



# Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,  
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

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## Editors Note:

This issue of Storming Fortresses is issued as a supplement to the April 2001 Issue. This article originally appeared as the June 1996 issue of the FACS Report. It retains these Volume numbers and dates.

We have presented it to try and highlight the need for continued political and social action in the Biblical sense. We often forget issues once we are a few years down the track. Often, however, the issues have not forgotten us and they will come back to haunt us.

Let us not forget, but remain vigilant and active.

## The Gun Debate Revisited (Revised)

By

Murray McLeod-Boyle

### Introduction

The event of Port Arthur saw, once again, the proliferation of calls to ban guns from our society. This call has been repeated in the years since and raises itself often, though not publicly, through the work of committees and anti-firearms groups. This is 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* that in no way takes into account the wider issues that surrounded this tragedy and which, more often than not, fall from the lips of those who seek to destroy society.

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 their subjective, enlightened, 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 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,

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fuzzy, and comfortable. Yet, he admitted that the banning of these firearms will not stop another Port Arthur from happening. That is right. So, why then, are we going to spend millions of dollars of taxpayers money on a scheme that the Prime Minister knows right from the very outset will not stop this type of action? If this plan, as costly as it is, does not rid our society of tragic events such as Port Arthur, then why did the Prime Minister proceed with

this lunacy? What is 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.<sup>1</sup>

This sounds very callous, but I believe it to be to the point. If you kept up to date with current affairs in the days, weeks, months, and years since Port Arthur, you will have noted that there have been many murders in that time. However, we have not heard cries to ban knives, tree branches, football, cars, or the like.<sup>2</sup>

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 governments 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, was an exercise in rational insanity.

The innocent were persecuted and the guilty set free.

As an interesting aside, it is worth noting that during one of Mr. Kennett's election campaigns, 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 the reasoning of the enlightenment rather than to morals. In other words, they are appealing to man and not to God—the ultimate Moral. The politicians have believed the lie that the actions of man are purely environmental. This is the modern rebirth of the "noble savage" concept. Hence,

<sup>1</sup> In *Gun Debate Revisited II*, (FACS Report Vol., 15, No. 7, July 1996), We included the following information in a footnote: *Federal Office of Road Safety, Road Toll Statistics Jan-April 1996: Total 641; By States: Vic. 155; SA. 64; NT. 17; QLD. 94; NSW. 188; WA. 86. Tas. 34. ACT. 3; (June 3, 1996, Victorian road toll: 188; SA: 77)*. My reason for including these statistics is simple. It is to support the claim that the reaction was not concerned with the crime, but with the statistics. Note that for the same period Tasmania had killed 34 people on its roads. That is one less than died at Port Arthur. Same year. One less. Where was the outcry to ban motor vehicles. It is also worth noting that in 1994, 522 people lost their lives to incidents involving firearms. Of this number 80% were suicides. That leaves 105 that were homicides. Compare this to the total road deaths in the statistic above. In the first four months of 1996, 641 people lost their lives on Australian roads. Even allowing that some of these may have been suicides, death by car is significantly more common than death by firearm. To illustrate this in another way, we shall look at sharks. Every time a shark attacks a human it raises headlines in the media. Just this week (July 2001) a young lad in Florida, USA, had his arm bitten off by a shark. His uncle wrestled the shark to the beach where it was killed and the arm retrieved. Shark attacks strike fear into our hearts. Headlines are made the world over. Yet, statistically, you have a greater chance of being killed at work than by shark attack. One is sensationalised. The other is just "ho hum" run of the mill. Firearms and cars are the same.

<sup>2</sup> In fact we have just the opposite in Victoria where, the Premier's Drug Advisory Council 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!?

people like Martin Bryant are not evil, they have been misled by their environment (read, society in general). Thus, the only guilty party is society. We created this monster and so we must take the blame for any atrocities he commits. Thus the politicians react to take firearms from society rather than punish the evil in man.

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.

## 1. The Law.

The 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>3</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.

We 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>4</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>5</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'.

As secular rights are completely subjective, it is inevitable that at some stage one persons 'rights' will impact upon another persons '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>6</sup>

I say prophetic, because these very scenarios are now coming true.

3. 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.

4. Biblical Law Versus Rights (Chalcedon Report; Number 352; January 1994) 22. Emphasis added.

5. For example, God alone gives life and He alone can take it. Hence, a person has, under God's law, a the basic "right" to that life. He/she has the basic "right" (and obligation) to preserve that life.

6. Sandlin. 22.

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>7</sup>

Is this not just the type of anarchy that subjectivism breeds. The Civil Liberties Council are probably 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 'right' to own and use guns. Who will resolve such an issue? Certainly not two people arguing from the same subjective position.<sup>8</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 upon psychology and measures all things by a corrupt heart 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 this switch are horrific.

### 3. Self Protection.

This 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 us 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. That this is the case 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; 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 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 elderly gentleman that 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 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

7. Bendigo Advertiser, Friday, May 24, 1996; Number 41,391; p4. Emphasis Added.

8. 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.

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>9</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 persons 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 and now enacted changes to firearm laws should be repealed because they constitute a basic denial of the individuals Biblical "right" to protect himself.

### Conclusion.

In the wake of Port Arthur there has been a lot of nonsense spoken. Rhetoric of all types has spilled from the lips of politicians, news paper 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 am sorry to be the one to say this, but the reality is that 35 people did die in vain. Moreover, now that these proposed changes have been made into law, their deaths have been made even more meaningless. These people died because our society forsook God's righteous standards. Instead of punishing the wicked the wicked are excused. The reaction to Port Arthur has just taken this one more step along the road. These 35 have served to deprive average Australians of even more Biblical rights and to further enhance the plight of the criminal as nothing more than a misguided product of society. Therefore, they died in vain. Their deaths did not bring greater stability to our society or a return to justice.

The only hope of being able to put Port Arthur in any sort of a good light, would have been if it served as a catalyst for the reintroduction of

the death penalty, and a general return to law and order. If this had been the case, then the tragedy of Port Arthur may have had a positive side to it

What Mr. Howard has enacted will not stop people being murdered—he has admitted as much himself. In fact, under Mr. Howard's proposal murders and serious crime will increase. Yes, increase! As you and I join the growing ranks of easy targets who are attacked and 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, what was your motivation Mr. Howard? Embarrassment at 35 tourist 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. Empower people to protect their lives against the evildoers who would rob them of it. Let it be once again that a man's home is his castle where he has a right to safety and to live in peace.

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.

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<sup>9</sup> Henry, Matthew. Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, Logos Library System.

## The Westminster Divines on Creation

1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (Heb. 1:2, John 1:2–3, Gen. 1:2, Job 26:13, Job 33:4) for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, (Rom. 1:20, Jer. 10:12, Ps. 104:24, Ps. 33:5–6) in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good. (Gen. 1, Heb. 11:3, Col. 1:16, Acts 17:24)
2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, (Gen. 1:27) with reasonable and immortal souls, (Gen. 2:7, Ecc. 12:7, Luke 23:43, Matt. 10:28) endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image, (Gen. 1:26, Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24) having the law of God written in their hearts, (Rom. 2:14–15) and power to fulfilit: (Eccl. 7:29) and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. (Gen. 3:6, Eccl. 7:29) Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, (Gen. 2:17, Gen. 3:8–11,23) which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. (Gen. 1:26,28)