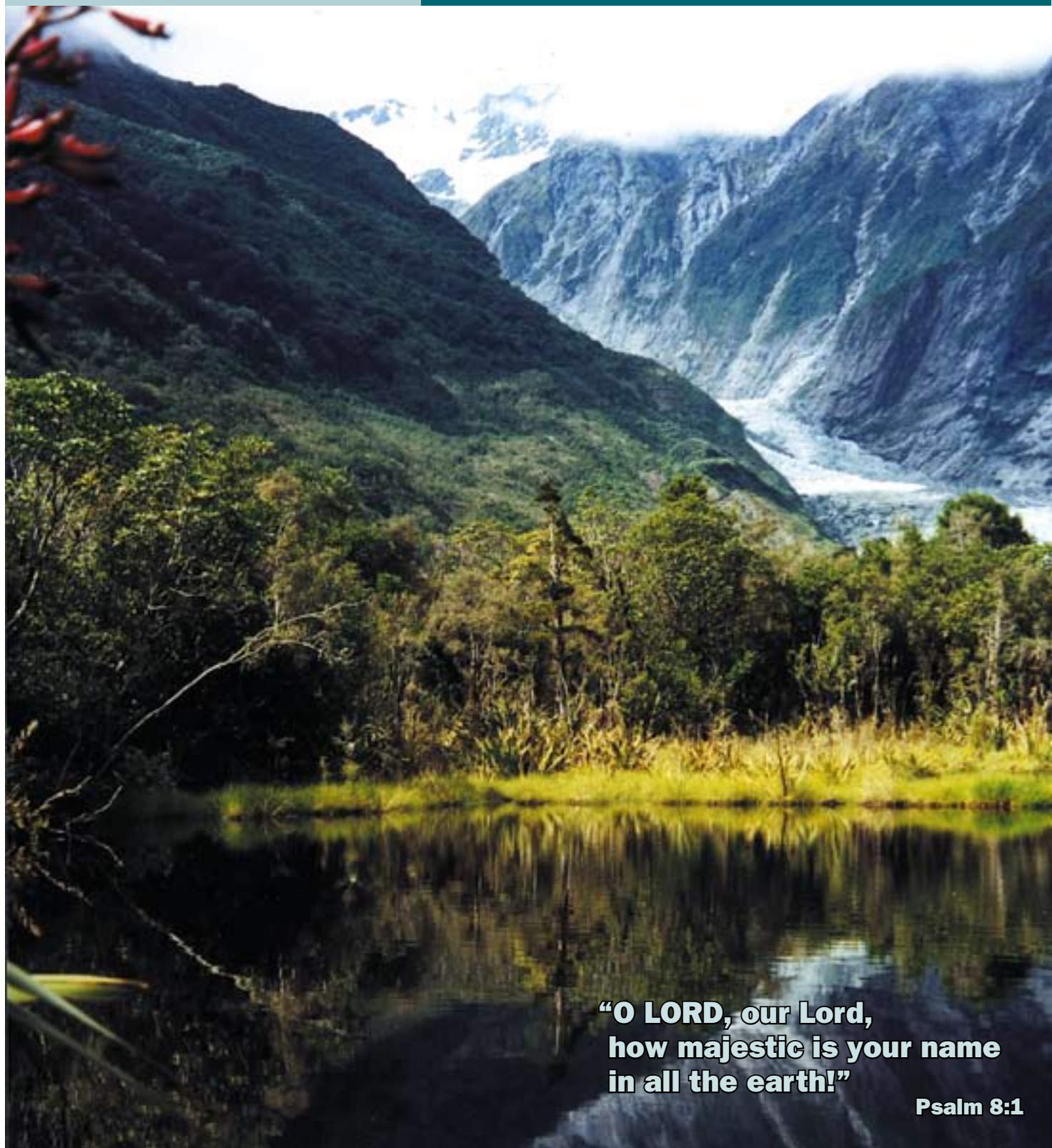


# faith in **focus**

Magazine of the  
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of New Zealand

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**“O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name  
in all the earth!”**

**Psalm 8:1**

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All correspondence regarding editorial content and advertising should be sent to:

**The Editor:**

Sjirk Bajema  
17 Phoenix Place, Papatoetoe,  
Auckland.  
Ph/Fax: +64 9 277 9360  
Email: thirty@paradise.net.nz  
Reformed Churches Home Page  
<http://www.rcnz.org.nz>

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**Editorial**

The news about Bruce Logan late last year was no surprise. In fact, I'm surprised we haven't had such 'revelations' earlier from such a source as the Rationalists and Whatever League.

What was the news? It was reported that Mr Logan, a Director of the Maxim Institute, plagiarised a paragraph from one of Margaret Thatcher's speech writers and from an American conservative leader. It seems that after an extensive trawl through the internet this was what was found. Now if it had been the large part of his work being directly copied we ought to be concerned. But we're talking about a few sentences out of a huge volume of writing and speaking that Mr Logan has done over many years. It's not like he signed a painting as his!

I was reminded of what an elder said to me, "If you don't work you don't make mistakes." So Mr Logan has been working. And working very hard, too. That he's a Christian writer having a serious impact in the New Zealand media has attracted some pagan who seemed determined to prove a point. As another saying goes, "If you want to beat a dog, you'll always find a stick!"

This incident simply proves the point of Bruce's argument all along. When it gets down to this gutter sniping, which the media is of course more than happy to run with, we are far from a civil society.

Well, I pray that you might make many mistakes this year. Not because you aren't careful with what you do - like Bruce Logan said, we can all do better - but because you are very busy in the Lord's work.

You may notice the difference with our cover. It's in colour. And it doesn't cost us any extra! Apparently the digital age and new machinery enable this. The picture is of Franz Josef Glacier as seen at Peter's Pool (thus the reflection).

*"The way of the guilty is devious,  
but the conduct of the innocent is upright."*

**Proverbs 21:8**

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 Dort, 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.

# To save his soul from death

## A stern tenderness

**Berwyn Hoyt**

*I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him ...*

- 2 Samuel 7:14ff

We've all seen a child giving the stereotypical supermarket tantrum: child hitting his mother screaming "but I want one now!" By contrast, every parent envies the mother who can quietly say, "I'll give you some raisins when we get home" and have the statement accepted meekly – or even with anticipation! What is the secret? How can we teach self-control as a godly trait from an early age?

First let us recognise that our culture's norms do not contain the answer. We live in a society where everyone's aim in life is pleasure, the one great evil is disciplined

restraint. How may we respond as Christians living in New Zealand? One place to start is to discipline our own children according to the Word of the Lord. Right now, our society is moving away from parental discipline to governmental discipline. Recent billboards have aptly labelled this "Nanny State".

In the face of various legislation trying to take away the parent's right to raise their children, let us review how the Lord wants us to raise our children, particularly in the area of discipline. We can do this in two steps.

- Section 1: We will observe how the Lord disciplines his own beloved children.
- Section 2: We can apply this in practice today with a look at Scripture and some good parental examples.

### Section 1: The Lord Disciplines His People

Our children are a rich blessing from the Lord – a blessing spanning generations.

Psalms 127 calls them a "heritage from the Lord." Yet, while they are a gift from the Lord, they are only given in trust. Just as we do not even own ourselves, so we do not own our children. They belong to God and, with us, they are his special people called to be his own.

Deuteronomy 6 makes it clear that God's ownership of his people spans the generations, "that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long."

Because God owns our children for their good, we must take our cue from the Lord as to how to deal with his people, our children. First of all, we can learn something about human nature and sinful rebellion from how the Lord disciplines his people. Two principles of discipline truly stand out in Scripture:

- the Lord disciplines his people severely:



stopping at nothing to break their pride.

- the Lord disciplines his people tenderly: pleading as he goes, for their humble obedience.

Two main passages of Scripture will clarify this in both Old and New Testaments: Lev 26 and Heb 12. I know that nobody ever opens their Bibles when reading an article, but open yours anyway as we study these passages. As you read, notice the applications this might have for us in dealing with our children: both the lengths the Lord will go to in order to humble his people, and his tender reasons for discipline. Here I will

**and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins."**

**"If then their uncircumcised heart is humbled** and they make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob ... Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, **I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God.** But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD."



emphasise and heavily summarise: Leviticus 26 says:

You shall not make idols, but shall reverence my holy day and sanctuary. If you obey my commandments, I will bless you richly. Very richly. All that you do will prosper. Moreover, "I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people." (v1-13)

But if you do not obey, spurning my statutes, I will do this to you: visit you with panic, disease, fever, and plundering enemies. **"And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, and I will break the pride of your power,** and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze."

Wild beasts will attack you and your roads will be deserted. "And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, then I also will walk contrary to you,

In the text above, obedience receives the Lord's blessing and his presence. Rebellion receives pain. Then he repeats this four times in increasing degrees of severity (I missed out two). Each time he repeats the phrase about "sevenfold discipline for your sins".

God promises four times to counter rebellion with pain until his son Jacob is a cowering wreck. But notice both the Lord's severity and his motivation. If at any point Jacob is humbled, then finally, when all is said and done, God is still their covenant God who saves them from slavery to sin. Staggering. It might almost be termed the Lord's desperation: he is that intent on humbling his people so that he can love them. Also note God's persistence: he is just not going to give up on them. This gives us a true perspective on discipline. For our own children we must learn what could be

called this tender severity. It is not a severity devoid of love, but a severity *born out of love*. Deep love.

But, you say, should we also deal out death and starvation as God does? No, that would be to misunderstand the text. Very briefly, the key to applying this passage is that the Lord is dealing with (as it were) a single person, "Jacob", whom he prunes precisely *in order to preserve* his life to perfection. We too must discipline in order to restore.

But although discipline is to restore, not to obliterate, we must not be too hasty to become slack. Remember that the end result of *undisciplined* rebellion is death (Prov 23:13; Dt 21:18-21). This leaves us responsible to nip rebellion in the bud – may God help us – before death becomes the natural result.

Hebrews 12:

Lest we think the Lord's idea of discipline is only an Old Testament legacy, Hebrews says the same things. God has just listed some terrible tortures experienced by his people, and then in chapter 12 he tells us the purpose: to perfect their faith.

12:1ff: Let us also throw off sin, and in faith of our own, look "to Jesus, the founder and *perfecter* of our faith.

"In *your* struggle against sin you have *not* yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood [by contrast with the men of faith above]. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and **chastises** [literally **whips**] every son whom he receives.'

"It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, *but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.* For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit

of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Notice how the author to the Hebrews quotes the Proverbs to show that God disciplines his people like a father disciplines his son. Then he says that children who are not disciplined are not unloved – they are not true sons! Neither is God talking about some kind of easy-going discipline. He even refers back them to those parts of the church which have shed blood to achieve perfection!

Once again at the end of the quote, he spells out for us the reason for the painful discipline. All this is for the tender purpose of perfection, peace and righteousness: “For our good, that we may share his holiness.”

**Humility**

My own experience of the Lord’s discipline is no different. Hardship brings humility. We reach the end of our own strength, and have at last to fall back on His goodness. And he is always good – once we have submitted to his will. “The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.” (Lamentations 3:25)

The other possible outcome of the Lord’s discipline is hardness of heart, as when God plagued Pharaoh. It is the kind of hardness that occurs in those whom the Lord does not love, and whose hearts he does not soften. This ‘discipline’ ends in eternal death. Now, you say, is this what we might get from the discipline of our children? Shouldn’t God guarantee his softening work on our children?

But before we blame the sufficiency of God’s work, let us look to our own work. Hardness of heart is what comes of a pride that is not used to being broken. If we do teach humility to our children, they will indeed develop the pride of which God says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

It is my own experience at the hand of my parents that a little hardship is good for the humility. There are times when I recall my attitude to my parents as plainly stubborn and rebellious. That attitude took a miraculous turn once that well-known board of correction had been applied to my seat of knowledge.

People of God, the Lord knows what is the best way for us to deal with our children. And, praise his name, he has told us what it is! Let us not proudly ignore him.

So may we not be soft, but in tender love throughout, may we be driven to the severity that is required to rescue our children. As for the practical, God has given us plenty of advice on how to discipline, but I will deal with some of that in section two.

**Section 2: Discipline of Children in Practice**

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from death.

- Proverbs 23:13,14

Discipline by example is a powerful thing. In this section the example of well-known and wise parents will serve us a very practical base. I will draw together wisdom from three sets of parents.

My parental examples are Tedd Tripp who authored *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* and my own parents, Bruce and Lois Hoyt, all of whom the Lord has richly blessed with wisdom and experience in this area. Some of this is merely advice from experience. Don’t take it all as ‘gospel’, but weigh it yourself and apply it as well as you can.

Discipline is a very broad thing. It includes both:

- verbal and physical love (hugs, holds & good-night kisses).
- verbal and physical correction.

**But the big picture is love** which must permeate the correction. The correction is just momentary and directive – like punctuation in the grand sentence of love. Discipline in its broader sense encompasses all of this (Deut 6:5ff, sidebar). This article will deal primarily with that small element of physical correction, but within the context of the grand picture of love.

This context of love is founded in the quality of the parents’ marriage. The child responds to the care and respect that parents have for each other, and is secure in their loving marriage. By observation, marriages where there is love and respect are also those where children are secure, and where discipline is most effective. My father has a maxim, “The best thing you can do for your children is to love their mother (or father).”

But while love is the constant background, this is not primarily an article about love. It is about practical elements of cor-

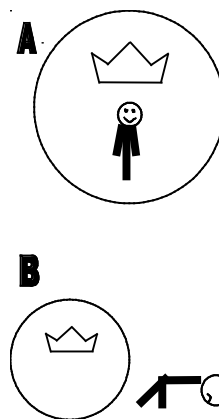
rective discipline. Not much good advice is available from our society in this practical area – partly because our society prefers to avoid restraint and discipline completely. If this article seems hard to you, remember that is because we are talking about the hard part – unglamorous, but necessary: the punctuation of the sentence.

There are many different kinds of good discipline including the giving of privileges, removal of privileges, encouragement, reproof, and physical correction. All of these are necessary and useful. However, in view of topical trends, it is worth giving primary attention here to physical correction.

In Part 1 we looked at the Lord’s severe but tender discipline of his own children. Now we will apply this in concrete terms. In a kind of reference style, I hope to answer the Why, What, and How...

**Reference Section**

1. **Why** discipline? *To restore* the child to the circle of blessing – to obedient humility. (Lev 26:44ff) Tedd Tripp in his excellent book *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* gives a simple graphical tool similar to these, which we can draw for our children to re-inforce the loving message of discipline. Figure A is a happy child inside the circle of blessing, under the crown of God. Figure B is a sad, cowering child not living under God’s blessing. The purpose of discipline is to move our children back into the circle of blessing.



2. **What** to discipline? Plain and simple: *rebellion*; whether in action, speech, or body-language. We saw this in the way God deals with his son Jacob. Discipline was promised only for continued rebellion. The strength of this approach is that it focuses on the child’s motive, not

his action. The severity of discipline is proportional to the rebellion of the child's attitude, not to your grief over the broken vase. You need to find out why the child offended before you discipline. It may help to observe the child's face. A veteran teacher once told me that a rebellious child's heart is often written plainly on his face. The most common evidence of rebellion is *disobedience*. Tedd Tripp says to require obedience without *challenge*, without *excuse*, and without *delay*.

3. **How often** use physical discipline? Whatever you think the child needs – depending on the state of his heart. Prov 13:24 simply says “*diligently*”.

- My father used the maxim “If you smack in love, you cannot smack too much.” Most of my parents’ boys were very hard of heart, and at certain stages would receive multiple smacks in one day. Being softer, the girls rightly got off much lighter. Some children may respond very well to rebuke and seldom require a smack at all.
- Because you hate to cause pain, it can be a temptation to become a nag in your smacking by frequently using painless little “stop that” reactionary smacks. That merely addresses behaviour, not attitude, and because it is quite controlling, it can be exasperat-

ing for your children. The greater pain of estrangement can result. You have not left them enough space to decide on obedience themselves, and you may dull them to proper discipline. A harder smack less often, with proper communication, can address the attitude of the heart (and, consequently, the behaviour).

- You do not always have to discipline every sin if there are more important lessons being learned. Thankfully, the Lord does not rigidly discipline us for every sin that we do – he restores and sanctifies us bit by bit. It is better not to address an issue until you are ready to see it out to the end.

## Biblical snapshot on physical correction

### The grand purpose of discipline:

Deut 6:5ff You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

### Justice and wisdom:

Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

### Motivation for discipline:

2 Sam 7ff I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

Prov 23:13,14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from death.

Prov 19:18 Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.

Prov 19:18 (AV) Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

### How often:

Prov 13:24 Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

### Originally sinful:

Prov 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Prov 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

### Probably for men or older teens:

Prov 10:13 On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.

Prov 20:30 Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts.

4. **How** to use physical discipline? Heb 12:11 plainly says to use pain; the Proverbs say the ‘rod’. This must be done in love that is expressed. Prov 2-4 are an expression of this fatherly love.

- Don’t over-correct. Often just a word can be enough to direct a child, and non-physical methods of discipline are valid in many cases. But for rebellion, the Scriptural language (sidebar) clearly assumes the common use of something physical as a base: words used are the *rod*, *stripes*, *chastisement*. Some say the ‘rod’ is merely a biblical metaphor for some kind of emotional restraint. This view does not do justice to the other words used in the Bible.
- It is best to use an instrument that will cause sharp pain, but only briefly. We can be inclined to shy away from discussion of the actual instrument used, but the Bible makes no such exception. My own parents used a sturdy flat stick. You need something stronger than a wooden spoon, and preferably flat so that it stings without bruising. A secure handle also helps you avoid mistakes. Apply it to a child’s seat which has plenty of natural padding so that a mistake is difficult.

We barely have time to scratch the surface of practical matters here, but for a much fuller reference, refer to one of the books mentioned in footnotes 2 and 3.

### Case Study

Depending on the child’s age and any

number of factors, some variant of this scene may be a regular occurrence in a good parent's household:

*"Duncan, you're not to say 'No' to your mother. You know that. Now, go into your bedroom."*

*Duncan runs to the bedroom. "I'm going to give you two smacks." <Smack, smack>. Duncan cries.*

*"Now, do you know why you had to have a smack?"*

*"Because I said 'No,'" he admits (on a good day).*

*"Yes. It is rebellion. And it is important that you obey Mum. The Proverbs say 'a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.'"*

*You continue "But let me hug you <big hug>. I don't like to smack you, but when you disobey, I have to for your own good. I love you <another hug>."*

Let's look at some features of this common-sense scene.

- You are communicating in calm, reasonable tones and also take time to listen to Duncan.
- Duncan knows before the smack exactly why he has to have it.
- He knows you're in control because you promise a specific number of smacks.
- Duncan is given an opportunity to verbalise his sin, helping him to understand it. Without the smack, Duncan's answer may well have been defiant: "But I didn't want to obey!" With the smack, he is humbled.
- After the smack you again communicate your love in words and actions. You may want to change the subject to a more pleasant topic, making it clear that the sin is forgiven and the slate clean, "What are you going to build on your train this afternoon?"
- Where appropriate, you should have Duncan go and ask his mum for forgiveness.

**Continued Defiance:** What is to be done when defiance continues? Once in a while Duncan will continue in defiance despite your discipline. He may show this by not hugging you or by continuing to mope. This is a tough situation, but God's record tells that it is a common one. We need to recall our research in Part 1 of this article where God promised repeatedly to repay the sins of

his beloved people sevenfold if they did not turn and listen to him. God knows that our sin is a much worse long-term enemy than the temporary pain of discipline.

Sometimes the answer to continued defiance is simply to administer the discipline again. Other times it is best to cease until the next offence and let the Scripture you have spoken settle in. This is not an easy situation, and you need the support and assistance of your spouse in this task. Plan your responses to continued defiance.

Persevere. A story of Bruce Ray's will draw this out:

*"One day we took Susanna to the bank, and the teller gave her a lollipop. She wouldn't say, 'Thank you,' so we made her return the lollipop. Then we took her outside where we talked to her, spanked her, and loved her. When we took her back into the bank, we promptly went through the whole thing again. Susanna still refused to say, 'Thank you.'*

*"As the day progressed it became apparent that this would be a very crucial test in her life. Susanna was the most stubborn of our children. She was determined that no matter how many times we spanked her, she would not say, 'Thank you.' For three long days we put her into situations where she knew she had to say those words, and when she didn't, we spanked her. Those were three of the most miserable days of my life. I didn't know what else to do, except to persevere in consistency. Finally, on the third day, she said it. What a time of rejoicing for all of us! And what a change in Susanna! She was so happy that she phoned one of the women in the church and said, 'Aunt Nancy, I obeyed. I said "thank you", and now I'm happy!'"*

**Age factors:** Tedd Tripp indicates that the majority of smacking occurs before five years of age, and Bruce Ray says "As the twig is bent, so goes the tree." ... When the rod is used diligently in the formative years, it will be used less frequently in the transitional or teenage years."

What does this really mean for how soon we should smack? The Scripture gives no direct answers, possibly because the right answer varies between children. But the principle is very simple – we have already covered it. We smack because of rebellion. As soon as we can be sure that our child is acting in rebellion, and not listening to our

voice, we should consider smacking. Each parent must decide when this is the case.

**Security and Teens:** The training package we've talked about contains verbal and physical love, plus verbal and physical correction. Only a consistent diet of this mix can produce the security that your child needs. This security will be evident from the earliest ages and will continue on through his teenage years.

An example will serve to illustrate the security that your child needs. For many years my parents tried to teach me to play the piano under the tutelage of my mother. It was always a drudge to me. Toward the end of this experience in my early teens, I became very rebellious. I hated the drudgery, the correction, and even the consistency and patience! (for which they deserved my gratitude).

Then a strange thing happened. As a teen, my parents had largely stopped smacking me, but I began to crave my parents' spankings! I vividly remember feeling cheated for not receiving them. You see, even though I had created the conflict myself, I still loathed the constant tension, and experience had taught me that spankings bring restored relationships and love.

Full of insight, Bruce Ray spells out for us what was going on.

*"The teen wants and needs a stable home life. He will rock the boat and try his wings, and to some extent that's good. A sensitive parent will give him some room along with much loving counsel and guidance. But the teen also wants to know the boundaries. How far can he fly? How late can he stay out? Sometimes he feels like a prince; other days*

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

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he feels like a toad. Do you love him with his pimples and whiskers as much as you loved him before? He needs reassurance, the reassurance that you care enough about him to discipline him when he errs. 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.'

"The rod is less prominent now, because he has already been trained to respond in obedience. Verbal reproof will frequently be sufficient to put him back on course. But when it fails, that means he needs to be retrained. The rod must be brought back out to physically reinforce the lesson... The rod is a symbol of your loving care and concern: he has been trained with it all his days."

**Worship and Prayer:** When we discipline our

children, we are teaching them about God. Biblical discipline is not take-it-or-leave-it for Christians. If you never make your child go to bed, but only try to convince him that he is tired, then you are also teaching him to obey God only when he feels God's diagnosis is right.

According to Bruce Ray, "The parent is preaching a sermon to his child. He is preaching a sermon which reveals something of the nature of God, something of the nature of man, ... something of the character and nature of sin, and also of judgment or the consequences of that sin... In fact, we may even go so far as to say that biblical discipline is an act of divine worship. How so? It is glorifying God through obedience to Him;

it is revealing, instructing, and manifesting something of the character and nature of God to the child." Do we accurately portray God as we wield the rod? Do we accompany it with the Word?

If this is true – that we are prophets in our homes – then who is adequate to such a task? If discipline is an act of worship, then surely prayer must be primary. We need to pray – first of all for ourselves in our weakness, to Him who "is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph 3:20). Then we need to pray for our children – in order that we may "save their souls from hell" by the turning of their hearts toward their Heavenly Father.

May God be our support and success.

## World in focus

### Pro-Israel evangelical groups say divestment are anti-semitic

Pro-Israeli evangelical Christians have denounced as anti-Semitic efforts by some US Protestant groups to divest from companies associated with Israel. The groups have vowed to counter the effort by increasing investment in such firms. Several Protestant churches in the US, including the Presbyterian Church (USA), the US Episcopal (Anglican) Church, and the United Church of Christ, have voted to re-examine their investments in companies seen as profiting from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the construction of the so-called "security wall." The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ), said it will set up a trade office to encourage Christian investment in the Jewish state. Malcolm Hedding, ICEJ's executive director, said his organization will take a "proactive approach" to stemming the divestment tide by helping Christians invest in Israel and Israeli companies.

+ International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, PO Box 1192, Jerusalem 91010, Israel

### Female ex-minister claiming sex discrimination

Helen Percy, a former Church of Scotland clergywoman, suspended after being accused of having sex with a married elder, has challenged a legal ruling that she was effectively employed by God.

Percy went to the House of Lords to try to overturn a Court of Session ruling that her duties as a minister were "essentially spiritual" and therefore not subject to protection in employment law. Percy is claiming sex discrimination because male ministers accused of having affairs with parishioners had not been removed from their posts. Her claim was thrown out by an employment tribunal, a tribunal appeal, the Court of Session and a special commission set up by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Each ruled that it had no jurisdiction to hear the case because of the Church's unique right to regulate its own affairs. Percy's counsel, Susan O'Brien, argued that a person who performs spiritual duties should also have rights under protections under civil law. She argued Percy was an employee because the Church had offered her a job and conditions of employment.

+ Church of Scotland, 121 George St., Edinburgh EH2 4YN

### Baptist Pastor electrocuted stepping into baptismal waters

Kyle Lake, pastor of the University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas was electrocuted as he stepped into baptismal waters and reached out to adjust a microphone during the Sunday morning service on 30 Oct.

The woman Lake was to baptize also was rushed to the hospital, but

she was not seriously injured.

The tragedy occurred during homecoming weekend at Baylor University. More than 800 people were present when the accident happened.

Lake who was 33, left a wife, a 5-year old daughter and two 3-year old sons.  
+ University Baptist Church, 1701 Dutton Ave., Waco, TX 76706 (254) 752-1401

### Lutheran church in Sudan set on fire

Two weeks after a Lutheran church was torched by unknown arsonists in a Khartoum suburb, Sudan's newly installed government still has not responded to church leaders requesting an investigation. On 18 Oct. most of the simple church structure which was constructed of bamboo reeds, wooden poles, and mud with a straw roof, was completely burned. Rev. Yousif El-Denger Z. Kodi, general secretary of the Lutheran Church of the Sudan said "We are all very sad because this is the first time for anything like this to happen."

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0314

### Updated ARP magazine website

The updated web site for the ARP Magazine is now on line. Individuals are encouraged to visit <www.arpmagazine.org> and check out the revised format and the new capabilities.

+ ARP Magazine, One Cleveland St., Greenville, SC 29601



**Hindu extremists in India disrupt meeting**

Hindu extremists disrupted a prayer gathering of 200 people in the home of a Christian family in Uttar Pradesh state on Sunday 6 Nov. The extremists accused the family of converting Hindus to Christianity, and confined the 200 people inside the house for hours. The extremists also threatened to kill the members of the family if any "Hindus" were seen "again" at such meetings. Eyewitnesses reported that the extremists belong to the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), the youth wing of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Part (BJP).

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0314

**Audio recording of Westminster Conference**

Audio recordings of the third annual Westminster Conference (hosted by the Westminster Reformed Presbyterian Church of Prairie View, Illinois) are now freely available at <westminsterrpc.sermonaudio.com.> On 7-8 Oct., Dr. Carl Trueman of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, delivered outstanding lectures on the theme "John Owen: Giant of Western Theology." + Westminster Reformed Presbyterian Church, 16670 Easton Ave., Prairie View, IL 60069 (847) 634-3333

**More schoolgirls in Poso, Indonesia, critically injured**

Two senior high school students in the Poso district of Indonesia were shot by unidentified assailants on 8 Nov., 2005. This follows the beheading of three Christian teenage girls 10 days ago. A report in the Jakarta Post states that Ivon, so far identified only by her first name, and Siti Nuraini, both 17 years old, were admitted to Poso Kota hospital in critical condition. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called on security forces to hunt down the perpetrators. Indonesians are skeptical, however, citing numerous violent crimes in Poso that remain unsolved.

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304

**Monks want Buddhism as official religion of Sri Lanka**

A constitutional amendment has been placed before Parliament by Buddhist monks to make Buddhism the official religion of Sri Lanka. To be approved, the

19th amendment would need a two-thirds majority vote in parliament and a public referendum. The current constitution requires government officials to "nurture and protect" Buddhism, but the new amendment would prohibit converting Buddhists to other forms of worship or "spreading other forms of worship among Buddhists." This proposed amendment would also ensure that Buddhist parents raise their children in

that faith. The bill calls for stiff fines and up to five years in prison for offenses. + Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304

**Christians jailed for printing Bibles in China**

A Chinese legal firm was ordered by Beijing authorities on 4 Nov., to suspend activities for a year, hours after lawyer Gao Zhisheng filed court documents in defense of

**HOMELEIGH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

**OUR STORY ...**

We like to take the opportunity to introduce to you Homeleigh Christian School, our Covenantal Christian School which the Lord was pleased to establish in 1987 in Masterton.

The Reformed Church in Masterton formed a school association firmly believing that as covenantal people we should do our utmost to educate our children from a Reformed perspective on the grounds of Deuteronomy 6: 5-7; 4:40. God blessed this effort and we were able to establish Homeleigh Christian School.

Homeleigh Christian School has a constitution firmly rooted in the Reformed Confessions of Faith and members of our association have to be also a member of a Reformed Church of New Zealand. The board is elected from this also. We had small beginnings, teaching year 1 – 6, approx. 25 students and 2 teachers, but have had blessed times with teaching year 1 – 10 and 4 teachers. Currently however we are smaller than we've ever been with only 12 students, 1 full time and 1 part time teacher. As you can appreciate, this places a great economical burden the members and parents of the students. This year we have been able to sustain the school through many gifts, pledged and fundraising. For next year, 2006, we are looking to financially secure the future of our school and raise \$25000, 00 - \$30000, 00 to cover the forecasted deficit. Our Home & School committee is confident of raising half of this amount.

The motto of our school is: "For Christ and His Kingdom". Through this means we would like to invite you to help us. We all know that unless the Lord blesses our efforts it will be in vain and for His blessing we pray.

You are able to support us financially via the following means:

- Become a (associate)member of our School Association @ \$400,00 per year and be able to have a real say in the future of the school.
- Gold sponsorship: \$300.00
- Silver sponsorship: \$200.00
- Bronze sponsorship: \$100.00
- Pledges/gifts of any amount
- Move to our area and have your children school at our school (highly recommended).

Receive 2 newsletters p/yr

We appreciate your support and prayers and look forward to hear from you. If you wish any further information about us please contact us.

*Christian greetings,*  
The Board of Homeleigh Christian School



## Dunedin

Professions of Faith. David Jaquiery and Sam and Ben O'Neill have requested to make their professions of faith. Following its examination of them, session joyfully accedes to their request. The professions will take place during morning worship on Sunday 27 November and will include the sacrament of adult baptism for Sam and Ben.

## Foxton

Meditation: Before my College days, we had a minister who would get on the pulpit with an open neck shirt, jeans and leather jacket.

Many in the congregation found it offensive. "Would he wear that if he visited the Queen? Surely not! How much more important is a worship service where we meet God? Surely he should not wear it in our pulpit!" The discussion lasted for weeks if not months. When I was at College, one student preached while he had an earring in his ear. Our College Professor made a rather pertinent comment, which I have never forgotten. He did not ask, "Would you wear that if you were visiting the queen," he simply asked the student, "Do you think there could be anybody in one of your future congregations that would find you wearing an earring offensive? The student replied, "There could possible be but then those people would need to adjust, for that was the fashion now!" The Professor had a few more words to say after that remark. As ministers of the Word we need to be very careful that we do not give any added offence to the gospel of the cross for it is already 'offensive' to many people in this world. If our present conduct or dress causes people to not hear the gospel, then we have a duty to change our ways quickly. If our conduct in the past continues to cause people to stumble when we bring the message of God's word, then it is our duty to step aside and let someone else bring the Word. It is far more important that all our people hear the glorious gospel than that any one man be heard. Surely our desire and primary concern as preachers and elders must be that the glorious gospel goes out clearly, unhindered by our past or present conduct or dress. What about pew sitters? They also have a responsibility. Their dress and conduct should not

be offensive either. Sure, remember the Queen illustration, but more importantly, as God's children we should also have the same desire as ministers and elders, that the glorious gospel of Christ goes out clearly, unhindered by our poor conduct or inappropriate dress. Do I need to list inappropriate dress or conduct? No. I'm sure you know, and if don't, then ask one of the elders, I am sure they can give you some guidance. Prayer: Lord, may our ministers, elders, deacons and congregations not add unnecessarily to the offence of the gospel by their inappropriate dress or conduct. For Jesus' sake and His glory, Amen. Zuidy

## Hamilton

Pastoral: Ruben and Theresa Zandman were blessed with the birth of a baby boy this week. Mother and baby are well and arrived home on Friday. Praise be to God!

Prayer request. Prayer support : Youth for Christ ñ Denmark Our son David has been chosen as the drummer for the Youth For Christ band 'Spin Cycle' which will tour Denmark for three weeks. They will visit 16 High Schools in 20 days to bring the gospel to young people in Denmark through music, song and talks. They leave New Zealand

today, 6 November and they will be back 30 November. We would really appreciate it if you would support David and the band by remembering them in your prayers during their tour. God bless you, – Nico and Caroline van't Wout

## Hastings

Ladies' Fellowship. We will visit Waiapu House in Danvers St Havelock North on the 14th of November (Monday). Please meet in the carpark at 10:30am (remember that parking is limited) ready to start singing at 10:45. We will sing the songs sung previously with Tina leading and Lois playing the piano. Remember to bring along a card and gift. For those who need them, Brenda has 12 soaps and 10 cards. Please let her know if you need them, otherwise it is assumed that you will provide your own gift. The residents really enjoy these occasions, so we look forward to your participation. Everybody is welcome, including any men who would like to join us.

From the Pastor. This morning we have the privilege of witnessing the baptism of Jessica Johanna Meeuwse as she is brought by her parents for baptism. Rick and Alisha, we rejoice with you in this blessing you have

## AUCKLAND PRESBYTERY

Auckland Presbytery met at Pukekohe on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2005.

The opening was led by delegates from the convening church, Bucklands Beach. The Rev John Haverland chaired the meeting with the Rev Reinier Noppers acting as vice-chairman.

The annual study day for 2006 will be organised by and at the North Shore with the proposed date being 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The topic (leadership training oriented) as well as the main intent of this day will be decided on in the near future.

The Avondale session has recommended that Dr Pieter van Huyssteen be given a vicariate in order to determine his gifting and suitability to become a pastor in our churches according to the provisions of Article 12 of our Church Order. This recommendation is being passed to the Synodical Vicariate Committee for their consideration.

The sessions of Avondale, Bucklands Beach and Hamilton were asked a series of questions about the leadership and functioning of their fellowship (CO Art 47). Reasons for praise and concern were mentioned and prayed about. It was noted that Hamilton continues its search for a pastor.

The annual church visitation reports were received without discussion.

The meeting closed at 10.40 pm.

**Dirk J van Garderen**

received and we will pray for you and support you as you commit yourselves to care for the physical and spiritual life of this little one which belongs to God.

Baptism and Profession of Faith. With great joy the elders heard the testimony of five of our youth who wish to make public profession of their faith. We are therefore happy to announce that Marc Gulliksen, Annelies Heesterman, Lillian Hoyt, Aaron Kaijser, and Anouska van der Werff will, D.V., profess their faith before God and His people next Sunday. If there are any lawful objections to any of these youth doing so, please make your objection known to your elder. In addition Steve and Angela Gulliksen have requested baptism for Daejahn, who now has a new name, Daejahn Milisa Gulliksen. May the Lord continue to give wisdom and patience to the Gulliksen family as they seek to lead Daejahn in faith and obedience.

**Hukanui**

The grand cycle of reaping and sowing is still


as much a waiting game today as it was in the time of James. So is life. Some things are simply beyond our power to rush or control. In those areas God expects us to practise patience and to remain faithful. Even non-farmers have plenty of opportunity to develop patience. The waiting for the birth of a new baby, starting a new job and waiting for exam results, waiting for family or friends from overseas to come and visit, slowly improving health after surgery (with the emphasis on slowly) all these situations can try our patience. We will exercise patience as we concentrate on the end result of our waiting. God's way is seldom the quick way, but it is always the complete way. Once again, congratulations to Evan and Carol Chatfield and their children with the birth of Zachary Evan on Saturday 15th October. May God give you wisdom and strength to raise your family in His ways.

A very warm and special welcome to family and friends who are here this morning for the baptism of Martin Vos. It is a great privilege

to be part of God's family, to receive the sign and seal of the covenant of grace in such a clear and distinct way. "Christ Himself instituted this outward washing and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly His blood and Spirit wash away our soul's impurity ñ in other words, all our sins." HCLD 26 Now of course the baptism itself cannot save us, and baptism does not automatically turn us into believers. However, infants also receive this sign and seal because they are in God's covenant and are His people. "They, no less than adults, are promised the forgiveness of sins through Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit who produces faith. Therefore, by baptism, the mark of the covenant, infants should be received into the Christian church and should be distinguished from the children of unbelievers." HCLD 27 It is in obedience to the Lord that Ereine and Rene have presented Martin this morning, and we pray that they may receive strength and wisdom in the nurture and leading of their growing family from Him who holds their time in His hands.

*Calling all country boys and girls to become*

**NETWORKERS**



*If you have always wanted to be a Cadet or Calvinette but live too far away from a club, we would love to hear from you!*

**NETWORKERS** is for children aged 9-15 years old, and you would be a correspondence member with the closest club, able to attend camps and any club functions that you could make.

Your counsellor and cadre would be your correspondent friends and leader.

**INTERESTED?**

*Then write to me –*  
**Cr Rob Wierenga, 35 Humber Street  
 Island Bay, Wellington**

**Mangere**

At our Session meeting we confirmed the details for Br Pieter van Huyssteen's leading of our worship services while I am away on Long Service Leave from the 7th November till the 16th January. During that Long Service Leave Betty-Ann and I travel first through a part of the South Island and spend time with my parents in Nelson before returning here at the end of November. In early December the family will go over to Geelong for the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Betty-Ann's parents and time in Sydney, where Eileen and Andrew will go with their cousins to the Australian Convention, before returning back.

**Palmerston North**

We have the privilege today of witnessing and taking part in the baptism of Joshua Michael Huizinga. We pray the Lord's poured out blessings on him in abundance, and His strength and help for Michael and Renee as they raise him for the Lord.

**Pukekohe**

From the Pastor: This Thursday afternoon

I have the opportunity to lead the Franklin Council in prayer at the beginning of their meeting.

**Bonfire & Bbq:** The annual congregational barbecue and bonfire at the Loef's is happening again! Barbecues for cooking will be provided. Please bring your own food, and feel free to bring along some fireworks too. We will fire the barbecues at about 5:30pm, but feel free to come earlier to play some sports from 5:00pm. See you all there!

The session is considering another request from Grace Theological College from John Haverland to teach a course on Pastoral Skills and Leadership for one term in 2006.

### Silverstream

We give thanks to the Lord for the birth of Jasmine Fiona Koster, to Andre & Shaline. Both Shaline and Jasmine are doing well, for which we also give thanks.

**Covenant Baptism.** This morning we witness the covenant baptism of Dorcas Anika Knol, daughter of Jacob and Anneke. May the Lord bless the vows that you make today and give you grace and wisdom to bring Dorcas up, along with your other children, in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

### Wainuiomata

A note from the Bartletts: After considerable effort on Dennis's part we have finally received a couple of pieces of encouraging news. Firstly, Anna has received an appointment time with the specialist Epilepsy Treatment Team in Auckland. Dennis will accompany her on 25 & 26 October to have a myriad of tests done to help establish whether the tumour and epilepsy are both situated on the same site in the brain and what might be the result to her memory retrieval function, personality and emotions if the tumour were to be removed. Secondly, Dennis has been in email discussion with doctors in Michigan and Singapore about a non-invasive treatment called Gamma Knife. This treatment is over 20 years old and many hospitals overseas use it regularly. 201 separate Gamma Rays pass through the brain tissue quite safely but where they all converge that the combined strength of the Gamma Rays will destroy the tumour and surrounding tissue. They can control it with pinpoint accuracy. Anyway, we have recently been told by the doctor in Michigan that Anna would be a candidate for this treatment, which we are thrilled about. You could look up their website for more information by typing in Gamma Knife in Google.

Through all of this Anna is doing well. Working hard at school, etc.

We would like to thank you all for your prayers and messages of encouragement. We are very thankful for your contact. We continue to trust that our God and Father is in control of our lives as always and remain optimistic in His care. The Bartlett's

### Wellington

**Wedding bells.** Jolanda VanVliet and Allan Saunders have requested that the solemnisation of their marriage take place on Saturday, 12th November, DV. Unless valid objections are raised, the service will be held in the Silverstream Retreat at 1.15pm and the Rev Jan Lion-Cachet will officiate.

Last Wednesday Anita Bartholomeusz arrived home from the Maternity Hospital with her twin daughters (born last Friday by c-section): Georgia Rose and Nina Grace. Welcome to these junior members of the church! We hope all will go well for them, and the family as they adjust to a new situation. God bless you and yours, Steven and Anita!

Last Monday sr Janke Howells passed away in Palmerston North. On Thursday we went to bury her after a thanksgiving service led by your pastor. We pray for God's grace and comfort to those left behind.

## A feminine focus

### Living pictures of faith –

#### *Some thoughts on the blessings of role models*

#### **Sally Davey**

One of my favourite chapters in the Bible is Hebrews 11. Its concise, helpful definition of faith summarizes a vital truth. But what really takes my breath away is its series of pictures of the obedience God's people achieved by faith. It's amazing! These believers were convinced of what they could not prove: it was enough for them that God had spoken.

They left their homes and wandered about for the rest of their lives. They built an ark and endured the world's ridicule. They were prepared to sacrifice an only son; defy a cruel tyrant by hiding a precious baby; choose suffering over the luxury of life at court; risk death by hiding spies in their house. I love the way the story accelerates as example upon example crowds into the list. The writer becomes almost breathless with excitement

as he names Old Testament heroes; warriors; and the many who died of terrible torture because they remained faithful to the One they trusted. It thrills me to think of all these men and women who were ready to endure this – to the end – for the sake of One they had never seen; but who was more to them than all they held dear in this world. They did not fall away. God enabled them to endure. By His Word they performed mighty deeds of

faith, and were kept faithful. Yet what He did for them, He will do for me, too. My calling in life, my role in God's great plan of redemption is infinitely smaller and more humble than theirs; but the God who preserved and used them will surely preserve and use me too. What more shall I say?

### These models inspire us

When I think of Hebrews 11 and its list of biblical portraits, the thing that strikes me is that pictures of people motivate us. When we see someone trusting God in time of trial, showing love when ridiculed, patience when provoked or saying "no" when sorely tempted, we are helped to see Christian

the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?" (John 14:8-10). Do we want to know what God's goodness, His love, His mercy, His justice or wisdom look like? We see them all in Christ, who lived and taught these things for thirty years, on this earth.

### Other models for us

God also gives us pictures of godliness in our fellow Christian brothers and sisters. Paul understood this and taught it to the Corinthian church. As their "father in Christ Jesus through the gospel," he urged these Christians, "be imitators of me." (1 Corinthians 4:15-16) Later in the same letter, at

in this light; but there are ways in which we should do something of the same.

For instance, when Paul was writing to Titus and giving him instructions on what to teach the young church in Crete, he made it clear that older women in the church should teach the younger – by their example – how to be godly wives and mothers. First, he listed the ways the older women should live – the kinds of qualities that should characterize them. Then he outlined what they should teach the younger women. It is clear that there is a relationship between the way these women should live, and the things they need to teach. Obviously, if what a person is recommending to others isn't matched by the way she lives, her recommendations become somewhat worthless. But if, on the other hand, she is able to give flesh to the principles she's imparting by living them out in her daily words and actions, how much more lasting, and useful her instruction will be! An older woman teaching self-control is a woman worthy of being believed when she quietly shows the younger woman it's not her habit to snack between meals; that she doesn't normally drink sugary soft drinks; that cakes, pastries and ice cream aren't part of her everyday diet; and that she stays about the same, trim size year in and year out. She's practising what she preaches when she refuses to gossip, and when her conversation about her husband expresses genuine respect. She's teaching purity most effectively when she's exhibiting care about what she reads and views, when she doesn't join in the general hilarity over an earthy joke, when it's obvious from her choice of clothes that she isn't trying to look ten years younger, or show off her body. The pattern is simple: while the words in which she imparts these things are the primary part of her teaching; her life is a living confirmation – or otherwise – of everything she is saying. As the old saying goes, a picture paints a thousand words.

### The best way to teach

Good examples in other people have always excited and motivated me. I've sometimes wondered why it is that seeing a lovely way of speaking or behaving has made me so enthusiastic about trying to do likewise; while reading directives on how to do it hasn't fired me up to nearly the same degree. But I think God has made us like that. Personal example



living at the level of our own lives. We are confronted, challenged, encouraged to believe that obedience is within our sights. God has provided us with a living, credible role model of what he would like us to be. True godliness is always inspiring; and I am glad whenever someone shows me – by their reaction, their choice of words, or even simply the expression on their face – what Christlikeness means.

Something of this idea is contained in the incarnation. One of the wonderful things about Jesus coming among us is that He showed us God the Father. Paul told the Colossian Christians that "He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:16). Jesus, in answer to the request, "Show us the Father," replied: "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us

the end of a long discussion on the difficult question of whether to eat food offered to idols, Paul writes "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1) To the Thessalonians, whom he was warning against idleness, Paul also wrote "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labour we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate." (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9) Obviously we do not have the qualifications of an apostle; and there are many things about Paul's authority to teach, let alone the sheer godliness of his life, that would preclude us seeing our own examples

is much the best way to learn; and any kind of teaching is better face-to-face than at a distance. I can still remember two examples that made a great impression on me. The first was in my second year at university. Our classes for the year were just beginning. I'd signed up for Greek history, and when we met our lecturer, I was awe-struck. She was a lady in her early forties – and I mean a lady. Here was a sweet, feminine person with poise and a certain touch of elegance in her dress - she gave the impression of taking the task of teaching us seriously. She was really intelligent; an expert in her field. Her lectures were well-organized and stimulating. She was quite a lady! I was so impressed. All I could think of was how I wanted to be like her one day. For me she has been a lasting model of brilliance coupled with feminine grace.

### **A learning that never leaves**

The other example is really several women, whom I remember well from my teenage years and early twenties. They were friends of my mother's, living in the same farming district. My sisters and I saw them often at church, or at social functions in the district. We visited their homes for dinner, and sometimes during the university holidays we would do a few days' work for them in their house or garden. (They were farmers' wives like my mother, and had younger children, so they needed a little home help from time to time). The special thing about them is that they were very kind to us. They were gentle, feminine ladies who, while farmers' wives, were not rough, or drudges. (In fact, they are among the most stylish ladies I have known!) They showed us quite a lot about being a hostess, dealing with children, the purpose of having an attractive garden (eg, creating a lovely environment for their husbands and families to come home to, or for the enjoyment of guests when they were entertaining). I was fascinated with how some of them dressed (beautifully and tastefully, in clothes they had sewn themselves); but what impressed me most of all was how gifted they were at warm, pleasant conversation. They knew how to put people at ease, they could speak on all manner of subjects, and their interest made even young schoolgirls feel that what they had to say was important. These ladies gave me lots of practical ideas about the kind of adult woman I wanted to be.

Later on, when I came to believe the

gospel, there were many other role models. I came to see biblical ideals lived out, and these have all helped me see the Lord Jesus, in action. Examples of solid faith in times of suffering have especially inspired me, and I'm grateful for them. Snapshots of Christian patience, of cheerfulness, of perseverance, modesty, humility, love and gentleness are part of my hall of memories and they help keep me going when I'm tempted to be otherwise in my own walk of faith. Women, especially, I think, respond to these kinds of pictures of faithful living. I know that I do – and many others have told me the same. We all love a well-told story of someone else's life experience – we relate to it, and start to make application to our own situations. Women's conference speakers often do this; and many writers of books for Christian women also do this very well – with good effect. If we can catch a glimpse of how someone else has applied Scripture in their life, we are given clues as to how to do the same in our own. I've often thought about this. There are many reasons we all find role models useful.

### **Why role models are so helpful**

So, I decided to ask a few friends just exactly how they saw it. Why, in their view, are role models so helpful? Here are some of the things they told me:

Role models show us what it means to obey the Word of God; to do the will of God. It is one thing to be taught the Scriptures by someone. It is quite another to see your teacher obeying them. The friend who gave this answer explained that she had seen it in action. A dear older friend of hers had taught her the Bible every week for some years. When this lady discovered she had cancer – in fact, she was going to die of it – she simply carried on living the truths she had always taught. She remembered, on the day she received her diagnosis, Psalm 112:6-8, "For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord. His heart is steady; he will not be afraid..." And she was kept steady, for the remaining years of her life. My friend watched this lady as she lived out her days in increasing discomfort; but she kept her resolve of faith, and didn't complain - to anyone. I myself heard this lady praise her "clever doctor", and the useful effects

of many, many rounds of chemotherapy. She lived the Word of God; and in the manner of Hebrews 11, this friend will be remembered as an example to follow, for the rest of their lives, by those who watched her.

Another friend explained that role models have helped her in quite a different way. By showing her, unconsciously, a much higher standard of faithfulness, they have rebuked her. She has seen more gentleness, more patience, more self-control, more kindness and more goodness than she believes she exhibits at times herself. Her role models have silently taught her what she could be, and should be. But because my friend is a humble lady herself, she is sensitive to these rebukes in ways that many of us, I fear, are not: and she is willing to benefit from them. She thinks about what these lessons contain, and wants to make godly progress. Believe me, she does. I marvel at such an attitude, and am rebuked myself.

A third friend impressed upon me that role models must be more than static pictures; people we simply look at and wonder about. We should interact with the people we admire; talk with them, ask them questions, investigate. We need to know their hearts, find out what motivates them to learn the ways of God; and ask what is behind their wise choices, loving actions and gentle words. How do they do it? How did they learn? The answers to these questions will, quite naturally, put us on the path of doing likewise.

Yes, living pictures of faith are a help to us. They are definitely motivating. But it seems to me that we need to make sure we profit from them as much as possible. If we make deliberate effort to ask ourselves exactly what has made a person we admire the picture of faith in action that she is, we will be much better able to apply the lessons to ourselves. We need to be good analysts of the women we read about, as well as good enquirers of those we know in the flesh. When was the last time you asked yourself what makes your role model such a good wife, or wise mother, or compassionate friend? Probe the biblical reasons, list the steps she took to become that person, and consider the ways you could follow in her footsteps. Then run the race as she has done.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In a recent edition of Faith and Focus, Sally Davey reviewed a book entitled "Attack on Anxiety". While the underlying principle that anxiety is evidence of a failure to fully trust and rely on God cannot be argued against, this article failed to distinguish between the "worried-well" and those whose experience of anxiety constitutes a mental illness. This is similar to failing to distinguish between those who have a cold and those who have pneumonia. The fact that most individuals who have a cold do not require medical assistance does not negate the fact that a cold is an illness, or that some individuals will require medical assistance to overcome their illness.

So, what is anxiety? Anxiety is generally defined as a vague, unpleasant emotion, associated with apprehension and dread<sup>1</sup>; and while it is correct to stress that all of us experience anxiety and worry, anxiety and worry can reach significant levels of distress and impairment<sup>2</sup>. So when does the experience of anxiety become extreme? Or alternatively, when does anxiety become classified as a psychological disorder? Before answering this question it must first be acknowledged that this is somewhat subjective; what one individual defines as worry at an acceptable level another may experience as extremely distressing. While it is not for us to decide whether an individual's anxiety is reasonable or unreasonable, there are guidelines that are useful in determining whether an individual's subjective experience of worry and anxiety reaches a level where intervention is appropriate. To assist mental health professionals in determining whether an individual is experiencing anxiety at a clinical level, the following criteria are applied: the worry must be excessive in intensity, duration, and frequency; the anxiety must be pervasive in that it occurs more often than not; and it must be difficult to control, for example simple distractions are not enough to help the individual forget about their worries<sup>2</sup>.

Anxiety at this level can lead to maladaptive behaviours, such as avoidance of an event or situation, or cause significant distress or impairment<sup>3</sup>. In this instance, an individual may become fearful and anxious of a specific stimulus, such as an animal, or a specific environmental situation, such as heights or speaking in public<sup>3</sup>. The individual may then avoid all situations in which they are likely to encounter the feared stimuli or event. While individuals who fear heights have the option of not climbing Mount Everest, in some instances the feared stimuli are almost impossible to avoid. For exam-

most commonly experienced psychological disorders experienced by a large number of people within our community and our congregations. Research has also found that children who experience significant levels of anxiety face a greater risk of experiencing a mental health illness later in life<sup>4</sup>. Anxiety is also a feature of mental illnesses such as depression. The elderly are particularly susceptible to experiencing anxiety related to depression, the loss of a spouse, and physical illness. To be dismissive of an individual's experience of anxiety may increase the risk of further health related problems, or indeed increase the risk of other disorders such as depression.

While it is useful to consider the impact of anxiety from a psychological perspective, it is also important to consider what the Bible has to say about this matter. The apostle Peter instructs us to cast all our anxiety on God (1 Peter 5:7). However, while David prayed and confessed his sins, it is also evident that his struggle with anxiety and despair was not easily overcome. Even Jesus on the night before his death experienced great anxiety and anguish; while he prayed he asked "Father, if you are willing take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done"; in direct answer to Jesus' prayer, God sent an angel to strengthen and comfort Him (Luke 22: 42-43). However, it must be noted that while Jesus turned in prayer to God, he still experienced the human frailty of extreme anxiety: "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of

blood falling to the ground" (verse 44).

This may be stating the obvious, but surely Jesus' experience of extreme anxiety and distress did not constitute sin?

How then do we reconcile the call to cast all our worries on the Lord, with the knowledge that there are those whose experience of anxiety requires more from us than the advice "...repent and confess your sins"? One way is to show sensitivity to those who experience severe anxiety and depression. Just as we recognise that physical illnesses



ple, in my first year of training as a Clinical Psychologist I met an individual whose fear of the dark became so intense he could not continue working as a night security-guard.

Studies of the lifetime prevalence of anxiety disorders indicate up to 6% of individuals experience distressing levels of anxiety at some stage of their life<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that anxiety disorders may be one of the



are the indirect consequence of sin, we must also recognise that mental illnesses are also an indirect consequence of sin. We do not expect our fellow Christian's to live sin-free lives, so why do we expect our fellow Christians to be free from distress such as anxiety?

My question for MacArthur and Sally Davey is: should we ignore the anxiety and worry that our children, young people, adults, and our elderly experience? Or should we as a church take a proactive role in assisting families and individuals by providing comfort and prayer, as well supporting them in finding appropriate treatment? It is my opinion that our role as a church in matters of psychological distress is to create an environment that is supportive. This can be achieved by openly discussing mental health issues, by supporting individuals who require treatment or medication to manage psychological disorders such as anxiety, and to promote a greater understanding of the impact of mental health issues on individuals and their families.

Joyce Alberts  
Christchurch

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## Reply by Sally Davey

Dear Sir

I write in reply to Mrs Alberts's letter, which responds to my review of John MacArthur's *Anxiety Attacked*. I would like to make two comments:

Firstly, Mrs Alberts is concerned that we show compassion to those who are anxious, and suggests that calling anxiety sin is a) insensitive and b) overly simplistic. I entirely agree that we should show the greatest

compassion to those who are afraid, and whose lives are full of difficulty because of it. But the best way to help people is always to give them the help of the gospel, and this MacArthur does. Could I suggest that Mrs Alberts take a close look at MacArthur's book? I think she will see that, far from simply calling anxiety sin and leaving it at that, he offers carefully worked-out and practical suggestions which will help both people who are anxious, and those who want to give sensitive help to those who are. Far from being simplistic, he seems (in my view) to have a remarkable understanding of the way peoples' minds work when fear paralyzes them. He offers the help Scripture gives to deal with this problem in clear, practical do-able steps.

Secondly, the kind of criticism Mrs Alberts makes of MacArthur's (scriptural, pastoral) approach is quite a common one for mental health professionals to make. Their understanding is that such problems as extreme anxiety and the like are too complicated for pastors and churches to deal with. Other expertise is needed. However, I am afraid that often something quite serious is at work here. Underneath the desire that people receive help from someone who really understands their problem, knows the answers, and can get them on their way out of it, is an assumption (or perhaps a doubt?) that really, Scripture is not enough to meet their needs.

Dear Sir,

I do not envy you your task and responsibilities as editor but I do commend you for your handling of two particular issues during the past year: (a) the criticisms of Mrs van Laar's series on 'The Saints in Ancient British History' - and her gracious and well-informed response; and (b), the presentation of Rev. G. Milne's critique on Pope Benedict XVI - undoubtedly an able administrator and scholar, - but also a product of the system in which he was raised.

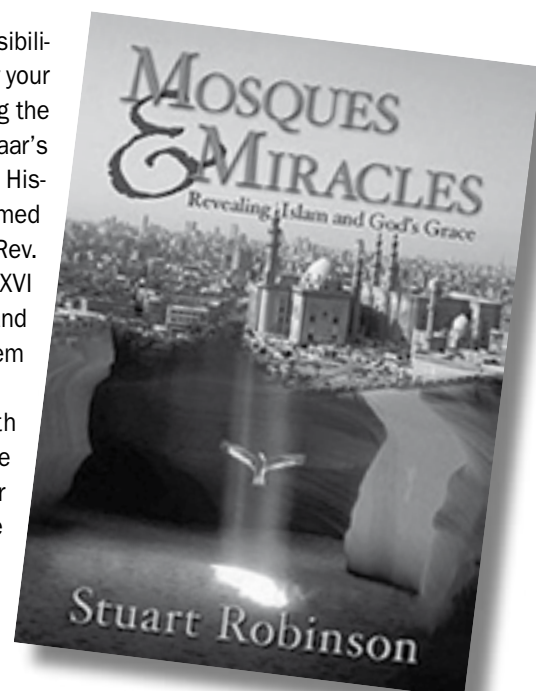
As a sympathetic reader of both these issues, it may seem strange that I descend to criticism in another issue - namely the critique of the book, "Mosques & Miracles" (Stuart Robinson) in a recent issue of 'Faith in Focus'.

As one who spent some years

At stake, in the end, is our view of Scripture. Is it sufficient? Are there areas of life God didn't take account of when He inspired its writing? Or is our real problem that we don't know it well enough, or are unable to make the right application of biblical truth to our lives? It seems to me that human problems such as anxiety have always been around; and since the beginning of God's church the role of pastors has always been to teach people how to apply its truth to their spiritual and emotional troubles. Many (I am thinking here especially of 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan ministers like Richard Baxter), were master physicians of the soul. They certainly had a high view of the sufficiency of Scripture. And really, I don't think our twenty-first century anxieties are any worse than those of their church members. One thing I am certain of, though, is that if we don't offer people the straightforward truth of Scripture to help them, we are denying them what is their only real help in their difficulties.

Yours sincerely, Sally Davey

P.S. Perhaps one of our elders could help us with some further wisdom on one or two points? (I think of issues like the question of whether or not our Lord Jesus was afraid, or anxious, when He contemplated the cross).



teaching in a Muslim country (Secondary and Tertiary students), I am aware of how such are brought up to regard the Christian Scriptures. I have also had a long-term and deep interest in the testimonies of Muslim converts to Christianity. I should also mention that I hold firmly to the Reformed "Solas".

Because of their upbringing, Muslims are convinced that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures have been corrupted and that the only reliable revelation from Allah is the

Qoran. Thus discouraged they are prejudiced against reading the Bible.

The majority of converts from Islam claim to have had supernatural visitation - dreams, vision, etc. - which have directed their attention to the Christian records. Rather than claiming these psychic experiences as 'revelations' it seems that they are affirmations of Christian truth they have been trained to reject.

My argument is that these visitations are not subsequent revelations but affirma-

tions correcting their prejudices. I hope that readers of the critique re-read the latter half of it. After reading the critique I re-read sections of the book and was impressed by the writer's thorough understanding of Islam and how God is working among Muslims today. Chapters 15, 23, and 24 of Robinson's book are especially valuable.

*C. G. Pearce  
Nelson*

# Hurricane Katrina

## **National Diaconate Committee**

### **Carl Larsen**

The following is one brief snapshot of a Church member and Church group getting involved in the Katrina cleanup. The writer is Katherine Sawyer, now a 21 year old, nearly completing her university studies. She may be known to some of you and particularly members in Silverstream and Hastings. Katherine came to NZ as a 6 month old child when her father the Rev Jack Sawyer responded to the call of the Silverstream Church and later the Hastings Church. The family spent ten years in NZ. This report will be submitted to Faith in Focus for publication for a wider readership.

NDC will soon be sending funds entrusted to it for Katrina relief. These will be channelled through Jack Sawyer who has been advised already of what is presently held. However we would appreciate hearing if there

are further funds available or likely to be.

### **An OPC trip to Slidell, Louisiana**

There are many different ways to spend a school holiday. Many students choose to take road trips, go home, or stay at school, and some of them are often bored to the point of tears. This year, I decided to do something a little different for my Fall Break. I went with a group of about 25 students from Louisiana College to the Slidell area as part of a Hurricane Relief Mission Trip sponsored by LC's Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM). We left about 9 AM on October 13th, and traveled to First Baptist Church in Lacombe, LA. where we would be lodging. For the first day and a half, the pastor of FBC Lacombe coordinated our work schedule, and we spent most of our time helping a woman, Karen, clear her yard and clean out her house. We were working with a group of men from First Baptist Church in Oviedo, FL, and their pastor was able to share the gospel with Karen, who responded very positively. It was truly a heartwarming moment, and I felt privileged to be a part of it.

On the afternoon of our second day, we traveled into Slidell, one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina, and worked with First Baptist Church of Slidell, which has now become a major Red Cross relief center. Because I had forgotten to get my Tetanus shot updated, I worked the food distribution line, while almost all of the others went to two houses and worked on cleanup work. In the food line, I handed out

ice, water, canned snacks, and hot meals for dinner. I was surprised by the almost-constant stream of cars that came through, and I was touched to see the thankful expressions on so many faces as people received a hot meal or a bag of ice. I was finally able to get my Tetanus shot updated at the shelter, and was allowed to join the work crews in the homes. We split our group into two smaller teams, and mine was sent to work on tearing down all the sheet rock in a house (this would prove to be a very common task).

After a morning of hard work and fellowship, we prayed with the family and returned to the church for lunch. That afternoon, we were sent to the home of an elderly German lady to move boxes and to remove her tile flooring. This was perhaps the hardest work that we did all week, but we were able to get it done in a relatively short amount of time.

On our last day we once more split into two groups and went to different houses. Our task was basically to gut a house, and we had limited time in which to do it. This house was particularly bad because of the large amounts of toxic mold that were growing behind the walls. We tore down most of the walls, removed the carpet, ripped up the tile flooring, and removed much of the clutter that had accumulated because of the floodwaters. At noon, we said goodbye to the homeowners and returned to the church to change clothes, and clean up for the ride home. We arrived back in Pineville

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about 6 pm, tired, sore, and so thankful that we had gone.

Although we worked at about six different homes, it was painfully evident that we had barely even scratched the surface of what needs to be done. The devastation is still hard to believe, even after I have seen it with my own eyes. The need of the people is so great that it will take them a very long time

to bounce back from the destruction that Katrina has brought into their lives. Thus I would encourage anyone who reads this and is interested in helping to get involved. I am so thankful that I was given the opportunity to be a servant, to feel like I helped in the Name of the Lord to alleviate, in the small way I could contribute, something of the suffering of these people.

The impact of Katrina will be an enduring one, and there will be many more opportunities for service, both at home and in the New Orleans area. I hope that I will be able to serve again.

*Katherine Sawyer, Member, Pineville OPC, Pineville, LA, Senior/ Louisiana College.*

# Industrial scale murder in the West

## *The continuing holocaust of abortion*

### **Evan Whetton**

Abortion has, for some time now, been under the radar. Only rarely does it make an appearance in the news. It barely made a blip in the media during the recent election campaign. Yet every day, across New Zealand, 64 killings are carried out. Although recent statistics, if they are to be taken at face value, indicate that the abortion rate is dropping slightly, new and sinister threats, such as genetic screening to weed out handicapped children and the use of aborted fetuses for stem cell research and treatment, are fast becoming commonplace.

### **Cold, hard numbers**

The number of "induced abortions" (a medical term for murder of the unborn) is huge. In the United States, 3500 children are aborted every day. In England and Wales, statistics report that 185,375 abortions took place in 2000, while in Germany, 129,650 abortions was the official total for 2004. Abortion has been legal in New Zealand since 1977. During that time, nearly 300,000 unborn children have been killed. Our most recent statistics were published in September. In 2003, there were 18,511 abortions. The ratio of abortions to live births was 247 per 1000, or nearly one abortion for every four live births. For 2004, the abortion rate dropped slightly to 237 abortions for every 1000 live births.

Just what sort of impact does this have on society? Abortion has the effect of cheapening human life and desensitising us to what should appall us. There is also rising concern that the population is growing older,

and that those working will be outnumbered by those on pensions. To counter the ageing population, immigrants must be brought in on a scale that makes integration extremely difficult. Historically, this leads to social unrest.

### **Eugenics**

Eugenics is the study of how to breed a "Master Race," by eliminating any undesirable characteristics. Just recently, there was an article in the Herald on the death of Simon Weisenthal, Holocaust survivor and Nazi hunter. Quite rightly, he was known as the "Conscience of the Holocaust," his mission having been to keep one of the most shameful events of human history before the eye of the public. The Holocaust, however, was simply a part of Hitler's eugenics programme. In an attempt to selectively breed a Master Race, he had many people forcibly sterilised and had a policy of euthanising all the physically and mentally handicapped. What is not generally known is that the German eugenic policy was copied off the American one. The West's attempt to breed the Master Race continues in virtually every "civilised" country.

In the United Kingdom, a 17% jump in abortions for Down's syndrome were recorded. An eight percent increase was recorded for suspected deformity. There has also been an increase in abortions for cleft lip/palate, or even deformed feet. According to the Daily Mail, more Down's Syndrome children are killed than are born. What is the difference between killing an unborn child, and euthanising an adult with these problems? The attitude that the mentally and

physically handicapped should never have been born will result in the view that "They're better off dead, so why should we look after them?" Also, just because someone has a disability, does that make them disposable? Some severely handicapped persons are extremely gifted. But because they do not match up to our pre-conceived notions of wholeness, they would be murdered.

### **Spare Parts Anyone?**

The Oxford Dictionary describes the word "cannibalize" as "to use (a machine etc) as a source of spare parts for others." That is probably the most accurate description of what is happening with many aborted fetuses. In New Zealand, we had the case of Willie Terpstra, who has motor neurone disease, who travelled to China for "stem cell treatment." The "treatment" involved two million stem cells being injected into her brain. Why did she have to go to China? Because stem cell research is banned in New Zealand, as that particular type of research often involves the use of aborted babies.

British women are flying to Barbados to undergo treatment to slow the ageing process and to increase their libido. The treatment was first developed to combat Parkinson's disease and certain blood disorders, and is also available in Ecuador, Russia and the Ukraine. How does it work? The doctors remove cells from aborted six to twelve week old fetuses and inject them into the arm of the patient.

To use murdered children to increase sex drive and try to slow the onset of age would have to be the ultimate in selfishness.

This wholesale cannibalization of human



beings raises the nightmarish scenario shown in the film *The Matrix*, where humans are grown in farms. In this case though, instead of being used as electricity generators, they are used for spare parts by other humans.

#### **The Risks of Abortion**

For some time now, studies have been circulating that show a connection between abortion and an increasing rate of breast cancer. Per capita, New Zealand has one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the

world, with 700 deaths per year, and 2300 new cases reported each year. Interestingly, we also have one of the highest abortion rates in the world. In the US, 3500 babies are killed every day. In New Zealand, 64 children are aborted each day. Proportionally to the population of the US, New Zealand's abortion rate is about 6000 per day.

According to several studies, women who have had an abortion are 50% more likely to develop breast cancer. Another researcher, American Chris Khalenborn, MD, believes that once the age of the woman and the length of her pregnancy is taken into account, the danger of cancer rises tremendously, up to 800%. If this research is valid, then abortion providers are giving women a gun to play Russian Roulette and asserting that there are no bullets inside. But in this case, the revolver has most of the chambers loaded.

#### **The Fight against Abortion**

The fight against abortion is not limited to the picketing of abortion clinics, which seems to always be negatively depicted in the media as persecution of the doctors and their patients. In New Zealand, in March 2005, Right to Life filed a lawsuit against the Abortion Supervisory Committee, with the second defendant being the Attorney General. The common perception in New Zealand is that abortion on demand is legal. Technically, it isn't. The Crimes Act 1961, Section 187A(1) states: "That the continuance of the pregnancy would result in serious danger (not being danger normally attendant upon childbirth) to the life, or to the physical or mental health, of the woman or girl." Two consultants must agree whether that is the case. Other criteria include; The age of the woman or girl, whether the baby would have a serious disability, or whether the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. Over 98 per cent of the abortions were on the grounds of mental health. If 98 per cent of abortions are on the grounds that the woman's mental health was at risk, then almost a quarter of all pregnancies were to women whose mental health was questionable. That is clearly ridiculous. Closer to the truth would be that a woman with an unplanned pregnancy is in a difficult position, and could be extremely upset or temporarily depressed. But because of these problems, the abor-

tion providers are turning the pregnancy into a risk to the woman's mental health. So does New Zealand have abortion on demand? The answer, in practice, is yes. Right to Life is arguing that abortion providers have misinterpreted the "mental health" section of the law. Their view is that while the law was written to prevent abortion on demand, the loose interpretation of the law by abortion providers (who are supported by the government) has resulted in abortion on demand.

In America, partial-birth abortion, where a full term child is killed as it is being born has been banned by President Bush. Also in America, two judges who oppose abortion have been appointed to the Supreme Court. In matters concerning the law, the Supreme Court wields more power than any other part of the government. If the position of the Supreme Court shifts from being pro-choice to anti-abortion, it may not be long before abortion may become illegal in America.

### **Guilt by Association**

In general, during the last election, economics seemed to be the major issue. Everybody seemed to be looking out for Number One. Even those protesting Labour's social engineering didn't mention the 64 murders per day. Are we now so used to the idea that we have become comfortably numb? The Germans, as a nation, turned a blind eye to the activities of the death camps and killing squads. Their nation was forced to accept the guilt of the crimes of Hitler and his assistants. The excuse that the general population didn't know what was happening had about the same strength as a house of cards. We are as guilty, perhaps even more so, than those Germans who didn't actively pull triggers on the Jews. They lived in a police state. We live in a democracy, where we can make our voices heard. We know exactly what is happening, and so often we don't protest. There was barely a murmur when Willie Terpstra came back extolling the virtues of stem cell treatment. By fail-

ing to oppose the work of the murderers, some of whom have personally aborted over 5000 children, we will come in for a share of the guilt. The Bible makes it clear about our responsibilities. In Proverbs 24: 11-12 it states "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth the soul, doth he not know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" Answering to the International War Crimes Tribunal will be far easier than answering to the Judge of the earth.

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## **Mission in focus**

*Janice Reid*

# **Where the harvest is hard**

"The magistrate of this district was only a pony in his last existence, but he was faithful, and even died to save his master's life. Accordingly in the present existence he had gained great advancement. This sickly sheep, lying on the plain there — probably a wolf will get him tonight — was the magistrate of a district in his last life, but he used his power unjustly, reducing innocent people to beggary; his punishment fits his crime. Indeed had he not died young, before he had committed further sins, he might have been consigned to one of the hells, and remained there for five hundred years or more, until his sins were expiated. This is karma, the doctrine of retribution; it governs all, pervades all. From it there is no escape."<sup>[1]</sup>

The passage above describes how the deeds of people's lives are rewarded or punished in their next reincarnation. Reincarnation, of course, is a central tenet of

the Buddhist religion, and the only way off the endless treadmill of reincarnations is to become good enough to achieve (by one's own merit) nirvana—the emptying of self,





the end of the soul.

Each Buddhist country or region has its own unique interpretation, or variation, of Buddhist teaching; Tibet is no exception. Home to more than 2,000,000 people, Tibet was ruled for centuries by a god-king, the Dalai Lama. In 1951 the Chinese government took control and by 1959 the Dalai Lama had fled to India. Until quite recently, Tibet was closed to the outside world; only in the last few years has the Chinese government allowed limited access to foreigners.

There are three major groups of Tibetans: Central, Amdo, and Kham. The central Tibetans live in the area just north of the Himalayan mountains in a high, dry plain called the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Amdos mostly live in the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan; the women of this tribe are distinctive for the way they dress: they have 108 braids in their hair, and they wear many semi-precious stones

and other heavy jewellery. Kham Tibetans live in the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan, and there are more in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Lhasa is the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. It is also the centre of the Tibetan Buddhist world. The Potala Palace is built on a high point in the city and towers above the street; it can be seen from almost any part of the city. It was the Winter Palace of the Dalai Lama and has hundreds of rooms full of statues and idols. The palace is one of the key centres of Tibetan Buddhism worldwide.

The Jokhang Temple is also situated in Lhasa, in the old part of town. It is known as "the heart of Tibetan Buddhism," but in fact this temple dates back to the previous religion, Bön, which was later incorporated into the unique form of Buddhism that is found in Tibet. Bön taught that there was demones whose body covered the whole land

of Tibet. Tibetans controlled the spirit world by building temples and monasteries over important parts of her body. The Jokhang Temple was built over her heart. [2]

Pilgrims with prayer wheels and prayer beads flock to the Jokhang Temple and the Potala Palace, especially in the winter when the weather is too cold for crops to grow. These pilgrims walk a well-trod circuit around the sacred places, spinning their prayer-wheels as they go. Prayer-wheels are cylinders with a handle, and inside the cylinder is a roll of paper with a single prayer printed many times over. As pilgrims walk, they spin the wheel; each turn of the wheel means that the prayer inside has been recited (whether or not the pilgrim speaks the prayer aloud). Pilgrims also prostrate themselves hundreds or even thousands of times over the course of several days, as they complete the circuit. They hope that in doing so, they will add to their store of merit and achieve a better reincarnation for their next life.

Missionary work in Tibet began in the 8th century, when the Nestorian Christians brought the Gospel message into this 'rooftop of the world.' The Roman Catholic church sent missionaries in the 17th century. Protestant mission in Tibet dates only from around the 1940s, but few people became Christians and the church did not grow in numbers. In fact, outreach in Tibet is so difficult that Hudson Taylor once said, "To make converts in Tibet is similar to going into a cave and trying to rob a lioness of her cubs." [3] Even today, the same challenge exists: it is impossible to enter Tibet as a Christian worker; the only way for Christians to go there is to provide a professional service in one of the very few areas accepted by the Chinese government, and then reach out to local people in one's spare time. But God is moving in Tibet nonetheless. Pray for the salvation of Tibetans and the planting of a vibrant Tibetan church.

Here is an account from one of our Reformed Church members who is serving in Tibet, teaching English....

Carefully stepping over the thick wooden doorframe, a blanket of cold descends on my body. The warming rays of sunshine have disappeared and my eyes take a moment to adjust to the murky darkness. As I lift up my head, my eyes fall on several detailed images of those gone past—men who were kings and gods deep in the history of Tibet.

The pervading smell of yak butter hits my nostrils and I turn to see a young monk replenishing the flickering bowl of butter lamps with the greasy liquid. Venturing forward into the rear chapel, I pass through the 'Three Doors of Liberation' and am greeted by a massive and hideous protector deity standing fiercely next to a line of equally massive bodhisattvas[4]. Stuffed between the fat fingers of the bodhisattvas are wads of small money—an offering placed there by pilgrims who shuffle past.

I feel a small nudge as a 'mola' (grandmother) pushes past me, murmuring the words of the well-known mantra, 'Om Mani Padme Hum.' A steady line of pilgrims shuffle past on the floor worn by thousands of feet and spilt yak butter. Upon coming to the four metre statue of Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, they pause and mumble a prayer or prostrate themselves on the cold stone floor. A rat scurries across the lap of the Buddha.

Suddenly, a cacophony erupts in the silence. Thud, thud, thud, the pounding of deep drums reverberates off the ancient walls and joins the beat of my heart. Ting, ting, ting of tiny cymbals played haphazardly, like a children's orchestra without a conductor. High and low, horns warble and join the discordant symphony. My ears fill with the chaos and my skin prickles as the sound creeps beneath it. Then silence. Approximately 30 cross-legged, crimson-robed monks set aside their instruments. A low drone begins as they resume reciting scriptures whilst swaying gently side-to-side.

Continuing my slow walk around the edge of the dark room, I head towards the stifled rays of light peeking through the door. Leaving the damp cold behind me, I step over the doorframe and breathe the free air. A 'mola' scuffs past and with wrinkled hands commences spinning the line of golden prayer wheels. Squeak, squeak, squeak....

In case you are wondering where I am, it is none other than the assembly hall of Samye Monastery—the first monastery in Tibet. Samye was built by King Trisong Detsen in the mid-eighth century. It represents the Tibetan state's first efforts to allow Buddhism to set down roots in the country which was previously dominated by the Bön religion.

Recently I and two of my city team mates, [names withheld], accompanied one of our local friends to visit Samye and some other



historical places about four hours outside of Lhasa. It was a very educational and eye-opening day.

Another interesting feature at Samye was the spirit room. It is said that the spirits of all Tibetans who have died come to this room and are collected in the two yak-leather bags hanging on each side of the door, to be taken into the room. When the spirit is ready for rebirth it exits out of the door through a hole that looks like a mail-slot. It is saddening to see photographs of people who have died—babies, teenagers, parents and elderly people—that have been attached to the outside of the door by family and friends."

Our member's letter continues with a description of her work, and prayer requests for Tibet. Please keep this country in your thoughts and prayers—especially those people who are so bound by the darkness of Tibetan Buddhism and the superstitions that control their lives.

Traditional missionary effort is important—even essential—but in many countries, like China, traditional missionary endeavour is out of the question. Please continue to pray for those workers who brave danger in order to bring the name of Christ into the world's many 'creative access' nations.



## MIF prayer notes

Pray for Walter and Jeannette Hagoort and the Reformed Ministries team in Papua New Guinea. Hagoorts are on home assignment this month, speaking in churches in the South Island to help people learn about their work. Others in PNG continue to work hard to build up the church and develop plans for the Leadership Training Centre.

Rev. Barry and Mrs. Anne James have once again spent several months in Uganda, serving with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda (OPCU) at their small seminary. As Faith in Focus goes to press, we are informed

that the James' are due to return to Australia in February. Please pray for good closure of the work they are doing; for safe travel; and for their adaptation back to life in a western culture.

At time of writing, it is estimated that this month Janice Reid will finalise her preparations and join HCJB in an Asian nation, working as radio trainer for their South East Asia sub-region. Please pray for safety as Janice relocates to a nation where believers are often in danger; pray for concentration and good memory as she begins language study.

Pray for our two short-term mis-

sionaries who are teaching English in closed countries. Ask for the Lord's safety at this time of year which is bitterly cold in some parts of Asia; and ask for both workers to have many opportunities to share spiritual truth with people they have dealings with.

[1] <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/main/bell.html>

[2] From "Tibetans: How will they hear?" Produced by Caleb project, [www.caleb-project.org](http://www.caleb-project.org)

[3] From "Tibetans: How will they hear?" Produced by Caleb project, [www.caleb-project.org](http://www.caleb-project.org)

[4] Beings who have reached enlightenment but vow to save others before they enter nirvana.