

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

SEPT/OCT 2018  
Volume 37 Issue No. 6

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS

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ON REAL  
HAPPINESS

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JUST HOW  
BAD IS THE  
TEEN ANXIETY  
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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

## A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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# READERS' RESPONSE

## DEAR EDITOR,

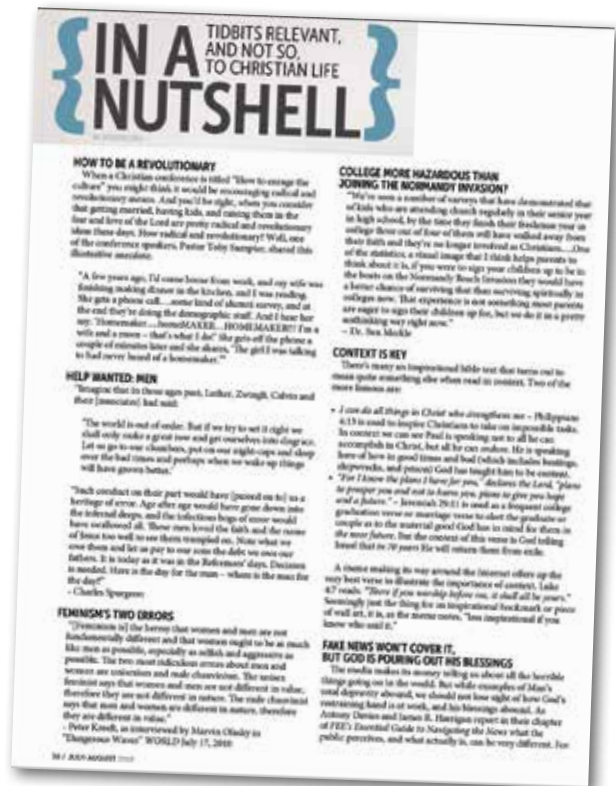
In the July/ August issue the "In a Nutshell" column contained a blurb "College more hazardous than joining the Normandy Invasion?" The article is correct in pointing out how many kids lose their faith in college but it never addresses the other side of the story. How many kids who don't attend college lose their faith?

In fact, not attending college may be more hazardous to one's faith than attending. According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, kids who do not attend college are approximately 16% more likely to lose their faith than those who do attend college. So while going to college might be more hazardous to one's faith than the Normandy Invasion, not going to college is even more so!

Perhaps we need to spend more time focusing on the factors that studies show help kids to retain their faith. They are:

1. Parents who were deeply committed to their faith and practiced it on a regular basis
2. Kids' frequent personal prayer
3. A kid's belief that their faith was extremely important in the day-to-day aspects of life.
4. Kids' frequent reading of the Scriptures

T. Littlejohn  
Calgary, Alberta



## Think you can change the world from a greenhouse?

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# LESSONS FROM THE OCCUPIED NETHERLANDS

by Jon Dykstra

I grew up reading Piet Prins' *Scout* books and Anne DeVries' *Journey Through the Night*, learning about the courage of the Dutch Resistance during World War II. I also heard stories about how my grandparents and my friends' grandparents hid Jews from the Nazis.

So when I watched the documentary, *Goodbye Holland*, it was with shock that I learned three-quarters of the Jews in the Netherlands didn't make it through the War alive. This is a higher percentage killed than any other European country. This was not the story as I had understood it!

But it turns out that the heroes I read and heard about growing up were the exceptions, not the rule. That courage was rare overall, but more common among our Reformed relatives, says something about the love they had for God. They were willing to risk their lives because they knew that whether they lived or died, they were the Lord's (Roman 14:8).

However there were not enough like them. Along with Anne Frank, more

than 100,000 Dutch Jews were deported to concentration camps, and they were often rounded up by Dutch policemen, whose work was overseen by Dutch officials, and they were shipped off on trains run by Dutch engineers. The Dutch weren't merely silent; many were among the Germans' most helpful allies.

That's the point that director Willy Lindwer makes in this documentary. A son of one of the few Jewish survivors, he set out to discover why the Dutch didn't do more to stop the Holocaust in their country. He interviewed both those who had the courage to help, and those who felt they had no other option but to go along with what the Germans were demanding.

It is with this second group, those who went along, that some of the most compelling discussions happen. This film was made in 2004, so six decades has passed since the war's end, and yet some had still not learned anything from it. One 70-something-year-old described his wartime boss as a "righteous man" – this same boss had been a police chief

who rounded up thousands of Jews for the Germans.

It's conversations like this that make the film so gripping. Evil men are supposed to look like Hitler, or Saddam – raving, shouting maniacs. But this man looked like your grandpa.

## LEST WE FORGET

The Remembrance Day phrase "Lest we forget" speaks to how we must learn from the past. The value in this film is precisely because the evil it uncovers is not at all dissimilar from the sort we see today.

Long before orders were given to deport Dutch Jews, they were excluded from government jobs. Then they were kicked out of public schools, and a few months later they were ordered to publicly identify themselves by sewing a Star of David on their coats. It continued step by step.

Why didn't more of the Dutch resist? Maybe it was because each step, on its own, didn't seem quite so objectionable. When the Dutch restaurant owners were

told they had to exclude Jews or risk having their businesses shuttered, how did these businessmen think through their decision? Perhaps they thought, “I have to feed my family. And surely the Jews can...just buy their food at the grocery store, right?” So the *Voor Joden Verboden* (“For Jews Forbidden”) signs went up.

Today we also face a step-by-step mounting pressure to conform to evil. Abortion is the biggest evil of our time, of course. But remember Melissa and Aaron Klein, the Oregon couple who were asked to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple? They were fined \$135,000 for refusing. So the message the government sent was that Christians bakers can either bake the cake or lose their business. They can spend a few hours making a cake – just flour, sugar, eggs, and some icing – or lose the business that it took them years and piles of money to build. It’s no coincidence that so much pressure was brought to bear on something quite inconsequential – a \$135,000 fine for not baking a cake that the same-sex couple could have easily purchased at any number of other bakeries. But the Devil wants to present the first compromise like it’s the only logical course to pursue.

### BEST TIME TO SPEAK UP IS NOW

We can ask, as one of the film’s interviewees does, why didn’t someone just throw sand in the engine of one of those Nazi transport trains? It wouldn’t have taken much to slow down the Jewish deportation if only someone had been willing to sabotage the trains.

But the film also acknowledges the fears that drove many to inaction and collaboration. The Jews weren’t the only ones being shipped away to concentration camps – if you helped them, you risked being deported along with them.

And yet...there was a time when action wouldn’t have been so costly. There was a time when speaking out might have, yes, cost someone their job, but it wouldn’t have cost them their life. And we can only wonder what might have happened if more had spoken up

*It took three years and 93 trains loads to take them all to Germany.*

then. Could the Germans have killed nearly so many if there had been a loud early voice arguing against Dutch collaboration?

What we must never forget, then, is that we shouldn’t delay in speaking up for what is right. We need to resist *now*, because if we wait, the pressure to stay silent and to go along will only increase. We need to speak now, because it is easier to turn things around before we’re heading full speed in the wrong direction.

Speaking up doesn’t guarantee success, but it is obedient. It does bring God glory. And because God has chosen to work through us, we never know what changes God might effect through us, if we’re willing to act in obedience. We can shake our heads at the state of our culture, or we can ask, like Paul, *how can the world respond to God’s Truth if we’ve never shared it with them* (Romans 10:14)?

There are so very many reasons to speak now.

### CONCLUSION

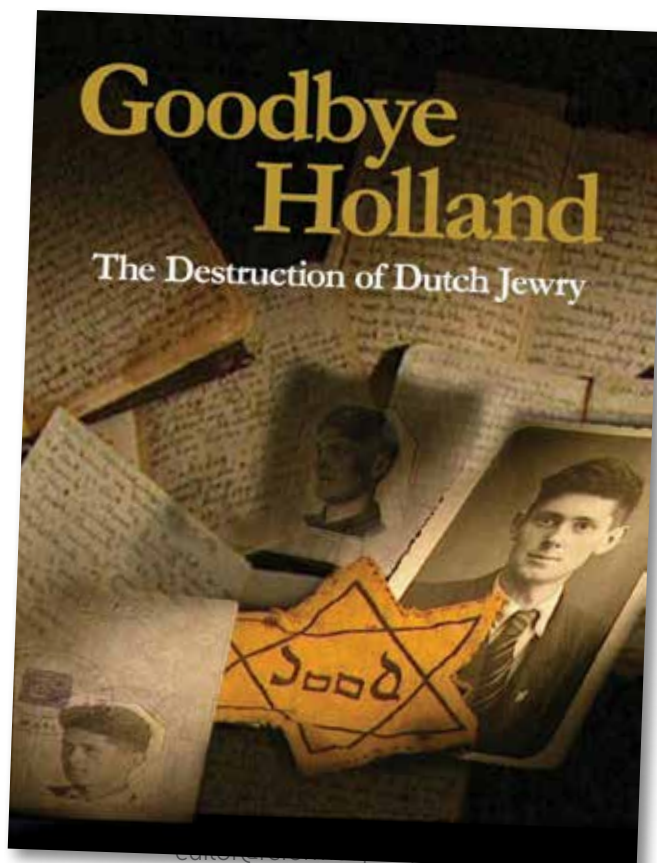
One hundred thousand Jews were deported from the Netherlands. It is a shocking figure. It took three years and 93 trains loads to take them all to Germany. And very few did anything to help them.

One hundred thousand is also the number of unborn children killed *each year* in Canada. What are we doing to stand up to the great evil of *our* time?

One place to start might be watching this film together with your family, or in a high school history class,

and discussing the place of courage, fear, and apathy in our day-to-day conversations and interactions with the world. Many of our Christian grandparents didn’t see the matter of hiding Jews as a question to be weighed and considered – they simply did it because they knew God wanted them to love their neighbors (Mark 12:31). And they were comfortable with placing their families, their fortunes, and their lives in His hands. We have the very same faithful God. Do we have the very same faith in Him? **RP**

*“Goodbye Holland” is a fantastic film, but hard to track down. Americans can rent it, or if they have Prime membership, watch it for free on Amazon.com. For the rest of us one option might be to buy it from RuthFilms.com, or try to borrow it from a public library.*





# NOTA BENE

News worth noting  
by Jon Dykstra

interact with the boss. When it comes to Ninja, teaming up with him brings a lesser-known gamer increased attention, and his rule means that only men can gain from Ninja's fame.

But Ninja was unapologetic. In a September interview with ESPN he explained that he will play in groups with women, but not one-on-one because that can involve two people talking for hours on end, which is "very intimate in a way." And he doesn't want to do that with anyone other than his wife.

"This is my spouse. This is the person I vowed to spend the rest of my life with....The fact that anyone feels they can judge how I'm protecting my relationship and try to make it political ... really?"

The "Ninja rule" and "Mike Pence rule" do have their downsides for the women around them, but there is also an upside. No one can accuse any of

them of the wrong-doings bringing down so many in so many other fields. Their marriages are protected not only from sin, but even from the appearance of sin.

In an ideal world, this sort of trade-off – an unblemished reputation, at the expense of limiting some opportunities for women – wouldn't be necessary. But in our sin-stained world, that does seem the choice that's out there.

And while it isn't clear if Blevins is a Christian or not, for Mike Pence and Billy Graham, the choice they made has allowed them to offer a Christian witness to the world that has been free of any hint of marital scandal. God is glorified in their work in a way that He wouldn't have been if sexual scandal had brought them low. Now Blevins is following in their footsteps, not for God, but for his wife. That choice also seems a hard one to criticize.

Picture credit: Shutterstock

## NINJA'S TAKE ON THE "BILLY GRAHAM RULE"

**T**yler Blevins is known around the globe as "Ninja," an online gamer making \$500,000 a month by streaming his game play to his millions of fans – *people are paying to watch him play video games.*

Blevins is most associated with *Fortnite*, an online multiplayer build-and-battle game, that was released in 2017 and has already pulled in more than 100 million players. For those who don't play, it might be best known as the very first video game banned by a professional hockey team. Vancouver Canuck players have been told to keep their competitive focus on the ice.

Blevins' video game skills are his major claim to fame, but he made news this past August for a very different reason. In an interview with Polygon.com he let it be known that as a rule he didn't play with female gamers.

This "Ninja rule" echoed one



adopted by US Vice President Mike Pence (and first crafted by evangelist Billy Graham) that he would never meet alone with a woman other than his wife.

Like Pence before him, Ninja was criticized for how his rule limited opportunities for women. A lot of important work is done in the lunches and dinners before and after meetings, so if women couldn't dine alone with the Vice President, but men could, then it might well limit those women's opportunities to

## A SECULAR DEFENSE OF THE SABBATH... AND HOW IT FALLS SHORT

**F**ast Company is a secular business magazine, as likely to pass on presentation tips from industry leaders as it is to pass on marketing tips from drag queens. So this isn't the first place you'd look to find a defense of Sabbath rest, but there it was in a Sept. 14 piece titled: "Let's bring back the Sabbath as a radical act against the always-on economy." The author, William Black, overlooks the core of Sabbath rest – that we take our rest in the Lord, coming together to worship Him. But because God's Law is written on our hearts (Romans 2:14-15), even unbelievers can recognize the Law's validity, at least in part.

Black began his article by pointing to the religious roots of the commandment, but he certainly wasn't making a religiously-based appeal for it. Implicit in his argument was that, despite how "the commandment smacks of obsolete puritanism" there was still something radical and vital about it.

"When taken seriously, the Sabbath has the power to restructure not only the calendar but also the entire political economy. In place of an economy built upon the profit motive – the ever-present need for more, in fact the need for there to never be enough – the Sabbath puts forward an economy built upon the belief that there is enough."

In a materialistic world, whose gods include "career advancement" and "more take-home pay" there's no end of the work that can be done to earn the gods'

favor. Enough is never enough, because extra work can help you advance further and faster, and help you earn more. In that kind of world, the idea of taking one day off every week is not only radical, but downright blasphemous – such a break can only be enjoyed by those who recognize the materialistic gods are not worth giving our full devotion.

Black continues by sharing how Sabbath rest was a benefit for the whole community:

"The fourth commandment presents a [G]od who, rather than demanding ever more work, insists on rest. The weekly Sabbath placed a hard limit on how much work could be done and suggested that this was perfectly all right; enough work was done on the other six days. And whereas the pharaoh relaxed while his people toiled, Yahweh insisted that the people rest as Yahweh rested: 'For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.'

"The Sabbath, as described in Exodus and other passages in the Torah, had a democratizing effect. Yahweh's example – not forcing others to labor while Yahweh rested – was one anybody in power was to imitate. It was not enough for you to rest; your children, slaves, livestock, and even the 'aliens' in your towns were to rest as well. The Sabbath wasn't just a time for personal reflection and rejuvenation. It wasn't self-care. It was for everyone."

may or may not be a Christian himself, but his approach – praising God's Law, without praising the Lawmaker – is one Christians commonly take. Whether it's abortion, sex-ed curriculums, or refusing to bake cakes for same-sex marriages, Christians regularly argue for the godly position while avoiding any mention of our God. We do that for tactical reasons – the world's not interested in God, so they'll just ignore us if we start any argument with His Name, right?

But the problem is, all of God's Law – every position we're arguing for – *stands on Him*.

Take abortion as an example. Christians will often argue that abortion is wrong because killing babies is wrong. And because God's Law is written on everyone's hearts, that's an argument the other side will usually concede. But they'll dispute that the unborn are babies and question how something so small and immature can really be of the same worth as much larger, already-born, human beings.

So the real argument is not, "Is killing wrong?" but "Where does our worth come from?"

Only God provides a satisfactory answer to that question: our worth comes not from any abilities we have, but is intrinsic in being made in His Image (Gen. 1:26-27, Gen. 9:6). That's why an unborn baby has value, no matter how small, and doesn't gain worth as it gains in abilities. This intrinsic value is also why a disabled adult isn't of lesser worth even though he can do less, and why an elderly adult doesn't lose their worth as they lose some of their abilities. Our worth comes not from what we can do, but from in Whose Image we are made. Even as the world rejects this explanation, they can offer no viable alternative. Why do they believe we – at least those of us who have already been born – are of *equal* worth? Where does the basis for equality come from? Some are bigger, or smarter, or faster, or more inventive, or more artistic, and some are less so – in every which way, no two human beings are exactly alike, so on what basis would we ever talk about equality? There is no worldly justification



While Black repeatedly mentions the Jewish origins of Sabbath rest, his is still a secular case for the command – he's touting the practical benefits, and not that this is God's authoritative command. Black



for it. The world holds to equality, but can't offer an explanation for it.

But we can.

Isn't that something we should be pointing out? *That's God makes the world make sense?*

It's no different with Sabbath rest – any argument for it needs to be built on God, and if it isn't, that argument will fall short. In his article Black speaks of an economy that embraces Sabbath rest as being one "driven, not by anxiety, but by...enoughness." And he contrasts that with our current 24-7 "anxious striving for more." Black wants our society to make the switch; he wants us to leave the "always-on economy" and start trusting in "enoughness." But what Black can't explain is on what basis his secular audience can confidently make that leap. Is there always going to be enough? Can we really depend on that?

His readers will know that in some spots on our planet there isn't enough right now. They'll also know that if our economy takes a downward turn, there might not be enough here too. That's why the secular soul always has a reason to strive for more – so they can build a better cushion against whatever difficulties the future might bring.

In short, as much sense as Sabbath rest makes – as great as the practical benefits are for mental, physical, emotional, and even relational, health – it doesn't make near the same sense without the Sabbath Lord. The world always has reason to fear the future, so they always have reason to continue striving anxiously. It is only the Christian, trusting in the Lord, who can not only take a break each week from the constant demands of work, but who can take rest where it can truly be found:

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

That the secular argument for the Sabbath doesn't stand up on its own isn't a reason to give up on the practical arguments for obeying God's law. But it is a reason to start with God – to start with Him as our cornerstone – *and build up from Him.*

## WOMAN IDENTIFIES AS A MAN WHO IDENTIFIES AS A DOG



ny journalist knows there's nothing newsworthy about a dog biting a man, but when a man bites a dog then you have headline material! So you can imagine the excitement at the *Daily Mail* when they discovered a woman who identifies as a man who identifies as a dog. The British tabloid's Oct. 12 headline read:

"Transgender man identifies as a DOG..."

The article goes on to detail how the woman, Tony McGinn, loves to play fetch, run around on all fours, and be told by her husband and "handler" that she is a "good boy."

What's interesting is how the newspaper has only partially bought into the transgender philosophy that "thinking makes it so." When it came to McGinn telling them she was a man, the *Daily Mail* was happy to agree that, just because she thought she was a man, she must be one – they consistently described *her* as a *he*. But when she said she was a "human pup" they were willing to go only so far. The difference was evident even in the headline where they describe her as a transgender man but don't describe her as a dog – no, they note that this is how she "identifies."

So which is it, *Daily Mail*; does thinking make it so? If a woman can become a man simply by thinking it, why can't she become a dog the same way?

The newspaper isn't the only one confused here. Even the couple – Tony McGinn and her husband – switch between talking of Tony as a "real dog" and talking about this being a "fantasy" with her "pretending," "imagining," and "playing" at being a dog.

Why the confusion? Because, at least for the moment, everyone knows that people are not dogs and can never become dogs. They understand that when it comes to species, thinking doesn't make it so. But when it comes to gender they draw a different conclusion.



Why?

At its root, this is about Man saying it is our thinking, not God's, that creates the world around us. And if that is what they insist, then we need to compare and contrast their confused claims with the clarity God's Word offers – "...in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27). God's thinking decides our species and gender. They say otherwise. But can they practice what they preach? *Can they live it?*

As a witness to the world, Christians need to highlight the world's inconsistency and demand that they either renounce the idea that thinking makes it so and stop saying people can switch genders... or they need to fully adopt this philosophy and *everything that goes with it.*

Then women *can* become dogs. And then we need to treat these new dogs the way we treat all others. If they are dogs, why would we treat them any differently than other dogs? This is what transgender people demand, after all – to be treated as if they are the gender they claim to be. So if people can become dogs then we should require them to get dog licenses, eat kibble, fly in the airplane luggage compartment, and, of course, stop driving cars, stop shopping online at Amazon, and stop using the toilet for anything other than a drinking bowl.

And the next time a classroom of kindergarten students *thinks* two plus two equals five, we should expect the teacher to nod in agreement.

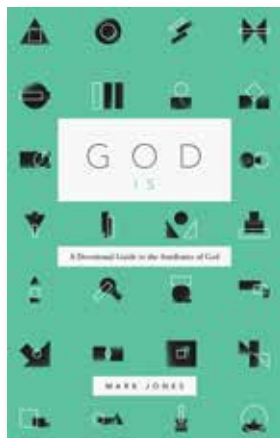
# BOOKS

## SOME MORE ACCESSIBLE THEOLOGY

### GOD IS: A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE TO THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

BY MARK JONES

240 PAGES / 2017



*God Is* has indeed been compared favorably to J.I. Packer's *Knowing God*. What Jones adds is a devotional and systematic look at 26 of God's attributes as revealed in His Word. What makes these looks at who God is even more valuable is this insight from Jones's Preface:

"The true and living God is too much for us to bear, to handle, to conceive, to adore, to know, to trust, to understand, and to worship.... However, that the Son became flesh makes our human nature appear lovely to God. But he also makes God appear lovely to us."

That's why chapter have these sections:

- the "Doctrine" regarding an attribute of God;
- how Christ makes that attribute more beautiful;
- how our knowledge of each attribute has "Application" to our lives

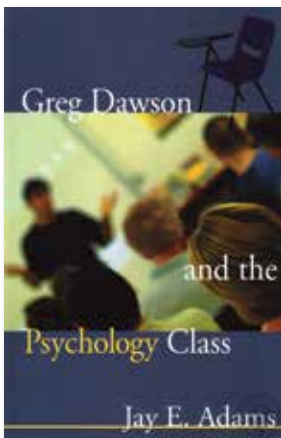
What deepens each section's insight, and our own insight, is Jones's use of Scripture, and his use of Puritan meditations and others in church history. Both the Bible and church history demonstrate how "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebr. 13:8), and Jones shows just how magnificent God's presence in Him is.

—JEFF DYKSTRA

### GREG DAWSON AND THE PSYCHOLOGY CLASS

BY JAY ADAMS

149 PAGES / 2008



This is a novel, or rather, a textbook masquerading as a novel – the goal here is education, not entertainment.

Jay Adams' fictional protagonist Greg Dawson is a preacher who lives near a Christian college. Some of the students want to know the difference between the psychological counseling theories they are being taught and the biblical counseling Greg Dawson uses.

It turns out the psychology they're learning is built on secular counseling theories. Consider for a moment the vast array of secular counseling theories that claim to be able to explain what Man is really like. And yet the different theories disagree, and sometimes wildly. How many line up with a biblical understanding of our inner nature? So long as they understand Man outside of our relationship with God how can they understand what Mankind is really like? To top it off, most of these theories don't acknowledge our sinful nature, or understand our purpose here on earth.

Adams is only one of many experts to consult when it comes to biblical counseling. Others include Ed Welch, Heath Lambert, Wayne Mack, Paul David Tripp and David Powilson. But this book is an ideal introduction to the subject – the novel format makes for an easy, yet highly educational, read.

—JON DYKSTRA

### THE GOSPEL COMES WITH A HOUSE KEY

BY ROSARIA BUTTERFIELD

240 PAGES / 2018



Perhaps this topic calls for a stark, hard-hitting polemic. But Rosaria Butterfield is more gracious than that. She not only issues a call for "radically ordinary hospitality," she also carefully unfolds the biblical mandate for it, while recounting numerous personal anecdotes from the hospitality-laden fabric of her family's life. And it's obvious that the hospitable life is not an easy one. It's one of cross-bearing.

After considering how discomfiting, sadly foreign, and attractive is Butterfield's portrait of hospitality, I'm reminded of Chesterton's famous lines: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried." I want to rise to the challenge of this book. I want it to change my life.

Regarding Butterfield's writing: it is affecting yet robust and no-nonsense. By chapter 3, I don't care who you are, your hair will be standing on end. At chapter 7, a heart-rending story of God's longsuffering love and care will almost certainly cause you to tear up – and this is even more likely if you listen to the audio book, read by Butterfield herself (I'm a sucker for audio books, and I have never heard one better than this).

—ADAM WALTER



## BLAME IT ON THE BRAIN?

BY EDWARD T. WELCH  
208 PAGES / 1998

A boy won't sit still so the doctor wants to put him on Ritalin. An aging grandfather, suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, is starting to make inappropriate comments to his grandchildren. A mother is depressed and asks her minister what he thinks about anti-depressants. These days we're regular confronted with "brain issues" but few of us feel equipped as to what God thinks on these matters.

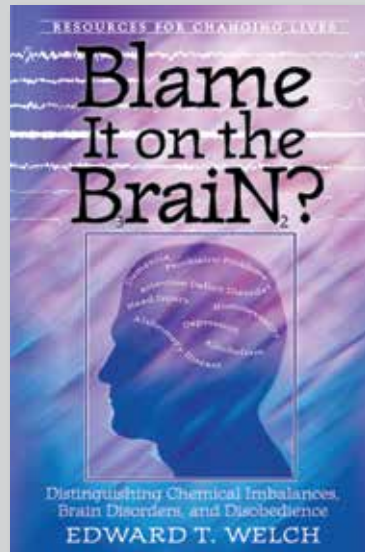
Author Ed Welch notes that while going to the Bible would be the natural thing for us to do with most other matters, it might strike Christians as an odd approach in this case. After all, what does the Bible have to say about our brains? Welch answers that question by noting that God made us, so He knows what we are really like. And what God reveals about us – about how our body and spirit are both distinct and yet impact each other – is foundational to a good understanding of our brain.

*Blame it on the Brain* is divided in two parts.

In Part One Welch offers up the theological resources Christians will need to be able to "dialogue with the brain sciences." These are the biblically-derived principles by which we can interpret and understand the (mostly secular) brain research being done. Once we are outfitted with the proper theology and taught how to apply it, Part Two then explores some "modern diagnoses and experiences, all attributed to the brain, and considers them from a biblical perspective.

Then, in Part Two, Welch applies these principles to specific problems including Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, head injuries, depression, bipolar disorder, anorexia, Attention Deficit Disorder, homosexuality, alcoholism and more. He groups them under three headings:

1. The Brain Did It
2. Maybe The Brain Did It
3. The Brain Didn't Do It



Where Welch places different conditions will strike some readers as controversial. Doesn't the world say *all* of these conditions should fall under the "The Brain Did It" umbrella? It does indeed, because the world thinks if the brain did it, then our sinful hearts can be excused. "Born this way" is supposed to clear us from any responsibility for our conduct.

But Welch's three-fold division is less controversial when we understand that even conditions with clear physical causes, like dementia, will have a spiritual dimension as well – responsibility persists, even if it is to a far different degree.

For example, if a dementia patient's confusion leads him to believe he has been waiting for his daughter all day long (even though she arrived right on time) she should try not to be bothered if he expresses some frustration. However, if the same patient starts making crude comments to the nurses, then that should *not* be dismissed as simply the disease talking. As Welch writes,

Does the disease create the sinful behavior? Definitely not.... Sexual thoughts, jealousy, private profanity, and anger can be neatly covered when our minds are intact. But when we are intellectually less competent, some of the private events begin to slip out.

Dementia isn't the cause of this sin; it simply reveals what was always in the heart. In a situation such as this repentance should still be sought. Even when our brain is damaged, we

remain both physical and *spiritual* beings, and as in need of accountability, correction, and forgiveness as the rest of humanity.

### CAUTIONS

The only caution I have is not with what Ed Welch wrote, but with how a couple of passages might be misunderstood.

In the first, Welch states that with psychiatric problems there "are always spiritual problems and sometimes physical problems." I'm afraid that some will understand him as saying psychiatric problems are always the result of sin. That is *not* what Welch is saying. Sin will *sometimes* be the cause of spiritual problem, but other times the spiritual problems will be better understood as spiritual *needs*. Welch notes counselors have to be aware that psychiatric problems almost always involve suffering so the diagnosed person and their family will need to hear from the Scriptures about the hope and compassion that God offers in the midst of suffering.

A second matter that might be misunderstood is how Welch designates homosexuality as something "the brain didn't do." When he denies the brain dictates someone's sexual preferences, is Welch saying people *choose* to be homosexual? No. Welch is only arguing that while the brain may have an influence it cannot be credited as the sole determiner of their sexual orientation – other factors are also involved.

### CONCLUSION

This isn't a large book, but there sure is a lot to love! I must have highlighted half of the pages and I really can't say enough good things about. Educational, thoroughly biblical, helpful, applicable, and it still manages to be enjoyably readable. This would be a valuable resource for ministers and elders, and a highly recommended read for everyone. We all need to learn how to think biblically about mental illness and matters of the brain and I can't imagine a better introductory book for this topic.

– Jon Dykstra



# Did Abraham really exist?

by John Byl

**E**vangelicals are debating the historicity of Adam, but they are too timid. It is time to reject fundamentalist distortions of the Abrahamic narrative just as decisively as we have abandoned literalistic readings of Genesis 1–3. Clinging to discredited biblical accounts of Abraham as *if these events actually happened* makes us look like Neanderthals, undermines the plausibility of our witness, and ultimately overturns the Gospel. To defend the Gospel and uphold the authority of the Bible, we need to reckon with the myth of Abraham.

So starts a brilliant piece of satire by Dr. Peter Leithart. Here are some further excerpts:

The historical evidence is overwhelming and need not be rehearsed here. It is sufficient to

point the curious reader to Hans Georg Unglauber's definitive study, popularly known as *Die Suche nach dem historischen Abraham* but originally published as *Abraham: Historie oder Pferd-Geschichte?* Unglauber shows that there is not a shred of independent evidence for the existence of Abraham, much less for any of the events recorded in Genesis.

But our faith does not stand or fall on the uncertain deliverances of historical scholarship. Scripture is our rule. The biblical writers deployed the full arsenal of ancient literary conventions, and their texts are full of sly authorial signals that they are not *supposed* to be taken literally...

The story of Abraham's exodus (Gen. 12:10–20) is obviously modeled on Israel's Egyptian sojourn and exodus (which most likely never

happened either). By shaping this narrative to mimic later myths, the author indicates that the episode is not to be taken seriously as history. Genesis 12, like the exodus narrative, teaches that *God delivers*. It does not matter whether or not God has ever *actually* delivered anyone. The moral stands: *God is our deliverer...*

Only when it is stripped of the mythology of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus will the Bible be firmly established as our inerrant rule of faith. We must die to our modern demand to know "what happened" and recognize that Scripture is infallible only when it is thoroughly de-historicized. Then we will arrive finally at the fullness of Christian faith, the Church of Christ Without Jesus.

The full article, "The Abraham Myth," can be found at [FirstThings.com](http://FirstThings.com).



## ADDRESSING FAULTY HERMENEUTICS

Dr. Leithart's parody is aimed at Biblical scholars, such as Dr. Peter Enns, who question much of the historicity of Gen.1-11. For example, Enns has argued:

Paul, as a first-century Jew, bore witness to God's act in Christ in the only way that he could have been expected to do so, through ancient idioms and categories known to him and his religious tradition for century upon century. One can believe that Paul is correct theologically and historically about the problem of sin and death and the solution that God provides in Christ without also needing to believe that his assumptions about human origins are accurate. The need for a savior does not require a historical Adam....

....A proper view of inspiration will embrace the fact that God speaks by means of the cultural idiom of the authors – whether it be the author of Genesis in describing origins or how Paul would later come to understand Genesis. Both reflect the setting and limitations of the cultural moment.  
– *The Evolution of Adam*, p.143

Enns has in fact responded to Leithart, defending his approach. Interestingly, Enns doesn't rule out Leithart's argument that Enns' demythologization of Adam might equally well apply to Abraham:

Even though the literary styles of Genesis 12 and chapters 1-11 are consistent with each other, thus suggesting one narrative, their content is quite different, which is why biblical scholars don't call

the Abraham story "myth" but something else – like legend or political propaganda. In other words, what holds for the Adam story may or may not hold for the Abraham story.

Leithart, in his reply to Enns, stressed his main point: that the same sort of arguments that Enns and others use to dismiss the historicity of Adam can equally well be applied elsewhere in Scripture. Also, he notes that Enns often accepts as fact that which is merely archaeological conjecture or scholarly fad.

Moreover, Enns is mistaken to think that we can give up Paul's belief in a historical Adam while retaining Paul's doctrine of Adam. The Bible is not a collection of stories illustrating doctrine and morals. It's a record of God's actions in history for the redemption of the world. We cannot peel off the historical husk of the Bible and retain its nourishing didactic kernel.

## DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

And why stop at Abraham? Richard Klaus has remarked on the close similarity between the argumentation used by Enns to argue against an historical Adam, and that of others to argue against the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both maintain, for example, that the mythological worldview of ancient Israel has been invalidated by modern science, that we should not read the Bible in a naive literalist sense, that the Bible writers were just children of their time, that the Bible's theological truths don't demand historical veracity, etc.

Consider, for example, a 2014 Kimberly Winston *Religious News*

*Service* interview with retired Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong. In "Can you question the Resurrection and still be a Christian?" Spong insists that Christianity doesn't need a supernatural miracle to be established:

I don't think the Resurrection has anything to do with physical resuscitation, I think it means the life of Jesus was raised back into the life of God, not into the life of this world, and that it was out of this that his presence — not his body — was manifested to certain witnesses.

He thinks the Resurrection must be placed in its proper context to be correctly interpreted and understood:


I tried to help people get out of that literalism... When people hear it, they grab on to it. They could not believe the superstitious stuff and they were brainwashed to believe that if they could not believe it literally they could not be a Christian.

A Christian is one who accepts the reality of God without the requirement of a literal belief in miracles...What the Resurrection says is that Jesus breaks every human limit, including the limit of death, and by walking in his path you can catch a glimpse of that.

And I think that's a pretty good message.

It's no message at all, according to Paul: *"If Christ has not been raised then your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins"* (1 Cor.15:17).

Here, with Spong's denial of the Gospel, we reach the logical conclusion of Enns' demythologizing trajectory.

Happily, Dr. Enns still affirms the physical resurrection of Christ. But on what basis? *Not* on the grounds of a simple, "because the Bible tells me so." 

*This article is reprinted with permission from a 2016 post on Dr. John Byl's blog Bylogos (bylogos.blogspot.com). The picture is by Guido Reni with his "St. Joseph" standing in for Abraham.*

*Enns is mistaken to think that we can give up Paul's belief in a historical Adam while retaining Paul's doctrine of Adam.*

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES

“The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives [Liberals]. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of

the Conservatives is to prevent the mistakes from being corrected.”

– G. K. Chesterton

## SAY WHAT? INSIGHTS FROM AN AGNOSTIC

Ambrose Bierce (1842- circa 1914) was an American satirist best known for his *Devil's Dictionary*. In it he sought to “improve” on Noah Webster’s famous work by providing definitions that weren’t so much devilish as cynical. And a cynic was, as Bierce defined him, “A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be.”

Now God says unbelievers are fools (Ps. 14:1) so it follows they shouldn’t be our go-to source for wisdom. That makes it all the funnier and that much more embarrassing when an unbeliever sees something we’ve missed. It is, for example, quite a shock to the system when Bierce sees through the fundamental flaw in the conservative political position, noting that most who go by this label aren’t principled, but are simply “conserving” *whatever it is the liberals pushed through in the years preceding!* If even an agnostic – if even a *blind man* – can see through the folly of unprincipled conservatism, we Christians – who have been gifted God’s illuminating Word – really have no excuse for supporting it. This is a rebuke delivered via the mouth of a donkey.

What follows below are a few of the diamonds from Ambrose’s dictionary, sifted out from the dross.

- **ADMIRATION:** Our polite recognition of another’s resemblance to ourselves.
- **CHRISTIAN:** One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor.
- **CONSERVATIVE:** A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from a Liberal who wishes to replace them with others.
- **EDUCATION:** That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.
- **EGOTIST:** A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.
- **IDLENESS:** A model farm where the devil experiments with seeds of new sins and promotes the growth of staple vices.
- **QUOTATION:** The act of repeating erroneously the words of another.
- **RADICALISM:** The conservatism of tomorrow injected into the affairs of today.
- **REFRENDUM:** A law for submission of proposed legislation to a popular vote to learn the nonsensus of public opinion.
- **TARIFF:** A scale of taxes on imports, designed to protect the domestic producer against the greed of his consumer.

And finally one more that isn’t in his dictionary, but which is commonly (and probably mistakenly) attributed to him:

- **SWEATER:** Garment worn by child when its mother is feeling chilly.

## THE DANGER IN A DIET OF CLIPS, TWEETS, MEMES, AND HEADLINES

We live in a 200-word blog post/140-character tweet/30-second YouTube clip/headline-reading kind of world. People read and watch more than ever, but with this larger volume comes the need to skim and sample. And that means even as we might know *about* more of what’s going on our knowledge isn’t as deep. And that can cause problems.

What sort of problems? The sort of problems that happen whenever we have facts without context – what we think we know, just isn’t so.

Here’s one example: the September issue of the creationist magazine *Acts and Facts* included a wonderful article on “Our Young Solar System.” It was already a summary itself, giving a broad overview of a vast amount of research, and briefly highlighting 6 different evidences for the solar system’s young age. One problem common with summaries is getting just the one perspective (Prov. 18:17). Author Dr. Jake Hebert does mention secular scientists have objections to the young earth creationist interpretations – he’s fair – but his article doesn’t have the space to get into, let alone respond to, any of those counter-arguments. Prov. 18:17 says that we can make our best assessment when we hear both sides, and summaries don’t always allow for that.

But the bigger problem shows up on the Institute for Creation Research’s website (ICR.org) where the article begins with an even briefer – just 30-seconds long – summary. Viewed on its own, the opening line could leave viewers with a mistaken impression.

“Secular scientists estimate our Solar System is around 4.6 Billion years old, *but evidence suggests it’s far younger.*”

ICR isn’t suggesting the *all* the evidence suggests it’s far younger – the article makes that clear. But for the many people who skip the article and watch the video instead, that’s an impression they could leave with. That’s already an impression that many a Christian high school student holds. And should such a student head off to university he’ll be unprepared for the attacks coming his way – he’ll be shocked, and maybe even shaken, to learn there is all sorts of scientific evidence that can be interpreted in support of an older universe.

The problem here isn’t with the ICR video. Maybe it could have been improved with the addition of one word: “...*some* evidence suggests it’s far younger.” But the article right below it already makes that point.

The bigger problem is our growing habit of ingesting facts





without context, of reading just summaries – headlines, tweets, video clips, memes, and more – and believing that we are informed.

There is a place for skimming and for a shallow understanding; we don't all need to know the ins and outs of jam-making, dolphin echo-location, or cricket. But if a topic matters – if it is something we are going to share with others, debate, and hold strong opinions about – then as servants of the Truth, we need to dig deeper and truly understand. That's what we need to do to properly reflect and represent the God of Truth (John 14:6).

### "HOMEMAKING IS THE ULTIMATE CAREER" – C.S. LEWIS (SORT OF)

There are some quotes so good you desperately wish they were real. This one below, often attributed to C.S. Lewis, isn't authentic. But the point it makes certainly is:

"The homemaker has the ultimate career. All other careers exist for one purpose only – and that is to support the ultimate career."

While C.S. Lewis didn't use this exact verbiage, in *Letters of C.S. Lewis* he did say something quite like it, showing that this longtime bachelor still understood the pivotal, and pinnacled position of the homemaker:

"I think I can understand that feeling about a housewife's work being like that of Sisyphus (who was the stone rolling gentleman). But it is surely in reality the most important work in the world. What do ships, railways, miners, cars, government etc. exist for except that people may be fed, warmed, and safe in their own homes? As Dr. Johnson said, "To be happy at home is the end of all human endeavour". (1st to be happy to prepare for being happy in our own real home hereafter: 2nd in the meantime to be happy in our houses.) We wage war in order to have peace, we work in order to have leisure, we produce food in order to eat it. So your job is the one for which all others exist..."

### SPURGEON ON DISCERNMENT

"Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the difference between right and almost right."

### WHY DID THE \_\_\_\_\_ CROSS THE ROAD?

One of the wonderful things about children is that they are a new audience. Dads, they haven't heard any of your material before – *they don't know why the chicken crossed the road!*

Another wonderful thing? They love to riff off of mom and dad, so if you get the jokes started, they may just take them places you've never been. Here's a few selections from the Dykstra joke factory, starting with the classic that spawned all the rest. (What can you add?)

- Why did the **chicken** cross the road? To get to the other side.
- Why did the **cow** cross the road? To get to the *mooooooovie* theater.
- Why did the **horse** cross the road? – To visit his *neighbor*.
- Why did the **lamb** cross the road even though his momma said not to? – Because he was being *baaaaaaad*
- Why *didn't* the **possum** cross the road? – He tried but he died.
- Why did the **child** cross the road? – To get to the other *slide*.
- Why did his **momma** cross the road? – To get to her child who *cried*.
- Why did the **unborn** baby cross the road? – She was along for the *ride*.
- Why did the **donut** cross the road? – I *donut* know
- Why did **Benedict Arnold** cross the road? – To switch to the other side.

### WHEN DOES A THIEF STOP BEING A THIEF? IT'S NOT WHEN HE STOPS STEALING!

"The old child's joke, 'When is a door not a door?' Answer: 'when it is ajar' is not funny....No, not funny, but quite useful as a paradigm. Run it this way: When is a \_\_\_\_ not a \_\_\_\_? When it's a \_\_\_\_\_. Ah, now we have something. Just fill in the blanks. When is a liar not a liar? When is a thief not a thief? If your answers were "When he stops lying" and "When he stops stealing," you'd be wrong.

"The true answers are found in Ephesians 4. There you see that the liar is no longer a liar only when he becomes a truth teller. The thief is no longer a thief only when he works for a living and gives from his earnings to those who are truly in need.


"You see, until he puts on the alternative lifestyle, he is a liar who doesn't happen to be a lying at the moment. But put him under pressure and he will still lie. The thief is still a thief when he isn't stealing – he's just a thief between "jobs." He will still steal when given the opportunity. This is why biblical counselors believe in the put off/put on dynamic of Ephesians 4, Colossians 3 and elsewhere."

– Jay Adams in a February 24, 2009 post to Nouthetic.org/blog (reprinted here with permission)

### CHESTERTON ON VALUING TRADITION

"Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to that arrogant oligarchy who merely happen to be walking around."

– *Orthodoxy*



by Christine Farenhorst

## "Did God answer her prayer?"

*To my dear niece and namesake:*

First of all, thanks for your letter. It's great to hear from a niece. The pages you wrote were so full of news, so full of thoughts that I am not privy to as we live such a great distance away from one another. So thank you again for that. I loved holding your thoughts in my hand.

I was so sorry to hear that your friend's mother is in the early stages of Alzheimer's. She is obviously someone of whom you are very fond. I was also very sad to hear that things are not going well at all in your church - dissension and quarrelling and people with the loudest mouths obtaining positions of authority. And then you went on to bemoan the world situation. You wrote of mass shootings, of persecution against Christians and of lawsuits being filed against those who refuse to give in to liberal agendas. Indeed, we live in a world full of hatred and ill-will against our Lord, don't we?

You wrote something as well that makes me extremely glad. You wrote that you pray constantly for God to intervene. But then you worry about

the fact that perhaps you do not have enough faith and do not pray correctly, for all the changes you pray for do not seem to come about.

If you will bear with me, let me just recount a small story, a true story, from my past. I had a good friend when I was a teenager. She was a married woman who loved the Lord dearly and spoke of Him often. She and her husband had a beautiful little hobby farm in the Niagara Peninsula. She was a teacher and her husband was a worker in one of the steel mills. There was, however, a great sadness in their lives. Grace, which was her name, had been married to Bill for almost fifteen years and they had not been blessed with children. Like Sarah, Grace was rapidly approaching the age where it would no longer be possible to have them. When she spoke of this, her eyes would cloud over and often she would weep, not only before me but also before the Lord. She begged Him for children. On her knees she would beg Him over and over and she would promise to raise up her children in the fear of the Lord. It was a good prayer and one, I am sure that pleased the Lord.

There was one thing that I left out.

Grace's doctor had advised her and Bill not to have children. You see, Grace had diabetes and the doctor thought it would aggravate the disease if she became pregnant. A few years after I became her friend, Grace did indeed become pregnant. She was ecstatic. Bill immediately paved their gravel driveway because he envisioned a little child roller-skating on it. Their conversation was now totally colored by this coming child, this coming birth. The sad part is, that after she carried this little baby for three months, Grace miscarried. Not only that, but her diabetes became much, much worse. She lost her eyesight. Bill had to comb her hair, do the cooking and clean the house. In less than a year, she was hospitalized and when I went to visit her with my father, who was her pastor, it was difficult to recognize her. Her body was puffed up with water retention and she was in and out of consciousness. I wept at the ugliness, the havoc wreaked by sin. Although Grace did not recognize me and died almost a week after my visit, my father recounted that in her conscious moments she testified of her love for God and her desire to be with Him.

*...as a little child comes to its mother for comfort, we also may run to our heavenly Father and He will comfort us.*

Now did God answer her prayer?

There are so many “Grace” stories out there and I think you mentioned a number of them. Perhaps there are different ways of looking at these stories. But there are several truths we must never forget. First of all, we may ask God anything in His name. God is not only a God of great things that happen in the world – things such as wars and famines – but He is also a God of the little things in the world – things such as falling sparrows and the number of hairs on our heads. We must never think that God is so busy with the great things that He forgets the everyday things in which you and I are constantly immersed. Remember Psalm 103: “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He knows how we are formed; He remembers that we are dust” (vs. 13-14). So, as a little child comes to its mother for comfort, we also may run to our heavenly Father and He will comfort us. And we may come to Him with anything.

If we approach God constantly with every little event in our lives, then we will feel more confident to approach Him with the bigger things as well. Grace and Bill came to God with their desire for a child. Christians in Nigeria come to God with a plea that persecution might be stayed. The wife of an alcoholic comes to the Father asking that her husband would stop drinking. The child of a mother with insidious cancer fervently pleads that her mother's life would be spared.

Another aspect of such situations is not to dwell on the perceived strength of the devil. Remember, he is a creature and a fallen creature at that. If he is active, and seemingly winning in his activities, it is only

because God, in His omnipotence, permits this. It is a precious gift, and one for which we should plead, to know that all things – all things – come from the hand of God and are within His control. Even things such as Alzheimer's, cancer, persecution and barrenness will eventually work out to His glory. Easy to say, I know, and more difficult to accept when you are in the middle of such a battle.


Psalm 139 emphasizes that God knows us in every aspect of our living, small and great. It is a good thing to be known. Psalm 139 shouts joyfully about being known by God when it iterates: “You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, You know it completely, O Lord” (vs. 2-4). How terrifyingly beautiful those words are and how they wrap about us as loving arms.

Difficult as it may be, consequently, there is no need to ask certain questions.

Questions such as: Why is there barrenness in this godly household when their neighbor has eight children and does not care for them properly? Why is this Christian mother afflicted with multiple sclerosis and the blasphemer so amazingly healthy? And, why does God withhold marriage from this wonderful girl whereas the atheist down the street celebrates his fiftieth anniversary?

God will not tell you all His reasons for doing things. But never doubt that all is well in His hands and be comforted that there are some things that He does tell you. He does tell you that His yoke is easy and His burden is light; He does tell you that He is a Wonderful Counselor, an Almighty God and an Everlasting Father; He does tell you that though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you ought not to fear evil, for He is with you; and He does tell you that when your body lies in the grave He will call you out of it with the sound of His trumpet.

Well, my dear, I have gone on and on haven't I! But these things are near to my heart. I wish you well and hope you come to visit the next time you pass through this area. Give my love to your parents and your siblings,

*Your loving aunt* 



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by Bill Muehlenberg

Delight yourself in the Lord;  
and He will give you the desires  
of your heart.”

– Ps. 37:4

# C. S. LEWIS ON REAL HAPPINESS & REAL CHRISTIANITY

So who does not want to be happy? We all do, but wanting something is not the same as finding it. We all strive after happiness, but how many people actually find true, lasting happiness? Of course for the Christian, we know this is a foolish quest.

Search for joy and it will elude you. Search for God wholeheartedly and you will be found by Him *and happiness will be thrown in as a by-product*. This is basic Christian teaching, yet sadly even most Christians today seem to get this wrong big time.

So many sermons we hear today are all about your own happiness and peace and satisfaction and having all your desires met. How can I be successful and happy and satisfied and prosperous? That is what we hear so often: it is all about self, self-satisfaction, self-fulfillment and personal happiness.

Instead of the biblical emphasis on the denial of self, we get plenty of self-centered foolishness by church leaders

who should know better. We expect the world to get it wrong here, but Christian pastors? Consider folks like Joel Osteen, the guy with the biggest church in America. This is what he said:

“To find happiness, quit focusing on what’s wrong with you and start focusing on what’s right with you.”

Um no, Joel, that is not the way it works at all. That is not even remotely biblical. We are to focus on God and God alone, and seek after holiness (without which no one will see God – Hebrews 12:14) and as a by-product, peace and happiness may well follow. But we are never told to seek after it, put it first, or to believe that we can somehow find it by focusing on our self.

The real nature of happiness, and why it should not be our central concern, is something C.S. Lewis spoke often about. He wrote much about happiness, or joy. Indeed, he called his autobiography

*Surprised By Joy*. In his many well-known works he speaks much to this.

Here I want to look at some of his lesser-known writings as I discuss this issue. He wrote about these themes throughout his life, and even in his very last writing before his death in November 1963, he was discussing this. His essay “We Have No ‘Right To Happiness’” (later published in *God in the Dock*) speaks directly to this.

## A SUPERFICIAL HAPPINESS

So what did he say in his last known writing? He mentions a woman who claimed a “right to happiness,” and says:

“At first this sounds to me as odd as a right to good luck. For I believe – whatever one school of moralists may say – that we depend for a very great deal of our happiness or misery on circumstances outside of human control. A right to happiness doesn’t, for me, make much more sense than

a right to be six feet tall, or to have a millionaire for your father, or to get good weather whenever you want to have a picnic.”

He goes on to say that this woman meant primarily “sexual happiness.” He concludes his piece with these words:

“Though the ‘right to happiness’ is chiefly claimed for the sexual impulse, it seems to me impossible that the matter should stay there. The fatal principle, once allowed in that department, must sooner or later seep through our whole lives. We thus advance toward a state of society in which not only each man but every impulse in each man claims *carte blanche* [complete freedom]. And then, though our technological skill may help us survive a little longer, our civilization will have died at heart, and will – one dare not even add ‘unfortunately’ – be swept away.”

Another essay, also found in *God in the Dock*, is entitled “Answers to Questions on Christianity”. Question 11 asks this: “Which of the religions of the world gives to its followers the greatest happiness?” To this he gave this now famous reply:

“While it lasts, the religion of worshipping oneself is the best. I have an elderly acquaintance of about eighty, who has lived a life of unbroken selfishness and self-admiration from the earliest years, and is, more or less, I regret to say, one of the happiest men I know. From the moral point of view it is very difficult! I am not approaching the question from that angle. As you perhaps know, I haven’t always been a Christian. I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity. I am certain there must be a patent American article on the market which will suit you far better, but I can’t give any advice on it.”

## NO ABIDING HAPPINESS APART FROM GOD

But perhaps some of his most-well known comments about happiness come from his classic *Mere Christianity*. As he says there:

“The moment you have a self at all, there is a possibility of putting yourself first – wanting to be the centre – wanting to be God, in fact. That was the sin of Satan: and that was the sin he taught the human race. Some people think the fall of man had something to do with sex, but that is a mistake. (The story in the Book of Genesis rather suggests that some corruption in our sexual nature followed the fall and was its result, not its cause.)

“What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like gods’ – could set up on their own as if they had created themselves – be their own masters – invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history – money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery – the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

“The reason why it can never succeed is this. God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”


And the very last paragraph of his book says this:

## God designed the human machine to run on Himself.

“Give up yourself and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day, and death of your whole body in the end, submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”

## CONCLUSION

Exactly right. This is indeed the basic Christian understanding, yet we have an entire generation of Christian teachers and preachers who have totally lost this, and are preaching a me-centered gospel which must disappoint. A focus on self, our wants, our desires, and our lusts is exactly what Satan wants us to do – but not God. Jesus made the secret to happiness absolutely plain in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Blessedness or happiness consists of being poor, being meek, mourning, being persecuted, and the like. That is the path to happiness. It is about denial of self, as Jesus spoke about so often.

It certainly is not about being fixated on self, seeking your best life now, or aiming for material wealth and possessions. What Lewis said about happiness is just the simple Christian gospel. How can so many believers and preachers today miss this so thoroughly? 

*Bill Muehlenberg blogs on culture daily at [BillMuehlenberg.com](http://BillMuehlenberg.com) where this first appeared. It is reprinted here with permission.*





# WHAT IF SALES COULD BE BEAUTIFUL?

5 crucial mindsets for the  
Christ-following sales leader

*by Pete Kuehni*



“I hate sales.”

That phrase came up again and again while I was working with a group of Christian not-for-profit leaders. As we explored the issue together, it became painfully clear that worldly *stinkin' thinkin'* had crept into their minds. For them, sales meant....

1. Prompting people to do something they didn't want to do.
2. Twisting people's arms.
3. Using people for your own good and not theirs.

Images of cold-hearted, self-focused, not-for-the-good-of-others, coercive people dominated our discussion. It was time to move our *stinkin' thinkin'* to *Kingdom thinking*.

Over my 25 years as an entrepreneur, business and sales professional, one of the bigger challenges to overcome has been the negative sales mindset many Christ-followers have adopted. In my experience, many see “sales” as a dirty word... a “necessary evil” to somehow make their business work. In their thinking, “wouldn't business be great if I didn't have to sell”!

But consider these questions:

- What if “selling” could be a beautiful thing?
- What if we looked at engaging in the sales process as a gift of service to the one with whom you are looking to “make a sale”?
- What if you could quit focusing on selling and, instead, help the potential customer buy?

What is your response? How do you view sales?

What follows are five very “Deliberate sales mindsets” I invite you to make your own. If you do, these could be game changers for you and your business! They were for me!

### #1 THE PROCESS OF SALES IS BEAUTIFUL!

God created work! Yes, we corrupted it as part of the Fall into sin, yet in the original design work was beautiful. Therefore sales, done in a Kingdom way, is also beautiful. (Genesis 2:2, Colossians 3:23, Ephesians 6:5-9)

Do you believe that selling can be a beautiful process? Why or why not?

### #2 FOCUS ON LOVE!

A Christ-following sales leader is called to show Christ's “love” to the potential buyer. This is non-negotiable for one who is committed to Christ. Either the “Great Commandment” is the “Great Commandment” or it is not. If this is so, an essential focus for the sales person is to ensure that they “love” (Matt 22:34-40). This kind of love is where I choose to extend myself for the highest good of another.

### #3 CHOOSE TO SERVE!

Your mindset is to serve and not be served. Jesus in Mark 10:45 says it well: “For the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” And we are called to become imitators of Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2).

### #4 HUNT FOR VALUE!

If “sales” is beautiful, and you are committed to loving the customer, then you are “free” to hunt for the value that will be meaningful for the customer. You are in pursuit of doing whatever you can to add value to your client's world.

Within the bounds of your well thought out business model you are free to listen well and ask thoughtful, meaningful questions. Pursue uncovering the value that may be hidden, just waiting to be discovered.

### #5 BE CURIOUS!


Nothing will kill a sales opportunity faster than approaching it with a “know-it-all” attitude. Pride and ego are “show stoppers” for sales people (let alone everyone else). Think of the times you have encountered an arrogant sales

person – I suspect not a great experience. Again, Jesus paves the way for us. He showed us, in His role, what it meant to operate with humility. (Phil 2:1-3 & 1 Peter 5:5-10)

*Nothing will kill a sales opportunity faster than approaching it with a “know-it-all” attitude.*

To bring authentic curiosity, where you are truly interested in what is best for your client, requires humility. Humility communicates that you are learning from this client; they will teach you what they need. Your job is to offer a heart and mind that is keen to listen and learn from them.

So let's move our view of sales from *stinkin' thinkin'* to *Kingdom thinking*! Either by yourself or with the help of others in a group ask:

“Father, what are you teaching me about you, and your view of ‘sales’? What are you teaching me about my view of sales? How aligned is my view with yours? What actions would you have me take as I ‘sell’? And, is there someone you want me to share this with?” 

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

Pete Kuehni is a partner at DeliberateU, a group offering business leadership mentoring for Christian business owners in their workplace, families and communities, with the goal of increasing their capacity to grow in both faith and business effectiveness. Their conviction is that God uniquely uses the marketplace to extend His kingdom purpose – to serve others while growing in faith, hope and love. You can learn more at [DeliberateU.com](http://DeliberateU.com) where this article first appeared under the title “Tired of selling but you need more sales?”

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# WHAT MAKES A SALESMAN GOOD?

by Jon Dykstra

I didn't know too many salesmen while I was growing up, so my perception of them was shaped in large part by the jokes made about them. I understood the jokes weren't meant to be taken literally, but hear something often enough and you do get impacted. So yes, I knew used car salesmen didn't *always* trick widows into emptying their bank accounts to purchase oil-leaking gas-guzzlers. But it happened more often than not, right?

My own sales experience only reinforced this villainous stereotype. For a grand total of two weeks I sold vacuum cleaners door-to-door. While the vacuums were remarkable our sales pitch was not. We'd bully our way into a home, counting on most people being too polite to throw us out. Then we'd give them a half hour demonstration, uncovering all sorts of hidden dirt and filth in the house – this machine could pull it out of even a newly laid carpet. Then we'd make an emotional appeal, asking parents how much their children mattered to them, and presenting the

\$1,500 machine as a way to save their children from sickness and allergies.

I wasn't all that good at this guilt-inducing plea, so in that two-week period I sold just one vacuum, and even that was only because my trainer clinched the deal. A few days later I was greatly relieved to hear that the couple had changed their mind and gotten all their money back.

This brief foray into sales taught me that it was every bit as sleazy as I had imagined.

## TWO CONTRASTING IDEAS

Some years later I started dating a lovely sales manager. If I'd been thinking it through, that should have challenged my perception of sales as a low-ethics field. Clearly it wasn't true of *all* salespeople! But I didn't put two and two together. I didn't really think about how what she was doing – selling student agendas to schools across North America – was, in fact, sales.

It was only later that year, when I had the chance to meet her company's sales

staff at their annual sales conference, that I was forced to re-evaluate. Talking with them made me realize it was possible to be a good salesman and still be a good man. It all came down to two very different understandings of what makes a salesman good.

## 1. CAN SELL ANYTHING TO ANYONE?

One of the first salesmen I met at the conference was a twenty-something-year-old who bragged he could sell ice to Eskimos – didn't matter the product, he could sell it. He touted how good he was at upselling, convincing his

*He bragged he could sell ice to Eskimos – didn't matter the product, he could sell it.*



customers to buy this or that add on.

As he talked I noticed something he didn't. His fellow salesmen were not impressed. I can't remember now whether he was cut off, but he was answered. A more experienced fellow made it clear that this is not what a good salesman does.

In the days that followed I had a few conversations with this second gentleman, and was able to dig into what he thought sales was all about.

## 2. CAN MEET HIS CUSTOMER'S NEEDS

His understanding was built on his love for God and a love for his neighbor. He saw his role as a salesman as trying to meet his customers' needs. That could be a complicated task: it might involve explaining to a customer that they have a need they didn't even know about. The product he sold, student agendas, weren't standard school equipment in the same way that pencils, paper, and rulers are. But he believed in his product; in a very real way he was in his job for the same reason a good teacher takes her position: they both want to help students learn. He knew that his agenda could help students be better organized by helping them manage their time and keep track of assignments. There were features that could help teachers and parents too, and all for the price of only a few dollars each.

His sales pitch wasn't dependent on pressure – he presented the features of the agenda in as clear and concise a manner as he could, respecting both the principal's intelligence and his time.

## A COUPLE KEY DIFFERENCES

So what's the difference between the first sort of salesman – the one who thinks he can sell anything to anyone – and the second sort who is trying to meet the customer's needs?

Attitude is the biggest part of it. Instead of being full of himself, the Christian salesman is thinking of others, trying to serve them by offering the opportunity to buy a valuable

product.

A second difference is that a Christian salesman can only sell a product he believes in. Christians wouldn't want to sell sand in the Sahara, even if our powers of persuasion were such that we could pull it off. A Christian salesman needs to be doing his customer a service that is to the customer's benefit. It was no coincidence that the sales staff at this agenda company also had a role in product development. They were trying to meet customer needs, and after talking with the same principals and superintendents year after year, the sales staff could give valuable advice to the product development team about improvements, and good features to add.


## CONCLUSION

I was grateful to meet this second salesman and his many godly sales

colleagues. They changed forever the way I understood sales, showing there is a way to honor God in this field too.

Of course, there are still the sleazy sort, and lots of them. In some companies there could be pressures to overhype products, and to push customers into buying options they don't really need.

But that shouldn't make us steer clear of the sales field. We do need to be aware that we might face such pressures, and understand that in standing against them we could even lose our position. But at the same time, the servant-minded salesman is going to be appreciated by all his customers – honesty and integrity are valuable "sales tools." In fact, the godly salesman I talked to was later honored as one of his company's top sellers.

If you have that servant mindset, and a product you can believe in, then sales can be a God-honoring job indeed! 





# WHAT IS MAN?

It's one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves.... or ask the world.

by Greg Koukl

**T**hree thousand years ago, an ancient sage gazed at the world and asked the most important question anyone could ask about our corporate humanity:

When I consider Your heavens,  
the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars,  
which You have ordained;  
*What is man* that You take thought of him...? (Ps. 8:3–4)

Indeed. What is man? What does it mean to be human? You cannot answer a single question of consequence regarding human beings without answering that question first. Everything vital, meaningful, and moral about us hangs on its answer. It is the quintessential query regarding the nature of human existence.

## MANY OTHER QUESTIONS FLOW TOWARDS THIS ONE

Is gender fixed or fluid? Is homosexuality natural or perverse? Is there a right to abortion? What about capital punishment? Or sexual slavery? Or social justice?

The answer to each of these questions depends upon an answer to a prior

question: What is man?

There are three ways to respond.

### 1. NATURALISM: We are nothing

Here is the first way, the response of naturalism — the religion currently governing science. According to pop “Science Guy” Bill Nye: “We are just a speck, on a speck, orbiting a speck, in the corner of a speck, in the middle of nowhere.”

“We emerged from microbes and muck,” Carl Sagan declared. “We find ourselves in bottomless free fall...lost in a great darkness, and there’s no one to send out a search party.”[i]

And they are right, of course. In a world without God, humans are nothing but cogs in the celestial machine, cosmic junk, the ultimate unplanned pregnancy, left to build our lonely lives on the “unyielding foundation of universal despair,” as atheist Bertrand Russell put it. Nihilism – bleak “nothing-ism.”

### 2. NEW AGE: We are God

There is a more cheerful alternative, though: the New Age answer to the question “What is man?” There is a God, according to Rhonda Byrne, and he is you. In *The Secret*, her celebration of

human divinity, she writes:

You are God in a physical body. You are Spirit in the flesh. You are Eternal Life expressing itself as You.... You are all power. You are all wisdom. You are all intelligence. You are perfection. [ii]

So the secularists have given us two options. Either there is no God, or there is and we are Him. Cosmic debris or divine perfection. In either case, we are alone — solitary nothing or solitary everything. Scylla or Charybdis.

### 3. A THIRD WAY: Not gods nor garbage

Our ancient sage, though, provides a third answer. No, we are not God, but we are not garbage, either. There is another alternative, a path between those two monsters. It is also one that makes complete sense of our deepest intuitions about what it means for us to be human.

## THE ODDITY THAT IS EARTH DAY

Something has always confused me about Earth Day celebrations. They seem to be based on a contradiction. Earth Day is a fete enjoyed by naturalists, on the main, who celebrate

*nature as ultimate and man's unique moral responsibility to protect it.*

There, did you see it? Did you catch the contradiction?

In order to see the misstep, you must see something else first. Worldviews come in packages. They are like puzzles with particular pieces fitting together into a coherent whole. Foundational concerns either fit crisply with other details or foreclose on them.

In a naturalistic worldview, nature is all there is – physical things in motion strictly governed by the deterministic laws of physics and chemistry. In this package, then, there is no place for actual moral obligations of any kind because morality is based on free choices, not on physical determinism.

Further, Darwinism is a strictly materialistic process that produces strictly material goods. No pattern of genetic mutation and natural selection can cause an immaterial moral obligation to pop into existence. [iii] Thus, no living thing can have an obligation to protect another. The locusts take what they can and leave nothing for the hapless boll weevil. Nor should they. May the best bug (the “fittest” critter) win. That’s the program.

Nature’s “balance” is maintained by the

corporate tug o’ war for survival that all living things engage in (on this view), not by one species acting responsibly towards another. There are no moral hierarchies in nature since nature has no resources to build them. Thus, the notion that a specific animal, even a human one, has *responsibility of stewardship* over any other – much less over nature’s entire project – is completely foreign to Darwinism and, thus, to naturalism. In short, there is nothing in an atheistic, naturalistic world that makes sense of man’s obligation towards nature.

That’s the contradiction.

### MY FATHER’S WORLD

As I said, it confuses me, and it ought to trouble naturalists, too, but it doesn’t appear to.

There is a reason for this, I think. To them it just seems obvious – regardless of their underlying worldview – that humans are different in a qualitative way, making us responsible as stewards over the world entrusted to us. That’s not the exact language they’d use, of course, but it’s what the intuition driving Earth Day amounts to.

And they are right about this intuition, of course, but certainly not in virtue of

their naturalistic worldview. Naturalists can talk all they want of human obligations, human meaning and purpose, human value, human significance – even human rights – but it’s all chaff in the wind given their foundational understanding of reality.


There is a worldview, though, in which each of these features of human worth makes perfect sense. Ours.

Here is what the Earth Day crowd gets right: Man *is* different. Humans *are* special. People *are* responsible precisely because they are *not* the same as anything else in nature. And we all know this, which is why the fact continues to stubbornly assert itself even with people whose worldview package cannot justify it.

That’s because this world is not Mother’s world (“Mother Nature”). It is Father’s world.

Here is what Father says about human beings. Humans are beautiful, but they are also broken. They are good, but they are also guilty, and so they are lost. But it hasn’t always been this way, so there is hope for rescue.

These are things we all know, it turns out. They reflect our deepest intuitions about ourselves and the world we live in.



This is the Earth as seen from the dark side of Saturn, 898 million miles away. Carl Sagan, Bill Nye and others, have argued that because we are so small in the grand scheme of things that means we are insignificant. And if we inhabited a universe without God, that would be true.

(Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Space Science Institute).



## BEAUTIFUL...

Carl Sagan says we are cousins of apes. [iv] That is Mother's assessment, of course. Father says different:

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:27)

This is the starting point for the answer to our question, "What is man?" At the core of our being lies a mark, an imprint of God Himself – not *on* us, as if foreign and attached, but *in* us, as a natural feature built *into* our natures. This mark is part of what makes us what we are, who we are. We would not be humans without it, but only creatures. Because of this mark, we are not kin to apes. We are kin to the God who made us for Himself.

I do not want you to miss the significance of this simple statement, "God created man in His own image," the very first thing said about humans at the outset of God's Story. It means that anyone reading these words – indeed, every person who has ever lived or died or hoped or dreamed anywhere on this planet at any time in history – bears something beautiful at their core, a beauty that can never be lost and cannot be taken from them.

No, we are not gods, but we are like God in an important way. God's image in us is what makes abortion a homicide and sexual slavery a travesty. It is the reason we are not free to treat each other like animals. It is why certain "inalienable" rights belong uniquely to us. It is also the basis for our friendship with God. We are like Him so we can be near Him in an extraordinary, intimate way.

In a very real sense, then, you have never met an "ordinary" person.[v] Because of the mark of God within our souls, we are each extraordinary in a way that no disfigurement – physical or moral – can ever change, no circumstance can ever alter, no thief can ever steal. It is God's forever gift to humanity, His image on our being.

Thus, we are precious to Him as nothing else is. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your

Father. But the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:29–31).

Notice something else about Father's world. God says He made us "male and female." God made gender binary, not "fluid." There are two and only two, not a vast array. This is a good thing – one made to match the other, each designed to fit the other physically for reproduction (obviously) and soulfully for oneness when paired together in lifelong relationship. The two make one, each "fearfully and wonderfully" made, man for woman, woman for man – the one as the other's proper, lifelong complement and companion.[vi]

There is another reason for our binary sexuality. Only in the combination of those unique characteristics germane to each gender is the image of God fully manifest. Though in God's essential nature He is Father, God is neither male nor female, strictly speaking, but shares and manifests the magnificent glories of both genders.

Note one thing more. God said to them:

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (Gen. 1:28)

This is the accurate insight of the Earth Day crowd. We are both masters and stewards; regents on earth, yet servants of the Most High God.

But there is a problem. Something went south.

## ...BUT BROKEN

I want to tell you another thing everyone knows. Something has gone terribly wrong. We call it "the problem of evil," and it prompts us to ask, "Why is there so much badness in the world?" There is a wrinkle to this concern, though, another detail each of us also already knows.

The world is broken, true enough. But we are broken, too, and our brokenness is a huge part of what is wrong with the world. The world is broken because we are

broken. Though man has inherent dignity, he is also cruel. The evil is "out there," as it were, but it is also "in here" – in us.

Things did not start out that way, though. At the very end of the very beginning, once God had set everything in its proper place, we find this summary of all He had done: "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

All was as it was supposed to be, just as God intended, everything working according to its purpose, man and woman one with each other and the world, resting in their friendship with God.

In that peaceful paradise, though, there was a lone prohibition – a test of fidelity to a Friend, of love to a Father, of loyalty to a King. There was also a tempter who told a terrible lie and a devastating disobedience that changed everything.

When our first parents chose to follow the deceiver rather than their Sovereign,

*"Maybe we feel guilty," I said, "because we are guilty."*

they broke fellowship with their Father, they broke communion with each other, and they broke harmony with the earth they'd been entrusted with. Indeed, when Adam and Eve sinned, *they broke the whole world*. Human badness made the world go bad.

Because our parents became broken, each of us is now broken like them since they reproduced children just like themselves, and their children have done likewise, one broken generation cascading down to the next.

Each of us is still beautiful, to be sure. God's image cannot be erased. However, it can be defaced and disfigured, sullied and spoiled. And that is what has happened. Where there was freedom, there is now slavery and struggle. Where there was spiritual life, there is now spiritual death and decay. Where there was friendship with God, there is now enmity and strife.

This is the second part of our answer to the question, “What is man?” Yes, man is beautiful, but man is terribly broken. And it gets worse.

## GUILTY

To say we are broken is accurate, but it is also easily misunderstood since it does not go far enough. We are not machines that are malfunctioning. We are not bodies that are ailing. We are subjects who revolted, rebels who are now morally corrupted. We are guilty, and for this we must answer.

Again, each of us knows this deep down inside. Years back, I lectured to a sold-out crowd at the University of California at Berkeley. I made the case against moral relativism simply by observing how frequently we object to evil deeds done by others.

This tendency, I pointed out, explains something about ourselves, too, since we are the “others” doing those evil deeds we object to. And we know it. Deep inside of us is a gnawing awareness of our own badness, producing a feeling we universally recognize. That feeling has a name. I asked them what it was. All over the auditorium I heard their response. “Guilt,” they said, one by one.

Yes, we all *feel* guilty, don’t we? At some point or another, if we are honest with ourselves, we feel the pain of our own brokenness. “But why?” I asked. “Why do we feel guilty? How about this,” I suggested. “Maybe we *feel* guilty,” I said, “because we *are* guilty. Is that in the running?” This, of course, is exactly what the Story tells us:

There is none righteous, not even one;  
There is none who understands,  
There is none who seeks for God;  
All have turned aside,  
together they have become useless;  
There is none who does good,  
There is not even one. (Rom. 3:10–12)

Humans are beautiful, yes. But humans are also broken. And in our moral wretchedness we are also profoundly guilty. We owe. We are in debt, not to a standard, not to a rule, not to a law, but to a Person – to the One we have offended

with our disobedience. And this is not good news, since our guilt has severe consequences.

## LOST

At the end of the Story we find a dark passage.[vii] It tells of the final event of history as we know it, a great trial on a great plain where a great multitude of the accused – the guilty ones – stand before a Judge. The books of death are opened, each of our moral lives laid bare for all mankind to see – the record in the books the basis for a final reckoning, a last judgment.

Nothing is missed or overlooked. From massive acts of evil to minor moral missteps, no sullied deed passes. “There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known,” Jesus warned (Matt. 10:26). “Every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment,” He said (Matt. 12:36). It is not a pretty picture.

Before the Judge stand all the beautiful, broken, guilty ones, each shut up under sin.[viii] Every mouth is also shut, each voice muted, silenced from any defensive appeal or any excuse, all the world accountable to Him with whom we have to do.[ix] The record in the books speaks for itself.

Here is Sagan’s “bottomless free fall” – mankind “lost in a great darkness.” He is right about that, since we are all guilty, and no judge owes a pardon. Atonement must be made. The debt must be paid. Justice must be perfect.

There is one more detail to the Story, though. I did not leave the students at Berkeley in despair, abandoned under the weight of their own guilt – culpability that we all shoulder, blame that we all share.

“The answer to guilt is not denial,” I told them. “That’s relativism. The answer to guilt,” I said, “is *forgiveness*. And this is where Jesus comes in.”

Sagan is right when he says we are lost. But he is wrong when he says, “There’s no one to send out a search party.” Clearly, man needs rescuing, and he cannot rescue himself. Help must come from the outside. From outside of ourselves. From outside of Sagan’s closed cosmos. From


outside of this world.

And the search party has arrived. The Rescuer has come:

Therefore, when [Jesus] comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come...to do Your will, O God.’” (Heb. 10:5–7)

Because our souls bear God’s own image, we are wonderful. Because we have rebelled against the God who gave us our beauty, we are broken, guilty, and ultimately lost. “For the wages of sin is death...” the Story tells us (Rom. 6:23). In the darkness, though, there is hope, because it then adds, “...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

He is the One who calls to us:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt. 11:28–29) 

## END NOTES

[i] Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random house, 1994), 6, 51.

[ii] Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret* (New York: Atria Books, 2006), 164.

[iii] In a previous issue of *Solid Ground*, I explain why Darwinism as a system is completely incapable of generating actual, objective moral obligations. See “God, Evolution, and Morality,” parts 1 and 2, at str.org.

[iv] Sagan, *ibid*.

[v] I owe this insight to C.S. Lewis.

[vi] Note Jesus’ comment in Matt. 19:4–6.

[vii] Rev. 20.

[viii] Gal. 3:22.

[ix] Rom. 3:19.

*Greg Koukl is the author of “Tactics,” an apologetics primer, and “The Story of Reality,” which is a lot like this article. He is the founder and president of Stand to Reason (STR.org), an organization that seeks to equip Christians to be knowledgeable, wise, and godly ambassadors of Christ. This article is reprinted with permission.*

# Hull Humanity

by Sietze Buning

"Hey, here's your sandwich," I called across the lunchroom to Caldwell, the kid we picked on. He was fat and unathletic, and we kept him in his place.

Right in style,  
I threw the sandwich I had swiped from him. He reached, missed,  
and the waxed paper burst apart  
against the lunchroom window.  
A smear of mayonnaise streaked the glass,  
a flap of bologna hung over the back of the desk,  
a lettuce leaf and a tomato slice lay on the floor.  
I smiled triumphantly,  
the boys' lunchroom laughed adoringly,  
and then we heard Mr. Leonard's voice.  
He had stepped in without our noticing.

"Caldwell,  
here is my sandwich.  
Enjoy it.  
Sietze,  
May I see you out in the hall?"

"OH oh."  
"Naughty Sietze."  
"Now you'll catch it."  
I was afraid.

In the hall,  
Mr. Leonard said quietly,  
"People throw food only at animals."

"Yes, Mr. Leonard," I said.  
He did not need to tell me to go for  
Mop, cloth, and soapy water.

From then on  
Caldwell was different for me  
and I was decent to him.

Once or twice later  
I have felt as alienated as Caldwell must have then.  
Depressed,  
I can always find comfort  
in how efficiently a waitress pours my coffee,  
in how a check-out girl smiles as she makes change,  
in how you, dear, ladle me a bowl of cheese soup  
and wipe the inside of the rim  
so that the line of yellow-green soup  
will be sharp against the brown pottery,  
and I remember that people throw food only to animals,  
and I tell myself,  
"Sietze, you're not such a dog as you think you are."

*From Sietze's Buning's  
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# JUST HOW BAD IS THE TEEN ANXIETY EPIDEMIC?



by David Murray

Over the past year or so, I've noticed a significant increase in the number of people asking me for help with anxiety issues. While it seems to be affecting people of all ages, the most common problem is teens with anxiety, as the following stats underline:

- Anxiety is the most common mental-health disorder in the United States, affecting nearly one-third of both adolescents and adults, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.
- Nearly a third of all adolescents ages 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder during their lifetime, according to the National Institutes of Health, with the incidence among girls (38.0 percent) far outpacing that among boys (26.1 percent).
- More than 6 million American teens are grappling with an anxiety disorder of some kind.
- Anxiety is now the most common issue for which people of all ages seek counseling.
- Over the last decade, anxiety has overtaken depression as the most common reason college students seek counseling services.
- Since 1985, the Higher Education

Research Institute at UCLA has been asking incoming college freshmen if they "felt overwhelmed" by all they had to do. The first year, 18 percent replied yes. By 2000, that climbed to 28 percent. By 2016, to nearly 41 percent.

- The American College Health Association has been recording about a 10% annual increase in anxiety rates over a number of years.
- Recent studies have declared millennials, especially women, the most anxious generation in history.
- Among 10- to 24-year-old females, seven to 14 percent will experience an anxiety condition in any given year.
- There's been a doubling of hospital admissions for suicidal teenagers over the last 10 years, with the highest rates occurring soon after they return to school each fall.
- A 2015 report from the Child Mind Institute found that only about 20% of young people with a diagnosable anxiety disorder get treatment.
- Based on data collected from the National Survey of Children's Health for ages 6 to 17, researchers found a 20 percent increase in diagnoses of anxiety between 2007 and 2012.

One Christian counselor said, "When I first started counseling twenty-four years ago, probably one out of every twenty kids coming in were dealing with anxiety," she says. "Now, out of my new appointments, I would say at least sixteen of every twenty families are here for that reason, if not more."

So just how bad is the teen anxiety epidemic? It's really bad, isn't it? I list these statistics, not to make everyone even more anxious, but to try to re-assure anxious teens and their parents that anxiety is a very normal abnormality. Due to the stigma that still surrounds anxiety and depression, especially in the church, many people suffer in silence and secrecy. They think, "I'm totally weird....There's no one else like me."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The statistics say otherwise. We are surrounded by kids who are suffering like this but most are afraid to admit it, and so are many of their parents. The kids therefore often continue to suffer without help or support.

## MANY DIFFERENT CAUSES

So, if teen anxiety is so widespread, what's causing it? On the basis of personal experience, counseling, and

research, here are what I believe are the most common causes of teen anxiety.

#### *UNRESOLVED GUILT*

Teen years are often sin-filled years, especially in the area of sex, both virtual and real-life. This causes fear of being found out, fear of God, fear of consequences, and fear of judgment.

#### *UNBELIEF*

Related to the above, many kids are not saved, they have no peace with God, because they have never believed in Christ for salvation. But even teens who are believers suffer from anxiety through unbelief, just simply not believing God's promises.

#### *PHYSICAL PROBLEM*

Oftentimes it's not a sin or faith issue but a biological issue, where the "fight-or-flight" mechanism is disordered, constantly or periodically flooding the body and brain with "anxious chemicals" such as adrenaline, cortisol, etc. This is far more common than most people think.

#### *IMPOSSIBLE EXPECTATIONS*

Teens can impose on themselves perfectionistic targets in school, sport, work, and other areas of life, causing huge anxiety when they fail to live up to them. Although young, there's often a sense that bad decisions already taken, or bad exam results, will ruin the rest of life, and that there's no way back.

#### *PARENTAL PRESSURE*

Parents sometimes add their own unrealistic expectations, often with a view to getting scholarships, or of maintaining their social standing with other parents. Related to this is the problem of over-protective parents. Many kids are so spoiled or protected by their parents that they are totally unprepared for what the world throws at them as soon as they venture outside of the cocoon.

#### *OVER-BUSY PARENTS*

The opposite of the above. Some kids just need quality and quantity time with Dad and Mom.

#### *BROKEN HOMES*

One of the most under-reported causes of teen anxiety.

#### *SLEEP DEPRIVATION*

Teens need 8-9 hours of regular sleep to thrive, but many are getting less than six causing significant physical, emotional, and intellectual damage

#### *TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION*

The teen brain is being fried by the constant sizzle of social media and gaming, giving the brain no opportunity for calm and repair.

#### *SOCIAL MEDIA*

Regardless of the impact of how long and how often teens are on social media, there's the constant performance anxiety that flows from seeing other teens "perfect" lives online.

#### *PHYSICAL IMMOBILITY:*

Teen bodies were not made to sit down all day. Lack of exercise reduces healthy brain and body chemicals and increases damaging ones.

#### *FRIENDS AND ENEMIES*

There's constant pressure to please and keep up with friends, and especially for girls, these relationships are often complex and fragile. Then add frequent bullying from enemies, sometimes in real life, but today more often online.

#### *NEGLECT OF THE SABBATH*

God made the Sabbath for our good, but very few teens take a day off a week from studies, work, sports, shopping, etc., and are suffering the consequences of going against our Maker's instructions.

#### *BAD NEWS*

Our teens are exposed to a constant diet of negative news from the media, feeding anxiety and fear.

#### *UNHEALTHY DIET*

Sugar, carbs, soda, and caffeine drinks make up a large part of many teen diets, a lethal cocktail for mental health.

#### *BAD TIME MANAGEMENT*

Bad organization, wrong prioritizing, doing the wrong things at the wrong times, procrastinating, taking on too much, all combine to create a constant background hum of stress and tension.

#### *MONEY WORRIES*

Poor planning, undisciplined spending, taking on debt, impulsive shopping, all stretch the budget and the nerves.

#### *PRACTICAL GODLESSNESS*

Without God as the foundation and framework of life, everything depends on us. Teens, yes even Christian teens, often go days and even weeks without praying and reading God's Word. This results in a lack of a sense of God's presence, plan, and power in their lives.


#### *FAULTY THINKING*

Teens can fall into a range of faulty thinking.

#### *TRAUMA*

Abuse, unexpected bereavement, exposure to violence, accidents, etc. can result in degrees of PTSD.

### **CONCLUSION**

As you can see, parents, there are multiple cause of teen anxiety. I hope this list helps you to think and talk to your teens as you try to explore what factors may be contributing to your teen's worries — it's usually more than one. Unless we find out the causes, it's unlikely we'll discover any cures. I'll expand on some of these in an upcoming article. 

*Dr. David Murray blogs at [HeadHeartHand.org](http://HeadHeartHand.org) where this first appeared as a pair of posts. We hope to share more of his thoughts in the next issue, to help concerned parents understand what's going in with their anxious kids, offer guidance on how they can help them, and give practical and biblical advice on how they can contribute to their healing.*

# RP, POPEYE, AND YOU

## Making the most of good, godly, outrage

If you haven't heard of a "Popeye moment," it refers to that tipping point when what was once tolerable isn't anymore – when it becomes so upsetting *you can't help but act*. It is, as Popeye the sailor puts it, when, "I've had all I can standz and I can't standz it no more!"

To be clear, this isn't about venting. There's no virtue in getting angry and leaving it at that. A Popeye moment is about spotting the bully, and then saving the girl – it's about:

1. Seeing evil
2. Doing something about it

So why are we talking about a cartoon muscle man? Because here at *RP*, we're all about Popeye moments...with one difference. While the sailor man always saves his Olive alone, we're looking for a team effort. Along with our supporters and readers we're trying to:

1. Identify evil
2. Oppose evil

### 1. IDENTIFY EVIL

That first step, identifying evil, can be hard. Charles Spurgeon once noted:

"Discernment is not simply a matter of telling the difference between what is right and wrong; rather it is the difference between right and *almost* right."

In our confusing times, evil is disguised with noble words like *love* and *justice*. In the name of "equality" God-given gender-based differences are denied. Under the banner of "compassion" confused people are encouraged to cut off healthy pieces of their anatomy in a vain attempt to become the other gender. Closer to home, in the name of "discipline" Christian moms and dads feel free to vent at their misbehaving children.

### 2. OPPOSE EVIL

But if spotting evil is hard, opposing it would seem an even bigger task. One big obstacle is simply time. We have kids to get off to school, diapers to change, consistory meetings to attend, fundraisers to volunteer for, and our job to think about. We are *busy*.

That's one reason *Reformed Perspective* provides all our content online. What am I talking about? Well, some evil can be opposed simply by speaking against it. And speaking out against it can be as simple as sharing a great *RP* article with your Christian and non-Christian family, colleagues, friends, and classmates. Just a click of the mouse, and you can send

a *Reformed Perspective* article to dozens via email or your social media streams.

The opportunity is enormous! Five hundred years ago, God used Martin Luther, and Luther used the printing presses, to start a Reformation. Today, via social media, we *all* have our very own printing presses. We can reach our families, friends, and the world...if only we dare do so.

### CONCLUSION

So, are we in this together? Here at *Reformed Perspective* we are doing our best to present God's Truth in challenging, thought-provoking articles and essays. And we need you to support those efforts in three ways:

- 1) Will you pray for the writers, editor, and the Board, so we can best use the resources God gives us to deliver his truth as well as we can, to as many as we can?
- 2) Will you help us reach more, by regularly sharing articles via social media?
- 3) Will you consider becoming a monthly supporter by sending in the form on the next page? Steady ongoing funding helps us meet today's financial needs, and plan for the future.

*The "Popeye moment" seems too important to name after a cartoon character. Maybe we can honor the man who, after seeing the abuses of the Roman Catholic church, was forced by his love of God to oppose them and declare: "Here I stand; I can do no other." What do you think about calling them "Martin moments"?*







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2018 **ARPA**

**FALL**

**TOUR**

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what's coming?**



**MIKE SCHOUTEN** — It's been nearly 50 years since Canada legalized abortion. Today, we are the only country in the world with no legal restrictions. We have a plan to change that. Are you ready for what's coming?



**ANDRÉ SCHUTTEN** — This past June, our Supreme Court struck a blow against religious freedom in the Trinity Western law school decision. The Court stripped away legal protections for our charities and schools and for Christian professionals. Are you ready for what's next?



**MARK PENNINGA** — Join me and my colleagues as we share a practical vision for how we can proactively move forward as engaged ambassadors in Canada, posted here by King Jesus.



**ED HOOGERDYK** — Please invite your Bible study or small group, family, friends, and acquaintances from the broader Christian & pro-life community to join you.

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### MANITOBA

WINNIPEG — OCTOBER 15  
CARMAN — OCTOBER 16

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

CHILLIWACK — OCTOBER 17  
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# IGNORE YOUR INNER DEFENSE LAWYER

Don't let your kids see you making excuses; let them see you repent



by Jay Younts

**M**y friend Paul Tripp writes that becoming our own defense attorney is a dangerous and destructive practice. In less formal language Paul is warning about becoming an excuse maker. These are the words of a defense attorney in action:

- “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to be angry.”
- “I guess I’m just tired.”
- “He was mean to me.”
- “If you were just a little nicer, it would be a lot easier.”
- “Being inside because of the weather makes me cranky.”
- “It wasn’t my fault, I’m just not feeling well.”

Whether these words come from you or your children they are the words of excuse making, defending ourselves from our own shortcomings and sins.

## EXCUSES CONCEAL SIN

Excuse making keeps us from trusting God, erodes relationships and weakens our character and faith. The default mode for the excuse maker is to shift blame instead of looking to God in repentance. Excuse making is evidence of regret over sins. Excuse making is a way to conceal sin. The Holy Spirit warns against concealing sin in Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper,

but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Here is alternate translation from respected commentator and scholar Bruce Waltke:

The one who conceals his transgressions will not succeed but the one who confesses and abandons them will obtain mercy.

## REPENTANCE BRINGS HOPE

The message is clear and profound: Repentance brings hope. Excuses result in frustration and blame-shifting. The flesh acts as our defense attorney by continually offering a stream of excuses so that we can avoid addressing and confessing our sin. This leads to disaster. Waltke makes this insightful observation about concealing sin:

People may smash their consciences to avoid humbling themselves, but they cannot avoid the reality that God knows and will punish sin. How much better to give him glory by acknowledging this and to experience his mercy.

Concealing sins – making excuses – destroys trust in God. But repentance yields mercy and the blessing of God. There is no freedom in making excuses, only regret and frustration. However, if

repentance is your first response you can be confident of God’s mercy. You don’t have to look for an excuse. You know that you are forgiven and can trust God for help to change. Repentance is the path of freedom.

## REPENTANCE DEFINED

Here is a definition of repentance you can teach your children: “changing my mind and turning around to do the right thing.”

Here is a prayer for repentance that will be a blessing to you and your children:

God, thank you for making repentance possible by sending Jesus to live and die in my place. Thank you that my sin doesn’t separate me from your love. But still, sometimes it is hard to repent, especially when I am stubborn and angry and I just want my own way. Please give me a repentant heart and help me to love you more. In Jesus name, Amen.

Don’t listen to your inner defense attorney! Embrace repentance. **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.*





# EVE:

## the mother of all living

by John de Vos

"...she said: 'God has appointed for me another child...'"

**H**ow sad the reflections. Hunched down in front of her tent, she stared into the fire that had to be kept alight to keep at bay the hostile animals which at one time had been friendly. Her heart melted inside her as she remembered how once she would shiver with delight when the rustling in the treetops announced the presence of God the Creator. Now noises in the treetops or in the undergrowth spelled only danger. Among the trees all around, like heavy drapes, hung the somber forebodings of new unknown perils that could afflict their scarred family on this now-cursed earth.

Terrible had been that day, when God angrily asked them to give account. The man who had once jubilantly embraced her, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, had pointed his finger: "that woman You gave me made me do it." There was no solidarity in guilt, no comfort in huddling together. Huddling? How solitary began the life after the fall! It still thundered in her ears: "That woman." Coming from her husband, her glory, her king!

That woman.

She was indeed the one who had taken the first evil step. They had been warned: the day you eat of that tree you shall die. They had eaten, and now the lifeline, through which the energy of love flowed between man and his Maker, was cut off – cut off by themselves through their willful disobedience.

They moved about like before, but they were dead. Everything was lost through guilt. Her guilt. His guilt. Their guilt.

But was there not the promise of the renewal of life, through the seed of the



woman, that would eventually crush the head of the serpent? Yes, they had heard and believed the promise. And they looked forward to its fulfillment.

They were not unlike the flowers and the trees early in the year: buds begin to swell, and there is the stirring of new life, a looking forward to friendly sunshine, mild summer showers and buzzing insects. And expectations began to grow, but as yet undefined and without specific contents.

Then came the day when she began to feel the stirring of new life inside her own body. It was something totally new. Animals gave birth to their young, and buds burst open on the twigs to allow the tiniest little leaves to unfurl and show their brand-new foliage to the sun. But to man, no children have been born as yet. And therefore, what longing, what looking forward! Will this be the seed that was to crush the head of the serpent?

\*\*\*\*

The woman, who was called Eve by her husband because she was to be the mother of all living, carried her first child.

And she talked to him, and she prayed for him, and she sang for him the lullaby for the unborn (as women would do for centuries after her), and she felt him thrashing around inside. Her husband would put his ear against the taut skin of her belly, which was round and hard as the bellies are of women who are great with child, and in his ear sounded the thud, thud, thud, of a forceful heartbeat, and he laughed, because the LORD had given cause for laughter. Advent had come; the firstborn who was to open the womb was about to be delivered.

Yes, and the day came that those mysterious feminine powers of her body took over because the child that had been so intricately wrought in the depth of the earth was now full-grown, and wanted to see the light. Her husband had to act as instant midwife, because there was no one else about. How strong the power of

## NOTHING BEATS THE ORIGINAL

In this reflection the author wants to direct us back to the text to look at it with new eyes – an oh-so-familiar story startles us once again when viewed under this different light. But like any commentary on Scripture, it shouldn't be read instead of the text itself. Read on its own, it could become confusing as to what are the author's thoughts and what the text actually says. So an important follow-up then is to look up Genesis 3-5.

her contractions, wave after wave! The world was startled with an entirely new sound, the crying of the firstborn child. And above the chortling baby noises, there sounded the victorious song of an exhausted mother: "A man! With the help of the LORD I have gotten a man!" The mother promise had been fulfilled.

\*\*\*\*

And another son was born, and daughters; a family was being formed on the face of the earth beyond the gate of Eden, but yet before the LORD. Their children, conceived and born in sin, were nevertheless children of the promise and they brought them up in the knowledge and the fear of the LORD of the covenant. They were actively expecting the day of the fulfillment of the promise...

But when the lads attained manhood, the robust tiller of the soil stood up against his brother and killed him. He killed him, because his works were evil and those of his brother were

righteous. The motivation for his deed came from the depths of depravity.

Their mother still remembered how they had found Abel's dead body and seen what bodily death looks like. They discovered how *rigor mortis* sets in after a certain length of time. Dust they were, and here was the first one to return to dust. How they had wailed and lamented! Even years later, she could not hold back her tears as she remembered all that had passed. The man that she had gotten with the help of the LORD: a murderer, a marked man, who had chosen the camp of the evil one, East of Eden. Her second son: a martyr, dead and buried, the first soul under the altar to call for justice. Is that then the way in which God fulfills his covenant promises?

Instead of the presence of God rustling in the treetops, there seemed everywhere the triumphant snickering of Satan, with his mock salutation:

*Ave Eve, are you the mother of all life?  
The LORD has left you;  
Cursed are you among women,  
And doomed is the fruit of your womb!*

\*\*\*\*

It was the year one hundred and thirty, from the start of the world. The years that had passed had taught them to walk in faith, not by what meets the eye. What they observed was a broken line. The sum total of their experiences looked very much like a dead end road.

But they had in their way, through suffering, learned obedience. Their

*Their mother still remembered how they had found Abel's dead body and seen what bodily death looks like.*

tribulation had worked endurance, and endurance had produced character, and character did produce hope. And in hope they were not disappointed, because again God granted life. Her arms, which had been empty, were again graced with the moist warmth of a new son. He drank from her, and as he smiled, as children do, nestling against their mothers' bosom, his mother repeated over and over: "Seth, Seth, for God has appointed me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him..." It was the profession of her faith in Him who after much distress because of sin still provided friendly sunshine, and a new hope.

"Seth, Seth," she hummed as gently she rocked him to sleep.

*Sleep, Seth, sleep;  
The ways of God are deep.  
Gone are your brothers two.  
The promise now must come  
through you;  
Sleep, Seth, sleep.*

\*\*\*\*

In her confession she praised God who in his elective love had opened the door, there where human flesh could only perceive a blind wall.

Through this door could prosper and continue the flow of the generations – the seed of the woman – until the Servant of the LORD, the Righteous One, would come.

There was happy laughter again in Eve's tent, as the suckling grew to manhood, ready to carry on the torch, as his name implied. And the Genesis account hardly gives us a chance to catch our breath as it hurries on: to Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. No time for stalling now; things are happening; history is on the move!

Then, with the growth of the different family units among God's people came the time to turn the house congregation into an instituted church and to praise God's holy name in public worship.

\*\*\*\*

Is it not remarkable that the historical account of those early days, brief as it is, contains two narratives about the birth of Seth?

The beginning of Chapter 5 looks like a fresh new start: Adam was created in the image of God, and Adam fathered Seth in his image and he gave him his name. It is introduced as the account of the generation of Adam, in the same manner as later there would be a book of the generation of Jacob. God created a new thing, a turning point in history. But praised be his name, He did not cut off the continuity from the beginning.

The promise had been given to the woman. Adam fathered Seth, true. But it was also in the continuity of the paradise-given mandate that Eve mothered him. Eve mothered again. She brought forth a replacement. A sword had gone through her heart, but this replacement brought healing; she accepted it in faith.

Therefore let all generations honor her name:

*Ave, Eve, mother of all the living;  
The LORD is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
And blessed is the fruit of your womb,  
Whose name is Seth, replacement.*

\*\*\*\*

Abel's blood was shed, and although dead, through his blood, he still speaks today. From Seth would come forth the final Replacement, not of Abel whose blood was shed, but of Adam. That second Adam, the Christ, has shed his blood for Adam, for Eve, for Abel, and for all of us.

And we are called to attend to that sprinkling of blood, which spoke more graciously than the blood of Abel.

Yes, blessed are you, Eve, because blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

RP

*John de Vos was Reformed  
Perspective's very first editor and  
this article was first published in the  
October 1993 issue.*

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# 6

by J. C. Ryle

## DUTIES OF PARENTS

*"Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*  
- Prov. 22:6

I suppose that most professing Christians are acquainted with the verse at the top of this page. The sound of it is probably familiar to your ears, like an old tune. You have heard it, or read it, maybe even talked about it, or quoted it, many a time.

But for all our familiarity with it, how lightly we regard this text! The wisdom it contains appears almost unknown, the duty it puts on us, rarely practiced. Reader, am I not speaking the truth? We live in a day when there is a mighty zeal for education. We hear of new schools, and new teaching approaches, and new books for the young, of every sort and description. And still for all this, the vast majority of children are most certainly not being trained in the way they should go, for when they grow up, they do not walk with God.

Why is this happening? The simple truth of it, the Lord's commandment in our text is not being obeyed; and therefore the Lord's promise in our text is not being fulfilled.

This should have us searching our hearts. Every parent should be asking

themselves the question: "Am I doing what I can?"

This is a subject in which all of us are in great danger of falling short of our duty. We are able to spot the faults of our neighbors more clearly than our own. A father will often see specks in other men's families, and overlook beams in his own. He will be as keen-eyed as an eagle in detecting mistakes in his brother's house, and yet be blind as a bat to the fatal errors that are happening each day in his own home. Here more than anywhere else, we need to suspect our own judgment.

In fact, there is hardly any subject about which people are so defensive as they are about their own children. I have been perfectly astonished at the slowness of sensible Christian parents to allow that their own children deserve blame. There are more than a few people who'd I'd much rather confront about their own sins, than tell them their child had done anything wrong.

So let me place before you a few hints about training your children rightly.

### 1. Train them in the way they should go, not the way they would like to go

First, then, if you want to train your children rightly, train them in the way they *should* go, and not in the way that they *would* like to go.

Remember, children are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong.

A mother can't tell whether her infant child will grow up to be tall or short, weak or strong, foolish or wise, but one thing the mother can be sure of is that he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural to us to do wrong. "Foolishness," says Solomon, "is bound in the heart of a child" (Prov. 22:15). "A child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread; let it alone, and it is sure to bear weeds.

If, then, you want to deal wisely with your child, you must not leave him to the guidance of his own will. Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as



## Our children will have choices. So we want to train them to make good choices.

you would for one weak and blind; and for pity's sake, don't give him up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations. He doesn't know yet what is good for his mind and soul, any more than what is good for his body. You do not let him decide what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and how he shall be clothed. Be consistent, and deal with his mind in like manner. Train him in the way that is scriptural and right, and not in the way that he fancies.

If you aren't determined to follow this first principle of Christian training, it is useless for you to read any further. Self-will is almost the first thing that appears in a child's mind; and it must be your first step to resist it.

### 2. Train them up with love and patience

You must train up your child with tenderness, love, and patience. I don't mean, "spoil him." I do mean that you should let him know that you love him. Love should be the silver thread that runs through all your conduct. Kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to enter into childish troubles, a

readiness to take part in childish joys, — these are the cords by which a child may be led most easily, — these are the clues you must follow if you intend to find the way to his heart.

Few are to be found, even among adults, who are not more easy to draw than to drive. It is common to all of us that when pushed, we resist; we stiffen our backs and stiffen our necks at the very idea of being forced to obey.

Now children's minds are cast in much the same mold as our own. Sternness and severity chills them. It shuts up their hearts, and you will weary yourself to find the door.

But show them you have affection for them — that you are concerned with their happiness, and want to do them good — and that if you punish them, it is intended for their good, that, like the pelican, you would give your heart's blood to nourish their souls; let them see this, I say, and they will soon be all your own. But they must be wooed with kindness, if their attention is ever to be won.

And surely reason itself might teach us this lesson. Children are weak and tender creatures, and, as such, they need

patient and considerate treatment. They are like young plants, and need gentle watering — it needs to be done often, but only a little at a time.

We must not expect all things at once. We must remember what children are, and teach them as they are able to bear. Their minds are like a lump of metal — not to be forged and made useful at once, but only by a succession of little blows. Their capacity to understand is like a narrow-necked bottle: we must pour in the wine of knowledge gradually, or much of it will be spilled and lost. There is a need for patience in training a child, and without it nothing can be done.

Nothing can compensate for an absence of tenderness and love. A minister may speak the truth as about Jesus, clearly and forcefully, but if he doesn't speak it in love, few souls will be won. In the same way, you must set before your children their duty, — you can command, threaten, punish and reason with them — but they don't feel your affection for them, your labor will be all in vain.

Love is one of the biggest secrets to successful training. Anger and harsh-

ness may frighten, but they will not persuade the child that you are right; and if he sees you regularly grumpy and angry, you'll soon stop having his respect. A father who speaks to his son as Saul did to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:30), need not expect to retain his influence over that son's mind.

So try hard to keep up a hold on your child's affections. It is a dangerous thing to make your children afraid of you. Anything is almost better than a distant reserved relationship between you and your child; such distance will come with fear. Fear puts an end to openness – fear leads to concealment – and leads to many a lie. There is a vital truth in the Apostle's words to the Colossians: "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." (Col. 3:21). This is advice that should not be overlooked!

### 3. Understand that much depends on you

Train your children always remembering that much depends upon you.

Consider how very strong grace is. God's grace can transform the heart of an old sinner – it can overturn the

*... see to it that the opportunity isn't wasted. If we let it slip away, it is gone forever.*

very strongholds of Satan, casting down mountains, filling up valleys, making crooked things straight. It can recreate the whole man.

Truly nothing is impossible to grace.

Our fallen human nature is also very strong. We can see how our nature struggles against the things of the kingdom of God – how it fights against every attempt to be more holy, right up until the last hour of life. Our fallen nature indeed is strong.

But after nature and grace, undoubtedly, there is nothing more powerful than the education we as parents give our children. Early habits (if I may so speak) are everything with us, under God. We are made what we are by training. Our character takes the form of whatever mold was formed in those first few years.

We depend, then, on those who bring us up. We get from them a color, a

taste, a bias which clings to us more or less all our lives. We catch the language of our fathers and mothers, and learn to imitate them, and we catch something of their manners, ways, and thinking at the same time. Time only will show, I suspect, how much we all owe to our earliest training, and how many aspects of our personality and our character can be traced back to seeds sown in the days of our very infancy by those who were living with us.

We can see God's wisdom and mercy and in this arrangement. He gives our children minds that will receive impressions like moist clay. He gives them a disposition at the starting-point of life to believe what we tell them, and to take for granted what we advise them, and to trust our word rather than a stranger's. He gives you, in short, a golden opportunity of doing them good. So see to it that the opportunity



Our children need to know we love them, before we can discipline them effectively.



isn't wasted. If we let it slip away, it is gone forever.

#### 4. Think of eternity

Train your child with this thought always in mind: that the soul of your child is the first thing to be considered.

No doubt, these little ones are precious in your eyes; but if you love them, then think often of their souls. No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, shall pass away; the hills shall melt; the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll; the sun shall cease to shine. But the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom you love so well, shall outlive them all, and whether they live on in happiness or in misery will (humanly speaking) depend on you.

This is the thought that should be uppermost in your mind in all you do for your children. In every plan, and arrangement that concerns them, don't forget to ask that all important question, "How will this affect their souls?"

Soul love is the soul of all love. To pet and pamper and indulge your child, as if this world was all he had to look forward to, and as if this life is his only opportunity for happiness, that is not true love, but cruelty. It is treating him like some beast of the earth, which has but one world to look to, and nothing after death. It is hiding from him that grand truth, which he ought to have been taught from his very infancy – that the chief end of his life is the reconciliation of his soul to God.

A Christian mustn't be a slave to trends if he is going to train his child for heaven. He should not teach them a certain way just because that's how everyone else is doing it, or allow them to read questionable books just because everybody else reads them; or let them form habits of a doubtful worth merely because these are the habits of the day. He must train with an eye to his children's souls. He must not be ashamed to hear his training called singular and strange.

What if it is? Our time here is short, and worldly trends will pass away. The

parent who has trained his children for heaven, rather than for earth – for God, rather than for man – is the parent who will be called wise in the end.

#### 5. Teach your children the Bible

Train your children so that they know the Bible. You cannot make your children love the Bible, true – only the Holy Spirit Ghost can give us a heart that delights in the

Word – but you can ensure your children are well acquainted with the Bible. And they cannot be acquainted with that blessed book too soon, or too well.

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is the foundation of all clear understandings of religion. Someone well acquainted with the Word will generally not be carried away by every wind of new doctrine. Any parental training that doesn't make a knowledge of Scripture the first thing is unsafe and unsound training.

Errors abound on just this point, so it is important we have a proper understanding of the Bible's place. There are some who honor a catechism more than the Bible, or fill the minds of their children with miserable little storybooks, instead of the Scripture of truth. But if you love your children, let the simple Bible be first, and let all other books take second place. So don't worry as much about them being well versed in the catechism, as their being well-versed in Scripture. This is training – believe me! – that God will honor.

See to it that your children read the Bible reverently. Train them to look on it, not as the words of men, but as it truly is: the Word of God written by the Holy Ghost Himself. And see to it that they read it regularly. Train them to view it as their soul's daily food – as something essential to their soul's daily health.

Again, I understand you can't make them love Bible reading – you can't make this anything more than a habit. But there is no telling the amount of sin that this mere habit may indirectly restrain.

See that they read it all. And don't shy away from presenting doctrine to

them. You shouldn't think that the foundational doctrines of Christianity are too difficult for children to understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we might suppose.

So tell them about sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can understand this, at least in part.

Tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ, and His work for our salvation – the atonement, the cross, the blood, the sacrifice, the intercession: again, you will discover that this is not beyond them.

Tell them about the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies: you will soon see they can follow along with some of what you are explaining.

In short, I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious gospel. They see far more of these things than we suppose.

Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.

#### 6. Train them to pray regularly

Prayer is the very life-breath of true religion. It is one of the first evidences that a man is born again. When the Lord sent Ananias to Saul, He said: "Behold, he is praying" (Acts 9:11). Saul had begun to pray, and that was proof enough.

Prayer is a key to spiritual growth. When there is lots of private communion with God, your soul will grow like the grass after rain; when there is little, all will be at a standstill – you will barely keep your soul alive. Show me a growing Christian, a strong Christian, a flourishing Christian, and I will show you one that speaks regularly with his Lord. He asks much, and he has much. He tells Jesus everything, and so he always knows how to act.

Prayer is the mightiest engine God has placed in our hands. It is the best weapon to use in every difficulty, and the surest remedy in every trouble. It is the cry He has promised to always be



## We need to teach our children to pray and read their Bibles.

listening for, even as a loving mother listens for the voice of her child.

Prayer is the simplest means that man can use to come to God. It is within the reach of all of us – the sick, the aged, the infirm, the paralytic, the blind, the poor, the unlearned – everyone can pray. You don't have to be academic or an intellectual to pray. So long as you have a tongue to tell God about the state of your soul, you can and you ought to pray. Those words, "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2), will condemn many on the Day of Judgment.

Parents, if you love your children, do all that lies in your power to train them up to a habit of prayer. Show them how to begin. Tell them what to say. Encourage them to persevere. Remind them if they become negligent and slack about it.

This, remember, is the very first step in religion that a child can take themselves. Long before he can read, you can teach him to kneel by his mother's side, and repeat the simple words of prayer and praise which she puts in his mouth. And as the first steps in any undertaking are always the most important, so is the manner in which your children's

prayers are prayed, a point which deserves your closest attention.

Few seem to understand how much depends on this. We must beware of our children saying their prayers in haste, or carelessly, or irreverently. You must be cautious too, of leaving your children to say their prayers on their own, without you in the room. We must make certain they are actually saying their prayers.

Surely if there's any habit which your own hand and eye should be involved in forming, it is the habit of prayer. If you never hear your children pray yourself, then for any negligence on their part, you are much to blame. You are little wiser than the bird described in Job 39:14-16:

*For she abandons her eggs to the earth  
And warms them in the dust,  
And she forgets that a foot  
may crush them,  
Or that a wild beast may  
trample them.  
She treats her young cruelly,  
as if they were not hers;  
Though her labor be in vain,  
she is unconcerned;*

Prayer is, of all habits, the one which we remember the longest. Many a grey-headed man could tell you how his mother used to make him pray in the days of his childhood. He'll have forgotten so many other things. The church where he was first taken to worship, the minister he first heard preach, the friends he used to play with – all may have been forgotten and left no mark behind.

But you will often find it is far different with his first prayers. He will often be able to tell you where he knelt, and what he was taught to say, and even how his mother looked all the while. It will come up as fresh before his mind's eye as if it was but yesterday.

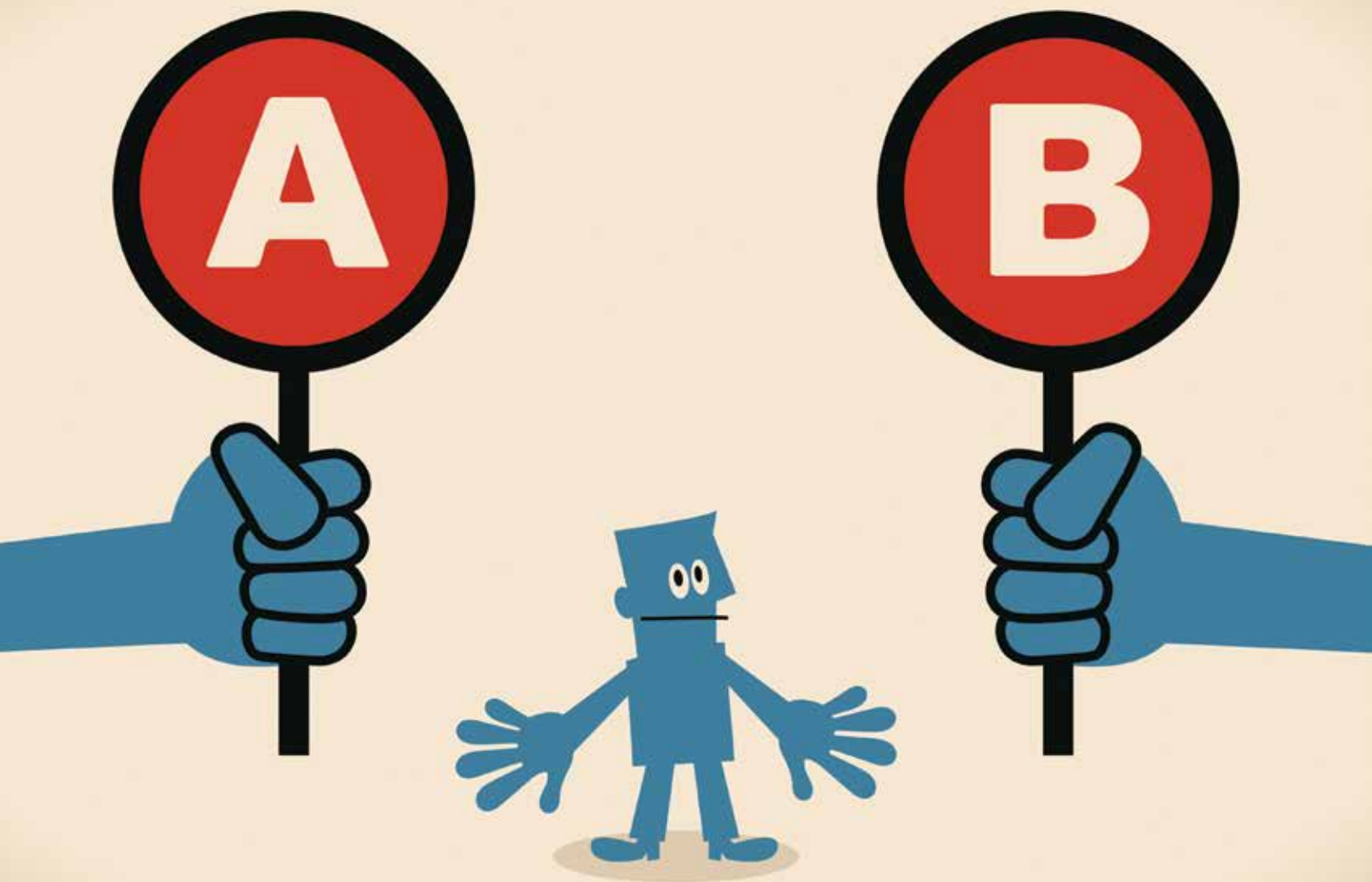
Reader, if you love your children, I charge you, do not let his early years pass with out training him to pray. If you train your children in anything, then train them, at the very least, to make a habit of prayer. RP

*This is a modernized excerpt from J.C. Ryle's article (and then book) "Duties of Parents" first published in 1888*

# CHOOSING EVOLUTION

Three bad reasons for a big departure

*by Ted Van Raalte*





**H**ow *I Changed My Mind About Evolution* is a recent book featuring 25 evangelical theologians and scientists, each taking a chapter to explain why they have adopted the theory of evolution. The editors note at the outset that fully,

“69% of Americans who faithfully attend church weekly believe that God created humans in their present form less than ten thousand years ago.”

The goal of this book is to reduce the number of evangelicals holding this view.

Instead of laying out the evidence of Scripture and the findings of scientists, they opt to tell their stories. And while each contributor has his or her unique story, one can notice that a number of themes recur in the stories. I want to note three major ones.

## 1. JOHN WALTON'S REINTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1 & 2

John Walton's approach to Genesis 1 & 2 was raised by several of the authors, who echoed his argument that the Genesis account only attempts to answer the “who” and “why” of creation, not “how” God did it.

Walton claims that Genesis is simply the Hebrew version of an Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) origins account and that such accounts are only intended to teach the function and purpose of each part of the created world. The origins of the material stuff of creation, and the way the world was brought into being, were not the concern in such accounts.

And since, according to Walton, Genesis is like these other ANEs, it wasn't trying to explain how the world was made either, but was only trying to point to who did it. Genesis thus sets out to refute the views of surrounding nations by attributing the existing world to the Hebrew God instead of the pagan gods, and presenting the earth as God's dwelling, his temple.

These claims of Walton have been soundly refuted by Noel Weeks in an

article in the Westminster Theological Journal (78:1 [2016], 1–28). Walton incorrectly interprets the ANE texts, brings together ANE texts from extremely diverse times and contexts, and, I might add, presents an exegesis of Genesis 1 & 2 that overlooks all the points that don't fit with his interpretation. He also makes words like “create” and “make” mean things they simply don't mean.

I've listened to Walton deliver his insights in several long speeches and I've read one of his books. Unfortunately, John Walton has had a dramatic effect in terms of opening the way for Christians to hold to an evolutionary account of the origins of the universe, and even of the origins of life. As, J.B. Stump, one of the book's contributors wrote, Walton's scholarship “has been a gateway for me (and many others) to consider a more sophisticated treatment of Scripture.”

More sophisticated? Walton's interpretation may appear to be more sophisticated than that of the average Bible reader. But it's patently incorrect.

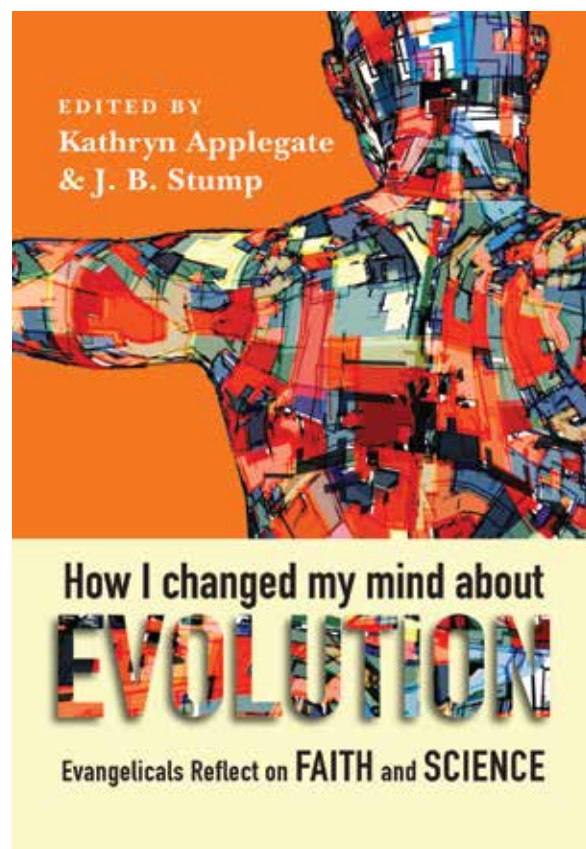
## 2. THE “TWO BOOKS” ARGUMENT

Quite a few of the contributors referred to Scripture and Creation as “two books”:

1. the book of special revelation (the Bible)
2. the book of general revelation (God's Creation)

Theologians are said to draw from the first; scientists from the second; and both of these “professionals” are supplying us with interpretations of divine revelation.

This metaphor – of equating certain scientists' conclusions as being God's



general revelation, and then calling this “revelation” complementary to the message of Scripture – has been around for some time. It may originate in a misuse of article 2 of the Belgic Confession, where the “the creation, preservation, and government of the universe” is said to be like a “beautiful book.”

One contributor even speaks of “reading the big book of creation alongside the little book of Scripture,” telling scientists that they are “thinking God's thoughts after him.” Another says that the “book of [God's] works is one that He desires us to take, read, and celebrate.”

But the Scriptures never speak of general revelation in this way. Rather, the general revelation that is available to all people in the world is enough to make them know that there is a God, and that he should be served and praised (Ps 19:1-6; Acts 17:24). This revelation leaves them without excuse when they suppress the knowledge of

God and substitute idols in his place (Rom 1:18–20).

Meanwhile, the discoveries of scientists are not revelations from God, but human interpretations of data that are fitted within particular theories. The Lord never promised a correct interpretation of nature, but he did promise to lead his people in the rich pastures of his Word by the working of his Holy Spirit. Further, since all people, because of sin, suppress the knowledge of God from creation, Scripture must correct those misconceptions; thus, the clear message of Scripture must have precedence.

### 3. STRAW MAN ARGUMENTS

Finally, the third major theme I picked out was not a theme the authors themselves highlighted, but rather, something I noticed. It felt to me that the arguments they mentioned against evolution were some of the weakest; they were blowing over straw men.

For instance:

- dinosaurs never existed
- Satan buried the bones that testify otherwise
- “Job invented electricity”

But these are not the actual arguments used by “young” earth creationists!

N.T. Wright’s contribution – an excerpt from one of his books – tries to trivialize the entire young earth position by treating it as if it were merely a tempest in a North American teapot. He speaks as if only unsophisticated revolutionaries would ever treat the biblical text in such a fundamentalist way. Similarly, another contributor states,

“Despite twenty-five centuries of debate, it is fair to say that no human knows what the meaning of Genesis 1 and 2 was precisely intended to be.”

I would have expected the editors to excise such nonsense.

Readers must also endure the expected jab at Bishop James Ussher,

*I would have expected the editors to excise such nonsense.*

who concluded that God created the world in 4004 B.C.. In fact, Ussher was one of the most learned men of his time, and sought to determine creation’s date because this was an exercise that many other scholars around him had sought to do. Indeed, many Jews still give today’s date as determined from the moment of creation – today, as I write, it is 17th of Tishre, year 5779 since creation began.

Finally, all sides in this debate ought to agree that pat responses such as “with God one day is like a thousand years,” will never suffice, and, in fact, represent a misuse of Ps 90:4 and 2 Pet 3:8.

### CONCLUSION

*How I Changed My Mind About Evolution* was never intended to

marshal all the arguments in favor of evolution. Rather, it tells the stories of various evangelical theologians, pastors, and scientists. As such, its style is completely in line with the purpose of its publisher BioLogos, which aims to “translate scholarship on origins for the evangelical church.” In other words, the book seeks to make evolution seem acceptable by holding up this collection of twenty-five models for evangelical believers to follow. They hope to reduce that statistic of 69% that was mentioned at the outset.

However, the book only leaves me unimpressed, inasmuch as some of the strongest arguments, the three that recur the most often in the book, the ones that seem to have opened the way for these 25 evangelicals to change their minds about evolution, turn out to be very bad arguments. RP

*A version of this article first appeared at CreationWithoutCompromise.com, Dr. Ted Van Raalte is Professor of Ecclesiology at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.*



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# THE LIMITS OF THE TWO-BOOKS METAPHOR

by Jon Dykstra

There is an idea, common among Christians, that God has revealed Himself to us via “two books”: Scripture and the book of Nature. *The Belgic Confession*, Article 2 puts it this way:

“We know [God] by two means:

1. “First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes **as a most beautiful book**, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature, as the apostle Paul says in Rom 1:20. All these things are sufficient to convict men and leave them without excuse.”
2. “Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word as far as is necessary for us in this life, to His glory and our salvation.”

But what happens when these two “books” seem to conflict? This happens in the Creation/Evolution debate, where the plain reading of Genesis 1 and 2 conflicts with the evolutionary account of our origins. As Dr. Jason Lisle has noted, that has some Christians thinking that since:

“...the book of Nature clearly reveals

that all life has evolved from a common ancestor....we must take Genesis as a metaphor.... we must interpret the days of Genesis as long ages, not ordinary days.”

## Analogies have their limits

But that’s getting things backwards. While the *Belgic Confession* does speak of Creation as being like a book, metaphors and analogies have their limits. For example, In Matt. 23:37 God is compared to a hen who “gathers her chicks under her wings” – this analogy applies to the loving, protective nature of a hen, and should not be understood to reveal that God is feminine. That’s not what it is about.

Clearly Nature is *not* a book – the universe is not made up of pages and text, and it’s not enclosed in a cover or held together by a spine. The *Belgic Confession* is making a specific, very limited, point of comparison when it likens God’s creation to a book. How exactly is it like a book? In how it proclaims “God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature.” It does so with book-like clarity, “so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

But in the Creation/Evolution debate some Christians extends this book analogy in a completely different, and entirely inaccurate, direction. It has been taken to mean that Creation can *teach us about our origins with book-*

*like clarity*. This misunderstanding presents us with a dilemma: if we have one book saying we were created in just six days, and another saying it took millions of years, and both are equally clear on this matter, then which one should we believe?

We need to understand that this dilemma is entirely of our own making. Creation is *not* like a book when it comes to teaching us about our origins. As Dr. Lisle has noted, it does not speak with that kind of clarity on this topic.

## Only one actual book here

In contrast, the Bible is not merely *like* a book, it *actually is one*! It is there, and only there, that it is detailed how we came to be.

So, yes, the two-book analogy remains helpful when it is used to illustrate the clarity with which God shows “his eternal power and divine nature” to everyone on the planet. But when it comes to the Creation/ Evolution debate, the way the two-book analogy is being used is (as Dr. Lisle notes) *fallacious*. God’s Creation simply does not speak with book-like clarity when it comes to our origins.

We can be thankful, then, that his Word does!

*Jon Dykstra also blogs on Creation at [CreationWithoutCompromise.com](http://CreationWithoutCompromise.com).*





by Johan Tangelder

# A HISTORY OF HEALTHCARE

...and why Christians have done it different

**W**ithin a short time span hospitals and medical care have greatly changed. In fact, today a man of seventy can justly claim that more medical progress has been made in his lifetime than in all of previous history.

This medical progress forces us to cope with issues our forefathers never faced. The most common and most pervasive issue is how new medical science has transformed medicine: it used to be about caring for a person; now it is about curing a disease.

According to this new philosophy, when someone is faced with a medical problem, everything that can be done ought to be done, no matter what – they are treated as an object to be fixed, rather than a person to be helped.

That's why it is important to understand the Christian origin of hospitals, and the Christian view on healthcare. We have an important message to share with the world. We can show them what true compassion is about.

## HEALTHCARE MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE

The medical profession is an old one and physicians were unquestionably a visible part of society in Bible times.

Scripture refers to the medical practice both favorably and disdainfully. Job gives a passing reference to doctors when he refers to his comforters as “worthless physicians” (Job 13:4). Charlatans, magicians, and witchdoctors were to be driven from society and avoided at all costs (Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:10). However, doctors like Luke (the author of Luke and Acts) were respected men (Col. 4:14).

In the New Testament Jesus is the Great Physician. He was concerned not only with humanity's spiritual condition but also with its physical state. He did not teach that we should accept suffering stoically; He saw it as an enemy which must be fought.

He was also involved in the lives of people who were in a situation of distress. All four Gospels reveal that along with his teaching, He healed many. He showed compassion to the multitudes (Mark 8:2)

healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, and making the lame walk, and the deaf to hear. When Jesus healed a woman on the Sabbath, his reply to the criticism was: “Should this woman... not be set free in the Sabbath day from what bound her?” (Luke 13:16).

Jesus expected his disciples, along with their teaching, to also heal: “He sent them [the twelve disciples] out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:2). He told his disciples when they looked after the sick, they were caring for Him (Matt. 25:36).

## HEALTHCARE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

This exhortation of our Lord did not go unheeded. And as the early Christians were dispersed throughout Asia Minor, largely as a result of being persecuted, we find them engaged in healing in addition to their preaching and teaching. History shows that these early Christians did not only oppose abortion, infanticide, and the abandonment of infants, but they also nurtured and cared for the sick, regardless of who they were. Christian or

pagan, it made no difference to them.

Bishop Dionysius (approximately 200-265 AD) tells us that Christians, when it came to caring for the sick and dying, ignored danger to themselves:

“Very many of our brethren, while in their exceeding love and brotherly kindness, did not spare themselves, but... visited the sick without thought of their own peril... drawing upon themselves their neighbors’ diseases, and willingly taking over to their own persons the burden of the sufferings around them.”

## HEALTHCARE IN PAGAN GREECE AND ROME

The world the Christians entered during the Greco-Roman era had a colossal void with respect to caring for the sick and dying. The Greeks built large temples in honor of their numerous gods and goddesses, fashioned statues of all sorts, and wrote a wide variety of illuminating literature but never built any hospitals.

The Romans were subject to most of the same illnesses and ailments which afflict us today but diseases which are minor problems today were often life-threatening then. Because cure rates were low, they distrusted doctors or even scorned them. And their skepticism is easily understood. Anyone could call himself a doctor – there were no licensing boards and no formal requirements for entrance to the profession. The Roman scholar Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) said:

“Medicine is the only profession, by Jove, where any man of the street gains our immediate trust if he professes to be a doctor; and yet surely no lie would be more dangerous. But we don’t worry about that; each one is lulled by the sweet hope of being healed.”

The key difference between the early Christians’ attitude toward the sick and the Greco-Roman attitude is their conflicting worldviews. The American church historian Philip Schaff summed it up well when he said, “The old Roman world was a world without charity.”

Dionysius vividly described the behavior of non-Christians toward their fellow sick human beings in an Alexandrian plague in about AD 250. The pagans he said,

“thrust aside anyone who began to be sick, and kept aloof even from their dearest friends, and cast the sufferers out upon the public roads half dead, and left them unburied, and treated them with utter contempt when they died.”

No wonder the pagan world took note when the early Christians appeared on the scene and started caring for the sick and dying.

## THE HISTORY OF HOSPITALS

Hospitals in the Western world owe their existence to Christian teachings and Christian culture. Charity hospitals for the poor did not exist until Christians founded them – these Christian hospitals were the world’s first voluntary charitable institutions. Out of compassion for the sick and suffering, Christians felt that something ought to be done.

It is very important that we should keep this point before us. Secularism, which has such a negative and condescending attitude toward Christianity, should be reminded of this history.

The first ecumenical council of Nicea in 325 AD directed bishops to establish hospices/hospitals. Although their most important function was to nurse and heal the sick, they also provided shelter for the poor and lodging for Christian pilgrims. They were prompted by the early apostolic admonition by Christ’s command that Christians be hospitable to strangers and travelers (1 Pet. 4:9).

The first hospital was built by St. Basil in Caesarea on Cappadocia about 369 AD. It was one of a “large number of buildings with houses for physicians and nurses, workshops, and industrial schools.” The rehabilitation units gave those with no occupational skills opportunity to learn a trade while recuperating. Deaconesses worked as nurses, visited the sick and the poor, and



The idea of the Red Cross was a Christian one. Founder Henry Dunant was raised with Reformed convictions, though he seems to have rejected Calvinism in later life.

contacted pastors for spiritual care when deemed necessary. Christians searched for the sick in the city, and the latter were brought to the hospital.

In about 390, Fabiola, a wealthy widow and associate of St. Jerome (347-419 AD), built the first hospital in Western Europe, in the city of Rome.

By the sixth century, hospitals had become independent of bishops and were linked with monasteries. For many monasteries the hospital was as much an essential part of the complex as a dining room, sleeping quarters, and the church. Monasteries without a hospital usually had an infirmary and herb garden which also enabled them to tend to their sick brethren and members of the general public. The love for Christ was their motivation. “Care of the sick,” states the *Rule of St. Benedict*, who founded the great Benedictine Order in 527, “is to be placed above... every other duty, as if indeed Christ was being directly served by waiting on them.

In our time when so much is said about the “glorious past of Islam,” it is interesting to note the impact of Christianity upon Islam’s health care. In *Under the Influence: How Christianity*



*Transformed Civilization* Alvin J. Schmidt observes that nearly four hundred years after Christians began erecting hospitals, the practice drew the attention of the Arabs in the 8th century. Impressed with humanitarian work of Christian hospitals, the Arab Muslims began constructing hospitals in Arab countries. This demonstrates once more that Christianity was a major catalyst in changing the world, even beyond the boundaries of the West.

In the course of time Christian hospitals were founded in many countries across the world. I will mention only a few.

- St. Bartholomew's, the oldest British hospital, was started in 1123 by Rahere, Court Jester to Henry I, when he founded a religious order.
- St. Thomas's Hospital, the second oldest, was opened in 1213 by Richard, Prior of Bermondsey, against the wall of his monastery. Most of the work was performed by monks and nuns.
- In 1524 Hernando Cortes, the Conquistador, founded Jesus of Nazareth Hospital in Mexico City, which is still operative today.
- As early as 1639 Ursuline nuns established a hospital for French colonists in Quebec.
- In 1801 there were only two hospitals in the United States. The one in Philadelphia was founded by the Quakers in the first half of the 1700s.

## NURSING

When Christians introduced hospitals, it was, of course, necessary that the sick be nursed. But little is known about those who first took on the nursing role. Most of the evidence, though sparse, indicates that widows and deaconesses commonly served as nurses in early Christian hospitals. They can be compared to social workers and home care nurses of today. Paula (347-404), a female associate of St. Jerome, was essentially a nurse. But in 533 the Synod of Orleans abolished the office of the deaconess and her functions were taken over by the monastic orders.

In the 12th century the Knights Hospitalers of St. John, a military order



Florence Nightingale, the "Lady of the Lamp," making her rounds at night.

of the Crusaders, recruited women to serve as nurses to care for leprosy patients in Jerusalem. The physician and medical historian Fielding Garrison once remarked,

"The chief glory of medieval medicine was undoubtedly in the organization of hospitals and sick nursing, which had its organization in the teaching of Christ."

In 1822 a young German pastor, Theodor Fliedner in Kaiserwerth, tried to revive the function of deaconesses by recruiting women from the middle and upper classes who were willing to work with the spirit of Christian sacrificial love. They were carefully selected and trained. This ministry led to the establishment of deaconesses hospitals, which provided spiritual and physical treatment for the whole person. When Fliedner died in 1864 thirty-two Deaconesses houses and 1,600 Deaconesses were spread throughout Germany, Asia Minor, and the USA.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), known as "the Lady of the Lamp" became a reformer of hospitals and the founder of modern nursing. Her interest in medical matters horrified her mother, who frustrated her attempts to gain nursing experience at Salisbury Hospital in 1844. Nevertheless, although nursing

was considered unsuitable for a woman of respectability, she spent three months at Kaiserwerth in 1853. In the same year she visited the Sisters of Charity in Paris. These visits made a deep impression on her.

She became famous for her work in the 1854 Crimean war. She was invited by the British government to take a team of nurses to aid wounded and soldiers. She selected thirty-eight middle-aged nurses from several religious orders and included eight who had nursed cholera cases in the Plymouth slums. This small number of willing workers were sent to the huge base hospital at Scutari across the Bosphorus from Constantinople. To this hospital came boatloads of sick and wounded. The conditions in this military hospital, which was no more than a collection of dirty barracks lacking all medical equipment, defies description. But with scant resources Nightingale and her assistants did their utmost to change the awful unsanitary conditions for the better. Nightingale developed new treatments, made ward rounds daily, even if it meant being 20 hours on her feet. The stricken soldiers – upwards of 5,000 at one time – soon regarded her as a saint, an angel sent to save their lives.

Upon her return from the Crimean War in 1856 she became a national hero and an authority on hospital care. The money the grateful nation gave to her was



mainly used to found a school for nurses in the St. Thomas Hospital in London. Her *Notes on Hospitals* published in 1859, were widely read, as were her *Notes on Nursing* published the same year. The two books recommended better sanitation, construction, and management of hospitals. Her prime aim in life was to secure the effective training of nurses. By the 1880s and the 1890s nursing had established itself as a suitable and respected career.

## WHY DID CHRISTIANS TREAT THE SICK DIFFERENTLY?

So it was clear Christians treated the sick differently... but why? There are two reasons.

### 1. IMAGE BEARERS OF GOD

The way doctors answer one key question will have a large impact on how they approach medical care. The question is: Who are we? Or, What is Mankind?

Secularists see people as *things*, maybe treasured things but things nevertheless. They don't regard man as having an eternal destiny. They value people in terms of status and productivity, good looks, credentials, income and wealth.

But we are not merely animals, objects, consumers, or spirits. God's attitude about the value of a human being is far different from that seen in the secular world. Each human being is precious in God's sight.

After the fall into sin, man has not ceased to be man. We are still God's representatives in his world. We are made in his image (Gen.1:26; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9). The high view God has of human beings is clearly demonstrated through

his Son's Incarnation. His Son became one of us, but without sin. Furthermore, in contrast to the view of the secular and pagan world, our Lord's teaching provides a clear picture of our value in God's sight (Matt. 6:26; 12:12). In fact, the cross of Christ is the ultimate proof of the value of mankind (Mark 10:45).

The Bible also teaches the importance of the unity of body and soul. We may never separate the soul from the body. We may not say, "winning souls for Christ is more important than the ministry of healing." We love the whole man, not just his soul. Man is a unity of soul and body, indivisible, and this is also true for the medical patient. The body is not a neutral thing. Paul set it firmly in place as a "temple of the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. 6:19). The body belongs to the Lord. To treat it as an object for medical experiments is sacrilegious. It will also have a dehumanizing effect on the patient.

The Christian worldview leads us to see the sick and distressed from a totally different perspective. Therefore, it is not strange that the commands of love taught in the Scriptures make Christians concerned about the whole man in all of his dimensions.

### 2. LOVE

The atheist British philosopher Bertrand Russell, famous for his book *Why I Am Not a Christian*, later wrote "What the world needs is Christian love or compassion." I am sure Christians agree with his observation.

But to show Christian love is easier said than practiced. How can we love those who persecute or hate us? The love standard revealed in Scripture goes against our human nature.

What is love? True love is from God: "Love is of God, and he who loves is born of God" (1 John 4:7). Consequently, we are the instruments of God's love (2 Cor. 5:14). Our helping someone in need is the same as helping the Lord Himself (Matt. 25:40).


How did the early Christians view love? The Church father St. Augustine had much to say about love, but it had nothing of that oozing, sentimental, sensual feeling promoted by our modern

culture. He observed that love is always preferential; it gives of itself voluntarily, not because the giving is legally due another. What is not loved for its own sake and its own right is not actually loved at all. Love, or compassion, is a relationship between persons. But love is not limited to one's friends. Love is desiring and doing the good of the other (1 Cor. 13:4-7). It is self-sacrificing for the other. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). Our neighbors are people in need, whoever they are and wherever they may be. For example, Jonah discovered that even the wicked Assyrians were his neighbors (4:2).

So Christians treat the sick differently because we recognize them as being made in God's image, and because we have been instructed to seek after the good of our neighbor.

## CONCLUSION

The Christian origins of hospitals and the nursing profession seem almost forgotten. But the precedent the early Christian hospitals set not only alleviated human suffering but also extended the lives of multitudes of people, whether rich or poor. These institutions did not treat patients as objects. They reflected Christ's love for the whole person.

In our technological age, the Biblical concept of love is lacking more and more in the medical sector, and unfortunately also in the caregivers. That's why the Christian perspective on healthcare has an important message for today. Love is concerned about the whole man with all of his needs. The hungry need food. The sick need to be healed (James 5:14). The lost need to be told the Gospel. Today's Christian healthcare giver has a great responsibility. Going against the flow, he/she is called to offer priestly and prophetic healthcare. 

*Rev. Johan Tangelder (1936-2009) wrote for Reformed Perspective for 13 years and many of his articles have been collected at [ReformedReflections.ca](http://ReformedReflections.ca). This article first appeared in the July/August 2007 issue.*

*Christians treat the sick differently because we recognize them as being made in God's image.*

### DESPERATE JOURNEY

DRAMA / DRAMA  
107 MINUTES / 1942  
RATING: 7/10



Ronald Reagan and Errol Flynn are two members of a Allied bombing crew assigned a near-impossible mission over Nazi Germany. When their plane is shot down, they set out to make it home again....and to do as much damage to the Nazis as they can along the way.

Their desperate journey has plenty of explosions, fisticuffs, aerial shootouts, guns blazing, and, at one point, Errol Flynn diving through a window to tackle two Nazi guards at once. There are laughs too, especially when the crew has the chutzpah to steal a ride on Nazi leader Hermann Göring's private train car.

As the crew is chased across Germany it isn't surprising that there are casualties along the way. And while there is no real gore, those losses make this a film that children could find too dramatic and emotional for them to deal with. So this might be best for 12 and up.

I watched this with a group ranging in age from 40 to over 75, and all eight of us enjoyed it. If you have any sort of appreciation for World War II films made *during* World War II, this is one of the especially fun ones.

### SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS

DRAMA / FAMILY  
96 MINUTES / 2016  
RATING: 7/10



Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* is the story of four children - two brothers and their two sisters - making up their own adventures during a summer holiday on the lake, fighting off imaginary pirates and pretend sharks.

That wasn't quite enough for the movie version, so in addition to the children's imagined peril, the producers have thrown in some of the real kind - spies! This takes place in Britain, in the lead up to World War II, and while spies are always an exciting addition, here it's a bit like dropping aliens into the middle of a Winnie-the-Pooh adventure - an interesting twist, certainly, but not at all in keeping with the spirit of the original story. However, if you don't know the book, or can at least forget it for a bit, this is quite the film.

One concern is language: the children do call each other names, like "idiot" and "duffer" and a girl says, "shut up" a number of times. One spy also says "Damn" in his foreign language, which the movie unhelpfully subtitles for us in English.

But otherwise, this is good family fare, with enough excitement for mom and dad to enjoy, and a calm enough story that it won't scare anyone over 12 (and maybe even 10).

### TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH

DRAMA / WAR  
132 MINUTES / 1949  
RATING: 8/10



Americans entered WWII with a small force spread thin, so they needed a "maximal effort" from the men they did have to cover the gap until more men and more materials could be had. But what exactly is a "maximal effort" and how far and how hard can a man be pushed before he crumbles under the strain?

When the commander of the 918 Bomber Squadron is pushed past the breaking point. General Frank Savage takes over. His job is to transform the struggling squadron back into an effective fighting force. But how long can he endure the strain of command, losing men almost every mission, before he too crumbles under the strain?

*Twelve O'clock High* is too cerebral for younger viewers to enjoy. But for adult viewers, it gives a haunting portrayal of the mental and emotional cost paid by these young bombardiers.

This was nominated for four Oscars back when that meant something, including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor, and it won two.



## SGT. STUBBY: AN UNLIKELY HERO

ANIMATED / FAMILY

84 MINUTES / 2018

RATING: 8/10

I read a review by a parent who arrived at the movie theater with his four-year-old and picked this film based solely on the smiling ever-so-cute doggie he saw on the movie poster. One problem: while this is about a charming, incredibly clever dog named Stubby, it's also about life in the trenches of World War I. And that's not 4-year-old material. Why oh why don't more people read movie reviews!

But, as we mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the "Great War" this is a movie that many a ten-year-old and up will enjoy and should watch.

It's based on the true story of Sgt. Stubby, the most decorated dog in American history. The story begins with the homeless dog attaching himself to a unit readying itself to be shipped overseas. First he charms his way into the heart of one Private Robert Conroy, the main two-legged character in the film. Then, one by one, from the lowest private to the general in charge, he wins over everyone.

When the unit heads overseas, Stubby manages to sneak aboard the ship, and he too is heading to the fight.

From this point onward there's one perilous scene after another, but to make it appropriate for (nearly) the whole family, the filmmakers decided to make this an entirely bloodless film. Even as bullets are whizzing, no one gets shot. German bombardments send both soldiers and dirt flying, but the soldiers get dug out and emerge both unbruised and unbloodied.

While parents will appreciate the nonexistent blood and gore, by muting the violence and death the film ran the risk of also muting the sacrifice that these soldiers made. But as the film draws to a close there is one death - to a secondary character - that drives home, even to the younger audiences, what these men risked and what they lost. Without giving it all away, I'll note that the death happens off screen and we don't even see the body. It is the soldier's absence that is noted - while his friends are looking for him after the last big battle, Stubby brings them his helmet. That'll get some kids crying, and even moisten the eye of many an adult. But it is necessary. And it is done with great care and restraint.

As you'd expect with an energetic pooch as its star, there is a lot of fun in the film. Kids are sure to enjoy Stubby training along with his fellow soldiers, getting chased by the cook, and winning over the Colonel after Conroy teaches his little buddy how to salute. In another treat, Gérard Depardieu makes an appearance as a large, wise French soldier, who along with Conroy and Stubby is tasked to spy out German positions. These "three musketeers" become fast friends.

### CAUTIONS

There are only a couple of concerns, including a little bit of language. The worst of it includes one character saying "What the devil?" and another exclaiming, "I'll be darned."

There is also just one bit of "naughty" comedy as the drill sergeant lectures his men on how they should imitate the never-complaining, always-ready-to-roll Stubby, but he makes this speech just as Stubby decides to lick his nether regions. That gets a laugh out of the sergeant and his men as they are presented with proof-positive that Stubby has some traits that aren't worthy of imitation.


The big caution would concern the near constant peril. This is not a film for four-year-olds. But most ten-year-olds will be sure to enjoy it.

### CONCLUSION

This was such a pleasure to discover. Before this I couldn't have imagined a war film that would be appropriate for the very young and yet still be a treat for their parents. This would be a great one to watch with the family for Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, or Anzac Day.

Oh, and if you want to know all the details about the real Stubby, our family really enjoyed listening to the audio version of Ann Bausum's well-researched *Stubby the war dog*.





by Gerda Vandenhaak

# FORGIVE ME

The waiting room was full. I pulled a number - 135. I just knew it would be a long wait. Next to me sat a nondescript woman; everything about her was a brownish gray. I looked around and knew most of us were here to get our pension applications in. Everyone was around the same age, 65.

I took out my papers and gave them a quick glance over. Everything was there. The woman next to me said, "Excuse me, can you look at mine?"

I felt instant resentment boiling up. Why didn't people make sure they had everything in order before they showed up? But I said, "OK, let's look." I saw her name, date of birth and her nationality, German. Thought nothing of it.

I started asking questions, while going through her papers and she noticed my Dutch accent.

"Forgive me!" she suddenly said. I looked up, surprised and asked, "What?"

"Forgive me for what we did during the war."

"The war? You were just a child, just like me. You did nothing wrong."

Then she told me.

She told me about the war and how they had to go to school and salute the hated flag.

It was a Lutheran village and most of the kids did not salute the flag. Their parents told them it was wrong; she did not understand the why of it. She was only 8. Then one morning soldiers came in black uniforms. They told the kids that if they did not salute the flag they would be shot.

The little girl in front of her did not salute. *She was shot!*

She told me how scared she had been and that she saluted the flag. She was crying now. People were looking at us. Her sobs were loud.


Again she lifted her tear-streaked face to me and said: "Forgive me!"

"You were just a child," I said again. We were standing now, facing each other, no longer aware of the others in the room.

"Please, please, for just one time in my life I want to hear some one say 'I forgive you,'" she cried.

I did it - I said: "I forgive you!"

We stood there oblivious to all others. We hugged each other and both cried...cried for the sorrow and the abuse of war, the sorrow we both had gone through, the hunger, the pain and the fear.

"Calling number 135." 

*She told me about  
the war and how  
they had to go to  
school and salute  
the hated flag.*

*This an excerpt from "Geertje: War Seen through the Eyes of a Child as an Adult" available for \$20 + \$3 shipping from the author at [gerandy100@gmail.com](mailto:gerandy100@gmail.com).*



**ATTN:**

**PARENTS,**

**PASTORS, MENTORS  
AND GUIDANCE  
COUNSELLORS...**

**ARE YOUR  
TEENS READY  
TO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE?**

# What's next?

**F**ROM FIRST STEPS to first car, this is the question that parents can't help but ask. As weeks shift from soccer practice to campus tours, there seems to be a countdown for young people to find their future — the one where they graduate from the right program at the right school and land the right job.

Higher education will provide job preparation, but it takes more than a career plan for young adults to answer the question, "What's next?" It also takes discipleship.

The world needs Christian difference-makers who bring the hope and love of Jesus Christ as they pursue their callings in health, business, science, art, social work and a host of other areas. The world needs the potential you see in your kids.

At Redeemer, your son or daughter will grow through discipleship inside and outside of the classroom, learning to see their giftedness, their careers and every part of their lives as avenues to serve God.

Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Redeemer integrates faith and learning to consider the whole person — heart and mind, body and soul. In classes that sharpen their skills and conversations that deepen their faith, students make discoveries and connections that last a lifetime.

It's across that lifetime that these students will face the question, "What's next?" What's next for this church? What's next for my field? What's next for my culture? Redeemer doesn't prepare students with one answer, but with the skills for a life of leadership in community, in wisdom and in Christ.

**Explore Redeemer's kingdom-driven** response to "What's next?" in the three articles that follow.







# Questions Answered and Unanswered

**LOVE REDEEMER.** God used this time and this place to form me in ways that I cannot express, perhaps in ways I do not even know. But here are two ways that I do know God has used this school in my life.

When I first stepped into Redeemer, I believed in God. I did. But I also didn't. I'm a thinker — I always have been. And as I entered into my first year, I was no longer able to reconcile my intellect with my faith.

I had so many questions and I hadn't been surrounded by people who thought deeply about Christianity. I thought that I couldn't possibly know the truth if I wasn't "objective" — if I didn't know everything about science, philosophy and the world's religions. My heart and my mind had turned against one another.

I came to Redeemer, mostly looking for answers. I needed to know that this faith is more than just faith; that there's

knowledge too. I found answers — some, at least — through the classroom and conversations with professors, friends and mentors. But as often as I found answers, I also discovered that there is a lot that we don't know. I don't need to know everything in order to hold this faith firmly. And what I do need to know, God will provide.

So, here I am, with a major in theology and a minor in philosophy. I've loved learning and I've found that the more I've studied, the richer my worship has become. I'm thankful for the gift of a Christian education, answers to questions and peace for unanswered questions.

Redeemer is not only the place where I have grown intellectually, it is also the place where the people I love are. I didn't know I could be so blessed with the friendships I've found here. My friends have taught me to honour Christ and to pray over our friendships. They taught me that there is a place for me in the body of Christ and that we're all so human. They have carried me, and they have let me carry them. Because of them, I've learned that the Father delights in giving good gifts to his children.

And suddenly, four years doesn't seem like enough time. But it is. I know this: those at Redeemer are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. There will be challenges, but there will also be great joy in journeying with this family, this body of Christ called Redeemer.

**RUTH CHAN '18** graduated from Redeemer with a Bachelor of Arts in theology and music and a minor in philosophy. Ruth shared these thoughts on her Redeemer experience during the last chapel of the 2017-18 academic year.



# Prepared for Good Work

DRAWING FROM EPHESIANS 2, DR. JAMES VANDERWOERD OFFERS A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE QUESTION, “WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU GRADUATE?”



**H**OW MANY TIMES have you heard students asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Or how about, “What are you going to do when you graduate?”

Ephesians 2 tells a story that helps Christians answer both of these questions. It talks about what we were: “As for you, you were dead in your sins.” It describes what we are: “But God has made us alive” and “we are God’s handiwork.” Finally, it offers a picture of what we will do: we are “created to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.”


God is preparing good work for each Christian to do, even when we don’t know what it is. “But,” we may hear students protest, and may have said ourselves, “couldn’t God just make it easier by telling me right now what I’m meant to be doing for the rest of my life?”

Let me share a bit of my own experience. In my twenties, I had a vague notion of “wanting to work with people.” So, I read through a directory of social service agencies, borrowed a friend’s beater and started dropping off resumés all over Edmonton. I knocked on the door of what turned out to be

a halfway house for hardened criminals reintegrating into society. The worker took one look at me — fresh-faced and naive — and said, “You don’t want to work here, kid. But I know someone.... Hang on, let me call him.”

I went to the address the worker provided, interviewed on the spot, filled out an application and interviewed again. Within two weeks, I started a full-time job in residential youth care that lasted four years and launched my career in social services.

I went on to complete my master of social work and worked on a variety of short-term contracts. After five years, my wife and I had no idea what the future held. A week after the birth of our third child, I saw a job ad for an academic position in the States and I had this weird sense that there was no one else more qualified for the job than me. Up to that point, my career had felt like aimless wandering from one opportunity to the other. But when I prepared my application package, the puzzle pieces of my career suddenly aligned to show a picture that was definitely not my design, but that revealed God’s plan and a direction that led straight to that job.



*"We may not see exactly what God is up to, but we can be certain that he's preparing that next thing right now."*

I've been teaching social work in Christian universities for 20 years now.

And if there's one thing you can learn at a Christian university like Redeemer, it's that there are more than enough areas of need and no shortage of good work to be done.

So, students may wonder what they will be doing this fall, after they graduate or even in five, 10 or 20 years. We may not see exactly what God is up to, but we can be certain that he's preparing that next thing right now. Why?

Because once we were dead, but God made us alive. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God is preparing in advance for us to do.

**DR. JAMES R. VANDERWOERD** is professor and chair of applied social sciences at Redeemer University College.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The Centre for Experiential Learning and Careers (CELC) partners with faculty and employers to build experiences that put the classroom in the workplace, and bring the workplace back to the classroom.



### / CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION:

Students in the Business, Kinesiology and Urban and Intercultural Ministry programs have an opportunity to work two 8-month terms in different businesses and organizations.



### / INTERNSHIPS:

Through practical, hands-on experiences at local and global organizations, students prepare for a future career and earn academic credit.



### / OFF-CAMPUS STUDIES:

Redeemer students can study at universities and organizations across the globe, while fulfilling their academic requirements. The Oxford Programme and the Laurentian Leadership Centre are some of the most popular programs, but they are far from the only options!

Learn more at [redeemer.ca/celc](https://redeemer.ca/celc).



### KATIE MACKENZIE '18

/ Kinesiology alumna, interned at McMaster Health Sciences' diabetes clinic

"The professionalism, making connections with people in the field, the knowledge from that real world experience and being pushed to use your education — all connects classroom application to real life. I feel ready to graduate."



# Career versus Calling

AS CHRISTIANS, DR. DAVID ZIETSMA WRITES, WE MUST ASK STUDENTS NOT WHAT THEY WANT TO BE, BUT WHOSE CHILD THEY ARE AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR THEIR LIVES.

**K**IDS FIRST ANSWER the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” with the more well-known archetypes, like hockey player or superhero, before moving on to police officer, firefighter, construction worker or doctor. As kids get older, we might hear more specific things — engineer, business owner, dental hygienist, accountant.

But while the answers might get more sophisticated, the essence of the question still presumes an identity each student must plan and put on. It presumes careers are the point for the future, the main trajectory of our identity and the main source of fulfillment and joy.

As Christians, we can ask, “How can you serve God’s kingdom through your life?” “What is your creator calling you to do with your gifts?” This, I’d argue, is the place for youth and young adults to start.



For some, the answer is service in a weekly ministry or participation in a mission trip, through which we fulfill the call to serve God’s kingdom. These are certainly critical pieces, but we must go deeper, realizing service to Christ and his kingdom is an all-encompassing reality that should drive questions about the future, about hopes and about aspirations. The ages between 15 and 24 are a transformative stage where many truly begin to sort out what God is calling them to do. Joseph, David, Samuel, Daniel and the disciples were all called into God’s service during this period of their lives.

# “What is your creator calling you to do with your gifts?”

One of the best examples we have of a life lived not for yourself but centred in Christ is that of the apostle Paul. Growing up in Tarsus as a Roman citizen, Paul was well educated and lived in relative freedom. Like many high school students today, Paul was positioned by these advantages for a great career that promised much success. He had every reason for confidence in his own abilities and could expect success as he pursued his own path.

But in a flash of bright light, Christ grabbed hold of Paul, and Paul came to realize that in Christ we have a joy much deeper, richer and more powerful than anything else he had been offered. And so everything Paul had, everything he was, he turned over to God. Compared to the richness of knowing Christ, Paul wrote in Philippians 3:8, he considered everything else as loss — his privileged citizenship, his learning and education, his knowledge, his future goals.

Paul didn't forget or rid himself of these things. Rather, he no longer used his knowledge, education and citizenship for his own success, but instead for the glory of God and in service of the gospel message of Jesus' saving grace.

In my role at Redeemer University College, I get to travel and talk to a lot of alumni. At Redeemer, the question they asked was not what they wanted to be, but whose child they were and what that meant for their lives. They were able to sort out their giftedness and find a path to serving God's kingdom in careers and callings from law to journalism, art to accounting, medicine to education. They are not in those jobs for their own sake or their careers' — they are in them to serve God and be a witness to the transformative power of his kingdom.

**DR. DAVID ZIETSMAN** is associate professor of history and vice president, external relations and enrolment at Redeemer University College.

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Students discover more about our rapidly changing world and begin to understand their place in God's story.



### / TRANSFORM YOUR MIND:

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### / DEEPEN YOUR FAITH:

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Learn more at [redeemer.ca/core](https://redeemer.ca/core).



### LIANE MIEDEMA '16

/ Environmental Studies,  
Art and French alumna

“I have always loved learning and initially had trouble choosing a single subject of study. My major in Environmental Studies and minors in Art and French are quite unique, but that is one of the wonderful things about an interdisciplinary education. I have been uniquely equipped with a variety of skills and knowledge. I've studied these subjects in depth and also see the interconnectedness between them.”

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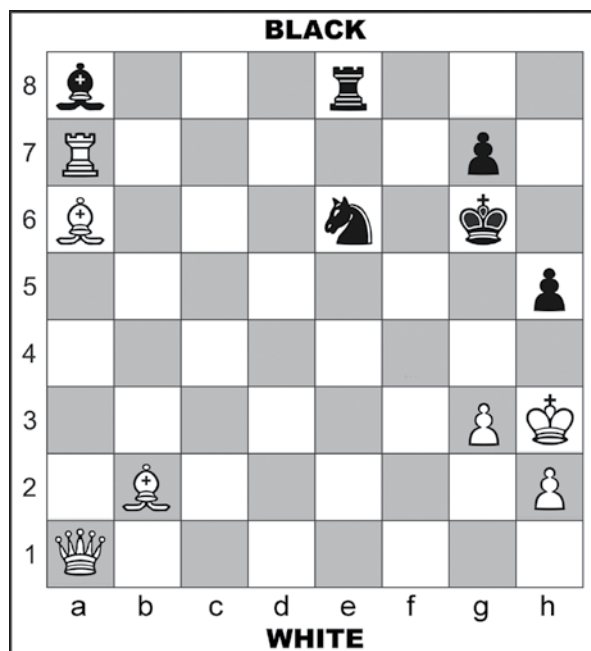




# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



## Chess Puzzle #248



**WHITE to Mate in 4**

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

**BLACK to Mate in 3**

## Riddle for Punsters #248

### "Puns Tailor-Made to the Topic?"

Why did the tailor often imitate people around him? He would see them do something and then he would feel compelled to follow s \_\_\_\_\_.  
Why was the tailor never fully satisfied with the items that he made? He always found his work to be s \_\_\_\_\_ - s \_\_\_\_\_.  
Why was the tailor good at debating? He clearly knew how to \_\_\_\_\_ down his arguments and people could easily follow the th \_\_\_\_\_ of his reasoning.

## Problem to Ponder #248

### "Weighty Calculations"

A snowball gathered more snow as it rolled down a hill. It started with a diameter of 10.0 cm and gained 15% more diameter for each 0.5 m it travelled down the hill. If it rolled for 0.25 minute at an average speed of 4.0 m/s,

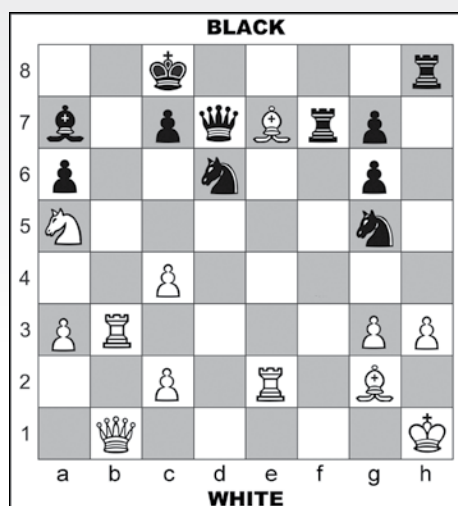
- What was the total % increase in diameter and final diameter of the snowball?
- If the snowball was approximately spherical and the volume of a sphere is  $V = (4/3)(\pi)r^3 = (4/3)(3.1416)r^3$  where  $r$  is the radius = half the diameter, what was its final volume?
- If the snowball's packed snow had an average density of 120 kg / m<sup>3</sup> what was the snowball's mass (to the nearest kg)?
- If the density of water is 1000 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, what would be the volume of water produced if the big snowball melted and made a puddle?

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,

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

## Last Month's Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #247



**WHITE TO MATE IN 3**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. R-N8 ch BxR
2. B-N7 ch NxR
3. QxN mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Rb3-b8 + Ba7xb8
2. Bg2-b7 + Nd6xb7
3. Qb1xb7 ++

### Answer to Riddle for Punsters #247 – "What if her Dad is an Umpire?"

Why was the baseball player hesitant to ask out on a date his best friend's sister? He was afraid that he would say something off base and consequently strike out with her. He needed some coaching from his friend on how to eventually score some points with her.

### Answer to Problem to Ponder #247 – "Jumbled Baseball Terms"

Anagrams with one-word answers:

|           |          |           |          |
|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| pie rum   | umpire   | tall fobs | softball |
| car tech  | catcher  | red life  | fielder  |
| set risk  | strikes  | rich pet  | pitcher  |
| info rum  | uniform  | nun err   | runner   |
| fouled it | outfield | art bet   | batter   |

Anagrams with two-word answers:

|                 |                |              |              |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| host sport      | short stop     | safe fob     | off base     |
| absolve lab gel | baseball glove | thinning inn | ninth inning |
| loaf bull       | foul ball      | has bite     | base hit     |
| men hour        | home run       | heap motel   | home plate   |

**BLACK TO MATE IN 4**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- RxP ch
2. BxR QxB ch
3. R-R2 R-B8 ch
4. QxR QxQ mate

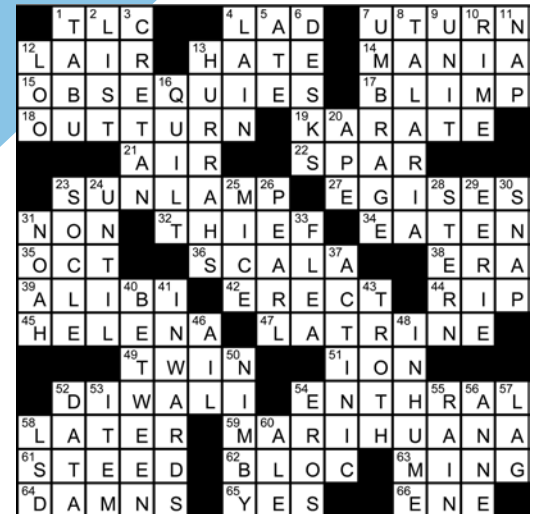
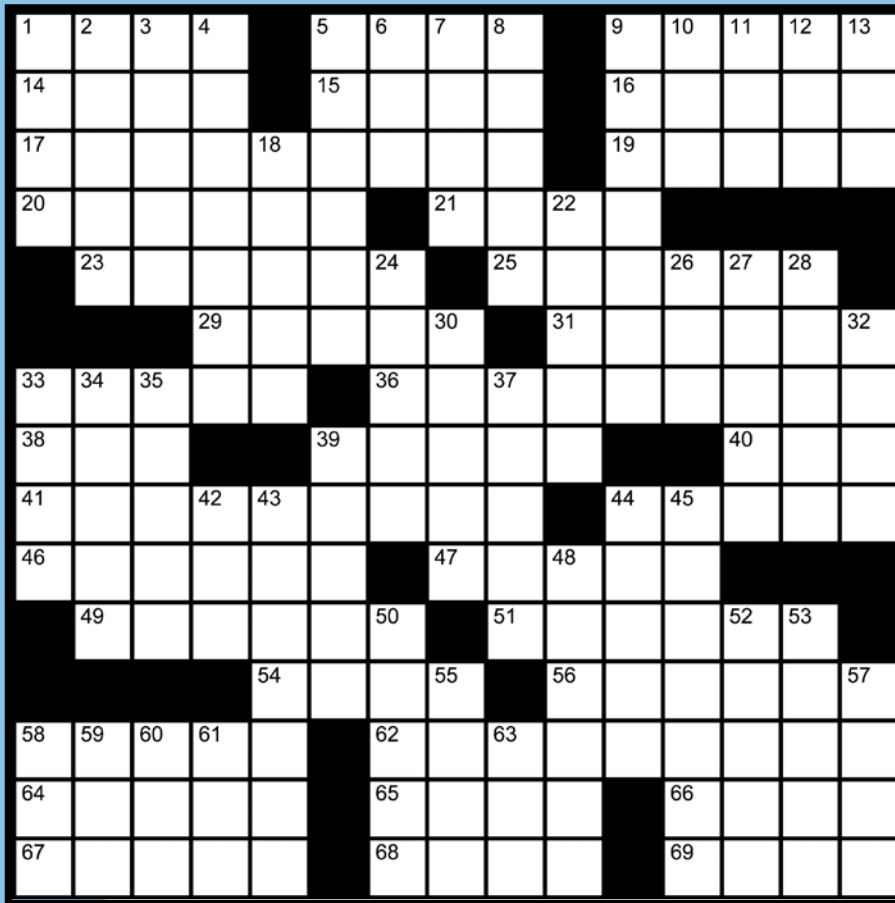
#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Rh8xh3 +
2. Bg2xh3 Qd7xh3 +
3. Re2-h2 Rf7-f1 +
4. Qb1xf1 Qh3xf1 ++

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 4-1

68. What Amaziah called Amos (Amos 7)
69. "What's our next prize?" "\_\_\_ car!"

## DOWN

1. Computer acronym for poor data entry
2. St. \_\_\_\_\_ (U.S. city); King \_\_\_\_\_ XIV
3. With lance in hand (archaic)
4. Not natural; artificial
5. Skulls; braincases
6. Musical form of Fresh I. E.
7. Eager; enthusiastic
8. Archaic past tense of *beget*
9. Cherry-laden Chekov play setting
10. Pigeon noise (mostly in coop?)
11. A \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ cleans well. (abbreviation)
12. "the birds of the \_\_\_" (Job 28)
13. Francis Crick's famous helical molecule
18. "Out of the \_\_\_\_\_ came..." (Judges 14)
22. Prophetess in several pagan religions
24. Plural of flowering plant in iris family
26. Beginning of name of a city and a river
27. Elephant goad
28. "say to the \_\_\_\_\_, 'Do not see,'" (Isaiah 30)
30. "The Place of a \_\_\_\_\_"

- (Mark 15, John 19)
32. Short form for dynamometer
33. Short form for a short period of time
34. Latin for *skin*
35. Opposite of *adept*
37. "your \_\_\_\_\_ sister is Samaria" (Ezekiel 16)
39. Soft luster on a surface (some shine?)
42. Association of parents and teachers
43. Tasting more like the cork
44. Lottery game similar to bingo
45. Interface of insect or tv with the air
48. "the \_\_\_\_\_ of the feast" (John 2)
50. *Fox in \_\_\_\_\_* (Dr. Seuss book)
52. Goods sunk in sea, but with buoy attached
53. Group at the top with special privileges
55. "cried out in a \_\_\_\_\_ of anguish" (Daniel 6)
57. "like white wool, like \_\_\_\_\_" (Revelation 1)
58. "the mole \_\_\_\_\_ the mouse," (Leviticus 11)
59. "with reverence and \_\_\_\_\_" (Hebrews 12)
60. Forbid; disallow
61. Sibling of sis
63. What 61 Down often wears (top choice?)

## PUZZLE CLUES

### SERIES 4-2

#### ACROSS

1. Stylish in a vain way
5. Sideways-moving crustacean
9. Group or set of eight; two tetrads
14. Smallest Greek letter (Matthew 5)
15. Partly rant, but in a good way
16. Substance used to lubricate violin bows
17. GP the \_\_\_\_\_ (pal of Hammy Hamster)
19. Dried meat of the coconut
20. (Stereo)typical Texan helpful to Tin Man
21. Like a hyphen but (100 meters?) longer
23. Electricity that doesn't get anywhere

25. Headpieces worn by princesses
29. Honeys' and sweethearts' beloved
31. Saturated in salty water for cooking
33. Much much colder
36. "Fine with me!" (1930s two-worder)
38. Sister, but not a sibling of 61 Down.
39. Homophone of 30 Down
40. You can hear a sea eagle in it.
41. New family member gained by marriage
44. It's used to catch little dogies.
46. Something you do "through the tulips"
47. "\_\_\_\_\_ tree, very pretty...."

- (song lyric)
49. Looks intently and rudely (at)
51. "laughs at the \_\_\_\_\_ of javelins" (Job 41)
54. Supposedly, Alexander cut the Gordian one.
56. "Whoever \_\_\_\_\_ a man and..." (Exodus 21)
58. Title for Jesus in gospels (means *Teacher*)
62. Machine that increased slavery in U.S.?
64. "Jesus, \_\_\_\_\_ of this, said" (Matthew 26)
65. "To me every \_\_\_\_\_ shall bow" (Isaiah 45)
66. International defense organization (abbr.)
67. Singing voice between baritone and alto