

LFL Conference 2010



DETAILS

9am - 3pm
Saturday 28th August, 2010
Australian Lutheran College
Student Centre
104 Jeffcott Street North Adelaide
Cost: \$20 Adults
\$10 Students/Concession
Please RSVP by Friday 20th August to
lutheransforlife@gmail.com or
08 7225 0369 (LFL Secretary)

SPEAKERS

Selena Ewing (Senior Research Officer at
Southern Cross Bioethics Institute, a founding
director of Women's Forum Australia)
Facing Motherhood as Women and as a Community

The Hon Dennis Hood MLC, Family First Party
Promoting Life Values in Parliament

Madeleine Wiedemann (Emily's Voice, Australia)
A Personal Journey Through Abortion

Rev Fraser Pearce (Lutheran Pastor)
Forgiveness and God's Plan



Lutherans For Life: Promoting the Sanctity of Human Life

One-year Membership Fees

Individual.....	\$25
Concession/Unemployed.....	\$15
Family.....	\$30
Institutional.....	\$100+ (contact for details)

Life Membership Fees

Individual.....	\$200
Pensioner.....	\$50
Family.....	\$300

Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Rev/Dr _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Congregation: _____

☐ New Membership ☐ Membership renewal ☐ Donation

Type of credit card: _____ Amount: \$ _____ Card number: _____ Expiry: ____/____

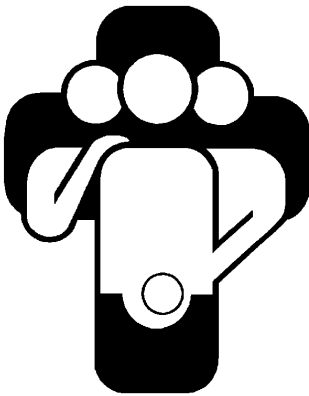
Name as it appears on card: _____ Signature: _____

Please send your completed form to: Pastor Christian Fandrich, 6 Cheviot Street, Harristown QLD, 4350.
(Privacy note: Membership information is used only for LFL membership.)

Life News

Inside this issue:

Editorial	2
Your vote counts	3
World Snippets	4
Join the revolution	5
Conference 2010	8



Life News is the newsletter
of Lutherans for Life Inc—
Established in 1987 and
sponsored by the Lutheran
Church of Australia.

Print Post Approved
Periodical No.
PP442570/0006
ISSN 1033-7725

Editor: Thomas Pietsch
✉ LN.editor@gmail.com

We Shall Not Weary, We Shall Not Rest

Richard John Neuhaus



Richard John Neuhaus, who passed away on 8 January 2009, delivered these comments at the July 2008 convention of the USA National Right to Life Committee. We reprint them here with the permission of First Things (www.firstthings.com).

Once again this year, the National Right to Life convention is partly a reunion of veterans from battles past and partly a youth rally of those recruited for the battles to come. And that is just what it should be. The pro-life movement that began in the twentieth century laid the foundation for the pro-life movement of the twenty-first century. We have been at this a long time, and we are just getting started. All that has been and all that will be is prelude to, and anticipation of, an indomitable hope. All that has been and all that will be is premised upon the promise of Our Lord's return in glory when, as we read in the Book of Revelation, "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be sorrow nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." And all things will be new.

That is the horizon of hope that, from generation to generation, sustains the great human rights cause of our time and all times—the cause of life. We

Continued on page 6

Editorial

Welcome to this quarter’s edition of *Life News* in which we’re very pleased to re-print for you the late Richard John Neuhaus’s rousing speech *We Shall Not Weary, We Shall Not Rest*. I hope he inspires you to continue your support for the right to life movement as a matter of central importance to our shared Christian faith.

One of the best ways you can show your support is by coming along to our annual conference in Adelaide (see the back page for more details). Lutherans For Life has always had impressive speakers at its events, and I think you’ll agree that this year is no exception. One of Australia’s foremost critics of the sexualisation of girls and women, Selena Ewing, will be talking on motherhood and community. In 2007, to wide acclaim, Selena published ‘Faking It’, a mock-magazine that debunked a lot of the messages that women’s magazines portray. Copies can still be ordered via www.womensforumaustralia.org.

Also speaking will be Dennis Hood, a tireless campaigner for life issues in the SA Parliament in his role as *Family First* member of the Legislative Council. He’ll be providing a unique, insider’s perspective to the struggle for life issues in the parliamentary context.

Madeleine Wiedemann from Queensland is a courageous young woman who has spoken out about her own experience with abortion and we are greatly privileged to have her speak to us also. She will be talking about her own personal journey through abortion—something as brave to speak about as it is necessary to hear and understand.

Lastly Pastor Fraser Pearce, newly installed at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Adelaide, will be speaking on forgiveness and what God intended man and woman to be. I hope you can see that this is a conference not to be missed!

A couple of weeks ago I attended a talk given by the US lawyer and bioethicist Wesley J. Smith. The *Right to Life—Australia* society had brought Smith out (you may even have seen him on television or heard him on radio) because the SA Parliament has introduced yet another euthanasia bill, and a number of other States are expected to follow. Please do watch out for this in your State.

At the end of the talk, which was held at State Parliament House, my local MP stood up to speak. She had not made up her mind about euthanasia, she confessed, but ever since coming to office a few months ago she had been bombarded with letters and phone calls from the pro-euthanasia lobby. She finally agreed to meet them (she was doing so in the following week) but thought that she should do the right thing and hear from the other side too. She was taken by what Smith had said, and impressed on me again the importance of letter writing. One other MP said that for every pro-life letter he gets, he receives about three or four from the pro-euthanasia lobby, and he encouraged us to write, preferably in hand writing, to all of our politicians.

On the topic of politics, I draw your attention to Rikki Lambert’s piece on the opposite page and the websites he refers to. They are excellent for being informed when you vote at the coming election. This issue also has a book review by Pastor Roly Stahl which I hope you find as interesting as I did.

Finally, our deep thanks to the many of you who responded to our appeal for membership renewals and donations in our last issue. There was an encouraging response for which we are very grateful. Your continued support ensures that Lutherans for Life can continue their work. Many are now taking the opportunity to do this via online donations, which we encourage you to utilise.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Thomas Pietsch

Lutherans for Life Branches:

Riverland Branch (Serving the Riverland area of South Australia; established in September 1989)
Contact Person : Mrs Lois Rathjen 08 8584 5706

New Zealand Branch (Established in June 1991)
Contact Person : Mr Petrus Simons 04 476 9398

Sunshine Coast Branch (Serving the Sunshine Coast area of QLD; established in Aug 1992)
Contact Person : Mr Norm Auricht 07 5443 6849

Darling Downs Branch (Serving the Darling Downs area of Queensland; re-established in Oct 2005)
Contact Person : Mrs Joy Wurst 07 4613 4189

Would you like more copies of *Life News*? To have the latest edition emailed to you in a PDF format that is ready to print, write to LN.editor@gmail.com.



and endurance and, by the grace of God, hope unvanquished—it struck me then that, by the criteria of the privileged and enlightened, none of these my people had a life worth living. In that moment, I knew that a great evil was afoot. The culture of death is an idea before it is a deed.

In that moment, I knew that I had been recruited to the cause of the culture of life. To be recruited to the cause of the culture of life is to be recruited for the duration; and there is no end in sight, except to the eyes of faith.

Perhaps you, too, can specify such a moment when you knew you were recruited. At that moment you could have said, “Yes, it’s terrible that in this country alone 4,000 innocent children are killed every day, but then so many terrible things are happening in the world. Am I my infant brother’s keeper? Am I my infant sister’s keeper?” You could have said that, but you didn’t. You could have said, “Yes, the nation that I love is betraying its founding principles—that every human being is endowed by God with inalienable rights, including, and most foundationally, the right to life. But,” you could have said, “the Supreme Court has spoken and its word is the law of the land. What can I do about it?” You could have said that, but you didn’t. That horror, that betrayal, would not let you go. You knew, you knew there and then, that you were recruited to contend for the culture of life, and that you were recruited for the duration.

The contention between the culture of life and the culture of death is not a battle of our own choosing. We are not the ones who imposed upon the nation the lethal logic that human beings have no rights we are bound to respect if they are too small, too weak, too dependent, too burdensome. That lethal logic, backed by the force of law, was imposed by an arrogant elite that for almost forty years has been telling us to get over it, to get used to it.

But “We the People,” who are the political sovereign in this constitutional democracy, have not gotten over it, we have not gotten used to it, and we will never, we will never ever, agree that the culture of death is the unchangeable law of the land.

We do not know, we do not need to know, how the battle for the dignity of the human person will be resolved. God knows, and that is enough. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta and saints beyond numbering have taught us, our task is not to be successful but to be faithful. Yet in that faithfulness

is the lively hope of success. We are the stronger because we are unburdened by delusions. We know that in a sinful world, far short of the promised Kingdom of God, there will always be great evils. The principalities and powers will continue to rage, but they will not prevail. In the midst of the encroaching darkness of the culture of death, we have heard the voice of him who said, “In the world you will have trouble. But fear not, I have overcome the world.” Because he has overcome, we shall overcome. We do not know when; we do not know how. God knows, and that is enough. We know the justice of our cause, we trust in the faithfulness of his promise, and therefore we shall not weary, we shall not rest.

Whether, in this great contest between the culture of life and the culture of death, we were recruited many years ago or whether we were recruited only yesterday, we have been recruited for the duration. We go from this convention refreshed in our resolve to fight the good fight. We go from this convention trusting in the words of the prophet Isaiah that “they who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

The journey has been long, and there are miles and miles to go. But from this convention the word is carried to every neighborhood, every house of worship, every congressional office, every state house, every precinct of this our beloved country—from this convention the word is carried that, until every human being created in the image and likeness of God—no matter how small or how weak, no matter how old or how burdensome—until every human being created in the image and likeness of God is protected in law and cared for in life, we shall not weary, we shall not rest. And, in this the great human rights struggle of our time and all times, we shall overcome.

We Shall Not Weary, We Shall Not Rest

continued from page 1

contend, and we contend relentlessly, for the dignity of the human person, of every human person, created in the image and likeness of God, destined from eternity for eternity—every human person, no matter how weak or how strong, no matter how young or how old, no matter how productive or how burdensome, no matter how welcome or how inconvenient. Nobody is a nobody; nobody is unwanted. All are wanted by God, and therefore to be respected, protected, and cherished by us.

We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until every unborn child is protected in law and welcomed in life. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until all the elderly who have run life’s course are protected against despair and abandonment, protected by the rule of law and the bonds of love. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until every young woman is given the help she needs to recognize the problem of pregnancy as the gift of life. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, as we stand guard at the entrance gates and the exit gates of life, and at every step along way of life, bearing witness in word and deed to the dignity of the human person—of every human person.

Against the encroaching shadows of the culture of death, against forces commanding immense power and wealth, against the perverse doctrine that a woman’s dignity depends upon her right to destroy her child, against what St. Paul calls the principalities and powers of the present time, this convention renews our resolve that we shall not weary, we shall not rest, until the culture of life is reflected in the rule of law and lived in the law of love.

It has been a long journey, and there are still miles and miles to go. As Pope John Paul the Great wrote in his historic message *Evangelium Vitae* (the Gospel of Life) the culture of death goes all the way back to that fateful afternoon when Cain struck down his brother Abel, and the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And Cain answered, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” And the Lord said to Cain, “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground.” The voice of the blood of

brothers and sisters beyond numbering cry out from the slave ships and battlegrounds and concentration camps and torture chambers of the past and the present. The voice of the blood of the innocents cries out from the abortuaries and sophisticated biotech laboratories of this beloved country today. Contending for the culture of life has been a very long journey, and there are still miles and miles to go.

The culture of death is an idea before it is a deed. I expect many of us here, perhaps most of us here, can remember when we were first encountered by the idea. For me, it was in the 1960s when I was pastor of a very poor, very black, inner city parish in Brooklyn, New York. I had read that week an article by Ashley Montagu of Princeton University on what he called “A Life Worth Living.” He listed the qualifications for a life worth living: good health, a stable family, economic security, educational opportunity, the prospect of a satisfying career to realize the fullness of one’s potential. These were among the measures of what was called “a life worth living.”



And I remember vividly, as though it were yesterday, looking out the next Sunday morning at the congregation of St. John the Evangelist and seeing all those older faces creased by hardship endured and injustice afflicted, and yet radiating hope undimmed and love unconquered. And I saw that day the younger faces of children deprived of most, if not all, of those qualifications on Prof. Montagu’s list. And it struck me then, like a bolt of lightning, a bolt of lightning that illuminated our moral and cultural moment, that Prof. Montagu and those of like mind believed that the people of St. John the Evangelist—people whom I knew and had come to love as people of faith and kindness

Be an informed voter at the Federal Election

I’ve observed politics for some 10 years and in most recent years in very close quarters. It is clear to me that issues that would be of concern to *Lutherans for Life* members are not likely to be covered by mainstream media during the lead-up to the 21 August Federal Election. It is a fact that Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott have differing views on abortion and euthanasia, but readers should not cast their vote purely upon the personality politics of modern electioneering. I encourage members of *Lutherans for Life* to contact their local House of Representatives candidates to find out their views on life issues. The point of doing so is vital. Ultimately, when conscience votes come before the Parliament it is not the Party vote or the Party Leader that matters - it is the view of every Member of Parliament in conscience. Nobody can stop an MP moving a Private Members Bill and once it is underway, nobody can force an MP’s conscience vote.

There are organisations such as *Family Voice Australia* who audit the views of every election candidate on life and other issues (see www.fava.org.au) or *Australian Christian Lobby* who audit Parties as a whole, and some candidates individually (see www.acl.org.au or their election website www.australiavotes.org.au). I have to confess that as a Lutheran years ago before observing politics more closely, while I cared about life issues I did not vote wisely and failed to investigate where my local Member of Parliament stood on life issues.

So let me urge readers, as Lutherans for life, to investigate where their candidates stand on life matters. Change in Parliaments on life issues starts with you!

Rikki Lambert
KLEMZIG, SA

‘We need a society which cares, not kills’

A man with quadriplegia who has just published a book on attitudes to euthanasia in the Netherlands and Australia asks whether it should be legalised in a caring society. In *Euthanasia and Disability Perspective*, Erik Leipoldt (who acquired quadriplegia in 1978 after a diving accident) asks whether we really need to legalise euthanasia:

‘In Australia and other Western countries, suffering is a subjective and private experience leading to the invocation of individual rights to do away with one’s life should it become unbearable. The life of a person who suffers is of no consequence to others.

‘When we look closer, however, we see that this private domain is an illusion. Suffering is not an individual, isolated experience. No one is an autonomous entity. Suffering, and its amelioration, is largely a dynamic process involving others.

‘Being inherently social, human beings feel best under conditions of positive, caring relationships. For example, in a study involving people with quadriplegia in the Netherlands and Australia, it was only those who lacked supportive relationships who wanted euthanasia for themselves.

‘This idea of suffering as a social, rather than a purely private, experience can help us decide what we will do about it. The palliative care journey is to address the person’s suffering by caring for them. The euthanasia option is to do away with the suffering by killing the sufferer.



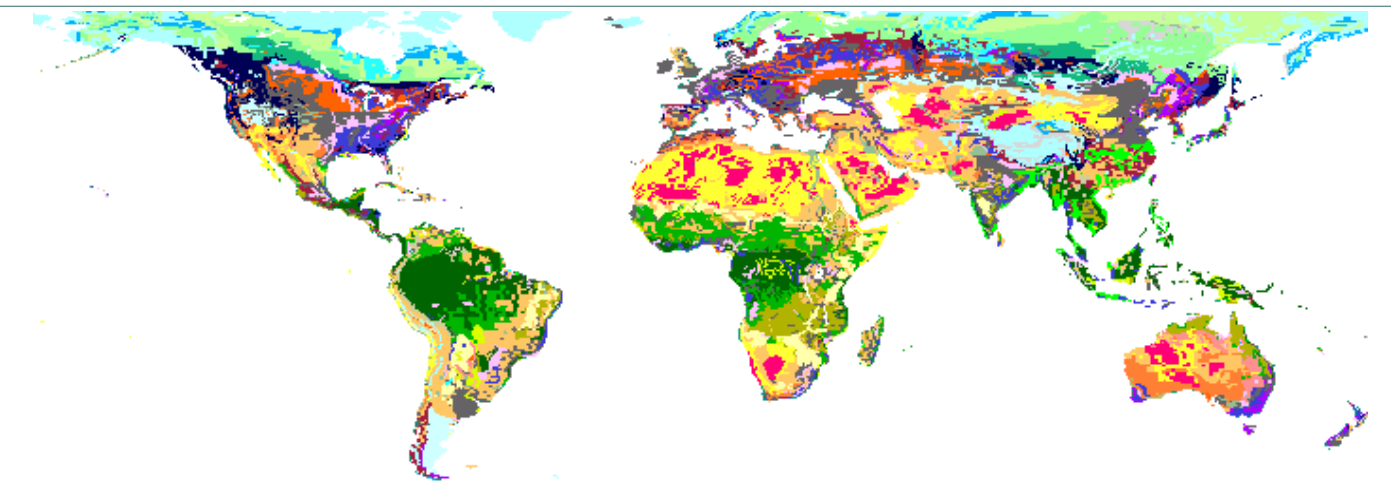
‘Legalising euthanasia fails to address the suffering that underlies patients’ requests for it. Often cited are: dependence on others, pain, and loss of dignity. All of these can be ameliorated through good care. Dependence on others is only undignified in the absence of caring support. Of course there may always be pain that cannot be treated other than by sedation, but extreme cases make bad law. In the end, there are no perfect solutions.

‘Legislatures should reject legalised euthanasia as an inappropriate route to relief of suffering. But they should also ask questions about their own health care policies and practices as potential contributors to requests for euthanasia. How to treat every life as valuable and deliver excellent care? How to strengthen palliative care?

‘If we paid attention to human needs at every turn; if we took responsibility for them; if we did so competently and in participation with patients, what would that look like?

‘The character of a nation is revealed in the way it treats its most vulnerable people. Terminally ill people are highly vulnerable. Rejecting state-sanctioned euthanasia is not insensitive. On the contrary, it should affirm our determination to work towards a caring society.’

(MercatorNet)



Life Issues Around the World

<p>Half of Belgian euthanasia deaths involuntary</p> <p>The use of life-ending drugs on explicit patient request has been legal in Belgium since 2002. Questionnaires completed anonymously by doctors and reported in the Canadian Medical Association Journal indicate that about four per cent of deaths in Belgium are due to euthanasia, and half of these occur without a request. Lead author Dr Chamber of Brussels writes – “The use of life-ending drugs without patient request occurs mainly in hospital and among elderly patients who have coma or dementia.” Experts estimate that only one quarter of euthanasia deaths are reported to the coroner. (Eureka Alert)</p> <p>In the Netherlands the number of reported euthanasia deaths has increased by 23 per cent over the last two years, with opponents of euthanasia claiming that this results from a failure of the Dutch palliative care system to provide adequate relief of pain and other symptoms. A Dutch health ministry committee is to report on the working of their euthanasia law in 2011. (London Telegraph)</p> <p>In the United Kingdom a Durham family doctor, Howard Martin, has been deregistered by the General Medical Council for his “reckless and dangerous” conduct in providing injections to 18 patients to hasten their deaths. He was cleared of murder charges after refusing to give evidence. Dr Harold Shipman, Britain’s worst serial killer with at least 215 victims, had worked in the same practice at one time. (BioEdge)</p> <p>In Australia several Green and Independent MPs plan to reintroduce Bills to allow voluntary euthanasia in state Parliaments over the next 12 months. (various sources)</p> <p>American lab designs synthetic bacteria</p> <p>Enthusiasts described this building of designer microbes as a “God moment”, as the creation of the first artificial life. Researchers from the Craig Venter Institute in California assembled the genome of one species of bacteria and inserted it into another cell. The constructed cell began to function, growing and dividing like a natural cell. Designer bacteria can be made to produce biofuels and medications, or to remove pollutants from water or air. Some ethicists expressed concern that if we begin to create lower forms of life then we “may in the very long run weaken society’s respect for higher forms of life.” (BioEdge)</p>	<p>India expected to legalise commercial surrogacy</p> <p>After six miscarriages and years of failed IVF treatments at Australian clinics, ‘Megan’ is finally expecting a baby at age 43. At New Delhi’s Phoenix Hospital she waits while surrogate mother ‘Rani’ delivers a baby for her. In New Delhi the same process will be repeated for about 60 Australian couples (both hetero and homosexual) this year, and that number is expected to multiply as the word spreads and the new law passes. Rani will return to her own flat, her husband and two children with a fee of 200,000 rupees (A\$4981).</p> <p>Socially conservative India has turned to commercial surrogacy with surprising rapidity. A Law Commission report in 2009 described the industry as a “pot of gold”. “Wombs in India are on rent which translates into babies for foreigners and dollars for Indian surrogate mothers.” Ethical concerns that a woman who prefers being exploited to being poor is not giving truly valid consent are being brushed aside. (The Australian)</p> <p>The Social Development Committee of the South Australian Parliament is currently considering whether homosexual parenting should be legalised in SA. Part of their investigation will focus on whether same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt or foster children and have children legally through IVF and surrogacy. (The Advertiser)</p> <p>Italian patients with corneal blindness have vision restored with the own stem cells</p> <p>At the University of Modena, people blinded by chemical burns have had their sight restored after healthy stem cells were taken from the edge of their eyes, grown into layers and then returned to the corneal area to grow into healthy clear tissue. Some patients had undergone failed surgery and other treatments. Dr Pellegrini reported that over 80 patients had their sight restored by their own stem cells. (Bloomberg)</p> <p>In contrast, a patient with kidney disease died from infection after embryonic stem cells were injected into the kidney at an unlicensed Asian clinic. Tumour-like masses formed in the kidney and the patient collapsed and died. The report in the Journal of the American Society of Nephrology observed that caution was needed with such stem cell therapies, particularly if unregulated private clinics are offering them. (BBC)</p>
---	---

A revolution worth supporting

Pastor Roly Stahl

<p><i>The Good Girl Revolution: Young Rebels with Self-Esteem and High Standards</i></p> <p>by Wendy Shalit (Ballantine Books, 2008)</p> <p>In <i>The Good Girl Revolution</i>, Wendy Shalit questions our assumptions about “repressed good girls” and, drawing on numerous studies and interviews, uncovers a new approach towards relationships that values intimacy and trust over sexual exhibitionism (318).</p> <p>Shalit is upfront about her orthodox Jewish background, which may well give her an edge in challenging some of the assumptions of popular culture. She shares the fruit of numerous stories, forums, and interviews with women from a variety of ages, occupations and backgrounds. These, as well as her reading from a broad range of writers on women’s issues (even back to the 1800’s) provide a rich tapestry from which Shalit draws common threads and cultural patterns.</p> <p>From an American cultural perspective, Shalit demonstrates how the marketing, fashion, and education system sexualises girls from a young age: from sassy Bratz dolls and “hot” outfits for toddlers, to provocative teenage clothing, to the expectation that college students will be sexually active, to the pressure from Boomer parents for their daughters to lose their virginity.</p> <p>She questions what is liberating or empowering about the pressure to conform to a stereotype with which many teenagers and women feel uncomfortable. ‘The plain fact is that girls today have to be “bad” to fit in, just as the baby boomers needed to be good. And we are finding this new script may be more oppressive than the old one ever was... Consider how girls today need to be thin, available, and always sexy. At the same time they are supposed to have no hopes, no messy feelings, no vulnerability. They must be aggressive, yet somehow inviting. It’s complicated, and to rebel against the bad-girl script takes enormous confidence. But, as I learned it can be done.’ (40)</p> <p>Shalit also exposes a number of ironies. While the women’s liberation movement brought great gains for women, why is the “bad girl” image the prevalent option? Why do those who resist that stereotype find themselves ridiculed, accused of being prudish, or regarded as dull? What has feminism really gained when the “good girl” is now regarded as the lowest of the low (42)? Is the bad-girl really empowered – or simply complying with male desires that have been tailored by porn and promoted through culture?</p>	<p>Reading through the earlier chapters, I couldn’t help wonder how did we culturally end up making a virtue out of promiscuity (e.g. <i>Sex and the City</i>). Isn’t this just a parody of men behaving badly - and hang the consequences? Shalit’s exposure of separating sex from love – and the emotional repression it demands – is incisive (85-90). Authentic intimacy requires connection, compassion, caring, and commitment. Without such foundation stones, sex becomes shallow, empty, and dull.</p> <p>Thankfully, Shalit indicates that there are some positive turning points, yet from some unexpected sources: African American women (66ff) and teenage girls (Chapters 6-8). While white college women are often afraid to challenge the new social norms, Shalit observes: ‘But never has an African American girl come up to me to lament, “Wendy, I’m afraid to speak out” (66). And: ‘...it is undeniable that African American women seem to have a special gift in arguing for fidelity and premarital chastity.’ (72)</p> <p>Rather than being dictated to by peers or those in authority to conform to the bad-girl image, some courageous individuals and groups of teenage girls are protesting – and getting noticed. Whether it’s highlighting the explicit lewdness of a set English novel in school, or questioning a fashion label about the trashy slogans printed on their T-shirts, or complaining to a department chain about the unavailability of more modest clothing, there are teens rebelling against the <i>status quo</i> of the bad-girl image. Chapter 8, <i>Feminism’s (new) fourth wave</i>, highlights some gains and victories won by girls making their own choices. ‘Having grown up in an oversexualized culture, they were sick of it and were trying to rally other girls to not present themselves as mere sex objects’ (233). As wisely commented by a number of young girls throughout the book, one’s goals, ambitions, and options as a woman can be much broader by not giving into the bad-girl image. Self respect eventually gains the respect of others.</p> <p>Beside <i>Notes</i> and <i>Bibliography</i>, there is a valuable section: <i>Questions and Topics for Discussion</i> at the end of the book (318-322). This could catalyse excellent conversations in a teenage or young adult girl’s group, or among a bunch of parents.</p> <p>Overall, Shalit’s book is an apologetic that exposes the shallowness of the bad-girl model of womanhood, and argues that the option for modesty, self respect, and developing as a whole person is more empowering. To pursue this option, the new wave of young rebel “good girls” will need both strength of character – and support from mentors. As a father raising two daughters, I reckon <i>The Good Girl Revolution</i> is well worth reading – and a goal well worth supporting!</p>
---	--