

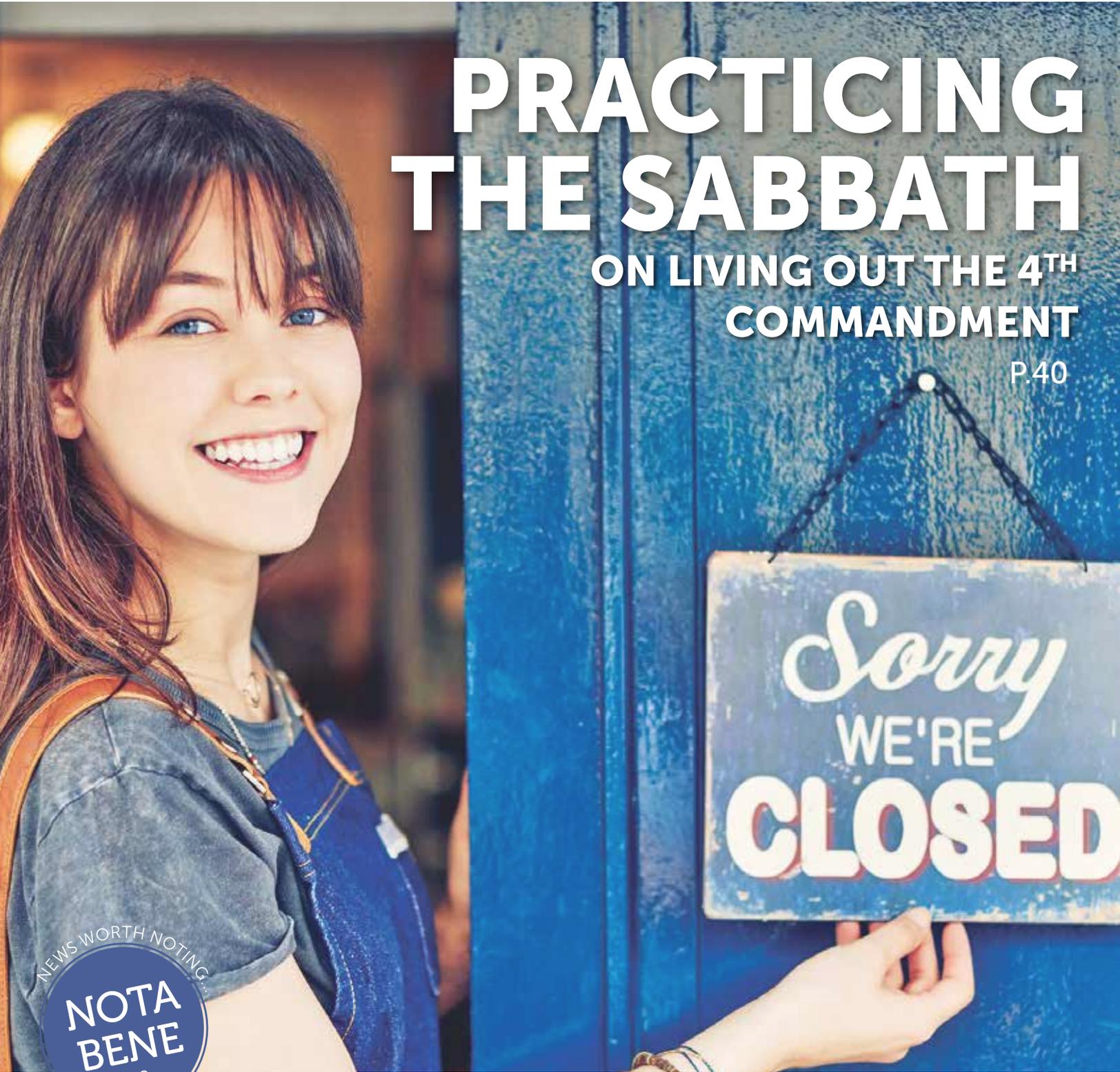
Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JAN/FEB 2018
Volume 37 Issue No. 2

PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS



PRACTICING THE SABBATH

ON LIVING OUT THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

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Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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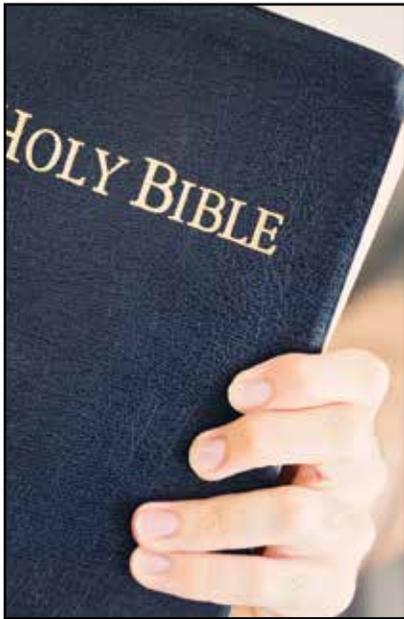
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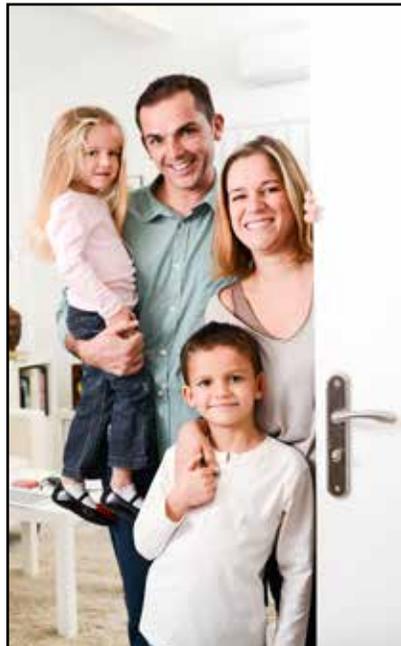
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READERS' RESPONSE

DEAR EDITOR,

I read with interest Mark Reimer's Nota Bene contribution "Canadian couples may have had adoption/fostering nixes because of their Christianity" (Nov/Dec 2017) regarding Christians' challenges to adopt and foster children in Canada. Related to this, I thought I would share our experience with fostering to adopt.

For many years, we have prayed for wisdom and guidance from God concerning fostering and adoption. I have read many books and articles, talked to people who have adopted and had many discussions with my husband. We have 9 children ranging in age from 4-18 so we decided that if we would go ahead with fostering to adopt, we would start with newborns to age 2 so that it would not interfere as much with the raising of our family. This past summer, I attended an information session at the Family and Children's Services for Guelph and Wellington County in Ontario. This was an exciting step because it would give us a better idea whether this was something we could do.

However, it became clear almost from the beginning that this organization was not supportive of Christian values and principles, and there was a strong emphasis on what they call "anti-oppression." The presenter explained that, of the 30 hours of training, the first three hours would deal primarily with an openness and support of homosexuality and gender identity. This was the first of two "deal breakers," so that anyone who was not able to adhere to their policy in this regard would not be able to foster children. My heart sank, knowing this would be a tough battle to fight.

She then went on to explain the second "deal breaker." Foster parents would not be allowed to spank their children, and this would apply not just to their foster children, but also to their own. I understand that foster parents should not spank their foster children, but it came as a surprise that spanking our own children would be forbidden. I asked for clarification, which made it all the more clear that this organization was not interested in families that uphold to Biblical teachings and practices.

This was a big disappointment. When I got home, I sent another email to explain how we implement spanking in our

NOTA BENE News worth noting

CANADIAN COUPLES MAY HAVE HAD ADOPTION/FOSTERING NIXED BECAUSE OF THEIR CHRISTIANITY

BY MARK REIMER

An Alberta couple filed a lawsuit in November, accusing provincial authorities of discrimination after their application to adopt a child was rejected. The suit claims that Alberta Child and Family Services disqualified the couple based on their personal belief that homosexuality is wrong. According to the filing documents "The casework supervisor explained that our religious beliefs regarding sexuality were incompatible with the adoption process... The casework supervisor said this stance was the 'official position of the Alberta government.'" The case, is expected to be heard in fall 2018.

This isn't the first Christian couple to make the news this year after running into trouble with

Canadian child welfare authorities. In April, Derek and Frances Baars filed a lawsuit against the Hamilton Children's Aid Society. The Baars, in their suit, claimed a child support worker demanded the couple tell two girls in their care, aged three and four, that the Easter Bunny was real, despite the couple's belief that lying is wrong.

The children were abruptly removed from their home, even after the Baars attempted to negotiate an acceptable alternative. It is unclear when their case will be decided, but the Baars have insisted that the caseworkers viewed them as poor candidates because of their religious convictions.

It's important to acknowledge, as Dominic Verticchio, executive director of the Hamilton Children's Aid Society, did, that there are two sides to every story and in both of these cases we've only heard one. That said, when asked if the Easter Bunny was real, Verticchio replied, "It depends who you ask."

Time will tell if these high-profile cases having an impact on the future of adoption and foster parenting in Canada. It's worth noting that using a faith-based adoption agency may not help head off these kind of confrontations -- the Alberta couple went through Catholic Social Services. However, if legal roadblocks do occur, one option may be to contact the Calgary-based Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms, which is representing both couples. Their website is www.jccf.ca.

As discouraging as these stories can be, Christians must never let them have a chilling effect on their interest in taking in children. There is an acknowledged need for parents willing to adopt and foster, and the secular dogma that committed Christians aren't up to the task must never be dignified. Rather, Christians should focus their concern on loving children who so often get forgotten in the smoke of social and political correctness.

SOURCE: John Collier's "Canadian couples may have had adoption/fostering nixed because of their Christianity" posted to CBC.ca on Nov. 7, 2017. <http://legislative.culturalaffairs.ca/catholic-agency-refuses-adoption-to-couple-who-faith-Christians-doubt-reality/> accessed by LifeSiteNews.com Nov. 30, 2017. Adrian Humphrey, "Christian couple says child welfare removed foster children because they refused to say Easter Bunny is real" posted to www.lifesitenews.com April 12, 2017.

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home (we never spank in front of others, always in private, in love and without anger) but the social worker was not willing to make concessions.

I felt compelled to respond because there are indeed Reformed families who are willing to open their hearts and homes but who are faced with roadblocks that are difficult, if not impossible to navigate. It is sad that families who have so much to offer to society with a stable, loving home and a heart to help children in need are not able to do so because of societies anti-Christian stance. It is our prayer that our voices will be heard and that the door may yet be opened for children in need to be received into Christian families.

Joanneke Kottelenberg
Hillsburgh, Ontario

DEAR EDITOR,

I'd like voice a polite and respectful "boo" to the article on school sports you recently reprinted online and in your weekly *RP Roundup* email newsletter. I'm referring to Shauna Stam's "Sports teams are important for Christian schools."

The article begged one very important and obvious question: Why should *schools* be the sole institutional sponsors of sport for our youth? Where is that written in the law of the Medes and Persians? I'd like to invite more careful thought and biblical reflection on the "sphere sovereignty" angle of this issue.

Let's assume sports are biblically lawful and terrific things for our kids to be involved with. Let's grant the general value of sports for personal development, etc. The big question remains, How is that activity best organized, and by whom? Why do we (and millions of secularists) automatically assume that *schools* should be the primary institutions to organize, fund, coach, and conduct youth sports?

Try this thought experiment: Let's make *churches* the primary institution to fund and organize all youth sports teams. Local churches could surely handle sports teams for our kids, right? "Whoa! Wait a minute," you might say. "That's not what the church is for!!" And I'd agree. Now shift back to schools: Are sports really what schools are for? Why reject the one and then automatically tilt toward the other? On what principle? By what standard? The case for making schools responsible for youth sports simply hasn't been made.

Why not *community*-based teams? I grew up playing on community Boy's Club teams in southern California and Washington state. Those were great experiences and the whole community (not just a couple of schools were

involved). Parents didn't lean on their local schools. They took personal responsibility for their own kids and organized themselves to make their sports experience possible.

In other words, there are clearly other options, other models to follow, besides imposing on our schools or our churches.

I don't have firm answers here, but it seems to me that the question of who or what institutions should bear primary responsibility for sports in the Christian context has been largely assumed and not carefully and prayerfully considered. It's time to stop begging that question. It's an appropriate time to start discussing it seriously with intentionally Reformational perspective after having so recently concluded celebrating the 500th anniversary of intercollegiate door nailing. Play ball!

Roy Atwood
Buçimas, Pogradec, Albania



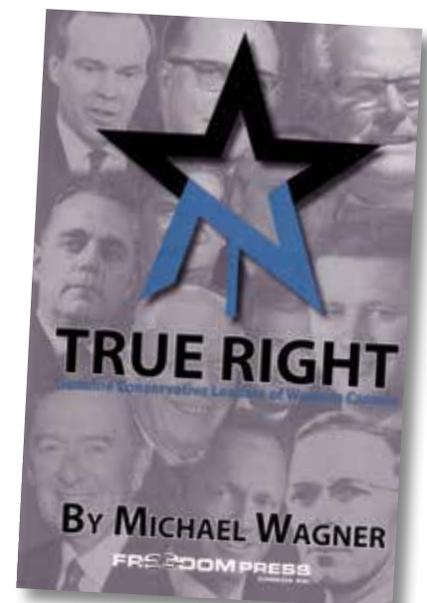
True Right: Genuine Conservative Leaders of Western Canada

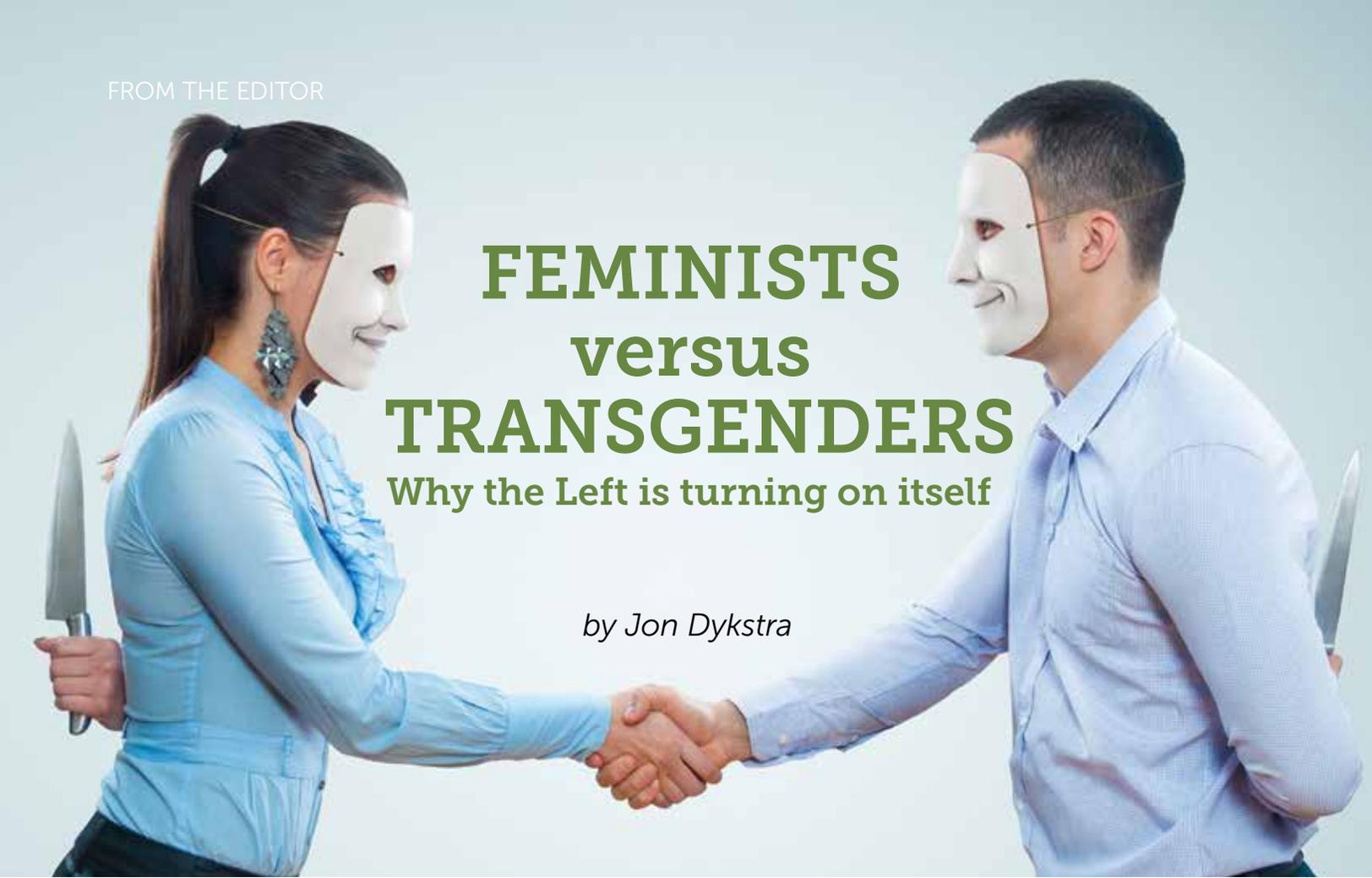
True Right provides an introduction to important western Canadian conservative leaders. The first part focuses on political leaders while the second part offers an analysis of the political thought of Ted and Link Byfield, the father/son team behind *Alberta Report* magazine and the Christian History Project.

"The Byfields were Canada's preeminent conservative prophets and teachers.... Wagner's sterling achievement has been to distill and present to his readers the pure essence of their thinking on the relevant issues of our time. One feels that no one can read this material without being inspired to pray and, one hopes, to work for the day when conservatism once more guides the nation."

– **Shafer Parker, Jr.**, Pastor, Hawkwood Baptist Church, Calgary, and former Senior Editor of *Alberta Report* magazine.

You can buy a copy for \$15 at Merchantship.generationalfamilies.net





FEMINISTS versus TRANSGENDERS

Why the Left is turning on itself

by Jon Dykstra

In Judges 7 Israel is faced with a fearsome foe, and God decides to use that foe's strength against it. Gideon and his 300 get to watch as “the Lord set the sword of one [Mideonite] against another even throughout the whole army.” Might God have something similar in mind for today's liberal Left?

Consider the case of Gabrielle Bouchard. This past December, Bouchard made news, and drew the ire of a small number of vocal feminists, when *he* became head of Québec's largest feminist group. Bouchard is a man who identifies as a woman, and the group he now heads, the *Fédération des Femmes du Québec* (FFQ) has the typical feminist stands: abortion is good, capitalism is exploitive, the patriarchy is evil.

It's on this last point – men running too much of the world – that the FFQ is getting attacked. Diane Guilbault, the head of a rival feminist group, told the *National Post* that she doesn't appreciate a man being in charge of a feminist group because:

“the experience of a woman who is born a woman is completely different from the experience of a man who decides one day to present himself as a woman.”

While the protest against Bouchard has been limited, it has garnered some favorable coverage from a mainstream press that isn't sure which side they should pick when one leftwing group takes on another.

A month earlier a similar sort of conflict occurred south of the border. An American white man, Ja Du, publicly identified as a Filipina woman and the mainstream press didn't know how to handle that either. The liberal *Huffington Post* decided to accept he was a woman, but wasn't yet ready to do the same for his transracial claims. Their headline read:

“Filipinos aren't happy with this white woman claiming to be a Filipina.”

Their hesitancy is puzzling: once you

grant a man can become a woman, what logic prevents us from acknowledging a *white* man can become an *Asian* woman? Why is *that* a bigger leap? Of course we knew it wasn't going to be long before “transracialism” was going to be embraced too, and this past month the *National Post*'s Barbara Kay reported that the State of Delaware is going to allow students to self-identify not only their gender, but their race too.

But the more the Left embraces this craziness, the sooner the infighting is going to get serious. The conflicts we see here – one feminist group vs. the transgender head of another, and the liberal media picking transgenders over transracials – might not seem to matter. But the problems these groups have with one another are only going to grow.

Why?

Because at their core, feminist, transgender, and transracial views contradict. And it's only a matter of time before these unnatural allies turn on one another.

ARE THE DIFFERENCES REAL OR NOT?

The divide between feminists and transgenders comes down to how each answers this question: are the differences between the sexes real?

The typical feminist is going to answer with a “no.” They’ll acknowledge reproductive differences only because those are impossible to overlook. But when asked why there are far fewer female CEOs, or why the overall average wage for women is lower than that for men, the standard feminist line attributes the difference to discrimination. It is most certainly *not* a result of men and women having different interests, or different strengths and capabilities – after all, anything a man can do a woman can do too! To put it another way, the predominant feminist take is that the differences between men and women are only outward and insignificant – we *look* different, but we aren’t *actually* different.

Meanwhile when a man like Gabrielle Bouchard claims that, despite how he looks, he feels like a woman then he is, unavoidably, attacking the feminist position. After all, he’s implying that there is something, *outside of the outward appearance*, that makes a woman different than a man. In making his claim to be the other gender, Bouchard is acknowledging that there are differences between the genders that are both *real* and *significant*.

What exactly those differences are, isn’t generally discussed. That’s where Christians need to press the issue and ask: what does it mean to *feel* like a woman? What does that feeling involve? Imagine if a man said he knew he was actually a woman because he felt more sensitive and emotional, liked dresses and the color pink, and felt so very nurturing. What would feminists think of *that*? It doesn’t really matter what differences a transgender might point to, feminists are going to either deny the differences are real, or that they are important.

So we can see the rupture already

starting. We can tear it wide open if we press that question: what exactly does being female or male mean?

ARE THE GROUPS FIXED OR NOT?

When it comes to transracialism, it might seem surprising that even a liberal-leaning publication like the *Huffington Post* is slow to embrace the idea. Why would any on the Left have a problem with accepting that a person can swap ethnic identities?

Maybe it’s because, on some level, the Left understands that transracialism (along with transgenderism) undermines *identity politics*: minority groups pressing for preferential treatment to compensate for past wrongs (real or supposed) done to their group. After all, what happens to identity politics when it becomes possible to switch groups? What happens to demands for preferential treatment when a white man can be acknowledged as black and female? What happens to hiring quotas when an applicant can choose to identify as whatever combination of special identities a company is looking to check off?

It becomes hard to pit one group against another when the lines between them are being erased.

THE TIPPING POINT

Christians might be discouraged at just how fast our culture is embracing ideas that, only a few short years ago, would have been dismissed as crazy by just about everyone. But there is a bright side to the speed at which the Left is adopting one incoherent idea after another: the more craziness they stack on their shaky foundation, the sooner the whole mess is going to tip over.

We can hasten that tipping point by asking questions that highlight that incoherence, like:

1. Are the differences between the genders real and significant?
2. What does it mean to *feel* like a woman, or *feel* like a man?

3. What does it mean to be of a different race? And if I can be a different race, can I be a different age? Or a different height? How about a different weight? Or socio-economic status? Why, or why not?

We can also point our culture to the one worldview that’s built on a firm foundation. We can begin by teaching them that God made us male and female, and that can’t be changed (though our feelings about our gender can be). We can share that gender-based differences do exist and they are significant, but they aren’t scary, and don’t have to be ignored or diminished. We can explain that acknowledging men are physically stronger than women isn’t an attack on women’s worth, because our worth doesn’t come from our muscle size, or any other ability. We can point out that there is only one way in which we are all equal, and so, only one basis for any claim to equality: we are all made in God’s image. We can clarify that there is just one race – the human race – and the denial of that truth has led to untold discrimination and persecution.

And we can explain that the reason this all makes sense in a way that their secular worldview just doesn’t, is because it is God’s truth, and it is trustworthy because He is. RP



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

NOTA BENE

News worth noting
BY JON DYKSTRA

MOVIEGUIDE: "SEX DOES NOT SELL"

In their annual survey of the previous years top films *Movieguide.org* discovered once again that sex is not the key to big box office returns. For 2017, they found that among the top films, those with "heavy depicted sex" earned an average of only \$18 million, whereas those with no sexual content were more than double that, with an average earning of \$46 million.

MovieGuide.org has been conducting this review annually for years now, and the groups founder, Dr. Ted Baehr, says that this year's findings echo those of previous years.

SOURCE: "Sex does not sell!", posted to *MovieGuide.org* on January 29, 2018.

CHICK-FIL-A IS ALWAYS CLOSED ON SUNDAY... EXCEPT WHEN AN OX FALLS INTO A PIT

The American fast food chain Chick-fil-A is a favorite among Christians for the owners' unwavering stand against Sunday opening. But it turns out this unwavering stance has some jiggle room to it, when needed.

In the past they've been so firm about their Sunday-closing position even their outlet in the Atlanta Falcon's football stadium stays closed for the 7 out of 8 home games the NFL team plays on Sunday. Not that it's hurt their business - even though they miss these 7 games, *ESPN's* Darren Rovell reports that the Chick-fil-A stand "sold the third most items of any stand in the stadium."

But, as consistent as their closed-on-Sunday position has been, they're not Pharisaical about it - they recognize there can be a need for exceptions. We know Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and, when the Pharisees confronted him about it, he put them in their place asking, "Which one of you will have a



son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"

For Chick-fil-A an exception occurred this past December when the Atlanta International Airport was hit with a complete blackout. This is one of the world's busiest airports, and the blackout resulted in hundreds of cancelled flights and countless stranded passengers. While Atlanta's municipal government was busy trying to find accommodations for these passengers they tweeted out that the passengers' meals would be handled

by someone else: "@Chick-fil-A will provide food for passengers."

A store that's always closed on Sunday was happy to open their doors on this particular day of rest because thousands of people needed their help. Not only is this a wonderful observance of the 4th commandment, it is Matthew 5:16 lived out as well:

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

CHIP AND JOANNA GAINES AND GLOBAL WARMING

When *Fixer Upper*'s Chip and Joanna Gaines announced, on Jan. 2, that they were pregnant with child number five, the congratulations rolled in. Thousands of encouraging messages flooded the home-improvement-show hosts' Twitter and Facebook pages.

But over at *CBC.ca* there was one voice of dissent, notable for the objection she raised. In her Jan 13 article, "It shouldn't be taboo to criticize parents for having too many kids" Kristen Pyszczyk characterized the Gaines' decision to have baby #5 as "a choice that affects everyone who inhabits our planet."

Yes, she was making the case that, due to the threat of climate change, the Gaines' newest little one shouldn't be seen as a blessing:

"Procreation is becoming a global public health concern, rather than a personal decision. So when people do irresponsible things like having five children, we absolutely need to be calling them out."

Pyszczyk gets some facts wrong – she claims that "populations are multiplying exponentially" and they simply aren't. But Christians don't need to know the latest statistics to see through her argument. We just need to know our Bibles.

It's there we find that procreation isn't a "public health concern" and large families aren't a problem. Children are a blessing, not a curse (Ps. 113:9, Ps. 127:3-5, Deut. 7:13, Gen. 48:4, etc.)

But what of the increasing numbers of mouths to feed that Pyszczyk is worried about? Well, her worldview blinds her to the full truth. Yes, children all come with their own carbon footprint, and a mouth that needs filling, but they also come with two hands to work, and a brain to dream up innovations. And as Solomon teaches us, we can "sharpen" one another (Prov. 27:17). Why have we seen so many technological leaps this past century? Because we have more minds than ever, and that means all the more opportunities for one to sharpen another. We are not



just consumers, but producers and innovators too!

The reason this matters is because Pyszczyk's short-sighted "children as a concern" narrative isn't just a minor mistake. As calmly as she presents it, this perspective has been a major justification for abortion, which, over the last half century, has killed hundreds of millions.

So it's vital then that we teach the world to see children as God sees them. We can do that by congratulating families, like the Gaines, who are blessed with growing families, and we can do so by, when God allows, embracing that blessing ourselves.

A PERSON'S A PERSON, NO MATTER HOW SMALL-HEARTED (OR NOT SO) PRO-LIFERS MIGHT BE



A new study, released in January by LifeWay Research is part of an effective rebuttal to a common pro-abortion argument. Pro-lifers are often accused of hypocrisy – we're said to only be interested in life *before* birth, but that if we truly thought life was precious from conception onward, wouldn't we do more to help children *after* they are born? Why, the question is asked, aren't

Christians adopting more children?

It's a question intended to shut pro-lifers up, so, for the sake of the unborn, it's important we understand the two problems with this accusation:

1. it's beside the point
2. it isn't true

Why is this hypocrisy charge beside the point? Because in the abortion debate there is only one issue that matters: whether the unborn are human beings. If they are, then they deserve the same protection as all other human beings, and that isn't going to change no matter how caring or uncaring pro-lifers might be. Even if pro-lifers really are the nastiest sort of two-faced frauds, our personal

failings don't have the power to grant, or do away with, their humanity. It's not about us.

In addition, the charge doesn't stick. In LifeWay Research's poll of 1,010 American Protestant and nondenominational churchgoers (people who went to church at least once a month) 40% of respondents said that over the last year someone in their church had been involved in foster care, or had adopted, or their church leaders were encouraging foster or adoption. Much more could be done – there is still a pressing need for more willing families – but these numbers show that Christian pro-lifers are concerned with children after birth too.

SOURCE: "Adoption, Foster Care Commonplace in Churches" posted to LifeWayResearch.com on January 24, 2018.

THE MIKE PENCE RULE WON'T SAVE US...BUT CAN IT HELP US?

In the spring of 2017 the *Washington Post* got mainstream media pundits chortling, when they revealed that US Vice President Mike Pence had a rule that he wouldn't dine alone with any woman other than his wife. The media hated this "Mike Pence rule" mocking it as some combination of childish and prudish. It was said to be sexist, suppressing advancement opportunities for women since they wouldn't be able to get the same alone time with the boss as the boys.

A half year later the *New Yorker* ran an exposé on Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, accusing him of sexually harassing or assaulting 13 women. The publication of these accusations prompted dozens of other women to come forward with further accusations. This spawned a "#MeToo movement" with more and more women coming forward, alleging abuse at the hands of powerful men of all sorts, including US senator Al Franken, *Today* host Matt Lauer, storyteller Garrison Keillor, US senate candidate Roy Moore, actor Dustin Hoffman, and, just this week, the now *former* leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, Patrick Brown. And while most of the accused admitted to at least some sort of misconduct, others, like Brown, claim to be completely innocent.

So in light of the #MeToo movement, and the enormous abuse of power it exposed among influential men of all sorts, is it time to revisit the Pence rule?

Some say no, Christians among them. A month after the Weinstein allegations came out, Katelyn Beaty, an editor at *Christianity Today* wrote an article titled, "A Christian case against the Pence Rule" for the *New York Times*. In it she gave this less than flattering assessment of the rule:

"The Pence rule arises from a broken view of the sexes: Men are lustful beasts that must be contained, while women are objects of desire that must be hidden away. Offering the Pence rule as a solution to male predation is like saying, 'I can't meet with you one on one, otherwise I might eventually assault you.' If that's the case, we have far deeper problems around men and power than any personal conduct rule can solve."

This is quite the condemnation! And yet Beaty granted that the Pence rule – also known as the Billy Graham rule, as he adopted it long before the Vice President – has saved Pence from ever facing the same allegations that were leveled at Roy Moore, Patrick Brown and others. Beaty also grants that the "Bible says a lot about humans' proclivity to sin."

In fact, it seems she is making a good case *for* the rule before she then presents her case against: the Pence rule can be frustrating to women who know that alone time with the boss, and "the informal and strategic conversations" that can occur in that setting are "the stuff of workplace advancement." There's something to what she says – the Pence rule may make it harder for women to advance in some workplace

settings...though a smart boss will be sure to create such opportunities other ways for valued female employees. But even if we grant the rule can cause

such hindrances, so long as we live in an imperfect world, we need to acknowledge there are no perfect solutions, only tradeoffs. So then the issue is not, is the Mike Pence rule perfect? It is not. Instead we should ask, does it help more than it hinders, and is it better than the available alternatives? And in answer to that, consider:

- A large numbers of men have been accused of, and many have then admitted to, victimizing women. The harassment or assault often occurring when they got a woman alone.
- Other men have been accused of assault or harassment *and deny it* by women they spent time alone with.
- One man has a system by which he not only would never commit sexual sin, but could never even be accused of it.
- That man is mocked as a prude, Pharisee, fool, misogynist, etc.

The Pence rule does more than shield women from male predation, so, no, it doesn't simply presume every man is a "lustful beast." It acknowledges that sexual temptation is real, and the workplace environment involves long hours of time spent together. This rule, then, also helps both men and women avoid workplace temptation. And it serves as an assurance to their spouses. Finally, it helps protect men from false accusations. There are downsides to this rule, but it also has quite the upside.

It's important to note that, while there is a biblical basis to the Pence/Graham rule – it acknowledges the fallen nature of men and women and the powerful pull of sexual temptation – we aren't going to find the rule itself in Scripture. That's why we mustn't treat it as something sacred or something every Christian business owner *must* be implementing. Maybe they have their own ways to combat sexual harassment, minimize temptation, and protect against false accusations. But there is a reason that Mike Pence and Billy Graham have never been tainted by sexual scandal, even as so many others in their positions have – there is wisdom to be found here.

That said, we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking this rule is going to save us. As Reformed blogger Tim Challies writes:

Rules have their place, but they must never be separated from a prayerful determination to put sin to death.



BEST PRO-LIFE SIGNS AT THE US MARCH FOR LIFE

This year's US March for Life took place on January 19 and marked the 45th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe vs. Wade* decision, which struck down many of the country's restrictions on abortion. Canada also has a March for Life, but it takes place four months later, always on or around May 14, to mark the anniversary of Pierre Trudeau's 1969 Omnibus bill, which first legalized abortion in Canada.

Both are attended by tens of thousands.

That means there are thousands of creative pro-life minds thinking through how best to communicate the truth about the unborn on thousands of signs, banners and t-shirts. And because the American event is months earlier, Canadians can be inspired by what we see south of the border!

What follows is a dozen of the best signs and slogans as shared by sites like *The Daily Signal*, *LifeSiteNews.com* and

PJ media. Some are blunt; others are clever. One is simply an offer to help. May they serve to inspire!

1. GOD PLANNED PARENTHOOD
2. I SUPPORT A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO BE BORN
3. THE STRONG MUST PROTECT THE WEAK
4. I SURVIVED ROE VS. WADE. ROE VS. WADE WILL NOT SURVIVE ME.
5. PRETEND I'M A TREE. SAVE ME.
6. A PERSON'S A PERSON, NO MATTER HOW SMALL
7. ME [next to an ultrasound picture]. STILL ME [next to a newborn picture].
8. ABORTION IS MURDER
9. AM I MORE VALUABLE BECAUSE OF MY SIZE?
10. YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE WILL HELP YOU.
11. ALREADY BORN? CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE.



But the very best pro-life messaging I think I've seen wasn't at this year's March, and wasn't even on this continent. It came on a pair of t-shirts worn by a couple at last year's Romanian March for Life. The potbellied husband wore a shirt that read "This was from choice" while the obviously pregnant wife wore a shirt that read, "This was from God."

SOURCE: Katrina Trinko's "29 of the best signs at the March for Life" posted to *DailySignal.com* on Jan. 19; "The best signs we saw at the 2018 March for Life" posted to *LifeSiteNews.com* on Jan. 22; Tyler O'Neil's "15 Creative signs that made the March for Life stand out" posted to *PJMedia.com* Jan. 19; "Press Release: The March for Life 2017 in Romania: 110,000 de participants in 138 cities" posted to *FamilyNews.co* on March 28, 2017

Reformed Perspective is looking for a part-time (10-20 hours/week) web developer who also has some audio/video editing skills. And the most important requirement of all? That they have a heart for our mission:

"to promote a Biblically Reformed perspective in all spheres of life by equipping and encouraging Christians to think, speak, and act in a manner consistent with their confession."

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WHEN MARRIAGE MEANS ONLY: "A WAY TO AVOID TAXES"



Matt Murphy and Michael O'Sullivan are good friends – they've been friends for almost 30 years. They are also straight. And, as of today, according to the Irish government, they are husband and husband. The two decided to get "married" so that 85-year-old Murphy could pass on his house to the younger 58-year-old Sullivan, tax-free. As O'Sullivan explained the arrangement to *Independent.ie*:

"I was homeless, sleeping in my car and [Murphy] needed someone to move into his home and take care of him. He was losing his sight and needed a full-time [caregiver]. He told me that he couldn't afford to pay me

but said that I could live with him and he would give me his house when he passed away as payment."

The problem was, if Murphy simply deeded the house to O'Sullivan in his will, O'Sullivan would be faced with a €50,000 tax bill under Ireland's inheritance tax. And since the formerly homeless O'Sullivan doesn't seem to have a lot of money lying about, such a bill might well have forced him to sell the home to pay the taxes. And then he'd be homeless again.

However, spouses seem to exempt from this inheritance tax, and when the two straight men heard of this option they decided it only made sense to get "married."

There's an obvious problem here, and another lurking underneath.

Marriage becomes meaningless

First up, we can see here that when God's standards are abandoned, the State's replacement has no foundation. Redefining marriage hasn't left us with a different version of this institution, but only turned "marriage" into a meaningless term. As God defined it, marriage is a man and a woman becoming one flesh, for life (Mark 10:8-

9). The State undermined the "for life" part with no-fault divorce, and the "man and woman" part by recognizing same-sex couplings. The act of homosexual sex makes a mockery of the "one flesh" part, and, in a different way, the Murphy/O'Sullivan "friendship marriage" does too.

So what then are we left with? Marriage has been redefined to mean only "a means of tax-avoidance."

Death taxes are problematic

Another problem lurking in the background of this story is the nature of the tax they are working so hard to avoid. Of course, taxes are never popular, but inheritance taxes are particularly problematic.

How so?

Well, consider the basis on which the State is taking in these taxes. Normally taxes are justified as a trade of sorts. We fund the government and in exchange we get benefits from that government, like policing, roads, healthcare, unemployment insurance, etc. But what services will Murphy get? None at all – the tax only kicks in after he has departed. It is something for nothing.

Consider also that while elections give us a say in how taxes are used,

26-YEAR-OLD WOMAN GIVES BIRTH TO 25-YEAR-OLD GIRL

We start counting our age from the day of our birth, but if we think on that for a moment we realize that's not, technically, accurate. Life begins at conception, not birth, so most of us are nine months older than we've been owning up to. But in the case of little Emma Gibson, the difference between conception and birth wasn't nine months, it was just over 24 years. When she was born this past November, she was already 25 years old because Emma had been conceived, via in vitro fertilization (IVF), back in 1992. And at that time her adoptive mother, Tina Gibson, was just 18 months old.

Since 1992 Emma had been left in frozen storage. As *WORLD* magazine's Jamie Dean reported, Emma isn't the only child that's been left waiting.

At least 600,000 embryos sit frozen in storage facilities across the United States, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Some reproductive experts believe the number is closer to 1 million.

Canadian estimates are hard to come by, but a 2014 *CBC*

article put the number at 60,000.

To the world, these hundreds of thousands of embryos are a legal headache. While they don't acknowledge them as human, they do seem to recognize there is something special about them, which is why so many of these children are not being destroyed but being indefinitely stored, without plans as for what to do with them.

Emma's rescue underscores the opportunity Christian couples have to save embryonic children via what's called "snowflake adoption" – a frozen embryo can be thawed, and if it survives that thawing, can then be implanted in its adopted mother's womb and, hopefully, carried to term.



an inheritance tax is “taxation without respiration.” A death tax is revenue without accountability, since (at least in most electoral districts) the dead don’t get to vote.

This type of taxation also undermines property rights. Do we really own something if we can’t give it to whomever we wish? Murphy wants to give his home to his friend, but he can’t (or at least he can’t unless he resorts to these extreme measures). He can only give a portion of it, with the State demanding the rest. But Murphy’s wealth has already been taxed when he first earned it, so why isn’t the remainder – the after tax portion – now finally his to do with as he wishes?

Finally, we should consider what such a tax encourages. If parents spend all their wealth and leave their children nothing, then the State is satisfied. But if parents save, and invest, and build a business that they want to hand on to the next generation, then the State demands a share. So such a tax encourages spending, and penalizes investing.

SOURCES: Emma McMenamy’s “Irish straight best friends marry to ‘avoid paying €50,000 inheritance tax’ on house” posted to IrishMirror.ie on Dec. 22, 2017; Sasha Brady, Denise Calnan, and Kathy Armstrong’s “It all worked out” - friends getting married to ‘avoid inheritance tax’ tie the knot in Dublin ceremony” posted to Independent.ie, on Dec. 22, 2017.

STUDY: CANADIANS TWICE AS MISERLY AS AMERICANS

Under what circumstances would giving 1.43% of your income to charity be seen as generous? Not too many. But what if your neighbor gave less than half of that? Then, in comparison, you would seem generous.

In a study of “Generosity in Canada and the United States” the authors found that while most Americans don’t give much, they look like Santa Claus himself when compared to Canadians. Fraser Institute researchers, Charles Lammam, Sazid Hasan and Hugh MacIntyre found that Canadians gave just 0.56% of their

pre-tax income in 2015.

Not only are Canadians more miserly than Americans, they are getting more so. From 2005 to 2015 there’s been a steady decline in Canadians giving, from 25.1% of tax filers claiming a charitable deduction in 2005, to just 20.9 in 2015.

The difference between Canada and the US came out in other ways too. There were only three states “where the percentage of aggregate [pre-tax] income donated was less than the percentage donated in Manitoba (0.83%) Canada’s highest ranked province.”

Is there an opportunity here for God’s people? If God’s people gave generously and carefully just imagine the good we could do and – in comparison to these miserly numbers – the light we could be!



SOURCE: Charles Lammam, Sazid Hasan, and Hugh MacIntyre’s “Generosity in Canada and the United States: The 2017 Generosity Index” in the Fraser Research Bulletin, Dec. 2017, posted to FraserInstitute.org

But even as Christians are involved in rescuing children from this frozen state, what should we think about IVF for our own infertility treatments? When couples struggle with infertility, IVF is presented as a near miraculous means to help them get the baby they’ve been yearning for. IVF is all about babies, and we’re pro-life, so we’re all about babies too! On the face of it, IVF would seem a life-affirming medical procedure.

But there is a reason hundreds of thousands of children are left frozen, waiting to be born. IVF, as it is commonly done, involves the intentional creation of “excess” embryos – the creation of more children than will be implanted in their mother’s womb. That’s not how it has to be done, but that’s how it is done most of the time for reasons of cost effectiveness. These embryos then face one of four fates:

- 1) As a rule, any that seem abnormal are “discarded” – British numbers indicate this happens to roughly half the children.
- 2) Some are implanted in the mother.
- 3) A small number are donated to science for experimentation (where they are killed).

- 4) The rest are left in a frozen state, waiting to be born. But unless something dramatic happens – unless “snowflake adoptions” start happening by the hundreds of thousands – the most likely fate for these children is eventual death.

Christian couples struggling with infertility need to understand that the IVF industry offers hope, but has a great darkness to it. We don’t think of IVF doctors as abortionists, but when we recognize that life begins at conception then it’s no slur to make the comparison. Abortionists kill half their patients and it seems the same, or worse, can be said about IVF doctors too.

So, of course, to rescue babies like Emma, we’ll need help from this IVF industry – there is a right way that IVF can be done. But we mustn’t be naïve about the darkness underlying this industry, lest, in our ignorance, we get caught up in it.

SOURCE: Jamie Dean’s “Hope for the unborn” posted to World.WNG.org on Jan. 20, 2018; “Prospective Canadian parents turn to the U.S. surplus embryo donation” posted to CBC.ca Nov. 4, 2014; Andrew Hough’s “1.7 million human embryos created for IVF thrown away” posted to Telegraph.co.uk Dec. 31, 2012

MOVIES

FIVE FUN FAMILY FRIENDLY FILMS

By Jon Dykstra

THE BOXCAR CHILDREN

ANIMATED / CHILDREN'S

2013 / 81 MINUTES

RATING: 7/10



The Boxcar Children is the first title in a popular and still expanding children's series of books. And just like the book, the film is about four children - three brothers and one sister - who have lost their parents, and have been told they will have to live with their grandfather. But Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny don't know their grandfather at all, and imagine that, because he never came to visit, he must be a cruel man. So they run away.

The first part of the story is about how they get by, all on their own. It's when they find a long abandoned railway boxcar that things start looking up for them. Then the older brother can go into town to do odd jobs, and the other three can start setting up the boxcar as a real home for them. Of course it has a happy ending and I don't think I give away too much to say it involves their cruel grandfather not being cruel at all.

The only cautions would concern language: in one instance a character says "holy mollie" and in another someone utters "oh my gosh" but that is the extent of it.

There's a brief chase scene early on but otherwise this is just such a gentle movie. That makes it perfect for kids who can't handle on-screen tension. Our daughters loved it!

POLLYANNA

FAMILY

2003 / 99 MINUTES

RATING: 8/10



Aside from a change of setting - from Vermont, to England - this is a faithful adaption of the source book (and far more so than the 1960s Disney version).

Pollyanna is a poor but cheerful girl who, after becoming orphaned, is sent to live with her very rich, and very strait-laced aunt Polly. The two have very different ways of viewing the world, with the joyful Pollyanna seeing nothing but wonder, despite the losses she's faced, and aunt Polly seeing nothing but the problems, despite the riches that surround her. So whose worldview is going to win out? Is Pollyanna going to stop giving out hugs, or is her aunt Polly going to get over her reluctance to be touched? Something has to give!

The only caution concerns one shocking/sad moment that will cause young viewers distress - Pollyanna gets seriously injured. It all happens in a flash, so nothing gory is shown, but our girls needed to be reassured that Pollyanna would recover.

Young ladies are going to love this one, and I think young lads may even be up for it, with a little encouraging. And if mom and dad can get past the British accents, they, too, are sure to love this well-acted, authentic adaption of a timeless classic.

THE GRUFFALO

ANIMATED / FAMILY

27 MIN / 2009

RATING: 8/10



How can a mouse meet up with a hungry fox, snake, and owl, and live to tell the tale? It helps that he has a monstrously big friend who is just about to meet him. And a fox, or a snake, or an owl, wouldn't dare eat a small mouse who has such a big friend!

But...what if they found out what the mouse knows: "There's no such things as a Gruffalo"?

Or is there?

This short film, based on the book of the same name, is a clever tale about a mouse who thinks his way out of trouble. It is beautifully rendered, visually and musically, with the only concern being that everyone wants to turn this little mouse into a little morsel. So in our household the pause button had to be used a few times to calm some anxious viewers. For those under eight, especially if they don't watch much TV, there is a little bit of tension here. In fact, kids under three might find it just too scary.

But it does all work out in the end, and reassuring any little ones of that might help them make it through.

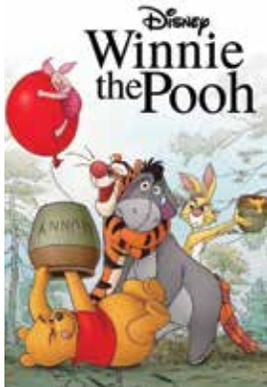
So, two thumbs up for this short, fun, and clever story. Who could ask for more?

WINNIE THE POOH

ANIMATED / CHILDREN / FAMILY

63 MIN, 2011

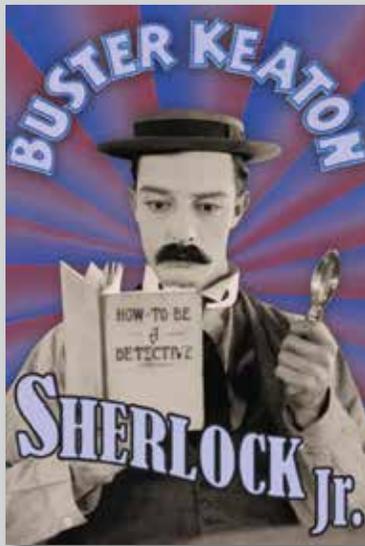
RATING: 8/10



It takes a little prodding from the narrator but once our favorite silly little bear gets out of bed, he proceeds to have quite the series of adventures. The first involves Tigger and a balloon, and the second, a fearsome beast (or as fearsome as a Pooh cartoon can be) named the Backson. The longest adventure of all is a search for Eeyore's tail... or for some substitute that could serve in that role. This is a gentle family-friendly gem.

One caution concerns the language. After the films' ten minutes of credits there is one final, very short, scene in which the word "gosh" is used twice.

The other caution is about Pooh who is even more selfish than usual. As an example, when the group sets out to trap the Backson, Pooh is content to let his little friend Piglet do all the work. Pooh's shallowness (including his obsession with honey) is the central "conflict" in the story, and one that parents should point out to their children – the "hero" of this little story is not being a good friend. Of course, Pooh does get his priorities figured out in the end. When faced with the choice of finally getting some honey, or bringing Eeyore his missing tale, Pooh chooses friend over food.



SHERLOCK JR.

COMEDY / FAMILY

1924 / 44 MINUTES

RATING 9/10

For anyone who wants to get their kids interested in the golden oldies, *Sherlock Jr.* may be the perfect introduction. This is a black and white classic with the frenetic pace of a Saturday morning cartoon – the action never stops!

Buster Keaton plays the part of a movie theater janitor/projectionist who has ambitions about becoming a great detective and winning the hand of a certain beautiful girl.

But he's not the only fellow interested in the lass. Standing in his way is a tall, dark, and handsome rival who, we quickly find out, has no scruples – when no one's looking this scoundrel steals a watch from the girl's dad. But wait, there's a theft? Isn't this an opportunity for a detective wannabe to show his stuff? Buster offers to do an investigation, but he is humiliated twice over when the clever scoundrel frames him for the theft, and then the girl's father asks Buster to leave and never come back.

Things are looking bad for Buster, but the story just keeps getting better and better. Dejected, Buster returns to the theater in time for the afternoon showing and gets the movie started. But as it's playing he falls asleep, *and in his dream he joins in on the action.*

It just so happens to be a detective story. And it just so happens that Buster dreams himself in as the suave and savvy star detective. In this film within the film it goes a lot better for Buster, as he brilliantly tricks and evades a whole horde of villains.

The best action scene in the movie is when Buster, in hot pursuit of the villains, hops on the front handlebars of a motorbike being driven by his trusted sidekick. But, unbeknownst to Buster, just as the motorbike started off, his sidekick fell off – Buster is on it alone, up front on the handlebars of the speeding bike, urging the absent driver to be a little more careful about the way he's driving!

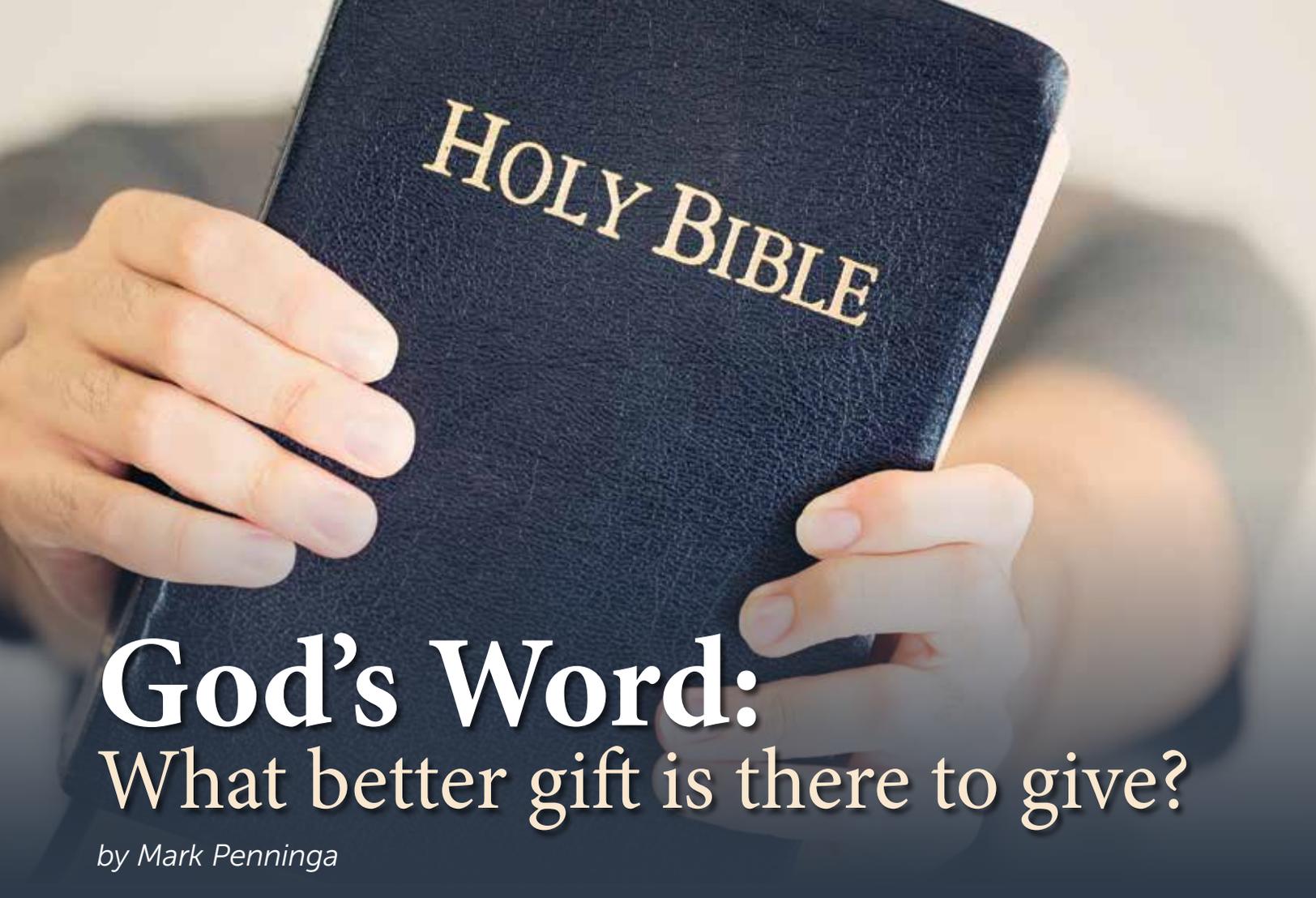
But what's going to happen when Buster wakes up? Well, even as he's solving mysteries in his dream world, his beautiful girl is figuring out things in the real one.

Cautions

There are moments of peril, and a brief occasion or two of fisticuffs that might be a bit scary for the very young.

Conclusion

At just 44 minutes, and jammed pack with action, this might be the best silent film to share with modern audiences.



God's Word: What better gift is there to give?

by Mark Penninga

My phone buzzed, alerting me to a new voicemail. I wasn't quite prepared for the message:

"Hello Mark. I am a legislator in the province of Saskatchewan, and when I came into my office today I found a Bible on my desk from ARPA.... I'm very offended by it.... I think there is no place for religion in the state and I'm doing my best to separate it. Even the quote you have in your card about the Charter ['whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God'] I think is offensive and would work hard to remove that from the Charter and am working on that in my own way...."

She told me to make sure she doesn't get mail from ARPA again.

This MLA was one of over 1,150 elected representatives who received a leather-bound Bible from ARPA in November, along with a card thanking them for their service.

THANKS AND MORE THANKS

But her message was not the only one, nor was it representative. In fact, it was *the only critical correspondence we received* in response to the Bibles. And we got some very encouraging cards and letters, some of which were downright surprising.

From a NDP MLA:

"Thank you so much for your thoughtful gift of a beautifully-bound Holy Bible in recognition of Canada's 150th birthday which I saw in my mailbox minutes ago. It is a gift that I will treasure and will pass on to the next generation of family members.... God bless the work and ministry of ARPA. In the coming days (when work is not as hectic as the next two weeks) I wish to share with you how the Lord led me to the work that I am doing now.... Once again, please accept my prayerful appreciation for the thoughtful gift."

We also received a warm letter of appreciation from Alberta's Premier, Rachel Notley, even though the Bible arrived around the time that she was receiving thousands of ARPA Easymail messages critical of her government's Bill 24. She told us:

"Your organization has brought together many people from across our nation, supporting each other in their daily lives, and forming a stronger community in the process."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent us a letter thanking us for the Bible and adding (in French) "your good words have touched me and I wish you great success for the continuation of your project."

We received similar letters and cards from Opposition Leader Andrew Scheer, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall and (so far) twenty-three others.

Saskatchewan MLA Greg Ottenbreit even shared his appreciation with the world via twitter:

“Thankyou ARPA Canada for the amazing gift! #HolyBible #BasicInstructionsBeforeLeavingEarth ;)”

Some other feedback we received from the Bible recipients included:

- “I will treasure this gift and read sections of it as often as I can. I appreciate your work and communications with policy makers to keep us ever-aware of our duties to Canadians and to each other.”
- “Even though I already have and daily read one of my own, I think this Bible sends a stronger message to all members than would a simple card or letter... thanks again.”
- “It was a pleasant surprise. It will be kept on my desk and read with regularity.”
- “It will be a reminder to me of the Creator’s Word for life, hope, and wisdom as I serve my constituents and the people of Nova Scotia.”

SOWING THE SEED

It is easy to assume that the Bible is something to which most Canadians, including our leaders, are already well exposed. That may lead us to conclude that this Bible Project is a waste of time and money. But the fact that the Bible is the most popular book in the world, and available online, does not mean we can expect our leaders to read it or know what God’s will is for them. We have a responsibility to be instruments of God’s grace to our neighbors, including our leaders. My hope with this project is that it will make a difference if our leaders actually get their own Bible, while God’s people pray that the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts to read it and take it to heart. Perhaps they won’t be ready to read it now. But there may be a time down the road when they are at a place in life where they will open it.

Some years ago, some Alberta ARPA volunteers gave free copies of our *Christian Citizenship Guide* and Dr.

Van Dam’s *God & Government* book to Alberta MLAs. In 2016, when I visited some of these MLAs regarding Alberta education, I was surprised to see these books clearly on display on their office bookshelves. Unlike an email or paper document that will get quickly lost under thousands more, these books were still close on hand and accessible. My hope is that this will be even more true for these Bibles. They may forget that they have been given a particular book on a particular topic. But they likely won’t forget that they now own a Bible, with their name on it. The leaders who may not respect the Bible will likely not throw it away but rather put it on a shelf. And it will be waiting for them if and when their hearts are softened to open it.

NOTHING WE CAN GIVE THAT IS MORE POWERFUL

The cards and letters are momentary and yes, they may even be dismissed by politicians as superficial. But that is not true of the Bible. As Hebrews 4:12 shares, “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.” You may be one of those who have been praying, asking God to use these Bibles to work in the hearts of our leaders. Please don’t stop.

Many across the country have given generously. Even more have prayed. *But the project is not complete.* Now that we know a Bible is in the offices of many of our

leaders, let us not miss the opportunity to use this knowledge to ask them about it. It can be a part of an effort to build a relationship with a government official. Pastors, this is a great opportunity for you as well. Many government officials are lost and lonely. They need the truth of God’s Word to lead wisely, but they also need the grace revealed in the Gospel to truly live.

May the Holy Spirit work though His Word and soften hearts across this land, beginning with our own every day again.

RP



Cornerstone Christian School

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.” 1 Peter 2:6

We are seeking to fill the full-time position of

PRINCIPAL

This position commences August 1, 2018 and is primarily an administrative role within our school with a supportive teaching role up to 40%.

We are also seeking to fill the position of

GRADE 1 AND 2 TEACHER

This position commences August 1, 2018 and is a full-time position in a double grade with grade separation for the core subjects.

Cornerstone operates a K-8 school with double grades and currently has a student body of 84 students. We seek qualified applicants who love to teach, and desire to support our community in its mandate to raise our children in the fear of the Lord.

For further details on either of these positions please contact the Principal

Mr. Menco Wieske

Phone 519 837 4092 (school)

519 837 5945 (home)

principal@guelphcornerstone.com

Applications should be sent to
Cornerstone Christian School

108 Forest Street, Guelph, ON N1G 1H9

Attention: **Mr. Theo Hopman**

Education Committee Chair

edcom.chair@guelphcornerstone.com



DNA: Good Discovery, Bad Agenda

by Margaret Helder

What a difference 65 years makes. It was in April of 1953 that a one-page letter appeared in the journal *Nature*. Two young scientists believed that they had figured out the double helical structure of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA. In their communication to the journal, these men remarked with masterful understatement that, “This structure has novel features which are of considerable biological interest.” This was indeed the case.

What these two men had achieved was to explain how the long DNA molecule in chromosomes stores information which can be accurately duplicated. This discovery has led directly to DNA fingerprinting, biotechnology, the sequencing of the human genome and evolutionary theories based on DNA sequences in various organisms. Although 65 years ago it was much too soon to foresee all these developments, nevertheless informed individuals understood that a significant milestone had been achieved.

NOBODIES ARE SOMEBODY TOO

The big surprise in 1953 was not that the structure, and by implication the function, of DNA had been discovered, but rather who had done it. With established scientists like American Linus Pauling of Caltech in Pasadena, and British scientists Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin at King’s College, University of London, carrying out such research, it was expected that the problem would soon be solved. These scientists all had research funds, equipment and established names in science.

On the other hand, the British Francis Crick (1916-2004) and American James Watson (b. 1928) were basically nobodies in the scientific community. Crick for his part, his career having been interrupted by war service, was still a graduate student in 1953. Four years earlier, he had come to the Cambridge Medical Research Council Unit. His base of operations was the Cavendish physics lab where Nobel laureate Ernest Rutherford had achieved great things in the 1930s. Crick might be

merely a graduate student, but he was nevertheless skilled in the methods of X-ray diffraction, so useful in searching for the structure of large organic molecules. Moreover he had devised a theoretical method for interpreting X-ray derived images of long chain molecules (polymers). This was a highly significant skill.

REBELS WITH A CAUSE

The lead author of the April 1953 letter was James Watson. He had actually already earned his doctorate in bacterial genetics. Then in 1951 at age 23, he arrived at the Cavendish lab to carry out post-doctoral work on myoglobin, an oxygen storing protein found in muscles. Crick, for his part, had been assigned to carry out X-ray diffraction work on hemoglobin (the all important oxygen carrying molecule in red blood cells). Although they came from different backgrounds, Watson and Crick were alike in many ways. Both of them had, for example, read the 1944 book *What is Life?* by quantum physicist Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961). In this

work, far outside the author's field of expertise, Schrodinger had speculated that there must be a code of some kind in cells that allows molecules to carry information.

Watson and Crick both suspected that DNA was such a molecule. They were fixated on the problem of DNA structure. It mattered little that they had been forbidden to work on this problem. By gentleman's agreement between laboratories, the DNA problem had been allocated to the people at King's College in London. Nevertheless nobody could forbid this irrepressible duo from bouncing ideas off each other, could they?

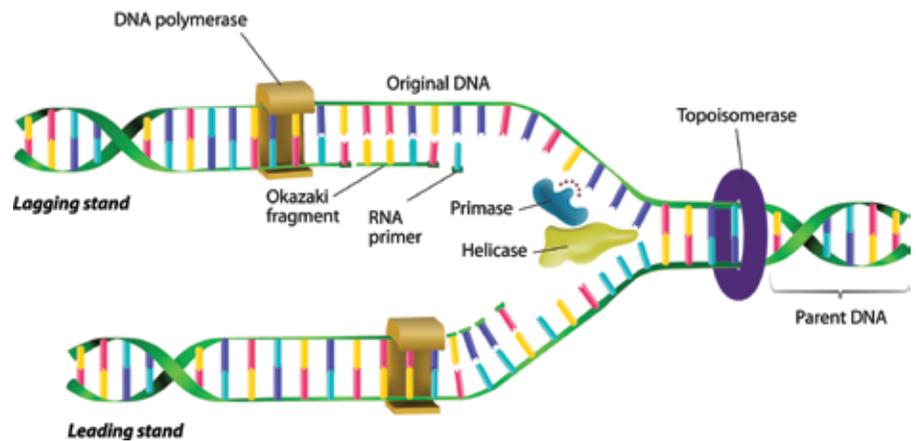
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE PARANOID DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE WRONG

Meanwhile at King's College, the most capable person carrying out research there in X-ray diffraction was Rosalind Franklin (1920-1958). She was a shy, very work oriented Jewish young lady who suspected that her male Anglo-Saxon fellow scientists were trying to steal the results of her research. In this suspicion she was entirely correct. Unfortunately as a result of her attitude, she had few people-handling skills and thus she found herself isolated and unprotected. She was one of two people allocated to research DNA structure. The other was Maurice Wilkins, who was much better known in the scientific community. He hardly ever spoke to his female colleague.

It was Rosalind Franklin who managed to overcome the difficulties of working with DNA. She designed a special X-ray camera for this work and protocols for handling the molecule. Soon enough, she began to produce X-ray images. What they meant however, she refused to speculate upon until her entire program had been

It was Rosalind Franklin who managed to overcome the difficulties of working with DNA.

DNA replication



The more we learn, the more we learn there is to learn.

carried out. It was X-ray images that would provide vital clues about DNA structure. She was quite sure about one thing; the images did not suggest a helical structure in DNA.

TWO'S COMPANY, THREE HELIXES IS A CROWD

It is traditional for scientists involved in research to occasionally give lectures to update colleagues on what they are doing. Rosalind Franklin delivered such a seminar in November 1951. Her colleague Maurice Wilkins invited his friend James Watson from Cambridge. Francis Crick did not come because his interest in DNA was too well known. Watson listened carefully, but he did not bother to take notes. That might look too eager. Watson's recall of what he had heard proved faulty however and progress on the issue was very slow. Then in January 1953, word came that American Linus Pauling was about to publish a proposed structure. This man sent a preprint to his son at Cambridge.

The son showed it to friends Watson and Crick. They were relieved to see that Pauling had made a simple but significant error in the chemistry and was proposing a triple helix structure. They had a reprieve which might last a few weeks.

Two days later Watson visited Franklin. The exchange of views did not go well. Watson taunted her that she was inept at X-ray interpretation. He then encountered Wilkins who showed Watson the best image Franklin had ever taken. From it Watson was able to see clear indications of helical structure and even measurements of angles. Wilkins also showed Watson a Franklin research proposal which contained further crucial details. Based on these insights, Watson and Crick solved the DNA conundrum within four weeks, proposed a double helix, and the rest is history.

When they published, they failed to acknowledge any contribution of Rosalind Franklin. She died five years later, never having heard of her contribution to this story. In 1962 Crick, Watson and Wilkins were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. The achievement of Watson and Crick reveals how important theoretical analysis is to the solving

Crick's hope was to dispense with any excuse for attributing natural phenomena to the work of God.

of many scientific problems. However they could not have done it without the experimental foundation of Rosalind Franklin. Theory and empirical research go hand in hand.

DRIVEN BY AN AGENDA

In the decades that have followed, both Watson and Crick enjoyed long careers. Interestingly, both attribute their success to their atheistic views. James Watson went on to a faculty position at Harvard University where he soon proved himself adept at fund raising and administration. Eventually he became director of the Human Genome Project.

Francis Crick also enjoyed a long career and in his later years turned his attention to the seemingly unrelated issue of human consciousness. In Crick's mind, however, there was a connection between the human brain and the DNA helix. During an interview with Matt Ridley, Dr. Crick described the connection. Apparently his interest in science came entirely from his atheistic views. Because of his distaste for religion, Dr. Crick said, he set out to research the two main topics often cited as support for religion: namely the gulf between life and nonlife, and the phenomenon of consciousness. As a hardcore materialist, it was Crick's objective to explain both these phenomena in chemical terms. His hope was to dispense with any excuse for attributing natural phenomena to the work of God. After all, as colleague James Watson once remarked "Every time you understand something, religion becomes less likely" (or so they would both like to believe).

A DESCRIPTION ISN'T AN EXPLANATION

A little reflection on our part, however, will show that Watson and Crick had in no way explained the gulf between living cells and mere

organic compounds. Indeed what they had achieved was to describe how information is stored in DNA but they had not explained how that information came to be stored in the DNA molecule in the first place.

Nevertheless, under the mistaken assumption that their explanation did away with the need for a Creator of living cells, Dr. Crick turned his attention to the problem of consciousness. He wrestled with the problem for more than twenty-five years, but still the solution eluded him. One might imagine that after all that time, he might conclude that his program has no hope of success – that he might even grow discouraged with his atheistic agenda. On the contrary, right up until his death, Dr. Crick remained as firmly committed to his position as ever.

Throughout his career, James Watson too has steadfastly declared his atheism. In an interview with editor John Rennie of *Scientific American*, Dr. Watson confided: "I never thought there was a spiritual basis for life; I was lucky to be brought up by a father who had no religious beliefs." In another interview he suggested that one of the benefits of DNA research was to provide mankind with godlike powers. Thus he remarked:

"Only with the discovery of the double helix and the ensuing genetic revolution have we grounds for thinking that the powers held traditionally to be the exclusive property of the gods might one day be ours."

When it was pointed out to him that his sentiments were a far cry from those of the founding Pilgrim fathers, he replied: "America isn't what it was like when the Pilgrims came here. We've changed everything. We've never

tried to respect the past, we've tried to improve on it...."

That's his opinion at any rate.

NO END TO THE WONDERS TO EXPLORE

It is apparent that from the start, the objectives of Drs. Watson and Crick were atheistic in nature. They were bitterly opposed to religious faith of any sort. For example, Francis Crick resigned as a fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge when that college embarked on plans to build a chapel. He suggested alternatively that a brothel would be nice, a not too subtle put down of places of worship.

The ultimate objective of these two men then was to explain both life itself and consciousness in chemical terms which would completely exclude any supernatural element. Of course in neither instance have they succeeded. The mystery of life cannot be explained in chemical terms. It is indeed ironic that our understanding of DNA has led to a greater appreciation of the gulf between nonliving chemicals and the living cell. No spontaneous or natural process can ever explain how a code such as DNA came to be, or the astonishingly concentrated storage of its contained information. Instead of providing us with an explanation of how we could have come about without God, their discoveries have only help show that we are more "fearfully and wonderfully made" than was understood before.

Thus this objective of atheists Watson and Crick has been met with utter failure. In addition even Dr. Crick admitted that the search for an explanation for consciousness had been frustrating. No solution is in sight even after all those years of study.

Christians for their part, still celebrate the achievements of April 1953. The motives of Watson and Crick were all wrong, but the nature of their information does not depend on attitude whether good or bad. 

A version of this article first appeared in the June 2003 issue of Reformed Perspective under the title "DNA and the atheists agenda."



GOOD HABITS CAN HELP MINIMIZE TROUBLE

by Wes Bredenhof

Though his name has long escaped me, I will *never* forget his rage. We had just moved to a new city and my mom was looking for a family dentist. Why a relative recommended this fellow, I'll never understand – he was the *angriest* dentist I've ever encountered. His patience for children was non-existent. Once the door was closed and I was cut off from my mother, if my mouth didn't open wide enough, his mouth opened wide with the most foul cursing I'd ever heard, all directed at me. Thankfully, Mom only took us there a couple of times.

While our next dentist was a far kinder man, his dental hygienist was another story. I called her “Carol the Butcher” as there was a butcher shop next door and I was quite convinced she went back and forth. These two forever put the fear of dentistry (*odontophobia*) in my blood. It can be hard to get past traumatic childhood experiences. As a result, I've always hated going to the dentist: the blood, the pain, the way my body seizes up in the chair. I come away sore and worn right out.

MINIMIZING TROUBLE

Eventually it dawned on me that I could minimize some of my trouble through regular dental hygiene. Other, more friendly, dental hygienists down the track taught me some helpful disciplines. I learned that regular brushing with a soft toothbrush was a key. I couldn't really floss because I have sensitive gums (and I'm a bit clumsy), but a hygienist

recommended some soft inter-dental brushes that could help in cleaning between my teeth. Regularly using these would make my visits to the dentist a bit less traumatic. As I developed better habits in dental hygiene (with some helpful tips), I was experiencing far less grief in the dental chair.

So much of our grief in life can be alleviated through developing good habits. Sometimes we just need to be taught. At other times, we need to become teachable and it can take some time. This is true when it comes to dental hygiene, but also when it comes to spiritual hygiene.

I've learned that developing good spiritual habits or disciplines is just as valuable to our spiritual health as good habits are to our dental hygiene. When you ignore your spiritual hygiene, you oftentimes bring grief on yourself. For example, if you think that you can be spiritually healthy while seldom going to church to be under the Word, you're just deceiving yourself. It'd be like thinking that you're going to have healthy teeth while seldom brushing. Or if you think that you can be spiritually sound without reading and studying the Bible for yourself on a regular basis, you're in a dream-world. It'd be like thinking that your next dental visit will go fine without you having regularly flossed, or using something like an inter-dental brush. Good hygiene is essential to good health — and it always requires effort and discipline.

A GOOD HABIT FOR MY SOUL

My lowest points, spiritually speaking, have always come when I've been neglecting discipline in my spiritual life, especially the reading and study of God's Word. I will always be thankful for an elder who challenged me on this point about five years ago. You may think it odd for a pastor to admit this. It's true that I'm always busy with the Bible, but usually I'm busy with it for the benefit of others. Yes, I've always gotten some benefit from it too. But this elder challenged me to be busy with Scripture on a daily basis *for my own benefit*. He said, “Have you ever tried reading through the Bible in a year?” I hadn't up to that point, but he really got me thinking. I was getting into good habits for my dental health, but what about good habits for my spiritual health? And which is more important? The Lord worked through that elder to introduce me to the habit of reading Scripture every day, two or three chapters, for my own benefit. Good dental hygienists introduced me to good habits for my teeth; a good elder introduced me to a good habit for my soul. For both, I'm forever grateful.

Looking for a Bible reading plan to start on a good habit for your spiritual health? A good place to start is Biblegateway.com/reading-plans. ^{RP}

Dr. Wes Bredenhof blogs at Yinkahdinay.wordpress.com where a version of this article first appeared.

IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,
AND NOT SO,
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY JON DYKSTRA

saw 10 burly young men who just stepped out of a dwelling coming toward you, would it or would it not make a difference to you to know they were coming from a Bible study?”

– Dennis Prager making

it clear to atheistic philosopher Jonathan Glover that the Bible does indeed have a positive effect on society, as recounted by Ravi Zacharias in *The Real Face of Atheism*

WELL SAID

“We are finished with the lie, that women aren’t free unless babies die.”
– as seen on a pro-life protester’s handmade sign

ON THE NEED TO READ WHAT’S OLD

“Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means that old books.”

– C. S. Lewis

CHRISTIAN DEBATE 101: DON’T SKIP OVER SCRIPTURE

Pages of History is a fun Christian book for kids about history, but in its justification for the American Revolution it gave a lesson in how *not* to argue like a Christian. The debate between the main characters, James and Lance, doesn’t last long:

JAMES: The Loyalists (those who stayed subjects of the British King) were right because in Romans 13 the Bible says we should submit to the governing authorities.

LANCE: “Yeah, but the colonists didn’t have any representation in Parliament.”

JAMES: “I see your point. I can see good arguments on both sides.”

What just happened here? James gives a biblically based objection to the American Revolution, and Lance counters with a reasonable enough sounding objection, but one that has no Scriptural basis. So why are both treated as *equally valid* arguments? The issue here isn’t the rightness or wrongness of the Revolution, but how very wrong this way of debating it is.

As Christians we profess that Scripture is God’s Word, but we all too often skip right over it when someone quotes it. Instead we form our opinions based on experts’ analysis, or pithy slogans – *no taxation without representation* – and don’t give God’s Word the weight it is due.

But if God has said, then we must listen. That means when Christians discuss, if a biblical passage is cited then what follows *has to be about the text*. We can’t ignore God’s Word. Instead we have to address it in one of three ways:

- If it’s applicable, we need to submit to it
- If it’s not, we need to explain why it’s not
- If we aren’t sure, we need to study further

What we mustn’t (but regularly) do is counter one text with another. In the homosexual debate liberal Christians will cite texts about God’s love as a means of obscuring or dismissing texts that express God’s disapproval of homosexuality. This is pitting Scripture *against* Scripture. But God doesn’t contradict Himself. If one text appears to conflict with another, that only means we don’t understand one, or both texts. The proper approach is going to involve resolving how the two texts fit *with* one another.

God’s Word is authoritative in a way that nothing else is. As Paul says, it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so in our discussions and debates, we need to turn to it. And then we need to submit to it. And as RC Sproul has said, “When God says something, the argument is over.”

BIG AND BURLY, BUT...

“If you, Professor Glover, were stranded at the midnight hour in a desolate Los Angeles street...and you

ARE YOU INFLUENCING, OR BEING INFLUENCED?

“If the Church is not transforming the culture around her, then the culture around her is transforming the Church. There is no static equilibrium point.”

– Douglas Wilson

A REASON NOT TO GAMBLE

Fred Couples recounts when he first learned that there is no such thing as a sure bet. The lesson was learned when the late tennis player Bobby Riggs, challenged him to a golf money match. There was one condition though – Riggs wanted one “throw” per hole. Even with one throw it seemed highly unlikely Riggs could beat the professional golfer, so Couples took the bet.

“On the first hole I hit my approach shot to 15 feet. Meanwhile it took Riggs four shots to reach the green,” said Couples. “But just as I got set to putt Riggs walked over, picked up my ball and threw it out-of-bounds.”

Riggs started laughing and wouldn’t accept Couples money.

“You’ve heard the lesson before, but here it is again,” Couples said, “If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.”

SOURCE: In the November 2000 issue of *Golf Digest*

CAN’T DO BETTER THAN THE BIBLE...

Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens discovered that the surest way to make it to the best sellers list is to write a book attacking the existence of God. But while these prominent atheists want to make doubters of us all, Philip Yancey has a ready answer.

Yancey may be staunchly Arminian,

but he's struggled with doubt for years and has a couple of insights worth sharing. He offers doubting Christians this bit of advice: "Learn to question your doubts just as much as you question your faith." After all, atheists and the doubts they raise and the arguments they make are nothing new. Yancey sees their disciples on every campus he visits, but they don't bother him.

"When I speak on college campuses I like to choose the most skeptical, the most rebellious people - the kids who are reading newspapers instead of listening - and speak to them. And I tell them this, 'I challenge you to find a single argument against God from the great atheists - David Hume, Bertrand Russell, Voltaire, people like that - that is not already included in the Bible!...I can find every argument - in the book of Job for example - that these great philosophers have used against God.'"

SOURCE: *When God is hiding: A candid conversation with best-selling author Philip Yancey*

AN ODE TO DIVERSITY

Up is like down

when left is like right,

Cold may be hot

when the day is like night.

The cat and the dog

are the same only when,

The men are like women

and the women like men.

Celebrate diversity for sure,

but recall,

That small really is small

and tall really is tall.

Calling smiling a frown

will not make it a frown,

Up really is up

and down really is down.

- **Rob Slane**, author of *A Christian and Unbeliever Discuss: Life, the Universe and Everything*

WHEN YOU'RE ASKED, "DO YOU SPANK YOUR CHILD?"

On a December edition of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors podcast, Stuart Scott was asked how he would answer if someone who opposed spanking asked him "Do

you spank your kids?" He encouraged listeners to give a "contextual answer" that presents spanking as the small part it is of all that's involved in the raising of children - just one tool in the toolbox.

"Those questions often come loaded. There's a lot more behind that question and you would like to know what sort of experience have they had, have they been a part of, that totally turns them off to the whole idea of spanking. Especially [when the question is phrased as] 'Do you hit your child?'"

"A good friend...Dr. Bill Goode... was counseling a guy who was going to appear in court and was going to be asked in court 'Do you hit your child? Do you spank your child?' to try and entrap him.

"Dr. Goode counseled this young man not to say, 'Yes I do' or 'No I don't' but instead to give a contextual answer. And this was the contextual answer. The man said: 'When I raise my child, I encourage a lot, I play a lot, I pray a lot, I teach a lot, and I use cause and effect a lot, so that when I do spank I do it lovingly, slowly, prayerfully, and thoroughly so I don't have to do it often.'

"I thought that a pretty wise answer."

ON TRUTH VS. LOVE

I've learned that truth without love is cruel; love without truth is cowardly.

- **Phil Callaway**, author of *To Be Perfectly Honest*

NEVER A BETTER TIME...

It's so easy to get caught up in what's going wrong with the world that we can lose sight of all the wonders God is working in the here and now. Pastor John MacArthur reflected on this, in his eulogy given at Sproul's funeral on Dec 20, and noted how very blessed we are to live at a time such as this.

"I think you have to understand this. This is the greatest time in this history of the church for the expansion of sound doctrine. You might say this is the greatest explosion of the Truth in history. And the truth, of

course, is captured in the doctrines of grace, and Reformed theology. People look at the Church today and what's going and very often they say to me: "This is a very sad time, there is so much bad preaching, so much unbiblical ecclesiology, there so much poor spiritual leadership, there is so much disinterest in the doctrine of sanctification. There's no real sense of holiness and worship.' You know all these things. At the same time there has never been a time in the *history of the world* where sound doctrine is so available in a split second anywhere on the planet."

SPURGEON ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE

"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom."

IS MOM #1?

On evangelist Ray Comfort's website www.hollywoodandgod.com there's a video in which Comfort hits the streets and asks people whether they would sit through a movie that took the Lord's name in vain. Then he asks them if they would sit through a movie that took their mother's name in vain. The answers provided seem to show that while we all love our mothers, God doesn't rate as highly.

ALZHEIMER'S AND THE HOPE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

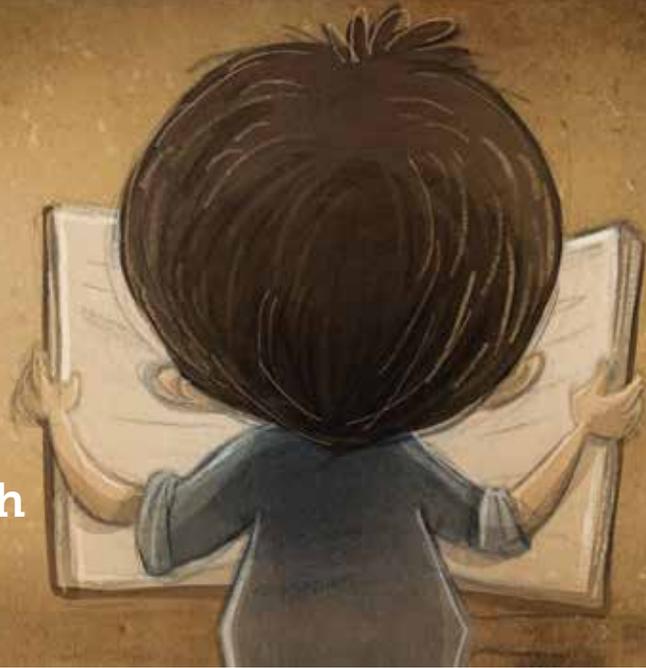
Christianity Today's former editor in chief David Neff once pointed out how little hope liberal theology offers the family and friends of Alzheimer's patients. Such theology, he wrote:

"requires Christians to act for their salvation/liberation. That is no comfort to those whose dementia leaves them without the capacity to act." After his father-in-law was stricken, Neff took comfort in a more Reformed understanding that instead emphasized, "that it is God who acts on our own behalf." RP

A Plea To Read

or, the story of a Boy,
a Repairman, and the Truth

by William den Hollander



In the title of this article I promised you a story. Actually that was mainly to draw you in. I figured stories sell more magazines. But it's not entirely untrue. I want to start with a couple of stories. They happen to be autobiographical.

The first story starts at about grade 3, around the age of 8. You may think that my qualification for making a "plea to read" is my current calling as pastor, or my (excessive) years of education before this. But that's not really it. That's not really why I agreed to share this article about reading. Instead, the story begins, once upon a time, when I was 8. That was the year I discovered reading, or at least my passion for reading. In the years that followed it became my number one activity. I was almost always reading, probably at an unhealthy level.

You want to know why I say that? Well, my parents would often ignore my lengthy birthday or Sinter Klaas lists and buy me things I didn't ask for and, truth be told, I didn't necessarily want. I asked for the next book in a series; they bought me a hockey stick. I asked for the first book in a new series; they bought me a Lego set.

Actually, we used to have a cartoon on our fridge. I think it was from Punch Comics. One of my siblings stumbled across it, cut it out, and posted it there.

It's a sketch of a family gathered around a television set in the living room. Two ladies on the couch are talking to each other and looking rather concerned about the boy in the foreground who's curled up in a chair reading a book, oblivious to the rest of the family. The caption at the bottom reads, "We're rather worried about William." I kid you not. That was the name. Google it if you don't believe me. It doesn't quite work because we never had a TV in the house, but you get the picture, I think.

So that's where this story begins. My plea to read is in part a plea for you to join me in the best hobby there is.

A DOG-EARED COPY OF REFORMED DOGMATICS

But that's not a terribly convincing appeal. That comes in the next story (I hope). We have to jump forward about twenty years to what was one of my more embarrassing moments in recent years, which for some reason I'm sharing publicly with you all.

You have to try to imagine the scene with me. I was in first year at the seminary at the time. And you have to know that first year seminary is that stage where you feel like you know everything. You have an opinion on everything. And you want to fight about everything. Things change after four

years. Thankfully... and by the grace of God.

Well, we were back home in Richmond Hill for the weekend. We got invited to my wife Diane's Opa and Oma Kampen's for dinner (don't tell them I told you this story) and we were sitting around waiting for dinner to be ready and chatting and what not.

Now, before I continue, I have to give a quick character sketch. Opa Kampen is retired now, but he was an appliance repairman all of his years in Canada. I'm not sure when his education stopped, but he definitely didn't have anything like the years of education that I had at that point.

So, anyway, we're talking together about one thing or another, and suddenly the conversation shifts. I don't remember why anymore, but rather unexpectedly Opa asked me whether I favoured Infralapsarianism or Supralapsarianism. Remember, I was the first year seminary student and he was the appliance repairman.

I don't remember why it came up, but I definitely remember my reaction. Vividly. I started sweating. I had heard those words before, but I had almost no idea at that point what they meant, let alone which one I leaned towards. I thought, here we go, Opa's about to expose me as a complete fraud. My

education has meant nothing! I was tempted to slip out quickly to the bathroom so that I could Google it, but there was no time. I actually don't even know what happened in the end, but that moment of panic has stuck with me.

So why am I sharing this story? Well, to me it illustrates a change over the years in terms of our investment into reading and educating ourselves in Reformed doctrine. Gone are the days when your appliance repairman read through Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, in Dutch or in English. Gone are the days when you can *expect* men nominated as elders or deacons to have invested significant time into studying Reformed doctrine over and above their catechism instruction as young people.

Now, before you get up in arms, I'm not saying there are none of these. I'm just saying that with the younger generations this breed is not as common. And I'm indicting myself with this too. I was a deacon before coming to seminary. Well, if that's the case with those being put up for church leadership, then how about the other people in the pew?

Before I continue, I should add a disclaimer. My comments here are completely unscientific. My doctoral supervisor would never forgive me for my poor research. I haven't crunched any numbers or done any surveys. I'm basing this on my experiences as an office-bearer, both before and after I went through seminary. If you have a more positive outlook, I'd love for you to convince me. But right now, this is my article, so you'll have to bear with me.

So why should we care? Why should I make this plea for us to read more widely and more deeply today, in the 21st century? Let me devote the next half of this article to exploring an answer to that question.

THEOLOGIANS SHOULD READ (AND WE'RE ALL THEOLOGIANS)

Well, first of all, everyone is a theologian. (If you're on Twitter, you might want to tweet that, although I certainly can't take credit for coining the phrase,¹ so don't quote me). Everyone is a theologian. Even the atheist is a

theologian. That's because theology is, essentially, thoughts or words about God. And the atheist has thoughts about God. Now, his thought happens to be that God doesn't exist – and he happens to be wrong – but that still makes him a theologian.

So, if we're all theologians then the important question is what kind of theologians are we going to be? You see, the problem with the atheist isn't that he's a theologian, it's that his theology is coming from the wrong source. If we don't study theology from the right sources – if we don't allow our thoughts and words about God to be shaped by the right sources – then our theology is going to be shaped by the *wrong* sources. If we don't consciously *do theology* – that is, if we don't consciously train our minds in the knowledge of God – we're going to end up basing our theology either on our own experiences and our own feelings or on whatever else we happen to be taking in.

Because we *are* reading. Maybe some of us – and I'm talking especially about my generation and younger – are reading more than ever. I'm thinking of social media. Don't tell me you're not a reader if you're on Facebook or Twitter. Maybe those who only use Instagram, which focuses on pictures, can have a legitimate claim not to be readers, but the other social media users can't.²

But the problem with only reading online, and not engaging in books, is that by its very nature the online world tends towards the superficial. Let's think specifically of theology – of the study of God. If your thoughts are shaped by your reading of little quotes that someone decided to share, taken out of context, written by who knows who, or if all you read are the musings of someone who is just "feeling philosophical"

(as the Facebook status often says) then you can't expect anything but superficial knowledge.

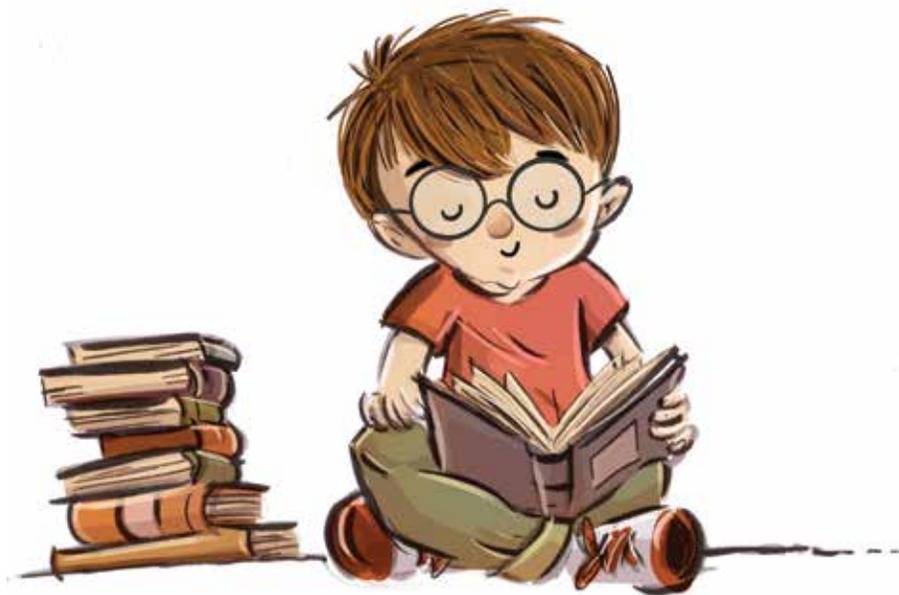
That, I think, is the biggest danger with losing our interest in reading deeply and studying deeply the doctrines of God found in his Word. We end up with an overall superficiality in terms of our theology, what we know about God. Worse, we can rely more on our subjective experiences than the objective truth we find in God's Word.

FEELINGS AREN'T RELIABLE... BUT THERE IS A BOOK THAT CAN BE TRUSTED

Let me explain that. What is *subjective* is based on our own experiences, our feelings, our emotions. We can't really call it truth – although as postmoderns we might want to – because we aren't reliable sources of truth. Our sinful, fallen nature means that we can't be trusted to process things correctly, understand things properly. We can't be trusted to theologize helpfully on our own. General revelation can only go so



Are you a grandparent? Stimulate the love for reading good books in your grandkids.



far (Rom. 1:19-23). We *need* objective truth. We need something to build our lives on that is absolutely rock solid, unshakeable. We find that foundation in the Word of God alone. Because it's a revelation from outside of us, from outside of this fallen world. It's special revelation from the unshakeable source of truth, God himself.

That's why we're called to pore over Scripture, to internalize it, to let it light our path, to let it shape our thoughts, to let it cut deeply into our hearts. And we have to trust that the Spirit works transformation through the Word. We have to believe that. And then live like we believe it.

But we also don't read Scriptures alone. We read them with the church of all times and places. That's why we guide and inform our reading with creeds and confessions. That's also why we supplement our reading of Scripture with studying good theology, with reading solid literature. Because it all helps ground us further in the *objective* truth of God's Word.

When we're deeply grounded in the truth of God's Word, then we are better able to process our subjective feelings and emotions. The psalms in Scripture provide us with great examples of what that looks like. But let me explain what I mean by what I think is the most powerful and poignant illustration of this,

where the believer directs his *experience* of reality by the truth that he *knows* from God's revelation.

It lies at the very center of the most tragic book in the Bible, Lamentations, traditionally understood to be written by Jeremiah. The prophet is lamenting over the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. His world, the world of God's own people, has completely fallen apart. He finds himself sitting in the ashes and ruins of the holy city. Many of the people of God have died in the Babylonian invasion. Many others have been deported to far away Babylon.

The whole poem is centred around the question: how could God allow this to happen to his chosen people? The prophet's present experience is of pain, disillusionment, disappointment. Almost the entire book is a long cry of deepest despair. But then, at the very heart of the poem, in the middle of "the wormwood and the gall" (3:19), we get this incredible confession of faith,

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness" (3:22-23).

One Bible teacher suggests that we imagine ourselves sitting in the ashes of the World Trade Center in New York City after 9/11 and speaking these words to

ourselves.³

That's what I mean by looking at our experiences and filtering our emotions through our objective knowledge of God... our theology. The prophet, sitting among the ashes, *knows* this truth because God has spoken it, and so he applies this truth to his troubled soul and to his experiences, which appear to contradict it.

Like the prophet, it's our knowledge of the objective truths of God's Word that gives us the wherewithal to process our experiences and feelings. Not vice versa. Then our theology lets us speak truth to our souls when our *experience* doesn't seem to line up with our *knowledge*.

That's part of why we read. That's part of why we pursue a deeper and deeper knowledge of God, above all through his Word, but also through reading deeply and widely with the church.

HOW CAN WE ENCOURAGE READING?

I want to explore the answer to one last question before I let you go: what should we do? I don't have space to pay much attention to this, but let me make a start by saying what we shouldn't do: we shouldn't do nothing. We shouldn't finish reading this article, muse about it for a few moments, and then just move on, mildly annoyed at the fact that this wasn't a story like it was advertised to be, but otherwise untouched. We shouldn't do nothing.

So what should we do? Well, let me issue a plea to all of you reading this to do *something*. What that something is will depend on who you are and what you do.

- Are you a parent or grandparent? Stimulate the love for reading good books in your kids and grandkids.

Buy them books – good books, mind you – and then talk about them.

Do that by modeling it for them and by giving them the right resources for it. And if you can't stimulate a *love* for it, then at least impress on them their *responsibility* to keep educating themselves in the doctrines of the Word of God.

- Are you an elder or deacon or pastor? First of all, create a culture of "professional development" within your church council and consistory. Secondly, stimulate that same love and that same sense of responsibility for reading in the sheep under your care.
- Are you a member of the body of Christ? Develop your own desire to grow in the doctrines of the Word of God, in sinking the objective truths of Scripture into your hearts and minds. And then make it your mission to share that love with your fellow members.

- Start with the people closest to you, your friends within the church. Buy them books – good books, mind you – and then talk about them. Start with easier (but not easy) reads and then make your way into heavier ones. Stretch yourself and stretch them too.

- Plan book review nights where you get together with your friends and you all share thoughts and insights from the books you happen to be reading at present. It doesn't have to be formal or complicated. Just talk. And when you're done your book (and it's a good one), pass it along to someone else. Don't let it collect dust on your shelf.

In all this, though, never forget that *studying theology ought to be an act of worship*. We can't let our reading become an end in itself. We can't become obsessed with theology for the sake of theology. We

do theology because we exist to glorify God and because we were created to know Him. So as you read and discuss, do it with a conscious posture of worship. Let your increase of knowledge lead to an increase of worship. Soli Deo Gloria! 

ENDNOTES

¹ R.C. Sproul wrote *Everyone's a Theologian: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*.

² For this point, see Aimee Byrd's *No Little Women: Equipping All Women in the Household of God*, page 202.

³ Donald E. Curtis made the suggestion in his article "Lamentations: The Fall of Jerusalem" which can be found at Bible.org/seriespage/lamentations-fall-jerusalem.

Rev. den Hollander is the pastor of Langley Canadian Reformed Church. This article was originally delivered as a speech at the December 8, 2017 Reformed Perspective fundraising dinner at the Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church.



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to function as prophets, priests, and kings in this world.”



PROVERBS: 3,000 YEARS AHEAD OF ITS TIME

by Jay Younts

Solomon did not have a web page. He didn't blog. He didn't tweet. He wasn't on on Snap Chat or Instagram. But he can still help you navigate the seas of social media.

Here are three important terms to know when using the internet: Verify, Verify, Verify!

In the world of social media, little is as it seems. You must verify that what you read and see is not just a half-truth or flat-out deception. Proverbs 18:17 says:

The first to present his case in a dispute seems right, until his opponent comes and cross examines him.

It is easy to accept texts, tweets, posts, emails, etc., at face value. Don't! This isn't cynical, but just realizing that the Bible warns about the deception of the human heart. The online chat can be with a predator. The text or email can sound like a real need, but it may well be only half of the truth. Someone who is struggling may be telling you only one side of the story.

Remember what is important about Internet communication:

VERIFY what you hear or read by way of another source. Just because one person or source says something is true, doesn't make it true. If verification is not possible then you must withhold judgment about the truth of what you read. Also verify the identity of whom you communicate with. Predators are a serious threat!

VERIFY that the person you are communicating with has nothing to gain from the information you receive. Is the person

trying to gain your support in a dispute? Are you being asked for information that could compromise you in some way? Is someone else being put in a bad light by what you hear? Are you being intentionally or unintentionally misled?

VERIFY that the person you are communicating with has done their due diligence in verifying what you are being told. Simply asking "how do you know that" is a great way to avoid gossip.

Someone reading this might well ask, "Well this article is online, how can I trust what you are saying?"

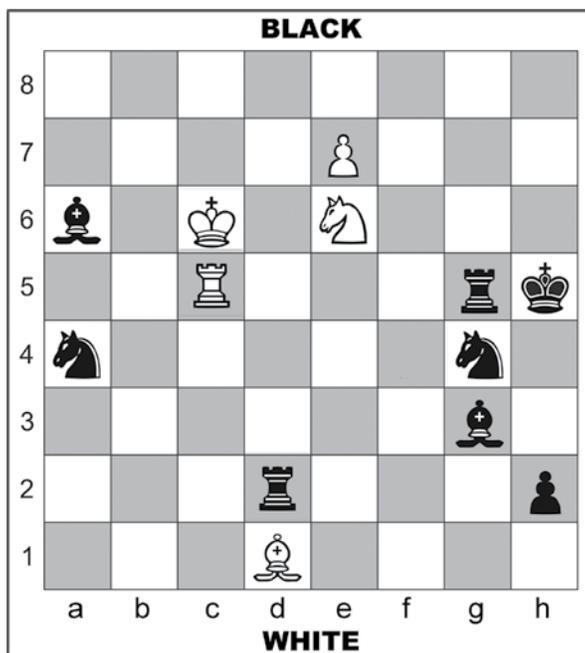
That is exactly the right question to ask! In this case you know the source of the article, *ShepherdPress.com*. You can know who the author is by checking out the webpage. You have the ability to communicate and ask for verification either by comment or via email from the Shepherd Press web page. You have the ability to check out the background and beliefs of Shepherd Press by checking out that same page. This is the sort of verification you should engage in with any information gained via social media. Protect yourself and your children by acting on the truth of Proverbs 18:17.

Solomon may not have had internet access. But his wisdom is timeless! 

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.

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Chess Puzzle #244



WHITE to Mate in 4

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

HINT: White only makes moves involving a white queen as black is forced into check mate in 4 moves by white.

Riddle for Punsters #244

"Animal Hospital?"

Did you hear about the new animal hospital opening up?

All the animal doctors have to sign a _____ cratic oath to do no harm to any animal. The business is honest: no _____-business such as overcharging customers. There is to be true compassion for the patients – no _____dile tears. L _____-hearted doctors will be the _____ administrators.

Problem to Ponder #244

"The Goal is to Find the Team's Net Worth?"

Suppose that your favourite hockey team has won 20 games and lost 12 games so far.

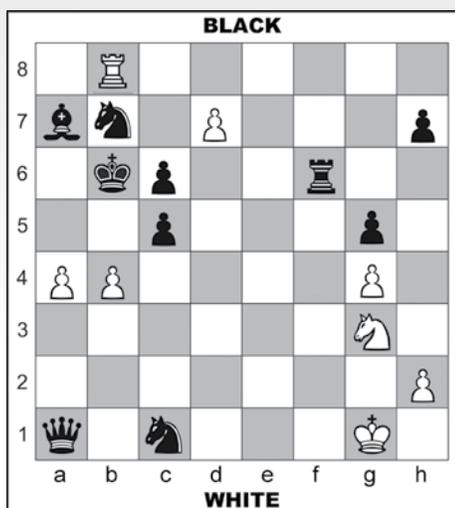
- What is, in simplest form, the ratio of wins to losses?
- What % of their games have been won so far?
- How many of that team's next 12 games would have to be won to make the win-loss ratio 7:4?
- If that happens and the win-loss ratio is now 7:4, what fraction of the next 16 games must be won so that the team will have won 65% of their games played?

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,

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

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #243



WHITE TO MATE IN 4

Descriptive Notation

A beautiful queen sacrifice!

- P-Q8=Q ch K-R3
- Q-R5 ch NxQ
- P-N5 ch PxP
- PxP mate

Algebraic Notation

- d7-d8=Q + Kb6-a6
- Qd8-a5 + Nb7xa5
- b4-b5 + c6xb5
- a4xb5 ++

BLACK TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

- N-K7 dbl ch
- K-N2 Q-KN8 ch
- K-R3 N-B5 mate

Algebraic Notation

- Nc1-e2 dbl +
- Kg1-g2 Qa1-g1 +
- Kg2-h3 Ne2-f4 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#243 – "Dessert going Bananas?"

Why did the banana split?

Being in a bowl with cold ice cream no longer had a peel for the banana.

Why did the milk shake?

If you had to go into a mixer with stirring blades and cold ice cream you would shake too!

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#243 – "The True Meaning of Christmas Jumbled Words"

Unscramble the words, most of which are anagrams. They will produce words (esp. words found in the gospels) related to Jesus Christ's birth. For example, A MIG = MAGI. Two blanks means two word answers.

BE THE HELM	<u>BETHLEHEM</u>	SHE AIMS	<u>MESSIAH</u>
OUR VISA	<u>SAVIOUR</u>	FENCE RANK SIN	<u>FRANKINCENSE</u>
HD SPHERES	<u>SHEPHERDS</u>	AN ICON TRAIN	<u>INCARNATION</u>
RAG MEN	<u>MANGER</u>	GRAY MINI RV	<u>VIRGIN MARY</u>
GLEANS	<u>ANGELS</u>	DOG HER INK	<u>KING HEROD</u>

ONE YEAR LATER

It's been some 36 years since the first print edition of *Reformed Perspective* came out, and a lot has changed since then.

A BIG CHANGE

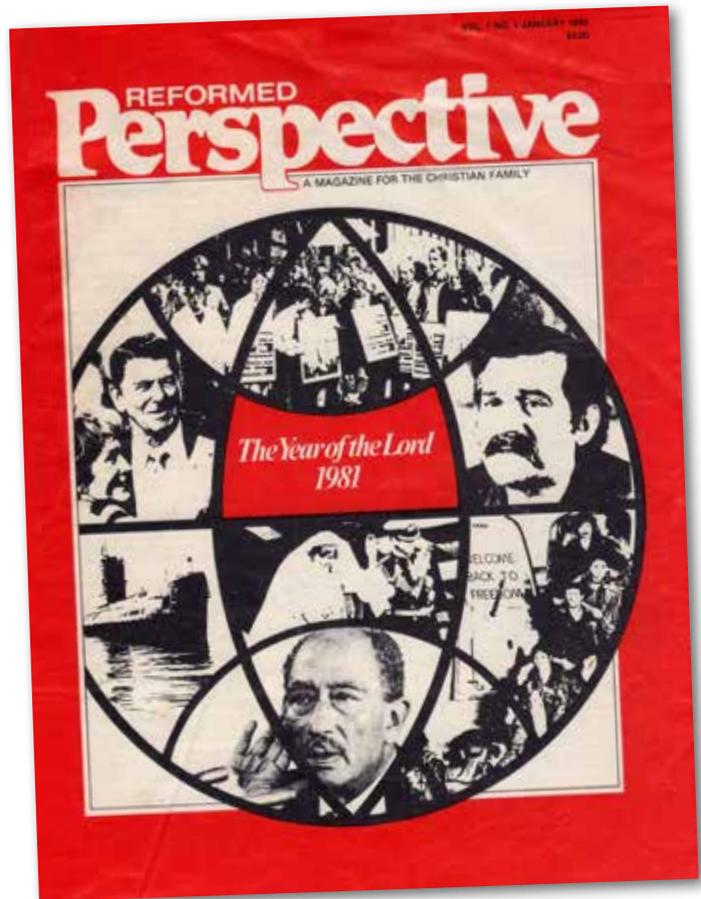
Back then, we were still distributing content in a way that Johannes Guttenberg would have readily understood: the publication went out on paper, and had to be transported to each individual reader. It wasn't exactly the same – Guttenberg's printings would have been sent out via horses, carts and ships, and in the five centuries since then we've invented planes, trains and automobiles, so *Reformed Perspective's* first issue was sent out much further and must faster.

But distribution was still laborious, and therefore expensive. And to cover that expense, they decided to sell subscriptions – it only made sense. But depending on subscriptions also meant that the magazine's business model contrasted with its purpose. The intent has always been to equip God's people by sharing edifying, challenging, Reformed materials with as many people as possible. But our need for subscription revenues meant we had to restrict distribution to only those who were willing to pay.

A little over a year ago, that all changed. In December 2016 we became donor-supported, which meant we no longer had to restrict who could see our content. That's when we began to fully embrace the possibilities that came with the Internet, and started distributing all our content for free online via Facebook, a website, and an email newsletter.

There are still costs that come with making a magazine, but now an article that was once distributed to a couple thousand subscribers can go out to thousands more for almost no additional cost.

God has blessed this effort, and we've seen a steady growth in our reach and impact. For example, in the month of January 2017 we reached 6,000+, while by December, we saw more than 20,000 visit the website that month. We started 2017 with just 43 email newsletter subscribers, and ended with more than 600. Over the course of the year our articles were featured on *LighthouseNews* and *Challies.com*, and have been reprinted in *Creation Science Dialogue*, *Una Sancta*,

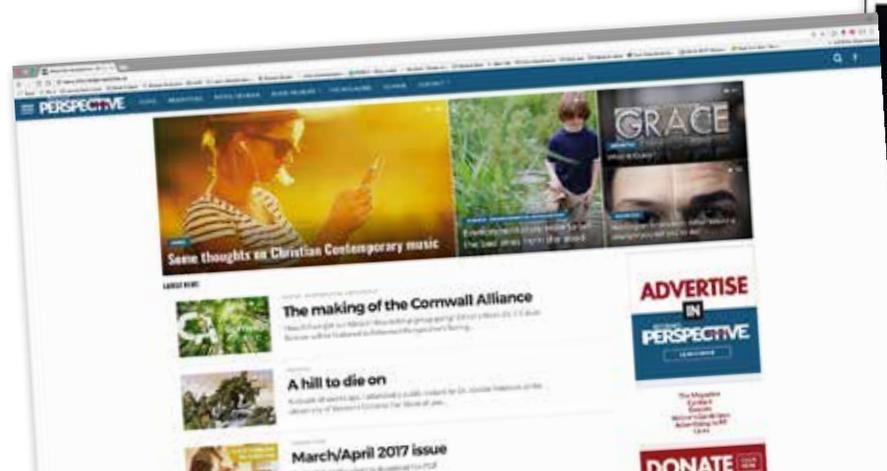


Mercatornet, *Faith in Focus*, the *Christian Study Library*, *Creation.com* and more. And we've had hard articles translated into Portuguese, Dutch French, and even Australian!

SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME

But as much as has changed, *Reformed Perspective's* mission remains the same. We still seek to promote a Biblically Reformed perspective in all spheres of life, and we are doing so by equipping and encouraging Christians to think, speak, and act in a manner consistent with their confession.

Will you help us? With your financial support we can continue to expand our online presence, but also explore other means, like our upcoming speaking tour (which you can learn more about on page 37). You can also help by pointing others to our Facebook page, and website, and letting them know about the speaking tour. Finally, we ask for your prayers. God has kept this magazine going for 36 years now, and created opportunities for us. Please ask Him to continue to guide us in the direction we head, and in the content that we share. RP



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

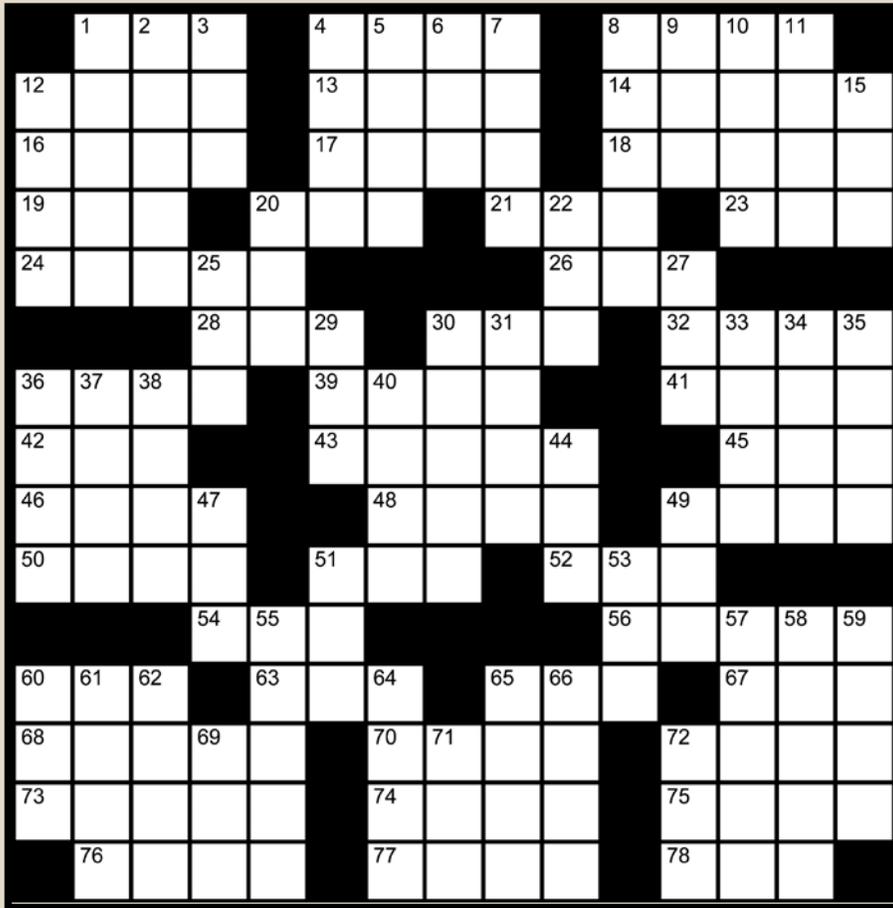
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I want to share my Reformed perspective with the world!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 3-10

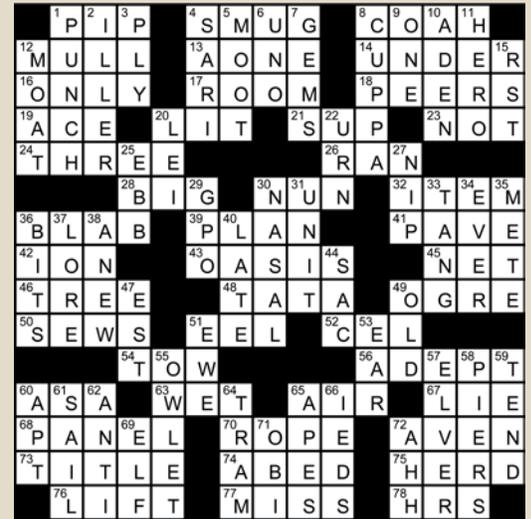
PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. Broadcaster of *Planet Earth*
4. Attack with knife
8. Length of bridge or width of wings
12. Current currency of Turkey
13. Indigenous people of Japan
14. Carbonated drink found in drinks
16. What you may find in slightly open fridge
17. Network of lines that cross each other to form squares
18. Proverb (from a commercial era?)
19. Leader of an organized crime family
20. First thing a golfer takes out of the bag
21. Type of "milk" for the lactose-intolerant
23. Title of novel by H. Rider Haggard
24. The part of the film you hear
26. "vessel for honorable ____"
- (2 Tim. 2)
28. Dad's better half
30. Polynesian staple food
32. Narcissus's lover in Greek mythology
36. It stings... sometimes repeatedly!
39. "Wisdom is with the ____" (Job 12)
41. Last name of Kublai or Genghis
42. High-flying computer key
43. "to wake from ____" (Rom. 13)
45. "____ we there yet?" (road trip question)
46. "so that the tent lay ____" (Judges 7)
48. ____ Minor (and Major) – nocturnal bears
49. After he tires of standing, he ____
50. Beginner; novice; greenhorn
51. Belonging to it
52. Quick bite (but not to eat)

54. "To ____ is human..." (Alexander Pope)
56. ____ of Dort (1618-1619)
60. Sports association that covers all the bases
63. Abbreviation on a wanted poster (= *alias*)
65. Hoover has one named after him.
67. "Flying saucer" – first claimed sighting 1947
68. Jewish festival celebrating Esther's success
70. Short form for toothy Nile predator
72. Composer, in 1936, of "O Fortuna"
73. "but gives ____ to the humble." (James 4)
74. Possible skin disease symptom (Lev. 13)
75. American defense overhead (abbreviation)
76. "You are ____, my lord," (Ophelia in *Hamlet*)
77. Fake an opposing player out (eg. in hockey)
78. Abbreviation in resume or application form

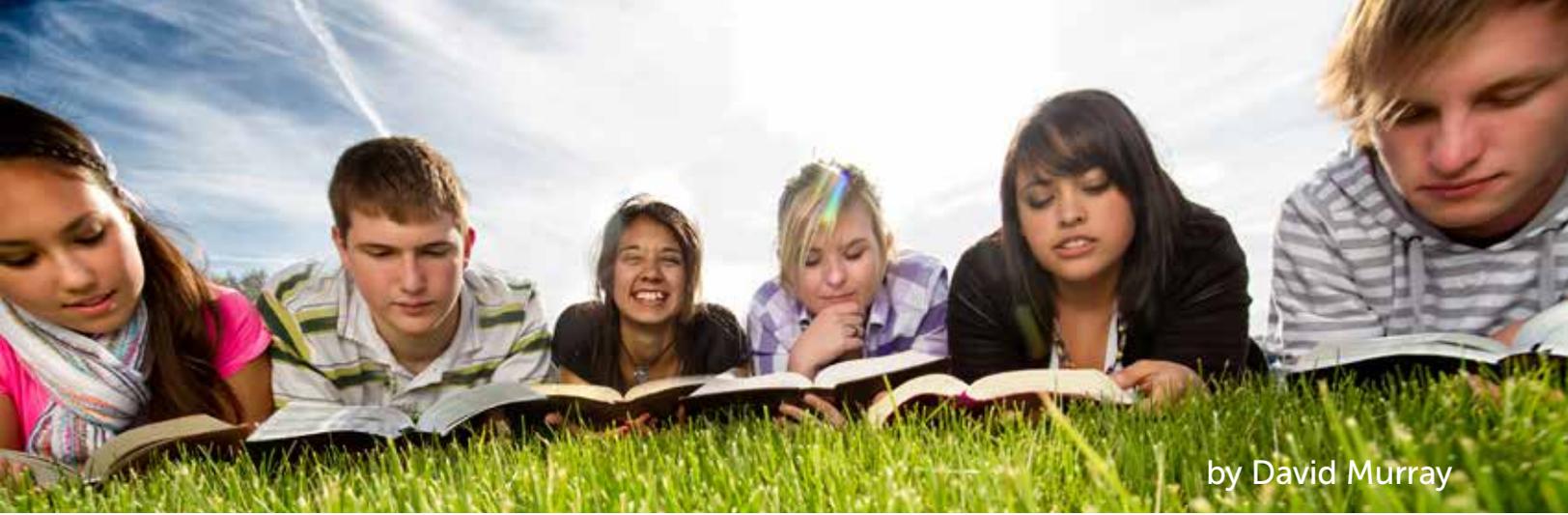
LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 3-9

DOWN

1. Small, exquisitely wrought trinket
2. Owner's stamp on a cow's hide
3. Train unit, or what a train may carry
4. *Riders of the Purple ____*, by Zane Grey
5. Become exhausted or fatigued
6. Ruined medieval Turkish city
7. What came from Aaron's staff (Num. 17)
8. "the one who ____ awake" (Rev. 16)
9. A peaceful home
10. Genus of dabbling ducks
11. Nearby (at least near night, anyway)
12. 3 Down manufactured in Russia
15. Mediocre grade, or grade of 100 in Rome
20. "Me ____, please!" (line in old gum ad)
22. Positively French reply
25. a small, mischievous sprite.
27. Reaction to mouse in a cartoon
29. Plural synonym of 28
- Across
30. A fair jury is made up of yours.
31. Poems in praise of natural things
33. Traditional Indian tea
34. "As the ____, about to falter" (old Ps. 42)
35. Former Canadian bills that are now loonies
36. Drift down to the ground or through the air
37. Enemy of your enemy (somewhat naturally)
38. "saw his ____ when it rose" (Matt. 2)
40. Too much is part of what makes a glutton.
44. "grain offering cooked in a ____" (Lev. 2)
47. "big ____ of his right foot" (Lev. 8)
49. "to ____ out the land" (Num. 13)
51. Irritate; get to
53. Suffix for *capital* or *social*
55. Japanese dish featuring noodles
57. "Then Naomi... became his ____." (Ruth 4)
58. Meat not found in a steak – sounds awful?
59. Tip (one's hat – in the presence of a lady)
60. Fuel economy abbreviation
61. "like a leopard I will ____" (Hosea 13)
62. Typically Scottish word for a hillside
64. Corrosive liquid
65. Deduct pay (for a worker on the pier?)
66. "the heart may ____" (Prov. 14)
69. Frozen assets, especially diamonds
71. Atlas or road sign abbreviation
72. "cried ____ with a loud voice" (Rev. 6)



by David Murray

Four Reasons To Remember Your Creator In Youth

Our enemy says, “Youth for pleasure, middle age for business, old age for religion.” The Bible says, “Youth, middle age, and old age for your Creator.”

But as it’s especially in our youth that we are most inclined (determined?) to forget our Creator, it’s especially in these years that we must work to remember our Creator (Ecc.12:1). Remember that he made you, that he provides for you, that he cares for you, that he watches you, that he controls you; and remember that he can save you too. That’s a lot to remember, but it’s much easier to start memorizing when we are young!

1. ENERGETIC YEARS

However, that’s not the only reason why God commands us to remember our Creator in our young years. It’s also because these are our most energetic years.

Why wait until we are pegging out, until we are running down, until our gas is almost empty, before serving our Creator? The God who made us deserves our most active and healthy years: our bodies are strong and muscular (well kind of), our minds are sharp and clear, our senses are receptive and keen and sensitive, our enthusiasm is bright and bushy, our wills are steely and determined. Remember him in your energetic years.

2. SENSITIVE YEARS

Why do far more of us become Christians in our youth than in our middle or old age? It’s because youthful years are sensitive years. Without giving up our belief in “Total Depravity” we can say that it’s “easier” to believe and repent when we are younger. It’s never easy, but it’s easier. And it’s easier because as we get older our heart is hardened thicker, our conscience is seared number, our sins root deeper, our deadness becomes deader.

Use youthful sensitivity and receptivity to remember your Creator before the evil days of callous indifference set in.

3. TEACHABLE YEARS

We learn more in our youth than in any other period of life. That’s true in all subjects, but especially true in religious instruction. All the Christians I’ve met who were converted to Christ late in life have expressed huge regrets about how little they know and how little they can now learn. I encourage them to

value and use whatever time the Lord gives them, but they often feel they have to study twice as hard to learn half as well.

4. DANGEROUS YEARS

Young years are minefield years: hormones, peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, pornography, immorality, testosterone, etc. Few navigate these years without blowing up here and there. Dangers abound on every side – and on the inside. How many “first” temptations become “last” temptations! How much we need our Creator to keep us and carry us through this battlefield.

REMEMBER TO REMEMBER

Let me then give you some helps to remember your Creator during these best of years (and “worst” of years):

- **BE PERSUADED THAT YOU HAVE A CREATOR:** Get well grounded in a literal understanding of Genesis 1-2 and shun all evolutionary influences.
- **GET TO KNOW YOUR CREATOR:** Study his Word using sermons, commentaries, and good books. But also study his World using microscopes and telescopes and any other instruments he gives.
- **JOIN WITH YOUR CREATOR'S FRIENDS:** Build friendships with other creatures that love to remember and respect their Creator.
- **FOLLOW YOUR CREATOR'S ORDER:** He set and gave the pattern of six days work followed by one day of rest for contemplation of His Works.
- **ASK FOR YOUR CREATOR'S SALVATION:** Even if your rejection of your Creator has broken you in pieces, he’s willing to re-create you in his image.

And while we’re on the subject of salvation, I don’t want older readers to be discouraged. Compared to the eons of eternity, you are still in your “youth.” It’s not too late to remember Him, before these evil days come even nearer. **RP**

Dr. David Murray is Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and pastor of Grand Rapids Free Reformed Church. This article first appeared on his blog HeadHeartHand.org and is reprinted here with permission.

Evidential Apologetics: the right way

There is no neutrality, so we shouldn't pretend otherwise



by Greg Bahnsen

In popular misconception today, the choice of an apologetical method facing a Bible-believing Christian is between arguing presuppositionally *or* appealing to evidences from history and nature in support of Christianity. But that is entirely wrong.

Presuppositional apologetics endorses and indeed encourages the use of evidences – *but not* evidences offered in the "traditional" manner as an appeal to the authority of the unbeliever's (allegedly) autonomous reasoning. Unbelievers who are self-conscious in their autonomy will usually fight against the force of the "facts" to which we can appeal in favor of the Bible's veracity.

When unbelievers resist the factual arguments which apologetics can and should readily set before them to confirm or defend the Christian position, [Cornelius]

Van Til said we must then realize and take seriously that

"the battle is not one primarily of this fact or of that fact. The battle is basically with respect to a philosophy of facts.... No one can be a scientist in any intelligible way without at the same time having a philosophy of reality as a whole."¹

◀ Evidential apologetics done wrong supposes there is some non-Christian, neutral set of scales by which the evidence can be fairly weighed and evaluated. Then the Christian's role is simply to present as much compelling evidence as possible.

But this approach overlooked the *antithesis* – that there are two sides, God's and Satan's, and neutrality isn't possible – there is no unbiased set of scales outside of God's own.

This approach also misunderstands what the argument is most often about: it's about how the evidence is to be weighed. So, if we were, for example, to put God's views on parenting

ONE WORLDVIEW VS. THE OTHERS

The presuppositional use of evidences in apologetics recognizes that ultimately the intellectual conflict between believers and unbelievers is a matter of *antithetical worldviews*. We must show that the unbeliever's worldview, by which he wishes to oppose the claims of the faith, would not only preclude the facts of Scripture, but the very intelligibility of *any* facts about any subject whatsoever.

For that reason Van Til was adamant that the apologist not make the mistake of pretending to be neutral or autonomous in reasoning, but present his factual defense in the right way and in the right light to the unbeliever.

"Christianity does not thus need to take shelter under the roof of a scientific method independent of itself. It rather offers itself as a roof to methods that would be scientific."²

If the intelligibility of the inductive, empirical reasoning used by the unbeliever to oppose the faith is to make any philosophical sense, the unbeliever will need to affirm the Christian faith as his presupposition or worldview! The efforts of unbelievers should be turned against their own unbelief. That is simply the presuppositional way of defending the faith and pressing evidential arguments.

Is the evidential *power* of (say) Christ's resurrection lost when the evidential argument for it is presented to the unbeliever within the context of Biblical presuppositions? Not at all. Presuppositional apologetics calls for the Christian and non-Christian to set side by side their two worldviews and do an internal examination of them both (and their respective "inner logics"). In such a comparison the evidential power of Christ's resurrection is easily set forth.

ONLY ONE WORLDVIEW MAKES SENSE

Yet somebody might wonder: "But if the presuppositions already require that the Bible be true and thus that Christ rose from the dead, how could the evidence be impressive?" Well, after the game-winning shot at the buzzer has become a matter of past history, and

to the test the secular scale will evaluate them by secular standards. It might find Christian parenting to be a failure because these parents aren't teaching their children to embrace alternative lifestyles. The secular scales are tipped, and on them Christian parenting will be found intolerant.

So, most often, the debate isn't about who has the more compelling evidence, but about how the evidence will be evaluated. ►

even though we know the outcome of the game, we are still astounded by that shot and can watch it in awe when we observe the videotape replay of the game. The shot is still impressive, even when you know the context and outcome.

And the resurrection of our Lord is far *more* impressive, *even when* we approach it within the context of the Bible's presupposed truth. Christians should readily say to unbelievers: "Within our worldview *the evidence shows* that God raised Christ from the dead! (even more amazingly, He did it out of saving love for sinners like us) – and your worldview has nothing as impressive as that, but actually makes nonsense out of history and science and reasoning."

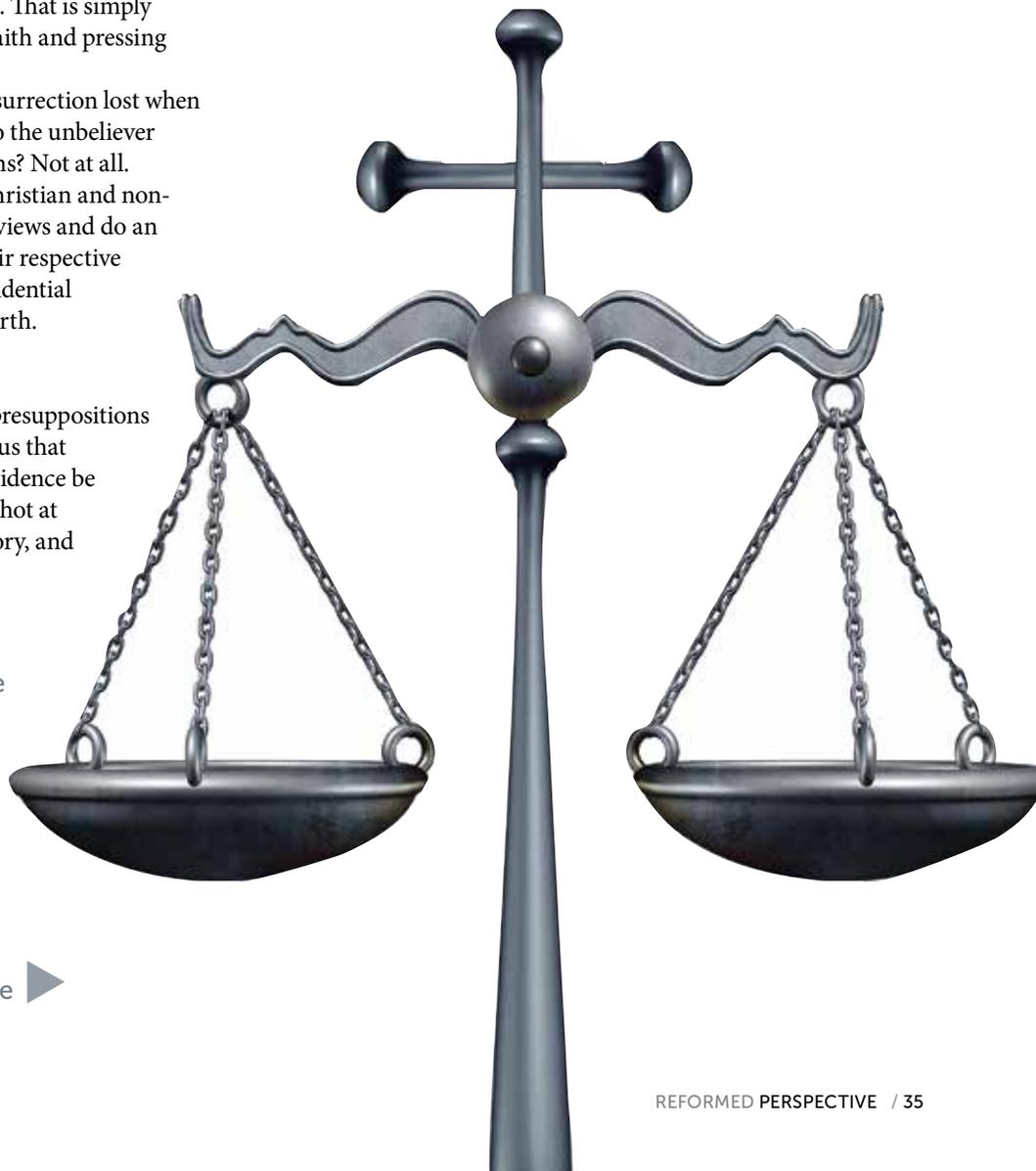
The choice should be obvious. 

END NOTES

¹ *The Protestant Doctrine of Scripture*, p. 51.

² *Christian Theistic Evidences*, p. 56.

This article was first published in the November, 1995 issue of Penpoint (Vol. VI:11) and is reprinted with permission of Covenant Media Foundation, which hosts and sells Dr. Bahnsen resources at cmfnow.com.



I LOVE APOLOGETICS

Don't be intimidated; sharing the good news isn't as complicated as we make it

by Ray Comfort

The *Evidence Bible* is filled with my favorite apologetical arguments. I love to use these arguments to pursue the lost. I also enjoy watching instructional videos about the subject of apologetics.

One of my favorite Bible teachers explains how to defend the faith. He is so eloquent and has such a brilliant mind, it makes me want to never open my mouth again. Plus, he is incredibly gracious and humble. I say that because I want you to know that what I'm going to say is not a criticism. It simply illustrates a very important point when it comes to sharing our faith.

I remember him speaking of the importance of truth when reasoning with the unsaved. He spoke of five critical grades to keep in mind when it comes to reaching the lost. He said that when testing truth there are two theories – the “correspondence theory” and the “coherence theory” – plus there is consistency, empirical adequacy, and experiential relevance. Then he added, “There are four questions to be dealt with – our origin, meaning, morality, and destiny – and to deal with those questions there are five disciplines you have to pull together: theology, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and anthropology.”

He also spoke of three cultures that we deal with: the theonomous culture, the heteronomous culture, and the autonomous culture, which dictates a “mutual autocracy.”

Got it?

If you did, you're more intelligent than most people. Most people have trouble even pronouncing those words, let alone knowing what they mean. And that's okay.

That's because proclaiming the gospel can be as simple as doing what Jesus did: use the Ten Commandments to stir the conscience, and show the sinner that he needs the Savior.

I rarely get into arguing about apologetics, the infallibility of Scripture, the deity of Christ, evolution, why there is suffering, etc. When I do enter that territory, I am always aware that there is a way out, and I take it. I can get out, because I have learned the importance of having control of the conversation. I know our ultimate agenda; it's to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

If I wanted to teach you how to fish, I could take you to a quaint little pond and catch a nice small fish. But I'd rather take you deep-sea fishing and let you see some action.

If you watch a deep-sea fisherman, when he gets a marlin on his line he will let it run. He does this because he knows that at any time he chooses he can pull back the rod and get the hook deeper into the fish's jaw.

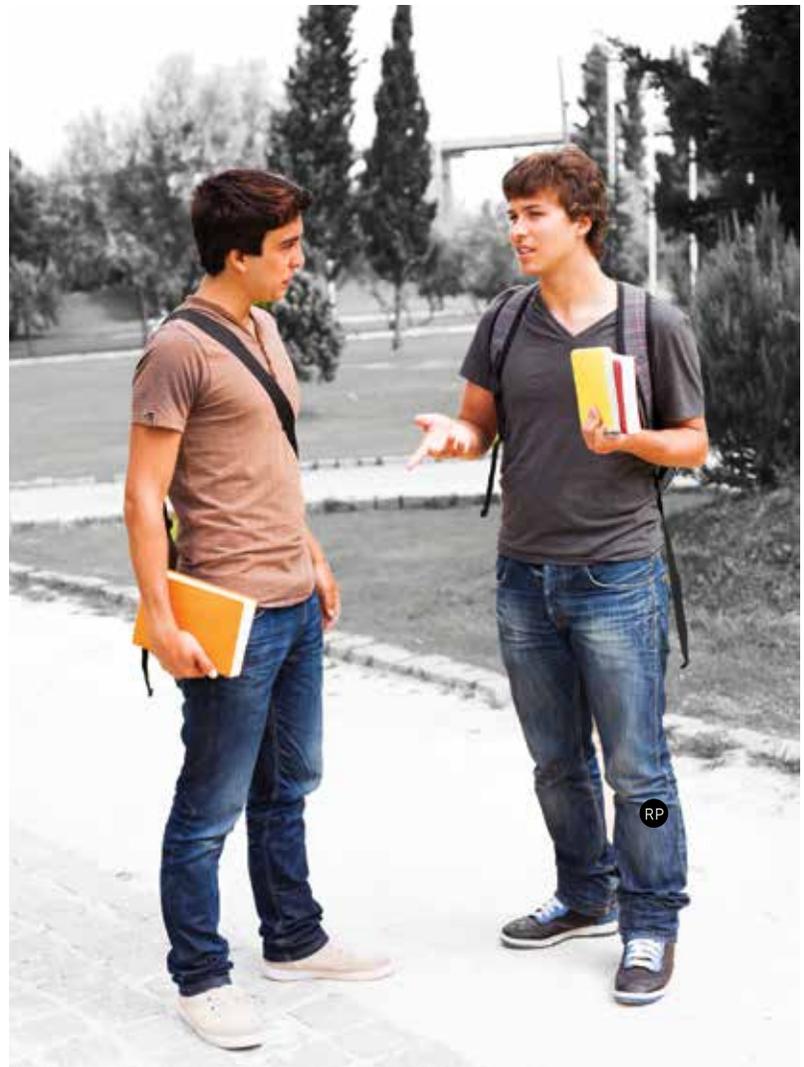
The “hook” that Jesus used was the moral Law (the Ten Commandments), and the “jaw” is the sinner's conscience.

It is because of this knowledge that I can let him run off in any direction he wants to, because I know that any time I choose I can take complete control, simply by asking the question, “Do you think you're a good person?” and bringing out the Ten Commandments as Jesus did in Mark 10:18–21.

That gives me a level playing field because I'm not talking to his contentious intellect. I have moved to his conscience. This puts even Einstein on the defensive.

Never be intimidated by so-called intellectuals. Our Creator has put something infinitely more powerful into our hands: the gospel. It is “the power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16). **RP**

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Reformed Perspective presents our 2018 Spring Speaking Tour:

Tactics in Defending Your Faith

To defend God's Truth you need to know it. And if you've been hearing God's Word preached, and been reading your Bible regularly, then you have that **knowledge**.

Why, then, does it sometimes seem like we still don't know enough to defend God's Truth like we want to?

That's where **wisdom** comes in. We will never finish learning who God is; there will always be more we could know. We need to learn how to take what we already know and use it effectively.

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This is a not-to-be missed presentation!

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March 20 – Aldergrove, BC
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March 23 – Coaldale, AB

APRIL 2-6

April 2 – Burlington, ON
April 3 – Chattam, ON
April 4 – Woodstock, ON
April 5 – Guelph, ON
April 6 – Smithville, ON



Tim Barnett trains Christians to think clearly about what they believe and why they believe it. Tim is a full-time apologist, and having earned an MA in Philosophy from Southern Evangelical Seminary. Tim lives with his wife and two children in the great province of Ontario.



Jon Dykstra has been the editor of *Reformed Perspective* since 1999. He blogs on books at *ReallyGoodReads.com*, reviews movies at the *ReelConservative.com*, and is a contributor at *CreationWithoutCompromise.com*.



SPEAKING AGAINST SUICIDE

A summary review of *A Guide to Discussing Assisted Suicide*

by Jeff Dykstra

Do you find it harder to make the case against euthanasia than against abortion? That might be, in part, because we have less experience – abortion has been legal in Canada since 1969, and euthanasia only since 2016.

Also, in abortion, we have victims who need advocates because they can't speak for themselves, whereas in euthanasia the victims are also the *perpetrators*. How do you help someone who doesn't want to be helped – who *wants* to die?

And consider how, in euthanasia, many of the cases involve terminal illnesses, and so have the same emotional tension as the hardest cases – those involving rape and incest – have in the abortion debate.

That's why it's more difficult.

JUST TWO OPTIONS

But, just as in the abortion debate, the key is to first find the central issue.

With abortion, the main question is, "Who is the unborn?" There are only two options. If the unborn is *not* human, there is no justification needed for "its" surgical removal. But if the unborn *is* human, then no justification is sufficient

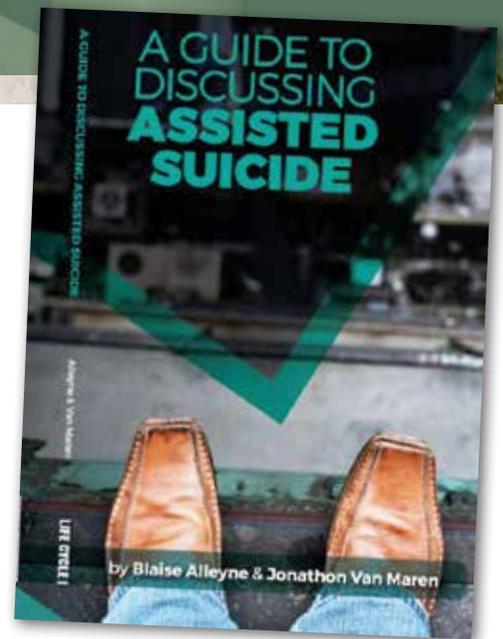
for killing him or her.

As in Blaise Alleyné and Jonathon Van Maren's explain in their new book, *A Guide to Discussing Assisted Suicide*, the crux of opposition to euthanasia can also be boiled down to just one question:

How do we help those who are feeling desperate enough to want to kill themselves?

And again, there are only two options: either we prevent suicide, or we assist it.

Alleyné and Van Maren have given us a wonderful tool in this book. Their extensive experience in the pro-life movement is evident as they start by framing the debate. If we're going to be effective, pro-lifers need to understand the three possible positions that people hold on this issue. They are:



- the **split** position – we should prevent some suicides while helping others
- the **total choice** position – anyone who wants to commit suicide should be helped to do so
- and the **pro-life** position – all life is precious, and all suicides are tragic

“...there are only two options: either we prevent suicide, or we assist it.”

THE SPLIT POSITION

So how do we respond to the split position? Van Maren and Alleyne say that it is the job of pro-life apologetics to show the split position's inherent inconsistency. Suicide is tragic sometimes, but to be celebrated other times?

The authors then give ways to counter the reasons often used to justify some suicides, given by the acronym QUIT for

- *Quality of life*
- *Unbearable suffering*
- *Incurable condition*
- *Terminal prognosis*

They spend 20 pages showing why these are fallacious reasons, so I can't properly sum up their argument in just a line or two, but one underlying flaw to these justifications for suicide is that they are based on ageism and ableism.

So in much the same way we can expose the inadequacy of many justification for abortion by bringing out an imaginary "two-year-old Timmy" ("What if the mother was too poor to have a baby?" "Would that be a good reason to kill Timmy?") in the assisted suicide debate we can bring out an imaginary able-bodied 19-year-old. If someone opposes this 19-year-old committing suicide, why is it that they are fine with that 90-year-old doing so? Or that wheelchair bound lass? We can expose them for being ageist and ableist – treating people as less worthy of life based on their age or ability – and show them it is wrong to assist the suicide of anyone, of any age or level of health because as the authors put it, "suicide is a symptom [of despair], not a solution."

TOTAL CHOICE

Next, the authors take on those are (sadly) willing to be consistent and advocate total choice for all who desire to be assisted in ending their lives.

Our only response is to insist that the suicidal need love even more than they need argument.

THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The fourth chapter shows how dangerous it is to accept either the split or

the total choice position, because

- 1) they have always involved a slippery slope toward more and more assisted killings
- 2) they reduce the willingness to prevent suicide
- 3) they undermine the morale of everyone who works in any facility that provides suicide assistance

THE PRO-LIFE POSITION

Finally, the authors show the pro-life position. We know, on the one hand, that life is a gift from God, so it is not to be thrown away, but on the other, that all life ends, and because of Jesus we need not fear death. So the pro-life position is not about continuing life at all costs. It allows for:

- the refusal of burdensome treatment
- the use of pain medication, even when that risks hastening death, as long as the intent of such medication is to alleviate pain rather than to kill

The pro-life position also offers positive responses to the suicidal: psychological health resources, pain management, palliative care, and dignity therapy. The authors end with two pleas:

- "Let death be what takes us, not lack of imagination." In other words, may no-one ever have their death hastened because we refuse to imagine how we may show more compassion.
- "As people who believe in the dignity and value of every human life, it is our responsibility to.... persuade people that assisted suicide is wrong."

In this *Guide to Discussing Assisted Suicide* Alleyne and Van Maren have done an admirable job of giving us the tools to carry out that responsibility. Given the urgency of the push toward euthanasia in both Canada and U.S., we all need to read this book.

"A Guide for Discussing Assisted Suicide" can be ordered at lifecyclebooks.com (where you can also find the option to buy in bulk for your pro-life group or circle of friends at greatly reduced prices).



The Canadian Reformed School Society of Edmonton, operating **Parkland Immanuel Christian School**, invites applications for the 2018-2019 school year for the following full-time position:

GRADE 6 TEACHER

Parkland Immanuel Christian School operates a reformed K-12 school that offers a supportive school community, competitive wages, and a collaborative and professional environment that encourages and supports innovation and excellence in teaching. The school has a population of 360 students and is experiencing a time of significant increase in enrollment.

Applicants must be a professed member in good standing of a Canadian Reformed, United Reformed, or sister church, and must have the necessary post-secondary qualifications to teach in Alberta.

For further information please contact the Principal,
Mr. Ken Leffers
Phone: (780) 444-6443 (school)
(780) 297-8841 (home)
kleffers@parklandimmanuel.ca

Applications should be directed to:
Mr. Wayne de Leeuw
Chair of Personnel Committee
c/o Parkland Immanuel Christian School
21304 35 Ave, NW Edmonton, AB
T6M 2P6
vicepresident@parklandimmanuel.ca



PRACTICING THE SABBATH

ON LIVING OUT THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

by Ken Koeman

It is not uncommon. Under pressure at the office or on the job, at school or right at home, vacation can't come soon enough.

"Ah," we console ourselves, "Three weeks away from it all, filled with hiking, camping, touring, biking, sailing, and maybe even a trip to Disneyland itself." When it finally arrives, we throw ourselves into our leisure, making the most of every moment, wringing every last drop of excitement out of our all too brief respite from the drag of our daily grind...and come home plumb worn out. We go back to working, lamenting the brevity of our respite, grudgingly facing the unwelcome demands of the job once more, trapped into knowing we have no other choice: it's the only way to keep the wolf from the door.

Whatever happened to real, solid rest, the kind that refreshes our spirits so deeply it reinvigorates us all the way

down to the very depths of our beings, or, as Psalm 23 would describe it, "restores our souls"?

VACATION IS NOT ENOUGH

What happened is that we confused rest with respite, as if a 30-second timeout in the fourth quarter makes athletes as full of energy as when the game began. A vacation is merely a respite (which we all need, just like a good night's sleep); it's far from the kind of deep rest the Bible calls a "Sabbath."

Vacations don't cut it; real Sabbaths do. No wonder our Father commanded that we practice Sabbath *every week* and he used plenty of words to insist upon it. Have you ever noticed that in the NIV, the Exodus 20 version of the 4th commandment is 99 words long? The final five commandments, altogether, take up just 53 words. God has almost twice as much to say about remembering

the Sabbath day *than He does about murder, theft, adultery, lying, or coveting combined*, suggesting to us that one of the most powerful defenses against immorality of all kinds is (did this ever occur to you?) a soul saturated to the full with God's kind of deep rest.

And then, as if to give it even more firepower, would you observe that it's the only commandment which reinforces its demand by insisting that we face up to the compelling reality that *this is what God Himself did*, as if to both warn us that we best follow our Creator if we know what's good for us, and besides, call us to humble ourselves enough to learn just how to do it from His example.

If you came home tired from vacation, or, more seriously, if you sense a weariness in your soul so deep that not even a full night of sleep (induced by medication), or a day of surviving demands (eased by your regular dose

of Xanax) gives you the kind of relief you crave, perhaps it's time to seriously reconsider practicing Sabbath as devoutly as you practice your fitness routine. In other words, have you ever considered fitting, into the rhythm of your week, a 24-hour period where you stop living as a human "doing" and actually enjoy living as a human "being"?

If you're even slightly curious enough to keep reading, then let me be audacious enough to prescribe for you the pathway to deep rest: watch how God rested, and then, go and do thou likewise. The commandment makes it as simple as imitating God. Of course, where it gets complicated is trying to figure out just how God did it. But He has not left us without a description:

- 1. He finished his work:** "Thus the heavens and the earth were *completed* in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had *finished* the work He had been doing (Gen. 2:1-2a).
- 2. He savored the goodness of his workmanship:** "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good (Gen. 1:31).
- 3. He ceased from all working:** "...so on the seventh day He rested (NIV footnote: "ceased") from all His work. ...because on it He rested (NIV footnote: "ceased") from all the work of creating He had done (Gen. 2:2b, 3b).

Each dimension deserves such careful scrutiny, we'll ponder them one at a time.

FINISHED WORK

God entered into his Sabbath by first having completely finished the work he set out to do during his "work week."

If we are to enter into deep rest, we simply must get our work done first. The commandment is firm on this: Six days you shall labor and do *all* your work. Finish your homework, your housework, or your assignments at the office. If you have work that was supposed to have been finished during your six days of labor, and could have been finished, but wasn't due to your

own procrastination, I can virtually guarantee this: that undone work is going to infect any rest you try to find on your "day off." It will weigh on you. It will preoccupy you. You're compromised!

Now I can just hear it already: "My work is never done." A mother's work is never done. A farmer's work is never done. A teacher's work is never done.

True enough, but then God's work is never done either. Jesus said that his father was always at his work to that very day (John 5:17). But, *what was finished was the work of creating*. That was completed. True enough: much remained to be done in this creation. There was no pizza or lasagna. Nobody had written poetry yet, and the only music came from birds because there were no violins. There was so much yet to do, which we call culture. But the work of creation itself was fully completed.

Every day has its task; every week, its duties; every meeting, its agenda. You want to know what really kills our rest? *Work that should have been finished, and could have been finished, but isn't finished.*

Unfinished assignments absolutely bar the way into joyful rest. So, be like your Father. Do it. Get 'er done, even if you have to work extra hard as your particular work week approaches its final day or hours. Nothing relaxes us more than being able to look back upon a truly finished task, be it anything from a reading assignment, having made the required number of sales calls, or having done our rounds in the hospital.

The finest picture of such profound rest

You want to know what really kills our rest? Work that should have been finished, and could have been finished, but isn't finished.

in Scripture is the utterly still body of the One who had just said, "It is finished" lying quietly and calmly in a borrowed grave even while His spirit savored the joys of Paradise. Imagine the depth of His holy rest having fully drunk the cup of God's wrath to the very last drop! Can there be any rest deeper than that? The wonderfully good news of the gospel is that, through Jesus, we are called and welcomed to enter into and savor that finished work. There is no richer Sabbath.

SAVORING ACCOMPLISHED WORK

When He finished creating, God savored his accomplishment. Scripture puts it like this: "God *saw* all that He had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). That is how He entered into His rest.

Now that is something most of us moderns hardly take the time to do. Look back? Savor what you've done? Who has time for that? Who even thinks of that? Especially on our days off! We're just glad to be *away* from the scene of the grind.

I recall a breakfast I had with a friend, a highly paid professional in a tough line of work: lawyering! His iPhone lay next to his plate. His eyes darted toward it frequently as we munched on our muffins. I could tell he was preoccupied. I asked him, "Don't you ever give yourself a break from that thing?"

"I can't," he said; "in fact, I can't *afford* to."

"When do you ever rest?" I probed.

"Well," he said, "I try to rest on the weekends but..."

I waited. "But what?"

Then he opened a glimpse into his uptight world I've never forgotten. "I never get a full weekend of rest because already on Sunday afternoons, right around 3, every week, it starts," he continued.

"What?" I asked.

"This tightness in my gut; I can just feel the pressure rising. The stuff waiting for me in my office on Monday morning starts forcing its way into my mind, and from that point on, I'm toast. I can forget about getting any more rest."

"In other words," I gently teased, "you actually show up at the office about 17 hours before your body gets there?"



“You’re not kidding!!” he moaned.

I suspect my friend has plenty of company. Our driven hearts are forever pushing us *forward*, even to the point that we are so focused on what lies ahead, Monday pushes itself up into our Sundays, as unbidden as acid reflux, and as sour.

Not so the Trinity! As God entered into His rest, this is the exercise He went through at the end of the sixth day: *He looked backward*. He surveyed his workmanship. He paused to delight over it. He admired the beauty of Eve, marveled at the masculinity of Adam. He *saw all with His all seeing eye* and rejoiced over every one of His works.

That’s the exercise God Himself went through as He entered his rest. He studied what He had done, and *celebrated* it. In fact, He ended every day savoring what He had done on that particular day, but at the end of the sixth day, He savored the whole panorama of His creativity, from the light He created the first day to the light-clothed humans He created on the sixth, and He rejoiced over all his works (Psalm 104: 31).

A second key to entering a place of deep rest calls us to imitate God and *look back*, savoring all that He enabled us to do during the previous six days. The doctor looks back in her imagination upon the faces of the patients she has treated. The waitress, the customers she

has served. The trucker, the loads he delivered. The teacher, the lessons his students learned.

Looking back moves the soul from anxiety to celebration as it disciplines itself to survey the beauty of a steady stream of accomplishments, each a trophy to the God who was right there empowering us every step of the way. That simple exercise has immense power to lay a soul down into deep rest by stiff-arming the intrusions of future “undones” as it relishes the joys of past “dones.” For what the soul is doing at such moment is supercharging itself with wonder and gratitude at the remarkable faithfulness of God who was right there with us during every moment of those six days past, assuring it that so much went well, once again.

I wonder if my neighbors just might think I’m nuts. Like all good Lyndenites, I edge, trim and mow my lawn faithfully every Saturday. It’s a rite around here. When finished, I stow my equipment and then do something which, if they are watching, might suggest to them I’m a little “off.” I take a good ten minutes and just walk around my lawn, and yes, frankly, I admire what I and my equipment have just achieved! I marvel at the sharp edges around the flowerbeds and savor the smells of newly mown turf. Odd? No. Like God? Yes.

Now God did something there that is

crucial to being able to rest. He affirmed his work as valuable; He gave it worth. He savored its beauty. He celebrated His accomplishment. The three persons of the Trinity rejoiced in what They had made, rejoiced in Their workmanship.

They stopped, turned around (unlike the other six days which were all forward looking, this was backward looking; from all the undone work ahead to the finished work behind), looked back, and They delighted in Their finished work.

Do you ever do that at the end of your work week? Your day of rest begins by looking back. Let’s say you deliver and pick up mail. Do you ever think back to all the people you serve every week by bringing them their mail? Think of the hundreds of people who every week find something in their mailbox they have just been waiting for – and you brought it to them. Now that is something to savor, to celebrate.

Most of us try not to think about our work on our day off. Not God. God entered his Sabbath by ruminating, savoring, delighting in what he had just done. One of the key elements of deep rest is savoring a sense of accomplishment. This is what shelters us from the tyranny of future tasks charging in and infecting our rest. You rest when you learn to resist this “Oh, there is so much I have yet to do” (which is very true for all of us) to “But look at what we

have managed to accomplish.” We are so driven by the demands of the future that we have forgotten to pause and take delight in the regular accumulation of the accomplishments of our lives.

CEASING FROM ALL WORK

There is a third Sabbath practice to consider, but be forewarned: you may not like this. In fact, you may think I’m just being a fussy old legalist. We cannot truly Sabbath, unless every 7th day we totally cease, as much as is reasonably possible, our daily work for 24 hours and refuse to come anywhere near it. We don’t even check our phones for work-related text messages. Why? Because of the explicit prohibition in the commandment itself: “On it you shall not do any work.”

Worship? Yes! Play? Sure. Work? None. Zilch. Nada.

When deadlines, demands, homework and duties bear down on us relentlessly this may seem hard. Who can afford this, especially in today’s highly competitive, low profit margin, economy? Close up shop, one day a week? Ridiculous. Students stay away from studies a full day in every seven? Sure way to flunk out!

Really? Are you so sure it’s ridiculous? Have you checked that with conservative Southern Baptist Truett Cathy, who, from the beginning in 1946 insisted that his fast food Chick-fil-A restaurants be closed every Sunday? Today there are over 2,200 of them, and they are flourishing. In 2014 the chain was #9 in total profit among all fast food restaurants, but #1, by far, in *profitability per store*. Each store earned \$3.2 million vs. second place McDonalds at \$2.6 million. They have been #1 in customer service for years. Rested and cared for employees are much more industrious and compassionate, and the result is customer loyalty that creates long lines in the drive-in lane and tidy profits at the bank. And they are closed everywhere, every Sunday.

But perhaps that’s not convincing.

Then consider this remarkable story. My town of Lynden, Washington has a mother, Phoebe Judson, who founded our city, arriving here in 1871. She promoted Sunday closure. Here’s why.

In May, 1853, Phoebe and her husband Holden joined a covered wagon train near Kansas City hoping to reach Washington Territory by mid-October, a distance of more than 2,000 miles over the rough Oregon Trail. Like all wagon trains, they elected a captain. His word was the law. Well, they chose Rev. Gustavus Hines, only to be surprised one Saturday night when he announced the train would never travel on Sundays.

Phoebe was shocked. They had half a continent to cross, at oxen pace (15-20 miles per day on a good trail), with at least four mountain passes and innumerable river crossings ahead of them. She sat in her wagon and just fumed. One family deserted the train and joined another.

On their first Sunday, while they stood still, one train after another passed them by. But, being the daughter of a minister herself, Phoebe felt they had no choice but to honor their captain’s scruples.

They started out again on Monday, bright and early, only to reach their first river cross on Tuesday evening. A long line of wagons stretched out ahead of

She grudgingly admitted that perhaps the animals needed a day of rest.

them, waiting for the single “ferry” to carry them across. They waited 3 days. On Saturday they resumed the journey, only to be told they would still rest the whole next day. Phoebe was livid. This made absolutely no sense to her. Still, the minister’s daughter obeyed.

Then, a few weeks later she began to see scores of dead oxen, mules and horses along the trail. They had been driven so relentlessly, they had collapse and died. She grudgingly admitted that perhaps the animals needed a day of rest.

A few weeks later, she ruefully admitted that maybe the men needed it too, since they walked most of the time. Then she slowly began to notice that as they worshipped, ate, rested and even



played together on Sundays, it had a remarkably salutary effect upon people's spirits. There was less grumbling, more cooperation. She even noticed that they seemed to make better time the other six days.

Finally, what totally sold her on the value of the Sabbath happened one Sunday evening: the family that had deserted them came limping into their campsite, humbly asking to rejoin them. She had assumed they were at least a week ahead; in fact, they had fallen behind. Their own wagon train had broken down! Of course they welcomed them back. And so it happened that they reached their destination *in plenty of time, as friends, and out of the 50 head of cattle with which they began, only two were lost.*

CONCLUSION

May I be so bold as to caution us about spiritualizing the meaning of the Sabbath commandment so much that we forget its literal and physical side? Bodily stepping entirely away from all work for 24 hours is clearly what is prescribed.

Its benefits are enormous. For one day, it moves us from life as a "human doing" to life as a "human being." For one day, it compels us to recalibrate our hearts back to the stubborn fact that "...*God is the only source of everything good, and that neither our work and worry nor His gifts can do us any good without His blessing*" (L.D. 50, Q&A 125). For one day it allows our souls to catch up with our bodies, or vice versa! For one day it arrests our drive for profits by reminding us that our real wealth is not in what we have but in whom we love and in who loves us. For one day it slows us down enough to ease our anxiety over reaching our destination to actually enjoy the journey. And for one day it brings us back to that Light, in Whose Light, we see the light which brightens every day. RP

Rev. Ken Koeman is a retired pastor living in the quite restful town of Lynden, WA. A version of this article first appeared in three parts in Christian Courier and is reprinted with permission.



The Board of
Covenant Canadian Reformed School
invites applications for the 2018/2019 school year
for the following full/part time positions:

Senior High Science Teacher and General Elementary/Jr. High/Sr. High Teacher

Covenant Canadian Reformed School (CCRS) is a vibrant K-12 school community with a current student population of around 240. We are situated 3 km east of the hamlet of Neerlandia and approximately 25 km north of the Town of Barrhead. Between these two locations there are three Canadian Reformed congregations and one United Reformed congregation. CCRS is located about an hour and a half north of the cities of Edmonton and St. Albert.

We anticipate growth over the next number of years and are currently planning for future expansion.

We encourage energetic, qualified (or soon to be qualified) educators, committed to Reformed Christian education, to apply. Under our Father's blessing of a broad, highly supportive membership base and current levels of government funding in Alberta, we are able to offer a very attractive wage and benefits package.

All interested individuals can apply by submitting a resume, a statement of faith, a philosophy of education, and references.

Please visit our school's website at www.covenantschool.ca

Applications can be sent in writing to
3030 TWP RD 615A
County of Barrhead, AB T0G 1R2
or to the Board secretary, **Mrs. Karen Breukelman**:
secretary@covenantschool.ca

If you would like further information about the school and the area please contact the Board chairman:
Mr. Jordan Tiggelaar – 780-307-8449
chairman@covenantschool.ca

or the principal:
Mr. Mike Nederveen – 780-674-4774 (school)
principal@covenantschool.ca



HOSPITALITY HACKS

for folks who want to be, but keep finding excuses not to be, hospitable

by Rebecca Korvemaker

As Christians, we know that hospitality is important, but if you've ever tried it, you also know that it can be really hard, and we can find so many reasons to put it off. When I moved out of my parents' house five years ago, I decided to try to invite everyone from my church over at least once in the space of a year. As a single person, I had to get creative as I set out on this endeavor. Here are some things I learned by doing and by observing.

1) JUST DO IT

Hosting people can be very intimidating. *What will we talk about? What if they don't like the food I made?* Just remember that God blesses all obedience and He has clearly commanded that we show hospitality (1 Peter 4:9). Even if at the end of the visit you feel that it went poorly, remind yourself that God is pleased with your obedience, and His pleasure is ultimately what we're after.

2) THINK ABOUT INVITING MORE THAN ONE FAMILY

When you invite more than one family that means you can leave them to talk to each other while you prepare food/get things ready. This also takes the pressure off you to keep the conversation going because if you have more people together, naturally there will be more opinions and topics coming up.

3) WHEN INVITING STRANGERS, HAVE SOME PREPARED QUESTIONS/TOPICS TO DISCUSS

If I don't know the people coming over, I try to have some getting-to-know-you-questions and interesting topics in the back of my mind so that if the conversation gets stale I can revive it.

4) KNOW HOW TO COOK SOMETHING

You don't have to be a master chef to have people over - most people don't care what you feed them (though it is always wise to ask about allergies and if there are any foods they don't like). But it is good to put in some practice until you have few staple recipes up your sleeve so you can cook without getting stressed.

It's also handy to have extra cookies in the freezer - cookies are a treat even unthawed - and ingredients for a meal that's quick to put together for when you haven't had time to prepare.

5) TAKE PEOPLE UP ON THEIR OFFERS

Oftentimes, when you invite people over, they'll ask if they can bring something. Say "yes." If you're making soup, one family could bring buns and another family could bring dessert. This helps cover the cost of feeding a lot of people and it makes people feel more comfortable when they've helped out.

6) REMEMBER THE KIDS

Own toys and books for children. This doesn't need to be costly if you keep an eye out at garage sales or visit a thrift store or two.

And if you have children, hosting families with other children is a wonderful opportunity to teach them to *look not only to their own interests but also to the interests of others* (Philippians 2:4).

7) KNOW IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT

It's more important that you actually practice hospitality than that you're all put together. It's nice if your house is clean, but it's okay if it's not. We all have homes. We all know homes get messy. Some of the best visits have happened when I've left the dishes heaped on the counter, thrown together some macaroni, and we ate off plastic plates.

CONCLUSION

Finally, when it comes to being hospitable perhaps the most important thing of all is *deciding that you will be*. God doesn't call us just to host the people we like. We are to

welcome strangers, our neighbours, and our church families.

Maybe your church is too big to have everyone over in a year. Could you do it in two years? Three years? At the very least you could try to talk to everyone in the lobby after church in the course of a year. Give it a try.

Don't know your neighbours? Start by saying "hi" and learning their names. You could host a game night, invite them over for pizza, shovel their driveway, or plan a block party. *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon is a good resource on neighbouring well.

And remember, hospitality is how you get to know strangers. Look around you at church on Sunday morning, I'm sure there will be visitors you could talk to. If you invite them into your home that's fantastic, and if you simply talk to them at church it's still showing hospitality as you welcome them in your church setting.

Through hospitality we tangibly show God's love to those around us. Prayerfully consider how much you and your family can do this year. And then do it. 

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by Christine Farenhorst

EVEN A CHILD...

Questioning daycare and kindergarten

In this twenty-first century more and more children are being relegated to daycare, or other institutions that look after them for a great many hours each day outside of the parental home. According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2015, about 3.64 million children were enrolled in public kindergartens in the United States, and another 428,000 in private ones. Statistics Canada reported that in 2011, almost half (46%) of Canadian parents reported using some type of childcare for their children, aged 14 years and younger, during that year. Many children obviously spend more time with childcare providers than with their family.

Various studies have shown that young children who spend time in daycare may bond less with their mothers than those who stay home. And it has also been concluded by other studies, that children who attend daycare experience more stress, have lower self-esteem and can be more aggressive.

“Even a child,” Proverbs 20:11 tells us,

“is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.” It seems a simple enough proverb and easy to understand. We have all encountered children’s actions – at home around the supper table, in a supermarket while we were shopping, in a classroom setting or on the street – and frequently found their actions lacking in moral wisdom. Greed, selfishness, anger, sloth and you name it, these vices surround cherubic faces like black halos.

So it neither surprises nor shocks us when Proverbs adds commandments such as:

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death”

“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him”

But what does that have to do with kindergarten and daycare? Read on.

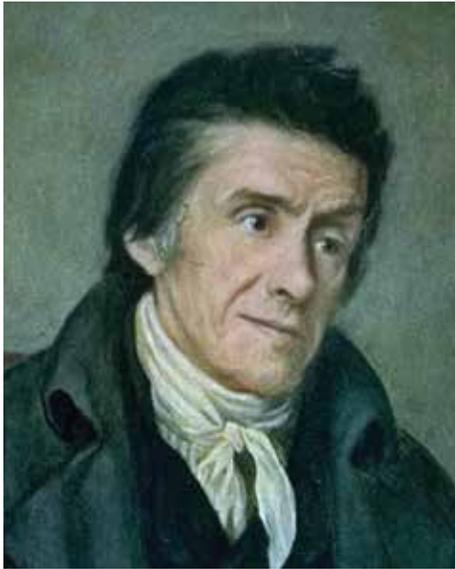
JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI: EDUCATION IS KEY TO A BETTER SOCIETY

To understand today’s education system we need to know something of its history.

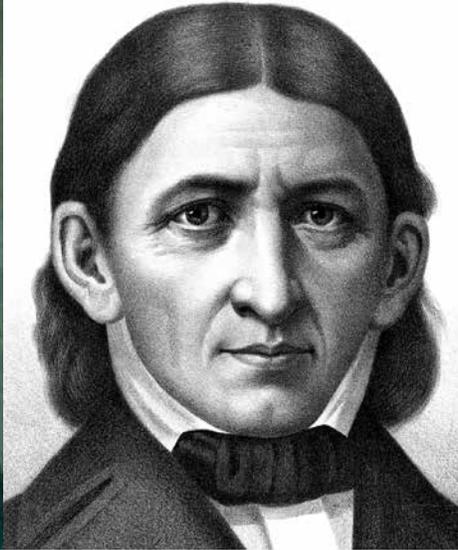
On January 12, 1746 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (pronounced *Pesta-lotsi*) was born in Zurich, Switzerland. His father died when he was only 6 years old and Johann was sent to school with the long-term goal of becoming a pastor.

As he grew older he developed a keen desire and vision to educate the poor children of his country. After completing his studies, however, and making a dismal failure of his first sermon, he exchanged the pulpit for a career in law. He reasoned within himself that perhaps he might accomplish more for the poor children of his country through law than through preaching. But after studying law, as well as opting for a number of other careers, in the long run Pestalozzi ended up standing behind a teacher’s lectern.

Now, throughout these formative



Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi



Friedrich Froebel

years Johann Pestalozzi had been greatly influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau was that philosopher who repudiated original sin and who penned the words: “there is no original perversity in the human heart.” Pestalozzi fell for these false words – fell hook, line and sinker.

Consequently, his principles in teaching strongly reflected the view that education could develop the pure powers of a child’s head, heart and hand. He thought, and he thought wrongly, that this would result in children capable of knowing and choosing what is right. In other words, educating students in the proper way would evolve towards a better society. Such a thing could only happen if human nature was essentially good and it was on this principle that Pestalozzi based his teaching.

Pestalozzi died in 1827 and his gravestone reads:

Heinrich Pestalozzi: born in Zurich, January 12, 1746 – died in Brugg, February 17, 1827. Saviour of the Poor on the Neuhof; in Stans, Father of the orphan; in Burgdorf and Munchenbuchsee, Founder of the New Primary Education; in Yverdon, Educator of Humanity. He was an individual, a Christian and a citizen. He did everything for others, nothing for himself! Bless his name!

As the engraving indicates, Pestalozzi was much admired, and his approach to education lived on after him, having a

massive influence on various educators who followed.

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL: THE FATHER OF KINDERGARTEN

One such person was a man by the name of Friedrich Froebel. Born in Oberweissbach, Thuringia in 1782, he was the fifth child of an orthodox Lutheran pastor. Interestingly enough, the boy heard his father preach each Sunday from the largest pulpit in all Europe. On it you could fit the pastor and twelve people, a direct reference to the twelve apostles. Friedrich’s mother died when he was only nine months old.

Perhaps his father did not have time for the boy, because when he was ten years old, he was sent to live with an uncle. During his teenage years he was apprenticed to a forester and later he studied mathematics and botany.

When he was 23, however, he decided for a career in teaching and for a while studied the ideas of Pestalozzi, ideas he incorporated into his own thinking. Education should be child-centered rather than teacher-centered; and active participation of the child should be the cornerstone of the learning experience. A child with the freedom to explore his own natural development and a child who balanced this freedom with self-discipline, would inevitably become a well-rounded member of society. Educating children in this manner would result in a peaceful, happy world.

As Pestalozze before him, Froebel was sure that humans were by nature

good, as well as creative, and he was convinced that play was a necessary developmental phase in the education of the “whole” child. Dedicating himself to pre-school child education, he formulated a curriculum for young children, and designed materials called Gifts. They were toys which gave children hands-on involvement in practical learning through play.

He opened his first school in Blankenburg in 1837, coining the word “kindergarten” for that Play and Activity Center. Until that time there had been no educational system for children under seven years of age.

Froebel’s ideas found appeal, but its spread was initially thwarted by the Prussian government whose education ministry banned kindergarten in 1851 as “atheistic and demagogic” because of its “destructive tendencies in the areas of religion and politics.”

In the long run, however, kindergartens sprang up around the world.

MOM SENT ME TO KINDERGARTEN

My mom was a super-good Mom as perhaps all Moms are who make their children feel loved. Even now, at this moment when she has been dead and buried some 25 years, how I miss her!

She had her faults, as we all do, and she could irritate me to no end at times, as I could her. But she was my Mom and I loved her. She was an able pastor’s wife and supported my Dad tremendously. Visiting numerous families with him, (in congregations in Holland she would walk with him to visit parishioners), she also brewed innumerable cups of tea for those he brought home. Always ready with a snack, she made come-home time after school cozy for myself and my five siblings, of whom I was the youngest.

In later years being the youngest meant that I was the only one left at home, and it meant we spent evenings together talking, knitting, embroidering, reading and laughing. She was so good to me. Perhaps, in hindsight, I remember her kindness so well because I now see so much more clearly a lot of selfish attributes in myself – attributes for which I wish I could now apologize to my Mom.

Should I send my children to daycare, and thus help pay off the mortgage or should I stay home and change diapers?

My Mom was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was 32 – a young mother myself, with five little sets of hands tugging at my apron strings. I was devastated. But my quiet mother who always had been so nervous in leading ladies' Bible studies and chairing women's meetings, was very brave. She said she literally felt the prayers of everyone who loved her surround her hospital bed. She had a mastectomy, went into remission and lived eight more good years

Many young mothers are presently faced with a fork in the road decision – shall I go back to work or shall I stay home? Should I send my children to daycare, and thus help pay off the mortgage or should I stay home and change diapers? Times are tough. Groceries have to be bought, gas prices are ever increasing, and so is school tuition.

I delve back into my memories and remember – remember even now as my age approaches the latter part of three score plus years – that my father and mother placed me in a Froebel School, a kindergarten, when I had just turned four years old. I was not thrilled about the idea. As a matter of fact, I was terrified.

My oldest sister, who was eleven years my senior, was given the commission of walking me down the three long blocks separating our home from the school which housed my first classroom. My sister was wearing a red coat and she held my hand inside the pocket of the coat. It must have been cold. When we got to the playground which was teeming with children, she took me to the teacher on duty. I believe there was actually only one teacher. My sister then said goodbye to me and began to walk away.

The trouble was, I would not let go of the hand still ensconced in the pocket of her coat. The more she pulled away, the tighter I clung – and I had begun to cry. Eventually the lining of the

pocket ripped. My sister, who was both embarrassed and almost crying herself, was free to leave. I was taken inside the school by the teacher.

It is a bleak memory and still, after all this time, a vivid memory. I do not think, in retrospect, that my mother wanted to get rid of me. Froebel schools were touted as being very good for preschool children. She, a teacher herself with a degree in the constructed, international language of Esperanto, possibly thought she was being progressive as well as making more time to help my father serve the congregation.

Dr. Maria Montessori, a follower of Heinrich Froebel, established the Dutch Montessori Society in 1917. By 1940, 5% of the preschools in Holland were following the Montessori system and 84% called themselves Froebel schools or Montessori schools. The general nametag is *kleuterschool*, (*kleuter* is Dutch and means a child between 4 and 6). Today the age limit is younger because of the increased interest in sending children of a younger age to school. Creativity and free expression are the curriculum norm.

Most of the memories I have of attending the Froebel School, (and let me add that it was for half days), are not pleasant. I recall braiding long, colored strips of paper into a slotted page. Afraid to ask permission to go to the bathroom, I also recall wetting my pants while sitting in front of a small wooden table in a little blue chair. My urine dripped onto the toes of the teacher as she passed through the aisle, checking coloring and other crafts. Such an experience as I gave that teacher cannot have been inspiring for her. Perhaps she always remembered it as one of the most horrible moments of her career. In any case, she took me by the hand to the front of the class and made me stand in front of the pot-bellied stove. Skirts lifted up behind me, she dried me off with a towel. Then she made me

stay there as she put the little blue chair outside in the sunshine. At lunchtime she brought me home on the back of her bicycle. Knocking at our door, she called up to the surprised figure of my mother standing at the top of the stairs. (We occupied the second and third floor of a home.) “Your daughter’s had an accident.” I think I dreamt those words for a long, long time afterwards. But this I also clearly recall, that my mother was not angry.

Would I have been a better child had my mother kept me at home? Felt more secure? More loved? Perhaps. Perhaps not. There is always the providence of God which like a spotlight on a busy street corner abruptly halts one in condemning the actions of another. God had a purpose for me, no doubt about it, in all that occurred in my life – whether things during preschool days or later. And so He has in all our lives.

CONCLUSION

We live at a time when everything is fast-paced – food, travel, and entertainment. What we often don’t realize is that time is also fast – fast and fleeting – gone before we know it. Our little children, sinful from the time of conception, two years old today, will be twenty tomorrow and thirty the day after that. And when they wear out the coat of their allotted time span, will it have mattered who fed them each meal, who read books to them, who played with them and who disciplined them? It is a question we have to answer with the Bible as our guidebook.

The strange thing is that I now regret that I did not spend more time with my mother when she was old. I loved her very much and love usually translates into time.

For parents concerned with mortgage and groceries and other bills, the simple Proverb “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” is good to hang over their lintels. First things should be put first. I have never heard God’s people say that He has forsaken them. 

WORK IS WORSHIP

*Done right, it is an expression of
God's character and beauty*

by Darren Bosch

There we sat under the starry skies, talking faith, family, fun and business. A familiar space. Like many of you, I get to enjoy some nice campfire-convos each summer. But this particular night challenged me. It didn't take long for the business conversation of this committed Christ-follower and marketplace leader to leave me saddened. "We've tried investing in people for years, even hired consultants to help us! At the end of the day, nothing works. We've just resigned ourselves that there's only one reason we're in business: to make money. At the root of it, that's what it's all about."

Similarly, a Christian business owner recently told me the purpose of his business was to simply retire with a healthy nest egg so that he didn't have to worry. It's a familiar business ploy by the great Deceiver.

SKEWED VIEW

See, many Christians hold a decidedly skewed image of work. Some view it

simply as a curse, post-Genesis 3. Others make a false distinction between what they perceive as the sacred (God), and the secular (everything else), separating Sunday's worship from Monday's work.

The problem with these is that these views of work always disappoint. They force us to view God as an evil taskmaster and you just have to buck-up because "that's your lot in life." Or, when my identity is not a reflection of God's character and design, that's because I'm choosing to run parts of my life on my own, thank you very much.

Both these approaches to work will leave you banging your head against the wall – hungry for something more, because we've left God out of the picture.

WORK IS A GIFT

Work is God's gift to us. It's not a result of the fall into sin. In giving Adam and Eve the job of cultivating and caring for the garden, He not only made them the first landscapers, He designed their DNA so that whatever

they put their head, heart and hands to is a form of worship. The same is true for us. Made in His image, vocation is an extension of God's work of maintaining and providing for His creation, bringing Him glory and enjoying Him.

Hundreds of times in the Bible the Hebrew word "avodah" is used to mean both "to work" and "to worship." Our work is meant to serve God's purposes more than our own, which prevents us from seeing work as a means to stock up our coffers, set ourselves up for retirement, or just plod away 'cause it's a necessary burden.

Simply put, work is worship. The Gospel actually gives us new lenses to see work through: we actually work for God Himself! Consider Eph. 6:

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing

“The word *glory* conveys the idea of beauty. So as we do good work that reflects God’s character graciously, purely, morally, ethically, creatively, and excellently, we unleash his beauty. People see God. Our work is a way to worship God. It has intrinsic value and can demonstrate God’s character when we do good work. Faith and work are to be seamless. Work is an expression of our life in Christ. Separating the two is like separating *being* from *doing*. How do you know who you are *being* without considering what you are *doing*?”

– Dave Gibbons, in *Our Souls as Work*



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Mr. Wayne de Leeuw
Chair of Personnel Committee
c/o Parkland Immanuel
Christian School
21304 35 Ave, NW
Edmonton, AB, T6M 2P6
vicepresident@parklandimmanuel.ca

the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people...”

Now *there’s* a reason to get out of bed in the morning!

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Martin Luther said that you can milk cows to the glory of God. Why? It’s your attitude that says, “God I’m doing it for you.” So whether you’re cutting flagstone or someone’s hair today, your handiwork, even with imperfection, is for God’s glory. Your and my work is an expression of His creativity, because we’re made in His image. That’s a calling. That’s worship!

So why does having the right understanding of work matter? Because it is only when we understand it rightly that we can best use it to:

1. GIVE GOD THE GLORY: a response of gratitude for what He did for us
2. REFLECT HIS CHARACTER: made in His image, we get to display this to others
3. SERVE PEOPLE: we are conduits for God’s grace and kingdom to extend
4. GIVE: we earn so we can to give to others
5. MEET OUR NEEDS AND INVEST OUR TALENTS: by exercising God-given gifts He provides for us

So, the next time you arrive in your office, on the plant floor, or at your client’s site, remember who you are, and then consider what you are doing. Your spiritual life is being expressed through your work. Your work is worship. It’s life changing.

Col. 3:23 says: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.” It’s my prayer that you will see your work as significant and view that significance in the light of God’s favor and plan. We are created to intimately know God, glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. Let’s do that in our work!

DELIBERATE APPLICATION:

1. How does seeing work as a form of worship change my company’s purpose and values?
2. If I begin doing everything “as though I’m working for the Lord and not for people” (myself or others), how would that change the way I work?
3. Because God loves business and the marketplace, and because we are called to imitate God (Eph. 5:1) let’s consider, how would Jesus do my job? Which people would He serve? What would be His vision or S.M.A.R.T (or specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time) goals?
4. When we finish a job, can we say, “Thank you Father, for making me for this purpose”?

Darren Bosch is a partner at DeliberateU, a group offering business leadership mentoring for Christian business owners in their workplace, families and communities, with the goal of increasing their capacity to grow in both faith and business effectiveness. Their conviction is that God uniquely uses the marketplace to extend His kingdom purpose – to serve others while growing in faith, hope and love. You can learn more at www.deliberateu.com where this article first appeared.



What research and the Bible says about: **THE SURPRISING SECRETS OF HIGHLY HAPPY MARRIAGES**

by Annie Kate Arnouste

Marriage is meant to mirror Christ and the church. One can scarcely imagine a higher calling than this, yet all marriages fall far short of the ideal. Thus we not only misrepresent Christ and the church but also experience sadness and disappointment.

As we all know, the Bible has quite a few things to say about marriage. Unfortunately, both the secular culture and much of the Christian culture read the relevant passages through ideological glasses. This leads to endless controversy but brings about very little improvement to marriages.

Shaunti Feldhahn's book, *The Surprising Secrets of Highly Happy Marriages: The Little Things that Make a Big Difference*, is a refreshing addition

to the conversation. Feldhahn does not offer yet another opinion on what the Bible says but instead gives a research-based answer: *this is what has been shown to work – try it*. Not surprisingly, the results of her research mirror what the Bible says.

WHAT HAPPY COUPLES DO DIFFERENTLY

Feldhahn and her team, experienced researchers, studied almost 1,000 people, both Christians and non-Christians, to understand what the happiest couples did differently. The research showed that there are many “learnable” things that can make a big difference in a marriage, regardless of other challenges a couple may be facing. In other words, by learning what the happiest couples

do, those in moderately happy or struggling marriages can improve their own relationships, although the most troubled couples will likely need other help besides this book.

Before we act on anyone's suggestions about anything, we need to verify that they agree with the Bible. Thus this discussion of Feldhahn's research results also notes how, as expected, the truth about the happiest couples is in line with biblical principles and admonitions.

First of all, “A handful of simple day-to-day actions increases the likelihood that our spouse feels that we care deeply about them, instead of feeling that we don't.” These are little things, so seemingly insignificant that people are tempted to shrug them off, but people who adopt them will have a big impact

on their spouse's happiness. A man tends to be happier if his wife:

- Notices his effort and sincerely thanks him for it.
- Says you did a great job at _____.
- Mentions in front of others something he did well.
- Shows that she desires him sexually and that he pleases her sexually.
- Makes it clear to him that he makes her happy.

A woman tends to be happier if her husband:

- Holds her hand.
- Leaves her a message during the day to say he loves and is thinking about her.
- Puts his arm around her or lays his hand on her knee when they are sitting next to each other in public.
- Tells her sincerely, "You are beautiful."
- Pulls himself out of a funk when he's morose, grumpy, or upset about something instead of withdrawing.

From a biblical point of view, it is not at all surprising that these powerful, gender-specific actions involve respect, appreciation, kindness, and caring. The happiest couples have also discovered other individual little things that make their spouse feel loved. Usually what matters to men are things that make them feel appreciated, and what matters to women are actions that communicate, "I care about what matters to you." From a practical point of view, these things are simple, learnable, and doable and have a huge impact on marriages because they communicate care in a way the other person values.

Believing that your spouse cares about you changes everything.

Believing that your spouse cares about you changes everything. It turns out that over 95% of people, even in difficult marriages, sincerely care about their spouse and want the best for them. However, in struggling marriages almost half think that their spouse does not care about them. Feldhahn's research shows that this is flat wrong.

As mentioned above, there are things we can do to help our spouse believe they are cared for. On the other hand, spouses also need to choose to believe the best about each other — that our spouse does care and that when they cause hurt it is unintentional. We need to choose to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things, and to think about things that are true and honorable. A worthwhile sentence to ponder is, "He/she must not have known how that would make me feel, or he/she wouldn't have done it." The research shows this is almost always true.

EPH. 4:26: "DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR ANGER..."

Another research result, surprising to Feldhahn who is a Christian, is that while many think the Bible instructs us not to go to bed mad, the happiest couples often do. Rather than staying up, exhausted, debating until they agree on a topic, they reconnect (i.e. assure each other that the relationship is okay even if they still disagree), put the issue aside until the morning, and go to bed.

A careful reading shows that the biblical principle in Eph. 4:26 isn't about delaying bedtime, but involves not allowing anger to drag on. This principle is part of the lifestyle of the happiest couples, whether they are Christian or not. Emotional reconnection, often a personal bit of sign language, needs to be both initiated and accepted, something that very happy spouses excel at but struggling spouses do not practice.

1 COR. 13:5 "LOVE...KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS"

In unhappy marriages, spouses tend to keep score of the bad things the other person does and the good things they

themselves do. The happiest couples keep score, too, but differently. They focus on the good things the other person does and intentionally show gratitude. They also notice and express more kindness, admiration, respect, and forgiveness.

Closely related is that the happiest couples actively work to change their negative feelings and responses. This countercultural idea of replacing unhappy or angry thoughts and actions with positive ones, instead of venting, has an enormous impact on marital happiness. The research is simple: Stop focusing on, thinking about, or speaking about what irritates you; rather, honor the other person in your thinking and base your responses on that instead. In fact, if you do and think what is right instead of what you feel like, then your feelings will change. Or in the words of a happy couple, "We have found that when we act loving, then eventually, wow, we are loving!"

The happiest couples not only adjust their attitudes, feelings, and opinions, but also adapt their expectations of each other. A clear factor in unhappy marriages is a longing for the other spouse to be or do something that they find difficult or impossible.

The happiest spouses, on the other hand, are grateful for the ways their spouse is able to meet their needs and do not ask for the impossible. In other words, they do not tell themselves, "If he/she really loved me, he/she would _____." Closely tied to this, happy couples tell each other what they need, but struggling couples assume the other person can, and should, figure this out on their own.

TOGETHER TIME

Research shows that "Not only do happy couples spend time together because they are happy; a big part of the reason they are so happy is that they are spending time together." They prioritize hanging out together and doing things together even during seasons of travel, busyness, or marital difficulty. What does this look like? It can involve romantic dinners, but more often it's



Thinking the best of your spouse might be the difference between complaining “You mussed my hair!” and proclaiming “You are a goof and I love you!”

something simpler, like going for a walk, watching the kids play sports, or carving time out of a busy schedule just to be together. The happiest couples all see the other person as their best and closest friend, a friend they want to stay close to no matter what, and their actions reflect that.

Finally, the happiest couples are kind, gentle, and self-controlled in how they talk to each other. Yes, they bring up all sorts of topics and they are honest with each other, but they do so without disrespect and they carefully avoid hurting each other. What’s more, they are at least as considerate in private as in public. “If you wouldn’t say it that way to a close friend, don’t say it that way to your spouse,” seems to sum it up.

MANY OF THE HAPPIEST COUPLES ARE CHRISTIAN

Feldhahn found that the happiest couples focus on something greater than their marriages and that many of them are Christian. In fact, couples who agree that “God is at the center of our marriage” are twice as likely to report that they are very happy than others. Many of the happiest couples worship together, share key values, focus on serving their spouses instead of being served, look to God for power to be selfless, and trust God for the outcome. They emphasize they do not look to marriage for fulfillment and meaning, but to God.

The happiest couples are fully invested in their marriage and do not

hold back emotionally, financially, or in other unhealthy ways. They do not have a secret stash of money “just in case,” they are open with each other, they trust each other, and they work at their marriage. In biblical words, they act as though they are one, even though the world says that is a dangerous thing to do.

In most highly happy marriages, each spouse credits the other for the happiness in their marriage, “and they live in regular, conscious gratitude as a result.” They are amazed that things are so good, as this one quote from a grateful wife sums up, “The fact that I get to live with him over the course of my lifetime is one of the biggest scams I’ve pulled off.” Many spouses feel this way, but the happiest ones make a conscious effort to let the other person know.

So, in a general overview, what do the research results suggest? Although Feldhahn does not discuss this, the happiest couples tend to be the ones

In most highly happy marriages, each spouse credits the other for the happiness in their marriage...

Some encouraging marriage statistics

by Jon Dykstra

In their book, *The Good News about Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths about Marriage and Divorce* authors Shaunti Feldhahn and Tally Whitehead share the following encouraging statistics:

- 1. Contrary to what commonly said, the actual divorce rate has never gotten close to 50%. Instead almost 75% of people are still married to their first spouse and some of those who aren't have experienced the death of a spouse, not divorce.**
- 2. Most marriages, about 80% of them, are happy. If those who are most unhappy stick with it, they rate their marriages as among the most happy within five years.**
- 3. The rate of divorce in the church is not the same as the rate among those who don't attend worship services. In fact, church attenders have a 25-50% lower divorce rate.**
- 4. Most marriage problems are not caused by big-ticket issues, and simple changes can make a big difference.**

Thus the statistics encourage hope about marriage, not futility.

who live according to biblical principles. They accept the fact that marriage means oneness and that divorce is not an option. They aim to show gratitude, kindness, respect, and consideration. They accept the biblical view that feelings are not the standard by which they must operate but rather adjust their feelings by adjusting their thoughts and actions. They do not expect happiness and meaning from their spouse but look to God instead. Conversely, research suggests that struggling couples are much more likely to be self-centered, seek meaning in their spouse or marriage, have unrealistic expectations, hold back, criticize, avoid each other, be nicer in public than private, and be negative.

THE CHANGES ARE SIMPLE

The good news in Feldhahn's research is that, once people know what behaviors and attitudes are good for a marriage, once they understand how biblical principles apply, they can make an effort to change. They are no longer left wishing they knew what to do in practical, everyday terms. Now they

know. What's more, it turns out that even if only one person commits to change, the marriage will benefit.

Feldhahn gives ten suggestions for implementing her research results, but the basics are simple: Rely on God, build only one or two new habits at a time, and set up daily reminders so you won't forget them. Above all, be grateful for success and patient with setbacks; in this broken world learning godly habits and attitudes is no easy matter.

How does this all apply to those who are not merely hoping to improve a good marriage but are struggling in a very difficult one? Struggling couples and those who help them can find hope in the statistics shown in the sidebar, especially #4 which emphasizes that these principles of a happy marriage are simple and can be learned. It may also help to note #2, that many of the happiest couples in Feldhahn's research were deeply unhappy before they learned how marriage works.

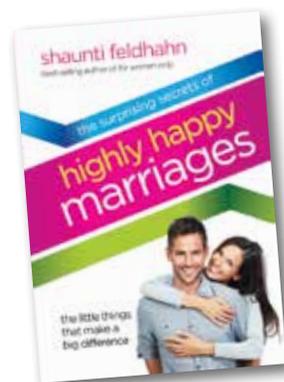
THE CHANGES ARE HARD

Do note that, although the principles suggested by the research are simple, they are not easy for anyone, whether happily married or struggling, to apply. Change is never easy, nor are repentance, apologies, and forgiveness.

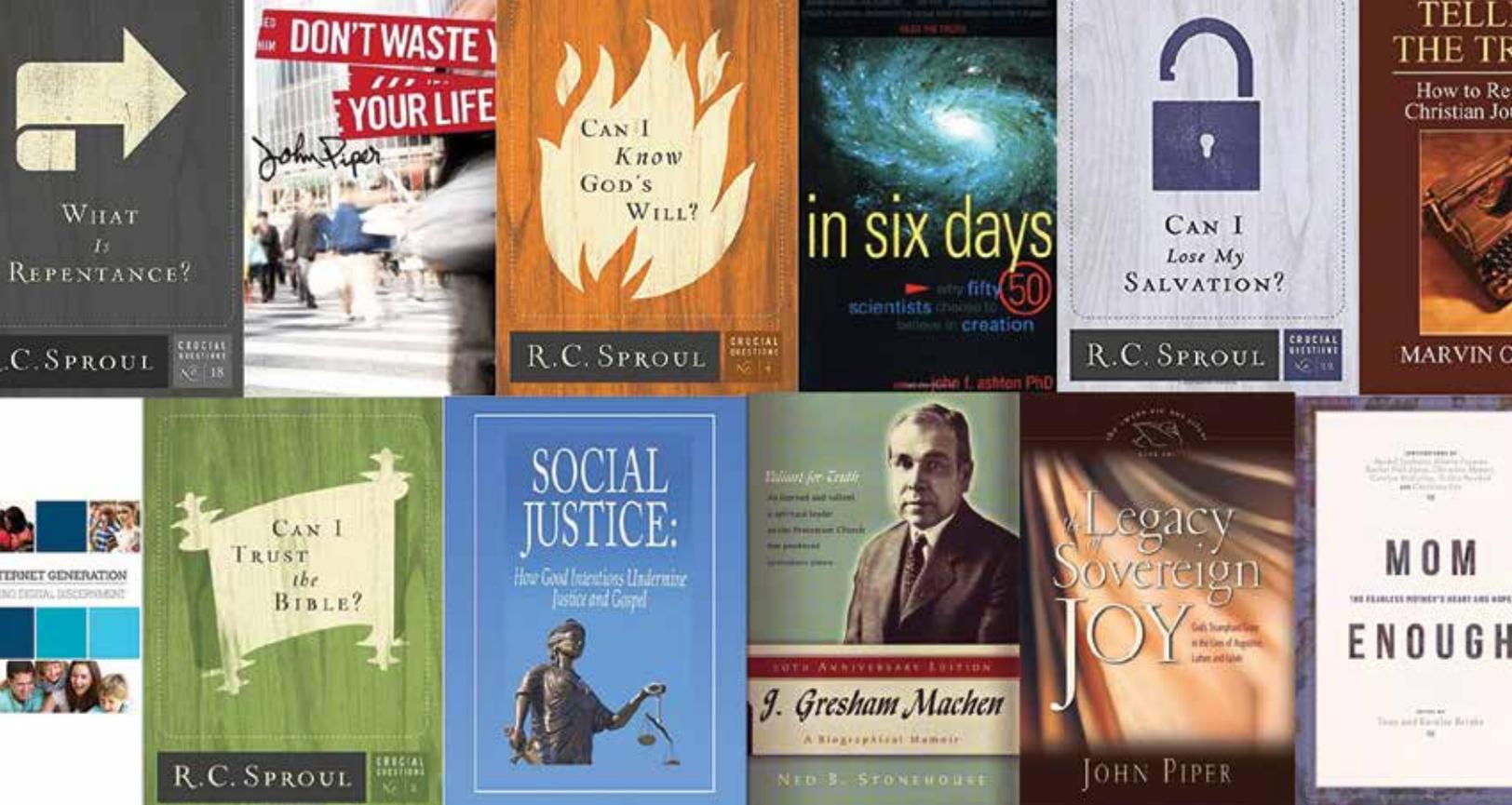
The research reminds us that a good marriage requires the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We not only need to pray for the fruit of the Spirit, but we also need to make every effort to add virtue, godliness, self-control, affection, and more to our faith.

In other words, we need to live close to God and humbly immerse ourselves in his wisdom instead of the world's. This, one of the blessings of marriage, brings us closer to God as we seek to understand how He wants us to live with the spouse He has graciously given us. Although all of this is a work of the Holy Spirit, it also involves our deliberate, thoughtful effort, and in the case of struggling couples, it may require outside help.

Our marriages are important and we need to obey God in them. Feldhahn's research, reflecting the Bible, helps us make wise daily choices about our attitudes and actions that will simultaneously enhance our representation of Christ and the church and increase the joy in our marriages. May God bless us all as we strive to have better marriages to his glory and for the benefit of our spouses, children, churches, and communities. **RP**



For a thorough explanation of Feldhahn's research and results, please read "The Surprising Secrets of Highly Happy Marriages." For those who wish to work through these ideas systematically, some simple worksheets are available at tinyurl.com/AnnieKateWorksheet



150+ FREE E-BOOKS WORTH CHECKING OUT

by Jon Dykstra

You're sure to find some real gems among the books shared below, but due to the sheer number mentioned it is impossible to vouch for the contents of them all. So (as always) discernment is needed.

The books are divided into three categories based on whether you can easily download them, or whether some personal information might be required, or whether the book has to be read online.

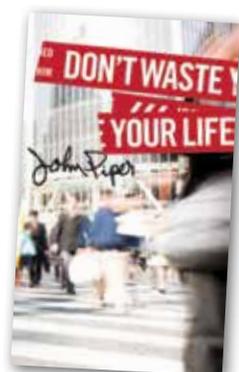
SIMPLE DOWNLOADS

These books are completely free and can be downloaded with minimal fuss (usually just a click and you are on your way).

ALMOST 100 FROM JOHN PIPER AND FRIENDS

desiringGod.org/books

Reformed Baptist John Piper seems to have released all of his books in free pdf versions, tackling topics as diverse as abortion, sex, retirement, C.S. Lewis, Open Theism, racism and Church history. While most of



the books on this site are by Piper, there are exceptions, and if it isn't by him, it may not be free.

31 DAYS OF PURITY

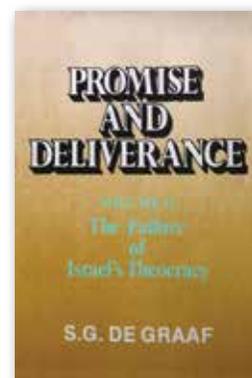
tinyurl.com/31purity

This is a 31-day devotional to encourage and challenge the Church in regards to sexual purity. Contributors include Tim Challies, David Murray, and Joel Beeke.

4-VOLUME SET OF S.D. DEGRAAF'S PROMISE AND DELIVERANCE

tinyurl.com/PromiseandDeliverance

This set has been used in Dutch Reformed circles for generations now, to equip parents to better explain Bible stories to their children. It could also be read as a devotional of sorts for teens, or even adults. The free pdfs are scanned, which means they aren't searchable, but they are certainly readable.



SOCIAL JUSTICE: HOW GOOD INTENTIONS UNDERMINE JUSTICE AND THE GOSPEL

tinyurl.com/BeisnerSJ

E. Calvin Beisner is probably best known as the head of the Christian stewardship group the Cornwall Alliance. But before he started speaking on the environment, he researched and wrote a lot on poverty and economics. In this booklet he outlines how good intentions are not enough.

20+ FROM THE OPC

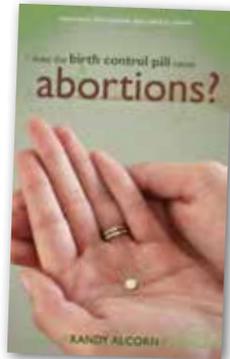
tinyurl.com/OPCfree

Interesting books and booklets here, including Ned B. Stonehouse's *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir*.

DOES THE BIRTH CONTROL PILL CAUSE ABORTIONS?

tinyurl.com/AlcornBCP

It's a question that any Christian considering the pill needs to look into, and Randy Alcorn gives a well-supported answer in this free 200-page book.



ABOLITION OF REASON

tinyurl.com/abolitionofreason

Jonathon Van Maren, Scott Klusendorf and other "incrementalist" pro-lifers argue against "immediatism."

MEMOIRS OF AN ORDINARY PASTOR: THE LIFE AND REFLECTIONS OF TOM CARSON

tinyurl.com/TomCarson

Well-known Reformed Baptist pastor D.A. Carson on his unknown, faithful father.

FALSE MESSAGES: A GUIDE FOR THE GODLY BRIDE

challies.com/books-e-books

Aileen Challies, wife of the Reformed blogger Tim Challies, has written a booklet for women on a biblical view of sexuality.

DOWNLOAD FOR FREE, BUT EMAIL REQUIRED

These books are free, but getting them will require you to give your email address, or create an account, or in some way provide them some information. But these aren't spammers, so you can always opt out of their email lists.



28 BOOKLETS FROM R.C. SPROUL

freeRC.notlong.com

RC Sproul has a series of 28 booklets in his "Crucial Questions" series that tackle topics like *Can I Know God's Will?* and *Who is the Holy Spirit?*

LOVE THE LEAST (A LOT)

Abort73.com/gear/books

Michael Spielman is the founder of Abort73.com, one of the most comprehensive pro-life websites on the Internet. And his *Love the Least (A Lot)* is one of the most readable, most motivating, pro-life books you could ever read.

GOD AND THE GAY CHRISTIAN

tinyurl.com/Mohlerresponse

This is a response, by Reformed Baptist leader R. Albert Mohler Jr., to a popular book by Matthew Vines called *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*.

PARENTING THE INTERNET GENERATION

covenanteyes.com/parenting-the-internet-generation

This is by Luke Gilkerson, of Covenant Eyes, a Christian Internet accountability company and his goal with this thoroughly biblical resource is to help equip parents to guide and protect their children when it comes to all things online.

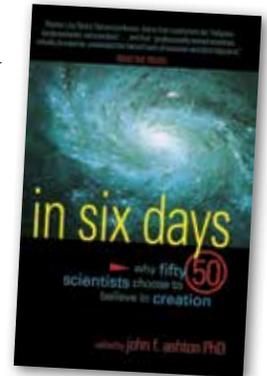
READ ONLINE

These books are free too, but are only available to be read online, usually one chapter per webpage.

29+ CREATIONIST RESOURCES

Answersingenesis.org/answers/books

Answers in Genesis has made a number of their books such as *In Six Days*, *Old Earth Creationism on Trial* and *In the Beginning was Information* available for free online reading but you can't download them. Instead you can read them, chapter by chapter, on their website.



EVEN MORE GREAT CREATIONIST BOOKS

Creation.com/books-online

Dr. Jonathan Sarfati's *Refuting Evolution*, and *Refuting Evolution 2* are available for online reading here.

LETTERS TO A MORMON ELDER

tinyurl.com/letterstoMormon

James White's fantastic resource can be read for free online. Be a bit patient – it does seem to take a few moments to load.

3 ON JOURNALISM FROM MARVIN OLASKY

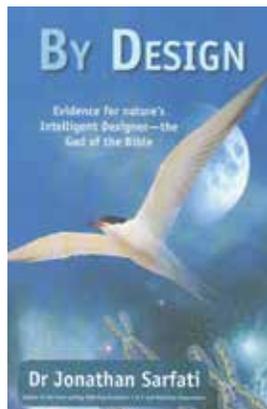
Worldmag.com/world/olasky

The editor of the Christian *WORLD* magazine has written 3 books on the media and how Christians should read the news and write it. *Telling the Truth* is fantastic! 

A longer version of this article is available online at ReformedPerspective.ca with clickable links under the same title. If you know of any more great free e-books, please let the editor know at editor@reformedperspective.ca

BY DESIGN: EVIDENCE FOR... THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

BY JONATHAN SARFATI
260 PAGES / 2008



The Bible tells us that God’s “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made, so they are without excuse” (Rom 1:20). One implication of these words is that scientists who study creation must be able to see something of God’s awesome power and wisdom. Yet, most mainstream scientists steadfastly refuse to give glory to God and instead seek to honour the god of their making, the theory of evolution, to account for the wonders of creation.

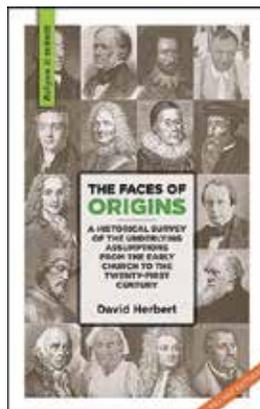
This delightful book illustrates magnificently how God’s glory can indeed be seen in his handiwork. God’s design is evident everywhere and it all argues against evolution. For example, God has put an incredible amount of information in creation to enable everything to work properly. “There is enough information capacity in a single human cell to store the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, all 30 volumes of it, three or four times over.”

This book is chock-full of all sorts of examples of God’s wonderful design, including the incredible designs allowing sight, smell, flight, orientation, and stickiness. Critics are answered and God’s wisdom is celebrated.

– CORNELIS VAN DAM

THE FACES OF ORIGINS

BY DAVID HERBERT
180 PAGES / 2012



It’s often said that new scientific knowledge has made it impossible to continue to accept the truth of the Genesis creation account, that this new knowledge meant scientists had no choice but to accept evolution.

Herbert challenges this narrative. He says it wasn’t the new knowledge, but a new worldview that led to the rejection of the Genesis creation account. Western civilization left a worldview based on biblical revelation, where God was actively involved in history, and instead embraced a naturalistic worldview based only on reason. Naturalism believes that natural processes alone are sufficient to account for life and creation.

Herbert shows that for eighteen centuries a biblical understanding of origins had the upper hand. Real change came during the seventeenth century. Indeed, Benoît de Maillet (1656-1738) was the first modern uniformitarian and evolutionist.

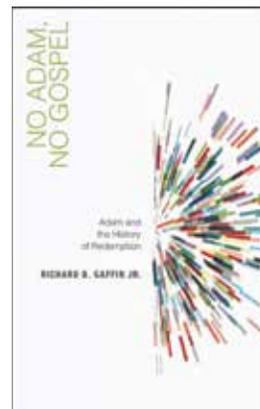
Once scientific findings were interpreted without God, through the lens of naturalism, evolution became the most popular explanation of our origins. This in spite of the fact that the empirical evidence points to design and not evolution. The price of excluding God and denying Genesis is high. It has led to a resurgence of atheism.

This book is a great and easy read.

– CORNELIS VAN DAM

NO ADAM, NO GOSPEL: ADAM AND THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY RICHARD B. GAFFIN JR.
29 PAGES / 2015



More and more professing Christians are accepting scientific theory that suggests that man-like mammals (hominids) preceded the coming of Adam by millions of years. Biologos, a well-funded organization, is also pushing evolution using scholars who have a conservative reputation to convince people to accept evolution. But what does affirming evolutionary origins of the human race do to the gospel? Can you affirm that Adam was not historically the first human on earth without jeopardizing the Good News? Professor Gaffin clearly shows that

“the truth of the gospel stands or falls with the historicity of Adam as the first human being from whom all other human beings descend.”

After clearly explaining Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49, Gaffin responds to *The Evolution of Adam*, a book written by a popular Old Testament scholar, Peter Enns. Gaffin shows how the views of Enns lead to a complete abandonment of the Reformed faith in its biblical understanding of sin, salvation, and death. Indeed, no Adam, no gospel! The results of accepting evolution theory are disastrous for the Christian faith.

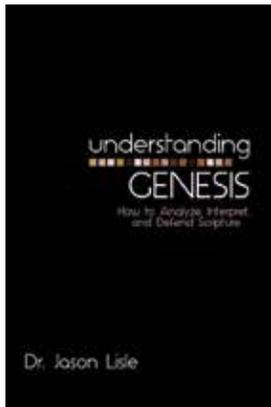
Although a small publication, this booklet is timely and packed with excellent biblical insights. I highly recommend it.

– CORNELIS VAN DAM

UNDERSTANDING GENESIS: HOW TO ANALYZE, INTERPRET, AND DEFEND SCRIPTURE

BY JASON LISLE

496 PAGES / 2015



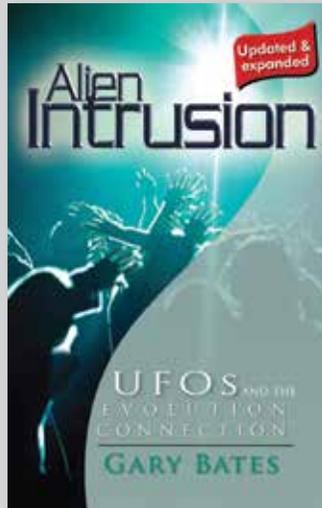
Building on his *The Ultimate Proof of Creation* (2009), Jason Lisle, who has a doctorate in astrophysics, goes into considerable detail in outlining the rules and principles for correctly interpreting God's Word. He wants to logically refute faulty interpretations of Genesis and equip Christians to defend God's Word against compromised positions, especially with respect to Genesis. These concerns take up the first half of the book.

The second part of the book goes into considerable detail in applying sound principles of interpretation to the matter of geocentricity, the age of the earth, theistic evolution, and the extent of the Genesis flood. Two appendices on a defense of the Trinity and formal fallacies round off the book.

Lisle's approach is sound and he does an excellent job in fleshing out how to interpret Scripture. He resists the temptation which earlier creationists like Henry Morris fell into by claiming that the Bible is a scientific textbook, so this book appears to be a significant improvement in the manner in which the Bible is used. Lisle rightly prioritizes Scripture over scientific theories and through careful exegesis wants to let the Word of God speak.

This is a very helpful book.

- CORNELIS VAN DAM



ALIEN INTRUSION: UFOs AND THE EVOLUTION CONNECTION

BY GARY BATES

2004 / 382 PAGES

Are people actually being abducted by aliens? That's the question being asked by this book...and the recently released documentary based on it. The author is Christian, so you might expect he'd answer with an emphatic "no" but Gary Bates response could best be summarized as, "sort of."

The way the book is structured, *Alien Intrusion* could be given to anyone, Christian or not. The cover and first few

chapters hardly give a hint that this is a Christian book since, initially, it seems to be making a case for UFO's and aliens. Bates notes that millions of people, including a past president of the United States, claim to have seen a UFO, and he discusses how many popular TV shows, likes *Star Trek* and various science fiction movies like *2001: A Space Odyssey* assume that aliens are somewhere out there.

But after delving into what people think about aliens and UFOs, the author then begins, step by step, to explain why aliens could not possibly be visiting us from other planets. Most of the reasons are simply practical – the distances are too far and the energy needed simply too immense.

Despite the fact that it is physically impossible for aliens to be visiting us, the author doesn't believe that every story of alien abduction is simply a lie or a delusion. After debunking many famous "UFOlogists" Bates notes that there are still too many ordinary folks making abduction claims – people who have nothing to gain, and personal credibility to lose – to simply dismiss the phenomenon altogether.

This is where the book starts to become clearly Christian. The author argues that it is only now that our world has embraced evolution (and dismissed God) that UFO sightings have become so prevalent. There is also a strong correlation between UFO belief and occult experimentation – many of the more famous "UFOlogists" have also dabbled in the "dark arts." It is worth noting, too, that the messages that the "aliens" pass on are often direct attacks on the Bible, portraying Jesus not as the Son of God, but merely as some advanced alien.

So are people being abducted by aliens? Bates argues that while some people may indeed be having these encounters it is not with aliens but rather with demons masquerading as extraterrestrials.

I've not yet seen the 2018 documentary of the same name, but the trailer looks promising. I suspect that it follows the same sort of format, first presenting the evidence for an alien intrusion, before then explaining why it just isn't so.

As for the book, it is fantastic, and a great gift for anyone interested in science fiction. Bates employs a solid Christian worldview to separate the fact from the fiction.

– Jon Dykstra

editor, yours truly, had an opportunity to chat with Al Siebring on this week's edition of *House News*. He wanted to discuss last month's editorial "What if speeding tickets went *critics*?" and you can [tune in to our conversation here](#).
Would your friends be getting this newsletter? Let them know they can sign up for free [here](#).



God wants young men to be brave, not crazy

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One way to use Facebook to God's glory might be to actively accommodate our fellow brothers and sisters who don't want to use it at all.

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'Murder,' White Says: Promises Prosecution



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The untimely death of Emmett Louis Till, and the power of graphic pictures

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