

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JUNE 2016

Volume 35 Issue No. 8

# PERSPECTIVE

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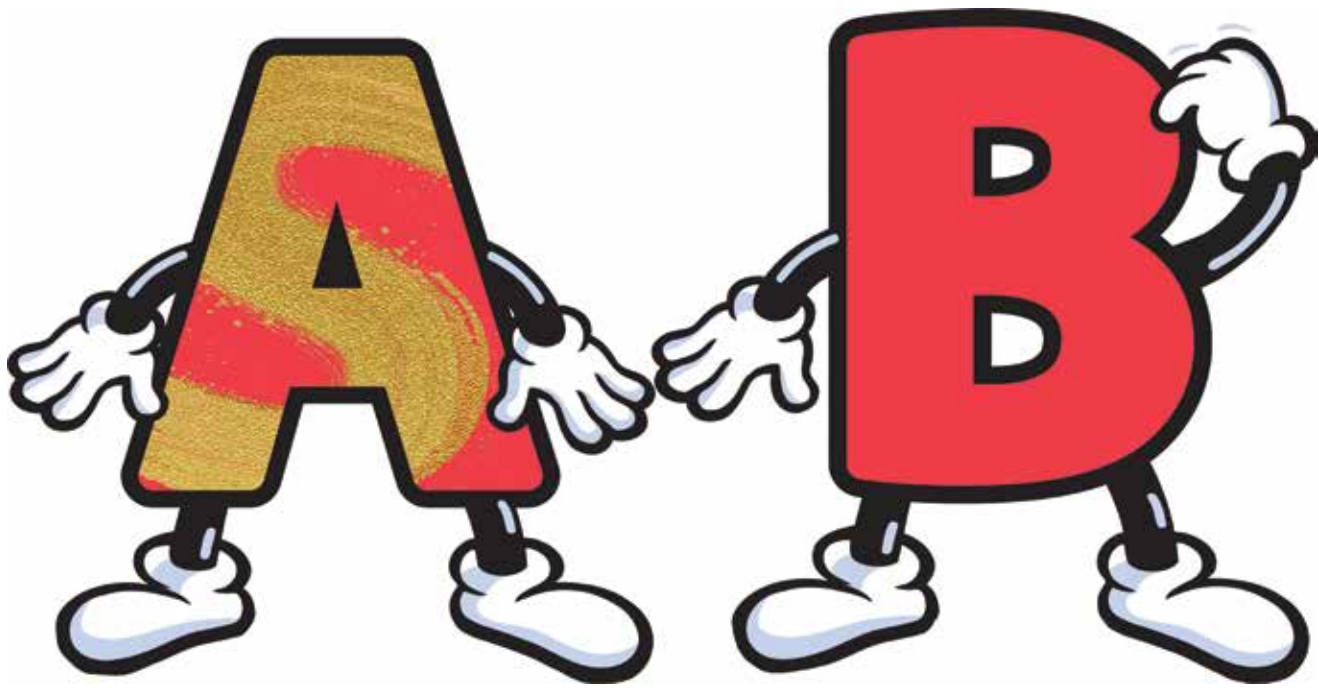
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# A is A... except when it wants to be S?

*The transsexual debate and the death of logic*

by Rob Slane

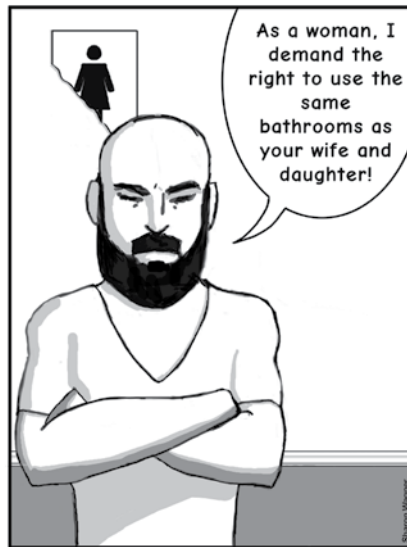
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# "AM I A CHINESE WOMAN?"

## Sometimes Truth's Best Defense Is A Good Question Aimed At The Big Lie

by Jon Dykstra

During a political science class the professor asked us, by show of hands, to indicate who was pro-life. There were about a hundred-some students spread out around the large auditorium and I was tucked up against the back wall. My arm went up, and I don't remember seeing any others. After scanning the room and spotting me, this 50-something-year-old prof came sprinting down the aisle, then scampering up and over the last few rows of seats, until we were face to face.

"Why," he asked, "are you pro-life?"

He waited, and I could see my classmates twisting in their seats to get a good look. This was no debate between equals. He was a world-renown lawyer, a drafter of United Nations agreements, and he'd been teaching this class for years. I was an 18-year-old student, who had never had to defend the unborn before. I don't recall the exact answer I gave, but I do remember how easily the prof slapped it aside.

He made me feel foolish. More importantly, he made the pro-life position seem foolish.

### LET THE TEACHER TEACH

It used to be that this sort of on-the-spot inquisition would only happen if you signed up for something like a university political science class. Nowadays we can expect hostile questioners in settings from the coffee shop to the workplace. Whether you proudly walk around wearing a pro-life shirt, or quietly decline having a rainbow flag decorate your cubicle, the world is going to want some answers.

But what we should offer are some good questions.

The key here is to realize what the world is up to. They think we're wrong and want to correct. They want to show us the error of our ways. They want to re-educate us.

So we should let them try.

The mistake I made with my university professor was when I let him swap his role for mine. He wanted me to teach the pro-life position to the class – *he wanted me to take on the role of teacher*. Now he'd had a few decades of experience, and maybe some hours of preparation to get ready for his lecture, but he expected

me, on a moment's notice, to be able to teach the class. How fair was that? And yet I accepted the role-reversal, gave it my best go, and failed miserably.

But what if I had refused his job offer? What if, instead of trying to mount an on-the-spot defense of the unborn, I had simply asked the teacher to teach?

"I'm just a student – I'm paying the big bucks to hear *your* thoughts. So what I'd like to know is *why are you so sure the unborn aren't precious human beings?*"

You want me to teach? I decline. This is a great strategic move, but also a humble one. It's strategic because asking questions is a lot easier than answering them. That's why our kids – back when they could barely string a sentence together – could still stump us by simply asking one "But why?" question after another.

It's humble because in adopting this approach we're not setting ourselves up as the ones with all the answers.

As I recall it, my professor believed





there was some gradual increase in the fetus's worth as it grew bigger and became able to do more things. If he'd offered that as his explanation – the unborn isn't worth as much as an adult because it can't do as much – my follow-up would have been easy: "But why?"

## THE COLUMBO TECHNIQUE

Christian apologist Greg Koukl calls this the Columbo Technique, naming it after the famous TV detective. Lieutenant Columbo, as he was played by actor Peter Falk, was a slow-talking, slow-walking, middle-aged man, perpetually unshaven, and as Koukl put it, who looked like he slept in his trench coat.

His unassuming manner was the key to the detective's success. He wasn't aggressive. He wasn't pointed. He only asked questions.

"Just one more thing..."  
 "There's something that bothers me..."  
 "One more question..."  
 "What I don't understand is..."

As he followed up his quiet question with another and then another, the murderer's story would fall to pieces, bit by bit. Columbo's approach was meek, but also merciless. And the killers never saw it coming.

## QUESTION THE RE-EDUCATION

This quiet questioning was recently put to masterful use by the director of the Family Policy Institute of Washington. Joseph Backholm headed down to the University of Washington campus to talk to students about gender identity. His position? Men are men and women are women. But rather than begin by sharing his own thought he asked others for theirs.

His first question had to do with whether men should be able to use women's washrooms, and the students agreed with one another that "whether you identify as a male or female and whether your sex at birth is matching to that, you should be able to utilize" whichever locker room you like.

That's when things got very interesting.



**"If I told you I was seven years old, what would your response be?"**

Space doesn't permit sharing all the students' answers (and they were all quite similar) so we'll focus on just one.

Joseph Backholm: "If I told you that I was a woman what would your response be?"  
 Enthusiastic girl: "Good for you. Okay! Like, yeah!"

JB: "If I told you that I was Chinese what would your response be?"  
 EG: "I mean I might be a little surprised, but I'd say, good for you! Yeah, be who you are!"

The next question made our energetic girl pause. She wasn't ready with a quick answer but after thinking it through she tried to maintain consistency.

JB: "If I told you that I was seven years old, what would your response be?"  
 EG: "If you feel seven at heart then, so be it, good for you!"

JB: "If I wanted to enroll in a first-grade class, do you think I should be allowed to?"  
 EG: "If that's where you feel mentally you should be...then I feel like there are communities that would accept you for that."

This final question stymied several other students...for a few moments. Then they too headed into the ridiculous, just

to maintain consistency.

JB: "If I told you I'm 6 feet 5 inches what would you say?"  
 EG: "I feel like that's not my place, as another human, to say someone is wrong or to draw lines or boundaries."

As Backholm concluded:

It shouldn't be hard to tell us 5'9" white guy that he's not a six foot five Chinese woman. But clearly it is. Why? What does that say about our culture? And what does that say about our ability to answer the questions that actually are difficult?

The video was effective, funny, and popular – it's been viewed well over a million and a half times already. (A Swedish version, in which a petite blond girl asks students whether she could be a two-meter tall seven-year-old Japanese male, has been viewed by another half million.) Backholm took the students' stand – that identity is whatever a person says it is – and exposed it as ridiculous by asking half dozen simple questions.

But did the questions do anything to convince the students? After all, none of them seemed to change their mind. Well, most of them were giggling by the end – they couldn't help but laugh at the bizarre stand they found themselves defending. Few of us are able to change our minds in a moment, even when all

the facts are against us, so it's no surprise these students didn't do an on-camera about-face. However we have reason to hope that once they had time to reflect, they too may well have realized the enormous problem with their thinking.

## BEYOND SELF-PRESERVATION

How might this questioning approach work in our day to day? Let's try it in an office setting. Imagine that your company has sponsored the local gay pride parade and the boss has handed out little pride flags so employees can decorate their cubicles. You decline. Shortly afterwards you find yourself summoned to the boss's office. How can quiet questions be a help here?

First, it's important we first understand the goal we should have for this interchange. Unprepared we might conclude our objective is self-preservation – we want to save our job. That's *a* good goal, but it shouldn't be *the* goal – our primary goal, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, "is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." As our country takes a perverse turn, we are going to start losing our jobs because of our beliefs and it won't matter what we say or how we say it. When we're called to explain ourselves, we need to realize there may be no God-glorifying way of preserving our job – the only options may be to profess or deny. So we need to prepare ourselves to profess... regardless of what happens afterwards.

## DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAY YOU BELIEVE?

Still, saving our job can be *a* goal and questions can help here too. Your boss wants to know why you aren't waving the rainbow flag? Ask him whether the company really believes what it says it believes. If they want to celebrate tolerance and diversity how about they do so starting with you?

BOSS: "Why don't you have your flag out? You know we're an inclusive company."

YOU: "Hey boss, as a Christian, I have some views that differ with the company's. I knew that might cause

## WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

In the May 17 *Breakpoint Daily* John Stonestreet shared a few questions he found particularly helpful. The first and most helpful is, "What do you mean by that?"

The battle of ideas is always the battle over the *definition of words*. Thus, it's vital in any conversation to clarify the terms being used. For example, the most important thing to clarify about whether same-sex marriage should be legal is the definition of marriage. So when the topic comes up, ask, "Hold on, before we go too far into what kind of unions should be considered marriage, what do you mean by marriage?" Often, when it comes to these crucial issues, we're using the same vocabulary as those with whom we disagree, but not the same dictionary.

Another example: if someone tries to dismiss you by calling you a homophobe, it's always a good idea to question the insult: "What do you mean by that?"

"Um, I mean you hate gays."

"But I don't hate gays. I do disagree with their lifestyle. Is disagreeing the same thing as hating?"

"Yeah, of course!"

"But you're disagreeing with me? Wouldn't that mean you're hateful?"

*... for all those shaking their fist at God, a good question may be the best response.*

some problems but I also know that we're a super inclusive company, so I was confident we could work something out. Sir, how can the company's inclusiveness be applied to me?

How is your non-judgmental, life-style-affirming, politically correct boss going to be able to answer this one without his head exploding? That's for him to figure out.

## CONCLUSION

A question isn't the best response in every setting. Questions are very helpful in poking holes in other people's incoherent worldviews – they're good tools for demolishing lies – but when it comes to teaching people the truth, we need to do more than ask questions.

We'll need to share God's Word, let our listener question us, and offer explanations. That's how we should talk to anyone interested in an honest dialogue.

But for all those shaking their fist at God, a good question may be the best response. We live in a time where every one of God's standards is being attacked and it's about time we were asking why. RP

Picture is a screenshot from the Family Policy Institute of Washington's video "College kids say the darndest things: On identity" posted to YouTube.com on April 13, 2016



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



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# NOTA BENE

News  
worth  
noting

The families that rely on the resource sector are watching their hopes for prosperity go up in *smoke*.

I call on the Prime Minister to work *jointly* with the provinces to ensure that Canadian oil moves to market quickly and safely.

Mr. Speaker, this government's priority should be pipes...pipes for oil!

Viersen's sense of humor was on display again in mid-May when he delivered a Sinter-Klaas-style poetic tribute to farmers. That got him coverage by *The Huffington Post*, which not only published the poem, but also altered the video to add a back-beat, turning the poem into a rap of sorts.

Viersen's humor has served him and his message well, but it certainly isn't the only tool in his box. In his speech at last month's March for Life, Viersen used a memorable turn of a phrase to speak up for the unborn. In noting that the Liberal government is now using federal foreign aid dollars to pay for abortions in other countries he explained:

This week the Liberal Government decided we need to export death around the world.... When you combine this with the recent legislation on assisted suicide and euthanasia, it's not hard to see that this Liberal government is quickly becoming the government of death.

The phrase "government of death" made it into the headlines of stories in *The Huffington Post* and *Toronto Sun* the next day, and was featured in stories on many other websites and media outlets as well. What label could be better? We should pray that it catches on. And we should ask God to so bless, guide, and also protect Arnold Viersen so this MP can continue to use his wit and wisdom to get widespread coverage on issues big, and people small.

SOURCE: Pictures is a screengrab from Ryan Maloney's "Tory MP Arnold Viersen Tells Anti-Abortion Rally Liberals Becoming 'Government Of Death'" posted to HuffingtonPost.ca, May 12, 2016

## CANRC MP: LIBERALS ARE "THE GOVERNMENT OF DEATH"

BY JON DYKSTRA

### Tory MP Arnold Viersen Tells Anti-Abortion Rally Liberals Becoming 'Government Of Death'

The Huffington Post Canada | By Ryan Maloney | Posted: 05/12/2016 7:23 pm EDT | Updated: 05/12/2016 7:30 pm EDT



**T**here are 338 Members of Parliament and only so much newsprint to go around. So how's an MP to get coverage when he needs it? How does he ensure he's heard? As Arnold Viersen has shown, a good turn of a phrase and a pun or two can really help.

Viersen is the Conservative Member of Parliament for Peace River – Westlock riding, and a member of the Canadian Reformed churches. The rookie MP has only been in office for a

half year now, but has already shown a remarkable ability to have his voice heard. In April, he used his sense of humor to point out how the Liberals were making marijuana a bigger priority than two needed oil pipelines:

Perhaps there was something in the air yesterday. The Minister of Health was in New York championing pot policy while the Prime Minister's pipeline policy continues to be *half-baked*.

With tens of thousands of unemployed Western Canadians, this government is far too *unmotivated* towards the Energy East and Trans-Mountain pipelines at a time when international markets have a *huge appetite* for Canadian oil.

Canadians are wondering, "*Dude where's our pipeline?*"

If this Prime Minister was serious about supporting Canadian oil, he would seize the *budding* opportunity to end our *addiction* to foreign oil.


....Mr. Speaker. Let me be *blunt*.





## PRO-LIFE BABY BOOTIES DISPLAY COVERS PARLIAMENT HILL

BY LEAH BREDENHOF

 On May 11, a huge display of about 6,800 pairs of baby booties was set up on the lawn of Parliament Hill, each pair representing the death of 15 aborted babies in Canada per year. Many of the booties were sent along with small messages from the makers, which were also included in the display. The finished array was undeniably an impressive and heartbreaking sight, and even before the official unveiling, passersby were asking questions, taking photos, and starting discussions.

The baby booties will be sent to every MP and Senator in Canada, before being donated to pregnancy care centers. Betty Bandstra, on behalf of the pregnancy care centers across Canada, thanked ARPA Canada for the

donation of the baby booties, calling them “a little gift that celebrates the big gift of life.” These booties will be distributed to mothers who come to these pregnancy care centers and their children that they, despite the cost, choose to carry to term.

Each of the booties was crocheted or knitted by hand by volunteers from all over Canada. Crafters of all ages attended knitting bees, dedicated hours of spare time, or even took up knitting or crochet for the first time, just for this cause. One of these volunteers, Fiena Dykstra, spoke on behalf of the her fellow contributors, saying,

“These booties that you see around you today are a culmination of

effort to end the injustice and to renew discussion about the issue of abortion. It is a wake up call to this land of ours that killing by abortion is against what is good and right.”

An MP, Kelly Block, representing the Carlton Trail-Eagle Creek riding in Saskatchewan, was even willing to speak at the unveiling. In her official speech, she announced,

“It is my hope and prayer that through events like this, Canadians will be moved to open their eyes to this tragedy, open their hearts to a solution, and open their mouths to call for action.”

SOURCE: Pictures are by Mark Luimes





## ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS BOSS PROMOTES WORKPLACE MODESTY?

BY JON DYKSTRA

**W**e know that even a stopped clock is right twice a day, so maybe we shouldn't be surprised when once every now and again a human rights tribunal manages to get something right too. In March the head of Ontario's Human Rights Commission (OHRC), Renu Mandhane, issued a policy paper warning restaurants and bars about gender-specific dress codes. It is common practice in some restaurants to require female employees to wear revealing uniforms – short skirts and low cut or bikini tops – even as the men are allowed to wear more sensible outfits. That, Mandhane warned, is sex discrimination.

Right after the policy paper was

issued Earls Restaurants decided to change their dress code, giving their "Earls girls" the option now of wearing black pants instead of short skirts. A couple media outlets sent queries to Hooters, a restaurant chain famous for their barely clad waitresses, but there was no immediate response from the US parent company.

Christians have every reason to hate human rights commissions: these are the folks who fine us thousands for not printing homosexual materials, or for not baking cakes for same sex ceremonies. We want these commissions

decommissioned and the fact they now got one thing right is no reason to change our minds. But what a joy it is to see how God can even turn these monstrous institutions to His own purposes!

### OHRC AND CHRISTIANS AGREE THIS IS NOT BUSINESS ATTIRE



## HOW TO HELP WITH THE DROUGHT IN AFRICA

BY SHEILA KAMSTRA



**A**lthough it hasn't captured the attention of the mainline media too much yet, many East and South African countries are experiencing severe drought. When the rains do come, they are either too little too late, or too much so that flooding results in destruction of the meager crops standing.

Farming families have experienced drought since summer 2015 with two failed crop seasons already, and some are entering their third failed crop season. Families in Ethiopia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia and parts of South Africa, as well as in Indonesia, are facing less income and higher food costs. It's important to send aid before family

assets are sold in order to lessen the length of impact of this climate change. Food assistance will most likely need to extend until summer 2017.

In South Africa, where Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund (CRWRF) supports the work of Home Based Care volunteers as they bring essential food parcels to patients living with AIDS, the community vegetable gardens have been bare due to lack of water. This directly affects their budget that is based on their ability to produce a lot of the fresh vegetables needed to help their neighbors. CRWRF has added to their annual budget so that they can afford to supplement those parcels from the market, where obviously, the cost of food has also risen.

When we think of Africa, we think of subsistence farmers but even the overall economies of these developing nations can become crippled by this drought. In Zambia, hydroelectric energy produced by the Kariba Dam serviced the growth of industry locally, but also was exported for profit. Now, due to the drought, this source of economic stability slows to a trickle causing urban unemployment

and infrastructure deficits.

CRWRF has also allocated \$50,000 from their 2016 budget towards drought relief in Africa through World Renew partners (including the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Food for the Hungry) who have already been responding through community development programs on the ground as they saw the need growing.

Join us and the church of Africa as She prays to her Father in heaven who is wise, just, faithful and merciful!

Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens, when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together? – Job 38

Donations can be made towards "Drought Relief 2016" online at [www.crwrf.ca](http://www.crwrf.ca), or by mail to:

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund,  
PO Box 85225,  
Burlington, ON,  
L7R 4K4.

SOURCE: CRWRF Press Release, reprinted with permission.

## INCOME TAX FORMS SHOULD BE SHORTER BECAUSE MATH MISTAKES ARE EASY TO MAKE

BY JON DYKSTRA

**I**n the heart of tax season Canadian conservative think tank, the Fraser Institute, released an infographic detailing just how much more complicated provincial tax forms have become over the last 15 years. From 2000 to 2015 the average size went up from 52 lines to 172 lines, an increase of 232%.

Or so the infographic said.

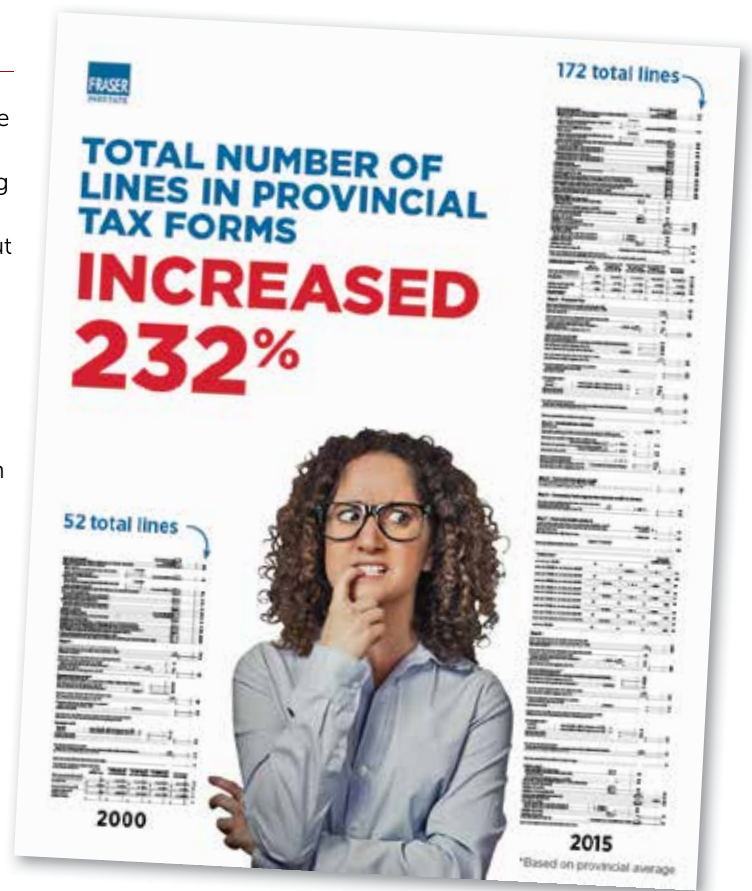
The point the Fraser Institute was trying to make was just how huge these tax forms have become, and consequently, how much effort and expense is involved in filling them out. Think of how many accountants and even lawyers are involved in helping businesses navigate the tax code – a simpler code would allow all this effort to be spent somewhere more productive.

But this infographic makes another point too, inadvertently. When the forms grew from 52 lines to 172 lines that

was *not* an increase of 232% but rather 332% (52 increasing to 172 is actually a growth of 331%, but as these numbers are all averages, 332% is likely what we get if we began with more precise figures).

So we're left with a couple of morals to this story:

- 1) always check your math
- 2) if even a think tank can make simple math mistakes, all of us would benefit from less complex tax forms.



## "NOAH'S ARK" TO SET SAIL FOR BRAZIL

BY MARK REIMERS

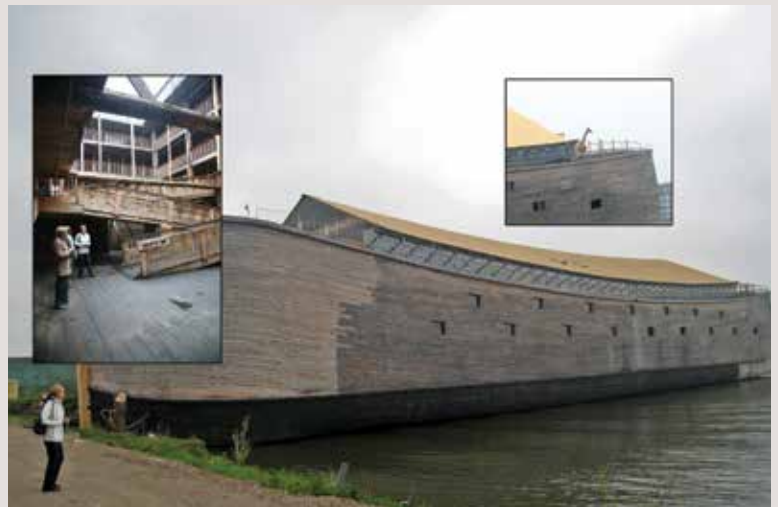
**A** life-size representation of Noah's Ark has been completed and is being prepared for a journey from the Netherlands to Brazil, where its builder, Johan Huibers, intends for it to be a witness to the world during this year's summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

The vessel, which has been dubbed "Johan's Ark," after its dreamer builder, has been a long-time project for the Dutch carpenter. If all goes as planned, Huibers plans for the ark to continue on from Brazil up the west coast of North America making stops along the way at major ports.

The project website, [arkofnoah.org](http://arkofnoah.org), makes clear that the purpose of the ark is to evangelize. And there is no denying the redemptive symbolism

bound up in the Genesis flood.

However, it would be a mistake if we relied on this ark to do the evangelizing for us. In Jesus's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham tells the dead rich man that even a spectacle as stunning as someone rising from the dead will not soften the hearts of the unbelieving. The lesson is clear: Just as it was enough for the Old Testament Jews



to have Moses and the prophets to lead them to faith, so we shouldn't expect dramatic displays such as Johan's Ark to be more effective a witness than the ordinary means that Christ himself ordained: preaching and the sacraments.



# { IN A TIDBITS RELEVANT, AND NOT SO, } NUTSHELL

BY JON DYKSTRA

## GET READY TO BE REVILED

"Pastors need to teach their people about how to handle with grace being looked down on more than ever before. I heard of John Stott reflecting that as a young man at Cambridge when people said 'O he's a Christian,' what they meant was that he was a goody-two-shoes. But now to be called a Christian means that you are viewed as a morally-deficient person, because you have not swallowed the gay agenda."

– Dr. John E Benton, *Evangelicals Now*, July 2012, on how the world will change as gay marriage becomes the norm.

## TROUBLEMAKING

Bruce Jenner, who now goes by the name of Caitlyn, was an Olympic decathlete in the 1970s, and his personal best in the 400-meter is still better than any woman has ever run. If feelings can determine a person's gender, then why doesn't Caitlyn own the women's 400-meter world record?

## IN THE NAME OF LOVE

In a presentation by Jonathon Van Maren on euthanasia and assisted suicide the pro-life apologist repeatedly cited Proverbs 12:10b

"...the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

He raised the verse as an explanation for what's happening in the euthanasia debate, where the Liberal government is pretending it is compassionate to help a desperate person kill himself.

But this is also a good explanation of the abortion debate, where abortion doctors tell themselves they are helping women by killing their offspring. They do this in the name of love, but it is a love that isn't in accord with what God says is loving. It is tender cruelty.

And what about our society's tender mercies to men who want to be women? God says He created male and female, and these fellows say, no it isn't so. Our society, in their tolerance and understanding, encourages these men to lop off bits that they will never get back. We'd call it mutilation if they did it to an arm or leg, but because this act is in direct defiance of what God says about gender - that He defines it, not us - the world celebrates these amputations. What tender cruelty indeed.

## CHRISTIAN COMMON SENSE

Dr. Leonard Sax is a rude and daring man. He's daring because he's willing to highlight the differences between the

genders. And rude because he not only points out areas where girls outpace boys but also highlights ways in which boys outperform girls.

The author of *Why Gender Matters* explained in an interview with the *National Post* that one of the most interesting differences that exist between boys and girls is how they deal with stress, and how they regard sex. For example, he notes that educational ads that stress the harm drugs do to brain cells will affect boys and girls very differently:

Girls don't want to ruin their brains. But risk-taking boys – who are exactly the boys who are most at risk for using drugs – will see an ad like that and think "Way cool! Drugs fry your brain! Where can I get some?"

Girls and boys also have premarital sex for very different reasons:

High self-esteem *decreases* the odds of a teenage girl having sex, but *increases* the odds of a teenage boy having sex. Participation in competitive sports such as soccer and basketball *decreases* the odds of a girl having sex, but *increases* the odds of a boy having sex.

The Bible makes it clear that God gave men and women different roles, so it shouldn't be a surprise to us that He made men and women quite different. As Sax has found out, boys and girls really are different. In the world that's a controversial idea, but to us it should be just a matter of common sense - Christian common sense.

SOURCE: *National Post* February 24, 2005

## MORE TROUBLEMAKING

Our culture is insane, as is on clear display with what they think about sexual education. To put that insanity on better display here's an idea from frequent RP contributor Rob Slane (from an upcoming article) that lays out a couple of pointed questions a brave troublemaking Christian could ask university professors or sex-ed teachers.

I imagine a teenager in a sex education lesson asking the following question: "Miss. Assuming I take precautions, would it would be safer for me to have 3 partners or 300?" No brainer of course, and even the most progressive of teachers would have to admit that 3 is "safer" than 300. Simple mathematical probabilities this one: the lower the number, the "safer the sex."

In which case a really mischievous teenager – a true rebel you might say – might ask the following question: "Miss, is it safer to only have 1 partner for life, or multiple? And if it's 1 – which it is – and if this is a safe-sex lesson – which it is – why do you not advocate it?"



# PROPAGANDA DISGUISED AS SEX EDUCATION

## ONTARIO'S CURRICULUM IS ONLY THE LATEST TO GO THIS DIRECTION

by Michael Wagner



Ontario's Premier Wynne wants to teach the province's children about sex

(Picture by Stacey Newman / Shutterstock.com)

When a new sex education program for schools was being implemented in Ontario last year, a number of organizations representing parents invited American sex education expert Dr. Miriam Grossman (a medical doctor) to analyze it and speak to them about its contents. Close to one thousand people came to hear her talk, which was video-recorded and is available at [Tinyurl.com/OntGrossman](http://Tinyurl.com/OntGrossman).

Grossman was very critical of the new curriculum and encouraged parents to oppose it. As she pointed out, it did not explain to students many of the dangerous consequences of experimenting with sexuality at a young age. In this respect the Ontario program reflected the priorities of sex education in the US, which Grossman had studied extensively.

In 2009 Grossman released a book that explains the problems and agenda of the modern sex education movement: *You're Teaching My Child What? A Physician Exposes the Lies of Sex Ed and How They Harm Your Child*. Though

it is an American book, it provides a lot of material that is helpful for people in other English-speaking countries. Grossman explains the underlying motivation behind many school sex education programs, and explains how this motivation leads to the deliberate distortion of sexuality information given to students.

### THE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR AGENDA

First of all, it's very important to know about the main organizations involved in promoting sex education. Many of us have heard of Planned Parenthood, the US's biggest abortion provider. Another key organization is the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Both Planned Parenthood and SIECUS are motivated by anti-Christian ideals. Grossman writes:

These organizations are still animated by the philosophies of the infamous

sexologist Alfred Kinsey – whose work has been debunked – the birth control and eugenics advocate Margaret Sanger, the feminist Gloria Steinem, and *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner. These twentieth-century crusaders were passionate about social change, not health. Their goal was cultural revolution, not the eradication of disease.

Because of the cultural aspirations motivating these organizations, the materials that are produced for sex education classes are not just about the nuts-and-bolts of human biology. They are deliberately designed to encourage behaviors that are condemned by traditional Western morality.

As Grossman puts it,

Sex education is about as neutral as a catechism class. And like a catechism, the "information" and "guidance" offered is designed to inculcate particular beliefs in young people.

## WHEN PLEASURE IS THE DRIVING PRINCIPLE

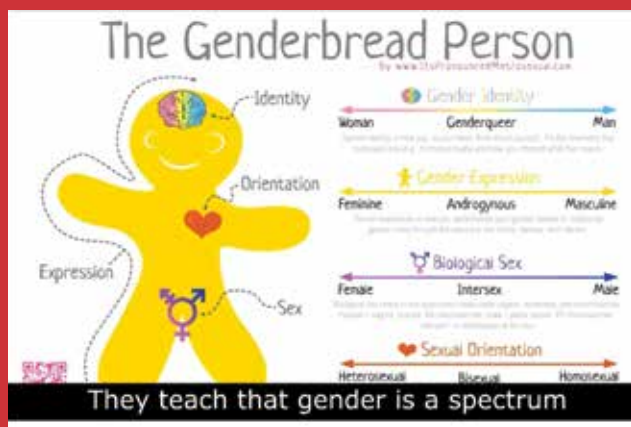
by Jon Dykstra

What principles should guide our use of sex? Well, God says that this is an activity intended for married folks – it is for committed couples who promise to stay true to one another for a lifetime. Within those marriage bonds sex can be put to several proper ends – it can be a pleasurable activity, it can bring couples closer together, and it can result in the begetting of the next generation.

In contrast the world says there's no need for commitment or marriage. And children, rather than being a blessing to be received, are understood as a curse to be avoided. So what's left then? What does the world think sex is for?

Pleasure. That's it.

If a secular someone happened upon this magazine, their



response might be, "That's plenty!" Sex for the fun of it, without constraints and hopefully without consequences, is enough for them.

Sex-ed curriculum creators agree. The 2016 documentary *The War On Children: The Comprehensive Sexuality Education Agenda* shows how a very popular sex-ed curriculum – one being used in more than 150 countries and every one of the American states – "has an obsessive focus on sexual pleasure, mentioning sexual pleasure 62 times." But there's a problem when unfettered pleasure becomes the driving principle for sexual education. As Dr. Miriam Grossman explains in the same documentary:

...the approach is to celebrate sexual freedom or sexual license – to celebrate experimenting. From medical perspective when sexual freedom is the priority, then sexual health is going to suffer. You just can't have it both ways.

If pleasure is your guiding principle, then safety can't be. Sex without constraints *comes with consequences*. Whether the damage is emotional (heartbreak) or physical (herpes, AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, and etc.) sex outside of marriage will be harmful. That's why a curriculum that focuses on sexual pleasure does so at the expense of sexual health.

You can watch either a 10 or 35-minute version of *The War on Children* by going to [ComprehensiveSexualityEducation.org](http://ComprehensiveSexualityEducation.org). This film should not be watched with children around as it has mature subject matter, including pixelated out nudity (shared only to show what is in this sex-ed curriculum).

In short, "Sex education is not about health – it's a social movement, a vehicle for changing the world."

### ALFRED KINSEY

Dr. Alfred Kinsey, the infamous sexologist mentioned by Grossman, was a prominent American researcher of the 1940s and 1950s. He produced groundbreaking studies on the sexual behavior of men and women in the United States. These studies claimed to demonstrate that the vast majority of people engaged in some form of perverse sexuality, such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality and more. On the basis of his studies, and the supposed normalcy of these behaviors, massive cultural and legislative changes were undertaken in Western countries. These changes were justified by Kinsey's science.

But there was a big problem. Kinsey's

so-called "science" wasn't science at all. His research was deliberately skewed to generate results that would justify his left-wing social beliefs. Kinsey wanted to overthrow traditional morality, so he conducted his "research" in such a fashion as to produce results he could use to undermine conventional views about sexuality.

Kinsey's fraud didn't get properly exposed until the 1980s when Dr. Judith Reisman (currently at Liberty University School of Law) carefully scrutinized what Kinsey had done and published her results. Unfortunately, outside of conservative circles, Dr. Reisman's research has not been widely disseminated. She deserves a Medal of Honor or something like it.

Anyway, it's important to realize, as Grossman points out, "In the upside down world of sex education, the ideology of

Alfred Kinsey has been enshrined."

### SIECUS

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) was founded in 1964 by Mary Calderone, who had been a director of Planned Parenthood. Grossman writes that the focus of Calderone's

newly launched organization, which was, by the way, founded with seed money from Hugh Hefner of *Playboy* fame, was not to treat or prevent disease. Like Kinsey, she was crusading for social reform. Her book for parents reads like a primer for his views, and quite a few Kinsey disciples had eminent positions with SIECUS

Hefner subsequently provided additional funding as well. That is to say, SIECUS



received financial support from the sale of pornography.

In short, much of the impetus for modern sex education in public schools is provided by organizations with a clear left-wing ideological agenda.

### DR. GROSSMAN'S EXPERIENCE

For twelve years Grossman was a student counselor at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). She dealt with hundreds of students in their late teens and early twenties who had contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD). She found that they had received sex education at school, but had not been warned about the harmful consequences that were likely to result from sexual activity.

Grossman is not opposed to sex education as such. She is opposed to ideologically-driven sex education that deliberately withholds information from students in order to advance a political and cultural agenda.

### PHEROMONES AND OXYTOCIN

Grossman is particularly sympathetic towards the numerous young ladies she counseled who have been harmed by premarital sexual activity. Recent medical research has helped to establish that women are especially influenced by male pheromones (a pheromone is a chemical produced by one person that can be perceived by other people) and the hormone oxytocin. Male pheromones “have psychological effects on women, like increased attention and a feeling of well-being.”

Oxytocin, known as “the cuddle hormone,” is released in women who have physical contact with a man. Among other things, oxytocin promotes social bonding, leading (potentially, at least) to a certain degree of attachment to the man.

The gist of all this is that young women who engage in premarital sex are likely to develop emotional attachments to their partners that can potentially cause intense emotional pain. Grossman believes this information should be shared during sex education so that girls can be forewarned about the likely emotional stress they will face from sexual activity. At this point, however, “These biological

truths are omitted by the sex-ed industry because they fly in the face of the ideology animating their very existence.”

Another important scientific finding involves the development of the cervix. Before a girl turns twenty, a region of her cervix called the “transformation zone” has a covering of cells that is only one layer thick. As she ages, the covering becomes 30 to 40 cell layers thick. But until then, there is little protection from viruses or bacteria. In other words, teenage girls are especially vulnerable to STDs, much more so than boys. Grossman writes,

Based on this finding alone – something gynecologists and pediatricians have known for at least twenty years, girls should be advised to delay sexual behavior. Yes, delay sexual behavior.

### ANAL SEX

Another area where sex educators fail to properly inform children has to do with the dangers of anal sex. These educators seem to encourage students to engage in any form of sexual behavior they desire (as long as the partner is willing), and anal sex is considered to be one of the legitimate behaviors to explore.

Grossman points out that there is an

inevitable “ick factor” in any discussion of anal sex. Anal sex inevitably and unavoidably involves contact with feces. However, she quotes a prominent sex education website as claiming that “negative attitudes about anal sex” sometimes result from a “disgust about feces” but “more of it is often based in homophobia and heteronormativity.” In this view, since anal sex is a common behavior of homosexuals, people who think it is gross are likely to be homophobes. Since homosexuality is good, anal sex must be good too! From a Christian perspective this is obviously complete rubbish.

Because of the strong support for homosexuality among sex educators, there is unwillingness among them to tell the truth about anal sex. Grossman has no such reservations and points out that “feces are filled with dangerous pathogens: salmonella, shigella, amoeba, hepatitis A, B, and C, giardia, campylobacter, and others. These organisms and others can be transmitted during anal sex or oral-anal contact.”

From a health perspective, anal sex is dangerous (not to mention gross and disgusting). Grossman makes an appropriate biological conclusion: “Unlike



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the vagina, nature put a tight sphincter at the entrance of the anus. It's there for a reason: Keep out!"

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Another aspect that is improperly taught has to do with STDs. Sex educators do discuss STDs and how to prevent them. The emphasis is on how to avoid STDs, and failing that, how to get treatment.

But Grossman says sex education curriculum does not discuss the emotional consequences of getting an STD. Many people who contract an STD get very distressed as a result of their diagnosis. But this is of little concern in sex education. Grossman writes,

Educators often mention the hardships of living in a sexist and homophobic society, but rarely describe how devastating it is to discover blisters "down there," to worry about cervical cancer, and to

learn that these viruses might stick around – for a long, long time.

All STDs are completely avoidable. Anyone who delays sexual behavior and finds a mate who has also waited will be free from STDs as long as they are faithful to each other. In other words, obeying the Bible in this area of life results in the avoidance of *all* STDs.


Grossman argues that all of the negative effects of STDs should be taught. But this is not the focus of the sex educators or their websites:

Instead of sounding an alarm about health risks – the association of oral sex with cancer of the tonsils, for example, or the epidemics of HPV and syphilis among gay men – kids get a hefty dose of leftist indoctrination and recruitment. On these websites, the enemy is not genital infections; it's our oppressive, heterosexist society.

## CONCLUSION

The controversies over sex education in North America will continue. This is all part of the ongoing culture war. Dr. Miriam Grossman has done parents a huge favor by analyzing the materials produced by the sex education movement and comparing them with modern medical knowledge.

From a modern medical perspective (i.e., a genuine scientific perspective), the best thing for people is to save themselves for marriage and then remain faithful to their spouse. Does that sound familiar? Of course it does because that's what the Bible teaches.

The science clearly demonstrates that monogamous heterosexuality is the healthiest sexuality for human beings. But as Grossman notes, that's "information our daughters and sons never hear, because it challenges the institutionalized ideology and – gasp – confirms traditional values and teachings." 

## ONTARIO CURRICULUM IS FUNDAMENTALLY INCONSISTENT

by Jon Dykstra

Christians and other conservatives are continuing their protests against the Ontario's government's new sex-ed curriculum, but in the classroom it is already being put to use.

The curriculum covers more than just sex, and while reviewing it child psychologist Dr. Miriam Grossman noted that there were some good parts – sections that urged children to exhibit self-control.

The parts about diet, alcohol and smoking, it's actually quite good. The priority when they talk about those things is health – for students to stay free from disease and distress. The language is straightforward – there's no nonsense, there's lots of facts, even if those facts are hard to hear. The tone is firm and authoritative – we adults know more than you, and we are warning you about the consequences of unhealthy choices: don't smoke, don't drink, avoid junky food and sodas, be smart, control your appetite, you can do it! And if you don't, there may be a price to pay.

But the sex-ed section is very different. As she explains:

As compared to diet and exercise and smoking where the teacher is an authority and informs the child of what the risks are, and she doesn't downplay it....over here [in the sex-ed section] it's all up to the student to figure it out.



It's this complex thing where they have to look inside, and know the other person, and so on and so forth.

So we need to ask some questions to our elected officials including:

- Why the inconsistency?
- Why isn't self-control encouraged here too?
- Why the lack of firm guidance?
- And why aren't students hearing about all the consequences that can come when someone chooses to have sex outside of marriage?

SOURCE: Dr. Miriam Grossman's lecture as found at [Tinyurl.com/OntGrossman](https://tinyurl.com/OntGrossman). Picture is a screenshot.



# ALCOHOL AND YOUR KIDS:

Parents, you're the key to helping your children prepare

by Monique Graafland

There are wrong ways to drink. Enjoying a beer with your dad while talking about life's big things is one very right way.

**Y**our teen is at a party with some of the “coolest” young people he knows. He’s encouraged to have a drink (“Come on, it’s only one!”)... and then another. Peer pressure doesn’t really allow for a negative response and reluctantly he downs the alcoholic beverages. After several, he’s not only lost count, he’s also lost his sense of reasoning and restraint. He’s a good boy, a nice boy, but what’s he going to do now that he’s drunk?

Studies done in Australia, the United States, and Canada show that many parents feel they have no control over how their son or daughter behaves in social drinking scenarios or simply do not believe their children consume alcohol. However, over 90 per cent of research supports the opposite: parents' behavior and attitudes are indeed powerful tools when it comes to teaching a teenager the do's and don'ts about drinking.

A father or mother, convinced that Johnny or Jackie doesn't partake in alcohol use, may be in denial. Perhaps that's the easiest way to deal with the issue, but it's

hardly an effective method.

Another view that occasionally shows up among parents is the attitude that alcohol abuse is part of growing up: “you are only young once.” Yes, drinking alcohol is part of life, but not the abuse of it.

## WHAT DID JESUS DO?

There is nothing wrong with having a drink. Alcohol was present in the Bible and Jesus Himself drank alcohol (Luke 7:33-35) and approved of its moderate consumption. Also, studies have shown that having a glass of wine each day is a healthy practice. So alcohol itself is not the problem. It's what you do after you've had that drink that counts.

This is where parental support and guidance comes in. Survey after survey proves that teenagers are much better equipped to handle social drinking and peer pressure when they have been raised to respect powerful drugs such as alcohol and are introduced to it in the home environment. An introduction to alcohol in this setting delays the onset of regular usage and most often produces people

who are only light drinkers.

The saying, “The grass is always greener on the other side” comes to mind: if a child has access to the occasional glass of liquor at home to be enjoyed as a family, chances are he or she won't go looking for it elsewhere. A teenager's developing sense of responsibility is in need of molding by the loving hand of a parent to arm them for future decisions. On the other hand, research indicates that harsh parenting or harsh discipline and high levels of conflict are connected to adolescent alcohol abuse. As in so many other settings, communication is crucial. Explain your actions to one another and talk about it with love and respect.

A report, by researchers at Columbia University and Queens College and published in *Adolescent and Family Health*, found that young people select friends who share their attitudes about drinking. And these attitudes have been shaped by observing their parents. Therefore, the peer group largely reinforces what young people have already learned from their parents. Parents are more influential than they may know.



## LEARNING FROM EUROPEANS?

David J. Hanson, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the State University of New York has put together a website called Alcohol: Problems and Solutions ([www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org](http://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org)). On this site one article explains that:

In spite of the fact that most Europeans promote responsibility and moderation by introducing alcohol to their children within the protective and supportive environment of the home, we ignore their successful example by denying children meaningful alcohol education in the false belief that young people can't handle alcohol. Our actions lead them to drink in uncontrolled environments, such as in cars, hanging around street corners with their friends, at unsupervised parties, and similar undesirable situations. These are the worst possible environments in which to learn appropriate drinking

behaviors. When children are served alcohol by their parents, drinking problems are generally low. When children are prevented from drinking until an older age, drinking problems tend to be high. The evidence is overwhelming."

Another pertinent passage reads:

Instead of stigmatizing alcohol and trying to scare children into permanent abstinence, we need to recognize that it is not alcohol but rather the abuse of alcohol that is the problem. We need to prepare our children to live in a largely drinking world.

## RESISTING PEER PRESSURE

Saying "no" under pressure isn't easy, but it becomes easier with time and practice and is a true character builder. We can teach our children to practice refusing drinks politely. They can

turn it into a joke and say something clever like "No thanks, I'm performing neurosurgery in the morning" or "It sloshes too much when I jog," or an honest and simple "no thank you." They'll be happy you prepared them; if not right away, then certainly in the future. As Thomas Jefferson once said: "In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock." Drinking responsibly is a sign of maturity and good judgment.

## THE MEDICAL CASE

It may also be worth telling your children about some of the detrimental effects caused by overuse of alcohol. It affects the brain, especially if in a growing child; it is a leading cause of many kinds of cancer, and can lead to psychological issues, not to mention injury, assault, and road accidents. Investigations published by the American Medical Association shares the following:

# MODERATION: Where beer and psalm-singing go hand in hand

by Jon Dykstra

In his book *God Gave Wine*, Gentry outlines the three positions Christians have had concerning alcohol consumption:

- 1) Prohibition: it's bad and the Scriptures forbid it.
- 2) Abstinence: it's bad and the Scriptures allow it.
- 3) Moderation: it's good when used with self-control.

The first position is wrong and clearly so – prohibition simply doesn't stand up to scriptural scrutiny.

But what about the second? When a man destroys himself and his family via the bottle it's hard not to wonder what might have been if he'd never touched a drop. We also know many of our young people regularly drink to excess. So, yes, the Bible *allows* alcohol consumption, but wouldn't it be more sensible – wiser even – to simply *abstain*? Isn't that the better course of action?

We can make a compelling case for abstinence. But not a biblical one.

As Gentry notes, Christ drank, served, and even made wine. God also repeatedly describes alcohol as something that can be put to good use (Deut. 14:26, Psalm 104:15, Eccl 9:7, etc.). It can be abused, but so can every good thing – it makes no more sense to condemn all alcohol because it can lead to drunkenness than it would to condemn all food because it can lead to gluttony.

## ABSTENTION UNDERMINES MODERATION

This is important. If we get this wrong – if we treat alcohol consumption as shameful – then we are running right up against the true biblical position of moderation. And running up against the Bible is never a good idea. In this case the unhappy result may well be that we'll contribute to the very drunkenness we are trying to curtail because abstinence undermines the teaching of moderation.

How so?

Well consider this example. I know of a church that wanted to address the very muted way its young men were singing. So the pastor invited the young men down to the church for a psalm-singing kegger – everyone would be given some singing instruction and a tall glass of amber brew.

How would you react if such a proposal came your way? I know how I reacted – that is not the sort of thing that ought to be done in a church!

But why did I think that? Clearly I wasn't objecting to the psalm-singing. And I knew that a glass of frothy goodness would be an excellent aid in helping young men learn to sing with vigor. So on what basis could I object?

It was my closet "absentism" coming out. I know God speaks of moderate drinking as a good thing, and yet deep down I feel I know better, so when an opportunity comes up for young men to see how a drink can be enjoyed responsibly – when an opportunity comes for them share a cold one with

- Adolescent drinkers scored worse than non-users on vocabulary, general information, memory, memory retrieval and at least three other tests.
- Verbal and nonverbal information recall was most heavily affected, with a 10 per cent performance decrease in alcohol users.
- Significant neuropsychological deficits exist in early to middle adolescents with histories of extensive alcohol use.
- Adolescent drinkers perform worse in school, are more likely to fall behind and have an increased risk of social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts and violence.
- Alcohol affects the sleep cycle, resulting in impaired learning and memory as well as disrupted release of hormones necessary for growth and maturation
- Alcohol use increases risk of stroke among young drinkers

Humanly speaking, reason enough to know your limits.

### DON'T BE NAIVE

Doing research on this topic, I came across the website of *Christianity Today* where I read the following:

Statistics show that many Christian kids experiment with alcohol in much the same way as their non-Christian peers. Libby, a mother of preteens who was raised in a churchgoing home, recalls drinking heavily when she was in high school and college. "I'm not really sure why I did. All of the kids were doing it, even the church group," she remembers. "My parents never said anything; I don't think they realized I was drinking." Libby says her parents didn't discuss alcohol with her. "I wish they had. I would at least have had a value or a moral context. I look back and feel such remorse about the danger

I put myself and others in by driving and drinking."

Alcohol abuse is indeed present in Christian circles. We cannot turn a blind eye to it. The Bible frequently mentions how God hates drunkenness and its effects (i.e. 1 Cor. 6:10). It gives us a clear picture that abuse was present then too. In Nelson's *Where To Find It In The Bible*, the topic pertaining to alcohol has over 30 referrals such as "Noah's drunkenness," "Festive Wine," and "False joy." God has given us alcohol to use, not to abuse.

Being blessed with children in a Christian setting is no guarantee for a positive outcome: we are human and make mistakes, and so will our children. However, our struggle to live as Christians should set us apart from those who have turned their backs on faith. Let's encourage one another to limit our alcohol intake. The future is so much brighter being sober! RP

their minister – I want to pass up that opportunity. But could there be a more God-glorifying way to enjoy a glass?

Now we all know bush parties happen. We know many of our young people gather at homes or apartments where there is no parental supervision so that they can drink to excess. In that context it might seem reasonable to sound a general warning against *all* alcohol consumption.

But blanket condemnations don't foster maturity. What our young people really need is instruction in *moderate use*. They need to learn how to drink to God's glory. So long as we parents lean in any sort of "just don't drink" abstention direction are we properly motivated to teach our children *how* to drink? If we think that it's more pious to abstain than partake, are we going to teach our children about moderation? When we forbid what God allows, then our children will still learn how to drink, but

from peers who don't care a whit about moderation.

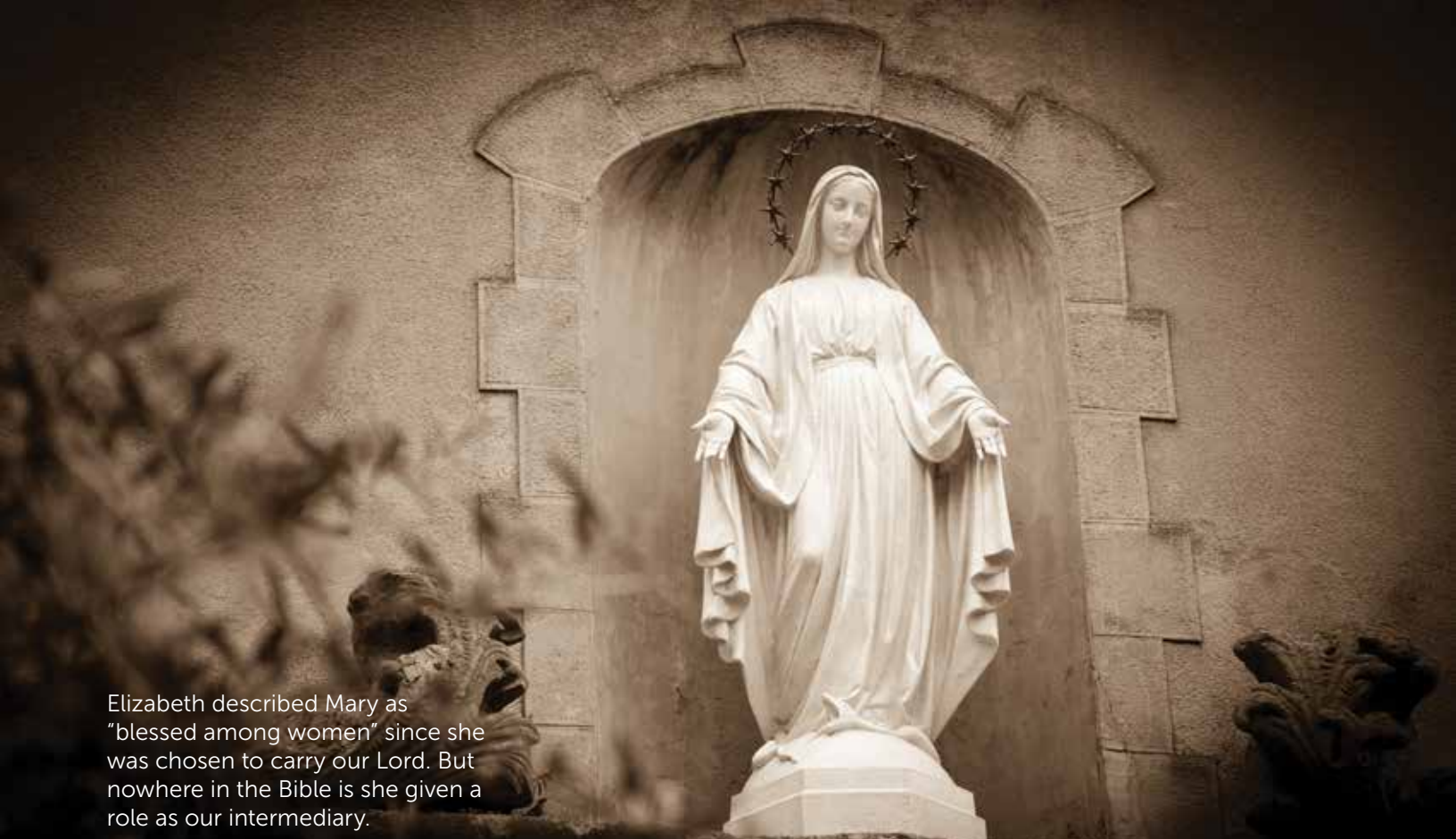
### CONCLUSION

Of course, Christians don't *have* to drink. In *God Gave Wine*, Gentry rebuts both prohibition and abstention, but he himself has always been a teetotaler, drinking no more than a half dozen glasses of wine *a year* (and now a medical condition precludes even that). No one needs to drink...and some most definitely should not.

But we need to accept what God says and acknowledge that moderate use is not only not shameful but a blessing from God. When we sit around the campfire with a s'more in one hand and a glass of red in the other, and friends all around, it is a wonderful thing. We *can* drink to God's glory! Let's teach our children how. RP



Mark Beauchamp



Elizabeth described Mary as “blessed among women” since she was chosen to carry our Lord. But nowhere in the Bible is she given a role as our intermediary.

# JORGE'S HERESY

by Christine Farenhorst

People might not think they know Jorge Mario Bergoglio from Argentina. As a matter of fact, when asked, most will probably say they’ve never heard of the man. However, if you mention that the fellow changed his name from Jorge Mario Bergoglio to Francis and is currently residing in Rome in the Apostolic Palace, a light will go on and they will nod, “You mean the Pope.” Or perhaps they will use the familiar descriptor “Papa Francisco” to show that they indeed do know who the man is and that they rather like him.

An affable looking, round-faced fellow, often smiling, Pope Francis has been touted in the press for humility; he has spoken out against abortion; and he seems not to care for wealth and material goods. Those are indeed virtuous marks with which no fault can be found.

But ponder this: the man also prays

the rosary three times a day. For those not familiar with praying the rosary, there is this clarification. To pray the rosary properly you begin at the bead holding the crucifix, starting there with saying the *Apostles’ Creed*. Moving to the following bead the “Our Father” is recited. The next three beads take the Aves. That is to say:

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus, Sancta Maria, Mater Dei ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

Translated that reads:

Hail Mary, full of grace, The Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy

womb, Jesus, Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The *Gloria Patri* follows, and so it goes on throughout the chain of beads. The usual number of beads on a rosary, by the way, is 59, although that can vary.

## ELEVATING MARY

Pope Francis is very fond of Mary. In the 1980s, while studying in Germany, he found great solace praying in front of a baroque painting entitled “Mary, Untier of Knots.” The painting depicts Mary untying a knot while simultaneously stomping her foot on a serpent. He took the painting back to Argentina and urged people to be devoted to the Virgin. The pope sees her as an untier of problems. The knots represent sins to him, sins that separate people from God. Mary, as



## Pope Francis asked them, "And devotion to the Madonna?"

shown in the painting, unties these knots and brings sinners closer to God. The pope, and the Catholic Church, wrongly attribute mediatory qualities to Mary.

The adoration of Mary is nothing new in Catholic circles. Many stories circulate with regard to her. One such story was reported on in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* of September 9, 1864. In this article it was said that a soldier had appeared before the police court in Madrid, Spain. He had been charged with having stolen a gold cup, a gold cup of great value. Exacerbating this crime was the fact that this cup had been placed as a votive offering on one of the numerous altars dedicated to Mary in the city of Madrid.

He had in his hand, the soldier was his own defense lawyer. "My family and I were in great need," he explained to the judge in the police court, "and our straits were so dire that I went to church to pray."

The judge regarded him rather blankly over the spectacles that he wore. "Go on," he ordered.

"Well, the statue of the Holy Mother of God drew me near," the soldier went on, "and I knelt down in prayer in front of her." He paused and wiped the sweat off his forehead before continuing. "I pleaded with her for assistance. I begged her for help."

"Yes?" the judge prodded as the accused stopped once more.

"Well," the man went on, "while I was engaged in prayer, I beheld the jewels displayed on the brocaded gown of her statue. I did not covet, but simply stared at them. And then, the Virgin Mother stooped down to my person and she smiled at me. Yes, she did. And she, while she smiled, took that gold cup which I am accused of stealing, and handed it over to me. Yes, this is the truth. She gave it to me."

There was complete silence in the court. No one replied to the defense. The soldier stood, face down, twisting his hat in his hands.

It was decided, in the long run, to hand the case over to an ecclesiastical commission. This commission met and discussed and discussed. It came to the conclusion, over time, that however inconvenient the admission of the miracle might be, it would be impolitic to dispute its truth. Consequently, the soldier was allowed to keep the cup to aid his needy family. He was also given the severe warning that, should a similar theft occur in the future, the court would be inclined to disbelieve his story.

### NOT SATISFIED WITH JESUS ALONE

On average, it takes fifteen to twenty minutes to pray the rosary. You keep track of the various prayers by using the rosary beads. Pope Francis is on record as saying that the Christian who does not feel that the Virgin Mary is his or her mother, is an orphan. The archives of the Vatican Radio tells the story that the pope met with a couple during the seventies, a young couple with small children who spoke quite beautifully of their faith in Jesus.

At one point Pope Francis asked them, "And devotion to the Madonna?"

They answered him, "But we have passed that stage. We know Jesus Christ so well, that we have no need of the Madonna."

The archives then relate that because of their answer the future pope thought of the young couple as orphans, poor orphans, because Christians without the Madonna are orphans. And Christians without the Church are orphans. He said:

A Christian needs these two women, these two women who are mothers, two women who are virgins: the Church and the Madonna. And to make a "test" of a good Christian vocation, you need to ask yourself: How is my relationship with these two mothers going, with mother Church and with mother Mary? This is not a question of "piety." No, it's pure theology. This is theology. How is my

relationship with the Church going, with my mother the Church, with the holy mother, the hierarchic Church? And how is my relationship going with the Madonna, my mamma, my Mother?


In a December 2104 address to Iraqi refugees, the pope said:

Dear brothers and sisters... You are in the hearts and prayers of all Christian communities, whom I will ask to pray in a special way for you on December 8, to pray to Our Lady to protect you; she is our Mother and will protect you...

That same December the pope sent Christmas greetings to prisoners: "May the blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary keep you under her maternal mantle." And that same month, following the death of an archbishop, he wrote: "I entrust his soul to the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary."

### WHAT IS GOOD?

Pope Francis is viewed positively by many people around the world. His concern for the poor, his statements about the environment, abortion and same-sex marriage, and so on – whether right or wrong – resonate with many. Many view him as a moral and humanitarian spokesperson for the world, (regardless of the sexual allegations leveled on a seemingly monthly basis against many priests). But the fact remains that he abounds and leads in idolatry. And does it really matter how the world thinks about you?

As a young boy in Argentina, Jorge Mario Bergoglio suffered an infection and had half a lung removed. He is 78 years old and occasionally suffers from fatigue, sometimes has difficulty breathing and has lost some weight. How many more years does he have before his body turns to dust? How many more days does he have left before his soul will face the only Mediator between God and man – our Lord Jesus Christ? Will veneration of Mary stand him in good stead at that time? 

# IT'S NOT ABOUT BATHROOMS

The transgender debate is about God, and how only He determines our gender

by Jon Dykstra

Here's the scenario: there's a big fellow in front of you, wearing a frilly yellow dress, and he wants to know your thoughts on the transgender debate. You're considering two possible answers.

- 1) "This is a debate about what feelings can and can't do. God says He determines our gender (Gen. 1:27, 5:2, Matt. 19:4, Mark 10:6) but now many people are saying that it's our feelings that do that. Do feelings have that power? I don't think so. What we know about our feelings is that they often run counter to reality. We can feel attracted to people we know wouldn't be good for us. We can feel pulled to do things we know we shouldn't, and to put off things we need to get done. Sometimes scarily thin girls can feel fat and bullied boys can feel worthless. We can feel angry when we have no reason to be, or feel happy when the more appropriate response would really be shame or regret. In everyday life our feelings can, so often, prove to be a horrible guide for us. Our feelings don't shape reality, so we need to shape our feelings and emotions to conform to the world as it is. And that's what God tells us when it comes to gender too (Deut. 22:5). He chose our gender, and we have to shape our feelings to fit that reality."
- 2) "We're worried that some guys will pretend to be transsexual just so they can get access to the women's washroom. So, for the sake of the women and children, we can't

let biological males use women's washrooms. It's a matter of safety."

Which do you choose?

Most Christians seem to be going with the second answer. It's not without controversy – Red Sox legend Curt Schilling got fired from his ESPN job for arguing this point – but it's nowhere near as controversial as the first. The second also has some clear advantages. It is shorter, and when it's important to say things just so, brief is better. And it focuses on the safety of women and children, which is a hard point to object to.

But it doesn't mention the Bible or God.

Some might think that another advantage. After all, our country has rejected God, so they don't care what He says. If we bring up God, aren't we just setting ourselves up to be ignored? Wouldn't it be better to present neutral/secular arguments, to increase the odds that we'll be heard?

## SECULAR ARGUMENTS CAN'T STAND ON THEIR OWN

The short answer is, no.

The longer answer is "Nooooooooooooo!"

Secular arguments might be less controversial, but they have no foundation. They are based on a worldview that is a lie. Thus there is a very practical objection to relying on them: they can't stand on their own.

We can already see the shaky nature of secular arguments in our bathroom debates. The US department store Target was hit with a one-million-signature petition protesting their decision to

let transgender customers use the washroom of their choice. But as one commentator noted, the vast majority of Target stores have single-stall family restrooms. If we're worried about the safety of our wife, or our children, then all we need to do is use these single-stall facilities.

A gay legislator from Alabama took down the safety argument a different way. Patricia Todd noted that most sexual assaults occur

"...in locations where children gather, school, church, parks, etc.... So if you really want to protect your children from child predators, don't take them to school, public parks, church or allow them to play sports or use the Internet."

We can also predict that if we keep talking about safety the other side is going to counter with safety concerns of their own. They are going to start sharing stories about dress-wearing guys who got harassed in the men's washroom. Or, rather, we're going to hear stories about dress-wearing *boys*, and crew-cut *girls* who were hassled. If we're all about safety, then what about these children's safety?

Canada's recent past provides an even better example of the shortcomings of the purely secular argument. During our country's gay "marriage" debate I did a presentation in one of our churches and asked the audience to list all the best arguments for our side. We came up with a half dozen or so, and some in

the crowd seemed to get worried when I rebutted all but one of them. The reason I could do that is because all but one of them were based on secular reasoning. I could slap them down as quickly as they were raised because they were all built on this quivering, crumbling secular foundation.

- “Marriage has been this way for thousands of years.”  
*“Slavery was in vogue for millennia; does that mean it was right? Some traditions need to be abandoned.”*
- “Most Canadians are against changing the definition of marriage.”  
*“Sometimes the majority can be wrong. And besides, will you support gay marriage if and when the majority approves?”*
- “We shouldn't let unelected judges shouldn't force this on us.”  
*“So if we vote it in you'll be fine with it?”*

Christians rose to the defense of tradition, and democracy, and stood against judicial activism, but how often did we speak about God's perspective? Not very. So we lost, and we lost in part because the arguments we were relying on simply didn't measure up. They couldn't stand on their own.

## SECULAR ARGUMENTS MISS THE POINT

But there is a still bigger problem: secular arguments don't fight the battle that really needs to be fought.

When a big culture-wide kerfuffle erupts we need to see this for what it really is. Christians need to ask: “What part of God's truth is being attacked *this time*?” We have to understand we're in a war, and the other side's objective is always to attack God's people and His Word. So yes, safety is a concern in the transgender debate, but that's not what the battle is really about. This bathroom ruckus is only a distraction – it's the enemy trying to get us to direct our attention to the symptom rather than the disease. What

they're coming after – what they want to overthrow – is Genesis 1:27b: “male and female He created them.”

Safety is a concern. We're already hearing in the news about sick guys taking advantage of these policies to head into women's washrooms, to peep, or take pictures, or expose themselves. It's predictable. It's ridiculous. But what's the cause of this craziness? God says He made us male and female, and the other side says, “No, we can create our own genders – God lied.”

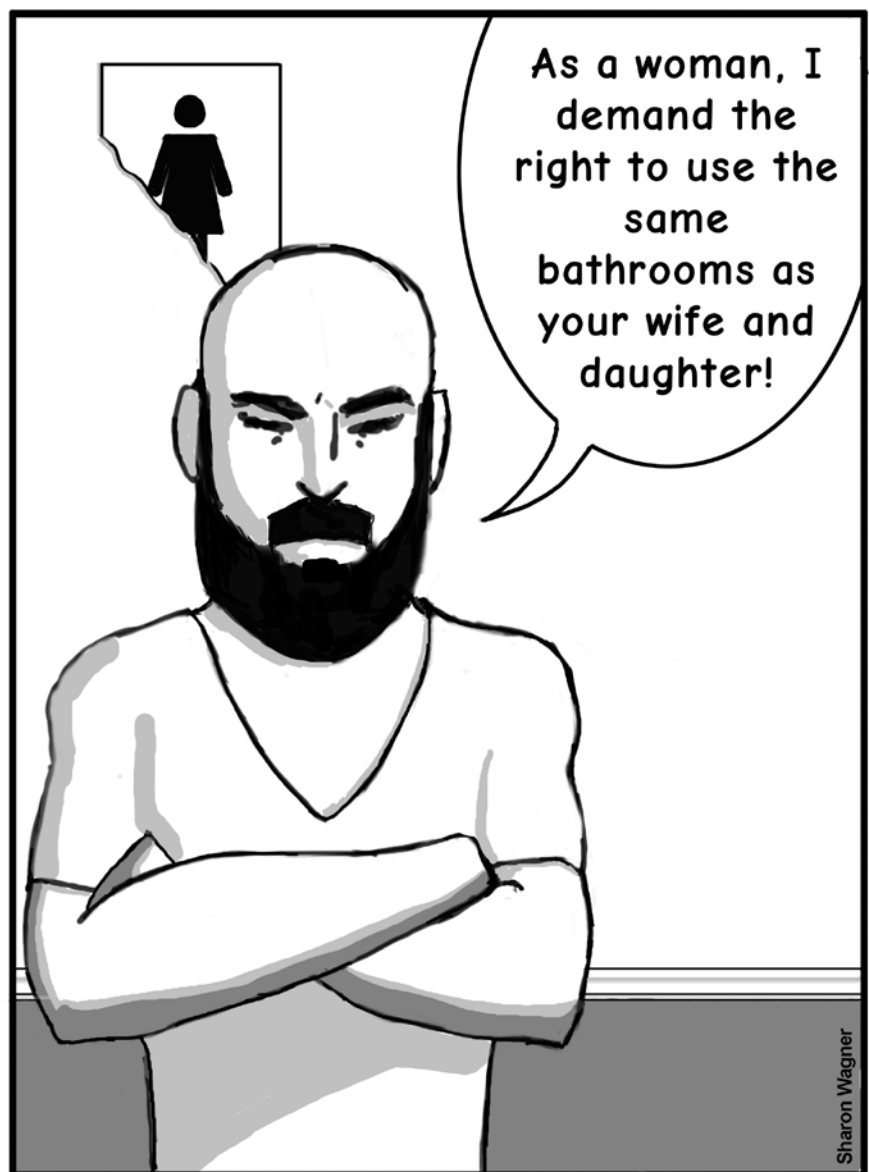
That's the real fight. That's the truth they are attacking, so that's the truth we need to defend.

## CHRISTIAN ARGUMENTS HAVE A FIRM FOUNDATION

So how do we get at it?

We begin with God. We lead with Him and His truth. The world doesn't want to hear about Him, but He's what they need.

Canada's gay “marriage” debate provides a good example of how a good Christian defense can look. During the



This is a very good point, but it doesn't stand on its own. More is needed.





## John Piper on DEBATING MORAL ISSUES IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

"...in your public involvement, don't conceal the roots of your convictions about what is right and wrong. Don't try to get a better hearing through downplaying your dependence on Christ and his Word and the gospel.

"This is where many Christians, it seems to me, lose their saltiness and their light. Advocating for behaviors that are Christian is not the light of the world. Advocating for restraining behaviors is not the light of the world. There is nothing gospel in it. The light of the world is Christ and all that God is for us in him, all his gospel, and all his promises. If Christians become practical atheists in public, but simply advocate for behaviors that correspond to Christian ethics, they may see a little more political acceptance and affirmation in the short run, but they will lose the larger battle for the eternal good.

"Do we really want to invest in a society whose outward behaviors are moral while everybody goes to hell?"

SOURCE: John Piper, interviewed on DesiringGod.org April 26, 2016 on the question "Should Christians partner with non-Christians on social issues?" Picture is by Micah Chiang, and used under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license. Special thanks to ARPA Canada, Lighthouse News, and Al Siebring for bringing this interview to our attention.

2004 election a Christian Heritage Party candidate gave his electoral riding a solid Christian defense of marriage. Ed Spronk sent a brochure to every household that presented God as the Standard-Maker. Spronk explained that if we abandoned God's standard for marriage then soon enough we would be left with no standard at all. He then shared news items from around the world to show how this was already happening, with people marrying multiple spouses, marrying objects, and even marrying themselves.

Spronk didn't win the election, but he was heard – his brochure was the talk of the riding.

The structure of his argument went like this:

- 1) Here's what God says on this matter.
- 2) What God says is true, so we'll see supporting evidence in the world.
- 3) Here's some of that evidence.

A few of the illustrations he presented were the exact news items other Christians were using as standalone secular arguments. For instance, many were pointing to the woman who married herself as an example of what would happen next if we let gay "marriage" happen. But the response to this as a standalone argument was mixture of apathy and disbelief: "Who cares?" and, "It will never happen." Once again the secular argument couldn't stand on its own.

Spronk used this same incident, with a difference: he placed it on the firm foundation of God's truth. He started by explaining that it's God Who defines what marriage is and isn't. Then Spronk used this self-marrying single lady as an example of the craziness that ensues when we deny God's standards for marriage. It supported his main point, but it wasn't his point. It was simply one bit of supportive evidence and his core argument – his explicitly Christian argument – would continue to stand with or without it.

## IN THE TRANSGENDER DEBATE

This article began with two answers. The first might not look all that similar to Ed Spronk's traditional marriage defense, but it actually has the same basic

structure. Both are built on an explicitly Christian foundation, and both then stack supportive evidence on top of that Christian foundation. This is how that first answer looks like broken down:

- 1) Here's what God says on this matter:  
*your feelings can't determine your gender; I do.*
- 2) What God says is true so we'll see supporting evidence in the world.
- 3) Here's some of that evidence: *examples of when our feelings have run counter to reality, without ever changing it.*

This is what a good Christian argument looks like. We need more like this.

Does that mean we have to abandon our bathroom arguments altogether? No, but we need to place them on a Christian foundation. That's the key. They don't stand on their own, but they can work well as supportive evidence for God's truth. Here's how that might look in a letter to your MP:

Dear Member of Parliament,

I'm writing regarding Bill C-16 which seeks to add "gender identity and gender expression" to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. As a Christian I know all of humanity is made in God's image, so that means we are all worthy of respect. That, of course, includes people who identify as transgendered. But there is a problem with this proposed amendment. It treats gender as something that is subjective, tied to how someone feels, rather than an objective reality.

However, our gender is not something that our feelings can change. Feelings don't have that power. Our gender is determined for us, by God, and is written into us right down to our DNA. And if we won't recognize that men are men and women are women and the two can't switch places, then all sorts of craziness will ensue. Craziness will happen because craziness always does when we reject reality. We will see:

- Peeping Toms claiming to be women to gain access to women's washrooms (we are already seeing

this happen)

- High school boys showering with high school girls
- Perverts of other sorts taking full advantage (also already happening)
- Men applying for spots in women's dormitories
- A demand for women's sanitary bins in male toilets "for men who menstruate" (this, too, has already happened)
- A demand for urinals in women's washrooms
- Men competing on women's sports teams (already happening)
- Men obliterating the women's records in weightlifting, shot-put, high jump, etc. and etc.
- Men winning "Women of the Year" awards (already happened)
- Men attending women's colleges
- Sexually abused women feeling unsafe in all public washrooms (already happening)
- Women cutting off their breasts and men cutting off their penises (already happening)
- Children being given high doses of hormones to suppress their normal maturation (already happening)

There will also be others who will extend this same "I am whatever I feel like I am" logic to other areas including age and race (this, too, is already happening) and maybe even height and species (and, yes, this is also already happening). We need to reject that idea that our feelings can remake reality.

I respectfully ask you to vote against an amendment that would effectively entrench into law the notion that "wishing *does* make it so."

Yours, in God's service,

Jon Dykstra

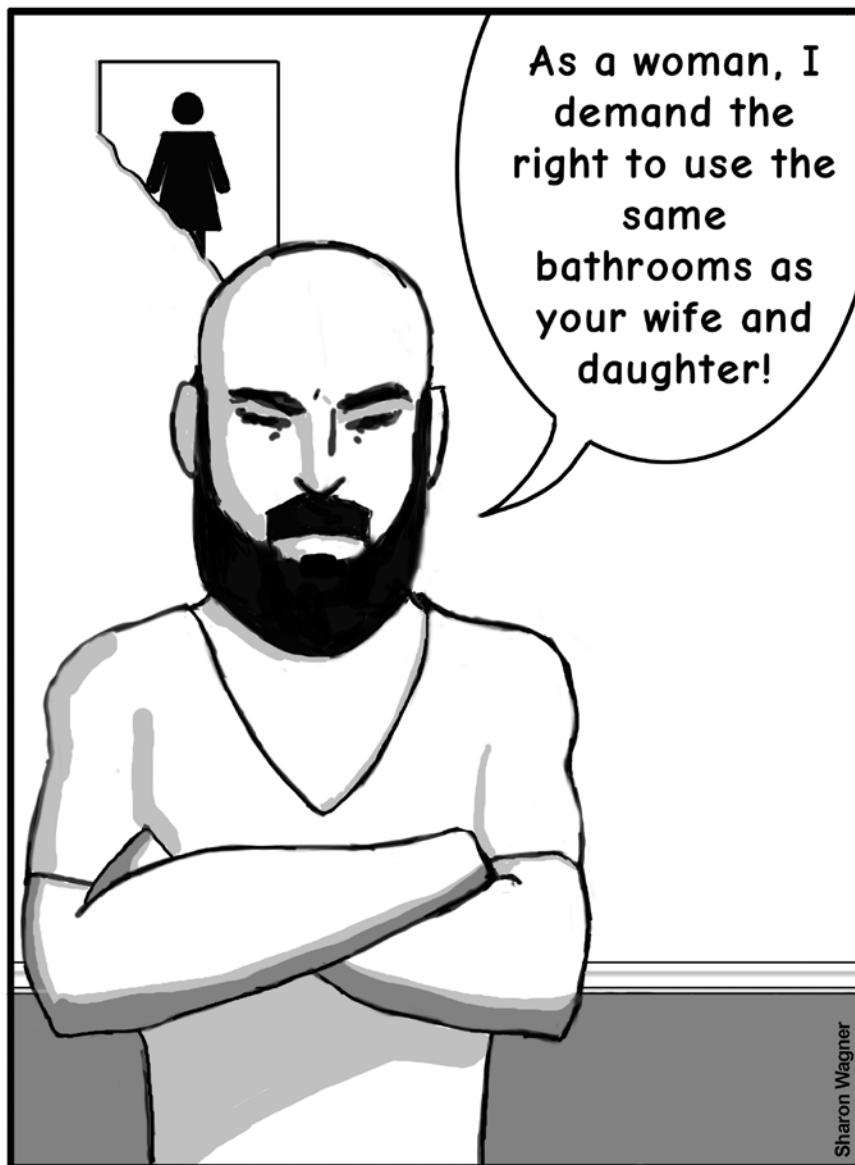
Here the bathroom argument serves as just one bit of supportive evidence for our overall argument that God determines our gender, not our feelings (and if we reject God's sovereignty over gender, then craziness will ensue). The structure is again the same as we saw with Ed Spronk: our foundation is

what God says on the matter, and then because we know that what God says is true, we are able to find supportive evidence in the world around, so we share some of those examples.

## CONCLUSION

When we present God's truth to an audience we don't need to hit them with

a sermon. We can be brief. But God's truth needs to be our foundation. The battle we're in isn't about bathrooms. It's about God, and how He determines our gender, and all of reality. That's the truth that's under assault, so that's the truth we are called to defend. May the Lord grant us the courage to fight where the battle rages. **RP**



## WHEN WE IGNORE GOD CRAZINESS ENSUES

The added caption gives this a clear Christian grounding, with the picture above serving as supportive evidence.

# 10 TOOLS TO HELP YOU TALK

## Comparisons to help clear away the transgender confusion

by Jon Dykstra

**W**e live in a time when the obvious is not so. How exactly can we explain to someone who doesn't get it, that saying you're a woman doesn't make you one?

Three thousand years ago the prophet Nathan faced the same sort of problem – how to effectively explain the obvious. Anyone who has heard the Ten Commandments knows that murder and adultery are sins and yet King David had done both and remained entirely unrepentant. So in comes Nathan, with a story about a rich man who'd stolen and eaten his poor neighbor's only sheep. David, blind to his own sins, condemned the rich man to death for actions that paled in comparison to his own. That's when Nathan connected the dots for him: if you think sheep stealing is bad, then what should you think about wife stealing? "You are the man!" he thundered. And David's eyes were opened.

Transgenders and their allies need their eyes opened too. To help clear away their confusion, here are 10 news items and other illustrations. They can be used in back-fence conversations or in letters to the editor or to our elected officials, and come in three broad groupings:

- A. We shouldn't encourage people to harm themselves
- B. People can be wrong about their own bodies
- C. Wishing doesn't make it so

These analogies are like warning signs that tell us "Turn around!" "Hazardous!" and "Do not go any further!" That's helpful, but a "Wrong way" sign only tells us what not to do. It doesn't really point us in the right direction.

So it's important to understand that while these analogies can expose the transgender lie, they don't do much to point people to the truth. For that we need to share God's thoughts on gender, that He created us male and female, and that when we deny this reality bad stuff happens – we arrive at a point where the cruel and the sadly comical are celebrated and encouraged. What follows are examples of where this reality-denying path leads.

### A. WE SHOULDN'T ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO HARM THEMSELVES

The majority of transsexuals don't undergo surgery, but many do. This involves cutting pieces of their body off. Why are we encouraging this self-harm?



#### 1. Lonely man wants to be a parrot

Ted Richards likes parrots, and in an effort to look more like his pets he has had the whites of his eyes inked, feathers tattooed on his face, horns inserted into his skull, and his ears cut off. He has also recently changed his name to Ted Parrotman. One article had him saying he had only two friends. His loneliness comes out in other ways too – he has no regrets about changing his surname because:

"I've not had any contact with my mother and father for years because we didn't really get on – I don't even know if they're dead or alive, and I also don't talk to my siblings anymore – so I felt no connection to having a family name."

When he appeared on *The Jeremy Kyle Show* the crowd applauded when the host declared, "There's nothing wrong with being different." No, but there is something wrong with cheering on self-destructive behaviour.

#### 2. Abled bodied man cuts off one arm

In 2015 the *National Post* profiled "One Hand Jason," a man who cut off his right arm with a "very sharp power tool." According to the Post:

His goal was to become disabled. People like Jason have been classified as "transabled" – feeling like imposters in their bodies, their arms and legs in full working order.



Like the transgendered, transabled people feel they have been born in the wrong bodies, but instead of objecting to their genitalia, the transabled object to their limbs, or their hearing, or even their lack of paralysis. And like the transgendered, some seek to address this discomfort by cutting bits of themselves off.

### 3. Woman blinds herself

Jewel Shuping wanted to be blind ever since she was a girl. She bought herself a white cane at 18 and learned Braille by 20, and then, at 23, paid a psychologist to pour drain cleaner in her eyes. She told the British Tabloid *The Sun*: “I really feel this is the way I was supposed to be born, that I should have been blind from birth.”

## B. PEOPLE CAN BE WRONG ABOUT THEIR OWN BODIES

The previous three examples could also fall into this category, but Kevin DeYoung’s illustration that follows is especially good.

### 4. Girl’s anorexia is affirmed

In *A Transgender Thought Experiment* (May 17 on TheGospelCoalition.org) Kevin DeYoung tells the fictional story of a young woman who at just 95 pounds still thinks of herself as fat. She asks her counselor for help and he shows himself to an affirming sort. Rather than address her anorexia the counselor tells her:

“If you tell me you’re fat, I’m not going to stand in the way of you accepting that identity....You are fat. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. It’s nothing to be ashamed of. It’s who you are.... No one can tell you what’s right or wrong with your body. After all, it’s your body.... it’s okay if you don’t eat much for lunch. Weight is only a social construct. Fat is a feeling, not a fact.”

## C. WISHING DOESN’T MAKE IT SO

Four of the examples that follow are actual people, but the best illustration is probably the last one in this grouping, where Joseph Backholm asks a series of hypothetical questions to university students. And if people don’t believe the hypothetical could ever become actual, real examples are plentiful.

### 5. Man says he is another age

Paul Wolscht is a heavy-set, six-foot tall, 52-year-old who wants to be a six-year-old girl named Stefoknee. In a video interview with the gay news site *The Daily Xtra* Wolscht explained that he has “an adopted mommy and daddy who are totally comfortable with me being a little girl. And their children and grandchildren are totally supportive.”

“It’s liberated me from the hurt. Because if I’m six years old, I don’t have to think about adult stuff...I have access to really pretty clothes and I don’t have to act my age. By



not acting my age I don’t have to deal with the reality that was my past because it hurt...”

Wolscht has abandoned his wife of more than 20 years and his seven children, deciding that playing the part of a six-year-old girl is more to his liking than his role of husband and father.

However, Wolscht has not abandoned caffeine or his car: “I still drink coffee and drive a car, right, even my tractor, but still I drive the tractor as a little kid. I drive my car as a little kid.” But, of course, six-year-olds really shouldn’t drink coffee, and driving is out of the question. So whether six or 52, Wolscht is not acting his age.

One more thought to consider – Wolscht’s childish claims have been treated with respect by *The Daily Xtra* but what would they think of the reverse? As one of my teenage nieces put it,

“Can I identify as a 22 year old and order a drink at a bar? Can I identify as a 16 year old and get my license?”



### 6. Woman says she is another race

The Afro-wearing, dark-skinned Rachel Dolezal was the president of the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 2014

until June of 2015 when she resigned after it was revealed that both her biological parents were white. She later stated that she was “biologically born white to white parents, but I identify as black.”

#### 7. Teens to get seniors’ discount?

In April the American department store chain Target announced that they would “welcome transgender team members and guests to use the restroom or fitting room facility that corresponds with their gender identity.” In May the Christian satire site *The Babylon Bee* came out with an item about how the department store would now “grant a 10% senior discount to any person who self-identifies as age 60 or older.”



#### 8. Woman says she another species

Nano, a Norwegian woman claims she is a cat. She wears cloth ears and will, on occasion, crawl around on her hands and knees and meow at people. In a video interview with reporter Silje Ese she says she was 16 when she first realized she was a cat trapped in a human’s body. She distinguished her situation from that of her friend Svein, who, she says, is a human with a cat personality in his head (one of several personalities he exhibits), whereas she was born a cat. They both claimed to be able to communicate to each other in “cat language,” a claim which the reporter did not, of course, put to the test.

#### 9. Man says he is “mythical beast”

Richard Hernandez has had his scales tattooed onto his face, arms and body, his ears removed, his eye whites dyed green, and his nostrils trimmed. Why? So he can become a female dragon. On one of his many blogs he describes himself as:

“...the Dragon Lady...in the process of morphing into a human dragon, becoming a reptoid as I shed my human skin and my physical appearance and my life as a whole leaving my humanness behind and embracing my most natural self awareness as a mythical beast.”

#### 10. Guy says he is another height, gender, race and age

In a popular YouTube video called *College Kids Say the Darndest Things: On Identity*, the short, very white, Joseph Backholm asked Washington University students if he could be a tall Chinese first-grader. They told him to go for it.

### CONCLUSION

These are fantastic illustrations of the insanity that results when we deny that it’s God who gets to define reality and not us. But the better the illustration, the stronger the temptation to rely on the story to do all the work for us. But like the prophet Nathan before us, after telling these tales we’ll need to spell out the transgender connection for our listening audience. What that might look like? Maybe a bit like this:

**Christian:** Have you heard about the guy who cut off his arm because he felt like he should have been born disabled?

**Secular Sue:** That is crazy! Someone needed to help that poor guy. He needed some counseling or something.

**Chris:** I agree. But I’ve got a question for you – some guys will cut off a significant bit of themselves because they think they should have been born girls. Do you think that’s crazy too?

**Sue:** I think that’s different – gender is just a social construct, so if someone feel they are the wrong gender, then maybe surgery like that can help.

**Chris:** So it’s crazy to cut off your arm but okay to cut off your...?

**Sue:** Well....

**Chris:** Why the hesitation?

**Sue:** Because when you put it like that it doesn’t sound quite right.

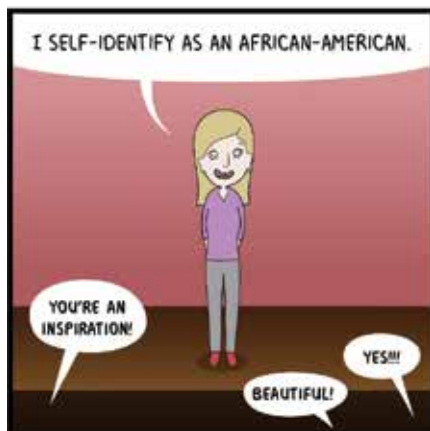
**Chris:** That’s because it isn’t right. Self-mutilation is wrong. There’s a guy who was on a talk show to share how, to become more like his parrots, he’d cut off his ears. The crowd applauded.

**Sue:** Oh, that’s awful.

**Chris:** I agree. But isn’t this just the logical end to encouraging transgenderism? If gender is changeable, what isn’t? And if all is changeable, how can we discourage anyone from trying to do just that? To each their own and all that. But Christians know that God made us male and female; we know He gets to define reality and we don’t; and we know that when we defy His reality, bad stuff results. Like people cutting off their ears to the approval of the clapping crowd.

We’re not going to convince everyone, no matter how brilliant the analogy, so that mustn’t be our measure for success.

Instead we want to ask is, are we bringing clarity? Are eyes being opened? Is the world being presented with the choice they need to make? Do they realize they can either choose for God, male and female, and reality as He has defined it... or they choose chaos? **RP**



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**Mr. James Meinen**

780-674-4774(work);  
780-674-3145(home);  
principal@covenantschool.ca

Applications can be sent to **Mrs. Gwen Mast**, secretary for the Board at: [tngmast@explornet.com](mailto:tngmast@explornet.com), or in writing to:

*Covenant Canadian Reformed School*  
c/o Gwen Mast  
3030 Township Road 615A  
Neerlandia, AB T0G-1R2



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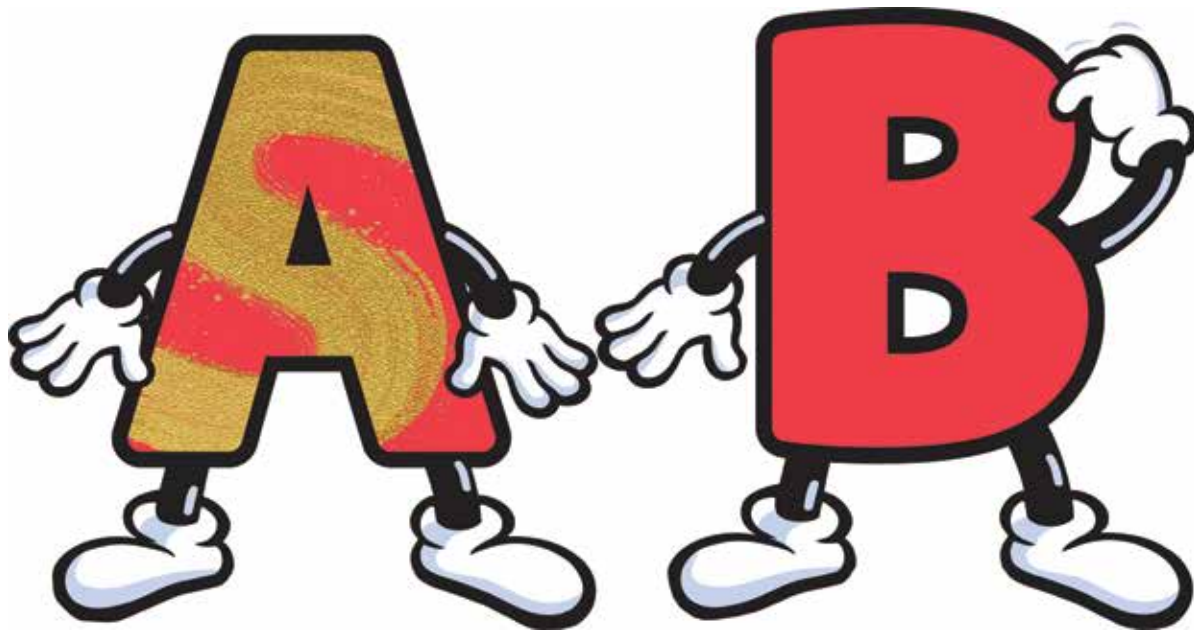
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by Rob Slane

# A is A...except when it wants to be S?

## The transsexual debate and the death of logic

“Hi A. It is A, isn’t it? I hardly recognized you there. It’s B.

Remember me? How are you doing?”

“I’m fine. Well I’m ... well it’s just ... I’m ...”

“What is it A? Is something the matter? You don’t look quite yourself.”

“Look, B. There’s something I need you to know. I’m no longer known as A.”

“What do you mean you’re no longer known as A, A?”

“I mean I no longer identify as A. In fact, from now on I’d like you to call me S.”

“S?”

“Yes. S.”

“I’m afraid you’ve lost me.”

“Look, it’s quite simple. You’ve always known me as A, and all my life everyone told me I was A. But recently I started to question whether that’s really who I am. And the more I questioned it, the more I realized I was just the victim of social conditioning and prejudice. To put it bluntly, I’ve been brainwashed into thinking that I’m A.”

“Social conditioning? Brainwashing? But A, you are A. How could you be anything else? Remember the first rule of logic:  $A = A$  and so  $A \neq \text{non-A}$ .”

“Well I simply don’t agree. In fact I

believe that’s nothing but an outdated social construct.”

“Social construct? But it’s an obvious truth. And it’s true for all times and all places.”

“There’s nothing obvious about it whatsoever, and frankly I’m amazed that anyone living in our post-modern culture could still think it is.”

“Ah, I thought as much. You’ve been listening to the post-modernists haven’t you? Well frankly I don’t much care what they say about it. It’s self-evidently true that  $A = A$  and there’s an end to it.”

### DO FEELINGS MAKE THE MAN?

“You know, B, I had always thought of you as a fairly open-minded letter. But I’m beginning to detect a quite shocking level of intolerance in you. Listen. Maybe this will persuade you. All my life I’ve had this nagging suspicion that I might be different. I’ve never much liked the way I look. That silly pointy bit at the top and that even sillier horizontal bar in the middle. And that’s just the capital “me.” Don’t get me started on the little “me”! But I’ve always admired S. Beautiful curvy letter is S. Well thankfully we’ve moved on from outmoded stereotypes that would have meant that I stayed an A trapped inside an A’s body, and I can

now be any letter I want.”

### IF GENDER, WHY NOT SPECIES?

“But you can’t be an S. Surely you can see that?”

“You know, I don’t think I’ve ever come across such a shocking level of bigotry. Why can’t I be another letter entirely, if I want to? Who are you to say what I can and can’t be?”

“Why stop at a letter then? Maybe you could identify as a number. I could call you 1. Or 19 if you like. Or maybe even a duck.”

“Adding sarcasm to hate speech doesn’t make it any less hateful.”

“Hate speech? I said nothing hateful. But A, do you not see what will happen all if you insist on calling yourself S?”

“Such as?”

### YOU ALREADY HAVE A ROLE TO FILL

“Well, I don’t know how we’d get along without an A. I mean, imagine if we tried driving to Alberta without you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Ever tried driving to Slberts? And what about that fellow who got caught up in the tree after trying to topple his father from the throne. Now what was his name?”

“Absalom?”

"No. Sbslalom I think it was. Not to mention what we'll do with the poor old SSrdvsrk. Can't you see how ridiculous it all is?"

"Well I'm not going to stand here all day being lectured by someone who is clearly a Hater and a Transletterphobe."

"You mean 'someone who is clesrly s Hster snd s Trnsnletterphobe'? You see, all you've succeeded in doing by refusing to abide by the simple truth that you are A and that you cannot therefore = non-A is to sow chaos and confusion. Imagine what will happen if T wants to become C, or Y wants to become X."

"As it happens, Y is already well on her way to becoming X thank you very much. She's a chromosome, you see. She used to be male but now identifies as X. And as for X, he's sometimes identifying as Y. You have a problem with that?"

"Well yes, actually. It's just a clear denial of objective reality."

"Objective reality? Hah! What you need to realize is that every letter has the right to identify as whichever letter they want, and every other letter ought to respect their feelings."

### WHY SHOULD YOUR FEELINGS WIN?

"Hmm! Fair enough. You win. I will no longer identify you as A."

"Good. Thank you."

"Instead, I shall now identify you as H."

"H? But I just told you I identify you as S, didn't I."


"Yes you did, but your basis for doing so was based firstly on a denial of objective reality, and then on making subjective opinions and feelings your standard. And, I might add, you said we all have to respect that. Well okay, in my subjective opinion, I no longer identify you as A, or indeed as S, but as H. Are you prepared to respect that?"

*You decree that there is no such thing as objective reality and that your feelings are king.*

"But I'm S and you have no right to call me H."

"No right? So let me get this straight. You decree that there is no such thing as objective reality (A = A) and that your feelings are king. Then you insist that I accept your definition as truth and call me a hater, a bigot and a phobe if I don't. So what you have done is to use your subjective feelings to create your own new 'objective reality' and insist that I accept it. Well sorry, I refuse. Two can play at that game and I say you're an H! Now you're not going to be a Transletterphobe, a bigot, and a hater and deny me my rights are you? Or is subjectivism taken to its logical conclusion as hard for you to bear as it is for me?"

### POSTSCRIPT

After this exchange the letter B was hauled off for tolerance training where he is learning that the right to define objective truth is the sole preserve of the Cultural Marxists who denied it in the first place. 

## RUINING/EXPLAINING THE JOKE

by Jon Dykstra

"A is A" is the symbolic representation for what's known as the "Law of Identity." This is one of the foundational laws of logic, and while short definitions seem hard to come by, the Law of Identity basically means that anything that exists has its own specific identity. It is what it is, and it isn't something else, and we can tell what it is by its characteristics.

So, for example, we can tell what the letter A is by its position in the alphabet – that's one of its characteristics that makes it A, and makes it different from all that is not A. It is the first letter in the alphabet and the first letter in the alphabet is A.

Now that might seem so obvious as to not need stating. But in the transgender debate we have some people disputing the obvious. We say A is A, a woman is a woman, and a man is a man. The world is willing to grant that first one, for now, but not the next two. Why? This dispute is about what characteristics make a person male or female. We know God created us male and female, with corresponding bits and pieces, and also specific roles to take on. Meanwhile the world says that what makes us male or female is simple a matter of the mental and emotional, simply feelings and beliefs – if I think I am a women, then I am a woman.

But even the world doesn't really believe that. Even they understand that there is a firm, unchangeable biological basis to gender, which is why there are separate men's and women's events in sports. It isn't the two genders' different feelings that keep them from competing head to head in boxing, basketball, and badminton. It is the fact that men are different physically, being, among other things, bigger, stronger, and faster than women.

So we have to remind the world of what they already know – feelings don't trump biological realities. We can remind them of this different ways, noting that feelings don't determine our:

- age – 50 is 50...even if you feel 6
- ethnicity – white is white...even if you feel black
- height – 6'4" is 6'4" even if you feel 5'10"
- species – human is human...even if you feel like a cat

Why, then, would they determine our gender?

A is A...even if it wants to be S.

# REVIEWS

## FILMS FOR THE FAMILY

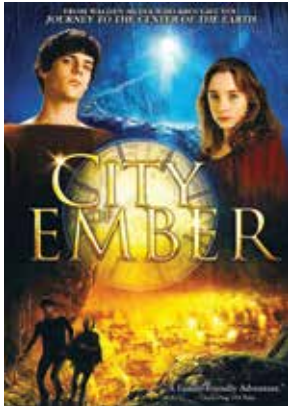
by Jon Dykstra

### CITY OF EMBER

POST-APOCALYPTIC/FAMILY

95 MINUTES / 2008

RATING: 7/10



For humanity's remnant to survive they have to hide deep underground for 200 years in a specially prepared city, the City of Ember. But when 200 years pass no one alive remembers there is another world out there – the only light they know is provided by light bulbs powered by their mighty generator. The bigger problem? The generator is starting to break down. The biggest problem? No one will admit what's happening.

To the rescue comes Doon and his friend Lina who uncover some long-lost and only partially intact instructions from the city's original Builders that they need to piece together to save their family before all of Ember's lights go dark.

The film has no language or sexuality concerns at all, but does have a mole the size of Volkswagen whose tentacles are a bit too squirmy for my tastes. The more notable caution would be that God is never mentioned, and His absence in a movie about a coming end to the world is glaring.

A post-apocalyptic tale is not your typical family fare, and a story in which the kids are smarter than the adults is all too common fare. So Ember is another film that shouldn't be treated as simply mindless entertainment – it is entertaining, but it should be discussed.

### CONDORMAN

FAMILY

90 MINUTES / 1981

RATING: 7/10



When comic book creator Woody Wilkins gets the chance to help out the CIA he jumps at it. But he gets a little too into the role, telling his Russian contact – his *beautiful* Russian contact – that he is a long-time secret agent with the code name "Condorman." He so impresses the Russian agent that when she later decides to defect she tells the CIA she'll only go if they send their "top agent" Condorman to come pick her up. Woody is willing to help again...but with a few conditions. He'll go, so long as the CIA agree to give him a few special tools he's dreamed up that come straight out of his superhero comics!

The only cautions are of a minor sort. The beautiful Russian agent wears a rather clingy dress on the DVD cover but that is more risqué than anything in the film. In one scene she changes clothes behind a dressing screen and is shown naked from the shoulders up. There are a lot of fistfights, car chases, and explosions, all of the comic variety, with no blood seen. Younger children, particularly those under 6, may find it too much.

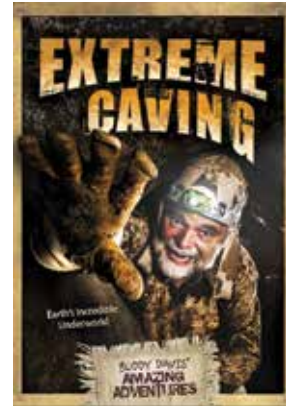
This is an action adventure, romantic comedy, Cold War, spy, superhero parody. If you take it seriously this is dreadful...so don't. As a parody it is hokey, cheesy, goofy, slapstick fun.

### EXTREME CAVING

FAMILY/ KIDS

58 MINUTES / 2013

RATING: 7/10



While Buddy Davis and the Tennessee Caveman Robbie Black are the hosts of this episode, the real stars of the show are the Cumberland Caverns themselves. This is one of the longest cave systems in the world, running at least 30 miles. If you've ever wondered what it's like to hike and climb and descend through caves that are hundreds of feet below the ground, you're going to love this!

Davis, and his professional camera crew, takes us through passages and caverns that vary in height from dozens of meters to tight squeezes that are just a matter of inches. We get to see flowers made of gypsum, popcorn made of calcite, and translucent "cave bacon." We go stoop-walking and belly-crawling, pit-crossing, butt-sliding and even scuba diving into parts of the caverns that people don't normally go. We go so deep down that for a while even our guide loses his bearings.

One minor caution: while this is produced by a creationist group that respects the Bible – Answers in Genesis – at least a couple of the Scriptural references Davis shares are on the random side.

But overall, this is very good, very family-oriented viewing. And there are three more videos available in this, the "Buddy Davis' Amazing Adventures series": *Swamp Man!*, *Alaska*, and *I dig Dinosaurs!*





## THE GIVER

DRAMA / FAMILY

97 MINUTES / 2014

RATING: 8/10

My brother Jeff wrote a review of the book this film is based on that hits all the high points of the film too. So with his permission I've included it below with slight modification.

*The Giver* is a brilliant dystopia – a vision of the future where things have gone horribly wrong. What makes it so brilliant is that in the brief space of a couple hours, we're shown, as dystopian story always do, that the desire to make a utopia always leads to disaster.

The original Utopia (which literally means "no-place"), by Thomas More (an English Catholic writing around the time of the Reformation), is a vision of an ideal, perfectly regulated society, where people live their lives with leisure and work balanced, and the wealth is fairly shared among all. All these features are appealing, but given human nature, any attempt to build society through regulation will result in the stomping out of individuality and the oppressive

power of whatever authority we trust to organize everything. Basically, there is a kind of idolatry of human systems and power. Of course, we know that idols always disappoint, and idols always demand horrible sacrifices.

That's what's going on in *The Giver*. The story begins with what looks like an ideal, well-organized society where everyone has his or her specific role set by 18 years old (in the book this all happens by 12). All the angst of adolescence in our society has been taken care of through this selection of each person's career by the community, as well as by the suppression of the disruptive disturbance of teenage hormones. The result is a village in which there is no significant crime; in which each person is given a specific role and, in return, has all his or her needs are met from cradle to grave by the community; and in which both the physical storms and emotional storms have been subdued by technology.

This "sameness" has been maintained for generations. Even the memory of the relative chaos of our own society has been wiped out, but the elders of the village have ensured that the past is not entirely lost, so that in the event of crisis, the elders can learn from it. This is where the main character, Jonas, comes in. At eighteen years old, he is given the unique role of the Receiver of the community. What does he receive? The memories of the village before the "sameness" - from the Giver.

Jonas's unique knowledge enables him to see what a terrible place our own world is – with war and other suffering – but also what emotional ties like family and romantic love were lost with the oncoming of the "sameness." His own crisis comes when he sees what sacrifices his seemingly utopian village demands to keep its stability.

Why would Christians want to watch this? *The Giver* shows us both the beauty and the cost of human emotion and desire, but also the foolishness of playing God in trying to wipe both out by human power. What we need is not liberation from our own humanness, but liberation from the sin which has corrupted our humanness – by the death of Christ - and the redirection of our emotions and desire – by the work of the Spirit. Neither the book nor the film explicitly put us before God's throne, but both do a fine job of knocking down one of the idols that serve as a stumbling block blocking our view of His glory.

## CAUTIONS

No language or sexual concerns, but there is a little violence. As the Giver shares his memories with Jonas, one of them is brief image of "war" that includes a man getting shot in the chest and another man getting shot repeatedly.

The most disturbing scene in the film is of a baby being euthanized by injection - we don't see the actual injection, but we almost do. I suspect it is this single horrifying scene that boosted this from a PG to PG-13 rating, and quite rightly.

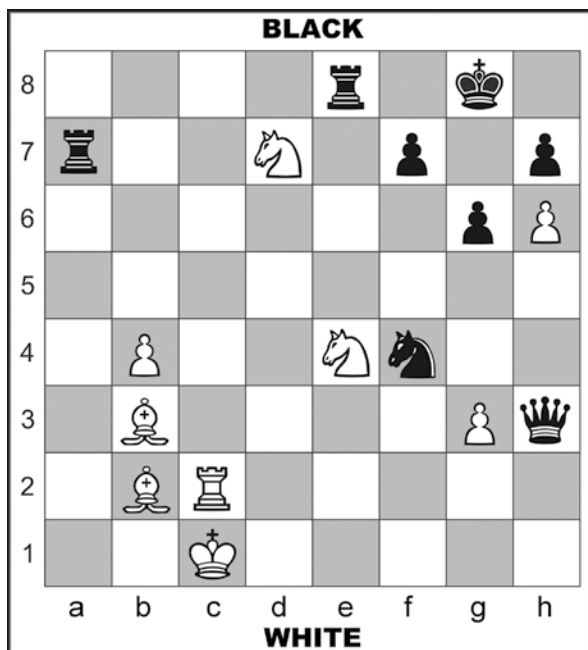
One other concern would be the way God is portrayed. For the most part, He simply isn't, but among the memories Jonas receives are ones showing the various religions of the world at worship and Christianity isn't distinguished from any of the others – all religions are treated as equivalent.

## CONCLUSION

This is a fantastic film, that hasn't been rated all that highly by the critics. I think that's because they are assessing it simply as entertainment, but this is meant to be discussed and not simply watched. I'd recommend it as family viewing so long as the youngest viewers are at least in their teens.

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #233



**WHITE to Mate in 4**

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

## Riddle for Punsters #233

**"Should Wendy tweet a daily report?"**

The VanderSmith family were going on a holiday. Wendy was asked to feed their many birds. Mr. VanderSmith was rather c\_\_\_\_\_y when he convinced her to do so. He said that it would not be a big \_\_\_\_\_on and that if a problem situation came up she could easily \_\_\_\_\_g it.

## Problem to Ponder #233

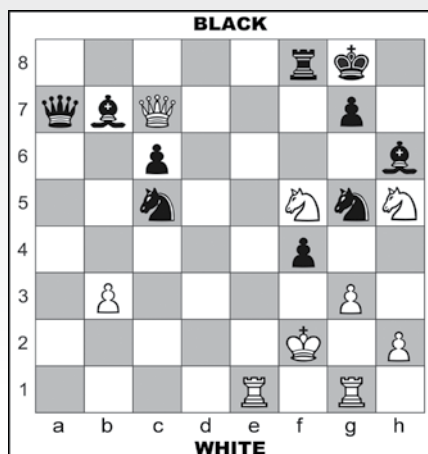
**"Music Genres for both Genders?"**

Cynthia has 88 music selections stored on her tablet. Ten are choir music selections, 24 are classical symphonies, 20 are movie theme tracks, 26 are easy listening pieces and 8 are country music songs.

- If all selections of a given category (e.g., classical) are kept together in a group, in how many different orders can the 88 selections be ordered on the tablet?
- If Cynthia's brother Steve borrows the tablet, what is the probability that a selection chosen at random is a choir music piece?
- If Steve plays three selections chosen randomly, what is the probability that he hears a movie theme followed by a classical symphony followed by a country music song?

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #232



**WHITE TO MATE IN 2**

**Descriptive Notation**

- NxB ch PxN
- Q-N7 mate

**OR**

- NxB ch K-R1 or K-R2
- QxP mate

**Algebraic Notation**

- Nf5xh6 + g7xh6
- Qc7-g7 ++

**OR**

- Nf5xh6 + Kg8-h8 or Kg8-h7
- Qc7xg7 ++

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

**Descriptive Notation**

- QN-K5 ch
- K-N2 P-B6 ch
- K-R1 N-B7 mate

**OR**

- QN-K5 ch
- K-K2 Q-B7 ch
- K-Q1 Q-Q7 mate

**Algebraic Notation**

- Nc5-e4 +
- Kf2-g2 f4-f3 +
- Kg2-h1 Ne4-f2 ++

### Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#232 - **"Cameras Ready! Let's Shoot Those Scenes!"**

A young man was exceptionally fast drawing a handgun and was hired to play the starring role as the sheriff in a western TV show. His meteoric rise to fame was appropriate for such a shooting star.

### Answer to Problem to Ponder

#232 - **"Field Work – Something to be Ditched?"**

Summer is coming and a 6-kilometer long drainage ditch needs to be dug in the middle of Farmer Hans' field for carrying away floodwater. Three workers can dig 60 meters of ditch in one 8-hour day. If they work 12 hours per day, they get tired and can dig only 80 meters of ditch. How many days will it take to complete the 6 km ditch if:

- There are 10 workers working 8 hours a day, 6 days per week (They do not work on Sundays)?
- There are 12 workers and a third of them work 8-hour days while the rest work 12-hour days, with both groups working only Monday to Friday, so 5 days each week?

a) Three can dig 60 m of ditch in one 8-hour day so one can dig 20 m in one 8-hour day so ten can dig 200 m in one 8-hour day so 6000 m of ditch will take ten men  $6000/200 = 30$  days exactly.

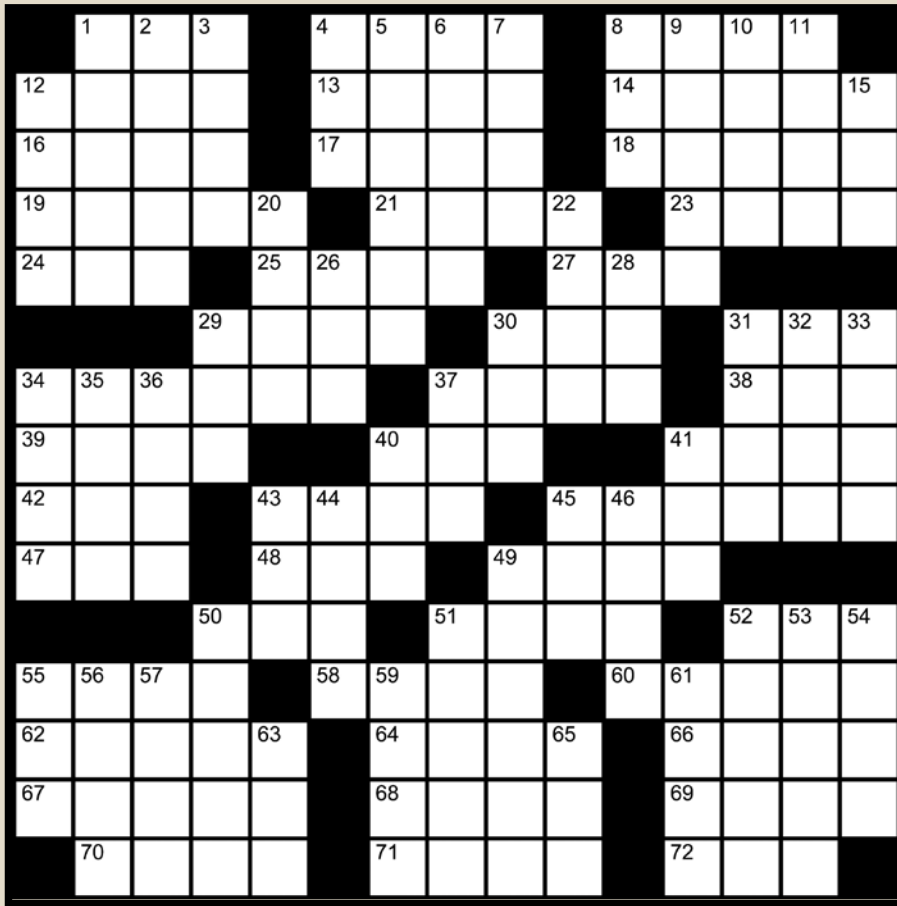
b) One third of 12 so 4 men work 8-hour days and the other 8 work 12-hour days. Since one can dig 20 m in one 8-hour day so 4 can dig 80 m in one 8-hour day. Three can dig 80 m in one 12-hour day so 1 can dig  $80/3$  m in one 12-hour day so 8 can dig  $8 \times 80/3 = 640/3 = 213.3$  m in one 12-hour day. Therefore all 12 workers can dig  $80 + 213.3 = 293.3$  m in one (8 or 12 hour) day so 6000 m will take  $6000/293.3$  or about 20.5 days.

**OR**

- Nc5-e4 +
- Kf2-e2 Qa7-f2 +
- Ke2-d1 Qf2-d2 ++

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 2-10

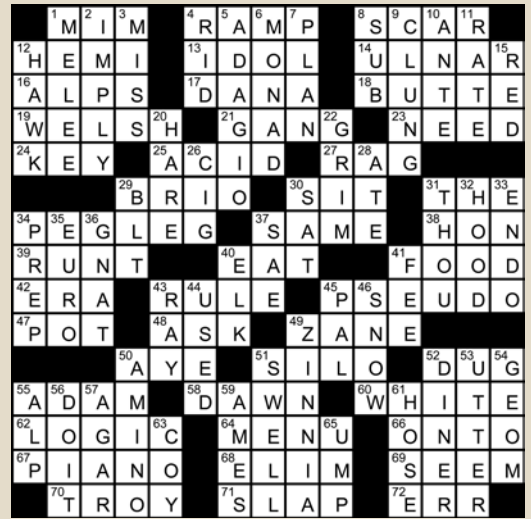
### ACROSS

1. A teaspoonful of tri-sodium phosphate?
4. Cat's noise (before it scratches \_\_. \_\_!)
8. Mythical manlike man-eating monster
12. "the early and the \_\_\_\_ rains." (James 5)
13. Nation that constructed Machu Picchu
14. \_\_\_\_ Jaya (Can. Ref. mission field)
16. Double-reed woodwind instrument
17. How Americans end their A-Bee-Cees
18. Money, especially when it's called "filthy."
19. Toy with someone's affections; be a tease
21. What knuckles get and rappers sing
23. \_\_\_\_ real ("royal mountain" in Quebec)
24. Shortest abbreviation for technology
25. "a \_\_\_\_ of the covenant" (Gen. 9)

27. What running water comes out of
29. Wacky (only a little like a Zane Grey novel?)
30. What you write a note, or make a sketch on
31. Where a bird lives before it is hatched
34. Comment (though not very \_\_\_\_able)
37. "a man with a nature like \_\_\_\_" (James 5)
38. Insulting term for a dog of mixed breed
39. "This \_\_\_\_ is a witness" (Gen. 31)
40. Be able to (kick the \_\_?)
41. Short form for *through* with an "o" not a "u"
42. \_\_\_\_ Island Park (near Edmonton, Alberta)
43. Chemical that has been sprayed on apples
45. Barely make (a living) [two words]
47. Archaic naval form of word meaning yes
48. Firm, light knock (especially on the knuckles)

49. Indicator of wind speed and direction
50. Noise made instead of answering properly
51. Irish name for Ireland
52. Abbreviation for supposed alien spacecraft
55. Curved parts of a circle
58. Snakes you should not put around your neck
60. *The City of \_\_\_\_* (children's novel)
62. Confused or overwhelmed by circumstances
64. Rising name in elevators since 1853
66. "not an \_\_\_\_ from the law" (Matt. 5)
67. Where ova come from
68. Sixth letter of the Greek alphabet
69. Where *Asterix* and *Obelix* come from
70. Celtic language, related to Irish
71. Erstwhile term for *long ago* or *formerly*
72. They are crossed by rds and aves.

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 2-9

### DOWN

1. "reclining... at \_\_\_\_" (John 12, 13)
2. Some Athenians' philosophical view (Acts 17)
3. Look through a slit (at someone like you?)
4. *Les \_\_\_\_* (musical based on Victor Hugo novel)
5. It's generated by oil, wind, sun, and waves.
6. Source of the one of the things in 5 Down.
7. It can really sting... more than once!
8. One of the things in 5 Down.
9. Grouchy person (including some *umpire*?)
10. Puerto \_\_\_\_ (U.S. territory)
11. Gain a reward or punishment
12. Where you put hay (or guests)
15. "set a \_\_\_\_ for my steps" (Ps. 57)
20. Russian ruler (anagram of 22 Down)
22. "and the morning \_\_\_\_ rises" (2 Pet. 1)
26. "use paper and \_\_\_\_" (2 John)
28. Most of the content of a newspaper
29. Comic book ray-gun sound
30. Wordplay
31. \_\_\_\_ location (used by bats)
32. Expert (particularly in Eastern religions)
33. Cave used by humans (short form)
34. Second-largest moon of Saturn

35. Like a particularly slippery fish
36. "I will \_\_\_\_ him a pillar" (Rev. 3)
37. What you shouldn't go up the creek without
40. Headgear worn by a baseball player
41. Type of shirt (that fits you to a \_\_?)
43. "\_\_\_\_ men... for the war" (Num. 31)
44. "Behold, the \_\_\_\_ of God..." (John 1)
45. "He who has an \_\_\_\_," (Rev. 2)
46. "every \_\_\_\_ should bow" (Phili. 2)
49. What a tourist does instead of lives there
50. Good computers are friendly to these.
51. "Out of the \_\_\_\_ came..." (Judges 14)
52. World War II German submarine
53. Scientific term for unborn child
54. By word of mouth rather than written
55. Big fuss or bustle
56. Praise (about) enthusiastically
57. Russian ruler (alternate spelling of 20 Down)
59. Seep or leak out of
61. Soviet or Russian fighter jets
63. What you use to colour clothing
65. "they \_\_\_\_ down to eat." (Gen. 37)





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