

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JULY/AUGUST 2017  
Volume 36 Issue No. 5

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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# WILL THE ISLAMIC STATE DISAPPEAR?

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by Jon Dykstra

# WHAT IF SPEEDING TICKETS WERE PAID TO CHARITIES?

As Kuyper said, “There is not one square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

And that applies to photo radar too.

In Colorado efforts are underway to put a very unusual initiative on the ballot that, if passed, would require that fines issued by the government no longer go to the government. Instead, if a citizen gets a speeding ticket, a parking ticket, or a fine for smoking, he would pay it by making a donation to any registered charity (though, presumably, he wouldn’t get a charitable receipt).

That might have some charities excited, but that’s really beside the point. The ballot initiative’s organizers aren’t as

concerned with where the money *would* go, as they are with where the money *wouldn’t go anymore*. To say it another way, the goal of the initiative is to take away any incentive the government has to, as *FEE.org*’s Jay Stooksberry put it, “fine and collect” rather than “serve and protect.”

## A STRANGE INCENTIVE

This initiative comes after the media reported some Colorado municipalities were funding a large part of their budget

via fines. The most extreme example was the small town of Mountain View, population 518, whose 10 police officers issued 3,624 traffic tickets in 2014. In 2013 traffic fines raised over \$600,000 for the town, *which accounted for more than half the municipal budget*.

It’s hard to find such egregious examples in Canada, but here too this strange incentive is in place. So, for example, Edmonton’s Anthony Henday Drive is a ring road around the city with smooth wide lanes, and no stoplights.

The speed limit is 100 kilometers per hour, but even the city's police chief Rod Knecht thinks the limit could be raised to 110 km/h without any serious safety concerns. So why doesn't the city do it? We can't read minds so we don't know. But the city does have a financial incentive not to raise the limit: the revenue from the thousands of photo radar speeding tickets issued on this stretch of road each year.

Some might not see the problem. So what if the city makes a little money from the fines it issues? Do we really think they will be corrupted by such sums?

There are two issues here: does such a system *encourage* corruption, and whether it does or not, how does the public *perceive* it?

### IT JUST LOOKS BAD

Consider what we would think if a judge received the money from all the fines he issued. Every time he found someone guilty, he'd make money, and the bigger the fine, the bigger the judge's bank account. Would the public perceive such a judge as being impartial? Or would they question his every decision?

The judge might still *be* impartial – such a system doesn't *require* corruption, it only *encourages* it – but that's not how he would be perceived.

The man behind Colorado's ballot initiative describes himself as a libertarian, and it's not clear whether he is a Christian. But his proposal lines up well with what we see Paul doing in 2 Cor. 8:20-21. There the apostle, when he was entrusted with money from the churches to be sent to Jerusalem, outlines steps he was taking to prevent even suspicions of wrongdoing. He wanted to ensure that there would be no way his actions could be misperceived.

This ballot initiative is a great way of addressing the perception that photo radar, jaywalking tickets, red light cameras, and other fines are simply "cash cows" for government. Law enforcement should be about protection and justice, and we should do all we can to ensure that it is also perceived that way. That's why such an initiative would help foster respect for our officers and government.

### NOT AN EXCUSE FOR SLANDER

Of course, if you and your lead foot have just been caught exceeding the

posted limit then there is a very different way you can foster respect for those in authority: you've done the crime so don't complain about the officer issuing the fine. Or, to put it in more biblical terms: you shouldn't concern yourself with any *perceived* speck in their eyes when you've clearly got a big log to deal with in your own.


SOURCE: Alexa Corcoran's "Handful of Colorado Towns Rely Heavily on Money from Traffic Tickets" posted to RMPBS.org on Oct. 12, 2016; Jay Stooksberry's "Colorado Challenges Police to Serve and Protect, Not Fine and Collect" posted to FEE.org on June 22, 2017



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# NOTA BENE

News  
worth  
noting

## PREGNANT STUDENT BANNED FROM GRAD WALK – DID BOTH SIDES GET IT HALF RIGHT, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, WRONG?

BY NATHAN ZEKVELD



**S**hould a pregnant student be allowed to walk with her class at graduation? That wouldn't even be a question in any secular school, but it became a matter of nationwide debate when a private Christian school in Hagerstown, Maryland – Heritage Academy – decided they wouldn't allow 18-year-old, former head of the student council, and straight-A student Maddie Runkles to walk with the rest of her class because she had gotten pregnant outside of marriage, a violation of the student code of conduct.

In an interview on *CBS This Morning* Maddie admitted that she knew

there would be consequences, but she felt like the punishment was too harsh – she had already publicly confessed her sin to the school body. In another interview with the *Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN)* Maddie said she didn't want the debate to become such a far-spread discussion. But she is ready to use this platform to help those going through the same struggles.

Pro-life groups have defended Maddie Runkles, and have challenged the school for shaming a girl who made a courageous decision, saying it sends the wrong message to other students in a similar situation. Their

concern is that if students are made to feel like they will be shamed for being pregnant, then they might take the “easier” way out, and secretly abort their children instead.

Hertiage Academy's Principal Hobbs originally responded with a letter stating: “Maddi is being disciplined, not because she's pregnant, but because she was immoral.” He concluded: “The Board has listened to three appeals from the Runkles family and compromised all three times.” Of course, the board has maintained their decision that she is not allowed to walk at graduation, and this is the source for the fight.

In an article she wrote for the *Washington Post*, Maddie described how the attention from the national media caused the situation to escalate. People who used to be supportive then started telling her to shut-up. Both sides began to dig in their heels.

Maddie seems oblivious to the fact that the journalists at the *Washington Post* don't really care about her or the school. When the media gives this much attention to a fight like this, they are only doing what the world loves to do: fostering dissension and disharmony among Christians.

In this entire debate we see two major issues that need to be addressed. First, sexual immorality is serious. Second, we are all in need of grace. The school seems to be emphasizing the seriousness of sexual immorality at the expense of grace. Maddie Runkles seems to be emphasizing grace at the expense of the seriousness of sexual immorality. Maybe the school should rethink the way they respond to sexual immorality. They should think about how sin is cultivated among the students, and then challenge that culture. They could also be providing counseling and training on these issues. Maybe they should even rethink disciplinary methods without, of course, giving them up. Maddie should accept the discipline – not being allowed to walk is a big deal, but is it important enough to bring your school, and even your faith, into disrepute on a national scale (1 Cor. 6:1-7)?

## MUNDANE EVIL DOES BANKING GIANT IN

BY MARK REIMERS

**A** chorus of media and government voices, as well as business analysts, began questioning the continued viability of banking giant Wells Fargo in July. This is in response to a class-action lawsuit filed against it over bogus auto insurance charges to an estimated 570,000 customers.

The *New York Times* reported that the company has already agreed to refund an estimated \$80 million of the charges. But, as Roland Tellis, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, explained, this doesn't yet address "the fraud or inflated premiums, the delinquency charges, and the late fees." The *Times* estimated 20,000 vehicles related to the bogus charges were repossessed by Wells Fargo. Any hopes shareholders have that Wells Fargo will weather this lawsuit are overshadowed by the \$185 million settlement the

bank just reached with regulators in September. That scandal involved an estimated 2.1 million bogus accounts created in customers' names without their permission – created allegedly so employees could meet sales goals.

That raises questions about a problem with the bank's "culture." This was not a few bad apples but company-wide corruption.

Scripture teaches us to not be surprised by lawlessness. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." But sometimes we forget to break it down to its barest components and apply it to all of life. Lawlessness is a disregard



for standards, laws, and even truth itself. With self-made standards, each does what is right in his own eyes; every sin is permissible if one can avoid the consequences.

We would do well to remember that lawlessness isn't just the crime-rate in Chicago or Hamilton. It is not just the measure of government corruption or the redefinition of justice. Lawlessness can be a dishonest report drafted in an air-conditioned cubicle.

## WHY EUTHANASIA RESTRICTIONS FAIL: "SAFEGUARDS" BECOME "BARRIERS TO ACCESS"

BY JON DYKSTRA



**C**anada's doctor-assisted suicide law is barely a year old, and already the safeguards in it are being challenged. The most recent challenge was this June when two Montrealers – Jean Truchon, 49, and Nicole Gladu, 71 – who have degenerative diseases but don't seem anywhere near death, went to the courts to ask that euthanasia no longer be limited to only those for whom death is "reasonably

foreseeable." As *Mercatornet's* Aubert Martin noted, their lawyer is arguing that this safeguard is actually a "barrier to access."

Does that terminology strike you? One man's *safeguard* is another's *barrier* to access?

Here is our country's problem in a nutshell: our government no longer views death as an enemy to be fought, but rather a treatment to be offered. So we can talk safeguards all we want, but if assisted suicide is mercy, why would we withhold mercy from some? Why would we set up these "barriers to access"?

In turning our back on God's law and his unchanging, fixed standards, we are not only rejecting what's eternal, but leaving ourselves with only the ephemeral. Instead of absolutes, our law is now based on opinions.

And opinions can be changed. So yes, right now minors can't

request assisted suicide. But how long before some 16 or 17-year-old, or maybe even a 5-year-old, asks why we've put up barriers to his access. If death can be merciful for an 18-year-old, why would we deny that mercy to a 5-year-old? Another "safeguard" is that a person needs to be "capable and consenting." But this excludes anyone with Alzheimer's, and will the public stand firm when they're asked: "Why are you withholding this treatment – why are you putting up barriers to access – for these poor people?"

The warning cry Christians need to share with the world is this: it's either God's way or chaos. Either we recognize that *all* life is valuable or we won't be able to find a good, fixed, unchallengeable, reason to stop *anyone* from committing suicide.

SOURCE: Aubert Martin's "Euthanasia: the slippery slope sold as desired progress – When 'safeguards' become 'barriers to access'" posted to *Mercatornet.com* on July 4, 2017

## FAKE NEWS: MEDIA CLAIMS THE BIBLE GOT IT WRONG ABOUT SOMETHING IT NEVER SAYS

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**n late July newspapers and other media outlets published articles about how a recent find had disproven the Bible. *The Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *Express*, the *Daily Mail* and other outlets told readers:

- "Study disproves the Bible's suggestion that the ancient Canaanites were wiped out"
- "Bible says Canaanites were wiped out by Israelites but scientists just found their descendants living in Lebanon"
- "The Bible was WRONG: Civilisation God ordered to be KILLED still live and kicking"
- "Bronze Age DNA disproves the Bible's claim that the Canaanites were wiped out: Study says their genes live on in modern-day Lebanese people"

The story even made it into at least one Chinese website under the title:

"Is the Bible wrong? Gene evidence that the blood of Canaanites is still flowing in the Lebanese"

So what was it that the Bible was supposed to have gotten wrong?

The articles reported on the work of Chris Tyler-Smith and an international team of geneticists and archeologists who had dug up bones from five ancient Canaanite bodies, estimated to be more than 3,600 years old. The bones contained enough DNA for them to make comparisons to the genomes of 99 living Lebanese. They found that the modern-day Lebanese shared about 93 per cent of their ancestry with these ancient Canaanites. In other words, the ancient Canaanites live on in the Lebanese.

But, according to the researchers that contradicted God's order to Israel (Deut 20:17) to completely wipe out the Canaanites. As the researchers wrote:

The Bible reports the destruction of the Canaanite cities and the annihilation of its people; if true, the Canaanites could not have directly contributed genetically to present-day populations...

How could there be modern day Canaanites, if God ordered them all killed? After all, if God told Israel to do something, they *always* did it, right?

The media wanted to expose the Bible's inaccuracies, but only exposed their own biblical illiteracy. Yes, Israel was ordered to wipe out the Canaanites but they disobeyed again and again. One example occurs in Judges 1:21:

But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

The rest of the chapter is an account of Israel's disobedience, and how the Canaanites lived on. So these new findings don't *disprove* the Bible, but even *compliment* it.

A day or two after it was first published *The Telegraph* article was corrected. And *The Daily Mail* piece, despite a headline that claimed, "Bronze Age DNA disproves the Bible's claim," acknowledged near the end that it did no such thing. But who reads more than the headlines these days? And who re-reads an article days after it first hits the web? This devilish attack has already done its damage.

So what can we do to counter this type of attack? We need to expose the media's biblical illiteracy and their journalistic incompetence by sharing rebuttals like this one.

There is an old journalism saying that "if it bleeds it leads." Stories like this one show that whether they say it out loud or not, there is another credo many reporters live by: "If it is a bible attack, we won't worry if it is fact."

SOURCES: Ian Johnston's "Bible says Canaanites were wiped out by Israelites but scientists just found their descendants living in Lebanon" posted to TheIndependent.co.uk on July 27, 2017; Shivali Best's "Bronze Age DNA disproves the Bible's claim that the Canaanites were wiped out: Study says their genes live on in modern-day Lebanese people" posted to DailyMail.co.uk on July 28, 2017; Chen Rulin's "Is the Bible wrong? Gene evidence that the blood of the Canaanites is still flowing on the Lebanese" posted to TechNews.tw on July 31, 2017

## CREATIONIST GROUP TAKING BACK THE RAINBOW

BY JON DYKSTRA

**K**en Ham and the folks at the creationist organization Answers in Genesis want to take the rainbow back. The group has built a life-size replica of Noah's Ark in the state of Kentucky, and in July they announced that they would illuminate it at night with a display of rainbow lights.

Nowadays the rainbow is mostly closely associated with the homosexual movement, but it wasn't always so. The rainbow was first used as a sign by God after He covered the world in water in the Flood. Then, after saving Noah and his family, He made a covenant with them and told Noah:

I set My [rain]bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth....and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh (Genesis 9:13-15).





## THREE PROBLEMS WITH TRANSGENDER SURGERIES

BY JON DYKSTRA

**T**his summer Pullman Regional Hospital in eastern Washington State announced they might offer transgender surgeries and asked the public for feedback. They got hundreds of responses.

On the one side there was the editorial staff of *The Daily Evergreen*, a student paper at the nearby Washington State University. In a June 14 editorial they argued for the surgeries, but against the public consultation.

"The public is not qualified to make decisions on a 'very complex procedure'....These decisions should be left to trained medical professionals and based on the availability of resources and the needs of the patient."

Among those on the other side was Christ Church pastor Douglas Wilson. In an open letter also posted to his church website he explained the Christian position in a manner so clear it's of benefit to both Christians and non-Christians alike.

### Three problems

These surgeries, he wrote, would be, "misguided, unethical, and wrong" and involve "complexities that we are manifestly not prepared for."

#### 1) Objective vs. subjective

First, the surgery involves the removal of "a perfectly healthy functional organ, doing so in an *irreversible* way." It is "objective damage for the sake of a *subjective* desire." What happens if the patient's feelings change? Such subjective feelings do. But meanwhile the *objective* damage can't be undone.

#### 2) Genital mutilation only for *some*?

If parents can request this surgery for a son or daughter, how would the



hospital respond, Wilson asks, if a couple from the Middle East brought their daughter in for a clitorctomy? This is more commonly called "female circumcision" but it bears no resemblance to male circumcision; it isn't simply a snip of skin that is cut, but a good portion of a woman's external genitals. It is often done for the specific purpose of reducing or eliminating a woman's pleasure during sex.

"If you refuse because it is 'genital mutilation,' how would you justify this refusal? ....Why is Pullman Regional endorsing the subjective reasoning of someone who is sexually confused while rejecting the subjective reasoning of a culture that is sexually repressed?"

#### 3) Amputation only for *some*?

And what if someone were to ask for the amputation of an arm or leg? This is already happening – there is a group who called themselves "transabled" and though they are able-bodied, they "identify" as being amputees and want the assistance of doctors to cut off limbs, or perhaps become blind. Wilson asks:

"If you are willing to remove healthy organs or limbs for some patients but not others, what standard are you using to discount one subjective preference while endorsing another?"

And in a letter full of memorable illustrations there is one that stands out: "Would you be willing to supply the music department with *castrati*?" Wilson is referring to boys who, in centuries past, were castrated so as to prevent them going through puberty and to preserve their pre-pubescent voices.

"It is easy to retort with an indignant 'of course not!' But *why* not? ....It seems bizarre to us that there was a time when choral music had such a high value that they were willing to sacrifice sex organs for the sake of purity of voice..... And in just the same way, subsequent generations will stare at *us* in disbelief.... We want to cater to a profound emotional, psychological, and spiritual confusion.

### Conclusion

A non-Christian might be able to offer up many of these same arguments, but they couldn't do so while glorifying God. That's a final lesson we can learn from this letter. When God's truth is denied – when a biblical doctrine the likes of "God made them male and female" is attacked – then let us sally forth to defend it as *Christians*. And Wilson does, making it clear that his insight on this issue comes straight from God's Word.

SOURCE: "Letter to the Board of Pullman Regional Hospital" posted to [www.christkirk.com/letter-board-pullman-regional-hospital/](http://www.christkirk.com/letter-board-pullman-regional-hospital/) on July 3, 2017.

## CREATING MORE PRO-LIFE “PROPHET NATHAN MOMENTS”

BY JON DYKSTRA

**I**n the abortion debate one of the big challenges we face is the human ability to turn a blind eye to evil – an ability to harden our hearts. And even among Christians, there is the danger that, when confronted with an ongoing evil, we can become numb. The older generation gets worn out from the decades of fighting, and the younger generation starts wondering why there’s all this fuss about this *one* issue to the seeming exclusion of all others.

So how do we get through? How can we speak the truth about the unborn in a way that breaches defenses, and rekindles passion?

Perhaps the prophet Nathan can show the way.

When faced with a sinner who has no interest in repenting – who was heaping sin upon sin – Nathan approached his king with a dose of creativity (2 Sam. 12). We all know the story – instead of confronting David head-on, he had the king look at his own sin from a new angle. How wicked that sheep stealer was...but how much more wicked a wife-stealer!

In the last few years Reformed Christians in the pro-life movement have been creating their own Prophet Nathan moments, and have crafted

displays that have stopped viewers in their tracks. One memorable example: ARPA Canada helped local groups around the country organize flag displays that, instead of highlighting the bloody horror of abortion, showed the unimaginable size of the yearly slaughter. No gore, just blue and pink ribbons...by the tens of thousands.

A more recent example took place on the University of the Fraser Valley campus earlier this year where a display was put up that, again, put a new twist on the pro-life message. Instead of focusing on the deadly nature of abortion, this event’s artwork celebrated the wonder of pregnancy and new life. And in doing so, it still stirred up opposition, but that opposition had a hard time explaining how they could object to such beautiful life-affirming pictures. Take, for example, Cassidy Van Delft’s *Value of Life*. This is creativity unleashed – she chose to do the work in the style of Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939), a name that won’t be familiar to all, but even those of us who have never visited an art museum can recognize the brilliance and attraction of using a style that is old enough to evoke a sense of the classic, and recent enough to be contemporary. The artist shared:



“What I really hoped to get across in this painting is the impression of life’s beauty, and how that same beauty applies to an unborn baby.”

This is beauty and truth paired, depicting motherhood with power...and in its glory.

The Prophet Nathan’s ability to speak truth creatively is a gift only a select few have. Not all of us can paint; we can’t all think up the next new wrinkle for a pro-life display. But those that can’t, *can* support these efforts. We can help with the setup and the takedown. We can get excited, and point other to the excitement. We can extend the impact by sharing the news on social media.

And those that *can*...should. Creativity unleashed, with God’s blessing, can sidestep people’s defenses, and hit them with the truth when and where they least expect it.



## SESAME STREET TWEETS ITS SUPPORT FOR LGBT MONTH

BY JON DYKSTRA

**U**nder President Obama, June was officially declared the LGBT National Pride Month. Under President Trump this has been discontinued, but unofficial celebrations still took place all over the US (and elsewhere too) including by one group that seems to have done so for the very first time this year. On June 23 the children’s television show Sesame Street released this rainbow-themed tweet that wasn’t about celebrating the Noahic Covenant.



# THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN BEING SAFE AND LEGAL

by Jay Younts

*Keeping the rules won't get us to heaven, but we can lose sight of that when it comes to our kids; we think we're doing a good job, so long as our kids obey our rules. But as Jay Younts shares, that's not our real concern. We want to know, where is their heart at?*

**R**ules and parenting are things that go together. But there is more to life than rules. Rules, by themselves, will not produce spiritual maturity. What rules may do is keep you safe and keep you from breaking laws. But God wants you to have more than that.

## RULES ADDRESS BEHAVIOR

Relying primarily on a set of rules to govern your family is toxic. Paul warns you about being taken captive by the human traditions of this world. Here is his warning found in Colossians 2:8:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Later on in this chapter of Colossians Paul talks about the danger of rules such as: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch" And then he says:

Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

The fact that these rules have some value here on planet earth is what makes them attractive and deadly. However, with

regard to spiritual safety and well-being these rules are of no value at all.


Such rules only require the strength of the flesh to obey. They will not hold back the lusts of the flesh. In fact they will encourage them. Why? Because anything that does not require faith in Christ and humble reliance upon his Spirit leads to pride and failure.

By all means, teach your kids to know when to be quiet, to know and follow the laws of your community and country. But do not rely on these directives for spiritual well-being.

## WE WANT MORE

Simply giving your children rules to be quiet, keep the house clean, don't do drugs, don't have sex, and don't look at pornography is not enough. Loving and living for Christ must come first. Understanding the gospel truth of our deep dependence on Christ is the highest priority.

Rules are deceptive. Keeping them apart from knowing Christ breeds contempt for Christ. Remember the story of the rich young ruler. He kept ALL of the rules but rejected Christ.

Paul pleads with you to live all of your life in dependence upon Christ. Go for more than rules. Go for the heart. 

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





# What Grieving People Wished You Knew

A book to help us understand how to comfort

*reviewed by Rebecca Bredenhof*

**W**e have all struggled with what to say to someone who has lost a loved one. Whether it be at the funeral, waiting to give our condolences, or an encounter with the bereaved at the store or at church, it can be challenging to offer words of comfort that don't sound cliché or inadequate to our ears.

What can we say that will help this person in their grief and sorrow? Sometimes we are at a loss of how we can best help a friend in their season of grief. Too often, we don't think much past the first few months after a death. But grief is a long and difficult journey, and our brothers and sisters in Christ need us to be there for them in this painful time. With *What Grieving People Wish You Knew*, Nancy Guthrie has written a practical guide for those

who want to help their friends and family members who are grieving.

## FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS

Guthrie writes from the perspective of someone who has suffered profound loss, as two of her three children died in infancy. She has experienced firsthand the comfort that thoughtful words and caring deeds can bring, but also the well-meant comments that can unintentionally hurt. To write this book she questioned many grieving people via an online survey, asking them to provide concrete examples of what others had said or done that helped them in the midst of grief, and throughout the book she shares many of these testimonies.

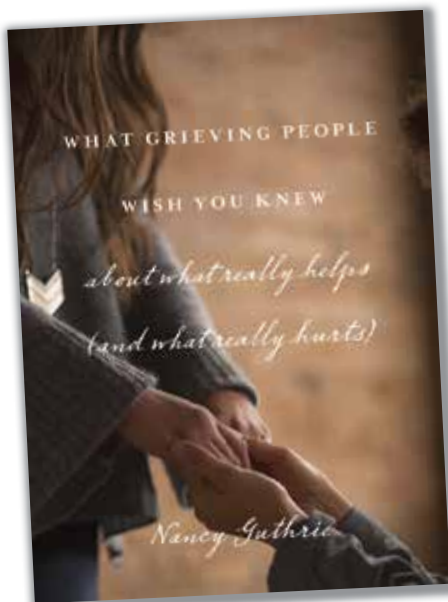
Guthrie gives straightforward advice on what to say, what not to say, what to do, and what not to do. As you read the

chapter "Typical Things People Say" (that miss the mark), you will probably cringe in the realization that you yourself have said some of these things, unaware how insensitive these words may sound to a person raw with grief.

"I know just how you feel" is one example. This statement, though well-meaning, by trying to establish camaraderie through a similar experience, in essence minimizes the other's loss by suggesting that their grief isn't unusual, or unique.

"You'll be fine" is another comment that sounds encouraging enough at face value, but, Guthrie notes, "what the grieving person hears you saying is that the person who died didn't really matter enough for his or her absence to matter." Ouch.

Or have you ever said "Just call me



## WHAT GRIEVING PEOPLE WISH YOU KNEW ABOUT WHAT REALLY HELPS (AND WHAT REALLY HURTS)

BY NANCY GUTHRIE

188 PAGES / 2016

if you need something”? A grieving person is not going to call. They likely don’t even have the headspace to know what they need. A more helpful thing to do is figure out what can be done for them and then do it. Tell them that you’re going to mow their lawn, pick up their groceries, or help them with their taxes. This is putting into action your love and concern for them in their grief.

Even the simple question of “How are you?” can be a tough question for the bereaved to answer. It makes them feel put on the spot to give what is hopefully an acceptable report of how they are really doing.

“The grieving person knows what the questioner most likely wants to hear – that everything is getting better, the world is getting brighter, the darkness is lifting, and the tears are subsiding. But oftentimes that just isn’t the way it is, and it can be awkward to be honest about the confusion, listlessness, and loneliness of grief.”

### WAYS TO COMFORT

What can we say instead? Guthrie’s survey revealed that there are two

*“If I had to boil down the message of this entire book to just two words, these two would probably cover it: show up.”*

particular things that grieving people really want to hear from others, and they are closely connected.

First, they love to hear stories, anecdotes, or things that their loved one said or did that were meaningful, and the more specific the better.

Second, they want to hear the name of the person who died. “Oh, to hear that person’s name. It is like salve to an aching soul, music to a heart that has lost its song.” So, talk with them about their loved one who has passed on! Tell them about the special thing he did for you, the way she was always so encouraging, or the joke he told that you still laugh about. Don’t be uncomfortable about speaking the deceased’s name, for hearing it spoken will bring comfort to those who mourn.

### JUST SHOW UP

Perhaps the most insightful chapter is the one entitled “Assumptions we make that keep us away.” Often people unconsciously distance themselves from the grieving for one reason or another – possibly we’re unsure of what to do or say, or feel we don’t know them well enough, or maybe we assume that the grieving just want to be left alone.

But, as Guthrie writes, “If I had to boil down the message of this entire book to just two words, these two would probably cover it: *show up*.” She encourages us to put aside any awkwardness we might feel and simply show up, and here again she offers many tangible ways of doing so.

Also really helpful is a section about heaven, briefly summarizing what the Bible teaches about it as well as tackling some common misconceptions. Guthrie brings forward the comfort and hope that believers possess, knowing they will be with Christ when they die. She also cautions not to assume the

deceased is in heaven; in such cases where it seems unlikely she encourages readers to simply offer what they know to be true about God, rather than give false hope by going beyond what the Bible says. While Guthrie’s regard for, and knowledge of, Scripture is evident throughout the book, the notion of covenant seems to be missing in this section on heaven, specifically in regard to the eternal destiny of children who die. But this is a minor imperfection in a beautiful chapter that focuses on the richest comfort we can offer those who are grieving – the resurrection that is yet to come!

### CONCLUSION

This is not an easy read. There is so much raw emotion written on its pages, in the countless examples of real people’s experiences of hurt, hope and healing. I found sometimes I had to put this book down for a while because reading about so many individuals’ sadness and pain became truly overwhelming. If you are anything like me you will probably shed more than a few tears, but you will also learn a lot, for this book will equip you with skills, words, and ideas “for being a balm of comfort to the grieving people in your world.”

I encourage you to read this book if you know someone who is grieving and you want to truly help them, to walk alongside them in their grief. And even if you don’t know someone who is grieving right now, some day you will. Reading this book will help you to help them in their time of need. I highly recommend it. RP

*A version of this article first appeared in the July 15, 2017 issue of Una Sancta, a magazine of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, and is reprinted here with permission.*



# { IN A NUTSHELL }

TIDBITS RELEVANT,  
AND NOT SO,  
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE

BY JON DYKSTRA

## IN PRAISE OF PEPPERMINTS

“...William Dember, a professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, has conducted a study of the impact of the scent of peppermint on people required to do ‘sustained vigilance tasks.’ What did he find? That the mere smell of peppermint increased attentiveness and concentration by 15 percent! ...If the mere smell of peppermints can increase concentration, think what the smell and taste can do! It appears, then, that Reformed people have been entirely correct in maintaining the custom of eating peppermints at the beginning of the sermon.”

– Bert Witvoet, as quoted in the July 10, 2017 *Christian Courier*

## HOW TO GET OUR BOYS TO READ

In a 2010 *Wall Street Journal* article, Thomas Spence argued that the way some “experts” were trying to encourage boys to read was all wrong. Their strategy involved pitching boys books like *Goosebumps*, *Sir Fartsalot*, *Captain Underpants* and *The Day My Butt Went Psycho*. If we want boys to read, so this line of thinking goes, then let’s give them the potty humor they adore. That’ll make them readers, right?

It might get some reading, but what it won’t do is give them any of the benefits that come from reading *good* books. Thomas Spence insists that instead of “meeting [boys] where they are at” we need to aim higher, and he quotes C.S. Lewis:

“The little human animal will not at first have the right responses. It must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likeable, disgusting, and hateful.”

If we point our sons to what’s disgusting and encourage their interest, how can we expect them to learn and appreciate what is good? How can our boys become men if, instead of training them up in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6), we reinforce their childishness? Instead of the gross, we need to fill our shelves with what’s great. We need to give our boys examples to aspire to, in books like *Encyclopedia Brown*, *Saint George and the Dragon*, *The Green Ember*, *The Hobbit*, *Journey Through the Night*, and *Wambu: The Chieftain’s Son*.

Of course, it’s one thing to stock our shelves, and another to get our boys to pull books off of them. How do we get them reading?

Two tips: start early, and get rid of the distractions.

Read to your son from the day he’s born. Sure, a newborn won’t understand what’s being read, but he will love the time sitting on mom or dad’s lap. As he gets older, he’ll enjoy board books’ for their soft chewy corners and bright colors. Then simple stories can help him learn colors and numbers and all sorts of other words. A child who never remembers a time when

he hasn’t been read to won’t have to be taught to appreciate stories – by the time he hits Grade One it’ll be in his DNA.

But like any habit, this one can be broken. In his article Thomas Spence cites the findings of a Dr. Robert Weis, who linked video games in the home with lower academic performance. I’m sure a similar connection could be made between TV viewing and reading ability. The fact is, no matter how good the book, it can’t compete with video games and TV shows for a boy’s attention – given a choice he’s going to watch a screen rather than read. If we want to raise readers then we need to limit their access to electronic media – we need to guard them against these distractions, indulging in them only in moderation.

This is going to be tough. One of the reasons we parents like TV shows and video games is they can act as effective babysitters. A boy glued to the TV, or busy trying to make it to Level 3, isn’t going to be pulling his little sister’s hair. And if he’s busy then Mom’s probably got at least 20 minutes to hop into the shower, or get breakfast ready, or put away the laundry. A lot can get done when this babysitter is helping out.

Now consider that not only does the TV have to be turned off, but mom or dad needs to read to the kidlets for 15, 20, 30 minutes a day, right from babyhood onward. For a busy set of parents this might seem like just another chore to add to all the others.

But here’s a bit of encouragement: it isn’t going to be forever, *and it does work*. A child can read on their own at 6 or 7, and while it’s wonderful to keep reading with them after that, it’s not the same sort of necessity. At that point you can switch up from being the book reader to being the book supplier, pointing them to the very best ones (and I have some suggestions on good ones at [ReallyGoodReads.com](http://ReallyGoodReads.com)). So regular reading might mean you don’t have time to tidy the house, or your lawn isn’t mowed nearly as often as it should be. But it’s only until your son reaches Grade One. Reading each day, for just a half dozen years or so and you’ll have helped develop an appreciation of *good* books that can benefit your son for his lifetime.

SOURCE: Thomas Spence’s “How to raise boys who read” in the Sept 24, 2010 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*

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## TO ARMS!

"Conversion is not putting a man in an armchair and taking him easily to heaven. It is the beginning of a mighty conflict, in which it costs much to win victory."

– J.C. Ryle in "What it costs to be a Christian"

## TWO WORDS THAT MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

by Nicholas McDonald

My friend who spent time in Australia had an off-hand comment that's changed the way I strike up a conversation with someone I meet, and it comes down to two words.

"In Australia," he said, "No one asks, 'What do you do?' That would be a weird question. Only Americans find their primary identity in their work. Instead, we ask, 'What do you *like* to do?' That opens up new worlds of possibility."

It's true - I've actually corrected myself twice in the last two weeks after asking "What do you do?" by saying, "Okay, but what do you *LIKE* to do?" And we're off to the races. Try it. It works.

SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from Nicholas McDonald's newsletter *The 5 Point Reformer* at [ScribblePreach.com](http://ScribblePreach.com)

## FAILURE TO LAUNCH – ONE REASON WHY

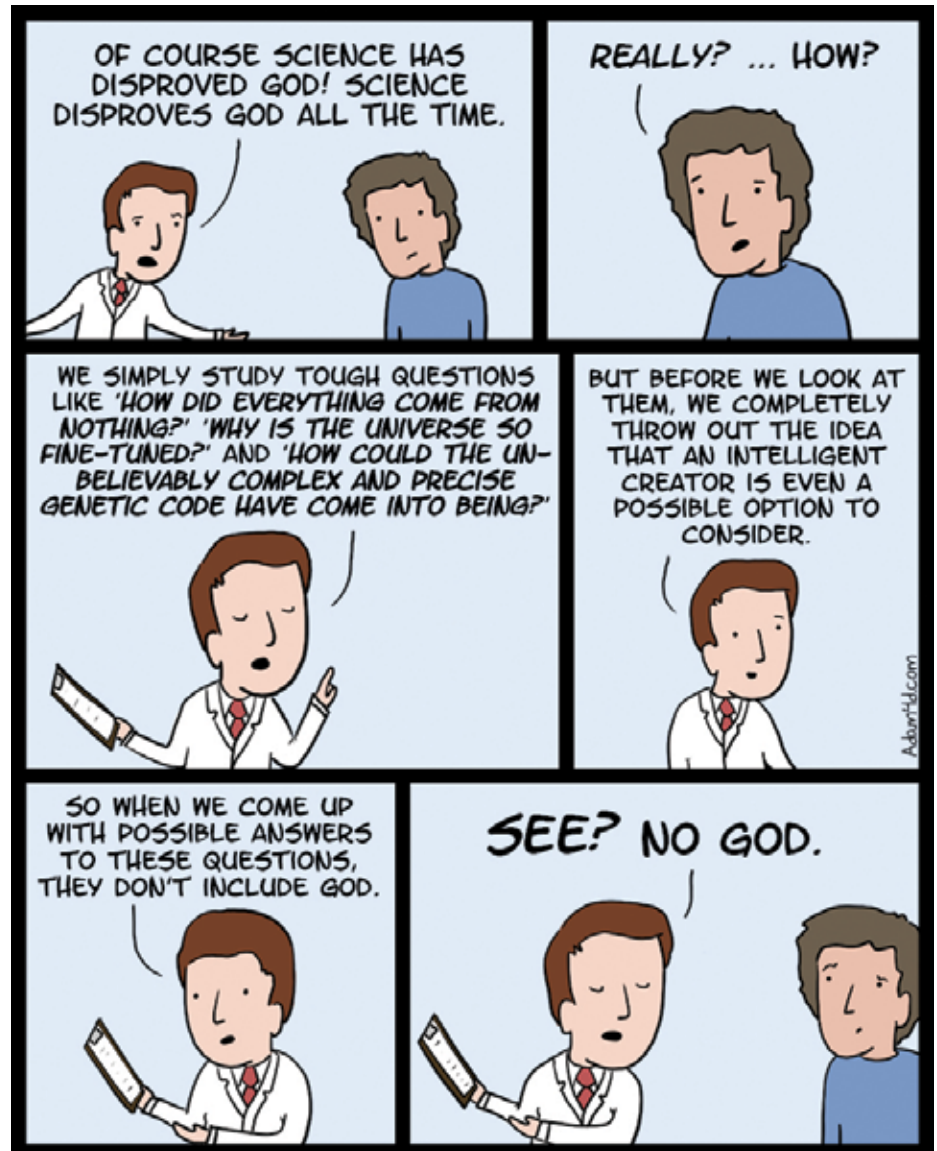
"Summarizing relevant research in 2013, *The Boston Globe* reported a staggering statistic: Only a quarter of Americans 60 and older had discussed anything important with anyone under 36 in the previous six months! Exclude relatives and that figure dropped to a mortifying 6 percent. How alien this would have sounded to the Apostle Paul, who in Titus 2 urges older men and older women to teach the younger."

– John Stonestreet, in a May 16, 2017 *Breakpoint.org* commentary "Helping Young People Spread their Wings"

## WRITE YOUR EULOGY

"...it's time to write your eulogy -- your *good* (eu) *word* (logos). What would you like someone to be able to say honestly in seven minutes? ....There should be more to your life than your résumé. If there isn't, start working on improving your eulogy. Then work backward."

– Gary North in the March 18, 2017 edition of *Dr. Gary North's Weekly Tip*



## THE MEDIA...ON THE MEDIA

"It's a *business*. People are like, the media has an ethical *pshss*... All the nice cutesy little ethics that used to get talked about in journalism school you're just like, that's adorable. That's *adorable*. Yeah, this is a business."

– CNN Senior Producer John Bonifield, as caught on a video published June 27 by James O'Keefe's undercover investigative unit, Project Veritas ([projectveritas.com](http://projectveritas.com))

## DIFFERENT SORTS OF SMART

Our children have their unique gifts, and if they are going to develop these gifts we need to help identify them. For some kids that's easy: they are good at school, and so it is no problem to spot that they are "book smart." But God blesses our children with a variety of talents, so there are other sorts of "smart." As Dr. Kath Koch has put it, some kids are:

- Music smart – some kids have a song in their heart and head from day one
- Body smart – good at sports, and maybe working with their hands too
- Nature smart – love and appreciate God's great outdoors and everything in it
- People smart – they connect while with all sorts of people, and can empathize
- Self smart – they understand their own gifts, and can work on their own

These are good categories to consider, but we could make up quite different ones if we wanted to. The point is that God has given our children different gifts and abilities, and instead of dwelling on what they might lack, we'll do better to ask: "What sort of gifts has God given my child?"

# "DADDY ISSUES"

by Ryan Smith



*"I'm busy."  
"I am too tired..."  
"Not now."  
"Tomorrow."  
"Maybe another time."  
"Leave me alone."  
"Your mom and I are talking..."  
"I have to work late..."*

These are typical answers that we dads are famous for using when our children ask us to spend some time with them.

*"Read me a book dad."  
"I'm busy."  
"Play with me dad."  
"I am too tired..."  
"Teach me to ride a bike dad..."*

*"Not now."  
"Play a game with me dad."  
"Tomorrow."  
"Push me on the swing dad."  
"Maybe another time."  
"Can I tell you about school dad?"  
"Leave me alone."  
"Can you help me with my homework?"  
"Go ask your mom."  
"I am excited for our date on Friday dad."  
"I have to work late..."*

I get it, trust me. I do it too. Sometimes I just want to crash on the couch and tell my girls to get out of the room. But do you know what your child hears when you never say "OK?" When you rarely show affection? When you rarely give them the time of day?

*"You are not worth my time."  
"You are bothering me."  
"You are a pest."  
"I...  
"Don't...  
"Love...  
"YOU."*

If Daddy is always doing something and if he can't ever be interrupted, that sends a very clear message to the child. Perhaps we do not mean it...but whether daddy means it or not, the child will perceive it as, "I don't have time for you, I don't love you."

When we are always out of town on business, or always working late, or so tired when we get home that we are unable to partake in the lives our

children...what kind of message do you think that sends? Mom can say, "Daddy loves you very much," as much as she wants, and she should...but the kids will only believe her for so long. Our kids need us for more than to simply make money, fix things, and engage in our own pursuit of leisure.

The Bible tells us not to provoke our children in a number of ways. In Ephesians 6:1-4 the Apostle Paul tells us:


"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

When we ignore our children we provoke them. A child who desires affection and attention from dad but only gets belittled by dad, or gets dad's "leftovers" or his "I am too tired's" or nothing at all... that child will eventually seek that attention elsewhere. Perhaps they will act out as teens, perhaps they won't. But I am not going to take the chance of my girls having "Daddy issues" when they become young women.

Guys, the criteria for elders and deacons is not just for the elders and deacons; it is for all of us. One of the criterion for elders and deacons is that he must manage his own household well – this is not just about making money and disciplining your kids when they misbehave. It is not just about making sure everyone gets up on time for church on Sunday morning. It is not about making sure everyone is quiet during the worship service. It is not about making a show of how well behaved your kids are to the rest of the congregation. On top of providing financially and spiritually, what it means is that you take care to lovingly discipline, show affection, to engage your wife and your kids at their level, be there for them no matter what.

We'll always have times where we just don't want to engage them. When we are burnt out. There will be times when work is busy, when work takes us out of town, but when we are home, we should be home... not on our iPhones, or fixing things in our garages, or ignoring our kids.

I love my kids, I assume you love yours as well. There is an old cliché that says, "Actions speak louder than words."

I want my kids to know that I love them, so I have to show them. 

*Ryan Smith blogs at OneChristianDad.com  
where this post first appeared.*

# "...IF I COULD FIND THE TIME"

*by Jon Dykstra*

*Cat's in the Cradle* was once described by the artist's brother as the song that "...put more fathers ill at ease than any other song in history."

Harry Chapin topped the charts with it in 1974, making this a real oldie, but it still gets playtime. Chapin's wife Sandra, who wrote the lyrics, said they were based on the relationship her first husband, James Cashmore, had with his father. But Harry said the song made him think of his relationship with his own son, Josh, and said it even put him ill at ease: "Frankly, this song scares me to death."

And no wonder. This cautionary tale is about a father who is surprised at just how fast his son grew up. The song begins with this businessman sharing he has "planes to catch and bills to pay" and meanwhile his boy "learned to walk while I was away." But his son, as sons do, still admired his dad, and so each verse of the song ends with the boy making a promise:

"He'd say 'I'm gonna be like you dad  
You know I'm gonna be like you'"

The years go by and soon the boy is ten. He wants to play catch but dad still has "a lot to do." His son doesn't complain – he goes off to play on his own, still promising to grow up just like his dad.

It's some years when the song, and this promise, takes a haunting turn. The father has "long since retired" and when he calls up his son to ask if his dear old dad can come by for a visit, he finds out his son just doesn't have time for him right now. Chapin finishes the song singing:

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me  
He'd grown up just like me  
My boy was just like me





# QUANTITY, NOT QUALITY: PARENTING TAKES TIME

by Jon Dykstra

In *The New Tolerance* authors Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler share the way one parent taught his teenage son to see through the worldly messages being presented in pop music. The son was allowed to buy any album he wanted so long as Dad listened to it beforehand.

"If Dad approved not only of the language but of the more subtle messages in the music, fine; if not... Dad would always explain his decisions."

At one point this father rejected three straight albums, which didn't leave his son all that happy. And it wasn't so easy on the dad either; he had to spend a long time listening to some lousy music. Now this was almost 20 years ago, so it took a lot longer than it even would today. Whereas we can read song lyrics online and preview many tracks via YouTube, back then the only way to check out an album was to go to the store, buy it on

CD, and take it for a spin.

But this dad was up for it. He knew that by investing "quantity time" with his son – by spending hours slogging through, and talking through, album after album together – he'd help equip his son to know and appreciate what was praiseworthy and to see through what was shameful and unworthy.

The Bible speaks about quantity vs. quality time. Or, rather, it assumes quantity time. In Deut. 11:19 God describe our parenting task – raising up children in the ways of the Lord – as an always and ongoing activity.

"You shall teach [these words of mine] to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up."


Raising up our children in the way they should go is going to take time. And energy too. There are going to be

moments when you'll feel downright exhausted.

But, be encouraged: this is what we are *supposed* to be doing; it's what we're *called* to do. And sure, it can be draining, but let's not forget how much joy there is in the process too. We get to not only listen to music together but:

- share meals
- teach them how to ride a bike and mow the lawn
- study God's Word as a family
- show them how to bake
- play games together
- and tell them for the hundredth time to stop picking their nose

This is what we get to do. Tired or not, there is no task more important: God has entrusted us with the care of his covenant children. When we consider we're going to spend our hours some way or the other, what better investment is there? **RP**



Queen Victoria, painted by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, 1859

by Christine Farenhorst

# Choice Words

The gossip's words are like choice food that goes down to one's innermost being (Prov. 18:8)

**T**here is an old adage which says, “Believe nothing of what you hear and only half of what you see.” Another saying rightly puts forth the idea that the phrase “They say” is often a great liar. The Bible advises us to live quietly and to mind our own affairs and the Bible also underlines that “Where there is no talebearer, strife ceases” (Prov. 26:20).

When you dislike someone, however, it is quite easy to believe gossip about that person; and when you have a disagreement with an acquaintance, how tempting it is to listen to a wagging tongue to discredit that acquaintance?

## BEFORE SHE WAS QUEEN

We all know many factual historical news items about Queen Victoria, the long-reigning English monarch (1837-1901). When she was born on May 24, 1819 at Kensington Palace, Victoria was

only one of several heirs to the throne of England. But after the death of her father, her grandfather and an uncle, she became the sole heir to that throne. She was eleven years old at the time.

Victoria's childhood was secluded. Much of it was spent isolated from other children her age. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent and a Fraulein Lehzen, the governess, were virtually the only people with whom she had contact. She played with 132 dolls and a pet spaniel dog, but these did not make up for the devastating loneliness she sometimes felt.

## THE KENSINGTON SYSTEM

Sir John Conroy had been equerry – a personal assistant – to the Duke of Kent, Victoria's father. After his death, Conroy offered his services to the Duchess as comptroller of her household. These services were accepted and the Duchess

and Sir John Conroy grew very close. Together they set up a system called the “Kensington System” which regulated and oversaw every aspect of the crown princess' life. The idea of this system was to make the young girl so utterly dependent on both her mother and Sir John Conroy, that she would be totally unable to do without the pair of them once she became queen.

The little girl had rarely been out of her mother's sight. She slept in the same bedroom, and possessed virtually no privacy. Conroy was not especially kind to the child, bullying her with disparaging words when he could, and she disliked him exceedingly. As well, she detested the power the man appeared to have over her mother, not to speak of the fact that he often inferred that she was ill-equipped to become queen.

In May of 1837 the princess celebrated her eighteenth birthday. The





Lady Flora Hastings

### LADY FLORA HASTINGS

Three years before this, a Lady Flora Hastings, the unmarried daughter of the first Marquis of Hastings, had been appointed lady-in-waiting to Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent. However, Lady Hastings inadvertently became part of the Kensington System. In addition to the duties of lady-in-waiting to the Duchess, she had been told to serve as companion for the young princess. Both the Duchess of Kent and Sir John Conroy believed this would deter confidences between the princess and her beloved governess, Fraulein Lehzen. Victoria sensed this and believing Lady Flora to be a spy doing Sir John Conroy's bidding, Victoria distrusted and disliked her. Given the whole history of the girl's repression and isolation, this can readily be understood.

Lady Flora Hastings was a beautiful woman. She had an oval face, big eyes, an aristocratic nose, thick dark hair and a flawless complexion. She was also a Christian and a firm believer in her Lord and Savior. In 1839, after Victoria's accession to the throne, she made a trip to Scotland to visit her family. Afterwards she returned in a carriage with Sir John Conroy without the presence of a chaperone. A few weeks later, Lady Flora openly complained about a pain in her abdomen. As well, she developed a noticeable swelling in her stomach as she continued to have this pain. She wrote later:

"...having been suffering from bilious illness since the beginning of December, I consulted Sir James Clark, her royal highness' physician, and placed myself under his treatment..."

The noticeable swelling of the stomach caused tongues to wag. Gossip was rife. And Queen Victoria, that very new and young monarch, participated in many a

demeaning conversation about Lady Flora Hastings. This woman, it was whispered, is unmarried, a prude, and probably pregnant. Unkind mouths went on that, very likely, the father was Sir John Conroy. The Queen's extreme dislike for Sir John Conroy and his cronies, probably added fuel to the fire.

A shunned Lady Hastings later wrote:

"On the 16th of February, Sir James Clark came to me, and asked me whether I were privately married, giving, as his reason, that my figure had excited the remarks of the 'ladies of the Palace.' On my emphatic denial he became excited, urged me to confess as the only thing to save me.... it occurred to him at the first that no one could look at me and doubt it, and remarks even more coarse. I observed to him that the swelling from which I had been suffering was very much reduced and offered him the proof of my dresses. He replied, 'Well, I don't think so. You seem to me to grow larger every day and so the ladies think.' He proceeded to say that it was the only supposition which could explain my appearance and state of health 'or else you must have some very bad illness.' I said that was possible. I had thought badly of my own state of health, but that his supposition was untrue and quite groundless. He ended by assuring me 'that nothing but a medical examination could satisfy the ladies of the Palace, so deeply were their suspicions rooted.... and the rumor has reached the ear of her Majesty.' I said, feeling perfectly innocent, I should not shrink from any examination, however rigorous, but that I considered it a most indelicate and disagreeable procedure, and that I would not be hurried into it.

It seems strange and hurtful that such wicked gossip should come to

celebration brought with it a coveted amount of independence, for it gave Victoria her own income. Less than four weeks after this milestone birthday, King William IV, her uncle, died. Not even five feet tall, Princess Alexandrina Victoria was immediately proclaimed Queen. Sermons were preached throughout England simultaneously mourning the death of William IV and celebrating the accession of the new queen.

The young queen immediately made appointments to form her own household. She very deliberately excluded Sir John Conroy. As a matter of fact, she referred to him as "a monster and demon incarnate whose name I forbear to mention." There was a move to Buckingham Palace and one of the first things the young monarch did was to secure her own bedroom. Her mother henceforth would not share her sleeping quarters any longer.



Lady Flora Hastings, not by the mouth of a female, but by a man. It would have been proper for a woman to convey these malicious rumors and for a woman to comfort her. The gossip about Lady Flora persisted after Sir James Clark's visit and the Queen continued to believe that she was pregnant.

Both saddened and shamed, Lady Flora wrote:

"It having been notified to me that it was her Majesty's pleasure that I should not appear (at court) until my character was cleared by the means suggested, and having obtained the permission of her Royal Highness to submit to it, as the most instantaneous mode of refuting the calumny, I sent.... for Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke and for Sir James Clark, and the examination took place in the presence of my accuser, Lady Portman, and my own maid. In the evening Lady Portman came to me to express her regret for having been the most violent against me. She acknowledged that she had several times spoken a great deal to the Queen on the subject, especially when she found it was the Queen's own idea. She said she was very sorry but she would have done the same respecting any one of whom she had the same suspicion. I said my surprise is, that knowing my family as she

did, she could have entertained those suspicions."

Even when it came to light that the doctors could find no evidence of pregnancy, giving her a certificate to verify this, the ill rumor persisted. At some point, Lady Hastings, who was also a poet, penned these words:

*In every place, in every hour,  
Whate'er my wayward lot may be;  
In joy or grief, in sun or shower,  
Father and Lord! I turn to Thee.*

*Thee, when the incense-breathing  
flowers  
Pour forth the worship of the spring,  
With the glad tenants of the bowers  
My trembling accents strive to sing.*

*Alike in joy and in distress,  
Oh! Let me trace Thy hand divine;  
Righteous in chast'ning, prompt to bless,  
Still, Father! may Thy will be mine.*

Although Lady Flora was re-included in all the festive and formal arrangements of the court after this most

*Words can be swallowed, but once spoken, they can never be erased.*

painful incident, it did not take away the shame and misery to which the young woman had been subjected. Her good name had been sullied. A few months later, she was unable to participate any longer in court functions. The illness which affected her kept her in bed.

The queen, to her credit, did visit the bedchamber once before Lady Flora died. A post-mortem revealed that she had suffered from a cancerous tumor on the liver. It is recorded that no word of reproach or enmity escaped from her lips and that she died peacefully.

When Queen Victoria was informed of Lady Flora's death, she wept and ordered that every mark of respect suitable for such a melancholy occasion be observed.

Words can be swallowed, but once spoken, they can never be erased. The slander against Lady Flora Hastings is, consequently, a blot on Queen Victoria's reign, a blot she, no doubt, often regretted. Proverbs 10:18 clearly says that *whoever spreads slander is a fool*. Lady Hasting's sad story serves as a sharp reminder that we must be careful with our words. <sup>RP</sup>



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# — East vs West —

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# CONTEST

*"Let your light shine  
before others, so  
that they may see  
your good works  
and give glory to  
your Father who  
is in Heaven."*

—MATTHEW 5:16

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**L**etters to the editors of newspapers and magazines are a free and very effective means to be a voice for truth, grace, justice, and common sense in our communities. It is time that we made use of this opportunity to its full potential!

And we have a friendly challenge for you: Western Canada (BC-MB) versus Eastern Canada (Ontario – Maritimes) – who can get the most letters published by the end of 2017?

For tips and more info visit:  
**ARPACANADA.ca**

### 5 ENTRY CATEGORIES

- Best letter in a large paper (eg Ottawa Citizen, Vancouver Sun)
- Best letter in a community paper (city up to 200,000 population)
- Best letter by someone under age 20
- Most letters published & submitted to contest
- One letter picked at random from all entries

### CONTEST RULES

- Letters must be on a topic that relates in some way to ARPA's mission (ie it must have something to do with bringing a Christian perspective to the public square).
- Send either a link to your letter, or a picture of a published letter, to **INFO@ARPACANADA.ca**. Or mail it to **ARPA Canada, PO Box 1377, STN B, Ottawa ON, K1P5R4**

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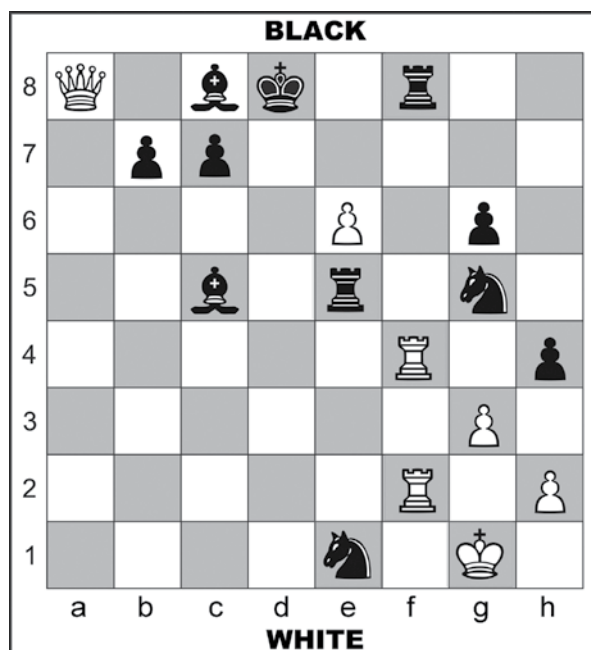
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# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #241



**WHITE to Mate in 3**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 4**

## Riddle for Punsters #241

**"Which Wind Pipes are you Repairing Today - the Church's or the Minister's?"**

Why did the surgeon like to repair organ pipes? While working on the pipes he used the time to o\_\_\_\_ize his thoughts and plan how he was going to do his next \_\_\_\_n transplant surgery as scheduled by the medical \_\_\_\_nization that paid him for each surgery.

## Problem to Ponder #241

**Problem to Ponder #241 – "Cagey Rearrangements of Letters."**

Arrange the letters of the following anagrams to make the names of animals commonly found at a zoo. All answers are just one word except for the ones on the bottom row which are two word names of animals.

For example , IN LO would be LION and CAT HE HE would be CHEETAH.

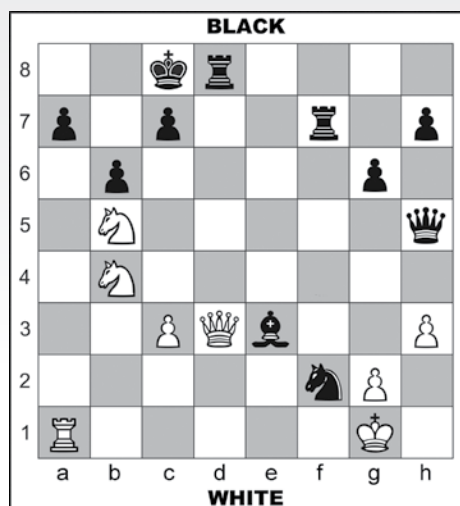
A HEN LEPT	_____	FEAR FIG	_____
MY KENO	_____	SHAMPOO IT PUP	_____
IF AM LONG	_____	TORCH IS	_____
RAIL LOG	_____	APE ZINC HEM	_____
RAZZ BYE GIRL	_____	FOWL UPP	_____

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,

43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 or robgleach@gmail.com

## Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #240



**WHITE TO MATE IN 3**

Descriptive Notation	Algebraic Notation
1. NxRP ch K-N1	1. Nb5xa7+ Kc8-b8
2. QxR ch K-N2	2. Qd3xd8 + Kb8-b7
3. Q-QB8 mate	3. Qd8-c8 ++
OR	OR
1. NxRP ch K-N2	1. Nb5xa7 + Kc8-b7
2. Q-R6 ch K-R1	2. Qd3-a6 + Kb7-a8
3. N-B6 mate	3. Na7-c6 ++

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#240 – **"Current Events?"**

*What shocking news did the electrician receive?*

His nephew was currently grounded for putting up a load of resistance to their instructions and revolting against their house rules.

## Answer to Problem to Ponder

#240 – **"Neighbours with Shovels, Lending a Helping Hand"**

It is time to do yard work! Isaac and his neighbour Ishmael can shovel garden soil at the same rate and each can shovel (and spread) 1.5 times more soil than Isaac's wife Rebecca can. It took Isaac and Rebecca, working together, two hours to shovel a large pile of rich, black top soil and spread it on their lawn and garden.

- How long would it take Ishmael, without help, to shovel (and spread) his pile of top soil (which is the same size and has the same amount of soil as Isaac's)?
- If, however, Ishmael is helped by Isaac and Rebecca, how long should it take the three of them to shovel and spread out Isaac's pile of top soil?

Let us say that Rebecca shovels (and spreads) x cubic metres of soil per minute. Then Isaac and Ishmael each shovel (and spread) at a rate of 1.5x cubic metres per minute and Isaac and Rebecca together shovel at a rate of  $x+1.5x=2.5x$  cubic metres per minute. Together the pile takes them 2 hours = 120 minutes, so the size of the pile of soil is  $2.5x$  cubic metres per minute x 120 minutes =  $300x$  cubic metres. Therefore,

- Ishmael, shovelling alone, would take time = volume/rate =  $300x/1.5x = 200$  minutes = **3 hours 20 minutes**.
- The three of them together would shovel at a rate of  $1.5x + 1.5x + x = 4x$  cubic metres per minute and so the pile would take them  $300x/4x = 75$  minutes = **1 hour 15 minutes**.

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

Descriptive Notation	Algebraic Notation
1. ---- NxP dbl ch	
2. K-R2 N-N8 dis ch	
3. K-N3 B-B7 mate	

**BLACK WINS SOONER IF**

1. ---- NxP dbl ch	
2. K-R1 N-B5 mate	

**Algebraic Notation**

1. ---- Nf2xh3 +	
2. Kg1-h2 Nh3-g1 +	
3. Kh2-g3 Be3-f2 ++	

**BLACK WINS SOONER IF**

1. ---- Nf2xh3 +	
2. Kg1-h1 Nh3-f4 ++	





# TRUTH

by Jon Dykstra

There is a saying, sometimes attributed to Spurgeon, about how, “A lie will go round the world even as the truth is still pulling its boots on.” This refers to how fast gossip can spread, but we can also see it in how quickly biased, and even outright “fake news” can be spread around the globe.

And when corrections come, they never get the same coverage. For example, people still believe overpopulation is a problem (and still push abortion as the solution) even though, decades ago, the alarmists’ dire predictions were exposed as completely wrong. Yet, the lie persists despite the fact that many nations now face *declining populations*. It persists and continues to do damage: overpopulation is one of the justifications behind Canada’s recent \$240 million pledge to support abortion and contraception advocacy around the world.

Lies are quick, and can persist. So how do we get God’s truth out there?

We do it together. The Internet presents us the opportunity to get the truth

out quicker than ever, and to every corner of the world.

That’s the idea behind *Reformed Perspective*’s new mode of content delivery. We’re sharing all our articles for free, on our Facebook page, our Reformed-Perspective.ca homepage, and via our weekly email newsletter. And because it’s free and online, you can share it at the click of a mouse with your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. It’s the same challenging, thoroughly Reformed, material, but now it’s delivered daily, and in a package that allows you to share it with anyone and everyone.

That’s what we’re doing. But we can’t spread the truth without you.


So what do you think of the articles in this issue? Do you feel challenged, or better equipped after reading the articles in this print edition? Are you finding material you think others could benefit from too?

If not, please let the editor know (editor@ReformedPerspective.ca). We are always looking for feedback on how we

can serve you better, and be a better tool for you.

However, if you have been challenged, then please use us to challenge others. Go to our website, track down one of your favorite articles, and then share it with your friends via email, or your Facebook page, twitter feed, or whatever. Use us to speak God’s truth to others.

Lies spread quickly, but today we have a God-given opportunity to spread the truth just as quickly. Let’s take full advantage!

To sign up for RP’s weekly newsletter, go to [tinyurl.com/RPweeklynewsletter](http://tinyurl.com/RPweeklynewsletter). To get RP’s daily Facebook posts, go to [www.facebook.com/ReformedPerspectiveMagazine](http://www.facebook.com/ReformedPerspectiveMagazine) and then hit the “Like” and “Follow – See First” buttons. Or go directly to [www.ReformedPerspective.ca](http://www.ReformedPerspective.ca) to see daily posts, and our archive of more than 200 articles. We are dependent on donations, so please consider becoming a regular monthly supporter by filling in the PAD form on the other side of this page. 



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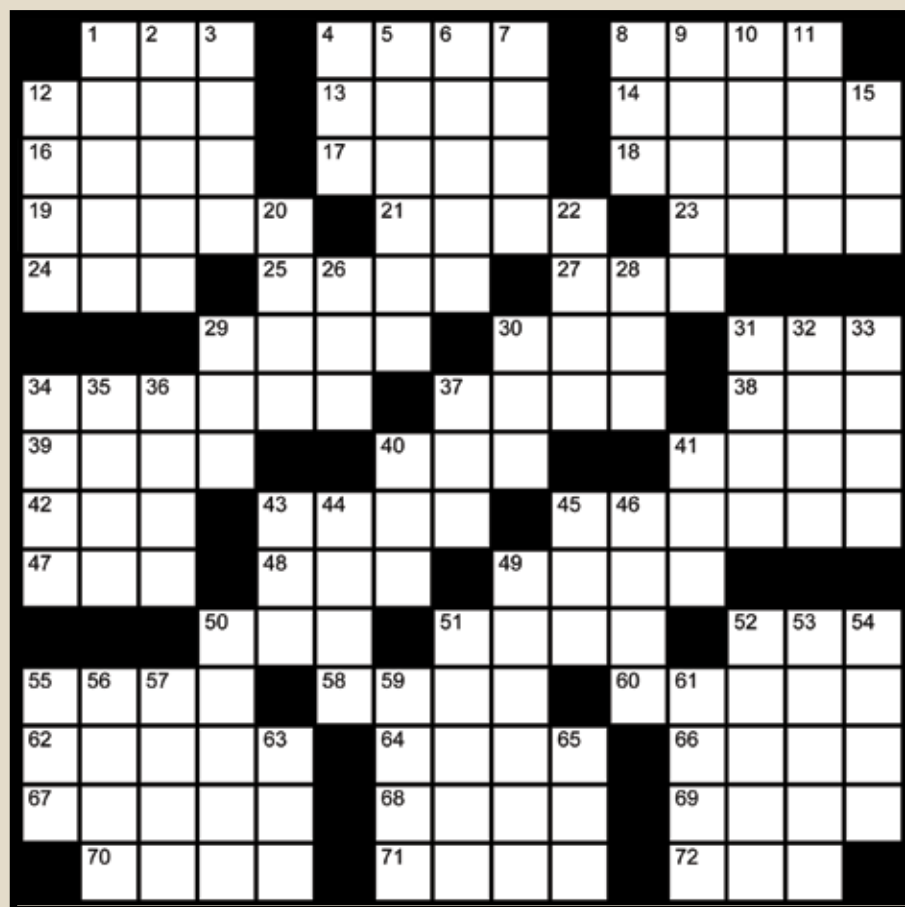
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# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 3-7

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. Cry of "man's best friend"
4. Sections of a circle (in spelling, too)
8. "he \_\_\_\_\_ to me, 'Do not...'" (Rev. 22)
12. Sound effect of laughter in a comic strip
13. "These... \_\_\_\_\_ with... strong drink (Is. 28)
14. Utterly obvious source for milk, say
16. Operatic solo
17. Type of silicate mineral
18. Pancho \_\_\_\_\_ - Mexican revolutionary
19. Candies produced by Dutch King
21. Part of gift offered to Joseph (Gen. 43)
23. "And Saul \_\_\_\_\_ David...." (1 Sam. 18)
24. "I hope to \_\_\_\_\_ you soon." (3 John)
25. \_\_\_\_\_ and proper - stuffy and strait-laced

27. "\_\_\_\_\_ Are So Beautiful to Me" (song title)
29. "Dizzy" \_\_\_\_\_ - popular professional pitcher
30. Explosive (found in part of a tent?)
31. On the \_\_\_\_\_ = fleeing (partly like a lamb?)
34. Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (Christian country singer)
37. Religious group split off from larger one
38. Boxer who wanted to "sting like a bee"
39. Scottish island in the Inner Hebrides
40. Metal thrown into a furnace (Ez. 22)
41. "\_\_\_\_\_. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22)
42. One legal description of a co.
43. One way up a ski hill (hyphenated)
45. Covered by heavy sheet to keep out rain

47. "the \_\_\_\_\_ of the house of David" (Is. 22)
48. Hairpiece
49. "the father... \_\_\_\_\_ with fever" (Acts 28)
50. Part of age-old time period
51. Semi-circular area at front of a cathedral
52. "though I was blind, now I \_\_\_\_\_" (John 9)
55. Made from hops: Scotch? No.
58. "Moses... did not \_\_\_\_\_ to look." (Acts 7)
60. It's also called leaven in the Bible.
62. Unclassy name for an unwise person
64. "When you \_\_\_\_\_ the harvest" (Lev. 19)
66. Randomly assorted (abbreviation)
67. Affectionate term for loved one in Spanish
68. Prefix for *legal*
69. Center of Mormonism and all that Jazz
70. "the crowd went to \_\_\_\_\_ him" (John 12)

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 3-6

71. Abbreviation for job alluded to in 68 Across
72. Once bitten, twice \_\_\_\_\_ - common saying

33. "Finally, ...have unity of \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Pet. 3)

34. Cheat or defraud (out of)
35. Learn by \_\_\_\_\_ (without real understanding)

36. \_\_\_\_\_ Warhol (artist who painted soup cans)

37. Title given to Isaac Newton

40. Game that makes you it

41. Animal shelter (Genesis 8)

43. Number of each kind of animal (Gen. 7)

44. "\_\_\_\_\_ him hand and foot" (Matt. 22)

45. "\_\_\_\_\_ vice to know him" (*Hamlet*)

46. \_\_\_\_\_-deucey (variation of backgammon)

49. "\_\_\_\_\_ shields, bows, and" (Neh. 4)

50. Gradually wear away

51. Sectors; regions; territories

52. How the King James Version says, "says"

53. Major writing form of Bacon and Montaigne

54. Engrave or carve an inscription

55. "...that makes a \_\_\_\_\_ difference." (Churchill)

56. Biblical kingdom of Esau's descendants

57. Irish Gaelic name for Ireland

59. Reformed association for political action

61. Large Australian flightless birds

63. Littlun - sounds somewhat like a toddler

65. \_\_\_\_\_ Sajak - host of *Wheel of Fortune*

### DOWN

1. Eagles' nest (up in the airy sky)

2. River flowing through six European nations

3. Deed of derring-do

4. "Break the \_\_\_\_\_ of the wicked" (Ps. 10)

5. Bring under control (two words) - like a horse

6. Pouch connected to small and large intestine

7. Piece of wood in a Venetian blind or a fence

8. Sporty and useful vehicle (abbreviation)

9. Goodbye to Paris

10. Lazily or without clear purpose

11. Editing abbreviation

12. Scottish caps (or Dutch surname)

15. Unit for measuring radiation

20. Went fast, perhaps too fast

22. In \_\_\_\_\_ - moving as a matched set

26. Unclean type of animal (Leviticus 11)

28. Mel \_\_\_\_\_ - big home run hitter for NY Giants

29. Each of us has his or her own unique set.

30. Number of cities in the Decapolis (Mark 5, 7)

31. "Your word... a \_\_\_\_\_ to my feet" (Ps. 119)

32. Sheltered from the wind (nautical term)





# Raising Readers: The Surprising Power of Reading Aloud

by Amanda Poppe

**O**f all the skills our children need to master, reading is at the top of the list. Children who read fluently do well in school, while poor readers struggle because the entire curriculum is based on the ability to read. Reading opens up incredible opportunities; in contrast, illiteracy is related to poverty and crime.

But success in life is not our main motive for raising readers. We want our children to love words so that they will be daily readers of the Word. The Bible is a challenging book, and our children need to be able to read and understand it in order to grow in their relationship with God. That's why raising readers is a priority for Christians.

## START EARLY...

*The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease provides a valuable resource for parents, teachers and anyone else involved with children. With carefully documented research and compelling stories, he tells us the most important thing we must do is read aloud to our

children. Trelease points out that reading is like any other skill: you get better at it by doing it.

But how do we get our kids to *want* to read in the first place? Children gravitate to activities they find enjoyable. How do we give them a love for reading?

We must read to them daily. Reading aloud brings to life the characters, places and adventures that are hidden between the covers of books. Children learn that books hold exciting stories. Young children associate books with cuddle times with their favorite person. As the family matures, books become the vehicle for countless conversations and laughs, shared memories and ideas. In this environment, children naturally fall in love with books.

## ...AND KEEP GOING!

Most of us understand the importance of reading to young children. The nightly bedtime story, I would hope, is a habit that parents maintain. When children have been read to regularly, they start kindergarten eager to learn to read.

But as they get older, reading levels often drop lower and lower. Trelease writes:

“Among fourth-graders, only 54% read something for pleasure every day. Among eighth-graders, only 30% read for pleasure daily. By twelfth grade, only 19% read anything for pleasure daily. In a Bureau of Labor Statistics survey in 2010, young adults between ages 15-19 reported spending only 12 minutes a day reading versus 2.23 hours watching television.”

What is going wrong? Many parents don't realize that we need to keep reading to children even when they begin to read on their own. Reading is a complex skill that takes years to develop.

## STUCK WITH *CAT IN THE HAT* BUT HUNGERING FOR MORE

The problem is, a beginning reader reads at a level far below his comprehension. That means that for a long time, he is stuck reading boring

books. Reading is hard work, and if there is little reward, why bother? Typically in grade four, children start to give up on reading. The pain is not worth the pleasure.

This is why continuing to read to your child is so important. You need to read captivating books that keep alive the interest and the motivation to read. Reading to your child every day is like advertising for books. Smart companies do not stop advertising. According to Trelease, the research shows that the gap between a child's listening vocabulary and reading vocabulary usually does not close until about grade eight. Yet most parents stop reading to their children long before that time.

### EXPANDING THEIR VOCABULARY

Besides giving children the motivation to want to read, reading to our children also gives them the building blocks to be able to read. It gives them words.

Researchers can tell how well a child will do in school based on the size of his vocabulary before schooling begins. Does speaking to our children provide enough vocabulary? No. We use 5,000 words in our daily conversation, with another 5,000 used less often. Trelease writes:

“The eventual strength of our vocabulary is determined not by the ten thousand common words but by how many rare words we understand.”

When we read to our kids they hear three to eleven times as many rare words as they would during normal conversation. Reading aloud pours a rich variety of words into our kids' ears and minds. This vocabulary is crucial for their learning.

### WHAT ABOUT TV?

Does television build vocabulary? Research shows that television is greatly inferior to print. Most TV scripts are made up of conversational vocabulary and over the years there has been a steady decline in the use of complex

sentences and rich vocabulary.


Trelease devotes a chapter to television and whether it helps or hinders literacy. To highlight one item, a study in 2004 which tracked 2,500 children concluded that:

“for each hour of daily TV viewed by the child before age three, the risk of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) by age seven increased by 10 percent.”

In contrast, reading aloud is the best way to increase attention span. The American Academy of Pediatrics has warned that children under two should not watch any TV. This would include other screens as well. As parents, we need to be in control of the technology in our homes if we want to foster reading and raise healthy children.

### BENEFITS ABOUND

Reading aloud is an incredible force in the lives of children. Sharing books builds the bond between adult and child and gives the child a secure sense of being loved and valued. Reading enriches life and is a gateway to the world of ideas. Good readers are able to provide leadership in our communities because they have thought about many things. We need more readers. The time you invest in reading to the children in your life is of incalculable value. Start reading today. It's never too late to start.

And be encouraged by what God has been doing in our families. He has built reading into our lives by giving us the Bible and making us people of the Word. He has given us wonderful routines of mealtime reading and bedtime Bible stories, where fathers especially can be the role models their sons so desperately need. These habits alone give our kids a huge boost in literacy. Our Heavenly Father knows what our children need. Praise God and keep reading to your kids! 

*A version of this article was first published in the July 15, 2017 edition of Una Sancta and is reprinted here with permission.*

## Practical Suggestions

### MAKE READING OUT LOUD A PRIORITY

- Make it a habit by setting a specific time. Doesn't matter when – before bed, after lunch, naptime, or school – it just has to be a daily appointment.
- Model reading. Children should see you reading for enjoyment.
- Have books in the house.
- Visit the library regularly.
- Read out loud every day for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Keep reading to children even after they learn to read.
- Get the grandparents reading to your kids.
- Read to your infants – long before they can talk, they are language sponges.

### FIND POCKETS OF TIME

- Read to your preschoolers while nursing/feeding your baby.
- Read to your kids while waiting for the doctor, dentist, etc.
- Read nursery rhymes (or that book you've read so often you have it memorized) while folding laundry or doing ironing.
- Pick a good book to read aloud when camping.

### READ OUT LOUD EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT A READER

- Not the best reader yourself? Don't worry – your child will love it. As the parent, you are the very best reader for them.

### MAKE IT EXCITING

- It's okay to skip boring bits. Pre-reading helps with this.

### FEEL FREE TO USE TECHNOLOGY

- Make use of audio books.
- Picture books are best as paper books, with their big bold pages. But e-readers have a place too, with their ability to store many, many books.
- If grandparents live far away they can still read to your children via Skype.



# A few read aloud suggestions to get you started....

by Jon Dykstra



I've been reading out loud to my girls since they were born, and for just as long I've been asking others and searching their bookshelves to find out what their favorites are. Here is a partial list of some that our family, and others too, have enjoyed.

## PICTURE BOOKS

All of these have big bright pictures on every page, and the first three are rhymed, which makes it a lot easier for a beginning Dad to get off to a good reading-out-loud start; these will make you sound *good!*

- **A camping spree with Mr. Magee** by Chris Van Dusen – it has two great sequels
- **The Farm Team** by Linda Bailey – about a hockey playing barnyard
- **Tikki Tikki Tembo** by Arlene Mosel
- **Charlie The Ranch Dog** by Ree Drummond
- **Don't Want to Go** by Shirley Hughes – Shirley Hughes has dozens of other wonderful read aloud picture books
- **The Little Ships** by Louise Borden – Dunkirk is in the news right now, and this is a stirring account
- **James Herriot's Treasury for Children** – a big book with eight sweet

stories for animal-loving children

- **The Mr. Putter and Tabby** series by Cynthia Rylant – an old man and his cat, and his wonderful neighbor and her trouble-making dog
- **The Piggie and Elephant** series by Mo Willems – 20 books, most of which require from the reader only the ability to do just two different voices

## BOOKS WITH PICTURES

There are pictures in these selections, but not on every page. These are slightly longer, more involved stories which your children will not be able to read on their own until the later part of Grade 1, or the beginning of Grade 2, but they'll love to hear them a lot earlier than that.


- **Bruno the Bear** by W.G. Van de Hulst – one in a series of 20+ classic books
- **Winnie the Pooh & The House at Pooh Corner** by A.A. Milne – it's worth getting the big collected treasury to read and reread again and again.
- **The Big Goose and the Little White Duck** by Meindert DeJong – another classic
- **Rikki Tikki Tavi** by Rudyard Kipling – the gorgeous Jerry Pinkney adaption is the very best

## CHAPTER BOOKS

Once the kids are hitting kindergarten or Grade 1 mom and dad can read books they might read for themselves only in Grade 5 or 6, or even as adults. That can make reading aloud more fun for parents, as the stories will be of more interest to them now.

- **The Little House on the Prairie** series by Laura Ingalls Wilder – this is not the easiest read aloud (the sentences are sometimes quite choppy) and I gave up, but my girls really enjoyed the audiobook
- **The Bell Mountain** series by Lee Duigon – only downside to this 9-book series is that each title leads into the next; it's one big story with no clear ending in any of the books, but we've loved 5 books worth so far...
- **The Wingfeather Saga** by Andrew Peterson – A laugh out loud hilarious adventure for older children (maybe Grade 3 and up) - 4 in this series
- **The Hobbit** by JRR Tolkien – much more of a children's tale than *Lord of the Rings* and shorter too (maybe also best for Grade 3 and up)
- **The Rise and Fall of Mount Majestic** by Jennifer Trafton





An Iraqi flag flies over the damaged Syriac Orthodox Church of St. Ephraim, in Mosul, Iraq after it was freed from ISIS. The ISIS emblem, now mostly destroyed, was painted on the church when ISIS took Mosul.

# WILL THE ISLAMIC STATE DISAPPEAR?

**A look at ISIS, and its past, to get an understanding of its future**

by Cornelis Van Dam

About four years ago the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) appeared to have come out of nowhere, creating havoc with its unspeakable brutality, and dramatically transforming the political landscape of the Middle East. In short order it had millions under its control in a territory comparable to that of Great Britain, with footholds in Libya, northern Nigeria, and elsewhere.

However, it now looks as if the days of ISIS are numbered, with coalition forces having taken the city of Mosul from ISIS in July, and now having the momentum as they seek to destroy ISIS.

## GONE FOR GOOD?

But will the battle against what ISIS represents, and its dreams of a caliphate, truly be over if ISIS is wiped off the map of the Middle East? That does not appear likely.

ISIS has been compared to an aggressive cancer. You can take out a local tumor (ISIS in the Middle East), but the cancer then goes to the next phase. It metastasizes, that

is, it spreads elsewhere where it is much more difficult to confront and control. We already see this happening in Southeast Asia where the Philippines are in turmoil as the government there grapples with ISIS forces.

But why is the ISIS drive for Islamic domination so difficult to defeat? In seeking an answer to that question, we need to understand what motivates ISIS. Since it claims to be Islamic, we must try to understand the notion and history of the caliphate and its theological origins.

We also need to hear what authoritative Islamic scholars are saying about ISIS and specifically their thoughts about how ISIS justifies everything it does from the Quran.

Finally we will ask what all of this suggests for the future.

## CALIPHATE

Let's begin with a question: what is a caliphate?

It is an Islamic form of government headed by a caliph – that is, someone who is considered to be the religious and

political successor of Mohammed, founder of the Islamic faith. Such a caliphate would unite the entire Muslim world and be ruled with a strict Islamic code.

There was a caliphate in the past. By the time of Mohammed's death in 632, Islam dominated the entire Arabian Peninsula and by 661 AD had spread into northern Africa and what is today the entire Middle East, including parts of Turkey and Afghanistan. By 750 AD this caliphate had expanded from India to Spain and Portugal.

The last major caliphate was the Ottoman Empire which embraced Turkey, the Middle East, northern Africa, the Balkans and beyond. This empire lasted from 1517-1924. Among the titles of the head of the Ottoman Empire was that of caliph. It was not always taken seriously but in the 1800's the importance of the caliph and the caliphate was revived and Islam was promoted as a unifying factor in the empire. It is good to remember that it was the Ottoman Empire that, in 1683, seemed ready to overrun Christian Europe

but it was stopped at Vienna. Christianity's conflict with Islam is very old!

Islamic caliphates and empires have had years of dominance and glory. It is no wonder that idealistic Muslims who take the Quran and its teachings seriously want to create a new caliphate. The 21st century has given these Muslims an opportunity.

## IS ISIS ISLAMIC?

To understand ISIS and its aggression, we need to know how ISIS relates to the Islamic faith.

The areas that ISIS controls are subject to Sharia law. Christians cannot worship in public and build or repair churches. They cannot display a cross, ring church bells, or pray within earshot of Muslims.

ISIS has all the trappings of a state including their own currency and an army of over 100,000. Their flag is the Black Standard or Black Banner which Islamic tradition says that Mohammed used. The white banner at the top of the flag reads: "There is no god but Allah. Mohammed is the messenger of Allah." This declaration of the Islamic faith is known as the *shahada*. Underneath is a white circle with the words "Mohammed is the messenger of God" which is meant to resemble the prophet's seal. A version of this flag is also used by al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

In spite of what has just been noted, Western leaders have been saying that ISIS has nothing to do with Islam. Islam is a religion of peace. But is this politically-correct approach true? ISIS says it is Islamic, and it has been very much in war mode. What are we to make of this? What is the relationship of ISIS to Islam?

## THE THEOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF ISIS

To answer those questions we need to take a look back at some recent Saudi Arabian history.

Since 1938, when oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia, the Saud family has spent an estimated \$100 billion to spread the cause of conservative fundamentalist Islam called Wahhabi Islam. This is the official religion of Saudi Arabia which considers itself the guardian of Islam since the two most holy places associated with Mohammed are found there: Mecca and Medina.

Wahhabi Islam stems from an 18<sup>th</sup>

century Muslim, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who wanted to restore Islam to its original purity by rejecting all innovations and basing his religious observance strictly on what the Quran and Mohammed taught. Anyone who disagreed was declared an unbeliever and could lawfully be killed as a heretic and apostate. Wahhab died in 1792 but his ideology lives on.

Eventually a Wahhabi sheikh, ibn Saud, captured Riyadh and established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. The brutality of ISIS today has been demonstrated in the past by the Wahhabis. For example, in 1803 the Wahhabis entered the city of Ta'if, close to Mecca and massacred all the Muslim men, and enslaved all the women and children.<sup>1</sup>

Saudi wealth has made Wahhabism go worldwide and mainstream in the Islamic world. Al-Qaeda is simply an especially pernicious outgrowth of Wahhabism, and ISIS in turn is a virulent outgrowth of al-Qaeda.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that "in July 2013, the European Parliament identified Wahhabism as the main source of global terrorism."<sup>3</sup>

So how does Saudi Arabia respond to that? The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, the highest official of religious law in this Muslim country, condemned ISIS in the strongest terms and insisted that, "the ideas of extremism, radicalism and terrorism do not belong to Islam in any way." This could, of course, be purely an exercise in public relations and may be an exercise in using the Muslim right to lie (*taqiya*) in order to advance the cause of Islam.<sup>4</sup>

There may, however, be an element of truth in what the Grand Mufti said. Prior to the rise of Wahhabism, Muslims were reluctant to declare a fellow Muslim an unbeliever (*kafir*), a practice called *takfir*. They would quote the Quran "There must be no coercion in matters of faith" (2:256). However, Wahhabism has now become mainstream fundamentalist Islam, especially through Saudi Arabia's worldwide efforts to export this brand of the faith. The Sauds have done so very effectively, not only in poor Muslim countries, but also in wealthy western nations, especially by building mosques and providing Wahhabi preachers. And so an entire generation of Muslims spread

over the whole world is growing up with this indoctrination. Not surprisingly, Saudi Arabia is in a difficult position over against ISIS. Particularly when you consider that it has encouraged its young men to join recruits from the Arab world to fight in the Islamic Jihad against Russia in Afghanistan in the 1980's (one of whom was Osama Bin Laden). Not surprisingly, Saudi young men have also flocked to ISIS.<sup>5</sup>

## WHY THE SAUDIS OPPOSE ISIS

Many have assumed or claimed that Saudi Arabia, which is of the Sunni branch of Islam, was a patron of ISIS, using ISIS as a pawn to check the rising power of Iran, which is of the Shiite branch of Islam.

While some experts suggest that there's truth to this claim, they also say that it's not quite that simple. Saudi Arabia supports a Wahhabi Islam and has sought to export it, but it did so not just for religious reasons, but especially political. As Wahhabi influence spread, the hope was that those who accepted it would also want to be ruled by Saudi Arabia, the protector of Islam, and so the influence and power of the Saudi nation would expand.

Because of its political, pragmatic approach, Saudi Arabia has had to deal with rebellions and uprisings in its own country from those who saw in its politics a less than faithful adherence to Islam. Al-Qaeda has also launched attacks in Saudi Arabia, back in 2003.

Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia has continued its pragmatic course, seeking to consolidate its own power. This means that it must take exception to the ISIS declaration of a caliphate. After all, Saudi Arabia imagines itself to be the center of any future caliphate – it doesn't want competition for that title from ISIS. It has therefore quietly tried to discourage Saudi fighters from going to ISIS, but it promotes the Wahhabi system that supports them.<sup>6</sup>

So there is a problem here for Saudi Arabia. The declaration of a caliphate has enormous appeal to faithful Muslims who want to answer its call. According to Islam expert Robert Spencer, Islamic theology holds that the caliphate is:

"the Islamic nation, embodying the supranational unity of the Muslim

community worldwide under a single leader, the caliph, or 'successor' of Mohammed as the spiritual, political, and military leader of the Muslims."<sup>7</sup>

So when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed caliph of ISIS, speaks as the caliph, to any who recognize him under that title, he is speaking as a successor of Mohammed, yes, as if he were Mohammed himself. This is powerful stuff, for the Quran repeatedly exhorts Muslims to obey not only Allah, but Mohammed as well.<sup>8</sup> So, reaching across Arab borders, including to tribes in northern Saudi Arabia, ISIS called for the faithful to subject themselves to ISIS.

And so, although theologically similar to ISIS, Saudi Arabia, in order to protect its pretensions to the caliphate and perhaps above all the unity of its country, quickly formed an international alliance against ISIS and declared it a terrorist threat.<sup>9</sup> In February, 2016, Saudi Arabia even decided to send troops against ISIS. Actually Saudi Arabia does not use the term ISIS, for they deny it is the Islamic caliphate. Instead they call ISIS, *Daesh* which is an acronym for the Arabic words: "The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant." In any case, with so much at stake, and with Western air power not defeating ISIS, Saudi Arabia had little choice but to say that they would join in the fight against ISIS by promising to send ground troops. However, it is not clear whether they have actually done so.

With this background into the caliphate and the theological origins of ISIS, we are now ready to address the question of how ISIS relates theologically to Islam. Is

ISIS really Islamic or is it just a terrorist organization?

## ISIS AND MUSLIM SCHOLARSHIP

There are many who say that ISIS is not Islamic, and not just Western leaders, who never tire of calling Islam a religion of peace, but also Islamic scholars, who have distanced themselves from ISIS.

On one occasion more than 120 Muslim scholars from around the world, including the Grand Mufti of Egypt and the Mufti of Jerusalem and All Palestine, condemned ISIS in an open letter to its Caliph, which was released in Washington in 2014. The letter made 24 major points such as that under Islam it is forbidden to kill the innocent, that jihad is a *defensive* war, that it is forbidden to harm or mistreat – in any way – Christians or any "People of the Scripture," that it is forbidden to torture people, etc. All the practices of ISIS were highlighted and denied as being Islamic.<sup>10</sup>

However, one can question both the accuracy of the fanfare accompanying this letter as well as the sincerity of those who signed it. Legitimate questions about the true extent of the condemnation of ISIS can be raised, as has been documented.<sup>11</sup>

A more recent conference that can be mentioned in this context is one that took place in Marrakesh, Morocco in January 2016. It included 300 prominent Islamic clerics and experts from Morocco to Indonesia. It called for more tolerance and quoted the Quran to back up its statements. When you read this "Declaration of Marrakesh," you start to wonder, yes, is Islam not a religion of peace? There are definitely peaceful passages in the Quran.

However, one needs to realize that Islam contains the concept of "abrogation." Simply put that means any later revelation that contradicts an

earlier one *cancels out that earlier one*. As Mark Durie put it in his excellent study, *The Third Choice*:

The Islamic doctrine of jihad is a noted example of the application of abrogation. Verses calling for warfare with unbelievers derive from Muhammad's militant Medinan period, while more peaceful verses derived from the earlier Meccan period, when the Muslims were weak and few in numbers. In accordance with the doctrine of abrogation, Medinan verses take priority over Meccan ones. For example Q9:5 and Q9:29, both in the last chapter of the Quran to be revealed, call for virtually unlimited war against unbelievers. These have been regarded by some Muslim scholars as having abrogated more than a hundred earlier verses which commanded Muslims to deal peacefully with non-believers. Consequently, for most Muslim scholars down the centuries the "Medinan face" of Islam overshadows the "Meccan face."<sup>12</sup>

Muslims do not readily talk about this notion of abrogation. It is to the advantage of Islam and its spread in the West to be known as a religion of peace by quoting selective passages from the Quran which are no longer authoritative because they have been abrogated by passages mandating a hostile attitude to non-Muslims.

The Declaration of Marrakesh was, therefore, not honest in representing Islamic thinking. It may have been well-intentioned but they were fooling themselves if they thought this would make any difference. The Declaration has been virtually ignored in the Muslim world.

## AL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY

Furthermore, it is quite telling and decisive that Sunni Islam's most prestigious center of learning, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, founded about 970 AD, refuses to condemn ISIS. This university expressed



The white banner at the top of the flag reads: "There is no god but Allah. Mohammed is the messenger of Allah." In the white circle underneath it reads "Mohammed is the messenger of God."



outrage at the burning of a Muslim Jordanian pilot by ISIS in early 2015, presumably because he was a Muslim, and even called for the crucifixion of the ISIS terrorists responsible, but it steadfastly refuses to say that ISIS is not Islamic.

Dr. Ahmed al-Tayeb, the Sheikh and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, and thus Egypt's top authority on Islam, said that he could not condemn ISIS. He would only do that if a Muslim rejected the fundamental principles of Islam such as the *shahada* – that there is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger – and Islamic Scriptures. As justification for ISIS tactics, Tayeb quoted the Quran 5:33:

“The only reward of those who make war upon Allah...will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land.”<sup>13</sup>

In light of all this, it is not surprising that in a real sense ISIS is a by-product of Al-Azhar's programs. This is openly admitted. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Nasr, a scholar of Islamic law and a graduate of Al-Azhar University, when asked why the university does not condemn ISIS as un-Islamic, replied:

“It can't [condemn ISIS as un-Islamic]. The Islamic State is a by-product of Al-Azhar's programs. So can Al-Azhar denounce itself as un-Islamic? Al-Azhar says there must be a caliphate and that it is an obligation for the Muslim world [to establish it]. Al-Azhar teaches the law of apostasy and killing the apostate. Al-Azhar is hostile towards religious minorities, and teaches things like not building churches, etc. Al-Azhar upholds the institution of *jizya* [extracting tribute from religious minorities]. Al-Azhar teaches stoning people. So can Al-Azhar denounce itself as un-Islamic?”<sup>14</sup>

Other authoritative voices support these sentiments. For example, “Egyptian political writer Dr. Khalid al-Montaser revealed that Al-Azhar was encouraging enmity for non-Muslims, specifically Coptic Christians, and even inciting for their murder.”

One needs to remember that Al-Azhar is a most renowned and authoritative institution which has a huge influence in the Muslim world. According to Wikipedia it oversees a national network of schools in Egypt with about two million students. In 1996 over 4,000 teaching institutions in Egypt were affiliated with this university.

So why did so many scholars and many others continue to say that ISIS is not Islamic? Why do they continue to deceive the Western world while Muslims in the Middle East say ISIS is Islamic and indeed ISIS itself says it is Islamic and thus calls itself the Islamic State?

It is possible that such scholars are following the Muslim doctrine of *taqiyya*, a teaching held by all branches of Islam. According to this doctrine a Muslim can lie if that is advantageous to him or her or if lying promotes the cause of Islam.<sup>15</sup> It makes sense for Muslims to keep propagating the idea that Islam is a religion of peace in order for it to find a more ready acceptance in the West. The integrity of these scholars must be questioned. It is better to listen to the most authoritative voice on Islam, the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo. It rightly considers the Islamic State to be truly Islamic. A look at the evidence from the Quran and its application in ISIS makes that clear.

### THE ISLAMIC STATE AND THE QURAN

ISIS accepts the Quran as authoritative and thus understands it at face value according to the plain meaning of the text. This simple acceptance of the most holy text of Islam finds resonance and acceptance among the Muslim masses.<sup>16</sup>

### ISLAMIC WITH ITS BEHEADINGS

ISIS has repeatedly cut off the heads of Westerners and others they consider their enemies. Not only did they behead, but



they filmed and distributed the gruesome scenes on social media.

Why?

It is all justified from the Quran. “When you meet the unbelievers, strike the necks” or “Smite at their necks” (47:4). This is in the context of battle for Allah. Furthermore, beheading was something Mohammed himself sanctioned. One example Andrew Bostom shares from 627 AD:

“According to Muhammad's sacralized biography by Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad himself sanctioned the massacre of the Qurayza, a vanquished Jewish tribe.... Thus some 600 to 900 men from the Qurayza were [led] on Muhammad's order to the Market of Medina. Trenches were dug and the men were beheaded, and their decapitated corpses buried in the trenches while Muhammad watched in attendance.”<sup>17</sup>

ISIS is following the example of Mohammed. The filming of beheadings also fulfills the requirements of the Quran which states “strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of Allah” (8:6).

### ISLAMIC AS REGARDS SEX SLAVES

Another atrocity committed by ISIS is their capturing non-Muslim women and using them as sex slaves. The Quran allows this practice. It says that in addition to having two to four wives, Muslim men may enjoy the “captives of the right hand.” “It

is a decree of Allah for you" (4:3; 4:24). These women were taken as spoils of war (33:50) and were to be used specifically for sexual purposes. The Quran says that virtuous Muslims "abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess. For in their case they are free from blame" [i.e. free from the blame of sexual sin] (23:5-6). It is no problem if the women they capture are already married. Islamic law directs that "when a child or a woman is taken captive, they become slaves by the fact of capture, and the woman's previous marriage is immediately annulled."

ISIS does nothing new in capturing women to serve their sexual appetite. They say that they are simply reviving an institution justified under Sharia, that is, Islamic law. Indeed, the practice of female sex slaves is openly defended among Muslim scholars in the Middle East as being fully in accord with the Quran. If a single man cannot do without a woman, religious experts advise that he should purchase a sex slave. Then he will not sin. ISIS has sex slave markets where women from defeated infidels can be brought to be sold.

This mindset explains why Boko Haram, the Nigerian terrorist group allied with ISIS, captured over 200 non-Muslim girls and pressed them into sex slavery. The going price of a slave was about \$170. It is also not by chance that in many areas of the West where large numbers of young Muslim men now live, sex trafficking and rape have become major problems. Non-Muslim girls are considered fair game for those who wish to capture for Allah.

### *ISLAMIC IN ITS PUNISHMENTS*

The horrific punishments that ISIS inflicts on those it captures and those caught "sinning" can also be defended as justified by the Quran which states:

"The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in the

world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom" (5:33-34).

Accordingly in ISIS, blasphemy against Allah or Mohammed is punished by death. Murder accompanied with stealing means death and the crucifixion of the dead body. Stealing is punished by the amputation of the right hand and the left leg. Elsewhere, stealing is punished by amputation of the hands.

"As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands. It is the reward of their own deeds, an exemplary punishment from Allah" (5:38).

Adulterers are to be stoned to death, fornicators are to be given a hundred lashes and exile. Stoning for adultery is based on the hadith – the sayings of Mohammed. The stoning of an adulterer can be done on the basis of witness, or pregnancy, or confession. Homosexual behavior is to be punished by death according to another hadith.

Other crimes deserving punishment within ISIS include drinking alcohol. According to a hadith, someone caught drinking such forbidden liquid is given 80 lashes. Slanderers also get 80 lashes. The Quran says:

"And those who accuse honorable women but bring not four witnesses, scourge them (with) eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their testimony - They indeed are evil-doers."

Those caught spying for unbelievers are to be put to death according to the Quran. And apostates too:

"They wish you would disbelieve as they disbelieved so you would be alike. So do not take from among them allies until they emigrate for the cause of Allah. But if they turn away, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them and take not from among them any ally or helper" (4:89).

As mentioned earlier, ISIS burned a Jordanian alive while locked up in a cage on February 3, 2015. Some Muslims have

condemned this as un-Islamic and even forbidden. There is indeed an Islamic tradition, or hadith, which forbids it, saying that only God tortures with fire. However, as happens so often in Islam, there is a contradictory hadith that depicts Mohammed as saying that "those who don't answer the call to prayer should be set on fire, along with their houses." The burning of the pilot can even be justified from the Quran. It says: "and if you do punish [an enemy], then punish with the equivalent of that with which you were harmed" (16:126). As ISIS explained in their on-line English language propaganda magazine:

"In burning the crusader pilot alive and burying him under a pile of debris, the Islamic State carried out a just form of retaliation for his involvement in the crusader bombing campaign which continues to result in the killing of countless Muslims who, as a result of these air strikes, are burned alive and buried under mountains of debris."

This statement was followed by proof from the Quran and Islamic tradition.

More generally, the Quran tells Muslims to kill all those who turn away from Islam (4:89). This would include all Muslims fighting with the Western powers against ISIS.

There is no question that ISIS is brutal. However, the brutality of ISIS punishments is a true reflection of Mohammed's own record of cruelty and many of the crimes punished with death in ISIS are also punished with death in Saudi Arabia. These include the death penalty for adultery, armed robbery, sorcery, heresy, spying, and for anyone who does not desist from his crime, and from whose evil civil society can be saved only by their death.<sup>18</sup>

### *ISLAMIC IN ITS TAX ON CHRISTIANS*

In accordance with the Quran, ISIS also demands that Christians pay a special tax. It is the *jizya* tax. The Quran states that "the People of the Book" (which includes Jews and Christians) "pay the *jizya* with willing submission" until they "feel themselves subdued" (9:29).

This tax is to be imposed on virtually all

non-Muslim mature males who live in a Muslim majority country. In the Wikipedia entry on *jizya* it is described as:

“a fee for protection provided by the Muslim ruler to non-Muslims, for the permission to practice a non-Muslim faith with some communal autonomy in a Muslim state, and as material proof of the non-Muslims’ submission to the Muslim state and its laws. *Jizya* has also been rationalized by some as a symbol of the humiliation of the non-Muslims in a Muslim state for not converting to Islam.”<sup>19</sup>

One needs to remember that this special tax within its historical context was basically one of three choices that non-Muslims can make. The other two choices were to convert to Islam, or to be killed.

There is one further way in which ISIS is truly Islamic and firmly built on Islamic tradition – its view of the end times.

#### ISLAMIC REGARDING THE END TIMES

Unlike other terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, ISIS believes that the final day is near. References to the end times fill the propaganda of ISIS. As author William McCants shares in his book *The*

*ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*: “It’s a big selling point with foreign fighters who want to travel to the lands where the final battles of the apocalypse will take place.”

The civil wars raging in the Middle East give credibility to the prophecies. As McCants notes, “The Islamic State has stoked the apocalyptic fire. Its fighters died to capture the militarily unimportant town of Dabiq, Syria, because it’s mentioned in the prophecies.”<sup>20</sup>

The approaching final Day of Judgment means that the Middle East and Europe need to be and will be conquered for ISIS’s vision of Islam according to Islamic

## DOES THE BIBLE DEMAND THE DEATH PENALTY FOR ADULTERERS AND HOMOSEXUALS? by Cornelis Van Dam

When ISIS kills adulterers and homosexuals, it correctly claims that it is acting according to Sharia law. Those defending Islam say that in this respect the Bible is no different. After all, it states that adulterers and homosexuals should be put to death:

“If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.... If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:10, 13).

So, on the face of it both the Bible and Sharia law demand death to adulterers and homosexuals. Should we therefore support the death penalty for these offences?

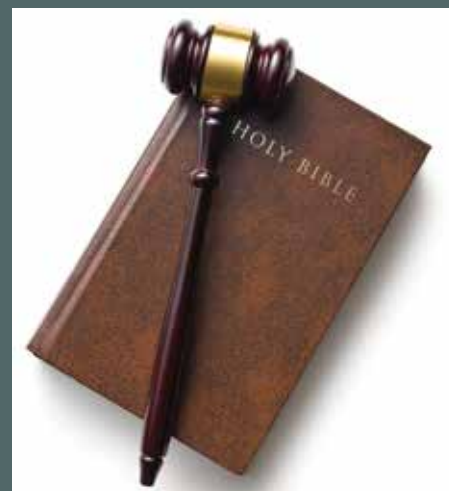
God gave these laws to Old Testament Israel, his chosen covenant nation, the church in those days. Israel was a theocracy. Church and state were one. Sin was an affront to God. Those who fell into sin and persisted in it would therefore be breaking their relationship with the LORD. He therefore demanded that such people be placed outside the nation of Israel. In the Old Testament such severing of the bond with his people was done with the

death penalty. This was the maximum penalty for sinning against any of God’s commands. In this way unrepentant sinners were excommunicated or placed outside the people of God, the church. With death as the maximum penalty for sin God mercifully and graphically pictured for his people the radical consequences of sin. Sin means death and eternal separation from God.

Today God also forbids adultery and homosexual sin (Rom. 1; Heb. 13:4). However, the church is no longer identical to a particular nation. Church and state are now separate institutions. Christ clearly stated that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). He therefore did not give the church the power to put to death unrepentant sinners.

But he did give his church the authority to place such people outside the fellowship of believers (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-5). If there is no repentance such expulsion eventually means suffering eternal death and separation from the God of life. So in principle, excommunication from the fellowship of the church in the New Testament is the same as the death penalty in the Old Testament. In both cases unrepentant sinners are expelled from God’s people.

Does the Bible say that adulterers and homosexuals should be put to



death today? The answer is no. We no longer live in a theocracy in which the Mosaic law is enforced with capital punishment. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. He allows both the good and the wicked to grow together until the day of judgment (Matt. 13:36-43). The state has the power of the sword (Rom. 13:4) but it has no mandate from God to put unrepentant adulterers and homosexuals to death. The state can tolerate what the church is unable to countenance.

*For more on this issue see my books “The Elder” (2009) pages 83-85, and 173-176, as well as “God and Government” (2011) pages 66-77.*



## KEY DATES

For some context, here are some key political dates as Robert Spencer details in his book *The Complete Infidel's Guide to ISIS*.

- 1928 The Muslim Brotherhood is founded in order to restore the caliphate.
- 1979 The Islamic Revolution in Iran.
- 2001 Sept 11, Al-Qaeda attacks New York & the Pentagon. The US invades Afghanistan.
- 2003 The US invades Iraq; Jordanian jihadist, Zarqawi, leads an insurgency and foreign jihadists flock to him.
- 2004 Zarqawi aligns himself with Al-Qaeda.
- 2006 Zarqawi is killed. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is now called Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).
- 2011 Arab Spring protests spread to Syria; civil war breaks out. Jihadists from ISI join the fight against Assad, president of Syria.
- 2013 ISI renames itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/al-Sham (ISIL or ISIS).
- 2014 While Sunni tribes and Shia forces fight in Iraq, ISIS seizes Fallujah in Iraq.
- Feb ISIS and al-Qaeda officially split.
- June ISIS seizes much of northern Iraq, creates 500,000 refugees, seizes American military equipment and half a billion dollars; declares a new caliphate called Islamic State (IS) on June 29.
- July The new Caliph Ibrahim (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) rallies the world-wide ummah (i.e. the community of the Muslims) to fight "the camp of the Jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of *kufr* [unbelievers], all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the Jews." ISIS attacks Kobani and Kurds, enslaving many Yazidi girls and women.
- 2015 March, Boko Haram (Islamist group in Nigeria) pledges allegiance to ISIS.
- May A UN report indicates that more than 25,000 jihadists from all over the world have flocked to ISIS or al-Qaeda and the numbers are rising sharply.
- Aug ISIS destroys historic city of Palmyra in Syria.
- Dec Iraqi troops retake Ramadi from ISIS.
- 2016 Campaign to retake Mosul from ISIS starts.
- 2017 Campaign to retake Raqqa, the capital of ISIS begins
- June Mosul is retaken by coalition forces.

prophecies, found in the *hadith*, and not the Quran. Such thinking fuels enormous energy and enthusiasm, especially among the young. They are convinced that the day of victory is in sight. They also think that the Left in Europe will help them achieve their goals. This type of thinking drives young jihadists from the comforts of the West to fight for ISIS and to carry out terrorist attacks in the West.

### IS THE ISLAMIC STATE A CALIPHATE?

Connected with the question whether ISIS is truly Islamic is the issue of the caliphate. Once a caliphate is proclaimed, many believe it is the duty of Muslims to flock to it and join it. As Robert Spencer writes:

"The caliphate is an obligation, that is, Muslims should strive to establish a single multinational, multiethnic empire, to which alone they owe political loyalty. In other words they owe no loyalty to the nations in which they currently reside."<sup>21</sup>

Young jihadists have answered the call and thousands from the Western world have flocked to ISIS. In the Islamic world, jihadists have come from the Sinai, Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Somalia.

Although ISIS is surely Islamic, not much in the way of official endorsement has been forthcoming from Muslim countries or scholars. This lack of enthusiasm for ISIS is mainly for political reasons.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a large international Muslim organization dedicated to the promotion and dominance of Islam in the world, with the use of terror as necessary. Yet, it is not recognizing ISIS simply because it also wants a caliphate, but one over which it has control.<sup>22</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood's ambitions came clearly to the fore

when it gained power in Egypt. It immediately pushed a rapid Islamization of Egypt which created serious public opposition. In the end the Muslim Brotherhood was thwarted by the army which rightly saw democracy disappearing under the Brotherhood's agenda and so removed Mohamed Morsi from the presidency. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the head of Egypt's armed forces became president.

Saudi Arabia formed a 34-state coalition against the Islamic State in December 2015, and ISIS in turn declared war on Saudi Arabia. There is some irony in all of this since, as we have seen, Saudi Arabia is to a large extent responsible for the export of radical Islamic ideology. Since Saudi Arabia considers itself the leader of the Muslim world, it does not like to be upstaged by ISIS. Furthermore, since Saudi Arabia and ISIS have competing claims to leadership of the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia is rightly concerned about ISIS terrorist activity in its own country. What ISIS would love to do is to take over the two most holy sites of Islam, both of which are in Saudi Arabia, namely, Mecca and Medina.<sup>23</sup>

When one realizes that the refusal to recognize the ISIS caliphate is mainly for political reasons and not because it is unfaithful to the Quran, the question arises whether a truly moderate Islam is possible.

### IS A MODERATE ISLAM POSSIBLE?

There is a good deal of controversy about this point.

On the one hand you can defend that a moderate Islam is possible. Historically, there has been a form of Islamic government that is not as cruel and barbaric as ISIS. One can think of medieval times when Jews fled persecution in Christian Europe by going to the Islamic Ottoman Empire. Turkey became home to Jews expelled from Hungary in 1376, from France in 1394 and from

Sicily in the early 15th century.<sup>24</sup>

However, moderate Islam is difficult to find today. It is true that Islam has to sort out their problems with ISIS. No one outside Islam can do that. But, the question can rightly be asked, where is moderate Islam over against all the atrocities of ISIS? The silence from the Islamic community is deafening. Where is moderate Islam 14 years after 9/11? There are a handful of Islamic scholars that speak up and protest, but as Robert Spencer comments:

“what they offer is a non-traditional Islam with no foundation in Islamic theology or history, and no significant backing among Muslims. There is no large-scale movement among moderate Muslims to combat the Islamic State, Boko Harmam, and other jihadists.... [Indeed] there is no moderate Muslim organization with a large membership or influence among Muslims.”<sup>25</sup>

When one looks at Islamic-majority countries, the outlook is not very good. Turkey, although a member of NATO, is being Islamized. Its president, Erdoğan is succeeding in turning Turkey away from its secular past into an Islamic state. Christians are seen as second-class citizens and Christianity is on the verge of extinction. The Armenian genocide and the continued marginalization of Christians has left them with a mere 0.2% of the population. There are only 34 church buildings and no new church buildings are allowed.<sup>26</sup>

Nowhere in Muslim nations do Christians have the same rights and freedoms as Muslims have in the West. Some exceptions may exist in certain local or provincial situations where there is a larger Christian population, as in Indonesia. But these are the exceptions indeed. Wherever Islam has the majority, the world over, it is intolerant to Christianity.

So, is a moderate Islam possible? Not really if they are true to their teachings.

This reality should send a warning message to the West. One could say, “Well the Muslims I know are not like that. They are moderate and peaceful.”

Two comments on this.

First, most Muslims are nominal Muslims and most have probably never read the Quran which is difficult to understand. It does not interpret itself as the Bible does. It is also written in ancient Arabic, the preferred language for reading it. Many Muslims have a copy of the Quran in translation but few appear to have read it.

Second, Muslims are now a minority, but once they have a high enough percentage in the population, trouble starts and demands for Sharia law are sounded. Basic to their ideology is the need to convert the world to Islam. The current friendly neighborhood Muslim may not be interested, but, when the time comes, the mosque may demand that he or she participate to increase the influence of Islam by whatever means the mosque deems necessary. That process is already starting in many parts of Europe.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

There are telltale signs that Islamic intolerance is now extending into the Western world. In the Netherlands, for example, open protests and marches to demand Islamic domination in Dutch society take place. The most obvious example of Islamic intolerance is the existence of so-called “no-go” zones where only Muslims are welcome. They are more and more prevalent in Europe. In such zones Sharia or Islamic law trumps the law of the land. Here are some facts about Islamic no-go zones in Europe.

#### FRANCE

The French government has acknowledged the existence of many no-go zones in their country. As Soeren Kern has reported:

“In October 2011, a 2,200-page report, ‘Banlieue de la République’ (Suburbs of the Republic) found that Seine-Saint-Denis and other Parisian suburbs are becoming ‘separate Islamic societies’ cut off from the French state and where Islamic Sharia law is rapidly displacing French civil law. The report also showed how the problem is being exacerbated by radical Muslim preachers who are promoting the social marginalization of Muslim immigrants in order to create a

parallel Muslim society in France that is ruled by Sharia law.”<sup>27</sup>

One needs to realize that this is over six years ago. The situation is much worse today.

Here is a typical comment from Fabrice Balanche, a well-known French Islam scholar. He said: “You have territories in France . . . such as northern Marseille, where police will not step foot, where the authority of the state is completely absent, where mini Islamic states have been formed.”<sup>28</sup> This is consistent with the ideology of ISIS and Islam.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

Similar things are being said in Britain. The Gatestone Institute’s Soeren Kern writes:

“A study by Oxford Professor David Coleman showed that if current immigration levels continue, white Britons will be a minority in little more than 50 years – within the lifespan of most young adults alive today. Coleman warned that this will be accompanied by a total change in national identity – cultural, political, economic and religious. He wrote: ‘The ethnic transformation implicit in current trends would be a major, unlooked-for, and irreversible change in British society, unprecedented for at least a millennium.’”

There are already over a 100 Islamic enclaves in Britain.<sup>29</sup> Here Sharia law would be the norm. Again, this is consistent with Islamic State ideals and the ideals of Islam generally. Islam needs to take over the world.

However, political correctness means you must not talk about this. As a matter of fact when Donald Trump back in 2015 spoke of no-go zones in Britain and said: “We have places in London and other places that are so radicalized that police are afraid for their own lives” a government sponsored petition was launched to ban him from entry to the UK. Police officers, however, retaliated with backing up Trump’s claims completely and letting them be published.<sup>30</sup>



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Terrorist attacks in Britain this year underline Britain's vulnerability.

### NORTH AMERICA

More examples from Europe could be given, but let's move to North America. Although the mainstream politically-correct media do not report or deny any danger of no-go zones in America, there are three urban areas that almost qualify as no-go zones: Dearborn, Michigan (near Detroit); Paterson, New Jersey; and the Muslim quarter of Jersey City, New Jersey (just outside New York across the Hudson River).

These are communities that do not want to integrate or assimilate. Robert Spencer, an expert on Islam told a news agency that there are no no-go zones in America right now,

"but they're coming as the Muslim population grows.... We already see areas such as Dearborn, Michigan: It isn't a no-go zone – police don't fear to enter there and non-Muslims aren't menaced for non-adherence to Sharia norms – but police did the bidding of the Muslim community a couple of years ago and arrested some Christian missionaries solely for the crime of preaching to Muslims. A Sharia crime, not a crime according to any U.S. law."<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, these evangelical Christians were attacked with rocks and bottles by a Muslim crowd for talking about their faith on public property during an annual Arab festival.<sup>32</sup> In another report we read:

"Hamtramck, Michigan now has a city council that is majority Muslim. The call to Muslim prayer is broadcast five times a day over the entire city, with the first blast launching at 6 am every day whether Christian residents are offended by it or not. Am I saying Hamtramck is a no-go zone? Of course not. Am I saying that if something isn't done, it will become one? If there is anything to learn from Europe, the answer to that question is an unequivocal yes."<sup>33</sup>

Obviously all of this has a message for Canada as well. We need to be far more realistic about our multiculturalism and immigration policies. Those entering our country from Muslim countries should be asked whether they wish to integrate into Canadian society. If not, they should normally not be admitted. Canada as the host country has the right to maintain its historic Judeo-Christian identity.<sup>34</sup>

### CONCLUSION

ISIS has a close relationship to Islam. It has justified all its actions from the Quran and Islamic tradition. The top Islamic university in the world does not deny the Islamic character of ISIS or its right to exist. Those Muslims who do challenge its right to exist, do so for selfish or political reasons. ISIS is Islamic, whether our politically-correct society wants to acknowledge it or not.

Is there such a thing as a moderate Islam that can be more amenable to Western ways so that it can integrate into Western society? The bottom line seems to be that it is very difficult if not impossible for Muslims to be moderate if they are serious about their faith. The Islamic faith demands to be dominant and rule. It is part of their theology. The religious and the political go together. They cannot be separated. ISIS has illustrated that, and the spreading of no-go zones in Europe, and ISIS-sponsored terrorist attacks confirm it. It is foolish to ignore this reality. Those modern Muslims who do not frequent the

mosque and are Muslim in name only are not recognized as Muslim by the faithful and so they have very little or no influence.

Even if ISIS were to be completely defeated in the Middle East it would probably continue to have a global impact and continue to plant terrorist cells in many nations as long as the funding is there. The jihadists are willing to fight and die for the cause. Western nations need to be vigilant. They must also ensure that those immigrating from Islamic majority countries are interested in integrating into Western society.

It is, of course, also important to work with Muslim organizations that do wish to honor key Western values. One example of such an entity is the Muslim Canadian Congress which was established by Tarek Fatah, who writes critical commentary on Islamic matters for the *Toronto Sun* and opposes Sharia law. A problem is that those Muslims who are sympathetic to the ideals of ISIS will not recognize another Muslim or Muslim organization that does not follow their understanding of the dictates of the Quran.

A huge obstacle to openly discussing the issues that radical Islam presents is political correctness. The challenges need to be discussed openly, for the Islamic dream of a caliphate that ISIS embodied will not disappear. This dream has significant influence among Canada's Muslims, especially the idealistic and fervent young.

### THE ONLY ANSWER

At the end of the day, the only real solution for Islam is the gospel. That is why it is important to support mission efforts to Islamic peoples at home and abroad. When an open-minded Muslim reads Scripture, the Spirit works and the Muslim is, so to speak, blown away. God is love! That is gospel, exciting good news, for those who only know of a distant and stern Allah. This concept of a loving God and Father is so important in reaching out to Muslims. When I was in northern (Muslim) Sudan some years ago, I visited the Muhaba Centre for boys aged 11-13. These are orphaned street boys who are given shelter, food and a Christian education. Within the Muslim context, the sign above the door made a deep impression on me:



"God is Love." There is forgiveness of sins! There is assurance of salvation for all who believe! All these concepts are foreign to a Muslim. When they understand them, they are overwhelmed. An example of that is Nabeel Qureshi who earnestly sought to be faithful to Islam and in the process was led to faith in Christ. He wrote a book about it, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* (2014). The Lord gathers his church also from Muslim nations. Some of that activity has been described by David Garrison in his study, *A Wind in the House of Islam* (2014). The Middle East Reformed Fellowship also receives much positive feedback to the gospel in its broadcasts.

While the dream of radical Islam will probably live on beyond ISIS, Christians have a future that is no mere dream, but a guaranteed reality. We have a Savior who rules in glory. He is sovereign. God the Father has given to him all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18). He gathers together his people, not with terrorist tactics, but with the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). And when the complete number of the

elect has been gathered, he will return! As Christians we can rest assured that at the end of the day, Christ will triumph over all forces arrayed against him, including Islam. The victory will be his! RP

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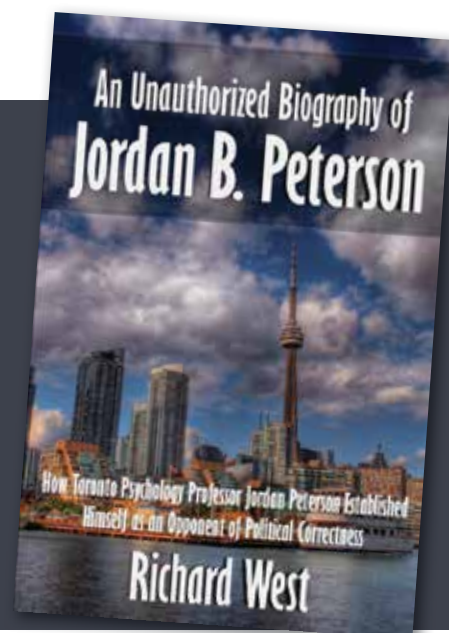
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# Peterson is not PC

## Professor Jordan Peterson's rebellion against Political Correctness

by Michael Wagner



On September 27, 2016, a star was born. On that date, Jordan B. Peterson, a psychology professor at the University of Toronto, posted a video to his YouTube channel condemning political correctness. In particular, he criticized Bill C-16 which added "gender expression" and "gender identity" to federal human rights legislation as well as to hate propaganda provisions of the Criminal Code. The video soon received thousands of views and catapulted Peterson into the vanguard of opposition to political correctness in Canada.

The political correct view he was opposing was that of calling people by made up pronouns like "ze" and "vis." He refused, absolutely, even though, under Bill C-16, which passed in June, that may get him in real trouble. His stand was not popular among the fashionable left and many academics and political activists were and are demanding that Jordan Peterson be silenced and punished. Opposition to political correctness is very politically incorrect.

A short book about Peterson and the controversy he has generated was published earlier this year. Written by Richard West, the book is entitled: *An Unauthorized Biography of Jordan B. Peterson: How Toronto Psychology Professor Jordan Peterson Established Himself as an Opponent of Political Correctness*.

### PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Jordan Peterson was born in Fairview, Alberta, and lived there until he went to

college. As a teenager, Peterson became close friends with his local Member of the Legislative Assembly, Grant Notley. Notley was the leader of the provincial socialist party, the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP). Peterson became an NDP activist and got to know Grant Notley's daughter Rachel, who would later become Premier of Alberta.

Peterson was brought up in a Protestant church-going home, but he abandoned Christianity because he could not reconcile the Bible's account of Creation with Evolution. He subsequently developed a keen interest in books and politics. West writes:

"At thirteen, he started reading serious political books. Authors of interest included Ayn Rand, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and George Orwell – three authors who warned against the evils of collectivism and totalitarianism."

Reading and studying politics eventually caused him to see through the false promises of socialism. As West puts it:

"His faith in socialism specifically and ideology generally was finally undone by George Orwell's book, *Road to Wigan Pier*. The book impressed upon him the possibility that socialists were those who hated the rich – not those who loved the poor."

After high school Peterson attended Grande Prairie College where he studied

Political Science. However, he became increasingly interested in Psychology and headed to the University of Alberta, graduating in 1984 with both a B.A. in Political Science and a B.A. in Psychology. Then it was off to McGill University, where he received his PhD in clinical psychology in 1991.

### SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC LIFE

Peterson was very successful in his academic career and became a visiting professor at Harvard University in 1993. He remained at Harvard for five years and then took up his current position at the University of Toronto where he became quite popular. West writes:

"Over time, he became a student favorite. Before he had a cult following on the Internet, Peterson had a cult following on the University of Toronto campus."

Peterson's success included publishing dozens of academic papers and appearing on TVO (originally known as TVOntario) numerous times. In 2013 he began posting videos of his lectures on YouTube. His videos received many views, likely mostly from students.

In March 2016 he made a short video asking viewers to financially support his work through Patreon, a crowdfunding platform. Support began to trickle in, but it soared after he began attacking political correctness. By July 2017, the *Toronto Star* reported he was receiving over \$45,000 per month from crowdfunding alone.

## THE VIDEO

As mentioned, at the end of September 2016, he released his now famous video criticizing Bill C-16. With this law, refusing to refer to people by their preferred pronoun (e.g. “ze,” “vis,” “hir”) could be considered a form of discrimination and harassment. West notes:

“Peterson made it clear in his video that he would not comply with requests that he use the preferred pronouns of individuals including transgendered persons. He acknowledged that not only would not using someone’s preferred pronouns be considered discrimination under the new human rights legislation, but it would also be deemed a form of hate speech.”

This video soon received tens of thousands of views and captured the media’s attention. Many people supported Peterson’s views but the academic establishment and the University of Toronto administration were outraged.

Early in October, the chair of the

university’s Department of Psychology wrote a letter to Peterson stating, “I wish to remind you that in your activities as a University of Toronto faculty member you are expected to comply with applicable human rights law.” Opposing the compulsory acceptance of transgender pronouns was seen as a potential violation of “human rights.”

Later in October, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and the Vice-Provost of Faculty and Academic Life sent him another letter to ask him to use “non-binary pronouns.” It also suggested – ominously – that failing to toe the party line could undermine his ability to fulfill his job.

## DEBATE

Peterson suggested that a public debate over the issue be held. This suggestion was resisted by faculty members such as Physics professor A.W. Peet who said, “Gender identity of real-life people is actually not up for debate.”

Nevertheless, a public debate was held at the university on November 19. He faced two opponents: another professor

from the University of Toronto and a professor from the University of British Columbia. As part of his final point Peterson stated:

“I regard these made-up pronouns – all of them – as the neologisms of radical PC authoritarianism. I’m not going to be a mouthpiece for language that I detest.”

## STANDARD BEARER

Peterson’s public and uncompromising opposition to transgender pronoun police has garnered considerable public support. His willingness to continue his fight in the face of frequent accusations of “hate speech” and “intolerance” has made him a hero to many people. Clearly, he is a man to be admired. As West puts it:

“Dr. Peterson’s refusal to use state-mandated pronouns is a form of civil disobedience, and his willingness to risk his career and reputation has made him a powerful advocate for free speech in Canada.”

# DR. PETERSON ON.... *by Jon Dykstra*

## ON OUTWITTING THE OBSTRUCTIONISTS

At a talk at Harvard in mid-April earlier this year Dr. Jordan Peterson shared advice on how we can bring back civility to our public debates.

The Bible says when we are seeking out the truth, it is important to hear both sides (Proverbs 18:17) but on many college campuses that isn’t possible. Disruption-minded protesters show up and shout down the speaker they don’t like with chants about how, “We respect free speech...but this is *hate* speech!” This make discussion impossible.

So how can we create room for discussion and debate on university campuses? Dr. Peterson outlined just how easy it would be.

“I will tell you how serious the protesters are...Some of you may know that I participated in a debate on free speech...that the University of Toronto hosted....But one of the

things I did when I was talking with the university administration was to suggest how they might deal with the possibility of protesters. So I said, well that’s easy, I know how you can have absolutely zero protesters. Have it in the morning and they won’t get out of bed in time. So we had it at 9 o’clock in the morning and there was one MPP - Member of Parliament - who showed up to hand out some pamphlets, and not a single protester. So it’s like, if you want to have a controversial speech, just have it at 7 AM in the morning. You won’t get a protester within 50 yards of it because they’ll still be sleeping off last night’s pot and alcohol-induced hangover.”

## ON THE NEED FOR STANDING YOUR GROUND

We can often make compromises. In fact when what’s at stake is an issue of preference, it’s important we be willing

to compromise – that’s how we all get along, by doing to others what you would want them to do to (Luke 6:31), giving a little and meeting in the middle.

But when it is a matter of right vs. wrong, it’s vital we don’t give an inch. If it is a matter of truth vs. lies, then we cannot compromise, not even in the name of





In fact, West sees Peterson's widespread support as being situated within a larger cultural phenomenon:

"Dr. Peterson's work seems to be part of a broader trend in North America and Europe, whereby voters are reacting against excessive political correctness."


Peterson continues to appear in YouTube videos discussing a wide range of topics. His perspective is deeply informed and usually conservative. However, he is not a Bible-believing Christian and

therefore gets some important things wrong. He doesn't think, at least at this time, that abortion should be made illegal.

But it's also important to note that it is not his abortion position for which he is being attacked. It isn't on what he is getting wrong, but on what he has gotten right that he is the target of so many.

## CONCLUSION

Jordan Peterson represents an important form of resistance to the leftwing cultural and political juggernaut. His leadership inspires others to stand

against the tide, and Peterson provides his supporters with well-thought-out reasons to oppose politically-correct attitudes and beliefs. He has considerable credibility due to his academic stature and cannot be "brushed off" as a fringe figure. Although he is not a Christian, his perspective on transgender pronouns parallels the Christian perspective (sex is binary), as does his opposition to political correctness generally, and therefore his cause is worthy of support. 

compassion, love or grace (Jesus showed that grace and truth need to be paired, not pitted against one another (John 1:14-17)). So we must hold our ground, and we can't give it up, even if it only seems a little compromise at the time. Or as Dr. Peterson explained in an interview on the *Joe Rogan Experience* (Nov. 28, 2016):

"Things get to terrible places, one tiny step at a time. If I encroach on you, and I'm sophisticated about it, I'm going to encroach 2 millimeters. I'm going to encroach right to the point where you start to protest, then I'm going to stop. Then I'm going to wait. Then you're going to calm down. Then I'm going to encroach again, right to the point where you protest, then I'm going to stop. Then I'm going to wait...and I'm just going to do that forever. And before you know it, you're going to be back 3 miles from where you started and you'll have done it one step at a time. And then you'll go 'Oh, how did I get here?' And the answer was, 'Well, I pushed you a little farther than you should have gone...and you agreed! And so then I pushed you a little farther than you should have gone again...and you agreed!'"

### ON THE TACTICS OF THE POLITICALLY-CORRECT LEFT

How do small fringe groups on the Left (like transgender activists) manage such a disproportionate influence in our culture? In an Oct. 5, 2016 video, on his "Jordan B Peterson" YouTube channel, Dr. Peterson outlines the tactics they use:

1. Identify an area of human activity.

2. Note a distribution of success. Identify winners and losers.
3. Claim that the losers are losing only because they are oppressed by the winners.
4. Claim allegiance with the losers.
5. Feel secure in your comprehensive explanation of the world.
6. Revel in your moral superiority.
7. Target your resentment towards your newly discovered enemies.
8. Repeat. Forever. Everywhere.

In the name of compassion, these social justice warriors are breaking the Tenth Commandment, coveting their neighbor's success.

### ON WHETHER HE IS A CHRISTIAN

Jordan Peterson is courageous, and when it comes to issues like gender, socialism, and resisting PC pressure, his stands have a lot in common with what we read in the Bible. And he talks about the Bible a lot too, using phrases like "For all intents and purposes I believe that the Logos is Divine." He has a popular video series devoted to delving into the Bible. And he's described himself as Christian.

So is he? Is Dr. Peterson a Christian?

When the question is put to him, he has a hard time answering. *The Spectator's* Tim Lott put it to him (in a video interview published to the "Jordan B Peterson Clips" YouTube channel on August 1, 2017) and Lott was not satisfied with Peterson's initial hesitant "Yes," so he asked for clarification. The ellipses in the dialogue that follows indicate pauses of a few seconds each as Dr. Peterson considers the questions.

LOTT: "Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Literally?"

PETERSON: "...I find that I cannot answer that question. And the reason is because...okay, let me think about it for a minute and see if I can come up with a reasonable answer to that. The first answer is, it depends on what you mean by Jesus."

LOTT: "A historical human being that existed in a body."

PETERSON: "It was a physical body, and it was on earth?"

LOTT: "Yes, that it was on earth, and it literally came back to life, after death."

PETERSON: "...I would say that at the moment I'm agnostic about that issue... which is a lot different from saying that I don't believe it happened."

Dr. Peterson is *not* a Christian – he doesn't know if Christ rose, and he is not turning to Jesus to pay for his sins. He is not a Christian.

Is that important to know?

It may well be. Peterson's courage has made him a hero to many. And because he often talks *like* a Christian, some might well be confused into thinking that Dr. Peterson has more wisdom than he really possesses. So it is important to note that, even as we appreciate his courage and his common sense in matters of gender, he does have feet of clay. He is not standing on the firm foundation of God's Word.

Understanding that, we can also pray that God opens his eyes to the reality of the resurrection, and to his need for the Savior.



by Rob Slane

# NO SATISFACTION

## James' Epistle On Pornography

If I were to do a sample of readers to ask what they think is the driver behind pornography, my guess is that the most common answer would be just one word: *lust*.

As far as it goes, this is true. But we need to get behind that word, so to speak, to find out what we actually mean by it. A good place to start is by studying the words of James in his Epistle:

“From whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust **and have not**. You kill, and desire to have, and **cannot obtain**. You fight and war, **yet you have not**, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:1-3).

I have bolded out three phrases here, because it seems to me that they are key to understanding lust (and incidentally not just lust, but all sorts of other sins that James alludes to). Now, I don't always use the King James Version but did here, because it uses the word “lust” where other translations use “passions” or “desires.” “Lust” gives the better flavoring here, because while desires and passions can be both good or bad, lust is what happens when passions and desires go awry, which is what is happening here.

Lust, according to James, is at root a desire to have something that we haven't

got and which isn't rightfully ours, to seek to obtain it but always fall wide of the mark, and consequently to fail to be satisfied. It is a vicious circle in which failure to obtain the satisfaction we desire drives us to seek it again in other places.

This, by the way, at least partly explains why pornography, as with drugs, is often a gateway habit, with users going on to seek harder and harder stuff in order to be satisfied. But of course true satisfaction never comes.

### SEXUAL DESIRE ISN'T BAD, UNTIL PORN TWISTS IT

Like all other vices, pornography is driven by the twisting of good and noble inclinations in a direction to which they were never meant to go. Pardon the pun, but there are no “original sins.” There is “Original Sin,” but there are no “original sins” in the sense of actions that are entirely thought up by the devil or by man with no reference to God. Rather, all sins are perversions and mockeries of something good that God has given to man.

Imagine a father who buys his son a toy drum, only to later find him using the stick to whack his little sister. The stick was meant to be whacked. It was meant to beat something. But it wasn't meant to beat *people*. And so, although some of the actions involved are nearly identical to *what the stick was meant to be used for*, in his mind and in his actions he has twisted it out of all recognition so that it is now

actively used for vastly different purposes than the one intended.

This is how pornography works. God has given us the good and noble inclination to want to be satisfied. Physiologically, he has given most of us the good and noble need to be sexually satisfied. Why do I call it good and noble? Because it is the consummation of, and the most intimate part of, the marriage relationship, which the writer to the Hebrews tells us is honorable (Hebrews 13:4). And without it, humanity would die.

What pornography does it to take this God-given desire for satisfaction, and the physiological need for fulfillment, and wrench it out of all recognition, fixing the gaze on another object than the one intended.

### TWISTED, IT CAN'T SATISFY

Yet the irony is that by using the gifts that God has given us for entirely different and incompatible purposes than the ones intended, we find that fulfillment eludes. If the sexual drive was created to lead us towards intimacy, how can pornography, which is entirely non-relational and involves people who we have never even met, fulfill?

The answer, as hinted at by James, is that it can't. To the extent that it appears to users to provide some fulfillment, it does so only in the way that scratching an itch does – entirely temporary relief, but with the catch that when the itch returns, it will be even harder to appease than before.

Herein lies the pornography trap. We are designed to find fulfillment in a real relationship, but it is partly the fact that pornography is non-relational that makes it so appealing. Relationships are hard. Life is often a monotonous routine. Living with another sinner is often far from easy. But as for the people in the pictures or videos, you don't need to worry about their sins. You don't need to live with them and deal with their issues day after day. And so the thrill and excitement of being taken out of normal life into some fantasy world where real satisfaction apparently resides can become intoxicating. No faithfulness is required to obtain satisfaction there. No commitment is required. No dealing with another person in an ongoing relationship is required to get satisfaction there.

And yet the irony is that true lasting satisfaction is the one thing it can never bring.

## LOTS OF REASONS TO STOP, ONE REMEDY

What then is the remedy? That might seem like an odd question. Surely I'm not about to suggest that there is one remedy for all of this? Actually I am. There are plenty of reasons and inducements for somebody who has a pornography habit to break it, but ultimately there is only one remedy, which I'll come to in a moment. But first here are some reasons and inducements.

### 1. Come to see how much it dehumanizes, both yourself and others

Pornography is by its very nature dehumanizing. Not just for the people who make it, but also for the one viewing it. By its nature it objectifies and commoditizes people, which means that if you are a user of pornography, you are both an objectifier and commoditizer of people. That's not a good thing to be.

### 2. Understand that it cannot bring you the satisfaction you desire

As mentioned, the use of pornography is rooted in a desire to be satisfied. Yet as any counselor of those with a porn habit will tell you, it has never yet brought anyone true joy or lasting happiness. If you are looking for satisfaction in something

which demonstrably cannot bring you what you are looking for, it's probably a good time to question whether you are seeking satisfaction in the right places.

### 3. Recognize how ridiculous it looks

There's something to be said for just sometimes stepping out of yourself and your circumstances, so to speak, and looking at what it is you are actually doing. What do you call fantasizing about having some sort of sexual encounter with a person you've never met, never will meet, and if you did meet them it would never take place? Isn't it about as absurd a scenario as it's possible to conjure up?

### 4. Stop referring to your habit as an "addiction"

The word "addiction" has become one of the most abused words of our day, and is often used as an excuse for responsibility avoidance. While I have no doubt that pornography produces certain chemicals in the brain that can take a powerful hold on us, the idea that we become passive victims is not borne out either biblically or practically.

Biblically, pornography falls into the category of sexual immorality, and Scripture is plain that this is a sin that we should avoid, can avoid, and must avoid, chemicals notwithstanding. Practically, the fact that many "porn addicts" break their "addiction" shows that, though undoubtedly hard, it can be done. "Porn addiction" is in reality a "porn habit," and it is there to be broken with willpower and determination.

### 5. God tells us that those who don't break with it will be excluded from the Kingdom of God

In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, the Apostle Paul says this:

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will

not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

Despite the wonderfully elaborate attempts of many modern Christians to ignore, twist, deny, camouflage or dispute much of this, there it is. Seems pretty clear to me. Make of it what you will.

## THE SOLUTION? NO HALF MEASURES

Yet finally, as I mentioned above, whilst these are all good reasons and inducements to break the porn habit, they are not the remedy itself. What is that then? Biblically speaking there is only one, which is this: "Flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18).

That's it. All the reasons and inducements in the world will not help the user of porn to break his or her porn habit unless they are prepared to do the one thing necessary. *Flee from it*. Don't walk, run. Don't dabble, don't skirt along the edges, don't case furtive looks. Get away from it. Have *nothing* to do with it.

*Rob Slane lives with his wife and six children in Salisbury, England, 90 minutes drive from Wales. He is the author of "A Christian and an Unbeliever Discuss Life, the Universe, and Everything."*



"After a few more years of complaining about my life I may just consider changing my ways."





# BUT WHAT DOES FLEEING SIN LOOK LIKE?

- by Jon Dykstra

Despite endless attempts to do so, fleeing sin can't be done halfheartedly – that only sets the stage for failure. A tepid turning away is like a drunk who doesn't buy beer anymore but still goes to all the same parties and hangs out with the same drunken crew. He's pushed off his sin, but only a short distance.

So what does fleeing sin look like? It's radical. It involves *complete* commitment.

In Genesis 39 we find an example of this radical commitment. When Potiphar's wife propositions Joseph first he refuses her, and, when that isn't enough and she grabs hold of his garment, Joseph takes off running. Now, grown men don't run away, do they? It's undignified. And they certainly don't shed clothes to get away. But that's what Joseph did. She was holding his cloak, so he let her keep it. We don't know exactly what state of undress this left Joseph – was he naked, or did he just lose his outer layer? – but we do know this was no calm and cool departure. This was a man desperate to do what God wanted, even if it left him clothed only in righteousness. *This* is complete commitment.

Matthew 5:29 outlines another radical response to sin:

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell."

This passage is most often explained as a figure of speech, not to be taken literally. And that's true enough – Jesus'

point here is to highlight just how important it is to flee sin but He isn't prescribing the specific and only means of doing so.

However, we shouldn't "explain away" the radical nature of what's being said. God can't *stand* sin and we need to do *whatever* it takes to fight our entrapping, entangling sins. The reason that we don't go plucking out eyeballs is because there are other means – more effective and less harmful – of fleeing sin. But these other means can be painful too, and we may be tempted to dismiss them as too radical. But if that leaves us trapped in our sin, then we need to hear what Christ says next: better a one-eyed man in Heaven than a two-eyed man in Hell. This is about our salvation!

## IF YOUR SMARTPHONE CAUSES YOU TO SIN...

Computers and smartphones are a part of our daily lives – most jobs involve them, and almost everyone has one. But they are also portals to pornography. If that's a problem for you, then in Matt. 5:29 Christ prescribes a radical, and vital, solution: "if your computer/smartphone causes you to sin, pluck it out."

But how can we manage without a computer? How can we keep in touch with our friends without a smartphone? Is it even possible today to do without these devices?

Well, plucking in this case might not mean doing completely without. They can be managed via various technological and practical means. A person can:

- install accountability software like Covenant Eyes on their computers

that monitors where they go on the Internet and then shares it with an accountability partner

- get filtering software that will block most (but not all – nothing is 100% effective) of the harmful content on the Internet
- use software or hardware means to limit the time your computer is hooked up to the Internet
- place your computer in a public area in the home, where other can see what you are up to when you are online
- install monitoring software on their smartphone
- swap their smartphone for a simple cellphone (some still allow you to text friends, but not surf the Internet).

What if none of this is sufficient? Then, Christ tells us to remember, better computer-less and on your way to Heaven, than a social media king on your way to Hell.

## IF YOUR FRIENDS TEMPT YOU TO SIN...

Temptation comes in all sorts of forms, and some of us will find it harder than others to resist peer pressure. If your good buddies are into all the wrong things, and you find yourself pulled in again and again, then you need to give up on this group of friends (Prov. 13:20, 1 Cor. 15:33). It doesn't matter if you've known them since elementary; don't place your friends above God.

## IF YOUR JOB TEMPTS YOU TO SIN...

Some jobs involve travel, leaving you alone in your hotel room with the porn

channels, or maybe it's simple risqué R-rated films, readily available. Maybe all that time alone on the road causes temptation. Or maybe you work in an office where there is a growing pressure to conform to their politically correct culture (and in doing so deny your Lord). Or you work with coarse colleagues who have nude pics on the walls, or in their lockers. There's any number of ways your job can be a source of temptation.

There is also any number of ways of managing this. It could involve creativity, and a willingness to make strange requests. I heard of one man who required that any hotel room he stays at have the TV removed from his room. Maybe it means speaking to colleagues and asking them to take down their girly pictures. It could be embarrassing. But that's the level of commitment God calls us to.

If a workaround isn't possible, and temptation at your job is unavoidable and causing you to sin, then don't think it too radical to quit...even if you don't have another job lined up (this is what deacons are for).

#### **IF YOUR "ME TIME" IS CAUSING YOU TO SIN...**

We are called to flee from more than just sexual temptation and drunkenness – Matthew 5:29 applies to all of life.

So, for example, God also wants us to control our anger...even if you are a parent running on very little sleep. Tiredness can leave anyone short-tempered, and some of us have to watch out for this even more than others. Maybe it's been a long day, the kids are finally in bed, and now we just want a little "me time" before we head to bed – just an hour of TV, or a couple chapters. We just want to unwind.

Except, that we're exhausted. And that exhaustion has meant that instead of being a loving disciplinarian, we've been a ticked off grump every time our kids have been kids. So it might only be nine o'clock, but if your "me time" is causing you to sin, you need to pack it in early.

#### **FLEE TO**

Now there is more to fleeing than simply fleeing *from*. Running *from* evil can give us only the temporary sort of victory that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 12:43-45. Here He describes a man who has a demon leave him. Success? Well, no, because after the demon leaves, the

man doesn't replace it. When the demon comes back he finds his former abode "unoccupied" and so brings seven other demons to come join him, and "the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

This is what comes of fighting sin on our own. Our fleeing can't simply be an aimless fleeing *from* but must be deliberate fleeing *to our Saviour*. He can help us not only put off our old sinful ways, but renew us, so we can put on a new self (Ephesians 4:22-24) "which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."


#### **CONCLUSION**

When we are entangled in sin it may feel like there is no way out. It can feel like we are caught in such a complicated situation we are unable to get free. It's important then to understand that fleeing sin isn't complicated...*but it is radical*.

And while fleeing sin isn't complicated, that doesn't mean it's easy. Proverbs 22:6 says that if we train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old "he will not depart from it." That works both ways, for good or evil. If you've been partaking in the same sin again and again, you've "trained" yourself – you've carved some deep ruts that will be hard to get out of, and easy to fall back into.

That means fleeing from sin may be *hard to do*. But it *isn't hard to figure out what to do*. It is a matter of placing God as first and throwing off everything that hinders (Hebrews 12:1). The reason we fall into sin, then, is because we count *everything* as too high a cost.

Now anyone who has been entangled in sin knows they can't get free on their own; that's why in setting out the radical nature of what fleeing from sin involves, it's vital we not forget *the radical nature of what has already been done for us*. Those entangling sins? Jesus has paid for them, so He can loose us from them. We need to flee from sin, yes, but more importantly, we need to run to the God who loved us so much He died for us to set us free.

So what does fleeing sin look like? It means running from temptation and putting off every sin and weight that hinders us. It means turning and sprinting full out – arms flailing, legs churning, spittle flying, maybe even cloak leaving – towards our Father and his secure embrace. 

## **John Piper on Hebrew 12:1 and running**

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..." - Hebrews 12:1*

Don't just ask, "What is wrong with it?" in life. Don't just say about your music, about your movies, about your parties, about your habits, about your computer games, don't just say, "Well, what is wrong with it?" Don't just ask, "Is it a sin?"

That is about the *lowest* question you can ask in life.

*"I am going to do it if it is not a sin. So tell me, is it a sin to do this?"*

"Well, not exactly."

*"Okay, that is all I wanted to know. I am off to do it."*

...Well...what question should I ask if it is not, 'Is it a sin?'" And the answer is:

"Does it help me run?"

That is the answer. "Does it get in my way when I am trying to become more patient, more kind, more gentle, more loving, more holy, more pure, more self-controlled? Does it get in my way or does it help me run?" That is the question to ask....

You know why that question isn't very often asked? Because we are not passionate runners. We don't want to run. We don't get up in the morning saying, "What is the course today? What is the course of purity? What is the course of holiness? What is the course of humility? What is the course of justice? What is the course of righteousness? What is the course of love? What is the course of self-control? What is the course of courage? O God, I want to maximize my running today."

If you have that mentality about your life, then you will ask, not, "How many sins can I avoid?" but, "How many weights can I lay down so that I am fleet-footed in the race of righteousness?"

SOURCE: Excerpt is from "Running with the witnesses," a sermon preached August 17, 1997, and posted to [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org).



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Be interesting<sup>ed</sup>

### **People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.**

One way to show you care is to listen. Here are a couple of things that might make us better listeners:

- Talk less
- Mind our posture
- Lose the distractions
- Get comfortable with silence
- Mind our thinking
- Ask questions

*Seek to understand before seeking to be understood.*  
- Stephen Covey -

*Excerpt from the new book*



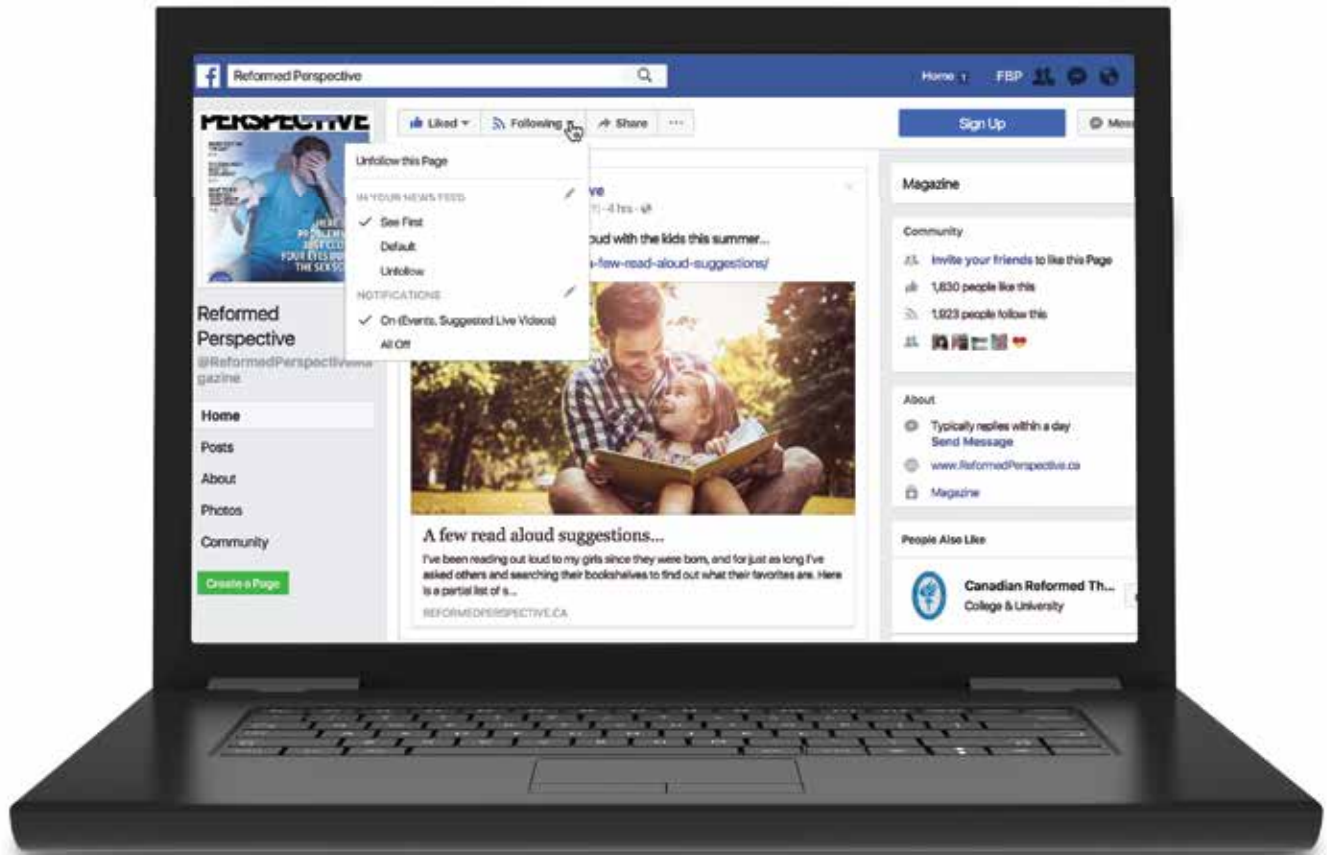
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