

REFORMED

Perspective

Volume 27 No 6

April 2008

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY



"There is not a single square inch of the entire cosmos of which **Christ the sovereign Lord** of all does not say, 'This is mine.'" - Abraham Kuyper

Politics is His. That's why ARPA Canada exists.

What's wrong with the news

Media bias impacts some mediums more than others

Editorial by
Jon Dykstra

Canadian newsman Ted Byfield once asked a group of journalism students how many thought of themselves as liberal, how many conservative and how many were unbiased. Out of the class of 50, almost half identified as leftwing or liberal, and just a handful, two or three, admitted to being conservative.

Surprised? Probably not – conservative Christians know the media is biased against us, against our beliefs, and more importantly against our God. But few realize just how bad the situation really is. Liberal journalists outnumber conservatives by a huge margin¹ but we need to understand that neutral newsmen – the 50% of the class that claimed to be unbiased – are against us too.

Systemic bias

It's not personal for them – it's just the nature of the news business, part of the system. The media is always on the lookout for what's current, what's usual, what's new. That's why "Dog bites man" isn't a story and why "Man bites dog" is.

It's this quest for the unusual that tends to bias the media against Christians. After all we hold to traditional, old-fashioned values and we hear the same gospel truth preached off our pulpits that has been proclaimed for 2000 years. There's nothing new about it. But if a pastor were to take to the pulpit dressed as Elvis, and announce to his congregation that he's all "shook up" and getting gender reassignment surgery, *that's* novel. And that's what makes it news. This isn't the "liberal media" out to get us conservatives – this is neutral newsmen reporting on perversions in unbiased, non-judgmental ways.

There is no neutrality though – when they report on evil night after night without condemning it as such, they normalize this behavior. Repeated exposure makes things like homosexuality, promiscuity, divorce, even pornography seem less shocking, less vile.

That's the impact of "unbiased" reporters at work.

"Group think"

So liberals not only outnumber conservatives in the newsroom the very nature of news biases it against us.

Fortunately we have lot of choices today in how to get our information so while conservative news sources might be rare, they can be found. And interestingly, they can be found more easily in some mediums rather than others.

Newspapers, news magazines, and nightly news shows are not the best mediums for conservatives. They all involve a large number of people working together to produce what you see. And because these are group efforts there's a strong tendency for journalists in these settings to succumb to a type of "group think." They want to get along with their co-workers, so there's a subtle form of peer pressure which impacts what sort of stories they'll cover. As *Whistleblower* editor-at-large Bob Just puts it:

"Let's face it: Social issues strike very close to home for us all. Try pitching a news story about the devastating effects of divorce on children to a news producer who's on his third wife. Or how about pitching a serious story on the harm caused by excessive daycare to a producer whose child is in daycare all the time. It's easier to pitch her a story on amazing improvements in daycare techniques, or on why there needs to be more daycare facilities – and how the government can help."

This "group-think" is not necessarily a deliberate bias, but as you can see, it does often work itself out as a generally anti-Christian bias.

The medium with the most

The news medium with the best potential for conservatives turns out to be the radio. There are no flashy visuals, or smiling faces, or distractions of any kind; it's just the program host and what he chooses to bring to our attention. It's an individualistic effort, so while there will still be some deliberate bias, radio is less susceptible to the vaguely anti-Christian "group think."

That makes it easier for a radio talk show host like Rush Limbaugh (or Dr. Laura, Dennis Prager, Cal Thomas, Dr. Dobson. . .) to tackle topics that your nightly news, or daily newspaper might shy away from.

Conclusion

I'm not trying to suggest that everyone stop reading the paper or start getting their news exclusively from the radio. There are many other good news sources. The Internet, for example, has possibilities, though here too it is the smaller, more individualistic efforts like LifeSiteNews.com and WorldNetDaily.com that provide the best conservative perspective.

We don't need to stop reading newspapers or watching CNN, but we do need to go beyond these sources. We do need to understand just how prevalent the media's anti-Christian bias is. Whether it is deliberate or not, the mainstream media is not friendly to Christians. . . so it just doesn't make sense for us to rely exclusively on them for the information we need to know.

Footnotes

¹ A recent Pew Research Center study of American journalists put the ratio of (self-identified) liberal to conservative journalists at between 2-1 and 4-1.

For further study

- Q1. Should a Christian reporter try to be unbiased and neutral? Should they try to be fair and balanced? Is there a difference between being neutral and being fair? What does the Bible say about being neutral? (See Luke 11:23 and Matthew 6:24.) What does the Bible say about being fair and balanced? (See Leviticus 19:15 and Proverbs 18:17.)
- Q 2. Can you think of more examples of where the media has normalized sinful behavior by repeatedly covering it, in an "unbiased" way?
- Q3. What do you think of the Internet as a news source? What are its strengths/weaknesses? Are news websites susceptible to anti-Christian "group think"?



What's Inside

This month marks the grand unveiling of ARPA Canada – the country's newest Christian political advocacy group – but the organization has already been quite busy for almost half a year now. A director has been chosen, an impressive website has been built (www.ARPCanada.ca) and contact has been made with local ARPAs, and other Christian political groups around the country. Canada needs a strong Christian witness in the political sphere, so we need to step onto this stage. ARPA Canada will show us how, and help us do it. Our seven pages of ARPA coverage will let you know the group's plans for the future, their vision, and the ways they hope to help Reformed Christians speak out.

In this issue we also feature a brilliant two-page comic that once again showcases the potential of this medium – God can be honored by comics. If you still don't believe it, take a look at pages 17-18.

Finally, Margaret Helder's contribution this month is challenging but also very rewarding. Physicists are spending billions in a quest to find an answer to the question "Why does matter exist?" This is really a spiritual quest of sorts, that is trying to answer what is really a theological question. . . but the last thing these physicists want to hear is anything about God.

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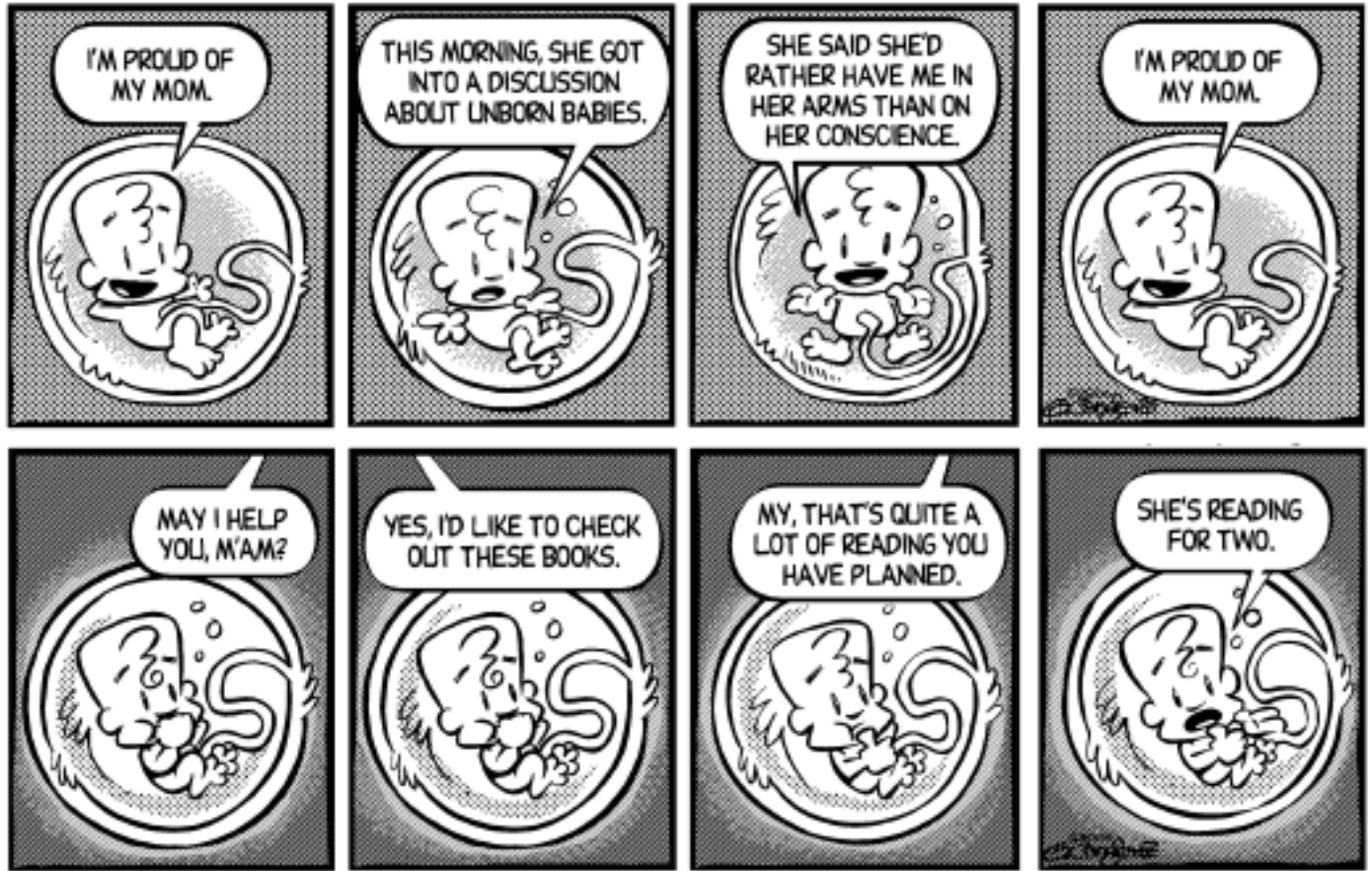
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Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



REFORMED
Perspective
www.reformedperspective.ca

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

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Annual Subscription Rates:

Canadian* & U.S. Funds – 1 Year \$50.00, 2 years \$93.00, 3 years \$137.00
 Canada Airmail \$70.00* U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$74.00
 International Surface Mail \$68.00 (2 years \$124.00, 3 years \$182.00)
 International Airmail \$100.00 *including 5% G.S.T. – G.S.T. No. R118929272RT

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



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Registration: ISSN 0714-8208

Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act
 Registration No. 18929272RR0001

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Nota Bene

News worth noting

by Sarah Meerstra



Killing newborns in the Netherlands

When it first became public a number of years ago that doctors in the Netherlands were openly killing newborns with severe disabilities, the world reacted with shock and horror. Yet this practice was even encouraged by the Dutch medical institution, with decision-making guidelines laid out in a document known as the *Groningen Protocol for Euthanasia in Newborns*.

Now, recently, a prestigious bioethics journal, *The Hastings Center Report*, has published an article by two Dutch bioethicists that defends the *Groningen Proto-*

col as truly humane and ethical. The authors argue that babies who have no chance of living past infancy, or who would face disabilities that left them with such conditions as chronic pain, paralysis, or complete inability to communicate are “better off dead than forced to endure the only kind of life [they] can ever have.”

In a further attempt to justify their perverted sense of ethics, the authors suggest that such an approach is more ethical than abortion, as parents and doctors are able to make a more informed decision about the child’s life chances after the baby is born.

Source: *LifeSite News*, Feb. 22, 2008

Oprah offers course in New Age “spirituality”

Since the beginning of this year, listeners to Oprah Winfrey’s radio show *Oprah and Friends* have been able to tune in to a daily course in New Age teachings.

A Course in Miracles, was originally published in 1975, by psychology professor Helen Schucman, who allegedly began receiving a “new revelation” from Jesus in 1965 to help humanity through the difficult times they were living in. Today, through Oprah’s show on XM Satellite Radio, or by buying the book, people are being taught dangerous principles

under a deceptive cloak of false Christianity. *A Course in Miracles* teaches, for example, that there is no longer any sin, that God is in everyone and everything, that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was meaningless, and that the name of Jesus is itself just a symbol and can be replaced with the name of any god to whom people want to pray.

While such teachings are clearly not in line with biblical Christianity, it is disturbing that they are presented as Jesus’ revelation, and being promoted by one of the most influential woman in America.

Source: www.parentsgeeksandgod.com
Feb. 20, 2008

Euthanasia in Australia

Assisting suicide may once again become legal in some parts of Australia, should a proposed new bill be passed. The Bill calls for the reinstatement of the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* in Australia’s Northern Territory. This act became law for a brief time in 1995, but was overturned in 1996.

This act is just one part of a chain of anti-life and anti-family legislation that is being brought forward since the defeat of John Howard’s Liberal Party last year. The government will soon be voting on bills that would decriminalize abortion, allow IVF for single and lesbian women, and grant greater recognition to same-sex couples.

Source: *LifeSite News*, Feb. 21, 2008

Penalizing traditional families

Three out of four families in Britain would be financially better off splitting up than staying together, under the UK’s rules for tax benefits and exemptions.

Despite mounting and consistent evidence that children do better in two-parent families, the British government has continued to allow this “couple penalty” to worsen over the last year, creating even greater incentives for parents to stay single. Britain is one of the only Western countries not to recognize marriage in the tax system. It also has the highest rate of family breakdown and some of the worst social problems in Europe.

Source: CARE UK, Feb. 2008



Family-friendly checkouts

Parents in Abbotsford, BC would like their local grocery stores to offer them the option of a “family-friendly” checkout,



free from sexually explicit magazine covers. The group, calling themselves *Abbotsford Families United* has issued a petition, saying that such magazines contain language and images that are not appropriate for their children.

Members of the group insist that they do not wish to censor or ban the magazines. Says one spokesperson, “We just want a choice. Just like people have a choice to buy the magazines, we want to have a choice not to look at them,” Another adds, “[The magazines] have the right to free speech, but we want to protect the rights of our kids.”

If you want to try this idea in your city, you can go to their website – www.abbotsfordfamilies.org – to see their petition and find out more.

Source: *The Vancouver Province*, Feb. 22, 2008

Foster parents rejected

For the second time in the United Kingdom, a couple has been rejected as foster parents because they refuse to promote homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle to the children they care for. This despite the fact that there is a chronic shortage of foster parents in the UK.

Stephen Green, national director of the British organization *Christian Voice* says that Christians are being pushed out of the adoption process “In the name of equality,” he says, they are “discriminating against Christians.”

Source: *The Daily Mail*, Feb. 27, 2008

Age of consent finally raised, in empty Senate

After more than two years in the works, the crime bill that would increase the age of consent for sexual activity in Canada from 14 to 16 has finally been passed by the Senate. It passed by a narrow margin of three votes, 19-16.

Stephen Harper had threatened to call an election if the bill wasn’t passed by March 1st, and while the Liberal-dominated senate opposed the bill and complained the timeline was too short, they did not wish to give Harper the opportunity to launch an election over the issue. Unfortunately, a vast majority of senators – more than 50 – either abstained from voting or did not show up from the vote. Still, the bill is now law, and Canada no longer has one of the lowest ages of consent in the western world.

Source: ARPA Canada, March 4, 2008

Ex-gay commercial is “hateful”?

In March, the Canadian television network CTV pulled an ad by Christian advocacy group Life Productions, after complaints their ad was “hateful.” However the ad merely offered help and encouragement to practicing homosexuals who wish to leave the lifestyle.

The ad is narrated by a former homosexual who became a Christian and left the lifestyle. While walking towards the camera he says, “You hear a lot about gay rights, gay marriage and the gay lifestyle being taught in our public schools for children, but what many people don’t realize, and seldom hear, is that many homosexuals don’t want to be homosexual. What many who are struggling with homosexuality don’t realize, and seldom hear, is that they can change. I should know – for 13 years, I used to be one.”

Latimer released

In Canada we aren’t yet killing disabled children, but we are acting leniently to those that do.

After serving 7 years of a 10-year sentence, Robert Latimer, the farmer from Saskatchewan who murdered his disabled 12-year-old daughter, was, this past month, granted day parole. Latimer has never expressed any remorse over the killing, always insisting that murdering his disabled daughter was an act of compassion.

Source: *National Post*, Feb. 27, 2008

Conservative government funds radical feminists

Status of Women Canada, known for its pro-abortion, anti-family, and radically feminist programs, will receive record amounts of funding from the Conservative government, as Harper and his government wish to show it their “firm commitment.”

Strangely, this comes less than two years after the same government re-evaluated the program, concluded that it was not offering real help to women, cut its funding, and closed 12 of its 16 offices. What is the rationale here?

Source: *LifeSite News*, Feb. 15, 2008



The ad was pulled after three days on the air, after the station received a number of complaints that it was “discriminating” and “hateful.” The Director of Life Productions expressed disappointment that the ad was pulled, saying, “The commercial doesn’t promote hate. It doesn’t promote discrimination. It promotes knowledge, and information. . .” People should know, he says, “that there is a community of people who practice homosexuality that are not interested in practicing homosexuality. . . they want help.”

Source: *LifeSite News*, March 10, 2008



HOMEFRONT

Blessings Spiritual and Material

by Jane deGlint

The blessings of the Lord form a golden thread that weaves itself through the Holy Scriptures. Adam, the first man, took on his task under the blessing of his Creator. Abraham, the father of believers, repeatedly received the blessing of the Most High on himself and his seed, on his earthly journeys and his possessions. Moses, the establisher of divine law, endorsed his brother Aaron to pronounce the high-priestly blessing of God himself over the chosen nation. David, the king after God's heart, prayed with the bold confidence of faith for the Lord's blessing over his house. "You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build him a house. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. O LORD, you are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O LORD, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever!" (1 Chronicles 17:25-26).

The people of the Covenant Lord lived securely under these pronouncements of goodwill. Constantly aware of God's presence and care, they internalized the divine blessing. It filled their hearts and spilled over into their conversations. Boaz, type and father of the Redeemer, greeted his workers from the heart. "The Lord be with you!" His workers responded in tune, "The LORD bless you!"

Blessings started to abound upon the entrance of the royal Savior into the flesh. The beatitudes ring with blessings for the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. They form a new fountain of the ancient well that provided streams of divine assurance for God's people. This blessing is extended to the King, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." At the same time it reaches all those who accept the King as their Savior, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Matthew 21:9 and Romans 16:20).

The stream of blessings speeds its way through time. It keeps us moving forward and looking upward. In the strength of the Almighty we take up our task day after day. When our physical strength wears out, our spiritual urgency increases. On the strength of the blessings we call out: Lord, hasten the day when the glory of your house will cover the purified earth.

Even though the stream of blessings is constant, it presents itself in markedly different ways. Blessings are geared to the different stages in the history of salvation. Their variations serve to bring out different aspects of God's ultimate blessing: a new heaven and a new earth where the Lamb is the light and where God's people are the spiritual house of God.

The blessing which Adam received at the first stage of salvation history implied a massive mandate. Although he had no children yet, he would be so fruitful that the whole earth would be filled with his descendants. Moreover, although he could not oversee the extent of the earth, he would be able to rule over all its creatures and vegetation. Adam's step was energetic and determined. He was ready to embark on his task under the blessing of the Maker of heaven and earth.

This blessing was foundational to all subsequent blessings. It contained two basic elements. God's people shall receive descendants and they shall have sufficient land to support themselves.

As far as we can determine it was not long till the manifestation of the original blessing needed an adjustment. Creation had undergone a fundamental change, which necessitated the entrance of the curse. From that time on, till time ends, the stages of the conquest of the curse are reflected in the aspect of the blessing which is highlighted.

God pronounced the curse upon man's wilful disobedience. This curse had an immediate effect on the two aspects of the blessing: the filling of the earth with people and man's dominion over all things living. The curse upheld the assignment, but corroded the blessing: both childbearing and the use of creation were condemned. The source of joy became cause for weariness. The awareness of purpose turned into a sense of uselessness. The blessing lay limp.

Yet, in the Lord's words to the deceiver we detect a renewed blessing. The bringer of the curse will be annihilated by the seed of the woman. What a blessing this implies! Creation will be restored by no-one less than a descendant of the woman. Woman will have good seed! That is only possible through the overwhelming blessing and intervention of the Lord himself.

Still, the curse had its impact. It necessitated the catastrophic interference of the flood. But our gracious God renewed

The sounds of blessing became very pronounced again when the Lord called Abraham

the original mandate as soon as he invited Noah back out of the ark onto the cleansed earth. Once more it sounded forth: be fruitful and rule! As such the Lord did not pronounce a blessing on his cursed creation at this time, but he promised never to destroy the earth with water again. He will purposefully look after his creation. It is his intent to use the powers of nature to bring about his plan for his creation, which includes the salvation and sanctification of his people.

The sounds of blessing became very pronounced again when the Lord called Abraham. The two-fold blessing is restored to those who have faith in their Lord and walk in his ways. Abraham received a renewed blessing, which contains both the original aspects: the promise of seed (“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you,” see Genesis 12:2), and the promise of rule over creation, which is introduced as the inheritance (“To your offspring I will give this land,” see the same chapter of Genesis, verse 7).

God’s covenant with Abraham marked the beginning of an emphasis on a large nation as well as on an undeserved inheritance. It is this promise that keeps the nation of Israel going when they are experiencing the curse on account of their unwillingness to walk in the ways of their Lord.

The Israelites sang about this blessing in their Psalms. “Give thanks to the Lord of lords, who gave the land of mighty kings as an inheritance to his servant Israel” (Psalm 136:3,18,21,22). The Israelites realized that such inheritance was reserved for the faithful. “The meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace” (Psalm 27:11,29,34). God himself announced the extent of the blessing, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession” (Psalm 2:8).

The prophets held high the banner of this blessing amidst disobedience and calamity. “In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land, and to reassign its desolate inheritances” (Isaiah 49:8). “Then will all your people be righteous and possess the land forever” (Isaiah 60:21). Also the prophet Ezekiel echoes the twofold blessing of the covenantal words first spoken to Abraham. “This is what the sovereign Lord says, on the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns and the ruins will be rebuilt. . . Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep” (Ezekiel 36:33-38).

From the days of Abraham till the birth of the Savior the curse was kept at bay. The blessing of raising families in a peaceful land was the hallmark of God’s nation. However, the birth of Jesus was a pivotal point in the history of salvation. He was the Seed which was promised in Paradise and referred to in the Abrahamic blessing (see Galatians 3:15-18). With the birth of our Savior the blessing of descendants was fulfilled.

But also the blessing of the inheritance changed fundamentally. No longer was the main emphasis on a piece of land. As the Seed was meant spiritually, so it was with the promise of the inheritance. The concept of heritage was to be determined by its spiritual dimension. All those who believe in Jesus as their Lord become the body of Christ. Together they form the spiritual heritage that will fill the earth as the gospel reaches the ends of the world. “You, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

The Abrahamic blessing with its restored promise of descendants and provision for our physical needs still stands, but it has been enriched with a profoundly spiritual layer. This change becomes immediately clear when the Lord begins his

Sermon on the Mount. Who are blessed and what is the blessing? “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the pure at heart, for they will see God. Blessed are those who are perse-

cuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:1-12).

And material wealth? Its value seems greatly reduced. “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust can destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there shall be your heart also” (Matthew 6:19-24).

As believers of the New Covenant we see these two layers of blessing. They contrast each other, each presenting a spiritual reality. Central in the New Covenant is the position of the cross, not only as the place where Christ accomplished our redemption, but also as the symbol of the hardships and persecutions which the Spirit uses to prepare us for service in the Kingdom of heaven. But the blessings of the Old Testament continue to foreshadow the eternal peace of the heavenly Kingdom. The result is a great variety of blessings. Some believers enjoy the blessing of material wealth, while others receive great poverty. Some have an opportunity to apply their talents, others need all their skills to survive. Some enjoy the freedom to hold respectable positions in the government of their country, others are ruthlessly persecuted by wicked regimes. Marriages are blessed, but some are called to be single.

But blessings abound in all cases. No matter what the circumstances, the Spirit will use them to make us into a holy nation of priests, who offer our gratitude for the blessings we receive.

*“May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”
Psalm 115:14*



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***In the Lord's words to the deceiver
we detect a renewed blessing***

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Saying sorry

by Rene Vermeulen

The new Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, began the parliamentary year by making a statement, which he called a “National Apology to the Stolen Generation.” Indigenous Australians, also called Aboriginals, had come from all over Australia to listen to these words. What were these words?

Well, until the 1970s many young children were taken from their parents simply because the mother was Aboriginal and the father white. The governments of those days thought that they should protect these children – there were reports that these mixed culture children were being mistreated – and give them a “white education” by placing them in foster care or orphanage homes. Some of these homes were excellent but many others were far from sound.

Our previous Prime Minister, John Howard, had refused to issue an apology because he believed that if an apology should be issued it should be done by the state governments who were responsible, and not by the Federal Government who has no responsibility in this area.

But Prime Minister Rudd thought different and proceeded to seek official reconciliation with our indigenous Australians. This is, in part, the statement he made:

“Today we honor the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations – this blemished chapter in our nation’s history.

“The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia’s history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future. We apologize for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologize especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. . . .”

“We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation. For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written. We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. . . .”

More wrongs than they know

What shall we think about this statement?

Let us first of all admit that much that was done in times past was indeed wrong. It has left a lot of hard feelings and lifelong scars; people were badly mistreated.

On the other hand it must be acknowledged that many people, white people, acted with the best of intentions. Many believed that they were carrying out their Christian duty to care for their indigenous citizens. However, what was often not recognized then, and still today, is that God’s Word has a message for all, including Australia’s aboriginal citizens. Most, if not all of the churches involved in the events of the stolen generations had rejected a literal understanding of the Bible; they did not believe in the Genesis story and consequently did not acknowledge that there is but one race, and instead treated the Aboriginals as different and inferior. And because they rejected God’s revelation, they also failed to see any need to send these young people to homes where the Word was central. So they failed these children in more ways than most today would understand.

Today, years later, many Indigenous Australians suffer from all sorts of problems: alcohol abuse, sexually transmitted diseases often affecting very young children, and a life expectancy of about 41 years.

Does this apology spring from Christian courage?

These issues will need to be dealt with by our governments. But it will take a lot of commitment and courage.

So where does Mr. Rudd come from? Mr. Rudd has made it a point to let people know he is a Christian. He does so not in a bragging manner but by explaining why he has certain points of view. In an article in the online *The Monthly* of October 2006 he used as title to his article “Faith in Politics.” In the article he deals at great length with the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer of whom he is a great admirer. The Prime Minister greatly admired Bonhoeffer’s courage so it will be interesting to see find out more about Mr. Rudd’s beliefs and to see how they impact his activities as Prime Minister.

Reaction

What was the reaction of people toward this apology? Some supported the Prime Minister; some pointed out the many problems that exist among the Aboriginals throughout Australia and indicated that the issues raised should be dealt with. Some leading indigenous people have come forward with claims of compensation for wrongs done to them. It will be interesting to see how these claims will be dealt with by the courts.

That a lot needs to be done is without doubt. We wish the government success.

ARPA Canada



A new vision for Reformed political action

by John Voorhorst

"There is not a single square inch of the entire cosmos of which Christ the sovereign Lord of all does not say, 'This is mine'."

– Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)

ARPA Canada, a new Christian political advocacy group has officially launched its work across the country. The mission of this new organization is to serve as a centre for coordinating political action among Reformed churches – providing news, research, support, and motivation. It will also communicate a Biblical view of current political issues to our federal government.

Kuyper's quotation above best sums up the reason that the board of the Reformed Perspective Foundation believed it was necessary to start this new organization. The acronym ARPA stands for "Association for Reformed Political Action" (or "Activity"). God is sovereign over all of life. Reformed Christians all know that Jesus Christ is King of all creation – including the political realm. Through ARPA Canada we are going to do our best to assist individuals and groups so we can be more involved in being a Christian witness in the area of politics.

With this public launch, ARPA Canada is unveiling its website (www.arpacanada.ca) to the general public and is advertising the fact that the Reformed community is awake and hard at work in Canadian politics and society. ARPA Canada will have a broader mandate than has been the case with similar initiatives in the past. It is our desire to become a strong and positive voice in Ottawa. We will strive to provide a Biblical perspective on current issues and explain how particular policies or legislation will impact the social fabric of our society.

Our origins

Although ARPA Canada is an initiative of the Reformed Perspective Foundation, which brings you this magazine, they are two separate organizations. The RP Foundation will continue to publish the RP magazine and will do so as a charitable organization. ARPA Canada is a federally registered not for profit organization. It will have a separate board and will also be funded separately.

What led us to where we are today? Approximately 25 years ago *Reformed Perspective* Magazine sent out its first issue. Its aim from the very beginning was printed in its masthead and today that same aim can still be found printed there: "To publish periodically a magazine promoting Reformed principles

in all spheres of life, especially the social, political and economic realms."

About 10 years ago, the board of the Reformed Foundation determined that it would add a few members from across the country with the clear objective of reviving and promoting the formation of political study groups in local congregations. At that time, the board hired Mr. Peter Veenendaal and gave him the monumental task of traveling across this great country with the objective of encouraging local groups to organize and form their own political study groups.

This was not a brand new idea. Already in the early '80s there were people working to do what they could to organize these political study groups. There was at least one active group in the greater Fraser Valley area at that time, and I seem to recall a second group in the Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Veenendaal was able to get a number of additional groups started and generally speaking, these groups all used the same name. In 2004, Mr. Veenendaal accepted the position of principal at Immanuel Christian School in Winnipeg. He did his best to stay in touch with the various ARPAs but I think it is fair to say that the schedule and demands of being a full time principal do not leave much extra time for any other work, let alone the huge job of keeping abreast of political thoughts and disseminating information to the various study groups.

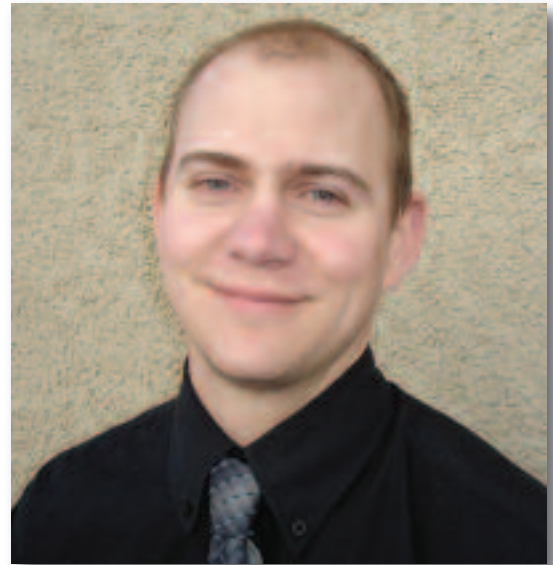
In the fall of 2006, the foundation board asked itself if it could legitimately justify its existence. At its meeting in the spring of 2007, a number of decisions were made. The board determined that a substantial commitment of time and financial resources was needed if the goal of promoting political action among the Reformed Church community was to be achieved. And yes, we can say loudly and with thankfulness that God is indeed sovereign. He has blessed us richly.

Our director

ARPA Canada was born as a result of meetings with Mark Penninga, who the board hired as director part time in the fall of 2007 and who will begin fulltime work effective May 1, 2008. Our magazine's regular readers are likely to recognize his name because he has written for the magazine several times.

Mark was born in BC's Bulkley Valley, where he also went to school for a number of years. He received his Bachelor of Arts

ARPA Canada
director
Mark Penninga



with a major in philosophy and a minor in political science from Trinity Western University (Langley, BC) in 2004. During his time at Trinity Western, Mark spent some time at the Laurentian Leadership Centre in Ottawa where he had the opportunity to work with Saskatoon MP Maurice Vellacott. From January 2005 to August 2006, he worked for Focus on the Family Canada as a research analyst. In August of 2006 Mark married Jaclyn VanderHorst and the two of them moved to Lethbridge, Alberta. By the time you read this, he will have completed the requirements for a Masters degree in Arts majoring in Political Science from the University of Lethbridge.

The Board is convinced that a man with Mark's education and work experience will be able to positively impact the work of ARPA Canada. We are very thankful that the LORD has directed Mark's path so that we were able to attract a man of such caliber to the organization.

Our Guide

What is the relationship between the sovereignty of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the *Reformed Perspective* Magazine and ARPA Canada? Let me try to explain this. There is a strong correlation between the objectives identified on the masthead of this magazine and the objectives of ARPA Canada. If you have access to the Internet, check out the web

site at www.arpacanada.ca. Across the top of the page is a declaration: "Shining the light of God's Word across our Nation." A rather bold statement. This statement is very much in line with the notion of "promoting Reformed principles in all spheres of life," especially the "political."

We humbly acknowledge that it is only because God has blessed us that have we been able to get this far. We also know that we must rely on His continued blessing and provision as we continue to move forward to carry out our mission. "The mission of ARPA Canada is to educate, equip, and encourage

ON THE HOT SEAT

Frequently asked questions about ARPA Canada

by Mark Penninga

How can ARPA Canada succeed when many local ARPA groups have faded away and generated little interest?

Due to numerous demands on time, a general cynicism towards politics, or a lack of will, the majority of Reformed Christians in Canada today don't get involved in politics in any active way. Political action is viewed as a hobby for those who "like that sort of thing" instead of a calling for every Christian to shine our light in public. In response to this sentiment, ARPA Canada will be doing at least three things.

First, we will motivate Christians of all ages to fulfill their Biblical calling to engage in the public sphere of life. This is a long-term goal that will be pursued through education via a quality website (www.arpacanada.ca), regular magazine articles, and e-newsletters.

Second, we will provide tools and resources that will allow everyone to get involved. A lack of time is a common reason for not doing anything. In response, ARPA Canada will provide clear and simple ways for everybody to respond to specific issues. Simply go to the website or give us a call.

Third, ARPA Canada will lead by example. We will not just ask you to get involved – we will get involved ourselves by meeting with MPs, by networking with other similar organizations, and by speaking before Parliamentary committees (recognizing that all of this requires God's blessing).

How will ARPA Canada be any different than other groups that already exist, such as the Canada Family Action Coalition or even the Christian Heritage Party?

Reformed Christians to political action and to shine the light of God's Word to Canada's municipal, provincial, and federal governments." We truly desire to serve the entire Reformed community. And our mission statement will be our guide.

So ARPA Canada desires to equip the Reformed community so that both individually and collectively we can provide not just the light of the lighthouse as a warning, but also the probing beam of a powerful spotlight to show the way as we travel through life. To be sure, God's Word

will be used to warn of cultural and political deformation. But of equal or even greater importance will be our attempt, with God's help, to shine the light of his Word so that all Canadians will see the safe and clear path He provides. And *Reformed Perspective* will continue to provide a forum so that Reformed Christians can read what God has to say about our walk of life here in Canada.

John Voorhorst is Chairman of the Reformed Perspective Board.



In some respects we will have a similar mandate to other groups, which means that we will need to network with them and work together on issues where we can do this in a manner that is in keeping with our faith. However, despite the fact that other organizations exist, there is still a pressing need for ARPA Canada. Check out the article "A Welcomed Ally" in this same issue, or the many endorsement we've gathered, to see why there is a need for this work.

Will ARPA Canada's sole focus be to start more ARPA groups in Reformed churches across the country?

Local ARPAs are very important and have accomplished some very worthwhile initiatives. Our hope is that more of these groups form and take advantage of the resources that ARPA Canada will offer.

However, ARPA Canada is directing its work also to people who are not interested or able to get involved with a local ARPA group. Whether you are too busy with other commitments, live too far from a local group, or have any other reason to not be part of an ARPA, you can still benefit from the work of ARPA Canada by simply going to the website www.arpacanada.ca, subscribing to our free e-newsletter or giving us a call.

Is this only for Canadians?

To keep our mission focused we will be directing our work to a Canadian audience and will deal with Canadian legislation and news.

However, Australians or U.S. citizens may find our research and news feeds worth reading, as many of the issues and action items on our website (www.arpacanada.ca) will be applicable to more than Canada.

Who pays for this?

ARPA Canada will rely on the support of members of the Reformed churches who believe that this is an important initiative. If you have the means to support us financially, secure donations can be made through our website with any major credit card or you can send a cheque to the address below. Also, you can become an *ARPA Associate* by committing a regular donation that will automatically come from your bank account (go to www.arpacanada.ca and click on "support ARPA" to print off this form). Doing so will help ensure the long-term success of this important new initiative. Donors will be updated regularly on ARPA Canada's work.

Due to the political nature of our work, ARPA Canada is not a registered charity and cannot issue tax receipts. Being a registered not-for-profit organization and not a charity gives us the freedom to be a strong political voice in our nation.

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A WELCOMED ALLY

Several Christian political organizations already exist in our country, so where does ARPA Canada fit in?

by Mark Penninga

Politics impacts everything we do, from what kinds of light bulbs we can buy to what we read on our cereal boxes. Given the impact politics has on our daily lives, it's worth asking how much Christians are doing to positively influence society through politics. Which Christian organizations are already involved in Canadian politics? How successful are they? And is there room for one more?

Canadian Christians have indeed been doing some work in the political sphere, and there are at least three different types of Christian political advocacy organizations already at work in our country. We're going to look at each of them, and then explain just where ARPA Canada fits in.

1. Grass-roots mobilization

Have you ever received an email from a group calling you to respond to something that is going on in Parliament, such as the definition of marriage, or a bill to increase the age of consent? Chances are the email came from an organization that is promoting grass-roots mobilization.

The two main organizations in Canada that are doing this are the Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC) and United Mothers and Fathers. Like almost all Christian political organizations, these are actually very small groups with only one or two employees. They rely on regular Canadians to get their message out to our civil governments. The primary method of action that these groups use is the Internet – through email “action notices” or “1 click technology” that allows individuals to send an email to many government officials at the click of their mouse.

Pros:

Grass-roots mobilization is very important because it is in keeping with the Biblical mandate for *all* Christians to be a light in our world. The work is not left up to a few professional lobbyists in Ottawa. Furthermore, since we live in a democracy, the people still have an important influence in the public policy process. Giving citizens a voice is an important part of promoting democracy.

Cons:

Grass-roots mobilization organizations are often reactive rather than proactive. Emails flood Parliament when something bad is happening, but little is being done to promote positive action before changes are already happening. Furthermore, Internet-based lobbying only has limited value. Few things are more effective than meeting with a government official face to face, or at least giving them a phone call.

2. Issue-based advocates

Recognizing that Canada is promoting many harmful things, such as abortion and the breakdown of the family, some groups exist to make a difference on those specific issues. Campaign-Life Coalition is a primarily Catholic organization that has been promoting the pro-life cause in Parliament. Groups like this have also sprung up in response to the changing definition of marriage (such as Defend Marriage Canada) but they have died out about as quickly as they came up. Many Reformed Christians are also familiar with the ECP Centre (Equipping Christians for the Public Square). Although their name suggests that they may belong in the first category of Christian political groups, they have instead focussed primarily on the issue of defending civil liberties.

Pros:

These organizations focus on one (or a few) issues which means that they are often good at what they do. They can also strategize and be proactive so that they influence the government officials before they make decisions. Furthermore, they are often able to interact more directly with Members of Parliament and hopefully also build a relationship with them.

Cons:

This approach does not usually encourage much action from every-day people because it is just a few paid employees who do all the work. Some of these groups struggle with having to give the same message for many years and end up becoming distracted from their goal or wearing out their welcome.

3. General Christian advocacy groups

Religious groups and denominations realize that government decisions have a big impact on the things that they care deeply about. That explains why organizations such as the Catholic Civil Rights League and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) have offices devoted to political action. These organizations work with a broad variety of issues and try to provide a religious perspective to government.

Pros:

These organizations don't try to hide the fact that they are bringing a religious perspective. This results in a more Biblically-based approach. Furthermore, they have a stronger connection to their support-base and are therefore able to encourage grass-roots mobilization as well. The EFC in Ottawa is a good example of how effective this type of organization can be. They have nurtured good relationships with MPs and earned a lot of respect for the work they do.

Cons:

Having a broad mandate can often result in a lack of focus. These groups struggle with having to cover such a wide variety of issues and still be effective.

Is there a need for another organization?

It may sound like there is already a lot of Christian political action so why should there be another group? In reality, most of the groups that exist only have one or two employees. As a result, they are limited in what they can accomplish and would welcome another organization on the scene with a similar objective. Another thing that must be noted is that most of the organizations which do exist have attached themselves to one niche in the political spectrum because they realize that it is difficult to be effective on anything more broad. Many issues are not receiving the attention they need because of a lack of people and organizations involved. For example, although the pro-life cause may seem to get a lot of attention in Canada, in reality there are very few people working to actually change the laws on abortion. Most of the people involved work for regional and provincial pro-life offices and stay away from politics if they can.

Why not simply support one of the organizations that already exist? The primary reason is that there are no organizations that are specifically promoting political action in the Reformed church community (aside from local ARPA's). Reformed Christians believe that their faith is supposed to impact all of life and yet many are cynical about politics or think that it is only for those who enjoy it. There is a real and pressing need for Reformed Christians to apply their faith to public life – including the political realm. The purpose of ARPA Canada is to help people do just that.

Furthermore, ARPA Canada aims to go beyond promoting political action in the Reformed churches by working on a couple of specific policy goals (including abortion legislation and a Royal Commission on the Family). We believe that there is a need for an organization like ours to come up with a proactive plan for these issues and then to get other groups on board to help accomplish this plan. Subscribe to the free ARPA Canada e-newsletter and stay tuned to *Reformed Perspective* magazine in the months and years ahead to be a part of this exciting vision!

How does ARPA Canada fit in with these other groups?


ARPA Canada most closely resembles the third type (a general Christian advocacy group) because we will be directed specifically to the Reformed church community. But it will also promote grass-roots involvement and will go directly to government on specific issues. It is broad in focus (applying the Christian worldview to politics) which is required because Reformed Christians will be active on issues as diverse as substance abuse to family taxation. But we will also attempt to be proactive by working on specific issues that we feel are important and have a reasonable opportunity for success.

ARPA Canada realizes the importance and value of working alongside the organizations that already exist and that share a similar vision. As director I have already developed connections with many of the organizations and will try to build upon this. We are willing to work together with other organizations on specific campaigns and briefs as well as to strategize future action.

ARPA Canada is a welcome addition to the Christian political organizations that already exist in Canada. With God's blessing, we hope to be an agent for change and a service for Reformed political action for years to come.



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“ARPA Canada’s determination to engage and motivate Christians to be active in a positive way in the political arena is most welcome. More Christian involvement, especially by the Reformed community, in the secular public square is a must. Only the light of God’s Word can show the way out of the present darkness and provide the hope and encouragement needed to find solutions that work. ARPA’s desire to work with grassroots local groups is most commendable. I sincerely hope that many get inspired by this new initiative to establish their own local ARPA and so become more involved as Christians at all levels of our democracy. ARPA Canada will be there to help with resources and suggestions for action.”

– **Dr. Cornelis Van Dam**

Dr. Cornelis Van Dam is the Professor of Old Testament at the Theological College of Canadian Reformed Churches



“As a Member of Parliament for over ten years, I recognize the importance of organisations that equip the grassroots with the resources and encouragement they need to make a positive contribution to this country. I heartily support ARPA Canada in its efforts to promote political awareness and action among Reformed churches and to bring a Biblical witness directly to government. Having mentored Mark Penninga some years ago when he worked as an Intern in my MP office on Parliament Hill, I am confident that that he has the knowledge and passion needed to coordinate this work. In an age when Christians are being told to keep their religion in the privacy of their homes, we need groups like ARPA Canada to challenge this and encourage more participation of faith in public life.”

– **Dr. Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament, Saskatoon-Wanuskewin**

Maurice Vellacott has been a Member of Parliament with the Reform Party, Canadian Alliance, and now the Conservative Party of Canada.

He recently served as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and is the co-chair of the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus

“The Cloverdale Chapter of the Association for Reformed Political Action is very encouraged by the creation of a new ARPA Canada. It is telling that the members of Reformed churches, though largely composed of first and second generation immigrants, have recognized the need for an immediate and pertinent Canadian cultural apologetic. ARPA Canada will, we are sure, serve us well in its careful analysis and presentation of Biblical ethics and policies.”

– **Surrey/Cloverdale ARPA**

This ARPA has been a shining example of the wonderful work that ARPA’s can do in a community. Their group has worked with all levels of government, organized events, and continue to keep BC’s Lower Mainland informed with their ARPA Alert



“Every Christian has an important role to play as an engaged citizen, making a positive impact in the community and the nation. ARPA Canada is a vital force to inform and mobilize Christians to engage. It is not enough to have organizations that do the work on behalf of the Christian community; each person has an individual AND collective responsibility. Mark Penninga is uniquely gifted to help Christians in the pew to understand and act on the important issues of our times.”

– **Janet Epp Buckingham, LL.B, LL.D**

Janet Epp Buckingham is the Director of Trinity Western University’s Laurentian Leadership Centre in Ottawa, Ontario and a constitutional law expert who formerly worked for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

“The ECP Centre welcomes ARPA Canada as an important organization to advance cultural and political reform in Canada. Our organizations can be of benefit to each other and Christians across the country – as is the case with all social conservative groups that are willing to collaborate while advancing our own distinct missions. There is still much demand in Canada for groups that have a clear focus and strong vision. This is especially true for Canada’s Reformed community.”



– **ECP Centre**

The ECP Centre has been a strong voice in the defense of civil liberties in Canada. Their new website www.noapologies.ca provides daily news and commentary

www.ARPCanada.ca

A website worth bookmarking

by Mark Penninga

We share the same values, but not always the same locale – we're spread out across the world's second largest country! So how does a group of like-minded, politically-active, geographically-separated Christians keep in touch? They use the Internet of course!

The primary medium for communication from ARPA Canada will be its website: www.ARPCanada.ca. The site is easy to navigate, it's current and constantly being updated, and it supports a variety of media, including videos. The target audience is members of Reformed churches across Canada – though our hope is that others will benefit from this work and be positively influenced by the Biblical perspective that we offer. As time goes on, we intend to offer special sections devoted specifically to students. Even without these sections, the site has been built to offer information for everyone – regardless of their interest or awareness of Canadian politics.

A website has the advantage of being up-to-date and it is much more cost-effective than traditional means of communication like the mail. For example, the e-newsletter allows anybody with an email address to receive free updates on important news and action items.

What does the ARPA Canada website offer you?

News – Why rely on the secular mainstream media for all your news? The ARPA Canada site has a news section that will be updated regularly. Bookmark the site and come back to it often to stay informed on the issues that matter to you.

Action Items – It's not enough to know what is going on – we need to know what we can do about it. The action section of the site provides specific suggestions for action on a variety of issues. It also provides contact information for government officials and (as time goes on) success stories of people who have had their work blessed with wonderful outcomes.

Research – Do you need more information on a specific topic? The site offers articles, links, and studies on issues such as gambling and drugs, abortion, sexuality, family, the environment, economics, justice, and developing a Biblical worldview. If you have an article that would be a good addition to the site, please contact us and let us know about it.

Coordination for ARPA Groups – Currently nine active ARPA groups are listed on the site, and it includes a form that allows you to contact any local group if you have a question for them. A special login section for registered users allows ARPA groups to share the work that they have done locally so that other groups can benefit.

Support – Sometimes it is best to get personalized support over the phone, through email, or in person. The website includes contact information and the ability to send a message to us so that you can reach us with your specific questions and comments.

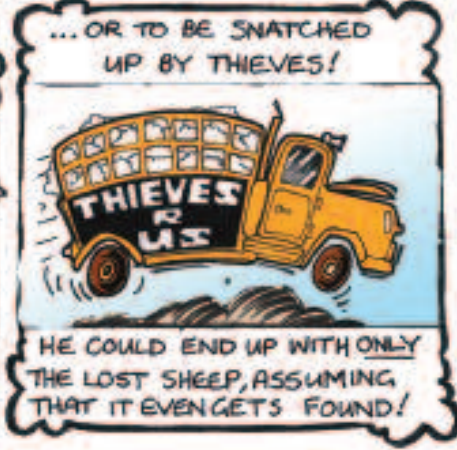
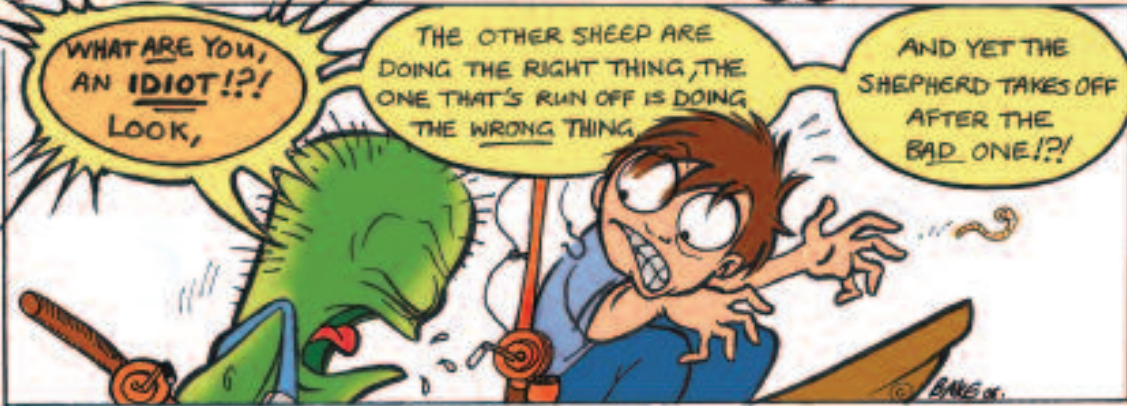
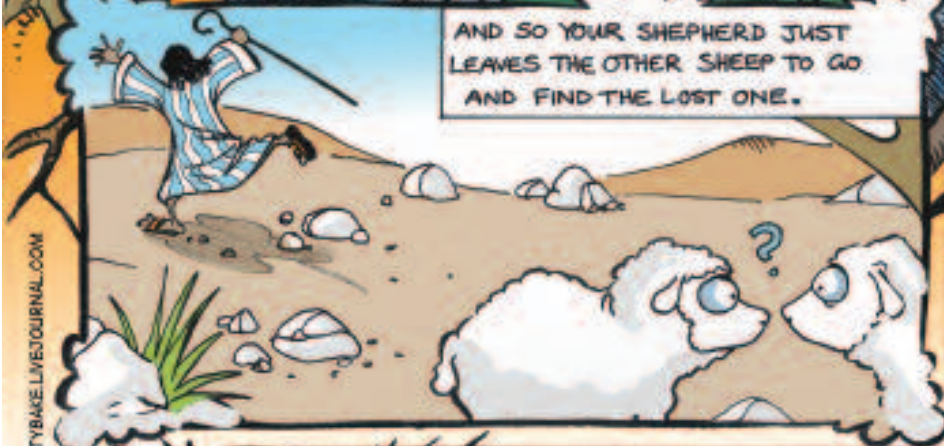
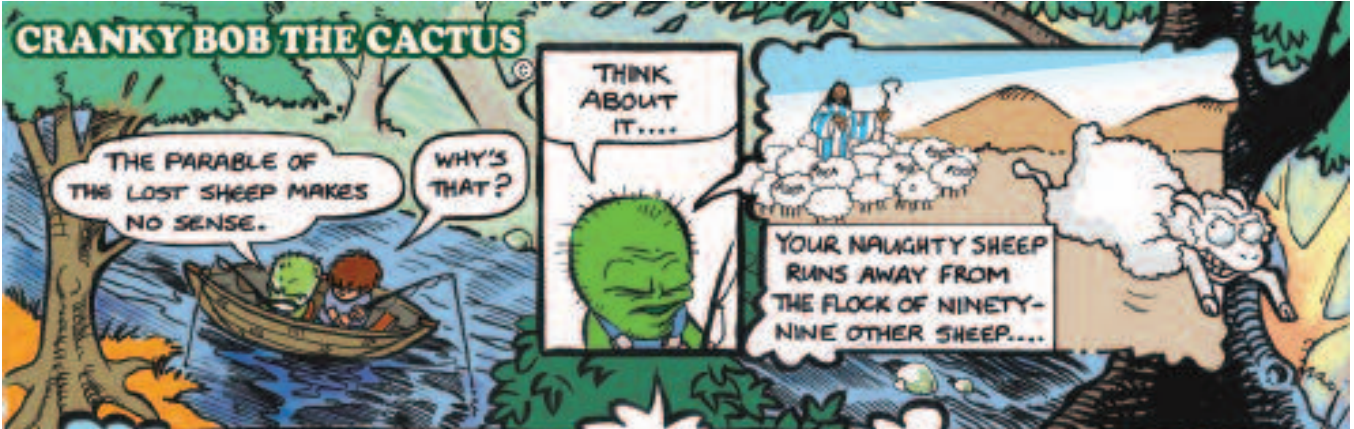
Administration – Sign-up for our free e-newsletter or learn more about the mission and history of ARPA Canada. The website also accepts donations from any major credit card to support this work. You can also learn more about being an ARPA Associate (a monthly supporter) – to ensure that ARPA Canada has the resources it needs to effectively fulfill its mission.

What can you do?

Support the work of ARPA Canada by bookmarking this website, linking to it on your personal or church website or blog, letting us know about news tips, or telling others about it! You can also help make it a success by contributing articles that you may have written in the past. We rely on the help of individuals in the Reformed community who have knowledge and expertise on specific subjects. A site like this will allow many more people to benefit from the work that has already been done but is currently not known or available.



CRANKY BOB THE CACTUS



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A chapter in the life of Jemmy Wood

by Christine Farenhorst

Jemmy Wood was born in 1756 in Gloucester, England. He was born into a middle-class family, neither rich nor poor – the kind of family and situation of which Proverbs 30:8 speaks:

“Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, ‘who is the Lord?’ or lest I be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

Jemmy’s grandfather had established the Gloucester Bank in 1716 and this bank, although primitive in its first few decades, began to solidify as Jemmy’s father took over. Later, as Jemmy became a young man and learned the ins and outs of bookkeeping, of borrowing and lending, of accounts payable and accounts receivable, the bank began to solidify even more. As a matter of fact, when Jemmy was middle-aged, Wood’s Bank, as it was familiarly known, employed two or three clerks and conducted an increasing amount of business with a great many local shops.

Scrooge-like

Jemmy Wood was thrifty to the point of stingy. This meant that although he made a great deal of money (he was considered in his later years to be one of the richest commoners in England) he spent next to nothing. His days were consumed as those of Dickens’ Scrooge were consumed – in the bank located at the end of a common chandlery shop. (This shop was also owned by Jemmy and run

by his clerks.) When Jemmy went home at night, he was alone. He was not married and he never invited company over for dinner. He did attend church on Sunday but, as during the week, he did not seek out company but returned home alone. Even the walk after his Sunday dinner was a solitary constitutional.

Jemmy Wood employed a little boy as house servant. This boy cleaned, cooked and acted as a miniature butler. One Sunday, before leaving his home to attend church, Jemmy handed the child a chicken.

“Roast it,” he commanded, “so that it might be ready for me to eat when I return from the service.”

The boy nodded and saw his master out the front door. Then he proceeded to the kitchen to put the bird on the spit. It took an hour or two and then a savory smell began to permeate the kitchen and the other rooms. The boy, whose nose was being fed, felt his mouth water. He had never been overfed. He sighed and his stomach growled. Almost without warning his hand ventured to touch the browning skin of the bird. He ran his index finger along the skin and then brought it to his mouth. Then after the juice of the fowl had further whetted his appetite, his hand stole back to the breast and he tore off a small piece of meat. The morsel titillated his senses and his stomach growled again. Chewing carefully to make the piece last, his eyes glazed over in ecstasy. Then hunger defied reason and morsel after delectable morsel found their way into his mouth. And even

though he was well aware that his master's steps were very likely wending their way back to the house, he did not stop his hand from bringing the tender bits of flaky flesh and succulent crust to his lips. In the end, his stomach no longer gnawing with hunger, he eyed the bones in a mildly surprised manner. The chicken was totally gone! The spit was empty!! And there was no visible dinner for Master Wood!!

What to do?

The boy, suddenly realizing the immensity of his crime, began to tremble. After he had wiped his greasy fingers on his pants, he fell to thinking where he could possibly hide. For surely his master would beat him, or perhaps he would turn him over to the magistrate. But it was neither the thought of a beating nor of the sternness of the magistrate that made him tremble as much as the thought of the old man himself. Backing out of the kitchen, it was almost as if Jemmy Wood's piercing, hawk-like eyes devoured him. There was, he knew within himself, really no point in hiding. He would be found out. And yet, his feet kept moving away from the kitchen into an adjoining room. There he opened a closet, intending to enter and expecting to shut the door behind himself. But on the shelf, within reach, he saw a bottle labeled "Poison." To his quaking mind and heart, poison was much to be preferred to Master Wood's anger. He unscrewed the top, closed his eyes, and gulped down the entire contents of the bottle.

Shortly afterwards, Jemmy Wood walked in through the front door. He put down the umbrella which he had taken along in case of inclement weather, hung up his coat on the coat rack, and appreciatively sniffed the aroma of fried chicken. Unconsciously he licked his lips. Some brandy and water would go exceedingly well with that chicken.

.....
***He unscrewed the top
 and gulped down
 the entire contents
 of the bottle***



"Boy, I'm home!" he called, adding, "Set the table and be quick about it."

When there was no answer, nor any detectable clatter of noise from the kitchen, he went to investigate. Seeing the chicken bones on the table, he raised his eyebrows. Some moments later he found the child lying on the closet floor with an empty bottle in his hand. The lad was stone drunk. The bottle in his hand contained brandy – brandy which Jemmy Wood usually drank by himself out of a bottle which he had marked "Poison" so that no servant would ever touch it.

Conclusion

It is not known what Jemmy Wood did with the child after he awoke from his drunken stupor. (The boy did live to tell the story.) Perhaps shocked that the child would so fear him that he would prefer poison over facing him, the master showed mercy. Or it could be that he put the child out in the street without pay. Or yet again, maybe the incident caused him to feel shame for his extreme stinginess and made him to dwell on the fact that he must give account to God before long of all his goods. The latter is not likely as Jemmy Wood left several wills of a conflicting character. These documents caused litigation providing fodder for lawyers and much courtroom action for years after he died.

This single chapter in the life of a long ago banker holds much food for thought. Jesus said, in Luke 18:17, "I solemnly declare to you, whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall never enter it." William Hendriksen, in his commentary on Luke writes:

*Make me, O Lord, a child again,
 Obedient to Thy call,
 In self possessing nothing, and
 In Thee possessing all.*



Contagious Joy

Lessons learnt from a “crooked grandmother” who was amazed by grace

by Mary-Lynn Dethan

Do we really realize how rich we are as Christians? Are we really aware of how much we have in Christ Jesus? Salvation. . . Redemption. . . Sanctification. . . perhaps it is the length of these words that cause us to forget the real and lovely meaning behind them.

But let us for a moment think of these long terms in simple, back-to-basics language so that we will remember again how lovely and amazing they are! God loved us so much He sent his only Son for you and me – Jesus. Jesus came into the world and died on the cross for ME. He loved me THAT much. God does not condemn me anymore, even though I still struggle with my sins every day. God loves me so much He daily gives me all I need in this struggle – his Holy Spirit in my heart to help me fight sin, and his Holy Word to guide me. He gives me all this as well as purpose in my life – to glorify Him – and something to look forward to – heaven! What purpose, what meaning in our lives! What joyful living we may have! No wonder Paul says in Romans 8:37 that we are “more than conquerors”! Indeed, we are more than conquerors!

Meeting “Nenek bongko”

For the last nine years of my life I have been living in Indonesia, helping my husband serve God in the Reformed churches here. Out of all my husband’s ministry work, I know for the rest of my life I will never forget one crooked old

lady. She became a Christian and was baptized, as an old lady in her 80’s. From then on she was such an example of having the joy of faith, I will never, ever forget it. I do not know her name – everybody just called her “Nenek bongko,” which means “the crooked grandmother.” She was so bent over, that everybody knew who you meant when you said “Nenek bongko.”

.....

A smile slowly grew over her face and a visible excitement became evident

.....

Nenek bongko could not speak or even understand the Indonesian language. She could only speak her traditional Sabunese language. The day she was baptized, the entire sermon was translated into Sabunese for her by one of her grandchildren so that she could understand it. As the word of God was explained to her a smile slowly grew over her face and a visible excitement became evident. When my husband sprinkled water on her head “in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” her happiness over-flowed and the water of baptism that ran down her face was mixed with tears of joy.



Rain or shine

This old lady’s joy did not stop after the worship service that day. . . or even after one day, or one week, or even one year. Her deep joy of faith was clearly evident to all for the rest of her life (which was about 8 more years). For as long as she could still walk, she walked the approximately three kilometers to church every Sunday, rain or shine. To get to our church you had to walk up a steep slope just in front of the church. She was so bent over that her hands touched the ground as she walked, climbed, hobbled up that slope. Often other members of the church held their breath as she climbed it, afraid she would fall. Once she did fall, too, but she was not hurt too badly. Despite the fall, the next week she still came faithfully to church.



According to her children and grandchildren, Nenek bongko was already asking on Wednesday morning, waking bright and early, “Is it Sunday yet?” When they replied “No,” she was noticeably disappointed. The next morning she asked the same question, “Is it Sunday yet?” This went on each morning until it was Sunday and her family could thankfully answer her with a “yes.” At five o’clock in the morning, she was already up and getting ready for church! She joyfully put on her “Sunday clothes” which consisted of her best traditional Sabu cloth wrapped around her waist and legs, her best blouse which was faded at best, and her worn out flip-flops. Then she hobbled, leaning heavily on her cane and as bent over as ever, to the church – where she greeted everyone she met with her toothless smile. (Nenek bongko had hardly any teeth left; all of them had either rotted or fallen out.)

When Nenek bongko’s health began to fade and she could not possibly make the walk to church anymore, she often asked for “that minister that baptized me” to come and pray for her. And each time we went she smiled her big, toothless smile, and tears of joy slid down her cheeks as we sang her favorite hymns and my husband prayed for her.

Her example

I believe Nenek bongko’s example can teach us a lot. First of all, her example can teach us to meditate on that verse in the Bible which says, “Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere” (Psalm 84:10).

Nenek bongko really felt that! Do we also share that belief with the Psalmist? Do we wake up on Sunday morning and think with joy, “Yes! It’s Sunday! I get to go to God’s house”? Or do we groan, “Oh no. It’s Sunday again. I can’t get my work finished that I started yesterday”? Are we so happy to go to church that we get up early to be there before the service starts and chat a bit with our fellow Christians? Or do we rush in just as the vatum is starting?

Second of all, Nenek bongko’s example can remind us again how rich we really are, and to ponder what a joy it is to be saved by Jesus’ blood and to know for certain that we will enter into eternal joy when we die. Let us, too, live our lives with an evident joyfulness that will be contagious and cause others to praise God too. Let us ponder these things every morning when we wake up, every night before we go to sleep, and every day as we go about our daily tasks. Let us all meditate on the simple yet profound truths that we have as children of God. And then we will sing joyfully “Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see!”



Three to see

Various videos worth viewing

by Ike Van Dyke

You aren't going to find these at your local video rental store, but they are worth the extra effort involved in tracking them down and purchasing them. The first two will get lots of use – if you buy them you'll be sure to share them with friends – and the third would be great for a school library where it would be a very useful resource for media studies.

Gospel Blimp

Satire/Drama
40 min; 1967
DVD \$10 US
**** out of 5

A group of enthusiastic Christians having a barbeque wonder how they can evangelize to the unconverted next-door neighbor. They all know the conventional ways of doing it, but they're looking for something. . . special. And that's when it hits them – as they're relaxing, sitting back in their lawn chairs, a blimp flies overhead. That's what they need to do! Buy a blimp so they can fly it over the neighbor's house, and the entire town, and throw down gospel tracks. That'll get people's attention. What a brilliant plan!

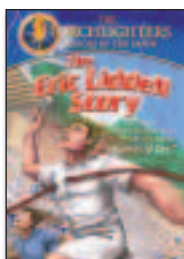
It may be 40 years old, but this understated satire is still one of the best Christian films ever made. You can order it online or view a video clip at GospelBlimp.notlong.com.



The Eric Liddell Story

Children's/Animated
30 min ; 2007
DVD \$15 US
***½ out of 5

If you've seen the film *Chariots of Fire* you already know a little about Eric Liddell's life. This champion runner turned down the opportunity to run the 100-meter



sprints in the Olympics because one of the heats was run on Sunday. But whereas *Chariots of Fire* ends with Liddell's unlikely triumph in the 400-meter final, that's where *The Eric Liddell Story* begins. After his Olympic victory Liddell went to China to serve as a missionary right when that country was in the throes of revolution and war. This is a story of a man of great conviction who sought to please God in all he did, whether that was on the track or in the mission field.

The only caution I would add is that the previews that accompany this video do include an animated depiction of Jesus. You can find this video in stock at many Christian bookstores, or online at VisionVideo.com or TorchLighters.org.

This is DNN

Satire/Political commentary
29 min; 2006
DVD \$20 US
*** out of 5

Have you ever wondered how much today's mainstream media impacts the news they cover? *This is DNN* explores this question in an incredibly novel way – they transport today's media back to 1940 to see how they would cover World War II. How would President Roosevelt have dealt with today's pollsters, talking heads and media hounds? Would the American people have stayed the course if they had gotten nightly news reports of the 300 Americans who died every day of the war? On a more positive note, would the today's media have swayed public opinion against the Japanese internment?

This a news broadcast you have to see to believe – a couple of the best highlights include, coverage of a small band of protesters shouting "Roosevelt lied, millions died," and an entertainment report on the new movie *Fahrenheit 12/7*. This is an impressive and insightful spoof of today's media in general, and specifically its coverage of the Iraq war. You can order this online, and view a trailer for it at www.ThisIsDNN.com





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

by Jon Dykstra

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Pop is pretty important

Randy Patten believes you can't overstate the importance of the father's role in raising good kids. At a recent National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC) conference, the pastor illustrated this point by telling his audience about an initiative a greeting card company tried at a prison near their printing plant.

They offered inmates a choice of cards to send to their mothers for Mother's Day. The cards would be free and the greeting card company would even pay the postage. The response from the inmates was so enthusiastic the company representative had to go back to the plant to get more cards.

This success prompted the company to make the same offer for Father's Day. But this time they didn't get even a single response – no one took them up on the offer. Almost to a man these inmates loved their mothers but none of them seemed to have any sort of positive relationship with their fathers.

.....
Quote of the month

"My family has an unwritten rule: if you wouldn't spend time with someone in real life, then don't let them into your living room via the television set either. It seems simple, but these days we're not just letting these people into our living rooms, we're letting them right into our kids' bedrooms."

– Glenn Beck, Host of *CNN's* The Glen Beck Program

.....
A right and wrong sort of question

Though the joke below is about a Bible class, it outlines a flaw that is also common to many Bible study books. . . and some home visits; too often the questions asked prompt automatic, unthinking answers.

Once day Miss Van Smith was busy conducting her Bible class but wasn't getting much interaction. So she turned to her students and said, "I have a question for you. Who has a fluffy tail, grey fur and eats nuts and bark?" No one put up their hand. "Come on children, you should all know the answers." Still, her students sat in silence. "Can't one of you even guess?" Finally one student put up a tentative hand: "I know the answer must be Jesus," he said, "but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me."

SOURCE: Joke adapted one making the rounds of the Internet

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Are you using what you're "good" at for good?

GK. Chesterton once wrote, "The word 'good' has many meanings. For example, if a man were to shoot his mother at a range of five hundred yards, I should call him a good shot, but not necessarily a good man."

.....
Paul on pretty

Blogger Wil Ramsey on Paul, pretty girlfriends and the shallowness of us menfolk:

"Sometimes when people tell me how pretty their girlfriends are, I think I kinda know what Paul felt like when he was talking about tongues. I'm like, 'Dude, not only is pretty the lowest of gifts a girl can have, and not only is she not as pretty as she is kind and compassionate and selfless and other things that are important, but my girlfriend is still better looking than yours.'"

SOURCE: <http://metros.xanga.com/hereistandrvltn>

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NO RULES, NO CIVILIZATION

The Sexual Revolution left us free. . . to be miserable

by Michael Wagner

We all want different things. And because of our fallen natures, many of our wants are for things that will harm us and those around us – we lust after power, sex, other people's possessions, even revenge. If everyone simply pursued their own desires, it's hard to see how civilization could survive.

Fortunately for us, God has provided rules for living – the Ten Commandments – that restrict these desires so that they don't harm others. The Law helps to make harmonious social life possible. Rules make civilization possible – no rules, no civilization.

The Bible is bad?

But many today don't like rules and this is especially true with regard to sexual behavior. So-called "Victorian" sexual morality has been accused of being the cause of psychological "hang-ups"; Biblical morality is seen as the source of much human suffering. The solution, in this view, can only be found in individual and societal sexual liberation.

The "need" to break out of the confining and suffocating constraints of traditional morality was a major impetus to what has been called the "Sexual Revolution," a significant social development in the Western countries whereby modern liberal views of sexual attitudes and behavior replaced the traditional norms of Western civilization. This revolution, and the attitudes and behaviors it promoted, has been embraced by the political, academic and media establishments, as well as many common citizens. It was the Sexual Revolution that led to the legalization of abortion and the widespread acceptance of divorce, promiscuity, pornography, homosexuality and cohabitation without marriage, basically a shopping list of many current social problems.

Playboy's role

David Allyn's book, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History*, describes in gory detail the major figures and events of the Sexual Revolution. Allyn is a proponent of

the changes he describes and is clearly excited by the sexual "liberation" that occurred. Strangely, however, he sees the Sexual Revolution as coming to an end by the mid-1980s (due to the emergence of AIDS and the Christian Right in the USA), so I'm not sure what he's thinking – today the presence of the Sexual Revolution is more obvious than ever before.

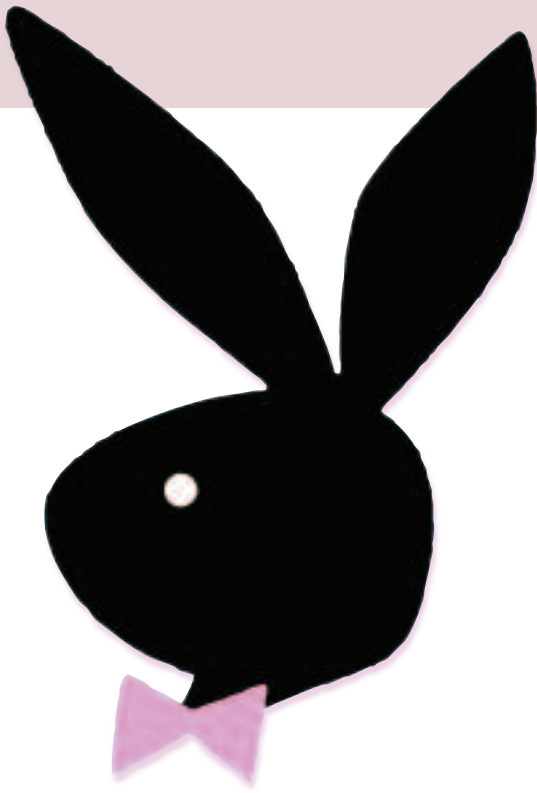
Pornography has been a major component of the propaganda arm of the Sexual Revolution. *Playboy* magazine was founded in 1953 and soon became exceedingly popular. By 1960 its circulation was over one million. The magazine's founder, Hugh Hefner, not only became very wealthy, he was also a cultural celebrity. *Playboy* magazine has played a central role in the Sexual Revolution.

Although *Playboy* is a heterosexual magazine catering to heterosexual interests, it nevertheless contributed to the strength of the homosexual rights movement. For one thing, the Playboy Foundation (affiliated with the magazine) contributed money to some homosexual rights organizations. More importantly, however, was *Playboy's* undermining of traditional morality. Allyn writes,

"As gay playwright and AIDS activist Larry Kramer states, 'Hugh Hefner did more for gay liberation by creating *Playboy* than any other single person did.' It is not so much that *Playboy* promoted the discussion of gay issues or endorsed gay rights (though it occasionally did do so) as that the magazine legitimated sexual desire outside of marriage."

Penthouse goes further

Playboy's financial success was bound to attract imitators, and it sure did. One of the most significant was *Penthouse* magazine founded by Bob Guccione in 1970. This magazine gained attention by publishing racier pictures than even *Playboy* would allow. And it was more ideologically committed to overthrowing traditional morality.



"Penthouse was more than just another skin magazine. It promised to keep the reader on the front-lines of the sexual revolution. Guccione made a virtual pledge to his readers that he would forever do battle against the forces of repression. This was an essential element in the magazine's extraordinary appeal."

With the spread of pornography, and at the same time a dramatic increase in the production of adult literature (i.e. immoral literature), came a basically simultaneous liberalization of obscenity laws, often through judicial interpretation. When immoral materials were challenged under obscenity laws, judges increasingly decided in favor of "free expression," thus helping to unleash further increases in the production of immoral materials.

"Free" love

One of the most popular novels of this period (the mid-1960s and early 1970s) was *The Harrad Experiment* by Robert Rimmer. Basically the novel is about the sexual experimentation of a group of college students. But the underlying purpose of the novel was to promote a stridently anti-Christian view of morality. Allyn notes:

"The book's thesis was clear: If individuals took a rational view of sex, there would be no more jealousy, no more monogamy, no more shame – all products of Judeo-Christianity's superstitious anti-sex agenda. From a historical perspective, monogamy was rooted in the concept of woman as property. In an enlightened, humanistic world, such a barbaric concept would be abolished. Ultimately, sexually liberated men and women would form happy, enduring group marriages, in which jealousy and secrecy and adultery and divorce would be unknown. In fact, by eliminating shame and self-loathing, sexual rationalism would solve virtually all of society's remaining problems."

This is a fairly succinct summary of the ideology guiding many sexual revolutionaries. Eliminate Christian morality and –

presto! – many of society's problems will disappear. Some people actually believe that.


Hand-in-hand with this kind of thinking went a favorable view of divorce. Traditional monogamous marriage was seen as a confining institution, basically a form of slavery. Many people suffered unhappy lives in unhappy marriages. Divorce, it was argued, would lead to liberation for the couple, and the children would be spared the trauma of watching their parents fight. Everyone would be better off, right? That's what many "experts" were saying by the early 1970s. And so "the sexual revolution of the 1960s and '70s created a new context for the national debate on divorce. Divorce went from a necessary evil to a positive good almost overnight."

The happiness promised by the Sexual Revolution is a fraud

Promiscuous sex outside of marriage was seen as a major component of "freedom" by proponents of sexual liberation. And as one would expect, such behavior led to a large number of "unwanted pregnancies." What to do? Well, kill the babies, of course. The problem was that abortion was commonly restricted or even illegal in most jurisdictions. Many states in the USA had laws against abortion, for example. So these laws needed to be overturned. The US Supreme Court obliged by striking down all abortion laws in that country in the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. Allyn makes the significance of that decision very clear: "*Roe v. Wade* was the crowning achievement of the sexual revolution." Legalization of abortion was the "crowning achievement" – how about that?

The "good life" is godly

According to this view of the world, Christianity is the killjoy of life. It compels people to restrain their natural sexual appetites, which can only legitimately be expressed within monogamous marriage. Supposedly this causes Christians to be "repressed," leading to various social and psychological problems. Sexual liberation (that is, throwing off Christian moral restraint) leads to relaxed, well-adjusted people. And these people can freely enjoy the good things in life – you know, like promiscuity, pornography, divorce and abortion. Isn't that appealing?

No. The rules stipulated in the Ten Commandments lead to the good life, not a so-called "liberation" from the Commandments. All people are sinful, and so all people experience problems in their lives, including Christians. But those problems cannot be alleviated by throwing away God's rules for human living. Quite to the contrary, in fact. Biblical morality is a sure guide to the good life. The happiness promised by the Sexual Revolution is a fraud. Surely that should be apparent by now. 

Why does anything exist?

Fancy physics seeks an answer. . . just as long as the answer isn't God

by Margaret Helder

Physicists around the world are all aflutter – the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) will become operational in only a few short months!

What's that? The LHC is a particle accelerator, or what is more commonly called an atom smasher. An atom smasher does exactly what its name suggests – it sends atoms flying towards each other at incredibly high speeds, and smashes them into each other. Physicists study these collisions to learn about the particles that make up atoms.

The LHC will smash much more than just atoms, however. It will send even smaller particles hurtling towards each other, at greater speeds than ever, and will have even more precise monitoring and measuring equipment than has been used before. It promises to be bigger, faster, and more precise than any other "atom smasher" in the world.

And it needs to be. You see, physicists have an incredibly ambitious goal for the LHC. When it becomes operational this year they hope to use it to find the reason for why anything at all exists. They want to use this machine to find the answers to questions about ultimate truth!

But how could a machine answer such questions? To understand the issue, we must detour back 60 years to the beginnings of particle physics.

A couples of expectations

Interest in this area of physics first developed about 1950. Scientists wanted to find out more about the nature of matter. They were quite sure there was more to matter than the protons, neutrons and

electrons with which they were familiar. If they smashed these tiny objects into a barrier, would something smaller emerge? That's when they started building their first atom smashers – to try this experiment and find out what happens.

This new breed of physicist – particle physicists – approached their discipline with a couple of expectations. They expected:

1. *The universe should be "simple"*

Based on the evolutionary idea that the entire universe developed by chance, physicists believed that the process that led

to the development of everything there is had to be, at their core, simple. "Simple" in this case, is a relative term – the processes might be hard to understand and complex to describe, but physicists expected there to be core simplicity to them. After all, the more complicated the processes were, the less likely the universe could ever have developed by chance.

An introductory article on the topic thus declared in 1985: "The notion that a fundamental simplicity lies below the observed diversity of the universe has carried physics far" (*Scientific American* 252 #4 p. 84).



Inside the LHC tunnel.

Photo courtesy of CERN

2. *The universe should be symmetrical*

Another expectation, ever since Einstein published his special theory of relativity in 1905, is that nature is fundamentally symmetrical. Of course we all know about mirror images which are basically the same, but which face opposite directions (like a right handed and left handed glove, for example). Another example of symmetry is particles that are the same except for having opposite electrical charges.

Not so simple, not so symmetrical

Particle physicists expected that they would be able to describe matter and energy, at their most basic levels, by a few simple equations. They also expected that nature manifested itself in symmetrical pairs of particles or forces.

Imagine their dismay during all these years of study as it became apparent that their results show diversity, not simplicity; arbitrary, seeming random values, not general “plug in any number” situations; and broken symmetry. The great hope for the LHC, or from subsequent, even larger, machines, is that physicists will yet be able to describe nature as simple and symmetrical.

Discovery after discovery

One of the first atom smashers was constructed at Columbia University in New York. Soon a number of American universities obtained such equipment. These were small devices, nothing like the mammoth machines of today.

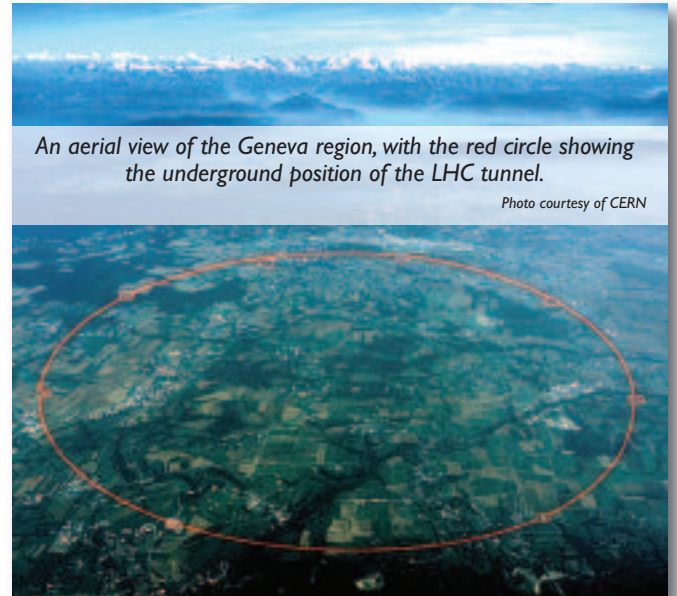
In 1954 the Europeans got into the act when a convention to establish the “Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire” also known by its acronym CERN (strangely enough, while the group’s name was changed in 1954 to “Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire,” the acronym for the group remains CERN). CERN is located near Geneva, close to the French/Swiss border.

Soon new discoveries were reported. In 1955, physicists operating the Bevatron at Berkeley University in California, discovered antiprotons, which are like regular protons in a nucleus but with a negative, instead of a positive charge. This is an example of symmetry.

In 1964 Murray Gell-Mann at California Institute of Technology and George Zweig at CERN, suggested that protons and neutrons (in an atom’s nucleus), themselves contain smaller particles, called quarks. Studies in the late 1960s at Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) in California, confirmed the quark hypothesis.

More and more “smashers”

It was not until 1972 that a national laboratory for particle physics finally became operational in the United States. This was the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory near Chicago. It cost \$243 million to build. In response to the American initiative, in 1975, physicists at CERN proposed the development of LEP or Large Electron-Positron Collider which would smash electrons into their symmetrical opposite (positrons). This system would involve an underground circular tunnel 27 km in circumference. It has been in operation since 1989.



An aerial view of the Geneva region, with the red circle showing the underground position of the LHC tunnel.

Photo courtesy of CERN

Two years after the LEP proposal, in 1977, physicists at CERN further proposed that the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) be developed in the same tunnel as the LEP. It would smash protons into each other. The power of the collision would be much higher for protons than for electrons since the former are much heavier than the latter. This facility, the LHC, is just about to come into operation in 2008.

Not to be outdone by the Europeans, Fermi (near Chicago) upgraded their facility at a further cost of \$100 million. It now became the Tevatron. In this facility, protons are smashed into antiprotons. With a circumference of only 6.4 km, the Tevatron is smaller than CERN’s LEP but Tevatron is more powerful because the particles are heavier. Tevatron became operational in 1983.

In the same year however, CERN achieved a major success in the creating and identifying of W and Z particles. The details of this discovery are complex but what is worth noting is that these particles are an example of broken symmetry. If they had been symmetrical physicists would have expected them to have no mass, but the W and Z particles turned out to have substantial mass.

Jealous of CERN’s successes, American physicists proposed the building of a Superconducting Super Collider (SSC). This would be an incredibly large facility with an underground circumference of 87 km! In 1985, when it was first proposed, the SSC was expected to be completed by 1994 at a cost of about \$3 billion.

The year 1989 was very significant for the particle physics community. First, because the Stanford Linear Collider finally became operational. It was supposed to give the United States a head start over CERN’s facilities in the study of Z particles. However, there were numerous unanticipated delays for the American SLC and it began experiments just before CERN began their own Z particle experiments at their Large Electron-Positron Collider (LEP). And what was even worse for the Americans, CERN’s LEP was expected to work much better than the American machine.

Also in 1989 the American government announced that the tiny town of Waxahachie in Texas had been chosen as the site for the American Superconducting Super Collider (SSC). By

1990 the estimated cost of the American SSC had escalated to \$7.9 billion.

Meanwhile CERN was trying to interest member nations in contributing money toward the LHC (Large Hadron Collider) proposed 13 years previously. It would boast four times the power of Tevatron, but only one half the power of the proposed SSC.

Meanwhile the Americans were running into financial trouble with their SSC. Initially Japan and India had offered financial support. They were told, however, that this was an "all American project" since certain members of Congress were afraid that sharing information on particle physics might be contrary to the USA's national interest. Later when the US requested \$2 billion from Japan in support of the SSC, that country, not surprisingly, declined to contribute anything. Finally in 1993 the US government cancelled the SSC. Its projected cost was by now eleven billion dollars. The project was by this time 20% complete. One suggestion was that the tunnel, which cost \$2 billion to build, could be used for water storage!

In 1995 American physicists at Fermi achieved major success when they identified the last of six quarks. The years went by and CERN progressed ever closer to the completion of the LHC. In 2006, American physicists, in anticipation of major European achievements to come, proposed the development of the largest particle accelerator ever. The International Linear Collider (ILC) would be 31 km long and was expected to cost 6.7 billion (not including labor!) when finished in 2010. Congress however, at the beginning of 2008, slashed the budget of the ILC from \$60 million to \$15 million.

Not as expected

As the scientific world awaits the results from the LHC, the situation is this: the apparently fundamental particles discovered number at least 37: 18 quarks, 6 leptons, the photon, 8 gluons, 3 intermediate bosons, and perhaps something called the Higgs boson.

This lengthy list of particles, most of which were discovered since 1950, does not fit secular physicists' idea of simplicity in nature. American physicist Joe Lukken at Fermilab declared: "We had a theory that started out really beautiful and elegant [simple], and then somebody beat on it and made it really ugly [complicated]" (*National Geographic* March 2008 p. 97).

As they've made more and more discoveries, physicists have compiled these findings into a model, called the Standard Model. It is not a simple model. Another American physicist, Leon Lederman, pointed out that many observations connected with the Standard Model are very precise and seemingly arbitrary. There is no general law which can predict why the values are as we observe them. It is just as if the values were chosen by God. Thus he declared: "Designing the world this way the Creator would have had to set twenty dials carefully at seemingly arbitrary values" (*Popular Science* 230 #6 p. 59). This is not what physicists want to discover.

The Standard Model is therefore not simple, nor does it demonstrate symmetry. The most obvious example of broken

symmetry is the lack of antimatter in our universe. When antimatter and matter meet, they cancel each other out. Thus the question arises, why is there anything here? Why did the particles and antiparticles not disappear in a puff of energy? There are also numerous examples of particles which should exhibit similar mass, but which do not.

The "magical" Higgs particle

Some physicists would like to see the LHC produce results which suggest that the Standard Model must be drastically modified. Most, however, would like to demonstrate that the Standard Model actually fits their expectations. So they are looking for something called the Higgs particle, hoping it, or some other complex of particles, will solve all their problems. The idea of a Higgs particle was proposed 40 years ago as a way in which the problems with the Standard Model can be explained away. If real, it would consist of a field, everywhere present, which provides mass to some particles, but not to others. It would explain why there are various instances of broken symmetry. It would solve certain mathematical problems with the Standard Model.

.....

We had a theory that started out really beautiful and then somebody beat on it. . .

.....

The existence of the Higgs may be just wishful thinking on the part of physicists. It may be a figment of their collective imagination, or it may indeed be real. Thus far, the failure to find any trace of the Higgs is not seen as a crisis for particle physics. However, if the LHC does not find any evidence of the Higgs that failure could be quite shocking. Understandably the scientific world is closely watching the events at CERN.

Conclusion

For over a century now, physicists have sought from nature the twin ideals of symmetry and simplicity. As Leon Lederman declared in his article "The God particle...": "Symmetry is an aesthetic concept: we believe nature is best described in equations that are as simple, beautiful, compact and universal as possible" (*Nature* July 19/07 p. 310). The "God particle" to which Dr. Lederman refers, is the Higgs boson. He and many other physicists believe that discovery of the Higgs particle would go a long way toward justifying their atheistic concepts of nature. They insist that when they are able to explain all nature in terms of simple equations, they will have explained away any role for God in creation. Thus an illustration with the article depicts people worshipping a Technicolor particle. Man's arrogance knows no bounds. God rules whether or not a Higgs boson is found.





Soup & Buns

Re-discovering the Old Testament

by Sharon L. Bratcher

I never set out to ignore the Old Testament. It just kind of happened. Usually when I sit down to read some of God's Word, I choose passages in the New Testament or occasionally a Psalm or chapter of Proverbs, and I'm never consistent with scheduled read-throughs. I started thinking that what mattered is that I spend some time hearing what God has to say to me, and that it didn't really matter what passage I chose.

Occasional encounters

This is not an exemplary pattern. God gave us 66 books to read to discover what He has to say to us. Limiting ourselves to only part of it can leave us rather uninformed and unappreciative.

I did study through the Old Testament thoroughly when I was younger and listened to it on tape in the car with my kids when we drove to school (ten minutes each day). Bible Study groups studied various OT books and Rev. Ken Kok of Reformation Church in Blue Bell even preached through the book of Leviticus and made every single sermon interesting and relevant. So there really wasn't any question as to the importance or enduring value of Old Testament studies, or of thoroughly reading all of God's Word. I knew it was important, and yet in my own personal reading the neglect "just happened."

Back to the OT

Recently, I realized what I had missed. Two years ago I wrote an article for *Reformed Perspective* about a covenantal perspective Sunday School curriculum that my friend and I developed about twenty years ago. Our goal was to teach the 2-5 year olds how to worship by promoting familiarity with the names and concepts that they would hear mentioned in the worship service, and by helping them learn to sit still, participate, and cooperate with their fellow believers. We used the Bible itself, and stressed God's words: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33, among other places).

I received two or three inquiries about that curriculum, and this led to a project of writing out two years' worth of lessons for ages 2-5 and ages 6-8 for a church in California. So of course I had to do a lot of study and reading. And as I read, I felt incredible excitement as I re-discovered books such as Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Ezra. Wow!

Wow!

For instance, I had forgotten Solomon's prayer in front of the entire congregation of Israel when the temple was completed. You can read it in 1 Kings 8:22-53, but here are a few excerpts:

"LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. . . But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!"

He went on to list every possible trial, suffering and sinfulness and to ask God to hear His people when they pray to Him, and to forgive them when they repent. Why?

"For You separated them from among all the people of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by the hand of Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."

He was talking to *our* God who has also made His covenant with *us*. What an exaltation and description! This entire section is every bit as awesome as the Psalms.

I also developed a new admiration for the details in the defeat of the enemy Sennacherib in 2 Kings and the summary of it in 2 Chronicles. (Read 2 Kings 18:17 through chapter 19, and 2 Chronicles 32:1-23 and add Isaiah 36-37 while you're at it.) As we reflect on what has been called "God's unfolding drama of redemption" we become re-acquainted with all of God's people and His mighty deliverance from their enemies.

And I was newly amazed at the connections between Daniel and Ezra:

"Then King Darius wrote. . . I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is he one which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 6:25-28

"Then King Darius issued a decree. . . let the work of the house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site. . . and may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. Ezra 6

What an abundance of amazing historical accounts and wonderful words of worship!

For far too long, we might neglect many Old Testament books. Since we love and serve one God in one Bible, we should mine the treasures in every part of it.



ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to PUZZLE PAGE, 43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 OR robgleach@gmail.com

NEW PUZZLES

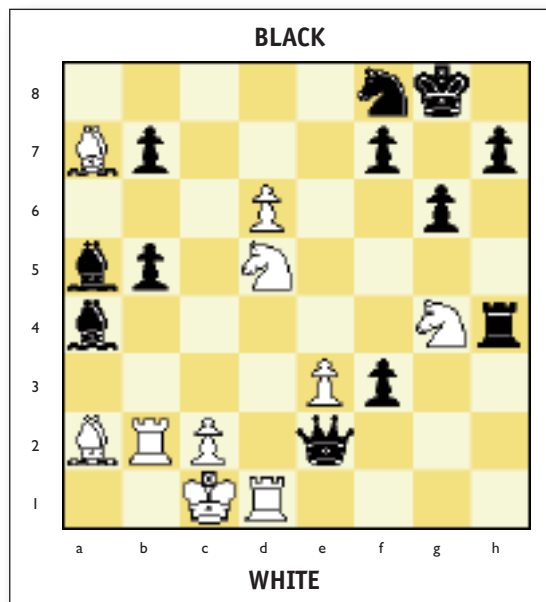
Riddles for Punsters #143 – “Patients’ Patience”

Sign in a crowded doctor’s office: Exercise is good for you.
At no extra cost we provide you with _ a i _ training.”

Problem to Ponder #143 – “Which Room?”

In Megaville’s large public school, all the grade nine students are required to take health class. Some parents want boys and girls to be taught health separately while others see no need for the boys and girls to be taught separately. As a result, there is a health class for boys, one for girls and a co-ed one where they are together. However, Room 201 has the sign BOY’S HEALTH CLASS, Room 202 has the sign GIRL’S HEALTH CLASS, and Room 203 has the sign CO-ED HEALTH CLASS. However, on the first day of classes no sign was on the right door. Mrs. Punctual just came to take her daughter out of girls-only health class for a dental appointment. By looking into just one classroom how can the vice-principal know for sure which room the daughter is in?

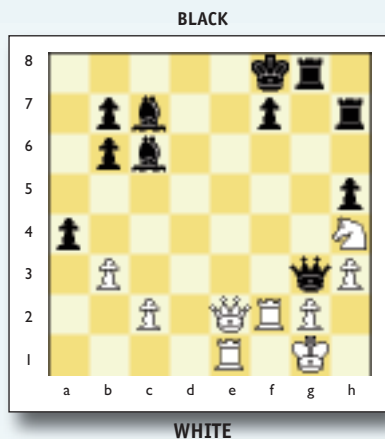
Chess Puzzle # 143



WHITE to Mate in 3
Or, If it is BLACK’s Move, **BLACK to Mate in 2**

SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (MARCH) PUZZLE PAGE

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 142



Descriptive Notation

1. Q-K7 ch K-N2
2. RxP ch K-R1
3. RxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Qe2-e7 + Kf8-g7
2. Rf2xf7 + Kg7-h8
3. Rf7xh7 ++

BLACK to Mate in 2

Descriptive Notation

1. _____ Q-R7 ch
2. K-B1 Q-R8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Qg3-h2 +
2. Kg1-f1 Qh2-h1 ++

Answer to Riddles for Punsters #142 – “Colourful Creatures”

How did the flamingo react when it was given a surprise birthday party?
It was **t i c k l e d p i n k**.

How did the turtle react, since no one ever gave it a surprise party?
It was **g r e e n** with **e n v y**.

How did the canary react to the turtle’s sadness and jealousy?
It was no longer in a party mood, but was more of a **m e l l o w y e l l o w**.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #142

An extra large pizza has a 15 inch diameter, a large has a 13 inch diameter and a medium has a 10 inch diameter at Tony’s Family Pizza Place. All prices include all taxes.

- a) If the extra large pizza costs \$15.49 and the large costs \$11.49, which is the better deal?
- b) Would two medium pizzas, on sale for \$6.85 each if you buy two, be a better deal? Would two mediums give more to eat than the large or extra large pizza?

Remember that the area of a circle of radius r is $A = \pi r^2$ and so:

- a) The extra large pizza has area $\pi(15)^2 = 225\pi$ square inches, so there is $225\pi / \$15.49 = 45.633$ sq. in. of pizza per dollar.

The large pizza has area $\pi(13)^2 = 169\pi$ square inches, so there is $169\pi / \$11.49 = 46.208$ sq. in. of pizza per dollar. Thus the large pizza is a better deal, providing slightly more pizza per dollar spent.

- b) The area of 2 medium pizzas is $2[\pi(10)^2] = 200\pi$ square inches, so would be **more pizza to eat than a large (having area 169π) but less than an extra large (having area 225π)**. However, the two mediums, at a cost of $2(\$6.85) = \13.70 , provide $200\pi / \$13.70 = 45.863$ sq. in. of pizza per dollar, so **2 mediums are a better deal than the extra large but not as good as the large**.

Crossword Puzzle

Series 15 No 6

Last month's solution
Series 15 No 5

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20				21	22					23				
			24				25	26	27		28			
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39				40	41	42		43			44			
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53	54	55			56						57			
58								59			60	61	62	
63					64	65	66				67	68		
69					70						71			
72					73						74			

1	H	A	N	S	E	S		7	D	I	N	O	S	A	U	R			
14	O	R	A	N	G	E		15	E	T	A		16	A	N	N	E		
17	M	I	R	A	G	E		18	N	E	T		19	M	A	C	S		
20	E	N	C		21	C	D	R	O	M		23	L	A	D	L	E		
	W			24	Q	U	E	S	T		25	M	O	R	E	E	N		
26	O	27	28		29	P	R	I	E	S	T	S		31	M	S	D		
32	R	E	A	R					34	S	H	O	E	S					
36	K	E	R	A		37	38	39		40	E	N	S	U	R	E	S		
				44	T	O	M	E	S		45				46	M	O	A	T
47	48	49		50	N	A	T	U	R	A	L		54	E	R	R			
55	W	E	E	56	P	E	R		57	T	O	N	E	R					O
58	I	S	L	A	S		59	L	U	P	I	N		60	T	61	P	N	
62	P	A	I	R		63	O	A	R		64	M	I	R	I	N	G		
66	E	M	U	S		67	P	I	E		68	A	T	E	A	S	E		
69	S	E	M	I	N	A	R	S		70	L	E	S	S	E	R			

ACROSS:

- 1. A drink garnish
- 6. Abram's wife
- 10. How some people like their steak
- 14. Farm machine for hay
- 15. First man
- 16. Father of Gaal, Judges 9:26
- 17. Greek muse of poetry
- 18. Ancient kingdom which is now Jordan
- 19. Type of bean sprouts used in Chinese cooking
- 20. Defense Data Network (abbr.)
- 21. Data Avail. Acknowledgment
- 23. French job
- 24. A New Testament book
- 28. A variation of the name Theresa
- 29. Kind of envelope
- 32. Pain in the head
- 34. Bright thought
- 35. Appraisal and Research of Real Estate (abbr.)
- 36. Root which yields arrowroot starch
- 39. Draw over the lines again
- 43. Thousands
- 45. Eur. Space Agency
- 46. Buddhist monk
- 48. Bitter liver fluid
- 49. Ancient city of Palestine captured by Joshua
- 52. Region
- 53. A native chief, of the Philippines
- 56. Kind of trunk
- 58. Delete
- 59. Fish catcher
- 60. Perchloroethylene, to some
- 63. Clean away
- 64. First born son
- 67. Mountain where Israelites encamped for almost a year
- 69. Quick abbreviation
- 70. Town of Galilee, site of Jesus' first miracle
- 71. Aromatic herb used in dropjes?
- 72. Twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet
- 73. Money
- 74. Not at any time

DOWN:

- 1. David's grandfather
- 2. Cooking fat
- 3. Internal local area network (abbr.)
- 4. Animal doctor
- 5. Disintegrate away
- 6. Winged fruit of the maple tree
- 7. Fuss
- 8. Royal Artillery Assoc.
- 9. Patient transportation, for short
- 10. TV controller
- 11. Treat improperly
- 12. Pays money to occupy a house temporarily
- 13. Boundaries
- 22. Lincoln, to his friends
- 24. Listen
- 25. Period of time
- 26. Not too hot
- 27. Divine by gazing into crystals
- 29. Male parent of an animal
- 30. Summer drinks
- 31. A stiff hair
- 33. Not him
- 36. A set of shoes
- 37. Not working
- 38. Seaward
- 40. Malt beverage
- 41. Vehicles
- 42. Send out energy
- 44. Structural support for bridge
- 47. Expert
- 49. Jacob's eleventh son
- 50. Samuel's mother
- 51. Mass (suffix)
- 53. Flask used in lab experiments
- 54. Get up
- 55. Spanish snacks
- 57. Male name that means "strength" in Hebrew
- 60. Private (abbr.)
- 61. Center for Envir. Sciences and Engineering
- 62. One of the seven heads of the families of the Gadites (1 Chr. 5:13)
- 64. Christian Counselling Centre in Ontario
- 65. Size of battery
- 66. ___ and outs
- 68. A single unit

Jaye