

REFORMED

Volume 25 Number 2 December 2005

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY



CENSORSHIP:

IT'S A GOOD THING!

What's inside?

Hannah's
Progress

The Candidate

Christmas
Heresies



Editorial

by James Dykstra

The Candidate

Watching a good man go bad

“Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised.” (Proverbs 27:21 NLT)

It was one of those pleasant but non-descript restaurants you find downtown. The food was good enough and that was really all that mattered because this was just one more political breakfast for this candidate. He was up early to meet another community leader he thought could deliver a few hundred supporters to help his dream of becoming party leader, and eventually premier.

This candidate knew what his breakfast companion wanted to hear. It wasn't about economic success or lower taxes. For this potential supporter it was all about the moral questions. It was about values.

.....

***“You ask around.
Everyone says I'm a good guy.”***

.....

So the aspiring party leader talked about what he'd done in the pro-life movement. “For years I've been vocal in the universities, and more recently I've been heard in political circles talking about the value of the unborn. Why, even my wife is a leader in our province's pro-life movement!”

So, the community leader asked the candidate, “If you're so strongly pro-life, why isn't anything being said about abortion in this campaign? How come the issue of abortion hasn't come up? Surely the lives, or deaths, of thousands of unborn children has to be an issue that matters to the whole province.”

Though he blushed deeply the candidate didn't miss a beat in his answer. “Abortion isn't a winning issue. Abortion is too divisive. Isn't it better to be

elected first and then to solve the abortion question? What's the sense in losing? Then nothing can be done.”

The community leader paused for a moment to reflect. “So what you're saying is that you'll hope people forget about what you stand for and then you'll surprise them with it later, right?”

“No, not at all,” the aspiring premier replied, “I'm making sure they know I'm a moral guy. I'm talking about gay marriage. I still believe marriage is between a man and a woman, and only a man and a woman.”

The candidate's breakfast companion looked confused. “You're talking about marriage and not abortion? Next to the lives and deaths of all those kids, marriage just doesn't sound so big. Why gay marriage?”

“Because that's a winning issue. In this province people still believe that marriage does *not* involve a man and a man or a woman and woman. We need an issue that will help us win and gay marriage is it.”

“So you're talking about gay marriage because you want to win? But what if you're wrong and talking about gay marriage makes you lose?”

“I'm not wrong,” the candidate replied, “The polls show this is a very important issue.”

“Sometimes polls are wrong. What if this time the polls are wrong, and you spend all this time opposing gay marriage and still lose?”

“Then,” the aspiring premier admitted with unusual candor, “I guess we'll have wasted an awful lot of time, effort and money.”

The candidate's breakfast companion sat thoughtfully for a few moments. “So if you lose the race, you've lost everything. Won't it have mattered that you talked about important issues with the

REFORMED Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

www.reformedperspective.ca

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

Address for Administrative Matters
(Subscriptions, Advertisements,
Change of Address):
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
13820-106A Ave., Edmonton, AB
Canada T5N 1C9
E-mail:
editor@reformedperspective.ca

Managing Editor:

Wilhelm Gortemaker

Regular Contributors:

*Jane deGlint, Christine Farenhorst,
Margaret Helder, Johan Tangelder,
Rene Vermeulen*

Board of Directors:

*Jacob Kuik, Chairman;
James Teitsma, Secretary/Treasurer;
Peter DeBoer, Wilhelm Gortemaker,
Henk VanderVelde, John Voorhorst,
Theresa Weessies*

Secretarial Address

(Board Matters):

*James Teitsma,
90 Ranchgrove Bay
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada
R2C 4Y3*

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
Kelmescott, W. Australia 6111*

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

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

Annual Subscription Rates:

Canada \$49.00*
(2 years \$89.00, 3 years \$130.00)*
Canada Airmail \$66.00*
U.S. (U.S. Funds) \$48.00
(2 years \$88.00, 3 years \$128.00)
U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$69.00
International Surface Mail \$64.00
(2 years \$118.00, 3 years \$174.00)
International Airmail \$95.00
* including 7% G.S.T.
— G.S.T. No. R118929272RT

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

Cancellation Agreement

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

Registration: ISSN 0714-8208

Charitable Organization under

Canada Income Tax Act

Registration No. 18929272RR0001

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE

CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

voters? You want to be a leader. By making people think about gay marriage and abortion, won't you be leading?"

"Be serious," the candidate responded, "I can't win talking about abortion. Politics isn't about talking. It's about doing."

"So why should I support you? You don't want to talk about abortion and if you don't think you can win talking about gay marriage, you won't do it. You won't stand up for the issues now, and that makes me wonder if you'll even stand up for them later. You want to be a leader but you won't show leadership. How can I go to my friends and tell them to support you?"

"Well," the aspiring premier replied with a sly smile, "you don't have to. All you have to do is tell them how bad the other candidates are, and that, compared to them, I'm not quite as bad. I'm really the only choice they've got."

"Oh." The community leader looked momentarily blank. "I guess I could say that you *used* to talk about abortion and that *maybe* you'll do something about it. That would be truthful."

"It would be. And that's really all you have to say, isn't it?"

"So I should recommend someone who hides his positions and may not even live up to what we *think* he stands for because he's not as bad an option as the other choices."

"Huh," the candidate mused, "when you put it that way, you make me sound really bad. But I'm not you know. I've done so many good things in the past. You ask around. Everyone says I'm a good guy."

"I'm sorry," the community leader answered, "but I have to go. My breakfast isn't settling well."

James Dykstra is a social studies teacher who lives in Winnipeg. His article is "based on a true story."



In this Issue:

Editorial – The Candidate

— *James Dykstra* 2

Readers' Response 4

Report from Australia – A potpourri of Australian
activity — *Rene Vermeulen* 5

Strange Brew — *Jordan Ballor* 7

Homefront – Content with Memories
— *Jane deGlint* 9

Censorship: It's a good thing — *Michael Wagner* 11

The New Utopia – It has no room for the disabled

or the suffering — *Johan D. Tangelder* 13

"Hark, the Heresies We Sing"

— *Sharon L. Bratcher* 17

Hannah's Progress — *Christine Farenhorst* 18

Stephen Harper's betrayal — *Jon Dykstra* 30

Puzzle Page — *Bob Leach* 31

Crossword Puzzle Series 13, No. 7 32

Readers' Response



Dear Editor,

Reading the article "Why Modern Art Stinks" (Oct, 2005), it is hard not to come away with a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. Very little seems to measure up. An ending that reads: "... there's not much hope for art in our time" is not encouraging to most of the readers. Should we even write, sing or paint? Is this not a defeatist attitude?

And is this the way we ought to look at art? That only the best is worthy, and all else does not deserve our attention, or even some small encouragement?

Perhaps this is why there are so few artists found in our midst. We don't seem to support it very much.

Mediocrity is not deserving apparently, so let's enter our sanctuary on an average Sunday morning, and examine the art of e.g. singing. I cannot remember the last time a sister's voice reminded me of Kiri Te Kanawa, or a man's voice which resembled Luciano Pavarotti's sublime tones.

But (and we can thank God for it) everyone in the sanctuary is singing! That includes all the mediocre voices, and even those who cannot hold a tune! All are singing to His glory, and rightly so.

We have had School Band performances, Talent Evenings, and even a special Music Night to gather funds for a new piano, and the musical talent was overwhelming! What great reasons to celebrate, not relishing in our own accomplishments, but in the generous way the Lord has blessed so many of us.

God demands all of us; we are His, in body, mind and spirit. To each is given, and from each shall be required. But are we to measure art, and condemn most art, due to its mediocrity? That seems to be a very shallow thought. It translates into something like this: If you cannot be a Rembrandt or a Bateman, better not paint! And if your compositions cannot compare to those of J.S. Bach, or Smetana's, you better stop now!

It seems incredulous to write that Pablo Picasso "cleared the path for artist wannabees who could become famous, not through genuinely creative talent and work, but by shocking people." Now the shock value style is more common than you may think, and not only in your local newspaper, where you'll see plenty of it. Even the title of the *Reformed Perspective* article: "WHY MODERN ART STINKS" (in capitals) is all about getting attention! Shocking indeed!

Michael Wagner writes: "And without an artistic standard, (whose standard? BV) how can someone tell the difference between a masterpiece and a pile of garbage?" I'd venture to say that most people can. But the key is that there is a lot of room for excellent art in between. Room that ought to be used, and celebrated, as together we have been blessed by Him with many talents.

We are to encourage one another, as the Bible teaches us. For God knows that encouragement leads to growth and to greater art, which leads to greater glory of Him, our Master Artist!

Bram Vægter
Spruce Grove, Alberta

Editor's response: While RP does use capitalized headlines to get our readers' attention we rarely try to shock our readers. The difference is significant – a person who yells loudly, and another who yells obscenities loudly are both trying to get attention, but only in the latter case is shock being used. When Michael Wagner worries that many modern artists are merely trying to shock people his complaint is that instead of garnering attention through the quality of their work, artists seek to garner attention by being extreme or offensive.

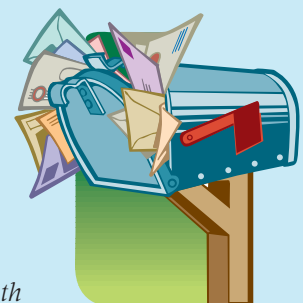
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CAN BE SENT TO:

Reformed Perspective

13820 106 A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5N 1C9
editor@reformedperspective.ca

Letters will be edited on the basis of grammar, Christian charity and also length (which should be under 300 words if at all possible).





A potpourri of Australian activity

Promising politicians, consuming carnivores, and seasonal cyclones

After one of the wettest winters for quite some time Western Australia is looking forward to summer. The eastern states of Australia have had varying success with rainfall this year. But here in the West things look good: for a successful harvest, for more water in the dams than quite some years, and maybe, and it is still a maybe, for fewer restrictions on the use of water. Of course as far as the crops are concerned a lot can still happen to do damage to the crops. Only yesterday a hailstorm destroyed many thousands of acres of grain.

It is interesting to listen to the long-range forecasters who are predicting that Western Australia will experience 5 cyclones, one of those severe. Of course this is conjecture on their part and only time will tell. It is true, however, that every so many years we seem to experience a severe cyclone.

For a long time I regarded cyclones as only bad – mighty storms doing damage, even hurting men and beasts. But I was left with more to ponder after discussing this with someone who lived up in the north of the state. He pointed out that cyclones are vital to the cattle industry in the north as they often bring the only rain that a pastoral property might get from year to year. A little damage to a home or some out-buildings is the price to pay for having enough water to feed one's livestock for another year.

And fortunately where most of these storms are experienced there are few peo-

ple. We do not have the threats such as what happened in the United States in New Orleans or for that matter the many thousands that have died in Kashmir, Pakistan. That does not mean that it cannot happen. After all God has told us that in the latter days He will announce His coming with all sorts of climatic and other natural disasters. And Australia certainly deserves to receive such punishment. For as a nation we have turned our backs on God; His name is today referred to mostly as a swear word.

.....
***For a long time
I regarded cyclones as
only bad. . . .***
.....

Some 40 years ago governments decided to stop teaching Scripture in the schools and the result has been that two generations of people have grown up who know nothing or next to nothing about the God of the Bible. I was reminded of that recently while reading some letters to the editor of our state newspaper. While occasionally someone will write in, or should I say, get his letter published that shows a clear understanding of the Word of God, reactions often come from people who show that they clearly know absolutely nothing about what the Bible teaches.

A man to watch

But not all is negative.

The Federal Minister for Health is an unusual character. His name is Tony Abbott – he is young, and by all accounts a possible future Prime Minister. While highly respected for his role in the Health Department he is also an outspoken opponent of abortion in all its forms. Generally speaking when people are in such important positions they tend not to be outspoken about issues such as this. But Mr. Abbott is different. One might ask, why? The reason is simple. The man is an active member of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact he once studied for the priesthood.

He is highly educated, was a Rhodes scholar, is married and has three daughters. Since being elected to Parliament in 1994 he has often been outspoken. He is probably fortunate in that he was for a time a feature writer for one of our major magazines. This means that he is able to handle the press very well.

And he needs that very much, for time and again there are attempts to put him on the back foot. He is attacked on a number of issues but especially because he is so outspoken on the large numbers of abortion in Australia. But he never draws back from his views, no matter who attacks him. Only during the last few days there have been calls from all sorts of “experts” to allow the Morning After Pill to be used in Australia – this pill, known as RU486, is an abortifacient used the day after sex to prevent the



Cyclones
are
good
for
cows?

embryo from properly implanting in the mother's womb. Mr. Abbott has rejected this call even though some of his supporters in the Parliament who are against abortion are in favor of this measure.

It will be interesting to see what he can achieve in the Health portfolio.

If he has his way abortions will be drastically curtailed for he sees it as a blot on the Australian scene.

Full steam ahead

In the meantime Prime Minister John Winston Howard seems to be thoroughly in charge of the government. It had been thought that after the last election he would give some indication when he intends to retire. But he has not done so and he seems to enjoy his job.

Having only recently got control over the Senate he intends to use it to get his legislative proposals passed. One of these is a total overhaul of the labor laws. He wants to make life more flexible, especially for the employers.

But this has brought him into conflict with some churches' leaders. Initially both the Roman Catholic and Anglican leaders spoke out against his proposals, and now during the last few days the Salvation Army has also let their opposition be known.

.....

***Tony Abbott is an
outspoken opponent of
abortion in all its forms.***

.....

Each of these leaders see in the proposals the threat that people least able to look after themselves will be disadvantaged by the new proposed labor laws. Thus the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, a man known as a Bible-believing minister, spoke of his concern that these measures may mean that families, especially poorer families, will see even less of each other.

While Howard has, at least on paper, control over the Senate, there are two men who, while normally on his side, may still vote against some of his proposals. It will be worth watching to see what happens.

Terrorism

Prime Minister Howard has also proposed to change Australia's security laws. Some of these changes seem rather draconian but may well be necessary to protect the country against terrorism. While the opposition Labor Party supports the changes it accuses the government of acting too slow, while civil libertarians are worried about some of the measures being proposed. But as government supporters remind us, these are tough times, dangerous times – they need tough measures to protect Australia and its citizens.

The monarchy

On a lighter note Australians are well and truly divided on the question of the monarchy. During the last few weeks something that happened in Denmark of all places has given monarchists a shot in the arm.

About a year ago a Sydney real estate agent, one Mary Donaldson, married the Crown Prince of Denmark, Frederik. In October Princess Mary gave birth to a baby boy and while this brought much joy to the Danes it has also caused quite a stir in Australia. All sorts of presents have gone from Australia to Denmark for the young baby and his parents. Princess Mary's home state is Tasmania and the Tasmanian government has offered the couple some Tasmanian devils. Tasmanian devils, for those that don't know, are carnivorous marsupials that can completely consume birds and even medium-sized mammals, bones and all!

It is clear that Australians are rather proud of their Princess at the Danish court.



Strange Brew:

Churches push for “fair trade” coffee

by Jordan Ballor

The “fair trade” coffee campaign (not to be confused with “free trade” coffee) is gaining traction beyond its early beachhead on college campuses and grungy latté shops. Increasingly, the campaign is finding new adherents in religious organizations, which are busily issuing guidelines for consumers. In churches and synagogues all over America, the once ideologically innocent coffee klatch has become a forum for international trade policy.

Prominent religious advocates of fair trade include the Interfaith Fair Trade Initiative, an outreach of Lutheran World Relief, and the Presbyterian Coffee Project of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Presbyterian Coffee Project, among other things, advises its churches to “offer gift baskets of fairly traded coffee and tea for new members, as Christmas presents, or on other occasions.” Catholic Relief Services announced the launch of an effort to boost fair trade coffee consumption among the nation’s 65 million Catholics.

Coffee sweatshops?

People of faith are working with groups like Global Exchange, a San Francisco human rights organization, which claims, “Agriculture workers in the coffee industry often toil in what can be described as ‘sweatshops in the fields.’” The fair trade movement, encouraged by victories among the religious and in corporate America, has ambitions that range all over America’s supermarket. TransFair USA, the only third-party certifier of fair trade commodities in the United States, announced in 2004 that fresh fruit is its “Newest Fair Trade Certified™ Product Offering.” Soon, even the purchase of a bunch of bananas will force shoppers to make a political statement.



An oversupply of coffee is driving down the world price, impoverishing many farmers. To help, some Christians are now buying “fair trade” coffee – higher priced coffee that pays the farmer a higher price for their beans. These efforts are well intentioned but they hurt more than they help.

But let’s be fair to the fair traders. Their techniques are based on convincing the consuming public and working through the market to achieve their goals. This approach is vastly superior to relying solely on governmental subsidies, which has historically been the chosen means of influencing agriculture policy for many like-minded activists.

The main difficulty with this lies in the fact that these campaigns rely on guilt-tripping people who drink coffee, rather than arguing from sound economic principles. The rhetoric of the fair

trade movement attacks “big business” coffee companies, and favors smaller, co-operative farms.

In addition to using such rhetoric as “sweatshops in the fields,” Global Exchange implicitly blames consumers and big business for the “crisis” with an explanation that does not explain: “Many small coffee farmers receive prices for their coffee that are less than the costs of production, forcing them into a cycle of poverty and debt.”

The “middlemen” involved in coffee importation into the United States are often

called “exploitative.” The Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project asserts that big business coffee involves “a lengthy, and expensive, cast of middlemen between the coffee farmer and the consumer.”

Most people, and not just economists, refer to this as a supply chain, the system by which food is delivered from field to table.

And corporate America is caving in. Proctor & Gamble announced it would begin offering Fair Trade Certified coffee through its specialty coffee division, Millstone.

It's not that simple

The fair traders' answer to the “sweatshop on the fields” situation is simple: fix the price of coffee at a level that will provide an adequate standard of living for the farmer. Currently they affirm that this fair level is a minimum of \$1.26 US per pound (compared to the current 50 cents per pound prices in the actual marketplace).

Such artificial and arbitrary measures fly in the face of economic reality. The law of supply and demand is a major player in regulating the price of coffee, which is bought and sold like any other commodity. The economic price mechanism takes into account a variety of factors that an artificial price standard cannot hope to deal with justly.

Pushing the poor towards an industry in decline

Fair traders also ignore one of the main reasons coffee growers face price drops: worldwide production has greatly expanded, especially in Southeast Asia. Increased supply equals lower prices given a static demand.

From 1995 to 2002, according to CoffeeResearch.org and the International Coffee Organization, Brazil increased coffee exports by more than 200 per cent. Colombia has shown a slight decline in production over the same period, while Vietnam's production has almost tripled. So the three largest exporters of coffee in the world had all either maintained or increased their pro-

duction during the seven-year period. Worldwide coffee production peaked in 2002 and because of a long buildup of surplus, finally showed a 15 per cent decline in 2003. There's simply too much coffee on the market.

There's simply too much coffee on the market.

Even though the U.S. is one of the largest importers of coffee in the world, per capita consumption of coffee has declined steadily, dropping from 38.8 gallons in 1960 to 22 gallons in 2000, according to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service. This is indicative of a downward trend in global demand, which, combined with increased supply, is a major cause of the plummet in coffee prices.

Pitting the poor vs. poor

Most troubling is the fact that the fair trade movement effectively pits the poor against the poor. It's a case of coffee farmers in the fair trade co-ops versus conventional farmers. Those who sell coffee in the traditional commercial manner are forced to compete with those who are artificially enabled by the fair trade movement to maintain production through such guilt-driven, market-based subsidies.

The Apostle calls us to live godly lives, to “keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism” (1 Tim. 5:21 NIV). This stems from our proper reflection of God's holiness and justice, “For God does not show favoritism” (Rom. 2:11 NIV). While these words are spoken especially in regard to salvation history, they have application to our morally-informed economic lives. Religious groups especially should reevaluate their position with respect to fair trade in the interest of true justice. The fair trade

movement needs to take into consideration the poor who are left out of their arbitrarily constructed system of privilege.

The fair trade movement's only response to this disparity is to argue for a complete standardization of its price-fixing methods. Global Exchange calls for “a total transformation of the coffee industry, so that all coffee sold in this country should be Fair Trade Certified.” The success of this sort of endeavor will never be comprehensively effective, especially in a free economy like the United States. As Global Exchange admits, “despite the growing popularity of Fair Trade coffee, demand has not yet matched supply: In 2003 about 200 million lbs. of certified Fair Trade coffee was sold at normal market prices because of insufficient demand.”

Help them move to growing industries

Rather than attempting vainly to maintain the status quo, the fair trade movement should look for other, more innovative ways to provide resources for the world's poor. For example, Ronald J. Sider in his book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997, pp. 233-36) outlines ideas about micro-enterprise development that might offer a better solution. Those who care about small coffee growers, according to Sider's view, might invest capital and enable farmers to grow crops that are in higher demand.

In this way, those who choose to stay in the coffee growing business would see less competition and, in theory, rising prices resulting from decreased supply. How much better than fair trade price fixing and guilt trips, which demand partiality for a select group of the poor.

Jordan J. Ballor is associate editor with the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion & Liberty in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This article is a reprint from their website www.acton.org.



Stephen Harper's betrayal

Traditional Marriage defenders think Stephen Harper's their great hope.

**Unfortunately, while he does want their votes,
he's not on their side.**

by Jon Dykstra

Stephen Harper started off the election campaign by promising to revisit gay "marriage" should his party win.

But before you get too excited, here's what else he did: the Conservative Party leader promised that the next vote on the issue would be a free vote, he promised that any gays already "married" would retain their status, and he made sure any mention of gay "marriage" was kept off the Conservative Party website.

Losing the free vote

His free vote promise almost guarantees that any legislation aimed at restoring traditional marriage will be defeated. Right now the best the Conservatives could expect is a minority government, or if you're very optimistic, a bare majority. The NDP, Bloc Quebecois and the vast majority of Liberals favor gay "marriage" and even in the Conservative Party quite a number of their candidates, like John Baird, Gerald Keddy, Jim Prentice and James Moore also favor gay "marriage." That means if all the Conservatives aren't forced to tow the line on this issue, if a free vote is allowed, then it's likely gay "marriage" will continue, even if the Conservatives are elected.

Losing the argument

But what if the Conservatives win an absolutely crushing majority – then couldn't they get the required legislation passed? Maybe, but even if we win this battle, Harper has ensured we will lose the war.

We're against any attempted redefinitions of marriage because we know that marriage can not be redefined. Or to put it another way, we don't think gay "marriage" is wrong, we think it's *impossible*. Harper's

stance is a completely different one – by promising to recognize the status of any gays already "married" he's acting as if gay "marriage" is indeed possible, though maybe not desirable at this moment. He's acting as if marriage can be redefined by the state. His position gives our homosexual opponents all the ammunition they need – if marriage really can be redefined then this debate revolves around whether or not we choose to exclude gays from marriage, whether or not we'll *discriminate* against them. And who do you think is going to win a debate framed in those sorts of terms?

.....

***We don't think gay
"marriage" is wrong, we
think it's impossible.***

.....

Losing our voice

Harper's stance on gay "marriage" becomes crystal clear when you examine the Conservative Party website www.conservative.ca. The Conservative Leader may have made a few headlines with his comments on gay "marriage" but they can't be found anywhere on this site. There is also nothing about it in the "Key issues," "Our Priorities" or "Reality Check" sections. Nothing on it in the campaign blog, the news releases, or absolutely anywhere else on the site.

Even the speech archives have nothing. Harper's opening day speech is there, but his comments on gay "marriage" are not. Why? Because the comments were

not part of his prepared speech – he decided to make them in a separate media scrum. He did make the comments, but only to get them over with.

Jack Layton, Gilles Duceppe and Paul Martin are all eager to promote homosexual "marriage," and the best our side can muster is a man who wants to keep his comments on the issue as brief and infrequent as possible. Harper has let the Marriage debate become one-sided; how can he be the man who's supposed to win it for us?

Conclusion

If you're not cynical yet, you haven't been paying attention. Harper has taken a stance against gay marriage, but it's such a comically inept one that even homosexuals can vote for him without fear. If Stephen Harper is Traditional Marriage's best public defender then gay "marriage" is safe and secure.

There are some people running who really are against gay "marriage" and are willing to speak out against it. The Christian Heritage Party is full of such people, but they won't run in every riding. The Conservatives have Traditional Marriage defenders but it's clear they also have many candidates who, like their leader, are simply clever politicians. These types will hope that a few vague statements on the issue (the fewer the better) will guarantee them the Christian and socially conservative vote, while still keeping the issue quiet enough that even gays will vote for them.

Don't be fooled and don't let them fool anyone else. Make sure you're voting for the genuine article – a politician willing to speak out loudly and clearly in defense of Marriage.





Content with Memories

by Jane deGlint

We cannot stop the hands of God's clock. With relentless movement time marches on in its course. As human beings we have no choice. God determines our entrance into the flow of time and he decides the moment of our departure. We join the race, run it, and leave.

God himself, as the Creator of time, has the unique option to stop time, even to make it go back. At two recorded occasions the Lord used this prerogative. He employed Joshua to stop the sun from hastening down (Joshua 10:12-14), while at a much later date he announced through his spokesperson Isaiah that the sundial would go back ten steps (Isaiah 38:7,8). These mighty signs are meant to reassure God's people that he uses his power over creation to facilitate their battle against the forces of evil. The Lord's children do not have to fear an attack on their personal safety or on their faith, but they can confidently appeal to almighty God who will arrange all things for their ultimate good.

People have great difficulty accepting God's timing.

Many people have great difficulty accepting God's timing. Both believers and unbelievers have an inherent desire to hold the reins of time. From the myths of the olden day to the science fiction of more recent years, stories emerge which describe how man through his wit takes hold of time. Sinful man is bent on dethroning the Creator, in whatever way he can and how-

ever foolish his attempts are. But all those attempts to reset God's clock are futile. People cannot go back in time to alter the course of history, nor can they reach into the future to live out their dreams. Man does not even fully comprehend how time functions among the forces of nature. How dare he contemplate manipulating it.

But also faithful believers have difficulty accepting the Lord's timing. They express their anguish about God's agenda by questioning his commitment to their cause. During stressful events they lose their willingness and ability to submit to God's timing. They succumb to the temptation of wanting to take matters into their own hands. With indignant self-justification they accuse the Lord of forgetfulness or tardiness. In great frustration they cry out to their God, "Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?" (Psalm 44:24).

It is through these struggles with the Lord that we learn to discern the wisdom of his timing. When all events seem to float aimlessly in the river of time, we might initially surrender to our despair and doubt the Lord's control over our lives. But in his grace the Lord teaches us patience and opens our eyes to the perspective of his plan for our salvation. The history of this world is not haphazard. It is a beautiful tapestry, woven with the scarlet threads of sin and the golden strands of providence into a flawless, royal design.

Once we have learned to recognize the tranquility of submission to God's timing, the road is open to treasuring our memories. As long as we were caught up in the mad pursuit of foolish desires, we were too impatient for memories. We pushed and pushed. But as we start to see God's guidance for the present, we become aware of his wisdom and grateful for his continued

guidance. Instead of demanding action, we learn to be content with memories.

When the Lord presents us with a certain incident in the present, it is not a fleeting gift that evaporates as soon as the event is over. We commit a version of the experience to our memory. In our mind we store the highlights, some details, our reactions and evaluations. But our memory is not a storage chamber of old relics. The stored events become part of us and grow with us. They shape us into the person we are and become an integral part of our being. In turn they attach themselves to subsequent,

We have no choice but to be content with our memories.

related incidents. Together they form a live cell in which all the components move about and relate to each other. At times of reflection, our collection of memories guides us through the present time and aids us as we prepare for a future event. Far from being abstract, this is an ongoing process that is very real, relevant and active.

We might not be conscious of these powerful memory cells in our system, but they exist in everyone's soul. They become active at unexpected moments. You may know, for example, a man in your church who is quite the money expert. He is an excellent account keeper, manages money frugally and has a keen business sense. By and large he is a pleasant man, congenial even at times. Then, at a congregational



his sharp wit he bares some weaknesses and inconsistencies in the budget. Suddenly your memory cell realigns itself. Instantly you connect to his objections at previous annual meetings and to his remark at a party that a financial reward compensates for hardships. Boy, he certainly acts as insistent, astute and cold as a lawyer for the defense! However, a few days later another alignment sets in. You realize that he is not a sterile, critical penny-pincher, but a caring man with a passion for proper money management.

Admittedly, the ability to structure one's memories can be used negatively. We can use our collection of grievances in such a way that we become habitual faultfinders. In fact, this pattern is completely in line with our sinful nature. Naturally we are inclined to hate our neighbor and to blame God for our troubles. When we allow our minds to dwell on insults, injustices, wrong assumptions, false accusations and many other forms of personal hurt, we will become as irritable and cynical as the people who caused us our pain.

Through the work of the Spirit in our heart we are able to turn the trend around. Taking distance from our tendency to quickly condemn and rashly accuse, we learn to depend on the Lord for guidance. Our impatience will have to be curtailed. Our need for revenge will have to be surrendered. We can trust God to rule all circumstances ably and firmly. He does not dither or stall. Undoubtedly, he does work salvation for those who trust his way for their life.

Aware of our need for immediate action and instant success, the Lord teaches us to be content with the memories of his great deeds. Many Psalms remind God's people to learn from God's mighty deeds in the past. God has always looked after his people in wondrous ways. His solutions were always higher than man's suggestions and expectations.

Without exception God's people recognize themselves in the words of Psalm 77. These inspired phrases reflect the struggle that all believers encounter. "I cried out to God for help. I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress I sought the Lord. At night I stretched out untiring hands. But my soul refused to be comforted!" The desperate questions are hurled into God's face. "Will the Lord reject for ever? Will he never show his favor again? Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" But then the Lord reminds the believer of his providential care. With growing confidence the writer of the psalm continues, "I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds!"

When we quench our impatience and eagerness, the peace of God descends on our souls. We are ready to meditate quietly about the Lord's help throughout all generations (Psalm 90). Having forgotten about our need for quick fixes, we suddenly realize how the Lord has always generously supplied his people with long-

term care. The Lord who parted the waters of the sea to let his people through, continues to be able and willing to provide for his children under any circumstance. Though God cannot be seen, his love and faithfulness become clearly visible to all those who look at history through the eyes of faith. We stand in awe and grow content as we learn to treasure the memories of God's mighty deeds.

The lesson of learning to be content with memories takes on a different dimension when we lose a spouse, family member or dear friend. Then all we have left are memories. It is not possible anymore to straighten out a misunderstanding, to apologize for a mistake, to make up for an injustice. We have no choice but to be content with our memories. However, we do have the possibility of realigning the memories. Exercising our faith in our merciful God, we learn to accept the loss. But along with the growing acceptance we start to bring out the positive incidents of our relationship. Even the incidents which were painful or distressing at the time, take on a different tone. They are balanced out with understanding and forgiveness. Moreover, as we grow ready for the joy that the relationship offered, we overcome our intense sadness and pain over the loss. The empty place will never be filled in the same way. But the gratitude for what the Lord gave us in the person will start to motivate us for our current tasks. Instead of being rebellious over the bereavement, we have learned to be content with the memory of our loved one.

Slowly but surely we learn how to tell time on God's clock. Sensitive to the signs he generously provides, we know when to speak and when to be silent, when to act and when to wait, when to remember and when to forget. As we learn to accept and appreciate the Lord's deeds in our personal life, we train ourselves for a lifetime of trust and an eternity of bliss.

"I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done" Psalm 143:5.



CENSORSHIP: IT'S A GOOD THING!

Preserving freedom through censorship

by Michael Wagner

All people must be governed; the only question is, who will govern? It could be the civil government (what we commonly refer to as “government”), or other institutions such as the church or family, or individuals governing themselves. In truth, all of these together share in governing.

However, the degree to which each contributes to governing can vary dramatically from one society to another.

.....

***How can a “free”
society prohibit certain
forms of entertainment?***

.....

In totalitarian societies the civil government exercises by far the vast majority of governing authority – they control every area of life and intermediary institutions and individuals must basically just obey.

But in free societies the power of the civil government (or state) is relatively small, and the governing role played by intermediary institutions like the church and family, and the governing role played by individuals over themselves, is quite large.

More and less

In the simplest terms, there is an inverse relationship between the power of the civil government and the power of individuals to govern themselves in any

society. The more governing power the state has, the less the individual has. The more governing authority (governing himself or herself) that the individual exercises, the less the state exercises. The ideal of a free society requires self-governing individuals under a limited civil government. If these individuals relinquish their task and responsibility of self-governing and self-control, the power of the state will expand to ensure that the society remains stable.

It’s vital to recognize the importance of individual or personal self-government in a free society to understand the need for censorship of the entertainment media. Only people of good character, who can restrain and govern their own natural impulses, can sustain a free society. And as political scientist David Lowenthal writes in *Present Dangers: Rediscovering the First Amendment*, “Only free societies require of all their members the moral disposition and capacities that make cooperation in self-government possible.”

Unfree societies do not need the average citizen to be a person of good character because governing power resides in the state, and the citizen can be *forced* to behave.

But free societies must have citizens of good character who live responsibly. Lowenthal states, “free civilized society cannot be largely composed of individuals driven by their appetites, disorderly and impulsive, who have no respect for others or for the law.” This is because a “nation of

profligates, cheats, and cowards, of people incapable of controlling their own lust, greed, rage, and fear, cannot, by the nature of things, use its freedom properly or long endure.” A society comprised of people of bad character will lose its freedom. These people will be governed, but if they won’t govern themselves as individuals, the power of the state will expand so that they will be governed by others.

If the civil government of a free society is concerned about preserving freedom (and it should be), then it must necessarily be concerned about the character of its citizens. It will want to uphold traditional morality to reinforce good character traits among the population. We “cannot pretend that the state has no interest in the moral content of the minds of its citizens, since their morality – their sense of right and wrong, good and bad, noble and ignoble, decent and indecent –

.....

***A proper form of
censorship is a true
friend of freedom.***

.....

is precisely what guides their actions.” A civil government that is unconcerned about the character and morality of its people is thus unconcerned about the survival of genuine freedom itself.

Censored for freedom's sake

Because a free society is rooted in a citizenry of good character and moral self-restraint, "all forces calling us back to a primordial condition, appealing to appetites and passions, and ignoring moral and legal constraints that must be placed on them, are dangerous to free civilized society." And because they are dangerous, these forces must be restrained.

There needs to be restrictions placed on the kinds of images and messages purveyed by the mass media to prevent deterioration in the morality of the population. "If society, by setting moral and legal limits, can prolong its own existence, it will furnish ordered freedom to generations of individuals, all enjoying its blessings, including art. If it

fails to set these limits, its existence as a stable free society is jeopardized, and hence its ability to pass on its freedoms and culture to future generations."

Pornography and other obscene materials are dangerous to the character of the community. These materials contain messages, verbally or visually, that strike against basic moral standards. As Lowenthal puts it, "obscenity, by its naked appeal to lust, either intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an effort to alter the ideas of sexual right and wrong in the citizens – to liberate them from traditional moral restraints." This sort of thing must therefore be prohibited in a free society.

Isn't that ironic?

Of course, that will sound rather ironic. How can a "free" society prohibit certain forms of entertainment?

Strange as it may seem, a free society cannot survive without some restrictions on the images and messages conveyed in public. "Public morality and moderate liberty are mutually consistent and reinforcing, but extreme liberty undermines the conditions for its own preservation and can lead to nothing but the ruin of free society."

Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb makes a similar point rather well in her book *On Looking into the Abyss*.

She notes that while most people recognize "that absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely," it is true to say "that absolute liberty also tends to corrupt absolutely."

Liberty, then, cannot be absolute. Some form of censorship must be in place to prevent attacks upon the morality that undergirds a free society. Otherwise the long-term survival of the society will be at stake. This is the thrust

of Lowenthal's argument for censorship. "If books, movies, and music have an educational influence on their readers, viewers or listeners, those that are obscene will dispose them to become certain sorts of human beings, to regard sex in a certain light and only in that light, and thus to behave in ways that endanger social institutions and individuals at one and the same time."

Pornographic and obscene materials change the people who use them. It breaks down their character. And this affects the entire society. "Slowly but surely its debasing and corrupting effect will be felt, ineluctably transforming the freedom of democracies into license, undermining their moral character and vital social institutions."

By preserving this moral character, censorship actually protects freedom. It may be argued that giving the state the authority to censor the entertainment media increases the government's power and thus reduces freedom. This is true to a point, in the sense that any government power reduces individual freedom. Traffic laws restrict the freedom to drive however you want, but they also protect innocent people from the consequences of such freedom. In the same way, censoring immoral entertainment protects people from a decline in character that can ultimately lead to a much more powerful state and subsequent loss of many other freedoms.

Today censorship is a dirty word. Of course, there are improper uses of censorship, such as when the freedom to preach the whole counsel of God is restricted. But a proper censorship, prohibiting vile and immoral entertainment, actually strengthens and perpetuates a free society. Citizens must responsibly govern themselves as individuals if they are not going to be governed by an all-powerful state. Their capacity for individual self-government decreases as their character is assaulted by immoral images and messages promoted by the entertainment media. Preserving their character, and thus their capacity for self-government, is essential to the long-term preservation of a free society. Thus a proper form of censorship is a true friend of freedom.



Some books, and particularly some filthy magazines, should be burned.

The New Utopia

It has no room for the disabled or the suffering

by Johan D. Tangelder

Since the announcement in 1997 that Dolly the sheep had been cloned, biotechnology has generated controversy. Human cloning, stem-cell research, and other biotech developments now raise moral dilemmas that our parents and grandparents couldn't have imagined. But behind this new technology is a very old attitude – some lives are being classified as useful and others as expendable or “not worth living.”

Already a force

Already in the United States and Canada euthanasia is enjoying perverse popularity. The 2004 Oscar winning film *Million Dollar Baby* portrayed euthanasia as something noble, even heroic – a boxing coach shows his love to his daughter-figure by euthanizing her after she becomes disabled.

In the Netherlands, on August 30, 2004, the Dutch judicial authorities and the Groninger University Clinic came to an agreement authorizing a protocol of experimentation which will extend the practice of euthanasia to children under age 12, to “liberate” them “from pain.”

Abortion is also used to decide who should live and who should not, and in England it is often based on whether the unborn child will have any “quality of life.” In 2004, an unborn English child 28 weeks old was aborted because new techniques for detecting fetal abnormalities indicated that the child had a cleft lip and palate – that was enough to brand the child as having a life not worth living. In Britain more babies with Down syndrome are aborted than are allowed to be born. In America more than 80 per cent of the

babies diagnosed prenatally with Down syndrome are aborted.

Abortion and euthanasia form the bookends of this debate. Once the premise is granted that some lives are expendable, there is lethal logic that leads in due course to infanticide, euthanasia, genetic manipulation, and coercive reproduction policies. When the child in the womb – the place where she or he should be most protected – is legally expendable, those already born are threatened. If society is unwilling to protect the lives of unborn children, life for the born threatens to be an expendable commodity. Hence, abortion is still *the* issue for our world culture.

What's next?

Ideas always have consequences – what is taught at universities does filter down to everyday life in society. In our “enlightened” society the pagan practice of infanticide is now considered a legitimate practice by Princeton professor Peter Singer, America's leading bioethicist. He believes that infanticide is perfectly permissible within a person's first two years of life. He also argues that there is no point in keeping disabled old people alive because the elderly are no longer productive or useful to society.

Singer's argument is both new and old; he is promoting the idea today but it can be traced to the ancient past. Anthropologists have found that infanticide was quite common. The Eskimos (Inuits) would leave their infant children, especially girls, out to freeze to death. This was permitted completely at the parents' discretion: no social stigma was attached to it. And despite their great cultural and political achieve-

ments, the Romans also had a low view of life. Infanticide was “infamously universal” among them. Infants were killed for various reasons. Those born deformed or physically frail were especially prone to being willfully killed, often by drowning. The Roman statesman and writer Cicero (106-43 B.C.) justified infanticide, at least for the deformed, by citing the ancient *Twelve Tables of Roman Law*. He stated, “deformed infants shall be killed.” The early Christians called this Greco-Roman practice of infanticide, murder. Singer's “new ethic” places him in the same league as these Romans and the ancient Eskimos.

The loss of moral absolutes

At the heart of Western culture's depreciation of human life is the rejection of its Judeo-Christian heritage. God is no longer relevant.

Human beings are now the measure of all things and there is nothing greater or more important than “we the people.” But without God how can people determine what is right or wrong? Morals become only a matter of taste or opinion. Instead of holding to absolute moral standards, many speak of “moral preferences” or “lifestyle options.” We are told to create our own values. What is right for me may be wrong for someone else. All judgments of evil are condemned as judgmental and evil themselves. We must be tolerant, we are told. We shouldn't judge others if our “created values” differ with “their values,” if our choices clash with their choices. Indeed, tolerance has become the last undisputed virtue and the only moral absolute.

But society cannot survive without facing the fact there really are rights and wrongs. As Margaret Somerville put it in *The Ethical Canary: Science, Society and the Human Spirit*, "...sometimes we need to face the fact of evil. To recognize evil might also be to recognize that some things are inherently wrong, and this is not a popular stance in societies as ours in which situational ethics is the predominant mode of values analysis."

Posthumanism

Underlying the denial of moral absolutes and their depreciation of human life is the belief that "the human species does not represent the end of our evolution but, rather, its beginning."

Some call this view "posthumanism" or "transhumanism." Numerous academics, leaders in engineering, and the scientific establishment are taken in by the idea that human beings should engineer the next phase of evolution. The idea is that by seizing control of human evolution through bioengineering, human beings should be augmented and altered. People should not merely be allowed to change themselves through plastic surgery, cyberotechnology and the like, but they should have the right to control the destiny of their genes via progeny design and fabrication.

These worshippers at the altar of scientism usually also have an optimistic view of human nature, believing that people are inherently good and are on an ever-upward march to peace, prosperity, as well as on the move toward a new super race. Hence the attempt to have "designer babies" – enhanced for greater beauty, intelligence, strength, sports ability, musical talents or other attributes.

In other words, when people forsake God they try to act like gods. In his book *Facing Up To Evil In An Age of Genocide And Terror* Os Guinness observes: "At the deepest level of all, modern evil that is part fantasy and part fanaticism grows from the heart of the modernist worldview: the

drive of secular intellectuals to create and control a better world, purged of all defects and based only on reason, science, management, and our understanding of them all."

Eugenics

If we can create life, why not dispose of it when we think it is necessary? Our culture's emphasis on the genetically "fit," combined with the power of genetic technology and our difficulty in embracing those who are "less fit," drives the movement to dispose of those deemed unsuitable for a meaningful life. This sends the unmistakable message that some people are worthy of life and others are not.

***When people forsake
God they try to act
like gods.***

For example, a 1993 March of Dimes poll in the United States found that 11 per cent of parents said they would abort a fetus whose genome was predisposed to obesity. Four out of five would abort a fetus if it would grow up with a disability. Forty-three per cent said they would use genetic engineering if available simply to enhance their child's appearance.

The "new eugenic" movement has its origin in England and the United States, where it became a powerful force. The word eugenics, formed from two Greek roots, eu (good) and gen (birth) was coined by the nineteenth-century statistician Francis Galton to refer to selective breeding within human populations. Galton was a cousin to Charles Darwin and was influenced by Darwin's theory of natural selection. He believed that nations should discourage or impede childbearing by the destitute, the physically weak, the mentally ill, and oth-

ers deemed unfit. Birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger was one of his followers.

These eugenics advocates tried to improve the human race by enacting mandatory sterilization laws. Those deemed feeble-minded, indolent and licentious were sterilized, without their consent or against their wills. By the 1930s in the United States, most states had mandatory sterilization laws. In one well-known case, a young mentally-handicapped girl named Carrie Buck was given the "choice" either to be sterilized or to be returned to her asylum. Because both her mother and grandmother had been mentally retarded, the famous jurist Oliver Wendell declared of Buck, "Three generations of imbeciles is enough" and mandated that she be sterilized.

We must resist the new eugenicists if we are to preserve the dignity of every human being. The Nazi's embracement of eugenics should be a warning for us all.



Million Dollar Baby promotes euthanasia – in 2004 it won 4 Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

The Nazis

Postwar condemnations of the “nazification” of German science and medicine in the 1930s often ignored the pervasive belief in eugenics and its influence on policy in the rest of Europe. The Nazis derived

their eugenic program from views widely held in the United States and elsewhere that supported the compulsory sterilization of the “feeble-minded.” But the Nazis went much further to carry out their agenda of eugenic “cleansing” than those nations which dabbled in eugenic legisla-

tion. Nazi ideology rejected Germany’s Christian root, refused to acknowledge God as the source of life and the criterion of the moral good. It was fuelled by “pseudo-scientific” theories of racial superiority, and “extremist forms of nationalism.” Hitler and the Nazi leaders were ex-Christians and ex-Catholics. Those, including Hitler, who had Christian backgrounds vehemently rejected them. “We shall never come to terms with the Christian lie,” he declared. “Our epoch will certainly see the end of the disease of Christianity. It will last another hundred years, two hundred years perhaps. My regret will have been that I couldn’t, like whoever the prophet was, behold the promised land from afar.” Hitler was driven by his dream of a new utopia, the self-perfecting state. He stated: “Those who see in National Socialism nothing more than a political movement know scarcely anything of it. It is more even than a religion: it is the will to create mankind anew.” But in Hitler’s zeal to create a new world, his movement became a human catastrophe, a killing ground.

Nazi ideology incorporated the notion of perfection, whether of people or the self-perfecting state. It is therefore not surprising that one feature of German medicine just prior to the Holocaust, was that it saw itself as having a valid and important role to play in the quest to perfect the German people.

Once the Nazis took power in Germany, they began the elimination of those they believed “inferior.” In 1933 the forcible sterilization law was passed. In 1935, a marriage law was enacted, which required proof the couple’s offspring would not be afflicted with disabling hereditary disease. And in 1938-39, eugenic sterilization was succeeded by euthanasia. The first victims were children. The test case was a baby born, who was physically and mentally handicapped, blind, with one leg and part of an arm missing. The child’s parents requested a mercy killing. The petition was approved and authorized by Hitler, with

One more way to speak up for the unborn

FREE PRO-LIFE BRACELETS

A nose can run, but can wrists stand up? Certainly! *Reformed Perspective* subscribers can now let their wrists speak out by requesting and wearing a pro-life rubber bracelet. These bracelets are white, highly durable, and come in two sizes:



A 7 inch “Life is Precious” band, for children, teens and most women.



An 8 inch “Choose Life” band, best for men.

Specify which one you want when you email or mail your request to:

Reformed Perspective

13820 106A Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5N 1C9

editor@reformedperspective.ca

Who will speak up for those who can’t speak up for themselves?

WE WILL!

instructions that similar cases could be handled in the same manner. Within a year, all children under three suffering from a variety of handicaps, including hydrocephalus, malformed limbs, and paralysis, were being executed, with or without parental consent. In October 1939, euthanasia was extended to older children and handicapped and mentally ill German adults. The calls for eugenics and euthanasia – and the whole paraphernalia of the gas chambers – became an “exercise in the rational management of society.”

Why did Nazi doctors become involved in euthanasia and medical experimentation on human beings? Why did they treat bodies of prisoners as scientific “material”? How could physicians-healers turn into murderers? They too were besotted by the dream of a new utopia. Robert Procter, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*, the scholar whose work has most carefully probed the roots of Nazi scientific policy and practice, has noted, “On the one hand, the Nazis wanted to return to what they saw as the original, natural state of human life and society, on the other hand, Nazi medical authorities also wanted to breed a better human, and this prompted them to entertain radical measures to alter and ‘improve’ the course of human biological history.”

Bearers of God’s Image

Eugenics is evil because it holds that all people are not created equal. The question at the heart of our culture, therefore, is no longer about when life begins, but about what life is and whose right it is to make decisions about life and death. And what does it mean to be human?

Every member of the human race is a person. The value of life does not depend upon what a person can physically do, experience or achieve. The life of a comatose person or a fetus has the same dignity and worth as the life of a fully functioning adult. The care owed to every individual does not depend on either his age or the infirmity he may suffer.

More than ever we must uphold the Biblical view of man as the special creation

of God. Without God, man is but a breath. Without ultimate reality in Him, life is absurd. Men and women are image bearers of God. They are not junk or disposable items. It is in the image of God that every human being has dignity. God is not made in our image; we are made in His. And there is no other ground for the preciousness and inalienable dignity of each human being. Will we recognize that every person, at whatever stage of development, is stamped with the very image of God (Gen.1:26)?

The Nazis derived their eugenic program from views widely held in the United States.

The most glorious example of the dignity of every human being is the Incarnation. No matter how deficient, disabled, deaf, mute, sick, young or old, God so honored human life that He Himself assumed it becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son (John 1:14). In Jesus of Nazareth we see “the Word made flesh”; and although Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, then rose and ascended at the right hand of God, He has not laid down His human nature. Therefore, Christians do not hold human life to be cheap or expendable. Christians hold that from conception to natural death, human life is a sacred gift, granted by the Creator. They believe that this life must be honored, respected, and protected as a moral mandate. How do we treat the weak and disposable? Do we recognize them as bearing the image of God?

Conclusion

The current developments in biotechnology combined with the enchantment with the new eugenics movement should serve to awaken the Christian church to its

responsibility to speak on behalf of those who have no voice, to defend human life at every age of development and in every mental and physical condition, and to confront the Culture of Death with wisdom, courage and conviction. There is no time to waste. If one member of the human race can be so devalued as to be considered unworthy of life, every single human life is effectively discounted.

But the church must do more than warn with words. In our time it has become more difficult to care than to cure. What an opportunity for Christians to minister! The sick, the handicapped etc. need treatment for their pain, emotional support from people who love them and care about them, and a way to find meaning in their suffering. What they need is a company of friends who will care even when they cannot cure, a communion of saints whose membership is stronger than death, and a Savior whose presence and promises of redemption abide even in “the valley of the shadow of death” (Ps. 23:4).



Hitler's eugenic ideas were based on popular ideas of the time, ideas which are gaining popularity again.

“Hark, the Heresies We Sing”

by Sharon L. Bratcher

I shopped for Christmas cards last month. I find it quite amazing how many of them picture the shepherds looking up and seeing a bright star in the sky. Well, they might have seen it, but the Bible only tells us that they were frightened by a host of angels, and the glory of the Lord (Luke 2:8-16).

Most nativity scenes would seem to be missing parts if they didn't show three wise men visiting the baby Jesus in the manger along with the shepherds and of course, a few docile animals. And yet the Bible tells us that they visited him in a “house” making it clear they visited some time after the shepherds, after Joseph had found some better accommodations. We also don't know that there were exactly three – only that three gifts were mentioned. Some have thought that they must have been kings to have afforded such wonderful gifts, but no royalty is suggested in the Biblical account (Matthew 2:1-12).

Of course, to view my neighbor's decorated house and lawn, one would think that not only this crowd, but also Santa Claus, his nine reindeer (don't forget Rudolph!) and a “host” of elves in a candy cane forest were at the scene. “Overkill” is the decorating term that comes to mind.

Silly songs

I sang in public and private school groups all my young life, so I know two or three stanzas of most of the well-known Christmas carols. This leads me to find myself happily singing along as I shop during the holidays, (which may be part of why my teens prefer not to be seen with me). Even as I sing, I find myself noting discrepancies and wondering how they ever got there.

For instance: *The First Noel* is a very pretty song. But I've been assured by a sheep farmer that had Jesus really been born as, the song says, “on a cold winter's night” those sheep and their shepherds wouldn't have been out in the fields. Too cold for them! It may be here, in this very early carol, that we have the origin of the tradition that the shepherds “looked up and saw a star,” rather than the angels.

Angels We Have Heard On High speaks of “sweet” singing. Now, the shepherds started out terrified! But even if the words of the angel of the Lord dispelled the terror by the time the multitudes of the heavenly host sang in praise to God, I would still choose words such as “majestic” or “holy” rather than “sweet.”

Away In A Manger talks of Jesus' “sweet” head. Jesus is also romanticized as a baby who would not have cried on the occasion (“No crying he makes”) though the sound and smell of cattle would likely have frightened a newborn child.


But if the cattle wouldn't bother him, then no wonder Mary would have no problem hearing a percussion instrument in *The Little Drummer Boy*. “Pa-rum-pa-pum-pum” notwithstanding, I also have to wonder why a boy who played a drum happened to be

out in a field with a group of frightened shepherds, and even more frightened sheep. Or, since he is concerned about also bringing his finest gift, was he actually supposed to be with the wise men?

Different choices

“Christmas music” seems to be all about the basic message: throw in some love towards all, and peace on earth, and giving one's best, and it doesn't seem to matter if details are correct or if people get mixed up as to which characters were actual and which were fictional. The world sees them all as fictional, so it doesn't matter.

What passes for “Holiday” music on our radio has more about winter and Santa and great times with loved ones than about Christ's birth. Our society is ever moving away from letting Christmas contain any religious meaning at all. Though I find myself glad to hear *any* reference to Christ, it would be so much better if all the religious Christmas songs were accurate.

At least, when it is our choice, we can choose those that are. 

Little Drummer Boy:

Nonsensical lyrics, and we don't mean the “pa rum pum pum pum” part

Come they told me, pa rum pum pum pum
A new born King to see, pa rum pum pum pum
Our finest gifts we bring, pa rum pum pum pum
To lay before the King, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum,

So to honor Him, pa rum pum pum pum,
When we come.

Little Baby, pa rum pum pum pum
I am a poor boy too, pa rum pum pum pum
I have no gift to bring, pa rum pum pum pum
That's fit to give the King, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum,

Shall I play for you, pa rum pum pum pum,
On my drum?

Mary nodded, pa rum pum pum pum
The ox and lamb kept time, pa rum pum pum pum
I played my drum for Him, pa rum pum pum pum
I played my best for Him, pa rum pum pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum pum,

Then He smiled at me, pa rum pum pum pum
Me and my drum.

Hannah's Progress

(an excerpt from a novel in progress)

by Christine Farenhorst

Chapter 1

*Man proposes, but God disposes.
(Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit.)*

Thomas a Kempis

My mother always said that there was no pot so strange but that somewhere there was a lid to fit it. To illustrate this positive statement for the universality of matrimonial bliss she more than once pulled out the family photo album, pointing with a certain amount of glee to the picture of her Uncle Joe. I can still see the faded, black-and-white photograph which had turned slightly reddish. Uncle Joe's bulging fish eyes peered out at me over thick, horn-rimmed glasses; large ears protruding above a scrawny neck uncannily seemed to hear everything we said, even across the decades; and thin shoulders held stiffly back sported a certain amount of arrogance and pride.

"Uncle Joe," mother would say, her finger under the picture, "Uncle Joe was a happily married man. Aunt Elsa was very much in love with him."

I sometimes took the album from the cupboard where it was kept with other mementos and studied Uncle Joe's picture secretly in my bedroom. There was nothing physically attractive about the man. He was not rugged, not remotely handsome from any angle, and I could not detect even the beginning of a twinkle in his round eyes. We did not possess a picture of the said "Aunt Elsa" but, according to mother, she had been a great beauty – a woman who not only possessed red lips, black hair

and a perfect complexion, but one who had also cleaned, cooked and sewed like Proverbs 31.

"Ah, Proverbs 31," mother said, "there's your answer, Hannah."

But I must tell you about myself before I go on with the story. I was a bit of a latecomer – a child born to somewhat older, although certainly not old, parents – one who, as my mother often told me, had been much prayed for. Had I been a boy my name would have been Samuel, but because I was a girl, my parents contented themselves with naming me after Samuel's mother, Hannah.

My father was a Dutch church historian and a preacher and much of my early childhood was spent in the study. From my perch in an easy chair, I watched my father read, smoke his pipe and write. He taught me to read before I went to school, sang with me from the psalter as he played

the organ, took me with him on numerous visits throughout the congregation, and showed me how to kick stones so that they flew half a mile ahead of us as we walked to church on Sunday. When I was in grade four my father received a call per telegram from a church in Toronto. "Call extended" – the words in the telegram were short and to the point but both my father and mother were not quite sure about the exact meaning of the word "extended." Several days were spent in translation of the phrase until a letter also arrived, clarifying the fact that my father had indeed been called to a congregation in Toronto, Ontario and that a response was requested as soon as possible.

"Do you want to go to Canada, Hannah?"

Father asked me the question many times but I think that he was really asking himself. I always answered "yes," intuitively aware that this was the answer for which he was looking.

We emigrated to Canada in the summer of 1958. I was almost ten years old. From the second-story apartment of the crowded Dutch city of Groningen, our living quarters became a spacious split-level house situated in Willowdale, one of the suburbs of Toronto. The house had a prestigious front lawn with flowerbeds and mother was in raptures. Our backyard bordered a hill of sorts which, when climbed, overlooked the Don River. Chipmunks, squirrels and raccoons all graced our property with their presence and for a while I didn't miss my friends even a little bit.



My parents had not the faintest notion that school presented any difficulty for me.

HANNAH'S PROGRESS

After the days of that first long summer had whittled down to September, my father personally walked me to the nearest public school – North York Central – where he had enrolled me that past June. It was with difficulty that he had persuaded the principal to let me try Grade Four. It was school policy to put the children of immigrants back two years. They compromised on one. I carried an old, brown briefcase. It had held my books back in Holland where most Dutch children had some sort of similar carryall. Here, however, no one did and the brown briefcase, besides the fact that my English vocabulary was pitiful and stilted, set me apart from the beginning.

"What's your name?"

That was easy. It was a sentence we had studied in our *English Made Easy* handbook back in Groningen.

"Hannah," I answered confidently.

"Can you speak English?"

That was easy as well.

"Yes. Yes, I can."

I answered quickly, eager for contact. Whatever the children on the playground said after that, however, was generally lost on me that autumn and I frequently stood alone as the others played. Sometimes all the children danced around me chanting, "Dutchie! Dutchie!" while I looked down at my sturdy, brown shoes. My parents had not the faintest notion that school presented any difficulty for me. They had more than enough work to keep them busy. The congregation was spread out over a large geographical area and their goal to visit all of the ninety-six families during their first Canadian year was a formidable one. An elder came over once a week to preview father's English sermons. Grammatical form and English pronunciation were worked on.

If you think I am digressing, let me hasten to assure you that you must know these things – these bits of information – for they lay the groundwork for what I am about to tell you. When my teacher, Miss Summerhill, asked me in the spring of

*Chipmunks...
graced our property
with their presence and
for a while I didn't miss
my friends even a
little bit.*



1959 to write an essay about the country I came from, I was not particularly enthusiastic. The idea was that I would first write the essay in Dutch after which I would translate it into English. It would then be used as a lesson in Social Studies and Geography for my Grade Four class. When I showed little response to her request, Miss Summerhill took it upon herself to call my parents who both thought the idea was wonderful. Father spent a great deal of time helping me and was very pleased with the result.

The day on which I was to read the essay in front of the class was rainy and dull, a precise reflection of the way I felt inside. As I walked to the front of the room, my heart thumped and my mouth felt dry. My thoughts were still completely in Dutch and the English letters on the page in front of me blurred into a jumble of incomprehensible sentences.

"All right, Hannah."

Miss Summerhill nodded encouragingly as I coughed and wiped a sweaty right hand on the side of my dress. I began.

"Holland is a small country in north-western Europe. . . ."

The heckling also began.

"You rope - she said, you rope."

Gordie Ames, three seats down the center aisle, snickered loudly. I ignored him and went on.

"Bordering the North Sea, Holland is a country that has much water."

It was very quiet. Rain pattered gently against the wide window panes of the classroom. The sound calmed me.

"Hundreds of miles of dykes protect Holland from the North Sea. There have been many floods in Holland in the past,

the most recent one only a few years ago in 1953. . . ."

As I related the story of the devastating flood in the province of New Zealand, I could tell that I had everyone's attention. It was a good feeling and I began to read with as much English expression as I could. Everything was going well, so well, as a matter of fact, that I actually felt regret at coming to the last paragraph – a paragraph in which father and I had interjected a Dutch phrase.

"The sea, also known as 'de grote vaart'. . . ."

There was suppressed laughter from the third seat down the center aisle.

"Did you hear what Hannah said?"

More laughter erupted and Miss Summerhill sharply rapped a ruler against her desk.

"Keep going, Hannah."

I began the last sentence again.

"The sea also known as 'de grote vaart'. . . ."

This time Gordie almost rolled out of his desk.

"Must have been a smelly sea."

"That's enough, Gordie."

Miss Summerhill stood up, her ruler looming large. But Gordie was past help. He couldn't stop laughing and the rest of the class appeared to be following his lead.

"You may sit down for now, Hannah. Thank you for the trouble you took in writing the essay on Holland. We learned a lot."

While she spoke, Miss Summerhill walked over to Gordie, pinched his ear and pulled him out of his desk.

"Come with me, young man. I think we have to have a little chat in the hall."

Chapter 2

*Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.*

Lewis Carroll

Whatever happened between Miss Summerhill and Gordie was never divulged, but I knew that the hall interview only served to distance the gap between myself and Gordie's friends. After school they followed me home, chanting at intervals, "Dutchie, Dutchie – you're nothing but a smelly Dutchie." It had stopped raining and the sun, warm and bright, bolstered my courage. First I simply tolerated the taunting, but as I neared home my defiance of the little group of name-callers grew Davidic in proportion. Turning around, I grabbed a clump of wet earth from a nearby flowerbed and whipped it at Gordie.

"Take that, you Philistine!"

I yelled loudly, thinking that Father would have applauded my Biblical application to a difficult situation. The wet earth hit Gordie smack dab in the middle of his forehead and drooled black lines down his face. Stunned he stood for a moment before rage overtook him. He charged at me like a mad bull and I ran the last block to my house with the knowledge that if he caught up with me, I would be done for. With a sinking feeling in my stomach I realized a few seconds later that I would never make it to the house in time – that Gordie was rapidly gaining on me. Turning into the nearby church parking lot, I raced for the side entrance, fumbled for a half-second with the doorknob, jerked open the door and disappeared inside. Clicking the lock into place, I weakly leaned against the wall as Gordie began to pound on the door.

"I'm going to wait until you come out, Hannah Steen. You can't hide in there forever."

It was dark in the small foyer. I was familiar with the area and sat down on the floor, hoping that Gordie would tire of



"O Lord! I'm so lonely! ... I do so pray for a friend – a companion. ..."

waiting before too long. But how would I know if he was gone? A small noise from the basement alerted me to the fact that the side door had not been unlocked by chance. The caretaker was probably cleaning. I stood up quickly and walked through the double doors that separated the foyer from the sanctuary. Footsteps were coming up the basement stairs. There was not much time to think and almost without knowing it, I found myself on the pulpit.

***"Dutchie, Dutchie –
you're nothing but a
smelly Dutchie."***

The wooden structure with its semi-circle of open space invited me into its enclosure and I snuggled down below the area where Father preached his sermons. No one would find me here, certainly not Gordie. I sniffed the pinewood appreciatively and began to feel safe.

I must have fallen asleep and slept for some considerable time underneath the pulpit because when I opened my eyes again the heavy sun rays that had shown up all the dust particles in the air, had almost completely disappeared. I yawned leisurely and stretched my legs. Surely Gordie would be gone by now. I could, at any rate, climb on top of the side pews and look out the windows, and thus inspect the parking lot. Crawling out of my small space, a faint noise caught my ears.

Stopping on all fours, I listened carefully. There it was again. It sounded fearfully like someone was crying. Edging my way past the pulpit, I peeked around the corner into the church. The second bench held a bowed figure, a woman, and she was shaking with grief. Transfixed by the sobs and paralyzed both with curiosity and fear, I watched her for a whole moment. The woman's hands clutched the first pew and her forehead was bent over.

"Oh, Lord!"

The words were muffled at first but as she repeated them they became louder. I retreated back under the pulpit and listened.

"Oh, Lord! I'm so lonely! Perhaps it's wrong to ask, but I do so pray for a friend – a companion. . . ."

My father's empty pulpit chair looked at me blankly, as if it too did not know what to do. Who was the woman? I vaguely recalled the voice but could not place a name with it.

"It would not be," the woman's voice broke in on my thoughts, "to honor myself. . . ."

Here she began to sob louder again and I became weak with pity. Was I not a child of prayer? Perhaps my mother had sat in a church like this in Holland and had cried before the Lord.

". . . not to honor myself, but so that I could serve you better. . . ."

There was a pause and then she added quietly, like an amen,

". . . but not my will be done but Thy will be done."

Rubbing my hand along the creme-colored carpet I waited but no more words came. There was only the sound of the woman blowing her nose. Then I heard her get up and leave the sanctuary.

I waited a while before I crawled out from underneath the pulpit again and I noted that it had become quite dusky as I eased my way back to the foyer door. Even if I climbed onto the side pews, there was little chance that I would be able to see much in the church parking lot. Surely Gordie would be gone by now. But what if he wasn't? No matter. I had to chance it. There was no way I could stay in church

HANNAH'S PROGRESS

longer. The woman might possibly come back up to the sanctuary from the basement. Carefully opening the outside door, I saw nothing but shadows on an empty parking lot. I slipped outside and raced across the asphalt towards our house.

Chapter 3

*Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.*

Longfellow

Mother was upset with me when I told her, quite indignantly, that I had called Gordie a Philistine.

"You have to learn to watch your tongue, Hannah," she admonished. "You of all people should be an example to others."

The expression "watch your tongue" has always baffled me. The truth is that you can never really watch your tongue unless you have been born long-tongued and cross-eyed. But I knew what Mother meant. My tongue, that is, my words, affected other people. I thought of how the single world Philistine had stirred up Gordie's temper. Ten to one he hadn't known what Philistine meant, but the clump of mud had probably defined it for him. Mother was right. Words could certainly create anger and laughter and tears. They could. . . .

"Hannah!"

My thoughts were rudely interrupted.

"Hannah! Are you listening to anything I'm saying?"

I nodded virtuously. It was amazing how many thoughts and ideas could pass through one's mind during one simple conversation. My nod reassured Mother.

"I'm glad your speech went well. It did, didn't it?"

I nodded again, happy that I had not told her about the abrupt ending – the teasing and the ridicule. She would only have been disappointed.

It began to rain again that evening. It was such an evening when talk is not necessary because of the warmth and glow of being in a sheltered place. I was curled up

with a book in one of the wide armchairs in the livingroom and Mother was doing the crossword in the newspaper. It was a habit she had acquired to improve her English. Father was not at home. He had been at a classis meeting all day and we did not expect him back until late that night. "What's a four-letter word for melt, Hannah?"

"I don't know."

Mother sighed.

"Well, you certainly didn't think about it very long, Miss Speech-giver. Why don't you go to the basement and get us both an apple. And on the way you might think about. . . ."

.....
***"You can't hide in there
forever."***
.....

"All right. All right."

I grunted and slowly forced my contented body out of the armchair.

The cool cellar was a dark closet off Father's basement study. We kept our potatoes, carrots and fruit down there. I walked down the stairs slowly, still ruminating on the story I had been reading, absentmindedly flicking on the light switch in the study. The phone rang. "I'll get it."

I liked answering the phone. We actually had two phones – one in the kitchen and one on Father's desk. Surrounded by a jumble of papers, it rang again. I reached it on the second ring. "Hello."

A crisp voice answered my greeting.

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

"Mother," I yelled, "it's for you."

She picked up the receiver in the kitchen and sinful curiosity overcame my impulse to hang up.

"Mrs. Steen?"

"Yes?"

Mother's voice was unsure, questioning. She was still worried about being able to understand people who called on the telephone.

"I regret to have to tell you," the crisp voice continued, "that your husband has been in an accident. It would be advisable if you came to the hospital as soon as possible."

"My husband. . . ?"

Mother's voice was thin. It took me a moment to realize what the woman was saying and then I smacked down the receiver. A few of Father's papers fluttered to the floor. My tears began at the study door and fell onto the stair railing as I walked back up. I could hear Mother talking but could not piece together what she was saying. Sitting down at the top of the stairs the word "accident" muted all other sounds. Leaning my head against the railing I closed my eyes for what seemed like an eternity. A car accident? – a bad car accident? People died in car accidents. Father could die.

"Hannah?"

Mother's hand was on my shoulder.

"Hannah, you heard what the woman said?"

I nodded and looked up at her, my eyes full of tears.

"I have to go to the hospital, kleintje – little one. I've already called one of the elders to ask if he could drive me down. The hospital is in a place called Strathroy. It's pretty far away – a few hours driving. So I'm also going to get someone from church to come and stay with you tonight."

Much of what she said went right by me. I only comprehended that Father was hurt and that she was going away.

"Let me come with you, Mother. Please?"

"The woman, she was a nurse, she said that your Father was seriously hurt. . . ."

Mother had lapsed into Dutch.

"It could very well be that I will have to stay for a day or so and then it would be easier if I were alone, Hannah."

"I want to go too."

"I know that, Hannah. But it's better this way right now. If need be, I will send for you. But for now it would be better if you stayed home. There's no immediate danger, the nurse said."

"I want to come with you."

She sighed.

"I better phone someone – someone who lives close by. Maybe one of the Dyken girls . . . the Dyken's only live a few minutes away in North York."

"I don't know them and I want to come with you."

Like a broken record I repeated the last part of the sentence again and again. But Mother was already looking in the church directory and dialing. I clutched at the railing and bent my head – bent it like the woman in church.

"Oh, Lord, please don't let Father die! Oh, Lord, please don't let Father die!"

Mr. Walton, one of the elders, arrived shortly afterwards, but Mother was still packing her overnight bag. I opened the door to let him in, showed him into the livingroom and then went back up to Mother's and Father's bedroom. Mother's hands shook as she tightened the buckle to her suitcase.

"Mother?"

"Yes, Hannah."

She looked at me, her hands on the buckle.

"Mr. Walton is here."

Then I added what the lump in my stomach feared.

"Will Father die?"

"Only God knows that, child."

Yes, God. He knew everything. He controlled everything. I knew that. But I wanted Mother to be God. I wanted her to say, with finality, "Of course Father won't die. Don't be silly." But if she had said that, I would have known that she was saying words simply for my sake. Words – words build up or tear down. Words had to be true. Or did they? Mother spoke again.

"Mr. Walton is waiting. . . ."

She hesitated before continuing.

"I have to go, Hannah. Alice Dyken will be here soon. I spoke to her and she is a very nice girl."

"I still want to come with you."

And because she didn't move from her position in the doorway, looking very tired

and vulnerable, and because my words would make her smile, I added a lie. At least I thought I did.

"I'll be fine. Don't worry about me."

Alice Dyken came about five minutes after Mother and Mr. Walton had left. I had gone to bed and was curled up into a tight ball underneath the bedspread. Alice rang the bell but I didn't want to get up and answer. The front door wasn't locked and she would probably walk in on her own sooner or later anyway. She did and after a few minutes found her way into my bedroom. Turning on the light, she saw my humped up form under the bedspread and turned the switch off again. Then she came and sat on the edge of the bed.

.....

Alice was an extremely handsome, young woman – from the left side.

.....

"Hannah?"

I didn't answer.

"Hannah, I'll be here all night. We don't know one another very well, so. . . ."

Her voice stopped but it went on in my mind. "Oh, Lord," it said, "I'm so lonely."

For a moment I forgot my Father and out of sheer curiosity lifted the cover off my face, turning it towards the speaker. The light in the bedroom was not on and faint hall light revealed a woman in her late twenties. She gave me a smile and picked at the bedspread with her fingers.

"Hannah's a pretty name."

She spoke softly and again I heard her voice go on. "Perhaps it's wrong to ask, but I do so pray for a friend. . . ."

"Yes."

I agreed in a half-hearted sort of manner. She shifted her position somewhat, turning her face, and now I could

see that her right profile was disfigured by a large birthmark. My nose was beginning to run because I had cried so hard and taking the corner of the sheet I was about to blow my nose into it when she offered me her hanky.

"Thanks."

She smiled again.

"Would you like to change into your nightgown and wash up a bit?"

I nodded and began to push away the cover but suddenly remembering my Father, I swallowed and lay back down.

"Your Father. . . ."

Alice spoke softly and repeated.

"I know – your Father. . . ."

My eyes filled with tears again and a great miserable feeling entered my heart. Alice knelt down alongside the bed.

"We'll pray about it."

She bowed her head.

"Dear Father in heaven. We are so very worried about Hannah's Father. But we know that he is in Your hand and that You let nothing happen to anyone without Your will – and that whatever does happen, happens so that we might come closer to You. . . ."

She paused for a moment and then went on.

"But we are so little, Father. And we have such little faith."

Alice's voice and words calmed me. They made me sigh deeply. I opened my eyes and looked at her. It was the second time I was hearing her pray that day but she didn't know that.

". . . please help Hannah to feel that You are close by and that You will watch over her and her Mother and Father."

I could not see her birthmark now but I could see her heart. It was the way I sometimes saw my Mother's heart when she sang in the kitchen or my Father's when he read me a book.

"In Jesus name, amen."

Alice lifted her head and looked at me. Embarrassed to be peering at her so intently, I swung my feet over the edge of the bed and stood up. She stood up also.

HANNAH'S PROGRESS

Feeling awkward I edged past her and took my nightie out of the dresser.

"When you've changed, maybe you'd like a cup of hot chocolate? I brought some with me."

She still stood next to the bed. I nodded again and walked towards the bathroom. Over my shoulder I noted that Alice had begun to plump up the pillow and straighten my bed.

The phone rang at seven the next morning. I heard it in my sleep and, blinking against the harsh morning light, vaguely remembered that there was something extremely unpleasant about the day. Alice's voice crept down the hallway.

"Yes, yes, I'll call her."

I was out of bed before Alice reached the bedroom.

"Is it Mother?"

She gave me a bright smile.

"It's all right Hannah. Your Father is all right."

There is no point in relating all the particulars about Father's accident and his subsequent rather lengthy stay in the Strathroy hospital. It does not have very much to do with the story except that it gave me Alice's company for the duration of some six weeks – six weeks in which she became both my foster Mother and my sister.

Chapter 4

*For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.*

Rosetti

If I had thought that living with Alice would be dull, the first week of her staying with us canceled that impression entirely. She walked with me up the hill behind our house the second night of that week and together we watched the rabbits come out and feed. There is something companionable, something very close, about sitting with someone else in the sweetness of the dusk. Talk is not necessary and words only interrupt the candor expressions of nature around you. In the days that followed she taught me how to stand on my head, how to whistle, (something I had never been able to accomplish before), and how to snap my fingers. She also allowed me to make pancakes for supper, in any shape or size, and let me pour on syrup quite liberally. Best of all, every evening she gave me a piano lesson.

Alice was a piano teacher. She received students at her parents' house every day between four and eight. These stu-

dents were simply diverted to our house now and because we lived close to the Van Dyken's this was no problem. My father, upon arriving in Canada, had purchased a piano that first fall. He and Mother both played the organ but had left our instrument behind in the Netherlands. He had shown me where C was on the piano and had left it at that. We sang psalms and hymns on Sunday evenings with Father enthusiastically playing and singing simultaneously. I tried, from time to time, to improvise but was usually told to stop. In any case, at this precise point in time it seemed to me that Bach, Beethoven and Mozart were within reach. Alice was teaching me notes and I loved it.

"Alice?"

"Mmh"

She was reading. It was the fourth week of her stay at our house.

"Alice?"

I had been contemplating her from my chair. From where I sat I could only see her left profile – a perfect profile. Alice was an extremely handsome, young woman – from the left side.

"What is it, Hannah?"

Alice turned her face to me and red tissue turned with her.

"Alice, I think you're very pretty."

She smiled and turned back to her book. I turned back to mine too but I wasn't reading. Why did she have that mark and I didn't? My fingers ran along the velvet chair lining contemplatively. Would that mark prevent her from getting married? She wanted to get married. I knew that for sure. If only someone would get to know her as I did – would find out what a really fine person she was. How would anyone, though, ever get to know Alice? I already knew that she was a recluse. After church each Sunday, she immediately left for home and I had the feeling that her circle of adult friends was small. What if. . . "There is no pot so strange. . ." I could hear Mother saying the words and on an impulse I went to the hall closet and took out the family album with the picture of



*I got out a piece of
paper and a pencil. . .
"Beautiful female
pilgrim looking for
progress."*

Uncle Joe in it. I stared at him for a long time. How had he ever met Aunt Elsa, I wondered. Bumped into her on the street? – met her at church? – at a store? – at a social? – placed an ad in the local paper? Now there was a novel thought – an ad in the local paper.

I rummaged through the paper later that night and found the classified section. There were a number of ads – houses, used cars and jobs. I briefly scanned the job section. “Domestic help wanted: A capable housekeeper, fond of children, live in at \$50 a week – references required.” No, that wasn’t what I was looking for. The next page held a Business Personal column which began: “Happiness – success in finding ‘your’ partner for a long-term compatible relationship. Success in ‘matching’ is never due to machines but to the people behind them. Hours of attention to each client by university graduate consultants make the difference to you at Scientific Introduction Centre.” I looked up compatible in the dictionary and read “capable of existing together in harmony as in *the most compatible married couple*.” Compatible seemed to be a good word. Maybe I should phone the Scientific Introduction Centre and ask for their help. But it would probably cost a lot to use university graduate consultants. I studied the ad for a long time. Maybe I should run my own ad. That might cost a lot too. But surely it would be cheaper than using the Scientific Introduction Centre.

I got out a piece of paper and a pencil. Slowly and thoughtfully I wrote down, “Beautiful girl looking for compatible relationship with a nice man.” It was a good sentence – as good as any Father had put in my essay about Holland – as good as any in his sermons. “Compatible relationship.” The phrase rang with promise. After chewing my pencil reflectively, however, I could see that it contained certain flaws. In the first place, anyone might answer it. I thought of Mr. Van Bruyn, the artist down the road. He stopped me at least once a week on my way home from school to ask

if I knew a nice girl for him to marry. He was joking, of course, but you never knew. Besides he already had a lady living with him and he was also not a Christian. “I’ll believe in God the day toads fly,” he had told me.

“But they’ll never fly,” I earnestly responded.

“Exactly.”

.....

Dogs made excellent friends. I was convinced of it.

.....

And he had laughed and laughed in my face. When I told my Father what Mr. Van Bruyn had said, Father said something to Mother in German. They always spoke German if they didn’t want me to understand them. No matter. I looked back down at what I had written. The point was, what was to prevent people like Mr. Van Bruyn from responding to this ad? I crossed out what I had written and began again. “Beautiful. . .” Beautiful what? Girl? Woman? Person? It should be a good word – a word to which only someone really nice and Christian would respond. I lay down on my bed and thought deeply. Before Father had had his accident we had read Pilgrim’s Progress together. What if the ad read, “Beautiful female pilgrim looking for progress.” But maybe I should leave out the word “beautiful” because that would only attract people who were interested in the outside of a person. “Nice female pilgrim. . .” Then I remembered Alice’s words: “I do so pray for a friend – a companion. . .” Perhaps the ad should just read “Female pilgrim looking for companion in progress.” That actually sounded very professional. I sat up, picked up the paper and wrote the words down quickly before I could forget them, discreetly adding our address at the end.

“Hannah! Hannah!”

Alice was calling. I slipped the paper inside my pillow slip and stood up.

“Yes, Alice. I’m in my bedroom.”

“It’s time for bed, honey. Get ready and I’ll come and tuck you in.”

“All right.”

Relieved that she wasn’t coming up, I took the paper out again and reread it. “Female pilgrim looking for companion in progress.” I smiled. It was a good ad. I awarded myself a star in executing God’s care. But I was only eleven and providence seemed to belong to me.

Chapter 5

I once knew a man out of courtesy help a lame dog over a stile, and he for requital bit his fingers.

Chillingworth

It was only a few days after the ad was run that responses began to trickle in – or rather, they began to flood in. Alice always let me take the mail out of the cast iron mailbox next to the front door. She reasoned that our letters were personal and that if I made sure they were placed on Father’s desk in his study so that Mother could sort through them on the days that she came home, it was a job that would teach me responsibility. She was right. Reaching into the box for the bills and letters made me feel important and useful. In any case, the Friday after the ad ran, our mailbox was jam packed with envelopes. I had actually forgotten about my helpful gesture into Alice’s life because Miss Summerhill had kept me after school that day asking about Father. She had been so nice and so interested that I couldn’t wait to tell Alice about it. But there was the mailbox and I automatically sank my right arm into it. The letters were wedged in so tightly that it took both my hands to extricate them. At this point I remembered the pilgrim ad. Sure enough, the top letter was addressed to: “Female Pilgrim, 27 Larson Crescent, Willowdale, Ontario.” The

next letter had a similar address. So did the next and the next. I must have stood in the doorway for a while, leafing through the pile, because suddenly the front door opened and Alice's voice cut through the pack.

"What a lot of mail, Hannah! You better take it down directly."

"Yes. Yes."

I nodded agreeably and quickly walked past her into the hallway, running down the stairs to Father's study. As fast as I was able, I took out the envelopes which were addressed to "Pilgrim" and stuffed them into my coat pocket. They were crying out to be read.

After a companionable tea, the doorbell rang. It was the first of Alice's Friday night piano students. There were times when I resented the flow of girls and boys who passed through our hall most days but today I welcomed it.

"Don't forget to heat up the soup at 6 o'clock."

Alice's voice followed me into the kitchen as I was about to exit through the back door.

"All right."

Scales followed me into the backyard, fading as I climbed the fence our neighbor Mrs. Harrison had of late put up, and began my walk up the hill. I was heading for my big tree; a tree close to the Don River; a tree with branches that hugged like arms. The letters felt stiff and crowded in my pocket. I was excited and scared at the same time. Who had written? Would I have to answer every single response?

The tree welcomed me like an old friend and I climbed into the relative safety of twelve feet or so above the ground with a fair measure of relief. Breathing deeply I took out the first letter and tore it open with my index finger. It was type-written. "Dearest pilgrim: What a refreshing ad! Would be delighted to make your acquaintance. Please call me at. . . and ask for Charlie." I sighed and put the letter back into the envelope. It was not a very romantic letter and it did not really tell me

anything about Charlie. I opened the next letter. "Dear Pil: Things are rather grim for me. The wife left last month and I have three kiddies to take care of. Care to progress with me?" A phone number was left here also and I contemplated a squirrel in a branch above my head. These first two letters were not what I had expected. But what exactly had I expected? "Dear Pilgrim," the next letter began. "Although I never thought I would answer a letter in the personals, your ad touched a cord of adventure in my heart of hearts. Who are you? How old are you? Please send your picture to Gabriel Tossatoni. PS. You'll find my address on the outside of the envelope. Looking forward to your reply."

.....

Any noise on my part would be fatal.

.....

The squirrel had scampered down and was almost within an arm's length reach. I wished that I had taken some bread with me or some peanuts. I held out the next letter to him. His little black nose twitched but he made no effort to come closer. Slowly I withdrew the envelope and opened it. The text was glaringly full of spelling errors. Scornfully I looked at words which had been mangled – words like "adres" and "luf." Even as a fairly new immigrant to Canada, I could spell better than that. Crumpling this letter into a wad and stuffing it into my pocket, I mentally reserved it for the wastebasket as I began to read the next one. "Dear Pilgrim: Please marry me as soon as possible. I have a terrible disease and would like some months of happiness and bliss. Call me soon or it might be too late." A phone number and address followed. I pondered this information for a while, sharing it with the squirrel and then decided that this man was very likely not telling the truth. The letter was perfumed and had little hearts

all over the margin. It was a nice touch but a dying man would hardly, I concluded, have been in a state of mind that would permit him to create doodles all over the page. With a slight feeling of regret, I also crumpled this letter.

Seven more epistles followed. Although each was individual, none alluded to the fact that "pilgrim" was a Christian term. I sighed as I folded the last one back into the envelope. What should I do now? Should I respond to any? That would take stamps and my last few allowances had just barely covered the cost of the ad. Maybe I should just dump the letters into the garbage and hope that all these people would forget they had ever heard of pilgrim. Rather disconsolately I wandered back to the house. The garbage can on the back porch was as safe a place as any to discard the pack of correspondence that bulged out of my pocket. What a shame!! This whole business hadn't helped Alice one little bit. Strains of a sonatina crept onto the porch. Alice was still teaching. As I lifted the garbage lid, the telephone rang. Throwing the letters into the drum, I dropped the lid and opened the back door.

"Hannah?"

"Yes, Alice. I'll get the phone."

"Hello."

I answered absently. My mind was still on the correspondence I had just tossed into the garbage can. A man's voice, deep and slightly hesitant, answered.

"Can I speak to Alice, please?"

"She's busy right now."

There was a silence and I volunteered more information.

"She's teaching piano. Do you want me to call her?"

"No. No."

The voice was quick to put down my suggestion.

"I'll call her back later."

"Do you have a message you would like me to give her?"

My training as a pastor's daughter let me implement all the niceties of answering the phone correctly.

"No. No, thank you. I'll call her back later. . . or, wait. Will she be home tonight?"

"Yes."

The affirmative popped out simultaneously with a frightening thought. What if this was someone about the ad? What if it was Gabriel Tossatoni?

"She might not be in though."

The sentence slipped in smugly and guardedly.

"It's . . . It's important that I speak to her today."

Clearly the caller was nervous. It made me calm.

"Well, maybe," I said, considering myself rather clever, "maybe if I tell her who called, she will stay home."

"All right," the male voice agreed, "tell her that it's Egbert. . . ." He waited a moment and then corrected himself, "Mr. Egbert Douma."

"All right."

I agreed rather reluctantly. I knew Mr. Douma. He was the church organist – a nice man who sometimes let me sit up in the organ loft with him. But he was about as romantic as Handel's Largo and one who did not fit into my present frame of mind. I hung up the phone peevishly.

The sonatina had ended and Alice's voice, as she taught, reminded me of the soup I had promised to heat up. I walked over to the stove and lifted the lid off the pan. Dutch vegetable soup stared up at me. Little globules of fat oozed on its surface like evil eyes. Cooking soup was not Alice's forte. The only thing I had ever encountered which had looked less appetizing was the soup I used to pick up for Mother at the butcher shop in Groningen – oxtail soup. But that was a thing of the past. I took out the soup ladle and skimmed the oily surface several times, dumping the fat down the drain. Perhaps a tin of brown beans would increase texture and flavor. Brown beans were my favorite food in the whole world. It was not until I had added three tins of it that the soup appeared palatable. Propelled by



"What a lot of mail, Hannah!"

hunger, and possibly greed, I ate three bowls while listening to Alice teach scales. Just as I was contemplating a fourth bowl and the letters in the garbage did not seem quite as problematic as before, the doorbell rang.

"I'll get it, Hannah."

Alice had just finished with her last pupil and I heard them walk towards the front door.

"See you next week, Annie, and don't forget to practice."

"Yes, Miss Dyken."

The front door opened.

"Hello, Mr. Boerman. What can I do for you?"

Chapter 6

*The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley*

Robert Burns

Mr. Boerman owned a textile store. He specialized in Dutch underwear; decent underwear, as Mother called it; underwear that lasted indefinitely.

"I wonder if I might come in a moment and speak with you?"

Mr. Boerman had a loud voice, a deep voice, and it penetrated right up to the sink where I was standing with the soup

bowl in my hand. I sensed a certain urgency in his voice and felt an uncomfortable, sinking feeling in my stomach. What if . . . ? I put the soup bowl down and tiptoed into the livingroom through the kitchen door. Climbing behind the couch I sat down, pressed my frame against the wall and waited. Alice and Mr. Boerman walked in directly.

"Please sit down."

Alice's voice was reserved – surprised as it were. Mr. Boerman did as she told him and sat down on the couch. He was a solid man of some forty heavy years and the springs creaked dangerously.

"Thank you. Thank you."

He sighed and I could feel the couch shudder. The back of his head gleamed with perspiration. I began to perspire myself, feeling rather nauseous.

"Please, Miss Dyken, could you sit down also?"

The heavy voice shook slightly.

"I want to speak to you. . . speak to you. . . ."

Mr. Boerman coughed suddenly and the back of his head moved forward. I felt the beans in my stomach churn about and wished that I had stayed in the kitchen close to the sink, closer to the bathroom.

"Yes?"

Alice sat down in a chair. It was the one, I presumed, kitty corner to the couch. Mr. Boerman sat up straighter. The couch creaked and I saw his head turn determinedly.

"Miss Dyken. . . ." he began again, "Miss Dyken. . . But may I call you Alice?"

There was a quiet and then Alice responded with a dignified, "Certainly, Mr. Boerman, if you feel comfortable about that."

"And please, please," he continued agitatedly, "call me Klaas."

There was no answer from Alice this time and the couch creaked again.

"I've known you for quite a while, Alice, and. . . ."

There was another pause in which my stomach made a low, growling noise. Mr. Boerman continued.

"Do you suppose, Alice, that you and I . . . that is, . . . you see, I just happened to read the paper and. . . well, you understand?"

The gleaming head above me nodded for understanding but Alice remained quiet. I suppose she was puzzled. Then she said, "Mr. Boerman, I really don't know. . ."

He interrupted her.

"I've got a good business, Alice. You know how it is, everyone needs underwear. But after work, there's only an empty house and what's it all for?"

I began to feel sorry for Mr. Boerman and thought perhaps I could suggest a dog to him at some point in the future. Dogs made excellent friends. I was convinced of it. It was a matter I often brought up to Mother and Father. The heavy voice interrupted my thoughts.

"I thought that you and I . . . that you and I . . . and I wouldn't have come except that I was reading the paper. . ."

He stopped again and the quiet was ominous. Alice stood up.

"Mr. Boerman. . . Klaas. . . I don't know what. . ."

"You don't have to decide right now, Alice."

He stood up also and two pillows rolled onto the floor.

"Think on it. Pray about it. . ."

"No! No!!"

Alice became vehement.

"I'm flattered that you think of me as. . ."

She paused, obviously perplexed and ill at ease. Then she went on hurriedly, as if sensing some terrible danger ahead.

". . . But really it would be no good."

She walked towards the livingroom door and opened it decisively. Mr. Boerman stood up slowly and followed her out of the room into the hall. His steps were somber and slow and I felt compassion for the man.

"There is no pot so strange. . ."

I could hear my Mother's voice again. Perhaps I could find an Aunt Elsa for Mr. Boerman somewhere else.

As I half stood up contemplating the possibilities of opening a marriage bureau, the doorbell rang again.

"Excuse me."

Alice's voice in the hall was short and rather nervous. She opened the front door. Mr. Boerman walked out without bothering to greet the next visitor.

"Mr. Pilfer?"

.....

How was it possible that so many strange pots had found their way into our house today?

.....

Alice's voice was a question – a question that embraced both Mr. Boerman's retreating form and Mr. Pilfer's presence.

"Miss Dyken, could I please come in and speak with you for a moment?"

"Certainly."

Alice's voice was growing weak. I could hear footsteps – several footsteps – and sank down to my haven behind the couch again. Mr. Pilfer was also a church member and a widower with four-year-old twins. His wife had died last year. It had been Father's first funeral and the little Pilfer girls always looked rather unkempt and forlorn.

"Please go in and sit down. I'll be with you in a moment."

Alice stayed behind in the hall for a few seconds, perhaps to pinch herself, perhaps to look for me, before she also came back into the livingroom. Mr. Pilfer had sat down on the couch. I could just make out the nape of his neck above a stiff, white

collar. He was a small man and the couch barely acknowledged him. A waft of after-shave fell on me. When Alice walked in, he stood up again.

"Please sit down, Mr. Pilfer. What can I do for you?"

Her voice was clipped, very reserved and tight. I could tell she was worried. I was too. Mr. Pilfer sat down again.

"Thank you."

His voice, unlike Mr. Boerman's, had a thin, tin-like quality. He cleared his throat. Alice cleared her throat also and I was about to clear mine when I remembered that any noise on my part would be fatal. The brown beans, however, were no respecter of discretion. A small noise escaped me before the beginning of Mr. Pilfer's first sentence. It was a rude noise and I blushed behind the couch. There was a dead silence before Mr. Pilfer spoke.

"Miss Dyken, I would like to compliment you on the fact that you are helping out the pastor's. . ."

Here another tiny, whistling parcel of wind interrupted. I was bent over double with a cramp. Hysterical desire to laugh almost overcame me and another noise flew over the edge of the couch right at Mr. Pilfer. Mr. Pilfer was a plodder. He ignored the interruptions, which he must have attributed to Alice, whereas Alice must have attributed them to Mr. Pilfer.

". . . I admire you for helping out the pastor's family."

Mr. Pilfer seemed unperturbed.

"It has occurred to me that you are a person who gives."

He stopped to let this sink in. Alice remained quiet.

"It is important," Mr. Pilfer continued, "for a Christian to give. . . to give to those who need help. I'm sure that you will agree with me."

He waited for her confirmation of his truths, but Alice remained quiet. My cramps were lessening somewhat and I carefully lifted my head from where I had it crammed into my lap.

"I was somewhat surprised, but also, let me hasten to add, very happy to see your ad in the paper this week."

"Ad?"

Alice's voice was baffled. My cramps returned with a vengeance and I put my head back down.

"Yes, and let me assure you that I thought it was a most novel way. . . although," he added cautiously, "perhaps not such a wise way. . . But providence would have me read it and here we are."

"Yes, here we are," Alice repeated somewhat laboriously, and then added, "Mr. Pilfer, I have no idea what you are talking about. Furthermore," she continued, her voice rising a trifle as she stood up, "I don't want to know what you are talking about."

Mr. Pilfer stood up also.

"But Miss Dyken. . ."

He didn't get any further.

"I have a headache, Mr. Pilfer, so I would appreciate it if you left, so that I could rest."

I wondered where I could go to hide after she let out Mr. Pilfer. The doorbell rang again. For a sweet, two-toned chime, it was beginning to sound threatening.

"Perhaps you ought to read this again before I leave."

Alice and Mr. Pilfer were in the living-room doorway and I heard paper pass hands.

"Female pilgrim looking for companion in progress."

Alice's voice as she read the ad was uncomprehending. When she slowly followed through with the address, it became squeaky.

"Thank you, Mr. Pilfer. May I keep it?"

"Certainly."

His voice was rather stiff and he added, "I rather thought, however, that you would have had it written out somewhere. After all. . ."

"Thank you, Mr. Pilfer."

Alice's voice was sharp and continued, ". . . and now I'll see you out."

I climbed back over the couch and made it to the kitchen just in time to hear Alice speak again, rather wearily this time.

"Egbert? Egbert Douma?"

I could not hear what Egbert answered Alice. How was it possible that so many strange pots had found their way into our house today? How could it be that. . . ? At this point in time Alice belted out my name in a manner I had never before heard her use.

"Hannah! Hannah Steen, come here this instant!"

A cramp doubled me over and I clutched the sink in despair. I didn't know whether my pain was being caused by beans or by fear.

"Hannah!"

Alice was in no mood to be gainsaid.

"Coming Alice."



Climbing behind the couch I sat down against the wall and waited.

I tried to keep my voice light and casual, but it was a struggle. Opening the kitchen door, I saw Egbert Douma standing in the hall next to Alice – Alice who was holding a newspaper clipping in her hand.

"Oh, here you are, Hannah."

Alice's voice was calm but her eyes glowed with a light that I had never seen before and one about which I was not particularly enthusiastic.

"Look who's come to visit us, Hannah."

"Yes."

It was the most profound answer I could muster and I wondered if the lock on the bathroom door would hold for two weeks until mother and father were home again. You could live for two weeks without food but not without water, at least. . .

"Hannah."

Alice's voice shook me out of my reverie at precisely the same time that another cramp almost doubled me over. A bit of gas unfortunately escaped me again and Egbert began to look extremely ill at ease. Alice still had that strange glow in her eyes as she went on.

"You'll never guess why Mr. Douma is here, Hannah. Try to guess! Go on, try!"

I cleared my throat and began to speak.

"For a piano lesson?"

It was a very poor attempt to make light of a bad situation and for Alice it was the last straw. She waved the newspaper ad under poor Egbert's nose.

"No, Hannah. He didn't come for a piano lesson. He came to propose to me. And," she continued, using the royal "we," "we're not a bit surprised about that, are we?"

Egbert turned to Alice with a rather dazed expression, but Alice ignored him and repeated what she had just said.

"No, we're not a bit surprised at all, are we, Hannah?"

I scuffed my shoes into the hall carpet and looked fleetingly at the nearby stairs leading to the bathroom.

HANNAH'S PROGRESS

"Well, Egbert, go ahead and propose to me! Go ahead and tell me how much you appreciate me and how this ad. . . this ad. . ."

Here Alice stopped and sobbed and I was back in church.

"Oh, Lord! I'm so lonely."

The remembered words hit my heart with full force and for the first time I realized the tremendous wrong I had done Alice.

"Oh, Alice."

My words were muffled.

"I'm sorry! I only meant. . ."

But my words were drowned out by Alice's crying. Egbert Douma took her arm and led her into the livingroom.

"Shh," he said, "Shh. . . It's all right. I don't know anything about any ad and I only came by to. . ."

He turned and spoke to me.

"Get a glass of water, Hannah."

I walked backwards into the kitchen and let the tap run cold. From the livingroom small reassuring murmurs of Egbert's voice reached me. When I walked in with the water, Alice was seated on the couch, her head on Egbert's vest, and he was dabbing her cheeks with a white hanky. I thought it a most beautiful sight until another cramp hit me. Handing Egbert the water, I squeaked "excuse me," and raced for the bathroom where I spent the next half hour.

That half hour was providence – not mine but God's. When I slowly and rather insecurely walked back into the livingroom later, Alice was just serving Egbert a cup of tea.

"Feeling better, Hannah?"

They both looked at me with a certain amount of compassion and I deemed it wise to maintain the crutch of ill health.

"A little."

"We must have a long talk later, Hannah."

"Yes, I know."

My words were small and oozed repentance – repentance which, I hasten to add, was real.

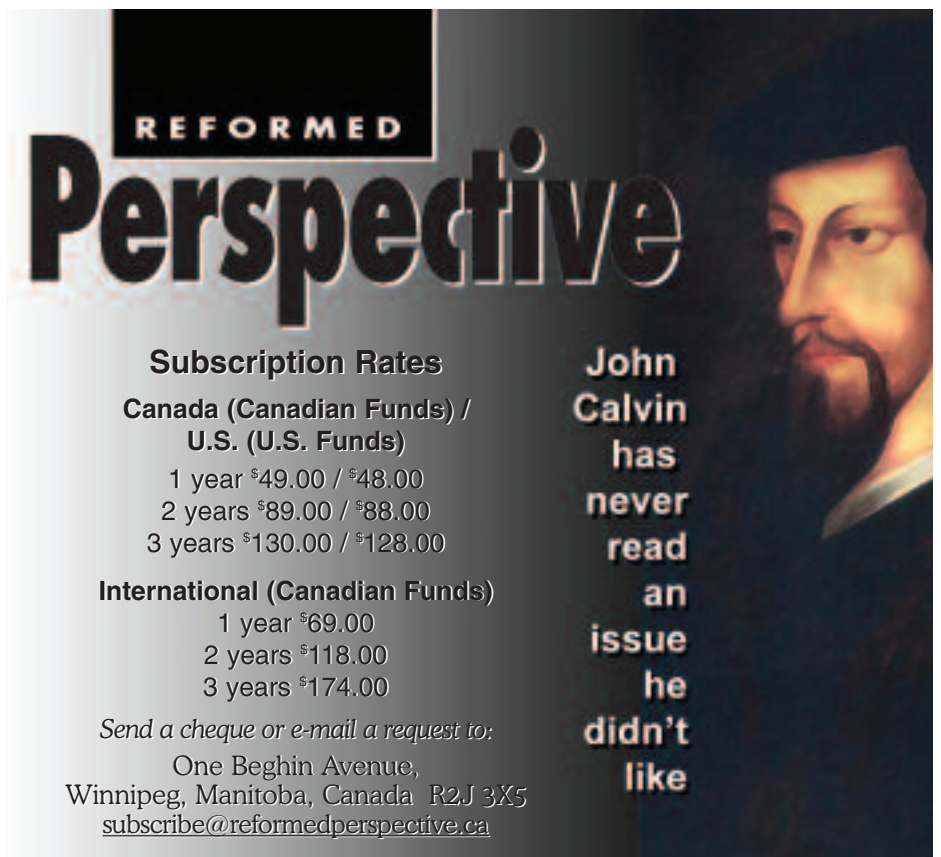
"All right then."

We played parcheesi after the tea and I never did find out why it was that Egbert Douma had come to call on Alice Dyken just that particular evening. I never spoke to my parents about my endeavors at matchmaking and the subsequent dozen letters or so that still arrived in the mail the following week were all disposed of properly.

A postscript to this came a few months later – during a time when my parents were both home again. A letter arrived for me in the mail. It was ad-

dressed to Hannah "Pilgrim" Steen and the large black block letters made me a trifle nervous. As I sat down on the couch and slit the envelope open I had a certain amount of misgiving but it didn't last long. "Dear Hannah," the letter began, "we'd like you to be the first to know that two pilgrims are going to progress together. Would you consent to be our flower girl?" I smiled happily and read on. "There's a condition attached to this invitation, however. You may not, under any circumstances whatever, touch, eat, or even look at any brown beans the week of the wedding. Love, Egbert and Alice." I blushed and folded up the letter. As if, I thought, as if I were someone who would even consider something that ridiculous.





REFORMED
Perspective

Subscription Rates

**Canada (Canadian Funds) /
U.S. (U.S. Funds)**

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

International (Canadian Funds)

1 year \$69.00
2 years \$118.00
3 years \$174.00

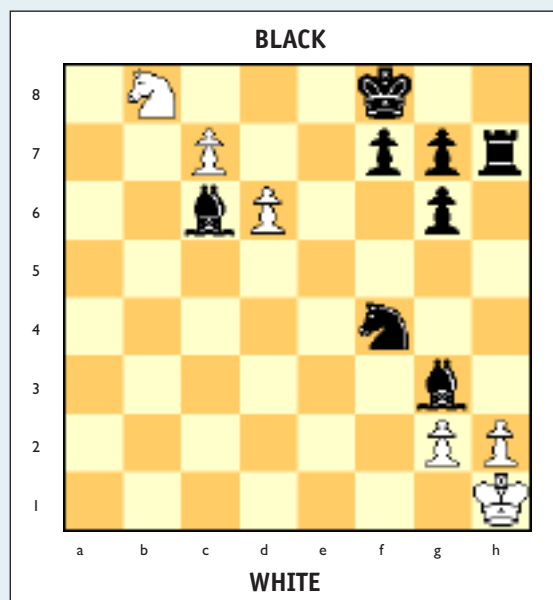
Send a cheque or e-mail a request to:
One Beghin Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2J 3X5
subscribe@reformedperspective.ca

**John Calvin
has
never
read
an
issue
he
didn't
like**

PUZZLE PAGE 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 # 117



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

NEW PUZZLES

Riddle for Punsters #117 -

Why did the explorer, just back from an exciting adventure, strut around proud as a peacock? Because he had such a o u r f u l to reveal.

Problem to Ponder #117 - "The Toll of Travel"

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



SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (NOVEMBER) PUZZLE PAGE

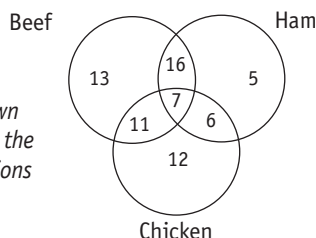
Answer to Riddle for Poetic Punsters #116 - "Are you knowing how you'll be going?"

If a boat will cross a m o a t and a train will cross a p l a i n, a truck will get you through m u c k and a car will take you f a r on a road made of gravel and t a r. However, to travel farther yet one needs to take a j e t: to travel unseen, go by s u b m a r i n e.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #116 - "Does this meat meet your approval?"

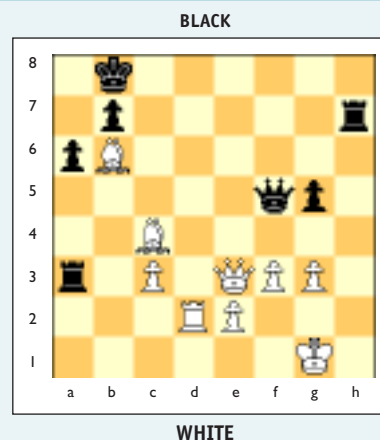
Anastasia was helping organize a church dinner for people who lived in the neighbourhood. She distributed a questionnaire which people were to complete and return if they planned to attend. One question asked people whether they liked beef or ham or chicken. 7 people indicated that they like all 3 meats. Including those 7, 23 like beef and ham, 18 like beef and chicken and 13 like ham and chicken. Including those already mentioned, 47 like beef, 36 like chicken and 34 like ham.

How many surveys were returned altogether?



Using the Venn Diagram shown below, the total of surveys is the total of people in all the regions = 47 + 5 + 6 + 12 = 70 surveys returned.

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 116



WHITE to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation
1. Q-K8 ch Q-B1
2. QxQ ch KxQ
3. R-Q8 mate

OR
1. R-Q8 ch Q-B1
2. B-R7 ch K-B2
3. Q-N6 mate

Algebraic Notation
1. Qe3-e8 + Qf5-c8
2. Qe8xc8 + Kb8xc8
3. Rd2-d8 ++

OR

1. Rd2-d8 + Qf5-c8
2. Bb6-a7 + Kb8-c7
3. Qe3-b6 ++

OR, If it is BLACK's Move, BLACK to Mate in 4

Descriptive Notation
1. _____ Q-N8 ch
2. R-Q1 QxR ch
3. K-N2 Q-KR8 ch
4. K-B2 R-KR7 mate

OR
1. _____ R-QR8 ch
2. R-Q1 RxR ch

3. K-N2 Q-R6 ch
4. K-B2 R-KB8 mate
or Q-KB8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Qf5-b1 +
2. Rd2-d1 Qb1xd1 +
3. Kg1-g2 Qd1-h1 +
4. Kg2-f2 Rh7-h2 ++

OR

1. _____ Ra3-a1 +
2. Rd2-d1 Ra1xd1 +
3. Kg1-g2 Qf5-h3 +
4. Kg2-f2 Rd1-f1 ++
or Qh3-f1 ++

Crossword Puzzle

Series 13, No. 7

Last month's solution
Series 13, no. 6

	1	2	3			4	5	6	7			8	9		
	C	E	P	E		P	A	P	E	R		P	O	T	
10	C	H	E	R		R	I	P	E	R		H	O	H	O
	14					15		16					17		
	H	O	N	O	R	G	E	R	M	S		W	A	N	
	E				18		19		20			21			
				O	A	T	S	K	I		S	E	R	E	
		T	22	23			24		25		26				
		O	F	F	E	E	S	N	E	E	R	E	D		
	27				28		29		30						
	M	A	N		T	A	K	E	V	A					
	31				32			33			34		35	36	
	A	M	I	R			E	L	K		A	S	T	E	R
37	38				39					40					
	R	E	C	E	D	E		D		F	L	O	R	A	E
	41						42		43				44		
	C	R	E	P	E		S	E	T			N	U	T	S
					45		46		47		48	49		50	
				A	M	I	R	A	T	E		R	E	T	
	51		52		53		54		55			56			
	E	P	I	S	O	D	E	R	E	A	S	O	N		
	57						58		59		60				
	L	A	N	T		E	N	D	E	S	T			R	
61	62				63				64		65		66	67	
	U	R	N		D	A	V	I	D	T	A	B	L	E	
	68						69					70			
	D	E	E	R		L	O	V	E	S		T	O	A	D
	71					72					73				
	E	R	R		A	S	I	A	N		S	E	W	N	

ACROSS:

DOWN:

1.

1.

Angie