From the day Pope Kevin XII drew a line across the known globe and awarded one bit to Spain and the other to Portugal, holy types have been proving that camels aren’t the only smelly beasts who think they can force their way into heaven through the eye of a needle—if only they shove hard enough.

This is nothing new of course: after all, who can have forgotten the gruesome sight of Jimmy Swaggart blubbering before his congregation “Ah have sinned ... Lord forgive me.” After he’d been caught with his Commandments (one of them at least) around his knees.

It wouldn’t have taken a Sale of the Century contestant to know that Jimmy’s Lord would of course forgive him. For one thing, being unshriven was awfully bad for business; for another, it was probably not the sin but being publicly found out that had caused the outraged elders of his Blessed Church of the Holy Squillions such heartburn. In the event, Jimmy was the first to know that the Lord would rather have him back in the pulpit, saving sinners, than scraping a living as a used car salesman. And so it came to pass.

In just the same crackbrained way, the Reverend Fred Nile knows he is right, that God knows he is right and moreover, that God is on his side. Naturally the Rev. Fred, in common with the other more excitable God-peddlers, wants it both ways.

So it is that Fred can say, with all sincerity and considerable conviction (in a recent interview in the Sydney Morning Herald) that although he hasn’t read any of the books he’s recently insisted be banned from NSW schools, he knows that the sex and violence reported to be in those books (by worried parents, most of whom haven’t read them either, it turns out) will undoubtedly corrupt and deprave the tender sensibilities of Australian youth.

At the very same time he fessed up happily to loving Rambo and the rest of the Sly Stallone oeuvre. Apparently he thinks on-screen ultra-violence is sufficiently removed from reality, presumably because it's presented theatrically on celluloid, to present no proven danger of corruption and depravity to those same tender sensibilities mentioned above.

Aside from the dazzling and fundamental contradictions on display in this blithe doublethink, there is more to it than meets the eye. (And at this point, readers are warned of scenes and language to follow that might offend.)

It is quite likely that the Rev. Fred could put one hand on his heart and the other on his crotch and swear truthfully that he is unaware of any underlying symbolism or threat in Rambo’s weaponry.

Presumably there are men who enjoy great big guns and knives for their technological possibilities and not as penis substitutes or extensions. But show me a man with a gun in his pocket and I’ll show you someone who ought to wash his hands afterwards and wipe the smile off his face at the same time.

Hypocrisy and thoughtless sexism aren’t confined to the God squad of course, and never have been. These qualities are alive and well and living vigorously to the Left, Right and up the central fundament of society. It’s just that, with the increasingly urgent debate on issues of censorship, pornography and violence (in entertainment and society at large) swirling all around, women are once again in the firing line and almost certain to be losers.

The difficulty many women now have in uttering the words “sexism” or (gulp) “feminism” is witness to that. They have become dirty words—indicating, more often than not, that the woman in question merely displays some independence of thought and action and simply isn’t willing to have any old camel think he can shove his way to heaven through the eye of her needle.

It follows then, that the “humourless feminist” is still with us. She is someone who has never been able to muster a titter at cunt jokes, and at the same time the scalpel-wielding man-hater who has a giggle at something like “Mummy, mummy, what’s an orgasm?” Answer: “I don’t know dear, ask your father.”

This kind of dick-shrivelling viciousness has to be punished, of course. And daily, throughout the world, it is. Sometimes it’s out and out murder, rape and other forms of social termination. Otherwise, the effects can be almost as limiting, if not as instantly obvious. For instance, the NSW State Rail Authority, with not a hint of irony or self doubt, suggested only two weeks ago that the way for women to overcome the growing problems of violence on urban trains is to avoid travelling on their own or late at night. It’s not so much déjà vu, more a way of life.

The church (just about any church) has always been at the forefront of this kind of reductive thinking. The Rev. Fred isn’t unusual in seeing nothing wrong with depictions of glorious technicolour violence which, if not overtly sexual to this deliberately un-educated man, is at the very least a perfect example of why the liberal education he is so fearful of is essential. However, let him who is without sin (of omission, commission or smutty joke) cast the first stone.