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REFORMED

Perspective

**A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY**

Television:

Who's really first in your heart:

God or your TV?



What's inside?

Flattery will get you nowhere

The Closed Womb

Nice is not always the point



Editorial

by Tristan Emmanuel

Flattery will get you nowhere . . .

Have you ever heard someone say that Christianity and Islam are sister faiths? I have. It shocked me at first, but after thinking about it for a while, I could see where they were coming from. Of course, it all depends on one's definition of Christianity.

Historically speaking, Christianity and Islam differ radically, but if you compare Islam with Liberal-Mainstream Christianity, then, quite frankly, there isn't a fundamental difference. When it comes to the question of Christ (the most fundamental distinctive of Christianity) Liberal-Mainstream Christianity is exactly the same as Islam.

Here's why.

A number of years ago, when I was teaching a world religions course, I took my class to the local Mosque. The tour guide gave us a number of helpful insights about Islam, but one message he kept broadcasting was that Islam and Christianity were essentially the same.

"We're both monotheistic," he said. "We both have the same heritage, and origin in Abraham. We're both people of the book. We both believe that man is responsible for his moral choices. And we both believe that man must submit to God the Creator; we even recognize the New Testament. Essentially we're the same," he said.

I remember musing, as I was listening, "If we're essentially the same, then why build this Mosque? Why not join a local church; save the money?"

What about Jesus?

You can't blame the tour guide. He was only trying to put my students, who had a number of misapprehensions about Islam, at ease; focusing on common points was probably the best route to take – especially when it came to uncomfortable issues like terrorism.

But, I couldn't help but press him. So I raised the million-dollar question, "But what about Jesus? Do we hold that in common too?"

"Ah yes, the Jesus question," he said smugly. "We believe that Jesus is a g-r-e-a-t prophet."

"Flattery will get you nowhere," I said. "Jesus claimed to be God."

"No he didn't," retorted the guide. "Those claims were inserted by scribes and Bible translators long after Jesus had died. They were never part of the original gospel message."

There is nothing worse than debating the question of "Christ" with someone who blindly accepts the claims of "source-criticism," except of course, debating with someone who also adamantly refuses to apply the same standard of "higher-criticism" to his own holy book.



Islam and Liberal-Mainstream Christianity are fundamentally the same.



Source-criticism, otherwise known as "literary-criticism" is a textual science. Its purpose is to ascertain, from the autographs (the original text of the Bible), any and all sources that may underlie the Bible. In other words, it looks at things like style, vocabulary, and historical background and ask the pressing question: "Given what we know about Jesus' day, did he really say this, or was it tacked on later by some copy editor?"

So, when I proceeded to point out to him that if he applied the same standard to the Qur'an, he'd find that most, if not everything Mohammed claimed, would also be erroneous.

"No way!" he rebuffed. "Our holy book has never been tampered with. The Qur'an is as pure today, as the day it was written. Besides it can't be translated. It was written in Arabic, and it remains Arabic. That's what ensures that no scribe can add or take a way one word."

Does the word *naïve* come to mind?

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A convenient dismissal

This man didn't really believe in "higher-criticism." It was just a convenient way to dismiss the Bible, because if he did believe "higher criticism," difficult as it may be, he'd apply it to his own book.

Which brings us to Liberal-Mainstream Christianity. Most liberals really don't believe in "higher-criticism" either, even though "higher-criticism" is one of their subtle inventions.

At least, they don't believe in it when it comes to their most trusted philosophers – Socrates and the ancients, all the way up to Kant, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, Bultmann and Tillich, to name just a few.

They take it on faith that the writings of these men are pure, that they've NEVER been tampered with. But raise the gospel claims of Christ and they all cry foul! It's an evangelical hoax!

Of course, they always do it with the utmost respect, stating, "While Jesus never actually claimed to be divine, we do acknowledge his profound contribution to Western thought. After all, Jesus was a great moral teacher."

Remember, flattery will get you nowhere.

Jesus Christ isn't impressed with flattery. He once asked his disciples, "Who do the men of Caesarea Philippi say that I am?" They responded: Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and still others say you're Jeremiah; but whatever they think, they're all agreed, you must be a GREAT prophet.

Jesus was not impressed.

"But who do you say that I am?"

Only Peter got it right. "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Now, coming from a man that apparently never claimed to be God, Jesus' response seems rather peculiar, "Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in Heaven."

Islam and Liberal-Mainstream Christianity are fundamentally the same. Both trust in "source-criticism," and both trust in flattery – vain as it is.



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Readers' Response



Dear Editor,

The "In a Nutshell" column of February 2002 mentions the tune of Psalm 81 as an example of "mixed up music." It states that the Genevan tune of Psalm 81 is often played in a slow and solemn manner, which is then viewed to contradict the lyrics that urge us to "sing a psalm of joy" and to "shout with holy fervour."

First of all, the Genevan tunes reflect the content of the complete psalm, the Word, rather than the words; a very difficult feat indeed. Similar to Psalm 95, the joyous opening of Psalm 81 leads to reminders not to forget the lessons of the past: the liberation from bondage, the desert journey of God's deliverance and His untiring outstretched arm. In other words: rejoice, remember, repent. The above quoted words along with the others are like a joyous hail to a victorious king with a blast of horns and the rhythm of instruments that urge to dance, jump or hop about. The lyrics of this psalm also speak of distressed slaves, veneration of idols, stubborn disobedience as well as rescue, blessing and abundant nourishment.

Secondly, Genevan tunes are for liturgical, congregational use and not for spectator entertainment. The composers were not only well aware of that, but as true believers, they also knew their Hebrew Bible. They translated the language of the Word into a musical language suitable for congregational service. The tune of Psalm 81 shows dignity, elation, majesty and honor at the top of our lungs, if you will. "Slow" and "solemn" seems most appropriate for respectful, joyous congregational singing and for shouting hail to our victorious King, who repeatedly delivered His people from eternal death. The tune is uplifting but not frenzied, exuberant but not frantic, calm, dig-



nified, elated but not agitated, full of fervor, not fever, and emotion without a trace of sentimentality or false humility.

To say that "the lyrics say one thing, while the music seems to say another" may appear to be a tasty tidbit, but will prove to be a poisonous morsel.

Dennis Teitsma
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Editor,

I have become increasingly concerned about the amount and quality of anti-Muslim rhetoric, in the popular media suggesting in subtle and not so subtle terms that Muslims are by nature of religion and politics a violence prone people, and that extremist Islamic terrorist ideology against non-Islamic people is the norm rather than the exception among Muslims. I would like to encourage Christian magazines such as *Reformed Perspective* to promote a balanced view of Islamic faith and be explicit in separating Muslim and Islam from terrorism, especially post September 11, 2001.

While there is no doubt that many Christians face persecution on account of their faith in many predominantly Muslim nations, Muslims are facing increased persecution in our own free society on account of their faith, their appearance, and

the misperceived union between the Islamic faith and extremist terrorism. When we as Christians propagate this generalization, we tread on dangerously thin ice. One does not need to look back hundreds of years to find atrocities committed in the name of Christianity. Today, fundamentalist Christian extremists bomb abortion clinics and kill abortion-providing doctors. The following text, "Pray for America! Each of us must prayerfully consider what we can do as individuals to lead more Christian lives. God will heal our land, but he requires our repentance. Our nation must turn from their wicked ways and put Jesus Christ and his laws first" was taken from www.kkk.com. I am sure that Pastor Thomas Robb, director of the National Headquarters of the Knights of the Klu Klux Klan would be quick to use his Bible to justify the activities that his organization and its associated chapters have committed and continue to carry out in the name of Jesus. And let us not forget Northern Ireland and the ongoing religious-political antagonism between extremist Protestants and Catholics that has resulted in repeated acts of senseless violence (remember the Omagh bombing, August 1998).

Extremist ideology should not come to define the Muslim faith in Christian eyes, neither through outright proclamation nor subtle suggestion. Just as we vigorously resist being grouped with those extremist so-called Christian examples as above, so let us be wary of applying those generalizations to others and rather extend tolerance to our Muslim neighbors. Disagree with principles of the Islamic faith? – emphatically. Witness and evangelize? – absolutely. Stereotype and malign? – hypocrisy.

Eric Mulder
Hamilton, Ontario

Separation of Church and State



by Peter Veenendaal

The recent Canadian Alliance leadership race has again brought out the cry of "Separation of Church and State." This cry has been a familiar one throughout the history of mankind and was also heard recently during the November 2000 Canadian federal election, when some politicians were maligned for daring to bring their personal religious beliefs out publicly (and even promoting them as being good for the future of Canada!). And as often as this cry has been raised, so often has it been misrepresented and misdirected.

Separate responsibilities

Separation of the responsibilities of Church and State is a well-known Biblical principle. Matthew relates the story of the Pharisees and Herodians coming to Jesus to try to trap Him, asking: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (Matt 22:17). In other words, "Does the Roman government have any authority over us? Is our citizenship not of a heavenly nature only?" By His wise answer Jesus pointed out that we have a dual citizenship; we are citizens of the country in which we live and we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Each of these citizenships brings with it certain obligations and responsibilities. Because of

our citizenship on earth we owe allegiance to our earthly country and are required to pay taxes and obey those who God has placed in authority over us. Because of our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven we owe allegiance to God; we must obey His laws as given in His Holy Word.



Does this mean that church and state have nothing to do with each other?



Throughout history, this Biblical truth seems to have often been ignored. At times the state was seen as the ultimate authority and at other times the church was in total control. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, did not fully realize the differences between church and state and even became head of the church as well as head of state. As head of the Roman Church and as "Christ's representative on earth," many popes considered themselves to have authority not only over the church but over

the state as well. Martin Luther and John Calvin correctly explained that the civil government has its own task and place and must carry these out according to the norms of God's Word. The Church governs itself and cannot make decisions for the state. The two stand side by side, each with its own responsibilities.

Two jobs, one boss

Does this mean that church and state have nothing to do with each other? Does it mean that those who raise the cry of "Separation of Church and State" today are right after all? I am convinced that today's "criers" are confusing two different but related matters. Let me try to explain what I mean.

When Christ rose from the dead He was given "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). No one is exempt from being under the authority of Christ. Daniel 7 says of the Ancient of Days, "He was given authority, glory and sovereign power. . ." Therefore, we can conclude that Christ's lordship extends over the state, including the civil government. They are ordained by Him (Belgic Confession Art 36) and must rule according to His commands and decrees. There is also no doubt that

Christ has authority over the Church of which He is the Head. "And He is the head of the body, the church. . ." (Colossians 1:18). Only Christ has authority to govern the Church and He does so by those ordained to special offices. Therefore, God rules over all the nations (Psalm 22:28) and over the Church. We should not falsely conclude that therefore the Church rules over the state or that the state rules over the Church. Each has its own tasks and responsibilities but each falls under the rule of Christ. Both Church and state are accountable to the King of kings.

Since both church and state can be seen as divine institutions that ultimately derive their authority from God, and neither is over or under the other, their relationship to each other should be seen as mutually beneficial. The civil government restrains the licentiousness of men, punishes wrongdoers and protects those who do good, protecting the Church and its ministry. The Church holds governing authorities in honor and respect, prays for them that God may direct them in all their ways. Although the tasks are different, the basis should be the same.

Godly principles should rule over all

People who complain that Christians are not keeping church and state separate are not able to differentiate between the concepts of church and personal faith.

Perhaps you can see how politicians who bring matters of faith into the public arena during an election campaign have sometimes been falsely accused of ignoring the principle of "separation of church and state." Those who do not or will not see that both church and state derive their authority from, and are accountable to God,

see this as a way of keeping God out of the picture when dealing with civil matters. They are not willing to admit that by promoting their secular man-centered philosophies, they are fusing together their own views of state and church and in that way sending our country on a roller coaster ride to disaster.

By suggesting that they are neutral and not catering to any special religious group, today's government leaders are in fact doing exactly what they falsely accuse others of doing. When they refuse to take a Biblical stand on matters such as abortion, same-sex marriages, euthanasia, and embryonic stem cell research, they are in fact taking a stand for a secular religion, allowing the licentiousness of man to go unchecked. So they are hypocrites. Instead of simply allowing freedom of religion in the way that they rule, they are encouraging and even forcing on Canadians, a religion of secular humanism in which man is a god unto himself.

Let it be our prayer that Christian people will continue to use their faith to direct those in authority to establish policies and legislation that honors the King of kings. And even if our efforts to encourage our rulers do not seem to be appreciated, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

Peter is the National Coordinator of the Reformed Political Research Council (RPRC) a group devoted to getting Reformed Christians more politically involved. His goal is to set up local ARPAs or Associations for Reformed Political Action across Canada. If you are interested in his work and want to find out more, or want to help, you can contact him at rprc@mb.sympatico.ca or 1-204-745-6238

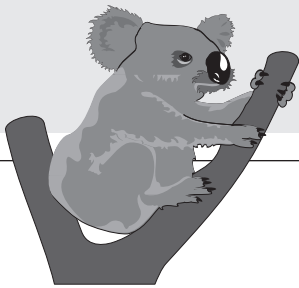


SEPARATION OF MORALITY AND LAW?

"Aristotle said that law stands on the *necessary* foundation of morality. It's common for people to say, 'Well, uh, you can't legislate morality.' My response is, 'Morality is the *only* thing you can legislate.' In fact, if a law does not have a moral justification, or a moral foundation, it's an illicit law. Laws that are not based on morality are essentially despotism. *Dictators* offer laws that serve their personal interests but have no moral goal to them. Every law must be justified in some sense by morality."

Greg Koukl

"The Bankruptcy of
Moral Relativism"



Refugees and Asylum Seekers

by Rene Vermeulen

According to the Australian government, they are doing a good job assisting people seeking refuge or asylum in Australia – providing that is, they seek our help in the correct way.

During the last few years there have been quite a few people who have sought such help but not in the correct way. I refer to the boat people. This started already after the Vietnam War when numerous people escaped Vietnam by boat and sought, and in many cases obtained, refuge in Australia.

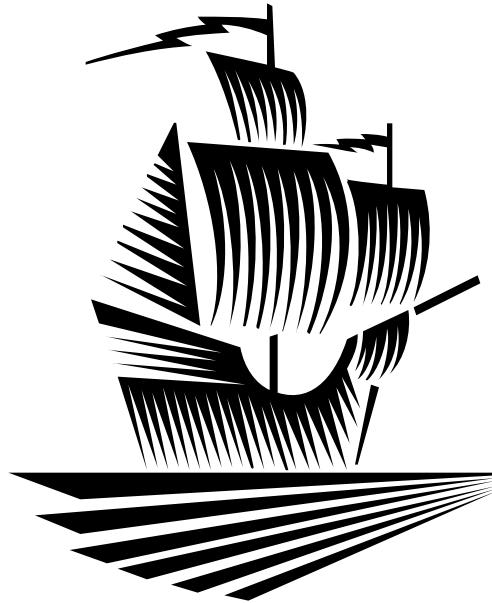
It is especially in the last few years that the pattern of boat people has changed. Many of the people seeking help arrive by boat from Indonesia. They are people who have sold everything in their country of origin – it might be Afghanistan, or Iraq, Iran or some other country in that region of Asia – often tearing up their identity papers making it even harder to identify them.

With the money obtained by selling everything they buy a plane ticket to Indonesia and, once there, they are helped onto an often rickety boat which then takes them to the Northern coast of Australia.

Quite a number of brokers have made a lot of money out of these unfortunate people. And, it is suggested, some in powerful positions in Indonesia seem to be assisting these boat owners.

Welcome to Nauru

Australia is far from happy with the way things were going some months ago. These people seeking refuge in Australia are doing so by illegal means. They are not following the normal channels and are forcing themselves on Australia.



It must be understood that these people receive a certain amount of sympathy from Australians and also from others around the world. That is even though they take enormous risks by allowing themselves to be carried in boats often hardly seaworthy, by people who are doing the job for the money. Part of the risk is, of course, that some of these boats have foundered in the treacherous seas between Indonesia and Australia.

Last year it seemed that the numbers were increasing. The Australian government decided to take drastic actions. When an Indonesian boat foundered and sank, its people were rescued by a cargo ship the *Tampa* from Norway. Australia insisted that these people be returned to Indonesia but the Indonesian government would not allow them to be landed. The Indonesian response was, that since they were on their way to Australia, let the Australians look after them. And so these people were for a time marooned on the cargo vessel. Eventually the government persuaded the Nauruan government to

accept these people while their claims for refugee status were being investigated. Canberra* funded the cost, which was a welcome help to the Nauruan people and government seeing as Nauru is virtually bankrupt.

The Australian government determined that people coming in boats from Indonesia would not be allowed to land in Australia but would be shipped to offshore camps in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Once this policy became known the shipping of people from Indonesia virtually stopped.

Trouble in Australian camps

Those people who arrived by boat before the *Tampa* incident had been placed in detention camps. There is one in Port Hedland in Western Australia's northwest, one at the Curtin Air Force base, also in WA, and another is located in South Australia at the Woomera Centre.

While it's true each of these camps is rather isolated, the inmates of these camps are properly fed and clothed by the Australian government. Still, it seems that as the investigation into their claims are taking longer to process, some in the camps are protesting. Several of the amenities at Woomera and Curtin have been set alight. Some of the people have gone on hunger strike, some even sewing their lips together. As can be expected there are people in Australia who argue that these people should be allowed to settle in the Australian community. Children should not be incarcerated, it is argued. Process the applications and let the people live where they want to live.

The Government argues that this would be the equivalent of granting them residency, which is being denied to others who try to settle in Australia by legal means. The minister for Immigration, Philip Ruddock, maintains that these people are here by illegal means. They have broken the law, torn up their identity papers, and in the light of the happenings on September 11 last year, every care should be taken before they are let out of the camps.



Some of the people have gone on hunger strike, some even sewing their lips together.



Clearly the Federal Government has sound arguments for the position it is taking. It is equally true that these arguments helped it win the last election. The Labor Party is trying to find a way of distancing itself from the Government without appearing to advocate an open door policy.

Questions being asked

Australia, like most Western nations, has adopted a multicultural policy. This means that all people of whatever color, or faith must be treated equally. This is much the same as in Canada.

But questions are being asked in the media, usually in the Letters to the Editor page: "Why is it that the West is regarded as Satanic by Muslims but at the same time Muslims want to come here. If the Muslim faith is so wonderful why do people not clamor to go to Saudi Arabia, awash as it is with oil dollars?" Many such questions could be asked. But there are not many answers forthcoming. These are the sorts of questions no right thinking Westerner should ask.

Now I realize that not all Muslims are as extreme as the Bin Ladens of this world. Many Muslims want to live peaceful lives. And they see that such peacefulness is present in countries having a democratic and western style of government. So from their point of view Australia is highly desirable.

It is interesting to note that recently there have been voices in the United Kingdom which argue that in parts of the UK, whole areas have been taken over by people who came from former colonies of Great Britain. It was in the 1960s that one Enoch Powell, a member of the British Parliament, warned the British people what Multiculturalism would do to England. He warned that it would create enclaves of people from certain parts of the world, but who have nothing in common with their countrymen. They and their children might speak with a Yorkshire or Lancashire accent but that does not make them Yorkshiremen. They are still Muslims or Animists or what have you, from this or that country. Enoch

Powell was accused of being racist but his predictions are coming true.

Is the same going to happen in Australia and Canada for that matter? Is it already happening in some of the inner cities?

The question I have is, how are we to rhyme this with the injunction in God's Word to be generous to strangers? On the one hand we can sympathize with those who support the government's stand, and who want hard measures taken against people who try to get in the country by improper means. On the other hand shouldn't we help people, even though they are Muslim, who have suffered greatly under regimes who treated their branch of the Muslim religion as heresy and them as pariahs?

I would love to give a nice pat answer but find myself with more questions than answers. Maybe this is a topic which one of our ministers can tackle. Or someone with a better understanding of the dynamics involved here.

** Australian capital city*



If your hair is gray, odds are you know something I still need to learn.

Please pass it on.



You can send your articles via e-mail or with a PC formatted floppy disk (sorry, disks will not be returned) or hard copy via regular mail to:

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Tidbits relevant, and not so, to Christian life

by Jon Dykstra

.....

Duh!

It's always amazing what passes for "news." For something to be news you would figure it would have to be . . . new, right? Not necessarily so. Last year *Saturday Night* magazine ran an article on the amazing discovery that we are born and conceived in sin – information that has been around for 6000 years or so.

Of course, they didn't phrase it quite that way. The article's opening lines read: "Psychologist Frances Aboud has found that children as young as four show signs of racism. Could the urge to discriminate be in our genes?" In a culture that refuses to acknowledge that we are born sinful, the idea that we could be born racist was truly extraordinary. But for Christians, this is just another example of scientists taking years and years to find out what has already been revealed in the Bible – we are born nasty by nature . . . Duh!

SOURCE: "P is for PREJUDICE" *Saturday Night* June 23/01

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Two new translations

The reviews are starting to come in for the two newest translations of the Bible: the English Standard Version (ESV) and Today's New International Version (TNIV). While the ESV is generally receiving applause, the TNIV is getting at least a few boos.

The TNIV is an updated version of the New International Version (NIV) with alterations to about 7 per cent of the text. The controversy around this translation arose because many of the changes are related to gender issues. God and Jesus are still referred to with male pronouns, but many other male terms are now neutered. In James 1:12 for example, the NIV reads,

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. . ." The TNIV translates this as, "Blessed are those who persevere under trial. . ." While this text may well apply to both men and women, a male term is clearly used in the original Greek. It gets sillier in Mark 1:17. The NIV translation has Jesus saying, "Come follow me . . . and I will **make you fishers of men.**" In the TNIV this becomes "Come follow me . . . and I will **send you out to catch people.**" Many more examples can be found on the TNIV website www.tniv.info. A critical evaluation of these translations can be found at www.cbmw.org, the website of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

The ESV, on the other hand, proclaims itself to be an "essentially literal" translation. Its more literal approach has led to endorsements from R.C. Sproul, J.I. Packer (the version's general editor) and Joel Belz (the editor of *World* magazine). Rev. C.J. VanderVelde, while writing in *Clarion*, also gave the ESV a favorable review, noting that it is in many ways an improved version of the RSV. Sample chapters, and an article about the version's translation philosophy can be found at its website, www.esvbible.org.

SOURCES: "Revised NIV makes its debut" *Christianity Today* Feb 4/02; "NIV's twisted sister" *World* Feb 9/02; "A standard, maybe" *World* July 28/01; "New Bible Translation Launched: The English Standard Version" *Clarion* Feb 1, 2002, Vol 51 No 3; "Should we trust the TNIV?" *World* Feb 23/02

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4 of a kind

Grace and *Mercy*: two words with distinct meanings . . . but do you know what they are? Through sheer repetition some Christian words seem to blend into each other and we forget their distinct meanings.

But their differences do matter. Below are three short definitions that describe the following four words: *Grace*, *Mercy*, *Justice* and *Persecution*. Try and match the right definition to the right word. This gets a bit tricky since one of the definitions applies to two of the words. (Answers are on the page 11.)

- a. not getting what you do deserve
- b. getting what you do deserve
- c. getting what you don't deserve

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Top ten

After yet another less than successful subscriber drive we present to you, the top ten reasons why people *don't* subscribe to *Reformed Perspective* (these aren't direct quotes, but they are real answers).

- 10. "It's not exciting enough."
- 9. "What are comics doing in a Reformed magazine?"
- 8. "I don't read."
- 7. "I don't like the pictures."
- 6. "I get my news from the TV!"
- 5. "I read an article in it once, that I disagreed with."
- 4. "What's *Reformed Perspective*?"
- 3. "I could go to 3 movies for \$39.50."
- 2. "We already get *Clarion*, and one Reformed magazine is enough."

And the number one reason why people don't subscribe to RP is . . .

- 1. "I read an issue twenty years ago, and I didn't like it then."

This is what we're up against folks, so we really need some help. In fact we need to pretty much double our subscriber base to be financially viable, so if you know anyone who might be interested in the magazine, or should be reading it, please consider buying them a subscription for their birthday, anniversary, graduation or Christmas. You'll be helping them, and us!



HISTORY: Boring and Irrelevant?

by Michael Wagner

Many people seem to assume that the study of history is boring and irrelevant. "So what if such-and-such took place in 1944? Who cares? It doesn't affect us now." As a matter of fact, it likely does affect us now. And not only do past events still affect us, but even what we *believe* about past events has a significant affect itself.

What we believe about the past is an important part of how we think about ourselves, i.e., who we are in relation to the rest of the world. Do you see yourself as being a member of an ethnic group or ecclesiastical tradition that has historically accomplished great things? That, for example, will influence your own self-image in a positive way.

Similarly, what people believe about the past – about history – strongly affects their political views. This point has perhaps best been expressed in a fiction book, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. As you may recall, this book is about life in a future totalitarian state. Society is ruled by an entity called "the Party," which controls everything, including the minds of the people. One of the Party's slogans is especially insightful: "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past." And so the Party "controls the past" by having books, as well as back issues of magazines and newspapers, constantly rewritten to fit with its political program. When a newspaper article was found to contain information that was out-of-step with the Party's current views or activities, it was rewritten, and the original article itself disposed of down a refuse

tube called a "memory hole." There would be no indication given that the article had been rewritten, and the information in the original article would be lost forever.

The political role of history

So the Party was able to control the past by having it rewritten to fit their political agenda. Historical evidence would always support the Party's current position. "Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date." Because history has political implications, it had to be altered to suit the Party. "All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary."

In our country there is, of course, no central agency directing the rewriting of

history to fit a political program. However, a number of social movements have seen the political significance of history and have begun using it to promote their agendas. One of Canada's most prominent political scientists, Alan Cairns, has written about the use of history in conflicts over the constitution in *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change* (McClelland & Stewart Inc, 1995). What has been happening is that certain groups, such as women (feminists), First Nations peoples, some ethnic minorities, etc., have carefully studied their histories to uncover injustices done to them in the past. These past injustices can then be used as the rationales providing support for policies that will rectify the mistreatment. In this way,



particular historical accounts become the basis, or the fundamental reason, that justifies desired political change. Cairns refers to this use of history as the “search for a new past,” that is, an account of the past that will support the group’s current political goals.



Political conflict can take the form of conflict between rival historical accounts.



In its most extreme form, history is used to demand reparations and restitution. “This is adversarial, accusatory history. It challenges the majority society through its government to reprove what are now viewed as nefarious acts committed by its ancestors. The admission of intergenerational guilt, or vicarious responsibility, followed by absolution, will wipe a moral stain from the past.” If group A can use an account of history to convince group B that group B’s ancestors harmed group A, then group B will be more likely to make restitution. In constitutional politics, the restitution can take the form of the recognition of certain rights. For example, First Nations peoples have used their account of the injustices they have historically suffered to argue for a more explicit recognition of their desired rights in future constitutional change. History provides a powerful impetus for particular political goals. Or as Cairns himself puts it, “How we interpret yesterday, therefore, is integrally linked to our search for a better constitutional tomorrow.”

Historic self-esteem

As mentioned earlier, our view of history can affect our self-image depending on how we view the history of our own

“group.” Cairns refers to this kind of thing in the context of discussing how group members feel about their group’s status in society. “The past,” he says, “exists as memory, as a key source of our identity, and as a contributor to whether we feel valued or unrecognized. The past is the raw material from which senses of pride or alienation derive or are fabricated.” If we feel good about our group’s status in the political order we are likely to defend that order, whereas if we feel our own group is alienated, we will more likely demand political change. But this perception, whether good or bad, is largely grounded on history.

Rival political accounts

Because of the political significance of history, then, political conflict can take the form of conflict between rival historical accounts. Groups with competing political claims will offer divergent historical accounts to justify their demands. This phenomenon is discussed in an article by Anne Norton, “Ruling Memory,” in the journal *Political Theory* (August 1993). The specific focus of her writing is nationalist movements in former European colonies in the third world. These movements understand the important political role of history. As she puts it, “Nationalist movements are born with the knowledge of history as contested terrain, they recognize the writing of history and the constitution of memory as means to political power.” Hence the conflict between rival historical accounts. “Histories will be challenged, contested, countered with other histories.” Or, as Cairns puts it in a specifically Canadian context, “History is one of the many battlegrounds on which the struggle to control the future takes place.”

Is history boring and irrelevant? Far from it. Aside from other considerations, history has significant political implications. Particular historical accounts can (and sometimes do) undergird political programs or agendas. What you believe about the past affects what you believe is

politically necessary for the future. Thus from a political perspective, history fulfills a very important role. In other contexts, such as the study of theology, history also plays an important part. But it is enough to understand the political significance of history to see the need for history to be written from a Christian perspective by Christian historians.



Answers from page nine

- A) Not getting what you do deserve, is *Mercy*. God is merciful when He doesn’t send us to hell. We deserve to go to hell, but fortunately Christians don’t get what we deserve.
- B) Getting what you do deserve, is *Justice*. God’s justice requires that sinful man be punished. Jesus took our deserved punishment on himself and thus fulfilled God’s requirement for justice.
- C) Getting what you don’t deserve, is *Grace* and alternately, also *Persecution*. This one is a little tricky. If justice is about getting punished when you do something bad, then persecution is about getting punished when you’ve done nothing, or done something good (like handing out a Bible in China). Persecution is, therefore, getting something bad that you don’t deserve. Grace on the other hand, is getting something good that you don’t deserve. God in His grace rewards us with eternal life, even though we have done nothing to merit this reward. It is through grace alone.



HOMEFRONT

The Closed Womb

by Jane deGlint

The birth of a child remains a miracle. Sure, we know about fertilized eggs, cell division, implantation, organ formation, maternal hormones to open the birth canal, and the expulsion of a baby. But this objective, scientific description is very incomplete. Not only does it oversimplify the very complex biological processes that culminate in the birth of a child, but it also ignores all that which goes beyond the physical. In order for a woman to conceive a child, she must have a relationship with a man, which defies mere scientific analysis. Moreover, an elaborate biological description of the pre-birth development does not even come close to answering the question of life: how is it possible that these cells divide and become a living creature? Yet, the biggest question arises after the child is born. The moment a child enters the world it is obvious that he/she has a unique personality, which is more than a combination of genetic material from both parents. The Lord still creates living souls, unique individuals. This divine aspect gives childbirth a spiritual dimension, which is sensed by many but only properly acknowledged by believers.

But apart from the prenatal creative processes there is a fundamental force at work that cannot be explained scientifically. Man wants to procreate. Parents want children. Grandparents want grandchildren. Children want siblings. Mothers long for a little person to hold and to nurture. Fathers thrive on protecting mother and child. The Lord has made his creatures in such a way that, generally, they want what he has intended for them. He created the union between husband and wife with the intent that they fill the earth and subdue it. The fall into sin did not completely eradicate the original command to procreate.

Especially in the church this longing for children is strong. In Old Testament

times parents longed to have descendants who would see the fulfillment of the promises concerning the Messiah. These desires came to fruition with the birth of our Savior. The Spirit-filled Simeon testified to this glorious fact when he held the child Jesus in his arms, "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people" (Luke 2:30-31). Also the New Testament believers confess that the Lord still opens and closes the womb. They have learned to make their desires subject to the will of their Lord and use their responsibility concerning childbearing in submission to their Lord. Careful not to be selfish, they raise their families in order to build the church until all believers will be gathered in.



Not only childless couples go through a struggle. Most single people are also childless.



How painful it must be to be excluded from this part of God's church gathering work. When over time a believing couple comes to the conclusion that the Lord withholds the fruit of the womb, husband and wife may have numerous questions. Also couples who have learned to place the created desire for children in the service of the Creator, are not exempted from difficult struggles as they try to come to grips with the empty place in their homes, their arms, their lives, their heart. Why would they not be able to have a child, while so many women opt for abortion? Is their childlessness punishment for a sin? Would not the

husband be especially suitable to give direction to a lively crew of youngsters? Would not the wife be a naturally dedicated mother? Not all childless couples have the same questions, but in all cases time is needed to reach acceptance.

These questions of believing couples will differ fundamentally from the struggles of childless unbelievers. Worldly people may seem to have honorable motives for raising families, yet ultimately they have man-centered reasons. Continuation of the family line, securing an heir, or an overwhelming desire for a child are all self-serving motives. Believers know that they serve their Lord, not themselves. Through their struggles they learn to accept God's wisdom, which is higher than theirs.

Not only childless couples go through a struggle. Most single people are also childless. The questions that the unmarried have in this regard are even more complex. While they are trying to reach peace about their singleness, they also have to deal with the fact that they will never have someone say to them, "Dad, lift me up, I want to see," or "Mom, how come you know where everything is?" They have two created urges to repress. Though the Lord has a special place for unmarried adults in his church, the life of the single is not always easy.

Every childless couple has a unique way to deal with unique circumstances. Each of their stories is special and individual.

William and Alice married in their thirties. They derived satisfaction from their jobs and lived in an elegant home. The first pregnancy came after two years. However, Alice miscarried at three months. She got pregnant again two more times during the next five years, but also for these pregnancies the hopes were dashed. A few months after the third miscarriage Alice developed severe abdominal pains. There was no choice. An operation brought her



These questions of believing couples will differ fundamentally from the struggles of childless unbelievers.

fertility to a premature end. At first Alice felt she was a failure. She was not able to fulfill a very basic human function. But William was very supportive. He did express disappointment, but never remotely blamed his wife. By the time they had accepted their situation, William and Alice were in their early forties. They participated very actively in their congregation. It cannot be said that it never occurred to them how children could have enriched their lives, but they had peace. They actually never considered themselves childless. They were William and Alice.

Collin and Melissa were rather young when they married. Melissa worked as a cashier in a local grocery store, while Collin was being groomed to take over his Dad's landscaping business. Both Collin and Melissa had more or less counted on having children right away. In fact, they were mentally prepared for a very large family. However, Melissa did not get pregnant. Strange. Already after about half a year Melissa had become very worried. Would she ever have children? Initially the doctors took a lighthearted approach. Collin and Melissa were barely married and very young. Yet, over time and after many tests the truth took shape. As a couple Collin and Melissa were infertile. Their dreams were shattered. They struggled with God. They avoided their luckier friends. Melissa

froze inside when her mother put up a framed picture of the first grandchild. The decision to adopt seemed natural. Over time they became the legal parents of four children: three boys and a girl. Melissa thrived on looking after them. She delighted in telling them the Bible stories. She was overjoyed when they were old enough to go to church. Collin used whatever spare time he had to make a crib, a swing set, bunk beds. He took the boys on hikes and went fishing with them. In being parents of an active family, Collin and Melissa found their identity amidst the members of their congregation.

Our last story is about Cameron. Cameron never married. To say that for him the womb remained closed sounds strange, but the reality was that his longing for a child remained unfulfilled. Cameron stayed single all his life. He was unable to find a woman who would share her life with him. Though he did have relationships, they never led to a marriage, either because he was not able to commit himself, or because the woman was afraid to surrender emotionally to him. But he was not only longing for a woman. He also longed for a child, a loyal companion whom he could teach about beauty, about the cosmos, about God. It never happened. But God came closer to him.



Childless people have the difficult task of learning to accept the Lord's plan for their life.



Different people, different circumstances, different struggles, different solutions. Some people opt for adoption, others go through medical tests and interventions, while still others prefer to leave things as they have presented themselves. Whatever decision is taken, it must be in line with God's revealed will. We cannot play or experiment with human life. At times we may have to step back and say, "So far." Respect for the God of life will determine what courses of action are taken.

Yet, though the circumstances differ, the underlying theme is the same. Childless people have the difficult task of learning to accept the Lord's plan for their life. Every child of God has to do that, but believers without children have to find peace with a situation that is against the created order. That requires faith and hard work.

In this work of coming to acceptance the childless people are not alone. They are part of the communion of saints. Superficially that might make it more difficult. Many families of our congregations have a fairly large number of children. But in love we must overcome the awkwardness of not knowing which toddler tales to share on the one side, and how not to feel left out on the other. This balance can be achieved through openness and sensitivity. At certain intervals childless couples are mentioned in the congregational prayers. Some find this an unnecessary singling out of a group, others derive comfort for the recognition of their problem. But as the needs and struggles of childless couples are placed before the throne of grace, we are all reminded of our blessings, whether we are married or single, whether we have children or not. The Lord is good and gracious to all of us, and provides us with all our wants and needs in his providential care.

The Lord has a place in his kingdom for all his children. In him everyone is fruitful, also the barren woman and the childless man.

"Sing, O barren one who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the LORD. Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities" (Isaiah 54:1-3).

"For this is what the Lord says: To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose to do what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant – to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:4,5).



TURNING OFF THE TUBE: Six months without



by Deborah Gibson

Last fall I unplugged my television.

I had bought a new car, and I was looking for ways to cut back my monthly budget. As I asked myself what I could possibly cut, my cable bill seemed the most obvious choice. Not only did I want to save money, but I had also been thinking how easy it was to fritter away the hours watching television with nothing to show for the time I had spent. I thought about the books I wanted to read, but didn't have time, the hobbies I had set aside because I

didn't ever get around to pursuing them, and the way television tempted me put off until tomorrow the tasks that I really should be doing today.

TV as a pill

Even more important to me than the issues of time and money, however, was the question of what I was putting into my mind in the hours I spent watching television. As a thinking Christian, it's easy to find messages in both the shows

and advertising that are contrary to the Biblical principles that tell us what is really important in life. I thought of Philipians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." I also thought about what Romans 12:1-2 tells us about being transformed into Christ's likeness by the renewing of our minds. What was I

The Foul Language Filter

Due to the wonders of this technological age, you can now watch offensive TV shows with all the offensive words muted out. (Oh joy! Oh joy!) Yes, lip readers will still be offended, but for the rest of us the TVGuardian™ is here to save the day. Simply connect this magical gadget to your TV and the next time your favorite TV character swears or takes God's name in vain, you'll hear nothing but silence.

The TVGuardian works by monitoring each show's closed caption signal. The captioned words are then "checked against a dictionary of foul words stored in the TVGuardian." If a phrase contains an offensive word, the whole phrase is then muted out (this may of course mean that the next time you watch one of your favorite shows, you'll hear nothing but silence). The system works with most shows except live events like sports, talk shows or the news. The TVGuardian also becomes somewhat confused when people use words like "God" or "Jesus Christ" since it has to try and differentiate between the way religious shows might appropriately use them, and the way most other shows probably misuse them.

The best that can be said about this product is that if you are going to watch objectionable shows with your children, they at least won't hear the objectionable words. TVGuardian is available at a Christian bookstore, or Wal-Mart near you, and retails for about \$70.00 US. You can also find it on the web at www.tvguardian.com.



putting into my mind? How would my thoughts change if I cut off this source of mental and spiritual pollution?

The reactions of my family and friends were interesting. One person in my family told me, "If you get depressed, get your cable hooked up again right away!" The idea of using television as an antidepressant gave me pause. I thought that this was a ridiculous solution to depression, but after I had begun I was surprised to find how much it was part of my routine to use the television as a way to escape from my daily concerns. I was very restless and at loose ends some evenings. Many people assumed I was just switching to "peasant TV" and were surprised when I refused to take their old television antenna. I discovered just how much we talk about television programs – I was out of the loop in a lot of conversations about the latest *Survivor* program or new developments in *Friends*. Especially on and after September 11 I felt like I might be missing out. I never saw the video clips of the tragedy in New York; however, I still heard a lot of the sounds and was touched by the personal

stories from radio news broadcasts. Although I was shocked and horrified along with everyone else, I was glad to have some detachment from the tragedy, and to be able to distance myself from the barrage of news.

Alternate inputs

Despite my initial restlessness, I gradually settled into finding other things to do. I began tackling some of the books I had always wanted to read, but hadn't because I knew they required more intellectual focus than strictly recreational reading. For example, I read *The Iliad* in September, and enjoyed it. I also read books by Christian philosophers and commentaries on the Scriptures, and books about history. I found that I was spending more time with other people, and I spent more time outdoors too – if you're bored, a walk down a tree-lined path is a refreshing way to spend an evening! I found I was better rested, because I was going to bed on time more often. I listened to more music, particularly Christian and classical music, which I found lifts my mood much better than television programming. And most impor-

tantly, after awhile I did notice a difference in my thought life.

I told a friend that my head felt cleaner and less cluttered – I felt better able to focus on the really important and good things in life. Because of my reading, I had much more interesting and meaningful things to think about. I actually felt more content with what I have, I think because I dramatically cut my exposure to advertising. I didn't actually save much money, because I spent more than usual on books, but I guess I could have used the library instead.

I also felt a sense of accomplishment as I looked at how I was spending my time. When I turned off my television, I sought out activities that gave me a lasting benefit – exercise, mental stimulation, creative hobbies, wholesome and interesting literature, building my relationships with friends. Did I miss my favourite television shows? Sometimes. Was going without them worth it? Absolutely!

Deborah Gibson teaches Grades 4 and 5 at Lacombe Christian School.

The great TV turn-off challenge

TV turn-off week occurs each year in the last week of April. Since 1995, when the event was first organized, millions have taken on the challenge of going seven days without TV.

Bob DeMoss has taken this idea one step further and challenged families to go 30 days without TV. His book, *TV The Great Escape*, includes journal entries from kids and parents who have turned off their televisions. He doesn't promote doing without TV altogether, but suggests that a 30-day TV fast will help Christian families get back to more healthy viewing habits.

The difficulty most people have, is figuring out how they will spend their extra time. Dinners will have to be spent talking, instead of watching, and evenings will have to be planned out a bit to ensure kids aren't bored and counting the days until they can turn on the television again. DeMoss's book is full of helpful hints and encouragement, and is a must buy for anyone considering a TV fast. Even if you're not considering a TV fast, you should probably still read his book, to see if your reluctance is a sign of a suffering spiritual life. If you can not go 30 days without TV, who's really first in your heart: God or your TV?

You can find out more about TV turnoff week at www.tv-turnoff.org. Bob DeMoss's book *TV The Great Escape* can be ordered at any Christian bookstore.





hours of TV

Finding out what's on when your back is turned

by Jon Dykstra

We only had three channels back when I was a kid, and we didn't get to watch much on any of them. One program in particular was banned: *Three's Company*, a show about two girls and a guy living together. An added wrinkle to this show was that the male roommate had to pretend to be gay. My mom hated this show, absolutely hated it, but it just happened to be on when she was busy making supper. Sneaky kids that we were, we tuned in whenever we possibly could.

Nowadays things are worse. WWF wrestling – probably the program that parents are most likely to ban their children from watching – shows bloody violence and women in various states of undress. But even as parents say no, kids remain as

sneaky as ever. Though they'll obviously deny watching the show, just try asking any of your male progeny who their favorite WWF star is. Far too many Christian children are able to give this question an emphatic response.

Kids really are sneaky, so it's worth checking what might be on when your back is turned. I recently spent 24 hours looking into just that.

Commercials

While it's apparent kids are sneaky, it's also clear that those sneaky kids must be someone else's kids, not yours. Your kids are good kids, right?

But do your good kids watch commercials? Parents may be able to control

the programs their children watch, but they can't control what commercials will be shown during those programs. And there are some pretty shocking commercials being shown during otherwise fine programming.

For example, a recent Midas commercial (they sell mufflers) featured an 80-year old woman exposing her breasts to a mechanic. This was shown during an afternoon college basketball game. In another recent Midas commercial a man, Mr. Air Conditioning, had one of his arms freeze, and fall off. The arm was then shown on the ground still squirming. Ehwww!

Many readers will be familiar with *Herbal Essences* commercials. This shampoo created an advertising campaign based on

If...

"Just how bad would television ... have to get, for Christians by the hundreds of thousands to turn it off – maybe for good?

If mainstream TV regularly scoffed at all we hold sacred; if it lifted up as wholesome that which we find shameful and repugnant; if it consistently wasted our precious time and dulled our own and our children's minds; if it inoculated us against sin; if it enhanced our cheapest materialistic tendencies; if it kept us, even at its best, from doing things that were better – if TV did all these things, and stuck a finger in our eye while doing them, then might we at last pull the plug on the ugly one-eyed monster?

Of course not, because it's already done all that and we haven't."

Joel Belz

"Sweeps month – how about sweeping TV out of your life for 30 days" November 18, 2000 *World*.



the similarity between the words “organic” (their product is entirely organic) and “orgasmic.” If you haven’t seen any of these commercials it will suffice to say they involve women moaning and screaming. These commercials are shown throughout the day.

The Networks want you to keep watching so as one show ends they’ll often insert a promo for the show that is coming up next. This means that even though you would never let your child see a program like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, it’s pretty likely they’ve seen at least a promo or two for it. In the one promo I saw, several demons were slain, *including one by decapitation*.

Some objectionable commercials don’t look or sound bad, but provoke unwanted questions. The one I’m thinking about in particular features a very happy man on his way to work. In fact he’s so happy, he’s bouncing his way to work. This commercial ends with the word “Viagra” flashing across the screen. So now the question on every 10-year-old’s mind is, “Daddy, what’s Viagra?”

Swearing and more

During the evening prime time hours I conducted a little experiment involving all the major networks in the US and Canada (ABC, NBC, CBS, CTV, A-channel, Global,

and Fox). I decided to switch channels every time something obviously objectionable happened. The experiment would be finished when I ran out of TV channels to switch to. The results are as follows:

CBS – swearing

ABC – swearing

CTV – nudity

NBC – swearing

A-channel – extreme violence (20 men shot to death in 10 seconds)

Global – swearing

Fox – swearing (done by a transvestite to boot!)

In all it took me 22 minutes to get through all seven channels. That surprised me, since I wasn’t even being particularly strict. I ignored sexual jokes and references, and all swears, except those that took God’s name in vain. It still only took 22 minutes for me to run out of channels. If your kids are watching anything during prime time they’re sure to be seeing something objectionable.

Cable and late night

It only gets worse if you have cable. Here in Canada there’s a channel called the Women’s Television Network – 3 p.m. on a weekday, they have nudity. The STAR channel recently featured a documentary on porn stars. . . at 7 p.m. SHOWCASE features artsy type movies all day long, which

means you’re sure to find something weird all day long. And let’s not forget the music channels, MTV and MuchMusic where scantily clad women contort to nihilistic music 24 hours a day.

And worse still is the late night line-up. That may not matter in most houses, as kids are safely in bed by 12, but stats say that 50 per cent of all American kids from 2-18 have a TV in their bedroom. Hopefully that percentage is much lower in Christian families. If it isn’t we’re exposing our sneaky kids to unrestrained sex and sleaze on every channel (forget about the late night movies – have you seen some of those 1-900 number commercials?).

Conclusion

After 24 hours worth of concentrated, intense viewing I’ve come to a less than surprising conclusion – TV today is sleazy blasphemous trash. The only real surprise for me, was just how sleazy and how blasphemous. As someone once said, when we turn on the TV we let people, language and ideas into our house that we would never let in through the front door. So the question is, what are we going to do about our unwelcome guests?

If you want more information on television sleaze, check out the website
<http://www.parentstv.org/>



The TV feedback loop

40 years ago, you couldn’t even show a married couple sleeping in the same bed; today you can show two naked people having sex while they swear, smoke drugs, and shoot some cops. There’s no question that TV has gotten worse, but why has this happened?

The answer can be found in the TV feedback loop. People watch TV to escape reality. Instead of watching shows about ordinary people doing ordinary things, viewers want to see the unusual and the exciting. However, repeated exposures to the same unusual stimuli, makes the unusual become ordinary – the strange becomes normalized. We can see an example of this in the world’s changing attitude towards homosexuality. It used to be marginalized as bizarre behavior, but as North Americans were exposed to more and more TV shows with gay characters the bizarre became a little more mundane.

Mundane, however, won’t keep people watching TV, so the feedback loop kicks in. If the unusual has, through repeated exposures, become boring, then TV programs will have to search further afield to find something even more bizarre. They’ll keep pushing the boundaries to get viewers, showing more skin, more sleaze, and audiences will get bored again.

It’s our desire for novelty and excitement that keeps feeding this vicious cycle.



Conscience Stricken

by Christine Farenhorst

I once read an article in our newspaper about conscience. That is to say, the word conscience was not specifically mentioned but the words “Haunted by Misdeed” were printed in large, black, block letters.

Stolen stone

It seems that a Belgian visited Scotland. While there he toured a Scottish burial place – an old, old cemetery. Impressed by the ancient site, he coveted a stone for a souvenir. Surreptitiously he picked up a rock from between the monuments. It weighed a little over two pounds, so it was small enough to be hidden within the folds of his jacket. And, when you come to think of it, what’s a stone? No one would miss it – certainly not the long-dead bodies beneath the earth.

Nevertheless, when the Belgian returned home, a series of mishaps caused him to stop and think. His daughter broke her leg; he lost his job; and his wife became ill. He began to reflect that perhaps these bad (or sad) events had to do with the fact that he had taken the rock. The pocketed stone consequently began to weigh heavier and heavier within the lining of his jacket. Had taking the stone perhaps been more important than he thought? After all, the burial site, Clava Cairns, was an ancient site, dating back to roughly 2000 BC and it was considered one of the most important and mysterious locations in Scotland. Although he told himself repeatedly that the rock in his pocket was simply one of many similar rocks and although he was convinced that in the long run it should-

n’t make one bit of difference whether this particular rock was in Belgium or in Scotland, he could not get rid of the uncomfortable feeling that he had done something wrong. The truth was God was using the confiscated rock to nudge his conscience. It wouldn’t leave him alone. It continually chafed at him like starch in a stiff collar.

.....
***Conscience, you see,
is not peculiar to
a Christian.***
.....

The upshot of the matter was that he sent the rock back to Scotland. He packed it up and sent it to the Tourist Office in Inverness along with an anonymous letter. In the letter he apologized for taking the rock and asked them to please return the rock to its rightful place in the cemetery. He said his letter might sound a bit strange but he firmly believed that his bad luck was being caused by the theft and that the deed was haunting him.

Written on all hearts

That was the end of the story. It was not the first time, though, that such an event has caused a person to feel uncomfortable, to return something that did not belong to him. As a matter of fact, there is an English phrase that deals with just such situations. The phrase is “conscience money.” This is money paid



Impressed by the ancient site, he coveted a stone for a souvenir.

anonymously to the British government by persons who have cheated the government and who have, humanly speaking, gotten away with it. Their conscience becoming uneasy, they are able to anonymously send the deficit to the Treasury Department. This sum is then advertised in the newspaper so that they can see it has been received.

Conscience, you see, is not peculiar to a Christian. All human beings have a conscience. God has equipped each person with a sense of right and wrong – whether he is a believer or not. The etymology, or root, of the word conscience is *knowledge along with* (or shared with) a person. It is a person's inner sense of right and wrong. It is his judgment on his thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions. God has written this on a person's heart (Rom 2:14, 15).

The Belgian tourist was reading God's law in his heart. He was listening to the voice of his God-given conscience, even though he did not realize it and even though he felt that he was being haunted.

There is no climactic ending to the story of the Belgian who stole the stone. Not as far as we know anyway. Perhaps, later in his life, he recognized the one Who had given him the conscience; perhaps someday he recognized the Savior. Sometimes God causes conscience to produce a tremendous, immediate turn-about in a life. Richard Wurmbrand, in his book *In the Face of Surrender*, records such a story about conscience and renewal.


Conscience bears witness

In Sofia, Bulgaria, a Christian, imprisoned by the Communists, was put into a cell the size of a man, with nails inside the cell which pressed into his flesh at the slightest movement. When the door was locked, the prisoner's first

words were: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When the warden asked the prisoner what these words meant, he was given the joyful account of the Gospel. As a result, his conscience was smitten and he opened the door. Later, when the arresting officer came, he found both the prisoner and the warden kneeling in prayer. The warden calmly told the officer that he was no longer under his orders but that he belonged to Jesus Christ. As a result, he too was imprisoned.

A conscience bears witness to God's law (Rom 2:15); it can be seared as with

a hot iron, deceiving people (1 Tim 4:2); and it can be purged by the blood of the Lamb (Heb 9:14). And how wonderful this purging is!! The blood of Christ cleans the believer's conscience by turning him from a life that leads to eternal damnation to a life spent in love and obedient service to God.

The Belgian, whose sin was relatively minute compared to the sin of the prison warden, will perhaps go to hell because his eyes were closed to the power of this cleansing. But the warden, who very likely had committed many murders, went to heaven. 

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REFORMED
Perspective

The Story of Faith Missions

**Non-denominational missionaries going
where established churches couldn't . . . or wouldn't**



We may have more wealth in these days, better education, greater comfort in traveling and in our surroundings even as missionaries, but have we the spirit of urgency, the deep, inward convictions that moved those who went before us; have we the same passion of love, personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ? If these are lacking, it is a loss for which nothing can compensate.

(Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor)



by Johan D. Tangelder

How excited are we about the tremendous opportunities we have of reaching millions who are in spiritual darkness and who need the Gospel more than ever? If missions were a mere human invention, it would be up to us to either support it or to ignore it. But it is entirely different when we know that missions are not an option or a personal preference, but a God-given mandate. Because our Lord commanded His Church to spread the faith, it is our privilege and duty to pray for our missionaries, to support them, and to give them a place in our hearts. In the past two centuries considerable progress has been made in spreading the Gospel. By the time of World War II American soldiers discovered that Christians were even to be found on remote islands and in the jungles. In the beginning of the twentieth century 80 per cent of Christians were either Europeans or North Americans. Today 60 per cent are citizens of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The start of modern missions

The modern missionary impulse began with William Carey (1761-1834), an English missionary to India. He has been called the "Father of Modern Missions" as his life and ministry spanned the so-called "Great Century" of missionary outreach; a century (1800-1914) which changed the religious map of the world.

Two generations after William Carey's 1792 publication *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*, which launched the new era of missions, Hudson and Maria Taylor founded the China Inland Mission (CIM), which was not just another mission, but the first mission of a new era, the era of interdenominational faith missions. What led the Taylors and like-minded to found new mission societies? No classical (denominational) missions were able or willing to evangelize the millions of unreached people speedily. For example, the names of many faith

missions illustrate their aim to reach the unreached. Because faith missions did not want to compete with classical missions, they added to the geographical area in their names another element, which indicated that they wanted to spread the Gospel in an unreached area: China *Inland* Mission, Africa *Inland* Mission, Congo *Inland* Mission, *Unevangelized* Africa Mission, *Unevangelized* Tribes Mission and Sudan-Pioneer-Mission. Klaus Fiedler observes that some missions, such as the Southern Morocco Mission, the North Africa Mission, the Kurku and Central India Hill Mission and the Heart of Africa Mission, did not need to add such an element to their names, because the whole area was unreached.

At the present time these missions have more missionaries under appointment than do denominational agencies.

The history told

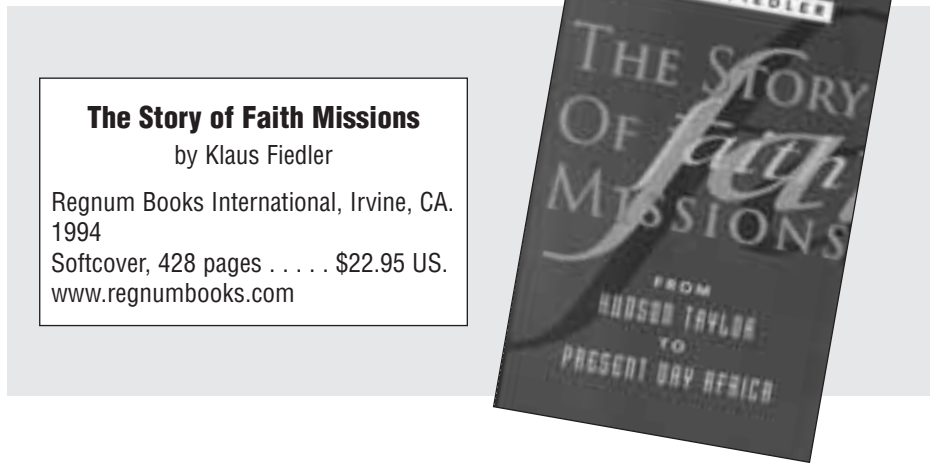
Klaus Fiedler's outstanding work *The Story of Faith Missions* is the first thorough

history of the theology, practice, and continuing impact of faith missions around the world, and the most comprehensive study available on faith missions in Africa. Extensive use of illustrations, charts, and copious endnotes to each chapter add enormously to the reader's understanding of the full scope of the faith mission movement which has played such a vital role in the development of worldwide missions. In order to facilitate a historical understanding, Fiedler provides a detailed history of the China Inland Mission, since it served as a pattern for all faith missions working in Africa. And in two articles based on his book, I intend to provide a brief historical sketch and an evaluation.

The term "faith missions" was not coined by the faith missions themselves. No faith missionary ever claimed to have more faith than missionaries who worked with denominational missions. The term is derived from one of its innovative concepts – the "faith principle" of financial support. But the most important characteristic is not its "faith support: but of its interdenominational character. As we explore the history of faith missions we must keep in mind though that not every interdenominational mission operates as a "faith mission."

China Inland Mission

Hudson James Taylor (1832-1905), founder of CIM (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship) was born in Barnsley, England, where his pharmacist father was a Methodist local preacher. Like his parents, Taylor was a Methodist. His conversion at the age of seventeen took place in the context of that church and its holiness theology. In 1852 he joined the Hull Brethren Assembly and was re-baptized. He joined the Brethren because he was looking for a wider "unity of all of God's children." He did not want to be denominationally defined. Yet, later in life he joined the Baptists. After his conversion, Taylor set his heart on mission work in China. He even



The Story of Faith Missions
 by Klaus Fiedler
 Regnum Books International, Irvine, CA.
 1994
 Softcover, 428 pages \$22.95 US.
www.regnumbooks.com

interrupted his medical studies at the London Hospital to go there in 1854 under the auspices of the short-lived China Evangelization Society. Failing health forced him to return to England in 1860. Taylor remained burdened for China, especially for the interior. Having found no existing society willing to sponsor him or to take on any more responsibility than they already had, Dr. Taylor founded CIM, which turned out to be a completely new missionary movement. In 1866 sixteen candidates

favorite CIM word. Since Taylor was not tied to any denomination, CIM did not care to which church a missionary belonged; an affiliation was not even registered. Candidates came even from churches with opposing views on baptism, such as Presbyterian and Baptists. Taylor's guiding principle was not correct doctrine, but effective evangelism. Nevertheless, he knew enough about the church membership of his candidates that he could say: "Those already associated with me represent all the leading denominations of our native land – Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist and Paedobaptist. Besides these, two are or have been connected with the 'Brethren' so-called."

Taylor was motivated by two convictions: First, he was convinced that all who do not believe in Jesus Christ are eternally lost. Therefore, Christians must make every effort to present the Gospel so that everyone has a chance to hear it. Secondly, Taylor believed that Christ was to return before the millennium. He thought it was possible to evangelize the world before His return, or even to speed it. This conviction made it so urgent to go to unreached areas to preach the Gospel, and the recruitment of a great number of missionaries and evangelists.

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***How excited are we
 about reaching millions
 who are in spiritual
 darkness?***

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sailed with Taylor for itinerant work in a land "where a million a month [were] dying without God." Taylor solicited no funds for his mission. He expected his support to come only "as an answer to prayer in faith." "Jehovah-jireh" which means, "The Lord will provide" (Gen 22:14) became a

Taylor's mission fervor was matched by his pioneering innovations. He adopted Chinese dress and hair braid, and paired foreign missionaries with national Christians. Since the task was so urgent, Taylor selected candidates less for their educational than their spiritual qualifications. Although he, a university trained doctor, did not despise education, he didn't believe it necessary to insist that missionaries must have all the educational preparations usually required by denominational boards.

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He lost two wives and four children to disease and famine.

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Men and women from all walks of life were acceptable. Whatever training he or she would need would be provided on the mission field by "roughing it," or through senior missionaries. Since the Chinese would be scandalized if Western male missionaries would attempt to evangelize Chinese women, CIM accepted women as missionaries, even for work in remote and dangerous areas.

By 1891, CIM had more than 640 workers, but Taylor's influence extended far beyond CIM. He mobilized and motivated people for worldwide missions and laid down mission principles still employed by faith missions everywhere.

Taylor not only had deep convictions and a burden for those Chinese who had not heard the Gospel, he also "walked the talk." He lost two wives and four children to disease and famine. Soon after the shocking martyrdom of seventy-nine colleagues and children during the Boxer rebellion in 1900, he became ill and retired. In 1905 he undertook a last visit to China, the

land he loved and for which citizens he had sacrificed so much, and died there.

Sudan United Mission

The founders of faith missions were remarkable, visionary, and committed Christians. True pioneers! The founder of Sudanese United Mission (SUM) was no exception. Karl Wilhelm Kumm (1874-1930), born in Hanover, Germany, attended the East London Training Institute. Eventually he attended universities at Heidelberg, Jena and Freiburg and received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the last. In 1898 he went to Egypt to prepare for missionary work among the Muslims under the auspices of the North Africa Mission. There he met and married Lucy, daughter of Grattan Guinness, an evangelical leader in Britain who had for some years experienced a burden for the evangelization of the Sudan. Guinness also published a periodical entitled "*The Sudan and the Regions Beyond*," with the purpose of stirring up interest in missions. Kumm's greatest hero was the famous missionary David Livingstone, referring to him as "saint, physician, explorer, missionary, pathfinder, and pioneer for God – 'the John the Baptist' of the 19th Century."

Kumm's biographer summarizes his feelings as follows: "More and more he had absorbed the spirit of David Livingstone, and he longed and prayed that in the year which celebrated the Centenary of his hero's birth, there should be inaugurated such a forward movement in missionary enterprise that Christianity should sweep the continent for which Livingstone gave his life." Kumm himself has been described as "a bold missionary explorer," one who was attracted by the unknown, by the difficulties and by obstacles. He was poetic, intense, and forceful, able to captivate his audience, whether in public speaking or in writing. Though Kumm became a missionary statesman, he seldom made any reference to denominations. He simply did

not think in denominational terms. He was born a Lutheran; in Britain he became an Anglican. He also had a deep interest in the Keswick (holiness) movement. In 1904 the Kumms moved to Britain started the SUM, an independent, nondenominational mission, not in opposition to existing mission societies, but to evangelize the unreached in the Sudan. Already in 1904 the SUM was able to send its original party of four men, with Kumm as leader, on an exploratory venture to Northern Nigeria. Kumm was driven by two realizations. First, the hold that Islam had on the population south of the Sahara desert, and second, how the Muslims were winning the animists of the Sudan to their faith. It was his ambition to win these people for Jesus Christ before Islam took them over.

A British citizen from 1910, Kumm moved to the United States in 1919 to lead the SUM branch there. The most famous of the women pioneers sent out by SUM-US was Johanna Veenstra (1894-1933), whose father was a Christian Reformed Church (CRC) minister who died when she was only five. At nineteen years of age,

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Mission offerings on the home front just don't seem to keep up with the needs.

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she entered Union Missionary Training Institute in Brooklyn. Between school years, at a missionary conference she heard Kumm speak about the work of SUM. Three years later, having completed additional training in Reformed doctrine and midwifery, Veenstra left for Nigeria, arriving in January 1920. Together with other single women, she laid the foundation of what is now called the Church of Christ in

Nigeria. She was an able speaker and had access to many CRC churches. Her gracious ways and public speaking did much to endear her to her denomination. Some CRC leaders became interested in becoming involved in Africa but this did not take place in Veenstra's lifetime. Within a short time span, SUM became one of the largest faith missions, with the unusual feature of combining interdenominational and denominational branches. But a CRC Branch of SUM was not established until 1940.

Faith support

How do faith missions get their support? So far there has been no detailed study on their ways and means of financing their work. Some agencies require each missionary to raise his or her own support, while others form a central pool for which every missionary raises money and out of which salaries and project funding comes. Having served on three different faith mission boards, I know from experience the challenge of raising funds. Because the cost to send Western missionaries keeps on increasing, mission offerings on the home front just don't seem to keep up with the needs.

Most of the faith missions ask for money or in some way make their needs known. When a contribution has been made once, letters keep coming explaining needs with a self-addressed envelope for a donation. Faith mission representatives tour churches, presenting challenges and seeking support. Many of the larger evangelical and fundamentalist churches have yearly mission conferences where missionaries are invited to talk about their work. Consequently, there are churches that support ten or more different faith missions.

One of the most innovative concepts of faith missions is "the faith principle" of financial support, which assured their independence. Faith missions believe that God will provide even if it appears

that no money is available. This makes it possible for them to continue to send out new missionaries. At the beginning, a society like CIM instructed their missionaries not to ask for money nor to tell anyone but God about their financial needs. Hudson Taylor formulated it thus: "God's work done in God's way will not lack God's supply." He took this concept of financing missions from George Muller (1805-98), a German born faith mission advocate, who went to England to do mission work among Jews. In 1834 he founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad with the purpose of establishing day schools, and adult schools for teaching Bible, and supporting mission work. Muller achieved fame for founding the Bristol Orphan-

age Mission Work. His greatest contribution was the example of his life of faith and prayer. He was determined not to ask for financial support and instead prayed for the needs of the orphan missions. He decided to trust the Lord alone for the supply of his needs, trusting that the Lord would meet them without his prompting others to give. In conclusion, the ideal of faith missions can be summed up in a poem:

*Three things the Master asks of US
And we who serve Him here below,
And long to see His kingdom come
May PRAY and GIVE or GO.
He needs them all – the open hand
The willing feet, the praying heart.*



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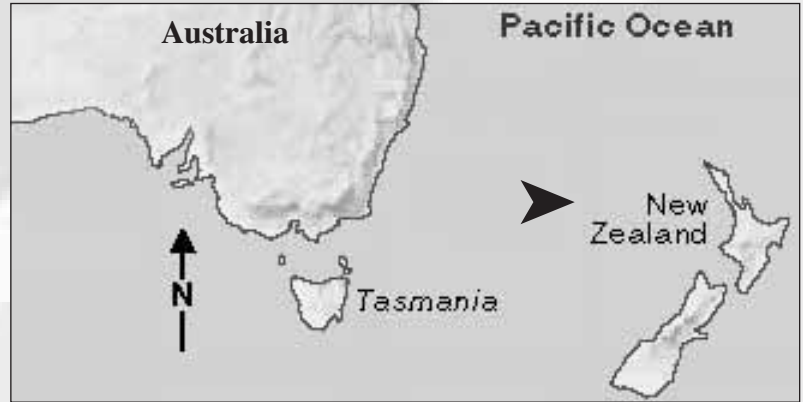
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Why write about New Zealand?

by Veronica Hoyt



The secret is out – New Zealand is in fact “Middle Earth.” The fabled lands of JRR Tolkien’s epic saga *The Lord of the Rings* have captured the imaginations of many. Since the opening of the movie *The Fellowship of the Ring*, both Tolkien fans and those who simply enjoy a good movie know it to be true: Middle Earth exists! Its other name is New Zealand!

As those readers who have seen the movie will have witnessed, New Zealand is a land of immense natural beauty. The rolling, intensely green countryside (of Hobbiton), the white capped (and treacherous) mountains, the swift-flowing rivers, and the dense rainforests in the movie can all be found in this (relatively) small country. The creator’s hand in New Zealand’s physical beauty is clearly evident. May the many tourists visiting New Zealand in response to seeing this movie, give honor to God, the master designer of this “clean and green” land.

It is not my purpose, however, to confuse fantasy with reality, or even to present a critique of this latest blockbuster movie. Rather this is an introductory article about New Zealand.

You could well ask the question: why write about New Zealand? Is it that unique? Isn’t it just an extension of Australia, separated only by the Tasman Sea? Or, alternatively: isn’t it just another Pacific island?

True New Zealanders would throw up their hands in horror at such suggestions, and answer “definitely not” to both of these latter questions. However, from my (Australian!) viewpoint, New Zealand is not vastly different than Australia, and also has

some close connections with the islands of the Pacific. Notwithstanding, there are unique differences, too.

So, why write about New Zealand?

Church Scene

In the first place, because it is a country in which our Lord is working out His salvation. In New Zealand, too, there are Reformed churches, who base themselves on the truths of God’s Word as they have been worked out in the centuries since the Apostles, and especially since the Great Reformation of the 1500s. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) hold to the Three Forms of Unity and to the Westminster Confession of Faith.



Neither of them has any concept of God or religion . . .



Briefly, the RCNZ was established in 1953. The three initial congregations (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch) were soon joined by four others: Bucklands Beach (in Auckland), Nelson, Hamilton, and Palmerston North. Today, there are 18 congregations (13 on the North Island, and 5 on the South Island). The average congregation has 160 members. The churches are made up largely of people of Dutch descent, but there are also many who come from other (mainly English-speaking New Zealand) back-

grounds. Others, too, have been attracted to the faithful preaching and Godly living found in the Reformed faith.

Perhaps this growth (from within the New Zealand community itself) has to do, in part, with church planting practices in the RCNZ. Let me give you an example: Masterton. In 1982, only three Reformed families lived in this town. However, the Reformed Church of Silverstream (in the nearby Wellington region) called Rev. Bruce Hoyt to serve as a Home Missionary, to establish a Reformed presence in Masterton. The Lord blessed his active outreach, and in 1987 the church was instituted. In five years, it had grown to 80 members, many of whom came from within the community. Today, the Masterton congregation has a membership of around 170. This church planting approach has been used more recently in the Christchurch region (the Reformed Church of Dovedale was established last year), Wanganui (Rev. Gary Milne is currently serving as Palmerston North’s Home Missionary in Wanganui), and in Waikanae (an outreach post amongst South African immigrants).

The Lord has blessed the RCNZ. There is truly a Reformed witness in New Zealand.

What, however, is the social and political context in which these churches live and work?

Social Scene

New Zealand has a population of just under 4 million people. While the greater majority of the population are still of European descent, the 2001 national census

showed that this majority is decreasing; 80% of the population recorded their race as European, dropping from 83% since 1991. The other 20% is mainly made up of Maoris (New Zealand's inhabitants prior to European settlement), Pacific Islanders, and Asians. One surprising statistic in this census is that there are now more people of Asian than Pacific Island ethnicity (New Zealand has long been the haven for Pacific Islanders). The largest Asian groups are from Korea, China and India.

Obviously, this changing population mix has implications for the church. For example, recently my husband and I have been in contact with a Chinese family. Both husband and wife are university educated professionals; both grew up and studied in the context of the Cultural Revolution in China, in the 1960s and 70s. Neither of them has any concept of God or religion; they have never been taught what spirituality is (other than the spirituality surrounding materialism). Such people have much to learn, and Christians in New Zealand have a responsibility in this.

Maoris and Pacific Islanders, who make up 12% of the population, have another history. Many members of these races were converted to Christianity by European missionaries in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This had a profound effect on stabilizing their (often) violent cultures. The current generation, however, has largely disowned this Christian past, and is returning to its pagan roots. One obvious sign of this is the resurgent popularity of tattooing the body with grotesque images that align a person with Maori culture. Previously, missionaries had discouraged tattooing on the basis of the Levitical law (Leviticus 19:28), and many Maoris had complied with this. Not so today.

Rejecting Christianity has left a large void in many Maoris lives. Sadly, this is accompanied by increased incidences of domestic violence and child abuse.

This rejection of Christianity is not just prevalent in Maori and Pacific Island communities, however. This is a national malaise. In 1901, almost everyone was Christian, and 89% could align themselves with one of the four main denominations:

MIDDLE EARTH



Hobbiton – also known as New Zealand.

Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic and Methodist. Today, only half of the population professes to be Christian, and of these as many as 40% cannot specify which denomination they belong to. From this latter statistic, and judging by the fact that most Christians are part of large, liberal denominations, one can easily conclude that this Christian affiliation is nominal, if it exists at all.



One of our (small) Reformed schools was caught in the national spotlight because of its discipline policies.



Again: this poses challenges for the Lord's people in New Zealand. We are becoming more and more of a minority; our voices are becoming fainter as they are drowned by the clamor of other (false) religions. And it begs another question: how can we reach out to the lost in this country of ours?

Political Scene

Answers to these dilemmas do not seem to be forthcoming from the country's political arena. The current Labour government is in its third year of office, and, unless the Lord intervenes, it looks likely that they will be returned to government at the national elections scheduled for later this year. Headed by a feminist prime minister (who, although married, insists on being

known as *Miss Clark*) this government seems to be intent on doing as much damage as possible to the Christian heritage that this country has.

In an upcoming issue of *Reformed Perspective*, I hope to write about a recent incident in which one of our (small) Reformed schools was caught in the national spotlight because of its discipline policies. One item on the government's agenda is to outlaw spanking. A bill is waiting to be tabled at one of parliament's sessions this year. The way in which this small school was vilified in the national media, and by politicians and the United Nations Children's Commissioner in NZ, needs to be seen in this context, and as part of this left-wing agenda.

Is New Zealand unique?

Let's get back to a question posed earlier in this article: is New Zealand unique? No, in many ways it isn't. I'm sure that you recognized your own country and context in the issues facing Christians in New Zealand, today.

At the same time, in reading about this small and insignificant country, may we all be challenged in our Christian response to the godlessness of our age, and encouraged to see the unmistakable hand of the Lord working despite the forces that prevail against the Lord's people, His Church.

We know that the victory is sure: *Come, Lord, Jesus!* In that hour, our society will be forced to acknowledge that He is, indeed, the Lord of lords and King of kings. He cannot (and will not) be ignored forever. Meantime, let us, His people, continue to pray for and to work with love for the nation in which we live.



Nice is not always the point

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There is a desire among Christians to present the gospel in a "nice" manner. But as this excerpt from Ihabod Spencer's A Pastor's Sketches shows, nice is not always the best approach. The excerpt begins with Rev. Spencer at a revival meeting. (This is in older English, but it is worth the effort.)

.....

It was on one of those evenings, when about seventy persons were present, and I was passing rapidly from one to another, that I came to an individual who had never been there before.

Said I: "What is the state of your feelings on the subject of your salvation?"

"I feel," said he, "that I have a very wicked heart."

"It is a great deal more wicked than you think it," said I; and immediately left him, and addressed myself to the next person.

The arrow driven deeper

I thought no more of it till a few days afterwards, when he came to me with a new song in his mouth. He had found peace with God, as he thought, through faith in Jesus Christ. Said he: "I want to tell you how much good you did me. When I told you that I had a very wicked heart, and you answered that it was a great deal more wicked than I thought, and then said nothing more to me, I thought it a most cruel thing. I expected something different. I thought you would say more, and my soul was wonderfully cast down. I did not believe you. I was angry at your treatment. I thought you did not care whether I was ever saved or not; and I did not believe you knew anything about my feelings. But the words rung in my ears, 'A great deal more wicked than you think.' I could not get rid of them. They were in my mind the last thing when I went to sleep, and the first when I woke. And then I would be vexed at you for not saying something else. But that was the

thing which drove me to Christ. I now know it was just what I needed. I thought, when I went to that meeting, my convictions were very deep. But I have found out they were very slight. You hit my case exactly. If you had talked to me, my burden would have been diminished. But you fastened one idea on my mind. You drove the arrow deeper, when I expected you to do just the contrary; and I could find no relief till I gave up all into the hands of Christ. I know you read my heart exactly."

.....

We cannot understand how it is that you can know our thoughts and feelings, when nobody has told you.

.....

After some few minutes' conversation with him, he said to me, "I want to ask you a question. I have been thinking of it a great deal, and I cannot conceive how you know what to say to each one, where there are so many. We have been talking about it some of us, and we cannot understand how it is that you can know our thoughts and feelings, when nobody has told you. How can you know what to say to one after another, when there are so many, and some of them you have never seen before, and they say so little to you?"

Conspire with the Holy Spirit

"I have only one rule on that subject," said I. "I aim to conspire with the Holy Spirit. If I perceive any one truth has impressed the mind, I aim to make its impression deeper; because the Holy Spirit has already made that impression, and I would not diminish it by leading the mind off to something else. If I perceive any error in the individual's mind, I aim to remove it; for I know that the error is of sin, and not of the Holy Spirit."

"But," said he, "our impressions are so different."

"No matter. They are of the Holy Spirit if truth has made them; and he can choose the kind of truth which is appropriate to any sinner, better than I can. I just aim to conspire with the Holy Spirit."

Said he, "I am confident if you had said much to me, or anything, to turn my mind away from that one thing, it would have done me hurt. You have no idea how much you increased my trouble that night. I somehow wanted you to lighten my burden, - you made it heavier. Then I was soon led to see that none but God could help me. I had partly begun to think my heart was improving. I found out the contrary, and turned to God in despair. He gave me peace, through Jesus Christ."

A Pastor's Sketches contains an account of Rev. Spencer's numerous home visits, and his other evangelism forays. Originally published in 1850, this unique book has now been republished by Solid Ground Christian Books and is available through their website at www.solid-ground-books.com. The site also includes several other chapters.



WHY WORRY ABOUT THE

Kyoto Protocol?

“It is a fantasy to believe that a democratic government would remain in office if it sought deliberately to shrivel its national economy significantly, but that is what adhering to the Kyoto protocol would mean for the US and for Canada.”

(Anon. 2001. Editorial. National Post. March 31 p. A15)

by Margaret Helder

The Kyoto Protocol is supposed to be about international cooperation to forestall the effects of global warming. That may not be the real issue however. The whole thing might better be construed as a thinly veiled attack on western lifestyles and population levels. Few expect that it will do anything significant for the environment. The really amazing thing is that Canada seems intent on walking into an economic straightjacket while other countries deftly sidestep the whole situation. The net result of the Canadian initiative will be no benefit to anyone, certainly not to the environment, but much potential cost to the citizens of this country.

On March 27, 2001 the government of George W. Bush announced that the United States has no plans to implement the climate treaty negotiated in Kyoto, Japan in December 1997. In Canada, on the other hand, the federal government has continued to insist that it is 100% behind the protocol. Depending upon the views of the commentator, this situation is either good or bad. On the one hand, environmentalists insist that inaction on this issue is folly, while on the other hand, economists warn that the protocol could be economically disastrous. Indeed, a leaked cabinet document obtained by Southam News in December 1999, warned that Canada's share in this agreement would result in “the most profound economic challenge since WWII”¹



This issue marks the 20th anniversary of Dr. Margaret Helder's first article in *Reformed Perspective*.

It was called “Arkansas and Beyond - Creationism versus Evolutionism . . . A Court Case.”

On behalf of all the readers, the editor would like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret for her tremendous contribution throughout the years and ask the Lord's blessing for her in years to come.

CO₂ or soot?

The area of concern, with Kyoto, is rising emissions of carbon dioxide gas. The burning of fossils fuels or wood, or any organic material, will release carbon dioxide into the air. This gas is also released by the breathing of living organisms and through decay as well. Carbon dioxide is indeed a natural component of our air. It is not a pollutant that causes asthma or any other breathing problem under normal conditions. However there is concern that increased levels of carbon dioxide in the air might lead to a warmer global climate and to more extreme weather such as enhanced flooding or more severe droughts.

Concern over carbon dioxide gas levels in the atmosphere started off as a whisper in the late 1970s but this has grown to a roar in the last few years. A twenty-year study on global gas levels was carried on from 1957-1977. There were two sampling points (both near active volcanoes – the one in Hawaii and the other in Antarctica.) Analysis of the data suggested that carbon dioxide levels were increasing exponentially (i.e. at an increasingly faster rate). Experts in climate began to ask their computer models what the effects of this situation might be. The first such studies were conducted by James Hansen and colleagues at NASA. The whole issue became politicized when James Hansen warned the US Congress that global warming was

already taking place. Almost overnight, the issue became an international concern. That same year, the United Nations created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at the request of member countries. Its mandate was to assess the state of knowledge and potential strategies.

Dr. Hansen continued to be a hero of the global warming debate until August 2000, when he changed his mind. In a new analysis, he argued that carbon dioxide was not the major culprit in global warming effects. Rather, he said, other gasses such as methane and chlorofluorocarbons and soot were to blame. This conclusion caused him to adopt a more optimistic view. He suggested that these other emissions could be much more cheaply curtailed than could carbon dioxide releases. The best news was that this happy result could be achieved without disastrous economic sacrifices. The environmentalists however were not happy. They were very annoyed. Indeed, according to one analyst: "The most objectionable feature of the Hansen Plan, as far as hard-line Greens are concerned, is that it may not require those wrenching lifestyle changes which they long for us to endure."²

A skeptical environmentalist

If the change of heart by James Hansen was unpopular with environmentalists, a book by Bjorn Lomborg (published in English in 2001) almost gave them apoplexy. Dr. Lomborg (an associate professor of statistics in the political science department of Denmark's University of Aarhus) originally set out to refute the position of people who say that the environment is in relatively good shape. He thus applied his analytical techniques to data from the environment. His book *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World* was the result, published first in Danish in 1998 and then in English by Cambridge University Press. The book soon became a bestseller. His conclusions



were that our globe is in better shape than generally reported, and that the Kyoto Protocol will not improve the situation at all. In response to final agreements on the protocol reached in Bonn on July 23, 2001 he wrote: "Last month in Bonn, most of the world's nations (minus the United States) reached an agreement to cut carbon emissions. Generally the deal was reported as almost saving the world. This is not only untrue in the scientific sense – the deal will do almost no good – but it constitutes a very poor use of our resources to help the world."³

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So angry were many scientists at this Dane – whose real crime was "not to be melancholy enough" (an oblique reference to Shakespeare's famous hero Ham-

let) according to Thomas Bray⁴ – that negative views of his book were accorded extraordinary prominence in scientific journals like *Nature* (November 2001) and *Scientific American* in January 2002. According to Mr. Bray "the savagery of the anti-Lomborg campaign is causing many to wonder if Mr. Lomborg hasn't struck a legitimate nerve."

Australia smarter than Canada

It is apparent that the environmentalist lobby has a strong vested interest in the Kyoto Protocol and in Canada's participation in this agreement. First attempts at global cooperation on this issue were undertaken in 1992 at the First Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. There most countries signed a framework convention, calling for voluntary controls on carbon emissions. Five years later, the Second Earth Summit met in New York. The main result of these deliberations was to agree to meet in Japan in December of 1997. The objective was to finalize a treaty that would set firm targets for carbon emissions. Some 2000 delegates from 150 nations set out to negotiate legally binding cutbacks which would affect only the 34 wealthiest countries. After ten days of "brutal" negotiations, punctuated by vehement attacks on

wealthy countries by China and India, an historic agreement was forged.

When the “dust of battle” had settled, it became apparent that Canada had agreed to far more than had been anticipated. While the federal government and the provinces had agreed that a 3% reduction in emissions compared to 1990 levels would be appropriate, the negotiators actually agreed to twice that much. According to a December 11, 1997 report in the *Edmonton Journal*: “Federal Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale said the Canadian team got swept up in the last minute momentum for a global compromise. ‘It would have been absolutely untenable to just stand aside. We wanted to be part of the solution.’ said Goodale. ‘We were looking for a sensitive balance between our environment and the realities of our economy. We achieved that balance.’” According to this agreement, the United States would cut emissions by the year 2010 to a level 7% below 1990 emissions. Canada and Japan would cut 6%, the European Community would cut 8%, while Australia’s emissions would rise by 8% and Iceland’s by 10%. Of the Australian share, Diane Francis, a Canadian commentator remarked: “Why weren’t we as intelligent as the Australians whose fair share of the pain meant curbing growth, not collapsing their economy?”⁵

During these same meetings, the suggestion that 120 developing nations adopt voluntary targets for emissions was soundly defeated. Discussion of a trading scheme in carbon “credits” was deferred until November 1998 in Buenos Aires. No agreement was achieved there, however, since the United States and Canada wanted credit for forests as carbon “sinks” (absorbing carbon dioxide for photosynthesis) and the Europeans wanted hard-line lifestyle changes only. Meetings in The Hague in November 2000 were then billed as the last chance to save Kyoto, but these talks broke down too. Finally in Bonn during July 2001, carbon credits were fi-



Canada's climate is cold. This means that per capita energy usage is high.

nally sanctioned as one means to “reduce” the official tally of emissions. The United States had by this time, however, bowed out of the discussions and out of the agreement.

Canada’s cost

Where did this leave Canada? Where indeed? In 1997 at the time Canada’s negotiators were so magnanimously giving away twice the previously agreed concessions (6% reduction instead of 3%), Canada already had emissions much higher the 1990 base line level. During the seven-year interval, while the Canadian population grew 9%, and gross domestic product increased 13.4%, the number of cars increased 8%, and carbon emissions increased a very moderate 13%. Thus already in 1997 we were almost twenty percent above the agreed level for 2010. Population and economic growth have naturally continued to

the present. Based on these trends, we can expect that by the year 2010, we will have overshoot our emissions target by 40%!

How would Canada set about achieving her Kyoto target? One thing industries could try is to buy “carbon emission credits” from countries whose emissions are relatively low. This would result in a massive transfer of wealth from Canada to the countries involved. This might cost Canada from one billion to four billion dollars per year, or even much more, depending on the demand for these “carbon credits.” Furthermore, less energy would be available for transportation in Canada, for heating, electrical appliances, industry and agriculture. Concerning this impact, former Conservative politician Perrin Beatty wrote: “The depth of reductions Canada would have to achieve is unprecedented. Canada has never experienced a decade in which greenhouse gases have actually declined. . . .”⁶

As the debate over Kyoto raged, some economists and business interests suggested that the agreement might cost the Canadian economy \$30 billion per year or 2.5% of gross domestic product. Some really pessimistic individuals predicted 450,000 jobs might be lost permanently. Policy analyst David Wojick put the whole issue in perspective: “in most cases these reductions mean reducing fuel use per se. But this is the fuel that fuels the economy, and no one knows how to run an economy like Canada’s with 25% less fuel. . . . The bottom line is that Canada will not be able to achieve its Kyoto target without significantly damaging jobs and the economy.”⁷

Just the beginning

Some people might retort that there is no gain without some pain. It seems reasonable to ask if this economic pain (which would begin almost immediately) is in a good cause. One interesting additional detail is that this pain may only be the start of more to come. In

1999 Environment Minister David Anderson (just newly appointed), remarked: "We all must bear in mind that the Kyoto emissions targets, as ambitious as they are, may be only the beginning of what is necessary to combat global warming."⁸ Mr. Anderson is correct that Canada's reductions will have no discernible effect on carbon dioxide levels. Indeed, even if Canada were to shut down completely, the reduction in emissions would be at most 2% of world levels. Canada's population is thinly spread out over vast areas and the climate is cold. This means that per capita energy usage is high. Compared to the rest of the world however, Canada releases very little carbon dioxide because we have so few people. Indeed, Canadian emissions per square kilometer of land mass are a mere 50 tonnes compared to 2600 tones for Germany and 4000 for Belgium.⁹ Other European countries no doubt have comparable levels.

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If Canada were to shut down completely, the reduction emissions would be at most 2% of world levels.

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The European Union has already announced that they will ratify Kyoto, and Canada seems prepared to follow suit. None of Canada's competitors in energy production however, are bound by any such agreement. Neither the United States, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or any developing nation has to worry about emission caps or carbon credits. At a time when Canada's NAFTA trading partners are unencumbered by extra costs, Canada appears ready to assume burdens whose cost is completely unknown. While Canada

accounts for a mere 2% of emissions, developing countries account for 40% and this proportion is growing rapidly. Yet these countries do not have even voluntary emissions targets. It is obvious that economic sacrifice on Canada's part is not going to accomplish anything. Some might point out that the European Union is successfully approaching its targets. The situation there however is altogether different. With the coastline so close, wind power is an option not found in many parts of a large continent. With dense populations in Europe too, mass transit is economical. Neither option is available in Canada. Even along her most densely populated land corridor, fast and fuel efficient trains would not be economical because the distances are too great and there are too few potential customers. Indeed it must be admitted that if people are to continue to live in Canada, relatively high energy consumption has to be part of the package.

It is obviously important that citizens critically evaluate information which comes to them from government and the media. This is certainly not news to Christians. But some implications of the Kyoto Protocol for Canada are not immediately apparent. At a time when the population is growing through natural increase and immigration, we have seen that government may undertake to reduce overall energy consumption. This means less energy available per person as the population grows. We might well expect that there would soon be pressure to reduce the number of people drawing on the resources. More than ever, large families might be a source of concern. Reduced population growth is probably the unstated objective of this environmentalist agenda. Since Kyoto can't possibly have much or any effect on climate, the real objective may be to discourage the arrival of new citizens. However since Canada's population is low anyway, let's throw Kyoto into file 13.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Edmonton Journal* December 14, 1999 p. A1
- ² David Wojick. 2000. *Financial Post* Editorial. October 19 p. C19
- ³ *National Post* September 5, 2001 p. A13
- ⁴ writing in Opinion Journal from *Wall Street Journal* Editorial Page February 19, 2002
- ⁵ *Financial Post* February 19, 2002 p. FP3
- ⁶ *Financial Post* February 27, 2002 p. FP15
- ⁷ same
- ⁸ *Edmonton Journal* October 8, 1999
- ⁹ Terence Corcoran. 2002. *Financial Post* Editorial. February 21 p. FP15



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NEW PUZZLES

Riddle for Punsters – #77

How did the prison inmate keep in touch with family and his pastor when visitors were not allowed?

He communicated with them using a _____.

Problem to Ponder #77 – “Flying High”

Rashi is flying a kite at the end of 130 m of string. His friend is standing directly below the kite and calls to Rashi. The sound, travelling at 350 m/s, takes 1/7 second to reach Rashi. How high is the kite above the ground?

Find the Words Challenge #12 – “for” words

Using each clue, find the word that contains “for”.
(THE NUMBER OF LETTERS IN EACH WORD IS SHOWN IN BRACKETS.)

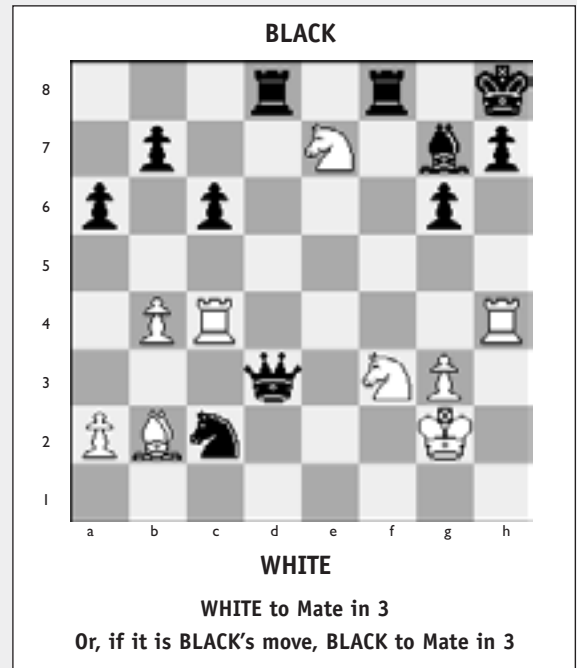
The first 5 words start with “for”:

1. strength (9)
2. eating utensils (5)
3. equation; recipe (7)
4. a fake item (7)
5. arrangement; structure (9)

The last 5 have “for” somewhere in the middle of the word:

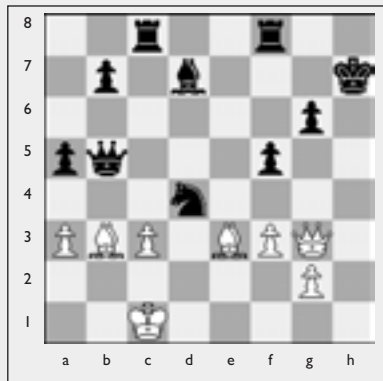
6. tell (6)
7. regular small holes (12)
8. change back; make again (6)
9. fits in with others (8)
10. act; function (verb) (7)

Chess Puzzle # 77



SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (MARCH) PUZZLE PAGE

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 76



WHITE to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. Q-R4 ch K-N2
2. B-R6 ch K-R1
3. BxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Qg3-h4 + Kh7-g7
2. Be3-h6 + Kg7-h8
3. Bh6xf8 ++

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

Descriptive Notation

1. _____ QRxP ch
2. K-N2 QxB ch
3. K-R1 N-B7 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Rc8xc3 +
2. Kc1-b2 Qb5xb3 +
3. Kb2-a1 Nd4-c2 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters #76 –

Why do so many stores sell Coke and Pepsi?
Because they are both so **p o p u l a r**.

What kind of soft drink would be suitable for workers in an auto wrecking yard?
O r a n g e C r u s h.

What kind of soft drink would be suitable for a chef?
D r . P e p p e r.

Solution to Problem to Ponder #76 – “A Number of Numbers”

A) The sum of two numbers is 34. Twice the larger plus five times the smaller is 107. What are the two numbers?

Let x and y be the two numbers, with x being the larger number.

$x + y = 34$ so $y = 34 - x$ is the smaller number

Therefore $2x + 5(34 - x) = 107$

$$2x + 170 - 5x = 107$$

$$-3x = -63 \text{ so } x = 21 \text{ so } y = 34 - x = 34 - 21 = 13$$

Thus, **the two numbers are 21 and 13.** Check: $21 + 13 = 34$ and

$$2(21) + 5(13) = 42 + 65 = 107$$

B) Penelope picked a particular number. From this number she subtracted two. The result she squared. The new result she divided by five. The result she squared. She then added 41. After that she took the square root of the result of the addition. Next she subtracted nine. She ended up with the number twelve. What number did she start with? [HINT: try doing the opposite operation in opposite order, starting with the end number.]

Doing the opposite operation in opposite order,

$$12 + 9 = 21 \text{ then } 21^2 = 441 \text{ then } 441 - 41 = 400 \text{ then } \sqrt{400} = 20$$

$$\text{then } 20 \times 5 = 100 \text{ then } \sqrt{100} = 10 \text{ then } 10 + 2 = 12$$

So Penelope started AND ended with the number 12!

