

REFORMED

Volume 25 Number 3 January 2006

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

ARE WE ON
THE
RIGHT SIDE
OF THE
ABORTION
ISSUE?

What's inside?

End of the Spear

**Why animals
don't get lost**

**Ban spanking
bans**



Editorial

by
Donald J. Mackay

An Amazing Dog

Recently, while listening to a sermon on the importance of family worship, I was reminded of an incident that took place in our home in Stornoway over fifty years ago, when my father had to take worship with our dog. I don't actually remember it, as I was only a little child at the time, and was in bed asleep, but I do remember my mother telling the story several years later.

Lassie won't go

When my sister and I were small, we had a dog – a golden cocker spaniel called Lassie. She had her own bed in a corner of the living room during the day, but at night she slept in a lean-to shed at the back of the house. My grandmother, who was bedridden for the last dozen or so years of her life, lived with us, and she, and my aunt who cared for her, occupied one of the two upstairs rooms. Unfortunately, she didn't like dogs, and so Lassie wasn't allowed anywhere near her, or even in her room.

There was a regular nighttime routine in our home; supper was followed by family worship, then Lassie went out into the garden for a few minutes, before going to bed. One night, however, after my sister and I had been tucked up in bed, my parents spent the latter part of the evening upstairs with my aunt and granny. They must have had their supper there, and my father conducted worship with them in their room.

.....
***They were at a loss to know
what to do next.***
.....

When they came downstairs, my mother started to set a tray for the morning, while my father went to put Lassie out into the garden, but she dug her heels in and refused to go out. Eventually she had to be

dragged, against her will, along the passage and out the back door. When she came back in, instead of going to the shed, she made a bee-line back along the passage to the living room, and into her corner.

My father then dragged her again out to the shed, and locked her in. As soon as the door was closed behind her, she began whimpering and whining, and my father went out to the shed to tell her off. The moment he opened the door of the shed she darted past him and raced back along the passage to her corner again. This went on for several minutes (if I remember the story correctly, Lassie was locked in the shed at least twice, and each time she whined non-stop), by the end of which time Lassie was back where she started, in her corner behind my father's chair, having been chastised several times in the process.

Something's missing

As you can no doubt guess, my parents were totally baffled by Lassie's behavior, which was completely out of character. They just couldn't understand what was wrong with her, and were at a loss to know what to do next. Almost at his wits' end, my father sat down in his armchair by the fire, at which point Lassie jumped up onto his lap (something she had never done before, and, so far as I am aware, never did again). It was at that point that my mother came up with a possible explanation. Turning to my father, she asked: "Do you think Lassie doesn't realize we've had worship?"

By this time, no doubt, my father was willing to try anything, and reached for the family Bible, which was on the shelf of the cupboard unit beside his chair. As soon as he did so, Lassie jumped down off his lap, and went round to her corner. He then conducted a very short worship – a brief opening prayer followed by just a few verses of a Psalm, then a few verses of a chapter, and an equally brief closing prayer – after which Lassie went off quite happily to her bed in the shed, and remained there for the night.

REFORMED
Perspective
 A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

www.reformedperspective.ca

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

Address for Administrative Matters (Subscriptions, Advertisements, Change of Address):
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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).

If you are interested in the work of Reformed Perspective Foundation and in the promotion of Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially in your local area, and you need help, call Peter Veenendaal at 1 (204) 661-6351.

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
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 Registration No. 18929272RR0001

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Conclusion

Several centuries before Christ, God, speaking through the prophet, said a day would come when "a little child shall lead them" (Is.11:6). But in this case it wasn't a little child but a dog who set the example and taught us a very important lesson which my parents never forgot. I would be very surprised indeed if there was any other animal who refused to go to bed until she knew that worship had been taken, and I would be equally surprised if any other head of a family had to take worship for the benefit of the family dog. But, you see, Lassie had become accustomed to a regular routine, and that routine had been disrupted. There was a vital ingredient missing, and she was not going to settle for the night until that missing ingredient had been restored.

Back in those days, half a century ago, even in non-Christian homes, family worship was normal practice (in the Islands at least). Sadly today, even in many Christian homes, children and adults are going to bed every night without family worship – and in many cases without even knowing what it is. Indeed, it may well be true to say that the television set has largely replaced the Word of God as the "family altar" around which they gather at the end of each day.

Is family worship such an essential part of your daily (and nightly) routine that even your pet would notice the difference if it was missing?

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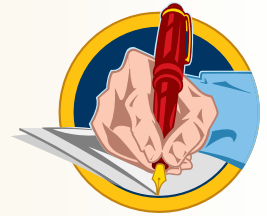
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Readers' Response



Dear Editor,

My wife and I have been enjoying *Reformed Perspective* for a couple of years and find we agree in large measure with your contributors. We do, however, have a concern with Sharon Bratcher's article "Lose Weight Fast" (Nov. 2005). In it Bratcher claims that the Mosaic laws did not have to do directly with hygiene and health. In other words they were simply an arbitrary division of animals into clean and unclean for symbolic purposes only.



It appears to us that there were sound biological principles involved in the division of animals into clean and unclean. Obedience to this dietary law would have conferred significant health benefits.

The unclean animals are those we recognize as scavengers and eaters of dead and rotting flesh. The pig, for instance, is not only omnivorous and a carrier of the trichinosis worm, but also has a rudimentary digestive system that causes its flesh to be unfit for healthy human consumption.

*Peter J. Ellis
Fergus, Ontario*

Editor's response: *Our God is a good God so when He outlined a diet for His people in the Old Testament we can be sure that this was a healthy diet. But many of the diet books Sharon Bratcher discussed go further than that, insisting that not only is an Old Testament diet healthy, but that any departures from it are unhealthy. This goes too far. It ignores texts such as Mark 7:19 where "Jesus declared all foods 'clean.'" And also Acts 10, where Peter is told by God to "kill and eat" some of these creatures that had previously been called unclean. Was God now telling Peter to eat unhealthy food? The Old Testament ceremonial law, as it relates to food, might have ensured Israel ate a healthy diet, but these laws were not mere health regulations. They instead set apart a people that God had "arbitrarily" chosen for Himself.*

Dear Editor,

I wish to take off my hat to the writer of "Dyslexia: Having dyslexia, or having a child with dyslexia is not the end of the world" (March, 2005). I would count that person as being somewhat fortunate. I went through life not knowing that I had a serious learning disability until I was in my 40s! I struggled in elementary school, and in my first year of high school I nearly

failed. Also I had to endure name-calling, consequently becoming a big fan of Charlie Brown who I could identify with.

Things did change and my grades improved but I wish my condition had been pointed out to me and to my parents earlier. Being a bright kid with a learning disability and not knowing the problem is like being the captain of a ship with faulty navigation equipment and not realizing that this is the case. I have been through many unexpected storms and choppy waters in my life, and I can well understand what the writer of the article has been through.



I managed to overcome my problem in high school with the Lord's help. During one summer I went to a Presbyterian Church camp and I was exposed to a very positive Christian family-like atmosphere which I had rarely ever experienced. True to John Knox's vision for every Scot to know the Bible I studied the Scriptures and I began to take my faith more seriously than I had before. When I returned to school I studied harder, and I never gave up as easily as I had done before. I ignored my tormentors and the teasing stopped. God had his hand on me.

Yes, having dyslexia is not the end of the world. I can offer some suggestions to help those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. If they are having some difficulties in school get them involved in hobbies, clubs and other activities outside of school. Picture thinkers are good in many artistic endeavors. I took up modeling, photography, and drama. I also took up cycling, long distance running, downhill and cross-country skiing and was in Cubs, Scouts, the Air Cadets, and the Militia. Most of all remember the importance of the church family. As I took the faith more seriously I became involved in Young Peoples Society and Young Adults. Even the usual Sunday worship service meant a great deal to me, and it still does!

Yes, dyslexia is a gift from God. For my own experience, I would say that people with this condition are specially gifted with the ability to see the world beyond their local communities, and even beyond their countries. Thank the Lord for his goodness, and that he has made us all unique.

*Alex Greer
Victoria, BC*

CORRECTION

In the November issue we included a chart in the article Lose Weight Fast that was supposed to help readers calculate their Body Mass Index (BMI). But a very crucial little “2” went missing, the one that was supposed square the reader’s Height in Inches. That missing numeral resulted in totals that were way out of whack, giving readers



BMI’s in the thousands.

Hopefully these inflated totals didn’t worry any readers.

The correct BMI formula is included below. Readers should remember that the BMI, while a useful measure, can give skewed results – for example, a 240 pound, 6’4” Olympic athlete will have the same BMI as a 240 pound 6’4” sedentary office worker. For more precise measures of fitness and weight status please look back at the original article, Lose Weight Fast, in the November 2005 issue.

$$\text{BMI} = \left(\frac{\text{Weight in Pounds}}{\text{Height in inches}^2} \right) \times 703$$

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight in Kilograms}}{\text{Height in meters}^2}$$

BODY MASS INDEX

Below 18.5
18.5 – 24.9
25.0 – 29.9
30.0 and Above
40.0 and Above

STATUS

Underweight
Normal
Overweight
Obese
Morbid Obese

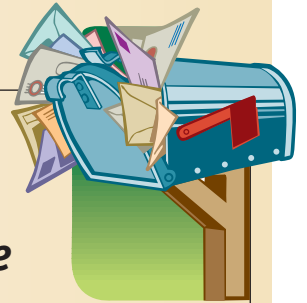
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CAN BE SENT TO:

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Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5N 1C9
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Christian charity and also length
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U.S. (U.S. Funds)**

1 year \$49.00 / \$48.00
2 years \$89.00 / \$88.00
3 years \$130.00 / \$128.00

International (Canadian Funds)

1 year \$69.00
2 years \$118.00
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**John
Calvin
has
never
read
an
issue
he
didn't
like**



HOMEFRONT

Sins of Youth

by Jane deGlint

Who wants to be known by his worst mistake? The shame of being identified with a gross sin is unbearable and permanent. Such label is the ultimate moral punishment. A person's good characteristics are completely overlooked in the dark abhorrence over the serious misdeed. Without nuance or context we simply refer to the transgressor as the thief, the adulterer, the sex offender, the murderer, the liar. The societal jury is unanimous: the horrendous epithets are justified. Not even aware of our prejudice we wonder whether there can be anything human left in these utterly condemned creatures. They are the personification of sin.

The darkness surrounding the labeled sinner stands in convenient contrast to the goodness of the law-abiding majority. The minor offences of the generic sinner appear absolutely insignificant in comparison with the horrible transgressions of the condemned. We know how to trivialize. Routinely we minimize our invisible sins. Who worries about the occasional hateful thought towards our brother three pews over? What is wrong about making personal long-distance phone calls at work? Why couldn't we tell a half-truth to save our face?

It seems that instinctively we avoid confrontation with our sins. Whereas we easily attach labels to others, we readily shrug off our own shortcomings. We have no time for the small details. Bigger things demand our immediate attention, such as public image, career advancement, damage control, account balance and gratification of basic needs. Rather than deal with sin, we prefer to get established among man according to secular standards. Even if we bother to appear religious, we essentially serve ourselves.

But before the slumber of self-gratification turns into the sleep of spiritual death, the hand of God starts to shake us up. Initially we might experience this divine interference as a slight nuisance. We get annoyed about a flat tire at the most inopportune time. We become irritated because we forgot to keep an important appointment. We lose our temper in a confrontation with a dear one. Yet, we remain smug. We resolve to pay better attention, to establish more efficient routines, to improve our anger management. We are still more sorry about our lack of success than about our sins.



***As we hang limp with
fear and shame, the
Spirit revives us.***



Regardless of our age or status, the Lord switches gears. Resolutely he begins to break us down at more fundamental levels. Motivated by perfect love he is not afraid to increase the intensity of his disciplinary action. As a matter of fact, divine affection and divine correction blend together into the perfect method for rearing holy children. In his faithfulness the Lord afflicts us (Psalm 119: 75). The wake-up calls come with increasing frequency and intensity. Someone whom we thought a friend betrays our confidence. A loved one contracts a very serious disease. Unwittingly we end up in the centre of a complicated argument. We lose our job.

Still oblivious to the extent of our sins, we protest loudly. We blame others. We ac-

cuse our friend of unchristian behavior. We suspect the medical profession of indifference, misdiagnosis and maltreatment. We find fault with our co-workers. With fearless pride we take the next step. We accuse the Lord of neglecting us. Where is he? We don't feel him. Is he helping the wrong people? Lord, "Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?" (Job 13:24).

Finally, when we start to waste away like a rotten thing (Job 13:28), we wake up from our spiritual unconsciousness. Suddenly we stand face to face with God. After all those years of pretend independence, we are facing our Lord. Not willingly yet. He grabbed us from behind, turned us around and now he lifts us up by the arms to the level of his face. We neither care nor dare to open our eyes from fear, hurt and disgust. But in spite of our persistent rebellion, we know that the Lord has checkmated us. In essence our struggle is over. Our self-defense is weak and silly. Soon we will have to concede defeat.

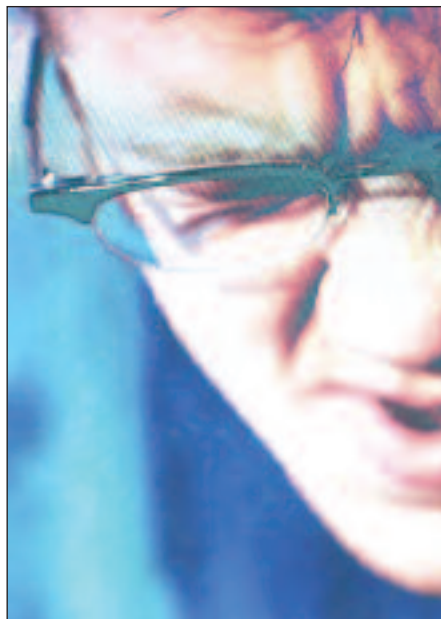
Unable still to comprehend love, we redirect our hatred away from God and neighbor toward self. We start to loathe ourselves. Images of previous sins spring up from a forgotten past. We are dumbfounded about our selfish shortsightedness and stubborn sense of superiority. Why did we not listen to our parents when they warned us about the choice of our spouse? Why did we not apply ourselves better to our studies when the opportunities abounded? Why were we not more frugal with our money when the cash flow seemed abundant? Why, oh, why, did we not think past the fleeting pleasures of the day? Why did we put ourselves on the wrong track? Where did we spiritually take the wrong turn?

Remembrance of the sins of youth obstructs God's face. For many days we are reliving the past. Inwardly we groan as we realize that we are reaping what we sowed. Certain sins stand out dark and grave. We lied at crucial moments in our life. Filled with hatred we smugly dealt some cruel blows to the dignity of a companion. We feel ourselves blush belatedly when we recall how in a pinch we took what did not belong to us. A faint taunt starts to drone through our mind. "Liar!" "Murderer!" "Thief!" Then with a shock we realize our sexual sins, committed either in thought or deed. We are perverts and adulterers too! For the moment we replay the blame-game. An intense hatred may arise to the persons who were the instigator or recipient of our sexual misconduct. The charged question erupts with refueled anger: why did God not prevent these things?

Suddenly we become aware again of the fact that the very God whom we are accusing is holding us up to his face. An intense fear grips us. God must hate us. We stand condemned. His wrath will pour out over us. More calamities will strike us. Our fear for our neighbor will increase. There is no one we can trust. Everyone hates us. And why shouldn't they? We are useless. Totally corrupt. Full of fear and hatred. Condemned to hell. The sense of God's wrath might become so severe, that we start to doubt his existence. The downward spiral intensifies. As our doubt blocks the experience of God's nearness, it increases our sense of doom. If perchance God does exist, we will rightfully be sent to the utter darkness for lack of faith.

As we hang limp with fear and shame, the Spirit revives us. He takes hold of our misdeeds. Opening our heart to the presence of the Lord, he helps us find the words to confess our guilt. Our shriveled up soul gains strength. Our groaning turns into a song of praise. Our accusation becomes a prayer of gratitude. Our hatred turns into love. What exuberance! The Lord forgave the guilt of my sin! (Psalm 32)

Amazingly, once we have reached this height of faith, we might discover that we



are not quite prepared yet to meet our neighbor. When we are in the company of those who witnessed our sins, it becomes difficult to hold on to our elation. God has forgiven us, but will our fellow men? Will they forever see us as the thief and liar? Will they ever be able to overlook the sins of our youthful folly? The question becomes even more pressing as we have to continue our relationship with those against whom we sinned. Their very presence can bring back the sensation of awful guilt and unbearable burden. Additionally, the lingering thought that our neighbor continues to think of us in terms of our sin can become so powerful, that we wish him eliminated. It is painfully ironic. Even if we are determined to love those who were part of the complex sins in which we were entangled, we still catch ourselves wishing them gone forever. Our love is not perfected yet. It is still riddled with fear.

This fear may lead us to very foolish impulses. We may want to move far away to have a new start. And if necessary, we will move again. We might end up like a Cain wandering over the earth, forever in search of a place where the taunt of those


who know our sins cannot reach us. As an alternate choice we may opt to form an exclusive group of friends, whom we carefully shield from our past. We end up in another stage of denial. We have owned up to God, but we still cover up with men.

Our escape tactics really show that our peace of mind is dependent on visible men rather than on the invisible God. Sadly, this halfway stage could easily dump us back to the depth of despair from which God rescued us. Our need for human approval so easily overrides our joy over divine forgiveness.

Our determination to continue with our fellow man gains strength when we fully accept God's grace. If God will not call the sins of youth to remembrance, we may not dwell on them either. The Lord Jesus provided us with the full-proof remedy for our troubled relationships: do not judge others and sin no more (John 8:11). As we keep our focus on leading a God-fearing life, we will cease to be worried about our own esteem. The glory of our Lord as it takes shape in our lives becomes our overriding concern.

Recalling sins of the past may only be done to bring out the glory of God. The apostle Paul had every reason to be embarrassed. He may not have committed any serious sexual sins, but his spiritual adultery was horrendous and public. But fearlessly he recalls his shame over his misplaced zeal as illustration of the perfect patience of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 1:15,16).

As the face of our Lord shines over us, we are encouraged to go on without fear. The Lord will uphold our honor. For the sake of his Son he will overlook both the sins of youth and the folly of old age. With the support and guidance of the Spirit we overcome our shame and concentrate on our walk in faith. Blessed we are, because our sins are covered.

"Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD" Psalm 25:7. 

Simply Amazing

The Apologetic Group's *Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism*

"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us." – C.S. Lewis

reviewed by Rene Vermeulen

I first got a glimpse at it while my wife and I were out visiting our daughter and her husband. My son-in-law invited me to take a look at a DVD he had just received in the mail. Because of time constraints I was only able to see a couple of segments, but it was enough to whet my appetite for more.

We have now had this DVD, *Amazing Grace: the History and Theology of Calvinism*, in our home for some weeks and we've watched it repeatedly. And it is now also making the rounds in our congregation. All have commented on how this is a valuable bit of teaching about one of the central messages of the gospels: that man is dead in trespasses and sin and cannot turn to God from his own accord.

The basic format

How does *Amazing Grace* do that?

First of all it sets the scene, showing how some Christians have a wrong view of the work of salvation.

It then takes a historical look at the Calvinist understanding of salvation, starting long before Calvin was even born, back with the very early church fathers.

We probably all learned in Catechism classes that Pelagius was a British monk who taught that a child, when it is first born, is a "blank sheet of paper" that only learns to sin after seeing others doing wrong. Pelagius denied that we were born sinful.

This point of view was opposed by Augustine, who insisted we were born sin-

ful, and so were completely incapable of doing anything to earn our own salvation. He gave all the glory to God and taught that faith is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Rome of course, followed Pelagius, or at least they took a semi-Pelagian approach and taught that man can do some things to help earn eternal life. Martin Luther came and in his 95 theses showed that God is the one who saves. The segment that deals with Martin Luther's defence of the Biblical teaching is one of the very best on the DVD. It shows Luther's defence of the gospel against men such as Desiderius Erasmus, the humanist from Rotterdam. It then leads to the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) and the rejection by that synod of the semi-Pelagian teachings of Jacobus Arminius. As you might expect from a

Amazingly Simple

Amazing Grace makes church history clear and exciting

by Peter and Nettie van der Schaaf

Recently we watched *Amazing Grace: the History and Theology of Calvinism*. We had no idea what to expect. We were very skeptical, as you are when you don't know what to expect. Will it be Biblical? Will it conflict with things we had learned from our parents? Would we feel threatened by what we would hear? So being the curious types my wife and I sat down to watch it immediately.

Exciting stuff

Prior to this we had never really studied church history much, other than the basics, learning some of it when the children had to study it for their Bible study meetings. But when we started watching excitement caught us straightaway. We were hearing things we had never heard before. The host of the show was very clear on the history, and order

of events. We never before realized that the Dutch were so important in the history of the church. Being from Dutch parents we knew that in Holland there were many churches that had the three forms of unity, and church discipline etc. But we hadn't realized just how important these were to the world.

But what about other important aspects of our faith in the history of the

DVD on Calvinism, they do make use of TULIP, drawing on it to show us the difference between Reformed and Remonstrant belief that was the focus of this synod. Throughout, effort is made to show how important this synod was and how it affected its participants.

The final section deals with Evangelism. The reason it does that is because some people of Calvinist persuasion argue that if God knows the number of the elect, if He has chosen them from eternity, there is no need to evangelise. This section shows why this argument is wrong; God wants to use us to bring to Him those whom He has chosen.

There is also a workbook available with this set, so you can use the DVD either at home or at a Bible study to discuss in a group the great matter of how faith becomes ours. The total running time is 4 hours and 17 minutes so you can see there is a lot on this set and some preparation would have to be done before you started using it at Bible study. But such preparation is well worthwhile.

Guest stars

The Apologetics Group, the producer of this DVD set, was founded by Eric Holmberg who in the DVD reveals that he was



Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism

257 min; 2004
DVD \$30 US

Amazing Grace Study Guide

by Jerry Johnson

Apologetics Group, 2005
50 pages; Paperback; \$13 US

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www.amazinggracedvd.com.

You can order the DVD there or by phoning
1-615-469-4554

once Arminian, coming to a Reformed understanding of Scripture some years ago. Holmberg is also the main commentator in the DVD but he is hardly the focal point. Instead the DVD is packed full of well-known theologians who do a great job in presenting the various viewpoints. All are of Reformed persuasion: some have a Presbyterian background, others come from a Reformed Baptist background. Some of these theologians are well known to *Reformed Perspective* readers and include: Dr.

R.C. Sproul, Dr. D. James Kennedy, Rev. Walter J. Chantry, Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr.

Apologetics Group have done a good job in producing this disk set. Someone asked me, "How happy are you with this DVD?" All I can say is that my enthusiasm grows every time I view it. I would urge you to buy it and use it. It is a much better way to spend an evening than looking at the TV. What is more, you'll come to a good understanding of what it means to be Reformed.



church? The earlier errors made by church leaders are so important for us to know so that these mistakes and false teachings are not made again in later years. Some of the leaders we learn about in the DVD were just stubborn in their approach to doctrine; they either didn't want to listen to what God said in His word or twisted it to suit themselves. That became very clear as we continued to watch.

The distinction between Calvinism and Arminianism also came out very clearly in the message – Christ's redeeming work and not any merit on our part

saves us. We only receive salvation in that way.

We learned about Augustine, John Calvin and Martin Luther, just some of the men God chose to study Holy Scripture to keep the church free from false teachings.

And we learned about Pelagianism, Anabaptists and many others whose teachings were not in accordance with the Word of God. Then the Synod of Dort is discussed and explained so that we can all understand how important that event was in the history of the church.

Two thumbs up

This DVD has so much to offer in explanations, importance, history, mean-

ings etc. It also points out what may be in store for the churches of today and in the future (we so often repeat the errors of the past). It is an excellent DVD and should be studied by young and old, and re-watched every so many years. With the Bible in hand this important research will be a benefit for all of us, now and in the future.

It is a strong DVD that will help you understand how the church doctrine you know came about! Church history will never be boring again and will inspire you to want to study God's word and keep in touch with church history as it develops.

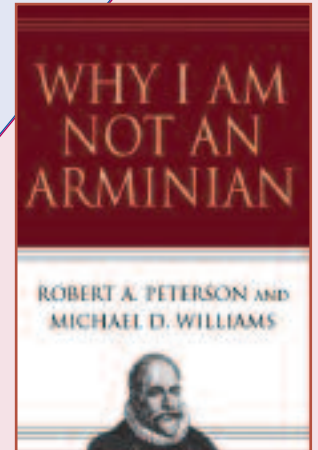
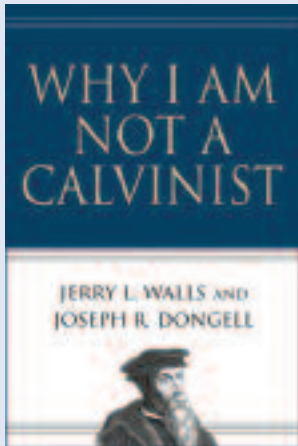


A TALE OF TWO BOOKS

WHY I AM NOT A CALVINIST

VS

WHY I AM NOT AN ARMINIAN



reviewed by Johan D. Tangelder

Why should we revisit the debate between Arminianism and Calvinism? Is it not a waste of precious time and energy to discuss their difference while the world is aflame with political unrest?

No, this is a debate that should always generate interest and discussion. Dr. J. I. Packer once observed that the very terms *Calvinism* and *Arminianism* represent opposition: “The words are defined in terms of the antithesis, and the point is pressed that no Christian can avoid being on one side or the other.”

Arminianism had considerable influence in Anglo-American theological developments and, on the surface, Calvinism seems to have lost the battle in the theatre of American evangelicalism. Many evangelicals even believe that Calvinism is “irrelevant.” They say, “Christianity cannot possibly teach that.” With a commitment to egalitarianism and the rejection of the traditional doctrine of original sin, Ameri-

can culture is receptive to Arminianism. The Arminian emphasis on individualism and self-determination dominated much of 20th century American evangelicalism. Billy Graham, for instance, uses the language of Arminianism in his crusades when he asks attendees to “make a decision for Christ” – language that Calvinists find utterly foreign to their understanding of salvation.

Revival of Calvinism

So it seems clear that Calvinism does not fit the American ideal. Why would anyone be a Calvinist then? The reason is quite simple. The gospel of Jesus Christ is countercultural.

Perhaps this is why Calvinism seems to appeal to young people, especially college students, as indicated by the growing influence of such campus groups as the Reformed University Fellowship. And there is a renewed interest in Calvinism among the

Southern Baptists. Several influential leaders, many of them young, have been calling for a revival of Calvinism. One of them said, “Southern Baptists are at a crossroads. We have a choice to make. The choice is between the deep-rooted, God-centered theology of evangelical Calvinism and the man-centered, unstable theology of the other perspectives.”

What is at stake?

But why should we know the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism?

Because they represent stark opposing theological visions, at the heart of which are profoundly different views of God. The authors of the book *Why I am not a Calvinist* state, “We believe the heart of the matter is how we understand the character of God. The issue is not how powerful God is but what it means to say he is perfectly loving and good.” They claim, “The breathtaking vision of God’s

Trinitarian love is obscured by the Calvinist claim that God passes over persons he could just as easily save and thereby consigns them to eternal misery.”

The following questions then, are at issue: How are we saved from our sins and granted eternal life? Are human beings so fallen that they must be saved exclusively through the unilateral and unconditional actions of God? Is it possible for human beings to resist (successfully) the saving approaches of God’s grace? Can any who were once truly redeemed through faith in Christ fail to receive final salvation?

The tone of the debate

Considering the seriousness of the differences, it should not come as a surprise that the history of the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism has been one of intense and often “mean-spirited” confrontation. However, Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams state that their book, *Why I am not an Arminian*, aims to treat their Arminian brothers and sisters in Christ as they would want to be treated. They also note that the Synod of Dordt was right to condemn the Arminian misrepresentation of the saving ways of God. “Yet we do not think of Arminianism as a heresy or Arminian Christians as unregenerate.” They observe that Calvinists and Arminians are brothers in Christ. In other words, “The issue of the debate is not between belief and unbelief but rather which of two Christian perspectives better represents the biblical portrayal of the divine-human relationship in salvation and the contribution of both God and man in human history.” And *Why I am not a Calvinist* authors Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell rightly say, “We should all speak with a measure of care and reserve when delivering our interpretative conclusions.”

Why I am not a Calvinist

What is the argument of the authors *Why I am not a Calvinist*?

Arminianism has its roots in the work of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609). It teaches that salvation is available to anybody who exercises faith; it contrasts with the Calvinist understanding that God alone deter-

mines who is and who is not among the elect. Arminian popular belief tends toward the overestimation of human ability and the human redemptive contribution.

Traditional Arminianism believes that the death of Christ provides grace for all persons and that, as result of his atonement, God extends sufficient grace to all persons through the Holy Spirit to counteract the influence of sin and to enable a response to God. But it is possible for sinners to resist God’s initiative and to persist in sin and rebellion. Arminianism argues that God’s grace *enables* and encourages a positive and saving response for *everyone*, but it does not *determine* a saving response for *anyone*. Furthermore, an initial positive response of faith doesn’t guarantee one’s final salvation. “It is possible to begin a genuine relationship with God but then later turn from him and persist in evil so that one is finally lost.”

In 1610, the disciples of Jacobus Arminius produced a manifesto called the *Remonstrance*, which they regarded as a corrective to the Calvinist doctrine of election. The authors view the divine election of Israel and Christ as “that tree of redemption into which all persons can be incorporated by faith.” They state, “God doesn’t unconditionally predestine particular persons to salvation. Rather, election is in Christ, and all are saved who do not knowingly and persistently refuse God’s gracious offer of life.”



Many believe that Calvinism is “irrelevant.”



The book’s authors depart from traditional Arminianism as they seem favorably inclined to Openness Theology, also called Open Theism. For over a decade, advocates of Open Theism have argued that while God knows everything that can be known, He cannot have exhaustively definite knowledge of the future. Since the fu-

Calvinism and Arminianism: SOME KEY QUESTIONS

Both Calvinists and Arminians believe that God created everything and everyone, and that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost make up this one almighty God and both believe that Jesus died and rose again and now rules at the right hand of God the Father. So with this in common, where exactly do Calvinists and Arminians differ? Well, Calvinists and Arminians would give very different answers to the following key questions:

- How are we saved from our sins and granted eternal life?
- Are human beings so fallen that they must be saved exclusively through the unilateral and unconditional actions of God?
- Is it possible for human beings to resist (successfully) the saving approaches of God’s grace?
- Can any who were once truly redeemed through faith in Christ fail to receive final salvation?

ture will involve decisions made by genuinely free creatures, knowledge of the future is said to be impossible, by definition. Since God doesn’t know future free choices, the future is not completely settled. Clark Pinnock, a noted Open Theism advocate says, “Some prophecies are conditional, leaving the future open, and presumably, God’s knowledge of it.” And Richard Rice argues, “Where human decision is presupposed, God cannot achieve his purpose unilaterally. He requires our cooperation.” Open Theist theologians acknowledge “the triune God of love has, in almighty power, created all that is and is sovereign over all,” but in His freedom and desire to enter into a relationship of love with humanity has “decided to make some of his actions contingent upon our requests and actions.” They also believe that God is “dependent on the world in

certain respects.” Consequently, they propose that the traditional view of God’s infallible foreknowledge is a conviction that should be dispensed with.

Open Theist theologians seem to highly esteem people while limiting God. For example, according to Pinnock human freedom can be won only by surrendering divine foreknowledge.

I agree with those theologians who call Open Theism radicalized Arminianism. And if our future free actions cannot be known with certainty, even by God, how can we believe in the fulfillment of prophecy? Why would God “promise” anything if He cannot know the future or guarantee it by His almighty power?

For the authors, the doctrine of election does not seem to hold any mystery. In fact, an appeal to mystery scandalizes them. They claim that some Calvinists “make a hasty retreat to mystery” when faced with charges of inconsistency. And they argue, “It isn’t a sign of true piety for one to be willing to dispense with logical coherence in the name of mystery.” They critique John Piper’s declaration that the potter has absolute rights over the clay, and if God chooses not to save some persons, it is not for us to understand but simply to adore.

Interestingly, on the one hand the authors state that Calvinists have been zealous evangelists and missionaries and have contributed powerfully to the cause of win-

ning the lost for Christ. On the other hand, they argue that Calvinists can’t make coherent sense of their claim that God makes a bona fide offer of salvation to persons he has not elected for salvation, nor can they explain how God can truly have compassion for such persons. They claim, “the consequences for evangelistic preaching are profound indeed.”

Why I am not an Arminian

What are the counter arguments from the authors of *Why I am not an Arminian*?

In their carefully reasoned, understandable exposition of Calvinism, they address the historical context, theological concerns, and biblical texts in a readable manner. In fact, they are Bible-centered in

Pelagianism, Arminianism and Calvinism made simple

A doctrinal overview based on the DVD set
Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism

by Allan Jenks

While the following is necessarily simplistic, as there are various shades of belief in each camp, the following is a good overview of:

- (a) Pelagianism,
- (b) Semi-Pelagianism/Arminianism, and
- (c) Calvinism.

They might answer the following questions thus:

1. What is man’s born moral state?
 - (a) “Perfectly well.”
 - (b) “Sick.”
 - (c) “Dead!”
2. What is man’s spiritual requirement?
 - (a) A Teacher
 - (b) A Physician
 - (c) A Resurrection (new birth)
- (3) What is man’s prayer concerning faith?
 - (a) “Lord I am thankful that I am not as others, who are yet lost, for unlike them I have saved myself by making the right moral choices.
 - (b) “Lord I am thankful that I am not as others, who are yet lost, for unlike them I have helped save myself by contributing my faith to the work of Christ.”
 - (c) “Lord have mercy on me! - the sinner!”
4. What is Salvation’s first work in man?
 - (a) The decision to make a right moral choice
 - (b) The decision to place one’s faith in Christ’s work
 - (c) God’s sovereign invisible regeneration of one’s spirit.
5. What is man’s life of faith?
 - (a) Continuation of right choices
 - (b) Continuation of faith in Christ’s work
 - (c) Continuation of God’s grace & mercy.
6. Who takes the credit, the glory, for a man’s salvation?
 - (a) “The man alone.”
 - (b) “Christ and the man together.”
 - (c) “God alone.”

their presentation. They point out that the question of ecclesiastical authority and the integrity of the church as a confessional body was an intense bone of contention for both sides in the struggle between the Calvinists and the Arminians within the Dutch church. The Calvinists argued that a Reformed church is a confessional church. Hence they pleaded for the maintenance of particular confessional standards.

Following in the tradition of Erasmus of Rotterdam, however, the Arminians championed the liberty of the individual conscience relative to doctrinal standards.

The authors show that Calvin was not the first one to talk about reprobation or the absolute sovereignty of God. They point to the church father Augustine who emphasized the utter dependence of man upon God alone for salvation and the supremacy of grace to the exclusion of all human contribution. His teaching has proven a problem for many Christians throughout the centuries, and it still lies at the heart of the Arminian rejection of Calvinism, which was in many ways a 16th century revival of Augustine's teaching on sin and grace.

The authors show that Calvinism stands for the doctrine that all humankind is sinful. Human beings will not and cannot make their way to God, retrieve their own lives or earn their own salvation. If humankind is to be saved, God must act. God must be gracious. Human beings are utterly dependent upon the saving grace of God. And apparently, God has not acted on behalf of all. He has not chosen to be gracious to all human beings. Sovereign in His grace, God showered His redemptive love upon a Jacob but not on an Esau.

It is a mistake, therefore, to pit individual and corporate election against each other. In other words, egalitarian fairness – treating all persons the same – may be a cultural ideal for the modern West, but there is no biblical reason to suppose that God shares it. “For his own reasons, God assumes the right to save one and not another – a Jacob, for example, and not his older, more talented brother; for Esau, left

to himself and his sinfulness, is deserving divine wrath.” Why does God elect some and others are passed by? God does not elect Abraham and Jacob based on foreseen merit or even foreseen faith. The basis of their election is God's love and will. The authors also show that both individual and corporate election are taught in the Old Testament. God chose Abraham and Jacob, also the nation of Israel.

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Arminian belief tends toward the overestimation of human ability. . .

.....

As fallen human beings, Calvinists struggle with a sovereignty that stretches and often transcends our abilities to discern the redemptive ways of God. Scripture leads us to the contention that divine sovereignty – God always prevails – is compatible with human freedom. God is not rendered idle by a world ruled by human freedom. Furthermore, in the new heaven and earth “the ultimate life of the redeemed will not include libertarian freedom, the ability to choose sin rather than obedience, apostasy rather than faithfulness.”

The authors also show that Calvinism is much broader in scope than the TULIP doctrine. The five points of Calvinism do not sufficiently define Calvinism, and certainly do not say all there is to be said about the Reformed faith. They affirm the five points of Calvinism but also a Reformed understanding of the church and sacraments. They explain the particular Reformed contribution to Christian reflection on the covenant and the kingdom of God. They also stress the church as the people of God with a call to seek a cultural life in the world that is typified by justice, mercy, and a transformational vision for individual vocational life.

Both Arminians and Calvinists agree that not all believe. One person hears the gospel as the word of life; another sees it as foolishness. But the authors of *Why I am not a Calvinist* critique Piper's rejection of “the wider hope,” which holds that saving grace is available to all persons, not just those who have heard the gospel in this life. The Canons of Dort follow Augustine in their explanation. God has sovereignly chosen to save some but not all. And unlike Arminianism, Calvinism believes in the perseverance of the saints.

The Canons of Dort judged the Arminian agnosticism regarding perseverance as a hopeless position. If our salvation depends on us, whether it be our merits, our will or even our striving to keep in step with God's grace, we are most surely lost.

The authors of *Why I am not a Calvinist* claim that an emphasis on God's sovereignty in salvation hinders evangelism, yet that emphasis encouraged the apostle Paul to continue preaching. In the line of Paul, Calvinists believe that the message of the cross is to be presented to all in order that they may believe and be pardoned. The good news of a provided forgiveness is to be as universally proclaimed as is the command to repent. God commands us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and to every person in it. The Synod of Dort did not see the doctrine of particular atonement as compromising preaching in the slightest. “God wants all to hear the gospel, but He intends to save only some. Why that is the case, we don't know.” As evidence of the compatibility of belief in limited atonement, and a fire for spreading the gospel, Calvinists can refer to Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles H. Spurgeon and Francis Schaeffer. They proclaimed a redemption that is definite and yet good news and offered an invitation addressed to all.

Much more can be said about the differences between Calvinism and Arminians. I hope that this review article will enhance our readers' love for our Calvinist heritage and the rich doctrines of sovereign grace.



And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desire of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

— Ephesians 2:1-10

Jacob “Harminius”

by Christine Farenhorst

The baby, who had been baptized Jacob Harmenszoon, lay contentedly in his mother’s arms. Warmth, food and love sheltered his small physical being. Even though his father was only a poor man who made knives for a living, the little one snuggled in his sleep. It was 1560 in the Dutch city of Oudewater and there was much trouble in the land – Spanish trouble, church trouble – and before long young Jacob would have and make his share of them.

When Jacob was only a little boy his father died. He was taken from his mother’s home to live with a former pastor of Oudewater in the city of Utrecht. The small boy mourned his father’s death and he missed his mother, (and only brother), very much. But this is what had been deemed best for him. Times were not easy for a widow with two sons to provide for. The old pastor tried to raise the lad as his own. However, when Jacob was fourteen this foster-father also died. Fatherless a second time, he returned to his mother in Oudewater. The reunion was not to be for long. Shortly after arriving home he was taken to Marburg, Germany by a friend.

From there he received the news that the Spaniards had attacked and murdered all the inhabitants of Oudewater. Jacob Harmenszoon, whose name had been Latinized to Jacobus Arminius, was an orphan at the tender age of fifteen.

It is difficult to imagine exactly how young Jacobus felt. He was not a child anymore, and yet not a man either at this point. It is Biblical to suppose that suffering

.....
***The Spaniards had
attacked and murdered
all the inhabitants. . .***
.....

can produce a steadfastness in the sovereignty of God. For Jacobus this was not the case. He did develop an intense dislike of any fighting or quarreling – and yet, strangely enough, the false doctrines he later came to espouse have brought about fighting and quarreling to this day.

Early schooling

When the teenager Jacobus Arminius was orphaned, several pastors took pity on the young man and one sent him to the recently established University of Leyden. Jacobus was at an impressionable age – the age that most of today’s students leave for college or university. This is why it is so crucial that teachers at this point in life are solid and impart true knowledge. Unfortunately, in Jacobus’ case, this was not to be. One of his professors taught, with power and conviction, man’s “free will,” as opposed to God’s divine election and reprobation. He taught so ably that Jacobus became both convinced and adept at convincing others. He was a good student. His thirst for knowledge plus his excellent study habits earned him a bursary which enabled him to further his studies in Geneva. Here he heard Beza, friend and successor of Calvin, lecture on election and reprobation. But it was too late. His young mind and soul had already totally absorbed “free will” and found it to be an attractive doctrine.

Jacobus also traveled to Italy where he met the famous Jesuit priest Bellarmino. Impressed by the man's great knowledge, Jacobus was subconsciously strengthened in his desire to stretch atonement to include more than just the chosen sheep specified by Christ Himself in John 10:25ff. After all, this man Bellarmino was kind, generous, extremely knowledgeable, active in good works, and surely God could not reject him? "Free will" consequently whispered in Jacobus' ear that atonement was not limited but universal.

A teacher of men

In 1587, at the age of 27, Arminius returned to Holland. One year later he was installed as minister in Amsterdam. In 1590 he married Elizabeth Reael, daughter of one of the rich regents of that city – a regent, one might add, who was quite liberal in thought – and whose daughter was likely of the same frame of mind as her father. This marriage seemed to encourage him in verbalizing the wayward thoughts he had already been harboring. A series of rather unreformed sermons on the book of Romans was begun.

Although he was a popular man, soft-spoken, cultured, good-natured and of impeccable character, these sermons stirred up a great deal of unrest in his congregation. He surmised, among other things, that death had not come into the world through sin but through nature. In chapters 8-11 he concluded that the reason God elected some and not others was because God knew beforehand what *they* would choose. Although Arminius was accused many times of preaching heresy, he continually maintained that he agreed with the forms of unity, (which at that time were the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession). The years passed and the regents, (of which his father-in-law was one), protected Arminius.

In 1603 Arminius was appointed as professor of theology in the University of Leyden. It had become the most important university in Holland – the university from which the state church called its ministers. The appointment gave Arminius the opportunity to sow seeds of heresy through

out the entire Reformed community. He won approval of the students easily enough for he was a congenial fellow and an able teacher. Between classes he gave private lectures at his house and criticized Calvin, convincing a great number that there were errors in the confessions.

A sad end

Understandably, there was quite a bit of discord within the university halls and in the church pews. There was a civil court in 1608, and again in 1609, at which these problems were discussed. It was obvious from these sessions that Arminius led a minority and would certainly lose out at a proposed synod. This is why the government, which looked on Arminius as a protégé, refused to call one. By the time the Synod of Dordt finally did take place, (1618-19), Arminius had been dead for almost ten years.



Jacobus became both convinced and adept at convincing others.



The final months of Arminius' life were marked with physical distress. Ill with tuberculosis, he also suffered a stroke, paralyzing one side and blinding him. Popular-

ity had waned and was seen in the fact that people literally applied Zechariah 11:17 to him.

"Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!"

Jacobus Harmenszoon, alias Jacob Arminius, died in 1609 before the age of fifty.

When the Synod of Dordt finally did meet, the Arminian point of view was eloquently defended by Episcopius, student and very able successor of Arminius. For six months issues were debated. The doctrine of sovereign grace was at stake. Representatives from Reformed churches all over Europe were present. In the end, Synod roundly condemned the views of Arminius in five canons, (or statements). These statements can be shortened into the acronym TULIP – Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bellarmino, Roberto Francesco Romolo (1542-1621) – a rigorous ascetic – the Roman Catholic church considers him one of the greatest theologians she ever produced.
2. Interview with Schuller in *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1984.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. There are many today who say that the reason people sin is because they have a lack of self-esteem. Can a lack of self-esteem be an excuse for sin? Or can a positive attitude redeem someone? Why/not?
2. Can a church help the Holy Spirit (in the way it designs its building, makes people comfortable, tells them that they are loved) in making people more receptive to God? Prove your answer from the Bible. Perhaps when Jacob Harmenszoon Latinized his name it should literally have become Harminius.

ARE WE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ABORTION DEBATE?

by Jon Dykstra

There are clearly two sides to the abortion debate. What is less clear is the make-up of those two sides.

Some think the debate is between those who feel abortion is good and those who feel it is bad. But does anyone feel abortion is good? US President Bill Clinton, while still calling for abortion to be legal, wanted it to be rare. His wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, described abortion as “a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women.” Another American senator, Ted Kennedy, echoed their concerns: “Surely, we can all agree that abortion should be rare, and that we should do all we can to help women avoid the need to face that decision.”

All three admit that abortion is bad – they describe it as sad and tragic, and to be avoided – but all of them want abortion to remain legal. So they are clearly on the wrong side of things. But if we talk of the abortion debate as being between those who think abortion is bad and those who think it is good, we will end up on the “abortion is bad” side along with the Clintons and Senator Kennedy. . . as well as almost everyone else.

This is clearly a silly way to talk about the abortion debate – it makes murky the very real and sharp differences that do divide the two sides.

The real division

There really are two sides to the abortion debate. On the one side we have those who think that abortion is a vitally important issue, a life and death matter. On the other side we have all those who insist abortion is not a matter of life and death – they argue that it is not nearly that important but is instead an issue of “personal freedom” or “just another medical procedure” that the government shouldn’t bother itself with.

This might seem an obvious way of divvying the two sides up but something rather odd happens when we look at the abortion debate this way. If we understand that the debate is between those who know it is a matter of life and death, and those who insist it is nowhere near that important, then we’ll find many people who claim to be pro-life are actually strong abortion advocates.

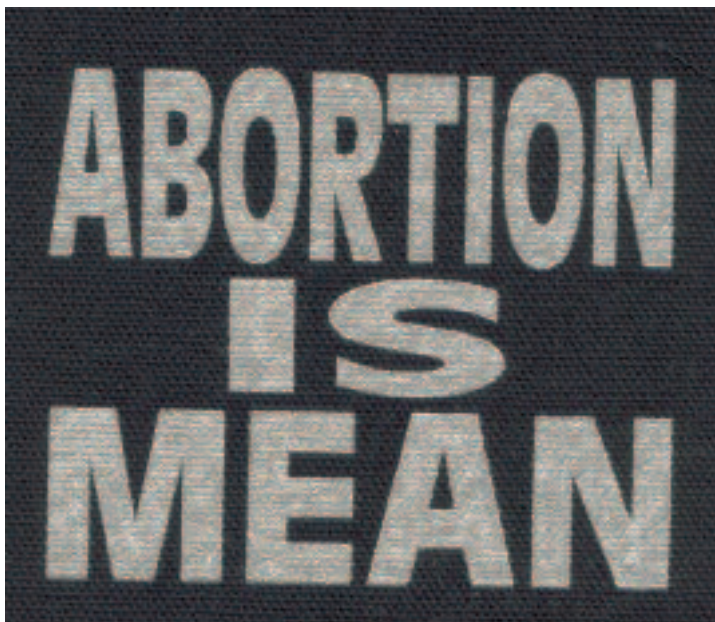
Silence is not golden

For example in the past federal election in Canada many politicians described themselves as pro-life. But did any of them try to make abortion an issue during the election? Or did they instead agree to be silent about it, acting as if it wasn’t particularly important? The Conservative Party is said to have the largest pro-life

caucus in Parliament but none of these politicians protested when their party leader Stephen Harper promised “The Conservative government won’t be initiating or supporting abortion legislation, and I’ll use whatever influence I have in Parliament to be sure that such a matter doesn’t come to a vote.”

Canadians who are still unsure or are confused about abortion understand on an instinctive level that there really are only two sides to the issue and if it isn’t a life and death matter, well then it is just a medical procedure that should be a matter of personal freedom. So when politicians who claim to be pro-life act as if abortion is just a minor concern, they are arguing for the other side. Their silence speaks volumes – if abortion in Canada really did involve the murder of over 100,000 children a year could anyone knowing the truth of the matter agree to keep silent about it? Of course not! So clearly abortion can’t be murder. A matter of life and death? How could it be when a supposedly pro-life politician who will thunder against higher taxes won’t scream about 300 abortions a day?

Such politicians aren’t pro-life, no matter what they say. Their silence is a devastatingly pro-abortion argument.



The worst understatement of all time?

“Abortion is Mean”

We have to properly understand the pro-life message if we want to communicate it effectively to others. Pro-lifers don't just think abortion is bad – if that was all we believed we could join hands with Bill and Hillary Clinton. We think abortion is murder. We want abortion banned because it involves the killing of a human child. If we act or talk about abortion in any other way we muddle up things. A popular shirt in the last few years proclaims that, “Abortion is Mean.” Notable pro-life activist Bryan Kemper wonders if even this shirt is clear enough: “Personally, I don't agree with ‘Abortion is Mean.’ It's like saying the Holocaust was impolite.” He's right, abortion isn't mean. . . it's homicide.

Closer to home

Even in our own churches the pro-life message isn't always communicated properly. No one in our circles would ever defend abortion but how often do any of us treat this issue as if it really was a matter of life and death? A young girl in our churches finding herself pregnant while unmarried would know her family was pro-life, but would she have ever had the true horror of abortion communicated to her? How would

the seeming wrongness of abortion compare with the certainty that “my parents would kill me if they ever found out”? This girl might *think* abortion is wrong, but she's *sure* her parents would freak out. Abortion *probably* isn't a good idea, but she's *absolutely knows* her dad would kick her out of the house. Her entire family might be pro-life but if they've only been so silently

then what sort of decision is this girl likely to make?

If abortion is a life and death issue we have to act like it is and communicate that to our children too. . . before it is too late.

Conclusion

There are two sides to the abortion debate but we mustn't make the mistake of believing the other side is arguing that abortion is good. No one, no one at all thinks abortion is good. But many will argue that it is minor issue, something that can be dealt with later, no cause for concern, a matter of personal choice, or simply another medical procedure. This side will not acknowledge that is a matter of vital importance, concerning life and death. So if we want to be on the right side of things, if we want to be pro-life and act pro-life, we must remember what abortion really involves and treat this issue with the importance it demands.



A Best of the Web

Top Ten

We are now taking nominations for the best Reformed websites on the Internet. If you know of any contenders please send in the web link and a few words as to why you think this Reformed site is well worth checking out. You can nominate one site or even several.

**Send your nominations to
Top10@reformedperspective.ca**

TALKING ABOUT ABORTION

Here are some (moving) pictures that are worth a few thousand words

by Jon Dykstra

There are a lot of reasons why we should talk about abortion, but what if we don't know enough, or *feel* we don't know enough? How can we start the conversation then? You can look to the films that follow for a little help. They all address the topic of abortion in different ways and are excellent conversation starters for youth groups, classroom situations, and the home.

one day in may

Drama
89 min; 2003
DVD/VHS \$20/16 US

Most of this movie takes place on just one set: the waiting room of an abortion clinic. The clinic's doctor is late, the waiting room is full, and slowly, hesitantly, the men and women sitting there start talking to one another.

This setting, and the movie's length, allow for a penetrating discussion of the justifications for abortion. The cast of characters include: Matt and Drew, two college students who don't think they can handle a child right now; a rich socialite making her young daughter go through with it to save the family from embarrassment; Angela, a strident feminist, who sees abortion as simply a right to be exercised; and Anna, a homeless woman, who doesn't know what else to do. Few in the room seem to think abortion is a good thing but they are all there just the same. However, as they endure a long wait for the doctor their doubts rise to the surface.

one day in may is well acted and well written with the possible exception of a dream sequence inserted rather abruptly towards the end of the film. In it Matt is put on trial for hiring someone to kill his girlfriend's unborn child. The point of this section is clear – if it's murder when a man hires someone to terminate a pregnancy it should be murder when a woman does it too – but the abrupt switch to this trial may cause some viewers confusion. Still, this film gives a voice to many arguments for abortion and answers those arguments admirably.



For more information and a look at the film trailer go to their official website www.2edged.com/oneday.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Illustrated lecture
63 min; 2005
DVD \$10 US

Little more than a taped lecture, it still manages to be among Answers In Genesis's top selling DVDs. Why? Well, there are a few cool PowerPoint slides to liven things up a bit, but the strength of this presentation is in its subject matter: the beginnings of human life. A Christian looking at their newborn might call the child a "little miracle" but this film reveals the insufficiency of this description. There isn't just one miracle involved in the conception and birth of a child – numerous miracles are involved at every stage, before conception even occurs.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made isn't specifically a pro-life presentation but by outlining the miracle of life Dr. David Menton makes clear the waste and destruction involved in abortion. This is a truly awesome presentation.

To order this video or take a look at a sample of the video online go to www.answersingenesis.org and type the DVD title into their search engine.



Tilly

Drama/Mystery

41 min

DVD/VHS \$20 Can.

Like the Frank Peretti book of the same name, this film tackles a very important aspect of the abortion issue that is often forgotten – God can forgive this sin. When we realize that as many as a third of Western women have had an abortion, or will have one before they are forty-five, the importance of talking about forgiveness becomes apparent. We can't just forget about these women.

The opening scene begins with Kathy Ross and her husband returning from a funeral. On their way back through the graveyard Kathy stumbles across a tombstone with the name "Tilly" inscribed on it right above a single date, the date of Tilly's birth and death. Kathy becomes fixated on the gravestone, wondering about the story behind this little girl's short time on Earth, and in next few days her fixation increases. Soon she can't even sleep or work. Her husband's growing concern prompts him to find out who this Tilly was, not realizing that his investigation will lead him right back to his own home.

The movie is in some ways a mystery so little else can be said without giving too much away. It is a very well made film and its moral is clearly an important one. To order it or look at the film's trailer go to www.lovelifeamerica.org



This video can be viewed online and purchased at www.abortio.no.org/Resources/audiobvideo.html

A Distant Thunder

Courtroom Drama/Metaphor

35 min; 2005

DVD \$20 US

This is the most professional of the films listed here and the most focused effort; it tackles one specific aspect of the abortion debate, partial birth abortion. The film is very good but almost needs to be watched twice to be fully understood. The Hollywood veteran who wrote and directed the film created a storyline that seems at first glance to be only a simple courtroom drama, but away from the courtroom a second story is taking place. As the trial proceeds the steps that occur during a partial birth abortion are paralleled by events in the life of prosecutor Ann Brown

This may sound a bit bizarre but it is effective. Though Ann Brown is pro-choice, she's given the job of prosecuting an abortionist when mistakes are made during one of his "procedures." The film's climax occurs when the abortionist's nurse gives testimony that dramatically spells out the details of this horrendous procedure.

To order this film or see the trailer go to their official website at www.adistantthunder.com

A Distant Thunder, one day in may, and Tilly can all be ordered online at www.visionvideo.com

**Harder Truth**

Documentary

9 min

VHS \$15 US

This film changed me. It is a video, taken in the womb, of an abortion. It is evil uncovered and brought into the light. Just as it took pictures of dead Jews, stacked like cordwood, to drive home the horror of the Holocaust so too visuals are important in the abortion debate. Ours is a visual culture and these pictures communicate what abortion really is. These pictures cut through words like "choice," "right" and "freedom" and make plain the fact that abortion is killing someone.

While this is a film I believe we should all see it contains pictures that are disturbing so it should be shown with some care. The audience should be warned about what they are about to see. When I show it I then turn down the lights and tell the audience that anyone who wants to look away can do so. I also find that, while the film is very short, its nine minutes of content can be overwhelming and I often show only two or three minutes.

The toughest consideration in showing this film is, how young is too young? As pro-life apologist Scott Klusendorf notes, girls as young as 12 can in many jurisdictions get an abortion without their parents' knowledge or permission. Twelve is very young, but if they are old enough to get an abortion isn't it important they know the real truth of it?

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FREE CATALOGUE

BAN SPANKING BANS

by Michael Wagner

Many of the people reading this article are child abusers. That would be the view of some secular child raising “experts,” anyway. They believe that spanking a child is “abuse,” or at least inevitably leads to abuse, and that corporal punishment should be outlawed. A large number of contemporary social problems cannot be solved as long as parents spank disobedient children, in their view.

The Swedish experiment

This kind of thinking prevailed in Sweden by the late 1970s, and that country passed a law to prohibit spanking in 1979. That was more than 25 years ago, and somehow Sweden still has its share of social problems – the utopia has not arrived. Perhaps they need more time.

More likely, the supposedly beneficial outcome of a ban on spanking is just another left-wing fantasy. Reality has a way of pouring cold water on the overheated theories of the social Left.

An American psychologist, Robert Larzelere, recently completed a study of Sweden’s ban on spanking. The study was published in 2004 by two groups based in England, Families First and The Christian Institute, and so it uses the word “smacking” where we in North America would use the word “spanking.” Hence the title of the study, *Sweden’s smacking ban: more harm than good*. According to this document, the ban has clearly failed to achieve its aims. In fact, it may have made matters worse.

If spanking contributes to child abuse in some way, then outlawing it will lead to a decrease in child abuse. But when Larzelere looked at the data, he found that “the best indicators of physical child abuse showed a 489 per cent increase in physical child abuse cases classified as criminal assaults in Sweden from 1981-1994.” In other words, after spanking was banned, there was a dramatic *increase* in child abuse.

That conclusion is reinforced by another observation from the data. Larzelere

states that “the best evidence suggests that perpetration of criminal assaults against 7-14 year-olds is increasing most rapidly in age groups raised after the law against smacking was passed.” Thus the Swedish experience provides compelling evidence that outlawing spanking will not reduce violence. Quite the opposite, in fact.

More State intrusion

Furthermore, there has been increased government meddling in families. Sweden empowers the state at the expense of parents. The spanking ban is one factor that contributes to this. Critics “say that the influence of parents has been inadvertently



Outlawing spanking will not reduce violence.



compromised by the entire set of overly intrusive Swedish policies. Because parents have been disempowered, the police must interfere in many more incidents than was



Sometimes it can be abuse not to spank your child.

previously the case.” And this intervention has severe consequences for the families. Sweden’s “programs to support childrearing include removing children from their homes far more often than in most other countries.” So it would appear that at least in some cases, the spanking ban has contributed to the government-imposed separation of children from their parents.

There are, of course, plenty of anti-spanking activists in other countries besides Sweden. And for many years they have been claiming to have studies proving that spanking is harmful. But those claims, when scrutinized properly, prove to be bunk.

Don’t be intimidated

A helpful discussion of this topic appeared in the April 13, 1998 issue of the mainstream newsmagazine *U.S. News & World Report*. In an article entitled “When To Spank,” Lynn Rosellini points out that many parents have been intimidated by the experts who claim spanking to be harmful. But there’s no need to be intimidated. The “notion advanced by a slew of American child-raising authorities that a couple of well-placed swats on the rear of your beloved preschooler irreparably harms him or her is essentially a myth. Anti-spanking crusaders relied on inconclusive studies to make sweeping overgeneralizations about spanking’s dangers.”

The Bible provides rules and guidelines to promote human wellbeing to its fullest extent. As every conservative Christian knows, those rules include spanking disobedient children at times. Parents would not be required to spank children if it was harmful to them. Of course, the Scripturally mandated form of spanking is to be measured and reasonable and could thus never be abusive. An anti-Christian policy like a ban on spanking must inevitably be harmful since it contradicts God’s express stipulations. So it’s not surprising that Sweden’s ban has failed. God’s way is always the right way.



The Truth in the *End of the Spear*

by Sharon L. Bratcher

How does a Christian group succeed in presenting a major motion picture in secular theaters? How do they present a true story about the Truth setting an entire native tribe free. . . and do it without the director and producer of the film taking too much dramatic license?

I must admit to being a bit disappointed when I viewed the *End of the Spear* during its opening weekend in Pennsylvania recently – it wasn't quite the Christian story I had been hoping for. But then I spoke with a friend of mine from Wycliffe Bible Translators who had met Steve Saint, the author of the book from which the film was made, and I became much more sympathetic to the challenge he faced.

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All five men were speared to death.

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This movie is based on the true story of five missionaries who went to Ecuador back in the 1950s to the Waodani tribe (known to most as the Aucas), a fierce homicidal "Stone Age" tribe. Many people are acquainted with this account via the famous book *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliot, the wife of the missionary Jim Elliot. Jim Elliot is also well known as the author of the quote: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

The missionaries reached out to the tribe but all five men were speared to death. Later on some of their wives and a sister went back and lived with the tribe, teaching them about Christ, and many were con-

verted, giving up their violent ways. A church still exists there today, with Steve Saint, the son of the slain missionary Nate Saint, living among them.

One movie becomes two

The original goal was to make just one movie – *End of the Spear*. But Steve Saint wasn't willing to give in to the moviemakers' desire to take dramatic license and change the actual events of the real story. In the end a compromise was made – first they made a true-to-life documentary. Afterwards, Steve consented to their taking some dramatic license in another film as long as it was still close enough to reality.

The documentary, entitled *Beyond the Gates of Splendor*, was released on DVD in October 2005. It is available at local movie rental stores (see the accompanying box for more info), and will more than likely be included on *End of the Spear* DVD when it is released later this year.

Beyond the Gates of Splendor gives the entire story of the missionaries, from their days in Wheaton College until current times. The family members of the five missionaries are interviewed, along with several members of the Waodani tribe. Their faith in Christ and eagerness for their mission will no doubt be an inspiration to all who view this film.

As for the *End of the Spear*, the story is told from the point of view of the natives, with less emphasis on the missionaries themselves. It focuses on what they thought and learned. It isn't intended to be a "tract," but rather, as one local commentator put it, it's supposed to tell a true religious story "without beating people over the head with it."

An obscured message

The major disappointment is that the name of Jesus Christ is never mentioned. We learn that the missionaries wanted to teach the people to give up spearing one another, and they would not kill the Waodani because those people were not ready for Heaven. God is referred to by His Waodani name, and the fact that He had a Son who "was speared but did not spear back" is mentioned. A converted Waodani woman shares with her tribe the fact that God left "carvings" for them to follow – in other words, information directly from Him on how He wanted them to live. But when the tribesman asks to see the carvings, no Bible is quoted from or shown. There is also a scene when the missionaries are afraid, yet they do not even pray! We learn that those who listened to the missionaries became peaceful, and near the end we do see that the "Gospel" has been translated into Waodani. But is all of this enough to accurately explain the transforming power of Christ that took place?

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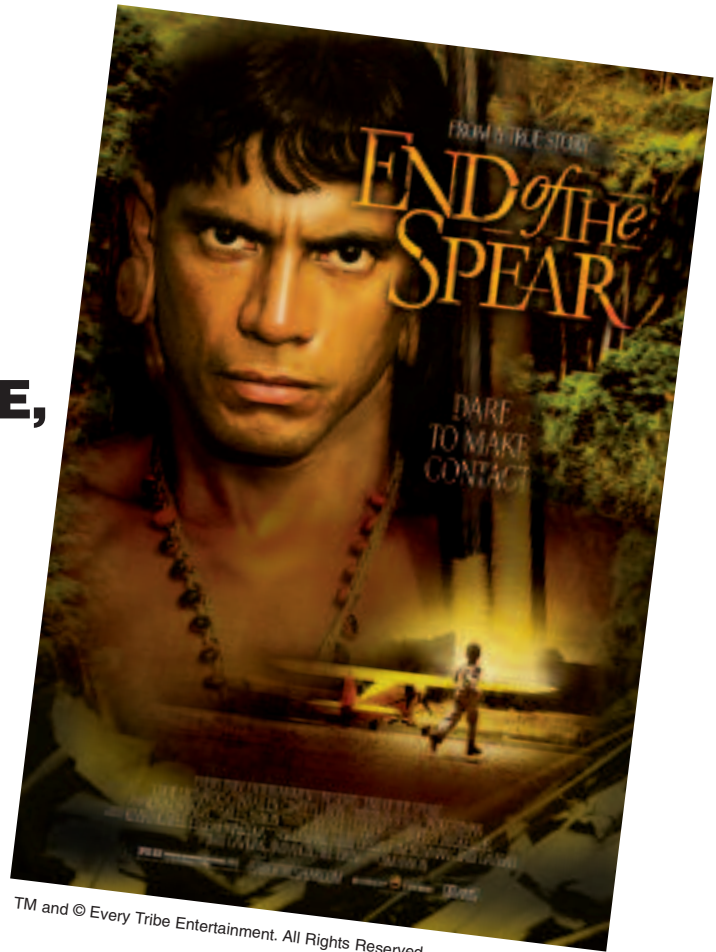
The name of Jesus Christ is never mentioned.

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There are enough pieces to the message/puzzle there for someone to take it and elaborate on it later. I couldn't help but think of urban gang violence and revenge when the Waodani were spearing each other repeatedly at the beginning of the film. The clue is there: the same message

COMING SOON

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that helped this tribe could help others. In fact, according to the website about the movie (www.endofthespear.com), it was this hope for spreading the Gospel message that convinced the Waodani to put aside their embarrassment regarding their history and give permission for it to be told.

But what could we really learn about the change of heart that took place in these people? Basically, we discovered that when the tribe learned about God’s Son not retaliating their lives were changed. I was left thinking that based only on what was in the film it would be possible for secular viewers to think of (the un-named) Christ as a Gandhi or any other non-divine “good teacher,” and remain happy and un-offended. At the end of the credits the filmmakers could have added, “no non-Christian positions were harmed in the making of this film.”

To those of us who believe in the Truth, it is sad that the entire story of God’s redeeming love could not have been spelled out more clearly. We can hope that there is enough interest from the film to lead people to watch the documentary afterwards.

Some final considerations

A few other factors regarding the film should be mentioned. The scenery in both films is absolutely breathtaking, and es-

pecially so on the big screen. There is something to be said for going to see the film in the first weekend in order to show the Hollywood people that we would like to see more films of this type, since they (unfortunately) put so much stock into those numbers.

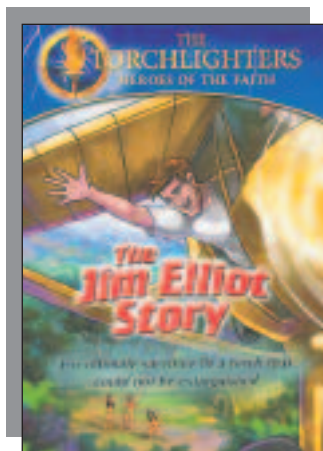
Another factor to consider is the native dress. Missionaries have to deal with that, and while the *Beyond the Gates of Splendor* documentary showed the more authentic dress (read: almost naked), *The End of the Spear* film actually covered the people more than was authentic. If there is any time when one might say that nudity is acceptable, this would be it. Still, I found it rather disturbing watching the thonged naked behinds of men running through

the jungle for two hours. It’s something to consider before taking the whole family to see the film.

There is no greater arrogance in our society today than for someone to state that he has the Truth. So, even in a movie telling the story of the Truth transforming the lives of many, Christ’s name and most tenets of the missionaries’ faith were carefully avoided. It reminded me of some brands of diet ice cream – where the basic substance is there but I find myself searching for the missing flavor. It was better than nothing, but it left me disappointed.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone that believes....” Romans 1:16a NIV





The Jim Elliot Story

Biography/Cartoon
30 min; 2005
DVD/VHS \$18/15 US

reviewed by Jon Dykstra

In 1956, Jim Elliot and his four friends seek out a group of Ecuadorian natives who have never heard the gospel, but the missionaries are murdered for their efforts. However when the men's wives also seek out the natives, and forgive them, this example serves as a powerful testament to the truth and power of the

Good News, and many of these same natives are then converted.

Though this is a cartoon it should definitely be previewed by adults as some scenes – specifically when the missionaries get speared – may be too intense for younger children. It is available at many Christian bookstores or online at www.christianbooks.com or www.visionvideo.com. For a look at a trailer go to the official website www.torchlighters.org.

Beyond the Gates of Splendor

Documentary
96 min; 2005
DVD \$22 Can.

reviewed by Jon Dykstra

The feature length documentary *Beyond the Gates of Splendor* provides a deeper look into the lives of the five missionaries and the murderous Waodani tribe they reached out to. Perhaps the most interesting part of the film is when one native recounts his family tree by pointing out where each member of his family had been speared to death – his uncle over there, his dad a few years later by that bigger tree, another uncle further away in the bushes. “Waodani children grew up understanding they would speared and live, or be speared and die.” No one died of old age. But as brutal and vengeful as the Waodani were, the bloodshed stopped when some of the tribe started to believe in God and follow Him.

Beyond the Gates of Splendor is a very good documentary, but still a documentary, so an attention span is required. It is available at many Christian bookstores and online at www.amazon.ca and www.amazon.com. Readers should bear in mind that, due to the native style of dress, there are occasional, very brief moments of *National Geographic* type nudity. For more on the film go to the official website www.beyondthegatesthemovie.com.



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BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN: Rape of the Marlboro Man

by David Kupelian

Brokeback Mountain, the controversial “gay cowboy” film that has garnered seven Golden Globe nominations and breathless media reviews – and has now emerged as a front-runner for the Oscars in March – is a brilliant propaganda film, reportedly causing viewers to change the way they feel about homosexual relationships and same-sex marriage.

And how do the moviemakers pull off such a dazzling feat? Simple. They do it by raping the “Marlboro Man,” that revered American symbol of rugged individualism and masculinity.

We all know the Marlboro Man. In my book *The Marketing of Evil*, I show how the Philip Morris Company made marketing history by taking one of the most positive American images of all time – the cowboy – and attaching it to a negative, death-oriented product – cigarettes.

Brilliant at what they do

Hit the pause button for a moment so this idea can completely sink in: Cigarette marketers cleverly attached, in the public’s mind, two utterly unrelated things: 1) the American cowboy, with all of the powerful feelings that image evokes in us, of independence, self-confidence, wide-open spaces and authentic Americanism, and 2) cigarettes, a stinky, health-destroying waste of money. This legendary advertising campaign targeting men succeeded in transforming market underdog Marlboro (up until then, sold as a women’s cigarette with the slogan “Mild as May”) into the world’s best-selling cigarette.

It was all part of the modern marketing revolution, which meant that, instead of touting a product’s actual benefits, marketers would psychologically manipulate



In Brokeback Mountain the cowboy image of rugged manliness is turned on its head and used to promote homosexuality.

the public by associating their product with the fulfillment of people’s deepest unconscious needs and desires. (Want to sell liquor? Put a seductive woman in the ad.) Obviously, the marketers could never actually deliver on that promise – but emotional manipulation sure is an effective way to sell a lot of products.

The “Marlboro Man” campaign launched 50 years ago. Today, the powerful cowboy image is being used to sell us on another self-destructive product: homosexual sex and “gay” marriage.

“People’s minds have been changed”

In *Brokeback Mountain*, a film adaptation of the 1997 New Yorker short story by Annie Proulx, two 19-year-old ranchers named Ennis Del Mar (played by Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) have been hired to guard sheep on a rugged mountain in 1963 Wyoming. One night, the bitter cold drives Ennis into Jack’s tent so they can keep each other warm. As they lie there, suddenly and almost without warn-

ing, these two young men – both of whom later insist they’re not “queer” – jump out of the sack and awkwardly and violently engage in anal sex.

Too embarrassed the next morning even to talk about it, Ennis and Jack dismiss their sexual encounter as a “one-shot deal” and part company at the end of the sheepherding job. Ennis marries his fiancée Alma (Michelle Williams, Ledger’s real-life girlfriend) while Jack marries female rodeo rider and prom queen Lureen (Anne Hathaway). Each family has children.

Four years later Jack sends Ennis a postcard saying he’s coming to town for a visit. When the moment finally arrives, Ennis, barely able to contain his anticipation, rushes outside to meet Jack and the two men passionately embrace and kiss. Ennis’s wife sadly witnesses everything through the screen door. (Since this is one of the film’s sadder moments, I wasn’t quite sure why the audience in the Portland, Oregon theater burst out in laughter at Alma’s heartbreaking realization.)

From that point on, over the next two decades Ennis and Jack take off together on periodic “fishing trips” at Brokeback Mountain, where no fishing actually takes place. During these adulterous homosexual affairs, Jack suggests they buy a ranch where the two can live happily ever after, presumably abandoning their wives and children. Ennis, however, is afraid, haunted by a traumatic childhood memory: It seems his father had tried to inoculate him against homosexuality by taking him to see the brutalized, castrated, dead body of a rancher who had lived together with another man – until murderous, bigoted neighbors committed the gruesome hate crime.

Eventually, life with Ennis becomes intolerable and Alma divorces him, while Lureen, absorbed with the family business, only suspects Jack's secret as they drift further and further apart. When, toward the end of the story, Jack dies in a freak accident (his wife tells Ennis a tire blew up while Jack was changing it, propelling the hubcap into his face and killing him), Ennis wonders whether Jack actually met the same brutal fate as the castrated "gay" cowboy of his youth.

Ultimately, Ennis ends up alone, with nothing, living in a small, secluded trailer, having lost both his family and his homosexual partner. He's comforted only by his most precious possession – Jack's shirt – which he pitifully embraces, almost in a slow dance, his aching loneliness masterfully projected into the audience via the film's artistry.

Feel, but don't think too deeply

Yes, the talents of Hollywood's finest are brought together in a successful attempt at making us experience Ennis's suffering, supposedly inflicted by a homophobic society. Heath Ledger's performance is brilliant and devastating. We do indeed leave the theater feeling Ennis's pain. Mission accomplished.

Lost in all of this, however, are towering, life-and-death realities concerning sex and morality and the sanctity of marriage and the preciousness of children and the direction of our civilization itself. So please, you moviemakers, how about easing off that tight camera shot of Ennis's suffering and doing a slow pan over the massive wreckage all around him? What about the years of silent anguish and loneliness Alma stoically endures for the sake of keeping her family together, or the terrible betrayal, suffering and tears of the children, bereft of a father? None of this merits more than a brief acknowledgment in *Brokeback Mountain*.

What is important to the moviemakers, rather, is that the viewer be made to feel, and feel, and feel again as deeply as possible the exquisitely painful loneliness



Last year Million Dollar Baby, a euthanasia promoting movie that gave a sympathetic treatment to a man who murdered his disabled friend, won the Oscar for best picture.



This year the homosexual romance Brokeback Mountain is almost certain to win. What does Hollywood have in store for us next year?

and heartache of the homosexual cowboys – denied their truest happiness because of an ignorant and homophobic society.

Thus are the Judeo-Christian moral values that formed the very foundation and substance of Western culture for the past three millennia all swept away on a delicious tide of manufactured emotion. And believe me, skilled directors and actors can manufacture emotion by the truckload. It's what they do for a living.

.....
A movie's musical score has one overriding function – to make the viewer feel. . . .

Co-star Jake Gyllenhaal realized the movie's power to transform audiences in Toronto, where, according to *Entertainment* magazine, "he was approached by festival-goers proclaiming that their preconceptions had been shattered by the film's insistence on humanizing gay love."

"Brokeback Mountain," said Gyllenhaal, "is that pure place you take someone that's free of judgment. These guys were scared. What they feared was not each other but what was outside of each other. What was so sad was that it didn't have to happen like that." But then, said the article, Gyllenhaal jumped to his feet and exclaimed triumphantly: "I mean, people's minds have been changed. That's amazing."

Film is more manipulative

Changed indeed. And that's the goal. Film is, by its very nature, highly propagandistic. That is, when you read a book, if you detect you're being lied to or manipulated, you can always stop reading, close the book momentarily and say, "Wait just a minute, there's something wrong here!" You can't do that in a film: You're bombarded with sound and images, all expertly crafted to give you selected information and to stimulate certain feelings, and you can't stop the barrage, not in a theater anyway. The visuals and sound and music – and along with them, the underlying agenda of the filmmakers – pursue you relentlessly, overwhelming your emotions and senses.

And when you leave the theater, unless you're really objective to what you've experienced, you've been changed – even if just a little bit.

Want to know how easily your feelings can be manipulated? Let's take the smallest, most seemingly insignificant example and see. Sit down at a piano and play a song, any song – even "Mary Had a Little Lamb" – as long as it's in a major key. Then, play the same song, but change from a major to a minor key; just lower the third step of the scale by a half-step so the melody and harmony become minor. If you watch carefully, you'll note this one tiny change makes the minor-key version sound a bit melancholy and sad, while the normal, major-key version sounds bright and happy. (As the expression goes, "Major glad, minor sad.")

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Propaganda works because it washes over us, overwhelming our senses.

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Now take this principle and apply it to a feature film by expanding it a million-fold. A movie's musical score has one overriding function – to make the viewer *feel* a certain way at strategic points during the story. And music is just one of dozens of factors and techniques used to influence audiences in the deepest way possible. Everything from the script to the directing to the camera work to the acting, which in *Brokeback Mountain* is brilliant, serve the purpose of making the moviemakers' vision seem like reality – even if it's twisted and perverse.

No limits

Do we understand that Hollywood could easily produce a similar movie to *Brokeback Mountain*, only this time glorifying an incest relationship, or even an

adult-child sexual relationship? Like *Brokeback*, it too would serve to desensitize us to the immoral and destructive reality of what we're seeing, while fervently coaxing us into embracing that which we once rightly shunned.

All the filmmakers would need to do is skillfully make viewers experience the actors' powerful emotions of loneliness and emptiness – juxtaposed with feelings of joy and fulfillment when the two "lovers" are together – to bring us to a new level of "understanding" for any forbidden "love." Alongside this, of course, they would necessarily portray those opposed to this unorthodox "love" as Nazis or thugs. Thus, many of us would let go of our "old-fashioned" biblical ideas of morality in light of what seems like the more imminent and undeniable reality of human love in all its diverse forms.

A *Brokeback*-type movie could easily be made, for instance, to portray a female school teacher's affair with a 14-year-old student as "a magnificent love story." And I'm not talking about the 2000 made-for-TV potboiler, *All-American Girl: The Mary Kay Letourneau Story*, about the Seattle school teacher who seduced a sixth-grade student, went to prison for statutory rape, and later married the boy having had two children by him. I'm talking about a big-budget, big-name Hollywood masterpiece aimed at transforming America through film, just as Hitler relied on master filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl to make propaganda films to manipulate the emotions of an entire nation.

In place of *Brokeback Mountain*'s scene with the castrated homosexual, the "adult-child love story" could have a similar scene in which, as a young girl, the future teacher's mother took her to see the body of a woman who had fallen in consensual "love" with a 14-year-old boy, only to be brutalized, her breasts cut off, and bludgeoned to death – all by Nazi-like bigoted neighbors. (So *that's* why she couldn't be honest and open about her later relationship with her student.)

Inevitably, such a film would make us doubt our former condemnation of adult-child sex, or at least reduce our outrage as we gained more "understanding" and sympathy for the participants. It would cause us to ask the same question one reviewer asked after seeing *Brokeback Mountain*: "In an age when the fight over gay marriage still rages, *Brokeback Mountain*, the tale of two men who are scarcely even allowed to imagine being together, asks, through the very purity with which it touches us: When it comes to love, what sort of world do we really want?"

Let's talk about love

OK, I'll bite. Let's talk about love. The critics call *Brokeback Mountain* a "pure" and "magnificent" love story. Do we really want to call such an obsession – especially one that destroys marriages and is based on constant lies, deceit and neglect of one's children – "love"?

What if I were a heroin addict and told you I loved my drug dealer? What if I told you he always makes me feel good, and that I have a hard time living without him, and that I think about him all the time with warm feelings of anticipation and inner completion? And that whenever we get together, it's the only time I feel truly happy and at peace with myself?

.....

We can easily lose the inborn understanding God gave us.

.....

Oh, you don't approve of my "love"? You dare to criticize it, telling me my relationship with my drug dealer is not real love, but just an unhealthy addiction? What if I respond to you by saying, "Oh shut up, you hater. How *dare* you impose your sick, narrow-minded, oppressive values on me? Who are *you*, you pinch-faced, moralistic hypocrite, to define for *me* what real love is?"

Don't laugh. I guarantee Hollywood could make a movie about a man and his drug dealer, or an adult-child sexual relationship, that would pull on our emotions and create some level of sympathy for the characters. Furthermore, in at least some cases, it would make us doubt our conscience – a gift directly from God, the perception of right and wrong that he puts in each one of us – our inner knowing that this was a totally unhealthy and self-destructive relationship.

Overwhelming

Ultimately, propaganda works because it washes over us, overwhelming our senses, confusing us, upsetting or emotionalizing us, and thereby making us doubt what we once knew. Listen to what actor Jake Gyllenhaal, who plays Jack, told the reporter for *Entertainment* magazine about doing the “love” scenes with Heath Ledger:

“I was super uncomfortable ... [but] what made me most courageous was that I realized I had to try to let go of that stereotype I had in my mind, that bit of homophobia, and try for a second to be vulnerable and sensitive. It was f—in' hard, man. I succeeded only for milliseconds.”

Gyllenhaal thinks he was “super uncomfortable” while being filmed having simulated homosexual sex because of his own “homophobia.” Could it be, rather, that his conflict resulted from putting himself in a position, having agreed to do the film, where he was required to violate his own conscience? As so often happens, he was tricked into pushing past invisible internal barriers – crossing a line he wasn't meant to cross. It's called seduction.

This is how the “marketers of evil” work on all of us. They transform our attitudes by making us feel as though our “super uncomfortable” feelings toward embracing unnatural or corrupt behavior of whatever sort – a discomfort literally put into us by a loving God, for our protection – somehow represent ignorance or bigotry or weakness.

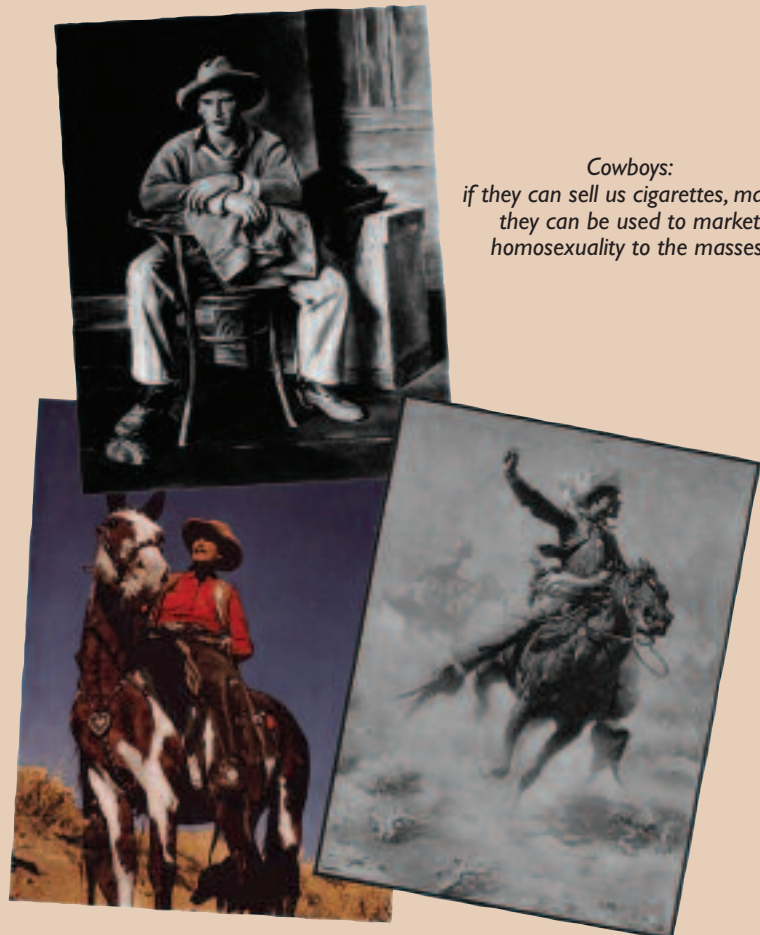
I wrote my book *The Marketing of Evil* to expose these people, and especially to reveal the hidden techniques they've been

using for decades to confuse us, to manipulate our feelings and get us to doubt and turn our backs on the truth we once knew and loved. Indeed, whether they're outright lying to us, or ridiculing us for our traditional beliefs, or trying to make us feel guilty over some supposed bigotry on our part, the “marketers of evil” can prevail simply by intimidating or emotionally stirring us up in one way or another. Once that happens, we can easily become confused and lose the inborn understanding God gave us. We all need that inner understanding or common sense, because it's one of our primary protections from all the evil influences in this world.

As I said at the outset, Hollywood has now raped the Marlboro Man. It has taken a revered symbol of America – the cowboy – with all the powerful emotions and associations that are rooted deep

down in the pioneering American soul, and grafted onto it a self-destructive lifestyle it wants to force down Americans' throats. The result is a brazen propaganda vehicle designed to replace the reservations most Americans still have toward homosexuality with powerful feelings of sympathy, guilt over past “homophobia” – and ultimately the complete and utter acceptance of homosexuality as equivalent in every way to heterosexuality.

If and when that day comes, America will have totally abandoned its core biblical principles – as well as the Author of those principles. The radical secularists will have gotten their wish, and this nation – like the traditional cowboy characters corrupted in *Brokeback Mountain* – will have stumbled down a sad, self-destructive and ultimately disastrous road.



Cowboys:
if they can sell us cigarettes, maybe
they can be used to market
homosexuality to the masses.

Why animals don't get lost

(and no, it's not because they're willing to stop and ask for directions)

by Margaret Helder

Since the advent of global positioning satellites, or at least since their availability for civilians, scientists have found many uses for these devices. One of the more interesting applications is to track animals. Of obvious popular appeal are programs such as "fish with chips."

This is a multimillion dollar Census of Marine Life project. In conjunction with this program, thousands of marine animals in the Pacific Ocean, including many fish, have been fitted with electronic surveillance tags. As of 2005, midpoint in a ten-year program, some interesting results have been recorded. Thus far about 1,800 sharks, tuna and turtles have been fitted with transmitting devices which relay information to a satellite when the animal surfaces. By this means, a bluefin tuna was tracked as it crossed the Pacific Ocean three times in 600 days. This fish swam 40,000 kilometers (km) with an average of 66 km/day.

More dramatic still were the exploits of Nicole, a 3.5 meter (m) long great white shark. This specimen swam 11,000 km from South Africa to Australia and back within three months. Nicole thus averaged 122 km/day. She swam in a straight line, never less than 5km/hr and 60% of the time she stayed within one meter of the surface. It is obvious she knew where she was going.

Scientists have been astonished to discover how far these and many other animals migrate. Another interesting study involved young fingerling salmon emerging from 16 river systems on the Pacific coast of North America. The tags on several

thousand of these fish were scanned as they passed over special receivers placed on the ocean floor from Washington State up to Alaska. This study revealed that the young salmon follow precise migration paths which vary depending upon their river of origin.

The results of these tracking studies intensify the question, long pondered, as to how animals navigate long precise routes through the oceans or skies. As our tools for study become ever more sophisticated, our insights might be expected to increase too. This may be, but the more famous cases still abound in unanswered questions.

Freshwater eels

Eels are long snake-like fish which can grow up to 3 m long. While some might consider such creatures ugly, many in Europe and North America consider them very tasty snacks.

However, there was one longstanding mystery concerning the freshwater eels of

eastern North America and Europe. Why were no young eels ever observed? Did they spring fully grown from their parents, like the mythical goddess Minerva who was imagined to have sprung mature and fully clothed from Jupiter's brain?

A Danish biologist solved the problem early in the twentieth century. Johannes Schmidt discovered that freshwater eels from both sides of the Atlantic spawn in a remote region of the Atlantic Ocean east of the Bahamas Islands. As is typical when one mystery is solved, this answer raised many new questions. How and why do all these eels navigate so far?

The Sargasso Sea, a region of the Atlantic Ocean where water currents slowly move in a gigantic gyre (whirlpool), is roughly the size of Australia. Its existence is a byproduct of the Gulf Stream which carries warm water north along the eastern coast of North America and then eastward toward Europe, and the North Equatorial Current which carries cold water south towards Africa and then west towards the Caribbean. It so happens that this sluggish whirlpool region of the Atlantic is very rich in mineral nutrients. *Sargassum*, a distinctive floating brown seaweed, grows so thickly there that the sea surface sometimes looks more like a meadow than like open water. Naturally this region is a wonderful habitat for sea life and there the eels go to mate.

In the fall, eels which are about ten years old, undergo physical and physiological changes. They stop eating as their stomachs shrink, and their reproductive organs expand. These mature specimens then



Eels certainly make a nice light snack but there's a lot more to them.



Scientists tracked one shark traveling 5,500 km in a straight line.

move from their preferred freshwater habitats down streams to rivers, and from rivers to the sea. They proceed from far inland along the Atlantic coast from Mexico up to Labrador, from Greenland's coast and Iceland, from the British Isles, from Scandinavia and from lands bordering the Mediterranean and Black Seas. As these eels converge on the Sargasso Sea, they show no specific preference to mate with specimens from their part of the world. Each female then lays up to twenty million eggs. These hatch into thin, flat, almost transparent creatures about one half cm long. As they move north in the Gulf Stream, those which mature first, apparently stop off in the fresh waters of North America. Others may take longer to mature, up to two or three years and these drift towards Europe. The American and European populations look different, but biologists think that genetically they may be almost identical.

It is apparent that we know some of the story concerning eels but there are obviously many blanks yet to fill. What causes the eels to migrate to a common area in the open ocean? Why do they not spawn closer to their feeding grounds? Drifting towards coastal areas is obviously easy enough, but how do the eels navigate their way back to the Sargasso Sea? There obviously is more to freshwater eels than a tasty snack.

Sea Turtles

Most of the seven species of sea turtle can be found throughout the world's tropical and subtropical seas. Despite this wide range, local populations exhibit very specific nesting site preferences and sometimes even a specific preference in feeding site as well. This scarcely seems remarkable until we realize that the nesting and feeding sites may be thousands of kilometers apart. After decades of ecological studies, scientists still have only a poor understanding of the wonders of sea turtle navigation.

Green turtles are a rugged, long-lived species (up to 70 years). As is typical with sea turtles, the female lays her eggs at night in the sand of a wide beach along the seashore. She digs a pit, and lays as many as one hundred eggs. After covering the eggs, the mother then retreats into the sea. Several weeks later, all the eggs hatch at the same time. The hatchlings emerge from the sand and head straight for the ocean. Once immersed, they swim straight out, farther and farther from land with its multitude of avian, crustacean and human predators. Only about one in one thousand hatchlings survives long enough to mature.

Once in the open sea, young turtles apparently set out for the feeding grounds. Green turtles hatched on beaches of Costa Rica later turn up in Spain, Chile and Brazil. Then, once mature, females return to the very same beaches from which they hatched fifteen to thirty years previously. Tagging programs with young turtles have never revealed an adult female nesting on a beach other than the one from which she emerged. How do these turtles, out at sea, navigate towards the appropriate beach?

One of the more remote destinations on earth is Ascension Island. Situated in the mid South Atlantic Ocean, this island of 88 square kilometers lies about 1100 kilometers northwest of Saint Helena, itself an island famous for its remote location. (Napoleon Bonaparte spent his last days

on Saint Helena, a site chosen as his prison because its distance from everywhere made escape impossible). However Ascension Island is even more isolated than Saint Helena. Nevertheless green turtles, feeding in shallow waters along the Brazilian coast, and others in similar habitats near Gabon (Africa), swim due east or west (respectively) to nest on the beaches of Ascension Island. The journey from Africa to the island is 2500 km and from Brazil to the island is 2250 km. It is like finding a needle in a haystack. Nevertheless adult female turtles make the journey once every three to four years. Moreover they do not eat at all during the entire eight month return trip.

Amazing skills in navigation are not unique to green sea turtles. Studies on the largest turtle of all, the leatherback, reveal some interesting details too. Unlike the green turtle, the leatherback forages for food in the deep ocean so they are less tied to specific feeding grounds. Nevertheless there are only a few dozen places in the world where these turtles lay eggs. Of these, only four beaches attract large numbers of nesting leatherbacks. One of these four beaches is Playa Grande Beach on the west coast of Costa Rica. Tagging studies have revealed that these turtles travel 2500 km west from Costa Rica toward the Galapagos Islands and beyond into deeper waters. They confine this travel to a narrow



Sea turtles may use cues such as wave direction, the earth's magnetic field, moonlight, and perhaps chemical gradients to figure out which way they need to go.

corridor up to 480 km wide. The females return to Playa Grande to lay eggs up to ten times per season. The females of another leatherback population, which feeds on jellyfish in the waters off Canada's Nova Scotia coast, later proceed to beaches within the Caribbean Sea in order to nest.

Studies on turtle navigation have revealed that young hatchlings react positively to wave direction, the earth's magnetic field, moonlight, and perhaps chemical gradients. Nobody has, however, established precisely how adult turtles navigate thousands of kilometers in the open ocean, or even why they do so. Even if turtles are able to orient themselves in a specific direction, how do they locate the particular beach from which they hatched so many years previously and on which they spent so short a time?

Monarch butterflies

One of the most amazing examples of navigation is that of the monarch butterfly. During the spring, these insects leave tiny stands of trees in Mexico where they spent the winter. They fly northeast to destinations throughout eastern North America. Then in the fall, several generations later, these butterflies head back to the very same stands of trees from which their great great grandparents had emerged the previous spring.

Several questions naturally arise. It may be that day length triggers the instinct to fly southwest in the fall, but how do these tiny brains identify the appropriate direction? Recent laboratory studies have shown that adult butterflies emerge at dawn from the chrysalis. This time is apparently internalized within each insect's 24 hour physiological clock. (Your own physiological clock tells you, for example, when it is time to sleep and time to eat.)

It is the insect's awareness of passing time which allows these butterflies to navigate with the sun as their reference point. As the sun moves across the sky, the butterflies automatically adjust their orienta-

Each spring the frail, tiny monarch butterfly begins a journey that his great, great-grandchildren will complete later that year.



tion to the sun according to the time of day and thus they maintain a constant southwest direction. If any butterflies are artificially caused to emerge from the chrysalis at a different point in the day, they cannot navigate according to the sun's position and consequently they get lost.

Imagine a navigating system that automatically adjusts for time of day! This is a fancy computer to cram into a very small insect brain. Obviously the whole system was designed to function in a sophisticated manner while using on a few simple cues. In the spring after overwintering, these very same butterflies will fly toward the northwest.

Arctic birds

In certain instances a much simpler navigating system than that of the butterflies may suit the needs of an animal. This situation applies to arctic birds on their annual migration south. Navigation apparently is most difficult near the poles since many useful parameters, like magnetic field, all converge.

During the late summer of 2005, scientists carried out a study of arctic bird navigation. As flocks of birds passed over the Bering Strait between Alaska and Siberia, scientists briefly tracked them by radar. From hundreds of such tracks, the travel trajectories (direction) could be calculated. Already the scientists had calculated the various routes that birds would follow if they were using one or other navigational cues. If the birds were navigating by means of a magnetic compass, for example, they would proceed towards the northeast (not an ideal direction). If they used the sun as

their reference point, adjusting their calculations according to time of day, they would proceed towards the east. However if they followed the sun without adjusting direction for time of day, they would proceed in a southeast direction. This was indeed the path these birds appeared to follow.

The end result of this strategy is that their route then traces an arc, part of a great circle. Such a route is by definition the shortest distance connecting two points on the globe. For people relying on technology, a great arc requires continuous changes in compass direction. Navigating by compass (magnetic field) is longer but much easier. Obviously, however, one expends less energy on a shorter route. In the case of arctic birds, lacking complex computer programs, they nevertheless manage to follow a sophisticated path out of the arctic. Scientists cannot refrain from asking how these birds learned such a navigational strategy.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that recent tracking studies have revealed exciting details about animal navigation. In addition, physiological studies continue to give us glimpses into methods which these creatures use to plot their routes. But none of these environmental cues would be any help at all without senses designed to perceive them, and brains to interpret the data correctly, and to act upon it. Secular scientists may eventually describe the tracking mechanisms ever so precisely, but they will never be able to tell us why or how these remarkable designs were conferred on these creatures. Christians know.



PUZZLE PAGE ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to PUZZLE PAGE, 43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 [OR robgleach@gmail.com](mailto:robgleach@gmail.com)

NEW PUZZLES

Chess Puzzle # 118

Riddle for Punsters #118 – “Trucking Along”

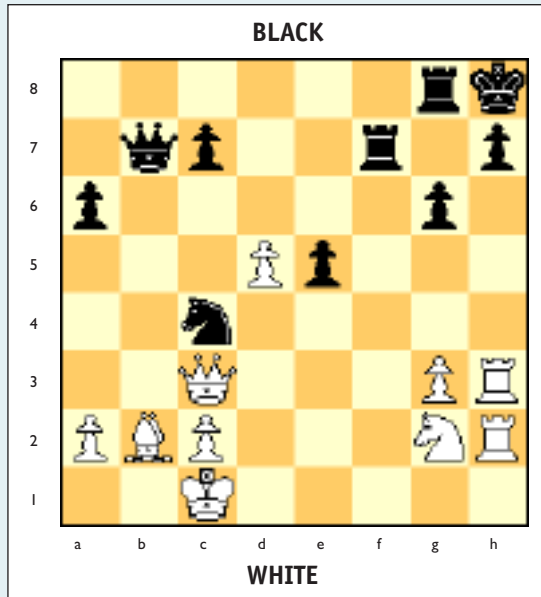
Why do some people get emotional when transferring their belongings from their old house to a new house? They find it a very _____ experience.



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

Problem to Ponder #118 – “Solve Some Student Statistics”

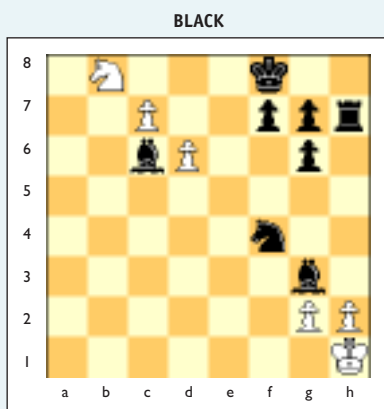
Janice, Jackie and Jasmine are joyful students at John Knox Christian School. Their last names, not necessarily in the right order, are Jenkins, Jennings and Jensen. Miss Jenkins is one and a half times as old as Miss Jensen. The average of their ages is Jasmine’s age, 15 years. Only Jasmine and Jackie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



WHITE to Mate in 4

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

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 117



WHITE to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. P-B8=Q ch B-K1
2. N-Q7 ch K-N1
3. QxB mate

OR

1. P-B8=R ch B-K1
2. N-Q7 ch K-N1
3. RxB mate

Algebraic Notation

1. c7-c8=Q + Bc6-e8
2. Nb8-d7 + Kf8-g8
3. Qc8xe8 ++

OR

1. c7-c8=R + Bc6-e8
2. Nb8-d7 + Kf8-g8
3. Rc8xe8 ++

Or, If it is BLACK’s Move,

BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. _____ RxP ch
2. K-N1 N-R6 ch
3. PxN R-R8 mate

OR

3. K-B1 B-N4 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Rh7xh2 +
2. Kh1-g1 Nf4-h3 +
3. g2xh3 Rh2-h1 ++

OR

3. Kg1-f1 Bc6-b5 ++

SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (DECEMBER) PUZZLE PAGE

Answer to Riddle for Punsters #117 – “Do Not be Bird-oned with Pride”

Why did the explorer, just back from an exciting adventure, strut around proud as a peacock? Because he had such a colourful tale to reveal.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #117 – “The Toll of Travel”

On a trip from Winnipeg to Toronto, Will and four of his boys spent 9 hours travelling the first day at an average speed of 90 km/h, 4 hours the second day averaging 95 km/h, 6 hours the third day averaging 80 km/h and 8 hours the fourth day to travel 760 km that last day. How far did they travel altogether and what was the overall average speed for the trip and what was the cost of fuel for the trip at an average price (in Canadian funds) of \$1.05/L for gasoline if Will’s van averaged 9.0 km/L for the trip? A total of \$180 U.S. was spent on accommodations for the three nights and an average of \$11.00 U.S. per day per person for food and activities and souvenirs. Using an exchange rate of \$1.20 Canadian for each U.S. dollar, was the overall cost (in Canadian funds) of the four day trip \$683.50 or \$719.50 or \$763.50 or \$820.20?

The distances travelled were $9 \times 90 = 810$ km the first day, $4 \times 95 = 380$ km the second day, $6 \times 80 = 480$ km the third day, and 760 km the fourth day, for a total of 2430 km. This total distance was travelled in $9 + 4 + 6 + 8 = 27$ hours.

Thus, the average speed was $2430 \text{ km} / 27 \text{ h} = 90 \text{ km/h}$.

Also, $2430 \text{ km} / 9.0 \text{ km/L} = 270 \text{ L}$ fuel used. $270 \text{ L} \times \$1.05/\text{L} = \283.50

Thus, the fuel cost in Canadian funds was \$283.50.

\$180.00 U.S. \times 1.20 = \$216.00 Canadian for accommodations.

Finally, at \$11.00 U.S. per day per person for food, etc.,

$\$11.00 \times 5$ (persons) \times 4 (days) \times 1.20 (Conversion) = **\$264.00 Canadian**

Thus, the overall cost of the trip was $\$283.50 + \$216 + \$264 = \763.50 in Canadian funds.

Crossword Puzzle

Series 13, No. 8

Last month's solution
Series 13, no. 7

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14						15							16	
17						18							19	
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66				67			68			69	70	71	72	73
74				75						76				
77				78						79				

1	P	U	M	A	S		5	D	O	S		8	S	C	O	O	11	P		
	U		12	U	M	P		13	E	A	T		14	E	O	N		I		
15	P	A	S	T	A		17	S	T	E		18	M	O	I	R	A			
20	P	R	E		21	M	A	S	H	E	D	23		24	N	O	U	N		
25	Y	U	R	T		26		27	D	E	S	P	O	T		29	N	E	O	
					30	A	M	O	R		32	E	Z	R	A					
33	C	O	M	P	O	S	T		36	D	E	I		37	A	38	39	S		
40	A	D	D	E	R							41	F	42	R	I	E	S		
43	I	D	S		44	T	O	P		45	46		47	S	P	L	U	R	G	E
				49	Y	A	L	U		50	T	I	E	S						
51	P	I	E		52	R	A	G	O	U	T		56	K	A	L	E			
60	E	N	I	D		61		62	F	A	R	F	A	63	L		64	P	O	W
65	A	N	D	E		66	S		67	R	I	F		68	A	69	M	P	L	E
C		70	E	N	T		71	E	O	E		72	T	I	L					R
73	E	A	R	T	H		74	E	N	D		75	E	X	E	C	S			

ACROSS:

- 1. Popular sport place
- 6. Church part
- 11. Kind of music
- 14. Flat, dull
- 15. Type of bear
- 16. As well as (internet chat lingo)
- 17. Express an opinion
- 18. An early Commodore computer
- 19. Lid, or head covering
- 20. Council of NATO reps
- 22. Specific Greek letters
- 23. Before, poetically speaking
- 24. Shut noisily
- 28. Well-known number
- 30. Consumer of a finished product
- 31. Envious
- 33. Cutting tool
- 35. City in Turkey
- 36. Church accessory
- 38. Crevasses
- 42. Specific Hebrew letters
- 43. Garden tool
- 44. All
- 45. Form of Algerian music
- 46. Come in
- 48. Little bit
- 50. Levels
- 52. Computer key
- 54. Ices the cakes
- 55. Type of carpet
- 58. Put out of the way
- 61. Dairy product, of old
- 62. Also known as the jack of clubs in certain games
- 63. Mischievous child
- 64. Slippery fish
- 66. Personal contraction
- 67. Certain playing card
- 69. Not together
- 74. Number found on a bill possibly
- 75. Mistake
- 76. Hot, or cold fruit drink
- 77. Finish
- 78. British pals
- 79. Kind of exam question

DOWN:

- 1. Farewell, of old
- 2. Sacrificial animal, of old
- 3. Erythropoietin, for short
- 4. Insect egg
- 5. Gulf of _____
- 6. Swiftly, archaically speaking
- 7. Isle of Man (Abbr.)
- 8. Slippery goo
- 9. Body of water surrounded by a reef of coral
- 10. Memorable time periods
- 11. Track competitions
- 12. Alert to
- 13. Tree product
- 21. Transportation for Balaam
- 24. Picture of a scene
- 25. Thick woolen cloth
- 26. Cease, on the seas
- 27. Bathroom sign
- 29. Compete
- 30. Machinegun
- 32. Certain wild Asian goats
- 34. Moisture extractor
- 36. Family member, possibly
- 37. Soft mass, possibly of gum
- 39. Just picked produce
- 40. Dutch, or French aunt
- 41. Cowardly person
- 47. Hospital test
- 49. _____ Baba
- 51. Oath
- 53. Picture taker
- 54. Fixed charge
- 55. Malice
- 56. Safe place
- 57. Change for the better
- 59. Sharp increase in growth
- 60. Forest mammals
- 63. Semper _____
- 65. Intricate clothing trim
- 68. Council of Europe (abbr.)
- 70. Tant _____
- 71. Newspaper parts
- 72. Mens _____
- 73. Attempt

