

the presbyterian banner

May 2015



*O LORD, you are my God;
I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness
you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago.
Isaiah 25:1*

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Editorial

In recent news we heard of a Kenyan school being invaded by Al-Shabab terrorists who crossed into Kenyan territory from Somalia and murdered one hundred and forty-seven students who, on being asked whether they were Christian or Muslim, confessed their faith in Christ. This sad event, top of the news for a day or two, has already been forgotten by mainstream western media.

But why is it that if it were one hundred and forty-seven Muslim students killed at a University by an extremist Christian militia there would be more of an outcry in the mainstream western media? Why is it that the feelings of a very obscure and depraved (LGBT) minority somewhere in the United States counts for much more newspaper space? Why is it that any sense of justice becomes swallowed up by the alleged practical realities of being in the 21st Century?

Why? Well, dear reader, it is because nothing has changed – absolutely nothing! Despite the implementation of much ‘enlightened’ legislation, decades of peace-keeping forces and aid programmes, modern evolutionary education – you get the picture – we are descending even more rapidly into the vortex of sin. Selfishness has indeed become enshrined. Any love for the poor and weak has been washed away in a plethora of abortuaries, gutless justice courts, and ‘mercy’ killings. It has been a long time since a biblical revival, and how much doesn’t it show!

You only need to consider how those changes have affected the Christian Church. Just go into some of the denominations that were once solid on doctrine and life, and see and hear the wishy-washy stuff getting served up there now!

But don’t you worry – if these comments were raised in one of our major daily papers you would be sure to get a reaction – together with death threats against one of those very few and narrow-minded conservative ministers.

One can only appreciate the courage of the apostle Paul as he took his life in his hands with challenging the Areopagus on their multi-god policy! With God’s power and Spirit he boldly proclaimed the only way by which a man may be saved. As you look at his ministry, isn’t it actually one of much persecution and suffering? You see, he followed right behind the Master. May we so do in our time, too.

*I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection
and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,
becoming like him in his death,
and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*
Philippians 3:10-11

Have you renewed for 2015?

Check your address label

The Presbyterian Banner is the official magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The PCEA was established in 1846 and adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as its doctrinal standard.

Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred.

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This magazine is available as a pdf file on the Church Website: www.pcea.org.au

Oh Really?

Worthless Me

There has been a dramatic increase in the hospitalisation of young Australian women who have intentionally harmed themselves, according to a new report ((Deborah Rice, 24 August, 2013). Figures released this week [i.e. August, 2013 - HZ] by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that in 2010-2011, there were more than 26,000 hospitalisations for self-harm across Australia. The majority of those treated were girls in the 15 to 19-year-old age group, and the rate for girls was almost three-times that of boys. Over a 10-year period, intentional poisonings and overdoses among young women rose significantly and the number of cases of self-harm using a sharp object more than doubled.

Making yourself feel better

Self-harm is a way of expressing and dealing with deep distress and emotional pain. As counterintuitive as it may sound to those on the outside, hurting yourself makes you feel better, say those who commit these acts. In fact, you may feel like you have no choice. Injuring yourself is the only way you know how to cope with feelings like sadness, self-loathing, emptiness, guilt, and rage (<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/cutting-and-self-harm.htm>). The physical pain functions as a distraction, an override as it were, however temporarily, to the emotional, psychological turmoil.

In many cases self-harm is not intended to be fatal. It is estimated that the number of young people who have engaged in self-harm is 40-100 times greater than those who have actually ended their lives. Evidence from Australian studies suggest that 6-7% (!) of

Australian youth aged 15-24 years engage in self-harm in any 12-month period. Evidence also suggests that more than 90% of people who present to hospital with self-harm have a mental disorder, the most common being depression. For many young people self-harm is a coping strategy, however maladaptive and damaging,



that allows them to continue to live rather than an attempt to end their life (<http://www.headspace.org.au/what-works/research-information/self-harm-and-suicidal-behaviours>). Some of the many quotes that could be obtained read as follows: "*I get really angry and I don't know how to deal with it. I end up punching walls until my hands bleed, trying to get the anger out,*" **Anna, 15 yrs**; "*The physical pain when I cut takes the focus away from emotional pain - and the physical pain doesn't feel as bad as the emotional pain,*" **David, 15 yrs**; "*When I'm down I feel helpless and hopeless, like things are never going to change, and I feel angry with everyone. After I cut, I feel less angry, like something has been released,*" **Sarah, 16 yrs.**

Herm Zandman

What God says

In the Scriptures we may read that God commands us to love our neighbour *as ourselves* (cf. Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"). Oftentimes Christian readers remember well that they are to love their neighbours with a self-sacrificing, self-giving love

(which, by the way, I have found to be the reason that so many seek a career in service to others, e.g. nursing and teaching), but they forget the second part '*as thyself*.'

The statement presupposes that the person who loves his neighbour loves himself as well. To some this may come as a bit of a shock in an era where so many psychologists and educators tout the importance of self-esteem for people. Yet, the Lord insists that those who belong to Him love themselves – in order to love others. And there is a logic to this.

God loves those who are His. He loves them beyond anything that a human being can imagine or measure. The ultimate evidence of this is that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us. Philippians 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. " Further-

more, He caused God the Holy Spirit to indwell His people (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19); God makes His home in those who are His.

If God loves His own so much, it follows that those objects of His love – in thinking God's thoughts after Him – do well to love themselves also. However, this self-love is *not* founded in the conviction that I am worthwhile in and of my natural self, it is because I affirm the *love of God* vested in me; it is supremely, divinely relational. As one young lady put it, "I know that God loves me and that is more than enough to enable me to love myself and others" (*Life with Paul de Jong*, Australian Christian Channel, 22/02/2015). Being the apple of God's eye (cf. Zechariah 2:8) enables the born-again Christian to accept himself and – consequently – reach out to others from a position of strength and God-centred stability. We are priceless in God and Christ, God loves each of us as if there were only one of us (Augustine); we simply are therefore priceless. We are no longer a den of Satan, we are a temple of God.

What we value we are inclined to fix if it needs fixing. For that reason we fix ourselves continuously, which we call sanctification, conforming more and more to the image of God (with the Holy Spirit's help). Likewise, we are concerned about the state of being of others. However, it is hard for you to guide some one else up a mountain when your own legs are broken. A person with a healthy constitution can more readily be the one for some one else on whom to lean. A well equipped person has the surplus to share more easily than some one who is poorly equipped to begin with. And so, the axiom is: / love me, because *God* loves me.

The focus on self

The problem continuously en-

countered in our materialistic society is that we tend to value what we *have* or *do* rather than what we *are* in God. As author Neil Postman in his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death* put it with more than a hint of sarcasm, "Successful is he who dies with the most toys around his bed." Not so, says the church father Augustine, "Thou [God] hast created us for Thyself, and our heart is not quiet until it rests in Thee."

We see many restless hearts around us, many of them in young people from all layers of society. Yet, they are aggressive, negative, depressed, isolated, without hope, diagnosed with all kinds of syndromes denoting emotional and spiritual imbalance, summed up in their own self-concept, "I am worthless." The remedy lies not in taking the knives away, in ritalin, or anti-depressants (I am not saying that these medicines cannot be used sometimes to give someone a bit of 'a leg up,' but they will only always be a band-aid) when the

entrapment to self-harm is essentially, but to no avail, aimed at filling the hole which Augustine signalized so many ages ago.

Created in God's image, no one is worthless, but seeing this for oneself, the self-harming young one needs to be brought back to the *source* of human worth, Jesus Christ. Only then the self-destruction of Satan's hell-hole will be supplanted by the self-affirmation of God's temple. By the grace of God, Christians young and old have experienced this, especially those who at one time were 'without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope**, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For **He is our peace**' (Ephesians 2:12-14). The Church has a job to do.



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The Past for Today

Christianity in Scotland (4) Reformation 1528—1600

Shortly after Patrick Hamilton's martyrdom in 1528, the 16 year-old King James V cast off the regency exercised since 1525 by his step father, Archibald Douglas, the pro-England Earl of Angus, and followed a pro-France policy. James married the daughter of the King of France in 1537 but she died a few months later. He married Mary of Guise the following year. In 1533 Henry Forres was burnt for possessing a New Testament in English and approving Hamilton's doctrines. Other believers fled to England, where Henry VIII had broken with the Papacy in 1534, or to France or Germany. The 1525 prohibition against bringing Lutheran literature into Scotland was renewed in 1535 with the addition that the possession of such literature was also a punishable offence. About twenty further persons were martyred prior to the Reformation and many others were prosecuted and had their property confiscated. In 1534 the Pope granted a dispensation allowing four of the illegitimate sons of the King by various mistresses to seek holy orders when they came of age, yet in 1541 Parliament, in an 'Act for Reforming of Kirks and Kirkmen', spoke among other things of the dishonesty and misrule of churchmen both in mental ability, knowledge and behaviour as the cause of churchmen being despised and held in contempt.

The death of James V in December 1542 a week after his only surviving legitimate child, Mary, was born, brought a regency, the Earl of Arran being appointed. There was a contest between the pro-English Earl of Arran and the pro-French Scottish Primate, Cardinal David Beaton, the nephew of the previous Archbishop. The pro-reform but timorous Arran at first

had the upper hand. In March 1543 an Act of the Scottish Parliament allowed the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, but it was passed against the opposition of the Church and with the qualification: that no man dispute or hold opinions under the pains contained in the acts of parliament.

Almost immediately Beaton recovered influence. Although Arran remained regent until 1554, he followed a pro-French line. Indeed he was created Duke of Châtellerauld for his part in arranging in 1548 a marriage treaty of the six-year old Mary to Francis, the heir apparent to the French throne.

Beaton has been described as living in the style of a Renaissance magnate, with a large household, servants and six residences, including the castle at St Andrews.



Cardinal Beaton

He was a secular-minded cleric, with strong French connections and great political ability. He was seeking to advance what he saw as Scotland's political interest over against the English at the same

Rowland S. Ward

time as influential Scots were opposed to his policies and religious dissent was increasing. He feared that if the Scottish King went the way of Henry VIII of England, the revenues of the church would suffer. Considering that the annual revenue of the church prior to 1556 was 'almost one half of the revenue of the whole kingdom of Scotland', and many times the revenue of the King, one can understand this. Created cardinal in 1538, Beaton held the office of Archbishop and Primate from 1539, was Lord Chancellor of Scotland from 1543 and became papal legate in Scotland in 1544.

Reformed influences

To what extent Zwinglian influences operated in the 1530s and 1540s is not altogether clear from the surviving records, but Swiss Reformed teaching comes to the fore with George Wishart. Wishart was the son of the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland and graduated in arts from the University of Louvain in 1532. He was ordained priest at some point. He became a schoolmaster in Montrose when he was summoned by John Hepburn, the bishop of Brechin, for using the Greek New Testament as a medium of instruction. Wishart fled to England in 1538 where he met Bishop Hugh Latimer in Bristol and where he also preached. Although convicted of heresy, in 1539 he was able to remove to Switzerland via Germany where he met Bullinger and other Swiss leaders of reform. He translated the First Helvetic Confession of 1536 into English (published posthumously in 1548), which doubtless indicates his own position at this point. The Reformed (Calvinistic) version of Reforma-

tion teaching continued to be the orientation of the Scottish Reformation.

Wishart returned to England in 1542, briefly studied and taught in Cambridge, and then went back to Scotland about the middle of 1543. He began an itinerant ministry beginning at Montrose which extended to Dundee. Archbishop Cardinal David Beaton, ordered him to desist, but Wishart simply removed to the west and continued preaching in Ayr. He returned to Dundee to minister when plague broke out, and successfully disarmed a priest who had been sent to assassinate him and then protected the man against the gathering. Although he knew his life was on the line he continued to preach and by the close of 1545 he was accompanied by an admiring and armed John Knox, a priest who had been ordained about 1536. Wishart refused to allow Knox to accompany him the 14kms from his last preaching place at Haddington to his lodgings at Ormiston, east of Edinburgh. Wishart was taken into custody there with a promise of protection from the cardinal, but was tried at St Andrews on 1 March 1546. In the course of the trial Wishart rejected several radical positions alleged against him, such as soul sleep, and turned the charge of clerical marriage back on his accusers. Beaton himself, in flagrant violation of his vows of celibacy, lived with a woman, Margaret Ogilvy (daughter of Lord Ogilvy), by whom he had eight children, all but one of them recorded in the public registers as legitimated.(1)

Wishart was a courteous, kindly and generous man with a concern for the poor. He was a very effective preacher, sometimes harsh, as one might expect given the corruptions of the time he sought to address, and was listened to attentively by the



common people. Prudently Beaton sent the audience out before sentencing him to death at the conclusion of the show trial. Beaton watched from a balcony as Wishart was hanged and burned to the west of St Andrews Castle. On 29 May 1546 a group of five disaffected landed gentry from Fife, some with Protestant sympathies, entered St Andrews Castle and murdered Beaton, and determined to hold the castle. Other sympathisers to the English connection and the Reformation joined them to a total of about 150. Beaton was succeeded as Archbishop of St Andrews by the Earl of Arran's half-brother, John Hamilton, who also became Treasurer of Scotland.

John Knox

The preaching of Wishart had stimulated the growth of private meetings for reading and discussing the Bible. John Knox (c.1514-72) was not involved in the murder of Cardinal Beaton, but his association with the Protestant cause made his life difficult. In April 1547 he found refuge in St Andrew's Castle at a time when there was a truce between the Regent and its approximately 150 occupants. He was called to be their preacher and was both eloquent and effective. However, late in October 1547 the French took the castle and Knox was sent to row in a

French galley for a period that lasted nineteen months. Early in 1549 he was released as part of a prisoner exchange and was exiled to England. He preached widely and became one of the chaplains to King Edward VI in 1551, but refused a settled appointment, including the offer of a bishopric. However, six months after Mary Tudor had succeeded to the English throne in July 1553 and renewed persecution of Protestants, Knox fled to Europe. Between periods at Geneva, he pastored a congregation of English exiles at Frankfurt, but in 1555 returned to Scotland where he preached openly. While the regent, Mary of Guise, intervened to prevent his prosecution for heresy in 1556, continuing persecution led Knox to return to Geneva in that year to pastor an English congregation there. Several pamphlets, including one directed against Mary Tudor and rule by women, and another appealing to the nobility of Scotland to seize political power in the interests of the Reformed faith, were written by him in 1558. A group of the Scottish Protestant nobility had come together in December 1557 as the Lords of the Congregation, pledged to provide in every parish for the reading of the Bible and passages from the English Prayer book until such time as public preaching in public was permitted.

In May 1559 Knox returned to Scotland at the request of the Lords of the Congregation, a group of the Protestant nobility who had come together in December 1557. They had renounced the Roman communion and committed to the pure Gospel. They also pledged to provide in every parish for the reading of the Bible and passages from the English Prayer



John Knox preaching before the Lords of the Congregation, June 1559.

book of Edward VI until such time as preaching in public was permitted. This development shows how things had progressed from private meetings of believers to a determination on the part of significant leaders to see a Reformed church throughout Scotland.

Knox was pre-eminently a preacher - one appointed 'to blow his Master's trumpet', as he said (cf. Ezekiel 33). There was growing support in towns and boroughs, but the regent was becoming less conciliatory now. On 24 April 1558, Mary Queen of Scots married the heir to the French throne. This strengthened her mother's regency in Scotland, but contributed to fears that Scotland would become a province of France.⁽²⁾ A few days later Walter Milne (or Mill), a frail old man of 82, was consigned to the flames at St Andrews at the instigation of Archbishop John Hamilton whose family was next in line to the throne. Milne was a former priest who had converted to the Reformation. His burning raised such an outcry among the people that it did much to spread the faith for which he died. In November 1558 the death of Queen Mary Tudor of England saw her

succeeded by her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth I.

While there were no more martyrdoms in Scotland, matters were coming to a head as the popularity of reform increased. Dundee in the east organized as a Reformed church in 1558 even before Knox's return. Ayr in the west was not far behind. The excesses of the French army of occupation and Scottish patriotism aided change. The regent reacted against the preachers, the Protestants mobilized and there was an uneasy truce in May 1559.



The regent was suspended by the Lords of the Congregation on 21 October 1559 with a view to establishing a provisional Protestant government. An English army came to the aid of the Scottish Protestants, and the Catholicism sustained by French interests now collapsed. It was supplanted by Protestantism of Calvinistic stripe. The regent died in June 1560, and the Treaty of Edinburgh, signed on 6 July 1560, gained the withdrawal of French and English troops. Francis II of France, the husband of Mary Queen of Scots, conceded the right to the calling of a Scottish Parliament to commence in July.

Footnotes:

(1). For details see David Hay Fleming, *The Reformation in Scotland* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910) Chapter 2 and Appendix B which lists nearly 400 sons and daughters of celibate clergy recorded to have been legitimated between the years 1529 and 1559.

Unless legitimized by the civil authority, the Crown became the ultimate heir of the property of illegitimates and that of any of their children.

(2). By letters patent dated 19 April 1558 Francis committed to Scotland falling to the nearest heir if Mary died without issue, but on 4 April she had signed secret documents that if she died without issue Scotland should go to the King of France and that contrary agreements should be of no effect. Text in W. Croft Dickinson *et al* (eds.,) *A Source Book of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1953) Vol. 2, 148-149.

Worship in the Banner

What the Hijabi Witnessed (and What She Didn't)

Carl Trueman

I have had the pleasure on a couple of occasions of sitting next to a girl wearing a hijab. Typically, this has occurred in departure lounges of airports or on the platforms of railway stations. Never has it happened in a place of worship at the time of a service. Never, that is, until recently.

On the last Friday in June, I happened to be in Cambridge with my youngest son and decided to expose him to one of my alma mater's true delights: choral evensong at King's Chapel. We dutifully queued in the pouring rain (for me, those blue remembered hills are definitely English and cloud covered), and, when the chapel finally opened, we took our places at the far end of the aisle. It was then that I realized that the young girl sitting to my left was wearing a hijab. It was an interesting, if unlikely, juxtaposition: the middle aged Orthodox Presbyterian and the twenty-something Moslem waiting for the Anglican liturgy to begin. I assume that – rather like me – he was probably in the chapel for aesthetic reasons rather than religious ones. King's choir is famous; the preaching in the chapel was, at least in my student days, at best, infamous. Sermons then were the ultimate Schleiermacherian nightmare: rambling reflections on the religious self-consciousness by the irremediably irreverent. It may have improved in recent decades but, not being remotely postmillennial, I have no confidence that that is the case.

Once the choir had entered and taken its place, the service began. For the next hour, the sardonic Presbyterian and the attractive hijabi sat, stood and on occasion knelt together as the congregation worked its way through the Book of Common Prayer's liturgy for evensong, modified to take into account the appropriate Feast Day (as a good Presbyterian, I have erased the detail of whose day from my memory). The singing, both corporate and choral, was beautiful; and the austere elegance of Cranmer's liturgy seemed to find its perfect acoustic context in the perpendicular poise of the late Gothic Chapel. Then, at the end, we filed out in silence, having, at the level of mere aesthetics, heard one of the great male

bachelors out there, I can confirm that it is still there, and still a prudent balance of atmosphere and good value for money).

Sitting in Don Pasquale's, my son and I indulged in a little thought experiment. What, we wondered, had the girl in the hijab made of it all? Culturally, it may not have been a completely alien environment. She was a Spanish Moslem, and, with the exception of the hijab, dressed in the casual attire of any fashion conscious Western girl. So the look and sounds of a Christian church was possibly not as alien to her as, for example, I had found the Blue Mosque in Istanbul while touring Turkey in the 80s. Yet she was still a Moslem. The service

itself would have been foreign territory. So what exactly had she witnessed, I asked myself? Well, at a general level she had heard the English language at its most beautiful



King's College Chapel

choirs singing words of deep and passionate piety. Outside, the rain continued and my son and I left the young hijabi chatting on her phone as we headed off to Don Pasquale's, a favourite haunt of my student days. Indeed, it was the place where one took a girl on a date if one wished to appear sophisticated while still operating on a budget. (For any would-be sophisticated but impoverished Cambridge

and set to an exalted purpose: the praise of Almighty God. She would also have seen a service with a clear biblical logic to it, moving from confession of sin to forgiveness to praise to prayer. She would also have heard this logic explained to her by the minister presiding, as he read the prescribed explanations that are built in to the very liturgy itself. The human tragedy and the way of salvation were both

clearly explained and dramatized by the dynamic movement of the liturgy. And she would have witnessed all of this in an atmosphere of hushed and reverent quiet.

In terms of specific detail, she would also have heard two whole chapters of the Bible read out loud: one from the Old Testament and one from the New. Not exactly the whole counsel of God but a pretty fair snapshot. She would have been led in a corporate confession of sin. She would have heard the minister pronounce forgiveness in words shaped by scripture. She would have been led in corporate prayer in accordance with the Lord's own prayer. She would have heard two whole psalms sung by the choir. She would have had the opportunity to sing a couple of hymns drawn from the rich vein of traditional hymnody and shot through with scripture. She would have been invited to recite the Apostles' Creed (and thus come pretty close to being exposed to the whole counsel of God). She would have heard collects rooted in the intercessory concerns of scripture brought to bear on the real world. And, as I noted earlier, all of this in the exalted, beautiful English prose of Thomas Cranmer.

Now, I confess to being something of an old Puritan when it comes to liturgy. Does it not lead to formalism and stifle the religion of the heart? Certainly I would have thought so fifteen or twenty years ago. Yet as I reflected on the service and what the girl in the hijab had witnessed, I could not help but ask myself if she could have experienced anything better had she walked into a church in the Prot-

estant evangelical tradition. Two whole chapters of the Bible being read? To have one whole chapter from one Testament seems to test the patience of many today. Two whole psalms sung (and that as part of a calendar which proceeds through the whole Psalter)? That is surely a tad too old fashioned, irrelevant, and often depressing for those who want to go to church for a bit of an emotional boost. A structure for worship which is determined by the interface between theological truth and biblically-defined existential need? That sounds as if it might be vulnerable to becoming dangerously formulaic formalism. A language used to praise God which is emphatically not that employed of myself or of anybody else in their daily lives when addressing the children,



King's Chapel Choir

the mailman, or the dog? I think the trendy adjective would be something like 'inauthentic.'

Yet here is the irony: in this liberal Anglican chapel, the hijabi experienced an hour long service in which most of the time was spent occupied with words drawn directly from scripture. She heard more of the Bible read, said, sung and prayed than in any Protestant evangelical church of which I am aware – than any church, in other words, which actually claims to take the word of God seriously and place

it at the centre of its life. Yes, it was probably a good thing that there was no sermon that day: I am confident that, as Carlyle once commented, what we might have witnessed then would have been a priest boring holes in the bottom of the Church of England. But that aside, Cranmer's liturgy meant that this girl was exposed to biblical Christianity in a remarkably beautiful, scriptural and reverent fashion. I was utterly convicted as a Protestant minister that evangelical Protestantism must do better on this score: for all of my instinctive sneering at Anglicanism and formalism, I had just been shown in a powerful way how far short of taking God's word seriously in worship I fall.

Of course, there were things

other than a sermon which the hijabi did not witness: she did not witness any adults behaving childishly; she did not witness anybody saying anything stupid; she did not witness any stand-up comedy routine or any casual cocksureness in the presence of God; she did not see any

forty-something pretending to be cool; in short, she did not witness anything that made me, as a Christian, cringe with embarrassment for my faith, or for what my faith has too often become at the hands of the modern evangelical gossellers.

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The World in the Banner

It's Legal to Kill Babies, But Let's Worry About a Gay Person's Right to Cake

A couple of weeks ago, a pregnant woman named Michelle Wilkins went to a home in Boulder, Colorado, looking to buy some baby clothes. The predator there, Dynal Lane, had placed an ad on Craigslist with the intent not of selling anything, but of stealing someone's unborn child. Lane accosted Mrs. Wilkins when she arrived at the house, cutting her uterus open with a knife, removing her baby and leaving her to bleed to death. Fortunately, the mother survived the attack, but sadly, her young daughter did not. Lane stowed the infant in an upstairs bathroom, where the little girl died alone in a cold bathtub.

Imagine the fear that beautiful child must have felt. Imagine the agony. Imagine the cruelty and selfishness of her slaughter. Imagine her light extinguished by the brutality and darkness of a cold, calculating killer. Imagine justice for this innocent victim.

All you can do is imagine it, because in this life, there will be none. The District Attorney in Boulder announced late last week that no murder charges will be filed in the case. Lane will stand accused of attempted murder for stabbing Mrs. Wilkins, along with a host of other crimes, but no matter how long she ultimately spends in prison, the fact remains that she will not have to answer for killing a child.

She will get away with murder.

The prosecutor says his hands are tied, and he's right, only he neglects to mention that he helped tie them. The Boulder DA has open connections to the abortion industry, and publicly supported the law now preventing him from charging Lane with murder. Unless it can be proven that the infant took a breath outside of the womb, the law does not consider her a person. Of course, the police report says the "fetus" gasped for breath, and

emergency room personnel said she was "viable," but none of this can be proven, so as far as Colorado is concerned, she wasn't a person.

But why should her personhood be hinged on whether she took a breath outside of the womb in the first place? Are hospital patients who require ventilators not people? If I hold my breath, do I forfeit my humanity for those brief moments? And if breathing outside of the womb is the completely capricious standard for "personhood," and if that made sense, which it emphatically doesn't, then what was she if not a person? A hologram? A hallucination? A phantom? A flamingo?

Nobody can answer these questions; it doesn't matter to the pro-aborts, anyway. Colorado's official legal position, regardless of its staggering idiocy and barbarity, is that unborn babies aren't real people — a view shared by millions of Americans in every state across the nation.

But don't worry. While the literal and actual dehumanization of infant children happens in Colorado, a protest movement gathers steam around the country. Celebrities, politicians, businessmen and regular citizens are taking to the streets to lash out against the devastating violation of basic human dignity. The media is reporting about it breathlessly, demanding answers from all involved and stopping at nothing until the perpetrators are exposed and shamed. Americans of all stripes are coming together, warriors for liberty and truth, bravely declaring their resolve. They will boycott an entire state just to make the point that the oppression inflicted by that state's government on the weakest and most helpless among us cannot be tolerated or condoned. Together they stand like rebels against the tyranny of evil men. Freedom fighters, struggling against all odds, screaming to the heavens so that God

Himself might hear them: Justice will be done, they cry! Justice!

...But not in Colorado. Don't be silly, the national outrage has nothing to do with dead babies, instead it's all targeted at Indiana. No, not because anyone's life is in jeopardy, but because a few homosexuals might be inconvenienced when attempting to purchase consumer goods.

Indeed, as babies are explicitly excluded from basic legal protections and the most fundamental of human rights, the attention of the country focuses on a religious freedom bill, passed last week, which might, in some limited circumstances, interfere with a gay couple's ability to procure baked goods. Liberals throughout the land are frantic over the prospect that homosexuals may possibly, in some potential situations, experience the moderate nuisance of a business owner declining to participate in their gay wedding.

Cakes for gay people, that's the issue of the day. The widespread legalization of child murder? Well, why would anyone be upset about that? You might think these two things are unrelated, and to liberals they are, and that's the point. The liberal philosophy of human rights is utterly random and disjointed, which is why their opinion can't be believed or listened to or treated with respect. It's an insane, rambling, mess of jumbled, moronic nonsense, where each right is severed and disconnected from the other with nothing tying it all together.

Just think about this for a minute.

+ *Matt Walsh, TheBlaze*

Q&A domestic violence program ignored male victims

While the increased awareness of domestic violence issues is to be welcomed, its manipulation by those with other agendas is an entirely different matter. Monday night's Q&A programme on the

ABC was a case in point. Not only did it work hard on perpetuating stereotypes about domestic violence, but the producers also refused to accept a potential panelist because she was a woman.

I have seen emails which show the producers had originally invited on the panel a man from 1in3, a group working to raise the profile of male victims of domestic violence. He was unable to go on, but well known psychologist and author on men's health, Dr Elizabeth Celi, was suggested instead. The producers rejected her because she was a woman. More precisely, they rejected her because she was an eloquent and insightful woman who wanted to speak up for men and children who were the victims of domestic violence. You see, the problem was she didn't fit the stereotype.

Yet there was a place on the panel for my old chum, Natasha Stott Despoja, the Ambassador for Women and Girls. That's because her perspective on domestic violence is finely attuned to exactly those stereotypes. The sad fact is that much of the "debate" about domestic violence is not a debate at all. It has descended into a 21st Century morality play in which roles are assigned according to gender. Men can have only two roles in this play: they are either the brutish perpetrators of domestic violence, or the courageous men who care for women.

The voices that are drowned out are the men who are the victims of domestic violence – about one in three of all cases – and the children. Australian Institute of Criminology Statistics show that 45 per cent of children murdered by a parent are murdered by the mother, making this kind of domestic violence an equal opportunity killer.

While domestic violence by men against women features large, not once has Ms Stott Despoja mentioned violence against children by women. Why is that? Because it would require admitting women are just as capable of acts of violence as men. And while one woman dies on average each week as a result of

domestic violence, men are not far behind; for them it is one on average every ten days.

+ *Brisbane Times* 25 February 2015

Megachurch Founder, Televangelist Robert Schuller Dies At 88

Christian televangelist Robert Schuller, best known for the Sunday morning Hour of Power telecast he hosted for decades from his Crystal Cathedral megachurch in California, has died at 88. Schuller's daughter, Carol Schuller Milner, and grandson, Rev. Bobby Schuller, announced the news on Twitter. Bobby Schuller, who has taken over as host of a scaled-back *Hour of Power*, said today that his grandfather "passed this morning into eternal life with Christ." Carol Schuller Milner was quoted by The Associated Press as saying her father died early Thursday at a care facility in Artesia, California.

The elder Rev. Schuller was diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus in 2013. *The Orange County Register* reports that he ceased chemotherapy after the death of his wife, Arvella, in February 2014.

Schuller launched *Hour of Power* in 1970 with what the AP describes as "upbeat messages on faith and redemption" but watched his empire collapse in his waning years, with the towering, glass-ensconced Crystal Cathedral, situated on 40 acres in Garden Grove, Calif., filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2010. The building was purchased the following year by the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Orange for \$57.5 million.

At the *Hour of Power's* peak in the 1990s, it had 20 million viewers in 180 countries, the AP says. The news agency writes: "Schuller's evangelical Protestant ministry, part of the Reformed Church in America, was a product of modern technology. He and his late wife ... an organist, started a ministry in 1955 with \$500 when he began preaching from the roof of a concession stand

at a drive-in movie theater southeast of Los Angeles. The church's motto — 'Come as you are in the family car' — tapped into the burgeoning Southern California auto culture and the suburban boom of post-World War II America."

NPR's Tom Gjelten says Schuller "was a compelling speaker with a positive message, and he reached out to Christians of all denominations. At the suggestion of Billy Graham, [he] began televising his services."

ABC News says: "In 2008, the recession led to a decrease in church donations and ticket sales to its holiday pageants, according to church officials. The church's money troubles forced it to lay off at least 140 people last year, halve the air time of the *Hour of Power* TV program and even dismiss its orchestra and profes-

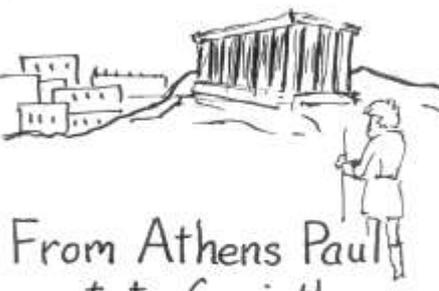
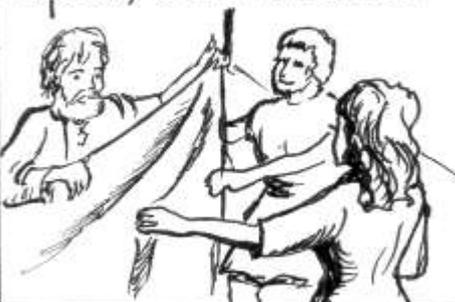
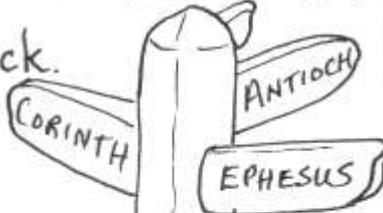


sional choir singers, church officials had said. The cathedral decided to file for Chapter 11 only after some of its creditors sued for payment, according to church officials."

In 2013, a lawsuit was filed by creditors against several members of Schuller's family, alleging that "the older Schuller and his family members used their power and position to give themselves generous salaries, housing allowances and other benefits while the church struggled financially," according to the Register.

+ www.npr.org

Children under the Banner — Acts 18:1– 19:41

<h1>Riot!</h1>	 <p>From Athens Paul went to Corinth.</p>	<p>He stayed with tentmaker Aquila, and Priscilla.</p> 
<p>From Corinth they all went to Ephesus, Paul went to Antioch then back.</p> 	 <p>Many believers burned old evil scrolls</p>	<p>A silversmith called Demetrius made trouble</p> 
<p>No one will buy our shrines!" Paul says <small>they shouted.</small> that man-made gods are no gods at all!"</p>  <p>"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" they kept shouting and shouting.</p>		 <p>Paul's friends did not let him go to the crowd.</p>  <p>At last the city clerk calmed the crowd.</p>

Prescribed Search Work

MAY 2015

Senior Section 12 years and over; Intermediate 10—11 years; Junior 9 years and under

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 4 and 8)

ACTS chapter 8

1. How did Saul make havoc of the church?
2. What did Peter tell Simon the sorcerer could not be purchased with money?
3. What was the eunuch's answer when Philip asked if he understood what he read?
- 4(x). What belief did Philip require, and the eunuch profess, for baptism?

chapter 9:1--31

5. What did Saul see and hear as he journeyed to Damascus? (2 verses)
6. What was the Lord's reply when Ananias objected to meeting Saul? (2 verses)
7. What was the response of the people to Paul's preaching Christ in the synagogue?
- 8(x). What did Barnabas do to help Saul?

JUNIOR

JOHN chapter 6:1--21

1. How many men were fed by the lad's loaves and fish[es]?
2. How many baskets of fragments were gathered?
3. How did the disciples feel when they saw Jesus walking on the sea?
4. What happened immediately they received Jesus into the ship?

Please send the answers to:
Mrs I Steel
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
The questions for the whole year
are available from the above postal
address or by email at:
iesteel@gmail.com

Abraham*The Friend of God*

T.M. Reeve

Friendship is that wonderful God-given capacity (by His common grace) for closeness of spirit, being of one mind and having affectionate love one for another. It is a golden subject as illustrated in a poem received many years ago:

*Friendship is a chain of gold,
Shaped in God's all-perfect mold,
Each link a smile, a laugh, a tear,
A grip of the hand, a word of
Cheer.*

*As steadfast as the ages roll,
Binding closer soul to soul;
No matter how far or heavy the
load,
Sweet is the journey on Friend-
ship's Road.*
(‘Friendship’s Road’ by J.B. Downie)

As indicated here the capacity for friendship is part of our being, made in the image of God. In the Godhead we have the perfect fellowship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the exalted model for all earthly relationships.

Friendships can be formed at a very young age with school friends, workmates, and later on special friends who may become partners for life. How wonderful when a wife can say, ‘My husband is my best friend’, or a husband, ‘My wife is my best friend’. That is how it should be. But we have to work hard and pray for this.

It is said that we make our best friends when young, but it is not always the case. There may be a difficult time as our journey winds to the finish line when spouses and friends are taken from us. That is where the church/body of Christ can exercise a helpful ministry to us. There are also some organisations which have special ‘Friendship Clubs’ to foster the making of new friends.

Comments on Friendship

There are many memorable sayings on record about good friends – meaning faithful friends. Here is one from the Apochrypha: ‘A faithful friend is the medicine of life.’ (Ecclesiasticus.)

But it is to the Bible we must turn to find the best advice and commentary on friendship as well as the best examples of true friendship. We may think of Proverbs such as “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” (Proverbs 27:6) or, “A friend loves at all times” (Proverbs 17:17). We are reminded of the words of Jesus, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13).



‘Abraham caressing Isaac’, by Rembrandt

Christ’s action went further than this, as He laid down His life for God’s enemies (Romans 5:8–10).

Also in the book of Proverbs, Solomon said, “A man who has friends must show himself friendly” (Proverbs 18:24). In other words, we should aim to have those qualities of kindness, consideration of others, compassion and patience that are attractive to others. These also are fruits of the Spirit and characteris-

tics of love as shown in Paul’s epistles.

When Friendship Fails

But there are occasions, when a crisis comes in life, that we ourselves may be let down by friends. It is in times of trouble that we find out who our real friends are! (‘You can count them on the fingers of one hand,’ I’ve heard it said.)

On occasion, very sadly, some are forsaken by all their friends. This happened to Jesus and to Paul. (Look at Matthew 26:56; 2 Timothy 4:16,17). This leads on to the second part of Proverbs 18:24, which states: “But there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.” How wonderful to have God as our never-failing friend!

A Specific Friendship

With these general considerations in mind, I wish to direct our thoughts to the friendship between God and Abraham. Principles here can be applied to our relationship with God.

Abraham, the father of the Jews (and Arabs), is spoken about much in the Scriptures as a man of faith or the father of the faithful. We have the record of his life in the early part of the book of Genesis but his high example of faith is referred to over and over again in the New Testament, notably in the books of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. Just as an example, here is a quotation from Galatians 3:9: “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” Those of us who are believers share in the covenant promises given to Abraham.

However we probably overlook Abraham’s special friendship with God. It is a remarkable statement, given three times in the Bible, that Abraham

was “the friend of God”. In the reading from Isaiah 41, the Lord is speaking and He designates “Abraham My Friend” (Isaiah 41:8). No one else receives this title, although the disciples come close, particularly John.

We might think of others with a close relationship with God, including the prophets in their lonely work. Enoch “walked with God” and God spoke to Moses, as it were, “face to face” (Genesis 5: 21-24; Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

Then there was David, a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). Yet only Abraham has this honoured appellation, “the friend of God”.

Five Aspects Regarding Friendship

I would like to say five things about faithful friendships and then examine the friendship of God and Abraham, applying the principles to us today:

1. Friends know each other well. They enjoy spending time with each other.
2. Friends love each other with caring, affectionate love.
3. Friends can speak honestly with each other; they listen well & speak well.
4. Friends help each other, bearing each other's burdens.
5. Faithful friends never forsake each other.

1. God knows us all perfectly.

God knew everything about Abraham including his diligence in ordering his family. “For I know him...” says the Lord in Genesis 18:19. God set His electing love

upon Abraham and called him to Himself.

Abraham came to know God well through the many times that they spoke to each other. There was no part of the Bible written until Moses.

But we know God through His word and Spirit. (John 17: 3,8; 16:13a) and we must strive to know Him better. (Philippians 3: 7-11).

2. Friends of God show their love for Him by obeying Him.

Abraham always obeyed God, no matter how difficult it was. There was no hesitation; “he rose up early” to carry out God’s instructions. (Genesis 22:3; Hebrews 11:8). See God’s word to Isaac in Genesis 26:4-5. Love and obedience go together. John 14:15,21; 15:13,14.

3. The LORD as Abraham’s Friend told him special things.

When He was about judgment work He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” Genesis 18:17. “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him” Psalm 25:14.

We must speak honestly; God always does that. And we must listen well to Him, with reverence for His word and worship (with no joking about God or the scriptures). (Psalm 89:7; Ecclesiastes 5:1; James 1:19).

God listened to Abraham’s intercession for Sodom when he spoke boldly, yet humbly, to Him. (Genesis 18:23-33). He also listened favourably to his prayers for Ishmael. (Genesis 17:18,20). They spoke freely and honestly to

each other but Abraham did not forget his position before God as “dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:23). Cf. Psalm 103:14.

4. The LORD helped Abraham His friend. God blessed Abraham greatly by giving to him land, livestock and riches (Genesis 13:2,6,14-17). He helped him in defeating the five kings and rescuing Lot, family, friends and goods, see Genesis 14. He was also blessed spiritually – directly by God and also through His priest at Salem, Melchizedek. (14: 18,19). Indeed he was blessed by God “in all things”, including the important task of choosing a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:1,7[angels assisted], 12,21,27).

The Lord also bears our burdens and believers can say boldly, “The Lord is my Helper.” (Psalm 55:22; Hebrews 13:6). His greatest blessing is in our salvation, where no-one could help us but the Saviour.

5. The Lord is the only truly faithful Friend.

He never leaves us in this world and guides us to the next. There we will dwell with Him in perfect fellowship. He did this for Abraham, (Hebrews 11:13-16), and He does it for us. He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

Tom Reeve is an elder in the Mt. Druitt congregation, the church which is hosting our Synod this year.

Was this space for your church news and photographs?

Ask your minister or elder how your congregation can be part of this positive promotion of the denomination, as well as keeping the rest of us up with what's happening!

Camps, special events, youth news, seniors, engagements, marriages, births, anniversaries, obituaries... the list goes on and on!

Perhaps you could volunteer to send in some news and photos?

Churches under the Banner



Former Free Presbyterian Chapel, Robe, South Australia

The SA Register reported late in 1858 that "a dissenting place of worship, a plain unassuming building near the site of the proposed Protestant Church (St. Peter's) will shortly be opened. It also reported that the varied denominations of Robe were "exceedingly liberal and tolerant in their religious opinions towards one another, each ... freely rendering his mite to the assistance of the other for church endearment purposes." The Free Presbyterian Kirk or "Independent" Chapel was completed in December 1858.

Ulverstone

The Ulverstone Rally Day this year was organised by Ben, Briony, and Denise.

We were sent off with different clues to find and things to collect along the way. At the end of



the first stage we were back at the church where we were given some newspapers and some tape and we had to construct a chair that would hold quite a few Books. In the second stage we had to make a paper plane and see who could fly it the longest distance.

Then, in the third stage, we had to make a small boat from a piece of foil and place it into the baby bath full of water and see whose boat would hold the most marbles.

We ended up at the beach at Devonport. It was such a beautiful hot day that most people had a

swim before finishing up with a great BBQ.

Congratulations to the organisers, we all had a great day and look forward to another one next year.

