

Reformed A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

SEPTEMBER 2016  
Volume 35 Issue No. 11

# PERSPECTIVE

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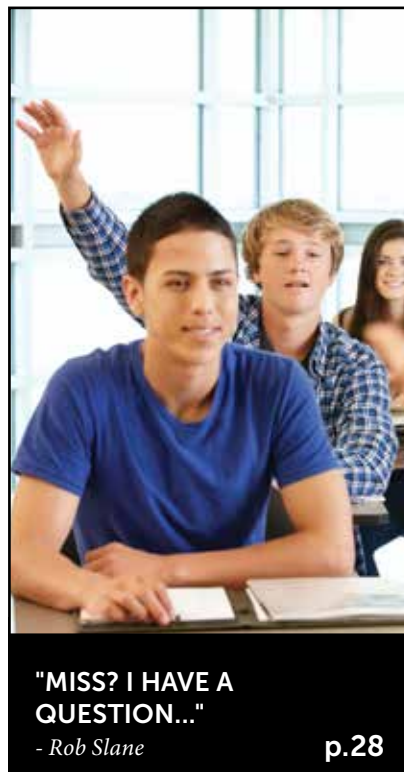


# BIOLOGY VS. EVOLUTION

A new book explains why doubting Darwin is a matter of common sense

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# CANADA'S ELECTORAL REFORM

## Why The Liberals Will Push For Ranked Ballots

by Jon Dykstra

**T**he Liberals campaigned on bringing in electoral reform, and are looking to make good on that promise.

But what exactly are they trying to fix? What's so bad about our current electoral system? And what are the advantages and disadvantages of their alternatives they are looking through?

### THE CASE AGAINST FPTP

The common complaint with our current First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system is that it doesn't seem to reflect voters' wishes. Under it a candidate doesn't need a majority of the vote to get elected; he only needs one vote more than the second place finisher. So, for

example, in the 2015 Federal election that meant one candidate – the NDP's Brigitte Sansoucy – was able to win a seat in the House of Commons even though she received only 28.7 per cent of the vote. In her riding, almost three quarters of voters picked someone else, and yet she is still their elected representative.

The FPT system also allowed the Liberals to win a decided majority of the seats (54.4 per cent) even though they had a decided minority of the votes (only 39.5 per cent).

Situations like this are why our representative democracy can be criticized for not being all that representative.

*Brigitte Sansoucy was able to win a seat in the House of Commons even though she received only 28.7 per cent of the vote.*

### THE RANKED BALLOT: FOR

So what sort of electoral reform are the Liberals planning? They haven't specified yet. But back in 2014, in an appearance at Ontario's Western University, Justin Trudeau told students, "I like the idea of a ranked ballot."

There's a clear reason he would. Under this system voters would rank the candidates from first to last (see the picture). If no one got 50 per cent of the vote, then the candidate with the least 1st place votes would be dropped off, and his ballots would be redistributed according to who those voters had marked as their second choice.

The advantage of this system is that the eventual winner can claim the legitimacy of having more than 50% of voters picking him. He may not have been their first pick, but he was at least someone they voted for.

### THE RANKED BALLOT: AGAINST

The problem with the ranked ballot is that it gives an advantage to whatever

parties are present in the middle of the political spectrum. Why? Because when voters on the right or left rank their second choices they aren't going to pick the parties on the far and opposite side. Instead they are going to default to the candidate who is the closest to them.

In Canada that means an NDP voter will likely rank the Liberals second (or third behind the Greens), and rank the Conservative last. Likewise a Conservative voter is more likely to rank the Liberals second than the NDP or Greens. So Liberals can count on getting far more of the second-pick votes than any of their political rivals.

CBC's Eric Grenier estimated that under a ranked ballot the Liberals would have picked up an additional 40 seats last election (mostly at the expense of the Conservatives). Of course, this is only a guesstimate - no one can know how voters would behave under a new system. But it's no surprise that the Liberal Party's leader, our prime minister, prefers ranked ballots.

#### PR: FOR

Another alternative being discussed is proportional representation (PR), but the Liberals aren't likely to go in that direction. While there are many forms of PR, the basic premise is that all involve

parties getting seats in proportion to their total vote total. Under this arrangement, since the Liberals took 39.5% of the popular vote they would have ended up with just 39.5% of the seats in Parliament.

That means that, as Eric Grenier noted, under the most basic form of PR, in the last election the Liberals would have lost 50 seats, while the Conservatives would have gained 10, the Green Party 11, and NDP would have had 23 more.

Interestingly, it is under the PR system that the Christian Heritage Party is

*... it is under the PR system that the Christian Heritage Party is most likely to prosper.*

most likely to prosper. While the CHP's 15,284 votes last election wouldn't have been enough to garner them an MP, under a PR system Christians who had previously wanted to vote for them but thought it a wasted ballot, could now

cast that vote knowing it would help elect at least an MP or two.

#### PR: AGAINST

But PR also opens up possibilities for other smaller parties too. The CHP would finally be in the House of Commons but there would also be a representative or two from the Marijuana Party. We'd likely see a Communist too, and maybe even a Pirate Party MP (yes, there really is a federal Pirate Party of Canada).

In addition, it would become harder for any one party to win an outright majority. As the Fraser Institute reports in their booklet *Electoral Rules and Fiscal Outcomes, from 2000-2015*

In countries with PR election systems, on the other hand, 83 percent of elections resulted in coalition governments.

That might not sound like much of a problem. So what if some parties have to work together? Why wouldn't that be a good thing? The reason is, when a coalition government is built, each participant does so on the condition that they get something out of it. And that "something" usually requires the outlay of money. In the same booklet the Fraser

## VOTE OR ELSE! – and other proposals

In addition to wholesale changes to our electoral system, the Liberals are also considering whether it would be a good idea to make voting mandatory, and whether, and to what degree we should move towards electronic voting, including online voting.

These are bad ideas.

#### Compulsory voting is only for show

Why would we even consider compulsory voting? Advocates argue that higher voter turnouts give a government a higher degree of political legitimacy. But in Australia, where voting is required, the 2013 election saw roughly 80% of the voting age population cast a ballot.<sup>1</sup>

To put that number in context, in the last couple of federal elections we've averaged about 65% of the electorate casting a ballot.<sup>2</sup> Compulsory voting could increase those totals.

But where would this increase come from?

From the apathetic: those too lazy to get educated about their choices, or those who know and hate their choices, but who are too sluggish to step up and offer voters an alternative. Why would we want to force these folks to *eenie, meenie, miney, mo* their way through the slate of candidates? Are we really making democracy better when your thoughtful choice can be countered by a guy who made

his selection based on his favorite number: "I'm going with lucky number 4!"?

Making voting mandatory can inflate the vote total, but that's really only a sham: requiring someone to vote doesn't mean they are any more involved. Do we think compulsory voting will motivate the I-won't-vote-unless-you-make-me sort to also spend time studying the issues and researching the various candidate's positions? The very last thing we need to do is force people who don't care, who haven't done their research, and who otherwise wouldn't vote, to now go down and mark their utterly random "x" on the ballot.

## Online and electronic voting isn't trustworthy

As the world seems to move from paper to digital, there's been an increasing push to have our votes tabulated on computers too. Some have called for the option of online voting too, again with the hope that this would increase participation.

But will it? If we want people to be involved and invested in the democratic process, then the one thing we need them to know is that the results reported at the end are, without a shadow of a doubt, legitimate. And that's true of Canada's present federal system...and in a way that should be the envy of every other country. Our paper ballots leave a paper trail that can be checked and double checked and triple checked too. In fact, in most ridings there are people with at least 3 different perspectives counting each vote:

1. the (hopefully neutral) Elections Canada staff
2. a Liberal scrutineer
3. a Conservative scrutineer

In addition there are often scrutineers from the smaller parties like the New Democrats and the Greens (though they don't have the manpower to have a

scrutineer at every poll).

This independent triple check keeps the system entirely transparent – if Elections Canada, the Liberals, and the Conservatives can all agree on the vote total (and they do 99% of the time) then we know that the result are trustworthy.

Compare that to United States, where electronic voting tabulates the vast majority of votes and there is no paper trail. Every election there are reports of computer errors – someone voting Republican and their vote being given to the Democrat candidate, and vice versa. Some of these errant votes are caught – one famous example occurred when, in a precinct where just 412 people voted, presidential candidate Al Gore received a *negative* vote count of minus 16,022 votes. Someone, it seems, had hacked the machine.

Errant totals like this are easy to spot, but if a machine can be hacked once, why should we trust all the others? American voters can only wonder how many less obvious errors may have escaped notice. Long ago Joseph Stalin said something to the effect of:

The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything.

Americans' dependency on electronic voting machines means their system is based on trust – trust that the machines are counting properly, and trust that the people making and programming these counting machines are competent and honest.

Meanwhile in Canada our hand counting approach recognizes that it is foolish to trust overmuch, that we are fallen and depraved creatures. Of course election officials have never stated it in such explicitly biblical terms, but that is the difference nonetheless. Instead of trust, we have verification, with two, three and even more vote totals from the different parties available to check against the official results. From a Reformed perspective then, the Canadian hand count is vastly superior to the American voting machine count.

## Endnote

1 The official figure was 93% but that doesn't factor in that, despite the law, 10% of Australians aren't registered to vote. When we consider all the people of voting age, and then see how many actually voted, we get 80%. This is also the calculation used with the American and Canadian figures that follow.

2 Figures are from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA, [www.idea.int/vt/](http://www.idea.int/vt/)

Institute noted that PR governments spend an average of 29% of their country's GDP, whereas governments that were elected via means such as ranked ballots or the FPTP spend only 23% of the GDP.

So a downside to any PR type of system is that taxes will likely go up. Coalition governments are costly!

## CONCLUSION

Some countries have adopted a mixture of these different systems, which means there are a limitless number of possibilities. But these three are the core sorts.

So what is Canada's new electoral system going to look like? Well we know what makes the most sense for the Liberal Party – it is in their interests to move forward with a ranked ballot. They've argued that since they campaigned on the promise of

electoral reform, they already have a mandate from voters to make changes. But the Liberals didn't get anywhere near a majority of the votes, so the Conservatives think it only right that the government puts any proposed changes to a referendum. But that's only going to happen if Canadians put the pressure on their MPs via phone calls, emails and visits.

But what system should we, as Christians, push for? Each system has its own strengths and weaknesses and I don't know if there is any one system that is definitively better than the others. That said, my own preference would be what we already have. Ranked ballots give the centrist Liberals an advantage that they don't deserve over the other parties, while proportional representation seems likely to expand the size of government. Neither of those are attractive alternatives.

So I think I can say about our present system what Winston Churchill once said about democracy: First-Past-The-Post is the worst form of electoral system...except for all others. **RP**

SOURCE: Kate Dubinski's "Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau says young people need to be involved" posted to LFPress.com on Sept 11, 2014; Eric Grenier's "Change to preferential ballot would benefit Liberals" posted to CBC.ca on Nov 26, 2015



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



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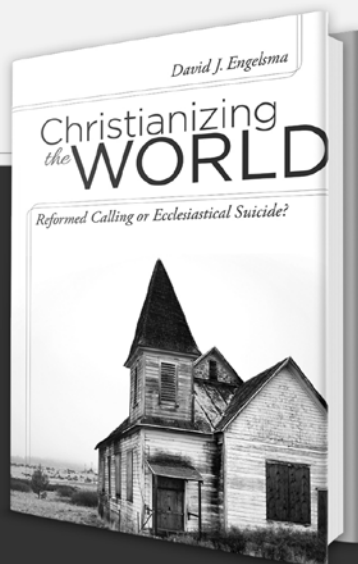


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# NOTA BENE

News  
worth  
noting

to react to this series of sins? In Psalm 82, God rebukes rulers for failing to protect the weak, so the *intention* of the Tribunal was sound.

But is the power of the state the best way to protect the weak? Probably not, for several reasons:

1. How do you calculate a just penalty for offensive remarks? The Bible limits justice to an eye for an eye. Do we compensate the boy for his suicide attempt, which after all was his reaction?
2. If we penalize these jokes because they are offensive and cruel, what is to stop future human rights commissions from penalizing Christian teaching that is also deemed to be offensive and cruel? Do we trust the *government* to discern offensiveness correctly? Past decisions against Christians do not give us much hope of that.
3. Finally, the penalties against Ward have only gained him, as he puts it, "millions in publicity," sympathy from fellow comics, and multiple concerts to raise funds.

Solomon warns us of the danger of dealing with fools:

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." (Prov. 26:4-5)

In other words, if you can't manage to show a fool his folly then avoid

dealing with him entirely, because you can't win. The best way to react to such verbal cruelty would be to help the victim rather than attack the guilty party.

SOURCE: Picture is by Mike Ward and made use of under Creative Commons license Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

## SHOULD A COMEDIAN GET FINED FOR TASTELESS JOKES?

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



his summer Canadian Mike Ward was fined

\$42,000 for insulting a disabled boy in his comedy act. The Quebec Human Rights Tribunal awarded the sum for moral and punitive damages to the boy, Jeremy Gabriel, and his mother because, as Justice Scott Hughes said in his decision, Ward's jokes were "discriminatory" and "clearly prohibited by the Charter."

The question the *National Post* asked in response was, "Is political correctness killing comedy?" A better question would be "How do you deal with a fool?" Ward's response to the decision makes it clear that he fits that description. Dismissing the boy's claim



that Ward's insults led him to attempt suicide, the comedian threw more offensive remarks at him and at deaf people in general.

So didn't Ward just get what he deserved? No. None of us gets what we deserve for our sins. A more important question: was the penalty an appropriate way for the government



## TIM LAHAYE HAS LEFT US BEHIND

BY WES BREDENHOF

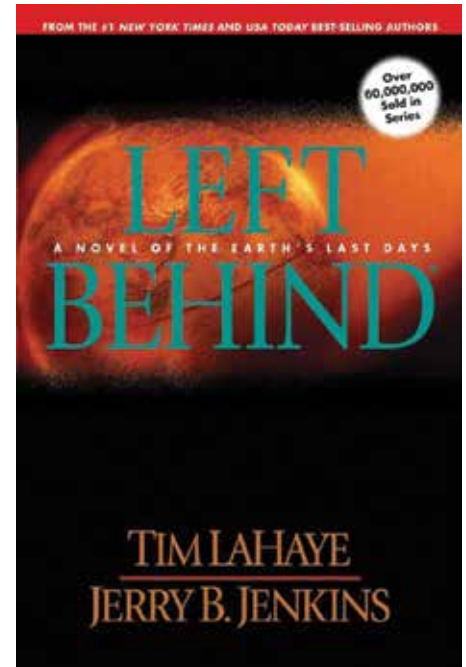
**N**oted American evangelical pastor, author, and activist Dr. Tim LaHaye died on July 25 at the age of 90. LaHaye was best-known for his *Left Behind* series of end-times novels. However, he was also involved in the political sphere, cooperating with Jerry Falwell Sr. in the establishment of the Moral Majority movement in the 1970s.

Far fewer people remember him as a fervent supporter of the biblical understanding of origins but he was that too. In September of 1970, LaHaye asked Dr. Henry Morris to join him in founding an institution which would come to be known as San Diego Christian College. The name of Morris will be familiar to many *RP* readers since it's associated with the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). Originally a department of the San Diego Christian College, ICR has grown to become one of the world's leading creationist ministries. In its obituary for LaHaye, ICR acknowledged the significant influence he's had on that ministry throughout its existence.

While we can be thankful for his contributions to the defense of God's truth about creation, we also have to acknowledge that LaHaye was,

like all of us, a fallible human being. When it came to the doctrine of the end times (eschatology), Dr. LaHaye was a premillennial dispensationalist and this came through clearly in his *Left Behind* books. Premillennial dispensationalism teaches that Jesus Christ will come back before (pre-) a literal 1000 year-reign on earth. By contrast, most Reformed theologians today teach that the 1000 years of Revelation 20 is symbolically referring to the present reign of Christ. LaHaye's eschatological scheme also makes a marked distinction between the Church and Israel, whereas Reformed theology insists that the New Testament church is the continuation of Old Testament Israel.

Although some Reformed believers were perhaps duped into thinking that the *Left Behind* series was an accurate, biblical portrayal of things to come, the reality is that these books do not stand up to the scrutiny of what we confess from the Scriptures in places like article 37 of the Belgic Confession. While the *Left Behind* series authored by LaHaye (with Jerry Jenkins) cannot be recommended at all, resources from the creation ministry that LaHaye helped found can



be very useful, but have to be used with discernment. The Institute for Creation Research does not feature premillennial dispensationalism in its "Core Principles," but it does appear in some of their publications, such as the *Henry Morris Study Bible*. It's good to be aware that while ICR gets many things right on creation (like the late LaHaye), there are other important areas in theology where they are less reliable.

## OPC CELEBRATES 80 YEARS

BY JON DYKSTRA



**T**his year the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) celebrated its 80th anniversary. The

denomination was formed in 1936, and at the time the most famous member was likely John Gresham Machen, a professor famous for his battle with liberal elements in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). Machen and other conservative ministers from the PCUSA came together June 11, 1936 to form the denomination that would, three years later, become known as the OPC.

Now, 80 years later, the denomination has a total membership

of 31,191, with 535 ministers. That amounts to roughly one minister for every 60 members – a remarkable number! (As a point of comparison, the Canadian and American Reformed Churches have approximately 80 ministers serving their 17,000 members, or one roughly one minister for every 200 members.)

Just a couple weeks after the Synod wrapped up, the last of the OPC's founders, Rev. John P. Galbraith, died at the age of 103.

## GRAPHIC PICTURES IN THE ABORTION DEBATE

BY JON DYKSTRA

**A**mong pro-lifers the topic of graphic pictures can cause some heated debates. Should we make use of pictures of aborted children to expose to the public what happens in an abortion? It's an important question, but a key to answering it comes in realizing this is about practicalities, rather than principles.

If it were about principles then we should be able to make a clear biblically-based case either for or against the use of these gory, brutal, bloody pictures. But it doesn't seem a case can be made for forbidding or requiring their use. If God *forbids* the use of gore in any visual presentation, then what of Jesus, who was beaten and bloodied and raised up on a cross in front of the crowds? God didn't hide the horror that was being done to his Son. And think also of the countless public sacrifices done for hundreds of years before, all pointing to this moment. No, God doesn't forbid bloody messages.

But does God *require* them? Again we can say no – the Jews were, for a time, required to make sacrifices, but we aren't. There is no command now to pass on Truth with gore.

Now, if graphic messages are allowed but not required then whether we use these pictures should come down to evaluating their effectiveness. This isn't a matter of wrong or right, but rather, *do they work*? Do graphic pictures shock people into realizing that the unborn are precious human beings? Or do they so disgust people that they turn away and refuse even to consider the humanity of the unborn?

I think the answer is both. I've seen them work well. I've made use of graphic pictures with student groups and seen students who were apathetic about the unborn become passionate. I've also seen graphic pictures spark campus-wide discussions at universities and colleges.

But some people do walk away. Just

a glance, and off they go headed in the opposite direction and there's no chance to talk. Graphic pictures have their place, but there also seem to be limits to their usefulness.

So if graphic pictures have mixed results, what of other approaches?

Two years ago ARPA Canada created an impressive display on Parliament Hill using of 100,000 small pink or blue flags, each representing one child killed via abortion in Canada each year. There was no gore, but it was effective.

And what of the two pictures accompanying this article, painted by Lisa Van Dam? They clearly illustrate the humanity of the unborn, and the inhumanity of abortion. Doesn't it almost hurt to look at them? Imagine them, paired together on a billboard – that's a clear message, an unforgettable message, and no blood to be seen.

Dr. William Lile has another approach. In 1999 he bought an abortion clinic to put it out of business, and ended up with all of its instruments and machines too. He decided that he would give people tours of the facility to show them what had been happening there. As *LifeSiteNews.com*'s Pete Baklinski reports:

He used the tools, including the suction machine, to show how first and second trimester abortions were performed. He also showed how a partial birth abortion was performed in the last trimester using a doll as a model.

The doctor holds that demonstrating the reality of abortion while using the actual tools of the trade on models allows people to see the horror without being traumatized by seeing blood or body parts.



"What I've found is that the more graphic the demonstration the more the audience will have their hands over their ears and their eyes closed. And, you can't educate anybody when their ears are covered up and their eyes are closed," he said.

Dr. Lile doesn't want to make use of graphic pictures, and yet his own method seems impactful. But like graphic pictures, it has limitations the

biggest of which is reach: he can only sway those willing to come visit his clinic.

So what is the best approach? That's going to continue to be a matter of debate. But as we have this discussion it's important to remember that whatever our thoughts as to the use

of graphic pictures – yea or nay – we shouldn't condemn the other side. They aren't doing something *wrong*; they simply disagree as to which approach is more *effective*. When we understand this as a debate about effectiveness – rather than wrong vs. right – then we can be more objective as we evaluate

all the various approaches. Then we can more easily work together to find out how in this situation or that, this approach or that will work best to highlight the humanity of the unborn.

SOURCE: LifeSiteNews.com's Pete Baklinski's "This pro-life doctor shut down his local abortionist's business in the most ingenious way" posted to LifeSiteNews.com on July 19, 2016

## WHAT'S THERE TO KNOW ABOUT POKÉMON GO?

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA



**I**f you've spent any time on social media in the last couple months or, watched the news, or read a newspaper, or noticed the increasing number of people wandering the sidewalks, head down, looking at their smartphones, then you've heard of the game Pokémon Go.

First available in Canada in mid-July, the game makes use of "augmented reality" technology – when players view their surroundings through their smartphone's camera, the game adds in digital Pokémon creatures (see the picture). Players search out and catch these Pokémon, hatch eggs, and capture and defend key locations called "gyms." One very interesting feature of the game is that finding the digital creatures requires players to move around in the real world – the game makes use of a phone's GPS – finding and capturing a Pokémon may require a player to walk blocks and maybe even miles.

The game has become extremely popular in a short amount of time, with users saying it encourages exercise, social interaction (players will often meet others on their walks), and exploration of the world around them. From some, however, the reaction

has been less positive, but still quite passionate – critics have deemed the game childish, immature, and a waste of time.

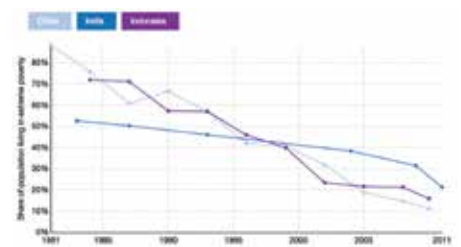
How then should a Christian react? One general principle, in assessing both this game and other leisure pursuits is presented in Matthew 7 – in the same way you judge, you will be judged. In other words, if we're tempted to criticize the latest fad, whatever it might be, we should be ready to apply the same standard to our own leisure pursuits. If you think chasing digital cartoon-like Pokémon characters is silly, then what should you think about chasing a black rubber disk with a stick? Or splashing about in a pool to get from one end to the other...only to return again to go right back where you came from?

There is, of course, always room in the Christian faith for discernment and careful reflection regarding our use of leisure time. But our focus should be first and foremost inward. It's too easy to go off about others' sins. But if we think this Pokémon craze selfish, not benefitting others, then it would be best to first evaluate our own time spent in front of the TV, or on Facebook, or reading. Before we go off about potential specks in the eyes of our Pokémon loving brothers and sisters, we should see about any logs in our own eyes.

Then, when we understand our own shortcomings, we will be better equipped to, *in humility and love*, help any brothers or sisters who might be a little too obsessed with Pokémon Go.

## AMAZING NEWS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD

BY JON DYKSTRA



**M**innneapolis *Star Tribune* reporter Adam Belz called it "easily the biggest economics story of the past 30 years." So what is this huge story? The improving financial situation of the average Chinese citizen – as economist Max Roser tweeted, back in 1981 "9 in 10 Chinese lived in extreme poverty" while in 2010 only "1 in 10 Chinese lives in extreme poverty." Over the course 30 years roughly a billion people were moved up and out of a state of extreme poverty!

In that same period, in India, those living in extreme poverty went from over 5 in 10 to just 2 in 10, and Indonesia saw a drop from 7 in 10 to less than 2 in 10, which impacted hundreds of millions more.

Many in these countries and around the world are still desperately poor. But improvements are being made. When we hear about 84 people run over and killed in Nice, or 9 shot dead in Munich, it can seem as if everything is going from bad to worse. However, we need to recognize and thank God for the many blessings He continues to bestow. And good news that impacts a billion people is something to be thankful for indeed!

SOURCE: Max Roser's data is available at [OurWorldInData.org/world-poverty](http://OurWorldInData.org/world-poverty); graph by Max Roser and used under a Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 license



## POLITICIAN SHOWS FOOLISHNESS OF "GENDER DIVERSITY"

BY JON DYKSTRA



**T**his summer the Brandenburg State Parliament (in Germany) debated whether to create an action plan for, among other things, the acceptance of gender diversity. Now as every good storyteller knows, the key to a gripping yarn is to show, rather than tell. So when parliamentarian Steffen Königer spoke out against the proposal, he made his point by giving a demonstration of the sort of foolishness the bill would promote. It was as if he said, "You want diversity? I'll give you diversity!" So he began by giving a greeting to more than 50 supposed genders.

Dear Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Homosexuals, dear Lesbians, dear Androgynes, dear Bi-genders, dear Female-to-males, dear Male-to-females, dear Gender-variables, dear Gender-queers, dear Intersexuals, dear "Neither"-genders, dear Asexuals, dear Non-binaries, dear Pan-genders and Pansexuals, dear Trans-males and Trans-men, dear Trans-females and Trans women, dear Trans-humans, dear Trans-with-\*(gender star), dear Trans \*females and Trans\*women, dear Trans \*males and Trans\*men, dear Trans-humans, dear-Trans-feminines, dear Transsexual persons, dear Inter\*females, dear Inter\*males...

At this point the Parliament's president interrupted: "Would you allow an interposed question?" Königer

replied, "But I'm not done with my introduction yet Mr. President. Sorry, no." And he continued:

Dear Inter\*men, dear Inter\*women, dear Inter\*humans, dear Inter-genders, dear Inter-sexuals, dear Dual-genders, dear Androgynes, dear

Hermaphrodites, dear Two-spirit third genders, dear 4th genders, dear XY-women, dear Bartsch (the German seems untranslatable), dear Gender-absent, dear Transvestites, dear Cross-gender, dear Zero-gender, and of course a warm welcome to all the "Other" genders....dear (male\_ or female\_) Mrs. or Mr. Nonnemacher, dear (male\_ or female\_) Mrs. or Mr. Baader, Dear (male\_ or female\_) Mrs. or Mr. Mus...

[My] party rejects your proposal. Thank you.

When the world wants madness, one good way to counter them is to take them seriously and give them exactly what they are asking for. Königer's 2-minute introduction and 5-second speech did just that, and it was met with smirks and laughter. He delivered it with restraint – he seems a dry wit – and with a twinkle in his eye. And despite the craziness being proposed, he did not whine, bemoan or otherwise despair. He was, in a word, winsome.

We can learn from his stunt. Like him, we can expose the world's foolishness with a smile. And then we can improve on his example, pointing our audience not simply away from the foolish lie, but towards God's precious truth!

SOURCE: Jacob Bojesson's "German politician trolls gender-identity debate greeting parliament in 60 genders" posted to DailyCaller.com on June 10; "German MP speaks out on diversity bill, addressing 60 genders" posted to RT.com on June 22; AFD Party press release (Google translated) "AFD Group rejects meaningless Action Plan" posted to AFD-fraktion-brandenburg.de on June 9; Picture is screenshot of AFD party video found on the AFD-Television YouTube channel, posted June

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# IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,  
AND NOT SO,  
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY JON DYKSTRA

## FREE AND FANTASTIC E-BOOKS

The four volumes of S.D. DeGraaf's *Promise and Deliverance* series are a very expensive and rare find because they haven't been in print for a decade or two. But these volumes would be very useful for parents and teachers who are trying to share the Bible stories with children. The set is a sort of commentary, or a set of outlines, for all the stories in the Bible, and done from a covenantal perspective. Maybe the best way to think of it would be as a sort of "cheat sheet" for parents – S.D. DeGraaf comes alongside parents to prepare us to teach these stories, this biblical history, to our children.

So here's the wonderful news - an e-book version of the whole set can be downloaded for free at [ReformationalPublishingProject.com](http://ReformationalPublishingProject.com)! Click on the "Paideia Books" link and then scroll down to the DeGraaf listings.

## FATHERHOOD FADING FROM THE BIBLE

In *Daddy Tried*, Tim Bayly shares the following chart to show how the "occurrence of words such as 'father,' 'fatherhood,' 'fatherless,' etc." have generally been on the decrease in popular Bible translations.

YEAR	TRANSLATION	# of father-words
1611	King James	1,720
1973	RSV	1,830
1984	NIV	1,727
1989	NRSV	1,185
1996	NLT	1,122
2002	The Message	1,022
2011	NIV 2011	1,338

Between the 1984 and 2011 editions of the *NIV*, translators dropped the word "'father' and its derivatives... 389 times." Is this a triumph of feminism over faithfulness? It does seem there is reason to suspect. Bayly also shares that some translations have bucked this trend, including the *NKJV*, the *ESV* and the *NASB*.

## IF YOU WERE TO INVENT A GOD...

There is one true God and many invented gods, and the inventions are easy to spot. Like most every bit of fiction, they are based on what the authors already knew. Consider the Greek and Romans gods: petty, combative, lustful and jealous, just like us. These gods had very human foibles and follies, only magnified.

But, as Charles Colson notes in his book *God and Government* the one true God is very different.

"...for those who insist that God is created by man, perhaps the most telling argument is to consider the nature and character of the God revealed in the Bible. If we were making up our own god, would we create one with such absolute demands for justice, righteousness, service, and self-sacrifice as we find in the biblical texts? (As someone has said, Moses didn't come down from the mountain with the Ten Suggestions!)

"Would Israel's powerful elite have concocted such declarations as, 'He defended the cause of the poor and needy...Is that not what it means to know me?' Would the pious New Testament religious establishment have created a God who condemned them for their own hypocrisy? Would even a zealous disciple have invented a Messiah who called His followers to sell all, give their possessions to the poor, and follow Him to their deaths? The skeptic who believes the Bible's human authors manufactured their God out of psychological need has not read the Scriptures carefully."

## TEACHING YOUR KIDS MEDIA LITERACY

"As your kids get a little older, if they want to spend time consuming media, get into the habit of rather than saying yes or no, instead say, 'Convince me.' Ask them to articulate why a specific TV show, movie, or game benefits their life in some way. This is not to be glib, but to really hear what they have to say. It forces them to not treat media time as a default mode, but to see it as a privilege that impacts their hearts and minds."

– Luke Gilkerson, in *Parenting the Internet Generation* (which you can download for free at [CovenantEyes.com/parenting-the-internet-generation](http://CovenantEyes.com/parenting-the-internet-generation))

## THE QUOTABLE CHURCHILL

Britain's bulldog was never short of witticisms worth pondering.

- "The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter."
- "In politics when you are in doubt what to do, do nothing... when you are in doubt what to say, say what you really think."
- "The inherent vice of Capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings. The inherent virtue of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries."
- "Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount. And the tigers are getting hungry."

# business is beautiful

## *How do you view your business?*

by Jason Bouwman

If you are an average healthy, able-bodied North American you will spend at least half of all the waking hours in your life at work (which, for most of us, is a separate place and community from what we call “home”). You will spend the majority of the remaining available hours engaging the marketplace in some way. Given that level of involvement, it’s remarkable how negative our outlook often is of work, business and the marketplace.

Work continues to receive a bad rap. The world of business is often characterized as a cold, calculating, sometimes cutthroat place where relationships are exploitative and largely dysfunctional. We might be tempted to think that, at its best, doing business should be nothing more than money changing hands.

Terms like “work/life balance” indicate a prevalent notion that there is no life at work. Rather life is something we escape to after work. Similarly, a saying like “living for the weekend” would indicate that we view work as

an unfortunate but necessary detour on our way to our real life. And if we’re fortunate enough to not be suffering through feelings of drudgery, perhaps we’re still at a loss as to the meaning of it all.

In the Christian community especially – how many Christ followers haven’t had an inferiority complex about their work; as if church ministry was somehow a better or more faithful endeavour than whatever it is that they put their mind to from 8 AM to 5 PM each day? How many console themselves with the idea that the work they do provides funds for ministry which is where the “real meaningful” work in our world is done?

*Terms like  
“work/life balance”  
indicate a prevalent  
notion that there is  
no life at work.*

### **A NECESSARY EVIL?**

But is that really true? Is ministry the only way to really obey the Great Commandment and Great Commission? Is business only a necessary evil in the process?

Consider what James K.A. Smith, editor of *Comment* magazine once wrote.



## Our work is a prime opportunity for us to create beauty.

When we spend our money, we are not just consuming commercial goods, we are also fostering and perpetuating ways of being human. To be a patron is to be a selector, an evaluator, and a progenitor of certain forms of cultural life. You didn't realize that you exercised such power did you? Our entire lives, including the purchases we make and the businesses we patronize, tell a story.

If we are impacting culture – if we are telling a story – as *patrons*, then wouldn't we be doing the very same as *producers*? Our businesses are also an opportunity to impact the world around us. Consider the influence we can have in our business life with:

- our employees, customers, contractors and suppliers,
- the entrepreneurs we encourage
- the business leaders we meet
- the organizations we build,
- the products we develop,
- the work we produce,
- the services we deliver,
- the way we serve our customers and
- the way we cooperate with each other at work.

All of this too, reflects what it is to be human. All of this too is “ministry.” Our work is a prime opportunity for us to create beauty. Not a superficial surface beauty but the kind of beauty that flows out of love. The kind of

beauty that reveals something “other.” Business is an opportunity for beauty. Makato Fujimura, founder of the International Arts Movement, says:

Human beings cannot live for a long time in a place bereft of beauty. We hunger for beauty if we are robbed of it. True beauty nurtures our deepest longings.

Our time spent at work and in the marketplace has an impact. All the time and all the resources available to us on the job and all the activities we engage in offer us an amazing opportunity to meet not just people's physical needs but also their deepest needs and influences our understanding of what is to be human in the process.

Fujimura continues...

In our pragmatism, beauty and art have been exiled to the peripheral realities of our culture and our business environments.

So we can approach work as something to be endured. Or we can see it as an opportunity to encourage something beautiful. Love transforms our businesses from cold, hard utilitarian structures into powerful catalysts for human flourishing.

Our leadership – creativity – innovation – organization – resources and the power we're each given, everything in the world of business tells a story. When love for God and neighbour is the driving force in our life – including our businesses – the story that that tells addresses our fellow man's deepest longings.

Because when love drives our business, “business is beautiful.” RP

*Jason Bouwman is the founder of Compass Creative (CompassCreative.ca).*



At Compass Creative, our team has a philosophy that we've been exploring for some time. It is expressed simply as this: “Live artfully.” This simple idea challenges us to a more intentional way of life and to season our work with beauty and love. To “live artfully” is to care deeply and to bring joy to others. Living artfully is living in step with the Spirit so that indeed our lives reflect the truth and beauty of our Father.

### APPLICATION:

- 1 How do you view your business? Do you see it as beautiful or a necessary evil? Why?
- 2 Discuss your perspective of business with a friend or colleague. What is their feedback to you on your perspective of how you view your business?
- 3 What steps can you take to help you and others see that, by design, business can be beautiful?

# RECOGNITION

**I**t is a good thing to be known, that is to say, to be familiarly recognized. When someone greets you by your first name and gives you a smile, it is generally an indication that this particular person knows you and is fond of you. My mother-in-law, who knew a great many people, had the strange knack of addressing people whose names had slipped her mind by saying, "Hello, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_," filling in the blank with something unintelligible. That something unintelligible could be interpreted as a possible pronunciation for their name. It was very amusing, but something which I've never attempted to pull off myself.

## SHEEP KNOW THEIR SHEPHERD

There are several amazing videos on YouTube which feature sheep which come running to their master's voice – a voice they know and recognize.

Consequently, when a shepherd comes to the door of a sheepfold where his sheep are bedded down together with other sheep and he calls out, his sheep will stand up, come towards him, and follow him. They will only follow his voice. They will not follow someone else's voice. J. Douglas MacMillan, (1933-1991), had twelve years of experience as a shepherd before he became a pastor. In his excellent book on the twenty-third Psalm, *The Lord Our Shepherd*, he wrote:

I remember one day, almost three years after I had left my shepherding to go to Edinburgh to study, that I was back home for summer holidays, and working with my brother. We were looking at lambs in one sheep pen that had been separated from their mother in another pen, and I was standing with my hands just dangling idly by my side, admiring some of the lambs and despairing of others.

Suddenly I felt a sheep's nose nuzzling into my hand. I looked down, and there was a sheep almost five years old – a sheep that for six

months I had looked after as a lamb, taking it home to the farm and feeding it with a bottle every so often. Although it went back to the hill after six months, that sheep would always come for me. The other sheep knew their shepherd, but they would not come as close as that to him. But this one would. That sheep had not seen me for almost three years. She was in from the hill, and she lived on a part of the hill that was almost three miles away from the farm. I was standing with my brother, and he had been the shepherd for three years. Yet I looked around and here she was! I was thrilled. Why? Because she knew me; and she was letting me know that she knew me."

## FORGOTTEN

Conversely, it is unpleasant not to be known.

More than a century ago, in 1884 to be exact, the Bristol newspaper, *The Western Daily Press* published an interesting article about a case of mistaken identity, a case of not being known. A rather frightening piece, it describes a visit to a lunatic asylum by an unnamed woman.

It appears that this woman, whom we will name Susan, travelled to the town of Littlemore, a small hamlet some four miles from Oxford, to visit a friend who had been committed to the Littlemore Asylum. The Asylum had been founded

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green; He leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.

by Christine Farenhorst



in 1846. From its onset its buildings were criticized as being inadequate (but it remained open until 1996). Throughout the nineteenth century, Oxford received payments from other counties for looking after their patients. As ill people arrived from a number of other boroughs throughout the year, Littlemore Asylum was often overcrowded and treatment was at times not what it ought to be. Confinement, restraint, padded cells, and rough handling were all par for the course if patients proved recalcitrant. So, in any case, Susan found out.

Susan knocked at the door of the Asylum hoping to visit and find her friend on the road to recovery. The porter admitted her cheerfully enough when she told him she was to “visit a female patient” and called one of the matrons. The matron, however, perhaps being somewhat hard of hearing, only caught the latter part of the porter’s words as he introduced the visitor - those latter words being “female patient.”

Susan was escorted, quite unaware as to what had been established in the matron’s mind, to one of the top floors of the Asylum, in the belief that she was being led to see her friend. When she and the matron, rather out of breath from the long climb up the stairs, entered a room empty of everything save a bathtub and a bed, Susan was a trifle taken aback. Perhaps she thought the room was a waiting room, although the tub and bed were strange, and she walked into it with a puzzled expression on her face.

“Where is...?” she began, turning to face the matron whom she believed to be behind her.

But the matron was gone and Susan perceived that the door to the room she had entered was closing. As a matter of fact, she could hear the click of a key turning the lock. She was perplexed, and walking back towards it, she turned the handle, becoming rather distraught when it would not give.

“Excuse me! Please open the door!”

But no one came and thinking the situation rather ridiculous, Susan strode over to the window, gazing out at grounds below. She was on the fourth or fifth floor. She could not remember which.

A number of stone buildings comprised the Asylum and she appeared to be at its center. She clutched her purse and turned back towards the door. She tried the handle again, but it still would not give. Her voice, when she repeatedly cried out to be freed, appeared weak and ineffectual. It echoed somewhat freakishly against the whitewashed walls of the room. There was no chair on which to sit down and Susan meandered over to the window again. What should she do?

After some ten minutes of waiting, minutes that seemed like hours, the door handle finally turned, the door reopened and a nurse entered.

“Oh, I’m so happy to see you,” Susan exclaimed, stepping quickly towards the rather heavy-set woman, “You see, there’s been some sort of mistake. I was...”

The woman did not speak. She was a trained professional, used to handling inmates. The door had once more closed behind her and she proceeded to begin to undress Susan.

“What are you doing?” the distraught girl called out.

“Calm down,” the nurse soothed, “it’s all right.”

Another nurse came in. Helping the first one, who was a strong woman, they brooked no opposition. All Susan’s protestations were hushed gently but firmly and Susan ended up being placed in the bath. She was in a frantic state of alarm. She knew no one in this place except the woman whom she had intended to visit.

It only took two signatures to get someone admitted to a lunatic asylum. Some of the reasons for admission were, interestingly enough, hereditary predisposition, hysteria, dissolute habits, epileptic fits, imaginary female trouble, opium habit, overstudy of religion, snuff eating, etc. There were, in effect, four classifications for lunacy: mania, melancholia, dementia and paranoia. Treatment was mostly restraint, seclusion and sedative drugs. Lunacy institutions were not pleasant places to be and they were not easy to leave once a “patient” had been admitted. One third of the patients who entered the hospital, never came out.

After the bath, Susan was forcibly put

to bed. Her nerves were fraught with fear, her hair matted, and her demeanor very much shaken. Overcome, she gave up her struggle and lay quietly. Providentially, the mistake was discovered later that day – whether it was through a talk with the porter who noticed that Susan had not exited when visiting hours were over, or through the initial matron’s perusal of admission papers. In any case, she was taken out of the bed, dressed with care and apologized to profoundly and abundantly. It was to her credit that Susan did not lodge any complaint against the hospital. She had not been known and she had not known anyone in the asylum.

## TO KNOW THAT YOU KNOW HIM

It is indeed a good thing to be known, that is to say, to be familiarly recognized. At the same time, it is also a good thing to know. In that same wonderful, little book on Psalm 23, Pastor MacMillan wrote about the Shepherd knowing the sheep as well as the sheep knowing the Shepherd. He said:

It is a great thing to have personal assurance in the Christian life. Now, that personal assurance of David’s is not ill-founded: he knows the Shepherd, and he *knows* that he knows Him. That is where the Christian’s assurance rests - not only in the fact of knowing that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but in the fact that we *know* we know. I say that because I believe it is possible for grace to come into a life, and for that life to go on without always knowing it for certain. I have met people who seem to lack Christian assurance, and yet I and others see the grace and the work of God’s Spirit in them. They know the Saviour, but they don’t always know that they know Him. It is a great blessing not merely to know the Saviour but to know that you know Him, so that you can say, “The Lord is *my* Shepherd.”

*Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me;  
And in God’s house for evermore  
My dwelling-place shall be.*

(Scottish Psalter, 1650)

RP





# THE BIBLE AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## (A Transcript)

by Mark Shaw

*The following is a transcript of a Feb. 21, 2016 Truth in Love podcast available at [BiblicalCounseling.com/resources/truth-in-love](http://BiblicalCounseling.com/resources/truth-in-love) and used here with permission.*

**Dr. Heath Lambert:** Addiction is a common problem, in fact, for me it has been more than a common problem. My mother who died several years ago battled alcohol addiction for most of her life; she was enslaved to alcohol for over twenty years. As a little boy on up into my teens, I have been to dozens and dozens and dozens of meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). I am thankful for all the good things that AA brought into my Mom's life to cause her ultimately to stop drinking, but it raises the question, what is a biblical response to addiction? What is a biblical understanding of AA?

To help us address this very important issue, I have invited to the podcast this week, Mark Shaw. Mark

is the Executive Director of Vision of Hope and a pastor at Faith Church in Lafayette, Indiana. He is also an ACBC certified counselor and is the author of *The Heart of Addiction*. Mark, we are glad you are with us and as we think through this issue of addiction and AA, the word addiction is really not a word that we find in the Scriptures. How should Christians think biblically about that idea?

**Mark Shaw:** I think words are very important and they are like sign posts; they point us in a direction. I think about 1 Corinthians 2:13 that says,

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual

truths to those who are spiritual.

So with biblical language in regards to words like "addiction," – I use that in my book title – and words like "relapse" and "alcoholism"; I use those words sometimes to help people know what the problem is. Then, when I write about it in my books like *The Heart of Addiction* I talk about a biblical, habitual sin nature problem and one of idolatry and of sin rather than as the world characterizes addiction.

**Dr. Lambert:** How does the world characterize addiction that is different than what the Bible understands as a habitual sin?

*...the word addiction is really not a word that we find in the Scriptures.*

**Shaw:** These words are sign posts and so they point people, I think, to a disease outside of themselves; to a problem that is not me, it is not really who I am, it is my disease. It is this thing outside of them rather than recognizing it as their own sinful problem that they need Christ to forgive them of and to begin the transformation process in their own hearts.

**Dr. Lambert:** Ok, so if that is what a biblical understanding of addiction is, then help us understand Alcoholics Anonymous; what is AA?

**Shaw:** AA is a program that started in the 1930's by a couple of guys: Dr. Bob and Bill Wilson. They started this program and really watered down some biblical teaching and biblical truth; no other way to say it than they just watered it down to make it more appealing to other people. So, you will hear some people who say that there are biblical truths in AA and in the organization's *Big Book*, and that kind of thing, which undoubtedly are true; there are some biblical truths there but they don't go far enough.

For example, one is that you admit that you are an alcoholic or you admit that you have a problem. Admission is good but confession is what the Bible says we should do. That is admission plus taking it the next step further of confessing it to a holy God that you have sinned against Him, that you need Christ's forgiveness, and that you need this transformation to work in your heart by the Holy Spirit. There are words that they use that are good like "admission" and "making amends" and that kind of thing, but biblical truths are more excellent. Biblical truths point to the whole wisdom of God and so I think half-truths in AA can be dangerous for people.

**Dr. Lambert:** Ok, so let's talk about that for a little bit because there are going to be a lot of people listening to this podcast who have had some kind of experience with AA. This is an organization that has effected and impacted untold millions of people.

I mentioned at the top of the podcast that my mother went to AA for years and years and years. I have been in more AA meetings than I know how to count. "Keep coming back, it works." "It works if you work it." "One day at a time." I have been there; I know the stuff. I am thankful, as many who are listening to this are thankful for the good fruit that has come into the lives of people through their interaction with AA. Yet, as biblically minded Christians, we want to have concerns about AA. Why should biblically minded Christians be concerned about AA?

**Shaw:** AA sets itself up as a spiritual program. So right there I have a moment of pause; ok this is a spiritual program, but if you read the *Big Book* and what it teaches the only higher powers that it mentions are like an enlightenment and something other than Jesus. By the very definition of the program it is a higher power of your own choosing. Well,

### 3 WAYS THE CHURCH CAN HELP ALCOHOLICS

In his article "A Reformed Critique of Alcoholics Anonymous" R. Scott Clark challenges the Church as to how it can help someone in their midst struggling with any sort of "life-dominating sin." He lists three ways in which the Church can support and encourage a repentant sinner.

#### 1. Alcoholics are sinners...just like us

"...we Christians must make a commitment to accepting the alcohol abuser into our midst, as someone no more or less dependent upon God's grace than we. If we as the visible community of the redeemed truly see ourselves as lost sinners saved by grace, then how can we not accept other sinners into our midst?"

#### 2. We must fight our sins together

"...we must make a commitment to dealing openly with one another about our sins. Here we need to reclaim territory we have conceded to AA. In an AA meeting there is usually a remarkable degree of openness in the meeting to one another....If someone is having a difficult time of it, he is encouraged to seek help from a qualified fellow member and even from the group as a whole. This seems to fit the situation envisioned by the Lord in Matthew 18.15-19 and by Paul in Colossians 3.16 and by James 5.16."

#### 3. We must really and sacrificially love each other

"...we must become available to serve one another. We are all sinners. Any sin could be life dominating. It is not necessary to be an alcoholic to serve the spiritual needs of the alcoholic. Part of [the AA] ministry requires the mature, sober alcoholic to go on call (much the way a doctor is on call) for a 24-hour period. When on call one's phone might ring day or night with call from a fellow member who is about to "fall off the wagon." Strong bonds of love and mutual encouragement are formed when one spends the night holding another's hand who is shaking and vomiting under withdrawal symptoms. Do we love one another in Christ as much as AA members love each other?"

#### Conclusion

As Clark makes clear, it is important that an alcoholic understand that he is struggling with a sin, not succumbing to a disease. And it is important that the Church act as God intends, supporting these struggling brothers and sisters in just the way that we would want to be supported ourselves.

Clark's article is well worth reading in full. It can be found at [Spindleworks.com/library/clark](http://Spindleworks.com/library/clark) where it is the last paper listed.

that is the very definition of idolatry. If I can choose a higher power then I can make anything my higher power and that is idolatry. Those are super huge concerns from my perspective about being careful to send people to this so called spiritual program that says any god will do; we know there is only one true God.

Then when you go to meetings, and you [Lambert] have been, they say things like, “we are spiritual people, but those people who go to church, they are religious people.” “We are spiritual, they are religious.” It is characterizing you and I as though we are Pharisees; we are the rule-followers without the compassion and love of Christ.

That is just unfair. My concern for biblical counselors is when you send people to these programs, don’t assume that this is a Christian program and that the teachings and the writings – the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Promises, the Twelve Steps – are going to point them to Christ because as I said in the beginning, the words that they choose really point people away from Christ to more of a medical solution and to more of just a worldly, secular mindset. Those are some of the dangers and concerns that I have with the program.

**Dr. Lambert:** Many Christians have come to see that there are imperfections and significant problems in AA and so there have been efforts to try to rehabilitate AA with some kind of Christianized version; we think of programs like Celebrate Recovery. Should Christians try to rehabilitate or rescue Alcoholics Anonymous by getting rid of the bad parts and trying to insert some Christian elements into it?

**Shaw:** Yeah, I had a friend once tell me, “When does a lie ever added to truth make the truth better, and when does the truth ever added to a lie make the lie into pure truth?” Well, it doesn’t happen.

So, I like to start with truth, I like

to start with the Scriptures, I like to proclaim the excellencies of Christ and point people to the riches of the Bible. I understand there are well meaning people that are in these programs and they are doing their best and maybe it is all that is out there in their minds. I would rather just start with teaching Scripture, teaching the Word, teaching about idolatry, sin, ruling heart issues and address those matters with these people who struggle with addiction rather than using programs that kinda mix them; the world’s teaching with the truth of God’s Word. I don’t think oil and water mix, I don’t think it can be done; it confuses people and it may lead them down the wrong path.


**Dr. Lambert:** So I mentioned that my mom went to AA. In my memory as a little boy, I think she started going to AA about the time I was seven and finally was sober for what would turn out to be the rest of her life by the time I was twelve. So it took about five years for the things that were working in AA to be able to take hold. I am very thankful for that. When she went to the last rehab center they all said she was at death’s door; she nearly drank herself to death.

It was interesting because from the time I was twelve to the time I was twenty-five, my mom was a miserable person. She was what her friends in AA called “a dry drunk.” She was angry; she was sad; she was promiscuous. She was one of just the nastiest people I have ever met. She was able to keep a job, she was able to keep a roof over her head unlike when she was drinking, but she wasn’t a better person. In fact, me and my brothers use to seriously wish that she would go back to drinking because you could at least live with her. When she wasn’t drunk you couldn’t live with her when she was this way.

The reason I mention that is because what happened when I was

twenty-five was I shared the gospel with my mother for the umpteenth time, but she believed. She repented of her sins and believed, and heart change began to happen. She began to be a qualitatively different person. So for me it was this powerful demonstration – I am thankful for the good things that AA did, but really AA didn’t take my mom very far; it taught her to go to hell more efficiently. It cleaned up her life but she was still going to hell; she was not a changed person. It was the power of Jesus Christ in the Word of God that really brought her the rest of the way. What is it that the Bible adds that is so superior to the Twelve Steps?

**Shaw:** Well, the Bible talks about our sin, our need for Christ, and that the transformation process is progressive; that we become like Christ. You know, transformation, we have been transformed in justification, we are being transformed and in sanctification, we will be transformed in glorification and in the AA program, in the Twelve Steps, you won’t hear anything about Jesus Christ, you won’t hear anything about confession of sin. You admit you are wrong but you don’t confess sin, certainly not to a holy God, because you are picking a god of your own choosing and of your own understanding. If I choose God, then who is really God? It is me; I am in that position of authority.

So the Bible gives us lots of biblical truth that moves us and grows us in a deeper way and in an eternal way rather than the Twelve Step program. Which, I agree has some helpful teaching and some things in it that can really help people to be clean and sober, but our goal is not to be clean and sober, our goal is to be like Jesus for God’s glory and that part is missing in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. 

*Mark Shaw is the author of The Heart of Addiction, and Addiction-Proof Parenting.*





# THE ETHICAL ISSUE OF TRANSSEXUALITY

by Dr. Greg Bahnsen

*Editor's note: though this is 20 years old, it is just as relevant today as when it was written.*

A correspondent recently requested that I share some Biblical insight on the issue of transsexualism, an increasing and bizarre phenomenon of our sex-crazed and sex-confused age. Only recent medical technology has made it possible for a male to undergo surgery which will change "him" anatomically into a female (and vice versa). Does the ancient law of God help us draw any ethical evaluation of such a thing? The correspondent asked whether such surgery changes a person's standing in terms of God's commandments. (Is "he/she" free to marry? Should "he/she" be encouraged in the newly assumed sexual role?) Should a post-operative transsexual be counseled from Scripture to restore "his/her" former status? How should the church be involved?

In reply I pointed out that although my book, *Homosexuality: A Biblical View* (Baker Book House, 1978), does not directly address the issue of transsexualism, it does offer us by implication an ethical evaluation of such a thing. Scripture clearly teaches us that it is an abomination in God's eyes to pursue or even to desire sexual relations with a person of one's own gender. Such a desire is in effect a desire to be a member of the opposite sex (who would, as such, properly qualify as a sex partner for one's own gender). Thus the condemnation of homosexuality would reasonably apply to transsexual desires and behavior as

well (as they pertain, at least, to sexual conduct and interests).

But Scripture speaks more directly to the ethical issue of transsexualism as well. We can see this by first taking note of the fact that a male does not truly become a female by means of any surgical procedure now practiced.

Part of one's sexual identity as a male or female is one's biological part and function in bringing about children. "Male and female created He them.... and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful and multiply'" (Gen. 1:27-28).

This is only part of one's sexual identity, to be sure. And sadly, for some individuals this aspect of their bodily identity does not function in a healthy or normal fashion (e.g., impotent males, barren females). Moreover, one may have the normal function and choose to keep it from coming to issue (e.g., abstinence, vasectomy, tubal ligation). Nevertheless, speaking as to the nature of the gender classification, to be a male (ideally or according to divine intention) entails the ability to impregnate, and to be a female (ideally) entails the ability to bear a child. Those who undergo sex-change operations do not fundamentally "change" their sexuality since they do not acquire impregnating or child-bearing abilities, as the case may be (this having nothing to do with a voluntary choice not to do so).

What are we to think of someone who has undergone a surgical change of anatomy, then? At best, the person who has a sex-change operation is involved in an elaborate and extreme

game of "dressing up" as the other gender (acquiring bodily parts which facilitate an outward costume). Here we have a bizarre biological masquerade.

Now then, when transsexualism is seen in this perspective, the Bible all of a sudden speaks directly and obviously to it as an ethical issue. Deuteronomy 22:5 declares: "A woman shall not wear what pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever does these things is an abomination unto Jehovah your God."

If true in the lesser case (items of clothing), how much more in the greater (items of biology)! The condemnation of cross-dressing covers crossing over sexually as well. A person who has undergone a sex-change operation but the later comes to Christian conversion needs to repent of this (as any other) sin and do the works appropriate to repentance. This would involve "getting back" to where they belong sexually (thus seeking a reversal operation), hating all desires to be other than what God has made them sexually, and seeking to live in a godly fashion as the male/female they were created to be. The church must counsel and support the converted transsexual in these things, as it helps all other kinds of sinners. RP

*This article was first published in the June, 1995 issue of Penpoint (Vol. VI:6) and is reprinted with permission of Covenant Media Foundation, which hosts and sells many other Dr. Bahnsen resources on their website [www.cmfnow.com/](http://www.cmfnow.com/)*



"...five tons of slick black and white launching out of the water with implausible ease"

# BIOLOGY VS. EVOLUTION

A new book explains why doubting Darwin is a matter of common sense

by Jon Dykstra

There's no shortage of books poking holes in evolution, but books that blow it up are more rare. But even among the second sort Douglas Axe's *Undeniable* is special – he explains why evolution isn't merely wrong, but is so completely inadequate an explanation for life's origins that even children can see through it.

## ON INTUITION

In Romans 1:20 God tells that through His creation He has made His presence known to all – none have an excuse. So it shouldn't surprise us that from the earliest age children intuitively disbelieve Darwin's theory. Axe quotes Berkley professor Alison Gopnik speaking on the challenge for teachers of evolution:

By elementary-school age children start to invoke an ultimate God-like designer

to explain the complexity of the world around them – even children brought up as atheists.

And it isn't only children who see God behind creation. Trained, and evolution-professing, scientists also have problems denying what they intuitively know to be so. Deborah Kelemen, a psychology professor is quoted explaining:

Even though advanced scientific training can reduce acceptance of scientifically inaccurate teleological explanations, it cannot erase a tenacious early-emerging human tendency to find purpose in nature.

Or, in other words, even those who claim that everything came about without purpose or design have a hard time talking that way. They keep speaking about

evolution as if it had intent.

Why is that?

It's because it's hard *not* to see how well crafted creation is. We're confronted with the undeniable reality that the marvelous animals we see – from the salmon to the spider to the orca – are so amazing and polished and complete. When an evolutionist looks at an orca whale breaking out of the ocean surface – "five tons of slick black and white launching out of the water with implausible ease" – he has to profess that this wonder is merely the current manifestation of a creature that was radically different in the past, and will be radically changed in the future. They have to insist there is nothing especially whole, or finished, about how it is *now*. But we all know better. As Axe puts it, "some things are so good that they cannot be other than what they are." An orca is not incomplete – it is a finished work of art.

This intuition is available to all. As he's said elsewhere, even a child can spot holes like this. For example, they know:

The same instantaneous reasoning that tells us origami cranes can't happen by accident tells us real cranes can't either — not even in billions of years.

## ON WHY EVOLUTION IS A NON-STARTER

There has always been a gaping hole in evolutionary theory. Back in 1904, in his book *Species and Varieties: Their Origin by Mutation*, a Dutchman, botanist Hugo De Vries, pointed out:

Natural selection may explain the *survival* of the fittest, but it cannot explain the *arrival* of the fittest.

It's no different today:

[Evolutionist Dan Tawfik's] own diagnosis...is admirably frank: "Evolution has this catch-22: Nothing evolves unless it already exists."

As Axe puts it,

What's left of a theory of origins once it has been conceded that it doesn't explain how things originate?

## WHAT EVOLUTION LACKS

Axe is a microbiologist, and as such has done research on the limits of what natural selection can do with enzymes. Try as they might, biologists can't get innovation even on this tiny scale — enzymes will *not*, via random processes, come up with *new* abilities. And if evolution fails on this microscopic scale why would we think it can do bigger things?

The claim that evolution *did* invent proteins, cell types, organs, and life forms is scientifically legitimate only if we know evolution *can* invent these things. Consequently our demonstration of evolutionary incompetence for an example of the least of these inventions — a new function for an existing enzyme

— undercuts the whole project of inferring evolutionary histories. If nothing *can* evolve its way into existence, then nothing *did*.

Evolution isn't living up to its big claims. Axe gives an apt analogy:

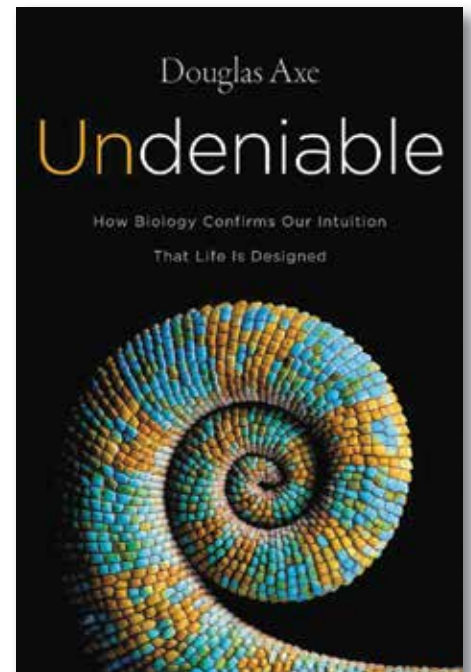
Imagine a group of people insisting that a certain man can jump to the moon. We, being skeptical, challenge this man to dunk a basketball, and we find that he comes well short of reaching the rim. When we publish our findings, we get lots of complaints, all of the kind "We never said he could dunk a basketball...or at least not *that* kind of basketball, on *that* rim."

Yes, we can see finches get big beaks, and then return to having small ones. We can see dogs diverge into any number of different sizes and types. Natural selection can improve an enzyme's efficiency. But it can't make anything new. As Axe puts it, "As a finder of inventions, Darwin's evolutionary mechanism is a complete bust, but...it sometimes come in handy as a fiddler."

So how did we get the amazing abilities we have? While evolution claims we came about by a unintelligent, purposeless process we all know that:

*Invention can't happen by accident. Invention requires know-how, and there is no substitute for know-how.... What the inventor can do — seeing possibilities that are otherwise not there and seizing opportunities that only exist because they are imagined — cannot be done by accident.*

*"Evolution has this catch-22: Nothing evolves unless it already exists."*



## Undeniable: How Biology Confirms Our Intuition That Life is Designed

by Douglas Axe

274 pages / 2016

## THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK EVOLUTION CAN DO WONDERS

Perhaps the most remarkable claim the Theory of Evolution makes is that this unguided, unintelligent, uninspired process managed to do what even our most brilliant engineers, scientists and designers can't begin to do. At one point Axe compares one of the "more advanced products of human technology" with one of Creation's simplest creatures.

*Tavros 2* was designed to conduct month-long missions in the Gulf of Mexico, measuring and reporting water depth and temperature. What makes this vehicle particularly sophisticated is that it operates autonomously, under the complete control of its onboard computer. *Tavros 2* is programmed to rise to the surface when it needs a solar recharge, after which it dives to its previous location and resumes data collection.

This is a remarkable machine, designed and created by some of the world's most intelligent and clever people. But it pales in comparison to the common, tiny, cyanobacteria. Both are solar powered, but while the *Tavros 2* "needs a solar collector the size of a coffee table," its living rival



"does very well with a collector roughly *one-trillionth* that size."

The contrast becomes even more extreme when we consider the manufacturing capabilities. *Tavros 2* has none, whereas every cyanobacterium houses an entire manufacturing plant within its microscopic walls.

Axe goes on for 9 pages giving an overview (*only* an overview) of how much more complex and incredible the lowly cyanobacteria is than the *Tavros 2*, one of man's more impressive accomplishments.

So our best work, by our most brilliant designers, doesn't compare to the simple cyanobacteria that evolutionists say came about through mindless, purposeless, mutation and selection.

This is ridiculous.

Evolutionists point to time as their theory's savior - inventiveness on the scale of the cyanobacteria may seem impossible in the short term, but what if we add in countless trials and experiments conducted over millions of years?

What's behind this objection is only another example of why even a child can

know better than to believe in evolution. After all, from the earliest age we all know that, "Tasks that we would need knowledge to accomplish can be accomplished only by someone who has that knowledge." Even if we grant time and countless trials we still know ingenuity – especially on the scale of living things! – can't manifest itself. Creativity needs a creator. Inventions aren't created by accident.

The action of bulldozers moving junk heaps at the dump...may well cause a ball bearing to find a makeshift socket or a lever to find a crude fulcrum or a cable to wrap around a cylinder, but none of these simple arrangements do anything significant enough to rise above the junk. Not even on a trillion, trillion planets *covered* with junk would an accidental robot ever rise up and flee from the bulldozers, much less scurry around looking for parts to build a copy of itself.

## CONCLUSION

Axe set out to show that doubting Darwin is a matter of simple common sense, and he's done a good job of it. This

is going to be a pivotal book – the sort to get people riled up and talking for years to come.

Axe is an Intelligent Design proponent, not a creationist, but this is a book that creationists can embrace. His argument is that biology blows up evolution – to that we can all agree. Unlike most in the ID community, he isn't hesitant about naming God as the Intelligent Designer – that comes out clearly in the last quarter of the book.

This is an accessible book for anyone who has any appreciation for biology. He's written this for the non-scientist, and yes, there were a few spots where I found it tough slogging, but once I got through them the rest of the book was a breeze. I'd recommend this for anyone with an interest in biology and the evolution/creation debate – this is an exciting, and more than anything else, encouraging book. God has created all of life as a wonder beyond explanation! Axe wants us all to be confident that, no matter how much and how often mainstream science ridicules those who don't believe in evolution, it is the Darwin's doubters who are on solid *scientific* ground. RP

## MUTATIONS: A PROBLEM FOR EVOLUTION

by Jon Dykstra

In a talk he gave this past spring, geneticist Dr. John Sanford explained that there are two conflicting worldviews at battle in our culture:

- 1) we as a species are naturally going up
- 2) we as a species are naturally going down

The first is the theory of evolution: Mankind is supposed to be the end result of a long process of beneficial mutations that changed us – *improved* us – from our origins as single cell, simple, organisms, to become the incredibly complex creatures that we are today. We as a species are improving. The second is the Biblical worldview. After the Fall into Sin we know that the world was put under a curse. Things started off perfect, but are broken now. We as a species, like all of creation, are breaking down.

So which is it?

In his talk Dr. Sanford explained that the supposed driver of evolution – mutations – are hurting, not helping us. While an occasional beneficial mutation can happen, Sanford discovered that the rate at which we are mutating from one



generation to the next is so rapid that we as a species are not long for this world. These mutations are accumulating like rust does on a car. Just as a little rust doesn't harm a vehicle, so too a few mutations won't harm our genome much. But rust spreading across a car will eventually cause the whole vehicle to fall apart, and in this same way accumulating mutations are eventually going to do Mankind in. *Roughly 100 mutations are being passed on per generation* – we, as a species are going down. We are slowly rusting out.

Dr. Sanford's talk was part of *Darwin's Dead End*, a young earth creationist conference held this past spring. It is available online at [tinyurl.com/DarwinsDeadEnd](http://tinyurl.com/DarwinsDeadEnd). I've also posted his 1-hour presentation to the creationist blog [CreationWithoutCompromise.com](http://CreationWithoutCompromise.com). It is well worth a watch!

# OPERATIONAL VS. HISTORICAL SCIENCE

by John Byl and Tom Goss

*“Evolution is just a theory.  
Then again, so is gravity.”*  
– as seen on a t-shirt.

Is the theory of evolution like the theory of gravity? How are they different? This is just one of the topics that professors John Byl and Tom Goss cover in their book, *How Should Christians Approach Origins?* In this excerpt they note that there are two very different sorts of science happening here.

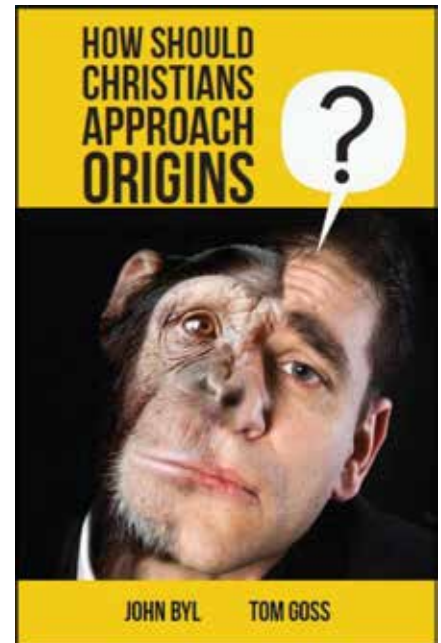
It is sometimes argued that it is inconsistent to use modern medicine and technology while rejecting evolution, since both are products of mainstream science. However, we must be careful to distinguish between two types of science: *operational science* and *historical science*.

1. **OPERATIONAL SCIENCE** is the experimental science done in the lab or in the field. It investigates repeatable events in the present. This concerns most of physics, chemistry, and biology, as well as observational geology, astronomy, and the like. It gives us all the science needed for technology, such as in developing smartphones, satellites, cars, planes, cures for diseases, and so on. It studies the present material reality and how it normally functions.
2. **HISTORICAL SCIENCE**, on the other hand, is concerned with extrapolating from present observations to the distant, unobserved, and unrepeatable past. This includes various theories and explanations in

archaeology, cosmology, historical geology, paleontology, biological evolutionary development, and so on.

These two types of science differ significantly:

1. Operational science aims to discover the universal laws by which nature generally operates, whereas historical science aims to establish ancient conditions or past causes. Operational science explains present events by reference to general laws, whereas historical science explains present events in terms of presumed past events.
2. Operational science calculates forward, deducing effects from causes, whereas historical science calculates backwards, inferring past causes from present clues. One problem here is that more than one possible historical cause can give rise to the same effect. For example, in a murder trial, the prosecution and defense may present very different historical scenarios to explain the material evidence.
3. Operational science assumes methodological naturalism. Since it is concerned with what normally happens, in the absence of miracles, it is reasonable to consider only natural causes. Historical science, on the other hand, seeks to find what actually happened in the past. Constraining ourselves to natural causes amounts to metaphysical naturalism – the further assumption that no miracles have in fact happened in the past.<sup>1</sup>



The well-known evolutionist Ernst Mayr acknowledged,

Evolutionary biology, in contrast with physics and chemistry, is a historical science – the evolutionist attempts to explain events and processes that have already taken place. Laws and experiments are inappropriate techniques for the explication of such events and processes. Instead one constructs a historical narrative, consisting of a tentative reconstruction of the particular scenario that led to the events one is trying to explain.<sup>2</sup>

In short, the scientific know-how needed to make smartphones is much better established than, say, the claim that humans evolved from [some chimp-like creature]. RP

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Meyer, *Signature in the Cell* (New York: NY, HarperCollins, 2009), 150–172.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Mayr, “Darwin’s Influence on Modern Thought,” *Scientific American*, November 24, 2009 (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/darwins-influence-on-modern-thought/>).

*This excerpt printed with permission. How Should Christians Approach Origins? can be found at Amazon.ca. Bulk inquiries can be directed to Tom Goss at [tgoss@rogers.com](mailto:tgoss@rogers.com)*



# THE CHRISTIAN JOB DESCRIPTION

by Paul Tripp

**W**hen I was a young seminary student, I had to read an extensive commentary by a Dutch theologian.

I had never studied Dutch writing before, and I really struggled to understand the syntax.

I asked an older student for help, and he directed me to an annotated outline of another theologian who had dissected the work of my Dutch theologian. But when I picked up this outline, I discovered it was longer and more complex than the original work I was studying!

## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

During my years of academic study and pastoral ministry, I've found that it's natural for us to overcomplicate the stunningly simple faith to which we've been called. Is theology and doctrine important? Of course it is – I would never minimize its value – but I think we've interpreted the Christian life as more complex than the Bible describes.

Today, I want to go back to the basics. I'm not suggesting that we do anything radical, like trash all our commentaries, but I just want to read Scripture verse by verse and see what it says about the way we're supposed to live.

The text that I love to go back to again and again is 1 Peter 2:11-12.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)

How are Christians supposed to live? There are three key attributes to what I call "The Christian Job Description."



## 1. Exist As Aliens

**"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles..."**

A sojourner is one on a journey or pilgrimage, moving towards a final destination and temporarily pausing at a location. An exile is a person residing in a location that's not his or her original and desired homeland. That's me and you. This earth is not where we, as Christians, should call home. Eternity is our home. Forever is coming.

But here's the problem: you and I have grown too comfortable in our temporary home. We like the materialism and pleasure-orientation of Western culture. We measure success by the square footage of our house, the number of options on our luxury vehicle, the size of our retirement package, the quality of our cuisine and the letters after our name.

If we want to live like true, Biblical Christians, we'll live like aliens. That doesn't mean we'll be anti-social and live in monasteries, but we'll exist with a different set of values. We'll think long-term - 10,000 years into eternity long term. Our good days will be good days because the Kingdom of God is advancing, not because we're experiencing a little more temporary pleasure than yesterday.

Are you living like an alien? Do you wake up every morning and long for Forever? Or have you grown too comfortable in this temporary sojourn?

## 2. Fight As Soldiers

**"Abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul..."**

I don't know if you feel it or not, but there's a war of desire raging on the turf of your soul every day. Whether its in your marriage, with your kids, at your workplace, with your neighbor or during the privacy of your personal entertainment choices, there will be two desires competing for control of your heart, which in turn will affect your words and actions.

In the mundane moments of everyday interactions, the passions of the flesh (sin) will fight to control your heart.

Simultaneously, the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God will be battling for the purity of your soul. These battles won't be won in dramatic Hollywood fashion with swords and shields, but by saying "No!" ten thousand times to your sinful desires.

If we want to live like true, Biblical Christians, we'll live like warriors. I don't mean aggressive and violent, trying to overthrow any external authority figure that doesn't believe the Bible. No, with humble and perseverant abstinence, we'll take seriously the sin that exists inside our hearts and not allow it to control of words and actions.

Are you living like a soldier? Do you wake up every morning and get ready to do battle? Or have you grown too passive, surrendering to the passions of the flesh?

## 3. Represent As Ambassadors

**"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable..."**

The job of an ambassador is to consistently and intentionally represent a leader who isn't physically present. In the same way, you and I are always "on call" - there's never a moment in life, whether its on vacation, at work, in your neighborhood, shopping at the store, working out at the gym, or whatever, where we aren't called to live with a ministry mentality and an ambassadorial attitude.

We are Gospel plumbers, Gospel teachers, Gospel lawyers, Gospel doctors, Gospel musicians, Gospel salesmen, Gospel moms and dads and Gospel neighbors. We're motivated by a single passion: that somehow and in some way, God would use our lives to accurately depict the truths of the Gospel and lead people to saving and liberating faith.

If we want to live like true, Biblical Christians, we'll live like ambassadors. We'll speak carefully with God-honoring words. We'll live admirably with Christ-honoring actions. We won't treat our lives as our own, but live instead for the King of Kings.

Are you living like an ambassador?

*What about you this week? Will you live like a true, Biblical Christian?*


Do you wake up every morning and consider that your words and actions represent Christ? Or have you taken your life in your own hands, representing occasionally and on your own terms?

## NOT QUALIFIED

Let me confess something to you. I don't always live with a destination mentality; I don't always live with a wartime mentality; I don't always live with an ambassadorial mentality. I indulge too much in the pleasures of this world and measure my success by earthly standards. I grow too comfortable with my sin and think it's not as destructive as it is. I don't step out in faith as often as I should and share the Gospel with those God has placed in front of me.

If I had to apply for the job of Christian, it wouldn't take Human Resources long to see that I'm not qualified! But being a Christian isn't about applying for the job; it's about receiving the gift of grace, living in obedience and following the example of Christ.

In every way, this passage points to Jesus. He was the ultimate exile; foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58). He was the ultimate soldier, valiantly sacrificing his life to conquer sin and death (Colossians 2:15). He was the ultimate ambassador, coming down from heaven to do the will of the Father who sent him (John 6:38).

What about you this week? Will you live like a true, Biblical Christian? 

*This article was originally posted to [www.PaulTripp.com](http://www.PaulTripp.com) and is reprinted here with permission of the author.*



We need to be willing to cause trouble by asking pointed clever questions.

# "Miss? I have a question..."

## Why won't safe-sex advocates advocate safe-sex?

by Rob Slane

A few months ago, the BBC reported on a rise in a new strain of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), which are proving to be resistant to treatment. Here is an extract from their report:

Doctors have expressed "huge concern" that super-gonorrhea has spread widely across England and to gay men. Public Health England acknowledges measures to contain the outbreak have been of "limited success" and an official said:

"The huge growth in sexually transmitted infections has come

about as a result of promiscuous lifestyles. Previous advice has been about encouraging people to practice safe sex but I'm afraid this hasn't worked in the past and it's not working now. The only truly safe-sex approach that will stop the spread of STIs is rediscovering the idea of pre-marital chastity and a lifelong commitment to marriage."

Okay, so she didn't really say that. You can relax again and take a deep breath, fully reassured that our culture hasn't actually discovered a dose of sanity. That would be really disorientating, wouldn't it?

What the head of the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) unit at Public Health England, Dr. Gwenda Hughes, actually said, according to the real BBC report<sup>1</sup>, is that we should be "encouraging people to practice safe-sex to minimize the risk of STIs."

Okay, so Dr. Hughes wants to *minimize* the risk of STIs. That's good. We can probably all assent to that. But what's the best way of actually *minimizing* the risk of STIs? According to Dr. Hughes, it is for people to "practice safe-sex", by which she means that people should protect themselves when they go about their promiscuous lifestyles.

But is this the safest way? If not, why didn't she mention what that is?

### A CALL FOR TROUBLEMAKERS

I imagine a teenager in a sex education lesson asking the following question: "Miss. Assuming I take precautions, would it be safer for me to have three partners or 300?"

No brainer of course, and even the most progressive of teachers would have to admit that three is "safer" than 300. Simple mathematical probabilities this one: the lower the number, the "safer the sex."

In which case a really mischievous teenager – a true rebel you might say – might ask the following question:

"Miss, is it safer to only have one partner for life, or multiple? And if it's one – which it is – and if this is a safe-sex lesson – which it is – why do you not advocate it?"

But of course Miss can't advocate it, even if Miss privately knows it to be true, for fear of something that apparently involves clocks and their being turned back. However, in reality Miss can breathe a sigh of relief; she is unlikely to have to undergo the embarrassing ordeal of being asked such hard questions since the number of truly rebellious teenagers prepared to challenge modern orthodoxy is not really very high.

### THE COUNTER ARGUMENT

Now I know the counter argument. It runs something like this: about 60 per cent of teenagers who pledge to remain celibate until they are married end up engaging in pre-marital sex and are one-third less likely to use contraceptives than their peers who have received sex education. Well that's what Wikipedia says at any rate. So this proves that abstinence programs don't work and therefore it is better to deal with the reality and try to prevent STIs through safe-sex education.

If ever you heard a spurious argument, that was it. Of course abstinence programs don't work. Why would

they? We have created a culture where pre-marital sex and multiple partners is absolutely expected and teenagers that try to go against the grain are called weird/stupid/backward (amongst the politer names that is). They are up against a cultural juggernaut. If they fail, pointing to their failure as evidence that this approach is wrong is plain bad logic. Was the problem really that abstinence doesn't work? Or was the *real* problem that our sex-obsessed culture makes pre-marital and extra-marital sex so utterly normal, that those who do try to be different come up against such enormous pressures and unpleasant taunts that only the most determined will stand? (I can't recall hearing much about tackling Chasteophobic bullying recently, can you?)

*...it's no good arguing that abstinence programs don't work in a culture that has been designed to make them fail.*

In other words, it's no good arguing that abstinence programs don't work in a culture that has been designed to make them fail. And telling children that they need to make sure they are wearing safety gear when the cultural juggernaut comes hurtling towards them is not really what you would call "a solution."

The problem is the cultural juggernaut itself, and the real issue is whether we want to continue thinking that pre-marital and extra-marital sex are the norms, or whether we are prepared to make a wholesale shift in the way we think about sex. The latter is of course the unthinkable concept, since it would apparently result in clocks going back.

## SOMETIMES THE WORLD LIKES ABSTINENCE

Eric Metaxas wants to know why does the world think "abstinence" is a four-letter word when it comes to sex, but not when it comes to cigarettes? In his August 10 BreakPoint column he wrote:

...nobody says smoking cigarettes or drinking huge amounts of sugary drinks is healthy and normal – or distributes pills in schools to offset the effects of tobacco and sugar. Instead, we urge young people to avoid cigarettes altogether, and cut down on the soft drinks. But heaven forbid we tell them to avoid sex.


These are the sorts of trouble-making questions we need to ask our friends, neighbors and classmates. God's design for sex is wonderful...and safe. Let's encourage some comparison and contrast!

On the other hand, though the former approach won't mess with the clocks, it will guarantee your culture a plethora of STIs.

That's the trade-off. Now make your choice.

### CONCLUSION

Here's the thing. Two cultures. One treats sex as entirely separated from procreation and marriage, and most people accept that view and live accordingly. The second links sex with marriage and procreation, and most people accept that view and live within its parameters.

Question: Even if the first one has all sorts of "encouragements to safe-sex" going on, which one is more likely to have the most STI's? Clocks notwithstanding, that's not a hard question, is it? 

### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> James Gallagher's "Super-gonorrhoea's spread 'causing huge concern'" posted to BBC.co.uk on April 17, 2016





There is a lot to appreciate about Aboriginal culture, but our children should not be forced to learn about Aboriginal spiritual beliefs.

# NO OTHER GODS

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #64 is a challenge to Christian churches and schools...and the first commandment

by Mark Penninga

Last year Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) published its final report as well as an accompanying document with 94 "calls to action." The TRC report resulted from over seven years of hearing abuse allegations from aboriginal Canadians who had been students in the country's Indian residential schools (which operated from the 1870s until the last school closed in 1996). The exact extent of the abuse that took place may never be known because the Commission heard complaints but had no power to compel testimony. That meant abuse claims could be heard, but not fully investigated – the accused individuals were never brought forward to either answer for or defend their actions.

When the TRC released their 94 calls to action the Liberal Party quickly promised to implement every one of them, and reaffirmed this promise after forming the government of Canada.

Promoting truth and reconciliation sounds noble, but the conclusions of this report are radical, promoting one

culture and religion over all others. This article will limit its focus to a key recommendation that pertains directly to Christian churches and schools.

## REQUIRING NATIVE SPIRITUALITY AT SCHOOL

Because some of the abuse occurred at Christian residential schools, some of the report's calls to action were directed towards Christian schools and the churches associated with them today. Call to action #64 states:

*Promoting truth and reconciliation sounds noble, but the conclusions of this report are radical...*

We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal elders.

By "denominational" schools, the report is likely targeting all religious schools, regardless of their formal connection to specific church denominations.

Forcing religious schools to promote aboriginal spirituality, even if such spirituality violates the Christian faith, flows from a consistent message in the TRC report that requires churches and religious institutions to "affirm Indigenous spirituality in its own right." These institutions are being called on to "formally recognize Indigenous spirituality as a valid form of worship that is equal to their own."

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION SHOULD MEAN BEING FREE FROM STATE COERCION

If someone were to ask me, or the Christian school I'm a member of, to teach that aboriginal spiritual beliefs are equal to my own Reformed Christian faith, I would respectfully point out to them that they are wrong and there is no way I will comply. Doing so violates the first commandment – it is idolatry.

Pagan aboriginal spirituality has little in common with the gospel of Jesus Christ and I'm not going to confuse my children by claiming that the competing faith claims are the same. But Natives are free to try to convince me otherwise, just as I will encourage my neighbors to consider the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

But it is a different matter altogether when the TRC demands that the State compels its citizens to undermine their beliefs by forcing the indoctrination of pagan spirituality. And when the Liberal government promises to follow through, then our fundamental freedoms are at risk.

Section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms lists the fundamental freedoms that all Canadians possess and that must be protected from any actions by the State. They include freedom of conscience, religion, and association. All three are involved here - when Christians come together to form churches and schools, they do so protected by the freedom to associate, and the freedom to live according to their religion. When the State forces these churches and schools to promote a religion that undermines their own, these constitutional rights are violated.

## NATIVES DON'T WANT TO BE TREATED THIS WAY

Even aboriginal Canadians should speak up against this


assault on freedom. In fact, the very same TRC calls to action includes the demand that all faith groups commit to:

respecting Indigenous people's right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice, develop, and teach their own spiritual traditions, customs, and ceremonies...

So all faith groups may not interfere in indigenous spirituality, but the TRC report, supported by Canada's government, demands that interference into the religious teachings of all other faith groups. It is a one-way street. This is the very reason why we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms – to protect citizens from the State including when the State thinks it can tell people what to believe!

## CONCLUSION

The politicization of the residential schools has made it difficult to get a firm handle of what really happened in these schools. It is indisputable and unjustifiable that abuse occurred. It is also completely inappropriate for the State to require the removal of children from their homes to be placed in institutional care, except in extreme circumstances. Where wrong was done, justice must be served, also when churches or governments are responsible. But we also know that the residential schools were well-intentioned and went a long way towards helping disadvantaged people with education, nutrition, skills, and medical care. When good was done, that too must be acknowledged.

Canada's federal government is not helping anybody, especially Canada's aboriginal peoples, by endorsing all of the demands from the TRC. 

## LOOKING AT TWO MORE OF THE TRC'S CALLS TO ACTION

by Jon Dykstra

The goal of the Indian Residential Schools – which were run by churches along with the government – was to educate, but also convert and civilize Native children, replacing their culture with a Western one. Starting in 1884, school became compulsory for Native children under 16, and when a local school wasn't available Native children would often be forcibly taken from their families and sent to these boarding schools. In other instances families were threatened with fines or prison if they didn't send their children. This practice left the children on their own, away from any family or trusted adults they could turn to for help. That left them especially vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse.

### The bad: #6

Of the Commission's 94 recommendations some are simply wrong. For example, #6 calls for a repeal of Section 43 of the Criminal Code. This is the section that specifically grants parents a defense when they use "reasonable force to discipline a child" – this is a legal recognition of parents' right to spank their children.

The reason the Commission is calling for an end to spanking is likely because of the physical abuse some Natives suffered in the schools. But in making this recommendation they are overlooking the vast gulf that exists between beating up a child and spanking one.

### The good: #81

One of the best recommendations might be #81, to make a monument to remember the evil done to these children and their families. Why? We want our country and especially our legislators to be continually confronted with the horror that the government committed in stealing children from their parents to teach them values their parents opposed. In Ontario right now the government is pushing a hotly opposed Sex-Ed curriculum. Still today, those in power are eager to force their worldview on other people's children.

So let's build a monument, make it huge, and place it somewhere in Ottawa that legislators will walk past every day. Stealing and indoctrinating children remains a temptation for lawmakers, so they need to be reminded of past wrongs in the hope that this memory will restrain them from committing future evils.



# REVIEWS

## FAMILY FILMS

By Jon Dykstra

### THE PEANUTS MOVIE

ANIMATED/FAMILY /CHILDREN

88 MIN / 2015

RATING: 8/10



*Peanuts* was always a little hit and miss for me. I liked Linus and Snoopy and PigPen and Marcie, but found it downright depressing when once again Lucy would get good ol' Charlie Brown to fall for her disappearing football trick.

That's why I found the film better than expected: it has all of the strip's funny minus the melancholy. Charlie Brown has his misfortunes, but he also has good friends – including a far more loyal version of Snoopy – to help pick him back up and push him to keep on trying.

Cautions are minor, but parents might want to note that Charlie Brown is silly to obsess about a girl he has never even talked to. At one point he offers up what might be a one-line prayer, and if so his "Don't I deserve a break?" plea shows that Charles is no Calvinist. Highlights include how (SPOILER ALERT) when the often lonely Charles has to choose between popularity and honesty, he doesn't even hesitate before doing the right thing. This boy is a man of character.

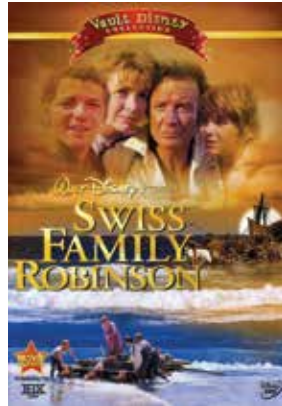
Our whole family enjoyed this, from two on up. A Charlie Brown who doesn't have to wait 50 years for a little happiness is a wonderful improvement on the original!

### SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

DRAMA/ADVENTURE/FAMILY

126 MIN / 1960

RATING: 8/10



Based on the classic 1812 Johann Wyss book, *Swiss Family Robinson* tells the tale of a family of five that gets shipwrecked on a tropical island after being pursued by pirates.

Life on a tropical island can be fun, with ostrich and elephant races, but work is involved too. The family has to struggle together to build a treehouse that will keep them safe from the island's tiger.

But what will keep them safe from the pirates, who are still looking for them?

The big concern in this film would be violence. While most of it is softened (a tiger, rather than maul its victims, sends them flying high into the air) there are intense scenes near the end of the film as the pirates attack that would scare young children.

This is a good old-fashioned classic with lots of gallantry on display – it's a great film to teach boys to look out for girls. It's also a good one to get your kids appreciating older films. Some of the acting is a little wooden, but as a family film that's fine – this was never going to win an Oscar, but there is a reason it's still being watched 50 years later. So all in all a great film.

### SWAMP MAN!

DOCUMENTARY/REALITY

45 MIN / 2012

RATING: 7/10



In the "Buddy Davis' Amazing Adventures" video series Buddy Davis takes us out to explore God's great outdoors from an explicitly Christian perspective. In *Swamp Man!* Buddy takes us to the Florida Everglades where he gets up close and personal with alligators, lizards, dolphins, turtles, manatees, and snakes – lots of snakes!

This is fast paced, cutting from one animal to the next every minute or two. There's lots of action to keep kids' attention, and mom and dad are sure to learn something too. I think I enjoyed this one almost as much as my kids – very good family viewing!

Now anyone with a snake phobia will want to give this one a miss – of all the animals we meet, these are by far the feature creature. That's why this isn't a video I'd show my pre-school kids right before they go to sleep. It's not all that scary, particularly mid-day...but alligators, bears, and snakes at bedtime don't seem a good combo.

That aside, this is great family treat – one that mom and dad and kids anywhere from 2 and up will enjoy.

There are three others in the series, including *I Dig Dinosaurs!*, *Extreme Caving* and *Alaska!* all of which are fun (though I would put *Alaska!* at the bottom of the list). You can buy it at [www.AnswersInGenesis.com](http://www.AnswersInGenesis.com).

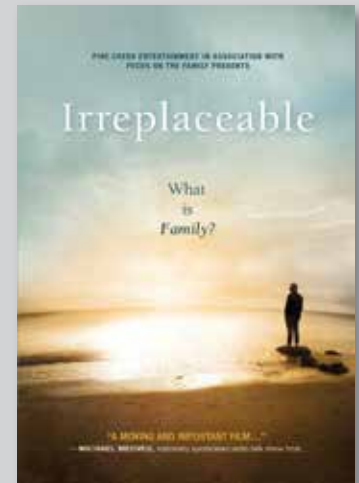


## IRREPLACEABLE

DOCUMENTARY

104 MIN / 2015

RATING: 8/10



Everyone knows something is wrong with the family these days. But what?

For this Focus on the Family production Tim Sisarich travelled all over the world to answer this question. He spoke to experts, interviewed prisoners, ordinary parents, and many others, and shared his own story as he searched for an answer. *Irreplaceable*, the resulting documentary, starts with the basic question, "What is family?"

From Eric Metaxas to Nancy Pearcey, from John Stonestreet to Michael Medved, respected experts are given the floor. They discuss:

- the importance of family from ancient Greek times to today
- the hollowness and pressures of the hook up culture
- the good news about marriage, and how hope and a few simple tools can transform bad marriages,
- the importance of parenthood,
- how children are treated as objects and commodities worldwide
- and the incalculable influence of fathers

Speaking of fathers, it turns out that there is a common denominator among troubled youth. Most high school dropouts, pregnant teen moms, homeless children, youth suicides, and youth in prison come from fatherless homes.

At this point in the film Tim Sisarich stops focusing on experts and turn to stories, his own first of all, and then those of others. Sisarich, himself a father of five, speaks sadly of seeing so very many disturbing examples of fatherhood that his only response was to say, "I don't know where to put that." But he keeps on searching for answers, speaking to convicts, to parents of a Down's syndrome child, to a foster parent of many, and to those who have been prodigals.

*Irreplaceable* is both fact-filled and compelling, with a straightforward moral to this story: if we devalue sex, we will devalue marriage, and if we devalue marriage we will devalue the role of parents, and if we devalue the parenting role, we will devalue children.

It is easy to look at the world and see the devastation such attitudes have caused. As we watch the movie, however, we realize that there is no call to point fingers at others; we, too, fall far short of God's plan for our families and ourselves.

In realizing this we, with Sisarich, can turn to our heavenly Father, remembering the gospel. He will certainly forgive us when we return to Him, whether we have sinned like the prodigal son in going astray, or sinned in not showing love and forgiveness to those who have sinned against us.

Anyone interested in understanding the family, our culture, and how to make an impact will appreciate this documentary and the accompanying panel discussion. For example, the panel discussion points out how lost most people feel. There is a huge opportunity, we are told, for the church to work out, practically, what it means to love God, each other, and society so that people will say, "Ah, they really care about me! Can I have some of that?"

There is one noteworthy caution: because of the subject matter and some images in the section on the hook up culture, *Irreplaceable* is recommended for age 15 and older.

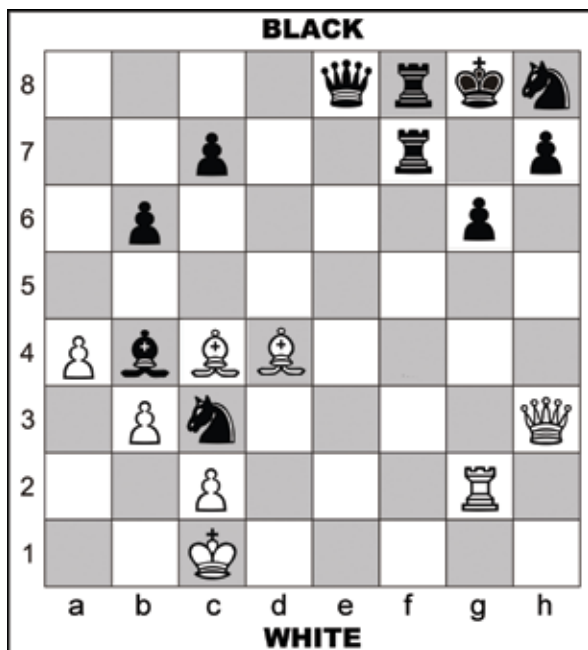
Although there are a few uncomfortable viewing moments, it is good for adults to understand what today's young people are up against and for young people to realize, from research as well as God's Word, how hollow an ungodly lifestyle really feels.

There are other DVDs that share this name, so the best way to find may be to search for "Focus on the Family Irreplaceable".

- Annie Kate Aarnouste

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #235



**WHITE to Mate in 3**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

**BLACK to Mate in 2**

## Riddle for Punsters #235

### "Crafty Changes"

Why did the retired plumber move to Scotland? He wanted to learn how to repair \_\_\_\_ g \_\_\_\_ es.

Why did the retired carpenter volunteer at an art museum? It allowed him to still do some \_\_\_\_ ing.

## Problem to Ponder #235

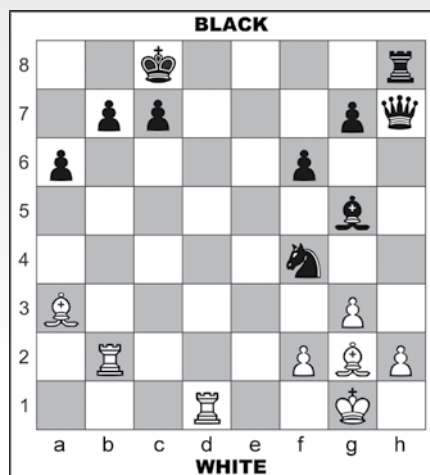
### "Summer Activities – By Whom?"

Debbie, Natasha, Greg, Ivan and Tim each have a different summer activity that he or she is doing this week. Neither girl knows how to waterski. Greg's leg is in a heavy cast due to a broken ankle and so he is on crutches. Debbie, who does not have a driver's licence because her eyesight is very poor, also does not have a backpack. Ivan's brother owns a speedboat. One of the girls recently bought a compass. Using reasonable assumptions based on the clues provided, who does each of the activities?

Fishing? \_\_\_\_\_ Water skiing? \_\_\_\_\_  
Swimming? \_\_\_\_\_ Hiking? \_\_\_\_\_  
Tennis? \_\_\_\_\_

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #234



**WHITE TO MATE IN 4**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. BxP ch K-N1
2. B-B6 dis ch K-B1
3. B-Q7 ch K-Q1
4. R-N8 mate

**WHITE WINS SOONER IF**

1. BxP ch K-N1
2. B-B6 dis ch K-R2
3. B-B5 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Bg2xb7 + Kc8-b8
2. Bb7-c6 dis + Kb8-c8
3. Bc6-d7 + Kc8-d8
4. Rb2-b8 ++

**WHITE WINS SOONER IF**

1. Bg2xb7 + Kc8-b8
2. Bb7-c6 dis + Kb8-a7
3. Ba3-c5 ++

### Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#### #234 - "Fowl tasting?"

Why did the turkey get fat so quickly? As soon as he saw food he would gobble it.  
Why did the vulture eat road-kill? He wanted to carrion the family tradition.

### Answer to Problem to Ponder

#### #234 - "Summer Holidays -ing Words"

**TINGNET** TENTING  
**NIGLAREX** RELAXING  
**GWIMNIMS** SWIMMING  
**GIVNID** DIVING  
**GLETLINVAR** TRAVELLING  
**TANGOBI** BOATING  
**LIGASIN** SAILING

**ETRAW GISINK** WATER SKIING  
**DEANRIG** READING  
**PIMCNAG** CAMPING  
**GIKNIH** HIKING  
**GHIFINS** FISHING  
**THUNGNABIS** SUNBATHING  
**GHAN NIGGLID** HANG GLIDING

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ---- QxP ch
2. K-B1 Q-R8 ch
3. BxQ RxB mate

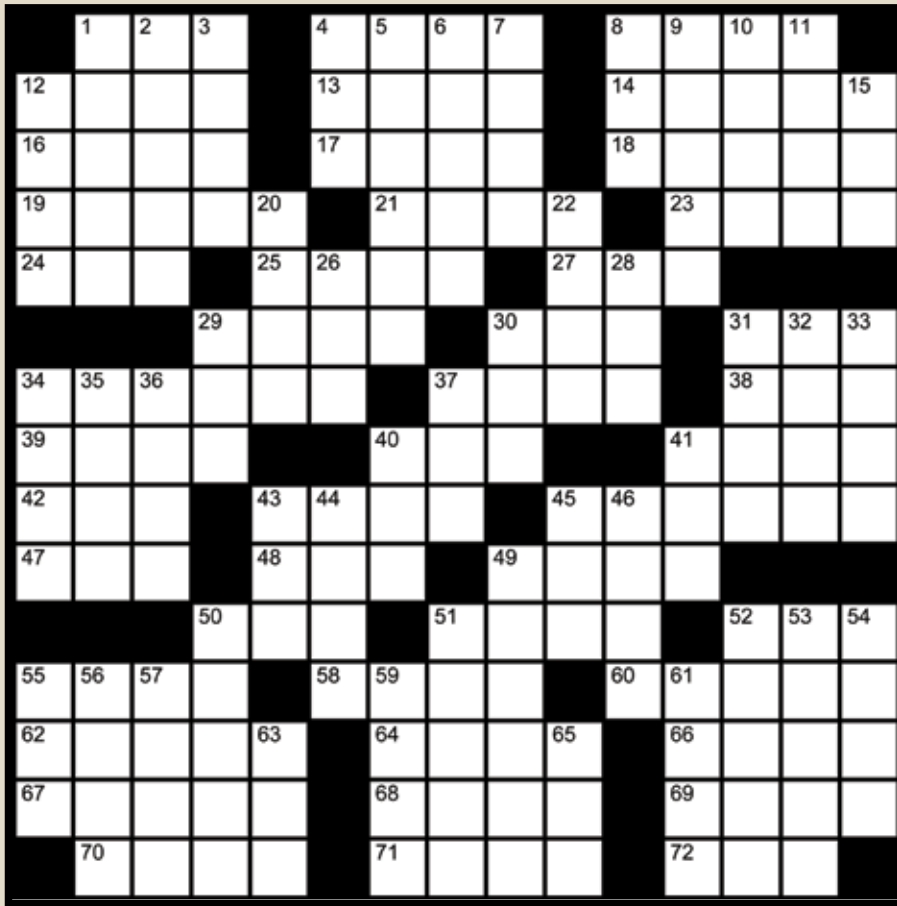
#### Algebraic Notation

1. ---- Qh7xh2 +
2. Kg1-f1 Qh2-h1 +
3. Bg2xh1 Rh8xh1 ++

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

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 3-1

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. Secret or real estate \_\_\_\_ (abbr.)
4. "Pay the ransom or \_\_\_\_\_"
8. Major historical periods
12. First initial & last name of short story writer
13. "\_\_\_\_\_ me in your truth and..." (Ps. 25)
14. Mixed-\_\_\_\_\_ installation (much recent art)
16. Sea eagle (archaically spelled)
17. Eventual destiny
18. Hostile dog's sound
19. Girl's name (dancing part of the *Lindy*?)
21. Short form for what to do with two watches
23. Radiate (rays or particles)
24. Abbreviation for 1970s terrorist gang
25. \_\_\_\_\_ 21: famous Halifax stop for immigrants
27. "a transgressor of the \_\_\_\_" (Jam. 2)
29. "Take one bull of the \_\_\_\_" (Ex. 29)
30. Soak up liquid
31. "to \_\_\_\_ out the land of..." (Num. 13)
34. Variety of pizza
37. "...not arrogant or \_\_\_\_" (1 Cor. 13)
38. "big \_\_\_\_ of his right foot" (Lev. 14)
39. Drearily dull
40. One who refused to curse God and die
41. "Que \_\_\_\_\_" (classic Doris Day song)
42. "God rested from \_\_\_\_ his work" (Gen. 2)
43. Trivial disagreement or argument
45. Make-or-break down in American football
47. Archaic word of agreement
48. "He who has an \_\_\_\_\_, let..." (Rev. 2)
49. Prong of fork (partly made of *tin*?)

50. Ruin the beauty or perfection of something
51. \_\_\_\_\_ Hersher (retired baseball pitcher)
52. The time they estimate the plane will arrive
55. Somewhat unattractive triple fruit hybrid
58. Circular current
60. Private recreational boat or ship
62. "took... a stone and \_\_\_\_\_ it" (1 Sam. 17)
64. Coal mine entrance (partly *exit*?)
66. City where Canons blasted Arminians
67. Unit of weight (with a lot of *bounce*?)
68. Bills showing Hamilton or Macdonald
69. Soon (spoken partly *anonymously*?)
70. Be full of or swarming with (especially life)
71. Latin for *therefore*
72. Steal, or Bob alternative

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION




## SERIES 2-11

### DOWN

1. Its showers bring May flowers
2. "\_\_\_\_\_ Fly Now" (theme from *Rocky*)
3. Started (off) one's golf game
4. Long-lived creature from Middle Earth
5. Rented for a specific period
6. Half-goat/half-man from Greek mythology
7. First man's home (Gen. 1-3)
8. Service providing Emergency Medicine
9. "they... shall \_\_\_\_\_ their strength" (Is. 40)
10. First man (Gen. 1-3)
11. How your Apple phone talks to you
12. More than half-*slender* fish
15. Height of a plane in flight (abbr.)
20. Top of a mountain height
22. Lump of earth or clay
26. Partly mixed-up *fiery* wrath or anger
28. Primate (having part of a *cape*?)
29. Center of a wheel
30. Short form for underwater transport
31. Suffix for any *gang*, *young* or *old*
32. Left side of a vessel (while in \_\_\_\_\_?)
33. Slangy word of agreement
34. Crucial 1944 deadline for WWII invasion
35. \_\_\_\_\_ Stanley Gardner (mystery writer)
36. \_\_\_\_\_ Land (zone of sleep or inattention)
37. "rushes will \_\_\_\_ away" (Is. 19)
40. "a \_\_\_\_ full of sour wine" (John 19)
41. "if anyone would \_\_\_\_ you" (Matt. 5)
43. "a \_\_\_\_ of glass, like crystal" (Rev. 4)
44. Trim (your nails or an apple peel)
45. \_\_\_\_ on you! (Shakespearean exclamation)
46. "his heart was \_\_\_\_\_ evil" (Gen. 6)
49. "who are \_\_\_\_\_ to deceive you" (1 John 2)
50. Grind or cut up food into small pieces
51. Stranger; more peculiar
52. Brand word (short form) showing low cost
53. Pulsate steadily (especially in pain)
54. Abbreviation on memos or on envelopes
55. Organizer of entertainment for U.S. troops
56. Surplus (for the partly *gluttonous*?)
57. "Clair de \_\_\_\_\_" (composed by Debussy)
59. Beginning or end of 8 Across
61. Twelfth month of the Hebrew calendar
63. Jewel
65. General \_\_\_\_\_'s chicken (Chinese food)





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