

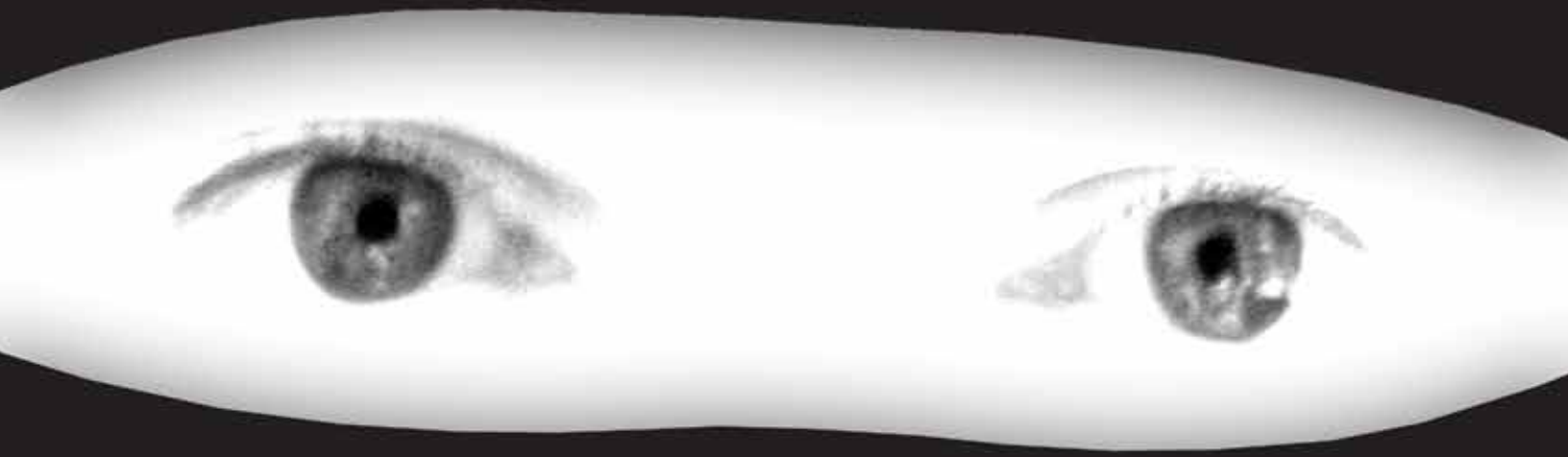
REFORMED

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

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December 2010



Christianity
Islam
and
modesty

Shifting the Overton Window

There are two ways to encourage our country to turn in a godly direction. Both involve talking.

by Jon Dykstra

The following was a speech delivered in Aldergrove, BC on November 22 at a CHP-sponsored event called: "Shifting a Nation through Christian Politics, Political Advocacy and Media."

Glenn Beck, a radio talk show host in the US, recently came out with a novel titled *The Overton Window*. It was a very odd title, so before even getting the book I googled the title to find out what it meant.

The Overton Window is a term used to describe how acceptable an idea is to the public, or where this idea would fall on a spectrum of acceptability. This spectrum starts on one side at *Unthinkable*, and ends on the other side with ideas that are so well thought of by the public, they have become *Policy*.

Now a politician isn't going to dare talk about ideas that will make him seem like a kook, so if an idea falls into the *Unthinkable*, or *Radical* end of the spectrum, he won't touch them. That's where we are right now with the issue of abortion in Canada.

A daring politician may bring up ideas that are merely *Acceptable*, but most politicians try to find out which way the parade is heading, and then get out in front of it. So they will only bring up issues thought *Sensible*, *Popular*, or so accepted that everyone thinks they should be made *Policy*.

I bring up the Overton Window because it is a very useful tool to direct, and measure what we are doing when we set out to "shift our nation." We are trying to change hearts and minds, and on issues like the protection of the unborn, marriage, human rights commissions, education policy, and restorative justice, we want to shift this Overton Window. We want our ideas, once thought unthinkable, to be seen by Canadians as simply common sense, and so popular they should be policy.

Doing it right

So how do we make the shift? There are two ways.

1. SPEAKING THE UNTHINKABLE MAKES IT LESS SO

If a teenage girl wants her parents to change her curfew from 10 pm to midnight it might be a good idea for her

to overshoot what she really wants, and push for 2 am.* If she pushes for this unthinkable curfew and makes a credible case for it, showing her parents that other teens stay out until 2 am, she might just succeed in making midnight seem acceptable. By taking a more extreme position than she actually held to, she could pull her parents to where she wanted them to be.

We can do something like that too. We aren't going to exaggerate our position like the girl – lying about what we believe isn't an option open to Christians – but we can take inspiration from her and speak out fearlessly on our most unthinkable ideas. If we are vocal, if we are heard, we can pull the public towards us, even if we don't yet bring them all the way over. So, for example, if in our day-to-day lives we all start wearing pro-life shirts that celebrated the humanity of the unborn, and if in the next election campaign CHP candidates effectively and vocally make the case for the humanity of the unborn, and then we all use the ARPA Easy Mail to write our MPs, and write into our papers too, calling for an end to abortion, we could succeed in pulling the public enough our way – we could shift the Overton Window enough – to allow a Conservative MP to push for an "Informed Consent" law. This is a law that would require women be given all the facts before they have an abortion. Of course we wouldn't be satisfied with this one small step forward, but some children would be saved. It would be a start.

But it will only happen if we are willing to speak the unthinkable fearlessly and boldly.

2. SPEAKING THE RADICAL REPEATEDLY

Earlier this month Sarah Palin, one time US vice-presidential candidate, brought homemade cookies for students at a Pennsylvania school. She had heard that there was a debate going on over whether public schools in the state should ban sweets. "Who should be deciding what [our children] eat?" she asked a cheering audience. "Should it be government or should it be parents? It should be the parents," Palin concluded.

THE OVERTON WINDOW

applied to parental curfew attitudes



That a child's parent should make their nutritional decisions, rather than some arm of the government, is not an extreme position. But unless, like Palin, we speak this truth repeatedly, repetitively publicly, and repeatedly (and repetitively) it could easily become extreme. It is only by repetition that common sense remains common.

How not to do it

Now there are also two approaches we can use to be sure we won't shift our nation in a more godly direction.

1. WE CAN'T EXPECT CHANGE IF WE WON'T SPEAK

This might seem so obvious as to be not worth mentioning, But it is our default. It is easier *not* to let co-workers know we oppose how a homosexual couple rewrote the BC public schools curriculum. It is easier to be quiet than do the research to be able to speak persuasively for the unborn. It's easier to remain ignorant about what our country's human rights commissions are up to. It's easier to be unprepared, and unnoticed, easier not to stick out, easier to keep our mouths shut.

It's easier, but we can't expect change if we won't ready ourselves to speak on the issues of our day intelligently and persuasively.

2. WE ALSO CAN'T EXPECT CHANGE IF WE PRETEND TO BE LESS RADICAL THAN WE ARE

One of the reasons I brought up the Overton Window tonight is because it is a more accurate way to evaluate success than some of our more traditional measures. We sometimes get caught up in measuring our success by how many Christians MPs or MLAs we've elected, or how many votes our candidate received, or maybe how many pieces of legislation "our guys" have managed to pass. But there is a problem with measuring success this way. It is possible to increase our vote total and elect more Christian MPs even as our nation becomes increasingly godless. We can even pass positive pieces of legislation, without changing Canadians' hearts and minds. How? By downplaying our Christian convictions. If we pretend that we aren't radical, that our radical positions are quite conventional, we can get elected. But without any mandate to make the changes we are actually hoping for.

I want to note as I bring up this next example, that I respect this man and am not trying to attack what he is doing.

My intent is only to present the *limits* of what he is doing. A Manitoba Conservative MP, Rod Bruinooge, has proposed a piece of legislation that would make it illegal to coerce a woman to have an abortion. It may be the very smallest possible step forward in the protection of the unborn, because it will only protect those few children who are wanted by their mothers, but are being threatened by their fathers. It is a small step, *but still a step!*

But it is not being sold as pro-life legislation. Bruinooge is quoted by WorldNetDaily.com as saying his bill "doesn't have any bearing on access to abortion." He noted:

"That's not related to this bill. Access to abortion in Canada is in all nine months. . . . This bill doesn't have any bearing on that. . . . This bill is neither pro-life or pro-abortion."

Now anything abortion-related in Canada would fall in the radical/unthinkable range of the Overton Window. But if the public takes Bruinooge at his word, and believes that his bill has nothing to do with abortion, they may find it an acceptable idea. It's possible the legislation may be passed.

That would be a victory. This would mean protection for children whose fathers might otherwise have pressured their mothers into having an abortion.

But its passage wouldn't signal any sort of shift in our nation. It will only be passed because MP Bruinooge avoided talking about abortion – so the bill won't have done anything to shift the public in a pro-life direction.

Conclusion

The shift that we are after is going to involve pushing boundaries, being radical, bringing up the unthinkable. That's how we are going to start to shift hearts and minds – when we fearlessly and repeatedly and effectively present God's truth to our nation.

And so to conclude I want to encourage you to speak out, in whatever organization you are a part of, and wherever God has placed you: at your work, in the park, behind a podium, over the back fence, at the gym, Equip yourself to speak out and then speak. We all need to take on this task.

**Joe Lehman used this curfew illustration to explain the Overton Window on the Glenn Beck Show. Lehman is the President of the Mackinac Center think tank where researcher Joseph Overton first thought up the term "Overton Window."*



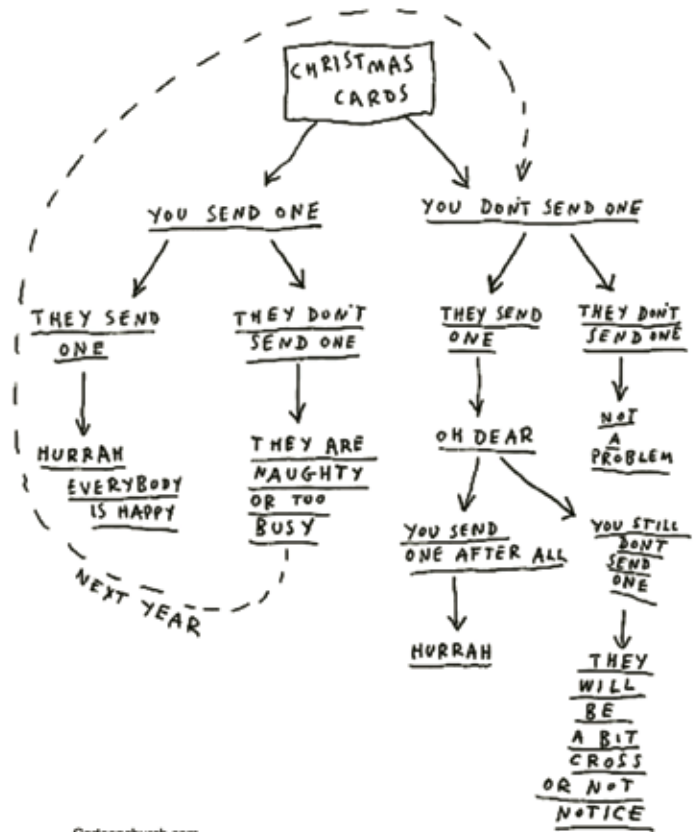
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FOR SOME REASON I STILL FIND MYSELF STICKING POST-IT NOTES TO MY NEW PHONE.



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

Premier Printing, One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2J 3X5
Telephone: (204) 663-9000, Email: subscribe@reformedperspective.ca

Editor: Jon Dykstra

Address for Editorial Matters (Letters and Submissions):

Reformed Perspective, 162 Cambridge Drive, Lynden, WA, USA 98264
E-mail: editor@reformedperspective.ca

Managing Editor: Peter DeBoer

Regular Contributors:

Sharon Bratcher, Jane deGlint, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder, Michael Wagner

Board of Directors: John Voorhorst, Chairman;

James Teitsma, Secretary/Treasurer; Peter DeBoer, Henk VanderVelde

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 Bookshop, PO Box 189, Kelmscott, W. Australia 6111

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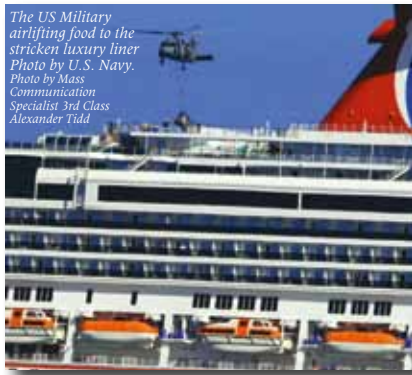
News worth noting



The definition of entrepreneur

by Jon Dykstra

In early November a cruise ship made the news after an engine fire left the *Carnival Splendor* adrift in the Pacific, without electricity, and for a time, without flushing toilets. For three days passengers lived in dark



The US Military airlifting food to the stricken luxury liner
Photo by U.S. Navy.
Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alexander Tidd

cabins, ate warm food and shared the washroom facilities that were operational. The passengers' less than luxurious vacation came to an end only after six tugboats pulled the cruise ship into San Diego harbor on November 11.

As the vacationers disembarked, among those there to greet them was Lissa Letts, a Kansas native who didn't know anyone on the ship but who had traveled more than 2,000 kilometers to greet the returning passengers. Why? She had created 100 T-shirts for the occasion that read: "I Survived the 2010 Carnival Cruise Spamcation." According to the Associated Press "Passengers snapped up the shirts at \$20 apiece."

SOURCE: USA Today.com, Gene Sloan's "Carnival Splendor passengers disembark in San Diego" Nov. 11, 2010

Planned Parenthood's "win-win"

by Anna Nienhuis

Planned Parenthood's president, Cecile Richards, spoke in October about making birth control a critical part of the US government's new health care bill. They already argue that abortion should always be fully funded by one's health care insurer, and are now saying that this is not only in the best interests of women, but also just "good public policy."

Planned Parenthood argues that unplanned pregnancies lead to unnecessary government expenses, which

could be eliminated by eliminating the pregnancies. Obviously there is a fairly gigantic conflict of interest here as Planned Parenthood is the #1 abortion provider in the US, and they also buy contraceptives at discounted prices and then sell them to women at up to 12 times the cost. So such a government position would strengthen their profit margin.

While Planned Parenthood is trying to portray this subsidizing of birth control as a "win-win" situation, the problem lies in their portrayal of babies as an economic liability. It is a shortsighted perspective since we are

Paid to be sterilized – Eugenics or a good idea?

by Anna Nienhuis

Project Prevention, a non-profit organization in the United States started by Barbara Harris, is a program working to prevent drug addicts from having babies. Harris started the organization after adopting 4 children born to the same crack-addicted woman in Los Angeles and seeing the pain of withdrawal these babies suffered after being born addicted to drugs. The organization pays \$300 to anyone who proves a drug or alcohol addiction (arrest records or a doctor's note) and provides documentation that a medical procedure has taken place to have them sterilized or put on long-term contraception.

Parts of Britain are now following suit, and critics are comparing the programs to Nazi eugenics, as the organizations are declaring drug addicts an "undesirable" subgroup that should not be allowed to reproduce. However, Harris defends the program, as "drug treatment is just a gamble" and most addicts end up in and out of treatment programs without success.

The problem lies in the fact that many drug addicts will take the money (and consequences) without much thought, as their only concern may be their next "fix" and they may regret their decision later in life if they get cleaned up. However, Harris counters this by citing examples of women who had multiple children while addicted to drugs who were taken away from them and that they are then unable to get back when they get their lives on track. She argues this is an equal, if not more devastating, emotional burden.

This goal of the program – to protect babies from suffering – is one we can agree with. But what should Christians think of the means by which this goal is being pursued? If you can offer biblical perspective on this issue, we would love to hear from you – please email the editor at editor@reformedperspective.ca

SOURCE: news.bbc.co.uk, Feb. 8, 2010; soycberty.com/issues/should-drug-addicts-be-paid-to-be-sterilized, Oct. 19, 2010

already not having enough children to replace the previous generation, and it sees children as a curse to be minimized, rather than a blessing to be embraced.

SOURCE: Kathleen Gilbert's "Fewer People Mean Less Government Cost: Planned Parenthood President", Lifesitenews.com, Oct. 26, 2010 and Steven Mosher & Colin Mason's "Planned Parenthood Wants to Abort Us Into Prosperity", Lifesitenews.com, Nov. 9, 2010

It's a Waste of Time. . . Right?

Letter writing in an age of apathy

by Mark Penninga

Moments ago an email arrived in my inbox. It contained a signed letter from the head of Status of Women Canada, the federal government's organization devoted to promoting the place of women in society, and it was a response to an email I wrote about an Ontario court striking down the country's prostitution laws. She informed me that the federal government will be appealing that decision.

This wasn't news to me. In fact, apart from acknowledging my letter and explaining what Status of Women is, the letter said almost nothing. Was this exchange a waste of time? Did my letter to a government official really make any difference?

In my current role with ARPA Canada, I encourage people to write letters all the time. We even recently built software (ARPA Easy Mail) that allows readers to send a customized letter to their MP in a matter of seconds. According to our "Action Meter" over 1,000 letters have been sent this year – and that doesn't include many more that never get recorded. Is all this letter writing worth it?

We wrongly assume that MPs are already inundated with correspondence from people who would write exactly what we would anyways. Sadly, the truth is very different. When a few ARPA reps met with one MP in Parliament earlier this year, he informed us that during the entire euthanasia debate last year (which carried on in Parliament over many months), he received a total of two letters from his constituents about it. And this was from a riding where a Reformed church was located. In fact, this was after ARPA encouraged letters on this issue time and time again.

Letters are essential. If our leaders don't hear from us about the issues that we care about, how exactly are they supposed to know that we care or what they should be doing? Even if they already agree with our position, how can they act on it with any confidence that their constituents are behind them?

The following arguments are commonly raised:

My MP doesn't even read my letter. I tried it once and all I got was a form letter in reply.

MPs are busy and have to represent over 100,000 people which means they won't usually have the time to respond personally to every letter, but every MP that ARPA contacted told us that they read *all* the mail they get from constituents. The only exception is duplicates of the same letter.



*You can write a letter
anywhere, anytime.*

My MP would just rip up my letter. She is completely opposed to my beliefs.

Some of the best responses I have ever received were from MPs with very different worldviews. When I lived in Burnaby, BC and Svend Robinson was my MP, I wrote him about a bill he had introduced that would add “sexual orientation” to the part of the Criminal Code pertaining to hate speech. Shortly after writing the email, I received a phone call from Mr. Robinson himself. Not only did he take the time to discuss my concerns, he also invited me to follow-up with another letter about the matter.

.....
One MP informed us that during the entire euthanasia debate last year he received a total of two letters from his constituents. And this was from a riding where a Reformed church was located
.....

And this isn't an isolated account. Some ARPA members have developed great relationships with their local MP even though they have very different beliefs. If they don't hear from you they will only be further convinced that the public agrees with their perspective.

My representative already agrees with me. They don't need to hear another letter in support of what they are doing.

As I am writing this article, an ARPA member forwarded me a response that he just received from a Senator who bravely defeated a bill on climate-change. That Senator noted that this was only the second email he received supporting him, with over 500 that were sent opposing his vote! They need our support and encouragement, regardless of whether they may agree with your perspective.

Everyone knows meeting with your MP is the only effective way to communicate with them.

Meeting in person is by far the best route to take. It provides an opportunity to discuss the issue, show that you really care, and avoid misunderstanding. It also forces our representatives to think about the issue enough to respond (rather than relying on a staff member to provide talking points).

However writing a letter the old fashioned way is also valuable – it shows that you put the time into thinking it through. Follow it up with a phone call to make sure it is considered. An email counts too, especially if you personal-

ize it. Form letters show that one more person cares about an issue, even if they don't carry as much weight as a custom letter or email.

A letter may have some value, but ARPA's new Easy Mail system is just cheapening the value of all mail because it is too easy.

ARPA Easy Mail is indeed easy. For those that aren't familiar with it, this is something we've just unveiled at ARPACanada.ca (it is also on our new site HumanRightsCommissions.ca) where you can find it by looking for the Easy Mail logo on the left of our home page. It makes contacting your MP something you can do in just minutes. To try it, select one of the dozen issues you want to contact your MP about. Type in your postal code – this will automatically find your MP and put his or her name and contact information into a letter that we already prepared on the issue. You can then customize the letter, add your mailing address, and click “submit.” After confirming (via email) that the letter indeed is coming from you, it is sent to the MP, yourself, and whomever we think should be carbon copied (usually the Minister responsible for that issue and the Prime Minister). This can all be done in a few minutes.

.....
That Senator noted that this was only the second email he received supporting him, with over 500 that were sent opposing his vote!
.....

Easy Mail results in over a hundred letters being sent to MPs across the country within hours or days of ARPA informing our readers about the need for action on a particular issue.

So it is easy to do, but we built Easy Mail in a way that each email would look just like a regular email, coming from your personal email address. The MP's job is to hear from their constituents. Hearing from more of us is a good thing, especially if we are bringing them a thoughtful letter.

We asked one MP to give his honest thoughts about Easy Mail and he replied:

“Don't be hesitant to make use of it. Even better yet when people tweak the letter and personalize it, so that as MPs we don't regard it as just a campaign by some tech savvy special interest group. . . If a flood of template letters come in, I still pay attention to the issue. However, if the letter transmitted is personalized some, then greater odds that the MP will be enticed to read a few more of them. Promote it more in the future. It's quick, effective and gets the job done.”



Francis Schaeffer

God used this man, at this moment, to start the Protestant pro-life movement

by Michael Wagner

Francis Schaeffer was one of the most notable Christian apologists of the late twentieth century. He is well-known among evangelicals for his defense of the faith against the predominant philosophies of the secular world. Towards the end of his life he was also instrumental in mobilizing conservative Christians in the United States to resist social and political trends that threatened life and freedom.

Almost no Protestant Pro-lifers

One of the most profound results of Francis Schaeffer's ministry was the development of the evangelical wing of the pro-life movement. It may be hard to believe today, but it in the first years after abortion was legalized in United States in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, most evangelicals were not particularly concerned about the issue. There were some conservative Protestant thinkers who understood abortion and its implications but, generally speaking, opposition to abortion was widely considered to be a "Roman Catholic issue."

According to Frank Schaeffer (Francis Schaeffer's son), Francis Schaeffer's efforts were the single biggest factor in mobilizing the evangelical churches to become involved in pro-life activism. Frank Schaeffer has written a kind of autobiography called *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right, and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of It Back* where he describes his upbringing, his personal spiritual journey, and his role in helping to create the movement commonly called the Christian Right. This book is very disturbing because Frank Schaeffer apostatized from his Presbyterian upbringing, but it does contain some very interesting information.

Preparing the way

Francis Schaeffer first moved his family to Europe to be a missionary on behalf of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in 1948. After a few years in Switzerland he formed the L'Abri organization. L'Abri was basically a retreat where people (especially young adults) who were searching for answers to the big questions of life could hear a Christian answer to those questions. Francis Schaeffer was able to help many of these people and a significant proportion of them became believing Christians. It was

in his capacity as this sort of evangelist/apologist that Francis Schaeffer began to write books and became well-known in English-speaking evangelical circles.

Early in the 1970s Francis Schaeffer was encouraged to make a documentary series on the decline of Christianity and the consequences for Western civilization. This became the *How Should We Then Live?* video series and its companion book. Towards the end of the series the abortion issue was dealt with since the *Roe v. Wade* decision had recently been handed down. Interestingly, Frank writes in his book that although his father held pro-life convictions, he was hesitant to make opposition to abortion a key element of his ministry. However, Francis ultimately was convinced to make a strong push to alert evangelicals to the evil of abortion.

Whatever happened to the human race?

A prominent pediatrician in the USA and friend of the Schaeffer family, Dr. C. Everett Koop, asked Frank to see if his father would make a video series about the abortion issue. Francis agreed, and the *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* video series and companion book were produced. Francis and Frank Schaeffer then toured across the USA with Dr. Koop showing the video and promoting the pro-life cause. This tour apparently had a significant impact in terms of mobilizing evangelicals.

.....
Opposition to abortion was widely considered to be a "Roman Catholic issue"
.....

Both of the Schaeffer film series were very effective. Frank writes that "The impact of our two film series, as well as their companion books, was to give the evangelical community a frame of reference through which to understand the secularization of American culture, and to point to the 'human life issue' as the watershed between a 'Christian society' and a utilitarian relativistic 'post-Christian' future stripped of compassion and beauty."

Pro-life movement was urged on by pro-choicers

Among the most interesting aspects of this time period (the late 1970s and early 1980s), is that the so-called pro-choice movement inadvertently helped to draw evangelicals into pro-life activism. Pro-choice activists attended some of the *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* seminars to challenge Francis, Frank and Dr. Koop. Frank notes that these activists were “in-your-face (and often off-the-wall),” and their anti-Christian extremism helped rally evangelicals to the pro-life cause, having the opposite effect of what they intended. “We could not have scripted it better” (p. 292), he says. The “pro-choice forces were so hubristically aggressive when belittling their opponents that they alienated everyone who even mildly questioned their position. They drove people to us.”

It is also worth noting that the mainstream media’s tactic of ignoring the rising activism of conservative Christians ensured that liberals would be unprepared for conservative electoral successes in the 1980 US elections. For example, at that time evangelical books were excluded from the *New York Times* bestseller list, even though evangelical books often outsold books that were on the list. “The people hurt most weren’t evangelical authors (our books sold anyway); rather, the losers were Democratic Party leaders and other liberal readers of the ‘paper of record’ who were blindsided by subsequent events. The *Times’* readers were not given a heads-up about what was going on ‘out there.’”

It wasn’t just book sales that were ignored. The media was basically ignoring the Schaeffer seminars and therefore did not see the political effect they were having. “The reality of who was at our meetings – thousands of working-class and middle-class churchgoing women and the

“The Bible teaches that man is made in the image of God and therefore is unique. Remove that teaching as humanism has done... and there is no adequate basis for treating people well.”

**- Francis A. Schaeffer & C. Everette Koop
*Whatever Happened to the Human Race?***




Photo credit: alyssabrownphotography.com

men they dragged with them – was very different than the image of loony ‘misogynistic’ pro-lifers propagated by Planned Parenthood and parroted by the media. We didn’t fit that image and so were ignored.”

The political issue of our age

The efforts of Francis Schaeffer and his son to inform people about abortion paid off. “Abortion became *the* evangelical issue. Everything else in our ‘culture wars’ pales by comparison.”

Of course, there were other conservative Protestant leaders who opposed abortion from the beginning.

But as Frank Schaeffer recounts, his father was one of the most important leaders in the effort to bring evangelicals into the pro-life movement. Leadership is an important factor in the building and development of a social movement, and Francis Schaeffer played a key role in the late 1970s and early 1980s, just when someone of his stature was needed. Opposing abortion was no longer just seen as a “Catholic issue.” Conservative Protestants had had their eyes opened to the evil reality and significance of abortion. 

Reducing debt is always a good idea . . . especially in uncertain times

by John Voorhorst

Today, as I sit down to write about the economy in general and household debt in particular, the top headline in the news is the largest swing in political power in America in more than 70 years. Some are hoping now, with the Republicans in charge of the House, that the United States will curtail their deficit spending. But if history is any guide, it is far from certain that the Republicans will be able to, or will even make a strong effort to, reduce this spending.

Also in the news is the report that Mr. Bernanke, the chairman of the United States Federal Reserve, has announced the next stage of what is now being called QE2 or “quantitative easing two.” What is quantitative easing you ask? Well, very simply, the government buys back its own debt with dollars it creates out of nothing. And when they do that, two things happen: the government increases the amount of cash in circulation and by increasing the amount of cash they reduce the value of that cash.

So how will the Republican victory, and this quantitative easing, impact the US economy? And how, in turn, will

that impact the Canadian economy? All anyone can offer are guesses. We live in economically uncertain times, and that can be quite unnerving. Or perhaps none of this means anything to you, and you’re already yawning, as you consider moving on with your life. In some sense, that’s all well and good because we know that ultimately God determines what will happen in the world around us and He is also in control of our powerful neighbor to the south so we don’t need to be afraid.

But in His word, God does call on us to be discerning, and to be good stewards with what He has given us. It is prudent to think then of how best to respond to today’s economic and employment uncertainty. That is why this month I would specifically like to address the area of personal debt.

Debt growing

You may recall that last year (“Downsize your Debt!” June 2009) I wrote an article about debt in general and our personal debt in particular. Since that article many things

Year-end giving

by John Voorhorst

The last month of the year may not be the typical month for thinking of ways to reduce your personal income tax bill. Generally the month of December is spent thinking and planning about Christmas.

But if you have managed your financial resources well during the year and you have surplus cash or if you are anticipating a year end bonus, now is a good time to think about year end tax deductions. Most all tax-deductible expenses need to be paid by the end of December to be eligible for deduction. The major exception is RSP contributions, which can still be made in the first 60 days of the next year.

RP could really use your help



One idea that we might forget is the entire area of charitable donations. We might easily forget about this area because we are accustomed to making our donations monthly. Budgeting monthly contributions for church and school is a very positive habit. Please do not let my next suggestion change that very good habit.

I would like to suggest that you seriously consider making an additional donation to a charity. If that is what you



The average Canadian household has just shy of nine credit cards.

have happened. Interest rates have remained at historically low levels. Because interest rates have been very low, a lot of people have felt comfortable in adding to their personal debt. I recently had the opportunity to listen to a presentation by a representative of one of the big six banks. He said the popu-

decide to do, then be sure to make the contribution before year end so that the charity of your choice receives the money before the 31st of December. That way you will receive the tax benefit immediately in the spring.

I would be remiss if I did not point out to you that *Reformed Perspective* is a registered charity. *Reformed Perspective* could not survive without donors, with almost one half of our annual budget supplied by donations. However, this year we find ourselves in the unenviable position of being very short of the required donation level. So, if you find yourself blessed financially to the point where you are looking for organizations worthy of support, please consider *Reformed Perspective*. You'll help us continue to publish articles that deal with the various social, economic and political issues of the day from a clearly Reformed worldview.

And of course there are other organizations which could also use additional financial support: organizations like the Canadian Reformed Teachers College, the various

lation of Canada was about 33 million and that currently in Canada there were a total of 72 million credit cards issued. The total credit card debt, according to him, was \$72 billion. That works out to an average of 8.7 credit cards per household and credit card debt of \$8,700 per household.

Further to that, in the 2009 calendar year the number of delinquent credit cards had increased by 50 per cent, "delinquent" being defined as being more than 30 days late in making the minimum payment. And yes, most Canadians are apparently only making the minimum payment on that debt.

In addition to credit card debt, there's also lines of credit, car loans, finance company debt and of course mortgage debt. An article in the October 20th issue of the *Financial Post* pointed out that to the end of August, consumer credit had increased by 3.7 per cent in the last three months. If that rate continues we would see an annual increase in debt of 14.8 per cent

We haven't learned our lesson

So what is the point of all this you may ask? Well, the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 was apparently caused by too much debt in the United States. Supposedly Canada was spared from the worst effects of this crisis. But what, if anything, have we learned?

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty just reported that the federal deficit was some \$2 billion more than was predicted in the spring of 2009. He will report a total deficit of some \$55.6 billion. And Canadian's personal debt levels are also increasing. This will become a drag on the economy. This rate of growth in overall debt simply is not sustainable.

But what about you? How is your household doing? Is it fair to assume that church members are not that much different than the rest of society? I for one sincerely hope that we have done all that we can to keep our debt levels in check.

mission posts in our midst as well as relief organizations like the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund.

God has blessed us all richly. Included in that blessing is the fact that the Government of Canada grants a 29 per cent tax credit for every dollar donation over \$200 – a thousand dollar donation reduces your tax bill by \$290. A rather unique idea might be to contribute an additional \$2,000 to *Reformed Perspective* and in the spring, when you receive your \$600 tax refund, donate that money to your local school to be used for the sport or music program. That way the youth in your community benefit from Canada Revenue Agency's largesse. And *Reformed Perspective* benefits from your generosity!

So please do consider giving. The board of *Reformed Perspective* appreciates any financial support you can offer. Donations to *Reformed Perspective* should be made out to "Reformed Perspective" and mailed to "Premier Printing, One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2J 3X5" or can be made by credit card by phoning (204) 663-9000.

Minimize your debt!

If you, like many Canadians, are having trouble managing your debt let me do my best to offer a few suggestions.

First, if you do have more than one credit card, do your best to pay down the one with the highest interest rate. Some store cards are charging 19 or even 23 per cent interest. Pay those down first. Never miss a minimum payment. Not even by one day. If you miss the due date by one day it is reported as one month late by the credit card company to credit rating agencies and 2 late payments will have an immediate negative impact on your credit rating. This also has a compounding effect, because as your credit score goes down, the interest rate on your credit cards goes up. Even if you have a credit card with a lower interest rate but you miss two payments, it is very likely that the institution that issued the card will increase the interest rate. Conversely, if you are carrying a balance on your credit card and you have not been late even one day in the past year, call the company and ask them for a cut in the interest rate on your card. If your credit record is clean you should be able to convince the credit card issuer to reduce your rate down to 11.9 percent from 19 or 23 per cent, which is fast becoming the standard rate for Visa and MasterCard.

To be clear, I am not at all advocating that you carry a balance on your credit card. But if you do carry one, ask the issuer to reduce the rate. Applying for a secured line of credit and paying off all your credit card balances might reduce your costs even further.

.....
***That works out to an average
credit card debt of \$8,700
per household***
.....

Always remember, though, that consumer debt is not a positive item on a personal balance sheet. Borrowing money to purchase an asset that increases in value, like a home, makes good financial sense. But borrowing money to purchase a depreciating asset, like a television or an entertainment system, makes little or no sense. We need to return to what our grandparent taught us; buy only what we can afford to pay for with cash.

We can read some good advice about debt in Proverbs 22:26 and 27: "Do not be one who shakes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you."

Rewarding borrowers at the expense of savers

So, let's find some conclusions. Mr. Obama lost more seats in the American Congress than any president in 70 years. Why? Perhaps because the American people realize that borrowing more and more money so that the taxpayer becomes responsible for all of the poor business decisions of banks and other financial institutions is not the correct solution. Chairman Bernanke has announced an additional

\$600 billion reduction in the value of the American dollar. He will add \$600 billion into circulation to buy back debt from other parties.

His intent is to stimulate the economy with this influx of cash, and the initial response of the stock market to this additional \$600 billion bailout attempt has been positive. Markets were up 1.5 per cent the day he made the announcement. But think about this for a moment. Chairman Bernanke is doing his best to devalue the American dollar. If he succeeds at this he will successfully reward all those banks, corporations and individuals who took on too much debt. If the dollar is devalued, the debt they owe is also devalued. And Chairman Bernanke will also be punishing those who have managed to save some money. As the dollar is devalued their savings will have less purchasing power as time goes on.

However, you should know that I don't believe that Mr. Bernanke will succeed in his efforts. Previous attempts at devaluing a country's currency when deflation sets in have not met with success. Just look at Japan. They also tried to re-inflate their moribund economy by reducing interest rates, (down to zero per cent) and they also turned up the printing presses. All to no avail. The Japanese find themselves in the unenviable position of having their stock market still down some 75 per cent from its December 1989 peak. And fifteen years ago it took about 85 yen to buy a US Dollar and today they buy a US dollar for 90 Yen.

The reality is this; the issue is not a lack of cash in the system. For us in North America the problem is that people in general have been living beyond their means and so even if the government makes two trillion dollars available, no one can access it. The unemployed cannot borrow more money because their income is down and they cannot pay what they owe already. Those who have a job cannot borrow more money because they do not have any equity left in their home. Their house is already worth less than the mortgage on it. Businesses cannot borrow more money because their sales are down so their profits are already slim to none. So, once again, the issue is not a lack of liquidity.

Neither Mr. Obama nor his Federal Reserve Chairman, Mr. Bernanke, has as much power over the financial markets as they would like to think.

So, once again, at risk of being repetitive, pay down your debt, and please do not for one moment believe that these gentlemen will succeed at re-inflating our economy. Deflation is the biggest risk facing our economy and I have outlined above why I believe that to be the case. The stock market will not and cannot continue its upward movement. Actually, by the time you read this it could well be that the market will be on its way down to levels well below that reached in the spring of 2009. Unless you are a sophisticated investor you should be holding T-Bill or Money Market Funds in your mutual fund accounts, and if you are using any type of bank savings accounts, high daily interest accounts are the best place to be.

The bottom line? Prudence, both in borrowing and investing. It's the only way to go.



Euthanasia in Australia

A Canadian perspective

by Alex Schadenberg

Alex Schadenberg is the head of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (www.euthanasiaprevention.on.ca) here in Canada. He recently spent a week and half, from October 7-17, touring Australia and speaking out about euthanasia, as well as learning what the battle looks like there.

Canada 228-59

Earlier this year Bill C-384 – a bill that would have legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada – was defeated decisively 228 to 59.

Afterwards I received an e-mail from Babette Francis, a great leader in Australia. Babette informed me of the many attempts by the euthanasia lobby to legalize euthanasia in Australia and she asked me if I was willing to come to Australia to speak about how we worked to defeat Bill C-384 in Canada.

At that time I was not aware of the push that the euthanasia lobby was making in Australia to legalize euthanasia. Australia is composed of five States and three Territories. The Northern Territory was the first jurisdiction in the world to legalize euthanasia in 1995, but that Act was overturned by Australia's federal government in 1997.

Australia has either recently defeated or is currently facing bills to legalize euthanasia in every state as well as in the federal government. Their Green Party has made the legalization of euthanasia their primary priority.

Western Australia: 21-11

It was arranged that I would speak in every state capital and the national capital. I started in Perth, Western Australia. To get there I had to start in London, ON, fly to Toronto, then from there to Vancouver, from Vancouver to Sydney and Sydney to Perth. By the time I had arrived in Perth I had been traveling, almost continuously, for more than 30 hours.

The very next day I spoke to an ARPA group in the afternoon and another ARPA group in the evening. What is interesting is that the ARPA group in Australia is directly connected to the ARPA group in Canada.

On Monday, I met with Hon. Nick Gorin, a Liberal member of the Western Australia legislature who was instrumental in the defeat of a euthanasia bill in September, by a vote of 21 to 11. To defeat the bill Nick organized presentations by palliative care and disability leaders and personally met with members of the legislature to discuss the



issue (Nick has agreed to be a speaker in Vancouver at the Third International Symposium on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide on June 3-4, 2011).

South Australia: 11-9

On Tuesday morning I flew to Adelaide where I had a lunch meeting with a group of state leaders who quickly informed me of the situation in their state.

Last year a bill in the South Australia Parliament that was introduced by the Green Party was defeated by a vote of 11-9 only after Councillor David Ridway changed his position at the last minute and another councillor, Ann Bressington, decided to abstain from the vote when her amendments to the bill were defeated.

But in March the election resulted in three of the eleven members who voted against the euthanasia bill being defeated. Green Party member Mark Parnell, has reintroduced his bill to legalize euthanasia in the upper house and Stephanie Key has introduced an identical bill to legalize euthanasia in the lower house.

The Parnell & Key bill is similar to the Bill C-384 that was defeated in Canada by a vote of 228 to 59. The bills legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide for people who are terminally ill or who have an illness, injury or other medical condition that:

1. results in a permanent deprivation of consciousness or
2. irreversibly impairs the person's quality of life so that life has become intolerable to that person.

In other words, the Parnell/Key bill would allow euthanasia for a person who is in a permanent vegetative state (a state from which people *do* recover) or a person who is living with a disability and considers their life intolerable (no definition for intolerable).

This bill is so wide that you could drive a hearse through it. The bill excludes euthanasia for depression but it uses similar language to the Oregon statute which has failed to protect depressed people from death by assisted suicide.

.....
***I was not aware of the push that
the euthanasia lobby was making
to legalize euthanasia***
.....

The battle in South Australia will be difficult to win because of the hardening of the positions of the current elected representatives.

But on a more hopeful note I should make mention of a man named Paul Russell, who lives in Adelaide, South Australia. He is launching a new group that will specifically focus on euthanasia and assisted suicide under the name HOPE. He is establishing a website – www.NoEuthanasia.org.au – and putting a leadership team in place. After meeting Paul Russell I have great hope that he will accomplish the goal of defeating the bills in the State Parliament and organizing an effective response to the bills throughout Australia. Please visit his website.

Victoria: 25-13

On Wednesday morning I flew into Melbourne in the State of Victoria. The plane arrived late, due to thick fog. Upon arrival I was brought immediately to a lunch meeting (I was one hour late) where I immediately began my power point presentation to around 50 people. This group included several political leaders.

I then went back to the home of Babette Francis who made a fantastic meal. We were joined at dinner by Peter Kavanagh who is the member of the Victoria legislature, and who worked very hard to defeat a euthanasia bill in September 2008 by a vote of 25 to 13.

The Green Party has indicated that there will be another attempt to legalize euthanasia in the State of Victoria after the next election.

Tasmania: 15-7

Hobart, Tasmania was significant for several reasons, the first being the crashing impression I made on the Tasmanian Parliament and the second being the commitment that was made by the many political and community leaders that attended my talks.

My plane arrived late in Tasmania because of the weather conditions. When I arrived I was brought straight to the State Parliament to have lunch with Hon. Michael Polley (the speaker of the House) and Rene Hidding. Polley is from the Labour party and Hidding is a Liberal.

When we arrived in the Tasmanian legislature, we were told that Hon. Polley could not join us for 30 minutes because the House was still sitting. We decided to watch the last few minutes of debate in the House. We entered the House and sat in the speaker's gallery. We noticed that all the furniture, including the chairs in the speakers and visitors galleries, were new. I turned to speak to one of our group and my chair shattered and I crashed to the floor with a loud noise. Everyone was concerned if I was OK. They must have feared a lawsuit.

**KEY POINTS THAT WERE
MADE TO THE AUSTRALIAN
AUDIENCES:**

1. *Choice is an illusion.*
We need to dispel the choice rhetoric before society will reject euthanasia. I emphasized the recent study in Belgium and the past studies in the Netherlands that prove that euthanasia is often done without explicit request or consent.
2. *Euthanasia is a threat to vulnerable people.*
We need to be concerned about elder abuse and societal attitudes toward people with disabilities.
3. *Safeguards don't work.*



We then had a very productive lunch with Polley and Hidding. Polley informed us that a euthanasia bill will be brought forward by the Green Party next fall. They were very concerned about the bill. In 2009 a euthanasia bill was defeated 15 to 7.

The evening presentation was held in the speaker's room in the Parliament building. There was a large crowd of people which included the local Anglican Bishop.

After the evening talk, I went out to test Tasmanian beer. At a local establishment we met Charles Wooley, a famous co-host of *60 Minutes* Australia. Wooley was very receptive at first – he talked about how much he likes Canucks. We then told him what we were doing in Tasmania. Wooley was disgusted. When I challenged Wooley with the facts, he said: "There will be collateral damage from euthanasia, but so what. There are six billion people in the world, why would you be worried about a few people who die by euthanasia without request or consent?"

As I say, the issue really isn't about choice.

Australian Capital Territory

In the capital Canberra, I was given a tour of the federal parliament and then brought to dinner where I met many local leaders.

EUTHANASIA HAPPENING IN AUSTRALIA NOW

"Euthanasia in Australia is practiced all the time. . . . It definitely happens, you ask any doctor. You can't keep people suffering."

– Australian trauma surgeon Dr. Carl Jurisevic, as quoted in *Adelaide Now*, May 8, 2010

That night I met Daniel Pask, a disability right advocate, who was really interested in starting an Australian version of Not Dead Yet (this is an advocacy group for the disabled, that was founded in 1996 after an American doctor, Jack Kevorkian, was acquitted after assisting two disabled women kill themselves). Daniel has Spina Bifida and has experienced many surgical interventions throughout his life.

I found out after I returned to Canada that an Australian Senator, Bob Brown, of the Green Party, has introduced a bill that would explicitly allow individual states to legalize euthanasia. It is expected to be voted on before the year's end.

New South Wales

I arrived in Sydney and was picked up by Chaing Lim, who had organized the Tasmanian and Sydney parts of the tour.

The evening talk was at the Epping Club in Sydney. Leaders from many groups came out to this event. I had the opportunity to meet Andrea Calilhanna who started the Facebook site: *Australians Against Euthanasia*.

There is currently a bill in the New South Wales that was sponsored by the Green Party, to legalize euthanasia. The Premier of New South Wales, Kristina Keneally stated, "As a former minister for aging, this is an area that I see as incredibly difficult, one that is complex, one that raises a number of significant moral and ethical issues."

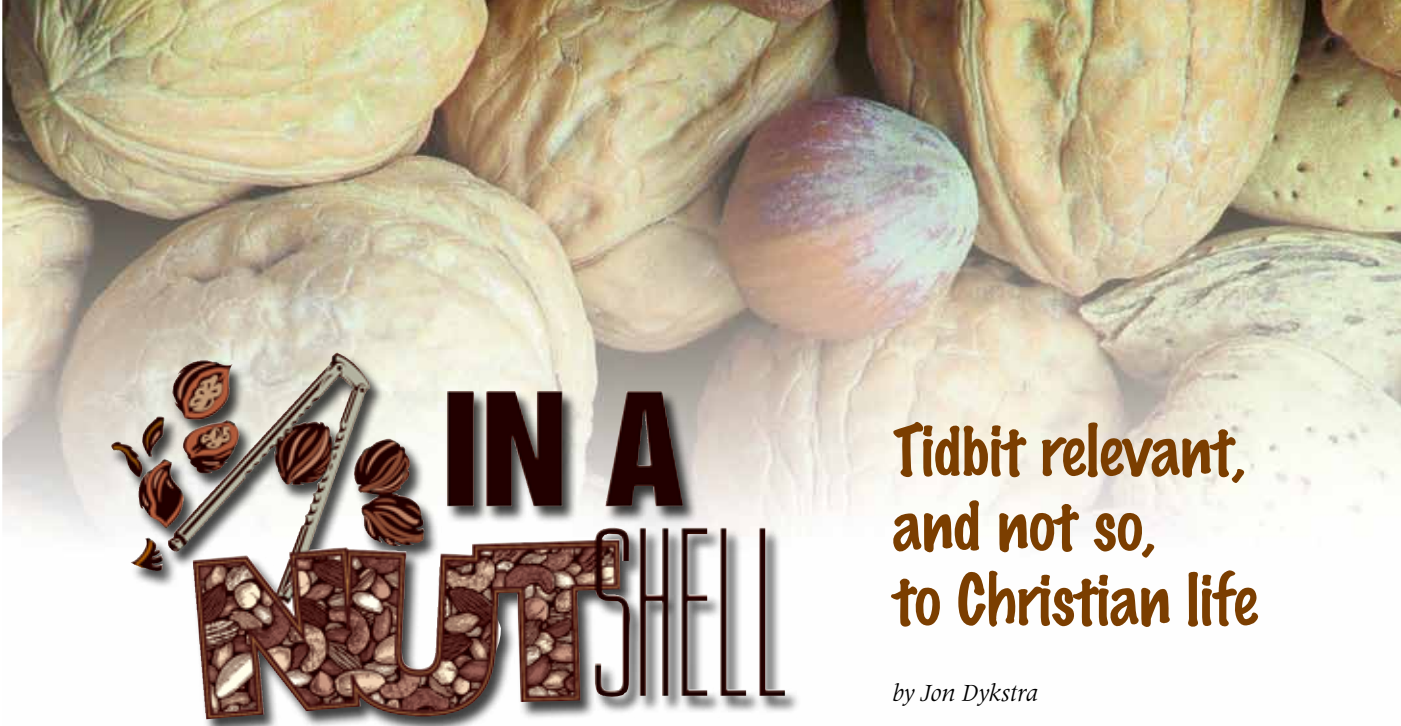
And on Sunday, I flew home to Canada.

Conclusion

The Australian tour was the result of the incredible defeat of Bill C-384 and the pressure by the Green Party in Australia to legalize euthanasia. The Green Party has gained influence in the Australian state and national parliaments and they have stated that the legalization of euthanasia is their top priority.

Alex Schadenberg can be contacted at euthanasiaprevention@on.aibn.com.





IN A NUTSHELL

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

by Jon Dykstra

.....
The best media book you'll ever read. . . and it's free!

If you want to understand the media, if you want to understand how the news business *should* be done, if you want to know what it means to be truly objective (hint: it actually involves bias – biblical bias!) then you need to read Marvin Olasky's *Telling the Truth*. This book is one of my ten favorite of all time, a book I have read and reread, and it is, amazingly, available to be read for free online at www.worldmag.com/world/olasky.

.....
Going all Philippians 4:8 on sports

In Dean Register's *Minister's Manual* he tells a story about a pastor, Leith Anderson, who grew up as an avid fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers. One year his father took him to a World Series game where his beloved Dodgers were playing their hated cross-town rivals, the New York Yankees. Anderson was sure his Dodgers were going to win, but he was bitterly disappointed when they never even got on base and lost the game 2-0.

Years later Anderson had an opportunity to share his World Series experience with another avid baseball fan. "It was such a disappointment," he told the man, "the Dodgers never even got to base."

"You mean you were actually there?" the man asked in amazement. "You were there when the Yankees' Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in

World Series' history? That must have been amazing!"

Because Anderson had been so wrapped up in the rivalry he missed out on appreciating the most dominating pressure-packed pitching performance ever displayed in the baseball finals. Sportsmanship at its core is about remembering that the guys on the other team are our opponents, not our enemies – they're fellow human beings, made in God's image. If we recognize that, it isn't going to cut into our intensity, but should cut down on our cross-checks. And while we're always going to cheer on our hometown boys, if we eliminate the hate we'll also be able to appreciate a brilliance performance by the other team's guy.

.....
Quote of the Month

"All television is educational television, the only question is, *What is it teaching?*"

– Nicholas Johnson

.....
Saying "I love you"

A woman in an adult creative-writing class didn't quite know what to make of her homework assignment. She had to write different ways to say "I love you," each of which had to be 25 words or less, and they couldn't include the word "love."

After she spent ten minutes scratching her head, the woman's husband came up behind her and started massaging her shoulders. As he loos-

ened up her shoulders and neck she was finally able to start writing. Here is what she submitted to her instructor:

"I'll get up and see what that noise was."

"It looks good on you, but you look even better in the red top."


"Cuddle up – I'll get your feet warm."

SOURCE: Adapted from joke in the February 1990 *Reader's Digest* submitted by Charlotte Mortimer

.....
Where? Here, there and everywhere!

"If we speak in church, we're told it's too political; if we speak in the political arena, we're told it's too religious. If we speak in the media we're told it's too disturbing; in the educational realm, it's too disruptive. On the public streets, it's too distressing for children; in the business world it's too controversial, in the family, too divisive, and in a social setting it's just impolite.

"So if abortion is wrong, where do we go to say so? The answer is that we have to stop looking for a risk-free place to fight abortion, and speak up in all those arenas. Let's stop counting the cost for ourselves if we speak up, and start counting the cost for them if we are silent. The pro-life movement does not need a lot of people; it needs people who are willing to take a lot of risk."

– Roman Catholic priest Frank Pavone speaking against those who say they are pro-life, but object to the issue of abortion being raised in a particular "arena." 

Civilization and self-control

Christianity and Islam have very different ideas about modesty and men's self-control

by Bojidar Marinov

"I don't want men looking at me lustfully when I work here."

This is how a Muslim girl, cashier at Wal-Mart, replied to my wife's question about the purpose of her head-covering, wrapped tightly around her head, covering everything except her face.

My first reaction was, "Phew, how do you look 'lustfully' at a woman's hair?" In a Christian society, the hair is the glory of a woman (1 Cor. 11:15). We don't normally expect Western men to fantasize over a woman's hair; and hair is a legitimate ornament for a woman, as far as the Bible is concerned. Deviations, of course, have existed in every culture, but are they so common in the Western societies as to warrant such strict dress-code? What made this Muslim girl have such strange views about modesty?

A very different worldview

Her views are not informed by the norms of the Western society but by the tenets of her Muslim worldview. According to the teaching of the Muslim religious teachers, a woman is a sexual object from her hair to her feet, and every part of her body is an occasion for seduction. Westerners usually believe that the burqas and the yashmaks of the Muslim women have some religious significance – something like the head coverings Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 11. They don't. The only significance of Muslim clothing for women is the avoidance of sexual seduction by the woman. Burqas are not a religious symbol; they are a protective barrier, protecting both men and women from the male sexual lust.



Islam has a very specific view of man's libido. In the Muslim worldview, male sexual lust is a central fact of man's personality. It is a force that can't be controlled in any possible way from the inside; one only accepts it as a fact and seeks ways to curb it externally. A woman is viewed as a sexual object only because a man is viewed as an animal whose sexual drive has no brakes or limits. A man is always defined by his lust, whatever other characteristics he may have. Rich men are expected to have multiple wives, and concubines as well. The sultans of the Ottoman Empire – the leaders of the Muslim world for centuries – were expected to have hundreds of wives, not so much because it was expedient for the Empire, but rather because that's what a good Muslim was supposed to

do. Most of the teachings or counseling of Muslim scholars you can find online are concerned with sexual lust, relationships between the sexes, or sexual relations within the family. Man as a sexual animal is the essential belief of the Muslim view of man, and nothing can be done about it.

This belief was also expressed in the rampant homosexuality and pederasty existing in the Muslim world for centuries. In cultures where the rich had the opportunities to appropriate many girls for themselves, and where male sexuality was considered a central fact of life, many of the younger and poorer members of society resorted to homosexuality because of the lack of available women. Even today, Muslim homosexual poetry is considered the "finest" in its "genre"

among the connoisseurs. Contrary to what some Muslims today claim, the Muslim countries didn't have anti-homosexual legislation until the late 19th century, and that appeared only as a result of Christian – particularly Victorian – influence on educated Muslim elites. In late 19th and in 20th centuries notable European homosexuals (John Maynard Keynes, Lord Byron, Joe Orton, and others), would make trips to Muslim countries to satisfy their lust for boys. It was considered normal in the Muslim world that a grown man without a wife would seek the services of young boys.

And of course, affirming this view of man, the eternal promise of Islam to its male adherents is blatantly sexual and promiscuous in nature: 72 virgins for every faithful Muslim, created to be his eternal sexual slaves.

No wonder Islam seldom teaches self-control in man. While acknowledging the destructive nature of male uncontrolled lust, Islam leaves it to women to protect themselves and society from destruction by choosing their clothing in such a way as to completely shut them off from the world. Men are supposed to remain at the level of immature puberty their whole lives. Women and girls are supposed to act wise and mature from a very early age, exercising external control where men are unable to exercise internal self-control. In the Shariah legislation, a woman is guilty of adultery even when raped. It must be her fault, and the man is very often absolved, as being an innocent victim of his own overwhelming lust and the woman's lack of prudence.

Christian self-control

This, of course, is in stark contrast to the Christian worldview based on the Bible. Far from being an irresistible drive, male sexuality is believed to be controllable, and certainly not a central fact of man's life. A man is defined by a number of characteristics, and his sexuality – while admit-

tedly destructive when uncontrolled – is only limited to his family. A good Christian man is expected to remain self-controlled and sober even when tempted. There are rules for modesty in a Christian culture, and there are expectations of women as there are of men, but whatever the conduct of a woman, the responsibility for adultery, fornication, and rape lies always primarily with the man. Self-restraint has been an integral part of the moral code for Christian men throughout the centuries – whether it was the monastic codes, or the chivalry rules of conduct, or the Puritan morality, or the Victorian culture. A man without sexual self-control was a man without dignity, and therefore his reputation suffered. Kings and mighty rulers may

have been promiscuous at times but they have always at least tried to maintain an appearance of respectability by obeying the accepted norms for sexual conduct. Even Louis XIV, with his many mistresses, preferred to keep them private, and would listen to the advice of his religious advisers.

Unlike Islam, which expects man to remain an immature, uncontrolled beast throughout his life, Christianity encourages maturity, self-control, and restraint. A Christian civilization is a civilization controlled and protected by mature, responsible men. A Muslim civilization is an always precarious balance between the destructive lust of immature men and the protective care of mature and responsible women.



Photo courtesy of "Zoom Zoom" at Flickr.com and licensed under Creative Commons agreement "Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic"

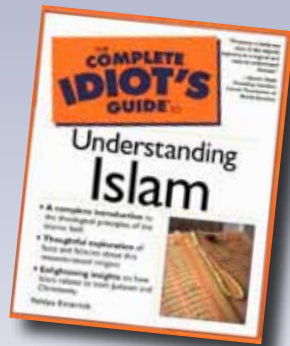
Boys rather than men

This maturity in controlling the sexual drive in man has ramifications in many other areas of human life. Immature childish lusts in men, when uncontrolled, lead to lack of self-control in other areas as well. TV coverage from demonstrations in the Middle East showing crowds of grown-up men acting chaotically like animals are known to anyone who ever watched CNN. The only analogy we have in the West is crowds of adolescents at rock concerts. Such behavior is not considered aberrant in the Muslim world, however. Men, in fact, are expected to act like animals, without self-restraint. The poor economies of the Muslim world can be blamed on the lack of self-control: rich people are expected to indulge in childish whims and desires (i.e. have garages of 300 cars, or large palaces, or spend money on other unnecessary luxuries) instead of wisely investing in the future or financing charitable organizations.

The Puritan asceticism and long-term orientation of so many of the Western wealthy families – that same asceticism that created capitalism and the wealth of the West – is completely foreign to the Muslim mentality. The absence of social justice in all the Muslim East is a product of that lack of self-control. Fathers and brothers beating and even killing female family members out of rage for wounded “honor” are a common occurrence, and are justified under the Shariah law.

Islam – everything is about sex?

In *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Understanding Islam* author Yahiya Emerick explains why it is men who are picked to do the azan – the call to prayer – that is broadcast from mosques around the world five times a day.



“Men are always chosen to say the azan for two reasons. They have louder voices, generally, and the sound of a woman’s voice calling through the streets may tempt some men to fantasize about her. Islam believes in protecting the modesty and dignity of women from any unscrupulous men who may be around.”

Christianity vs. Islam

A civilization is built on the self-control of men. When men are able to refuse to obey their childish whims, their energy is freed to undertake greater things: invest, build, accumulate knowledge, create economic and political organizations, innovate, explore, discover. A man who cannot control his lust is unlikely to have the long-term commitment necessary to build a civilization. The Christian civilization that created the modern world with all its technologies, prosperity, justice, and knowledge, emerged in result of the self-conscious decision of Christian men in many generations to forgo present consumption and invest in the future. In the 8th through 10th centuries, Europe had fewer resources, less population, and a worse starting point than the lands taken over by Islam. In the course of several centuries it was hit by many epidemic plagues, by the beginning of the Little Ice Age in the early 1300s, by Mongol invasions, etc. And yet, by the 1500s it emerged as a vibrant, prosperous, and technologically developing civilization that set its eyes on conquering the world. The Reformation gave it the complete moral code for civilization builders, and as a result, we have our Western world today.

.....
***In Shariah legislation,
a woman is guilty of adultery
even when raped***
.....

In contrast, Islam started by conquering the most prosperous regions of the civilized world – Egypt, Mesopotamia, Northern Africa, Spain. Lacking the theology of male self-control, though, it gradually transformed those civilized regions into lands of savagery and barbarianism, and within 1,000 years it managed to remain woefully backward in comparison to the Christian West. Even today, the crowds of devoted Muslims are not able to produce a superior civilization. No matter how fast their numbers grow, Islam will remain an anti-civilization force, and will never be able to produce anything of value to match the West. The key is male self-control. Not only doesn’t Islam teach it, it actively discourages it. Islam is in essence a female culture: preserved from decay by mature women who are forced to take responsibility for their immature men.

The future for Islam is not as bright as is envisioned: It doesn’t have what it takes to build a successful civilization. But this is still not good news for the West. The West has lost its ability to civilize because it has now lost its ability to produce self-control and maturity in man. However, this is a topic for another article.

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Hannah's Progress

(an excerpt from a novel in progress)

by Christine Farenhorst

Readers may recall that in December 2005 another excerpt from this novel in progress was published in Reformed Perspective so after enjoying these latest chapters, you'll want to go back and dig up that issue to read again how the story begins.

CHAPTER 11

I've a grand memory for forgetting

– Robert Louis Stevenson

The next morning, I awoke to the sound of my father's voice. I'd been dreaming about an eagle – an eagle who was about to drop me off the edge of a floating bed into an abyss. I clung to the sound of my father's voice. Far away at first, it drifted in and out of my consciousness. His words became more and more distinct and they were very soothing. I opened my eyes.

"Lean against me. It's all right."

A soft moaning accompanied father's voice. I bolted upright in my bed. It was fairly light out already. Again father's words penetrated the thin, bedroom wall.

"We're almost there – just a few more steps."

I threw off the woollen blanket and got up. Walking across the bedroom, I opened my door and stepped into the hallway. The bathroom was directly to my right and I could see my mother kneeling on the floor by the toilet. She heaved and heaved and then vomited. Father in his grey, striped pajamas knelt next to her, rubbing her back. I backtracked into my bedroom, feeling rather queasy myself. Standing in front of my bed for at least fifteen minutes listening to the sound of her being sick, I heard my father's gentle words telling her over and over again that it would be all right. Finally the noise stopped and I heard my father turn on the tap and rinse a washcloth, all the while still murmuring softly. My mother said nothing all this time but a minute later they both walked past my room back to their bedroom. I followed them.

"Are you all right, mother?"

Father answered.

"She's a little under the weather, Hannah. Probably a touch of the flu. Go back to bed for a while. Don't worry."

I did go back to bed and watched the early sunlight filter beams through the half-open curtains. Sunlight was comforting and warm. I put my hand in the length of a beam

that fell on my chest. There was no more untoward noise and I presumed that mother had been able to fall asleep again. I disliked it when she was sick. Mother was the mainspring of our household. She cooked, cleaned and always managed to be there. I guess the thing was that she was. . . what was that word. . . she was indispensable. Indispensable, it was almost a poetic word. I said it to myself a few times and then snuggled under the covers. It was almost a year ago, I remembered suddenly, that father had been in the accident. But he was fine now. It was the last thought I had before I fell asleep again.

* * * * *

It was a passable day at school. Mr. Van Keswik let the senior grades, the grades six, seven and eight group of which I was a junior member, have a monitored walk down by the Don River as their physical education period. Tilly Vliet, who had become my bosom friend that summer, was my partner. We managed to be the last pair in the two-by-two formation that filed past the river. We skipped stones, managed to wet our socks and giggled, but all the while in the back of my mind I worried about mother. I was very relieved to see her sitting at the dining room table, doing a crossword in the paper, when I came home from school.

"Hello, Hannah," she said, getting up to get me a cup of tea.

"That's all right, mother. Sit down. I can get it myself. Are you feeling better?"

"Yes, a lot."

She sat down again and smiled at me. "Were you worried? I sounded pretty horrible, didn't I?"

"Well. . ." I let the word hang and she laughed.

"Sorry, it must have been something I ate, although I don't know what."

"Probably the brussels sprouts we had for supper last night." I answered quickly, thinking that I might as well take advantage of the situation.

"We have a letter from Opa Lammert." The white envelope stood straight against the purple African Violet in the middle of the table.

"Oh, can I read it?"

"Yes."

Mother turned back to her crossword and I walked to the kitchen to pour myself a cup of tea. Lammert Ventstra was not really an Opa but a great-uncle. He was the only brother of Oma Ventstra, mother's mother. He used to live on



"Well. . ." I let the word dangle after I hung up the receiver

a farm close to us, just on the outskirts of Groningen. But because I did not have a living Opa, I called him Opa and loved him very much. He was old, but not a selfish old. That is to say, he had not hidden himself in a multitude of wrinkles, in discomforts of rheumatism or in the solitude of never speaking to younger people. He could laugh from his belly, listen with his heart, sing with gusto and read the Bible out loud as though he believed it. I spent a lot of time with my Opa and Oma Ventstra, not because they were relatives but because they loved me and because they seemed to remember what it was like to be small and learning. They permitted me to make mistakes and loved me enough to correct me, whether these mistakes were flaws in words or whether they were mistakes in deeds.

In Groningen, when I came home from school, I had frequently asked if I might go and visit Opa and Oma Ventstra. If mother gave me permission, and she very often did, I changed into old clothes and biked over to their farm. There was always something for me to do, whether it was taking care of a new litter of kittens, raking out a stall or helping to collect eggs in the hen house. Through clumsiness and childish impetuosity, I broke more eggs than I care to remember. Sometimes I forgot they were in my pocket and at other times I simply dropped them in my haste to do something else. Yet Opa continued to trust my expertise, constantly repeating a single refrain.

"Never mind, Hannah. We'll make a farmer out of you yet."

I would answer him hopefully: "How do you know, Opa? How do you know I'll be a farmer?"

With yellow yolk running down my hands and cracked eggshell on my shirt, agricultural ambition was laughing at me. Opa answered patiently and with a twinkle in his eyes: "What color are your eyes, child?"

"Brown. You know they're brown, Opa."

"Well, you see, blue-eyed children, they become sailors."

"Oh, Opa!" I didn't believe him for a minute but was intrigued.

He went on. "And green-eyed children, they generally become golfers. And brown-eyed children. . ." He stopped and chucked me under the chin before he continued. ". . . brown-eyed children, why they love the soil. The love of good land is reflected in their eyes and if they follow their hearts, they become farmers."

"Is that really true, Opa?"

"Every word, child, every word."

"But Opa, your eyes are blue. And you're a farmer?"

"There are exceptions to every rule, child." He laughed and bent over to pick up an egg half-hidden under a board as I wiped my hands on some straw. "But do you know, little Hannah, the most important part of your eyes?"

"What, Opa?"

"The most important part about your eyes, child, is that you can lift them up to the hills, that you can see with them, that you can see where your Help comes from when you are in trouble."

We were out in the yard again and behind us the chickens squawked and clucked in comforting harmony.

"What kind of trouble, Opa?"

He put down the eggs, and wiped his face with his big, white handkerchief. "Trouble from wolves, child, trouble from wolves."

My Oma Ventstra died when I was seven years old. She was seventy-eight. I still had the obituary in my box of special things. It read: *Elizabetha Johanna Ventstra, nee Molenaar, (1877-1955), for fifty-seven years the beloved wife of Lammert Ventstra*. Every now and then I traced the words of the crumpled obituary with my finger. The last words were: I lift up my eyes to You, to You whose throne is in heaven. It rained the day of the funeral and I saw my Opa cry.

Two years before we immigrated to Canada, and a year after Oma died, Opa sold his farm and moved to Michigan. He had three sons who had immigrated to the United States and he wanted to be close to them. He moved into a Christian old age home close to Grand Rapids. I missed Opa very much that first year, especially the first summer and wrote long blue, air-mail letters to him. But when school began again I was caught up in the excitement of friends and learning and general forgetfulness. We had never visited him yet in his new home. The trip to his home in Michigan would take us some eight hours.

I picked up the letter and began to read. It didn't take me long to understand that Opa was asking us to come and see him.

"Mother are we going to go down to Michigan to visit Opa?"

"I don't know, Hannah. It's a long drive and your father. . ."

The telephone rang. I stood up and walked to the kitchen with the teacup balanced precariously in my left hand, lifting the receiver with my right.

"Be careful, Hannah!"

"Yes, mother. Hello."

"Could I speak to Mrs. Steen, please?"

"Sure. Just one moment please." I put my tea on the floor, put my hand over the telephone mouth and walked, as far as the cord permitted, towards the entrance between the kitchen and the dining room. "It's for you, mother."

"Who is it?"

I took my hand away from the phone and repeated mother's request to the caller. "Can I ask who is calling, please?"

"Mrs. Dom." I put the receiver against my shoulder and passed the name on softly: "It's Mrs. Dom, mother."

Mother pulled a face. Mrs. Dom was president of the English Ladies Society and she was always after people to do things for her. A very aggressive lady, she had the knack of making those she spoke to feel very small. As mother was slowly getting up, her face apprehensive, I was hit with the luminous idea of helping her out.

Speaking into the receiver again, my voice professional and chipper, I said, "Actually, Mrs. Dom, mother is not feeling that well. Could I take a message for her?"

"Well," Mrs. Dom's voice was dubious, "Well, I suppose that you could. It's Women's League Day next Wednesday and we have a speaker but we would like your mother to recite a poem – something appropriate, you understand. I'm sure that the Reverend, your father, could help her out with choosing a selection."

"Oh." It was all I could manage.

"Well, be sure to tell her."

"Yes, I will."

My mother continued to eye me with an uneasy face and I knew that when I passed the message on to her she would be ill again. Mother was not a reciter but a listener.

"Well, thank you, Hannah. Goodbye."

"Goodbye, Mrs. Dom."

"What did she want, Hannah?"

"Well. . ." I let the word dangle after I hung up the receiver, picked up my teacup and walked back into the livingroom.

"Well, what?"

"Well, she was wondering if you would. . . if you would recite something at the Women's League Day next Wednesday. She said father could help you find an appropriate poem or something."

Mother groaned and began scribbling away at the crossword page so furiously that she ripped the paper.

"I can't recite."

"I know, mother. And she can't make you."

"I think that if I were a cat, she could make me bark."

I failed to see the connection here but looked at her with sympathy. Last year, actually the first month we were in Canada, Mrs. Dom had nominated mother for president of the Dutch Women's Society and she frequently phoned father to correct bulletin announcements so that he might learn from his mistakes, as she phrased it. My father often pointed out that she did not have the name 'Dom' without reason,

(dom being the Dutch word for simple-minded). As such, he reasoned, she really could not quite help being rather thick-headed and somewhat foolish.

I sat down at the table and picked up my poetry book. After slurping some now lukewarm tea, I began to recite Tennyson's Charge again.

"Please," mother said, as she absently folded the paper, "Please, Hannah, can't you recite that somewhere else? I'm beginning to dislike that poem."

"All right." I was not offended. Not all people enjoyed good poetry. "I could probably find a nice poem for you to recite next week, mother."

"I'm not going to recite!" Her voice was sharp and edged with nervous tension.

"I know," I answered in a conciliatory tone, "But I could still help you."

She pushed her chair back from the table and walked into the kitchen.

"What I meant," I said, as I followed her there, "was that if I found a nice poem, you could tell Mrs. Dom that you had a poem for someone else to say."

Mother regarded me doubtfully. "She'd never go for it unless I had the person's name and permission."

"Well, I bet that Mrs. Huizingh. . ." I stopped. Mother was shaking her head.

"Mrs. Huizingh would never do it. She doesn't even want to do essays for the Women's Society."

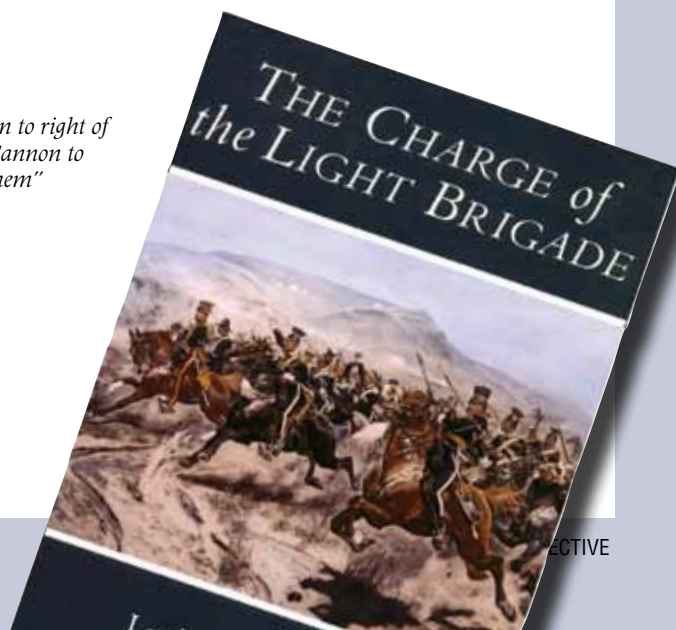
"Oh. Well, what about Mrs. Van Oost?"

"No!" Mother's voice was weary and tinged with hopelessness as she continued.

"There's no one in the whole church who likes to recite and who will do it. That's why that woman called me. If I call her back and say that I can't do it, she'll tell me that it's my duty as the minister's wife and that if I don't, I'm sinning."

Father walked up the stairs and into the kitchen, rubbing his hands together and smiling at both of us. "What's your duty, Lien, and how are you sinning?"

"Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them"



Mother didn't answer and poured a cup of tea for him. But her hands were shaking and she spilled some over the edge onto the saucer.

"Mother's duty is to read a poem for the Women's League Day next Wednesday."

I answered softly.

Father looked blank. "Who says so?"

"Mrs. Dom."

Mother turned around and handed him the teacup as she spoke. She looked absolutely miserable. I felt very sorry for her and at that moment a wonderful idea hatched in my mind. "Why not let me recite a poem for you, mother?"

Father smiled. "The Charge of the Light Brigade, no doubt?"

In spite of herself, mother smiled too.

"No," I countered, feeling very noble and enlightened, "I'd find something appropriate, as Mrs. Dom said, and something special for that particular audience."

They both smiled again.

"I don't think so, Hannah. But thank you anyway." Mother's voice was trembling. "Well, Lien, I don't think it's such a bad idea."

"She has school, Henk."

"Well, the Women's League meeting is just upstairs, in the church. I'm sure Mr. Van Keswik would give the child an hour off to recite a poem – probably a half hour would do as well."

Father looked at me speculatively. "Are you sure you want to do it, Hannah?"

I nodded vigorously. He turned back to mother. "Well, I don't see why Mrs. Dom would object. After all, Hannah's a woman in the bud."

Father phoned Mrs. Dom that night and it was all arranged. He also phoned Mr. Van Keswik who had no objections to my leaving his classroom for an hour or so. My name was Hannah, Lady Tennyson.

CHAPTER 12

***O hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright.***

- Sir Walter Scott

That night, after mother had tucked me in with the admonition that I was only to read for fifteen minutes or so, I sat up in bed with *The Silver Treasury of Light Verse* propped up on my knees, reading poems to my heart's content. Mother had bought this volume for father when he was in the hospital and I thought it had some marvelous verses in it. I leafed through the pages thoughtfully, grinning from time to time. I knew from past experience – well, actually the only experience I'd ever had was my speech in front of the grade four class last year – that if you had the undivided attention of your audience, it was much easier to speak. There were a number of short poems by someone named Graham, all of which would evoke laughter. Laughter, it seemed to me, would be a good attention-getter.

*Billy, in one of his nice new sashes,
Fell into the fire and was burnt to ashes;
Now, although the room grows chilly,
I haven't the heart to poke poor Billy.*

I liked the poem, although it was a bit morbid, and I also liked another one by Graham.

*Making toast at the fireside,
Nurse fell in the grate and died;
And what makes it ten times worse,
All the toast was burnt with nurse.*

I had the feeling, however, that this was not the poetic venue for which Mrs. Dom was looking and I also knew that these poems, hilarious though they might appear to me, would not pass muster with father.

Not proper material for Women's Day, Hannah. I could hear his voice clearly. Sighing and yawning simultaneously, I put the book on the table next to the bed. Tomorrow I would find a good poem, one that eminently suited the occasion. Tomorrow was Saturday – no school. It was a wonderful custom these Canadians had – to have no school on Saturday. In Holland we'd had school on Saturday morning and on Wednesday morning, but Saturday and Wednesday afternoons had been free. If I could pick, I'd rather have all Saturday free and that is what I had. I yawned again and got up to turn off the light. Mother and father were still downstairs talking. Their voices drifted up, low and soothing. I snuggled under the covers and fell asleep.

* * * * *

The next morning I awoke to the sound of my father's voice. "It's all right, Lien. It's all right. Just lean against me. That's it. Take it easy."

My mind was confused and I listened to the voice with my eyes shut. I had heard these words before. I had heard them yesterday.

"Take it easy, schat – sweetheart. All right. That's the way."

And then followed the sound of mother retching into the toilet again. A feeling of unease crept over me. I did not get up, as I had the day before, but stayed under the covers, tense and rigid. It was a good half hour later before I heard father taking mother back to their bedroom.

Breakfast was a dismal affair. Both father and I toyed with bowls of soggy Kellogg's corn flakes.

"Will mother get up later?"

"Maybe. We'll just see how she feels."

"Are you going to phone the doctor?"

"She doesn't want me to."

"Shall I go up and see if she wants anything?"

"No, Hannah. I'll check up on her in a little while."

"Shall I cook supper today?"

Father eyed me meditatively. "Dat is lief. That's nice. Maybe, sprout. We'll just take things a bit at a time." Perhaps he was remembering the pound cake I had made the week before, aptly christened ton cake by him.

Mother groaned and began scribbling away at the crossword page so furiously that she ripped the paper.



“Can we still go to the library today?”

“Why don’t you take the bus down, Hannah.” It was not a question but a statement. I sighed. Father took the Bible down from the shelf and began to read our morning devotions. A lone October robin skipped about in the backyard looking for the proverbial early worm. Upstairs mother coughed. Father stopped reading and we both glanced towards the door. Clearing his own throat, father continued. After reading, he left me to go and check on mother. He returned rather cheerfully a few moments later, informing me that she felt well enough for some tea and a *beschuit* – a rusk.

I didn’t go to the library that day, hanging around the house instead, asking mother a dozen times whether she was feeling any better and could I do anything to help her. In exasperation she finally sent me outside to mow the front October lawn with the push mower. It was a fine day and mowing the lawn was gratifying work, even though the grass was short. Laurie and Linda were outside on the road, playing hopscotch. I waved at them and they waved back. I was halfway done the front lawn when a car pulled into our gravel driveway. It was Dr. Spanning, our family doctor. I stopped mowing and walked up to him as he rang the front doorbell.

“You can walk right in, Dr. Spanning.”

“Thank you, Hannah.”

I followed him into the hallway, calling out as I did so: “Father, Dr. Spanning is here to see you.”

“Actually,” and Dr. Spanning turned and smiled at me as he continued, “I came to see your mother.”

I did not return his smile but merely responded with an “oh.” It had not occurred to me, strange as it was, that his visit was a medical call.

“Did mother call you?”

“Yes, she did.”

Worry jumped out at me again and I eyed him with something akin to hostility. “She didn’t tell me.”

Mother walked down the stairs at this moment. She was dressed and looked perfectly normal. “Hello, Dr. Spanning. It’s so nice of you to come out on a Saturday.”

“That’s all right.” He grinned affably at both of us but I didn’t grin back.

“Well, Hannah,” mother said, “Why don’t you go and make Dr. Spanning a cup of tea while we go upstairs and. . .”

Her sentence was left hanging over the stair railing as they both went up. I went downstairs to inform father.

Father was at his typewriter working on something.

“Hello, sprout. Finished the lawn, have you?”

“No, not yet. But Dr. Spanning is upstairs.”

Father got up, put down his pipe and began to walk towards the door.

“Father, you didn’t tell me he was coming.” It was an accusation.

“No, I didn’t.”

“Well, why didn’t you tell me?”

“We didn’t know ourselves, sprout. We just phoned some time after breakfast to ask him a few things and he said that he had some spare time and would stop by the house. Very nice of him too.”

We were walking up the stairs together by this time and father continued up towards the bedroom while I watched him from the main floor hallway. The door to the master bedroom opened, then shut and I was alone. Disconsolately I walked into the kitchen and plugged in the kettle.

It was only fifteen minutes or so later that all three came downstairs. Father poked his head around the kitchen door. “Well, Hannah, is the tea ready?”

“Yes.”

I poured the red liquid into three cups waiting on a tray and carried the tray into the livingroom. Mother looked fine. Slightly flushed, she smiled at me.

“Well,” I said, “here’s the tea.”

“Thank you, Hannah.”

“Well,” I continued, “are you all right, mother?”

She looked at father and he answered my question. “Dr. Spanning thinks it’s a good idea for mother to have some tests done at the hospital on Monday.”

“The hospital?”

Dr. Spanning patted my hand. I was just then serving him his tea from the tray. “I think she’s fine, Hannah. But I just want to make sure, that’s all.”

The two remaining cups on the tray rattled as I shifted position and repeated my words. “The hospital?”

“Yes, Hannah. The hospital.” This time it was father who spoke. “I know that it sounds a little frightening, but really, Dr. Spanning just wants to run some tests. Nothing to be worried about.”

But I was worried. Mrs. Folken, Jeanne’s and Jeannette’s grandmother had just been diagnosed with cancer at the hospital and it was hard to get away from worry. Jeanne and Jeannette were twins in grade seven and they had talked about cancer all week. I went back to the kitchen and began peeling potatoes for supper. There was some laughter from the livingroom and the murmur of slow, relaxed voices crept into the kitchen reminding me that adults could be irresponsible at times and not at all aware of danger lurking about. Dr. Spanning showed no signs of leaving soon, so after the potatoes were done I went back outside and finished the front lawn. Just as I was pushing the mower into the garage, he came out the front door.

"Dr. Spanning?" I let go of the mower, letting it stand in the garage doorway. My voice was somewhat brittle and edgy.

"Yes, Hannah. What is it?"

Dr. Spanning walked briskly and was already at the front door of his car. I followed him and put my hand on the hood. Lifting it, the outline of my sweaty fingerprints stood out.

"Yes, Hannah?" Dr. Spanning, standing by the open door of the car, questioned me again.

"Is it. . ." I was searching my brain for the right word. "Is it. . . uh, you know, is it. . . fatal?"

He grinned and sat down, shutting the door and rolling down his window. "Well, some parents might think so."

I could feel myself turn white. "What do you mean?"

He grinned again. "Don't worry, Hannah. It's not fatal. At least I don't think so. But try fetal."

He started the motor.

"Feetal?" I repeated the word the way it sounded rather stupidly and then went on to ask, "Why? Is there something wrong with her feet?" I prided myself on my growing English vocabulary, but was aware at this moment that it was far from perfect. Dr. Spanning did not answer, but laughed very loudly as he backed his car out of the driveway.

"Feetal?" I whispered the word to myself as the gravel ground under the tires of the doctor's blue Chevrolet. When he waved at me, I waved back and then turned to put away the lawnmower before I ran inside for the dictionary.

Mother and father were still in the livingroom. Mother was reading the paper and father was setting up the chessboard for a solitaire round of chess. He played games from a book. I went on to my room, reaching for the brown dictionary on my bookshelf as quickly as I could. Veetal? Did it start with a V or an F? I thumbed to the V first but could find nothing. Feetal – nothing under the F either. Maybe it was Ph, as in pheetal. No, nothing there either. Maybe just fe as in fetal. I couldn't really ask mother and father. If this was serious, they wouldn't want to talk about it and would likely try to hide it from me. Parents always wanted to protect their children from the worst. I could feel tears welling up deep inside myself as my sweaty hands, with grass blades sticking to their palms, searched through the dictionary. The pages were thin. F, fe, fet – yes, here was the word. Fetal, of or pertaining to, or having the character of a fetus. So what was a fetus? I looked it up next. Fetus, used chiefly of viviparous mammals. The young of an animal in the womb or egg, especially in the later stages of development when the body structures are in the recognizable form of its kind, in man being from the latter part of the third month until birth. Also, foetus – L. offspring.

I read the definition five times. So what exactly did this mean? Mother's problem was fetal? This pertained to a fetus. Perhaps Mr. Van Keswik had been correct in surmising that I was not quite ready for grade eight, or seven, for that matter.

Strains of Beethoven's Fifth flowed up the stairs. Father must have put on a record. I closed the dictionary thoughtfully.

"Hannah!" Mother's voice was cheerful through the notes.

"Yes, mother?"

"Thanks for peeling the potatoes."

I got up and opened my bedroom door. Mother was standing at the foot of the stairs looking up at me. I looked back at her and responded very softly. "That's all right. Would you like me to do anything else for you?"

"No. Thanks though." She paused and then went on.

"Hannah, are you feeling all right?"

I considered her brave to be thinking of me, but that was mother love for you. Choosing my next words very carefully, I scrutinized her as she stood there. She was still slightly flushed but, on the whole, appeared remarkably well. "Mother?"

"Yes?" She ran her hand over the iron railing and smiled up at me.

"Mother, what's a fetus?"

Her flush deepened and she studied the ceiling for a long moment before she called father. "Henk, can you come here a moment?"

Father came out into the hall. "What's the matter? Don't you feel well again?" He regarded mother affectionately and put an arm around her back.

"No. No, I feel fine."

"What's the trouble then?"

"Hannah would like to know what a fetus is."

"Oh." Father studied the ceiling also and I began to have the feeling that the whole matter had to do with light bulbs and things rather complex. Then father began to speak. "Your mother and I were going to wait until next week, until after the tests to tell you, kleintje."

Kleintje meant "little one" in Dutch and father only called me that on special occasions, such as my birthday.

"Tell me what?"

"Tell you that your mother is probably going to have another baby."

I was glad that I had sat down on the top stair because the floor seemed to disappear under my feet.

"A baby?" I repeated the word weakly.

Father nodded and smiled. "Hoe vindt je dat, kleintje? How do you like that?"

I simply swallowed and nodded back at him.

"Come here, Hannah, and let me give you a hug." Mother opened her arms and as I walked down the stairs into them I was overwhelmed with a great gladness.

Afterwards, back upstairs in my bedroom with Beethoven in the background, I began to recite part of The Charge of the Light Brigade with greater gusto than I had yet done. I was full of emotion and the words shot out.

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them,

Volley'd and thunder'd.

"Hannah!"

"Yes, mother."

"Could you recite something else, or maybe not recite at all?"

I sighed. Life was so difficult.

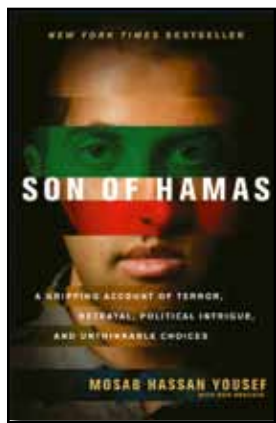


BEST BOOKS: THREE BRILLIANT BIOGRAPHIES

reviewed by Jon Dykstra

SON OF HAMAS

by Mosab Hassan Yousef



Here is an autobiography that reads like a spy novel – Mosab Hassan Yousef is the son of a terrorist leader and grew up wanting to kill Jews. But as an adult he ends up working as a

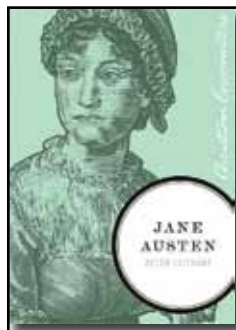
double agent for the Israelis, meetings them in the dead of night, in secured locations to pass on secret terrorist plans, so that Jewish lives can be saved.

If spy novels don't interest you, then pick up this book because you're interested in world affairs or history. Yousef gives his readers a solid education on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. He knows how it started because his father is one of the main "starters" – he helped found *Hamas*, a Muslim Palestinian group that is both a terrorist organization and the democratically-elected ruling party in Palestine. (That a group can blow up children and still win a popular vote shows just how badly the Middle East is messed-up.)

But *Son of Hamas* is first and foremost an awe-inspiring book. You can't read it and not be astonished at what God has done with this young man. Yousef would have followed in his father's footsteps and fought the Israelis, he could have been killed many times, he would have continued to worship a false god, but for our Father's grace. God pursued Yousef, and completely transformed him. Wow!

JANE AUSTEN

by Peter Leithart



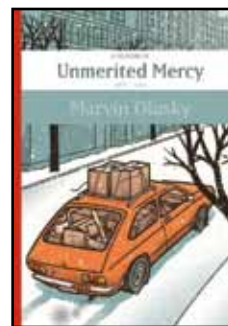
The strength of Peter Leithart's biography lies in its author's insight and extensive knowledge of all things Austen (he has previously written another Austen-themed book: *Miniatures and Morals: The Christian Novels of Jane Austen*). He argues that the modern conception of Jane is quite divorced from reality – she is not the saintly "Divine Jane" presented in some recent films and some older biographies. The Jane he presents is instead "Jenny" – a woman who never lost her childhood sense of fun, nor her childish precociousness. She is a shrewd observer of people, but like a little girl, would sometimes succumb to sharing observations with her sister or brothers that would have best been left unshared. His Austen is also unabashedly Christian, the daughter of a pastor, and the sister to two more, though her Christian worldview is only on subtle display in her novels. He shows Jenny to be a remarkable woman, not a perfect one.

This is a small book, only 175 pages, but one that does take effort so if your love of Jane Austen has been limited to watching her movies, it is not for you. However, for an avid Austenite who has read all six of her novels, maybe even twice or thrice, there's a lot to love, and a lot to learn here.

UNMERITED MERCY: A memoir, 1968-1996

by Marvin Olasky

Marvin Olasky is the editor-in-chief of the Christian news magazine *WORLD*, a Presbyterian elder and was, until a month ago, a Christian college provost.



He is a godly man and a good leader.

But it wasn't always so.

In *Unmerited Mercy* Olasky shares how God brought him from "card-carrying Communist to Bible-carrying Christian" through a tumultuous 28-year period in his life. The tumult started soon after his entry into Yale in 1968, and peaked after a trip to the USSR where he was supposed to learn how to be a Soviet operative. The book concludes with Olasky serving as an advisor to President George W. Bush. Quite a transition!

Olasky makes clear, however, that it was not a transition of his own making. Indeed the most wonderful part of the book is how clearly the author shows God working in his life. It was God's grace, and not his own smarts or initiative, that brought Olasky to where he is today.

Though it is small book – only 131 pages – there's a lot packed in it. Olasky has lead a very exciting life. If you want to learn more you can visit WorldMag.com/OlaskySeries and listen to a series of interviews the author gave about each of the chapters of the book.

Jon Dykstra and his siblings blog on books at www.ReallyGoodReads.com

Two scientists against the (research) world

In the last eight years the United States has spent a half billion dollars doing research that involves the death of embryos – it kills precious little human beings. Dr. James Sherley and Dr. Theresa Deisher have gone to the courts to try to stand up for the defenseless.

by Margaret Helder

In the tragedy that bears his name, Hamlet talks about a custom which is “more honored in the breach than in the observance” (Act 1, Scene 4, Line 16). In other words, he refers to a custom which, in his opinion, is best ignored. That is all very well for customs, but what about laws? Of course many countries still have archaic laws which no one has ever bothered to repeal. These laws are typically not relevant to anything today, and so no one enforces them. However, what about recently enacted laws? Might any such laws be ignored? One might hope not, but in one conspicuous case in the United States, that is exactly what has happened, until now.

It was in January 1996 that the American Congress passed the Dickey-Wicker Amendment which prohibits the use of federal funds for research involving creation or destruction of human embryos. This amendment has been passed every year since then as part of the appropriations for funds for the Department of Health and Human Services including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and it has been signed into law every year by both Democratic and Republican Presidents. Bill Clinton signed it first, then George Bush and Barack Obama.

In 1998, shortly after the amendment’s initial passage, human embryonic stem cell lines first became possible – these involve the destruction of five-day-old human embryos. Clearly such practices are contrary to the Dickey-Wicker Amendment, but supporters of this research claim that it has the potential to provide cures for many diseases.

Against it and supporting it

President Clinton sought to have his cake and eat it too. He stipulated that private money must be used to actually produce the stem cell lines but thereafter the NIH would fund the research. Thus the letter of the law would be observed, but not the intent or spirit of the law.

President Bush tried to reverse the Clinton policy. However the media storm, which resulted, forced him to

reconsider. Thus on August 9, 2001, he decreed that federal monies would support research only on cell lines already derived by that date. Thus during his tenure too, the Dickey-Wicker Amendment was attached to the spending bill every year, and signed into law, but every year the intent of it was again ignored. And so the process has continued.

Some stem cell researchers, however, have been deeply concerned about the Dickey-Wicker “elephant in the room.” They were sure that sooner or later, that elephant would make its presence felt. And they were right!

An elephant. . . and two plaintiffs

In August of 2009, several Christian groups joined forces to take the US Department of Health and Human Services and the NIH to court. According to the statement of claim, the Obama administration’s policy of funding embryonic stem cell research violates the Dickey-Wicker Amendment.

After the court refused to consider the case, declaring that the plaintiffs had nothing obvious to gain or lose by pursuing the case, the plaintiffs changed their strategy. Now only two individual plaintiffs were involved, two scientists working in adult stem cell research. These people argued that the allocation of funds for adult stem cell research is greatly reduced as a result of the popularity of work on embryonic stem cells. Because of this shift in funding allocation, they argue, their opportunities to obtain funds for their research in adult stem cells are reduced. Thus the plaintiffs have a vested interest in the case.

As a result of this new approach by the plaintiffs, on June 25, 2010, the court reversed its former dismissal of the case. Judicial consideration of federal funding in terms of the Dickey-Wicker Amendment could now go ahead.

This caused consternation in the medical research community. For example, an editorial in the journal *Nature*, declared the reversal a “dangerous precedent” (July 8, 2010 p. 159). The elephant was becoming way too active, and more bad news was soon to follow for the secular scientists.

On August 23, 2010 Judge Royce Lamberth (the same judge who had rejected the original suit) now issued an injunction halting all federal funding of embryonic stem cell research until the case is heard on its merits. Judge Lamberth declared in his judgment that the intent of Dickey-Wicker is clear. Thus:

“This prohibition encompasses *all* research in which the embryo is destroyed, not just the ‘piece of research’ in which the embryo is destroyed.”

Up to this point, government lawyers had interpreted Dickey-Wicker as applying only to the act of deriving the stem cells, not to research involving those cells. An editorial in *Nature* bemoaned the deteriorating situation:

“Unless the injunction is quickly reversed, and unless the government then prevails when the case is heard on its merits, hundreds of experiments funded by the NIH will be crippled and many will have to be abandoned” (Sept. 2, 2010 p. 7).

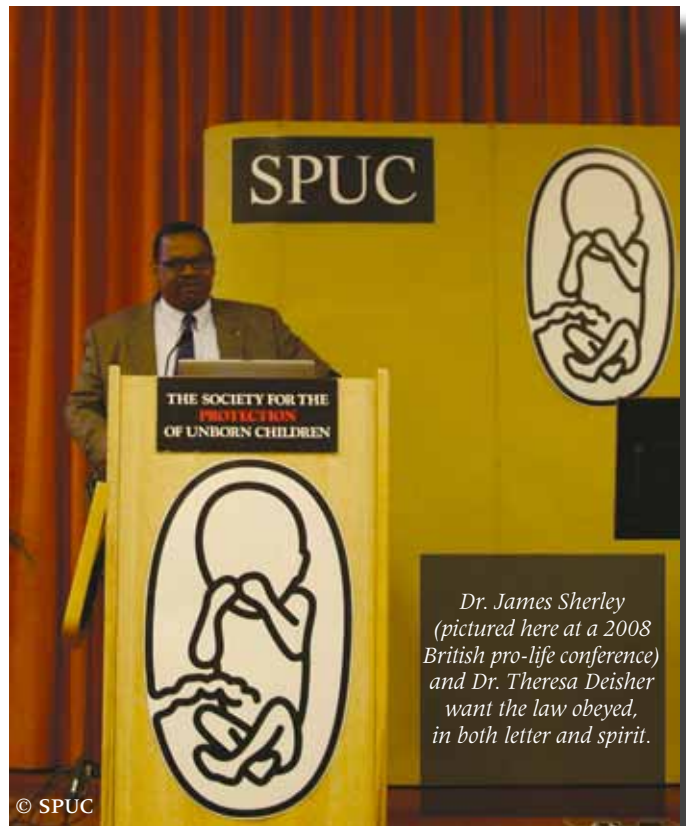
Apparently, according to that editorial, within the past eight years, Congress had spent about \$550 million on human embryonic stem cell research. Obviously these are huge sums involved and a lot of scientists benefit.

Unflattering attention from the secular media was firstly focused on the judge who had granted the injunction. Judge Lamberth was nominated to the federal bench by President Ronald Reagan in 1987. In this context, the journal *Nature* opined:

“The US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, where the NIH’s appeal will be heard, is dominated by conservatives, who are likely to sustain last week’s injunction, as is the US Supreme Court” (September 2, 2010 p. 7).

The biotechnology community in the United States was completely stunned by the news of the August 23 injunction. The work of hundreds of researchers had suddenly become financially uncertain. On August 24, Francis Collins, Director of the NIH, announced that the process of reviewing research proposals for future funding had been halted immediately. Also \$54 million in funds, set to be dispersed that month to support university-based research, would now not be forthcoming.

The government assumed that any funds already in the accounts of 199 research laboratories could still be spent. It was, however, recognized that this situation could change at any time, and on August 30, all scientists working at the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, were told to immediately halt all experiments involving human embryonic stem cells.



The effects of the funding crisis in embryonic stem cell funding were also felt abroad. There were collaborations with foreign scientists which were now in jeopardy. The funding of some foreign labs was affected too, as was financial support for various foreign postdoctoral fellows presently working in the United States, and Americans working abroad. It takes a situation like this to reveal how far reaching American government support has become for endeavors which many taxpayers strongly oppose.

Spending spree

In due course, the medical research establishment saw a reversal of their fortunes, but this too was illuminating concerning the nature of these vested interests. On September 9, (17 days after the initial injunction), a panel of three judges of the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, temporarily set aside the August 23 injunction against funding embryonic stem cell research which had been issued by Judge Lamberth. According to an article in *Nature* (September 16, 2010 p. 258), a stampede to spend the government money ensued: “Within hours of last week’s ruling, senior NIH officials were advised to speed new grants out the door, fast-track the review of grant applications and fund 24 existing, multi-year grants that are still owed a total of \$54 million in the government’s 2010 fiscal year. . .” Obviously it must have been

a very senior level of government official who could advise the NIH to spend money as fast as possible before anyone could declare such expenditures illegal.

Later, on September 28, this same Court of Appeals decided that, until the courts made a final decision on the matter, embryonic stem cell research funding would continue. The decision signaled that the government will likely win this case.

There were now parallel streams of litigation working their way through the courts. The lower court over which Judge Royce Lamberth presides, is still set to consider the legality of federal funding for work on embryonic stem cells in the light of the Dickey-Wicker Amendment. The judge could issue a summary judgment early in November, or wait for the higher court to rule on its case, or send the whole issue to full trial.

.....
***The government which is supposed
to administer the law, seeks
instead to circumvent it***
.....


The higher Court of Appeals has similar deadlines for briefs from the opposing parties concerning the nature of the injunction. This court has set December 6 as the date to hear oral arguments on the issue. In addition, the Appeals Court has received a large number of hefty *amicus* (friends) briefs from influential parties in support of the government. These include the University of California Regents and the University of Wisconsin among others. So far nobody has sent any *amicus* briefs in support of the plaintiffs.

Whatever the outcome of the court case, legislation has already been proposed to specifically over-ride the Dickey-Wicker Amendment, to ensure continued government support for work on human embryonic stem cells “notwith-

standing any other provision of law,” which, according to an editorial in *Nature* (September 2, 2010) means funding in spite of Dickey-Wicker (p. 7). Some observers think that this legislation will need stronger wording in view of the recent litigation. Others suggest that the chances of it becoming law now are slim since, in January, a much more conservative Congress will take office and in the dying days of the old Congress, there may not be time or even inclination to deal with funding for “non-essential” items.

Two brave souls

Lastly, we might speculate on the likely impact of this litigation on the careers of the two plaintiffs, James Sherley from the Boston Biomedical Research Institute, and Theresa Deisher, director of AVM Biotechnology in Seattle, Washington. It seems certain that these people will have a most difficult time with their peers. Anyone who challenges hundreds of millions of dollars in funding and the jobs of thousands can expect to be extremely unpopular. Their chances of obtaining further research grants or of publishing in the scientific literature seem very slim. It takes amazing courage to take the stand which they have, only two scientists against the biomedical establishment.

Finally of course the issue arises as to how effective the rule of law is today. In former generations, it was considered socially responsible to obey the law, not because anyone liked it, but because it was the law. Today however, there is little respect for authority or for the law (and, evidently, little respect for life). It certainly is interesting that, in the United States, the government which is supposed to administer the law, seeks instead to circumvent it. If the various presidents did not approve of the Dickey-Wicker Amendment, it would have been more honest to refuse to sign it into law. They would then have had to explain their stand to the public. But instead they have signed it, and then worked around its provisions. Apparently recent administrations in the United States have agreed with Hamlet, that some things are better honored by pretending they don't exist or at least don't matter! 

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Soup & Buns

The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corintihains 5:17

by Sharon L. Bratcher

Recently I listened to two church members tell about how the Lord brought them to know Him as Savior. They grew up in faithless homes with little thought for God. And then God began to work inside them, pulling them His direction, and making them re-think everything in their lives. God used the book *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis to cause one of them to consider the claims of Christianity. God used the words of Scripture shared by people, and their actions. Finally He used the words of a sermon. When they both repented of their sins and prayed and received God's forgiveness and salvation through Christ, they said it was truly as though "scales" fell off of their eyes as they began seeing life through the "lens" of Jesus Christ. Every thing in their lives changed and suddenly the Bible made sense. Those who knew them before saw two different people after that.

I am a Christian raised in a Christian home, and so I have never really had a "life beforehand" for comparison. Home-grown Christians' lives are a progression of steps wherein we grow in grace, learning how to be holy. We falter, we succeed, we grow, we fail, and sometimes even turn away for a while. But through it all, hopefully, we grow closer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Doubting the Holy Spirit's power

It's difficult to understand those who do not know and love the Christian God, and there is a tendency for us to act, functionally, like it's not possible for them to change. They sure don't look like they want to change. They may be bogged down as workaholics, or cast down as alcoholics. Their customs and worldview may be quite foreign to us. They may have opinions that they are quite willing to share as the "personal truth" they believe in.

It's quite popular these days to allow one another to believe "whatever works for you." It seems very. . . liberating and free and polite and even kind. We can even talk about God because other people will just take our words of thanksgiving and plug in whichever Deity (or none) that they happen to follow. "It's all one and the same," they may happily tell us. "Turn to *your* Higher Power."

Unfortunately, testimonies can come from anywhere. A brochure in our mailbox quoted followers of a particular type of Meditation:

"I wish I could find the words to connect with the meaning [this type of Meditation] has in my life. In simplicity, it is all about the Truth. It is all about who we are and where we are going. It let me discover who I am, how I exist, and how I relate to and interact with others."

Another person ended his testimony with, "[It] changed my life and it can change your life as well."

As another example, a Hindu member of our Toastmasters Club gave a speech about how her god helped her through a difficult time.


That is why our testimony can only be a portion of what we share with the non-Christians around us. Many people can come up with a way to match it.

Much more than our testimony

But God's Word – *that* is different. God's Word is *the* two-edged sword that divides truth from falsehood and conquers hearts. God's Word, quoted, is "the foolishness of preaching" that leads people to salvation. In my weakness, I might choose to tell a neighbor about "what worked for me" instead of showing her specifically what God says in His Word is *the* Truth. But it is the truth in those 66 books that is going to set her free from her sin. The testimony carries little impact without the Lord's words to open the door.

The testimonies I heard last night were a great encouragement to me because I confess that I really, truly, in my heart, very often do *not* really believe that God is going to bring those around me to Him. If I did, I would tell them about the truth of Christ and would *never* worry about being embarrassed or ridiculed. I would realize that when Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me" He meant it. I would practice the fact that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

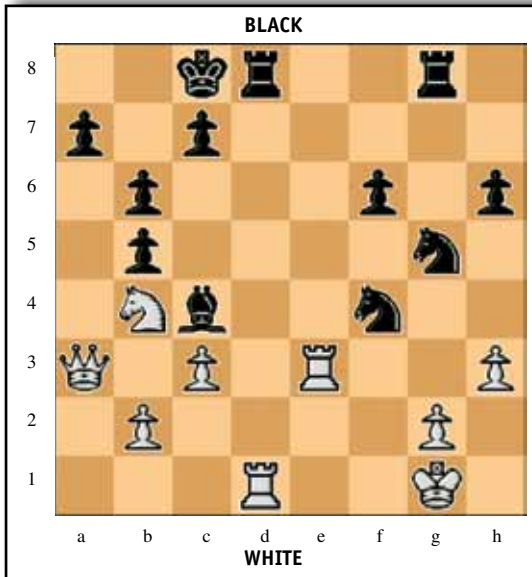
Dear Lord, help my (functional) unbelief.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. . . ." Romans 1:16 

ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page, 43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 OR robleach@gmail.com

Chess Puzzle # 172



White to Mate in 3
Or, if it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 3**

NEW PUZZLES

Riddles for Punsters #172 – “She made a big deal about a friendly meal”

Why was Mrs. Peacock so proud of the lunch she served her friends?
Mrs. Peacock joyfully _____ ed that on bread that was _____ ed she served beef that was _____ ed and so her reputation no longer _____ ed on previous luncheons that she _____ ed, to which written invitations had been _____ ed.

Problem to Ponder #172 – “ ’tis the season to be _____ ing ”

Find Christmas season words ending with “ing” and having the number of letters shown in brackets afterward. Also, the first two letters of the word are shown.

SPORTS (done outside)

- sl _____ (7)
- snow bo _____ (8)
- to _____ (11)
- ice fi _____ (7)
- sk _____ (7)
- snow sh _____ (7)
- cu _____ (7)
- Ski-do _____ (5)
- sk _____ (6)
- snowball th _____ (8)

HOBBIES (done inside)

- re _____ (7)
- se _____ (6)
- kn _____ (8)
- sc _____ (12)
- ba _____ (6)
- si _____ (7)
- dr _____ (7)
- game pl _____ (7)
- letter wr _____ (7)
- su _____ (9)

Answer to Riddles Riddles for Punsters #171 – “Planning Ahead”

Why did the goose put money into a savings account every year?
It wanted to have a financial n e s t - e g g set aside so that it could retire in Florida.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #171 – “Migration Time Flying Time”

A flock of Canada Geese is headed south for the winter. The flock wants to reach a familiar winter retreat 3000 km away and travels each day at an average air speed (speed relative to the air in which they fly) of 70 km/h. Their actual speed relative to the ground will vary, depending on the wind speed. On the first day, there is no wind and the flock flies for 12 hours. On the second day, there is a head wind that slows down the flock (their speed relative to the ground is now only 70 - 20 = 50 km/h) and the flock flies for only 10 hours. On the third day, there is a tail wind that speeds up the flock (the resulting ground speed is 70 + 20 = 90 km/h) and the flock flies for 11 hours. Determine how many hours the flock must fly on the fourth day, on which there is no wind, to reach their destination.

DAY 1: The geese fly for 12 hours at a ground speed of 70 km/h and so travel 12 x 70 = 840 km.

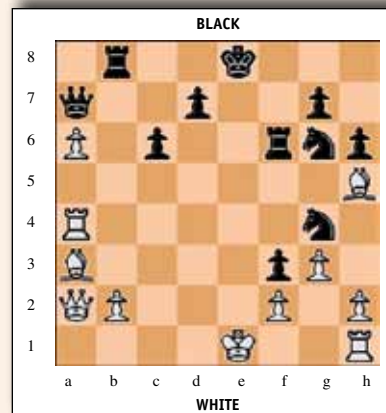
DAY 2: The geese fly for 10 hours at a ground speed of 50 km/h and so travel 10 x 50 = 500 km.

DAY 3: The geese fly for 11 hours at a ground speed of 90 km/h and so travel 11 x 90 = 990 km.

DAY 4: The geese flew, in 3 days, 840 + 500 + 990 = 2330 km and so must fly the remaining 3000 - 2330 = 670 km. Since there is no wind, their speed is again 70 km/h relative to the ground so the time required is 670/70 = 9.57... hours. Thus, they must fly for **just over nine and a half hours** on the fourth day.

SOLUTIONS TO THE (NOVEMBER) PUZZLE PAGE

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 171



WHITE to Mate in 2 Descriptive Notation

1. Q-N8 ch R-B1
 2. QxR mate
- Algebraic Notation**
1. Qa2-g8 + Rf6-f8
 2. Qg8xf8 ++

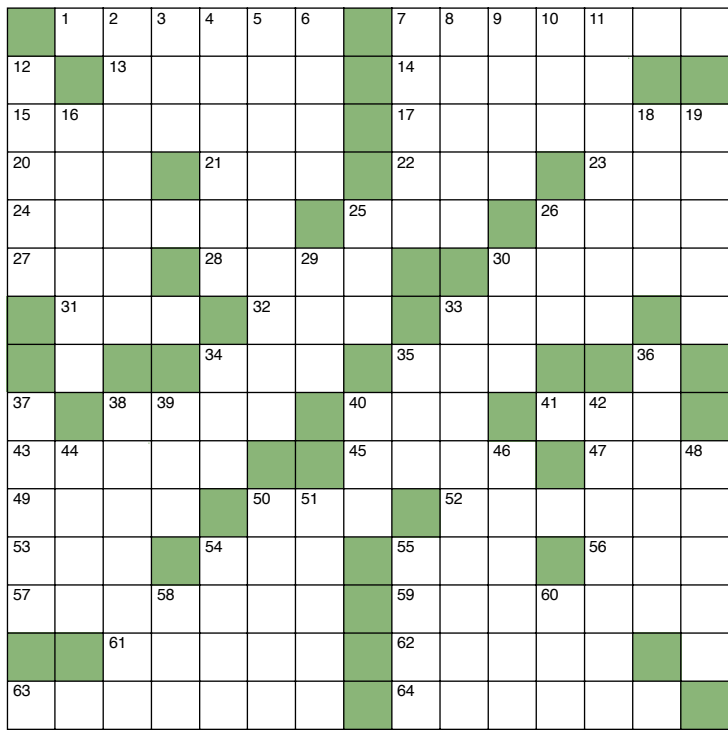
BLACK to Mate in 3 Descriptive Notation

1. _____ QxP ch
 2. K-Q1 N-K6 ch
 3. K-B1 Q-B7 mate
- Algebraic Notation**
1. _____ Qa7xf2+
 2. Ke1-d1 Ng4-e3+
 3. Kd1-c1 Qf2-c2 ++

Crossword Puzzle

Series 17 No 11

Last Month's solution
Series 17 No 10



ACROSS:

1. Roman poet
7. English town, and university
13. Tail description
14. Rajah's wives
15. Diagonal cross on a shield
17. Something that stands out
20. ___ de Coeur
21. Help
22. Former Serbian capital, or nickel sulfide letters
23. Aussie slang for kangaroo
24. Vital body parts
25. Self-esteem
26. Assorted items
27. Knot together
28. Put an end to
30. Holiday visitor
31. Visual Display Unit (abbr.)
32. Russian space station
33. Earthen pot
34. Buddy
35. Arid
38. Raised platform
40. Wine term
41. Big bird
43. River in France
45. London restaurant district
47. Certain time
49. Gaelic
50. Horse command
52. Deletes
54. Man's name
55. Illegal drug
56. Winter sport
57. Nickname for resident of Indiana
59. Kind of restaurant
61. Tasty sauce
62. A petrel with a serrated bill
63. Seasonal circles
64. Summer wear

DOWN:

2. Required by duty
3. Mud dip in the road
4. Inhabitants of China
5. December event
6. Observed closely
7. Fork part
8. Music box
9. Stops
10. Blood relative, for short
11. Tsar's wife
12. Fancy tie
16. Get there
18. Without direction
19. From the surrounding area
25. Electron Paramagnetic Resonance (abbr.)
26. French bad
29. Grease
30. Cunning
33. Musical group with instruments
34. Dessert
35. ___ Volente
36. Cry of discovery
37. First letter of Hebrew alphabet
38. Depose from popedom
39. Exist
40. Direction
42. Seaport in Sicily
44. Cookie brand name
46. Confer holy orders upon
48. Ancient Greek city of Argolis
50. Go, archaically speaking
51. Money used in Holland
54. Itemized writing
55. Face parts
58. Body of water
60. Place where the apostle Peter healed the paralytic

Joyce