



Differences, questions, and corrections

Genocide

ROY GANE'S ARTICLE in *Spectrum's* summer 2006 issue is a good summary of genocide portrayed in the Old Testament and resonates as if justified today. Nonetheless, how is it justified by reason other than God having so instructed?

Regardless of how viewed, such action is, simply put, murder, which is forbidden by the Decalogue. Christ even accentuates the problem to the point that evil thought, as hate, is tantamount to murder. Therefore, there appears to be a conflict still not understood, and justifiably so, even in today's setting.

Neither is it clear why God uses mankind to do his dirty work, as if one is to receive a spiritual uplift from doing it. In the end, he has no qualms about destroying evil to a state of: "without form and void" (*Abussos*) (Jer.4:28; Gen.1:2), ushering in a new "replenished" (KJV) earth, which Adam and Eve were instructed to do at their beginning, to put back what once was, but failed.

GERHARD PUDEWELL

Muscatine, Iowa

I FOUND THE discussion between Charles Scriven and Roy Gane (fall 2006) regarding genocide rather interesting. However, neither touched on a

factor that has helped me at times.

We know that the Bible was written by humans and that the writings span many centuries. It appears to me that there is a development or growth in the understanding of God during this time, with the life of Jesus of Nazareth being the clearest perception of God that we have to date. The authors wrote of their interaction with God (and God's interaction with them), but their perception of God was skewed by the culture and world in which they lived.

I just finished reading about King David. He slaughtered untold thousands, including children, but is guiltless before God except in the case of Uriah, his buddy. The books of Moses mention that during the religious celebrations, when the people all traveled to "the place I choose," God promised to keep raiders away from their lands and homes (Exod. 34:24). I suspect he would have preferred doing this always if their culture hadn't been in the way. But he honored their willingness to serve him and gave them strength to destroy their neighbors

I surmise that those neighbors may have learned to serve Abraham's God if they had been approached differently.

BRUCE RAFUSE

Via the Internet

ON THE SUBJECT of genocide, your correspondent, Gordon Short ("Feedback," winter 2007), seems to have difficulty understanding not only the theologians, but—of all things—me, from the same gene pool! My point was that, in dealing with the sin problem, all the options open to God were bad.

For Abraham Lincoln, saving the Union involved the terrible option of war, with the loss of six hundred thousand young American lives. The suffering it cost him is revealed in the increasing haggardness of his face as the war progressed.

To curb the spread of demonic heathenism and the toll it took on human life, God resorted to genocide, a dreadful option contrary to his nature of love. What it cost him can be calculated in his pain at the death of a sparrow! The suffering that God-ordered, Old Testament genocide caused shows up most clearly in the agony of Father and Son at the cross, when the whole mess caused by sin enveloped them both.

Let me add that God is equally criticized for not exterminating Hitler and his gang of thugs during World War II. Whatever he does or doesn't do in dealing with the messy problem of sin, he gets blamed.

For a more lengthy treatment of

the subject, see the complete article, "God in the Mud: A Woman's View of the Dark Side of God" on my Web site <beatriceneall.com>.

BEATRICE NEALL
Ooltewah, Tenn.

No Excuses for Lawbreaking

I DISAGREE WITH Douglas Morgan's view on the Iraq war ("Why I Want to Witness for Peace," winter 2007), but he has every right to protest. However, I see his justification for breaking the law very disingenuous: "The hope is that the extraordinary spectacle of hundreds of peaceful, praying Christians being arrested will help draw attention to the urgency and magnitude of the situation we face."

Does attaching a Christian motive make breaking the law acceptable? How about a student of Morgan cheating just a little to ensure gaining access to a better theological seminary.

I'm sorry, but breaking the law is breaking the law. Let's not make excuses.

RICHARD HANSON
Nashua, N.H.

Offensive Artwork

I FOUND THE cover of your winter 2007 issue offensive. Something less "revealing" would have served your purpose just as well.

KATHY HECHT
Via the Internet

I AM CONCERNED that the recent cover of *Spectrum* will give fuel to critics who would like to continually burn *Spectrum*. I personally do not like to see a woman's body portrayed in that way on the cover of a Christian magazine, especially when that magazine is the one avenue in Adventism

through which we seek to reach other thinkers.

Publication of controversial topics gives us enough platform for criticism; but putting such artwork on the cover opens the magazine to unnecessary attack. I think someone forgot who is in the audience.

Seeing this painting in an art museum is very appropriate. Seeing it on the front cover of *Spectrum* is unbecoming.

BRONWEN F. LARSON
Loma Linda, Calif.

SPECTRUM editor, Bonnie Dwyer describes the issue as a new media, explaining that postmodernity is not a choice ("Thirty-Five and Counting...on Hope," winter 2007). She is correct, but as a Christian I have always believed we have a God-given innate ability to choose what we will partake in any age.

I am an artist and I recognize that John Hoyt is a gifted artist, but I cannot accept *Spectrum's* choice of its new postmodernity, with his front cover art displaying a nude woman. This does not seem any different from almost any other magazine in which one can see similar nude images. I cannot understand by what justification this choice appeared on the cover of a Christian magazine.

It is a fact that nude imagery influences people to abuse others, especially women and children. The average person does not comprehend what sexual exploitation does to the psyche. The poem on the back cover was incredibly true and beautiful and could have also included mention of the horror of dying inside when one is sexually abused.

This same issue stated that some

churches may condone cybersex in some instances. It also said Christians should "respond to new porn technologies not with knee-jerk judgmental outrage, but with fine moral reasoning." I unequivocally believe that Jesus would be totally outraged with any porn or cybersex.

It seems that *Spectrum* should be extremely cautious before it asks me or any other Christian to partake of or react to the evils within postmodernism.

MARIE SANDBORN
Hendersonville, N.C.

Correction

In Richard M. Davidson's article, "The Authority of Scripture: A Personal Pilgrimage" (summer 2006), several lines were mistakenly omitted from what appears as the first sentence of the last paragraph on page 43. The passage should read as follows:

Of course there is an illegitimate proof-text method that takes texts from here and there, pulling them out of context and applying them to something the texts were never intended to support. But it is also true that if we believe that a divine Author superintended the work of the human authors, there must be a basic unity to Scripture.

The editors apologize for this omission. ■