

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS

IS JORDAN
PETERSON THE
CHAMPION WE'VE
BEEN LOOKING
FOR? p. 34



LAST OF THE
GREAT REVIVALISTS
BILLY GRAHAM
(1918-2018)
p. 20

NEWS WORTH NOTING...
**NOTA
BENE**
p. 8

MOVIE REVIEWS • WHEN ALMOST RIGHT IS COMPLETELY WRONG • BOOK REVIEWS



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Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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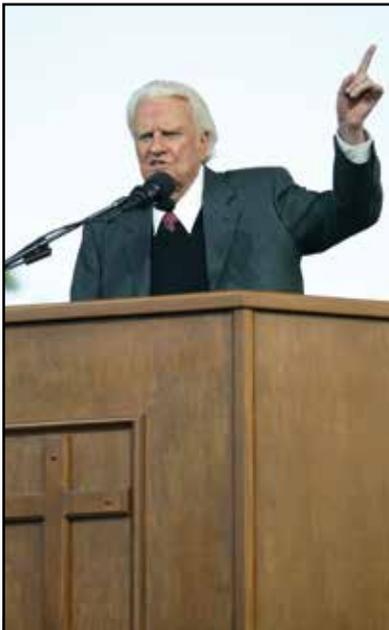
IS JORDAN PETERSON THE CHAMPION WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR?

p.34



ELECTION
- Sietze Buning

p.15



BILLY GRAHAM: LAST OF THE GREAT REVIVALISTS
- Wes Bredenhof

p.20



DISCIPLINE OR PUNISHMENT? P.27

- Jay Younts

FROM THE EDITOR P.4

- Jon Dykstra

NOTA BENE P.6

IN A NUTSHELL P.12

THE GROWTH OF STATISM IN CANADA P.28

- André Schutten

AMAZING GREEN MEAT-EATERS P.43 - Margaret Helder

CHARITY AND CLARITY

WHEN A GAY COUPLE WANTS YOU TO HELP THEM CELEBRATE SIN

by Jon Dykstra

Tim Back in 2012, an American couple that rented out their barn for weddings ran into trouble when two ladies wanted to reserve it for a gay “marriage” ceremony. Cynthia and Robert Gifford, both Catholic, refused – they didn’t want their farm used to celebrate what God condemns.

The lesbian couple lodged an official complaint, and the New York Division of Human Rights ruled in their favor, fining the Giffords a total of \$13,000 for their refusal. Two years later New York’s Supreme Court Appellate Division upheld the ruling. The appeals

judge, Karen Peters, said that the Giffords could “profess their religious beliefs that same-sex couples should not marry,” but as long as they allowed heterosexual couples to use their farm, they had to let same-sex couples do so too.

THE “PERFECT SOLUTION”?

So what could the Giffords do? A March 23 *Faithwire.com* article detailed the couple’s response. They are continuing to rent out their barn and farm, but on their website they’ve announced that a portion of the proceeds from any wedding will

be donated to support traditional marriage. The notice reads:

At Liberty Ridge Farm, our deeply held religious belief is that marriage is the union of one man and one woman, and the Farm is operated with the purpose of strengthening and promoting marriage. In furtherance of this purpose and to honor and promote our moral and religious beliefs, we donate a portion of our business proceeds to organizations that promote strong marriages such as the Family Research Council.



The couple's response got a couple of media outlets quite excited, with *Faithwire's* Will Maule suggesting they "may have just solved the gay marriage dilemma" and *The DailyWire's* Hank Berrien describing it as the "perfect solution." They thought this was the way forward for Christian wedding cake bakers, and wedding photographers, and wedding venue owners.

By declaring their support for traditional marriage, the Giffords are sure to dissuade many gay couples from even considering their farm. And the activist sorts who want to push the issue and rent it anyway? Well, if they know that using the Giffords' barn means, in effect, making a donation to the conservative Christian lobby group, the Family Research Council, that might just dissuade them too. This would seem an approach that Christian wedding photographers, and wedding cake makers, and more, could readily imitate.

But it is it really the perfect solution? On the very same webpage the Giffords promise that all "couples legally permitted to marry in the state of New York are welcome to hold their wedding at Liberty Ridge Farm. We serve everyone equally." This statement is probably a requirement from the judgment against them, but it would seem to concede too much. On the one hand the Giffords are speaking up for traditional marriage, but on the other, they are promising to host and help with same-sex "marriages." This is a muddled message.

Still, is there something that we can be inspired by here, and perhaps improve on?

SHREWD AND INNOCENT

In Matthew 10:16 Jesus told his disciples that in their dealings with the world, they should be shrewd and innocent:

I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

The Giffords' approach is certainly shrewd. It seems sure to decrease and maybe even eliminate the requests they might otherwise get from homosexual couples.

What might be missing in the Giffords' approach is the "innocent as doves" part. When Christians oppose gay "marriage" we're not going to be portrayed as innocent doves, but as bullying bigots – we're going to be accused of simply hating those who are different. That's why it's important we explain ourselves. And it's just as important that our motivations be truly godly.

We can applaud the Giffords for their desire to stand up for traditional marriage but if we're going to build on what they've done, we shouldn't overlook where there is room for improvement. In their explanation, they speak of honoring and promoting their "moral and religious beliefs." They also speak of traditional marriage as being a "deeply held religious belief."

Something is missing here. Or, rather, Someone. We don't oppose gay "marriage" because of our deeply held religious beliefs. We oppose it because God made us male and female (Gen. 1:27), and because a man is to leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). We oppose gay "marriage" because that is not how God intended marriage to be. We oppose it because we know that homosexuality is a sin, and that unrepentant sin separates a person from God. We oppose it, because if we love our gay neighbor then we want them to know that a commitment to continuing to live this sinful lifestyle "until death do us part" is a commitment to rebellion against God. It sets them on the road to hell. That's why we can't help them celebrate. Out of concern for the couple themselves, we don't want any part in these ceremonies – we know it's going to harm them!

Of course, a reporter from the 6 o'clock news isn't going to give us the time and space to communicate our concerns. But when it comes to our own websites, we have all the time and space we might need, so let's spell it out there, with clarity and love.

"EWWW!" IS NOT AN OPTION

To be clear, this isn't simply about finding the right words, so we can say just the right thing. This is about living out

the love God calls us to. If we're saying we oppose gay "marriage" out of concern for the salvation of homosexuals, but we don't actually feel that in our hearts, it's going to come out. We can't be a light to the world, if we're faking it. So if we're not feeling concern for them, then, before anything else, we need to ask God to work on our hearts, and to help us better love our neighbor as ourselves.

CONCLUSION

While the Giffords' approach is shrewd, it's also more than a little confusing. That's in large part because, even as they are conceding they will host gay "marriages" but don't want to, they don't make it clear why they are opposed.

Christians still have the freedom to speak our beliefs, including what we know to be true about marriage and homosexuality. What would happen if all the Christian wedding cake bakers, and wedding photographers, and wedding venue owners did so? What would happen if we stated our concerns that these sinful commitments separate the couple from God? And what if we stated that, if a gay couple uses the law to compel us to be a part of their ceremony, then we are going to donate all funds to homosexual outreach so we can express these concerns to many more?

Is that a stance we can, in good conscience, take? Or does it concede too much? Might there be another better way for us to be both clever and clear?

If it's not clear just yet what exactly the "perfect solution" is, this much is clear: Christians need to explain our opposition to gay "marriage" with clarity and charity. Our opposition isn't first and foremost because it undermines traditional marriage, or because it offends our "deeply held religious beliefs." We oppose gay "marriage" because it is a commitment to life-long rebellion against the one true and holy God, and if the couple keeps to that commitment, then they are going to hell. That's the clarity. And the charity is in expressing that in all sincerity, and with genuine concern. RP

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

LEAVING FROZEN OUT IN THE COLD

BY WES BREDENHOF



For show biz, as elsewhere, there's no such thing as bad publicity. Hollywood stands to benefit from whatever controversy it can generate. Disney is one company learning this lesson well.

Before Disney released *Finding Dory* in 2016, it was rumored there would be a small cinematic homage to same-sex relationships. The rumor created buzz around the film. After the film came out, discussion continued over whether or not a two-second shot involving two women and a baby carriage counted as Disney's first foray into the new world order.

In 2017, more rumors emerged over Disney's next Star Wars installment. Some believed *The Last Jedi* would include a homosexual romance. Christians and other social conservatives bemoaned this possibility but, in the end, all for nothing. Disney created a conversation, but didn't

deliver on this one.

When *Frozen* hit screens back in 2013, some wondered whether the main character Elsa was an in-the-closet lesbian. The discussion certainly didn't hurt the movie's bottom line – it grossed more than any other animated film in history, well over \$1 billion US. Disney is planning the release of a sequel in 2019 and already there's speculation over whether Elsa will come out of the closet and have an openly homosexual relationship. There are online campaigns for and against but, as usual, Disney is playing its cards close to the chest.

See the pattern? It should make Christians cynical and distrusting of Disney and other Hollywood giants. They manipulate our concerns to create more hype – and make more money. Even if *Frozen 2* doesn't have a lesbian Elsa, they made you (and me!) talk about it. They got us aware and interested and that's going to translate into dollars at the box office. The bottom line is the bottom line. Disney is *not* a business dedicated to upholding biblical marriage and family values – they're pragmatic movie barons out for your money. Could it be time to vote not only with our feet, but also with our mouths and keyboards, and leave *Frozen* and Disney out in the cold?

SOURCE: Doug Mainwaring's "In Disney's much anticipated *Frozen 2* Elsa just might be a lesbian"

NEW GERBER "SPOKESBABY" HAS DOWN SYNDROME

BY VALERIE BOERINGA

Since 2010, Gerber, the baby food company, had conducted an annual photo contest to find real-life Gerber babies – the winner is then their "spokesbaby" for the next year. One hundred and forty thousand families entered the contest this year, and the winner was one-year-old Lucas Warren, the first child with Down syndrome to be named a "Gerber Baby." "Every year, we choose the baby who best exemplifies Gerber's long-standing heritage of recognizing that every baby is a Gerber baby," Bill Partyka, chief executive and president of Gerber, said. The Warrens won a \$50,000 prize, and with Lucas's new title as the Gerber baby, he will be featured on Gerber's social media channels throughout the year. He is the eighth winner of the Gerber Baby Photo search.

We can be thankful that Gerber is celebrating Lucas, but we should also understand why it is that the world is valuing him.



Lucas's smile won him the iconic contest; he was picked because he is cute. But around the world Down syndrome children are not being valued – these babies are being aborted, to the extent that in Iceland and Denmark there are almost no Down syndrome children. That's because many think people with disabilities don't amount to anything because they have more limited abilities in specific areas. But our value should not be about our abilities and what we can do; Lucas is valuable even when he's not smiling! And that's because his value – everyone's value – comes from being created in God's image (Gen. 1:27).

SOURCE: Photo provided by Gerber

GLENN BECK ON STEPHEN HAWKING (1942-2018): WHEN ALMOST RIGHT IS COMPLETELY WRONG

BY JON DYKSTRA

When renown theoretical-physicist and atheist Stephen Hawking, 76, passed away March 14, it made headlines around the world. He was probably the world's best known scientist, his fame due in part to his 10-million copy bestseller *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*. He was also known for his decades-long battle with ALS that confined him to a wheelchair and took his ability to speak, forcing him to communicate via a distinct computer-generated voice.

In a tribute to the man, radio talk show host Glenn Beck addressed how the world doesn't properly value the disabled:

"Stephen Hawking is a prime example that all life is precious and has meaning. How would [Planned Parenthood founder] Margret Sanger or [eugenicist] George Bernard Shaw view Stephen Hawking? They would say he didn't have any quality of life. They would say he was disabled and therefore a burden on society. They would say he was worthless.

"All of those sentiments are untrue. The world is a better place because Stephen Hawking chose to live his life to the fullest despite his crippling disease. He leaves behind a loving wife, three children and a legacy unmatched by many. Agree with him or not, he challenged our perception of the universe. But more than that, he showed us that no one can define your life except you. You are the master of your own world."

As a Mormon, Beck speaks from a generally Judeo-Christian perspective, and thus often defends the disabled. But while his sentiments here are right, his argument is wrong.

In its push for euthanasia and



abortion, the world argues that life is worth living only so long as we can be productive. Thus they justify euthanasia as the best end to a person's life who, due to age, has become infirm. Similarly, the world touts abortion as the best "treatment" for unborn children with Down syndrome; since their disability will limit what they can do, their lives are not valued.

To put it in more formal terms the world argues:

- If you can't do much then your life isn't worth much,
- And the disabled can't do much;
- Therefore their lives aren't worth much.

Beck counters this argument by disputing the second premise: yes, Hawking was severely disabled but look at all he was able to accomplish! *Some disabled people can do amazing things!*

This point is true enough. But in attacking only the second premise, Beck gives credence to the first. He acts as if the world is right: our lives are

valuable only if we can do, and achieve, and accomplish.

In granting this point, Beck is (albeit inadvertently) attacking the worth of any who are so severely disabled they can't do much. Yes, some disabled people can make notable accomplishments...but what of those who cannot make decisions for themselves, can't define their own lives, and are not the masters of their own world?

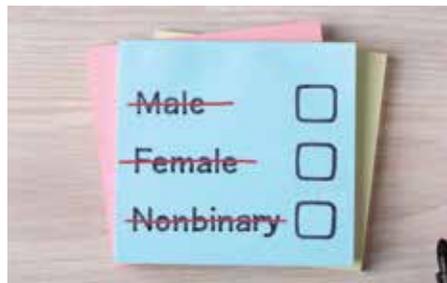
Beck has lost sight of where our worth comes from. It isn't found in what we can do, but instead is found in Who made us. We are all made in God's Image, from the smallest unborn baby, to the most aged and infirm adult – this is why all life is valuable and should be respected.

Beck was half right – many disabled people are able to accomplish notable things. But this is an example of how being half right is sometimes the same as being horribly wrong.

SOURCE: Glenn Beck's "Stephen Hawking was proof all life is precious and has meaning" posted to GlennBeck.com on Mar. 14, 2018

“NON-BINARY” FELLOW TAKES ON FEMINIST LAW

BY JON DYKSTRA



In mid March news broke of yet another “first,” this time in an Oregon county where Venn Sage Wylde, a “non-binary candidate” – a man who doesn’t want to be identified as a male or female – is running for the position of “Precinct Committee Person.”

The interesting wrinkle here is that, by state law, these positions are to be filled with an equal number of men and women. Why? This type of law is typically meant to increase the participation of women in politics and based on a feminist ideology that declares women and men to be identical, both in interests

and abilities. So the lower number of women in politics is understood as being irrefutable proof of discrimination – what other explanation could there be? – which such a law is then brought in to correct.

Of course, this sort of feminist thinking ignores the possibility that men and women might actually be different. It denies that God, in making us male and female, gave us different roles, and different abilities, and might even have given us different priorities. Could it be that more women than men find politics noxious and unattractive? Feminists deny that’s even a possibility. There is one gender difference feminists *will* tout: they say women are uniquely oppressed. So, again, that’s why we need “corrective” laws like this one.

But what happens when a feminist law is protested by a “non-binary” fellow?

Venn Sage Wylde has previously been elected a “Precinct Committee Man,” but earlier this year he went to the courts and had the State officially affirm his non-binary claim. Then, when he decided to run for a “gendered” position, that left the State with a problem.

However, it turns out Multnomah County is nothing if not quick to appease. They immediately granted Wylde his wish and created a ballot with three offices:

- 1) Precinct Committee Man
- 2) Precinct Committee Woman
- 3) Precinct Committee Person

What’s unclear is how this can possibly work. Originally there was supposed to be one man and one woman elected for every 500 electors. Is there now going to be one man, one woman, and one “person” for every 500? Is this 50/50 split going to now be a 33/33/33 division? And how are they going to deal with the fact that while there are roughly as many men as women in the world, there are nowhere near as many folks claiming to be non-binary?

There’s only one possible way forward: Oregon is going to be forced to eliminate their gender-based requirements. When that happens, it’ll mean that God has used a “non-binary” fellow to frustrate feminists’ ambitions; He’ll have used one rebel to correct another.

EPISCOPALIANS CONSIDER NON-BINARY/FEMININE PRONOUNS FOR GOD

BY JON DYKSTRA

The 1.7 million member Episcopal Church opposes the death penalty, supports legalized abortion, and ordains both women and homosexuals into office. Now one diocese has voted to ask the denomination’s upcoming July General Convention if they could please “when possible, avoid the use of gendered pronouns for God.”

The 88-congregation Washington, D.C. diocese passed the resolution in January with the intent that any upcoming revisions of the denomination’s Book of Common Prayer would use “expansive language for God from the rich sources of feminine, masculine, and non-binary imagery for God found in Scripture and tradition.”

The problem is, there are no rich Scriptural sources of feminine imagery for God; He overwhelmingly chooses to

use the masculine pronouns to describe Himself. And that reality is a problem for many in this diocese. As delegate Rev. Linda Calkins shared:

“Many, many women that I have spoken with over my past almost 20 years in ordained ministry have felt that they could not be a part of any church because of the male image of God that is systemic and that is sustained throughout our liturgies. Many of us are waiting and need to hear God in our language, in our words and in our pronouns.”

It’s clear then, that instead of trying to know God as He has revealed Himself, they want to hear from a god made in their own image.

When we see millions of professing Christians running from God, some self-examination would not be out of order. So....are we so different?

To answer that question, consider how we deal with passages of the Bible that

we find unpleasant, or difficult to accept, like those on:

- eternal damnation (Rev. 20:10-15)
- corporal punishment (Prov. 13:24)
- the annihilation of the Canaanites (Joshua 12)
- gender roles (Eph. 5:21-33)
- the Creation account (Gen. 1-2)



EUTHANASIA IN THE NETHERLANDS: SO BAD EVEN SOME SUPPORTERS ARE NOW OPPOSED

BY EMMA ELLIOTT FREIRE

The Netherlands is a pioneer in the field of euthanasia. In 2002, it was the first country in the world to legalize physician-assisted suicide, and today it is becoming a case study in the slippery slope that quickly follows.

The quick slide down has prompted even some prominent euthanasia supporters to ask, "Where does this end?" One such supporter is ethicist Berna van Baarsen. For the last ten years, she served on one of the euthanasia-oversight committees established by the 2002 law. The committees are supposed to review each reported instance of euthanasia to ensure the doctor followed all the legal requirements.

As a member of one of these committees, van Baarsen obviously supports euthanasia. However, she resigned in January because she objects to the way euthanasia is now

- slavery (Eph. 6:5)
- election and reprobation (Rom. 9)

Do uncomfortable passages inspire us to dig deeper to find out what they reveal about God? Or do we want to ignore them, and ignore what they teach about God so we can go on worshipping God as we would like Him to be?

The answer to that question will reveal the direction we are heading. Either we're embracing God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, or we are heading down the same path, even if it is quite a distance behind, as the Episcopal Church.

Of course, God may yet turn them around and there is a small, almost ironic indicator that something is going on behind the scenes. The same Diocese that is pushing for gender-neutral descriptors has also, since 2015, been encouraging their members to tithe!

increasingly being administered to patients with advanced dementia. "That's my boundary, based on ten years of reflection and reading dossiers," she said in an interview with the journal *Medisch Contact*. She is using her resignation to make a public statement...and perhaps to ease her conscience.

Under Dutch law, a patient must have unbearable suffering to become eligible for euthanasia. They must also make a request to die that their doctor believes is voluntary and carefully considered. A Dutch person can draft a written declaration stating they wish to be euthanized when they develop advanced dementia and, thus, are no longer able to make an oral request. To date, such written declarations have only resulted in a handful of deaths, but the numbers are likely to rise in coming years. The Dutch Right to Die Society (NVVE) has claimed that one in twenty Dutch people has a written declaration requesting euthanasia, usually for the case of advanced dementia.

It is these written declarations that are giving van Baarsen her moral qualms. "In this phase {i.e., advanced dementia}, it is impossible to determine if the patient is suffering unbearably because

they are no longer able to express this," she told Dutch newspaper *Trouw*.

Van Baarsen is not alone. Last year, 220 doctors published an open letter in a major Dutch newspaper, the *NRC Handelsblad*, to express their unwillingness to euthanize patients with advanced dementia.

"Giving a deadly injection to a patient with advanced dementia on the basis of their written declaration? To someone who cannot confirm that they wish to die? No, we're not going to do that. Our moral abhorrence at ending the life of a defenseless person is too great."

Patients with advanced dementia typically are not aware that they are being killed. A doctor begins by secretly administering a sedative, usually via the patient's food. A 2016 case that attracted considerable controversy involved a woman with Alzheimer's who woke up from the sedative and began struggling. She was restrained by family members so the doctor could administer the fatal injection.

Sadly, van Baarsen's proposed solution is for dementia patients who truly wish to die to orally request euthanasia while they are still able to do so – her solution would have patients killed sooner. She does not understand that legalized euthanasia in the Netherlands has undermined the valuing of human life. A few tweaks to existing laws will never solve the much bigger problem.



HOW LONG, O LORD?

HABAKKUK 1:2

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Questions? Email Hannah at
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Euthanasia and the folly of downward comparisons

by André Schutten

Have you ever heard a euthanasia advocate argue that to force grandma to live in pain is to treat her worse than a dog? The assumption is that if euthanasia is compassionate for the dog, it's compassionate for the human: "I put my dog down because of horrible pain, so why can't we put grandma down too?"

A SIMPLE REBUTTAL

The simple answer: "Because grandma is not a dog."

As Barbara Kay eloquently wrote in the *National Post* a few years back,

"...if we applied human standards of compassion in all things to our treatment of animals, our willingness to euthanize them when they are suffering would be 'compassion's' exception, not the rule."

Sure, we euthanize animals when their lives are a burden to them (and us). We also line-breed them when we want more of them, neuter them when we want fewer of them, give them away when our children develop allergies to them, control what and how much they eat, when and where they sleep, and when they may go outside to relieve themselves. Those in our care who do have sex with others of their species only do so when we permit it, infrequently and only for breeding purposes. We separate them from their

biological families to make them members of our own.

Is all that compassionate? Not if they were human. But they're not human, you see, so there's nothing unethical in any of those actions.

TWO UNDERSTANDINGS OF "COMPASSION"

Our response to the question of suffering is predicated on our worldview. Two radically different answers to the question of our *origin* result in two radically different answers to our *expiration*.

If we accept that we are mere animals, then maybe we should only be treated as animals. *Social Darwinism* has us oriented downward instead of heavenward.

But the *Judeo-Christian worldview* re-orient us. Paradoxically, we are both dust and ashes (Ps. 90:3, Eccl. 3:20) and yet a "little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:5) because we are "made in the image

of God" (Gen. 1:26-28). And so our response to suffering is not to "put down" our fellow man like a dog, but to do everything we can to alleviate the suffering of our fellow man.

Ideas have consequences, and societies need to understand those consequences when we decide what ideas we are going to embrace. In the ongoing euthanasia debate we can choose to view every one of our neighbors as just another animal and treat them as such. Or we see them as "little lower than the angels" and treat them as such. Let's not lose ourselves to the animals. We can do better. RP

André Schutten is the Director of Law & Policy, and General Legal Counsel for ARPA Canada. A version of this article first appeared on their website ARPA-Canada.ca.



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

BY JON DYKSTRA

KUYPER AND DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

The Dutch Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) lived and died one hundred years ago, and yet the culture he faced in his time seems quite familiar. Kuyper said:

“Revolutionaries now tell us, ‘Everything used to be Christian, so your religion was responsible for these abuses, and abandoning the Christian religion and switching to our humanist beliefs is the only permanent remedy.’ ... The press suggests day in, day out that you can engage in politics apart from Christ and that you should lean on your own understanding.”

ATHEISM EXPLAINS NOTHING

“Atheism... is the ultimate non-explanation, ‘explaining’ by denying that explanations exist. ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’ No reason. ‘What caused everything?’ Nothing. ‘What accounts for Morality?’ There is no Morality to account for. ‘Why is there Evil in the world?’ There is no real Evil in the world since there is no real Morality. ‘What is wrong with the world?’ Nothing. It just is. ‘How do we fix the world?’ We can’t fix what’s not broken.”

Greg Koukl, in *Stand to Reason’s Solid Ground* newsletter, January 2, 2018.

DON’T MIX THEM UP!

Sometimes we find the most unlikely sorts fighting alongside us. Maybe it’s atheists and Roman Catholics standing with us against abortion, or feminists joining hands with us against pornography, or Jungian psychologists leading the way for us defending freedom of speech. When that happens

it is important to understand what sort of combined effort we are making. As Douglas Wilson explains in *Empires of Dirt*:

“An ally fights the same enemy you are fighting, and for the same reasons. A co-belligerent fights them for different reasons.”

The danger is in mistaking co-belligerents for allies. When we side with a group like feminists, we have to keep in mind that the relationship between co-belligerents is not that of friendship, but utility – they are with us only so long as we can further their ends. But Paul’s warning against being “unequally yoked” (2 Cor 6:14) applies here, because feminists have many ends we want no part of. Take the matter of “equality.” We believe in that too, right? That’s why it would be only natural if, after working together against pornography, we mistook feminists for our buddies, and wanted to help them on the matter of “women’s rights” too.

The problem is, we aren’t like-minded. Feminists are not our allies. Their understanding of equality is rooted in an ungodly denial of any gender differences. While we can stand side-by-side with them against sexual harassment, and against pornography, and against sex-selective abortion, we have to be aware they’re going to spin it all as being about “women’s rights.” And we have to ensure we don’t make the mistake of “allying” with their understanding of the term. Yes, we believe in equality, but not rooted in sameness. Equality has nothing to do with the genders being interchangeable and indistinguishable.

No, God made us male and female and it is an attack on His creative genius

to dismiss or demean what makes men masculine and what makes women feminine. On this point we do not side with the feminists, but must stand with the French: *vive la difference!* Different is good (Genesis 1:31, 2:18) and, in fact, these differences are to be explored and celebrated!

So Christians have an entirely different basis for equality. We recognize that we are all unique, varying in our height, weight, hair color and eye color and skin color, and in interests, and abilities and much, much more. Thus the only real basis for equality is in the one thing (and one thing only) we all share: male and female, black and white, tall and short, blonde and brunette, *all of us are made in God’s image.*

Christians can be co-belligerents with feminists (and others too) on any number of issues, but we must never make the mistake of thinking or acting like these groups are our allies.

WORTH CHEWING ON

“If cruelty rejoices with those who weep, envy weeps with those who rejoice.”

Matt Smethurst

CHRIS MCKENNA’S 7-DAY RULE FOR ANY NEW APP

Chris McKenna is an Internet expert times two – he works for the Christian Internet filtering and monitoring service Covenant Eyes, and also for his own group, Protect Young Eyes, which, via information to parents, does what its name suggests. So when he has tech advice for parents, well, it’s worth hearing.

Earlier this year news came out that several dozen apps on the Google Play store contained a hidden bit of coding, that would show the user pornographic ads. In response McKenna shared what he calls his “7-day rule”: kids don’t get to use an app until after their parents have tested it out for seven straight days. Seven days will allow parents to check out whether the type of ads displayed (many apps have ads) are acceptable, and whether they are acceptable not just on the first day, but on day seven as well. Seven days allows parents to test it out with their child in mind, asking

themselves, “Is my son or daughter ready for everything that I just experienced?”

SOURCE: Chris McKenna’s “Google is not Parent Friendly” posted to CovenantEyes.com on Jan 31, 2018

BIG BROTHER SAYS LOVE IS DOUBLE-PLUS-UNGOOD AS A GRANOLA INGREDIENT

“It just felt so George Orwell.”

John Gates, after the US government’s Food and Drug Administration (FDA) told his bakery they couldn’t list “love” as an ingredient in their granola because “love is not a common or usual name of an ingredient.”

ON HOW SOME CANADIANS VIEW PRIVATE SCHOOL

Currently public schools in Alberta get roughly \$10,000 per student, and one public school advocacy group, Save our Students (SOS), thinks that’s not enough and wants to blame private schools that are getting \$5,000 a student from the government. SOS wants these private schools complete defunded. Donna Trimble, writing for the *Calgary Herald* had a great response:

“This reminds me of an old Russian tale of a peasant living in poverty, who

comes upon a bottle from which a genie appears and says, ‘I’m empowered to give you one wish.’ The peasant replies, ‘My family is poor. My neighbour has a goat. That goat gives good milk and that family has what it needs.’ The genie looks at the peasant and offers, “Do you want me to give you a goat?” ‘No,’ says the peasant, ‘I want you to kill my neighbor’s goat.’ The moral of the story? The request made by the peasant is envy-born and would result in only one thing: No goat for either peasant. The same will be true of Alberta students and families if the government strips subsidies for independent schools, forcing many students back into public schools.”

ON HOW CANADIANS VIEW HEALTHCARE QUEUE JUMPING

Former Canadian ambassador to the US, Derek Burney, didn’t think much of his country’s socialistic tendencies. In one of his speeches he told a story about two Maritime fishermen. The first fisherman was bringing his catch of lobsters from his boat down the pier. Another fisherman warned him his lobsters might escape since there was no lid on the pail. “Oh no,” says the first fisherman. “These are Canadian lobsters, boys. As soon as one

makes it to the top, the others will drag him down.”

ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOL MISSION FIELD

“Pastors and families often idealize the public-school experience, calling it a ‘mission-field,’ and holding out hope that their children can be ‘salt and light’ in a difficult environment. But the process of education largely involves one-way communication, with the teachers and administrators seeing the students as their secular ‘mission field.’ Isolated young children are more vulnerable than powerful, and I’ve seen many parents come to grief as fully indoctrinated, peer-pressured kids make mistakes with lifetime consequences.”

David French, National Review

BIBLE AS A BOOK

A Canadian Reformed pastor, Reverend Huijgen, has challenged congregations to read the Bible as a book. How many people, he has asked, have read the Bible front to back? We often study it, one or two chapters at a time, or even an entire book, but do we ever just read it anymore? The reverend suggests trying to read the entire Bible in a couple of weeks or maybe a month.



Don't study it, he says, just enjoy the story and power and read it all the way through.

CONTRADICTIONS, REAL AND NOT SO

Some of the statements below would seem to have no good answer. Which are which?

- What would happen if Pinocchio said "Watch out - my nose is about to grow!"?
- If a child has a overly strict mother, what answer can the child give when she asks "Are you allowed to tell Mommy 'no'?"
- What is the answer to "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?"?
- If someone tells you there is no truth, are they telling the truth?
- Is it true that this sentence contains exactly three errorz?
- Is it true that exactly two of these can be given clear answers?

CATCHY QUOTATIONS FROM CALVIN COOLIDGE

American President "Silent Cal" Coolidge had a reputation for being a man of few words. A popular joke is told of Coolidge being approached by a young lady who had made a bet with her friends that she could get the president to say three words. "You lose," he is said to have told her.

But as quiet as he might have been, when he did talk, what he said was often worth hearing. Here are a few of his best quotes that are worth pondering:

- Duty is not collective; it is personal.
- Men do not make laws. They do but discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness.
- Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.

- There is no dignity quite so impressive, and no independence quite so important, as living within your means.
- We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once.
- Although I had been rather constant in my attendance, I had never joined the church . . . Among other things, I had some fear as to my ability to set that example which I always felt ought to denote the life of a church member. I am inclined to think now that this was the counsel of darkness.

"THE JOURNALIST."

"In the past, he had to 'pay dues'
And develop 'a nose for the news.'
Well, he still has a nose,
But, my, how it grows
When the facts must conform to his
views."

F.R. Duplantier

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Election

by Sietze Buning

Nobody would tell who had written the naughty word inside the door of the boys' toilet.

The six girls in our one-room country school were dismissed, and the five boys – two older and two younger than I, and I in fifth grade – were left behind.

"Write on a piece of paper," the teacher said, "the name of the person you think did it, put the paper on your inkwell, and put your head down on your desk."

Teacher's footsteps from desk to desk, the unfolding of paper, and afterwards:

"Sietze, you will stay to write five-hundred times 'I will be pure in thought, word, and deed.'"

Elected but not guilty, I ran home, the copying done, and cried in outrage.

"But who," said Dad, "put the tiddlywinks in the collection plate on Sunday? The deacons found them and they're missing from your set."

So much for outraged innocence.

"Poor teacher," said Dad, "what can she do with lying foulmouthed boys? No wonder she makes mistakes."

So much for my mistrial.

"And now you know," Dad said, "a very little bit about how Jesus felt being punished for sins he didn't do."

So much for self-pity.

Dad gave me the tiddlywinks from his overall pocket: "I'll see the teacher, though. Whoever did it shouldn't get away with it."

Next day my friend Ted was washing the toilet wall.

"Hey, how did your dad know I did it?"

To this day I do not know how he knew.

From Sietze's *Buning's Style and Class*, copyright the Middleburg Press, and reprinted here with their gracious permission.



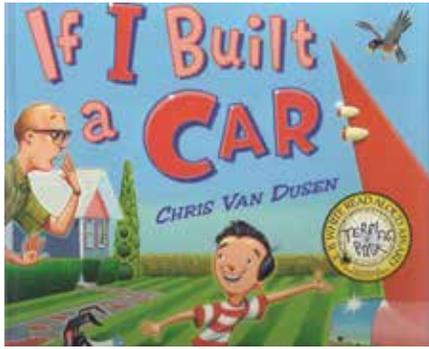
BOOKS

FANTASTIC PICTURE BOOKS

BY JON DYKSTRA

IF I BUILT A CAR

BY CHRIS VAN DUSEN
40 PAGES / 2007



Rhymes and a kid's big ambitions: it makes for one engaging read-out-loud story. The "hero" of this story is a little boy who wants to make a new sort of car, with a couch, fireplace, fish tank, its own pool, and much, much more. The rhythm and rhyming make this a real treat for a parent to read out loud to their kids – you can't help but sound good! And the crazy fantastical imagining make for quite the adventure.

There's also a sequel, *If I built a house*, which is every bit as good, though there is one bathroom scene that might get giggles from some readers – the imaginative boy has come up with a "scrub-a-dub" shower/bath machine:

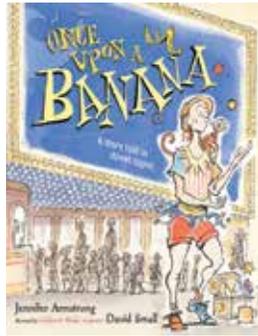
Just step on the belt,
and it washes you clean,
even the places you never seen.

The boy is shown getting cleaned, and while his nakedness is entirely covered up, some kids seem to think it titter-worthy nonetheless.

This is the sort of book to spur an imaginative boy or girl to grab their crayons and start making plans for their own special car so mom and dad, be ready for that, and if your energy permits, grab a pencil right alongside of them, and see what sort of car you can come up with.

ONCE UPON A BANANA

BY JENNIFER ARMSTRONG
48 PAGES / 2013



I'd almost forgotten just how wonderful wordless books can be. But then I found this at the library, brought it home, read it once to my three girls, and then, moments later, my youngest, all of three, was off on her own "reading" the book to herself.

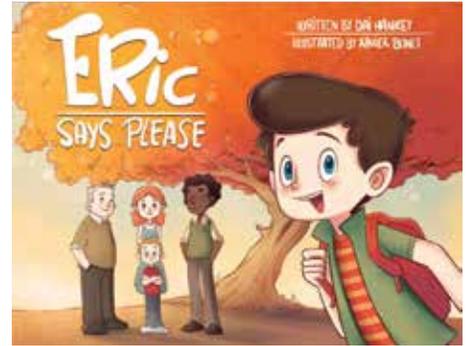
Long before kids can read, many really, really want to. Wordless books are a way to build on this enthusiasm. I did go through *Once Upon A Banana* the first time but they didn't need much help to figure it out. The story is one big chase scene, with monkey owner chasing monkey, and then grocer chasing monkey owner, and then some dogs join the chase, and a skateboarding judge, and a mom, and her baby in its stroller. Oh, and there's a big garbage truck in the mix too. It's crazy and frantic with lots to look at on every page.

After I gave a short run-through on how to read this wordless book, my two pre-readers could do it all on their own.

The only downside to wordless books is that they take hardly any time to read, so I normally recommend getting them out of the library. But our littlest loved this one so much we figured it was a keeper.

ERIC SAYS...

BY DAI HANKEY
32 PAGES / 2017



In a series of three Christian picture books, author Dai Hankey guides little Eric through some great lessons. The books are fun, and the rhyming makes them all great fun to read out loud – dad will sound like he's got mad skills.

In *Eric Says Thanks* this little boy models some fantastic enthusiasm as he learns Who to give credit to for the goodness he's been giving in his "brecky."

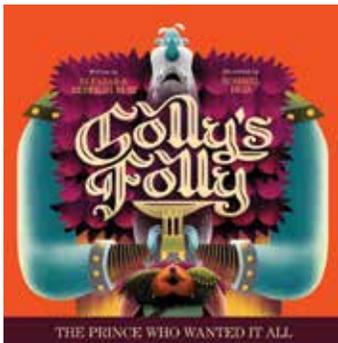
In *Eric Says Sorry*, we see Eric mess up and then try all sorts of way to get out of trouble. But lying, shifting blame, and coming up with excuses don't get him anywhere. Fortunately his dad gives him grace - epic grace! - and pays for the broken pot, Eric gets a glimpse at the grace God gives us. We can't earn forgiveness. But we can ask for it.

Finally, in *Eric Says Please*, he wants to show he can do it all himself, but the little fellow soon learns that pride goes before a fall...right out of a tree! When Eric finally realizes he can't do it on his own, his grandfather points Eric to Who he can go to, to ask for help.

Longer reviews of some of these titles can be found at ReallyGoodReads.com

GOLLY'S FOLLY

BY ELEAZAR AND REBEKAH RUIZ
36 PAGES / 2016



Inspired by the Preacher's denouncement that "all is vanity," this is the story of Golly, a prince who wants more and more and more, but finds that nothing satisfies.

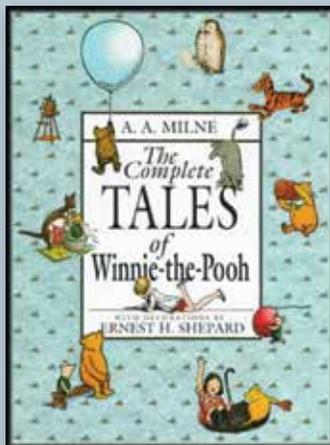
The story begins with Golly looking to power as the way to happiness. He convinces his father to give up his throne, so Golly can be king. And he *is* happy... for a time. Then he tries things, telling his trusted advisor:

"I want flocks of animals,
and a farm on a hill.
Get some of all kind – what a thrill!
Build lots of houses,
find rings for my hand.
Oh – and I'd like my very own band."

Next Golly turns to food, partying, knowledge, but none of it brings him contentment.

Golly learns the world is vanity, and he only finds the happiness he is after in submitting to his father. In doing so the story almost presents "family" as the ultimate good. But, of course, his father is meant to point us to our Father. That analogy shouldn't be pressed too hard, though, because while King Zhor gives up his crown, our Father doesn't. Like any analogy, it's the gist that matters – *the world is not enough!* – not the details.

Vivid pictures, fun rhymes, and a moral worth discussing make this a good one for the whole family, from 3 and up.



THE COMPLETE TALES OF WINNIE THE POOH

BY A.A. MILNE
368 PAGES / 1928

I've always had Winnie-the-Pooh in the back of my mind, but I only recently checked out a copy of *The Complete Tales*, which included both *Winnie-the-Pooh*, first published in 1926, and *The House at Pooh Corner*, in 1928. As I read, I quickly entered the fun of the characters, most of whom were based on the stuffed animals of author A. A. Milne's son Christopher Robin.

Pooh, Piglet, Roo, and Tigger are very much children, with children's typical egocentric focus on themselves. At the same time, Pooh, though a somewhat gluttonous Bear of Very Little Brain, has the childlike love of the world that prompts him to create and recite plenty of poetry, which he, with childish confidence, is sure that Christopher Robin, will love. Piglet is a typical little kid who is more than a little worried about everything. Both Roo and Tigger are filled with the energy of children that sometimes exhausts the adults in their lives.

Many of the others seem to be more children's view of adults: Rabbit, all busy and bustling, but not very patient; Kanga, the perfect mother, but just a little fussy; Eeyore, the somewhat depressed (and depressing) donkey.

What binds the two groups together is their love for Christopher Robin, who owns all these (stuffed) creatures.

What makes the characters funny is their general lack of awareness of their own weaknesses, but this can also get somewhat discouraging, story after story. I was pleasantly surprised, then, when near the end of the second volume, Milne tells a story that shows how, sometimes, the communion of saints breaks through.

We've seen Rabbit in action before, trying to un-bounce Tigger, but now his brusqueness is put to good use when he (finally) tells Eeyore what we've been thinking all along – to stop feeling sorry for himself and go out and visit others. Pooh sings a song that does more than just amuse himself; it also pays tribute to Piglet's earlier heroic actions. Finally, Piglet, when Eeyore mistakenly gives away Piglet's house to Owl after Owl's tree falls down, quietly lets Owl keep the house and accepts Pooh's gracious offer to come and live with him (echoes of Acts 2:45!).

All the creatures, who love the one who owns them, learn to love each other as well. That's what we should be seeking as well. Our unity in the One who owns us should prompt our love for the others who are owned by Him (at much greater cost than Christopher Robin's ownership). That love should start as well, for its youngest audience, in the family. The Pooh stories are wonderful read-alouds for parents with their kids, and a wonderful way to start conversations about the difference between being childlike and childish, and how growing up in the communion means being able to deal graciously with others even when they are (as we all sometimes are) being childish.

- JEFF DYKSTRA

How does a Christian live in the midst of suffering?

A BOOK SUMMARY OF KELLY KAPIC'S *EMBODIED HOPE*

by Annie Kate Aarnoutse

Pain and suffering require good theology because often, during intense pain of any kind, the whole question of how God's sovereignty and goodness relate becomes intensely personal. Often Psalm 92:15 – *the Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him* – becomes a very difficult confession. Is God really good? Sometimes it's an arrogant question, but when there's suffering it is often something entirely different.

In *Embodied Hope: A Theological Meditation on Pain and Suffering*, Reformed theologian Kelly Kavic considers physical pain and discusses "how a Christian might live in the midst of suffering." That is, ultimately, what those in pain need, far more than abstract theories of the problem of suffering.

THE NEED TO KNOW GOD AND KNOW THE SUFFERER

Kavic, a professor with a wife who suffers severe chronic pain, insists that to help others with pain we need both pastoral sensitivity and theological insight. Without careful study of who God is – without theology – we often head into psychology and moralism. Conversely, without loving and knowing the sufferer, we may end up with harsh principles.

Kavic's deep understanding of the gospel, and of pain, and of the writings of godly men like Augustine, Athanasius, Luther, Calvin, and Bonhoeffer, enable him to explore how hope and lament are intertwined. He discusses how we can deal with the fact that God's good creation has been compromised, how we experience that as we suffer, how to lament that biblically, and how God's faithfulness

ultimately shapes biblical lament.

Vigorously rejecting the ancient and still common idea that the body and its pain are not important, Kavic points out that God created our bodies as well as our souls. Our bodies are essential to our identity as individuals, they are essential to our relationships, and essential to our worship. And all of that is tied to Jesus Christ, *who is hope embodied, hope made physical*. Jesus is the answer to the sufferer's questions and he is God's solution to the brokenness of the universe. Because of him our sufferings are not the final word, nor are pain, aging, forgotten memories, or death.

GOD GIVES US EACH OTHER

However, it is not only our individual relationship to Jesus Christ

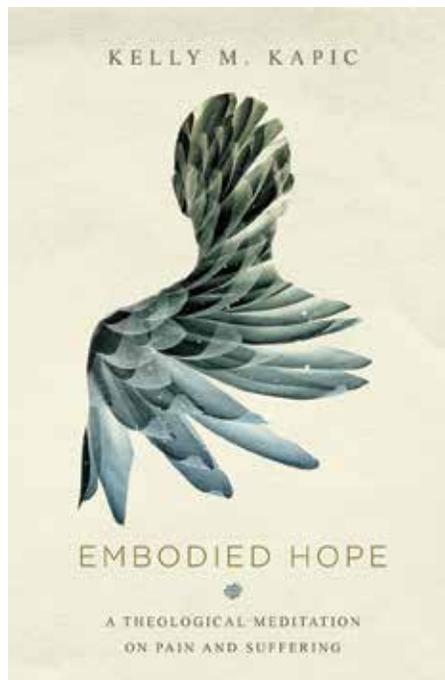
that counts; our relationships in the body of Christ are also vital. In fact, suffering shows how essential the body of Christ is to each member. Kavic states that we are in essence "members of a larger body, and thus also inherently unstable when isolated."

If this is true in general, it is even more important when someone is suffering. *Being in pain is not a safe place to be alone*. Lonely pain opens up temptations to despair, to dwelling on already-forgiven sins, and to questioning God's care. A Christian who suffers chronic pain alone is vulnerable to Satan's attacks, but a Christian who suffers in the body of Christ is, ideally, carried and encouraged by the faith, hope, and love of other believers. For example, when Luther was ill, he begged prayers from his friends that he would be saved "from blasphemy, doubt and distrust of his loving God."

Even so, sufferers must not ultimately look to other believers but to God's revelation in Christ, since all faith, hope, and love "must ultimately point to and come from the triune God, and not merely from the communion of saints."

BEING THERE

Of course, believers need to learn how to come along side those in pain. We often just want to help and, while this can be very important, our goal should not be to "fix" the other person. Rather we must learn to accept that pain is real and that the suffering person often just needs someone to be there. It can be very hard to watch someone suffer, and many people feel helpless and want to run away. Instead, we need to learn to share God's love,



by Kelly Kavic
2017 / 192 pages

perhaps with a glass of cold water, or a card, or a smile, or perhaps with endless hours of simply being there, suffering faithfully together, listening, honestly accepting the pain, and pointing to Christ, together.

Just as the suffering person needs other believers, so other believers need sufferers. In loving and being loved by sufferers, those who are well are reminded that they, too, are poor and in need of God's grace. Otherwise it can become easy to imagine that they are self-sufficient and deserve their wellness because of how faithful they have been. Furthermore, those who suffer are uniquely able to witness that, though troubles are real, "God is unflinchingly faithful."

And, as Kacic points out, sufferers, too, have a responsibility. They can encourage and serve those who are well by loving them and being grateful and

compassionate. They "need to beware of abusing others."

"Those dealing with a great deal of pain often have to work hard to avoid self-absorption and cultivate neighbor love. It takes intentionality. It takes a missional focus. But it can be life-giving."

CONCLUSION

In *Embodied Hope* Kacic, as the husband of a wife with chronic pain, shares many practical insights. Yet he always comes around to this:

"Beloved, amid the trials and tribulations of life, let us have confidence not in ourselves, not in our own efforts, but in God. This God has come in Christ, and he has overcome sin, death, and the devil. While we may currently be

walking through the shadow of death, may our God's love, grace, and compassion become ever more real to us. And may we, as the church, participate in the ongoing divine motions and movements of grace as God meets people in their need. "

This book has helped me come to terms with the fact that chronic suffering exists and has given me insight for supporting my daughter. I think it will be a blessing to every Christian who suffers physical pain or who loves someone who does, and I strongly recommend it. *Embodied Hope* would be a great addition to a church library, as well. 

Annie Kate Aarnoutse reviews books at AnnieKatesHomeschoolReviews.com where this first appeared.

“
Being in pain
is not a safe
place to be
alone.”





Billy Graham

(1918-2018)

The last of the Great Revivalists

by Wes Bredenhof

Without a doubt, Billy Graham has had a huge role in shaping American Christianity. His death on February 21, 2018 signals the passing of an era. American revivalism was a movement of spiritual awakening that began in the 1700s with Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. It carried on with celebrity preachers like Billy Sunday and Dwight Moody – but it really reached both its climax and end with Billy Graham.

REFORMED ROOTS, BUT ARMINIAN

He was born and raised in a Christian home. His parents were members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. His wife Ruth was also a Presbyterian. He dates his conversion to 1934, when he was sixteen years old. Billy Graham described his conversion as happening during an evangelistic campaign. Before he became a full-time evangelist, he served as a pastor of two churches and was also the president of a Bible College. By this time, he was a member of the Southern Baptist Church. Many Southern Baptists are monergistic in their doctrine of salvation (believing that salvation is not a cooperative act between the Lord and Man, but rather the work of God alone) but Billy Graham was not.

Billy Graham was, instead, Arminian. The “Statement of Faith” of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) signals this clearly when it says: “...repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ results in regeneration by the Holy Spirit.” Rather than regeneration resulting in faith (the biblical view found in Reformed theology), the BGEA says faith results in regeneration – first you believe (using your free will) and then you are born again. But regeneration is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit who works this, as the Canons of Dort say, “in us without us” (CoD 3-4.12).

PREACHED TO MILLIONS

Graham began doing evangelistic work in about 1944. The first few years were spent in obscurity in the United States and England. But this changed dramatically in 1949. It happened in Los Angeles where Graham was doing a series of revival

meetings. William Randolph Hearst was the head of an American newspaper chain. Somehow word about Graham reached him. He liked what he heard. Graham was patriotic and young people were attracted to him. Hearst was also an American patriot, and because this was the time of the Cold War, he was deeply concerned about the communist threat from the Soviet Union. He saw Graham as a figure who would encourage and support American values. Graham could be helpful in shielding America from the Soviet Union’s plans to dominate the world. Hearst sent a two-word telegram to all his newspapers to “puff Graham.” And they did. Newspapers all over the United States were covering Graham’s crusade in Los Angeles. He soon appeared on the cover of leading American news magazines. His crusade in Los Angeles was planned for three weeks, but because of the news coverage, Graham extended it to eight. And this is where the story of Billy Graham’s celebrity status begins.

In 1950, he started the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The Association started organizing crusades around the world. It also started a radio broadcast called “The Hour of Decision,” and eventually that led to his appearance on television as well.

When I was a boy, I can remember watching the Billy Graham crusades on television sometimes. I grew up in a church of Dutch immigrants and I wasn’t used to hearing a preacher without a Dutch accent. He preached clearly. He often had a Bible in his hand, and he seemed to be preaching about what the Bible says. Billy Graham was a skilled communicator. He was simply a preacher, a man who preached with sincerity and seriousness.

Over the years, Graham did over 400 crusades in 185 countries. His largest event ever was in Seoul, South Korea in 1986 where one million people attended a single crusade evening. His last crusade was in 2005. Through television and radio, he has preached to millions of people. Consider this fact: more people have heard Billy Graham preach than any other single preacher in the history of the world. That’s amazing.

Quotes by and about Billy Graham

ON FIGHTING SEGREGATION

“Millions of people were intensely charged over segregation, and any preacher defying the color line in the South in the 1950s was exposing himself to physical harm and even death....The story is told... of how at one of his early 1950s crusades, Graham asked the head usher to take down the ropes used to segregate blacks from whites. The usher refused. So Graham walked down off the platform and took down the ropes himself. I don’t care what you say, that’s courage right there.”

– Dr. Joel McDurmon

ON COURAGE

“Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened”
– Billy Graham, “A Time for Moral Courage,” *Readers’ Digest*, July 1964

ON STAYING FREE OF SCANDAL

“We all knew of evangelists who had fallen into immorality while separated from their families by travel. We pledged among ourselves to avoid any situation that would have even the appearance of compromise or suspicion. From that day on, I did not travel, meet or eat alone with a woman other than my wife. We determined that the Apostle Paul’s mandate to the young pastor Timothy would be ours as well: “Flee ... youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 1:22, KJV).”

– Billy Graham on what would come to be known as the “Billy Graham rule” that he and his ministry team crafted back in 1948 in Modesto, California.

MINIMIZED KEY DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

So what were some of the features of Billy Graham's revival ministry? He preached for individual decisions for Christ. Following in the footsteps of revivalists before him, public relations campaigns were crucial. So was getting the sponsorship of local churches. Graham also made efforts to involve churches by having them send volunteers for his crusades. They would work as counselors and in other capacities. Local churches would also be involved with follow-up. Billy Graham wanted to make sure that the people who made decisions would be contacted by local churches soon afterwards. Graham even said this was the most important aspect of his work.

This became controversial in the late 1950s because of who he was working with. He worked with evangelical churches, but he also worked with the large mainline churches that were friendly to liberal theology. Converts from his crusades would be directed to become members of these liberal gospel-denying churches. That caused many fundamentalist Christians to become angry with Graham.

Eventually Billy Graham even came to cooperate with Roman Catholic Churches. If someone would come to a crusade and make a decision and identify as a Roman Catholic, then they would be directed back to the Roman Catholic Church for spiritual care. Billy Graham was surprisingly open to Roman Catholicism. At one point he said, "I have no quarrel with the Catholic Church." In another place, he said, "I feel I belong to all the churches. I am equally at home in an Anglican or Baptist or a Brethren assembly or a Roman Catholic Church." He was invited to worship alongside Pope John Paul II at a service in South Carolina in 1987, and he would have if not for an unexpected invitation to China.¹ Doctrinal differences were minimized and became irrelevant.

Carrying on the tradition of previous revivalists like Dwight Moody, another important feature of the Billy Graham crusades was the music. Especially at the "moment of decision," it was important

to have the right music played and sung by skilled musicians. Billy Graham had a long-standing relationship with George Beverly Shea. Shea began working with Graham in 1947. Shea would sing a solo before Graham gave his message. That was to prepare the crowd to receive his words. After the message, however, Shea turned the singing over to the choir. They would sing the well-known hymn "Just As I Am" and people would be invited to come forward and make their decision. The music set the mood.

THE END OF AN ERA

Billy Graham retired from active ministry in 2006. Since then, there hasn't really been anyone to replace him in American revivalistic evangelism. His son Franklin has done some crusades, but he's not as popular as his father was. The phenomenon of revivalism appears to have run its course. Revivals as big events with preaching and music can hardly compete with television, movies, and the Internet. With Graham's death, the era of American revivalism definitely seems to have drawn to a close.

RP

END NOTE

¹ All of this is from Iain Murray's *Evangelicalism Divided*, 68-69.

This post is reprinted with permission from Dr. Bredenhof's blog, Yinkahdinay.wordpress.com.

ON A CHANGE OF ADDRESS

"Someday you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now. I will just have changed my address. I will have gone into the presence of God."

– **Billy Graham**, adapting a quote from D.L. Moody

ON ASSISTED SUICIDE

"...God gave life to us, and only He has the right to take it away. Life is a sacred gift from God. We are not here by chance or by accident; God put us here. Just as He put us here, He alone has the authority to take us away, and when we take that authority into our own hands, we do violence to His all-wise purposes. Life is not to be destroyed at random."

– **Graham**, at 81

ON HOW GOD USED GRAHAM

"Multitudes of individuals spanning the continents could credit him and his ministry with introducing the gospel to them. Thousands of clergy and missionaries trace their spiritual lineage to him and the gospel he preached."

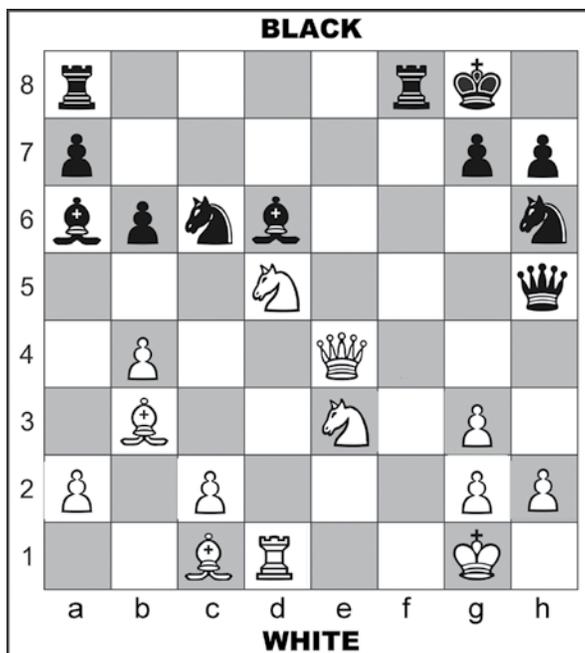
– **Edward E. Plowman**



ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



Chess Puzzle #245



WHITE to Mate in 2 or, If it is BLACK's Move, BLACK to Mate in 2

Riddle for Punsters #245

"Fired? You can Bank on it!"

Why was the bank manager fired? He no longer showed any real _____est in his work. At any r_____, that was the pr_____ reason he was fired. He could no longer give a good ac_____ of how he spent his workday. He did a bit of work when he arrived at the bank but the _____ance of his working hours he did very little to _____n his salary.

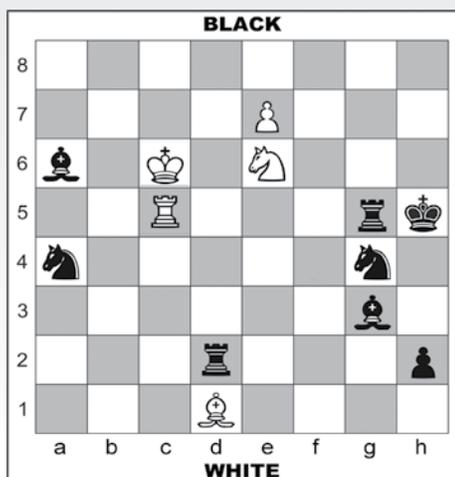
Problem to Ponder #245

"Using Cruise Control on the Highway?"

Hannah lives out in the country and her house is right beside a long highway. She drives out onto the highway shoulder, stops to check that there is no traffic, then at 12 o'clock noon she accelerates uniformly at 5 km/h per second for 18 seconds, then travels at a constant speed for 135 minutes then slows down uniformly at a deceleration rate of 10 km/h per second until she comes to a stop at a stop sign. How far (in km) has she travelled and at what time does she come to a stop? (HINT: when acceleration is uniform, the average speed is $\frac{1}{2}$ (initial speed + final speed). ALSO, what was her average speed for the whole trip (to the nearest tenth of a km/h)?

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #244



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

WHITE TO MATE IN 4

Descriptive Notation

1. P-K8=Q ch
2. Q-KR8 ch
3. Q-N7 ch
4. QxR mate

OR

1. P-K8=Q ch
2. Q-KR8 ch

K-R3

K-N3

K-R4

K-R5

N-R3

3. QxN ch

4. RxR mate

Kh5-h6

Kh6-g6

Kg6-h5

Qg7xg5 ++

R-R4

OR

1. e7-e8=Q +

2. Qe8-h8 +

3. Qh8-g7 +

4. Qg7xg5 ++

Kh5-h6

Kh6-g6

Kg6-h5

R-R4

OR

1. e7-e8=Q +

2. Qe8-h8 +

3. Qh8xh6 +

4. Rc5xh5 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#244 - "Animal Hospital?"

Did you hear about the new animal hospital opening up?

All the animal doctors have to sign a hippocratic oath to do no harm to any animal. The business is honest: no monkey-business such as overcharging customers. There is to be true compassion for the patients - no crocodile tears. Lion-hearted doctors will be the mane administrators.

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#244 - "The Goal is to Find the Team's Net Worth?"

Suppose that your favourite hockey team has won 20 games and lost 12 games so far.

- What is, in simplest form, the ratio of wins to losses?
- What % of their games have been won so far?
- How many of that team's next 12 games would have to be won to make the win-loss ratio 7:4?
- If that happens and the win-loss ratio is now 7:4, what fraction of the next 16 games must be won so that the team will have won 65% of their games played?
 - The win to loss ratio is 20:12 = **5:3 in simplest form.**
 - 20+12 = 32 games were played so they won 20/32 = .625 = 62.5/100 = **62.5 %**
 - If they play 12 more games, the total games played is 32 + 12 = 44 games. Require wins:losses = 7:4 so 7 wins out of 11 games **OR** 7x4 out of 11x4 so 28 wins out of the 44 games. They already won 20 so they would **need to win 28-20 = 8** of the additional 12 games.
 - If they play 16 more games, the total games played is 44 + 16 = 60 games played. Require 65% of 60 = 0.65 x 60 = 39 games won. If 28 of 44 are already won, they need to win **39 - 28 = 11 games** out of the additional 16 games.

BLACK TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- P-R8=Q ch
2. B-B3 QxB ch
3. R-Q5 QxR mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- h2-h1=Q +
2. Bd1-f3 Qh1xf3 +
3. Rc5-d5 Qf3xd5 ++

If RP has been of benefit to you...

As a print publication there was only a few ways to share *Reformed Perspective* articles: handing over the whole thing, or cutting the key pages out, or photocopying them. But the Internet created opportunities, and now, via our weekly email newsletter, daily updated website, and growing Facebook presence, sharing RP articles has become a matter of a few simple mouse clicks.

And that's how articles that once went to just one or two thousand are now being read by 5 and 10 times as many.

THE BIG IDEA

This expansion only became possible because our subscribers were excited about sharing their Reformed perspective with the world. In an effort to reach more, we started to give away the print magazine for free, and distribute all the articles for free via the website, email newsletter, and Facebook. And when we did, a good practical Dutchman (like many of us are) might have asked the question, "Why continue paying for what I can just get for free?"

But instead many subscribers grabbed hold of the vision and they were willing – *eager even* – to donate so others could benefit from what their families were already enjoying. They understood this was no longer just a magazine, but was now a means of equipping and educating God's people all over the world, so that we can better live out our love for God those other six days of the week.

So most of *Reformed Perspective's* subscribers have been making the switch to become monthly donors. To find out how you can, too, please see the facing page.

But just as important, they've been making use of social media, and email, to share articles with their friends and family, whether one house over, or all the way on the other side of the planet. It's because of this enthusiasm that the following articles published this past year have reached five and 10 and even 15 thousand, (which is far beyond anything we ever reached in print). Some of these viral hits include:

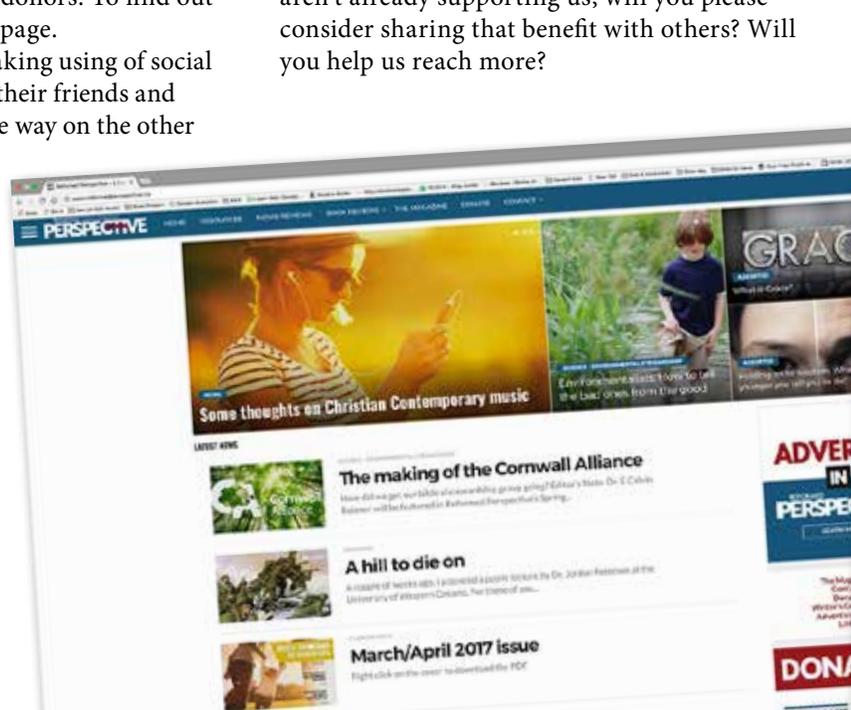
- Is recreational Marijuana sinful?
- Spanking on trial: how to make a public defense
- What is school for? Evangelism or discipleship?

- The surprising secrets of highly happy marriages
- Chick-fil-A is always closed on Sunday... except when an ox falls into a pit
- The growth of Statism in Canada
- What will heaven be like?
- Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?
- Moderation: Where beer and psalm-singing go hand in hand (or, Drinking to God's glory)
- Is Jordan Peterson the champion we've been looking for?

It's because we're in this together; it's because *RP* supporters and *RP* staff are both eager to spread God's Truth to as many as possible, by whatever means possible, that we are able to do this. It's because of your prayers, and God's blessing that, even if things stayed as they are (and, in actual fact, they are steadily improving) we'll have well over a quarter million articles read this year.

And we're just getting started. This month we've been able to hire a quarter-time webmaster, to help us increase our impact online, and help us start crafting video content. And we hope to be able to hire an executive director in the near future, to help with more content, coordinate cross-country speaking tours, and explore how we can reach others like-minded Christians with content that they would love and benefit from, if only they knew it (and we) existed.

So, if you've found *Reformed Perspective* beneficial and aren't already supporting us, will you please consider sharing that benefit with others? Will you help us reach more?



By filling out the form below, and becoming a monthly contributor, you give the *RP* Foundation the steady support that will enable us to reach many, many more with a thoughtful, thought-provoking and thoroughly Reformed perspective on every sphere of life.

PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT:

I want to support the mission of the *Reformed Perspective* Foundation through monthly contributions. As a registered Canadian charity, Canadian donations will get a tax receipt.

Please debit my bank account: (attach VOID cheque for banking information)

\$10 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: _____

Withdrawn on the _____ (1,2, or 28) day of each month

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

This payment is made on behalf of an Individual a Business

I may revoke my authorization at any time, subject to providing notice of 30 days. I can obtain a sample cancellation form, or further information on my right to cancel a PAD Agreement, at my financial institution or by visiting www.cdnpay.ca. I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

Thank you for standing with us as we together proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all spheres of life!

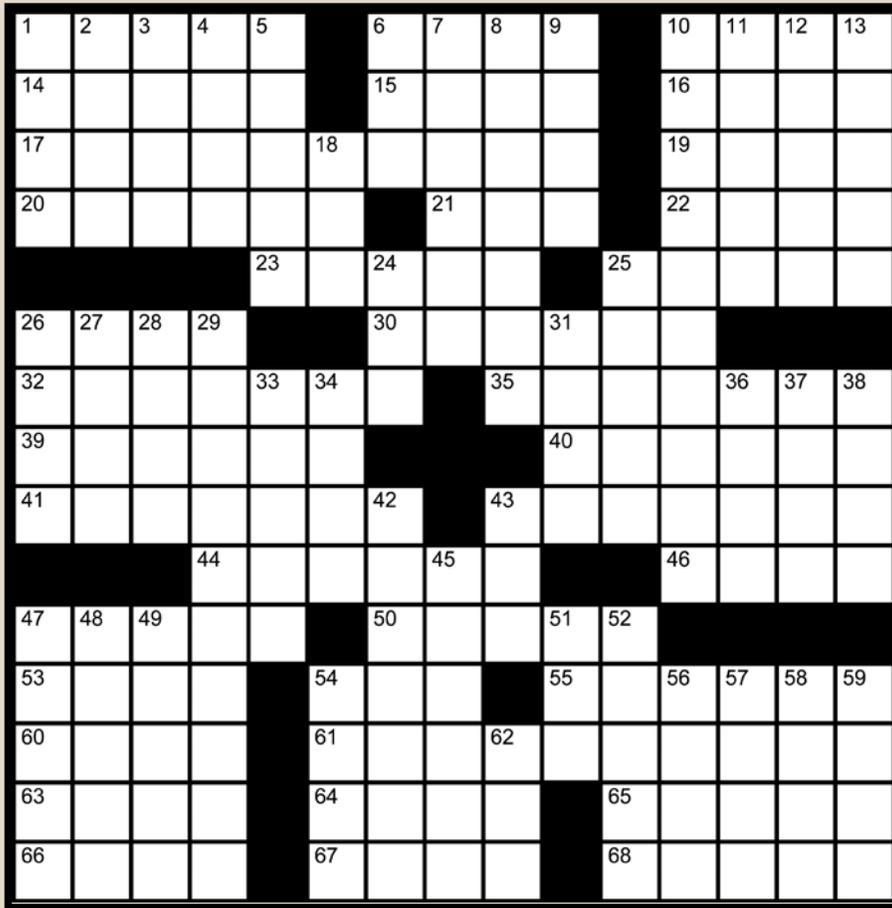
Completed forms, along with void cheques, can be mailed to: *Reformed Perspective*, Box 1328, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0.



I want to share my Reformed perspective with the world!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 3-11

PUZZLE CLUES

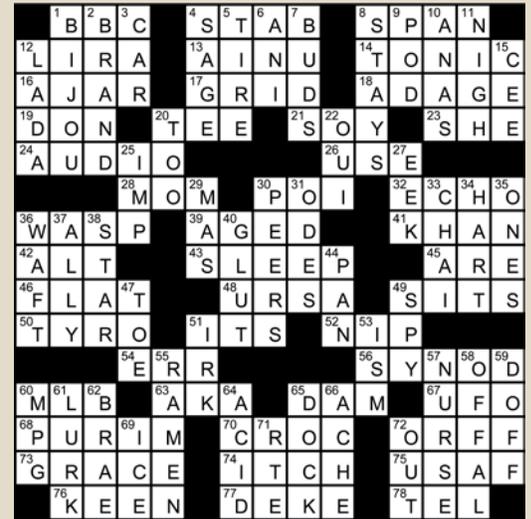
ACROSS

1. Sits for a portrait
6. Imitated (more like a baboon than a buffoon)
10. When the planes get here (abbr.)
14. Species of banana native to the Philippines
15. Palm tree found in man grove swamps, or, back wards, one tailor's tool
16. Where you buy or sell (in part of market?)
17. It's a bright little sight for a scared little tyke!
19. "The LORD has heard my _____" (Ps. 6)
20. _____ of Liberty
21. _____-size – amount to brush your teeth with
22. "clothed with a _____ robe" (Rev. 1)
23. What Rogers did to cows in rodeos – he _____ them
25. Belonging to a specific island in the Hebrides

26. "an _____ person will suffer...." (Prov. 19)
30. Unwilling to listen to rulers or rules
32. Little bit of jewelry worth only a little bit
35. Predatory sea "flower" (sort of an enemy?)
39. Horse's gait (on the way to Canterbury?)
40. Paced and then faced (with pistols)
41. Hi, Jean! (greeting keeping things clean?)
45. Citizen of region joined with Herzegovina
44. Ingenious
46. Where-a Scarlet O'Hara looked so fair-a, or, backwards, one rodent
47. What people earnestly seek in a desert
50. Pass a bill; cause a bill to become law
53. (Crazy?) ring-necked Canadian bird

54. 1/100 of the coin abbreviated in 53 Across
55. If he messes up, it's a net loss.
60. A legal one can be given by only a little bit
61. Breaking the Berlin blockade 1948-1949
63. "____ Be Me" (Cliff Richard song title)
64. Cut or thrust with a knife (archaic British)
65. Voluntarily do without
66. "For my yoke is _____" (Matt. 11)
67. "a feast of well-_____ wine" (Is. 25)
68. "pierced his side with a _____" (John 19)

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 3-10

DOWN

1. Bad reviews
2. Final review (short form)
3. Old Norse story of heroic history or legend
4. Authentic (partial echo of German term?)
5. First half of a day for running errands
6. Ruined medieval Armenian city
7. Place to keep pork before the slaughterhouse
8. Plant used for alternative herbal medicine
9. It can be raw, analysed, or flawed.
10. Work for a living
11. Eagle's claw
12. It's got game (and concert, and...)
13. Group of adult male deer
18. Name of the lion in the sky
24. "who likes to ___ himself first" (3 John)
25. Lack of movement in the intestines
26. "if the ___ has not spread" (Lev. 13)
27. Truck or cart without sides
28. Long-bodied cod-like fish
29. In a tempting, alluring, or attractive way
31. "to ___ the straps of the yoke" (Is. 58)
33. Blades on boats' bottoms
34. See eagle? Yes – sea eagle!
36. Hair color brand that is ammonia-free
37. "Draw ___ to God, and he will..." (James 1)
38. ___ Ferber (writer of books made as films)
42. "Beginning" of each creation day (be sure to read Gen. 1!)
43. Female undergarment
45. Main course (but not a mandatory one)
47. Song from the '50s to the '80s
48. Largest artery in human body
49. "the salvation of your _____." (1 Peter 1)
51. Using a computer to generate imagery
52. Dismissive slang for British aristocrat
54. "Mi ___ es su ___!" – Spanish hospitality
56. At the pinnacle of
57. Former monetary unit of Italy
58. Feminine version of the name Ingvar
59. City in Edo State, Nigeria
62. "God ___ the people around..." (Ex. 13)

Discipline or punishment:

Do your children know the difference?

by Jay Younts

There is a huge difference between punishment and discipline. Since children are born wanting to go their own way, every parent engages in some form of correction. That correction will either take the form of punishment or discipline.

Punishment is about retribution, about payment for wrong doing. Punishment produces insecurity and fear.

Biblical discipline on the other hand produces security and peace. The reason for the difference is that biblical discipline is motivated and controlled by love, the love of Christ. Only the love of Christ can remove punishment. As 1 John 4:18 says, the perfect love of Christ drives out fear, and replaces it with the blessing of the gospel.

Thus, if your correction is not directly connected to the restorative power of the gospel it will resemble punishment more than discipline. This will produce a response of fear and anger in your children. Listen intently to how your children talk about the impact of your correction. Here are some examples of children who are experiencing punishment instead of loving discipline:

“Mommy, I’m sorry I make you angry.”

“Daddy, I won’t do it again.”

“Why is everybody mad at me?”

“Do you think God is mad at me?”

“He hurt me, so I hit him back.”

“I am sorry that I am not good enough to make you happy.”

“I’ll be good, I promise. Please don’t be mad at me.”

“I try and try and try but I just can’t do what you want me to.”

“I guess I am just not good enough.”

“Mommy, I just can’t do it. I try but I just can’t.”



Have you heard words like these from your children? These statements indicate what your child thinks about the gospel. These kinds of statements show that performance (and not grace) is forming the basis of how your children think about the correction they receive. They know about punishment, but not much about loving, healing, restorative discipline.

Notice the fear and apprehension in the statements above. The loving discipline of the gospel is needed to give hope. The complete, perfect love of Christ given in discipline will drive out the fear of punishment. The gospel must be part of your daily discipline. Here is one picture of what a gospel centered response would look like:

“Sarah, I know you can’t obey by yourself. I know that. But that is

why Jesus died on the cross, because we can’t do it ourselves. Remember the Bible says that Jesus died so that we would have new life. You can’t obey in your own strength, but you can obey in Jesus’ strength. Let’s pray right now and ask Jesus to help.”

This is the tender nourishment of the gospel that Ephesians 6:4 compels parents to give to their children. Punishment or discipline: the difference is life changing. RP

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 (reprinted with permission) first appeared.

What's next?

The growth of Statism in Canada

by André Schutten

Last month I attended a particularly moving live stage production called *Solitary Refinement*. The play is based on true stories of persecution. It focuses on the suffering of Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbrand, imprisoned and tortured for 14 years – including two years in solitary confinement – for placing his faith in Jesus above his allegiance to the Communist government.

(The play is currently on tour, and I encourage you to attend or have it come to your church. There is also a movie of Wurmbrand's story coming out in March.)

In the play Wurmbrand recounts a refrain that reverberated continually between the loudspeaker and the concrete prison walls: "The State is Progressive. Christianity is Regressive." This same mantra was dogmatically drilled into all the students attending the mandatory State-run schools.

In the weeks that followed the play moved me to think about three things:

- First, the damage and terror inflicted by communism, socialism, and other totalitarian governments
- Second, how particular episodes in Canadian political drama of the last few months have an eerie similarity to the first experiences of Wurmbrand with communism
- Third, how unprepared Western Christians are to face such totalitarianism

IT'S SIMPLE; JUST COMPLY

In present-day Canada, two government institutions require citizens to affirm State ideology in order to enjoy the equal benefit of the law or government programs. The first is the Law Society of Ontario. It announced several months ago that all licensed Ontario lawyers are now required to affirm that they will:

abide by a Statement of Principles that acknowledges my obligation to promote equality, diversity and inclusion generally, in my behaviour towards colleagues, employees, clients and the public.

All that lawyers have to do is "just check the box."

Then, right around Christmas, the Hon. Patty Hajdu, Canada's Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour,

announced that citizens applying for a Summer Student Jobs grant had to "just check the box" to affirm that:

the job and the organization's core mandate respect ... the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights...

Thousands of Canadian Christian charities doing wonderful work in refugee resettlement, summer camps for underprivileged kids, poverty relief, addictions help, and assistance for at-risk youth, must "respect" "reproductive rights" (which include unfettered abortion, according to the government's explanatory manual) or risk losing out on thousands of dollars. When pushed on this, the Minister said it's no big deal to "just check the box", even if you do believe that the pre-born child is a human being worthy of protection in law.

So, what's the big deal? Is checking a box really the end of the free world? Let's look at the communist regimes of not so long ago to understand what is at stake.

WHEN THE POWER OF THE STATE IS UNRESTRAINED

Václav Havel was a dissident writer in communist Czechoslovakia. His plays pilloried communism. As Havel became more politically active, he fell under surveillance of the secret police. His writing landed him in prison multiple times, the longest stint lasting almost four years. He later became the president of the Czech Republic (which formed shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union). His most famous essay is *The Power of the Powerless* – well worth studying as statism increases in the West and the terrors of communism fade from memory.

Rod Dreher, in his book *The Benedict Option*, describes a central point of Havel's famous essay:

Consider, says Havel, the greengrocer living under Communism, who puts a sign in his shop window saying, "Workers of the World, Unite!" He does it not because he believes it, necessarily. He simply doesn't want trouble. And if he doesn't really believe it, he hides the humiliation of his

coercion by telling himself, "What's wrong with the workers of the world uniting?" Fear allows the official ideology to retain power – and eventually changes the greengrocer's beliefs. Those who "live within a lie," says Havel, collaborate with the system and compromise their full humanity.

That is what's happening with these check boxes today. It's so simple – by design – to affirm the State ideology of "inclusion" and "reproductive rights". Just check the box. And yet what's actually happening is a wearing away or a numbing of our convictions. Like the greengrocer in Communist Czechoslovakia, we fear the trouble of dissenting. We need the funds. We want to keep our license. As Dreher further explains:

Every act that contradicts the official ideology is a denial of the system. What if the greengrocer stops putting the sign up in his window? What if he refuses to go along to get along? "His revolt is an attempt to live within the truth" – and it's going to cost him plenty. He will lose his job and his position in society. His kids may not be allowed to go to the college they want to, or to any college at all. People will bully him or ostracize him.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO SPEAK UP

But we must dare to dissent. We need to live within the

truth. We have a better and deeper and richer understanding of "diversity" and "inclusion". We know what murderous lies are hidden behind the euphemism of "reproductive rights". Because we love our neighbours as ourselves, we dare to dissent because we know what is true, good, and beautiful. And it's worth fighting for.

As Dreher says, channeling Havel, when we do dissent,

by bearing witness to the truth, [we] accomplish something potentially powerful. [We have] said that the emperor is naked. And because the emperor is in fact naked, something extremely dangerous has happened: by [our] action, [we have] addressed the world. [We have] enabled everyone to peer behind the curtain. [We have] shown everyone that it is possible to live within the truth.

And so, when I filed my annual report at the end of 2017, I declined to check the box. I wrestled for a long time about whether to check the box. I rationalized checking the box. After all, what's so wrong with a statement on "diversity and inclusion"? But I concluded that what was motivating me to check the box was fear: fear of professional consequences, fear of the hassle, fear of what others might think of me. And while I do fear the State in a Biblical sense, I can't do what it is asking of me because I'd ultimately be lying. My statement of principles is not what they are actually looking for.





So I checked no, and then explained myself:

The Law Society of Upper Canada has no clue what the words “equality” “diversity” or “inclusion” mean as demonstrated in its unequal, exclusive and intolerant treatment of Trinity Western University graduates. I hold to an ethic that is deeper and richer and more meaningful than any superficial virtue-signalling that the law society cobbles together. However, the law society has no authority, constitutional or otherwise, to demand it of me. I, therefore, refuse on principle to report such a statement to the law society.

It’s not the most eloquent thing I’ve written. But I dissented.

WHAT’S NEXT

So where do these check boxes take us? What’s next? I can’t help but think that the check boxes are a trial balloon of sorts. If the current government can get away with enforcing moral conformity as a condition for receiving summer job grants, can it do the same for charitable status? Will the other regulated professions (medicine, accounting, engineering, etc) include check boxes? Will all charities in the next few years have to check the box each year to affirm the “Charter values” of inclusion and non-discrimination and reproductive rights in order to keep their charitable status? And after that, will our Christian schools have to check the box to keep the doors open? Will we as parents have to check the box to access medical care for our kids? What’s next?

Are we prepared for what comes next? I’m not saying this is the way it will go. I am optimistic that when Christians stand up for what is right, good things happen. God blesses faithful witness. So I hope and pray for a revival in Canada and I know it is possible, by God’s grace.

But if the trajectory we are on continues downward, are we prepared? How much Scripture have we committed to memory for those lonely days in a prison cell? (There are no Bible apps in prison.) How often do we practice the spiritual discipline of fasting, as Jesus expected us to do? If nothing else, it trains us to cope with hunger. Do we practice the discipline of tithing, which develops a willingness to part with material blessings?

Are we prepared for whatever comes next? 

André Schutten is the Director of Law & Policy with the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada. A version of this article was originally published on the ARPACanada.ca blog, is reprinted here with permission.

The Board of
Covenant Canadian Reformed School
 invites applications for the 2018/2019 school year
 for the following full/part time positions:

**Senior High Science Teacher
 and
 General Elementary/Jr. High/Sr. High Teacher**

Covenant Canadian Reformed School (CCRS) is a vibrant K-12 school community with a current student population of around 240. We are situated 3 km east of the hamlet of Neerlandia and approximately 25 km north of the Town of Barrhead. Between these two locations there are three Canadian Reformed congregations and one United Reformed congregation. CCRS is located about an hour and a half north of the cities of Edmonton and St. Albert.

We anticipate growth over the next number of years and are currently planning for future expansion.

We encourage energetic, qualified (or soon to be qualified) educators, committed to Reformed Christian education, to apply. Under our Father’s blessing of a broad, highly supportive membership base and current levels of government funding in Alberta, we are able to offer a very attractive wage and benefits package.

All interested individuals can apply by submitting a resume, a statement of faith, a philosophy of education, and references.

Please visit our school’s website at www.covenantschool.ca

Applications can be sent in writing to
 3030 TWP RD 615A
 County of Barrhead, AB T0G 1R2
 or to the Board secretary, **Mrs. Karen Breukelman:**
secretary@covenantschool.ca

If you would like further information about the school and the area please contact the Board chairman:

Mr. Jordan Tiggelaar – 780-307-8449
chairman@covenantschool.ca

or the principal:

Mr. Mike Nederveen – 780-674-4774 (school)
principal@covenantschool.ca



ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: EVANGELISM IS NOT DISCIPLESHIP

by Sharon Bratcher

TA few years ago, at a Ligonier Conference, Pastor Voddie Baucham was asked what he would say to parents who were weighing the option of homeschooling or Christian schooling over against using the public schools. The hope was, in using the public system, that their children's Christian faith would be a "witness and influence" in this unbelieving culture.

Baucham's response was profound.

"I think they're making a categorical error....All of a sudden we went from a discussion about education, which is *discipleship*, to a discussion about *evangelism* in spite of negative discipleship. And so, we've got two completely separate categories there.... So what we've got to do is, we've got to talk about those things properly."

He went on to explain:

"When somebody asks me that question that way, they're telling me that they don't want to answer the most important question. And they've created a false argument between two separate categories that are being held up in competition against one another when they are absolutely not. Because, if they ask me, 'Should I give my child a Christ-honoring education' or 'Should I have my child be an influence on people who are unbelievers' - Yes! Why do we assume that the only way a child can have an impact and influence on unbelievers is if they give up on a Christ-honoring, Christ-centered education? So, I think there's a categorical error in the question."

The impact starts so young

As a public school substitute teacher

Should I give my child a Christ-honoring education, or should I have my child be an influence on people who are unbelievers - Yes!

in the Detroit, Michigan area, I have worked in more than 30 schools. While I have been impressed with the teachers' and staff's dedication, I find constant reminders that the children are in no way learning about God or Jesus Christ. He has been replaced by Nature in Science class, ignored in Mathematics, barely noticed in History and Literature, and severely criticized in Psychology and Sociology.

Recently I was teaching a lovable group of Kindergarteners about the symbols of the USA: the flag, the eagle, and the Statue of Liberty. I defined freedom for them, mentioning that in our country everyone can pray to God the way that we want to, get the type of job we prefer, and travel where we want to without the government telling us that we cannot.

A sweet, smiling, dark-haired girl raised her little hand, eager to add info to my list. She said, "And in the United States, when you grow up, if you're a boy, you can marry a girl or a boy, and if you're a girl, you can marry a boy or a girl! In some places you can't do that, but in the United States we can marry who we want to."

She was quite excited.

I was stunned.

Factually, she was correct, so there was nothing I could say in that setting. I changed the subject and moved on. But I shouldn't have been shocked. The public schools, colleges, and universities follow the current cultural norm wherever it leads, and that, without question, includes teaching kids that 2 Moms or 2 Dads is entirely normal, even desirable. By the time this 5-year-old is 18, she won't have any room left in her "open" mind to think anything else.

Conclusion

At the same Ligonier Conference, R.C. Sproul added his own thoughts to Voddie Baucham's, speaking to the economic cost of Christian school tuition: "The biggest illusion is that sending your kids to the government school is free. It's the most costly thing you could ever do."

While we are still free to do so, we need to renew our dedication to Christ-centered, Christ-honoring education, whether inside a brick and mortar building or as a consortium of homeschoolers who aid one another. How might we all sacrifice more to ensure that all of our children will learn His truth?

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." - Deut. 6:6-7 

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SHOCKED BY AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

by Harma-Mae Smit

There are many classics I mean to read in my life, but I just haven't yet. Fortunately this summer, while laid up with an injury, I found myself facing Augustine's *Confessions* without an excuse. So I dove into it. And I was quite shocked – not by any of his confessions, but how readable it is. You always imagine classics to be quite unreadable, which doesn't really make any sense, because how could anything become a classic unless people read it? But whatever the case, this classic is engaging.

FREE TO QUESTION

The best thing about the first few chapters is all of Augustine's questions. Instead of doing what most books do, which is pose a question (such as 'Why does a good God allow evil?') and then immediately answer it, Augustine just begins with posing questions. Many chapters start with a block of questions directed towards God, and Augustine doesn't even pretend he has answers to most of them. If he has part of an answer, or a thought about the answer, he'll say it, but it's not from a position of authority. His bits of answers are not presented as definitive. He just lets his mind go wild with wonder over God.

I'd give a few examples, but to baldly state the questions in my own words destroys his beautiful wording of them. I'll just say one or two – for example, haven't you ever wondered whether you have to know God first before you cry out to him, or if you can cry out to him in order to

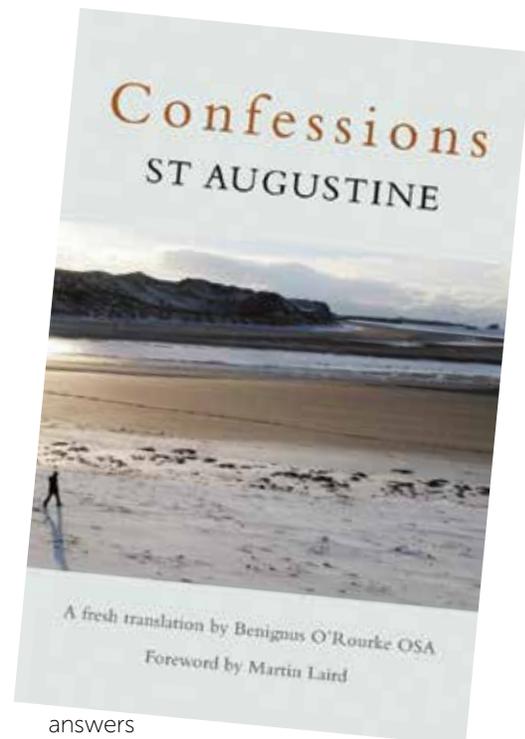
know him?

And haven't you ever wondered how a God who's outside time, and created time, experiences time?

AN ATTRACTIVE HUMILITY

The unexpected thing about this is that Augustine is such a revered figure in the church. He's more or less the ancestor of many of the churches that exist. So much of Christian theology has roots that go back to his writings. So I expected him to present himself as an expert.

It was refreshing because I haven't read a book that admitted it didn't have the



answers

for a long time. Most often people write books because they do think they have the answers. Or they write because they think people need the answers, so they cobble together some kind of explanation. They know their book won't attract our precious divided attention if they don't make bold claims.

But Augustine shocked me because he's not presenting himself as the pattern



the Church after him should follow... even though the Church does. (At least, he doesn't present that way in the first part of *Confessions*.) If anyone has a right to make bold claims, it would be Augustine, of all writers.

This is not to say Augustine is completely uninterested in answers. No, in fact much of his search for God is driven by his dissatisfaction with the answers given by his pagan worldview. And finding a few answers was central in his conversion – he explores answers more and more the further you delve into his book.

However, the questions never stop. In the end, he is willing to have faith without answering every question that could be asked about God.

QUESTIONS ASKED IN FAITH

The second really cool thing about *Confessions* is that, unlike if I was the one asking the questions, Augustine is able to ask them without a trace of cynicism. He doesn't resent God for not providing answers to all of them. Somehow Augustine is able to put down all his wonderment with the deepest humility, and in a fever of steadfast love. He's asking because he loves God. He wonders because a person is obviously interested in the ones they love.

I can only hope I present a similar attitude one day.

If someone had wanted me to read *Confessions* before now, they should not have described it as Augustine's autobiography, or however else people describe the book. They should have said, "Here's a guy who lived a couple thousand years ago, who has a mind that works just like yours." It's crazy to reach across the centuries and find a thought pattern that feels familiar.

And as for the unanswered questions? This is what Augustine says about them: RP

"Let [people] ask what it means, and be glad to ask: but they may content themselves with the question alone. For it is better for them to find you, God, and leave the question unanswered than to find the answer without finding you."

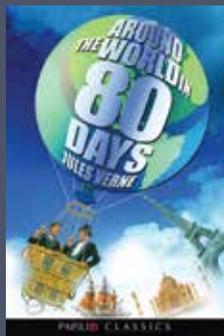
A couple other classics that aren't hard to read

by Harma-Mae Smit

Classics are usually heavy reading. Even if they're short, the language is unfamiliar enough that they take a long time to get through. But every once in a while you find one that surprises you, and here are couple that surprised me.

JULES VERNE'S *AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS*

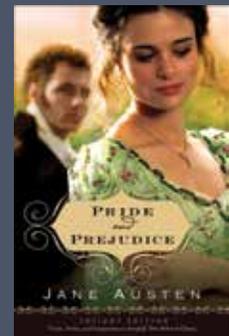
I just really enjoyed the very punctual and methodical Phileas Fogg racing around the world with his comic French servant, Passepartout. They get into preposterous adventures of all sorts, some of which strain believability but are incredibly fun to read. It gives a wonderful picture of travel before airplanes were invented, with railroads and steamboats. Verne is known as a science fiction author, but this was a contemporary novel for him — and so for us it's a nice view in on the past. Also, I loved the sudden revelation of Fogg's tender side in the end.



As a side note, Jules Verne's novels have historically received poor English translations, which led him to have a higher reputation in his native France than in the English-speaking world. This is the only sample of his work I've read, but I quite enjoyed him. In addition, I've noticed publishers give this novel nonsensical cover pages – one edition had a hot air balloon, but hot air balloons failed to appear in the story. Another recent edition has a daredevil racing in an old-fashioned car, but this does not happen in the novel either.

JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

This was my introduction to Jane Austen, and I still believe it's the easiest one to start with (though none of her novels are too difficult for the modern reader, aside from the formality of the language). This novel gets right into the action and humor, with Mr. Bingley arriving in town and Mrs. Bennett nagging her husband to go meet him. It does not start with family history, like *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*. The heroine is lively enough that it's not a chore to follow her through the story, and the story is shorter than *Emma*. There's a few lulls in action, but overall it's a very satisfying romance and shows off Austen's talent very well.



CONCLUSION

These are my recommendations – your mileage may vary! After all, I thought *Lord of the Rings* and *The Illiad* were easy to get into, and I know many people who didn't. Meanwhile I struggle with *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, while others just love them.

But if you're meaning to read a few novels that have stood the test of time, these are a few places to start.

IS JORDAN PETERSON THE CHAMPION WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR?

by Joel McDurmon



Christians, it's time to think a bit more deeply about the Jordan Peterson moment.¹

Unless you've been asleep and on a different planet for the past several weeks, you've probably seen a video clip of the increasingly popular social commentator Dr. Jordan B. Peterson. Most recently, Peterson was rocketed to the precarious and perhaps not-what-one-bargained-for, but nevertheless real, spotlight of internet stardom by brilliantly handling an aggressive feminist interviewer with raw logic, facts, and truth. She was literally speechless. Scores of memes followed. Dr. North wrote up the exchange under the heading, "Bambi vs. Godzilla," which it surely was.

Peterson is popular for a real reason, too. He's speaking the hard truth about personal responsibility, and right into the teeth of the beast of leftist safe spaces, spin machines, blizzards of snowflakes, and the like. That stand on that issue alone, when executed well (and it is), is enough to win you a nice fan base. But Peterson adds yet another dimension. He's leveling liberal academics from within their own fortress—the sacred groves of academia. Even better, he's doing it from within one of the more rabidly liberal of disciplines. He's a psychologist.

Conservatives everywhere are lining up to hear him. He puts his class lectures online and also posts several more casual and intimate Q&A style videos. His audience is overwhelmingly made up of young men, most of whom are hearing a positive, challenging, and inspiring message for young men for the first time. The war on boys ends here, and millions of viewers and students are lining up for something that sounds manlier than what they get anywhere else—certainly any of their other liberal arts classes. Each video he posts gets tens or hundreds of thousands of views, and he, smartly, is receiving donations to a reported tune of something like \$60k per month.

If his liberal colleagues didn't hate him enough for repeat-blasting feminism and the LGBT political agenda like an

intellectual jackhammer, they could hate him for just being such a greedy capitalist alone.

Meanwhile, conservatives have found a new hero. He's brilliant, fairly well-read, and even better, he spends a ton of time explaining Bible stories from Genesis and the like in profound, engaging ways. Conservatives are cheering a new champion, young men are in love with the father they never had, and Christians are mesmerized by what seems like a new prophet of international proportions. At least one conservative Reformed conference ushered Dr. Peterson past any number of theologians to the front of the keynote speaker line.

The more I listen to Dr. Peterson, the more I like him and think maybe some genuine progress could be made with him from a biblical Christian perspective. He often exegetes material that most pastors don't get to, and applies it in helpful ways that I sense most pastors would be afraid to, even if they recognized the application.

And that kind of gets us to the "but" in this article, and it's a "but" that every Christian needs to consider next to everything Jordan Peterson says and does, because it's a very big "but." In a nutshell, it is this:

For all of his toppling of great idols of humanism in our day, Dr. Peterson's thought, from their presuppositions right through many of his conclusions, is as thoroughly humanist, autonomous, and thus ultimately dangerous, as anything any leftist ever said. Christians need to be aware of the depths of this problem in Peterson's thought, and the implications it has for their discernment of his teachings.

OUR HAPPY BLINDNESS

Conservatives and Christians in general, however, don't see it, due, I think, to a very regular historical occurrence. They have never really developed and taught their own thoroughly biblical psychology and social theory. They have a few snippets of beliefs from the Bible, and a few beliefs from Bible stories, and enough of an idea of Christ to have a lot of well-developed

theories about *individual salvation* — at least, in the sense of answering "how do I get to heaven"? But social theory? Social dynamics? Personality, vocation, self-improvement, discipline, meaning, power versus authority, law, justice? We're not only virtually empty here, but when even a few of us have tried, they are usually pilloried by the rest for daring to say the Bible speaks to such issues that are outside of individual ticket sales to heaven.

No wonder there's a market for strong words about personal responsibility to young men today.

As I said, this has often been true in history. Christians have consistently failed to develop a distinctly biblical social theory. So, they wander like sheep with no shepherd; and when the next major social, moral, or intellectual crisis hits, they have usually found themselves sidling up to the strong, unifying voice of some secular moralist who is saying some of what the church should have been saying all along.

More often than not, too, the Christian intellectuals cannot line up fast enough to parrot the new hero and present mildly-baptized versions of his thought. Only, in the process, they end up carrying water for paganism, and bringing it right into the baptismal fonts of their sanctuaries. Christianity, and especially Christian social theory, suffers for a generation until the next crisis hits.

To prevent this problem, it would of course behoove us just to go ahead and develop a biblical social theory from the bottom up (there's a good start on it already, by the way). It would also help to quit fawning over every bright and engaging pagan that momentarily captures our hearts in the meantime.

Even if we were to take a "chew the meat and spit the bones" approach (not out of the picture), it would certainly be incumbent upon us to learn, to know, and to know what the bones are — to understand the paganism of the particular unbelievers we invite to dinner, and to make sure the other guests are aware just how deep that rabbit hole goes.

Now, Jordan B. Peterson is the latest

of such pagan heroes. Even if we were to decide he has a good benefit to offer to those with a biblical Christian worldview, when analyzed from that perspective, we need at least to talk about the presuppositions from which he is working, and what that means for us, and some of the things they, so to speak, don't tell you in the brochure.

THE DEPTHS OF DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

Jordan B. Peterson is sometimes called a Christian, and some have said he calls himself a Christian. But from any orthodox or historical definition of that term, nothing could be further from the truth — his interesting grasps of Bible stories notwithstanding. Peterson is a clinical psychologist by trade and by academic profession, but in terms of worldview, he is a full-blown, unapologetic, enthusiastic Jungian humanist, with a twist of Nietzsche in there, too. This means, first, you need to know a little bit about Carl G. Jung.

Jung early on was a parallel figure to Sigmund Freud, but eventually developed certain ideas into something more complex and fantastical than Freud, by wedding forms of ancient pagan, mystic, occult, and other esoteric philosophies into his theories of the primitive drives and instincts, sexual and otherwise, of the human *libido* which make up the core of our unconscious being. Jung was a strong disciple also of Friedrich Nietzsche, and many Nietzschean themes such as the *Übermensch* (“super-man”), death of God, and the transvaluation of all values find new expression in Jung's theories. To this Jung further added *völkish* religion, Aryanism, UFOs, alchemy, and virtually all forms of occultism (emphasis on *all*).

There was a tremendous push and enthusiasm in Germany at the time for all such things, and one popular understanding of it all was that Germans, in order to become truly all they were destined to be (whether naturally, through evolution, or mystically through some kind of cosmic evolution), needed to push beyond all

the impediments Christianity had forced upon German civilization and engage the true roots of ancient German folk religion, which predated Christianity and had within it all the secrets, mysteries, and savage power in a sort of mystical, cultural DNA that would make Germans be all Germans were ever intended to be—fulfilled, transcendent, powerful.

And if you sniff a bit of Hitler and Nazism in that, that's because it's all the stuff they were made of. But there is even more to it.

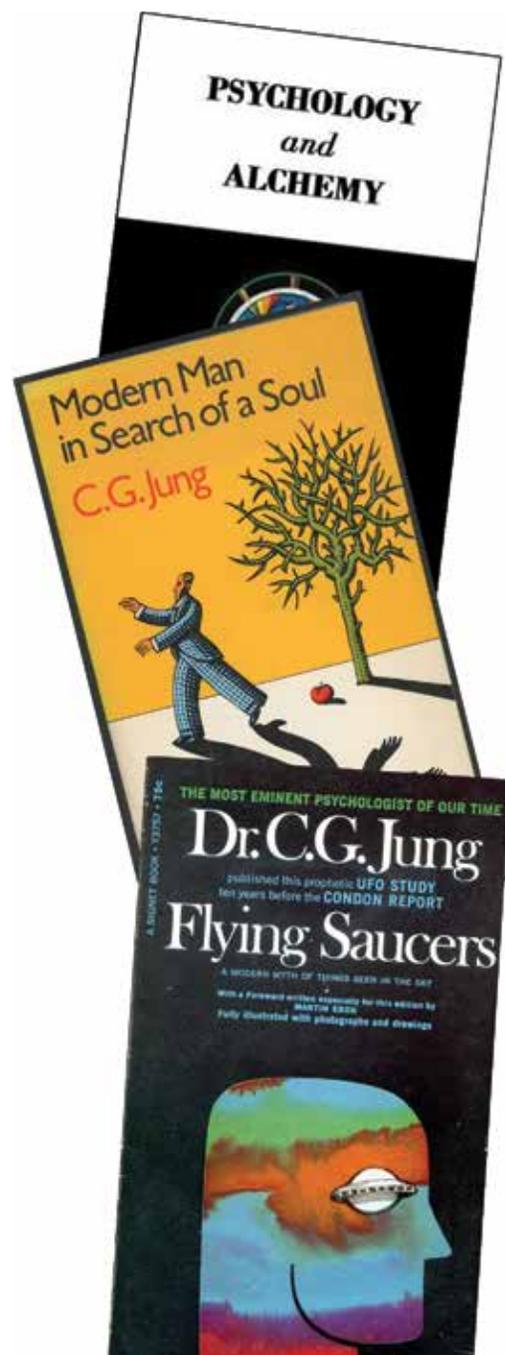
This also came on the heels of two generations of developed higher criticism of the Bible (much of it led by German scholars) — the kind that far surpassed merely denying inspiration, and said the Bible must be treated like any other book, then proceeded to deconstruct it into fine slices with razors of all kinds of criticism, historical, literary, philological, textual, linguistic, etc. The result was a near-total denuding of the faith of the German people, and many more besides. In this milieu grew up the likes of Nietzsche (not to mention Marx), but also a whole new denigration of traditional Christianity, and on top of that, a whole new appreciation for all things pre-Christian and not-Christian. Into the void flooded, among other things, a great interest in the ancient mystery religions — especially those which were supposed to have the deepest, purest of Persian/Aryan roots, for these were the ancient roots of the Germans.

By the time Jung arrives, there is a developed body of scholarly literature on all of this. One of the mystery religions which most captivated Jung, for various reasons, was the Roman cult, allegedly of Persian origin, of Mithraism. This was a blood-sacrifice cult centered on a Sun god named Mithras and featuring also a lion-headed god.

These things were not fringe or side interests to Jung. They were the core of his very being and of the psychology, philosophy, and methods he developed. It was around 1913 that Jung, through dabbling in spiritualism and psychic trances (which he called

“active imagination”), achieved his own personal version of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. He had a vision in which he met Elijah and “Salome” in a “Druidic sacred place.” Salome approached Jung and began to worship him. When he asked her why, she said, “You are Christ.” A snake approached him and coiled around him. Soon, he could feel that his face had transformed into that of a lion.

Jung explained to an audience in 1925 that through this experience, he had been mystically initiated into the Mithraic mysteries, and had undergone “deification”—personally transformed into the very lion headed God, named



“Aion” by Jung, featured in the ancient cult. Jung believed he had been deified, identified with Aion the Persian/Aryan sun God, and immortal.

The one thing on which *all* of this was built, and with which all the major players were consistent, was the need to find something to replace the razed religious foundations and superstructure of traditional Christianity.

Jung himself embodied this critique. He agreed with that vast critics of Christianity at the time and saw Christianity as a great historical distraction to the true development of the human race. If history had only gone differently, we would have not had this sad affair, but been more thoroughly enlightened by Mithraism and the mysteries instead of impeded by Christianity. Instead, he said, “In the past two thousand years Christianity has done its work and has erected barriers of repression, which protect us from the sight of our own ‘sinfulness.’ The elementary emotions of the libido have come to be unknown to us, for they are carried on in the unconscious; therefore, the belief which combats them [i.e., Christianity] has become hollow and empty.”

A couple paragraphs from one popular Jung scholar will tie this all together, explaining Jung’s worldview and teachings:

Within each native European there was a living pre-Christian layer of the unconscious psyche that produced religious images from the Hellenistic pagan mystery cults or even the more archaic nature religions of the ancient Aryans. The phylogenetic unconscious does not produce purely Christian symbols but instead offers pagan images, such as that of the sun as god. If the sediment of two thousand years of Judeo-Christian culture could be disturbed (as in psychotic mental diseases with a psychological component, such as dementia praecox), then this Semitic “mask” might be removed, and the biologically true images of the original “god within” could be revealed: a natural

god, perhaps of the sun or stars like Mithras, or matriarchal goddesses of the moon or blood, or phallic or chthonic gods from within Mother Earth....

To Jung, the mystery cults of antiquity kept alive the ancient natural religion of human prehistory and were a corrective antidote to the poison of religions—like Judaism and Christianity—that had been forged by civilization....

Jung regarded Christianity as a Jewish religion that was cruelly imposed on the pagan peoples of Europe. . . . Semitic cultures, cut off from the primordial source of life, did not have mysteries in which a direct experience of the gods could be attained through initiation rituals. They were, therefore, cut off from the renewal and rebirth that such mysteries offered the Aryans....

Jung often referred to the ancient mysteries as the “secret” or “hidden” or “underground” religions and their social organizations as the secret or hidden churches that kept alive the divine spark from the dawn of creation. This leads us to an obvious conclusion. When Jung became one with Aion in his visionary initiation experience, in his imagination he was not only becoming a full participant in the mysteries of Mithras; he was experiencing a direct initiation into the most ancient of the mysteries of his Aryan ancestors....

Here’s the part that is the most crucial summary for our purposes:

His new science of psychoanalysis became the twentieth century vehicle of those mysteries. Most important, as his initiation experience also entailed assuming the stance of the crucified Jesus as he metamorphosed into Aion, Jung thereby became the figure that fueled the fantasies of thousands of Volkish Germans and European and American anti-Semites at the turn of the century: the Aryan Christ.

Much more could be added to this,

and in fact is in the books from which these paragraphs came, *The Jung Cult* and *The Aryan Christ: The Secret Life of Carl Jung* (see esp. pp. 121–147), both by award-winning author and clinical psychologist Richard Noll.²

I want to be clear here: while there are obviously strains of antisemitism in all of this, and Jung did briefly give a favorable glimpse to Nazism, the point here is not to play the anti-Semite card and try to discredit Jung in that way. The point here is to show the radical break with all things Christian, the reinterpretation of even Jesus himself in terms of mystical, occult mysteries, and the projection of such occult practices into a thoroughly scientific-sounding method of “psychoanalysis” as a way of, among other things, transforming the collective imagination of the West from Christianity to a new paganism (same as the old).

All of this was Jung’s answer to Nietzsche’s “death of God” proclamation. Nietzsche was not just dancing on the grave, he was alerting the world to a need for something to fill the void left behind, because “God” had been performing some pretty important services in regard to meaning and morality and all, so those who killed him had to pick up the slack. Nietzsche’s answer to this, in a nutshell, was that we had to become powerful autonomous actors who from now on determined our own values for ourselves. Or as Peterson has put it in his lectures, men must become creatures who can autonomously create their own values. But this looked like trouble. So what Jung added to that answer was to examine people’s fantasies to determine their drives and motives, and supply some kind of collective unity that could tie these many autonomous actors to something common. He added the dimension of mythology across history as a guide to interpretation and meaning. These last few explanations are notes directly from Peterson’s own lectures.

In short, Jung mainstreamed the most famous doctrines of the atheist Friedrich Nietzsche, and also mainstreamed virtually every kind of ancient paganism

“The thing that is instantiated in Jungian psychotherapy, the Jungian model, is, it requires personal responsibility above all else.”

and occultism right into the heart of twentieth century secular humanism, and it makes a huge core of what makes modern humanism what it is.

This is what Christians should consider when they listen to Jordan Peterson, because this is precisely, and quite squarely I would add, where he is coming from when he says what he says, even when it seems to comport with Christianity.

PETERSON'S JUNGIAN WORLDVIEW

Some will be quick to object that I am merely poisoning the well. All of this, I admit, could indeed be seen as one big genetic fallacy, or series thereof. We could understand Peterson's association with Jungian psychology as little more than incidental, like a kind of professional vestige, long since watered down and papered over with many layers of more modern, scientific clinical theories.

Except, Peterson says things like this: “Jung, I would say, was the most serious thing for the twentieth century.” And he says such things with passionate verve. And he lectures with enthusiasm on how great Jung was and he weaves Jung's theories and ideas into his own. He speaks openly of Jung (and Nietzsche, too), his admiration for

him, and quite often will drop phrases and ideas from Jung's methodology that show Peterson follows the same path: for example, the interpretation of people's “archetypal dreams” and “the mythological underpinning of them” in his psychological practice.

Consider teachings like this:

For Jung, not only are the substructures of your thought biological, and so therefore based in your body, but your body was also cultural and historical.... You're an evolved creature, so [there's] 3.5 billion years worth of weirdness that you can draw on, or that can move you where it wants to move you.... But also, you're being shaped by cultural dynamics all the time.... Part of what every single person is constantly broadcasting to every other person is how to behave....

Then he discusses the archetypal “savior figure” as the distillation of a thousand people's ideals, and says if someone comes along who is close to one of these figures, you have a religion. So, the story of Horus and Isis kept Egypt civilized for millennia. Then that story “sort of transmuted into Judaism and then turned into Christianity, so it's not like the ideas disappeared.” Peterson says

You're just as possessed by those ideas as any ancient Egyptian, you're just more fragmented, because what your conscious mind assumes and what your unconscious mind assumes are different things, and you're always at war with yourself; that's why you're attracted to ideologies.

These ideologies he calls “idols” and destructive to your soul (I wondered if he would include the ideologies of Jung and Nietzsche in that. Don't know.). He concluded the section by mentioning what is so terrifying about Jung: “there's no escaping the realization of the nature of the forces that are behind the puppets that we are.” Scoffing at people who said Jung started a cult, Peterson says he is “so much more terrifying than a cult!” No, Jung was “trying to bring the primordial

imagination back into the world and to make people conscious of it.”

And there's more. If there's any single thing Peterson's become known for, it's his emphasis on taking personal responsibility. Here, it would seem, there's at least some overlap with the discipline, responsibility, and sanctification found in Christian teaching. But not really, this is Jungian too. Peterson himself teaches, “The thing that is instantiated in Jungian psychotherapy, the Jungian model, is, it requires personal responsibility above all else.”

It's not Christian. It's Jung's answer to Nietzsche's superman. It's humanism, human autonomy, self-help, or in Peterson's personal brand, “self-authoring.”

Peterson comes across as conservative, mainly because he takes such an uncompromising stance against “cultural Marxism” and “postmodernism” (which he says is just Marxism under a new name), but his own roots in Nietzsche and Jung not only conflict with that stance in theory (who, after all, is a greater granddaddy of postmodernism than Nietzsche?), but some of his own ethical wranglings show those roots in practice as well.

One lesser known, but certainly not surprising, aspect of Jung is his sexual immorality. He counseled some of his clients to have affairs, and himself had women in addition to his wife. Peterson is certainly more prudish personally (his assessment), yet he himself from his worldview has a hard time addressing homosexual marriage. Yes, he would oppose such a law if it were only cultural Marxists using it to destroy western civilization, but he's also supportive of it because “it's a means whereby gay people can be more thoroughly integrated into standard society, and that's probably a good thing.”

Likewise, on abortion. He has no problems calling it morally wrong, though on pragmatic and anecdotal grounds. But the question of its legality is a whole different thing. Some morally wrong things should still be legal. This discussion, he said, is nested inside a larger discussion, and in discussing it,

Peterson reveals how he once counseled a 27-year old female virgin to address her personal timidity by going out and having some sexual “adventures.” After all, “You can’t just say to people in the modern world, ‘No sex until you’re married.’”

Even in his “self-authoring” theme, Peterson is Jungian-Nietzschean to the point of being postmodern himself. In speaking of self-improvement in metaphorical terms, he says this:

...then if you create an ultimate judge, which is what the archetypal

imagination of humankind has done, say, with the figure of Christ – because if Christ is nothing else he is at least the archetypal perfect man and therefore the judge – you have a judge that says get rid of everything about yourself that isn’t perfect.

The thing that’s interesting about this, I think, is you can do it more or less on your own terms. You have to have some collaboration from external people; but you don’t have to pick an external ideal. You can pick an ideal that fulfills the role of ideal for you; you

can say, OK, if things could be set up for me the way I need them to be, and if I could be who I needed to be, what would that look like? You can figure that out for yourself, and then instantly you have a judge.

Maybe he would explain these points, or the context, a little more satisfactorily given the chance, but as it is, this is nothing less than the very moral relativism one would expect from his inspirations (yet which he himself decries).

“So what you’re saying is...”

In January Jordan Peterson was interviewed by Cathy Newman, on Britain’s Channel 4 News. The exchange quickly went viral, with more than 7 million watching the half-hour interview, and millions more watching clips from it.

Why did so many watch? Because here we had a battle of heavyweights – a politically incorrect professor who wouldn’t let his words be twisted vs. a mainstream media journalist who wouldn’t stop trying.

Her favorite trick was to restate whatever Peterson had said in her own words. But every time she did so – each time she led with a “So you’re saying...” – what followed was never an accurate summary of Peterson’s position. An extended clip from this interview gives a good illustration of why so many Christians admire the courage of this man. He was bullied and unfairly treated, just as Christians often are in by the mainstream press, but he never let it bother him, and he never let her get away with it.

NEWMAN: Is gender equality desirable?

PETERSON: If it means equality of outcome, then almost certainly it’s undesirable! That’s already been demonstrated in Scandinavia. Because in Scandinavia, ...

NEWMAN: What do you mean by that? Equality of outcome is undesirable?

PETERSON: Well, men and women won’t sort themselves into the same categories, if you leave them alone to do it off their own accord. We’ve already seen that in Scandinavia. It’s twenty to one female nurses to male, something like that. It might not be quite that extreme. And approximately the same, male engineers to female engineers. And that’s a consequence of the free choice of men

and women in the societies that have gone farther than any other societies to make gender equality the purpose of the law! Those are in ineradicable differences! You can eradicate them with tremendous social pressure and tyranny! But if you leave men and women to make their own choices you will not get equal outcome!

NEWMAN: Right, so you’re saying that anyone who believes in equality, whether you call them feminists, call them whatever you want to call them, should basically give up, because it ain’t gonna happen!

PETERSON: Only if they’re aiming at equality of outcome.

NEWMAN: So you’re saying give people equality of opportunity, that’s fine?

PETERSON: Not only fine, it’s eminently desirable for everyone, for individuals and for society.

NEWMAN: But still women aren’t gonna make it! That’s what you’re really saying....



One of the many “so you’re saying” memes that began circulating on the Internet soon after the interview ended.

JUNG WITH A STIFF UPPER LIP

Somehow, however, this Jungian depth psychologist has adopted a conservative-ish streak along the way. But even these are humanistic. The following excerpts of Peterson quoted in David Brooks's recent article are very interesting:

All of life is perched, Peterson continues, on the point between order and chaos. Chaos is the realm without norms and rules. Chaos, he writes, is "the impenetrable darkness of a cave and the accident by the side of the road. It's the mother grizzly, all compassion to her cubs, who marks you as a potential predator and tears you to pieces. Chaos, the eternal feminine, is also the crushing force of sexual selection. Women are choosy maters. ... Most men do not meet female human standards."

Life is suffering, Peterson reiterates. Don't be fooled by the naïve optimism of progressive ideology. Life is about remorseless struggle and pain. Your instinct is to whine, to play victim, to seek vengeance.

Peterson tells young men never to do that. Rise above the culture of victimization you see all around you. Stop whining. Don't blame others or seek revenge. "The individual must conduct his or her life in a manner that requires the rejection of immediate gratification, or natural and perverse desires alike."

When I hear "struggle" and "suffering," I hear the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. When I hear the advice to rise above these and face them like a man, I hear classic stoicism (which churchmen of the era loved). The two are far more similar, by the way, than most histories of philosophies catch. These ideas connect historically also in Nietzsche, but also in classic British conservatism. In the face of calamity and chaos, keep a stiff upper lip. Don't bend, don't change. Edmund Burke could have written those paragraphs.

Above all, a Burkean Conservative would say, don't touch the ancient institutions. Don't mess with the

fundamental foundations of society that have served us well for so many years. Don't change anything. If you do, you don't know what the consequences will be. This is exactly Peterson's message, too. Don't be fooled by naïve optimism. Accept traditions, etc., even if you have to embrace the pain.

Sure enough, what we are getting in the conservative and Christian flocking to Peterson is the same thing we saw with the classic conservatism centering on Edmund Burke. Never mind that he was every bit as much a humanist and natural law proponent on social theory as Robespierre himself. It was the Right Wing of the Enlightenment, and Christians loved it, mainly because it said some things Christians weren't getting in a fully biblical form from their pulpits – weren't getting at all, really.

Christians don't realize that the Enlightenment had two wings, one right and one left. When we think humanism, we only think left wing humanism, but the right wing was every bit as humanist. One could go on to say, in fact, that the right wing of the enlightenment is even more dangerous than the left, because it teaches humanistic principles on humanistic foundations, but often with common conclusions Christians like to hear, and often in language that sounds amenable to Christianity. Here are the Isaac Newtons, Adam Smiths, Edmund Burkes — all guys Christians tend to love. It is often through these relationships and their influence that humanism enters the church to the detriment of all.

ANALYSIS FROM A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

The point with Peterson should not be to have to do something so obvious as to go through Peterson's lectures on biblical narratives critiquing every point from the perspective of orthodox theology. Rather, it is to look deeper at the presuppositions that underlie his interpretations and methods, and what, while it may sound profound (and in a way, is), is little more than the same type of humanistic repurposing of the texts to which we would strenuously reject and decry if we heard a liberal doing it. But since this guy

seems to be on our side, we give him a more passive treatment.

Cornelius Van Til provided a very helpful multi-point review of the psychology of religion which not only nicely critiques humanistic attempts (which would subsume Jung), but also establishes biblical presuppositions from which to do so.³

A biblical worldview of souls ("psychology" is the study of the soul) must begin with the Creator-creation distinction. Man is not God, and man cannot become a god. Second, the fall of man is the source of all our brokennesses. All of them. We will not be saved by creating a distillation of archetypes from the collective imagination of fallen man, or any projection from that which is already broken. Nothing derived from us either horizontally with other men, or vertically up from ourselves, can save us. The cure of souls must come from without, not within fallen humanity.

Psychology, therefore, that proceeds on any other ground, certainly including Jung's program, is a rival plan of salvation to that of the Bible and Christian tradition.

These basic ideas have severe implications.

First, as we have seen with Jung and Peterson above, the rival views are hardly neutral. This is because there is no neutrality. Our views of psychology and "Self-help" are either in covenant with God, or covenant breaking with Him.

Second, humanistic psychologies assume that man is his own autonomous being — autonomous from God, that is, because they will call him everything but subject to the God of the Bible, even going so far as to call him subject to the impersonal forces of the universe, or a collective consciousness of humanity. He is autonomous from God, nonetheless. But man is totally dependent upon his creator. For the Bible, man is created in the image of God. For the Jungians, God is created in the images of glorified men.

Third, since man is dependent upon the Creator for his being, and totally subject to Him, this means man is also dependent upon Him morally. The whole concept of establishing our own values, then, whether per Nietzsche, Jung, or Peterson,

is unbiblical and humanistic. For the humanist, man must be saved on his own terms, setting his own values. For the Bible, man must return to the ethics God created for him.

When we follow the humanistic models, like Jung's, but any of them, really, we can trace several steps of the destruction of the foundations of civilization. First, the intellect is dethroned in favor of irrational forces — thus the emphasis on paganism, spiritualism, and all things occult.

Second, man is eventually reduced to little more than a holistic corpus and product of such forces.

Third, comes a focus on the psyche developed in childhood. The child becomes the most meaningful part of the psyche, and thus of the person. The adult is soon interpreted in terms of the child.

Fourth, emphasis is placed upon the unconscious and subconscious forces.

Fifth, emphasis is placed upon abnormal psychology. Since there is no fall in

humanism, the abnormal and normal are both natural, and thus both normal in a way. Thus, for example, homosexuality is just as valid as hetero. In ethics, this means homosexual marriage must be given some space as valid in the mix.

Sixth, the emphasis next becomes primitive and primordial man. Jung obviously exemplifies this in reaching back to our earliest pagan roots for archetypal patterns and foundations.

Seventh, we go from primordial man to animals. The key to the human psyche will then lie somewhere deep in our evolutionary history. Not the men, not the abnormal man, not the child, not the subconscious, but the chimpanzee and the rat, will explain our woes and its cures.

And if you can recall Jung standing there, snake-wrapped, with his own face replaced by that of a lion, perhaps you can see that this is no joke.

In virtually every one of these areas, we can easily refute Freud and the humanistic

traditions, whether Jungian, behaviorist, or whatever. But such refutations also just as earnestly critique the humanistic foundations from which Peterson works, as well as many of the points he would emphasize from them. We don't need another lion-headed Aryan would-be Christ, or any other humanist stretch of the imagination. What we do need is to return to the God-man that our Creator sent to rescue us in our fallen condition. Here we can find true representation, manhood and womanhood, ethics, meaning, and a future outlook.

And in that outlook, we'll be much better equipped to discern the problems that appear in even the good-speaking humanists.

CONCLUSION

When you boil it all down, the weightiest contributions coming from Peterson are actually quite limited and easily procurable from sources with less

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True Right: Genuine Conservative Leaders of Western Canada

True Right provides an introduction to important western Canadian conservative leaders. The first part focuses on political leaders while the second part offers an analysis of the political thought of Ted and Link Byfield, the father/son team behind *Alberta Report* magazine and the Christian History Project.

"The Byfields were Canada's preeminent conservative prophets and teachers.... Wagner's sterling achievement has been to distill and present to his readers the pure essence of their thinking on the relevant issues of our time. One feels that no one can read this material without being inspired to pray and, one hopes, to work for the day when conservatism once more guides the nation."

- **Shafer Parker, Jr.**, Pastor, Hawkwood Baptist Church, Calgary, and former Senior Editor of *Alberta Report* magazine.

You can buy a copy for \$15 at Merchantship.
generationalfamilies.net

intellectual baggage and less-deceptive packages to truth-and-practice-hungry Christians. His weightiest contribution on social theory is a repeated historical lesson that communism lay behind the slaughter of millions of people, and we don't want to return to that.

Ok, fine. But we've got plenty of help on that message already. We just need pressure on the teachers to teach it more. We need simply an effort to get the word out better on that.

His weightiest contribution on personal life is the emphasis on personal responsibility and self-discipline. Don't buy into the lure of victimhood and entitlement.

Ok, fine, too. But that's the message of the mind of Christ in the New Testament (Phil. 2), in which version it is far more meaningful and profound. It's the most fundamental lesson of sanctification in the Bible. It's where Christians should begin and never depart. So why don't we begin with the Bible and not depart from it? It contains, Peter says, "all things pertaining to life and godliness." No detour through Mithraism or the Übermensch is needed here.

So, why do we allow ourselves to become enamored with the pseudo-profundities of Jung and depth psychology, and with their fundamental deceit that the answer lies inside of ourselves, in humanity, in a collective unconscious, in humanity's evolutionary being? What improvement is this over any other humanism?

Why, I ask you Christian, would we want to trade one humanism for another? I am speaking of intellectual presuppositions and foundations. Why does it matter if we try to build Christian-sounding ideas on top of Right Wing Humanism or Left Wing Humanism? Ultimately, beneath both, are the same ideas: we are evolved beings, the universe is impersonal, we are products of our environment, our instincts, drive, and urges rule us, etc., etc. The only good that exists in Peterson's talks is when he departs from these basic presuppositions and happens to echo biblical ones, and that should tell us all we need to do next: go to the

source of the good ideas Peterson has. That source is Scripture. Peterson denies the inspiration of it, the historicity of it, the God who is behind all of it, and the Christ who is the Son of that God and Savior of us in our condition.

Yet Peterson is commanding huge audiences of largely young men. While we obviously need a clear warning in the church that his foundations and teachings lack quite a bit, the nature of his appeal speaks volumes about what is missing in our own house. But for all of this problem, the main lesson Christian leaders need to take from this is to see where all the young men are flocking to gain wisdom and insight into practical living and every area of life while Christian leaders are missing the boat in virtually every way a boat can be missed: intellectually, spiritually, apologetically, culturally, as well as in terms of business, opportunity, community, dominion, etc.

END NOTES

¹ The phrase "Jordan Peterson moment" was coined as the headline of a recent New York Times article by David Brooks.

² Peterson, like much of the pro-Jung academic guild, has not been appreciative of Noll, and in a lecture called him a "crooked guy," although when confronted later apologized.

³ The following points are taken from Rushdoony's summary of Van Til in "Psychology," in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001), 41-51.

This article was first published on the AmericanVision.org under the title "Is Jordan Peterson our new Aryan Christ?" and is reprinted here with permission. Dr. Joel McDurmon is the author of "God vs. Socialism" and "The Problem of Slavery in Christian America" and many other books. Top photo is cropped version of TEDxUofT Team picture (photo credit: Strategic Communications/University of Toronto) and used under a Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic

Amazing green meat-eaters!

by Margaret Helder

The first thing a student of nature learns, is that it is fatal to generalize – an exception can be found to almost any general rule. Most of us, for example, would define animals in terms of food capture – they go out and get their food – and we’d define plants as sedentary manufacturers of their own food, using sunlight for energy.

Nevertheless there are plants that dine on animals: quite the reverse of the expected!

Tempting embrace

Probably the most famous meat-eating (carnivorous) plant is the Venus Flytrap. In scientific jargon it is named *Dioneae* after Dione, mythical mother of Venus, goddess of love. This is an apt name when one considers how the plant lures and catches victims.

The trap consists of two fringed lobes, seemingly hinged by the midrib, at the end of each leaf. The lobes are bright red in the sun and they exude sweet scents to attract the unwary insect.

Once a suitable insect has landed on the trap, it snaps shut in a fraction of a second. Interlocking “teeth” prevent escape of the victim. The more it struggles, the more tightly the trap closes. The leaf now releases a slimy fluid which contains enzymes able to digest protein.

Then, once the meal has been digested, the fluid containing the new nutrients is reabsorbed into the leaf. Dry once again, the leaf opens and the victim’s empty shell falls away. The trap is again ready for business.

Clever, clever, clever!

How does the leaf surface “know” when a suitable victim has landed on the trap? Prominent hairs on the surface of each lobe are trigger mechanisms. Raindrops and small insects fail to spring the trap. Two hairs must be touched, or one hair moved twice in order to produce closure. This ensures response only to large insects, not useless small ones.

How is the message of a suitable victim translated into slit-second action? No one really knows. An electric charge has been shown to flash over the leaf surface as the trigger hairs are stimulated. One guess suggests that the charge produces a rapid change of some chemical, from soluble to insoluble (eg. from sugar to starch), in the cells of the upper half of the leaf. Water then moves into the lower leaf cells which now contain relatively more dissolved solids. These cells swell, causing the leaf lobes to move together. This sounds plausible but slow. Obviously it is not the final answer.

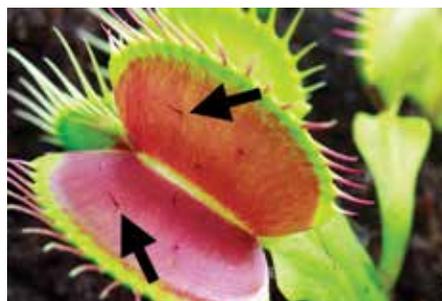
One would suppose so specialized a plant would have many less complex

relatives. Such is not the case. The genus contains only one species. Even this species is very restricted in its occurrence. The plant’s natural habitat is sandy soil within 100 miles of Wilmington, North Carolina. Except for another genus with a single species, there are no similar plants.

So many important parts

It is conventional scientific wisdom that the trapping mechanism of *Dioneae* developed in response to nutrient-poor soil conditions. It is difficult however to imagine how transitional forms could exist. If the sweet aroma did not attract insects, the trap would be useless. Without rapid closing, or without teeth on the lobe edges, the insect would escape. Without suitable gland cells to release and absorb digestive fluids, all the rest would be useless.

It is easy to see why Darwin called the flytrap ‘the most wonderful plant in the world’! It is more difficult to understand how he could have presumed evolution of such a precise mechanism. Natural selection could not select for traps which lacked any one component of the system. Only the fully developed system, produced by the Creator, can account for these amazing plants.



This article first appeared in Creation Science Dialogue, Volume 8, Number 1, 1981, and is reprinted here with permission. Dr. Margaret Helder is the author of “No Christian Silence on Science.”

Afterwards...



by Christine Farenhorst

“Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. Afterward David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.” (1 Sam 24:4b-5)

We all have a conscience, and whether we acknowledge it or not, we also all have an afterward. David certainly did, not just in the incident of cutting off a piece of Saul’s robe, but also in the incident of the census taking (2 Sam. 24:10).

Only the Holy Spirit can so direct the conscience of a person that after accusing him, that person can be led by Him to the comfort of confession, peace and knowledge of forgiveness. David is a prime example of being conscience-stricken by the Holy Spirit, giving way to an amazing confession and experiencing the peace of being forgiven. Just read Psalm 51 written after his infamous adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah the Hittite.

And examples of the Holy Spirit nudging consciences are found throughout history.

A command often repeated in the Old Testament, the command to honor the Sabbath, is one about which God is very particular. And yet there is no longer a great deal of respect for the Sabbath, for the Sunday. It used to be that when my family drove to church in the late 1950s in Toronto, that the streets would be bereft of most vehicles and that the stores we passed were closed. It was a quiet drive and you could sense it was the Lord’s Day. Sad to say, that is no longer the case.

There is the story of a gravestone cutter who resided in Wakefield, Yorkshire. An amiable and jolly fellow, he was a pleasant man, one who had been born and raised in the area. Well known and well-liked for his endearing character, he also held the post of sexton, taking care of the church premises and faithfully ringing the church bell to call people to worship each Sunday service. A lettered man, he served as clerk for the area as well,

keeping records and undertaking administrative duties. A practical man, he was not at all superstitious and much enjoyed inscribing words and texts on tombstones.

It was on a Saturday evening in March of 1790, that Peter Priestley, for that was his name, kissed his wife goodbye and set off for some unfinished work, the work being the touching up of an epitaph on a gravestone. Intent upon being done sooner rather than later, he walked briskly, whistling as he strode through the dark. He carried a lantern and had his bag of tools slung over his shoulder. It was rather late and the church clock struck eleven as he traveled on. He should have begun his work earlier, but he reasoned that there were only a few letters in the epitaph which remained to be chiseled out and he was quite confident it would be done quickly and easily.

Arriving inside the church, which place he had been using to give him

shelter in the still chilly March weather, Peter Priestley put down the lantern and lit his candle which was set inside a hollow potato. Placing the potato-candle on the tombstone, he began work. However, as he bent over the flat gravestone, hammer and chisel in his hand, a noise stopped him short.

It was a strange sound – more like a hiss actually – and one he had never heard before. He straightened up, gazed about, but all was silent. Neither seeing nor hearing anything untoward in the next minute, he concluded that he must have imagined that he heard something

“I am a little deaf,” he grinned to himself, “as my wife often tells me.”

Shrugging lightheartedly, he picked up the mallet and chisel once more, bending over again with great care to concentrate on the matter at hand. But, although not immediately, the noise returned.

“Hiss.”

It was very marked. Not only that, there was a smell which accompanied the sound - a rather unpleasant smell. Peter straightened up slowly and peered around. He walked over to his lantern, relit it and began a search of the premises. But he could find nothing – nothing unnatural, nothing strange – all was as it should be. Nevertheless, strange thoughts began to huddle about in his mind, and uncertainty hovered over his shoulder. Sighing, he contemplated the stone. There were only a few letters left to be touched up. He could do it quickly. Setting down the lantern once more, he returned to the table where the stone lay. Once more, chisel and mallet in hand, he bent over.

“Hiss.”

Peter’s body jerked upright even as the clock in the church steeple began to strike twelve. Then the awful truth hit him and fear took over. He had almost profaned the Sabbath; he had almost broken one of the Ten Commandments. He dare not waste any more time. Blowing out his potato-candle, and throwing his instruments into his

bag, he picked up his lantern with a trembling hand. Heart beating wildly, he left the church premises and trotted home in what resembled a gallop.

Bursting through the door, Peter was sufficiently disoriented for his wife to be concerned.

“What is wrong, Peter?”

He would not tell her for he could not speak to her of a matter so troubling his conscience. His wife coaxed sweetly by making him a hot toddy, rubbing his back and stroking his cheek, but he offered no explanation. Eventually they retired to bed, Peter tossing and turning most of the night. When first morning light dawned, Peter’s wife happened to glance over at the chair where Peter had cast his wig.

“Why, Peter!” she exclaimed, “What have you been doing to burn all the hair off one side of your wig?”

“What did you say, woman?”

“I said,” repeated his wife, “what have you been doing to burn all the hair off one side of your wig?”

It is an amusing and supposedly true story. The fact is that God uses all sorts of means to probe and sear consciences.

Conscience stories abound and we should learn from them and praise God for them.

In January of 2018 a man by the name of Brian Hawkins walked into a KRRCR-TV station in Redding, California startling the crew by saying that he wanted to confess to a murder. He and the station agreed to tape and air his confession on the condition that he turn himself in at the police station. A conscience-stricken man, he confessed:

“God and Christ and these things that have happened over the course of twenty-five years have pushed me and pushed me to do the right thing. I know the wrong can’t be changed but this is the closest I can come to doing the right thing.”

In 1993, Hawkins and two accomplices murdered a twenty-year-old young man by the name of Frank McAlister, after robbing him of his money. Stabbing him to death, they left his body in a wood, and dumped his car in a Costco parking lot. Police had never been able to solve the murder.

Calvin once said, and rightly so: “The torture of a bad conscience is the hell of a living soul.” Hawkins confirmed this statement when he added this to his confession:

“Horrible, horrible, horrible, absolute horror, absolutely horrible since that day. Every minute of every day has been a nightmare. It’s kind of weird, Frank never got to have a life, but we were teenagers and now I’m forty-four and still haven’t even had a life and now most likely won’t anyway. I’ve been through hell my whole life because of this. There hasn’t been a moment that I have not been remorseful for what I have done.”

Centuries before, Athanasius, (328-373), said, “The Savior is working mightily among men. Every day He is invisibly persuading numbers of people all over the world, both within and beyond the Greek-speaking world, to accept His faith and be obedient to His teaching. Can anyone, in face of this, still doubt that He has risen and lives, or rather that He is Himself the Life? Does a dead man prick the consciences of men...?”

There is a hopeful afterward for Brian Hawkins; there is a hopeful afterward for all of us. But only if we repent and are baptized, every one of us, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38).

Christine Farenhorst is the author of many books, her latest being Katherina, Katherina, a novel taking place in the time of Martin Luther. You can buy it at www.sola-scriptura.ca/store/shop

BY JON DYKSTRA

MISTY

FAMILY / DRAMA

91 MIN / 1961

RATING: 7/10



If you have girls in your home there's a good chance you've already heard of the book this is based on: *Misty of Chincoteague*. It's the story of two orphans who, after coming to live with their grandparents, fix their minds on buying a pony named Phantom.

But it's not going to be easy. First, Phantom is a *wild* pony, and to this point no one has been able to catch her. If she is caught, it'll cost the two children \$100 to buy her and they don't have any money. And last but not least, Phantom is three years old already, and their grandfather says that no one can gentle a pony that's been wild that long.

These two have their work cut out for them!

A couple cautions to pass along: there are a few instances of "gee." And at one point bets are placed on a horse race between the nearby islands' fastest ponies, and the grandfather gets caught up in it. Overall this is a minor element, but children will need to be told that we should never seek to become wealthy at another's expense – that's what's wrong with gambling.

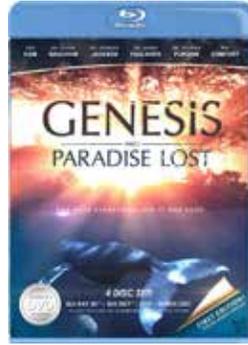
The moral of this story is an old-fashioned one, and while powerful, it is gently presented: "love is not possessive; love seeks the best for the other."

GENESIS: PARADISE LOST

DOCUMENTARY

109 MIN / 2018

RATING: 8/10



The film's strength is the sheer width and breadth that it covers – this is Creationism 101, covering all the basics. That is also its most notable weakness: there is just *so much information*, and it's coming at us so quickly it can be overwhelming. But, as faults go, that's a good one to have – it just means this is an excellent candidate for repeated viewings!

Another strength are all the computer animations of the six days of Creation. If they are just a shade from being perfectly life-like, they are perfectly gorgeous. They are also respectful: God is never depicted, and naked Adam and Eve are only shown at extreme distance, or only in parts (their feet, or hands, or faces). Of course depicting the Creation Week visually is going to involve a lot of imaginative interpretation to fill in all the missing details; these folks have done so with the tact and care.

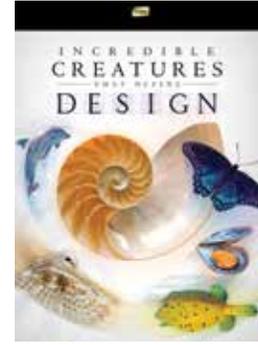
So who should see this? I think the many talking heads means that *Genesis: Paradise Lost* isn't for children – it would probably have to be older teens and up. But for anyone who's interested in learning about our origins, and about how we should understand the opening chapters of the Bible, this is going to be a treat!

INCREDIBLE CREATURES...

DOCUMENTARY

62 MIN / 2011

RATING: 7/10



When a fan manufacturer wanted to make a more powerful, but quieter, model, he decided to look into the way that an owl can travel silently through the air. And in looking at its wing design, this manufacturer discovered design principles he could imitate and use. That's what *Incredible Creatures that Define Design* is about: engineers looking to God's creation to discover the genius that is everywhere evident in things like mussel glue, the color of butterfly wings, and the adhesion of sticky burrs.

However, in the documentary God is never given the credit that is His due – I suspect the producers are Christian, but they give more of an Intelligent Design presentation, in which the genius found in creation is celebrated, but without any mention made of Who that Genius is.

The only caution concerns a brief scene of a man having a heart attack at a restaurant. It's not all that shocking, but might alarm some small children.

Documentary-enjoying families with older kids – maybe 12 and up – can enjoy this together. But it's not for young kids – too much talking, and at a level that is simply above them. That said, any science geek will love it.

Storm Voeten is the 12-year-old son of a printer, living in 1500s Antwerp. Martin Luther has written his 95 Theses and his ideas are a source of debate and division across Europe. That's also true in the Voeten household, where Storm's mother, a staunch Catholic, doesn't even want to hear Luther's name. But his father is interested in learning more...and he's even willing to print Luther's ideas.

The opening scene has Luther making his brief appearance in the film. He's writing a letter, even as a squadron of soldiers is heading his way. The letter is entrusted to the care of an assistant to quickly and secretly take to Antwerp.

Though the events in this film are more of the "inspired by" variety, rather than purporting to be historically accurate, there is some real history here. Luther did send a letter to Antwerp. In the film the letter is a rallying cry against the Catholic Church, and a call to rely on Jesus alone. In real life, while we don't have the letter itself, other accounts make it sound as if it had an additional target, the Anabaptists. But that doesn't come up in the film.

When Luther's assistant arrives in Antwerp he seeks out Storm's father. Voeten Sr. accepts the printing job, even though the town's Inquisitor has already arrested another printer for producing forbidden Protestant materials.

And that's when the film turns into a chase movie. The authorities catch Storm's father in the act of printing and arrest him, but not before Storm runs off with the letter's printing plate. He gets chased through the alleys and only escapes when 12-year-old street orphan Maria, and her handy sling, intervene.

Now it's up to Storm to figure out how to get the letter printed, and how to save his dad.

CAUTIONS

There are no language concerns, and any "sexual content" is limited to one short kiss between the two 12-year-olds at the film's end.

But there is a fair amount of violence. All of it is muted and some of it takes place off screen. But here's a partial list:

- A printer's burned hand is shown briefly (one second).
- The printer is tortured by the Inquisitor – via some form of water boarding – and while we don't see it happen, we do briefly hear the man pleading.
- A couple of soldiers get hit in the head by rocks hurled by Maria and her sling.



STORM & LUTHER'S FORBIDDEN LETTER

FAMILY / DRAMA
105 MIN / 2017
RATING: 7/10

- Maria hits a soldier in the head with a pole.
- Storm hits a soldier in the head with a pole.
- One man is murdered by the Inquisitor, but off-screen, and before Storm arrives. We do see the body with just a little blood for a second or two.

In addition, there is quite a lot of tension. Some of it involves chases, and some of it involves not knowing what will happen next – when Storm's father is set to be burned at the stake, the young audience doesn't know whether he'll be saved, and that makes this quite scary.

For those reasons I'd say the target audience for this is probably 12 and up.

One theological concern: Maria thinks that the Virgin Mary helps her. Storm tells her Luther's thoughts on idols, and that Mary is just an ordinary woman, but the issue is left unsettled. By film's end, Maria hasn't clearly changed her mind. So that might be a good topic to discuss with younger viewers

CONCLUSION

The big caution with this film concerns the tension. This is more a "chase film" than a theological exploration of Luther's views, but that might just make it perfect for the younger audience it's aimed at. While the plot is a bit simple for mom and dad, the authentic 1500s setting will keep their attention. This is good, clean, even educational, fun.

The film was carefully shot so that it could be dubbed into a number of different languages. If you pay attention you'll notice that the principal characters often speak with their mouths obscured in some way. Sometimes we see their mouth when they start speaking but, as they continue, the camera cuts away. That's because this was shot in Dutch, and this clever camera work means the dubbing is hardly noticeable in the English version.

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE



MAY

10

2018

PARLIAMENT HILL

OTTAWA

RALLY: 12:30

MARCH: 1:30

PRO-LIFE



ALL.IN.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2018 - CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL: 9:00 PM

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018 - PARLIAMENT HILL

RALLY: 12:30 | MARCH: 1:30

ROSE DINNER 6:00 PM

YOUTH BANQUET 6:00 PM

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018 - YOUTH CONFERENCE: 8:00 AM



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