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A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JANUARY 2016
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DEALING WITH BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

by Jon Dykstra

"For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."

"You see that a person is justified by works, and not by faith alone."

Paul, writing in Romans 3:28

James, writing in James 2:24

Supposed contradictions in the Bible can be unsettling. I had a few aggressive professors in university who offered up Biblical contradictions in a proselytizing sort of way. They were looking to win converts to their atheistic (or, in once case theistic evolutionary) ways by attacking the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Now I'd attended a Christian high school and had almost entirely Christian friends, so I'd never run into this type of attack before. I didn't know how to respond. Did trusting God mean just ignoring these challenges? Should I just keep believing despite all these seemingly irreconcilable difficulties being offered?

Well, contrary to some popular Christian notions, our faith in God isn't meant to be blind. We trust Him, not despite the evidence, but because of His track record – He has proven

Himself trustworthy again and again. And because we can trust Him, we can go all "Berean" on these supposed contradictions. We can look at them closely, without fear, knowing that because God is true, these contradictions are no contradictions at all.

Now, not only can we proceed without fear, we can even delve into these with a spirit of anticipation. Why? Because some of these "contradictions" are among the most enlightening passages of the Bible – we can look closer knowing that by better understanding these difficult passages we are learning more about our God.

LOOKING CLOSE AT ONE DIFFICULTY

One of the most illuminating "contradictions" occurs in James 2.

It's here that James seems to take a direct shot at much of what Paul writes. In Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 the contrast is clearest. Here Paul takes a stand for faith *apart from works*, while James is certain that both faith *and works* are needed.

This is a big problem here – the Bible appears to contradict itself about the most important of matters: how we are to be justified!

We aren't the only ones confused. In his book *Interpreting Puzzling Texts in the New Testament* Robert H. Stein calls James 2 the one biblical passage that has "probably caused more theological

difficulty than any other." Martin Luther, who loved Paul's book of Romans, also had problems with the book of James, in part because of this seeming works vs. faith dilemma.

ENGLISH TEACHERS TO THE RESCUE?

There is a problem here, but it turns out it is the sort of problem that can be solved by a decent high school English teacher.

It was your English teacher who taught you words can have multiple meanings. For example the word *bad* means both *not good* ("You are a bad boy!") and *very good* ("You is bad boy!) depending on the context.

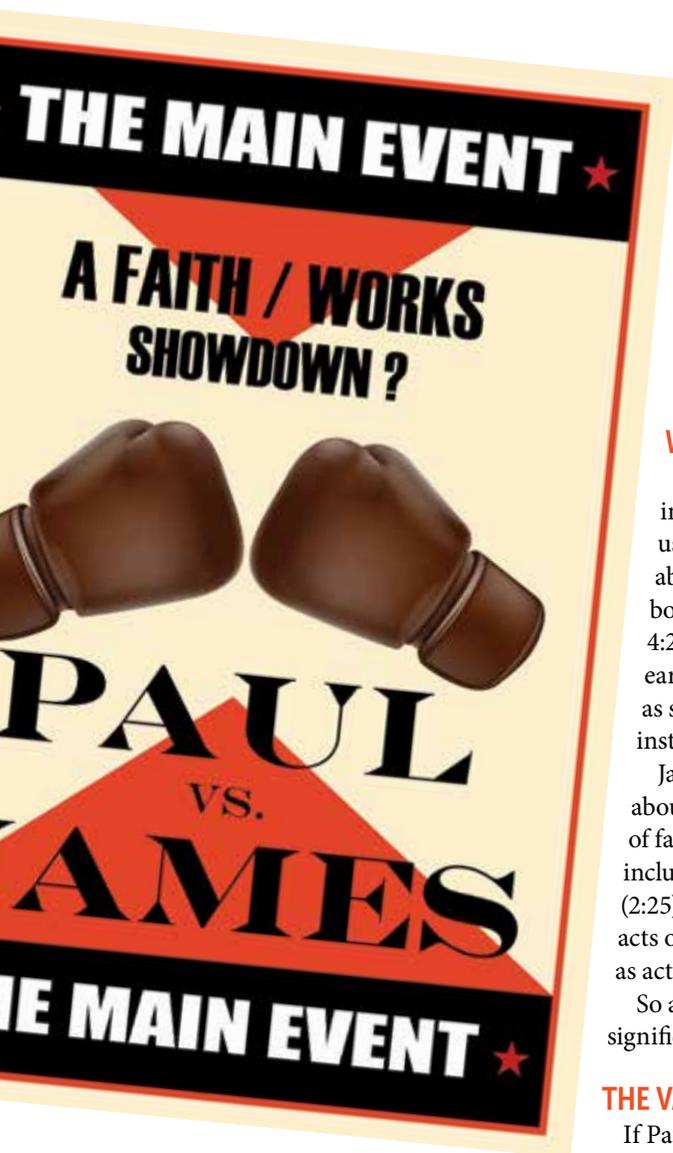
While words have a degree of flexibility to them, there are limits to this flexibility – if a word could mean absolutely anything, no one would know what it means (the word *bad* might mean both *not good* and *very good* but it doesn't mean *blue*, *root beer*, or *canoeing*).

FAITH

The word *faith* also has a degree of flexibility and even has numerous dictionary meanings. As Robert Stein notes, it can mean any one of the following:

- a religion (the Hindu faith)

...some of these "contradictions" are among the most enlightening passages of the Bible



- a branch of a religion (ex. the Protestant faith)
- a specific set of theological doctrines (ex. a church's statement of faith)
- a living vital trust in God (ex. "She has real faith.")

The problem that many people have with James 2 and the contrasting passages written by Paul, is that they assume both James and Paul are using the word *faith* in exactly the same way. This isn't so.

If we take a look at the context in which Paul uses the word we find him speaking of faith that seeks to please Christ (2 Cor 5:7-9), faith coupled with love for the saints (Ephesians 1:15), a faith like Abraham's (Romans 4:9), and a *faith that is accompanied by the Holy Spirit* (Gal. 3:14).

James uses the same word quite

differently. He talks of a faith that allows Christians to see brothers in need and ignore them (2:14-16), a faith that is purely intellectual (2:19), and a *faith that even demons have* (2:19).

James and Paul are not using this word the same way!

WORKS

There is also a notable difference in the way that James and Paul use the word *works*. Paul talks about works as something men boast about before God (Romans 4:2), or as a legalistic way of earning salvation (Gal 5:2-4), or as something that people rely on instead of God's grace (Romans 11:6).

James on the other hand talks about works as the natural outgrowth of faith. James' use of the word *works* includes Rahab's hiding of the spies (2:25) taking care of the poor and other acts of compassion (2:15-16) and works as acts of obedience to God (2:21).

So again, Paul and James' meaning is significantly different.

THE VALUE

If Paul and James mean different things when they use the words *faith* and *works*, then the apparent contradictions between Romans and James turn out to be no contradictions at all. But it is only by studying these "contradictions" that we can get a proper understanding of the relationship between works and faith. James' book can be seen as a rebuke to Hyper-Calvinists – people who take the doctrine of salvation by faith alone to mean they don't have to do good works. Paul's many letters are a rebuke to people on the other end of the spectrum, let's call them Hyper-Arminians – people who believe that they have to earn their own way into heaven by doing good works.

And in between these two polar opposites are the proper Calvinists who know that faith without works is indeed dead, but that our works do nothing to earn us salvation. It is by faith alone. And by grace alone.

The end result of wrestling with this

seeming contradiction is that we've gained in our understanding of what God has done for us, and what God expects from us!

CONCLUSION

So how then are we to deal with supposed Biblical contradictions? Ignorance is not bliss. We don't need to turn a blind eye. God is trustworthy and that means we can trust that His Word will not contradict itself. We can trust that examining the Bible closely will not be dangerous, but only to our benefit.

Trusting God also means when answers are not so easily had, or just aren't coming at all, that shouldn't lead to doubt. We will be able to resolve the vast majority of troubling texts presented to us but we also need to understand that some difficulties will remain, and some questions may not be answered for years. Why is that so? Because omniscience is one of God's attributes, not one of ours. We aren't going to understand everything.

But even if we are limited, there is still so much more we can learn about God. So trust Him enough to seek solutions to any biblical difficulties you're presented with. And trust Him enough to be content when you only get 9 out of 10 questions answered. RP



Jon Dykstra can be reached at editor@reformedperspective.ca.

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

ATHEIST TRUSTS/MOCKS CHRISTIANS

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



Phil Zuckerman, an atheist professor and blogger, is comfortable making fun of Christians on his blog because he doesn't fear retaliation from them. But there is one religion he's not willing to tackle. In an October 30 CNSNews.com article Penny Starr shared his explanation:

"I know what keeps me from critiquing Islam on my blog is just fear," Phil Zuckerman said at a discussion on religious liberty at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. "I've got three kids."

Christians have a reputation as being "safe", even when provoked by the pen, so it is in one sense no surprise that when we express counter-cultural views, like opposing same-sex marriage, we will be attacked even as Muslims expressing this same view will not be. But it is still worth asking: why is Christianity everyone's special target? This attention confirms that our opposition comes not merely from man, but from the "powers of this dark world and...the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). The special attention, this persecution, is also good evidence for God – despite denying His very existence, atheists still can't ignore Him!

Source: Penny Starr's "Atheist: Okay to Disparage Christians, But Islam Off-Limits Because of 'Fear'"; todaychristian.net

CANADA AT THE PARIS CLIMATE CONFERENCE

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



of this mass delegation of representatives flying jets from various locations to discuss ways to use less energy should not be lost on us – this was "Do as I say, not do as I do."

The Liberal government supported

the agreement that came out of the conference, despite the fact that the Paris Conference's goal – to drastically reduce CO2 emissions – is likely to make energy much more expensive. And that will cost everyone dearly, not just in Canada, but also in poverty stricken, developing countries already struggling to find cheap abundant energy.

Source: Michael Smyth's "Smyth: Canadian climate-change contingent, 383 strong, dwarfs Australia's, UK's, USA's – put together" posted to TheProvince.com on Dec. 2, 2015

The 21st United Nations Climate Conference took place in Paris in November, and Prime Minister

Trudeau was eager to show Canada's commitment to "real change." To show how serious he was, Canada sent the largest delegation to the Paris talks of any nation in the world, with close to 400 people. This group was larger than the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom *combined*. The irony

CALVIN COLLEGE STUDENT PAPER TRIES TO BE FOR AND AGAINST GAY MARRIAGE

BY WES BREDEHOF



A wedding ceremony took place on June 20, 2015 just outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan. What was unusual were the two people getting married: Zachary Waasdorp and Colby Touchine, a homosexual couple. The two are now legally known as Zachary and Colby Roanhorse – they took their surname from Colby’s grandmother.

All across the United States, similar stories unfolded after the June Supreme Court decision. Most of

these stories made local news, but didn’t go much further.

However, the Waasdorp/Touchine wedding caught the eye of many Christians because it was reported on in the Calvin College student newspaper on December 4. Chimes noted that Waasdorp and Touchine began their relationship while students at the educational institution run by the Christian Reformed Church. The article was entitled “First gay couple married in Kent County share testimony of faith, love, and time at Calvin.” Katelyn Bosch interviewed the couple and presented their story as two homosexual Christians struggling for acceptance of their relationship, but also giving up the struggle against their homosexual desires for one another.

The story becomes even more curious. Accompanying the online

article is a note from the editor stating that the position of Calvin College on homosexuality is the same as that of the Christian Reformed Church. The CRC has a definite position stated on this topic and (among other things) it states, “Homosexuality (that is, explicit homosexual practice)...is incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Scripture.” While Waasdorp and Touchine are not CRC members (they belong to a Reformed Church of America congregation), their story was published approvingly in the student newspaper of a CRC institution. So, out of one side of the mouth comes a celebration of same-sex marriage, and out of the other side comes a condemnation of same-sex marriage.

Which will it be?

SOURCE: Katelyn Bosch’s “First gay couple married in Kent County share testimony of faith, love and time at Calvin” posted to www.Calvin.edu/Chimes on Dec. 4.

BRITISH WOMEN TO ENTER COMBAT ROLES

BY JON DYKSTRA



In December British Prime Minister David Cameron promised to do away with current army rules that restrict women soldiers to non-combat roles.

In response, Lord Alan West, a former Admiral in the British Royal Navy, said he had

some nervousness about women in

the infantry and the Royal Marines, where they have to actually advance on the enemy, climb into a trench and fight and kill each other.

The British Lord clarified he didn’t doubt *some* women could be effective trench fighters, but “in general terms, when you are looking at averages, women have one-third less upper body strength.”

I want forces that can win. And why don’t we have women in the England men’s rugby team? Because actually they don’t have the same size, power and all of these sort of things.

The online British *Telegraph* labeled Lord West’s comments a “sexism row”

while online Express called it a sexism outrage, but the readers on both sites thought otherwise. In online polls linked to the two articles, 64% and 85% of responding readers agreed with Lord West.

Why this push for women in combat? Because the world’s basis for equality comes down to ability: women are said to be equal to men because they can do anything men can do. But this is a lousy foundation on which to base equality – it’s so obviously not true! As Lord West noted by bringing up rugby, we all know that men hit harder. Would that the world would acknowledge God – then they would understand the reason men and women are equal is because we are all made in God’s image.

AMAZING DISCOVERY CONFIRMS SCRIPTURE – AND WE’RE NOT SURPRISED

BY WES BREDEHOF



© Eilat Mazar, Photo: Chris Tabner

Biblical skeptics are always being disappointed by archaeology. It happened again recently as a new report of excavations in Jerusalem was published. Dr. Eilat Mazar and her team of experts uncovered remarkable evidence reconfirming the existence, and rule, of King Hezekiah.

In an ancient garbage dump on

the Ophel area of the Temple Mount, the archaeologists discovered a seal belonging to Hezekiah. This seal, known as a bulla, is quite small, only about a centimeter in diameter. It shows a sun-like figure with two wings, with ankh symbols (looks like a cross with a loop on top) alongside. There’s also writing in ancient Hebrew script, “Belonging to Hezekiah, (son of Ahaz), king of Judah.” According to the press release, “The bulla originally sealed a document written on a papyrus rolled and tied with thin cords, which left their mark on the reverse of the bulla.”

This isn’t the first Hezekiah bulla to appear – Dr. Mazar says that there have been some other examples circulating in the antiquities market. What is unique about this one is where it was found: at the place from which Hezekiah ruled in Jerusalem. From an archaeological

perspective, this find demonstrates that King Hezekiah was a historical figure who ruled from Jerusalem. Archaeologists also suggest that the ankh symbol, a symbol of life, reflects the period of Hezekiah’s reign after his miraculous healing described in 2 Kings 20. Earlier bullae had a winged dung beetle symbol.

We don’t need archaeology to *prove* the truth of the Bible. We believe the Bible because it’s the Word of God, not because archaeology can back it up. However, we can be encouraged when archaeology confirms what Scripture says about matters of historical fact. Moreover, we shouldn’t be surprised – in fact, we should expect these sorts of discoveries.

SOURCE: <http://phys.org/news/2015-12-israelite-judean-king-exposed-situ.html>

EVOLUTIONARY BIAS BLINDS MEDIA TO YOUNG EARTH EVIDENCE

BY ANNA NIENHUIS AND JON DYKSTRA



Dinosaurs – those legendary beasts of incredible size! – continue to grip our imaginations, and regularly make the nightly news whenever another discovery is made and more bones are dug up. What isn’t reported regularly is how many of these uncovered dinosaur bones are not fossilized (or, more technically speaking, not *permineralized*) but are, instead, relatively fresh.

One example: this past September a story in *The Guardian* reported on a discovery of a unique species of duck-billed dinosaur (hadrosaur) in Alaska. While the story noted that when geologist Robert Liscomb first

discovered the bones he mistook them for *mammal remains*, the article didn’t explain *why* he made his mistake. It was because the bones were too fresh – so fresh he assumed they must have been bison bones. And because they were *so fresh the bones weren’t examined closely for another two decades* when they were finally realized to be dinosaur bones. But none of this was found in *The Guardian* article. As Paul Price, of Creation Ministries International (CMI) noted, readers would have to go back to the scientists’ original paper to find out that the bones weren’t typical fossilized bones – in which the organic bone material is replaced by minerals – but were, in fact, unpermineralized. They were still just bone!

A second example: results of a study published in November prove the existence of original *soft-tissue* blood vessels in a hadrosaur specimen found in Montana. Various tests, including comparisons to supposed dinosaur relatives (chickens and ostriches),

confirmed that the blood vessels were from the dinosaur and not the result of some outside contamination of the sample. Researchers at North Carolina State University say these are “the oldest blood vessels on record to survive with their original components.” Instead of considering whether the fossil may not be 80 million years old, as they first supposed, these scientists instead say the finding “adds support to a growing pile of evidence that organic structures such as blood vessels and cells can persist for millions of years without fossilizing.”

As the CMI’s Paul Price put it, “evidence for Noah’s Flood [and a young Earth] is everywhere, but it is not reported as such by mainstream secular sources.”

Sources: Fossils of new duck-billed, plant-eating dinosaur found in Alaska” posted to *TheGuardian.com* on Sept. 22, 2015; Laura Geggel’s “Dinosaur blood vessels survived 80 million years without fossilizing” posted to *livescience.com* on Dec. 9, 2015; Paul Price’s “Media bias hides the significance of Alaskan hadrosaur finds” posted to *Creation.com* on Oct. 20, 2015; “Breaking! Dino Blood is Real” posted to *crev.info* on Dec. 1, 2015

READERS' RESPONSE

DEAR EDITOR,

"Canadian Heroes and Feet of Clay" (July/August 2015) requires some extra information which may be embarrassing to Reformed readers. Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, who was known for scandals and for his hard drinking, was a nominal Presbyterian. He had been a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kingston, ON; which I attended as an undergraduate at Queen's University. (Queen's was originally a Presbyterian college which a young John A. helped to found.)

William Lyon Mackenzie King had been known to be a devout Presbyterian, and unlike Sir John A. he was a teetotaler. When two thirds of Presbyterian congregations joined the new United Church in 1925, King remained a continuing Presbyterian. His eccentric spiritualism was kept secret and not known to the Canadian public until his death. Many were shocked, including King's own minister.

I think that the lesson to be gleaned is that even the mighty can fall. Scripture carries accounts of where even the best rulers, such as David and Solomon, had transgressed divine law.

Alex Greer
Victoria, B.C.



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SHOULD WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE CANADA FOR ALL THE BABIES BEING ABORTED?

NO.

by André Schutten
(with Dr. Cornelis Van Dam)

While preparing for lifeTOUR – a cross-country series of pro-life presentations last fall – I was digging through some articles on what Scripture says about who or what the preborn child is, what our responsibility to the preborn child is, and what the law’s relationship to the preborn child ought to be. In one of them I came across the following Bible text from Deut. 21:1-3a, 7-9:

If anyone is found slain...and it is not

known who killed him, then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure the distance from the slain man to the surrounding cities. And it shall be that the elders of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer.... Then they shall answer and say, “Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it. Provide atonement, O LORD, for your people Israel, who you have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people...” So you shall put away

the guilt of innocent blood from among you when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

The passage left me pondering: should we, as Reformed churches, be regularly praying for forgiveness for the shedding of innocent blood, as it relates to abortion? We know that the carcasses of dead babies can be found in nearly every hospital in every major city in this country. Ought we to be in specific prayer on this issue? Or would that be a misapplication of the text?

NO FORGIVENESS WITHOUT REPENTANCE

I turned the passage and the text over to Professor emeritus of Old Testament, Dr. Cornelis Van Dam. He wrote the following.

What is striking is that although the murder was unsolved, and no one could specifically be held accountable, God teaches that there is nevertheless corporate responsibility. The people as a whole needed to respond to it through their elders. The elders of the two closest cities have to make atonement on behalf of Israel and pray for forgiveness. By making atonement, the people through the elders show remorse over this murder and thus provide a basis for asking for forgiveness.

Now there are some major differences with our current situation. Canada is not in a special covenant relationship with God, with special rules for affecting atonement in the land. However, the country's rulers are ultimately responsible to God, also with respect to the sixth commandment (Rom 13:1-5). But, as a nation, we have not received special covenant regulations for making atonement. Atonement has been made in Christ and it is the church that has been given the duty to proclaim that gospel. Hence your question, does the church also have the task to pray for forgiveness?

Abortions are not unsolved murders and we certainly have corporate responsibility as a democratic society

for the murders of those children not yet born that take place in hospitals. Abortion has become a taboo topic. Those who govern are determined to let abortions continue. Can we pray for forgiveness when there is no repentance? The biblical answer is "no." We can pray that God withhold his wrath from our decadent society, bless the proclamation of the gospel so that many repent, and bless the work of those who want to honor God's rights in the land. But simply to pray for forgiveness would go against the biblical principle that repentance is necessary for forgiveness to be possible. Think, for example, of Christ's words: "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). God only forgives us if we are repentant (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19) and his forgiving is to be a model for ours (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). If and when Canada repents of the sin of abortion, then the church should certainly pray that God also forgive that heinous crime.

The crime of abortion is extremely serious. Israel had to make atonement lest God's wrath descend on the land. But Israel also had to repent in order for the sacrifices of atonement to be accepted. Without repentance, God rejected the sacrifices and – due to Israel's continued sins – ultimately destroyed both the northern and southern kingdoms in accordance with the covenant curses. Even though Canada is not in a special covenant relationship with God, this country too faces God's judgment and at some point it will happen unless there is repentance and the forgiveness that follows. After all, God holds all nations accountable, especially those who know or could know his will (cf., e.g., Luke 10:14).

BUT WHAT OF JESUS AND STEPHEN'S PRAYERS?

Dr. Van Dam's response was very helpful, but it did prompt one more question. If repentance must precede forgiveness, what should we make of Jesus' plea on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do?" (Luke 23:34) And what should we make of Stephen's prayer as he was stoned to death, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60)?

Dr. Van Dam responded with the following:

In the light of what Scripture teaches, the late Dr. William Hendriksen, in his commentary on this passage, rightly paraphrased this prayer of our Savior thus:

Blot out their transgression completely. In thy sovereign grace cause them to repent truly, so that they can be and will be pardoned fully.

In this way he interceded for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12). Christ's prayer was heard. Thousands of Jews believed in Christ after his death when they realized what they had done (Acts 2:37-41; 4:4; 6:7). At the same time, the nation as a whole stood condemned and the judgment pronounced on Jerusalem could not be averted (Luke 21:5-6). The city fell to the Romans in 70 AD with the resulting slaughter, enslavement, the sacking of the city, and the destruction of the temple. It was the end of the Jewish state. Stephen's prayer can be understood in the same light as that of the Lord. It was a plea that those who were killing him would see and realize what they were actually doing and repent and so receive forgiveness.

CONCLUSION

As Christians then, we must be a shining light in this country darkened by the heinous crime of abortion. We must continue to work also to bring repentance to our decadent society so that, one day, our Father might forgive Canada our trespasses. As one pro-life apologist said to me, "May their sins of commission never be because of our sins of omission." 

André Schutten is the General Legal Counsel for ARPA Canada. Dr. Van Dam is Professor emeritus of Old Testament at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.

“Can we pray for forgiveness when there is no repentance? The biblical answer is “no.”

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

AN ORIGINAL SIN

Three-year-old Linda watched excitedly as her visiting aunt unpacked her suitcase. The little girl was waiting eagerly for the present she knew was coming. At long last two bouncy balls were produced, one green, the other yellow.

“One is for you, and one for your brother Timmy,” her aunt explained. “Which would you like?”

Quick as a wink Linda replied, “I want Timmy’s.”

SOURCE: Based on a joke from *The Bedside Book of Laughter*, with jokes selected from *Reader’s Digest*

EVERYONE KNOWS THERE ARE ABSOLUTES

Ravi Zacharias has a favorite story he tells about an encounter with a deconstructionist/post-modern building. As he describes it, “...inside you encounter stairways that go nowhere, pillars that hang from the ceiling without purpose, and angled surfaces configured to create a sense of vertigo.”

What’s the point? Zacharias explained that “when the architect was asked, ‘Why?’ he said, ‘If life itself is capricious, why should our buildings have any design and any meaning?’”

But as Zacharias went on to show, this post-modern building, with its dead ends and useless pillars was still very well designed – even as the designer pretended to flout all the rules of design, he had to acknowledge them and submit to them. As Zacharias put it:

“When the rationale was explained to me, I had just one question: Did he do the same with the foundation?”

“The laughter in response to my question unmasked the double standard [atheists] espouse. And that is precisely the double standard of atheism! It is possible to dress up and romanticize our bizarre experiments in social restructuring while disavowing truth or absolutes. But one dares not play such deadly games with the foundations of good thinking.”

EVIL ISN’T OUT THERE

“If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.”

– Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

MEN AND WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT

“A study in *The Washington Post* says that women have better verbal skills than men. I just want to say to the authors of that study: ‘Duh!’”

– Conan O’Brien

J.C. RYLE ON BACKSLIDING

“It is a miserable thing to be a backslider. Of all unhappy things that can befall a man, I suppose this is the worst. A stranded ship, a broken wing, a garden overrun with weeds, a harp without strings, a church in ruins - all these are sad sights; but a backslider is a sadder sight still.

“That true grace shall never be extinguished, a true union with Christ never broken off, I feel no doubt. But I do believe that a man may fall away so far that he will lose sight of his own grace, and despair of his own salvation. And if this is not hell, it is certainly the next thing to it! A wounded conscience, a mind sick of itself, a memory full of self reproach, and a heart pierced through with the Lord’s arrows, a spirit broken with a load of inward accusations, all this is a taste of hell. It is hell on earth. Truly that saying of the wise man is solemn and weighty: ‘The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways’ (Prov.14:14).

“Now, what is the cause of most backsliding? I believe, as a general rule, one of the chief causes is the neglect of private prayer. Of course the secret history of falls will not be known until the last day. I can only give my opinion as a minister of Christ and a student of the heart. That opinion is, I repeat distinctly, that backsliding generally first begins with the neglect of prayer.

“Bibles read without prayer, sermons heard without prayer, marriages contracted without prayer, journeys undertaken without prayer, residences chosen without prayer, friendships formed without prayer, the daily act of prayer itself hurried over or gone through without heart, these are the kinds of downward steps whereby many a Christian descends to a condition of spiritual palsy, or reaches a point where God allows him to have a tremendous fall.”

WHAT WOULD KING SOLOMON DO?

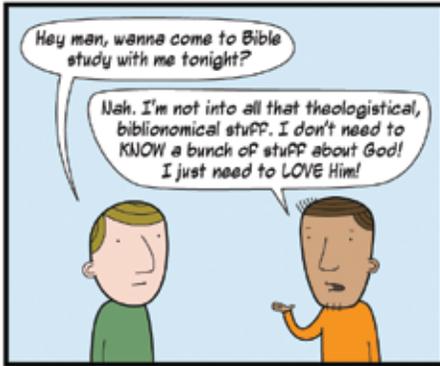
A policeman arrested two men and confiscated a pair of loaded dice. In court, each man accused the other of owning the dice.

“Constable,” said the magistrate, “did you take these dice without a warrant?” The policeman nodded sheepishly. “You had no right to,” said the magistrate. “Give them back immediately.”

One culprit stuck out his hand to retrieve the dice. The magistrate promptly sentenced him to three months and freed the other.

SOURCE: Based on a joke from *The Bedside Book of Laughter*, with jokes selected from *Reader’s Digest*

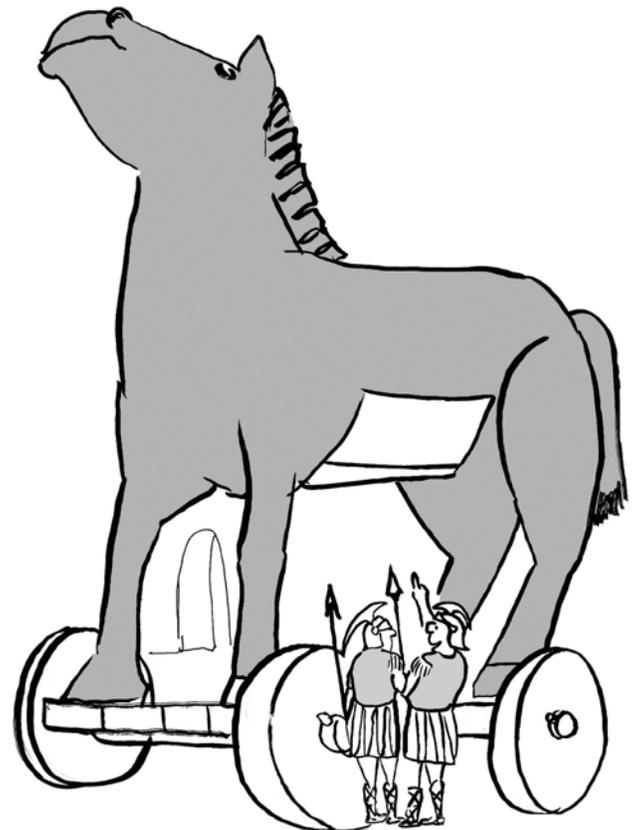
COMICS



LATER...



Calvinist Cartoons presents **CHIC & GUMBO** IN **BUCKET LIST**



"That's where the batteries go."

GETTING TO KNOW THE BIBLE BETTER

by Jim Payton



Most of us would like to know the Bible better, but how can we do that? Perhaps you have gotten into a Bible study or tried to use some books that explain Scripture's meaning. But after a while, you realize how *big* Scripture is, how *much* there is of it, and how *many* books and studies

there are on it – and the task can seem overwhelming.

A number of years ago, I learned from two godly men a couple of ways that helped me get to know Scripture much better; they can almost certainly help you, too. Neither approach takes more than about 15 or 20 minutes a

day, neither takes a huge expenditure of effort and neither requires anything besides your Bible as supplies. But in only a few years of using these approaches, you can become familiar with all of Scripture – and even memorize large chunks of it.

...in only a few years of using these approaches, you can become familiar with all of Scripture.

READING REGULARLY

You reply, “Years? But I’d like to have that now, as soon as possible.”

Have you tried that approach with learning to play the piano? It takes time and some commitment to “keep at it,” to develop proficiency at almost anything worthwhile, including developing familiarity with Scripture. It’s understandable but shortsighted that Christians so often opt for the devotional “quick-fix” that rarely leads to lasting spiritual growth or deepening insight. Besides, aren’t you planning on serving the Lord for the rest of your life? Then don’t reject an idea about how to get to know Scripture better just because it may take a while to produce its full fruit.

The first way to get to know Scripture better is simple – read it: *all* of it. Do you realize that if you read four chapters a day, seven days a week, you will read through the Bible in less than

a year? (At three chapters a day, it takes a little more than a year.) If you do that, two or three or four years in a row, you will be amazed at how much you learn, and you will develop a sense for the emphases and balance of Scripture that will enable you to discern whether what someone says is in keeping with Scripture or not. That is valuable. It will also help you recognize what ought to be important in your life. That is also valuable.

REREADING ALERTLY

The second way offers help for something we all recognize would be good but find very difficult to do – *memorizing* Scripture. Oh, sure, we’ve heard about the benefits of doing it, but memorization seems to be so much hard work that it gets left undone, and with out busy schedules, we somehow never really commit to it.

Many years ago, I heard an aged and well-respected Bible teacher explain how we could do it. He even told us that, with this approach, we could “go big,” memorizing whole chapters, and books of Scripture.

He said that, if you wanted to memorize Philippians, for example, you should simply read it through every day for a month – not trying to memorize it, but just reading it alertly. (Once a week, read the book in a different translation, so that you still hear that message of the book, while your mind is storing it). At the end of the month, you will know the book by heart without trying to memorize it. You will

be able to quote off several verses, and if you glance at the next phrase, you will be able to go right on from there. Breaking up large books (like Romans) into chunks of four or five chapters, you can carry the process through to memorize those bigger books, too. Keep at that for a couple of years, and you can memorize a fair amount of the New Testament (it works for Old Testament material too!)

CONCLUSION

Maybe you hesitate or you’re skeptical that these will work. Why not challenge yourself to try one method? Include every day (or as close to that as you can get) a period of 15 or 20 minutes to read four chapters. Try to make it a regular part of your life, a pattern that you can keep up over the next year. Try treading Philippians (or Colossians) every day for a month, then another book in the next month. Why not see if you can memorize a whole book of the Bible this way?

After all, you want to get to know the Bible better, so what do you have to lose? If these work – and I can testify personally that they do – you have a lot to gain. ^{RP}

Dr. Payton is Professor of History Emeritus at Redeemer University College Ancaster, On. This article originally appeared in Christian Courier (www.christiancourier.ca) and is used here with permission.

if you wanted to memorize Philippians, for example, you should simply read it through every day for a month

A photograph of Stephen Harper, the former Prime Minister of Canada, smiling and giving a thumbs up with both hands. He is wearing a dark pinstriped suit, a white shirt, and an orange tie. The background is a blue stage with some red confetti.

WHAT IS “POLITICAL SUCCESS”?

Stephen Harper’s mistaken understanding changed him from a principled conservative to a power-focused politician

by Michael Wagner

People get involved in politics because they’re concerned about the future. They know certain principles need to be defended, for the good of all, even the good of those that oppose those very principles. However, in a pluralistic, increasingly relativistic, country like Canada, it’s hard to get elected while standing uncompromisingly on principle (just ask the Christian Heritage Party!). So compromise on principle and you might win, don’t and you’ll almost certainly lose.

How then can we succeed?

It’s a key question, but there’s a more important one that we need to answer first: how are we going to define political “success”?

The dictionary tells us success is “reaching our goal” but it doesn’t offer any insight into what those goals should be in the political arena. The Bible does. We were created for the glory of God (Is. 43:7) and therefore, whatever we do,

we should do it “all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

Now the world defines political success as being elected to office. And because they do, principles are then seen as impediments that get in the way of achieving that goal.

But if we define “success” as glorifying God, then we will publicly advocate for His principles, and we will speak out to honor God, and to educate people about what really is right. Then success will be had by having the loudest election campaign possible. Then we will speak out at every opportunity, and without fear, because whatever the election result, we will know we have already achieved God’s idea of success.

CAN BOTH TYPES OF SUCCESS BE HAD?

But what if someone could be principled and get elected? On occasion

a man or woman associated with clear principles will seem to make strides towards electoral success. We do have some godly Members of Parliament. However, history seems to show that for a person to reach the highest positions of influence they will need to backtrack from their previous principles. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper is an example of this phenomenon.

Early in his political career, Stephen Harper was considered to be a principled conservative. After serving one term as a Reform Party MP, he became president of the National Citizens Coalition (NCC) in 1997. The NCC is a conservative organization that promotes limited government and individual freedom. Harper pursued this objective passionately and effectively. However, after leaving the NCC in 2001 to become leader of the Canadian Alliance, Harper began to compromise his principles.

GERRY NICHOLLS OF THE NATIONAL CITIZENS COALITION

One of the people most surprised by Stephen Harper's compromise was Gerry Nicholls, a longtime staff member of the NCC. In his 2009 book, *Loyal to the Core: Stephen Harper, Me and the NCC*, Nicholls provided an account of Harper's time as NCC president.

Initially Nicholls was convinced that Harper was committed to conservative principles. That's why, after Harper re-entered electoral politics, Nicholls helped Harper's campaign and was willing to overlook Harper's initial compromises. Eventually, however, Nicholls saw the writing on the wall.

For Nicholls, the straw that broke the camel's back was the Conservative government's March 2007 budget. That budget involved what Nicholls describes as "an orgy of massive government spending." "After that," Nicholls explains, "I knew Stephen had no intention of providing Canadians with conservative government, or of even paying lip service to conservative ideals. He had turned his back on conservatism."

PROFESSOR TOM FLANAGAN

That assessment might sound harsh, but it is shared by Tom Flanagan, a political science professor at the University of Calgary. Flanagan was, for many years, a close companion of Stephen Harper. Flanagan managed Harper's successful leadership campaigns for the Canadian Alliance and for the new Conservative Party of Canada, and also played key roles in the Conservative Party's 2004 and 2006 federal election campaigns.

After a while, however, Flanagan became concerned about the change in Harper's political direction. Eventually the two men had a falling out. In 2011 Flanagan wrote a letter to the editor of the *Literary Review of Canada* where he described Harper's compromised political perspective as prime minister:

Harper has adopted the Liberal shibboleths of bilingualism and multiculturalism. He has no plans to reintroduce capital punishment, criminalize abortion, repeal gay marriage or repeal the Charter. He

swears allegiance to the Canada Health Act. He has enriched equalization payments for the provinces and pogy for individuals. He has enthusiastically accepted government subsidies to business, while enlarging regional economic expansion. He now advocates Keynesian deficit spending and government bailouts of failing corporations, at least part of the time.

Flanagan, in fact, wrote this letter to reassure certain prominent Liberals that their policies still governed Canada. The "Liberal consensus lives on," Flanagan wrote, "It's just under new management." Stephen Harper's management.

CONNIE FOURNIER

Just this past year another book was published expressing disenchantment with the former prime minister: *Betrayed: Stephen Harper's War on Principled Conservatism*. The author, Connie Fournier, and her husband Mark are the co-founders of a Canadian conservative Internet forum called Free Dominion. The primary goal of Free Dominion is the promotion of principled conservatism.

Beginning in 2001, Connie Fournier became very active in the Canadian Alliance Party, and then the Conservative Party of Canada, at the local level. Free Dominion quickly became popular among Canadian Alliance activists, and when the Alliance held its convention in Edmonton in April 2002, Free Dominion hosted a banquet. A number of Canadian Alliance MPs and National Council members attended. As Fournier wrote:

Even Stephen Harper, as the brand new leader of the Canadian Alliance, sent us a letter praising Free Dominion for its role in promoting and advancing conservatism in Canada.

After that, however, the Fourniers and other Free Dominion supporters began to fall out with Harper. They considered him to be centralizing too much control of the party in his own hands at the expense of grassroots members. They also thought (correctly) that Harper was trying to marginalize social conservatives within the party, and they opposed Harper's plan

"I'd rather be right than be president," said US Senator Henry Clay...

to merge the Alliance with the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

Connie Fournier wrote her book to convince other conservatives that Stephen Harper has betrayed their movement. She hopes that the Conservative Party of Canada can be restored to conservative principles under a new leader.

CONCLUSION

In the 2015 federal election, Stephen Harper was clearly preferable to Justin Trudeau of the Liberal Party and Thomas Mulcair of the New Democratic Party. He was the "lesser of evils" among the major party leaders. But that's not a very high recommendation.

In current Canadian politics, conservative principles and even more so, Christian principles, are most often a hindrance to electoral success. The career of Stephen Harper is a clear example of how conservatives and Christians can be tempted by the worldly sort of political success into jettisoning their principles. But the cost of this kind of "success" is very high. What's the point of attaining power if principles cannot be the guidelines for governing?

However, if our "success" is defined as glorifying God by publicly proclaiming truth, then doing so and facing the electoral consequences is a meaningful activity. By this standard, a loud and public Christian Heritage Party campaign that loses would be more successful than all the electoral wins of Stephen Harper's Conservatives.

"I'd rather be right than be president," said US Senator Henry Clay in 1838. That's an admirable sentiment that Stephen Harper rejected.

We must not make the same mistake. 

Photo is from Oct. 2008, in Calgary, and is by Mike Ridewood/iStockPhoto.com



You know Grandma will treasure your letters.

Letters Mingle Souls

by Christine Farenhorst

*"Sir, more than kisses,
letters mingle souls,
For thus, friends absent speak.*

– John Donne (1572-1631)

When my father courted my mother, he wrote her sonnets in Dutch, German, English and French. Amazing! I think she was truly impressed and also touched by the fact that he took the time to do this especially for her.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

I do not know a great many people who still write letters, let alone sonnets, to dear ones to express their feelings of love, appreciation and other issues. Letter writing seems to be a lost art. When we first immigrated from Holland to Canada, it was a happy day when an overseas blue vellum envelope was delivered by the mailman through the mail slot in our door. I can vividly recall my mother's happy face as she opened such a letter, avidly reading the news that my maternal grandmother sent her across the ocean. I also retain the memory of sitting around the luncheon table, home from school for an hour or so that first year in Canada, while my father read family bulletins in the form of letters from aunts and uncles to all of us – so that we would not forget the family we left behind.

I can't think of anyone who does not enjoy receiving a card or letter with some encouraging words, some personal sentence, written next to the text. But truthfully, I can think of very few who actually put pen to paper to communicate such things. Yes, there is e-mail, but you cannot hold an e-mail in your hand. You cannot fold it up and put it in your pocket or purse, or lay it on your night table

next to your bed to reread at your leisure before going to sleep. E-mail, although it is an easy way to correspond, has a certain amount of machine-feel to it, a good dose of impersonal touch. The flick of a button can send the exact same greetings to others besides yourself. An e-mail is simply not as individual as that letter which arrives in your mailbox addressed to only you.

Actually, I remember a funny anecdote in which a teenage nephew of mine was so infatuated with a pretty face that he sent her a long letter in which he declared his undying devotion to her. In the epistle he detailed the girl's pretty cheeks, eyes, eyebrows, hair, and so on. On that same day he penned a letter to my father, his grandfather, telling him about his studies at medical school, his progress with those studies, and so on. When he got around to mailing these two letters, however, he put the wrong address on the envelopes. The girl received the letter intended for my father, and my father received the letter intended for the girl. I think I've never seen my father laugh so hard, and he certainly lost no time in phoning his grandson to tell him he was very touched by the fact that his elderly face was held in such high esteem.

Seriously, to write something by hand forces one to think carefully and sincerely. You can't erase what you have written without making a bit of a mess. Scratching out words or sentences can create unsightly black blobs. Consequently words should be wisely chosen while reflecting on needs

*Writing by hand
makes one think
carefully, slowly,
and forces you to
build relationships
with others.*

and encouragement needed by the recipient. Writing by hand makes one think carefully, slowly, and forces you to build relationships with others. More than anything else they remind the one receiving the letter that you are thinking of them, possibly praying for them and loving them. Letters, written in the right spirit, have an amazing ability to console, strengthen, and soften hearts that might have contained bitterness towards the world and God.

MARTYN LLOYD-JONES: LOVING, LETTER-WRITING HUSBAND

One of my favorite preachers, although he died a great many years ago, is Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981). Strongly opposed to liberal theology, he became the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England in 1939, and he remained in that church for thirty years. A gifted speaker, he preached to thousands, but classified himself, with regard to letters, "... a truly bad correspondent."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, however, had an intense affection for his wife. If he was



"This Valentines Day, don't say it with chocolate. Or flowers. Say it with written words!"

away from her for more than a day or two, he always wrote her a letter. Iain Murray, who edited a book of his letters in 1994, more than twenty years ago, wrote about Bethan Lloyd-Jones, Martin's wife: "She was in every sense a partner in all that her husband did. Although a medical doctor herself, she happily gave her life to keeping him preaching and to the care of the home." They had a very good marriage.

In 1937, while still a pastor at Sandfields, Aberavon in Wales, Dr. Lloyd-Jones went to the United States on a speaking trip. Bethan could not come with him as their youngest daughter Ann was only 5 months old. He wrote her:

There is one constant regret right through everything – that you are not with me. I was counting it out in bed this morning, that by three weeks today, I ought to be with you again. You said in your letter that you hoped I would not forget you – I am prepared to enter into a competition with you on that score without the slightest hesitation! ... All my love to you, dearest girl in the world. There is no one like you anywhere. The more I see of others the more obvious does this become. Kiss each of the girls for me. Yours for ever and ever, Martyn.

If you have ever heard Dr. Lloyd-Jones preach, his serious, throaty voice punctuating Biblical truths, and if you have stood in tremendous awe of his God-given ability to argue and defend the faith, these touching words in the letter to his dear wife will undoubtedly raise him to higher levels of affection and esteem in your heart.

At the conference in Ohio, he penned thoughts to his dear spouse again:

I have not had a letter from you since I left New York, but I have just realized

that letters take an extra two days to arrive here. I felt very homesick on Monday. With me on the train was Dr. Wilson from New York... In the Pullman he met another minister and his wife. After talking for a while Dr. Wilson said to the other minister's wife; "You know, you make me feel very homesick for my wife - I think I'll send a card to her to come along." "Yes, do," said the other, "most of the wives are coming this time." And me, having to think of the dearest little wife in the world, thousands of miles away, across the sea! I became totally depressed as I thought of it. When we arrived here, I saw that the wives were here by the dozen! This is surely one of the best hotels in the world. I never saw anything like it. I have a double-bedded room with a private bathroom, toilet, etc. This is real luxury. But Oh! the bed is much too big for one! You ought to be here with me.

How wonderful it would have been for Mrs. Bethan Lloyd-Jones to receive that letter and to be able to read and reread her faithful husband's declaration of love, of his missing her. His words were simple and unadorned words – words we can all understand – and words which came straight from his heart.

SAYING IT WITH WRITTEN WORDS

With Valentine's Day on the loom, Hallmark cards and Hershey Kisses are for sale in supermarkets, drug stores and dollar outlets. It's a great market. Good business! Sales experts know that deep within all human hearts there lies that desire to be told they are special – loved as no other.

Ironically, there is one letter which is addressed to all people and one which we can read and reread again and again. Sadly it is probably a letter which is gathering dust on bookshelves throughout

...deep within all human hearts there lies that desire to be told they are special.

North America. Yes, of course I mean the Bible. Listen to the words of the greatest of all Lovers, the Lord God Himself.

... Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, Who has compassion on you (Isaiah 54:10).

And,

"...I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness..." (Jer. 31:3).

These sentences are part of that old, extant letter which has been delivered to all mankind. We should read them aloud to our children so they will be caught up on the news of their Father as they gather around the lunch or supper table; and it is a letter which we should place on our night table so that we can reread its words when we feel lonely at night. Perhaps, lacking in ability to formulate words ourselves, we can even copy this letter's words and put them on cards for relatives and friends. For even as John Donne said a long time ago, "...more than kisses, letters mingle souls. For thus friends absent speak."

Happy Valentine's Day! 



The Board of the Canadian Reformed School Association,
operating **William of Orange Christian School**,
invites applications for the position of

TEACHING PRINCIPAL.

Celebrating 60 years of our Lord and Saviour's goodness in 2015, William of Orange Christian School is a vibrant elementary school in Surrey, BC with over 80 students. Our school has mixed grades, small class sizes, and is blessed with experienced staff. Our new Teaching Principal will provide teaching leadership in a hands-on way with the students, with 25-35% of the school day available for administrative tasks. The teaching assignment will be flexible and will depend on the qualifications, experience and preferences of the successful applicant and of our current staff. We're looking for a gifted teacher who desires to grow in the role of a servant leader; one who prefers collaboration in pursuing the long term vision of our Reformed community here in Surrey.

The **Teaching Principal** will be responsible for

1. fostering Reformed Christian education in the classroom that develops solid citizens in the Lord's kingdom;
2. providing inspirational educational leadership to staff;
3. supervising the daily operations of the school office, classrooms and property;
4. ensuring good collaboration with board, staff, parents and the community;
5. enhancing strong working relationships with our educational partners.

Please email or call Will Faber (william.r.faber@gmail.com / 604-593-3003) or John Van Seters (jjvanset@hotmail.com / 778-574-4493) with any questions about this opportunity. The successful applicant will be a professed member of the Canadian/American/United Reformed Churches, have a B. Ed, preferably M. Ed, and will possess or be able to obtain a BC teacher's certificate. Applications with resume and covering letter should be submitted by January 30th to:

**Principal Search Committee @ William of Orange Christian School, Box 34090 RPO
Cloversquare, Surrey, BC, V3S 8C4.**



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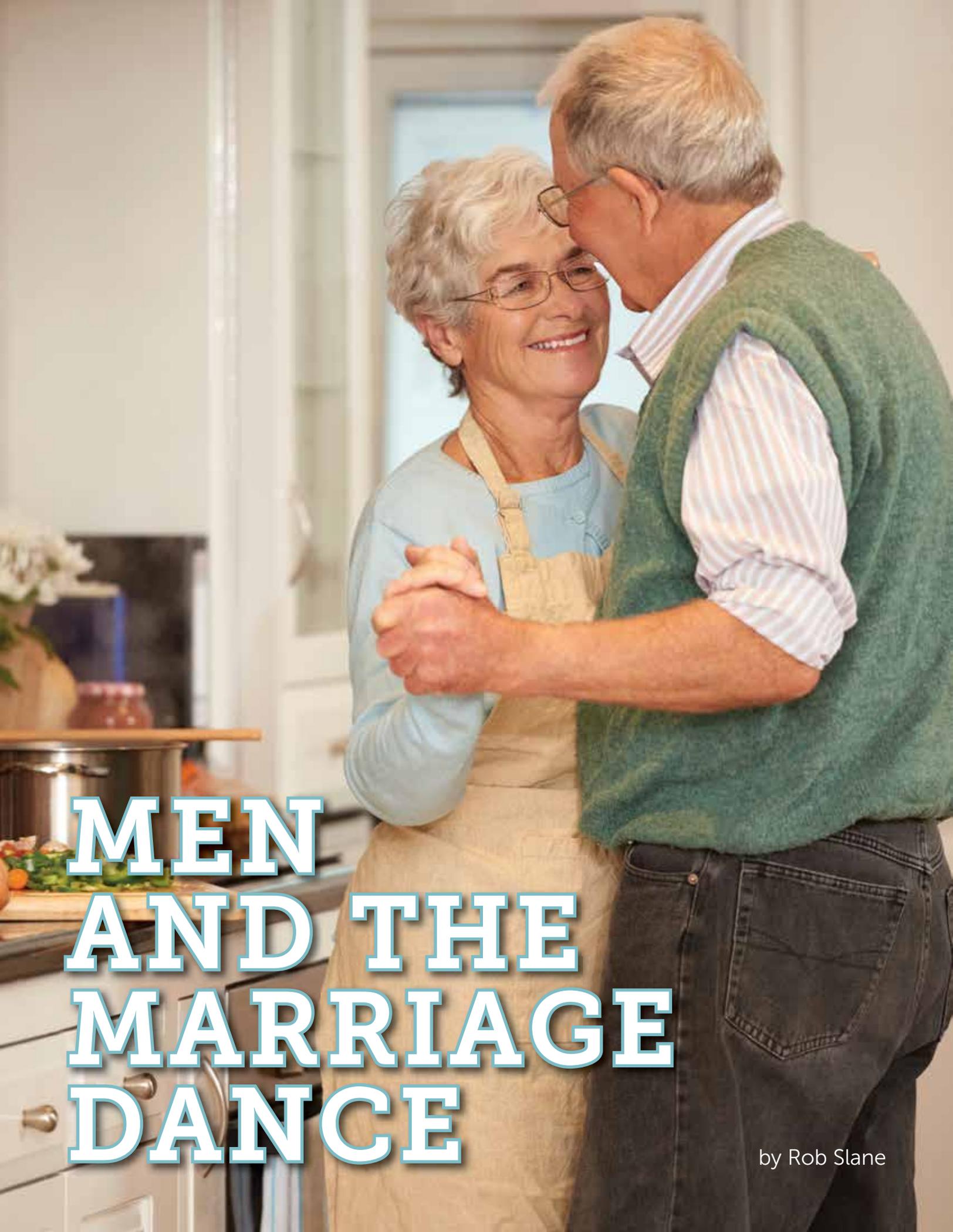
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MEN AND THE MARRIAGE DANCE

by Rob Slane

*“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.”*

– Colossians 3:18-19

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and
gave Himself up for her...”*

– Ephesians 5:25

Maybe I have been looking in all the wrong places, but in my ten years of being a Christian, I seem to have heard an awful lot more on the subject of wives being in subjection to their husbands than I have on the subject of husbands loving their wives. In the interests of redressing the balance, I wish to focus on the other side of the marriage bond.

LOVE BEFORE SUBMISSION

One of the first things to notice about Paul’s teaching on marriage is that although he mentions wives before husbands in both the Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 passages, the onus is clearly on the men to act first. Husbands are told to “love your wives, *just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her*” (Eph. 5:25). Elsewhere in Scripture we are explicitly told the order of Christ/church relations: “We love Him because *He first loved us*” (1 John 4:19).

So if the husband/wife relationship is to look anything like the Christ/church relationship, it is very much the responsibility of the husband to first ensure he is loving his wife before he starts worrying about whether his wife is submitting to him.

SACRIFICIAL HEADSHIP

In Ephesians 5:22-24 we read a passage that many a man loves for all the wrong reasons.

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the

body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Some husbands, while properly recognizing that this passage is about headship, conveniently ignore the fact that it is about *sacrificial* headship. Their thinking goes something like this: “Christ commands his church, right? And his church is meant to be in subjection, right? That’s what Paul says, isn’t it? So if the marriage relationship is meant to be like the relationship between Christ and his church, then clearly I get to decide everything and you must obediently follow.”

There are two big problems with this type of blockhead masculinity.

The first is that although Christ commands His church and His church is called upon to submit to Him, He commands her as a sinless, spotless head. Which means that all of his commands are made in love, righteousness,

*There are two big
problems with this
type of blockhead
masculinity.*

and truth, and that nothing He has commanded to his church is dictatorial, and that nothing He asks his bride to do is necessarily grievous. Sure, the church disobeys and acts like these things are grievous, but that is because the church is stuffed with sinners, not because her

Husband is in the wrong.

The second big problem with this way of thinking, is that even Christ – though He had every right to just command and expect submission – had to die sacrificially in order to win His bride. His headship is not one of mere headship – I command and you obey – but rather a headship that is born of giving Himself, at great personal cost, for the bride that He loves.

Any husband who just commands and expects submission is therefore wronging his wife in expecting her to obey whilst he himself fails to obey the command directed to him. He is failing to understand the import of Paul’s command, which is not to just assume headship, but to assume it in a self-denying and sacrificial way.

FOUR DIFFERENT DANCES

I tend to think that what Paul has in mind is something akin to a dance. Now in any really good male/female dance that I’ve ever seen, the man leads and the woman follows. Yet the man does so in a way which is firm and masculine, rather than authoritarian, and the woman follows in a way that is neither overbearing on the one hand nor a pushover on the other, but rather firm in a feminine way.

But let’s just play around with this analogy and see what happens when we add various factors into it. Picture the scene: a husband and wife are about to begin a dance upon a high stage with no barriers surrounding it, set to a Strauss waltz.

Now into this scene steps the modern couple. The way they do this “marriage

The way they do this “marriage dance” looks a little different to what the Apostle Paul had in mind.



dance” looks, shall we say, a little different to what Paul had in mind. Instead of a graceful scene of husband and wife dancing in unison, with the man gently but firmly leading his wife while she gracefully and willingly accompanies him, many modern marriages look like the two spouses just doing their own thing on separate corners of the stage. Maybe he’s making one last attempt over here to perfect his breakdance technique before middle-age sets in, while she’s over there doing her twerking thing. The two of them are utterly independent of each other, and it is no surprise when they split, citing irreconcilable differences. And poor Strauss carries on in the background, treated in much the same way as that beautiful gold ring on the end of the pig’s snout.

Then there is the feminist dance. You know, where the powerhouse woman tries to lead the man around and he either willingly submits and the dance ends up looking plain silly, or he resists and they end up pushing each other over the edge.

Or there is dance of the “apathetics.” This is where the performers are so floppy and without backbone, especially the man, that you wonder whether they are actually trying to dance or to do a distinctly underwhelming impression of two octopi skulking across the sea bed.

But what of the over-bearing, authoritarian, she-ought-to-submit-to-me-because-that’s-what-Paul-says dance couple? What does their dance look like? It looks like a man dragging his wife

rather than leading her, and then when he starts veering too far toward the edge of the stage and his wife tries to pull him back from the brink, he gets mad, accuses her of not being submissive, and carries on doing his thing until they both fall over the edge. Such a guy thinks he’s doing what God commands, yet is in far more danger of disobeying Paul than his wife is.

THE DANCE DONE RIGHT

So what will the kind of dance envisaged by Paul really look like? As with a beautiful waltz to a bit of Strauss, it will look like the man leading his bride gracefully but firmly around the stage, with his wife gladly following his lead. It will look like him making sure he does nothing to grieve her or put either her or the both of them in jeopardy. So he will not only be aware of his steps, but will be aware of her steps too, and of both their steps together. If he happens to wander too near the edge and his wife gently pulls him back, he will not accuse her of being unsubmitive, but rather will accept the reproof and adjust his ways accordingly.

In practical terms, there is no thought in this type of dance of a man commanding his wife regardless of her feelings and opinions, and her being expected to just submit to everything he says. Rather the thought is that the kind of man Paul is thinking of will always take his wife’s desires and opinions into account. If there is disagreement about a decision that needs to be taken, yes it is ultimately the man who is called upon

to make that decision and the wife who is called upon to submit. But if the man has not first spoken to his wife, sought her opinion, taken it into account, considered whether maybe she is right and he wrong and that perhaps he needs to die to self before making the decision – unless he has gone through those steps – he is not leading his wife in the dance the way Paul says he ought.

CONCLUSION

Now, this piece doesn’t address difficulties and problems, such as, “what if a woman is married to a husband who is a blockhead. How far should she go in obeying him?” That’s really not an easy question. Suffice it to say that when Paul teaches headship in Colossians 3, his command for wives to “submit to your own husbands, *as is fitting in the Lord*” suggests that this is by no means an open check, and that there are limits to her submission, as when Abigail didn’t just go along with her fool of a husband, Nabal.

However, difficult as these questions are, a good place to start in addressing such issues would be for more and clearer teaching on the role of men. This is the surest way of warding off problems and creating the beautiful marriage dance envisaged by Jesus Christ, the true sacrificial head. ^{RP}

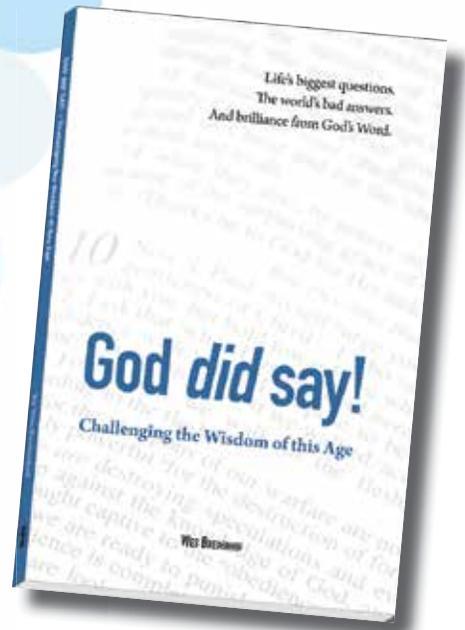
“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself” (Ephesians 5:28).

Consider the difference between these two questions:

- "What did God say?"
- "Did God *really* say?"

The first one is about finding clarity. The second seems like the first, but when the Serpent asked it of Eve in the Garden his intent wasn't to confirm what God had said, but rather to *challenge* it. He was asking this question to raise doubt. The same is true today. Some in the Church are questioning, but not to find out what God said, but instead to undermine what He said.

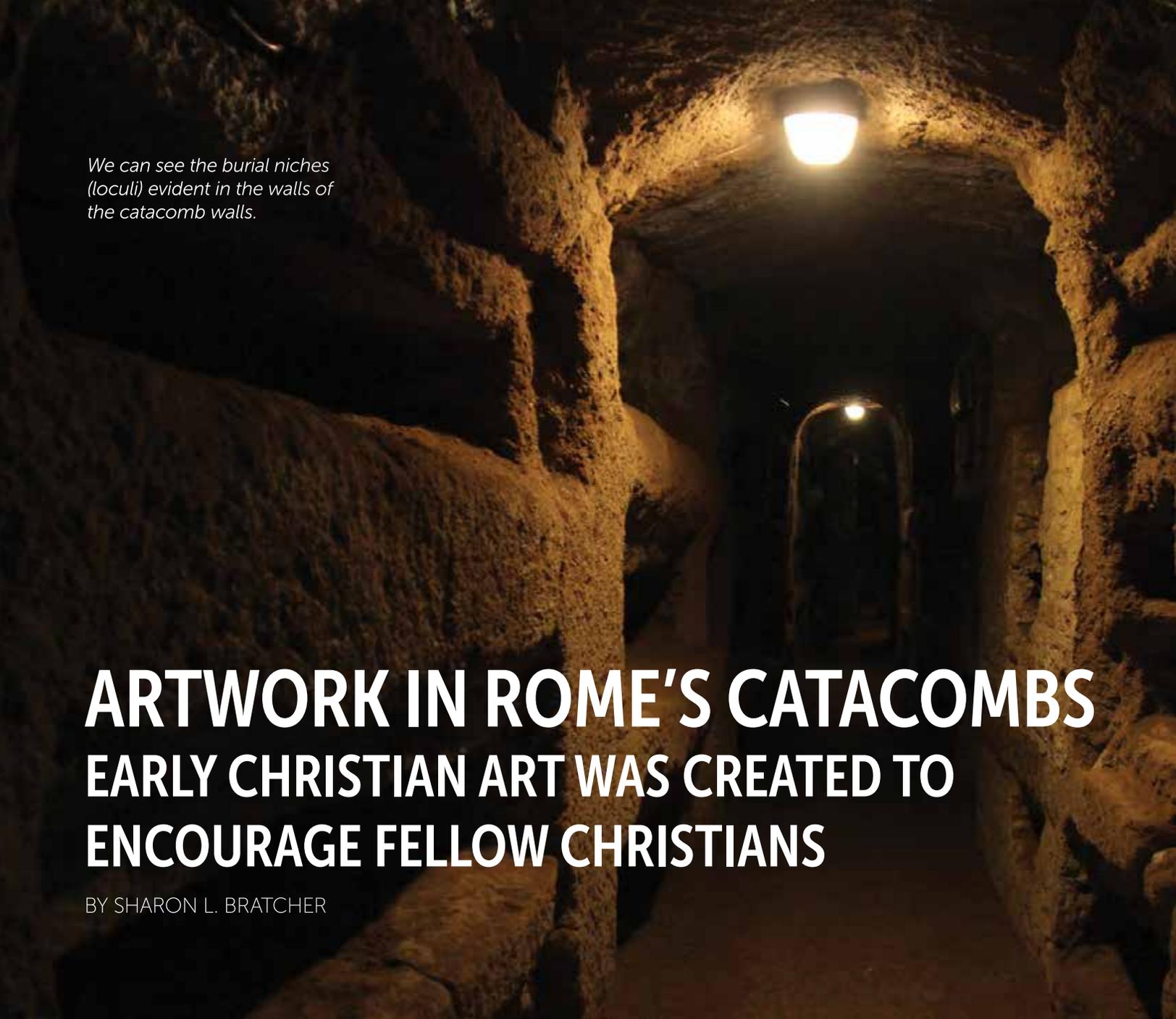
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We can see the burial niches (loculi) evident in the walls of the catacomb walls.

ARTWORK IN ROME'S CATACOMBS

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART WAS CREATED TO ENCOURAGE FELLOW CHRISTIANS

BY SHARON L. BRATCHER

Imagine a vast, underground series of zigzagging passageways covering an area several miles in length, 590 acres in size. Ponder the amount of work that was required to dig down between 2 and 60 feet deep into volcanic tufo rock in order to create these passageways and the *loculi* (burial niches) that lined the sides of them. In an ancient time period when graveyards were not permitted within the city limits of Rome, the catacombs were created for the burial of Christians, Jews, and some pagan individuals.

The catacombs are thought to have held between four and seven million

graves. Between 40 and 60 multi-level burial chambers connected by numerous tunnels have been discovered just outside of Rome. Narrow steps go down as many as four stories, leading to passages that are about 8 feet high and 3 or 4 feet. The burial niches were carved into the walls and are generally 16-24 inches high and 45-60 inches long.

And it is here, in these catacombs, where we can find the earliest known examples of Christian artwork.

During the second century, the traditions of the Romans and Etruscans favored cremation, but the Christians,

Narrow steps go down as many as four stories, leading to passages that are about 8 feet high and 3 or 4 feet.

believing in the bodily resurrection of the dead, thought that bodies of the deceased should be buried, as was the

described manner within the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Because of that, and because it was inexpensive, Christians dug these catacombs, generally beginning on the property of one of the Christians, digging downward and then branching out in many directions. Imagine starting such a project in your back yard!

The Christians definitely expanded the number of catacombs, and were known to hold funeral services in small chapel-like rooms, similar to how people hold graveside services today.

WHAT WAS THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN ARTWORK LIKE?

We can learn a lot about the people who expressed their faith artistically in the catacombs. It is especially uplifting to note the particular themes and symbols that were chosen, as well as noticing those that were not.

It is also interesting to consider that whereas some religions, such as the pagan worship in Egypt, provided artwork within their burial places for the use of the deceased along the way to the afterlife, Christians provided artwork for the encouragement of the living who would visit the catacombs. Christians' souls were already in Heaven, but the bodies awaited the great resurrection at the day of judgment.

The types of artwork found in the catacombs include fresco paintings (paintings done on wet plaster), Greek and Latin inscriptions, carved stone burial boxes (sarcophagi), and statues. Some of the artwork is simple and amateurish, but in other cases it's clear Christians hired professional artists to decorate the graves of their loved ones with the purpose of advancing the message of Christ.

The people who could afford it placed the body of a loved one in a stone sarcophagus that was most often decorated, but those who were poor simply bound the body up in linen. It was then placed in the *loculi* – the burial niche – and the niche was sealed with a slab that bore the name, age and



A fish carving from the Domitilla Catacombs in Rome, dated to around second or third century AD. The letters below spell fish in Greek (ichthys) and can also be used to form an acronym of the phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

date of the person's death.

Catacombs historians state that there are three themes that are seen throughout the catacombs' artwork: resurrection, salvation, and baptism, which Andrew Shubin in *Early Christian Imagery in the Catacombs of Priscilla* refers to as the "three core tenets of Christianity." Another catacomb art historian, Gregory S. Athnos, states that:

Every story in catacomb art is a tale of deliverance, a tale of the powerlessness of death and the certainty of the resurrection. God delivers us from the consequences of death situations and gives us life instead. In our view of the history of Christian art it appears the crucifixion of Jesus holds the highest place."

A French Catholic cultural historian, Frederic Ozanam, sums up the topics depicted in this early Christian artwork thus:

In these figures of Noah in the Ark, Moses striking the rock, Job on the dunghill, the Miracle of Cana, the feeding of the five thousand, Lazarus leaving the tomb, and most prominent – Daniel in the lions den, Jonah cast out by the whale, the three Children in the furnace. All these are types of martyrdom – martyrdom by beasts, water, and fire, but all symbolical of triumphant martyrdom

such as is necessary to depict in order to maintain courage and console grief.

And, amazingly he points out the following:

We see no trace of contemporary persecutions, no representation of the butchery of the Christians, nothing bloodthirsty, nothing which could rouse hatred or vengeance, nothing but pictures of pardon, hope, and love.

In this regard, Athnos points out that he saw "no crosses in the catacombs – no symbols of death. Rather, he saw symbols of the Resurrection such as the Phoenix, a bird which came back to life, and the fish, which speaks of God's provision and sustenance, as well as a reference to Jesus' calling his disciples to follow Him and become fishers of men.

Other researchers describe pictures of a dove, representing the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to dwell within Christians and bring them

One subject that was frequently repeated in statuary was that of the Good Shepherd.



This fresco painting of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) is found in the Priscilla catacombs in Rome and is dated to around the third and century.

guidance, wisdom, peace, comfort, and joy. Another frequent symbol was the anchor, representing hope in Jesus as expressed in Hebrews 6:19, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” Although Athnos saw no crosses, other researchers point out that when the anchor is turned upside down, the Greek letter TAU was formed and the T represented the shape of the cross, promising salvation through Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.

Last of all, the symbol of a peacock was adopted for use by early Christians. It had long been a symbol of eternal life for other cultures, who feared death and their unknown future; Christians improved on it, believing that the victory of Christ’s resurrection canceled the obscurity of death.

One subject that was frequently repeated in statuary was that of the Good Shepherd. The Old Testament book of Psalms, Chapter 23, begins with, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.” The Psalmist describes how this good shepherd watches over his sheep by taking them to green pastures with quiet, not frightening, streams of water, and providing comfort for them in every dangerous situation. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your

rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Jesus announced Himself in John 10:11-18 as the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for His sheep; this reference would have brought Psalm 23 to His disciples’ minds. It brought great comfort to the souls of early Christians to believe in Christ as their good shepherd.

There were also pictures found of the Virgin Mary, of a person praying in Orant style (arms uplifted), and of the disciples and other early saints and martyrs of the Christian faith. These, too, served to encourage the living by referencing the power and love of God and the witness of other believers. There are also depictions of Jesus performing His many miracles, but these aren’t the earliest pictures, as the first Christian arts were seemingly more reluctant to depict Him than later ones.

DID CHRISTIANS HIDE IN THE CATACOMBS?

Many of us have heard references to the Roman persecution of Christians which took place during the first three centuries after Christ. Ministers have often called on us to imagine the difficulties which led many Christians to hide from the Romans down inside of the catacombs.

However, some modern historians dispute whether the catacombs were used as a hiding place, and one source even questioned whether there really was a great persecution! These writers call the ideas tradition, myth or a romanticizing of what actually occurred. Note the following arguments and responses:

1. OBJECTION: There is no visible evidence that suggests that Christians hid there from the Romans.

RESPONSE: People who were generally very poor, on the run, and hiding for their lives would be careful not to leave any trace of their whereabouts.

2. OBJECTION: The stench from the rotting bodies would have made it a difficult place to exist and it would have been an unpleasant place to live.

RESPONSE: Each grave was sealed with stone, and it was cold down there, so it was unlikely that there would be a stench; besides, people who are running for their lives might not be so concerned about the comforts of life. There is at least one known location in the catacombs that still shows blood, where a Christian



A catacomb fresco painting of Samson with the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15).

Photo credit: photogolfer at Shutterstock.com

was killed, proving that there was at least one person who hid there.

3. **OBJECTION:** The catacombs were a public place well-known to the Romans, so they would not have provided a good hiding place.

RESPONSE: Since the passageways are very long, irregular, and complicated, it would be difficult to find people there even if the soldiers knew they were in there somewhere.

4. **OBJECTION:** Christians were willing to die as martyrs for their Lord Jesus Christ, so why would they want to hide?

RESPONSE: While Christians were (and should still be) willing to die for Christ, that doesn't mean we seek death! The Apostle Paul sneaked out of the city of Damascus to avoid being killed by an angry group of Jewish leaders (Acts chapter 9) and like him, if Christians can avoid death while staying true to Christ, then we should.

Also consider, since the artwork was intended to encourage people who were living in dangerous circumstances, those who painted and sculpted it

did expect that it would be viewed by others; this lends credence to the idea that some Christians would be coming there sometime.

CONCLUSION

The catacombs outside of Rome served as an extensive underground burial location around the second century. The Christians who dug some of them held funeral services within the small chapels there, and some hid there to avoid persecution.

They expressed their faith in salvation through Jesus Christ by painting or sculpting symbols of Christianity and references to carefully chosen Biblical accounts that would particularly instill courage, faith, hope, and trust within those who viewed them. Hebrews 12 sums up the encouragement that the early Christians passed on to others through their artwork in the catacombs:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross,

scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

RP

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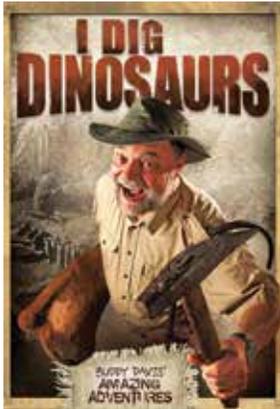
FUN FILMS

FAMILY VIEWING

BY JON DYKSTRA

I DIG DINOSAURS

FAMILY / KIDS
26 MINUTES / 2011
RATING: 7/10



Buddy Davis is a musician, dinosaur sculptor, and children's entertainer. In this children's video Buddy invites along to go on a dinosaur bone dig to see how paleontologists find them and take them out of the ground, and then put them on display.

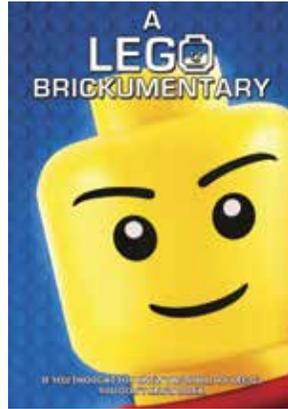
The man really knows his stuff. He approaches the topic of dinosaurs and their fossils from a thoroughly Christian, creationist perspective and contrasts the biblical position with the evolutionary one. For example, he explains that fossilization doesn't need to take millions of years – they've found fossilized teddy bears! And kids are also told about how elastic blood vessels have recently been found in dinosaur bones that shows they couldn't possibly be millions of years old. These animals aren't as old as they have been made out to be!

Our host is energetic and keeps things hopping. While I enjoyed it, I'd recommend this as more a kid's video than as family viewing. Why? Well, parents likely won't want to watch this as many times as their children.

I Dig Dinosaurs! is the first of four in the Buddy Davis Amazing Adventures series and the only one that can be watched for free online at www.tinyurl.com/BuddyDavis. You can also buy the DVDs at AnswersinGenesis.org/store (just search for "buddy davis amazing").

A LEGO BRICKUMENTARY

DOCUMENTARY
93 MINUTES / 2015
RATING: 7/10



This is sure to get your kids building, but the target audience for the documentary is as much adults and children. In fact, the majority of the builders we're introduced to are adults, including both the "master builders" who work for the company, and the legions of AFOLs – Adult Fans Of Lego. Their creations are astonishing, including reproductions of classic artworks like the Mona Lisa and Michelangelo's David.

As for cautions, this is G-rated, with no language worries. However there is a 10-20 second bit of evolutionary nonsense, accompanied by a depiction of primordial Lego life evolving into a Lego man. There is also a short 5-second Lego mini-figure recreation of the shower murder scene from the Alfred Hitchcock film *Psycho*. That sounds worse than it is – in both cases my kids didn't even catch what was going on. A last caution might be the obsession of the adult fans – they are a little over the top and Mom or Dad should probably point that out.

This was entertaining, somewhat educational, not at all scary, inspiring, and the host – a Lego mini-figure – is charming and often funny. So far we've watched it twice, and I could see us watching it again.

LOST AND FOUND

ANIMATED / FAMILY
24 MINUTES / 2013
RATING: 8/10



This film made my girls cry and that's okay. It is a classic boy meets penguin tale, a tale of loneliness felt and friendship found, and a beautiful tale throughout. This is what made my girls cry – the beauty of it – and that gave mom and dad an opportunity to explain to these two little misses that crying is not always linked to sadness. That beauty can indeed be tear inducing, and then it is something, strangely enough, to be enjoyed. This lesson wasn't entirely lost on them, and also not entirely understood but it was a good first exposure to this curious truth.

The story itself is simple. Lost penguin arrives on boy's doorstep. Boy briefly tries to get others to help penguin, but then decides to do it himself. He builds boat and rows to the Antarctic, where he then drops off the penguin and heads back home, only to realize that the penguin wasn't lost after all, but had shown up at his house because he was *lonely*. Boy returns to Antarctic, penguin hops in boat, and the two head together for what looks like the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

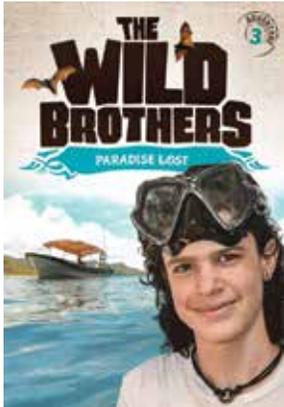
The only caution would be that a storm scene may be a bit scary for the under 6 set. Our whole family loved it. I would recommend it for anyone 6 to 106.

THE WILD BROTHERS: PARADISE LOST

REALITY / DOCUMENTARY

28 MINUTES / 2015

RATING: 7/10



Our girls were very excited when the third installment of the Wild Brothers series arrived at the library. The Wilds are a missionary couple and their four boys who live in the deep jungles of Papua, Indonesia. This time around the family is on vacation with another missionary couple and their three girls. The two families are resting and recouping on a beautiful island surrounded by reefs and bays. Each day they check out sea turtles, manta rays, and sea snakes and so many gorgeous fish!

Misadventures also occur, some painful, like mom getting stung by a jellyfish, and some hilarious, like the boys contending with a large snake (8-12 feet long) that decided to take up residence in their cabin roof.

As they have in each episode, the boys bring a solid Christian perspective to their exploration: when they come across an old burial grounds – where skulls are haphazardly stacked by each other – they take the opportunity to talk about how despite the beauty of this world, it is still fallen, and waiting for restoration.

The scene with the human skulls, and the snake episode (found in the extra features) was just a tiny bit scary for my little ones. That said, my girls, 2 through 6 enjoyed this immensely – they weren't *that* scared!

You can find the whole series at AnswersInGenesis.org.



BEYOND THE MASK

CHRISTIAN / ACTION / DRAMA

103 MINUTES / 2015

RATING: 8/10

William Reynolds is a 18th century assassin and the right hand man to the head of the East India Trading company. When the young Reynolds wants to leave his dark life behind, his employer (played by veteran actor John Rhys-Davies) tries to have this loose end tied up, planting a bomb under Reynolds' carriage. Reynolds survives thanks to the warning of a passing vicar who ends up paying for his kindness by getting blown up himself. In search of a new life, and

a new identity, Reynolds adopts the vicar's identity, and, meets Charlotte, a young woman who knows a lot more about God than this "vicar" does.

There is so much to love about this film, and this romance is a big part of it. It has the typical movie-plot instant attraction, yes, but no bodice-ripping whatsoever. As impressed as Charlotte might be by Reynolds' charm, she wants to know his heart – she finds it strange that this "man of God" so often speaks of Him as "if He were a distant acquaintance." So despite her heart saying yes, she will not pledge herself to Reynolds until she seeks advice from an older wiser head. So this has all the fun of the flirtation, and yet none of that falling-into-bed-with-a-near-stranger nonsense.

Of course, with their affair of the heart taking place just 20 minutes in, we know that the happy ending can't come yet. Reynolds old life forces its way into the new and he has to flee to the American Colonies, leaving his lady love behind. There he decides he will make repayment for his former evils by doing heroic goods – he dons a disguise and a mask to fight the East India Company in its new endeavors in the Americas. Lots of daring-do and explosions follow.

Cautions

There is no sexual content at all, and while God's name is called upon, it seems to be put to appropriate use (being either directed to Him, or part of a discussion about Him).

A concern is violence. There is quite a lot, and while none of it is gory, there are men murdered, others blown up, and piles upon piles quickly put down by a punch or two from our reforming William Reynolds.

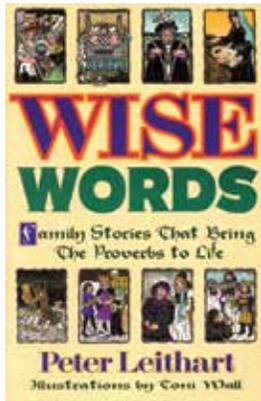
Conclusion

Solid acting, an intriguing (if occasionally confusing) script, good special effects, authentic period costumes and sets, and a pleasant number of explosions make for a wonderful film. While it is intended as family viewing, the violence means this is for older children only. Certainly a cut above most family films out there.

WISE WORDS: FAMILY STORIES THAT BRING THE PROVERBS TO LIFE

BY PETER LEITHART

150 PAGES / 2003



What makes these 18 fairy tales so entertaining, as well as wise, is how the author plays with the images, characters, and events of classic fairy tales, Biblical accounts, and history that we already know. The preface explains how Leithart seeks to echo those familiar stories to make the wisdom of Proverbs more vivid, as each story's "moral" is a verse from that Biblical book. For example, the first villain of the story "King Jacob of the Green Garland" is called King Eric the Red (but not for the reason you might think). When this cruel king flees for his life from an invading king, he is reduced to eating grass and drinking muddy water (much like a certain Babylonian king). Eventually, Eric's younger brother, Jacob (a shepherd who treats the poor kindly and justly, like both David and the Son of David) restores order, and the story proves the verse from Proverbs that explains, with suddenly greater vividness and meaning, how a king is established through faithfulness, and how through love his throne is made secure (Prov. 20:28)

What is enlightening about the stories, besides the obvious references to Proverbs (some of which are a bit of a stretch, but can still stimulate some worthwhile

discussion) is how often Leithart's stories are clearly redemptive-historical, in that they connect the book of Proverbs to the story of Christ's coming that runs through the whole Bible. For instance, one verse says how it's better to live in the desert than with a nagging wife. That can make the guys feel pretty smug, but not once Leithart has shown how the worst wife in the world is "Meribah, the Goatherd's Bride" – a story that should remind us of the frequent ingratitude of Christ's bride, the Church. No gender excluded in that moral.

If you're looking for a great book to read aloud with the kids that will provide food for thought, *Wise Words* has the wit and wisdom you want (And for long family car trips I can also recommend the audio version!)

It is available at CanonPress.com.

– JEFF DYKSTRA

THE BIGGEST STORY

BY KEVIN DE YOUNG

120 PAGES / 2015



I read this over three nights to my kids but if it had been up to them we would have finished the whole thing that first night! In the space of ten chapters Reformed pastor Kevin De Young summarizes the whole Bible.

And on every single page of the book illustrator Don Clark squeezes in more vibrancy and color than you'd ever thought possible. His highly stylized illustrations grab young eyes. Clark is very careful and reverent when it comes to illustrating Jesus. We see, for example, the silhouette of a man with a crown of thorns, but not his eyes, nose, mouth, etc. In other pictures we see only His hand or his foot. So, the pictures are very well done.

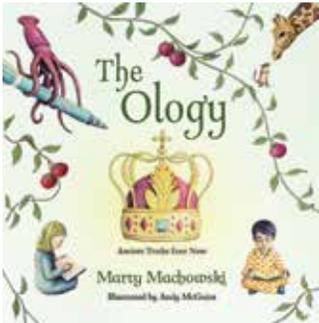
The text is even better. Kids can easily mistake the Bible for a book of stories, some about judges, some about kings, some about Jesus. What Kevin De Young does in this overview is make it clear to even the youngest kids that the Bible is one story, all about Jesus and God's plan to bring "us back to the garden."

This would make a fantastic supplement to daily Scripture reading with your kids - you can use it, maybe every year again as a reminder that the passage of the Bible being read that day is tied into a whole over-arching narrative - just one part in God's big story!

– JON DYKSTRA

THE OLOGY: ANCIENT TRUTHS, EVER NEW

BY MARTY MACHOWSKI
224 PAGES / 2015

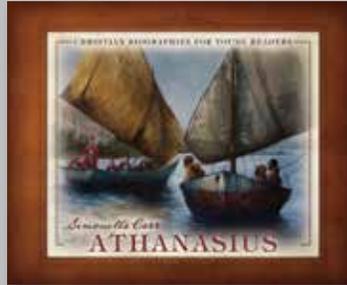


I am always on the lookout for good books for our Church library, local Christian school and for our grandchildren, and just yesterday received my copy of Marty Machowski's *The ology*. I am very impressed!

It is a systematic theology for children that I would say is geared to ages 5 to 8 as a read-aloud but it can be used by older children in personal study. Chapters are very short, averaging 2 minutes, plus reading a few texts. Each beautifully illustrated story is accompanied with two or three texts written out, and references for four or five others to be looked up. These text references certainly add to the book. A parent guide at the beginning suggests ways to use it with different age groups, and a short glossary at the end, as well as discussion questions for each chapter, all make this an easy, enjoyable book to use.

I think *The Ology* is a "must have" for any family with children. Most parents are faithful in teaching the Bible stories but can have a harder time with the "theology" part and this will be a good aid for them.

- GERTRUDE DE BOER



ATHANASIUS

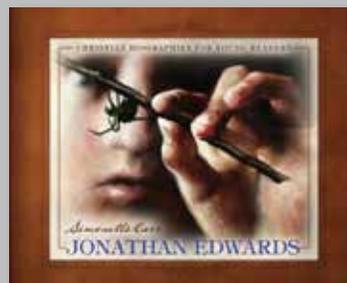
BY SIMONETTA CARR
60 PAGES / 2011

One reason we should learn church history is to be equipped to fight errors our ancestors already countered. For example, what we learn in this brief biography is that the Jehovah's Witnesses are nothing new – already back in the 4th century a man named Arius was teaching that Jesus was not fully divine.

Another reason we should know our church history is to learn about and praise God for the mighty deeds He has done in the past. Arius' teaching was confusing many but Carr shows readers how God had prepared another man to fight for the Truth with unwavering courage.

He was Athanasius, the man our Athanasian Creed is named after (under the mistaken idea that he wrote it, though it is an accurate summary of what he taught). He was an Egyptian bishop who through his lifetime had to deal with nine different Roman emperors. Three of these were pagan, and two supported Arius; five in total that thought Athanasius was a troublemaker. They banished him, and caused him to flee multiple times. Carr recounts one great escape story where Roman soldiers asked the man himself where Athanasius was. His answer: "He is not far from here." Nothing could stop Athanasius from teaching about God, explaining about Jesus and the Holy Spirit too. In the conclusion Carr shares Athanasius' apt nickname, *contra mundum*, Latin for "against the world."

This picture book is intended for children in Grade 2 or older, but adults will enjoy reading it too. What Carr has done here is condense a lot into a concise, beautifully-illustrated package. That makes it the better of the two Carr books featured here.



JONATHAN EDWARDS

BY SIMONETTA CARR
60 PAGES / 2014

It would be understandable if a young student thought that church history only ever happened across the Atlantic, far from North America. After all, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Augustine, Athanasius, and the many other theological giants

all lived so very far from here. But as Simonetta Carr shows in her *Jonathan Edwards* biography, God used men here too, to spread the news of what He has done.

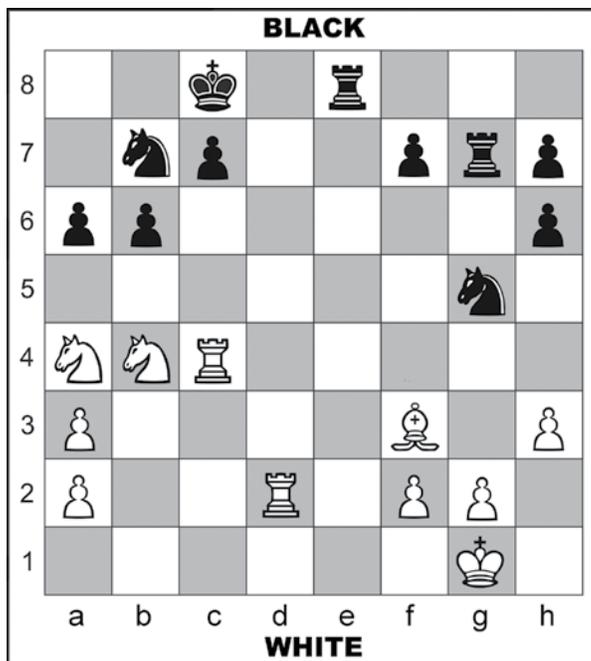
Edwards is probably best known for his role in the "Great Awakening" where men and women turned to God in droves, and for his famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Carr briefly discusses both, but if there is a fault to this book it is that while it gives an overview of Edwards' life, it really doesn't give readers much of an understanding of his theology.

As with the other books in author Simonetta Carr's series of "Christian Biographies for Young Readers" it is illustrated with many lavish full-page, full-color illustrations – among the 40 pictures are 11 paintings commissioned for this book. This is church history made accessible.

But it isn't church history made exciting. That's not meant as a slight on the book – Carr gives us a good introduction to Edwards, but his life was not the sort to excite young children. He lived in a tumultuous time and place, with British and French, each with their own Native allies, battling to and fro, but Edwards' own battles were with sickness, discouragement, and theological controversies. So this is a solid *educational* book but not the best *entertainment* for children.

- JON DYKSTRA

Chess Puzzle #228



Riddle for Punsters #228

"Could You Scale it Down?"

What did the electronic organ say to the noisy pump organ?

Could you please "_____ down"?

The other organ replied, "Sorry, but it is hard to make soft sounds when I am so _____ ed."

Problem to Ponder #228

"Skating Ahead!"

Two sisters, Betty and Hettie, left their home at the same time but in different vehicles. Both drove straight to a park to go skating and have hot chocolate inside the recreation building. Betty drove at an average speed of 90 km/h and arrived when the skating started. Hettie drove at an average speed of 80 km/h and arrived 15 minutes later than Betty. How far is the park from their home?

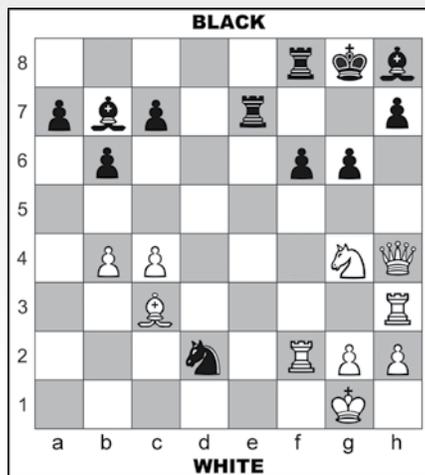
WHITE to Mate in 2

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

BLACK to Mate in 2

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #227



WHITE TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. N-R6 ch K-N2
2. BxP ch RxB
3. QxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Ng4-h6 + Kg8-g7
2. Bc3xf6 + Rf8xf6
3. Qh4xf6 ++

BLACK TO MATE IN 2

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- R-K8ch
2. R-B1 RxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Re7-e1 +
2. Rf2-f1 Re1xf1 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#227 - "Food for Thought - Breeze Through These"

Why did the plumber order pizza for supper? He was plumb out of ideas as to what to cook for supper.

Why did the wind tunnel operator end up as a soldier? He was drafted.

Why was an electrician looking for a new job? He had received the shocking news that he had been fired.

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#227 - "A Logical Defence - Who Needs a Lawyer?"

A judge said to a young defendant who was a first-time offender: "If you tell the court the truth, you must pay a \$5000 fine but will not go to jail. If you lie to the court, you will go to jail for 5 months." What did the defendant say so that he paid no fine and did not go to jail?

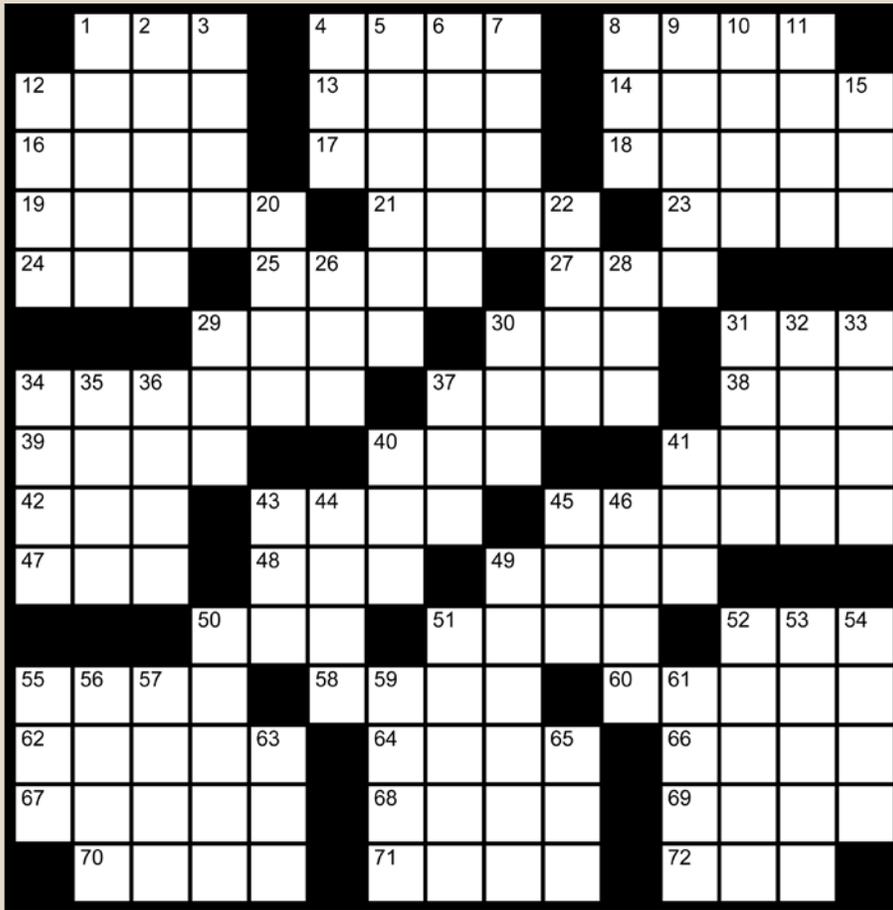
He said, "I am going to jail for five months."

If he lied, he must go to jail, but if he goes to jail then he told the truth and should not go to jail. However, if he does not go to jail, by the judge's words he must have told the truth and has to pay the fine yet if he does not go to jail then what he said was not true and so should go to jail rather than paying the fine. After the elderly judge struggled to figure out what to do, he pulled out some of his gray hair, ruled that the defendant did not have to go to jail or pay a fine, and then the judge went into early retirement!

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 2-5

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. "____, humbug!" (famous expression of Scrooge)
4. Expert guide in his field
8. Russian imperial leader
12. Desert in Mongolia
13. Soon (archaically put partly *anonymously*)
14. Boko _____ (Nigerian Islamist terrorist group)
16. "a _____ of bread was given" (Jeremiah 37)
17. "David... _____ homage" (1 Samuel 24)
18. Of, relating to, or resembling sheep
19. Unlace; take out the knot
21. Shapeless mass
23. "you shall sow your seed in _____" (Leviticus 26)
24. Golfers need it, but most don't play in it.
25. "Your objection is _____ noted."
27. _____ gun: common weapon in 50s sci-fi movies

29. Humanoid, but also human-eating, monster
30. "put his hand in his _____" (1 Samuel 17)
31. Alternative to Netflix or VHS
34. Anne _____: another poor wife of Henry VIII
37. "look and take _____!" (Jeremiah 5)
38. Fish eggs
39. "you must rule _____ it." (Genesis 4)
40. Crow's sound
41. Location for a building
42. Plural of "the" in French
43. Mollusk used for chowder
45. Metal used for wire and pennies
47. Province between Que. and Man.
48. "she was taken _____ of man" (Genesis 2)
49. "the price of his sale shall _____" (Leviticus 25)
50. "He drew me... out of the

- miry _____" (Psalm 40)
51. "I am the _____; you... the branches." (John 15)
52. Unruly group attacking Paul (Acts 17, 21)
55. Former enemy of the USA in the Cold War
58. _____ Blair (= George Orwell)
60. Overweight
62. Pause or reduction in intensity
64. Exam that doesn't need a pen
66. Father of the Norse "gods"
67. Negotiated pause in warfare
68. Mother of Jesus (Matthew 1)
69. What one eats
70. Once more, again, afresh
71. "Have you anyone _____ here?" (Genesis 19)
72. It's the most important part of *hearing*.

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 2-4

DOWN

1. Daniel _____ (famous American frontiersman)
2. Let up; diminish in force
3. Favorable description of a stereo system
4. Break in continuity
5. Not capable
6. Turbulent (describing water all *roiled* up)
7. "_____ the straps of the yoke" (Isaiah 58)
8. But; however (in archaic short form)
9. Useful knowledge (includes some *savoir faire*)
10. Song usually sung solo in Italian
11. Sanskrit word meaning "duchess"
12. Surplus (part of what makes a *glutton*)
15. "These were the... _____ of renown." (Genesis 6)
20. Irritable; grouchy; likely to lose your cool
22. Child likely to make you lose your cool
26. "a golden _____ holding the manna" (Hebrews 9)
28. "the eyes of Israel... dim with _____" (Genesis 48)
29. "_____ the land of the free and the home of..."
30. A match for a violin, or arrows
31. "mountains shall _____ wine" (Joel 3, Amos 9)
32. "I cast my _____ against them" (Acts 26)
33. "As a _____ pants for..." (Psalm 42)
34. Necktie style
35. "Our skin is hot as an _____" (Lamentations 5)
36. "neither... touch it, _____ you die" (Genesis 3)
37. American soldiers' nickname for Vietnam
40. Heavy equipment brand name, for short
41. "to _____ out the land" (Numbers 13)
43. Dove's sound
44. Sled event in the Olympics
45. Be capable to
46. Cookie with the icing in the middle
49. Church officials representing bishops
50. Robert the _____: great Scottish warrior
51. Description of a contagious internet trend
52. Where the trend in 51 down happens (plural)
53. Species of willow used in basket-work
54. "he has _____ and readied his bow" (Psalm 7)
55. Abbreviation for a type of Frisbee sport
56. Plural for serum
57. Knock unconscious
59. City in which Paul was imprisoned (Acts 28)
61. Predict or foretell
63. Seat in church
65. "you wash yourself with _____" (Jeremiah 2)

**THE VERY BEST
DINOSAUR
BOOKS!** P.32

REAGAN VS. OBAMA
P.26

MY DEMOCRACY IS
BETTER THAN YOUR
DEMOCRACY
P.23



THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD

**ARE THEY
WING?**

AND THE CHURCH P.16

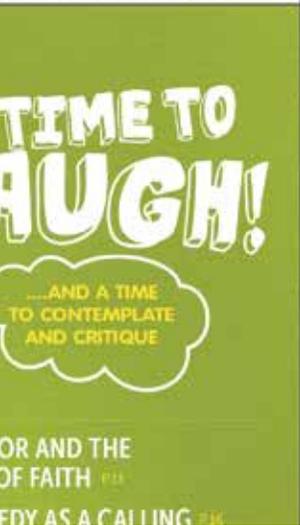


THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD

**IT'S TIME TO
LAUGH!**

...AND A TIME
TO CONTEMPLATE
AND CRITIQUE

OR AND THE
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EDY AS A CALLING P.16



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PERSPECTIVE CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

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SOVEREIGNTY
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BIG
AND SMALL** P.14

PERSPECTIVE CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

LEST WE FORGET

On May 5, 2015 the Netherlands celebrated the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II with a re-enactment of the liberation.

NOTA BENE P.9

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WRONG ANSWERS** P.24

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**ADOPTION:
GOD DID IT FIRST**

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Is Genesis 1 Historical or Poetic?
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GLASSES?
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DIFFERENT IS GOOD:
GOD CREATED MALES
AND FEMALES TO BE
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ARE YOU FOR
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