

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

FEBRUARY 2016

Volume 35 Issue No. 4

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS



## ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISM: *A ONE-WORLD VIEW*

P.30



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# ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISM: A ONE-WORLD VIEW

by Jay Adams

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# READERS' RESPONSE

## DEAR EDITOR

I read through the discussion on IVF adoption in the December issue, and wondered if I could add some thoughts to this. In Job 3:11 and onward we see Job expressing the thought that to be stillborn is better than to suffer. Again in Ecclesiastes 6:3,

...I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he.

These are both coming from wise men of God, and maybe there lies the answer. An embryo, while fully human created in the image of God, is not in a state where it experiences as much suffering. It is amazing that when one looks at the process of conception, the little baby will look human as fast as possible in the least amount of time, and I don't want to diminish the value of man in an embryonic state.

So maybe the comparison you make with children stuck on a ship slowly sinking is inappropriate since children can experience suffering, and embryos likely do not. Take for instance these two scenarios:

1. My wife and I adopt a baby that was taken from a broken home.
2. My wife and I adopt a friend of ours who is single and 16 and who was living comfortably with both parents who both attend church. (I know no one would ever do this, but it is just an illustration - just bear with me).

To me the value of life is the same for both scenarios, but it's the first case which is more urgent because of the need of that baby to be brought into a safe home (think of James 2:14). So I

think the same counts with embryo adoption and adopting a baby. Babies that are carried to term and end up in broken homes, or foster children who need parents who can take care of them should take priority before embryos, not because they are more valuable, but because they are in more need. And I am not familiar with the statistics, but it seems there are enough children out there who could use a home, who are suffering. So by adopting embryos, are we doing this at a cost to those who could use it more?

This issue is complicated as each parent will be at a different maturity level and may not be ready to adopt or foster children, but are "comfortable" with embryo adoption. But maybe we could be honest with ourselves about the state of embryos, and admit they are not in need of saving, because they are not suffering and they are in God's hands. There does seem to be an age where God will hold us accountable for our actions and our words (Isaiah 7:16), and embryos have not reached that stage; therefore their salvation is in God's hands who is the just judge and as we can read in Eccl. 6 "...yet it finds rest rather than he." I don't know what pain an embryo experiences, nor do I want to make adopting embryos to be a wrong thing, but maybe from these texts we can find a good perspective. On a side note, I really like this magazine, and you are doing a good work here.

Hendrik Baron,  
Haywood, Manitoba



## EDITOR'S RESPONSE

With new technologies come new ethical challenges. We face moral dilemmas today that our parents never considered because they could never have imagined them! So it is wonderful then, in the face of such daunting challenges, that we can work through them together. Thank you for your letter.

I agree with you that embryos do not suffer to the same extent born children do - at this early stage in their development they likely don't even have the capacity to feel pain. But when we're determining where it would be best to direct our help, the extent of people's suffering is only one of many factors we might consider. Others could include:

- the extent to which others are, or are not, willing to help (Luke 14:12-13)
- whether the people in need are Christians (Galatians 6:10)
- the degree to which they are helpless (Prov. 31:8-9)
- our own gifts and talents (Matt. 25:14-30)
- the particular direction in which we feel the Lord is leading us (Acts 16:6)



These are biblically-based guidelines, but they are not uni-directional. Different couples following these same guidelines may come to very different conclusions about how they should proceed.

Let's look at just the first factor: how willing others might be to help if we don't. That might be the very reason one couple decides to go the route of snowflake adoption when they learn there are so many more embryonic children than willing adoptive couples. Another couple might decide to adopt a child from overseas because they learn how horrible that country's orphanage system is and how many children are trapped in it, and that's why they feel the need to help. Other couples may decide that adoption isn't for them, and instead devote their time and energy to telling their neighbors about our Father in heaven, because they conclude "the harvest is great but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2). Can we say to any of them that they have

their priorities out of sorts? I don't believe we can. All are following solid biblical principles to get to their very different destinations.

Regarding the age of accountability, in the *Canons of Dort* (1.17) we confess that, "God-fearing parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children who God calls out of this life in their infancy." But our confession says nothing about the children of unbelievers, and that's because the Bible is silent. (Isaiah 7:16 on its own might leave one impression, but we have to read it in the context of verses like Psalm 51:5: "surely I was sinful... from the time my mother conceived me.")

So we don't know where these children will go when they die. What we do know is that they will die in cold storage unless they are rescued; these children are not in pain, but they are in peril.

Let us consider to what sort of service God has called each one of us.

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# SIX RESPONSES TO ONE ANGRY ATHEIST

by Michael Wagner and Jon Dykstra

British scientist Richard Dawkins may be the world's most famous atheist. And he has garnered his fame from, and used his fame for attacks on God and his people. To that end he founded the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science in 2006 and, five years later, hired Sean Faircloth to be the Foundation's Director of Strategy and Policy.

Like his mentor, Faircloth is aggressively anti-Christian in his perspective. In 2012 he authored a book (with a foreword by Dawkins) called *Attack of the Theocrats: How the Religious Right Harms Us All—and What We Can Do about It*. The anti-Christian agenda Faircloth proposes is both monstrous and unsurprising. There is nothing original in the book, and that is why it is worth a closer examination – the vision Faircloth shares is one we have heard in bits and pieces for some time now. There are lessons to be learned from responding to his points.

## 1. DON'T ASSUME THE ATTACK HAS ANY BASIS

To lay some groundwork for his agenda, Faircloth tries to discredit the Bible by falsely claiming it was written during a time in history “when guys could simply hit or rape any women who dared to talk back.” He then continues: “Don't believe that was the case? The Bible tells us such acts are A-OK.”

Of course, the Bible nowhere says it's

“A-OK” for men to rape and hit women. Faircloth just made that up.

He then proceeds to attack Christians themselves, insisting that the Christian mindset leads its adherents to steal things, and to hurt other people. According to Faircloth, Christians are prone to anti-social behavior because their religion causes them to reason in the following manner:

You can hurt others – and terribly so – and be forgiven for that sin simply by asking a supernatural being for forgiveness. With the “forgiven” card, it's so much easier to say to oneself, “I will grab this food now. I will grab this money now. I will grab and grab and grab.” Concern yourself with long-term consequences later. You can always be forgiven—and then you live forever! A convenient belief system indeed.

If you missed hearing that preached off the pulpit you aren't alone. Notably, Faircloth does not cite any sources to support his claim that Christians think that way. It's very important to remember that when a critic attacks the Bible we shouldn't simply assume their attack has credibility. As Faircloth's attack illustrates, sometimes the critic is so desperate to slam Christianity that he's willing to make things up.

## 2. TURN THE TABLES

Faircloth claims that in recent years religion has acquired special

legal privileges that are harmful to American society. Allowing churches and other religious organizations to hire people who share their beliefs and lifestyles is one of these special privileges that he wants to eliminate. When he argues this point he does so in a particularly twisted way. In his view,

...religions enjoy legal privileges that corrode our most basic American values. In most states, religious groups can say in one of their child-care centers: “You're a Jew? You're fired.” Similarly, in one of their charitable organizations, they can say to the administrative assistant or janitor: “You're gay? You're fired”

True, religious groups that run child-care centers or charitable organizations often only hire people from within their own group. It is a basic principle of freedom of association and freedom of religion that religious organizations select employees based on their own principles. Christian schools want to hire Christian teachers, for example. They don't say, “You're a Jew? You're fired,” as Faircloth puts it. There are Jewish organizations that hire exclusively Jewish employees. Why would a Jewish school hire a Christian teacher? Should it be forced by the government to hire non-Jewish teachers?





In Faircloth's world there may be situations where it would. His solution is for the government to prohibit such "discrimination." As a result, the employee qualifications for Christian organizations would be determined by the government. Allowing religious organizations to hire only people who share their beliefs is, in Faircloth's words, a legal privilege that corrodes "our most basic American values."

But turnabout is fair play. If Faircloth thinks it discrimination to have a religious test for Christian schools, then what about his own employer, the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science? Surely, in the name of tolerance, they should then be required to hire their share of Christians and maybe a

creationist or two?

We don't need to be mind readers to know how Faircloth would respond to our suggestion. He would find a reason of some sort, very quickly, to explain that discrimination isn't wrong in every circumstance, and, in fact, is sometimes the only reasonable course.

### 3. HIGHLIGHT THE CONFLICT

Faircloth is also very upset that Christian pharmacists are not compelled by the government to provide abortifacient drugs for women who want them. As he puts it, in the US,

fundamentalist pharmacists in several states get special permission from state legislatures to ignore their professional duties and to even deny rape victims emergency contraception.

In his view, Christian pharmacists should be compelled, against their conscience, by the state to provide such "emergency contraception." This is justified because "Pharmacists work in the health-care profession, not in a church."

While little could be said to change Faircloth's mind, we can, with a few pointed questions, highlight the severity of what he proposes.

- Will he let Christians who won't violate their conscience have jobs? He wants us out of pharmacology, but what of the many other businesses where Christians' conscience claims run up against others' wishes? Would he want us out of the bakery business, wedding catering and photography, and bed and breakfast inns? What of Christian doctors and nurses who don't want to be involved in euthanasia? And printers and T-shirt makers who want to refuse some jobs? Should they all be shown the door?

- Would the country be better or worse off if Christians were run out of these positions?

We may not be able to change someone like Faircloth's mind, but we can at least highlight his hatred, making it plain for even the most clueless to see.

### 4. USE THE SCIENCE

Faircloth is further outraged by the fact that US foreign aid given to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) cannot be used to provide abortions or to advocate for or counsel abortion. Faircloth calls this prohibition on counseling abortion a "gag rule" and says it prevents women from receiving needed medical advice. In his view:

Neither Congress nor the president should deny women accurate medical information. To impose a gag rule is to mandate a particular religious bias and to promote religious propaganda based on the views of specially privileged religious groups – and to use tax dollars to do so.

Faircloth says the US government's position is being based on "religious propaganda" and in one sense it is. The only reason the US has this overseas pro-life position is because of Christian voter's influence.

But God's truth isn't limited to the Bible. When we examine life's beginning then we find the science backing up the biblical position: we find that the only real beginning we can talk about is conception. That's when a new human life – genetically distinct from both parents – is started. It is smaller life, and with fewer abilities than adults, yes, but no less valuable because, as even an angry atheist knows, we don't measure people's worth by their size or ability.

### 5. TURN THE TABLES AGAIN

Christian schools constitute another problem for Faircloth. He objects to the Biblical Christian view that males and females have somewhat different roles. He claims such a perspective makes women subservient, and then asks,



Why should even one child be taught that women should be subservient? Children make no adult choice to attend a sexist school. It violates their human rights to impose such views on them.

Here we can, once again, turn the tables on this attack.

God does call on a woman to submit to her husband (though not men in general) but is that the same thing as being subservient? Faircloth has to submit to the decisions of his employer, Richard Dawkins – would he equate submission with subservience in his case too? Does his submission to his boss mean he is less than his boss? I think Faircloth would agree, submission is very different from subservience.

But let's take this further. Christians know that whether male and female, we are all made in God's Image. We know why women are equal. But on what basis would an *atheist* make that case? In a Darwinian, survival-of-the-fittest

understanding, why would he view the weaker and the smaller as being of equal worth?

## 6. WHENCE COMES MORALITY?

Among other things Faircloth is also against the corporal punishment of children in Christian schools. Interestingly, Faircloth acknowledges that all law is based on morality. As he puts it,


You've heard the phrase "you can't legislate morality." In fact, the only thing you can legislate is morality. Legislative decisions embody the moral choices of a society.

At last Faircloth gets something right. He understands that the policies he supports amount to an imposition of his morality on society through law. Yet he objects to Christian schools imposing their morality on students.

But on what basis does an atheist speak of morality? Christians know that the moral code has its origins in the

very character of God. Atheists dispute this but disputing is easy; coming up with a godless basis for an objective, applies-to-everyone moral code is difficult. Sometimes an appeal is made to consensus, as if morals are simply what we as a society agree is moral. But by that reasoning racism is only recently wrong, and a convincing PR campaign could make any evil good. When an atheist makes use of words such as "morality" and "right" and "wrong" we should demand from them the basis of their own supposedly superior moral code.

## CONCLUSION

Sean Faircloth's attacks on God's people are unfair and unremarkable and far from unusual. We should expect to see more like this in the years ahead. That's why, for the glory of God and for the encouragement of his people, we should equip ourselves to offer a ready response. 



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# NOTA BENE

News worth noting

## CANADA SPENDS AS MUCH ON INTEREST AS EDUCATION

BY JON DYKSTRA



**J**ust how deep a financial hole is Canada in, and how fast are we continuing to dig? Those questions were answered in the January edition of the Fraser Institute's *Bulletin*. In an article titled "The Cost of Government Debt in Canada, 2016" the authors detailed how Canadian governments (federal and local):

- "collectively spent an estimated 60.8 billion on interest payments in 2014/15"
- increased their overall debt from \$834 billion in 2007/08 to \$1.3 trillion in 2015/16
- spend 8 cents out of every tax dollar on debt servicing

The *Bulletin* put this \$60.8 billion figure in perspective, showing how it was approximately the same amount the federal and provincial governments spent on primary and elementary education in 2012/13.

The Bible speaks of debt as slavery – "...the borrower is the slave of the lender" (Prov. 22:7b). When we consider that Canadian government's \$1.3 trillion debt works out to \$35,827 for every Canadian man, woman and child, we can understand why – debt limits our options.

SOURCE: "The Cost of Government Debt in Canada, 2016, printed in the January 2016 Fraser Research BULLETIN. The article was by Charles Lammam, Milagros Palacios, Hugh Macintyre, and Feixue Ren

## SHOULD ALL ADOPTION RECORDS BE UNSEALED?

BY JON DYKSTRA

**T**he Nov. 2015 *Costco Connection* asked, "Should it be mandatory to give adult adoptees full access to their birth records if they want it?" Or to say it another way, should birth parents be denied the option of anonymity?

Arguing the "Yes" side, April Dinwoodie said it came down to the best interests of the child. While noting that in the US 95% of recent adoptions are already voluntarily open, she insists all should be.

...adopted persons...are left without potentially lifesaving family medical history... Most importantly, we are denying this class of people a right that every other human being currently enjoys: the right to know the truth of their origins.

The December issue of the *Costco Connection*

showed that an overwhelming 92% of responding readers agreed with Dinwoodie.

But there is one important point Dinwoodie never mentioned: parents with an unwanted child don't have to choose adoption – they can also choose abortion. So if we want to give these unwanted children the very best chance at life, we will want to make adoption as attractive as we possibly can. If some birth parents want anonymity, so be it. Better a living child without roots than an aborted one.



## GROWING PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS WORLDWIDE

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

**I**n January, Open Doors USA released their list of the top 50 countries where it is hardest to be Christian, and North Korea for the 13th year in a row topped the list.

This year, among the 50 listed, African countries outnumbered Mideast countries. That means more people are being affected than before, though in these African countries the persecution was characterized as less severe, compared to the Middle East.

However, worldwide over 7,000 individuals were martyred for their faith (compared to 4,344 in 2014 and 2,123 in 2013) and 2,400 churches were destroyed or damaged this past year. These figures don't include what's going on in North Korea and parts of Iran and Syria, where accurate numbers could not be gathered.

In the face of these numbers, nearly doubled from last year, we see a growing hostility around the world toward Christians and what, and Who, we stand for.

SOURCE: Sarah Zylstra's "North Korea Gets Competition: The Top 50 Countries Where It's Now Hardest To Be a Christian" posted to ChristianityToday.com on Jan. 13

## PRINCE CHARLES SPEAKS UP FOR THE PERSECUTED

BY MARK REIMERS

**T**his past December the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles, gave a poignant speech on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. After describing in brief detail some of the atrocities Christians regularly suffer at the hands of groups like ISIS and Boko Haram, the prince had strong language about the place of the Christian faith in the land of its own birth.

...it seems to me vital that we pause for more than a moment to think about the plight of Christians in the lands where the Word was actually "made flesh and dwelt among us."

The prince's prescription is solidarity and prayer.

Above all, ladies and gentlemen – and however inadequate they may be – my special prayers are with you and all those in the Middle East and elsewhere who suffer iniquitous atrocities and perfidious persecution for whatever faith they may belong to.

Sincere prayer, the prince should know, is never inadequate since it is a call on the One who can redress all wrongs. Perhaps Charles is limited in his understanding of the bigger picture. Regardless, we should praise God for this public recognition of those who suffer for the name of Christ.





## 288 PRO-LIFE LAWS PASSED IN LAST 5 YEARS

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA

**C**an we make progress in our fight for the unborn? Results from the US would suggest the answer is a clear yes. A Jan. 4 report from the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute noted that state legislatures have approved more pro-life laws in the last five years than in the previous fifteen years combined. Since the 2010 midterm elections 288 pro-life laws have been passed across the USA.

How did American pro-life advocates achieve these numbers?

### 1. THEY KEEP TRYING

At one point 235 pro-life bills were proposed in state legislatures *in just a 3-month period!*

### 2. THEY TRY AT EVERY LEVEL

While most pro-life efforts focused on state legislation, the recent Planned Parenthood videos allowed pro-lifers to bring the fight to the federal Congress as well.

### 3. THEY TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

While the goal is always the same



– saving unborn lives – pro-lifers have used any legislative means at their disposal to pursue that goal. So they've tried banning late-term abortions, increasing safety standards in abortion clinics, banning federal funding of Planned Parenthood, and more.

In Canada we haven't had the same results but groups like We Need A Law are trying to follow in the footsteps of these US pro-life groups by using this same approach. Check out [www.weneedalaw.ca/take-action](http://www.weneedalaw.ca/take-action) to find out how you can help them help the unborn.

SOURCES: Steven Ertelt's "States pass more pro-life laws saving babies from abortions in last 5 years than the previous 15" posted to LifeNews.com on Jan. 4, 2016; Teddy Wilson's "235 Anti-Choice Bills proposed in state legislatures since January" posted to RHRealityCheck.org on Mar. 31, 2015

## US PHARMACISTS/CANADIAN DOCTORS FIGHT FOR CONSCIENCE PROTECTION

BY ANNA NIENHUIS AND JON DYKSTRA



**I**n 2007, Washington passed a law requiring pharmacies to dispense abortion-inducing drugs, the only state to have such a law. One family, the Stormans, refused to do so on religious grounds, instead referring clients to 30 nearby pharmacies that were willing to dispense the drugs. They came under investigation for this and their battle has now gone all the way to the US Supreme Court.

"No one should be forced out of her profession solely because of her religious beliefs," said Luke Goodrich, Deputy General Counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. Since no other U.S. state has this law, it is believed the Court will rule in favour of religious exemption for these pharmacists.

Part of the Stormans' defense is that they would point people to where they could get these drugs. What if they hadn't wanted to do even that? Here in Canada, Quebec doctors are being told that if they won't help patients die via euthanasia, they must refer them to a doctor that will. However, some doctors don't want to have any part, no matter how small, in this sinful activity. To preserve their right to refuse to refer they are looking for your help. You can find out more, including what your province is up to, and find out how to help at [www.moralconvictions.ca](http://www.moralconvictions.ca).

SOURCE: Steven Ertelt's "The Government Forced These Christian Pharmacists to Sell Abortion Drugs, But They're Fighting Back," posted to LifeNews.com on Jan. 4; Alex Schadenberg's "Dutch doctors have the right to refuse to participate in euthanasia" posted to [alexschadenberg.blogspot.ca](http://alexschadenberg.blogspot.ca) on Jan 5.

## PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SAYS "MY FAITH...IS THE SINGLE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN MY LIFE"

BY JON DYKSTRA



**W**hile Christian voters have been courted by front-running Republican presidential candidates like Senator Ted Cruz and Dr. Ben Carson, it was a up and coming candidate, Senator Marco Rubio, that made headlines in January for how upfront he was about God's place in his life. Early in the month he released a 30-second commercial talking about

God in a manner Canadians have never heard our politicians speak. He said:

Our goal is eternity, the ability to live alongside our Creator for all time, to accept the free gift of salvation offered to us by Jesus Christ. The struggle on a daily basis as a Christian is to remind ourselves of this. The purpose of our life is to cooperate with God's plan. To those who much has been given, much is expected. And we will be asked to account for that. Were your treasures stored up on earth or in heaven? And to me, I try to allow that to influence me in everything that I do. I am Marco Rubio and I approve of this message.

## CANADIAN SUPREME COURT GIVES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MORE TIME TO COME UP WITH EUTHANASIA LAW, BUT EXEMPTS QUÉBEC

BY ALEX SCHADENBERG

One year ago, on February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court struck down Canada's assisted suicide law, and it employed language that would permit euthanasia. The Supreme Court gave Parliament 12 months to legislate on the issues.

This past month, on January 11, 2016, the Supreme Court heard a request from the Federal government for a six-month extension to legislate on euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada. The Federal government suggested that Québec should be exempted from the extension to allow them to institute their own euthanasia law.

Four days later, on January 15, 2016, the Supreme Court decided to grant the Federal government a four-month extension, they agreed to exempt Québec from the extension and based on national "fairness" they have enabled Canadians to petition the Superior Court for approval to die by lethal injection. If governments do not legislate on the issues within four months, Canada's

assisted suicide law (Section 241b) will be null and void leaving no protection in law for Canadians.

The Superior Court is instructed to approve assisted death based on Section 127 of the Carter Decision which stated:

a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life; and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition. "Irremediable", it should be added, does not require the patient to undertake treatments that are not acceptable to the individual. The scope of this declaration is intended to respond to the

factual circumstances in this case. We make no pronouncement on other situations where physician-assisted dying may be sought.

It is important to note that key terms in the Carter Decision, such as "irremediable," have not been defined.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition ([www.epcc.ca](http://www.epcc.ca)) is concerned that it is not possible to devise and pass effective legislation on euthanasia and assisted suicide within four months. We are further concerned that Superior Court judges will be given the right to approve lethal injections without proper definitions and effective parameters around their decisions.



## SURPRISE! – ALLOWING MEN IN WOMEN'S WASHROOMS CAUSES PROBLEMS

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA



Recent years have brought a push for so-called "bathroom bills" – laws that, among other things, allow transgendered individuals to use the bathroom of their choice – and protests against these laws have

been dismissed as bigoted. But how is this going to work?

Well, the University of Toronto has given us a preview of what it might look like to allow men in the same washrooms as women. Long before these bathroom bills were proposed the University was a trendsetter, putting in place "gender-neutral" washrooms. But late last year, in two separate incidents, a female student has reported that someone has reached over the shower stall door with a camera. As a result, the University of Toronto has been forced to take a step back from these policies, and the school has re-

designated several washrooms to be for men only or women only.

These situations come as little surprise to Christians who understand that people are sinful, and that we as a society should take what obvious steps we can to protect women in situations where they are the most vulnerable. Incidents such as this can provide evidence of the dangers of transgender bathrooms when discussing this issue with our neighbors and politicians.

SOURCE: Jessica Chin's "University of Toronto Gender-Neutral bathrooms reduced after voyeurism reports" posted to [Huffingtonpost.ca](http://Huffingtonpost.ca) Oct. 6, 2015.



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**Mr. Wayne de Leeuw**

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*And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was sitting at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. (Luke 7:37-38)*

# With the Hair of Her Head

by Christine Farenhorst

**M**any people are familiar with the word *hermeneutics*. From the Greek *hermeneutikos*, it means interpretation. It is the science of the study and interpretation of Scripture – that branch of theology that prescribes rules by which the Bible should be interpreted.

Most people have probably never heard of the world *hairmeneutics*. That's because it's a new word.

## HAIR IN THE NEWS

Lately there have been news headlines, believe it or not, to debate whether or not sixty-eight-year-old Hillary Clinton is sporting her own hair. Her loyal hairdresser avows that she has the most amazing hair in the world and that allegations about her wearing a wig are ridiculous. Captions alongside photos of the blondish Hillary, include phrases such as “The Whig Party,” “Human or Synthetic” and “The way we were.” Clinton herself commented,

I'm aware that I may not be the youngest candidate in this race, but I have one advantage. I've been coloring my hair for years. They are not going to

see me turn white in the White House... If anyone wonders if mine is real: the hair is real. And come to think of it, I wonder if that's true for Donald too.

Yes, it is likewise alleged that another presidential hopeful, Donald Trump, wears a toupee. There are those who are convinced that he does although others say he just grows his hair very long on one side and combs it over to the other side. Donald Trump himself wrote on Twitter: “As everybody knows, but the haters and the losers refuse to acknowledge, I do not wear a ‘wig.’ My hair may not be perfect, but it's mine.”

Remember Muammar Gaddafi, the erst-while Libyan leader who was killed in 2011 after being seized by soldiers in a sewage tunnel in his hometown? Upon being discovered hiding, he was shot in the head by revolutionary fighters. He had ruled Libya for a brief 42 years. A brutal, unpredictable autocrat, this cruel man died alone and, he died wearing a wig. At a hospital in Misurata, samples of Gaddafi's DNA, blood, hair and saliva were taken to verify that the body which had been shot was actually Gaddafi. Muammar Gaddafi, while on earth, lived in a lavish compound when more than one third of his country lived in poverty. It was rumored he'd had plastic surgery; it was obvious that he always dressed in a flamboyant style; and it is now a joke that this vain man kept his wig on even as he was fleeing for his life.

## HAIR IN THE BIBLE

And then, of course, there is the Biblical

story of Absalom, that wayward son of David. As a hopeful would-be king, this handsome prince stood by the gate of the city, flattering people, speaking to them of their rights and claims, and promising them that if he were in charge they would most certainly be heard. Two Samuel 14: 25 tells us that there was no one in all Israel so much to be praised for his beauty as Absalom. This perceived outward beauty was to a great extent due to the hair of his head. According to the same Samuel chapter, Absalom cut it once a year and weighed it and it “weighed two hundred shekels by the king's weight.” Commentators differ on the exact amount of poundage these locks weighed, some going for more than five hundred pounds and others to less than twenty, a third group even opting as low as three and a half pounds which is still a hefty mane. In any case, Absalom's rather proud skull was framed by an amazing amount of hair. And we all know what happened to him in the end.

Vanity of vanities. It is certainly not wrong to wear a wig. Many people are grateful, especially after cancer surgery, to have the option to decently and stylishly cover their heads.

It is after all, not about the hair, is it? It's all about the heart and about glorifying God with what we say and do; with what we wear and don't wear; with what we mirror and reflect.

## HAIR TODAY

To that end I would like to highly recommend a book my husband and I read recently, a book entitled *God's*

*Most people have probably never heard of the world hairmeneutics.*





*Double Agent* by Bob Fu. This 326-page volume outlines the life of a young boy born in Communist China who was spoon-fed atheistic principles – principles which neglected to speak of our Almighty God. Yet this young lad, who had been chosen by God from before the foundation of the world, was in a strange and most miraculous way exposed to a Bible tract and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, came to be a strong believer and evangelist. His journey to Christ is most remarkable, encouraging, and inspiring. As a sideline, the chapters teach recent Chinese world history, but as a mainline they underscore the loving and providential arms of God. Bob Fu ends his book with some *hairmeneutics*, the account of a man who was arrested by the Chinese authorities for running a house church. This is what Bob Fu writes:

This man was sent to a labor camp and on the first day of his imprisonment, the guards lined up all the new prisoners to shave their heads. His young daughter was watching him through the iron gate, crying. "Oh, Daddy, you didn't commit a crime?" she protested, "Even if you're released, people will see your shaved head and think you're a criminal." "Remember what the Bible says?" he said in the gentlest voice possible. "Every piece of hair is counted. Without His permission, not a single piece can fall to the ground."

When he got back into line, resigned to his fate, his daughter pressed her face against the cold bars. But when it was

the man's turn to get his head shaved, the clippers malfunctioned. The guard angrily examined the device, found it to be functioning, and tried again.

"There's a problem," he told the other guard, because – once again – when he placed the clippers on his head, they didn't work. The second guard angrily walked over to my friend, placed his clippers on his head, and flipped the switch. Nothing.

The guards scrambled, now that both sets of clippers didn't appear to be working with a long line of prisoners yet to shave. Finally they sent him away, grumbling about how there must be something wrong with the man's hair. As he walked away, the clippers began working again. The father caught the daughter's eye and smiled. Not a single piece of his hair had fallen to the ground.

## GONE TOMORROW

We presently live in a world where a great many people are hugely concerned about physical appearances. We also live in a world gone mad with worry about so-called climate change, terrorist attacks, nuclear threats and an influx of Asian migrants. Most leaders, wearing suits and sporting well-manicured nails, have only an outward manifestation of beauty. They stand at the gate of universal problems, promising to fix things by their own wisdom. Totally ignoring sin, they are not cognizant of what God teaches through His Word and, consequently, will not be able to provide lasting answers. Hermeneutics is a foreign word to them.

The Absaloms of our day are myriad and they want their names to stand out in history.

## LOOKING TO ETERNITY

Contrast these leaders with the unnamed man in Bob Fu's story. Certainly in the midst of many difficulties, he was a man fully aware of God's providence, God's control over his entire life; he was a man so trustful of his Savior, he cared not for his own appearance; and he was a man whose hair remained untouched.

And then there is the unnamed woman in Luke 7. Aware of and repentant of her sin, she literally humbled herself in front of the world by bowing down to Jesus. Oblivious to all but the fact that He had forgiven her sins, she poured out perfume on His feet. She was grateful and anxious to show her love. In those times no respectful woman was supposed to loosen her hair in public, but only aware of the deep affection she had for her Savior, she weepingly wiped His feet with her loosened hair.

In the long scheme of things, our names in human history don't matter. What does matter is if our names are written in the Book of Life. In the long scheme of things, our physical appearance is not looked upon by God. He looks at the heart. The brief moments of limelight for the Clintons, the Trumps, the Gaddafis and the Absaloms are minute. But the eternal glory awaiting those who decrease so that Christ might increase is sure because the One Who promised it is true. RP



The very first powered, controlled flight, on Dec. 17, 1903. The plane is the Wright Flyer I, the pilot is Orville, and the figure on the right running alongside is brother Wilbur.

# THE GIFT OF FLIGHT

## Two brothers' determined quest

by Margaret Helder



As stories go, this one sounds as if it comes from *Through the Looking Glass*: and what Alice found there, the classic story by Lewis Carroll where everything is backward. That is how this plot goes: amateur technologists succeed with a few dollars of their own money while big science, with a big budget, fails. And the improbable scenario continues. Even when the amateurs succeed, establishment science and the national media refuse to acknowledge that fact. They don't want it to be true, so it isn't. Then, when belatedly everyone knows that the amateurs have indeed achieved what they have long claimed, the government honors the scientist who failed! This isn't a nihilist plot by Franz Kafka, this is history. And these events have much to tell us about the impact of vested interests on scientific research and public honors.

## LANGLEY GETS THE GOVERNMENT ONBOARD

In hindsight it is obvious that the time was ripe for a breakthrough in heavier-than-air flight. During the mid eighteenth century Swiss mathematician Daniel Bernoulli had developed equations to describe the flow of fluids. Since air currents flow in the same fashion as fluids, similar equations apply. Thus it was as easy to study the flow of air over an object as it was to study the flow of water. In both instances, as the speed of flow increases, the pressure decreases. If a current moves over an object with a curved upper and a flat lower surface, then the flow above the object moves faster than the flow below. As a consequence the pressure exerted on the upper surface is less than on the lower surface. With reduced pressure above, the object will move upward. Such theory, towards the end of the nineteenth century, provided the basis for the new science of aerodynamics. The object with the curved upper surface was an airfoil or wing, and this was the structure that would carry heavier-than-air flight into reality.

Some scientists at the time insisted that such a phenomenon was impossible. There were others however, like Samuel

Pierpont Langley (1834-1906), who were actively involved in aerodynamic research. Indeed, this American astronomer and physicist had published a treatise in 1891 entitled *Experiments in Aerodynamics*. Five years later he designed and successfully flew an unmanned steam-powered model airplane. The machine flew 0.8 km (0.5 mile) in one and a half minutes. Based on this success, he applied for, and received, a grant of \$50,000 to scale up his model to pilot-carrying size. That grant represented a huge fortune. Obviously there were influential people in government and science who believed that heavier-than-air flight was possible.

## ENTERPRISING BROTHERS

Some bachelor entrepreneurs in Ohio also knew that heavier-than-air flight was possible. They had observed buzzards, and other feathered flight success stories (birds), and they decided that it might be fun to try their hand at this project. Wilbur and Orville Wright (born 1867 and 1871 respectively) were the third and fourth sons of Bishop Milton Wright of the United Brethren Church. Their Christian commitment translated into a joyous and lively curiosity about nature. They refused, however, to pursue any research or work on Sunday.

*They refused,  
however, to pursue  
any research or  
work on Sunday.*

Although bright, these men never actually graduated from high school. Nevertheless they loved a mental challenge. Their main source of income during the late 1890s was as bicycle shop owners. Not only did they sell machines, they also manufactured them. This business was somewhat seasonal in nature which left time during the off-season for the brothers to pursue other interests. Moreover, the tools and know-how from bicycle manufacture would prove useful

for developing another technology.

The Wright brothers' interest in heavier-than-air flight was piqued by the news in 1896 that German Otto Lilienthal had been killed in a crash of one of his gliders. Since 1891 this man had experimented with various glider designs and everyone recognized that he had significantly advanced the science of aerodynamics. Lilienthal was the first person to ride an airborne glider and by the time of his death he had about 2,500 flights to his credit.

## ON TO KITTY HAWK

By the summer of 1899 the Wright brothers had researched the topic and they understood what problems needed to be solved for success to be achieved. Next, upon inquiry, they discovered that the coastal sand dunes near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, were a promising place to fly gliders. This identification was based on the unusually strong and steady winds which were typical of that area. Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk thus became the site of their early experiments.

The Wrights set out, first of all, to find a glider design that was stable and reliable in the air. Others had made gliders before them, but none that were well controlled – balancing a “flyer” seemed easy but it really wasn't. When the wings were arranged in a V pattern with the passenger at the lowest point, the system performed adequately in calm air but got knocked back and forth, oscillating in wind. Alternatively when the center of gravity was located in front of the wings, there was constant up and down undulation.

In view of these already identified problems, the Wrights determined to build a glider which would allow the operator to restore balance. They thus set out to design wings which could be manually warped – twisted slightly – when the pilot shifted his weight so he could make ongoing inflight adjustments, somewhat like birds do by twisting and tipping their wings. Their objective was to obtain from the wind, the forces needed to restore balance. When they tried out their design at Kitty Hawk in October 1900, they discovered that their device did

not have enough lift to carry a man. These trials did however suggest that they were on the right track as far as balance and control were concerned.

The brothers returned to Kitty Hawk during July of 1901. They now used a wing shape that Otto Lilienthal had developed, and also relied on his lift calculations to determine how big the wings should be. This design performed much worse than their previous year's model. They rebuilt the glider and still it insisted on spinning. After further modifications the balance was improved but the lifting capacity was still most disappointing.

The Wrights realized that "the calculations upon which all flying-machines had been based were unreliable and that all were simply groping in the dark." Even Samuel Langley's data they concluded was "little better than guess-work." (All quotes are from "the Wright Brothers' Aeroplane" by Orville and Wilbur Wright published in the Sept. 1908 edition of *The Century Magazine*.)

### WORLD'S FIRST WIND TUNNEL

The Wrights returned home to Ohio, determined to generate their own data. To this end, they devised the world's

first wind tunnel. This was a contraption six feet long that they set up in their bicycle shop. The brothers had taken up aeronautics "as a sport." Now they reluctantly undertook real research. Soon they found the work so fascinating they were "drawn deeper and deeper into the project." Using the wind tunnel, they made systematic measurements of standard surfaces

so varied in design as to bring out the underlying causes of differences noted in their pressures. Measurements were tabulated on nearly fifty of these at all angles from zero to 45 degrees, at intervals of 2.5 degrees.

Based on these new data, they ran successful trials of a new glider during the fall of 1902. With a stable device, and with accurate data on lift, they were now ready to build a powered flyer. The two hurdles yet to overcome were propeller design and building a suitable lightweight engine.

Early in 1903 they turned their attention to propeller design. It wasn't as easy as they had expected. As they later reported:

What at first seemed a simple problem became more complex the longer we studied it. With a machine moving forward, the air flying backward, the propellers turning sidewise, and nothing standing still, it seemed impossible to find a starting point from which to trace the simultaneous reactions.

After much agonizing, they apparently sorted out the problems. The result of their calculations was highly satisfactory propellers.

The last requirement was a small internal combustion engine. This they built in their bicycle shop. The cost of the entire flying machine was about \$1000. It featured the propellers behind the wings, the rudder in front, and wings covered with "Pride of the West" muslin, a cotton fabric manufactured especially for ladies' underwear.

### THE FATEFUL DAY

On October 7, 1903 Samuel Langley's scaled up airplane design crashed. He asked for, and received more government funds to try again, but on December 8 his device crashed again.

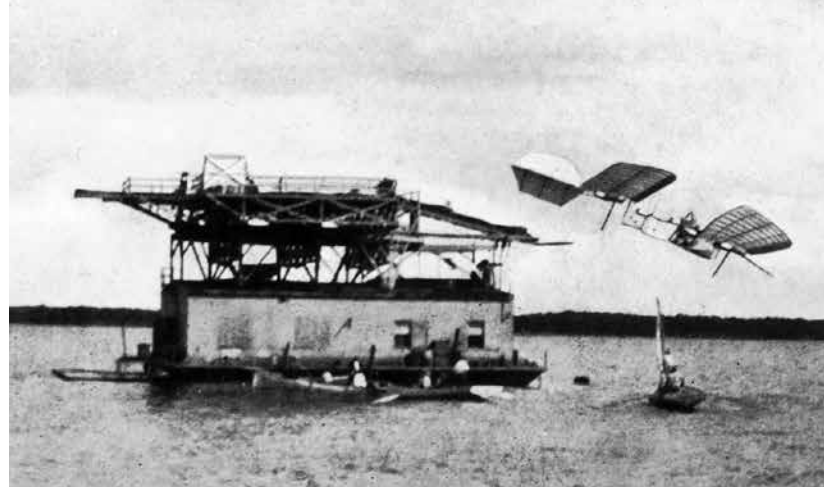
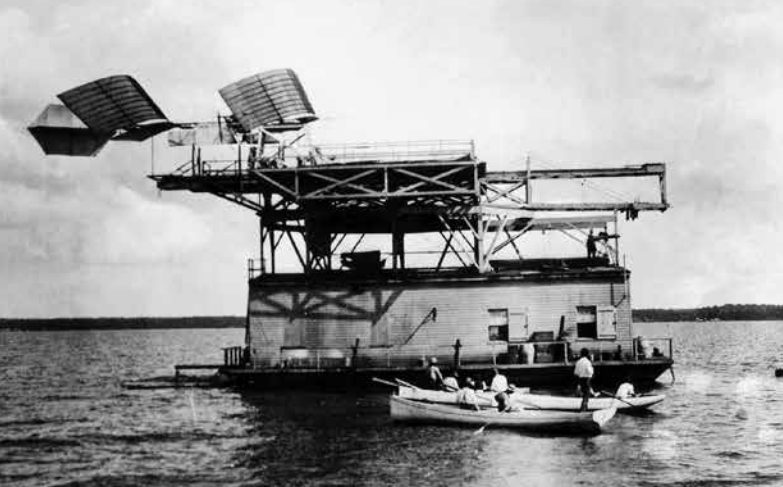
Then on December 17 at Kitty Hawk, Orville Wright made the first successful powered flight. Five people witnessed the event. The flight lasted 12 seconds and extended only 120 feet. Later in the day a flight of 852 feet was achieved. Heavier-than-air flight was now a reality and modern life would never be the same.

The almost universal response of their fellow Americans was to deny that anything had happened. The media refused to take any notice of this achievement. By the fall of 1905 the Wrights were now airborne for one half hour at a time. They practiced flying in Ohio, above a large field with public roads and a railroad nearby. Thousands of eyewitnesses testified to the reality of this success story. Reporters refused to believe firsthand accounts nor even to investigate for themselves. In January 1906, *Scientific American* insisted in print that the story of flight was a hoax since no newspapers had reported it. Finally in 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt ordered flight trials at

Glider pioneer Otto Lilienthal (1848-1896) in 1894, about to test one of his glider designs. He was an inspiration to the Wright brothers, though they never met.







Samuel Langley's Aerodome was to be launched, catapult style, off the roof of a houseboat. But both his 1903 trial flights ended up in crashes.

Fort Myers. As a result the brothers signed a contract to deliver airplanes to the US Army. However, public acclaim only came after Wilbur carried out a "public" flight in France on August 8, 1908. Now the age of flight had really dawned. Within less than a year, on July 25, 1909, Louis Bleriot became the first person to fly across the English Channel.

### WRIGHT AIR FORCE BASE?

The relationship of the Wrights with the American scientific establishment

was never cordial. After a dispute with the Smithsonian Institute in 1928, the only model of the original flyer was sent to England for display. There it remained until 1948, the year Orville Wright died. His older brother had died many years earlier. Meanwhile significant honors were accorded Langley rather than the Wrights. Langley Air Force Base was established in 1916 to honor this "American air pioneer." From 1931 to 1995 the world's most prestigious wind tunnel operated at the Langley base. This site is also famous

for its NASA research laboratory located there. In addition, the nation's first aircraft carrier was also named after Langley.

The world nevertheless remains deeply indebted to these two Christian bachelors who used their God-given talents for the benefit of their fellow man. Their objective was not fame and fortune, but rather the joy of discovery of God's creation. Thus just over one hundred years later, Christians can give special thanks for the testimony afforded by the lives of these interesting men. RP

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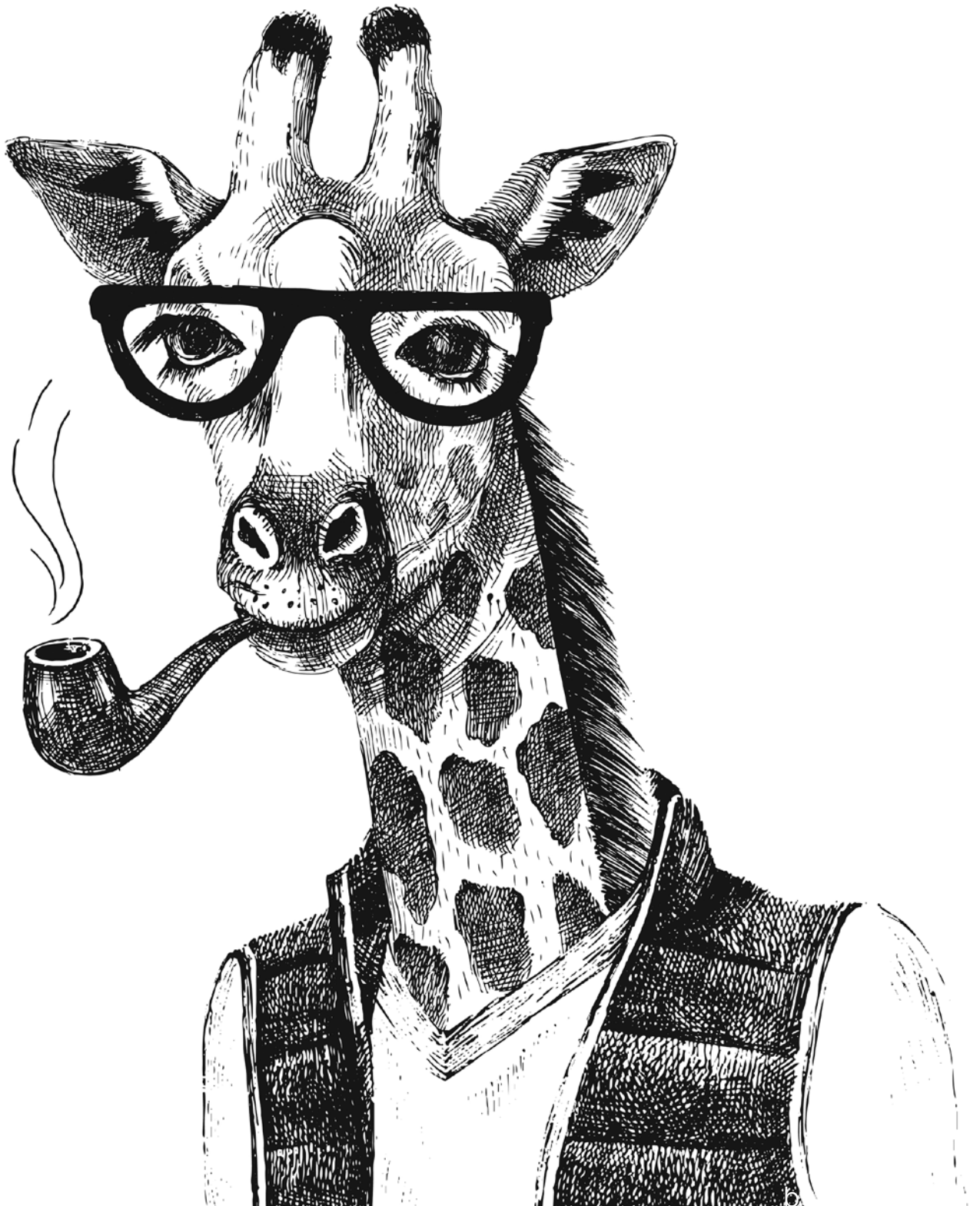


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# TRANSKINDOPHOBIA

by Rob Slane





Doctor Clive Gledhill looked down at his watch – 4:30. Only half an hour until the surgery shut and then he could head off home for the day to his family. He looked at the screen in front of him and saw that he had just two more patients booked in. Perhaps they might give him a more interesting end to the day than what had gone before. A few cases of stomach upset and flu – that was about it, so far as he could recall.

“Yes, come in,” said the doctor as he heard a tap at the door. As it opened, he looked up to greet his patient, only to find himself startled. “You wanted interesting?” thought the doctor. “Well here is interesting.”

The man entering the room was perhaps the oddest looking person the doctor had ever seen. The fabric that made up all his clothes – from his shirt all the way down to his socks – consisted of a series of irregular shaped brown patches, with white lines in between, rather like a mosaic. It seemed to be patterned like some sort of animal, though for the life of him the doctor couldn’t think what. He also had this same design tattooed onto his hands.

Around his neck he wore a series of metal coils – the sort of thing worn by women in the Kayan and Ndebele tribes, which is wound around the neck in order to stretch it. His arms were hung long and loose in front of him, almost as if he were trying to reach down to the floor with them. But perhaps the oddest thing of all was what he was doing with his mouth. He was chewing, but not in the way people chew gum. Rather it was a slow and ponderous action, not too dissimilar to a ruminant chewing the cud.

“Come, take a seat,” said Dr. Gledhill beckoning him to sit in the chair on the opposite side of his desk.

“I prefer to stand,” said the patient, moving the words around his mouth slowly as he continued to ruminate.

“As you wish,” replied the doctor. “Now tell me, how can I help you today?”

The oddity shifted around somewhat apprehensively. He seemed nervous and reluctant to speak at first, but the patient manner of the doctor seemed to put him

at ease.

“Before I tell you of my condition, I would like an assurance from you. Tell me, doctor, do you consider yourself to be a tolerant man?”

*“Tell me, doctor,  
do you consider  
yourself to be a  
tolerant man?”*

“Strange question,” thought Dr. Gledhill. Nevertheless he answered in the affirmative, adding that he considered himself to be a man of some high level of tolerance.

“Good,” replied the man. “And do you think yourself to be completely open and non-judgmental?”

“Well, I would say that I am fairly open,” replied the doctor. “I’ve practiced medicine for nearly thirty years now and I doubt whether there is much I haven’t seen. As for non-judgmental? I don’t suppose I am any more or any less judgmental than anyone else. We’ve all got our prejudices about something or other, but I suppose I try to be as impartial as possible. Can I ask to what these questions tend?”

“Yes, you may,” answered the man. “Dr. Gledhill, I have now been to no less than five doctors about my condition. Yet not one of them has taken me seriously. In fact they have all more or less ridiculed me and sent me out of their surgery. I have been humiliated and left feeling emotionally wrecked by the treatment I have received by various members of your profession. Which is why, before continuing, I seek reassurance that you will not treat me with the same derision as I have received before.”

“Okay,” said Doctor Gledhill pondering the request, “I promise that I’ll be as open-minded and fair as I am able. Now, what seems to be the problem?”

The patient nodded approvingly at the doctor, before walking slowly around

the room. As he spoke, every so often he would stand on tiptoes, straining as if he were trying to reach high up for something.

“Ever since I was a young child I have felt different,” he said.

“How do you mean different?” asked the doctor.

“What I mean is that even when I was a small boy, I would look around at the other boys the same age as me, and I knew I just wasn’t like them. Ever since I was about six, I knew what I really was – and it wasn’t what people thought. And the problem has never changed. In fact it has just got worse and worse. For more than thirty years, I have lived a lie. I can hardly describe it to you, but the ‘me’ you see on the outside is completely and utterly different from the ‘me’ on the inside.”

“Aha,” thought doctor Gledhill. “I think I know what is coming up.”

“The effects on my life have been disastrous and I find myself almost friendless, doctor. My behavior is too much for most people, and I daren’t tell anyone why I am the way I am. That is why I am here. The real me has been trying to burst out for years, but until now I always thought too much of public opinion to actually do anything about it. But enough is enough and I must finally seek a solution.”

Doctor Gledhill looked at the man for some moments, weighing up his response.

“Look, I think I understand what you’re saying,” replied the doctor after some moments. “Ever since you can remember, you have felt more female than male and now you’ve come to me asking if I can put you forward for a sex change. I must say I’m surprised by the reaction you received from some of my colleagues in the medical profession. Sex changes are really quite common these days and there’s nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about. If you like, I can refer you to a consultant I know at the hospital who specializes in these procedures.”

“Oh no, you don’t understand,” said the man looking a little put out. “I’m perfectly happy with being male. I have

no desire to become female and I did not come here seeking a sex change.”

“Well, I’m terribly sorry if I have misunderstood you,” replied the doctor, surprised by the response. “It’s just that everything you told me sounded remarkably similar to other cases I have dealt with where the patient was seeking to change their sex. So then would you mind correcting my error?”

“Yes of course,” replied the man. “Can’t you tell by looking at me? I’m not looking for a sex change. I’m happy with my gender and wouldn’t dream of trying to changing it. What I’m looking for is a species change.”

Dr. Gledhill’s head jerked back sharply as if he had just received an electric shock. Had he heard the man right? He’d said he was looking for a species change, hadn’t he? Surely not. Better check.

“Look, I’m sorry if I have misheard you, but did I hear you say you were looking for a species change?”

“Yes, you did,” replied the man.

“And what species are you looking to become?” asked Dr. Gledhill warily.

“Why surely that is obvious,” replied the man somewhat disdainfully. “Ever since I saw pictures of the Maasai Mara as small boy, I have wanted nothing else than to be a giraffe.”

Dr. Gledhill quickly attempted to gather his thoughts. Surely this must be some sort of joke. Perhaps one of his colleagues was playing a hoax on him. Yet since the man looked in earnest and gave not the slightest hint of any prank being played, he decided that his best course of action would be to try and talk the man round to a normal way of thinking.

“Look I understand that you may have issues and problems that perhaps need addressing,” said the doctor in a soothing tone. “But you do know that you can’t just become a giraffe, don’t you?”

“And why not?” came a rather stern reply.

“Well...” stumbled the doctor searching for the right words, “well... because you are human. You were born a human and that is what you are. You can’t change that.”

“But you were happy to refer me for a

sex change?”

“That is entirely different,” answered Dr. Gledhill. “There is a world of difference between changing one’s sex and changing one’s kind.”

“Oh there is, is there?” said the man cynically. “I’d love to know what that difference is exactly. Apparently my kind is fixed but my gender isn’t. Tell me doctor, you’re not a creationist by any chance, are you?”

It took a lot to offend Dr. Clive Gledhill, but this comment hit a raw nerve. He most definitely was not a creationist and he was not about to let his patient off without letting him know this in the sharpest possible terms. “No I’m not a creationist, thank you very much,” he replied tartly. “I absolutely affirm the Darwinian theory of natural selection. But what of it?”

“Then you believe in the mutability of species, you deny the fixity of kinds, and you affirm that we both evolved from apes all the way back to some kind of bacteria?”

“Yes I do,” replied the doctor.

“Well then since you affirm these things to be true,” replied the man, “why do you deny the possibility that I can change from a human to a giraffe?”

“Why a giraffe? How about an ape, since they are our nearest cousins,” said the doctor sarcastically.

“I was never very good at climbing trees – it makes me giddy – so I dread to think what swinging through them would do,” replied the man with total seriousness. “But you have avoided my question. Look, since you affirm that the gender of a person is not so fixed that it can’t be changed, an opinion which must surely be based on an evolutionary understanding of the world, and since you believe in the morphing of atoms into creatures and of kinds into other kinds, why would you then claim that humanness is so fixed that it cannot be changed?”

“Well,” said the doctor, thinking as quickly as he could. “I’m not sure whether such a thing is even possible, but even if it were, would it be desirable? And even if it were both possible and desirable, we certainly do not have the


*“Apparently my kind is fixed but my gender isn’t. Tell me doctor, you’re not a creationist by any chance, are you?”*

capability of performing species change operations at present.”

“Then might I suggest that the scientific establishment begin researching into this capability,” said the man indignantly. “They claim that they can make a man out of a woman or a woman out of a man by cutting bits off here and there and by the injection of various hormones. But if they are as serious about the mutability of species and kinds as they say they are, maybe they need to put their money where their mouths are – else I shall think that they neither understand nor fully believe the logic of their own convictions.”

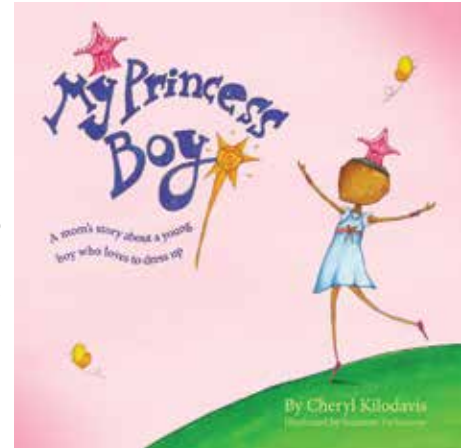
“And might I suggest that you go and see a psychiatrist and perhaps talk over your issues with them?” replied a clearly irritated Dr. Gledhill.

“It doesn’t surprise me,” replied the man walking towards the door. “All of the previous doctors I have seen have told me pretty much the same thing. They all affirmed their belief in evolution, yet when push came to shove, they have backed off from the implication of their beliefs, which is that nothing is fixed and so everything is open to change – including a medically-induced species change. I see that you are no more open to change than any of them were.”

And with that he walked through the door leaving Dr. Clive Gledhill somewhat shell-shocked at the conversation he had just had. After some moments he managed to pull himself together. “Species change indeed,” he muttered to himself. “Let’s hope my final patient just has an upset stomach.” 



# { IN A TIDBITS RELEVANT, AND NOT SO, TO CHRISTIAN LIFE NUTSHELL } BY JON DYKSTRA



## A LITTLE RESPECT...

Twenty years ago talk show host Charles J. Sykes penned a memorable newspaper column on “Some rules kids won’t learn in school.” Number seven is as good today as it was then:

Before you were born your parents weren’t as boring as they are now. They got that way paying your bills, cleaning up your room and listening to you tell them how idealistic you are. And by the way, before you save the rainforest from the blood-sucking parasites of your parents’ generation, try delousing the closet in your bedroom.

SOURCE Sykes’ column appeared in the San Diego Union Tribune on Sept. 19, 1996

## IS THIS LOVE?

How can a parent help put a daughter’s crushes in the right context? How can we help her view this boy with discerning eyes? Diane Stark shared her approach in the March 2015 issue of *Thriving Family*. First she pointed her daughter to 1 Corinthians 13:4-6:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Then she asked her daughter to replace the word “love” in this passage with the boy’s name, to see if it fit. As in “Timmy is patient and kind; he does not envy or boast. Timmy is not arrogant or rude...” What her daughter found is that the boy she was interested in wasn’t all that loving to many of their classmates. Seen in this biblical light, this prince wasn’t quite so charming.

Stark wasn’t done. Next she asked her daughter to insert her own name in this passage to see how well it fit. Though Stark didn’t share her daughter’s self-evaluation it is safe to say this passage exposed her own room for improvement – this passage exposes us all, and shows us all our need to ask God to continue His transforming work on us, so we can become more and more like Him.

## ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

“I think we ought to be plain about this – that unless we preserve the principles of liberty in this department there is no use in trying to preserve them anywhere else. If you give the bureaucrats the children, you might as well give them everything else as well.”

– Presbyterian professor J. Gresham Machen, testifying before Congress in 1926, speaking against the formation of a federal Department of Education and the further involvement of the government in education.

## WHAT LURKS ON LIBRARY SHELVES?

It might not surprise you to know that in the teen section of your local library there lurks all sorts of books you don’t want your kids reading – sexually-charged anime books, books promoting homosexuality, and books with horrendous titles like:

- *Sex: an uncensored introduction*
- *What if I’m an atheist?*
- *Zombies vs. unicorns*
- and *100% Official Justin Bieber*

However, you may be surprised, as I was, about what can be found amongst the picture books in the children’s section. *My Princess Boy* is about a cross-dressing four-year-old boy who likes to wear a pink dress to school. This made its way into our house because, at first glance, its pink cover looks like just another girl book. We don’t censor what our children grab too rigorously while we’re still in the library, in part because our kids can’t read yet so we can always nix them later on (our daughters know that mom or dad may deem a book they picked out “too silly to read”).

But after our oldest daughter had already poured over the pictures of this one, mom thought it would be best to read it together. She used the opportunity to teach how God made boys and girls different from each other. “Should a boy dress like a girl?” That was an easy question to answer. As was the follow up: “Should we laugh at a boy who is acting strange?” No, they know better than that. So a very perverse book was put to instructive use because my wife was there, doing the reading.

I already knew there was some odd stuff in the kids’ section – books about bratty children, and “Captain Underpants,” and other rude, peculiar material – but I didn’t realize that anything so starkly anti-Christian was lurking there amongst the picture books. My oldest will be able to read on her own in a few months and it was an eye-opener to realize that even in our conservative, church-going, small town, the public library is not to be trusted.

We need to be aware of what our children are reading.

## “YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE ONE...”

A man gazed incredulously at a huge mounted fish. Finally he said: “The man who caught that fish is a liar!”

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

# ON CLIMATE CHANGE

## Clear thinking on a controversial issue BY COLIN POSTMA

What should Christians think about global warming? And how should we respond to the recent 2015 Paris Agreement that calls on Canada and nations around the world to substantially cut our carbon output? Canada's newly appointed Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna was "thrilled" about the Agreement. Should we be? How would cutting our carbon output impact the country? How will it impact our poorest citizens? Should cutting our carbon be a priority for us and for our government?

To answer these questions we are going to examine:

- A. the history of global warming activism
- B. faulty assumptions driving this activism
- C. negative impacts caused by this activism
- D. the type of stewardship Christians are called to

### A. THE HISTORY OF GLOBAL WARMING ACTIVISM

The idea of climate change – specifically catastrophic, anthropogenic (man-caused), global warming – was brought to public attention when high-profile environmentalists and politicians publicized statistics showing a rapid increase of the earth's temperature since the industrial revolution. The signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary *Inconvenient Truth* popularized the cause.

Based on computer modelling of historic weather patterns, cataclysmic predictions were made. These predictions included:

- total polar ice-cap melts
- dramatic increases in sea levels
- flooding in some areas
- severe droughts in other areas
- the extinction of animal and plant species
- the increase of natural disasters
- and plagues and famines which will impact billions of people across the globe

Such predictions were understandably alarming.

The theory of catastrophic anthropogenic climate change has been promoted most prominently by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international body of climate scientists and government representatives under the auspices of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization. A 2014 report summarizes their findings:

It is very likely that human influence has contributed to the observed global scale changes in the frequency and intensity of daily temperature extremes since the mid-20th century... Multiple lines of evidence indicate a strong, consistent, almost linear relationship between cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and projected global temperature change to the year 2100.

The IPCC report also called for carbon dioxide taxes and economic sanctions in the form of cap-and-trade to "price" carbon dioxide into the market. Other recommendations include major government subsidies for particular renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

### B. FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS DRIVING THE ACTIVISM

The IPCC and dozens of other environmental organizations are calling for drastic action from governments based on their predictions of dire consequences. However, there are a surprising number of unsubstantiated assumptions backing their positions.

#### Assumption #1

#### The climate can be accurately and consistently modeled

The IPCC's climate predictions are based on models – complex computer programs that predict what the weather will be like in the coming decades. But the outputs from such models are only as good as their inputs. Any errors in reasoning, or oversights, will yield unreliable results.

But how can we know if these computer models contain errors, or if the scientists programing them have overlooked something? One method involves "hindcasting." This is where scientists see if a computer model can "predict" what has already happened. So, for example, they might input all their data on the Earth's climate up to 1999 and then see if what the model then predicts for the next 16 years matches up with what we know has actually happened.

It turns out that hindcasting of models demonstrates that climate models tend to overestimate temperature trends. Why? Because they show themselves to be very poor at predicting the cooling impact of cloud cover, and underestimate the impact that significant plant growth from increases in CO<sub>2</sub> will have on actual CO<sub>2</sub> values in the atmosphere. They also fail to properly estimate isoprene levels in the atmosphere, and more.



The global increase of temperature is at most 0.8°C since the beginning of the 20th century, and for the most part has stopped trending upwards, as seen in *Figure 1*. Global carbon dioxide output, however, has continued to increase. The correlation between carbon dioxide and temperature cannot be nearly as direct as many scientists originally thought. The climate is incredibly difficult to predict, as the IPCC acknowledges in their Third Assessment Report:

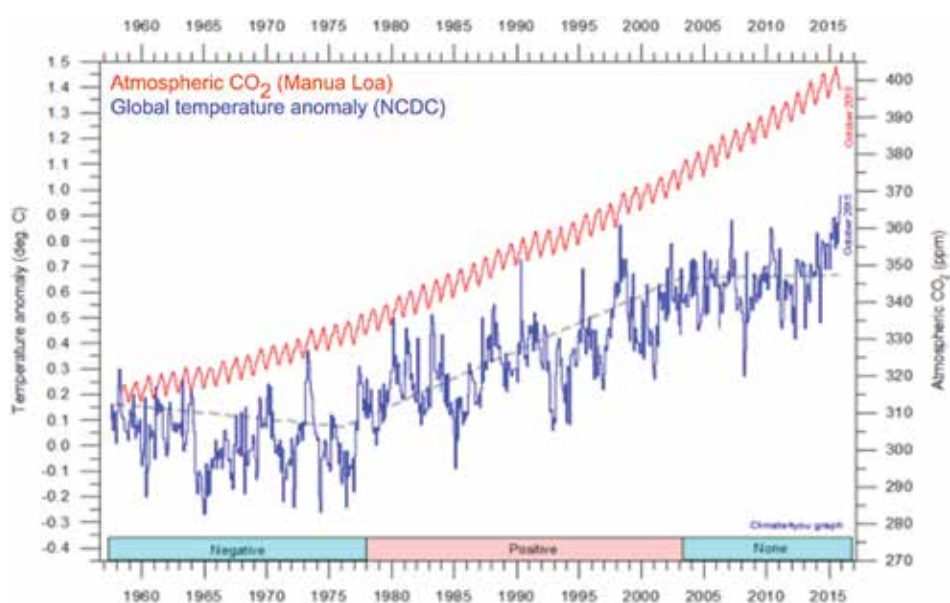
The climate system is particularly challenging since it is known that components in the system are inherently chaotic; there are feedbacks that could potentially switch sign, and there are central processes that affect the system in a complicated, non-linear manner. These complex, chaotic, non-linear dynamics are an inherent aspect of the climate system. ...In sum, a strategy must recognise what is possible. In climate research and modelling, we should recognise that... the long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible.

Ninety-five percent of the IPCC's climate models predicted more warming than was observed, which implies that their errors are based on a bias incorporated into the models themselves. None of the models predicted the complete absence of statistically significant global warming – according to the satellite data – that has occurred for over 18 years since January 1997. to October 2015.

Based on these failures, the models provide no rational basis for any predictions of future global average temperature, or any other climate-related phenomena, and therefore are not a sound basis for public policy.

### Assumption #2 Anecdotal evidence is reliable

Media reports commonly make linkages between global warming and any severe weather events. For example, this past November the *New York Times* ran a story under this headline: “California



**FIGURE 1: ATMOSPHERIC CO2 AND GLOBAL TEMPERATURE**

OLE HUMLUM'S "GLOBAL MONTHLY TEMP SINCE 1958 AND CO2. " FROM OCTOBER 6, 2015 AND ACCESSED NOVEMBER 20, 2015 ON [HTTP://WWW.CLIMATE4YOU.COM/](http://WWW.CLIMATE4YOU.COM/)

Drought Is Made Worse by Global Warming, Scientists Say.”

But drought in California, or the death of a pod of whales in the Atlantic from an increase in algae, simply cannot be used as evidence of anthropogenic warming any more than those who argue that a record-breaking snow fall is evidence global warming is *not* occurring. Anecdotal evidence over-simplifies the issue. It is essentially a research study with only one sample – proving nothing about the climate. There is very limited evidence of any increasing trend in extreme weather events, such as tropical storms, tornadoes, heat waves, or droughts. There is also no discernable impact of CO2 on polar ice melt or sea level rise. Attribution of weather events to climate change has only been accomplished by climate models, not actual data.

### Assumption #3 A warming earth is inherently a negative development

Would the effects of warming be entirely bad? Why should we assume so? And yet those calling for drastic government action generally fail to consider the probable benefits of a higher global temperature.

- Some warming would allow people to farm in areas that previously were too cold to farm, increasing food production.
- Heat decreases the number of lives lost to extreme temperatures: cold weather kills twenty times more people than hot weather.
- Society thrived during climate optimums like the Medieval Warming Period (approximately 900 to 1200 A.D.).
- Crop increases, population expansion, increased wealth, and less disease have been, historically, some of the benefits of warming.
- Cooling periods, such as the one experienced from 1300 to 1800 A.D., saw increased famines and disease, drops in food production, lower life expectancy, and heightened health problems.

### Assumption #4 This level of climate change is unprecedented

The earliest recorded temperature data reaches back to the 1600s for a few small areas of Europe. Most of the world's land and ocean surface temperature records only go back reliably to the 1900s.



## Would the effects of warming be entirely bad? Why should we assume so?

It turns out that climate change computer models don't "predict" the past all that well. Why would we believe their predictions for the future?

Temperature data from before that time is based on scientific assumptions about core ice, sediment samples, and tree ring data, which are not as precise due to difficulty establishing timescale.

Further, there is historic evidence of much greater shifts in global temperature than the mere 0.8°C increase experienced in the last century. American climatologist Dr. Judith Curry wrote recently,

I am still waiting for a robust explanation for the substantial global warming from 1905-1945, why the globe has been warming overall for the past 400 years, and what caused the Little Ice Age. Failing to even try to understand climate change during these periods... is a recipe for fooling ourselves about what has caused the recent warming, and how the future climate will evolve.

### Assumption #5 People in developing countries are as concerned about climate change as developed countries

Around the world – in both developed and developing countries – climate change falls far below other priorities such as food, education, safety, health, and jobs, as evidenced in a recent UN survey. According to the 2014 UN Development Report, over three billion people still earn less than \$2.50 US per day, with basic survival being their chief priority. The Acton Institute points out:

...people worried about putting food on the table today understandably consider that to be more urgent than reducing smog next year, or minimizing global warming one hundred years from now. But when people are confident that their most urgent needs will be met, they begin allocating more of their resources to needs deemed by them less urgent – including increasingly rigorous environmental protection.

### Assumption #6 Climate Change is settled "science"

A recent article in *The Guardian* made the following statement:

there is a 97% consensus amongst the scientific experts and scientific research that humans are causing global warming. Let's spread the word and close the consensus gap.

The belief that there is a 97% consensus among scientists about catastrophic anthropogenic global warming originated from a number of studies. Possibly the most widely referenced of these is a study done by John Cook (et. al.) on 11,944 peer-reviewed reports from climate scientists. The study calculated that 32.6% of scientists (approx. 3,894 articles) had agreed with the statement that "humans are causing

global warming," and that only 1% disagreed or were uncertain (approx. 119 articles). However, the study disregards any of the scientists that didn't comment on the subject (66.4% or approx. 7,931). So this study does not prove that 97% of scientists believe that the earth is warming catastrophically, or that it is doing so primarily due to anthropogenic causes, or that we need to take immediate global action on the scale proposed by many environmentalists.

Consensus is a political value, not a scientific value. The sciences rely on empirical study, not popularity. Dr. Judith Curry writes,

With genuinely well-established scientific theories, "consensus" is not discussed and the concept of consensus is arguably irrelevant. For example, there is no point to discussing a consensus that the Earth orbits the sun, or that the hydrogen molecule has less mass than the nitrogen molecule. While a consensus may arise surrounding a specific scientific hypothesis or theory, the existence of a consensus is not itself the evidence.

Or as *National Post* columnist Barbara Kay shared,

Numbers of scientists aren't important, evidence is. As Albert Einstein reportedly said regarding the book written by dissidents to his Theory of Relativity, *One Hundred Authors Against Einstein*, "Why 100 authors? If I were wrong, then one would have been enough."

In his novel *That Hideous Strength*, C.S. Lewis illustrated how the modern sciences are being used the way magic has been used in a more superstitious age: to concentrate power in the hands of certain individuals. In the same way that a tribe looked unquestioningly to a witch doctor, today many scientists expect unquestioning faith in their pronouncements. This is reflected in the attitudes of those who have begun calling for the silencing of critics. David Suzuki recently said that climate change “deniers” should be thrown in prison as environmental criminals. Elizabeth May, in a 2009 Munk debate, likened “climate change deniers” to someone in a burning theatre who cries out, “It’s okay - we’re fine!”

History gives ample evidence of the danger of this type of unquestioning faith. Stalinist Russia proclaimed that reason and modern science were the pinnacle of human achievement. Trofim Lysenko, an acclaimed scientist in Stalinist Russia, claimed to be able to triple and quadruple crop yields in the starving country. His theories were spread across Russia as undeniable truth. Lysenko was hailed for many years by the general public as a national hero. Scientists who questioned his methods and his science were told to be silent. Some were arrested and even executed. Propaganda embellished the success he obtained, and omitted his failures which caused famine and death in a country already ravaged by failed Soviet ideas. Following Stalin’s death, his methods were entirely discredited. “Lysenkoism” is the term now used to describe this theory. Historical examples like this give free societies the duty to question the “consensus” of scientific theories that are propagated as “unquestionable.”

### C. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THESE FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS

Now none of this would matter if there weren’t real world implications to this debate. But nations are pledging hundreds of billions, and even trillions, to fight global warming over the next century. This is a trade off we need to



Global governments are promising to spend hundreds of billions each year and trillions over the next century to fight climate change. When billions of people today are living in poverty and squalor, and hundreds of millions don’t have enough to eat or access to clean drinking water, and millions die each year of preventable diseases, are we getting the biggest life-saving bang for our buck?

understand: whatever is spent on fighting global warming is money that can’t be spent on anything else.

Kenya, encouraged by the United Nations, recently committed to investing \$40 billion into its carbon dioxide reduction program. This is money that a developing nation like Kenya cannot afford to waste; it comes with the risk of severe hardship for its poorest citizens. Encouraging developing nations to use “clean energy solutions” to fuel their rise into the industrial age is a way for neo-colonial powers to pacify their conscience about their own industrial revolutions. Unfortunately, investing in wind and solar energy as the future of energy production is poorly calculated. Wind power and solar energy are simply too expensive and have proven too unreliable to replace fossil fuels as the primary source of energy. Providing subsidies does not make these forms of energy more competitive; it simply means people are paying the extra cost

for energy through taxes.

Economic programs like carbon dioxide taxes, cap-and-trade, and incentives for replacing fossil fuels with more expensive wind turbines and solar power will result in greater harm than good. The Copenhagen Consensus on Climate has calculated the value of these types of solutions and compared them with other possible solutions. They found that these programs are some of the most economically unsound

*...this study does not prove that 97% of scientists believe that the earth is warming catastrophically*



available to governments who wish to reduce carbon dioxide production. There are better options.

The commonly-advocated options actually make the problem of world poverty worse. According to the Copenhagen Consensus:

Achieving the target [of the IPCC] would require a high, global CO2 tax starting at around \$68 per ton...a tax at this level could reduce world GDP by a staggering 12.9% in 2100 — the equivalent of \$40 trillion a year... for each dollar spent on the “solution,” we will avoid only about 2 cents of climate damage.

By allowing developing nations to invest that “green” money in infrastructure, health care, education, security, food, clean water and job creation *instead* of climate change mitigation, these nations could take meaningful steps away from poverty.

Dr. Calvin Beisner points out that:

...many times more people are and will remain at risk of disease and death because their poverty deprives them of safe and sufficient food, water, sanitation, and pest control than even the most alarming scenarios of the... IPCC forecast... In fact, out of 24 risks to human life

ranked by U.S. Interior Department analyst Indur Goklany, climate change ranked last.

Ultimately, those who advocate for reallocating the spending of vast amounts of government funds to fight climate change in developing countries remove the opportunity for those countries to aggressively fight untimely deaths from disease, hunger, lack of water, poor living conditions, and much more. The current approach to internationally-imposed global climate change solutions amounts to ideological colonialism.



Cheap, reliable, fossil fuel energy is what makes it possible to survive and even thrive through our cold Canadian winters. How would it impact Canada's poorest if we dramatically raised the price of energy?

## D. THE STEWARDSHIP CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO

There is certainly reason to be concerned about the way some humans have treated the planet. It seems one cannot travel anywhere in the world – even the most remote island beaches – without coming across evidence of humanity damaging the natural environment. Fish, birds, and plants live in the beauty of creation, while garbage bags and plastic cups roll in the foam. The scars that human waste and mismanagement have left are horrible indeed, and reflective of our fallen human nature as we fail to uphold our mandate as nature's curators.

The Bible calls humanity to worship God as the creator of all things. God made us and set us up as stewards of all creation, to use it, to preserve it, and to honour it as a gift (Gen. 2:5-16, Job 38–41, Psalm 104, Matthew 25:14-37). As we read in Genesis 1:28-29:

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."

God continues to sustain and order the universe, and we see a reflection of His perfection in the unchanging laws of nature and in the constancy of seasonal cycles. *The Heidelberg Catechism*, in response to the question, "What do you understand by the providence of God?" states,

God's providence is his almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come to us

not by chance but by his fatherly hand (Lord's Day 10, Q&A 27).

We should strive to uphold both the health of our planet and our fellow human beings, but when that isn't possible, and a choice has to be made between one or the other, our priorities must be with our fellow Image bearers. Or as The Acton Institute's *A Biblical Perspective on Environmental Stewardship* stated it:

Both by endowing them with his image and by placing them in authority over the earth, God gave men and women superiority and priority over all other earthly creatures. This implies that proper environmental stewardship, while it seeks to harmonize the fulfillment of the needs of all creatures, nonetheless puts human needs above non-human needs when the two are in conflict...People, alone among creatures on earth, have both the rationality and the moral capacity to exercise stewardship, to be accountable for their choices, to take responsibility for caring not only for themselves but also for other creatures. To reject human stewardship is to embrace, by default, no stewardship.

## CONCLUSION

Any measures or policies developed to aid poor nations should aim to build their economies and raise citizens out of poverty so that these nations will be able to develop solutions to priorities such as health care, housing, energy, clean water, and education.

Most importantly, government policies directed towards reducing CO2 emissions and mitigating catastrophic anthropogenic climate change are merely symbolic and produce no environmental benefit, and thus should be ended. Environmental policy should be focused on stewardship of Canada's land, air and waters, not changing the climate. <sup>RP</sup>

*This article has been adapted from a longer, fully footnoted position paper titled "Respectfully Submitted: Climate Change" which can be found at [ARPACanada.ca](http://ARPACanada.ca).*

## The Executive Summary

1. The earth's climate has, is, and always will be changing.
2. The global mean temperature and atmospheric CO2 levels have historically varied significantly compared to the 20th century average.
3. The climate sensitivity to increasing atmospheric CO2 is not fully understood.
4. There is no discernable trend in frequency and scale of extreme weather events.
5. Most recent IPCC climate models have over-estimated temperature trends.
6. Carbon dioxide reductions – through policies such as green energy subsidies, cap-and-trade and carbon dioxide tax models – are expensive, negatively impact the economy, and produce no measurable benefit for the climate in the long run.
7. "Fossil fuels" provide a better health and economic solution for energy production than other fuel sources used by the world's poor such as burning dung, wood, garbage, etc.
8. Reductions in energy production or increases in the cost of energy production will hinder medical, economic and social progress for the world's poorer nations. Abundant, reliable, affordable energy is essential to lifting the poor out of poverty.
9. Until a cost-competitive energy solution is developed, it is hypocritical to require poor nations to either use unreliable expensive solar and wind-power to generate energy, or to remain as they are – in poverty using unhealthy and polluting fuels like dung, charcoal, etc.





# ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREMISM: A ONE-WORLD VIEW

## Christians know there is another Earth coming

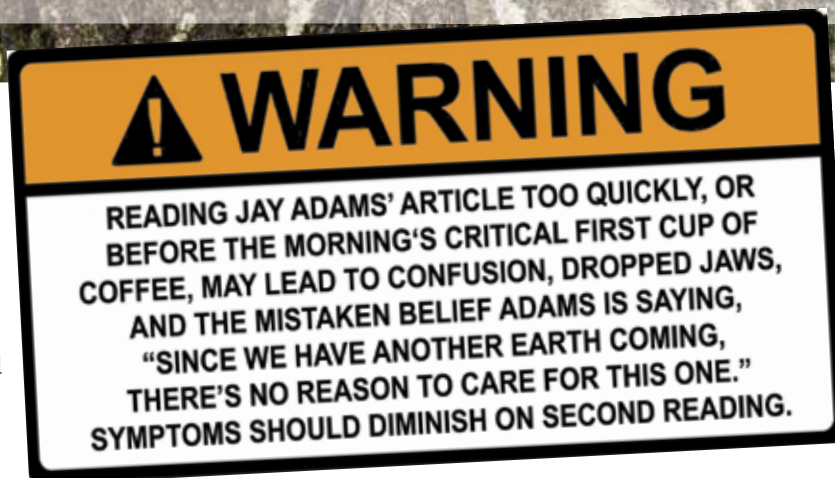
by Jay Adams

No intelligent and dedicated Christian wants to debate the idea that we ought to be judicious about how we conduct ourselves with the planet that God has given us to inhabit and enjoy. Reasonable conservation is, of course, nothing more than good stewardship of those bounties. We applaud efforts at reforestation, preservation of Natural Wonders, and the like.

### WE SHOULD BE THINKING DIFFERENTLY

But our views of the earth ought to collide with those of the environmental extremists who are more concerned about snail darters than about the livelihood of hardworking farmers whose efforts to earn a living are impeded by them. As believers, therefore, it is important for us to consider what God, Himself, has said about the matter.

I want to suggest that, in passing, Paul makes an all-important statement in Colossians 2:22a that has been overlooked by many of our people. His words rest upon a worldview that simply is not



shared by non-Christians. This dissimilarity in views leads to many of the differences that we find between ourselves and the environmentalists. Here are his words:

“These refer to things that are intended to be used up and perish.”

In the passage Paul is referring to “ascetic” injunctions concerning fasting, various uses of food, and so on, that unbelievers and Judaizers alike sought to impose upon Christians. Paul would have us refuse to follow them. So, in passing – as I indicated above – he says that the things that the world holds sacred, to the Christian, are but items that God has provided for our use.

### THIS EARTH ISN'T MEANT TO LAST

His point is that when they are “used up” that’s OK (assuming they were used in a responsible manner). It is no great tragedy to deplete the supply of fossil fuels, for a species of unusual fish to become extinct, or for the wolves to be banned from lands



where they attack and destroy herds of cattle and sheep.

“But that is a tragedy,” says someone. “After all, once they are gone – “used up” as your apostle put it – they are gone forever. To lose an animal species or a rainforest is to have suffered an irreparable loss!”

Yes, in that objection, you detect quite a different philosophy of existence. Christians should expect outcries from environmentalists about oil drilling in the Arctic, logging in the West, the use of SUVs on our highways, and similar human activities that they believe will noticeably affect the environment. Such objections to these activities are perfectly in accord with the one-world view of the non-Christian. He would be inconsistent to his basic philosophy of existence if he didn’t raise an outcry.

“What, then, are you saying,” asks a Christian?

## NO NEED TO CLING

Simply this. The unbeliever has but one world. He knows nothing of another world to come. He clings to every aspect of the present world’s assets because, as he believes, once they “perish” they are gone forever. No wonder he goes to lengths to preserve all that he can. But the Christian looks forward to a new heavens and a new earth that will be so far superior to the present one that he cannot stake everything on what now exists. He looks on the present world as a marvelous creation, in which God had provided all things for us to use and enjoy now – insofar as we can since it is under the curse of sin. Because of that curse, however, nothing will remain forever. Indeed, the book of Ecclesiastes was written to point out that nothing is permanent. And, in that book, like Paul, Solomon tells us to enjoy what we can so long as we are here and the deteriorating world in which we live continues as it is. The clash in opinions that occurs over various environmental issues is, in reality, a clash of a one-world and a two-world view of existence. RP

*Dr. Adams has written more than 100 books, on a variety of subjects. This article was originally posted on the Institute for Nouthetic Studies’ blog ([www.nouthetic.org/blog](http://www.nouthetic.org/blog)) and is reprinted here with permission.*

## PRIORITIZING THE LIVING OVER THE HYPOTHETICAL

by Jon Dykstra

Atheists have no future hope – no eternity to look forward to – so they are desperate to hold onto what they have now. That’s true for the unbelieving environmentalist, and equally so for the unbelieving health food fanatic: one is worried about the planet, the other his own well-being, but in both cases they are willing to go to extremes to preserve what they have because it is all that they have.

A Christian knows better. We know that while life is precious and death is an enemy to be fought, we have another life coming. So we take good care of the body God has given us – we eat healthy foods and exercise when we can – but we don’t obsess about eliminating every last kettle chip from our diet, or worry about whether we’re getting enough of the latest superfood. We need to be good stewards of what God has given us, and that includes our life, but we don’t need to cling desperately to it.

When it comes to our planet, Christians know that not only is another Earth coming, there is a chance it might come very soon. The unbeliever thinks this is it, there ain’t no more, so he’s willing to impose huge burdens on this world’s present population in the faint hope it will extend the Earth’s best before date.

But what about the good that money could do right now?

Consider this: if we knew the world was going to end in a decade – let’s say scientists saw a gigantic planet-killing comet on the way – would we spend trillions in the hope of making the planet a cooler place in 100 years? No, of course not. Then the choice would be obvious and even the unbeliever would want to spend those trillions on helping people right now. Well, we don’t know when the Christ is going to return, but we know it could happen any time. When we are weighing the needs of people today vs. the needs of people in the future Christians need to place a very important and clarifying modifier before those future folk: we need to understand they are “hypothetical.” Jesus could come back tomorrow; we don’t know if there will still be children being born in one hundred years.

Now, regardless of whether Christ returns this century or not, prioritizing the needs of real people over potential people is the right idea. The future is uncertain, and we don’t know what it brings. What we do know for certain is that there are millions of children today who are living in poverty, and dying from hunger and preventable sickness. We have to take good care of the resources God has given us, and that includes the Earth, but when we are figuring out how to make use of those resources then the living, breathing, suffering souls of today should be a higher priority for us than the hypothetical population of the future.

# REVIEWS

RELATED TO ARTICLES THIS ISSUE

## COOL IT

DOCUMENTARY

88 MINUTES; 2010

RATING: 8/10



Bjorn Lomborg is an agnostic, homosexual, vegetarian, environmentalist who believes that man-caused global warming is happening and is a significant problem. I stand opposed to his views of God, sexuality, and food choices, and am a good deal more skeptical about the impact of man on the warming of the planet. However, I love this DVD and highly recommend it because of the one point on which we both agree: Man is the pinnacle of creation (Gen. 1:26-27).

Agnostic Lomborg doesn't put it that way, but nonetheless it is this understanding that drives his approach to climate change. So in the film we see he's gathered a group of Nobel Prize winners to discuss "where can we do the most good?" His proposed solutions have, as their measure, how many people can be saved with this approach, versus how many might be saved versus another. This Man-is-more-important-than-Nature approach has made him enemies and set him sharply apart from climate change proponents behind the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Accord. But it matches up with the God's priorities.

This is a fascinating documentary that should be watched not so much for the specific solutions it proposes, but rather for the different way of thinking – the right way of thinking! – that undergirds what Lomborg is proposing.

- JON DYKSTRA

## THE MORAL CASE FOR FOSSIL FUELS

NON-FICTION

BY ALEX EPSTEIN

209 PAGES / 2014



Author Alex Epstein challenges society's negative view of fossil fuels by asking us to also consider the positives. He argues that, "*energy is ability* – because energy can help us do anything better" and "make the world a better place . . . *for human beings.*"

Throughout the book Epstein exposes the unreliability and unaffordability involved in alternative energies (with the possible exception of nuclear energy in the future). He repeatedly emphasizes the importance of making human life our measure of something's value, and he shows how fossil fuel consumption has actually led to improved water quality, less disease, and cleaner air. Fossil fuels are moral because they have improved human life!

One caution: though not critical to his argument, the author is seemingly not Christian, as is evidenced by references to "Mother Earth," and one silly quote from Ayn Rand in which having "half naked women" about the house is lauded.

That said, this book is a must-read for those working in the energy industry, a should-read for those pursuing science degrees, and a good-read for all who are interested in developing a realistic, big-picture approach toward environmental stewardship, sustainable energy, and industrial progress and development.

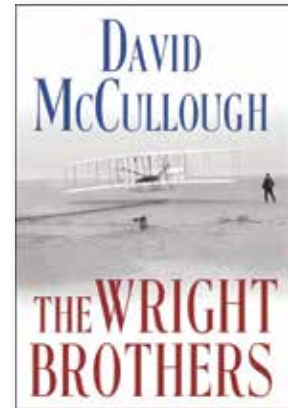
- LANCE VISSER

## THE WRIGHT BROTHERS

BIOGRAPHY

BY DAVID MCCULLOUGH

320 PAGES / 2015



Match an astonishing story with a superb storyteller and what more could we ask for? David McCullough clearly had fun delivering a story that, if it weren't true, would never be believed – the Wright brothers seem simply too good to be true. These two former journalists, now bike builders, simply decide one day to get into the plane building business. They begin by firing off a letter to the Smithsonian Institution to ask for all the information that can be had about flight because they are determined to succeed where all others have failed.

McCullough gives us the measure of these two men, by highlighting just how audacious their goal really was. At the time many thought human flight was an impossibility, and based this conclusion on the decades of failed experiments that preceded the Wrights' interest. And while the two brothers are not poor, they don't have the resources some other experimenters have been able to muster. So how could the Wrights manage what they did? McCullough credits it to determination, brilliance, patience, curiosity, and, did we mention determination?

This would be a wonderful book to give to older teens, to inspire them to investigate, experiment, study, dream and work hard. That's what the Wrights had going for themselves, and look at how far it took them! - JON DYKSTRA

## THE WRIGHT BROTHERS (ANIMATED HERO CLASSICS)

ANIMATED

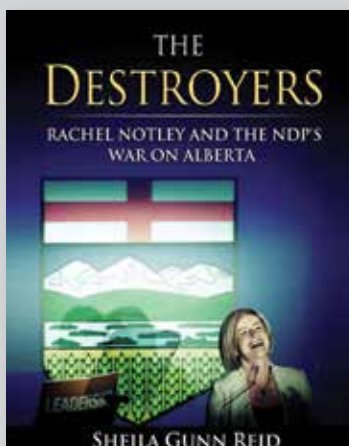
27 MINUTES / 1996

RATING: 7/10



This is an impressive educational tool, and a pretty solid family movie too. In just the first 15 minutes we get to see the history of aviation develop from disastrous first attempts at gliding to the Wright brothers' first successful powered flight. Then in the second half we see aviation take its first faltering steps - the Wrights continue to refine their design, but others are flying now too. And because the Wrights are content to do their work in private, their achievement is disputed. Even the American press doesn't believe they've flown. And when the Brazilian-born Alberto Santos-Dumont gets his own plane up in the air, he claims the title "first man to fly." It seems as if the Wrights "have lost their place in history."

It's all here: tension, amazing inventions, and loads of historical detail packed tightly into just a half hour package. On top of all that, this is entertaining too. Our whole family loved it, though for different reasons. My wife and I were fascinated by the history, and our children, from 2 to 6, were swept along by the story. This would be an unmatched resource for schools, and it's also good fun for the whole family. - JON DYKSTRA



## THE DESTROYERS: RACHEL NOTLEY AND THE NDP'S WAR ON ALBERTA

BY SHEILA GUNN REID

58 PAGES / 2016

The first book from Ezra Levant's *Rebel Media* is about the radical background of key members of the new NDP Alberta government. It's a short, important book, and the price is right: they're giving it out for free. Author Sheila Gunn Reid wants us to understand that, starting with the premier herself, the Alberta government is filled with socialist, communist, and environmental

radicals. For example, the premier wears a Che Guevara watch. While Che Guevara is a common fashion accessory on college campuses in real life he helped Fidel Castro bring communism to Cuba. As Reid notes, her wristwatch wouldn't be all that alarming on a college student's wrist because

*...those are kids. They're juvenile by definition. But Notley's old enough to be a grandmother, and she still hasn't grown out of her childish campus-style radicalism?*

Reid continues sharing short biographies of key players, one of which is Brian Topp, the premier's chief of staff. Before taking up his new position he has previously come out against the Keystone XL pipeline, and at one point stated that if it were up to him he would force "fossil-fueled cars out of our cities." Then there is Graham Mitchell, the new chief of staff for Alberta's energy minister, who has trained activists to push for fracking bans. And NDP MLA Rod Loyola, who is an admirer of the late Hugo Chavez, and is on record saying that oil royalties should rise from 9% to as high as 60%.

That's a taste of what Reid has to share. One point she makes repeatedly is that Albertans never really wanted the NDP. As an Abacus Data poll right after the election found 93% of Albertans thought the results were about throwing the PCs out of office, and only 7% thought it had anything to do with picking the NDP to govern. The NDPs haven't been given a mandate to make their tax hikes, or to implement their carbon tax, or to force schools to allow transgender boys into girls washrooms. That wasn't what the electorate were voting for. They only wanted to "throw the bums out."

But Albertans are going to be stuck with the NDP for the next four years. We'd best learn all we can about our new government.

As you might expect, considering the publisher, this is very one-sided. The NDP and their supporters must have some counterpoints to the material presented, but their response isn't provided here. There is a real weakness to such an imbalanced presentation. As we learn in Proverbs 18:17: "The first to present his case seems right, until another comes and questions him."

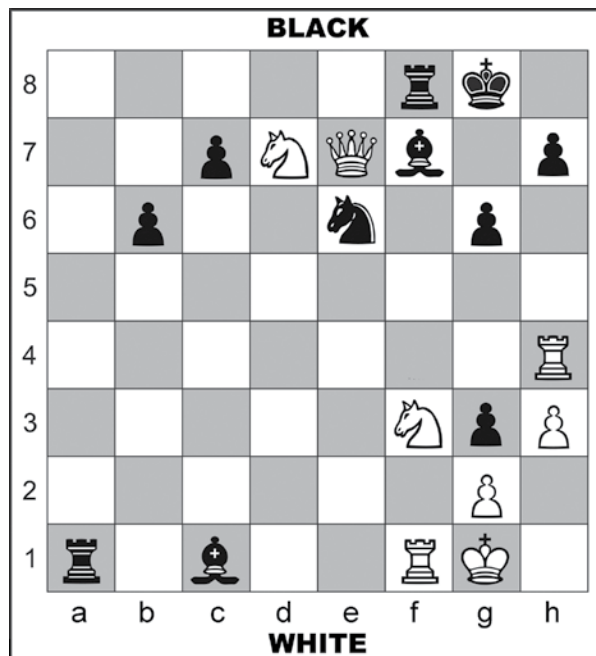
But this is still an important and valuable read because it serves as balance to other media outlets' equally - but less obviously so - one-sided reporting. And while *The Rebel Media* group does have a tendency to over-hype things, but I can't recall them spreading straight-out falsehoods. That's more than can be said for many other news sources, and that's another reason this book is worth checking out.

You can get the e-book for free in several formats by visiting [www.therebelmedia/thedestroyers](http://www.therebelmedia/thedestroyers). You do have to give your email address, but can opt out of receiving any email updates. - JON DYKSTRA



# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #229



**WHITE to Mate in 2**

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

## Riddle for Punsters #229

**"Stating it Plainly?"**

Why did the airline passenger start to com \_\_\_\_\_?  
He said that the airline fares were no longer \_\_\_\_\_ r to the customers  
but were too el \_\_\_\_\_ ed and he was wheel-ly \_\_\_\_\_ d of it.

## Problem to Ponder #229

**"A Challenge for MAN and woMAN alike?"**

Each of the following words has the word "man" within. For example,  
HINT: all people. ANSWER: mankind.

A very large house  
An order or law or statute  
Insist  
An official purpose or goal(s)  
More than a few  
Creature created in God's image  
Necessary or required  
Administer or supervise  
Scruffy or scraggly looking  
Twist out of shape, distort  
Shelf on top of a fireplace  
Soon to happen

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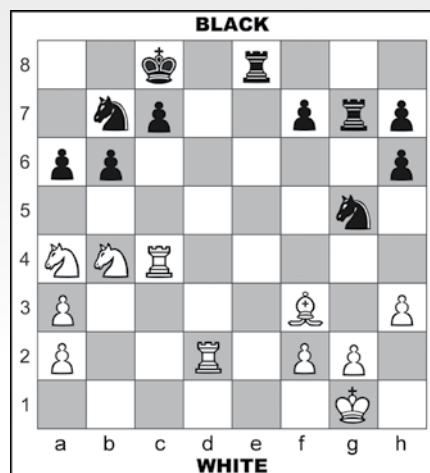
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## Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #228



**WHITE TO MATE IN 2**

**Descriptive Notation**  
1. RNxP ch K-N1  
2. N-B6 mate

**Algebraic Notation**  
1. Na4xb6+ Kc8-b8  
2. Nb4-c6 ++

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

**Descriptive Notation**  
1. ----- Ng5xf3 +  
2. Kg1-h1 Re8-e1 ++

**Algebraic Notation**  
1. ----- NxB ch  
2. K-R1 R-K8 mate

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#228 - **"Could You Scale it Down?"**

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

Could you please "pipe down"?

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

## Answer to Problem to Ponder

#228 - **"Skating Ahead!"**

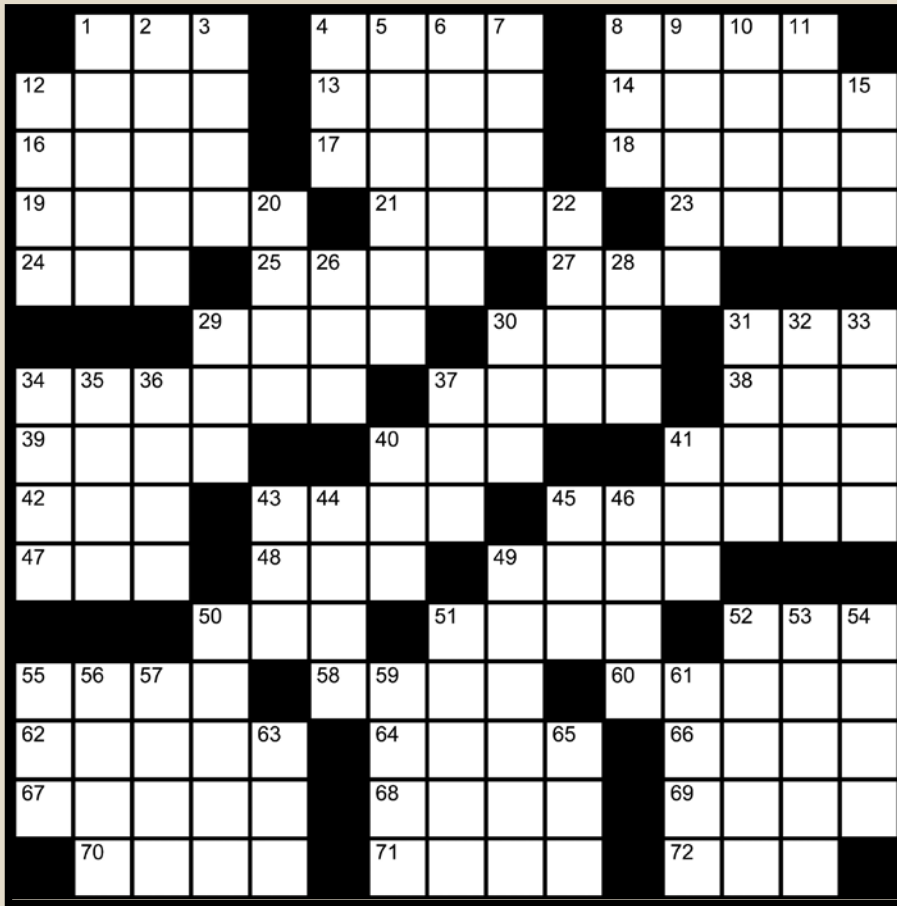
Two sisters, Betty and Hettie, left their home at the same time but in different vehicles. Both drove straight to a park to go skating and have hot chocolate inside the recreation building. Betty drove at an average speed of 90 km/h and arrived when the skating started. Hettie drove at an average speed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

Let t hours be the time Betty drove so Hettie drove for t + 1/4 hours. Distance = speed x time and Betty and Hettie drove the same distance.  
Thus, 90(t) = 80(t + 1/4) so 90t = 80t + 20 so 10t = 20 so t = 2 hours.  
Therefore Betty drove a distance = speed x time = 90(2) = 180 km.  
Check: Hettie drove at 80 km/h for 2.25 hours a distance of 80(2.25) = 180 km.  
**The park is 180 km from their home.**

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

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 2-6

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. (Scottish?) boy
4. What you need to handle a sword
8. Colour of unbleached linen
12. "Over hill, over \_\_\_\_\_, as we ride the..."
13. Berry considered a "super-food"
14. Birds found on Canadian dollar coins
16. "Why... stand here \_\_\_\_\_?" (Matthew 20)
17. "He will \_\_\_\_\_ his flock like a..." (Isaiah 40)
18. Former capital of Japan
19. Name of town and gorge in Ontario, Canada
21. Mediocre marks on report cards
23. Belonging to the former Tokyo. Or, what follows "tux" (plural)
24. "Offensive" holiday in Vietnam War
25. Potential problem in

27. On top of or above (poetically put)
29. \_\_\_\_\_ gun (cheap Soviet WWII weapon)
30. What you feel after taking a jet
31. "Dude!"; "Bud!"
34. Thief of ships or copyrighted material
37. El \_\_\_\_\_ (= the bull)
38. What Eve was made from (Gen. 2)
39. Uncouth or aggressive man or boy
40. Tree long used for making longbows
41. "grain for \_\_\_\_\_ in Egypt" (Gen. 42)
42. When plane is likely to leave (abbreviation)
43. "\_\_\_\_\_ your hand to him" (Deut. 15)
45. Sharply; vividly
47. One of six in which all was made (Gen. 1)

48. Third-person form of *have*
49. "\_\_\_\_\_ le roi!" (= "Long live the king?")
50. Flightless running Australian bird
51. "terror on every \_\_\_\_\_!" (Ps. 31)
52. "Scram!"
55. "He has \_\_\_\_\_ blood" (Lev. 17)
58. "righteous... bold as a \_\_\_\_\_" (Prov. 28)
60. "Awake and \_\_\_\_\_ yourself" (Ps. 35)
62. Overhanging part of a roof
64. Half of what a horse's hoof says
66. Digestive fluid (bitter if felt in your throat)
67. Region with its own distinctive climate
68. Egg cell
69. Date in March for Julius Caesar to beware of
70. Blemish; logical mistake in reasoning
71. Bird's home
72. Little child

### LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



### SERIES 2-5

#### DOWN

1. Serving spoon
2. "\_\_\_\_\_ the land to Israel" (Josh. 13)
3. "As a \_\_\_\_\_ pants for... streams" (Ps. 42)
4. It's removed from a man's head in worship.
5. The one at the South Pole is expanding.
6. Cars and bowling balls travel in them.
7. "Time and \_\_\_\_\_ wait for no man." (Chaucer)
8. Wapiti; mascot of an order and its lodges
9. More shy, but attractively so (unusual form)
10. Archaic word for cross or measure of land
11. "For \_\_\_\_\_ you is born this day..." (Luke 2)
12. Luther's one of Worms gave him trouble
15. Distress signal in Morse code
20. Touch or lean on (especially in carpentry)
22. What an eagle does (Obadiah 1)
26. Anger (part of *fire* in the belly?)
28. *The \_\_\_\_\_* (1879 novel by George Meredith)
29. Unclean flying rodent (Lev. 11)
30. "Israel was brought very \_\_\_\_\_" (Judges 6)
31. Hard outer layers of cereal grain
32. Shallow channel cut in soil by flowing water
33. "Children, \_\_\_\_\_ your parents" (Eph. 6)

34. Beseeched, begged
35. Small amount denoted by a Greek letter
36. \_\_\_\_\_ Giuliani (famous New York mayor)
37. "Suppose \_\_\_\_\_ are found there." (Gen. 18)
40. "let your '\_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_, and your..." (James 5)
41. "Having eyes do you not \_\_\_\_\_?" (Mark 8)
43. Measure of electrical resistance
44. New name of last apostle after conversion
45. Child (Seriously; no \_\_\_\_\_ding!)
46. "Why did you \_\_\_\_\_ send me?" (Ex. 5)
49. Related to wine (y'know, from the vine!)
50. Swelling due to fluid collecting in your body
51. "I will \_\_\_\_\_ my riddle" (Ps. 49)
52. \_\_\_\_\_ de Bres: writer of Belgic Confession
53. Small island
54. Where golfers start (not what they wear!)
55. French for *dry*; short for 1/60 of a minute
56. "\_\_\_\_\_ -tribe of Manasseh" (Josh. 21)
57. "knowing good and \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 3)
59. Image on computer screen to click on
61. News item after a death (short form)
63. Stitch together (after you've gone too fa?)
65. Abbreviation found on invoices



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MY DEMOCRACY IS BETTER THAN YOUR DEMOCRACY P.23

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**TIME TO LAUGH!**

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**PERSPECTIVE** CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

**LEST WE FORGET**

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

picture by Blaise H. Brown (blaisebrown.org)

NOTA BENE P.8

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