

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

SEPT/OCT 2017

Volume 36 Issue No. 6

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS



**WHAT'S THE  
PURPOSE  
OF FAMILY  
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**21 THINGS  
I LEARNED  
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## LUTHER FOR ALL AGES!

**10 fantastic resources about the man  
God used to restore His Church.**



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



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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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# THE REFORMATION COMES TO STRASBOURG

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# LEARNING ABOUT LUTHER



## 10 titles about the monk God used to spark His Reformation

Five hundred years ago a learned monk drew up 95 pointed arguments and asked for a debate. What he got was a revolution.

Fast forward five centuries, and on the very same evening that others are dressing up as demons and celebrating death, at least a few kids are putting on brown bathrobes and dressing up as a round Reformation giant. On Oct. 31, each year, we remember Luther posting his 95 theses, and we celebrate the man's courage, his insight, and his passion and his love of the Lord.

Largely overlooked are his faults. Oh, yes, we know about his attempts at self-justification, and his crass insults, and even his anger, but in the books and films that are recommended here Luther's darkest side is hardly raised. Maybe it comes from a desire not to speak ill of the dead. After all, when we reminisce about our Great Aunt Ditty we fondly recall how she loved to sew doll clothes for all her grandchildren, but we don't bring up the disagreeable face she made whenever a particular ethnic group crossed her path. The Fifth Commandment would seem to encourage us to only talk about what was good and praiseworthy about our dearly departed.

That's a good approach for the Great Aunt Dittys of the world, but something more is needed when it comes to Christian heroes. Then there is a reason to acknowledge both the good and the bad. As Calvin said, our hearts are idol factories – so much so that we can take the proper respect (Heb. 13:7) we have for one of God's servants and twist and pervert it into something that blocks our view of God. We go from respecting the man, to worshipping the legend, and getting angry if anyone dares mention his faults.

But acknowledging his flaws guards us against hero worship. It also keeps us from being blindsided by the critics who want to attack the good God did through him. When we understand that even a man after God's own heart like David – giant-killer

and slayer of tens of thousands – was also an adulterer and a murderer, we aren't going to put him on a pedestal. And then we won't have to worry about critics trying to knock him off that pedestal.

It's important, then, to acknowledge that Luther said some dreadful things about the Jews. In his earliest writings he was kind and winsome, trying to evangelize to them. But in his later years he concluded that God was done with the Jews, and he wrote a 60,000-word treatise called *On The Jews And Their Lies*. In it he encouraged that their synagogues and homes be burned, their books and money taken, and their rabbis killed if they didn't stop teaching. He also repeated, as true, lies about Jews poisoning wells and kidnapping children. This is Luther at his worst, writing a book that Nazis reprinted.

So how do we handle Luther's dark side? We acknowledge it and clearly identify it for the sin that it is. And then we continue our 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary party. This was never supposed to be all about the man, but rather the wonderful truths he rediscovered about God's grace and mercy and love. And when we understand our hero's failings, then how can we help but glorify God all the more, appreciating how He can use fallen, frail, sinful sorts like Luther – and like you and me – to accomplish his glorious ends?

\*\*\*

It's been said there are more books about Martin Luther than on any other human being. But some are dry and dusty. Some need a forklift to pick up. And some need a dictionary in hand just to get through them. These aren't the kind of books we're after.

Our focus is on engaging, and readable. So we're suggesting novels, picture books and comics that parents will enjoy read-

ing to their kids. And there's a movie, novels, and non-fiction for mom and dad, that they can finish in a quiet evening or two. These aren't big books, and these aren't long movies, but they are intriguing. My hope is that you'll find a good match for everyone in your family.

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

### MARTIN LUTHER

by Simonetta Carr

2016 / 62 pages

This is the perfect book for any 4th grader and up looking to do a school project on the Reformer. Like other entries in Simonetta Carr's series of "Christian biographies for young readers" *Martin Luther* is a gorgeous book. It is a beautifully bound, with thick pages, and includes 12 full-page paintings among its 44 illustrations.

It is also well-researched, and wonderfully detailed. I've read more than a dozen works on Luther, and was pleasantly surprised to learn so many new things from a children's book. For example, I don't think I'd ever before heard that Martin had a special relationship with his young brother Jacob, nor that Jacob might have been with him when Luther was "kidnapped" on his way home from the Diet of Worms. And it was interesting to learn that Luther's famous "brand" - the Luther rose - was designed for him at the request of his protector, John Frederick of Saxony.

What makes this book special is how much Carr has managed to pack in its 60 pages. But that also means that even though this is a picture book, it is probably too much for children in Grades 1 or 2. I think the best bet is Grade 4 and up.

Overall, Carr gives a generous assessment of Luther, focusing on his strengths. But she is willing to at least note his faults, the biggest of which is what he wrote about the Jews in his later years. Carr makes brief mention of it, noting that he "wrote against the Jews" and there is no "excuse for writing what he did."

I'd recommend this as a wonderful *educational* resource, and by that I mean that while it makes learning easy, this isn't the type of frothy, brightly-colored picture book that young children will pick up simply for *entertainment*. It will need a teacher's or parent's prompt.

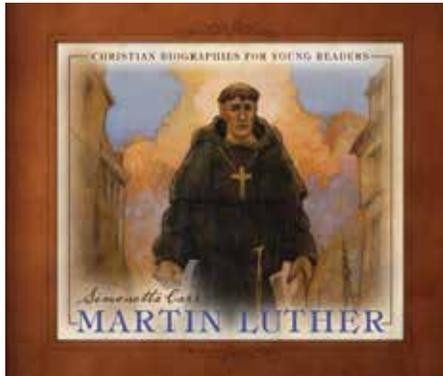
### THUNDERSTORM IN CHURCH

by Louise A. Vernon

1974 / 132 pages

It isn't easy being the son of a giant.

In Louise Vernon's children's novel, we get to hear Luther's



story told from the perspective of his young son Hans, who is worried that he won't measure up to his father.

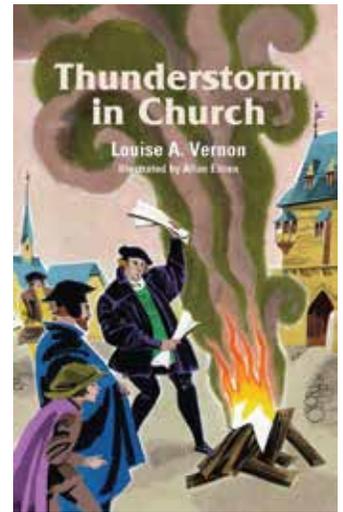
Though I'm a bit outside the intended demographic, I found it a very fun read, and I think that's because, with one of his offspring acting as the narrator, this is a really unique look at Luther. Hans reveals to us a father who is both funny and furious - a man of quick temper who also laughs a lot. Having Hans narrate also allows Luther to teach us, as he instructs his son, some of the truths that he uncovered about God's grace - that we don't have to *buy* the forgiveness that God freely offers.

Some reviewers have faulted the book for being too dialogue-driven, and there *is* a lot of talking. But Vernon inserts a few actions scenes as well, like when the town's bullies want to teach the son of the famous Doctor Luther a lesson or two.

If your child is a reader, this is a book that could be enjoyed simply as entertainment - it is fun, even if it has some slower sections.

As an educational tool, the age-level this is aimed at - as young as Grade 3 - may have to be alerted that this is a *fictionalized* biography, and that this means only the general facts are true, but many of the details are just a matter of imagination.

Overall, *Thunderstorm in Church* is a wonderful book that could make for a nice nighttime read with your kids.



## ALSO WORTH A MENTION

Old Testament historian Paul L. Maier's picture book *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* is simply gorgeous, and a wonderful introduction to the man for younger readers.

RC Sproul also has a great picture book for younger children called *The Man Who Wanted to Pray*, about Luther teaching his barber how to talk to God. And what the barber learned from Luther, our children can learn from the barber. I should note that there is one picture of Jesus, with his face mostly, but not entirely obscured.

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

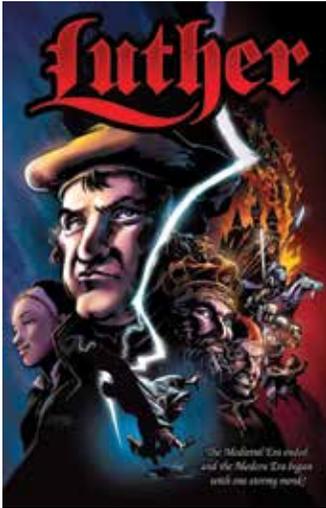
### LUTHER

by Rich Melheim

illustrated by Jonathan Koelsch

2016 / 72 pages

I've reviewed other "comic biographies" and never enjoyed one more. *Luther* is scripted like a movie, has witty dialogue with actions scene interspersed, and the artwork is of the same quality you would find in Marvel or DC comics - it is



fantastic!

Educational comics, as a genre, are valuable in that they make learning history a lot less painful. But very few of these educational graphic novels are the sort that a teen would just pick up and start reading. *Luther* is the exception. I don't want to over-hype it – a kid who reads nothing but superhero comics will still find this a bit of a stretch – but it really is as good a comic as you will find.

Since this is intended for teens, I'll note a few cautions.

The word "crap" is mentioned three times, "ass" once, and "old fart" once. But when you consider this is a comic about the notoriously potty-mouthed Luther, this is really quite tame. I'll also note there is a depiction of Christ on the inside back cover of the book that is not part of the story, but rather part of an ad for other comics by the same publisher.

The comic has several strengths including the overall picture it gives of the happenings going on in the broader world that made it possible for Luther to both spark this Reformation and live into old age and die a natural death. I've always wondered why the Emperor didn't just have him killed. Perhaps it was because, as we learn in this comic, Charles V was busy contending with Turkish expansion and might not have wanted to risk alienating any of his German princes.

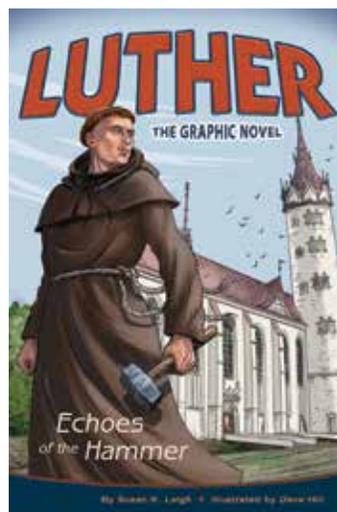
Another strength is that while this account is sympathetic, it does note one of Luther's weaknesses: that sometimes Luther's pen got the best of him and he could write some "terrible and hateful words" denouncing Jews, Calvinists, and Anabaptists alike.

Overall this is a comic that teens, and adults who aren't embarrassed to be seen reading a comic, will certainly enjoy.

## LUTHER: ECHOES OF THE HAMMER

by Susan K. Leigh  
illustrated by Dave Hill  
2011 / 144 pages

I think this is the perfect compliment to the other Luther comic reviewed here. Whereas *Luther* is the more exciting of the two, it plays a little looser with the details. Meanwhile *Luther: Echoes of the Hammer* is a more reliable history lesson, but it isn't as dramatic.



I tested this graphic novel on two of my nephews with mixed results. The older one, heading to grade 10, was happy to take a look, and thought it would be a great way to learn about Luther. The other, two years younger, seemed to think it was too much biography, and not enough comic book for his tastes.

As far as comics go, this one is quite an involved, even heavy, read. Interspersed throughout are explanations of key events, like the Diet of Worms, key terms, like "indulgences," and key figures, like Charles of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor. These one or two-page insertions really add to the narrative and make this a highly educational comic.

However, a few of these insertions will also trouble informed Reformed readers. In one list of Luther's adversaries, Calvin is numbered among them! While it is true Calvin and Luther had their differences, it's surprising to see Calvin listed as an opponent. Especially when, some pages later, we find Erasmus listed as one of Luther's supporters! While Erasmus was, like Luther, critical of the Roman Church, he never left it, and this led to strong, vitriolic disagreements with Luther. In fact Luther once called Erasmus, "the very mouth and organ of Satan." It is downright silly, then, for the authors to list Erasmus as a friend if they are going to list fellow Reformer John Calvin as an adversary.

The only other quibble would be the overestimation the authors have of Philip Melancthon, describing him as "a great Reformer, second only to Martin Luther." Second? Really? How can they overlook Calvin like that?

Those quibbles aside, this is an impressive book. The writing is crisp, succinct and engaging. The artwork is attractive and instructive – many of these pictures are worth a thousand words. For example, in the pages covering Luther's visit to Worms illustrator Dave Hill shows us the man's quiet passion, his many supporters, and his opponents marshaled together. This gives us a good understanding of the setting, and thus a better understanding of the courage it took for Luther to stand up for what he knew to be true. Older teens will enjoy it, and many an adult too.

## ALSO WORTH A MENTION

The same folks who created *Luther: Echo of the Hammer*, created a sequel, focused on his wife. *Katie Luther* is a little shorter, and a little less involved, but also quite enjoyable.

## YOUNG ADULT FICTION

### WHEN LIGHTNING STRUCK!

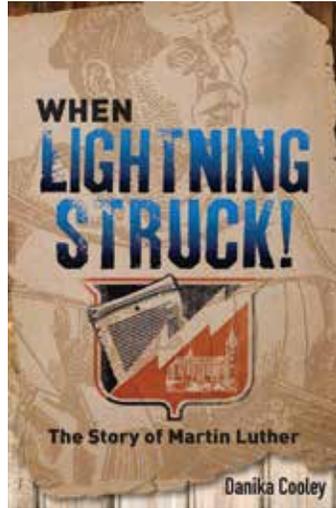
by Danika Cooley  
2015 / 231 pages

This is a treat!

The target audience is teens, but like any fantastic book, adults are sure to enjoy it too. In fact, this is the perfect book for any adults who feel a need to know more about church history but are a little reluctant to get started. That's how I'd

characterize myself. As a student I had a hard time appreciating history – learning dates and names seemed pointless. Now I understand it is important to know where we came from, and I want to learn more....but I have no interest in learning it from a dry, dusty tome.

That’s why this was such a treat. In the hands of a talented writer, it doesn’t take much to make Luther’s life exciting. As doubt-filled as he was early on, the Reformer was bombastic after he understood that forgiveness is a gift given, not earned. This is a man who:



- was condemned by the pope as a heretic
- had 200 knights pledge to protect him
- didn’t want to marry lest he quickly leave his wife a widow
- was kidnapped
- masqueraded as a knight
- helped formulate the German language
- cared for Plague victims
- ended up marrying a nun

And it would be easy to go on and on.

While much of the day-to-day dialogue is fictionalized, a strength of the book is the many genuine quotes that are interspersed throughout (these are identifiable by the endnote numbers after such quotes). One example: in a debate at Leipzig University, Johann Eck hits Luther with a stinging question:

“Are you the only one who knows anything? With the exception of you, is all the church in error?”

It stung because Luther, plagued by self-doubt, had been wondering this very same thing. But Luther also knows that God’s truth doesn’t depend on Luther being brilliant. Nope - God can spread his truth using even the dumbest of beasts, as Luther notes in his reply:

“I answer that God once spoke through the mouth of a donkey.”

Another strength is how the book reveals more of the man – warts and all – than many other biographies. While Cooley largely skips over Luther’s love of scatological insults (this is a book intended for younger readers, after all) she does share how Luther’s anger stung not only the pope, but allies as well. She has Luther attempt to justify himself:

“It is precisely because of my outbursts that the Lord has used me! I never work better than when I am inspired by anger; for when I am angry, I can write, pray, and preach well, for then my whole temperament is quickened, my understanding sharpened.”

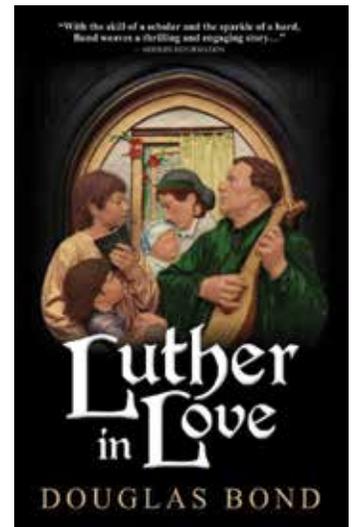
There is a time and place for anger, and God made good use of Luther’s righteous anger. But later, as Luther aged, it seems he came to *indulge* in anger, and that got him and others into trouble. Cooley shares how Luther’s anger cost him friends. And it was in his anger that he wrote his tract condemning the Jews, who were already facing persecution. So he used his influence for great good, but his anger meant that at times his influence also caused great harm.

*When Lightning Struck!* would make a great present to just about any reader, particularly if they have even the slightest interest in church history. I’d even recommend this to teens who have the same bad attitude towards history that I once did. For them, this might be a bit of a gamble, but if you can get your son or daughter to promise to read through the first 60 pages, that should have them hooked.

## LUTHER IN LOVE

by Douglas Bond  
2017 / 320 pages

*Luther in Love* shows us the Reformer from the perspective of his better half. The story begins with 62-year-old Luther spending an evening in his chair. He’s not in the best of health – worn out from a lifetime of controversy and conflict – and his dear wife knows that it can’t be long before he is gone.



So she has given herself a bittersweet project to complete. Others have written accounts of the Reformer, but always from one extreme or the other - either thinking him “the spawn of Satan” or “a living angel.” She wants the world to know the real man, and she’s going to record his story as he remembers it. But Katie doesn’t want her husband to know what she’s up to, so even as she’s prodding him about the past, and has paper and quill at the ready, he thinks she’s busy keeping track of the family finances and other business matters.

It’s a great premise and let’s Bond explore Luther’s life through the appreciative, but far from naïve, perspective of his helpmeet. After all, who knows a man better than his wife?

One strength of the book is the thorough research evident throughout - we are *immersed* in Luther’s world! And

then there is Bond's writing – this is the fourth fictionalized biography Bond has written about Reformers, and he is a master of this form. Again and again I had to get up to find my wife and read sections to her that were simply too exciting, or too sweet, not to share.

Some of that sweetness comes up when the couple is teasing and debating each other. Bond gives us a wonderful look at how two souls can grow old together and continue growing in love for one another. It's a book about Luther, but it's also a model for marriage.

Of the many books I've read about Luther, this is one of the biggest. But it might just be the fastest read. That's why I'd recommend it to anyone and everyone, teens and up. It is funny, entertaining, informative, sweet, challenging, and more.

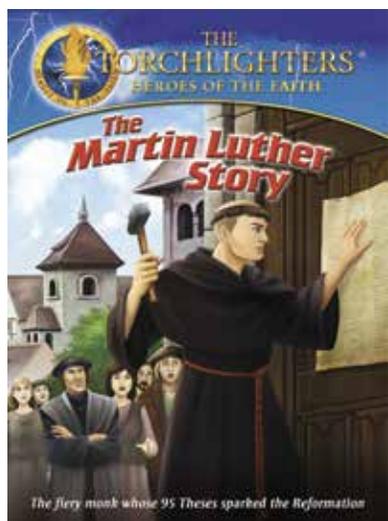
### ALSO WORTH A MENTION

Christine Farenhorst's new historical novel *Katharina*, *Katharina* is and isn't about Luther. He never appears in the book, but he's the talk of the town even in Strasbourg. Be sure to check out my review elsewhere in this issue.

### MARTIN AT THE MOVIES

#### TORCHLIGHTERS: THE MARTIN LUTHER STORY

2016 / 34 minutes



The strength of this film is its short length. At just 34 minutes, it can be shown in the space of a single school period. For the pre-teens this is intended for, that might be just the right length, with the quick pace, and colorful animation sure to grab most students' attention.

But the biggest weakness of this short film is...its length. It is far too short to tell this story with the gravitas

it needs – Luther's spiritual wrestling is dealt with in just 7 minutes! It also ends abruptly, with Luther busy translating the Bible into German in Wartburg Castle. The narrator then spends just a single minute summing up the whole of the second half of Luther's life. And then the credits role.

I should note a couple of inclusions that might have been better left out. Luther is told that the very night he nailed up his 95 Theses, his long-time protector, Duke Frederick, had a dream about a monk writing on a church door with a quill that was so long it extended all the way to Rome "where it toppled the crown off of a lion." This is presented as the reason Frederick was willing to defend his rebellious trouble-

making monk: God had told him ahead of time that his monk was going to topple the pope. But while the movie portrays this as fact, there is good reason to think this might just be a popular myth.

Also, at the film's conclusion there is a passing, two or three second, shot of a title page illustration from one of Luther's books depicting Christ on the cross, with Luther and John Frederick I, Elector of Saxony kneeling below. I make mention of it, for any who consider this a violation of the Second Commandment.

That said, this is a great film for children who don't yet have the attention span for a longer Luther film. It will keep most children engaged.

#### MARTIN LUTHER

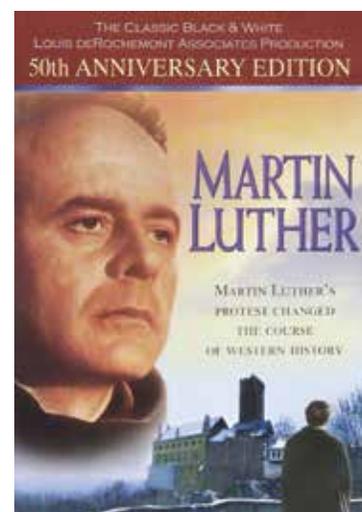
1953 / 105 minutes

What sort of film is *Martin Luther*? The sort that gets produced by a church, and yet gets nominated for an Oscar – solid theology paired with high production values. How often has that happened?

It does get off to a slow start; the first couple of minutes are more documentary than drama. But when we get introduced to Niall MacGinnis as Luther, his brilliant portrayal sweeps us into the story. We follow along, starting with his tormented time in the monastery, and continue all the way through to his marriage to an ex-nun. MacGinnis captures all the contradictions of the man – even as the Reformer stands before the Diet of Worms strong and defiant he is distraught and trembling. This is certainly among the best Christian films ever made.

This is a black and white film, which is a mark against it in many minds. But if you're considering showing this to your class or to your family, here's the secret to helping them get into it: make the sound your priority! In a dialogue-driven film it's the sound, much more than the visuals, that really matters. I still remember watching this with my Grade 6 classmates, years ago. The screen was small – minuscule by today's standards – but this big box TV had great speakers. There was no fuzziness, no straining to understand what was being said – we could all follow it. And after 30 minutes or so, we were all hooked.

There are quite a number of films about Martin Luther, with at least a half dozen dramas, and more than a dozen documentaries. The best known is probably the 2003 *Luther* that played in major theaters, and starred Joseph Fiennes (of *Shakespeare in Love* fame). It is a wonderful film (and in color!) but marred by an instance or two where God's name is



taken in vain. As well, it focuses a little more on Luther's external struggles with the powers that be, and a little less on his own internal struggles. That makes for more action, but less of a theological focus – more about Martin, but God somehow fades into the background. So the 1953 *Martin Luther* is the better educational film.

This would be great for a family movie night. I've seen kids as young as 7 enjoy it, though with younger children you're going to want to break it into a few "chunks" so it's spread out over two or three nights. But for those 12 and up, so long as they are "forced" to give it a half hour ("No, you can't check your smartphone while watching this") it will grab them and give them a good understanding of the amazing work God performed through this man.

## ADULT NON-FICTION

### MARTIN LUTHER'S 95 THESES

by Timothy J. Wengert  
2015 / 90 pages

If you want to understand Luther and the reforms he began, can there be a better place to start than his 95 theses?

When I first got my copy in the mail, I was struck by how short it was. This is the Pope-shaking document that God used to start it all? Shouldn't it be...heavier?

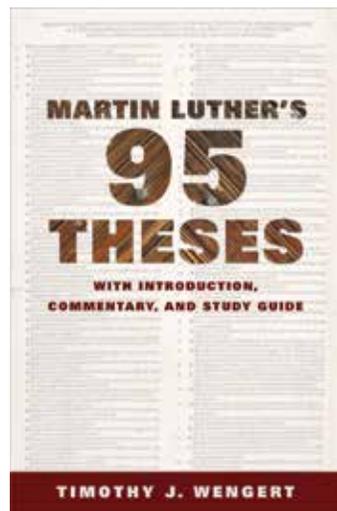
And if we were to take out the introduction, commentary, and study guide, Luther's 95 theses only amounts to 13 or 14 pages!

Thankfully, Timothy Wengert stretches it out to (a still slim) 90 pages so he can present Luther's pivotal work in the right context. He uses his introduction to set the scene, explaining how the doctrine of indulgences evolved from bad to worse. He also includes two other documents – Luther's letter to the Bishop of Mainz in which he respectfully asks the bishop to consider the theses, and Luther's "Sermon on Indulgences and Grace" written a year later, in 1518, which was intended as an explanation of his 95 theses for the common people. In the theses themselves, Wengert fills almost half of each page with footnotes to clarify Luther's more difficult points.

So this is a short, but intense read – it will take some effort to work through it, but not all that much time.

And to make the going a little easier, Wengert has sprinkled in all sorts of fascinating facts.

- Did you know Luther may never have posted his theses to the church door? The first published account of this particular detail occurs in 1546, four



months after Luther's death.

- If he did post them he probably used wax, not nails.
- Luther's 95 theses were not the first he had written. This was a common communication form among students and professors, and just one month before, in Sept 1517, Luther composed 97 theses against scholastic theology.

Outside of God's Word, Luther's 95 theses might be the key document that our Father used to reform his Church. It isn't long. It is an education.

### THE HEROIC BOLDNESS OF MARTIN LUTHER

by Steven J. Lawson

145 pages / 2013

My brother Jeff called this "a book that every Protestant minister should read...because it uses the story of the first Protestant minister, Martin Luther, to show what Protestant ministers should be doing with the word of God."

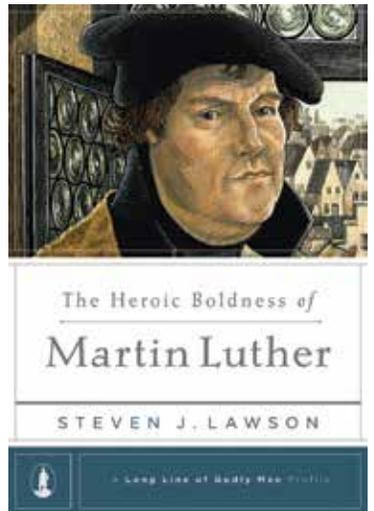
To be clear, this isn't so much a biography as it is an examination of Luther's "conviction about the Word" and his approach to preaching. Before the Reformation, church service were dominated by the Mass, and by rituals, but Luther and others made preaching central. And not just preaching, but *biblical* preaching that was willing to be controversial, not for controversy's sake, but because apostasy needed to be challenged, and sin needed to be named.

Author Steven Lawson thinks that's just as true today, so he's hoping that Luther's example – his respect for Scripture, his practice of reading through the whole Bible twice each year, his passionate delivery off the pulpit – can inspire others to go and do likewise.

That makes this a book that might seem like it would only be for ministers. But while it does definitely have particular relevance for them, all of us can learn from Luther's zeal to grow in the knowledge of his Lord.

### ALSO WORTH A MENTION

John Piper's *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* is about Luther, Calvin and Augustine, and the joy the three found in knowing God better. It is short, at just 150 pages, and an informative encouraging read. It's also free – download the e-book at [www.desiringgod.org/books](http://www.desiringgod.org/books).



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# NOTA BENE

News worth noting

increase in the economy.

Unfortunately, this is not true. Simply put: destruction does not benefit the economy.

In the case of Hurricane Irma, the GDP figure will show the value of reconstruction efforts, *but not the value of what was destroyed*. It is true that the reconstruction of infrastructure and housing spurs on economic activity. However, this argument ignores the opportunity cost – it ignores what could have been done with that money if it didn't have to be spent on reconstruction.

This observation was first made by the French economist Frederic Bastiat. He illustrated the concept that destruction does not benefit the economy by using the example of a broken window. Replacing the window may improve the economic position of the repairman, but it means that the owner of the window has lower disposal income to spend on anything else. If the window hadn't broken he could have had a window *and* a pair of news shoes. Now he can only afford to replace the window.

Similarly, the destruction caused by the hurricane requires the government to spend money on reconstruction and aid, at the expense of what it might otherwise have done with that money. The government has to use resources to rebuild something, as opposed to using the resources to build something new.

As Christians, we need to be sensitive to this fallacy in the measurement of economic activity. The task of stewardship of God's creation is not only about the utilization of the resources within it. It is also about considering the destructive impact we have on creation through our activities. Far too often do we only consider the value that was generated through our activities, but we forget to properly count the cost of our activities, whether it be environmental or socioeconomic.

May the Lord be a refuge and strength to those affected by the destructive power of the ongoing natural disasters across the world.

## DESTRUCTION ONLY DESTROYS THE "BROKEN WINDOW FALLACY"

BY ALBERT VAN DER LINDEN



**W**e are halfway into the 2017 hurricane season and tropical mega-storms in the Atlantic basin have already broken several records. Hurricane Irma has sustained its destructive power longer than any super-storm ever recorded (and our data goes as far back as the 1970s). At the time of writing, the expected damages are upwards of \$250 billion US.

In the midst of this destruction, some are speaking of an economic "silver lining" – that the incoming hurricanes might, in fact, be good for the economy. For example, William Dudley,

from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, argues that, "the long-run effect of natural disasters is that it actually lifts economic activity."

The reasoning is that after the initial harmful effect on human and economic resources, the inevitable rebuilding efforts will stimulate local economic activity. It will also increase demand for labor, driving up wages and ultimately making people wealthier. And if we consider the way economic activity is most often measured – via Gross Domestic Product (or GDP) – reconstruction efforts might seem to cause an

## MEDIA BIAS AND AUSTRALIA'S MARRIAGE DEBATE

BY WES BREDENHOF



his month and next Australians are being given the opportunity to have their say on same-sex "marriage."

The Liberal-National (LNP) coalition ran their election campaign last year with a promise to hold a plebiscite on the issue. Like regular elections, this plebiscite would have been compulsory, with every eligible voter required to cast a ballot. However, the LNP does not have a majority in the Senate, and that resulted in the legislation for the plebiscite being blocked (twice) by the other parties. Finally, the LNP decided to undertake a voluntary postal survey – no one is required to vote – and the results are not binding on the government. Ballots have been mailed out with one question: "Should the law be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry? Yes or No."

Results are expected to be announced on November 15. The campaigns for both "Yes" and "No" are now fully underway.

Much of the Australian news media is unabashedly promoting the "Yes" campaign. Not only are there the usual editorials and opinion pieces, but much of the news reported on the postal survey is slanted towards influencing

the "Yes" vote. However, some news outlets have gone further.

Following a post on social media of an offensive poster against SSM, some Australian news outlets were reporting that this poster had been "plastered" all over Melbourne. Broadcaster *Channel 10* went out in search of the poster, but came up empty. However, they needed a visual for their news story. So they got creative.

They took a stock news photo of a European bus shelter and photo-shopped the poster in.

After being caught, *Channel 10* released a statement in which they stated:

"This was not a deliberate attempt to mislead our audience, but a creative error which we regret."



This was followed by less than truthful reporting on a "No" campaign meeting at a Roman Catholic Church in Brisbane. "Yes" campaigners gathered outside the church and succeeded in preventing the meeting from even happening. As a few of the "No" crowd drove away in their vehicles, the "Yes" side tried to block them. Some news reports spoke of a rowdy clash between the sides. Other news reports mentioned a vehicle driving "at nearly full-speed" into the protestors. Queensland Police later confirmed that these reports were completely false.

This debate reflects not just differing views on marriage, but a clash between utterly opposite worldviews. In one worldview, truth is something that exists outside of ourselves as public, objective reality. In the other worldview, truth is a subjective thing which can and must be manipulated for your own agenda. The latter is fantasy, the former fact. Christians should be encouraged that the former will ultimately prevail, no matter the outcome of the postal vote.

*Dr. Bredenhof blogs at  
Yinkahdinay.Wordpress.com and  
CreationWithoutCompromise.com.*



## DUTCH AIRLINE ACCIDENTALLY POINTS OUT THE OBVIOUS

BY JON DYKSTRA



An August 5 tweet by Dutch airline KLM was meant to celebrate homosexuality, but inadvertently pointed out that two of these things are not like the other – the airline would only let their customers make use of the bottom pairings. As a twitter response from Rick Shafton noted: "Only one pair works. Are you trying to make a point?"

The funniest response? From @tonyinatl: "Airline safety is just a social construct."

## RESTAURANT CHAIN WON'T COMPROMISE ON THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

BY MARK REIMERS

**T**he Chick-fil-A restaurant in the brand-new stadium of the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons is going to be closed on all but one of the team's home games...because they are played on Sundays.

The restaurant chain is known both for their good-guy sense of customer service (one Virginia location recently offered its space to a local church that had been suddenly displaced from its worship location) and conservative stand on social issues. The Christian owners of Chick-fil-A have also held a strict line against doing business on Sunday.

ESPN commentators bemoaned the decision in August once it came to light, with Bill Plaschke going so far as to call it a "complete shame and a sham."

With its headquarters in Atlanta, Chick-fil-A has long been a part of the

food scene at sports venues in the city. Likewise, the Falcons aren't the only sports team planning to play games in the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, which was built right next to the soon-to-be-demolished Georgia Dome. However, with the vast majority of NFL games, including the Super Bowl, being played on Sundays, it takes a strong commitment to a principle to leave that much profit on the table in Chick-fil-A's own hometown.

It's always refreshing to see the Sabbath honored publicly, especially when the day is no longer holy

even in the eyes of many believers. Let's recommit ourselves to being "called out" of the world and use our Sabbaths to look forward to the eternal one. Also, remember the Sabbath has been a blessing to mankind wherever it has been honored — we love our neighbor best when we encourage a Sabbath rest.



Picture credit: Paul Bremman / Shutterstock

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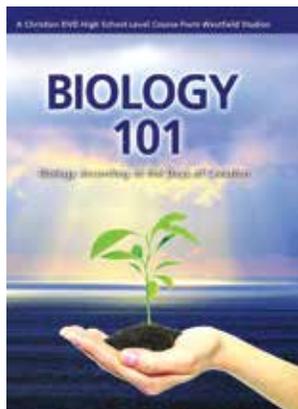


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### BIOLOGY 101

CURRICULUM / DOCUMENTARY  
2012 / 277 MINUTES



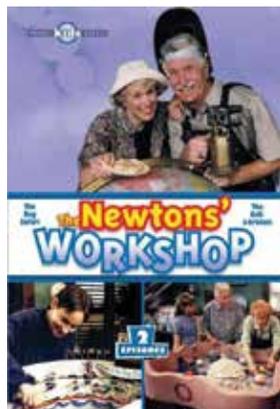
As many a Christian university student has discovered, the field of Science is a spiritual battlefield. So what a joy it was to find Wes Olson's solidly biblical (and from a specifically 6-day creationist perspective) *Biology 101* DVD series. At 4.5 hours long, with segments varying from 15 minutes to 44 minutes, it can be used by homeschoolers as a near complete course (it includes labs, and a 118-page pdf textbook), or as a compelling supplement to any Christian school science curriculum.

What makes this so valuable is how Olson conveys an awe of what God has done in his creation. This awe shows up in all he says, and is the perfect hedge against the evolutionary indoctrination our children will face in post-secondary. When they can understand the wonder of what God has done, they will be equipped to see through the lie that this could have come about any other way than sheer Genius.

Production values are solid throughout. There are piles of pictures and film clips of the creatures being discussed, and Olson, as narrator, has a delightfully dry wit. You can find out more, and watch the introductory lessons, at [the101series.com](http://the101series.com). His Chemistry series is also excellent, and I look forward to checking out his *Physics 101* set.

### THE NEWTONS' WORKSHOP

CHILDREN'S TV SERIES  
1997 / 226 MINUTES



The stars of this children's "edutainment" show are most certainly Grandma and Grandpa Newton, who are quirker than any grandparents you know. Over the course of this 8-episode series, they are ready to help any time their grandkids have any questions.

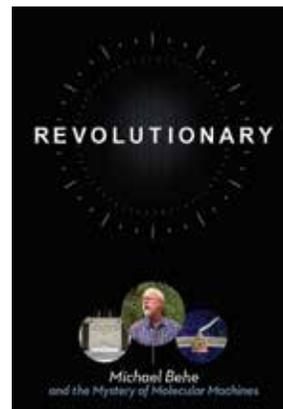
It's fast-paced, funny, and teaches science from a conservative Christian perspective, which isn't surprising considering these are produced by the generally Calvinist, Moody Bible Institute. And, while I'm not up for quite as many viewings as my kids, these are entertaining enough that I don't mind seeing the repeats now and again.

One caution: global warming comes up briefly in Episode 8, and no matter what side you fall on in that debate, the solution offered is mere tokenism. It's suggested global warming can be addressed by "walking on short errands, or riding your bike, or carpooling to work." This misrepresents the radical nature of the changes global warming proponents say will be required: not more bikes, but fewer children. And since the Bible says children are a blessing to be embraced, we have good reason to question any "solution" that portrays them as a curse to be avoided.

So I might give that episode a miss. But for ages 5-10 there is lots here to love. And Mom and Dad won't mind watching either.

### REVOLUTIONARY: MICHAEL BEHE & THE MYSTERY OF MOLECULAR MACHINES

DOCUMENTARY  
2016 / 60 MINUTES



How did a quiet professor who believes in some sort of evolution manage to get Darwinian evolutionists very, very upset with him? It's because Michael Behe doesn't believe the world came about by chance.

*Revolutionary* shows how Behe shook up the origins debate when he first published his book, *Darwin's Black Box*, 20 years ago. In it, Behe argued that Darwinian evolution could not account for the many amazing molecular machines – outboard motors, "energy-producing turbines, information-copying machines, and even robotic walking motors" – that can be found within a single cell. Behe couldn't see how these micro-machines could have developed in stages. They were, as he put it, "irreducibly complex" – take one piece out, and they don't simply function less efficiently, but instead cease functioning at all. Thus, they had to be "intelligently designed."

One caution: "Intelligent Design" theory has its problems. Because proponents don't want to be seen as making religious arguments, they refuse to specify Who the "Intelligent Designer" is. And in this refusal, they are not giving God the glory that is His due!

This film is fascinating and important, but not for casual viewers – to enjoy it you will need to already be interested in the origins debate. It can be viewed online for free at [revolutionarybehe.com](http://revolutionarybehe.com).

## IS GENESIS HISTORY?

DOCUMENTARY

2017 / 100 MINUTES

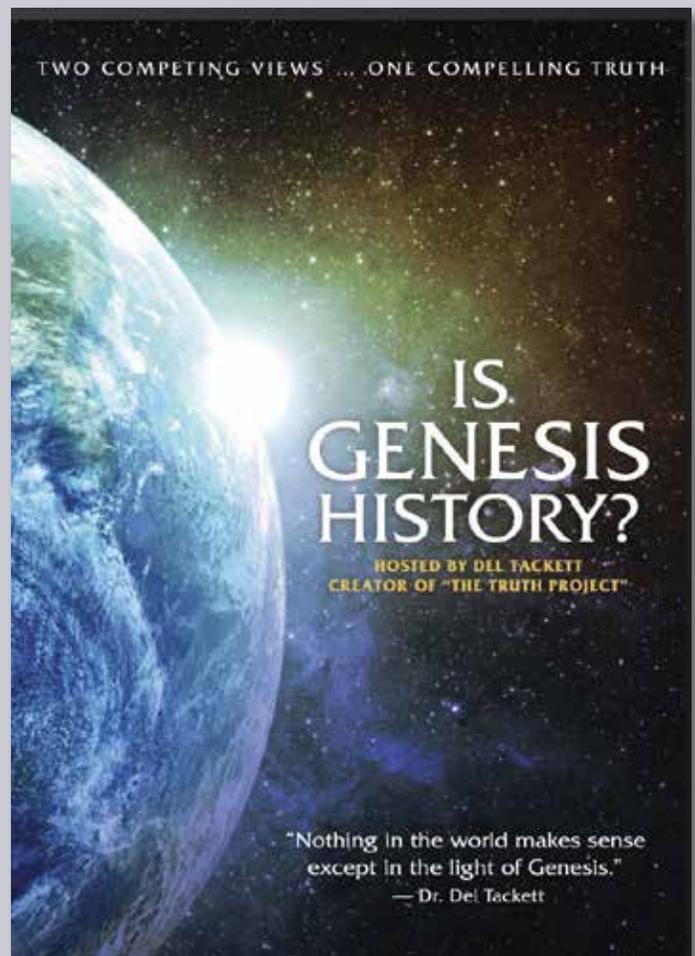
We live and breathe and move in an atmosphere that is full of assumptions. We assume that what we see is how things have always been. And our friends and colleagues at work assume that scientists have disproved the Bible. And even if we know better, we hear so often that the earth is the product of millions and billions of years of slow erosion and evolution, those assumptions can impact us too – we can begin to wonder, "Is it crazy to believe that this planet is only 6,000 years old, that God made all of this in just six days?"

*Is Genesis History?* is a film that can help to quell those voices of doubt, the voices that ask, "Did God really say?" Like thoughtful Christian apologetics, this movie can give us confidence that it is logical and entirely defensible for a modern person to fully believe that God's Word describes historical events and real people.

Narrator Del Tackett opens the documentary showing a series of beautiful rock formations and deep canyons, and wonders aloud how many years these magnificent sites took to develop. We might assume thousands or even millions. But no – he reveals that the landscape around him was formed *in just a few months*, after the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980! This is a powerful illustration of just how our observations are colored by our preconceptions.

Throughout the film Tackett speaks with various PhD-holding scientists about their areas of expertise, and often in the midst of beautiful scenery. These passionate and articulate scholars contrast two major competing views of history: the conventional view that all we see around us developed over billions of years, and the Biblical view that points to a young earth in which God acted directly and with incredible power to create and form the world.

Many of these experts point to the great Flood that covered the whole earth as an explanation for the geological formations we can observe in the Grand Canyon for example, and for the way that fossils appear intact and often in groups and herds. The massive power of the waters below, bursting forth, and the windows of heaven opening, caused enormous changes to the earth, killing most life. The flood was universal and catastrophic and awesome in its



destructive power, and its effects can be seen all over the world still today – if you have eyes to see it!

The format of *Is Genesis History?* consisting of questions and answers filmed in interesting locations, with helpful illustrations, makes it easy to understand and engaging. It probably won't keep the attention of younger children, but middle school students on up to senior citizens will enjoy and benefit from this film. I can see this movie being beneficial for our Young Peoples' societies, and the producers have made available free study and discussion material at their website [www.IsGenesisHistory.com](http://www.IsGenesisHistory.com). This is a great film that encourages us to view the Bible as accurate history, and is a timely reminder that God's Word is true yesterday, today and tomorrow. You can find it on Netflix, Amazon Video, and on DVD.

- Marty VanDriel



# FACEBOOK...TO GOD'S GLORY

Using Facebook right might involve accommodating church members who don't want to use it at all

by Pete Witten

Recently a colleague commented on the fear that some have about social media, and their resulting reluctance to open Facebook accounts. She said it reminded her of controversy that occurred in the mid 1970's, when television first became common amongst our church families.

I thought it an interesting point, and wanted to take a brief look at Facebook, in light of how our churches dealt with TV those decades ago.

## WHERE'S THE DISCUSSION?

Back then, church members debated the pros and cons of having a television. It was a hot issue. People were concerned that television viewing would pose a serious threat to the spiritual wellbeing of the congregation. Consistories even hesitated to nominate for office those brothers who had purchased a TV.

Today, most families do have a TV or watch its programs via the Internet. We've come to understand the need for

good stewardship – what matters is how we use the TV, not whether or not we have one.

And in a similar way, we today realize that the world of social media is not inherently evil. And it is already as common as TV; an estimated 1.94 billion people used its services in March. Checking Facebook is just a part of our regular daily activities for many, it's not a hot issue.

## AN ADDICTION

But maybe it should be.

Following the introduction of television, problems with TV addiction also soon appeared. Families discovered that it wasn't easy to turn the TV off. Programs were smartly sequenced to keep the viewers tuned-in. Church members also fell victim to too much TV viewing. Who knows how much time was wasted (or even how many church meetings were missed) due to a TV addiction? Whilst seemingly less concerning than,

for example, an addiction to drugs, the spiritual harm caused by a TV addiction is real and troublesome.

"Facebook Addiction" is a new reality. A quick Google search of this topic will uncover a host of websites aimed at helping those who have been caught-up in the fury of Facebook. As blogger Michael Poh notes in a post titled, "7 Telltale Signs of Facebook Addiction":

As you get used to communicating on Facebook via messaging, sharing photos and posts, commenting and "liking" others etc., it may come to a point when you get more comfortable socializing online than offline. You become over-reliant on Facebook to fulfill your social needs and may start sacrificing the time spent on real-life meet-ups for coffee with your friends."

How ironic, that something which is intended to improve our social world, can actually lead to increased loneliness.

## THE DISCONNECT

When television ownership became possible within our churches, initially it resulted in a sort of disconnect between the members. There were members who readily accepted and welcomed a television into their homes. But, there were also members who strongly opposed television ownership. This latter group often spoke about TV's negative influence and their concern for the spiritual wellbeing of others. Some parents even prevented their children from visiting friends with homes that had a TV. There were two groups. It was a time of "disconnect" between the members of one church.

Fast forward to today's world of social media, and consider how Facebook has influenced our churches. Unlike the debates surrounding TV, little has been said about having a Facebook account. Rather, it seems like it is just assumed that an active church member should have an active Facebook account, if only to keep in touch with others.

Nevertheless, what about the members who are reluctant to join Facebook? We know spending too many hours reading and posting messages can lead to problems, so we know Facebook is not for everyone. So what of invites that happen only via Facebook? Or events that are only advertised there? If some members don't have an account, for whatever reason, won't they feel left out, disadvantaged and disconnected?

Although the disconnect caused by Facebook might seem trivial, whatever threatens to breakdown the communion of saints should not be ignored.

## FELLOWSHIP

The point here isn't to argue that Facebook – or TV – are inherently bad.

Just consider, when TV first became available in our homes, it wasn't uncommon for families or friends to get together and enjoy an evening of TV viewing. Whether it was an exciting sports event, a special documentary or perhaps an important news report, these were times of fellowship amongst church members. Although such evenings might be rare today, it shows that TV can be

*The point here isn't to argue that Facebook – or TV – are inherently bad.*

used to bring people together.

So is the same possible with Facebook? And if so, what does Facebook fellowship look like?

One member told me, "Each day, on Facebook, I look forward to Rev. V's meditations!" Another member said, "It's such a good way to share each other's joys and sorrows." It is a way to stay in contact when living far away from loved ones, or when shut in. As someone told me, "Without Facebook, I would probably be quite lonely." Clearly, the enhancement of fellowship is also possible through Facebook.

Of course, we realize that the *kind* of material that is viewed and put on Facebook will be crucial, just as it with the kinds of TV programs watched. Angry Facebook messages and inappropriate TV programs will endanger true fellowship.

## COMMENT

It's interesting to note how both TV and Facebook have impacted our churches. At times we struggle to adapt our lives to the changes that confront us. Making the right decision isn't always simple or easy! Yet, the Lord guides us through His Word. Colossians 3:17 states, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of

the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

In the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, we're instructed to "hallow" the name of God. Therefore, we must not post anything on Facebook, nor allow our eyes to see TV programs that will lead us away from God. Lord's Day 47 concludes with these words:

Grant us also that we may so direct our whole life – our thoughts, words and actions – that your name is not blasphemed because of us, but always honored and praised.

As the communion of saints, we remain duty-bound to use the TV and Facebook (and other social media) for the benefit and wellbeing of the other members. Such a duty might cause us to join Facebook, or help us to be patient with others who are reluctant to enter into the world of social media. Ultimately, our discussions about social media (including Facebook) must serve to God's glory! 

*A version of this article first appeared in the August 26, 2017 issue of Una Sancta and it is reprinted here with permission.*



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# IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,  
AND NOT SO,  
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY JON DYKSTRA

## WAS NOAH'S ARK A LOCAL FLOOD?

Some Christians – those trying to reconcile evolution with creation – will say that Noah's Flood was just a local affair. Or maybe a *really big* local affair, but certainly not something that covered the whole Earth.

There are a few problems with that position, with perhaps the most often forgotten one being God's promise in Genesis 9, to "never again" send "a flood to destroy the earth." The type of flood God is talking about here is the sort to "destroy all flesh." It doesn't sound local. But if it is merely local, then we have a different problem, because local floods have happened aplenty since, so then we have the problem that God doesn't seem to be keeping His Word. And we know that can't be.

God's people are faced with the choice of going with the eyewitness testimony of the Bible and accepting it all, or adopting Man's theories. But the one choice that just isn't open is to reconcile the two to each other. As we can see here again, it can't be done.

## DON'T PUT GOD OFF, AND DON'T EVER ASSUME IT IS TOO LATE

"The Bible, which ranges over a period of 4,000 years, records but one instance of a death-bed conversion – one that none may despair, and but one that none may presume."

– Rev. Thomas Guthrie (1803-1873), in *Early Piety*

## THREE LITTLE LETTERS THAT WOULD HELP SO MUCH

"Look at the Black Lives Matter movement. I get the issue. The evidence is out there about the criminal justice system and African-American males. But the tone is totally wrong. I want these issues addressed, but I want them addressed in a way that finds solutions.... I've said to some who defend the slogan, 'Why not add three little letters: "black lives matter too?'" That way we're not saying that all lives don't matter, we're just saying that black lives have been neglected. Yet when I suggest this, there's a big backlash. That makes me think this is not about finding a solution that all can live with. It's about imposing a solution..."

– George Yancey in the Dec. 26, 2015 issue of *WORLD* magazine

## STANDING STILL

It's only a short quote – from the Christian philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal – but something I plan to share with my kids:

When everything is moving at once, nothing appears to be moving, as on board ship. When everyone is moving towards depravity, no one seems to be moving, but if someone stops, he shows up the others who are rushing on, by acting as a fixed point."

God can use individuals who will not be moved. Some are pastors like Luther, and Knox, others politicians like William Wilberforce, Winston Churchill, Ronald Reagan and more recently Pierre Lemieux. He can use regular folk too, like Aaron and Melissa Klein (bakers who lost their business because they wouldn't help celebrate a gay "marriage"). And He can use us too. If we will stand on His Word, and refuse to move, we can be a light in our home, in our community, and in our classroom. We can help others just by standing still.

## THE WIT AND WISDOM OF GEORGE HEBERT

George Hebert was best known as a Christian poet, but he published a collection of proverbs he collected over his lifetime. Here are ten of the best:

- None is a fool always; everyone sometimes
- All truths are not to be told
- Better to speak truth rudely than to lie charmingly
- Be what thou wouldst seem to be
- Many things are lost for want of asking
- More have repented speech than silence
- Old wine and old friends are good provisions
- Who spits against heaven, it falls in his face.
- A gift much expected is paid, not given
- An oath that is not to be made is not to be kept

## 1984 VS. BRAVE NEW WORLD

"What [1984's author George] Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What [*Brave New World's* author Aldous] Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny 'failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions.' In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us."

– Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

## THE FIRST ADAM VS. THE LAST

"The first Adam blamed his bride, while the Last Adam took the blame for His bride. The first Adam earned thorns.

The Last Adam wore thorns. The first Adam gained a wife when God opened man's side, but the Last Adam gained a wife when man opened God's side. The first Adam brought a curse. The Last Adam became a curse. While the first Adam fell by listening when the Serpent said "take and eat," the Last Adam told His followers, "take and eat, this is my body."

- John Stonestreet, "Jesus, the Last Adam" posted to Breakpoint.org, April 13, 2017

### "WAIT...WHAT?"

As our family has been reading through the Bible, certain passages (starting right off with Genesis 4) make it necessary to at least touch on the "birds and the bees" with kids. But I wasn't ready to hear my six-year-old say:

"Dad how do you spell 'sex'?"

"Wait...what!? What do you mean?"

"Well, I've already got I and N and I need to know what comes next."

"Oh, okay. It goes S - E - C - T - S."

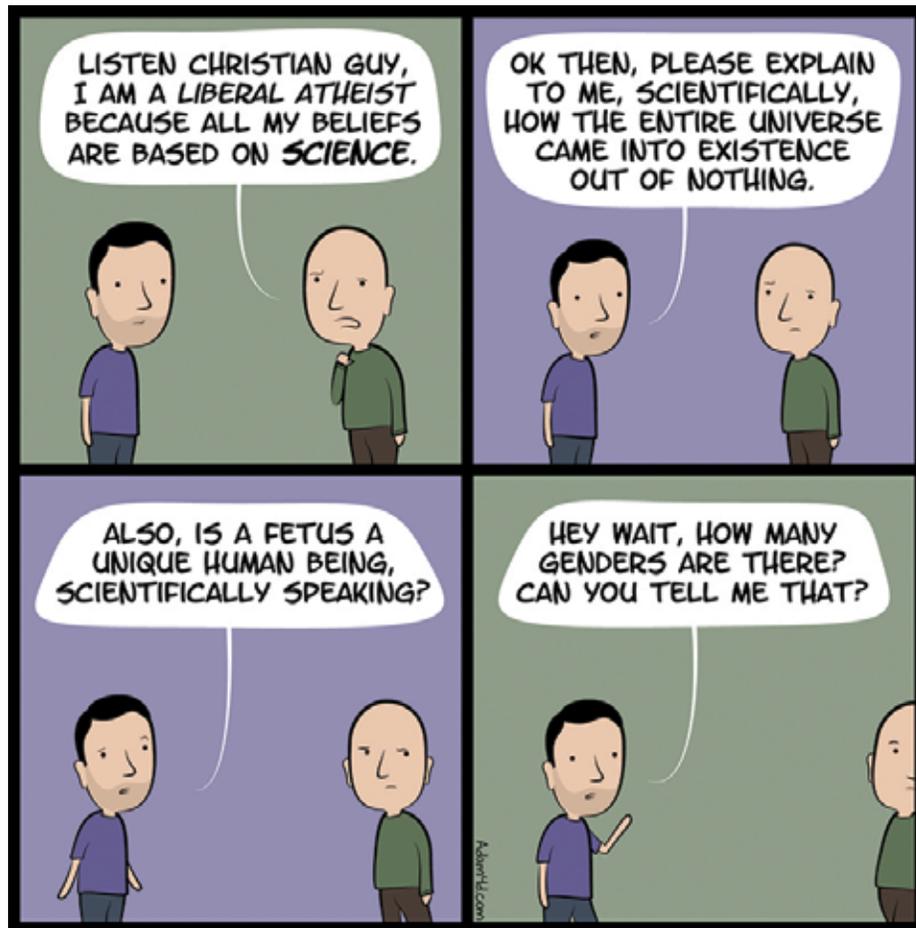
### IF YOU DON'T KNOW, YOU CAN'T KILL

In Michael Wagner's new book *True Right: Genuine Conservative Leaders of Western Canada*, he details an encounter between pro-life journalist Ted Byfield and abortionist Henry Morgentaler, and the question that stumped Morgentaler.

From early on Ted Byfield was a spokesman for the pro-life cause. He has been an outspoken defender of unborn children. In one instance he was asked by the *CBC* to be on a television program with the infamous abortionist Dr. Henry Morgentaler. In the course of this program Byfield presented Morgentaler with a particular hypothetical situation of the kind social studies teachers were being encouraged to present to their students:

Several men are out in the woods hunting. Suddenly one of them sees something move in the bush. At last, he rejoices, a deer. Then a warning flashes through his mind. That might not be a deer. That might be one of the other hunters. Question for the class: Should the hunter fire at the thing if there's a chance it's another human being? The approved answer is no.

After posing his question the television program was never run and he was never invited back. Morgentaler was a *CBC* hero and Byfield's question exposed the wicked cause that he was promoting. The question may have been considered unfair. [Byfield later wrote]:



The question may be hypothetical but it is certainly not unfair. The doctor, along with other liberals who defend this hideous practice, in effect argues as follows: We do not know at what point during pregnancy a fetus or an embryo becomes, in fact, a human being—whether at the instant of conception, or at the instant of birth, or at some intervening stage. Because of this uncertainty, abortion may be permitted at some elementary phase of growth. In other words, since we do not know whether the thing is human or it isn't, then it is all right to kill it, the very reverse of the conclusion that sane people would reach in the case of the hunter. The moral principle must surely be: If you don't know, you don't kill it.

Purchase *True Right* at [Merchantship.generationalfamilies.net/](http://Merchantship.generationalfamilies.net/)

### GENDER CONFUSION CLARIFIED

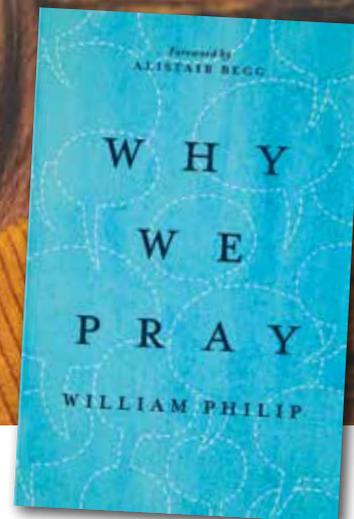
"The two most ridiculous errors about men and women are unisexism and male chauvinism. The unisex feminist says that women and men are not different in value, therefore they are not different in nature. The male chauvinist says that men and women are different in nature, therefore they are different in value."

- Peter Kreeft

# 4 REASONS TO PRAY

## A summary review of William Philip's *Why We Pray*

by Jeff Dykstra



Does prayer intimidate you rather than refresh you? Do you wonder whether your heart is really in it?

If so, then you'll be interested in William Philip's *Why We Pray*, a brief, easy-to-read and often humorous response to these and other questions that many of us have about prayer.

Philip is a Scottish minister who used to be a cardiologist, and in this book he continues to deal with "matters of the heart." Rather than lecturing us on how important it is to pray more, he explains how prayer is a response to who God is. Philip uses examples from politics, sports, and his own life to clarify the four Biblical reasons why we may and must pray.

### 1. GOD SPEAKS AND WE MAY RESPOND

We may pray, first, because God is a speaking God. He spoke creation into being and shaped it by his *word*, so creation "speaks" back *visibly* by displaying His power (see Psalm 19:1-6). God wanted more from human beings, though, because He made us capable of responding *audibly*.

When we cut off the conversation through the sin of Adam and Eve (including hiding from God), He restored the relationship through Jesus Christ. Real prayer is responding in faith to God's call in Jesus Christ.

### 2. GOD IS HAPPY TO HEAR HIS CHILDREN

The second reason we pray is because we are "sons of God" (even the "daughters"!)." Philip says that the reason we are called sons of God is because we, like sons in the ancient world, have an inheritance.

We can pray to our (adoptive) Father in heaven because of the work of God's (natural!) Son, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ was (and is) such a faithful Son, God gladly accepts us as His children – so we have the right to appear before Him. Like any loving father (only much more so!), God wants to hear His children speak to (and with) Him.

### 3. GOD IS ABLE TO DO WHAT WE ASK

It is because, in the third place, God is sovereign that our prayer is so meaningful - though some do not necessarily see it.

If God is so great, and is working out His infinite plan, some ask, then why pray at all? Philip compares our part in God's plan to being on an unbeatable sports team. Would any of us quit simply because we are so sure that the team is going to win? In His infinite power, God is not only a *willing* father, but also *able* to grant whatever we ask that is within His will.

### 4. THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US TO PRAY RIGHTLY

Finally, God is the Spirit who dwells within us, and this makes sense of the requirement that we ask only what is within His will. The presence of the indwelling Spirit makes prayer into the conversation that God intended to have with us before the fall into sin. This gives us both hope and a significant responsibility. God wants us to pray for whatever we think we need, but He also speaks to us by His Word and Spirit, so that as we pray, our Biblically informed consciences enable us in time to see what His will is, and in the meantime to ask that He grant us only what is according to His will.

In other words, as Philip tells us, prayer is to "think God's thoughts after Him."

### CONCLUSION

If you want a helpful clear explanation of why we may pray, and why we should want to pray to our speaking, Fatherly, sovereign, indwelling God, then I encourage you to pick up a copy of William Philip's *Why We Pray*. 

*A version of this review first appeared on ReallyGoodReads.com*

# THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM: DO IT 'TIL YOU DIE

by James Zekveld

Some might assume that, as they grow older, they will grow in wisdom. But the Bible tells us that's hardly a given. One of the themes of the book of Proverbs is that wisdom is something that is to be pursued. We can see this in three of the characters we are introduced to in Proverbs.

One of these characters is "the righteous" – humble and actively seeking out God's wisdom.

The wicked, on the other hand, are proud, and in their selfish ambition they are active too, but actively seeking out folly. They get into trouble because *they are looking for it*.

But perhaps it is the third character who should most interest us. This third sort is also seeking folly...but not actively. In a sense he finds folly only because he isn't seeking wisdom. He is the sluggard.

So both the wicked and the righteous go out and make choices – they choose between wisdom and folly.

The sluggard? He just stays home.

And folly finds him.

## BETWEEN WICKED AND WISE

That's why the sluggard is encouraged to stir. We find him in Proverbs 6 being told: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Observe her ways and become wise." The ant doesn't have somebody telling her what to do. She acts on her own initiative. She goes out and finds a job,

so that she may learn her trade. The sluggard needs to get up out of his bed and learn from the ant. The author of this proverb wants to encourage his readers in godly ambition.

Then again, in Proverbs 26:13 and onward, we see a warning against sloth. Here the sluggard cries out, "There is a lion in the streets." The sluggard makes excuses for himself, for why he just wants to stay home. He won't risk any effort. Again, we see the need for godly ambition. We can't be afraid of risks when we go out into the world. We have to be wise and prudent in our actions, but if we live in fear of what might happen, we will never find the prize. The reward will be gone.

Christians have no excuse for sitting around and waiting; we have no excuse for endless leisure time. We either have to go out and seek wisdom, or we will lose it. Then we'll become the fool, fearing even imaginary lions. And ultimately, we will lose the Wisdom of God; Jesus Christ. We are all called to that search for wisdom in so far as God has given us the ability to do so.

## WISDOM PUT TO USE

Wisdom, in our passages, is the ability to discern between two choices. Practically speaking, wisdom is the means by which we make business decisions, choose a marriage partner, or

make any number of other choices that come to us each day.

But within Proverbs all wisdom ultimately points to the Wisdom of God, the Wisdom that God reveals in Jesus Christ and the Wisdom by which God made the world. He is the one who holds the universe together. We can distinguish between practical wisdom and the Wisdom of God in Proverbs, but they cannot truly be separated. If we do not seek wisdom, we ultimately lose the Wisdom of God; Jesus Christ. We are all called to that search for wisdom in so far as God has given us the ability to do so.

So one of the messages of Proverbs is, "get up, get out and find wisdom." Search then. Seek out the wisdom of the universe. We need to have the attitude of the man Jesus speaks of in the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. This man sells everything in order to find what is most precious; the kingdom of God. Search for *the Wisdom*; Christ.

That is a life-long search – a life-long desire – for those who have found him. Do not cease from scouring the Scriptures. Do not cease from praying for understanding. Search until God gives you the fullness of eternal life and rest with Him. RP

Rev. James Zekveld blogs at [JamesZekveld.com](http://JamesZekveld.com) where a version of this article first appeared.



# CANADIAN COLONIALISM DRESSED UP AS AID

by Maaïke VanderMeer

Red tomatoes and purple onions pile in front of her. Behind is sugar, bagged by the kilo. Bottles of Fanta and 7-Up stand on a white shelf in this small, road-side kiosk, one of many in sub-Saharan Africa. In the midst of it she stands, a smiling woman in a blue shirt and white head wrap.

Her smile adorns the official website of the UN's Family Planning Summit, which met on July 11 in London, UK, to decide what to do with her. The website reads like a sales pitch: "Family planning is a best-buy in global development." The Canadian government stood out as a champion of reproductive health at the Summit, part of its Feminist International Assistance Policy. Policymakers, donors and leaders have solved the life problem of the smiling African woman. But have they asked for her opinion?

Chrystia Freeland, Canadian Minister of International Trade, told the House of Commons that our national values "includes sexual reproductive rights and the right to safe and accessible abortions. These rights are at the core of our foreign policy."

This statement profoundly concerned the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops, which argued in an open letter that abortion advocacy cannot be the core of Canadian foreign policy when it is "not only legally contentious but completely contrary to the deeply held convictions of many both within and beyond Canada's borders."

The numbers underscore their concern: \$119 million in international aid will go to famine relief and \$650 million to abortion and sexual reproduction rights. Fifty percent of the latter is dedicated to sub-Saharan Africa, including countries where



abortion is illegal except to save a mother's life.

An African proverb says, "the absent are always wrong." The same donors who are so eager to end poverty are proving deaf to the voices of those they claim to help.

## A DIFFERENT VIEW OF PROCREATION

I have lived in East Africa since the age of three. Congolese mothers often counted their children to me, including those who died as babies. Mama Rebecca, a gentle old woman, cried over

her five children, each of whom died tragically and far from her. In Africa, children – all children – are carefully remembered.

To speak of Africa is to speak of an immense continent with 54 nations and many unique tribes, each with their own culture. Yet commonalities do exist. Father Bonaventure Turyomumazima of Uganda wrote that generally traditional African cultures are centered in life. Procreation completes marriage. Children are the continuation of a physical line, important both for the living and the

dead. It is commonly expected for the entire community to raise the child. That means there are few unwanted children or “orphans.” Elaborate taboos and rituals preserve the lives of mother and child.

Faith Kasiva, author of the report “Robbed by Choice,” explains, “We live in an African cultural setting where having a child or motherhood is glorified in a way that probably it’s not in other societies.”

Telling a woman in such a cultural setting to not have children is almost like telling a Canadian woman to empty all her bank accounts, quit her job and publicly defame herself on all social media, just to avoid poverty. It doesn’t make sense, given the social construct.

“Unwanted pregnancies” are not the problem as much as unwanted wars, unwanted famines, unwanted rape, unwanted incest and unwanted displacement. Mama Rebecca didn’t weep because her children ought not to have been born. She wept because they ought not to have died.

A strange irony plays out here: the world’s first feminist policy warring against a culture that glorifies mothers! But do Minister Freeland and the Family Planning Summit tell the whole truth?

## THE DARK SIDE OF DEPOPULATION

Often, benevolent NGOs hold out family planning with one hand. The other is behind their back, shut tight on hundreds of statistics linking abortion and family breakdown, psychological health, increased poverty, community disintegration and isolation.

The contraceptive Norplant is one example of this. Designed to keep a woman infertile for five years, Norplant has suffered tens of thousands of lawsuits in America for its side-effects. Now Norplant is exported to developing countries as “aid.” It’s an old story. Norplant is even harder on the bodies of malnourished women. The consequences are often not fully explained. When faced with unexpected complications, life-long

sterility and even death by hemorrhage, these women are without health support. More than that, long-term barrenness can ruin marriages and isolate women from communities.

Family planning as the West understands it will not end poverty. Tying aid money to such an agenda prompted Nigerian activist Obianuju Ekeocha to hail Canada as the new “number one colonial master of the world.”

## NEW FACE, OLD STORY

Over a hundred years ago during the rubber trade in Belgian Congo, the colonial army raided the village of a woman named Ilanga. As the chained villagers were marched from their burning homes, soldiers forced Ilanga’s baby from her, tossing it aside so she could carry their looted pot. The agony of such men and women being “civilized” bleeds into one of their songs: “We are tired of living under this

tyranny/ We cannot endure that our women and children are taken away/ and dealt with by the white savages.”

Today, the Canadian Prime Minister can use the force of the dollar to tell millions of women in Africa – “Drop the baby. Carry the pot of civilization. We know what is best. Your child would never have a good life. You may as well kill it now.”

At least, this is what is heard on the other end. According to a writer in the *Lusaka Times* in Zambia, “Abortion is one way of saying ‘do not multiply anymore.’ Our multiplying is disturbing the depopulation plans.... These NGOs in Zambia came in the name of ‘helping’ suffering Zambians; on the surface they do good things, but in the background, they start their main program.”

Canada is the first donor country to call its foreign policy a feminist one. An “ism” denotes a belief system. Emil Hagamu of Tanzania writes, “In



Today, the Canadian Prime Minister can use the force of the dollar to tell millions of women in Africa “Drop the baby. Carry the pot of civilization. We know what is best. Your child would never have a good life. You may as well kill it now.”

Picture credit: Shutterstock.com



African communities, the death of a child is no small matter.... Expanded legalization of abortion is being forced upon us by the traditional colonizing powers of the West.”

Ekeocha, founder of Culture for Life, told *Catholic News Service* that Western funds are used to bribe African politicians to accept abortion, “The polls show overwhelmingly that Africans hate abortion.... By ignoring the will of the people, this is spitting in the face of the very type of democracy we are supposed to have in African countries.”

### “TIRED OF TYRANNY”

The Democratic Republic of Congo, the giant heart of the African continent, is targeted by Canada to the tune of \$97 million. Minister Bibeau told the *Globe and Mail* that the aid would be “subtle,” working to provide adolescents with extensive sex education and to push abortion in a country where it is illegal.

*“Unwanted pregnancies” are not the problem as much as unwanted wars, unwanted famines, unwanted rape, unwanted incest and unwanted displacement.*

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a deeply troubled nation. Her children already suffer because of greed-based violence. Instead of helping living children, Canada will prevent the birth

of more. Maybe that musical country will sing again the old song, “We are tired of living under this tyranny/ We cannot endure that our women and children are taken away/ and dealt with by the white savages.”

If Canada does not consider the true situation of the woman in her roadside shop or listen to the bereaved grandmothers, then Canada’s aid is just colonialization in a new outfit.

The colonizing powers of Africa-past were confident in their superiority. They were sure their agendas were right. But blood and tears mark those pages. Canada is currently writing a colonization of Africa-present. This too, history will remember. RP

*This article was originally published August 28, 2017 in Christian Courier ([www.christiancourier.ca](http://www.christiancourier.ca)) and is reprinted here with permission. Maaike VanderMeer blogs at [shoutofjoy.wordpress.com](http://shoutofjoy.wordpress.com).*

# THE END WAS NEAR...

by James Dykstra

**T**hey've probably been predicting the end of time since the beginning of time. Recently, we've had predictions it would end in 2012. And in 2011, Harold Camping, a prominent, and formerly Reformed, radio host made news by predicting Jesus' return for May, followed by the universe's destruction in October. And, of course, cults all around the world were expecting the end in the year 2000, and countless other individuals were predicting Western civilization would grind to a halt as the Y2K computer bug shut down all the computerized systems we depend on.

While computers may be a recent invention, predictions of the end are not. For numerous orthodox and not-so orthodox Christians, predicting the end of time has been a preoccupation for as long as anyone can remember.

The reasoning behind most of the predictions has often been creative, and of the sort of logic that could come up with almost any date. It often goes something like this: the world is going to end in 1998. Why 1998? Well, all you have to do is take the number of God – three – multiply it by the number of the beast – 666 – and you get 1998. (Since

you're reading this in 2017, you might've noticed a flaw in the reasoning.)

Other examples abound. John Gribben authored a book in the 1970s arguing that an alignment of the planets in 1982 would bring on the end as the combined gravity of the planets caused massive earthquakes, tidal waves, and other disasters. Though by 1980, even Gribben had disowned his theory, some religious groups continued preparing for an end that didn't arrive.

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Charles Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses cult, took a unique approach to forecasting the end. He predicted Christ's return in 1874, but he predicted this after the year had passed. According to him, Christ had returned secretly that year. In the closest thing to success in a doomsday prediction, Russell expected the final battle between God and Satan would take place in 1914. While it wasn't the final battle, World War I did start that year.

In fairness to the Jehovah's Witnesses, after repeated failed attempts to predict the end of the world, they gave up on that in 1996. Now they focus on being "watchful"

and "cultivating strong faith" rather than failing to predict the end of time.

## THE END, FURTHER BACK

For those trying to anticipate the end, the year 1666 was an obvious year to expect it. After all, the year itself contained the number of the beast. If anyone was expecting judgment that year, it only arrived in London, where The Great Fire burnt much of the English capital to the ground.

Some had predicted the end of time to fall in 1657. The very important Council of Nicea was held in 325. Add 325, to two times the number of the beast - 666 - and you've got 1657.

The Black Plague swept Europe from 1338 to 1349, returning for a second outbreak between 1357 and 1362. This rat-borne disease wiped out from 20 to 30 million people, anywhere from one quarter to one third of Europe's total population. With this sort of catastrophe sweeping the continent, predictions abounded of the anti-Christ's imminent arrival. He was expected to come in 1346, 1348, 1375, and 1400. If those dates didn't produce the expected result, those peering into the future simply tried again and guessed another date. Though they



thought they could see Armageddon coming, they miscalculated, repeatedly.

One of the predictions that seemed to catch a lot of people's imaginations was that the end would come in 1260. The monk, Joachim of Fiore, developed an elaborate theory of history to back up his expectation. Based on Biblical genealogies, there are 42 generations from Abraham to Christ. If a generation is 30 years on average, that's 1260 years. He reasoned that there would also be 42 generations after the birth of Christ, and thus, the world would end in 1260. What made Joachim's system so much more enticing was that his whole history of time was based on the number 3. The first period, the period of the law or of God the Father, took place until the birth of Christ. The period of Christ would last until 1260, and the third and final period of the Spirit, when the world

would be converted, would take place immediately after that. Though Joachim was consulted by popes, and wined and dined by kings and princes, he was still wrong. Time kept marching on.

### THE YEAR 1000 SCARE

The most widely believed date for the end of time was the millennium. No, not the year 2000, but the year 1000. At that point, there was considerable panic that the end was near. In 950, the monk Adso wrote to Gerberga, sister of the Frankish king, Otto I, saying that the anti-Christ would come when the last Frankish king died. This Frankish dynasty ended somewhere between 987 and 991, inspiring fear that the end of time was fast approaching. This fear was reinforced by Adso's one-way pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The arrival of Halley's Comet in 989 was seen as a sign of the

coming apocalypse. These indicators were backed up by the preaching of Aelfric, the Abbot of Eynsham, who delivered apocalyptic sermons in the 990s, hinting at the end of time in the year 1000.

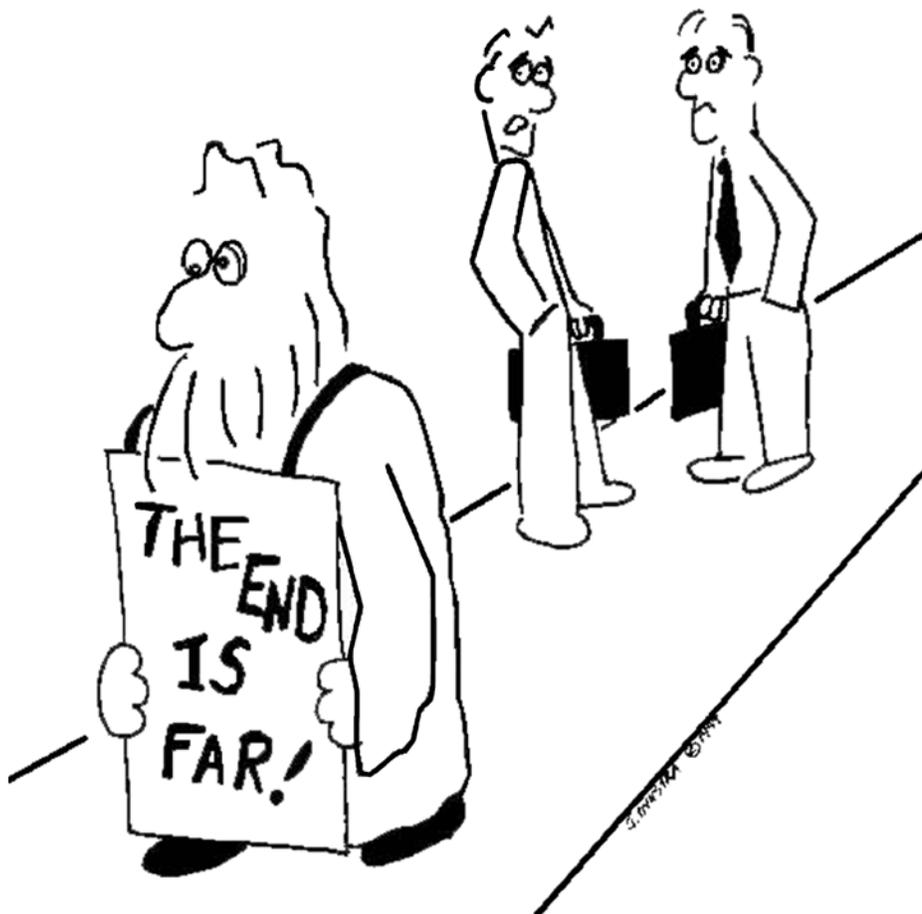
Doomsdayers are nothing if not flexible. The year 1000 was seen as a reasonable date for the end of time since it came 1000 years after the birth of Christ. When the world failed to end in 1000, the next logical choice was 1033, 1000 years after the *death* of Christ.

In the case of both the year 1000 and the year 1033, society changed in noticeable ways. Peace councils were formed to try to stop the violence and war of the period. In the resulting peace, parishes and villages were organized. Not surprisingly, new prosperity resulted. In preparing for the perceived end, the peasants and aristocrats drew together in a new spirit of cooperation and friendship. As the cynic might expect, when the end did not come, these advances quickly fell apart.

### CONCLUSION

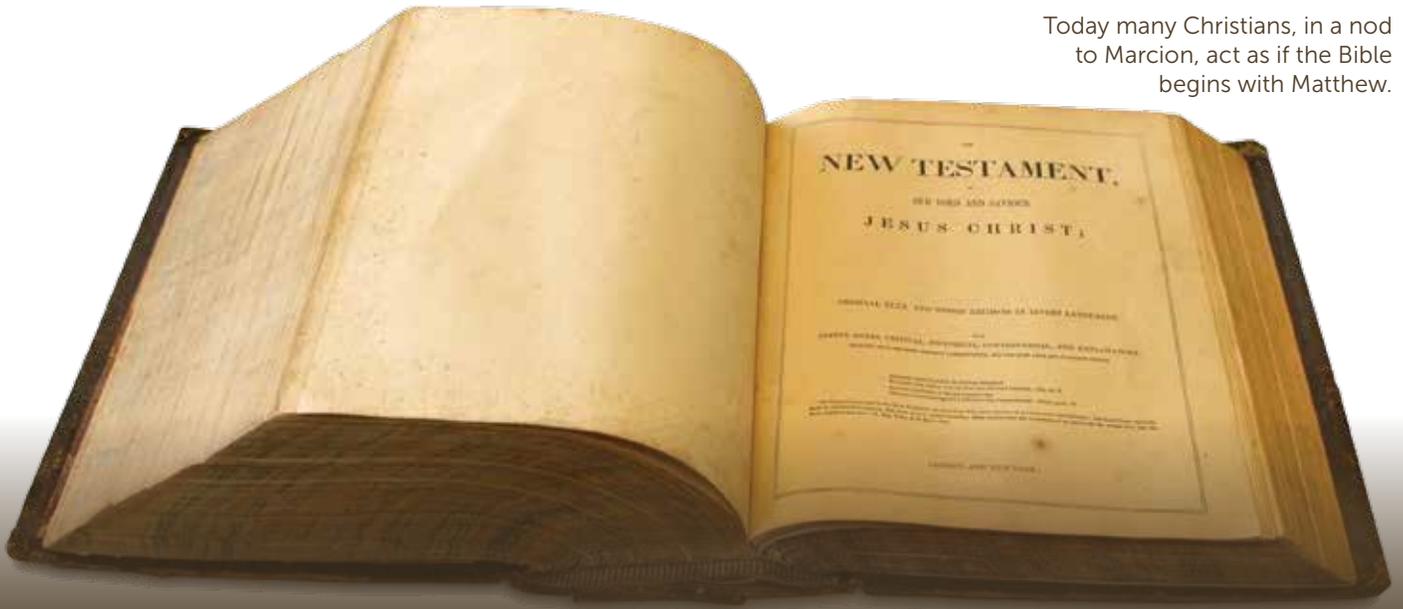
So what are we supposed to make of all this? Try as we might, we just don't know the day or hour of the end; not even the angels in heaven know that. Since we're still here, in time, having to use our talents to God's glory, that means that we have to trust that God will take care of us. Eventually, those predicting the end are bound to hit the mark. If you make enough predictions one of them eventually has to be right. However, when that last day comes, for us it's not something to fear or to make us panic. When the Master returns and finds his servants doing what He has asked, He will richly reward them. The end of time is something to be eagerly expected, not eagerly predicted. RP

*A version of this article first appeared in the May 1999 issue. For more information on End Times predictions see Richard Abanes' "End-Time Visions: The Road to Armageddon?" and Bernard McGinn's "Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages"*



**"SAY, AREN'T THOSE GUYS ALWAYS WRONG?"**

Today many Christians, in a nod to Marcion, act as if the Bible begins with Matthew.



# MARCION OF SINOPE: a heretic we need to know

by Carl Trueman

When one asks the most influential thinkers in the modern evangelical church are, one might find names such as Jim Packer, John Stott, and Don Carson. I would like to suggest, however, that there is one whose influence is perhaps much greater than we are aware of, yet whose thinking all but pervades the modern evangelical church: Marcion.

He's the man who gets my vote for most profound influence on evangelicalism, from canon to theology to worship practices. You never see his books on the shelves in your high street Christian bookshop; you never see him advertised as preaching in your local church; but, rest assured, his spirit stalks those bookshops and pulpits.

## NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

Marcion is – or, rather, was – a somewhat shadowy figure, with most of what we know about him coming from the hostile pen of Tertullian. Apparently, he was a native of Pontus (in modern times, the area by the Black Sea), who flourished in the

middle of the second century, dying circa 160. His major distinctive was his insistence on the Christian gospel as exclusively one of love to the extent that he came to a complete rejection of the Old Testament and only a qualified acceptance of those parts of the New Testament which he considered to be consistent with his central thesis (i.e. ten letters of Paul and a recension of the Gospel of Luke).

So how does Marcion influence modern evangelicalism? Well, I think evangelicalism has become practically Marcionite at a number of levels.

### 1. *Out with wrath*

First, the emphasis upon God's love to the utter exclusion of everything else has become something of a commonplace. We see this in the collapse of the notion of penal substitution as an evangelical doctrine. Now, maybe I'm missing something, but of all the things taught in the Bible, the terrifying wrath of God would seem to be among the most self-evident of all.

Thus, when I hear statements from evangelical theologians such as “God's wrath is always restorative,” my mind goes straight to countless OT passages, the Bible's teaching about Satan, and NT characters such as Ananias and Sapphira. There was not much restoration for any of these folk – or is being swallowed alive by the earth, consumed by holy fire, and being struck dead for cheating the church actually therapeutic techniques intended to restore the individuals concerned?

And when leading evangelicals tell me that penal substitution is tantamount to cosmic child abuse (don't laugh - this is seriously argued by some leading evangelical theologians), I'm left wondering whether I should sit down and explain the doctrine to them, or whether I should merely tell them to go away and grow up. Do they really expect the church to take such claims as serious theological reflection?

### 2. *Out with the Old*

Then, there is the constant tendency to neglect the Old Testament, in

*“An NT scholar...thought the average evangelical's life would be pretty much unaffected if the whole Bible, except for the Gospel of John and the Letter to the Romans, simply disappeared.”*

particular in our theological reflections – our devotional lives need to take full account of the Old Testament. We need to read the Bible as a whole, to understand each passage, each verse, within the theological and narrative structure of the canon as a whole.

As evangelicals we can often err by focusing purely on the straight doctrinal teaching of the letters in the NT and the great passages in John's Gospel. An NT scholar and friend once said to me that he thought the average evangelical's life would be pretty much unaffected if the whole Bible, except for the Gospel of John and the Letter to the Romans, simply disappeared. Hyperbole maybe, but probably not by much.

We need a solid biblical theology – not one which downgrades everything to the level of economy at the expense of ontology but one which takes full account of the central narrative of the Bible and seeks to do justice even to those bits of the Bible we don't like.

### 3. *Out with God's songs*

Then, in our church practice, we need to take the Old Testament more seriously. It astounds me, given the overwhelming use of Psalms as central to gathered worship in the first four centuries, and the absolute importance given to psalmody for the first two centuries of the post-Reformation Reformed churches, and the fact that the Book of Psalms is the only hymn book which can claim to be universal in its acceptance by the whole of Christendom and utterly inspired in all of its statements – it astounds me, I say, that so few Psalms are sung in our worship services today.

Moreover, often nothing seems to earn the scorn and derision of others

more than the suggestion that more Psalms should be sung in worship. Indeed, the last few years have seen a number of writers strike out against exclusive psalmody. Given that life is too short to engage in pointless polemics, I am left wondering which parallel universe these guys come from, where the most pressing and dangerous worship issue is clearly that people sing too much of the Bible in their services. How terrifying a prospect that would be.

Imagine: people actually singing songs that express the full range of human emotion in their worship using words of which God has explicitly said, “These are mine.”

Back here on Planet Earth, however, there is generally precious little chance of overloading on sound theology in song in most evangelical churches as the Marcion invasion is pretty much total and unopposed in the sphere of worship. Yet I for one prefer Athanasius to Marcion and, in his letter to Marcellinus, he gives one of the most beautiful and moving arguments for Psalms in worship ever penned (which can be read at [tinyurl.com/AthanPsalms](http://tinyurl.com/AthanPsalms)). It is a pity more have not taken his words to heart

### **MAKING GOD UNKNOWABLE**

So what will be the long-term consequences of this Marcionite approach to the Bible? Ultimately, I think it will push “the God who is there” back into the realm of the unknowable and make our god a mere projection of our own psychology, and make our worship simply into group therapy sessions where we all come together to pretend we are feeling great.

God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – take that identity away

and what do we have left? As the OT is the context for the NT, so the neglect of OT leaves the NT as more or less meaningless. As our reading, our sermons, and our times of corporate worship neglect and, sometimes, simply ignore the OT, we can expect a general impoverishment of church life and, finally, a total collapse of evangelical Christendom.

Indeed, there are mornings when I wake up and think it's already all over, and that the church in the West survives more by sheer force of personality, by hype and by marketing ploys rather than by any higher power.

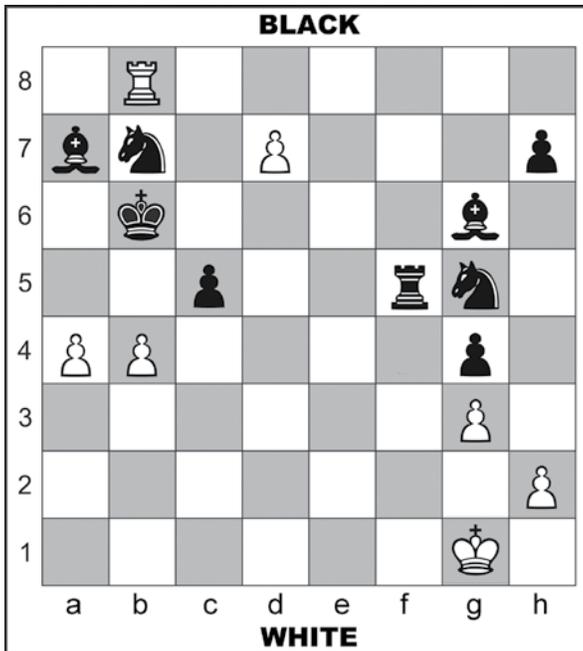
We need to grasp once again who God is in his fullness; we need to grasp who we are in relation to him; and we need teaching and worship which gives full-orbed expression to these things – and this will only come when we in the West grow up, ditch the designer gods we build from our pick-n-mix Bible where consumer, not Creator, is king, and give the whole Bible its proper place in our lives, thinking and worship.

Think truncated thoughts about God and you'll get a truncated God; read an expurgated Bible and you get an expurgated theology; sing mindless, superficial rubbish instead of deep, truly emotional praise and you will eventually become what you sing. RP

*Dr. Carl Trueman is Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary and blogs at [FirstThings.com](http://FirstThings.com). This article first appeared in *Themelios* Vol. 28 No. 1 under the title “The Marcions have landed. A warning for evangelical” and is reprinted here with the author's permission.*

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #242



**WHITE to Mate in 2**

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

## Riddle for Punsters #242

### "A French Delicacy for Supper – Legs of a Croaker"

A dead rabbit was laying in a field. The next day its body was gone. This confirms the adage, "H\_ \_ \_ today, \_ one tomorrow."

A frog was merrily hopping around a campfire but suddenly found itself landing in a pot of quite warm water above the fire, confirming the adage, "L\_ \_ \_ before you l\_ \_ \_." The frog considered leaping out right away but did not do so, wanting to enjoy the warm water a bit longer. The increasing warmth put the frog to sleep and eventually the frog truly "cr\_ \_ \_ ed". The camper had frog's legs for supper, confirming the adage, "He who \_ \_ \_ \_ tates is l\_ \_ \_." It appears that any plans the frog had for the future had truly "gone to \_ \_ t".

## Problem to Ponder #242

### "The Baker, the Banker & the Blacksmith"

For the following three statements, **one is true and the other two are false**. Determine the name of the baker, the banker and the blacksmith.

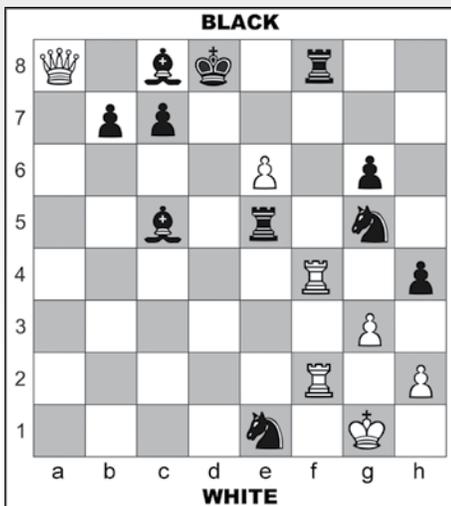
1. Jeremiah is a blacksmith.
2. John is not a baker.
3. James is a banker or blacksmith.

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,

43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 or robgteach@gmail.com

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #241



#### WHITE TO MATE IN 3

##### Descriptive Notation

1. QxB ch KxQ
2. RxR ch BxR
3. RxB mate

##### Algebraic Notation

1. Qa8xc8 + Kd8xc8
2. Rf4xf8 + Bc5xf8
3. Rf2xf8 ++

#### BLACK TO MATE IN 4

##### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- N/K8-B6 ch
2. K-N2 P-R6 ch
3. K-R1 R-K8 ch
4. R-B1 R/K8xR mate

or

1. ----- N/K8-B6 ch
2. K-R1 R-K8 ch
3. R-B1 R/K8xR ch
4. K-N2 R-KN8 mate

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters

### #241 – "Which Wind Pipes are you Repairing Today - the Church's or the Minister's?"

Why did the surgeon like to repair organ pipes?

While working on the pipes he used the time to **organ**ize his thoughts and plan how he was going to do his next **organ** transplant surgery as scheduled by the medical **organ**ization that paid him for each surgery.

## Answer to Problem to Ponder

### #241 – "Cagey Rearrangements of Letters."

Arrange the letters of the following anagrams to make the names of animals commonly found at a zoo. All answers are just one word except for the bottom row answers which are two word names of animals. For example, IN LO would be LION and CAT HE HE would be CHEETAH.

A HEN LEPT	<u>ELEPHANT</u>	FEAR FIG	<u>GIRAFFE</u>
MY KENO	<u>MONKEY</u>	SHAMPOO IT PUP	<u>HIPPOPOTAMUS</u>
IF AM LONG	<u>FLAMINGO</u>	TORCH IS	<u>OSTRICH</u>
RAIL LOG	<u>GORILLA</u>	APE ZINC HEM	<u>CHIMPANZEE</u>
RAZZ BYE GIRL	<u>GRIZZLY BEAR</u>	FOWL UPP	<u>WOLF PUP</u>

#### BLACK WINS SOONER IF

1. ----- N/K8-B6 ch
2. K-B1 R-K8 ch
3. K-N2 P-R6 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Ne1-f3 +
2. Kg1-g2 h4-h3 +
3. Kg2-h1 Re5-e1 +
4. Rf2-f1 Re1xf1 ++

or

1. ----- Ne1-f3 +
2. Kg1-h1 Re5-e1 +
3. Rf2-f1 Re1xf1 +
4. Kh1-g2 Rf1-g1 ++

#### BLACK WINS SOONER IF

1. ----- Ne1-f3 +
2. Kg1-f1 Re5-e1 +
3. Kf1-g2 h4-h3 ++

# DELIVERING THE TRUTH, UNVARNISHED

As Christians, we need to “under hype and over verify”

by Jon Dykstra



There is an old adage in business that, if a company wants to have a good reputation, they should “under promise and over deliver.”

When it comes to the media this adage has been flipped. There are so many channels, and videos, and stories, and articles out there that if a news outlet hopes to get our attention, they can't help but be tempted to “over promise and under deliver,” hyping stories that are hardly stories at all.

So, for example, in this issue Dr. Bredenhof writes about the media storm that took place in Australia when a poster was found that used a four-letter expletive for homosexuals. It was a single poster, but news reports made it seem as if there were many others. And when those many others couldn't be found, one news outlet went so far as to manufacture a picture, “photoshopping” the poster onto a stock image of a bus shelter. They succumbed to the temptation – they hyped the story into something much bigger than it deserved to be.

## EXAGGERATED TRUTH ISN'T TRUE

But the secular media isn't the only group facing this temptation. It's a temptation for us all, in our Facebook status updates, and our tweets, and even in our face-to-face conversations. We want to make our point. We want to be

heard. We want to be convincing. So it can be tempting to exaggerate just a little, be just a little careless about the facts. All in service of the greater truth, right?

*Reformed Perspective* faces the same temptation. How do we get our material read? How do we get readers to open the magazine or click on the link? And to further complicate the issue, sometimes there is only a fine line marking the difference between exaggeration and simply making a story as engaging as possible.

## BEING CAREFUL WITH THE TRUTH

When Dr. Bredenhof's article came in, it needed a picture that would grab eyes. And with all the talk of “fake news” these days, why not run with that? That'll get attention, right? So I created the first picture up top, with the big bold “FAKE NEWS” stamp running across it.

But there was a problem: this wasn't *entirely* fake news. Sure, the bus shelter photo was fabricated. But the original poster had been real and that meant there was a kernel of something real in this story. Now, I don't think it would have been *wrong* to run the “fake news” illustration. But it wasn't as accurate as it could be. The real problem here wasn't so much that the story was *all* fake as that it had been hyped and exaggerated beyond recognition. So it would have been a

terrible irony to make the same sort of mistake in our picture choice.

Instead this needed to be the truth unhyped. I got rid of the fake news stamp, and to grab eyes I kept the poster in color and turn the background black and white. Still striking. But no exaggeration.

## DON'T GIVE THEM AN EXCUSE TO IGNORE YOU

When we witness to a world that is increasingly hostile to God's truth, it's vital we deliver it unvarnished. Otherwise they'll use any exaggeration, any careless mistake, as a reason to dismiss what we have to say. If there is a nit they can pick, they will find it, and use it.

That's why, if we want to be faithful witnesses, we have to “under hype and over verify.” We have to be careful, and conservative about the claims we make.

That's what *Reformed Perspective* is trying to do: we're trying to be careful with the Truth in big ways and little.

We hope that's something you appreciate too. And we ask that you make use of our efforts, sharing them on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and other social media pages. And if you haven't already, will you consider filling in the form on the facing page and becoming a monthly supporter? 



I want to share my Reformed perspective with the world!

By filling out the form below, and becoming a monthly contributor, you give the *RP* Foundation the steady support that will enable us to reach many, many more with a thoughtful, thought-provoking and thoroughly Reformed perspective on every sphere of life.

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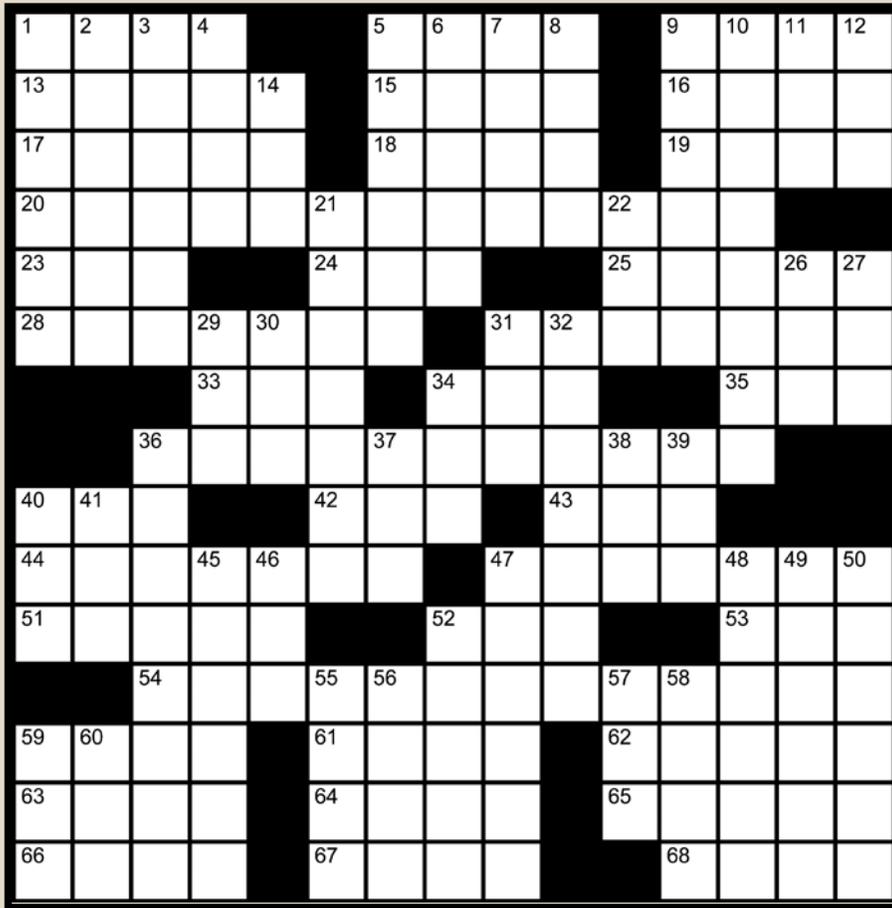
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Thank you for standing with us as we together proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all spheres of life!

Completed forms, along with void cheques, can be mailed to: *Reformed Perspective*, Box 1328, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 3-8

### PUZZLE CLUES

#### ACROSS

1. Brown-capped edible mushroom
5. Liver secretion
9. What the tide does when it's on its way out
13. French farewell
15. "he makes it an \_\_\_\_ and falls...." (Is. 44)
16. A toy that has its ups and downs
17. Edging of windowframes or doorframes
18. "who \_\_\_\_ on the throne" (Rev. 5, 7)
19. "following the nursing \_\_\_\_" (Ps. 78)
20. Unstable way to make legs look longer
23. Atom with positive or negative charge
24. "with uplifted \_\_\_\_ he led them" (Acts 13)
25. "the house of Simon the \_\_\_\_" (Mark 14)

28. French forest site of World War I/II battles
31. "...a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole \_\_\_\_"
33. Month named after a Caesar (abbreviation)
34. Frequently (poetically speaking)
35. U.S. tax agency (abbreviation)
36. Repercussion, consequence
40. Hundredweight (abbreviation)
42. "neither root \_\_\_\_ branch" (Mal. 4)
43. The Gershwin brother who wrote the lyrics
44. Refuse to buy to show disapproval
47. "all of them \_\_\_\_\_ in holes" (Is. 12)
51. Brownish tint in photos or video
52. "Rah rah \_\_\_\_ boom bah!" (college cheer)

53. One hundredth of hectare (or 3 sevenths?)
54. Adjective for the current Space Station
59. "let us run... the \_\_\_\_" (Heb. 12)
61. "As a \_\_\_\_ pants for flowing...." (Ps. 42)
62. \_\_\_\_ Apso (dog breed originating in Tibet)
63. Test that is partly example of final insight
64. "This \_\_\_\_ pleased Haman" (Esther 5)
65. Slang, sometimes insulting, term for a Briton
66. \_\_\_\_ Lugosi (actor playing Dracula in 1931)
67. Hills or rocky peaks
68. "where no galley with \_\_\_\_" (Is. 33)

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 3-7

#### DOWN

1. "Cinnamon" made of bark of East Asian trees
2. Other title of the author of "In a Nutshell"
3. Post that supports a foundation
4. "\_\_\_\_ your possessions, and..." (Luke 12)
5. Brown pigment extracted from soot of wood
6. "Run out of ink," for example
7. Unwilling (archaic, short form)
8. "please send someone \_\_\_\_" (Ex. 4)
9. Hole in fabric to thread laces through
10. Spar extending from a ship's bow
11. Tata; toodle-oo
12. Maritime distress signal
14. "rather not \_\_\_\_ paper and ink" (2 John)
21. Line on a curve; idea not on point
22. Wapiti
26. Infinitely long time, poetically speaking
27. Hi-\_\_\_\_; low-\_\_\_\_
29. Insulting term for uncoordinated person
30. What goes round a bolt
31. "the putting \_\_\_\_ of my body" (2 Pet. 1)
32. "did not understand \_\_\_\_" (John 12)
34. Above, poetically speaking
36. Not average, not the usual
37. "like dry \_\_\_\_ to the

house...." (Hosea 5)

38. Significant historical period
39. Top limit, or alternative to top hat
40. Radio network that aired *War of the Worlds*
41. "\_\_\_\_ to them.... in the way of Cain" (Jude)
45. Film, or where a film might be shown
46. \_\_\_\_ meal – usually breakfast
47. Queens' headwear
48. Men's headwear type (in Central America?)
49. End of pencil to do 56 Down
50. They hold us up (not robbers).
52. Facial/vocal expression of snide snippy snob
55. Carry out the task of 2 Down
56. What 2 Down might ask an author to do
57. "was \_\_\_\_ , near to death." (Phili. 2)
58. State beginning and ending with same letter
59. Short slang for a Confederate soldier
60. Tool wielded by Abimelech (Judges 9)



# PARENTS, ARE YOU PUSHING OR LEADING?

by Jay Younts

**D**o your children feel led or pushed? Are you as a parent dominated by love or frustration? The two questions are tightly connected. Leading is born out of love and pushing is born out of frustration. As parents we may tell our children that we demand obedience and speak sharply because we love them and only want the best for them. Most likely our children are not buying this explanation. It feels to them as if they are being manipulated into doing what mom and dad want.

But God has better way. Proverbs 16:20-21 calls it pleasant words.

“Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.”

*Are you as a parent dominated by love or frustration?*

Focusing on pleasant words encourages your children. Pleasant words also point to the true motivation which should guide each parent: conveying a deep love of God from the heart. This is what the Holy Spirit commands you to do. You are to take the truths of God’s Word, weave them into the fabric of your heart and then present your heart to your children. This is what Deuteronomy 6:5-7 is teaching:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

So, you as a parent are to deeply love God with all that you are as a person. This love is expressed by drinking deeply of his commands so that your heart is permeated with them. Then, this love for

God and his commands is to overflow from your heart with pleasant words into the everyday life that you and your children inhabit.

It is this combination of loving God and speaking pleasant words that will enable you to lead rather than push. Even as you embrace this deep love for God that Deuteronomy requires you to have, your children will still be sinful creatures that desperately need the grace of God. The difference will be that you will not be pushing them to grasp what remains elusive to you. Rather you will be leading them to the same place that you long to go – to the cross.

Are you pushing or leading? Think about it. **RP**

*Jay Younts is the author of “Everyday Talk: Talking freely and Naturally about God with Your Children” and “Everyday Talk about Sex & Marriage.” He blogs at ShepherdPress.com, where this article (reprinted with permission) first appeared under the title “Pushing or leading?”*

# THE REFORMATION COMES TO STRASBOURG

*This year, as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, most of the focus will be on famous names such as Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, and Luther. But there were countless others used by God. In this excerpt from Chapter 23 of Christine Farenhorst's new novel "Katharina, Katharina" we follow the Reformation as it happened in the city of Strasbourg, 400 miles from Wittenberg, and as it happened in the life of Katharina Schütz Zell.*

In the early fall of 1518, when the heat was beginning to ease off just a breath, and trees were setting up their easels of autumn colors, Matthis Zell, a new priest, took charge of the cathedral parish of St. Lawrence.

\*\*\*\*

It was Katharina's friend, Annalein, who first informed her that St. Lawrence had acquired a new parish priest.

"What does he look like?" Katharina asked, her curiosity piqued.

They were sequestered in the Schütz sitting room, side by side, heads drawn close in conversation. She poked Annalein, who was dreamily staring out at the rectangular-shaped windowpanes through which the afternoon sun was shining.

"What does he look like?" she repeated impatiently.

"Who?" Annalein asked, almost as if she were waking up, "Whom does who look like?"

"The new parish priest," Katharina said, resisting an urge to shake Annalein. "You just told me that St. Lawrence had a new parish priest."

Annalein had always been rather absent with her thoughts. But Katharina knew that there was not a kinder girl in the whole of Strasbourg.

"Oh, the new priest," Annalein responded, a slow smile appearing at the corners of her mouth, "He seems quite nice, actually. But Katharina, you will never guess whom I saw at Mass this morning. Herr Burrman and his wife and ...."

"I didn't ask if the new priest was nice,

Annalein," Katharina patiently replied, "but I asked what he looked like. You know as in: Was he tall? Did he have dark features....?"

"Oh," Annalein said, "is that what you meant?"

"Yes, it was."

"Well, I only saw him from a distance and could not make out his features very well. He was of medium height – neither short nor tall. And whether or not he had a dark complexion...."

She stopped, shrugging a little helplessly and then went on, animation lighting her pale face.

"But Herr and Frau Burrman had their son with them. He is quite tall and rather good-looking, I think. They remembered me and stopped to speak with me. The son was very kind also. He asked after my health."

During the somewhat rapid flow of words cascading down from Annalein's lips, Katharina observed her friend carefully. As far as she could recall, she had never heard her speak of anyone of the male gender with such praise.

"What is his name? What is the son's name?"

"It is Reinhart."

"Reinhart," Katharina repeated, adding, "a very noble name."

"Yes, indeed," Annalein agreed, "I did think so as well."

Katharina smiled indulgently, before adding, "So might you see him again?"

Annalein blushed most becomingly.

"Well, he did say that he might call on my Mother, just," she added innocently, "to ask about some particular matters

with regard to her tapestry work. He was thinking of buying something for the church because he is so thankful about his mother's complete recovery."

"Oh, I see," Katharina said, "a devoted son. And that is," she added, "the way it should be."

"Indeed," Annalein agreed demurely, hands folded in her lap, "he appears to be very devoted."

Then the girls caught one another's eyes and they both began to laugh – first softly, but their peals of laughter increased by the moment. It was at that moment that Katharina's sister Margaret walked in.

"What are you laughing at?" she demanded, almost beginning to laugh herself because the merry sound that met her was so contagious.

"Oh, nothing," Katharina spoke with difficulty, heaving a big sigh to control the mirth that kept bubbling up.

"Nothing?" Margaret said disbelievably.

"Well, actually we were speaking of... of the new parish priest at St. Lawrence," Annalein added, trying hard to speak seriously.

"Well, what is so humorous about him?" Margaret asked, "I have heard him preach a few times and he is quite...."

She stopped. In spite of herself, Katharina was intrigued.

"He is quite what, Margaret?"

"Well, I would say, he is quite stern."

"Stern?"

"His eyes," Margaret said, sitting herself down on a chair opposite the two girls, "his eyes are quite piercing and when he speaks, you must listen for you cannot look away."

*Luther posting his 95 theses in 1517,*  
by Ferdinand Pauwels

"You have not spoken of him before," Katharina observed, "but it seems that he has made quite an impression on you."

"He carries himself," Margaret went on, "with a quiet dignity and not at all like many of the priests we are wont to see who...."

She stopped, rather at a loss.

"Yes," Katharina encouraged.

"I would not," her sister said softly, "I would not malign those of the church and thus incur... incur...."

"I know," Annalein finished her hesitating words, "you are not eager to incur a lot of disapproval, especially when you will feel bound to confess in the booth to your local priest what you have just said. For he is likely to fine you and give you a week's worth of 'Hail Mary's' to boot."

"Annalein!"

Both of the Schütz girls gasped at her audacity. Annalein placidly stared at them.

"It is true what I said, is it not? I think I am not the only one to scoff at those who preach good works but who steal from the poor."

As the sisters continued to stare at her, she added, "And, from what Margaret has just said, I would like to hear brother Zell preach, and not," and here she poked Katharina in the side, "just look at him."

It was Katharina's turn to blush.

"I merely wanted to know what he looked like, so that I would recognize him on the pulpit," she responded with what dignity she could muster.

"As I said, I have heard him," Margaret repeated, noting her sister's blush with interest, "and I do learn from what he says."

"How old," Katharina asked, "is he?"

"I think that he would be in his late thirties, maybe about forty years of age," Margaret said, "quite old really. But not so old as Father. And," she added as a non sequitur, "he has a rather large, longish nose."

\*\*\*\*

It was not until several of months later, not until the spring of the new year of 1519, that Katharina finally met the new



pastor of St. Lawrence in person.

She had gone to visit a woman whose only son, an eight-year old, had become ill with a severely swollen stomach. Steadfast at the boy's bedside, the mother had barely had any sleep. The child's stomach was so distended he continually screamed with pain. Purgatives had been administered, but the boy repeatedly vomited them up. Just prior to Katharina's visit, the doctor had concocted a powder which the child had kept down, soon afterwards passing a great many worms in his stool.

"May Almighty God," the mother whispered, "still grant His grace in letting Kristoff live."

Katharina patted her hand, then guided her towards a small cot made up in the corner of the boy's bedroom and made sure she lay down. Satisfied when both mother and child appeared to be sleeping, she went outside into the small yard with a bucket of sudsy water to clean the soiled sheets and blankets. She was thus occupied when she saw a priest approach the dwelling. Because she was aware that both child and mother were trying to sleep, she quickly ran to intercept the man.

"Pardon me," she called, crying out just as he was lifting his hand to knock on the door, "but have you come to visit Frau Freiburg?"

He stopped, hand in mid-air, and nodded. Somewhat shyly, she went on to explain that she was helping the family, putting her own soapy hands which held an old towel behind her back.

"They were sleeping, both she and

her child, when I left them some fifteen minutes ago," she finished.

The priest had a rather longish nose and remembering her sister Margaret's comment, Katharina suspected that it might be the new priest of St. Lawrence parish and bit back a smile.

"Truth be told," she went on, as the man did not respond but simply gazed at her, "the sleep will do both mother and child a world of good as the boy has been, and still is very, ill. But you are undoubtedly aware of his illness."

While she spoke, she dried her hands on the towel.

"So I take it," he spoke, and his voice was a rich, deep baritone, "that you suggest I not come in."

"Far be it from me," she replied, "to tell you what to do. But, yes, given the severity of the boy's affliction and that he has been but a foot from the grave, I would deem it wise that you not awaken them."

"You are quite right," he smiled, "and I think they have a fine neighbor in you, for you are a good Samaritan. Would that all the people in Strasbourg were so blessed."

She blushed and he regarded her deeply for a long moment without speaking.

"My name is Matthis Zell," he finally spoke.

"Yes," she responded, "so I thought."

There was another quiet.

"And what might your name be, if I may be so bold as to ask?"

"Katharina - Katharina Schütz."

"Ah," he responded, regarding her with his great brown eyes, eyes which reminded



*Martin Luther in front of Thomas Cajetan, by Ferdinand Pauwels*

since the boy had worn them? How long since he had played with the horse? How vain life was! Soon this child, Katharina fleetingly mused even as she patted Frau Freiberg's shoulder, would be buried to the tune of clergy's chanting and the sound of bells would carry his memory away. For who would remember him in the long run? Who would?

\*\*\*\*

Later, after Frau Freiberg's relatives had come to be with her, Katharina and the black-robed Matthis Zell went home, walking together side by side for a considerable length of streets. Katharina was somewhat lost in thought, her mind overly occupied with the loss that Frau Freiberg had to sustain. Why did such things happen? It was true, all men had to die – but such little ones?!

Hard put to keep up with Katharina's quick steps, Matthis was uneasy. He was impressed by the girl's gentle and yet decisive manner, by her way of helping the family they had just left, but she seemed so far-off with her thoughts now. He studied her profile as she paced next to him. It almost seemed as if she had forgotten that he was there.

"Which church," he began in a low tone, curious but also genuinely interested in the young woman that providence had placed on his path, "do you attend, Fraulein Schütz?"

She began walking slower, suddenly realizing that he was still there, and turned her large blue eyes towards him. They were troubled, he noted.

"Which church?" she repeated slowly, "Well we, that is to say, my family and I, always attended Dr. Geiler's church. After he died his nephew, Peter Wickram, took over the pulpit but Peter Wickram is not his equal in preaching, I am afraid."

He inclined his head to show that he had heard this, but did not say anything else, as he believed it was in bad taste to criticize a colleague.

"You are at St. Lawrence?" Katharina asked him.

He nodded again.

Katharina of a faithful dog.

She experienced a certain amount of regret that she had not worn a better gown, one with, perhaps, elaborately cuffed sleeves. But this man, this priest, did not seem the type of fellow to whom a matter such as dress would be important. Nevertheless, she felt a strange desire to appear pleasing to him, to appear neat, with a hair net hiding the ever-rambunctious hair strands that always escaped from beneath her cap.

"Well, I must...." Katharina eventually said, blushing as he chose that same moment to also speak.

They both left off words again and Katharina was quietly contemplating a return to her labors on the sheets and blankets, when they heard an agonized cry come from within the house.

"I think," the priest said, "that we... that you, at any rate...."

Katharina lost no time and bolted past Master Matthis Zell, who stepped aside to let her enter the front door. The wailing that met their ears, as soon as the door opened, was heart-rending. Katharina ran towards the bedroom. Although she had left both the mother and the boy in slumber, a state of turmoil and disorder met her eyes when she entered the bedchamber. Frau Freiberg was attempting to hold Kristoff, her son, down. But he, talking constantly, although not in such a way that one could understand him, was frantically trying to get out of bed. His breathing was labored and difficult and

his eyes were bulging. Katharina knelt down on the opposite side of the bed and attempted to help Frau Freiberg get Kristoff to lie down again. Matthis Zell stood in the doorway, but then also drew near to the bedside.

"Let me help," he said, "I am stronger. Perhaps if I lift him up and carry him about, he will be more comfortable."

The two women immediately stood up and Matthis bent over the child, easily lifting the lad up in his strong arms. Initially Kristoff quieted in the priest's embrace, but just as Katharina was about to heave a sigh of relief that a crisis had been averted, the child began to convulse. Within a few minutes, the boy was dead – dead in the priest's arms. Gently he laid the boy back on the bed, closing the wide-open eyes. Then turning to the bereft mother who had fallen down on her knees by the edge of the bed, tightly gripping the blanket in her hands as if by doing that she might hold on to the life of her little one, he laid one hand on her head.

"May God keep Kristoff safe until we come to him!"

"Indeed," Katharina echoed, even as she, coming around the bed, put her arms about Frau Freiberg.

A little cowhide-covered horse stood in the corner of the room. Herr Freiberg, a merchant, had brought it back for Kristoff from one of his business trips the last time he had been home. A brown jerkin and some skin-colored stockings hung over the toy's side. How long ago had it been

"Yes, I am and I have been given comfortable quarters on the Bruderhof Strasse just behind the Cathedral."

He did not know himself why he volunteered this information. Surely the girl was not interested in knowing where his place of residence was.

She smiled, slowing her pace even more, "I am glad for you. It must be difficult to come to live in a new place where you know very few people."

"The ones I have come to know have been kind," he rejoined.

"Where," she hesitatingly went on, not wishing to appear nosy, "are you from?"

"From Kaysersberg."

"Oh, that is where Dr. Geiler was from. It was his home town."

Her face shone now and he remarked within himself that the smile which transformed her face exposed a sweetness that was very pleasant to behold.

"Yes, I have heard that he was."

"And did you know," Katharina went on eagerly, "that forty years ago Dr. Geiler was on his way to a preaching post at Würzburg when he was waylaid by Peter Schott, who was one of the chief magistrates of Strasbourg, and was persuaded by him to come here instead?"

"I have heard the story," Matthis Zell replied.

"And Peter Schott, who was also curator of the Cathedral, had the magnificent stone pulpit built for Dr. Geiler, with its nearly fifty saints, from which he preached for some thirty years to us here in Strasbourg. Perhaps you will also...."

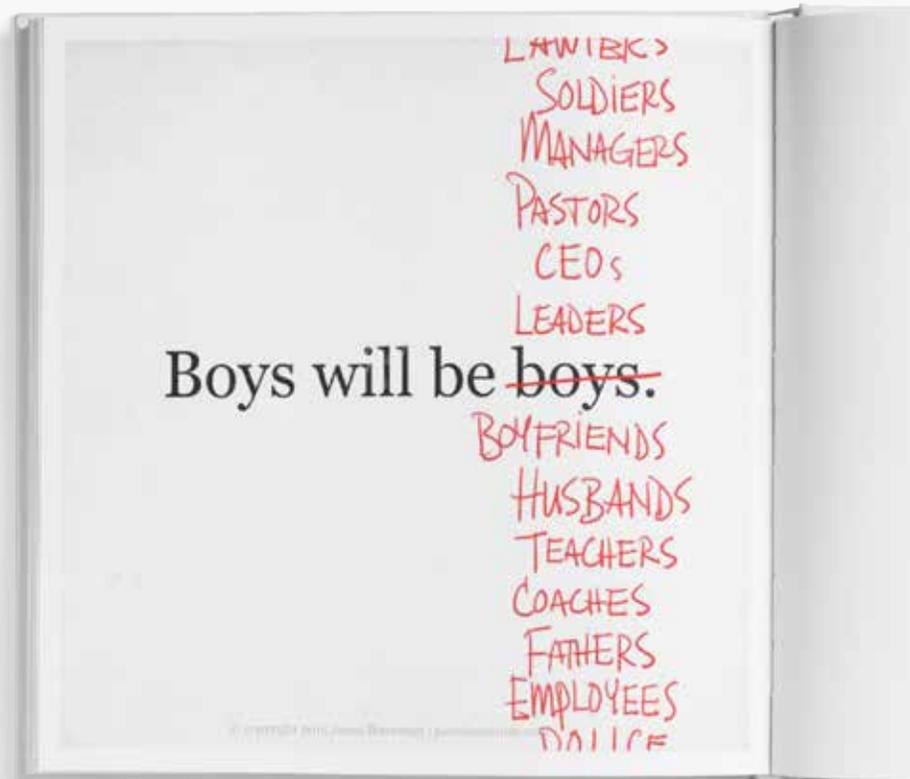
Matthis Zell nodded and smiled as she halted her account.

"I had indeed heard."

Katharina had stopped because she was suddenly embarrassed. Here she was again, dominating a conversation and comparing this man to Dr. Geiler. Perhaps he was intimidated by her words. Indeed, it was perhaps most unkind. Katharina herself did not like to be compared to others. It was sometimes humiliating and oppressing. She began another topic, trying to cover up her enthusiastic endorsement of Dr. Geiler.

"And your parents live there - in Kaysersberg? And have you brothers and sisters whom you will surely miss?"

She stopped again. She was such a



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*What think you of Luther and his views?" she said, blurring the words out rather quickly...*

waterfall of words and knew herself to be speaking overly much, something her mother was always warning her not to do.

"I," she continued, suddenly shy and withdrawing her smile, "do apologize for talking too much and for asking such questions as are not really mine to ask. I surely over speak."

"No, indeed," he responded quickly, "too few people are interested. They think a priest is made only of black robes and has

not a background of flesh and blood and is not interested in stories and such."

This made Katharina grin in spite of herself, for she knew that there were indeed a great many priests who were very much made of flesh and blood, priests consisting mainly of bellies and greed.

"Why do you smile now?"

Matthis Zell's curiosity was piqued.

"It is just," and she spoke slowly now, not certain as to what she should reveal of her

thoughts, "that I have known a great many priests who hid money pouches and slack flesh underneath their robes."

He was quiet for a great many steps and she was afraid that she had been too bold once more and that she had offended him.

"I am sorry," she began, "I did not...."

But he interrupted.

"No, you need not apologize. I am only too well aware of the iniquities of a great many men of the cloth."

## Wonderful story shows the Reformation through ordinary eyes

In the past year, inspired by the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 theses I've read more than a dozen works on Luther and this is a favorite.

It offers something very different from the others – this is about Luther and his time, but he isn't the main character. He isn't even a minor character, never making an in-story appearance. The events take place miles away from Luther's Wittenberg, in the French city of Strasbourg, on the border with Germany. The story centers around a middle daughter of the middle-class Schutz family. Like their neighbors, the Schutzes read and discuss Luther's pamphlets.

By taking a step back from the man himself, author Christine Farenhorst gives her readers the opportunity to encounter Luther's ideas in much the same way as the people of his time did. They didn't debate his ideas at the start, so much as wonder what to think of them. Some of his points they could readily agree with – many saw a need for at least some sort of reformation of the Church. But his thoughts on indulgences... might he be right?

We follow the title character from childhood up until her mid-twenties. Though Katharina Schutz is a real person, this is historical *fiction* – all the big

events are true, but the day-to-day details of Katharina's life have been made up. This is why, even as a background character, Luther still dominates the story. Katharina's life is fascinating reading but because much of it is speculative it serves as the foundation while what we learn about Luther here is his real actual history.

One of the strangest bits of true history in the book is the dancing plague of 1518 that hit Strasbourg. Victims couldn't help but dance. It would have been funny except that this stilted, clumsy dancing never stopped - as many as 400 dancers kept going for days and days, beyond exhaustion, and even to the point of heart attacks and strokes.

### Target Audience

This is a teen to young adult book, but like any good children's book, adults interested in their church history will find it fascinating. However, as a third of all children at that time were dying before they hit age 5, there are some parts to Katharina's story that would be bawl-inducing to anyone under, say, ten. The slow beginning also makes it better suited for readers with a little maturity to them.

### KATHARINA, KATHARINA

BY CHRISTINE FARENHORST

328 PAGES / 2017



### Conclusion

There is a real benefit to learning about Luther in this one-step-removed fashion. I enjoyed the story, but what really grabbed me was what I learned about the people and culture of that time. It gave me a deeper understanding of the pressures that Luther faced, and insights into how God prepared the ground for the Reformation Luther sparked.

You can buy *Katharina, Katharina* at [Sola-Scriptura.ca/store/shop](http://Sola-Scriptura.ca/store/shop) or by phoning 1-800-563-3529

- Jon Dykstra

*...she knew that there were indeed a great many priests who were very much made of flesh and blood, priests consisting mainly of bellies and greed.*

the church door of that city."

He smiled.

"Yes, I am acquainted with Herr Luther. I am, and have for some time, been reading a number of things that he has written. My parishioners obviously read him, and I ought to be aware of what they are reading."

He smiled as he said this, but she did not smile in return.

"I would know what you think of his charter, of his theses," she said, "for his words do touch my soul."

"As they do mine," brother Zell immediately rejoined, "as they do mine."

"Do you think he speaks the truth?" Katharina asked.

"He is a very courageous man, in any case, to speak as he does. As you may know, he appeared before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg last October. They spoke for three solid days. Initially, I understand, Luther prostrated himself on the floor in a gesture of humility before the Cardinal, and the Cardinal raised him up as a gesture of goodwill. But Luther refused to take back anything that he said."

"Yes," Katharina very nearly stood still, turning her body towards him, her feet moving at a snail's pace, "so I have heard."

They had almost arrived at an intersection.

"He has said," she cautiously went on, "that the person who truly repents has full forgiveness both of punishment and guilt, even without letters of indulgence."

He sighed deeply at he made this statement.

"I am sure that you," she began again, "especially from what I have heard of you...."

He cut off her words.

"Do not listen to what others say, Katharina. It is often only exaggeration and this often leads to disappointment."

Katharina blushed. She knew herself rebuked and stared pointedly at her shoes before reverting the conversation back to the question she had asked him before.

"Do have you have family?"

This seemed a safe topic, and one that would not lead to controversy. Besides that, inside herself she was for some inexplicable reason so very glad that Matthew Zell came from the very same city in which her beloved Dr. Geiler had made his home and she wished to hear him speak of it.

"Well, I have a housekeeper, Mey-Babelli, who was cook to my aunt in Freiburg. When my aunt died, Babelli came to live with me and she takes care of me. So she is like family. But, yes, I also have one sister and one brother. My sister's name is Odile."

"Odile," Katharina softly repeated, "that is a very nice name. I know no one by that name. Perhaps some day I will meet her."

"Yes, perhaps you shall," Matthis Zell nodded as he spoke. "As for me, I did not stay in Kaysersberg, and have not been back for a number of years except briefly to visit my brother who still resides there."

"Where have you lived then?"

"Well, I served in the army for a short time. And this was the time during which I moved away from Kaysersberg and lived neither here nor there as the regiment I was with moved about quite a bit. And after serving in the army, I went on to enroll in the university of Freiburg in Breisgau. When I received my master of arts there, I continued with theological studies."

"Why?"

Katharina knew it was another rather impertinent question and she looked back down at her shoes even as it flew out of her mouth.

But Matthis Zell did not appear to be put off by it.

"Because I did so love to study and the more I studied the more I loved it."

"You felt not that you ought to study, in order to....? You only did it for the sake of the pleasure of studying? That is to say, you were not motivated by an inward call....?"

She stopped here abruptly. Her speech had consisted of unfinished phrases, and she knew quite well that her words sounded muddled, probably making very little sense to him.

"Motivated by an inward call from God?" he finished her last phrase, noting that her face was clouded.

"Yes," she looked up at him now as she spoke, her blue eyes bright with interest, "for it seems to me that God has a purpose for all people and it also seems to me that if priests were to take such a purpose seriously we would not see all the vice that is so rampant in Strasbourg today."

A voice within her, a voice that sounded remarkably like her mother, warned her that once more she had overstepped her oral bounds and had spoken too much and too quickly. After all, she had only just met this man. After all, her words accused the priesthood and the man walking next to her was a priest. She glanced at his face. In profile his nose seemed longer than it actually was. That nose was now pointing at the ground. It was almost as if the nose was sad.

"I'm sorry," she murmured, truly repentant of perhaps having caused him discomfort.

He had been a source of easement to Frau Freiberg and Kristoff and the fact remained that she had only heard good things about him. He put her worries to rest by smiling, revealing even, white teeth.

"No need to feel sorry. I'm glad you feel that you can speak your mind to me," he replied.

"What think you of Luther and his views?" she said, blurring the words out rather quickly, for this indeed was a matter which nagged at her often, nagged her at night and in the daytime as well.

"Luther?"

"Yes, Herr Luther. You surely know of the priest in Wittenberg who has written at length about indulgences and who posted, just this last year, some points on

Matthis Zell looked at her rather quizzically.

"So I have read also," he responded.

"And what thought you?"

"I think that the trafficking in indulgences is shameful," Matthis replied, his eyes serious, "and it grieves me deeply."

She heard that he meant his words and, although she knew the truth of them, was rather shocked by the sentences that followed.

"The public perception of the priesthood is appalling. Nearly all people disrespect the priests. There are so many examples of gluttony, of ambition, of lives of lasciviousness, of harlots being allowed into monasteries...."

He stopped rather abruptly. It was almost as if he had forgotten that she was there. She wished to reply; to say something intelligent, or, at any rate, something comforting, for she gauged that he was lonely. But there was nothing that came to mind.

And his voice, almost metallic now, continued.

"They say that the nearer people live to Rome, the less religious they are. How incredibly strange and despairing is that thought! And I have heard tell that there are those who care not what evil they do, for they say they can always get a plenary remission of all guilt and penalty by absolution and indulgence granted by the Pope for four or six or ... or whatever sum of money they carry."

The metallic tone in his voice had given way to a tremendous sadness – a sadness which distressed Katharina and which made her want to hold his hand to guide him away from such black thoughts. This she could do with little Jacob, but with a priest? No, of course not. But he did appear so mournful. She swallowed and was about to say something about the weather, when he went on again.

"Rome has become a harlot. The church has become blind to all but that which brings monetary gain. And we have so many poor, so many who stand in need of love and help."

He stopped, seeming suddenly to remember that he was speaking with someone and was not alone.

"I am sorry," he said. "I do indeed

apologize for speaking so freely."

She shook her head, cautiously replying, "I speak too much and too hastily myself. And what you say is true."

She forgot that but a few moments ago she had sincerely worried about her hair coming undone, about a few stray strands flying about her face, for truly there were so many more important things to worry about.

"I have to turn off here at this corner," she swallowed as she spoke, regretting that they were now close to the Johangasse, "and you will have to keep on straight to reach the Bruderhof Strasse."

"I know," he said and she bit her lip yet once more for appearing to know the way better than he did.

"Well, Katharina," and he spoke softly, as if to guide her into humility, "I have very much enjoyed speaking with you and hope we can do so again. I think I can tell you a story, perhaps the next time we meet, of an encounter I had with Dr. Geiler when I was but a small boy."

Her eyes widened at this. He had stopped – stopped walking and stopped talking. She did too.

"You met Dr. Geiler when you were a little boy?"

"Yes, indeed. It was only a small encounter, but I should like to tell you about it, as I gather you really loved him, this great preacher of Strasbourg. I also hope," he then added warmly, "that you feel you might want to hear me preach some time."

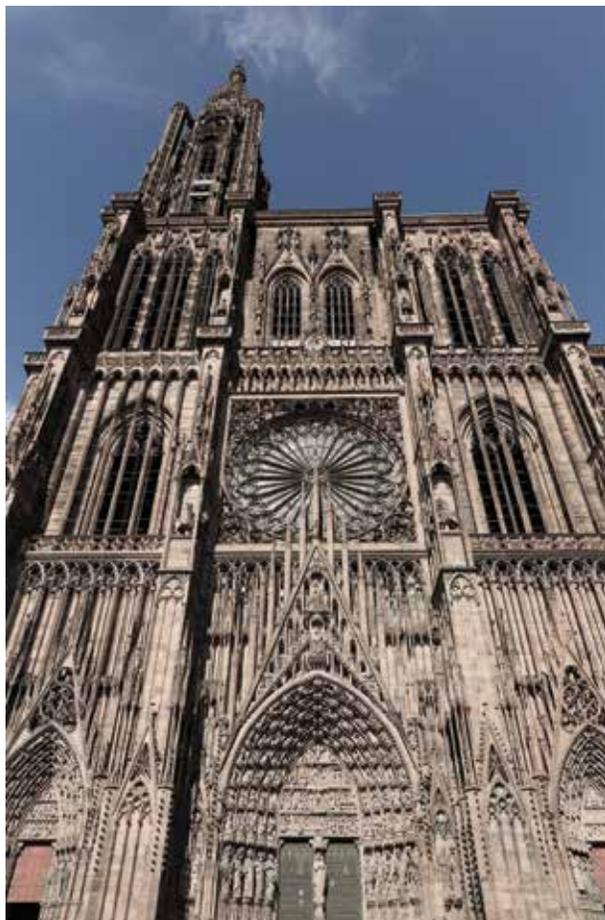
She vigorously pumped her head up and down, feeling several more hair strands escaping her hair net. In spite of herself, her hands flew up to smooth out and tuck in the rebellious curls.

"I would very much like to hear the story of your meeting with Dr. Geiler. And, yes, I would

also like to hear you preach and I thank you for helping Frau Freiberg," she ended the conversation rather lamely, sensing innately she had used a great deal too many 'I's in these sentences, yet adding, "and I bid you good-day, brother Zell."

He smiled at her and the corners of his mouth, as well as the corners of his eyes, crinkled with the many laugh lines that the years had placed there. She was glad of it, for some of the weariness and sadness that had lined his face but a few short moments ago, disappeared. Looking into his friendly face, she flushed even deeper before she turned and walked towards the Johangasse. After staring at her retreating figure for a few moments, Matthis Zell also turned and walked towards the Bruderhof Strasse. RP

*Pick up your copy of Christine Farenhorst's "Katharina, Katharina" at [Sola-Scriptura.ca/store/shop](http://Sola-Scriptura.ca/store/shop) (1-800-563-3529)*



*The cathedral that Matthis Zell preached at.*

# — East vs West —

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# CONTEST

*“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven.”*

—MATTHEW 5:16

**L**etters to the editors of newspapers and magazines are a free and very effective means to be a voice for truth, grace, justice, and common sense in our communities. It is time that we made use of this opportunity to its full potential!

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# 5 TIPS FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS WITH SMALL CHILDREN

by Emma Elliott Freire

**F**or Christian parents, reading the Bible and praying with our children each day is a critical part of raising them in the faith. Yes, it's also important to look out for spontaneous opportunities to teach them the gospel. And our lives should be a constant witness to our children. But nothing can replace a fixed daily time of sitting together as a family to open the word and pray.

But how do you handle family devotion when your children are very young? My husband and I are wrestling with this issue. We have a 9-month-old son and a 2-and-a-half year old daughter. I was blessed to have been raised in a Christian home where daily Bible reading and prayer were a priority. Here are five tips I've gleaned from my childhood and now from my role as a parent.

## 1. PICK A DAILY TIME

We have our family devotions after meals. This comes from my mother's Reformed upbringing in the Netherlands. I recommend that approach if your work schedule allows it. You started the meal with prayer, you shared fellowship at the table, so it's natural to close with Bible reading and another prayer.

## 2. STICK TO THE DAILY TIME

Life with young children can be total chaos. That makes it all the more important to have family devotions at roughly the same time every day – start switching it around and you'll quickly forget or let it slide. Besides, you'll be amazed at how quickly children adapt to the routine. When our daughter was 16 months old, I brought dinner out of the kitchen and she automatically folded her hands to pray.

We're doing our best to establish the routine while our children are small. Then, when they get older, they'll consider daily family devotions as "something we always do."

## 3. GET THEM INVOLVED

When our children are older, we'll discuss the Bible readings with them. But in the meantime, we're finding simple ways to get our toddler to participate. If the Bible is in another room, we ask her to bring it to us. After prayer, we sing Scripture songs with her.

Family devotions are also a great time to introduce the habit

of memorizing Bible verses. We're teaching our daughter some simple phrases like "The Lord is my shepherd."

## 4. KEEP IT POSITIVE

You need to be realistic about what small children can handle. Our toddler can't sit still for more than a few minutes – for anything. We're gradually increasing the length of our Bible reading but it's unfair to expect more from her than she's able to give. Sometimes I take her on my lap to keep her quiet a bit longer. If the baby has a genuine meltdown, I carry him to another room and my husband finishes devotions with the toddler.

The gospel is called "the good news." Children should have a happy association with family devotions. It should not be a time that your child associates with getting disciplined. We give our kids a fair bit of leeway with squirming. I only intervene if someone is being truly disruptive. I'm busy listening to God's Word, not micromanaging my kids.

## 5. KEEP IT REVERENT

During these early years, we can teach our children so much by our attitude of reverence for God's Word. Our actions show them that we believe "the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Before children can even speak, they will learn that the Bible is something special and important.

Moreover, your children take their cues from you. If you're modelling proper reverence, it will significantly reduce misbehaviour during devotions.

In our family, we start with a clear gear-shift. We say, "It's time to read the Bible" and "It's time to pray." If our CD player is on, we'll go through the hassle of getting up to switch it off. We don't talk about other things.

## CONCLUSION

Trying to have regular family devotions with small children can be frustrating. Perhaps these five tips will help you. I am thankful to my parents for persevering. I've personally experienced the fruit it bears in later years. RP

# WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF FAMILY DEVOTIONS?

by Sharon L. Bratcher

A mother-to-be asked two of my adult children how we did our family devotions and what they appreciated about them. To my horror, they described how “most of the time” they just complied as expected – singing, being quiet, and looking as if they were listening intently. They added that they had pretty much sat through church services the same way.

And there I sat, thinking that we had done a “good job” overall, but discovering that the kids were often just tuning it all out and biding their time until they were freed.

I shouldn't have been surprised. Many parents, including us, remember the fruitful times of good singing, contemplation, long discussions, and prayer. But they also remember flying through the format – *bing, bang, bong* – done, only because they were supposed to. If the dinner conversation unfortunately ended up including arguments, or sibling rivalry, one of the sinful selves may even have shouted: “*Settle down - we have to read the BIBLE!*”

Was it still worthwhile to “read and pray”? Well, if we wait until life is perfect, we'll never read or pray, because we sinners do get out of sorts. Teaching children by example to quiet themselves, and then reading a short amount of Scripture and praying for forgiveness and strength, is exactly what is needed to get everyone back on track.

## HOW DO WE REALLY TEACH LOVE FOR GOD?

The purpose of family devotions is to glorify God together. Psalm 63 says,

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I live;  
in your name I will lift up my hands.

We ourselves must first love God and express that love and honor to God verbally, and by our actions throughout the day.

So if we're not patient and we shout angrily over small matters, we won't teach them to use self-control. If we don't ask



for forgiveness, we won't teach them to ask for it. Family devotions should demonstrate that love of God. We must genuinely glorify Him when we read, pray, and sing, and not just rattle off words.

## FOUR SUGGESTIONS

Worship is the most important thing we do every week and we should treat it as such. How can we do that? Here are four suggestions:

### 1. *A new setting can help with attention*

Consider letting young children leave the table when they are finished and then re-convening in the living room for devotions. This can provide a helpful transition, instead of taxing their patience – and yours – and making everyone want to rush through devotions and just get it over with.

It's also a more comfortable setting, snuggling together on the sofa or chair, away from dirty plates, silverware, and cups that could be spilled. Pre-bedtime might also be an opportunity when children will be happy to give attention to Bible stories and learning to pray.

### 2. *Be a study buddy*

Work together on your child's Bible or catechism memorization, or review what they wrote down in their simple sermon notes on Sunday.

### 3. *Plan ahead*

If you can, find out the texts, songs, and Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day portion for next Sunday. Then use family devotions time to read and practice everything in preparation for worship.

### 4. *Get involvement*

When the kids can read, let them take turns reading the text and choosing songs so they understand that it's not just Dad or Mom who can or should do this. 

*Sharon L. Bratcher has a book with 45 of her Reformed Perspective articles in it, and a 2-year lesson plan entitled “Bible Overview for Young Children ages 2-6 and 6-9.” For information on these, contact [sharoncopy@gmail.com](mailto:sharoncopy@gmail.com).*



# 21 THINGS I LEARNED LIVING WITH TEENAGERS

by Sarah Vandergugten

*This article first appeared in the June 1999 issue of Reformed Perspective.*

**W**e're almost running out of teenagers in our family. Our eldest of six is well past the mid-twenty mark, and our youngest is less than a year away from getting his driver's license. And then time will really speed by. By the time our last hits twenty, Peter and I will have been parents of teens for twenty-six years. Well, not surprisingly you do learn a thing or two in such an extended period of time. Here are some important life lessons we've learned as parents of teens.

## ON CURFEWS AND CARS

**1.** A mother's imagination is a terrible thing. If your kids are a half-hour late, you imagine them in all sorts of trouble. This feeling becomes almost a certainty if you happen to hear police and ambulance sirens in the distance.

**2.** Fathers can sleep through anything. "What's the point of staying awake? If something's happened, we'll find out soon enough."

**3.** You can fold a lot of laundry while you're waiting for your sons to come home. And then when everything is stacked and put away, you can start on the ironing. Getting all this work accomplished will prevent you from blowing your stack when they walk in the door an hour and half late....maybe.

**4.** You should never throw apples in anger. You might hit someone...or you might not. Late, late one night, having completed all the waiting-for-son-to-come-home-chores, a mother – whom I happen to know rather well – decided she might as well pick the apples off the ground in the back yard, since

making applesauce was on the agenda the next day. By the light of the moon, she trudged to the back of the yard and began gathering the fruit. Shortly thereafter, her tardy son drove in. He slowed carefully to a stop on the noisy gravel, opened his door, slid out, silently closed the door and tiptoed toward the back door, humming softly under his breath. An apple whizzed past his head. Splat! It hit the shed door. So did the next one. Wisely, the son said nothing and calmly, though hurriedly, continued in and went to bed. So did mother.

**5.** If you and your husband come home late one night, and you start to fret and fume because your son isn't home yet, don't drive around town looking for him and don't start phoning his friends to find out where he is. Check his bed

first. He may have come home early and be sleeping peacefully.

6. Life is less stressful if your son's girlfriend has to be home by 11:00 p.m.

7. When you're driving with a son who has his learner's license, it does not help to push your right foot through the floorboards on your side of the vehicle. The car will not slow down.

8. If the phone rings at midnight it might be your son informing you that he's had an accident with your recently purchased car that you reluctantly let him use. Remember to first ask him whether anyone's been hurt and if he's all right, before you ask if there's any damage to your car.

9. At some point, you will learn to love the sound of your son's car's stereo. I have discovered this to be true when I hear it half a block away, fifteen minutes before curfew.

### ON FOOD

10. Your teens and their friends will instinctively find and consume all the food items you were saving for your Sunday evening visitors. You will begin to hide these special food items in the master bedroom, something you told your own Mom you'd never, ever do.

11. If you want to prevent your teens from eating the special dip you made for tomorrow night's party, stick it in a wrinkled brown lunch bag at the back of the fridge. No one is interested in old lunches.

12. Homebaked cookies last a long time if you put them in the freezer in an ice-cream bucket marked "Soup Stock." They'll last even longer if you mark the pail, "Liver."

13. If your son or daughter phones a half-hour before Sunday supper and asks, "Can I bring my friends along?" say, "Yes, of course." Just add four cups of hot water and a package of chicken noodle soup to the pot and defrost

*Homebaked cookies last a long time if you put them in the freezer in an ice-cream bucket marked "Soup Stock."*

another dozen buns. If they show up without having phoned, the same instructions apply.

### ON HOUSEWORK, HOMEWORK AND BEDTIME

14. You can tell a teen has cleaned her bedroom by the number of her clothing items you find in the laundry hamper. If they're still folded, you can probably get away with just putting them back into her bedroom. Sometimes all you need to do is fluff up those only-worn-once-for-one-hour-jeans in the dryer with a sheet of Fleecy or Bounce for ten minutes, then fold them and put them away.

15. Teens don't like being told what to do. They prefer to make up their own mind about things. So ask them, "What would you rather do today? Dust and vacuum or clean the bathrooms?"

16. Teens are just as hard to get to bed at night, as they are to get up in the morning. The ideal life for them would start at noon and go till midnight or two. The trouble is, no schools can find teachers who want to be up that late.

17. The most reticent teen becomes the world's greatest talker, one hour

after Dad and Mom had planned to be sleeping.

18. Teens who cannot stick to homework for more than thirty minutes without needing three snacks, can play video games for three hours without even a bathroom break.

19. Interest in school projects increases greatly the night before they're due.

20. There is never any glue in the house at 11:00 p.m. the night before a project is due. Someone has also stolen all the scissors. And worst of all, the printer is out of ink.

### BUT THE MOST COMFORTING THING I'VE LEARNED....

21. You can never pray too much for your teens.

So, just when you think you've got it all together, the next one becomes a teen, and the rollercoaster ride starts up once more. But remember, take time to listen with your heart, not just your ears. Keep smiling and give lots of hugs. Before you know it, your grandchildren will be teenagers and you can stand on the sidelines smiling encouragingly, remembering with a sigh what it was like. 



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# THE SLIPPERY SLOPE IS REAL

by Richard D. Phillips

Some weeks ago I wrote a piece about a San Francisco pastor, Fred Harrell, who had recently attacked the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement. In doing so, I made a connection between Harrell's prior shifts (first, adopting the ordination of women and, second, endorsing homosexual relations) and his most recent movement away from the clear teaching of God's Word. My conclusion was to posit this as evidence of a slippery slope, further noting that in our cultural moment the slippery slope is usually entered at the point of ordaining women to office in the church.

It would be an understatement to observe that this post touched a raw nerve for some readers. (One well-known pastor wrote me privately to accuse me of being schismatic. It is a feature of our times, I am afraid, that to defend the consensus on which we have built unity is to be labeled as divisive.)

Of the different reactions one that most surprised me was a denial that there is validity to the idea of slippery slopes. My initial response to this criticism is to marvel that people can take this position in light of recent church history. Still, the topic is

important enough that I think it good to defend the reality of the slippery slope.

## WHY IS THE SLOPE SLIPPERY?

First, let me define what I mean in referring to the slippery slope.

The slippery slope simply notes that those who remove the restraint against worldly conformity place themselves in peril of further and more damaging accommodations.

The slope becomes slippery when the source of friction is removed. Far from the logical fallacy of which it is charged, there is a logical basis for the slippery slope argument: when the authority of Scripture is yielded to cultural demands, the loss of that authority renders us vulnerable to further cultural demands. Herein lies the wisdom of Scripture: "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3).

Indeed, the very first Psalm begins with a portrayal of the slippery slope, charting a progression from "the counsel of the wicked" to "the way of sinners" and ultimately to "the seat of scoffers" (Ps. 1:1).

## THAT IT'S SLIPPERY DOESN'T MEAN EVERYONE SLIDES

In making these observations, I do not mean that anyone who changes his or her view in the direction of cultural preferences is irrevocably bound to further concessions. It is blessedly true that people and churches have taken a perilous step to the left (or right) and later reconsidered, and to note examples of this happening does not prove that their previous action had not been imperiled. It is because the slippery slope can be escaped by recommitting to Scripture that warnings of peril are of value.

Moreover, I do not mean to suggest that those who make any concessions to culture over Scripture have already abandoned the atonement of Christ.

I am suggesting, however, that the slippery slope is...well, slippery. Those who remove traction from their feet may very well slide much further than they first thought possible. As Fred Harrell's progression illustrates – together with those of the PC(USA), CRC, RCA, Church of Scotland, and other denominations – the abandonment of clear biblical teaching at one cultural

*...the topic is important enough that I think it good to defend the reality of the slippery slope.*



pressure-point (women's ordination), imperils us with further capitulations (homosexual acceptance), and if unchecked will find itself challenged to avoid "touching the Jesus Box" – denying even the resurrection of our Savior.

### IT STARTS WITH WOMEN'S ORDINATION

Second, I noted that in our time, the slippery slope is usually entered at the point of women's ordination.

This tendency is not surprising, since the assault of secular culture against the Bible is most tenaciously focused on gender and sexuality. To uphold biblical gender norms, including the Bible's clear teaching on male-only ordination, is the single most inflammatory position that Christians may hold in our culture.

For this reason, it is hard to find an example in recent history when a Christian leader or church denomination moved from biblical conservatism to unbiblical cultural conformity when the slide did not begin with the ordination of women to church office. It stands to reason, then, that we should avoid thinking that we can conform to the worldly demands regarding gender and avoid further accommodations of greater significance.

### WHAT ABOUT WOMEN DEACONS?

This brings me to the topic of women

deacons. Several critics accused me of asserting that to support the ordination of women to the office of deacon is to abandon the gospel. This response is noteworthy because I made no mention of women deacons in my original post.

I will admit, however, to being unpersuaded that the move to ordain women deacons in the PCA is unrelated to a broader agenda of cultural accommodation. In saying this, I do not mean to question the sincerity of those individuals who advocate the position that women should hold the office of deacon. But I would note the growing tendency among these same persons to employ women in roles that are associated with the office of elder.

For example, in many churches pastored by ministers who are supportive of the ordination of women deacons, women are placed in the pulpit during worship services for the public reading of Scripture and to offer the congregational prayer. Women are assigned to distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper. These are functions associated with the office of elders, not deacons.

Moreover, word has recently come that pressure is being exerted in one PCA presbytery to install a woman as its stated clerk, making her a member of a court composed exclusively of ruling and teaching elders.

Where is the outcry against these tendencies from those who say that they are *only* wishing to ordain women as deacons?

### CONCLUSION

The slippery slope, then, is real. And the sole restraint against it – against all our sin and tendency to compromise – is our obedience to the voice of the Spirit of Christ speaking in Holy Scripture. Therefore, the counsel given by Jeremiah at another moment of cultural peril seems urgent:

Stand by the crossroads, and look and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls (Jer. 6:16).

In this way alone will we navigate the perils of our times, fortifying our fidelity to Christ. **RP**

*Rev. Richard D. Phillips has been the Senior Minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina (PCA) since July 2007. A version of this article first appeared on Alliance for Confessing Evangelical's Reformation 21 blog ([www.Reformation21.org](http://www.Reformation21.org)) under the title "Standing Firm on the Slippery Slope." It has been reprinted here with permission.*



# Truth requires love & love requires truth

by Paul David Tripp

Contrary to popular opinion, love and truth don't stand in opposition to one another. In fact, you can't really have one without the other. To love truth, you have to be committed to love, and to love love, you have to be committed to truth. The most loving person who ever lived, so loving that he died a cruel and bloody public death for crimes that others committed, was at the same time the most forthright and honest truth speaker that the world had ever known. It was not just that the love of Jesus never contradicted his candor and his candor never inhibited his love. No, there was something more profound going on. His commitment to truth speaking was propelled by his love.

The biblical call to love will never force you to trim, deny, or bend the truth, and the biblical call to truth will never ask you to abandon God's call to love your neighbor.

We see this graphically displayed in a very well-known moment in the life of Jesus Christ. It is recorded in Luke 18:18–30. A rich ruler comes to

Jesus to ask him about eternal life. It is a very good question that gets a very hard and honest answer. As you read the conversation, it doesn't look like Jesus is engaging in very successful evangelism by modern standards. In a moment of complete honesty, Jesus doesn't work to make the gospel attractive. Rather, he hones in on and exposes the central idolatry of this man's heart. Jesus tells this man the bad news he needs to hear if he is ever to want the good news he desperately needs.

So Luke is recording something very important for us. In the face of Jesus's honesty, the man walks away, and as he does, Jesus looks at him with sadness. You see, Jesus isn't being cold and indifferent. He doesn't lack love. The hard words are motivated by love, and Jesus's sadness at the end of the conversation exposes the love that motivated the words he had said. There is no mean-spirited condemnation in the words of Christ. Those hard words are words of grace, spoken by the Savior of love, spoken to redeem.

Truth isn't mean and love isn't dishonest. They are two sides of the same righteous agenda that longs for the spiritual welfare of another. Truth not spoken in love ceases to be truth because it gets bent and twisted by other human agendas, and love that abandons the truth ceases to be love because it forsakes what is best for the person when it has been corrupted by other motives.

Today you are called to loving honesty and honest love. You will be tempted to let one or the other slip from your hands. Pray for the help of the One who remained fully committed to both, even to death. His grace is your only hope of staying true to his righteous agenda.

*For further study and encouragement: 1 Corinthians 13. Taken from "New Morning Mercies" by Paul David Tripp, © 2014, pp. August 6th Entry. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, [www.crossway.org](http://www.crossway.org).*



**ATTN:**

# **PARENTS**

**AND YOUTH PASTORS, GUIDANCE  
COUNSELLORS, MENTORS...**

**WHAT IS YOUR  
GREATEST HOPE  
AND PRAYER FOR  
YOUR TEENS AS  
THEY HEAD OFF  
INTO ADULTHOOD?**

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1

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**E**VERY PARENT and mentor hopes that the young, emerging adults in their lives will find meaningful jobs and relationships, adjust to independence and settle down happily in time. But your biggest, deepest hope and prayer is that they will love Jesus deeply and follow him faithfully wherever life takes them.

As they prepare to set out on their own, and you prepare to transition into guiding them wisely, this becomes an ever more urgent prayer. You've invested your lives into theirs and the world is waiting. But you can't do it for them.

What you can do is influence one of their first major decisions — where they will go after high school.



Generation Z — those born in the late 90s and after — are often defined by being “digital natives”. They'll never know life without the Internet. They are also marked by their desire for living with purpose. As they grow into adulthood, they want to make a difference.

The world needs Christian difference-makers — Christians who bring the hope and love of Jesus Christ into everything they do. As students graduate and pursue their callings in law, politics, science, education, art, social work, health, and a host of other areas, they will be the leaders and culture shapers of tomorrow.

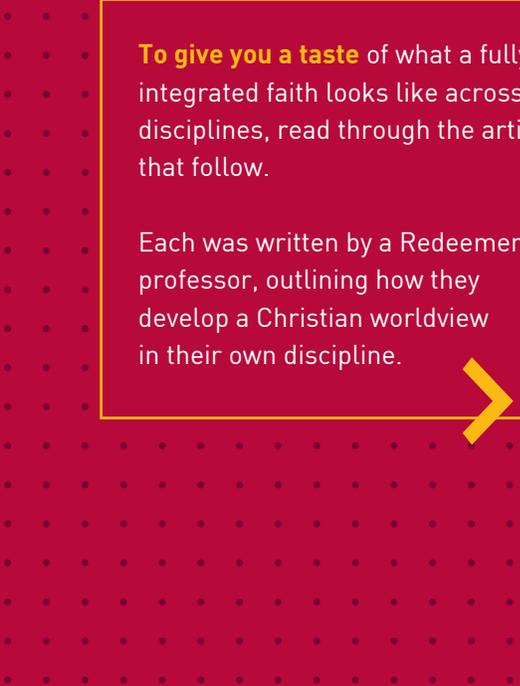
Redeemer is committed to shaping tomorrow's Christian leaders. Here, education is a time of preparing for a career while discovering God's world and listening for his call. Inside and outside the classroom, Redeemer is about learning through discipleship. Through Christ-centred, accredited degree programs, students explore what it means to be a Christian in a rapidly changing technological and cultural context.

The integration of faith and learning embraces what the secular academy denies — that education always comes with a worldview. A Christian university education at Redeemer sets students up for future careers and a lifetime of serving the King.

Christian university is an opportunity to make room for and work with that ultimate hope and prayer for your teens.

**To give you a taste** of what a fully integrated faith looks like across disciplines, read through the articles that follow.

Each was written by a Redeemer professor, outlining how they develop a Christian worldview in their own discipline.



# Better Living Through Chemistry?

IN THE LAST CENTURY, CHEMISTRY HAS MADE OUR LIVES BETTER — AND WORSE. GIVEN THAT, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN AND A CHEMIST?

**IN THE PAST CENTURY**, the global population has approximately quadrupled. Perhaps the most important factor behind this is the tremendous increase in global food production, thanks to synthetic nitrogen-rich fertilizers. It is estimated that today almost half of humanity is alive because of the discovery of one chemical process: the conversion of nitrogen in the air into ammonia. It is arguably the most important discovery of the 20th century.

At the close of the 1800s, there was great concern that food production in Europe could not keep pace with the growing population. There was not enough natural fertilizer in the world to meet the needs of the 20th century. “England and all civilized nations stand in deadly peril,” argued Sir William Crookes, president of the British Academy of Sciences. “It

*“Being a Christian and a chemist means recognizing that God has given us the ability to investigate and understand his creation.”*

is through the laboratory that starvation may ultimately be turned into plenty. It is the chemist who must come to the rescue.”

The scientist who ultimately solved this great problem was the Jewish chemist Fritz Haber. In 1908, Haber made his discovery that nitrogen in the air could be converted into ammonia and in 1913, the first nitrogen-fixing ammonia factory opened. This ammonia could then be converted into other forms of nitrogen useful for fertilizers.

Or explosives. World War I broke out shortly after, and Haber was able to modify his fertilizer-making technology to supply the raw materials for making explosives for the German military. Haber’s involvement in the military deepened as he became the driving force behind the use of poisonous gases in the trenches, like those used on Canadian troops in Ypres.

It is ironic that the inventor of a process that today keeps nearly half of the globe’s population fed is also considered the father of modern chemical warfare.

So where does that leave a chemist today? Does the Christian tradition have anything to offer chemists looking to make a better world through their vocation?

Being a Christian and a chemist means recognizing that God has given us the ability to investigate and understand his creation, but has also actually tasked us to be creators, to make something of the material world he created. But what should we be creating? With chemical knowledge of the material world comes a great deal of power, even mastery, over the creation. Through chemistry, we have gained the power to heal through medicines, but also the power to kill through explosives. We have gained the power to provide clean water, yet have the power to pollute our streams, lakes and oceans. With the knowledge that comes through chemistry comes great responsibility to wield this power and authority with great care, particularly for the Christian. If we see “better living through chemistry” as a way of serving our neighbours and enhancing creation with care, then a Christian chemist has much to contribute.

**DR. DARREN BROUWER** is associate professor of Chemistry at Redeemer University College. This article originally appeared in *Comment*, a publication of *Cardus*: [www.cardus.ca](http://www.cardus.ca).

# SCIENCE

Studying in the sciences at Redeemer exposes students to world-class, leading edge research opportunities that encourage them to ask tough questions in order to discover and dig deeper into the world that God has created, structured and organized. Students have the opportunity to work closely with faculty during labs and field work, complementing the classroom understanding of how the sciences impact society.

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The **Analytical Chemistry (CHE-231)** course gives students the opportunity to design, carry out and participate in an ongoing and comprehensive research. For example, students have monitored the water of streams that feed into an important local wetland area that is under rehabilitation.



**DR. SARAH REID-YU**

*/ Professor of Health Sciences*

With the growing concern over the increasing prevalence of “superbugs”, Dr. Reid-Yu is researching how bacteria develop antibiotic resistance. This important research could lead to discoveries on new therapies against superbugs.





# The Man Who Saved the World



OUR CULTURAL CRISIS IS NOT CAPACITY, SKILLS TRAINING OR JOB READINESS: IT'S INTEGRITY, ETHICS, WORLDVIEW, LOVE.



**T**HE MAN WHO SAVED THE WORLD is an apocalyptic Cold War drama that tells the story of a Russian officer, Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov, who did — literally — save the world. Released in 2015, the documentary tells the 1983 story of how Russian censors misinterpreted a satellite launch as a nuclear attack and Petrov was ordered to respond in kind. He waited, and in that waiting saved the planet.

It's a bit harrowing, frankly, how close human beings have come on any number of occasions to being authors of our own apocalypse. The list of possibilities, I think, could be covered by keeping an eye on summer blockbusters.

Though Hollywood could probably convince us otherwise, not everything in politics and history is a race between evil and the courage and integrity of one man standing in the breach. In fact, most of politics is what my friend Mike Gerson calls the “banality of goodness”. It's showing up at what feels like another soul-sucking committee meeting, watching for mistakes, measuring agendas, often on a very small, sometimes narrow, scale. Much of politics and



history is a “long obedience” — a lot of habits and virtues, practiced over generations, that produce what we only see retrospectively as major cultural shifts.



In this work, we need the most serious students of history, the most sophisticated philosophers, the most penetrating political analysts, all with a deep and abiding passion for God's mercy and justice. To put it in a biblical parable, we need Good Samaritans, people who will act in the moment when no one else will. But we also need city planners, neighbourhood watches and the police service, to purge the robbers from the road to Jericho. Our society needs not only physicians, but the architect as well; not only works of mercy, but also of justice.

“Redeemer students will be a generation marked by steadfast love, patiently binding wounds, fixing systems and awaiting the coming of the King.”



Evangelical Christians are overrepresented in the gatekeeping spheres of power, business and politics especially, writes Michael Lindsay in *Faith in the Halls of Power*. We often hear, he continues, that we need “our people” in places of influence. But the truth is, “our people” are there, and have been for a long time. Instead, the issue is whether we’re who we need to be when we get there. Our cultural crisis is not capacity, skills training or job readiness: it’s integrity, ethics, worldview, love.

We’re suffering in the work of slow, patient formation, of understanding how the current runs and where it pulls, of where to row fiercely and where to let the water guide us to the next spot. We are overwhelmed with knowledge, and desperately short of wisdom.

The challenge of our day is not whether we’ll find a position of influence, it’s whether we’ll get there with something to say. My hope is that in “getting there”, Redeemer University College students, fuelled by a deeply Christian worldview in every sphere — a collective project our world-class faculty works to advance — will be a generation marked by steadfast love, patiently binding wounds, fixing systems and awaiting the coming of the King, who will bring their work to completion.

**DR. ROBERT JOUSTRA** is associate professor of Politics and International Studies at Redeemer University College and director of the Redeemer Centre for Christian Scholarship.

## PUBLIC SQUARE

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**DR. KEVIN FLATT**

/ Professor of History

Dr. Flatt has been researching the secularization of Western civilization and the misconception that culture has progressed beyond the need for religion. He is currently working on producing a textbook-style narrative history that will investigate how modern secularization occurred, an important step in equipping Christians to think rightly about this change.

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# The Problem With "Pan-Millennialism" by Steve Burchett

"I'm not amillennial, postmillennial, or premillennial. I'm pan-millennial."

"Huh?"

"Yep, I'm pan-millennial—I believe it will all pan out in the end!"

I've occasionally heard this humorous remark made when the end times are discussed. Technically, if we believe in the biblical gospel, we should all be panmillennialists. The risen and ascended Christ will return and everything will "pan out" for believers who will ultimately enjoy "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13).

But the person who tells the "panmillennial" joke, and really means it, isn't interested in details about the end times. He realizes that eschatology (the study of last things) is loaded with difficulties, and says, "I'm not going to think much about end times doctrine anymore. Jesus is going to make everything right when He comes again, and that's good enough for me." This man hasn't just given up on figuring out what "a thousand years" means in Revelation 20, but has decided that thinking about the end times beyond generalities is just too hard and ultimately fruitless.

There's a major problem with the panmillennial mindset. The Bible does speak about the particulars of the end times, so to ignore those verses is to disregard what the Holy Spirit made sure was included. Furthermore, when we skip over those passages, we lose more than just knowledge. God has spoken in understandable ways about the end times to give us hope and joy

## TRANSFORMING GRIEF

The Thessalonian believers enthusiastically awaited the return of Christ (1 Thess 1:9-10). But after Paul was forced out of town by persecution, some believers died, sending the remaining Christians into a state of hopeless grief (4:13). They didn't just miss the deceased believers, but apparently thought the dead believers would miss out on some blessing at Christ's return.

Paul addressed the Thessalonians' ignorance by speaking of some of the details about the day of Christ's return. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, he gave an order of some of the events of that day:

"The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord."

In the first frame of a *Peanuts* comic strip, Lucy is looking out the window and says, "Boy, look at it rain... What if it floods the whole world?"

Linus responds, "It will never do that... In the ninth chapter of Genesis, God promised Noah that it would never happen again, and the sign of the promise is the rainbow."

Lucy replies, "You've taken a great load off my mind..."

So Linus concludes, "Sound theology has a way of doing that!"

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about the return of Christ and the resurrection

of the dead in order to give them sound theology so they could take a great load off of their minds. They needed to know that their beloved sleeping believers (4:13) wouldn't miss anything when Jesus came back. Instead, they would have front-row seats! With that kind of information, their grief would undergo a dramatic transformation.

Paul refused to ignore the details about the return of Christ in addressing the Thessalonians, because he understood how relevant and encouraging that information really was. He even charged them to "encourage one another with these words" (4:18). What words? The specific words about the believers who had died and their participation in the events surrounding Christ's return.

## BLESSED IS THE ONE...

Revelation is full of end times information, yet it is one of the most neglected books of the Bible due to interpretive difficulties. However, in his opening comments John promises, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near" (1:3). We should humbly admit when we are confused about certain aspects of Christ's return. Yet, not everything that God has said about the end times is puzzling. Read those verses carefully and thoughtfully, and blessing is sure to follow. 

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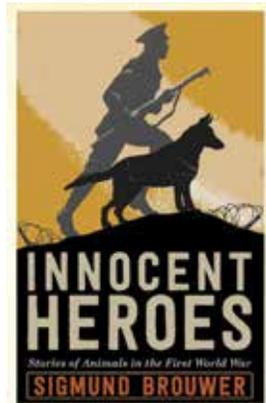
# BOOKS

## LEST WE FORGET – FOR ALL AGES

By Jon Dykstra

### INNOCENT HEROES: STORIES OF ANIMALS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BY SIGMUND BROUWER  
186 PAGES / 2017



Animals had a bigger role in WWI than most of us realize. Author Sigmund Brouwer has taken true heroic stories of these animals and, in the interests of making a continuous, compelling storyline, fictionalized the details, placing all the animals in just one Canadian platoon, the Storming Normans.

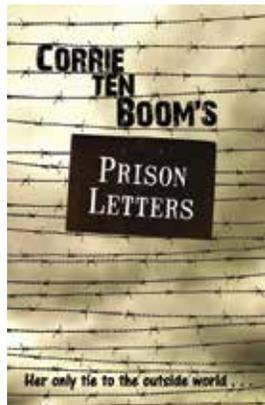
While each chapter is built around the story of a particular creature – a cat, a bird, two dogs, a horse, a mule, and a lion – the book's main characters are three fictional Canadian infantry soldiers. In the trio of Jake, Charlie, and Thomas, the author gives us soldiers who couldn't have more different backgrounds, with Jake a farm boy, Charlie the city-dwelling millionaire, and Thomas, a Cree Indian.

With this "odd couple" friendship, Brouwer injects his story with humor even in the midst of the horrors of war. It also allows him the opportunity to educate readers as to how Natives were treated on the front lines and back home in Canada during this period.

My highest praise for a book is that it is so good I have to read it to my family – we're loving it! Brouwer has weaved these animal stories together into a compelling book that tackles some tough topics at an age-appropriate level for pre-teens and teens.

### PRISON LETTERS

BY CORRIE TEN BOOM  
90 PAGES / 1975



This is a collection of the correspondence between Corrie Ten Boom and her family when she and her sister Betsie were being held in prison by the Nazis during World War II.

If you haven't already read her remarkable wartime biography *The Hiding Place*, then you must read that first. It recounts how her family hid Jews, not because they were brave or courageous, but simply because they were obedient to what they knew God was calling them to do. Ten Boom shares how God sustained them, sometimes in miraculous fashion. It is a book of doubts being answered, and God being found sufficient even in the most trying of circumstances.

If you loved *The Hiding Place* (and I don't know anyone who hasn't) then this collection of letters will act as a moving appendix to that remarkable book. It is the same story, but told a very different way, one letter at a time. However, because no correspondence was allowed in the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, where Corrie and Betsie were sent last, the book ends abruptly. So, this will be a wonderful supplement to *The Hiding Place*, but it is not one to read simply on its own.

### WAR IN THE WASTELAND

BY DOUGLAS BOND  
273 PAGES / 2016



"Second Lieutenant C.S. Lewis in the trenches of WWI" – if that doesn't grab you, I don't know what will. *War in the Wasteland* is a novel about teenage Lewis's time on the front lines of the First World War. At this point in his life, at just 19, Lewis is an atheist, and his hellish surroundings seem to confirm for him that there is no God.

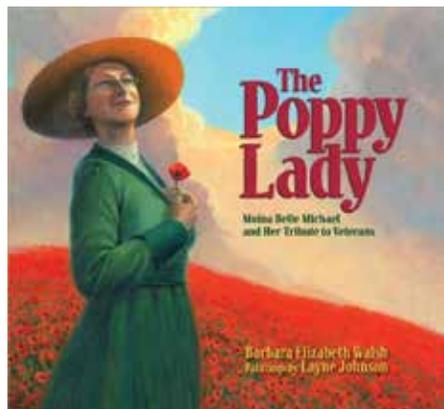
When men are hunkered down in their trenches, waiting through another enemy artillery barrage, there is good reason, and plenty of time, to talk about life's most important matters. Bond gives Lewis a fellow junior officer – Second Lieutenant Johnson – who won't let Lewis's atheistic thinking go unchallenged. Their back and forth sparring is brilliant; Bond has pulled the points and counterpoints right out of *Mere Christianity* and other books Lewis wrote when he became the world's best-known Christian apologist.

Bond has crafted something remarkable here, capturing in grim detail what it must have been like to live, eat, and sleep barely more than a stone's throw from enemy troops hidden away in their own trenches.

I think older teens and adults who have an interest in history, World War I, apologetics, or C.S. Lewis, are sure to enjoy *War in the Wasteland*.

## THE POPPY LADY

BY BARBARA ELIZABETH WALSH  
40 PAGES / 2012



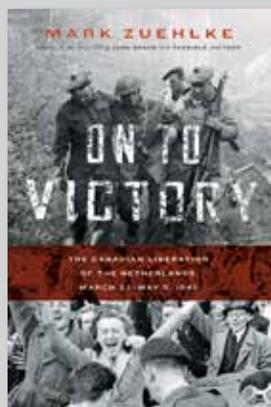
How did poppies become the symbol for Remembrance Day?

This beautifully illustrated (I love the water colors in this book - it's a treat just to look at it!) and well-researched children's picture book tells the story of Moina Michael, who was 45 when World War I broke out. She was a teacher at the University of Georgia's Normal School and realized that every home in America would be affected. "Her girls" would see fathers, brothers and sweethearts sent to the war front. As the war progressed, she did what she could to help.

Her motto from a young age was "Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with all your might." When she read John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields" she knew what she had to do for all her beloved soldiers. She went on a search for poppies and found one large red poppy and 24 small ones in a department store. She put the large one in a vase in the YMCA canteen and gave 23 away. From that small, significant gesture, the Poppies have become a symbol of remembrance and bring much needed funds to help the veterans.

The book has an epilogue that is helpful for teachers or parents who wants to tell children more about the history of the poppy. This book would be an asset to any elementary school library.

– Joanna Vanderpol



## ON TO VICTORY: THE CANADIAN LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS, MARCH 23 - MAY 5, 1945

BY MARK ZUEHLKE  
552 PAGES / 2010

This book is a detailed account of the Canadian Army's advance into the Netherlands and northwestern Germany during the last phase of World War Two. It is written in a popular (rather than academic) style and frequently relies upon first-hand reports provided by the soldiers themselves for a vivid narrative of combat and other experiences of frontline troops.

For this part of the war, the Canadians were superior to the Germans in almost every way, but the terrain heavily favored the German defenders. The ground was frequently too soft for military vehicles so they were confined to roads, making them easy targets. As well, there were a large number of rivers and canals that had to be crossed to reach objectives. The Germans would blow up bridges as they retreated, and time after time the Canadians would have to cross by boat in the face of enemy fire.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the frequent accounts of heroic actions by individual Canadian soldiers. When the chips were down and the situation looked grim, some responded with acts of bravery that could be straight out of a Hollywood-style movie. For example, when Major Harry Hamley found his unit pinned down and threatened by a German attack he grabbed a large machine gun.

Charging into the face of enemy fire, Hamley burned through a magazine as he ran, shooting eight Germans dead, wounding several others, and scattering the rest.

There were many such real-life heroes.

We learn here that the Canadians were not reluctant combatants. When Dutch authorities requested that Canadian forces undertake a particularly dangerous mission, the Canadian commander consulted his troops about their willingness to attempt it: "There wasn't the slightest hesitation or any objection raised, they were prepared to lay it on the line for the Dutch people."

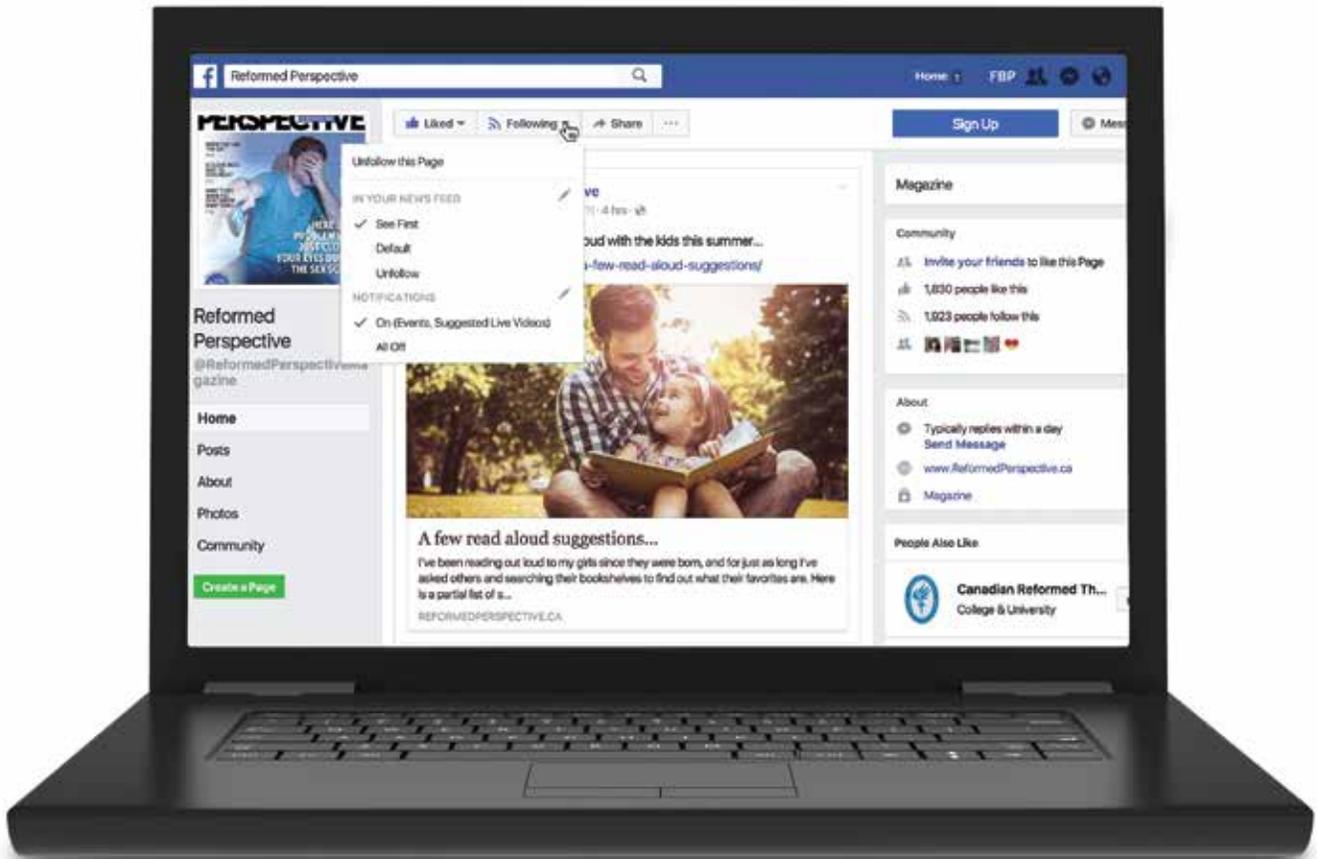
Author Mark Zuehlke goes into much detail about individual army units and their experiences as they move from one objective to another, fighting much of the time. Many of the events described occur simultaneously in different parts of the Netherlands and northwestern Germany. At times it can be difficult to keep track of how each event relates to the others. This is not the fault of the book so much as a reflection of the large battlefield continually in action.

Thankfully, there is a series of maps at the front of the book, making it possible for the reader to keep track of events as the Canadian Army advances over a broad geographical front taking in numerous cities, towns and villages. There are also two sections with photographs.

In short, this book lucidly describes a period of history that will make any true-blooded Canadian feel proud, and anyone of Dutch roots so very grateful.

– Michael Wagner

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