

Volume 25 Number 4 February 2006

REFORMED

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

Restorative Justice:

If you steal something
you should pay it back.

It's a radical notion. . .
and a biblical one!

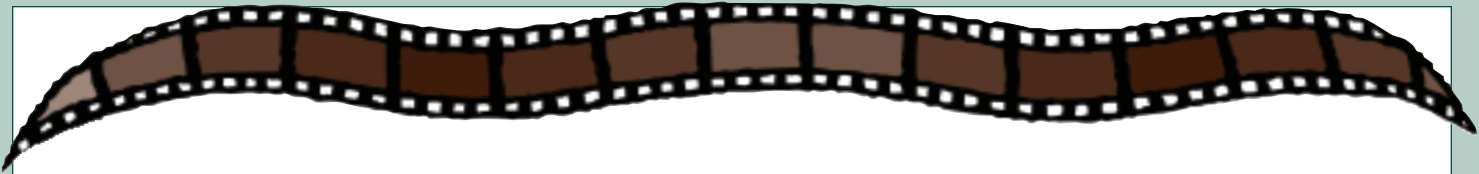
What's inside?

The Best MP You've
Never Heard Of

A Shirt a Day. . .

Your Sin will Find
You Out





Editorial

by Jon Dykstra



Coming Attraction

One last preview of the summer movie issue

In the quest to find 100 movies worth watching, we're stuck at 93. The single absolute criterion that we've been using – to make the list a film cannot take God's name in vain – eliminates at least 95 per cent of all current films. It was rather disturbing to discover that this single rule also eliminated at least 75 per cent of the films made in the 1940s and 50s. Perhaps most disturbing of all was that even 50 per cent of all "Christian" films take God's name in vain. These Christian filmmakers carefully avoid any use of the F-word, but don't seem to understand the need to revere God's name. That's hard to understand.

But while we may not quite reach the 100 we were trying for, there are some good movies on the list. And some of the very best movies have titles that kids and young adults may find very familiar. Before they were remade in the last few years these films were popular in the 20s, 30s, 40s, and 60s.

The Miracle Worker

Drama/Biography
106 min; 1962
DVD \$15 Can.



The 1962 original won two Oscars – the 2000 remake was a forgettable Disney production.

Seven-year-old Helen Keller, blind and deaf almost from birth, learns to communicate through the discipline and unpitying love of her teacher Annie Sullivan. Miss Sullivan never gives in to Helen's tantrums because she knows to do so would leave Helen trapped in a dark, silent world. This is a tearjerker and a good discussion starter on the importance of discipline in raising children (Proverbs 13:24).



The Shop Around the Corner

Drama/Romance
99 min; 1949
DVD \$25 Can.

Though he finds the newly hired store clerk quite attractive, Alfred de-

icides she just isn't the girl for him – for some reason the two of them just can't get along, and besides he has a heart to heart, mind to mind connection with his long time pen pal and how can mere physical attraction compare to something like that? It just can't! But before he rushes off to marry his pen pal, Alfred decides he should meet her once first. That's when he finds out she looks a lot like the new store clerk. . . and awful lot like her! Remade in 1998 as *You've Got Mail*, the original is far superior, and doesn't take God's name in vain. A good counter to the Hollywood notion of love at first sight – this is love done write!

Lassie Come Home

Drama/Family film
90 min; 1943
DVD \$20 Can.



This is the first and very best of the Lassie movies (and the only one to be nominated for an Oscar). Poverty forces a family to sell their treasured dog. . . but the dog won't stay away and returns to their house again and again. But what is poor Lassie going to do when her new owner takes her all the way to the other side of Britain? Will she still be able to find her way home?



Mr. Deeds Goes to Town

Drama/Romance
115 min; 1936
DVD \$25 Can.

Way back in 1936 Frank Capra won an Oscar for directing the original version of this story about a small town yokel, Longfellow Deeds, who inherits \$20 million and decides to give it away because it proves to be too much trouble. That gets him in a whole mess of trouble when the big city men figure his generosity proves he's insane and must be locked up.

The 2002 Adam Sandler remake *Mr. Deeds* adds a lot to this original story but some of the additions are pretty unfortunate – a dozen or so potty jokes, a foot



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www.reformedperspective.ca

Published monthly by the Foundation for the publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine (Reformed Perspective Foundation).

fetishist, a pornographer, and at least a few instances of the Lord's name being taken in vain. This is yet another instance where less is so much more.

Seven Chances

Comedy
56 min; 1925
DVD \$22 US



This Buster Keaton film was remade in 1999 as *The Bachelor*, but while the remake bombed the original continues to please – on IMDB.com, the largest movie website in the world, the 1999 version was rated five on a ten point scale while the Keaton film got an eight. And the original trounced the remake even though Keaton's is a *silent* film!

Keaton stars as Jimmie Shannon, a down on his luck businessman who finds out he will inherit seven million dollars if he is married by 7 pm. When the newspapers report on his predicament Jimmie is forced to flee a throng of very aggressive would-be-brides who are all after his hand. When they realize they can't get that, they want his head! It's slapstick humor at its very best.

It may be worth mentioning this film has been tested on a number of very skeptical 20 and 30 year olds to see if they'd like it – it took them a few minutes to warm up to it but by the end they all gave it the thumbs up. Anyone who wants to find a copy of this film should be sure to track down the KINO Video version. Silent films, because they have no spoken dialogue, rely heavily on the soundtrack that accompanies the action – the sound matches the action on screen and adds to it. Unfortunately some soundtracks on cheaper versions of this film are only random selections of classical music. The KINO version's superb soundtrack is worth the extra money.



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This periodical is owned and operated by the Foundation for the publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine, a nonprofit organization, whose purpose is described in Article 2 of its constitution: "to publish periodically a magazine promoting Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially the social, political and economic realms." In carrying out its objectives, the society is bound by the Bible, God's infallible Word, as it is summarized and confessed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort (Article 3 of the constitution).

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Annual Subscription Rates:
Canada \$49.00*
(2 years \$89.00, 3 years \$130.00)*
Canada Airmail \$66.00*
U.S. (U.S. Funds) \$48.00
(2 years \$88.00, 3 years \$128.00)
U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$69.00
International Surface Mail \$64.00
(2 years \$118.00, 3 years \$174.00)
International Airmail \$95.00
* including 7% G.S.T.
– G.S.T. No. R118929272RT

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.



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Registration: ISSN 0714-8208
Charitable Organization under
Canada Income Tax Act
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SOAKING WET AND BURNING HOT

Water . . .

It is early January when I write this. Earlier in the week a cyclone lashed the coast around Dampier and Karratha. According to people on the ground the winds were up to 200 km per hour. Thankfully very little damage was done and no one was seriously hurt.

As forecast, the rain that accompanied this cyclone moved down the coast of Western Australia dumping lots of water, especially in the agricultural areas. While rain is generally welcomed in these areas because they often suffer drought conditions, it was not so welcome this time – many sheep farmers still had a lot of dry feed stored outside in their paddocks, and now that it has become waterlogged it is of little use as sheep feed.

To give our Canadian readers some idea what this cyclone brought in rain, the town of Lake Grace in the Southern part of the state received some 200 millimeters of rain over two days. This was the first cyclone this season and the weather bureau expects at least another four during the next two months. Our forecasters often look so terribly confident in their predictions, yet their predictions are based on past happenings and some understanding of what is happening in the seas to the north of Australia. But we know more – for it is God who directs all things, also the weather.

Fire . . .

During the last weeks the eastern part of Australia has had some severe weather of a different kind. There the temperature has risen to some 40 degrees Celsius with the result that both New South Wales and Victoria have had some severe bushfires.



100 per cent interest is being charged. . . .



Many homes were lost in these fires and even some lives. Even with all the modern equipment such as water-bombing aircraft, and other fire retardants, there was little that could be done as the temperature rose above 40. The New South Wales Fire Commissioner Phil Koperberg suggested that in the worst areas temperatures were some 10 degrees higher than the areas that escaped the bushfires.

Trochus shells . . .

In Northern Australia there is another concern – trochus shells.

What are trochus shells? The trochus is a marine snail that grows on the tidal reefs off the north of Australia. The Bardi people, a tribe of aboriginals, who live in the Kimberleys are the only people allowed to harvest trochus shells in Western Aus-

tralia. The attraction of the trochus is that its outer covering is very ornate, covered in beautiful mother-of-pearl. Many years ago it was decided that this beautiful shell could only be harvested by Aboriginals or Torres Strait islanders.

The aim was to preserve the stock, which would provide the original inhabitants an income from a product that would be on going. But things haven't gone quite as planned.

It seems from all reports that fishing in the Indonesian archipelago is badly in decline due to over fishing. This over fishing is due in part to the fact that most of these fishermen come from areas where poverty is still a reality, so few want to quit the fishing, since it may be the only job they can get.

One of the species that seems almost extinct in Indonesian waters is the common shark. Shark fins fetch a very high price in countries such as China, Singapore and other places where shark fin soup is regularly on the menu. So, in search of sharks, these fishermen need to come further south to the Australian fishing zone to earn some money. But what they are doing is not in accord with the agreement Australia has with Indonesia. Australia wants to protect its fish stocks for its own fishers and therefore needs to take action against these fishing people.

A January 4 article by Mark Dodd in *The Weekend Australian* reported on what

has been happening as of late. Let me quote some of what he wrote:

“Shark fin is the preferred catch for the poachers, but in recent weeks illegal Indonesian vessels have also targeted reef fish and trochus shell, threatening one of the few sources of independent income for the Bardi Aboriginal people living at One Arm Point, north of Broome.

“On Monday, the year’s first batch of 41 illegal Indonesian fishermen arrived in Broome after two of their boats were detected hidden in the mangroves off Cleft Island, at the entrance to King Sound, on the remote Kimberley coast.

“On Boxing Day, another Indonesian boat with 19 crew was detected southeast of Caffarelli Island, north of Broome. It was caught by HMAS Fremantle, and the Indonesians were taken to Broome for questioning.

“In a sign of a hardening attitude by the federal Government, all three Indonesian boats were destroyed at sea.

“A total of 4500 kg of trochus shell was confiscated and returned to the reef, said Broome Customs spokesman Peter Constantino. The haul, believed to have been collected in two days,

falls just short of the annual quota for trochus shell allocated to the Bardi community. . . .

“A total of 2175 Indonesians were detained last year, all caught fishing illegally in Australia’s northern waters.”

In Australia there are many who think that the government is too soft on these people. When caught they are taken before a court and sentenced. Being subsistence fishermen, with many having a debt hanging over their head for their boat, which has now been sunk, they are unable to pay the fine and are therefore sent to jail at the cost to the Australian taxpayer of some \$250 per day. Additionally they will receive the normal pay while in prison for any jobs that they do. This payment, I believe, is some \$10 per day.

One can only feel sorry for these people. They are doing things that are illegal but they are doing it to feed their families back home where things are very tough. According to a report in the paper this week some of these boats have been provided by loans on which 100 per cent interest is being charged. So you can imagine how these people feel when they are sent to jail.

The Australian government is finding the whole matter rather difficult. Relations with Indonesia have only recently been put on a better footing and now this. The

Indonesian authorities have probably very little sympathy for their rich southern neighbors. So all in all it is rather a mess.

. . . and Japanese whaling

Now to the Southern Ocean. There Japanese whaling ships are out to kill some 1000 minke whales. They are doing this in what Australia regards as its Antarctic whale sanctuary. The reason the Japanese are killing these whales is ostensibly for scientific purposes. But it seems that back in Japan whale meat is on the menu of Japanese consumers and is sold openly.

Japan has also said that it intends to kill 10 fin whales and 50 humpbacks during this season. It has already indicated that it intends to increase the numbers next year.

Greenpeace and other environmentalist groups are out in the Southern Ocean trying to stop the Japanese from catching their quota. Here again the Australian government is in a bit of a bind. Japan is one of our major trading partners and we don’t want to do anything that might upset our trade. On the other hand many in Australia are firmly opposed to what Japan is doing. This could result in the Australian government being accused of siding with Japan against the whales.



The shark is becoming very rare in Indonesia waters and Indonesian fisherman are becoming all too common in Australian waters.

Election 2006

Was the CHP successful?

by Jon Dykstra

In politics, success and failure are usually measured in terms of how many seats a party has won in the last election. If they've won a lot they're successful. If they haven't won many – or haven't won any at all – then they must be a failure. That's the way we generally view things in politics.

But how does a political party that didn't win any seats, hasn't ever won any seats, and doesn't seem likely to win any seats in the near future, define success?

Well, they can look at some different numbers and view them in as positive a light as possible. In this past election the Christian Heritage Party (CHP) officially became Canada's sixth largest party, surpassing the vote totals of nine others. They even doubled their nearest rival, the seventh place Progressive Canadians.

But any numbers-oriented measure of success is still going to look pretty dismal for the CHP. They may have run more than 40 candidates this past time around, but that pales in comparison to the more than 250 ridings that didn't have a CHP candidate. They may have gotten 28,279 votes but that amounts to only 0.2 per cent of the national vote. And they may have finished sixth, but only the top four parties won seats.

So it doesn't matter much which numbers are selected, or how they're looked at; if that's what we use to measure political success then the CHP must be a failure.

More numbers

But if we succumb to this numbers obsession then things will start to seem bad no matter where we look – even Christians in the Conservative Party will have reason to despair. That party may have

won the election, but they took only 124 of 308 seats. And of those 124 MP's less than half – *The Interim* found only 60 – are either pro-life or somewhat pro-life. And some of the new Tory MP's are staunch "gay marriage" supporters. Though few in number these "Conservatives" seem to tip the balance in Parliament towards favoring "gay marriage" making it very unlikely anything will be done to restore Traditional Marriage.

.....
The Christian Heritage Party officially became Canada's sixth largest party.
.....

If we start obsessing about numbers, and totals, and sums, then Christians, no matter which party they support, are going to be confronted with failure.

A different sort of success

Fortunately as Christians we know that true success is measured a far different way. As CHP leader Ron Gray noted in his election reflections, we know that, "It is God who raises up and puts down governments" – the results are in His hands. Though it may be unpleasant – and ego deflating – we have to realize that these things are too big for us and are beyond our control. We have no choice but to trust God with the results.

What we can control is whether or not we will let our Christian light shine in the political realm. This realm is no differ-

ent from any other – here too we are supposed to point people to God through our words and deeds. That is our calling in all of life. And we can measure our success by whether or not we are obedient to God's call.

A Christian voice

So using this measure of success, was the CHP successful in this past election? Did they let their light shine?

After contacting a half dozen candidates it seems the CHP was successful beyond almost anyone's expectations. Their vote totals were not impressive, but the number of people they reached with their clear Christian political positions was astounding. Some campaigns garnered donations in the tens of thousands of dollars and used the money to buy radio ads, newspaper ads or to get brochures delivered throughout the riding. Other candidates took advantage of numerous speaking opportunities – the candidate in Niagara West-Glanbrook, Dave Bylsma, gave 11 speeches! He also had enough volunteers (more than 40) to organize some door knocking and reached 800 houses this way. In York-Simcoe Vicki Gunn ran radio ads. In the BC riding of Cariboo-Prince George, Chris Kempling got his message out via interviews on TV, the radio, and the newspapers. In Alberta, John Wierenga managed to get a brochure out to most of the incredibly large Yellowhead riding (more than 300 kilometers wide). Across the country the message they put out was clear, and it was heard.

In 2006 the CHP was successful. God be praised.





The best MP you've never heard of

Maurice Vellacott's job involves far more than you might realize.

by Tim Bloedow

Pro-life involvement

As a result of this understanding Dr. Vellacott has been one of the most assertive pro-life and pro-family MPs on Parliament Hill over the past decade. Even before being elected he was already active in pro-life circles, being a founding board member of the Real Choices Crisis Pregnancy Centre in Saskatoon. As an MP he has been a co-chair of the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus for the last six years and, along with his Saskatchewan colleague Garry Breitzkreuz, has introduced more pro-life bills (as Private Members Bills) and motions in Parliament than any other MPs over the past decade, if not the last century.

His primary pro-life initiative has been a Private Members Bill that would protect healthcare professionals from discrimination in the workplace and in training schools when they refuse to collaborate in abortions due to their conscience and religious convictions. It is commonly called a "conscience-clause" bill. This legislation is vital if we want to ensure that in the future at least some doctors will be pro-life.

Dr. Vellacott would also be supportive of provincial legislation that would end taxpayer funding for abortion-on-demand, and he favors laws that would allow for prosecutions in situations where an unborn child is killed, whether by negligence in an accident, or as a result of intentional assault on the mother.

A variety of moral issues

The number and variety of issues an MP has to deal with are considerable, even when you consider only the family or so-

cial conservative concerns. During his years in Parliament, Dr. Vellacott has spoken out against:

- banning corporal punishment
- the Liberal anti-marriage Bill C-38
- Svend Robinson's anti-Christian Bill C-250
- euthanasia and assisted suicide
- embryonic stem cell research (while also explaining the moral and scientific case for adult stem cell research)
- homosexual and single parent access to in vitro fertilization procedures

Dr. Vellacott takes very seriously the opportunity and responsibility he has to mentor other Christians in his role as a politician. This is a vocation, a calling to him, not simply a job he has to do. So he frequently speaks to grassroots Canadians across the country on matters of faith, family and freedom (the Campaign Life Coalition, Real Women, the ECP Centre, and the Christian Coalition are just a few of the socially conservative organizations he has addressed).

And instead of being beaten down by the constant political failures Christians have experienced in Canada's "culture wars," Vellacott rises to each new challenge. In his speeches he likes to use a hockey analogy in which he talks about each Christian staying on the ice, playing his position to the best of his ability, blocking a shot or assisting a goal, without being discouraged at the present score because "we know that, in the end, the Heavenly Coach leads the team to victory."

There are two reasons why you've probably never heard of Maurice Vellacott.

First, though he's been a Member of Parliament (MP) for the last nine years, he serves an area of the country that doesn't receive much attention, the Saskatchewan riding of Saskatoon-Wanuskewin.

Second, he's both intelligent and a moral conservative, a combination that isn't very popular with the national press.

Background

Maurice and his wife of thirty years, Mary, have two adult children, five grandchildren (counting the two that will be born this summer) and two more young children who are making their way through elementary school.

While many politicians profess to be Christian, Dr. Vellacott is a Christian politician who understands that his faith must impact his job. With a doctorate in ministry and fourteen years of experience as a pastor, he understands just how important it is.

More than a one-issue politician

Although life and family issues are Dr. Vellacott's passion, his job as MP involves so much more. He also enthusiastically addresses the whole spectrum of issues that come before him in civil government, including:

- agricultural,
- fiscal,
- healthcare,
- environmental,
- judicial reform,
- military defense,
- and aboriginal matters.

He is very interested in humanitarian concerns and foreign affairs, having traveled to countries like China, Vietnam and recently to Sudan to survey the humanitarian

crisis there. He has been speaking out for justice and relief in that devastated country for many years.

Since coming to Parliament, he has held numerous Deputy (Opposition Party) Critic positions and sat on Parliamentary committees where he has attempted to advance constructive, conservative reforms and expose corruption. These positions have included Deputy Critic for Health, Deputy Critic for Human Resources Development Canada, Deputy Critic for Aboriginal Affairs, and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.

Being Christian makes him a target

He also works hard for his constituents, which is probably why he con-

tinues to win elections so decisively. He won in 1997 as a Reform Party MP. He was re-elected in 2000 as a Canadian Alliance MP, and in 2004 and this year as a Conservative MP. In this recent election, he received 50 per cent of the popular vote, receiving substantially more votes than the combined tally for his Liberal and NDP opponents.

Despite his popularity in the riding, Dr. Vellacott is not always popular among certain segments of his own party, not least because of the liability that some Canadians see in those who are openly social conservative. As a result, with one exception, he has always faced a nomination contest prior to an election. The exception was this last time: because of the possibility of a snap election in a minority Parliament, the Conservative Party allowed no challenges to sitting MPs and simply confirmed all incumbents. So far, the MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin has remained undefeated.

What we can expect from him in the future

Notwithstanding the ongoing pronouncements by Canada's political "professionals," there is no indication that Maurice Vellacott intends to soften his social conservative stance. In fact, he wrote an open letter to Conservative Party leader, Stephen Harper, within a week of the 2006 election, stating his preference for other positions, if a Cabinet role would tie his hands on foundational issues of marriage, family and the sanctity of life.

In the days ahead one can probably expect Dr. Vellacott to introduce one or more Private Members Bills that promote life. He may also continue to act as a co-chair of the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus. You can also expect him to speak out strongly in defense of social conservative positions on any measures that come before Parliament on marriage, childcare, freedom of religion, euthanasia and Canada's role at the United Nations.

You can learn more about Maurice Vellacott and the work he does as an MP, by visiting his website at www.mauricevellacott.ca.

Tim Bloedow was asked by the editor to write about his boss Maurice Vellacott.



...And why you may hear more about him in the future

by Jon Dykstra

One of the more peculiar blessings of my life was being brought up on a hate charge before the Alberta Human Rights Commission. I had been charged while running for provincial elected office, and the accusation had been brought forward by one of the other candidates contesting the by-election. There was no truth to the accusation but even though the claim was baseless, many voters believed what the NDP candidate was saying about me. So at first this seemed a very bad turn of events.

But this same hate charge also raised my campaign up from the depths of obscurity. Up until that point I had received almost no media coverage and very few voters had even heard of me. After the charge more than 100 articles were written about my campaign and I made regular appearances on the radio and on television. This accusation was a blessing indeed.

I am hoping and praying the Maurice Vellacott may make use of a similar "backward blessing" he recently received. During the last federal election while making an appearance on a Shaw Cable political program a caller accused the former minister of sexually assaulting his church secretary at North Park Church. While Vellacott was once a pastor he was never a pastor at North Park Church and he has never been accused by anyone of sexual assault. Vellacott's level-headed reaction turned this sleazy accusation into national news; after calmly and clearly denying the accusation he asked the technicians working the phone lines to note the name and phone number of the caller so he could proceed with defamation charges. The phone number turned out to be the main phone line of the campaign office of Chris Axworthy, the Liberal running against Vellacott!

Being falsely accused of sexual assault could not normally be considered a blessing. But for one night, or rather the whole week after that nighttime accusation, Maurice was given some of the national coverage he had previously been denied. Reporters who wouldn't otherwise have been able to distinguish him from any of the other 300 MPs in Ottawa now knew his name and knew a bit about what he believed and what he stood for. This accusation gave him, for a time, some national name recognition. We can only hope that God will now grant Maurice the ability and wisdom to put his heightened national profile to use. May God use even this vile allegation for good!



ABORTIONISTS ADMIT HUMANITY OF UNBORN

NOW CLAIMING RIGHT TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT KILLING

by Hilary White

The pro-life movement has made such gains in arguing for the humanity of the unborn that abortionists and their apologists are finding their rhetoric is too harsh, even in traditionally supportive political circles.

The campaign slogans familiar to everyone who has read a news report on abortion – “my body, my choice,” “women’s choice is a human right” – are no longer resonating with an American public that is increasingly confronted with the devastating psychological and social aftermath of abortion. With even such politicians as notorious abortion campaigner Hillary Clinton trying to position herself as a moderate, the abortion industry is worried about its PR and clout.

Abortionists look to spin-doctors

Francis Kissling, head of the abortion industry front organization, Catholics for a Free Choice, said the movement is losing on what it used to consider its own ground. “There is a deep-seated fear (in the abortion lobby) that if you address the moral issues, you’re going to lose,” Kissling said.

“But we’re losing anyway. It’s only by addressing the moral issues that we’ll get some relief on the political questions.”

The problem is becoming so dire that a leftist think tank, the Center for American Progress, is hosting a summit for abortion-

ists, lobbyists and activists of all kinds to talk about how to address the situation. The meeting will attempt to forge a new public relations strategy.

An article in the March 6, 2006 edition of *Newsweek* featured Peg Johnston, an abortionist in upstate New York who will be attending the Washington meeting. Johnston said that she eschews the euphemisms

and jargon of the abortion lobby when speaking to clients. She says that her patients speak in terms of “babies” and “killing” so she uses those terms as well.

“At first I thought they were picking up the language from [anti-abortion protesters] outside. But then I started really tuning in to my patients, and I realized, ‘She really feels that way.’” Johnston says.



SPOTLIGHT ON *LIFESITENEWS.COM*

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This article, taken from *LifeSiteNews.com* on February 28, 2006, is typical of their concise but informative content. Five to ten stories are posted to their site and sent out to email subscribers each day, Monday to Friday. They offer this service free of charge, though they do ask for donations once or twice a year to support their work. The overall slant to their news is Judeo-Christian though with a pronounced Roman Catholic influence. Still, if you want a daily dose of news that matters you can’t do much better than LifeSiteNews.com. To subscribe to daily email bulletins go to www.lifesitenews.com or www.lifesite.net and click on the top left button that says “Free Daily E-news.”

Murder with warm and fuzzy trappings

But the shift to a warmer, more “compassionate” public image by abortionists has been developing for some time. George Tiller, the abortionist in Wichita, Kansas who specializes in killing late-term babies, features on his website photos of a macabre “baptism” ceremony for the dead child which clients can have for an extra fee.



Many abortion organizations, including Planned Parenthood, now include a “chaplain” on the payroll whose job it is to help clients overcome their “guilt feelings” for having killed what few now deny is a human child.



Claire Keyes told *Newsweek* that she plans to establish a “sanctuary space” in the abortion facility she directs in Pittsburgh and has offered “baptismal” ceremonies. Many abortion organizations, including Planned Parenthood, now include a “chaplain” on the payroll whose job it is to help clients overcome their “guilt


feelings” for having killed what few now deny is a human child.

Knowing the truth, and killing anyway

Advances in sonogram technology were hailed by the pro-life movement as a great help in the argument for the humanity of the unborn, but this has not necessarily translated into moral comprehension. Kirsten Moore, spokesman for the Reproductive Health Technologies Project says a focus group showed that women who see the pictures of their unborn child on a sonogram are as ready to kill as they ever were. “Women who are thinking about ending a pregnancy are not asking, ‘Is this a life?’ They know that it is. They are asking, ‘Can I take care of this baby?’” Moore told *Newsweek*.

Despite the best efforts of pro-lifers the result, at least among committed abortion activists, is a further distancing from the fundamental notion that it is wrong to kill.

The shift may be one that pro-lifers are not prepared for. “We’ve really moved onto the next rung of the ladder haven’t we?” Jim Hughes, National President of Campaign Life Coalition commented to *LifeSiteNews.com*. “What do you do when they admit that they are killing babies and claim the right to feel good about it?”

“Abortion was bound to lead to this and the idea has finally sunk in,” Hughes said. “We have made the case for the humanity of the unborn only to convince the abortionists to claim the right to kill human beings without guilt. It’s a moral shrug. How do you argue with a shrug?” 

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Muslim Outrage and God's Grace

The Danish cartoon controversy contrasts our gracious God with the merciless Allah

by Tim Challies

"Europe You Will Pay. Your 9/11 Is On Its Way," reads the sign. "Be Prepared For The Real Holocaust," reads another. Other signs list verbs prescribing the punishment for one who blasphemes the prophet of Islam: behead, slay, butcher, exterminate, massacre, annihilate. All this from the hearts and hands of those who claim to follow the religion of peace. And all of this over a series of cartoons.

The real blasphemy goes on

James White writes, "I see the State Department of the United States has also condemned the cartoons. . . could someone link me to where they condemn the blasting of Christianity, the Bible, Jesus Christ, etc., that takes place daily in almost all of our newspapers? I can't find that link. I must just be missing it. It has to be there, right?"

But we all know it is not there. Jesus Christ is blasphemed and reviled every day. In fact, there may be no greater object of scorn in the world today than Jesus Christ. His very name is, for multitudes of people, little more than a blasphemous swear word. The name of Jesus is slandered and blasphemed not only in cartoons, but in poetry, prose, song and film. The symbols of Christianity are swear words and the Savior of the world is despised and rejected.

John Piper comments, "To me this cries out for the observation that when artists put the crucifix in a flask of urine, Christians were grieved and angered, but not one threatened to kill anyone. Our longing is to convert the blasphemers with the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection, not kill them. Our faith is based on One who was reviled not just in car-

toons but in reality and received it patiently for the salvation of the cartoonists. These riots are filled with intimations about the glorious difference between Christ and Mohammed, and between the way of Christ and the way of Islam. And the cowering of the press around the world and the US government is ominous for the fear we are under of Islam – not just extremist Islam. I do not respect the teachings of Islam which when followed devoutly lead to destruction."

My friend Paul Martin (no, not Canada's ex-Prime Minister) says that this is bottom line: "Our God is sovereign and will meet out a perfect justice

in the great and final judgment. He doesn't need me to burn your house down just because you blaspheme Him. In fact, He calls on me to warn you of your sin and (wonder of all wonders) to urge you to embrace the One you have mocked and disgraced as your own Savior from sin and its punishment."

A strange irony

Islam is, in many ways, a terrifying religion. As much as Muslims insist that they embrace a religion of peace, it would so often seem to be anything but. The great irony in many of the protests around Europe and the protest expressed in North

January 28, 2005 in Akhbar al-khalij (Bahrain)



America is that the Muslims are using the freedom of speech provided to them by the Christian framework of the constitutions of their lands to protest another freedom of expression. They are using freedom that would be denied to them were their laws to rule the land.

Christians look at these people burning, shouting and inciting violence and we feel some outrage, but mostly we feel pity. These people are merely acting out a naturally sinful human tendency.

Too wonderful to imagine

Christianity is a rational set of beliefs that can be proven in many different ways. We can turn to historical evidences for the existence of Jesus and there are many available to us. We can look at the complexity of the universe and declare correctly that it must have been created by an intelligent Designer. And it was. But when I seek evidence of the truths of the claims of Scripture, I need look no further than Scripture itself. There is simply no way that a mere

human could have created such a religion. It is impossible.

Every religion in the world acknowledges that there is a problem with humanity. Every religion knows that man is not in the state for which he was created. This is obvious to us. Every person knows, even if only deep in his heart, that death is unnatural. Men were made to live forever, not to be torn away from friends and family. Men were made to live in fellowship with God, not separated from Him temporarily and eternally.

Cartoons that just aren't funny

Let's use our freedom responsibly

by Jon Dykstra

When the *Western Standard*, a rightwing Western Canadian publication, decided to reprint the infamous Danish cartoons I instinctively wanted to cheer.

Muslim clerics in countries around the world had first started making a fuss over these cartoons when they were published in a Danish newspaper. Some were simply drawings of Mohammad (one of the "cartoons" is only a drawing of man and his camel – presumably the man is Mohammad but nowhere is that stated). But depicting Mohammad is, to some strains of Islam like the Wahhabis, tantamount to blasphemy.

The few drawings that did attack or mock Mohammad were still rather tame by editorial cartoon standards – one depicts Mohammad with a bomb in his turban and another depicts Mohammad in heaven telling a line of still smoking suicide bombers that they must, "Stop! We've run out of virgins!"

But tame or not, many Muslims rioted and attacked Danish embassies and threatened Europe, the West, and anyone associated directly or indirectly with these cartoons. One Pakistani cleric even offered a \$1 million bounty to anyone who killed one of the Danish cartoonists.

September 27, 2005 in Al-Watan (Qatar)



Freedom of the press?

So when the *Western Standard* decided to reprint these cartoons in their February 27 issue I wanted to applaud. They were standing up to the bully. They refused to back down. And I started wondering whether I should consult the Reformed Perspective board and ask them if our little magazine should follow the *Standard's* example.

Every religion in the world offers some type of solution to this problem. But for one, every religion offers a solution that ultimately depends on the efforts of man. Only Christianity looks outside of man to the work of God Himself. Jesus Christ is our hope. Without Him and without His work we are nothing, we have nothing and we can look forward to nothing. He is our only hope.

Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, empowers us to live lives that are pleasing to Him. He calls us to live lives marked by peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. He tells us that, if our enemy persecutes us, we are to love our enemy. If a person strikes us we are to turn the other cheek. If a person blas-

phemes the Lord God, we are not to exact vengeance but are to lovingly, patiently, passionately challenge that person to turn from his sin and to turn towards the Lord, the very one who has been offended. We serve a Lord who is infinitely more willing to forgive than we are to sin. And we all love to sin.

Christianity proves itself to be true simply by its other-worldliness. No human being could conceive of such grace – grace that compels us to forgive rather than avenge. Grace that demands obedience rather than sacrifice. Grace that forgives all of our sin.

So when I look to the news and see followers of Mohammed burning embassies,

rioting in the streets and demanding blood, I see my own humanity. I see men acting as men will act. But then I turn to Scripture and see the change God has wrought in my heart, and the change he can bring to the hearts of those who seek blood. Blood has already been shed, and Christ's precious blood is sufficient to cover a multitude of sins.

When I see the Muslim riots I see myself. Looking past myself I see Jesus Christ and in Him, clear evidence for the truths of Christianity.

Tim Challies' blog can be found at www.challies.com



But as you can see we didn't print the Danish cartoons. We live in a country where we can still publish these cartoons, even if many Muslims don't want us to. But the fact that we are free to do something isn't reason enough to do it. As Christians we are also called to love our neighbor as ourselves and to live in peace with him in so far as it is up to us (Luke 10:27 and Romans 12:18). Yes, God has blessed us with freedom, but as the stewards of that gift we are called to use it responsibly.

Cartoons that really are offensive

So instead of publishing those Danish cartoons simply because we can, we took a look at the issue that spawned the cartoons in the first place – the link between violence and Islam (and not just radical Islam). With that in mind we decided to publish a few examples of Anti-Semitic cartoons that have appeared in Arab papers over the last few years.

Comparing Jews with Nazis has to be among the most offensive insults possible and yet this vulgar association is made frequently in many Arab publications. This being a family magazine we avoided the more graphic and bloody cartoons and instead picked some relatively mild examples that the Jewish ADL (Anti-Defamation League) first spotted and posted to their website www.adl.org.

While the Danish cartoons may have mocked Mohammad, none of them were designed to incite violence against Muslims. The Anti-Semitic cartoons shown here clearly have a more maniacal intent – the depictions of Jews as hook-nosed, war mongering and blood thirsty is clearly done with the intent of stirring up hatred and violence against Jews.

The Islam that spawned these cartoons is clearly a very violent hateful strain. Judging from the frequency that such cartoons are published, and the lack of outrage that they prompt among the millions of Muslims who read them, it seems this violent strain of Islam is an all too common strain.

And that's a bit of information we can be thankful we are still free to publish.





HOMEFRONT

Ring of Faithfulness

by Jane deGlint

Amarantha was born into a well-to-do family. The family home graced the main street of a medium sized town. With its high windows and elegant gable it looked both stately and inviting. The house was a reflection of the family. Both parents and their five children took active part in the mainstream of life, socially and ecclesiastically. Their dignified demeanor added charm and sincerity to their welcoming nature. The family home functioned as a harbor where ships from many different backgrounds and cultures were welcomed and restocked.

Amarantha was the middle child, the centre link in an alternating girl/boy chain. She did not take centre stage, however, at least not to her own perception. Rather, she considered herself the least of her siblings. There was no apparent reason for Amarantha's feelings of inferiority. Both physically and mentally she was a gifted child, adorned with the confidence that God looked after her family. Yet she had no awareness of her uniqueness, partly because no one ever told her, and partly because she often lived in her dream world.

As much as she loved others, Amarantha did not consider herself lovable. Not that this was constantly on her mind. Her undivided commitment towards her obligations prevented her from dwelling on her own feelings. But increasingly so she considered herself the lowest rank of whatever pecking order she belonged to. This minimized self-worth prevented her from promoting herself. Whereas her sense of duty made her succeed at whatever she did, she would never present herself as a leader, as the likely candidate for a position, or as a desirable partner for a man. When she had reached her early twenties, her reti-



cence covered her sparkling personality like a veil.

During her late twenties she accepted a position as a research scientist in a large city. With flair she set herself up in an attractive apartment and committed herself to her new congregation. Her spark came back. But not for long. When she ran into some interpersonal difficulties at the research centre, she started to doubt her decision to move away from her family. A general sense of failure descended over her. She plodded on, but with little initiative and originality.

This state of underperformance became her standard. She lost her skill to interact spontaneously with people of different gifts and interests. She even lost her ability to discern between truth and falsehood. Quickly she was intimidated by someone's big talk, fake strength or shallow formality.

At this vulnerable time in her life she met Baldwin. With smooth poise and pretence he overran her disabled social skills. When he took control of Amarantha's pliable heart, she surrendered willingly to his advances.

Baldwyn made his moves fast. Within a year they were married. After the birth of their first child, a son, they moved even farther away from Amarantha's family. Al-

though they joined the church at their new location, they did not make friends. Baldwin objected to socializing. So focused was Amarantha on Baldwin in those years, that she did not see how he was isolating her from the support of family and friends. Unwittingly she became an extension of her husband, completely at his whim.

After the birth of their next child, a daughter, Baldwin started to show signs of violence. He blamed Amarantha for not keeping the children under control. It was her fault that he had to cope with these violent moods. As always, Amarantha believed him. She exhausted herself to make life for her husband as convenient as possible. It became her second nature to apologize for what she did or said.

Two more girls were born. Amarantha dedicated herself fully to her wonderful brood. She considered herself the most blessed woman on earth to have received such special children. On her limited budget she fed and dressed them well. She bought and borrowed books for them. She taught them crafts and music. Throughout it all she shared with them her great love for the Lord. They would have been the happiest family, if it were not for Baldwin's increasing moodiness.

Baldwyn was fired from his administrative job on the fifth birthday of their youngest child. After a short period of unemployment, he was hired as a janitor in the regional hospital. The family moved to a smaller, cheaper house in order to pay off some of their debts. Baldwin became very demanding. Most of the time he was not able to tolerate the children. During his outbursts of anger he would often throw their toys through the room, blaming Amarantha for raising miserable children.

Life would have turned quite dark for Amarantha at this point, had she not been a child of God. The Lord does not forget his oppressed children. Even before the light of relief begins to dawn for them, He has prepared a rescue plan. With the reins of times and events securely in his hands, He delivers each of his children from the powers of darkness. The Lord is faithful.

In his faithfulness He looked after Amarantha. The move to the small house proved to be a glimmer of light for her. For the first time in their married life they lived within walking distance from a family of their congregation. When the two couples first introduced themselves to each other after church, Amarantha felt an immediate affinity with Clara. A very close friendship sprung up between the two women, in spite of Baldwin's disapproval. Amarantha and Clara stimulated each other creatively with craft projects and small home improvements. They drove to their Bible study group together. They took each other's children to the library and swimming lessons.

Most importantly, they talked. Clara was a very astute observer. From the start she had noticed that Baldwin was a very self-serving, demanding head of the family. She was appalled about his extreme control over Amarantha, the more so when it appeared that Amarantha was not even aware of it.

Amarantha started to blossom. She discovered talents within herself that had been dormant all her life. With contagious enthusiasm she applied herself to all the new challenges and opportunities. The family flourished.

Except Baldwin. He became increasingly angry when he realized that he was losing his grip on Amarantha. He threatened his wife with leaving her. He accused her of neglecting him. He tried to sabotage her friendship with Clara. His disturbed infatuation with his wife turned into an obsession to destroy her blossoming personality.

The home became a battlefield of souls. To the outside world all things continued to look normal. The family participated in church activities and the children did well in school. But inside the home the battle was demoralizing and draining. It

paralyzed everyone in the family. As Amarantha became emotionally worn out, she became unreasonable in her expectations of the children. Sometimes she was outright hostile to Baldwin. In turn Baldwin, who was coping with the loss of the fantasized version of his wife, became obnoxious and uncommunicative. Clara and her husband stood by helplessly.

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***Immediately the weight
of the marriage was
taken away.***

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Baldwin's threats to leave his wife became more frequent and intense. It made Amarantha very nervous. It was difficult to live with her husband, but the thought of not living with him choked her. Then, one morning, she found his wedding band on the counter in the bathroom. Suddenly her plan for the day seemed meaningless. She started to cry. Her stomach turned into a knot. When he finally showed up late at night, he ignored her obvious distress. Being confronted with the ring, he shrugged about the fuss she made over such trifle. Did she not trust him?

That night Amarantha could not sleep. Her stomach was still turning. Her eyes hurt from crying. Her head was throbbing. An enormous weight on her chest made her breathing laborious. Beside her Baldwin was sleeping.

Amarantha felt a strong urge to do something about her impossible situation. Not knowing what to do, she left the bed and looked for refuge in the bathroom. She stared at her wedding ring. It elegantly enhanced her shapely finger. As in a trance, she took it off and put it in a drawer. Immediately the weight of the marriage was taken away. Unburdened, she went back to bed and fell asleep.

The next morning she realized the folly of her nightly activity. She reprimanded herself, not only for mocking her vow made before the Lord and witnesses, but also for foolishly thinking that taking

off her wedding ring would change her miserable condition.

Ironically, the ring removal became a ceremonial addiction. When the weight of her marriage oppressed her to the point of choking, she unburdened herself by taking off her ring. After a sacred moment of peace she voluntarily took on the yoke again by sliding the ring back on her finger.

For several years the ring ceremony provided her with sufficient relief to continue. But the unholy ceremony wore out. One day Amarantha left her ring off. She had escaped from her prison.

To her astonishment she realized that she was not free at all. The burden of her marriage started to become overwhelmingly large and oppressive. There was no strength left in her to be faithful to her marriage vows. But in her weakness she understood. The Lord will give her strength to continue. She must trust Him. His solutions are unimaginable. Not only is He able to change circumstances, He also changes hearts.

Without delay she went to her bathroom drawer. Holding up the ring she looked at herself in the mirror in a moment of deep reflection. On her own she would not be able to keep her vows. She looked up at her ring, the ring of her faithfulness to Baldwin. She shuddered. She could not put it on. Not in her own strength.

Then, before God and with the angels as witnesses, she slid the ring on her finger again. With a deep sigh she surrendered to her Lord and Keeper. Solemnly she uttered her acceptance of the Lord's faithfulness to her. "Lord, this ring shows your faithfulness to me. You will give me the strength to take on my marriage. You will give me the wisdom to build a new house on the ruins of the old. You will fill me with love. You will make me able and willing to wear this ring as sign of your faithfulness. Amen."

Amarantha had received the love, peace and strength to take up her task and follow her Lord. God is faithful.

"I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD." Hosea 2:20



Children among the rubble:

SEXUAL LIBERATION HURTS KIDS

by Michael Wagner

Fire plays an important role in people's lives, both for good and ill. It helps to heat homes in the winter, but if things go wrong it can also burn those homes down. In its proper place it fills an essential function, but out of place it becomes destructive and even deadly. The usefulness or dangerousness of fire depends on whether or not it is under control.

Similarly, sexuality can be very beneficial and creative, or on the other hand rather destructive. It's socially beneficial to the degree it's used according to the rules stipulated by God in His Word. Within marriage sex leads to the existence of a godly seed and the strengthening of the bond between the husband and wife. A new generation of children emerges supported by the adults who care for them and each other. This is the pattern of family life that leads to human flourishing and wellbeing.

Sex must be constrained

Outside of marriage sex remains powerful, but not socially beneficial. Instead, it leads to problems both for the individuals involved as well as the society in which they live. As Barry Maley puts it in *Family & Marriage in Australia* (Centre for Independent Studies, 2001), "The strength of the sex drive is such that without forms of sociocultural channeling and constraint it can rapidly become socially disruptive and sometimes threatening to other individuals." The proper constraints (namely the Seventh Commandment) channel sexual behavior so that it's healthy, constructive and creative.

However, the Western countries are currently in the grip of an entirely different

idea, one that views those constraints as oppression. The Sexual Revolution of the 1960s was the turning point, where large numbers of people began to abandon traditional morality. It became intellectually fashionable to view traditional morality as hampering proper mental health. In order for people to be truly happy and well-integrated, it was necessary to liberate them from the sexual constraints of the past. "The cry against repression in favor of sexual liberation has, in the name of freedom of expression, trumped all attempts at restraint and modesty and effected a transformation in values and sexual mores."

American intervention

Currently the cutting edge of the continuing sexual revolution is the homosexual rights movement, a political movement defined exclusively by deviant sexual practices. In Canada its success has recently led to the legalization of same-sex marriage. During the controversy over same-sex marriage some Canadian media outlets pointed to the efforts of a couple of American-based

Christian organizations, such as Focus on the Family, as if such activity amounted to conservative American influence in otherwise liberally-oriented Canada. The implication was that American involvement was questionable if not illegitimate.

But what those media outlets didn't mention was the significant American influence in promoting the sexual revolution in Canada that had gone on for many years, primarily through the entertainment media, but also through other channels such as academia. Maley makes this point with regard to Australia, but the same would be true for Canada: "As America became the cultural leader of the English-speaking world, the intellectual content and practice of the sexual and cultural revolution in Australia were almost wholly derived from American models or from European originals filtered through the United States." If the media wants to highlight the influence of American Christian organizations in Canada's cultural struggles, it should also highlight the powerful socially left-wing influence emanating from the USA as well.

Freeing women from motherhood

In the fight for liberation from traditional morality, the sexual revolutionaries received cooperation from the feminists. The most extreme feminists, who Maley calls "gender feminists," see marriage as an institution designed by men to force women to serve them. In this view, marriage and motherhood have been used to subjugate women, and prevent them from participating in the most important affairs of life. "So, on the assumption that women share with men the same strong urge for



Old fashioned it might be, but the two parent family is still the best.

power and control, but have been denied the opportunities to express that urge by imprisonment in child-rearing and home production, the first and crucial step is relief for mothers from children and home in order to play a more active role in the outside world."

That is, women need to be liberated from marriage and from motherhood in order to live meaningful lives. Hence feminism's strong support for raising children in daycare centers. "The core proposition of gender feminism is that the emancipation of women is incompatible with motherhood, understood as caring for children. By extension, a traditional family life is inherently oppressive to women." Thus feminism (or at least the more extreme elements of feminism) works together with the cultural agents of the sexual revolution to break down traditional conceptions of marriage, the family, and sex.

One major component of the gender feminist view is the denial of biological factors on human behavior. They say the frequent differences in the roles of men and women are culturally constructed and don't reflect natural inclinations. In other words, it's the social environment that accounts for the different roles of men and women in society. Thus in this view, it is possible for women to become "equal" to men by changing the social environment.

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In this view, marriage and motherhood have been used to subjugate women. . .

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As Maley points out, this line of thinking inevitably leads in a totalitarian direction. "Complete preoccupation with engineering the social environment thus becomes the objective, since it is the supreme causative agent of behavioral and

social differences. In this are the seeds of a monstrous tyranny, since the preferred agent of change, the only institution with the coercive power to reach to the heart of civil society in a program of manipulation and social engineering, is the state. Logically, therefore, it is the state which must take over the entire care and education of children lest, according to gender feminism, the inherently corrupt, 'patriarchal' family continues to do what it has always done – instruct its children and reproduce a culture which is destined to oppress and subjugate women."

The price children pay

Aside from this threat of social engineering, however, the sexual revolution and feminism have already wreaked considerable havoc on the traditional family. Certain trends throughout the developed English-speaking countries make this clear. In the last thirty to forty years there has been a dramatic increase in the incidence of divorce; more marriages are breaking up. An increasing number of couples are "cohabiting" rather than getting married. An ever larger percentage of children are being raised in single parent families, and so on.

A large amount of social science research has been conducted on these trends, and in every instance the evidence clearly demonstrates that each of the trends is harmful for children. For example, studies have shown that children whose parents divorce are more susceptible to psychiatric illnesses, as well as certain physical ailments. "Reduced educational performance by children of divorced and sole parents is one of the most consistent findings of a large body of research."

The research findings for children of single parent families is equally clear, and demonstrates that such arrangements are not as good for children as the traditional family. Indeed, even child abuse is notably more common in the "non-traditional" family forms. Maley summarizes this point by saying that "there is confirmation from studies in Australia and other English-speaking countries of the significantly

greater risks of child abuse as children, through divorce, separation and ex-nuptial parenting, move away from original two-parent families and into step/blended and sole parent families."

When people ignore God's program for human wellbeing (summarized in the Ten Commandments), their lives – and the lives of those they influence – will deteriorate, not improve. In throwing off the constraints of traditional (Biblical) morality, the lives of many people have suffered, especially children. Contrary to the claims of the sexual revolutionaries, sexual liberation makes life worse not better. And contrary to the claims of feminists who want children to be placed in daycares, "The simple unavoidable fact is that in normal circumstances a child's own parents are its best carers and anything else is second best." That's what the evidence demonstrates.

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In this are the seeds of a monstrous tyranny. . .

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Children have been the biggest losers from the sexual revolution, even when the mass murder of unborn children is left out of the picture. The legalization of abortion was itself, of course, a result of the sexual revolution. But even the lives of the children that are allowed to live have deteriorated in many instances. Abandoning traditional sexual morality and the traditional family hurts children because it often leads to situations where they are not raised by their mother and father, together. When examining research on this issue, "One crucial fact stands out. For the overwhelming majority of children their flourishing is very strongly associated with their parents staying together in a stable marriage while they are being raised." Since the sexual revolution has successfully opposed this form of family structure, it's the children who have borne the greatest cost.



A shirt a day...

The vision of the folks behind www.Abort73.com

by Jon Dykstra

“Hey, what’s with the shirt? What’s Abort73.com?”

“I could tell you, but better yet, why don’t you go online and check it out?”

On school campuses across the US, Canada, and even in England, students are showing up to class with shirts emblazoned with a distinctive “Abort73.com” logo. Each day they’re showing up wearing a different shirt, in a different style or different color, but all emblazoned with “Abort73.com” across the chest and back. Imagine, for a moment, what it would be like to sit behind someone who, day after day, was outfitted this way. Would you start getting a bit curious about this website? Would you want to know more? The name gives a bit of a hint as to what the site might be about, but it isn’t altogether clear – wouldn’t that get you even more curious?

Speaking up without saying a word

That’s the brilliance behind Abort73.com. Through repeated exposures, people who otherwise would never check out a pro-life website go to this one. Their curiosity compels them. Day after day, week after week, month after month, shirt after shirt, the same short web address – eventually curiosity has to get the best of them.

And that’s why so many are visiting the Abort73.com website – they had over 700,000 page views in just the last half of 2005.

These shirts are also an aid, and really an answer to prayer, to the many Christians who want to speak out against abortion but don’t feel equipped to do so. Perhaps you’re the type to get tongue-tied, or maybe you always think of just the right thing to say twenty minutes after the opportunity has passed you by. Maybe you’re worried that if you speak up no one will pay attention. Or perhaps you’re more worried at the

prospect that *everyone* might listen. Whatever the case might be, these shirts allow you to speak up without saying a word.

A two-step approach

Now traditionally pro-life t-shirts have been designed to make a statement all on their own – with slogans like “Abortion in Murder” or “Choose life - Your mother did” – but these Abort73 shirts don’t even try to educate. As they put it:

“The evidence in the case against abortion is too vast to be adequately communicated on a single t-shirt or bumper sticker. You can communicate an opinion, but you can’t communicate much in the way of fact. The Internet, however, offers a remarkably effective way to dynamically distribute massive amounts of information. All the facts, all the evidence, all of the research and source material can be easily compiled and distributed across the globe, offering visitors an exhaustive abortion education. When they leave the Abort73 website, they will not just be leaving with our *opinion*, they will be leaving with all the *facts* that brought us to that opinion. That makes a big difference. The trick, of course, is to get people to the website who wouldn’t normally be giving any thought to abortion. To that end, we offer a wide range of Abort73 Gear. . . . We recognize that our approach is a two-step process (see the shirt, go to the website), but since the alternative is unlikely to change minds in any significant way, this is our best option. And it is an option that can be very effective.

Why not check it out?

The site itself is an innovative, video-driven answer to any question you could ever ask about abortion. It features both



concise, logic-driven articles and emotion provoking graphic pictures of aborted children. It is cutting edge and simply amazing. And now that your curiosity is piqued why don’t you go to www.Abort73.com and check it out? And while you’re there, why not order a shirt. . . or thirty?

On April 25 the US will celebrate its 4th annual National Pro-life T-Shirt Day.



*A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies will not escape.*

*A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies will perish.*

*A false witness will perish,
but the word of a man who hears will endure.*

Proverbs 19:5, 9 and 21:28

Your Sin Will Find You Out

by Christine Farenhorst

There is, of course, the story of the talking donkey as well as the tale of the ravens who fed Elijah. Both marvelous indications of how God controls all things and uses even dumb animals to praise Him and bring about His purposes. And there have been throughout the annals of history many stories about animals.

A dog among dogs

The Castle of Montargis stands in France. On the chimney of the great hall of the castle there is a sculpture of a dog – an English dog. The question of how this sculpture came about is answered by the following story which took place in the early 1200s.

A gentleman by the name of Aubri de Mondidier was traveling through the Forest of Bondi when he was set upon by a robber. Cruelly murdered, his body was buried beneath a tree. Mondidier's dog, an English bloodhound, escaped death. Although he loyally tried to defend his master, his bravery was to no avail. The murderer left the scene of his crime, but the dog did not. For days the animal guarded the crude and swiftly dug grave. At length, however, hungry and dejected, he arrived at the house of his dead master's friend. Howling at the door, the dog made such a spectacle of himself that all wondered what the matter might be. Letting the animal in, they fed the emaciated creature. Not content with



the food, however, the bloodhound ran back and forth, from hearth to the door and back again, over and over, pulling at the friend's sleeve, entreating the man to follow. The dog's persistence prevailed and the friend took his servants and followed the dog into the forest. Entering the profusion of trees, the animal showed no hesitation,

but after a long trek, led the party to a particular tree. Scratching the earth, a mournful howl sent chills up their spines and one of the group was sent back for a shovel. The subsequent digging revealed Aubri de Mondidier's body.

They meet again

After this time the dog lived with the friend and it so happened that the robber, or assassin, whose name was Macaire, visited the house one day. When the dog beheld the man, he flew at his throat, and had not several servants pulled the animal back, Macaire would have died. It should be noted that, on the whole, the dog was endowed with a very gentle nature. The children of the house romped with him and ladies petted him frequently. A lamb could not have been more mild. It was only when he saw Macaire, who continued to visit from time to time, that he became violent. The friend pondered on this. He reflected on the dog's conduct and the animal's obvious love for his late master Aubri. It was a fact that with the bloodhound's unerring guidance his grave had been uncovered. And it puzzled him exceedingly how a dog with such a sweet nature could harbor such an obvious hatred for Macaire. He spoke to others about the unusual circumstances and about the fact that he mistrusted Macaire. In the long run, the story reached the ears of the King – Louis VIII.

Louis VIII, much interested in the story, had the dog brought to him. He then sat with the creature in a room for some time. The dog was quiet, obedient to commands and playful. But as soon as Macaire was escorted in, on orders of the King, the hair on the dog's back bristled, his fangs showed, and he leaped towards the man in such fierceness that it took several soldiers to hold him back from killing the fellow.

Louis was intrigued and became convinced there was something unusual in the fact that Aubri's dog felt this hatred. He consequently commanded that a battle should be fought to determine Macaire's innocence before God of the murder of Aubri de Mondidier. It mattered not that Macaire pleaded not guilty, and that he swore with tears that he had not killed anyone.

"I refer my decision," Louis VIII said to the accused and to his courtiers, "to battle. Indeed, battle between Macaire and the dog. It shall take place," he went on, "in the Isle of Notre Dame."

He thought for a while before he continued.

"And these shall be the stipulations. Macaire shall be given a great cudgel as a weapon. He shall defend himself with this cudgel and thus prove his innocence. The dog shall be given an empty cask – a house of sorts – to give him a place where he might be sheltered for a moment to catch his breath. Prepare these things and we shall see what will happen."

Dog-tired

The Isle of Notre Dame was, at this time, an unenclosed, uninhabited place. It did not take long for the king's conditions to be met. And so, shortly afterwards, Macaire and the dog were brought face to face on the Isle of Notre Dame. When the dog was loosed, he immediately began to stalk Macaire. Macaire wielded his cudgel carefully, skillfully. But no matter how he aimed and struck, he always missed the bloodhound. The dog leaped, crouched, ran and dodged and avoided every blow

that Macaire struck. Eventually Macaire became exhausted. At this point the animal sprang forward, gripped his opponent by the throat and threw him on the ground. Immediately, knowing that he would surely die if there was no intervention, Macaire confessed to the murder of Aubri de Mondidier. The king and the entire court heard the confession and the king motioned that his soldiers should aid Macaire and escort him to the royal dais.

"By your acknowledgment, Monsieur," said the king, to the badly frightened and panting man, "you confess to murder. I will spare you the shameful death by a dog, but die you shall!"

A few days later Macaire was beheaded on a scaffold on the Isle of Notre Dame. The dog, on the other hand, lived a few years longer and had a good home at the long-time friend of his dead master.

In this new year. . .

The truth is that there are no dogs who watch the smaller and larger sins which we commit each day. But there is an Almighty and All Seeing Creator God Who is aware of all we say and do down to every petty item of our existence. Like Macaire we should confess our guilt, humbly and on our knees – not to an earthly king but to our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness this coming new year of 2006, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, in this coming new year of 2006, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son will cleanse us from all sin. May 2006 be a year of true fellowship and light-walking.



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John Calvin has never read an issue he didn't like

What's wrong with Public Schools?

TEACHERS LIKE THIS!

by Ron Gray

Listening to CBC Radio's *Ideas* recently, I heard an interview that almost made my blood boil. Michael Enwright was interviewing Frank McCourt, the author of *Teacher Man* – memoirs of his years as a high school teacher.

What infuriated me was McCourt's bald statement that, in order to be perceived by the students as their "friend," he often and openly sided with kids *against* their parents. McCourt's way of presenting himself to the teens as their "friend" was most often to help them keep secrets from their parents. . . to conspire with them to treat the parents as enemies.

Teachers vs. parents

If there was ever a clear indication of what's wrong with government-run, taxpayer-funded compulsory "schools," this was it: its toleration – even celebration – of teachers who deliberately and systematically undermine the relationship between students and their parents.

When those teachers are Sixties-era liberals – aging flower-children, with their graying ponytails who still adhere to a discredited ideological commitment to Marxism or postmodernism, and their knee-jerk opposition to traditional morality – this stance becomes both anti-social and dangerous.

Children are required by law to be in school; that makes them a captive audience. That's why the B.C. Teachers' Federation (the teachers' union), in its Code of Ethics, says that the classroom must not be used for indoctrination. Hah! Yet the BCTF at its 1999 annual meeting passed a resolution calling for teachers to include, in every subject and

at every grade level from Kindergarten to Grade 12, materials that are "anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist."

Paying our opponents

Parents and other citizens must support those schools with their taxes – even if they choose to home-school, or to spend extra money to send their children to independent and Christian schools; they thus become compulsory donors of funds for the promulgation of ideas with which most of them disagree – precisely Thomas Jefferson's definition of "tyranny."

Thus almost the whole youth population of Canada is systematically delivered up to tax-funded indoctrination centers for brainwashing, regardless of their parents' wishes.

And what they are being taught is rarely subject to parental scrutiny or control. A subversive like Frank McCourt has virtual free reign. And a fellow "flower child" like Michael Enwright will use the public airwaves, paid for by the taxpayers and abused parents of the nation, to *celebrate* his subversion of morality and respect.



Do we understand just how messed up, just how evil the public school system is?

Forget the 3 R's

So what *are* our children learning? They're being taught that unhealthy, unnatural and immoral sexual perversions are "normal," and should be respected and celebrated. They're being taught that their parents – and all previous generations – are ignorant, racist bigots and exploiters. They're being told that killing an inconvenient baby is a "right" – at least up to the time it is born; and, indeed, some university professors like Peter Singer – a tenured professor at Princeton – teach that it should be legal to kill babies up to the age of two or three years after they have been born.

They're *not* being taught to read, write and calculate: a recent study showed that a quarter of high-school graduates are virtually illiterate and innumerate. And they're certainly not being taught to think logically; nor are they being taught history, nor how their government works, nor the foundations of moral behavior.

Universities – in Canada and around the world – now present courses in what is euphemistically called "intergenerational sex" (in fact, it's an attempt to justify pedophilia), in pornography, and in revisionist history that trashes the reputations of those who built western civilization and our nation, trashing them and the Biblical ideas that motivated them.

This kind of subversion is anarchic, destructive, and evil. It's exactly what's wrong with government-monopoly "public" schools.

Ron Gray is the leader of the Christian Heritage Party



Restorative Justice

What is it?

Why is it better than the justice system we have now?

by Johan D. Tangelder

When Jane Creba was murdered in Toronto on Boxing Day 2005, politicians reacted with their predictable “get tough policy.” Politicians seem to feed on the rise of violence in Canada’s big cities. They promise to ban all guns, to lock up criminals, slam the prison doors shut and throw away the keys. Aside from kissing babies, visiting kindergartens and bribing the electorate with expensive programs, talking tough on crime is certainly the most popular political pastime.

Unfortunately, politicians often offer simple answers to complex problems – and the public is eager to accept them. Even many Christians have joined in the chorus calling for severe punitive treatment of all offenders. But the crisis in the Canadian criminal justice system is serious and tough talk alone won’t solve it.

More prisons? Longer sentences?

Is a tough no-holds-barred attitude to crime the answer? Does the law-and-order approach of more prisons and longer sentences work in the real world of victims, offenders, and communities?

I don’t believe so.

The problem is that this approach is merely an outgrowth of our postmodern philosophy of criminal justice. The current justice system ignores the victims of crime and instead focuses on offenders, asking



Are longer sentences the best way to deal with crime?

why they broke the law, and how they should be punished so that they won’t commit a crime again.

.....

Politicians often offer simple answers to complex problems.

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But when a crime is committed victims suffer from emotional trauma or perhaps a physical injury or material losses. Yet they are the forgotten parties in the criminal justice system. Too often victims are excluded from any meaningful participation in the criminal justice process – they typically receive no payment for their losses and have no say in the plea-bargaining. The only role they are given is as witnesses.

For some victims it is a real shock to see the system not working for them. Who is the system for? The justice system seems less concerned about the victim’s losses and emotional pain than with processing the case of the offender. C.S. Lewis comments in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* that in our age criminal law increasingly protects the criminal and ceases to protect his victim. “One might fear that we are moving towards a Dictatorship of the Criminals or (what is perhaps the same thing) mere anarchy.”

Instead of seeking justice for the victim our system focuses only on “rehabilitating the criminal.” So at times murderers are let out on bail and are given extremely light sentences because the judges “feel” the offenders will not repeat their crimes.

Is this justice?

It is clear that we need to change our criminal justice system but as attractive as it might seem, simply calling for tougher sentences isn’t the answer. A far more radical, and far more biblical perspective would involve changing sentencing to allow non-violent offenders to pay back society.

Human Dignity

Regardless of what kind of crime committed, a criminal deserves the dignity of being held accountable for his actions, and paying his debt to the victim and society. If

the wrong they committed can be righted, we shouldn't deny criminals the responsibility and opportunity to do so.

This may sound strange, but I tell you we do great damage to our society when we allow people to refuse to take responsibility for their actions. Such a denial dehumanizes a person. Ultimately lack of punishment undermines one's dignity as a moral, responsible human being. To be punished because we have deserved it, because we "ought to have known better," is to be treated as a human person made in God's image. We are personally responsible for our actions.

The biblical view of taking responsibility for one's actions is often forgotten in our therapeutic society. Despite the rise of crime and violence, many people still believe in the basic goodness of man. Evil acts are not evil. Problems arise from social conditions rather than inherent moral corruption. Blame society! The root cause of crime is unemployment, racism, poverty, or mental illness. Ramsey Clark, Attorney General under Lyndon Johnson, wrote, "Healthy, rational people will not injure others." Since people are essentially good, social or psychiatric causes are found for their antisocial behavior. The lesson is clear: *the fault lies not in ourselves.*

But are people naturally good? When we see ourselves in the light of the cross of Christ, we can't deny our own sinful nature. Criminals, not society, are the cause of crime. Poverty, racism, oppression, and substance abuse cannot be summarily dismissed as contributing factors to crime. Nor can they be tolerated in society. But they do not make people commit crimes. If we have lost the quality of life, it is because we do not obey the Creator's constitutional order for society. This is not a popular thing to say today. Sin makes us seek ourselves at the expense of our neighbor. The apostle Paul tells us what we can expect in a society like ours. If men are not lovers of God, their society will be made up of lovers of self, lovers of pleasure, lovers of money,

What is Crime?

If we want to create a better justice system we must first understand what crime is. But how do we define crime? Many Christians mistakenly assume that their country's legal code is somehow tied to or based on clear moral principles or even divine law. However, the definition of crime in each country is a relative matter that changes with the whims of legislative bodies. Any conduct may be declared criminal or made legal. For example, homosexuality, polygamy, and prostitution are crimes in some nations but not in others.

The definition of crime is also culturally fluid. In Saudi Arabia it is a criminal offence to conduct a Christian worship service. In *Truth Decay* Douglas Groothuis tells the story of a Laotian Hmong immigrant in his thirties. This man kidnaps a seventeen-year-old woman as part of the accepted marriage-by-capture practice of the Hmongs. Groothuis comments that this forces the postmodernist in a sharp dilemma. The American legal system considers kidnapping a crime and not the equivalent of matrimony. But who is right? Whose law is the right law?

In Canada crime is viewed only as an offense against the state, not as an injury to the victim or community. So our justice system does not require that victims get repaid, or that offenders make things right, or that the community take responsibility for justice done.

The Bible has a different perspective. Crime is primarily an offense against human relationships – a specific person has been hurt, or scammed or defrauded. Crime then is when offenders break the harmony that is to exist between them and their victim, their community, and God. The Biblical response to crime aims to restore right relationships – shalom – between the affected parties. Instead of simply "doing time" the criminal has to take responsibility for his actions, seek reconciliation and make restitution.

and haters of good (2 Tim 3:1-7). Charles Colson and Daniel Van Ness state in *Convicted: New Hope for Ending America's Crime Crisis*, "No matter what its aggravating causes, there is only one teapot of crime. It is not some sociological phenomenon; it is sin. Though men and women have essential dignity and value, we are predisposed toward evil choices."

Restorative Justice

A biblical perspective of criminal justice is punishment to fit the crime, not the criminal. One doesn't punish an offence, a crime, but always a human being. Punishment does something either for good or ill.

A relatively new approach to criminal justice is the restorative justice movement. Charles Colson and his organization, Prison Fellowship, have taken the lead in advocating this approach. Colson wrote a book *Justice That Restores* in which he argues that

attending to the victim's safety needs and attending to his injuries or damages means that the victim is as important as the offender in the Restorative Justice system. This system includes principles such as promoting the rights of victims in the legal process, giving them a voice in the proceedings, and encouraging offenders to reconcile with their victims. The object of restorative justice is to repair the moral and social order God called us to live in.

Justice is more than handing out a sentence; it is also about caring and serving. It involves compensation for losses, and assisting victims as they attempt to reestablish their sense of personal security. The criminal justice process should leave victims satisfied that their rights have been vindicated, not that they have been ignored or, even worse, made out to be the villains. The wrongdoers are punished and the victims are helped.

Restitution

Unfortunately restorative justice is often accused of being soft on crime because under this system fewer criminals would be locked up. We do need prisons for dangerous offenders. But I believe a nonviolent offender should be working in community service, paying back those he wronged, learning to contribute as a responsible member of society rather than sitting idly in an expensive prison cell, growing bored and bitter. Performing free service is an excellent way for nonviolent offenders to pay this “debt to society.”

One of the most creative ways of administering justice involves the concept of restitution. God is determined to restore right relationships to all who will accept his restoration (all who believe). Wrong cannot simply be passed over. This Biblical response to crime aims at restoring right relationships between the affected parties. Restitution – paying back the victim – is essential to the process. It has its origin in the Old Testament. God told Moses while elaborating on the Ten Commandments that if a man stole an ox or a sheep, “he shall make restitution for it” (Exodus 22:3). The New Testament tells the story of the corrupt tax collector Zaccheus, who repented of his greed and extortion. He promised to repay fourfold to anyone he had cheated (Luke 19:1-10). His restitution did more than financially compensate his victims. It helped restore the *shalom* – the peaceful relationship – that had been broken. Zaccheus did not pay a fine to the state for his wrongdoing. He repaid his victims.

What does restitution involve? A first step in the restoration process and healing for both victim and offender is to recognize a wrong was done. Restitution is not meant to minimize the offense nor overlook the safety and needs of the victim. True restitution will recognize the injustice, make agreement to restore the equity as much as possible and plan for an accountable future in which the trespass does not reoc-

cur. On the basis of redemption, criminals are called to repent of their crimes and, as far as possible, to restore what they have damaged. Regardless all the efforts put into implementing the concept of restorative justice, a call for repentance of sin, faith in Christ and conversion are essential.

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Restorative justice is often accused of being soft on crime.

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These are the most important factors for change. Offenders need to hear that through His death on the cross, Jesus bore our punishment and brought reconciliation for all who believe in Him. For example, every prisoner in Colson’s Prison Fellowship program has to follow the path of repentance, restoration and public apologies to victims that is described in the gospel story of Zaccheus.

Role of the Church

In Matthew 25 our Lord tells His followers to care for prisoners and to visit them. Christians, who are specifically called to care for the bruised and broken of society, can offer hope to people touched by crime. The most essential element of any real change in the criminal justice system is the



hope and transforming power of the Gospel. Churches, therefore, should have active prison ministries to provide for the men and women who show a desire for the message of salvation, the means which alone can totally rehabilitate them. But this ministry also includes caring for offenders, both during and after their incarceration. The families of offenders also need help and encouragement. And emotional and practical support should be available for the victims of crime.

We can make a difference in the crime crisis. Often ordinary people can be used in extraordinary ways. We should be informed on criminal justice issues. We should pray for those touched by crime – victims and offenders – and those who work in the criminal justice system. And when we are involved in prison ministry, we must always remember it is only by the grace of God that we are who we are. We too are prone to sin and wrongdoing.

Professionally Prepared Fun

It may be safer, but is it better?

by Sharon L. Bratcher

When I was 17 our church youth group went on a weekend winter retreat.

I don't remember what we studied, although I'm sure I paid attention at the time, but what I do remember is this: we played hide and seek in the pine trees under a moonlit sky at 1 a.m., a couple of my friends started going steady, and we had the absolute best snowtubing I ever experienced!

It all started with about 15 kids and about 5 inner tubes at the top of a hill not far from the lodge where we were staying. A couple of the guys went down first, paving a path that avoided a large tree along the way. With their instructions, we began taking turns. The trick was to hold onto the branch of the pine tree at the top of the hill so as to arc safely around the next tree before zooming down to the bottom. Then it was necessary to get out of the way before the rest of the "avalanche" arrived. We enjoyed our turns for awhile, but it got old after that. Pretty soon we started piling two people on each inner tube. Then came the chains and trains of connected tubes, with colorful arms and legs connecting every which way, and girls' squeals probably reaching all the way into town. The next thing we knew, we had all 5 tubes connected, and the rest of the 15 would pile on at the last second, caring little as to exact location. Someone stood near that large tree to give a mighty shove-away, and we screamed our heads off as we careened down the hill, bodies flying off left and right face down into snowbanks. We came up covered with white, laughing at our predicaments. We paid little attention to cold toes and fingers, wet clothes or legs

that eventually ached from climbing back up the hill. The next ride – with all its new creative format, was all that was on our minds.

Eventually we were called inside to hot mugs of cocoa and calmer activities; but the memories never ended.

The next week our family drove to a lake; we all worked hard clearing off a section and then skated. We cracked the whip, raced, did figure 8s, and shot a hockey puck around for a little while. It was a little bumpy, but skates were always more fun than boots, and the "ice pond" was something we had made ourselves, so we left feeling satisfied.

The cost? \$0, although of course someone had to own the inner tubes and the skates in the first place.

Waiting for the fun

Now I have my own kids and I live in a different city, but I remember those winter activities fondly. So I gather up my kids and their friends and we head for an approved, safe, sledding location. Yessir, for only \$16 per person (with a coupon!) we get to "tube" for 3 hours on a weeknight (more \$ on weekends).

First, we pay, and then we sign the legal waivers which explain the risks involved in tubing, and absolve the establishment of all responsibility in case of injury or death. Then we get a tube with a long loop on its pull rope, and get in line. After about 20 minutes (depending on the size of the crowd), we sit down on our tubes, and the loop is hooked to a cable that pulls us to the top of the hill. At the top, we wait patiently for our turns. A list of rules and regulations

adorn the fence and the attendant walkie-talkies his co-worker for the all-clear signal. Finally we are seated and ready, and pushed, and WOW! What a ride! I spin and scream all the way down. "Woo-hoo!" the kids shout. At the bottom, two more attendants help us off the tubes and toss them to the side. We get off, laughing and comparing stories, and head for the line once again. Twenty more minutes of waiting.

After a few times of waiting, a couple of the kids start a snowball fight. "Not allowed," barks the attendant. I have someone hold my place in line while I help some kids build a little snow fort over to the side, just to help keep them busy. One young attendant smiles. An older one says we're in the way of his snowmobile.

The next time down, a couple more kids disappear after the ride. They're tired of waiting in line, though they enjoy the thrill itself. I find them inside playing in the video arcade. Mine know better than to ask for money for this option, but they watch longingly. I drag everyone back out to the hill for more rides. "You paid \$16 for this – you *will* get your money's worth."

A week later I agree to take them all ice-skating at the local indoor rink. With coupons, it costs about \$5.00 each plus a skate rental of about \$2.00. Everyone enjoys skating for awhile. Around and around we go, in a counter-clockwise manner, with striped employees keeping watch over the behavior, for safety's sake. My own personal enjoyment is lessened by the blaring rock music which I assume is there to keep them from getting bored or having to make conversation with one another. Again I make

rounds to drag them out of the video arcade to actually spend their time skating.

Safety first?

Now, being that I am “fifty-ish,” I have to admit to enjoying the ride back up the hill at the tubing place – it allows me to participate longer than I would if I had to climb it. I wouldn’t want to actually get into shape. And it’s nice to have the skating rink already prepared when we get there. And as a mother, I certainly don’t want my kids to ever get hurt, so safety is a good idea, right?

Similar situations could be cited concerning riding tricycles and bicycles on the sidewalk *without* helmets (how did we ever survive going all the way around the block?) or *with* them (“it’s just too sweaty to deal with, Mom – I’m going inside”). The kids cannot climb the trees in the park, but instead have to climb on monkey bars with foam rubber pads pieced together beneath them. Another example regards visiting a beach by ourselves versus one that has lifeguards and numerous rules: don’t dig a deep hole, don’t go past the buoy, don’t go past the line, don’t play ball or Frisbee except in the designated area (far from your chairs), don’t bring cans or bottles onto the beach, and don’t sass the 18 year old lifeguard who has your fun in his hands (oops!).

Whenever there is a crowd of people involved in an activity, there must be rules. If half of the people decided to go clockwise on a rink, it would be chaos and there would be injuries. If no one watched for the hill to be cleared, we’d be bouncing people right into the hospital, and it wouldn’t be like a comical movie, either. And the lifeguards can only watch so much territory, and need not be distracted by umbrella-clad people falling into 4 foot deep holes dug by enthusiastic teen boys.

Have we lost something?

I just wonder what we have lost by needing to have professionally prepared fun. For one thing, some of us lost the ability to turn right on an ice rink. We lost some of the harder aspects – the work, and the sweat. Was that good for us? We lost a sense of personal responsibility and forgiveness when lawsuits be-

.....
***We
screamed
our heads
off as we
careened
down the
hill. . . .***



gan scaring municipalities and resorts. And we lost the spontaneity, for these items became cost prohibitive so that they are only an occasional treat rather than a regular pastime. Our children lost some opportunities to organize and invent their own fun. We lost creativity and freedom (though I admit that might have been a good idea in some cases). We lost the confidence that comes from trying, climbing and running fast without being constantly reminded to “be careful” because we might fall. We gained ease, but along with it came boredom and timidity.

.....
***Why do people so
desperately need to
know that their children
are safe?***

It seems to me that the search for security is also at the root of it all. Why do people so desperately need to know that their children are safe? Is it because they heard on the news about so and so and the accident that happened just last year? Is it because they are intensely afraid of pain possibly inhibiting their goal of their child’s every moment being a happy one? Is it because they always want someone they can blame? Is it because they do not know God and are afraid of death?

In all of our actions, we Christians acknowledge a fine line between being re-

sponsible and trusting in God’s Sovereignty. Where does the application of the sixth commandment to “not kill,” which includes taking care of ourselves, end? And where does our knowledge that our Almighty God and Loving Father watches over us begin?

Certainly we don’t let our five-year-old ride a bike in the middle of a highway to see what will happen! But neither do we need to be full of fear for our 13-year-old to walk to the store alone, as though God will not protect her.

In the movie *Gods and Generals* about the American Civil War, the faith of General Stonewall Jackson is emphasized. He was asked why he was able to sit calmly on his horse “like a stone wall” in the midst of battle with cannonballs flying to the left and right of him. He replied that his life was so securely in the hands of his God that he was just as safe out there on the battlefield as in his own bed.

No matter how hard we try, we are still not in control of our lives or our children’s lives either. A few years ago my friend opposed getting a trampoline for her family because she was afraid that her kids would fall off and get hurt. She finally relented and the family greatly enjoyed the trampoline. During that summer one of her children was running across the lawn and he fell down and broke his arm. Another broke hers by falling off of a bunk bed. Go figure.

Snowtubing, skating, biking, swimming, jumping, running, climbing. Sure, we should be careful. But we do not need to be overly anxious.





**Tidbits relevant,
and not so,
to Christian life**

by Jon Dykstra

I've failed and been failed by the people I
love
But your beautiful arms they surround me
And any other soul who has to sail those
seas
Of a broken family

Been so many times that I've been close to
rock bottom
Trying to look for answers but nobody's
got 'em
Like the time my mother looked me in the
eye

Trying not to cry, telling me the cancer
might cause her to die
How can this be, I thought that God loved
me?

So why would he try to take my mother
from me?
And as I cry myself to sleep at night,
holding on my pillow tight
He spoke to me and said that everything's
gonna be alright

So I tried to fight all the pain that it
caused
Try to move on and I try to stay strong
So put your hands up, hey, if ya'll are
feeling me

And put your hands up for everyone to see
So put your hands up, we all a family
So put your hands up, in unity, in unity

I've been there too
When everything falls apart and the best
you can do is
Get through each day wondering will this
never end?

Is it always going to be this way?
And the greatest lie you've ever been told
is that

You're the only one to ever walk on this
road
And that you'll never see the light of
dawn, so we came together to say

Hold on
Cuz we've been there and found our way
home

We promise you that you're not on your
own
One day this will pass, God will see us all
through

God will see us all through
God will see us all pass through

Quote of the month

"I believe in Christianity as I believe
that the sun has risen: not only because I
see it, but because by it I see everything
else." – C.S. Lewis

Strange. . . and a bit sad

An email making its way around the Internet notes the perplexing priorities we Christian have. Isn't it strange, the email asks:

- how \$10 hardly seems like much money. . . until the church collection plate comes around?
- that we so easily believe the news in the paper but have doubts about what it says in the Bible?
- that we often have so much to tell our friends. . . but don't know what to say to God in prayer?
- that we can read a bestseller in one sitting, but often find it difficult to read a chapter each night from the Bible?
- that we can always find time to go out with our friends. . . but can't seem to find time for a home visit?
- that we have no trouble passing on the latest tidbit of juicy news, but find it so difficult to pass on the Good News?

Weird fact of the month

Identical twins have exactly the same DNA...but different fingerprints.

SOURCE: Dr. David Menton "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" DVD

Every year God reaches out

Genesis 22 is a strange chapter – in it God seems to ask Abraham for a human sacrifice, Abraham's son Isaac – but have you ever considered how much stranger this chapter would be to a Jew? On an edition of the CNN talk show *Larry King Live* Jewish Rabbi Harold Kushner was asked for his thoughts about this chapter and he couldn't provide an explanation: "The story

of Genesis chapter 22 about the command to sacrifice Isaac is one I have never really been happy with. I'm sorry that we read about it every year at the High Holidays because I can never make sense of it. . . no, I don't know what to do about that story. . . " Fortunately another guest on the show, Protestant pastor John MacArthur, was there to provide a proper explanation: "I think the reason that, if all you accept is the Old Testament, you have a problem with this story of Isaac is because the story of Isaac is a picture of God giving his son Jesus Christ as an offering for sin."

We Christians can understand this passage as a foreshadowing of what was to come, and can see how God offered up what Abraham was never required to – His Son. But to a Jew this passage is inexplicable, and yet every year on the High Holy Day of Rosh Hashonah Jews read this passage aloud and ponder it. Of all the passages they could read, the one they do read every year, year after year, again and again is a passage that makes no sense outside of Christ.

Our God is a loving God.

Song lyric of the month

STORIES (DOWN TO THE BOTTOM)

by Superchic[k]

I never knew that it would feel like this
When the two that raised you up call it
quits

Nobody told me 'bout the emptiness
When the place you call home is closed for
business

I push the pain down, I gotta get by
Always knowing in my heart that it ain't
gonna fly

Rock bottom's never felt so near before
And if pain is God's megaphone it's loud
and clear

So hold me now Father, human love ain't
enough

BELEATED REALIZATION

Dinosaurs ate grass – Scientists eat crow

by Margaret Helder

Have you ever tried to imagine what a world without grasses would look like? The scenery might well look pretty bleak, with extensive patches of bare soil. We see good examples of this in illustrations of dinosaurs in their natural surroundings – scientists have long declared that there were no grasses present in dinosaur communities. The plant-eating dinosaurs had to make do, we have been assured, with cycads, ferns, horsetails and trees of flowering plants such as palms and magnolias.

Today however, grasses (which are also flowering plants), actually contribute far more than beauty to the environment. They represent extremely important sources of nutrition. Indeed, our whole ecosystem could well crash if grasses disappeared. This group of plants includes sedges, bamboo, barley, oats, fescue and timothy grasses, rice, millet, sorghum and corn among other others. What large grazing animal does not depend upon one or other of these sources of nutrition?

Nevertheless, scientists have steadfastly maintained that large grazing dinosaurs survived without grasses. This view will certainly be re-evaluated in the light of a November 2005 article on dinosaur diets which appeared in the journal *Science*.

20/20 retrospect

In retrospect, scientists may well decide that it makes sense that dinosaurs ate grass. Many grasses grow continuously when they are grazed. Thus they provide a reliable source of food.

Ferns and cycads on the other hand, restrict growth to once per year. Cycads, which look like squashed down palms, have hard indigestible leaves much like those of conifers. Cycad seeds could well be eaten, but some contain poisonous compounds, at least to people. The stems might be good, but if it was eaten the plant might not survive to grow next year. Altogether, without grasses, the vegetation would be hard pressed to support gigantic grazing dinosaurs.

.....

Evolutionary preconceptions can bias discovery.

.....

So, in retrospect, scientists say it makes sense that grass was present in communities with dinosaurs. The amazing teeth of the duckbill dinosaurs suggest that their lifestyles were similar to ungulate grazers (deer, bison, gazelles) that we know today.

There were also mammals (gondwanatherians) present, now extinct, which had teeth shaped much like today's grazers. Now it makes sense that the teeth of these mammals were used for eating grass; in hindsight it all seems so obvious. So why did it take so long for scientists to recognize the presence of grasses in these communities?

Missing from the fossil record

Scientists have long been aware that leaves and stems of the cycads, conifers, and ferns are common in the layers of rock which contain dinosaurs, but no grasses can be found. John Lindley (1799-1865) was one of the early experts who reflected on this situation. He wondered whether the fossil record conveys an accurate impression of plant life in the past. He set out to find some answers.

John Lindley was typical of many learned men of his time. He was interested in all aspects of his chosen discipline and consequently he was involved in many diverse pursuits. He was a botanist, specializing in orchid classification, a palaeobotanist interested in plant fossils, and he was a horticulturist. In 1829 Lindley was appointed to the chair of botany at University College, London, a post he held for thirty-one years. In his role as horticulturist, he developed the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Chiswick and started a school of horticulture there. In 1838 he wrote the report which saved the botanic garden at Kew from being abandoned. At the time, it was a neglected royal property. Lindley persuaded the Treasury branch to spend large sums of money to nationalize the property and of course to upgrade and maintain it. In keeping with his interest in plant fossils, Lindley and William Hutton co-authored a three volume work entitled *The Fossil Flora of Great Britain* (1831-1837). It was in conjunction with the writing of this work, that John Lindley carried out an interesting experiment.

Just add water

In March of 1833, John Lindley filled a huge tank with water. In it he immersed fungi and lichens, mosses, ferns, club mosses, cycads, conifers and flowering plants of various types. Since he was so closely connected to botanic gardens, he was able to obtain many exotic and tropical specimens for his experiment, as well as more typical English plants. The question this man was asking was, how does prolonged soaking with water affect plant remains. He allowed the experiment to sit for two years and then he examined the contents to see what was still present. Did all the plants last equally well in the water? This is what he found:

“This experiment appears to me to lead to the most important conclusions. These things seem clear: firstly that dicotyledonous plants [dicots], in general, are unable to remain for two years in water without being totally decomposed; and that the principal part of those which do possess the power, are the Coniferaid [conifers]

and Cycadae [cycads], which are exactly what we find in a Fossil state; secondly, that Monocotyledones [monocots] are more capable of resisting the action of water, in particular Palms and Scitamineous [group including bananas, ginger and arrowroot] plants, which are what we principally find as Fossils, but that Grasses and Sedges perish, so that we have no right to say that the earth was not originally clothed with Grasses because we no longer find their remains.”¹¹

.....

Scientists have maintained that large grazing dinosaurs survived without grasses.

.....

Based on this experiment, John Lindley concluded that the proportions of different plants that we see preserved as fossils, is a function of their resistance to decay. The absence of grass fossils from a given layer of rock was not to be taken as an indication that grasses hadn't existed at that time.

But what about the spores?

Lindley's experiment explained why grasses weren't found in the fossil record – they decayed too quickly to be fossilized – however plant spores and pollen are much more resistant to decay. If grasses were around in the past, why was grass pollen not identified in sediments with the dinosaurs?

There are few issues in palaeontology as controversial as the study of fossil pollen grains. At first sight it is hard to understand why this should be. The facts of the matter are that spores and pollen grains are made of an exceedingly tough organic compound called sporopollenin. It so happens that these outer coverings are characteristically shaped and decorated in ways which make it easy to tell the plant that released them.

Because the sporopollenin is so tough, these small artifacts can be concentrated from sediment samples by means of treatment that uses strong acids or alkalis to dissolve away everything else. Obviously this technique provides a wonderful way to establish the presence of plant material in sediments which lack large plant fossils.

Ignoring the evidence

None of this, of course, is controversial. What is controversial is the suggestion that these pollen grains came from plants like our modern ones. Based on evolutionary assumptions, most scientists refuse to acknowledge that deep sedimentary layers might contain remains of modern appearing plants.

Palynologists (spore/pollen grain experts) routinely recognize pollen grains of modern genera and species, if these are found in recent sediments. When it comes to the sediments which buried the



Can you imagine a world without grass?

dinosaurs, and also sediments lower still, it is a widely accepted convention that the pollen grains will be identified by appearance only. Any resemblance to modern plants is entirely ignored. Specialists who had previously identified such pollen collections in terms of modern plant names, later saw their conclusions discounted by others and names based on form only were substituted.

The problem of identifying the presence of grass plants in dinosaur communities now becomes clearer. The sediments might contain ample grass pollen, but nobody would identify it as such because of the custom of describing appearance only. At the higher levels where pollen grains are compared with living plants, grasses have variously been said to have first appeared in Oligocene rocks (about 35 million years ago by evolutionary estimates) or Paleocene rocks (about 55 million years ago by similar reckoning). According to

such evolutionary scenarios, this would place the first appearance of grasses ten to twenty million years after the extinction of the dinosaurs.

Finding gold in dinosaur dung

It was the identification, in dinosaur dung, of tiny silica crystals produced only by grasses that led to the dramatic announcement concerning grasses in dinosaur diets. These crystals, called phytoliths, form in the thickened walls of certain plant cells. These artifacts are typically destroyed by the strong acids used to concentrate pollen grains. Thus they would never be found along with collections of pollen grains.

The shapes of these crystals are so specialized, that scientists can identify the general characteristics of the plants which produced them. Thus five very different types of grass phytolith were found in the dinosaur dung. Some of the phytoliths resemble those produced by modern rice. Some of the plants may have looked like bamboo, only smaller. All we know to this point is that there was considerable variety in the characteristics of the grasses. Evidently these plants were an established part of the ecosystem.

Why did it take so long?

Thus we return to the question as to why it took the scientists so long to document the presence of grasses with the dinosaurs. There were at least four reasons:

- It is evident that the scientists were not looking for grasses at these deep levels in the rocks.
- The pollen grains which could have been assigned to the grasses, were instead described merely in terms of appearance.
- Phytoliths did not show up because nobody was looking for them. The preparation of pollen grains, in fact, eliminated phytoliths.
- Finally we learn from a long ago experiment by John Lindley of England, that grasses quickly decay in standing water.

Obviously other methods to search for their presence should have been employed. The fact is this recent discovery complicates theories about plant evolution. Indeed this is a classic example of the way in which evolutionary preconceptions can bias discovery.

FOOTNOTE

¹ Lindley and Hutton. Vol. 3 pp. 11-12; cited in H. Andrews. 1980. *The Fossil Hunters: In search of ancient plants*. Cornell University Press p. 82



While trees and other plants can be found in the fossil record, grasses are mostly absent. Does that mean there was no grass in the past?



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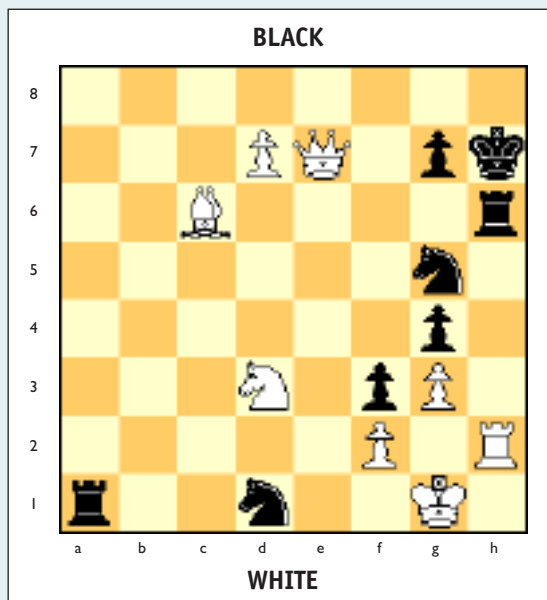
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Chess Puzzle # 119



WHITE to Mate in 4

[HINT: White's first move is to put Black in check using the bishop]

Or, If it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 2**

NEW PUZZLES

Riddle for Punsters #119 - "Some Light Humour?"

After asking that the classroom blinds be opened so that she would be in the sunlight, the student gave some b r _ _ _ _ t answers and was both a s h _ _ _ g example for the other students and a true d e _ _ _ t to have in class.

Problem to Ponder #119 - "Costly Chocolates"

- A certain tasty chocolate treat, wrapped in shiny foil, sells for \$2.98 per 100 grams in the bulk food area of a local store. [This is a real life price, not made up!] What, including 14% sales tax, is the cost of 1 kilogram of the treats? What is the cost of 5 pounds [given that 1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds]? How many treats can be bought for one dollar if the mass of each treat is 12 grams?
- Peanuts, also found in the bulk bins, cost only 28 cents per 100 g. What is the cost of 5 pounds of peanuts (if they are not taxed)?
- If the price of peanuts increases by 2 cents per kg per year, how much will 5 pounds of peanuts cost 50 years from now [if Christ does not return in glory by then]?
- If the price of peanuts instead increases (with inflation) by 4% each year, how much will 5 pounds of peanuts cost 50 years from now? Quite scary, how much will 5 pounds of the chocolate treats cost 50 years from now (including tax) if their price also increases at 4% per year?

SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (JANUARY) PUZZLE PAGE

Answer to Riddle for Punsters #118 - "Trucking Along"

Why do some people get emotional when transferring their belongings from their old house to a new house? They find it a very m o v i n g experience.

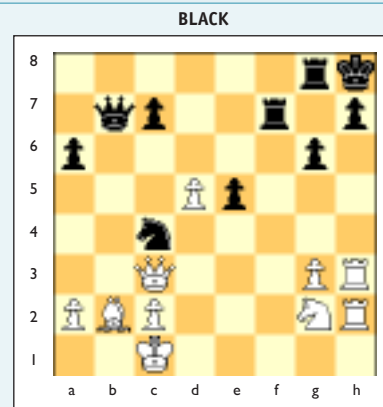
Why is it suitable for people to drive transport trucks if they want part-time work after retirement? They are s e m i-retired.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #118 - "Solve Some Student Statistics"

Janice, Jackie and Jasmine are joyful students at John Knox Christian School. Their last names, not necessarily in the right order, are Jenkins, Jennings and Jensen. Miss Jenkins is one and a half times as old as Miss Jensen. The average of their ages is Jasmine's age, 15 years. Only Jasmine and Jackie are teenagers. State the full names and ages of the three students.

Let Miss Jensen's age be x years. Miss Jenkins age is $1.5x$ years. The average of their ages is Jasmine's age, 15. (NOTE: Jasmine is not Miss Jensen or Miss Jenkins so Jasmine's last name is Jennings.) Thus, $(x + 1.5x)/2 = 15$ so $2.5x/2 = 15$ so $2.5x = 30$ so $x = 12$ and $1.5x = 18$. Only Jasmine, age 15, and Jackie are teenagers, so Jackie is the 18 year old and is Miss Jenkins, 1.5 times as old as Miss Jensen who is Janice, age 12. Thus, the students are Janice Jensen, age 12 years, Jasmine Jennings, age 15 years, and Jackie Jenkins, age 18 years.

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 118



WHITE to Mate in 4
Descriptive Notation

- QxP ch NxQ
- BxN ch R/N1-N2
- RxP ch K-N1
- R-R8 mate

NOTE

- BxN ch R/B2-N2
- RxP mate **loses sooner!**

Algebraic Notation

- Qc3xe5 + Nc4xe5
- Bb2xe5 + Rg8-g7
- Rh3xh7 + Kh8-g8
- Rh7-h8 ++

NOTE

- Bb2xe5 + Rg8-g7
- Rh3xh7 ++ **loses sooner!**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,
BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

- _____ QxB ch
- QxQ R-B8 ch
- N-K1 RxN mate

OR

- _____ QxB ch
- K-Q1 Q-N8 ch
- K-K2 Q-KB8 mate

Algebraic Notation

- _____ Qb7xb2 +
- Qc3xb2 Rf7-f1 +
- Ng2-e1 Rf1xe1 ++

OR

- _____ Qb7xb2 +
- Kc1-d1 Qb2-b1 +
- Kd1-e2 Qb1-f1 ++

Crossword Puzzle

Series 13, No. 9

Last month's solution
Series 13, no. 8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15				16				
17				18				19				
20				21				22				
23				24				25				
				26				27				
32	33	34						35				
36								37				38
39				40				41				42
43				44				45				46
				47				48				49
53	54	55		56				57				58
59								60				61
63								62				64
66								63				65
								66				67
								68				69

1	A	2	R	3	E	4	N	5	A	6	A	7	I	8	S	9	L	10	E	11	R	12	A	13	P	
14	V	A	P	I	D			15	P	O	L	A	R			16	A	W	A							
17	E	M	O	T	E			18	A	M	I	G	A			19	C	A	P							
					20	N	A	C		21	M	U	S			22	E	R	E							
24	S	L	A	M				25	S	E	V	E	N			26	U	S	E	R						
31	C	O	V	E				32	T	S		I			33	A	D	Z								
35	A	D	A	N	A			36	P	E		37	W		38	R	I		39	F	40	41	42	43	44	
42	P	E	S					43	H	O	E				44	A	N	Y					45	R	A	I
46	E	N	T	E	R			47	E	R		48	T	A	D		49	E		50	51	52	53	54	55	
								52	E	S		53	C	L		54	F	R	O	S	T	S				
55	S	H	A	G				56	A	S	I	D	E			57	W	H	E	Y						
62	P	A	M					63	I	M	P				64	E		65	L							
66	I	V	E					67	D	E	U	C	E			68	A	P		69	70	71	72	73	74	
74	T	E	N					75	E	R	R	O	R			76	C	I	D	E	R					
77	E	N	D					78	M	A	T	E	S			79	E	S	S	A	Y					

ACROSS:

- From a great distance
- Yellow cheese
- Coup — ' —
- Bird holder
- US Emergency Agency
- Forced absence from one's country
- Traditional, in Britain
- Poetic name for Ireland
- Dainty food, archaically
- More frigid
- Here, in Paris
- In a faulty way
- Sell as a peddler
- Ms. _____ Cavell, a heroic British war nurse
- Employ
- Not in
- Fishing accessory
- Heavy handwoven textile
- Conduct oneself properly
- Winter hazard
- Wine term
- Small chore
- Sea star
- Become solid, gel
- The supreme ruler
- Wrath
- Vestige of something
- Spanish coin
- Looked at greedily
- Inquire
- Wild
- Not dead
- Heap
- Group of three
- Kind of noodle
- Special garden
- Ladder rung, of old
- Highly intelligent
- Withered
- Showily artistic

DOWN:

- Recreational extracurricular events
- Mockery
- Once more
- Advise, give counsel to
- Early fuel evap.
- Ridiculers
- Italian or Latin friend
- Ojibwa supernatural conception
- Ten (comb. Form)
- Tests
- Tree with white flowers
- British pub drinks
- Girl's name
- French direction
- Center of activity
- Utilizing
- Ventre a _____, = at very great speed, or belly to the ground
- _____ Goreng, Indonesian dish
- Days before special days
- Engineering, practical application of knowledge
- Land measurement
- Vivacious
- A perfectionist for detail
- Small point
- Exist
- Window coverings
- Cut apart
- Away from others
- Ancient city, capital of the Edomites
- Mistake
- Canonized person
- Boat paddles
- Mid Glamorgan (abbr.)
- Kind of bean
- Car ding

