

REFORMED

Perspective

A MAGAZINE
FOR THE
CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

Letter to the Editor

Who will speak for imbeciles?

Dear Editor:

I really appreciated Stephen Thorning's article Friday, June 23, 2001 regarding slot machines and their history in the early years of this century.

Thorning reiterates the statement that slot machines and gambling are a tax on the poor, and he quotes an old Scottish statesman of 150 years ago stating that gambling of any kind is "a tax on imbeciles which has been repeated in varied forms ever since."

The British government knew of the socially destructive aspects of gambling and its tendency to aggravate poverty

However, our society walks steadily off the cliff of morality and thinks it's the other person's right to destroy themselves and their families if they wish. Most don't know they are on a road that is headed for destruction or disillusionment.

Even our government promotes gambling. So, are we all selfish and uncaring? Who will speak for the imbeciles of our time? Will you? Can they? Are you your brother's keeper? Does being politically correct mean that you don't care

social destruction anymore? Friends, write your politician today!

Irma D.

Support for tax

RP's Letter Writing Contest: THE RESULTS

Letter Writing Lessons

The best tips compiled from more than 50 entries to RP's "Write Right Now" contest

Editorial

Jon Dykstra

Some things are so good they have to be shared. In this issue we share with you the three top entries on pages 16-17 – the winners – of *Reformed Perspective's* "Write Right Now" contest. We share with you here the collected wisdom of the dozens of writers who entered the contest. Everyone who sent in a letter was asked to include a line or two on anything they may have learned while they were writing, and it turns out that quite a number of lessons were learned.

Proverbs 27:17 notes that, "just as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." What follows is material to sharpen all of us – those who are already writing letters, and those who are still working their way up to it.

Variety of topics

The vast majority of the letters were addressed to newspapers, though President Obama and Oprah were also favorite addressees. The topics covered a wide array, including BC's Corren Agreement (whereby two homosexuals were allowed to rewrite BC school's curriculum to make it more "gay-friendly"), the war in Iraq, the threat of a coalition federal government, human rights commissions, and a bizarre advertising campaign for Capital One that had the devil endorsing their credit cards. Abortion was the most common topic, and rightly so as this is the biggest political issue of our time.

But while the topics were diverse, the lessons people learned were often of a similar sort.

Lessons learned

Easier to have an impact locally

Several writers submitted their letter to both the closest big city newspaper and their local smaller one. While the bigger newspapers only printed the occasional letter these writers found that their local newspapers were far more likely to print their letters. One regular letter writer gets almost everything he submits printed in his local area papers.



A similar lesson was learned by Canadians who wrote President Obama. At the time they sent in their entries, none had heard back. Our own prime minister, however, has a good reason to respond – he wants our vote. It seems here too, writing locally makes it easier to have an impact.

We need to do more encouraging

Out of the more than 50 entries, only three were letters of encouragement, thanking people for a job well done. Far more common were letters of complaint, chastising Members of Parliament or columnists for things they had done wrong. While our complaints need to be heard, I think these numbers make it clear we could do with a lot more encouraging. There are politicians out there doing good work – we need to support them.

And, as one letter writer learned, it can be a good idea to offer encouragement publicly. When Washington State recently decided to allow physician-assisted suicide one hospital announced that they would have no part in the killing of their patients. So this lady sent the hospital a note thanking them for their stand. But she later noticed that someone had, in the local paper, complained about the hospital's stand. In hindsight she wondered if she should have sent her letter to the local paper instead, to offer her support in a more public way.

An editor makes any letter better

Several writers mentioned how helpful it was for them to have a second set of eyes looking at their letter before they sent it off. Behind every good writer is an editor who's willing to offer constructive, no holds barred, criticism. Editors need to not only point out any problems with the grammar and writing, but point out any flaws in the logic – it's so easy to write something that makes perfect sense to us, but to no one else. Taking criticism can be a painful process, but if you're not willing to subject your writing to constructive criticism it will never be as powerful as it otherwise could be.

Spouses seemed to be the editors of choice, but that may not be the best choice for everyone.

Mass doesn't beat punch

Finally, the best letters in the contest were from writers who contented themselves with making one point well. Sometimes that took just a hundred words, and sometimes it took several hundred, but as long as the writer kept things simple – just one main, strong point – the letter was powerful. While it can be tempting to try to back up one good point with another, letters that had multiple points most often lost focus, and ended up being a compilation of several weaker points. And weak points, no matter how many are included, can never make up in the sheer mass of them what could have been accomplished with just a single stronger point.

This is probably the most important lesson of all – to keep things simple and focused.



What's Inside

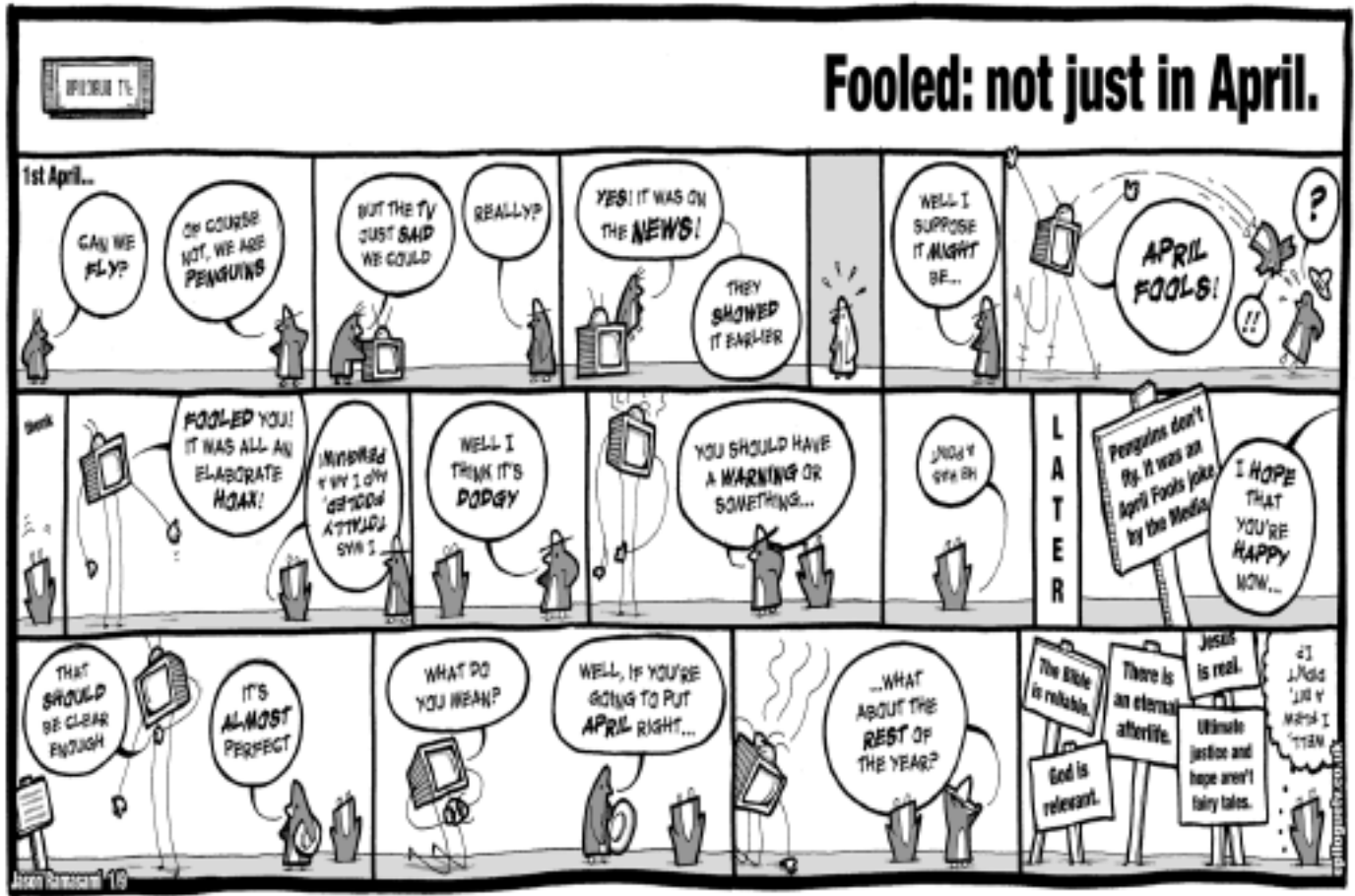
The scores have all been tallied, and the results are in! This issue we are happy to present to you the **three winning entries in RP's "Write Right Now" Letters Contest.** These three were the best of a very good lot – in the end we received more than 50 entries from around the world, and across the generations. It was encouraging to read again and again how the Reformed community is impacting our local communities by speaking out via letters. Along with the winning three we have an editorial on the facing page chronicling the collected wisdom of the other entries. Many of the writers were doing this for the very first time, and the lessons they learned will help you write better letters too.

In this issue we also feature an **assortment of movie reviews**, some of documentaries available on DVD that would make good additions to any church or school library, and others of movies that are available in their entirety online. After taking a look at these online videos you might be inspired to cancel your cable – there are just so many worthwhile videos available online, any time.

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Nota Bene

News worth noting

by Sarah Meerstra



Goodnight to Las Vegas?

Even a downturn in the economy can have a silver lining – the bad economy may just do in the American gambling industry. The *Wall Street Journal* is reporting that the United States' 18 largest casino companies are being crippled by the more than \$65 billion they have in long-term debt. "Casinos on average now owe \$7 of debt for every dollar they project to earn. Some of the

industry's high rollers such as Harrah's Entertainment and Las Vegas Sands owe \$9 for every dollar of projected earnings." One analyst with 35 years of experience said that he had never seen it so bad for casinos.

by Jon Dykstra



ARPA on the Hill

Canadian Reformed minister and professor Dr. Cornelius Van Dam broke new ground when he was able to make a presentation to Canadian Members of Parliament (MPs) this March. The event, organized by the Association for Re-

formed Political Action (ARPA Canada) and sponsored by Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott and Liberal MP John McKay was based on the theme "God & Government: A Biblical Perspective on the Role of the State."

The event, which was attended by 15 MPs, one senator, various parliamentary staff members, and leaders of several pro-family organizations was well received and generated positive discussion between Dr. Van Dam and the MPs.

Although the Prime Minister did not attend the event, a transcript of the presentation and discussion was provided to him by one of the MPs in attendance. The Lord willing, ARPA will continue to grow in influence on both a grassroots level, and among the leaders of our country.

For more on this event see www.ARPCanada.org.

How did they vote?

In a move supposed to increase transparency in government and enhance democracy, MPs' voting record in the House of Commons will be posted on Parliament's website for the first time.

Liberal MP David McGuinty is a supporter of this move, saying,

"Anything that drives up transparency is a good thing for Canadian citizens; it will also then force Canadian citizens, I believe, to examine not just how MPs voted but the rationale behind their decision to vote one way or another. Way too often advocacy campaigns and the views of our citizens are very black and white and I think this will compel them to understand that behind these decisions to vote one way or another is often a very strong rationale based on policy, based on values, based on all kinds of factors and I think that that will help promote an understanding of how Parliament works and how MPs weigh their decisions to vote one way or another."

One critic, however, points out that usually MPs vote along party lines and when they don't it's the exception and it becomes a national story.

"If you are going to try to tell if your MP has an independent mind," he says. "Generally you won't see that pattern from any MP because their party leader can refuse to sign their nomination papers in the next election and they all know that and that threat hangs over their entire political career so they usually show up when their leader says show up and they don't show up when the leader says don't show up. So I think most Canadians know that already, they don't need the registry to show them that it is a major problem."

There already is an independently run website, www.howdtheyvote.com, which shows how MPs voted in the House of Commons. It's founder, however, is supportive of this move, saying that it should be the role of the government to provide this information.

Source: *The Hill Times*, February 23, 2009

(Re)building the Ark

A Dutch carpenter has created a half-scale model of Noah’s Ark. Visitors have been coming to see Johan Huibers’ replica of the ark since 2007. While there, they are able to see the cages inside with life-size animal models made of polyester, watch videos illustrating Noah’s mission, and enjoy displays which include a “flood demonstration” for children, and such things as the walls of Jericho, a Galilean fishing boat, and the empty tomb of the Lord Jesus, to put the whole biblical picture in perspective for the visitors.



Huibers’ intention, however, was to do more than create just another tourist attraction. Visitors to the ark are confronted with Biblical truths. “The people in the Netherlands have to be reached by the Gospel. That is the aim of the “Ark” says Huibers.

“In the past most people went to church and heard the Word on Sundays. Now they don’t go to church anymore, so to reach them, God uses other means. If they don’t come to church anymore, we bring the people the gospel in their own environment”

Source: Creation Ministries International

More progress with adult stem cells

Adult stem cell treatments are continuing to prove effective. In one case, a 2-year-old girl born blind experienced a restoration of sight after undergoing experimental treatments involving adult stem cells from umbilical cord blood. After only 3 weeks of treatment, the child was able to track moving objects with both eyes and to recognize people and objects without first touching them. The doctors performing the treatment

Man run over – still saves child from abortion

An unlikely and unfortunate incident at an abortion clinic in New Jersey may actually have saved the life of one unborn child. A lone protestor outside the clinic was run over by a man driving to the clinic to have an abortion performed on his wife. The man’s wife arrived on the scene shortly after the accident and reports that her conversation with the couple changed their mind about having an abortion.

“I thought, ‘What would Jesus do?’” she told *LifeSiteNews.com*.

“So I walked over and I said, ‘. . . I forgive you for hitting my husband.’

And he said, ‘Oh, I’m so sorry,’ and his whole face just changed. Then I said: ‘I want you to look at me in the eyes. I’ve been where you’re at, and I can tell you my husband also forgives you, and he probably wants me to tell you that if one broken leg would save your child, he would do it over again. You should know that God has something in store mighty for you, and you should take this as a sign from God.’ And he said, ‘I know, I know.’ And they never went in [the abortion centre].”

She recalled that she embraced both and exhorted them to “think about this child now.” The victim suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

New pro-life tactic in the Netherlands

The Dutch pro-life organization Cry for Life has generated considerable controversy with its plan to distribute models of a 10-week-old fetus to all homes in the Netherlands, along with a pro-life information packet. The secular Dutch press has condemned this plan, calling it hurtful to women who have had abortions or miscarriages, or who could not conceive. The government refused to distribute the models to its representatives, saying that they would be destroyed if not reclaimed.

Cry for Life Leader Bert Dorenbos wrote to the Chair of the House of Representatives complaining of the lack of

democratic freedom. He noted that Cry for Life would continue to spread the truth about the life of the unborn in this “once so Christian country of tulips and windmills” where now there are one hundred abortions a day.

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*, February 5, 2009



are themselves surprised by the remarkable results, although other doctors warn that the treatment is unproven and its lasting effects are not known.

Also using treatments involving stem cells from umbilical cord blood, a 21-year-old man who was completely paralyzed in a motorbiking accident is experiencing remarkable results. Whereas previously he was paralyzed from the neck down, could not control his bladder, and had such low blood pressure that he would frequently

faint, he now can feel down to his chest, control his bladder, and his blood pressure has stabilized.

Although the treatments are still in the early stages, he and his family have high hopes that he will eventually walk again.

Both cases give further pragmatic support for favoring adult stem cell research instead of the fetal stem cells of aborted babies.

Source: *Victoria Advocate*, February 19, 2009

More than cold comfort

In a bad economy the communion of saints must be quick to comfort

by John Voorhorst

By now all of us know someone who has lost their job because of the slow down in the economy. Manufacturing is down. Auto sales are down. Home prices are down. The stock market is down. Investment portfolios are down. The only thing that seems to be going up is unemployment. Where does all this leave us?

Job's comforters

Some will be quick to say, "Trust in the Lord. He will provide." And that is true; I would never deny it. But think now of that young couple in your congregation who has two or three children, and a fairly new business they started some years ago because the husband could not readily find a job that left him free from having to join a labor union or where he was not required to work on Sunday. So he borrowed what he could and started his own electrical company. He started very modestly. It was just him, wiring some new homes for well-established general contractors. And over the last five years his little company grew until last year he had eight men working for him. And those men all have young families. And now, since last October, there has been no new work. Sure, he finished up a number of projects (for which he has not yet been paid) but hasn't been a single new contract signed since October of last year. In February he could just meet his payroll, but in March it will no longer be possible to pay his men – he has no choice but to lay them all off. And when he looks ahead to May he doesn't know if there will be any money left to pay his own salary. Have you spoken to that man? Do you know his pain?

When we look back over the last five years, it is easy for us to be armchair critics and say, "Well, if only he hadn't grown so quickly. He should have managed his growth better." Or, "If only he didn't taken on those contracts for that firm that declared bankruptcy last week. Then he wouldn't have had this large outstanding account." Or perhaps some say, "It will teach him a lesson. He was becoming somewhat arrogant and filled with his own success." That sounds a little like the comfort Job received from his friends.

What can we do?

No, there must be a better way. We as a communion of saints need to find a better way, and I believe we can. Together

we can learn how to help those among us who have been hurt by this massive downturn. Using God's word as the light on our path, we can seek solutions to these sorts of situations and learn how best to avoid them in the future. Of course this task can't be accomplished in just one short column, so we will leave talk of budgets and business plan, and investments strategies to future columns.

A clear first step

But first we need to deal with what is here today. Does the Bible have anything to say about this young couple's situation? How do we help people who find themselves in this kind of financial trouble?

Perhaps we would do well by beginning with the form for the ordination for elders and deacons in the *Book of Praise*. When the form addresses deacons we read the following:

"Also today the Lord calls on us to show hospitality, generosity, and mercy, so that the weak and needy may share abundantly in the joy of God's people. No one in the congregation of Christ may live uncomforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness, and poverty."

One of the Bible texts quoted in the form is Romans 12:13: "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." So it would appear that the very first thing we can do, no *must* do, is share generously with this man. Help him and his family without judging or condemning. If anyone wants to argue with this point, he should read Matthew 25:31-36. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. . . .'"

When our brothers and sisters are laid low, God calls on us to lift them up.

John Voorhorst is a Certified Financial Planner in Lethbridge, Alberta. In the coming months, using God's Word as our guide we hope to address a variety of financial topics including: budgeting, business plans, managing cash flow, hiring policies, and perhaps even investments and investment strategies. Next month: what we can learn from what's happened in the market.





Australia aflame...

Environmentalists to blame?

by Rene Vermeulen

I am writing this in February, and much has happened during that month. It has been full of disasters with floods in the Northern part of the country and severe fires in Victoria, Australia's second-most populous state, with more than 5 million inhabitants. Even as I'm writing it is becoming obvious that this bushfire will be regarded as the greatest natural disaster to befall Australia. The best guesses now say that more than 200 people died, with many thousands of homes destroyed and untold acres of bushland burned out. As the week has unfolded the horrifying stories about these fires became the order of the day.

Who is to blame?

For quite some years now there has been much opposition to an age-old Australian practice of reducing the fuel load of the forest floor by burning it in regular, small, managed fires. The eucalypt often referred to in Australia as a gum tree is part of the landscape. Each year it sheds leaves, bark and branches which, when dry, become highly flammable. When there aren't regular burns the forest floor can quick build up a mat of this flammable material that only needs a match to flare up and consume huge areas. A spark, coupled with high winds and searing temperatures can result in firestorms that are horrifying, to say the least.

The opposition to regular burning has come from the "greemies," the environmentalist to whom burning-off was wrong by definition. Those attitudes will have to come under examination for the future, simply because Australia is a country that can only be described as hot and dry, or as the Australian poet Dorothea MacKellar put it:

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.

Last week I attended a meeting where the matter of burning was brought up at a locale where it had been rejected repeatedly for years. This time, though, it was interesting that there was little opposition and it now seems that a well-organized burning program will take place once the worst of the hot weather is past.

All that has happened and is still happening led the Chief Officer of Victoria's Country Fire Authority to say that, "Australians living in the bush and in semi-rural suburbs must change the way they live or else risk dying in bushfires." Russell Rees, the chief officer, realizes that now is the time to act after years in which he and his workers were regarded as little better than vandals even though they had argued and warned what could happen.

And now it has happened in a massive way.

Water here and not there

All this is blamed on global warming but here opinions are divided. While there are many good arguments that global warming is happening – this can be experienced in lower rainfalls in many parts of Australia – it is interesting that in Western Australia there is little to indicate. For some 12 years I have been keeping records of daily rainfall, and all that I can say is that there has been no change in the rainfall. Some years have seen greater rainfall than others but overall it has been fairly steady.

What is concerning, especially in the bigger cities such as Perth, is that water usage is increasing. People buy bigger and more luxurious homes that also need more water to keep their gardens looking as good as Joe's down the road.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned the floods in the Northern part of Australia. If you look at a map of Australia you will see that the northern parts of Queensland, Western Australia and all of the Northern Territory have a tropical climate. Being tropical, the area is subject to cyclones – massive



downpours of rain and all that during the summer months. The result is that currently a large part of Queensland is under water and unless the water goes down rather quickly the bananas and sugar for which the state is known may be under threat of failure. At the time of writing this article it is still only the end of February so further cyclones are still possible.

Encouragement

Throughout Australia collections are being held to help those affected by the bush fires and floods. And, while the economy is feeling the downturn happening around the world, it is amazing how much is being collected to help those who have lost everything. Truckloads of clothing and home wares are being sent to Victoria to provide the basic necessities for those left with nothing. Millions of dollars are being collected to help people to build their homes again and get their lives back to normal.

As Christian believers we also pray that these people will find their real help before the throne of grace. That God's Word may lead many to where there is real help.



Five Lines FREE

COOKBOOK – Cornerstone Christian School in Lynden, WA has published a cookbook filled with award winning recipes. Cost: \$14 CAD or \$10.50 US (incl. postage). Discounts available. Contact S. Bareman at j-sbareman@comcast.net or (360) 354-3714

* * *

Consider a vacation this summer in the beautiful Rocky Mountains!

Emanuel Reformed Church in Denver is hosting another Summer Camp from August 14-17. For more info go to www.emmanuelarc.org/familycamp2009/

DO YOU HAVE AN EVENT GOING ON YOU'D LIKE TO LET EVERYONE KNOW ABOUT?

Let us know, and we'll post it here, in *Reformed Perspective's* new Five Lines Free column. If your Young People's, Ladies Aid, school, church or other non-profit group is selling cookbooks, hosting a speaker, putting on a rally, or staging a play you can post the details here.

Requirements:

- Ad should include information such as What, Where, When, How much and contact info
- Ad must be no more than 250 characters (and that's including spaces)
- Ad must be for events that go beyond the local – if it's just for your congregation you can advertise it in your bulletin
- this is for non-commercial groups (whose philosophy and worldview is in accord with that of *Reformed Perspective*, so we reserve the right to refuse any ad).

Send your requests to editor@reformedperspective.ca

Deadline for inclusion in the July/August issue is May 10.



Editor's note: When Reformed Perspective was invited to interview new Christian Heritage Party leader Jim Hnatiuk we wanted to follow the lead of the US media, and cover Mr. Hnatiuk in much the same way as the American media covers President Obama. Unfortunately we couldn't quite meet their standards – though our interviewer is the head of the BC CHP and really rather fond of Mr. Hnatiuk, Harold Ludwig is not prone to gushing or fawning.

Q: For RP readers who want to tell their friends there is a new CHP leader, how is your last name pronounced?

My name is pronounced: Nah – chuck

Q: What first made you decide to join the CHP?

After retiring from a career in the military I had the time to look at local, provincial, and national issues in more detail. I became troubled by: the lack of concern that governments exhibited for family matters; the waste of money and corruption in government; the size of government was getting too large and taking too much control; [and] that there was absolutely no law with regards to abortion in Canada. I had decided to start a new federal political party and was investigating to that end when I found out about the CHP on the Internet. After examining the CHP with a fine-tooth comb for two to three months I realized that a principled party did exist in Canada. I decided to join and work with it.

Talking to Jim Hnatiuk

Canada's Christian Heritage Party has a new national leader

by Harold Ludwig

Q: Why did you decide to run for the leadership of the party?

I was confident that the experiences and training that preceded my involvement with the CHP prepared me for the tasks and responsibilities of leadership. Such as: twenty five years military training. . . ten years of working within my local community as a volunteer helping youth and within my church in leadership positions. . . running as a CHP candidate in three elections. . . [and] serving as Nova Scotia CHP President and CHP Deputy Leader. With this under my belt, I felt the Lord's calling to run for the leadership. I would accept whatever outcome He was to provide.

Q: As the new party leader what are your goals over the next 2-3 years?

My goals for the party over the next three years are three-fold:

1. To unify the Christian political voice under one umbrella, the CHP. Years ago, Mark Twain said satirically, "If Christians should vote their duty to God at the polls, they would carry every election, and do it with ease." Mark Twain was a non-Christian and realized the immense potential of *one* Christian political voice. Christians must be made to understand that this is possible with the CHP.
2. To have the CHP portray itself in a manner in which our policies can be understood as viable, practical, and better solutions for the concerns and challenges that face our nation. That the CHP is political, committed, and determined.
3. To increase membership and support for the CHP. To equip our current membership with the tools and training to confidently share the good news about the CHP and to be excited to do so.

Q: Vince Lombardi once said, “Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing.” Canada is home to a large number of “Lombardi Christians” for whom it doesn’t matter how godly your policies are, or how ungodly the other parties may behave – they won’t vote CHP until and unless the party has a chance at electoral victory. What do you have to say to these voters?

These voters need to be shown how every vote and every new membership is a victory for the CHP. The *only thing* that threatens a political party is the loss of members and the subsequent loss of donations to another party. History has shown, that all the protests, debates, letters to MPs, having Christian MPs in other parties – none of these things have affected the changes most Canadians wanted. Nor will it ever. Mr. Morgentaler receiving the Order of Canada, the legalization of “same sex marriage,” bigger government, and ever higher spending, are all the result of this kind of hopeful thinking. If that is Lombardi “victory” I don’t want it. Only MPs with a political party that will support and encourage them to bring their convictions to the floor in the House of Commons will ever effect the change Christians want. The CHP is the only federal political party that offers this.

Q: What is the CHP’s answer to the current economic troubles? What is the government doing right, and what should it be doing differently?

The government should have used the CHP infrastructure plan to stimulate the economy. Low interest loans from the Bank of Canada, which is a government institution, to provinces and municipalities. The government stayed away from the large day-care facilities that were proposed by the former liberal government and provided for families instead – this was positive but they didn’t go far enough. The CHP Family Allowance Plan is what our families need today to truly build and support the family unit in Canada.

Q: What is your plan for winning the support or cooperation of other Christian political or social organizations to create a common front?

My answer to [your Lombardi question] is a big part of the plan. I have put together a Power Point presentation (which I continue to refine) which I will be taking across Canada to show to as many as will hear it. The presentation explains in greater detail the argument that I presented [to you]. Prayer Canada, under the leadership of Arne Bryan in Surrey BC, was privy to hear my presentation just last month. I trust that my presenta-

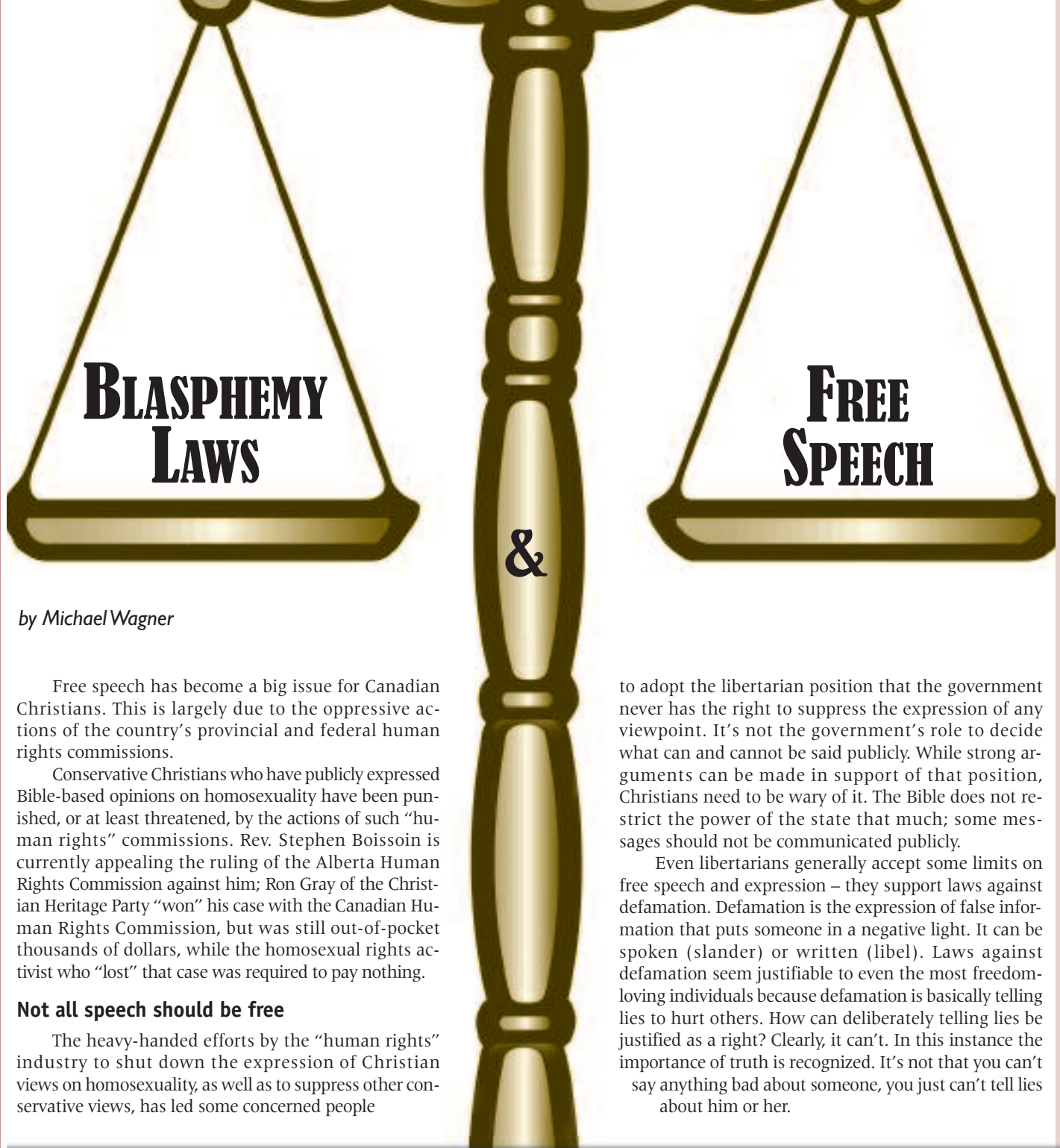
tion was influential in his recent decision [to back the CHP]. [Let me quote here from] my latest *Communiqué*:

“We at CHP Canada hope this will be the first of many endorsements from Christian organisations all across this land who realise that for biblically sound principles to be advanced in the House of Commons, they must come from a political party that is willing to openly defend those principles. The years of countless debates, protest, letters and phone calls are falling on deaf ears in the House of Commons. MPs didn’t listen after 15,000 marched on Parliament Hill in April 2006 in defence of traditional marriage and the 5,000 that marched at Queen’s Park in Toronto. There is only one thing that will open the ears and mouths of those in parliament and that is when they see growing support for another political party. The CHP thanks Arne Bryan and the approximately 5,000 members of Prayer Canada for their support. Our aim is to replace those now sitting in the House of Commons. The members of Prayer Canada can rest assured that CHP MPs *will* speak up and they will receive the much-needed encouragement and support of an entire team working behind the scenes for them on these important issues. This is not only a Better Solution – it’s the *only* solution”



BRIEF BIO

- Joined the Navy in 1970 and retired after 25 years of military service in the Combat Systems Engineering Department of the Canadian Forces, Jim attained the rank of Chief Petty Officer 1st Class and retired with a Certificate of Service and Canadian Declaration.
- Currently owns the largest hunting, fishing & taxidermy business in Nova Scotia.
- At the 2005 CHP Convention, Jim was named Deputy Leader while continuing to serve as Nova Scotia President, a position he had held since 2004. Jim has served three times as a CHP federal candidate in Nova Scotia.
- At the November 2008 CHP convention, Jim Hnatiuk was chosen as national leader.
- Jim is married to Ellen, his “support and constant companion for thirty-five years.” They are residents of Enfield, Nova Scotia, where Jim serves as a Deacon in his local church. They have a son and daughter and three grandchildren.



by Michael Wagner

Free speech has become a big issue for Canadian Christians. This is largely due to the oppressive actions of the country's provincial and federal human rights commissions.

Conservative Christians who have publicly expressed Bible-based opinions on homosexuality have been punished, or at least threatened, by the actions of such "human rights" commissions. Rev. Stephen Boissoin is currently appealing the ruling of the Alberta Human Rights Commission against him; Ron Gray of the Christian Heritage Party "won" his case with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, but was still out-of-pocket thousands of dollars, while the homosexual rights activist who "lost" that case was required to pay nothing.

Not all speech should be free

The heavy-handed efforts by the "human rights" industry to shut down the expression of Christian views on homosexuality, as well as to suppress other conservative views, has led some concerned people

to adopt the libertarian position that the government never has the right to suppress the expression of any viewpoint. It's not the government's role to decide what can and cannot be said publicly. While strong arguments can be made in support of that position, Christians need to be wary of it. The Bible does not restrict the power of the state that much; some messages should not be communicated publicly.

Even libertarians generally accept some limits on free speech and expression – they support laws against defamation. Defamation is the expression of false information that puts someone in a negative light. It can be spoken (slander) or written (libel). Laws against defamation seem justifiable to even the most freedom-loving individuals because defamation is basically telling lies to hurt others. How can deliberately telling lies be justified as a right? Clearly, it can't. In this instance the importance of truth is recognized. It's not that you can't say anything bad about someone, you just can't tell lies about him or her.

Blasphemy Q & A

RP: You argue that just as telling lies about people – defamation – is against the law, telling lies about God – blasphemy – should also be against the law. How might this work out practically? If, for example, an atheist and Christian debated, should it be against the law for the atheist to claim, "God is dead"?

Michael Wagner: Certainly not.

RP: But it's a lie about God.

Michael Wagner: The key here is to remember that it isn't just any lie we're concerned with, but, as Canada's old blasphemy law put it, "any profane words vilifying or ridiculing God, Jesus Christ, the Old or New Testament, or Christianity in general *with the intent to insult and shock believers or to hurt or mislead the ignorant or unwary.*" Intent is one of the key components, so people who are mistaken, sincerely in error, or simply on a search for truth would not get caught by this.

Lying about God

It is on this basis that the need for laws against blasphemy can also be justified. Basically, blasphemy is telling lies about God. If it is illegal to publicly tell lies about an individual human, shouldn't it also be illegal to publicly tell lies about God? Do men have more rights than God? The truth is to be protected by law, but falsehood has no rights, whether talking about other people or God Himself.

Of course, the mention of laws against blasphemy brings to mind images of irate Muslims rioting due to the Danish cartoons making fun of their false prophet, Mohammed. Isn't that what happens when people want to prevent the public expression of blasphemy? They go berserk, throw stones, and burn down buildings? Well, that's a very different response to blasphemy than what one can discern from the Bible.

A law we once had

Of course, Christian-based laws against blasphemy would simply be laws reflecting the third commandment. And since Canada historically had a generally Christian foundation, for many years there were laws against blasphemy here too. It may be hard to believe now, but a free country can have laws against blasphemy. If God is the ultimate source of our freedoms, and He is, then protecting His Name actually helps to preserve the freedoms we have. Once God has lost His privileged place in our society, it's only a matter of time before we lose the various benefits of a Christian-based society.

Canada's law against blasphemy was alive and well at least until the late 1970s, just 30 years ago. An article from the old *Saint John's Edmonton Report* (precursor to *Alberta Report*) dated May 26, 1978 is titled, "There are laws against blasphemy; so Albertans nixed a film."

Early in 1978 there was a European movie under production that was going to be called *The Many Faces of Jesus* or *The Three Faces of Jesus*. The director of the film made it clear that it would portray Jesus as vile and sexually immoral. A Social Credit MP from Quebec raised the matter in the House of Commons and this brought it to the attention of Canadian Christians.

Two Edmonton pastors, one evangelical and one Anglican, encouraged their congregations to embark on a letter-writing campaign that resulted in a federal ban on the movie because it was blasphemous. As the evangelical pastor, Gordon Quantz, explained, Section 260 of the Canadian Criminal Code forbade blasphemous libel, that is, "any profane words vilifying or ridiculing God, Jesus Christ, the Old or New Testament, or Christianity in general with the intent to insult and shock believers or to hurt or mislead [the] ignorant or unwary." That sounds like a pretty fine law to me. But it would clearly be found in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms today.

Conclusion

The point is that Canada had blasphemy laws for many years, even as it was one of the freest countries in the world. There is no need to see the presence of Christian-based blasphemy laws as a threat to genuine liberties. Laws against slander and libel aren't considered to threaten freedom. Blasphemy laws should be seen the same way.

The expression of truth should always be protected as a right. But the expression of lies should not be protected as free speech or expression. There is no "right" to tell lies about your neighbor, and there is no "right" to violate the third commandment and ridicule God. This is one area where the state has a legitimate responsibility to prohibit the public communication of certain messages.



RP: So we can tolerate errors, but not deliberate insults?

Michael Wagner: In a sense, yes – if someone like Richard Dawkins wrote a book saying "there is no God," that wouldn't fall under these provisions. He's trying to convince people of a philosophical position he believes to be true. What Dawkins is doing is very different than deliberately trying to "insult," "shock," or "mislead the ignorant."

RP: Then it's not so much what's said, as why it's said?

Michael Wagner: I think that intent is the key factor. We'll tolerate error from Dawkins, and the same would be true of

Muslims, or for that matter, fellow Christians, who say inaccurate things about God. Even young Reformed children will occasionally say incorrect things about God out of ignorance. Those comments can be corrected without punishment. But the case I mention in the article, about a producer making a movie to present Jesus as sexually immoral and vile is deliberately trying to insult, shock, mislead, etc. That's not a mistake or part of a search for truth. It's a deliberate attempt to stir up trouble and undermine the truth. This is the kind of thing that would be caught by the law. Intent is indeed the key.



The Flow of Words

by Jane deGlint

A flow of words can change the world. Even children sense this ancient truth. An outspoken youngster discovers quickly that a forward expression uttered inopportunely can land him in real trouble. On the other hand he learns equally fast that he can talk his way out of a predicament, be it by quoting extenuating circumstances or by passing the blame.

Manipulation with words has proven to be more powerful than the sword. The sword forces people into submission, but words have the power to propel people into propagating a lie. The history of the world provides many examples. It is well known that the propaganda branch of the Nazi party cunningly weakened people's discernment with cultivated lies. As result many endorsed and promoted the ungodly ideals of this evil movement.

No wonder then that linguistically inclined people can become very fussy about the way words are used. They are aware that the fluency of words often erodes proper use. Vigorously they hold up the banners of proper grammar and correct spelling. And rightly so. The gift of language should be treated with respect.

Yet, as a language flows through times and cultures, it adapts. Sometimes it picks up new words from a neighboring tongue. At other times it leaves behind an entire system of conjugation. The pronunciation of words is constantly streamlined in the rapids of speech. "Often" became "offen" and "interesting" occasionally sounds like "inneresting." Ultimately the linguistic experts can only describe how grammar and spelling evolve. Sometimes their prescriptions run out.

Whereas changes in spelling and grammar could be considered a specialty of experts, the involvement spreads to larger layers of the population when the meaning of a word is in jeopardy. How old do you have to be to remember that the word *gay* was actually used to describe a happy child? Interestingly, the word "gay" is now adrift. It has moved further downstream to take on the meaning "lame," as in "What? This is the gayest excuse I have ever heard!"

Furthermore, the politically correct have conditioned us to shiver at the words "Indian" and "Eskimo." And the war on gender discrimination has turned our good old postman into our letter carrier. Last but not least, there are a number of ex-

pressions that I have stopped using on the authority of my grown children. There comes a point at which it is the wisest choice to go with the flow. To use an outdated Latin expression, *Verba valent usu* – words receive their meaning through usage.

Yet, there is one very important aspect of words that should not change. We may never stop marveling at the miracle of language. It a miraculous gift, specifically created for mankind. People have the amazing ability to communicate practical matters and abstract concepts. They can articulate thoughts with words, and they can string these words into coherent sentences.

The gift of speech is directly related to the place of man in creation. As the image of the Creator man is the mouthpiece of creation. He can praise God for all the wonders of heaven and earth. But man is more than the mouthpiece. With his God-breathed soul he can communicate with the Almighty. He is able to understand why the Lord has placed him on this earth. It is his will to do God's will. Adam communicated with his Lord in the original language, which he spoke flawlessly.

As is clear from the creation account in Genesis, man spoke with God before he had received his wife. The relationship between God and man was established by means of language. This is the primary purpose of language.

The secondary purpose followed soon. In preparation for meeting Woman, Man sharpened his language skills by naming the animals. As he thus explored the gift of speech, he also became aware that he was not complete. He did not have a soul mate. As soon as the Lord presented him with Woman, he burst out in language that was not only directed at God, but also at his wife. His first words to her were a fountain of love. "You belong to me! You make me complete! Woman! You are mine!" There was perfect communication between man and woman, as there was perfect harmony between God and man.

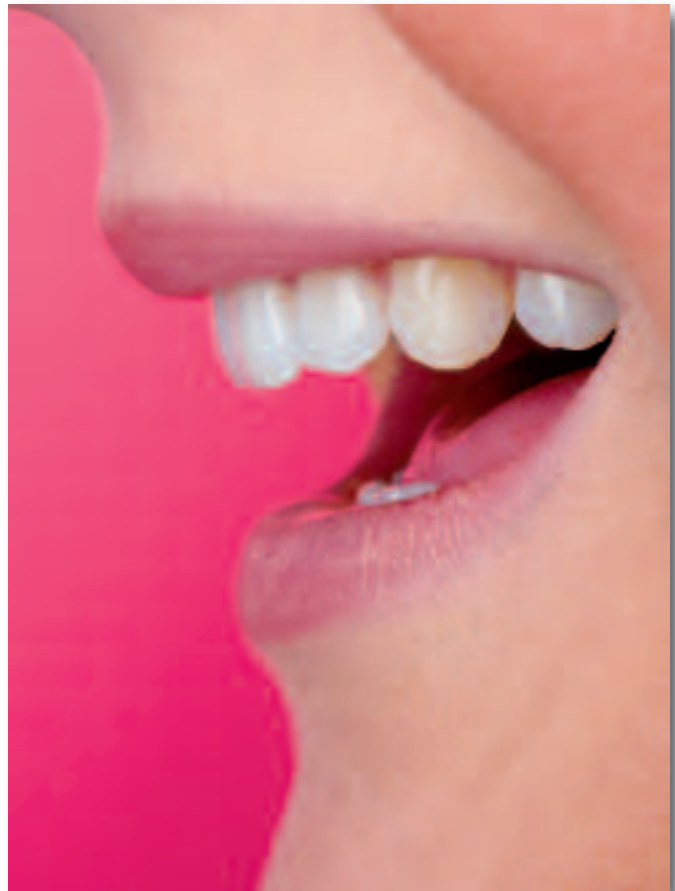
This perfection did not last. The harmony of paradise was interrupted by the lie. For centuries God's people lived in darkness. Their only glimmer of hope was the promise of the Savior, the seed of the woman. As his arrival became closer, the glimmer was able to highlight more details. The Savior would be the Lion of Judah. He was to be born from the line of David. His birth would take place in Bethlehem, the town of King David.

But it was not till after the ascension of the Savior that the most revealing light was shed on his role in creation and recreation. In the first chapter of his gospel the apostle John describes the Savior as the Word. In the beginning this Word created everything. It was the Word that gave life. This Word was God. He created, and He will recreate.

For that reason the Word became flesh at the appointed time. He became the manifestation of God among men. The original communication between God and man was miraculously restored in the Word Incarnate. The whole truth and the full extent of grace were revealed in Him. God and man were reconciled.

From that time on the gospel of reconciliation must be preached to all nations. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old nature that spoke falsehoods is gone. The new nature of truth has become a reality for those who accept the Word of reconciliation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Life in the new nature implies that the use of language is much more than a specialty for linguistics. It is of vital importance for all those who are reconciled to God by the Word of Truth. Our conversations must always echo the Word of Life. Our words should be steeped in grace and seasoned with Kingdom Salt. Whether we speak to fellow-believers, or whether we answer questions from those who knock at the door of the Kingdom, our speech must amplify the Word of Life (see Colossians 4:5-6).



Even though the language of church is rooted in the Word, minor changes in vocabulary do occur. As the church spreads across the world and moves through time, it has to respond to many different trends and it will find itself in different situations. Some believers are subjected to persecution. Others struggle to defend their faith amidst scientific opposition. Still others live in an environment where God is ridiculed and where unholy lifestyles are the norm. Many believers are systematically attacked by members of false religions. These differences may lead to variations in confessions and ecclesiastical customs. Yet, they do not form a barrier in understanding. Christians from different backgrounds recognize each other as the Word dominates their conversations.

The concept of proper speech takes on a new meaning. It still builds on proper grammar and syntax, but it is not defined by it. Its strength lies in the truth it conveys. When we confess a long-concealed sin it does not matter that our grammar falters or that our words turn into sobs. In times of severe grief it is of no consequence whether our sentences run on or stop abruptly. The old saying holds true, be it in a somewhat different way. *Verba valent usu*. If we use our words to pass on the truth of the gospel, they will be validated by the Word. The value of a stumbled sentence uttered in faith cannot be measured by human standards. God can use it to break rebellion and soften sorrow. Empowered by the Word our faltering words will flow like a river of healing.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16).



.....

How old do you have to be to remember that the word gay was actually used to describe a happy child?

.....

As we learn to surrender ourselves better to the Word, we notice that the flow of our words changes. Our speech will increasingly be filled with spiritual insight. Some believers are able to quote appropriate Bible texts. Others apply their understanding of prophecies and promises to the situations they face. Still others develop a fluency in biblical doctrines and images. Each of God’s children will show in a unique way that Christ lives in him/her and that the Word of the covenant is written on his/her heart.

THREE TO SEE

The winning entries in *RP*'s "Write Right Now" contest

by Jon Dykstra

It was difficult to pick just three top entries, but no one said a judge's job was easy. So Mark Penninga from ARPA Canada and yours truly put our heads together, tallied up our vote totals, debated over the final handful and finally selected these three as the winners.

The strength of these three letters is their solid argumentation. They make their point, they make it well, and they make it memorably.

The first, by Irma DeVries, was given an attention-grabbing title by letter's page editor, using a line plucked out of her article: "Who will speak for imbeciles?" If you were just flipping through your local newspaper and saw that title, how could you not stop and read the letter?

Mel Harthoorn's letter was possibly the shortest entry in the whole contest, and included just one point. But she made her point powerfully, like a punch to the gut.

The third letter is a longer one, written to a senator. It includes an effective illustration – eliminating corporal punishment because some people beat their children is like lowering the speed limit to stop people who already far exceed the present one – and a good use of Scripture.

We're happy to share these three with you, and thankful that there are so many people in our circles who are using letters to speak out. Thanks very much to everyone who entered. . . and please keep on writing!



Dear Editor,

I really appreciated Stephen Thorning's article Friday, June 23, 2001 regarding slot machines and their history in the early years of this century.

Thorning reiterates the statement that slot machines and gambling are a tax on the poor, and he quotes an old Scottish statesman of 150 years ago stating that gambling of any kind is "a tax on imbeciles which has been repeated in varied forms ever since."

The British government knew of the socially destructive aspects of gambling and its tendency to aggravate poverty and they wisely restricted its use over time.

However, our society walks steadily off the cliff of morality and thinks it's the other person's right to destroy themselves and their families if they wish. Most don't know they are on a road that is head for destruction or disillusionment.

Even our government promotes gambling. So, are we all selfish and uncaring? Who will speak for the imbeciles of our time? Will you? Can they? Are you your brother's keeper? Does being politically-correct mean that you don't care about social destruction anymore. Friends, write your politician today!


*Irma DeVries
Harriston, Ontario*

Why I wrote: "Because I have a passion to speak for truth – God's truth – to our nation."

Response/reaction: "The only response I get is a few comments such as 'I liked your letter to the editor' or 'I read your letters!'"

What I learned: "I recently joined Toastmasters and I'm preparing myself for more impromptu speaking opportunities. To God be all the glory."

* * *



Dear Senator

I am writing in regards to Bill s-209 which has been re-introduced by Senator Hervieux Payette. This bill seeks to remove corporal punishment as a form of reasonable force in dealing with children. I believe this would be a big mistake and will only serve to harm children and destroy families.

First of all I would like to make clear that I am against child abuse including beating on a child. I do not believe in the use of excessive force when disciplining a child. Canadian law is there to protect children from this kind of abuse and to punish those who engage in it. Do the parents who love their children and give them the occasional pat on the behind need to be placed in the same category as these criminals? Do we want to see children taken away from their parents because the child was engaged in excessively disruptive behavior resulting in a spanking? Have we as a country lost sight of the difference between excessive and reasonable force?

As a child I was spanked when my behavior got out of control. Today I can thank my parents for the way they raised me including their choice of discipline; I know it was never easy for them. I know there are many who do not believe in corporal punishment, but does that make those who do criminals? Must we all raise our children the same way and use the same discipline methods? Imagine a bill forcing all parents to use corporal punishment on their children; isn't it up to the parents? Banning the use of corporal punishment is just as wrong. What about parental choice? What about a parent's rights? What about families? Whose children are they anyway? Certainly not the governments!

If this bill is a way of trying to deal with parents who abuse their children it misses the mark. It's like reducing the speed limit to stop the drivers who far exceed the existing limit. Everyone suffers rather than those who are the real problem. A better way is to stiffen penalties for the offenders. In cases of child abuse the offenders need to be dealt with more swiftly. Bill s-209 only serves to punish loving parents.

We all know the saying "spare the rod spoil the child." A better quote is "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him" (Proverbs 13:24). Corporal punishment has been used to bring up children in obedience for thousands of years. It was not a mistake that corporal punishment was not excluded in Canadian law as reasonable force. We can be thankful that Canada is a free country founded on Biblical principals.

I ask that you stand up for parents and families in general and not support this bill.

A loving father to three children
Ralph Vis
 Dunnville Ontario

Why I wrote: "because ARPA Canada had it as an action item and I believe it is important that parents have the freedom to raise their own children even if that includes the use of corporal punishment. ARPA Canada is my home page so this stuff is always in my face."

Response/reaction: "I just sent it out tonight so I have not yet received any response."

What I've learned: "One thing I learned from a past letter is always let my wife edit my letters before they go out!"

* * *



What Difference does Seven Weeks Make?


Recently in Tarboro, North Carolina, a young couple was charged for murdering their six-week old son. Now, I would venture to say that most of us in Canada are shocked and outraged at such a horrific crime on such a helpless child.

However, I would also venture to say that many would not blink an eye if this crime happened seven weeks earlier. Most people don't realize that in Canada, there are no legal restrictions on abortion. That means that it is legal for parents to murder their child the day before he or she is born. What's the difference? Each person is a precious human being the day he or she is conceived. Murder is murder, whether you are a day old inside your mother's womb or a day old outside of it.

Mel Harthoorn
 Neerlandia, Alberta

Why I wrote: "This letter was written to the editor of the *Lethbridge Herald* of Lethbridge, Alberta. I chose to write him to raise awareness in my community on the lack of any legal restrictions in Canada on abortion. According to a recent survey by Environics Canada, the majority of Canadians (two-thirds) support legal protection for human life at some point before birth. However, as I pointed out in my letter, most Canadians don't realize that no protection exists."

Response/reaction: "While I have not received any specific response to my submission, a letter to the editor entitled 'It's not just a pregnancy, it's a baby' showed up a few days later, perhaps in support."

What I learned: "The next time I write another letter I think I'll add some statistical data, instead of using words like 'most' and 'many.' Studies show that 80% of people are more likely to believe a statement if it starts with 'studies show' (ha ha)." 

CONCEIT

Our worthy opponents don't regard us as worthy opponents

by D.Allan Stares

Recently I have been writing a regular column in my local newspaper. Each time I write there are a few who let me know that I have struck a chord with them, offer support, or encourage me to keep writing.

There are others who believe that I should be packed off to a Gulag somewhere in the melting Arctic. The combination of a bit of cranky and the expression of a conservative Christian perspective seems to be more than many can stomach.

I have noticed a pattern emerging in these letters.

True? Don't matter

The first commonality shared by these writers is that the general argument is ignored. There is rarely a comment regarding the *truth* of the argument I have proposed or a systematic evaluation of whether I am sane or delusional. Their first statements usually concern how they don't like how I have expressed certain information or that I have expressed it at all.

Now just because a thing is true does not mean that it needs to be said. So I encourage discretion and believe that it is an underdeveloped skill in our society; the lady sitting next to you in church doesn't need to be told the truth about her hideous hat.

However, there are times when the truth needs to be said, even if it makes us uncomfortable, because ignoring the truth is often how we have gotten into trouble in the first place. Pointing out that a sin is a sin is essential to an honest discussion of that sin, but it will rarely gain the favour of those who do not wish to discuss sin. An argument that fears to state the uncomfortable truth may be a place of refuge, but is of little practical use.

Conservative? You must not know any better

The next stage is the task of my re-education; the leading edge of the wedge of conceit. It is obvious to many that I hold my opinions because I do not know the facts surrounding the issue. If I knew the history, the newest theory, or the evidence, then I would never have come to my conclusions. Letters of response are often filled with "facts" of which I was obviously ignorant when I wrote my piece. I do not expect to be agreed with, but I do not react well to being patted on the head.

My responses to them often begin with an assurance that I do, in fact, know the history, the theory, and the evidence.

Their assumption of ignorance is entertaining and their blatant display of intellectual conceit is educational in a broader context. The responder believes that if I knew what he knew, or was as intelligent as he, then I would have no choice but to agree with his opinion. He is incredulous when I assert that I know and yet still disagree. This option is not possible in the secular humanist world.

Don't agree? Don't dare write

One particular letter illustrated the third and final strategy, the *coup de grace* of intellectual conceit. After informing me that he must both chastise and rebuke me for bringing up the subject and expressing the opinions that I did, he bombarded me with information that anyone could acquire from being alive and paying attention. The writer then stated that the paper should not have printed my column, and hoped that they would not print my columns again. In other words, until I started coming to the correct opinions, I should not be allowed to express my opinions at all. I like that; it is so modern.

The atheist books being dribbled into the world recently depend on this same conceit. Richard Dawkins begins his latest by explaining how conservative Christians are not intelligent because they are not evolutionary scientists, the few Christians he knows that are intelligent don't believe that religion stuff anyway, and the best way to deal with people who don't agree with him is to educate the educable and ridicule those with conviction. Once those who can be educated are educated they will agree with every other intelligent person and be atheists like he is. Until then, they should shut up or be shut up.

The intellectually conceited cannot limit their conceit by the thought that there could be something outside their understanding. Everything they know confirms their opinions; what they don't know, if there are any such things, must also confirm their opinions or are not worth knowing. Their minds are their highest authorities and cannot be questioned lest the idol show its cracks.

It took me a long time to realize that all that there is cannot be contained or explained by my mind. Christians understand that they believe what they believe, and know what they know, and understand how they understand because of the work of God.

There are times when I am especially thankful for the working of the Spirit.



FIVE FOR FREE

Throw out your TV and take a look-see at what's playing on the Internet

by Jon Dykstra

This year, for the very first time, every game of the US college basketball playoffs – “March Madness” – was available for viewing online, for free. So instead of being stuck with whatever game they decided to show on TV, I could go to my computer and pick the one I wanted to see. It was a basketball fan's dream.

But that's not even the best thing that's playing online. In just the past few months several different organizations have posted videos to the Internet that would be of particular interest to Christians. Many of these used to only be available on DVD for \$15 or \$20 but now they can be seen online for free. It's almost too good to be true. But it is true (and yes, it's legal too).

So read on and figure out which of the five featured here you'd like to see tonight.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made is one of Answers In Genesis's top-selling DVDs, and it can now be seen for free online. While it's basically just an hour-long taped lecture (with a few cool PowerPoint slides to liven things up) Dr. David Merton's look at the beginning of human life is awe inducing. You only have to look at a newborn to know he's a little miracle, but after seeing this presentation you'll realize that even that description is insufficient. There isn't just one miracle involved in the conception and birth of a child – Dr. Merton takes us through the numerous miracles that are involved at every stage, even before conception occurs.

Remarkably this is just one of more than *thirty* Answers in Genesis DVDs that can now be viewed for free at: answersingenesis.org/media/video/ondemand. If you want to learn more about mammoths, the Intelligent Design movement, Neanderthals, Lucy, cloning, dinosaurs or the intricacy of the eye and ear, they've got great presentations on it all.



Somebody's Daughter

There's impressive material online, but that's not the only thing that's offered on the 'Net. Pornography, which once could only be had by those who sought it out, is now available online all the time, anywhere, and for free. And it's not even limited to the web – material that was once only offered for sale from behind counters is now loaned out at libraries, or featured in swimsuit editions of popular sports magazines. The smooth lipped woman of Proverbs 7 makes appearances in the catalogues that come in the mail, or the commercials that pop up on TV. Pornography is everywhere.

Because it is everywhere, this is a temptation that men can flee from with only limited success. Because it is such a strong enticement, such an entrapping sin, pornography is an issue we need to deal with openly and *Somebody's Daughter* could be a valuable tool.

There are two main messages to *Somebody's Daughter*. The first is a warning – “Pornography destroys, pornography strips men and women of their dignity. Pornography violates love; it prevents intimacy.” Four men – four Christian leaders – explain in short clips how this is an equal opportunity sin, infecting “every group, every culture, every ethnicity.” They explain how they first encountered pornography. For one, it was through a friend; another came across a stack of magazines in a neighbor's barn when he was a child; another, a businessman, became addicted soon after starting up his own home business: “We had a computer and I remember just being curious. . . .”

The second message is that there is hope. A Christian pastor, who became entangled in pornography while in seminary, talks about how he tried again and again to deal with this on his own. Another of the interviewees talks about how he thought God would want nothing to do with him, until he finally turned to God in exhaustion. He turned to God when he realized



that he could not win the fight; God had to win it for him. And he found God not only willing but eager to save him.

Though this is a documentary about pornography, the gospel message comes through clearly – we are sinners, but God sent his Son to pay for our sins, and break our bonds. I'd recommend this film for church libraries, and for careful considered use in some Men's Bible study group settings.

Somebody's Daughter is available on DVD for \$20 US and can be bought at somebodysdaughter.org. But the 45 minute documentary can be viewed in its entirety on the American Family Association website at afa.net/somebody.

Silencing the Christians

In the July/August 2008 issue, *Reformed Perspective* showed how Canada's human rights commissions are intimidating and silencing Christians whose only crime is speaking God's Truth. *Silencing the Christians* is a one-hour documentary that shows how Christians are being silenced in the United States as well. The US may be the home of the brave but increasingly, as this documentary shows, it is not the land of the free. This is an eye-opening, and if you forget Who is in control, potentially depressing video.

Silencing the Christians is really must-see viewing for parents who need to understand the culture we live in so we can prepare our children for the coming hostility the next generation will face when they profess their faith in God. We live in scary times. But we serve a God who remains in control, so we can proceed knowing He has already secured victory. *Silencing the Christians* can be viewed online at www.silencingchristians.com.

God of Wonders

This is a nature documentary that starts at the stars, and touches on just about everything else: lightning, squids, hummingbirds, snow crystals, DNA and butterflies are just a few of the highlights. That's both the strength and the weakness of the film. The footage is as remarkable as anything seen on the Discovery Channel, or a National Geographic special, but each time a creature is investigated, we learn only enough to know we would really like to learn more. . . and then we're on to the next bit of nature.

But there is a method to this madness. The theme of *God of Wonders* is straight out of Romans 1:19-20: God has revealed Himself in the wonder of his creation. If we reject God, we can't claim we did so out of ignorance – God, through his creation has left us "without excuse."



This documentary's target audience is probably agnostics, rather than Christians – it seems meant as an evangelistic tool. But Christians will enjoy the ride too, as they get a broad look at the wonders God has wrought.

God of Wonders is, at 85 minutes, a full-length documentary, and can be purchased on DVD for \$16 US at Christian-books.com. But it can also be viewed for free online at godofwondersvideo.org/chapters.htm.

Meet John Doe

Unlike the other films featured here, this one is a drama, from 1941. The director, Frank Capra, is probably best known for *It's a Wonderful Life*, but that wasn't his best film. *Meet John Doe* is not his best either, but it is the only one of his films that's legally available online. Like *Wonderful Life*, Capra's Roman Catholic upbringing and general Judeo-Christian ethic come out strongly in *Meet John Doe*. That doesn't mean the films are flawless theologically (for example we know angels don't get their wings when a bell rings) but there is a moral depth here that is almost unknown in today's films.

Set in the depression, the story revolves around a reporter, her editor, a derelict, and a politician trying to take advantage of them all. When a round of layoffs at *The New Bulletin* leaves columnist Ann Mitchell out of a job, she decides to go out with a bang. For her last column she submits a letter from an unemployed "John Doe" who threatens to jump off the roof of City Hall on Christmas Eve to protest society's degeneration. The letter is fake, concocted by Mitchell to express her own disgust, but it causes a sensation. Readers flood the newspaper with letters, some marriage proposals from concerned women, some job offers, but all wanting to know, "Who is John Doe?" When Mitchell's editor finds out it's a fraud, he hires her back to prevent the public from learning about the deception. Then he takes things one step further, hiring a derelict former baseball player (played by Gary Cooper) to take on the role of Doe.

What starts as a deception soon takes a positive turn. When the paper's new "John Doe" begins making public appearances his simple speeches encourage a helping spirit among his listeners. John Doe Societies spring up spontaneously to enable neighbors to help one another. Doe becomes the leader of a huge, helpful movement. . . that's built on the lie of his false identity. Things come to a climax when a conniving politician threatens to expose this lie, unless Doe endorses him.

Meet John Doe can be seen in its entirety at archive.org/details/meet_john_doe. It's just over 2 hours long, so be sure to plan ahead and make enough popcorn.



FIVE TO BUY

Must-see DVDs that would be great additions to school or church libraries

by Jon Dykstra

THE RECKONING

Remembering the Dutch Resistance
Documentary

96 min; 2006, DVD \$20 US

My grandfather never talked about the war but I knew he had been involved in the Dutch Resistance. I was proud of him then, but I didn't properly appreciate his courage. As a child I thought his involvement in the Resistance was a brave, but almost unremarkable thing. After all, most of my friends' grandparents had also done their part. To me it seemed as if everyone back then had joined. I was sure that, had I been there, I would have joined as well.

But now I understand things better. Though many from our small Reformed community got involved, what they did was rare and exceptional. As the narrator of *The Reckoning* notes, "Hundreds acted. Millions did not."

The Reckoning is a tribute to the courage of these special few, and delves deeply into the ordinary details around their courageous activities. Director John Evans uses a host of 1940s photography, interviews with surviving Resistance members and archival footage to bring viewers right into the dilemma these men and women faced. We should never make the mistake of thinking them fearless – one gentleman recounts how he had to change his shorts after one run in with the Nazis. And yet deciding to act seemed a simple decision for many. God gave them an understanding of right and wrong, and the conviction to act on it. A principal figure in the film, John Muller, described how quickly and suddenly he got involved:

"My brother-in-law called me and said, 'I want to talk to you. . . I decided you were material for the underground.' I said 'No!' And then I thought it over and said, 'Okay I will do it. I will do it. I will do something for my country.' I said, 'What do you want me to do?'"

It was a simple decision for him, but millions more declined. Viewers can't help but wonder, "Would I have been among the few?"

I would highly recommend this film – this is a tribute to our grandparents, and we should know their story, so we can seek to be like them. They loved the Lord, and acted as He directed, even when they were left confused and wondering why God would allow such evil. Their faith was tested, but God kept them close.



While this is an important film that I hope many will see, it does contain some graphic war footage, and film of some of the concentration camps including footage of skeletal bodies piled one on another. So this is not appropriate for small children.

To order this film, or see the trailer go to www.dutchresistance.net.

TURNING THE TIDE

Dignity, Compassion And Euthanasia
Documentary

29 min; 2007, DVD \$16 US

In the 2008 Canadian federal election both the NDP and Liberals favored physician-assisted suicide. And in 2008 Washington State followed the lead of Oregon, to become the second state to allow physician-assisted suicide. We're fighting a culture of death, and euthanasia is the newest battleground.

Turning the Tide is intended to be a tool in this fight, and it is a good one. The strength of this documentary is the expertise assembled on camera: pro-life advocate Wesley Smith; Bobby Schindler, the brother of Terri Schiavo; Senator Sharon Carstairs, who headed a Senate committee on euthanasia; Alex Schadenberg, the head of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition; and from our own Canadian Reformed circles, Adrian Dieleman. They make it clear what a slippery slope we are on, and outline a series of solid, compelling arguments against assisted suicide.

But the film has a glaring weakness. *Turning the Tide* hardly even mentions the spiritual dimension, shuffling it off to a small five minute segment in the bonus features section of the DVD. This is clearly meant to be a secular presentation, but because they hardly dare mention God's name, the film ultimately isn't able to explain why the life of every person – disabled, elderly, depressed, or otherwise – is precious. We are, all of us, made in God's image.

Still, it is an eye-opening documentary, and for its short length, an extensive look at this deadly quest – it covers a lot of ground. I'd suggest it should be mandatory viewing in our Christian schools. The DVD comes with a discussion guide, and can be purchased from visionvideo.com.



DEMOGRAPHIC WINTER

The decline of the human family
Documentary

56 min; 2008, DVD \$20 US

This is not a Christian film; it's just a film that argues everything Christians have been saying about the importance of the family, about the damage done by divorce, about what a blessing children are, about the threat of "gay marriage," and about the harm caused by premarital sex, is exactly right. Christians had it right on every count.

Demographic Winter warns about a coming collapse in world population caused by a birth rate that is well below replacement levels in most developed countries. Unless things change dramatically, in 40 years the population of Russia will be halved. In Europe things are little better. Couples need to have at least two children to keep the population level steady, but are instead having an average of just 1.3.

Who's to blame? Expert after secular expert lays the blame at the feet of those attacking the family and encouraging divorce, abortion, "gay marriage," contraception and cohabitation. We're heading towards a crisis, they say, and the proper response is to strengthen the family, not plot its demise.

The findings of all the leading social scientists are so closely in accord with what the Bible says that one, a Phillip Longman, felt he had to make his motivations clear. In the film's final scene Longman explains,

"I'm not church-ed – I work for a progressive secular think tank. . . I have one child, adopted. So this is not a faith-based analysis. This is an analysis that, um. . . may eventually bring me to faith, but it's not driven by faith. It just turns out this is where the facts take you when you look at population."

This is not a Christian film; it is a film that will fascinate Christians. To order it, or see the trailer go to demographicwinter.com.



28 DAYS ON THE PILL

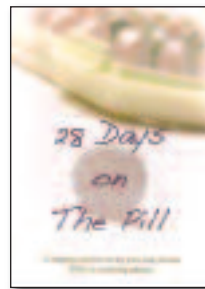
Documentary

45 min; 2008, DVD \$15 US

Can the birth control pill cause abortions? It's a simple question, but it's hardly simple to get an answer. In *28 Days on the Pill* we follow Trent Herbert and nurse Patti Halliday as they travel across North America talking to a variety of doctors and nurses, prominent theologians such as Albert Mohler and Randy Alcorn, and even the Duggar family from The Learning Channel's show *18 Kids and Counting*.

They discover that the pill can cause abortions. . . maybe.

The pill has two main mechanisms of action, both of which act to prevent conception. The first stop ovulation (the release of an egg) and the second thickens cervical mucus to stop sperm in their tracks. But some of the experts Halliday and Herbert visit talk about a third mechanism as well, that thins the lining of the uterine wall. Should conception occur, these doctors believe the lining is likely to be less hospitable to the im-



plantation of the newly conceived baby and that may result in an abortion or miscarriage of that child. The evidence is less than conclusive, but worth examining.

While *28 Days* has noticeably lower production values than the other four documentaries recommended here, Herbert and Halliday more than make up for that with their impressive investigative work. This is a film that anyone using the pill or considering it must see. Buy it at 28daysonthepill.com.

EXPELLED

No Intelligence allowed
Documentary

95 min; 2008, DVD \$10 Cdn

reviewed by Rene Vermeulen



Comedian Ben Stein (who once also wrote speeches for Richard Nixon) is our guide in this film that dares to question Darwin. Stein travels the world doing interviews with scientists who have lost their position merely because in their writings they have allowed for the possibility of there being an "Intelligent Designer" involved in the creation of the universe. That does not mean that these scientists necessarily believe what the Bible says about creation – far from it. Many believe in evolution, but see problems with it. And for bringing up those doubts they are being denied tenure and even fired.

So what can we expect by looking at this DVD? Let us first say that Reformed people believe the Bible to be God's Word. So we don't need to hear Stein's defense of "Intelligent Design." We already know what's true – we have the first six chapters of Genesis to let us know that God created the world in six days. And it is important that as parents and teachers we keep this knowledge before our children.

But as our children get older and start studying at higher institutions they are confronted with the Darwinian theory. I am sure that sometimes it must be difficult to hold on to faith when confronted by a world that keeps reminding us that our point of view is "just a belief" and that the rest of the world – those who do not believe in the Bible – believes in what Darwin taught. There is a danger that some of our children might even compartmentalize their faith, thinking the Bible is good for Sunday, but is not to be believed when it comes time to do science on Monday and the rest of the week.

Nothing is further from the truth. So this DVD can be an encouragement to struggling Christians by showing them that not all people believe the Darwinian theory and that even in the secular world there is room for other ideas.

How best can we use this DVD? I have thought long and hard about this. I think it is important that parents see this one with their children – children shouldn't see it alone. Parents can buy the disk and accompanying leader's guide and go through it with their older children to show what is being taught and how. If used together with the guide we can arm our children to see how the Bible and the created world reveal God's glory. So I recommend this DVD provided it is used in the right way.

Expelled can be purchased most anywhere. To see the trailer go to ExpelledTheMovie.com.



IN A NUTSHELL

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

by Jon Dykstra

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We see better, and have a better rep!

Dutch researchers have discovered that Calvinists see better than atheists. In a study conducted by Bernhard Hommel, a psychologist at Leiden University, Calvinists responded to small visual cues quicker than their atheist counterparts. The difference was a small one – only 30 milliseconds – but still statistically significant.

Even more intriguing was the lead researcher's theory as to why this was so. Hommel argued that a fundamental tenet of Calvinism was the idea that "everyone should mind his or her own business" which, he thought, would leave Calvinists less outwardly focused, less intent on the big picture, and thus more attuned to finer details. So not only do Calvinists see better than atheists, we've somehow garnered a reputation for not being busybodies!

SOURCE: *PLoS ONE* (www.plosone.org)

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1 + 1 = 2,000

G.K. Chesterton understood the importance of being a friend to the friendless: "There are no words to express the abyss between isolation and having one ally. It may be conceded to the mathematician that four is twice two. But two is not twice one; two is two thousands times one."

.....

Good advice

As a newly married chap, I am the happy and frequent recipient of marital

advice. One of my favorite bits was a set of "Fourteen rules for a happy marriage" that implicitly acknowledged marriage is the result of two sinners saying "I do."

Prayer

1. Surround your marriage with prayer.

Arguments

2. Remember, it takes two to make an argument. The one who is wrong is the one who will be doing most of the talking.
3. Also remember that when you point a finger at your mate, three fingers are pointing back at you.
4. If you feel you must criticize, do so lovingly. (Never use "you never. . ." or "you always. . .")
5. Yield to the wishes of the other as an exercise in self-discipline, if you can't think of a better reason.

Anger

6. Never both be angry at the same time.
7. Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
8. Never go to bed angry.

Forgiveness

9. When you've made a mistake, talk it out and ask for forgiveness.
10. Never bring up a mistake of the past. Always be ready to forgive wholeheartedly.

Affection

11. If you have a choice between making yourself or your mate look good—choose your mate.

12. Neglect the whole world rather than each other.
13. Never let the day end without saying at least one complimentary thing to your life partner.
14. Never meet without an affectionate greeting.

SOURCE: Thanks Aunt Jo!

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Spurgeon, on finding the right church

"If you wait for a perfect church, you must wait until you get to Heaven; and even if you could find a perfect assembly on earth, I am sure they would not admit you to their fellowship, for you are not perfect yourself. Find out those people who are nearest to the Scriptures, who hold the truth in doctrine and in ordinance, and are most like the apostolic church, and then cast in your lot with them, and you will be blessed in the deed."

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Quote on Calvin

"There is nothing wrong with starting a hefty book like Calvin's *Institutes* and only getting a hundred pages read. Think what the church today would be like if we all read the first hundred pages of Calvin."

— author Ben House

.....

Quote from Calvin

"God tolerates even our stammering, and pardons our ignorance whenever something inadvertently escapes us – as, indeed, without this mercy there would be no freedom to pray."

SOME MEN AND FATHERS

by Christine Farenhorst

Rev. Peter Smart

In 1628, a Rev. Peter Smart preached in the Durham Cathedral in England. It was a hot morning and, perhaps in keeping with the weather, he had chosen a fiery theme. "I hate them that hold of superstitious vanities." In the sermon, Rev. Smart called the altar in the Roman Catholic church a "damnable idol," those who bowed to it "spiritual fornicators," and the bishops of the Church of England, "Rome's bastardly brood still doating upon their mother, the painted harlot of the Church of Rome."

In a country where feelings ran high against restoring the papacy and Roman Catholic practices, Peter Smart's sermon was applauded by many. But it was not applauded by the monarchy – by King Charles I and his newlywed French Roman Catholic bride, Henrietta Maria. Charles promoted the High Church of England bishops, who were Arminian in their views. He and his administrators had absolutely no use for sermons like those preached by the Rev. Smart.

The very same day on which Rev. Smart preached his fiery sermon, he was hauled off to court. Though that very morning he had stood in a pulpit, by two o'clock in the afternoon he stood before a hastily convened Court of High Commission. In this court he was accused of sedition. Deposed of his office of pastor, he was degraded and fined five hundred pounds. He chose not to pay and spent the next twelve years of his life in prison.

Durham County, where the sermon had been preached, had a mixed religious heritage. The people living there had not been given representation in Parliament although they were taxed severely. Near enough to Scotland to have felt the influ-



ence of John Knox and other Protestant Reformers, they also had a strong contingent of Roman Catholics. Consequently, the deposing and imprisonment of Peter Smart caused great discontent and bad feeling in the community.

It is when children see their parents stand up for a true cause, for some virtuous matter, at cost of their own reputation or job, that these children are taught what is truly important in life. So it was with many Puritan youngsters who lived early on in the 1600s. The sermon by Peter Smart, as well as sermons preached by many other faithful men, touched hearts and minds.

Dr. John Bastwick

But at this time in history, men were arrested not only for preaching, but also for printing material that was at odds with the law. And the law was stringent. The right to publish a book was vested in the Archbishop of Canterbury or in the Bishop of London. If they gave permission for a book to be granted a license, it then had to be registered with the Stationers' Company

before being printed. This company could search for and seize any book printed without this registration, and the writer of a book that had no registration, could be ordered to appear before court. This author would then be in danger of having his books burned; of being charged with libel; of being put into the pillory; of having his ears cropped off; and of being imprisoned for life. In spite of these perils, an increasing number of illegal books came out during the first four decades of the 1600s. Great courage was obviously needed by those who believed in the truths of what they were writing and in the importance of having others read these truths.



One such courageous man and father, a Dr. John Bastwick, a Presbyterian, was imprisoned in the early 1630s. Held over for trial at the Gatehouse Prison at Westminster, he had been arrested for printing “scandalous” things in Latin about bishops. This Gatehouse Prison, somewhat like Dickens’ description of prison in his *Little Dorritt*, permitted Dr. Bastwick’s wife and children to live with him and cook his meals. As well, he could receive visitors and, oddly enough, continue to write books. Dr. Bastwick’s chief complaint, which he gave with a twinkle in his eyes, was that he only got roast meat once a week.

Among Dr. Bastwick’s visitors one day was an old man by the name of John Wharton. John Wharton was four score and two years old, a bookseller by profession in London’s Bow Lane. Wharton had no love for the bishops and no respect for the impossible publishing laws which forbade the printing of truth. His stock of books had been seized innumerable times, but he had built it up again and again. As well, he had been fined more times than he cared to remember.

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He chose not to pay and spent the next twelve years of his life in prison

.....

“Write something for me, Dr. Bastwick,” the old man pleaded, while sitting across from the imprisoned man in his bare-bones apartment.

“For you?” Dr. Bastwick queried.

“Yes, well, not for me alone, of course, but for the people. And write it in English, not in Latin, so that every man’s son may read what you have written and profit from it.”

“And what is the subject on which you want me to write?”

“On bishops.”

John Wharton’s answer was prompt. Dr. Bastwick considered him from where he sat in a chair which had definitely seen better days.

“On bishops,” he repeated softly, as if to himself.

John Wharton nodded enthusiastically, his glasses almost falling off his nose.

And so Dr. Bastwick began to write after his visitor left. And once he had begun, the discourse which he entitled *Letany*, flowed from his pen with greater ease at each written word. Wharton came back and read Bastwick’s work and the words pleased him very much. As a matter of fact, they made him laugh.

“Did Mr. Wharton like what you wrote, father?”

Dr. Bastwick’s children were curious as to why the old man had left the apartment chuckling.

“Indeed, he did, children. As if he had bin tickled, so that I never saw a man more pleasant at a peece of grillery.”

And what were the sentences that had so amused and pleased Wharton?

“. . .from plague, pestilence, and famine, from bishops, priests, and deacons, good Lord delivers us,” was a typical line. Bastwick caricatured the unpopular Archbishop Laud riding through the streets of London. He vividly described Laud’s servants pushing aside little playing children so that the archbishop’s retinue could pass. Full of pathos, Bastwick’s words pictured the prelate’s retainers “. . .flinging and tossing the poore costermongers and souce-wives’ fruit and puddings, baskets and all into the Thames with cries of ‘Room! Room!’”

Distributed throughout London and immediately popular reading, many people began to visit Bastwick at the Gatehouse Prison to hear him read the *Letany* out loud. They brought him roast meat and paid him money for more amenities and so God provided for Dr. Bastwick and his family. Bastwick’s fame spread and young men from all over London came to spend time with him. He gave them counsel and instructed them in many points of Reformed theology and doctrinal controversy.

William Prynne and Dr. Henry Burton

Before the year 1637 had finished, over several thousand copies of *Letany* had been distributed throughout England. That same year, Dr. Bastwick was brought before the Star Chamber Court. Two other men, William Prynne and a Dr. Henry Burton,



were tried at the same time. Prynne’s crime was that he had described the bishops as “devouring wolves” and Dr. Burton, a pastor, had denounced the innovations in doctrine, worship and ceremonies creeping into the church. He had also called the bishops “anti-Christian mushrooms” and “not pastors but traitors.”

On June 4, 1637, all three men were found guilty and condemned to the pillory in New Palace Yard, to lose their ears, to be fined 5,000 pounds, and to perpetual imprisonment. On June 30, 1637, the sentence was carried out. The New Palace Yard was



filled with spectators. The three prisoners arrived. They embraced each other and then Dr. Bastwick, as the first condemned, walked towards one of the pillories. His wife came up to him, kissed each of his ears and then his mouth. The people who had gathered were so impressed, they gave a shout of encouragement. Dr. Bastwick then spoke.

“Had I as many lives as I have haire on my head, or drops of blood in my veynes,” he said, “I would give them up all for this cause.”

Prynne was next. He also spoke.

“Had we respected our Liberties, we had not stood here at this time. It was for the generall good and Liberties of you all that we have now thus farre engaged our owne Liberties in this Cause. For did you know how deeply they have entrenched on your Liberties in point of Law, and upon our established Religion in point of Popery; if you knew but into what times you are cast, it would make you look about you: and if you did but see what changes and revolutions of Laws, Religions and Ceremonies have been made of late by one man, you would more narrowly look in your Priviledges, and see how farre your Liberty did lawfully extend, and so maintaine it.”

Burton was the last to speak. He looked at the three pillories and commented briefly: “Methinks I see Mount Calvary where the three crosses were pitched.”

Then he turned, before stepping up to the third pillory, and addressed his wife:

“I would not have you dishonor this day, or darken the glory of it, by shedding one teare, or fetching one sigh. . . never was my Wedding day so wellcome, and joyfull a day, as this day is.”

Burton had a small bouquet of flowers in his hand. Perhaps a daughter or maybe his wife had given it to him. As he was about to walk to the pillory, a bee came and alighted on one of the flowers. Turning to the crowd, Burton spoke again.


“Doe ye not see this poore Bee? She hath found out this very place to suck sweetnesse from these Flowers; and cannot I suck sweetnesse in this very place from Christ?”

Necks firmly caught in the pillories, the three men spoke with the crowd of people who milled about, wives, friends, and children pressing close to hear everything they said. There were writers in the crowd and printers, who would describe and type out every word the prosecuted men would speak, in spite of the printing laws. And this would be circulated throughout London.

Important as that circulation of this atrocity was for citizens of that time, important as their witness was before the listening crowd, it behooves us today to remember that each word we speak to others is also important; that each action we are involved in is recorded and seen; and will be read out loud. Not by any North American newspapers nor by any North American court of law – but by the Master Printer, by the Word Himself. And as our mouths shall be stopped then, we do well to consider what we do and say now.

In 1641 all three prisoners were released.






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Happy Hunting of Horned Dinosaurs

Alberta is dinosaur country!

by Margaret Helder

Every jurisdiction, be it municipal, regional, or national, looks for unique features to encourage tourism. In the province of Alberta, for example, on the seemingly unremarkable western plains, some small towns have taken to building their own claims to fame. The town of Vegreville, for example, in celebration of their Ukrainian heritage, features “the world’s largest Easter egg” and another town features the world’s largest pyrogie (a bite sized savory dish made of potato dough wrapped around a filling). In this case however the gigantic pyrogie is attached to an equally large fork standing prominently in the town. Another town has even built a landing platform for flying saucers!

The province of Alberta, as a whole, has plenty of natural claims to fame. The mountains in the west are unequalled in their beauty and interest. In the southern half of the province, there are world famous dinosaur-bearing fossil beds. Then farther south, collections of marine fossils which are so rich in the mother of pearl interiors of ammonite shells (extinct relatives of *Nautilus* and squid) they are mined for expensive jewelry.

Yes indeed, Alberta has lots to claim the interest of tourists. And for those interested in dinosaurs, there is yet another reason why Alberta is the destination of choice – it’s the very best place to find horned dinosaur fossils!

Duckbill dinos

There are two kinds of dinosaur fossil that are particularly common in Alberta. The one group includes the duckbill dinosaurs and the other group the horned dinosaurs. These two groups are found together in many fossil dinosaur communities.

The duckbills have actually been found in considerable variety in many parts of the world. Their remains appear suddenly, worldwide, in similar dinosaur communities. For this reason the dinosaur specialists consider that they appear nearly simultaneously in the fossil record, with no hint anywhere of possible ancestors. This situation is contrary to the expectations of evolution theory.

The duckbill dinosaurs were large creatures which ran on two feet. Most were from 8 to 10 meters (m) long, but some



Another horned dinosaur, the *Achelousaurus*

were as long as 15 m. These were large heavy animals. Their diet was plants, and they had impressive arrays of fancy teeth wedged tightly together to form a dental battery.

Horned dinos

The fancy horned dinosaurs are the other major group of dinosaurs in upper Cretaceous rocks in western North America. Some experts interpret Cretaceous sediments around the world as the top layer of flood deposited material. The rocks below this level have no hint of any ancestor of these creatures. The two groups differ in several aspects, but it is the skull of the horned dinosaurs which is so conspicuous and easy to identify.

The horned dinosaurs were heavy four footed creatures of moderate size. The average body length was about 5m. This length included overgrown skulls. The one group of horned dinosaurs, the centrosaurs, had skulls that were about 1.5 m long. The other group, the chasmosaurs, had much longer skulls, up to 2-2.5 m long. Obviously these bony skulls were extremely heavy although the chasmosaur skulls usually featured open areas (windows) with no bone there. It is evident that these plant eaters were less than frisky on their feet. They did however exhibit some design features which enabled them to carry out all the tasks of life.



Two centrosaurus going head to head.

It was maverick American dinosaur hunter Othniel C. Marsh who, in the late 1880s, named the most common and most famous horned dinosaur *Triceratops* (meaning three horned). A huge skull bearing three horns had been discovered by an assistant in 1886. Over the next three years this assistant searched North and South Dakota (in the United States). He turned up fifty *Triceratops* specimens including 33 nearly perfect skulls, of which one weighed about 3,200 kilograms. Since then, so many *Triceratops* specimens have been discovered, that today, specialists do not even bother to collect most of them. Among dinosaurs, the two that most North American children can identify at a glance, are plant eater *Triceratops* and the famous predator *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

Dino design features

The claim to fame of the horned dinosaurs is their vastly enlarged skull. The back of the skull is swept up into a frill which may be decorated with various spikes and bony knobs. On the face, such creatures may additionally sport various combinations of horns. These skulls sometimes extend as much as one third of the body length. It seems amazing that such top-heavy creatures were able to maneuver at all. How could they turn their heads to find food, avoid obstacles and predators, or even find mates?

It so happens that these dinosaurs had a unique design feature which greatly enhanced the maneuverability of their heads. They were provided with a ball and socket joint between the skull and the top of the backbone. Extending from the base of the skull was a unique, perfectly spherical ball which could be quite large, up to 95-113 mm in diameter. That's the size of a small grapefruit. (The technical term for this feature is occipital condyle.)

Moreover the three top vertebrae of the backbone were fused together to make a strong socket for the bony projection from the skull. We see somewhat similar ball and socket connections between a vehicle and a trailer, but these connections are not as large. Thus the horned dinosaurs had a wonderful pivot for their heavy skulls.

Another marvelous design feature were the teeth of these dinosaurs. Like the duckbills, the other prominent components of this community, the horned dinosaurs had very densely packed, fancy arrays of teeth specially designed for efficient harvesting of tough plant material. Their most famous claim to fame however was the decorations on their faces and skulls.

Evolutionary problems

The two groups of horned dinosaurs appeared simultaneously in the fossil record, neither ancestral to the other, and with no suggested ancestors in lower lying rocks.

The centrosaurus had a short, solid (or mainly so) frill swept up behind a short deep face. A horn over the nose, if present, was large. Horns over the eyes, if present, were small. The frill itself was often elaborately decorated with a scalloped edge of bone around the outside and with curved horns and spikes projecting in many directions. There were wild levels of variability between individuals within a population. No two individuals were ever alike.

Despite the variation however, there are only a few distinctly different centrosaurus designs. Most are considered to represent different genera with only one species each. With the exception of the flamboyant *Pachyrhinosaurus*, all the centrosaurus have been found only in Alberta or in adjacent Montana, or both. Also with the exception of *Pachyrhinosaurus*, all the centrosaurus have been found only in the second highest layers of Cretaceous rock. These layers are called Campanian and they include Alberta's famous Dinosaur Provincial Park.

The other group of fancy horned dinosaurs is the chasmosaurus. These had a long shallow face with an extremely elongated frill swept up behind. Typically there were large windows (openings) in the bone of the frill. In life, these would have been covered with skin. The windows, of course, would greatly reduce the weight of the frill. This frill boasted very little decoration. Its size and shape were its chief claims to fame. Chasmosaurus had long horns over the eyes, but only a short horn over the nose. Like the centrosaurus, there was a lot of variability between individuals within a population and only in the genus *Chasmosaurus* have scientists described more than one species.

The chasmosaurus, found from Alberta to Texas, occur over a much larger area than the centrosaurus. Also they occur not only in Campanian layers but also in the higher Maastrichtian rocks (the highest extent of Cretaceous sediments).

Triceratops

Observant readers may have noticed that one famous dinosaur is supplied with a large horn over the nose and other large horns over the eyes. *Triceratops* fits neither the centrosaurus nor chasmosaurus group. It is actually something of an embarrassment to the

experts. This species is found only in the very highest Maastriichtian rocks. If it were found lower than other horned dinosaurs, then the experts might have suggested that it was ancestral to the two different groups. As it is however, the scientists categorize *Triceratops* as a chasmosaur which originally had a long frill, but which “secondarily” underwent a reduction in the size of the frill.

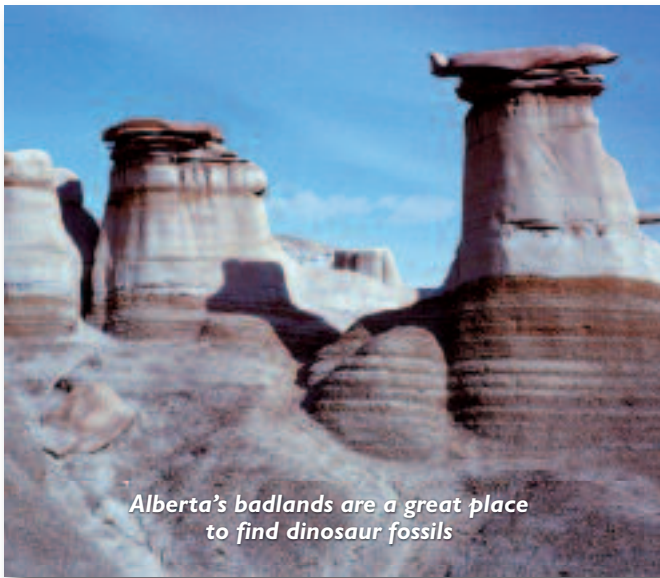
A newly discovered horned dinosaur in Alberta also exhibits a blend of characteristics. Since it is found in rocks lower than the vast majority of horned dinosaurs, the experts suggest that it might resemble a species ancestral to the two groups. Thus if specimens with blended characteristics are found at a high level, they are said to be secondarily changed, and if they are found at a lower level, they are said to possibly represent an ancestor.

The fact is however that we do not see the pattern of variation that we should see if divergence (evolution of new groups) had taken place. With great diversity within populations, we should see a cluster of very similar species, and we do not see that. On the contrary we see species widely separated into separate genera.

What are the horns for?

The question on everybody’s mind is the purpose of the horns and frills. Many experts have suggested that much of the variation within a population reflected differences in gender and age, and that could well be. This does not explain why these animals would have such large frills and horns in the first place. Some have suggested sexual display or use for threatening posture. Others have suggested actual use for fighting.

However, it seems hard to imagine how these extreme designs would be more useful and successful than something a little more moderate. It seems apparent these features are designs, chosen by God and wonderfully crafted to enhance the richness and variety of their communities.



Alberta's badlands are a great place to find dinosaur fossils

Beds of bones

One other claim to fame of the horned dinosaurs is the massive, one species only at a time, deposits of their bones in western North America. One of the most famous of these deposits is the *Centrosaurus* bone bed in Dinosaur Provincial Park. The *Centrosaurus* dinosaurs of Alberta were only moderately large compared to other designs such as *Triceratops*. *Centrosaurus*, for their part, were about 5 m (16 feet) long and perhaps 2.5 m (8 ft) tall. But they were certainly chunky and heavy. Nevertheless something terrible happened to this herd consisting of thousands of animals. Not only were there vigorous adults, but also juveniles and even elderly animals. We know that something terrible happened to them all because the bones of thousands of their carcasses ended up smashed together, buried almost up to the present day (the bone bed was discovered in 1978). This fact, that the bones were smashed together and buried by sediments carried along in raging torrents of water, causes one to wonder about the nature of the flood that overtook these hapless dinosaurs. The interesting thing is that similar tragic events overtook other even larger horned dinosaurs.

Pachyrhinosaurus

There is no doubt that *Pachyrhinosaurus* had stranger looking faces than other horned dinosaurs. While not quite as big as *Triceratops*, pachyrhinos were nevertheless pretty impressive. They were about 7 m (23 ft) long and 3 m (10 ft) tall. Typically their skulls, with associated frill, might be as long as 1.8 m (6 ft). While *Triceratops* at 9 m, were the longest and heaviest of the group, pachyrhinos, for their part, may have reached a not insubstantial 8,000 kg or 17,500 lbs. These were big heavy brutes – not easily pushed around, one might imagine.

Nevertheless there are some spectacular pachyrhino bone beds. In 1974 an incredibly rich pachyrhino bone bed was found in northwestern Alberta, near Grande Prairie. The bones are jumbled so closely together that there are on average about 120 bones per square m, compared to about 60 bones per square m for the *Centrosaurus* bone bed. The same broad spectrum of animal ages has been found in this pachyrhino bed, which was formerly found in the *Centrosaurus* bone bed. This means that the pachyrhino herd also met sudden death when fast moving water engulfed them in enough sand and gravel to bury their bones permanently. Thus buried, they became fossils. A similar scene of pachyrhino devastation has been found on Alaska’s North Slope.

Conclusion

Thus Alberta celebrates her remarkable horned dinosaur fossil beds. The meat eating dinosaurs may be the most dramatic specimens, and the duckbills may show the greatest number of species, but the horned dinosaurs are not found in many other places and they certainly show the most astonishing designs. So instead of celebrating predators like *T. rex*, perhaps Alberta should encourage tourists to come to the land of the horned dinosaurs. Just tell the museums of Alberta that Margaret sent you!





Soup & Buns

Be kind to *them*?

by Sharon L. Bratcher

Did you ever play the old version of the board game *LIFE*? Players were rewarded for going to college, having children, and buying insurance, and only the daring played the stock market. There was also a space called “Revenge.” Young eyes gleamed at the thought of taking an opponent down and increasing the possibility of winning!

Our human nature leads us to delight in revenge. It seems it would feel so good to get back at someone for what they said or did. Now, there are times when people break God’s commandments and we must seek for justice. But in our heart and in our daily interactions with people we need to take care that we are not thirsting for revenge.

But I don’t want to. . .

Luke 6:35-36 is a familiar passage, but it contains a sometimes overlooked phrase that challenges our self-centered, “I want my rights” type of thinking. Here Jesus commands:

“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. *For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.* Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” (NKJV)

We don’t like the unthankful *or* the evil. Not at all. We want to avoid and ignore problematic people. We want the bad guys in the movies to die and quit giving the good guys trouble. We want to be around safe people who are grateful for what we do. And here God tells us that He is kind to the *unthankful and the evil*, and oh, guess what – He wants *us* to act the same way. Can this be possible?

Don’t we have “our rights?”

No, we don’t. We have been bought with a price – the blood of Jesus, not to mention being created by Him in the first place. We were put on this earth *solely* for the purpose of glorifying God in all that we think and do and say. It’s His game, not ours.

His interests above our own

Imagine working for a company that has rules for interacting with others. While you are on duty, you represent the company, even when you feel out of sorts. It takes a lot of self-control to deal with difficult people, and sometimes your fortifying strength comes from eyeing the company logo or feeling your boss’s keen eyes on your back.

Next, imagine being an ambassador for your country. You are the spokesperson who represents your nation, and you had

better communicate the message accurately. It’s not *your* message. You are only there to deliver it.

God’s Word refers to His people as servants (which includes employees) (Isaiah 41:8-10) and as ambassadors for Christ “as though God were making His appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20.) And just like the aforementioned employees or ambassadors, we must put His interests above our own.

And He tells us to

“bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil. . . Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:14, 17, 19-21, NIV).

Often we act just like our children, not desiring to do anything unless we know the reasons “why?” and the expected results. But just like them, our minds cannot understand or know what our Father has in mind. We must accept that and be kind out of obedience, by His enabling power.

An example is found in *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo. Here a priest shows an unexpected kindness towards a thief, thus expressing to the shocked man what the grace of God is like. The man is completely changed as a result of the priest’s obedience to Luke 6:35-36.

It’s His game, His plan, His job

We cannot know how God will work in the lives of others – we cannot guess, and we should *not* underestimate God by declaring “that person will never change!” What we do know is what *we* should do.

There are those who harm us who are not quite in the category of “unthankful and evil.” But if we are to be kind to the “ultimate” wrongdoers, we can certainly apply these commands to those doing even less.

The only way that we can show kindness to all of them is by accepting that God has commanded us to do so, and by doing it *solely* to please Him. We must do it to further *His* goals – *His* plan, because we consider it more important than our own. This makes no sense to us when our minds are filled with thoughts of revenge. But *He* wants us to show kindness to them – and leave the results to Him. In His own good time He will punish or discipline others, and we can trust His judgement.

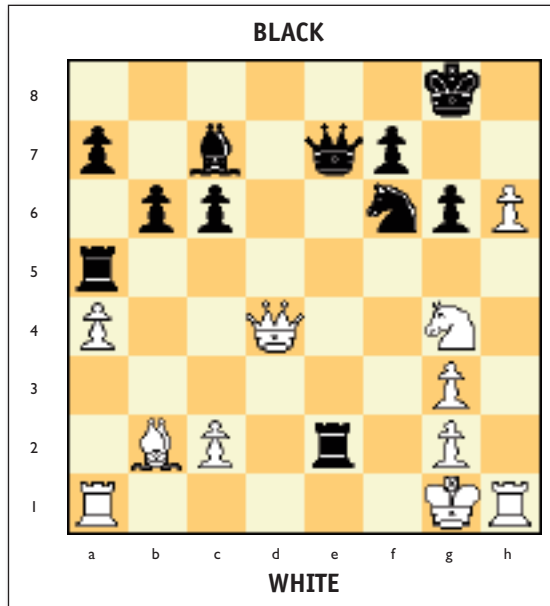
It’s His job, not ours.



ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to PUZZLE PAGE, 43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 OR robgleach@gmail.com

Chess Puzzle # 154



WHITE to Mate in 4

(Hint: Attack first with the pawn)

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

NEW PUZZLES

Riddles for Punsters #154 - "Pushing Pins"

Why did the little girl use her thumb to push her mother's pins into her pin cushion? The girl was bored and needed some ___ to do.

Why did the little boy use his thumb to push his mother's pins into an eraser? The boy was bored and needed t ___ _thin to do.

Problem to Ponder #154 - "Give me threes, if you please"

Some people regard 3 as the number of the trinity. Students may think of triangles with 3 sides and 3 angles. For others, it is just one of the prime numbers. Your task is to use three 3s, along with your choice of mathematical operations, to produce the required result.

For example, to produce the result 4, write $3 + (3 \div 3) = 4$ or to produce 36 write $33 + 3 = 36$.

Now use three 3s to produce the following results:

Easy: 9, 3, 6, 12, 27, 2

Not-so-easy: 30, 81, 0, 1, 1/3.



SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (MARCH) PUZZLE PAGE

Answer to Riddles for Punsters #153 - "Sensible sailor"

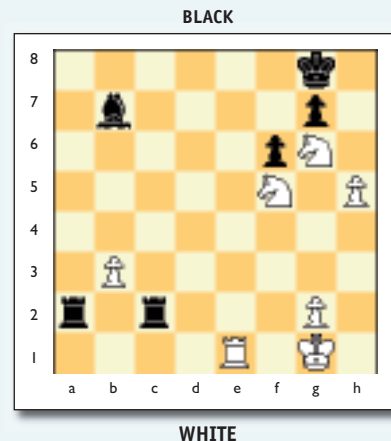
Why did the sailor not take his date to a really expensive restaurant? He did not want her to think he was the type to go o v e r b o a r d.

Answer to Problem to Ponder #153 - "Do not 'shun' these words"

Determine the words below, **all ending with "ation,"** that relate to the Christian faith. Note that the first four words indicate bad things but the rest are words for good things.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| State of not changing | stagnation |
| Eternal punishment | damnation |
| Destitute, empty land | desolation |
| Defiling of something holy | desecration |
| Eternal redemption | salvation |
| Learning church teachings | indoctrination |
| Removal of sinful nature | sanctification |
| Removal of guilt due to sin | justification |
| Future state of blessedness | glorification |
| Joyful feeling | elation |
| Joyful festivity | celebration |
| State of being joyful | jubilation |
| Picture or example | illustration |
| Act on behalf of someone | representation |
| End of a journey | destination |
| Gathering of believers | congregation |

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 153



WHITE to Mate in 2
Descriptive Notation

1. R-K8 ch K-B2
2. N-Q6 mate

OR

1. R-K8 ch K-R2
2. R-R8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Re1-e8 + Kg8-f7
2. Nf5-d6 ++

OR

1. Re1-e8 + Kg8-h7
2. R-h8 ++

BLACK to Mate in 3
Descriptive Notation

1. _____ RxP ch
2. K-R1 R-N6 ch
3. R-K4 BxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Rc2xg2 +
2. Kg1-h1 Rg2-g3 +
3. Re1-e4 Bb7xe4 ++

Crossword Puzzle

Series 16 No 5

Last month's solution
Series 16 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								

1	P	A	L	E	R		6	P	R	O	P	S		11	S	A	P						
14	I	R	E	N	E		15	R	E	N	E	W		16	T	U	R						
17	N	O	M	A	D		18	A	N	T	R	E		19	A	G	O						
20	E	M	U				21	E	S	T				22	A	N	N	E	X				
23	S	A	R				24	O	N	E			25	26	M	A	T		27	D	R	Y	
							28	S	R	I			29	D	E	F	E	R		30			
31	32	33										34	R	E	T	R	O		35	36	37		
38	N	E	R	O						39	B	E	T					40	V	A	S	E	
41	P	E	R	O			42	G	I	E	S			44	45	W	E	E	D	E	D		
							46	P	R	A	M	S			47	O	A	R					
48	P	R	O			50	E	P	A				52	E	R	R			53	54	55		
56	H	A	V	E	N					57	A	G	E						58	N	A	M	
59	O	R	E			60	A	D	L	E	R			63	64	T	W	I	C	E			
65	N	E	R			66	D	E	E	R	E			67	L	A	S	E	R				
68	E	R	T			69	E	R	G	O	T			70	E	V	E	R	Y				

ACROSS:

- 1. Vehicle puller
- 8. English place that has white cliffs
- 14. Dessert
- 15. Part of shoe
- 16. Each one
- 17. Process coffee beans
- 19. Coffee pot
- 20. Alloy of lead and tin that tea canisters are made of in China
- 21. Forward an email
- 22. Had a baby cow
- 23. Mini demonstrations
- 26. Extract forcibly
- 29. Not well
- 30. Assumed haughtiness
- 31. Military abbreviation for troop
- 34. Show again
- 37. Not happy
- 38. Boyfriend
- 39. Ledge for knickknacks
- 40. Oozes through
- 41. Yours and mine
- 42. Police officer
- 45. Starts a garden
- 46. Near-death experience, for short
- 47. Atmosphere
- 48. Man's name
- 49. Mighty warrior in O.T. great-grandson of Noah
- 51. Abominable snowmen
- 54. Operated a spacecraft
- 56. To the inside of
- 58. Father of Ner, who was the grandfather of Saul
- 59. Rail Rapid Transit
- 61. Not the before picture
- 62. One of the first makers of home computers in the 70s
- 63. A town of Benjamin, on a plain, see 1 Chr. 8:12
- 64. Actor's hint
- 65. Mediterranean island
- 66. Bovine accessories

DOWN:

- 2. Give an opinion
- 3. Dutch landmarks
- 4. Short name for Theodore
- 5. Sumerian sun god
- 6. Eye parts
- 7. Knowledge
- 8. Stickers
- 9. Egg shapes
- 10. Soft fabric
- 11. A great lake
- 12. Millstone part
- 13. "S" shaped moldings
- 18. Vivid colour
- 22. Edible flower heads of cauliflower and broccoli
- 24. Patron saint of Norway
- 25. Sneaky
- 27. By way of
- 28. Malicious burning of property
- 32. Deeply engrossed
- 33. Kitten
- 35. Benjamin's great-grandson (1 Chr. 7:10)
- 36. A plant that keeps coming back
- 38. Something pleasing to look at
- 40. Blackthorn fruit
- 42. Kind of cheese, like cottage cheese
- 43. Spanish gold
- 44. Place in Italy, or maker of cookware
- 45. Apply oneself steadily
- 47. Ms. Earhart's first name
- 50. Inactive
- 52. Military abbr. For intelligence
- 53. Woman saint, for short
- 54. Madam, briefly
- 55. Am. Brain Tumor Assoc.
- 57. Mine's treasure
- 59. Strong bird of legend
- 60. Drag behind
- 61. Expert

Joyce