

Well thought Christian Reflections.

A review of '*Thinking Things Through: Christian Reflections on some Contemporary Ethical Issues*', Michael Cassidy, Acorn Press, Brunswick East, 2006. Pp. 167.

If you are looking for a good summary of a Christian understanding of the major social issues before the Western world today, then here is an excellent reference. It is a book which lends itself to personal study as well as group study.

Michael Cassidy would be well-known to many evangelical Australians. He has been to Australia many times in his deputation work for African Enterprise, and has written a number of popular Christian books. Some of you may be aware of the reflections as they started in a supplement to the monthly African Enterprise newsletter.

There is a helpful start with a general consideration of **ethics** within the Christian context. This leads into a chapter on marriage, in the context of '**Morals, ethics and principles – Christian marriage**'. Like my recent writings on Marriage in Australia, (*Pointers: Christian Research Association Bulletin*, December 2008), Cassidy highlights the need to advocate for marriage, and for churches especially to more fully understand their role and place in affirming and enhancing marriage today.

These themes are continued in the next chapters **on Divorce and then Re-marriage**, which also illustrate Cassidy's firm commitment to Scripture and his understanding of the grace and compassion of God in Christ.

Homosexuality – his sub-title sets the tone:

"An issue for Compassion and Concern in the Church today". This chapter builds the foundations for the next chapter and a detailed consideration of '**Same- sex marriage**', in which he examines many of the traditional arguments and provides a very helpful summary of much of the research to date. A significant feature is his discussion of the situation in the new South Africa, providing an explanation of why they reached their present situation and the implications for other

I thought it worth nothing Cassidy's conclusion that: "The fact is that ultimately what lies beyond gay marriage is no marriage at all." (p. 93)

Both the chapters on **Abortion** and **Euthanasia** provide a common Christian foundation and helpful compassionate and active roles for Christians to consider rather than simply reacting reactionary.

I found the chapter on **Capital Punishment** challenging as he relates his personal viewpoint, and that of others, sometimes in the South African context. While I do not agree with his conclusion, which is mostly a summary quote from Charles Colson (I will leave this to you to read), I can understand the position he is coming from.

Three areas which are often neglected in some areas of Christian teaching are given excellent commentary:

In '**Prosperity, Poverty and Shalom**' – Cassidy explores the difficulties of the church being caught in another side of the world's emphasis. In '**A Theology of Work**' he explores a fuller Christian understanding of work and rest, a subject that surely needs more reflection in all our churches. And finally in '**The Environment, Creation and the Bible**', he provides an amazingly succinct and eminently sane Christian response, strongly underlined by his Christological emphasis which is a feature of his writings. Cassidy calls us continually to recognise the Creator, and His Creation and to respond.
Amen.

Peter Bentley
14 January 2008