



# F.A.C.S. REPORT

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## The Gun Debate Revisited I

by Murray McLeod-Boyle

**T**he recent event of Port Arthur has once again seen the proliferation of calls to ban guns from our society. A very reasonable outcry and, as such, I too would like to add my voice to the growing chorus.

Yes, let's ban guns. After all, what need do we have for such weapons of mass destruction to be available within our society. These weapons, as well as the para-military fringe dwellers who own them, should be outlawed, and shown up for the disease on society that they are. Enough is enough! Let's cleanse our society. This is but a *reasonable* request.

Yes, a *reasonable* request. Yet, herein lies the problem. The above gibberish (which I do not subscribe to, at all) is nothing more than *subjective* reason.

What is needed in a debate of this type is an objective moral or ethic and not, a little bit of secular reason.

This whole debate has been hijacked by a bunch of enlightened secularists, who have applied reason to the debate. Their reasoning says, "he killed 35 people with a gun, let's ban guns. That will solve the problem". Will it? Not on your life — and that is what is at stake in this debate.

Mr. Howard has made many speeches about unity, not going down the American path, and of having a better Australia; all of which are meant to leave us feeling warm, fuzzy, and comfortable. Yet, he has admitted that the banning of these weapons will not stop another Port Arthur from happening. So, what's the point of the exercise?

Guilt manipulation. Pure and simple. My opinion, callous as it seems, is that most politicians reacted to Port Arthur because they were embarrassed at the number of people who were killed; not because a heinous crime had been committed.

This sounds very callous, but I believe it to be to the point. If you read papers, or keep an eye on the news, you will have noted that there have been many murders since Port Arthur, yet we have not heard cries to ban knives, tree

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***"Mr. Howard's gun reform, for want of a better term, has made Australia into a Police State. . ."***

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branches, footballs, cars, or the like. (In fact we have just the opposite in Victoria where, the Premier's Drug Advisory Council has recommended the legalisation of small amounts of marijuana for private use. Whilst we know that drugs and alcohol are major contributors to crime, we seek to make more drugs legal!?)

In the wake of Port Arthur politicians needed to be seen to be doing something. The ones, twos and threes that are regularly murdered can be swept under the carpet. However, the task is not so easy when there are 35 victims involved. The people wanted 'action', the politicians wanted 'action', and the families of the victims wanted 'action'. So, where did the politicians turn? To the source of the problem - the criminal? To law and order? To tougher prison terms? To capital punishment? No! They turned

and 'bit the hand that fed them'. They reacted against average, decent, citizens, who had nothing to do with Port Arthur. (The government's reaction at this point would be equivalent to locking up all women because one was raped; rather than hanging the rapist.)

Port Arthur, rather than being a victory against guns, is an exercise in rational insanity.

The innocent are persecuted and the guilty set free.

As an interesting aside, it is worth noting that, prior to the last Victorian election, a survey of Victorians regarding their view of sentencing was promised. Yet, right from the outset Mr. Kennett ruled out the reintroduction of capital punishment — even if the people wanted it.

What this indicates is that our politicians are clearly students of the enlightenment, and not of Scripture. That is to say that they are appealing to reason rather than to morals. Or in other words, they are appealing to man and not to God - the ultimate Moral.

If our politicians were moral, they would leave the gun owners alone and focus on dealing with the moral degradation of our society. Degradation which they have created.

As it stands this debate over gun ownership is going to be side-tracked by all the 'reasonable' people making their morally bankrupt statements from a position of 'reason'.

Let's take a few moments to consider some of the casualties of the debate.

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## 1. The Law

**T**he first criticism to be levelled in this argument was directed at Tasmania's gun laws. 'Reasonable' critics cried foul at the standards which they perceived as far too loose. Yet there is no justification for such statements. Follow up reports on the accused gunman brought to light the following:

(a) *He was unlicensed,*

(b) *He had attempted to have an automatic weapon repaired. He was refused because he did not have a licence,*

(c) *He tried to buy a weapon but was refused because he did not have a licence.*

So, did the law fail? No! Not at all. The law prevented the accused gunman from getting his hands on a weapon *legally*.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the gunman had to steal, and possibly murder, to get hold of the particular weapon used to commit the atrocity that we now know as Port Arthur.

What this shows is that the law did not fail - *the heart of man did* (Jeremiah 17:9).

## 2. Rights

**W**e hear much of "rights" in our day, most of which is nothing more than Enlightenment relativism. However, the subjective arguments about "rights" must not be allowed to

murder the true "rights" that a man has. Outside of God's Law-Word man falls into subjective rights. Rights that have no other criteria than 'what is best for me'.

Hence, Andrew Sandlin is correct when he notes that:

It is crucial to recognize that the rights-terminology so prominent in modern Western society, especially in its political discourse, represents a deviation and, indeed, apostasy from historic Christianity and Holy Scripture, the latter of which is devoid of any such terminology or sentiment. *The protection of citizens from magistrates, magistrates from citizens, minorities from majorities, the weak from the strong, and races from races is secured in the Biblical scheme not by the imposition of an abstract conception of human rights but by the imposition of concrete Biblical law.*<sup>2</sup>

Whilst I do not agree with Sandlin when he says that Scripture has no "sentiment", of human 'rights', I most certainly agree, that man has basic rights only when theocratic law is applied to society. Hence, it must be understood that when I speak of rights it is not in the subjective, but rather, the objective sense.<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with this, we must understand that the Biblical "right" also entails *obligation*. Something which is completely foreign to the modern concept of secular human 'rights'.

Since secular rights are completely subjective, it is inevitable that at some stage one person's 'rights' will impact upon another person's 'rights'. The arbitrariness of this type of thinking will only end in confusion and anarchy. In this regard Sandlin's words are not only timely, but prophetic:

The proliferation of "rights" naturally creates a dilemma when the exercise of two or more of these "rights" collides, when for instance, the "sensitivity rights" of the homosexual collide with the "free speech rights" of vocal heterosexuals; when the "economic rights" of the destitute collide with the "property rights" of business owners and the wealthy; when the "right to privacy" of women collides with the "right to life" by an unborn child; and when the "right of religious exercise" of the church collides with the "separation of church and state" hailed by modern secularists.<sup>4</sup>

# Government-Induced Poverty

**T**HERE REMAINS a belief among many people that unless the government controls the economy, and especially money and banking, that people's lives will be at the mercy of the small handful of wealthy people who have amassed great wealth and riches. A recent report in Howard Phillip's newsletter, *Issues and Strategies Bulletin* (9520 Bent Creek Lane, Vienna, VA 22182 USA), indicates otherwise.

On December 23, 1913 President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Reserve Act which established the Federal Reserve System. Its original purpose was to give the United States "an elastic currency, to provide facilities for discounting commercial paper, and to improve the supervision of banking." Its broader objectives were to "help counteract inflationary and deflationary movements, and to share in creating conditions favorable to a sustained, high level of employment, a stable dollar, growth of the country, and a rising level of consumption."

The US Dollar, until 1934 was convertible to gold, and from 1934 to 1971, the convertibility was limited to international redemption. That is, US citizens could not readily convert their paper currency to gold. In 1971, President Nixon closed the gold window completely, and the US dollar is backed only by the goodwill and promises of the Federal Government in America.

Considering the aims of the Fed (as it is popularly known), it is well worth asking how has it fared? Here are some results:

"With a gold standard in effect between December 1854 to December 1912, which covers 58 years or 486 months, there were 14 recessions which lasted a total of 312 months, or 45.6% of the time. Under the Fed standard from 1913 to date (81 years or 972 months) there have been 17 recessions lasting 243 months, or 25% of the time. . . . To say that the Fed saved [the US] from recessions but not count the relative cost of what the Fed printed in (fiat) paper money to stimulate growth (?) would be to dismiss inflation as economically meaningless. Therefore, we also have to compare inflation from 1854 to 1912 under a gold standard with inflation between 1913 and 1993 under a Fed (paper) standard."

"The CPI rose from 10.0 in December 1913 to 13.2 in December 1933," a 32% increase during the 20 years when the Fed

- Remember that this is the point here. Society can never protect itself 100% from the criminal element. If the present line of reasoning is followed, then society should rid itself of all instruments of harm - including cars. Such an idea is preposterous; and that is precisely why Biblical justice requires that the evil-doer be made to account. It is the punishment of the evil-doer that deters evil; not the wrapping up of society in cotton wool.
- "Biblical Law Versus Rights" (*Chalcedon Report*, Number 352; January 1994) 22. Emphasis added.
- For example, God alone gives life and He alone can take it. Hence, a person has, under God's law, the basic "right" to that life. He/she has the basic "right" (and obligation) to preserve that life.

I say prophetic, because these very scenarios are now coming true. More importantly, you guessed it, this very type of conflict has raised its ugly head in the current gun debate.

This very problem was highlighted when the following appeared in a recent news article:

*Pro-gun lobbyists had hijacked the language of the human rights and freedom in their claims that gun ownership was a basic right, Victoria's peak civil liberties group claimed yesterday.*

In one of the most unified protests against the pro-gun argument since gun control legislation was proposed, a Victorian Council for Civil Liberties spokesman said *gun lobbyists were ignoring the most basic concepts of human rights.*

Council spokesman Joseph O'Reilly said the statements of many who opposed the Federal Government's *gun control proposals disregarded the right of the community to live in safety.*<sup>5</sup>

This is the type of anarchy that subjectivism breeds. The Civil Liberties Council is often pro everything, except that which is good, decent, and, above all, Biblical.

On one side people want the 'right' to live in "safety". On the other, people want

***"... the police simply do not have the ability to protect every individual..."***

the 'right' to own and use guns. Who will resolve such an issue? Certainly not two people arguing from subjective positions.<sup>6</sup>

When man returns to the objective Law-Word of God the issue will be resolved, for God's light shall illumine the darkness. For those who take God's Word seriously, it will already be apparent that there is no real conflict. Public safety is not compromised by the ownership of guns. Public safety is compromised when man's corruption is not only excused, but denied, by a justice system that bases its rulings on psychology rather than the dictates of the Law Giver. It is in this climate that true "rights" are murdered and illegitimate 'rights' are not

only propounded, but accepted. The consequences of which are horrific.

### 3. Self Protection

**T**his is, by far, the most crucial issue in this debate. This question stems out of the above discussion on Biblical "rights", but deserves to be discussed on its own.

As is obvious from the above citation from the *Bendigo Advertiser*, there are certain elements who want guns banned in order that society might be safe. This sounds plausible at first. However, if I have been disarmed then the question of, 'who is going to protect me?' must be asked. It is at this point that the "wheels fall off" for anyone who believes that society will be safer without guns. For if the answer to the question is, *The Police*, then we are forced to ask, *where were the police at Port Arthur?* Nor should we limit the question to this one event. We are well entitled to ask, *where were the police when any of Australia's murders were committed?*

Mr. Howard's gun reform, for want of a better term, has made Australia into a Police State. That is to say, that the police are now the only legitimate means of protection that you or I have as individuals. This is established by the fact that "self protection" will not be considered as a legitimate reason for gaining an exemption under the proposed laws.

Well, at least Mr. Howard has solved the unemployment problem. As I see it, the only way Mr. Howard's Police State will work is if each of us has a 24 hour per day police guard. This means that half the population will be engaged in looking after the other half.

The absurdity of this is apparent at once. *The police cannot protect you or me (and everyone else at the same time); that is the bottom line.*

Recent history has highlighted this. In the last two years there have been a number of cases where individuals have been shot and killed, whilst breaking into premises. Where were the police? Why did they not protect the individual whose house was being robbed? If the police are so effective, why did the property

operated under a partial gold standard. From 1934 to 1971, when Nixon suspended all gold convertibility, the CPI index from 13.2 to 41.1, an increase in 211.4% in 38 years. From 1971 to 1995, the CPI index rose to 144.9, or another 252.6% increase in 22 years. This adds up to a remarkable increase in inflation of 1349% since 1913.

What, then, has the Fed achieved? On the one hand it has apparently reduced the number of years of recession. Whether the Fed achieved this reduction, or it was a reduction due to two world wars and an economic boom probably unprecedented in world history, is another issue. But during the reign of the Fed, this reduction in recessions, however it was obtained, was accompanied by an inflation rate that averaged 81.0% per year, or 6.75% per month. This inflationary figure is certainly attributable to the Fed, since it alone controls the expansion of money, the ultimate cause of inflation.

This inflation rate compares unfavourably with the post Civil War rate of zero percent that reigned from 1854 to 1896. But there's more.

"In 1896, average hourly wages in manufacturing were \$0.55 per hour. By 1913 wages had doubled to \$1.10 per hour. From 1913 average wages in manufacturing increased to \$15.10 in 1992, an increase of 1372%, almost identical to the inflation rate of 1349%. In a 40-hour week in 1913, a worker would have earned \$44.00, or \$2,280 a year and would have paid no federal income taxes. However, that \$2,280 equals \$30,865.12 in today's purchasing power before taxes, for which today's worker would pay in all types of taxes about \$6,000, causing a net loss of income under Fed rule of about 20% since 1913..."

Is there any evidence we need government controlled money? Certainly no practical evidence is forthcoming. The defence of government-controlled anything is never pragmatically based. It is philosophically based. And this underlies the real issue in politics today. Which philosophy will reign? Shall it be the philosophy of Christ the King as given to us in the Holy Scriptures, or will it be the philosophy of the man-centred philosopher-kings, who give us, instead of righteousness and a better way of living, inflation, higher taxes, less freedom, and thereby invite the judgment of Christ the King on this rebellion against His rule.

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**P**OPULATION CONTROL EXPERTS still attempt to argue that the world is "overpopulated." That is, too many people for the amount of food available.

4. Sandlin, 22.

5. *Bendigo Advertiser*, Friday, May 24, 1996; Number 41,391; p4, emphasis added.

6. The issue will be resolved. However, it will only happen in one of two ways. It will be resolved when the Government repents and heads down a track of Biblical law making, or when it pushes through unjust legislation and penalises the innocent.

owners have to take up arms to protect themselves?

The short answer to these questions is, that the police simply do not have the ability to protect every individual.

What we must also note is that in several of these cases, it was an elderly gentleman who pulled the trigger. Men who were in no condition to engage in a fist fight with their young assailants. Men who live in fear, because they are easy targets. Men who took the only legitimate course open to them — self protection.

Every man has the "right" to protect his property and himself — *God says so*.

In Exodus 22:2-3 we read: "If the thief is caught while breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. *But* if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (NASB).

Scripture is clear. We do not need a Police State. In fact we do not even need the police. Scripture dictates that every man has the right to defend himself and his property. In regard to Exodus 22:2 and 3, Matthew Henry comments:

If a thief broke a house in the night, and was killed in the doing of it, his blood was upon his own head, and should not be required at the hand of him that shed it, v. 2. As he that does an unlawful act bears the blame of the mischief that follows to others, so likewise of that which follows to himself. *A man's house is his castle, and God's law, as well as man's, sets a guard upon it; he that assaults it does so at his peril.* Yet, if it was in the day-time that the thief was killed, he that killed him must be accountable for it (v. 3), *unless it was in the necessary defence of his own life.*<sup>7</sup>

What Henry here articulates is exactly what Scripture teaches. A man has the right to protect his property and himself. Whilst the police are an added bonus, they can never be lawfully empowered with the sole right to protect a person's life and property.

In fact, Biblical law would dictate that the individual has the right of protection *before* the police. In other words, the individual may add the police to a list of protective measures, as he would add a guard dog or a burglar alarm, but the

police may never subtract the individual from the equation.

The proposed changes to firearm laws should be rejected, if for no other reason, because they constitute a basic denial of the individual's Biblical "right" to protect himself.

## Conclusion

**I**n the wake of Port Arthur there has been a lot of nonsense spoken. Rhetoric of all types has spilled from the lips of politicians, newspaper editors, churchman and the like. The most pathetic of all comments being that 'if these changes to gun laws go ahead, then the people who were killed at Port Arthur would not have died in vain'.

I'm sorry to be the one to say this, but the reality is that 35 people did die in vain. Moreover, if these proposed changes are made into law, then their deaths will be made even more meaningless.

The only hope of being able to put Port Arthur in any sort of a good light, will be if it serves as a catalyst for the reintroduction of the death penalty, and a general return to law and order.

What Mr. Howard proposes will not stop people being murdered - he has admitted as much himself. In fact under Mr. Howard's proposal murders will increase. Yes, increase! As you and I join the growing ranks of easy targets, and are murdered in our homes, unable to defend ourselves.

The hypocrisy of this whole situation is that the libertines are crying fowl over the 35 people murdered at Port Arthur, yet they, Mr. Howard included, do not raise a whimper over the thousands of babies that are murdered through abortions each year.

Hence, we are well entitled to ask Mr. Howard what is his motivation? Embarrassment at 35 tourists being killed, or a genuine hatred of evil? If it is the second, then act to save every life — particularly the lives of those who are most defenceless.

As Christians we must make sure that this issue is not side-tracked by secularists. We must seek to apply God's Law to this situation as to any other.

Productivity on the farm, however, has increased, spurred on by agricultural science and capital investment. Food output has doubled in the past 30 years. "Most of the world's food gains," argues Dennis Avery, "have come from rapidly-rising crop yields." (See Julian L. Simon, ed., *The State of Humanity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), Chapter. 36, "The World's Rising Food Productivity", p. 376ff.). In addition, argues the author of this chapter, there is somewhere around a *billion* acres of arable land that is either underused or unplanted. "But higher-yielding seeds, modern fertilizers, and improved pest control have made it cheaper to increase food production on existing land than to forge out onto frontiers. It takes heavy capital investment in roads, schools, and other infrastructure to bring new land into commercial farming."

If there is land available still to be developed, then we have some way to go before we can argue that the world is overpopulated. What is needed is a drop in capital investment prices (or a rise in raw produce prices) so that available land can be brought into production. And this will happen when the price of food makes it economically viable to develop new areas.

Not only are farm yields on the increase, but farming technology is kinder to the environment. A legume named kadzu is being used in Brazil and one crop restores soil fertility as effectively as 14 years of the traditional bush fallow. Western farmers are using a tillage method that leaves a heavy crop residue in the upper layer of the soil, halving the effects of erosion.

New hybrids of corn have shortened the growing season, thus increasing the areas that can carry the crop. Beneficiaries include Canada, the USSR, Poland, China and Argentina. Winter wheat and barley can now tolerate cooler weather, again helping the temperate-zone climates in production. Asian farmers have learned to grow 100 million tons of dry-season wheat between its rice crops.

Capital input into farming includes irrigation, farm-to-market transport and improved storage facilities and processing plants. All these contribute to improved food production around the world.

This helps to explain why the number of people employed in farming has decreased while the supermarkets at home continue to be filled with all kinds of fresh farm produce. No shortage here, it seems. And above is a part of the explanation.

It is the Christian work ethic at the back of these farming gains, since the non-Christian communities are not generally using home-grown technology but buying it from the (former Christian) West. Clearly the third industrial revolution is under way.

7. Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.