

REFORMED

# Perspective

A MAGAZINE  
FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN  
FAMILY

Volume 30 No 12

October 2011

*Saving  
some is not a  
compromise*



# How can we know what is in a man's heart?

Pilgrim's Progress turns 333 this year... and it still has something to say

by John Bunyan

How can you know what is inside a man's heart?

This is a question we might ask about others when we wonder if they are being genuine, but might also ask of ourselves. And it is hardly a new question. In John Bunyan's allegory *Pilgrim's Progress* this is an issue that comes up when the two pilgrims, Christian and Faithful, meet Talkative, a man very good at talking about God, but whose reputation leaves much to be desired. So Christian advises his friend Faithful to steer the conversation in a rather pointed direction. What follows is an excerpt from Bunyan's classic.

\*\*\*\*\*

As they continued to walk Faithful once again struck up a conversation with Talkative. "Earlier," said Faithful, "you invited me to pick the topic of our conversation. How about this: How does the saving grace of God make itself known in a man?"

"Ah, what a very good question!" Talkative responded excitedly. "And I shall be eager to respond to it. There are several ways, each of which I will touch on but briefly, to keep my answer from becoming overly long. First, where the grace of God is at work in a man, it will cause him then to cry out against sin. Secondly –"

Faithful interrupted: "Wait, hold on! Before you go to a second point, let's consider your first. I think you should have said, it shows itself by inclining the soul to abhor sin."

"Abhorring, or crying out – what's the difference?" Talkative asked.

"Oh, a great deal!" Faithful explained, "A man may cry out against sin, as a matter of principle, but he cannot abhor it unless he actually feels about it as God does. I have heard many cry out against sin, even from the pulpit, who are comfortable enough with that same sin in their hearts, their homes and their life (Gen. 39:15). Potiphar's wife cried out with a loud voice against Joseph, acting as if she had been very holy; and yet she would have eagerly committed adultery with him."

"I think you are laying a verbal trap for me, hanging so much on such a small difference in wording," Talkative complained.

"No, I am only trying to set things right," said Faithful. "But what was the second way you were about to mention, by which the grace of God makes itself known in a man?"

"It can be known through a man's great knowledge and understanding of the Gospel," Talkative replied.

"I think this sign should have been first: but, first or last, it is also false. For knowledge, great knowledge, may be obtained about the Gospel without there being any work of grace in a man's soul. A man can have studied endlessly, have vast knowledge, and still be nothing, and so, consequently, be no child of God (1 Cor. 13:2). When Christ said, 'Do you know all these things?' and the disciples answered, 'Yes,' he added, 'Blessed are you if you do them.' He doesn't bless them for knowing, but rather for doing. For there is knowledge that is detached from doing: 'He who knows his Master's will, and does not do it.' A man may know as much as an angel and still not be a Christian. Therefore your second sign is not true. Indeed, to know is something that pleases talkers and boasters, but to do is what pleases God. Not that the heart can be good without knowledge, for without knowledge the heart is empty. There are, therefore, two sorts of knowledge: knowledge that is content with the mere facts of the matter, and knowledge that is accompanied by the grace of faith and love, that has a man eager to put into practice what he has learned will please his God. The first sort of knowledge will serve the talker; but without the other, the true Christian is not content. 'Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart'" (Ps. 119:34).

Talkative was starting to become agitated. "You are pouncing on my words again – this is not an edifying approach!"

"Well, then, why don't you tell me another sign by which we can see the grace of God making itself known in the heart of a man?"

Talkative didn't like this suggestion: "I don't think I will, for I already know you are going to disagree with anything I say."

“Well, if you won’t, may I do so?” Faithful asked.

“Go ahead. I won’t stop you,” said Talkative.

So Faithful continued, “A work of grace in the soul will reveal itself to both the one who has it, and to those around him as well. When God’s grace is present it will convict a man of his sins, and he will become more and more aware of the defilement of his nature, and his sins of unbelief, for which he knows he will be damned to hell if he doesn’t find mercy at God’s hand, by faith in Jesus Christ. God’s grace will result in increased sorrow, and shame for his sin (Ps. 38:18; Jer. 31:19; John 16:8; Rom. 7:24; Mark 16:16; Gal. 2:16; Rev. 1:6). And he will realize his absolute need for his Savior. Now, according to the strength or weakness of his faith in his Savior, so is his joy and peace, so is his love for holiness, and so are his desires to know Christ more, and serve him wholeheartedly in this world.

“Those around him will discover it this way:

1. Through his public confession of faith in Christ.
2. Through a life answerable to that confession. So we will see in his family life (if he has a family) a distinctly holy way of conduct, very different from that of the World, and we will see this, too, in how he talks, and in every other part of his life – a God-pleasing distinctiveness. We will see how God’s grace teaches him to hate his own sin more and more, hate himself for it, and work to suppress sin in his family, and promote holiness in the world. He will not simply talk about holiness, as a hypocrite or talkative person may do, but will in practical ways demonstrate a godly life, governed by a love for, and faith in, God’s Word.

“So now, sir, what do you think of my brief description of the work of grace, and how we can discover evidence of it in a man? Is there anything you disagree with, or object to? If not, can I ask you a second question?”

Talkative had no objections: “It seems my role here is not to object, but rather to listen. So go ahead, give me your second question.”

“It is this: have you experienced this first part of what I have just described? Does your life and conversation testify to God’s grace working in your heart? Or is your religion comprised merely of words, rolling off your tongue, with no deeds to give evidence to it? Now wait before you answer; be sure you say only what you know that God above would say his Amen to, and say nothing to which your conscience would object. ‘For it

is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.’ And remember, too, that it is a great wickedness to say, ‘I am this or that,’ when my conversation, and all my neighbors, will say the very opposite.”

Talkative began at first to blush; but he quickly recovered and replied: “You talk now about experience, about my conscience and about God, and appeal to him as justification for what you have said. Now I did not expect this sort of pointed conversation, and I don’t appreciate it. I don’t feel any need to answer to you about my conduct – are you my minister? And even if that is a role you see yourself in, I still refuse to allow you to be my judge. But I am interested in having you answer me this – why are you asking me such questions?”

Faithful was direct in his response: “You were so eager to talk, that I wanted to know if there was anything of substance to your words. And to be blunt, I have heard that you are a man whose conduct gives lie to your talk. They say you are a blemish among Christians, that Christianity is derided because of you, and that some have already stumbled because of your wicked ways, with more in danger of being fooled by your example. Drunkenness, covetousness, uncleanness, swearing, lying, evil companions and more are all about you. The proverb is true of you which is said about the harlot: ‘She is a shame to all women’; so are you a shame to all professing Christians.”

Talkative stopped walking: “Since you are so ready to listen to the gossip of other men, and to judge as rashly as you do, I cannot but conclude you are some mean and petty man, not fit to have conversation with, so I say adieu.” And with that, he started walking briskly away.

As Talkative departed, Christian came up beside Faithful. “You did well to talk as plainly to him as you did. There is very little of this direct faithful dealing with men nowadays. I wish that all men would talk as plainly as you have just done. Then these talkative fools, whose religion is only in word, would either change their ways and turn to God, or do as Talkative did, and flee from the company of his saints because it has become too hot for them.”

*This is an excerpt from John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress modernized by Jon Dykstra. For an excellent modernization of Bunyan’s allegory, see this issue’s Best Books page.*



## In This Issue

How can we know what is in a man’s heart? — *John Bunyan* ....2

Nota Bene.....5

PEOPLE WE SHOULD KNOW: Francis Schaeffer

— *Michael Wagner* .....8

Saving some is *not* a compromise — *Mark Penninga*.....10

BEST BOOKS: 3 on progressing pilgrims — *Jon Dykstra*.....19

Marring the perfection — *Christine Farenhorst*.....20

Sex is powerful but dangerous — *Jonathon VanMaren* .....22

God’s plan for sexual purity: Marry earlier — *Jon Dykstra*.....24

Miniature machines that matter — *Margaret Helder*.....27

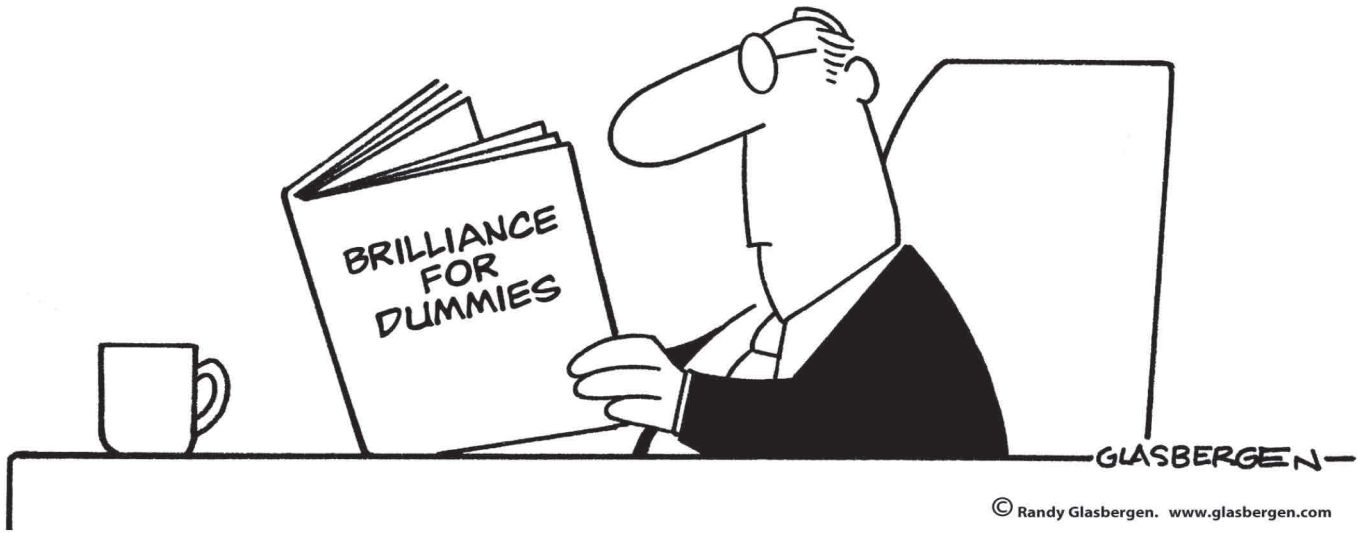
Looking for ET — *John Byl*.....31

Soup & Buns - “Parent rests while toddlers play: film at 11”

— *Sharon Bratcher* .....34

Puzzle Page — *Bob Leach* .....35

Crossword Puzzle – Series 18 No 7 — *Joyce Mulder* .....36



© Randy Glasbergen. www.glasbergen.com

# REFORMED Perspective

www.reformedperspective.ca

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

**For Subscriptions or to Change your address, contact:**  
Premier Printing, One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2J 3X5  
subscribe@reformedperspective.ca  
(204) 663-9000

**For Letters to the Editor, Advertising and Submissions contact:**  
Reformed Perspective, 503A Forest Circle, Lynden, WA, USA 98264  
E-mail: editor@reformedperspective.ca

**Editor:** Jon Dykstra  
**Regular Contributors:**

Sharon Bratcher, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder, Anna Nienhuis, Michael Wagner

**Board of Directors:** John Voorhorst (Chairman); Henry Stel (Managing Editor); James Teitsma (Secretary/Treasurer); Peter DeBoer; Bob Lodder  
**Secretarial Address (Board Matters):** James Teitsma  
449 Almey Avenue, Winnipeg, MB Canada R3W 1P6

**Contact Address for South Africa:**  
Arie Roos, Box 584, Kuilsrivier, 7580 Republic of South Africa

**Contact Address for Australia:**  
Pro Ecclesia Publishers, PO Box 189, Kelmscott, W. Australia 6111

**Copyright statement:** Copyright in letters, articles, cartoons and any other material submitted to Reformed Perspective and accepted for publication remains with the author, but RP and its reciprocal organizations may freely reproduce them in print, electronic or other forms.

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

*If you are interested in the work of Reformed Perspective Foundation and in the promotion of Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially in your local area, and you need help, call John Voorhorst at 1 (403) 328-9114 (days), and 1 (403) 345-2904 (evenings).*

**Annual Subscription Rates:**  
Canadian Funds – 1 year \$50.00, 2 years \$93.00, 3 years \$137.00\*  
Canada Airmail \$73.00,\* U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$80.00  
U.S. Funds – 1 year \$55.00, 2 years \$100.00, 3 years \$145.00  
International Surface Mail \$69.00 (2 years \$125.00, 3 years \$184.00)  
International Airmail \$115.00 \*including 5% G.S.T. – G.S.T. No. R118929272RT

*We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.*



**Cancellation Agreement**  
Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date.

**Registration: ISSN 0714-8208**  
Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act  
Registration No. 18929272RR0001

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:**  
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

# Nota Bene

## News worth noting



### Christians facing increasing censorship on the Internet

by Anna Nienhuis and Jon Dykstra

Will Christians' use of the Internet be restricted in the future?

In early September the National Religious Broadcasting Group released a study indicating that Internet bigwigs such as Google and Facebook are avoiding faith-based advertising and may also be actively blocking Christian content, especially any that criticize the homosexual lifestyle. Apple has admitted to removing an app that took a negative view of homosexuality, for fear of offending some users.

Later that same month Chuck Colson reported on how, due to pressure from homosexual activists, Microsoft and Macy's had disassociated themselves from an online shopping portal called Charity GiveBack Group (cvn.org). This shopping portal gives a percentage of purchases back to a charity you can choose. The gay activists objected to two of the choices – Focus on the Family, and the Family Research Council – because both help those who

want to leave the homosexual lifestyle.

Also in September, Julio Severo, an influential Christian Brazilian blogger and a translator for the pro-life LifeSiteNews.com, was no longer allowed to use PayPal. The company shut down his account after pressure from a gay activist group who claimed he was propagating hate. However, all Severo does is vocally promote a Christian pro-family alternative to homosexuality.

Gay activist groups have already made it necessary for Severo to flee Brazil for his family's safety, and they even temporarily succeeded in having his blog shut down by its host, Blogger. Rather than present

arguments against Severo, his opponents have instead taken aim at his means of communication and income. A petition protesting Severo's treatment has been set up at <http://profamilyfreedom.net/>.

Source: Jordan Otero's "Religious group claims censoring"; washingtontimes.com; Sept. 15, 2011; Chuck Colson's Breakpoint "You Thought You Were Only Shopping" Sept. 9, 2011; Matthew Hoffman's "Gay activists get LifeSiteNews translator and pro-family activist Julio Severo cut off by PayPal"; lifesitenews.com; Sept. 19, 2011.



### From pro-choice to pro-life in minutes

by Jon Dykstra

The trailer for *180* showed people being interviewed on the street declaring their support for "a woman's right to choose." But then each of these interactions was fast-forwarded – anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes – to the conclusion of the interview where each of these same people declare that they have changed their mind and are now pro-life! Wow! So what prompted this sudden and dramatic switch? In the 33-minute documentary interviewer Ray Comfort makes use of an illuminating comparison



to the Holocaust and follows it up with this clarifying question: "It's okay to kill a baby in the womb when...?"

What Comfort is doing is confronting people with the incoherence of their own views – most don't believe it is okay to kill human beings any time, for any reason, but they make an exception in the case of abortion. When Comfort asks them to explain what circumstances make it permissible to kill a baby, each of his interviewees is brought short. Their conscience convicts them with the knowledge that there is no good reason, and Comfort makes them realize that they have never really thought through the issue of abortion before.

The documentary does have some graphic content – specifically, pictures of Holocaust victims and aborted children – so it is not appropriate viewing for the very young. For the rest of us, this is a fantastic film that can inspire us to clarify the abortion issue for the many millions who are pro-choice only because they are confused.

To see it, go to [www.180movie.com](http://www.180movie.com).

## No longer need a mother listed on a birth certificate

by Anna Nienhuis

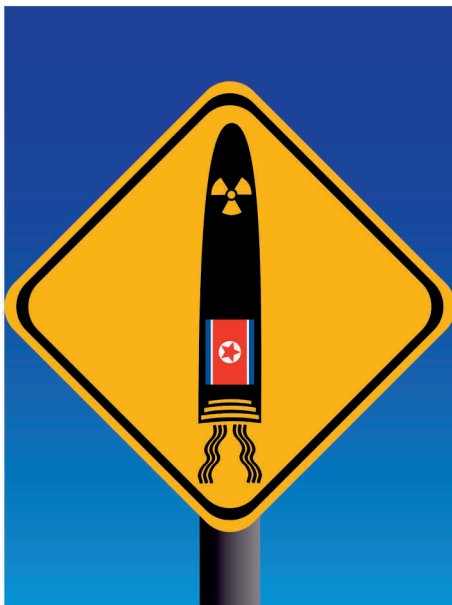
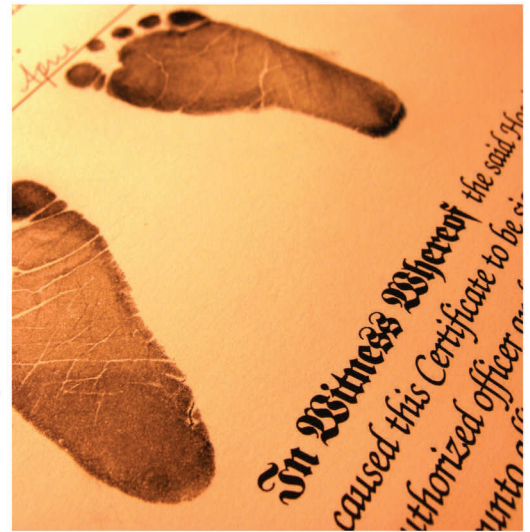
A Saskatchewan court has ruled that a same-sex couple can be listed as the only parents on the birth certificate of the daughter of one of the men. The issue at stake was the Vital Statistics Act, which “defined mother as the woman who delivered the child.”

The male couple used a surrogate mother, but she was not the biological mother of the child, thanks to the in vitro fertilization of sperm from one of the men and an egg from an anonymous donor.

The surrogate mother had no interest in being a part of the child’s life, and the couple successfully argued that there is no point in having an uninterested, non-biological mother listed on a birth certificate. The men are now listed as “father” and “other parent.”

Those who appreciate motherhood and value what women bringing to parenting will be saddened at the implications of this ruling - intentionally depriving a child of its mother is now being celebrated as a triumph for gay rights.

Source: “Gay couple wins right to amend child’s birth record”; cbc.ca; Sept. 10, 2011



## North Korea heads UN disarmament panel

by Anna Nienhuis

In late June the leadership of a key United Nations disarmament panel was handed to North Korea, despite the fact that the nation faces UN sanctions over its nuclear weapons program. The situation arose as a result of an automatic rotation through the Conference for Disarmament’s 65 member nations – it was North Korea’s “turn.”

Canada announced it will boycott the meeting in protest of this development, as it brings yet another blow to the UN’s credibility on the world stage.

Source: Tobi Cohen’s “Canada to boycott UN conference over North Korea”; news.nationalpost.com; July 11, 2011, and Steven Edward’s “North Korea takes over UN body for disarmament”; nationalpost.com; June 30, 2011-09-28

## Anglican congregation takes a stand – and pays for it

by Anna Nienhuis

An Anglican congregation in Vancouver is separating from its diocese even though that means they have to leave their church building behind. They made their decision to separate in response to changes that required the blessing of same-sex marriages. Though they took steps to mend their differences, they finally realized that they could not support the direction the Anglican Church was taking in trying to “keep up with the times.” Their decision led them to leave behind the historic St. John’s Anglican Church they previously worshipped in, as it was legally owned by the New Westminster diocese.

On their website, their decision is explained as the only option they had to remain able to profess and practice in accord with Biblical teachings. There they note that “foundational Christian beliefs are currently under attack within the church itself” and argue that the decision for same sex blessings is the “elevation of the authority of church leadership over the authority of the Bible.”

Source: “St. John’s Vancouver: Why we are moving” from [anglicanessentials.ca](http://anglicanessentials.ca) Aug. 16, 2011; “Historic Anglican congregation moves over differences in belief” from [canadianchristianity.com](http://canadianchristianity.com) on Sept. 8, 2011.



The direction of Canada’s Anglican Church on display at this year’s Toronto Gay Pride Parade

## Abortion now permitted in the fourth trimester?

by Jonathon VanMaren

Six years ago the then 19-year-old Katrina Effert strangled her newborn baby boy and tossed him over the fence of her parents' home. Two Alberta juries convicted her of murder. But on September 9 this year, CBC reported that Ms. Effert's conviction had been "downgraded" to infanticide. She will serve no jail time for strangling her child.

She may spend 16 days in jail for improperly disposing of her victim.

The excuse the judge gave was that:

"while many Canadians undoubtedly view abortion as a less than ideal solution to unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy, they generally understand, accept, and sympathize with the onerous demands pregnancy and childbirth exact from mothers, especially mothers without support."

Translation? Infanticide is just a really, really late-term abortion.

The pro-life movement has always pointed out that if we as a society do not value human life a few minutes before birth, we have no intellectually consistent reason to value it a few minutes after. This warning has been proven prophetic – abortion, which pro-lifers have always declared to be infanticide, is now being used to justify infanticide by the Canadian justice system.

If this is not a call to action for us, what more will it take?



### Happy 200<sup>th</sup> Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte

by Rev. James Visscher

October 17<sup>th</sup> marks the 200th birthday of a man many consider to be the founding father of two federations of churches. Both the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) trace their beginnings and early roots back to Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte (1811-1876).

In addition to being considered a church father on one side of the ocean, others acclaimed him as a church reformer on the other side of the ocean for his impact in Europe. In addition he was a pioneer, church planter, treasurer, philanthropist and town planner – clearly a special servant of the Lord.

Van Raalte grew up in the Netherlands and aimed to follow in the footsteps of his father, a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. Only it was not that easy, for when Van Raalte was examined for the ministry his examiners doubted that he would abide by the regulations of the church and denied him entrance. As a result, Van Raalte decided to join the churches of the Secession led by the Rev. Hendrik de Cock. This reforming federation was in desperate need of pastors. Van Raalte quickly found a home and ministry there and became very involved in training young men for the ministry.

Economic conditions during this time

were difficult in the Netherlands, and a potato blight brought more hardships. People began to look elsewhere to live, and America was at the top of many lists. It also drew Van Raalte, who, together with his wife Christina, set sail on October 2, 1846, for America where, due to his wife's inheritance, he was able to buy a large tract of land in the western part of Michigan and start a Christian colony.

The first years were very hard. Michigan at this time was mostly wilderness, with few roads and fewer conveniences. Yet Van Raalte and those with him persevered, and in time his colony attracted more and more Dutch-speaking immigrants and farmers. Houses were built, farms were started, roads were laid and churches were instituted.

On April 23, 1848, the Classis of Holland was organized under his leadership and consisted of four congregations. Still, Van Raalte was no isolationist and quickly developed ties with the leaders of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church situated more in the east. In June of 1851 the Classis of Holland joined with this church. This fledgling church was the start of the Reformed Church in America.

However, some members of Classis Holland were not in agreement with this merger. They cited a lack of preaching and teaching using the Heidelberg Catechism, improper baptisms, the singing of hymns, indifferent fencing of the Lord's Supper and lodge membership as their reasons. Hence they decided to form a church federation of their own. This second federation came into being in April of 1857 and became known as the Christian Reformed Church.

Van Raalte was not convinced of the validity of the charges against the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church and continued to use his many talents to build up the newly united church. He was instrumental in the founding of the RCA's Hope College, and saw to it that it included a department of theology. Later this department was set apart and became known as Western Theological Seminary.

In 1871 his wife Christina died of tuberculosis, and on November 7, 1876, Albertus went to be with the Lord. Together they made a real impact on America.

## PEOPLE WE SHOULD KNOW

# Francis Schaeffer:

## Intellectual leader of the Christian Right

by Michael Wagner

During the late 1970s and early 1980s many conservative Protestants in the United States became involved in social and political activism for the first time. The movement emerging out of this activism is often referred to as the “Religious Right” or “Christian Right.”

While a number of factors combined to produce this phenomenon, one of the most important was a theological shift. Conservative Christians who had previously avoided any form of activism came to believe that they had a duty to speak out on behalf of Biblical positions regarding social issues. More than any other individual, a Presbyterian pastor named Francis Schaeffer was responsible for this shift.

A recent book by Barry Hankins, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Eerdmans, 2008), provides a good overview of Schaeffer’s life, work and influence.

### Reformed foundation

Francis Schaeffer was born in 1912 to a nominally Christian family in Pennsylvania. As a young man he converted to Biblical Christianity as a result of hearing an evangelist. After completing college he enrolled in Westminster Theological Seminary in 1935. In 1937 Westminster Theological Seminary split, and a number of professors and students left to form Faith Theological Seminary. Mirroring this split, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had a rupture, with

a number of people leaving to form the Bible Presbyterian Church. There were a number of issues involved, one of the most important being eschatology. Those who formed the new seminary and new denomination were premillennialists, and Schaeffer was among them.

After completing seminary, Schaeffer became a very effective Bible Presbyterian pastor in St. Louis. In 1948 he moved with his family to Switzerland as a missionary under the auspices of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM). To make a long story short, Schaeffer’s relationship with both the Bible Presbyterian Church and the IBPFM deteriorated. He left both organizations. (Ultimately he joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which merged with the Presbyterian Church in America in 1982.)

### Come and question!

In 1955 Schaeffer formed his own mission group called L’Abri, the French word for shelter. It was basically a small community in Switzerland that would receive guests who had questions about Christianity and life in general.

L’Abri was very effective, and gradually emerged as an influential evangelical organization. People came from all over the world to learn about Christianity from Francis Schaeffer. Many people became Christians in this way, while many who were already Christians had their lives and career paths changed in

a positive direction.

Schaeffer’s ministry focus was on demonstrating that only Christianity provided an answer to life’s questions and problems. Schaeffer could explain why the popular philosophical movements of the mid-twentieth century were deficient. Doing so provided an avenue for presenting the Gospel. As Barry Hankins writes,

“Apologetics had two purposes for Schaeffer: the first was defense of the faith, and the second was to communicate Christianity in a way that a given generation can understand the message.”

L’Abri, however, was not just about providing intellectual answers from a Christian perspective. It also provided shelter and care for people who were having personal problems. The love and care provided by his ministry substantially increased Schaeffer’s credibility and his esteem among believers and unbelievers alike. Hankins notes, “Schaeffer taught that the ‘final apologetic’ for the Christian faith was the fulfillment of Jesus’ command that Christians love one another.”

### A wider audience

Schaeffer would speak to people individually about their questions and concerns, but he would also lecture regularly. By the end of the 1950s many of the lectures were being taped. Gradually,



an audience for these taped lectures spread throughout the world.

“By 1968, there were Schaeffer listening groups across the U.S. and Canada, as well as in Taiwan, Japan, India, South Africa, France, New Zealand, Australia, and nations in South America.”

Even before 1968, however, Schaeffer’s influence was being noticed. Hankins records that, “His growing popularity was noted in a 1960 issue of *Time* magazine.”

As a result of his increasing notoriety, Schaeffer began lecturing tours, first in Britain and later in the USA. These lectures were very popular. Many were subsequently published in book form, and this caused his fame and influence to spread even further.

Schaeffer was teaching evangelicals about modern philosophical

trends and how they related to Biblical Christianity. This had not really been done before, so Schaeffer was on the cutting edge of Christian cultural analysis for English-speaking conservative Protestants. “To whatever extent evangelicals by the mid to late 1970s were analyzing culture instead of rejecting it, Schaeffer was largely responsible,” Hankins argues.

By the mid-1970s Schaeffer was so well-known that he became acquainted with some American politicians and was even hosted at the White House by President Gerald Ford.

### Pivotal books

In 1973 the US Supreme Court ruled in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision that women had a right to abortion. This was a momentous decision, and Schaeffer began to speak out increasingly for the pro-life cause. Actually, he was the most prominent evangelical leader promoting the pro-life cause because so many evangelicals during the early to mid-1970s were ambivalent about this issue.

In 1976 Schaeffer (with substantial help from his son Franky) produced a book and film series called *How Should We Then Live?* that described the decline of Western Civilization due to the rise of secular humanism. It was an effective combination introducing many conservative Christians to worldview thinking for the first time.

Then in 1979 he produced another book and film series called *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* that presented the Biblical position on abortion and other life issues. This book and series had a major impact in activating evangelicals into the

pro-life cause.

Schaeffer’s influence continued to increase. In 1981 he wrote a book called *The Christian Manifesto* demonstrating that secular humanism was replacing Christianity as the basis of the United States. If Christians did not resist this trend, he argued, it would only get worse. This book is arguably one of the most important ever produced by the Christian Right.

Then in 1984 he wrote *The Great Evangelical Disaster* which criticized a trend among some evangelical leaders to question the inerrancy of the Bible. If these men continued in that direction, Schaeffer warned, they would soon be embracing theological liberalism. He called on conservative Protestants to continue to defend the Bible as God’s inspired and inerrant Word as his last message to the church. In the same year this book appeared, he died of cancer.

### No coincidence he was Reformed

Hankins notes that Schaeffer’s

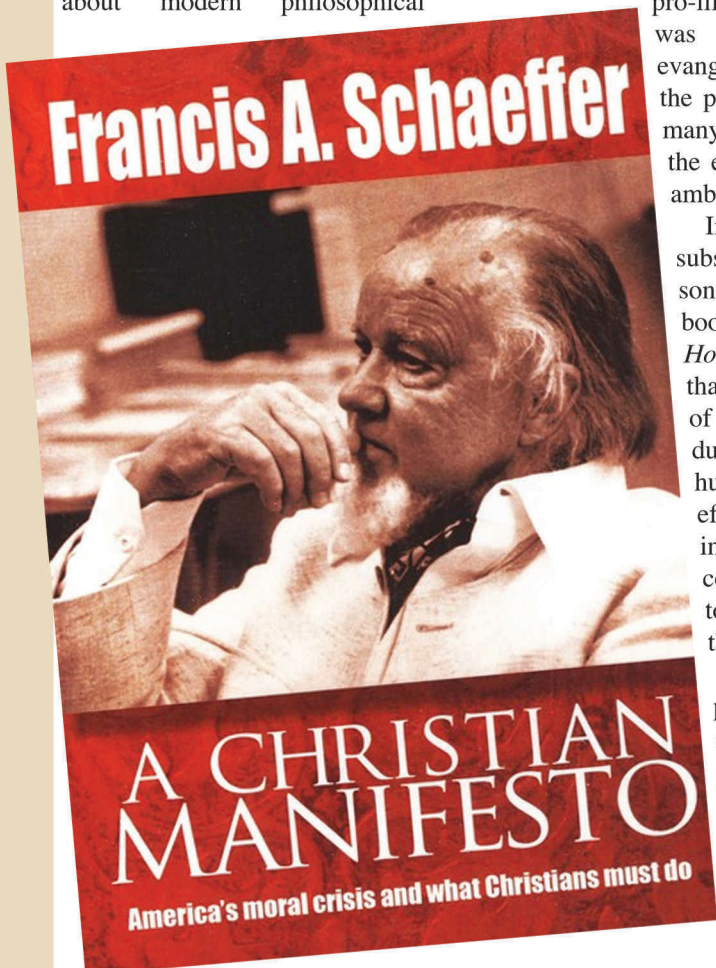
“attempt to alert Christians to the need for intentionally and self-consciously forming a Christian worldview based on solid Christian presuppositions was the central part of his intellectual project.”

This continues to be a major component of his legacy.

It’s important to recognize that Schaeffer’s theological background provided him with the intellectual tools to confront popular culture from a Biblical perspective.

“His training within the Reformed branch of American fundamentalism by scholars such as J. Gresham Machen and Cornelius Van Til served him well in this regard.”

Reformed theology provides the most robust Christian challenge to our modern secular culture, and it was foundational to Schaeffer’s own ministry and success as an apologist.



“...arguably one of the most important ever produced by the Christian Right.”



# Saving some is *not* a compromise

## The case for advancing abortion legislation in Canada one step at a time

by Mark Penninga

Why is it that this year alone over 80 laws have been passed in the United States restricting abortion and yet in Canada we have not been able to pass one law in over 20 years?

It is easy to dish out the blame: It's our secular society! The Supreme Court! Our gutless politicians! Pierre Trudeau! Stephen Harper! The evil mainstream media! ... and so on. But an honest analysis will reveal that at least part of the problem lies with us – the pro-life movement in Canada.

That's a statement liable to raise both eyebrows and blood pressure, but it is also a truth that is verified time and time again by those who are most intimately involved in this battle, including MPs, pro-life leaders, and even radical pro-abortion activists. It is also something that more people are finding the courage to openly admit, knowing full well they will be challenged for it by the pro-life community itself.

But if part of the problem is with ourselves, that is actually very encouraging. It means that the appalling reality of 100,000+ abortions every year in Canada can be changed. There are a lot of people and institutions that we may not be able to change. But we can definitely change ourselves, including our strategies.

### It doesn't have to be all or nothing

Abortion legislation could be advanced

in Canada if the pro-life community can move beyond a hidden and long-standing dispute that has mired our efforts for over twenty years. Key leaders and organizations within the pro-life movement have been opposing many efforts for abortion laws on the grounds that we may not support or advance laws that do not give equal protection to *all* unborn children, even if it is a step in that direction. So, for example, they would oppose legislation that would make abortion illegal only in the third trimester, because they would view such a bill as legitimizing abortion in the first two trimesters.

This position sounds convincing because we know that it is wrong to compromise our conviction that all human life must be protected. But there is no reason why we would have to compromise this conviction when supporting laws that limit the evil of abortion as much as is humanly possible in this sin-filled world.

That's the great news – that we can, *in good conscience*, proactively fight against abortion in our Parliament and Legislatures and see real successes in the coming decade. We can do this by closing the gap between public opinion and the current status quo which legally permits abortion throughout all 9 months of pregnancy. One step at a time, we can expose and limit the ongoing injustice of abortion that our society is trying so desperately to hide. And we can do this together, as a united pro-life movement. There is much reason

for optimism and hope.

How can I be so sure we can start seeing real successes? This is one of those issues that take more than a few facts, Bible texts, or talking points to build a case. In fact, it has taken me years to study this issue and discuss it with pro-life leaders, pastors, MPs, and friends. Although this may be a longer than usual read, the issue is of critical importance if we are serious about making progress in the abortion fight. So please, read on!

### #1 - Understanding the pro-life movement

Stephanie Gray from the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform has done a good job explaining how there are three arms of the pro-life movement in Canada; she labels them the pastoral, prophetic, and political arms. Understanding these three arms and their unique responsibilities is key to understanding how we should move forward.

#### *The pastoral arm*

There are over 135 pregnancy care centres in Canada that come alongside pregnant women with the help they need to choose life and then have their child. They provide a range of services including pregnancy-related information, crisis phone lines, counselling, pregnancy tests, maternity clothes, and even financial help.

### *The prophetic arm*

Abortion needs to be exposed for the injustice that it is. The prophetic arm is responsible for bringing this message to our society, so that the choice becomes unthinkable. Education is critical because a large majority of Canadians support legalized abortion even though they refuse to consider what abortion really is. That explains how about 90% of Canadians wrongly think that there are some restrictions already in place. As the Canadian Centre for Bio-ethical reform states:

“The political arm cannot change the law until the prophetic arm changes the minds of voters. The pastoral arm cannot reach all abortion-minded women until the prophetic arm helps these women understand that abortion is an unthinkable choice.”

Examples of the prophetic arm include billboards, marches, LifeChain, bumper stickers, the Genocide Awareness Project, TV ads, and word-of-mouth.

### *The political arm*

After decades of work by the prophetic and pastoral arms, as well as the inescapable impact of abortion on the health and lives of millions of Canadians, the reality is that a significant majority of Canadians disagree with the *status quo* – the lack of *any* restrictions on abortion – even if many may consider themselves pro-choice. The Canadian public want either a complete ban, or at least some restrictions on abortion. This should not surprise us. Canada is the *only* country in the Western world without any legal restrictions on abortion.

Our Supreme Court has made it clear that it is looking to Parliament to change that. This has to be done by our Parliament and Legislatures, and it is the political arm of the pro-life movement that needs to work towards this goal. Examples of laws that could be proposed include gestational limits (e.g., a ban on abortion after 12 weeks) and requiring the *informed* consent of the mother. In the US, Americans United for Life produces a large book every year

detailing the many different pro-life laws enacted in each state.

Canada’s pro-life movement has for the most part avoided this realm. Campaign Life Coalition (CLC) identifies itself as the political arm of the movement in Canada, though the reality is that most of its efforts fall within the prophetic arm (its annual March for Life in Ottawa, its national pro-life newspaper *Interim*, etc.). Although it speaks *about* many political issues, it does so from the sidelines rather than assisting MPs, MPPs, and MLAs with actual legislative efforts.

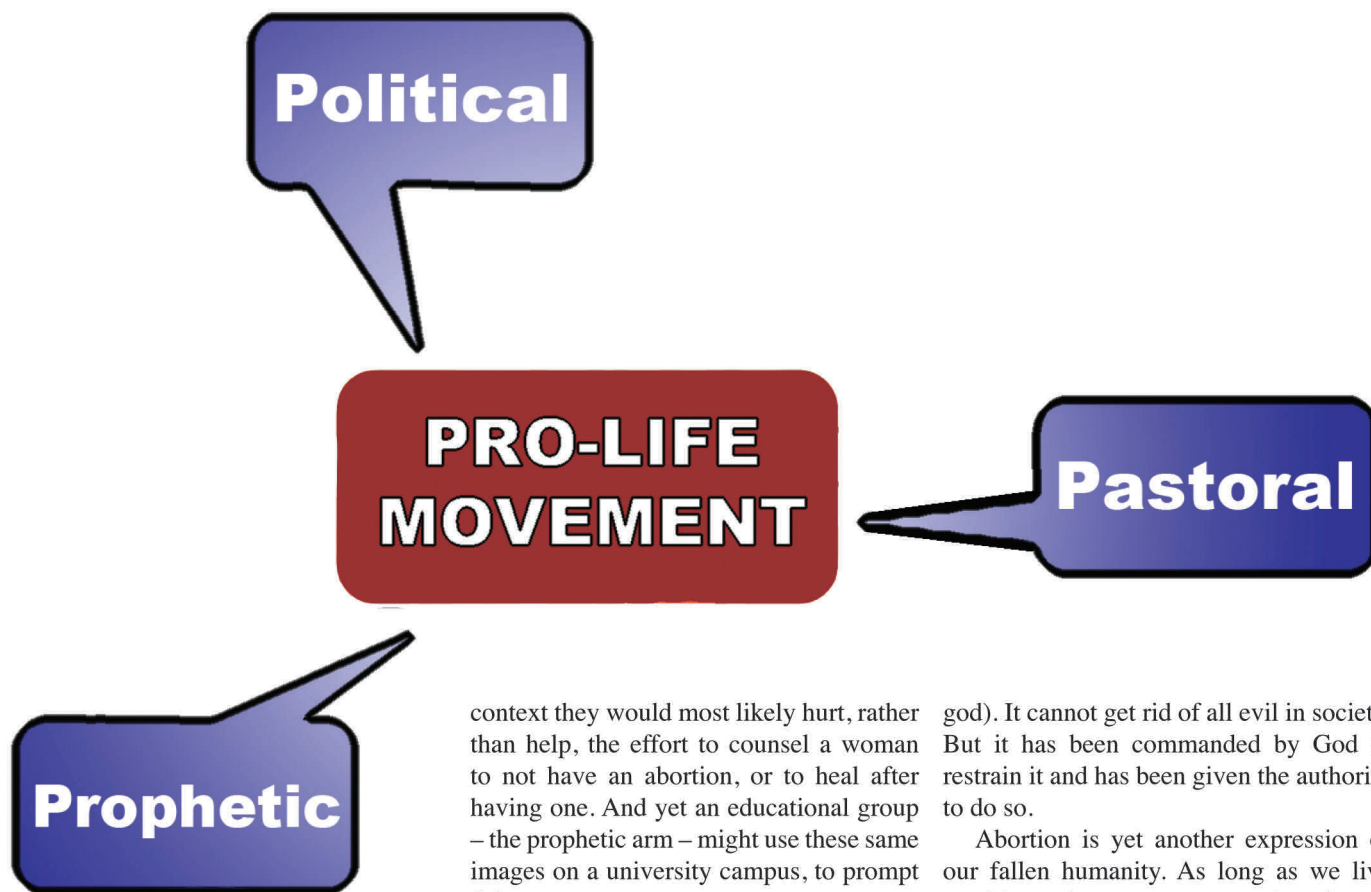
The same is true for most pro-life

organizations in Canada. They follow political developments, but the reality is that very little effort is directed towards advancing laws. Their work has value, but it has to be understood as fulfilling the role of a prophet more than a king.

Although there are pockets of political activity happening in various parts of the country (e.g. defunding campaigns in some provinces), most of what is done comes from the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus, made up of MPs and Senators, who meet monthly with this goal. But their work is limited by time and resources. They have busy lives doing the work of an MP and



## The 3 arms of Canada's pro-life movement



can't organize a grassroots campaign to support a bill.

On the provincial level, even less is being done in the political arm. Most provincial pro-life organizations are geared towards education and coordination, not advancing pro-life legislation.

The bottom line is that Canadians would be shocked at how few people there are working in the genuinely political realm. There is very little strategy or long-term vision.

### #2 - Understanding the different roles

It is crucial that while these arms share a common heart to defend life from conception to natural death *they each have different roles, strategies, and players*. For example, with good reason we don't put graphic pictures of aborted babies on the walls of a pregnancy care centre. In that

context they would most likely hurt, rather than help, the effort to counsel a woman to not have an abortion, or to heal after having one. And yet an educational group – the prophetic arm – might use these same images on a university campus, to prompt debate.

But just because the pastoral arm – the pregnancy care center – uses a different method than the prophetic arm, it does not mean it is “compromising” the pro-life stance. The arms have to know their respective audiences, opportunities, and limits.

The focus of this article is the political realm. What is the role of the political arm and how should it function? Pro-lifers with a biblical foundation recognize from Romans 13 that our government officials have been put there by God, with the purpose of promoting order and the common good and restraining evil. But note carefully that the Bible does not say that the state has the task of eradicating evil. There is the assumption that it is impossible for the state to do this. Human nature is such that we are sin-filled people. That can't be changed – in Psalm 51:5 David goes so far as to say that he was *even conceived in sin*. The state is not God (though it is more and more lifted up as a

god). It cannot get rid of all evil in society. But it has been commanded by God to restrain it and has been given the authority to do so.

Abortion is yet another expression of our fallen humanity. As long as we live on this earth, no government is going to be able to end abortion, even if it was outlawed. The point is that government can only do what it is able to do. And in a sin-filled world, that means *limiting* evil.

So one reason why the political arm of the pro-life movement in Canada is so sparse is because Christians don't like to work in a realm where evil can only be limited. Politics takes on a dirty connotation because it necessarily involves doing only what is possible. As intimidating as it can be to participate in a pro-life demonstration, holding up a graphic picture of what abortion does, many Christians would rather participate in these activities than direct their efforts to pass laws that would “merely” limit the number of abortions.

Given that politics is the art of what is possible, it means that politicians have to work with the sad reality that our society will not ban abortion today. At least two-thirds of Canadians would oppose a ban on abortion, and some polls have the

figure much higher than that. The political will to address the issue is even weaker than the public will. However, polls do show that at least 60% of Canadians would support *some legal protection* for the unborn (increasing protection with longer gestation). Given this reality, and given also the fact that every other country in the Western world has been able to pass abortion laws and restrictions, there is room for our Parliament to get rid of the gap between what Canadians would support and the *status quo* (no legal protection for unborn children).

When pro-life politicians in this country have tried to do what is possible by advancing legislation, they are given very little support by the key organizations representing the political arm of the pro-life movement. These politicians are often singled out as “compromisers.” With immense opposition from pro-abortion activists, the media, and even their own party, is it any wonder that after 20 years of this, most MPs, even pro-life MPs, are hesitant to touch the issue?

The pro-abortion camp is thrilled with this. Joyce Arthur, from the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, has shared Canada’s story with the rest of the world, encouraging them to learn from us. She explains:

“Because we have virtually no restrictions against abortion, we’ve been able to spend our time working on access and funding issues, instead of fighting oppressive laws, which is what our American friends must do. Restrictions such as consent laws, waiting periods, and the like are simply cruel and unnecessary obstacles that impede a woman’s ability to get a safe, early abortion. *There is no question that the absence of restrictive laws against abortion places the struggle for abortion rights on the fast track to success*” [emphasis added].

**#3 - Understanding the controversy within the political arm of the pro-life movement**

Ever since Canada’s abortion laws

were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1988 there has been a strong division within the political arm of Canada’s pro-life movement. On the one side of the divide are those who argue that we ought to work to end abortion by enacting laws that restrict it as much as possible. If we can restrict access and increase awareness of what abortion really is then the number of abortions will drop, and society will be more aware of just how evil it is. For example, if society is willing to criminalize abortion after 12 weeks gestation, then we should work towards a law that does that. If it is successful, we move on to the next step and restrict it even further. Though gestational limits were not previously considered an option in the United States (because of their constitution), they have successfully applied this strategy to the

.....  
**“...in Canada we have not been able to pass one [abortion restriction] in over 20 years”**  
 .....

point that over 80 laws restricting abortion in one way or another have already been passed this year alone.

On the other side are those who oppose many of these efforts because they view them as compromising the pro-life position and as an assault on the principle that all innocent human life is sacred. For example, Campaign Life Coalition defines “compromise legislation” as:

“... any type of legislation that would explicitly or implicitly accept or admit that killing any category or class of unborn children is lawful, or that unborn children may be lawfully killed in any specified circumstances, whether or not the existing law already permits abortion in these cases.”

As one pro-life leader told me, “We can’t decide who will live and who will die. That’s what you do when you advocate for a gestational (abortion) law. We decree that all human life up to x weeks may be

killed.”

It must be noted that those in this camp are clear that they welcome laws that would chip away at abortion, as long as they meet the requirement noted above. But it isn’t just gestational limits that fail the test. As has been evident from recent attempts to introduce pro-life legislation in Parliament, logical consistency means many more pro-life bills become unethical. Does supporting informed consent legislation (where a mother has to be told about the level of development of her child, or what is involved with the abortion procedure before she can have an abortion) mean that we are supporting the abortions that occur once a woman has been informed and still decides to kill her child? Doesn’t that implicitly accept the killing of unborn children? Does banning coerced abortion (as MP Rod Bruinooge attempted to do with Roxanne’s Law last year) mean that we are implicitly tolerating abortions that have not been coerced?

On the one hand they state that they are in favour of incremental legislation. Yet the reality is that over the past twenty years they have done very little to support the private members’ bills introduced by brave MPs. In some circumstances they have outrightly opposed them. Both options are a far cry from proactively advancing and building public support for abortion legislation.

As a side note, although many who oppose a step-by-step approach to limiting abortion come from the Roman Catholic faith, by no means is that the rule. Some time ago ARPA Canada received a formal letter from a committee of a Reformed church urging us to rethink our political efforts on abortion. They wrote:

“We understand the thought process behind this [step-by-step] approach but we cannot endorse or support it because it leads inevitably to an unbiblical compromise of God’s command: ‘Thou shalt not kill.’”

**#4 - Refuting the misunderstandings & errors**

The key issue of debate between the two sides hovers around whether it is immoral or unbiblical to promote legislation that

would have the effect of saving some, but not all, unborn children. To put it another way, is it compromising to support a law that would ban abortion after 20 weeks? As one pro-life leader stated to me, "Abortion is evil and if you say it's ok that we allow some evil (abortion) in order to save some of the children then you are going against the moral order." Those who hold to this view have admirable intentions, but they have flawed conclusions. And these conclusions are costly. Dispelling the flawed conclusions will reveal that we can, in good conscience and in harmony with our faith, limit the evil of abortion in the political realm.

**Argument 1 - This logic ignores the reality of our sin-filled society, which currently allows the killing of all unborn children, at all stages, for all reasons, and at taxpayer's expense.**

There is a huge moral difference between advancing an abortion law when there is, and when there isn't, already an abortion ban in place. If the current law was a complete ban on abortion and a majority in society wanted to change that to a ban after 12 weeks, or 20 weeks gestation, it would be immoral for government to pass this legislation. All human life should be protected and it is government's responsibility to ensure that. The effect would be to increase the amount of evil, a direct assault on the role of government. However, if the current law allowed for the

killing of all unborn children (as it does in Canada today), then a new law that would ban abortion after 12 or 20 weeks would reduce the evil.

There is a substantial difference. That difference is called context. Reformed believers should be the first to understand the importance of applying our belief about human nature to our daily work.

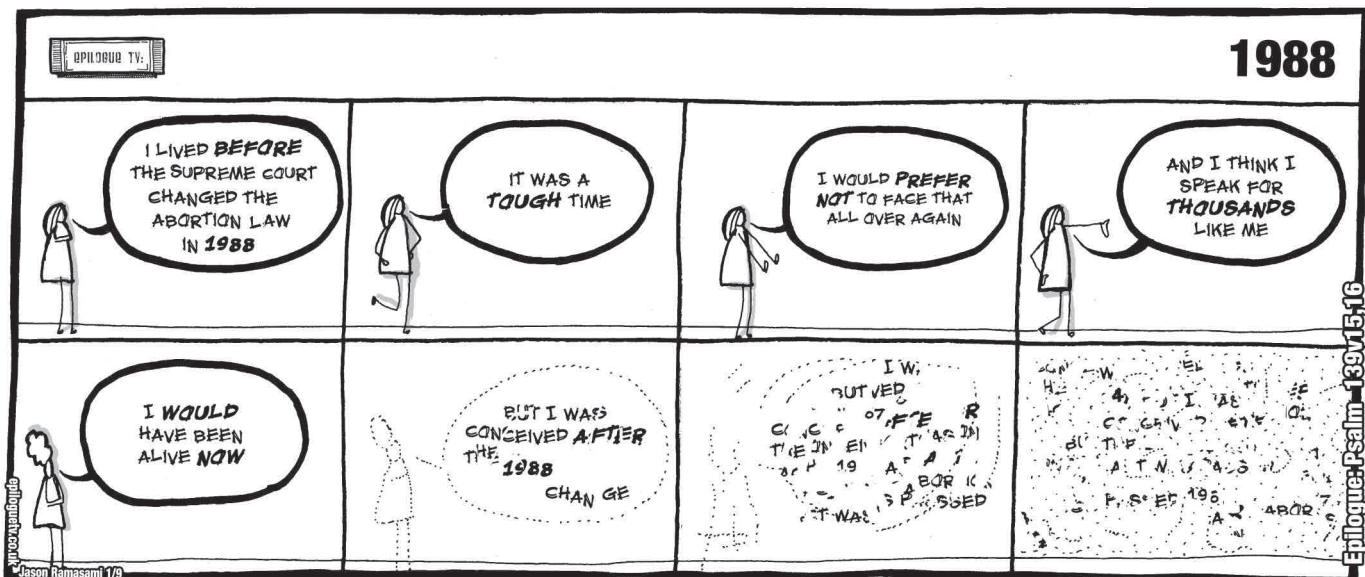
A classic philosophical dilemma that is posed to university students goes like this: "A trolley (i.e. a train) is running out of control down a track. In its path are five people who have been tied to the track by a mad philosopher. Fortunately, you could flip a switch that will lead the trolley down a different track to safety. Unfortunately, there is a single person tied to that track. Should you flip the switch or do nothing?" Some would argue that those who advance incremental strategies against abortion are trying to demand a similar answer. However, the scenario does not reflect the reality of what is going on with abortion in Canada. The more accurate scenario goes this way: "A train is running out of control down a track. 100,000+ children are tied to that track by their mothers and fathers. You can untie as many children as you possibly can, or you can stand on the sideline and hurl accusations of compromise against those who are untying the children, for saving some and not others; for making a value judgement about one over another."

We may not like the out-of-control train, and we may disagree with the thousands of parents who tie their children

to the track, and we might only be able to save a selection of the babies, but that does not mean that we should not do what we can to save some.

**Argument 2 - Supporting incremental legislation is not condoning the death of the children who are not protected by the new law. Society is condoning abortion – government must try to limit the evil.**

By supporting incremental legislation, we are not in any way compromising. We are working to abolish all abortion by taking the steps humanly possible in this sin-filled and limited world. By promoting a law that bans abortion after 18 weeks, for example, we are not in any way condoning abortion up till 18 weeks. The pro-life leader quoted earlier who opposed gestational limits wrongly believes that such a law would mean we are allowing some evil, to save some children. But we aren't allowing the evil. Our society has chosen the evil. The train is hurtling down the tracks whether we like it or not. Our sin-filled human hearts have chosen the evil. Our government has the responsibility to limit that evil as much as possible. If a ban on abortion is not humanly possible in such an evil society but restrictions on abortion are possible, it is the moral duty of government to enact those restrictions, to begin to engage the brakes on the train. We may not be able to stop the train dead in its tracks, but we should begin to apply



# When it *is* compromise

When saving some is all we can do  
we should never pretend it's all we hope to do

by Mark Penninga

Fighting abortion bit by bit, one legislative restriction after another, doesn't mean compromising on our conviction that *all* of the unborn are precious human beings. This step-by-step approach recognizes the reality that today, in our current political climate, we simply can't save all these children, and that in these circumstances saving some is better than saving none.

But even as we acknowledge the status quo, and the limitations on what is possible politically, it is vital that we in no way suggest that we are happy with the way things are. It is very important that everyone in the pro-life community, including those in the political arm, be forthright that *all* abortions are wrong and be clear that our goal is to end the atrocity.

Unfortunately, a common mistake of those advocating limits on abortion is to suggest that a wrong would be made right if we adopted a specific law. The temptation is to try to sell a law by

making arguments that would appeal to someone in the middle, but which actually undermine our core belief about the intrinsic value of all human life.

For example, the fact that the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) defines viability at 20 weeks gestation and/or 500 grams is *not* the reason why we think a law restricting abortion to 20 weeks is necessary, *even if* it is an argument that would convince someone who does not believe that all human life is sacred.

If we use that argument as the *reason* for the bill, we undermine our foundation. The truth is we oppose abortion at 12 weeks, 8 weeks, and 18 days gestation and we may not mislead the public to think otherwise. We know that the fact that unborn children older than 20 weeks may feel pain does not mean that abortion before 20 weeks is OK. We have to state very clearly that all unborn children should be protected so a law that would ban abortion after 12 or 20 weeks would help limit the evil, but it is just one step

towards the end we are looking for.

So how do we use appropriate language to defend these laws to a secular society? We can say boldly and firmly that we believe abortion is wrong and that we are proposing/defending/supporting this legislation because it is a *step in the right direction*. We can also say that our society may not agree with all our reasons, but they should be convinced by their own reasons, including the fact that the CMA would call these children viable and that the medical community agrees that they feel pain.

In other words, we must never obscure God's Truth on this issue and must never talk or argue in a way that gives the impression some of the unborn aren't precious human beings. We may only be able to save *some* right now, but we must always be clear that saving *all* is our end goal.



the brake.

This does not stop after a law is put in place. The restrictions have to keep increasing, as we see in the United States. Abortion clinics are closing their doors south of the border, not because all abortion is illegal, but because there are so many restrictions they can no longer justify operating. The Lord willing, some day we may get to the point where there is a complete ban on abortion.

**Argument 3 - Arguing against incremental legislation flies in the face of how we understand politics and the role of government on every other issue.**

Those who are convinced by the "compromise" arguments have to answer some questions themselves. For starters, how can we justify such a different standard when it comes to every other political issue that we engage with? With their logic, anyone who supports a bill that would increase the age of sexual consent from 14 to 16 is condoning or supporting all sexual activity after age 16. The reality is that the government has virtually no control on sexual activity, but it can try to prevent the exploitation of youth. Increasing the age of consent is a very important step towards accomplishing this. By no means does it mean that they are compromising on sexual purity.

To take this a step further, every piece

of legislation that crosses Parliament's floor has problematic elements. But it would be much more problematic if MPs were unable to pass any laws, leaving society in a state of anarchy. For a society to function, our politicians have to tolerate things that we as Christians may not tolerate. **But tolerate does not mean condone.** It is easy for people to point at politicians from the sidelines and accuse them of being unjust. But it is the reality of working in a sin-filled world that has limits on what is possible. We can't force people to be moral. But we can do our best to restrain evil. Perhaps this explains why the Canadian pro-life community has almost abandoned the political realm. We simply don't like working in such a nasty,

but real, world.

Over the past 15 years we have seen smoking dramatically decrease in Canada. How was this accomplished? A wise strategy was employed. Education was a component, but government also enacted many laws and policies, such as health warnings on cigarette packages, increased taxes, banning advertising at public functions, and even hiding tobacco products behind curtains. The combination of the educational and political arm has reduced smoking to the lowest level ever, even among teens. What would have happened if our government tried to ban smoking 15 years ago? Or, to follow the logic used by some pro-life leaders, does making a law that requires these dangers to be shown on tobacco packages etc., mean that we implicitly condone tobacco use? It is well known that those behind the law are

working towards a much bigger goal. The same applies to abortion. We should never stop with one bill that limits it or exposes the evil nature of it – we have to work toward a total ban. But that does not mean that we can't try to get what is possible currently, and work towards a ban one step at a time.

The argument is made that the difference between abortion and other issues is that human life is at stake. Again, although that sounds noble, it is misled. Many other political issues also have lives at stake. The Canadian government does not devote 100% of its efforts to fighting starvation in Somalia because it recognizes that even its best efforts would have limited impact. Further, doing so would come at the cost of the many other issues and people that need attention. Once again, it comes down to recognizing that the role and power of

government is limited. It can only do so much. The question we have to answer is, will we do what we can, or will we walk away?

**Argument 4 - Limiting evil is not the same as "playing God."**

This talk of saving lives can turn us off. As one person who wrote me said "We can't play God as lay people or as politicians. We can't decide who will live and who will die." But does supporting incremental legislation mean that we are "playing God?" God has made it clear that he gives the responsibility to our governments to exercise authority. They have a moral responsibility, from God, to limit evil. They are called to represent God's standard on earth. Although "playing God" is not the proper way to

## Gestational Limits for Abortion on Demand





describe it, it is correct in reminding us of their (and our) God-given responsibility to “do justice.”

The “playing God” argument is a convenient means for us to avoid the responsibilities that God has given us. In a country like Canada, God uses citizens to govern. He calls us to make difficult, but important, decisions about how we will live. Because we are in a democracy, Romans 13 applies to each of us because we all have a hand in governing this nation. We can’t absolve ourselves of all blame. There is a reason why pro-life MPs are hesitant to put forward pro-life laws – almost nobody is standing behind them. That proves that citizens have a direct effect on our leaders and on the civil government’s responsibility to apply God’s truths to earth. If we did stand behind them, they would be much more likely to do something. We may not like the responsibility that comes with democracy, but by no means may we shy away from it.

**Argument 5 - Acknowledging the status quo does not mean we are condoning it.**

Last year some key pro-life leaders refused to support Member of Parliament Rod Bruinooge’s bill (Roxanne’s Law), which would have made it a crime to coerce a woman to have an abortion. Section 4 of that bill stated that it did not apply to physicians who tried to convince a pregnant woman to have an abortion if the abortion is necessary to “prevent serious threat to the female person’s physical health.” These pro-life leaders argued that the bill condoned the evil of abortion for the sake of the mother’s health.

However, the reality is that abortion is already legal for any and every reason, including for the protection of the life of the mother. This bill simply acknowledged it because Bruinooge thought that was what was necessary to have the bill passed. Even if that was a poor decision or completely unnecessary, it does not negate the point that it reflected what the law already states. The process of chipping away at abortion will mean that we have to continually remind Canadians just how wide-open the laws currently are.

**Argument 6 - The fact that there are some options that most pro-lifers can agree on does not mean that they are the only options we should pursue.**

Just because part of the pro-life community does not support many pro-life laws does not mean that we should avoid those laws and concentrate on those they do support. Although it sounds considerate, we end up trying to be nice rather than do what is really best for the unborn. Prudence requires the right law at a specific time and in a specific context. We have to be wise in those situations and boldly advance abortion legislation that would be effective in limiting evil. With lives at stake we can’t devote all of our time to talking to ourselves. There are some foundational differences within the

.....  
**“... well over 500  
lives could be saved  
every year.”**  
.....

pro-life community (our view of human nature, the role of government, the end times, etc.) that we will debate as long as we live. That debate should happen, but we can’t put aside our political responsibility while doing so.

There are some laws that most pro-life groups should be able to agree to. We thought that was the case with Roxanne’s Law, but we were sad to see some prominent leaders in the pro-life community opposing that as well. Even if we can agree to a bill, it does not mean that it is the appropriate bill for our Parliament today. In Canada it has become easy for MPs to write off pro-life bills with very weak arguments. Rather than acknowledging that no woman should ever be coerced to have an abortion (even though Roxanne’s Law really was a pro-woman bill that every MP could support), they stated that there are already laws dealing with coercion so this bill was redundant. Although the argument could be disproved in two sentences, they get away with it because neither the politicians nor the media have any appetite to acknowledge the truth. [As an aside, it became even easier for them to vote against the bill when they were informed

that even pro-life leaders opposed it.]

But if our MPs have to vote on a bill that would ban abortion after 20 weeks, for example, they are forced to address the issue head on and can’t skirt the issue. Even Henry Morgentaler opposed abortion after 24 weeks. He has stated, “We don’t abort babies, we want to abort fetuses before they become babies... Around 24 weeks I have ethical problems doing [late-term abortions].” It would be hard for many MPs to defend it. And there is no way that they can argue that the bill is redundant, or that no abortions happen after 20 weeks anyways. A bill like that would make sense and could actually accomplish something, even if it did not pass the first time. Let’s not forfeit these options because we are trying to be nice.

**Argument 7 - This issue is not minor. Hundreds, even thousands, of lives can be saved.**

In the face of controversy we can be tempted to just walk away. Indeed, that is what many of us have done. We don’t like to argue among fellow pro-lifers so we leave the political realm and move on to a different arm or a different cause. But the issue is not just another squabble. If we did boldly advance abortion legislation that is in keeping with public opinion today, well over 500 lives could be saved every year.

Abortion takes the lives of over 100,000 children every year (the specific numbers are unknown because many abortion providers don’t report what they are doing). In 2008, of the 24,087 abortions that were actually reported with gestational details to the Canadian Institute of Health Information, 1,028 occurred from 17-20 weeks gestation and 556 occurred 21 weeks and later. That does not include all of the abortions where no details were provided (let alone gestation), nor does it include the numerous abortions that are not reported at all. A law against abortion after 20 weeks would save real lives every year.

Americans United for Life has been working with similar goals for a long time in that country. One example they provide of the success of working in the political arm is in Mississippi.

“Over the past 15 years, Mississippi has adopted 15 pro-life laws. As a result, abortions in the state have decreased by nearly 60% and six out of seven abortion clinics have closed – leaving only one embattled abortion clinic in the entire state.”

There are many other benefits to introducing laws like these. First, the debate in Parliament and the media will open the eyes of Canadians to the ongoing reality of abortion. The less abortion remains hidden, the less it can be justified.

Second, if a law like this were to pass, it would have many spin-off consequences. For example, although many abortion-providers don't keep statistics (even though abortion is tax-funded and deemed “medically necessary”) a ban on abortion after a specific age should force them to reveal the age of the child.

It would also be a huge blessing to the disabled community. After all, many of the late-term abortions are done to kill children who have a disability.

Finally, think of the impact this would have on the huge adoption wait-list! There are so many homes waiting for the gift of a child to adopt into their family.

### **Argument 8 – Canada is the exception, not the norm.**

European nations that are as secular as Canada, if not more so, all have laws against abortion. Where it is available on demand, most countries limit it to a maximum of 12 weeks gestation. In other countries, including Spain, Portugal, and Poland, abortion is only allowed for specific reasons, such as the health of the mother, even if the pregnancy is less than 12 weeks gestation. In Holland abortion is allowed on demand up until 13 weeks, but a 5-day waiting period is required. In Greece abortion is illegal after 12 weeks gestation (24 weeks for cases of fetal abnormality). Abortion is illegal in Ireland, though about 7,000 women travel to Great Britain each year to get an abortion. In that country it is allowed until 24 weeks. And in Sweden, a country often held up as an example of progressivism, abortion is illegal after 18 weeks except to save the life or physical health of the mother.

Canada is the one country in the West where this evil act is completely unrestricted. The only way to change that will be by boldly, and publicly, declaring the truth about abortion while at the same time introducing laws that would limit it.

### **Argument 9 – If you don't make a concession, you don't compromise.**

After reading all of these arguments, some will still want to label this proposal for advancing abortion legislation a type of compromise. But that is wrong. Compromise involves a mutual concession to reach an agreement. Nowhere in this argument am I proposing that we should concede anything. To put it even stronger, from a legal and political perspective it would be hard to make the case that we *could* even concede anything because we have *nothing* to concede - unborn children have *no* legal protection. We can fight to change that without making concessions. (In the sidebar accompanying this article, “When it *is* compromise,” I warn against conceding our foundation, by avoiding any language that suggests that some children are more worthy of legal protection.) Let's not put stumbling blocks on our own path.

### **A path forward: taking steps together**

All pro-life Canadians are committed to protecting life from conception to natural death. It is time to point our swords away from each other and direct them towards the evil of abortion.

The three arms of the pro-life movement are each critical, and must work together to end abortion. Now, after more than 20 years of effective work by the pastoral and prophetic arms of the movement, Canada has become increasingly pro-life. *It is time for the political arm of the pro-life movement to advance laws that reflect where Canada really is on the abortion issue.*

There is no need for us to fight within the pro-life community. If we are uncomfortable working in the political arm, we can move to the prophetic or pastoral arms and still be an effective voice. What matters is that we encourage each other with our respective roles. We

can also hold each other accountable. It is good for those outside of the political arm to remind those in it to never allow compromise in their words or deeds.

By this point some might say, “But our leaders refuse to touch the issue. There is no way that we can advance anything.” Fortunately that is not true. Our Members of Parliament can introduce private member's legislation (PMBs). Although such bills used to be rather ineffective, that is not the case today. All PMBs that are declared constitutional may advance to a vote. So if there is a courageous MP that is willing to put forward a bill that restricts abortion, it will likely come to a vote.

But it takes more than one MP or Senator to introduce and pass a bill. A large base of grassroots and professional support is needed to carry it through Parliament and respond to the challenges of the pro-abortion activists who will fight tooth and nail against it.

Each of us has a responsibility to help with this. We can:

- Pray for unity within the pro-life movement
- Pray that God raises up courageous leaders who take on this issue
- Encourage our MPs via phone, email, and in person to advance abortion legislation
- When an MP does put something forward, get behind it 100%
- If you financially support Campaign Life Coalition, or Alliance for Life Ontario, encourage them to read this article (which can be found online at [www.ReformedPerspective.ca](http://www.ReformedPerspective.ca))
- Give continual encouragement to all who work in the pro-life movement. Satan is pushing hard from every direction and would love us to move away from the issue. Sadly, many churches and Christians have.

At the same time, let's challenge our pro-life community to make progress in the political realm. A new generation of leaders is emerging, many of whom are unfamiliar with the divide that has held us back for over 20 years. The Lord willing, we can look forward to some encouraging victories in the years ahead.

*Mark Penninga is the executive director of ARPA Canada ([www.ARPCanada.ca](http://www.ARPCanada.ca))* 

## BEST BOOKS: 3 on progressing pilgrims *reviewed by Jon Dykstra*

### THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

**From this world to that which is to come**

CrossWay, 2009, 240 pages

by *John Bunyan*

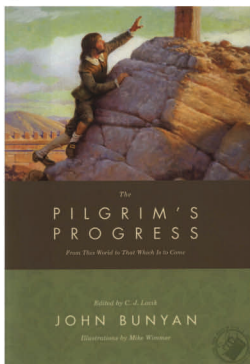
edited by *C.J. Lovik & illustrated by Mike Wimmer*

Bunyan's allegorical tale is about a man, burdened by his sins, who has no hope. In despair he cries out for help, and his cry is answered by Evangelist, who knows where hope can be found. He tells the sin-burdened man that he must flee the City of Destruction, and journey to the Celestial City. And along that straight and narrow path he will come to the foot of a cross, and it is there that his sin-burden will be lifted.

But that isn't the end of his journey – as he continues he meets, and is slowed or sidetracked by, a variety of people, all representing temptations or secular worldviews. They have names like Worldly Wiseman, Mistrust and Atheist. Through God's grace, the pilgrim perseveres.

*Pilgrim's Progress* was first published 333 years ago, and since then has been translated into more than 200 languages. Aside from the Bible, it may be the best-selling book ever.

This particular version has been updated from the original's 17<sup>th</sup> century English and is quite simply the most readable edition of Bunyan's tale you can find - editor C.J. Lovik has done a masterful job. Thirty full-color, full-page illustrations only add to the volume's attractiveness and accessibility, and extensive footnoting ensures that the modern reader will be able to understand the full depth of the story.



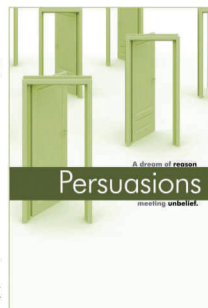
### PERSUASIONS

**A dream of reason meeting disbelief**

Canon Press,

1989, 95 pages

by *Douglas Wilson*



In *Pilgrim's Progress*, the very first person the pilgrim, Christian, meets is Evangelist. In Douglas Wilson's *Persuasions*, instead of following Christian, we stay with Evangelist, and listen in as he converses with the many other travelers who are on this road.

The people he meets are all heading in the wrong direction, away from the City and towards the Abyss, so Evangelist tries to make them aware of their peril by exposing to them the inconsistency in their beliefs.

The first person Evangelist meets is Randy, a young man who has made a god out of sexual immorality. When he finds out that Evangelist is a Christian, Randy mocks monogamy: "Making love to one woman for life... That's like buying one record and taking it home and playing it over and over and over again." But Evangelist is quick to corrects him:

"I'm afraid your analogy is a faulty one. It is not like buying one record; it is like buying one instrument and learning how to play it. If you are committed, boredom is not a danger."

Evangelist doesn't instantly convert Randy, but he does get him thinking. And in the 13 encounters that follow he does the same for an evolutionist, a feminist, an Antinomian and several others. This slim book would make a thought-provoking gift for anyone, but particular a young man or woman making their profession of faith.

The book's one flaw is an instance where a character uses God's name in vain – strange that a Christian author would include this.

### THE JOURNEY

**A spiritual roadmap for modern pilgrims**

InterVarsity Press, 1996, 128 pages

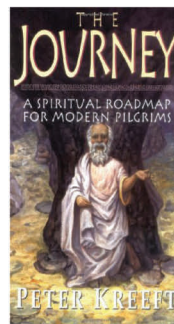
by *Peter Kreeft*

In this allegorical journey the pilgrim – author Peter Kreeft – has Socrates as his guide, and the temptations he faces all involve Greek philosophers, one after another, every time there is a fork in the road. Each philosopher offers up his own particular worldview for consideration and Kreeft then has the choice of staying with them and subscribing to their philosophy, or rejecting it and continuing on his journey in search of Truth.

What makes this book valuable is that, while these philosophies are ancient, they are also current. Take as example the first philosopher Kreeft meets: Epicurus presents the "Eat, drink and be merry" approach to life. He tells Kreeft that the Truth isn't even worth seeking after - not when there is so much partying to do! Today we might call this the Hugh Hefner philosophy. As Kreeft continues he meets more ancient Greeks, each with their own challenge to present, each of which has its own modern day counterpart including: skepticism, cynicism, nihilism, materialism, relativism, atheism, pantheism and deism.

One note of caution: the author is Catholic, and in this book that comes out in an Arminian flavoring to some passages. But Kreeft is also a great thinker, and when he targets secular errors, as he does in this book, there are few writers his equal.

This is a fun and, despite it being philosophy-heavy, an easy read. It would make a great gift and a very good tool for any student about to head off to university.



*Jon Dykstra and his siblings blog on books at [www.ReallyGoodReads.com](http://www.ReallyGoodReads.com) where longer versions of these reviews can be found*

*“Believer in Jesus, remember that all your confidence, all your hope, all your comfort flows from the finished work of your Savior. See that you unwittingly add nothing to the perfection of this work. You may be betrayed into this sin and this folly by looking within yourself rather than to the person of Jesus; by attaching an importance too great to repentance and faith and your own doings and strivings, rather than ceasing from your own works altogether, and resting for your peace, joy, and hope simply, entirely and exclusively in the work of Jesus. Remember that whatever we unintentionally add to the finished work of Christ mars the perfection and obscures the beauty of that work.”*

- Octavius Winslowe (1808-1878)

# Marring the Perfection

by Christine Farenhorst

There are those who refuse to accept salvation freely. They subconsciously feel they must work for that salvation. They have a need to do, to act on behalf of themselves. There are those who are afraid to attend the Lord’s Supper lest they appear presumptuous, too sure of themselves. Consequently, they fear they might be mocking God and His sacrifice if they attend joyfully. They have a burden – a great one – and carry it on their shoulders and in their hearts. They deprive themselves of the gladness God has freely given.

\*\*\*\*\*

Macarius was such a man. Born in the early 300s, (and very like the better known Simon Stylites, c 459), he was convinced that he must live a life of sacrifice, emulate Jesus’ in all, and deny himself all worldly goods so that he would be tempted by nothing.

Macarius owned a sweet shop in Alexandria in Egypt. The daily give and take, the continual happy interchange of conducting business with people who came to buy from him, he began to consider a temptation. The earning of money became repulsive to him. Upon reflection, he thought these interactions of business could cost him his soul. So he up and left Alexandria. He left his shop, his family, his friends, his religious circle and traveled into the desert. He was of the (entirely wrong) frame of mind that, deprived of human company, he would become holier.

History records, however, that having taken up his abode as an anchorite in Thebaid, (an ancient region surrounding Thebes), he continued to be dissatisfied with his holiness growth, and moved to still remoter regions close to what we now call Libya. There were, so he had heard, other hermits in that district who were amazingly close to attaining perfection in their secluded way of life. He did not actually speak to or see any of these Libyan hermits, who did not reside within ear or eyeshot of one another, but soon it was rumored that Macarius outdid the others in austerity, and that he was fast becoming a number one candidate for heaven. For seven years he lived on raw herbs and pulse, (a leguminous plant similar to lentils); and for three years after that he consumed only four to five ounces of bread each day.

Somehow, however, Macarius was still not satisfied. Perhaps he had indulged in some conversation with curious travelers, or perhaps he had spoken with those who provided his meager sustenance. In any case, he heard via some sort of caravan-vine talk, that the monks of the town of Tabenna were extreme masters of self-denial. Leaving the desert, he sought them out, lived with them for a season, and showed off. That is to say, he bested the monks in fasting and calorie intake.

There is the story, whether fact or fiction, that Macarius was once bitten by a gnat, a sixth day creature and also a member of the third Egyptian plague. After having been bitten, Macarius in a fit of impulsive anger, killed the little insect.

Remorse soon set in. After all, he reasoned, the animal had likely been sent to him by God. To expiate for the killing of the gnat, Macarius traveled to some local marshes abounding with flies and exposed himself to them for six months. His body, during this season, became so covered with bite sores that he was unrecognizable.

Macarius supposed himself privy to many temptations. One of these was the temptation to leave the desert and go to Rome to nurse the ill in the hospitals there. Obsessed, however, with himself, he considered such a calling wrong.

“Suppose,” he reasoned, “I nurse well and unselfishly, consequently earning the love and respect of others for this demeaning task, how they will praise me. This is surely a great temptation, for if others praise me, I will become proud. True humility is to be found only here in the desert where I have contact with no one.”

He stayed and it is recorded that he threw himself on the ground and cried out to the imagined devils surrounding him, “Drag me hence, if you can, by force, for I will not stir.”

Then, finding “they” would not leave, he filled two baskets with sand, laid them as a yoke across his shoulders and journeyed farther into the desert, proclaiming that he was tormenting his tormentors by not giving in to them.

Historian, and ascetic himself, Jerome, (340-420 AD), relates the tale of a certain anchorite dying. The man had been a weaver of cloth and had left money, some one hundred crowns, behind on the day

of his death. The monks of the desert met together to discuss what should be done with that sum of money. Some debated that the church should benefit; others were for the poor receiving the legacy. Macarius though, and some other hermits, would not hear of this. They ordained that the money should be thrown into the grave alongside the dead body and that the words "May thy money be with thee to perdition," be spoken at the same time. Macarius' fervent words and his macabre and fanatic appearance created such terror in the hearts of the monks that no one dared contradict and no one dared lay claim to the money.

\*\*\*\*\*

This all happened a great many years ago and Macarius has been dead for some centuries. Was he a better Christian than others? Did his hours of solitude and his so-called "self-mortification" please his Creator? Did it earn him more salvation as opposed to less salvation?

The Biblical book of James is filled with the theology of encouragement for Christians to act out their faith. James stresses that Christian lives are lived not merely in worship services, but in day to day practicality. Martin Luther, who actually called the book of James an epistle of straw, was in agreement with this. Luther abhorred those who lived their lives in monasteries, saying that such people were self-servicing and did nothing to serve God. He followed this through by saying that those who love Jesus Christ must follow Him and serve their neighbors through their vocations in the world. "God does not need our good works," said Luther, "but our neighbor does."

It is certainly a Reformed credo that Christians must express gratitude to God because they have been saved, not because it will help them to be saved.

Does a Macarius life detract from Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross? Does a Macarius lifestyle, in its over-the-top self-denial and hyper-penitence, flaunt a self-righteousness, thus belittling the cross? The answers to these questions are not hard. Actually some of the examples of his life are so off-the-wall, so close

to ridiculous, that we think ourselves far removed from them.

But are we?

Are we sometimes so self-absorbed in our church communities that they begin to resemble monasteries? Do we parade our schools, church programs and catechism classes in such a way before the Lord that it is akin to pride? Do we spout theological knowledge in deserts of our own making, at the expense of living out our faith by speaking with and eating with sinners and tax collectors – that is to say, our immediate neighbors down the road? Are we, every now and then, perhaps unconsciously, trying to add to the finished work of Christ?

*"It is finished! Let devils hear it, and tremble! Let sinners hear it, and believe! Let saints hear it, and rejoice! All is finished... Before this stupendous truth, let all creature merit sink, let all human glory pale, let all man's boasting vanish, and Jesus be all in all. Perish, forms and ceremonies; perish, rites and rituals; perish, creeds and churches; perish, utterly and forever, whatever would be a substitute for the finished work of Jesus, whatever would tend to neutralize the finished work of Jesus, whatever would obscure with a cloud, or dim with a vapor the beauty, the luster, and the glory of the finished work of Jesus!" - Octavius Winslowe*



**The Anchorite by Teodor Axentowicz - Anchorites thought that salvation was to be had through their own sacrifice.**

# Sex

## is powerful but *dangerous*

Its impact will be felt emotionally, physically and spiritually

by Jonathon VanMaren

A few years ago, a professor named Chap Clark decided to do a study of adolescent high school students to find out what they thought about sex. Since close to half of high school students are reportedly sexually active, Chap Clark wanted to find out what the stories behind the statistics were. What he found shocked him.

“I was surprised to realize that for most mid-adolescents the issue of sex had lost its mystique and has become almost commonplace. They have been conditioned to expect so much from sex and have been so tainted by overexposure... as one student told me, ‘sex is a game and a toy, nothing more.’”

Because of how our culture treats sex, this attitude has become a reality across North America.

### Sex sells and pop culture sells sex

In today’s culture, it is extremely difficult for a Christian to adhere to Christian values. Our popular culture is working against us – the music industry, Hollywood and television, all use sex and extremely explicit material to sell their products.

Music genres such as Hip Hop and Rock glorify sex as something that everyone should be doing, a casual activity to be pursued and celebrated. There’s a reason Rock music accompanied the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s and ‘70s with the symptomatic tagline “sex, drugs, and rock and roll.” The message is simple: do whatever makes you feel good. The world

is full of pleasures. Go out and get your share. The title of a song by the Canadian band Nickelback sums it all up: *Sex is always the Answer*.

Hollywood and television sell the same message, with movies increasingly showing sex as glamorous, casual – and most importantly – *something that doesn’t have any consequences*. Recent movies with titles such as *Friends with Benefits* and *No Strings Attached* once again encapsulate the message that popular culture is trying to sell all of us: sex isn’t a big deal.

In fact, when I was attending Simon Fraser University, one classmate said to me, “Guys these days don’t have any excuse for not having sex. Music and TV have done half the job for us.”

### Is sex worth protecting?

For many young Christians, that is the essential question. Is sex actually a big deal?

Christian young people are some times inclined to look at extramarital sex as yet one more thing we are not allowed to do in a long list of demands given to us by God in the Bible. So yes, we know that *technically* we are not allowed to have sex outside of marriage. But, we can rationalize, we’re not allowed to lie, be lazy, disobey our parents, or be disrespectful of authority either. So extramarital sex is wrong, sure, but is it any bigger deal than any other sin?

That answer is, yes! And in many ways!

Having sex outside of marriage can impact our entire lives in ways we don’t

### HOW IS SEX LIKE MASKING TAPE?

Brings two parts tightly together, but if the first bond is broken it won’t bind as tightly again.



even comprehend.

What Christians often do not realize about the laws given to us by God in the Bible is that He did not give us these rules purely to *restrict* us. We might sometimes think these rules are simply a long, seemingly arbitrary list, that limits our possibilities for fun. But the truth is, in many cases, God gave us these rules to *protect us from ourselves*. Because God created human beings in His image, God also knows infinitely better than we do what lifestyle is best for us, physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Just to give you a quick example to illustrate what I mean, the dietary laws God gave in the Old Testament included a number of prohibitions about certain foods. We now know that many of these restrictions were also quite helpful from a health perspective. With the limited cooking technology of that day, including the lack of refrigeration, and lack of knowledge concerning bacteria, many of the foods on the prohibited list would have poisoned the eaters. In essence, God gave His people the first health codes.

The same concept applies to sex. Sex in and of itself is not a bad thing—in fact, it is quite the opposite. It is a beautiful creation of God given to mankind in the Garden of Eden. Sex was one of God's great gifts to men and women, and one that He gave for them to enjoy and cherish. However, if sex is used outside of the context in which God created it, it can have devastating and poisonous consequences.

The consequences of sex outside of marriage can be placed into three categories: physical consequences, psychological consequences, and spiritual consequences.

### 1. Physical consequences

Before 1960, there were only two Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) that were widespread for people to worry about: syphilis and gonorrhea. Only *two* diseases! However, when people started to ignore the limits that God had placed on sex, the consequences were not just spiritual. Because humans ignored the natural order that God created, the consequences were very *physical*.

## Christians are a friend of sex

by Jon Dykstra

In the first chapter of Douglas Wilson's *Persuasions* the main character, Evangelist, talks with Randy, a young man obsessed with getting as much sex, from as many women, as he can. He thinks Christians oppose sex, but as Evangelist shows, that is far from the truth.

Randy asked, "Why do you Christians have such a thing about sex? You're always saying who should be sleeping with whom and who shouldn't."

Evangelist replied, "It is a common misconception that opposition to the perversion of a thing is the same as opposition to the thing itself. But of course the idea is absurd."

"How is it absurd?"

"If someone wanted to draw a mustache on the Mona Lisa, would that be an act of vandalism?"

"Of course it would."

"Would you step in as a friend of art or as an enemy of it?"

"As a friend."

"But suppose the vandal reviled you as an enemy of all that is beautiful. How would you answer him?"

"I would not need to answer him. The accusation is absurd."

"Exactly so. Absurd is the right word. And if you have understood the argument, you will stop accusing Christians of being the enemy of the thing they desire to protect. Sexual immorality destroys a very great gift of God. Immorality is vandalism."

Today, there are twenty-five *categories* of STDs. Not twenty-five new STD's, twenty-five new *categories*.

For example, you may have heard of herpes. Herpes is an incurable sexual disease. You can get herpes from one sexual encounter, and you will have it for the rest of your life. One in five Americans over the age of twelve has this disease. Herpes comes in *eight* different strains, and you can contract anywhere between one and all eight strains at the same time. You also may have heard of the STD hepatitis. Well, there isn't just hepatitis B, the one you most likely have heard of. Hepatitis comes in strains A through G.

Approximately one in four high school students will graduate with an STD. Most of them have no idea that they have contracted one. In fact, one half of sexually active single adults has, or will have, at least one STD. Four out of ten girls will contract an STD the very first

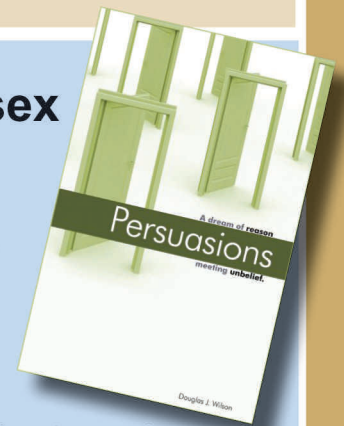
time they have sex.

Let me put the enormity of this problem in perspective for you.

Every day in the United States, 1,500 people die from cancer. Another 2,600 die from a heart-related illness like a heart attack or a stroke. And every day, more than 50,000 people will contract a sexually transmitted disease. That's 19 million people every year! There are only 300 million people in the entire United States. From an economic perspective, direct medical costs associated with sexually transmitted diseases in the United States are estimated to be thirteen billion dollars annually. There truly is no such thing as a free lunch – or "free love."

But wait, isn't there's medication to control even the incurable STDs?

Yes, you can control diseases like herpes with medication. But if a woman has a herpes outbreak during childbirth, there is a significant chance that her child



will die.

And there are STDs that are lethal. I'm sure you've all heard of AIDS. While AIDS does happen more often in homosexuals (once again an example of contravening God's natural order) it is increasingly common in heterosexuals as well. Men and women have been arrested

and put in jail for sleeping with people and not first informing them that they were HIV positive – the reason this is a crime is because, as a result, their “casual sex partners” may die of AIDS.

Incidentally, condoms rarely prevent STDs. This is according to a man known as the “Condom King,” Dr. Thomas Fitch

of the Center for Disease Control. The only safe sex is saved sex.

Sexually transmitted diseases, even the curable ones, are no picnic either. Here is how abstinence speaker Lakita Garth describes a very common STD, genital warts:

## God's plan for sexual purity: MARRY EARLIER

by Jon Dykstra

Want to start an interesting conversation with fellow Christians? Propose to them that one good way of fighting sexual temptation is to encourage our young people to marry earlier.

### Years of fighting temptation?

Back in 1973 the average age for a Canadian man to get married was 25, and for a woman, 23. Since then the average age for newlyweds has increased by roughly five years: men are now averaging over 30, and women over 28.<sup>1</sup> We can also notice something similar happening in our own church circles. Parents are encouraging young men and women not to think about getting married until they finish their post-secondary schooling, get their finances in order, and hit at least 25.

The problem with this advice is that

it doesn't take seriously the persistent pull and power of sexual temptation. If we are telling our children that they can date in their teens, but shouldn't get married until at least their mid twenties, then we are expecting them to somehow remain sexually pure even while dating *for years* before marriage. This is horribly unrealistic, and setting them up for failure. That's why the apostle Paul proposes marrying as a means of addressing sexual temptation. In 1 Cor. 7:9 he writes: “if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

Now some will argue that today's young people are too immature to marry early. If that is true, it is a serious problem, and not one that is solved simply by telling them to get married later. Parents are called to raise their young boys to be men, and their little girls to be women, so if our children need another decade after they leave high school to finally become mature enough for marriage, then this is something we need to change. Instead of telling them to delay marriage, we need to teach them to grow up.

### Conclusion

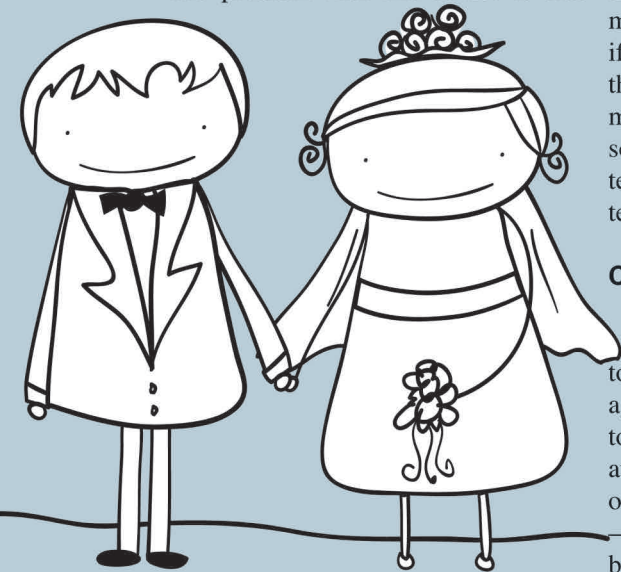
My point here isn't to push for everyone to be married by 18 (or 19, or by any set age). There is no perfect age for everyone to get married at... but there is a proper attitude to have about marriage. Instead of telling our children to put off marriage – to seemingly make it their last priority behind education, finances, and finding

that ideal job – we should tell them that it is important enough to make a priority in their life. We should tell our young men that “a good woman is hard to find and worth far more than precious jewels” (Prov 31:10) so if they find one early, they should pursue her, before some other young man beats a path to her door. And if they do find – and win! – that special someone, yes, then we should encourage them to marry earlier rather than later. Or at least, that's what we should do for the passionate couples; cold, controlled couples need not pay any attention to the Apostle Paul's warning.<sup>2</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada's *The Daily*, Jan 17, 2007 ([www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/070117/dq070117a-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/070117/dq070117a-eng.htm))

<sup>2</sup> There is another, altogether separate, reason to encourage our young people to get married earlier – so they can share with their children the blessing of grandparents. A man who gets married in his mid-thirties, whose children follow his example, will have to wait until he is over seventy before he has any grandchildren, if he even lives that long. Compare that to someone who gets married in their early twenties, and whose children follow their example - they will have grandchildren in their fifties, and perhaps even late forties. If this trend to marrying later, and having children later continues, a large portion of the next generation will have to do without the blessing of grandparents.





“If you get genital warts, you’re going to start growing warts in your genital area. They grow on top of each other, and they’ll begin to form nodules and clusters that look like broccoli. They’re called condyloma. They make it painful to sit and painful to walk. And they’re most painful when they’re being removed.”

Now if someone thinks that an STD is unlikely because they are only having sex with one person, Dr. Everette Koop, the former U.S. Surgeon General warns otherwise:

“When you have sex with someone, you are having sex with everyone they have had sex with for the last ten years, and everyone they and their partners have had sex with for the last ten years.”

The bedroom could end up pretty crowded.

The final physical consequence of casual sex is one that should seem so obvious that I shouldn’t even have to point it out, but many in today’s culture seem to have forgotten it: pregnancy. For some strange reason, when people decided that sex could be “recreational,” they forgot the very simple fact that sex creates babies. It’s why your genitalia are called “reproductive organs,” not “recreational organs.”

Anyone having sex outside of marriage is clearly not ready for a child – children need responsible committed parents. So sex before marriage has, in our culture, led to two devastating circumstances.

One, the baby gets raised without the benefit of having a father around.

Two, the baby is not raised at all; it is aborted. Every year in Canada, over 100,000 unborn children are brutally destroyed. In the United States, it is over a million.

When people around you are casually talking about their sexual conquests, remember that millions of tiny children are being horrifically destroyed so that our culture can engage in “recreational sex.” Millions of babies have been sacrificed on the altar of our lust and ultimate

selfishness. Phrases such as “casual sex” and “recreational sex” are merely a flimsy facade attempting to shield a mass grave containing millions of dismembered pre-born corpses: our own sacrifice to the god of our own pleasures

## 2. *Psychological and Emotional Consequences*

Aside from physical consequences, there are also psychological and emotional consequences to having sex outside of marriage. Many people today think that they can have casual sex with a number of different people, especially during their college years, and then settle down and marry their dream partner without any real impact on the relationship they hope will last a lifetime.

The fact actually is that since God created humans to be monogamous – one man and one woman, just as God created Adam and Eve – sex outside of marriage has a huge impact on future relationships.

Many readers have probably heard of the concept of “never being able to forget your first love.” This is a common theme in both literature and poetry, where everyone seems to agree that forgetting your first love is always the hardest, if even possible.

There is actually a biological and psychological explanation behind this phenomenon. Sexual contact releases powerful chemicals into the brain called neurotransmitters. These chemicals trigger immediate sensations – but they do far more. In their book *Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex Is Affecting Our Children*, authors Dr. Joe McIlhaney Jr. and Dr. Freda McKissic Bush write:

“When two people touch each other in a warm, meaningful and intimate way, oxytocin is released into the woman’s brain. The oxytocin then does two things: increases a woman’s desire for more touch and causes bonding of the woman to the man she has been spending time in physical contact with.”

The bonding agent most active in the male brain is called vasopressin. As

McIlhaney and Bush explain:

“Vasopressin seems to have two primary functions related to relationships – bonding of the man to his mate and attachment to his offspring... vasopressin seems to be the primary cause of men attaching to women with whom they have close and intimate physical contact.”

However, when men and women decide to have sex with multiple partners, they begin to lose their ability to bond with a partner, which is why promiscuous people have a far harder time staying in a long-term relationship. There is a simple example to illustrate this: try putting masking tape on your arm. The first time you pull it off, it will be painful. The second time you pull it off, it will hurt less. If you keep doing it, there will be no bonding between the adhesive and your skin at all.

God created men and women to be monogamous, and when He told us in the Bible to avoid sex outside of marriage, He wasn’t simply giving us a restriction – He was informing us how our biology and psychology function, and telling us what would lead to the healthiest, most fulfilling relationships.

Since we have ignored this, statistics tell us that sexually active teens are three times as likely to face depression if they are female, and twice as likely if they are male. They are three times more likely to attempt suicide if they are female and seven times more likely if they are male, and far more likely to divorce if they marry.

As Mars Hill pastor Mark Driscoll puts it, today’s pattern is “hook up, shack up, break up.”

## 3. *Spiritual Consequences*

Obviously, all sin has spiritual consequences because it is rebellion against God. Because having sex outside of marriage has such a power to affect lifelong relationships, it is more likely to affect men and women in this area as well.

God created sex to be shared between a husband and a wife. God, by the rules

set out in the Bible, warned us of the power of sex and the impact it could have outside the natural order. Sex is extremely powerful, and can enslave those who become obsessed or addicted with it. Unhealthy and sinful obsessions have obvious consequences for one's church and spiritual life.

For example, pornography is a \$60 billion a year industry. One thousand dollars is spent in the United States every second on pornography, and a new porn film is made every hour. Pornography, because people are so visual, actually triggers a chemical reaction in the brain, releasing what are known as "erototoxins." These erototoxins literally rewire your brain, and the images are often burned into one's memory, inerasable.

Sex in its true form is one man and one woman *giving* themselves to each other. Sex is not intended to be a biological activity to stimulate the brain's pleasure centers; sex, according to the Bible, is two "becoming one flesh." While today sex is characterized as "getting some," it is supposed to be about *giving* yourself to your spouse.

Abstinence speaker Lakita Garth relates an interesting story. When she told her college roommate that she wasn't having sex, her roommate looked at her aghast. "Don't you feel like you're missing out on anything?" she asked.

Lakita replied:

"I have missed out. I have missed out on the thrill of waking up wondering if my early pregnancy test will turn blue. I missed out on not getting to walk into a clinic with my best friend holding my hand because my boyfriend isn't going with me unless he's dragging me in. I missed out on sharing the same joy as my ex-roommate, who has pinpointed the day her child would have been born if she had not aborted, and who cries herself to sleep every year because she's named him and celebrates his birthday. I'm even more saddened that five years from now I'll miss out on waking up to stare at the ceiling of an AIDS hospice like my cousin Ricky and my friend Rod before they died... You're right. I've missed out... on all the wonderful opportunities you've

opened yourself up for."

In a spiritual sense, sex is a powerful action that can take over your mind, destroy your relationships, and ruin your chances to have a healthy church life. Getting involved with sex outside of marriage has the chance of numbing or destroying your conscience. That is not fire we should be playing with.

**Conclusion**

So, we looked at all the horrible consequences of sex outside of marriage. And we've also looked at how God has tried to protect us from these consequences by telling us, in his Word, how sex should be treated. We've gone over STDs, abortion, the destruction of emotional bonding, and how porn addiction can change you forever.

But the good news about sex is that the Bible has it one hundred percent right.

.....

**As pastor Mark Driscoll puts it, today's pattern is "hook up, shack up, break up."**

.....

Even the secular, sex-obsessed culture has noticed that Christians have it right when it comes to sex. Sure, they make fun of us and call us prudes. But statistics everywhere show that married people have the most satisfying sex lives. The statistics even show that married people have far better sex lives than those who just live together, because of the commitment shared by those who have dedicated themselves to each other in marriage. In all polls taken, the simple fact is that married people have more sex, and better sex lives.

Sex is not a negative thing. Sex is an extremely positive thing – when it is enjoyed in the context of God's plan and the natural order He has created. Christians who wait for sex, unlike many in the outside culture, have something actually fulfilling to look forward to. This is not about Christians demonizing sex – it is about Christians enjoying sex in the way God intended.

**Six Lines FREE**

**Reformed Mature Singles Social Group:** Meet other singles, 30-50 years old (give or take a few years) from the Can Ref or sister churches at RMSSG website. Email Patricia at [tturnedlezp@shaw.ca](mailto:tturnedlezp@shaw.ca) for info

**Looking For Old Issue:** If anyone is willing to donate Vol. 14:11 of Reformed Perspective to a theological library looking to complete their run, contact Melodie at [mstorey@regent-college.edu](mailto:mstorey@regent-college.edu)

**Letter to the Editor Contest:** Send your published letters to ARPA Canada to compete for \$500 in prizes (sponsored by Holland Shopping Centre). Rules and details are at [www.ARPACanada.ca](http://www.ARPACanada.ca)

**Every RP article indexed.** To find out who wrote what, when, go to [CanadianReformedSeminary.ca](http://CanadianReformedSeminary.ca), then click on the "Library" tab, and "Search Reformed Periodical Index" or see [RPindex.notlong.com](http://RPindex.notlong.com).

**How to get your ad posted here for free:**

1. Ad should include information such as What, Where, When, How much and Contact info, and be no more than 200 characters (and that's including spaces).
2. Ad must be for events that go beyond the local – if it's just for your congregation you can advertise it in your bulletin - and for non-commercial groups like Young People's, Ladies Aid, schools, or churches, etc to sell cookbooks, announce speeches, rallies, plays, etc.
3. Send your requests to [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca). Ads will appear in the issue two months after submission (ex. if you submit in December, it will appear in February).

This is for groups and individuals whose philosophy and worldview is in accord with that of Reformed Perspective, so we reserve the right to refuse any ad.

# Miniature machines that matter

## Even tiny viruses are a marvel to behold

by Margaret Helder

There are so many amazing things in this world, but few are as strange as viruses. Most people consider viruses as bad news, and in general, they are correct. However from another point of view, viruses are actually beautiful and awe-inspiring.

To start though, let's consider in what ways they are strange.

For a start, viruses exhibit some major deficiencies. They are not alive. A virus could sit somewhere forever and the particles would end up no different than when they began their wait. Although they may look beautiful and fancy, a virus, by itself, does not do any of the things a living cell does, like metabolize, or reproduce.

In fact it does not do anything... or rather it doesn't do anything until a suitable living cell makes contact with it. The situation changes then, because viruses are designed to make use of suitable living cells in order to produce more viruses.

A virus consists of a protein coat (that can look very fancy) with genetic material (a string of DNA or RNA) packed inside. So, you might ask, how does the virus manage to take over the activities of a living cell? That is a very good question, and one that biologists have wondered about for many years.

### A bacteriophage springs to action

It turns out that many viruses have some amazing design features for penetration of living cells. Consider for example the phage viruses. These fancy looking structures are designed to exploit specific bacterial cells and their ways of gaining access to them are truly amazing.

You have probably seen images of bacteriophage – these are viruses that

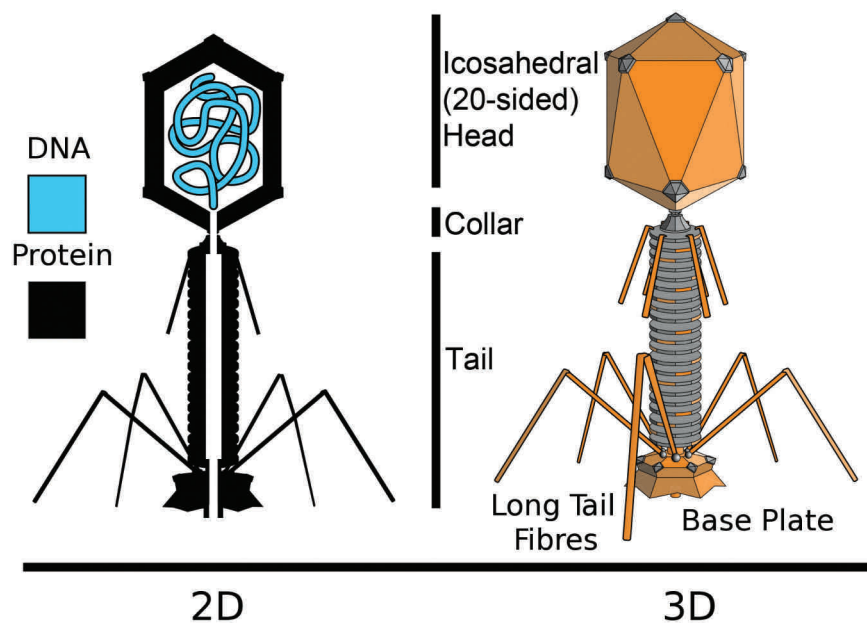
attack bacteria. They exhibit an artistic icosahedral (20-sided) head connected to a cylinder which has tail fibres (like spider legs) attached at the far end of the cylinder. The whole structure looks like an alien flying saucer.

The system works like this. The tail fibres recognize surface receptors on a suitable bacterial cell surface. They then bind so strongly to this host cell that they cannot be dislodged. This binding causes a change in the position/shape of the virus tube. It consists of an outer tube and an inner tube. The outer tube is spring-loaded to contract, forcing the rigid inner tube through the outer of two bacterial membranes. It still has not penetrated the inner membrane, but by some as

yet undiscovered process, the inner membrane is breached and virus DNA is shoved into the host cell.

The forcing of DNA into the host cell seems like an easy process, but it is not. One study suggests a push-pull mechanism. In one phage/bacterial system, the entire 19,000 base pairs (like ladder rungs on the DNA molecule) enter the host cell within 30 seconds. The DNA inside the virus head is packed under such pressure that it uncoils extremely rapidly, threading through a tiny hole, one ladder rung at a time into the host cell. Once 60% of the DNA molecule has uncoiled and entered the victim, the pressure is reduced in the virus head and the process slows down. But by this time, a protein

## Bacteriophage



This file was created by Michael David Jones (Wikipedia.org user: Adenosine) and licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license.

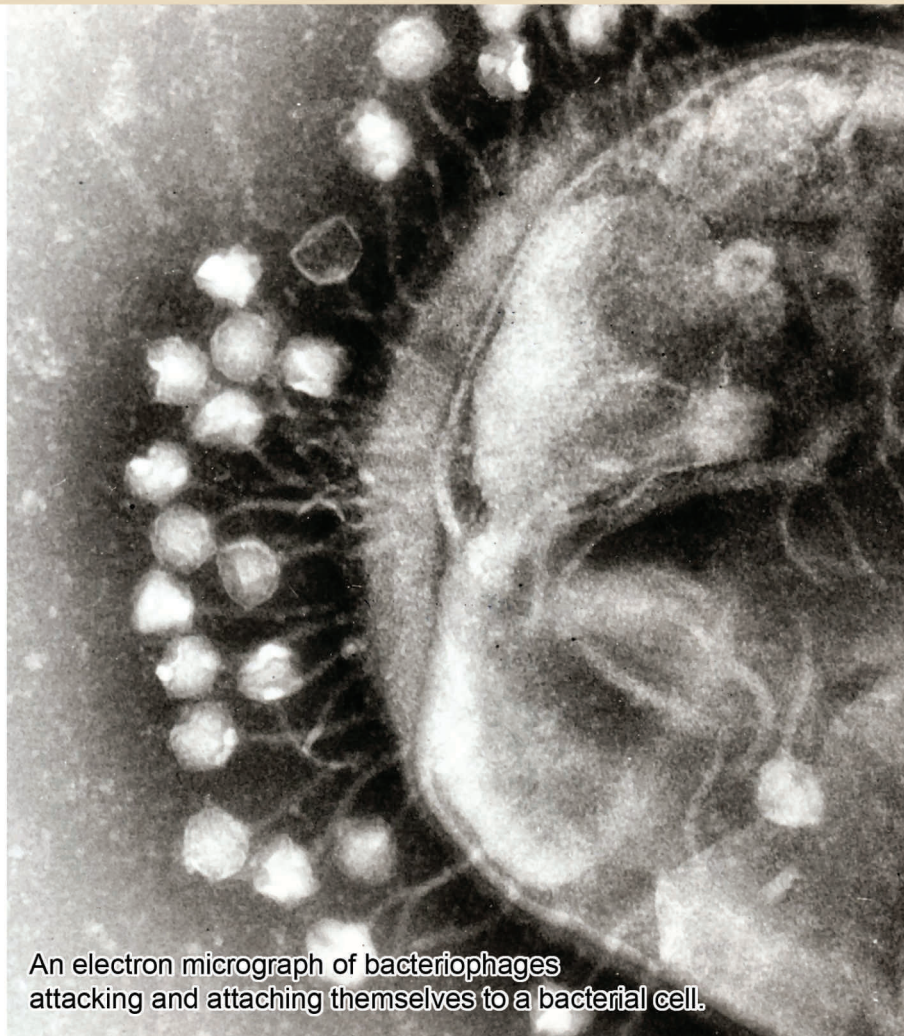
has been read off from the virus DNA that is now inside the cell. The new protein forms a machine that pulls the remaining DNA into the cell.

Immediately after this, all bacterial metabolic processes stop. Within five minutes, synthesis of virus proteins begins and the copying of virus DNA. Within 10 minutes, some new virus particles have already been produced inside the host cell. Once the cell contains about 400 particles, within one half hour of the initial penetration, the cell bursts and the contents are dispersed. This process represents precision manufacturing on a colossal and rapid scale.

Getting DNA into the host cell is, however, only half of the battle for the virus. To produce more virus particles, it has to later insert the DNA into these artistic icosahedral heads. How would this be accomplished? The hole at the base of the head is very small. Have you ever tried to thread a floppy tangle of thread up into a tiny receptacle? However, it so happens that some of the proteins which are produced at the direction of the virus, include 5-ringed pumps that work with the high energy releasing molecule ATP. This pump has two phases, an ATP loading phase in which the pump connects with the DNA molecule – it loads up on fuel. Then there is a burst of action wherein 10 rungs of the DNA ladder including roughly two turns of its helix/spiral structure are cranked up into the head. This rotary motor exerts one of the strongest molecular motors known. Thus through a process of alternating pauses and bursts of action, the entire DNA molecule is shoved under great pressure into each virus head. No wonder that when the pressure is released at the time of a new infection, the DNA briskly springs forth to be threaded into the host cell.

**Precision engineering**

When you stop to think about it, we see a lot of fancy design features in a particle that is not itself living. These features include machines which enable the virus to hijack the systems of cells which are living. Not only that, but its protein covering itself consists of molecular



An electron micrograph of bacteriophages attacking and attaching themselves to a bacterial cell.

machines which enable the virus to access the contents of a living cell. Then the hijacked cell is forced to undertake high speed, and highly accurate, copying

.....

**“...we see a lot of fancy design features in a particle that is not itself living.”**

.....

of virus DNA and the manufacture of proteins which will form the virus coat, complete with molecular machines for pushing the DNA into a new host cell, once an appropriate victim is encountered.

You have to wonder about the origins of such fancy particles. Did these elaborate machines just happen, or were they designed? The amusing thing is that there

are bacteria, hundreds of times larger than viruses, and actually living, which exhibit similar machinery to phage weapons. An article in the July 21/11 issue of *Nature*, declared that such a bacterial system is “evolutionarily and functionally related to bacteriophage” (p. 346). What the authors are saying is that the bacterial system is not only similar in its form and function to the virus system, but that somehow the latter was derived by descent from the non-living particles! Even from an evolutionary point of view, this seems like a major stretch of scientific imagination!

**A similar seeming weapon**

The bacterial system which is reminiscent of phage, is called a Type VI secretory system. It is found, for example, in a common bacterium called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

In the process of competing with other bacteria for limited resources in the environment, *Pseudomonas* cells stoop to biological warfare. When they encounter a different kind of bacterial cell, they set about to blow it up. In this endeavor, the *Pseudomonas* inserts a toxin into the competitor. This causes the latter cell to burst.

It seems that *Pseudomonas*' weapon is anchored in the inner of the cell's two encircling membranes. The weapon points outward and the tip of the inner of two concentric tubes actually extends through the cell's outer membrane into the environment. One might think of a cannon projecting from a ship's deck.

When this tip touches a foreign bacterial cell, the spring-loaded outer cylinder contracts (just as in the phage weapon),

thereby forcing the inner cylinder through the foreign cells' outer membrane. From there, somehow, a poison is released into the victim, with fatal consequences for that cell.

Bacteria have so many more positive features than phage viruses. The bacteria are much larger and they live independently in a suitable environment. Yet some biologists attribute the design of their weapon to evolutionary descent, since it does have similarities to phage viruses. Such a suggestion ignores the obvious explanation that both were designed by the same Supernatural Mind.

### More weaponry

Bacteria have other weapons. The one which we have just discussed is, after all,

called a Type VI secretory system (T6SS). What about systems 1-5? They are all different and they all are designed for different objectives. The Type IV secretory system (T4SS) consists of a large chamber which extends through both enclosing membranes around a bacterial cell. It is topped outside with a hollow thread-like structure. This system is found in bacteria which move some DNA to another cell, not necessarily the same species, through a process called conjugation. This process has resulted in genes which confer resistance to antibiotics being transferred to other cells and other species of bacteria. Also some genes which can change an ordinary bacterium like *E. coli* into a disease causing bacterium, have been moved through conjugation.

Just because a hollow thread connects

## God made incredibly-designed killing machines?

by Margaret Helder

It is easy for Christians to concentrate on the beauty and complexity of the creation. However other aspects of nature involve parasites, carnivores, disease, disasters and death, and as we are talking about here, viruses.

Some people forget that the Bible talks about these issues too. For example, we read in Isaiah 45:7: "I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things." Also in Job 39:13-18 we read about the ostrich which is so lacking in wisdom that she neglects her own young because "God has given her no share in understanding." Nevertheless she is so well designed for speed that "when she rouses herself to flee, she laughs at horse and his rider." The negative aspects of nature, as well as the good, come from God's hand.

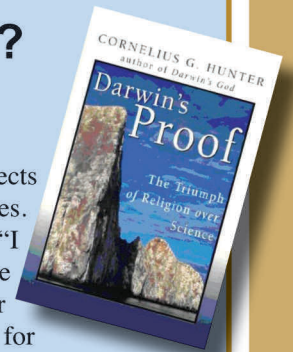
The problem of evil in nature has long occupied the minds of naturalists. If God is so good, the thinking goes, how could he have created so much evil in the world? The evolutionists have long claimed that they have the answer. God did not actually involve himself in the details of the creative process. Therefore the evil that appeared was not God's fault, it was incidental to the process.

As we all know, the Bible describes an original perfect creation which was later cursed by God as a result of man's fall into sin. Biophysicist Cornelius Hunter, in his (2003) book *Darwin's Proof: the Triumph of Religion over Science* (Brazos Press) declares that, "Humanity's rebellion against God did not simply bring about a human separation from God. Original sin did not have only moral implications – it also brought about a dramatic change to the natural order."

Dr. Hunter summarizes the situation:

"Over and over the Scriptures portray a glorious creation and a sovereign Creator. And they make a connection between humanity's choice to sin and the natural order. Unlike evolution, which attempts to explain the quirks and evils of nature but cannot explain complexity, and unlike the design argument, which cannot explain evil, the Scriptures give us a complete picture of the world. The Bible predicts both evil and complexity. God has created a glorious and awesome world. On the one hand, it includes complexity beyond measure, but on the other hand, it includes predation. And it has been corrupted by humanity's fall from grace."

We seldom reflect on the far reaching consequences of God's curse on nature. For example, there are now many creatures, like spiders, which are exclusively predators. In addition, although there are many benign microbes, many others contribute to disease conditions. Nevertheless, some day the creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption (Romans 8:21). We can certainly look forward to that day!



two bacterial cells, does not mean that DNA will move through the tube from one cell to another. We need force for that. Biologists now call the T4SS system a conjugation machine, meaning that the process is carried out by specific machines which are supplied with energy. Apparently the channel in the bacterial membrane is one of unprecedented size and complexity. This channel is gated to prevent mistakes. The outer thread is responsible for making contact with target cells. Once this happens, the internal gate opens and energy is provided to drive the DNA outward into the target cell. The interesting thing is that often neither the donor cell nor the recipient cell is obviously injured by this process which involves donor machinery which is large, structurally very complicated and chemically even more so. Interesting! Is this a design feature or a device that developed spontaneously? To assume the latter, you must have a lot of faith in spontaneous processes!

### The T3SS weapons system

The most famous such system in bacteria is the Type III secretory system (T3SS). This consists of a needle machine made of many different proteins. Its function is to deliver toxic compounds into the much larger cells of organisms

.....  
**“Did these elaborate machines just happen, or were they designed?”**  
 .....

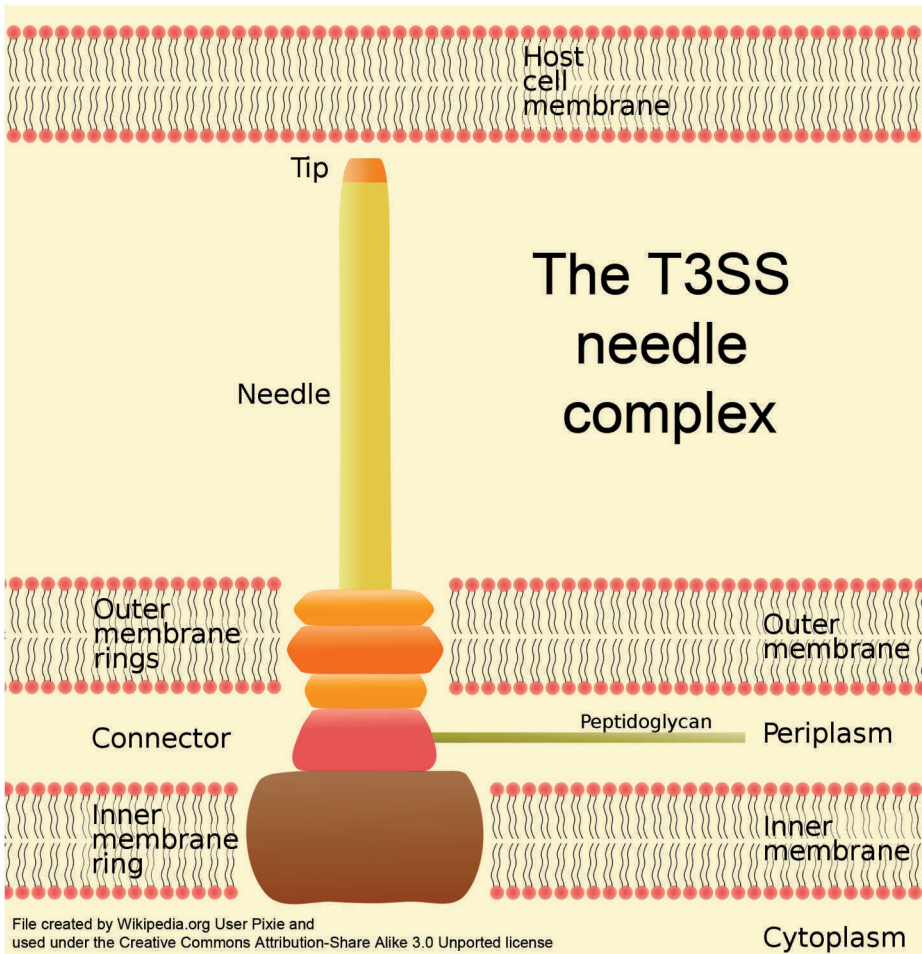
with a nucleus in each cell. Most such organisms are made up of many different cell types. The weapon consists of a fancy system of rings which are anchored in the inner and outer enclosing membranes of the bacterial cell. There is an interior rod which lines the cavity of the ring system and there is a needle protruding out of the

cell. The interior rod connects the needle to the anchoring rings. Assembly of the system proceeds one step at a time. Once the previous step is completed, the next begins. First the rings are formed and then the inner rod. Then the needle is produced. Once the needle reaches a suitable length, the system switches to production of toxic proteins which will be driven through the machinery into the victim’s cell. If the inner core is missing, no poisons will be produced either.

Since the channel through the system is so small, associated chaperone proteins are required to unfold the poison protein in order to thread it through the needle. Once inside the victim, however, the protein has to be refolded, since the action of a protein comes largely from its shape. These T3SS bacterial weapons are among the most complex secretion machines known. Among their amazing features is the unique and highly sophisticated nature of the poisons used. Each bacterial species employs different poisons which hijack the victim’s metabolism. These poisons act like important components in the host cell so that they act like “too much of a good thing.” Although they act like host cell components, the poisons actually do not resemble these host cell components in any way. Now how does the attacking cell achieve that feat?

### Conclusion

Biologists are astonished at the “importance and intrinsic beauty of these fascinating machines” (*Nature* Nov. 30/06 p. 571). The weapons of these exceedingly small bacterial cells and even smaller virus particles, are amazingly intricate, exhibiting precision, unique components and beauty. None of these systems could possibly be called primitive, although all are built on so miniature a scale. What they all display in fact is purpose and planning, irreducible complexity or intelligent design, whatever you want to call it! Presumably these organisms were initially created with exclusively beneficial contributions to nature, but these roles were later changed, so that some are benign and some threatening, such as we see today.



File created by Wikipedia.org User Pixie and used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license



# Looking for ET

## The world is searching for aliens Should we expect to find any?

by John Byl

Is there intelligent life elsewhere in the universe?

In a 2010 documentary entitled *Into the Universe With Stephen Hawking*, British physicist Stephen Hawking claimed that intelligent alien life forms almost certainly exist. However, he cautioned that communicating with them could be dangerous, since they may be looking for new planets to conquer.

More optimistic, Guy Consolmagno, the Pope's chief astronomer, speculated that aliens might have souls and could thus be baptized – if they were to request it.

Many people share Hawking's belief in the existence of aliens. In 1992 the US space agency NASA launched a major project to search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. This project, called SETI (short for: Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) uses radio telescopes around the world to examine distant stars for signals that might be of artificial origin. Thus far, the results have been completely negative. Discounting flying saucer reports, no signs of aliens have as yet been detected.

### The scientific case for aliens

How strong is the scientific case for aliens?

Estimates vary considerably. The optimists assert that many stars have planets, that a good fraction of those planets are suitable for life, that life will in fact develop on a sizeable proportion of such inhabitable planets, and, finally, that a significant number of these life-bearing planets will produce intelligent societies. Even if the fraction in each step is on the small side (say, 1 out of 100), the huge number of stars in our Galaxy alone, estimated at about 300 billion, would still leave us with perhaps about 3000 intelligent civilizations in our Galaxy. Many of these are likely to be much more advanced than we are.

On the other hand, the pessimists point out that all of the above factors are highly uncertain, that attaching numbers to them is mere guessing, and that, in fact, some of the required steps in the chain seem to be extremely unlikely – if not impossible – on the basis of current scientific knowledge

During the past few years, using new advanced telescopes and technology, about 600 exo-planets (i.e., planets beyond our solar system) have been found. Most, however, are gaseous, like Jupiter. Only a few dozen might have a solid surface. Of these, only 2 or 3 are at the right distance from their star to have

temperatures that could support life.

Last year, in September, the discovery was announced of a just-right, Goldilocks planet orbiting the star Gliese 581. This planet – named Gliese 581g – was said to have three times the mass of the Earth, an orbital period of 37 days, a rocky surface, and a temperature hospitable to life. Dr Steven Vogt, the discoverer, asserted, “chances for life on this planet are 100 percent...It's pretty hard to stop life once you give it the right conditions.” This claim was based on the assumption that the planet might have liquid water and that, based on earthly experience, life is always found where there is water.

However, it should be kept in mind that such planets cannot be directly observed. Thus, in the case of Gliese 581g, no actual rocky surface, liquid water or life-supporting atmosphere had in fact been seen. All these properties were surmised from tiny wobbles found in the motion of the parent star Gliese 581. Indeed, the official research report noted that the wobbles could be due to measurement errors and that the tentative conclusions needed to be confirmed by further research.

Now, a year later, it has been concluded that planet Gliese 581g probably does not exist. Also in science, one must be careful to distinguish what is actually observed from wishful thinking.

### Unwarranted optimism

Further, contrary to Vogt's optimism, given a habitable planet – even with liquid water and all other conditions needed for life – the naturalistic chances for life to evolve are extremely improbable. Paul Davies (*Are We Alone?*, 1995) estimated the odds against random permutations of molecules assembling DNA to be roughly  $10^{4000}$  (1 followed by 4000 zeros) to one against! This is about the same as tossing a coin and getting heads 130,000 times in a row. At that rate, Davies concludes, we wouldn't expect to find another DNA molecule in the observable universe for ten billion years.

What about the chances of life evolving into civilization? Stephen Webb (*If the Universe is teeming with aliens where is everybody?*, 2002) contends that, of the alleged 50 billion events in the history of the Earth resulting in new species, only one led to the development of language – which is the key to civilization.

Hence Webb concludes that civilizations are extremely rare. We must be alone in the universe.

Optimists, such as Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart (*Evolving the Alien: The Science of Extraterrestrial Life*, 2002) argue that life may take on many different forms, beyond our imagination.

Perhaps.

However, given the above immense odds against the chance emergence of intelligent life, such considerations seem unlikely to reduce the odds sufficiently to favor the existence of aliens.

### Motivation for belief in aliens

Given the lack of scientific evidence, why do so many people believe in aliens? The motivation seems to be primarily psychological and philosophical. Consider the words of Carl Sagan (*Broca's Brain* 1979):

“The translation of a radio message from the depths of space... holds the greatest promise of both practical and philosophical benefits. In particular, it is possible that among the first contents of such a message may be detailed descriptions for the avoidance of technological disaster, for a passage through adolescence to maturity...”

Paul Davies (1995) comments:

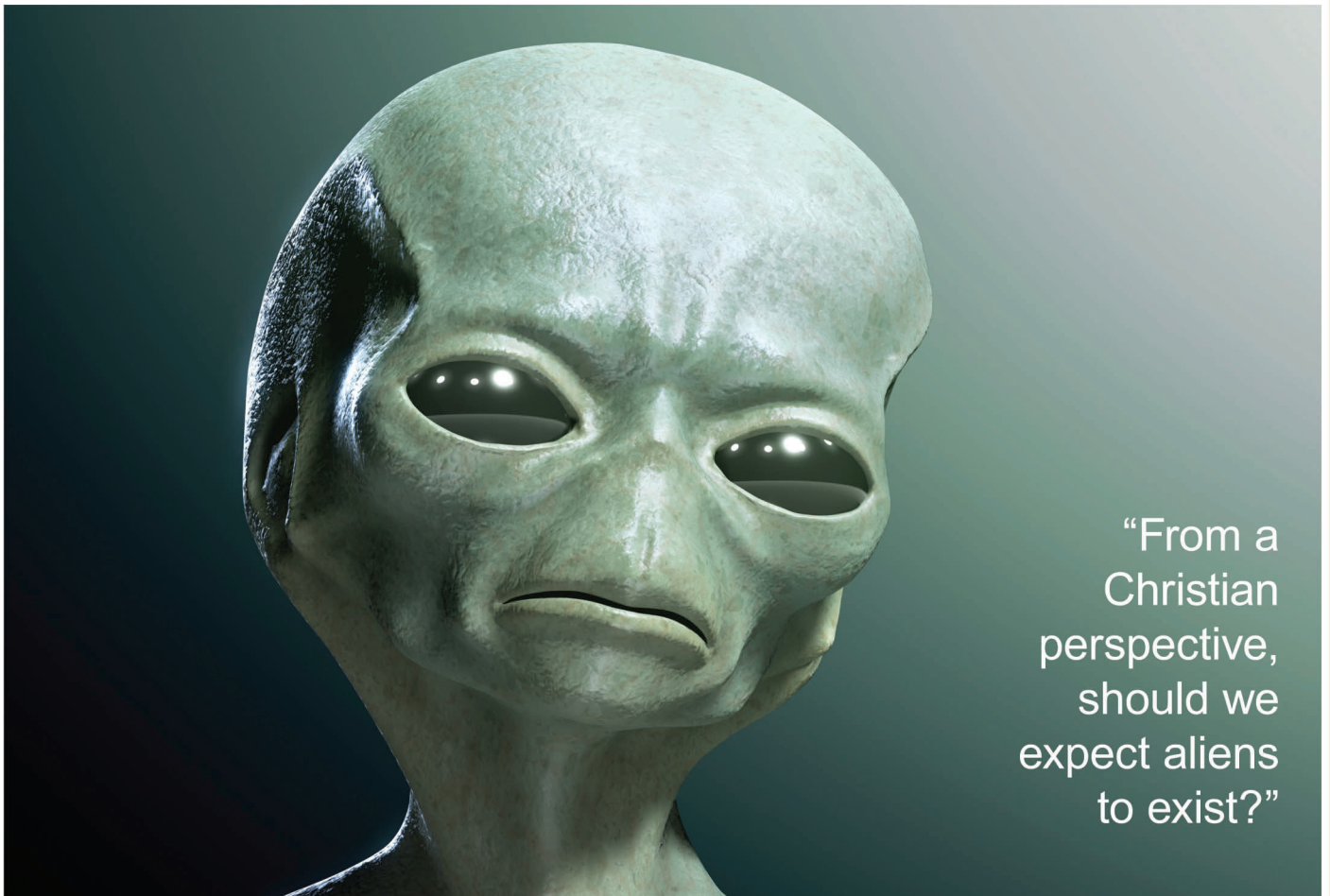
“The interest in SETI among the general public stems in part, I maintain, from the need to find a wider context to their lives than this earthly existence provides. In an era when conventional religion is in sharp decline, the belief in super-advanced aliens... can provide some measure of comfort and inspiration...This sense of a religious quest may well extend to the scientists themselves, even though most of them are self-professed atheists.”

It is ironic that man, even after having rejected God, still searches the heavens for his salvation.

### Theological considerations

From a Christian perspective, should we expect aliens to exist?

It is certainly possible that God has directly created intelligent beings on other planets – it is within His power. Yet Scripture makes no mention of the creation of intelligent beings beyond the Earth (except, of course, the angels). To this one might suggest that God may not have deemed it necessary to inform us of such creatures.



“From a Christian perspective, should we expect aliens to exist?”



The foremost theological issue concerns Christ's incarnation. Was it unique? Or did it re-occur on other planets, as was postulated by theologian Paul Tillich? Augustine (354-430 AD) already noted that the historical process of creation, fall, and redemption could occur only once. This seems clear from such biblical texts as "for Christ also has once suffered for sins" (I Peter 3:18) and "Christ being raised from the dead dies no more...he died unto sin once" (Romans 6:9-10).

John Jefferson Davis ("Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence and the Christian Doctrine of Redemption" *Science & Christian Belief* 9 (1997)) suggests that Christ's unique incarnation as a human nevertheless suffices for the redemption of *all* intelligent beings in the universe. However, Scripture makes a necessary connection between the first Adam and the second Adam, Christ. For Christ's sacrifice to be sufficient it was essential that Christ have a human nature:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same... For indeed he took not on himself the nature of angels; but he took on himself the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:14-17).

Aliens, like angels, are not descendants of Adam. They thus share neither his nature nor his guilt. Hence Christ's sacrifice is of no avail to them. Man is the only creature Christ saved from the consequences of his sinfulness. Thus, if aliens exist, either they have not fallen from grace or, less happily, like the fallen angels, they cannot be redeemed.

Moreover, man has a special relation to God. Man alone was created in the image of God. Man was appointed to rule over the earth and its creatures. Even the stars were created primarily to serve as lights and signs for man. Finally, at the end of times, Christ returns to the Earth, the abode of man, to judge the living and the dead. Man is to judge the angels (1 Cor.6:3). The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to Earth. All this reinforces the special place of man in God's creation.

### Conclusions

In sum, we note that there is no scientific evidence in support of the belief in aliens. Indeed, there has been no sign of life of any form on any of our planets. Searches for interstellar life, scanning nearby stars for radio signals or noise indicative of civilization, have virtually ruled out the possibility of advanced civilized life within a hundred light years. To span greater distances even an extremely fast rocket traveling at a tenth of the speed of light would

take longer than a millennium, and radio dialogues would have century-long gaps. Thus, for all practical purposes, communication with extra-terrestrial civilizations can be ruled out.

From an evolutionary perspective, the odds are heavily stacked against the chance occurrence of life, particularly intelligent life.

Theological considerations based on Biblical revelation weigh very heavily against the presence of aliens. Yet not conclusively so. We cannot absolutely rule out the possibility — however remote it may seem — that God created intelligent life on distant planets. The prime argument against aliens is Biblical silence. However, God's creation and plan may be much more complex than we can imagine.

*This article is adapted from a post on the author's blog  
www.bylogos.blogspot.com*



## Inter-League Publication Board

Publishers of Reformed Study Material

Making Reformed study aids available for assisting  
and promoting the study  
of Scripture.

Old Testament books – New Testament books  
Other Biblical topics

Visit our website: [www.ILPB.ca](http://www.ILPB.ca)

## KEEPING THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY

An excellent resource for spiritual and  
practical ways of observing the Lord's Day.

Some subjects : faithful Church attendance; reasons, relevance & need of worship & rest; Biblical background; preparing for Sunday; Sunday is a delight, perpetual obligation; resisting unlawful Lord's Day work; Sunday shopping; if the Sunday becomes a day of amusement it will soon become a day of labour; permissible Sunday work; Sunday clothes; reverence in Church; 4th commandment; confessions, benefits, stewardship, witnessing, etc., over 100 articles.

**\$17.14 - shipping & tax extra**

**Bethel Books 519-351-4290**

for *Reformed Christian* books. **Free catalogues**

Jerry Tillema, 274 McNaughton Ave. East, Chatham, ON N7L 2G8

Psalm 122 : I - I rejoiced with those who said to me,  
" Let us go to the house of the Lord. "

Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at  
Chatham, Ontario, 283 McNaughton Ave. East, N7L 2H2

Services on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

[www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org) [www.chatham-ebenezer.com](http://www.chatham-ebenezer.com)



# “Parent rests while toddlers play: film at 11”

## 10 activities you can do with your kids while lying down

by Sharon L. Bratcher

A young relative has two toddlers, and our conversation reminded me of some useful strategies from those wonderful and exhausting days. While I don't miss the days when several of them were sick simultaneously, or those hours when they all whined or argued, I miss the children: their voices giving daily news bulletins that showed me who they were and who they were becoming, and all of the singing, learning, and playing together.

Some negative people see only the duties of parenting. That's like a Fortune 500 company president focusing only on flooding toilets in the washroom or employee theft. But you can enjoy being in the thick of it now, even if the work is challenging and tiring!

### Make a plan

The first strategy is that days always went best when I guided, loosely at least, the order of the activities for the day. Mom or Dad assessed the needs *and* the desires of the children, and then decided when it was playtime, rest time, or lunch time.

A second strategy was born from fatigue and creativity. I found that with *enthusiasm* I could engage the little ones in activities that could be done while I was physically resting and they were getting exercise. I thought of titling it, “10 games you can play with a toddler without having to roll off the sofa.” Here are my ten:

1. Fetch. Seriously! While lying on the sofa, you can throw a ball for a toddler to retrieve. They love it, and you

get to be prone.

2. Rollies. Similar to fetch, except that you take whichever toys will roll (stacking rings, for instance) and you roll them as far as you can, and the kids chase them and bring them back. I used to do this in church nursery and it kept them occupied for a good twenty minutes.
3. Coloring. Children like to have you color with them. Get a coffee table that's the height of the sofa, and pull it over next to the sofa. While you lie there, color together, commenting on what you are doing. It's a great time to listen. You can even color with your odd hand if you need to turn over onto your other side— the kids don't care or even notice.
4. Reading, and lessons. Let them bring over their favorite books. I taught all of my kids to read (starting at age 4) using *Why Johnny Can't Read* by Rudolf Flesch; all it takes is the book, attention, and some paper and pencils. It doesn't matter what position your body is in while you read or teach them!
5. Blocks or Duplos. Build towers and teach them to build houses on the coffee table. Practice boundaries by letting them use opposite ends of the table to build. They love your attention to their designs and details.
6. Safety scissors, magazines, catalogs, and tape = books. Staple together 3 or 4 pieces of construction paper and then, on the coffee table, let them cut pictures and tape them in to make a book. Have them dictate what to say,

and write it down exactly. All together at the end you can pick up the debris.

7. “Don't let the balloon hit the floor!” Best played when there are at least 2-3 kids to run and jump after it. You can use one hand and one foot as you lie there.
8. Sing. Sing songs that they know. Teach them silly songs from your youth. Listen and sing along to kids' CD's (our favorite was *Rosenshontz!*) Encourage them to dance and jump to the music, or have a stuffed animal parade. They get exercise, and you're lying on the sofa, waving your arms.
9. Write letters to grandparents, or church members. Be the secretary and ask them what to say (with a little prompting.) Let them make up a story, and read back each paragraph as they finish it. If you use a pencil and a paper on a clipboard or book, you can write while laying on your back. After your rest you can walk to the mailbox together.
10. Watch a video together. I'm not for plugging kids in very often, but it is another activity you can do while lying down on the sofa. Plan it, saying, “after lunch cleanup we'll watch a video together;” then get comfy and enjoying their responses, teaching them tidbits: “God made those puppies, didn't He?”

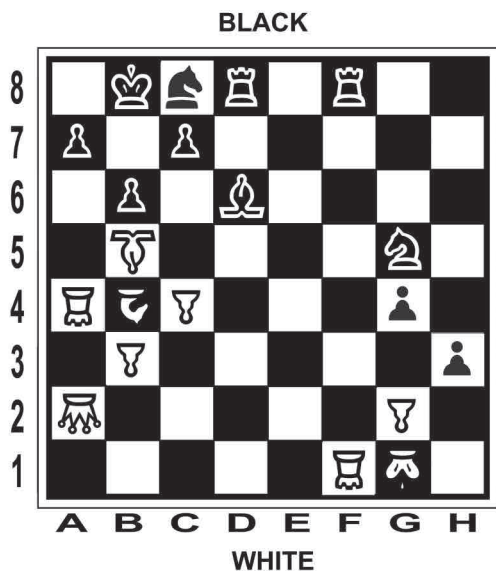
Toddlers desire your loving attention. You can give them a full dose of it *and* rest yourself by trying these ideas in your home.



# ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

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

## Chess Puzzle # 181



**WHITE to Mate in 4**  
Or, If it is BLACK's Move,  
**BLACK to Mate in 2**

## NEW PUZZLES

**Riddle for Punsters #181** – “Do not impatiently mutter if your ball goes in the gutter!”

What did the bowler say to his competitor who kept interfering with his concentration by trying to s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ up a conversation?

“Please s \_ \_ \_ \_ me the details.”

**Problem to Ponder #181** – “Fairly Average Bowling Averages”

Tony and his sister Sophia went bowling and each played three games.

a) The score for Tony’s second game was 35 points higher than for the first game and score for the third game was 50 points higher than for the second game. If his average score for the 3 games was 130 points, what was Tony’s score in each game?

b) The score for Sophia’s second game was 10 points higher than for her first game. Her third game score was double the first game score and 70 points higher than her second game score. What was Sophia’s average score?

## SOLUTIONS TO THE SEPTEMBER PUZZLE PAGE

**Answers to Riddles for Punsters #180** – “A bad tree cannot bear good fruit!”

You can tell that an apple is rotten on the inside if there is evidence of c o r e-uption.

**Answers to Problem to Ponder #180** – “Row, Row, Row Your Boat...”

Two boats were entered in a 8 kilometre rowing competition. The first took 12 minutes to speed up uniformly from 0 to 20 km/h (and so had an average speed of 10 km/h during those 12 minutes) then travelled the rest of the way to the finish line at that speed of 20 km/h. The second boat took 20 minutes to speed up uniformly from 0 to 24 km/h (and so had an average speed of 12 km/h during those 20 minutes) then travelled the rest of the way to the finish line at that speed of 24 km/h. How long did each boat take to reach the finish line and so which boat won the 8 km long race?

During the 12 minutes of speeding up uniformly, the first boat’s average speed was  $(0+20)/2 = 10$  km/h and so the distance travelled during that time was  $1/5$  hour  $\times$  10 km/h = 2 km. The time to travel the remaining  $8-2 = 6$  km would be  $6 \text{ km} / 20 \text{ km/h} = 6/20$  hour =  $18/60$  hour = 18 minutes. The total time to reach the finish was  $12+18 = 30$  minutes.

During the 20 minutes of speeding up uniformly, the second boat’s average speed was  $(0+24)/2 = 12$  km/h and so the distance travelled during that time was  $1/3$  hour  $\times$  12 km/h = 4 km. The time to travel the remaining  $8-4 = 4$  km would be  $4 \text{ km} / 24 \text{ km/h} = 1/6$  hour = 10/60

### SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 180

**WHITE to Mate in 4**

**Descriptive Notation**

1. N/K4xN ch PxN
2. NxP ch K-R1
3. Q-R7 mate

**OR**

2. NxP ch K-N2
3. Q-R7 mate

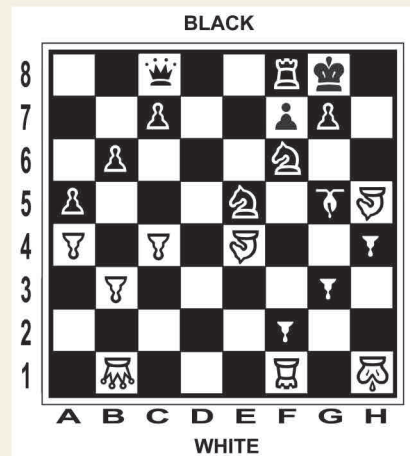
**Algebraic Notation**

1. Ne4xf6 + g7xf6
2. Nh5xf6 + Kg8-h8
3. Qb1-h7 ++

**OR**

2. Nh5xf6+ Kg8-g7
3. Qb1-h7++

**BLACK to Mate in 2**



**Descriptive Notation**

1. ----- Q-R6 ch
2. K-N1 N-B6 mate

**Algebraic Notation**

1. ----- Qc8-h3 +
2. Kh1-g1 Ne5-f3 ++

hour = 10 minutes. The total time to reach the finish was  $20+10 = 30$  minutes. Thus both boats took the same time to reach the finish and so tied.

# Crossword Puzzle

Series 18 No 8

Last Month's solution  
Series 18 No 7

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11		
12						13				14				15
16						17				18				19
20					21		22		23			24		
			25			26		27						
28	29	30		31				32				33		
34			35			36						37		
38				39	40				41			42	43	44
			45			46		47			48			
49	50	51		52				53	54	55		56		
57								58			59			
60				61			62		63			64	65	66
67			68			69		70		71				
			72				73			74				
	75									76				

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
S	E	V	E	R	S	I	C	E	S	A	R
I	E	V	E	T	R	A	Y	O	B	I	E
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
T	I	R	E	D	R	O	S	E	I	O	N
28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
A	D	S	I	C	O	N	S	T	R	U	S
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
R	O	E	A	I	N	A	H	A	T	E	S
55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
S	L	A	G	V	A	T	S				
69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
P	A	P	A	S	P	A	R	T	A	R	E
83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94
E	M	I	T	S	P	A	S	M	O	N	U
97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108
R	I	T	E	O	O	P	R	I	D	E	
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122
S	O	U	S	P	O	R	E				
125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136
S	O	A	R	T	E	A	E	S	T	R	
139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
C	A	T	E	R	D	I	S	K	S	C	O
153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164
O	K	A	Y	P	A	S	T	S	L	E	E
167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178
N	E	N	E	I	T	A	L	E	A	N	E
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192
E	N	D	S	P	E	R	E	D	R	E	S

## ACROSS:

- Wild animal track
- Shrinking in fear
- French book
- Male sheep
- Employ
- Fully attentive
- Small dog's sound
- Picture
- Domestic servant or retainer
- Fix a sock hole
- Small child
- Short play
- A unit of luminous intensity
- Abraham, to his friends
- Self-importance
- Time-delay estimation, for short
- Near-death experience (abbr.)
- Horse colour
- Withstand the force of
- Dock for pleasure boats
- Isis' brother
- Baseball hits
- Jaunty
- Downcast
- Multi-passenger vehicle
- Outs partner

## DOWN:

- Piece of sunshine
- Act ahead of
- Pros partner
- Latin plural suffixes, esp. in names of zoo groups
- Layer between earth's crust and it's mantle
- Sharp narrow sword
- Tree that has chocolate flavored pods
- Bad sun ray
- Having a tendency
- Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, for short
- Body of water
- Remains undecided
- Ship contracts
- Bread ingredient

## DOWN:

- Shut a door hard
- Heap
- Baker's appliance
- Iris with a fragrant rootstock
- Photograph again
- Sob
- Sudden attack on the enemy
- Forceful collisions
- Book of world records
- Distinctive doctrine
- Tidy up
- Stiff bristle hairs
- Precious metal
- Media function with free refreshments
- Apparatus for receiving music
- Rocky pinnacle
- Body limb
- Snake
- Head part
- Nat'l Institute of Health
- Waitress' perk
- Month
- Mano \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (conflict between two people)
- Colour

- Retirement savings account (abbr.)
- Pig pen
- Show enthusiasm
- Dog's command to attack
- Vacant area
- Gulf of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , aka Ambracian Gulf
- Scarcity
- Neither's partner
- Impatient or irritable
- Lively frolic or outing
- Finished
- Island in Hebrides, center of early Celtic Christianity
- Concludes
- Repose
- Obstructive sleep apnea (abbr.)
- Associate in Applied Sciences (abbr.)

*Joyce*