

## Blame Culture

Don't you just love how the tabloid media work!

In the midst of a state election campaign, in a week when nationally we have the release of a blueprint for radical health reform, and where internationally we hear of another catastrophic earthquake, in our local paper in Launceston this week, we are treated to two front page spectacles devoted to outing the alderman who swore at a colleague! I don't for one moment condone the language used, but surely there are far more important things going on in the Council, in the State, in Australia and in the world than to highlight the juvenile behaviour of local councillors.

So I ask myself why any newspaper or media outlet would devote itself to such trivia. "Bread and circuses" come to mind, and I wonder if our local media have taken on the function of the medieval stocks, around which people gathered to throw things at village miscreants.

It would appear that human beings need scapegoats to blame when things go wrong in their world. We live in a culture of blame that does little to change how things operate in our world. Find the culprit and punish him or her. Name and shame! And we, the righteous can all sleep easily in our beds.

For years I worked in a child protection system whose workers lived constantly in fear of a child dying in our patch. For we knew we would be held responsible often for situations well beyond our control. It seemed to me then and now that politicians, media and the community in general were more interested in who's to blame for a debacle than finding solutions for what are often intractable problems.

And **As I See It**, one of the reasons for the "Blame Culture" is that it diverts attention from any attempt at radical change. It encourages conservatism, tinkering at the edges, and cover ups. The "Blame Culture", encouraged by vested interests, diverts our attention from the real issues, issues that cannot be resolved by quick political fixes and that often demand extensive financial sacrifice to rectify. Not willing to pay the price, we settle for second best.

As followers of the Christ, we are called to bring God's radical programme of death and resurrection to life in the world we inhabit; to speak out against the cultural values that reinforce materialism, justification of violence and blindness to injustice. Rather we are called to encourage generosity, forgiveness, and hope, values where there is no room for blame and where we look to building a community that has no need for pointing the finger for we are consumed in bringing society to wholeness.

That at least is the theory of how the Church works, but sadly we too can become consumed with the spirit of the age, joining our fellow citizen around the metaphorical stocks, - and nothing changes. Jesus the Christ came that we might experience God's rule here and now. God's rule has no place for scapegoats for it starts always with the premise of grace and love.

And that is what will change our world.

*Tony would be more than happy to chat about the above article with anyone who wants to.*

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