

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

MARCH 2016  
Volume 35 Issue No. 5

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS



## GOVERNMENT KNOWS BEST?

P.28

## DO YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE GENTLE?

P.31

Refugees and migrants  
crossing across the Aegean  
Sea from Turkey heading to  
the Greek Island of Lesbos

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# VINDICATION AND THE SPIDER

by Christine Farenhorst

p.18



**PRAYING AND BORROWING: ARE WE HOPING GOD WILL BAIL US OUT OF OUR IRRESPONSIBLE WAYS?**

- John Voorhorst

**p.21**



**CRISPR: A USEFUL GENE-EDITING TOOL, A SCARY THREAT, OR BOTH?**

- Margaret Helder

**p.24**



**COMPLEMENTARIANISM VS. EGALITARIANISM** **P.22**

- Nicholas McDonald

**FROM THE EDITOR** **P.4**

- Jon Dykstra

**NOTA BENE** **P.8**

**GOVERNMENT KNOWS BEST?** **P.28**

- Michael Wagner

**IN A NUTSHELL** **P.27**

**REVIEWS** **P.32**



# NEEDS & DANGERS

## Thinking about the Syrian refugee crisis

by Jon Dykstra

On September 2 the body of three-year-old Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi was discovered washed up on a Turkish beach. The image of this lifeless toddler was shown on the front pages of hundreds of newspapers around the world.

On the night of December 31 a group of as many as 1,000 men gathered in front of the Cologne, Germany train station; in smaller groups of several dozen they swarmed around and groped defenseless women. More than 400 sexual assault complaints were filed with the police. The perpetrators were reported as being “Arab or North African” and of the first 31 suspects 4 were Syrian, and 18 were refugees.

Alan Kurdi's death was an eye-opener to many. The Syrian civil war has killed tens and even hundreds of thousands, and displaced millions, but those are numbers, only statistics, and it's too easy to never quite let those numbers register, or to hear them and quickly forget. But the sight of this toddler, alone on the beach, beautiful and precious...and dead – that was a heart-breaking image. It brought something

of the horrors of war home like statistics never could. This one picture confronted viewers with the desperate need of so many refugees.

The Cologne attacks were an eye-opener of a very different sort. This was a scale of sexual assault unheard of in Europe, though similar, smaller-scale attacks were reported in other German cities that same night. Why this new phenomenon? The media didn't want to say – they didn't even cover the assaults for several days for fear, it seems, of being accused of anti-Muslim bigotry. But after the attacks, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, who had taken the lead in welcoming refugees, spoke about how there might be a need to toughen her country's immigration laws. What happened in Cologne and elsewhere highlighted that there could be a danger in accepting large numbers of immigrants from cultures and religions that do not respect women as equals.

### WHAT SHOULD WE THINK?

Here in Canada the prime minister's election campaign pledge to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees has been met, and plans are in place to bring in another 12,000 by year's end.

So, are the government's actions ones that we should celebrate out of a love for our needy Middle Eastern neighbors? Or are they ones we should oppose out of fear of the very different values that these refugees – primarily Muslim – will bring with them?

To best answer that let's take a closer look at the dangers, and at refugees' needs.

### IS THE DANGER REAL?

So is there a danger in bringing so many Muslims into our country?

That question will strike some as bigoted, and it doesn't help matters that U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump has asked it too. Back on December 7, Trump called for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on.” Of course, just because Trump suggests something doesn't mean it's *has* to be wrong.

His demand came five days after a Muslim American and his immigrant Muslim wife murdered 14 people and injured 22 others in San Bernadino, California, but calmer heads have also called for some sort of moratorium on Muslim immigration. Canada's own Christian Heritage Party (CHP) has had this as party policy for at least five years now. Their moratorium isn't directed at all Muslims, but only at those from “Sharia-based countries,” and it's intended as a stopgap measure, based on their belief that Canada's current immigration system isn't up to the task of properly identifying and excluding applicants who pose a danger to the country. Of course, just because a Christian group proposes something doesn't mean it has to be a good idea. However, while the CHP may be wrong they shouldn't be dismissed as bigotted; they are trying to think through this thoughtfully and carefully.

So do Muslims really pose a danger?

*...the danger of dying from an Islamic terrorist attack is far closer to 'lightning-strike danger'...*

Before answering this question, let's take another moment to defend the asking of it.

Our politically correct culture can't acknowledge one religion as safer than another, but as Christians *we* should know better. Muslims worship a false god. Professors at big name Christian colleges sometimes get confused on this point since Muslims say that they worship the God of Abraham. But the Muslim god has no Son; they reject Jesus' divinity. Their religion has no God becoming man, no Savior dying to atone for our sins. Thus theirs is a very different and *false* religion. From there we can come to a necessary conclusion: a religion that worships the true God is *better* than a

religion that rejects Him. Christianity is better not because its followers are better but because it directs us to the God Who is. Islam is wicked because it deceives its followers, directing them away from the only source of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now to say Islam is a wicked religion doesn't tell us whether it is a *dangerous* one. However, there is no reason to simply assume that a wicked religion would have to be peaceful – that wouldn't be a given. Thus when we ask whether Islam may pose a danger, the question should strike *at least us* as sensible. Our culture may not be able to shake off its politically-correct blinders, but, thanks be to God, Christians can... and we must. We have

no reason to presume all Muslims will be peaceful, so we have every reason to go see what the evidence says.

What is that evidence?

Well, how about the Paris attacks this past November that killed 130 and left more than 300 others injured? Then there are the thousands of victims of Islamic terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, ISIS and Boku Harum. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism reported that in 2013 the top eight terrorist groups (as measured by the number of people killed) were all Islamic.

But the danger isn't limited to terrorists. When Islam gains dominance in a country, a different sort of danger is



A residential section in the Syrian city of Homs.





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*Christian Renewal*, Jan. 23, 2016

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evidenced. Then we can see mass persecutions of Christians, as is happening in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan and Somalia. According to the *Open Doors World Watch List* released in January, nine of the top 10 worst persecutors of Christians are Islamic.

It isn't just government officials either. When we look at the beliefs of the average Muslim we find that many of the regular sort hold views we would find troubling. Consider the 2013 Pew Research Poll *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*. Pew conducted 38,000 face-to-face interviews with Muslims around the world and found that in regions like Egypt (40%), the Palestinian territories (34%), Bangladesh (51%) and Jordan (53%) only around half (or less) of the population is ready to denounce suicide bombings as "never justified." Even on the other end of the spectrum, the results are chilling – only 93% of Muslims polled in Kazakhstan, and 91% of those polled in Azerbaijan were ready to denounce all suicide bombings. If those numbers – the best case numbers – don't shock you, consider what we would think if they were applied to Christians, and just 93% were always opposed to this form of terrorism.

## SOME SORT OF CONTEXT

So is there a danger in bringing over large numbers of Muslims? Yes, and especially if our government is not willing to acknowledge, and thus is not able to exclude, the large segment of the Muslim world that holds views that stand in stark opposition to our own.

However, in acknowledging this danger we shouldn't overhype it. In 2015, by one measure, there were 30,000 people killed worldwide by Islamic terrorist attacks. During the same time period an estimated 6,000 died from lightning strikes, and 1.2 million from car crashes, while somewhere between 40 and 50 million were killed via abortions.

These numbers need a context too. Here's one: in 2015 Canada killed three times as many of its citizens via abortion than Islamic terrorists killed worldwide! And while 30,000 died from Islamic terrorism last year, that was a particularly bad year. In the ten years up to and

including 2012 the annual victim total was well under 15,000. So the danger of dying from Islamic terrorist attack is far closer to "lightning-strike danger" than "driving-your-car danger." And it's nowhere near the danger Canada's citizens face from abortion, which kills around one in four.

The danger is not enormous for us. We aren't taking in Syrian refugees in the numbers that other nations are, like Lebanon (more than a million) and Germany (at least 100,000 accepted, with many more than that already in the country). But the danger is real: Islam is both a wicked religion and one in which violence, and the support for it, is not limited to some small lunatic fringe.

## NEEDS

But if the danger is not enormous, the need is. Anywhere from 3 to 5 million of Syria's pre war population of 22 million have fled the country. Most have gone to Lebanon (1 million), Turkey (1 million), and Jordan (600,000). The burden on these neighbors has been enormous: while Turkey is a large country of 75 million, the influx of refugees into Jordan and Lebanon has increased their populations by roughly 10 and 20 per cent, respectively. The equivalent for Canada would be like us taking in between 3 and 7 million refugees!

They need our help.

Among those desperate for assistance are the moderate Muslims who oppose bringing in Sharia law, denounce suicide bombings, and are themselves in fear of radical Islam. They may fear it even more than we do because they've had to contend with it up close.

But nowhere is the need more pressing than among the Syrian Christians. Making up roughly 10 percent of the pre-war population, the 2 million Syrian Christians have been hunted down. Some have been slaughtered, others ransomed, women and girls sold as sex slaves. ISIS and other radical Islamic groups are intent on perpetuating a genocide against Christians and other minorities. Even in the United Nation refugee camps the persecution continues, where outnumbered Christians face persecution from the Muslims around

them. Muslims are also being driven out of their homes by the various warring factions in Syria, but when they flee to neighboring Muslim countries they don't face the same persecution as the fleeing Christians. However desperate things might be for Syrians in general, they are far worse for the country's Christians.

## WHERE WE CAN DIRECT HELP

While Syrian Christians have the greatest need and represent the lowest risk, the Canadian government won't make them a priority. That's one reason we should. The other? Because they are members of the household of faith, and so deserve our particular attention (Galatians 6:10).

There are many means by which we can deliver that help, including sponsorships to bring Christian refugees here, and charitable giving to help refugees over there. Here are a few suggestions:

### CANADIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF FUND MISSION

They give funds raised to organizations they know and trust.  
[www.CRWRF.ca](http://www.CRWRF.ca)

### MIDDLE EAST REFORMED FELLOWSHIP

They've been working in the Middle East since the 1970s, spreading the gospel via a radio ministry and providing aid in times of need.  
[www.MERF.org](http://www.MERF.org)

### WORLD SUGGESTIONS

This Christian bi-weekly news magazine has reporters in the Middle East and their own list of Christian organizations they've seen in action and trust.  
[www.wng.org/iraqaaid](http://www.wng.org/iraqaaid)

### CITY OF REFUGE

Emmanuel Free Reformed Church in Abbotsford, BC has been involved in helping many sponsor Christian refugees to come to Canada.  
[www.emmanuelfrfc.org/contact2.html](http://www.emmanuelfrfc.org/contact2.html)

If you have suggestions as to other good groups to support, we would love to hear about them. Send them to [editor@ReformedPerspective.ca](mailto:editor@ReformedPerspective.ca).

# NOTA BENE

News worth noting

## PEW: MANY PARENTS DON'T KNOW WHERE THEIR KIDS ARE ONLINE

BY MARK REIMERS



**A**ccording to a recent Pew Research Center study, only about 60 per cent of American parents regularly check up on their kids' browsing habits and social media activity.

In an article for the *New York Post*, psychologist Wendy Mogel accused parents in general of being lazy or in complete denial.

"They're just so overwhelmed, they're acting like ostriches... Parents who would never let their kids have ice cream for breakfast or drive cars without a license have just given up (when it comes to technology)."

The comparison to physical behaviors and habits in the real world is apt. We wouldn't, after all, allow our children to wander through a slum or through a red light district.

Yet what are we doing to prevent something just as dangerous from occurring under our own roofs? We should not allow denial or laziness to prevent us from taking staying informed about where our children are at, and what they are up to, online.

SOURCE: Naomi Schaefer Riley's "How the Internet is defeating America's parents" posted to NYPost.com on Jan. 11, 2016

## JUGHEAD COMES OUT?

BY WES BREDENHOF



**M**any of us grew up with Archie and his friends. These comic books, often in digest format, were our light reading, especially during long summer vacations. Back in the late seventies or early eighties, there was even a series of "Christian" Archie comics – good ol' Archie was definitely raptured, while evil Reggie got "left behind."

Archie and his pals are still around – the comics are still being published all these years later. But how things have changed in Archie's world! A while back, homosexual characters were introduced in such a way as to evoke sympathy for their lifestyle and behaviour. More recently, Jughead has "come out" as being asexual. We always

knew that his first love was food, but now it turns out that Archie's best friend has no interest in either women or men. Naturally, this is presented as another form of value-neutral sexual expression – there is nothing dysfunctional or wrong with Jughead. These comics, targeted at teens and pre-teens, seem rather obsessed with these sorts of issues.

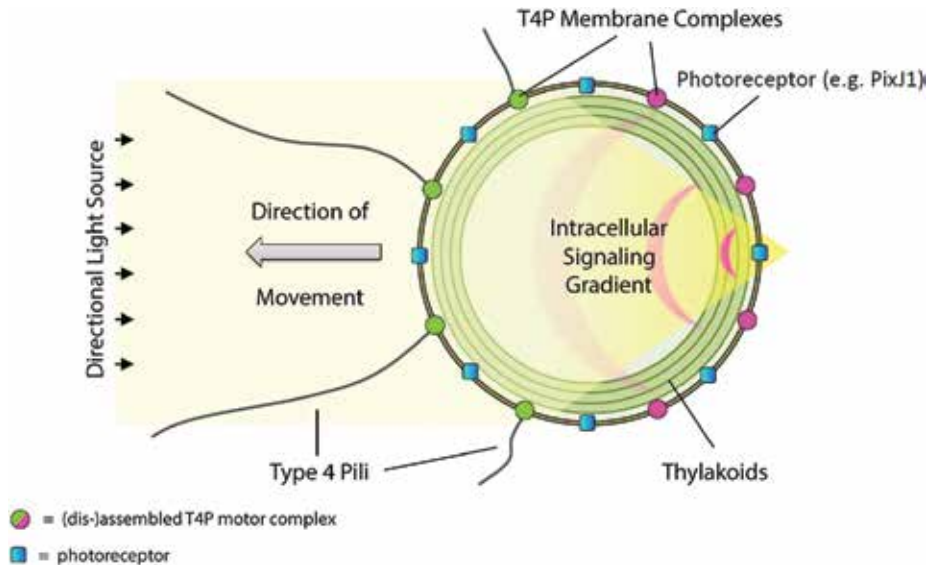
Christian culture commentator Walt Mueller ([www.cpyu.org](http://www.cpyu.org)) often points out how popular culture is both a mirror and a map. What he means is that pop culture both reflects what's going on around us in minds and hearts and tries to point the direction that we should all be going. Archie comics have always illustrated this. Christian kids and their parents need to be aware that this fun, light reading not only reflects a worldview around us, but is trying desperately to shape a worldview in us. And more than ever, it's a worldview at odds with God.

SOURCE: [www.themarysue.com/jughead-asexuality](http://www.themarysue.com/jughead-asexuality)



## TINY BACTERIA MAY BE ABLE TO “SEE”

BY DAVID COPPEDGE



Certain bacteria can respond to light by turning their whole bodies into eyeballs. The cells are round anyway; why not focus light? Scientists have wondered why certain cyanobacteria in “pond slime” are able to move toward light, a process given the name phototaxis (“light order”). A new study published in *eLife* suggests that the whole cell becomes a lens. BBC News comments:

Despite being just three micrometres (0.003mm) in diameter, the bacteria in the study use the same physical principles as the eye of a camera or a human.

This makes them “probably the world’s smallest and oldest example” of such a lens, the researchers write in the journal *eLife*.

Scientists had noticed phototaxis for a long time. Reporter Jonathan Webb writes, “After more than three centuries of scientists eyeballing bugs under microscopes, Prof Mullineaux said it was remarkable that nobody had picked up on this before.” A press release from the University of Freiberg sheds some light on that:

All previous attempts to explain bacterial phototaxis, the process by which bacteria move toward light, have failed because these organisms, which measure only a few lengths of a light wave, were thought to be too small to perceive differences in light between the front and back side of the cell. Since the entire bacterium functions like a lens, however, the organisms can concentrate light, creating a pronounced light gradient within the cell.

It’s not that different from the way the human eyeball focuses light, *Live Science* says. “A cyanobacterium, however, is 500 million times smaller than the human eye, and the algae likely view only the blurry outlines of objects that the human eye could see clearly, the researchers said.” In response to the light, a cyanobacterium grows tiny tentacles called pili that move the cell toward the light source.

What’s also remarkable is that none of the articles or the journal paper itself talked about evolution.

Think about what a cell needs to use this information. It has to know how to shape itself into a lens. There have to be receptors at the focal point. Those receptors have to send signals

to the nucleus, where genes must be transcribed to turn the information into action. The cell has to grow pili at the right place, and move them in directions that push the whole cell toward the light.

If any one of those processes is missing (and each involves complex molecular machinery), phototaxis wouldn’t work. That’s design, not evolution. That this takes place in a “simple, primitive” life form like a bacterium should give Charlie Darwin more cold shudders.

David Coppedge is the editor of Creation-Evolution Headlines (CrEv.info).

Illustration is courtesy of *eLife* under Creative Commons license 4.0 and the original can be found at <http://elifesciences.org/CONTENT/5/E12620V1>

## PAUL RYAN CHAMPIONS NEED FOR PRAYER IN THE U.S.

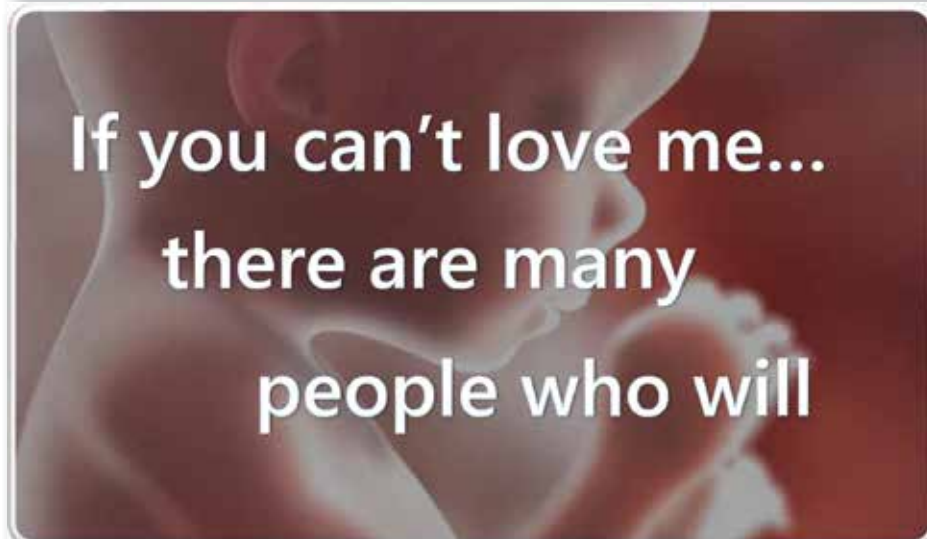
BY MARK REIMERS



Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, used his time at the annual National Prayer Breakfast on February 4 to elevate the benefits of prayer for nations and individuals.

I have noticed a growing impatience with prayer in our culture. When people say they’re praying for someone or something, the attitude in some quarters seems to be, ‘Don’t just pray; do something about it.’ But the thing is, when you are praying, you *are* doing something about it.

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In first place in the pro-life category, Jessica Jonker gave a voice to the unborn child's plea for her mom to just "Give me the chance to call you mommy."

The first runner up, by Ramona D'Addazio, highlights the fact that there are people very willing and eager to take in unwanted children.

In the free topic category the winner was Daniel Slaa with his "stop euthanasia" message that is only becoming more important, as many Canadians don't understand that we should be helping people live, not helping them to die.

You can see the other runners up and honorable mentions on [ARPACanada.ca](http://ARPACanada.ca). If you, or your local ARPA group, are interested in putting one of these designs on a billboard near you, please:

- investigate local partnerships (ex. your local pro-life society) to see if together you can afford a temporary or permanent billboard
- then send an email ([info@ARPACanada.ca](mailto:info@ARPACanada.ca)) to ARPA Canada with details of what you are looking for.

ARPA Canada will then pass it on to the designer and work together to get a high-resolution version that can be printed. For more information, see [ARPACanada.ca](http://ARPACanada.ca).

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE: WOULD IT BE WRONG TO REFER?

BY JON DYKSTRA

One of the first groups to send the Liberal government recommendations on physician-assisted suicide has suggested that doctors should be required to kill patients themselves or make the arrangements for their death.

The final report of the Expert Advisory Group on Physician-Assisted Dying said health care providers – even those who had conscientious objections to physician-assisted suicide – should be required to:

- inform patients of all end-of-life options, including physician-assisted dying, regardless of their personal beliefs.
- either provide a referral or a direct transfer of care to another health care provider or to contact a third party and transfer the patient's record.

But should Christian doctors and nurses who refuse to commit these murders be willing to refer their patients to other doctors and nurses who will? Would that make them complicit to the act? Wouldn't that make them at least partially responsible for the evil that is then done?

This is a point on which Christians need to be clear. We need clarity for our own sakes – if Christian doctors and nurses are going to take a stand against even referring they need to know this is what God requires of them. So would it be wrong to refer? Sean Murphy of the Protection of Conscience Project says yes. In a Feb. 1 article on *Mercatornet.com* he noted that before Canada's Supreme Court legalized assisted suicide if a physician had made arrangements of any sort to have someone else kill their patient they:



...would be exposed to criminal prosecution as a party to the offence of first degree murder or assisted suicide, or conspiracy to commit first degree murder or assisted suicide.

In other words, when Canada still recognized assisted suicide as murder, it also recognized that referring for it should be a criminal offense too. And even if our country no longer recognizes assisted suicide as murder, we still know better. So for us it is clear that even referring is a step too far.

SOURCE: Sean Murphy's "Canadian euthanasia raises weighty conscience issues for doctors" posted to *Mercatornet.com* on Feb. 1, 2016

## THE APPENDIX QUESTION SOLVED

BY WES BREDENHOF



For many years, we were told that the human appendix was a leftover of our evolutionary development and the proof was in the fact that it does nothing useful. If anything, that thing dangling off your intestine can only do you harm when it becomes infected and doesn't get removed in time. For Christians, however, we humbly rest in the fact that we have a Creator and he knows far more about human anatomy than we will ever know. He created us with an appendix and the Designer knows why. Perhaps

we will eventually discover that reason or perhaps not.

It turns out scientists are beginning to discover why we have an appendix after all. Already in 2007, medical researchers were starting to find evidence that the appendix is important to overall intestinal health. Duke University published findings that proposed the appendix as a "safe-house" for helpful bacteria while the intestines are being flushed out by illnesses. In 2011, a follow-up study at Winthrop University Hospital determined that "individuals without an appendix were four times more likely to have a recurrence of *Clostridium difficile*," a nasty illness often found in hospitals.

Australian molecular immunologist Dr. Gabrielle Belz has recently (2015) published research that confirms and develops these earlier findings. According to her team's work, the appendix definitely holds a key role

in maintaining good digestive health. When gut health is threatened, the appendix works to keep the digestive system populated with the right bacteria.

Of course, when the appendix was considered useless it served as proof of evolution – the appendix was a vestigial organ leftover from plant-eating ancestors. Now that it's found a purpose, it still serves as proof of evolution because, according to one scientist, "it no longer serves the function for which it evolved." No matter which way the evidence points, it can never point to a Creator! You see, it's not really about the evidence after all. When God is ruled out at the beginning, all evidence to the contrary has to be seen in that light.

SOURCES: Randy J. Gulizza's "Major evolutionary blunders: our useful appendix – evidence of design, not evolution" published in the Feb. 2016 Acts & Facts; Rob Dunn's "Your appendix could save your life" posted to *blogs.scientificamerican.com* on Jan. 2, 2012



## QUEBEC'S MAPLE SYRUP MONOPOLY

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**n December *BBC News* covered the plight of a Canadian grandmother they called “one of Canada’s most wanted woman.” Angele Grenier is facing the prospect of half million dollar fines and lengthy jail time.

Her crime? She’s a self-confessed smuggler and illegal dealer, someone who sells contraband across province lines. But what exactly is she selling that has so incensed the Canadian authorities, and seen the police search her property? Drugs? Guns? Nope, maple syrup.

Grenier owns a farm full of maple trees which she taps each spring. The sap is then boiled down and the end result is maple syrup. But by provincial decree Grenier, and all of Quebec’s other maple syrup producers, must hand their syrup over to the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. The federation had been granted a monopoly – only they are allowed to sell the province’s syrup on the wholesale market. But Grenier and her husband have been bypassing the federation to sell to Americans just over the border. Otherwise, Grenier argues, “we don’t own our syrup any more.”

Other producers are quite happy with the monopolistic system, praising it for the stable pricing it provides, and the ever-increasing prices. Quebec is the world’s leading maple syrup producer, which puts the federation in control of about 70% of the world’s supply. That allows them to manipulate pricing, holding some production in reserve when production is high, and selling it in years when production is low.

As Christians we understand that God has placed us under the authority of the government, and as such we shouldn’t defy the laws of our land unless we have no other option. So Grenier is in the wrong.

But the law she is breaking is also wrong. God has given the government the fearsome power of the sword to punish evildoers (Romans 13:4), not impose monopolies. Is there anything in the Bible that would make us think it should be a crime for this grandmother to sell her syrup to a person of her own choosing? The federation’s monopoly does help producers by boosting the price, but that help comes at a cost to consumers – we have to pay higher prices. This, then, is the government legislatively siding with producers over against consumers. God hates unjust scales (Prov. 11:1) and partiality (Lev. 19:15), so the government has no business using its coercive powers to fix prices.

SOURCE: Andreane Williams’ “Canada’s maple syrup ‘rebels’” posted to BBC.com on December 10, 2015

## CANDIDATE: “I’D RATHER LOSE AN ELECTION THAN BE WRONG ABOUT LIFE”

BY JON DYKSTRA



**S**enator Marco Rubio’s passion for protecting the unborn was evident when political rivals attacked the presidential candidate for being too pro-life. During the February ABC News Republican Presidential Candidates Debate, former Florida governor Jeb Bush and New Jersey governor Chris Christie argued that Rubio’s opposition to abortion in cases of rape and incest

would hurt the party at the polls. Rubio didn’t back down, explaining that his position is hardly extreme.

On the one hand is the right of a woman to choose what to do with her body which is a real right, and on the other hand is the right of an unborn human child to live. And they’re in conflict. And as a policy maker, I must choose which one of these two sides takes precedence. And I have chosen to err on the side of life.

Here’s what I find outrageous. There have been five Democratic debates. The media has not asked them a single question on abortion; and on abortion the Democrats are

extremists. Why doesn’t the media ask Hillary Clinton why she believes that all abortion should be legal, even on the due date of that unborn child? Why don’t they ask Hillary Clinton why she believes that partial- birth abortion — which is a gruesome procedure that has been outlawed in this country — [is] a fundamental right? They are the extremists when it comes to the issue of abortion, and I can’t wait to expose them in a general election.

He later added, “I just believe deeply that all human life is worthy of protection of our laws....I would rather lose an election than be wrong on the issue of life.”

## PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DOESN'T KNOW BASIC ECONOMICS

BY JON DYKSTRA

**S**enator Bernie Sanders wasn't supposed to have any chance at the Democrat nomination for president; the media consensus was that former First Lady Hillary Clinton was certain to be her party's candidate. But as the nomination race has entered the new year Sanders has closed the gap and it is less than clear which of the two will win.

What is clear is that Sanders lacks a basic understanding of economics. At year's end the self-described socialist tweeted out a question about student loan payments:

You have families out there paying 6, 8, 10 percent on student debt but you can refinance your homes at 3 percent. What sense is that?

As the Foundation for Economic Education's Steven Horowitz (and many others) has pointed out, the reason for the different rates comes down to collateral.

...a mortgage has collateral in the form of a house, so it is a lower-risk loan to the lender than a student loan, which has no collateral and therefore requires a higher interest rate to cover the higher risk.

While economic ignorance isn't all that unusual, a man aspiring to be President should know these sorts of things. Horowitz shared this Murray Rothbard quote:



It is no crime to be ignorant of economics, which is, after all, a specialized discipline and one that most people consider to be a "dismal science." But it is totally irresponsible to have a loud and vociferous opinion on economic subjects while remaining in this state of ignorance.

SOURCE: Steven Horowitz's "3 Kinds of Economic Ignorance" posted to FEE.org on January 7, 2016

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# REFUGE

by Cecilia Vandeveld



The lot beside Lawrence and Margaret had always been empty. No one had bought the parcel of land from the town when the lots on the newly minted Oak Lane had gone up for sale. At first Lawrence and Margaret would wonder together who would move in next door, but as the years went by they stopped wondering and the vacant lot became a fixture of the neighbourhood. It was the place the neighbourhood communally griped about because of the dandelions that proliferated there in the spring and the groundhogs that merrily dug into their yards from the unused land.

The neighbours had long convinced themselves that this wild and free parcel was, in fact, an eyesore and they grumbled about it over their morning coffees and their noonday luncheons. They glared at the wildflowers as they fought the wars on weeds and sighed as they raked the autumn leaves that fell from the giant oak tree that shaded the plot. It became something they bonded over, something they could agree on, something they could slip into an awkward conversation to loosen up any tension. It was the thing they all loved to hate.

It was Norm who found out the news first. Norm had a friend who was on the town council and the neighbourhood looked to him to keep them updated on the latest offenses the municipality was committing. As they got together that Spring morning for their daily cup of coffee they could tell there was something big. Norm always got that gleeful look about him when something particularly disturbing was unfolding in their local government. Something they could complain about for a while, something to fill up their morning before they went home to their wives to complain some more



over lunch. This morning Norm was definitely gleeful as they got their coffees and settled in for the battle.

When Norm told them the town was going to develop the vacant lot, they were shocked. Truth be told, they had grown used to the oasis in the middle of their neighbourhood. Jim was the first to respond. "Well, at least we can finally say goodbye to all the dandelions," he managed, thinking of how his wife would miss the beautiful flowers out her side window in the Spring. "They'll dig it up and that should get rid of the gophers," said Bob, thinking of how he'd miss the thrill of the chase and the unspoken competitions of the hunt. "We won't have to rake the leaves of that old tree anymore," Lawrence put in, thinking of how he'd miss the plethora of birds that perched in the branches every summer.

"That's not all," continued Norm, "they're planning to put in low-income housing." This was news they could sink their teeth into, and they quartered it up for all it was worth for the next hour, wondering just what kind of riff-raff they'd have to settle to live beside and just how it would affect their property values.

"It's bad news," Lawrence said to Margaret over lunch. "Just think of what kind of people will be living right next door to us."

"Maybe they won't be all that bad," said Margaret. "There's a lot of good people for whom life had dealt a bad blow and they've ended up in need. Being needy doesn't make someone a criminal."

Lawrence disliked it when his wife made sense. "But think about what it'll do to our property values."

Margaret looked at him a moment and then answered, "You planning on moving soon?"

Lawrence shook his head. She just wasn't getting it. He'd have to pull out the big guns. "What if they sell drugs?" He asked.

Margaret looked at him and she and Lawrence both knew he was grasping at straws. "Just because they're poor doesn't mean they do drugs, Lawrence." She readied her spoon for another bite of soup.

"They'll need help" she said, "maybe this is our chance to help someone who has a real need. To shine the light of Christ; to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and welcome the strangers in His Name."

All summer long the neighbours watched the little house get built. The work went slowly as most of it was built with volunteer hours. Even the men of Oak Lane pitched in from time to time, surreptitiously bringing coffee for the workers or offering to pick up a roller and paint for a while. In the end the neighbourhood was secretly proud of the little house "they" had built and were eager to start showering some needy family with their love. Margaret wondered if there would be children in the family. "Maybe I could babysit them while the Mom does errands," she said to Lawrence one day. "And we could have tea and become friends and invite them over for dinner and whatnot."

"Uhm-hm," said Lawrence noncommittally from behind his newspaper.

November came and the house was still uninhabited. It had sat silent, waiting, for two months. "The committee is deadlocked," Norm said one morning. "They are torn over how to decide who to put in the house. They're asking for suggestions from the public."

That night as they sat watching the news of the refugee crisis Margaret said, "Maybe they should put a refugee family in our little house." Lawrence snorted. "Yeah, a family of terrorists is just what this neighbourhood needs." Lawrence felt a little guilty after saying it. Margaret turned and stared at him incredulously.

The family arrived in the middle of a snow squall. A taxi pulled up to the little house and a man and a woman and three children ran through the wind and snow to the front door. A town councilman was waiting for them. "Welcome home!" he yelled over the wind and unlocked the door.

Everyone in the neighbourhood noticed the vehicle, they had been tipped off

by the truck with the town's crest on the door that had arrived a while earlier. They watched as the woman held down her headscarf and pushed through the wind. They watched as the children piled from the taxi, laughing, picking up the fluffy snow and throwing it above their heads. They watched as the man carried all their earthly possessions, three knapsacks, along the walk and up the front steps.

The neighbourhood watched and wondered and when the snowstorm abated they ventured out to say hello. Margaret was first, she marched over with a freshly-baked loaf of bread and rang the doorbell. Furtive eyes watched her from behind the curtains of the neighbouring homes.

Then, following her example and so as not to be outdone, the other ladies of the neighbourhood warily went over to say hello and bring gifts of welcome. Before long the women were chatting and laughing inside while the men stood in the garage offering advice on where to find the cheapest car parts and where the best fishing was. They were having a grand time when a phone beeped and they all fell silent. Eyes turned to Sami as he pulled out his smartphone and checked it. He texted a quick response and turned back to the waiting crowd.

"I didn't know refugees could afford smartphones," said Jim, regretting it as soon as he had said it. But then not regretting it because it needed to be said, at least he thought so. The men waited in silent agreement but Sami didn't notice the tension.

"I brought it from Syria," he answered. "We had to flee in the middle of the night. I could only take what we could carry, I made sure to grab the phone because I needed to tell my brother when

*Yeah, a family of terrorists is just what this neighborhood needs."*

we arrived safely. It was the easiest way to contact them.” He glanced around. “Doesn’t everyone here have phones? I thought everyone in Canada had cell phones.” Lawrence nodded. It made sense, he thought, if he had to run for his life he’d probably grab his phone too.

As he and Margaret shared their evening meal they talked about Sami and his wife, Zeinah. “They seem so nice,” Margaret said. “And they know English so well because it was always their dream to move to Canada someday.”

Lawrence barely heard his wife. He was thinking. Thinking about what it would be like to take all your money and give it to some crooked stranger in hopes that he’d be honest enough to take you and your family across the water out of the country. Thinking about having to flee in the middle of the night, praying your children wouldn’t cry and give everyone away, not being able to take anything with you but what you can carry, leaving behind your home, your family, your life.

The neighbours of Oak Lane threw themselves into welcoming the refugee family. They brought meals and baking and offered a cheery hello whenever they could. “Do you think this meal is halal?” Zeinah asked her husband one day as she looked in dismay at the supper that was waiting for them. “We’ll eat it anyway,” decided Sami. “It is a gift of love.” It was a mild winter without the usual quota of cold that instigates hibernation, and so

despite the occasional snowy day the neighbourhood stayed somewhat alive and Margaret would sometimes meet Zeinah outside going for walks or playing in the snow with her children.

The men of Oak Lane continued their morning coffee breaks and invited Sami to join in, but he had started a job at the local gas station. This was a huge change for someone who used to be a teacher, but he went happily, thankful for the opportunity to work again and support his family. Thankful for some normalcy, some stability to anchor his family. This left the coffee drinkers free to swap stories of things they had heard and talked about with Sami.

“Do you know why most of the refugees are young men?” Jim asked one day. “Sami told me it’s because that’s the age group that they are trying to recruit into the rebel army over there. It’s either join up or be killed. So they run.”

“That makes sense,” replied Norm. “I’d run too.”

“You’re too old to run,” joked Lawrence. But the joke fell a little flat as they all thought of Zeinah’s mother who had run with Sami and Zeinah, but died in a refugee camp shortly after they arrived there. She was 75.

Eventually the sensation of the newcomers wore off. The men of Oak Lane still argued often, as people will do, about the politics of bringing refugees to Canada or if resettlement closer to their homes would be a better option. They worried about the influx of refugees, the potential for terrorists entering undetected, and the Islamization of Canada. They hashed over the reasons why so few of the refugees claimed to be Christian and wondered if persecution occurred in refugee camps as well. They told each other the hair-raising stories they heard from the news, stories of children lost in watery graves, heart-wrenching stories of families having to choose who to save and who to leave behind.



The more they talked, the more they were moved. The more their hearts were touched the more they turned to the only source of comfort and peace. They began to pray together earnestly for those on the run. They prayed for safety and protection for the Christians making the dangerous crossings. They prayed that the Muslim refugees might be convicted by the cups of cold water they received in Christ’s name on their journeys and sent money to the Christian organizations on the ground. They prayed for God’s grace to find their neighbours on Oak Lane, and they prayed to be used as God’s hands and feet and voices on that journey. Indeed, a beautiful thing had happened on Oak Lane. God had used a family of Muslim refugees to quicken the hearts of the Christians. Sami and Zeinah had become for them a face, a story, and a reason to care. **RP**

*‘I didn’t know refugees could afford smartphones,’ said Jim...’*

# ODE TO HURT (OR WHY MY TOLERANT NATURE CAN'T STAND YOUR OPINIONS)

by Rob Slane

I'm hurting I am, and I want you to know,  
That the pain I am feeling, isn't likely to go.  
I'm hurting I am, it's your opinions you see,  
I just can't accept them, I do not agree.

D'you not pay attention, d'you not see the news?  
This post-modern world has no place for your views.  
They're outdated, outmoded, outrageous no doubt,  
And lots, lots more words beginning with out.

Reactionary, Dark Ages, Stone Age repression,  
And other assorted clichéd expressions.  
That's what I think of your bigoted rants,  
Which contrast so starkly with my own tolerance.

You've made me so angry, so hurt, even bitter,  
What can I do, but to go onto Twitter?  
Hashtag #BigotedIntolerantPhobe,  
Said something that hurt me, so I'm telling the globe.

I'll put it on Facebook, Instagram too,  
The world needs to know the pain caused by you.  
Pain that keeps giving and won't find relief,  
For I simply can't cope with a different belief.

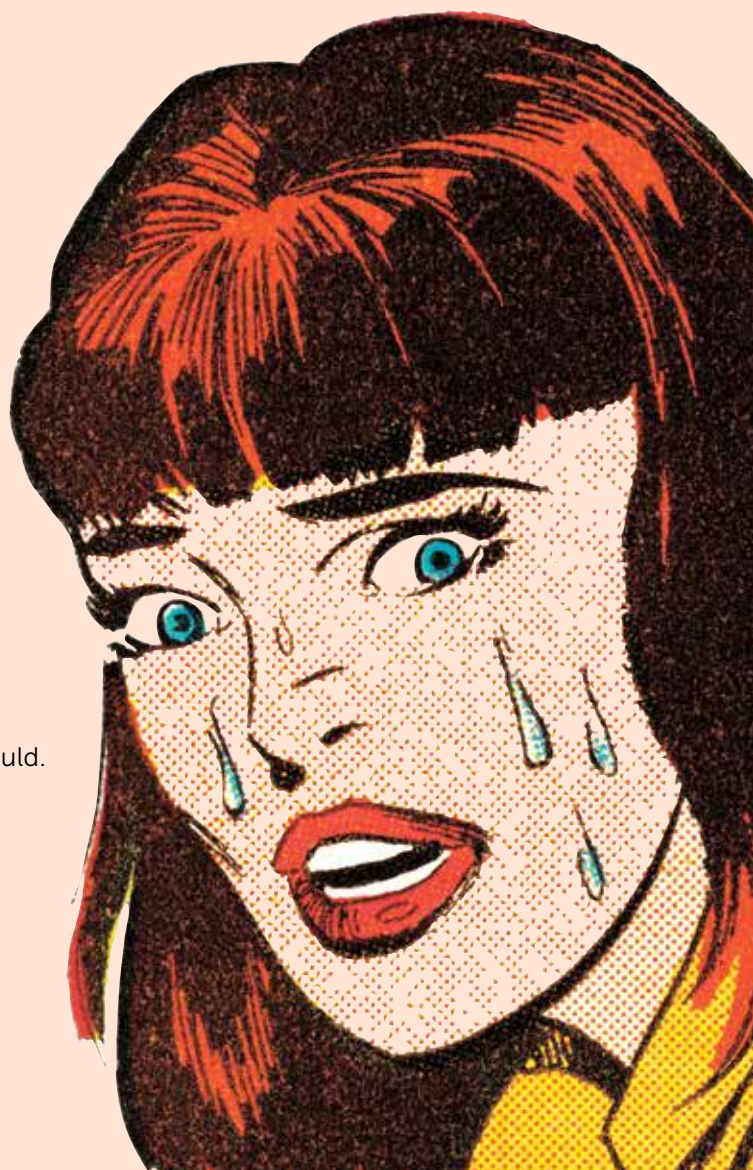
But being free-thinking, I'm perfectly fine,  
That others have thoughts that are different to mine.  
I must draw the line though, with views such as yours,  
Against which there really ought to be laws.

Don't get me wrong, I'm 100 percent,  
Committed to free speech and the right to dissent.  
But it's Twenty-Sixteen and I can't understand,  
Why opinions like yours still haven't been banned.

The law ought to treat them as Hate Crimes, it should,  
Then you'd have to keep them all up in your head, yes you would.  
And not only Hate Crimes, but Hurt Speech I say,  
On account of them really upsetting my day.

Enough is enough, I'm really perturbed,  
My tolerant nature has been greatly disturbed.  
From now on I beg, keep your views well hid.  
Did I tell you they hurt me? Yes you hurt me, you did.

*Rob Slane is the author of A Christian and an  
Unbeliever Discuss... Life, the Universe and Everything.*







*In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. If any one stirs up strife, it is not from Me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; no weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from Me, says the Lord. (Isaiah 54:14-17)*

# **Vindication and the Spider**

by Christine Farenhorst

There are nearly 40,000 different kinds of them around the world. Some can catch frogs, rabbits and even birds with their strong poisons and fangs. They also make webs, those amazing architectural structures that you can bump into during an early morning stroll through the forest. These webs are made of silk – a material which cannot be duplicated even though it's been tried. It is strong and flexible.

### SPIDERS ARE GOOD... EVEN IF WE DON'T THINK SO

We tend to look at spiders and shudder. I confess I frequently have done so. My husband has often come when I called for help. He's stood on a chair innumerable times, taken his hanky out of his pocket and collected an eight-legged creature off the ceiling, smiling at me before depositing it outside.

We confess that God created these little (or larger) arachnids, and the truth is that everything He made was good. My mind can extol God for the fascinating abilities He has given these little creatures, but my emotions often get the better of me when I encounter a hairy fellow clinging to the side of a cottage, or peering at me from underneath a dock by a lake. It is a truly unique gift that this so very common animal can spin a web, weaving a creation unlike any other on the earth. Producing silk (a chance evolutionary accident? - not likely!) from a tiny but complex body is mind-boggling. Here's a bit of interesting information: a spider can have a waist narrower than one millimeter, and through this waist pass its digestive tract, veins, windpipe and nervous system.

Most spiders have rather poor eyesight and can see only short distances. Perhaps this is a comforting thought if you have ever been surprised by one as you were walking a trail! But the arachnid is extremely sensitive. Each one of the thousands of hairs on his or her body is attached to a nerve ending and consequently, to the brain. As a result, the spider can quickly read warning signals. So small and so complex!

### CREEPY FOR A REASON?

My husband once spent a few hours with the kids in the backyard hovering

over a small hole in the lawn in which a wolf spider had taken up his abode. The life span of a wolf spider is about 305 days. It can spend about one third of its life without eating anything. Created by His heavenly Father to adapt to extreme conditions, it is able to resist hunger by greatly reducing its body metabolism.

God created everything in six twenty-four hour days. And everything He created was good. Spiders, in number as well as in diversity, outdo any other predator. Indeed, because so many were created by God, we must deduce that they must be special in His eyes. Every creature that exists has a purpose. And perhaps these eight-legged ones were created to look quite creepy so that they can perform their various tasks in His kingdom without being hunted down by humans. Spider silk is very compatible with human tissue and was, at one time, put onto cuts and wounds by rural folks to help sores to heal. They are also a critical part of the balance of nature. Their ability to create webs manifests God's glory and causes praise for the great Designer and Creator of the universe Who made them.

### BIG AND SMALL

On the evening of November 13, 2015, a series of coordinated Islamic terrorist attacks occurred in Paris, France. Three suicide bombers struck in various places killing a total of 130 people, as well as wounding 368. It seems that every day someone is killed by a terrorist. As a matter of fact, the grim number of those killed in Syria during 2015, is 55,219. Many of those were Christians. Open Doors, an international group supporting persecuted Christians worldwide, says Islamic militants posed the greatest threat in 18 out of the 20 countries that are toughest for Christians. Topping the list of Christians confirmed to have been killed for faith-related reasons were Nigeria at

*... the grim number  
of those killed in  
Syria during 2015,  
is 55,219.*


2,484 and Central African Republic at 1,088, with Syria and Iraq – where ISIS militants have driven out hundreds of thousands of Christians from areas they control – at 271 and 60 respectively.

So what does the previous paragraph have to do with spiders? What does it have to do with creatures so strangely created, they evoke both shudders and praise for God?

Our God is a God of both the small and the cataclysmic events in history - a God of small creatures and of those made in His image. He is the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of everything. As a matter of fact, it is good to know that nothing, not one thing, is outside of His providence. From worldwide flood to rainbow, from Babel to covenant with Abraham, from babies killed by Pharaoh to burning bush, He is in control.

In August of 1572, the year of the infamous St. Bartholomew's Massacre in Paris, France, many Huguenots were assassinated and murdered in cold blood in a wave of mob violence. Although these murders began in Paris, the slaughter lasted several weeks and spread to the surrounding countryside. It seemed no one was safe.

A small anecdote records, however, that someone trying to flee from the frenzied killers hid in a brick oven to conceal himself. He fancied he had little hope of escape, as every spot was checked, and rechecked. He prayed inside that oven. And his prayer was heard. God providentially sent a spider to the oven. The small creature spun its silk across the brick. Thick, strong and sticky, it covered the door and hung, shiny and concentric. Then God sent a breeze, and dust blew up from the ground landing on the new web, covering it and making it look old and dingy. It appeared as if no one had touched that oven for days. The hiding place was passed by those seeking his life and the man was saved. He had been vindicated by a spider through the Almighty hand of God.

And today those who hide in the shadow of God's wings, (Psalm 17), in spite of the seemingly bleak prospects looming on the horizon of this year of 2016, will also be vindicated through the Almighty hand of God. 





# PRAYING AND BORROWING

Are we hoping God will bail us out of our irresponsible ways?

by John Voorhorst

The Lord's Prayer is said regularly in our churches and in our homes. We all know how it goes. Now, as our economy seems headed towards a downturn, there is one petition many may be praying with special urgency: "Our Father in Heaven...Give us this day our daily bread."

Is this your prayer – are you praying for your daily bread, more concerned than ever about where it will come from? May I ask one more question? Are you, like many Canadians, making minimum payments on your credit cards? If those two questions don't seem related, let me explain.

## TAKING ON DEBT

Back in 2012 I wrote an article in *RP* titled "Honey, I blew the budget" explaining how all Christian families needed to work hard on budgeting with the particular focus being that we should get out of debt as quickly as possible. In the four years since that article, in my role as a Certified Financial Planner, I've found that most, if not all, of my new clients have (like most Canadians) actually *increased* the level of their personal debt. This is a sad situation, especially as we find ourselves living in a time of general slowdown in our North American economy. It seems likely that many people will soon lose their jobs, investment portfolios will decline in value, and people will find themselves in a position where they will not be able to keep making the payments on all their debt.

I have already said that this is sad. But, if we, as God's children are also in this situation I wonder if we might say more than that. Isn't this foolish? If this debt is as a result of covetousness or greed Ephesians 5:3 or 5:5 may also have something to say – the warning in these verses is stark!

The Bible teaches that debt is a form of slavery. Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender." Deuteronomy 15:6 speaks of the lender ruling, and the borrower being ruled. If the idea of debt as slavery is hard to accept do as Rev. Hank Van der Woerd has suggested: "...recall the last time you paid off any sizeable debt, and remember the relief you experienced." The shackles have come off!

Taking on debt is more serious than many seem to understand. Let me be clear. I am not suggesting that all debt is wrong. The question becomes one of the heart. Here is one more question: should we allow our *wants* to put us into this form of slavery?

## WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?

Many Canadians today, and Christians too, prioritize their wants over most everything else. We work hard, perhaps


*Many Canadians today...prioritize their wants over most everything else.*

even at the expense of spending time with our children, all so that we can enjoy ourselves. Caught up in the busyness of life, we have no time to evangelize because we are too busy working a second job so that we can have the best that the world offers. The food, the gadgets, the cars, the vacations – we do not deny ourselves or our children anything.

But this isn't how we have to live. In

his book *Freedom of Simplicity*, Richard J. Foster does a good job of extolling the benefits of living a simple, obedient, God-centered life. Mr. Foster reminds his readers that God requires simple obedience to Him alone. He requires that all our efforts should be directed so that He receives the glory and the praise. Mr. Foster encourages us to live simply, leaving our hectic lifestyle, not so that we benefit, but so that we return to living for God's glory. Let's go back to living as slaves of Jesus Christ, rather than as a slave of the bank or the credit card.

Do you find yourself praying to God for daily bread and really praying, because you are not sure how you are ever going to get out of debt? Let me ask you a very frank question. Are you begging God to give you daily bread while at the same time your list of toys and first world benefits looks just like your neighbors'? Can we understand then why God may not hear our cry? Is our cry to God for help a godly cry if we are unwilling to stop our reckless spending? The first step, then, is repentance, and to ask God to make Him our greatest want.

If your household is drowning in consumer debt and you would like to begin to change that, I would encourage you to read Mr. Foster's *Freedom of Simplicity*. And as a follow-up, consider having the deacons in your church organize a one-day event with *Reformed Perspective* where we would bring in a qualified speaker to assist your community in finding solutions to this issue of debt. We can help free each other from this slavery. 

*If your church would like to work with RP to run a "It's God's Money" conference, contact John Voorhorst at chairman@reformedperspective.com*



...when we both lean in – curiously – it forms something like a steeple

# COMPLEMENTARIANISM VS. EGALITARIANISM

## There Aren't Just The Two Positions

by Nicholas McDonald

### Debate defined

**COMPLEMENTARIANISM** –The belief that a husband should be the spiritual head of his family, and that husband and wife will have different and complementary roles in their marriage.

**EGALITARIANISM** – The belief that there are no separate gender roles in marriage, and that husband and wife will lead the family collaboratively.

**A**s my wife and I have been facing big decisions over the last few months, it's been neat to see the way God has transformed our marriage from its fledgling stages to something a little more beautiful.

It's also got me thinking about the whole complementarian/egalitarian debate, and how my views over the years – though still complementarian – have shifted from a kind of misogynistic

immaturity to what my wife and I both perceive to be a more Christ-like model.

It's made me realize there aren't just two positions on this: egalitarianism and complementarianism – and when people are arguing against one or the other, they're normally arguing against a flawed diversion, rather than the real thing.

That being said, let me lay out a few different options.

## **MISOGYNY: The husband asserts his desires, the wife submits.**

Though this is what chiefly comes to mind to those in the egal. camp, this is the furthest thing from the biblical picture of complementarianism possible. Unfortunately many, wounded from a history of misogyny, reject all hierarchy within families whole-sale based on their experience.

If I'm honest, both my wife and I came into marriage with a subconscious commitment to this kind of relationship, and the results were not only personally devastating, but anti-gospel. Jesus never asserts his personal desires over and above his bride.

## **MATRIARCHY: The wife asserts her desires, the husband submits.**

Though I doubt any would publicly subscribe to this, it is, unfortunately, a settled pattern in many Christian homes. In this model, the husband mistakes weakness for meekness and, rather than honoring his wife, becomes bitter and distant (in effect dishonoring her).

Jesus was not weak, he was meek – he asserted his bride's good, he didn't passively give into it.

## **PRAGMATISM: We both assert our desires, and we both win.**

The reason this sounds so ideal is that it is so idealistic. The truth is, we don't have the time, energy and resources to try and make "win-wins" out of every minute situation in life. Nor, I might add, does this sound much like the Christ who called us to marriage.

Jesus didn't come to earth saying: "You get what you can out of this, and I'll get what I can." Pragmatism (a focus on what works), is a denial of the purpose of marriage – the point of marriage is not to do the greatest good to the greatest number (both of us, in this case), but to assert the image of Christ and the church to a watching world (Ephesians 5:23).

So "work," in this case, is contingent upon a definition of marriage's purpose which goes little beyond realizing my

own, personal desires.

Besides, if "work" means, "does what it's meant to do," then pragmatism, in that sense, doesn't "work."

## **NAIVETY: We'll never disagree.**

Point 1: Okay, sure.

Point 2: Jesus called us to be peacemakers, and that in the church. This assumes there will be conflict, and it assumes a non-passive approach. We're not called to be peace keepers, but makers, meaning: we have work to do.

A quick read through the New Testament ought to wash us clean of this one. Jesus had (has) conflict with his bride, and he's perfect. So, to put it strangely – if there's no conflict, something's wrong.

## **DEMOCRACY: We both assert our desires, and someone wins.**

The truth will win out, is the thought here. Except, there's no real "truth" to whether we ought to go out for ice-cream or pizza. No argument can solve it. There's no "right" answer to whether we should move to California or Timbuktu – these are morally neutral issues. In fact, let me be controversial: there's no real truth as to whether the house should be clean or messy. We attach virtues to these things because we inherently view our personalities like good Pharisees – we make rules from them, and work outward.

Besides, this looks nothing like Christ and the church. Notice I'm not saying that we shouldn't communicate our desires to one another: communicating our vulnerability is actually an investment, not a withdrawal. It's a compliment to say, "I need you." But saying, "Therefore, you must do this" is patently wrong on every account.

## **COLDNESS: Neither of us assert our desires, and no one submits.**

Clearly, when you've reached this point, there's bitterness and the whole operation's gone amuck. Jesus communicates his desires toward us, and he invites us to communicate our desires to him. So – this is radically

anti-gospel as well. This is a roommate scenario, not a Song of Solomon one.

## **ABSURDITY: Both of us assert the others' desire, and no one submits.**


This is the closest to true complementarianism, but its only flaw is that it's absurd. I believe it is in *The Four Loves* that C.S. Lewis points out that two people sitting at a dining table insisting that they pour the others' tea has less to do with love and more to do with absurd false-humility. The beautiful thing about complementarianism is that it's just like this, without the absurdity, which leads us to...

## **COMPLEMENTARY: Both of us assert the others' desire, and the wife submits.**

In a recent decision my wife and I made, it became clear that our desires were in conflict. The position being offered to us would have been a wonderful fit for one of us, and a terrible fit for the other. Sparing you the details, it became evident to both of us the beautiful irony of the situation: my wife was insisting that we do things my way. And I was insisting we do things in a way that was best for her.

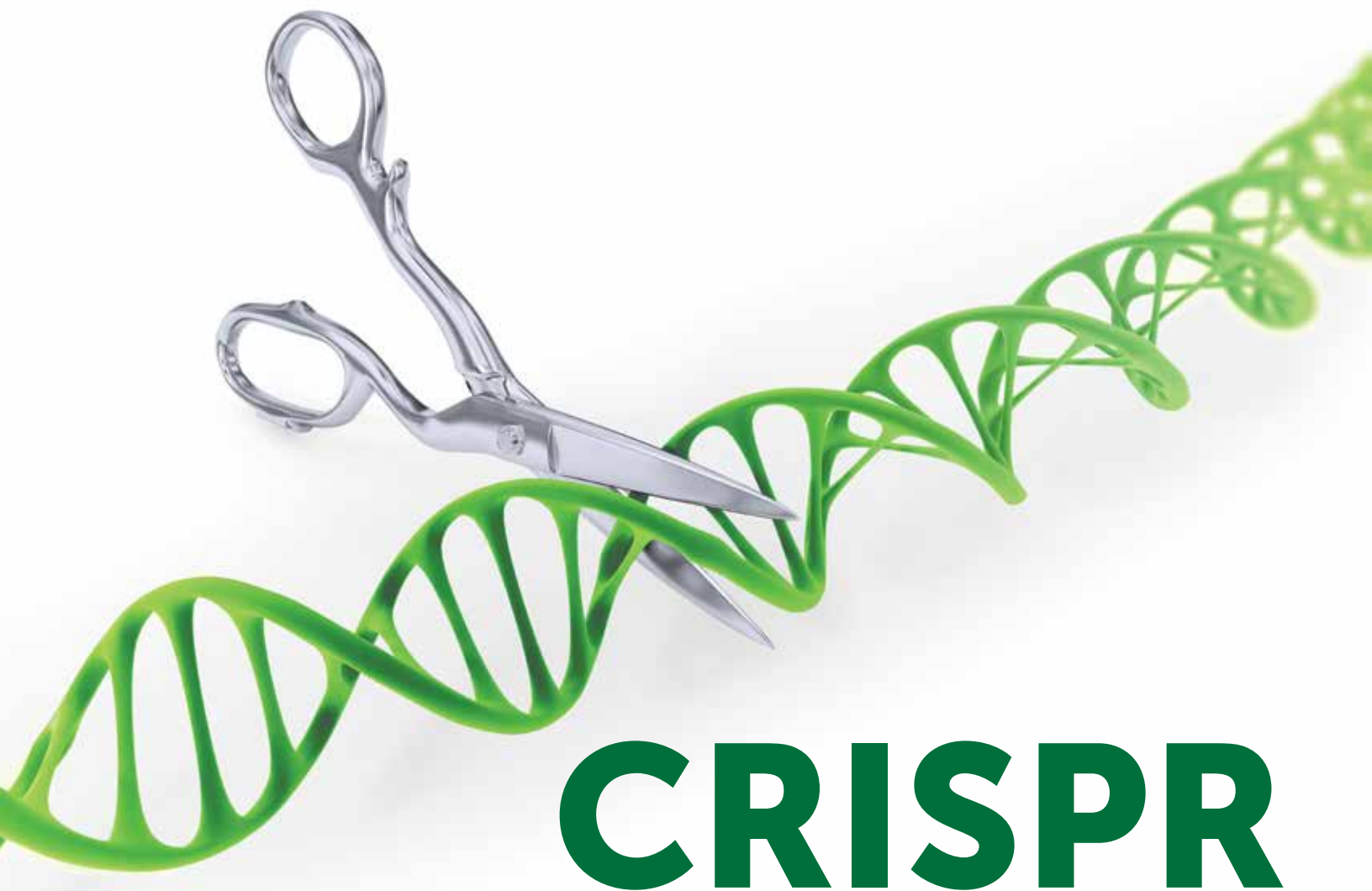
And because we are complementation, I "won out" in the end: I asserted her desires over mine.

That is a long and winding journey, but I think it's good for many of us to hear, on every side of the debate. While we think we may be in one camp, we may actually be in some permutation of it that is actually unrecognizable from its original intent. The truth is, the real model is like two people leaning toward one another for balance – it's a total act of trust on both parts, and it requires an "all in" approach, not something half-baked.

But when we both lean in – curiously – it forms something like a steeple. 

*Nicholas McDonald blogs at ScribblePreach.com where this article was first posted. It is reprinted here with permission.*





# CRISPR

## A useful gene-editing tool, a scary threat, or both?

by Margaret Helder

**C**RISPR is a technique that has taken the world of biotechnology by storm, but which is scarcely a household word with the rest of society. That however is changing – it's now being talked about on the funny pages! On January 28 and 29 the comics strip *Arctic Circle* featured two jokes about CRISPR technology. This attention is overdue, since the implications of the CRISPR technique are so significant for society.

There are two issues that should have our attention concerning CRISPR.

The first one is the amazing elegance

and design efficiency of the system.

The second one is the ethical implications for human society that this technology carries with its application. This second issue is the one that claims most or all of the attention in the media. For example, an item in the Feb 9 *MIT Technology Review* was entitled "Top U.S. Intelligence Official Calls Gene Editing a WMD [weapon of mass destruction] Threat." The subtitle reads: "Easy to use. Hard to control. The intelligence community now sees CRISPR as a threat to national safety."

### WHAT IS CRISPR?

So what is CRISPR?

In its most basic terms, it is a short piece of genetic code in the DNA of a bacterium. It is coupled with a small portion of the genetic code of a foreign agent – a virus – that at an earlier time invaded the cell. This stored copy of part of the virus's DNA is how these cells can remember past attacks and reject the next attacks by such viruses. The viruses want to hijack the cell for their own ends so it is in the best interests of the host cell to eliminate such foreign agents, which are threats to its integrity.



We could perhaps liken the CRISPR system in bacteria to a planned community that exercises extreme control over the design of the houses within its borders. Imagine a street where every other house is a "cookie cutter" model built by the same developer. However, in between houses 1 and 3 and 5 and 7 custom-designed houses are built. Thus the street looks like cookie cutter/custom design A/cookie cutter/custom design B/cookie cutter/custom design C/cookie cutter/custom design D and so on. The street will certainly look distinctive.

Now let's pretend that afterwards a life-size picture is made of the first two houses, cookie cutter and design A. Another picture of similar scale is made of the cookie cutter/design B combination and so on. Then these large pictures are moved around the community. If the cookie cutter/design A combo picture comes across a house on another street, that is the same as design A, it brings in resources to destroy the copy! And if the second combo – cookie cutter/design B – representation comes across a house elsewhere in the community which is the same as design B, it too calls in the troops to destroy that design B house! Only the original street is allowed to have that pattern of designs.

So how does this parallel what is going on in bacterium? Well, the host cell identifies enemy invaders based on a small piece of exact genetic code that had previously been pulled from a similar invader. After it was pulled from the invader this piece of genetic code was then inserted into the host cell's DNA, attached to a brief CRISPR segment – it now has a permanent record, stored in its own DNA, of the invader. The snippet taken from the invading foreign agent's DNA is comparable to the custom-built house on our street. When a different foreign agent attacks, a piece of its genetic code will also be snipped and copied into

the host cell's DNA. To separate the one "custom house" from the other, a repeating piece of DNA – the CRISPR segment – is inserted between. Our cookie cutter model represents this identical-each-time segment. Thus each bacterial cell has its own custom-recorded library of past invaders in the form of "custom-designed houses" coupled to the "cookie cutter models." What do the life-size pictures represent? They are the stored snippet of invader's DNA coupled with a CRISPR segment that have been copied onto RNA (ribonucleic acid) so that they can travel the cell looking for matches. And when they find a match then they know it is an invader, and call up associated enzymes to destroy the identified invading entities.

If the system sounds sophisticated, this is certainly the case. If it's hard to imagine, try reading through the previous three paragraphs one more time. This is mind-blowing...though the way it works is astonishingly simple in design.

And this system has amazing potential for human applications.

## CRISPR'S SHORT HISTORY

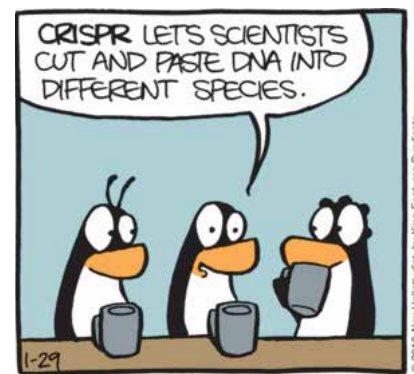
It was in 1987 that Japanese scientists studying the DNA sequence of a particular gene in the bacterium *Escherichia coli*, noticed a strong repeating pattern in the genetic information flanking that gene (aka. the "cookie cutter models"). But they weren't sure what these repeats were for.

Answers to that question were not immediately forthcoming. In fact, it took scientists some time to realize that this issue was a significant one. A paper in 2002 reported that this unusual pattern was now known to be widespread among bacterial species – these repeats weren't just happening in the *Escherichia coli* bacterium!

However, it was still anybody's guess what use, if any, the cell had for this strange pattern in the genetic

material. But it was at this time that the repeats were given their name: Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats, or CRISPRs for short. (Palindromes are sections of code that can be read identically in each direction, such as "Madam, I'm Adam.")

Scientists might have known that something this fancy had to have function. Enlightenment was soon to follow. By 2010 scientists had discovered that the spacers (the "custom-designed houses") between the



A panel from Arctic Circle: CRISPR has made the funny pages.

repeats represented code that had come from outside the host cell itself. Several papers in 2005 demonstrated that the DNA of the spacers (each one of which was different, like the custom-designed houses) had come from "foreign genetic elements" – from invaders.

Within a month in 2012, five papers were published which described how the CRISPR and associated protein system could be used as a simple and versatile tool for gene editing in human cells in culture, and in other microbes and in fish. Several scientists had discovered that they could program the spacer section (the custom designed house) of the CRISPR system with DNA that they wished to target for removal from a living cell. They could use this to edit the genome of living cells easily and cheaply!



## WHAT CAN IT BE USED FOR?

Within the past three or four years, the applications of CRISPR in biotechnology have become more and more precise, and some of them have become more and more alarming.

The ability to cut DNA at very specific locations (a task previously far more difficult for biologists) carried with it the possibility of inserting new code into the location of an engineered break. By November 2013 a new commercial venture was launched with the objective to develop therapies to edit disease-related genes (*Nature* December 5, 2013 p. 13).

## THE GOOD?

A case in point is the sickle cell anemia mutation which causes anguish and death in millions of people. The mutation involves a single error (one nucleotide out of three which code for one amino acid out of about 140 in a protein component of hemoglobin.) This means that one wrong nucleotide out of 420 nucleotides coding for that protein (140 x 3), is enough to cause disease and death. The mutation replaces one amino acid (glutamic acid) with a different one (valine). This small change has the capacity to turn flexible disk-shaped red blood cells into rigid structures with distorted sickle-like appearance. These cells become clogged in the body's capillaries, preventing vital blood flow to the organs and tissues. Concerning this disease, scientists now wonder if gene editing might be possible to treat the disease. With gene editing, they would seek to replace the defective gene in the blood stem cells, with a good copy. The day may soon be here when this will be possible.

Other applications of CRISPR technology are appearing at a dizzying pace. Another application which has been developed is to allow the system to latch onto a target gene, but not destroy it. Scientists then move in other enzymes which cause the target gene to

chug out its particular protein product. Apparently scientists are able to target and turn on thousands of genes at the same time. So if they want to know what a particular set of genes can do, they simply turn them on and see what the effect is. Most cells in the human body of course only express a small number of genes at one time. Skin cells and bone cells, for example produce very different proteins, although they all share the same genetic information.

But there is more! Commercial interests have developed genetically engineered mice in a much shorter time than previously. The scientists inject the CRISPR system (carrying the desired mutation) into the fertilized egg of a mouse and the genome was now permanently changed. Soon mice which breed true for that new trait are ready for research programs.

## THE VERY SCARY

Obviously, if scientists can permanently change the germline of mice, someone is going to want to try it on people. Such research involves significant ethical implications. It would be a grave responsibility to permanently change the genetic composition of any person in such a way that the changes are passed on to future generations. Edward Lamphier and four co-authors (all involved in CRISPR research) have called for a worldwide moratorium on the use of gene-editing on human germlines – on DNA in eggs and sperm (Lamphier et al. 2015. *Nature* pp. 410-411). Society does not need designer babies!

However, scientists in China have begun to carry out such research on human embryos and it seems that many colleagues in a variety of countries are sympathetic to such endeavours. Not the least of the issues is the ease of access to and simplicity of working with CRISPR compared to other older techniques.

The equipment needed to manipulate cells with CRISPR technology is extremely cheap and easy to use. Almost

*This could be used to quickly develop weapons of mass destruction or to cause a bad gene to multiply quickly in a local human population.*

any country may be able to apply this technology for biological warfare should they so desire. And there is another recent development of the technology called "gene drive", which would provide for the rapid replacement in an entire population of a mutant gene, inserted into only a few individuals. This could be used to quickly develop weapons of mass destruction or to cause a bad gene to multiply quickly in a local human population. Society should be concerned.

## EVIDENCE OF AMAZING DESIGN

In the final analysis, just as traditional biotechnology demonstrates the work of highly skilled technicians, elaborate machines, and rich funding, so the CRISPR system in microbes is evidence of elegant design that is so sophisticated and so conservative in its use of materials that our human minds can only react with wonder and awe. Our most competent scientists could never have imagined or devised such a system...though now that they have found it, they can appreciate and exploit this technology. We all know that technology is designed by minds; it never comes about through an unguided process. The scientists applying this amazing technology should reflect on that fact. No natural process could ever produce the CRISPR system! RP





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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## THE QUOTABLE G.K. CHESTERTON

At 6'4" and 286 pounds Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) had the body of a defensive lineman. But more notable was his massive mind – Chesterton was never short of wisdom and wit. What follows are four quotes – four of his best – worth pondering.

- To have a right to do a thing is not at all the same as to be right in doing it.
- Impartiality is a pompous name for indifference, which is an elegant name for ignorance.
- Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable.
- The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected.

## WHAT DID THE SADUCEES BELIEVE?

Pop quiz: what did the Saducees believe? Don't know? You're not alone – 9 out of 10 North American chicken farmers can't recall any of the key beliefs of this ancient Jewish sect. And when a control group of lawn mower repairmen was told that the Sadducees denied the existence of angels, and the eternal soul, and even life after death, they couldn't recall any of those facts just minutes later.

So what can we do to retain this information? Can anything be done?

Yes, help can be found! Pastor William Pols, of the Orthodox Reformed Church of Edmonton, has a stunningly simple solution for this vexing problem – he has a memorable definition of the sect's beliefs: "Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, so they were *sad*, *you see*."

Once heard, how could that ever be forgotten?

## A PRESIDENT'S PRAYER

Ronald Reagan hated flying with such a passion that for decades he would traverse the country only by train, even traveling all the way from California to Washington D.C. by rail. But eventually the demands of his public office forced



him to regularly use planes. Even then he was only able to deal with his fear by praying every time the plane took off and every time it landed. His daughter Patti asked him about these prayers:

"Do you pray that the plane won't crash," I asked him assuming that would be a logical thing for which to pray.

"No," he answered, "I pray that whatever God's will is, I'll be able to accept it with grace, and faith in His wisdom. We're always in God's hands. Sometimes it's hard to accept that, so I pray that He'll help me just to trust His will."...

What my father had communicated to me, through his words, and between them, was that he believed God was in charge of his fate and the fate of everyone on the plane. He had told me once before that when we die is God's business. So it wasn't his place to second-guess God, or try to sell him a particular agenda by praying, "Please don't let the plane crash."

And I thought of this, too: If I were falling through the sky, falling toward my death, would I want my last moments to be spent screaming at God for not obeying my wishes, or would I want to exit this earth in a moment of silent communion, a prayer for grace and acceptance?

Of course it isn't wrong to ask God to keep our plane safe, or, if it were falling, to ask Him to bring it back under control. But what Reagan understood is that God is in control and we can trust Him.

SOURCE: Paul Kengor's *God and Ronald Reagan*

## MY BROTHERS WOULD HAVE LAUGHED

I grew up in a house full of boys, and while I feel very blessed with my house full of girls I am, every now and again, struck by how very outnumbered I am. For example, at breakfast I noticed we had genuine maple syrup on our table so I took it as an opportunity to teach my kids how it was made.

"It's basically tree blood," I told them.

No one thought that was cool. Sigh....

## CLARK KENT EVANGELISM

Too scared to evangelize? Ray Comfort has a suggestion:

Go into a phone booth. Open the phone book at the yellow pages. Find "Abortion," and slip a gospel tract in the page. Then look for the word "Escorts," and slip a tract in there. Many phone booths have a door, so you can go in, close the door and put it in without fear of being seen. You are not breaking the law, and the simple act of leaving a gospel tract in those two places may not only stop someone making a terrible life-changing decision, but it may bring them to faith in the Savior.

SOURCE: May 2001 *LWP Newsletter* [www.raycomfort.com](http://www.raycomfort.com)



# GOVERNMENT KNOWS BEST?

Stephen Gilles shows us how to defend parental rights

by Michael Wagner

Earlier this year Alberta's NDP government announced they want to use the province's schools to teach children that their gender is something they can choose. But gender isn't a choice, and to teach impressionable children otherwise is to mislead them. Despite many parental objections the government is still moving forward.

This isn't the first time a government has tried to override parental rights in education. Politicians and bureaucrats in various jurisdictions seem to be regularly devising new ways to thwart

the freedom of parents to direct the education of their children. These governments have the backing of intellectuals who use their scholarly expertise to produce academic materials arguing that parental rights in education need to be severely curtailed or even abolished. These intellectuals aim to persuade lawyers and judges that parental rights are unnecessary and no longer need to be recognized in law.

## WE HAVE ALLIES

Thankfully, not all intellectuals think that way. In recent years, a law

professor named Stephen Gilles at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut has written a number of scholarly articles defending parental rights in education over against statist arguments. "Statist" here refers to the belief in the supremacy of the government – the State – over individual and family freedom.

One of Professor Gilles' most famous scholarly articles is entitled "Hey, Christians, Leave Your Kids Alone!" which was published in the Spring 1999 issue of *Constitutional Commentary*, an American law journal. In it he took on

the Statist arguments that another law professor, James Dwyer, proposed in his *Religious Schools v. Children's Rights*. What Dwyer argued was that religious education is harmful and damaging to children and therefore the government needs to protect children from the harm their parents will impose on them through a religious education. In short, Dwyer sees parental rights as an obstacle that must be eliminated to ensure the wellbeing of children.

This differs only in degree, but not in kind, with what provincial governments have sought to do via their school systems. In BC the school curriculum was rewritten to promote homosexuality and parents were limited as to whether they could opt their children out of these classes. In Alberta and Manitoba the government wants to use the schools to promote transgenderism, over against our objections. And in Quebec the government wants schools to teach the equal validity of many religions, which is the very opposite of what we as parents want to teach our children. Our secular governments think they know best.

But if our governments think like Dwyer, we have a friend in Professor Gilles. He completely rejects Dwyer's Statist perspective and demonstrates that following Dwyer's proposals would, in fact, be positively harmful to children. Why? Because parents have a much better grasp of what their children need than government officials, so transferring decision-making power to those government officials would undermine the children's well-being.

*... parents have a much better grasp of what their children need than government officials*

## THE "PARENTALIST PRESUMPTION"

Dwyer's statist thinking gives us a glimpse of where our government may be heading in the future. Dwyer provides a theoretical foundation for the use of government coercion against conservative Christians, an idea that is popular among some left-wing intellectuals. As Gilles explains,

...many law professors see religious traditionalists – especially Christian Fundamentalists – as extremists whose beliefs and practices are irrational, without value, and positively dangerous to themselves and others. The dispositions these opinions induce are not limited to preventing religious traditionalists from gaining government power; they also include using government power to counter and undermine religious traditionalism as a movement.

In contrast Gilles wants to promote what he calls "parentalism," which maximizes parental rights. This view has not just the Bible but history behind it. In the past, in the Anglo-American countries (of which Canada is one), it has always been assumed that parents act in the best interests of their children. Gilles calls this the "parentalist presumption" which he summarizes as follows:

the state may not override a parental decision unless it overcomes the presumption and demonstrates that the parents' choice is in fact harmful to the child.

## THE GOVERNMENT MAKES A LOUSY PARENT

Naturally, then, the next question is to determine what constitutes "harm" such that the parentalism presumption can be overcome. Gilles answers this way:

If parents starve or brutalize their child, or prevent the child from acquiring foundational skills such as reading, writing, and calculating,

there is consensus that they are doing harm, and state intervention is entirely appropriate.

From time to time there are instances where the government may legitimately need to take action to protect children. While God calls on parents to care for their children, He also gives the State the power to administer justice, so when parents neglect their children the State does have the jurisdiction to step in. Most people would agree that children who are being starved, or tortured, or deliberately prevented from acquiring literacy and numeracy skills by their parents would need help. However, outside of these extremely rare occurrences families should be left alone by the government.

Now, parents are imperfect. We all fail to one degree or another. That leaves an opening for opponents of parental rights to point to these instances of parental failure and use them to justify increased government control over children. But Gilles points out that this line of reasoning is faulty:

The relevant question is not whether robust parental rights are perfect when measured by the yardstick of children's best interests, but whether they are superior to alternative regimes that give the state more control over children's upbringing. To this question, the longstanding answer of our legal tradition has been that state authority over childrearing is more to be feared than comparable authority in the hands of parents.

Parents make mistakes...but they are far better than a "government as parent" alternative.

## WHO KNOWS A CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS BEST?

Of course, that's the very point that Dwyer, and others of his ilk, will dispute. He argues that the government is much better suited to determine what is best for children. Therefore the government, rather than parents, should have ultimate control over education.



So what answer does Gilles give?

The flaw in this approach is its blithe assumption that state agencies, and above all courts, will expertly and disinterestedly pursue the best interests of children. A moment's reflection will show that courts are neither as well-placed as parents to discern the child's best interests nor as interested in ensuring that the child's welfare is in fact advanced. Unlike parents, judges will never have the time or the day-to-day contact necessary to acquire an intimate understanding of the procession of children who would come before them. Nor will they have to live with the many-faceted ramifications of their childrearing decisions.

God has crafted a wonderful way to raise children that the government simply won't be able to improve on. Parents have much more at stake in the well-being of their children than any employee of the government. Parents know their children much better and will have to endure the consequences of any bad decisions they make. In other words, the incentive for parents to watch out for the best interests of their children is infinitely higher than any social worker, teacher, or judge. That's why it is absurd to suggest that these public employees are better at determining the best interests of the children.

Nevertheless, theorists like Dwyer write as though teachers and judges are best suited to determine what's good for children. Really? Gilles will have none of it:

I find it naive to describe the run of state employees in such idealistic terms, let alone to believe that they will more often be better judges of a child's best interests than that child's parents. State agency personnel may spend years thinking about what is best for children – but parents spend decades *doing* what they think is best for their own children, and living with the consequences. Parents are far

more likely to get it right, even if they have fewer course-credits in child development or education theory.

### WHICH ADULTS?

Because children are young and immature, they need to be under the authority of adults. People like Dwyer who claim to be promoting children's rights are not suggesting that the children be allowed to determine their own best interests. They just want the determination of best interest to be done by government employees rather than parents. Gilles notes that this is an issue of who has authority in the lives of children:

Thus, the question is not whether our childrearing regime will entail other-determining governance of children by adults; it is *which* adults will enjoy the freedom to engage in this other-determining behavior.

That's how we need to present the issue: *which* adult will do the job best. When the government treads on parental toes we need to ask, "Are you trying to say that you think a government employee working 9-5 is a better parent for my child than me?"

### THEY'LL WANT TO EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF "HARM"

Historically, Anglo-American nations have recognized parental rights, with the only limits on these rights involving the rare instances where parents harm the children.

So if the State can only act when a child is being harmed, we can predict what statisticians will do – they'll want to greatly expand what we view as harm. So, for example, Dwyer hates conservative Christianity and what it stands for. Thus he argues that teaching children certain Christian doctrines is harmful. What are these harmful doctrines? Dwyer believes that teaching children that sex is only for married couples harms those children because it restricts their freedom. He also believes teaching girls that women have different roles than men is harmful. So he wants

the government to prevent parents from teaching conservative Christian tenets to their children...to protect the children from "harm."


As Christians we need to highlight the sheer arbitrariness of Dwyer's definition of harm. We need to highlight that he is simply defining as harmful that with which he disagrees.

In fact, Dwyer's proposal has clear totalitarian implications, as Gilles points out:

If the government can forbid parents and teachers to communicate any message it decides (based on value-laden and highly debatable criteria) is "harmful to children," then the government can control the transmission of ideas to future generations.

### CONCLUSION

Prof. Gilles has shown us what to watch out for, and how to present well-reasoned argumentation for defending parental rights in education. Since parents have such powerful incentives to promote their children's best interests, it is clear that they should have virtually unhindered authority over their children. Government employees and institutions never have as much at stake in the well-being of children as the children's parents. A tiny number of parents occasionally abusing their authority do not undermine this fact.

To think that government employees will make better decisions about children than parents is naïve at best. And to use an anti-Christian ideological concept of harm to determine what children should be taught, clearly leads to a totalitarian government. Parentalism, as Prof. Gilles calls it, is much more reasonable and consistent with freedom than the statist perspective of the left-wing intellectuals. 

*Dr. Michael Wagner is the author of Standing on Guard for Thee: The Past, Present and Future of Canada's Christian Right*



# PARENTS: DO YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE GENTLE?

by Jay Younts

**A** gentle response to an angry or defiant act seems weak and out of place. The Holy Spirit has a different perspective:

A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger.  
– Proverbs 15:1

The Hebrew word for gentle here means the quality of being tender, soft, delicate in substance. This is not exactly the first response that comes to mind when someone you know or your teenager opposes you. There are two natural responses when this happens. Both are equally wrong and destructive.

The first is to fight fire with fire, to let others know you won't stand for their behavior. The second is to be hurt and withdraw either in fear or humiliation. But the Holy Spirit says to offer a gentle answer. The goal here is to soothe and comfort that listener (see Ephesians 4:29). An angry response only serves to inflict pain and encourage even more upset. This is what is meant by a harsh word stirring up anger.

Once again we see that God's ways are not our ways.

When your teenager approaches you in anger, the Holy Spirit urges you to respond with the power of gentleness. It is his fruit, his way. It takes great courage to put aside the defensive response of anger or hurt and instead extend the love of Christ to one who, at that moment, is unlovely.

"It's not right! I never get to do what I want. You think you know everything!"

"No, I don't know everything. I do know that I have managed to provoke your anger. That is not what I want. You know I can't agree to what you want, but maybe I can understand what I have done to anger you. Will you help me do that?"

"What is this? Some new way to get me to do what you want? No way, I'm not falling for it."

"The offer is genuine. I should have realized earlier how much doing this meant to you. Help me work through this with you. Let's talk about how we can make things different."

"Easy for you to say, you still get to

control me and I don't get anything! Things never change."

"I don't want to control you.

Let's work together to avoid what is happening now. I should have come to you sooner instead of telling you no at the last minute. Please forgive me for all of the times that I have been angry with you in the past and for raising my voice at you. I was wrong."

"Are you really serious?"

"I am."

"Let me think about it."

"No problem. I am here to talk whenever you want to."

Was the immediate issue solved? No. Is the teenager still angry? Yes. But her anger was not increased. There is still work to do. But, in faith and with courage, a new path of reconciliation and restoration is now open because a gentle, soft answer turns away wrath. **RP**

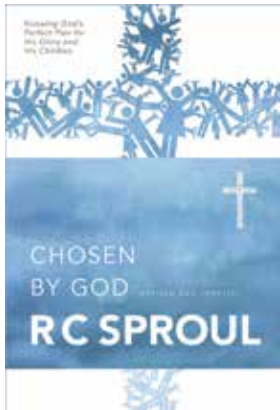
*Jay Younts is the author of Everyday Talk and blogs at ShepherdPress.com where this first appeared. It is reprinted here with permission.*

# REVIEWS

## READABLE THEOLOGY

### CHOSEN BY GOD

BY R.C. SPROUL  
1986 / 187 PAGES



While most Christians joyfully acknowledge God's sovereignty in His *providence* – His protective care – many are less eager to embrace His sovereignty in *salvation*. With some this is because they fear losing man's free will; others fear losing our sense of responsibility for our *response* to God's grace; and others want God to woo us rather than compel us.

R.C. Sproul's book deals with all these concerns. Each of the first eight chapters explores aspects of God's sovereignty, and ends with a summary of the ideas argued and a list of at least four supporting Biblical passages.

Several of those chapters deal with significant connections within the doctrine of predestination – like between *Adam's Fall and Mine*, between *Rebirth and Faith*, and between God's *Foreknowledge and Predestination*.

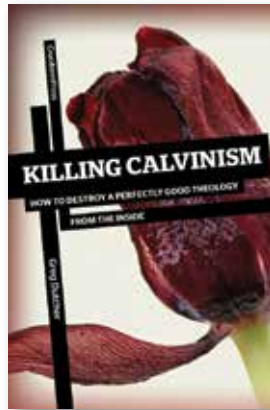
The eighth chapter deals with possibly the most personal of the five points of Calvinism, the perseverance of the saints, whether you can really know that you are saved – renaming it the preservation of the saints to highlight both God's sovereignty and His steadfast mercy.

The final chapter, dealing with questions and objections, ends with Sproul's invitation to open "our eyes to see God's beauty" in His sovereign love for His people. May our eyes be so opened!

– JEFF DYKSTRA

### KILLING CALVINISM

BY GREG DUTCHER  
2012, 111 PAGES



In *Killing Calvinism* Greg Dutcher warns us that being, or becoming, enthusiastically Reformed has its dangers. What makes Dutcher's cautions so effective is that he is humble enough to confess that his embrace of Calvinist theology has not always led to greater humility – something that we also can be guilty of.

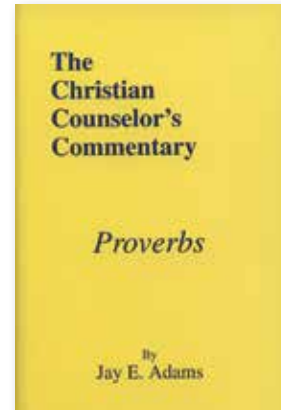
For instance, one issue that Dutcher deals with has also been raised in many Reformed churches recently – the need to renew our love for the lost. Another problem he mentions, that I have seen lately on Facebook and other social media, is our approach to non-Calvinists – scoffing at their hang-ups with Calvinism rather than lovingly seeking to understand the reasons for their resistance and deal with them "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

The above challenges are only two of the eight ways Dutcher shows how Calvinists often discredit the Biblical truth of Reformed theology (or, as the book's subtitle puts it, this is how we are destroying "a perfectly good theology from the inside"). Each of the eight main chapters invites further self-examination through a prayer that God will work in our hearts a willingness to truly love our neighbour and glorify God in our Calvinism.

– JEFF DYKSTRA

### PROVERBS

BY JAY E. ADAMS  
1997 / 231 PAGES



I grew up with a set of Calvin's *Commentaries* at my disposal for my Young People's essays. This was quite the blessing, because Calvin's thoughts were reliable and insightful. But they weren't all that *readable*. For the longest time I thought that was just the way commentaries were – formal, and formidable – but when I came across Jay Adams' "Christian Counselor's Commentary" series I learned otherwise. Adams is solidly Reformed, his insights reliable, and his commentary readable enough that it can be used for personal devotions.

The full text of Proverbs is included, which allows readers to take just the one book with them if they want to do a little study at the local coffee shop or park. This portability is a nice bonus.

Adams is best known as the "father of biblical counseling." Forty-five years ago he reminded the church that looking after our spiritually weak and wounded is our job, and not to be off-loaded to secular psychologists and psychiatrists.

Proverbs is a book of particular value to this work; it is in some ways the "owner's manual" for mankind. Adams ably shows how much wisdom – how much love – God has packed into each one of these proverbs. Help can be found here, and helpers equipped. I highly recommend this to elders, and also to anyone who wants a readable, reliable, Reformed commentary.

– JON DYKSTRA



## SONG OF SONGS: THE GREATEST LOVE SONG

BY MATTHEW H. VANLUIK

210 PAGES / 2015

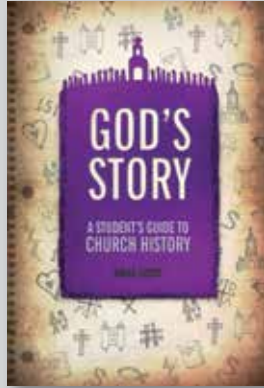


One of the greatest challenges today for both adolescents and adults in Christ's kingdom is the world's idolatrous focus on sex. As much as we need to tear down this idol, it's just as important to work on the positive side of the issue – learning the responsibilities and rewards of Biblically guided intimacy. That is the goal of this book, a strongly Biblical, Christ-centered view of the Song of Songs that shows the ups and downs of love and marriage, both the day-to-day necessity to give of ourselves and the beauty of indeed being and becoming one flesh.

The 16 chapters of this book take us from the couple's initial attraction, through struggling with desire, through their wedding day and night, to marital conflict and reconciliation. At each stage, VanLuik also repeatedly demonstrates that one cannot have a truly fulfilling marriage without a living love for Christ, and stresses what is even more important, how the relationship portrayed in the Song parallels how the perfect love of Christ for His bride calls for His people's passionate response (whether single or married).

A great resource for parents, teachers, and preachers who don't want to simply skip the reading and study of the Song, but actually want to confront the foolishness of our sex-obsessed culture with the wisdom of God.

- JEFF DYKSTRA



## GOD'S STORY: A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO CHURCH HISTORY

BRIAN COSBY

144 PAGES / 2014

This small book is an introduction to church history written for students at the high school level. The author is the pastor of a conservative Presbyterian church in Tennessee. Therefore the book is written from a position that strongly favors Reformed theology.

Not everything could be fit in between the covers – Dutch Reformed history is largely skipped over,

and some significant documents such as the Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Solemn League and Covenant fail to get even a mention. Nevertheless, considering the brevity of the book, it does a remarkable job of covering major events and issues.

There is also an emphasis on how the church today has benefited from the faithful efforts of past Christians. For example, after describing the struggle against powerful heresies in the early centuries of the church Cosby writes,

We, today, often take for granted the doctrine of the Trinity as it is so nicely defined and articulated (e.g. Nicene Creed). But this came at a price – the defense of biblical doctrine against a raging set of heretical views. We stand on the shoulders of these men who have given the church a rich heritage of theology, faith, and passion for truth.

Of course, attention is paid to the growth of the papacy and gradual corruption of doctrine, the rise of Islam, and the split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054. Interestingly, when Islam conquered the city of Constantinople in 1453, Eastern Orthodox scholars headed to Western Europe, bringing with them Greek New Testament manuscripts.

In his chapter on the Continental Reformation, Cosby refers to John Calvin as “arguably the greatest and most significant theologian in church history.”

One of the most helpful aspects of the book is its analysis of the nineteenth century and how four particular movements originating in that century continue to plague the church today:

- 1) extra-biblical revivalism
- 2) liberalism
- 3) cults, and
- 4) evolution

Under the category of extra-biblical revivalism, Cosby includes doctrinal currents such as the views of the influential evangelist Charles Finney (who had a defective doctrine of original sin) and a new method of interpretation called Dispensationalism, which became dominant among evangelicals in the early twentieth century. Dispensationalism is the source of the popular concept of the “rapture.”

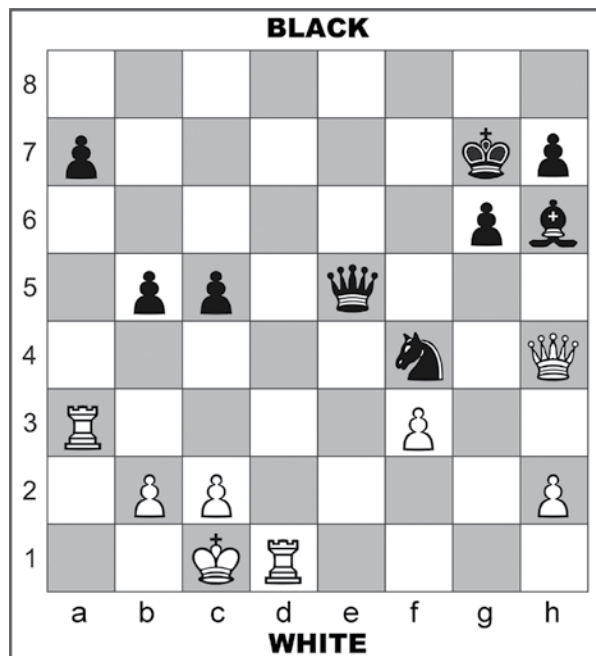
The nineteenth century also witnessed the development of liberal theology. The liberal heresy had a destructive impact throughout the West, starting early in the twentieth century. As for cults, both the Mormon and Jehovah's Witness heresies were invented in the US during the 1800s. And, of course, the theory of evolution spread like wildfire throughout the West following the publication of Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* in 1859.

In sum, this is a short but effective introduction to church history and the developments that have set the stage for our circumstances today.

- MICHAEL WAGNER

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #230



**WHITE to Mate in 4**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 2**

## Riddle for Punsters #230

### "Belabouring the Labour?"

Why did the car mechanic walk so stiffly?

He w\_\_\_\_\_d his back at work.

Why did the plumber look so tired?

He found his work quite d\_\_\_\_\_g. I s\_\_\_\_\_ he will soon need to change jobs.

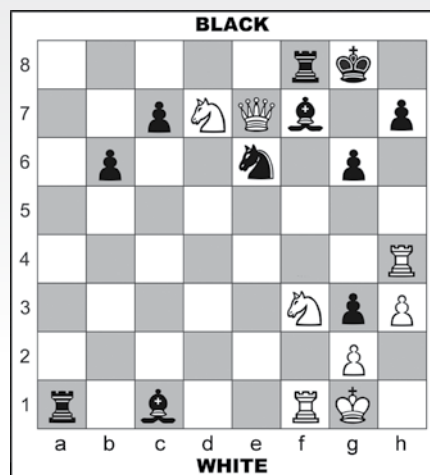
## Problem to Ponder #230

### "Food for Thought-fullness?"

A charity was selling tickets to a gala dinner as a fundraiser. Adult tickets cost \$12 and each child's ticket cost \$7. How many of each type of ticket were sold if the total ticket sales was \$644 and the number of adult tickets sold was 22 more than the number of child tickets?

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #229



**WHITE TO MATE IN 2**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. N-B6ch K-N2
2. RxP mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Nd7-f6 + Kg8-g7
2. Rh4xh7 ++

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- B-K6 ch
2. K-R1 RxR ch
3. N-N1 RxN mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Bc1-e3 +
2. Kg1-h1 Ra1xf1 +
3. Nf3-g1 Rf1xg1 ++

### Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#### #229 - "Stating it Plainly?"

Why did the airline passenger start to complain? He said that the airline fares were no longer fair to the customers but were too elevated and he was wheel-ly tired of it.

### Answer to Problem to Ponder

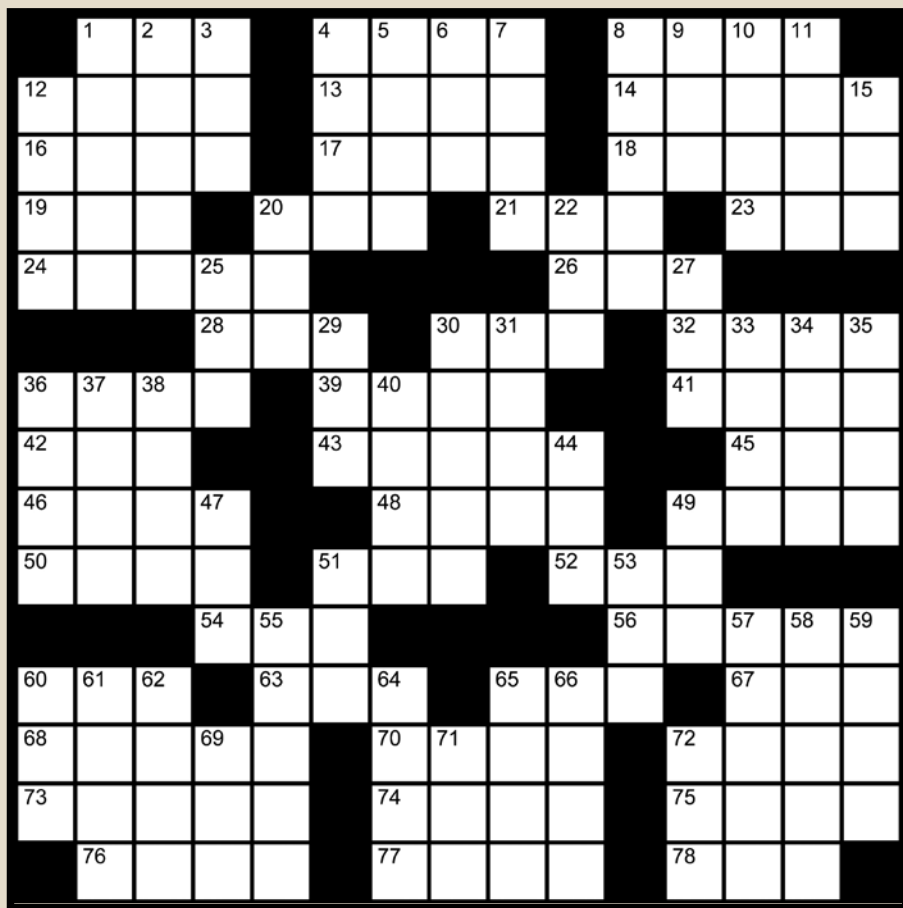
#### #229 - "A Challenge for MAN and woMAN alike?"

A very large house	<u>mansion</u>
An order or law or statute	<u>commandment</u>
Insist	<u>demand</u>
An official purpose or goal(s)	<u>mandate</u>
More than a few	<u>many</u>
Creature created in God's image	<u>human</u>
Necessary or required	<u>mandatory</u>
Administer or supervise	<u>manage</u>
Scruffy or scraggly looking	<u>mangy</u>
Twist out of shape, distort	<u>mangle</u>
Shelf on top of a fireplace	<u>mantle</u>
Soon to happen	<u>immanent</u>

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

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 2-7

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. "men to \_\_\_\_ out the land" (Num. 13)
4. "he will crush your \_\_\_\_" (Gen. 3)
8. Large piece broken off a larger piece
12. Admirable main character of story
13. About 40% of a hectare
14. Gas with groups of three oxygen atoms
16. "rain fell \_\_\_\_ the earth" (Gen. 7)
17. "he \_\_\_\_ his clothes" (Gen. 37)
18. "he \_\_\_\_ on... the wind" (Ps. 104)
19. Machine for separating cotton fibers
20. Clock that's Big in Britain
21. Unit of radiation absorption
23. "\_\_\_\_ out to go to... Canaan" (Gen. 12)
24. Epic cycles of tales, especially Norse ones
26. "but a \_\_\_\_ years until" (Lev.

- 25)
28. "they weave the spider's \_\_\_\_" (Is. 59)
30. Choose (to or for)
32. "You are not \_\_\_\_ to do it..." (Ex. 18)
36. "enough dew... to fill a \_\_\_\_" (Judges 6)
39. Actually, U.S. blacks not all \_\_\_\_-Americans.
41. "These also \_\_\_\_ with wine" (Is. 28)
42. Exclamation of disgust or startled pain
43. Alex \_\_\_\_: author of *Roots*
45. "eyes of Israel... dim with \_\_\_\_" (Gen. 48)
46. Defect in design
48. Abnormally deep sleep
49. Smallest unit of a chemical element
50. Greek cheese variety (of a mixed fate?)
51. Which comes first – egg or \_\_\_\_?
52. Tom \_\_\_\_: silent movie cowboy killed in 1940

54. Female and French abbreviation for *Saint*
56. "beams and planks of \_\_\_\_" (1 Kings 6)
60. Belonging to Mother
63. "of what \_\_\_\_ is a birth-right...?" (Gen. 25)
65. Something to make while the sun shines
67. Ruined medieval Armenian city in Turkey
68. "Airier" font than Times New Roman
70. Meaty part of the calf
72. Glove worn by a catcher
73. Health-giving but stinky Malaysian bean
74. Latin for *therefore*
75. Great Lake (the one that sounds spooky?)
76. Abbreviated synonym of "Stat" or "Move it"
77. Tear down (but sounds like its opposite)
78. Big Apple (abbreviation)

### LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



### SERIES 2-6

### DOWN

1. Reddish-brown color of old photographs
2. One fork of a fork
3. Over there (archaically put)
4. Intense dislike
5. Abbreviation for business course
6. Pirate's cry
7. Prime source for venison meat
8. Gigantic mass of people
9. Israeli submachine gun
10. Shows consent, agreement, or fatigue
11. "every \_\_\_\_ should bow" (Philippians 2)
12. They can be both tender and crushing.
15. Abbreviation on corner-stone plaque
20. Scientific abbreviation for mad cow disease
22. Toward the back (said the stern captain?)
25. Ear-piercing tool (Ex. 21)
27. "The LORD is a man of \_\_\_\_" (Ex. 15)
29. Start of dismissive remark from Scrooge
30. Acrylic fiber developed by Dupont in 1940s
31. "I think that I shall never see / A \_\_\_\_ as..."
33. "loud \_\_\_\_ the horses' hoofs" (Judges 5)
34. Classic Danish toy big in construction

35. Short form for pre-secondary school
36. Very muscular (part of *buffalo* description?)
37. Look leeringly
38. "\_\_\_\_ have you done?" (Gen. 4)
40. "why has your \_\_\_\_ fallen?" (Gen. 4)
44. That is one sweet potato!
47. Past tense of is
49. Start of bad *accident*, say (Deut. 19)
51. "\_\_\_\_ kidding, right?" "No, \_\_\_\_ serious."
53. Covered with frozen water
55. Doctrinal acronym for Calvinism
57. Milky way of treating cows
58. Extreme prank
59. Ceremony (partly a *ritual*?)
60. Old-school alternative to GPS
61. "\_\_\_\_ of influence" (2 Cor. 10)
62. "who \_\_\_\_ on his throne" (Ex. 11)
63. Always; constantly; at any time
65. "You secret, ...midnight \_\_\_\_!" (*Macbeth*)
66. Plant bearing a soothing substance
69. Small battery or big US automobile association
71. Historical period
72. "were... mighty \_\_\_\_ of old" (Gen. 6)





# God<sup>and</sup> GOVERNMENT

## EVENT 2016

**T**his May, ARPA Canada will host our signature event, the 5th biennial God & Government conference in Ottawa. The events are held **MAY 9-11** and bring together delegates from across Canada.

*This is no ordinary conference! ARPA's God & Government event stands out from anything else like it in Canada.*

### TOPICS

EUTHANASIA  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
PARENTAL AUTHORITY  
ABORTION  
PROSTITUTION AND PORNOGRAPHY  
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS  
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION  
TAKING ON GOLIATH

### CONFERENCE DETAILS:

#### ARRIVAL

Arrive and check-in at the hotel anytime after 3:00 pm on Monday, May 9. Drop by the ARPA Canada office to register and for a time of socializing.

#### CONFERENCE

The first half of Tuesday and Wednesday will be for training, equipping and strategizing through presentations and workshops. The second half of each day will be devoted to lobbying on Parliament Hill to meet with MPs, Senators, Cabinet ministers and staffers. Begin booking your meetings now! You are encouraged to tour Parliament and the Supreme Court, attend question period or sit in on various parliamentary committee meetings.

#### BANQUET

Tuesday evening we will come together for a banquet dinner and keynote presentation by Rev. Dr. Joe Boot, the presentation of the Salt & Light Volunteer of the Year award and entertainment.

#### MARCH FOR LIFE

The conference officially ends on Wednesday at 6:30 pm after a final wrap-up session with delegates and staff. You may opt to stay an extra night for the Reformed Prayer Service and March for Life on Thursday, May 12. A movie screening will be made available for those staying the third night.

#### FUNDRAISING TIPS

*For those travelling from outside Ottawa, we recognize you'll have added costs (such as flights or fuel) that are not covered in your registration cost. You may want to consider asking for a sponsor to help offset your costs. If you need more ideas, or are still unable to send delegates due to travel costs, please contact:*

Niki@ARPA CANADA.ca

#### COST

Early-bird prices (by March 18):  
Conference only: \$200  
Conference & March for Life: \$250

1-866-691-2772  
INFO@ARPACANADA.CA  
130 ALBERT STREET, SUITE 2010,  
OTTAWA, ON K1P 5G4



TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:  
**ARPA CANADA.ca/GG2016**