

Volume 24 Number 12 October 2005

REFORMED

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

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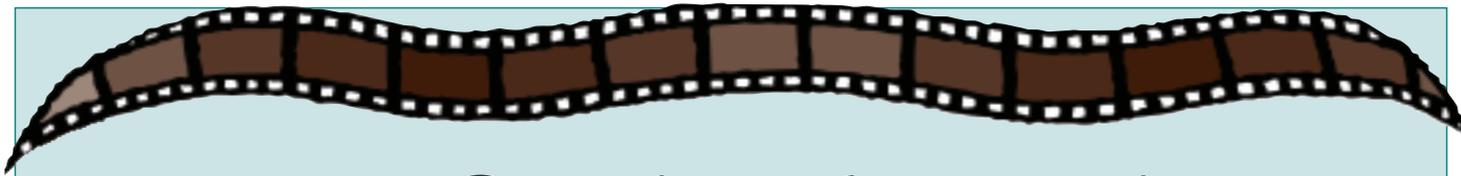
What's inside?

Why Modern
Art Stinks

Finding the
Right Words

Evangelical or
Reformed?





Coming Attraction

Another preview: World War II films that help us never forget

Editorial

by Jon Dykstra



I've been asked why *Reformed Perspective* would consider having a movie issue. After all, most Christians would agree that the motion picture is at best a suspect medium and at worst a depraved one: nudity, gratuitous violence, and the misuse of God's Name mar most films. So why would *RP* bother looking at movies? Why not just write off this medium and be done with it?

While the medium does have its flaws (and they are considerable) it has a strength that should not be overlooked: a picture is worth a thousand words. Sometimes it is far easier to show, rather than tell – this becomes particularly evident as we approach Remembrance Day and think of the events of World War II. The facts are there to be read in any number of history books, but these books don't answer some of the bigger questions.

The German perspective



For example, I could never understand the mentality of the German people of that time – how they could succumb to such evil, what they could have been thinking of when they elected Hitler, why they just stood by as he put his horrible plans into action – until I watched the Nazi propaganda film *Triumph of the Will*. Filmed in 1934, it was shown in German theatres from that time right to the end of World War II. It is a piece of brilliant propaganda, horribly beautiful, with bold military parades and powerful speeches and it shows how evil can, in a certain light, be made to seem patriotic and even noble.

This film helped me understand the Germany of World War II, and gave me an insight into our modern age. Today we also hear horrors portrayed as noble issues. Abortion, our opponents say, isn't a matter of dismembering and murdering the unborn – who could be for something like that? – but is rather about freedom of choice, a noble cause if ever there was one.

A forgotten aspect of the German WWII experience is examined in the 1999 drama, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*:

Agent of Grace. Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran minister who returned to his homeland during WWII. Instead of fleeing Hitler's oppression he chose to fight it and remain with those suffering under it. But when he became involved in a plot to kill Hitler he had to wrestle with just what a Christian is and isn't allowed to do. The film is jumpy in parts, and while it doesn't do full justice to Bonhoeffer's ethical struggles (this is where the medium of film shows its weaknesses) it is still an insightful look into the German struggle. Those interested in a more thorough, but somewhat drier, treatment of Bonhoeffer's life should instead see the two-hour documentary *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Hanged on a Twisted Cross*. Or, alternately they could read a Bonhoeffer biography.



One word of warning about *Agent of Grace*: as Bonhoeffer is led off to his execution there is a brief shot of him naked from the back.

Closer to home



One WWII film is of particular relevance to our community, many of whom are of Dutch descent. *The Hiding Place* (1975) tells the true story of the Ten Boom family and how they hid Jews above their watch store in Holland. The film hardly touches on one of the more interesting theological dilemmas the Ten Booms faced: is it ever right to lie? The oldest daughter thought it always wrong, and refused to do it, even when Nazis asked her if she was hiding Jews. But the film effectively tackles a far more relevant and more common question: why does God let us suffer? Though the Ten Booms kept a number of Jews safe in their "hiding place" upstairs, these activities did eventually land the family in a concentration camp.

Those with a high speed Internet connection can watch this film online for free at www.billygraham.com/WWP_Index.asp.

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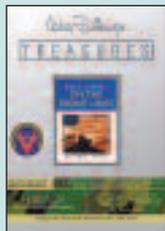
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The Allies



Understanding the Allies is easier after watching some of the movies produced during the war.

Disney recently released a collection of their animated propaganda shorts from that time period called *Walt Disney on the Front Lines*. Donald Duck, Pluto, Chicken Little and others each take their turn fighting on the front lines, or helping the war effort back home. Included also is the animated full length movie *Victory Through Air Power*, produced by Walt Disney himself to try to convince the US military to focus their war efforts on plane building.

One of the best movies about the Japanese theatre of war, and perhaps one of the best WWII movies period, is the 1945 film *Objective Burma*. Before a paratroop-based invasion of Burma can begin a Japanese radar station must be destroyed. The small force assigned the task completes it, but then finds itself stranded in enemy territory, cut off from help. The tension that today is produced with blood and gore is present in this film, despite the fact it is almost bloodless. Real war footage is interspersed, including amazing shots thousands of paratroopers floating down to earth, and of gliders landing – without wheels or brakes these plywood constructions kept sliding along the ground until they hit something.



A last word

Other impressive WWII films could be mentioned but we'll save those for the *RP* movie issue. Sadly, while there were many very good films made during the 1940s, even back then more than half of all films included at least one instance of God's name being taken in vain. Today that figure is probably higher than 95 per cent, making it understandable why some Christians dismiss the medium of film altogether.

We will continue, however, to seek out the rare exceptions – good films that are worth watching and, of course, don't take God's name in vain.



In this Issue:

Editorial – Coming Attractions

— *Jon Dykstra* 2

Report from Australia

– Howard happy despite Blue Flue
— *Rene Vermeulen* 4

Homefront – The Tired Prophet — *Jane deGlint* 6

The Heaven Book — *Christine Farenhorst* 8

Praying for Persecution — *Gene Edward Veith* 10

Evangelical or Reformed? — *Johan Tangelder* 11

Finding the right words — *Sharon L. Bratcher* 15

On Your Marks — *Reuben Bredenhof* 16

Osama's Sister-in-law — *Christine Farenhorst* 19

Why Modern Art Stinks — *Michael Wagner* 24

In a Nutshell — *Jon Dykstra* 26

Classy Connections — *Margaret Helder* 27

News Bites 30

Puzzle Page — *Bob Leach* 31

Crossword Puzzle Series 13, No. 5 32



Howard happy despite Blue Flue

Australian politics has just entered a phase it has not seen for years. For the first time in some 20 years the two houses of the Australian parliament are in the hands of the same party. Prime Minister John Howard is, at least on paper, in control of both houses of the Parliament.

Let me first explain how this has come about.

The House of Representatives has been in the control of the Prime Minister's party ever since his election back in March 1996. But not so the Senate. Canadian readers should note that the Australian Senate is an elected body, unlike Canada's Senate, which is an appointed body.

While the House of Representatives is based on ridings of roughly proportionate population, the Senate is elected by state with each state having the same number (12) of Senators, plus two from the Australian Capital Territory (Canberra), and also two from the Northern Territory.

The reason for this was that at the time of Australia becoming a sovereign nation at the beginning of last century it was considered important that the states should have equal representation in the Senate to overcome the power which the representatives from populous New South Wales and Victoria would have in the House of Representatives. For both these states have always held the majority of Australia's citizens. Even today after a large amount of growth in the other states, more than half of Australia's 20 million people live in Victoria and New South Wales.

Putting the numbers in a context

A quick look at some numbers will help put all this in context:

Australian Population:	20 million
Largest city, Sydney:	4 million
2nd largest, Melbourne:	1.7 million

It is clear that the Senate was put in place to protect the smaller states, states such as Tasmania with about 500,000 people and South Australia with 1.4 million. Even Queensland, a state that has grown tremendously recently still has fewer people (3.8 million) than Sydney.

Hence the idea was that the predominance of the House of Representatives would to some extent be curtailed by the Senate being a house representing the states. That was the theory.

But that was if one left out political parties. For already early in the Federal Parliament there were parties. The Labour Party in particular – founded as it was as a socialistic organization – has a strong basis of discipline to which members of Parliament have to subscribe. While the conservative parties were and are less disciplined they nevertheless expect that their members will toe the party line.

This, of course, means that the idea of a states' house was interesting but hardly fact.

And so for many years it has been every governing party's ambition to have control over both houses of parliament. For having a majority of one's members in both houses means in effect that the Prime Minister of the day is able to achieve all that he wants.

Telephones in the bush

One can imagine the sense of victory that surrounded John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, when last year he achieved a resounding success in the House of Representatives and, after a lot of vote counting, a bare majority in the Senate. His party, the Liberal party, (which is actually the major conservative party) could not hide its glee. Prime Minister Howard could see all his plans coming to fruition. These included the sale of Australia's largest company, Telstra, through a public float. Telstra is the Australian Telephone provider. It alone supplies the phone lines throughout the country and most homes have a Telstra phone in their home even if another company provides their service. And so this government owned company is to be sold off. Well, that's the wish of the government. But that does not mean that the shareholders, the Australian voters, naturally support this idea. Out in the farming areas, out in the outer suburban areas, away from the cities there is much that needs attention. Broadband is not everywhere available. When a breakdown occurs in the phone service, repairs can take too long. What is more, it is argued that should Telstra be sold off there is no guarantee that things will not get a lot worse for the people living in the bush.

To sweeten the pill the government has offered a \$3 billion communications upgrade but did not specify that it should be primarily spent in the bush areas. So the doubters are highly skeptical about this program.

The Blue Flue

Another matter that is of concern to many is the proposed changes to the Industrial relations in Australia. Our country has a very low unemployment rate of some 5 per cent, which is better than it has been for many, many years. The government believes that by introducing industrial reform the number of unemployed will remain low.

But the union movement sees in the government's move only a lowering of the standards they have achieved for their members. There have been massive protests in all capital cities against the government proposals even though the fine print has not yet seen light of day.

The government argues that these changes are necessary to stay ahead of our trading partners, while the union movement argues that it is an attempt to push ordinary workers back to the dark ages of slave labor. There is obviously a fair bit of hyperbole on both sides.



Prime Minister John Howard is, at least on paper, in control. . . .

The latest trick in the union books has been experienced in Perth, the capital of Western Australia. There workers on a major rail project all called off sick one day. This is called the "Blue Flue" and the unions have threatened major action should the contractors dock the pay of the workers for that day.

It must be remembered that Australia is made up of six sovereign states. This means that each state has its own industrial legislation. The Federal government also has industrial legislation, for projects that cover more than one state or for Federal government projects.

Why did I mention that each state has its own industrial legislation? For the simple reason that all the states are in the hands of Labour Party governments. The result is that the state minister responsible for industrial matters inevitably is a former unionist. His sympathies lie with the unions not with the bosses. This is true even though workers on these massive projects receive large pay packets and other benefits.

A contentious future

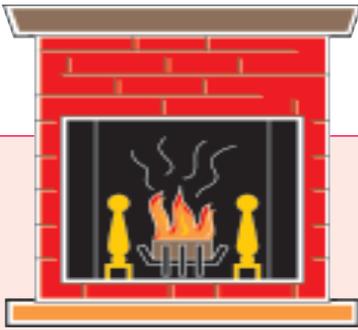
So as you can see the next few months should be very interesting. Prime Minister Howard is determined to get his program through the Senate. After all it is his last term in office. This he has made clear, although lately he has allowed for the possibility of staying longer. His deputy, Peter Costello, is standing on the sidelines

champing at the bit. So the prime minister wants the Senate to bow to his demands. But there is no guarantee that the Senate will do so. A lot will depend on what the proposed legislation contains.

And, of course, not everyone, even in government circles, is supportive of Prime Minister Howard's wishes.

There will be a major push to get rid of this conservative government, particularly since, once the PM goes, his successors could well be more conservative on issues such as health, abortion, euthanasia and other matters of concern to us.

So it can be understood that the six state governments will do all in their power to upset this government. This is especially so because these Labour governments have been supportive of the matters mentioned – some of the most rabid feminists are in our state parliaments.



HOMEFRONT

The Tired Prophet

by Jane deGlint

Zadok River was a very bright boy. Much too bright for his surroundings. He was destined by his parents to follow in the footsteps of his forefathers. All of them, according to the family stories, were laborers.

The oldest stories dated back about two hundred years. They told of men who worked hard on their master's fields during the day, but who read books of religion at night. Already at that time his family had brought forth men who served as elders in the rural churches. They were known both for their piety and their ability to discern doctrinal and ethical flaws. The combination of these traits made them able defenders of the faith. Publicly and privately they spoke against errors in teaching, while they eagerly uprooted any form of misdemeanor with word and deed. It was said, with a tinge of cautious pride, that they were fearless.

About fifty years ago Zadok's branch of the family had exchanged the quiet, rural regions of their ancestors for the crowded, sooty harbor city. This move, prompted by the desire for better work opportunities, was generally condemned by the family members who stayed behind. Zadok's grandfather was accused of being a traitor, a materialist and a follower of Satan himself. How dare he lead himself into the temptations of the big city, where prostitution was common, where fashion dominated people's minds, where art groups offered drama productions. Undoubtedly, the move was a disgrace to the family.

Surprisingly, Zadok's branch did not go astray. In truth, it should not have been a surprise. The urban Rivers stayed true to character. Courageously they applied their God-fearing lifestyle in their unfamiliar surroundings. Though they were often ridiculed for their farmer background and

their strong convictions, they earned respect for their integrity. One could depend on them.

Zadok's grandfather got a menial job with a large ship company. In a respectable way he made due with his modest income. Never mind Satan, he followed in the footsteps of his fathers: hard labor during the day, kingdom work in the evenings. In time Zadok's grandfather became an elder in the big city church. At first his odd manners and speech earned him some condescending looks from his fellow office-bearers. But not for long. He became a respected, trusted leader among God's people in the metropolis.



***Lead by example,
not force.***



In a sense Zadok was like his grandfather. Not in the least, he was named after him. But apart from the unspoken expectations which he carried as namesake, he was not afraid to tread unfamiliar grounds. However, Zadok the junior also had a drive to compete. At first this tendency was buried under the familiar expectations. But when he took the opportunity to pursue a high school education, he started to set himself apart from his family. Zadok became aware of his intelligence, the thrill of convincing others, his natural penchant for leadership. The conviction grew deep within him that he had a special calling.

At first he was not sure what he was called to do. Till he met Matilda. She was the only child of a wealthy entrepreneur. Attracted to his tall stature, regular looks

and intelligence, she started to draw his attention to herself. Initially he was imperious to her advances. His focus was on learning and on his involvement with family and church. But Matilda was determined. She accosted him after church. She phoned him about homework. She invited him to get-togethers. And she was successful. One day she walked toward him in the hallway. Suddenly he was engulfed by her charm. It was the moment for which she had been waiting. Instantly she was at his side, looking sideways-upwards into his eyes. He was conquered. After a while she asked him over to her house. He met her parents, who shared their daughter's intuition that he was a special young man. In particular her dad was intrigued with Zadok's potential. He knew what Zadok could do.

Matilda's father began to groom Zadok after the image of worldly success. Even though he was a member of the same church as the River family, he adhered to a totally different value system. Wealth and influence were at the centre of his life. Employing aggressive and competitive methods, he had established himself among the most influential people of the city.

As Zadok was immersed in the mindset and lifestyle of Matilda's family, he collided with his inborn convictions. He was pre-programmed to a life of hard physical labor for little financial reward. He was taught that a man can serve the Kingdom of Heaven best at the bottom of the societal ladder. Part of him wanted to continue on that path. But on the other hand, he had already tasted the joy of competition and personal success. He concluded that he must be the River who would lead his family into a new direction. His grandfather brought his tribe to the city. It was the

junior Zadok's calling to raise his relatives well above the poverty line to the heights of material blessing.

No small stir was caused in the River family when the full extent of Zadok's courtship with Matilda became clear. Not only had he become romantically involved with her, but he was also heavily under the influence of her business-smart father. As concerned believers, Zadok's parents recognized that Matilda's family led more of a man-pleasing than a God-fearing life. They ached for their son. What a pain. What a disappointment. What a fundamental question: Should their family not have come to the city?

Zadok was torn between his two sides. On the one hand he did appreciate his heritage. He felt privileged that he was born into a family that feared the Lord. He wanted to continue in that path. He had always felt special that as oldest son he was the chosen one to become the spiritual leader of the family. But on the other hand, he had also received the gift of intelligence and willpower from the Lord. Could his love for Matilda and his relationship with her wealthy family not be used by the Lord to give his family a level of financial freedom?

Soon the lines of demarcation were drawn. Matilda's parents were convinced that Zadok should obtain a university degree in economics. Of course they would pay. Zadok's parents, however, were horrified at the thought of their son being in a secular institution of higher learning. They objected. Matilda's parents invited Zadok for a vacation at their cottage in the mountains. But Zadok's parents were suspicious of the luxury and leisure which a cottage represents. They disapproved. In an effort to bridge the rift, Matilda's parents asked Zadok's parents out for a meal at the exclusive Restaurant de Bordeaux. The Rivers, who had never been in a restaurant, were confused. They declined.

In spite of his parents' suspicions Zadok became increasingly attracted to Matilda's family. Almost unawares, he started to resent his parents for their prejudices against wealth. He came to enjoy the comfort and freedom at Matilda's home. In fact, he admired her parents for



He sat deflated on his leather chair in his spacious office.

accepting him in spite of his deprived background. Their concern for his advancement motivated him to apply himself to his studies. He accepted the offer for a university education.

Halfway through his studies he wedded Matilda. Together they settled into a nice apartment close to the university. Though they were now officially one, there was a hidden crack in their marriage. Matilda cared more for Zadok's outward appearance and accomplishments than for his spiritual concerns. Zadok did sense that their relationship rested on unequal footings, but he was mesmerized by Matilda's attention for him and by the accompanying generosity of her parents. He silenced his conscience by resolving that one day he would use his position to improve his parents' societal status.

Zadok proceeded nicely on his chosen path. In his final year at the university Matilda gave birth to a healthy son. After receiving his university degree with honors, he accepted a position in his father-in-law's business. The following year their marriage was blessed with another healthy son. Two years later Zadok became an elder in the church.

He took his task very seriously. He acquainted himself with the people under his care. He listened to them during family visits. In the process he learned about their problems, discovering their sins of

greed, distrust, slander, drunkenness and insolence.

These sins awoke a holy zeal in him. He was going to face them head on. Without regard for status he pointed people to their shortcomings. He pulled youngsters out of bars. He forced arguing relatives to sit down together and make peace. He made people pay back personal loans to each other. His forthright measures earned him the nickname "prophet."

Initially he was proud of his title, but soon he realized that it was meant sarcastically. Moreover, Matilda was not amused. She did not want a spiritual warrior, but a showpiece to enhance her own position. The invisible cracks in their marriage became ugly fault lines. It took the wind out of Zadok's sails. He became very disillusioned. He started to doubt his career, his marriage, his office in the church. He lost his drive to succeed, his pride as husband and father, his zeal for his work in the congregation. He became a tired prophet.

One morning he sat deflated on his leather chair in his spacious office. The phone rang. Routinely he picked up the receiver. His secretary's voice announced a visitor. Before he could refuse, the door opened.

He walked his father, hesitantly and awkwardly. He stopped in front of his son's big desk. Then he spoke, prophetically.

"Zadok, remember your place and calling. Lead by example, not force. Love your wife without being fearful of her. Be an example of proper piety for your sons. Share your spiritual wealth with your parents-in-law. They need that more than your mother and I need your money. Zadok, we love you. In spite of our own prejudices, we raised you for the Lord. Do not defect to Mammon. Become a humble prophet, not an activist. Be a servant."

Zadok stood up. In a daze he walked around the desk, till he faced his father. He hesitated for one short moment. Then he embraced him. A load fell off his shoulders. He would become his own man in the strength of the God of his fathers.

"Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength."
1 Chronicles 16:28



Two policemen were assigned to watch. They sat in front of his wooden box and gambled while he stood there. Pastor John recalled, in those moments of agony, that his Savior had hung on a cross and had also seen gamblers in front of Him. This gave him courage and he began to speak, telling the guards about Jesus. He spoke with conviction of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The guards refused to listen. "Old man," said one of them, "when I reach seventy and look as unhealthy as you, I won't be afraid of death either."

Pastor John stood on the box for days. His body cried out for sleep. His legs cramped and the only relief he got was when it rained and he caught raindrops on his tongue. An incredible week passed. People came by to see him standing there. It was impossible, they said, to stand so long without food and water and rest. After twelve days, Pastor John was very ill and delirious. On the thirteenth day a thunderstorm erupted. As the rain poured down like hail, Pastor John finally collapsed. And the noose tightened.

Pastor John did not die. When he next opened his eyes, he was lying on the floor. His legs were propped up on a chair and he had much pain. Someone was giving him water, trying to revive him. In the next few moments, he realized that he was looking into the faces of the two guards who had stood in front of his box.

"Don't die," they said to him, "Don't die, old man!"

"Why?"

It was all his swollen and cracked lips could manage.

"Because He saved you. A bolt of lightning struck the rope above your head as you fell. We know it's no coincidence!"

The guards, consequently, became believers and as the story spread, many others came to faith. A little later, the

prison officials released Pastor John. In 1985, four years after the original Bible project, Pastor John was finally able to dig

up his Bibles. The heaven books had been buried for a long time and their distribution caused great joy.



Good gifts

by Jon Dykstra

If you enjoyed this story – "The Heaven Book" – then I think you'll very much enjoy the book that it came from. This is a chapter from Christine Farenhorst's new collection of devotions for families to read together: *Amazing Stories From Times Past*. As readers of *Reformed Perspective* will already know, Christine is quite a storyteller, so it goes without saying that each chapter is enjoyable, but what I particularly liked about her book was the questions that followed each chapter – they are just the thing to get parents and children talking. The story sets up the questions, making the rather deep queries understandable for youngsters, giving parents an opportunity to really sit down and talk with their kids about God.

This would make a good gift for Christmas, something grandparents might consider giving, or even something for the grandchildren to consider giving to their oma and opa – many of these stories will bring a joyful tear to the eye of dear ol' grandma. And for twice the pleasure there is also Christine's previous collection, *The Great Escape: Forty faith-building lessons from History*.

***Amazing Stories from Times Past:* Devotions for Children and Families**

by Christine Farenhorst
P&R Publishing, 2005
160 pages; Softcover; \$11 Can.



Praying for Persecution

Chinese Christians have a slightly different idea of how God blesses

by Gene Edward Veith

How should North American Christians pray for the church in China? So asked the reporter from the Baptist mission board, ending his interview with a leader of the Chinese house-church movement.

His subject answered, "Stop praying for persecution in China to end." He added, "It is through persecution that the church has grown."

The leader of the underground church then added something else: "We, in fact, are praying that the American church might taste the same persecution so revival would come to the American church like we have seen in China."

James Draper, the president of the Southern Baptist bookstore chain LifeWay who recounts the incident in a column with Baptist Press, notes the irony: "We in America keep praying for God to bless us" – with success, prosperity, political clout, and booming churches – "and Christians in other nations are praying God will allow us to experience persecution so that we'll act like the blessing we were made to be."

What did the Chinese leader – who constantly faces arrest for evangelizing and worshipping – mean? It is certainly true, both in China and throughout church history, that the greatest periods of church growth have been times of persecution, or at least cultural hostility.

This happened most dramatically in the Roman Empire. After Rome fell, the European barbarians first martyred the missionaries before finally accepting their message. During the Reformation, the gospel spread like fire while those who preached it were burned at the stake.

In more recent times, though falling short of overt persecution, the church has flourished in times of cultural hostility. At the height of the Enlightenment, with its anti-supernatural rationalism, John Wesley sparked the Methodist revival and America had its Great Awakening. The age of Modernism, which was expected to eliminate religion altogether, gave us the evangelical movement. Conversely, times of cultural conformity – the late Middle Ages, today – show the church at its worst.



The Greek word for "witness" is martyr.



Persecution does not always create growth in numbers, as is evident in Islamic countries. But it does eliminate nominal believers who only go to church for cultural approval. The church members remaining, who are willing to endure suffering for their Christianity, demonstrate a faith that seems particularly real, and particularly persuasive to nonbelievers. We blithely speak of "witnessing to our faith," by which we mean just telling someone about Jesus. The Greek word for "witness" is martyr.

So, if persecution has been good for Christianity, does this mean we should cultivate martyrdom? Not at all. It was good that Rome finally legalized Christianity (though this would have unintended bad consequences). Today we should work to

promote religious freedom around the world, including China. And we should resist – while we can – the assaults on that freedom in our own country. Nor should individual Christians try to turn themselves into "martyrs" through obnoxious or illegal behavior.

The Reformers made it clear that "self-chosen" suffering – as in asceticism, self-flagellation, and purposefully getting in trouble – has no spiritual value and can contribute to works righteousness and hypocrisy. But suffering that we do not want, enduring trials and tribulations out of our control, can be a refining fire, forcing us to depend ever more on Christ.

Despite the clear teachings of the Bible, many of us actually think God has abandoned us when we go through difficulties, failures, and sorrows. We expect one glorious victory after another and are disconcerted when Jesus sends us a cross to bear.

We American Christians have become so prosperous, so successful, so optimistic that we have become spiritually soft and thus ineffective. The Chinese churchman sees that we could use the bitter medicine of persecution.

So when you find yourself struggling with hardship and opposition, or, even more so, when you are exulting in your success and popularity, remember: Someone in China is praying for you.

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Evangelical OR Reformed?

Some prominent Reformed theologians like R.C. Sproul, D. James Kennedy and J.I. Packer have been called Evangelical, but can you be both Reformed and Evangelical? What does it mean to be Evangelical? Are we Evangelicals?

by Johan Tangelder

Evangelicalism has become the dominant form of Protestant Christianity in the United States. It is the nation's largest and most actively committed form of Christianity. It has also made an impact abroad, especially in Africa and Central and South America.

Due to evangelicalism's public involvement in the affairs of the nation, and its emphasis on the uniqueness of the Gospel, it has made enemies and is regarded with hostility by many people. Evangelicals remain one of the last social groups in the United States that people can speak disparagingly about in public and get away with it. They are victimized by mockery and prejudice. Many secular "elites" have such a negative view of evangelicals that it approaches religious bigotry. Mention anything positive in the name of the God of the Bible, and someone will immediately mention something negative. According to one survey, nearly one out of three academics said that Evangelicals are a "threat to democracy."

Definition of Evangelicalism

While it is clear many don't like it, it is hardly clear what exactly evangelicalism is. It is very tough to define.

The story of American evangelicalism is rich with a great variety of theologies and cultural traditions. The modern evangelical movement emerged from fundamentalism by the 1930s and early 1940s. New leaders arose who wanted to reform Protestant fundamentalism and smooth its rougher edges. They reacted to the fun-

damentalist withdrawal from the world and the intellectual ghetto in which fundamentalists had boxed themselves. In so doing, they opted for a new label – evangelical instead of fundamentalist.

So what is evangelicalism? *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (1984) describes it as "The movement in modern Christianity, transcending denominational and confessional boundaries, that emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of the faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency." So evangelicalism is not a church, nor a theological system, nor a religious society. It is a movement without a specific address or residence. It is more a mood or a mindset than a systematic whole. It is noted for its activities in evangelism, foreign missions, campus ministries, aid organizations, and political and social issues. It affirms the central beliefs of historic Christianity. In his *The Old Religion in a New World* Mark A. Noll argues that the term is broadly used to mean all non-modernist Protestants, or all Protestants who retain belief in the Bible as the revealed word of God, who share their Christian faith with others, and who trust in Christ alone for their salvation.

In his *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism* (2002), Randall Balmer includes in evangelicalism both staunch Calvinists in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, who believe that speaking in tongues ended when the last apostle of Christ died, and members of the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination that makes such

Spirit-filled language a sign of genuine Christianity. But many evangelicals also belong either to independent churches or to mainline denominations in which they are a distinct minority.

Neo-Evangelicalism

Many new leaders in the evangelical movement preferred to call themselves "neo-evangelical." The new term was first introduced by Dr. Harold John Ockenga, the first president of the National Association of Evangelicals. He countered the oft-repeated charge of anti-intellectualism leveled at fundamentalism by an emphasis on scholarship. He also emphasized that Christians should participate in politics and take stands on social and moral issues. Christians had to get involved in the world outside their church.

One of the early prominent neo-evangelical leaders was Carl F. Henry. In his *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* he issued a stinging rebuke to fundamentalists in 1947. He argued that fundamentalists were too secluded, too otherworldly, anti-intellectual, and unwilling to bring their faith to bear upon culture and social life. He wanted to unite personal depth with social breadth, the importance of conversion with the necessity of social reform. In 1956 Henry became the founding editor of *Christianity Today*, an influential magazine that has served as a guide, a forum for neo-evangelical theological thought, perspectives on social issues, education, and so.

Evangelicalism's Theology

Since evangelicalism is not “uniform,” it is difficult to describe its theology. Evangelicals disagree about baptism, about the character of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper, about predestination and human freedom, and about church polity. But most evangelicals in the twentieth century recognized areas of agreement to be more crucial than the disagreements that had utterly divided Christians in the past.

What is clearly evident though is the influence of Arminianism. Randall Balmer notes that American evangelicalism in general has abandoned Calvinist notions about predestination in favor of Arminian doctrines that exalt the individual’s ability to “choose God” and thereby take control of his or her spiritual destiny.

But despite the many internal differences, the bricks and the mortar of the movement have four enduring emphases:

1. The necessity of conversion of the individual. Some evangelicals believe one should know the date of his or her conversion. Others claim it does not matter when or how one is converted; you don’t have to know the date of your conversion as long as you know you are converted.
2. Scripture is the ultimate authority in matters of spirituality, doctrine, and ethics. Evangelicals defend the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture against the inroad of modernism and the modernistic spirit.

3. The cross of Christ is central in the evangelicals’ gospel proclamation. The atoning work of Christ as the sole mediator between God and humanity is stressed. Jesus Christ is the only way to God the Father.
4. Because Christ is the only way, evangelism and missions are imperative. In obedience to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) the glad tidings of salvation to a lost and hurting world must be proclaimed. As George M. Marsden observed, evangelicalism is marked by “a zeal to proclaim the biblically revealed gospel of salvation through the atoning work of Christ.”

But its zeal for outreach has also its critics. The historian of religion Martin Marty notes that evangelicals have typically emphasized “personal piety and individual salvation, leaving men to their own devices to interpret the world around them.” Marty argues that we are living for the first time in history in an era in which Christianity has been boxed into the private sphere and has largely stopped speaking to the public sphere.

In his *The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion* Kenneth J. Collins offers a similar critique. He asserts, “Though American evangelicals are well known for leading sinners to Christ, and the altar call in some churches has virtually become a sacrament, many are less adept at leading Christians into serious and costly discipleship, the kind of discipleship that is marked by patient suffering and

sacrifice over time as men and women are led into the fullness that is Christ.”

Loss of tradition

Critics of evangelicalism claim that it suffers from historical amnesia due to a faulty interpretation of the Protestant notion of *sola scriptura* – Scripture alone. When Reformers shouted “Sola scriptura!” they were making it clear they rejected all Roman Catholic doctrines that were not based on Scripture. Evangelicals today have misunderstood this slogan and thought it a reason to reject biblically based historic creeds and confessions – Scripture alone, they say. So they emphasize instead each individual’s “right” to interpret Scripture for themselves.

Because evangelicalism claims the sovereignty of the individual in interpreting Scripture it has lost its appreciation for the great traditions of the church. While conservative evangelical Christians believe American culture needs to return to its historic traditions, they somehow think the church needs to abandon hers. Consequently, they play fast and loose with the Bible and its theology, even while maintaining inerrancy and inspiration.

The hostility towards traditions and the historic roots of the church have led to a cavalier rejection of the past, which strips the church of the rich resources of centuries worth of theological reflection, scriptural meditation, and spiritual experience. Many evangelicals have lost the intellectual riches of two millennia of theological reflection. Their attitude implies that there is nothing to be gained from grappling with the thoughts of the great minds of the past such as Augustine and Tertullian, Bernard of Clairveaux and Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and John Calvin. In *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* Nancy Pearcey points out that the great figures in church history are our brothers and sisters in the Lord, members of the Body of Christ extended across the ages, and we learn much by honing their minds on the problems they wrestled with and the solutions they offered. But when one rejects Christian history and attempts to start anew, he/she is doomed to failure. It



A survey found that one out of three academics think evangelicals are a “threat to democracy.” So we should either be very frightened of evangelicals, or of every third academic.

leads to anti-intellectualism and theological shallowness.

Anti-intellectualism

The word “evangelicalism” continues to evoke images of anti-intellectualism. What happened to the evangelical mind? Why did the evangelical movement become largely anti-intellectual, with little sense of how to relate to the mainstream culture? The populist seeker-friendly style of evangelicalism downplayed doctrine and appealed to “ordinary” folks.

But there is also the scholarly style of evangelicalism – united in evangelical fervor with traditional emphasis on theology and scholarship. It shows that it is capable of holding its own when challenged in the marketplace of ideas. For example, the Evangelical Theological Society, founded in 1949, tapped a wide circle of scholars who hoped to develop an evangelical perspective in biblical and theological studies. The Evangelical Philosophical Society, founded in 1974, is an organization of professional scholars devoted to “excellence in both the church and academy.” Both societies have Reformed scholars as members.

The doctrine of the church

The evangelicals’ attitude towards the doctrine of the church is revealing – this doctrine is not very important to evangelicals.

Many evangelicals uncritically absorbed the individualism that dominates American culture, and simply transferred it to the church. They view the church as a collection of equal, autonomous individuals committed together by choice. The church is no longer an organic community into which one is received, and certainly not a spiritual authority to which one submits him or herself. The evangelicals’ attitude toward personal choice enables them to move rather easily from one denomination or one community church to another. In today’s consumer’s culture, the customer is in charge.

John G. Stackhouse Jr., theology professor at Regent College, argues that contemporary evangelicalism “has fragmented a thousand ways.” He observes: “Loyalty



Church loyalty is not a common evangelical trait.

to a group, especially a local denomination and denominational tradition, is now regarded as a quaint heirloom from Grandma and Grandpa’s day. We are loyal to those organizations that suit us individually. . . . And when they don’t suit us any longer, we move on to another option, another ‘brand’ or ‘product’.”

In his *Deconstructing Evangelicalism: Conservative Protestantism in the Age of Billy Graham* D.G. Hart notes: “To be a Christian is not to be a part of a movement but to be a member of the body of Christ. This is a lesson that the evangelical movement has not learned.” Evangelicals seem to think of themselves as a movement, a network of like-minded individuals and organizations. They all shared basic similarities, similar doctrine, similar concern for piety and evangelism. This sort of thinking eventually led, in the late twentieth century, to replacing the church with the parachurch. Evangelicals established a number of parachurch structures and organizations with the goal of fostering interdenominational cooperation, especially in the area of evangelism. Some examples of the multitude of parachurches are InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, World Vision International, and the Navigators. Put simply, evangelicalism thrives on parachurch “ministries” that function as sources of communication and recruitment not tied to a particular congregation or denomination.

Postmodern Evangelicalism

The prominence of individualism and consumerism, combined with the latest

marketing techniques continues to shape America’s religious landscape. The populist branch of the evangelical movement gave rise the megachurches with leaders who are celebrities, entrepreneurs – pragmatic marketers who are willing to do whatever works to get the numbers and enlarge their churches. They show a willingness to tailor their message, their worship, and their theology to the consumer demands of the religious marketplace. They have become performers, stringing together stories and anecdotes, often from their own life to offer advice for practical daily living. Expository sermons on biblical texts have given way to topical sermons on the felt needs of the congregation. In these megachurches you won’t see crosses, nor hard pews, nor pipe organs, nor Sunday finery, nor collection plates. Churchly language is avoided. Drama is also featured. And Praise and Worship has become embodied and institutionalized. Many people attending megachurches may be church hoppers or perennial visitors, considering themselves free-floating Christians without accountability and commitment – and they like it that way. They apparently believe that salvation is separable from accountable church membership. Noll describes megachurches as “spiritual shopping malls designed intentionally to provide religious resources for people caught in the tense circumstances of modern life.”

Two of the new celebrities in what is now called “postmodern evangelicalism” are Joel Osteen and Rob Bell. America’s largest nondenominational megachurch, Lakewood Church, is led by Joel Osteen, televangelist and best-selling author. It

boasted an average attendance of 32,500 in the first quarter of 2005. Osteen's book *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living Your Full Potential* has sold almost 3 million copies. This 42-year pastor did not go to seminary and never preached a sermon until his father, the church's previous pastor, died in 1999.

Critics of Osteen argue that he downplays the sinful nature of humanity and the need for repentance. Absent in his new church building are a cross or other traditional religious symbols.

Rev. Rob Bell, who in 1999 founded the Mars Hill Bible Church, now has 10,000 attendees in a former Grandville shopping mall. Recently he released his first book *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith*. Bell gives the impression that he is the first one ever who struggles with theological questions. As he doesn't place any value on the history of doctrine, he raises questions without offering answers or solutions. He doesn't draw the lines between believers and unbelievers, or church members and nonmembers. He argues that the lines are arbitrary and that we are all on a journey. He suggests we ought to replace the word missionary with tour guide, because we cannot show people something we haven't seen. This "tour guide" shows people that wherever he/she goes, Jesus is already there.

Rob Bell wants a "fresh picture" of Jesus for those who have trouble with the

traditional portrait. While calling Christ's way the best possible way to live," Bell writes that Jesus did not claim that His way is better than another. He argues a follower of Jesus is free to claim the truth wherever he finds it. The individual reins supreme. "Everybody's interpretation is essentially his or her own opinion. Nobody is objective." Consequently, Bell reduces religious truth to a "matter of individual choice" or preference. He encourages readers to question their beliefs and church teachings. He believes that the Bible is a narrative, a book that constantly must be wrestled with and re-interpreted. "I think sometimes the Bible can become the new golden calf," said Bell. He calls for a faith that fights poverty, injustice and suffering – to make this world the kind of place God can come to. He is eager to bring about the kingdom of God on earth. Heaven comes to earth. "For Jesus, the question wasn't, 'how do I get into heaven?' But 'how do I bring heaven here?'" In other words, in Bell's postmodern church, it doesn't matter whether a religion is objectively true but only whether it performs a beneficial function for those who believe it.

Reformed or Evangelical?

Many church historians mistakenly identify Reformed tradition with the very substance of American evangelicalism. We have some fundamental differences with

the evangelical, but we should learn from their missionary passion, the joy in their salvation, their personal devotional life, and their warmth in preaching and worship.

Although we share basic Biblical doctrines of evangelicalism, the conservative Reformed emphasize the centrality of God's grace for the salvation of individuals. We also strongly believe that church membership cannot be separated from salvation. We believe that Christ builds His church as a house – a home for the Holy Spirit for parents and their children. And a house is not a movement. We rest in the grace of God and resist the appeal of individual choice. We share confessional traditions such as the *Three Forms of Unity*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Belgic Confessions*, and the *Canons of Dort*. We share the Calvinist picture of the fallen human condition, of merciful divine sovereignty in redemption, and the self-authenticating dignity of God's law. Calvin says that the goal for believers is conformity "between God's righteousness and their obedience." Unlike many evangelicals, Reformed believers emphasize the whole of Scripture and not just one or more of its parts. The reality of a life inflamed with a passion for God and accustomed to communion with God is given a central place. And this passion may be shown with "an inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Peter 1:8). The Reformed tradition is, above all, preoccupied with God and His glory. God rather than man is the focus of attention. The heart of the Reformed vision is "the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos." Reformed Christians do not believe they can bring heaven to earth. Nowhere does the Bible speak of the kingdom of God as a human achievement. The Kingdom of God is God's rule which He and He alone establishes. In conclusion, for the sake of the Gospel and the future of our covenant youth I urge Reformed Christians to prize and value their own tradition. As John Bolt observed in *Christian and Re-formed Today*: "If Christians no longer value their own tradition, often because they do not know its true genius, they cannot be convinced of its being the purest and truest expression of Christianity." 

SCARY INDEED

"Macleans has called them 'scary.' *The National Post* terms them 'radical.' *The Globe and Mail* runs front-page headlines warning us that they are 'capturing' political nominations around the country. The CBC has refused to sell them advertising space.

"But for the North Koreans fleeing tyranny they are the Good Samaritans who risk their lives spiriting them through Chinese forests to freedom. To the million desperate women around the world sold into the sex slave trade every year, they are the activists lobbying and embarrassing western governments to put an end to the global human trafficking industry. American prisoners cherish them as the groups that have pushed for laws forcing state and federal officials to stop the sexual brutality inmates face daily.

"They are evangelicals.... orthodox Christians."

- *Western Standard* Oct 17, 2005

Finding the right words

Comfort them with the comfort with which you were comforted

by Sharon L. Bratcher

During the Spring of 2004 my husband Dennis lay in the Intensive Care Unit at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia. Surgery had led to his inclusion in “the 10% who develop complications,” leaving me both bewildered and overwhelmed. As day followed day with little improvement, I thought, “what if I lose him?” and “this is really hard.” I prayed. I read my Bible. And others shared God’s words of comfort.

An assignment

Each time a brother or sister in the Lord called or sent a card with a verse on it, it became a blessed assignment for my day. These were the verses that I meditated on day and night. I probably could have found them myself – I have often been the one who shared verses with others – but my emotions were raw, my body was worn out with weeping and my mind was occasionally confused. The blessed assignment for the day directed my soul to a specific passage of Scripture which the Holy Spirit then used to comfort me. It employed my mind, leaving no idle room for despair. It assured me that we were not alone, for others cared about us. All of this infused me with strength.

My mother searched for a suitable card and sent one to me that included her “favorite” Psalm 46. It arrived during a difficult time and I carried it around with me for several days. When worry began, I read it. When despair appeared, I read it. When fear tried to strangle, I read it. God *was* my refuge and strength, a very present help in my trouble. I was comforted and I lost the fear. When it returned again, I prayed Psalm 46 once again.

During the 29 days that he was hospitalized, I met others who came quite frequently to the ICU waiting room. Three women feared for the lives of their sons. Two men were there often to visit their wives, Betty and Nina. I didn’t know anyone’s background or beliefs, but at times I offered to read my card to them and to pray. God’s Word does not go out in vain, and the Holy Spirit used those instances as He would. One evening I read Psalm 46 with Betty’s family as she lay dying in the next room. Nina’s husband invited me to come daily to read the Bible, pray, and sing to her. Nina had been in ICU for over 3 months, and she was eager to know the Lord. We both enjoyed the 15-20 minute visits that lasted until Dennis was well enough to go home.

As it says in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, our Lord is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Never before were these words so clear to me. I was weak and gained strength and then shared that strength with others.

Calvin concludes

Many people wonder what to do to encourage someone in difficult times. Some hesitate, afraid to err, or certain that “others have it covered.” Sometimes we are just so busy with our own schedules and goals that we don’t make the time to encourage. John Calvin says in his excellent *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*:

We should seek the good of other believers.

How extremely difficult it is for you dutifully to seek the advantage of your neighbor, unless you quit all selfish considerations and almost forget yourself. How can you perform the duties which Paul teaches to be works of love, unless you renounce yourself and devote yourself wholly to others? (see 1 Cor. 13).

If this be all that is demanded, that we do not seek our own, yet we must not exert little pressure on our own nature which is so strongly inclined to love self exclusively and does not easily permit us to neglect self and our own affairs. Let us rather seek the profit of others, and even voluntarily give up our rights for the sake of others.

Scripture urges and warns us that whatever favors we may have obtained from the Lord we have received them as a trust on condition that they should be applied to the common benefit of the church.”

Who do you know in your church or family or neighborhood that is undergoing trials right now? Calvin continues:

Let this be our rule for goodwill and helpfulness that whenever we are able to assist others we should behave as stewards who must some day give an account of ourselves. . . . For we must not first of all try to promote the good of others by seeking our own, but we must prefer the profit of others.

With just a few minutes of time, some paper and ink and perhaps a stamp, you will be, as an old prayer states, “an instrument of God’s peace.” Let us go and “comfort with the comfort with which we have been comforted by God.”



On Your Marks

Some thoughts prompted by a stack of used Bibles

by Reuben Bredenhof

There is a condition, shared by not a few people, that sometimes goes by the name *bibliophilia*. That is, one has a love (Greek: *philia*) of books (Greek: *biblos*). You may not find it in your home medical guide, but *bibliophilia* is simple to diagnose. Briefly put, it is a persistent longing to have, to hold, to smell, to spend time with, and to read books. A bibliophile might have a parking stall reserved for him at Chapters, might be on a first-name basis with Sophia at the local second-hand bookstore, and will probably know the location of every thrift store within half an hour's drive. And a bibliophile's home most certainly will feature tall bookshelves, filled to capacity – with books.

If there's a condition called *bibliophilia*, then there must also be one called *eubibliophilia*. That is, one is a lover of the good (Greek = *eu*) book, the Bible. For there are people known to have a copy of nearly every English translation of the Bible ever made, old and new, plus samples of the Bible in a couple dozen languages: Swahili, Gaelic, Chinese, and so on.

An observation

Paging through a stack of assorted used English Bibles, one observes that in nearly every Bible there are marks of some kind. In some margins, notes and comments are written in pen or pencil. Under certain words, there is single or double underlining. And select verses are awash in the yellow or pink or green of an eager highlighter.

These are Bibles that have sat on a shelf in the kitchen, in a desk at school, at

someone's bedside, in a pew at church, or somewhere else entirely. Wherever their original home, these are Bibles that have been used. And they bear signs of this use, not just in silent creases or unspeaking rips, but in the added words, marks and lines that draw attention to a verse or passage that was special in some way to the person who once owned the very Bible you now hold in your hands.

Questions and speculation

Of course, it's impossible to know for certain why a verse has been marked. The owner of a used Bible usually doesn't know the previous owner and his circumstances. Yet, about these marked verses and words one might make a few tentative observations, or at least ask a few thought-provoking questions.

In one almost brand-new NIV (New International Version), only three passages could be found marked – three "classics," if you will. Marked was a small portion of 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter on the spiritual gift of love, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast..." Also underlined was the fruits of the Spirit passage from Galatians 5. Highlighted likewise was the powerful verse from Philippians 4, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (v 13).

These are the passages that practically every Christian knows, and that many new Christians excitedly "discover" early on when reading and studying the Bible. And indeed, this particular edition of the NIV was a so-called "economy-version," printed on cheap paper, with cheap binding –



Lighter thoughts can also emerge from a pile of Bibles.

suiting for handing out for free to a “seeker” or to a new Christian. One can’t help but hope the previous reader made it farther into the Bible than just these three verses, beautiful as they are.

Similarly in a very fresh-looking RSV (Revised Standard Version), one of just a few passages discovered as highlighted was the central Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works. . .” If you could mark only one passage in the Bible, what better passage than this?

Yet that same question as before arises when one thinks of how little has been marked. The previous owner found a good passage, but did he only read for a short time, and then discard what he had? Somewhat ironically, in one nearly pristine NEB (New English Bible), one of the few texts highlighted was John 6:66, “From that time on, many of his disciples withdrew and no longer went about with him.”

Looking at these practically brand-new Bibles (and many more of similar condition in the eubibliophile’s stack), one would like to ponder other possible and happier reasons a person might get rid of his perfectly good copy of God’s Word. Was it time to read a better translation? One with more study notes?

They say the Bible is the most widely printed book in the world, the most widely stolen book in the world – go to five different thrift stores, and you might conclude it’s also the most widely donated book in the world: there’s often a sagging shelf filled completely with now ownerless Bibles. And maybe, the eubibliophile suddenly wonders, it is better to give away a Bible if you don’t need that particular copy anymore, rather than hoarding God’s Word for yourself.

Marginal matters?

Lighter thoughts can also emerge from a pile of Bibles. In a KJV (King James Version) from the late 1800s, several texts are

underlined. Beside one passage, in addition to its underlining, in the margin is a finely drawn little hand with its index finger extended and pointing to the text. For your interest, the text that is pointed out is: “Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecc. 11:1). Judging from the date of the Bible, and the faintness of the pencil marks, this artistic form of “highlighting” is from a time long before the days of the rather less subtle neon highlighters.

Another, more recently-printed KJV gives evidence that a previous reader was familiar with some Bible folklore. At Psalm 46 in this Bible, the 46th word from the beginning of the Psalm (not including the superscription) is “shake,” and it’s highlighted in pink. The 46th word from the end of the Psalm (not including the *Selah*) is “spear,” which is also pinked. Put the two words together and what do you get? “Shake-spear.”

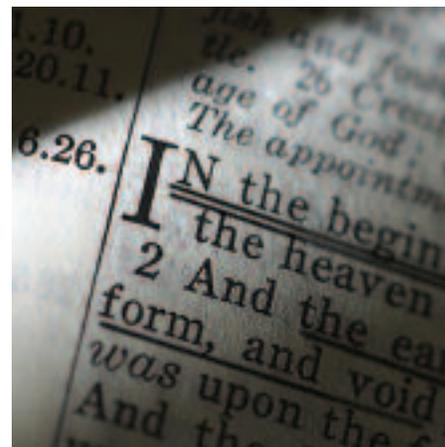
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***“If you’re allowed to,
please take your pencils
and underline. . . .”***

.....

This bit of KJV trivia has been taken by some as sure proof for the interesting theory that William Shakespeare lent his high literary style to the writing of the sublime KJV. Though the history books don’t say he had a role, here, some will still insist, is Shakespeare’s hidden “signature” on a work to which he contributed. To some this surreptitious “signature” alone is conclusive for the case of the Bard’s involvement, for when the KJV was completed (1611), Shakespeare’s age was. . . 46.

One NIV Study Bible bore many signs of frequent use. This was heartening on the one hand, but it illustrated a sad point on the other. For, looking at the stack of



It’s impossible to know for certain why a verse has been marked.

pages of the Bible when closed, it seems evident from the smudge marks that the New Testament was favoured far more than the Old. The gray streaks of finger-grease began promptly with Matthew, while the pages of Genesis to Malachi (three-quarters of the Bible!) were still cleanly white.

The same well-worn NIV Bible had few markings on its pages, except one found at Isaiah 59:13. There just one word was circled. Can you guess which one? Now look it up in your dictionary.

“Take your pencils. . .”

Once there was a minister known for different catch-lines in his sermons. Probably the most important phrase that he regularly used was this: “If you’re allowed to, please take your pencils and underline. . . .” This minister’s desire was to have all those sitting in the pew involved during the preaching. Not simply sitting there, they had to have their Bibles open in order to follow his word-by-word explanation of the text.

As the preacher would be expounding, from time to time he’d direct attention to one very significant word, one the reader might otherwise miss. That’s when he’d tell his listeners – if they were allowed, that is (by their parents? spouse?) – to underline that important word. He would then proceed to draw out from it rich, Scriptural truth. He “underlined” the word in his preaching, and many of his listeners would underline it in their Bibles, that they might remember the next time they read the verse.

Looking through a Bible that was opened during many a sermon by the said preacher, one hears many words, once perhaps neglected, calling out for attention to their significance.

The account of Jesus calling his first disciples in Luke 5 is probably familiar to most readers. Jesus there shows Peter, James and John how successful their fishing will be in the future – though they won't be fishing for fish. Their reaction to Jesus is very instructive, for though they probably were prosperous fishermen, "They pulled their boats up on shore, left *everything* and followed him" (v 11). Underline that one word "everything," and then think about what it means.

In 1 John 5:13-20, a small phrase occurs and recurs, so common it might easily be overlooked. Yet pausing to highlight it, and then to reflect on it, we see the ample God-given certainty of our faith and comfort in Jesus Christ: "We know. . . we know . . . we know. . . we know. . ."

A lesson to underline

There may be people who have principal reasons for not making marks in their Bibles. Others might blush at the abuse our RSV Bibles (complete with pictures!) took back in elementary and high school. It's true, Bibles are sometimes treated as colouring books or doodle pads, and little reverence is shown for what the Belgic Confession calls "the holy and divine Scriptures" (Art. 3).

The Bible, however, is not a book to keep on the top level of your bookshelf in the basement, nor a book to keep under glass. It is, in a sense, a "work book." The Bible is a book to take with you, to have open often, to consult regularly, and to study carefully. If the pages of the Bible we read (or maybe intend to read) everyday are pristine and uncreased and free of finger-grease, there may be a problem.

Rather, our Bibles should be well-used. If it helps you to remember, underline. If it helps you to draw passages together, make

notes in the margin. If it makes it easier to use, make your own tabs. If it helps you grasp the essence of a passage, get highlighting. The Bible must be central in our lives, because, as the Confession also says, its books are "for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith" (Art. 5).

There are those who smile at their so-called self-diagnosed condition bibliophilia. But like the love of anything can, a love of just any book can take us away from reading the holy and divine Scriptures. May we all then be eubibliophiles, lovers of the Good Book!



Let Your Light Shine. . .

WRITE FOR *Reformed Perspective*

Heretics

January 20 Deadline

Is there anything we can learn from the controversies of the past? Are the heresies of today the same as those of yesteryear? For example, are Jehovah Witnesses modern day Arianists? Do we have any modern Pelagians? What were some of the most notable heretics of the past? How is knowing about them relevant for today?

Sex

February 20 Deadline

In our sexualized culture how early should we be having "the talk" with our kids? What's a single person to do with the Song of Solomon? Can Christians talk about sex with non-Christians without sounding like prudes? Or self-righteous? Or hypocrites? Is every type of birth control bad? Do some of them cause abortions? Is the sole purpose of sex procreation? If men and women really do think differently about sex, why did God make us that way? How does the Bible's view of sex differ from other religions (for example, Muslim martyrs get 70 virgins when they go to heaven)?

We need articles on a variety of issues, so don't feel limited to what's mentioned here.

You can send your articles via email or via regular mail to:

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Osama's Sister-in-law

by Christine Farenhorst

One of the reasons I took down the hardcover book entitled *Inside the Kingdom* with the photograph of a sultry beauty on the cover was because of the author's last name – Bin Ladin. For most of us in these last few years, that name has produced disgust as well as a certain measure of curiosity. I turned the pages as I stood in the library, began to read and, later, signed the book out.

Carmen, daughter of a Swiss Christian father and a wealthy Persian mother, grew up in Switzerland in the lap of luxury. She visited Iran, her mother's birthplace, from time to time, was treated like a little princess and basked in aristocratic life. Her parents eventually divorced and her mother retained custody over the four daughters, of which Carmen was the oldest. A Muslim in name only, Mrs. Sheibany did not practice that faith. Consequently, Carmen and her sisters, although taught to be proper young women, were educated in Swiss schools and not handicapped by strict Muslim conventions.

In 1974 Carmen met a boy named Yeslam Bin Ladin – a rich Saudi Arabian tourist visiting Geneva. Elegant, wealthy and good-looking, she fell head-over-heels "in love." They saw a great deal of one another and things became serious. She writes:

"Yeslam began involving me in his private life, introducing me to his extended family. He told me that he had twenty-four brothers and twenty-nine sisters. I couldn't even begin to imagine what that really meant in practical terms, and I suppose my shock showed on my face, because Yeslam assured me this was an unusually large family, even by Saudi Arabian standards."

Eventually Carmen and Yeslam became engaged. He took her to Lebanon for a trip. She was enchanted but wrote:

"It seemed like everywhere we went we encountered more of Yeslam's brothers. In Lebanon we met Ali and Tabet. Physically they were very different. Ali was tall, very Middle Eastern-looking; his mother was Lebanese. Tabet's mother was Ethiopian: he was black. It was only then that I realized that Yeslam's father had had twenty-two wives. Rather than let the implications sink in, I chose to see it as an exotic backdrop. I was in love, and this labyrinth of family ties was all just another hazy part of my wonderful romance."

The truth is that Islam permits a man to marry four wives. Most Saudi Arabians are content with one or two. There are a number of royal princes, or sheiks, however, and Yeslam's father Sheikh Mohamed was one of these, who add to the number of their wives on a regular basis. Sheikh Mohamed, as a matter of fact, was on his way to marry his twenty-third wife on the night he died – the night his private plane crashed in the desert.

Black wedding dress

Carmen said that she would marry Yeslam on the condition that he further his education. He agreed and both of them registered at the University of California in December of 1973. The wedding was scheduled for August 1974. Carmen went shopping, as many brides are wont to do, for a nice dress. It had a high collar, scalloped sleeves and was made of white organza. It came as somewhat of a shock to her when she found out that she would have to wear a black cloak overtop of her

beautiful dress, and that she would need to shield her face and body from the world around her in Yeslam's country. But Yeslam insisted.

"I bought thick black cotton and had it made up. The result was a heavy Persian veil, like a chador, not the thinner silk Saudi abaya. I didn't know any better. The thing was like a curtain, covering me from head to toe, so heavy it almost stood up on its own. It seemed. . . like wearing a disguise.

"Then Yeslam and I took the plane to Jeddah, with my sister Salome. (My Mother and my other two sisters followed us two days later.) Yeslam wore the white cotton Saudi robe called a thobe. . . I thought him ever more romantic in this. . . A few minutes before we landed Salome and I put on our veils. . . We were covered completely in thick black cloth. . . I looked over at Salome. It was a shock. She had no face.

"The heat was stifling. I could hardly breathe under the thick folds of my abaya. Every movement was slow and awkward. We came down the steps of the plane and my sister stumbled on the stairs. Everything spilled out of her beauty case, and yet nobody helped her up or picked up anything. She turned to me, a completely black triangle speaking and said, 'What is this place?' In Saudi Arabia no man could touch her or even come close."

The wedding, a few days later, had more of the same.

"I dressed. . . Over my white organza went that baleful, stiff black chador. . . A separate women's area had been prepared with jute screens to shield us

from the gaze of any passing, waiting or male guests. My eyes met a vast crowd of women. Only women; the men's ceremony was taking place elsewhere. . . Customarily, a wedding is the only occasion at which women do not veil their faces despite the presence of a strange man – the groom. Still, most women covered their hair with a light head scarf and a few wore the full abaya.

"Everyone smiled. . . A properly brought up Saudi is never openly rude – except to a servant. . . I was under intense scrutiny. I and my way of life were as strange to them as they were to me. I was a foreigner. I had been brought up in the West, with my face displayed to all. They had been born in the land of Islam's holiest sites – the homeland of the Prophet Mohamed. They believed they were the chosen guardians of the world's most sacred places. They were the chosen people. As I watched them watching me, all the new and strange and sometimes unpleasant experiences of those first days in Saudi Arabia struck me with full force. I was married now, to a man from a country that I now realized was very different from my own."

After their marriage Carmen and Yeslam returned to America to finish their education. But, upon Yeslam's graduation in 1976, they moved back to Jeddah. This time there was no return ticket for Carmen. But there was a little baby in her arms now – a little girl named Wafah. Carmen quickly understood that for women in Saudi Arabia most things were considered either "haram" – sinful, or "abe" – shameful. The rules were plentiful and, as the abaya covered her body, these rules covered her life. Her face could not be seen by a man outside the family; shopping was for servants. If she needed something, no matter how trivial or large the item, a driver would be instructed to search the stores for the required item.

"I needed activity. I needed to read. I longed for some stimulation of my mind, and my body. The two TV chan-

nels broadcast an imam chanting the Koran all day; for lighter fare, little boys as young as six or seven, who had won prizes for their Koranic knowledge, recited the holy texts from memory. Foreign newspapers were Magic Markered into fragments. Any comment on Saudi Arabia or Israel, any photo or advertisement showing even an inch of a women's limbs or neck was blacked out by the censors. I held them up to the light, to divine the forbidden words veiled by the censor's pen.

"There were no books. There were no theaters, no concerts, no cinemas. There was no reason to go out, and in any case we could not go out: I was not allowed to go for a walk, and legally could not drive. Much as I loved my role as a mother, taking care of Wafah was not enough to fill my mind and my days."

It was a blessing for Carmen that Yeslam was wealthy and, to a certain degree, broadminded. He took Carmen back to Switzerland for holidays. She loved those outings and was amazed at how much she had taken for granted in the past. But they were always outings and Jeddah always loomed on the horizon as the place to which she inevitably had to return.

The younger brother

Yeslam's father, Sheikh Mohamed had been born in Yemen. Dirt-poor, he had emigrated to Saudi Arabia in the 1930s and had begun a construction company. That company grew into the largest construction company in the Middle East. Close connections with the Saudi royal family also made it one of the most influential companies in Saudi Arabia.

Osama was one of Yeslam's younger brothers. Carmen only saw him a few times and wrote:

"As far as I know, Osama was always devout. His family revered him for his piety. . . The Bin Ladens were deeply proud of the Mecca shrine, like all Saudis. The Saudi form of Islam is the strictest form that religion can take."



In 1979 Osama left to go fight in Afghanistan.

A bit of Saudi history tells us that a desert warlord, Abdel Aziz ibn Saud, conquered and unified all of Saudi Arabia in 1932. Inspired by the teaching of a Muslim mystic named Wahab (1700s), Abdel Aziz ibn Saud, with a little help from the British, established a country which he gave his own name. As they were conquered, the Bedouin tribes in this vast area were all required to adhere to the strict Wahab Koranic rules so that, it was said, Mecca's holiness would be preserved.

Yeslam's father was presumed to be so pious by Abdel Aziz ibn Saud that his construction company was given the exclusive right to renovate Mecca and Medina. Consequently, all of Carmen's in-laws were very religious. None of the female relatives or acquaintances Carmen knew read anything but the Koran. They talked about the health of children and husbands but had no other knowledge or opinions on anything. In 1978 Yeslam and Carmen had a second child, another girl whom they named Najia. While Najia was just a tiny thing, Carmen met Najwah at a family gathering.

"My little Najia was a few months old, and Osama's wife, Najwah – a Syrian girl, the daughter of one of his mother's brothers – had a baby, Abdallah, who was about the same age. He was thirsty. Najwah kept trying to feed him water with a teaspoon, but it was obvious this tiny baby was far too small to manage to drink properly from a spoon. My little Najia was

“I hate”

In 1981 Wafah and Najia began school. Carmen watched them go with some trepidation. She was right to be concerned.

“At school, what those children met was a form of brainwashing. I watched it happen to my daughters. Lessons – Arabic, math, history – were learned by rote, parrot-fashion, with no deeper understanding of their real content. There were no sports, no debates, no discussions. No games, marbles or tricycles. Religious education was the most important class of all, and it seemed to take up half or more of every day. When Wafah was seven or eight, I remember, I looked through her exercise book one evening and I found she’d written down, ‘I hate Jews. I love Palestine,’ in her childish Arabic script. What was happening to my daughter? . . . The next day I went to the school principal and said, ‘My daughter doesn’t know where Palestine is. She knows nothing about Israel. She isn’t even doing geography yet. How can she be taught to hate when she doesn’t know anything about it?’ The principal, a small but imperious woman, was completely impervious to my protest. ‘This is not a matter for you to discuss,’ she told me, ‘You are a foreigner, you cannot understand. Does your husband know about this?’

“ . . . I didn’t care that Wafah got high marks in school: I knew that her teacher would always give a Bin Laden the best marks, whether she deserved it or not. Everything was glossed over that way. . . One day, exasperated, I met with her classroom teacher and told her I wanted her to treat Wafah the same as the others. A few days later, Wafah came home sobbing. Her teacher had hit her across the face. I went back to the teacher, not to make a big protest, but to say simply that I thought this was not the best method of discipline.irate, the woman said Wafah was a liar – she had never done such a thing. She asked the children,

‘Wafah is lying, isn’t she? I didn’t hit her, did I?’ But one brave child, another half-foreigner, raised her hand and said Wafah had told the truth. That poor little girl had a miserable time for the rest of the school year. . . I understood that my intervention in school was doing no good.

“ . . . At school, my girls learned the fear of hellfire. They began to worry about my soul. ‘If you don’t pray, Mommy, you’ll go to hell,’ Najia would say, staring up at me. . . It hurt me to see the worry in her eyes. I would say that my faith was a matter between God and me. That the most important thing was to behave in a way that helped others, and not harmed them. I told my little girls I didn’t want them to pray because they were frightened of hell. . . .”

Carmen did not have any real conception of what the ultimate Truth of God was. Had she known, she would not have married Yeslam in the first place. But consequently, she was unable to replace the pagan ideology her daughters were being taught with the Gospel Truth – the Truth that Jesus was the Way and the Truth and that no one could be saved from hellfire unless they went to God the Father through Jesus His Son.

.....
I have lived in the Bin Laden clan.

Carmen continued to worry about her daughters – understandably so. Would their lives eventually be even more controlled than her own life was? It nagged her increasingly much.

“Would my daughters marry a cousin, perhaps, in a family arrangement, and be delivered to him, mind and body, for the rest of their lives? . . . The word ‘Islam’ means submission. I had come to dread submission. I had seen too many women deprived of their children, their independence, their own minds. But if my girls were not submissive,

what lives would they have? It gnawed at me.”

Carmen saw clearer and clearer that Islam affected the everyday life of Arabs in Saudi Arabia. There was no getting away from it. Church and state were one and the Sharia, the strict Islamic law, was the constitution of Saudi Arabia.

In the 1990s, Osama, who had publicly condemned the decadent living of the Saudi royal family, went into exile in Sudan with a group of armed followers. Tanks guarded his compound there. Often Yeslam implied to Carmen that soon Osama’s star would rise in the Bin Laden family. Yeslam also became more domineering and sought out the company of other Saudi men. Carmen became pregnant once more and this time had the child. It was another baby girl who was named Noor. Yeslam now became unfaithful. Consequently, she separated from him while they were visiting Switzerland. A battle for the children ensued and Carmen was awarded custody by the Swiss courts. She wrote:

“Yeslam has ceaselessly harassed us with legal procedures. Twice I received frightening official letters from Saudi Arabia demanding that I appear before a court of law in Jeddah. When my lawyer asked for an explanation, Yeslam claimed that this was for a Saudi divorce. But I knew that he was lying – a Saudi divorce doesn’t require the presence of the wife. I believe that Yeslam charged me with adultery. In Saudi Arabia the sentence for that would be death. If so, he has cut me off not only from Saudi Arabia but from the entire Middle East. I am afraid to set foot in any Muslim countries that have close legal ties with Saudi Arabia because I could be extradited; and I would be at the mercy of a legal system that would be prepared to carry out a death sentence on an innocent woman. I fear for my life.

“My struggle to keep my daughters has made me stronger. But it seems to me that Yeslam has changed far more than I have. Or perhaps my husband was always cruel, self-centered, arrogant and dismissive: his

Saudi background simply caught up with him as he grew older. I was blind to reality, star-struck and foolish, imagining a love story. . . .”

In the end Carmen tried to analyze things.

“I have lived in the Bin Laden clan. I have analyzed the workings of Saudi society. And I fear for the future of the free world. My fear is based on my conviction that a large majority of Saudis support the extremist ideas of Osama Bin Laden, and that the Bin Ladens and the Saudi royal family continue to operate hand in hand. . . I cannot believe that the Bin Ladens have cut Osama off completely. I simply can't see them depriving a brother of his annual dividend from their father's company, and sharing it among themselves. This would be unthinkable among the Bin Ladens. No matter what a brother does, he remains a brother. It's certainly possible that Osama retains ties to the royal family, too. The Bin Ladens and the princes work together, very closely. They are secretive and they are united... Saudis don't openly argue with each other. Sometimes the thirst for power, greed, and material interests might separate the brothers in a family like the al-Sauds, or the Bin Ladens. But they are always brought back together by the bonds of their shared beliefs and religious convictions, and their upbringing.

“Osama Bin Laden and those like him didn't spring, fully formed, from the desert sand. They were made... Saudis are structured by a hateful, backward-looking view of religion, and an education that is a school for intolerance. They learn to scorn what is foreign. The non-Muslim doesn't count. Their mothers spoil boys into arrogance. . . . when they become fathers, their rule is law. When Osama dies, I fear there will be a thousand men to take his place. . . .”

In the end, Carmen openly despises the narrow view of Islam and applauds herself



for fighting to give her daughters what she calls “freedom of thought.”

Conclusion

Reading about Carmen's life, and the lives of those she describes, was extremely informative. First of all, it evoked a heartfelt thankfulness that Christians are free to worship God in the West, (for now anyway). Secondly, it taught that Islam is a wicked, dangerous way of life and totally incompatible with Biblical teaching. Thirdly, it kindled a renewed sense of evangelistic zeal not just for the far-away Car-

men and her daughters, but also for those in our own neighborhood who do not know God and who are in bondage to the devil.

The deprivations and box-like atmosphere to which Carmen was subjected is horrible. But there are box-like atmospheres in the West as well – box-like atmospheres of Phariseic, man-made rules and regulations, box-like atmospheres of idol worship in the form of TV, sport and self, box-like atmospheres of haughtiness and pride, and box-like atmospheres of... The list is endless. The real sorrow, however, for Carmen and her daughters was (and is) the fact that they have no real comprehension of what either freedom or slavery really means. John 8:31,32 reads: “To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said: ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’”

Nowhere in the pages of the book is there any hint that Carmen seeks the One True God. The hopeful news is, however, that in Switzerland, if she or her daughters are moved to open a Bible and are confronted by the God of salvation, they will not be executed for reading it. And should this happen and should the Holy Spirit move them, then perhaps, someday in the future, Carmen and her daughters will be truly free.

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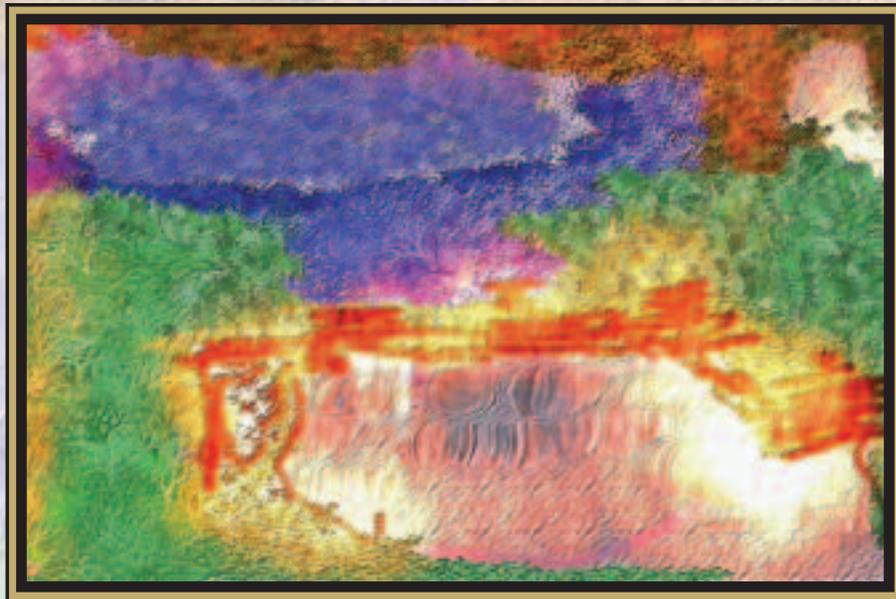
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WHY MODERN ART STINKS

Nowadays
it's all
about
getting
attention
rather than
capturing
beauty

by Michael Wagner



In art and literature a “classic” is generally considered to be a work that has been valued for its qualities over time. A number of generations have evaluated a particular story, song, painting, etc., and found it to be exemplary. No one doubts that Shakespeare, Mozart, and Michelangelo produced classics in their respective fields, for example.

Is there any classic art and literature being created in our generation? Some conservative critics say “no.” In their view the contemporary “cultural establishment” is too corrupt to produce anything worthwhile or enduring. Most modern art and literature is garbage. That’s why it stinks.

Great garbage

This view is expressed articulately by Bryan F. Griffin in his book *Panic Among the Philistines*. Griffin says that the current cultural establishment is too self-satisfied to recognize that its artistic products are lousy. Its members flatter each other over the value of their respective works, oblivious to their mediocrity. Among the artistic community the last few decades have been “an age bracketed by congratulatory self-delusion and defined by the proximity of its own horizons, an age when everything was Great precisely because

nothing was very good.” They were unable to see that their work was inferior to the art and literature of the past. And they could not “do better, because they did not know what better was: they really believed that they were the best of their time, and many of them believed that they were the best of all time.”

.....

***Shock value replaced
creative quality.***

.....

Like television and movies, an increasing amount of sex and violence became prevalent in the works of fiction writers. This was a common theme among those who were unable to generate genuinely creative material. “Writers with nothing to write about invariably start covering themselves up with sex and gore, if only because they realize, almost instinctively, that those two subjects can be described and ‘understood’ by otherwise hollow people.” Griffin defines this kind of hollowness as “vacuous ugliness” and states that it “was the inevitable fruit of the union of cultural democracy and widespread spiritual decay.”

Pablo shows them how

Interestingly, Griffin includes the famous painter Pablo Picasso among the crowd of mediocre twentieth century artists. As a young artist Picasso did not attract much attention. He apparently had some skill, but nothing to really distinguish himself. Then, however, he hit upon a method of “artistic extremism” that not only generated attention, but also turned him into one of the most famous artists of the century.

In this sense Picasso had discovered a route to fame that benefited not only himself, but other artists of the same ilk. “Picasso’s carefully calculated leap was a leap into self-conscious artistic extremism. It was a procedure that was to be repeated many times in the dreary decades to come: a young ‘artist’ of average or less-than-average talent works hard for several years, painting or writing or sculpting or composing, and attracting no attention; and then he discovers that he *can* attract attention (and money) by making a spectacle of himself, or his work (it doesn’t matter which) – and so he does.” Picasso cleared the path for artist wannabees who could become famous, not through genuinely creative talent and work, but by shocking people. Shock value replaced creative quality.

According to Griffin, Picasso became famous through a kind of marketing campaign by art dealers and critics. The middle class in Western countries was growing during the early twentieth century and a certain proportion of those people were interested in art. They constituted a potential art market that art dealers were eager to exploit. Picasso’s art was the kind of product that could be used to cultivate this emerging market. It was “just passable enough to attract the necessary squeals from the anxious professional critics, just reputable enough to be discussed with a straight face, just inscrutable enough to support the con.”

Thus Picasso’s fame resulted, in part, from the commercial success of art dealers promoting his material. “The Picasso name was quite deliberately developed over the years as a money-making commodity, as a way of ensuring a fairly constant supply of funds and popular respectability for an entire community of idle hangers-on.” Mar-

keting success prevailed over genuine artistic standards.

Preserve, if production impossible

It would likely be unreasonable to expect every age to produce great art. But the cultural establishment, even if it can’t produce great art, should at least preserve the memory and the standard of the great art that was produced in preceding ages. This requires, of course, that an artistic standard be recognized and defended.

.....
***Art was. . . art was. . .
 art was art, or
 something.***

But in a time of easy relativism such as ours, standards are hard to come by. And without an artistic standard, how can someone tell the difference between a masterpiece and a pile of garbage? Griffin notes the specific case of an editor who was having a hard time deciding which pieces of creative writing to publish. Without a standard he couldn’t tell whether any particular story was good enough or not. Griffin imagines the editor thinking that all the stories he had might be deserving of publication: “after all, there were no rules, were there? It was art, wasn’t it? And art was...art was...art was art, or something.” There has to be some kind of standard to determine what is genuine art.

Editing and publishing play a significant role in the cultural community, and

therefore editors and publishers are to a large degree responsible for the direction of artistic trends, especially with regards to literature. Griffin therefore castigates contemporary publishers for publishing the trash that constitutes modern literature. In assessing responsibility for the current sad situation, he says we should “blame these professional bookmen, who were to have been the guardians of their civilization, and became its assassins instead. And if the surviving executives gaze at you with hurt eyes and tell you that they were merely Reflecting A Sordid Culture, tell them that they weren’t hired to be mirrors of all that was sordid in man, but to be protectors of all that was fine.” By publishing trashy literature, publishers contribute greatly to the degradation and decline of culture.

It should go without saying that this is a generalization, and that there are publishers out there (for example Inheritance Publications) who only produce wholesome material.

A calling to get at it

As most conservative Christians would probably acknowledge, the current spiritual state of the world is very bad. Christian ethics and beliefs have been in steady retreat for decades. This is, ultimately, the reason for the low quality of modern art (if it is, in fact, art). “It was Goethe who observed that all great literature has been produced during ages of intense belief, and that an age of spiritual confusion can never produce genuine art.” Assuming this observation is true, there’s not much hope for art in our time. Unless, of course, some Christian artists are available to fill the void left by modern art.



GAY MARRIAGE 101

It’s definitely the issue of the day.

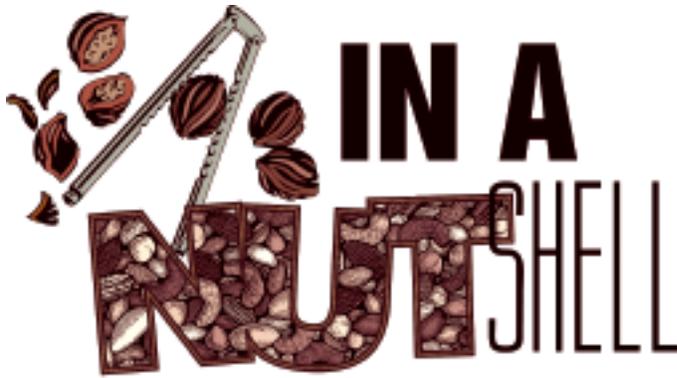
If you want to learn more you can check out the *RP* website where these four articles are posted:

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www.reformedperspective.ca



Tidbits relevant, and not so, to Christian life

by Jon Dykstra

Stupid for atheists and Christians alike

John Brown, the renegade from US history, had many addled ideas but at least one sensible thought. He said this about profanity: "It is not only wrong but foolish. If there is a God, what is to be gained by taking His name in vain? And if there is not, why ask His curse on anything?"

SOURCE: *Raising Holy Hell* by Bruce Old

Practice makes perfect

I have a friend who makes it a point of pride *not* to open doors for women. "Women are just as capable of opening doors as men," he says.

True enough, but my friend has missed the point of this little politeness. Gifted with greater strength and power, men could use their strength (and some brutes do) to dominate women. Proper Christian chaps in times past took a strong stand against this misuse and instead put their strength at women's disposal, doing so in many different ways: helping with chairs, giving up their seat on the bus, carrying packages, holding the psalm book at church and yes, opening doors for the fairer sex.

It wasn't that women were incapable – it was simply that men, instead of using their strength to harm, were practicing in every day life using their strength to help. They were engraining a habit, and modeling it to others, showing how gentle men behave. And since brutes con-

tinue to abound it's clear that men still need to practice and model this gentlemanly behavior.



Quote of the month

"People should know what they believe and why they believe it, and they should know what they don't believe and why they don't believe it."

– Dr. Glen Martin

Anagram arrangements

Sometimes the exact same letters can be used to say the same thing in another way, as happens in the anagrams below.

Astronomer: Moon starrer

The eyes: They see

The Morse Code: Here come dots

Slot Machines: Cash lost in me
Snooze Alarms: Alas! No more Zs
A decimal point: I'm a dot in place
The earthquakes: That queer shake
Eleven plus two: Twelve plus one
Butterfly: Flutter-by
Vacation Times: I'm Not as Active

SOURCE: Internet

The liberal version of generosity

by Jonathan Bloedow

I practiced some liberalism yesterday. I was buying some groceries at the supermarket yesterday. A little background: when you pay cash the change is dispensed by this little machine to your left. It's really easy to miss it and leave your change behind. I've done that before, and as I was leaving I noticed that someone before me had evidently done the same thing. (I paid with a debit card this time.)

Noticing that any previous customers were long gone, and also noticing a donation jar for Hurricane Katrina victims, presumably via the Red Cross, I took the 60 cents and – upon confirming with the Safeway associate that there was no realistic way to reunite the money with its owner – I placed the money in the donation jar.

I practiced generosity with someone else's money. It felt surprisingly good. . . I got to feel like I was helping someone and it didn't cost me a cent! It was a truly vicarious liberal experience.



Classy Connections

Some parasites really have their work cut out for them if they want to propagate

by Margaret Helder

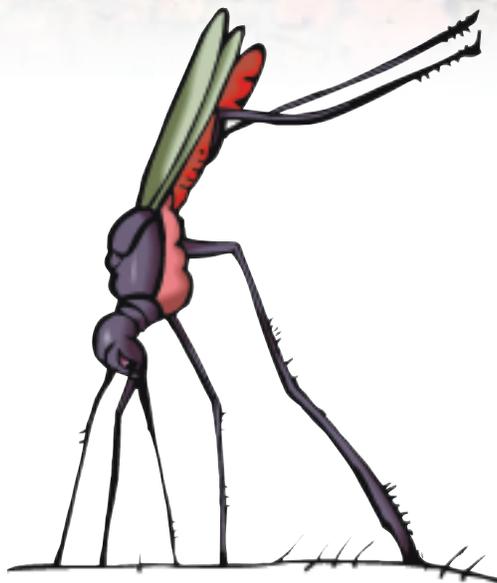
Influential environmentalists tell us that nature is interconnected. What they mean is that an impact, good or bad, on one population in an ecosystem, will affect the whole array of organisms.

There are, however, other ways in which organisms may be interconnected. One fascinating situation involves certain parasites or disease causing organisms. In several cases, a parasite passes through two entirely different kinds of host in order to continue its nasty parasitic existence. Not only are these situations fascinating, but biologists are mystified how these relationships could ever have developed.

It takes two

Malaria is probably the best known case of alternation of hosts. The blood from a person suffering from malaria cannot infect another person. A specific type of mosquito is required to further incubate and spread the disease. There are about 2500 species of mosquito which are grouped into various genera. These include *Aedes*, *Culex*, and *Anopheles* among others. It is the *Anopheles* mosquitoes which transmit malaria, but only 60 out of 380 species have this capability.

The disease agent is a tiny protozoan or single celled animal, really a kind of amoeba. When an infected female mosquito bites a person or a warm-blooded animal, she injects tiny amoeboid cells into the victim's blood stream. These amoebas invade red blood cells and multiply therein. The infected red blood cells burst all at the same time and more young amoebas invade other red blood cells. Every time such a release occurs, the victim suffers from fever and chills.



Malaria is hosted by both mosquitoes and humans.

After several such cycles, the protozoan develops a presexual stage suitable for transmitting to mosquitoes. When a suitable female mosquito drinks a victim's blood, the malarial parasites end up in her stomach. There sexual cells unite. These then penetrate the stomach wall. They multiply, producing huge numbers of slender spore cells which then invade the salivary glands of the mosquito. When this insect injects saliva into a victim prior to her next blood meal, the slender cells enter the human victim's blood stream and become amoeboid.

Thus we have the amoeboid stage and presexual stage in man, the sexual union and massive multiplication of spore cells which, when injected into another person's blood, become the amoeboid stage

again. Here we see that a single celled animal depends upon warm-blooded organisms and cold-blooded mosquitoes in order to complete its parasitic life cycle. In order to eliminate this nasty disease, the best procedure obviously is to control or eliminate the relevant mosquito populations.

The tea-fungi connection

The exploiting of alternate hosts by a parasitic organism is also found elsewhere in nature. Most fungi do not indulge in such fancy lifestyles, but there is one fungus group which does include parasites famous for their dependence on alternate hosts. The rusts include many highly specialized fungus diseases of plants. Some attack only a single host. For example *Hemileia vestatrix* attacks only coffee plants. The devastation brought about by this fungus on English coffee plantations in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and elsewhere during the late 19th century caused the British to switch to tea as their preferred beverage.

Some other rusts require two distinct hosts in order to complete their life cycle. As we saw in the case of malaria, the hosts exploited by the rust fungus are very different from each other.

One of the most famous rust diseases is *Cronartium ribicola* or white pine blister rust. Pine (*Pinus*) trees, of course are conifers, non-flowering evergreens which reproduce by means of seeds borne in cones.

The fungus was apparently originally native to white pines in Asia. At some point centuries ago, plant collectors introduced diseased material to Europe. At the end of the nineteenth century, imports of infected white pine seedlings from Germany resulted in the establishment of the disease in

eastern North America. A few years later, ironically, North American eastern white pine seedlings were imported from France to Vancouver. Thus the disease became established along the west coast of North America too. Apparently at that time the Europeans had better plant nurseries than the North Americans, and so American plants were often propagated in Europe and then resold back to the new world. That was in the days before people from the Netherlands established plant nurseries throughout Canada and the United States!

The offspring of a tree and shrub

The story of white pine blister rust appears uncomplicated, but this is not so. The fungus, which grows on pine, cannot infect another pine tree or seedling. It needs an alternate host, namely flowering shrubs of the genus *Ribes* (currants and gooseberries). It so happens that *Ribes* species are native to Europe, temperate Asia and North America. Places where suitable white pine grow also tend to have currant bushes and/or gooseberry shrubs growing on the forest floor.

The disease cycle proceeds like this. During the late summer and early fall, especially when the weather is cool and moist, special fungus spores from *Ribes* leaves may be carried by the wind to white pine needles. These spores (called basidiospores) are delicate and survive only a couple of days. Ideally they encounter white pine within a few hundred meters. The spores germinate and grow through the needle into the bark. The fungus then overwinters in the pine victim. During the following summer, the fungus produces a swollen area in the bark. Late in that summer season, the fungus breaks through the bark. Sticky drops of sweet liquid from the fungus attract flies which inadvertently transfer special sexual cells. Following this sexual union, the fungus settles down for another winter. In the second spring, swollen white to yellow blisters appear where the sticky areas were formerly. These blisters are full of spores called aeciospores. The fungus on the pine keeps growing farther on the stem. It may kill a whole branch or a whole seedling.



Barberry bushes are but one step in the lifecycle of the wheat rust.

More and more aeciospores are produced season after season.

The aeciospores, however, cannot infect another pine tree.

White pine aeciospores can only infect a *Ribes* bush. These spores are tough and can spread hundreds of kilometers, carried by the wind. Once they light on a suitable *Ribes* bush, they invade the leaf. Within two weeks, orange uredospores (rust) appear on the bottom of the leaf. These spores infect more currants or gooseberry leaves.



In several cases, a parasite passes through two entirely different kinds of host.



In the fall, dark spores called teliospores appear instead of uredospores. When conditions are cool and moist, each teliospore produces a short club-like growth bearing four basidiospores. The basidiospores are delicate and short lived and can only infect pine. All fungus stages on *Ribes* die when the leaves drop off in the fall. Only in pine trees does the fungus survive the winter.

The obvious way to control this disease is to eliminate one of the hosts. Since white pine trees are very valuable, the prudent course of action is to eliminate *Ribes*. In central Canada and the eastern United States, this policy was vigorously pursued for many years. Several states banned the growth of cultivated *Ribes* species. Civic minded citizens sought out native plants and uprooted them. In recent years, such initiatives have become less rigorous, but they certainly helped. In western North America, however, the native shrubs are so common, and so hard to kill, that the initiative was soon abandoned and the blister rust continues to extend its toll.

Rusty wheat

There are other rusts with interesting host choices. In many grain-cultivating regions, wheat rust is the most famous disease to exhibit an alternation of hosts. The life cycle goes something like this. Thick walled teliospores overwinter on wheat stems. In the spring, each teliospore develops a tiny club like structure on which four delicate basidiospores are produced. The basidiospores, spread by the wind, land on the leaves of a small shrub called barberry (*Berberis*). There are native shrubs of this genus in most wheat growing regions. The fungus firstly develops sweet

sticky pustules on the barberry leaves. These pustules attract flies which inadvertently spread the sexual cells. Once sexual union is accomplished, the fungus vigorously develops aeciospores on the lower leaf surface. The aeciospores, unable to re-infect barberry, are carried by the wind to wheat stems. Subsequent growth on wheat stems and leaves results in large rust coloured areas releasing myriad uredospores. These can and do infect other wheat stems. Eventually in the fall, the fungus produces dark teliospores which overwinter on wheat stubble.

It might seem that if barberry bushes were eliminated, the fungus would likewise be gone. This program was indeed successful in some European countries. Similar programs were undertaken in North America. During the 1930s in the United States, many jobless citizens were employed in barberry eradication programs. There were still barberry shrubs in Canadian gardens during the 1950s, but later they too were rooted out. Within the past 4-5 years however, new resistant cultivars of barberry (from Japanese stock) have appeared on the market. These attractive small shrubs are quickly becoming popular.

In view of the immense importance of wheat to the Canadian economy, this country has devoted a lot of money to research rust fungus. Eliminating the alternate host (barberry) unfortunately did not result in control of the disease in North America. Non-hardy rust colored uredospores are able to survive the winter in the southern United States. This is a repeating stage

which is able to re-infect wheat. Thus the need for an alternate host is bypassed. As the warmer weather moves north each spring, the uredospores proceed northward on native grasses.

.....

This fungus caused the British to switch to tea as their preferred beverage.

.....

It was a Canadian, John Craigie (1887-1987) who in 1927 discovered the function and significance of the sexual stage in rusts. This man spent much of his career researching the 200 or so physiologic races of wheat rust. Some strains of wheat are resistant to certain fungus strains, but not to all of them. It is the task of the plant breeder to predict which strains will be most prevalent in a given year, and to develop wheat cultivars resist to those fungus strains. Naturally this is a research program that never ends!

Worms aplenty

No discussion of alternate hosts could be complete without mention of worm parasites. Among human diseases, schistosomiasis ranks third after malaria and AIDS. This disease is caused by a tiny flatworm parasite. The problem is common in 74 developing countries, with the vast bulk of

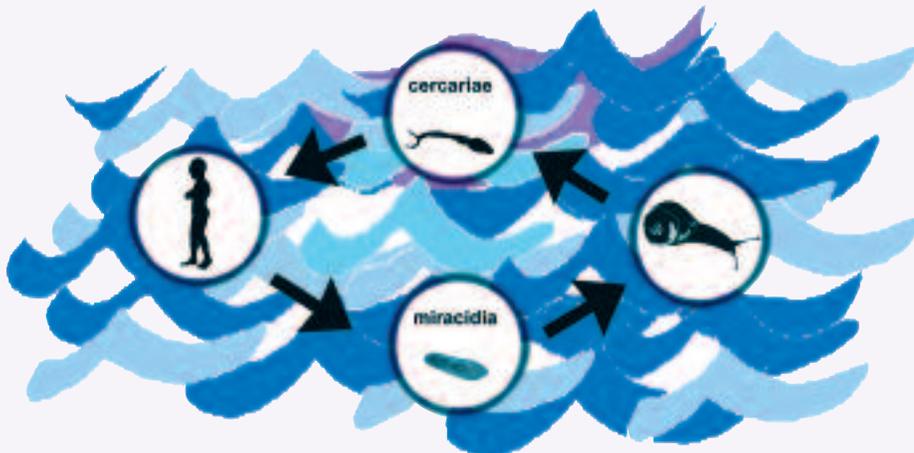
victims living in sub-Saharan Africa. The disease renders victims lethargic, with stunted growth and often reduced mental capacity. The male worm is flat and the female worm nestles up against the male. The pair lodge in a person's blood vessels of the intestine or bladder wall. The female releases perhaps thousands of eggs per day. Inadequate sanitation results in many of these eggs ending up in bodies of water in which people wash, swim or work in irrigation projects.

The eggs from the worms cannot infect more human victims. Instead, the eggs hatch into tiny swimming structures called miracidia. These need to find a suitable snail host within 8-12 hours or they will die. Each worm species is able to infect only one particular genus of snails. Inside a suitable snail host, the miracidia develop into many cyst-like spores. After two months, the spores develop into forked tailed swimming structures called cercariae. Invisible to the naked eye and released in their thousands, cercariae need to find a human victim within 48 hours. Successful cercariae burrow through the skin to a blood vessel and from there they move to the intestine or bladder. Some may get lost and land in the brain, heart or liver, often with fatal consequences for the victim.

Obviously, as well as improved sanitation, control of the alternate host is the most promising control measure. Faster flowing water with fewer places for aquatic vegetation, definitely reduces the prevalence of the snails and thus of this parasitic disease in humans.

Conclusion

Fascinating as all these stories are, the really interesting question is how each of these parasites came to exploit two highly different hosts in one life cycle. While few of us would be sorry to see these parasites disappear, we must admit to a grudging respect for such ingenuity. Who of us would have the imagination to even conceive of such systems? "Ingenuity" of course is a characteristic of intelligent agents, not of random processes. Blind processes never exhibit planning or design skills. It is evident that these life histories were designed.



News Bites



Now that gay-marriage is a reality in Canada, **EUTHANASIA IS NEXT** on the agenda. Bill C-407, up for first reading at the end of October, would make it legal for physicians to help people kill themselves. . . . A statement signed by 100 physicians and lawyers protests the bill and notes that legalizing assisted suicide would “put immense pressure on those who, due to illness or disability, consider themselves to be a burden to relatives or society.” . . .The statement also quotes Wesley J. Smith from his book *Final Exit*: “Dutch doctors have gone from killing the terminally ill who asked for it, to killing the chronically ill who ask for it, to killing the depressed who had no physical illness who ask for it, to killing newborn babies because they have birth defects, even though, by definition, they cannot ask for it.” . . .The *Euthanasia Prevention Coalition* has launched a website with the intent of fighting Bill C-407 by letting Canadians know what it is all about. The site’s address is www.StopBillC-407.com.

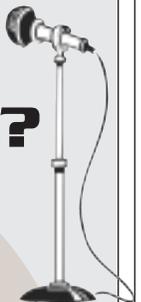
The very first “National Porn Sunday” took place in the United States on October 9. No, it’s not what you think – the day was marked not in seedy bookstores but rather in hundreds of churches across the nation and was aimed at equipping and prodding churches to deal with the scourge of pornography. . . . Organizers of the event www.xxxchurch.com offer a free tool on their website to help Internet

users **FIGHT THE TEMPTATION OF PORNOGRAPHY**. The tool, called X3 Watch, is downloaded onto the user’s computer and from that point onward sends a list of the websites you’ve visited to an “accountability partner” you’ve chosen. The end effect is that there is always someone who knows everywhere you’ve been on the web. And if you stray they will be there to question and confront you, at least if you’ve picked a *good* accountability partner. Be forewarned, this group has a very weird sense of humor, calling their website the “#1 Christian Porn site.” . . .A better but costlier version of the same service is offered by www.covenanteyes.com. It works out to about \$75 US a year, but they also have group pricing for businesses and schools.

Since the election of Pope Benedict XVI, **CATHOLICS HAVE BEEN SPEAKING OUT** with far more clarity and volume on divisive issues. The Vatican’s recent moves include banning homosexuals from being priests, condemning gay marriage in Canada and Spain and making it clear that women cannot become priests. . . . In Canada LifeSiteNews.com reports that a Catholic Member of Parliament, Charles Angus, was denied communion by his priest because Angus had voted for gay marriage. This is one of the first times a Catholic politician has been disciplined for voting in a clearly anti-Catholic manner.



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(politics)

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Kene Vermeulen
(unions, politics, church history)

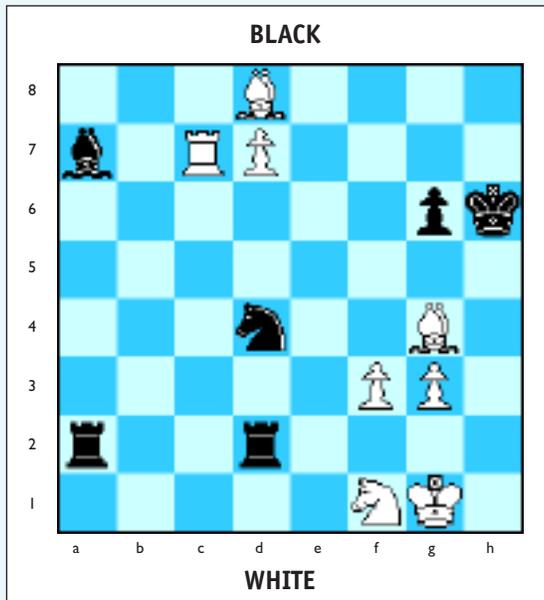
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Chess Puzzle # 115



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

NEW PUZZLES

Riddle for Punsters #115 – "Oats with Oars?"

The frustrated prairie farmer said to his neighbour, "Our fields have been so flooded with rainwater this year, I'm thinking that instead of canola I should have planted c a n"

Problem to Ponder #115 – "Active Activities?"

A poll involving students was taken at John Knox School. The students were asked if they participated regularly in three types of activities: imaginative (reading, including Bible study), active (sports) or passive (TV watching, including video games). Of the ones polled, 49 were TV watchers, including 6 who only watched television, 24 who only did TV and reading, 7 who only did TV and sports, and the ones involved in all 3 types of activities. Also, 55 students were involved with sports, including 10 that only did sports. Finally, 77 students were readers, including those who also did sports, or TV, or both.

- How many were involved with all 3 types of activities?
- How many were involved only in sports and reading?
- How many were involved only with reading?
- How many students were polled? (HINT: The total is NOT 49+55+77, since some students would then be counted two, or even three, times.)

SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (SEPTEMBER) PUZZLE PAGE

Answer to Riddles for Punsters #114 – "Can You ConFURm that Order?"

Not only did Mrs. Grizzly buy a new f u r coat, she bought brand new f u r n i t u r e, had her new curtains u n f u r l e d, had a high efficiency f u r n a c e installed and made even f u r t h e r changes to her home. When Mr. Grizzly saw the bills he said to her, "This time you have gone too f u r!"

Answer to Problem to Ponder #114 – "Symbolic Operations – Continued"

Problem to Ponder #112 used these symbolic operation definitions:

$A \nabla B = A^3 - B^3$ and $A \square B = A^2 + AB + B^2$ where AB means "A times B" and $A \odot B = AB - A - B$ and $A \oslash B = 10(A^2/B) - 5(B^2/A)$

a) Show that $[5 \odot 2]^2 + 5 \odot 2 - 5 \nabla 2 = 5 \square 2 \div 5 \odot 2$

$$5 \odot 2 = 5(2) - 5 - 2 = 3 \qquad 5 \odot 2 = 10(25/2) - 5(4/5) = 125 - 4 = 121$$

$$5 \nabla 2 = 5^3 - 2^3 = 125 - 8 = 117 \qquad 5 \square 2 = 5^2 + 5(2) + 2^2 = 25 + 10 + 4 = 39$$

Thus, **Left side** = $[5 \odot 2]^2 + 5 \odot 2 - 5 \nabla 2 = 3^2 + 121 - 117 = 13$

and the **Right Side** = $5 \square 2 \div 5 \odot 2 = 39 \div 3 = 13$

So **Left side** = **Right Side** as required.

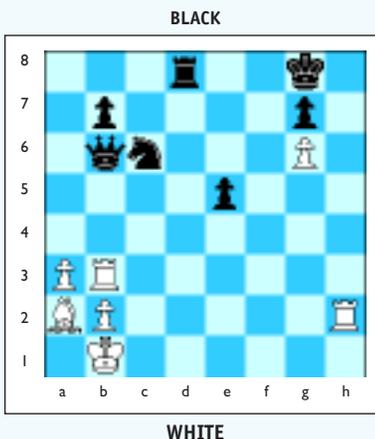
b) Determine the value of $5 \odot [7 \square 3 - 3 \nabla 7]$

$$5 \odot [7 \square 3 - 3 \nabla 7] = 5 \odot [(7^2 + 7(3) + 3^2) - (3^3 - 7^3)]$$

$$= 5 \odot [(49 + 21 + 9) - (27 - 343)]$$

$$= 5 \odot [79 - (-316)]$$

$$= 5 \odot [395] = 5(395) - 5 - 395 = 1975 - 5 - 395 = 1575$$



SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 114

WHITE to Mate in 2
(Note mate in 3 is also possible)

Descriptive Notation

- R-R8 ch KxR
- R-R3 mate

OR

- R-KB3 ch R-Q4
- R-R8 ch KxR
- R-B8 mate

Algebraic Notation

- Rh2-h8 + Kg8xh8
- Rb3-h3 ++

OR

- Rb3-f3 + Rd8-d5
- Rh2-h8 + Kg8xh8
- Rf3-f8 ++

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

- _____ Q-N8 ch
- K-B2 Q-Q8 ch
- K-B3 Q-Q6 mate

Algebraic Notation

- _____ Qb6-g1 +
- Kb1-c2 Qg1-d1 +
- Kc2-c3 Qd1-d3 ++

Crossword Puzzle

Series 13, No. 5

Last month's solution
Series 13, no. 4

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

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14					
	S	W	O	O	P	S		B	E	H	A	V	E							
11	R		12	E	R	R		R		13	A	R	E	N	A	14	C			
	E		15	A	C	A		16	R	I		17	W	A	R	S	T	18	L	E
19	P	20	T	A				A		21	R	N	S		22	W	I	L	L	
23	A	S	H			24	S	H		25	A	H			26	D	E	C	A	L
27	S	L	E		28	E	P			29	L	E	A	N		30	R	A	M	A
33	T	E	R	R	A			34	L	O	D	E	N		35		36	N	A	R
				37	A	D	Z	E		39	H	O	O	40						
41	R	42	P		43	E	A	G	L	E		46	R	E	47	P	E	L		
50	E	C	A	D		51	P	E	A	R		53	S	N	A	R	E			
54	V	I	S	U	M			55	M	E	R	E		56	R	I	A			
58	E	N	T	S		59	E	B	B		60	O		61	U	S	E	S		
62	A	G	I	T	A	T	E		64	M	E		65	T	R	O	E			
L		66	M	E	A	N	T			A		67	I	N	N		S			
	68	T	E	R	R	A	E		69	D	R	E	S	S	Y					

ACROSS:

- Flutter quickly
- Sore throat infection
- Plural of 'os'
- Lady's and/or hurricane's name
- Sports place
- Sharp
- American (abbr.)
- Public vehicles
- Janet _____, former US Attorney General
- Fall vegetable
- One way to prepare veggies
- Shoe parts
- Chatters
- London Commodity Exch.
- Carry by hand
- Heavily treed area
- Sandy area
- Family relation
- Image (comb. Form)
- Angers
- Groups of three
- British pantry
- Digital End-Speed Indicator (abbr.)
- Series (abbr.)
- Early, archaically speaking
- Former Cdn. Prime Minister
- A smokeless explosive powder
- Young goose
- S-shaped molding
- More strange
- Finished
- A talk with God
- Inclined, in Britain
- The seed of a vetch
- Slippery fish
- Lady's name, or Cdn. Mtn in Jasper
- A state of agitation

DOWN:

- Draws a sail tight
- The Hawaiian name for seaweeds
- Article
- Protective covering
- Shiny material
- Translation (abbr.)
- A variety of rabbit, or cat
- Isolate
- Glue
- Gumbo ingredient
- Appear to be
- Samoan money
- Cell part
- Show of affection
- Punta del _____
- Month
- Fall veggie
- Arnold, to his friends
- Greek letters
- Type of willow tree
- Marine birds
- Build
- Oily or greasy matter
- _____ the season
- Computer word
- Mao _____-tung
- City & port N. Timor
- Family members?
- Gave cloth or leather a certain finish
- A ruler
- Range of operation
- Maize meal porridge
- Direction
- Bird
- Monster
- Not fake
- Ruling official of the Ottoman Empire
- Many
- A 'Terrible' Russian csar
- Italian founder of "Fathers of the Oratory"
- Variant of "Tai"

