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INCREASE FONT DECREASE FONT

NEWS (OCTOBER 25, 2007) ALP accuses Christian sect of supporting Turnbull

NAOMI LEVIN

DEBATE is raging in Australia's most Jewish electorate, Wentworth, about the origins of an advertisement urging voters to "Keep Australia Christian - Don't vote Labor/Green Coalition".

Christian sect Exclusive Brethren has denied that it circulated the advertisement, which says: "Kevin Rudd and his team in Wentworth (George Newhouse) want to do away with Christian values".

But this hasn't stopped the ALP trying to smear Wentworth MP Malcolm Turnbull, alleging that he is party to the advertisement and calling on him to declare any links, personal or financial, he may have with the sect.

Turnbull responded to the ALP's allegations and told *The AJN*, "I have no involvement with the Exclusive Brethren church at all. I have no involvement and no knowledge of their supposed activities," he said.

Wentworth Labor candidate George Newhouse said he was unable to comment about Exclusive Brethren campaigning in his electorate because the Australian Electoral Commission and Australian Federal Police are investigating the advertisement. He did call on Turnbull to discuss whether he has received any financial or in-kind support from what he called a "shadowy group".

Members of Exclusive Brethren do not vote on "conscientious grounds", but according to their website, "individual members are free to vote to support causes or principles in which they believe. We believe, as citizens, that we should be able to warn the public of serious challenges to the moral fabric of society, including through advertisements".

Prime Minister John Howard and Treasurer Peter Costello have admitted to meeting with the leadership of Exclusive Brethren and allegations have been made that the organisation donates thousands of dollars to the Liberal Party.

Labor leader Kevin Rudd has refused to meet with members of the sect, telling the ABC in August that it is an "extremist cult and sect" that "breaks up families".

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ALP accuses Christian sect of supporting Turnbull (October 25, 2007)

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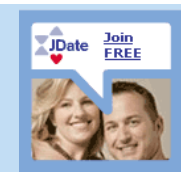
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