

REFORMED

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CHURCH

DOES KEEPING THESE TWO SEPARATE MEAN CHRISTIANS DON'T HAVE A PLACE IN POLITICS?

STATE

Rethinking milk buying

Romans 1:19-20, in a grocery store

Guest Editorial

Douglas Jones

Imagine that you are mistaken about everything you hold dear. Suppose you wake up one morning and clearly realize that your long-held, day-to-day views of nature, social values, and self are obviously mistaken. Common things you have seen for years take on a whole new light. The world hasn't changed, but different things stand out in odd ways. Things you once adored are now utterly disgusting. Things you once hated now command your deepest loyalty. You can now see through your motives and rationalizations in a way hidden before. How could you have been so naive?

Those folks are all crazy!

Could one really be so radically deceived about the world after all these years? We may not often think about it, but most people do in fact assume that millions of others are out to lunch in just this way. For example, probably much of the world believes that millions of zealous Muslims are seriously disconnected from reality. And millions of third world animists, slavishly trying to balance numerous life forces in trees and rocks and heads, fare no better on reality checks. Even gaping postmodernist types who pretend to deny any single reality or truth are usually the first to insist that the vast millions of us who believe in truth are terribly mistaken about the world.

Some can easily write off "fanatics," but why can't a more mundane, common-sensical, middle-of-the-road view be equally deceived about the world? After all, most people with "sane," moderate views acquired those views in the same way that most "fanatics" acquired theirs – living in a community where those views seem obvious. Fanatics don't usually look like fanatics within their own communities. There, they appear rather mundane and average. To them, you are the fanatic, wildly at odds with reality.

You, like most people, hold the beliefs you do because you picked them up along the way from people you trusted: parents, friends, media, maybe even from some zealous college instructor. But over millennia, many parents and zealous college instructors have proven themselves terribly mistaken. Maybe you

too have fallen for subtle lies? Real deception never looks strange when you're on the inside.

A subtle deception

The kind of deception I'm suggesting isn't the rather unbelievable sort, like being mistaken about whether your left thumb is really an African elephant. The more interesting and plausible kind of radical deception involves less obvious, even invisible things, like moral standards and rules of reasoning and assumptions about how the world works. If you are wrong about these sorts of things, then you could be radically mistaken but go along with the flow of life in the short term without running into any corners. You might only recognize your horrible mistake in the long run, when it all starts to fall apart. Then it could be dangerously late.

Now add to all this the fact that your years on earth have really been very few. And the time anyone spends thinking about the world is relatively minute compared to all that there is to understand. Given all this, then, isn't it even likely that you are indeed radically deceived about the world? Considering how easily and how many people are deceived, it doesn't seem that wild of a conjecture to suspect that you too are radically deceived.

God at the grocery store

In fact, your actions often reveal more about your likely deception than your words. For example, whenever you do something like go to a grocery store to buy milk, you reveal many things about yourself. When you first walk up to the grocery store, you assume that you and the store are two different things, not one, thus showing your rejection of most Eastern and New Age religions. When you walk down that same dairy aisle and select the same kind of milk, you assume

Photo by
Julian Burgess



that the world is not chaotic, but orderly, regular, and divided into set kinds of things. When you stand in line with others, expecting others to respect your space and person, you reveal your rejection of moral relativism and your deep trust in absolute ethical norms. When you calculate your available change, compare the price of the milk, and make the exchange with the clerk at the register, you engage in a complex array of thought processes involving nonmaterial rules of reasoning, thus showing your rejection of materialism and evolution.

In short, when you do something as mundane as buying milk, you accept and reject all sorts of views. You act like you reject many popular religions and scientific claims. In fact, given the sum of what you assume and reject just when buying milk, you act like you believe that you live in the world described by Christianity. The world depicted above suggests complexities and contours of reality that are only supplied in Christianity. Now, you may openly reject Christianity, but you certainly act like it is true and that your non-Christianity is false. Why such self-deception? Why don't you just confess what you appear to assume?

Non-Christian thought has no cogent answer for such evident and world-encompassing self-deception, but Christianity does. The Christian Scripture explains that the world is in an abnormal state, due to the destructiveness of our sin. We have rebelled against a holy and gracious God, and so we try to make up grand scenarios in order to evade Him. Such evasion isn't a marginal error. It is concerted warfare against our Creator, and it deserves divine capital punishment. Or, you can pray to embrace the mercy found in Christ, the God-given substitute sent to take our punishment so that we can be reconciled to God. That's the heart of Christianity – peace with God, with no more radical self-deception about the world.

Could you be radically mistaken in your non-Christian outlook? It certainly looks likely. You profess non-Christianity, but assume Christianity. Think about Christ's work the next time you go to buy some milk.

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What's Inside

We feature two articles this month on the **"Separation of Church and State."** This is a regularly abused slogan, most often used to shut Christians out of the political debate, but properly understood it does have merit. Micheal Janssens and Michael Wagner weigh in on the uses and abuses of this phrase, including how President Obama mangles its meaning.

Self-deception is also the subject of two articles in this issue. In the editorial Douglas Jones questions why non-Christians will deny the very existence of God, and yet still go grocery shopping – that's just not being honest. And if this last sentence seems a bit of a non sequitur, then you need to read Jones' *Rethinking milk buying* on the facing page. Then, for more, and to learn how self-deception certainly isn't limited to Gentiles, turn to Jeremy Van Dyken's *Case study in self-deception*. It is a disconcerting look at the damage we Christians do by lying to ourselves.

Finally, while it is a bit unusual to talk about what isn't in this issue, if readers want to learn more about self-deception, and specifically how it relates to evangelism and apologetics, a sister publication of sorts, *Clarion*, has recently tackled this topic with two articles by Rev. W.L. Bredenhof, in the April 10 and 24 issues. Both parts of "I Can Lie to Myself: Self-Deception and Apologetics" can also be found on the pastor's website at www.bredenhof.ca under "Articles. Highly recommended.

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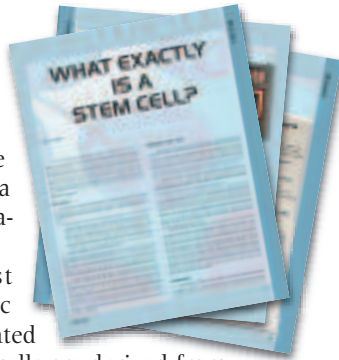
Readers' Response



Dear Editor,

I would like to commend Cor Hoff on the excellent article he wrote about stem cells ("What exactly is a stem cell" Mar. 2009). The information provided was exact.

What concerns me and most Christians should be the embryonic stem cell research. As Mr. Hoff pointed out in his article, embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos and destroying these embryos is killing human life. We should never support this. This being said we should not support any charity that uses embryonic stem cells to do research. Below I have listed a group of Canadian charities that support this type of research:



- ALS Society of Canada (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis)
- Alzheimer Society of Canada (ASC)
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Terry Fox Run

- Run for the Cure
- Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CCFF)
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC)
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Huntington Society of Canada
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
- March of Dimes
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
- Muscular Dystrophy Association
- National Cancer Institute of Canada (NCIC)
- NeuroScience Canada
- Parkinson Society of Canada
- SickKids Foundation (Sick Children's Hospital - Toronto)

I know some of these charities are close at heart but we must not donate to them, either financially or through participation.

Margaret Van Dyk
Richmond Hill, Ontario

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Dear Editor,

In the "In a Nutshell" segment of your magazine in the March 2009 issue, you detail various alternatives for the estimated \$150 billion US a year that will be spent combating global warming. This attempt to characterize the left's beliefs as backwards and ridiculous whatever their motivation, in order to make the right's ends look better is part of a serious trend I have noticed in your magazine. There is no objectivity involved, just a right-wing perspective on this sort of current events and social analysis. If I wanted that, I would watch or read anything owned by Conrad Black or Rupert Murdoch, but since your magazine is Reformed and represents the interests of me and my community, I want a Reformed look at the news. This entry doesn't even come close to examining the issue as Biblical or not, but rather simple partisan politics. Why didn't you look at more costly, more definite, and yet more "right-wing" numbers?



For example, let's take the war in Iraq. Conservatively, for the war there will be an estimated \$700 billion in direct spending since it began in 2003 (though others suggest one trillion), on what was supposed to be only \$60 billion. Spending on the operation, on things such as rebuilding, contracting, equipment, etc., is costing \$200 million each day (again, a conservative estimate). This money would not only have covered all the costs listed, but would help much more people in a much less divisive way than any war. Where was the economic analysis of this plan of action?

If none of this is convincing, and if you rationalize the Iraq War as defending the people of Iraq and us in the Western world from tyranny and terrorism, then consider that scientists who tout global warming as a reality do it partly because of the negative ramifications it will have on the Third World. Forget the scientific stalemate that is the anthropogenic climate change debate – both sides have science that supports their views and I'm neither a scientist nor someone with a firm grasp on the processes involved with climate change, so it would be stupid for me to take sides when both have opposing proof. But I do know the adverse effects that are predicted if it is true make action necessary; if seas rise as predicted by scientists, 17 million Bangladeshis will be affected by loss of land in the low-lying and overcrowded country, and fighting man-made climate change would help many people in similar positions. Yet this side of the argument is never mentioned. As a Reformed magazine, a voice to and for Reformed Christians all over, the rift between left

and right politics should not shape your opinions, and the articles/news items should always have a Biblical basis rather than a right-wing one.

Steve Spriensma
Grimsby, Ontario

Editor's response:

While Reformed Perspective is not, nor ever has been, part of the vast right-wing conspiracy it isn't surprising you've noted some of the Right's political ideas showing up in our Christian magazine. But I'd argue this isn't caused by our neglect of Scripture, but rather the Right's alignment to it.

Both Right and Left have a messed up understanding of God, as is evidenced by the way they largely treat Him as irrelevant. But the Right does at least have a passable understanding of Man: they see us as creative but limited creatures who are motivated by self-interest. It's a picture of Man that bears some resemblance to the one we find in Scripture – made in the very image of God, but fallen; the pinnacle of creation, but still creature rather than Creator.

The Left, on the other hand, adds to their ignorance of God a naiveté about Man. They overestimate our capabilities and underestimate our depravity. Man is credited with the god-like ability to redefine marriage, micro-manage a nation's economy, adjust the planet's thermostat and eliminate gender differences. Man's basic goodness is a given, so the Left hands out benefits, grants, even sex-ed info, never thinking that the recipients would abuse any of it.

As for global warming, the short article you object to was a counterpoint to the inundation of global warming hysteria the mainstream media prints every day. It was presented as simply one more thing to consider and listed ideas being put forward by Nobel Prize winners. I don't see how it makes the other side look ridiculous. That could be done though – after all, Al Gore has said that population control is a necessary step in fighting global warming. He portrays children as a burden, rather than a blessing, and the Bible tell us that is an idea worthy of ridicule (Gen. 1: 28, Ps. 127:5).

So overall I grant your point: RP isn't objective and there is more material in the magazine that could be characterized as right-wing rather than left. But there's a reason for our bias – I think the Scriptures tell us it is warranted.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Nota Bene

News worth noting

by Sarah Meerstra



Stop cruelty to animals. . . perform tests on human embryos instead?

A new proposal by the European Commission would drastically restrict the use of animals in laboratory testing and would have researchers perform tests on human embryos instead. A report put out by the commission says, "The establishment of human embryonic stem cells in 1998 raised hopes in many research areas, including the development of alternatives to animal experiments." The report says

that human embryonic research is a "powerful alternative to animal tests."

Pro-life groups in the European Union are reeling at this new directive. Pat Buckley of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, says, "This is a shocking proposal and yet another instance of the appalling lack of respect for unborn human life in the EU institutions. Animals should never be treated cruelly but to propose that human embryos should be used for research instead is utterly reprehensible."

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*, March 24, 2009

Oprah told just how wrong Obama is on stem cells

This March President Obama reversed a ban President Bush put in place against the federal funding of most embryonic stem cell research (ESCR). When he made the change Obama declared that his administration would make decisions on embryonic stem cell research "based on facts, not ideology," even though critics have condemned his decision as purely ideological since alternatives to ESCR have produced better results (see the Americans taxpayers must now fund this research.

Even more than this, however, Obama has also rescinded an order put into place by Bush that provided fund-

ing for adult stem cell research, which does not require the destruction of unborn children and which has proven to be more useful than ESCR.

Ironically, it seems that Obama's actions are coming at a time when even the most secular of experts are realizing that adult stem cells are superior to embryonic ones. Medical doctor Mehmet Oz appeared recently on Oprah, telling the audience that the stem cell debate was "dead" because there were just too many inherent risks associated with embryonic stem cell treatments.

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*

Illustration by Jason Bouwman



Is America a Christian nation? Canada?

While speaking in Turkey as part of a tour to boost US relations

with Muslim nations, President Obama dismissed the notion that America is a Christian nation. "Although. . . we have a very large Christian population, we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation, or a Jewish nation, or a Muslim nation," said Obama. "We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values." Obama made a similar comment back in 2007, telling the Christian Broadcasting Network, "whatever we once were, we're no longer just a Christian nation."

Says Professor Tim O'Donnell of Christendom College, "While it is clear America was not instituted as an explicitly Christian nation, it's an incontrovertible fact of history that the overwhelming population of people who were involved in the drafting of the constitution. . . came out of the tradition of Western Christian civilization. . . . I think there's a strong body of Jews, Christians, certainly Evangelicals that would find such a statement to be very offensive," he said.

A recent *Newsweek* survey found that 62% of Americans identify themselves as Christians. In Canada, a recent poll found 58 per cent "definitely believe in God" and an identical percentage think Canada is still a Christian nation.

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*, April 8 2009, *Ottawa Citizen* April 12, 2009

In the dictionary

A popular dictionary has changed the definition of marriage to include same-sex relationships. A recent edition of the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines marriage not only as “the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law,” but also as “the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage.”

Defending its decision to alter this definition, a spokesperson for Webster responded by saying, “We hear such criticism from all parts of the political spectrum. We’re genuinely sorry when an entry in – or an omission from – one of our dictionaries is found to be offensive or upsetting, but we can’t allow such considerations to deflect us from our primary job as lexicographers. In recent years, this new sense of ‘marriage’ has appeared frequently and consistently throughout a broad spectrum of carefully edited publications, and is often used in phrases such as ‘same-sex marriage’ and ‘gay marriage’ by proponents and oppo-



nents alike. Its inclusion was a simple matter of providing our readers with accurate information about all of the word’s current uses.”

This controversy follows a similar incident in Britain, when many objected that words associated with traditional English Christian culture were removed by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). Widely considered to be the most definitive dictionary of the English language, the OED endured heavy criticism in December last year when it removed from its edition for children, the *Junior Dictionary*, words associated with Christianity, the monarchy and British history. “Aisle,” “bishop,” “chapel,” “empire,” “monarch,” “saint,” “Pentecost” and “abbey” were removed, while “blog,” “broadband,” “MP3 player” and “voice-mail” were included for the first time.

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*, April 1, 2009

Canadian couple wants to be killed together

Ludwig Minelli, the founder of Dignitas, a Swiss pro-euthanasia organization, is seeking protection from the courts to allow them to assist in the suicide of a perfectly healthy Canadian woman. The woman, whose husband is ill and may be seeking to be euthanized at the Dignitas facility, wishes to die along with her husband, even though she is in perfect health.

Minelli told BBC Radio 4 that everyone has a right to kill themselves, whether they are healthy or sick, and that there should be no legal restrictions whatsoever on physician assisted suicide. He called assisted suicide a “marvelous, marvelous possibility for a human being,” insisting, “It’s a right, a human right, without condition except capacity of discernment.”

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*, April 2, 2009

ARPA here there and everywhere

by Jon Dykstra

ARPA has made it to Australia too! On April 1st a new Association for Reformed Political Action held their inaugural meeting in the Kelmscott Free Reformed Church in Perth, Australia. The 40 people attending heard speaker Kevin Swarts talk about efforts to revive interest in political action among the members of the Free Reformed Churches. The group then adopted a constitution and got a five person committee up and running.

While ARPA Australia shares similar goals, and of course a similar name, with ARPA Canada, it is an entirely independent organization. That said, the two groups will undoubtedly do all they can to assist each other. Anyone interested in more information on ARPA Australia can contact committee member Royce Vermeulen at arpa@frca.org.au.

Duke doesn’t back deadly decision

The tiny European country of Luxembourg has become the third nation in Europe to legalize euthanasia, against the wishes of its hereditary monarch, Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg. When the issue was first debated in parliament at the end of 2008, the Grand Duke indicated that he would not sanction such a bill. Since then, the parliament has taken action to change the constitution, stripping the monarch of his executive power to veto laws passed by parliament.

A similar situation arose with the Grand Duke’s uncle in Belgium in 1990. At that time, parliament wished to pass a bill legalizing abortion. King Baudouin I of Belgium, described as a deeply religious Catholic, refused royal assent to the law. At this time, the constitutional crisis was “solved” when King Baudouin asked the government to declare him

temporarily “unable to reign” to allow him to avoid signing. Baudouin’s monarchy was suspended for a day, during which all members of the government signed the bill. Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg has, however, stood firm, choosing to accept this attack on his authority rather than compromise his beliefs and conscience and become complicit in any way in the passage of this bill.

Ironically, Luxembourg is a state with strong Roman Catholic ties, and 87 per cent of its citizens claim membership in that church.

Source: *LifeSiteNews.com*



BEST BOOKS: THREE PICTURE BOOKS BY PATRICIA POLACCO

reviewed by Janet Faber

THANK YOU, MR. FALKNER

Like most of Patricia Polacco's books, *Thank-you Mr. Falker* is inspired by incidents and people from the author's life. It tells the story of Trisha, a young girl and gifted artist who is teased mercilessly because she cannot read well. Her teacher, Mr. Falker, realizes that Trisha has a learning disability and needs special help. Over time Trisha overcomes her challenges and the students learn how devastating teasing can be to a young student.

The story is based on what had really happened to Patricia Polacco. As a child she also had difficulty reading and was teased and made to feel dumb. Fortunately a teacher in her life discovered that she was dyslexic. Through special help she learned the magic of reading.

The book *Thank-you, Mr. Falker* recognizes the influence this teacher had on her life. In her other books too, Polacco portrays teachers as caring and inspiring people who can help open the world of learning and help young people realize that mean words can be very hurtful.



THE LEMONADE CLUB



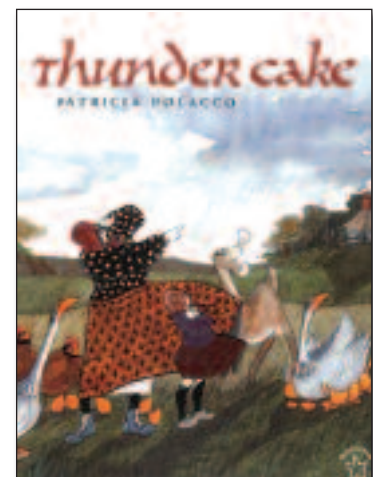
There are very few Patricia Polacco books that are not my favorites, and *The Lemonade Club* is another. It is a "lump in your throat" story that deals with the serious issue of childhood cancer. Marilyn and Tracy are two girls who share a close friendship with their teacher, Miss Wichelman. Their teacher is a special lady who encourages her students to make the most out of life's lemons, so when one of the girls is diagnosed with leukemia her friends rally to her side and give her support.

The artwork in this book, also done by Polacco, shows the wide range of reactions people have when they are confronted with the news and effects of cancer. My daughter read this book to the students in her school when she was going through chemotherapy for cancer and lost her hair. *The Lemonade Club* shows how the support of family and friends helps someone going through the trial of overcoming cancer. The book does not, however, offer the Christian perspective on how to handle "life's lemons." How beautiful are the words of Lord's Day 10, that because all things, including sickness, is in our Father's hands we can trust Him and can be patient in adversity. This is a much richer perspective that what Polacco suggests, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

THUNDER CAKE

Patricia Polacco's grandparents were of Russian, Ukrainian, and Irish descent. These different cultures often appear in Polacco's books, for her grandparents were avid storytellers. She is quoted as saying, "When you are raised on hearing stories. . . *not seeing them*, you become very good at telling stories yourself." And the book *Thunder Cake* is a story that Polacco had heard many times.

Trisha is young girl who is very frightened by thunderstorms. But with the gentle help of her babushka (Ukrainian for grandmother) she is encouraged to go out into the storm to gather ingredients for a "Thunder cake." Trisha's babushka says, "Only a brave girl would wander out into a storm." Realizing her grandmother is right, Trisha welcomes the storm and later a warm slice of thunder cake. *Thunder Cake* is actually the story of how Polacco conquered her own childhood fear of thunderstorms with the help of her loving grandmother. Polacco often portrays grandparents and the elderly as loving and influential people in the lives of children. This book can be used to teach lessons about weather and thunderstorms and also to help children have the courage to overcome fears.



Legalized polygamy on our doorstep

All the more reason for a Royal Commission on the Family

by Mark Penninga

Nearly hidden in the Creston Valley of South Eastern British Columbia is a Mormon community called Bountiful. For years it has been a well-known fact that polygamy is alive and well in Bountiful. The residents may have wanted privacy, but the media continually reported on the goings-on of this fundamentalist sect.

Finally, in January of this year, the RCMP charged Winston Blackmore and Jim Oler, two leaders in Bountiful, with practicing polygamy. After all, Section 293 of Canada's Criminal Code clearly prohibits it.

Why did it take so long to intervene? The BC Attorney General, Wally Oppal, knew very well that the law against polygamy may not hold up to a Charter challenge. According to an article from the Institute for Canadian Values, he stated "There's been some suggestions that if two or more women want to marry a man, or vice versa, and they all do it by consent, what business does the state have intervening in that?"

The state on polygamy

Apparently the Harper government does have some interest in intervening. Canwest News Services has obtained documents that reveal that the Department of Justice has been monitoring this issue for some time and plans to appeal to "Canadian values" to defend the current ban on polygamy.

But how much of a leg does the Department of Justice have to stand on? Which "Canadian values" in particular can be used to oppose polygamy? References have been made to the values of human dignity, equality, and the rule of law. But even a superficial examination of the past twenty years of Canadian law will reveal that concepts such as human dignity and equality are being used to legalize and celebrate alternative lifestyles and non-traditional values rather than uphold traditional values.

The Harper government may be principally opposed to polygamy but what can they do about it? They can offer a weak defence of the current law, hoping that it will look good in the eyes of many who still believe that polygamy is wrong. They can also use Section 33 of the Charter, the "notwithstanding clause" to overturn any decisions courts may make to strike down the current law. But this is unlikely because our federal government has shown zero interest in making use of this unpopular and politically incorrect tool.



The courts on polygamy

The determining factor on this whole issue is the courts. After all, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* trumps all democratic authority, including our Parliament. Every indication seems to be that the current law against polygamy doesn't have a hope of surviving a Charter challenge. This is because our courts have redefined family according to preference rather than any objective or moral standard.

We would be wrong to blame this on the redefinition of marriage to include homosexuals. The problems started in 1968 when Pierre Trudeau, the man who brought the Charter to Canada, introduced "no-fault" divorce. As a result, marriage was essentially redefined to mean a man and a woman who are legally united, regardless of how long they wanted to be together. Marriage became about preference. If it was in the interests of the husband and wife (forget the children) to break up, that was fine with the state.

Over the next few decades, the courts began to utilize their new powers that came to them from the Charter. They even began to "read-in" things that aren't even in the Charter, claiming that the document has to evolve with the times and they are the ones who decide how it should evolve. It wasn't a big step then when the courts decided that if marriage is about preferences, then it should include same-sex couples who prefer to marry. Even more recently, an Ontario court ruled that a child can legally have three parents (to include a homosexual spouse). Why in the world would the courts not take the next step and open up marriage to other preferences, including polygamy?

It should also be noted that the current law against polygamy also forbids “any kind of conjugal union with more than one person at the same time.” If this were really observed a gigantic number of Canadians should be found guilty of breaking this law because they are having sex with more than one person at the same time. It may very well be the case that the courts will strike down this law on polygamy because it is simply too vague.

It would seem that the only way in which the ban on polygamy will be upheld would be if it can be proven that the very nature of polygamous relationships leads to harm. Harm-reduction seems to be one of the last remaining values that the court upholds. But even on these grounds, the future looks bleak. Courts are willing to turn a blind-eye to harm when it is politically correct to do so. They refused to consider harm when it comes to divorce, or giving homosexuals the right to adopt.

What can be done?

Given the status quo in which the Charter and Canada’s courts have so much power, it may seem that there is not much that can be done by the public or even by our governments. But this is not entirely true. First, if the federal government really believes that the law should stand, it should have the guts to use the not-withstanding clause and put the courts in their place. They will get a lot of flak for doing this, but leadership is not simply about doing what everybody agrees with.

But there is something else that can be attempted in addition to using Section 33, something that is more proactive rather than reactive. You may remember an article in *Reformed Perspective* (see *RP* Dec. 2007) or on the ARPA Canada website where we joined a number of other organizations (including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, and the Christian Heritage Party) and called for a Royal Commission on the Family. Now, more than ever, the federal government would be wise to consider this option. Here is a selection of what I wrote in the previous article about the need for a Royal Commission on the Family:

What is a Royal Commission?

A Royal Commission is a major public study of a problem that our country is struggling with. Often it deals with controversial issues, such as the status of women or which reproductive technologies we should legalize or criminalize. These commissions meet with experts as well as the general public, and attempt to come up with specific recommendations to deal with the problem being studied. As the name suggests, it is officially requested by the Governor General (as the Queen’s representative). However, she makes this call as a result of notification from our federal cabinet. Royal Commissions have an enormous amount of power, but this power is limited to coming up with a report. It is up to Parliament to decide if they actually want to follow the recommendations. Library and Archives Canada lists over 200 Royal Commissions which have occurred since Confederation.

How would this help the state of the family?

What would be the benefits of having a Royal Commission on the family? We know that there are many good reasons to uphold the traditional family. This is supported by academic studies which testify to the importance of stable, two-parent families. By examining these studies on the family, both our leaders and the public will have more awareness about why it is so important to protect it, rather than subject it to a social experiment in the name of rights. Royal Commissions may not have any power to implement their recommendations, but they sure have influence. When the government has to make a decision, it looks to the research that has already been done. It will be able to draw on the recommendations of this Royal Commission to stop the social experiment and promote the traditional family unit.

There is no way to confirm that a Royal Commission would indeed come to the conclusion that we need to stop breaking down the family. We know that studies can be twisted and opposite conclusions can be justified with other studies. However, if there has ever been a good time to engage in this, it is now. Our current federal government would be most likely to appoint decent people to oversee this commission. A commission may be appealing to this government because it will allow it to address an issue which many of its MPs care deeply about, while at the same time keeping a distance between the government and controversial family issues (such as the definition of marriage or divorce). Furthermore, a commission would provide Christians with another opportunity to become engaged in the consultative process and testify to why we believe families must be protected. Organizations like ARPA Canada can meet with the commission on behalf of Reformed churches. Non-political organizations such as Christian counseling agencies could also offer input about the importance of promoting traditional families.

Action Item:

Now is the time to call for a Royal Commission on the family. A recent Compass poll indicates that as many as 85 per cent of Canadians oppose the legalization of polygamy. We have to use that support now, before it wavers (just as it wavered in same-sex cases as the public warmed up to the fuzzy media coverage of homosexuals who wanted to get married). Many MPs have never heard of this idea and they need to hear about it directly from you. Get together with a few others from your group of friends or congregation and schedule a lunch or coffee with your MP. Then bring up this issue and proposal and, if they are receptive, urge them to pursue it with their caucus. If you would rather not meet directly with your MP, consider phoning him or her, or simply writing a letter. ARPA Canada is here to help you. Just pick up the phone and call us at 1-866-691-2772 or email mark@arpacanada.ca.



***Stocks have plummeted,
and government deficits have skyrocketed. . .***

What now?

by John Voorhorst

In Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism, we ask, "What do you mean by the providence of God?" As we consider the answer to that question, I'd invite you to do so in the light of the recent massive sell-off in the stock markets.

In the past number of months we have all seen news articles or listened to broadcasts about that massive sell-off. Most every market in the world has been impacted. The American Standard & Poor's index lost 50 per cent of its value in the past year, and the Canadian index was not far behind. There have been stories in the media of 70-year-old retirees losing more than 30 per cent of their investments, and aggressive investors who are down 70 per cent or more. Many experts have spent considerable time and energy in trying to understand what has caused this crash.

Problem not so hard to diagnose

It's become clear that the main reason the market dropped as much as it did worldwide was because of too much debt. Every financial institution in the world was prepared to offer credit for many different investments until there was an almost unbelievable mountain of debt.

Just a few examples will illustrate the point. A 2008 *New York Times* article cited American consumer debt as topping some 2.5 trillion dollars ("Given a shovel, Americans digger deeper in debt" July, 20). That's more than 8,000 dollars for every man, woman and child in the US. On top of the consumer debt there is business debt, government debt, financial sector debt and the various unfunded pension and healthcare liability debts. Approximately 80 per cent of that debt has been added since 1990. It's not hard to imagine that, on a per capita basis at least, Canadians are not far behind.

But I do need to be clear about something. It is not the debt itself that is or was the problem. It is the fact that there was not enough equity in the system, not enough security backing up that debt. For example, I read of just one American company, Carlyle Capital Corp, which borrowed 21.7 billion dollars with 670 million dollars of equity. This company was doing what many investors have been encouraged to do over the past few years. They were borrowing to invest. And they were very conservative investors. They only invested in *government-backed* institutions, and they only held so-called "Triple-A" se-

curities. These were securities issued by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. And you can easily guess the end result. When their portfolio dropped by 3 per cent, the loss essentially ate up the equity the company had – the collateral on its debt. In other words, when the sub-prime mortgage market started to unwind in the US, Carlyle's portfolio was quickly in a negative position. That led to its lenders calling their loans, and Carlyle selling its securities into an already falling market. Carlyle Capital Corp has become another statistic. And this scenario repeated itself not just in one bank, or one sector, but in hundreds of banks and investment companies, and it was happening around the globe.

All of this is just a very small part of the debt mountain. Banks and insurance companies had all found innovative ways to increase the levels of debt that they were carrying. Banks, for example, had something called "Asset Backed Commercial Paper." That sounded pretty impressive. After all, the paper was "backed" by assets. What they didn't tell investors was that the "assets" were properties which were subject to extremely high-risk mortgages – questionable loans which the sale of this "paper" would get off their books. But once they received the money for this ABC paper they started the process again. They used the cash they received as security and borrowed against it. You see, banks only make money when they are lending money. So the more money they lend the more money



An American grandmother protests what her generation is doing to the next ones.

they make. And those holding shares in the banks are definitely interested in higher profits because that raises the price of their shares and also increase the size of their dividends. So the shareholders kept encouraging the banks to increase the amount of loans on the books and the banks, ever mindful of the regulations, found newer and more imaginative ways to increase the total portfolio of loans.

It used to be considered standard banking practice that homebuyers would save enough money so they could have a 30 per cent downpayment. In the last few years that has been dropped so that with 10 per cent or even 5 per cent down people were able to buy a home. And at the top of the real estate boom, people were able to arrange a mortgage without any money down. Even in Canada, I have anecdotal evidence of people being able to arrange a mortgage for 100 per cent of the purchase of the home.

New gods

This house of cards really had nowhere to go except to come crashing to earth. And when the run started it was very serious. The entire banking system worldwide was at risk of coming apart. Because, if those people who had a savings account at the bank would have asked for their money, there would have been a catastrophe. They would have learned quickly that there was not enough money in the system. And the assets backing up that cash had dropped in value precipitously.

So people worldwide did what people have always done in times of great financial upheaval. They turned to prayer, asking for help. Did they turn to the LORD God? No. . . they turned to their new god, and demanded its help. What “god” is this? Government, of course.

Initially, in Canada at least, Prime Minister Stephen Harper tried to convince Canadians that they were at the wrong address. But in the United States, the newly-minted President, Barack Obama, seemed to be only too happy to be seen as the man who would save America from its financial quagmire. And within just a few months, Mr. Harper also caved in to the demands for government “help.”

Debt beyond comprehension

In the United States the government will try to stimulate the economy with an extra trillion dollars in spending in 2009 alone – that will boost the US deficit this year to a record \$1.8 trillion. And when the money the government and US Federal Reserve has lent, spent or committed to this stimulus endeavor is all added up, the total amounts to \$12.8 trillion!

In Canada, things are more sedate, with the government pledging a comparatively modest \$40 billion to a stimulus package stretched over the next two years. But due in large part to this spending the 2009 budget projects a deficit of roughly \$40 billion this year, bringing the Canadian national debt back up to a half trillion dollars, or \$13,000 for every Canadian man, woman and child.

And before we go too much further, it’s worth reflecting, just for a moment, on how much money this truly represents. A half trillion dollars. A trillion is the digit “1” with 12 zeros beside it. Like this: 1,000,000,000,000. If you study it, you’ll see that it’s a million millions. Another way to put it is that one trillion

dollars would feed almost 20 million families with 100 dollars worth of groceries every week for ten years. So when governments talk about trillions of dollars, think about the groceries that would buy every week

And then consider that these multi-trillion dollars bailout packages are borrowed money. And remember; it was debt that caused the mess we are in. Or as financial people say, it was highly leveraged investment strategies that put us into this mess. And what is the government doing? Borrowing more money. The money is being given to the financial institutions that helped get us into this mess, with the idea that they’ll bail us all out. But it is still borrowed money.

Have we not learned anything? The only difference in this new round of “government borrowing” is that the risk has been transferred; it’s no longer the banks and insurance companies that have the exposure; it’s taxpayers.

What now?

And what about us, as Christians? Have we learned anything? Because ultimately we will have to face the question of whether we have been good stewards of the resources that God has given us.

Perhaps you too, were among the investors who borrowed money to invest in the stock market. If you borrowed money to invest into your RSP or into your investment accounts and if your account also lost 40 or 50 or even 70 per cent, the painful question is, what now?

Because this article is written about 5 weeks before you actually read it, it is a little difficult to give any definitive advice. But in general I would say stay invested for the short term. It is likely that we will see a strong but very temporary recovery in the stock market. When the TSX hits 11,000 or 12,000 and the S&P 500 hits 1100 or 1200 it is likely time to close out most if not all of your holdings and put the money into a daily interest account. Not even Money Market Funds will be safe in the next round of this credit debacle.

But aside from giving the short-term issues of how to invest prudently, I believe there are much more important things to keep in mind here. We need to go back to God’s Word and ask what the Lord requires of us. May we live as our neighbors, who only seem to be interested in building their portfolios, or should we be laying up treasures in heaven? When God’s Word speaks about stewardship, what does that mean?

And of course, we also need to be able to answer the question we began with, about what it is that we understand about the providence of God. “God’s providence is His almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come to us not by chance but by His fatherly hand.”

That must be our starting point. Our Father in heaven upholds all things, including Barack Obama, Stephen Harper, and the world’s bankers. He directs all things so that His children will always be cared for.

And as His children, we need to be aware that God will demand of us an accounting of our lives. Our financial gifts too, will need to be accounted for.





HOMEFRONT

by Jane deGlint

There is less of a contrast between physical and spiritual than is commonly believed. We tend to take the tangible reality on its own, with all its laws and patterns. Without hesitation we readily include abstract concepts, such as creativity and verbalization. From this tangible viewpoint the spiritual is seen to be on a different plane. To the human eye the spiritual world appears obscured. Most of it seems hidden in a shroud of mystery.

Yet, the Creator of all things visible and invisible sheds a revealing light on spiritual matters. The Word lifts up the veil sufficiently for receptive people to understand the plan and will of God. To our wonder we discover that the most basic of physical human needs are used by the Lord to teach fallen men the essence of life. In other words, the physical makes sense in light of the spiritual.

The core of the relation between the spiritual and the physical was never a secret. The Lord did not keep it hidden that man was created in his image. This detail in the creation account was not a mere point of theological interest. To the contrary. The creation of man in the image of God connects the created with the uncreated, the physical with the spiritual. In man, creation became complete. As the crown of creation he has the ability to have a relationship with his Lord. As he rules creation on behalf of his Creator he forms the connection between heaven and earth. He is the vice-royal, who embodies his Lord. Indeed, it is in his very body that he reflects his Lord.

It may easily be overlooked by the blind in spirit that there is a connection between the most basic human functions and the Lord himself. But the Lord has opened the eyes of the believers. To them he has revealed the wide perspective on the way people sustain their bodies and bring forth new life. The need to consume food as well as the drive to procreate are as spiritual as they are profoundly physical.

The most intimate physical relationship between man and woman ultimately reflects the holy union of Christ and his people. Admittedly, as sinful people in imperfect relationships we might miss this point. We are handicapped by dull-mindedness and nearsightedness. But the apostle Paul leaves no doubt. He clearly explains to the Ephesians that marriage reflects the relationship between God and man. A husband's responsibility to his wife is directly linked to Christ's sacrificial love for the church, and a woman's dedication to her husband

Spiritual Food

is an image of the church's ability to serve the Lord in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 5:22-33 and 4:24). From our position in the history of salvation we can only understand a fraction of this immense mystery. Yet we feel its hidden depth in the sense of shame that protects the holiness of intimacy.

The human need for food and sharing meals receives an equally divine perspective. One might object. Would life not grind to a halt without food consumption? Likewise, would humanity not be doomed to extinction without sexual relations? Do the need for food and the drive for procreation not prove that these functions are decidedly physical? However, the opposite makes more sense. The fact that these functions are essential to life proves that they must have a spiritual dimension. There is no life outside of the Lord of Life, and all life bears his stamp.

Of a truth, the Bible draws a very vivid picture of the tight relationship between food and spiritual life. As consumption of food nourishes our bodies, so does communion with our Lord strengthen our souls. This connection was there from the perfect start.



*"my blood is
real drink..."*

In his wisdom the Lord used food to test whether man would live by the Word alone. He forbade man to eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Physically, the fruit from this tree had the same ability to sustain man's body as any other fruit. Man and his wife could easily observe that. The forbidden fruit looked equally appealing. But the tree of knowledge of good and evil encapsulated the battle of the spirits. Eating its fruit meant refusal to do God's will. Man claimed ownership of the garden as soon as he ate the forbidden fruit. This arrogance fundamentally destroyed his relationship with his Lord, and consequently with his wife. Instead of being like Christ, he became an anti-christ. He conceded to pride and lust, rather than protecting his wife and her descendants (the church) from the Evil One. His holiness was corrupted. Shame entered the world.

In spite of man's rebellion God returned to him. Immediately he began to restore the unity between the physical and the spiritual. The importance of food in this process of reconciliation is striking.

The Lord enabled man to respond to the Lord's call for restoration. Adam and his sons understood that they depended on God's providential care. They also felt the need to show God that they were sorry. As token of this dependence and repentance they started to offer sacrifices. These sacrifices consisted of food. Cain offered the fruits of the soil; Abel offered fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock (Genesis 4:3-4 – notice that Abel sacrificed firstborn). The fruit of the land became a metaphor for the fruit of the Spirit.

God continued with his people. He chose Abraham. He led Jacob and his descendants to Egypt. After four hundred years of oppression at the hands of the Egyptians the Lord delivered his people. However, he wanted his children to understand that they did not merely need a rescue from outside oppressors. They needed to be saved from the sin that dwelled within their hearts. As illustration and confirmation of this spiritual truth God instituted a meal of remembrance, the Lord's Passover. It was a spiritual meal, with spiritual significance. The Passover foreshadowed that the Lord will provide salvation through a sacrificial lamb. By eating this lamb the Israelites showed that they were willing to walk in the ways of their Lord. The Passover meal celebrated a restored relationship between God and his people, between Christ and his Church. The Lord delights in his children; his people have his law written on their hearts.

The Lord gave his delivered people another crucial sign of salvation. On their way to the Promised Land the Israelites became hungry. No, not hungry for the Word of God, but hungry for food. In his unfathomable wisdom the Lord gave them a food that in fact symbolized the Word of God, who is the Bread of Life. The Lord rained down bread from Heaven (Exodus 16:4).

This he did again at the fullness of time. The prophets had been silent for four hundred years. Once more there were cruel oppressors. The time had come for the Lord to make a new beginning in his work of salvation. All the images of the past were bundled into a powerful light. He sent down his Word to become flesh (John 1:1). This Word testified of himself, "I tell you the truth. It is not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from

heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

This is not an image that we can delight in and then put aside. No. The Son of Man explained how to take this new bread to heart.

"I tell you the truth. Unless you can eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my bread and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. . . . Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:53-58).

By consuming the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus spiritually, we become one flesh with him and we do the will of the Father. After Jesus physically returned to the Father, he sent his Holy Spirit to make us grow in faith and holiness. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper with fellow believers we celebrate the union we have with our Savior and with each other. What a comfort to those who were condemned to death for eating the wrong fruit! In Christ they can enjoy the bread from heaven to the revival of their bodies and souls.

.....

The Bible draws a very vivid picture of the tight relationship between food and spiritual life.

.....

If the bread of heaven is a gift, so is the process by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to consume it. Through the constant work of the Holy Spirit we learn to understand the Word better and better, and we learn more and more to serve God and our neighbor. At the beginning of this learning process we can only digest the milk of the word. But as we grow in knowledge and wisdom we are ready for the solid food of the heights and depths of our sin and salvation (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Hebrew 5:11-14).

As we become more mature in our faith by consuming the Word, we show the fruits of the Spirit. This spiritual harvest is bountiful: love, joy, thankfulness, trust, helpfulness, readiness to forgive, thoughtfulness, generosity, gratitude, and an awareness that we represent the triune God in this fallen world. The aroma of our spiritual harvest will attract those who are called to be saved and repel those who are perishing (see 2 Corinthians 2:14-16).

Growing up with solid spiritual food will ultimately prepare us to become the perfect Bride of Christ. As the Spirit guides us through the God-breathed Word we learn to resist temptation and grow strong in faith.

"For solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" Hebrews 5:14.



Those nasty Christians and their hateful Bible!

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” Matthew 5:11

by Michael Wagner

Conservative Christians in Canada and the United States have increasingly been active in political affairs. First as a result of the legalization of abortion, and later due to the impact of the spread of homosexual rights, some Christians have felt it their duty to oppose the current direction of society on social matters. More and more of them have been drawn into political activism in response to policy changes that have occurred since the 1970s.

People who support those changes do not, however, look kindly upon the Christians who get involved. They allege that a sacred principle of “separation of church and state” is being violated. If Christians promote public policies that reflect Christian principles, the secular nature of our society is threatened, they argue. Theocracy will be the inevitable result. Christians must therefore stay out of politics or if they do get involved their activism should reflect a secular agenda. In this way, the opponents of Christian activism seek to marginalize Christians and make them appear to be sinister.

A looming theocracy?

The reasoning they offer is clearly bogus. When Christians oppose the killing of babies and the redefinition of marriage by government fiat, it does not in any way bring the church into the affairs of the state. A few years ago abortion was illegal in Canada, same-sex marriage was unheard of, and pornography was severely restricted. Was Canada a theocracy at that time? Obviously not. So the fear of Christian activism promoted by the specter of a looming theocracy is bogus. Why can't Christians be as involved in political activism as other citizens?

Christian activism is either being misunderstood or misconstrued by its opponents. One of the clearest examples of this is a recent book by Chris Hedges called *American Fascists:*

The Christian Right and the War on America. The title basically says it all: conservative Christians who get involved in political activism are just like the European fascists of the 1930s. If they aren't stopped, the United States will be taken over by “Christian fascists” and all freedom will be lost. If you are active in opposing abortion or homosexual rights, you are a fascist, you are evil, and pose a threat to your neighbors. Hedges received considerable media attention and praise when he released his book. His message was eagerly swallowed by the opponents of conservative Christianity.

Why the desperation?

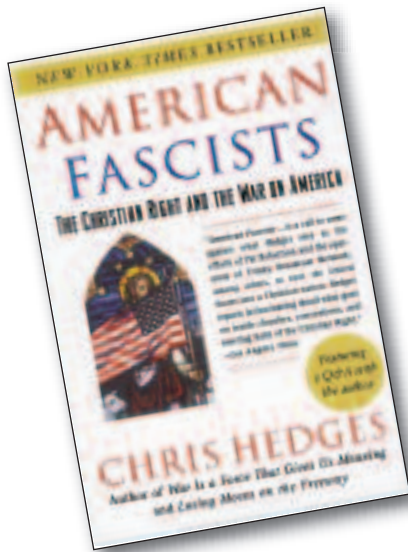
There have been a myriad of books warning about the “threat” of conservative Christian political activism since at least 1980. In this respect Hedges' book is just the latest in a particular genre. He has an extreme perspective, perhaps indicating that the opponents of Christian activism are getting more desperate.

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Why can't Christians be as involved in political activism as other citizens?

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But why should they be getting desperate? They control the major institutions of society, including the legislatures, the courts, the education system, the media, etc. So one can only feel bewildered when Hedges writes that “This may be the twilight of American democracy” just because conservative Christians are politically active. But that's not the only bewildering statement he makes.



You may have read of a private security firm in the US called Blackwater. It contracts with the US government to provide armed guards in Iraq, for example. Critics call these guards “mercenaries.” Hedges claims that Blackwater is the paramilitary wing of the Christian Right – that is, the conservative Christian political movement. Referring to Blackwater he states, the “Christian Right is deeply involved in the building of America’s first modern mercenary army.” Due to the increasing power of the Christian Right, “thugs with automatic weapons, black uniforms and wraparound sunglasses. . . could appear on our streets.” The Nazis had the brownshirts, and the Christians have Blackwater. This comparison is not remotely true.

Any influence is ominous

Hedges is also very concerned about the extent of Christian broadcasting in the US. Millions of Christians watch Christian television there every day. They’re getting a steady flow of Christian content rather than the secular content of Hollywood, and this can no longer be allowed, according to Hedges: “The radical Christian Right must be forced to include other points of view to counter their hate talk in their own broadcasts, watched by tens of millions of Americans.” He goes on to say that the Christians “must be made to treat their opponents with respect” because “Passivity in the face of the rise of the Christian Right threatens the democratic state.”

Clearly, Hedges considers conservative Christians to be a rather nasty bunch. Why are Christians like this? It’s because they’ve become detached from reality. Secular humanists, you see, are people “who embrace reason, who function in the real world of cause and effect.” But Christians, on the other hand, “seek meaning in a mythical world of intuition, a world that is no longer reality-based, a world of magic.”

The Bible is partly to blame for this. It should not be taken literally and it is full of contradictions, according to Hedges. But more than that, “there are hateful passages in the Bible that give sacred authority to the rage, self-aggrandizement and intolerance of the Christian Right. Church leaders

must denounce the biblical passages that champion apocalyptic violence and hateful political creeds.” The problem is that the stupid Christians are reading the Bible, and believing it! No wonder they’re so full of hate, opposing homosexuality and abortion.

Since Christians are so whacky, it’s impossible to deal with them as rational adults. As Hedges puts it, “Debate with the radical Christian Right is useless. We cannot reach this movement. It does not want a dialogue. It is a movement based on emotion and cares nothing for rational thought and discussion.” Thus Hedges recommends solutions to the problem of conservative Christian activism such as implementing hate crime laws, protesting against Christian universities and schools that teach that homosexuality is wrong, challenging the tax-exempt status of churches that support conservative political candidates, and fighting against global warming. . . global warming. He doesn’t really explain how Christians are to blame for global warming.

And one more thing: the government must curb the power of corporations. According to Hedges, corporations are funding conservative Christian activism and thereby undermining American democracy. “These corporations, and their enraged and manipulated followers in the Christian Right, tens of millions of them, if left unchecked will propel us into despotism.” Maybe that’s an American thing, because conservative Christian groups in Canada are certainly not swimming in contributions from corporations.

Hedges says he is worried about people who have lost touch with reality. After reading this book, I’m worried about them too. But I think the people who have lost touch with reality are Hedges and his supporters. Hedges says he’s concerned about people spreading “hate”; he may want to read his own book and pay particularly close attention to what he says about conservative Christians.



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OBAMA

On the separation of church and state

by Micheal Janssens

I have run as a candidate for the Christian Heritage Party in the previous two elections, and as such, I've had the unique privilege of engaging in public debate with candidates from other parties. When I begin to speak of how our government needs to recognize and respect our Christian heritage, someone will bring up that tired, worn-out slogan "Separation of church and state!" They'll yell it out as if, by itself, it rebuts anything a Christian politician like me might have to say.

To be sure, there is something to this slogan; history has taught us that when both church and state authority are concentrated in too few hands, dangerous and tragic consequences can follow (think of the Crusades, the Inquisition, heretic burnings, etc). The idea that power corrupts is in full accord with what we learn in the Bible about Man's sinful nature.

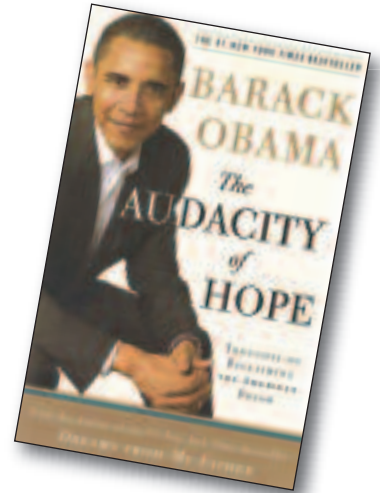
Separation of faith and reason?

But the idea of separation of church and state most often is misunderstood. Back in 2006, before he was elected, President Barack Obama wrote a book entitled *The Audacity of Hope*. In that book, he devotes an entire chapter to faith and the separation of church and state. It's clear that the President, sadly, has seriously missed the idea behind the separation of church and state, in much the exact same way as my opponents in public debate. Many people understand the separation of church and state as President Obama does: as a separation of faith and reason:

Almost by definition, faith and reason operate in different domains and involve different paths to discerning truth. Reason – and science – involves the accumulation of knowledge based on realities we can all apprehend. Religion, by contrast, is based on truths that are not provable through ordinary human understanding – the "belief in things not seen."

... Politics is hardly a science, and it too infrequently depends on reason. But in a pluralistic democracy, the same distinctions apply. Politics, like science, depends on our ability to persuade each other of common aims based on a common reality. Moreover, politics (unlike science) involves compromise, the art of the possible. At some fundamental level, religion does not allow for compromise. It insists on the impossible. If God has spoken, then followers are expected to live up to God's edicts, regardless of the consequences. To base one's life on such uncompromising commitments may be sublime; to base our policy making on such commitments would be a dangerous thing (pg 259-260).

It is precisely this notion that defines for most people the separation of church and state. However, while I agree that a separation of the authority of the church and state is necessary for good order, I strongly oppose any notion that the two are entirely unrelated and cannot influence each other. In fact, they certainly must.




Can't have latter without the former

Faith and reason do not, as President Obama indicates, operate in different domains. On the contrary, the former is a prerequisite to the latter. Whatever faith we embrace will have an insurmountable impact on the way we think, reason, and perceive the world around us. It affects our perception of everything that we call truth.

For example, let's look at the Grand Canyon. It is one of North America's most impressive geographical formations. Many a man and woman have stood before it, mouth agape in awe at its structure. Yet we as Christians perceive it differently than an atheist. An atheist, in his faith, will see the Grand Canyon, and imagine a small amount of water and millions of years. We see the same canyon and picture a global flood and 13 months! We simply cannot both be right. Either the global flood formed the canyon, or millions of years did. In this way, our respective faith will form our presuppositions, and the atheist will come to a very different scientific "truth" than I will. Yet both "truths" will be based in the very scientific law of erosion.

If faith affects scientific "truth," then certainly this also spills over into moral truth. Is it wrong to murder a child? We say "Yes it is." The atheist says, "Only if it has been born." The radical Islamic terrorist says, "Only if it believes in Allah." Each of these responses reflects a moral position derived quite logically from faith-based presuppositions. Therefore, morality is firmly entrenched in faith, making it impossible to debate any issue of morality without talking about faith as well.

So when I am challenged by my opponents that there should be a separation of church and state, I usually agree with them. However, insisting that faith stays out of politics means insisting that morality stays out of politics.

Isn't that *exactly* the problem with our government today? 

Why I'm all a twitter



by James Dykstra

If you'd told me a year ago that I'd be busy tweeting with people hundreds and even thousands of miles away who I've never even met, I would've told you that was the dumbest thing anyone has ever said. Yet here I am, twittering and tweeting away.

If the above paragraph didn't mean anything to you, let me explain. Twitter.com is a website that asks the question, "What are you doing?" and expects you to publicly answer it in 140 characters or less. Once you've done that, you look for interesting people on Twitter and follow their updates. Basically, they reveal the details of their lives and you voyeuristically listen in on them.

Tapping into creativity

You're likely wondering, why would anyone do this? Well, with hundreds of thousands of people on Twitter, there is probably someone very much like you – or very much like you want to be – who is out there sharing valuable information on a subject you care about. Twitter gives you a tremendous opportunity to learn from people all over the globe and listen in on their thoughts. You don't necessarily have to be at a conference, listen in on a phone call, or read someone's book to find out about what they're doing and what they think is important.

I've used the opportunity to learn from some of the educators around the globe who are doing some of the coolest things imaginable in their classes. They're "visiting" other schools via Skype, making stop motion videos about grammar concepts, and researching the past with fantastic online primary sources. Everyday they inspire me with their ideas. I don't necessarily adopt all their ideas, but "hanging out" with innovative people, even in a virtual way, inspires you to be more creative in the real world.

Though I follow others to learn from them, Twittering is also a way to give back. Most people – and teachers are especially bad at this – will freely borrow the time, resources, and ideas of others and only rarely give something in return. By sharing some of the cool projects you're working on, you end up returning the favor and offering support to others.

Letting your light shine

Tied in with that, though I follow the updates of most Twitterers for professional reasons, inexplicably you find yourself

becoming fond of them. Some of them complain a bit too much. Some of them are always cheerful. One plays saxophone for his church worship services. You find that these are people, and you start to make personal connections with them. As a Christian, intentionally or not, you also end up sharing little bits of your story and your Christianity. Your personal witness quickly becomes global. Your light is seen a little further away.

Instant access to experts

So what kind of people would want to be involved on Twitter and "tweet" about their lives in these short, 140 character bursts? Pretty nearly anybody who wants to be connected to a larger community. For example, I've heard numerous Christian school teachers complain that they have very little contact with other Christian teachers working in the same subject area. Ministers in many denominations are often very isolated from colleagues. Who can a Christian counselor ask for resources? Help and friendship, once so far away, become very accessible with Internet tools like Twitter. If you follow enough people and enough people follow you, a reply to your problem may arrive within minutes.

Of course, like any Internet site, you have to remember that everything you are tweeting is public. Complain only with great caution. Though "letting off steam" sometimes gives us perspective, the object of your complaint may be reading your post. You may be excited about your upcoming holiday, but people can easily figure out who you are and will know your house is empty. Not all details of your life are things you should share. Additionally, the details you share may be on Twitter for years, and may be archived by search engines for decades. Be careful what you say.

That said, Twitter is a fantastic resource. Used with a bit of thought and care, it can put you in touch with all kinds of people you already know, or those that you might like to know. Twitter can bring a sense of community to those living or working in isolated circumstances and make the world feel like a much smaller place.

James Dykstra can be found on Twitter.com under the user name mrpuffin. When not tweeting, he can be found blogging on technology in the class at www.befuddled.info.



Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life?

For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

— James 4:13-17

The Right Thing

by Christine Farenhorst

In 1903, baby Georg Elser was put into the arms of his mother. The child was dark blond, a color that would later turn black. His ears protruded a bit, and his mouth was rather long. But such things are not seen by mothers. She cradled the child tenderly and crooned to him. Georg's father was a wood merchant and owned several hectares of forest by Königsbronn, that is to say, King's Spring. As well as being a wood merchant, Georg's father was also an alcoholic.

Königsbronn was an old, old town, possibly dating back as far as 1000 AD. Situated in the district of Heidenheim, Baden-Württemberg in southern Germany, it lies nestled in the Swabian hills. In 1303 a monastery was founded there by Cistercian monks. In 1552, Reformation times, the monastery and the village next to it were destroyed and a year later the area became Protestant. When the village was encouraged to become Roman Catholic once more, in the third decade of the 1600s, the villagers rebelled and remained Protestant. As Königsbronn was known for its paper industry, wood merchant Elser was able to conduct business with the local factories.

Georg, growing up healthy although living in lean times, attended the usual primary and secondary schools. He was also faithfully taken to the Protestant church at Königsbronn by his parents. Fairly well adjusted, he lived through the ravages of the First World War. During the war, father Elser sank deeper and deeper into debt, however, and was forced to sell both his business and his land. Consequently, the matter of higher education was out of the question for young Georg. At age 14, in 1917, he left school and applied for and landed a job as an apprentice turner in a local foundry. Foundry work did not suit Georg, though, and after two years of going hard at it, he quit and took up an apprenticeship as a joiner. This work was much more to his liking. He loved fashioning things out of wood and metal, and attained his master's certificate as a cabinetmaker in 1922. He set up a workshop in the basement of his parents' home and began repairing locks, furniture, watches and clocks.

Times were not easy. Many people were out of work and Georg was not able to make a go of it in the basement workshop. He left Königsbronn in 1925, said goodbye to his parents and began working in the Dornier plane factories and, after he was laid off there, was able to obtain a position at Konstanz in a watch factory. In the early 1930s, this factory also went bankrupt. It was a hard time for many people.

In 1920, as a teenager, Georg had joined the Woodworkers' Union. Like many of these workers, he voted Communist until 1933. Only interested in wage increases for himself and his fellow workers, as well as improvement in housing, he did not concern himself with ideological party matters. Alongside paying party dues, buying a badge and attending three or four KDP (Communist) meetings during the early 1930s, he also faithfully attended the Protestant Church.

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For thirty-five nights he worked. . .

In his spare time, of which he sometimes had a great deal more than he desired, Georg played the zither as well as the double bass with a folk dance group. In 1933, when the Communist Party was banned, he ended all political associations. Listening to Hitler speak, and seeing a great many Jews deprived of work, social standing and schooling, he became troubled. Refusing to salute the swastika, he left any public place where a Hitler broadcast was being played on the radio. At the end of 1936, he obtained work in an arms factory at Heidenheim. A hard worker, he soon moved up, getting a responsible post in the dispatch office in 1938.

Not so different from today

Reading the above, Georg Elser's life could be the prototype of many people's lives today. The hard times, economic depression, wage cuts, uncertainty, the shadow of war on the distant horizon, and an aura of dissatisfaction over most of the population, certainly fits the early 21st century.

It is a wise thing to plan our lives to a certain degree. It is wise to consider ahead of time just what we are going to do with regard to most matters. "For which of you," says Jesus, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28). In other words, Jesus tells us to set goals, and to discern the times – provided we set these goals and discern the times with Him in mind; as long as we remember that we are His creatures only here for a little while before we vanish.

Plotting step by step

In 1938 Hitler sent his Wehrmacht into Czechoslovakia. It was at this point in his life – when he finally had the security of some work – that Georg began to plan the death of Adolf Hitler; that he began to think that the death of the Führer would drastically improve Germany's situation; that he became convinced that the monstrous regime the rise of which he was witnessing, would have to be stopped.

Georg was not an on-the-spur-of-the-moment person. He had always been a methodical, conscientious worker and this work ethic carried through as he thought about how to go about with his scheme to kill Adolf. He asked himself, first of all, where Hitler was likely to be without fail and at a specific time? The answer was not that difficult. Each year Hitler met with the Nazi Old Guard in a place called the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich. And he always met with them on November 8.

It was autumn and Munich was an eighty-mile trip from the place where Georg was working. But he put together carefully saved money, bought a return ticket, boarded a train and headed for Munich on the 8th of November of 1938 to reconnoiter the lay of the land. He listened to the Führer give his annual impassioned speech and was hardened in his resolve. It was obviously too late to put his plan into action for this year, but November of the next year would find him ready and prepared to commit an act which he felt would save many lives and be for the general good of the German people.

Georg found the Bürgerbräukeller an ideal place for the assassination he planned. There was a large pillar running from the ceiling to the floor only a few feet behind the platform from which Hitler would be speaking. If a bomb were implanted in that pillar and timed to go off during the speech. . . He was thoughtful on the train ride home and began to map out the steps he would have to take to carry out his proposed undertaking.

He returned to his job and ruminated. At the beginning of April of 1939, he returned to Munich for a more detailed in-



It was at this point. . . that Georg began to plan the death of Adolf Hitler.

spection of the restaurant's premises. He strolled through the small dining area and walked on into the great hall where Hitler always entertained his guests. Here the Führer and all his cronies sat each November, drinking beer and singing the praises of the Reich. Georg spent a week in Munich, eating several meals at the Bürgerbräukeller, and becoming friendly with the waitresses. At his request they posed for him in front of the rostrum and he took their picture, the pillar tall and thick behind them.

Back in Königsbron, Georg now sought and obtained a job with a local quarry where large amounts of explosives, detonators and fuses were stored in a bunker. He pilfered small amounts of the ingredients from time to time and began to seriously work on a bomb. Experimenting with several types of devices, he finally settled on electricity supplied by storage batteries to provide energy to spark the detonation. He devised an ingeniously worked alarm clock which could run for three days, an alarm clock which could set off the explosive charge at any given time during that period.

Putting the plan to work

On August the 5th, 1939, Georg again boarded a train bound for Munich. This time he meant to stay there for a few months. With him he had a large wooden box weighing about 150 pounds. Lugging the heavy suitcase with him, he walked the streets until he found a suitable boarding house close to the Bürgerbräukeller. Then he waited for a few days until a tool kit, which he had mailed to a post office box in Munich, arrived.

Every night Georg ate in the restaurant around 8:00 p.m. He was usually served by the same waitress. He ate, drank a glass of beer and paid his bill at about 10:00 p.m. He left the dining room, went through the wardrobe room into the unlocked hall, walked up the rear staircase to the gallery of the hall and hid in a broom closet. Between 10:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. the hall was locked by the woman who sold cigars in the Bürgerbräukeller. Georg always knew she had come into the hall, because she first fed the cats in the building. He could hear them meowing and knew that she would shortly lock up.

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Georg placed fifty pounds of explosives inside the pillar cavity.

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After the lock-up, Georg left his hiding place in the broom closet and went directly to the pillar. It was tedious work he undertook and work that caused much tension. First Georg, who was after all, an expert in wood and metal work, removed a panel from the pillar before he began the hard work that would put his plan into motion. Then, using steel hand drills, chisels and hammers, he laboriously chipped out a cavity from the brick, stone and cement of the pillar. Each tap of the hammer on the chisel reverberated through the hall. The echoes often sent sweat running down his armpits. But doggedly he persevered. For thirty-five nights he worked, always carefully replacing the panel of the pillar between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. of the morning. Then he sat down in a chair in the broom closet and dozed until the restaurant opened. The hall would be unlocked by a worker, and Georg would slip from his hiding place, walk down the staircase of the gallery, find his way through the wardrobe room, and slip out the front door. Amazingly enough, he was never caught even though a civil air guard had been placed by the Bürgerbräukeller since the onset of the war.

During the day, Georg spent his hours in the room he had rented, perfecting the apparatus which would trigger the explosion. It was a complicated mechanical device but he patiently worked at it, hour after hour.

On November the 2nd, six nights before Adolf Hitler was scheduled to speak at the Bürgerbräukeller, Georg picked the lock

of the hall and placed fifty pounds of explosives inside the pillar cavity. The following night, the 3rd of November, he repeated his action and placed sixty more pounds inside the pillar. On November the 8th, in the very early hours of the morning, Georg put in his final appearance at the hall. Shining his flashlight into the pillar hole, he carefully inserted the clockwork mechanism next to the explosives and hooked up some wires to two detonators. Counting on Hitler to be punctual, as he always was, he set the bomb to go off during the middle of Adolf's speech. Then, as he had always done, he left for his rooming house, job completed, train ticket in his pocket. Destination Switzerland.

Hitler arrives

At 6 p.m. of that same day, the Bürgerbräukeller was crowded with people. Prominent Nazis, men such as Himmler, Rosenberg, Frank, Goebbels, and Ribbentrop, were in attendance. It was still early, but everyone there wanted to be sure that they had a front row seat. The Führer was due to speak at 8:30.

We are all but creatures – we are vapor, a little mist – the Bible tells us. It is good to remember that while we propose in all earnestness, it is God who disposes. Even if we decide and plan with the greatest of care, things can only come to pass if God so wills. "If the Lord wills," James says, in chapter 4 of his book, "we will live and do this or that." Often God's will is different than our own will and His will always takes precedence over our own.

In God's providence, Hitler did indeed arrive that night in the Bürgerbräukeller. It was just nine weeks after the outbreak of World War II. But although the Führer arrived in Munich as



The hall, after the bomb went off.



A street sign in Munich, Germany. It reads:
 Georg Elser (1903-1945); Resistance fighter against National Socialism
 (Assassination in the Bürgerbräukeller on November 8th, 1939)

planned, he arrived early and he was in a hurry. The Poland offensive was distracting him and he badly needed to get back to the capital. Though he had originally planned to fly back to Berlin from Munich, bad weather had forced the Munich airport to close. The train was an option he must consider, but the train left Berlin earlier than a plane would have left that city. All these things spun through Adolf's head as he rode his armor-plated, bulletproof Mercedes-Benz sedan for the short drive to the hall.

As he entered the hall, the Nazi Old Guard stood as one man, thundering approval for their leader. It was twenty minutes before the speech was scheduled to take place, but the Führer, without further ado, walked up to the lectern and began his speech. Julius Schaub, who was responsible for seeing that Hitler reached the railroad station in time, held onto cards which he was supposed to place in front of his Führer indicating how much time he had left to speak. The speech was a tirade of abuse against Britain, which, Hitler maintained, was jealous and hateful of the new Germany. The pillar loomed large behind Adolf as he spoke. Nervously Schaub placed cards on the lectern in front of the Führer. "Ten minutes!" then "Five!" and then "Stop!" It was a method that was often employed by Schaub, as Hitler never used a watch.

"Party members, comrades of our National Socialist movement, our German people, and above all our victorious Wehrmacht: Sieg Heil!"

Hitler concluded his speech amidst loud cries of the "Sieg Heil" greeting, repeated over and over. A purposeful Schaub managed to conduct the Führer through the crowd, out the door. It was twelve minutes past nine. The train for Berlin was due to leave the station in nineteen minutes and the bomb, ticking away inside the pillar, was set to go off in ten.

The end of things

Eight people were killed by the blast and sixty-three others were injured. At the time of the explosion, Georg Elser was on his way to the Swiss border. He had disembarked from his

train about fifteen hundred yards from the border, and was stealing through the darkness towards freedom. He was, however, apprehended by two German frontier police – police who pointed their guns at him and who hauled him off to the guardhouse. When they searched him, they found a clock spring and a picture postcard of the interior of the Bürgerbräukeller. Telling the police that he was on the way to a friend's house and that he had simply gotten lost, Georg remained calm and good-natured. The authorities were actually about to release him when a telegram was received – a telegram which informed them that an attempt had just been made to assassinate Adolf Hitler in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich and to be on the alert for suspicious characters. The guards fingered the postcard of the restaurant and took a second look at Georg.

Transferred to Munich, Georg denied all involvement in the assassination attempt. The Gestapo was called in. Beaten and tortured for hours on end, he finally broke down and confessed. The Gestapo, however, refused to believe that one man, without accomplices, could have acted by himself in such a way that the Führer had almost been killed. They thought Georg a British agent who was acting under orders. Opting for a planned show trial at the end of the war, the Gestapo placed him in special custody in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and gave him the code name "Eller."

Georg was transferred from Sachsenhausen to Dachau in 1944. In 1945, Hitler, realizing that his plan to bring Elser and other prisoners to court in a series of post war show trials would not now occur, ordered him shot. He was consequently executed at Dachau on April 9th, 1945 by the specific order of Heinrich Himmler. It was just a few weeks before the end of the war.

Georg Elser's motive for the assassination attempt, in his own words was: "Ich habe den Krieg verhindern wollen." That is to say, "I wanted to prevent the war." A plaque on the wall of a building in Königsbrunn where Georg lived as a child, states: "Ich wollte ja durch meine Tat noch Grösseres Blutvergiessen verhindern." That is to say, "I wanted to prevent, through my deed, even more bloodshed."

To act in accordance with God's plan, we have to know what God's plan is. That plan is not always easy to discern. He does require very plainly that we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). In other words, to obey His commands and to fear Him.

Obviously it was not within God's plan that Hitler die at the time of the bomb placed by Georg Elser. Humanly speaking, we would have preferred to have that bomb blow Adolf to smithereens so that the entire tragedy of the Second World War might possibly have been averted at the onset, so that possibly the bloodshed Georg Elser foresaw would not have happened. But who knows, someone else, someone worse than Hitler might have taken over. God knows best.

May God give us all the ability and grace to work within His providence – to be extremists where we should be extremists and to be acquiescent where we should be acquiescent.



DON'T KID YOURSELF

A case study in self-deceit

by Jeremy Van Dyken

It is an irony that the study of self-deceit, if taken lightly, is liable to lead directly to... self-deceit. Instead of seeing personal application, we're quick to tell ourselves that this is a topic relevant only to so and so, or the couple that sits in the pew three rows ahead of us.

There is then, a real danger in studying self-deceit in the abstract – it's liable to teach us more about how to lie to ourselves than how to deal with our lying. So instead of attacking this in the abstract we will begin with a case study, a father of three named Robert. Now Robert may have a problem that we don't all share – anger – but he also has a problem we certainly do share.

Case file# 12345

Robert

35 years old

Married with 3 children

Robert's most apparent problem is with anger. However, anger is only the beginnings of his problems.

Because Robert doesn't want to admit to anger problem, he has to tell himself lies to justify it and explain it away. Robert also has several fears that are closely related to his anger. He knows that acknowledging he has an anger issue would mean that he lacks self-control, and mean that he should give more control to other people. But Robert is afraid of being perceived as weak. He fears that others would relate to him differently if he acknowledged his anger issue. He would have to confess fault more readily and would have to trust others more readily. He might not get the respect and admiration that he so desperately desires.

Robert not only experiences these fears, he has begun to develop fears about the unhealthy ways he is dealing with his fears. Robert is afraid other people will realize that he knows, on an intuitive level, that he has an anger problem. He is afraid other people will realize that he not only knows he has an anger problem, but that he knows that he's been lying to himself about it. What if they ask why he's taking such efforts to lie to himself? Do they know he has vague feelings that there

is something badly twisted inside of him? Do they know that he knows that they know that he knows that this is only one of hundreds of lies that he's told himself?

When Robert recently lost his job as a result of his anger problem a part of him sensed that he was the cause of the problem. But he wasn't going to acknowledge it – that would have been a painful truth to face. Instead he attributed the loss to the workings of God. He tried to convince himself that God took his job from him because He wanted Robert to spend more time with his family. Robert has shared this belief with others, hoping to get them to believe it too. He's told people that he's enjoying the extra time with his family and is being strengthened in his Christian faith. He has even started thanking God in his prayers for taking his job away.

On an intuitive level, Robert knows he's weak, and he consequently feels very uncertain about himself. Yet on a cognitive level, he has long demanded perfection of himself, so he refuses to believe he has an anger problem. Because of this internal conflict – between his intuition and cognition – Robert has begun to feel quite confused. And since he needs to expend a considerable amount of energy convincing himself he doesn't have an anger issue, Robert often feels tired, lethargic, and irritable.

When Robert experiences other anger related issues in his relationships, he has begun to blame those issues on other parties. To maintain the lies that he has told them about themselves, he tells additional lies. He's started to look for opportunities to "prove" that the other people are at fault. And because of the force of Robert's anger, people have begun to accommodate his outbursts and rationalizations. Few people are willing to confront him. Those who do are told that they are alone in their beliefs; everyone else disagrees with them.

Robert has come to a point where he won't allow himself to think about himself. He used to just avoid thinking about a few uncomfortable issues, but now he won't allow himself to think about himself at all. It is too painful, too confusing. And since no one talks about him having any problems he can pretend everything is okay; there's no need to raise issues that aren't there. And yet, things are not okay. Robert feels alone. People won't open up to him; they ignore him when

he feels depressed. Everyone has learned how to get along and how to live in spite of his anger; now, it seems as though they have learned to live in spite of him. No one seems to understand him, and worse yet, no one seems to be trying to understand him. All of this, because of Robert's refusal to honestly acknowledge his anger issue.

Honesty and deceit in Scripture

The themes of honesty and deceit pervade Scripture. Truth is said to be found in Jesus Christ (John 14:6), whereas deceit finds its source in the devil, the father of all lies (John 8:44). It's made clear that each Christian is called to examine their ways and to test them, in order to return to the Lord (Lamentations 3:40).

As Christians honestly examine and confront ourselves in the light of the truth, we will come to understand that our ability to deceive ourselves is godlike. The Laodiceans were a testament to this, as they were able to convince themselves that they were rich, successful, and happy, when in reality they were poor, wretched, pitiful, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17). Their ability to thoroughly delude themselves in matters so basic and elementary as their own happiness reveals the human capacity for self-deceit as practically unlimited. If we adults are capable of deluding ourselves to truths accessible to even the smallest infants then we can be sure there's no limit to our ability to deceive ourselves. We're so good at it we can blithely ignore the truth about ourselves, our relationships with others, and our relationships with God.

This human capacity for self-delusion can be observed in every level of society: in the addict prostituting their child for another hit, in the family going to bed at night believing that it isn't a travesty that incest is taking place in its midst, in churches that are conscientious in matters of essential Christian doctrine yet apathetic in matters of human relationships (or vice versa), or in nations that have bought into the belief that the destruction of millions of unborn children is worth the price.

Each person, it seems, is as Robert is, a progression of developing and unraveling lies. Each person paves their own path with the abundance of lies that they have told themselves and others, burying the truth underneath their feet in the service of looking good and avoiding painful realities.

Nevertheless, a major difference can be found between the story of Robert and the average person. Robert's problems are more obvious. The rest of us are far better at discreetly hiding our dishonesty – our patterns of self-deceit are more complex and subtle. In *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*, La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680) noted that humility can often be pride abasing itself only to exalt itself later. In the same way, one can say that honesty may often be no more than self-deceit recognizing itself at one point only to deceive itself later.

Straining gnats, swallowing camels

In His earthly ministry, Jesus called the Pharisees to task for their "honesty," realizing that their efforts to be honest were a self-vindicating charade in the service of self-deceit. Jesus used the strong metaphor of straining out a gnat, yet swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24) to illustrate the full extent of their self-deceit. The full meaning of this metaphor can be made evident by noting a detail of the context in which Jesus spoke. It was common for the wine of that day to contain gnats and in an effort to avoid drinking gnats together with their wine, people would often strain their wine before drinking. Through this metaphor, Jesus was suggesting that the Pharisees had invested a considerable effort into straining a gnat out of their wine, yet had inadvertently swallowed a camel despite their most painstaking efforts.

Now the act of swallowing a camel would naturally induce strong sensations of discomfort and uneasiness. To cope with this, the Pharisees, true to form, could be expected to invest themselves more and more into straining out additional gnats.



Instead of acknowledging the camels – their sins – the Pharisees developed new life strategies to deal with the emptiness, shallowness, and tragedy associated with their transgressions. They naturally gravitated towards the behavioral patterns with which they were the most familiar, and would invest greater energy into their efforts to conform to the finer points of the law. To cope with the discomfort generated by their deep moral failings, they would focus on the points of the law they were best able to fulfill, while swallowing additional camels in the process. In the end, a host of Pharisees would be saved from the influence of a few dead gnats, but would forever be corrupted by the influence of a thousand swallowed camels.

Similar strategies can be observed in the world today. As people demonstrate an unwillingness to confront their own destructive moral failings, they divert their attention to comparably insignificant issues. To cope with the discomfort associated with playing god and creating animal/human hybrid embryos, the British bio-technical researcher painstakingly goes through rigorous ethical training, making a stellar effort to respect the rights and wellbeing of other research subjects. The pastor of a Fundamentalist persuasion copes with the discomfort caused by his dreadful legalism by warning his congregation of the deceit of the world and the devil in no uncertain terms. The evangelical, for his part, aware of his unwillingness to confront the destructive worldly influence in his life with eye-gouging intensity (Matthew 18:9) harshly condemns the Fundamentalist church for the strategies it has designed to protect itself from the influence of the world. His level of fervor and condemnation in doing so is far greater than is his condemnation of the depravity in the world. In the service of both perceived and actual truth, all men (British researchers, Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, and Reformed alike) cope with the discomfort of swallowed camels by straining out additional gnats, and in so doing swallow more camels.

In light of the universal presence of this self-deceptive pattern, it's clear that even efforts to cultivate righteousness can turn out to something else entirely. They may instead be unrighteousness attempts to find justification and comfort in good deeds. Truly, an awareness that one can be wrong, dreadfully wrong, is as fundamental to the search for the truth as is the search for the truth itself.

How can we be saved from ourselves?

In light of all of this, it would seem as though there is no help possible for either Robert or the human race. After an individual discovers and confronts one lie in themselves, they notice that several more have emerged from the shadows. In the afterglow of the honeymoon, the eyes of the husband and wife are opened to each other for the first time. Recognizing their lies and those of each other, they feel naked, resentful, and ashamed.

In spite of all of this, however, Christians can take heart in the fact that there is hope for people like Robert.

One possibility for healing, relational reconciliation might result from a visit with a good counselor, even a secular counselor. A good counselor would seek to model to Robert the truth that he doesn't need to hide various aspects of himself or to emphasize other aspects to be accepted by him. Though Robert would initially have a difficult time accepting this truth (and would demonstrate a considerable amount of avoidance) appropriate instruction and confrontation would help Robert to see both the truth and the helpfulness of this fact. Robert would most likely learn new ways to face, calm, and question the fears that drive his dishonesty. The counselor would help Robert to recognize the pathologizing consequences of his dishonesty, and would work with Robert to identify the lies that he has told himself about himself and his relationships. The results of this intervention, undoubtedly, would be helpful, in large part because of the fact that Robert would be experiencing a confrontation with the truth.

Something similar but more complete would occur were Robert to meet with a Christian cleric, or Christian counselor. In this setting his encounter with the truth would not be limited to temporal realities. Rather, his encounter with the truth would include an encounter with the one who is Himself the Truth. As such, the healing that Robert would experience would go beyond that offered by an encounter with a secular counselor. As Robert would experience an encounter with both temporal and eternal truths, he would begin to develop a better understanding of the healing nature of the truth. Robert would come to understand that the same person who stated that it is the truth that sets people free (John 8:32) is the same person who claimed to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Thus, in order for Robert to experience complete healing, the person of Christ Himself would need to be brought to bear on him. As the person of Christ is brought to bear on a person like Robert, the diverse excellencies of Jesus would blaze with a vibrant glory, and truth would begin to well up within Robert.

Forced to confront the extent of his sin and misery in the face of the holiness of God, Robert would no longer be able to engage in his awkward, gyrating, and lifelong dance around the true nature of his innermost being. As he would look upon a God who cannot look upon the existence of a single lie, Robert would be pierced by the truth of God, even to the point of the division of the bones and marrow (Hebrews 4:12). In the face of a reality so eternal, imminent, and truthful, the lies within Robert would be forever unraveled and dismembered, and his innermost being would be both consumed and consummated by the light of an ever-glorious and all-consuming Truth.





Tidbits relevant, and not so, to Christian life

by Jon Dykstra

How much do your children owe?

Both Canada and the US governments debt-finance their federal government budgets – they spend money they don't have to pay for election promises they've made to this generation. This generation gets the benefits, but this generation isn't going to pay off these loans; in Canada it is the next generation, and in the US, at least the next couple of generations, that will be saddled with this debt.

In times past parents sought to leave their children with more than they had. It's clear things have changed. If you want to see how much Canada's federal government owes, and your share of it, go to www.debtclock.ca. For the US go to www.debtclock.com.

What is a billion?

The US government will spend roughly a trillion dollars propping up the economy this year – that's a number that boggles the mind. Here in Canada the government has been content to throw mere billions at the problem, but for some of us, even one billion is a number that's pretty hard to comprehend. Just how much then, is one billion? Well. . .

- A North American's average age expectancy is between two and three billion seconds
- A billion liters would fill 400 Olympic-size swimming pools
- 170 African bull elephants weigh the equivalent of one billion grams
- A bit over one billion minutes ago Jesus walked the Earth

And how much is a trillion?

Dr. D. James Kennedy did an interesting bit of calculating in his book *The Mortgaging of America*. He notes that, "if you had gone into business when Jesus Christ was born – a business that was so unprofitable that. . . you lost a million dollars a day, seven days a week, it would still take you 700 more years from today to lose a trillion dollars."

A brief rebuttal of post-modernism

"Some of you may believe that you cannot discover Truth. If this is true, you have actually discovered a truth. You might as well continue searching for more."

– Thor Ramsey
A Comedian's Guide to Theology

Sexism, done pure and proper

In his book, *This Momentary Marriage*, John Piper takes on the task of teaching men what it means to be men. The world pretends that men and women are equal because they are alike, but as Christians we know better. Or rather, we should. We'll acknowledge that God created Man and Woman as very different creatures – with different abilities, strengths, dispositions and roles – but while we are sure of this general principle, and sure of a couple or so specific particulars (women can have babies, men can be pastors), gender differences are a touchy topic even in our circles.

There is a self-imposed silence on the topic; a form of political-correctness. As a result, a segment of the next generation of men has no idea what it means to be men – they've never been told. So Piper goes back to the basics, building on Ephesians 5:21-33 to point out a number of roles males should take on. He also includes one he wishes was "too obvious to need illustration," that of protector. He makes his point in a particular sexist way, noting that this role is not given on the basis of ability, but gender alone – *this is what real men do*:

If there is a sound downstairs during the night and it might be a burglar, you don't say to her, "This is an egalitarian marriage, so it's your turn to go check it out. I went last time." And I mean that – even if your wife has a black belt in karate. After you've tried to deter him, she may finish off the burglar with one good kick to the solar plexus. But you'd better be unconscious on the floor, or you're no man. That's written on your soul, brother, by God Almighty. Big or little, strong or weak, night or day, you go up against the enemy first. Woe to the husbands – and woe to the nation – that send their women to fight their battles.

Spurgeon on Original Sin

"Any man who declares children to be born perfect was never a father. Your child without evil? You without eyes, you mean!"

– Charles Spurgeon

LIVES LIVED, CHOICES MADE

Kurt Wise and Jerry Bergman couldn't be more different, but both became creation scientists

by Margaret Helder

The world is full of apologists for all sorts of points of view. Among academics today there are humanists, atheists, agnostics, and even some who are officially Christian, Jewish, Muslim or adherents of any one of a vast array of Eastern religions. Nevertheless most scientists ignore any religious implications for their disciplines. There are, of course, exceptions, some of them well known. The stories of why these people made the choices that they did, are often very interesting.

A different sort of witness

Dr. Jerry Bergman, for example, was born into a religiously indifferent household. His father was an agnostic, very dedicated to science and very hostile to religion. When the boy was eight years old, his mother became a Jehovah's Witness. As a result of this development, the parents later divorced. Jerry and many relatives on his mother's side became Witnesses, but he still felt closer to his father than to his mother.

In time, at university, the young man became disillusioned with the Jehovah's Witnesses and he then embraced the atheism of his father. During these years he met many of the big name atheists including Madalyn Murray O'Hair. He published in several atheistic journals, the last time in 1977. By this time he was an assistant professor in the department of educational foundation and inquiry at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

Shortly after 1977, Dr. Bergman began to wonder about the validity of the atheistic position. It seemed that the writings were biased and the advocates were very defensive, unwilling to engage in real discussion about the issues. Dr. Bergman felt that he had seen the same pattern among the Jehovah's Witnesses. This academic then decided to evaluate the atheistic position for himself. In his opinion, the two arguments the atheists used to prove their worldview were "the existence of evil in the world, and the assumption that evolution (meaning evolutionary naturalism or Darwinism) could totally explain the existence of the living and nonliving world" (*Persuaded by the Evidence* p. 42).

As far as the first argument was concerned, he concluded, "that the historic orthodox Christian answer was the most viable solution to the omnipresent problem of suffering in our world" (p. 43). It was furthermore clear to him that atheists themselves had no solution to the problem of evil, other than to criticize Christians.

About 1978 Dr. Bergman then began to research the main arguments in favor of evolution. Since he distrusted religious writings, he read only secular studies. In this way, he declares: "Slowly, but surely, I was able to eliminate *all* the main arguments used to support evolutionism by researching secular literature only. At some point I crossed the line, realizing the case against evolutionism was overwhelming and conversely, so was the case in favor of the alternative, creationism" (p. 44/45). Eventually, after examining the three main world religions, he came to the conclusion that historic Christianity was true.

During this time, Dr. Bergman's university colleagues became aware of his Christian conversion. This was particularly so after he wrote a booklet in 1979 entitled *Teaching about the Creation/Evolution Issue*.

Abandoned by all, even Christians

Soon it was time for Dr. Bergman to be considered for tenure at his university. If a candidate is successful (most are) he is rewarded with a permanent position at the university, and if not successful, he would have no job. Dr. Bergman was not worried. His research, publication and teaching records were all excellent.

He found out however that none of this mattered. His colleagues voted against his tenure. They did not need to have any valid reasons. During depositions for a subsequent court case on the matter, it transpired that his colleagues did not like the fact that he was a Christian. This is not a valid criterion for tenure considerations, but that did not matter. One colleague even cultivated Dr. Bergman's friendship for the sole purpose of betraying his confidences. Various appeals were lost and Dr. Bergman was indeed out of a job (*The Criterion* p. 68/69).

His wife decided that she did not like Christians either, especially unemployed Christians, and a divorce followed. As a result, secular institutions refused to consider Dr. Bergman because of his Christian views, and conservative Christian institutions refused to consider him because he was a divorced man. At one stage, while job hunting, Dr. Bergman landed in a hospital for indigents because he had no job and no medical coverage.

A hard but fruitful journey

Eventually Dr. Bergman obtained a position at Northwest State College in Ohio. He has taught science there for a number of years. During that time Dr. Bergman has continued as a very active participant in the community of scientists supportive of the creation model. He does not regret his intellectual journey which has taken him far from his roots. This was a case where an inquirer found secular attitudes and conclusions to be inadequate. Thus he declares:

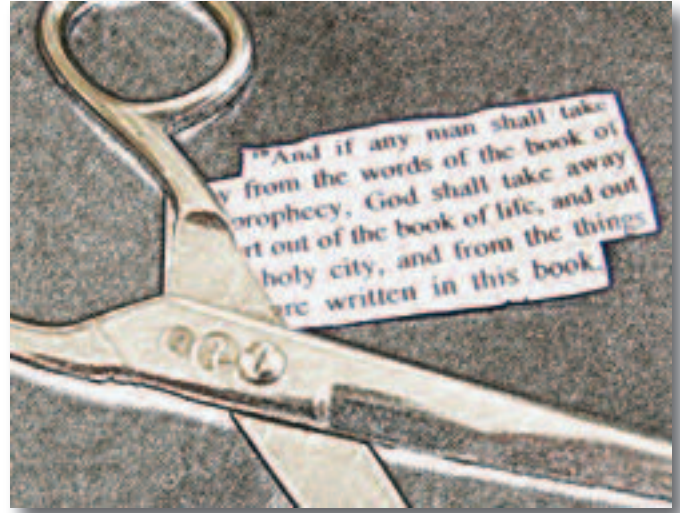
“Eventually after much study. . . I came to accept orthodox Christianity. When I began my quest, I had no faith in religion, only a set of very negative experiences with religion. I demanded facts, and, as was true of many other people, it was science research that led me to reject Darwinism and accept theism” (FortWayne.com Feb. 18/06).

Taking scissors to the Bible

The story of Dr. Kurt Wise is quite different. Born into a Christian household, from a very young age, he dreamed of becoming a scientist. Already by the eighth grade, his ambition was to study at Harvard University. That year, when he was thirteen years old, he undertook an ambitious project for a regional science fair. His project dealt with evolution, and he did a very thorough job including a free-standing geological column, complete with real fossils, models of other fossils, and arrangements of continents at various stages, all displayed. There was just one little problem, in his own mind – he could not reconcile the details of evolution with the Biblical record.

A couple of years later, he could no longer stand the mental conflict over the issue of evolution. He then resolved to come to a conclusion about the issue. As a preliminary, he read through the entire Bible and he cut out every verse which would have to be discarded if evolution were true. The last verse he cut out, with trembling hands, was Rev. 22:19 “If any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” To his horror, the young Kurt realized that the remaining portions of Scripture were like a doily, so much had been removed. It was then that the young Kurt decided that he must accept the Word of God in its entirety and reject all that would ever counter it, including evolution. This was a remarkable decision for a fifteen year old (*In Six Days* p. 354).

As far as the young Kurt was concerned, he had thrown away all his hopes for a career in science. Strange as it may seem though, his dreams still came true. In 1981 he graduated with



a B.Sc. in Geophysics from the University of Chicago. One of his mentors there was the famous palaeontologist David Raup. This man recommended Kurt to his colleague Stephen Jay Gould at Harvard, and shortly thereafter, Kurt Wise arrived at Harvard to study fossils with Dr. Gould. Apparently when Dr. Gould accepted Kurt Wise into his graduate program, this professor had heard nothing of the young student's views on evolution. By the time the young Kurt arrived in Boston however, Dr. Gould had heard the news. Upon arriving for the first time on campus, late in the evening, Kurt Wise encountered an angry Dr. Gould. The professor berated the new arrival concerning his creation-based worldview. From then on however, the two interacted in normal professor/student fashion and Dr. Gould rarely referred to the issue of views, and even when he did so, it was in a very matter of fact way.

One of the qualities that Stephen Jay Gould exhibited, was that he was brutally honest about some of the shortcomings of evolution theory. This meant that in certain academic circles, Dr. Gould was himself quite unpopular. This may be why, although he did not approve, he was nevertheless so tolerant of Kurt Wise' views. All this exposure to the biggest names in geology meant that Kurt Wise graduated with a very detailed background on the shortcomings of evolution. However, such a discussion was not his objective. His goal was much more ambitious. Thus he once stated: “My goal is to develop a theory that explains the data of the universe better than conventional theory but is consistent with Scripture.” He did not want to point out weaknesses in evolution theory. Thus he remarked: “by the time I finished at Harvard, I realized I could destroy macroevolutionary theory at will. I don't want to challenge evolution. . . I intend to replace it” (cited in *Slaughter of the Dissidents* p. 335).

Accepting the Bible, not trying to prove it

A frequent criticism of creationists is that they are trying to prove the Bible true. But as Dr. Wise points out in his book *Faith, Form and Time*, that simply isn't true. Thus he declares: “the Bible should be understood to be authoritative on all matters it addresses” (p. 22). In addition he maintained: “It is important

also to assert that this book assumes the veracity (the truthfulness) of God and His Word. It does not seek evidence for the veracity of God or Scripture, because such evidence would then have a higher status than God and His Word" (p. xiv-xv).


Unlike most graduates in geology from Harvard, Dr. Wise has contented himself with positions at small Christian institutions rather than in prestigious universities or museums. When he goes to meetings of professional geologists, many of his colleagues take whatever evasive action is necessary (such as climbing over furniture) in order to avoid even walking near him in the building.

Nevertheless Dr. Wise has positively influenced a large number of young Christian academics in science in the United States. His amazing grasp of detail and his analytical abilities have led to some important new interpretations of nature such as baraminology – the study of, and search for, the created kinds (for more on baraminology, see *Reclaiming Galapagos* in the Sept. 2005 *RP* issue). Everyone who has heard him speak on fossils, or other details of science, declares that he is the most interesting individual that they have ever heard. This man is a wonderful resource for the Christian community. His renouncing of personal ambition in order to mentor others has been a great blessing for young Christians in science, particularly those in very technological fields such as DNA sequencing and in geological studies.

Conclusion

The annals of science are full of stories of scientists who received Christian training in their youth, but who later rejected such faith once they were exposed to evolution in university. This situation makes it all the more interesting to learn about the lives of scientists who chose to give up fame and fortune in order to show forth the praise of God not only in their personal lives, but in their careers as well. May God raise up many more such individuals in the days ahead!

BOOKS CITED:

1. John F. Ashton's *In Six Days: why fifty scientists choose to believe in creation*
2. Jerry Bergman's *The Criterion: religious discrimination in America*
3. Jerry Bergman's *Slaughter of the Dissidents: the shocking truth about killing the careers of Darwin Doubters*
4. Doug Sharp and Jerry Bergman's (eds) *Persuaded by the Evidence: true stories of faith, science, & the power of the creator*
5. Kurt Wise's *Faith, Form and Time: what the Bible teaches and science confirms about creation and the age of the universe* 

Five Lines FREE

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* * *

Consider a vacation this summer in the beautiful Rocky Mountains!

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

* * *

Heart Soul and Mind: A Retreat for University and College Students

Date: August 31-September 4

Location: Deroche, BC

Instructors: Dr. Ben Faber and Rev. Rob Schouten

Details: www.derochecollegeretreat.com

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

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

Requirements:

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

Send your requests to editor@reformedperspective.ca

Deadline for inclusion in the September issue is June 10.



Soup & Buns

Respecting Children

Some humor just isn't funny

by Sharon L. Bratcher

My little son was very excited to see a large yellow earth-moving machine next to where our car was parked. We walked over to watch the backhoe digging, transporting, and dumping the dirt elsewhere. How powerful and big it seemed! His eyes were wide with interest. After a few moments, the driver of the machine noticed us and, in what he no doubt thought was a humorous gesture, he turned the machine and brought it towards us as though he would scoop us up. Well, this guy definitely didn't know much about three-year-old boys, or didn't care, because my son was terrified. A fascinating moment had become a frightening one, and the workmen all thought it was funny.

Now, some of you may be saying, boy, her family is made up of wimps! Being terrified of a little thing like that – come on, it's funny!

Well, I disagree.

Perhaps you could tell me where it says in the Bible that it is okay to have a laugh at someone else's expense, and particularly okay to be unkind to young children. Children deserve our respect and our love. That means that we need to consider their feelings and needs in all situations. We, the adults, should be the mature ones, right?

Only a joke?

Some families have a tradition of "birthday spankings." While looking forward to gifts and a cake on their birthdays, children also have to dread their family members' boasting and hitting. Who invented such an idea anyway? What could possibly be the good purpose?

Even an adult joking about "I'm going to get you!" or "I'm going to bite your nose!" can be threatening to a young child who doesn't understand it is a joke. It might be funny for us, but is it funny for them?

Think about the child who gets teased because it brings a laugh, and he's told to "grow up" and not take it to heart. This may be a child who feels that his parents do not really care about what he thinks. It may make him withdrawn, or fearful of asking important questions because he fears being ridiculed.

Children often tease and hurt one another as well. How many children, even in our Christian schools, end up hating school be-

cause of how another student has treated them, all in the name of humor? Sometimes the adults have no clue how to stop it, or they minimize the effects, telling the child to "shake it off."

Making memories

Out of the thousands of moments of our lives, the events we remember are those which evoke a deep emotion in us at the time. Happiness, anger, fear, sadness, or pain; basically, any drama. This is expressed well in the book *Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories* by Kevin Leman and Randy Carlson.

In their book they ask readers to try this experiment: pull up a clear memory from your childhood and write out what happened. It will no doubt be a memory of an emotional experience. The regular school day where nothing special happened doesn't make as deep of an impression on us.

What does all of this have to do with respecting children?

If the events that are going to stick in their memories and shape them are those that cause the deepest emotions in them, should we not refrain from bringing unnecessary pain, shame, and embarrassment into their lives? Wouldn't it be so much better if they could remember the family picnic because of the love that they felt or the good time they had? Or do you really want them to remember it as the day that Uncle or Aunt so and so made them the butt of the joke or teased them about their appearance? Respecting children means having fun with them, not against them.

So if you ever find yourself thinking that everyone around will find you hilarious and like you a lot if you tease or embarrass a child, please consider the following, from Proverbs 3:3-4:

"Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man"

Perhaps you can give a word of praise and a hug instead. Or just listen. Everyone around will still like you because they'll be impressed with your godly, loving attitude.

And maybe they'll even be inspired.



ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

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

NEW PUZZLES

Riddles for Punsters #155 – “Party Policies?”

Why was the Conservative party member told not to be overly generous? It was because he was being too _____ with his money.

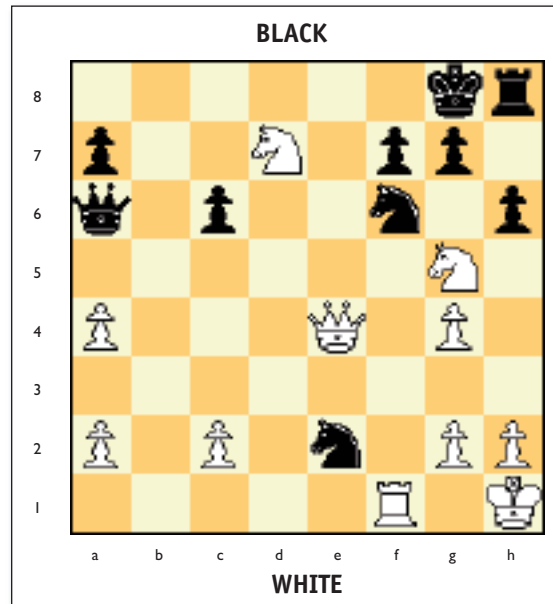
Why did the Liberal fundraiser order extra food for a political party luncheon? He was afraid that estimates of how many people would attend were overly _____.

Problem to Ponder #155 – “Some ‘S’ Sound Starts Solution”

The challenge is to come up with a word, starting with the letter “s”, that is the antonym (opposite in meaning) of the given word. The number in brackets after the clue indicates the number of letters in each “s” word. For example, sit (5) stand OR common (7) special.

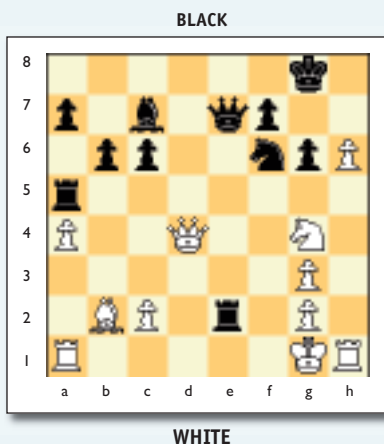
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| familiar (7) _____ | silly (7) _____ |
| married (6) _____ | buy (4) _____ |
| difficult (6) _____ | sour (5) _____ |
| easy-going (5) _____ | antonym (7) _____ |
| foolish (8) _____ | spotless (7) _____ |
| weak (6) _____ | receive (4) _____ |
| hard (4) _____ | integrate (9) _____ |
| flesh (6) _____ | well-fed (8) _____ |
| flexible (5) _____ | save (5) _____ |
| happy (3) _____ | quick (4) _____ |

Chess Puzzle # 155



WHITE to Mate in 3
Or, if it is BLACK's move,
BLACK to Mate in 4
(Hint: Mounted on a horse, attack the King)

SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 154



WHITE to Mate in 4 Descriptive Notation

1. P-R7 ch K-B1
2. P-R8=R ch N-N1
3. RxN ch KxR
4. Q-N7 mate

NOTE: Black loses sooner IF

1. P-R7 ch K-R1
2. QxN ch QxQ
3. BxQ mate

Algebraic Notation

1. h6-h7 + Kg8-f8
2. h7-h8=R + Nf6-g8

3. Rh8xg8 + Kf8xg8
4. Qd4-g7 ++

BLACK to Mate in 3 Descriptive Notation

1. _____ R-K8 ch
2. RxR QxR ch
3. K-R2 R-R4 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. _____ Re2-e1 +
2. Ra1xe1 Qe7xe1 +
3. Kg1-h2 Ra5-h5 ++

SOLUTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS (APRIL) PUZZLE PAGE

Answer to Riddles Riddles for Punsters #154 – “Pushing Pins”

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

Why did the little boy use his thumb to push his mother’s pins into an eraser? The boy was bored and needed t h u m b thing to do.

Problem to Ponder #154 – “Give me threes, if you please”

Your task is to use three 3s, along with your choice of mathematical operations, to produce the required result. For example, to produce the result 4, write $3 + (3 \div 3) = 4$ or to produce 36 write $33 + 3 = 36$. Now use three 3s to produce the following results:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 9 = 3 + 3 + 3 | <i>Not-so-easy:</i> |
| 3 = 3 + 3 - 3 | 30 = 3 ³ + 3 [OR, easy, 30 = 33 - 3] |
| 6 = 3 x 3 - 3 | 81 = 3 ³ x 3 [OR 81 = 3 x 3 ³] |
| 12 = 3 x 3 + 3 | 0 = (3 - 3) ÷ 3 [OR 0 = (3 - 3) x 3] |
| 27 = 3 x 3 x 3 | 1 = (3 ÷ 3) ³ [OR 1 = 3 ⁽³⁻³⁾] |
| 2 = 3 - (3 ÷ 3) | 1/3 = (3 ÷ 3)/3 [OR 1/3 = 3 ÷ (3 x 3)] |

Of course, the above are just some of the possible answers!

Crossword Puzzle

Series 16 No 6

Last month's solution
Series 16 No 5

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14						15				16				
17						18				19				
20					21		22		23		24			
			25	26		27		28		29				
30	31	32		33				34				35	36	37
38				39								40		
41				42				43	44			45		
46			47					48				49		
			50		51	52		53			54			
55	56	57						58				59	60	61
62					63		64				65			
66				67		68		69		70				
71						72				73				
74						75				76				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
13	O	P	I	E	T	O	E	E	V	E	R	Y		
17	G	R	I	N	D	U	R	N	C	A	L	I	N	
21	S	E	N	D	N	C	A	L	V	E	D			
	23	D	E	M	O	S	E	V	U	L	S	E		
28	A	I	L	L	A	I	R	S	T	R	P			
34	R	E	P	L	A	Y	S	A	D	B	E	A	U	
39	S	H	E	L	F	S	E	E	P	S				
41	O	U	R	S	C	O	P	P	L	A	N	T	S	
46	N	D	E	A	U	R	A	L	O	U	Y			
		49	N	I	M	R	O	D	Y	E	T	S		
54	M	A	N	N	E	D	E	I	N	T	O			
58	A	B	I	E	L	R	R	T	A	F	T	E	R	
62	A	T	A	R	I	O	N	O	C	U	E	E		
65	M	A	L	T	A	C	O	W	B	E	L	L	S	

ACROSS:

1. Proverb
6. Emerg. Medical service
9. ___ Bifida
14. Kitchen utensil
15. Thus far
16. Wind toys
17. Improve
18. Tokyo, formerly
19. Angry
20. Bare, simple
22. Signal of distress
24. Assoc. of ALS
25. Part of a plant
28. Agreement
30. Male turkey
33. Egg; comb. form
34. Round objects
38. Green plant that grows on brick
39. Mens ___ (criminal intent)
40. Judge and priest of Israel
41. Bear home
42. Well-dressed bird
45. Digital Audiotape
46. Delete
48. French Female saint, abbr.
49. Single unit
50. Soft Dutch cheese
53. Direction
55. Orange colored
58. Parts of a blouse
62. On the top
63. Make a mistake
65. Wee
66. Takes on cargo
68. Part of a group of atoms
70. Long weapon
71. Lady's name
72. Cool drink
73. Thanks in Quebec
74. Vase with two handles
75. Morning dampness
76. Basket used for catching in jai alai

Joyce

DOWN:

1. First man
2. Small currency
3. Type of tree
4. Units of heredity
5. Shrewmouse
6. Face part
7. Prescription medications, for short
8. Bends down
9. Winter sport
10. Sea robber
11. Type of letter formatting, for short
12. Fishing helpers
13. On the water
21. Reception or assembly of honour
23. This runs in the spring
26. Water weapon
27. Groan
29. Kind of takeout food
30. Water phenomenon
31. Finished
32. Kind of bird
35. Fix up
36. Enthusiasm
37. Place to camp
43. Employs
44. Mediterranean country
47. Snake
51. Had dinner
52. A great number of things
54. Native American house
55. Hot, to an old poet
56. 70s computer company
57. Cowboy show
59. Changes direction
60. Make into a statute
61. Damascus is the capital of this place
64. Sat on a horse
67. Body of water
69. Not old
70. System manager console (abbr.)