According to De Valk, “The observation that our law is permeated with the spirit of Christianity is commonplace” (p. 152). But the abortion law set a significant and sinister precedent contradicting that fact. De Valk writes, “This legalization is the first instance in Canadian history, I believe, where an element has been introduced into the legal system which is diametrically opposed to the common good as Christian theology understands and defines it. It has introduced the notion that human life innocent of any crime may be snuffed out for reasons of utility” (p. 155). This non-Christian principle incorporated into the law could grow and help to undermine the original Christian basis of law.

The 1969 abortion legislation did place some restrictions on obtaining abortions in Canada. Abortions could only be performed in hospitals that had a Therapeutic Abortion Committee. Each committee consisted of three medical doctors who had to approve each request for an abortion for medical reasons. These committees basically rubber-stamped any request for an abortion so the number of abortions in Canada increased dramatically.

Even these relatively minimal restrictions were struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada’s Morgentaler decision of 1988. But most of the damage had already been done by the legislative change in 1969.

CONCLUSION
Abortion was legalized in Canada by an act of Parliament in 1969. It was Pierre Trudeau’s majority government that initiated this measure, but it also received the votes of the New Democrat MPs as well as some Progressive Conservative MPs. There was enough popular support in the country for a majority of elected federal politicians to support legalizing abortion.

Abortion still holds considerable support among much of the population, especially in the media and political establishment. In Canada these days, even so-called “Conservative” politicians avoid this issue like the plague. There likely won’t be any legislative restrictions on abortion until a groundswell of popular sentiment convinces enough politicians that it is wrong. Educating people about what abortion really entails (i.e., the killing of an innocent unborn child) may be the single most important activity that pro-lifers can do to bring it to an end. ♦
swallow for scholars wandering in the wilderness of contextualization who see everything as far too complicated for “unlearned,” *hoi polloi*, those whom they deem clueless as to academia’s theory that objective truth is, alas, not merely inaccessible but even nonexistent. You may disagree, but Engelsma’s certain trumpet sound – albeit often in a minor key – strikes a vital chord for the Reformed ensemble in our discordant times.

For this theologian, the Belgic Confession is not some ancient relic that office bearers dust off and sign on to with a wink and a nod, but a reliable presentation which proves how all biblical doctrine is ever true, and truly connected in a coherent system. Since all truth is related, compromising at one point more than threatens the Walls of Zion.

And who can deny that relentless, “open-minded” wavering and capitulation have chipped away at the doctrines of Scripture and the Sovereignty of God until the substitutionary blood atonement itself is politely sidestepped, which then demolishes the entire Christian enterprise.

**ORTHODOX AND PASTORAL**

That said, the professor’s John-the-Baptist-like zeal is not only for truth’s sake, but also for the believer’s life. Like a loaf of bread fresh from a Dutch oven, the outside may feel crusty, but inside, the warrior is warm and tender for the saints. Not out to impress scholars, Engelsma takes to heart his calling to be a theologian for the people of God.

For example, church members today seem increasingly left in the dark with evermore perplexing questions in the face of sorrow and calamity, sin and evil. And what about pastors who have little more comfort to offer than a glib, “I’m here for ya, man,” in the midst of the misery of their sheep? Not that we ever rub a mourner’s nose into Romans 8:28, but Engelsma’s treatment of providence early in the first volume dares to take on the bewildering issues of life, because, well, the Bible does. And sure, there is mystery – more than you can imagine – but it is mystery in the good hands of a sovereign God and eternal Father who truly knows best.

At the other end of the volumes is the professor’s exposition on the end times, which in the confession itself is rather compact. In rolling out the doctrine, his discourse soars with inspiration and even awe as he depicts the certain destruction of the reprobate world, as well as the blessed arrival, at last, of our Savior and Lord.

As to everything that falls between, the author delivers profound, as well as helpful, exposition. In getting to the heart of the gospel of justification by faith alone, Prof. Engelsma sorts out current discussions and clarifies the relationship of faith to the declarative act of God and the Spirit’s sanctifying work. Whether expounding upon creation or predestination, the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper or of the elect in the universal church – his head and heart operate in full gear for those in covenant with God.

**MEAT, NOT MILK**

But no human confession or creed may claim infallibility. And Engelsma tackles BC 36 on the role of the government with respect to the church. He reviews the last century’s tinkering with the article and then presents concrete ideas for a gravamen to beef it up once and for all.

All being said, the commentary succeeds in keeping its promise: it demonstrates how our confession is “rich, lovely, and powerful.” Recommended for meat-eating parishioners, students, pastors and theologians.

While every reader will not assent to every point Engelsma propounds, every point he proffers will make every reader think. If you are looking for something to chew on, then take up and dig in. The distinguished offering will feed the Flock of God well for generations to come.◆