

**REFORMED**

# Perspective

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A MAGAZINE  
FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN  
FAMILY



**Interviews of a different sort:  
we talk to an economist,  
a journalist and a departed apologist**

# BE A MAN

*“Stand firm in the faith”*

*1 Corinthians 16:13*

Editorial by  
Rev. Allen M. Baker

I suggest that for at least the last two hundred years men in America have suffered an identity crisis. We don't know who we are and what is expected of us. On the one hand we have wimps who refuse to lead their wives and children, abdicating their calling from God; while on the other hand some men embrace a machismo lifestyle, convincing themselves that they can run roughshod over their families. Paul the Apostle, at the end of his first epistle to the Corinthians, gives five admonitions for men. These are all present tense, imperative mood verbs, meaning these are continual, perpetual commands. They are not suggestions. I am speaking to men, but, women, you need to read and pray for your men.

## 1. On the alert

First, men are to be on the alert. In Ephesians 5:15 Paul says the same thing, urging men to be careful how they walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of their time because the days are evil. The King James version translates this as walking circumspectly, looking around, much like a SWAT team does when storming a fortified position, looking in each direction, guns in a ready position, like a Commanding Officer does in a theatre of war, being careful to know his enemy, how strong they are, where they may attack.



***He must train  
for an extended period of time***



To be a man means to be proactive. Our tendency, since Adam's fall into sin, is to pass the buck, to blame our wives or others for our troubles. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Men are to be on the alert, to be proactive as providers and protectors. A man's job is to provide financially, spiritually, and emotionally for his family. These are not the woman's

responsibility. I am not saying a woman cannot work outside the home, but I am saying she should not be required to do so by her husband, and she ought not do so if her work conflicts with her primary responsibility of caring for her children and husband. Men are to shepherd their wives and children, praying with, and for them, instructing them formally and informally in God's Word, taking the lead in disciplining the children. Men are to be proactive in protecting their families, keeping out unwelcome guests like certain television programs, movies, and Internet pornography. Men are to protect their wives from verbal abuse of the children. Men are to make sure the wife's car is roadworthy. Men are not their children's best buddy.

## 2. Stand firm in faith

Second, men are to stand firm in the faith. Paul is encouraged by the report of the Thessalonians' faithfulness, saying that he lives if they stand firm in the faith (1 Thessalonians 3:8).

Men, your wife and children are strengthened, encouraged as they see you stand firm in your convictions. You need to decide beforehand what you will do and not do in certain potentially compromising situations. Will you or will you not have a private lunch with a woman other than your wife? Will you or will you not flirt with another woman? Will you or will you not succumb to marketing ploys which plunge you into short term, credit card debt which you cannot adequately cover? Will you limit your spending, no matter what your income over the remaining years of your business career?

## 3. Act like men

Third, men are to act like men. In 1 Samuel 4:9 the Philistines are struck with terror when hearing that Israel is coming after them with the Ark of the Covenant, and they are told to take courage and be men, lest they become slaves of the Hebrews. You have daily choices which profoundly affect you and your family. You can choose cowardice or courage. You can choose to look at a porn site. You can choose to

neglect the discipline of your children. You can choose to buy that new toy you “must have,” but remember this – what you sow, this you will also reap.

To not be a man, to not have courage, means slavery of your will (I can’t help it), your heart (I love this other woman, I must have her at all costs), and slavery of your conscience. King Saul, early in his career was fearless, but at the end of his life, having been reduced to seeking intelligence from a witch at Endor, he is terrified, paralyzed with fear. Slavery of will, heart, and conscience rob men of their resolve to hold fast, to do the right thing.

**4. Be strong**

Fourth, men are to be strong. One does not decide to run a marathon two weeks before the race without any prior conditioning work. He must train for an extended period of time, daily adding miles to his regimen. Only then will he have the strength and stamina to succeed.

Men, if you are to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might, then you must daily spend private time with God. This is essential, a non-negotiable. You must take the lead in family devotional times as well as Lord’s Day worship. You must cultivate a heart for the Lord Jesus. Only then can you stand in times of duress and trial.

**5. All done in love**

And fifth, all you do, men, is to be done in love. This summarizes everything. Your life is to be marked by self-denial (I am tired but I will help my wife tonight with the children) and servanthood.

Who is sufficient for these things? We all are miserable failures. That’s why we must cling to Christ who makes possible our biblical manhood. He exhibited all these traits in his life; and his death and resurrection provide us the grace and power to be what God calls us to be. Will you be a man? Will you be on your guard? Will you stand firm in the faith? Will you act like men? Will you be strong? Will you love?

*Reprinted with permission from the Banner of Truth.*



**What’s Inside**

Examples abound of Christian kitsch. One of the more horrendous to make an appearance is a larger than life, plastic, neon-orange colored, sculpture of a hand impaled by a nail which is meant to be mounted to the wall and used as a coat hangar; you can hang coats on the nail or on the outstretch fingers. You can also purchase a finely detailed David vs. Goliath chess set, but one has to wonder, are you allowed to win if you play the Philistine side? A more important question: is this the best Christian artists can offer? Is this what we mean when we talk about Christian art? Johan Tangelder clears away some of the confusion in his article “Christian Art?”

*Reformed Perspective* is abuzz with change, the most recent of which is the Nota Bene section, and its new layout. It looks good and is good for you!

This issue also features a number of “interviews” with famous figures, including one with a well-known Presbyterian who died more than two decades ago. So, as you might have already guessed, these aren’t your typical sorts of interviews.

And of course, we have a survey tucked into the center of this issue. Our goal is to put out a publication that both educates and motivates its readership. We need your input to find out just how we’re doing – enquiring minds want to know what you think of *Reformed Perspective* and what you think we can do to make the magazine the best it can be.

***Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and mail it back to us.***

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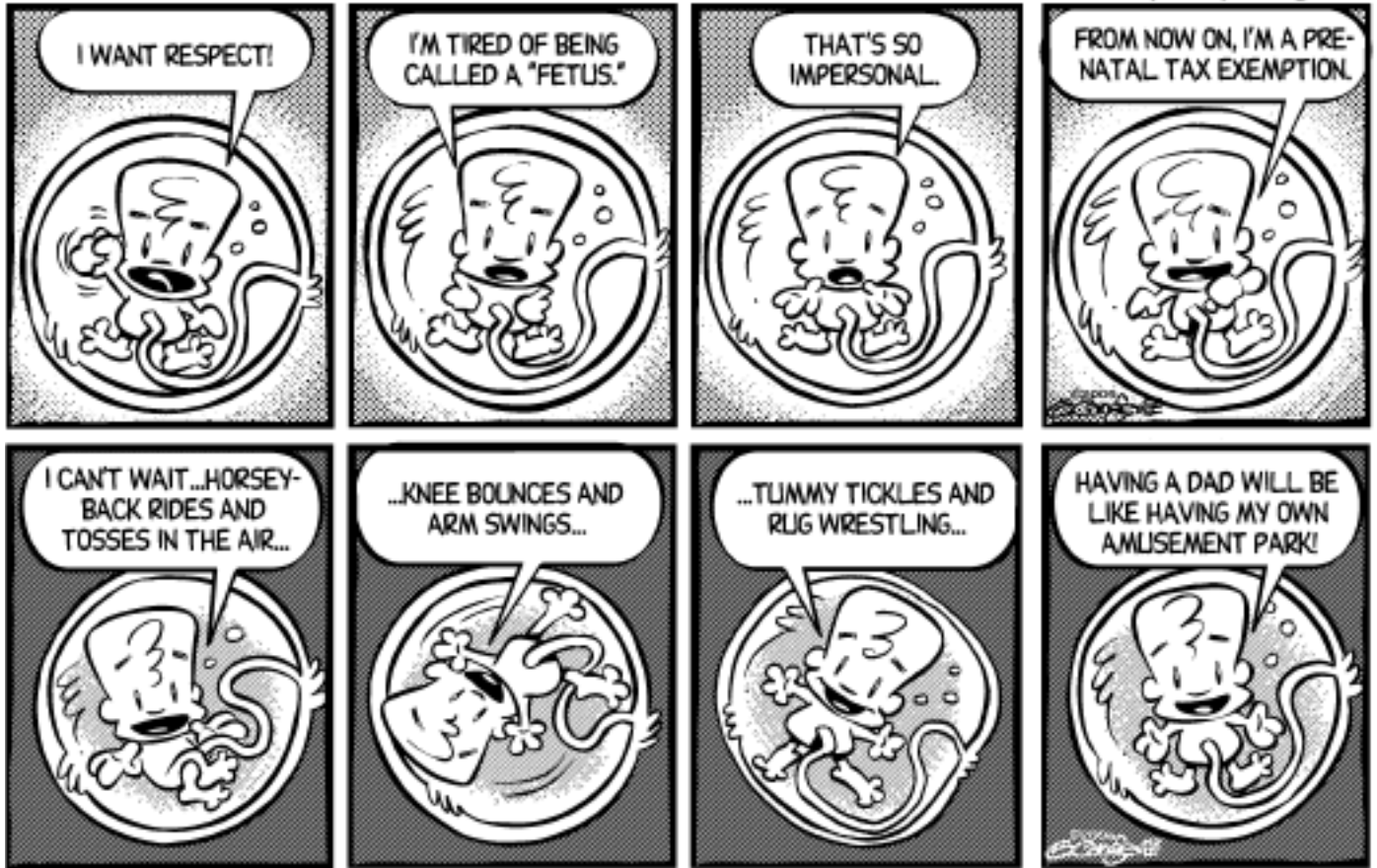
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# Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



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Telephone: (204) 663-9000, Email: [subscribe@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:subscribe@reformedperspective.ca)

Editor: Jon Dykstra

Address for Editorial Matters (Letters and Submissions):  
Reformed Perspective, 3573 McKinley Drive, Abbotsford, BC, Canada V2S 8M7  
E-mail: [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca)

Managing Editor: Wilhelm Gortemaker

Regular Contributors:

Sharon Bratcher, Jane deGlint, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder, Johan Tangelder, Rene Vermeulen, Michael Wagner

Board of Directors: John Voorhorst, Chairman;

James Teitsma, Secretary/Treasurer; Peter DeBoer; Wilhelm Gortemaker; Jakob Kuik, Henk VanderVelde, Theresa Weessies

Secretarial Address (Board Matters): James Teitsma  
449 Almey Avenue, Winnipeg, MB Canada R3W 1P6

Contact Address for South Africa:

Arie Roos, Box 584, Kuilsrivier, 7580 Republic of South Africa

Contact Address for Australia:

Pro Ecclesia Bookshop, PO Box 189, Kelmescott, W. Australia 6111

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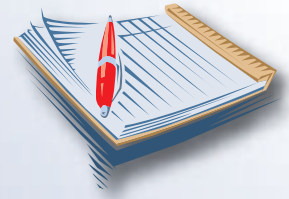
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# Readers' Response



## Dear Editor,

Your recent article "Why the Run is wrong" makes some strong statements regarding responsible giving. It is suggested that giving to an organization that supports cancer research through the National Cancer Institute of Canada, such as the Terry Fox Run, is unethical.



While I agree that embryonic stem cell research is reprehensible, I question whether it is unethical to support the NCIC when the money is earmarked for ethically sound projects. The argument that money is freed up for stem cell research is an assumption at best. How do we know which projects would be put on hold by not supporting the Run? Perhaps the ethically sound projects would be the first to go. The author suggests that you wouldn't buy a man dinner if, from the money he saved, he would buy a bat with which to beat his wife. However, the example of the bat does not sufficiently cover all the angles. Perhaps the man has already purchased the bat with which he intends to beat his wife. Being broke he needs money to buy dinner. In this scenario, buying the man dinner does not make the giver complicit in his crime of wife beating. Likewise, it is just as likely that the ethically sound projects will be put on hold by the withdrawal of our support. It is not certain that the funds are being freed for unethical projects. It is another case of viewing the glass half empty rather than half full. So contrary to the author's view, I would suggest that giving through the Terry Fox Run is limiting the available funds for unethical research and directing the money to ethically viable projects. If all donations to cancer research were given through the Terry Fox Run, the pool of money available for embryonic stem cell research would be zero.

I just do not see the ethical dilemma in the same terms. Do we stop giving to the inner city missions because the clothes, food and shelter they provide free up an individual's money for drugs and alcohol? By giving to the inner city mission are we inadvertently assisting people perpetuate a sinful lifestyle? Where does our responsibility end and where does the responsibility of an organization such as the NCIC begin? If a man donates an expensive piece of equipment to a

hospital and it saves many lives, I would suggest that the man has made an ethically sound decision. If the administration of that hospital now have surplus funds and open a fertility clinic performing invitro-fertilization, a process similar to abortion where fertilized eggs are destroyed, obviously the hospital administration must bear the responsibility. To suggest, somehow, that the man should share the blame for his good deed defies logic.

In conclusion the author suggests that supporting the Terry Fox Run would be unethical and to "continue to do so in the future, now that we know better, would be a sin." So those that wish to overcome the evils of cancer, who give to an organization that responsibly prevents their funds from being used in sinful research, can now be branded sinners. The author has failed to make the case, either scripturally or ethically, that such giving is sin. I for one will continue to support the Terry Fox Run with a clear conscience.

Steve van Leeuwen  
Neerlandia, Alberta

## Editor's response:

*Mr. van Leeuwen says I do "not sufficiently cover all the angles." After all, he notes, "it is just as likely that the ethically sound projects will be put on hold by the withdrawal of our support" from the Terry Fox Run. That is true and that is the point – we don't know what use our money is being put to; perhaps it is being put to good use, and perhaps it is being put to murderous use. What we can know for certain is that the promise the Terry Fox Run garnered from the NCIC not to use Terry Fox dollars for embryonic stem cell research is a meaningless one. It pretends to offer certainty but if we raise money for the NCIC via the Terry Fox Run we can't be certain whether our money will be used for good or simply free up money for evil.*

*Mr. van Leeuwen is right when he notes some uncertainty is a part of all charitable giving. But that is not a reason for us to shrug our shoulders at the idea of giving to a charity that does great good... but also funds the murder of children. Why this loyalty to the NCIC and the Terry Fox Run? There are cancer charities out there that fight cancer and don't rip apart unborn babies. Given this alternative why would we even consider giving to the NCIC via the Terry Fox Run?*

**Dear Editor,**

In the January issue, in the "Strange Appraisals" comic, on page 21, near the bottom left-hand corner, the word "cripes" is used. According to *Webster Intercollegiate Dictionary, tenth ed.*, this word is a "euphemism for Christ" and is "used as a mild oath." In my opinion this should not have been copied in this Reformed magazine since the name of the Lord is used in a "euphemistic" way. Would it not have been better to have placed "...." there instead? Should we expose our children and teenagers to this kind of oath? In the workplace people use this word but as Christians we want to use the name of the Lord with great reverence, as we confess. I therefore deplore reading this "oath" in our Reformed magazine.

*Simon Breukelman  
London, Ontario*

**Dear Editor,**

"Vulgar" and "repulsive" – these are the first two words that came into my head as I read "Comics to bore and confuse you, Strange Appraisals" in the January issue. When I first heard of *Reformed Perspective* magazine I thought it was meant for anyone somewhat interested in political science. In my opinion a young teenager at the age of 13 or 14 can be very interested in this magazine. It is a good magazine with a substantial amount of valuable information.

Over the past couple of weeks I have been debating whether or not I would ask my school's library to buy a subscription to this magazine. After reading this comic I'm not sure it's appropriate for junior high or even high school students to be reading this sort of material. I think that the language presented in this magazine is also inappropriate

for the student body to which it would be offered. It can very easily put a damper on a teenager's vision of what this magazine is for. To put this vulgar comic in a Christian magazine is not only filthy, it's wrong.

This past Sunday afternoon I sat around the living room with my family and a couple friends. Some of my family hadn't yet had time to read the January *Reformed Perspective*. As they came to the article "Strange Appraisals" a discussion started on whether or not this article belongs in a Christian magazine. The discussion included talk about how the pictures in the cartoon were unnecessary, and how the point that was trying to be made could have been done through a different approach. The unanimous decision was that the comic was inappropriate and shouldn't have been placed in a Christian magazine. Even though the cartoon has some good meaning to it there is no rational reason for making your point through such vile images. I urge you to ask yourself, is this what the magazine is meant for? Should this inappropriate comic be placed into *Reformed Perspective*?

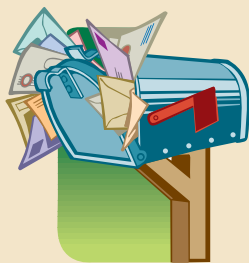
*Nicholas Voorhorst  
Coaldale, Alberta*

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

CAN BE SENT TO:

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3573 McKinley Drive,  
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Email: [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca)



*Letters will be edited on the basis of grammar,  
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**John Calvin  
has never read  
an issue  
he didn't like**



**Doctors to decide when patients die**

The Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons has issued new regulations stating that doctors, not families, have the right to decide whether to continue treatment for patients on life support.

Dr. Bill Pope, speaking on behalf of the college, said the newly laid out process does allow families to express their concerns and wishes with their doctors. The ultimate decision, however, is in the hands of the doctor, who can decide to end a patient's life even against a family's wishes. Dr. Pope claims these new regulations are not a response to the case of Samuel Golubchuk, whose Orthodox Jewish family is currently fighting in court to keep him alive and on life support despite doctors' wishes to end his life. Pope concedes, however, that should the courts rule in favor of the Golubchuk family, the College would have to review these new regulations.

To find out how you can make a difference in this fight go to [www.samuelgolubchuk.com](http://www.samuelgolubchuk.com).

Source: *The Winnipeg Free Press*, January 30, 2008



**Risking public health to score points with gays**

Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman has criticized Health Canada's guidelines for organ donation, arguing that the practice of labeling organs from donors who come from groups at a high risk of serious blood-borne diseases is "nonsense." The high risk group includes: men who engage in homosexual activity, prison inmates, drug users, prostitutes, and those who have recently received piercings or tattoos.

Despite the Health Minister's claims, a 2005 study found that men who had engaged in homosexual activity within the past 5 years really do face a significantly greater risk of HIV or hepatitis infection. So organ donations from them are riskier. Donations from these groups are not refused, but patients are informed of the risk and allowed to decide whether or not to proceed with the transplant.

Source: *The National Post*, January 25, 2008



**Stem cell developments, (good and bad)**

First the good news: in Finland, scientists have replaced the upper jaw of a man with a bone graft that was grown from his own stem cells. Such a procedure should eliminate the risk of rejection, as the transplant is developed from the patient's own genetic material.

However, in the United Kingdom, scientists claim that they have used female adult stem cells to create primitive sperm. This could possible eliminate the biological necessity of a father in conception and opens up the possibility that one day lesbian couples may be able to have children that are genetically their own.

Source: *Reuters*, Feb. 3, 2008; *The Telegraph*, Jan. 31, 2008

**Genetically modified babies**

British scientists have created human embryos using DNA from three individuals, two women and one man. The purpose of the undertaking was to replace "defective" genes in the mitochondria of the female egg with healthy genes from another donor, in hopes of finding a way to prevent inherited diseases that can result from mistakes in the mitochondria's genetic code. Ten such embryos have been created in this way, although all were killed after 5 days.

Source: *Associated Press*, Feb. 5, 2008





# *Tempted in the Modern Desert*

by Jane deGlint

With a bounce in his tread Joshua Strong strode through the streets of Amsterdam. The steady, strong sound of his steps made the weary shoppers turn their heads towards the tall man. Ignorant of his surroundings he walked purposefully toward the renovated mansion which served as the office building of Euro-Enzyme Research. With a determined push he swung the glass door wide open. Slightly impatient, he waited for the elevator completely oblivious to the calls of the watchful receptionist. She shook her head and observed with metropolitan insight, "Tut-tut, this one knows where he is going."

Yes, he knew. At the fourth floor he got off. Before the elevator doors had a chance to close behind him, he walked into the office of Mr. George Crowsnest. He steered directly toward the desk of the very pretty secretary.

"Good afternoon. I am Joshua Strong. Mr. Crowsnest is expecting me."

"He is, is he?" she chirped, tilting her head toward him and looking up at him through half-closed eyes."

"Yes."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes. Let me in. Please."

"Oh, yes, yes. Of course. Just a minute."

With elegant pushes she pressed some buttons on her phone and picked up the receiver.

"Mr. Crowsnest, here is a Mr. . . . uh, uh, . . ."

Again she tilted her head toward him.

"Joshua. Joshua Strong."

"Ah, right. Here is Mr. Joshua Strong."

Carefully placing the receiver back, she fluttered her eyelids at him.

"You can go in."

Joshua did not deem the secretary worthy of another look. Exuding confidence he opened the big oak door and walked in.

Immediately Mr. Crowsnest jumped up and held out his arm in invitation.

"Take a seat, Mr. Strong. Take a seat."

Joshua sat down on the big leather chair. He straightened out his back and placed his elbows on the armrests.

Without delay Mr. Crowsnest picked up a sheet of paper and scraped his throat.

"Mr. Strong, you are the successful applicant. The decision was not difficult. You did very well on all the interviews and aptitude tests. You have what it takes. Business sense. Determination. Research skills. You dare to go where cowards do not tread. You are our man, Mr. Strong. We look forward to building a long-lasting relationship with you. And, of course, you will be well rewarded. You will have no regrets about joining our company."

Joshua felt a rush through his body. He had the job! He had conquered all the hurdles. His persistence paid off. He had found himself a lucrative position in a prestigious company. He envisioned himself boarding a plane to New York and being shown his seat in the business class. An upscale apartment would soon be within reach. He felt more invigorated than ever.

After the signing formalities he left the room. With a hasty smile to the overtly coquettish secretary he strode back to the elevator. He had conquered.

In a trance he walked back to the railroad station. Imagine

how wealthy he would become! Imagine what influence he would have!

Easily he located and boarded his train. So many times he had traveled this track, but never before had he felt so exhilarated. Life had taken a new turn!

"So, what's up?"

The man across from him waited patiently till Joshua came down from his fantasy world. Then he repeated his query.

"So, what's up?"

Joshua stared at him for a while before he found the words to reply. Who was this stranger across from him? His shoulder length hair was dirty and slick. His pointed nose was slightly wet. His velvety eyes were bottomless. Joshua shivered.

"So then, what's up?"

Finally Joshua managed a reply.

"Excuse me? Do I know you? I don't think so. Have a good evening."

Joshua looked around for a newspaper, but before he located one the stranger stepped up his attack.

"You got yourself a good job, uh? Can't fool me. So you are going to be one of those shortsighted people who think that they can beat the odds and conquer the world. You fools. Wait

***He had the job!  
He had conquered all the hurdles.  
His persistence paid off***

till the masses rebel. Wait till the lower ranks go on strike. Wait till you get blackmailed and sabotaged. You really think big shots will stick up for each other? Think again. It's every executive pitted against the other. And nobody will care if you go under. Not even an eyelid-fluttering pretty devil."

Joshua felt the color being drawn from his face. He suddenly felt utterly irritated. He wanted to hit the man. What an interfering, rude, blasphemous idiot.

"Excuse me sir, but I do not know you. I have never seen you before and do not desire to become acquainted with you."

"Ah, now you are wrong. You do not recognize me because you have always ignored me. I have been with you for many years. The time has finally come to face your demon. You vowed never to become like me. Yes, I am smart, but also utterly corrupted. Good-looking, but dreadfully unkempt. Educated, but sadly unrecognized. Wealthy, but unhappy. You pretend to be confident, Mr. Strong, but you are a fearful little midget. As long as you pretend that you do not know me, I will stay alive and well. But I have a proposal. Ha, ha. Hum. I shall not laugh. Demons can be serious, if they so choose."

Joshua sat frozen in his seat. He stared at the figure across from him. Cold drops of sweat dripped off his temples.

"Sir, what can I do?"

"Ah, now we are talking. I will let you have your wealth and your fame. I will even give you the love of women. But, you will have to betray the Master of Life. You may never thank him for anything. You must surrender the peace of thanksgiving for the false belief that you deserve all that is given to you. Your soul will never rest, never. Not in all eternity."

Joshua stared at the man across from him. Struck with fear he was unable to keep his focus sharp. The outline of the man became vague. Joshua tried to concentrate, but he was



*He stayed and watched the train leave till it disappeared into the distance.*

unable to bring the man back to his visible shape. The man had slipped away.

Joshua was completely deflated. When the train came to a gentle halt in his small hometown he grabbed his briefcase and stepped onto the platform. He stayed and watched the train leave till it disappeared into the distance. He did not have the strength to start the ten-minute walk to his home. He slumped down on a bench.

Not much later Angela Forester walked onto the platform. Having arrived at the station much too early for her train, she looked for a place to sit. There were only two benches. One was taken up by a group of students, the other by a well-dressed young man. If she wanted to sit peacefully anywhere, it must be beside the slumped man. Ah, well. She was not scared of slumped men.

She took her seat at a polite distance from the man and took out her book. She read quietly, till she noticed that the people around her were gathering towards the edge of the platform. The train must be arriving shortly. She checked her watch, and yes, it was about time. As she put her book back in her purse, her attention was drawn to the slumped man. He was not getting up. Should she wake him? Shake him a little maybe? Weighing off what would be the best approach, she moved a little closer to him. . . .

With a jolt she recognized him.

"Joshua! What are you doing here on this side of the track? If you are going to Amsterdam, you should be on the other side. If you've just come home, you should not be here at all! What's with you, Joshua! Wake up!"

Slowly Joshua opened his eyes and straightened out his back. Was he seeing another phantom? If he did, this one was certainly more kind, more reassuring, more peaceful. No, it was not a phantom. It was Angela!

"Angela! What are you doing here?"

"Well, I came for the train, but now I am waking you up!"

At that moment the train conductor blew his whistle and the train started to move.

"Well," Angela concluded, "I guess I did not come for the train, but for you, Josh."

Immediately Joshua focused fully on Angela.

"Angela, do you believe in demons?"

"I believe that demons exist. But the children of the Master have received the gift to see through them. The power of demons shrivels up when the Master's children apply their talents with grace and love, whatever their tasks may be."

"Angela, I got a job today, at Euro-Enzyme Research."

"Don't sound so sad! Congratulations! May you be a blessing to all those who will benefit from your contributions."

"Thanks. Thanks. Thanks, Angela. Thank you."

With renewed bounce in his tread Joshua walked home.

*"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His love endures forever."*  
Psalm 136:1



# If Francis Schaeffer dropped by for coffee. . .

## A different sort of interview, or perhaps a different sort of book review

by Jon Dykstra

For several years now I've wanted to share a cup of coffee with Francis Schaeffer and talk with him about his fascinating little book *A Christian Manifesto*. But there were a few problems with that idea. First, he's a big name, and we're a small magazine, so it can be hard for us to secure time with such a popular public figure. Second, he's always split his time between the US and Switzerland, so the prospects of him coming north to do an interview didn't seem great. Third, and this one seemed a real clincher, Francis Schaeffer died almost 24 years ago.

So getting an interview was definitely unlikely. But if I couldn't get an interview, I was pretty sure I could fake one. What follows is a short interview with Francis Schaeffer, about his book. The words in italics are his own, taken straight from *A Christian Manifesto*.

**Jon Dykstra:** A Christian Manifesto. . . that's quite a title. Why the need for a Christian Manifesto?

**Francis Schaeffer:** Today the phrase "separation of church and state" in America is used to silence the church. It has been used to push Christians to the sidelines in politics, and to our shame we have, for the most part, gone willingly. Christians have forgotten that *the Lordship of Christ covers all of life and all of life equally*. That includes politics as well. But *A Christian Manifesto* is more than a call for Christians to reenter the political sphere – it also argues that the Christian worldview is absolutely vital to civil society.

**JD:** Why is it vital?

**FS:** It isn't just vital; it is foundational! In the US constitution we have the phrase "certain inalienable rights." *Who gives the rights? The state? Then they are not inalienable because the state can change them and take them away. Where do rights come from?*

Now Christians know there is Someone who gave these inalienable rights, but if you don't recognize the Giver, how can you recognize His gift? So if we ignore God and build our law on evolutionary or humanist assumptions we are left with rights that have no foundation. And if we can't explain the basis for these rights, how can we complain when they are taken away? This is the road to tyranny.

**JD:** We're well on our way down that road. How should Christians respond when their government ignores God and creates immoral laws?

**FS:** *The bottom line is that at a certain point there is not only the right, but the duty to disobey the state.*

**JD:** What exactly does that entail?

**FS:** *Samuel Rutherford suggested that there are three appropriate levels of resistance: First, [the Christian] must defend himself by protest (in contemporary society this would most often be by legal action); second, he must flee if at all possible; and third, he may use force, if necessary to defend himself. One should not employ force if he may save himself by flight; nor should one employ flight if he can save himself and defend himself by protest and the employment of constitutional means of redress.*

**JD:** What would you say to Christians who refuse to even write their elected officials?

**FS:** I would quote to them a few lines from Bob Dylan's *Slow Train Coming*:

*"You've got gangsters in power and lawbreakers making rules  
When you gonna wake up,  
When you gonna wake up,  
When you gonna wake up  
And strengthen the things that remain?"*



# A call for Christian journalists

## A different sort of an interview with Marvin Olasky

by Jon Dykstra

Marvin Olasky is many things – the Editor-in-Chief of *World* magazine, a journalism professor, and a baseball fanatic – but he is probably best known as one of the founders of the compassionate conservatism movement. His 1992 book *The Tragedy of American Compassion* argued that the needs of the poor and dependent could better be met by local faith-based groups rather than the large, impersonal, bureaucratic government welfare system. Though this idea ran counter to conventional ideas about the separation of church and state, Olasky promoted his Christian perspective unapologetically.

Olasky has some revolutionary ideas about journalism as well and his written two books on how journalism used to be a Christian enterprise,

and how it can be again. The text in italics are his own words, taken from his two journalism books: *Prodigal Press: The Anti-Christian Bias of American News Media* and *Telling the Truth: How to Revitalize Christian Journalism*.

**Jon Dykstra:** Let's start with title of your first journalism book. What does *Prodigal Press* refer to?

**Marvin Olasky:** The title refers to the relationship that today's secular press has with the Christian journalism of yesteryear. Though few know it, *American secular journalism is the wayward son of Christianity*.

**JD:** Do you mean newspapers used to be Christian?

**MO:** Yes, indeed. For example, the *New York Times*, which has been in the news so much as of late, was founded in 1851 by Henry Raymond, a Bible-believing Presbyterian. Throughout the City of New York there was at one time *fifty-two magazines and newspapers that called themselves Christian*.

**JD:** A Christian *New York Times*? That is pretty hard to believe.

**MO:** It was a great Christian paper! *It became known for its accurate news coverage and for its exposure in 1871 of both political corruption (the "Tweed Ring") and abortion practices.*

*A reading of the New York Times in the mid-1870s shows that editors and reporters wanted to glorify God by making a difference in this world.*

**JD:** The 1800's seemed to be a good time for Christian journalism. Is that when it all started?

**MO:** Oh, it started much earlier than that. You could even say the Luke was one of the first journalists. At that time published news was what authorities wanted people to know. The *Acta Diurna*, a handwritten news sheet posted in the Roman forum and copied by scribes for transmission throughout the empire, emphasized governmental decrees but also gained readership by posting gladiatorial results and news of other popular events. Julius Caesar used the *Acta* to attack some of his opponents in the Roman senate – but there could be no criticism of Caesar. . . The Bible, with its emphasis on truth-telling – Luke (1:3-4 NIV) wrote that he personally had “carefully investigated everything from the beginning” so that Theophilus would “know the certainty of the things you have been taught” – was unique in ancient times. New Testament writers comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable.

**JD:** But if journalism had a Christian origin, what happened to change things? Most journalism today could hardly be called Christian.

**MO:** There were a number of reasons for the change. First newspapers started shying away from tough stories. *Evil unfit for breakfast table discussion or considered unfit to print was ignored and thereby tolerated. Several generations later it was embraced.* More importantly, just as Christianity was being attacked by ideas like evolution and materialism, Christianity in North America underwent a period of revivalism that emphasized individualism. Many were saved thankfully, but this emphasis on personal faith did not stress the importance of a Christian worldview. So instead of confronting all problems from a biblical perspective, newspapers pushed Christianity to the sidelines. *Furthermore many Christians began to believe that the general culture inevitably would become worse and worse. They thought that little could be done to stay the downward drift. Christian publications should cover church news, they thought, and ignore the rest of the world.*

**JD:** So instead of responding to these attacks, Christian journalists just retreated?

**MO:** Exactly.

**JD:** When did this shift take place?

**MO:** It's hard to put an exact date to it, but by the 1890s things were underway and by the 1900s journalism had

turned rather vicious under the leadership of men like William Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer.

**JD:** But weren't Hearst and Pulitzer giants in the newspaper industry?

**MO:** Yes they were, but you wouldn't want to get on their bad sides. Hearst for example, was the first journalistic leader to assault regularly those who stood in his path. When Hearst could not get the Democratic presidential nomination in 1904, he called Judge Alton Parker, the party's nominee, a “living, breathing cockroach from under the sink.”

**JD:** Nice. Well, if we've lost our way, how can we make journalism Christian again?

**MO:** For too long Christians have contented themselves with singing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” all the while forgetting that a fortress was an offensive as well as defensive weapon: *From it soldiers could make sorties.* We have to go out boldly and engage culture, and contrast our Truth with their opinion.

**JD:** But don't we already have a number of Christian columnists who do just that?

**MO:** We have columnists, but not journalists. We need to have people covering the day-to-day news from a biblical perspective. Too often Christian newspapers fill their pages with warmed over sermons rather than realistic stories of successful independent schools or corrupted churches and thereby miss an opportunity to teach boldness. We need to confront culture boldly!

**JD:** Boldness is the key then.

**MO:** Well...no. Boldness alone won't do it. In fact *none of this will make much difference unless Christian communities view journalism as a vital calling and Christian journalists as ministers worthy of spiritual and economic support.*



# Omnicompetent: God is; Government isn't

## A different sort of interview with Thomas Sowell

by Jon Dykstra

While the Bible tells us not to put our trust in prince and men in power, politicians want us to believe that no matter what the problem, they have a solution. They think government can solve all the world's problems if only we're compassionate and committed and care deeply enough for our fellow man.

It's an attractive sentiment, particularly to Christians. We are, after all, supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves. So if a politician proposes a "caring" government program it's easy to understand why many Christians will support it. But it's one thing to be caring, and quite another to be competent. Government might *want* to solve all the world's woes, but government is neither omniscient nor omnipotent. It simply isn't competent to address all the problems it tries to solve.

In his book *The Vision of the Anointed* Thomas Sowell exposes the naivety of those who ascribe God-like powers to government. What follows is a different sort of interview/book review with the Stanford University senior fellow. The text in italics are his own words, taken straight from his book.

**Reformed Perspective:** You refer to "the Anointed" in your title. Who are they and what is their vision?

**Thomas Sowell:** The anointed are a relatively small group of "elite intelligentsia" who are in prominent positions in institutions like the mass media and government. Their vision is *a particular framework of assumptions within which most contemporary social and political discourse takes place in the media, in politics and in academia.*

**RP:** Can you flesh that out a bit? What sort of assumptions does this elite intelligentsia make?

**TS:** Well for example the anointed assume that human capabilities have pretty much no limits – that we can do anything if we only set our mind to it. So from their point of view, any

problems we have in society can be solved, one by one, and eliminated. They would insist that poverty, homelessness, AIDS, and drug addiction can all be tackled and conquered completely if we only decide to do it. Of course we would also need a little direction from the select elite.

**RP:** This seems to be a pleasantly optimistic outlook. But you're skeptical?

**TS:** Definitely. I find this view naïve rather than optimistic. It is simply not enough to say we want to eliminate poverty, AIDS and homelessness – *one of the most important questions about any proposed course of action is whether we know how to do it. . . Those with the vision of the anointed. . . assume that we know how to do it.*

**RP:** What is your take on these issues?

**TS:** The key here it to realize that we simply can't solve all the world's problems. We have limited resources, and limited intellect, so while we can address some problems, we can do that only by ignoring or diverting resources from other concerns. In other words, instead of solutions, we are talking about trade-offs. *A simple example might illustrate concretely the difference between seeking a solution and seeking a trade-off. When a baby was killed in a tragic airplane crash in 1989 by being ripped out of its mother's arms by the force of the impact and being sent hurtling through the cabin, a political "solution" was proposed by having a federal law requiring babies to be strapped into their own seats on airplanes. But a study by economists indicated that such a law requiring parents to buy an extra seat would divert a portion of the traffic to cheaper alternative modes of transportation on the ground – most of which have higher mortality rates than airplanes. Over a period of a decade there would be an estimated saving of one*

*baby's life in airplane crashes, a loss of nine lives in alternative ground transportation, and an additional cost of \$3 billion. Few people would regard this as a reasonable trade-off. But it is only by analyzing an issue as a trade-off that we avoid the dangerous and deceptive appearance of a "solution."*

**RP:** Do the anointed make any other assumptions you disagree with?

**TS:** Well, since *omnicompetence is implicitly assumed* for them the question is *not knowledge but compassion, commitment and other such subjective factors*. So when anyone disagrees with their approach, they assume that person must not be compassionate – they assume the worst. To put it another way *disagree with someone on the right and he is likely to think you obtuse, wrong, foolish, a dope. Disagree with someone on the left and he is more likely to think you selfish, a sell-out, insensitive, possibly evil.*

**RP:** Evil? Why do you think they assume the worst of their opponents?

**TS:** *The very idea that an opponent of the prevailing vision...has just as much compassion for the poor and the disadvantaged, that he is just as much appalled by pollution, or as horrified by the suffering and slaughter imposed by war on millions of innocent men, women and children – such an idea would be a very discordant note in the vision of the anointed. If such an idea were fully accepted, this would mean that opposing arguments on social policy were arguments about methods, probabilities, and empirical evidence – with compassion, caring and the like being common features on both sides, thus canceling out and disappearing from the debate. That clearly is not the vision of the anointed."*

**RP:** So they basically discount their opponents completely?

**TS:** Exactly. And because they vilify their opponents, they ignore any evidence presented from that side of the argument. So their *vision has become self-contained and self-justifying – which is to say, independent of empirical evidence*. They'll ignore the evidence just because they don't like who presented it.

**RP:** Can you give an example of that? When have they ignored the facts altogether?

**TS:** A good example would be *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker. He wrote a series of articles, from the Johnson to Bush senior administrations, about the income of black families. He manipulated the stats to make Republican presidents look bad, and Democratic presidents look good.

**RP:** How did he do that?

**TS:** Well, without going into too much detail, there are two ways that you can look at the income levels of blacks. *Income*

*per black household rose only 7 percent from 1967 to 1988 but real income per black person rose 81 percent over the same span. The reason for the disparity is that even as individuals' incomes rose, the size of black household shrunk dramatically. Tom Wicker knew how to use [individual] income statistics when he wished to depict success for the Johnson administration and family income statistics when he wished to depict failure for the Reagan and Bush administrations.*

**RP:** That's pretty sneaky. Is that the typical for "the anointed"?

**TS:** No, I don't think so. Most of the time they just find what they are looking for and ignore the rest of the data. I mean, *anyone who looks through enough statistics will eventually find numbers that seem to confirm a given vision*. Statistics can be misused in so many different ways.

**RP:** Such as?

**TS:** Well, for example, *Alarmist stories in the media about domestic violence often lump together husbands and boyfriends as "partners" who batter women, when in fact a woman who heads her own household is nearly three times as likely to be beaten as a wife is*. But by lumping husbands in with boyfriends, one positive aspect of marriage is obscured.

**RP:** So it's safer for women to be married.

**TS:** Right, but they aren't being told this. I could just go on and on. . .

**RP:** Please do.

**TS:** Well, *a joke has it that upon being told that a pedestrian is hit by a car every 20 minutes in New York, the listener responded, "He must get awfully tired of that!"* The point is that the anointed act like the people they statistical measure are stuck in the same group forever, but that is simply not true. I mean, *What sense would it make to classify a man as handicapped because he is in a wheelchair today if he is expected to be walking again in a month and competing in track meets before the year is out? Yet Americans are given "class" labels on the basis of their transient location in the income stream. Just because someone has a low income today, doesn't mean they will next month, and it doesn't mean they did last month. Things change, but these stats don't measure that sort of change.*

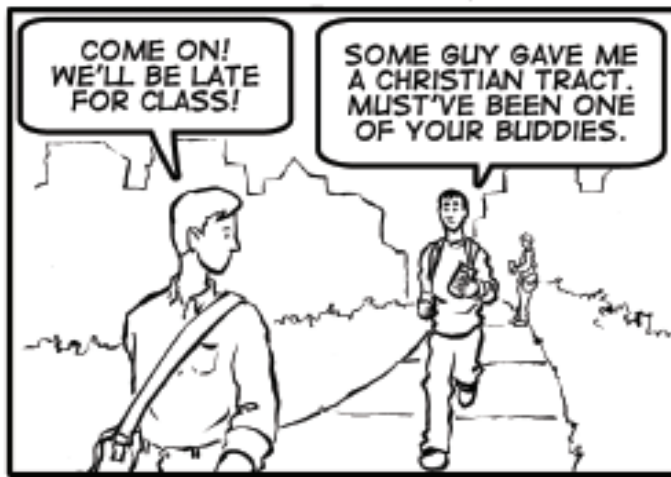
**RP:** If you were going to sum up your book in only a few words how would you put it?

**TS:** *In short, few have spent their entire lives outside the vision of the anointed, and virtually no one has been unaffected by it. Understanding that vision, its current impact and its future danger, is the purpose of [my] book.*



# HEAVY LOAD?

by Russ Stutler



COME ON!  
WE'LL BE LATE  
FOR CLASS!

SOME GUY GAVE ME  
A CHRISTIAN TRACT.  
MUST'VE BEEN ONE  
OF YOUR BUDDIES.



WHAT  
DOES IT  
SAY?

I DIDN'T READ IT. NOW  
TELL ME HONESTLY,  
AFTER YOU BECAME A  
CHRISTIAN, DID YOUR LIFE  
REALLY GET BETTER?

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YEAH,  
SURE.

YEAH? YOUR GIRLFRIEND LEFT YOU,  
YOUR PARENTS THINK YOU'RE CRAZY,  
A PROFESSOR IS GIVING YOU A HARD  
TIME, AND YOUR FRIENDS TEASE YOU.



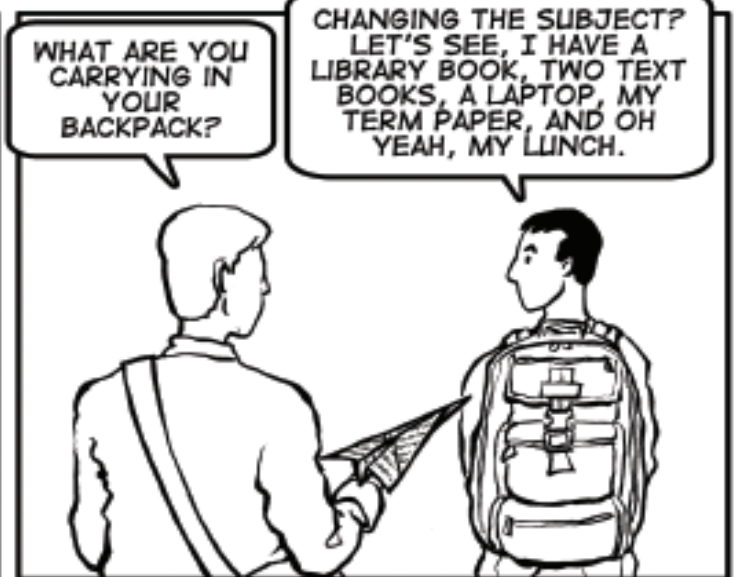
ESPECIALLY  
YOU...

World Rights Reserved. Printed here by permission.



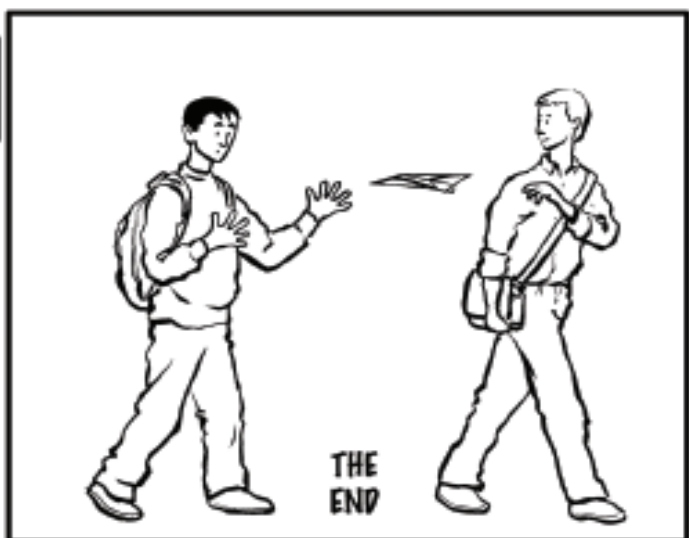
IT APPEARS TO ME THAT  
THIS CHRISTIAN STUFF  
HAS ACTUALLY MADE  
YOUR LIFE WORSE!

SO, WHY  
NOT  
GIVE IT  
UP?



WHAT ARE YOU  
CARRYING IN  
YOUR  
BACKPACK?

CHANGING THE SUBJECT?  
LET'S SEE, I HAVE A  
LIBRARY BOOK, TWO TEXT  
BOOKS, A LAPTOP, MY  
TERM PAPER, AND OH  
YEAH, MY LUNCH.



# Roman Catholics and Protestants

**To properly witness to Roman Catholics we need to understand their very different worldview**

by Alex Greer

We've all met Roman Catholics; they are our neighbors, our work colleagues, our frequent political allies and in some cases our relatives.

But while we've all met Roman Catholics, that doesn't mean the Catholics we've met all believe the same thing or live their beliefs the same way. Roman Catholics in modern western society vary greatly as to their level of religious commitment. There are many who are Roman Catholic in name only, who rarely attend mass, except perhaps for Christmas, Easter, baptisms, marriages and funerals. From them you may hear a boast about the winning streaks of various sports teams from Catholic schools.

Then there are the more devout, who attend mass and other church events regularly, and who may say a prayer for us, their "separated brethren."

Finally there are those who are more extreme, whom you need meet only for a moment to find out that they are Roman Catholic. They carry their rosaries and medallions proudly, and their views on Protestantism are anything but complementary.

In my life I have encountered all three of these types of Roman Catholics, and have had varying responses to my Reformed witness.

## **Not merely a small difference**

Today relations between Catholics and Protestants are friendlier than what

they once were. But to understand the Roman Catholic church today, it's good to remember how things used to be. That is a needed starting point.

In the days before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) when the mass was still said in Latin, Protestants were not "separated brethren." Protestants, Reformed or otherwise, were just heretics,



***Roman Catholics presuppose the authority of their church, and rely on its traditions***



lost and destined for hell. As my parents have told me, in those times it was rare that there was any social contact between Roman Catholics and Protestants. They attended parochial schools and colleges run by their priests and nuns and had their own separate social clubs and athletic leagues. Any social mixing was done in the workplace, the marketplace, political meetings, military parades and the councils of government. Having Protestant friends was not something individual Roman Catholics were urged to have in the old days.

## **The pope over all**

Why the closed attitude? Well, the Roman Catholic Church asserted (and still does today) that it was the one and only true church founded by Jesus Christ upon the Apostle Peter. They use our Lord's words in Matthew 16:16-20 to make their claim. Peter is said to have become the Bishop of Rome, and thus today's Bishop of Rome, the Pope, is said to be the "apostolic successor."

This basic position did not change with Vatican II and Pope Benedict XVI affirmed this cardinal doctrine in a recent statement, and further claimed that Protestant churches are not really churches, but mere "religious organizations." A Vatican statement clarified that the Pope did not mean that Protestants were not Christians, only that they did not understand the meaning of what a "church" is about.

As to what being the "true church" means to Roman Catholics, it is much deeper than most Protestants may realize. It is not just as if they are sports fans saying that their team is better than ours. Nor are they merely saying that their theology is right, and ours is wrong, as when Calvinists debate Arminian Protestants. One Catholic guidebook confidently asserts that: by following their church "you can be sure that you are plugged into the apostolic faith – the faith that has been given the gifts of the

sacraments, divinely-given leadership, and the promise of remaining faithful until the end of time.”<sup>1</sup>

### The church over Scripture

Protestants start with the Scriptures – *sola Scriptura* – and then ensure their churches conform to what God’s Word requires. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, first presuppose the authority of their church, and rely on its traditions as being equal to Scripture. Roman Catholics are to accept without question what their church says is the “true” interpretation of the Scriptures.

There is a widely used term, *the Mystical Body of Christ*, which Roman Catholics use to describe their church. In the Apostle Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians we read of Christians belonging to the body of Christ (12:12-31). Protestants read this passage as an analogy. The interconnectedness of the human body is compared to the close relationship between our Savior Jesus Christ, and those who believe in Him. Many other comparisons are used such as the church being the “bride” (Rev. 21:2), or being “branches” while Jesus is the “vine” (John 15:1-17), and being the “sheep” while Jesus is the Good Shepard (John 10:1-18, 21:16). Christian believers are not literal fruit-bearing branches, nor are we literal wool-bearing sheep, nor are we literal body parts. However for Roman Catholics this Pauline scripture about the body carries a more carnal interpretation. Just as they believe that in communion, or mass, the bread and the wine are changed into the literal flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus, they believe that the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church is the flesh and blood body of Christ. The Second Vatican Council proclaimed that the mass “is an action of Christ the priest and of his body the Church; it is a sacred action surpassing all others; no action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”<sup>2</sup> So they have an almost literalistic view of the church being Jesus. Jesus is the “head” but in his absence the Pope, “Peter’s successor,” the Bishop of Rome, is acting in Jesus’ place. When a Pope

Calvin and Luther:  
our heroes are their villains.



speaks from the chair (*ex cathedra*) he is, for a Roman Catholic, speaking with the authority of Jesus himself.

### The priests over their congregation

And this authority of the Pope extends right down to a parish priest. Priests have greater authority over the lives of ordinary Catholics than what even the most charismatic Protestant ministers have over their flocks. Roman Catholic priests, who are celibate to be like Jesus, have the authority to say mass (and hence turn the elements into Jesus), to hear confession, demand penance, and grant forgiveness for sins.

This difference was aptly expressed by a very conservative Roman Catholic doctor I talked to who unashamedly identified himself as “a blind follower.” Few Protestants would ever say such a

thing. With this kind of blind obedience to an institution, Roman Catholics have a radically different mindset than that of any Protestant.

The difference comes out in a variety of ways. One example is our very different views of church history. Our heroes are their villains. Our villains are their heroes. In Catholic books one can find different accounts of such historical events than in Protestant texts. The Reformation is regarded by the pre-Vatican II Catholics as the work of the devil. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox are all deemed as “sick” individuals who carried out a conspiracy to undermine the church. Catholics who were executed for trying to kill Protestant rulers, like those in the Babington plot against England’s Queen Elizabeth I, are regarded as martyrs on a par with the Christians in the Roman arena. On the other hand the murder of

Protestants for their faith, like that of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day, was an event celebrated with a papal medallion. Of course some Catholics regard the Reformation as merely an unfortunate event, and that Luther and Calvin were really only misguided individuals who should have worked for reform from within the church. But even these more moderate Catholics believe that matters could be improved if only we realized our "error" and returned to the "mother church."

So regardless of whether a Roman Catholic is moderate or more fervent, he has been taught that Protestants are outside the true "Body of Christ." In some cases like French Canada, Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia, this has taken on a nasty political and ethnic dimension.

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***Roman Catholics have a radically different mindset than that of any Protestant***

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In these regions when Roman Catholics call us "Calvinists" or "Lutherans" they are using these words as terms of abuse. They are saying that really we do not follow Christ, but Martin Luther and John Calvin. Sadly many Protestants have responded with hate rather than love. With my Northern Ireland roots I have experienced this counter-hate at first hand. This is clearly not the way to witness to Catholics.

**Clearly fallible**

Many Roman Catholics have learned of the adverse results from putting trust in fallible men. Over the past two decades news report after news report have surfaced about Roman Catholic clergy committing gross acts of sexual abuse against minors. What has been equally disturb-

ing, even to many Roman Catholics, is that a number of cases the church hierarchy kept the matter covered up.

The abuse scandals were not too surprising for Protestants with long memories. Books on the immorality of past Popes and Roman Catholic clergy were a common staple on the catalogues of old Protestant organizations. But to Roman Catholics, given the special regard they have for their clergy, these scandals carried a very different meaning. I talked about the issue with a Franco-American friend who blamed the "anti-Catholic" bias in the media for the problem. He reluctantly admitted that these abuses may have happened, but he believed that "one should not destroy people's faith by the exposing of scandals."

I was initially quite taken aback by his answer. How could people's faith be ruined by the exposure of the crimes of fallible men? Later on, I was reminded of my friend's comment when another Roman Catholic friend, this time a Newfoundland, told me that the scandals caused him to give up on his religion completely. Protestants might see the scandals, as with that of the television evangelists, as the acts of sinful men, and hardly something to cause one to give up on the faith. However, for any serious Roman Catholic, these priests are literally the "little fingers" of Jesus, and if they can hear confession and forgive sins, they then must be "holy."

**May the Spirit use the Word**

As some Roman Catholics encounter their doubts they may be willing to talk to Protestants on theological matters. What would be a proper response for Reformed Christians should God grant them the opportunity to witness to Roman Catholics? First, do not be afraid. Stand firm for the truth, and let the Word (2 Timothy 3:15-16) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17) be your guide and your witness. Should there be any abuse do not allow yourself to succumb to angry or hatred. Also, keep a positive sense of humor. Given what Roman Catholics have

been taught in their schools and churches in the past about Protestantism in general, and Calvinism in particular, you may hear some very strange ideas as I have. Should you even use the word "Calvinist" when explaining your theological background they might be surprised that you do not have any horns and hoofs!

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***Today's Roman Catholics are in a position similar to that of the Sixteenth Century***

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Perhaps, what many of us with a long Reformation pedigree can appreciate is that today's Roman Catholics who are searching for the truth are in a position similar to that of the Sixteenth Century reformers. The early Protestants had grown up in the Roman Catholic Church, and had only known what that church had taught. Luther was an Augustinian monk, and Calvin was a priesthood candidate at the Sorbonne. They read the Bible for the first time, and then proceeded to call on the church to adhere to its teachings. So we must do as the Reformers did and confront Roman Catholics with Scripture – *sola Scriptura* remains a defining difference. That is a legacy which continues down to the present, and one that we can hope and pray that our Roman Catholics neighbors, coworkers and relatives will one day come to understand.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Editors of the Catholic Exchange, *A Guide to the Passion: 100 Questions about the Passion of the Christ*, West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2004, p.76.

<sup>2</sup> *New Saint Joseph Sunday Missal: Prayer Book and Hymnal for 2008*, NJ: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2007, p.8.



# Feminists get it half right

## Pornography isn't just sexist; it's sex without love

by Michael Wagner

But pornography is a form of propaganda promoting a particular view of human life, and it's not a good view. Many feminists have realized this and have led efforts to ban or restrict pornography in Canada and the USA. One prominent American feminist academic, Catherine MacKinnon, was particularly influential in the Canadian Supreme Court's 1992 *Butler* decision which basically ratified the government's power to restrict pornography in Canada. Despite being American, she contributed heavily to a legal brief that convinced the court of the feminist view.

Feminists oppose pornography largely because they see it as promoting inequality between men and women. Pornography is a means by which men dominate women. Women are just presented as objects for the pleasure and satisfaction of men. Or as MacKinnon puts it, pornography "institutionalizes the sexuality of male supremacy."

### But what if we objectify everyone?

Of course, it's good that many feminists oppose pornography – the more opposition to pornography the better. But as conservative political scientist Harry Clor points out in his book *Public Morality and Liberal Society*, the feminist critique of pornography is inadequate. Because it is based on the view that

Most people don't like to be told what to. They think people should mind their own business and leave others alone. To each his own. So some people strongly object to efforts to restrain

pornography because they feel their freedom is being invaded by others – it's nobody's business but their own if they use pornography. Pornography is a harmless pastime.

pornography is bad primarily because it promotes the inequality of women, pornography that portrays women as equal to men would actually be acceptable to feminists. “That assumption is implicit in the oft-repeated claim that ‘pornography is not about sex; it is about power.’ Take away the male power – equalize the status of women and men in sexual representations and in society – and there is no problem remaining.”

.....

***Love is excluded from  
the sexuality involved in  
pornography***

.....

Many feminists recognize and endorse this reasoning. In their view sexual images can be produced that don’t demean women or portray them as being dominated, and these images are therefore okay. They call this kind of stuff “erotica” rather than pornography, but the only apparent difference is that inequality between the sexes is not being promoted. So it’s the message advocated by sexual representation (not necessarily the sexual representation itself) that is opposed by feminists.

The feminist critique of porn breaks down at this point. If equality is the key issue in this debate, it “might actually mean nothing more than the even-handed objectification of everyone.” As long as men are not in control of the women or dominating the women in sexual imagery, there is no problem, according to the feminist view.

**Where’s the love?**

The conservative critique of pornography is much more substantial than the idea that it demeans women, which, of course, it does do. Human beings have

many natural physical desires that must be controlled in order for people to live together in community, including thirst, hunger, and other bodily needs. But sexual desire “unlike other sensual appetites (eating, for example), is an appetite oriented to and involving another person.”

In the proper form of sexuality, the two people involved care for each other, respect each other, and have a life-long commitment to each other known as marriage. Love between two people is absolutely central to this concept of sexuality. And in Christian marriage, love often means prioritizing the needs of the other spouse ahead of one’s own needs.

But love is completely excluded from the sexuality involved in pornography. Indeed, the central purpose of pornography is “to arouse an elemental passion for other people’s bodies independently of any affection or regard for a particular person.” This is achieved through “a heavy emphasis on the observable external, hence the animal and mechanical dimensions, of sexuality, and the depiction of its subjects as *things* to be used for the gratification of the user.” Other people are just objects.

**It has an impact**

This kind of thing is profoundly anti-social. How could people live harmoniously together in community if each person views others as “things” for his or her own use? Other people exist only to serve his or her needs. That is the message of pornography. “Insofar as it appeals to strong primitive impulses that civilization seeks (with difficulty) to control or refine, pornography is anticivilization.”

Many people deny that pornography is harmful. It is “victimless” they say. What harm could there be in looking at pictures or watching movies? It doesn’t cause anybody to run out and rape or molest someone. At least that can’t be proven by strict scientific standards. But


this kind of argument runs counter to the common aphorism, “garbage in, garbage out.” Whatever people view or watch, whether in a magazine, television, or on the Internet, influences what they think about. As Clor states, it is virtually self-evident “that man, the image-making and image-using animal, can be influenced for good and ill by images.”

Pornography is becoming increasingly ubiquitous in Canada and in other countries – on television, on billboards, and especially on the Internet. This is bound to influence some people. Clor writes that “almost everyone believes (and acts upon the belief in one way or another) that the cultural milieu is a factor in the shaping of attitudes and moral sensibilities – an educator or miseducator.” So the increasing presence of pornography and pornographic images contributes to the declining morality of our country.

.....

***Other people exist  
only to serve his or her  
needs***

.....

Pornography is not harmless. It promotes an anti-social view of other people. Many feminists have recognized this, at least in part. But the conservative critique is considerably more substantial than the feminist critique. From the conservative perspective, “pornography is appropriately restricted largely because of its long-range effects upon attitudes and feelings in certain sensitive matters of vital social interest.” We can judge things by their fruit, and the fruit of pornography is evil. In fact, it would be true to say that pornography itself is evil. 

# Christian Art?

If today's art is too often vile,  
today's Christian art is too often infantile

by Johan D. Tangelder

Do we know what to look for in art, or how to recognize it when we see it, or how to distinguish the real thing from an imitation? And does being Christian make a difference in our appreciation of the arts?

Well, art is another battlefield, and a work of art can become either an instrument of sin or an instrument for the glory of God. Today's contemporary art refuses any set form, content, or medium – it is in full flight from God and it insists “religion” has to go. The Art Institute of Chicago's James Elkins argues in his book *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* that the art world “can accept a wide range of ‘religious’ art by people who hate religion, by people who are deeply uncertain about it, by the disgruntled and the disaffected and the skeptical, but there is no place for artists who express straightforward, ordinarily religious faith.” And Elkins states:

“To fit in the art world, a work with a religious theme has to fulfill several criteria. It has to demonstrate the artist has second thoughts about religion. . . . Ambiguity and self-critique have to be integral to the work. And it follows that irony must pervade the art, must be the air it breathes.”

He dismisses off hand the work of Christian artists. He declares that, “committed, engaged, ambitious, informed art does not mix with dedicated, serious, thoughtful, heartfelt religion.” So much for neutrality in the arts!



Christian art from today: Thomas Kinkadee's "Sunrise Chapel"

That's why when we look at modern art we see work that conflicts with nature. We see things like a portrait of a woman whose forehead and cheeks are green and a painting of a landscape with blue horses. Instead of portraying the beauty and wonder of creation, these sorts of works symbolize the disintegration of creation.

## Kitsch aesthetically bad art

So we can see rebellion against God in much of the art today, but what about art that does have religious content? When we see these sorts of works how

should we react? Well, we must begin by asking, “Is it art?” and “Is it Christian?”

The simple fact that a Biblical hero is painted in color does not give a satisfactory answer to either question. Just look at the “art works” for sale in many Christian bookstores. Have you ever wondered whether they truly are Christian? I suggest they belong to a type of art known as “kitsch.” The dictionary describes kitsch as “art or literature of a cheap, popular, or sentimental quality.” In other words, kitsch can be judged as aesthetically bad. Many of the prints and sculptures that are sold in Christian

bookstores reflect worldviews that have nothing to do with Christianity. The figurine or plaque or picture that give us a warm feeling because of its cuteness and emotionalism may have more to do with Romanticism than Biblical Christianity. Kitsch also includes plaster and plastic lawn ornaments. It is art of poor quality, which nevertheless manages to be enormously popular in appealing to some sentiment of association. It reflects today's obsession with positive thinking and feeling good about ourselves. Kitsch often trivializes truly great art: for example, as in an ashtray modeled after the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany.

Although such work and those who buy it may certainly be sincere, Christians should try to develop their taste in art, just as they try to grow in other areas of life. In his book *State of the Arts. From Bezael to Mapplethorpe*, Gene Edward Veith Jr observes, "Christianity is not a sickly sweet religion, contrary to the saccharine plaques and greeting cards that clutter up the bookstore. The anemic figurines of Jesus Christ are poor testimonies to His deity and His Lordship."

### What the Bible reveals about art

But is a visit to an art museum not a frivolous way for a serious Christian to spend his time? I am told that some new Christians just drop their artistic career because they think that painting and other art forms today are incompatible with being a real Christian. They seem to believe that if art has a function at all, it is for evangelism.

But art is more than a means to spread the Gospel. Hans Rookmaaker comments: "Many fine Christians who have a talent or an interest in the arts are forced to defend their involvement by saying that art is an excellent means of evangelism. When art is used as a tool for evangelism, it is often insincere and second-rate, devaluated to the level of propaganda. I would call it a form of prostitution, a misuse of one's talent."

Scripture's perspective is that art stands on its own. The Bible sanctions the arts, by describing the gifts God has given to artists, and recounting in loving details works of art that were ordained by

God to reveal His glory and to enrich His people. God is revealed as the Great Artist who works with a blueprint. In Hebrews 11:10 we read about Abraham who was looking forward to the city with a foundation, "whose architect and builder is God." In Exodus it tells the story of the tabernacle built according to divine instruction. God, the designer and maker of the universe, clearly places great value on details of design, construction, and artistic skill. In the Bible, then, art stands on its own; it has its own sphere; it is not an afterthought.

In the Bible we also see that the Holy Spirit gives the inspiration for the creation of art. The Lord chose Bezalel to build the Tabernacle, and "filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze" (Ex. 31:2-3). The Bezalel mandate also indicates that being an artist can be a vocation from God. He is also the first person described in Scripture as being filled with the Holy Spirit. God gave him a measure of understanding, of reason, of common sense. The work assigned to Bezalel suggests a purpose for all of the arts – to glorify God and to manifest beauty. The Exodus account also warns that art can express falsehoods as well as truth. While Bezalel was empowered to build the Tabernacle for the worship of the true God, Aaron used his artistic talents to manufacture an idol, a golden calf, a work of art that displaced the true faith and led the people into the grossest sin.

Later, when Israel was permanently settled in the Promised Land, Solomon built the temple – an improved, lasting tabernacle. God's concern for beauty is amply documented in the specifications for Israel's temple. Though the temple remained ever devoid of anything resembling an image of the Lord, things cleverly carved and woven, things of wood, precious stone, brass and gold proclaimed His praise. It was also filled with the sound of music. The public worship commanded by God "included musical instruments of all kinds, and a trained choir of a thousand voices." The whole worship service in tabernacle and

temple reflected beauty. Angels were depicted, as well as objects from the natural world. Precious stones were placed in the temple for the purpose of displaying beauty (2 Chron. 3:6). In *Art and the Bible* Francis Schaeffer notes, "There was no pragmatic reason for the stones. They had no utilitarian purpose. . . . God is interested in beauty."

### Talents that must be used

Art is possible because we are made in God's image. Here lies the borderline between the art of God and the art of man. God invited Adam, one of His creatures, to share in the process of "creation" with Him (Gen. 2:15). He called us to exercise our creative capacities to the fullest possible extent.

Art is the ability to make something beautiful (as well as useful), just as God made the world beautiful and said, "It is good." A Christian artist, therefore, is the imitator of God (Ps. 104). Dorothy Sayers observes, "The characteristics common to God and man is apparently that: the desire and the ability to make things."

Therefore, we may not neglect an artistic gift. For the Christian artist his work is his mission. He is not only an artist, but also a servant and a Christ confessor. He is called to preach with his brush. Artists are not made, but born. The Spirit gives, also in the field of art, according to everyone as He wishes. When one lacks creativity, the ability to be a good artist won't come. It is not something that can be taught or caught. But an artist with a God given talent should not hide it under a bushel. In his *The Creative Gift: Essays on Art and the Creative Life* Hans Rookmaaker argues, if God has given us talents, we must use them creatively. "A Christian artist is not different from, say, a Christian teacher, minister, scholar, merchant, housewife, or anybody else who has been called by the Lord to specific work in line with his or her talents. There are no specific rules for artists, nor do they have specific exemptions to the norms of good conduct God has laid down for man. An artist is simply a person whose God-given talents ask him to follow the specific vocation of art."

## Our worldview will come out in our art

When does an artist create something? When a thought is turned into a deed.

Of course an artist does not create something out of nothing. He works with the powers and talents God has given him. He uses his imagination, the impressions of what he sees in his mind. He idealizes what he sees or degenerates it. His view of the world, his religious orientation, is reflected in his work. Let us not forget: art is a part of culture and culture is closely connected to one's worldview. Dorothy Sayers notes, "If we commit ourselves to saying that the Christian revelation discovers to us the nature of all truth, then it must discover to us the nature of the truth about art among other things." The task of a Christian artist who takes his faith seriously will be a difficult one in our world with its lack of respect for God and His law.

How, then, can a Christian artist keep his focus in our confusing times with its many conflicting views on art? By living according to the Word of God (Ps. 119: 9). It is impossible to keep a clear perspective on art apart from studying God's Word. The artist who draws his inspiration from the Bible will not promote abstract art. All that the Bible teaches him is concrete: the divine and the human, the good and the evil.

A Christian artist must use as his starting point the fact that art is only possible because of Jesus Christ. He is the mediator of creation. He is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Heb. 1:3). All things exist in Him (Col. 1:17). Every sphere of life is under His authority. Yes, for the artist it is imperative to know the world has been created by God and that he himself is an image bearer of God, equipped for creative work of beauty (2 Tim. 3: 17). As a Christian artist he has to acknowledge his prophetic and priestly office. The Christian artist is, before all things, a Christian – that is his starting point.

And what is a Christian? Well, the Heidelberg Catechism in Question 32 asks: "Why are you called a Christian?" It answers, "Because by faith I am a member of Christ and thus a partaker of His anointing, in order that I also may confess His Name, may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him, and with a free conscience may fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter in eternity reign with Him over all creatures." So a Christian artist must present himself, and all he does, as a living sacrifice to his Creator.

## Looking back to find examples of great Christian art

While much of today's Christian art is kitschy, it was not always so. We need only look back. And if we do, we will be rewarded. Art, great art, has a special reserved place among human endeavors. What a delight when we can stand before a great work of art, meditate on it,

and be blessed by it. In his *Confessions*, Augustine noted that God's truth is never the private property of a philosopher: "Your truth," he says to God, "does not belong to me or to anyone else, but to us all whom you call to share it." And throughout the ages Christian artists have shared their work. They exercised an enormous influence on art, and at certain times in the West practically everything that was painted was explicitly "religious." In some real sense, therefore, we can speak of *Christian art*.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of style is the artist's personal way of looking at things. Every great work of art is a commentary on life – not just a statement of fact, but an interpretation. It was the Reformation, when Christian artists best understood this, that we had one of the greatest periods in art history. The idea that Calvinism has been the death knell of the arts is refuted by the history of the "golden age" in the Netherlands.



Christian art from the past: detail from Rembrandt's "The Night Watch"

In Reformed Holland painters became the world's first painters of landscape, portraits, and still life pictures. Numerous Dutch painters became famous for their scenes of the countryside with its canals and windmills.


When my family still lived in Amsterdam my father took us often to the Ryksmuseum with its magnificent collection of art works. And, of course, we viewed the paintings of Rembrandt (1606-1669). Rembrandt did not look for beauty, but for truth. As a committed Christian he received light from the Father of lights. He sought light in God's light. His paintings show that he was really in love with light. Besides flawless drawing and use of color, Rembrandt

used light expressively and symbolically. He shrouded his canvases in obscure brown shadows, and set his face flowing against them with golden light that captures deep traits of characters.

His greatest paintings are his self-portraits of those bitter years when nobody valued his pictures, while his great Biblical paintings consoled his spirit. In his short book *Rembrandt and the Gospel*, Willem A. Visser't Hooft describes Rembrandt's art as truly Christian: "As Rembrandt deeply understood the mystery of the Incarnation he was able to in the passion story express the whole tension contained in the gospel between God's wrath and his mercy. Some painters have represented the crucifixion more elo-

quently. But their very eloquence is suspect. Rembrandt does not omit anything of the biblical story. In the second version of the Three Crosses we feel all the human and cosmic horror of Golgotha. But he does not add anything either; for we cannot add anything where 'all things are accomplished'."

### Conclusion

Is Christian art still possible? Yes, it is. But to make full use of their talents Christian artists must go beyond the kitsch of today. Perhaps they can look to the past for inspiration on how to best use their talents in the future. A Christian artist, it is clear, has the high calling to glorify God in all his work. 

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Do you have an event going on you'd like to let everyone know about? Let us know, and we'll post it here, in *Reformed Perspective's* new Four Lines Free column. If your Young People's, Ladies Aid, school, church or other non-profit group is selling cookbooks, hosting a speaker, putting on a rally, or staging a play you can post the details here.

### Requirements:

- Ad should include information such as What, Where, When, How much and Contact info
- Ad must be no more than 200 characters (and that's including spaces)
- Ad must be for events that go beyond the local – if it's just for your congregation you can advertise it in your bulletin
- this is for non-commercial groups (whose philosophy and worldview is in accord with that of *Reformed Perspective*, so we reserve the right to refuse any ad)

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





# The environmentalist way: Mandate in haste, Repent in leisure

by Margaret Helder

The Montreal Protocol was achieved twenty years ago. This was the first major international agreement on an environmental issue of global concern. According to the agreement, major industrial nations agreed to phase out the manufacture of chlorofluorocarbons, chemicals used in cooling systems (refrigerators) and other important industrial applications.

As time has passed however, this environmental success story seems to have turned to ashes. Questions abound. Was such drastic action justified at the time? Armed with more recent information, would we pursue a similar course today? Was anything really achieved? The story of research on atmospheric ozone is certainly a cautionary tale of how not to react to perceived environmental crises.

It was in 1974 that chemists Mario Molina and Sherwood Rowland of the University of California, first proposed the theory that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) would break down in the upper atmosphere (stratosphere) thereby releasing chlorine atoms which could break down ozone gas into ordinary oxygen. *TIME* magazine, in an article May 17, 1993, conceded that scientists had to confirm that CFCs did in fact attack ozone. Nevertheless, declared the *TIME* article, governments should have acted a lot faster than they did. The article asks rhetorically: "Did the world really act as fast as possible to meet the threat? The answer, unfortunately, is no. The eventual rescue operation was the last chapter in a long saga of confusion, wishful thinking, indecision and delay."

Alternatively, some people at the time insisted that worldwide action was premature. In retrospect, it now appears that the latter group of naysayers was correct. The scientific community really had little in the way of data. Nevertheless there were plenty of dire warnings about what might happen.

## The sky is falling. . . apart!

It was the discovery in 1985 of a large area of much lower ozone levels in the sky over Antarctica which really caught the world's attention. Such an "ozone hole" in the Antarctic sky has since appeared each spring and ozone levels soon bounce upward again, but scientists worry that a significant amount of ozone is being lost every year in the sky over this southern, very cold continent. More recently, an ozone hole over the Arctic was also found during very cold springs in the northern hemisphere.

A United Nations conference in Vienna in 1985 was convened to search for an international response to the ozone prob-

lem. The reason for concern about ozone levels is that this gas filters out harmful ultraviolet radiation which comes from the sun. Ultraviolet radiation has the ability to break down genetic information (DNA) in cells, and cause cancer and cataracts.

The Vienna conference failed to achieve a consensus. But the Montreal conference, which met two years later, approved the freezing of CFC production worldwide, initially at 1986 levels with a subsequent phased reduction over ten years. Thus the Montreal Protocol was achieved in 1987 and ratified two years later in 1989.

## New findings

A retrospective article, written in the June 11, 1993 issue of the journal *Science*, admitted that there were no actual documented negative effects from reduced ozone levels. There had, in fact, been no increase in dangerous UV light discovered in the USA. On the contrary, the data, if anything, suggested a slight decrease in UV light. The concern was over what might happen in the future. Thus the *Science* writer declared: "The gap between the present danger of ozone depletion – little or none that can be attributed to rising ultraviolet radiation at the Earth's surface – and the possible danger in the future, had not the Montreal Protocol been passed, provided plenty of room for a wide range of opinions as to how much concern is warranted."

The 1993 *Science* article also mentioned that the current scientific understanding of global ozone behaviour was "fraught with uncertainty." That admission certainly came to mind when a news item about ozone chemistry appeared in the journal *Nature* September 27, 2007. It was impossible to miss the title: "Chemists poke hole in ozone theory." The opening paragraph declared that new experimental results "threaten to shatter established theories of ozone chemistry" and if the data are confirmed, "scientists will have to rethink their understanding of how ozone holes are formed."

According to the 1974 theory of Molina and Rowland, sunlight in the highest levels of earth's atmosphere (upper stratosphere) breaks down CFCs and releases very reactive atoms (or radicals) of chlorine gas (one half a chlorine gas molecule). Unlike most molecules in the air close to sea level, CFCs arrive intact in the stratosphere because they are so resistant to chemical change. However even these molecules succumb to the effects of strong sunlight in the outer atmosphere. The reactive chlorine then steals an atom of oxygen from

*The Montreal Protocol banned CFCs as the cause of ozone depletion. Now it turns out they may have only been a cause.*

ozone. This leaves oxygen gas ( $O_2$ ) instead of ozone ( $O_3$ ). The chlorine oxygen combination then combines with another such combination to form dichlorine peroxide ( $Cl_2O_2$ ). The sun then causes that molecule to break down too, releasing more reactive chlorine which can again attack more ozone.

That was the theory. What chemists have more recently done, is to measure how fast that reaction proceeds under conditions which are realistic for the upper atmosphere. Guess what! The measurements indicate that the reaction proceeds almost ten times more slowly than had been expected. The implications for the result were only evident when a scientist from the Alfred Wegener Institute of Polar and Marine Research in Potsdam, Germany inserted the new reaction rate into computer models for ozone depletion.

It would be an understatement to say that the result was a shock. It now appears that 60% of the ozone destruction at the poles comes from an unknown mechanism! Markus Rex, the atmospheric scientist involved, thus declared: "If the measurements are correct we can basically no longer say we understand how ozone holes come into being" (*Nature* Sept. 27/07 p. 382). It seems ironic that the institute that Markus Rex represents, is named for Alfred Wegener, whom North American scientists vilified for forty years over his theories about continental drift. European scientists do seem to be more free to question current science dogma than are North American scientists. Nevertheless Markus Rex did declare his support for the Montreal Protocol and current views that CFCs are the main culprit in the ozone problem.

In view of the recent chemical studies, it makes sense that the Montreal Protocol does not seem to have led, at least yet, to any improvement in ozone levels in the outer atmosphere. An article (the cover story) published in *Nature* May 4, 2006, was entitled "The search for signs of recovery of the ozone layer." The article declares that there are a lot of factors which can influence ozone levels in the upper atmosphere. Thus we need long term data to see any trends. Indeed the authors Elizabeth Weatherhead and Signe Andersen declare: "The analyses of ozone records and conclusions regarding recovery, in the short or long term, are sensitive to many concurrent changes in the atmosphere. Because of high natural variability in ozone levels, total column ozone fluctuates over timescales of a few years. These fluctuations can obscure long-term changes and offer false indications of recovery. The separation of long term change in ozone concentrations from natural variability is our current challenge."

The authors compared annual ozone averages at four latitudes from 1980 to 2005. What they found was "considerable variability that cannot be attributed to concentrations of ozone-depleting substances." The authors found that storms on the



sun, which follow an eleven-year cycle, and volcanic eruptions, both had an influence on ozone levels. In the early years of the controversy, many scientists denied that these processes had any significant effect on ozone levels. At the end of their article, the two authors conclude: "Considerably longer data series and improved understanding of atmospheric processes and their effects on ozone are needed to estimate future ozone levels with confidence."

### Lesson to be learned

Before the Montreal Protocol was ratified, many concerned citizens and some scientists declared that the rush into worldwide action was premature. Long-term studies would have been the prudent response in order to ensure that the CFCs were really to blame. After all, if there really was a problem that should be addressed, the smart procedure would be to correctly identify what the problem is. However, as a result of the Montreal Protocol, some compounds which were important for refrigeration, aerosols and fire retardants among other uses, have been replaced by less efficient, more expensive compounds.

In the case of the ozone story, society will manage with the new situation. However a similar controversy involving carbon dioxide emissions, promises to have a much greater impact on all our lives. If there are any lessons to be learned from the ozone story, it is to proceed slowly. Collect information on natural variation and long-term changes. Listen to the critics as well as the prominent "experts." Thus the title of this article comes from a seventeenth century proverb: "Marry in haste, repent at leisure." Our modern version translates into "Mandate (a protocol) in haste, repent at leisure." This is an important concept that should never be forgotten.

# Lessons from The Man in the Van

by Fenna Bredenhof

One Sunday afternoon a man knocked on our door. He was looking for work and thought that we were the owners of some nearby blueberry fields. Unfortunately, we couldn't offer him a job. He seemed to be a decent man – shy and almost child-like, looking for an honest job, so we offered him a place to sleep so he could talk to the owner of the fields the next day. He declined the room in the house but politely asked if he could sleep in the barn. My husband showed him a place in one of the sheds that was clean and dry. He set up a “bed” – taking what he needed from his duffel bag – a duffel bag that contained all his earthly possessions. The following day when we brought him a meal, we found out he had gotten a job and his new boss was letting him sleep in an old, broken-down van parked beside the shed.

## Two copper coins

We would often bring him a warm meal. His boss would take home his laundry and gave him a heater to keep warm. Over the course of the week my husband spoke to him quite often and invited him to church. When my husband explained all that happens at church including the collection bag going around for the needy that man said, “Oh, I have a few dollars I can stick in there.” After the service the man said to us, “Big people go there.” He meant rich people – that a lot of rich people go to church. And this man had put some of the few dollars he had in the collection bag to help the needy in the church who, compared to himself, were not needy at all. Here was a living example of the poor widow putting in her last two copper coins in Mark 12:41-43.

This man was living in a broken-down van, relying on others for his food, warmth, and laundry until he got a paycheck. He had no kitchen – not even a stove, no bathroom, no soft, comfortable bed, no electricity for light (he used a flashlight and candles we had given him), and only a few clothes.

## Blessed beyond measure


We were living on the same yard, in a nice warm house. We have all the food we can eat, a

washing machine for our many clothes, a kitchen with all the amenities, and a bathroom with flush toilets and a warm shower. Our bed is soft, warm and comfortable, and we waste electricity with our lights on all day. We have so much stuff we don't know what to do with it.

For some of us, our stuff ends up in a storage space, collecting dust and yet we keep on buying new stuff. We're so often discontent with what we have. How often don't we wish we had that outfit that so-and-so was wearing to church the other day, or that car – wow, if only we had that car. We are so often sucked into advertisements and start wishing we had the newest product that they are offering.

Not only do we wish for more, we also complain about what we do have. The hot water might take a couple of minutes to heat up to the right temperature or the computer takes so long to load. The radio goes fuzzy just as our favorite song or program comes on. Or the carrots and potatoes are a little hard, and the meat is a little too dry. And that light fixture that came with the house – ugh, it just has to go – it's so ugly. We seem to be discontent in all situations.

## Paul content in all

But then when we turn to the Scriptures we see Paul's example in Philippians 4:12-13. “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” Paul's secret is living for God and seeking our contentment in Him. God gives him strength to be content in each and every situation because Paul asks God for that strength and Paul trusts that he will get that strength. We can be content in all things if we serve God for that is what we were made for. So whether we live in an old broken down van or in a warm comfortable house, we should learn to be content. 



# Soup & Buns

## Inspired by Righteous Actions

by Sharon L. Bratcher

Bob surprised us all. While we were each trying to outdo the other quipping TV-type anti-spouse jokes, he declared: "I got the blessing of bringing Cindy home to be my wife." We all glanced at Cindy, who was positively beaming at her husband's praise. The contrast between the comments caused me to remember that room and that conversation for many years.

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Marsha put us all to shame. We young people were standing around whining about life and expressing our fears about a dangerous situation. Everyone spoke similar phrases. Then Marsha declared "We ought to read a Psalm and pray because we know that God will protect us and give us strength today." Because truth was spoken, our behavior changed.

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Dave led quietly by example. Our Christian College administration admonished chapel-goers to enter quietly and pray before the daily chapel sessions began. This was difficult for boisterous 18-21 year olds reuniting with friends or "potentials" after a morning of classes. During my junior year, I entered and noticed fellow Chorale member Dave, in the second row on the right had a seat available beside him. I brushed past him, sat down and began to chat. He flashed his grin and listened politely for a moment. Then he said, "I was just praying, to prepare myself for the message."

"Oh!" I responded. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to disturb you."

"No, it's ok. But I want to pray now." He bowed his head, folded his hands, closed his eyes and went quiet.

I respected that. I admired that. My first thought was "Wow, someone who actually does it." Tentatively, I took the same position and began to pray. When chapel started, we both looked up, glanced at each other, smiled, and picked up our hymn books. For the rest of that year I sat next to Dave nearly every day in chapel. From his example I drew strength that encouraged me to apply this practice regularly and cease forever worrying about whether other students were going to comment about me or not.

We can model our behavior after good examples, and we can become the good examples to be modeled.

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God's Word never goes out in vain and the practice of godly actions never goes unnoticed, although we may not ever know who benefited. It is unfortunately also true that the initial reaction by others, even Christians, may be impulsive mocking. All of this can contribute to our fear of righteous action in the face of its opposite.

Edward Welch has written a book entitled *When People Are Big and God Is Small*. Through this book, it is amazing to discover how many ways we engage in approval-seeking behavior. He quotes Proverbs 29:25: "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe."

He points out that: "One of the Bible's dominant questions is, Whom will you fear (need, be controlled by)? Will you fear God or people? Scripture gives three basic reasons why we fear other people and we will look at each of them in turn." He goes on to discuss the fact that we fear people because they can expose and humiliate; reject, ridicule, or despise; attack, oppress or threaten us. These aspects lead us to, "see people as "bigger" (that is, more powerful and significant) than God, and, out of the fear that creates in us, we give other people the power and right to tell us what to feel, think, and do.

The situations described at the start of this article made a deep impression on me when I was young because I saw a Christian doing what was righteous, and at the time it was not what I had chosen to do, even though I was a Christian and among Christians. Memories were sealed into place by deep emotions, and each of these situations caused me to seriously re-think my own behavior, and to grow courageous because of their examples. As an adult, I still face numerous situations where I need encouragement to do what God would desire: standing up for His name, respecting my husband when I speak, not gossiping, and sharing God's Word with unbelievers.

Welch encourages us to "Recognize that the fear of man is a major theme both in the Bible and in your own life." He encourages us, biblically, to know our real needs and delight in the God who "fills" us as we learn to love our brothers and sisters, our neighbors and our enemies.

Righteous actions inspire others.

*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes 12:13*



# 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)

## NEW PUZZLES

### Riddles for Punsters #142 – “Colourful Creatures”

How did the flamingo react when it was given a surprise birthday party? It was t \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ d p \_ \_ \_ .

How did the turtle react, since no one ever gave it a surprise party? It was g \_ \_ \_ n with e \_ \_ \_ .

How did the canary react to the sad turtle’s jealousy? It was no longer in a party mood, but was more of a m \_ \_ \_ ow y \_ \_ \_ ow.

### Problem to Ponder #142

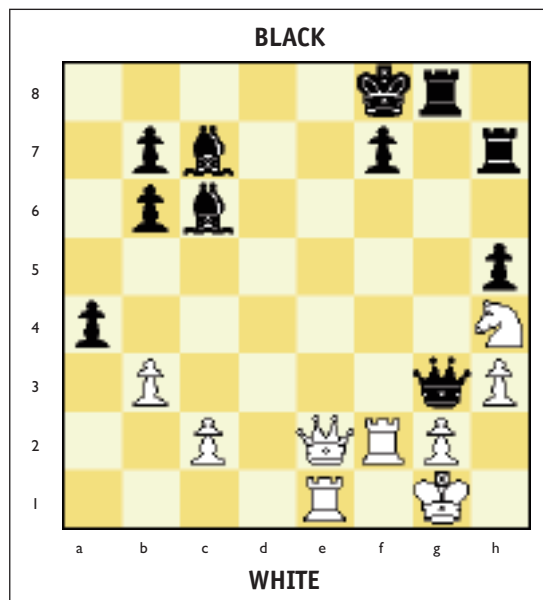
An extra large pizza has a 15 inch diameter, a large has a 13 inch diameter and a medium has a 10 inch diameter at Tony’s Family Pizza Place.

All prices include all taxes.

- If the extra large pizza costs \$15.49 whereas the large costs \$11.49, which is the better deal?
- Would two medium pizzas, on sale for \$6.85 each if you buy two, be a better deal? Would two mediums give more to eat than the large or extra large pizza?



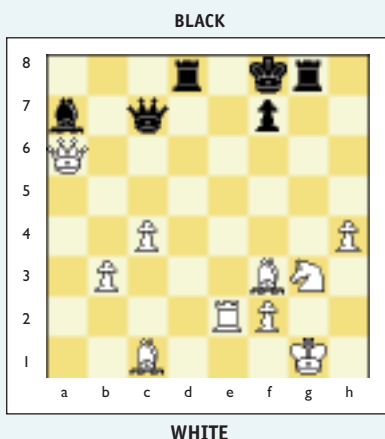
## Chess Puzzle # 142



**WHITE to Mate in 3**  
Or, If it is BLACK’s Move, **BLACK to Mate in 2**

## SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (FEBRUARY) PUZZLE PAGE

### SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 141



#### WHITE to Mate in 3 Descriptive Notation

- Q-R6 ch R-N2
  - Q-R8 ch R-N1
  - B-R6 mate
- #### Algebraic Notation
- Qa6-h6 + Rg8-g7
  - Qh6-h8 + Rg7-g8
  - Bc1-h6 ++

#### BLACK to Mate in 2 Descriptive Notation

- \_\_\_\_\_ QxN ch
  - B-N2 QxB mate
- #### Algebraic Notation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Qc7xg3 +
  - Bf3-g2 Qg3xg2 ++

### Answer to Riddles for Punsters #141

Why did the vegetable farmer not like to watch comedy shows on daytime television?  
He found them too c o r n y and figured that he should have b e a n working in the fields instead.



### Answer to Problem to Ponder #141

Mrs. Van der Thrifty goes to the market on Mondays when the vegetables are on sale. Carrots cost \$0.85 per bag, beans \$1.25 per bag, cucumbers \$0.65 each and green peppers \$0.99 per bag. If Mrs. Van der Thrifty has a ten dollar bill how can she buy spend as much of it as possible on vegetables (and so have a minimum of change left over) if she buys at most three of any particular vegetable (so no more than three bags of carrots, etc.)?

A bag of carrots at 85 cents and a cucumber at 65 cents totals 150 cents. Three of each totals 450 cents. Two bags of beans at 125 cents each cost 250 cents, so the total so far is 700 cents. Three bags of green peppers costs 3 times 99 cents so 297 cents. The overall total is 997 cents, so **only 3 cents change would be received from the ten dollar bill**. Thus she should buy 2 bags of beans and 3 of everything else.

# Crossword Puzzle

Series 15 No 5

Last month's solution  
Series 15 No 4

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

1	T	O	W	E	R		5	E	L	K		8	S	T	A	T	E				
13	O	D	I	N			14	A	X	I	O	M		15	O	C	H	S			
16	N	O	N	O			17	R	A	M	I		18	L	U	T	E	S			
19	E	R	N	S			20	I	M	E		21	C	E	R	I	S	E			
	S		I				22	A	S	S		23	C		24	S	E	V	E	N	
		25	O	P	I	N	E		27	S	A	T		28		29	D	E	S		
30	T	R	E	N	D				31	F	U	T	O	N						32	A
33	L	E	G	S					34	E	A	G	E	R		35	A	P	E	R	
	C								38	R	A	D	A	R		39	A	M	E	N	D
		40	A	M	42	U		43	T	E	R		44	S	P	I	N	E			
45	S	P	I	R	E		46		D		47	A	H	A		E			48	A	
49	A	I	R	B	E	D			50	T	R	I		51	S	T	E	P			
53	F	E	R	A	L				54	S	O	I	R		55	L	A	S	H		
56	E	C	O	N			57	L	A	G	E	R		58	A	N	T	I			
59	S	E	R	E	D			60	P	A	L			61	E	G	G	E	D		

## ACROSS:

1. Medieval merchant guilds
7. Extinct beast
14. Dutch colour, perhaps?
15. Airport abbr.
16. Famous red-haired girl
17. Desert illusion
18. Fish catcher
19. Apples or computers?
20. Env. abbr.
21. Computer part
23. Soup spoon
24. Search or expedition
25. Curtain and upholstery fabric
26. A single unit
29. Men of the cloth?
31. Master of Science in Dentistry
32. The back
34. Feet accessories
36. Tough protein in nails and hooves
40. Makes certain
44. Large books
46. Castle defense
47. Librarian's command
50. Not fake
54. Make a mistake
55. One who cries
57. Computer cartridge
58. — Malvinas, aka Falkland Islands
59. Plant with purplish-blue flowers
60. Total Parenteral Nutrition
62. A set of two
63. Boat necessity
64. Sinking in mud
66. Big birds
67. Dessert
68. Soldier's relaxing command
69. Conferences
70. Not as large

## DOWN:

1. Student's burden
2. Aerospace Research Information Network (NASA)
3. Drug officer
4. Systems network architecture, for short
5. Breakfast dish
6. Farm machine
7. Signifies, serves as a symbol
8. Separate article
9. Nathaniel, to his friends
10. Island in E. Central Philippines
11. A wreath for the head
12. Male relatives
13. Fax again
22. Repetitive strain injury (abbr.)
23. Doesn't win
25. Megaton
27. Maiden name
28. Head part
30. Her
33. Rodent
35. Add up
37. Musical pitches
38. Inst. for Marine and Atmospheric Research
39. Final profit
41. Fish eggs
42. Corn part
43. Having more strength
47. Hits with a sweeping motion
48. Small, oval, edible seeds
49. Balloon filler
51. Run-of-paper, where the ad is placed
52. Wild beast
53. Different articulation of sound
56. Persian dialect
59. Animal's home
60. Spanish aunts
61. Plan National Santé-Environnement (French)
63. Dutch grandparent
65. Matter, to a lawyer