in John's gospel alerts us that something important is being disclosed in the story (John 9:1–41). To feel the weight of it, we can substitute people from our world: 'Rabbi, who sinned, this child or his parents, that he was born HIV positive?' or 'Rabbi, who sinned, this indigenous girl or her parents that she was born malnourished?' Jesus' disciples saw the link between sin and illness but did not see the wider forces at work producing the condition. It would take pages to unravel the forces that produce HIV positive or malnourished babies. Limited access to information and education, powerlessness, gender bias

and, above all, poverty, all play their part. There is certainly sin there but it is not a simple equation between behaviour and consequence. ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no-one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”’ Jesus draws their attention to the moment in time which was playing out before them in which God’s glory would be revealed. In the healings, especially performed on the Sabbath, Jesus was signalling release from bondage, that the long-awaited jubilee was breaking in. Jesus’ clash with the Pharisees in this story (v.13–34) and elsewhere was not just about different definitions of purity but about their refusal to see the ‘times’ as the Kingdom of God being revealed. For Jesus, the real sin was not that sin which produced blindness in the man but that sin which failed to see that in his (Jesus’) coming, the Kingdom had arrived: ‘If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains’ (v.41).

Human sin is a lot more devastating than the kind of things we confess in our quiet times. Let’s take our malnourished indigenous girl example. It is undeniable that non-indigenous Australians have

benefited from the appropriation of land from traditional owners. The agricultural and mineral wealth which has fuelled our economy was extracted from land appropriated in unjust ways. The marginalisation of indigenous Australians demonstrated in poverty, ill-health, lack of education and the signs of a dispirited and broken community, has occurred while most of us have had the vote and voice to influence change.

Does this appear in our quiet times? Probably not, for most of us. The point is that Jesus’ life and death was for something more than my recognised, individual sins. If his death showed that all sin is dealt with, and that the powers are defeated then we have more to celebrate than we can conceive. Did Jesus die for sins? Absolutely: mine, yours and all the capital-letter Sin which worked malevolently to produce the man born blind, the boy born HIV positive and girl born malnourished. But more than this, his death brought the beginnings of a new community created to model for the world what the world is to become. That is why the gospel is such good news and not just good advice.

► Dealing with Corporate Sin

How do we begin to recover this corporate dimension to our faith?

We begin where we always begin, with the gathered worship where we confess our sins together. This group confession is not just a bunch of individuals confessing private sins in parallel but us all confessing the corporate sins of our life together. Sin is not just about disobeying some arbitrary laws but about missing the mark, failing to be the glorious humanity that God’s work allows us to be. When we confess together, we admit that we are not yet the community that God wants us to be.

If there is anything that marks us out as Christians, it is this. It is not our purity, not our breast-beating over sins. It is in the sustaining rhythm created by the naming of sin, by repentance and by the appropriation of our new status in Christ, that God’s people move on in pilgrimage.

■ *Barbara works with TEAR Australia, worships at St Mark’s Spotswood and volunteers with Christians for Biblical Equality and the Centre for Applied Christian Ethics. She also has extensive experience with Sin.*

One Constructive Way to Deal With Corporate Sin

BY AMANDA COVERDALE (A MEMBER OF PEOPLE FOR FAIR TRADE)

Do you feel overwhelmed by the problems created by our participation in organisations that inevitably commit corporate sin?

Do you feel that politicians all over the world make decisions to benefit their citizens and ignore those living in poor countries?

One thing you can do is consider buying your goods in such a way that everyone along the production chain gets a fair price and are good stewards of the creation. These principles are relevant for vegetable growers and artisans in Australia.

The term “Fair Trade” has come to be used for trade like this with producers in poor countries.

Consider buying from not-for-profit groups who are members of the International Fair Trade Organisation (IFAT) such as Oxfam Australia and People For Fair Trade.

In addition, keep a look out for products with FLO labels certified by the Fair Trade Labelling Organisations International. They are available from IFAT groups, specialist shops and even your local supermarket.

Want more information and a detailed explanation of fair trade?

► Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand
www.fta.org.au

► People For Fair Trade
www.fairtrade.asn.au

► Oxfam Australia
www.oxfam.org.au

► Macro Wholefoods Market
www.macrowholefoods.com.au

They have four stores in New South Wales and four stores in Victoria. Some of their products carry fair trade labels and they sell organic food.

The Hardest Word

BY EMMA BAILLIE

It seems appropriate to begin this article by making a confession—I am hopeless at confessing. A wise man (C.S. Lewis) once said on the subject of giving spiritual advice to others that ‘if one begins with the sin that has been one’s own chief problem over the past week, it is surprising how often the arrow hits home’. So where to begin?

Confession, as used in the Bible, seems to mean simply to acknowledge the truth. We are instructed both to confess our sins (eg: James 5:16) and to confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9). But when we hear the word ‘confession’ the first thing that usually comes to mind is an acknowledgement of sin—and not just a private acknowledgement to ourselves, but to God or another person.

Acknowledging our sins is hard enough. Who wants to hear the news that they’re not perfect after all? There is nothing so difficult to see as the sin you’re currently in the middle of, and if there’s one thing we humans are good at, it’s ignoring inconvenient facts that make us look bad. Among non-believers, it seems one of the commonest complaints about the Christian concepts of grace and forgiveness is that it is all too easy—God will forgive even a terrorist or a mass murderer if they only say they’re sorry. But there’s nothing ‘only’ about acknowledging your own wrongdoing. As Elton John’s song says, ‘sorry’ really does seem to be the hardest word.

After the initial hard step of acknowledging sinfulness, I at least find the next step, confessing to God, relatively easy. With God, there is no plausible deniability. There is no room for the strategy of ‘let’s pretend this never happened’. He already knows. Confession to another person, however, is a hundred times harder. God has promised to forgive us: ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness’ (1 John 1:9). Other people have given us no such assurance. When we confess our wrongdoing we run the risk of being shunned, mocked and held to account for our misdeeds for as long as the person we confess to remembers them.

In Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* there is a scene where the heroine receives her new husband’s confession of his former sexual sins. She freely forgives him, and in return offers her own confession. He reacts with horror and disgust, hypocritically refusing to forgive her, then refusing even to admit his lack of forgiveness. This powerful scene encapsulates all our worst fears about confession—that it leaves us completely at the mercy of the person confessed to, without even the possibility of an appeal to justice.

So why do it? Confession is hard, possibly dangerous and certainly unpleasant to have to do. I, for one, would prefer to be

let off the hook altogether. After all, what’s really important is ‘repent and believe’, right? Can’t we just get away with promising not to do again whatever it was we did wrong in the first place?

Probably not. For one thing, confession is something the Bible tells us to do: ‘Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed’ (James 5:16). James seems to be telling us that if we try to repent without confessing we are getting it backwards, and depriving ourselves of the opportunity to have others’ prayers help us in our quest for repentance.

Confession is also valuable, perhaps because it is hard. Great risks usually come with great rewards. The fear of not receiving forgiveness from others is balanced by the great load that is lifted off our shoulders when we do receive that forgiveness.

When I look at the people around me and reflect on whom I admire the most, particularly among my Christian brothers and sisters, I know that people who can acknowledge openly their own failings—people who are the opposite of hypocrites—are very near the top of that list. A relationship in which people are hiding large portions of their lives (the less admirable parts) is a superficial relationship. We can easily get away with fudging the issue once or twice, or a dozen times. However, the Christian life ought not to be about what you can get away with, but about seeking the very best in every situation.

And confession is, in the end, impossible to get away from. The Bible tells us that in God’s kingdom ‘there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open’ (Luke 8:17). We serve a God of Truth, and confession demonstrates our own commitment to honouring that truth.

■ *Emma Baillie is a member of St Jude’s, Carlton, wife of Stephen and mother of two small girls who also need a lot more practice in the difficult business of confessing. She can be emailed at ebaillie@netspace.net.au*

Plum Tree or Prickly Pear?

BY RUTH HOLT

She looked at me with a mixture of frustration and anguish. Her little face contorted by the contradiction of how she felt and what God said was true; my daughter asked, *'If God has changed me, why do I do things wrong?!*'

I recognized my daughter's dilemma. I am often exasperated by the chasm between the new godly life that pleases God and the life I often live. Sure, there are moments when I serve, when I'm loving and patient, striving for godliness. But what about the rest of the time, when I am busy with my own importance, or am being jealous, impure, or angry for no reason? There seems to be a great gap between who God wants me to be and who I am. In Jesus, I am a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17), so if God has changed me, if God has made me a new person, *'why do I do things wrong?!*'

Paul challenges our despair over the chasm in Galatians 5. Paul uses strong language to show us that Christians are now free from the domination of sin. He says we are either slaves or free (v.1). He writes that the fruit of the Spirit (v.22–24) are completely opposite to the acts of the sinful nature (v.19–21). The godly life of those whom Jesus has set free is completely different from the ungodly slavery to sin. Paul says they are in conflict with each other (v.17).

In Canberra, where I live, a lot of people have plum trees and other fruit trees in their gardens. In fact even in the drought, fruit trees seem to grow. The plum trees have lovely flowers, fantastic fruit, and beautiful leaves in autumn. My garden, however, has two very healthy prickly pear plants. My neighbour's beautiful plum trees are like the Christian that Paul speaks of. The Christian produces beautiful fruit, like love, patience and self control. The sinful nature would be like my prickly pear—sure there's fruit, but it's the nasty kind; hatred, selfish ambition and impurity. We're meant to produce godly fruit, but when we look at what we are producing, is it plums or prickly pears? If you're like me sometimes it feels like you're a prickly pear trying to grow plums. But Paul says no—you are either a prickly pear or a plum tree. If you have the Spirit you will produce the fruit of the Spirit!

Sure, that is what the Bible says, but what about the vast chasm we spoke about? If we are beautiful new creations why do we sin? These sinful acts and thoughts are nasty infestations on our tree, a result of not 'living by the Spirit' (v.16) or keeping 'in step with the Spirit' (v.25). So when a nasty bit of anger sprouts up we are meant to hack it off ... ouch! God is at work in us to produce beautiful fruit but we often forget that and live like the prickly pears. We're not bad people trying to be good, we're righteous people trying to remember who God has made us to be! There's a fundamental difference. If deep down we are

unchanged people we will never really produce the fruit that God commands us to. But if God has really changed us, then He isn't asking the impossible, He's just asking us to be who we are! So how do we do that?

One way to keep living as God's new creation is to 'live by the Spirit' (Galatians 5:16). Living by the Spirit is characterized by having our minds fixed on what the Spirit desires (Romans 8:5). So we first have to know what God wants of us then fix our thoughts on those commands. As we have God's desires embedded in our thinking His Spirit works in us to make them our desires. Our life will be more and more in step with the Spirit.

Here are some practical things I have done to live by the Spirit;

- ▶ Reading God's Word and engaging my brain as I do it so that it pops up in my thoughts and conversations.
- ▶ Praying that God would open my eyes to my sin. (It is a prayer I pray a little hesitantly but that's one way to keep in step with God's work in my life.)
- ▶ Memorising passages—yes, memorising! I memorised the fruit of the Spirit list from this chapter of Galatians with a friend and then we tested each other. (There was even a prize!) I have also memorised verses with my children.
- ▶ Encouraging one or two mature Christians whom I know well to point out areas of sin they see. I have asked an older woman to meet with me to point out any nasty infestations she sees.
- ▶ Looking back to see how God has changed me and thanking Him.

So we can live like new creations, with God's help. Firstly we need to know that God has indeed set us free from slavery to sin. Then we need to live by the Spirit and be open to God's discipline. Finally, rather than focusing on the chasm of past mistakes we need to see them for the strange fruit that they are, and focus on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

■ *Ruth is married to Jonathan and attends a church plant in Canberra. She has three daughters and during the course of writing this article the family moved to a new house with ... four plum trees!*

God Finds What's Good in Me

CD Review:

Wounded Beauty by Monique Lisbon

BY AMANDA COVERDALE

Do you like your Christian music to be full of upbeat sounds and positive statements about the goodness of God and how He makes your life a success? Well, you might find Monique Lisbon's latest CD rather uncomfortable.

However, if you like Christian music to be empathic but challenging about your personal struggles with God then *Wounded Beauty* may be a CD for you.

At the launch, Monique stated, '*Wounded Beauty* is an album about living in the tension between pain and hope.' She created the new CD in six months, with the help of many experienced friends. Monique explained that, in the early stages of making it, she 'knew that it was going to be an album that grapples with some of the tough issues that I seem to be very experienced at writing about now!'

While I enjoy singing Monique's congregational music such as 'We believe', I found it difficult to listen to this CD because the lyrics and music spoke to my arguments with God. I experienced that well-known effect where music gets behind a person's self-protective defences and speaks to the spots that hurt inside.

I identified with Monique's lyrics in the first verse of 'Eyes of Grace' and then found it comforting to hear her sing to God:

'you find what's good in me
in all that I'd replace ...
extravagance of grace'

Monique has been composing music for many years to reflect on her struggles in understanding God's goodness in the face of her childhood abuse. Her first album *Only the Suffering God* (1992) included dark music which expressed difficult emotions.

Wounded Beauty is Monique's seventh album, and it is not so very dark. The songs address different aspects of a Christian woman's personal relationship with God. One song asks why God lets people suffer so dreadfully. Another reflects on how Monique's friendship with a

depressed woman taught her about the way God interacts with her.

Monique's long experience in song-writing is evident on this CD. She worked with a large team of musicians, but it is Monique's confident solo voice that carried me on an emotional journey. I was especially struck by the way the lyrics matched the musical styles. Perhaps composers often do that, but I am so familiar with supermarket music that I don't notice this skill. Here, I noticed the match every time I heard 'Walk a Mile' because the critical lyrics are emphasised by the jazz music.

There is a variety of music styles on this album. While several tracks are subdued and reflective, 'Walk a Mile', 'Still' and 'Silver Grey' are written in the jazz style. The album's rock song, 'Deliberately', gets its punch from the trumpets. Several of the tracks also include unexpected instrumental passages that are delightful listening. This might be a self-published CD, but Monique and her team produced polished performances.

If you like challenging and reflective lyrics and fantastic music, I encourage you to visit Monique's website for song excerpts from *Wounded Beauty* and her previous CDs, and information about her ministry.

Wounded Beauty is \$30.50 (including postage). Other MonoMusic products can be purchased securely through the website www.monomusic.com.au or from PO Box 324, Ashburton, VIC 3147.

■ *Amanda Coverdale joined the ishah Editorial Committee last year, and is a member of St Mark's Anglican Church, Forest Hill. While she is a freelance writer and editor, she is constantly amazed that anyone can write music with more than one part. amanda@clari.net.au*



write of reply

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WHO'S YOUR MASTER?

Movie Review:
The Devil Wears Prada
Directed by David Frankel

BY MARIA BRAND-STARKEY

'Personal life hanging by a thread?'

'...That happens when you start doing well at work. ... When your whole life goes up in smoke, that means it's time for a promotion!' (Nigel, in *The Devil Wears Prada*)

The central themes of the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, a screen adaptation of Lauren Weisberger's best-selling novel, resonate with nearly everyone in the workforce. However, they have special significance for women. How many women do you know who find it hard to say 'no' in the workplace? How do *you* balance a demanding high profile career with a family life? *The Devil Wears Prada* asks these questions.

In *The Devil Wears Prada*, Andy, in an attempt to advance her career in editing, takes a lowly job working for Miranda Priestly, the editor of premiere fashion magazine *Runway* (equivalent to *Vogue*). Miranda, whom the film portrays as the Devil Incarnate, wields her power in such a way that Andy quickly becomes her unquestioning slave. Andy soon finds herself changing not only her appearance, but also her values and priorities. Although her friends try to

help her, Andy finds it almost impossible to say 'no' to her new-found master.

What the film does not ask, but will probably occur to Christian women as they watch, are questions such as: 'How do I maintain a demanding, high-profile career, while still serving God as my first priority?' and 'Which master am I serving?' We are told to live in the world and yet not to serve the world, but where do we draw the line? The outcome of the film does not suggest it is impossible to have both 'a life' and a fast-paced career. Nor should it suggest to us that it is impossible to live for God's Kingdom while still having a fast-paced career and a family. Rather, the film encourages us to keep watch of our motives and priorities.

The Devil Wears Prada reminded me of how important it is to support our friends and keep each other accountable and 'on track' as we persevere with our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus, when the Devil does turn up disguised in 'Prada', we will have a better chance of detecting both him and his work!

When I told friends that I was going to see *The Devil Wears Prada*, some were sceptical and warned me that the film would probably be 'chick-flick trash'. I was pleasantly surprised. I loved this film! Not only was it well-acted, hilariously funny, easy to relate to and well written, as I have already indicated, it raised some weighty and thought-provoking ideas. And this is why, now that it has just been released on DVD, I will probably be persuaded to watch it again and discuss these ideas with others. Or I might just watch it and enjoy the superficial hilarity and fantastically coordinated designer outfits!

■ *Maria is married to Byron and they enjoy watching movies, eating popcorn and having a good laugh! Maria studies theology at Ridley College, serves at St Hillary's Anglican Church in Kew and is a candidate for ordination in the Melbourne Anglican Church.*

Starting Point is a regular column that aims to encourage readers to engage with a contemporary issue in the media.

Are You a Channel Flicker?

Have you ever thought about the music you listen to? How does it affect you or make you feel? The lyrics, the melody, even the theme of the song, all play a role. While driving to work the other day, a song came on the radio, 'I Write Sins Not Tragedies', by the band Panic! At the Disco. The song was catchy, quirky and it really stood out. The song was fun until you paused for a moment to really listen to the lyrics. There are dark undertones to the lyrics in many of the band's songs. 'I Write Sins Not Tragedies' told the story of an engaged woman cheating on her fiancé, in a carefree, playful way. The band produces popular music, mainly aimed at the teenage market, and without the lyrics, they make pretty good listening. They disguise the true meaning of their songs by having a larger vocabulary than most songwriters and having eccentric, playful videos.

So, how far should we go in filtering out distasteful music? Do we not listen to the radio at all? Do we channel flicker constantly? I had a friend a long time ago who would listen to Christian music exclusively. Is this the best way? There is a danger in doing this. You may place yourself in a bubble where you cannot relate to those in the secular world. And yet there's something to be said about being conscious of what you are listening to. It may not even be the overt lyrics, but the theme those lyrics represent. Where do we draw the line?

God made music for us to enjoy, but also to honour him. It takes a conscious effort to be selective about what we choose to let enter our ears. Maybe being a channel flicker is not such a bad thing after all.

■ *Meredith Bedford attends New Peninsula Church, on the Mornington Peninsula. She graduated from university last year and is currently taking a short Graphic Arts course at TAFE.*