

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

APRIL 2016  
Volume 35 Issue No. 6

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

## COUNTERING A REFORMED CONSERVATIVE'S CASE FOR EVOLUTION

*If evolution, whence  
sin, suffering,  
cruely and carnage?*

p.12



IN A NUTSHELL • FROM THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD

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& ELEMENTARY TEACHERS**

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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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# COUNTERING A REFORMED CONSERVATIVE'S CASE FOR EVOLUTION

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# SHOULD WE FACT-CHECK OUR FRIENDS?

## *Taking a closer look at The Rebel Media*

by Jon Dykstra

Sometimes you just have to laugh at how biased the mainstream media can be. In January tens of thousands of pro-lifers showed up in Washington, but how many did the *New York Times* report were there? They went with “hundreds.”

Not thousands. That might have been defensible – an inexperienced reporter might not be able to tell the difference between thousands and tens of thousands. But instead of something plausible, they went with a laughably low number. There’s a perverse sort of honesty behind a figure this ridiculous: this is the *New York Times* saying they hate pro-lifers and they don’t care who knows it.

We’ve come to expect blatant bias from the mainstream press. We know the *CBC* is going to call us anti-abortion,

rather than pro-life. We weren’t surprised when news anchor Peter Mansbridge gave fawning coverage to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. And of course the *Globe and Mail* was going to laud the courage of men who want to become women, but ignore the poor souls who regret having these surgeries. We know the mainstream press is biased, and we know better than to simply swallow what they serve us.

But what about the “rightwing” press? Should we be just as skeptical about them?

Yes and no. We know that media outlets like *LifeSiteNews.com*, *Fox News* and *The Rebel Media* ([www.theRebel.media](http://www.theRebel.media)) are going to be far friendlier to Christians. We can expect to get far better treatment from them, and hear important stories from them that aren’t being reported anywhere else.

### TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

But last month, while doing the research for an article on the Syria Refugee Crisis, I was reminded of the need to fact-check even our friends. In a December 9 video report *The Rebel Media*’s Ezra Levant shared a statistic that grabbed my attention. He said that the Canadian government wasn’t rejecting *any* Syrian refugee applications. According to Levant:

Today our Brian Lilley went to an Immigration Department briefing on refugees. He asked them, of the thousands of migrants who are being processed, how many are being rejected? And you know what they told him? Zero. They said that!

Zero. That’s a devastating stat. Here we

## Ezra Levant Won't Let The Facts Get In The Way Of A Good Story

Does Ezra Levant misrepresent the truth? Yes, and here's another example.

Last May Levant reported on the \$300,000 renovation that Ontario Green Party leader Mike Schreiner did to his own home. Levant made it seem as if the entire \$300,000 was spent on making the home more energy efficient. He told his viewers that,

...according to *The Star*, after spending three hundred grand [Schreiner's] natural gas bill is down 66% and his electricity bill is cut in half. So what's that – he's saving maybe \$50 or \$100 a month? He invested \$300,000 to save \$50 a month! Hey, Mike, if you give me \$300,000 I'll just cover your gas bill!

It would indeed have been ridiculous to spend \$300,000 to save \$50 or \$100 a month (that's an investment that would take between 250 and 500 years to pay off!). But that is not what Schreiner did. His home is more than 100 years old, and the renovation also involved giving "the house a complete facelift" – he wanted to make "the house more livable by modernizing it and upgrading it."

So how much was spent specifically on making the house more energy efficient? We don't know. But what is clear is that it was nowhere near the \$300,000 Ezra Levant made it out to be.

are, worried that terrorists might be sneaking into Canada via the refugee process, and then we find out that the government is letting in any Syrians who apply! This stat showed we couldn't trust the government to properly vet the applicants.

But as devastating a stat as this was, it was also a suspicious one. Fallen creatures that we are, we never manage perfection. That means even when we're being incompetent we aren't going to be *perfectly* so. Zero? The government wasn't rejecting *any* applicants? Really?

No, not really. What Levant said was technically true but entirely misleading. I tracked down Brian Lilley's report from that same day and here's what Immigration Minister John McCallum said about the government's vetting process:

...if one of the officials doing the interview has *any reason* to question an individual case, well, that case will be put to the side and he or she will go on with other cases...

No one is being officially rejected. But not everybody is being accepted – applications are being "setting aside." (How many? The government wouldn't say, and that is a disturbing bit of silence that's newsworthy in itself and doesn't need the extra hype.) It was completely misleading for Levant to state that "zero" applicants are getting rejected.

Ezra Levant is the example, but "if it's too good to be true..." has a broader application. If we spot a statistic, or see some meme floating around the Internet,

or hear a turn of a phrase which seems to completely and utterly rebut the other side, we should be suspicious. In our messy world things are rarely so neat and tidy. Yes, Jehovah Witnesses and socialists and evolutionists and Justin Trudeau's Liberals are wrong...but they're also not two-year-olds. Rebutting them is going to take a little effort.

*He can be entertaining, his heart seems to be in the right place, but he is not a trustworthy source.*

### THIRD STRIKE

This is the third time in the last while that I've noticed Levant getting careless with the truth. I don't listen to him much so that's a lot of misrepresentation spotted in what's been a pretty small sample size. He can be entertaining, his heart seems to be in the right place, but he is not a trustworthy source.

Fortunately the rest of the crew at *The Rebel Media* seem far more reliable, particularly Brian Lilley. But they, too, are unabashedly biased.

### RIGHTWING MEDIA ONE AND ALL

In an age of instant updates and posts and tweets we can fool ourselves into thinking that if we've read a headline we're

actually informed. But Proverbs 18:17 tells us to beware of relying on partial pictures. There God says: "The first to present his case seems right, until another comes and questions him." If we hear just one side – even if it's our side – God is telling us we don't have enough information to understand what's really going on. So yes, if we care about the truth we need to fact-check the rightwing media too.

One final thought: nowadays we've all got blogs, and Facebook feeds, and Twitter accounts, and we're all posting and sharing and informing, with dozens and maybe even hundreds of people reading what we're pointing them to. In a very real way we're all media outlets, publishing our own selection of news and commentary. In this brief look at *The Rebel Media* we've found them coming up short but now here's a question for all of us: as media outlets, how are *we* measuring up? As *Christian* media outlets, how well are we serving the truth? Are we sure that what we're sharing is really true? Or are we passing on an unchecked account that may, by telling half the story, be completely misrepresenting the truth of the matter?

We need to fact-check even our friends...because our readership is relying on us to get the story right. RP

*Save The Date: Canada's March for Life is coming up on May 12.*

Jon Dykstra can be reached at [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca).



# NOTA BENE

News  
worth  
noting

note that, "there is something...disturbing about this celebration of darkness."

While more than a billion people across the globe make a symbol of forgoing non-essential electrical power for one hour a year, another 1.3 billion people across the developing world will continue to live without electricity as they do every other night of the year.

The problem here is not that we have electricity, but that so many do not. As Lomborg says,

Almost three billion people still burn dung, twigs and other traditional fuels indoors to cook and keep warm. These fuels give off noxious fumes that kill an estimated 3.5 million people each year, mostly women and children. It was the advent of widespread electrical power that freed us from some of these harmful practices that still affect large parts of the developing world. Electric stoves and heaters have ended the scourge of indoor air pollution. It goes without saying that electric power has brought near innumerable benefits to mankind.

Earth Hour treats the very thing that could raise these people out of poverty – cheap reliable energy – as if it were a problem. Earth Hour directs us from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources such as solar and wind that are inefficient, expensive and intermittent, and in doing so raises the price of energy, leaving billions in energy poverty. In other words Earth Hour misdirects our priorities from promoting energy policies that would actually help the poor.

SOURCES: Bjorn Lomborg's "Earth Hour adds to pollution, mocks the poor" posted to TheAustralian.com March 29, 2014.

## EARTH HOUR: CALLING A BLESSING A CURSE

BY JON DYKSTRA



On Saturday March 19 Prime Minister Trudeau was one of the millions who celebrated "Earth hour" around the world by shutting off the lights at the PM's Rideau Hall residence.

Earth Hour critics note that even when millions switch their lights off for an hour once a year it does nothing for the environment or lowering CO2 emissions. In fact, if Earth Hours observers light a candle, or several, and get the logs burning in the fireplace, as the Prime Minister did, they'll have already emitted much more CO2 than they were going to save.

True, say Earth Hour promoters, but they tout the event as a powerful symbolic gesture that creates awareness.

But what exactly is it symbolizing? Environmental-

ist Bjorn Lomborg, in a 2014 piece in *The Australian*, made the case that Earth Hour treats the great blessing of cheap power and light as if it were a curse – it is ingratitude to God. He doesn't use quite that terminology (Lomborg is an atheist), but he did



## CATHOLIC PROFESSOR URGES EXCOMMUNICATION OF PM

BY MARK REIMERS



**A** prominent McGill University professor is urging Canada's Roman Catholic bishops to be ready to resist the country's euthanasia laws that are set to come into effect on June 6.

In an open letter published on March 3, Douglas Farrow, professor of Christian Thought, said the mission of the Roman Catholic Church is at stake.

It is my hope that the Church will declare publicly, to the Prime Minister, to the Justices of the Supreme Court, to MPs and Senators and the entire country, that she will not

regard euthanasia legislation, even when signed and sealed with royal authority, as having the binding force of morally valid law. And that she is prepared both to exercise and to encourage civil disobedience in the matter, though that require significant sacrifice. It is also my hope that you and your fellow bishops will make clear to all Catholics under your charge that formal cooperation with suicide or euthanasia ... entails [automatic] excommunication. And that you will inform Catholic officials that anyone who votes to create a euthanasia regime or to liberalize one – since this provides immediate material cooperation to those who commit suicide or euthanasia and causes serious scandal by gravely injuring good morals – should not present himself for communion and is subject to punishment by a just penalty; even, if need be, to [Church-imposed] excommunication.

Farrow is correct to exhort his own overseers to speak with authority. Reformed churches shouldn't be outdone. Even as we strive to be subject to the civil authorities, their authority has no legitimacy if it requires our assent to evil. At the very least, we perpetuate the evils in our communities if we are silent about them.

It is important to "not be maneuvered," Farrow wrote, "in the name of political compromise or with a view to limiting harm, into giving even tacit approval to whatever assisted suicide and euthanasia regime comes into being." All Christian medical professionals must be ready to object and oppose these officially-endorsed evils, even when it costs them socially, financially, or legally.

SOURCE: Douglas Farrow's "Canadian Culture of Death: An Open Letter" posted to FirstThings.com on March 3, 2016; Picture by Art Babych / Shutterstock.com

## BUT DOES HER MAJESTY GET THE GOSPEL?

BY WES BREDEHOF

**H**er Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been one of the most beloved monarchs in history. Her popularity amongst Christians in the Commonwealth is also rather notable. The Queen's annual Christmas messages speak of Jesus Christ and his birth with no apologies. She is always quite forthright about the fact that she is a Christian ruler – and that's a remarkable stance to take today.

On April 21st Her Majesty celebrates her 90th birthday and one of the ways the occasion is being commemorated is with a special book about her faith. *The Servant Queen and the King She Serves* was written by Mark Greene and Catherine Butcher and will be co-published by three Christian organizations based in the UK. Greene says,

The Queen has served us all her adult life, with amazing consistency of character, concern for others and a clear dependence on Christ. The more I've read what she's written and

talked to people who know her, the clearer that is.

Some of the promotional material is drawn from the Queen's famous Christmas messages over the years. For example, these words are from her 2014 Christmas message:

For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance, and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.

In 2015, her message proclaimed, "Christ's unchanging message was not one of revenge or violence but simply that we should love one another."

This is an improvement on blatantly humanistic sentiments expressed in 1968 when she told her subjects, "The great message of Christmas is that we all belong to the brotherhood of man."



However, there remain lapses in the Queen's annual messages. We hear of Christ's example and Christ's love. She does speak of him as her King. This is far more than what we hear about Jesus from other world leaders. Yet we still never hear of sin or of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin and its consequences. Unfortunately, these true gospel notes are seldom, if ever, heard from Her Majesty. Will *The Servant Queen and the King She Serves* sound these missing notes? We hope so.

SOURCE: [www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/271617/The\\_Book.aspx](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/271617/The_Book.aspx)

## NBA WORLD STUNNED BY EULOGY

BY JON DYKSTRA



**A** little over a week after his wife Ingrid was killed in a head-on collision, NBA assistant coach Monty Williams delivered a eulogy that stunned the NBA world. It was covered on sports talk radio, made the front page of the Oklahoma newspaper, was shown in almost its entirety on network TV, and was tweeted out by reporters and players alike. It was seen and heard by millions. And in it Williams pointed to God's trustworthiness, His love, and His goodness. He said:

Psalm 73:1 says, "God is good."  
And 1 John 4:16 says, "God is love."

During times like this, it's easy to forget that, because what we've gone through is pretty tough and it's hard, and we want an answer. We don't always get that answer when we want it, but we can't lose sight of the fact that God loves us, and that's what my wife, and that's what I try to, however badly, exhibit on a daily basis. But God does love us.

He loved me so much that He sent his Son to die for my sins, and I for one know I'm not the man that you guys see every day. And only God could cover that. He loved me so much that He gave me a wife that loved every part of me, and she fit me perfectly. I know different players that I've had over the years probably got tired of me talking about my wife. I used to think to myself, "Who else was I going to talk about?" So, that never bothered me.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." All of this will work out.....I don't care what you're going through. This is *hard* for

my family, but this will work out. And my wife would punch me if I were to sit up here and whine about what's going on. That doesn't take away the pain. But it will work out because God causes all things to work out.

....We didn't lose her. When you lose something, you can't find it. I know exactly where my wife is. I'll miss holding her hand. I'll miss talking with my wife. Sam (Presti) and Coach (Billy) Donovan probably couldn't figure out why I always wanted to get out of the office... I just enjoyed being with my wife. I enjoyed being with my family, and most of the time, we didn't do anything. We'd just be at the house, sittin' around, doin' nothin'. I'm gonna miss that.

Let's not lose sight of what's important. God is important. What Christ did on the cross is important. Let's not lose sight of that family that also lost someone that they love. I love you guys. I hope I get a chance to hug and shake a hand and give a kiss on the cheek. But let's keep what's important at the forefront.

## AMERICAN PRO-LIFE POLITICIANS SHOW HOW IT'S DONE

BY JON DYKSTRA

**W**hile Canada has elected our most pro-abortion prime minister ever, the situation for the unborn south of the border is improving. This election's spate of Republican presidential candidates have all spoken out against Planned Parenthood, the nation's biggest abortion provider. And in mid February Senator Ted Cruz released a short 5-minute video in which he called the right to life the most important right of all.

...no issue reveals the true character of a candidate for public office more than the life issue. It's more than a litmus test – it's a window to the soul. Ronald Reagan once observed

that the right-to-life was the most important God-given right of them all for if you're not alive then everything else is sort of meaningless.

....A candidate that can't be trusted to protect the right-to-life can't be trusted to protect any of our other God-given rights either. When you look at the voting records of politicians what you'll find is if they're bad on life they're always – and I repeat *always* – bad on everything else too. If a politician will rob a fellow person of their right to life, rest assured they'll rob you of your private property rights, religious liberty, and look for new taxes and regulations to rob you of your hard-earned money as well. Liberty isn't safe in the hands



of a politician who doesn't hold all life sacred.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's pro-abortion agenda reveals his character – it is indeed a window into his soul. And what of Canada's other politicians? Who among them will speak up for the most fundamental God-given right of all?

SOURCE: Picture credit: Crush Rush / Shutterstock.com



## YAWN! NBC REPORTS PRO-CHOICERS SOMETIMES SAY PRO-LIFERS LIE

BY JON DYKSTRA

**N**on-stories are accounts that may seem newsworthy when half the tale is told, but become quite boring when all is known. One of the latest such stories popped up on Feb. 29 when an article was posted to NBCNews.com. Its headline read, “States give women misleading abortion information, study finds.” One of the problems this study highlighted is that, “A Wisconsin brochure said a 20-week-old fetus ‘may feel pain’” and, according to the study’s researchers, that is incorrect.

These fetuses don’t feel pain? But that runs contrary to the many claims, and many backing studies cited, by pro-lifers. If pro-lifers were wrong about this it would be quite the story!

But there is no story. This is a one-

source article based on a single study whose lead author is a professor in Rutgers’ *Department of Women’s and Gender Studies*. No opposing perspective is presented; pro-lifers aren’t given a chance to answer the charge. And the story was written and provided to NBC News by a foundation that, among others things, advocates for women’s reproductive rights.

In other words, in a one-sided account a feminist foundation is reporting that a feminist professor’s study says pro-lifers tell lies. Is that news? Or is that dreadfully boring?

It’s only by running with half the story that NBC News could get some people reading and outraged.

We should not go and do likewise. If you read an account that outrages



you, before you pass it on, look at it closely. Who are the sources? Is there more than one? Are they credible? Is there any attempt at balance – i.e. has the opposition been given a chance to answer the charge (Prov. 18:17)? If not, take a moment to track down the opposition perspective. You may well find that the story you were just about to share far and wide on social media is, upon closer examination, no story at all.

SOURCE: Thomson Reuters Foundation’s “States give women misleading abortion information, study finds” posted to NBCNews.com on Feb. 29, 2016; Conor Beck’s “Pro-abortion study falsely claims unborn babies don’t feel excruciating pain in abortions” posted to LifeNews.com on Mar. 4, 2016

## HURRAY FOR OUR SIDE! OR NOT?

BY WES BREDENHOF

**I**n Sept. 2014, Bethany Paquette had just graduated from Trinity Western University (TWU), a well-known Christian liberal arts university, with a Bachelor of Science. She was looking for a job as an outdoor guide and submitted an application to Amaruk Wilderness Corporation. Amaruk didn’t want to hire her. But instead of just ignoring her application or sending a polite letdown letter, they responded with a vitriolic attack on the applicant, and especially her Christian faith. Her resume mentioned her TWU education and that provided ammunition for vicious anti-Christian e-mails from Amaruk’s hiring manager “Olaf Amundsen” and others.

The story first broke in October 2014 when Paquette filed a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT), citing discrimination and harassment because of her religious beliefs. Further investigation by reporters revealed a strange twist in the story: Amaruk doesn’t even seem to be a real company doing real wilderness tours. “Olaf Amundsen” and the other individuals sending e-mails to Paquette didn’t seem

to be real either. The only real part of the company seems to be the CEO, Christophe Fragassi. But Fragassi, also known as Christophe Fragassi-Bjornsen, seems a pretender too, claiming a resume that doesn’t appear to match with reality.

Paquette’s complaint went forward at the BCHRT. Fragassi appeared at a hearing in November, but only to declare the process a sham and storm off while telling Paquette, “Try to get any money from me.” In early March, the BCHRT decided in favour of Paquette and ordered Fragassi to pay her damages of \$8,500 plus \$661 in expenses related to the tribunal.

What an odd story when you think about it! A young woman applies to fake company for a job. The fake company harasses her and insults her for her Christianity, so she takes it to the BCHRT. One of the other odd things in the case is the fact that, by her own admission, Paquette wasn’t even very serious about being a Christian at the time she applied to Amaruk. She wasn’t attending church and the fact that she applied to be a wilderness guide in the Arctic would seem to indicate that church was not a



Screenshot from the Amaruk Twitter account

priority for her at the time. Then there’s the question of whether Christians should be trying to force non-Christians to hire us – would we want the reverse done to us? Would we want to be forced to hire a virulently anti-Christian bigot like Fragassi for our business? And one final question: should Christians be bringing complaints to the same human rights tribunals that have brought some of us so much grief? After all, our Lord said in Luke 6:27-28, “...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” Do we really win when we don’t follow him?

SOURCES: Bruce Huthinson’s “Adventure company discriminated against Christian job applicant, must pay \$8,500: B.C. rights tribunal” posted to NationalPost.com March 2, 2016; Bruce Huthinson’s “God Bless” is very offensive to me: “Viking with a Ph.D” in rant after Christian’s job application” posted to NationalPost.com Oct. 8, 2014; Bruce Huthinson’s “Former associates question claims of man behind adventure company at centre of B.C. rights complaint” posted to NationalPost.com Oct. 16, 2014.

# { IN A TIDBITS RELEVANT, AND NOT SO, TO CHRISTIAN LIFE } NUTSHELL

BY JON DYKSTRA

drops a dish every now and again). But then we need to remember that the point of getting them to do the dishwasher is not to help us, but to help them become good helpers.

## WHY FOSSIL FUELS ARE A BLESSING

According to Kathleen Hartnett White, in her study *Fossil Fuels: The Moral Case*, “man-made emissions of carbon dioxide have risen three-fold since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.” But if some think that a decided downside, let’s not lose sight of the way we’ve been blessed by God’s provision of fossil fuels. As White explains,

When innovative minds developed a steam engine which could convert the stored heat energy in coal into mechanical energy, the economic limits under which all human societies had formerly existed were blown apart. A life of back-breaking drudgery was no longer the inescapable condition of the overwhelming majority of mankind.

Life expectancy had changed little throughout all human history until the Industrial Revolution; it thereafter tripled. Income per capita has since increased 11-fold.... Fossil-fuel powered mechanization revolutionized economic productivity, increased incomes, population, and life expectancy across all classes.

## CHORES ARE GOOD FOR YOU, AND THE EARLIER THE BETTER

Something parents have long suspected but few children have believed has been verified by research: chores are good for kids. The research that backs this up isn’t new. According to a *Wall Street Journal* article by Jennifer Breheny Wallace, these findings came in 2002 when Dr. Marty Rossmann of the University of Minnesota analyzed data to discover that

young adults who began chores at ages 3 and 4 were more likely to have good relationships with family and friends, to achieve academic and early career success and to be self-sufficient, as compared with those who didn’t have chores or who started them as teens.

Yet, as Wallace notes, a survey of US adults in 2014 found that while 82% grew up doing regular chores, “only 28% said that they require their own children to do them.” Why? It seems like parents are making piano lessons, and homework, and dance recitals and hockey practices the priority, and letting their children slide when it comes to pulling their weight at home. We think these other things are important, but they don’t compare to the joy of having a helpful daughter or son who becomes a responsible young lady or man.

One other reason we tend to put off training our children to do chores is because the payoff for parents is very long term. A three-year-old who helps empty the dishwasher is going to cause much more work than she saves (especially when she

SOURCE: Jennifer Breheny Wallace’s “Children need chores” posted to The Wall Street Journal on March 13, 2015.

## PARENTAL CODE: UPPING OUR GAME

As is true for many readers of this magazine, my parents spoke Dutch whenever they wanted to talk about things they didn’t want us kids to understand. That always got us listening all the more intently, and over the years we did learn a “klien beetje” of Dutch, but never enough to figure out exactly what they were saying.

But now, with kids of our own, and no second-language skills to turn to, I’m trying to figure out how I can talk to my wife without our kids clueing in.

For the last four or five years, every since our oldest learned to talk, we made use of our ability to spell. But now she’s off to kindergarten and has managed to break that code. So we’ve turned to shorthand spelling – instead of spelling out the whole word, we’ll just spell out the first few letters. So if I want to suggest a trip to the library, I’ll ask my wife what she thinks “about going to the L-I-B.” As “lib” doesn’t sound all that much like “library” it kept our speller off the scent for a while. But after repeated usage she broke that code too, and now when I ask my wife if we should have “I-C-E for dessert” our oldest is already salivating.

Clearly, we had to up our game. Now instead of using actual letters, I’m using sound-alikes, in shorthand. So the last time I suggested heading to the library I asked my wife whether we should head to the “E-L-L-E, E-Y-E, B-E-E.” That should serve us for at least the next little bit.

After that? How about sound-alikes, in shorthand, *backwards*! Or we could just go to the other room.

## ALZHEIMER’S AND THE HOPE OF A REFORMED FAITH

Some years ago the then editor of *Christianity Today*, David Neff, pointed out how little hope liberal theology offers the family and friends of Alzheimer’s patients. Such theology, “requires Christians to act for their salvation/liberation. That is no comfort to those whose dementia leaves them without the capacity to act.” After his father-in-law was stricken, Neff took comfort in a more Reformed understanding that instead emphasized, “that it is God who acts on our own behalf.”

SOURCE: Editorial from the April 24, 2000 issue

## LEADERS ALWAYS, EITHER SACRIFICIAL OR BAD

“The Bible says the ‘husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church’ (Eph. 5:23). Paul most emphatically does not say that husbands *ought* to be heads of their wives. He says they are.... Because the husband is the head of the wife he finds himself in a position of inescapable

leadership. He cannot successfully refuse to lead. If he attempts to abdicate in some way, he may, through his rebellion, lead poorly. But no matter what he does, or where he goes, he does so as the head of his wife."

– Douglas Wilson in *Reforming Marriage*

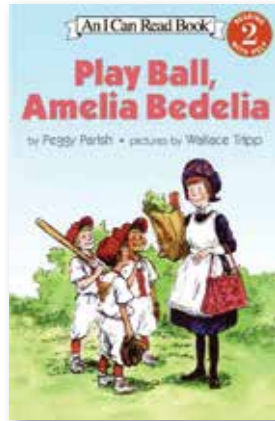
## A READING TIP FOR DADS

Whenever I begin an *Amelia Bedelia* book I can hear a growing chorus screaming, "Nooooooo! Don't say her name agaaaaaaain!" Those are my brain cells...dying.

Still, my kids like these books, and men are called to lead sacrificially, so I've had to figure out a work around. At first I had my daughters interject with Bedelia's name each time it appeared ...which meant they were reading half the book! But now I've come up with an even better solution that allows me to go entirely Bedelia-free – when her name come up, I just swap in "Jane Smith."

Aaaaah, sweet relief!

Give it a try dads; your brain cells will thank you!



Lems included five more, and noted that while his list was a negative one, it could also be reframed in the positive. For example, we could also note that going to church is God's will, and doing so "strengthens your fellowship with the saints." There are certainly dangers to neglecting church, but clear benefits to going. For the full article see [www.opc.org/nh.html](http://www.opc.org/nh.html).

## COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

If Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the prospect of President Donald Trump have you despairing, it's time to start counting the many, many blessings God continues to shower on us. Here's a half dozen to get things started.

- It used to be expensive to phone long distance. Now we can Skype grandma for free.
- Most of us have a computer more powerful than anything NASA used to run the Apollo missions...and it's small enough to fit in a pocket.
- Life expectancy has jumped ten years since 1950.
- Everyone used to smoke, even if they never touched a cigarette - the haze was everywhere! Now we don't...mostly.
- The percentage of people in the world who are living in extreme poverty has been halved since 1990.
- Students in school today have no idea what a nuclear missile attack drill entails.

## OH CANADA!

- How do you get a mob of Canadians to disperse? You say, "Please disperse."
- How did they name Canada? They picked letters from a hat and called out: "C, eh? N, eh? D, eh?"
- What did the Albertan ask the tour guide at the Eiffel Tower? "How many barrels a day does it produce?"
- Canada: where's it's so cold teen pull their pants *up*.
- How do you get a Canadian to apologize? Step on his foot.

SOURCE: Tanya Chen's "18 jokes that only Canadians will appreciate" posted to Buzzfeed.com July 2, 2014, and "Canadians in the Prairies are cracking jokes because it's laughably cold" posted Jan 19, 2016

## "DO WE HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH TODAY?"

In the September 2015 issue of *New Horizons* Pastor Shane Lems shared how as a young lad he would complain to his parents, "Do we have to go to church today?" He didn't understand the dangers of neglecting the church service – he wanted to stay home with his Lego. But, as he says, while "it's one thing for a child to reason this way, it's a very different thing for an adult to do it." And he goes on to list some of the dangers to skipping church.

1. It is against God's will
2. It hinders Christian fellowship
3. It diminishes God's praise
4. It confuses/sets a bad example for other Christians
5. It invites Satan's temptations
6. It is harmful to the Christian's faith



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# COUNTERING A REFORMED CONSERVATIVE'S CASE FOR EVOLUTION

## Examining Tim Keller's white paper *Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople*

by Ted Van Raalte

Tim Keller's trusted place among Reformed and Presbyterian folk is well-earned, but not when it comes to his views on evolution. In a discussion paper of some years ago for the Biologos Foundation he provided Reformed scientists with a theologian's suggestions about how one might apparently help others keep the faith and accept evolution. His 13-page white paper, entitled *Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople*, has been referenced favourably by scientists and theologians in conservative Reformed churches.<sup>1</sup> For example, when Frieda Oosterhoff introduced Keller's paper some years ago on the Reformed Academic website, she stated,

(Readers of this blog, incidentally, will notice that our blog partner Dr. Jitse van der Meer sees eye to eye with Dr. Kidner in the matter of human evolution, the historicity of Adam and Eve, and the descent of all humans from Adam, and that he affirms the same tentative approach as Kidner and Keller.)<sup>2</sup>

In his paper Keller explores the critical questions of concerned Christians and deals with them head-on. While his forthrightness is commendable, most of his answers are not.

### What this debate is not about

It's important to situate accurately our debate with Keller. The debate between

us is not whether the Christian faith and current science (or what is claimed to be science) are irreconcilable, for we all agree that in many respects they are reconcilable while in some respects they are not. The debate, rather, is in what *particular* respects they are and are not able to be reconciled.

The debate between us is not whether evolution is a defensible *worldview* that gives us the basis of our views on religion, ethics, human nature, etc. We all agree that it is not the "grand theory/explanation of everything." We all agree that there is a God and he is the God of the Bible – Triune, sovereign, covenant-making, gracious, atonement-providing, and bringing about a new creation. Nor am I debating whether Keller is an old-earth creationist aka progressive creationist or an evolutionary creationist or a theistic evolutionist. His own position is a bit unclear so I will simply deal with what he has published in this paper.<sup>3</sup>

The debate between us is not whether matter is eternal; whether the universe's order is by sheer chance; whether humans have no purpose but to propagate their own genes; whether humans are material only; whether human life is no more valuable than bovine, canine, or any other life; whether upon death all personal existence ceases; or whether ethics is at root about the survival of the fittest. We all agree that none of these things are the case – Scripture teaches differently. We are not debating these points.

### What it is about – 3 key questions

Our differences emerge in the compatibility of Scripture with biological evolution, namely, whether Scripture *has room* for the view that humans have a biological ancestry that precedes Adam and Eve. Is this a *permissible* view?

The first thing to realize as one reads Keller's paper is its context and purpose: Delivered at the first Biologos "Theology of Celebration" workshop in 2009, Keller lays out 3 concerns that "Christian laypeople" typically express when they are told that God created Adam and Eve by evolutionary biological processes.

Keller advances strategies to help fellow Biologos members allay these fears of Christian laypeople. The context thus is that biological evolution is a permissible view; the scholars just need to figure out how to make it more widely accepted.

Keller deals with the following "three questions of Christian laypeople."

1. If God used evolution to create, then we can't take Genesis 1 literally, and if we can't do that, why take any other part of the Bible literally?
2. If biological evolution is true – does that mean that we are just animals driven by our genes and everything about us can be explained by natural selection?
3. If biological evolution is true and there was no historical Adam and Eve how can we know where sin and suffering came from?

These are excellent questions! But what sort of answers does Keller propose?

## Q1. If evolution is true can we take Genesis literally?

Keller's first question is, "If God used evolution to create, then we can't take Genesis 1 literally, and if we can't do that, why take any other part of the Bible literally?" Keller's short answer is,

The way to respect the authority of the Biblical writers is to take them as they want to be taken. Sometimes they want to be taken literally, sometimes they don't. We must listen to them, not impose our thinking or agenda on them.

At first glance this is a solid answer – the Bible has authority! But Keller has more to say.

### Genre and intent

He expands upon his answer first by delving into the genre of Genesis 1 because "the way to discern how an author wants to be read is to distinguish what genre the writer is using."

"How an author wants to be read" is a bit ambiguous, but I'll take it to refer to authorial intent – Keller's point is going to be whether or not the author wants us to read Genesis 1 literally and chronologically. The link he proposes between genre and authorial intent, however, is not straightforward. Someone can use widely differing genres to communicate the same intended message.

Consider this example: If I use poetry to communicate to my wife how much I love her, my intentions are just the same as if I had written it out in a regular sentence or two. I could even send the same message via a syllogism:

All my life I have loved you;  
Today is a day of my life;  
Therefore I love you today.

Whether poetry or prose or syllogism (or, as my wife would call it, a silly-gism),

my message remains the same.

Now it's true that in poetry I'm more likely to use figures of speech but that doesn't mean poetry as a genre can't recount history. See Psalm 78 for a good example of poetry replete with historical truth.

### Genre of Genesis 1

Keller next asks what genre Genesis 1 is and starts his answer with the conservative Presbyterian theologian Edward J. Young (1907–1968) who, he says, "admits that Genesis 1 is written in 'exalted, semi-poetical language.'"

Keller correctly notes the absence of the telltale signs of Hebrew poetry. Yet he also points out the refrains in Genesis 1 such as, "and God saw that it was good," "God said," "let there be," and "and it was so," and then Keller adds, "Obviously, this is not the way someone writes in response to a simple request to tell what happened." He completes this part of the arguments with a quotation from John Collins that the genre of Genesis 1 is "what we may call *exalted prose narrative* . . . by calling it exalted, we are recognizing that we must not impose a 'literalistic' hermeneutic on the text."

Thus this argument is now complete: Keller is saying that the genre of Genesis 1 prohibits us from reading it literally.

### Misleading appeal to E. J. Young

However, if we follow the trail via Keller's footnote to E. J. Young's *Studies in Genesis One*, we discover that Keller sidestepped Young's real point. Here's the fuller quote: "Genesis one is written in exalted, semi-poetical language; *nevertheless, it is not poetry*" (italics added).

Young continued by pointing out what elements of Hebrew poetry are lacking and by urging the reader to compare Job 38:8–11 and Psalm 104:5–9 to Genesis 1 in order to see the obvious differences between a poetic and non-poetic account of the creation. Prior to this paragraph Young had written,

Genesis one is a document *sui generis* [entirely of its own kind]; its like or equal is not to be found anywhere in



## WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS ARTICLE

by Jon Dykstra

You need to read this article because it addresses one of the most compelling arguments for evolution you are likely to see. Why is this argument so compelling? Because its author, Tim Keller, is a different sort of evolutionist.

Keller upholds many of the things we hold dear. He is a pastor who understands evil is real, believes in God, and sees evidence of Him all around. He is Reformed. He has written on, and said many helpful things about, marriage, idolatry, and grace. His books can be found on our bookshelves, with at least a couple – *Counterfeit gods* and *The Prodigal God* – recommended in *Reformed Perspective*.

And yet he still believes in evolution.

In short, this is a man who, when he's not talking about evolution, has shown himself capable of impressive scriptural insights. So when he directs his attention to Genesis 1 and 2, and says that these chapters can be reconciled with evolution, we need to pay attention. We need to pay attention because we know his well-deserved influence will result in his argument being spread far and wide. And we need to pay attention because his argument will be better than most any other we'll see. Thus, if we can be prepared to respond to him, we'll be prepared indeed.



Keller rebutting Freud: "If, as Freud says, all views of God are really just psychological projections to deal with our guilt and insecurity, then so is his view of God, so why listen to him?"

the literature of antiquity. And the reason for this is obvious. Genesis one is divine revelation to man concerning the creation of heaven and earth. It does not contain the cosmology of the Hebrews or of Moses. Whatever that cosmology may have been, we do not know . . . Israel, however, was favoured of God in that he gave to her a revelation concerning the creation of heaven and earth, and Genesis one is that revelation.

Young elaborates further,

For this reason we cannot properly speak of the literary genre of Genesis one. It is not a cosmogony [creation account], as though it were simply one among many. In the nature of the case a *true* cosmogony must be a divine revelation. The so-called cosmogonies of the various peoples of antiquity are in reality deformations of the originally revealed truth of creation. There is only one genuine cosmogony, namely, Genesis one, and this account alone gives reliable information as to the origin of the earth (*italics added*).

With these words of Young guiding our hearts, we turn back to Keller's statement that it is "obvious" that someone would not compose an account in the exalted style of Genesis 1 "in response to a simple request to tell what happened."

Really? But what if the things therein described happened exactly in that exalted way? Of course we are reading "exalted prose" – precisely because the things described are so wonderful! The literary style not only fits but even reflects the miraculous events. God is glorified repeatedly, all the more because it is literally true.

### **An old canard: Genesis 1 versus Genesis 2**

Keller's second reason – and strongest, he says – why he thinks the author of Genesis 1 didn't want to be taken literally is based on "a comparison of the order of creative acts in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2."

This argument is a bit more complicated and deserves closer scrutiny than I will give it here. But the basic point is that Genesis 2:5 apparently speaks about God not putting any vegetation on the earth before there was an atmosphere or rain or a man to till the ground. This, says Keller, is the natural order. Genesis 1 is the unnatural order, so it's not literal. His argument is an old canard, but really it is a lame duck.

Let's examine it: Keller says that Genesis 1 has an unnatural order because:

- light (created on Day 1) came before light sources (created on Day 4)
- vegetation (Day 3) came before an atmosphere and rain (which he says was created on Day 4)

Let's consider this second point first. Keller reads the text too quickly here, for the separation of waters above and below occurs on Day 2, thus allowing rain before vegetation. And even if there was no rain, a day without light or water wouldn't kill these plants anyway.

Now regarding the first point, the "light before lightbearers" problem, it might strike us as interesting that God created light on Day 2 before there were any light sources – the sun moon and stars were created on Day 4 – but why should it strike us as a difficulty? God has no need of the sun to make light (Rev. 21:23).

To continue: the order of events in Genesis 2, especially verse 5, is not in the least contrary to Genesis 1. Rather, whereas Genesis 1:1–2:3 refers only to "God" and focuses on the awesome Creator preparing and adorning the earth for man, Genesis 2:4–25 focus on this God as "Yahweh" who lovingly and tenderly creates the man and the woman, prepares a beautiful garden for them, and who thereupon enters into a loving relationship with them. Each chapter makes its own contribution to the story, with chapter 2 doubling back in order to more fully explain the events of the sixth day. This is a common occurrence in Hebrew prose. Further, we can easily fit 2:4–25 chronologically in between 1:26, "Let us make man in our image" and 1:27, "So God created man in his image . . . male [Adam] and female [Eve] he created them."

Finally, Genesis 2:4 begins the first "toledoth" or "generations of" statement, which after this becomes a structural divider in Genesis, occurring nine more times. Young argues that we should translate "toledoth" as "those things which are begotten." If we follow this suggestion, we see that Genesis 2:4ff tell us about the things begotten of the heavens and the earth, such as the man, who is both earthly (his body) and heavenly (his spirit), or the garden, which is earthly, yet planted by God. When Genesis 2:5 states that "no shrub of the field" had yet grown and "no plant of the field" had yet sprouted, it portrays a barrenness which sets the stage for the fruitful garden (2:8–14) and the fruitful wife (2:18–25).



Further, the “shrubs” and “plants” of the field likely point to cultivated plants that require human tending. Adam will be a farmer. If so, the point of 2:5 is not the lack of vegetation altogether, but the lack of certain man-tended kinds, such as those Yahweh God would plant in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, we ought to conclude the very opposite of Keller. Whereas he argues that we cannot read both chapter 1 and chapter 2 as “straightforward accounts of historical events” and that chapter 2 rather than chapter 1 provides the “natural order,” we most certainly can read both as historical and literal.

Keller pulls together both the genre and the chronology arguments and concludes,

So what does this mean? It means Genesis 1 does not teach us that God made the world in six twenty-four hour days. Of course, it doesn’t teach evolution either . . . However, it does not preclude the possibility of the earth being extremely old.

However, both of Keller’s grounds for not taking Genesis 1 literally have been exposed as weak at best.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, E. J. Young’s strong arguments for the literal, historical reading of Genesis 1, a few of which we reviewed here, remain firmly in place. Exalted prose indeed, and true!

### Whose authority?

Before we move on to Keller’s second question, a word about the authority of the text: Keller states that we must “respect the authority of the Biblical writers.” His wording is similar to that of John Walton’s in speeches Walton gave at a conference I attended in September 2015.<sup>5</sup> Walton frequently spoke of “the authority of the text” and stated that it rested in the original meaning “as understood by the people who first received it.”

But missing from both Keller and Walton is the recognition that all Scripture is breathed by God (2 Tim. 3:16) and that therefore the primary author is the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). We are not called just to respect the authority of human writers or of the text, but of God himself!

That’s why there are passages of

Scripture for which the first intention of the human writer – as far as we can discern it – does not reach as far as the divine intention. (Consider, for example, certain Messianic Psalms such as 2 & 110, or the injunction about the ox not wearing a muzzle as it treads out the grain – Deut. 25:4; cf. 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18). In fact, Peter tells us that the Old Testament prophets searched with great care to find out the time and circumstances of the things they prophesied about Christ – implying that the prophecies went beyond the knowledge of the prophets themselves. He adds that these are things into which even angels long to look (1 Pet. 1:10–12). Thus, it’s clear that the primary author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit and that the authority of the text resides in his intentions first of all. This is why one of the primary rules of interpretation is to compare Scripture with Scripture. This book is *God’s Word*!

Let us take great care in handling the *Word of God* – greater care than Keller does on this point. And let us conclude that the text of Genesis 1 itself clearly indicates it is to be read literally, historically, and chronologically (Keller, at least, has not proven otherwise).

## Q2. If biological evolution is true, does it explain everything?

So let us move on to Keller’s second question. This “layperson” question really gets at a problem: “If biological evolution is true, does that mean that we are just animals driven by our genes and everything about us can be explained by natural selection?”

Keller provides this short answer: “No. Belief in evolution as a biological process is not the same as belief in evolution as a world-view.”

### Two senses of “evolution” – EBP vs. GTE

In explaining this question and his response, Keller distinguishes evolution in two senses.

- Evolution as a means God used to

create. Or as Keller puts it, “human life was formed through evolutionary biological processes” (EBP).

- Evolution “as the explanation for every aspect of human nature,” which he calls the “Grand Theory of Everything” (GTE).

Similarly, some Canadian Reformed authors have argued for the distinction between “evolution” and “evolutionism.”<sup>6</sup>

The problem Keller is addressing is that self-described “evolutionary creationists” – such as those at Biologos tend to be – end up hearing the same critique from both creationists and evolutionists: both argue that you can’t hold the theory of biological evolution without at the same time endorsing atheistic evolution as a whole. Essentially both critics assert that evolution is a package – a worldview, a big-picture perspective – and you can’t just isolate one part of it.

Keller suggests to his fellow Biologos members that most Christian laypeople have a difficult time distinguishing EBP from GTE. They have a hard time understanding that it is possible to limit one’s commitment to evolution to “the scientific explorations of the way which – at the level of biology – God has gone about his creating processes” (Keller quoting David Atkinson).

“How can we help them?” Keller asks, for “this is exactly the distinction they must make, or they will never grant the importance of EBP.” He simply states that Christian pastors, theologians and scientists need to keep emphasizing that they are not endorsing evolution as the Grand Theory of Everything.

### Keller’s helpful critique of evolution as the Grand Theory of Everything

To support this, Keller provides a brief but helpful analysis, showing that evolution as the Grand Theory of Everything (GTE) is self-refuting. He touches on this in the paper, and expands on it in an online video from which I’ll also quote.

Basically, according to those who hold to evolution as the explanation of everything (GTE), religion came about only because it somehow must have

helped our ancestors survive (survival of the fittest). In fact, they say, we all know there's no God, no heaven, no divine revelation. Such things are false beliefs.

But if that is the case, argues Keller, then natural selection has led our minds to believe false things for the sake of survival. Further, if human minds have almost universally had some kind of belief in God, performed religious practices, and held moral absolutes, *and if it's all actually false*, then we can't be sure about anything our minds tell us, including evolution as the grand theory of everything. Thus, with reference to itself, evolution as the GTE is absurd.

In the online video Keller is dealing with the problem that opponents of Christianity and of religion generally try to "explain it away." He states,

C. S. Lewis put it this way some years ago, "You can't go on explaining everything away forever or you will find that you have explained explanation itself away."

Keller, following Lewis, illustrates "explaining away" with "seeing through" things: A window lets you see through it to something else that is opaque. But if all we had were windows – a wholly transparent world – all would be invisible and in the end you wouldn't see anything at all. "To see through everything is not to see at all." How does that apply to our discussion? Keller then shows that many universal claims are self-refuting.

If, as Nietzsche says, all truth claims are really just power grabs, then so is his, so why listen to him? If, as Freud says, all views of God are really just psychological projections to deal with our guilt and insecurity, then so is his view of God, so why listen to him? If, as the evolutionary scientists say, that what my brain tells me about morality and God is not real – it's just chemical reactions designed to pass on my genetic code – then so is what their brains tell them about the world, so why listen to them? In the end to see through everything is not to see.<sup>7</sup>

As usual, Keller is an insightful apologist for the Christian faith. He helps us oppose evolution as the Grand Theory of Everything.

Just the same, I heard another prominent evolutionary creationist, Denis Alexander, answering questions at a recent conference (2016) and musing about our lack of knowledge as to when "religiosity" first evolved among our ancestors. So, Keller's helpful critique notwithstanding, at least one of his co-members at Biologos appears to think that religiosity is an evolved trait (or at least allows for this view).

### **But Keller doesn't prove that EBP doesn't lead to GTE**

Although I've highlighted something helpful in Keller's white paper, the main point he needed to make was to prove that one's commitment to the theory of evolutionary biological ancestry for humans (and all other living things) does not entail holding to evolution as the grand theory of everything. He didn't prove this, and didn't really make the attempt. He might not have felt the need to, because of the setting in which he spoke – he delivered this speech to Biologos, an organization which is committed to EBP but wants to avoid GTE because the members are Christians.

Nevertheless, this is the real point at issue.

### **Can and will Christians be able to hold to EBP without moving to GTE?**

I seriously doubt that Christians can or will be successful in adopting evolution as EBP while avoiding the trajectory that moves toward evolution as GTE. Here's why, in short.

It seems to me that as soon as one adopts EBP, the following positions come to be accepted (whether as hypotheses, theories, or firm positions):

1. **Adam and Eve had biological ancestors**, from whom they evolved – some sort of chimp-like creatures. These "chimps" in turn had other biological ancestors and relatives, as do all creatures. In fact, there is an entire phylogenetic tree or chain of

evolutionary development that begins with the Big Bang. All living things have common ancestry in the simplest living things, such as plants. At some point before that the transition was made from non-living things to the first living cell (some evolutionary creationists assert that God did something supernatural to make the transition from non-living things to living).<sup>8</sup>

2. **Evolving requires deep time.** "Multiple lines of converging evidence" apparently tell us the universe is 14.7 billion years old; the earth is about 4.7 billion, life is about 3 billion, and human life is probably about 400,000 years old (these numbers may vary; I happen to think 6-10 thousand is rather ancient as it is!).
3. **Humans do not have souls;** they are simply material beings. This is being promoted by Biologos and other theologians and philosophers.<sup>9</sup> Not all evolutionary creationists would agree; some say God gave a soul when he "made" man in his image, others that the soul "emerged" from higher-order brain processes at some point in the evolutionary history.
4. **The world is getting better,** on a continual trajectory from chaos to increasing order, or from bad to good to better to best. This creates great difficulties for one's doctrine of the fall, redemption in Christ, and the radical transition into the new creation.
5. **The earth, as long as it has had animal life, has been filled with violence.** Keller admits in his paper how critical this is: "The process of evolution, however, understands violence, predation, and death to be the very engine of how life develops." This presents enormous difficulty for one's doctrines of the good initial creation, and the fall into sin.
6. **God must have been more hands-off.** The universe's order arises mainly due to the unfolding of the inherent powers and structures God must have embedded in that initial

# AFTER EVOLUTION:

## 4 Reformed figures who accepted evolution and kept on moving

by Jon Dykstra

What follows are very brief bios of four prominent Reformed figures who have accepted evolution and gone on to accept increasingly unorthodox positions.

### 1. PETER ENNS

Enns once taught at Westminster Theological Seminary (1994- 2008) from where the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) gets many of their ministerial candidates. He now claims, "God never told the Israelites to kill the Canaanites. The Israelites believed that God told them to kill the Canaanites."

### 2. HOWARD VAN TILL

Van Till taught at the Christian Reformed Calvin College (1967-1998) and was for a time one of the best-known Reformed defenders of evolution. He no longer holds to the Reformed confessions, and, according to a 2008 piece in *The Grand Rapids Press* seems to have migrated to some form of pantheism, seeing "God not as a transcendent, separate creator, but an active presence within and inseparable from creation."

### 3. EDWIN WALHOUT

Walhout is a retired Christian Reformed Church (CRC) pastor, and was once the denomination's Editor of Adult Education. In 1972 he suggested

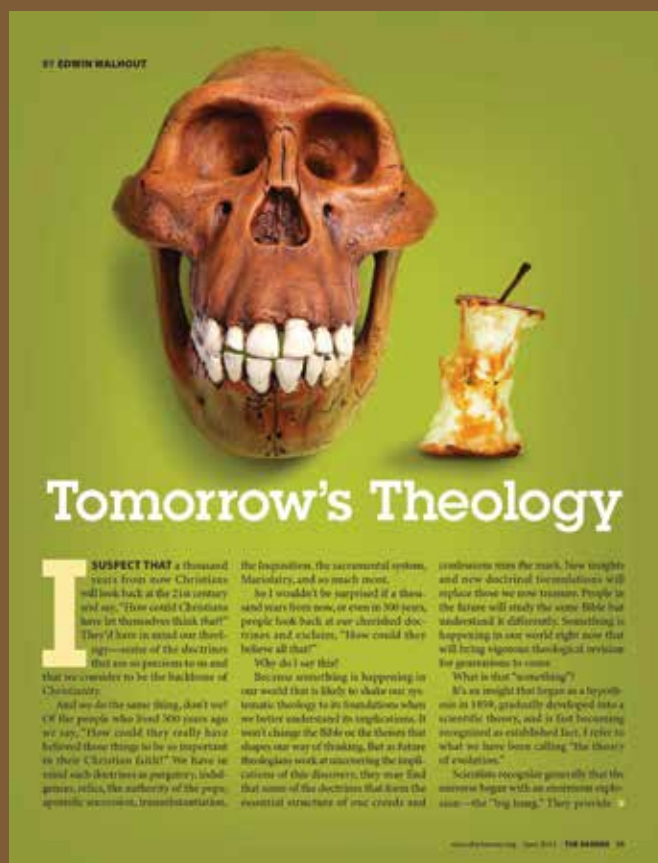
...it may well be that science can give us insights into the way in which God created man, but it can hardly discover or disclaim that man is an image of God.

In a 2013 *Banner* article he was far more definitive, proposing that in light of evolution the CRC needs to re-examine the doctrines of Creation, Original Sin, the Fall and Salvation, as well as whether Adam and Eve were real historical people.

### 4. DEBORAH HAARSMa

Haarsma was a professor at Calvin College from 1999 until 2012. In 2007, along with her husband, she authored a book that discussed various views on origins and, while endorsing none, treated evolution as credible. She is now the president of Biologos, a think tank that affirms evolution to be true, the Earth to be billions of years old, and Adam and Eve to not necessarily be historical people.

Does this mean that accepting evolution always leads to liberalism? Couldn't we counter this list by coming up with one made up of Reformed luminaries who have accepted evolution and stayed generally orthodox?



Edwin Walhout's 2013 article in the *Banner*, suggesting that evolution might cause tomorrow's theology to look very different than today's, caused quite a stir in the CRC.

We could come up with such a list and Tim Keller might be at the top of it. But the problem is that twenty years ago Peter Enns might also have been on such a list. He didn't reject orthodoxy immediately. Any such "counterlist" might simply be a list of evolution-believing Reformed figures *who don't reject orthodoxy yet*. Only time will tell.

No, if we're going to try to make the case that evolution and orthodoxy are a natural fit, then the better counterlist would be that of liberals who, after embracing evolution, *moved in a more orthodox direction*. That would be a good answer to this list.

But does that ever happen?





"The third question Keller tries to answer is, "If biological evolution is true and there was no historical Adam and Eve how can we know where sin and suffering [and carnage and cruelty] came from?"

singularity called the Big Bang. There is a movement toward Deism inherent in the theory. Much of what the Bible ascribes to God's creating power and wisdom actually belongs to his providential guidance, which itself was probably a rather hands-off thing.

**7. God's nature needs to be understood differently** – particularly his goodness – if creation was "red in tooth and claw" from the beginning.<sup>10</sup>

**8. Scripture needs to be reinterpreted.** The authority of God's Word falls under the axe due to the exegetical gymnastics required to accommodate EBP. Scripture apparently no longer means what it appears to mean. This opens up the reinterpretation of everything in the Bible.

### Where is the line between?

In sum, Keller provides a helpful critique of evolution as the Grand Theory of Everything (GTE). However, he fails to demonstrate that holding to evolutionary biological processes (EBP) does not, in itself, open one up to evolution as the GTE, and may in fact ultimately make it impossible to avoid more and more of evolution as the GTE.

This is surely because for the most part evolution as such depends upon atheistic

presuppositions. And in fact, it's actually quite hard to determine just where the line is between evolution as EBP and GTE. I'm afraid that's a sliding scale, depending upon which scientist or theologian presents his views. Once the camel's nose is in the tent... you know the rest.

The academic and religious trajectories of scholars who were once orthodox and Reformed shows how hard it is to maintain evolution as EBP only. I'm thinking of such men as Howard Van Till (who is now more of a "free thinker"),<sup>11</sup> Peter Enns (who now only holds to the Apostles' Creed and treats the Bible as arising from the Israelites, not from God),<sup>12</sup> and Edwin Walhout (who advocated rewriting the doctrines of creation, sin, salvation, and providence).<sup>13</sup>

There are whole swaths of theologians and scientists associated with Biologos, the Faraday Institute, and the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation who are trying valiantly to hold together their Christian faith with evolutionary science. And the money of the Templeton Foundation will ensure that pamphlets, presentations, conferences, and books, will bring these views to the Christian public. Holding to Dooyeweerdian philosophy's sphere sovereignty may help some of these Christians compartmentalize their biology, geology,

and their faith, but that philosophical school has been subject to severe criticism in our tradition, and on precisely this point.<sup>14</sup> I fear that the dissonance of EBP itself with the historic, creedal Christian faith will prove to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Christians to keep their faith and EBP together. I also doubt that one can very easily maintain evolution as EBP only.

## Q3. If biological evolution is true, whence sin and suffering?

One question remains. Keller words this "layperson" question as follows: "If biological evolution is true and there was no historical Adam and Eve, how can we know where sin and suffering came from?" He responds in short,

Belief in evolution can be compatible with a belief in an historical fall and a literal Adam and Eve. There are many unanswered questions around this issue and so Christians who believe God used evolution must be open to one another's views.

Keller finds the "concerns of this question much more well-grounded" than the first two questions.

With reference to the first two, he summarizes, “I *don’t* believe you have to take Genesis 1 as a literal account, and I don’t think that to believe human life came about through EBP you necessarily must support evolution as the GTE.” But as regards this third question he wants to maintain that Adam and Eve were historical figures and not mere symbols. In this regard he differs from those who are more liberal with the text of Genesis 1–3.

### In part agreeing with Keller

As with the last question Keller entertained, I again find him making some strong and valid points but ultimately proposing solutions that don’t work. He is concerned that if the church abandons belief in a historical fall into sin, this might “weaken some of our historical, doctrinal commitments at certain crucial points.” Two such points are the trustworthiness of Scripture and the scriptural teachings on sin and salvation.

He correctly asserts that, “the key for interpretation is the Bible itself.” He adds that he doesn’t think Genesis 1 should be taken literally because he thinks the author himself didn’t intend this. However, we have earlier weighed his case and found it wanting. His principles sound good, but he doesn’t practice them. Moreover, he fails to talk about the ultimate author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit.

When Keller favourably quotes Kenneth Kitchen to the effect that the ancients did not tend to historicize myth, that is, think that their myths really were history, but rather tended to turn their history into myths, celebrating actual persons and events “in mythological terms,” we can again agree. This supports the view that the original message is the truth we find in Genesis, and that the myths of the surrounding nations adulterated this.<sup>15</sup>

### The Derek Kidner model

In 1967 Derek Kidner, a British Old Testament scholar ordained in the Anglican Church, published a

commentary on Genesis in which he surmised that the creature into which God breathed life (Gen 2:7) could have belonged to an existing species whose “bodily and cultural remains” (fossils, bones, cave drawings, I presume) show that they were quite intelligent but were not up to the level of an Adam. Keller concludes, “So in this model there was a place in the evolution of human beings when God took one out of the population of tool-makers and endowed him with the ‘image of God.’”

However, a problem arises regarding all the other tool-makers. They would have been biologically related to Adam but not spiritually related. Kidner then proposed a second step: “God may have now conferred his image on Adam’s collaterals, to bring them into the same realm of being.” Then, if Adam is taken as the representative of all, they might all be considered by God to be included in the fall even though they are not physically descended from Adam and Eve (this sort of move, by the way, has been welcomed by certain Reformed theologians who emphasize Adam’s *federal* or *covenantal* headship, though historically Reformed theologians never separated this from his physical headship).

### “Let us make man in our image”

What is lacking in Kidner’s account and Keller’s consideration is more attention to the language of Genesis. God did not simply appoint an existing being to be endowed with his image. Rather God conferred within himself and specifically uttered his determination, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule . . .” (Gen 1:26). Then verse 27 three times uses the word “created,” when it says, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Thus, God spoke of “making” and “creating” man in chapter 1, while in chapter 2 the manner of this creating was specified in that God “formed the man of dust from the ground” and “fashioned/constructed a woman from the rib he had taken

out of the man” (2:7, 22). Speaking of a mere endowment or bestowal of God’s “image” on an existing hominid, Neanderthal, or whatever it was, doesn’t do justice to such terms as “created,” “made,” “formed,” and “fashioned.”

### Suffering and death before the fall?

Moving on to the problem of death before the fall, Keller acknowledges that this is a very prominent question. He doesn’t propose a fulsome answer, but offers a number of points by which his Biologos fellows could help Christians overcome these concerns. He does this by highlighting aspects of the creation which, in his view, show that “there was *not* perfect order and peace in creation from the first moment” (*italics added*).

These aspects include the initial chaos which God had to “subdue” in the successive days of creating, the presence of Satan, the fact that the world was not yet “in a glorified, perfect state” and the view that surely there had to have been some kind of death and decay, else the fruit on the trees would not even have been digestible. What response can we give to this?

First, we must emphasize what the Scriptures emphasize, “And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31), the climax of all the other affirmations of the goodness of creation in that chapter (Gen 1:4,9,12,18,21,25).

Second, we can agree that good bacteria were present, to digest food, for God gave all the plants for food (Gen 1:30; cf. Gen 9:3) and even in the new creation the tree of life will bear fruit every month and its leaves will be used for healing (Rev 22:2). Although Revelation describes this symbolically, the idea of plant death in some sense is not averse to the new creation (cf. Isa 65:25). Thus digestion and plant death before the fall are something good, not something evil.

Third, God did not have to subdue the chaos as though it were an active power against him. Rather, he took six days to form and shape what he had

initially produced on the first day so that he would set the pattern of our lives and manifest himself as a God of power, wisdom, order, and love.

Finally, the presence of Satan did not make God's creating work as such incomplete or evil. Rather, Satan had chosen to rebel, had destroyed the peace of heaven, but had not yet instigated our human rebellion. So none of Keller's points stand and certainly none of them provide any scriptural evidence whatsoever of suffering and death before the fall. We must shun any suggestion that God is the one responsible for sin, evil, and suffering, or that suffering and evil are just natural developments and not a result of our sin.

### Spiritual death, not physical?

One final attempt by Keller to find some room for suffering and death before the fall emerges from the distinction between physical and spiritual death. If one treats the threat of death in Genesis 2:17 and the curse of death after the fall as simply indicating *spiritual* death, then all of the hundreds of thousands of years of animal death before Adam and Eve are no problem. As Keller writes, "The result of the Fall, however, was 'spiritual death', something that no being in the world had known, because no one had ever been in the image of God." Note that this is simply a consistent application of the idea that God "bestowed" his image on at least two hominids (or whatever they were) and thereby "elected" them to be humans. Before this all creatures were only animals.


However, this separation of physical and spiritual death is artificial. The refrain of Genesis 5, "and he died," underlines how the curse on creation was effected in a very physical way. We realize that Adam and Eve did not drop dead physically, the moment they disobeyed. But at that very moment they put themselves on the path of death, rebelling against God, and running from the Author of life. Only in the promise of the Seed could they

still find hope – both physical and spiritual.

### Conclusion

I don't think Kidner's model or Keller's attempts to provide rhetorical suggestions to his fellow Biologos members have any scriptural weight behind them. These are attempts to accommodate theories that simply do not fit the message of Scripture. Nor do I agree with Keller that the right attitude for the church is to have a "bigger tent" in which we can peacefully discuss together the ways in which we as Reformed Christians might accommodate to Scripture the view that humans descended from other species by evolutionary biological processes. I am convinced that such views are serious errors that need to be kept out of the church of Christ. They disturb the peace. Defending the church against them preserves the peace within.

While I appreciate many of Keller's writings on apologetics and church planting and have expressed my appreciation in particular for the way in which he pointed out the absurdities of holding to evolution as the "explanation of everything," I hope that this review essay will help Reformed and Presbyterian churches maintain adherence to their confessional statements.

God created all things good in the space of six days. He made us – from the moment of our existence – as his vice-regents, representing him to creation and responsible to him. We pledged allegiance to his enemy when we yielded to Satan's suggestion. Thus we are responsible for sin and death; it is our fault, not God's. But thanks be to God that his work of grace in Jesus Christ has opened the way for forgiveness, new life, and ultimately, a new creation. 

*Dr. Ted Van Raalte is the professor of Ecclesiology at the Canadian Reformed Seminary in Hamilton. A slightly different version of this article can be found at [CreationWithoutCompromise.com](http://CreationWithoutCompromise.com)*

### Footnotes

- 1 Keller's paper can be found online at [http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Keller\\_white\\_paper.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Keller_white_paper.pdf). Accessed 25 Mar. 2016.
- 2 See <http://reformedacademic.blogspot.ca/2010/03/tim-keller-on-evolution-and-bible.html>. Accessed 27 Feb 2016.
- 3 For this debate see <https://adaughterofthereformation.wordpress.com/2012/04/04/is-dr-tim-keller-a-progressive-creationist/>. Accessed 27 Feb 2016.
- 4 In addition, Keller's note 17 on page 14, linked to a different section of his paper, asserts that prose can use figurative speech and poetry can use literal speech. It appears, then, that he undercuts his own argument.
- 5 See my blog entry at <http://creationwithoutcompromise.com/2016/02/03/the-lost-world/>.
- 6 See, for instance, <http://reformedacademic.blogspot.ca/2010/03/response-to-clarion-s-ten-reasons.html>. Accessed 24 Feb 2016.
- 7 See [http://veritas.org/talks/clip-explain-away-religion-tim-keller-argues-we-cant/?ccm\\_paging\\_p=6](http://veritas.org/talks/clip-explain-away-religion-tim-keller-argues-we-cant/?ccm_paging_p=6). Accessed 24 Feb, 2016.
- 8 As an example of an evolutionary creationist attempting to defend the evolutionary link from egg-laying reproduction to placenta-supported reproduction, see Dennis Venema's recent essays on vitellogenin and common ancestry at Biologos. See <http://biologos.org/blogs/dennis-venema-letters-to-the-duchess/vitellogenin-and-common-ancestry-does-biologos-have-egg-on-its-face>. Accessed 25 Feb 2016.
- 9 See my essay entitled, "In Between and Intermediate: My Soul in Heaven's Glory," in *As You See the Day Approaching: Reformed Perspectives on the Last Things*, ed. Theodore G. Van Raalte (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 70–111.
- 10 See <https://sixteenseasons.wordpress.com/2014/12/04/evolution-and-the-gallery-of-glory/>. Accessed 27 Feb 2017.
- 11 See <https://yinkahdinay.wordpress.com/2012/12/25/howard-van-tills-lightbulb-moment/>. Accessed 26 Feb 2016.
- 12 See his book, *The Evolution of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press 2012), ix–xx, 26–34.
- 13 See <https://yinkahdinay.wordpress.com/2013/05/08/walhout-gets-it/>. Accessed 26 Feb 2016.
- 14 For example, see J. Douma, *Another Look at Dooyeweerd* (Winnipeg: Premier Printing, 1981).
- 15 See remarks from E. J. Young in the discussion of the genre of Genesis 1.



# Zero Tolerance for "the Creator"

Chinese researchers inadvertently acknowledge God and are punished for it

by Margaret Helder

A prominent biology journal has withdrawn a research article it published just a few weeks previously. Why? The sole reason was three references in the article to the "Creator," in connection with the structure and function and overall design of the human hand.

## RECENT FRAUDS

Retractions or withdrawing scientific articles from publication used to be almost unheard of. In recent years however such events have become increasingly common. The most common reason is that the information contained therein was falsified or fraudulent (made up).

One of the early horror stories concerning fraudulent information involved German physicist Jan Hendrik Schon who, shortly after graduating with a Ph.D., went to the United States to conduct research at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey. His research project on electrical conductance seemed quite revolutionary and his name was connected with one publication approximately every eight days. Many of these papers he wrote himself. Eventually others began to question some aspects of his papers. Nobody was able to duplicate his results. When the lead author was unable to produce any raw data (observations upon which his conclusions were based), scientific journals began to investigate the validity of his articles. Within five months, a total of 24 papers were withdrawn (retracted) from such journals as *Science*, *Nature*, *Applied Physics*, *Physical Review* and *Advanced Materials*. Finally in 2004 the University of Konstanz revoked his doctoral degree because of

"dishonourable conduct." If his work had been valid, scientists could have developed a new kind of electronics.

Many might wonder how anyone would imagine that faking observations could ever be good for one's career (even apart from consideration of moral issues). Yet the horror stories have continued.

In 2009 colleagues realized that a research assistant professor in Alabama had faked eleven protein structures. The descriptions of these structures were published in 10 scientific articles. Some of these protein structures appeared to give important leads in the search for drugs to combat diseases like dengue fever, which is a painful, debilitating, mosquito-borne, virus disease common in the tropics. The disputed articles had been cited more than 450 times, an indication of how important others considered these results. Any work by others based on these structures was definitely wasted.

Another story involved Harvard

evolutionary psychologist Marc Hauser who between 2006 and 2010 generated one peer-reviewed article per month. He was studying the evolution from ape-like ancestors of key human characteristics such as morality, language, and mathematical ability. However in August 2010 an investigative committee declared that he had interpreted information in an inappropriate manner in three scientific papers.

And the stories keep coming. A Dutch social psychologist, Diederik Stapel, was found to have made up data in at least 30 published papers. An April 26, 2013 article in *The New York Times* titled "The Mind of a Con Man" quoted Stapel as remarking:

"It was a quest for aesthetics, for beauty - instead of the truth," he said. He described his behavior as an addiction that drove him to carry out acts of increasingly daring fraud, like a junkie seeking a bigger and better high.



In another case, a researcher at University of Leiden Medical Center went into the lab at night to inject mouse antibodies into tubes of human blood samples in order to produce a false result. It is hard to imagine such a blatantly dishonest procedure.

## WHY SUCH DECEPTION?

The public is happy to hear when fraudulent papers are withdrawn, but why does fraud occur in the first place? Surely most people understand that it is futile to make up results. The problem seems to stem from a lack of respect for the truth. Perhaps these people do not believe in truth, or at least in standards of conduct like honesty.

In the United States, agencies that fund biomedical research have been concerned about ethics for many years. In fact, the National Institutes of Health has required that participating scientists obtain formal training in "responsible conduct of research." Apparently these efforts at communicating the importance of honesty, have not been working. A Commentary piece on the topic in *Nature* (June 19, 2008) declared:

Nearly one generation after the effort to reduce misconduct in science began, the responses by NIH scientists suggest that falsified and fabricated research records, publications, dissertations and grant applications are much more prevalent than has been suspected to date.

Similarly an opinion piece in the same journal on July 22, 2010 began: "Despite attention to research misconduct and other issues of research integrity, efforts to promote responsible behavior remain ineffective." Moreover concerning those entering college since 2000, the authors of the opinion piece declared that, "misunderstandings about academic integrity suggests that this generation may cheat throughout their lives, whether they are scientists, builders or bankers." This is a bleak picture of a society that has abandoned teaching of the Ten Commandments.

In this intellectual milieu, one journal (*Nature*) reported that within the past

twenty years, while the number of published papers doubled, the proportion of retracted papers increased tenfold. (November 4, 2010) Nevertheless, in spite of the serious nature of the allegations against certain authors, negotiations concerning retractions often take years to accomplish (*Nature* editorial October 2, 2014).

This was the situation with scientific papers as the year 2016 dawned. Retractions of a scientific paper, often as the result of fraud, were never undertaken lightly and the process could take a long time.

## HAND IS WONDERFULLY DESIGNED

However, there were no suggestions about fraud concerning an article published on January 5, 2016 in the on-line open access peer-reviewed journal *PLOS ONE*. The paper was entitled "Biomechanical Characteristics of Hand Coordination in Grasping Activities of Daily Living." The work was conducted by four scientists in China, none of whose first language is English, and the work was funded by two grants from the Chinese government.

The scientists used an instrumented glove with multiple sensors to study what parts of the hand were used and how they were used in various grasping tasks. The studies involved 33 different task types carried out by 15 males and 15 females all about 25 years old. Armed with the data recorded by computer, extensive statistical analyses were carried out. The objective of the work was to find a link between the fancy anatomical details of the human hand, and the various precise tasks that the hand is able to accomplish. The ultimate objective of the study is to yield insights on how to design better robotic hands.

These scientists found that the human hand is indeed wonderfully designed for many tasks. Thus they declared:

In humans, the FDP [flexor digitorum profundus] muscle only attaches to the four fingers, while the thumb has a separate long flexor muscle in the forearm called the flexor pollicis longus (FPL) muscle. The presence of

the FPL muscle is a specialization in humans and enormously increases the independence of the thumb. The movement characteristics of the human hand show that the thumb needs to be able to move independently of the other four fingers to perform various tasks. Fortunately the presence of the FPL exactly satisfies the functional requirement and offers the human hand superior capacities to perform a variety of complex functions compared to other primates.

They also found the connective controls to the index finger are usually distinct from the other three fingers. The authors pointed out that many investigators have studied the relationship between fingers and joints, but the present study involved a far greater range of motions and tasks.

## NO FRAUD, BUT LOTS OF HEAT!

Most people might wonder what could possibly have been so controversial in this paper that the journal would withdraw it within days of publication? Even in cases of blatant fraud, the process can take years. There was no fraud here. So what was the problem?

It so happens that the translator of the article used the term "Creator" rather than "Nature" which perhaps might have suited the authors' intentions better. Certainly the authors had no understanding of the extreme dislike of many North American scientists to the term "Creator" in a scientific paper.

In the abstract the authors declare that the links between the muscles and tendons in the hand are the "proper design by the Creator to perform a multitude of tasks in a comfortable way." And in the introduction they write: "Thus, hand coordination affords humans the ability to flexibly and comfortably control the complex structure to perform numerous tasks. Hand coordination should indicate the mystery of the Creator's invention." Finally in the conclusion we read:

...our study can improve the understanding of the human hand and confirm that the mechanical architecture is the proper design by

the Creator for dexterous performance of numerous functions following the evolutionary remodeling of the ancestral hand millions of years ago.

The Chinese authors clearly had no conception of the extreme aversion of most mainstream scientists to any hint that the work of the Creator might be observable in nature. Since most scientists insist that only the effects of energy working on matter will ever be evident in nature, these same people insist that appeals to the work of God, or an Intelligent Designer, or the Creator,

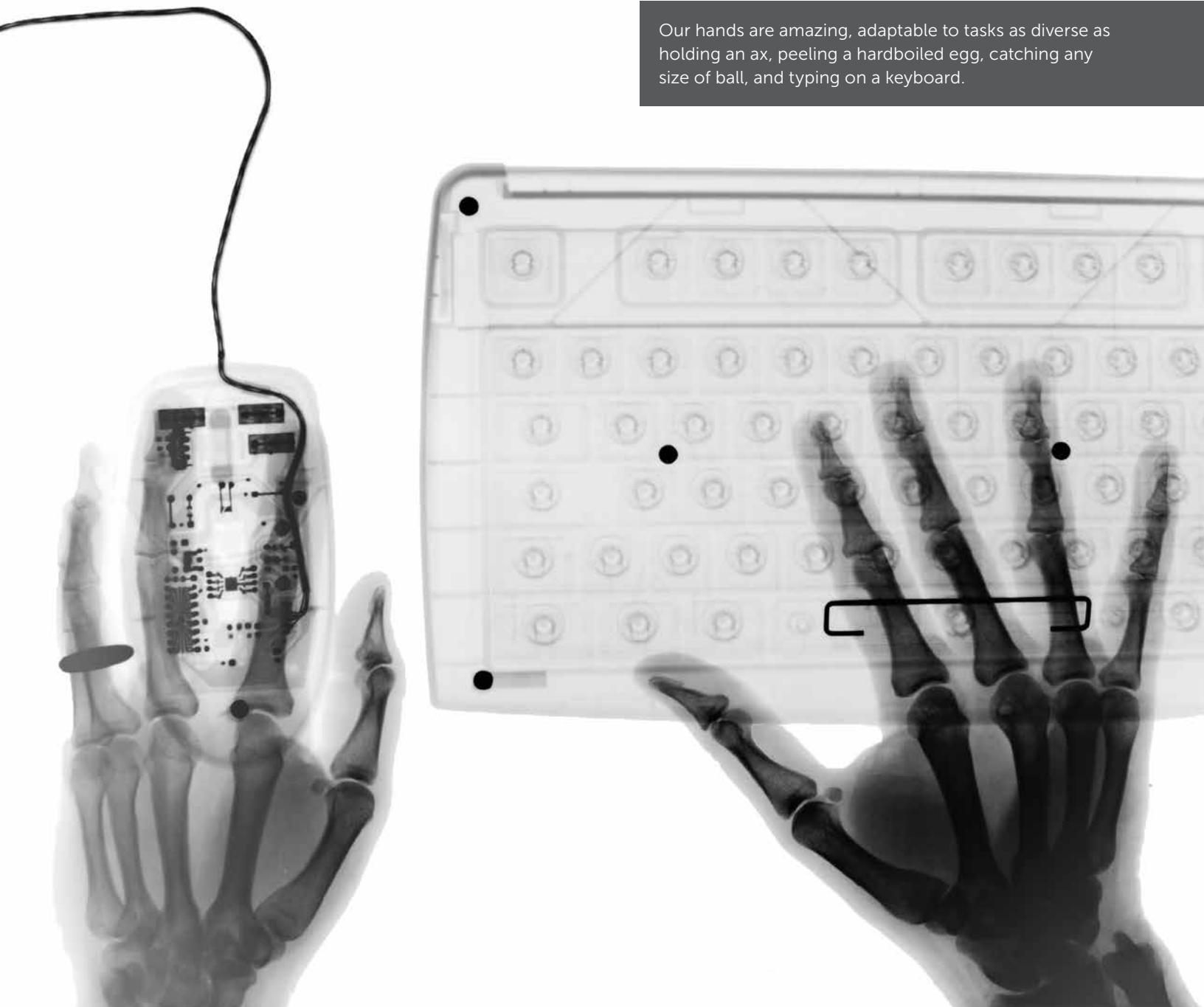
cannot be considered scientific. The clear implication is that not only are studies that refer to the Creator not scientific according to their biased definition, but they are not true either.

Similar attitudes were evident in 2004 when a review article on intelligent design by Stephen C. Meyer was published in the *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* (a publication of the Smithsonian Institute). The furore which followed, resulted in other officials from the Smithsonian repudiating the article because of its support for Intelligent Design. Moreover the editor, Richard

Sternberg, lost his jobs at the National Institutes of Health and the Smithsonian Institute.

This is the intellectual milieu in which the article on the human hand appeared. It is obvious, however, that the authors had no knowledge of the implications of their use of the term "Creator." They probably did not mean to implicate the work of God. Be that as it may, somebody noticed the use of the term "Creator" and initiated a firestorm of protests on Twitter. There were many calls for the firing of the editors involved in the publication of this article. Many suggested that the editors

Our hands are amazing, adaptable to tasks as diverse as holding an ax, peeling a hardboiled egg, catching any size of ball, and typing on a keyboard.





had not actually read the article (other than the peer reviewers who approved it.) The editors, for their part, fearful for their own jobs, did not dare to resist the calls for reprisals. Thus on March 4, 2016, two months after publication of the article, and about one month after the protests began, *PLOS ONE* announced that the article had been retracted.

The announcement concerning the retraction declared that officials from the journal had now identified problems with the scientific rationale (suggestion of good design), and language. Thus "the editors apologize to readers for the inappropriate language in the article." There was no apology to the four authors whose work had been sacrificed to political expediency. The authors had paid \$1,500 US as is customary to have their paper published in an open access journal. There was also no apology to the Chinese government which had funded this project.

During the course of the controversy, someone presenting himself as one of the authors had written:


Our study has no relationship with creationism. English is not our native language. Our understanding of the word was not actually as a native English speaker expected. Now we realize that we had misunderstood the word Creator. What we would like to express is that the biomechanical characteristic ...is a proper design by the NATURE (result of evolution) to perform a multitude of daily grasping tasks" (March 3, as posted on RetractionWatch.com).

This author suggested references to Creator be removed from the article and the word Nature substituted. However, the editors of the journal did not dare to show any consideration for a paper which had once included such a term. The authors and their article were collateral fallout in the effort to control damage to the journal's reputation.

## CONCLUSION

Many well-meaning people question why scientific studies with creation-

based conclusions are never published in mainline scientific journals. This case all too clearly demonstrates why this is so. The mere hint of anything beyond nature is totally rejected. The Chinese authors in this case had no objective other than to study form and function with a view to developing better robotic hands. However their article which attributes design to the Creator (however inadvertently) could not be allowed to stand. The sooner it was gone, the better. The event is an object lesson to other scientists not to include references (however obscure) to design or to creation in their discussions of science.

This event is also a clear indication to Christians that there is zero tolerance in secular scientific publications for anyone who sees God's work and character reflected in the things that have been made. If even an inadvertent acknowledgement of God is met with this degree of outrage it's no surprise then that creationists, who eagerly praise our Creator God, are not going to be accepted in such journals. 

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# SLIPPING OFF THE HOOK

## Are we ready or willing to lose our charitable status?

by Mark Penninga



**T**ax season may cause stress for many Canadians, but it often leaves Reformed Christians with more money in their pockets, thanks in a large part to the tax break we receive from the many charitable donations we make.

But the winds of change are blowing. The cultural and political climate in Canada is quickly shifting, and that could translate to the loss of charitable status for organizations that exist to advance religion. Are we prepared if our churches and other charitable organizations can no longer give tax receipts?

### SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNTS OF CASH

In 2014 the Canadian Secular Alliance (CSA) presented to the House

of Commons Finance Committee, and recommended that the federal government remove the “advancement of religion” as an eligible charitable activity. About 27,000 of Canada’s 85,000 charities have programs limited to “advancing religion.” That number includes most Reformed churches in Canada. Since religious Canadians donate far more money than the general population, it’s no surprise that these charities accepted close to 27% of all tax-receipted gifts in Canada.

The CSA crunched the numbers and concluded that the federal government would save \$782 million in tax revenue, while the provinces would save about \$390 million, totalling over \$1.2 billion dollars. On the flip side, religious Canadians could

be paying over a billion dollars more in taxes.

It is hard to come up with a good reason why a secularist Prime Minister like Mr. Trudeau will not find that attractive.

### CONVINCING ARGUMENTS

The CSA argues for why the “advancement of religion” is not a worthy ground for charitable status. They state that, “there is no evidence that the promotion of religious opinions, in and of itself, is in the public interest.” It explains that there are many views advocated by religions that conflict with Canadian law and human rights (such as opposing homosexual rights, condemning blasphemy, and condemning apostasy). Why should the public be indirectly funding this? Even more convincing is the simple logic that spending \$1.2 billion to advance religion is not “sound management of public funds, especially in a fiscal climate in which cuts to essential public services are being contemplated.”

*It is hard to come up with a good reason why a secularist Prime Minister like Mr. Trudeau will not find that attractive.*

The CSA is careful to note that the point is not to strip charitable status for religious charities that actually benefit the public. If these charities alleviate poverty, etc., then the fact they are religious does not make them unworthy of the charitable designation. They point to the United Kingdom as an example of a country that has “modernized” their tax law to require religious organizations to prove their benefit to society.

Let’s be honest – in Canada there is a substantial difference between the roles that religious organizations played a century ago compared to today. Churches are doing far less charitable activity in our communities. Generally churches no longer operate hospitals, provide financial relief for those in poverty, or operate public schools. Even the members of Reformed Churches today often go to the government for social assistance before going to the church. The role of deacons has changed significantly as the State has taken on more and more responsibility for looking after needy citizens. Although we may sometimes grumble that the government is intruding into domains it ought not to, to a large degree Christians have willingly abdicated these domains at the same time.

Another layer to this is the reality that there are a growing number of other religions for whom “advancing religion” means something very different than it did for Christian churches two hundred years ago. The public rightly has concerns when they see Muslim mosques and schools promoting values that undermine freedom and democracy.

## SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

The ability to provide a charitable tax receipt is very important to most charities; it can translate into a 29 per cent federal tax credit to those who donate to their cause. For example, if a family donates \$5,000 to their local church over the year that translates into a \$1,450 decrease in taxes, which is a huge help with school tuition or other expense. And that is just for one charity. If a charity can’t grant this tax credit, some of its donors would give less or might choose to give to another

organization that does have charitable status.

There are more perks to being a charity. Since Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) specifies that charities can only give funds to other charities, being a charity is a gateway to large pools of cash that are funneled in from elsewhere.

For example, a wealthy person or family can create a foundation which gives large grants to charities that line up with the foundation’s objectives. BC billionaire Jimmy Pattison set up the Jim Pattison Foundation which doles out over 10 million dollars each year. But you have to be a charity to benefit.

Without them explicitly saying so, the point of the Canadian Secular Alliance argument is to minimize the advancement of religion by removing any financial incentive for supporting these religious causes.

## CHARITABLE STATUS AS A HOOK

Although it is possible that a secular government like we have under Justin Trudeau may choose to follow the course of action recommended by the CSA, they may also choose a more sinister route. Instead of dropping charitable status for churches, mosques, and other religious organizations, the State could simply require these organizations to abide by an ever-growing list of requirements in order to keep their charitable status. In a sense, the government would then be “buying” (with our tax dollars and public debt) the allegiance or conformity of the charitable sector. In fact, this is what we are already seeing.

If you are on the board or staff of a charitable organization you are probably aware of the many rules that charities face. For example, charities may not devote more than 10 per cent of their time or resources to political activities (there are some exceptions). And if they do get involved in anything political, it may not in any way support or oppose a particular political candidate or party. The federal government can spend over a billion dollars of taxpayer money to fund a



...how far should we go to follow the beck and call of the Canada Revenue Agency in order to keep our charitable status?

“news” agency by the name of the CBC which fills Canadian airwaves with secular worldview training and political activism but your church may not single out the evils being promoted by a particular party. Further, charities may not give to non-charities.

Charitable organizations look to these rules to determine what they should be doing. The obvious problem with that approach is that, for Christian charities, they should determine what they should be doing by following the direction God sets, not the CRA.

Whether we admit it or not, Reformed churches are far from immune to this temptation. In our high regard for obeying the law, we ensure that our deacons only give to organizations that also have charitable status. Other worthy causes and non-profit organizations are disregarded simply because they don’t measure up to the CRA’s requirements or choose not to. (I do not write this hoping to garner church support for the organization I work for – we are blessed with abundant support from individuals). The local church will not donate to the local pro-life center, because most local pro-life centers are not able to get charitable status. And if a member of a church happens to be a public office holder (town councilor, MLA, MP, etc), chances are that the church won’t pray for him or her, lest they compromise their “duty” to be non-partisan. If a pastor gets even a little political in his sermon or bulletin write-up, it is often looked at with furrowed brows, as if Canada’s decision to allow euthanasia (for example) is not something churches should discuss because it is “political.”

If this is the case today, we should not be surprised when those in power decide to utilize the power of the CRA and the



## Are we too reliant on Caesar's assistance?

carrot of charitable status to create more rules for charities which further their ideology. I won't speculate here, because it is not all that helpful. But one does not need much of an imagination to think of what some of the activists working in our provincial and federal governments would love to demand of churches and other religious charities.

At some point (and I would suggest that point is already now), churches and other religious charities should contemplate why exactly they have charitable status and what it costs them when it comes to faithfully serving our Lord and Savior. The question needs to be asked, how far should they go to follow the beck and call of the CRA in order to keep their charitable status?

On a related note, many churches and other religious organizations are incurring extraordinary levels of debt and are having a hard time meeting their annual

budgets. Again, Reformed churches are not immune. What happens when those financially stressed churches consider whether to maintain their charitable status? Can they even think objectively (i.e. Biblically) anymore? Or are they too reliant on Caesar's assistance?

### CONCLUSION

There may come a time when religious organizations can no longer maintain their charitable status, either because it is being stripped of them because they are religious, or they decide on principle to give it up. I'm not sure either scenario is such a bad thing.

What would it look like if Christian charities slipped off the hook of charitable status? Not only will it relieve many church treasurers who will no longer have to devote dozens of hours filing paperwork with CRA and issuing tax receipts, it will free these organization and institutions

to speak as they will, and to consider a broader range of worthwhile groups when it comes to who they choose to support.

When the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada started in 2007, the option existed for us to operate under the umbrella of an existing charity. From day one we chose to forgo that and instead create a new organization without charitable status. Yes, that may have cost us a few donations along the way. But it has also provided a freedom and, I would argue, a corresponding effectiveness, which we would not trade for many donations. Yes, ARPA Canada is a political organization and therefore reaps many benefits from not being on the hook of CRA. But the question remains whether churches and other Christian organizations would also do well to consider the same course of action.

I invite readers to share their thoughts via letters to the editor. 

*Mark Penninga is the executive director of ARPA Canada (ARPACanada.ca).*

## MP wants to increase charitable tax credits by Jon Dykstra

If you donated money to help feed the hungry you would, at the very most, get a tax credit amounting to 29% of your donation. But if you donated money to fund a political party you could get back a tax credit worth as much as 75% of your donation. Why the difference?

As Conservative Member of Parliament Ted Falk has pointed out, there is no good reason. So he's proposed a private member's bill, *Bill C-239 – The Fairness in Charitable Gifts Acts*, which would give people making charitable donations the same sort of tax credits that political donations now garner.

Since 1990 the percentage of Canadian taxpayers who donate to charities has dropped from nearly 30% to about 22% in 2012. Falk hopes that by giving a more sizeable tax write-off more Canadians will be encouraged to give, and give more.

While private member's bills don't

usually stand a good chance of getting passed, Falk was fortunate to have his be the first private member's bill to be debated, greatly increasing his odds. By the time you read this, the bill will have had its first hour of debate, and it will probably be mid or late May before it gets Second Reading, which means we have time to call our MPs to ask them to support this bill.

But should we support it?

In his article "Slipping Off the Hook" ARPA executive director Mark Penninga makes the argument that we may be too reliant on Caesar's assistance – we may be making charitable receipts too high a priority when it comes to deciding who we should donate to. It's a very good point.

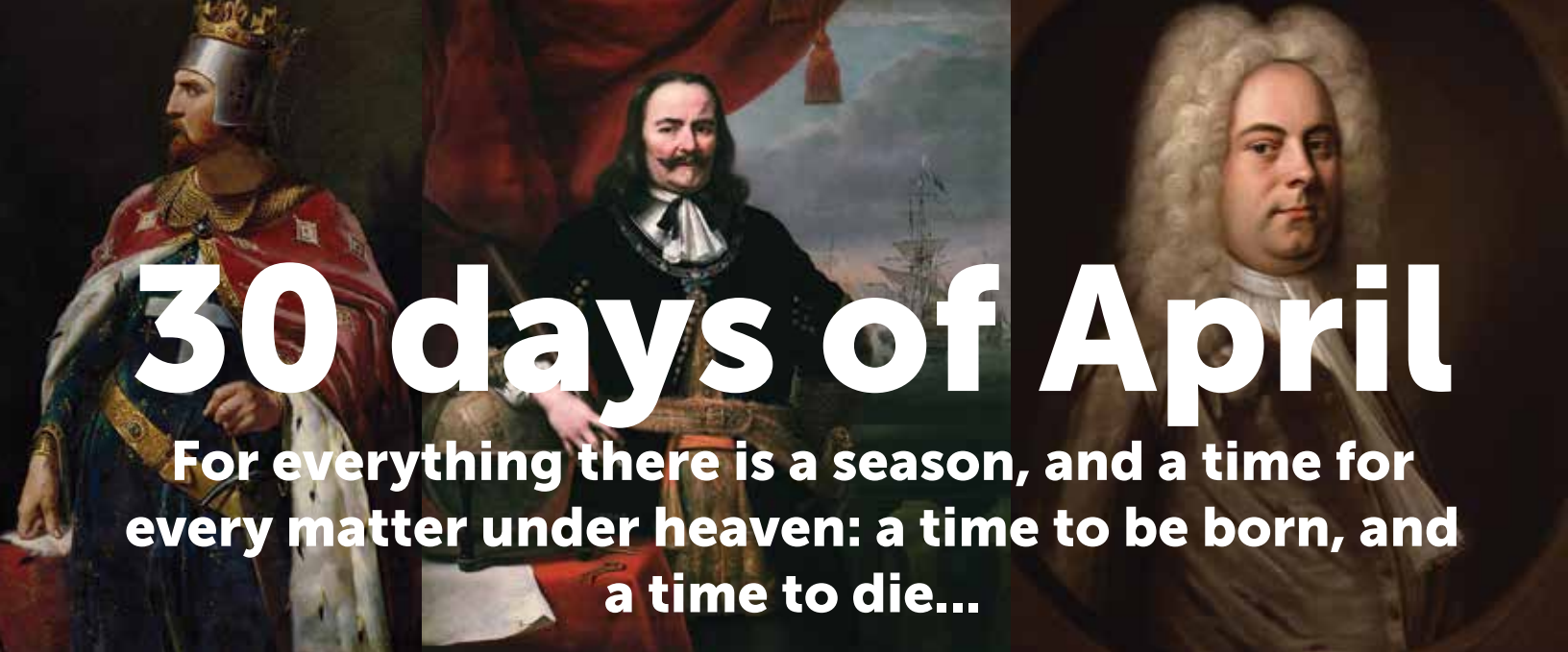
So should we support Ted Falk's bill?

An even bigger charitable receipt will bring with it an even bigger temptation for us to donate only to government-

approved charities, and for charities to do all they can to hold on to their charitable status, even if that means making compromises they don't want to make. That's a decided downside. But there is also the upside to this bill that, were it passed, we would all be likely to get more money back from the government, which means when we do donate to these approved charities we can give even more.

So if we support this bill, we need to do so with our eyes open. If we can get larger tax credits for the money we already would donate anyway, wonderful. Then let's use the system, turning it to our godly ends. But we can't let the government use these even bigger charitable receipts to limit who we give to. God needs to direct where we give, not the government.

For more information on Ted Falk's *Bill C-239* visit [www.TedFalk.ca](http://www.TedFalk.ca).



# 30 days of April

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die...

by Christine Farenhorst

**E**aster Sunday this year fell on March 27th and, April followed joyfully in its footsteps. April is the month of new beginnings; the month of crocuses and daffodils peeping up. It is the month to which many particularly look forward; a month in which our children exclaim: "April Fools," and one in which we excitedly call out: "Hey, there's a robin." But, as in every month that our good God gives us, April is also a time to reflect on how short our days actually are and that there is nothing new under the sun and that God *sweeps men away; they are like a dream* (Psalm 90:5).

\* \* \* \*

April Fooling has been done for many years. In the 1500s, Francis, the Duke of Lorraine, and his wife were held prisoners in Nantes and effected their escape in consequence of it being April 1. Disguised as peasants, the duke bore a hood on his shoulder while his wife carried a basket of rubbish on her back. Very early in the morning, thus disguised, they walked the streets towards the gate. A woman, recognizing them, ran to the guard at the gate to tell him the duke and his wife were escaping.

The guard, thinking it was a joke, cried: "Poisson d'Avril" or, "April Fools!" and all the guards, to a man, bawled out: "Poisson d'Avril!" including the sergeant in charge of the gate. And so

the "peasants" were allowed to pass. The governor of Nantes, to whom the story was relayed, became suspicious and ordered the fact to be proven. But it was too late. Through all this tomfoolery, the duke and his wife were well on their way to freedom. But at the end of the days appointed to them by God, they too, like all mortals, died, and were buried.

*The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them* (Eccl. 2:14).

On April 2, 308, Theodosia of Caesaria was martyred. She was but seventeen-year-old - a Hebrews 11 type. Tortured and urged to reject Christianity, she was thrown into the sea when she clung fast to Christ.

*If you see in a province the poor oppressed and justice and right violently taken away, do not be amazed at the matter...* (Eccl. 5:8).

The Welsh-born poet, George Herbert was born on April 3. He died of consumption at age 39. His biographer said of him that he composed "such hymns and anthems as he and the angels now sing together in heaven."

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to the end* (Eccl. 3:11).

Oliver Goldsmith, English poet and writer, died on April 4, 1774 of a kidney infection. Described by his contemporaries as congenial, impetuous and disorganized, he once planned to emigrate to America but failed to do so because he missed his ship.

*A wise man's heart inclines him toward the right, but a fool's heart toward the left* (Eccl. 10:2).

On April 5 in 1689, Danton, a leading figure in the early stages of the French Revolution, was guillotined.

*Moreover I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness* (Eccl. 3:16).

Richard the Lionhearted died on April 6 in 1199. He was shot by a crossbowman in battle at Chalus, central France. His entrails were buried at Chalus. The rest of his body was entombed further north, in Fontevraud Abbey. And His heart was embalmed and buried in Rouen. Transformed into a brown powder which rests in a crystal box, the heart is exhibited at a museum of antiquities and does not exceed the weight of one and a half ounces.

*As man came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil, which he may carry away in his hand* (Eccl. 5:15).

On April 7, 1506, Francis Xavier was born. A Roman Catholic missionary, he ventured into Japan, Borneo and the Malaku islands. He was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1622.

As well, the Dutch Petrus Camper, died on this day in 1789. Camper was a physician, anatomist, physiologist, mid-wife, zoologist, paleontologist and a naturalist.

*Then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out; even though a wise man may claim to know, he cannot find it out (Eccl. 8:17).*

On April 8, 217, Caracalla, the 22nd Roman emperor died. In order to get the throne, Caracalla assassinated his brother Geta, executed most of his brother's supporters, and ordered his brother's memory stricken from records.

*In my vain life I have seen everything; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evil-doing (Eccl. 7:15).*

George Peacock, dean of Ely for the last twenty years of his life, and a mathematician, was born in Denton, in 1791 on the 9th of April. While dean of the cathedral, he wrote a textbook on algebra comprising two volumes.

On this same date in 1616, Francis Bacon, philosopher, statesman and scientist, died. He died of pneumonia which he contracted while studying the effects of freezing on the preservation of meat.

*He who quarries stones is hurt by them; and he who splits logs is endangered by them (Eccl. 10:9).*

On April 10th, 1843, eight laborers were digging around some trees in Tufnell Park near Highgate on the north side of London. Hitting something hard with their shovels, they were surprised to find at the root of one particular tree were two jars filled with 400 sovereigns of gold. These they divided. However, soon afterwards, Mr. Tufnell, lord of the manor where they were employed,

claimed the whole treasure. According to the law, this hidden treasure belonged to the Crown, to the lord of the manor, to the finder or to two of these three.

While all were puzzling, the real owner came forward. He was a brass founder from Clerkenwell. For nine months he had had a temporary mental delusion and one night he had taken the two jars of sovereigns and buried them. Being able to prove it, his claim was admitted.

*He who loves money will not be satisfied with money; nor he who loves wealth, with gain; this also is vanity (Eccl. 5:10).*

On April 11, 461, Pope Leo the Great was born. The first pope to be called "Great," he asserted the universal jurisdiction of the Roman bishop.

As well, Stanislaus Poniatowski, the last king of Poland, died on this day in 1798 in St. Petersburg.

*All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return (Eccl. 3:20).*

Seneca, a Roman philosopher, one who was tutor to Nero, died April 12 in 65, because he dared advise his fiddling pupil that he should restrain his excesses. When this advice went ignored, he knew his life was in danger. Not one to be told what to do, Nero ordered his teacher to commit suicide. This Seneca did in front of his wife and friends. His veins were opened and he took a draught of poison. Dying slowly, he was submersed in a warm bath which was expected to speed blood flow and ease pain. Some medieval writers believed Seneca had been converted to the Christian faith by Paul.

*It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools (Eccl. 7:5).*

In 1760, on the 13th of April, Dr. Thomas Beddoes, writer on medicine and natural history, was born.

On that same day in 1759, George Frederick Handel died.

*There is ... a time to be born, and a time to die... (Eccl. 3:2a).*

The 14th of April in the year 1360 was the morrow after Easter. King Edward the III, with his host, lay before the city of Paris. It was a dark day, full of mist and hail and so bitterly cold that many men died while sitting on their horses. Wherefore, this day has been called Black Monday.

*Keep the king's command, and because of your sacred oath be not dismayed; go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases (Eccl. 8:2-3).*

Dominico Zampieri, an Italian painter died on April 15, 1641. The son of a shoemaker, he was slight in stature and known as "little Dominico." His paintings are said to be worth much money, even millions, today.

*I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ... (Eccl. 2:18).*

One John Law, speculative financier, was born on April 16, 1671. Working for Louis XV, he established a private bank, Banque Generale, in France. Three quarters of its capital consisted of government bills and government notes, making it the first central bank of the nation. A gambler and a brilliant calculator, he was known to win card games by mentally calculating the odds.

*Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun (Eccl. 2:11).*

On April 17th of 1725, a John Rudge bequeathed to the parish of Trysall in Staffordshire, 20 shillings a year. He did this so that a poor man might be employed to go about the church during the sermon and keep people awake as well as keeping dogs out of the church.

*Guard your steps when you go to the house of God (Eccl. 5:1).*

On April 18, 1740, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of the infamous Charles, died. Erasmus had two illegitimate daughters with his son's



governess. He was also the grandfather of one Francis Galton, who in the late 19th century would found the science of eugenics.

*As you do not know how the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God Who makes everything* (Eccl. 11:5).

In 1757, on April 19th, Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth, naval commander, was born. He fought during the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars.

*A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of birth* (Eccl. 7:1).

Bram Stoker, he who penned Dracula, in 1897, died on April 20 in 1912.

*The more words, the more vanity, and what is man the better?* (Eccl. 6:11).

On April 21, 1653, Prince George of Denmark, consort of Anne, Queen of England, was born. Anne's seventeen pregnancies by George resulted in twelve miscarriages, four infant deaths and a chronically ill son, William, who died at the age of eleven. Despite the deaths of their children, George and Anne's marriage was a strong one.

*It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all men and the living will lay it to heart* (Eccl. 7:2).

King Henry VII of England died on April 22 in 1509 in Richmond. Henry VII was the first monarch of the House of Tudor.

*There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture* (Eccl. 5:14).

On April 23, 1215, King Louis IX of France was born.

As well, William Shakespeare died on this day in 1616 in Stratford-on-Avon.

*Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches*

*to the intelligent, nor favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all* (Eccl. 9:11).

On April 24 in 1731, Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* died. A prolific writer, who wrote more than 500 books, he used more than 198 pen names. He was probably hiding from creditors when he died.

*All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again* (Eccl. 1:7).

In *Rymer's Fedora* (a collection of miscellaneous documents), there is reference to a woman named Cecilia who was jailed for the murder of her husband. While in jail she remained mute, and was said to have abstained from food for 40 days, after which she was presented to King Edward III. It is recorded that, moved by piety and for the glory of God, and the virgin Mary, (to whom it says the miracle was owing), the king pardoned her on April 25, 1357.

*If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for deference will make amends for great offences* (Eccl. 10:4).

In 1711 on the 26th of April, David Hume, philosopher and historian, was born in Edinburgh. He was a skeptic and an atheist and continues, sadly enough, to influence many people today.

*...the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his talk is wicked madness* (Eccl. 10:12b-13).

On April 27th in the year 1546, William Foxley, pot-maker of the Mint in the Tower of London, fell asleep and could not be awakened by pinching, cramping, burning, or anything else. He slept for 14 days and 15 nights. The cause of his thus sleeping could not be known, although the cause was diligently searched for by the king's physicians and other learned men. The king himself examined William Foxley, who was in all points found at his waking as though he had slept but one night. And he lived more than 40 years afterwards.

*Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let him sleep* (Eccl. 5:12).

On April 28th, 1772, there died at Mile End a goat that had twice circumnavigated the globe. In the ship "Dolphin," under Captain Wallis and in the ship "Endeavour" under Captain Cook. The Lord of the Admiralty had just signed a warrant, admitting the goat to the privilege of an in-pensioner of Greenwich Hospital, a boon she did not live to enjoy.

*For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has not advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity* (Eccl. 3:19).

On the 29th of April, in 1676. Michiel de Ruyter died. In early life a common sailor, he rose to the rank of admiral. De Ruyter was the man who by the grace of God, in the seventeenth century, made Holland one of the greatest maritime powers in the world. He was struck by a cannonball at age 69 and passed away in Sicily, Italy.

*For if a man lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity* (Eccl. 11:8).

On April 30, 1751, Richard Gough wrote in his diary: "At Glastonberg, Somerset, a man 30 years old afflicted with asthma, dreamed that someone told him if he drank of such particular waters near the Chaingate for seven Sunday mornings, he should be cured. The man did and accordingly became better, attesting his healing with an oath. This being rumored abroad, it brought people from all parts of the kingdom to drink of the so miraculous waters for various distempers and many were healed and a great number received benefit. It was actually computed that 10,000 were at Glastonberg to drink the water.

*Is there a thing of which it is said 'See, this is new?' It has been already, in the ages before us* (Eccl. 1:10). RP



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The Canadian Reformed School Society of Edmonton, operating **Parkland Immanuel Christian School**, invites applications for the 2016-2017 school year for the following positions:

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### Mr. Ken Leffers

Phone: (780) 444-6443 (school)  
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Applications should be directed to:

### Mr. Wayne de Leeuw

Chair of Personnel Committee  
c/o

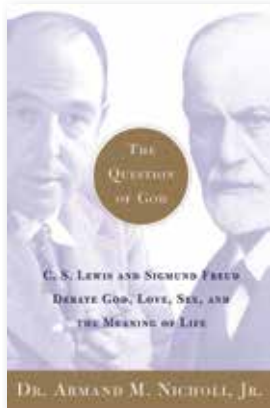
Parkland Immanuel Christian School  
21304 35 Ave, NW  
Edmonton, AB  
T6M 2P6

[vicepresident@parklandimmanuel.ca](mailto:vicepresident@parklandimmanuel.ca)



### THE QUESTION OF GOD

BY ARMAND M. NICHOLI JR.  
2002 / 244 PAGES



While C.S. Lewis was 40 years younger than Sigmund Freud, he was well acquainted with his ideas. Freud hated and feared God, and as a young man Lewis found Freud's atheism attractive. But after his conversion, Lewis used his considerable skills to answer and rebut Freud's arguments against God. What author Dr. Armand Nicholi has done is present a type of conversation between the two, with Freud usually presenting first, and Lewis them coming after to respond and correct.

So what do these two "talk" about? As the subtitle shares, *C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*. The two also discuss whether morality exists and why there is suffering. And they take a close look at death.

It is a fascinating book, part conversation, but also part biography, giving us a good understanding of both men by sharing the similarities and differences in their histories.

The only caution I would note is that when it comes to the problem of pain, both Lewis's and the author's Arminian leanings come out. For a good Reformed perspective, see Joe Rigney's "Confronting the Problem(s) of Evil," as found on [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org).

But overall this is a very readable, very interesting account of two of the twentieth century's pivotal figures.

- JON DYKSTRA

### GOSPEL PATRONS

BY JOHN RINEHART  
2013 / 170 PAGES



Are you a giant?

Church history is full of such people: William Tyndale, George Whitefield, and John Newton, to name just a few.

However, not all of us are called to these leadership positions. In *Gospel Patrons* author John Rinehart tells the stories of three people who took supporting roles that enabled Tyndale, Whitefield and John Newton to do their work. Humphrey Monmouth was the man who financed Tyndale's Bible translation efforts. Lady Huntingdon used her position and influence to have the richest in England come hear George Whitefield preach the Gospel. John Thornton placed John Newton in an influential church, and encouraged him to publish a book of his hymns, one of which was *Amazing Grace*.

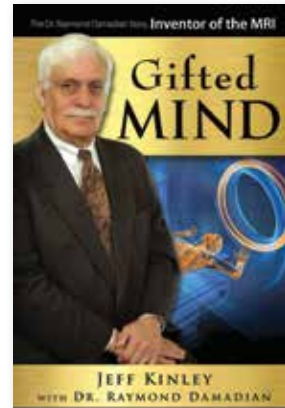
Most of us are not giants like Tyndale, Whitefield and Newton, and we might think that we don't have the funds to act like Monmouth, Lady Huntingdon, or Thornton either. But many of us can spare either money or time to support worthy causes. God has a part for each of us to play. And if we understand how important the "lesser" roles are, perhaps we will more willingly take them on, sacrificially donating what we do have.

This is a very readable book and very challenging too. I highly recommend it, for all ages.

- JON DYKSTRA

### GIFTED MIND

BY DR. RAYMOND DAMADIAN WITH JEFF KINLEY  
240 PAGES / 2015



Dr. Raymond Damadian began his research in the late 1960's and built the very first MRI in 1977. As a research scientist who was raised as a Methodist, he left the faith for a while but God had plans for him and directed his research so that Dr. Damadian came to realize that God is the Creator of all things. And as his research developed, Damadian became a very strong six-day Creationist.

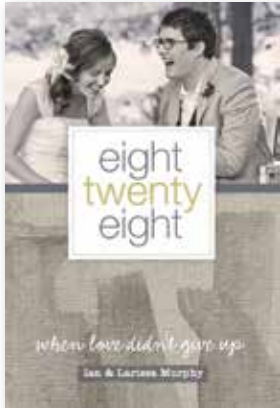
I enjoyed this book quite a lot because it was an eye-opener, tackling a topic that you never stop to think about – MRI's have changed the medical field greatly! Parts of his book are very technical, probably of great interest to anyone with a university-level background in biology, but for the rest of us these sections can be quickly skipped over to get to the other parts of this biography that are fascinating. Those other parts include how he struggled with his research on a shoestring budget, how people thought he was absolutely crazy at first, how he felt like he was in a David/Goliath battle fighting to retain his patents, how he was nominated for a Nobel prize but was passed over, etc. His absolute disdain for evolution and his satisfying arguments are also enjoyable to read. Those with a scientific bent would enjoy reading this book. The first chapter can be found at [tinyurl.com/giftedmind](http://tinyurl.com/giftedmind) and read for free.

- JO VANDERPOL



## EIGHT TWENTY EIGHT: WHEN LOVE DIDN'T GIVE UP

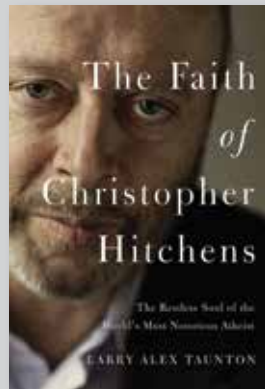
BY IAN & LARISSA MURPHY  
208 PAGES / 2014



I really enjoyed this book. It is the true story of Ian and Larissa. Soon after they decided to marry – ten months into their courtship – Ian was in a horrific car accident, receiving a traumatic brain injury. He spent many months in the hospital, and when Ian did eventually come out of the coma he was quite handicapped. Larissa felt that the old Ian was still there and continued to grow in love for him. Then on the 28th of August, 2010, they married, seeking to serve God and enjoy life together with much laughter.

After the accident a person made a well-meaning comment to Larissa, "You need something to keep you going" which really hurt her because it sounded like he thought she "had nothing to be living for outside of an improved Ian." But what carried her, what she discovered, was the understanding that God turns *everything* – Ian healed, or Ian handicapped – for good (Romans 8:28). Anyone who has sat beside a loved one's bed in ICU and gone through intense therapy with him or her, or someone who has had to come to terms with the handicaps of a loved one, will want to cling to the encouragement found in that promise.

– JO VANDERPOL



## THE FAITH OF CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

BY LARRY TAUNTON  
BIOGRAPHY  
181 PAGES / 2016

The late Christopher Hitchens is best known for his book *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. He was an aggressive atheist who made his living blaspheming God. So why would we want to know more about him? And why would Christian author Larry Taunton want to write a book about him?

Because this book is much more about God's graciousness than it is Hitchens' rebellion. And because Hitchens wasn't quite what he seemed. Taunton writes of Hitchens having "two sets of books," just as fraudulent accountants do, with the one set for the viewing public, and the second private set that give the true tally. Hitchens' public face was that of the confident anti-theist who thought it made good theater to claim God was both unforgivably evil and non-existent. Meanwhile the private Hitchens was spending more and more time with God's followers, calling some of them friends, and even studying the Bible with one or two. If he wasn't deliberately seeking God, this other Hitchens' interest in the truth was bringing him closer and closer to his Creator.

Taunton got to know Hitchens after arranging public debates between Hitchens and prominent Christians. Often times after these debates the two public combatants, along with Taunton and others, would head out to a late dinner where the debate would continue. This is how Taunton and Hitchens became friends. When Hitchens was diagnosed with terminal cancer, the late night debating seemed more important to them both.

God not only brought Christians into Hitchens life, He also gave this materialist a sure knowledge about the reality of evil. The atheistic/materialistic worldview has no room for right and wrong – things just are. We don't speak of chemical reactions as having any sort of "moral quality," and in the atheist worldview all we are is chemical reactions. So when atheists speak of evil they are speaking of something they have no explanation for. Hitchens seemed to understand this, but, particularly after the 9/11 terrorist attack, was also certain there was evil. Hitchens bravely denounced radical Islam, which lost him friends among the Left, but more importantly exposed – seemingly to Hitchens himself – the big hole in his godless worldview. It was another nudge in a Godward direction.

While Taunton doesn't make any claims about a deathbed conversion for one of the world's most notorious atheists, he shows us that God was ever so gracious to Hitchens, confronting him, pursuing him. We don't know if Christopher Hitchens ever repented, but we do know God gave him every opportunity.

### Caution

The only caution I'd note is that some of the Christians noted in the book – some who debated Hitchens and gave him something to think about – have some notable flaws in their theology, the most common being some sort of bow to theistic evolution. This isn't much of a concern in this book and I share it only as an alert to any readers who might be spurred to look up the works of some of these mentioned men.

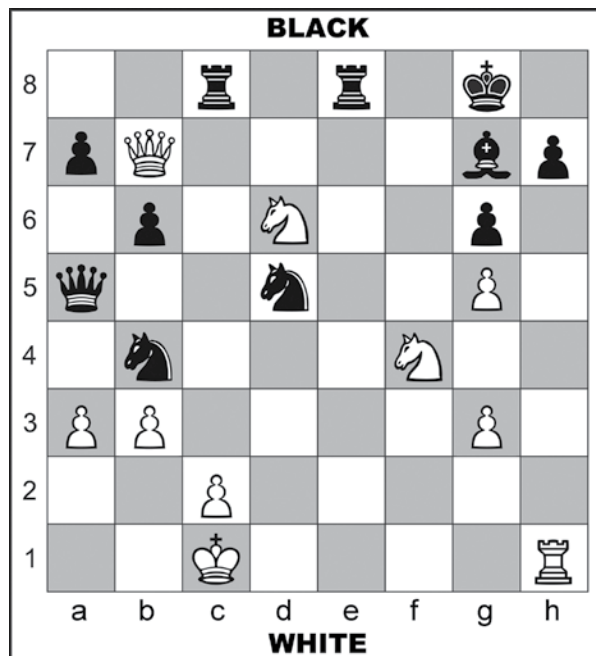
### Conclusion

This is a close-up look at a wavering atheist that concludes without a clear happy ending – that makes it strange, particularly for a Christian-authored book. But the glimpse at what God was doing in Hitchens' life makes this a compelling book. God gave Hitchens time, allotting him 16 months after his initial terminal cancer diagnosis; He brought him into close company with men who were able to answer his objections; and He also made Hitchens aware of evil. Why read *The Faith of Christopher Hitchens*? Because one can't help but be struck by God's graciousness in the life of Christopher Hitchens.

– JON DYKSTRA

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #231



## Riddle for Punsters #231

### "Check the King and Check the Cheque?"

The school chess club had durable chess pieces but the boards were made of card \_\_\_\_\_ and needing replacing. The school \_\_\_\_\_ was asked for the money to do so. Approval was given at a \_\_\_\_\_ meeting with the condition that the club not go over \_\_\_\_\_ on the money spent. The ones purchased were somewhat \_\_\_\_\_rline extravagant but when the receipt was submitted the school accountant was feeling rather \_\_\_\_\_ and approved the purchase and sent the club a c \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_ ing into it further.

## Problem to Ponder #231

### "Give that Car Room to Really Move!"

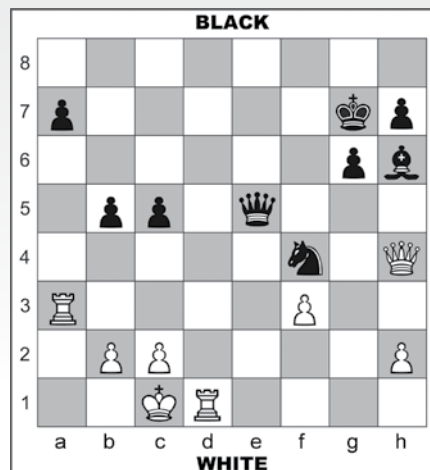
A remote-control toy car, speeding up from rest at a constant rate of acceleration for 10 seconds, traveled 16 m in the first 4 seconds. How far will it have travelled 10 seconds after it started moving?

**WHITE to Mate in 2**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 3**

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #230



Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,  
43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 or  
robleach@gmail.com

### WHITE TO MATE IN 4

#### Descriptive Notation

1. RXP ch Q-K2
2. RxQ ch K-N1
3. R-Q8 ch B-B1
4. QxP mate **OR**

1. RXP ch Q-K2
2. QxQ ch K-N1
3. R-R8 ch B-B1
4. RxB mate **OR**

1. RXP ch Q-B2
2. RxQ ch K-N1
3. R-Q8 ch B-B1
4. QxP mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Ra3xa7 + Qe5-e7
2. Ra7xe7 + Kg7-g8
3. Rd1-d8 + Bh6-f8
4. Qh4xh7 ++ **OR**

1. Ra3xa7 + Qe5-e7
2. Qh4xe7 + Kg7-g8
3. Ra7-a8 + Bh6-f8
4. Ra8xf8 ++ **OR**

1. Ra3xa7 + Qe5-c7
2. Ra7xc7 + Kg7-g8
3. Rd1-d8 + Bh6-f8
4. Qh4xh7 ++

### BLACK TO MATE IN 2

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- N-Q6 ch
2. K-N1 QxNP mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Nf4-d3 +
2. Kc1-b1 Qe5xb2 ++

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters #230 - "Belabouring the Labour?"

Why did the car mechanic walk so stiffly? He wrenched his back at work. Why did the plumber look so tired? He found his work quite draining. I sink he will soon need to change jobs.

## Answer to Problem to Ponder #230 - "Food for Thought-fullness?"

A charity was selling tickets to a gala dinner as a fundraiser. Adult tickets cost \$12 and each child's ticket cost \$7. How many of each type of ticket were sold if the total ticket sales was \$644 and the number of adult tickets sold was 22 more than the number of child tickets?

### ALGEBRAIC SOLUTION

Let a be the number of adult tickets sold at \$12 each. Let c be the number of child tickets sold at \$7 each.

$a = c + 22$  (tickets) and  $12a + 7c = 644$  (dollars)

Combining,  $12(c + 22) + 7c = 644$

Distributing,  $12c + 264 + 7c = 644$

Simplifying,  $19c - 264 = 644 - 264$

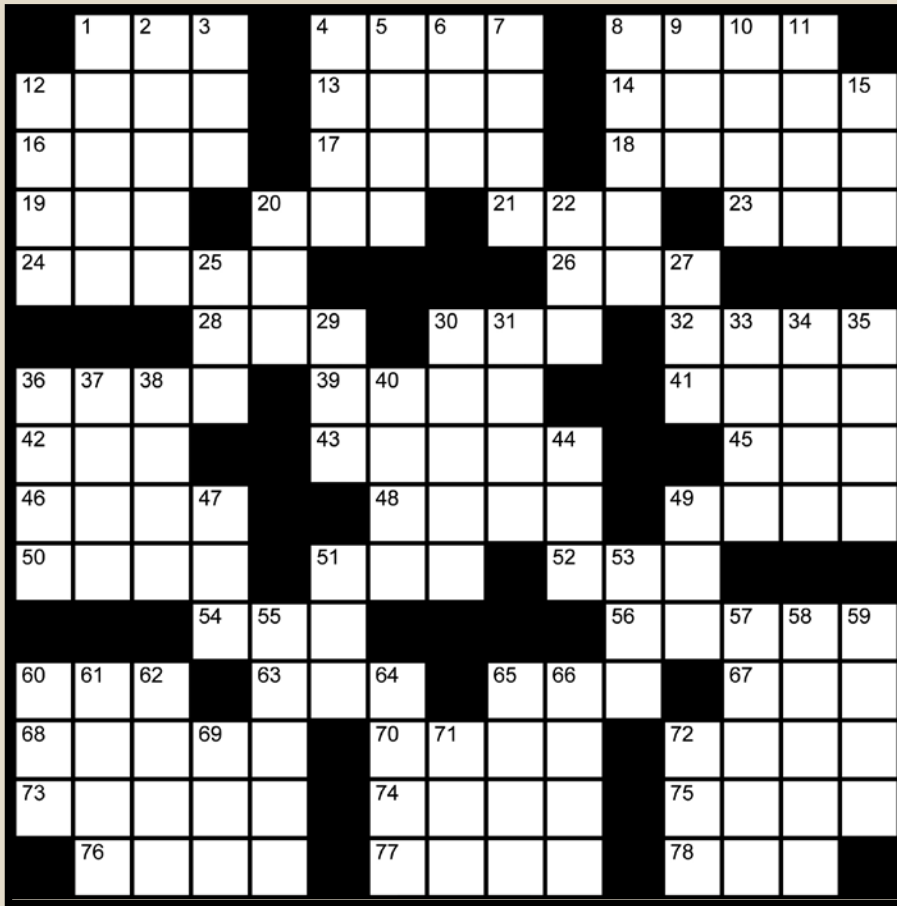
Therefore  $19c = 380$

Divide by 19 so  $c = 20$  and  $a = c + 22 = 20 + 22 = 42$

**Therefore 42 adult tickets and 20 child tickets were sold.**

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 2-8

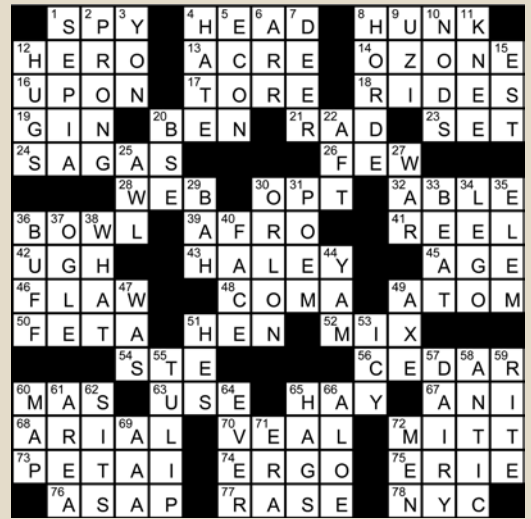
## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. American speed limit sign abbreviation
4. Tools to shape Temple stones (1 Kings 7)
8. "the evil \_\_\_\_ of Haman" (Esther 8)
12. Slang short form for West Coast state
13. Rhymes with *slim*; similarly complimentary
14. Rent again
16. Burden (of proof, blame, or responsibility)
17. Popular drink originating in Greece
18. "my tongue will not \_\_\_\_ deceit" (Job 27)
19. Missing this keeps the shot clock running.
20. Not actually a sweet potato
21. Tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel
23. \_\_\_\_ to Joy (Beethoven)
24. Specific Reformed mission field
26. Vim and vinegar (for those at a rally?)
28. Two of this can go downhill fast.
30. On the head, this is partially *patronizing*.
32. Single egg, especially in human biology
36. Epic, multi-generational story
39. "Reuben said, ' \_\_\_\_ no blood'" (Gen. 37)
41. Current currency of Turkey (plural)
42. Mary \_\_\_\_: Kansas girl on *Gilligan's Island*
43. Largest type of parrot
45. This could come from 43 Across.
46. Like a shot, this "in the dark" is a wild guess.
48. "I was... feet to the \_\_\_\_." (Job 29)
49. Suffix referring to fruit juices
50. Internet domain suffix for New Zealanders
51. Those who go hither also often go \_\_\_\_.

52. An agile wrestler is as slippery as this.
54. Peek-a- \_\_\_\_ (great game with babies)
56. South American relative of the camel
60. Smallest of your kids? (still part of the *total*)
63. Very quiet, or a British parent of 60 Across
65. "they left \_\_\_\_ building the city" (Gen. 11)
67. " \_\_\_\_ upon this quiet life!" (Shakespeare)
68. Distinctive quality of person or place (plural)
70. Top level, peak, summit
72. Satan was the first \_\_\_\_ (John 8)
73. Poor puck-handling (on a cake?)
74. Operatic solo
75. Phicol commanded one. (Gen. 21, 26)
76. Genus of tropical plant; vision care company
77. Fingerless glove
78. \_\_\_\_ Yi, top-level Chinese chess player

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 2-7

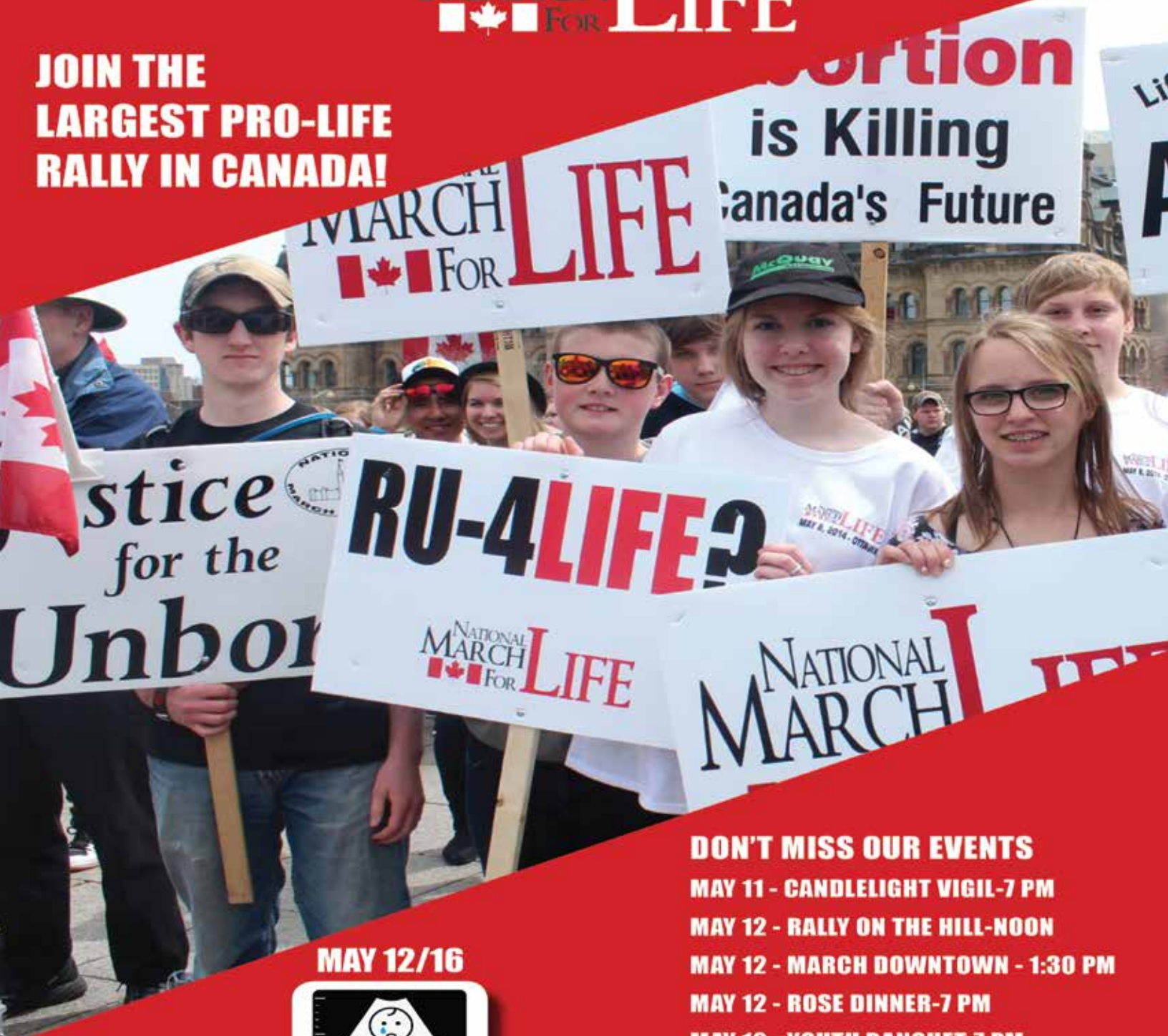
### DOWN

1. Crazy state or obsession
2. Pharaoh's dream cows' state (Gen. 41)
3. "she bore \_\_\_\_ brother Abel" (Gen. 4)
4. Ancient Greek covered walkway
5. Type of lily
6. Slang name for a real expert
7. Not *The Hobbit's* dragon (he might exhale it!)
8. Person of exaggerated modesty or chastity
9. "And God said, ' \_\_\_\_.'" (Gen. 1)
10. Specific singing part in a choir
11. "The Lord has \_\_\_\_ of it" (Mark 11)
12. Abbreviation for a large company
15. Italian word for more than two
20. Talk (to a Himalayan animal?)
22. Suitable (for a shrunken apartment?)
25. Country of the stars and stripes
27. Short form for someone running for office
29. Ending for *social*, *capital*, *liberal*, and *real*
30. Nut used in pies and tortes
31. Jesus is the second \_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 15).
33. Strove or competed (for)
34. "Do not \_\_\_\_ me to leave" (Ruth 1)
35. Issues containing pics and bios
36. Province with initial postal code letter S
37. Prefix for -aircraft gun, -personnel mine
38. Nibble at persistently, like a dog with a bone
40. Circle of light, holiness, or glory
44. Tiny (like 53 Down, in some cases?)
47. This keeps babies' eating slightly less messy.
49. " \_\_\_\_ things work... for good" (Rom. 8)
51. "Just are \_\_\_\_, O Holy One" (Rev. 16)
53. Tolkien's Legolas is a non-tiny version.
55. "I am the Alpha and the \_\_\_\_" (Rev.)
57. " \_\_\_\_ not fanned will devour..." (Job 20)
58. Source of Heat and home of Dolphins
59. Ethereal or having an aerial quality
60. \_\_\_\_ chi: Chinese martial art and exercise
61. Exclamation of pain
62. Two more than performs 74 Across
64. Short form of a polite address to a lady
65. Leave out; fail to include
66. Deed of derring-do or great skill
69. " \_\_\_\_ thing you say may be used against you"
71. \_\_\_\_ de coeur (= a cry from the heart)
72. "I delight in your \_\_\_\_" (Ps. 119)





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