

REFORMED

# Perspective

A MAGAZINE  
FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN  
FAMILY

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*Love  
is...*



# Love is...

Editorial

Jon Dykstra

Love is a mostly misunderstood word – it's mistaken for sex, for sentimentality, for some sort of chemical thing that just happens, or doesn't, and either lasts forever, or doesn't. Some think it's effortless. Some even think it can be bought for money.

Christians too, are confused. We know love is more than sex, more than sentimentality, and more than chemistry, but most of us are still trying to figure out whether love is a feeling or an action!

So what is love then? God tells us that love is. . .

## . . . sacrificial

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).*

Some misunderstand love as a math formula, where things are supposed to work out even on both sides of the equation: if you give a friend a thoughtful present, you should be able to count on getting one in return; if you give your spouse a backrub, they should get up and make you coffee; tit for tat, back and forth, even steven. But Christ demonstrated the complete inequity of real love – He loved us, so He gave himself up for us, even though, in return, we can offer him nothing. Love is giving with no thought of getting.

## . . . something you do

*"Let us not love in word or in tongue but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).*

Love is more than a feeling, more than an attraction, more than arousal or sentimentality. Love is expressed in what we do for one another. We can say we love our brother, but if we won't visit him when he's lonely or help him when he is troubled, there is no love. Love is an action.



## . . . not a duty to be performed

*"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3).*

Doing is not enough – it's not enough to give to the poor, go to church twice each Sunday and read the Bible regularly if we are not doing this out of our love for God. A daughter can take her aging father to medical appointments, help him with his shopping and pop by regularly for a cup of coffee, but this, by itself, isn't love – the very same tasks could be done by hired staff. Love is more than just a verb. A husband can play the part of a loving spouse – he can *do* all the right things, but love is more than just action, more than just duty. Love is an attitude.

**... not God**

*“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8).*

The Beatles got it backwards when they sang, “All you need is love.” All we need is God, and while God is indeed love, that doesn’t make the reverse true – love isn’t God. The Beatles aren’t the only ones to get it backwards though. Our society is in love with love. Love, they insist, is the only way to bring meaning to our lives so it must be pursued no matter what the cost. Affairs, naturally, have become commonplace; if love is god, nothing should stand in the way of it, not vows, not spouses, not family. Instead of pursuing the God who is love, our society pursues love itself and has made an idol of it. But love is not God.

**... from God**

*“In this is love, not that we loved God, but the He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).*

God commands us to love our neighbor, and it’s a command most of us find easy to do. Or at least easy to do with old Mrs. Todd, our next door neighbor who bakes cookies for us every Thanksgiving. But this command isn’t as easy to obey with that neighbor two doors down, who always steals our parking spot. Or the guy right next door who leaves beer cans on our lawn. Love these guys? Maybe we would, if only they were a bit more lovable. But of course, the love God is commanding here is of a more godly sort – the love that comes from Him. We need to humbly remember that we love, only because God loved us first. He, after all, didn’t love us because we had first in some way earned or prompted his love. No, He loved us first, sending his Son to die for us even while we were his enemies. And it is because He loved us first, that we can now love Him, and our neighbor. Love comes from God



**What’s Inside**

Like so many other magazines, we’re tackling love this month. But we’re not doing it like those others – there are no big red hearts on display in our issue, nor any rose pictures, and we haven’t polluted our pages with even a single “say-you-love-her-by-blowing-big-bucks-once-a-year” advertisement. What we have instead are three articles that together offer a pretty good overview of this short, but very big word. The first article tackles what love is, the second tackles what love just might not be, and third outlines what love certainly ain’t.

Another highlight this month is a review article by Margaret Helder outlining two great Creationist resources. As most readers will know, Dr. Helder is one of the regular contributors to our magazine, but what some may not realize is that she is, as the Answers in Genesis website puts it, “probably the most prominent woman in creation science.” We are privileged to have her in our pages. The book and CD set she reviews this month are designed to help families get the most out of their trips to the zoo, by showing them how to better appreciate God’s creative genius. God has made some pretty amazing animals!

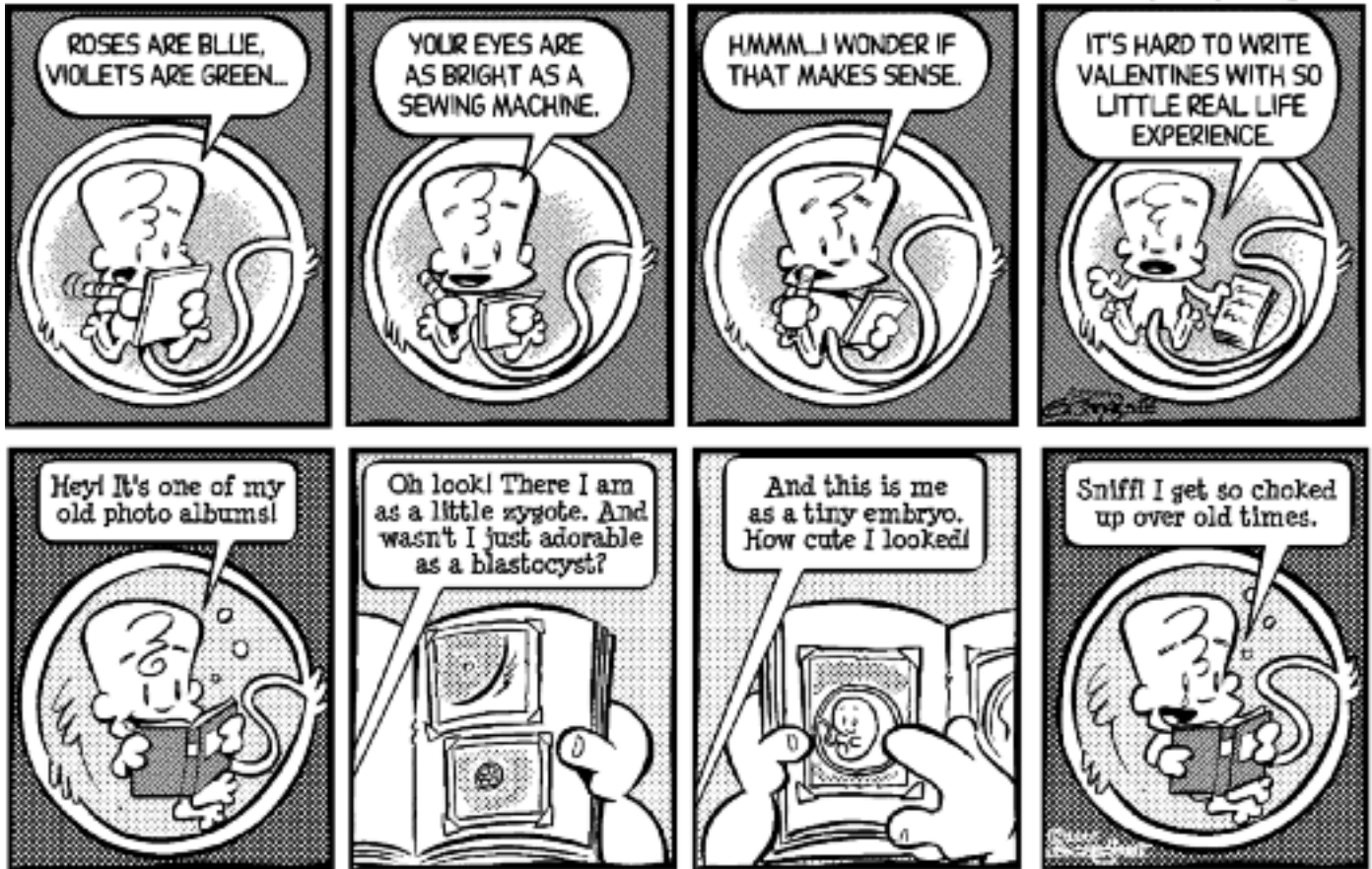
**In This Issue**

Editorial – Love is... — *Jon Dykstra* ..... 2  
 Umbert the Unborn – *Gary Cangemi* ..... 4  
 Nota Bene — *Sarah Meerstra* ..... 5  
 Report from Australia — *Rene Vermeulen* ..... 7  
 The Kid — *Gerda Vandenhaak* ..... 9  
 What’s Undemocratic About It? — *Harold Ludwig* ..... 10  
 Kidney Controversy — *Mark Penninga* ..... 12  
 In a Nutshell — *Jon Dykstra* ..... 14  
 Abortionists as Euphemists — *John Jalsevac* ..... 15

Cultural Depavity and 9/11 — *Michael Wagner* ..... 17  
 Homefront — *Jane deGlint* ..... 19  
 Pondering Love — *D.Allan Stares* ..... 21  
 Love is... not a feeling? — *Rob Schouten* ..... 22  
 Love is never leaving your partner behind ..... 24  
 Lasting Legacies — *Christine Farenhorst* ..... 25  
 Googling Google — *James Dykstra* ..... 27  
 Two for the Zoo — *Margaret Helder* ..... 28  
 Soup & Buns — *Sharon L. Bratcher* ..... 30  
 Puzzle Page — *Bob Leach* ..... 31  
 Crossword Puzzle Series 16, No. 3 ..... 32

# Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



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# Nota Bene

## News worth noting

by Sarah Meerstra



### Are American "Christians" Christian?

A recent study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life has found that many Americans who call themselves Christians either disregard or disagree with some key Christian doctrines. In particular, 40 per cent of evangelical Protestants will not say that Christ is mankind's only hope for salvation. They not only think non-Christians can be saved but they also name groups, such as Jews and even atheists, as also having access to eternal life.

Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary calls these findings a "crisis," saying that they are an indication that churches are not clearly presenting the truths of the Bible to their members. "It's an indictment of evangelicalism and evangelical preaching," he says. "Our first responsibility is to present what the Gospel really is, to call people to faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ."



One possible problem with this study, however, is that it relied on religious self-identification. Says one commentator on the study, "These may be people who wear the team shirt but haven't played the game in decades. That could explain why they're outside the doctrinal lines."

Source: *USA Today*, December 18, 2008

### Muslim hate OK

In a move that only serves to further discredit the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) the body has dismissed a complaint against a Montreal imam who has published an online book which calls for the extermination of homosexuals and lesbians.

The book also talks about other groups – it claims that "infidels" (all non-Muslims) "live like animals," and that they are "evil people [who] love perversity." Jews are said to "spread corruption and chaos on earth," while "men are superior to women and better than them."

The document includes statements that gays "spread disorder on the earth," and that homosexuals and lesbians should be "exterminated in this life."

Marc Lebuis, the Quebec man who filed the complaint, did so to test whether or not the CHRC would deal with it in the same way as the Alberta Human Rights Commission dealt with pastor Stephen Boisson, who was essentially ordered to never again publicly speak on the Biblical position on homosexuality and to offer an official apology for his words.

Conservative journalist Mark Steyn, himself a victim of the CHRC, wrote on the matter, "I support the right of Imam al-Hayiti to say exactly what he likes. But... if it's okay for Imam al-Hayiti to say homosexuals and lesbians should be 'exterminated,' why is the Reverend Stephen Boisson under a lifetime speech ban merely for objecting to gay marriage?"

Why indeed?

Source: No Apologies, December 18, 2008

### Freedom of Conscience for US healthcare workers

The outgoing Bush administration has passed a final regulation that en-



sure the right of pro-life healthcare workers to refuse, for reasons of conscience, to partici-

pate in performing an abortion. The regulation came into effect on January 20, the same day as pro-abortion Barack Obama's inauguration.

Source: LifeSiteNews.com, December 18, 2008

**If kids ruled the world**

In a recent study of children aged 10 and under, researchers asked kids what rule they would make if they were king or queen of the world. The most common response? They would ban divorce. Banning bullying came in second place.

When questioned on other topics, researchers found around two thirds of children said they were “happy,” while 17 per cent said they were not. They felt that the best thing in the world was “good looks,” and the very worst was “being fat.”

About 80 per cent thought they would probably get married one day, but only 66 per cent thought they would have children – and most only wanted 1 or 2.

So it turns out you don’t have to be smarter than a fifth grader to know that divorce should be banned. But the next generation isn’t as insightful when it comes to understanding what a blessing

children are, or when it comes to seeing through the shallowness of beauty.

Source: *The Daily Telegraph*, December 14, 2008



**Some good news for the Family**

Although it seems like family values are under attack in so many ways around the world, the World Congress of Families, in its January 2009 newsletter has highlighted a number of *positive* developments for the family that occurred in 2008.

- These include:
1. The nomination of a pro-life woman as the Republican vice-presidential candidate
  2. The passage of Proposition 8 in California, which defines marriage as the union of 1 man and 1 woman
  3. The passage of a law against human-trafficking in the United States
  4. The appointment of Darrell Reid, family advocate and former president of Focus on the Family Canada, as director of policy for Prime Minister Stephen Harper
  5. An acknowledgement by the British Association of Psychologists that abortion can cause psychological problems in women, including depression and substance abuse.
  6. A UN study which found that the rate of AIDS infection in some African countries is declining, and that this decline correlates with increased abstinence.

Source: World Congress of Families, January 2009

**Same-sex marriage may be forced on all EU countries**

A resolution has been passed by the European Union that would compel all member countries to recognize and give status to same-sex marriage, whether they currently allow it or not.



The resolution, authored by Italian Communist Giusto Catania, calls upon EU member-states to guarantee access to “sexual and reproductive health and rights,” terms universally accepted as including abortion and sterilization as well as the recognition of same-sex unions.

Anthony Ozimic, president of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, responded to the passage of this resolution, saying, “Religious leaders and pro-life groups throughout Europe must shake off their complacency about the EU and mobilize religious believers for pro-life action. The message everyone must hear is that the right to life is the most important political issue, because the right to life is the indispensable foundation of all other rights.”

Source: LifeSiteNews.com, January 14, 2009

**Research says. . . or does it?**

When a recent study claimed to have found that teenagers who take virginity pledges are not much more likely to remain chaste than those who do not take one, the mainstream media went wild. “Virginity Pledges Don’t Stop Teen Sex,” and “Premarital Abstinence Pledges Ineffective, Study Finds,” were among the many newspaper headlines devoted to this topic. Apparently this was big news, another victory for mainstream culture and free sexual expression.

There was one small problem, though: this was *not* what the study had found. In fact, the study did not compare pledging teens to everyday, “mainstream” teenagers, but instead compared them to equally religious and conservative teens who simply never made an official chastity pledge. And here, there was not much difference. Had “pledgers” been compared to teenagers at large, the findings certainly would have been different.

In the study, both groups were markedly different from the majority of

teenagers. Whether they had made a virginity pledge or not, they were less likely to engage in sexual activity, less likely to get pregnant and, if they did lose their virginity before marriage, they were likely to do so at a considerably older age than most teens (21 compared to 17).

What set these teens apart was not the pledge they took or didn’t take. Rather, it was a home and church community that supported chastity and encouraged teens to save themselves for marriage.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, January 6, 2009



# Islam keeps gaining respect

**In the West we are becoming ever more understanding towards Islam, without actually learning anything about it.**

by Rene Vermeulen

It is interesting to see how people's attitudes are changing towards Islam. It is not that long ago that Islam was regarded somewhat negatively by the press. Today that has decisively changed. Some of that has to do with the perceived offence of racism – we are far more sensitive to that today than before, thus when Prince Harry referred to one of his fellow officers in training as “our little Paki friend from Ahmed” he was called racist. But as someone pointed out in our local newspaper this sort of thing has been going on for years – most nationalities have some sort of nickname. In Australia the English are referred to as “Poms,” the Italians as “Dings,” and New Zealanders as “Kiwis.” And then there was this boy from our own John Calvin School who had to go to a government school for an assessment. While there he was recognized as coming from John Calvin and consequently called a “Dutchy.” And I could go on. But this will do for now.

We've become more sensitive to words today but less sensitive about more important matters. What is far more offensive is that it is reported that in some Muslim dominated parts of England, clergymen who wear “dog collars” as part of their daily attire and who therefore stand out in a crowd have been warned to change to more civilian dress for their own safety. It is not safe to be recognized as Christian clergy in these areas.

## Unassimilated

Since the election of the Labor Government of Mr. Kevin Rudd the number of boat people coming to our shores has increased again. For those who smuggle these people into Australia there is big money to be made and for those who are happy to pay money to be brought here there is much to look forward to. Under the previous Howard government the number trying to get to our shores had almost dried up, but this government is getting known for being more welcoming. As part of that process the Australian navy brings these people to

shore, sends the smugglers to be punished and takes their passengers to Christmas Island to be processed. For this purpose the Howard government had built a facility to hold such people. This facility cost some \$400 million and before they were elected, the Labor opposition had vowed not to use it, as they regarded it as a prison. However with the increasing numbers now arriving they need to put them somewhere, and guess what, this facility was opened to house them. There they are catered for, fed and clothed and given spending money while their applications to settle in Australia are being considered.

Most of those seeking an opportunity to stay in Australia come from Muslim countries. The situation in their country is often atrocious and Australia is like paradise to them but when they arrive here many still seek to retain their original way of life. What I mean by that is that in many cases their approach to others in the community is colored by beliefs that they claim are taught by the Koran.

## Little known embarrassing aspects

While thinking about this I received a magazine called *Life News* which introduced me to Coptic priest Zakaria Botros. He is a bearded, bespectacled cleric who is making big waves in the Muslim community – *WORLD* magazine reports that his TV show reaches as many as 60 million in the Arab world. *WORLD* also named him their “2008 Daniel of the Year,” this Christian magazine's equivalent of a “Man of the Year” tribute.

Botros's specialty is examining “little known but embarrassing aspects of Islamic law and tradition.” Botros speaks and reads classical Arabic and hence can speak with authority about what the Koran teaches. Unlike Christianity where the Word of God is held authoritative regardless of the language it is in, Muslims regard only the classical Arabic as authoritative. All other languages in which the Koran appears are regarded as “interpretations” not translations.

In the article it is pointed out that there are two sides or two faces to Islam. Let me quote what Botros writes:

“In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, many Muslims (and non-Muslims driven by political ends) worldwide have attempted to present Islam as a religion of peace and love, wanting to distance it from those shameful and brutal occurrences. . . they say that there is no violence in the essence of Islam. It is obvious however that the perpetrators of these acts base their dependence on violence on clear and indisputable verses of the Koran, represented clearly in a statement by Osama Bin Laden on the CNN network. Based on this premise, Bin Laden, the Taliban and the Philippines Muslim group Abu Saiaf, among others, have openly declared war against the United States of America in the name of Islam, using quotations from the Koran such as:

‘And those of the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) who aided them (the unbelievers), Allah (god) did take them down from their strongholds. And cast terror into their hearts, so that some ye slew, and some ye made prisoners. And He made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods’ (Surah [chapter] Al Ahzab 33:26-27).

Many are then confused: is Islam a religion of violence, or one of peace? When we actually study the book of Islam, the Koran, we discover that Islam has two faces. Each of these faces represents a certain stage of Mohammed’s character: one in Mecca, and the other in Medina.”

Botros then goes on to explain that Mohammad while he lived in Mecca, and was just starting his preaching and had few followers, presented a peaceful face to the world. But after he moved to Medina in 622 AD he was gaining more and more followers – an army of followers – and he started talking about spreading his religion by the sword. This is the later, more violent, face of Islam that is evident in many passages in the Koran.

Botros’s has a book on this subject on his website, called *The Two Faces of Islam* available for free download if you want to learn more. I recommend that you do look it up at [www.fatherzakaria.net](http://www.fatherzakaria.net).

### Even Christians are confused

Another writer on this subject is Bill Muehlenberg, well known in Australia as an ethicist and theologian. In an article titled “Islam and Fifth Columns” posted on his website ([www.billmuehlenberg.com](http://www.billmuehlenberg.com)) on November 10 of last year, Bill relates how a Muslim Iman and a Christian pastor from Nigeria toured the country in a “The Iman and the Pastor” tour. They had been invited to speak at the Parliamentary Christian Prayer Breakfast in Canberra. Their tour was being sponsored by various Islamic councils who hoped that the event would convince Non-Muslims that genuine Islam is a “peaceful, friendly religion.”

At the Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast the two of them were given the floor to make their case. So, as Muehlenberg notes, “what we had was the Christian Prayer Breakfast be-

*Clergy in Britain have been advised that wearing their “dog collar” might make them a target for violence.*



coming a stage for Muslim evangelism and indoctrination.” Muehlenberg continues:

“The Iman did a great job of making the case for Islam. He did all the usual tricks of the Muslim trade. We were told that Islam is really a forgiving and tolerant religion, that Muhammed was a peaceful and likeable guy, and that the differences between Islam and Christianity are really not all that great. Indeed, the Iman happily quoted several verses from the Quran, informing us what a religion of peace and forgiveness Islam is. Never mind that he quoted from the earlier, peaceful Meccan passages, and not the later, violent Medina passages. But the Islamic doctrine of *naskh* (abrogation) declares that whenever there is a conflict between verses, the later ones take priority over the earlier ones. . . .

“The seminar at the Prayer Breakfast served the Iman well. The Iman had a captive audience of Christian leaders to whom he could push his Islamic agenda. And given the many times the audience applauded, and the standing ovation (by at least half the audience) at the end, he looks like he was very successful indeed.”

Why are we so foolish? As Muehlenberg notes, Western Christians are happy to open up their Christian events to Muslim evangelists, but any reciprocal action “would simply result in quick and sudden death.” Even at this compromised breakfast the contrast between Christianity and Islam was made evident; one of the other speakers was a Mama Maggie Gobran from Egypt, who does “Mother Teresa-like” work taking care of 30,000 children who have been abandoned in the garbage dumps of Cairo. Why are these children in such dire straits? Muehlenberg explains:

“They are mostly dhimmies, or second class citizens, in Egypt. They are mainly non-Muslim kids who have been marginalized and oppressed by Egyptian Muslims. All around the Islamic world Christians live in second class citizenship, replete with torture, deprivation and death at the hands of their Islamic masters.”

Muehlenberg ends his article by noting that the Lord will not share his glory with any other. The West needs to understand the true face of Islam, but before that can happen, western Christians need to learn the same lesson. There is only one God, and as Muehlenberg concludes, “He will not honor those who seek to put Jesus and Mohammed side by side, on the same platform as two equals.”

# THE KID

by Gerda Vandenhaak

Half his head is shaven. The middle part is green and the right side bright orange. He is clean, very clean. His red jeans are ripped, to show his boxer shorts. His torn T-shirt is white and clean. Lots of piercings; huge earlobe holes, like some African tribesman. Have not seen that since 1954.

He is talking to a crying old Native man. I see him going to the coffee counter and returning with a coffee and a bun and giving it to the Native man. That was the last I saw of him that day.

Two weeks later he wandered into the kitchen while Sue and I were trying to figure out how to feed about 80 people on 30 eggs and 72 buns. First we decided the staff would not eat that day, so no worries as to sticking to my diet plan. Someone brought in a hot apple strudel, six inches by twelve. We looked at it and just laughed.

He stood in the doorway as we boiled the eggs – very small eggs, not meant for sale and therefore donated to the shelter. He got in my way as I was peeling the eggs. Suddenly he found himself with a spoon and knife in his hand. “Cut the eggs right through the middle and scoop out the egg, dump it in the green bowl.” The old lady, me, had spoken.

He looked at me funny and went to work. One of the guys ran out and got a jar of Mayo. In no time at all, we had egg salad on the buns and got the kid to bring out the trays to the hungry.

When all the buns were gone and the apple strudel still on the counter, the kid got busy. He ran to the back freezer and came back with ice cream – two half full pails, chocolate and strawberry. It was just the two of us in the kitchen. He found the styrofoam soup bowls and had the plastic spoons. We divided the strudel in some 60 pieces and added two kinds of ice cream. When he carried the first tray out, he was greeted with a shout of “DESSERT!” Sue came back and took the second tray.

Again it was just the two of us working together. When everything was gone, he suddenly said: “The way I live I have about 10 to 15 years to live.” “So do I,” I informed him dryly. He glanced up at me with a stunned look on his face.

“I had fun,” he said. “Got drunk every day, that’s why I’m here. Community service. Can’t wait to get back to drinking.”

“First time?” I asked him.

“No, the second and the last time,” he said.



I agreed and told him that the third time would probably be jail and even more fun.

He asked, “Well did you have a fun life?”

“Sure did and no splitting headache in the morning. Besides that I can even remember the fun I had.” I asked him if he’d ever played in a band, toured Europe by motorbike or traveled all over the world. I told him that I completely understood that going to a bar and spending the evening drinking and then staggering around with a splitting headache was, of course, much more fun. But at least I had fun for more years than he had had.

We cleaned the kitchen, no longer talking. Before he left, he told me he had six more hours to serve and probably would not see me again. I agreed with him and told him I realized that it would be jail for him. He left but came back a little while later. “Look,” he said, “if I ever want to be told off, can I look you up?”

“Sure, be glad to,” I replied. We grinned and shook hands! So now there is another kid in my prayers and I do not even know his name.

*Gerda Vandenhaak’s take on the second greatest commandment has her preparing meals for the hungry – and scolding scamps – at a local homeless shelter.*



# ***What's Undemocratic About it?***

**In December the NDP, Liberals and Bloc almost overturned Canada's Conservative government; Christians had reasons enough to be upset, but had no grounds for calling it a coup**

by Harold Ludwig

"But that's undemocratic!"

This was among the mildest of accusations levelled against three of Canada's political parties in the waning days of 2008 as Canada faced the prospect of a "coalition" government.

Let's deconstruct the events that precipitated this political crisis in normally calm Canada. On October 14, 2008, the Canadian electorate pronounced its judgment and returned a larger contingent of Conservative MPs to Parliament than in the previous election of 2006, although with a barely changed percentage of the popular vote. It was not the result many Conservatives had hoped for – they wanted a majority, giving them a lock on government for the next four years. Once again, the government would have to depend upon at least one of the other parties to support them to get legislation passed in parliament. This is something we had been getting used to over the past number of years with successive minority governments.

## **Cut our funding?**

What then precipitated this most recent political crisis? There can be little doubt that it was a result of the reaction to the economic statement issued by the Minister of Finance in November. This statement was to be the government's response to an increasingly shaky world economic situation, telling Canadians how their government was going to deal with it. Part of the statement dealt with some measures to cut expenses. Strangely, one of the things the government decided was to eliminate the funding of political parties by taxpayers, which was brought in by the Liberals under Jean Chretien. Regardless of what one might think of this scheme (and I happen to think it's wrong), the inclusion of this measure in the economic statement was a red flag waved in front of the other parties and something they could not let pass without protest. The Conservatives are the only one of the parties that successfully fund much of their operations through membership do-

nations; the others rely on this public funding to a large extent and counted on paying off their election debts via this method. Although the parties themselves denied that this was their biggest concern with the economic statement, most political observers would agree that it was the stimulus which led to the next big political development.

The official opposition (also known as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition) Liberal party, having the next largest parliamentary contingent, had discussions with the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Quebecois (a party dedicated to the break-up of the country by separating Quebec). They wanted to come to an agreement which would see the two parties – the Liberals and NDP – form a government to be supported by the Bloc so they could bring in the measures they felt were needed to address the serious financial and economic crisis facing the country. This agreement was unveiled at a news conference featuring the leaders of the three parties.

## **Christians too, caught up in the slander**

This development led to quite an uproar among the public, in the media and in the House of Commons, with accusations liberally thrown around about a "coup d'etat," about this being "illegal" or "undemocratic," and other statements which shouldn't be dignified by repeating them here. Many Christians too were making these spurious accusations and were offended by the prospect of this particular "coalition." Perhaps we should be offended but not because the formation of a coalition is in itself undemocratic.

## **The way it works**

Canada follows the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy which is a *representative* type of democracy. That means that we elect individual Members of Parliament (MPs) who represent ridings or constituencies and who are usually affiliated

with one or another political party. The *convention* – the tradition – is that MPs forming the largest party get to form the government (although parties are not even explicitly recognized in the constitution). Any government must enjoy the support of the House (a majority of the members voting) in order to pass bills and get measures approved. The recently returned Conservative minority government knew that, and had been widely expected to be more cooperative in working with other parties to get their bills passed. It became clear that the opposition parties did not trust the leadership of the government and decided they should try another route. While unusual and even somewhat extraordinary given that there had been an election only recently and the leadership of the Liberal party was in flux, it nevertheless was within the bounds of parliamentary democracy.

We do not elect our governments the way the Americans do, where the president is voted on by everybody in the country and there is a fixed term. No matter how much some people might want to get rid of an unpopular president, for example, it can't be done unless he's impeachable. That's quite different from the Westminster model where a highly successful and popular leader such as Margaret Thatcher could be (and was) removed by a vote of her party's MPs. Even Tony Blair had to bow to pressure from his own caucus and not stay longer than he might have wanted to.

### The way some people think it works

It's true that in recent years our governments have been behaving more as if we have a presidential system since an increasing emphasis is put on the leadership of the Prime Minister. Whether that's a good or a bad development is the subject for another time, but the reality is that much of the criticism levelled at the "coalition" strategy of recent months is based on populist thinking.

Let's remember that Stephen Harper's roots are in the Reform/Alliance party which was a populist movement, particularly strong in Western Canada, where people took a direct role in voting for change. Populist thinking says that the more directly events can be influenced and directed by the voters, the better it is. This is also known as "grassroots" thinking and behaviour. The voice of the people is elevated above that of their representatives and any actions taken by these representatives is somehow less legitimate or democratic if the people are not directly consulted on major changes (via referenda for example).

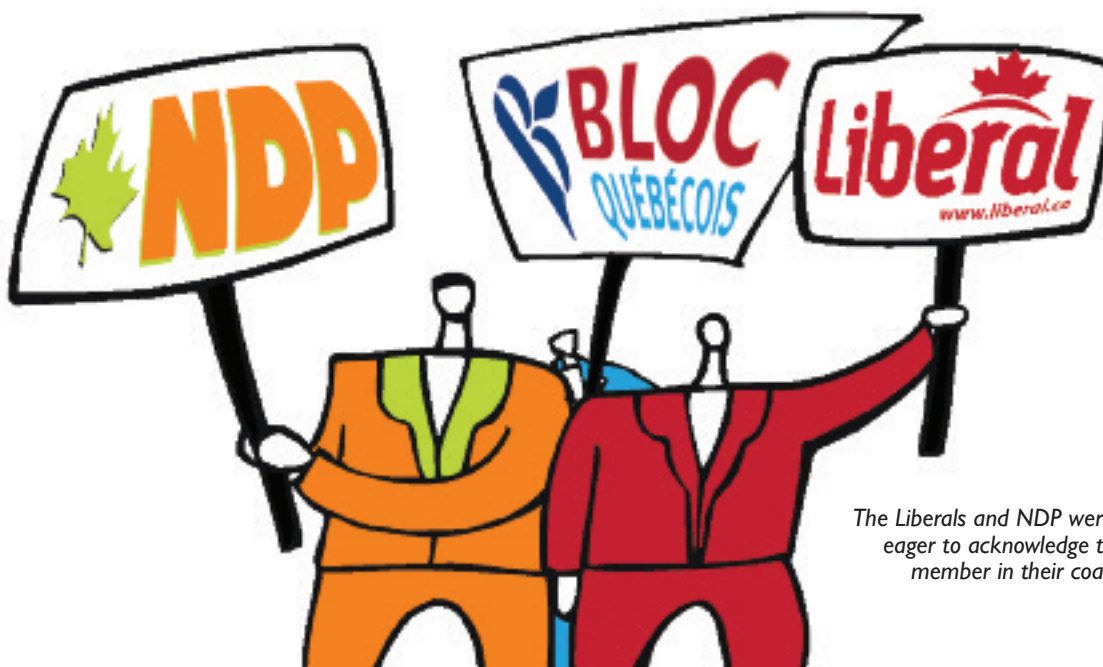
### Conclusion

We need to recognize this attitude as we filter the response to recent political events.

Ultimately, it comes down to how one understands "democracy" and "representative government." The temper of the times is definitely against our Westminster, more "indirect" form of government where elected representatives do the business of the nation on behalf of the electorate.

The Westminster system has its shortcomings, no doubt, but its legitimacy should not be questioned nor should we disrespect those who try to work within the system to bring about the best possible government as they see it. We may not necessarily like the results, but we nevertheless can respect it until and unless the system itself is changed. In the meantime, we should honour (and pray for) all members of parliament who were elected to represent their constituents and to participate in the government of the country.

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*The Liberals and NDP weren't always eager to acknowledge the third member in their coalition*

# Kidney controversy

## Member of Parliament Rod Bruinooge gets flak for defending the unborn

by Mark Penninga

Believe it or not, there are some gutsy and principled politicians. The most recent example is Rod Bruinooge, a Christian Member of Parliament (MP) from Winnipeg South. While Canadians were just recovering from their turkey dinners and getting ready to welcome in a New Year, a media and political storm was ignited over comments made by Bruinooge about abortion. Now that this important debate has been started, we need to keep it going.

### Who is Rod Bruinooge?

Pro-choice critics like to paint pro-lifers as narrow-minded white-haired Caucasian males. Fortunately for him, Bruinooge doesn't fit this description and can't really be put into any box, despite attempts to the contrary. He is a young Metis who explains in a press release at [www.ARPACanada.ca](http://www.ARPACanada.ca) that "Respect for the unborn was passed on to me by my Aboriginal elders and I believe in keeping that tradition alive." His ancestry made him a suitable choice for the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the last session of Parliament. Bruinooge also has a colorful past. Before he entered the House of Commons in 2006, he was known for being the developer of a computer game called "the Stone" and a follow-up movie documentary fittingly called "Stoners." He also started the Winnipeg International Film Festival and served as its director until 2006.

In December, shortly before igniting the political storm on abortion, Bruinooge was elected as the new chairperson of the Parliamentary Pro-Life Caucus (PPLC). The PPLC is a group of MPs who meet once per month to discuss and develop strategies to advance the pro-life cause in Parliament. It is open to all parties and past chairs included MPs from the Conservatives, Liberals, and even the NDP. The incumbent chair was Maurice Vellacott, from Saskatoon.

Having worked for a while in Vellacott's office and having been able to sit in on a couple of PPLC meetings, I have a lot of respect for his courage and leadership, especially when it comes to defending the unborn. Vellacott is not scared to speak out, even though it has relegated him to the backbench of the Conservative Party.

### Kidneys have more rights than the unborn

Bruinooge seems to share the same fire as Vellacott. At the end of 2008 he spoke with reporters and wrote a piece for the

Rod Bruinooge:  
the MP at the  
center of this  
controversy



*National Post* where he exposed the absurdity of Canada's treatment of the unborn. "Your kidneys have more protection than an unborn child until the moment it is out of the woman," Mr. Bruinooge said, according to a December 29 story in the *Globe and Mail*. "I challenge anyone to debate me on that point, because I don't think you can. It is very true. There is no legal value to an unborn child in Canada. I just don't see that as a good bioethical position for anyone to have, let alone a country."

In a piece he wrote for the *National Post* on the same day, Bruinooge explains his point further:

"Most Canadians would agree that you should not be able to remove your kidney and sell it on eBay to the highest bidder. Although it's your body and your kidney, this would not only be a poor bioethical choice, but it is in fact illegal under our laws. Most Canadians would also agree that an unborn child in the ninth month of gestation, moments away from delivery, should not be eligible for an elective abortion. However, regardless of the fact that this would be an extremely poor bioethical choice, it is in fact legal. As such, Canada has far greater protections for human kidneys than we do for human fetuses."

Bruinooge dares to talk about what few other leaders do. In the same article he also explained that abortion is one of the reasons for the collapsing birthrate in this country. This is a fact, and yet few of our leaders have the guts to address it in public.

## Gold can come out of the fire

It didn't take long after these comments were published for our Prime Minister to remind the media that the Conservative government will not introduce or support legislation on abortion. Harper seems to have an allergic reaction to the issue because whenever the word abortion is mentioned he sneezes out these same words. Of course others were quick to lash out against Bruinooge as well. Joyce Arthur, the outspoken leader of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, said that both Bruinooge and the whole Conservative Party are out of touch with reality because "Canadians don't want to go back to the abortion debate. . . . People are happy with the status quo. It's working well" (*Toronto Star*, Dec 29/08).

Stephen Harper and Joyce Arthur probably didn't intend to do so, but their attitude and comments about the status quo working well will only spark more debate in this country. They, along with many pro-choice advocates, have for years been trying to shut down any meaningful discussion and debate. This may work for the time-being, but the truth will eventually be recognized by the public. In fact, polls consistently show that a majority of Canadians already agree and want to see restrictions on abortion (go to [www.ARPACanada.ca](http://www.ARPACanada.ca), click on "Issues and Research" and then select "Pro-Life" for a link to a poll on this). Not only are we the odd-ones out internationally with our void of any laws on the matter, we are also beginning to reap the consequences of over two decades of abortion on demand. Women are hurting, both physically and emotionally, and the hurt can't be hidden for much longer. The declining birthrate also has huge implications on the economy, as we are beginning to feel. Politicians and radical feminists might say that the status quo is working well but the reality is that it is killing both the most vulnerable members of our society and our nation in general.

The truth about abortion has to be exposed. The cowardly politicians who refuse to touch this issue must be challenged. Leaders like Bruinooge and Vellacott have taken steps to this

end and will take a lot of heat for doing so. We have to come alongside of them and publicly defend their views. This applies both to pro-life groups and any individuals that call themselves pro-life. We can't just cheer them on from the sidelines. We have to be engaged ourselves.

Truth and justice can come out of the fire that has been generated by this public discussion of abortion. Now that the discussion has begun, we have to play a role in keeping it going. How so? There are two levels of action. First, on your own personal level some suggestions include:

- Writing letters to the editor of your local papers in which you applaud Bruinooge's commitment to the issue, or expose the absurdity and injustice in this country of tax-funded abortion.
- Consider writing a note of thanks and encouragement to Bruinooge as well. (His email address is [Bruinooge.R@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Bruinooge.R@parl.gc.ca). If you are sending a letter, all mail to the House of Commons is free. Just send it to the MP's name, House of Commons, Ottawa Ontario, K1A 0A6).
- Write a letter to your MP (along with the Prime Minister and Justice Minister) urging them to stand up for the unborn. Many MPs call themselves pro-life even though they don't think now is the time to do anything about it. So even pro-life MPs need pressure to get active. Urge them to join the PPLC.
- Call ARPA Canada at 1-866-691-2772 for more suggestions or any help with acting on these.

The second level of action needs to be taken by political organizations, MPs, and journalists. Speaking on behalf of ARPA Canada specifically, we are communicating with other pro-life leaders and are working towards a proactive strategy for bringing in laws against abortion. This isn't easy because tough decisions need to be made about what kind of laws we can support. Most pro-life organizations (campus clubs, local pro-life offices, local ARPA's etc.) in Canada are very small and would welcome more help and involvement from you. And when it comes time to put a strategy into action, they need the grassroots of the pro-life movement to act on it. Get plugged in to one of these organizations to be a part of this in the months and years to come.

The truth is on our side. There is no shortage of arguments to support the pro-life position. Even more importantly, we have a biblical calling to live as prophets, priests, and kings. How can we be silent in the face of this evil? As Proverbs 24:11-12 states:

"Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?"

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

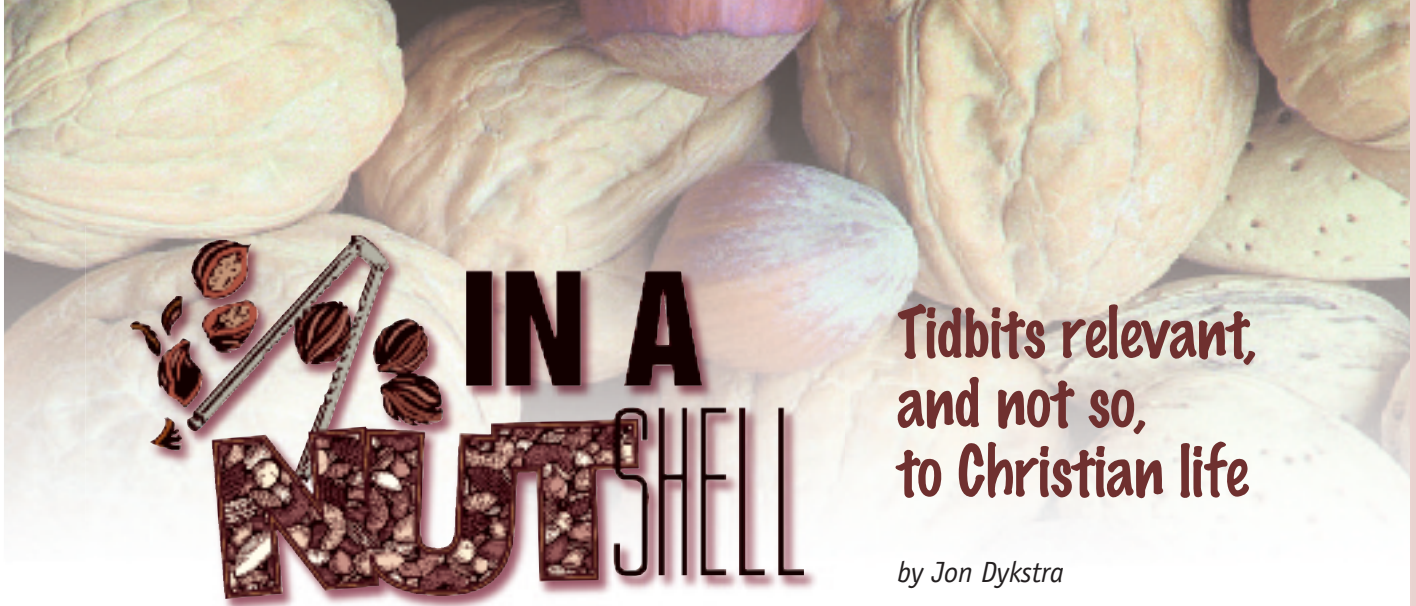


## ARPA Canada's Action Challenge

James 1:22 states "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. . . ."

We have to make sure that our actions testify to our beliefs. In this spirit, ARPA Canada is challenging the Reformed church community to complete at least 500 political action items in 2009.

To record your email, letter, phone call, visit, or other action item, just go to [www.ARPACanada.ca](http://www.ARPACanada.ca) and look for the Action Challenge on the left side of the page.



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

by Jon Dykstra

### Potty training

Financial guru Gary North got this from a subscriber to his “Tip of the Week” email newsletter.

“Once when our daughter came home from college she rented a couple of movies and failed to return them before heading back to school. I called her and told her that I returned the movies but there was a late fee which I paid. To teach her a money lesson, I told her I did not want her to repay me, but I did want her to take the fee (couple of dollars) and flush it down the toilet!

“She was shocked of course and begged and pleaded with me to let her mail me the money, but I insisted. I did not want her money. I wanted her to learn a lesson. It would have been all too easy for her to give Dad a couple of bucks to shut him up. Instead I wanted her to take a couple of dollars, walk to the toilet, lift the lid, throw them in and then flush the toilet, and then stand there and wave to her money as it went down the toilet.

“After several minutes of discussion about how crazy that was and more begging and pleading, she finally agreed and promised me that she would do it. I am proud to say that she is much more responsible about her money. I think it was the most creative parenting I ever did. Well worth a couple of bucks!

“The reason why this worked is because of the graphic nature of the ritual – and it surely was a ritual. It required an action. This action (1) drove home the economic point; (2) sealed point into the memory.”

SOURCE:  
www.garynorth.com/public/4465.cfm  
Reprinted with permission

### Even when they get it wrong, they’re still right

The first woman to earn a Ph.D. in meteorology, Joanne Nova, is a skeptic of anthropogenic – man caused – global warming (AGW). Or at least that’s what the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation claimed in a recent edition of their newsletter. This Christian environmental group was trying to make the point that countless scientists are skeptical of AGW, including Nova, the first woman to earn a meteorology doctorate.

It turns out, though, that the Cornwall Alliance didn’t get all their facts quite right: Joanne Nova does have a Ph.D. in meteorology, and she is an AGW skeptic, but she was *not* the first woman to earn this Ph.D. That honor belongs to Joanne Simpson who is – wait for it! – also an AGW skeptic!

### All alike

Though Europe can hardly be called a Christian continent, it does have a Christian heritage and tradition that, on some occasions, still shouts out the Truth. One such occasion was the funeral of Empress Zita, the former ruler of Austria who died in 1989. She received a royal funeral that last 2 hours, and was attended by more than 6,000. Afterwards her body was loaded into a hearse and pulled by a team of horses, and accompanied by 600 soldiers to the church of the Capuchins, where many other royals are buried. When the procession arrived at the church the doors were closed.

The chamberlain stepped up and knocked three times. A voice from inside cried out, “Who requests entry?”

The chamberlain’s reply was impressive: “Her Majesty Zita, Empress of Austria, crowned Queen of Hungary, Princess of Bohemia, Grand Duchess of Lodomerai, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galizia, Illyria, Queen of Jerusalem, Archduchess of Austria, Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Cracow, Duchess of Lorraine, Salzburg, Carinthia, Krain and Buconia, Grand Duchess of Transylvania, Marchioness of Moravia, Duchess of Upper and Lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, of Dubrovnik and Zara.”

“I do not know her,” came the reply. “Who requires entry?”

The chamberlain offered a simpler response: “Her Majesty Zita, Empress of Austria, Queen of Hungary.”

The response was the same: “I do not know her. Who requires entry?”

This time the chamberlain replied: “Our sister Zita, a poor sinning mortal.” And the gates were thrown open to receive her.

SOURCE: A half dozen newspaper and website accounts which all differed slightly on the details (perhaps due to translation problems), such as all the titles the chamberlain listed, but which corroborated each other on the core of the story. Among the newspapers and magazine were: *People*, April 17, 1989; *The Guardian*, July 10, 2006; *The New York Times*, April 2, 1989.

### Joke of the month

Q: How many bass-baritones in a church choir does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Three: One to climb the ladder and do the job, and the other two to sit there and say, “Isn’t that a little too high for you?”

# “ABORTIONISTS AS EUPHEMISTS

## The curious case of the shifting language

by John Jalsevac

Most abortionists are euphemists. By which I mean merely, to quote Chesterton, “that short words startle them, while long words soothe them. And they are utterly incapable of translating the one into the other, however obviously they mean the same thing.”

If, for instance, you say to an abortionist, “The excessive burden upon the mother, particularly in light of the rights to autonomy, privacy and reproductive freedom, of an unplanned pregnancy precludes any ethical objections to surgically removing the products of pregnancy post-viability, but prior to completion of delivery,” a gentle, indeed a radiant smile will cross his face, and he will dose off as if to a lullaby.

Say, on the other hand, in a forceful, straight-forward way, “Crush the skulls and suck out the brains of your children!” and he will leap from his seat, startled and full of objections.

But the two sentences mean precisely the same thing.

Or, if you were to say, “An analysis of the cost-benefit ratio of carrying to term a fetus found via amniocentesis to have non-disjunction of the 23rd chromosome invariably leads to the conclusion that medical resources would be better allocated by discontinuing the pregnancy,” your average abortion supporter will sway like a child borne carelessly upon the waves of a warm summer sea.

But unapologetically bellow forth the declaration, “Save money! Kill all the disabled kids!” and you will get a very different reaction indeed. But, once again, cold logic says that the two propositions propose precisely the same thing.

### Hiding the baby

Abortionist literature is chock full of a million similar instances. Pro-abortion writers keep a whole stash of such long words at their disposal, which are ushered forth to carefully hide the tracks of any stray meaning that might have crept into their sentences.

I need only reach out my hand and grab the mostly excellent book *What to Expect When You are Expecting*, which my wife, who is pregnant with our first child, has been reading. On pages 42 and 43 we find information about prenatal diagnosis and we are told that in case of fetal abnormalities there are two options: to continue the pregnancy or to terminate the pregnancy. Already, I would argue, we have taken our first steps into the

weird world of abortionist euphemisms with the ambiguous and oddly mechanical word “terminate.” But I won’t press the point. What especially interests me is not this, but that in the paragraph about continuing the pregnancy, we are told all about a “baby.”

But in the next paragraph, which is all about “terminating” the pregnancy, there is no mention of a baby; the baby has been completely replaced with the “products of pregnancy.” What, then, has become of the baby? Nothing at all, of course. It’s still right where it was and no matter how much they wish to do so, our illustrious authors cannot actually make the baby go away merely by changing their language; but what they can do is the next best thing – they can hide the baby, shove it behind the sofa or under the rug, like an embarrassing mess they haven’t yet had the chance to clean up, and the guests are already arriving.

In other words, they can come up with a long word. And so they come up with “products of pregnancy.” And when the “products of pregnancy” are safely and properly “terminated” we can all get on with our lives, displeased that the pregnancy did not “turn out favorable” (an actual quote from the book), but unbothered by either our consciences or any of those pesky handicapped children.

### Please ignore the obvious

Of course, if we were to press the point and ask, “But what are the products of pregnancy?” the authors would have to respond, “A baby.” But they are hoping that no one will ask the question. And many (including, I suspect, themselves) don’t. Which is why up to 95% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are never born: because all we’re doing is “terminating” the “products of pregnancy,” and what could be wrong with that? The answer is nothing at all, unless you happen to prefer precision to muddleheadedness and replace the comfortably cumbrous word “terminate” with the uncomfortably curt “kill,” and the melodious “products of pregnancy” with the wholly unpoetic “baby.” That would leave us with “kill the baby,” or, to use another short and unpopular word, “murder.”

I recall hearing a story somewhere, told by a fellow who attended an abortion debate, where the representative of the pro-life position repeatedly spoke of “killing the unborn baby.” After

the debate this fellow happened to step into an elevator full of pro-aborts, and as the elevator slid down everything was silent, until somebody soberly observed, “‘Kill the baby’ You just can’t argue with that.” If the speaker had ever stopped and questioned why you can’t argue with that, he might now be pro-life.

### Words with no meaning

I take another example at random. In a 2003 article published in *The Nation*, Katha Pollitt complained that “anti-choicers” had coined what she termed the “imprecise” phrase “partial-birth abortion.” This phrase, she says, “has no precise medical meaning and cannot be found in any medical text,” but has nevertheless been widely used by the mainstream media, possibly out of a “fear of seeming too liberal” (not a fear that I myself have ever detected in the media).

Instead, Pollitt very helpfully suggest the terms “dilation and extraction” and “dilation and evacuation.” These terms, she says, are much better than what she calls the “oxymoronic” phrase “partial-birth abortion,” which “with accompanying gory description – crushed skull, sucked-out brains, half-delivered fetus – was a stroke of public relations genius.”

According to Pollitt dilation and extraction (D&E) and dilation and evacuation (D&E) are the proper terms because they describe “actual methods” used for abortions in the second or third trimester. But, of course, if there is one thing that these terms do not do, it is “describe.” She might as well say that the media should always speak of “mastication” instead of “chew” and “perambulate” instead of “walk” because “masticate” and “perambulate” describe actual methods of eating and moving. The thing is absurd.

To most everybody the two D&Es convey not a thing, which is precisely how Pollitt wants it. Stop a man or a woman on the street and say to them, “Dilation and extraction. Define it!” and odds are (unless you’ve stopped a doctor or Katha Pollitt) they won’t have a clue what you’re talking about. Or if you were to say to an acquaintance, “I’m going in for a dilation and extraction today,” they might smile and say, “I pray that it goes well,” and walk away with the vague sense of sympathy that we reserve for people who are undergoing obscure and technical sounding medical treatments that we don’t understand. They very probably wouldn’t at all suspect that you were about to authorize a doctor to suck out the brains of your own child.

If Pollitt really wants words that “describe” the “actual procedures” used in killing a fully formed baby moments before birth she has no option but to fall back on such things as, “punch a hole in the back of the baby’s head,” and “vacuum out the brains,” and, “crush the skull” and “corpse,” which, undoubtedly, are not nearly as long as “dilation and evacuation,” and not nearly as useful in conveying absolutely no meaning at all.

### Let clarity reign

However much Pollitt may object, she will have to face the fact that if medical doctors applied the standards she is advo-

ating to every other medical procedure, all the patients in our hospitals would be extremely confused. If Pollitt fell ill, for instance, and her physician would only tell her that she had Retroperitoneal Fibrosis (an actual name for a condition found in medical textbooks) and that they would have to remove the “products of the illness,” I’m sure Pollitt would be quite put out. She would certainly want to know what the “products of the illness” are and how they are to be removed. But in her world the doctor would merely cluck his tongue at her plebian ignorance and get on with the thing.

So far I have only discussed euphemisms in the abortion debate. But you will find that whenever a “progressive” bioethicist or politician is doing something naughty and not at all popular, they will create a host of long words to ensure that they are misunderstood by everybody except their like-minded colleagues. At the beginning of this piece I quoted Chesterton on this issue. The thing is that Chesterton was not himself writing about abortion, but about eugenics – another horror which very erudite and progressive scientists and politicians were attempting to foist on the British at the time, always under the cover of long words and sentences. And so it is with most every other branch of the culture of death, whether it be abortion, eugenics, embryo research, and all the rest; the culture of death always makes its greatest strides under the disorienting and heady fog of ambiguity.

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# Cultural Depravity and 9/11

Author Dinesh D'Souza argues that it is not the West's Christian heritage that Islamic terrorists find provocative, but rather the West's pervasive immorality

by Michael Wagner

The terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 is undoubtedly the defining event of recent history. It has had a significant effect on subsequent events. Even Canada, which was not directly attacked, was nevertheless impacted. Security is tighter at airports and Canadian soldiers are fighting and dying in Afghanistan, just to mention two notable effects. And, of course, American foreign and military policy was dramatically reoriented after the attacks, as one would expect.

Subsequent terrorist attacks have also occurred in countries such as Spain and the United Kingdom.

If the terrorists are to be defeated and future attacks thwarted, it is important to understand why the attacks took place. Why would people be willing to blow themselves up just to kill innocent civilians in foreign countries? If we don't understand why they attack, then it will be difficult to develop a strategy that can successfully stop them.

## Terror not inherent to Islam

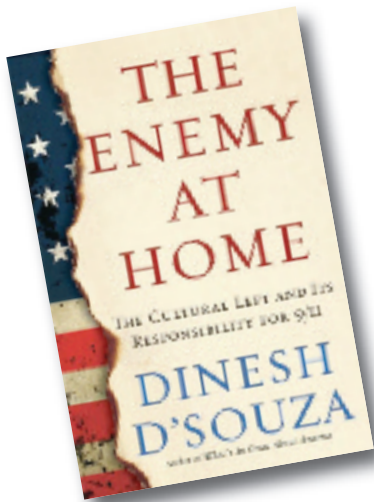
Some people argue that Islam itself is the problem. In this view Islam, properly understood, encourages its adherents to attack and kill those who are not Muslims. Thus as long as there is Islam, there will be terrorism. Stopping terrorism means stopping Islam in some sense.



However, there is a major problem with this view. Islam has been around for approximately 1,300 years, yet terrorism by Islamic extremists is a relatively recent phenomenon. If Islam naturally leads to terrorism, then there should be a 1,300 year history of Islamic terrorism. In the distant past Islam waged war and captured large tracts of territory in Asia, Africa, and even Europe. But that kind of expansionism has not occurred for centuries. Islam has not produced a notable number of terrorists until relatively recently.

One conservative scholar in the United States has spent a considerable amount of time studying the writings of Islamic extremists to discover an explanation for the recent outbreak of Islamic terrorism. Dinesh D'Souza has published the result of his study as the book *The Enemy at Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11*. As you can gather from the title, his thesis looks at some domestic American sources as provoking the terrorism to a certain degree.

D'Souza makes a distinction between two kinds of Muslims: traditional Muslims, who take their religion seriously but do not want to use violence, and radical Muslims who are willing to support terrorism. Both kinds of Muslims see Islam as being under attack from the West, especially the United



The introduction to Dinesh D'Souza's book *Enemies at Home* can be read online at [www.dineshdsouza.com/books/enemy-intro.html](http://www.dineshdsouza.com/books/enemy-intro.html)

States. So both kinds dislike the United States but only the radicals advocate violence to attack the United States and its allies. "Traditional Muslims are best understood as those who practice Islam in the way that it has evolved in the centuries since Muhammad. By contrast, radical Muslims are those who believe that Islam has reached a point of crisis and that violent conflict is both the inevitable and desirable outcome of this crisis."

The important thing to notice is that many Muslims believe that Islam is under attack. Thus the radicals who engage in terrorism believe they are defending Islam. They see themselves as primarily on the defense, trying to protect their religion from foreigners. Their view is warped, of course, but it's important to understand why they feel this way.

### Muslims repulsed by the American Left

Many Muslims look at the immorality and sexual decadence of American culture and are repulsed. Worse, they believe that this kind of culture is being forced on them through influences such as US television, movies and music, as well as United Nations efforts to promote abortion, homosexuality, and other anti-family agendas. American cultural influences are common throughout the world, and they threaten traditional cultures as well as traditional morality. The sexual depravity promoted by the American entertainment industry not only undercuts Christian morality, but also Islamic morality. This is offensive to millions of Muslims and contributes to Islamic hatred of the United States.

Why do so many Muslims hate the US and support terrorism? D'Souza answers that

Their main motive is the belief that the fate of Islam is at stake. Bin Laden in one of his videos said that Islam faces the greatest threat it has faced since Muhammad. How could he possibly think this? Not because of U.S. troops in Mecca. Not even because of Israel. The threat Bin Laden is referring to is an infiltration of American values and mores into the life of Muslims, transforming their society and destroying their religious beliefs. Even the term "Great

Satan," so commonly used to denounce America in the Muslim world, is better understood when we recall that in the traditional understanding, shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Satan is not a conqueror; he is a tempter. It is the cultural Left in the United States and other Western nations that supports the sexuality immorality that repulses so many Muslims. This is one way in which the Left has contributed to the recent rise of Islamic terrorism. "The left has produced a moral shift in American society that has resulted in a deluge of gross depravity and immorality. This deluge threatens to engulf our society and is imposing itself on the rest of the globe. The Islamic radicals are now convinced that America represents the revival of pagan barbarism in the world, and 9/11 represents their ongoing battle with what they perceive to be the forces of Satan."

### A shared revulsion

Of course, this view is warped. But it has a foundation in reality. D'Souza writes, "The radical Muslims are convinced that America and Europe have become sick, demented societies that destroy religious belief, undermine traditional morality, dissolve the patriarchal family, and corrupt the innocence of children." This is not the only reason they hate the West, but it is a major contributing factor. And importantly, it leads to support for terrorism among many people in underdeveloped countries. "A good deal of bin Laden's support comes from non-Western people who see him as defending a traditional social order.

Many conservative Christians are aware of the efforts of various United Nations agencies to push an agenda of radical social liberalism. Abortion and homosexual rights, for example, are frequently considered to be "human rights" by UN officials. UN activists want to push these kinds of practices onto countries around the world, including Islamic countries. And with some justification, many Muslims see this as part of "a powerful Hollywood effort to push American culture throughout the world."

### Can Christianity cure Islamic terrorism?

Terrorists who target innocent civilians are clearly evil – there is never a justification for committing such acts, such as the 9/11 attack. To prevent this kind of Islamic terrorism it will be necessary to reduce the provocations that lead to extremism. Defeating the radical social Left in the Western countries would certainly contribute to that goal. In this respect, conservative Christian efforts to defend the traditional moral basis of the West do more than just preserve our country for our children and grandchildren. It may even defuse some of the Islamic anger towards the West and thus lead to reducing the threat of Islamic terrorism.





# *The blessings of an imperfect ministry*

by Jane deGlint

It is a sad fact of life that in our imperfect world everyone makes mistakes. Without exception. The imperfections which present themselves in infancy are not outgrown during the adolescent years. Through proper rearing and appropriate correction children are taught acceptable behavior. But no amount of upbringing will deliver a perfect adult. Imperfection is the mark of living in a broken world.

Yet, this rather obvious fact is often intentionally overlooked. At a very young age a child discovers in himself the possibility of claiming innocence even in a case of blatant disobedience. Many adults bring it to the next level. They develop an attitude that effectively preempts accusations. With inborn shrewdness they cultivate an air of indignant disbelief about the mere possibility that they could ever commit an error in judgment.

If a shortcoming is so obvious that it cannot be denied, there is the option of justifying it. Excuses abound. "My mother put my notebook in the recycling bin." "The dog ate my agenda." "I did not realize that my annual report was due for this meeting." "No one told me that it was against the by-laws of this town to take out the sidewalk." "The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." With our denial of responsibility we elevate ourselves to a state of perfection beyond reproach.

The matter is more complicated yet. Many people apply a double standard. Admittedly, they make mistakes. Inadvertently they may drive through a red light. In the past they may have bent the rules a little to lighten their tax load. Occasionally they may cast a lustful glance at the curves of a luscious woman. But their leaders must be perfect. Woe to the leader with moral flaws! Woe to the leader who does not promote my cause! Woe to the leader who signed an agreement that failed!

However, it is a sad consequence of living in a broken world that neither we, nor our leaders, are perfect. This is not only true for the world. It applies to the church as well.

If there is any place on earth where shortcomings are acknowledged, it is in the church. At the heart of the church lies the need for the confession and forgiveness of sins. The leaders in the church have the task to bring the light of salvation into the darkness of the believers' lives. With the Word they expose and comfort, they give guidance and correct.

Even though the pernicious imperfection of believers is acknowledged in the church, the unspiritual ways of dealing with sin are not totally eradicated. There is no doubt that at times believers do not take responsibility for their sins.

There is also ample evidence that believers do not always have the perfect approach to their leaders. Some leaders are revered like gods. They can do no wrong. The majority of the people follow them blindly and their excesses are justified as spiritual privileges. On the other hand, certain leaders suffer greatly under the constant and cutting scrutiny of members of their congregation. Their ministry becomes a burden to themselves and bears little fruit among the believers. In either case, whether the minister is idolized or vilified, the work of the Spirit is obstructed.

.....

***Neither we, nor our leaders,  
are perfect***

.....

Between these extremes we do well to accept without grudge or judgment that our pastors are not perfect. God calls imperfect men to shepherd his flock. In order to come to grips with the real or perceived flaws of our spiritual leaders, it may be helpful to provide some categories.

Some ministers are on the emotional side. They may easily be thrown off by a disparaging remark. Quickly overwhelmed by their workload, they might either doggedly work on, with or without action plan, or they might come to a full stop. Their anger is easily aroused, but they also suffer personally when someone is bereaved, injured or slighted.

Other pastors find it difficult to concentrate during the sermon writing process. The essence or even relevance of an intricate passage in a commentary escapes them sometimes. Occasionally they might wonder why they felt called to become preachers if it takes them so long to grasp the essence of a text.

Then again there are ministers who are better at the academic side of their calling than at their pastoral obligations. They derive great satisfaction from sermon preparation and usually

function well at prepared visits. But they fear unstructured and unpredictable situations, such as the time after a worship service and open houses.

Before we continue our careful and respectful sketch of possible ministerial weaknesses, let us take a moment to speak a few words of support to our pastors. We like to encourage the more emotional preachers to depend on their Lord and Savior for stability and support, casting all the congregational anxieties on him. Those who are bogged down by sermon writing may be revived by focusing on what the Great Shepherd himself wants to say with the passage at hand; he can be heard in every text by those who recognize his voice. The more academic ministers who may suffer from social discomfort can be reassured that their very presence is experienced by other believers as a representation of the Lord; they do not necessarily have to add small talk.

.....

***We do well to accept without grudge  
or judgment that our pastors  
are not perfect***

.....

The ministerial imperfections may extend past weakness of character. A minister is as prone to sin as are all other children of God. Maybe even more so. Satan targets the leaders of the flock. He aims to push the proclaimers of divine peace across the fine line between virtue and vice. He may use a moment of fatigue or frustration to reset the pastor's loyalty. The change might appear subtle, but is fundamental. Confidence based on God's strength becomes shallow smugness. The assurance of divine approval turns into the need for public recognition and material compensation. The fervor for defending the faith turns into an ugly demand for self-justification. A sincere humility changes into hubris – the sophisticated pride that presents itself in a cloak of humility.

Neither the pastor nor his congregation may immediately be aware of the gradual decline in ministerial spirituality. But it will not remain hidden. The minister may assume a slight arrogance, or a grating indifference, or an overbearing pompousness, or an irreverent flippantness. If ever, it is now important to pray for such a minister, not only for his own spiritual wellbeing, but also for the name of the Lord and for the holiness of Christ's body on earth. With spiritual sensitivity one or more members of the congregation must find an opportunity to address their pastor with their concerns. Blessed be the preacher who can accept the hand of healing extended to him by a fellow-believer of his congregation on behalf of the Spirit.

For when the diagnosis of pastoral weakness is guided by the Spirit, it leads to hope and restoration. It shows us again that the Lord of life chooses to employ imperfect servants to accomplish his plan for salvation. Conversions are no boast for



man, but fruit of the Spirit's mysterious work. Growth in faith is evidence of God's presence, not of ministerial accomplishments. The apostle Paul often refers to this miraculous side of his ministry. In spite of his physical and spiritual weaknesses the Lord used him to advance the gospel in a mighty way.

Paul's words to Timothy are revealing and empowering. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom Paul was the worst. He was a blasphemer, and persecutor, a man of violent temper. But he received mercy so that in him, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus himself might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who were to receive faith and eternal life. Not to Paul, nor to those who came to faith in Jesus through his preaching, but to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory, now and forever! (See 1 Timothy 2: 12-17.)

The contrast is stark: a holy God and a decaying preacher. But God takes the dry bones of his servants. He makes them strong again. He dresses them with spiritual muscles and nerves of faith. He envelops them with the breath of life. On this breath they will herald the tidings of salvation in Christ Jesus.

A faithful pastor does not take his special calling for granted. He will make time to restore himself – physically, emotionally, mentally, and foremost spiritually. Guided by the Spirit he will watch his life and doctrine closely, saving both himself and his hearers (see 1 Timothy 4:16).

Graciously God blesses the labors of his faithful preachers. Imperfect sermons reap a harvest of growth in faith. With their eyes toward God the believers produce an increase in good deeds, which they dedicate to the name of Jesus. Awkward words become convincing when the Spirit adds his power. A prayer without fluency can connect the believers to the throne of grace. In spite of incoherence the Lord can use a sermon to heal a broken and contrite heart. The weakness of a God-fearing preacher brings out the strength of his Lord.

The blessings of such imperfect ministry abound. The hearers will understand their own shortcomings. Rather than coming up with excuses, they will confess their sins and taste the joy of forgiveness. They will treat their leaders, both spiritual and secular, with respect, not as pleasers of men, but as children of the Most High. Without dwelling on their weaknesses and imperfections, they will employ their talents in the service of their Lord.

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.  
"From the house of the LORD we bless you." – Psalm 118:26*



# Pondering Love

by D.Allan Stares

Love is an interesting concept that deserves a good discussion on a regular basis. It needs to be discussed around the kitchen table. It needs to be discussed from the pulpits of your churches. Love needs to be discussed in our Bible studies and schools and youth groups.

I am not sure that it is a suitable topic for the mass media.

Every February, our society spends a considerable amount of time thinking about love in its many variations. Most of the time what is being discussed is the gooey commercialized version of love that is fed with chocolate and candy and Valentine's Day cards. It is the love that is built upon diamonds and dinners and flowers. It is a love that is easy and may even make us feel wanted and loved, but it is not love.

This shallow, product-oriented love is not necessarily a bad thing unless we begin to imagine that this actually is love. The difference between this love and real love is the difference between a farm pond and an ocean.

## Some basis for confusion

Now water, wherever it is found, has certain properties which can, at first glance, make all collections of water seem very similar. All water will freeze, though fresh and salt and contaminated water will freeze at different temperatures under different pressures. All water will vaporize with enough heat, but again the amount of heat needed will depend upon pressure and other factors. All water allows for the floating of boats and other carefully constructed craft, but salt water allows for more buoyancy than fresh and water with bubbles surfacing allows for very little buoyancy at all.

But regardless of the similarities, mistaking the pond out behind your barn for the Atlantic Ocean is prone to make you seem a bit silly. It will certainly reveal to all that you have never seen the Atlantic Ocean, or any other ocean for that matter. A discerning friend may mention your silliness to you and may begin to doubt your sanity if you persist in your conviction. He will most certainly stop asking for your opinion on bodies of water.

But these are trivial problems in the large scale. You can live with this odd opinion, just so long as you don't decide that this water would be a good place to launch an ocean liner.

If you do, it is at this point, as the waves displace all of the water and the liner becomes firmly grounded in the bottom, that it may occur to you that this was not actually an ocean. You might still insist that you have dropped the liner into an ocean so the problem must be with the liner or the boat builders. Unfortunately, whether you realize the truth or place the blame somewhere else, your liner is still stuck and the cows are going to be thirsty. Calling a pond an ocean is only a problem when you have truly forgotten that it is a pond.

## Delusion

Thus it is with much of what we call love. A quick glance can certainly leave one with the impression that all love is the same. Shallow love can look like love. There is the affection that we expect from love. There is the attention that we expect from love. There is even the illusion of small selfless activity that we associate with love. But all of these surface ripples can serve to hide the true nature of the water beneath rather than give a realistic picture of either the quality or quantity of that water. Unfortunately, many people in our society, and in our churches, for that matter, do not realize that they are about to float an ocean liner in a puddle. Many do not realize their error until the boat hits the bottom.

## Depth

It is ironic that Valentines' Day is firmly placed between Christmas and Easter. The love of Christmas is rooted in an expression of God's great love; a love so overwhelming that He gave his only begotten Son that we might know righteousness. This is a love of commitment and faithfulness. This is a love of beauty and gentleness. This is the love of the perfect for the unlovely. The love of Easter is also an expression of this same great love; it is the love that requires an ultimate sacrifice in the place of the guilty. It is a love of trust and obedience. It is a love of sweat and of tears and anguish. It is a love that we may know, though we struggle to understand.

The love of God is cool deep water that begins at the fathomless beginning and stretches pure to beyond the ultimate end. Why then do we thirst for Valentine's Day?



# Love is. . . not a feeling?

by Rob Schouten

Photo by Alyssa Brown

I think most of us have heard it said that the love which God requires of us is not a feeling. Love for God is not a feeling and neither is love for our neighbor. Even in the context of a wedding service, you may well hear an officiating minister say that the love which characterizes a marriage is not primarily a feeling.

Negativity toward the thought that love is primarily an emotion probably arises from the awareness that love is also a moral obligation. The thinking seems to be that since love is a virtue commanded by God, it cannot be an emotion. After all, emotions are not susceptible to commands. You cannot instruct people to have a specific emotion.

Along the same lines, people will say that just as emotions cannot be commanded, neither can they be promised. For example, when you get married and vow to love your spouse for as long as you both shall live, this is not a commitment to have a specific emotional response to your spouse. Instead, you are binding yourself to specific *behavior*. More than once I've heard it said in a wedding service that the vow to love means a solemn commitment to never stop seeking the good of the person to whom you are getting married.

## How emotions really work

Behind the idea that that emotions can be neither commanded nor promised is an underlying thought about how emotions really work. Most people today appear to regard emotions as more or less beyond cognitive control. Moods and feelings just happen. Because of this, you can ask people to change their minds but you can't ask them to change their emotional state.

In reality, however, it would appear that our emotional state is tied quite closely to what we believe and think about God and about our neighbors. Our feelings about God reveal what we really believe about Him and sometimes this contrasts with what we profess to believe about Him. If we say that we believe in God but have no emotional engagement with the Lord of glory, how real is our faith? Similarly, if we say that we love our fellow Christians but don't actually have positive feelings toward them, how real is this love?

The link between thought and feeling is also evident in repentance. The Bible teaches that repentance includes heartfelt

*sorrow*. That's an emotion. Without this component of godly grief, a professed repentance is not real. Even in human interactions, we can tell when someone apologizes to us without the feeling of remorse. Such an apology is not satisfying because we know that it does not come from the heart. I think everyone understands that the emotion of heartfelt sorrow doesn't just happen. The Holy Spirit brings it about by confronting the sinner with the objective will of God. The feelings that go with repentance are rooted in thoughts about God and His holiness.

## Thoughts impact feelings

If we accept that there is a *link* between what we think and how we feel, then it's not surprising that the Bible commands us to have certain feelings. A *command* to have specific feelings contains an implicit command to have specific thoughts in our minds.

Similarly, a *promise* to have specific feelings includes a commitment to think specific thoughts which give rise to those feelings.

Here are a few examples in which God clearly commands us to have specific emotions. In many places, the Bible instructs us to *fear* the Lord. This command means that we ought to be filled with feelings of reverence and awe for God who is great and glorious. These feelings are at the heart of Biblical religion. God does not want us to live before Him with emotional indifference but with the specific emotion of religious awe.



***Most people today appear to regard emotions as more or less beyond cognitive control***



Then, there are many passages in the Bible which exhort believers to be *joyful*. Rejoice, says the Word, and do so always, in every circumstance. Joy is the emotion we have when we know that something wonderful has happened to us or is

about to happen to us. When God commands us to be joyful, this is a way of saying that we should focus our minds on the amazing things God has done for us and will do for us in Christ Jesus. As we think about His redemptive work, we can have joy, even in the most difficult personal situation.

If the fear of the Lord and Christian joy are emotions and if these emotions can be the object of a command, why would we expect it be different with the emotion we call *love*? Love is the emotion of being drawn to someone or something because that person or thing is good, valuable and worthy. When the Bible tells us that we must love God, this means that it's proper and normative for Christians to experience a feeling of being powerfully drawn toward God. Loving God involves the emotion of being strongly attracted to Him because of the glory of who He is and the wonder of all that He has done.

### Feelings follow thoughts

Similarly, when the Bible says that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, this means that it's normative for Christians to feel an attraction to their brothers and sisters in Christ and more generally for all human beings. If we really know that our neighbors are made in the image of God, and if we understand that our fellow Christians are cleansed in the blood of Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we will be drawn toward them with our whole heart. Our feelings will follow our thoughts.

In conclusion, love is indeed an emotion. It is an emotion commanded by God and promised by us on various occasions as when we make a public profession of faith or when we get married. If at some specific time we don't feel love in our hearts for God, it's likely because we've somehow lost sight of how wonderful God really is. Similarly, if we no longer feel drawn to our neighbor, we have probably failed to reflect sufficiently on our neighbor's true identity as someone made in the image of God. As we begin to think true thoughts about God and humanity, feelings of love follow.

Finally, it should also be said that even when the feeling is lacking, we should still act in a loving manner. Far better, though, is to have the feeling of love accompanied by and leading to the deeds of love. At least, that's how I see it.

*Rev. Schouten is the pastor of Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church.* 

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*Deadline for inclusion in the April issue is February 10.*

# Love is never leaving your partner behind

by James Dykstra

This is powerful, funny (did I mention powerful?) movie that gets off to a lousy start. *WORLD MAG.com* film critic Warren Cole Smith was so overwrought by the first twenty minutes – the “bad acting. . . bad dialogue. . . and bad directing” – that he left.

Don’t read too much into that though; Smith knows a bit about drama, and isn’t above indulging in some. It’s true *Fireproof* won’t win any Oscars, but if Smith had stuck around just a bit longer he would have seen the acting, dialogue, and even the directing take a dramatic turn for the better.

## Love dare

*Fireproof* is produced and directed by brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick, and, like their earlier film *Facing the Giants*, it has an overtly Christian message. The focus this time is on marriage, and specifically the disintegrating marriage of Caleb Holt (played by Kirk Cameron) and his wife Catherine (Erin Bethea). Holt is a well-respected firefighter who doesn’t understand the lack of respect he gets at home. Catherine is a publicist at the local hospital who sees little reason to respect a husband who spends time on the unsavory side of the Internet. So she turns to her friends and coworkers for sympathy, and starts spending extra time with a young doctor who is always available to talk. When the topic of divorce comes up it’s the first time in a long time that Catherine and Caleb can agree about something – they both want out.

Fortunately Caleb’s father isn’t as ready to give up – he challenges his son to try saving his marriage and gives Caleb a book called *The Love Dare*. The book is filled with forty tasks, one to be done each day for the next forty days.

The first few tasks seem simple, but present challenges to a husband who isn’t used to showing affection, and to a wife who isn’t used to receiving it. So when, on Day 2, Caleb has to do an “unexpected act of kindness” for his wife, the best he can think of is making her a cup of coffee. . . which she leaves behind on the counter.

Two weeks later the tasks become more difficult: Love Dare #16 asks Caleb to pray for his wife. Up until this moment Caleb has had no time for God, but as his father tells him, Caleb cannot truly love unless he know the God who is love, the God who expressed His love to us by dying for our sins.

## Strengths and superficialities

It’s here that the movie’s theology comes to the fore, highlighting both strengths and superficialities. Like most Christian movies, *Fireproof* has a “conversion moment,” but the Kendricks take it much further. In other films the principal character’s conversion concludes the movie (and viewers are left with the impressions that life will proceed on in a happily-ever-after fashion)

but in *Fireproof* Caleb’s conversion takes place about halfway through the film and drives the rest of the action. Here, as in real life, conversion is just the beginning of something – a life with God that while wonderful isn’t necessarily easy. However, it’s in this same scene that *Fireproof* reveals a rather man-centered theology: Caleb’s motivation for turning to God seems to be based more on seeking help for his marriage than seeking reconciliation with his Holy Creator. Caleb’s marriage occupies the top spot in his priorities, the spot that should belong to God.

## 3 out of 5

The final word? This is a film any couple would enjoy and benefit from. *Fireproof* may start slow, but it ends strong and earns a solid three stars out of five for enjoyment. It should probably get the same rating for its theology – weak on the Christian basics, but its message on marriage is right on the mark: “never leave your partner behind.”



**Fireproof**

Family/Comedy

122 min, 2008

DVD \$17 US

\*\*\* Back in Print \*\*\*

## ...and we escaped

By the late Rev. G. van Dooren



In the seemingly minor altercations of a rural Dutch congregation, important issues were at stake: the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ over His congregations and the dependability and trustworthiness of the promise of Gods covenant. The deposit of faith had to be guarded over against hierarchism and subjectivism. The true doctrine and the right church polity had to be proclaimed and maintained even in a village church during the dark years of a global conflict.

May this simple narration enliven the study of the history of the church especially among the young people of the Canadian Reformed Churches and may it confirm all its readers in the belief that the triune God still gathers and defends His holy and catholic church.

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# Lasting Legacies

*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

*In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

– 1 Timothy 6:17-19

by Christine Farenhorst

There has been much hand-wringing these days about the economy. The Dow Jones and TSX rise – they fall – they rise a bit – they fall some more. RRSPs have become vulnerable; the word “savings” has attained an iffy meaning; and people have become downright afraid of what they will not have come retirement age.

Perhaps most of us, from the time that we were little, have had a piggy bank – that is to say, we’ve had some sort of safe spot where we stored nickels, dimes and pennies. Sure, nickels, dimes and pennies used to be worth a lot more than they are now – but the point is that most of us have had some sort of saving instinct instilled in us. We don’t like to be dependent. We like to have something for a rainy day, we like to have a nest-egg, something for retirement. And we like to leave something behind to our posterity.

## Bodybuilder, banker and businessman

Wills appear to be a person’s last wish, or wishes, about what they want done with what they are leaving behind. They can reveal much of what was most important in someone’s life. They can be vengeful, manipulative, and controlling as well as merciful, gracious and loving. Some interesting wills of past times reveal this.

Charles Atlas, that man of bodybuilding fame, bequeathed part of his fortune to his eldest son with the stipulation that he be baptized a Roman Catholic. A revealing stipulation! It is very likely that Mr. Atlas was convinced of the salvific efficacy of Roman Catholic baptism and, loving his son, he desired very much that he partake of that efficacy. A sorry vignette, actually.

There’s another anecdote of a businessman who bequeathed acting scholarships to a theater. In his will, however, he stipulated that his corpse be decapitated, the flesh of his

head be taken off by some method, and that the skull be used in the play *Hamlet* as that of the jester Yorick. He gave a reason for the macabre request in a personal, written letter: “All my life I wanted to be on stage. Lack of talent prevented me from realizing that wish.”

The theater accepted the bribe and did as the dead man requested. Such a demand tells you a great deal about the glory-seeking of that businessman. The glory he desired was obviously of an earthly kind and he seemed to care very little about what happened to his immortal soul.

Sometimes people try to accomplish something concrete, in the lives of those they leave behind, by means of a will. A banker, again a wealthy man, added a small footnote, a codicil, in his will. He stated in it:

To my wife and her lover, I leave the knowledge that I wasn’t the fool they thought I was. To my son, I leave the pleasure of earning a living; for twenty-five years he thought the pleasure was all mine.

You can almost hear the man chuckling with revenge – with revenge and hatred. And surely his was a situation which did not come about overnight. God will judge.

## Barrister, babies, and the betrayed

Another husband of an adulterous wife wrote: “To my unfaithful wife I leave only pocket change, the sum not to exceed that received by Judas when he betrayed Christ.”

Again, how sad to die embittered and full of anger and to leave that anger as a last bequest.

A wealthy Canadian lawyer, a Charles Millar, who was born in 1885 and who practiced law around the turn of the last century, left a strange will behind in 1928. Counting on the greed of human nature, he left a judge and a preacher, both of whom

were violently opposed to gambling, large shares in a racing track. They were free to accept or reject, but both accepted. As well, to a group of pastors involved in the teetotaling movement, he left more than fifty thousand dollars worth of shares in a brewery. Fifty thousand dollars was an awful lot of money in 1928!! All but one accepted. To two of his acquaintances, who disliked one another intently, Millar left his vacation home in Jamaica with the stipulation that they share it. They agreed.

The last part of his will, and a part given wide press, was that a fortune would be given to that Toronto woman who would give birth to the greatest number of babies in the decade following Millar's death. Millar's relatives were incensed. Ministers thought it scandalous. But Millar, who had been a good attorney, had written an airtight will. Although it was contested by a number of relatives, the court repeatedly upheld it. In 1938, the judge of Toronto's Surrogate Court awarded \$568,106 in cash. Many women, to be sure, had applied. A mother of ten was disqualified because not all her children had the same father. Another woman, some of whose children were stillborn, was also turned down. Both of these mothers, however, received \$12,500 as a consolation price. The bulk of the estate was eventually divided between four women who each had nine children. And what had such jokes, if you will, benefited the dead man?

### Burnt books, Bernard and no black bows

These were all rather outlandish examples of last wills. But the truth is that even as Isaiah advised King Hezekiah to put his house in order, we must also set our house in order as much as we can before we die. And it is a certainty that we shall die. What then should we make sure we do to set our houses in order?

A last wish, which is often considered sacred by many, is often left by people as well. It costs nothing and again, reveals much of what is in the wisher's heart. Some famous last wishes are interesting. Virgil, for example, wished that his work, *The Aeneid*, be burned. Charles Dickens' last wish was that his mourners ". . . wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hatband, or other such revolting absurdity."

George Bernard Shaw's last wish was that no religious service be held and that his tombstone not take the form of a cross or any other instrument of torture or symbol of blood sacrifice. Napoleon's last wish was that his body be cremated after his head was shaved and his hair divided among friends. W.C. Fields's last wish was that he receive no religious service. He also required, by the way, in his will, that an orphanage for white boys and girls be established and called the W.C. Fields College. He stipulated that no religion of any sort was to be preached there. Such a college never happened.

Sad last wishes! Hopeless last thoughts! Feeble controlling desires ending in. . . And what will they end in?

Although it is no longer the case, there was a time when a man was forced to leave part of his inheritance to his wife and children so that they would not be a burden to the state. It



*One businessman bequeathed his skull to a theatre to be used as a prop in the play Hamlet.*

was said by the Roman Catholic Church that if you left all your money and estate to the church, you were assured of a place in heaven.

### Better than bills and bank accounts

Again, back to the economy. Will it be a disaster if we leave institutions or our children no fat wad of bills, no large bank account? How should you think about tomorrow and what might happen? In no uncertain terms, God has told us about His will – His last testament, so to speak, in the Bible. Indeed, He tells us of treasures which He has specifically designated for His children in heaven. He also tells us not to worry about tomorrow. If we trust Him, if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, He will provide for us.

Contrast Paul's words in 1 Timothy 4:7, with the idle words of the dying who presumed they were in control, of those who presumed that moth and rust would not touch them or their possessions. Paul said, at the end of his life, as a last will and testimony:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.

If you can leave this truth with you children, you will have left them wealth untold.



# Googling Google

by James Dykstra

Google is easily the world's most popular Internet search engine, being used millions of times per day and indexing untold billions of web pages. Google is so popular that it's not just a noun it's a verb. If someone wanted to know the meaning of an obscure word like kakistocracy, they wouldn't tell you they'll search for it on the Internet. No, they'll google it.

If you've ever wondered just what people search for with an index that powerful, Google has made it easy to find out. All you have to do it take a look at the Google Zeitgeist. Zeitgeist is a German word meaning "spirit of the times." If you want to find out what interests people, find out what they're searching for on the Internet.

## Intelligent Americans

The Zeitgeist shows the Americans as a generally intelligent bunch. The search term that increased the most from the previous year was "Obama." In an election year, Americans wanted to know who this once obscure presidential candidate was. In this list the seventh most popular search was for "Palin." This greatly loved or greatly reviled vice presidential candidate from Alaska was also the fastest rising image search on Google, as well as the fastest rising news story beating the *American Idol* TV show, presidential candidate John McCain, the Olympics, and Hurricane Ike to take top honors in the current events category.

## Different priorities in Canada

By contrast, Canadians are not nearly so sophisticated. In an election year, our most popular search was not for a politician like Stephen Harper or Jack Layton, but for the social network site Facebook. In second place was the video site, YouTube; in seventh was the e-mail site, Hotmail; and in eighth position was the Internet portal, Yahoo. That people would be interested in these sites is hardly surprising. While you can waste a large amount of time on any of these sites, you can also find a lot of really neat content on all of them, too. The surprising part was that Canadians couldn't remember where to find a site like Hotmail – located at Hotmail.com – and had to search for it. They couldn't seem to figure out that their most popular Internet sites just needed a ".com" added to them and so they googled them instead. It doesn't present a flattering picture of Canadians.

The tenth most popular search done by Canadians was on "Canada." This really makes you wonder why Canadians needed Google to tell them who they are. Do Canadians have a bigger identity crisis than we realized, or have Social Studies teachers simply done a horrible job of teaching their students what Canada is all about?

## Google<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the oddest part of Canadian web searching was that the sixth most popular term on the search list was Google itself. A large number of Canadians went to an Internet search engine to find out about an Internet search engine. In other words, they went to Google to google Google.

This seems odd until you try it. When you google Google, you find out that Google is more than just a search engine, it's a source for maps, for reading blogs and news sources, for creating and editing documents and spreadsheets, for video, for blogging, for building a website, for e-mail, and even for keeping track of your appointments. Google can, if you want it to, be the tools you need to organize almost your entire life.

## Active on this new medium

So what does the Google Zeitgeist tell us about ourselves? As a country, we're very social and so we like Facebook, Hotmail, and YouTube. That's probably not surprising since most Canadians who use the Internet are fairly young and when young folks aren't on the Net they can typically be found phoning or texting. Googling "Canada" as much as we do, we may not know who we are, but we definitely want to talk to each other.

As Canadians, we've also become a bit lazy. We can't remember the full domain name for Yahoo, or YouTube and so we look it up. It's easier to search for numerous small bits of information than to remember them. Google helps us organize ourselves.

We're also adventurous. It seems that no other nation googles Google like Canada does. That probably means we're using Google's online tools in a more active and developed way than many other nations. We're typing, e-mailing, blogging, and making spreadsheets using these tools allowing us to access our material from anywhere and, potentially, collaborating with anyone, anywhere in the world.

If nothing else, the Google Zeitgeist suggests that many Canadians are at home on the Web and actively making use of it. Thanks to the Internet, we're able to explore Canada more fully, connect more actively, and with tools for collaborating around the globe our home and native land may have gotten just a little bit bigger.

*James Dykstra blogs on technology in the classroom at [www.befuddled.info](http://www.befuddled.info). He used Google Docs to write (and share) this article.*





# TWO FOR THE ZOO

## Jonathan Park and the Parkers glorify God at the Zoo

by Margaret Helder

Zoos not only provide a delightful experience for children and the whole family, but they also provide “teachable moments” in which we can all learn more about these creatures, and by extension, more about the Creator who made them. It is certainly true that some research in advance of a trip to the zoo will cause children to be more excited about certain specimens. I well remember trying to interest our children in a large snake in a pet store cage. We quickly discovered that children who do not know what a snake is, are not going to be impressed by a fat yellow coil parked in the corner of a cage. So background information certainly helps.

In addition, once at the zoo, the youngsters may well be curious about further details concerning the animals. In this situation, discussions about why there are so many kinds of creature will certainly point us to God, the Creator. These are the objectives of a set of four CDs entitled *Jonathan Park Goes to the Zoo*, and a book by Mary and Gary Parker entitled *The Complete Zoo Adventure*.

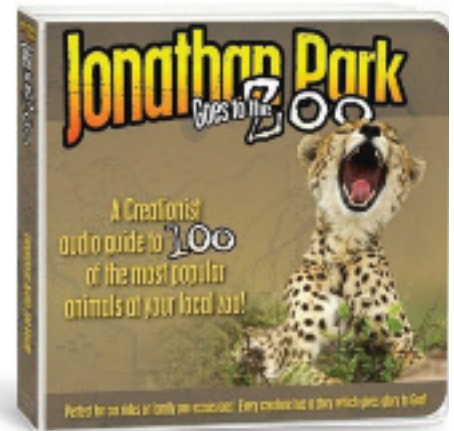
### Jonathan Park

The four audio disks include discussion segments, each two minutes long, on a total of 100 animals. Thus each disk includes information on 25 animals, arranged alphabetically in order from armadillo at the beginning of disc 1 to zebra at the end of disc 4. Jonathan and his father bounce information back and forth between them during each segment. The one may read the signage, while the other replies with additional details. Sometimes the son provides the additional information and sometimes the father does. In the background we often hear realistic background noise such as appropriate animal calls or background chatter, sometimes a little loud, by other people.

Besides interesting biological details, Jonathan and his father call to our attention various connected issues. They may touch on the idea of wise stewardship, or of wise design demon-

### Jonathan Park Goes to the Zoo

The Vision Forum,  
2008  
Four CDs  
(60 minutes each)  
\$25 US



strated in the animal, or the nature of the created kinds with specific reference to the animal in question, or to sudden appearance of this animal kind in the fossil record, or the effects of disease and degeneration and the problems associated with eating or being eaten (a consequence of the fall of man). Lastly for a few animals they point to a suitable Scripture verse dealing with praise and worship of God, the Creator. Obviously for each animal, in its allotted two minute segment, only one of the above topics will be discussed. However over the whole sequence, all these ambitious issues receive consideration.

These disks are recommended by the manufacturer for lengthy car rides or visits to the zoo. For many youngsters in the age range 8-12, it may be difficult to maintain their interest in animals which they cannot see. Then again, if they are at the zoo, it may be tedious to continuously change disks and to search for the appropriate two minute discussion. The benefit of this system is that the Parks are able to discuss a large number of animals, but the lack of visual backup may limit the effectiveness of this package.



### Mary and Gary Parker

The Parkers' hardcover book provides all the visual detail that the Park CDs lack. Naturally the Parkers' book discusses many fewer animals, 27 instead of 100. The book and accompanying information cards are printed in full color, so the presentation is highly attractive. Since the material is provided in print, the Parkers are able to provide more details and deeper discussion than is found on the CDs.

In an attached envelope, the Parker book includes several kinds of cards. There are field journals with space for children to record details of the animals which they observe at the zoo. Also there are name cards for a child's name and group assignment, if any. There is an animal field fact card for each animal and these cards are color coded for animal body plan (for example mustard for hoofed mammals, or blue for mammals with paws, green for birds, grey for reptiles and red for one amphibian). Each animal field fact card has similar categories of information provided in an organized way for quick comparisons. One can compare body coverings, animal diets, when they are active, where they live etc.

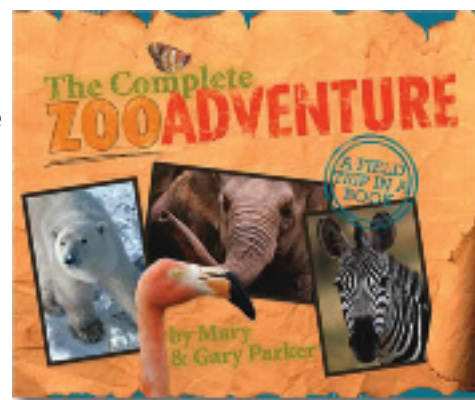
In addition, seven biome cards are provided. A biome is a climatic zone determined by the general availability of water, the temperature range of the area, and the range of seasonal variation. For example, organisms which survive in a dry but cold environment will be different from those characteristic of a dry but hot climate. Thus there are seven basic biomes in the world: tundra; evergreen/boreal forest; desert; deciduous/temperate forest; chaparral/Mediterranean; rain forest and grassland/savannah. These cards describe the features of each zone including a map of where they are located and a scale indicating average temperature. This is provided only in Fahrenheit however – an adjacent Celsius scale would have been nice for Canadians. Also the cards give no indication of average rainfall, which is a very important characteristic of each biome. At any rate the cards are a great idea and should serve to focus a young person's attention on ecology.

In the book proper, there are beautiful two or three page discussions of each animal. This includes a map of where the animal lives, the technical classification according to its body plan, and interesting details concerning its biology. Another feature of these discussions is the provision for each animal of a Bible verse which is then connected to the discussion. Some of the verses seem very remotely relevant to the animal, for example 2 Peter 3:13 (we look for a new heaven and earth) con-

### The Complete Zoo Adventure

by *Mary and Gary Parker*

MasterBooks,  
2007, 160 pages;  
Hardcover;  
\$20 Can



nected to the elephant, and John 8:32 (the truth shall make you free) connected to the rhino. I don't think it was necessary to force a Biblical reference on each creature.

Another feature of the Parker book is the provision of seven devotionals which provide the context for understanding biological diversity and ecology. The first one discusses God as creator and four themes for understanding our world: creation, corruption (the fall), catastrophe (the flood) and Christ (salvation). The second devotional discusses the power of God and design features exhibited by organisms. The third discusses the progression of time and ecological roles of organisms in nature. The fourth discusses days five and six of the creation week. The fifth discusses the fall of man and various consequences which followed. The sixth discusses the flood, and the seventh discusses Christ's work of salvation and our responsibility to exercise stewardship over the earth.

For easy access of information, the Parker book has dividers with tabs to separate the various sections. They also provide a few pages ready to duplicate for activities suitable to early elementary children and later elementary youngsters. Some activity suggestions are more challenging and could be suitable for somewhat older students. The Parkers have also included suggestions for parents/teachers on how to use the material to best advantage.

The Parkers' book is exciting to look at, stimulating to read and it no doubt will provide many families with a fun filled learning experience even if they cannot actually go to the zoo! Their provision of a Christian context to the discussion is certainly helpful and interesting. Many families and school classes will find this book a joy to use. What a blessing to have such excellent resources available today!





# Soup & Buns

## Paying our Bills

Promoting our neighbors' good needs to be part of our business dealings

by Sharon L. Bratcher

There are always two sides to a business deal. We shouldn't only think about ourselves.

I grew up in a family that faced some very difficult financial problems. We never missed a meal, but we bought cheap, and sometimes pined for trendy items that just didn't fit the tight budget. We looked for bargains and pushed for the best deal if pushing was possible, because it enabled us to *have more* than we otherwise would have.

### He needs to eat too

Years later, a Dutch man at church talked with me about home improvements that were being planned at his Netherlands home. He mentioned that his contractor was a relative. Immediately I smiled and said, "Oh, so then that means he'll give you a good deal – that's great!"

To my great surprise, he said, "No, actually it's the exact opposite! Because he is my relative whom I know and care about, I must pay what the job is worth. If it was someone I didn't know, then that person might give me a discount in order to acquire my business. So it actually costs me more to have a family member do the job. Because I care about him, I help his business to thrive. He needs to eat too!"

I had *never* heard such a sentiment. I remember the conversation well because it was one of those domino-effect moments that caused me to think and re-think my dealings with other people. I began to realize that while getting a bargain for myself was good stewardship, loving my neighbor and caring about his financial situation was important too.

### Are we part of the problem?

This applies not only to our personal accounts, but also to our church and business situations. I have worked for two businesses where I have noted the sad fact that it is often the Christians who do not want to pay for what they receive. They push for lower rates, and sometimes do not even pay their bills. They seem to expect an attitude of forgiveness to be exercised towards them. They think that the vendor should be as interested in their "mission" as they are.

What kind of "testimony" does this leave with the person or company that they have hired? One of my co-workers went so far as to refer to being "stiffed" for a bill as "being church-ed." What a sad commentary that is!

Maybe it was a "committee problem" that led up to this. One person in a church or Christian school was excited about a project and he got it all lined up and ready and supposedly approved; then the whole committee took a look at it and nearly had a group heart attack. "This is too much money!" "We could get it cheaper elsewhere!" "We don't really need this – the money should go to something more important!" Now the embarrassed representative must cancel the job, or try to wiggle out of the full cost.

Perhaps there was no contract, but there was effort and/or "understanding." Sometimes there *is* a contract and yet the church/Christian school/organization still decides not to pay. Let me be clear: I am not talking about an inability to pay – but rather a lack of willingness or conviction that it is necessary.

The Westminster Catechism states that "You shall not steal," includes: "truth, faithfulness and justice in contracts and business dealings; giving to every one his due; restitution of goods unlawfully kept from the rightful owners." The Heidelberg Catechism sums it up with "I must promote my neighbor's good wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would like others to deal with me, and work faithfully so that I may be able to give to those in need" (see Matt 7:12, Gal 6:9-10 and Eph 4:28.) "The laborer is worthy of his wages" refers to a minister's pay in 1 Timothy 5:18 but the principle applies to others as well.

### Conclusion

Why do some Christians try to squeeze out every last dollar in their business dealing, or even refuse to pay what they agreed?

It might be due to a lack of trust in the Lord on our part – "If we put out this money, we might have to go without something." Or, it might be due to selfishness on our part – we *like* our money and have a hard time parting with it.

There aren't any excuses. A good revival of "shame" and repentance ought to set in on all Christians and Christian organizations that do not represent the Lord correctly on this matter. Micah 6:8 states: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

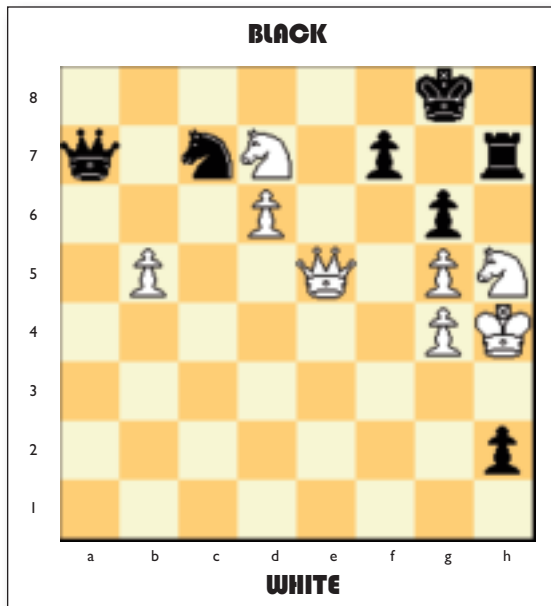
There are always two sides to a business deal. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." (Gal 6:10)



# ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

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

## Chess Puzzle # 152



**WHITE to Mate in 4**

(HINT: 2 Knight Moves then 2 Queen Moves by White, OR Mate in 2 if Black does NOT prolong the Mate as long as possible.)

Or, if it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 3**  
(2 solutions)

## NEW PUZZLES

### Riddles for Punsters #152 "Travel Troubles"

Sam decided to d r \_ \_ e downtown after the night s h \_ \_ \_ at work but when he tried to p \_ \_ \_ his vehicle he could not put it into r e \_ \_ \_ e so he a u t o \_ \_ \_ \_ a l l y assumed that his car needed a major repair. After t r a n s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n of his problem to the towing company, he c l u \_ \_ \_ d his wallet and got g e \_ \_ \_ d up to pay a big bill which was s t a n \_ \_ \_ d for such a repair.

### Problem to Ponder #152 - "Investment Ups and Downs"

There has been a lot of uncertainty lately about economies worldwide. Investors are especially concerned about the ups and downs (mostly downs!) of stock markets. Suppose Kinsley, on advise from a family member, bought 1000 shares of Microhard Corporation at a price of \$8.00 per share. After some time she saw that the shares went up in value by 30% so she bought 500 more shares at the new price per share. After a further 20% increase in value, the shares suddenly tumbled and lost 50% of their value. a) **If Kinsley panics at this point and sells all her shares** at the new low value, *how much money has she gained or lost overall?* b) **If she instead does not sell the stocks** and gradually see the stocks bounce back up by 50% of their low value, *how much money has she gained or lost overall?* c) What if, by some fluke, Kinsley **managed to sell all 1500 shares when their value was highest**, then used all that money to **buy shares when they were at their lowest value**, then saw them bounce back up in value by 50% (as above)? *Now how much money has Kinsley gained or lost overall?*

## SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (JANUARY) PUZZLE PAGE

### Answer to Riddles for Punsters #151 - "Family Shoe Sales"

Why did Roberto take over the family shoe business? If he did not, he would have felt like a h e e l. Yet, that was not the s o l e reason. Roberto liked to be straight - l a c e d about things, liked working out sales t o t a l s and wanted to be the one to b o o t up the store computer each morning.

### Solution to Problem to Ponder #151 - "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" (Continued)

Abdul always rows his boat at a regular speed of 30 m/minute. He aimed his boat toward the other side of the river where his beloved Katrina awaited but a current carried him and the boat downstream at a rate of 10 m every minute. In the Solution to Problem to Ponder #150 it is shown that Abdul was carried downstream by 120 m and that rowing upstream (against the current) at a net speed of 20 m/minute it would take Abdul 6 minutes to travel the 120 m upstream.

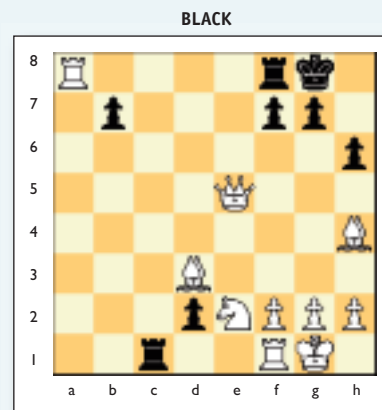
d) Suppose Abdul is so surprised to end up downstream that he just sits there. Katrina, tired of waiting, puts her large, waterproof picnic basket in the water, jumps into the basket, then floats downstream to Abdul. How long does her trip downstream take?

Time = distance/speed of current = 120 m / 10 m/minute = **12 minutes**.

e) Suppose Katrina starts to float downstream at the same time that Abdul starts to row upstream. After how much time will they meet and at what distance downstream from where Katrina started (namely, the spot where Abdul could have rowed to if he had compensated for the current and could have saved us all a lot of calculations!)

When they meet, the sum of the distances they have travelled must be the 120 m they start out apart. Distance = speed x time and they travel during the same time interval, t, so  $d_{total} = d_{Katrina} + d_{Abdul}$  becomes  $120 = 10t + 20t$  thus  $120 = 30t$  and so  $4 = t$ . Therefore they will meet (and hopefully not drift by each other!) **after 4 minutes** and in that time Katrina will have travelled speed x time =  $10 \times 4 =$  **40 m downstream**. (Abdul will have travelled  $20 \times 4 = 80$  m, so their sum is indeed 120 m.)

### SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 151



#### WHITE to Mate in 3 Descriptive Notation

1. QRxR ch KxR
2. Q-K7 ch K-N1
3. Q-K8 mate

#### OR

1. QRxR ch KxR
2. Q-N8 ch R-B1
3. QxR mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Ra8xf8 + Kg8xf8
2. Qe5-e7 + Kf8-g8
3. Qe7-e8 ++

#### OR

1. Ra8xf8 + Kg8xf8
2. Qe5-b8 + Rc1-c8
3. Qb8xc8 ++

#### BLACK to Mate in 2 Descriptive Notation

1. \_\_\_\_\_ QRxR ch
2. KxR P-Q8=Q mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Rc1xf1 +
2. Kg1xf1 d2-d1=Q ++

# Crossword Puzzle

Series 16 No 3

Last month's solution  
Series 16 No 2

	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
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50				51				52				53	54	55
				56				57		58		59		
60	61	62	63			64		65		66				
67						68				69				
70						71				72				

1	W	E	E	D	S		6	A	R	E		9	A	D	O	R	E					
14	A	V	R	A	M		15	M	E	A		16	C	O	R	A	L					
17	R	E	I	N	S		18	E	N	G		19	T	R	A	I	K					
	20	R	E	C		21	A	N	O	L	E		22	C	L	D						
24	F			25	E	26	A	R	S		27	E	M	28	M	A		29	P			
30	31	32								33	S		34	I	S	S	35	36	U	E	R	
37	D	A	N			38	E	A	S	T	E	R	N				41	N	I	E		
42	E	N	D						43	G	A	L					44	C	D	T		
45	R	O	E			46	O	S	T	R	I	C	H			49		50	L	E	E	
51	A	R	D			52	E	N	T				53	O	I		54	L	E	R	S	
						55	N	E	A	R			57	F	R	E	E				T	
						58	T	O	R			60	R	O	G	U	E		62	A	L	L
65	M	O	R	A	L			66		67	Y	A	M			68	U	S	U	A	L	
70	S	T	A	G	E				71	A	L	E			72	T	E	C	T	A		
73	G	E	L	E	E				74	L	E	S			75	E	S	K	E	R		

## ACROSS:

1. Kind of fish
5. Winter mo.
8. Member of the US Military freshman class
13. Mansion
14. Office of Technology Assess.
15. Traveler's destination
16. Get up
17. Mongrel dog
18. Sing like a Swiss mountaineer
19. That identical one
21. Italicized, abbr.
23. Educational degree
24. Little one (suffix)
25. Old French unit of value, or coin
26. Owns
29. Girl's name, or computer language system
30. Am. Society for Testing Materials (abbr.)
31. Drink
32. Fall behind
35. Big bird
37. Become a plant
38. Single unit
39. Master's employee
42. Direction
43. Stare at
44. Nat'l Assoc. of Realtors, for short
45. French sea
46. View
47. Wise person, or herb
49. Moved quickly
50. Before, poetically speaking
51. Inuit knife
52. Division abbreviation
53. Loud noise
56. Level
58. Unnecessarily extreme
60. Line of a letter
64. Wild ox
66. Train tracks
67. Variegated chalcedony
68. Exist
69. Trigonometric functions
70. Dishonest horse dealer of old
71. Prefix meaning reverse of
72. Units of work

## DOWN:

1. Shoppers' vehicles
2. Eurasian herb used to make dropjes
3. Smelly flower
4. Musical movements
5. What's up \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Small case for holding needles
7. Relating to Rene Descartes or his philosophy
8. Animal grouping/classification
9. British bathroom
10. Airport time term
11. Insect
12. Pipe elbow
13. Injure severely
20. Match result
22. Perform on stage
26. Many wives and concubines of one man
27. On one's own
28. Tailor
32. Not tight
33. Fury
34. A cosmetic gel
36. Inhabitant of Uruguay
40. Nostril
41. Cross over
47. Endure pain
48. Every
53. Having existence
54. Medieval kingdom, a.k.a. Kingdom of Burgundy
55. Untidy condition
57. Edible Asian plant
59. Squirrel fur used in medieval times
60. \_\_\_\_\_ a main, French purse
61. Self-esteem
62. Knock sharply
63. Resident suffix
65. Know, to a Scot