

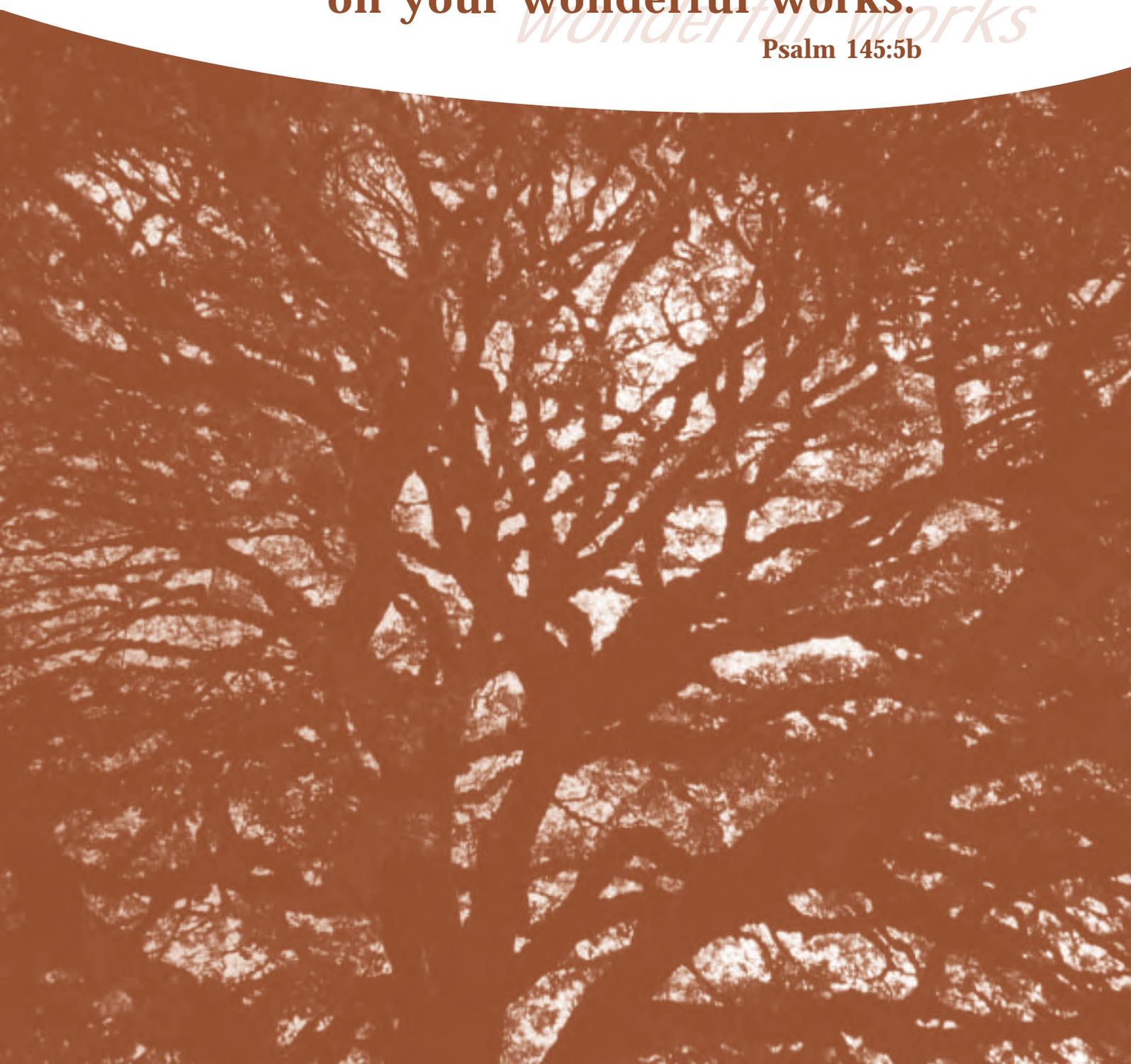
faith in **focus**

Magazine of the
Reformed Churches
of New Zealand

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*"I will meditate
on your wonderful works."*

Psalm 145:5b



CONTENTS

Is it ever right to fight <i>The case for a 'Just War'</i>	3
World in focus <i>Is abortion causing a 'black genocide'?</i>	5
Focus on home <i>Gleanings in focus</i> <i>National Youth Camp</i>	8
The saints in ancient British history <i>St. Augustine</i>	12
Mission in focus <i>Reports from Hayden Bosgra & Craig van Echten</i>	14
A feminine focus <i>The feminine virtue of discretion</i>	16
Letter to the Editor	18
Children in focus <i>Sonshine Korner</i>	19
Talking about holocausts <i>A week in this world</i>	20

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Editorial

The American invasion of Iraq has not passed unnoticed in the news media. Certainly the leftwing bias of our local journalists has been quite evident in much of the reporting of that battle and its aftermath. It's interesting, though, that there are evangelical Christians in the United States who have a principial objection to what their government has undertaken in that foreign land. They believe it goes against biblical principles of how one nation should treat another. Our article concerning the case for a 'Just War' deals with this point. Read it and see how you think what has happened in Iraq matches up with it.

And then our issue ends with a reflection on the worst of injustices man could perpetuate upon man—a 'holocaust.' What shows up there is how much mankind in his allegedly most enlightened and democratic form has deceived himself in this.

In other parts of this issue we have the faithful work of our regular contributors, together with a review of the recent National Youth camp. May you be blessed in reading this issue, as we have already been blessed in the work we have done to bring it to you. As a teacher learns that much more than his student in preparing and delivering his lesson, so we have ourselves grown in what we have done to get it to this stage.

Letters to the Editor are warmly welcomed. If they are written in a gentle and respectful way, they can help to build us up in the precious faith.

"The foundation of our society and of our government rests so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings should cease."

Calvin Coolidge

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not to be considered the official position of the Reformed Churches of NZ unless they expound the Biblical system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or reflect the successive Acts of Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. On the other hand, care is taken to ensure that articles and opinions do not directly contradict the official position of the Reformed Churches as contained in the above sources without attention being called to that fact.

Is it ever right to fight?

The Biblical case for a 'Just War'

Sjirk Bajema

You will see them, many of them, marching together in many towns and cities across our nation. Some will be quite frail, and walk with difficulty; perhaps they had to travel in an open vehicle. But they are proud nevertheless and so they march in orderly style. With their chests covered by the medals and reminders of past wars, you couldn't mistake what they have done.

And there were the younger ones. Those who are wearing uniforms now, whether it be of the army, the navy, the air force, the police—right down to the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

Who could forget it's ANZAC Day? ANZAC, a word made up of the first letters of Australian & New Zealand Army Corps. It was war which brought these two nations together. And what war made of us is remembered on ANZAC Day.

But let's shift our eyes now to quite a different scene. It's outside an alleged military communications base. From thousands of kilometres, and even from foreign countries, protesters have come to vent their public displeasure that this place is being used for the world-wide security of the major world power.

What a contrast that scene is with the marches on April 25! They are not neatly dressed at all. They violently tear down the security fence and charge on the centre. For publicity they take off all their clothes, apparently to show what war really does to us. They hurl abuse at any semblance of authority.

Though, much as their appearance and action may repeal us, haven't you asked, **Is it ever right to fight?**

We know of war too well. Some of us have experienced it personally. And the rest of us are grimly reminded each night on the television news, and each day in the papers, just how bad it is. Even right now, there are as many armed struggles across the face of this earth as there has ever been before at one time! Despite their disgusting behaviour, perhaps those protesters have a point. Is it ever right to fight?

It's a question that doesn't only affect the nations of the world. It comes right the way down into the school playground and around the dinner table. But it is an issue the Lord helps us with—very clearly!

It is right to fight—in self-defence

The picture has often been painted that we as Christians should be a bunch of passive

dummies. The bit in Matthew 5, about turning the other cheek and all that, has often been thrown against us. It's a passage pacifist Christians use. And later on we'll consider where that passage fits in.

But first of all, God has made us who we are. And God Himself has given us what we have. This is what we read in Proverbs chapter 22:28: *"Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers."*

So, there's a set property with a set position. The Lord says it even stronger in Proverbs 23 verse 10: *"Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, for their defender is strong; he will take up their case against you."*

Believers see already how complicated this is. There are always the powerful and selfish who stop at nothing to trample on top of others and what belongs to them, in order to get to the top. We've seen enough megalomaniacs like Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, and Saddam Hussein, to realise this is happening.

Our children have them in your neighbourhood, too. They are called bullies—those insecure, forceful people who get their satisfaction from picking on someone else!

You don't have to simply accept it when they start taking what is yours, and even start hurting you. Stand up to them. Be ready to

tell on them!

Now, that might sound a bit harsh. You might even have friends who say you can't ever tell on anyone. In some countries it's almost a tradition not to pimp or dob on anyone, as they call it.

But when you do let someone in authority know, you're actually fighting a very worldly sin. Because if you don't tell, it only helps evil people. They use it to keep others under their control.

This is shown most vividly by our Lord Jesus Himself, that Man whom the pacifists quote and point to so often as their supreme example! Yet, what did He do upon entering the temple courts just a few days before His death? He used violence to throw out the merchants who were desecrating God's House. And He did this in self-defence!

How could that be, we wonder? It is because the position and property of the LORD God was at stake! And it was God who defended Himself, as Jesus hurled those tables and their products across the floor.

It's this aspect of self-defence that helps explain the difficulty we can have with the Old Testament Israelites. They seem to go through the countryside with impunity, brutally killing and looting all in their way.

But what was it they were doing? Weren't they reclaiming their land—the "Promised Land"—which God had first pledged to their



forefather, Abraham? Deuteronomy 6:10-12 says, "When the LORD brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you didn't plant—then when you are satisfied, be careful that you don't forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Of course it was all of grace—but it was a gift nevertheless! It was their possession from God. They were taking back their own inheritance.

That also explains the rather harsh language of Psalm 137. For the Psalmist is speaking about those who took the Israelites away from the land of promise. Babylon was a nation that led God's people away. Though the LORD may have used them as His way to punish the Israelites, they were still responsible for the evil they did. So the harshness of the psalm is simply a plea for God to restore His people.

That means you can do a self-defence course. But let that martial art be your master, and let it intimidate another or take you away from your faith—that's wrong! As the Israelites learnt when the helpless ones in their society were oppressed and abused.

It is right to fight—in the defence of another

And here we come to another aspect in this whole subject. For when someone else through weakness or ignorance cannot defend their own, then you're called to do it

for them. The weak ones we have just been reminded about.

The law of the LORD to His people spelt out exactly the concern there should be for those helpless ones. And when the people left the ways of the LORD, guess who became oppressed and abused?

Isaiah expressed the anger of God at one of those times in the first chapter of his prophecy. In verse 17 he cried out, "Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow."

Compassion has always been a distinctive mark of Christians. Of all the religions of the world, we are the most involved in reaching out to the poor and oppressed.

That's not giving ourselves a pat on the back. It's simply living out the life of Christ in His Body. When Jesus promised He would be with us until the end, He meant it—with His Spirit working in our lives. And as the Old Testament church when it was faithful showed a shadow of what this great love would be in Jesus, we now are empowered to take it into this world.

Indeed, the way of Christ has already made a great difference to the world. A good example is the 'Just War' tradition. This states that it can only be right to fight when the cause is righteous. In the words of John Stott, "It must be defensive, not aggressive. Its objectives must be to secure justice or remedy injustice, to protect the innocent or champion human rights. It must be taken as a last resort only, after all attempts at

negotiation and reconciliation have been exhausted, and then only after a formal declaration (following an ultimatum) by a legitimate authority, not by groups or individuals. Moreover, the intention must be as righteous as the cause. Just causes are not served by unjust motives. So there must be no hatred, no animosity, no thirst for revenge." (p84, "Issues Facing Christians Today".)

Try transferring that to the boy you see being bullied, or your employee suffering at the hands of a fellow worker, or someone else being harassed. It might seem a complicated process, but it's not. Picture it. You see what appears to be a clear act of someone being put down or hurt—or both! You could react straight-away. You could let what you feel at that one particular time judge a whole situation. That's what eleven tribes of Israel did in Judges chapter 20. But hold on! Let's find out why those people are there. Gain some background knowledge on them. Why are we in a rush? It's the Lord's time, isn't it?

It is right to fight in the defence of another, but only if his defence is being genuinely threatened. The Christian isn't chasing after those who cry "wolf" just to get attention.

However, as well as being concerned for the "weak", we are also to show concern for the ignorant. And here we take up that much thrown-about passage from Matthew 5—that well-used part about "turning the other cheek". The usual impression we have there is of a passive action. You let it happen to you. But that view has often led to Christians and the Church being ripped off by professional leeches who suck what they can out of believers. They know they can get away with it! They abuse the Church because they're aware of what the Bible says.

In the situation of Matthew 5, though, the Lord is speaking of those who treat you harshly as those not knowing the Gospel. For instance, the Romans could press those who were not Roman citizens to carry equipment for a mile. What a witness you were to them when you went that much further! That's given freely! That's real sacrifice! And that's in Christ's defence! Your active concern for the Romans led you to take the time to think how to show them something of your Saviour and Lord. Revenge has been put right out of the picture.

As has any idea that you just have to put up with it. Because **you** are looking out for their good! Indeed, in all those instances we read from Matthew 5, the verses 38 till 48, the believer is fighting for his Lord!

Do you see it? These are practical ways to struggle for their souls! You want to keep them from ultimate harm, for the glory of the Lord. Just as you defend yourself, because you have His work to do! I know, it's a strange thing to say. But haven't we, of all people,



V-Day in France, 1945

come to know that our only worth is in Christ?

Now, compare that with a man of the world who sang and demonstrated all about peace in the 1960's. John Lennon took his concern across Europe with his so-called 'Bagism,' where he and Yoko Ono would stage press conferences in hotel beds to speak for peace. "Give peace a chance" was one of his hits of that time. A song that epitomised his public concern. This same man, though, hated his former song-writing partner and fellow-Beatle, Paul McCartney, with a vengeance. He even sang about him, "those freaks was right when they said you was dead; the one mistake you made was in your head."

It is right to fight—for the offence of the Lord

The world makes a lot of noise about having no more wars on the outside, yet inside its sinful nature stays exactly the same. This is its hypocrisy. It's because of this utterly rotten world that God tells us it is right to fight in self-defence and in the defence of another. But to really look beyond all this we need to know that it is right to fight—for the offence of the Lord.

This is the offence that is about taking the initiative, not as in being offended, because right throughout our fighting for the right things we know we will win in Christ Jesus the Great King! The new world is coming! Already now we are preparing the way. Even in our daily lives - at work, at school, at home, at play - we are building up toward the second coming of the Prince of Peace. That's why we pray. We're talking to the Lord now because we want so much for Him to take over everything as soon as possible. The vision of Revelation 21 is what we're anticipating!

And we have encouraging little glimpses of how it will be. At those times, His Spirit stirs within us His special work. Christ is King! He is ever so busy reigning—right now! In thousands of thousands of human temples—each one a soul saved by grace—the Lord is living.

The picture of being a soldier for the Lord comes up several times in Scripture. Why do you think Paul describes the armour of the Christian soldier in the way he does in Ephesians 6? Isn't so that all those things which make up the soldier can go into battle for the Lord? Everything that God gives us glorifies Him. The way He shows us in His Word is the plan for our attack.

Again, John Stott is helpful. He says, "I cannot see that Christian people should remain isolated from public life; they should rather be involved in it, knowing that in doing so they are ministers of God just as much as pastors...There's nothing abnormal about Christians serving in the police force or the prison service, as politicians or magistrates



or city councillors. For Christians worship a God who is just and are therefore committed to the quest for justice. The Christian community shouldn't stand aloof from the secular community, but seek to penetrate it for Christ."

In a society which has left her Christian foundations and has become multi-religious, as well as multi-cultural, to live with Jesus makes us stand out that much more. For the offence of the Lord, we will be greatly offended!

So let's listen to what Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:3-4. "*Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer.*"

Live the life of love! Hate only compounds because sin abounds! Although the Cold War may be over, there's a whole new enemy now in the Islamic world. To live by His grace puts everything for us in a completely different perspective! Despite the traumas and tragedies of this present time, we're working for the world to come.

Is that the motivation of your heart? It is

most right to fight—for the offence of the Lord!

In fact, to love anything else in your life is to hate! Yes—you heard me right! Unless you can honestly say that you're claiming every moment for the Prince of Peace, your soul is at war with Him. That's a battle you can't win! And if you're a Christian, you know that is a fight which isn't right. So, by His grace, you'll change.

But, perhaps, you are one who hasn't been touched by His love deep down? Your heart actually wants to go its own selfish way. Please—there's a better way! There's a path, through a narrow gate, that leads to a wonderful new world. A world where there will be no more war.

And there's been a God-man who has gone through this difficult way before us. He has given us glowing descriptions of what it will be like. Most of all, He calls us to believe in Him. Trust Jesus! Turn over to Him all that hatred which has kept you from His love—the greatest of all loves! Repent and believe. Then you too can have true and everlasting peace within.

World in focus

Christians stalked on Islamic website

A New Jersey man was brutally murdered with his family after being tracked systematically by a radical Islamic website because they debated Muslims on the internet chat service PalTalk.com.

The password-protected Arabic website www.barsomyat.com, includes the kind of death threat received by Hossam Armanious, a Coptic Christian from Jersey City, New Jersey, who was found 14 January with his wife and two daughters, bound and gagged with their throats slashed, the New York Sun

reports. Two months before his murder, according to authorities, Armanious received a death threat from a Muslim PalTalk user: "You'd better stop this bull...or we are going to track you down like a chicken and kill you." + *New York Sun*, 105 Chambers St., 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10007 (212) 406-2000

Constitutionality of Ten Commandments in Texas

Harold J. Berman, one of the nation's foremost experts on law and religion, is joining with The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) in filing an amicus brief with the US

World in focus *(continued)*

Supreme Court asking the high court to uphold an appeals court ruling that declared a Ten Commandments display in Texas constitutional.

The brief, posted at www.aclj.org, stated: "To require its removal from the walls of American courthouses and other public settings because it refers to the God of Israel as a source of fundamental legal obligations would be similar to requiring the removal of the Declaration of Independence because it refers to 'Nature's God' and to 'the Creator' and to 'divine providence' as the source of the equality of all persons and of the universal rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

+ *The American Center for Law and Justice, Washington, DC (757) 575-9520*

New Moderator elected for Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Rev. Dr. Harry Uprichard, currently minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Ahoghill, has won the support of 12 out of the Church's 21 presbyteries throughout Ireland. Rev. Dr. Uprichard will succeed the Rev. Dr. Ken Newell.

Rev. Uprichard described himself as a

"conservative evangelical" who wanted "to try to conserve the biblical tradition in the Church for evangelical purposes." Rev. Dr. Uprichard considered his ministry as one of "teaching the scriptures in order to bring people to faith and to develop their witness," and is noted for his expository preaching and his evangelistic zeal.

As the new Moderator-elect Dr. Uprichard will not be inviting Dr. Sean Brady, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, to this year's General Assembly of the church.

Last year Archbishop Brady became the first Catholic bishop to ever attend the Assembly after he was invited by the Moderator, Dr. Ken Newell. Dr. Uprichard stressed that "We do work with the Roman Catholic Church in many areas in practical ways such as education, on homosexuality, sectarianism and racism." But Dr. Uprichard said he could not agree with joint worship because "there are deep and fundamental differences."

The Irish Presbyterian Church, which is a founding member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, has over 560 congregations in 21 presbyteries throughout

Ireland, with over 300,000 members. It is the largest Protestant denomination in Northern Ireland.

+ *Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church House, Belfast BT1 6DW, Northern Ireland*
Info@PresbyterianIreland.org

CRC(NA) marks 110th Anniversary with cycling event

The Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is marking its 100th anniversary in Canada this year and it is inviting interested bicyclists to join the celebration by riding "Sea to Sea with the CRC."

More than 150 cyclists are already signed up from Christian Reformed churches to ride from Vancouver to Halifax, 23 June - 4 September, in the largest cross-Canada cycling event ever held.

Cyclists are expected to raise funds to be used in support of the CRC's mission of planting new churches in communities across Canada. The suggested goal is US\$1,000 per week, for a total of US\$10,000 per rider.

+ *www.SeatoSea.org 1 (888) CRC-BIKE.*

Two congregations become one

The Bell Road Methodist Church congregation merged with the Grace Presbyterian Church (EPC) on 30 Jan. to form the new Grace at Bell Road (EPC). Grace at Bell Road is the result of the two congregations worshipping together since last August and is located in Montgomery, Alabama. The Bell Road Methodist Church left the United Methodist Church some years ago, and the Grace Presbyterian Church left the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1996. Grace at Bell Road is pastored by Dr. J. Kent Bull, who was called to Grace last spring.

+ *Grace at Bell Road, 5 Bell Rd., Montgomery, AL 36117-4304 (334) 288-8072*

Activists say abortion causing 'black genocide'

Pro-life activists are charging that legalised abortion has led to a "black genocide" of more than 14 million unborn African-American babies. They condemn, in particular, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Clenard Childress Jr., director of the Northeast Chapter of the Life Education and Resource Network, told the Cybercast News Service "This is a horrific injustice to women, and it's decimating our communities."

Childress runs the BlackGenocide.org, <<http://www.blackgenocide.org>> website, which quotes that since 1973, more than twice as many blacks have died from abortion than from heart disease, cancer, accidents, violent crimes and AIDS combined. Blacks make up about 12 percent of the population in the US but account for 32 percent of the abortions, and



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+ L.E.A.R.N. PO Box 157, Montclair, NJ 07042, (866) 242-4997

Presbyterian Church opens development store

The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, which is a group of 83 Islands in the South West Pacific, North East of Caledonia and North West of Fiji, has officially opened its development store.

Pastor Roy Pearson, Project Officer of the Presbyterian Church, said that this store was not a profit-making venture, but an opportunity for Presbyterians from all over Vanuatu to sell their crafts in Port Vila.

All profits from the store will be used to develop Vanuatu, and will be used to help lower school fees at church-managed schools, fund development projects, and to help disaster victims.

+ Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, PO Box 150, Port Vila, Vanuatu presbyterian@vanuatu.com

Mississippi Valley reports on emerging theologies

A year ago the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley [PCA] appointed an ad hoc committee to facilitate study of the issues surrounding the distinct but related phenomena of the so-called "New Perspectives on Paul": the so-called "Auburn Avenue theology," which is sometimes referred to as the "Federal Vision," and the theology of Norman Shepherd.

The committee began its work well aware of the differences among these theological projects, but also realizing that they share a similar attraction to a distinct theological sub-culture within various Reformed denominations (PCA, OPC, CRC, and URCNA). The committee's appreciation of the distinctness of these theological blueprints is reflected in the provision of four separate summary outlines and one critical overview of these multifarious views. The full report is available in PDF format.

+ <http://webzoom.freewebs.com/msvp/msvpadhoc.pdf>

Love is...

A group of professionals posed the question "What does love mean?" to a group of 4 - 8 year-olds and the answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

"Love is when someone hurts you and you get so mad but you don't yell at them because you know it would hurt their feelings."

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

"When you tell someone something bad about yourself and you're scared they won't love you anymore. But then you get surprised because not only do they still love you, they love you even more."

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day."

"My Mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken."

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones."

"I let my big sister pick on me because my Mom says she only picks on me because she loves me. So I pick on my baby sister because I love her."

"Love cards like Valentine's cards say stuff on them that we'd like to say ourselves, but we wouldn't be caught dead saying."

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

Laredo, Texas congregation leaves Presbyterian Church (USA)

On 17 February 2005, Mission Presbytery in Texas dismissed a Confessing Church congregation and its pastor to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, but the property issue is still up in the air.

The presbytery voted in October against a motion to allow First Presbyterian Church in Laredo, Texas, to leave with its property and assets. However, the presbytery decided to allow the congregation to continue using the property until after an appraisal is made of the land and building.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) Constitution includes a property clause stating that congregations hold their property in trust for the benefit of the national church. The presbyteries can take over the property and assets of a congregation; sell the property to the separating congregation; or give the property to the congregation.

+ Presbyterian Church (USA), 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Swedish Pastor's conviction overturned

A Swedish Pentecostal pastor sentenced to a prison term after describing homosexuals as "a cancerous tumour in the body of society" has had his conviction overturned by an appeal court. The court of appeal ruled that the views of the pastor, the Rev. Ake Green, did not constitute a crime under anti-hate legislation which bans incitement against homosexuals as well as against racial, religious, or national groups. After preaching a sermon about the Bible's condemnation of homosexual conduct and other sexually immoral conduct, Green was accused of inciting hatred and showing contempt in violation of Sweden's hate speech laws.

Samuel B. Casey, Executive Director and CEO of Christian Legal Society, said, "We are grateful for Pastor Green's resolve and for the

Swedish court's sensible decision.

+ Samuel B. Casey, Executive Director and CEO Christian Legal Society, 4208 Evergreen Ln., Suite 222, Annandale, VA 22003-3264 (703) 642-1070

Kansas joins evolution sticker debate

Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline has offered to defend placing stickers in school textbooks saying evolution is a theory, not a fact, stated Steve Abrams, the chairman of the State Board of Education. Kline said he believes such stickers are reasonable, even though a federal judge in Georgia rules that similar stickers are an unconstitutional endorsement of religion.

Kline's comments came as the board created a three-member panel of board members to hear expert testimony about evolution and its place in the state's science education standards, which currently describe evolution as a key concept every student should learn.

+ Dr. Steve E. Abrams, 6964 W. 252nd Rd., Arkansas City, KS 67005

Court martial over for Clergyman

Hamid Paourmand, an Iranian Protestant clergyman, is no longer accused of espionage and will soon be able to leave the military prison where he has spent the last three months. However, he will now have to face charges of apostasy and proselytising. Hamid Paourmand's trial will thus be exclusively based on the intolerance Iran's religious theocracy has towards the country's religious minorities. Rev. Mr. Pourmand went on trial last week before a military court in Tehran, charged with deceiving the Iranian armed forces about his religion. Born a Muslim, Rev. Mr. Pourmand converted to Christianity 25 years ago.

+ Iranians for International Cooperation, PO Box 75248 Washington DC 20013-5248

Chinese Christian testifies of torture

Liu Xianzhi, a member of a Chinese underground church, says she escaped from the Communist country after being tortured for six years in a labour camp. Xianzhi said police tortured her, in 2001, into falsely testifying that the pastor of the South China Church, Gong Shenglian, "raped" her, according to the China Aid Association of Midland, Texas. Xianzhi is one of 8,903 members of the South China Church arrested for their religious beliefs, including Gong, who is serving a life sentence in prison based on multiple confessions allegedly obtained through torture.

Xianzhi 34, spoke of her experiences at a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on 10 February. Sen. Sam Brownback, (R) Kansas, Deborah Files of the Midland Ministerial Alliance and Joseph K. Grieboski of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy also expressed their concern about religious persecution in China.

+ Institute on Religion and Public Policy, 1101 15th Street NW, Suite 115, Washington, DC 20005 (202) 835-8760

Seminary President Fired

Rev. Norman Kansfield, President of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, New Jersey, has been fired after he performed the "gay wedding" of his daughter last year in Massachusetts.

In an interview at the seminary, Rev. Kansfield said he had not done anything to hurt his denomination, the Reformed Church of America.

"People presume I have been on a crusade: in point of fact, I'm a conservative theologian. I would not do anything that goes against the church."

Formal complaints have been filed against Rev. Kansfield, and he said he expected to be brought up on charges in June at the church's General Synod in Schenectady, New York.
+ New Brunswick Theological Seminary, 17 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1196 (732) 247-5241

Judge drops charges against Philadelphia 5

Traditional Values Coalition Chairman Louis P. Sheldon has announced, "We are pleased and grateful that Philadelphia Judge Pamela Dembe has dropped all charges against the five Christians who were charged with felonies for preaching the gospel to homosexuals. "These Christians should never have been charged in the first place, and Judge Dembe clearly sees this." "These Christians were charged under a state hate crime law that added 'sexual orientation' as a protected class," said Rev. Louis P. Sheldon. "This case is a clear example of the danger that hate crime laws pose to religious freedom and free speech when Christians can be charged with a felony for preaching from the Bible."

+ Traditional Values Coalition, 139 C. St., SE, Washington, DC 20003 (202) 547-8570

Prince of Wales to marry in a civil ceremony

The Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles will marry in a largely-private ceremony on 8 April followed by a service of prayer and dedication in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, will preside. In a statement Williams said that the arrangements had his strong support and were consistent with Church of England guidelines.

Since the death of Princess Diana, Charles' previous divorce was not as much of an issue but Mrs. Bowles' was, since her husband is still living.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles Collins Jr., *Christian Observer* Correspondent, 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

Focus on home

Gleanings from our bulletins...

Andrew Reinders

Avondale

Marriage Banns: Congregation, Monique Gjaltema and Raymond Lagas have indicated their desire to be united in marriage. They want to begin their life together in the name of the Lord and in the presence of His people, and continue it to His glory. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place at The Reformed Church of Hamilton on Saturday, March 05, 2005 at 1pm.

Bishopdale

Congratulations to Eric & Yvonne Janssen with the birth of their son Reuben last Sunday.

Men's Christchurch Conference. "God, Man, Life and Work". March 1 and 2, 2005 Sponsored by St Johns, Latimer Square. These are evening sessions. Speaker is Vaughn Roberts, Senior Pastor of St Ebbes, Oxford, United Kingdom. Brochures are available for this conference on the table in the foyer. Any further enquires _ HYPERLINK "http://www.mcc-nz.org.nz" _www.mcc-nz.org.nz_ or ring Wally Behan 03 366 7744

Reformed Motorcycle Rally 18/19 February: If you own a motorbike and you're keen on joining other reformed bikers on an overnight trip to Hanmer, please let Hille or Nynke Pijker know today so we can finalise accommodation and cost. Please ring on 383 2268.

Christchurch

We rejoice with Daniel Havelaar and Monique Bangma and their families as they anticipate the beginning of their married life together and the establishment of a new covenant home. Daniel & Monique's wedding is scheduled to take place this Saturday at 1.30 pm here in the church.

Memories Wanted. The Lord willing, on May 28th and 29th we hope to celebrate the retirement of our dad, Rev Paul Stadt, who served as your pastor in the past. As his daughters, Sara and I want to make a memory album of his years in the ministry. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to reminisce about a time in which Dad's ministry touched you personally, such as at your wedding, or a baptism, a time of trial or grief or a time of celebration, or even words spoken in a sermon or catechism class which have remained with you. Feel free to include recent photos of yourself or your family or if you have any with Dad in it that would be great too. Cards of congratulations can be sent to him personally at a later date. Further details of the weekend will be announced later. Please send your memories by March 1 to Andrea Draijer, 91

Milford Ave, Unit 409, Waterloo, Ontario. N2L 3Z5.

Dunedin

We rejoice at the safe arrival of new additions to the Vaatstra and Tepper families during the summer break. Leonard Elijah Vaatstra was born on 4 January, 4:45 pm at Dunedin Hospital; Lillian May Tepper was born on 17 January, 2:05 pm at Oamaru; thanks be to God.

We rejoice with the Balchin and Ure families at the safe arrival of Luke Ure born to James and Melanie Ure, Friday week ago at Invercargill. Both mother and child are well, thanks be to God.

We rejoice with Timothy and Charlene Storm at the safe arrival of Adam Cornelius Alexander Storm born on Tuesday 15 February at 2:10 am. Mother and child are doing well, praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Foxton

Church BBQ. The congregation is invited to the annual church BBQ at Foxton Beach on February 19th, at 5.00 pm. Bring your own eats. BBQ's will be provided. Also, bring a 'kite' to fly for the enjoyment of all.

Hukanui

Opportunity, Opportunity, Opportunity. The "Night Light Café" is currently being run every Friday night in Garden place. It is a place

where Christians are allowed to have a barbeque and give sausages away along with Gospel tracts and it gives great opportunities for one to one witnessing. The Hamilton City Council has given the green light for "the Night Light Café" to be run on Saturday night as well as Friday night. The people that are running the Friday night café need some help for the Saturday night and they have asked me to get a team together from our church to run the café for one Saturday night per month. I am looking for people that are willing to be the hands and feet at the moment to help get the tables, chairs and barbeque set up and to just be there. If you feel you can help with that then please give me a call on 829 4545 Henri Pennings

Masterton

We rejoice with Andre and Annelies de Leeuw in the birth of a healthy daughter Aline Adriaana. The Lord has added a covenant child to their family and to His congregation. They expressed their thankfulness to the Lord with the words of Ps 9:2, 3 "I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart: I will tell of all Your wonders. I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, o most High".

Men's Prayer Meeting: All men in the congregation are invited to attend a men's prayer meeting being held tomorrow at Stolte Jnr's place at 7:45. A fortnightly prayer meeting was started at the end of last year where men of the congregation met together to bring before the throne of grace the needs of the world, society, church and those things that affect us as men seeking to be God honouring leaders and examples in our homes. If you would like to attend but you're a bit apprehensive about praying that's all right too, nobody is made to pray (as long as you pray in your heart with us). Just remember before you come to prepare yourself and your heart to meet Him in prayer.

Palmerston North

Open Air Preaching. I intend to start open air preaching on Thursdays at 12.15pm at Majestic Square, Victoria St. beginning 3rd February. If you are able, you can support this effort to take the gospel into the world by coming along. You could bring your lunch and also encourage a workmate or friend to come along. This attempt to engage Wanganuians with the gospel will be a trial period initially to see whether what we are doing is worthwhile. The costs of the stage and sound system at Majestic Square are approx. \$5.00 per week with no other charge apparently. GM

COM Working Bee. Will be held on Monday

21 February. Arrive 5.30-6.00pm at the Church with a BYO Fish and Chip dinner.

The Reformed Church of Foxton farewelled Brother Craig van Echten last week, to go to study at the RTC, with a view to entering the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in our churches. We pray the Lord's strength and help for him.

Baptism Today. Today we have the privilege of administering and receiving, and witnessing, the sacrament of baptism for Alexander de Jonge. It is a sign and promise of God's covenant love, and a call to Alex as he grows to receive all that Christ has bought for him at the cost of his own life. Our own baptisms are a call to us to do the same. We pray for Wibo and Lisa that the Lord will give them his grace and gifts as they raise Alex, and all their children, in reliance on him.

Pukekohe

This morning we have the privilege of witnessing the sign and seal of baptism administered to Sean Reitsma. We are thankful for this visible sign of the covenant

promises of God given to believers and their children and we pray for Jesse and Wendy in their new role as parents. A warm welcome to members of the wider family who are visiting here for this occasion. In connection with the baptism I want to preach from Deuteronomy 6 - one of my favourite passages about the family and one very relevant to our contemporary situation.

Youth Club: The first Bible study will be held tomorrow night at 7.00 pm at the Haverland's home, 17 Leishout Way. Mr Haverland will lead a study on encouragement. We will begin with a potluck dessert, so please bring something to share. Hope to see you all there!

Wellington

Session News. Session is about to start its visitation programme. We hope to see and talk to each person in our congregation, predominantly during the month of March, beginning late February and finishing early April. To be able to do this some of the retired elders have been recalled to help with this visitation schedule in March only.

Psalm 37 v 5

*"Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in Him and He will do this"*

*With thankfulness to the Lord and great joy,
we announce the*

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



of our parents /
opa and oma

**Henk and
Maria
VAN DE
WAARDT**

Married in Palmerston North 11th April 1955

Henry – Matthew & Melissa, Palmerston North
Corley & Stef – Amanda, Auckland

Nelleke – Danielle & Ashley, Palmerston North

Gina – Joshua, Alannah & Luke, Auckland

Adrian & Linda – Jaron & Rhys, Auckland

James, Auckland

Maria & Richard, Auckland

18 Lane Place, Palmerston North



The outing at dinner time



Dion and Diane Stevenson's 10th Anniversary



NZ National Youth Camp



National Youth

It all started on a slightly cloudy day somewhere in the middle of Aotearoa New Zealand. The youth of the Reformed Churches of the above-mentioned country began to congregate on the green sports fields of Teapot Valley Christian Camp. The air was filled with greetings as the young people discovered friends made at previous camps and from old church congregations.

Later that day they were introduced to the hardworking camp committee: Dion Stevenson was head honcho, with the other roles

from Financial Officer to Sports Coordinator to the One in Charge of Duties being filled by: Nic, Monique, Jess, Sean, Anna, Anton and Joanna. Rev. Reinier Noppers was there to lead the 270-strong flock of adolescent sheep spiritually.

The theme was 'Shine,' and the Nelson weather decided to oblige around about Thursday. The sporting competitions included volleyball, touch rugby and soccer—the last-mentioned left a few hobbling around on smashed and swollen limbs. The Survivor trials, including



o – Teapot Valley Nelson



“Wearable Arts” night



Rev Noppers leading the studies



h Camp 2005

the wonderful potato game, had Jono the Drummer crowned top survivor. The sun set on Friday with an energetic performance from the Kiwi Christian band 'The Lads.' The Wearable Arts Banquet went off with a bang (no injuries reported) with creative and imaginative costumes and food filling the marquee. Michelangelo's David (Jason Flinn) took top prize in the male category and an enigmatic and alluring creature from the depths of the underworld in the female category. A Talent Quest filled with great, um, talent and humour on

Sunday night ended the unforgettable National Youth Camp of 2005.

A chorus of thanks to those involved with the camp: the Committee, camp staff of Teapot Valley (three cheers!), the camp parents, medic and spiritual leaders. We give thanks most importantly to the LORD, Who blessed the week of fellowship and fun.

N.B. Please remember to close windows and turn off lights before leaving the cabin, as the cutter bugs (these flying cockroach-like bugs are no joke!) are rather horrendous this summer.

The saints in ancient British history

St. Augustine

Patricia van Laar

The year 597A.D. marks a convenient point of division in the record of the history of the British Isles from the first century A.D. to approximately the year 1000, the latter leading into the final five hundred years of indulgence, extravagance, authoritarianism and the ruthless politics of the pre-Reformation church. 597 was indeed, a significant year for Britain, seeing both the death of the beloved Columba, whose successors would shortly begin carrying the Gospel to the northern regions of England,

and the arrival of St Augustine in the south. One could say, a two pronged attack on the devil's territory.

The Angels of Britain

"They are Angels, not Angles."

So said Pope Gregory, upon hearing the identity of the fair-haired young people whom he saw being offered for sale as slaves in the ancient market of Rome.

Gregory had risen to the top position in the Roman church by reason of his suitability and capability. His deep desire as pope was to be a bishop who was truly 'a Servant of

the servants of God.' Having his interest aroused by these blond captives from the land of the Angles (England), nothing would stop his determination that the gospel should be heard amongst their people too.

Opportunity in Kent

Gregory heard that the powerful King Ethelbert of Kent already knew something of Christianity. His wife was a Christian from the Royal Frankish household. This was Gregory's opportunity. Unable to go himself, he decided to send to England Augustine, who was the Prior of the monastery that was formerly Gregory's own home, the Monastery of St Andrew. Augustine was instructed in 596A.D. to sail to the island of Britain, accompanied by forty monks. The monks felt lost already while travelling overland through Gaul, because they were unfamiliar with the language. Then the party heard of the fierce reputation of the Saxons in the land of their intended destination. That was more than enough for them. Fear took over. They absolutely refused to go further, but insisted on returning home.

Gregory, however, was not about to give up so easily. He promptly promoted Augustine to Abbot, thus giving him the authority to demand the monks' obedience. Gregory then sent them back again, giving them an interpreter this time. Just after Easter 597 (as it happened, only about five or six weeks before Columba of Iona died) the company at last arrived across the channel, landing at Richborough, and immediately sent word to King Ethelbert of their arrival with Good News.

Ethelbert was the great-grandson of that Hengist, the pirate sea rover who had settled his extended family in England after Vortigern had given him lands in Kent. This heathen king hesitated to trust the promised 'good news', fearing the magic of a strange religion. But he consented to meet the missionaries. Although he at this time did not commit himself to their teaching, he allowed them to 'set up shop,' assigning to them a house in Canterbury. Soon afterwards, Ethelbert forsook the gods of his fathers for the God of his wife and of the missionaries, not in any conditional way, but in sincerity and reality. This happened in the way Gregory had instructed, not by compulsion but by free consent. Ethelbert accepted wholeheartedly the news of the Saviour.

The structure of society in England in those days was not individualistic, but was based on tribal communities. Any approach to the people was made, if possible, through the headman, the chief or the king. So



Ethelbert's genuine conversion opened up the way to his people. In the manner of tribal societies (even as sometimes today) large numbers in a mass movement turned to the Christian faith. Thousands being baptised as *disciples*, as the Lord commanded in Matt.28:19, on Christmas Day 597.

Where he could, Augustine made full use of the customs of heathendom (religious or cultural), if they could legitimately be adapted for Christian usage or for teaching. (We find a modern example of using a cultural custom for Christian teaching in Irian Jaya [now Papua] in missionary Don Richardson's book '*Peace Child*'.) In Augustine's case, if a heathen temple were well built, the missionaries would adapt it to Christian usage. Idols were destroyed, cleansing ceremonies held, and it was then furnished and dedicated as a church. Feasting was no longer associated with sacrifice to devils, but with thanksgiving to God. This accommodation of custom to Christian usage helped create a measure of legitimate and acceptable indigenous expression in worship.

The Character of St Augustine

Augustine himself had personal weaknesses. Unimaginative, he had not foreseen nor prepared himself for the dangers encountered in his venture—the need of language knowledge, or the questions of Christian living and practices that arose. He exasperated Gregory, who obviously found some of the questions in Augustine's letters quite naive, and who rebuked him for his lack of preparation for pastoralia.

As the work and the Word spread from the southeast, it was inevitable that sooner or later there would be contact with the Celtic British church, by now at least three or four hundred years old. The latter was apprehensive and suspicious of this new movement and its Roman connections. Augustine did not help to allay those suspicions. This led to grave difficulties in his relationship with the original Celtic church. He was unimaginative and overbearing, a failing which affected his own relationship with the north, and also brushed off on the new southern churches. Strong leadership requires a forceful personality, but this strength can easily become the weakness of autocracy.

The Pope in 601 wrote to Augustine about the danger of becoming puffed up with pride at the wonders that God had done through His servant. Augustine is by no means the only one in Christian history to need but not heed this warning. One modern writer, Charles Swindoll, calls autocracy 'sheep bashing'. He writes, "Those seeking power want to control, to rule over others. They want to take charge and get their way. They manipulate and manoeuvre to be in a position of authority so they can hold others

in check or force them to get into line." (*The Quest for Character*, p. 23)

Augustine showed such a tendency. One of his letters to Pope Gregory asked how he should deal with the bishops of Gaul and Britain. The pope wisely pointed out that Augustine had no jurisdiction over Gaul, and if he wished to correct them in any way it should be by good example. But Gregory (unwisely, it seems) gave him authority over the British bishops (an indication of the developing attitude of authoritarianism and audacity in the church at Rome, even in a personally-humble man like Gregory). This caused a rift between the two sections of the church in Britain—the Celtic and the English. It happened like this:

A conference was arranged at 'St Augustine's Oak', (thought to have been Aust on the Severn). The British Bishops were wary of this newcomer, and did not intend to become 'bashed sheep.' In fact, they themselves were under-shepherds, and were leading their flocks very well, thank you! Following the advice of a 'hermit-sheep' from their own flocks, they decided to test Augustine on the question of his humility as a man of God. They allowed Augustine to arrive and take his seat at the meeting place first. If the newcomer arose to greet them when they, the British bishops, arrived, they would listen to him submissively, but if he remained seated that would indicate that he despised them, so they would despise him in turn. What a lot turned on that simple test! Augustine did not rise.

So the two sections of the Church in Britain became deeply divided, the ancient British and the new English. It was not until over a hundred years later at the Synod of Whitby in 664, that the British Church succumbed to the pressure of Rome, adopting Roman customs.

The Spread of the Gospel

Augustine probably achieved less than the Pope hoped for. Nevertheless, it must be recognised in fairness that in spite of this, like Columba's, his was a quite remarkable achievement. He began the Kent mission, was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, bishoprics (forming diocese which were responsible for regions, as presbyteries are for us) were established again in London (from where they had disappeared with the Anglo-Saxon invasion) and at Rochester. He converted a king and began the conversion of a kingdom. His establishment of a Christian Province from absolute heathendom meant the linking of England with the centre of Christendom, no mean feat, which we in our anxiety to uphold our Protestant faith must not overlook.

It is easy to forget that the development of Roman Catholicism did not occur overnight. Many of its rules, practices and

dogmas were proclaimed between 1000 and 1500 A.D. Some of the most important came after that, and the latest so far was proclaimed in 1950. Many of the claims of achievement and of saintly personages that the Roman church takes for itself belong to the early faith, which we may rightly claim for our own. We must not forget the meaning of the word, 're-formation'.

A Comparison

There is a late legend (rejected by thinking historians) which turns St Augustine into a man of violence. One historian, John Foster, in '*They Converted Our Ancestors*', wrote of Columba: "Anyone reading Admanan must say, "How his people loved him." (Not a sign of a violent disposition.)" Columba was indeed, a gentle, beloved leader. "Unfortunately," Foster continues, "little of this has come down to us concerning Augustine."

Violent, no; respected, yes; but he did not inspire the *love* of his followers. Yet Augustine won a place, even if often exaggerated, worthy of remembrance in the history of the British Isles, and subsequently as a link with the history of Christendom in the European mainland countries, as we shall see. The text books which place him as being the first to introduce Christianity to the British Isles are wrong. The Scottish/Irish Celtic Church had already begun that spread of the faith in the northern kingdoms. This by no means detracts from the greatness of St Augustine's work and achievements. The textbook assessment of his importance in the history of Great Britain is right.

He deserves his place of honour in the gratitude of Church history.

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articles in
Faith in Focus
can be
obtained by
contacting
the Editor*

Mission in focus

Janice Reid

Hearing the call

by Hayden Bosgra

Hayden Bosgra (22) is a member of the Hamilton Reformed Church. His mission trip with an interdenominational organisation was supported by the session of Hamilton church as well as by the Overseas Mission Board.

"To those who overcome He gives the right to sit at His right hand..."

Grace and peace be upon you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My name is Hayden 'Luis' Bosgra and I am serving the Lord in Cuenca, Ecuador. All up, I will be here for 10 months, working with a national church.

Ecuador is a country situated in the north east of South America, on the equator. (Ecuador is Spanish for 'equator'!) There are roughly thirteen million people living here. The principle religion is Roman Catholic (about 95%). Most people are mestizos, of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent. The capital is Quito. I lived there for 3 months when I had my Spanish lessons. The city I

am living in now, Cuenca, is in the south of Ecuador. There are about 500,000 people in the city. Roman Catholicism is very prominent here: there are 2 cathedrals and about twenty 'churches' in Cuenca alone. These churches are very old, some of them dating back to the 16th century when Cuenca was founded.

Here in Cuenca I have faced some peculiar problems. For example, the church is very important to people, but in general they are reserved when talking about Christianity; they are closed to the message of the gospel. If you ask a Roman Catholic if he is a Christian, he will most likely answer, "Yes!"

However, the Catholicism that was brought over about five hundred years ago is ritualistic and superficial; it has little of true faith in it. Also, it has mixed over the years with many tribal beliefs of the indigenous people. The result is a form of 'hybrid' Roman Catholicism. I have encountered this a lot when talking with my pastoral team and to the people on the streets.

Also, in working with people here, there are plenty of prejudices. When I first visited a fellow missionary in another town, we were talking when a local youth came up and asks me (in perfect English with a Bronx accent) "What ya doin' in my country?" That sums up a lot of people's feelings. The two biggest prejudices that I personally have come across are first, that because I'm white I must be American; and second, that because I'm white and American I must be rich. These

are common assumptions, especially from the people on the streets who ask for money and handouts. How would you handle it? There are people in poverty who need help, but how they got that way can often be hard to discern.

As part of the pastoral team for my church here in Cuenca I am involved with both planning and doing evangelism. There are many ways to witness to people, but here in Cuenca it is challenging because of people's attitudes towards religion.

Cell groups are an important activity of the church. These are usually started by identifying someone who has personally responded positively to the Word, and showing a film in their house. Neighbours are invited, and the pastor or another church member helps to run the group, and to teach/disciple new believers. The idea is to turn this over so that after a while, the new believers will in turn continue the sequence. At this time we have a group run on Friday nights where two youths are being disciplined—Jean Jairo and Ruben Dario. They are going through a series of lessons now about new life in Jesus Christ.

Another means of evangelism that we use here in Cuenca is providing programmes for the community. These may include cooking classes, electronics lessons, or the one I am involved with—teaching English! We have English classes three times a week: the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. During the Thursday night classes we have a Bible study/lesson in English for about 20 minutes. Through these classes I have come



to know about ten people in the community.

The most important programme that we have in the church, however, is prayer! We have a time of prayer together on Saturday mornings from 6:00-8:00a.m. where we pray for the needs of the church and the people involved with it. We also have a time in the morning where we are disciplined, too. I use my own free time as well to pray for the church needs (it is easier for me in English!). Most of my free time here has been in the mornings, and I spend this time building up relationships with people in the neighbourhood—the lady who washes my clothes...the lady in the bakery...the man who runs the internet café...the man who has a corner shop on my street. In these times of talking/witnessing, it is challenging for me as well as a bit humbling because I am not able to express myself as well as I want! But it is certainly by God's strength that we are able to continue.

The fact of God's provision was highlighted to me one morning when I was waiting in town to meet a friend. He didn't come in the end, but as I was waiting I met another guy called 'Charlie'. We began talking and then Charlie invited me into his office for a cup of tea (Cherry and Strawberry!). He started telling me about his work as an ecologist. He was waiting to meet a friend of mine to write a song about conserving the environment. After a few minutes I felt I really should talk to this guy about the Lord, so I asked if he was a Christian.

"Yep!" he said.

I remembered that most Roman Catholics here think they are Christians, so I asked if he was an evangelical Christian. He was one. After that we began to talk on a much deeper level, about his church and problems that youth in general face in today's world. In our conversation he would throw in the big words and I would be struggling to understand them! Talk about a turnaround in my understanding of Spanish from one year back!

So, what challenges have I faced? Language was one of the biggest! Before I came here, I really did take for granted my ability to communicate meaningfully.

Another challenge has been the 'culture shock.' Adjusting to a new culture can be hard. Often I found myself thinking, "Why do they do it like that?"

Also, there are great extremes in my experiences here. Sometimes I've shared great joy with my national brothers and felt a real sense of belonging. Then, not long after, I've experienced loneliness.

Through all of this, the big question is, "Has it been worth it?"

If I was to answer in a worldly way, I would say—no! (Well, maybe the 'free' travel was good, as my friend tells me!) But, looking at things from a spiritual viewpoint, the

blessings God has in store are uncountable. By becoming involved in missions, you will meet committed Christians from other nations; you'll make lifelong friends with other missionaries and nationals; you'll find yourself stretched and tested by God, and as a result your relationship with Him will grow stronger than ever. Mostly I have found this to be a journey of who I am in the Lord.

My friend, the choice is before you now: will you take up the challenge of involvement in missions? One thing I do say to you is that you will never regret doing it!

Your brother in Christ,
Hayden Bosgra

Why go on a short-term mission?

by **Craig van Echten**

In 2004, Craig van Echten from Foxton congregation went to Papua New Guinea. He spent two weeks there helping the Hagoorts, and doing construction work for the Mapang Missionary home and the Reformed Church that meets at 9 Mile, in Port Moresby. Here is the second of two reports that Craig wrote for Missions in Focus....

If you're considering a holiday, why not consider doing short-term mission trip? I went for two weeks to Papua New Guinea and had an enjoyable time staying with the Hagoorts.

A short-term mission is something you do by yourself and pay for yourself. But it opens many doors of experience and growth. By staying with the Hagoorts I was able to live like a missionary and experience firsthand what things are like. I was able to learn so much more about the country than I would have by just visiting and staying in a motel. Staying with the Hagoorts at the Mapang missionary home also put me into contact with many other missionaries from around PNG. I was able to listen to their interesting stories and experiences in PNG.

Through the Hagoorts I was able to arrange to stay a night in one of the settlements. It was a good experience to live in a large hut situated on poles above the

water. Through the cracks in the floor I could see the water. But even this place had a few luxuries for PNG. There was power (even though it went off for an hour) and there was a toilet (even though it had to be flushed using a bucket of water). The people I stayed with showed me around their local area including the market, and again I learnt a lot.

Visiting PNG opens your eyes to what a 'third world country' is like. You can see how people live, and understand so much more clearly how God has blessed us in N.Z.. However, it also highlights how greedy we've become in western society: we are always wanting so much more than the basics. God says in 1 Tim 6:8, "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." Certainly most people in PNG would be 'over the moon' if they had an adequate supply of food and clothing, not to mention shelter. So it's good to go to a country like PNG: it helps you to realise how much culture can affect your behaviour and how you can easily get 'sucked in' to the western way of gathering up possessions on earth and not treasures in Heaven.

And of course, being a short-term missions trip meant I had to do some work while I was there. This involved building a small playground at the Mapang missionary home so that the children would have something to play on. It was good to finish that after a good week's work. But the Lord's work did not finish there, because through my experiences in PNG I am now able to communicate to the churches how the missionaries are doing and how God's people are progressing in that country. When you do a short-term missions trip, the information you bring back can be of immense value to the church. And if you go to a place like PNG it makes for a good conversation starter—and gives you a few more opportunities to witness to non-Christians!

MIF prayer notes

Walter and Jeannette Hagoort in Papua New Guinea ask for our prayers for the people of East Boroko. The Hagoorts are involved with teaching this group the basics of the Christian faith and Christian life.

Rev. Barry and Mrs Anne James are grateful for our continuing prayers for themselves and their ministry at the seminary run by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda. Please pray also for students of the seminary: for clear understanding of the Word of Life, as they learn things that they will in future teach other members of their churches.

Janice Reid asks for prayer for the growth of the Church in Cambodia. There is a real need for spiritual leadership, and yet few national Christians have the maturity or the understanding of God's Word to lead the Church into the future. Please pray for clear and biblical teaching on the part of those who seek to remedy this situation. Pray also

for effective outreach by radio, as FEBC and New Life stations broadcast in the Phnom Penh area, and other ministries buy airtime on local stations in the province.

Please pray for our short-term missionaries. **Hayden Bosgra** will leave Ecuador next month, and needs our prayers as he finishes

his work in Cuenca and says goodbye to friends. Leaving is a hard transition.

A feminine focus

The feminine virtue of discretion

Sally Davey

Have you ever been terribly embarrassed at something you've said or done, something tactless or untimely, the kind of thing to send you or others present scurrying for the nearest hole in the ground, covered with shame? I know only too well how it feels. It's called indiscretion, and it's truly awful. We can get ourselves—and others (which is even worse)—into a lot of trouble with our indiscretion. People have lost jobs, lost elections, or even lost their lives because of indiscretion. Remember those posters that used to be displayed in time of war, sometimes depicting men in uniform chatting with attractive, flirtatious young women? "Walls have ears" and "Loose lips sink ships," they warned. The idea was that reckless talk could put military information into enemy hands. Yes, definitely. Such heedlessness can have horrific results. James was not wrong when he marvelled at "*how great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!*" The tongue, you see, may ignite "*the entire course of life.*" (James 3:5-6)

Defining discretion

But having introduced the subject of *indiscretion* through its consequences, it is necessary to explore the meaning of discretion itself. It's not just that the lack of it is horrible—the possession of it is wonderful. It is a virtue, a part of Christian character, and those who have it are worthy

friends indeed. Why especially? Because discreet people are, above all, *wise*. They are discerning, they have good judgement, they are prudent. They know when to say things and where to do things—and when not. Thus Joseph, interpreting Pharaoh's dream, advised him to "*look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.*" (Genesis 41:33). Proverbs 1, that chapter introducing the subject of wisdom, teaches that it will "*give... to the youth knowledge and discretion.*" (Proverbs 1:4). Proverbs 3:21 reminds youth to "*keep sound wisdom and discretion.*" Wise people, discreet people, can be trusted with big responsibilities. They won't let others down by foolish behaviour or careless speech, and they display the sort of judgement that can be depended on, especially in time of trial.

Discretion also involves a sense of what is right and fitting, particularly with regard to the way we conduct ourselves. This includes civility and courtesy, and observing the manners which are "common custom" in our culture. Now, this is obviously not as clear as it used to be: we have become a diverse society, and it seldom seems a straightforward matter to decide what one should or shouldn't do in any given situation. What my mother taught me is doubtless different from what your mother taught you; not to mention different from the majority in our country who had no Christian upbringing at all, or who were "dragged up rather than brought up" as the saying goes. Despite all the politically correct rhetoric to the contrary, though, there is something to be said for relatively homogenous societies where people share common norms about morality, manners and what to do when and how. It is easier to be discreet when everyone around you shares the same ideas about what discretion is.

The aspect of carefulness

There is a third idea related to discretion, and that is caution, or carefulness. Melody Green (wife of Keith), who wrote a booklet on modesty, also defined discretion, which is closely related. In addition to lacking in pretentiousness or ostentation, and showing

good judgement, Melody believes discretion involves being "prudent; cautious; careful about what one says or does." John MacArthur agrees: "Discreetly refers to self-control, especially over sexual passions." Interestingly, *Roget's Thesaurus*, that invaluable guide to the use of words, includes discretion in the "caution" group of meanings (No. 864 if you are interested), which also includes self-possession, a well-regulated mind, thinking twice, keeping at a respectful distance and so on. In other words, a discreet person does not leap in without thinking what she should do first. She looks, you could say, before she leaps. She does not speak before considering her words—and most likely, her words are not excessive in number. Her words are well-chosen and edifying, and she knows when to stop. Proverbs 10:19: "*When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.*" Paul and I once had a very enthusiastic and (I thought) quite lovable sheep dog named Ned. When told to get up on the deck of the truck he would charge at it, flinging himself so fast that he could seldom put his brakes on quickly enough before he was skidding off the other side! But he lacked discretion—he had far too much to say for himself and barked continually—which didn't amuse Paul when he was trying to muster sheep. "Well," I once commented, "Ned has no unspoken thoughts." "No," his frustrated owner answered, "but he has an awful lot of spoken non-thoughts." Dare I say it? Neds exist in human form, too...

A theme in the 19th century

Discretion, unsurprisingly, was a regular theme of nineteenth-century writers. The discreet woman was desirable—the sort of woman who, a man could rightly expect, would do him "*good, and not harm, all the days of her life.*" (Proverbs 31:12). Many writers described such women as their heroines. But one could search a long time before one found a better illustration of the importance of discretion than Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. It is almost the perfect picture of where indiscretion can lead. It is

witty and humorous, but there are some very serious lessons to be gained. In what follows, I want to refer at length to this depiction, so if you're unfamiliar with the story, could I suggest you borrow the 1994 BBC mini-series from your local video library and treat yourself to a viewing? Alison Steadman does such a brilliant job of portraying Mrs Bennet that you will see it straight away.

The story is about a family of five girls of marriageable age, and their mother's over-enthusiastic efforts to see them disposed of to rich and eligible young men. Half-way through the drama the main character, Elizabeth (the second daughter), receives a letter from Mr Darcy. Darcy, the richest and most eligible man in the book, is totally smitten by her intelligence, wit and character. He has just proposed to her, and she, considering him proud and disagreeable, has rejected him outright—to his utter astonishment. In this letter, Darcy attempts to explain many things about his background and recent experience that cause him to appear—somewhat wrongly as it proves—so proud and disagreeable. He also explains why he has made considerable efforts to discourage his good friend Bingley from marrying Elizabeth's older sister, Jane. The nub of it is the lack of propriety (discretion) of her mother and younger sisters. Mrs Bennet had long been in the habit of talking incessantly about the beauty and prospects of her girls—often in front of them—to prospective suitors. She simpered, she boasted, she gushed on and on—at the most inopportune moments—when it caused pain to both her sensible older girls, and to the respectable young men they learned to love. Her loud speeches were overhead at public assemblies. It really was excruciating! Anyway, Mr Darcy's letter alluded to all this, and to the mad-cap, unrestrained behaviour of the two youngest girls at a large ball, who were chasing officers around the room in a rather shameless, flirtatious way. Elizabeth was angry at the offensive way Mr Darcy had referred to her family and connections in his proposal but on reading his explanation, her feelings began to change: "*When she came to the part of the letter, in which her family were mentioned in terms of such mortifying, yet merited reproach, her sense of shame was severe... and as she considered that Jane's disappointment had in fact been the work of her nearest relations, and reflected how materially the credit of both [her and Jane] must be hurt by such impropriety of conduct, she felt depressed beyond anything she had ever known before.*"

Almost none of her family, in fact, had consistently behaved in a way that showed discretion. They had violated many of the norms of good behaviour both publicly and privately. They had been foolish, careless, ill-mannered and incautious. They had

embarrassed both Jane and Elizabeth and, it seemed, ruined the possibility that good, honourable gentlemen would want to marry them and thereby attach themselves to their relatives. Indiscretion in her family had cost them heavily. Even her father, who had almost from the earliest days of his marriage recognized Mrs Bennet's follies, had resigned himself to them, feeling himself partially compensated by the amusement they gave him. He had done little to help her; he merely laughed at her. Elizabeth, Jane Austen writes, "*had never been blind to the impropriety of her father's behaviour as a husband. She had always seen it with pain; but respecting his abilities, and grateful for his affectionate treatment of herself, she endeavoured to forget what she could not overlook, and to banish from her thoughts that continual breach of conjugal obligation and decorum which, in exposing his wife to the contempt of her own children, was so highly reprehensible.*" She realised that her father had failed both his wife and his daughters: he could have used his considerable wisdom, knowledge and discretion to cultivate these same qualities in his wife, and to bring up his younger daughters more judiciously. Mr Bennet himself comes to acknowledge this after Lydia, the youngest girl, heedlessly elopes with George Wickham, an unprincipled scoundrel. As Jane Austen tells us later, she spends the rest of her days regretting her foolish indiscretion in an unhappy marriage to a worthless man.

A suitable conclusion

I am impressed by the way Andrew Davies, the screen-writer of the BBC mini-series, chose to conclude the story of *Pride and Prejudice*. It ends with the double wedding of Jane and Elizabeth; and while the clergyman is reading the preamble to the wedding service from the *Book of Common Prayer*, examples of indiscretions concerning marriage on the part of a number of characters in the story appear on the screen. The words being read, however, say it all: Marriage is not to be rushed into foolishly, "*it is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisably, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy man's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained...*" It is a fitting way to end a story about discretion.

Illustrating biblical ideas

Pride and Prejudice is certainly amusing, but Jane Austen has also made some serious reflections on human character and behaviour. She has illustrated what are, originally, biblical ideas. And nineteenth-



century people certainly respected them. But how do we score today, in terms of discretion? It's a little hard to answer that question, actually, for the reason I gave earlier: postmodern relativism has muddied the waters about "the way things should be done." How you want to behave is up to you: my ideas of what are good manners, the way to speak, dress, eat, show disapproval, apologise, conduct a courtship, etc. are entirely mine. There is no common understanding any more, it seems, of what one should do or how one should behave in given situations.

However, there is every reason to expect more from Christ's ambassadors. The Bible is not silent on these matters. Solomon, the king to whom God gave "*wisdom and understanding beyond measure*" (1 Kings 4:29), once wrote that "*the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. For there is a time and a way for everything, although man's trouble lies heavy on him.*" (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6). After making allowance for some (slight) differences between cultural traditions, we ought to be able to agree on some of the important ways to be discreet. After all, the underlying foundation of all good, gracious, discreet behaviour is Christian consideration—or love, really—for our neighbours. We can see this most especially in the standards of discretion in those cultures that have been most influenced by the gospel. I can think of a few examples of little "rules of behaviour" handed down to me by my parents (and shared by friends brought up with the same principles) that illustrate discreet behaviour.

"Don't point at people", "don't stare at people", "use a person's name—don't just call them 'he' or 'she'", and so on. The reason? No one likes being on the receiving end of pointing, staring or references to "she" or "her". The same applies to table manners: it's not very nice to sit across the table from someone who burps, slurps, and chomps with their mouth open, or next to someone who reaches their arm right across in front of you to grab something. As my grandfather said to me most memorably on one occasion, "My dear, eating is a disgusting habit—table manners make it bearable." He's right!

Most uncertainties in the Christian life are resolved by going back to basic biblical principles, and the question of how to be discreet is no exception. If we return to our original definition, which began with wisdom, it is not hard to see why. Those who are steeped in biblical wisdom cannot help knowing how to be discreet. Consider the book of Proverbs, which is all about wisdom. Not only does Chapter 1 tell us that it begins with the fear of the Lord, but subsequent chapters give us all sorts of practical application in everyday life for the specifics of how to be wise. These include keeping short accounts with our neighbour (6:1-5), avoiding various kinds of deceit (6:16-19), guarding your mouth (12:18, 13:3), being cautious (14:16), using gentle, as opposed to harsh speech (15:1,4), listening to worthwhile instruction (14:5), and so on. Beginning with this sort of wise common-sense approach, it is not difficult to decide how we should speak or act in almost any given situation.

The roots of indiscretion

But why do we do stupid, thoughtless, embarrassing, unkind—indiscreet—things so often? This question occurred to me almost as soon as I started thinking about the subject of discretion, and I can identify a number of possible reasons (all of them rooted in sin, of course). The first is simply a lack of the kind of wisdom that tells us how to be discreet. And we lack this because we haven't made the effort to learn it. We haven't studied the Scriptures, we haven't listened to our parents when they've tried to teach us, we haven't observed wise people carefully, we haven't asked others for their wisdom, and so on. The second is thoughtlessness. We may be reckless or impetuous by nature, rushing in enthusiastically to say or do something without considering how we should do it. Impulsiveness can be warm and affectionate, but it can also land us, and other people, in an awful lot of trouble! There is enough warning in the Scriptures about the need for caution in both speech and action to convince the most reckless of us. Thirdly,

we sometimes get carried away, at least in our speech, by a desire to be witty or funny. (This is usually how I end up committing my verbal indiscretions, anyway). It's wrong, because it stems from a desire to please man—to look good because of our wit—and so often it ends up in a betrayal of confidences, saying something in a place or to a person to whom it should never be said, and so on. It is painful to remember such occasions. And there is, I think, a fourth reason—rebelliousness. This is when we simply don't care about conventions of good behaviour, and try to convince ourselves that by flouting them, we have somehow scored a victory for our own independence. Oh dear! While that may be a very common response (especially on the part of younger people), it is not smart, or godly. It is really a kind of pig-headed and short-sighted refusal to listen to wisdom that has been tried and found worthy—plenty of times before! I'm afraid the Bible calls it foolish (Proverbs 12:15) and proud (1 Timothy 6:4).

Best learned by passing on

But to return to my earlier theme: discretion, it seems to me, is something that is best learned and refined by being taught; by being passed on, from generation to generation in the form of good manners, of Christian civility, or godly politeness and respect. It's a kind of Deuteronomy 6:7 process, talking about what we do and why we do it with our young people, as we go through our lives, from day to day. This is the sort of thing Paul had in mind when he was writing instructions to Titus as to the way older women should teach younger women Christian behaviour. I'm referring here particularly to Titus 2:5. At the very beginning of a list of godly qualities older women should be passing on is a word that is variously translated: in the King James Version it is "*discreet*"; in the New American Standard "*sensible*," and in the English Standard Version "*self-controlled*." Clearly, what Paul is suggesting are wise, decent, careful standards of behaviour. This quality seems a priority: it comes first in the list that goes on to include pure, domestic, kind and submissive. So why not consider how we may all teach—and learn—the practical ways of living lives of discretion? Are we mothers giving our daughters good counsel on how to behave in this or that situation? How to visit sick people and give comfort; how to behave at weddings and other important parties; how to respond to the overtures of young men; how to greet and look after guests in our homes; how to conduct oneself during worship; how to resolve a disagreement with a friend; how to live, in short, as discreet Christian women. But perhaps we have women in our midst that never benefited from such training? Could we plan ways to teach

these things in our churches, either informally through friendship, or formally, in some kind of group activity? Given the confusion about these things that now reigns in our society, we may need to take more decisive action. Any ideas?...

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Regarding a gleaning

Dear brother in Christ,

We just received the first issue of 'Faith in Focus' for this year.

Thank you for the work and effort in putting it together, and, yes, we need to take to heart what you write in your editorial, it is both an unspeakably great privilege and responsibility to live and be known as God's children.

Taking up on that I wonder how fitting some items in "Gleanings in Focus" are. My wife and I were saddened by what was written for the Palmerston North church, really a sick joke in bad taste! Compare this with what Br. Ralph Adams writes and the difference is obvious. We are meant to glorify God and to edify one another and our 'Faith in Focus' magazine can support us in this.

Well, brother, I pray for you and rejoice with you in God's love to us in Christ whom to know is life eternal.

In His love,
Albert Reitsma, Opiki.

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Disposable Friends

Read: John 15:13-15

Clarissa carried a handful of cookies and a glass of milk into the laundry room where Mum was folding some washing.

"Mum, can I call Amber and invite her over?"

Mum added a towel to the stack on the dryer. "Who is Amber?" she asked.

"She's my new friend." Clarissa dunked a cookie into her milk.

"I suppose you want to call Jolene, too," said Mum.

Clarissa shook her head. "No. We had a fight. Anyway, Amber is much more popular."

"Oh?" Mum frowned slightly as she handed Clarissa a stack of towels. "Take these to the guest bathroom, please," said Mum.

As Clarissa set her milk on the dryer, Mum asked, "Are Stacy and Madison still your friends?"

Clarissa shrugged. "Not really. They're . . . well . . . Amber's more fun." As she turned to leave, she bumped the glass of milk. "May I . . . oops!" Milk poured down the side of the dryer. "Sorry!" Clarissa set the stack of towels down and picked up the one on top.

"Don't use that clean towel!" exclaimed Mum. She quickly pulled paper towels from the roll on the wall. "Here! Use these!"

Clarissa sopped up the milk, and then threw the paper towels into the trash. Mum watched thoughtfully. "Paper towels are pretty handy. Just use them and toss them." Clarissa shrugged. "That's what's good about them."

"Yes, but unlike paper towels, friends should not be disposable,"

said Mum. "Friends are valuable, but you've been treating them like paper towels. You seem to want to use them, and then throw them away." She pointed to a lovely yellow towel on top of the stack. "When a friendship gets smudged, clean it. You need more than one friend, just like our family needs more than one towel."

Clarissa held the stack of clean-smelling, fluffy towels to her cheek. She smiled. "Can I call Amber, Jolene, Stacy and Madison and invite them all over?"

"All of them?!" Mom laughed. "Why not. The more the merrier."

How About You?

Do you value your friends? Are you willing to spend time repairing and maintaining friendships? The greatest friend we will ever have is the friend who died on the cross for our sins, Jesus. That is a friendship which must never be disposable.

Write in the word that fits the definition. Write the letters on the lines below. Find important words of Jesus.

Season after spring 1 2 3 4 5 6

Outer garment to keep warm 7 8 9 10

Small mountain 11 12 13 14

Enclosed, "truck-type" vehicle 15 16 17

Opposite of night 18 19 20

10 11 12 1 12 1 2 20

7 8 3 4 9 17 18 4 5 17 19 10 11 9 10

20 8 2 13 8 15 6 8 17 5

9 17 8 13 11 5 6 3 1 12

11 9 15 5 19 8 15 5 16 20 8 2

—John 15:12

Jesus gave a command for us all.

Fill the answer to each math problem. Use the alphabet code to fill the blanks.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
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

10+10 4+4 6+3 10+9

11-2 21-0 7+6 12+13

6-3 17-2 16-3 11+2 4-3 7+7 2+2

6+6 8+7 11+11 10-5

11-0 6-5 10-7 15+3

10-5 10+10 1+7 8-3 9+9

Talking about holocausts

A week in this world

John Rogers

Well, it has certainly been a week for hypocrisy. The world has been remembering Auschwitz; and well we might. I read very little and watch almost no TV programmes or films about the Holocaust these days – have not done so for years. From reading in my younger years I know what went on. It is enough. It is true, we must not forget, else we will, as is said about all forgotten history, repeat it. But I cannot wallow in misery or violence and horror. It is too much for much me. Besides, having dealt with sin and misery as much as I understand God calls me to do, my duty is to rejoice in the Lord and “dwell on whatsoever is true, honourable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent and worthy of praise” (Philippians 4). “Let your mind dwell on these things ... and the peace of God shall be with you.” And I, and the Jewish people and the whole world, need peace. But peace is the fruit of righteousness as Isaiah 32:17 says so clearly: “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”

I do not mind that the remembrances were held. It is appropriate. Perhaps even necessary. And while I do not want to dwell on it, and do not think it wise to dwell on it, it must be taught, as all history and the lessons of history, must be taught to each rising generation. But it is the sheer hypocrisy that is so galling. For, for all our

determination never to forget and our loud assertions, “Never again!” it has not stopped. And I am not referring to Bosnia or Rwanda or Cambodia. I am referring to us victor nations of the West and our then ally, the USSR. There is something, to us, so in the face, so bald, so open and gross about the Holocaust that it appals us. But according to one student of the Holocaust on the National Programme this week, it wasn’t like that at all. He said that Auschwitz and the gas chambers actually developed because the Nazis found it too traumatic to kill women and children in cold blood with machine guns. So they turned to technology. I heard once of a newly pregnant woman who went to see her doctor about an abortion. He looked at her eighteen month old whom she had had to take to the surgery with her and said, “Well, why don’t we just kill him. It would be a lot easier and less dangerous for you.” The woman was horrified. But why? In principle, what was the difference between that and what she was asking for? The essential difference was technology and the distance technology places between us and our actions. One is under anaesthesia; it is all out of sight in the womb; we use depersonalising language (foetal tissue). But what we are doing is precisely the same and the horror for the child is precisely the same - dismemberment with a vacuum cleaner; the burning of saline solution (if it’s still used today; and public concern is expressed this week about children ending up in hospital

through accidental burning caused by ingestion of dishwashing powder); or, in the US at least, however the child dies/is put to death in a partial birth abortion as it is held back in the womb when it wants to come out into the light and life of day. Some light!

We have not learned a single thing. “Auschwitz was the greatest mass murder in history,” said this student on the National Programme. It was very great and very horrendous. But even with the total six million, it doesn’t match the abortion holocaust that has gone on since that war and continues. New Zealand kills around 18,500 per year; the average woman in Russia has two abortions for every live birth; 40 million children have been aborted in the last 30 years in North America alone. China? India? England and Europe?

“The heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things,” says Jeremiah, “who can know it?” None of us, without the light of God shone into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Certainly not this generation that is almost obsessed by a great, very obvious crime in the past and refuses to look at its own heart; that in gross stubbornness absolutely refuses to see that it is hiding enormous criminality under the cover of the white coat in the antiseptic operating theatre. And it will continue “until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high” (Isaiah 32:15). We have work to do brothers and sisters, work on our knees first of all.

