

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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Volume 38 Issue No. 2

PERSPECTIVE

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Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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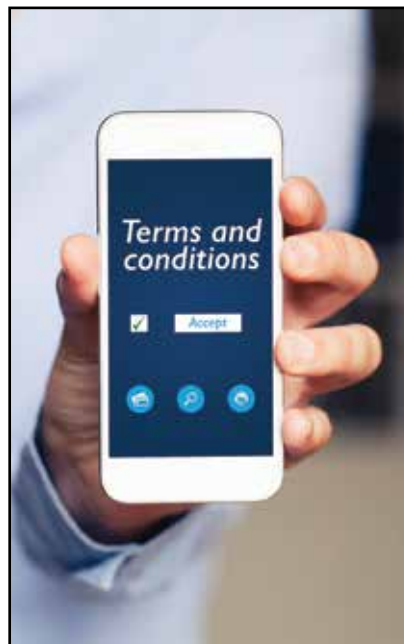
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by Jon Dykstra

A CALL TO PUBLIC *CHRISTIAN* WITNESS

An interview (of sorts) with Francis Schaeffer

Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) has long since been retired from his earthly duties, but the Presbyterian pastor, philosopher, and apologist was still up for an interview (of sorts) on the desperate need for a clear Christian witness in the public square.

The text in bold are his own words, taken from his book *A Christian Manifesto*.

JON DYKSTRA: *A Christian Manifesto* is your last book. Why did you feel the need to write it?

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER: It was intended as a rallying cry for Christians to stand up against the world's humanist worldview by offering up God's own. **The basic problem of the Christians in this country...in regards to society and in regards to**

government is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals. They have gradually become disturbed over permissiveness, pornography, the public schools, the breakdown of the family, and finally, abortion. But they have not seen this as a totality – each thing being a part, a symptom of a much larger problem. [We] have failed to see that all of this has come about due to a shift in...

the overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole. This shift has been away from a worldview that was at least vaguely Christian... toward something completely different – toward a worldview based upon the idea that the final reality is impersonal matter or energy shaped into its present form by impersonal chance.

The phrase “separation of church

and state” has been used to push Christians to the sidelines in politics, and we have, for the most part, gone willingly. Christians have forgotten that **the Lordship of Christ covers all of life and all of life equally**. That includes politics as well. *A Christian Manifesto* is a call for Christians to reenter the public square *as Christians*. It argues that the Christian worldview is absolutely vital to civil society and we need to share it with them.

JD: *Why is it vital?*

FS: Because it is foundational! In the American Constitution we have the phrase “**certain inalienable rights.**” **Who gives the rights? The State? Then they are not inalienable because the State can change them and take them away. Where do rights come from?** Now Christians know **there is Someone who gave these inalienable rights**, but if you don’t recognize the Giver, how can you recognize His gift? If we ignore God and build our law on humanist assumptions we are left with rights that have no foundation. And if we can’t explain the basis for these rights, how can we complain when they are taken away? That’s why a secular worldview is the road to tyranny.

JD: *How should Christians respond when their government ignores God?*

FS: Be a witness! We are where we are today in large part because of the many voters who held to **two bankrupt values – personal peace and affluence. Personal peace means just to be left alone, not to be troubled by the troubles of other people, whether across the world, or across the city. Affluence means an overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity – a life made up of things and more things – success judged by an ever-higher level of material abundance.** Even as voters demand peace and prosperity, we Christians need to stand on principle. We need to speak, even when that is going to cause us trouble, and cost us materially.

...at a certain point there is not only the right, but the duty to disobey the State.

JD: *But are Western Christians prepared for the cost that comes with being a witness?*

FS: Many are scared. I know many among your readership had grandparents involved in hiding Jews from the Nazis. What your grandparents understood is that when we recognize Christ as Lord of all, then **at a certain point there is not only the right, but the duty to disobey the State.** That’s why your grandparents were willing to risk the wrath of Man – because they valued the approval of God. And they understood that **when Jesus says in Matthew 22:21: “Give to Caesar what it Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” it is not:**

GOD and CAESAR

It was, is, and always will be:

**GOD
and
CAESAR**

The civil government, as all of life, stands under the Law of God.


JD: *You’re talking here about there being a time and place for civil disobedience. What cautions or considerations would you share when it comes to resisting a government doing wicked things?*

FS: Samuel Rutherford suggested that there are three appropriate levels of resistance: *First*, [the Christian] must defend himself by protest (in contemporary society this would most often be by legal action); *second*, he must flee if at all possible; and *third*, he may use force, if necessary to defend himself. One should not employ force if he may save himself by flight; nor should one employ

flight if he can save himself and defend himself by protest and the employment of constitutional means of redress.

JD: *Here in the West we are still free to make use of the first possibility, taking legal and political action. What would you say to Christians who are hesitant to speak out against our society’s humanist worldview, and downright scared about presenting the explicitly Christian alternative?*

FS: I would tell them the world needs to hear a Christian witness. And until we share that, anything we do is only treating the symptoms. Then I might quote to them a few lines from Bob Dylan’s *Slow Train Coming*:

**You’ve got gangsters in power and lawbreakers making rules
When you gonna wake up,
When you gonna wake up,
When you gonna wake up
And strengthen the things that remain?** 

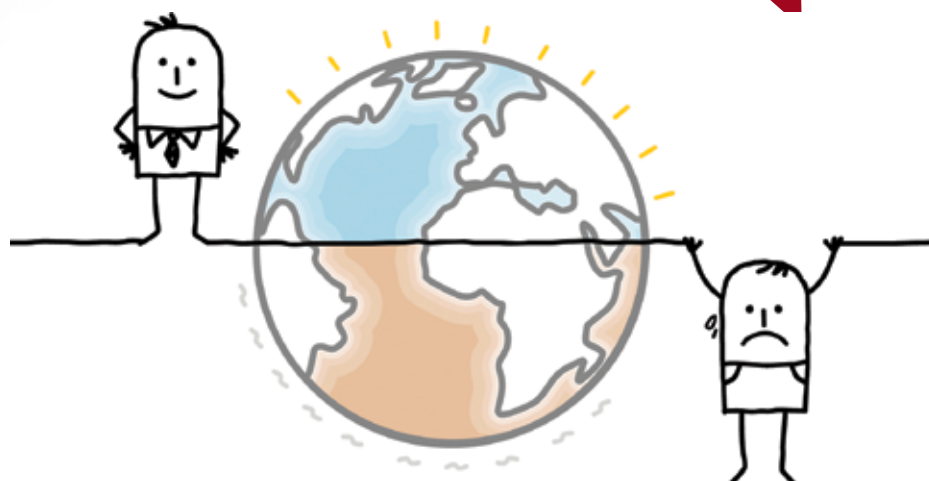
A version of this article first appeared in the March 2008 issue.



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

NOTA BENE

News worth noting



26 RICHEST OWN AS MUCH AS THE WORLD'S POOREST 3.75 BILLION

BY JON DYKSTRA

The 26 richest people on the planet hold as much wealth as the poorest 50% of the world's population. So says the *Oxfam Inequality Report 2019* released this January.

That is quite the statistic – it's a disparity that will surprise and stun many. But why is Oxfam sharing it? To foster covetousness.

Of course, that's not how they present their case. They speak of *fairness*. They think it obviously unfair that the 26 people at the top have as

much as the 3.75 billion on the bottom. But what the report doesn't detail is how these 26 got their wealth. No accusations of theft are made. We know God hates for the powerful to oppress the poor (Prov. 22:16, 22-23) but Oxfam doesn't even try to make the case that this is how the rich gained their money. The report details the dire circumstances the poor face around the world, but no linkage is made between their poverty and specific wickedness done by the rich.

Still, isn't it obviously wrong that so

few have so much, when so many have so little?

To answer that question properly, we need to view things biblically. In Scripture we find God repeatedly calling on us to help the poor (Prov. 28:27, 31:9, etc.). And at the very same time in the 10th Commandment – *Do not covet* – He makes it clear He doesn't want us concerned with what the rich have. Poverty is a problem to be tackled, but the God who made Solomon wealthier than any before him nowhere speaks of "fixing" wealth inequality.

How can the God who wants us to help the poor also tell us not to concern ourselves with the wealth of the rich? Aren't the two related?

No.

Abraham prospered, but his increased wealth didn't come at the expense of anyone else (Genesis 14:23). Similarly, a successful businessman doesn't have to become rich by taking from the poor. Unless he steals, then the way he becomes wealthy is by making others wealthier too. He can only sell us his \$10 widget if we think he's delivering more than \$10 worth of value. After all, if we don't think it's worth more than the asking price, why would we trade our money for it? If we do make that exchange, not only is the widget-maker wealthier (he's up \$10!) *we're wealthier too* because we now own a widget that's worth much more than \$10 to us!

The *Oxfam Report* laments the wealth of the super-rich. They see it as representing good that could be, but isn't being, done – they see it as good *withheld*. What they don't understand is that this wealth represents enormous good *already done* – every dollar representing *more* than a dollar's worth of wealth given to their customers.

(And we haven't even touched on how these 26 people's wealth is tied up in companies that bring further benefits by employing millions.)

There will always be a temptation to look over our back fence and make plans for what our rich neighbor has. But when God calls on us to help the poor, He's calling on *us* to help the poor.

MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT DECIDES GENDER IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

BY JON DYKSTRA



The annual Miss Universe beauty contest was held this past December, and while the winner was Miss Philippines, most of the attention was on a contestant who didn't make it past the preliminary round. Miss Spain, Angela Ponce, made history by being the pageant's first transgender

contestant – a man was now on stage with the women.

In 2012, the Miss Universe organization eliminated its requirement that contestants had to be “naturally born” women, making Ponce's appearance this year possible. But the pageant isn't doing away with all their rules: women over 28 are still out, as are married or divorced women. In addition, the swimsuit/athletic wear requirement excludes women who find that style of dress immodest, eliminating much of the Muslim world, the Amish, and also Orthodox Jews. Finally, contestants can't ever have been pregnant.

Even as the media was celebrating the pageant's historic inclusion of all

sorts of “women” it was continuing to exclude all sorts of *women*, banning them on the basis of age, marital status, or religion (those modest Muslims and others). The pageant wasn't acting consistent with their professed “inclusive” values. But that the organizers aren't exactly deep thinkers shouldn't surprise us; these are folks who evaluate a woman based on how she fills out a bikini.

What's funny is how far the pageant is willing to go to accommodate men. Consider their ban on contestants who've been pregnant. This actually tilts the field in favor of transgender contestants because it can only be applied against genuine women – an Angela Ponce can't ever get pregnant.

ABORTIONIST SAYS: “GOD PERFORMS WAY MORE ABORTIONS THAN I DO...”

BY JON DYKSTRA

In a Dec. 29 tweet abortionist Leah Torres went viral by claiming:

“God performs way more abortions than I do...”

While pro-lifers were quick to respond, most failed to offer an effective reply. When we debate the world there can be a temptation to assume anything they say must not be true. That's what happened here, with many a Christian afraid to concede there was something to Torres' claim, at least as far as it went. And because this uncomfortable truth was avoided, the rebuttals missed their target.

The newsgroup *LifeNews.com* tweeted this reply:

“But you believe in evolution. So it's evolution's fault, not God's.”

Maybe Torres does believe in unguided evolution, but the

largely Catholic *LifeNews* presumably doesn't. So why not offer a Catholic or Christian response, instead of this evasion? *Faithwire.com* thought another reply, a tweet by *ToniMZ81*, was worth sharing, but it also sidestepped the real issue. She wrote:

“...most miscarriages are because of an issue with the pregnancy/ non-viability & most abortions are viable pregnancies.”

What this forgets is Who controls viability. There is a difference between an abortion and a

miscarriage, but this tweet didn't get to the heart of it. The difference is not that Torres takes life and God does not. The difference is that God is the *Author of life* and Torres is not. As the Source of life He has a right to take what He has given. Torres does not.

This point was made by a few pro-lifers. Greg Schultz tweeted:

There's a difference...
You.
Are.
Not.
God.

Taken to its logical end, Torres' argument justifies every sort of murder at any age, because, after all, God has killed more people of that age than any of us have. To highlight the incredible wickedness of this logic, Anthony Abides, in the most memorable tweet of them all, put Torres' self-justification in Hitler's mouth:

“God killed more Jews than I do.”



IF A \$15 MINIMUM WAGE IS COMPASSIONATE, IS \$33 TWICE SO?

BY JON DYKSTRA

As of January 1, the minimum wage in New York City was boosted to \$15 an hour, a more than doubling of the \$7.25 minimum wage of just six years ago. Three days later *The New York Times* published a piece with the provocative title:

The \$15 Minimum Wage Is Here.
Why We Need \$33 an Hour.

Author Ginia Bellafante didn't exactly demand \$33 as a new minimum wage, or at least didn't set a timetable to reach that number. She did argue that the new \$15 minimum wouldn't do much to meet New York City workers' needs and "the war" for an adequate living wage had to continue. Bellafante cited a report by New York's largest food bank, City Harvest, which calculated that a "single parent with two school-age children...would need to make nearly \$69,427 a year" which works out "an hourly wage of just under \$33."

But is *need* a good basis for a minimum wage? If a single mom needs \$33, a married couple with two kids could get by with just half that. So maybe \$15 is a good number after all? But then what of that single mom? And what if, instead of just two kids, she had four? Then she would need a lot more than just \$33, so should we be looking at a \$50 minimum wage, or even higher?

If you see a problem with that idea, you're recognizing something that many minimum wage proponents do not – that the basis for wages isn't employees' needs.

Consider our own buying habits. We don't buy a car from Ford because Ford *needs* the money – that's not a consideration. When we head to Safeway and find out that a dozen bagels are on sale for \$5 we might buy them. But not at \$10 a dozen – they aren't worth that to us. So whether we buy them or not depends on what

value they return to us for the money we have to hand over.

It's no different when employers buy labor. They aren't buying our labor out of a charitable impulse – they are looking to get good value for their money. And like us, if something is overpriced, they aren't going to buy. That's why a minimum wage of \$50/hr. would be disastrous. Many of us aren't worth \$100,000 a year to an employer so if \$50 were the minimum wage, we would be out of work. We would be unemployed because our labor was overpriced by government mandate.

While \$15 is a lot lower than \$50, not everyone is worth that either. Unskilled workers might not be able to produce \$10 or even \$5 an hour of value, or at least not until their employer trains them. If the law says they have to be paid \$15/hr. that makes them unemployable.

It may not even be the unskilled worker who pays the price. Take as example a business that employed high school students at minimum wage,

and also employed a single mom who made a bit more. When the owner needed help running the business he began training the single mom to become a manager, and increased her salary to go along with the new responsibilities. Then the minimum wage went up and the owner had to increase the wages of all his high school students. That money had to come from somewhere and the end result was that the owner had to let his manager-in-training go, because he had to use her wages to pay the students. This government-mandated increase, legislated as a means of helping the poor, didn't help her. High schoolers who had already been happy with their wage got more, but a single mom lost a good job. The government might have meant well, but they didn't do well.

There is a Christian case to make against the minimum wage and any number of verses could be cited. Prov. 14:31 tells us to be kind to the poor, and while that is the professed intent of the minimum wage, that is not its effect on the least skilled. Just as relevant is Prov. 27:14 which tells



The higher the minimum wage the more attractive automation becomes.

us that mere good intentions are not enough – we actually have to *be* kind. In the online discussions of this article Luke 6:31 was raised: “Do to others as you would have them do to you,” as in employers should pay their employees what they would think fair, were their positions reversed.

True enough, but this verse is applicable the other direction too. Don't want your job banned? Then don't ban other people's jobs. There are any number of reasons why someone might be happy to work for wages below a government-mandated minimum. Someone might want to work for free as an intern instead of spending thousands learning the same skills in university. Low-skilled or no-skilled workers might want to get a foot in the door so they can work their way up to higher paying positions. Some low-paying jobs have fringe benefits, like a parking lot attendant I knew who could do his university homework during his shift. Mentally handicapped people who can't do as much as others might still enjoy work. Elderly folks who can't move as quickly as they once did might appreciate a job that doesn't demand a high output. And students might prioritize flexible hours over big bucks. Do these sound like positions that need to be banned? Should it be the government's job to make working for less than \$15 a crime?

God warns against arrogance (Daniel 4:30) but when a government makes minimum wage laws it is making decisions for millions and presuming it can price the value of people's labor better than they can themselves, and better than employers can. Our governments are trying to manage our economy in a hands-on way that requires them to be near all-knowing and have miraculous powers. But they are not God, and they can not make everyone worth 15/hr. by government decree. In humility our governments need to recognize that their powers and knowledge are limited, and they are simply not up to that task of running an economy. Is it any wonder, then, that God never asks them to?



WHAT'S IN A NAME? PAYLESS PRANK HAD PEOPLE PAYING \$600 FOR THEIR SHOES

BY JON DYKSTRA

Payless sells their shoes for as low as \$20. So why were people paying \$200, \$400, and even \$600 for their shoes a month before Christmas? It came down to a clever bit of rebranding.

The discount shoe store hasn't been doing well as of late, shutting down hundreds of stores last year, so in the lead-up to Christmas they were looking to make a splash. Their advertising agency proposed a publicity stunt: rent out an upscale retail location, stock it with regular Payless shoes, but relabel them as *Palessi*, and then charge 10 times more and see if anyone buys. To really sell the stunt they decked the store out in avant-garde statues, and had champagne for the opening.

It worked: as the *Washington Post's* Kristine Phillips reported, at the grand opening customers gushed about the shoes.

"I would pay \$400, \$500. People are going to be like, 'Where did you get those? Those are amazing,' a woman said as she tried on a pair of bright-gold sneakers with leopard prints."

"*Palessi* is just such high quality, high

fashion, taking your shoe game up to the next level,' said one man wearing spiked necklaces, holding a knee-high boot. 'It looks really well made.'"

"It's just stunning. Elegant, sophisticated and versatile,' said a woman, as she held a pair of floral stiletto heels."

Anyone who bought the shoes was taken to the back and let in on the stunt. And by way of an apology for the trick played on them, they were given their money back, and given their shoes for free.

It's hilarious that anyone was willing to pay 1000% the going retail price – is this what it looks like to have more money than sense? But before we laugh too hard, let's acknowledge that the trick – a new label disguising the same old, same old – is one that even a thrifty dutchman could fall for. What's worse, it's one we *regularly pull on ourselves*. After all, how often don't we relabel our *sins as mistakes*?

And we actually buy it!

SOURCE: Kristine Phillips's "They had us fooled": Inside Payless's elaborate prank to dupe people into paying \$600 for shoes" posted to WashingtonPost.com Nov. 20, 2018



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TOO MUCH TOO SOON? THE IMPACT OF BEING THE YOUNGEST IN A GRADE

BY VALERIE BOERINGA

A new study by Harvard Medical School researchers has found that children who are the youngest in their grade are 30 percent more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) than the older students in the grade. As lead researcher Timothy Layton put it:

“Our findings suggest the possibility that large numbers of kids are being

overdiagnosed and overtreated for ADHD because they happen to be relatively immature compared to their older classmates in the early years of elementary school.”

These younger children may not be able to live up to the standards expected by parents or teachers for children in their grade. Add in that today children are expected to learn more earlier, like being able to read

already in kindergarten. But some children at younger ages can't yet concentrate on their teacher and what he or she is teaching them. They are daydreaming of playtime or are just confused about what it is happening. If the researchers are right, this may not be ADHD or disobedience either, but may simply be the way a younger, less mature child acts.

SOURCE: Kerry McDonald's "Harvard Study Shows the Dangers of Early School Enrollment" posted to Fee.org on November 30, 2018

THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE WORLD

BY JON DYKSTRA

The leading cause of death in 2018 was not heart disease or stroke or AIDS or cancer or traffic accidents. In a Dec. 31st article, *Brietbart.com's* Thomas D. Williams, reported that:

There were more deaths from abortion in 2018 than all deaths from cancer, malaria, HIV/AIDS, smoking, alcohol, and traffic accidents *combined*.

Williams, using numbers from the World Health Organization and from Worldometers, reported that while 8 million died from cancer in 2018, and 5 million from smoking, *41.9 million died from abortions*.

The fact-checking, and left-leaning website *Snopes.com* questioned Williams' abortion numbers, but not in the way you might have expected. They couldn't find data from 2018 and noted that in the most recent years they could find 2010-2014, WHO reported an average of *56 million abortions annually*.

As concerned as we should be about reducing deaths by traffic accidents, stroke, AIDS and more, we should be that much more concerned about abortion, which killed more than the next ten causes of death combined.

Reformed blogger Samuel Sey made a similar point about Canada. In his November 9 post on his blog *SlowToWrite.com* he noted:

370,000 Canadians die a year –
100,000 of them die from abortion....

Every year, 100,000 babies in Canada are ripped apart, limb-by-limb, from their mother's womb. Abortion is the most grotesque and widespread human rights violation of our time. Its the leading cause of death in Canada and America. And that won't change unless Christians like you and me become the leading cause for its abolition.

SOURCE: Thomas Williams' "Abortion leading cause of death in 2018 with 41 million killed" as posted to Brietbart.com on Dec. 31, 2018



by Evelyn Kruis



Our modern Underground Railroad: A CASE FOR FOSTER CARE

Nestled in the sagging seat of her dad's gigantic green recliner sits a freckled faced 12-year-old girl, with a book almost touching her nose, legs crumpled beneath her, the rhythmic ticking of the wooden family clock above her, all reminiscent of the safe haven of a home she lives in. Yet, for the moment this girl is unaware of her surroundings as she is lost in another world, separated by historical decades. There she sits, the *Hiding Place* in hand, quixotic with the idea that she too, like Corrie ten Boom, would be a hero of faith. If only she lived during World War II, she would be offering her home to distressed Jews, risking her life for the Lord, enduring prison and suffering with naught a complaint; an altruistic heroine.

Another day, another book: *Underground Railroad to Canada*. This time the adolescent girl is listening to

her mother read about enslaved people moving through a secret network of routes and safe houses to escape slavery and reach the free states in the North. Brave, hospitable mothers opening their homes and children to the dangers of hiding slaves. This girl is enraged at the slaveholders for mistreating human beings and believes wholeheartedly that if she lived during that time period she would be well known for fighting against slavery and running a sanctuary for slaves.

Two different time periods, two different groups of God's image bearers needing a place of refuge. A community of God's people bearing the load and caring for their version of the orphan and widow, the distressed and fatherless, who need the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, and safety.

NEEDS PERSIST TODAY

You might be thinking that it is only natural that Christians would be ready and eager to stand as pillars of faith if some national crisis or war should beset us.

Yet, there is a crisis, here and now, in our very own backyard, caused by the realities of modern life in this post-Christian world. The Underground Railroad, and the Hiding Places, are still needed today for the most vulnerable holders of God's image: children.

Christians are well aware that abortion is a colossal tragedy happening minute by minute all over our world. Many believers have a well-informed theology and philosophy about the immorality of abortion. Many Christians partake in "walks for life," donate to their local pregnancy center, and take a stance

... in their state over half of the children who "age out" of foster care end up homeless or get incarcerated.

politically.

Yet, I ask this question: was disagreeing with Hitler about the value of Jews enough?

Was it enough to just not own any slaves in our own households?

No. Our brothers and sisters in the past did not stop at disagreeing, or not participating. They took a step further and welcomed the neglected and suffering people into their very homes, and risked their lives doing so.

Let us be actively pro-life towards the children who are born.

TODAY'S CRISIS

Today there are more than 78,000 children in Canada, and 400,000 in the USA in the foster care system. A foster child is someone who is taken out of his or her birth home due to an environment or relationship that is unsafe for the child.

Our postmodern worldview proclaims that the individual – and his or her every changing idea of relative truth – are the most important pieces of life. The result? A sky-rocketing number of marriages ending in divorce because “this just does not make me happy anymore.” This same thinking has adults turning to drugs, causes gender confusion, and can bring financial strain. And that, in turn, leads to a steady flow of broken families, leaving society's most vulnerable citizens neglected, abused, and alone. Foster children are among the orphaned, widowed, fatherless, and distressed image bearers who need radical Christian refuge, despite the risks that accompany them.

When a foster child does not have a permanent home – through reunification with birth parents, or legal guardianship, or adoption – then they are placed in a boarding house with other foster youth, called a group home. When they are 18, youth in foster homes or group homes no longer receive these services and they

essentially “age-out” of the system.

One California based group, the Alliance for Children's Rights, shares that in their state over half of the children who “age out” of foster care end up homeless or get incarcerated. That means that thousands of young people are living in office spaces, on the streets, or moving from home to home.

Foster children struggle in school, with relationships, and with self-understanding and worth. As technology is creating ways to study the brain, science is confirming what has been observed for generations: that children cannot develop from one stage to the next without an attachment figure in their life. All it can take is one steady attachment figure and the brain can start to figure out how to continue developing. Unfortunately, when some of these children age-out of the foster care system at the physical age of 18, they may really only be at the developmental age of 12. No one would think that a 12-year-old could live independently, hold a job, or save up for an education. Is it any surprise then that many of the foster youth who age out without an adoptive home get into trouble soon after?

In order to prevent a youth from reaching an age where they follow the trajectory outlined above, they need loving homes and a steady attachment figure at a young age. In Los Angeles alone, there are roughly 30,000 children who need beds from safe families, and only 9,000 registered beds available. Cities across Canada and the USA are dealing with similar issues.

IT IS A RISK

That young starry-eyed girl is now a grown woman and realizes her romantic notions take risk, heartache, and a strong reliance on God's sovereignty and grace. Risking your life for Jews or slaves, or spending your life helping foster children

– these are not easy tasks. Foster care will not bring glory, or make you a hero. In reality, life outside the safe haven of a home is unbearably hard. Welcoming strangers into your home is difficult, and it may take years of heartache before the relational rewards come. Yet, each home is a gift from God and ought to be used to serve his kingdom.

Perhaps you hear a small knocking at your door; you open it to find a young, dirty child who tells you with sweet tears that her mother never comes home and she is lonely, hungry, and in need of another mother. That visual reality would be impossible to ignore and I believe you would want to take this young girl into your home and give her food, shelter, and safety, possibly even love. Let that gentle knocking of urgent need cause you to act immediately, with gracious and radical advocacy.

Foster care and adoption can seem quite intimidating and disruptive to your own family. That is an understandable and reasonable fear. I have a dream that church communities can take on this mission together. A program can be developed where families join together to care for these children. Many families feel that pull in their hearts, and that ache to help, but are overwhelmed by what is required. If each family who does foster care is paired with two other families who will devote themselves to providing a meal and free babysitting once a week, that community support will help those on the fence to commit, and provide others with a task that is equally as important to the process.

My pastor has a dream that if Roe vs. Wade is reversed, every Christian family would adopt one child to show to the watching world that we take seriously the command to welcome the stranger. When a community rises up together with a common goal, the impossible becomes possible.

There are also many options for helping these children if you do not have a home to offer. Below is a list of possibilities:

- Foster-to-adopt: If you are clear about your intention to adopt, agencies will place you with children who are least likely to be taken away.



God chose us out of this world to be adopted into his heavenly family.

- Foster care: To help grow and develop a child as he/she waits for reunification with family members.
- Respite care: A service where one family supports another foster family for a short amount of time (one day, or up to a week) as the original family takes time for self-care or family emergencies.
- Emergency shelter care: A temporary short-term home for children (1-21 days) as social workers find placement in a more permanent home.
- Foster child mentor: Mentorship programs that train individuals to meet once a month with a foster child to build relationships.
- Volunteer guilds: Ask your local foster care and adoption agency how you can join a group and help organize events for the foster children (i.e. Get everyone in your office to commit to serving at a meal that raises funds for foster children).
- Court-appointed special advocate: Volunteer to be a court advocate for an abused or needy child, with the goal of guiding them out of the foster system.

DO FOSTER CARE AGENCIES WANT CHRISTIANS?

While it is becoming difficult in some regions for Christians to foster, that isn't the case everywhere.

A significant roadblock that causes agencies to turn away Christians is when the agency tries to dictate what Christians can or cannot teach about morality in their home. This can happen with many issues, but the main one has to do with the LGBTQ community. Agencies turn Christians away because they fear public scorn for supporting someone who is a "bigot" against those who identify as LGBTQ. This happens in both Canada and the United States.

Many agencies do not make rules about what is taught in the home, but just want Christians to mark that they would not reject a child or youth who identifies as LGBTQ. This is a separate issue. Agreeing that you would accept an LGBTQ youth in your home does not come with the requirement of what you need to teach in the home, thus Christians can be consistent with their Christian faith and bring all types of children into a home that teaches a Christ-centered life. For those that plan to foster children under the age of 10, this is rarely even an issue.

One way to avoid these issues is to find a non-profit or Christian foster care and adoption agency.

CONCLUSION

God chose us out of this world to be adopted into his heavenly family. He paid the greatest price, sending his own Son to die on the cross for us, so that we might have eternal life, and have it abundantly.

Will you take up your cross and follow him? If you'd like to join me in this kingdom-dream, I'd love to hear from you via the comments on this article, as you can find it online at ReformedPerspective.ca, or you can reach me via emailing the editor.

Jesus said, "Suffer the children to come unto me." This is one way. RP

Evelyn Kruis works part-time in a foster and adoption agency and has an MA in Family Counseling. November is National Adoption Month in the United States.



by Margaret Helder

Chinese researcher: Genetically-engineered babies have now been born

Secular scientists claim to be outraged. But why would they be?

Human experimentation has been happening around the world for the past four decades, with research scientists actively carrying out experiments on human embryos. The stated objective, in usually something noble-sounding: to learn more about human biology, or to possibly treat some disease conditions. And while few scientists will admit to an interest in cloning people, or in actually producing genetically-altered individuals, this is the direction our society is heading.

Indeed, modern society does not value unborn babies enough to protect them, and at the same time society is terribly afraid of genetic abnormalities. Under these conditions – little respect for unborn human life, and little respect for those with genetic abnormalities like Down syndrome – it would seem human cloning and gene alteration is inevitable.

But it isn't acceptable yet.

That became clear when, on November 26, 2018, the scientific and medical world reacted in horror to the announcement by Dr. Jiankui He at the Second International Summit on Human Genome Editing in Hong Kong, that he had created modified human embryos. These embryos had been implanted in their mother, and in early November, twin baby girls had been born

in China. This was a world-wide first – the first genetically-edited full-term human babies.

WHAT HAPPENED

Ever since the 1970s introduction of *in vitro* fertilization of human eggs with sperm *outside the womb*, the stage was set for scientists to experiment on such embryos. Many people, mindful of the special nature of humans at every level of development, protested against such work. Even some scientists were nervous about the implications of these experiments.

However, for many, the concern was only that individuals damaged in laboratory experiments should not be allowed to develop to term. They were okay with the human experimentation – they just didn't want these babies to be born.

As a result, a general understanding was reached between ethicists and scientists, that no experiments on embryos would continue longer than 14 days – at this point these embryos were to be destroyed. The 14-day limit was chosen because it is at this point that the embryos begin to develop specialized tissues and thus becomes more obviously human (*Nature* July 5, 2018).

But as the experimentation has become more sophisticated, scientists have begun to promote the idea of a longer timeline for their investigations. Thus, a conference was held in May at Rice University at which 30 American scientists and ethicists discussed “whether and how to move the [14-day] boundary” (*Nature* July 5, 2018). About the same time, *Nature* published an announcement concerning such research:

“At present, many countries ... prohibit culture [of human embryos] beyond 14 days, a restriction that reflects the conclusions of the 1984 UK Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilization and Embryology (also known as the Warnock Report. *Whether this rule should be relaxed is currently being debated*” (May 3, 2018 emphasis mine).

Scientists are clearly seeking to relax the rules governing their studies.

“GERM-LINE CHANGES”

Research on human embryos has continued worldwide since those early days. However, all parties once agreed that on no account should modified embryos be implanted into a mother and be allowed



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to develop. The reasons included society's disapproval of experiments on people, but especially because such individuals would carry "germ-line changes." Changes to most cells in the human body have no impact on future generations – these changes die with that individual. However, changes to the gametes (egg and sperm) are called germ-line changes because these modifications will be passed on to each subsequent generation.

It is not that the scientists involved actually object to germ-line changes. The problem is that they want their results to be predictable and "safe." Any uncertainties could lead to catastrophic results, ensuing hostile public opinion and big lawsuits. It would be far better to proceed cautiously. Thus, it is illegal in the US and many other countries to alter genes of human embryos or gametes.

However, within the last decade, another new biomedical technology has appeared on the scene that has drastically streamlined gene editing in numerous organisms. The CRISPR-Cas9 technology has made gene editing much easier and much more precise.* Obviously, it was a mere matter of time before someone used this to try his hand at gene editing in human embryos. The scientific community offered no serious objections when Dr. Jiankui He of China presented an account of such work at a conference at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York during the spring of 2018. At this conference, Dr. He discussed the editing of embryos from seven couples. However, at that point, this man made no mention that any of these embryos had been implanted into their mothers.

DR. HE "EDITS" BABIES TO BE HIV-RESISTANT

According to a Nov. 28 news item at *Nature.com* (David Cyranoski's "CRISPR-baby scientist fails to satisfy critics") Dr. He recruited couples in which the male was HIV positive but the female was not. Individual sperm cells were washed to remove any viruses and the cells were injected into eggs along with CRISPR-Cas9 enzymes carrying a gene for resistance to HIV infection. A total of 30 fertilized embryos resulted of which

19 were deemed viable (able to live) and apparently healthy. These were tested for the CCR5 mutation which confers resistance to HIV infection. From one couple, two of four embryos tested positive for the mutation. One embryo carried the mutated gene on one chromosome and a normal gene on the other, while the other embryo carried the mutation on both maternal and paternal chromosomes. These embryos were implanted into the mother who successfully gave birth to twin baby girls early in November.

No information was forthcoming on the fate of the other embryos, although Dr. He now says that another woman may be pregnant.

The response of the scientific community has been shock and horror. But why are they so horrified? Is this not what they have been working towards? The scientific community is afraid because the risks of this procedure at this preliminary stage of research, are substantial. There are, at present, major questions as to whether the genetic modifications will actually have the desired effect. A well-known problem is that the CRISPR apparatus sometimes cuts the chromosomes at other places as well as/ or instead of the desired location. This off-target effect has been found to be a major problem in some studies. In addition, most genes are known to influence a number of seemingly unrelated traits. This phenomenon is called pleiotropic impact of one gene on other genes. These risks are particularly serious when we consider that these are germ-line changes, that will impact subsequent generations from this individual.

RESPONSE

The same Nov. 28 *Nature.com* news item declared:

"Fears are now growing in the gene-editing community that He's actions could stall the responsible development of gene editing in babies."

Indeed, a commentator on one website reflected that "if this experiment is unsuccessful or leads to complications later in life ... [it could] set the field of

gene therapy back years if not decades.”

In view of these concerns, many individuals and medical and scientific institutions released statements expressing condemnation for this gene-editing work. Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health in the United States, declared that the NIH “does not support the use of gene-editing technologies in human embryos.” The Chinese Academy of Sciences declared that Dr. He’s work “violates internationally accepted ethical principles regulating human experimentation and human rights law.” A colleague and friend of Dr. He suggested that the gene-editing work lacked prudence, that it could, unfortunately, serve to create distrust in the public.

Obviously, an important concern on the part of the scientists was that the promise of this technology not be rejected by the public. Dr. David Liu of Harvard and MIT’s Broad Institute (heavily involved in CRISPR research), insisted of He’s work: “It’s an appalling example of what not to do about a promising technology that has great potential to benefit society.”

Dr. George Daley, dean of Harvard Medical School, summed up the feelings of many colleagues when he said:

“It’s possible that the first instance came forward as a misstep, but that should not lead us to stick our heads in the sand and not consider [a] more responsible pathway to clinical translation.”

In other words, many scientists seek to continue to pursue the goals also sought by Dr. He, only the rest of them will proceed more slowly and carefully.

CONCLUSION

It is largely Christian objections to treating human embryos as *things*, rather than as *persons* (made in the



... it was a mere matter of time before someone used this to try his hand at gene editing in human embryos.

image of God), that has led to the ethical rules that control this research. It is a vestige of our Judeo-Christian heritage which limits scientists from just doing whatever they want. They have to obtain permission from ethics committees to conduct their particular research program. Of course, Christians want to see this work made completely illegal, but if political realities make such a ban impossible, then we can still seek to restrict this work as much as possible.

It is interesting that a news feature in *Nature* (July 5, 2018 p. 22) articulated the fascination and unease that some scientists derive from this work. Bioethicist Dr. Jennifer Johnston of the Hastings Center in upstate New York, reflected on the respect that the human embryo commands even in secular observers:

“That feeling of wonder and awe reminds us that this is the earliest version of human beings and that’s why so many people have moral

misgivings It reminds us that this is not just a couple of cells in a dish.”

Are there any good results from this controversy over genetically-engineered babies? Perhaps there is one. The event may cause more people to pay critical attention to the experiments that are, every day, conducted on human embryos. Let the whole world know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, from the very first cell onward, and manipulation in laboratories should have no place in our society. RP

FOR FURTHER STUDY...

For more on this topic, see:

1. Dr. Helder’s book *No Christian Silence on Science* pages 32-39 for a discussion on Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (ie. CRISPR).
2. Jennifer Doudna and Samuel Sternberg’s book *A Crack in Creation: the new power to control evolution*, page 281.

CALVIN'S MAGNUM OPUS

A critical review of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

by Wes Bredenhof



A “magnum opus” is an author’s greatest work. When it comes to John Calvin his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is one of the classics of Protestant theology. However, as often as it is referenced, it is seldom read as a complete work from front to back. I first purchased my copy of the McNeill/Battles edition before starting pre-seminary studies in university, more than twenty years ago. Over the years I have read bits and pieces and there, often as a need or interest required but it wasn’t until this past year that I finally read the *Institutes* from beginning to end.

In this essay, I will share some of the highlights of my complete tour through this theological masterpiece, and those highlights will include both points of appreciation and critique. I read the two-volume McNeill/Battles edition published in the Library of Christian Classics. This edition is based on the final version Calvin published in 1559. I also occasionally referred to the older editions of Beveridge and Allen, and even sometimes checked the original French and Latin.

DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS AND EDITIONS

Calvin originally wrote the *Institutes* in 1536 as a sort of catechetical handbook. It was never designed to be a systematic theology – such a creature did not yet exist. It was also not designed to be a book of extensive commentary on Scripture. No, its original purpose was catechetical – to summarize the teaching of Scripture on essential matters of

faith and life.

However, as the work progressed to its final form in 1559 – twenty-three years later – it did take on a more systematic form. In some places there is limited commentary on Scripture – for example, when dealing with the Ten Commandments (2.9) or the Lord’s Prayer (3.20.34-49) – and there are extensive references to Scripture, but generally Calvin leaves biblical exposition to his commentaries.

A SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION...MOST OF THE TIME

His approach is typically theological, with the Scriptures explicitly as a foundation. However, by way of exception, there are parts that are more philosophical. For example, in 1.15.6-8, Calvin discusses the soul. There is almost nothing directly from Scripture in this discussion. Instead, Calvin works more with philosophical ideas from the likes of Plato. For a modern reader unfamiliar with Greek philosophy, this discussion is difficult to follow.

Related to that, there are places where Calvin follows Platonic notions instead of biblical ones. One of the most well-known examples is how Calvin speaks of the body as the prison house of the soul. He does this in at least four places (1.15.2, 2.7.13, 3.7.5, 3.9.4). This devaluing of the body does not accord with the biblical worldview. In Scripture, the body is redeemed by Christ just as well as the soul (1 Cor. 6:19-20), and will be raised at the last day (1 Cor. 15).

WELL-READ AND IT SHOWS

The attentive reader will pick up on Calvin's copiousness – he read widely! Throughout the *Institutes*, Calvin refers to numerous authors going all the way back to the early church. Two stand out in particular.

The most quoted and referred to author is Augustine. This is not surprising since Augustine is the most influential of the church fathers on the Protestant Reformers in general. Most of the time Calvin quotes Augustine approvingly, but there are also occasions where he dissents.

The other author is Bernard of Clairvaux, a Cistercian monk who lived from 1090 to 1153. While Bernard lived before the worst developments in Catholic theology, he was still not exactly a medieval quasi-Protestant. Nevertheless, Calvin made use of Bernard's best insights. In 2.16.1, Calvin gives this beautiful quote from Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*:

The name of Jesus is not only light, but also food; it is also oil, without which all food of the soul is dry; it is salt, without whose seasoning whatever is set before us is insipid; finally, it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, rejoicing in the heart, and at the same time medicine. Every discourse in which his name is not spoken is without savor.

Calvin appreciated Bernard's fervor for Christ and his felicitous turn of phrase.

BRILLIANT, BUT ALSO INEXPLICABLE, WORD CHOICES

Calvin likewise employed language with a skilled eye to felicity. Calvin valued beautiful rhetoric – throughout the *Institutes* there are words so well

crafted you may feel some salty moisture rolling down your cheek. Calvin's *Institutes* feature numerous sections like this in 3.2.42:

Accordingly, in brief, hope is nothing else than the expectation of those things which faith has believed to have been truly promised by God. Thus, faith believes God to be true, hope awaits the time when his truth shall be manifested; faith believes that he is our Father, hope anticipates that he will ever show himself to be a Father toward us; faith believes that eternal life has been given to us, hope anticipates that it will some time be revealed; faith is the foundation upon which hope rests, hope nourishes and sustains faith.

Calvin was indubitably a master of using language to powerful effect.

Regrettably, I have to say I also encountered instances where Calvin uses strong, questionable, or even offensive language. He uses strong language when it comes to unbiblical and dangerous ideas. But he also uses strong words for the person of his theological opponents: "blockheads" (3.20.25), "stupid men" (3.21.7), "swine" (3.23.12), and many other such insults. I have read enough Reformation literature to know Calvin was not unusual in using this kind of language – and our day tends to be far more sensitive about throwing invectives around in our theological polemics.

I am far less inclined to give Calvin a pass on some other language he uses. In three places, Calvin uses the exclamation "Good God!" (3.4.29, 3.4.39, 4.16.27). In each context, it is clearly an exclamation and not a sincerely-meant prayer to God. The expression was used in Calvin's original Latin of the 1559 edition ("*Bone Deus!*"), but

for some reason he dropped it in the French. In each instance, the older translations of Beveridge and Allen omit these exclamations. I have encountered the same expression in the writings of Guido de Brès.

I find it troubling and I cannot find a way to excuse it. I would suppose that, being former Roman Catholics, they became accustomed to using this exclamation to express great horror – a blind spot.

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

For readers today there are some challenges in reading and benefiting from Calvin's *Institutes*. Some of the discussion has less relevance to us. For example, I found the discussion about the sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church to be one of the most tedious parts of the work. It may be interesting from a historical standpoint, and it might still be valuable to someone actively engaged in apologetics with Roman Catholics, but for the rest of us, the temptation to skip through this section is difficult to resist.

Persevering readers will encounter some of Calvin's best and most well-known theological insights. Among them:

- The Scriptures serve as spectacles to help us see God clearly (1.6.1, 1.14.1)
- "...man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols (1.11.8)
- Calvin believes the world to be less than 6000 years old (1.14.1, 3.21.4)
- Justification "is the main hinge on which religion turns." (3.11.1)
- Fasting "is an excellent aid for believers today (as it always was)..." (4.12.18)
- If baptism is to be denied to the infant children of believers because Scripture is silent on the explicit practice, then women should also be denied access to the Lord's Supper (4.16.8)
- The Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently, preferably every week (4.17.43)
- Aristocracy, or perhaps a system compounded of aristocracy and

... throughout the Institutes there are words so well crafted you may feel some salty moisture rolling down your cheek.

democracy “far excels” all other systems of government (4.20.8)

- Revolts are possible when led by lower magistrates (4.20.30)

Reading Calvin’s *Institutes* will remind Reformed believers today that Calvin is not the gold standard for what it means to be Reformed. After all, there are several points at which much contemporary Reformed faith and practice departs from Calvin. For example, in 4.3.16, he discusses the laying on of hands in connection with office bearers. He argued that this laying on of hands ought to be practiced not only with the ordination of “pastors and teachers,” but also deacons. Interestingly, the original Belgic Confession also said that all office bearers should be ordained with the laying on of hands. While there are Reformed churches which follow Calvin on this, there are also those (like the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia) which do not involve the laying on of

hands in the ordination of elders or deacons.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude with noting that the McNeill/Battles edition is generally well-done. There are comprehensive indices. There are immense numbers of helpful explanatory footnotes.

It must be said, however, that some of these footnotes reflect the editor’s liberal theological bias. For example, in a footnote in 1.8.8, the editor informs us that Calvin did not hold to the modern view of a late date for Isaiah 45 and its mention of Cyrus. Well, I guess not, seeing as how Calvin believed the Bible to be the Word of God!

As another example, in a footnote in 4.8.9, the editor claims Calvin does not explicitly support biblical inerrancy anywhere. While it would obviously be anachronistic to expect Calvin to affirm every jot and tittle of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (written in 1978) there is plenty of evidence to affirm Calvin has far more in common

with biblical inerrantists today than their opponents.

For most Reformed people today, Calvin’s *Institutes* will remain a reference. No one should expect regular church members to pick it up and read it straight through with profit. Those who try will almost certainly get frustrated and give up. We must be realistic. It is a work from an era in which theologians could expect far more from their readers. I wonder whether even many of today’s pastors would be able to digest everything Calvin serves up. Some of his discussions and references certainly went beyond my ken. We live in a strange time where we have more access to information than anyone else in the history of world, and yet, compared to Calvin from 500 years ago, we are dullards. Reading through the *Institutes* certainly drove that point home to me. RP

*Dr. Bredenhof blogs at Yinkahdinay.
Wordpress.com where this article first
appeared.*

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WHICH EDITION TO READ?

John Calvin published five different Latin editions of his *Institutes*, expanding on it with each new edition. The 1536 edition was just 6 chapters long, and the addition of 17 shorter chapters in 1539 doubled the book's size. Four more chapters were added in 1543, and then only minor changes made in 1550. But the final, 1559 version was fully 80% larger than its predecessor. In addition to these Latin editions, Calvin also created French versions that, while very similar, were not strict translation – they taught the same doctrine, in the same order but sometimes said things in different ways.

It is the final Latin 1559 version that most translations are based on, including the two best-known English-language translations: the 1845 Henry Beveridge and the 1960 Ford Lewis Battles (edited by John T. McNeill) translations.

1845 Beveridge

One advantage of the Henry Beveridge edition is that that copyright has expired on this translation, so it is readily available online for free (there is also a harder-to-find 1813 translation by John Allen, also available online).

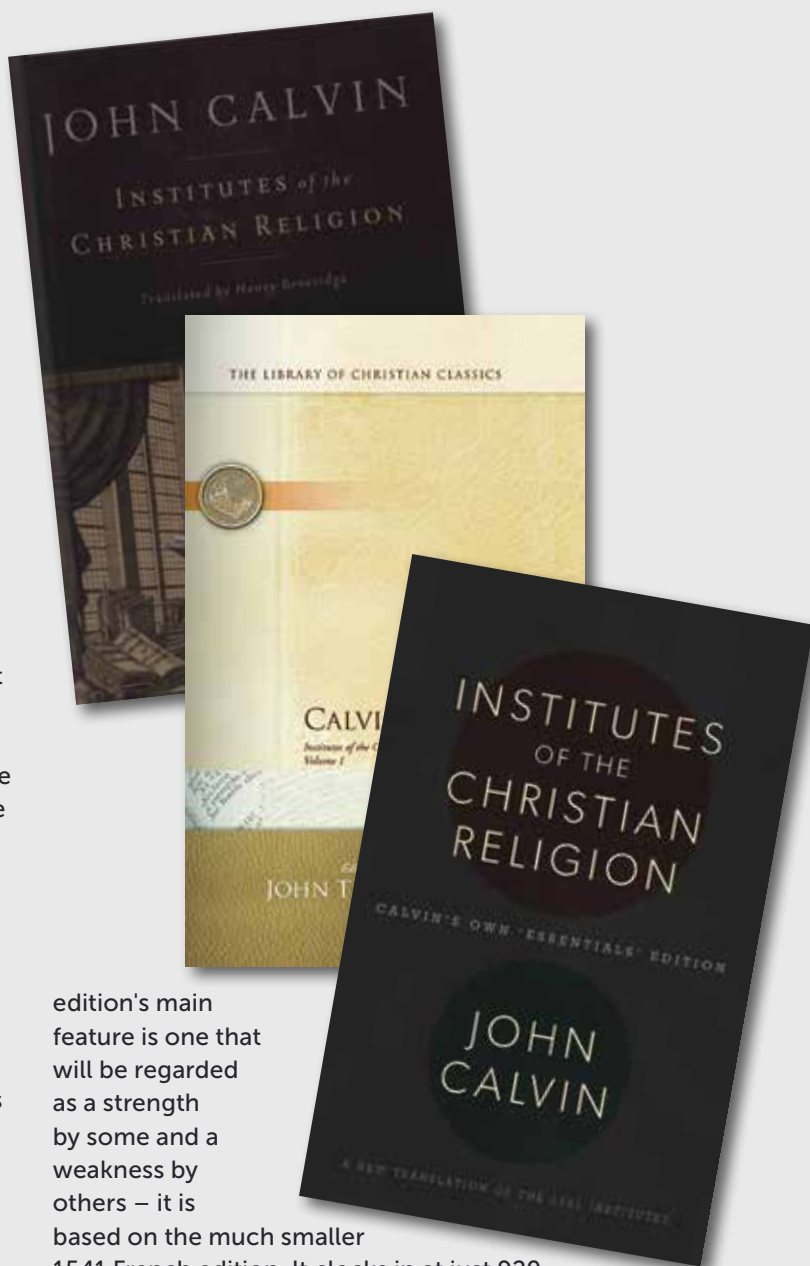
Cheap print and e-book copies are also available, but this is where you have to be wary, as some of these have crisp new type and a beautiful layout, and others look like they are copies of copies of the original 1800 publication, with dark text cramming every nook and cranny of the page. If you plan to be reading the *Institutes* front to back – all 1,700 some pages of it – then a nice airy, legible layout is important. So buyer beware – be sure that you can take a look at the inside of whatever edition you are buying.

1960 Battles/McNeill

The Ford Lewis Battles translation came a hundred years later, so as you might imagine, the language is notably more current. Another strength of this edition are the many helpful, explanatory notes that the editor, John T. McNeill, includes on the bottom of most every page. However, as Dr. Bredenhof notes in his *Institutes* review, McNeill's liberal theological bias comes out in some of these notes.

2014 White

In addition to being the most modern translation (by Robert White and published by the Banner of Truth) this



edition's main feature is one that will be regarded as a strength by some and a weakness by others – it is based on the much smaller 1541 French edition. It clocks in at just 920 pages, instead of the more than 1,700 pages of the final 1559 version. So, this would be the best one for those interested in checking out the *Institutes* but who would appreciate an abridgment...in this case, done by the author himself!

Conclusion

While it might seem a trivial thing, I really can't emphasize enough the importance of buying an edition with an inviting layout. If you plan to invest a lot of time with this book, then getting one with dense text in a hard to read font will wear on you. And on the point, the White edition is beautiful, the Battles/McNeill seems good though not great, and the various editions of the Beveridge run the gamut from beautiful to atrocious.

- Jon Dykstra



ON GOSSIPS

Charles Spurgeon with advice for the Internet age

by Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) died a century before Mankind mastered the ability to pass along unverified news stories and unfounded rumors at the speed of light. But while the medium is new, the sin of gossip isn't, and Spurgeon's warning remains as relevant as ever.

What a pity that there's no tax on words: what an income the government would get from it. And if lies paid double, we could pay off the National Debt! But, alas, talking pays no tax.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Now if men only said what was true, what a peaceable world it would be. But we pass on hearsay. And hearsay is half lies – consider how a tale never loses in the retelling of it. As a snowball grows by rolling, so does the story. So those who talk much, lie much.

While silence rarely causes mischief; too much talking can be a plague to the parish. Since silence is wisdom, it's clear, then, that wise men and wise women are scarce. As they say, still waters are the deepest, but the shallowest brooks babble the most.

An open mouth shows an empty head. It's like a treasure chest – if it had gold or silver in it, it wouldn't always be standing wide open. Talking comes natural for us, but it takes a good deal of training to learn to be quiet; yet regard for truth should put a bit into every honest man's mouth and a bridle on every good woman's tongue.

BE FREE OF SLANDER

If we must talk, at least let us be free from slander. Spreading slander may be fun for some, but it is death to those they abuse.


We can commit murder with the tongue as well as with the hand. The worst evil you can do a man is to injure his character. As the Quaker said to his dog, "I'll not beat thee, nor abuse thee, but I'll give thee an ill name."

The world, for the most part, believes that where there is smoke there is fire, and what everybody says must be true. Let us be careful, then, that we do not hurt our neighbor in so tender a spot as to besmirch his character, for it is hard to get dirt off, once it is thrown. When a man finds himself put in people's bad books, he might never be able to get out of them.

So, again, if we want to be sure not to speak wrongly, it might be just as well to speak as little as possible; for if all men's sins were divided into two bundles, half of them would be sins of the tongue. "And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body" (James 3:2).

THE SOLUTION

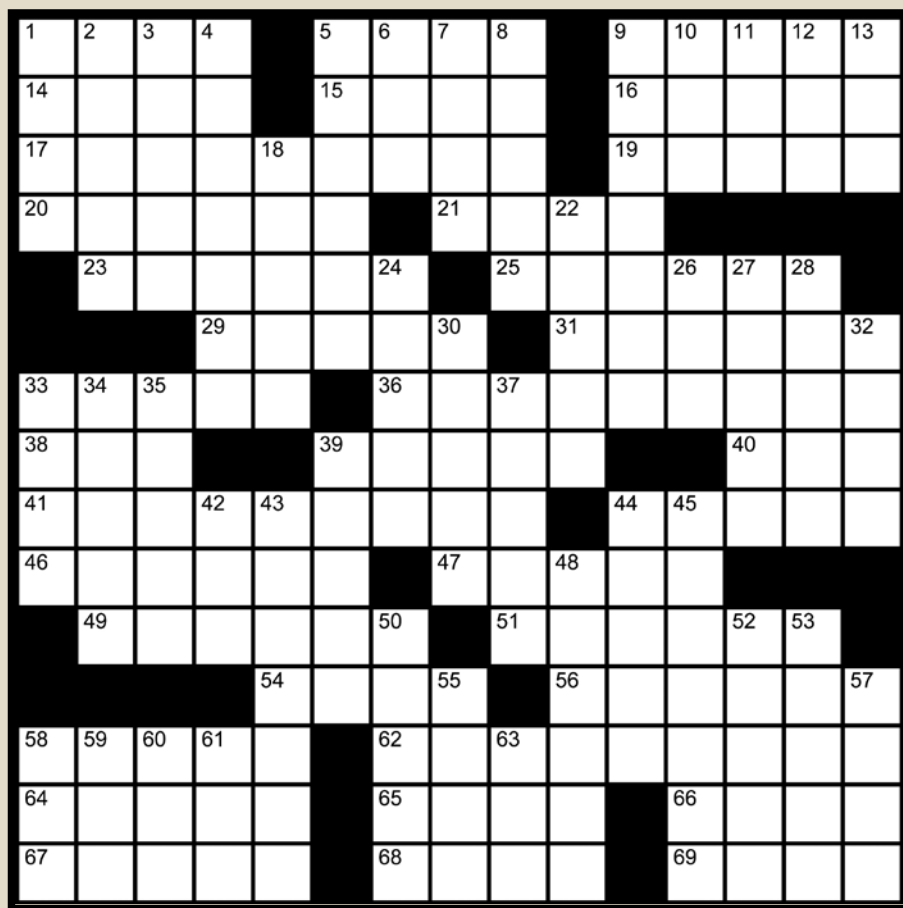
So, gossips, give up the shameful trade of tale-spreading; don't be the devil's bellows, giving more air to the fire of strife. If you are going to talk, at least season your tongues with the salt of grace – praise God more, and blame neighbors less.

Any goose can cackle, any fly can find a sore place, and any empty barrel can make a big noise. But the flies will not go down your throat if you keep your mouth shut, and no evil talk will come out either. So think much, but speak little; be quick at work and slow at talk; and, above all, ask the great Lord to set a watch over your lips. 

This is an abridged, modernized, version of Chapter 6 from Charles Spurgeon's "The Ploughman Talks."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 4-4

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. "The land is still ____" (2 Chron. 14)
5. Slang for ambulance
9. Repeated element in story or musical piece
14. Dot on radar screen
15. Mr. Tumnus's species (resident of Narnia)
16. Bacterium found in undercooked meat
17. The Spanish version hit after WWI.
19. Textile derived from cellulose
20. "made mud with the ____" (John 9)
21. Trace element essential for immune system
23. Occur again, repeatedly or periodically
25. Earlier Russian coin (out of the rubble?)
29. "your ____ sister is Samaria" (Ez. 16)
31. Vacuum tube with three electrodes

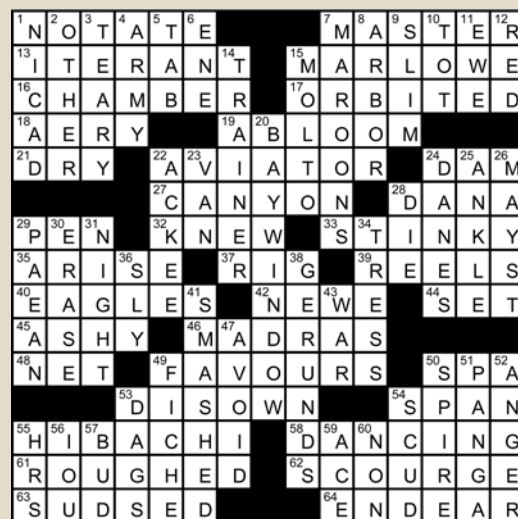
33. It's all in black and white – from China.
36. Wealthy person, or what he might carry
38. U.S. group of bikers, or of doctors
39. ____ their time (= waited patiently)
40. Herbal or high ____
41. Professional buyer
44. Jacket style named after Indian leader
46. Beware, lest you get what you ____
47. Public, widespread disgust and disapproval
49. Chaperone; minder; attendant; protector
51. Young cod or haddock (plural)
54. Brown soil-like material often put in gardens
56. Hinders or prevents by legal action
58. Remark to the audience in a play

62. Relating to or containing caffeine
64. Thighbone
65. International Civil Aviation Organization
66. "Beware! I'm ____ your shenanigans!"
67. They come in cassettes and VHS format.
68. Chinese secret society
69. "bird's ____ in any tree" (Deut. 22)

DOWN

1. Sashes for kimonos
2. Relating to a bone in the lower arm
3. Long-barreled gun
4. What the film editor did
5. Pirate version of *afraid*
6. "one like a son of ____" (Rev. 14)
7. The latest news heard about bees?
8. Where you might hear the latest news
9. The ____'s pretty high

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 4-3

- on this planet.
10. Ontario association for cyclists or campers
11. They filmed a *Story* about it – three times!
12. UN agency dealing with labour issues
13. Five-dollar bill (slang)
18. Flap at back of throat – produces 20 Across
22. "He's a ____ celebrity." "Duly ____."
24. Big trucks (more than half as big, oddly)
26. Necessity for baby or lobster eater
27. Unwilling or reluctant (archaic)
28. Grass trimmer
30. Place to show off riding and roping
32. Genesis twin
33. Hemingway's nickname
34. Entertain or tickle someone's funnybone
35. Drug enforcement agents (variant slang)
37. Unusually shaped American candy brand

39. Horizontal bar used in ballet practice
42. Banned compound substance
43. Those who puts hoops on barrels
44. "Naomi... became his ____" (Ruth 4)
45. Feelings, nothing more than feelings
48. Winter driving hazard
50. Implied and accepted by more than tact
52. Sounds like this poet was done a while ago
53. Expectorates (on the rotisseries?)
55. Mexican food (served at the Bell?)
57. John Knox or Queen Mary
58. Looking back, I prefer this part of the ship.
59. "wild waves of the ____" (Jude 1)
60. Little brat (just a little impulsive?)
61. "the glory ____ his name" (Ps. 20)
63. Autograph seeker

"DID YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THE ARTICLE GRANDMA SENT YOU?"

Grandparents don't always understand how much influence they have in their grandchildren's lives.

True story: there once was a little boy who, like many a child, didn't always like the food his mom gave him, and who would sometimes express that opinion with vigor. But this same child, when given peanuts by his grandmother, ate them without protest. Even though he'd never had one before. *Even though they were still in the shell.* This little boy slowly chomped through the peanuts – big dry, dusty shells and all – without even a word of complaint. Now, mom and grandma did eventually notice the little boy's slow and laborious chewing, but it still took them a few moments to connect that with the fact that while there were fewer peanuts in his chubby

little hands, there were no peanut shells on the ground. Only then did they realize the depth of his love for dear old grandma (and only then did they reveal to him the secret of the peanut: that the true treasure lies within).


But why did this little boy keep chewing when, had it been his mother giving these "treats" he surely would have protested? Because it was his grandma! Grandmas are a force of nature – they love you unconditionally, like your parents, but probably never spank you like them...and maybe that's why it is the rare grandkid who would want to disappoint grandma!

Grandparents, you might think your influence disappears when your grandchildren get older. When they hit the teen years and get jobs and girlfriends, and play school sports, you

are going to see less of them. These older, busier kids may not drop by or email you nearly as often as they should. But that doesn't mean *you* can't be a big influence on *them*. Sure the communication might be slowing from their direction. But many of the same twenty-somethings who forget to call you will still appreciate a call *from you*. Or a text. Even a teen who's going through a rebellious stretch with his parents could still be entirely receptive to an email from grandpa or grandma.

Shucks, sometimes grandparents can get away with saying things that everyone else has to dance around. We expect the elderly to be more, let's call it, forthright, and plainspoken. Grandparents, you can take advantage of that.

There are any number of ways to use your influence, but if you've really appreciated an article or two in this issue, then please consider sending it on along to your grandson or granddaughter. We've made it easier to do, by posting everything you find here on our website, www.ReformedPerspective.ca. On the website you'll find a little magnifying glass symbol on the top right. Click it and you'll be able to search for and find whatever article it is that caught your eye. Then click on it, copy the link from the address bar above, and you can paste that into an email to whatever grandchild you think would best benefit from it.

And if God has blessed you financially, one other means by which you can spread your influence is by helping us spread ours. If you find this magazine helpful, then please consider becoming a monthly supporter so we can continue to post all our material online, and for free, so it can reach hundreds and thousands more than we ever did via just our print magazine. 



I DON'T BOTHER RECOMMENDING GOOD ARTICLES TO MY KIDS AND GRANDKIDS BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T EVEN READ ANYMORE.

OR MAYBE YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T READ BECAUSE NO ONE'S RECOMMENDING GOOD ARTICLES TO THEM.



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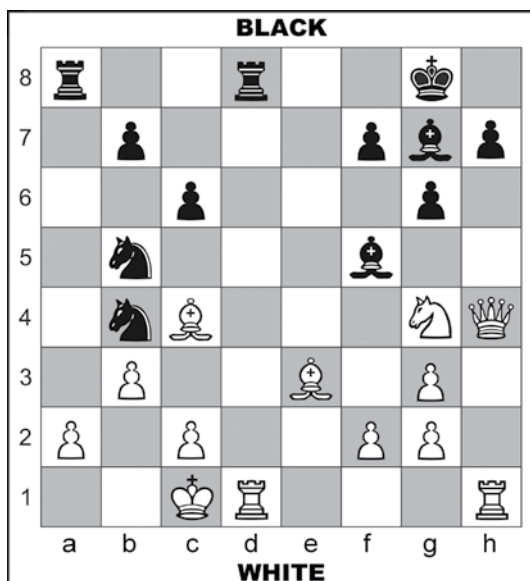
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ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Chess Puzzle #250



WHITE to Mate in 4

or, If it is BLACK's Move,

BLACK to Mate in 3

(Hint: Note that the white queen taking the rook pawn, resulting in Check, requires 7 more moves for a forced mate so is not part of the solution here)

Riddle for Punsters

#250 – “Seeing through One but not the Other”

Mr. Black was a _____ ovy politician who _____ ened his party's reputation.

Mr. Glass was _____ rly an open advocate for more tr _____ par _____ in government.

Problem to Ponder

#250 – “Can You Describe the Person For Me?”

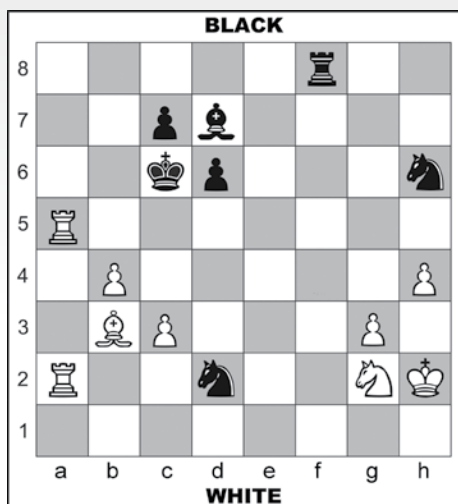
The following people have either blue or brown eyes, have blond or dark hair, and are either tall or short. Mr. Adams and Mr. Chan have the same colour eyes. Mrs. Banks and Mrs. Dunn have different colour hair and different height but both have the same colour eyes. Mr. Adams has to look up to Mr. Chan and Mrs. Dunn. Mrs. Banks dyed her hair a dark colour (similar to the colour of Mr. Chan's hair). Only two of the people have blue eyes and Mrs. Banks does not. Two people have blond hair. Describe the height, eye colour and hair of Mrs. Banks and Mr. Chan.

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 #249



WHITE TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. B-Q5 ch K-N3
2. R-R6 ch K-N4
3. R(at R2)-R5 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Bb3-d5 + Kc6-b6
2. Ra5-a6 + Kb6-b5
3. Ra2-a5 ++

BLACK TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- N-N5 ch
2. K-R3 N-B7 ch
3. K-R2 N-B6 mate

IF

1. ----- N-N5 ch
2. K-N1 or K-R1 R-B8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Nh6-g4 +
 2. Kh2-h3 Ng4-f2 +
 3. Kh3-h2 Nd2-f3 ++
- IF
1. ----- Nh6-g4 +
 2. Kh2-g1 or Kh2-h1 Rf8-f1 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#249 – “Tales of the Tall or Famous?”

Why are giant-sized people so nice to everyone? It is because they are so **big-hearted**. Who was the baby-boomer bank teller's favourite country singer? Johnny **Cash**.

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#249 – “Food Fast but Not Cheap?”

Ikuya bought for his family at Conrad's Hamburger Place 4 hamburgers, 3 hotdogs, 2 milkshakes, 4 cans of pop and 5 ice cream cones. The burgers cost twice as much as the hotdogs and three times as much as a can of pop. Ice cream cones cost as much as a can of pop plus a hotdog whereas shakes cost as much as a cone and a can of pop. Ikuya paid the bill exactly with two \$20 bills. *How much did each hamburger and each milkshake cost?*

Let x be the cost (in dollars) of a can of pop. Thus, 3x is the cost of a burger.

Thus $3x/2 = 1.5x$ is the cost of a hotdog (since is half the price of a burger).

Therefore an ice cream cone costs $x + 1.5x = 2.5x$ and a shake costs $2.5x + x = 3.5x$

The total cost of 4 burgers + 3 hotdogs + 2 shakes + 4 pops + 5 cones is $4(3x) + 3(1.5x) + 2(3.5x) + 4(x) + 12.5x = 40x = 40$ dollars so $x = 1$.

Thus each burger costs $3x = \$3.00$ and each shake costs $3.5x = \$3.50$

by Jay Younts

ANGER IS NOT YOUR FRIEND

Anger: sometimes it just feels right. Anger is happy to assume its place as your advocate, your defense against unfair actions. And we are all too happy to welcome it. It just feels right!

When your spouse is insensitive, when the kids are selfish and squabble constantly, anger stands ready to come to your defense. When others are selfish, anger is there to encourage you. When your pride is wounded, anger offers its supposed “healing power.” But the reality is that when human anger is embraced, good things will not happen.

But what about righteous anger? Paul says in Ephesians 4:26 that in your anger you should not sin. So, since it is possible to be angry and not sin, it is easy to welcome anger like a friendly ally when others sin against you. But righteous anger results in God being honored, not you being justified.

Ephesians 4:26 is not all that Paul has to say about anger. Read just a few more sentences down to verse 31 of chapter 4 and you see that Paul commands that you must get rid of all anger! Is Paul contradicting himself? No, he is not. Anger does have its place, but that place is not one of self-defense. When anger leads to justification for your sinful responses, it is never a good thing.

Paul says that you must be clothed in kindness and compassion towards others. You must follow the example

of Christ. Anger will be of no help here. This is why he says to get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger. Relational anger will keep you from showing the love of Christ to those whom you love.

You must learn to ask this one question when anger offers you its assistance: “Am I showing the kindness and compassion of Christ or am I justifying my behavior?”

Instead of engaging in anger, show the compassionate love of Christ when you think others fail you. Isn’t that what God does for you when you sin against him? If God treated you as your sins deserve, you would not survive another minute!

Take another look at Ephesians 4:31-32. Anger is not your ally. It is a tool of

the enemy to damage your relationships, causing you to feel alone and bitter. Listen carefully to Paul. Get rid of your anger!

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **RP**

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



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

BY JON DYKSTRA

DON'T GIVE YOUR KIDS SMARTPHONES. LET THEM USE YOURS.

In a mid-December Facebook post on his page, Tedd Tripp shared a strategy for parents wondering how to guide their children in the area of smartphones. While Christmas has passed, his advice is just as valuable for the new year. This is what he wrote:

Don't give your kids a smartphone for Christmas! Do your kids need a phone? Are they ready for a smartphone? If so, I have a suggestion, don't give them a phone. Let them use yours.

Here is the conversation you want to have, "I have a phone here, it is my phone, I bought it, it is on my plan and I would like to let you use my phone. Here are the conditions... (whatever conditions you deem appropriate) "as long as you honor these conditions, you can use my phone. Oh. and since it is my phone, I have the passwords and I can look at my phone when ever I think it is appropriate. If you can accept these conditions, I would love to have you use my phone." Think about it. Once I say, "Here, I bought you a phone." Whose phone is it? So, don't give your kids a phone, let them use yours.

OUR CHILDREN'S MENTORS

"We cannot continue to send our children to Caesar for their education and be surprised when they come home as Romans."
– Dr. Voddie Baucham

BEING LIGHT

Rebutting a secular argument can be as simple as applying its logic more broadly. Samuel Sey (@SlowToWrite) who is black gave a pro-life example of this with his January 14 tweet:

Her: "You're a man. You can't say abortion is wrong!"

Me: "If a White cop wanted to shoot me in my face, would you defend me?"

Her: "Yes, I would."

Me: "But you're White. You can't say racism is wrong"

Her: ☹

Me: "My gender, your ethnicity, doesn't mean we can't speak up."

THESEED.INFO – AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES' OUTPUT TRIPLES THAT OF CANADA

One of the best sermon resources on the internet is TheSeed.info, where more than 1,500 sermons can be found by Canadian Reformed, URC, OPC and other solidly Reformed pastors. More than 50,000 different people take a look each year, at more than one million pages.

A close look at the sermons reveals some more statistical insights:

- There are 412 OT sermons, compared to 618 NT
- Only one book of the Bible has yet to be covered: 1 Chronicles
- 5 of the 32 pastors on the site have contributed the majority of the sermons – more than 1,000 of the 1,500.
- While Canadian Reformed churches (CanRef) outnumber Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) by 4 times, there are 3 times as many FRCA sermons as CanRef on the site!

If your minister has sermons you really wish others could hear too, then encourage them to send them to TheSeed.info/dispatch.php so many more can benefit.

IF ONLY...

"You've heard about the merger that's coming next year between Facebook, YouTube and Twitter? It's going to be called YouTwitFace."

– Dr. Joe Boot

WHO DO YOU WANT TO KNOW BETTER?

In a holiday ad (for Spanish speakers) the furniture giant IKEA gathered several families, seating each clan around a large table where a holiday feast was prepared with all the trimmings. Then a quiz started: if a person answered the question correctly they could stay and keep eating, but if they got something wrong they had to leave.

Initially everyone found the quiz easy, correctly answering questions like:

- What animal filters can you find on Instagram stories?
- Can you demonstrate the "swish swish" (or "floss") dance?
- What is the latest Instagram feature?
- Can you finish a lyric from this current song?
- What does this text message abbreviation mean?
- How did this celebrity couple meet?

But when the questions became more personal the answers stopped coming:

- How did your parents meet?
- What exactly is your dad's job?
- What degrees does your grandma have?
- What's your son's favorite group?
- What's your wife's dream?
- What has your mother been studying recently?

Some family members tried to guess the right answer, but one after another, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers,

grandparents too, had to get up and leave. Finally, there was one solitary figure remaining, a lonely grandpa. A teen daughter summed up the embarrassment everyone felt: “What I’ve discovered is that I don’t know as much about my family as I do about some celebrities.”

There was a happy ending. Everyone was invited back to the table, but this time smartphones were placed in a box in the middle of the table and the lid was firmly affixed.



PROVERBS 18:17 – THE ANTIDOTE TO FAKE NEWS

In the era of not so much fake, but exaggerated, partisan, and selectively reported news, how can we discern the truth of a matter? God shows us the way in Proverbs 18:17, where we are told the first to present his case seems right until a second comes and questions him.

What does it look like, to put this verse into action? Let’s take a classic example from the US gun debate. In the early 1990s Emory University medical professor Arthur Kellermann told Americans that owning a gun was associated with a 2.7 times greater risk of being murdered. Kellermann shared that in his study of three metropolitan areas they had found that three quarters of the victims were murdered by someone they knew, and nearly half by gunshot wounds. That raised the question of whether having a gun in the house might *increase* rather than *decrease* a person’s chance of being murdered. And the *New York Times* and other newspapers of note spread these findings far and wide.

But was the anti-gun case as compelling as it seemed?

To find out, we have to continue on and hear from the critics – the first has presented his case and now we need a second to come question the first.

Critics first noted that Kellermann’s study also showed an equal risk increase associated with owning a burglar alarm. *National Review*’s Dave Kopel points out, this study overlooks “the obvious fact that one reason people choose to own guns, or to install burglar alarms, is that they are already at a higher risk of being victimized by crime.... Kellermann’s method would also prove that possession of insulin increases the risk of diabetes.” And the National Rifle Association wanted

people to understand that a study of homicides couldn’t give a good measure of how effective guns could be for personal protection. “99.8 percent of the protective uses of guns do not involve homicides,” explained NRA spokesman Paul H. Blackman, but instead would involve brandishing the weapon to hold off an assault, or perhaps firing the weapon to scare or wound the assailant.

The first presenter might have had us thinking guns clearly needed to be banned. But we didn’t have nearly enough information. Even after hearing from the critics we don’t have the full picture – veteran newsman Ted Byfield once noted that to provide every side of a story we’d need more ink than exists in the whole of the world – but by hearing the two sides argue it out we have a much better picture. God tells us in Prov. 18:17 that if we hear only one side – even if it’s *our* side – then it’s likely we’re going to miss something. So if the truth matters to us we want to give even our opponents a hearing.

Or, at least the thoughtful ones.

TO DISAGREE IS NOT BULLYING ...AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT

“[Homosexual activists] argue that anything short of full acceptance is homophobic bullying. That means unless you affirm and approve of all LGBT+ lifestyles, you are a bigot, a phobe and, yes, a bully.

“The Christian, by contrast, wants to say that it is possible to be anti-bullying of all forms without necessarily affirming everything about them.....

“Of course, we all recognise that the Christian position is entirely legitimate. None of us have to affirm all the views and practices of Islam, for example – nor do we have to attend pro-Muslim marches – in order to be clear that we don’t think Muslims should be bullied. Most people would agree that it would be entirely wrong, not to say untrue, to call me an Islamophobe because I won’t affirm my belief in Allah as the one true God and Mohammad as a prophet.... But to insist I affirm it or else I am bullying them, everyone who isn’t a Muslim evidently agrees that is nonsense.”

– *Stephen Kneale*, “When anti-bullying agendas bully people into accepting your agenda, something has gone wrong” *posted to StephenKneale.com Nov. 21, 2018*

DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) lived 100 years ago but the quotes below seems to show that the time and culture he spoke to was not all that different from our own.

- “We are learning to do a great many clever things... The next great task will be to learn not to do them.”
- “Once abolish the God, and the government becomes the God.”
- “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried.”
- “The act of defending any of the cardinal virtues has today all the exhilaration of a vice.”
- “These are the days when the Christian is expected to praise every creed except his own.”

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a white shirt, looking off to the side with a concerned or thoughtful expression. She is holding a white coffee cup. In the foreground, a man's hands are visible, holding a blue smartphone. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with large windows.

Thoughts on Deepak Reju's

SHE'S GOT THE WRONG GUY: WHY SMART WOMEN SETTLE

by Sarah Vandergugten



Sometimes a pointed comment sticks with you for years. A decade back, a dad of two unmarried mid-twenties daughters exclaimed in exasperation, “I really don’t know what guys are looking for in a girl.” I knew those young women. They were beautiful, talented, educated, faithful Christians. The one in particular even had a delightful sense of humour. So what are guys looking for? And when they don’t make a move, what is the girls’ response? Sometimes it means that a woman – a smart woman – will “settle.” That is the premise of Deepak Reju’s book, *She’s Got the Wrong Guy-Why Smart Women Settle*.

Deepak Reju, a pastor of biblical counseling and families in a Baptist Church in Washington, DC, writes from a wealth of experience with the sad consequences that arise when women make poor choices in marriage. He writes with genuine empathy for the realities 21st century Christian women face. Some problems are ageless. When confronted with the spectre of the single life, women have always questioned themselves. *What is wrong with me? Am I never going to have children? Doesn’t God care that I feel lonely?*

Today there are added challenges. Sex is everywhere, more than ever. Both men and women are single longer and marry later, requiring a sustained commitment to purity. Technology has changed the way we do relationships. Face-to-face conversations, always more risky, become the exception. There is comfort in hiding behind a screen. “It’s a lazy man’s dream – no intentionality, no commitment, and no risk” (p. 5). Online dating allows optimal, but not necessarily honest, presentation of oneself.

Another reality is that today more women are educated, accomplished and talented as they enter the workforce. With university degree in hand they move into successful careers. This may be intimidating for some men. The secular world generally does a better job valuing women for their intelligence and capabilities. Christian women are affirmed and rewarded in the workplace, but often treated like second-class citizens in their church. Dating as a

conservative Christian woman is hard; dating as an intelligent, gifted and self-confident Christian woman seems almost impossible (p. 6).

Added to this mix of challenges is the current confusion over sexuality, gender, the value of marriage, and the rising number of divorced singles and single parents. Reju suggests that faced with such a confusing, complex world of dating, women too often make the choice to simply settle for an OK man.

It could be that a woman thinks of marriage as the most important goal of life, a sort of idolatry. “As Christian women, we teach the gospel, pray the gospel, sing the gospel – and we secretly hope for marriage” (p. 7). One can hardly blame her, since that is typically an unspoken expectation in church communities.

Or “settling” could be the result of personal baggage that makes a woman undervalue herself. *I don’t really deserve better. It’s the best I can do.* She might have blinders on, refusing to see the problematic aspects of a dating relationship. *He’s not very spiritually minded now, but I’m sure that’ll change after we’re married.* She may live with anxiety, fearful that she is not really lovable, or seen as too picky, or that she’ll always have to fend for herself. Fear of loneliness is real. It’s good to reflect what it would be like attend several weddings each year as a single (*Will I ever walk down the aisle?*) and baby showers after that. And how about never having a reason to go to the church nursery except to babysit other women’s children? I remember the exasperation of one single woman in her early thirties who still visited with her married girlfriends: “If I hear another breast feeding or diaper rash story, I’m going to scream....or puke!”

MEN TO WATCH OUT FOR

Reju is not dismissive of the discouragement and loneliness single women feel, but he urges them not to forget Jesus. Instead, desire him above all else. As Christians, our goal, male or female, is to form our lives around growing closer to Jesus. Marriage and family life are valuable, but they are

earthly treasures. Christ remains the greatest treasure.

That said, the bulk of the book deals with the ten, yes ten, categories of men to avoid in dating. It's a formidable list. Avoid the following:

- the control freak
- the promiscuous guy
- the unchurched guy
- the new convert
- the unbeliever
- the angry man
- the lone ranger
- the commitment-phobic man
- the passive man
- and the unteachable guy

Each of these types will present significant issues in a marriage. It will be more difficult for the wife to mature as a Christian. It is unlikely the relationship will be truly loving or of mutual benefit. Likely the woman will suffer. Each chapter of about ten pages includes an engaging story of a couple that highlights the serious challenges that develop.

A brief look at one of the stories – that of Janelle and Dominique – will give a taste of Reju's approach to the complex topics he's addressing.

Janelle, from a Christian home, met Dominique, a relatively new believer, at church and began dating. It wasn't long before she noticed his controlling patterns. When she was with girlfriends he would call to ask where she was. He would check with her multiple times a day. She rationalized his behavior, "He's protective of me." But his behavior was sometimes accompanied by anger, jealousy, and insistence on his own way. Despite realizing that her relationship had problems and that her guy didn't meet the biblical criteria of a loving husband, she carried on. She thought, "He knows me; we are making it work; he's fun; and I like him." It seemed like too much work to untangle the relationship and start over. Besides, that would be admitting failure. And things would change once they were married.

But warning flags should be flying! Such a man displays a warped perspective on what the Bible says about male

leadership. He uses Scripture to make his girlfriend or wife do what he wants. He lords it over her through spiritual language that is twisted to support his demands. Maybe such a man could change with growing maturity, but it's better and much safer not to date this sort until he does. Don't assume that you can change him. Better to break off and not marry him, than face a lifetime of emotional abuse, and worse.

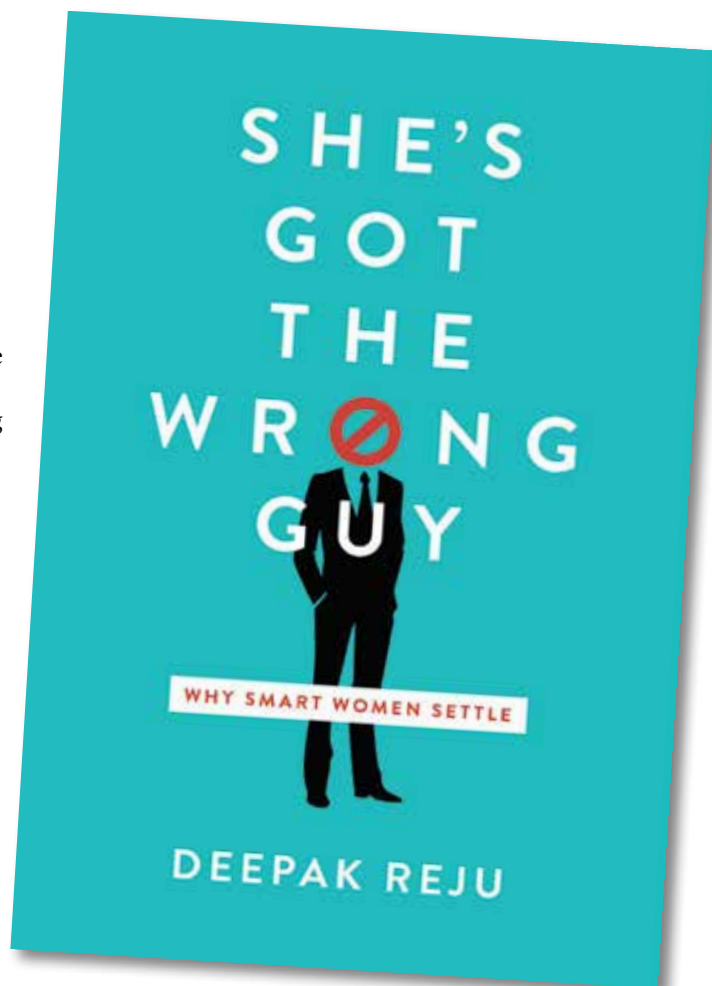
Interestingly, Reju devotes a whole chapter to the topic of ending relationships:

"Breaking up for the Glory of God."

WHO'S LEFT?

As I made my way through chapter after chapter on men to avoid, I began to wonder, "Well, who's left. Now what? Should women just stay single?" Thankfully, the author offers a way forward.

There are godly men who desire to serve the Lord within the context of marriage. Women must realize that there is no perfect man, even if he is a committed Christian. It happens that good men are overlooked because they don't meet expectations in superficial or non-essential things, like physical appearance, age, or charisma. Furthermore, a woman cannot expect complete maturity and thoughtfulness from a man in his twenties or even thirties. Christian maturity takes time. So it is possible to choose wisely, while choosing an imperfect man. Choose to be attracted to one who is growing in Christ and demonstrates interest in continued



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growth in Christ together with you. Don't settle for the problematic man who is far from God and shows little sign of change.

Reju devotes a final segment explaining that waiting is OK. Yes, waiting is hard, but there is a way to wait well. I think it's fair to say that in many churches singleness is not seen as a beautiful thing. Scripture presents a high view of marriage, with only a couple passages highlighting the benefit of being single. Reju suggests that singles may be made to feel incomplete. I would argue that at times we are even guilty of taking advantage of our singles, counting on them for some heavy lifting for our church programs and duties. One mature single confided to me, "They say, 'Well, you're alone anyway so you have more time.'" She continued, "They should realize that I have to do everything myself, including groceries, home repairs, painting and car maintenance. I have

no one to share the workload. I work full time. I probably have less not more time.” So, church involvement, yes, but certainly to be accompanied with a lot of appreciation and support.

The author argues that what makes waiting hard is that it exposes the heart. You begin to believe that what you “want” is what you “need.” Waiting is hard because it shows what you really worship. Patience is difficult. What do you pray while you are waiting? And then there is the challenge of maintaining sexual integrity. Desire for sex is a healthy thing. Desire for children, no less so. These are challenging realities to face, while not knowing if the desire for marriage will ever be fulfilled.

But it is possible to wait well. Scripture does portray singleness as a positive thing that allows a single-minded devotion to the Lord. Remember, marriage is temporal, singleness lasts to eternity, for everyone. The goal is to wait on the Lord, not to wait for marriage. Be willing to share your heartache and pain with others. In the church we live in community; singles and marrieds need each other as we wait together. Remember that no man will ever fulfill your ultimate desires; only one bridegroom does that and he’s planning the ultimate wedding banquet.


CONCLUSION

Would I recommend this book? Yes, certainly for single women who are dating. The book offers pertinent questions and issues to consider before making any commitment to marriage. Breaking up for the glory of God may be necessary. The book also offers helpful advice for single women not in a relationship. It will expose the heart’s desires, and help her not to settle for being married to an unsuitable man, but to wait, relying that God’s grace

will be sufficient.

Single men should read the book as well. They will gain insight into the typical longings of a woman’s heart. If they find a chapter or two that serves as mirror for them, there is the choice to put away ungodly attitudes and become the mature man in Christ. It will also be a helpful read for friends of singles and those who counsel them. And while I agree the title is catchy, I wonder if it might put off exactly those who could benefit most from reading it.

I was also left with the thought there could be a second volume, warning men which women to avoid: the manipulator, the gossip, the passive-aggressive, the I’ll-change-you-for-the-better-agent and of course, the unbeliever, the unchurched and the angry woman. All in all, I appreciated the honesty of Reju’s book. He writes with empathy and understanding. His advice rings true.

Some final reflections: I read this book with keen awareness of the many beautiful, talented, educated, godly young women (and some men) in our church communities. I wonder what it’s like to be a single in our churches. That would be worthwhile to explore. Are they lonely even while being part of a congregation? Are they appreciated for who they are as singles, or perhaps somewhat pitied? How well do our churches serve and support our singles in their twenties and thirties, and beyond? Do our conversations revolve around our families, our spouses, and children with scant thought what that feels like to someone who longs for marriage and children? Do we encourage post-secondary education for our young women according to interest and ability, or do we fear that will make them less marriageable? Do we expect singles to shoulder tasks in the church because, “Well, they have the time, anyway?” Are we as inclusive as we purport to be? It’s a good thing when a book makes the reader reflect on the broader issues at play in our churches. *She’s Got the Wrong Guy: Why Smart Women Settle* is one of those books, and well worth the read! 



The Canadian Reformed School Society of Edmonton, operating

Parkland Immanuel Christian School,

invites applications for the 2019-2020 school year for the following full-time position:

ELEMENTARY 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 405 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:

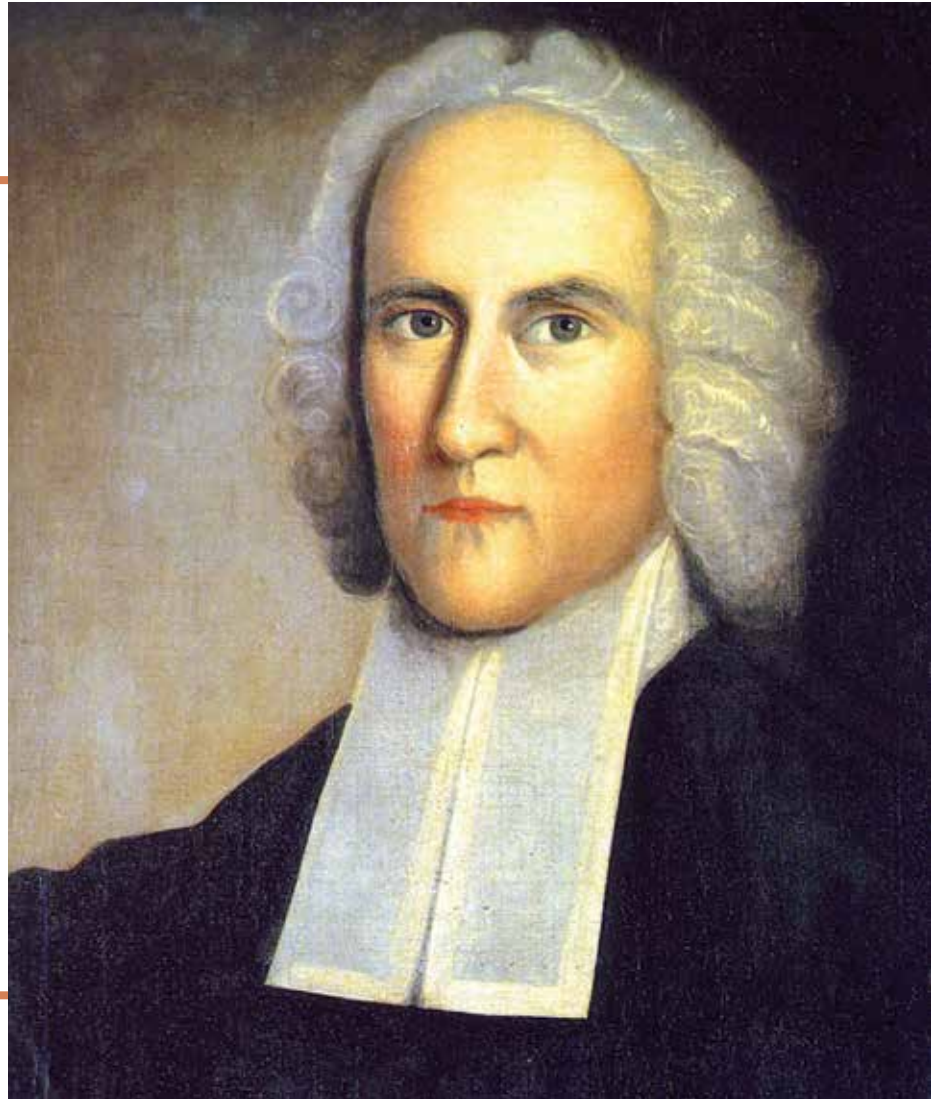
Mr. Wayne de Leeuw

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

*Single men
should read the
book as well.*

BY LUKE W. VAN VUUREN

Jonathan Edwards was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut to his father Reverend Timothy Edwards and his mother Esther, the daughter of Reverend Solomon Stoddard. Stoddard would become a mentor to Jonathan. He attended Collegiate School, later called Yale College, graduating in 1720. In 1722, he accepted a call to a Scotch Presbyterian church in New York. He then went to Bolton, Connecticut in 1723. In 1724, he became a teacher at Yale College, and finally succeeded his grandfather Reverend Stoddard at Northampton, Massachusetts in 1727.



JONATHAN EDWARDS:

THE PASTOR WHO PACKED THEM IN PREACHING THE WRATH OF GOD

Much like today, during the early colonial years in America, preachers rarely spoke about the wrath of God – this did not seem the type of topic to draw in the masses. One man, however, thought very differently. He brought the message of God's wrath and, in doing so, ignited a revival which spread throughout the colonies.

Jonathan Edwards was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor,

Connecticut and began preaching in 1722. Although hell and God's wrath are unpleasant topics, Edwards became one of America's best-known evangelists by preaching on just these topics. We can get an understanding of how God used him to spark a revival across the colonies by looking at three specific sermons Edwards delivered at different points throughout his ministry. Through these sermons he taught the reality of God's wrath by:

- 1) showing how it will destroy unrepentant sinners
- 2) explaining that it is the power of God which can save them from this wrath
- 3) warning that those who do not glorify God are deserving of destruction

Edwards knew that the themes of wrath and hell needed to be taught to cause the hearts of those listening to be convicted about their sins and to realize the reality of eternal punishment.

#1: WHEN THE WICKED HAVE FILLED UP THE MEASURE OF THEIR SIN...

He began preaching on the subject in May 1735 when he delivered his sermons "When the wicked shall have filled up the measure of their sin, wrath will come upon them to the uttermost."

Edwards' text was 1 Thessalonians 2:16, which reads, "To fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." He immediately presented a picture of hell and never let go of that illustration throughout the sermon. He clarified that God enacts His wrath "very dreadfully in this world; but in hell wrath comes on them to the uttermost." God executes his wrath on the sinners in this world to a smaller extent, either outwardly on the body or inwardly on a mental or emotional scale. However, "these things are only forerunners of their punishment, only slight foretastes of wrath." When God's full wrath comes upon them, it will come with no restraint and no moderation of degree, for "His heavy wrath will lie on them, without any thing to lighten the

burden or to keep off, in any measure, the full weight of it from pressing the soul."

Perhaps the most powerful point Edwards made in this sermon is that once the day of judgement comes, the wicked are sealed in their punishment eternally. There is no longer any chance for repentance or forgiveness once death has come. This is a message that the content Christians in the pews needed to hear. Without knowing the reality and severity of hell, the sinner did not feel a need to repent.

Edwards concluded by noting how dreadful the wrath will be, for it is given by the One who created the universe, shakes the earth, rebukes the sea, and shines His majesty over wicked men. The judgement of God is certainly coming, but it will not be known until it comes. Therefore, Edwards begged everyone listening to "haste and flee for their lives, to get into a safe condition, to get into Christ." This sermon carefully presents the danger of those who are content with living in sin, and it presses the message of hell to convict them of their rebellion.

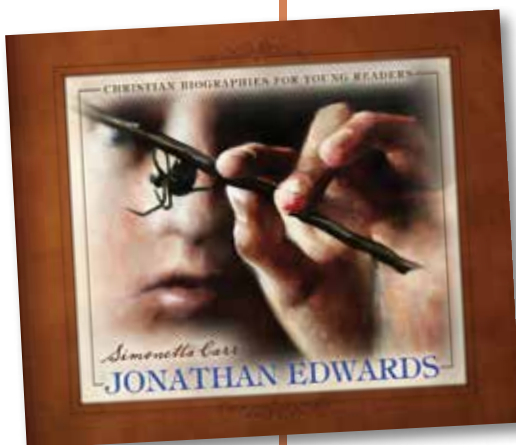
The reaction to this sermon inspired many in New England to change their lives. However, much more was to come when, six years later, Edwards preached his most famous sermon.

#2: SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

On July 8, 1741 Edwards delivered "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" in Enfield, Connecticut. He was not supposed to preach that night, and he had preached that same sermon before at his home church. He happened to have his manuscript with him, and after receiving the last-minute request to fill in for the pastor, he preached a message that had an amazing effect on many of the hearers, spurring on a revival.

The text of this sermon was Deuteronomy 32:35, which says, "Their foot shall slide in due time." Edwards opened his sermon by saying:

"In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who lived under



JONATHAN EDWARDS

BY SIMONETTA CARR
64 PAGES / 2014

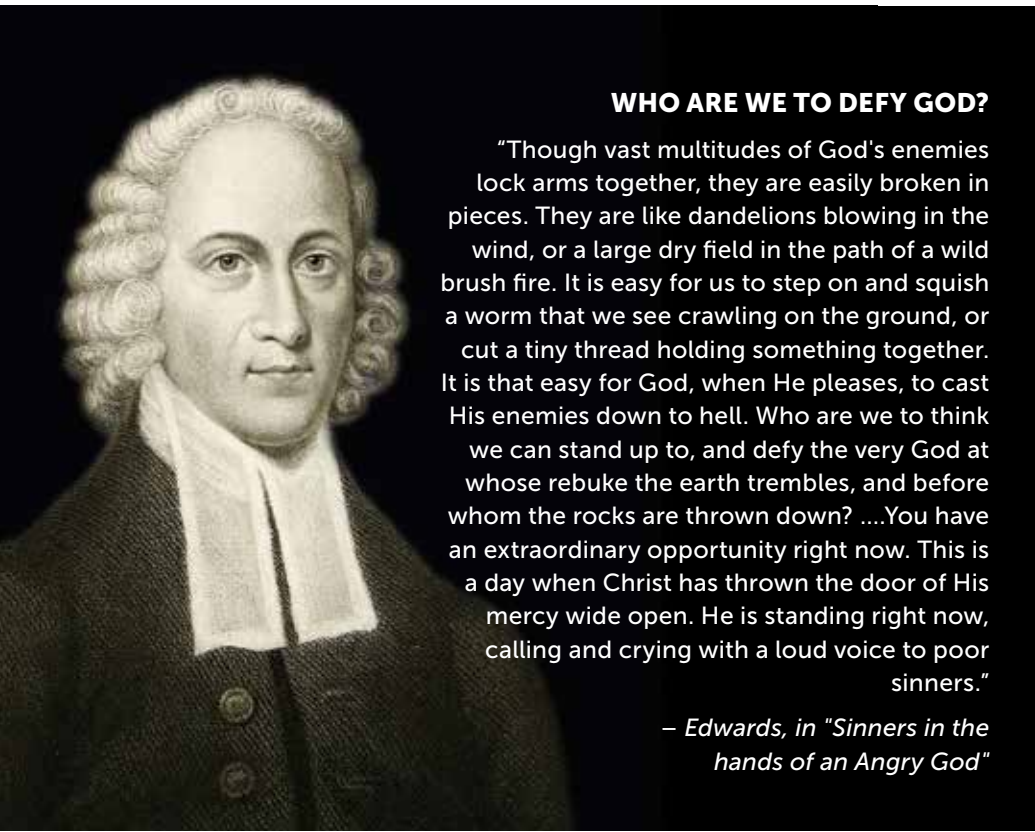
Anyone who wants to learn more about Jonathan Edwards will enjoy Simonetta Carr's picture book biography of the man.

Two hundred years after Luther and Calvin, God used the Connecticut-born Jonathan Edwards to bring a Reformation of sorts to churches on this side of the ocean. People think, based on his "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" sermon, that Edwards was all hell and damnation but as Carr shows, that wasn't at all true. She presents Edwards as a nature-loving young man as curious about science as he was about God's Word. The two, to him, seemed a natural fit.

Carr commissioned a dozen full-page color paintings to illustrate the book, and makes use of a couple dozen other pictures to make this a true picture book will illustrations here there and everywhere. It is also attractively bound, making this a book that can be passed from one generation to the next. And when it comes to the text itself, the presentation is clear, boiling down a whole lifetime concisely.

That said, this is not a book that most children will readily pull off the shelf. It is beautiful, but it's not about cute cartoon mice, and it doesn't have bright garish colors so it will have a hard time competing with everything else out to grab children's attention. But while this might not be the right choice for a present from grandma and grandpa, it is a book that every Christian school should own and every Church history teacher will be able to put to good use – it is fantastic educational resource that makes learning about Edwards easy.

—JON DYKSTRA



WHO ARE WE TO DEFY GOD?

"Though vast multitudes of God's enemies lock arms together, they are easily broken in pieces. They are like dandelions blowing in the wind, or a large dry field in the path of a wild brush fire. It is easy for us to step on and squish a worm that we see crawling on the ground, or cut a tiny thread holding something together. It is that easy for God, when He pleases, to cast His enemies down to hell. Who are we to think we can stand up to, and defy the very God at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?You have an extraordinary opportunity right now. This is a day when Christ has thrown the door of His mercy wide open. He is standing right now, calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners."

— Edwards, in *"Sinners in the hands of an Angry God"*

the means of grace...yet remained void of counsel."

He began by stating that all sinners are exposed to destruction, a destruction that is unexpected and brought about by the sinner himself. The only reason why this destruction has not yet come is because of the mere mercy of God, which He gives under no obligation but by grace. Edwards was keen on portraying the power of God by reminding his listeners that even the strongest man has no power over God, and not even the mightiest fortress can defend against Him. He emphasised the fact that sinners deserve to be cast into hell, saying that they are the objects of the anger and wrath of God. He painted a vivid picture by declaring:

"the wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them."

Edwards revealed the reality of death

and claimed that God is under "no obligation by any promise" to keep sinners out of hell. God is provoked by sin, and nothing can be done by sinners to appease that anger. Edwards was trying to "awake unconverted persons in the congregation... who find [they] are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it."

Edwards ended his message by urging the congregation to consider the danger that they were in, that if they did not change their lives for Christ they were in danger of suffering an everlasting wrath, where "it would be dreadful to suffer...one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity." The Christians of the early British colonies had forgotten that if God withdrew His hand from them, they would fall into the depths of hell. This is what it means to be in the hands of an angry God, that sinners are born again and made new creatures because the God of wrath and justice found pleasure in making the damned soul worthy of salvation. Edwards pushed the reality of God's wrath and hell, a topic which was rarely

preached. It is this topic which ignited a revival.

The effect of this sermon was immediate and powerful. According to one listener, even before the sermon was done "there was great moaning and crying out – 'What shall I do to be saved?'...[the] amazing and astonishing power of God was seen." Another eyewitness, Stephen Williams, wrote

"Mr. Edwards of Northampton... preached a most awakening sermon... 'Oh, I am going to Hell,' 'Oh, what shall I do for Christ,' and so forth...went out through [the] whole [Church]."

Edwards was able to vividly portray the wrath of God on sinners, causing those who heard him to know the true condition of their hearts. A revival swept through the towns. Hymns were sung, taverns were closed, and young people poured into churches. Congregants arrived at church hours before the service in order to get a seat in the sanctuary. It is estimated that 10 percent of New England was converted during this time. That is equal to 28 million people today. Clearly, Jonathan Edwards sparked a revival in Enfield.

#3: WICKED MEN USEFUL IN THEIR DESTRUCTION ONLY

While that might have been Edwards' most famous and impactful sermon, he continued to tell the people of New England about the reality of God's wrath. In July 1744, he preached a sermon called "Wicked men useful in their destruction only," and as the title suggests, his main point was that "if men bring forth no fruit to God, they are wholly useless, unless in their destruction."

His message was from Ezekiel 15:2-4, which asks what the worth of a dead vine is. The answer is that "it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned" (Ezek. 15:4). Edwards expanded on this passage by comparing sinners to the vine, saying that the dead vine which is good for nothing deserves the same fate as a dead sinner: utter destruction.

Edwards claimed that the only two

ways in which a person is useful is either in acting or in being acted upon. A person is useful in acting when they display the “fruits of the Spirit” and use them for the love of God and neighbour. If, however, a man does not do this, then there is no purpose for him to exist. Yes, there are other uses for mankind, as man was made for one another to be friends and neighbours. However, these are inferior ends and are subordinate to the main purpose, which is to serve and glorify the Creator. Therefore, since a wicked man cannot glorify God, he is only useful passively by being destroyed. Edwards claimed that it goes against God’s justice to let wicked men “live always in a world which is so full of divine goodness... that this goodness should be spent upon them forever.” Even though the world is full of sin, so much of God’s undeserved blessings can be seen and enjoyed. The rest of creation is made subservient to mankind, which is wasted on men who bear no fruit for God. The only use that wicked men can be is in their destruction for God’s glory, by both having God’s majesty and justice acted upon them and by being an example to the righteous, giving them “a greater sense of their happiness and of God’s grace to them.”

Edwards applied his point so that all may learn the justice and righteousness of God. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but no one blames a farmer who cuts off a tree which no longer bears fruit. Edwards is calling his congregation to consider all the good things God has bestowed on them, including having a soul which houses the Holy Spirit and by having hosts of angels working for them. All of creation works for man’s pleasure, so “how lamentable it is, then, after all these things he should be a useless creature.” The one who is useful will experience pleasure in this world, and the pleasures will be even more wondrous in the world to come. However, those who do not continue “to bring forth any fruit to the divine glory, hell will be the only place fit for [them]...[where] nature ceases to labour any more for sinners.” Again, Edwards is stressing the point that God’s wrath is real, and unrepentant sinners will suffer it.

CONCLUSION

Jonathan Edwards inspired many revivals through his preaching by talking about God’s wrath and hell, topics that were unpopular to the crowd and avoided by other preachers. Through this unpleasant topic, Edwards ignited a fire of repentance in the hearts of the people of New England. His sermons presented God’s wrath by showing how He will destroy unrepentant sinners utterly, how it is the power of God which can save them from His wrath, and how those who do not glorify God are only useful to be destroyed. RP

Texts are quoted as Edwards translated them in his sermon manuscripts.



The Board of **Covenant Canadian Reformed School** invites applications for the 2019/2020 school year for the following position:

TEACHER/VICE-PRINCIPAL **Teaching and Administrative duties to be determined upon hiring of successful candidate**

Covenant Canadian Reformed School (CCRS) is a vibrant K-12 school community with a current student population of around 250. 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.

We would love to arrange flights for applicants who are out of province to come and visit our community!

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. Tara Tiggelaar - secretary@covenantschool.ca

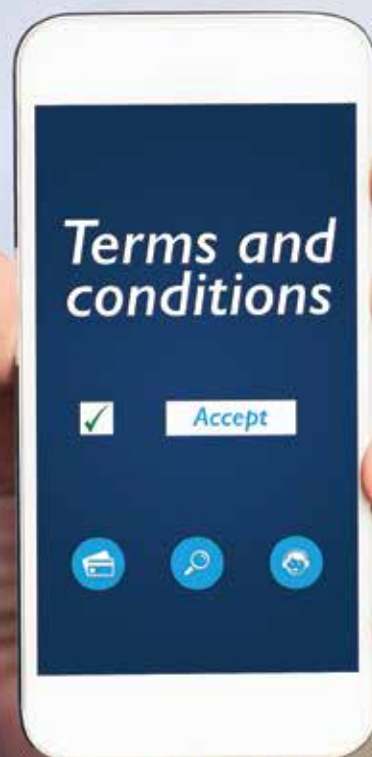
If you would like further information about the school and the area, please contact the Board chairman:

Mr. Jordan Tiggelaar – 780-307-8449
chairman@covenantschool.ca

or the principal:

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

A SMARTPHONE CONTRACT FOR OUR KIDS



by Cameron Stewart

The “Lights at Stewart’s Place” Facebook page is normally about the Stewart family’s incredible Christmas light display. This past December they turned their whole house into a bright and brilliant light show that featured glowing brilliant colors dancing across their lawn, doors, walls, and windows, all of it synced perfectly to a half dozen Christmas songs. Most of their hometown, the city of Lynden, WA, probably passed by their house at some point in December to catch a look (and you still can, via some wonderful videos on their Facebook page).

But in January, a couple of weeks after all the lights had been taken down, this same Facebook page featured a very different sort of post. Cameron Stewart shared a smartphone contract he’d come up with for his children.

REFORMED PERSPECTIVE: Where’d you come up with the idea for this contract?

CAMERON STEWART: Our 12-year-old daughter was asking about getting a cellphone. We’d started her out on a flip phone and after a lot of prayer, we decided to give her a smartphone for her birthday. But I knew we needed a contract to spell out our expectations, and the dangers. So I came up with one. Some of the ideas came from various contracts and articles I found online but the bulk of it was things that were important to us. It has been adjusted various times and I am sure we will make more tweaks.

RP: How has it been helpful?

CS: We’ve been using it for a year now, and one thing that it really helped with is that it made our daughter understand how important her proper handling of her phone was to us. She knows we mean business. And she has done a great job. **RP**

OUR SMARTPHONE CONTRACT

We are excited to know that we can trust you, and that you have proven that you are responsible enough to use a smartphone to communicate. In order for you to have a smartphone, there are a few things that you must agree with, and abide by.

A smartphone is a communication instrument, and like every instrument, there are correct ways in which to use it. Here are the instructions and guidelines that you, your mom, and I, will agree to in order for you to get a smartphone:

MY RESPONSIBILITIES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

1. I understand this is my mom and dad's phone. They bought it. They paid for it. They are letting me use it. Aren't they awesome?
2. If it ever rings, beeps or vibrates and it says "mom" or "dad", I will answer it or text back right away. It is never ok to ignore a call or text from my parents.
3. I understand that nothing replaces face-to-face conversations. When I am in the company of my family and my friends, I will limit my smartphone use. I will show them that I value them by making them a priority over my smartphone.
4. It is ok to take my phone to school, but I must obey all the school smartphone rules. No one else is allowed to use my smartphone unless they need to make an emergency call to their parents. I will NOT give out my passcode.
5. On school nights the smartphone will be plugged in at 8:00 in the kitchen. On weekends my parents will grace me with another hour (9:00).
6. I understand that the world does not revolve around me. I should always be looking for ways to serve Jesus and others.
 - a. My texts, phone calls, pictures, and social media should be about others more than they are about me. I should never be looking to draw attention to myself.
 - b. Selfies may not be sent or posted if they do not contain at least one other person. I understand that when I send pictures of myself I am SCREAMING to the world – PAY ATTENTION TO ME! We all need to remember, it's not about me ☺
 - c. I will never post or send pictures of others without asking them for permission first. This will keep me out of trouble with others, and save myself some future heartaches.
 - d. I will not take or send pictures of my private parts. My parents assure me that "while this may seem funny someday, some idiot will tempt you to do this. It is a terrible idea that could make your life miserable. Cyberspace is bigger than you could ever imagine and once it is out there, it never goes away (think "screenshots")."
7. I understand smartphones can be very dangerous to my safety if my information gets into the wrong hands.
 - a. I will NEVER text, talk, or communicate with people I do not know.
 - b. I will immediately tell my parents if someone is trying to contact me that I do not know, or I do not want to have contact me. If someone sends me something questionable/inappropriate I will not delete it but will shut off my phone and bring it immediately to my parents, or to a trusted teacher if it occurs at school.
 - c. I will not message, text or email ANY adult without my parents' permission...even if it is for school, sports, music, etc. Also, my parents will be included in the "group" conversation.

- d. I will never give out personal information with my phone such as last name, birth date, school I go to, or even the city I live in. I will just stay on a first name basis, so no creep can track me down.
- e. I will never share my contact information with any boys!
- f. I will give out my information sparingly, even if for a school-related project.
8. I am never allowed to initiate conversations with boys for any reason, including homework. If a boy contacts me, I will immediately let my parents know, and we will work through the problem together.
9. I will be positive, encouraging, and uplifting with the things that I do with my phone. I will never gossip or talk behind people's backs. I will not use the phone to lie, fool, or deceive anyone.
10. I am not allowed at this time to use social media. Not at all! When I have shown that I am trustworthy, my parents may gradually let me use social media. I will give all account information to my parents. This includes passwords.
11. If the phone is dropped and breaks, if it falls in the toilet, is chewed up by the cat because I left it laying around, or is taken by the boogie man, I am responsible for fixing or replacing it.
12. The smartphone may be taken away as a consequence for poor communication with my parents, not treating my siblings well, not keeping up my responsibilities around the house, poor performance at school, or any other reason my parents decide. I understand having a phone is a privilege, not a right.
13. Last, and most importantly if anyone sends me a text that is inappropriate, or someone gets a hold of my phone and does anything that does not seem right through my phone, I must immediately tell my parents. I understand that they will help me with this and that I will not be in trouble for what happened. I understand that my parents have more experience handling these sorts of things.

MY PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. We will always be willing to help you through any problem with your phone or the use of it.
2. We will always look first at any app or music you would like to download.
3. Anytime you come to us with texts, pictures, call, or social media that is inappropriate we will support you, not judge/condemn you.
4. We will monitor your phone all the time. We can see everything you do on your phone – trust us ☺. It is our job to protect and take care of you, and we promise we will do it.

We are fully aware that at some point you will mess up, and your phone will be taken away. Your mom and dad will sit down and talk about it with you. Then we will all start over again. Mistakes are part of learning, and remember it's not so much the mistake, but it is how you deal with it. We are on your team.

SIGNATURES

Mom _____
Dad _____
Me _____
Date _____



TEACHING BOYS TO FIGHT

by Clarence Bouwman

Boys today are no longer expected to become warriors as a rite of passage to manhood. And that's a good thing; I'm grateful that my sons did not have to physically kill an enemy to be considered men.

Yet there was something very healthy and wholesome about boys needing to lay their lives on the line for the protection of another. Fighting to defend the weak has a way of developing a lad's sense of worth. And the Bible certainly encourages lads to become fighters.

CHRISTIANS ARE WARRIORS

God in the beginning told Adam to "work [the Garden] and keep it" (Gen 2:15). The verb "keep" used here appears again in Gen 3:24 to describe what the angel at the entrance to the Garden was to do after Adam's expulsion: with his flaming sword that turned every way he was to "guard" the way to the tree of life. We might think that the Garden was a place of peace void of danger, but omniscient God knew Satan had rebelled (or perhaps would yet rebel) and would attack his world. The man Adam was mandated to guard his territory and his home – and that involves fighting. The fact that he failed dismally in defending his home and family from outside attack

does not free his offspring from the same responsibility.

In line with that mandate from the beginning Paul reminds the saints of Ephesus that Christians continue to "wrestle" (6:12) – a term that catches the concept of hand-to-hand combat. He adds that the battle is "not against flesh and blood" that needs to be fought with fists or guns, but is rather against "the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" – all terms that describe the very same devil and his demons that attacked mankind in Paradise. That's why Paul instructs every Christian to "put on the whole armor of God" (6:11) and why Timothy was told to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim 6:12). It's fact: Scripture mandates men to fight.

I see two implications:

1. Men need to see themselves as fighters and so actually get out there and fight. Those for whom they go to battle are first of all those entrusted to their care – and that's primarily the family. There's our role as Dads!
2. The boys in the family need to be trained to become tomorrow's fighters.

That's the question we will explore: how do we train our sons to fight?

ARMY TRAINING

Those who join the military must undergo rigorous training. The training invariably involves two aspects: classroom theory and physical practice. The same is true of Christian trainees preparing to fight the fight of faith. We commonly call the classroom theory "doctrine" and the physical practice "lifestyle."

These two elements to good training are obviously inseparable. Getting the classroom theory right is the first step in getting the fight right – and the second step is lots of practice. It's striking that Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains 3 chapters of doctrine and then 3 chapters of Christian lifestyle – with the two sections connected by the hinge-word "therefore" in 4:1. The word "wrestle" (mentioned above) appears in the second section on lifestyle. If we are to master the field instruction of the "wrestling" of Eph 6:12, we need first to get the classroom theory of the first 3 chapters straight in our minds. That is true for mature fighters (in this article we're applying that to the fathers) as well as for future fighters (that's the sons).

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Paul ends chapter 1 with the glorious proclamation of Christ's ascension into heaven and his enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then he moves to chapter 2 to describe what enemies Christian fighters will encounter out in the field. What he says is highly instructive for Dads (and Moms) training their sons to be fighters.

Says Paul: that future fighter yet in the cradle is (contrary to appearances) not angelic and innocent but is instead "dead in sin" (Eph 2:1,5). From infancy, our dear little Johnny lives in step with the passions of his flesh, and from birth he carries out the desires of his body and mind (2:3). We hate to admit it, but all of us who has ever lived for any length of time with a toddler in the house knows from experience that that little child is inherently selfish and wants to impress on those around him that he's the king of the castle – and you better listen to me *now*. That's the passions of his flesh....

Adding to the challenges of that depravity, Paul continues, is the impulse of "the world" (2:2). That's the fallen creation in which that child lives with its *anti*-God patterns of thought and behavior. From birth little Johnny is inhaling that hostility so that he's as perfectly comfortable in this anti-God system as a fish is in water. More, because of his own deadness in sin, Johnny *hungers* for that anti-God system; it's his food and drink.

Furthermore, "the prince of the power of the air" – that's the devil- is "at work in the sons of disobedience" (2:2) – and that definitely includes our dear little Johnny! And Johnny is absolutely wired to follow the devil's work in his surroundings and in his heart.

My point: we fathers (and mothers) need to train our boys from infancy to fight the sin within and battle the influences of the world attacking them. Those little children are not angelic but are in fact – as I heard someone put it – *vipers in diapers*. The fact that God claims Johnny for himself in his covenant of grace does not change this tragic bent in little Johnny's heart nor does it change the fact that he's daily

...we need to teach our children from infancy to think in terms of those three sworn enemies, the devil, the world and the infants' own flesh.

inhaling the toxic anti-God pollution of the world in which he lives and it does not diminish either the hellishly subtle schemes of the devil and his demons against him. My conviction: in the classrooms of life we need to teach our children from infancy to think in terms of those three sworn enemies, the devil, the world and the infants' own flesh. And as our children grow from infancy into toddlers and from there into childhood, we need to keep training them in the fields of life how to fight these three mortal enemies. There's a reason why the PLO let children play with guns; their fathers wanted their sons to become fighters – and excel in the battle.

IN THE FIELD

God's instruction manual would have Dads train their children to "put on the


whole armor of God" (Eph 6:11). Dads do that by systematically reading the Bible with the children and speaking about God's promises and obligations as caught in that passage (see 6:14-17). More, Dads pray with their children and for them (6:18). And they train the children – yes, children! – to turn off the TV when the program has foul language or nudity or selfishness (see 5:3-14). They train the children to cease the video game when the game turns to violence or murder or assault. Dads stop the program to make the children take the advertisement apart in order to weigh what was actually communicated. Dads do it because they know *some* foul language and *a bit* of nudity and *the odd* murder and *some playful* violence are devilish ploys to make our children think that evil is normal and a bit of evil is



harmless. That's the reason why Paul writes that, "sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints" (5:3) and adds the instruction to "take *no* part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (5:11). These are instructions *fathers* need to train sons to follow. As the boys are attacked by the devil in the stuff of daily life, they learn to fight temptation and evil.

IS THERE A PROBLEM?

Of course, young soldiers will not follow where the general fears to go. In the family Dad is the general. That becomes the question: when the children sneak out of bed to peak into the den, what do they see Dad watching on TV? Brothers, our children simply won't buy into our training if they don't see us fighting in step with the training we give them. Anybody who has parented for any length of time knows that our children figure out what actually happens in the secret corners of our lives. And they figure out too where we fail to engage the battle whole-heartedly. My point is this: it is we Dads first of all who need to put on -and keep on- that full armor of God – and that's a reference to Bible study, committed prayer life, serious about living the faith. The children need to see that we are seriously wrestling with the enemy in our own decision-making, our own choices, our own tastes.

More, the children need to see that we Dads are actively defending the domain God entrusted to us – and that's first of all our own homes. We cannot close the windows of our homes so securely as to keep out the toxic air of the world outside and we cannot lock the doors either so tightly as to keep the demonic spirits of the air away from our children. In other words, we cannot prevent that the enemy lobbs his bombs our way. But we can alert the children to Satan's attacks and dress them in a way that ensures minimum damage. More, we can teach our children, through instruction and example, how to fight back and, in God's strength, to say "No!" to the enemy. That involves more than putting internet filters in your home; it involves also discussing issues with the children, answering their questions, analyzing a movie together, showing the children the two sides of a political or social issue and how to come to a God-pleasing solution, etc. It involves showing the children how you wrestle yourself with the issues of life, and how you respond when the enemy gets an arrow under your armor. It involves fighting beside your son, debating with your son, praying with him. Where we aren't fighters ourselves, we can't expect our children to become fighters! 

This article first appeared on SmithvilleCANRC.ca/blog, the Smithville Canadian Reformed Church blog, where Rev. Bouwman is a pastor of the Word.



The Board of **Covenant Canadian Reformed School** invites applications for the 2019/2020 school year for the following full/part time positions:

SENIOR HIGH SCIENCE TEACHER

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 250. 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.

We would love to arrange flights for applicants who are out of province to come and visit our community!

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. Tara Tiggelaar - 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

by Rebecca Korvemaker

...BUT I DO HAVE A COUCH

On Ordinary Hospitality



Rosaria Butterfield's *The Gospel Comes With A House Key* came highly recommended, and after reading it I understand why. Rosaria is honest and insightful. She shares examples of hospitality gleaned from her own experiences, from feeding popsicles to the neighborhood children, to squeezing as many people as possible into their home on a snowy Sabbath when church was canceled. It seems that there are extra people in the Butterfield home so often that they expect to see non-family members at their dinner table and regularly make too-large meals to accommodate the guests.

Upon finishing the book I felt inspired to be more hospitable, to invite all my neighbors over for chili and Bible reading. So I put down the book and looked up – up at the small kitchen/living room of my one-bedroom apartment, and my heart sank because there's no way I could fit fifty people into my home, and this truth became incredibly clear: *I cannot do hospitality like the Butterfields.*

So what do you do, when you feel convicted and inspired to obey God but you just don't know how to do it? You pray. Well, I prayed, and as I sat on my couch, asking God how to do hospitality for Him, a new concept came to me.

There is a reason I cannot do hospitality like the Butterfields. God has not put me in a house with a husband

and given me the occupation of a stay-at-home, home schooling mom. He has put me by myself in a one-bedroom apartment with a schedule that requires me to work at least two evenings a week. In short, I can't do hospitality like the Butterfields because I'm not a Butterfield. But God's command to be hospitable does not say "be hospitable like the Butterfields" (nor does Rosaria say that in her book) but simply "show hospitality" (1 Peter 4:9). The question we all have to answer is *how*?

Perhaps the most helpful and practical thing to do is to look around and recognize what you have, and then be intentional about using what you do have to obey God. For example, I don't have a large space, but I do have a couch. So, I now invite women to come share a pot of tea and sit on my couch and talk. That couch is just an ordinary, everyday thing, but it has become a tool to enhance the Kingdom of God. If it could talk it would tell you stories that would make you weep and laugh and weep again.

When we take the daily things God has given us and deliberately use them to serve Him, they cease being plain objects and start being tools consecrated to generate heavenly treasures.

We get intimidated by hospitality thinking that it has to be big and fancy. It doesn't. It can be as simple as Oreos cookies and water, along with ears that

*We get intimidated
by hospitality
thinking that it has
to be big and fancy.*

listen. It can involve folding laundry and making soup, along with ears that listen. It can be shown around a campfire in your backyard or on your front patio or around your kitchen table or sitting on the floor...with ears that listen. People don't care much where you are or what you serve them, as long as you prove yourself to be a safe person that they can share their lives with.

Sharing life usually doesn't happen over the first cup of coffee, but it's a beginning, and we'll never get anywhere if we don't start. Hospitality requires you to be intentional and loving and available, and it needs to be shown to fellow saints and neighbors and the least. Jesus showed hospitality by making people sit on the grass and by divvying up five loaves and two fish among them (Luke 9:10-17). His first concern wasn't physical comfort or meeting social expectations, but to show people the Father. By His Spirit, may we follow His example and bring the living Savior to our dying world. RP



MACARIUS: Great Works vs. Grace

by Christine Farenhorst

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." – Eph. 2:8-10

When he was born on January 2 in the year 300 A.D. in Alexandria, Egypt, his parents must have been filled with great thankfulness and hope, for they named their little baby boy Macarius. Macarius means "supremely blessed." Perhaps they'd had other children die, or perhaps they had prayed for a child for a long time and were not sure that they would ever have one. Whatever the case, the bundle of blessing grew up, and became a man, and that man took on the job of merchant.

There are times in the lives of believers when they consider how much they have done, how much they ought to

have done and what they have not done. There is no doubt that these moments of reflection can lead to fruitfulness, to a further developing of the fruits they are admonished to have. After all, Peter encourages readers in his second epistle (1:5-7):

"...make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."

Across New Testament pages Peter shakes hands with Paul, who tells believers in Phil. 2:12 to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

RETREATING FROM THE WORLD

Macarius married, but his wife died shortly afterward. Impressed by the spectre of death which he had

encountered firsthand, a spectre which was neither a respecter of youth nor of financial status, the merchant was led to forsake the world.

What did this mean for Macarius? It meant that he gave away all his material goods and moved to a solitary place where no one else lived. This place was the Thebais in Upper Egypt, a desert, a lonely area which had become a retreat for a number of Christian hermits. Macarius was convinced that this action would prepare him for eternity, that this would enable him to devote himself to thinking heavenly thoughts, that here he would be able to concentrate on pure matters.

Perhaps, however, the Thebais was not as stimulating in holiness as he speculated, for later in life he moved on to different deserts in Lybia. Hermits lived here as well, but these men were not within eyesight of one another.

Macarius became an austere man. There was a drive in him to strive for what he perceived to be perfection of



you." (John 13:34) And did He not help the ill and the maimed? And did He not die for us?

Because Macarius often deprived himself of God-given sustenance, he was prone to strange hallucinations which he supposed were godly visions. Persuaded through some of these that to help others would make him proud and give him too much esteem in the world's eyes, he did not leave the desert for Rome. Instead he threw himself down on the ground and cried out to the imagined "temptation," "Drag me hence, if you can, by force, for I will not stir from here." He lay on the ground all night.

However in the morning, upon rising, he found that his desire was still for service in Rome. Not wishing to give in, he filled two baskets with earth, lay them on his shoulders and plodded into the surrounding wilderness. Meeting someone he knew, he was questioned as to what he was doing with those baskets on his shoulders. He made no reply other than: "I am tormenting my tormentors." Returning


"...a soul which relishes God in solitude, and thinks no more of anything but heaven, and forgets the earth, which has nothing in it that can now please. It burns with the fire of divine love, and sighs only after God, regarding death as its greatest advantage; nevertheless it will find itself much mistaken if it imagines it shall go to God by straight paths.... in which it will have no difficulties at all..."

Sadly, such a definition describes the error of those who think they might climb into eternity using their own boots, their own merits, pushing open heaven's door by their own victories.

A CONTRAST

Also a January baby, my father, Louis Praamsma, was born on January 1, 1910 – one hundred and nine years ago. He was no anchorite, however, for he loved to mingle with people all of the 74 years of the life on earth which God gave him. He studied the Word of God diligently, was humble and acknowledged his sin, preaching forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ in season and out of season, always seeking people out and giving them the reason for the hope which was in him. This is how pastors (and all believers) should be – compassionate, seeking sheep, in but not of the world, eager to listen and never too preoccupied with self. Louis Praamsma did not walk into heaven on his own merits; neither did he open heaven's doors with his own hands when he died in 1984. No, salvation had been accomplished for him by his Savior, Jesus Christ. Hence his earthly life was full of thankful service.

Perhaps my Dad has met Macarius in heaven, if that anchorite perceived at the end of his life that all his works had been but as filthy rags.

May it be that 2019 is a year of thankfulness – one filled with love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – because against such there is no law. And may our thankful lives radiate outwards towards loving one another even as Christ loves us. 

Macarius gave away all his material goods and moved to a solitary place where no one else lived.

character. It is not recorded whether he diligently studied the Word of God, or whether, as Peter puts it in the second part of his epistle, he experienced the grace and peace afforded those who have the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

RESISTING THE "TEMPTATION" TO SERVE

During the course of his stay in one of the deserts, Macarius, at one point of his life, was overcome by a virtuous desire to travel to Rome to spend time serving and aiding those who were ill in that city. It was a noble aspiration. We are told in the Bible to serve others. Indeed, Jesus commands His followers: "Love one another even as I have loved

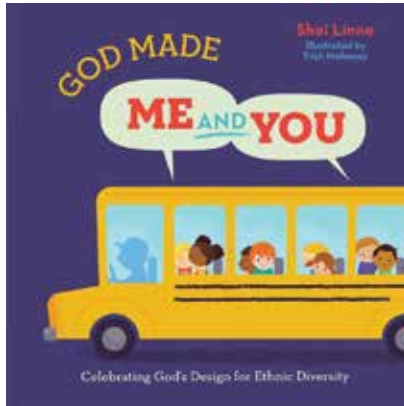
to his lodging in the evening, he was glad to be free of the "temptation" to serve.

It seems Macarius spent no time contemplating Jesus' temptations in the desert – temptations which were overcome. It seems Macarius did not ponder the fulfillment of the law performed by the Lord during His life, death, resurrection and ascension. And it seems that Macarius did not think of the fact that the Holy Spirit had been sent to enable and equip believers to serve in thankfulness.

The definition of an anchorite such as Macarius, as given by Abbot Rance de la Trappe, (1626-1700 and founder of the Trappist monks), reads:

GOD MADE ME AND YOU

BY SHAI LINNE
32 PAGES / 2018



Reformed rapper Shai Linne has written a children's book about racism and it's really good. In response to racism Christians typically talk about how there is, in fact, just *one* race – the human race. Linne builds on this point, even as he makes another. Yes, we are all *alike* in one way, but in others, we are wonderfully *different*.

And as you would expect a rapper to do, he makes this point in rhyme. When two students make fun of other kids for their hair, clothes, and skin color, that prompts a lesson about how diversity is a testimony to God's greatness. The teacher says:

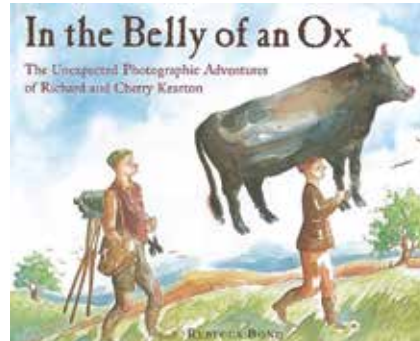
Brown eyes and green eyes,
hazel and blue,
Each in their own way
works of art we can view.
Some that are deaf
and some that are blind
All have great worth
in God's sovereign design.

Christian morality tales can sometimes be more sermon than story but the rhythm and rhyme here carries us along. There so much to love, from the much-needed message, to the bright colorful pictures, to the fun, bouncing rhymes that make it a joy to read out loud.

–JON DYKSTRA

IN THE BELLY OF AN OX

BY REBECCA BOND
32 PAGES / 2009



By the delightful picture on the cover I thought I was picking up a funny story book but after reading a few pages I was drawn into an interesting biography about, as the subtitle puts it, "the Unexpected Photographic Adventures of Richard and Cherry Kearton."

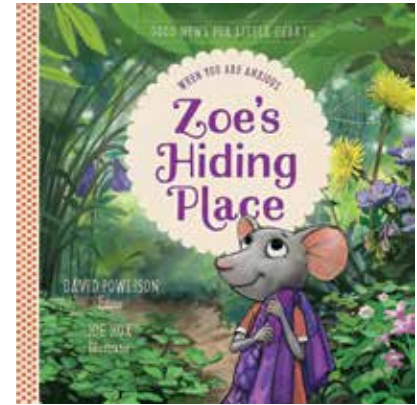
As youngsters the two brothers were entranced by nature, particularly birds. As adults, living in London, they longed for the moors, often visiting friends in the country. They started photographing birds in their nests. They came up with all kinds of camouflages including a hollow ox made from a real bullock hide over a light wooden frame. From inside this ox they would take pictures. The birds did not seem to mind a six-legged ox! In 1895 they published a book called *British Bird Nests*, which marked a new era in natural history.

The water-color illustrations throughout are lovely, and the last few pages show some fantastic photos of the lengths to which these brothers went to get their perfect photographs. This would be a fun book to read to mid-elementary school children and as adult, you would also learn something about early photography in nature.

–JOANNA VANDERPOL

ZOE'S HIDING PLACE: WHEN YOU ARE ANXIOUS

EDITED BY DAVID POWILSON
32 PAGES / 2018



Zoe is a little mouse who's worried about a school trip to the art museum. The last time the class went, she became fascinated by one painting and stayed by it so long that when she looked up, her class was gone. That was scary. And now she's worried it will happen again.

How can Zoe deal with her fear and worry? Her mom begins by listening. That's a good start. Then she explains to Zoe that what she is feeling is understandable. But when worry makes us feel like we're all alone, that's not true – God is always with us, and will never forsake us.

In the back of the book, the moral of the story is developed further with a two-page message to parents on "helping your child with anxiety." There the editor of this book, David Powilson – a very well-respected biblical counselor – has included a list of 10 "things to remember that will bring comfort to you and your child."

This is a wonderful book, with its absolutely stunning pictures making it a pretty special morality tale. There are two other books in the CCEF's "Good News for Little Hearts" series, on dealing with failure and anger that are also very good.

–JON DYKSTRA

DANCE AT GRANDPA'S

BY LAURA INGALLS WILDER

ILLUSTRATED BY RENÉE GRAEF

33 PAGES / 1994

If by chance you aren't already familiar with Laura Ingall Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* novels, the series is based on the author's own experiences in the late 1800's as a small child living the pioneering life.

This picture book, *Dance at Grandpa's*, is an adaptation of Chapter 8 from the first novel, *Little House in the Big Woods*. While neighbors are far flung, they do come together for special events, and this time everyone is invited to Grandma and Grandpa's big cabin. Laura, her Pa, Ma, big sister Mary, and baby sister Carrie, get bundled up in gloves, boots and coats, then covered up with blankets on the sleigh, as they head on their way to Grandpa's. Everyone brings their children so as the big cabin fills, Laura finds that there are "ever so many babies lying in rows on Grandma's feather bed." Her pa then takes out his fiddle and the dozens of couples begin to dance and swirl. Laura discovers there's also food of all sorts, including wonderfully sour pickles! When the dancing finally stops Laura heads to bed, and come morning her family heads back home on their sleigh.

As with any adaptation the obvious question is, why not just read the original?

First, these picture books are great for non-readers. After going through this once with my youngest, she could then "read" through the pictures on her own, which she quite enjoyed.

Second, they are great for novice readers. Many early reader books are quite boring and young readers might find they just aren't worth all the effort it takes to read them. But the books in this series are fun and familiar.

There are 14 picture books in all in this "My first Little House books" series, based on the first three novels in the original series. The first two novels, *Little House in the Big Woods* and *Little House on the*

Prairie, are about Laura's childhood, and the third, *Farmer Boy*, is about her husband's childhood.

One little annoyance we found with the picture books is that they were not published in chronological order and aren't numbered, so it was hard to figure out which to read first. While it didn't matter all that much, if you do want to tackle them in the proper chronological order, this is what it would be:

Based on *Little House in the Big Woods*

- Winter Days in the Big Woods
- Christmas in the Big Woods
- A Little House Birthday
- Sugar Snow
- Dance at Grandpa's
- Going to Town
- Summertime in the Big Woods
- The Deer in the Wood

Based on *Little House on the Prairie*

- Going West
- Prairie Day
- A Little Prairie House

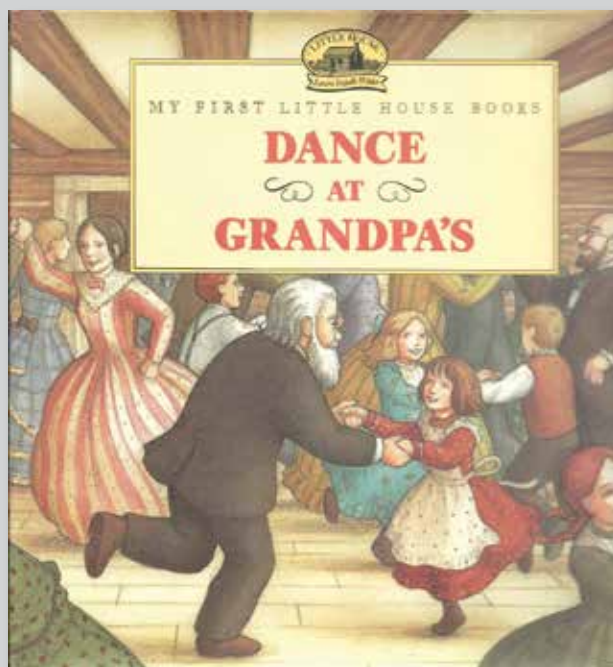
Based on *Farmer Boy*

- Winter on the Farm
- A Farmer Boy Birthday
- County Fair

CAUTIONS

The one caution I'll pass along concerns not *Dance at Grandpa's*, but another in the series. *A Little House Birthday* is based on Chapter 5 of *Little House in the Big Woods* and, just as in the original, Laura has quite the bad attitude about Sundays:

"On Sundays they could not run



or shout or be noisy. They must sit quietly and listen while Ma read stories to them. They might look at pictures, and they might hold their rag dolls nicely and talk to them. But there was nothing else they could do. One Sunday Laura could not bear it any longer and she began to play with Jack and run and shout. Pa told her to sit in her chair and be quiet, and Laura began to cry."

Eventually she falls asleep and, waking up the next morning, she realizes with relief, "It was Monday, and Sunday would not come again for a whole week."

Laura's parents caused this problem by ensuring Sunday was the worst day of the week. But if mom or dad reads this with the kids, we can share that this is simply not the way the Lord's Day should be celebrated.

CONCLUSION

We've read 12 of the 14 available and enjoyed them all (though *A Little House Birthday* not as much). I'd recommend them as fantastic books for Grades 1 and maybe 2 and mostly for girls, though boys might be up for the three based on *Farmer Boy*.

-JON DYKSTRA



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