

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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Volume 38 Issue No. 6

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS

A SAD TALE  
OF A WEALTHY  
MILLENNIAL'S  
MORAL CONFUSION

P.19

WHAT IS "SOVEREIGN  
GRACE SINGLES"?

P.23

**FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD**

CELEBRATE 1517 P.29-45

NOTA  
BENE

p. 6

FROM THE EDITOR • **BOOK REVIEWS** • CROSSWORD • **MOVIE REVIEWS**



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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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*Cover painting is a 1529 portrait of Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach*





# FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD: CELEBRATE 1517

P.29



HE WHO HAS EARS,  
LET HIM HEAR

- Christine Farenhorst

P.16



A SAD TALE OF A WEALTHY  
MILLENNIAL'S MORAL  
CONFUSION

P.19

by E. Calvin Beisner



WHAT IS "SOVEREIGN  
GRACE SINGLES"? P.23

MARTIN LUTHER ON THE VITAL,  
FOUNDATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL,  
CALLING OF PARENTS P.4

- Chris deBoer

NOTA BENE P.6

REALLY CREATIVE  
COFFEE TABLE BOOKS P.18

MOVIE REVIEWS P.48

# MARTIN LUTHER ON THE VITAL FOUNDATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CALLING OF PARENTS

by Chris deBoer

**M**artin Luther loved God's Church so much he risked his freedom and life for it. He boldly took on princes, bishops, emperors, and popes, all in an effort to bring reformation to the Church he so loved. But did you know there was something he thought even more foundational to society than the Church? Luther recognized that society has three basic structures – the family, the Church, and the State – and of these three, he argued that it is the *family* that is the foundation for the other two.

Why?

Because of the great responsibility parents have to educate their children. It is in this role that the family unit will, for good or ill, greatly impact both the Church and State. In his "Letter to the Councils of German Cities" Luther expresses how educating children:

"is the command of God. Its importance is seen in how He so frequently, through Moses, urges and enjoins parents to instruct their children such that it is said in Psalm 78:5-6, 'how strictly he commanded our fathers that they should give

knowledge to their children and instruct their children's children.'"<sup>1</sup>

In his exposition on the fifth commandment, Luther stresses the need for children's obedience towards their parents. Where that is absent,

"...there can be neither good morals nor good government. For where obedience is lacking in the family, no city or principality or kingdom can be well governed. Family government is the basis of all other government; and where the root is bad, the trunk and fruit can not be good... where the father and mother rule badly, and let the children have their own way, there neither city, town, village, district, principality, kingdom, nor empire, can be well governed."<sup>2</sup>

## LUTHER ON THE BASICS

But Luther doesn't just tell parents that they had better do a good job because a lot is riding on their success. He also provides guidance for instruction.

He prepared *The Small Catechism* in which he provided "the simple way a father should present [the Ten

Commandments, the articles of the Christian faith, prayer, baptism, etc.] to his household."<sup>3</sup> Luther believed everyone in the home needs to be instructed in the fundamentals of the faith, daily.

In his short preface to his *The Larger Catechism* he lays out his expectation that fathers would examine their children (and servants) "at least once a week to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it." Parents have a high calling that aligns with their high position. The Lord commands all of us to love one another, but:

"the parental estate God has especially honored above all estates that are beneath Him, so that He not only commands us to love our parents, but also to *honor* them... for to *honor* is far higher than to *love*, inasmuch as it comprehends not only love, but also modesty, humility, and deference as though to a majesty there hidden... that both in heart and with body we so act so to show that we esteem them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them the very highest."<sup>4</sup>





Gustav Spangenberg's  
*Luther Making Music in  
the Circle of His Family*

## PARENTS MUST BE TEACHERS

This view of the relationship between parents and their children has many implications. First of all, when parents send their children to Christian day-schools (Luther wouldn't imagine sending children to secular schools but would call them "nests of Satan") or even to catechism classes in the church, they are sharing the responsibility for teaching their children with the school and Church. *They are not permitted to abdicate it.* Parents cannot hire out the task of teaching their children, but they can share it with others they know and trust to be godly in their teaching.

Luther's views would also have an impact on family worship and devotions as parents, especially fathers, intentionally teach their children, explaining to them the glorious deeds of the Lord. If we are convicted as Luther was, of parents' important educational role, then perhaps recitation of the Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed,

*Parents cannot hire out the task of teaching their children, but they can share it...*

and the Lord's prayer every day would become a new norm. Opening the Heidelberg Catechism to teach our own children the fundamental doctrines of God's word could become a part of family devotions. Perhaps we could sit beside our children while they do their assignments from school, not only when they need help, but also to demonstrate interest in their work, and in showing a unity of purpose with the school to the children.

The Lord has given children to parents and in so doing, has given parents the major responsibility and privilege of training up their children in the fear of the Lord for the benefit of family, Church, and State. May the Lord grant

His blessing on all parents who seek to fulfill the high calling given to them by God. RP

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> A.T.W. Steinhäuser's translation as found at [godrules.net/library/luther/NEW1luther\\_d9.htm](http://godrules.net/library/luther/NEW1luther_d9.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Franklin Painter's *Luther on education: including a historical introduction, and a translation of the reformer's two most important educational treatises* pages 114-115 (1889). Retrieved online at: [Archive.org/details/lutheroneducatio00painuoft/page/114](http://Archive.org/details/lutheroneducatio00painuoft/page/114)

<sup>3</sup> *Luther's Little Instruction Book*, translated by Robert E. Smith (1994).

<sup>4</sup> Painter, pages 115-116.

*Chris deBoer is a former school principal and present Reformed Perspective Executive Director.*

# NOTA BENE

News  
worth  
noting

## NEW STUDY: UNIVERSE MAY BE OLDER (OR YOUNGER) THAN SCIENTISTS PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT

BY JON DYKSTRA



**T**he *Associated Press* headline read, "Study finds universe might be 2 billion years younger." While that wasn't a complete come-to-creationism capitulation – even running with the new estimate would leave secular science more than 11 billion years off the biblical timescale – it seemed an encouraging development. Hey, they're moving in the right direction!

But it turns out the headline, while technically accurate, should have had the "might" underlined, italicized and bolded since there was quite the margin of error. Yes, Inh Jee and his team from the Max Plank Institute in Germany think the universe might be 11.4 billion years, which is down 2 billion from the conventionally held 13.7. But her margin of error is so large that the upper range of her team's estimate would actually make the universe even *older*.

Shucks.

What's still noteworthy, though, is simply that the age of the universe is still being debated. Did you know that was happening? Secular science is represented in the press and classrooms as having it all figured out. But this is another instance in which they've been left looking for their erasers, readying themselves for another correction to their ever-changing textbooks.

In contrast Christians can be grateful for, and confident in, the unchanging source of truth God has given us in his Word.

SOURCE: Seth Borenstein's "Study finds the universe might be 2 billion years younger" posted to APNews.com on Sept. 12, 2019.

## NEW DEFINITION FORCES CHRISTIANS TO STAND ON THE BIBLE, NOT THE DICTIONARY

BY JON DYKSTRA

**A**in't *is* in the dictionary, and now something else you might not expect is too. In September, the US's oldest dictionary publisher, Merriam-Webster, announced they were adding in a "nonbinary" definition for the word "they." According to the new entry, "they" can be "used to refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary." In other words, if a guy who thinks he isn't a guy wants us to call him "they," he's now got the dictionary backing him.

But lest this depress, there is a bright shiny silver lining to this story. With

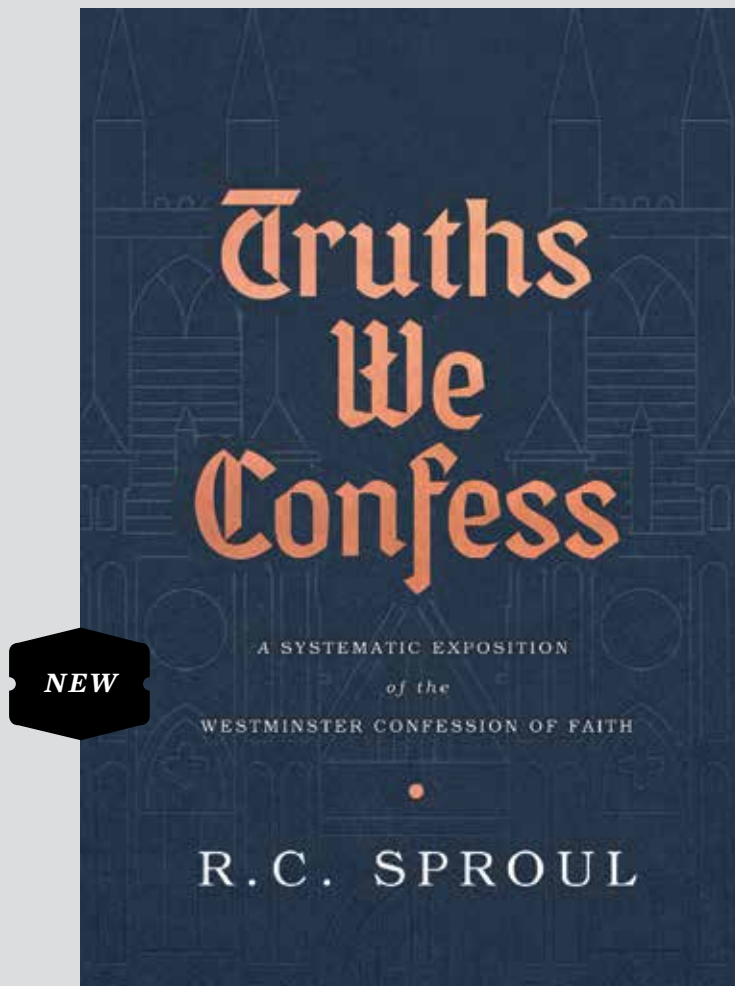
the addition of this definition, God has taken away one of the worst arguments Christians might otherwise be tempted to use: an appeal to the dictionary. But that was never an authority we should have stood on. We don't know we're male and female because the *dictionary* says so, but rather because *God* says so (Gen. 1:27). Our stand isn't based on the authority of the dictionary, but on the authority of God's Word!

And now that's all we've got.

We can thank God, then, for giving us all that we need, and thank Him also for taking away a red herring that was only distracting us.







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## AFTER POLITICIANS DECLINE, "STONES" START DEFENDING THE UNBORN

BY JON DYKSTRA

**T**he end of August and beginning of September were not auspicious weeks for the unborn. South of the border we saw Democratic presidential candidates compete for how callous they could be: Beto O'Rourke endorsed abortion right up to a child's birthday, while Bernie Sanders sold killing the unborn as a way to fight global warming.

Then in Canada, the two party leaders that pro-lifers are watching closest did their best to disappoint. The Conservative Party's Andrew Scheer repeatedly promised his party wouldn't bring forward legislation on divisive social issues, while the People's Party of Canada leader Maxime Bernier stated that "up to 24, 25, 26 weeks...the fetus is not a child."

If this news has you despairing, then dig a bit deeper into your newspaper while considering Luke 19:40. In this verse Jesus, in response to the

Pharisees trying to shut his disciples up, says, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Over the space of two weeks we've had something very much like that happen. Even as princes have disappointed (Ps. 146:3) we've had the unlikeliest of defenders crying out for the unborn.

The first "stone" was Planned Parenthood (PP) itself. The abortion giant's Sept. 1 Instagram post made the profound point that: "The size of your body doesn't define your worth!" PP wasn't able to connect the dots, but the Twitterverse did, highlighting that this is exactly what pro-lifers say about the unborn. As that renowned philosopher Dr. Seuss once put it, "A person's a person, no matter how small."

There was also a second stone crying out. On Aug. 26, Dave Chappelle's new Netflix comedy special was released. In it the foul-

mouthed Chappelle yanked his audience back and forth, first telling them, "I'm not for abortion" before assuring them, "I'm not for it, but I'm not against it either." To calm them down further, he trotted out the standard pro-choice rhetoric that if you don't have a uterus, you shouldn't have an opinion.

"Seriously! This is theirs; the right to choose is [women's] unequivocal right. Not only do I believe they have the right to choose, I believe that they shouldn't have to consult anybody, except for a physician, about how they exercise that right. Gentlemen, that is fair."

Then, once he had his pro-choice audience reassured, he took another sharp turn:

"And ladies, to be fair to us, I also believe that if you decide to have

## DUTCH DOCTOR ACQUITTED IN EUTHANASIA CASE

BY EMMA FREIRE

**T**he threshold for euthanasia in the Netherlands is already low. And a Dutch court just lowered it even further.

On September 10, a panel of three judges found a doctor "not guilty" of breaking the law in the way she administered a lethal injection to one of her patients. The trial represented the first time a doctor was prosecuted since the Netherlands legalized euthanasia in 2002. The case centered on the question of whether a patient who is mentally incompetent can receive a lethal injection.

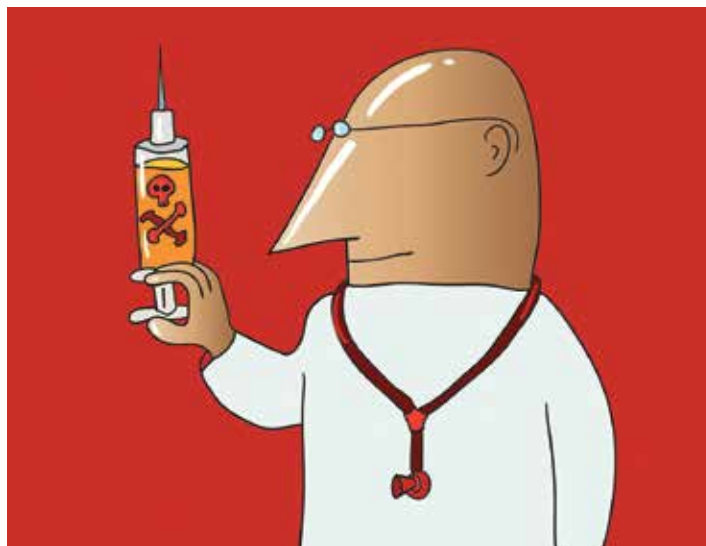
Under Dutch law, a person can write a legal declaration requesting euthanasia should they develop advanced dementia in the future. If a doctor determines a patient with such a legal declaration has "unbearable suffering," they can proceed to

euthanize them – even though the patient is unable to orally confirm that they still wish to die.

The patient at the center of the case was a woman with Alzheimer's. Her condition had become so advanced that she no longer recognized her own face in the mirror. When she was still mentally competent, she had written up a legal declaration. She had also had several conversations with her GP about

euthanasia over a period of several years. However, she kept saying she was not yet ready to die.

Once her condition became advanced, she had to be removed to





the baby, a man should not have to pay. That's fair. If you can kill this \*\*\*\*\* [then] I can at least abandon him. It's my money, my choice."

If murder is a right, why can't abandonment be too? Chappelle's logic is sound, but it takes us to a place even abortion defenders don't want to go. That's when Chappelle concludes with a parting shot: "And if I'm wrong, then perhaps we're wrong." From the ready laughter it's clear his audience doesn't understand what Chappelle has just hit them with. He's telling them that if they know abandonment isn't right, then they should understand murder isn't either. The audience doesn't get it yet, but they will.

As for us, if we're too anxious to speak God's Truth publicly, and are mumbling



out a half-hearted whisper now and again only because we feel we really *have* to, what we need to realize is, we don't *have* to – God's got the opposition doing it, so He really doesn't need us. We don't *have* to.



But we do get to.

If these "stones" can cause a ruckus speaking just a part of God's Truth, imagine how He might use us, if God's people were willing to open our mouths and cry out.

a care home. The doctor who gave the lethal injection worked in the care home. The woman's husband raised the issue of euthanasia with the doctor when the woman was admitted. The doctor then spent seven weeks consulting with second opinions to determine if the woman met the criteria of "unbearable suffering" before ending her life on 22 April 2016.

The doctor began by secretly administering a sedative to the woman via her coffee to put her to sleep. However, the woman awakened when the lethal drugs were added to her IV and began to struggle. She was restrained by her husband and daughter so the doctor could finish.

The Dutch committee that oversees euthanasia found the doctor "negligent" in the way she handled the case. The Netherlands' Board of Medical Examiners also issued her a reprimand. However, the court acquitted her of breaking

Dutch euthanasia law and thus set an important precedent. Legal declarations can be used to administer euthanasia to patients who are not able to give consent and are perhaps totally unaware of what is being done to them.

Euthanasia for patients with advanced dementia is still extremely rare in the Netherlands. There were only 15 reported instances of this since legalization in 2002 (out of a total of 62,000). However, the numbers are likely to increase in the years that come. One poll found that over 10% of Dutch adults have a legal declaration requesting euthanasia in the event of advanced dementia. Given the amount of media coverage the recent trial and verdict attracted, more people may decide to write them.

Up to now, the status of these legal declarations had been ambiguous. Even some euthanasia supporters are opposed to them because it

is not possible to determine if the patient still wishes to end their life. Last year, ethicist Berna van Baarsen resigned from her position on the Dutch committee that oversees the practice of euthanasia because she does not believe advanced dementia patients should be eligible. "That's my boundary, based on ten years of reflection and reading dossiers," she said.

However, on September 10 the Dutch court sent a clear message that legal declarations can be used as a substitute for oral consent to put a mentally incompetent person to death.

A 2017 study showed that 92% of the Dutch population accepts euthanasia. However, many are uncomfortable with the way the threshold for eligibility continues to be lowered. Perhaps the verdict will lead more people to stop and ask, "Where does this end?"

## UNIVERSITY REJECTS CHRISTIAN GROUP FOR NOT WANTING TO BE LGBT GROUP

BY JON DYKSTRA

**D**uke University's student government has rejected a Christian student group's request for official status. They turned down Young Life because, while the group allows homosexuals to their events, it doesn't allow homosexuals to hold leadership positions. And that, the student government contends, amounts to discrimination.

Other Duke student groups are organized around race, religion, and sexual beliefs, but these groups have so structured their constitutions as to say they will allow anyone in. So, for example, the Muslim Student Association's constitution promises: "all undergraduate and graduate students at Duke University are eligible for membership" and "any member of the Duke Muslim Student Association can become an officer."



Near identical wording can be found in the constitutions of the Black Student Alliance and the Native American Student Alliance.

These constitutions allow for curious possibilities. If, say, enough Christians were so inclined, they could take over the Muslim Student Association. A bunch of white, or Asian, or Latino students could do the same to the Black Student Alliance. But, interestingly, this same trick couldn't

be pulled on the campus LGBT group, Blue Devils United, whose constitution allows for the removal of students "found in violation of our mission" to promote "intersectionality." Christians need not apply here.

That's why if Young Life were to sue, it seems likely they would win. In February a federal judge found in favor of a University of Iowa student group, Business Leaders in Christ, which had been stripped of its registered status. They also wouldn't allow a homosexual student to hold a leadership position. The judge noted that other campus groups were allowed to limit their membership, basing it on race, religion, or view of homosexuality. It was clear then that the University of Iowa was unfairly penalizing Business Leaders for limiting their leadership to Christians.

## ABORTION AND THE UNBORN: THE US VS. THE UNITED NATIONS

BY JON DYKSTRA

**E**ven as the US continues to debate the fate of the unborn within its own borders, the Trump administration is speaking up for them internationally. In a Sept. 24 speech to the United Nations General Assembly President Trump said:

"Americans will also never tire of defending innocent life. We are aware that many United Nations projects have attempted to assert a global right to taxpayer-funded abortion on demand, right up until the moment of delivery. Global bureaucrats have absolutely no business attacking the sovereignty of nations that wish to protect innocent life. Like many



nations here today we in America believe that every child, born and unborn, is a sacred gift from God."

Trump's words came one day after the US, Russia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Poland and 12 other nations issued a joint statement that asked the

United Nations to stop using:

"...ambiguous terms and expressions, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights in U.N. documents, because they can undermine the critical role of the family and promote practices, like abortion....There is no international right to an abortion and these terms should not be used to promote pro-abortion policies and measures."

Meanwhile the United Nations Human Rights Commission has, in the last year celebrated "International Safe Abortion Day" and taking the US to task for pro-life legislation in several states.



## PUBLIC DOUBT: JOSH HARRIS ABANDONS GOD, AND HILLSONG'S MARTY SAMPSON STRUGGLES

BY JON DYKSTRA

**I**n July, Josh Harris, the author of the 1990s Christian bestseller, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, declared he was kissing his wife and his God goodbye. He made the announcements on Instagram where, shortly thereafter, the former pastor shared a picture of himself as a participant in this year's Vancouver Pride Parade.

In mid August another public figure used Instagram to announce a crisis of faith. One of Hillsong Church's worship leaders, Marty Sampson, told his followers: "I'm genuinely losing my faith... and it doesn't bother me.... I am so happy now, so at peace with the world." He then laid out some of the questions that had been troubling him:

"How many preachers fall? Many. No one talks about it. How many miracles happen. Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send four billion people to a place, all 'coz they don't believe? No one talks about it. Christians can be the most judgmental people on the planet – they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people. But it's not for me."

The post has since been deleted, and Sampson has since clarified that he hasn't renounced God, but that his faith is on "incredibly shaky ground."

This public apostasy of Josh Harris, and the equally public struggle of Marty Sampson were met by all sorts of reactions. Among the constructive ones, was a Facebook post by John Cooper, the leader singer of the Christian rock band Skillet who, while never mentioning either by name, was clearly writing about both Harris and Sampson. He began by questioning why Harris continues to act as a public figure:

"I am stunned that the seemingly most important thing for these leaders who have lost their faith is to make such a bold new stance. Basically saying, 'I've been living and preaching boldly something for 20 years and led generations of people with my teachings and now I no longer believe it...therefore I'm going to boldly and loudly tell people it was all wrong while I boldly and loudly lead people in to my next truth.' I'm perplexed why they aren't embarrassed? Humbled? Ashamed, fearful, confused? Why be so eager to continue leading people when you clearly don't know where you are headed?"

Then he addressed Sampson, not mentioning him by name, but responding to a question in Sampson's post:

"...there is a common thread running through these leaders/influencers that basically says that 'no one else is talking about the REAL stuff.' This is just flatly false. I just read today in a renown worship leader's statement, 'How could a God of love send people to hell? No one talks about it.' As if he is the first person to ask this? Brother, you are not that unique. The church has wrestled with this for 1500 years. Literally. Everybody talks about it. Children talk about it in Sunday school. There's like a billion books written on the topic. Just because you don't get the answer you want doesn't mean that we are unwilling to wrestle with it. We wrestle with scripture until we are transformed by the renewing of our minds."

Breakpoint Ministries' John Stonestreet saw Sampson's struggle as revealing "a failure on the part



of the church to take the difficult but essential task of faith formation seriously enough."

He noted that the faith Sampson felt himself falling away from was an emotion-driven, uncritical and uneducated faith that discouraged questions because it couldn't stand up to them. But this is not Christianity. This is not the faith of David, or Habakkuk, or Solomon, who all came to God in despair, asking questions in doubt. God is not scared of our questions...though as we see with Job, He doesn't always give us the exact answer we were asking for. But He invites inquiry – honest questions, not simply scoffing (Prov. 3:34) – because He wants us to love Him with not only our heart, but also our mind (Matt. 22:37).

So, as Stonestreet notes, it isn't wrong to admit to doubt. But that a worship leader feels that no one is talking about these things reveals a congregation that isn't interacting with the Psalms, or preaching on Habakkuk and Job and Ecclesiastes. As Stonestreet puts it, Sampson's church failed him.

In 1 Cor. 10: 1-12, Paul tells us to take it as a warning when we see the problems others face. So, in our Reformed churches, how are we dealing with these types of questions? How do we address the doubts that are common to many a Christian? Are our churches a place where honest inquiries are welcomed? Or, if Robert Sampson were in our midst, would he feel that here too, "no one talks about it"?

## NEWS OR FAKE NEWS: THIRD OF BRITS HAVE DINNER IN SILENCE?

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**n September, at least five of the United Kingdom's online newspapers shared the results of a study claiming one third of Brits eat their dinners in complete silence. They reported the study was commissioned by Old El Paso, the Tex Mex food producer, and involved 2,500 British parents. Other study findings include:

- 4 in 10 parents don't eat at the same time as their children most days
- only 20% of families eat dinner together every day of the week
- 44% of respondents admit to staring at their phones while eating

Apparently more and more families don't have the energy or intimacy to know how to interact with one another. That's sad, if true.

But this does have a whiff of fake news about it. How so? The original study is untraceable – we're told it was commissioned by Old El Paso, but we aren't told what polling organization did it. No further information can be found on the company website or social media pages. Also, while the news articles have a few different titles, most were authored by just one reporter, Rob Knight and none provided additional information – the others were shorter abridgments seemingly based on Knight's original. So even as, at first glance, it looked like this story was coming from lots of different sources, it actually amounted to just one. What we're left with is one reporter telling us about a study that can't be traced, which was published by a company that hasn't publicized it on their website or social media. Of course, none of that means it's fake. It does give us reason for healthy skepticism.

For Christians, how many Brits talk during dinner isn't as important as that we know how to handle such news stories. We're all news outlets now, what with our social media accounts, so the question we have to ask is, are we going to be reliable or unreliable reporters? This is a big deal. After all, we worship a God-man who died and came back to life, which is already a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23). We don't want to blow our credibility where it hardly matters by passing along trivia that doesn't turn out to be true. Instead we want to be careful in the small things, so that we will be seen as trustworthy when we talk about what, or rather Who, really matters.

SOURCE Rob Knight's "Third of Brit families sit in silence at dinner, study reveals" as posted to TheSun.co.uk Sept 12; Rob Knight's "Brit families sit in silence at meal times not knowing what to say to each other" as posted to DailyStar.co.uk. on Sept 12.



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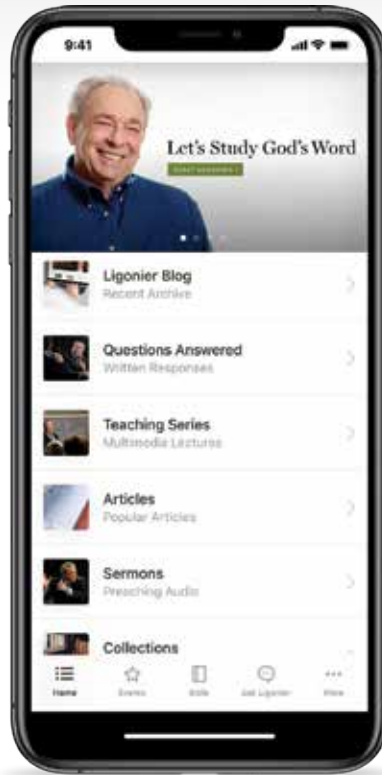
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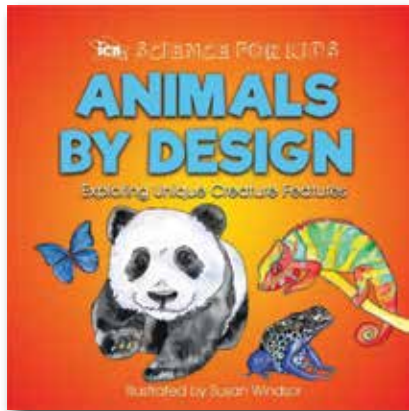
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# REVIEWS

REALLY CREATIVE COFFEE TABLE BOOKS!

## ANIMALS BY DESIGN: EXPLORING UNIQUE CREATURE FEATURES

125 PAGES / 2018



Mexican walking fish, lantern fish, immortal jellyfish, and zorses – those are just some of the crazy creatures featured in this fun little book. Every two-page spread showcases another animal, and even when it's one you've heard of before, there's sure to be cool details that'll surprise you.

*Animals by Design* is published by the Institute for Creation Research. That means that, in addition to all the fascinating facts, a clear Christian perspective is also included. The point of this book is to introduce our children to how awesome our God is: hey kids, just look at the amazing, bizarre, surprising, unique, and simply astonishing creatures He's made!

For the last few months my wife and girls have all been taking turns flipping through this. It's an easy book to dip in and out of – it doesn't require a big time commitment – because each animal can be read on its own. So, maybe this time I'll learn a little about zorses, and the next time I sit down at the couch, I can always find out then what makes an immortal jellyfish immortal.

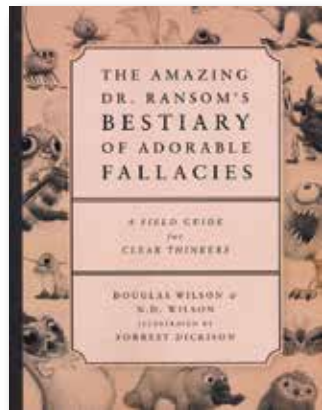
This is a kids' book but one mom and dad will love too. Canadians can find it at [Create.ab.ca](http://Create.ab.ca), while Americans can go to [ICR.org](http://ICR.org).

– JON DYKSTRA

## AMAZING DR. RANSOM'S BESTIARY

BY DOUGLAS WILSON & N.D. WILSON

320 PAGES / 2015



These are the adventures of globetrotting fallacy-hunter Dr. Ransom. And by following him along on his hunts, we, too, will learn how to track down (and on occasion, kill) fallacies in our own interactions with people who love them.

Ransom deals with 50 fallacies in the following four categories: fallacies of distraction, of ambiguity, and of form; and millennial fallacies. Each chapter:

- defines a fallacy and its dangers (showing it as a cuddly but vicious animal);
- explains how we, like Ransom, can defeat it; and
- provides discussion questions and exercises in recognizing fallacious and logical arguments.

What makes the book fun is that both Ransom's adventures in confronting fallacies and the examples given are presented with satirical wit. I have never enjoyed reading about and puzzling out fallacies more.

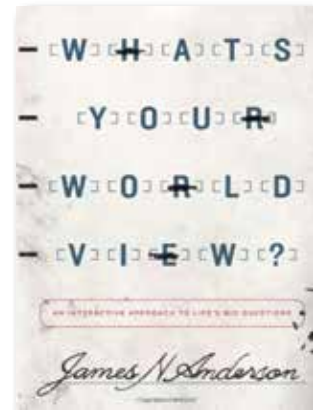
I will note one caution: on occasion the Wilsons, arguably, step over the line of good taste in the description of Dr. Ransom's confrontation with fallacious fools (always a peril in satire). But despite this consideration, as a teacher, I would love to see this as a textbook for my high school English courses.

– JEFF DYKSTRA

## WHAT'S YOUR WORLDVIEW?

BY JAMES N. ANDERSON

112 PAGES 2014



If you've got fond memories of *Choose-Your-Own-Adventure* books you'll really enjoy this adult update. This time it's a journey to discover our own worldview and, like the kids' books, we keep coming to forks in the road. So, early on, we either agree there is objective truth and then go to page 22 or we say there isn't and then go to page 91. A Christian reader flipping to page 22 will be asked to consider, "Is it possible to *know* the Truth?" The author James Anderson lays out the case for both options, after which we again have to choose which way we want to go.

After a dozen or so steps, readers will eventually arrive at the worldview that matches their professed beliefs. Anderson is a Christian and his biases are acknowledged up front. So, even as he has challenging questions for anyone who lands on one of the other 20 worldviews, he also raises the problem of evil for Christians. He wants everyone to follow God, but he refuses to pretend as if Christians have it all figured out.

The strength of the book is the really fun format and it's conciseness – there is just so much packed in such a little space.

– JON DYKSTRA

## STILL THINKING

BY JASON BOUWMAN AND FRIENDS

187 PAGES / 2019

This creative, challenging, accessible, readable, godly book is quite hard to describe. Oh, sure, it's easy to layer on the adjectives – it's all that and more – but to describe exactly what it is? That's hard, because there's really nothing else like it.

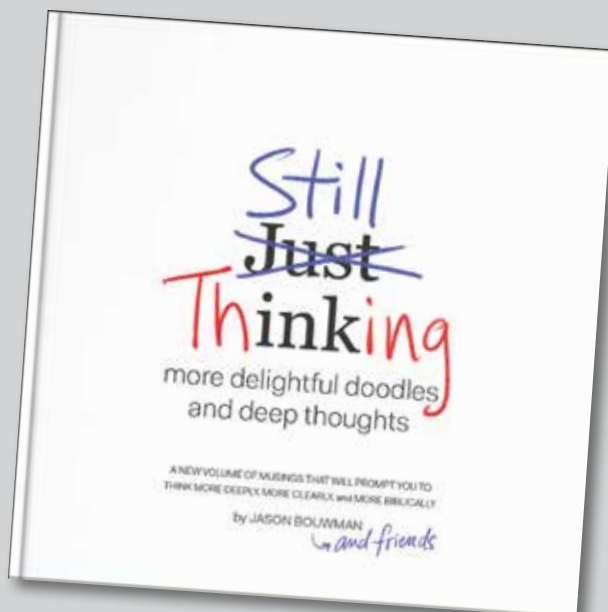
Is it a devotional? It could sure be used as a great one. Each of the two-page spreads includes not only a powerful quote, thought-provoking word art, and insightful commentary, but a number of suggested Scripture texts. So this would be a fantastic way to regularly dig into God's Word. With its many doodles, maybe we could describe it as a comic book of sorts. It's also a coffee table book *extraordinaire* since it can be started anywhere. Each two-page spread stands on its own, so if you only have a couple minutes to read, this doesn't require more. But I'll bet you don't just read one! And as a discussion starter, it's sure-fire. Read this around other people, and soon enough you'll be reading sections out loud or passing it around for your spouse/friend/teen to check out one of the bits of word art.

It is certainly a book to be shared. My wife and I bought 10 of Jason Bouwman's first book (the unfortunately sold out *Just Thinking*) and we've already ordered 10 of this, the sequel. It's the rare book that can be given to your 70-something-year-old aunt for her birthday, and your 17-year-old nephew for his profession of faith, and that you can then be sure both will love, and actually read. How often do you find a one-size-fits-all present suitable for pastors, neighbors, parents, and your second cousin twice removed?

On top of that, it's good for them. This is an accessible book, but it's sure to challenge every reader at some point, reminding us of where we're falling short, or just failing to even seek God's glory at all. Quite the combination: enjoyable yes, but also edifying!

This is not available in stores, and the only way you can order it is through the author's website. The first one sold out, so it'd also be best to order sooner than later (and if you order now, well, you could have all your Christmas shopping done before December even rolls around!). I can't imagine anyone not loving *Still Thinking*. So pick up a copy (or ten) at [JustThinkingBook.com](http://JustThinkingBook.com).

- Jon Dykstra



The theory of evolution posits that  
we're here by chance, have no purpose  
in life, and have no hope in death.

The Bible tells us that we were  
lovingly formed by an all-powerful, all-knowing,  
everywhere-present God for the glorious  
purpose of enjoying Him forever!

We ~~are~~ matter.





# HE WHO HAS EARS LET HIM HEAR

by Christine Farenhorst

**T**he passage from Matthew 13:1-9 is a very well known passage, a very well known parable.

The first sentence in this parable deals with “path” people. Have you ever known “path” people? Are you acquainted with people so hard-packed that nothing seems to be able to penetrate the much-traveled surface of their hearts?

## A “HARD PATH” MAN

Ernest was born in 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois. His father and mother were solid and evangelical. They stocked their young son's bedroom shelves with good and inspiring G.A. Henty books. Morning family prayers were accompanied by Bible reading and some hymn singing. Discipline was diligently applied and if bad language came out of the boy's mouth, it was washed out with soap. When Ernest was eight, he received a note from his Dad which read:

“Your Daddy loves you and prays that you may be spared many years to praise God and help your parents and sister and others about you.”

And when he turned sixteen, his father, who was a doctor, likewise encouraged him by writing:

“I am so pleased and proud you have grown to be such a fine, big, manly fellow and will trust your development will continue symmetrical and in

“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about Him, so that He got into a boat and sat there; and the whole crowd stood on the beach. And

He told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A sower went out to sow. And as He sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty...’”

Matthew 13:1-9

harmony with our highest Christian ideals. I want you to represent all that is good and noble and brave and courteous in Manhood, and fear God and respect women.”

However good his father's hopes and his mother's prayers were, the immortal seed that was sown liberally during the boy's maturing years fell on a hard pathway. Young Ernest, whose surname was Hemingway, had a heart which seemed impenetrable. During his teenage years he began to write pornographic stories, used foul language, and did not feel guilty. At eighteen years of age, he had no more use for the church. He often took God's name in vain. He once stopped just short of killing his father. His mother warned him in a letter:

“Unless you, my son, Ernest, come to yourself, cease your lazy loafing and pleasure seeking and borrowing with no thought of returning, unless you stop trading on your handsome face, fooling little gullible girls, and neglecting your duties to God and your Savior, Jesus Christ - unless, in other words, you come into your manhood, there is nothing before you but bankruptcy: you have overdrawn.”

Till the day she died, Ernest's mother did not cease to pray that her son's eyes would open to the very real spiritual danger he was in.

Ernest Hemingway is depicted by Wikipedia as a successful American journalist, novelist, short-story writer and sportsman. But in reality this "hard-path" man was an apostate and one who knowingly turned away from the free offer of salvation. Married four times, he died a depressed and hopeless person, committing suicide in 1961.

Ernest Hemingway is one of countless numbers of children raised in Christian homes who have not allowed the seed cast on their lives to penetrate the surface of their hearts; have not been impressed by it; have become calloused to it; and have not brought forth fruit.

He who has ears, let him hear.

### A "ROCKY PLACE" WOMAN

Have you known "rocky place" people? Have you known temporary people? Have you known people who appeared genuine for a short time before succumbing to other interests? When difficulties come because of the Word, they stumble. When the promises of the Gospel do not pan out according to their desires, they change radically.

Leslie was an older lady whom I met on a street corner. She was outgoing and not at all averse to having a conversation.

"Do you have any faith?" I asked her.

Untucked strands of hair blew about her rather thin face, and grey eyes peered almost accusingly as she stood in well-worn indigo sandals in front of me. Her left eyelid had a blue vein running straight down towards her left cheek. We, a group of church members, were evangelizing at a Kitchener intersection, speaking with passers-by.

"I used to believe once," she answered, not at all put out by the question.

"Why don't you believe anymore?"

"There is too much hatred in the

world. It's terrible what people are doing to one another. This world is a mess. We are destroying it."

"So you think that you would believe if the world was a well-ordered, happy place?"

"I think," she replied, meeting my eyes evenly, without any visible nervousness, "that this mess could be straightened out by God Who is all-powerful. Obviously He is not doing anything, and therefore I reject Him."

"Do you know the story of Creation?"

"I do." Leslie punctuated the words with conviction, straightening out her five-foot two frame as she enlightened me. "And I think the Biblical story of creation is OK for those who need a story like that. I'm not going to criticize weaker people for needing a crutch. But we both know that science has come up with a much better explanation for how this earth began."

"You mean evolution?"

"Exactly." Leslie was emphatic.

"But where does the first cell come from? Doesn't it take as much faith to believe in the creation of a first cell, as it does to believe in creation by God?"

"No, evolution does not take faith.

It's a fact."

"Science changes every so many years. What people hold for truth now, might change in ten years. Do you agree with that?"

"Absolutely." Leslie's face glowed as she added, "That's what makes science so wonderful. The facts can change all the time. We grow towards full and perfect knowledge."

"Do you know that Charles Darwin died in agony and fear?"

"Yes, I do," she acknowledged, but with a smile, "and that was because he feared that he had undermined Christianity. And so he had. Good for him!"

"And if you die, what do you think will happen to you."

"You want me to say that I will either go to one of two places. But you see, the truth is that I will simply stop existing."

"What if you are wrong?"

"I will still be all right. But I have to go now." Leslie took off at a brisk pace down the sidewalk. She was a lonely figure. Her skirt flapped above the sandals, and uncombed hair trailed behind trying to forsake a thin neck.



Ernest Hemingway on his boat, in 1950.

How sad are those who do not accept the full counsel of God. Temporary faith dies into futility.

He who has ears, let him hear.

### "THORNY" PEOPLE

Have you known "thorny" people?

Have you known people who have weeds emanating from their hearts smothering the seed? Have you known people crammed full of things which they value much more than the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

There was a man who lived among believers in the times of the New Testament church. His was a familiar face during church services. He worked faithfully alongside others, was a colleague, and an accepted co-worker for the kingdom of God. And yet, suddenly, the man left the communion of saints. His name was Demas.

Mentioned only three times in the Bible as a companion of Paul, Demas was, in the long run, neither faithful nor dependable. He had, as an adherent of the faith in Jesus Christ, tasted the goodness of the Word of God but then he had consciously spit out this goodness. At some point during his association with Paul and other Christians, Demas had concluded he had no desire to meet the demands of the Gospel message. Knowing full well that his life would have to change drastically into a humble obliteration of self if he committed wholly to God, he stood at a crossroads. Weighing matters on the balance, Demas arrived at the opinion that the world and its riches were more significant than the good news of Salvation. This opinion choked the seed.

We never hear of him again.

He who has ears, let him hear.

### "GOOD GROUND" PEOPLE

Have you known "good ground" people? People who are joyful, people who strive to understand God's Word, people who keep it and bring forth fruit? People who are compelled to share the good news of salvation?

The Hmong are an Asian people who live in a remote part of southwest China. Miraculously, they heard a broadcast in their own language in the 1980s. This

*For the first time, this family heard about the Lord Jesus Christ and they were astonished at what they heard.*

broadcast came through the shortwave radio preaching of a Hmong evangelist named Vam Txoob Lis, or John Lee. John Lee was stationed in California, a long way away from where the Hmong lived, and it was his joy to proclaim the Gospel in daily broadcasts. He had no idea whether or not his message was being either heard or accepted by people in whose tongue he spoke. Nevertheless, he kept preaching.

One day during this season of preaching, an old Hmong man was tuning his radio. Suddenly he heard someone speaking Hmong. Surprised, he called others in his family to gather around and listen with him. For the first time, this family heard about the Lord Jesus Christ and they were astonished at what they heard. The next day the old man notified the entire village, and a great many people gathered around their radios to listen to what John Lee had to tell them. They, in turn, shared with other fellow villagers and neighbors. The old man also felt compelled to walk many miles to eighteen other Hmong villages in the valley they inhabited. As a consequence, thousands of people came to hear the Gospel each day and the eyes of their hearts were opened by the Lord.

As the people in this valley were convicted, they came to the conclusion that they had to make a decision about what the preacher was teaching them on the radio broadcast. The leaders of the eighteen villages met together and debated the topic, in the end deciding that they should become Christians. Although they did not have Bibles, they consciously chose to obey whatever John Lee should preach from the broadcast. When idolatry and its sinful ways were spoken on, the Hmong destroyed all the idols in their homes. When they heard about baptism, they dug pits and filled them with water. Afterwards they baptized one another.

An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 Hmong became Christians that year listening to the Far East Broadcasting Company's Manila station. Drug addicts were cured, marriages were healed, and broken fellowships restored. The amazing part is that as this was initially taking place, John Lee was unaware that this was taking place. One day he preached about the Lamb's Book of Life. The Hmong, not fully understanding this, all agreed they needed to be included in this book. According to Paul Hattaway, author of *An Asian Harvest*, they sent a large package to the radio ministry's California office. When this package was opened, a bundle of papers was extracted from it with the names and signatures of some 10,000 Hmong people. There was also a cover letter which read:

"Dear Sir, please include the following people in the Lamb's Book of Life!"


As the Gospel newscast continued, the number of Hmong becoming Christians rose to hundreds of thousands and continues to this day. "Good ground" people, they are a persecuted people and stand in need of prayer.

He who has ears, let him hear.

### CONCLUSION

Isaiah 55:10-11 states:

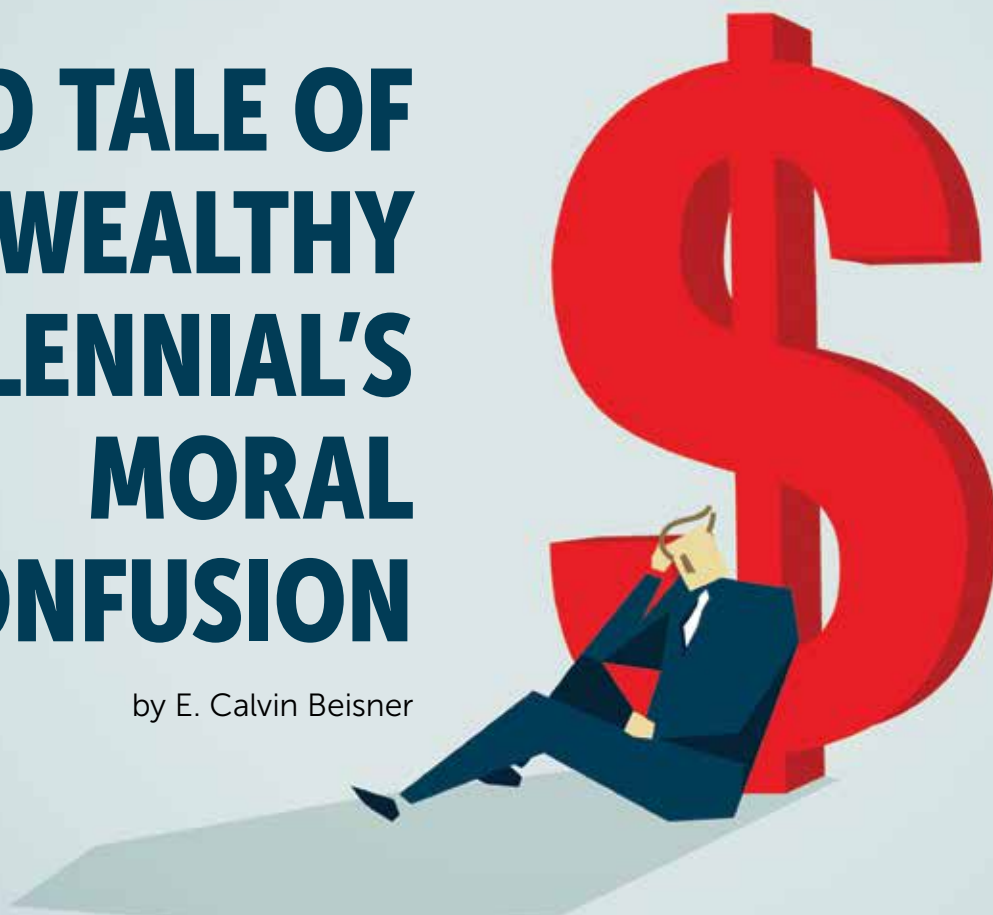
"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my Word that goes out from My mouth: it will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

He who has ears, let him hear. 



# A SAD TALE OF A WEALTHY MILLENNIAL'S MORAL CONFUSION

by E. Calvin Beisner



A few years back my wife heard a young woman share that she had felt guilty for being able to go out to dinner with friends in Chicago. She knew her mother, still living in South Africa, wasn't able to dine out like this.

When she later told her mother about her feelings during a phone call, her mother was having none of it. She told her daughter that gratitude, not guilt was the appropriate response to God's blessings. The young woman was told that she should thank God for how she'd been able to immigrate to America, and she could also pray and work for a time when South Africans, and others around the world, would enjoy blessings similar to those she was experiencing now in America.

## IS WEALTH IMMORAL?

I remembered that story the moment I began reading about Adam Roberts, a Millennial who in his *Vox* article "Is wealth immoral?" expressed his sense of guilt and injustice at having inherited

over a million dollars as a child of wealthy parents.

"As I got politicized around things like wealth inequality, climate change, war, and the forces connecting them, I didn't connect it too much with my own family or history," he wrote.

But then he came to understand things differently.

He confessed, as if they were sins, that his family had gained wealth through the oil industry, banking, and stock in companies that built things for the military. His parents had given him stock in ExxonMobil, BP, and Chevron – another reason for guilt.

As he became active as a "community organizer" in Boston, "no longer surrounded by wealthy peers," it "felt absurd ... to have access to so much when so many others didn't."

"As a result," he wrote, "I got real weird about money. I'd barely spend any of it." He'd walk instead of taking

Uber. Spending of \$300 a month for prescription drugs for his mother-in-law was okay, but he was conflicted about putting down \$30,000 on a house or spending \$6.99 for a bag of popcorn at a theater. So he offset those two by contributing \$30,000 to a land trust and declining to get a soda refill.

But such things, he believes "are imperfect, individual actions." The whole system that allows people to amass such wealth while others struggle is "immoral." Everyone, he thinks, should have a modest first home, but nobody should have a "\$20M mansion in Newport, RI," a second home if anyone else is homeless, or a third (or fourth or fifth). Nobody should buy a new \$799 sofa when he could buy a used one, and nobody should have a yacht – at all.

"Is it moral to hold any *excess* [emphasis original] private wealth under capitalism?" he asks – and later reveals that it's not.

"Does it matter how that wealth was accumulated?" He offers four examples:



fossil fuels, medical doctor, useful invention, or stocks.

He draws toward his conclusion by writing:

“In a system that produces a handful of people with billions of dollars while hundreds of millions of people still lack access to basic human needs like health care and affordable housing ... the question isn’t what billionaires should do with ‘their’ money. It’s how to enact policies that prevent any one person from concentrating that much wealth and power in the first place.”

He recommends “taxing wealthy families like mine a whole lot more” because it’s “totally happened in the past,” it’s “part of the Green New Deal,” and it’s “widely supported.”

At the level of individual choices, he reports that he’s donated roughly a third of what he inherited to charitable causes and intends to donate another third. “For me, it feels like part of becoming more connected and alive on this planet,” he says.

## GOOD MOTIVES; BAD CONCLUSIONS

How should we respond to such thinking? Certainly not by condemning Roberts’s motives. It’s refreshing to see someone born rich who cares about those who weren’t. His charitable giving is to be commended, as is his self-restraint. And, frankly, as I read his article (accompanied by brilliant illustrations that drive home his points), my heart went out to him.

Nonetheless, there are serious problems with his thinking.

Is “wealth inequality” unjust by definition? Why, then, hasn’t he already divested himself of everything he owns except what would equal the average net worth of people around the world?

How can anyone buy a used sofa – or any sofa at all – if nobody buys a new one?

What constitutes a modest first home – something typical of Corinth, Mississippi, where median home value is \$105,900? Or of Boston, where Roberts lives and the median home value is five-and-a-half times as much, or Manhattan at eleven times as much, or San Francisco (tack on another hundred grand)?

Or – let’s get real now, and care about the whole world, not just wealthy America – is \$1,000 a square foot, common in Boston, “modest,” or \$99 (7,000 rupees) a square foot, common in Bengaluru (Bangalore), India’s “silicon valley”? Or next to nothing for the cardboard shacks in which millions of the poor of Africa, Asia, and Latin America live?

And what’s the dividing line between a moral system and an “immoral” one that allows people to amass such wealth while others struggle? Is personal net worth of \$10,000 okay, but not \$11,000? Or \$250,000 but not \$300,000? What objective standard justifies where Roberts draws the line?

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or to the Board secretary:

**Mrs. Tara Tiggelaar** - [secretary@covenantschool.ca](mailto:secretary@covenantschool.ca)

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

**Mr. Jordan Tiggelaar** – 780-307-8449  
[chairman@covenantschool.ca](mailto:chairman@covenantschool.ca)

or the principal:

**Mr. Mike Nederveen** – 780-674-4774 (school)  
[principal@covenantschool.ca](mailto:principal@covenantschool.ca)

# What do millionaires and billionaires do with their “excess” wealth?

And what is “excess” wealth? Consider millionaires and billionaires – the sort of persons Roberts thinks “the system” should disallow. What do millionaires and billionaires do with their “excess” wealth?

Well, they might buy stocks or bonds – providing the capital to pay workers, equip them with expensive tools that enable them to produce the food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical care, and other benefits still other people need. They might buy a second or third house (or a yacht, or a private jet), construction of which employed workers whose wages provided food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical care, and other benefits to themselves and their families.

Maybe they’ll just stick it in a bank account – from which the bank will make loans to companies that will employ people to make things that benefit others. About the only thing they can do with it that will be of use to nobody is hide it under the mattress. (Let me know if you run into a millionaire

who does that. I’m curious to meet such an eccentric.)

It’s pretty clear that Roberts thinks there’s something particularly immoral about accumulating wealth from fossil fuels. Yet using those fossil fuels has lifted billions of people out of the poverty that breaks Roberts’s heart by providing not only energy but also plastics that prevent foods from spoiling; fertilizers that allow farmers to grow more food on less land to feed the growing human population while leaving land available for wildlife; pharmaceuticals that heal diseases; and literally thousands of other products derived from them. And when he bemoans fossil fuels’ contribution (however great or small) to climate change, does he weigh that against all those other benefits from them – plus the roughly \$3.2 trillion in extra crop yields the CO2 emitted from them added to global crop yields (making food more available for the poor) from 1960 to 2012, with another \$9.8 trillion expected by 2050? Medical doctors, whose method of accumulating wealth it seems Roberts favors over fossil fuels, would be severely handicapped without fossil fuel-derived medications (maybe including some his mother-in-law takes), not to mention the electricity that lights their operating rooms and powers their refrigerators to preserve their medications, their MRIs, and every other high-tech invention that enables them to restore people’s health and prolong their lives.

How many of the things that raised human life expectancy at birth from

about 27 or 28 years before the Industrial Revolution to about 70 today worldwide (and 80 in developed countries) would have been developed if no inventors, innovators, or entrepreneurs could have received any more rewards for their efforts than those who dug ditches (an honorable task but not highly rewarded) or just sat on their haunches?

## FOR SOME, WEALTH IS A PROBLEM

When a rich ruler asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus tells him to obey God’s commandments – something the man says he has done from his youth up.

“One thing you still lack,” Jesus says. “Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

The man leaves sad, prompting Jesus’ remark, “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God” – i.e., impossible. But, He explains, “What is impossible with men is possible with God” (Luke 18:18–27).

So does that justify Roberts’s feeling guilty about his inherited wealth, and demanding that “the system” be changed to prevent anyone’s amassing “excess wealth” while others struggle?

## CHARITY IS GOOD, AND SO IS INVESTMENT

No, for in the very next chapter, when Jesus encounters a rich tax collector who says that he will give half his goods to the poor and restore fourfold anyone he





## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. God calls for "equality" Lev. 19:15:

"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor."

How does that differ with the sort of equality that Adam Roberts wants the government to bring in?

2. Roberts feels guilty for two different reasons: 1) for being wealthy, and 2) for how that wealth was garnered. As Christians, which of those two could be a legitimate concern, and which would not. Why?

3. Roberts acts as if all accumulated wealth is somehow wrong. But in any voluntary exchange, both parties are helped. For example, when I give \$5 to buy a book it's because the book is worth *more than \$5 to me* (or else I wouldn't make that trade). And they give me the book because the \$5 is worth more to them. Amazingly both of us came off the better for the trade – in a very real way we are both wealthier. Thus, money gained via legitimate means (piracy and money laundering are both out) represents good that has been done and wealth that has been increased. How should that understanding color our impressions of billionaires and millionaires? How much good already accomplished does their wealth represent?

4. The 10th Commandment (Ex. 20:17) says we're not to covet our neighbor's stuff. Is it still coveting if we support a political party that has plans for our uber-rich neighbor's wealth?

5. Lord Acton's most memorable quote "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is based on a biblical understanding of Man's fallen nature. Is this adage a good reason to want to diminish the wealth – and thus the power – of the very wealthy? Or does the 10th Commandment apply even to their power?

6. In Luke 12:48 we read, "...from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Is this a justification for higher taxes on the wealthy? Is this God speaking to government about what the wealthy need to do, or God speaking to the wealthy about what they need to do?

has defrauded, Jesus responds, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:1–10).

So which is it? Must one give everything away, or half? Or is there a different point entirely – wealth takes the place of God for some people, and must be given away entirely, but not for others.

After that encounter Jesus tells a parable about a nobleman (who represents God) who entrusts money to each of ten servants and instructs them to engage in business until he returns. On his return, the servants report their performance. The first has multiplied the investment ten times, the second five times. He rewards them proportionately.

The third servant says, "Lord, here is your mina [about \$470 today], which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow."

The nobleman, ignoring the obvious lie that he was reaping where had not sown, responds, "I will condemn you

with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?" Then he instructs others to take the money from him and give it to the first servant.

"Lord," they protest, "he has ten minas!"

And the master responds, "I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Luke 19:11–27).


## GOD CONDEMNS INJUSTICE, NOT WEALTH

The Bible has much to say about the need to protect the poor from oppression and to give charitably to help those who cannot help themselves. But nowhere does it condemn wealth. Indeed, some of the most important of God's people were wealthy – Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Joseph

of Arimathea, and wealthy women who provided for Jesus and His disciples.

The Bible condemns greed, selfishness, and injustice – but it never equates injustice with inequality.

Adam Roberts's confusion is sad, for it means he encourages not only envy and resentment toward many whom God has blessed but also false guilt on the part of many, including himself, who are blessed.

By all means, whether you consider yourself rich or middle class or poor, give to the poor, and work to protect the poor from injustice. But don't condemn all inequality as injustice, and don't feel guilty for the gifts God has given you. 

*E. Calvin Beisner, Ph.D., Founder and National Spokesman of The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation and a former professor of historical theology and social ethics at Knox Theological Seminary, is author of Social Justice vs. Biblical Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and Gospel.*

# What is "Sovereign Grace Singles"?

## An interview with founder Dean Scott

*Dean Scott started Sovereign Grace Singles ([sovereigngracesingles.com](http://sovereigngracesingles.com)) to help Reformed singles meet and mingle with other like-minded, and like-hearted, Christians. In the following interview we've asked him to give us some more details about his website, and what prompted him to create it.*

\*\*\*\*

**REFORMED PERSPECTIVE:** In preparing for this interview I saw the comments of an Arminian professor who said your online Reformed dating site conflicted with Calvinism. He seemed to think that anyone who believes in God's sovereignty over all things would just keep quiet and wait for God to drop a spouse in their lap. How would you respond? What is this professor missing?

**DEAN SCOTT:** I remember that same quote – it was from a *Christianity Today* article – and I when read it, well, I was embarrassed for the professor who made it. Doesn't he know Calvinists do evangelism? Why would we do that, if we held the "do nothing - God will do it all" caricature he presents of Calvinism? But we know God often uses us as the *means* by which He does his work here are on Earth. That's why Paul asks, "And how will they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). When it comes to spreading the gospel, God uses preachers – that is his *means*. And consider prayer - I like what Spurgeon said about prayer...

"You have heard a great many Arminian sermons, I dare say; but

you never heard an Arminian prayer, for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed, and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist."

In other words, an Arminian in prayer is acting like a Calvinist – asking God to change people's hearts. But here, too, God presents *prayers* as a means through which He works. This objection gets even sillier when you ask questions like:

- Does a Calvinist work? Why? Because *work* is the means God has given us to make money to pay life's expenses.
- Does a Calvinist shop at the grocery store or does he think food will simply arrive on his plate at dinnertime?
- Does he own an automobile? Why? Because it is the *means* to get him where he wishes to go.

In that same way, Sovereign Grace Singles (SGS) is the *means* God can and has used for many couples to find their like-minded mates.

**RP:** What's the one sentence answer to "What is Sovereign Grace Singles"?

**DS:** SGS's focus is to bring together Reformed single Christian men and

women who wish to meet other Reformed Christian singles for spiritually like-minded, loving relationships, walking together in mutual agreement, based on the words of Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" This is the theme verse of SGS.

**RP:** How did you first come up with the idea for SGS?

**DS:** I had been single for many years and did not want to be. I wanted a mate who believed the same as I did...Reformed in faith and doctrine. But the Christian "dating" websites were a disappointment at best.

Then in 2004, I was fishing with some members of a non-Christian flyfishing club I was part of. These were nice guys but the way they talked, what they talked about, the smoking, excessive drinking, and more, had me thinking, *Wouldn't this be even better if I could go flyfishing with other Reformed believers?* What if I could go fishing with other brothers and sisters in Christ who could be struck by the incredible beauty of a brown trout and be filled with the same need to praise the God who made it?

And that "spawned" (pardon the pun) the genesis of the SGS idea.

How could I go find the fellowship that I was looking for? The Internet!

*Sovereign Grace Singles (SGS) is the means God can and has used for many couples to find their like-minded mates.*

That's how I could find other Reformed singles! And when the thought hit, I asked myself, "Why not do it?"

SGS was developed and launched in January of 2005. It was a website where Reformed singles could meet for fellowship, service, or perhaps even romance. The first wedding was less than a year later in December and the groom was a businessman who invited me to be their guest at the wedding in *Germany!* The bride was from India but living in south Florida and their story is amazing and heartwarming to read. I think they have four kids now!

I also met my wife Karen in December of 2005. She was widowed with 4 fantastic adult kids who loved the Lord and she had an incredible extended family and church body. We were married in September of 2006. I have 5 grandkids with another on the way! Three of them are a result of the youngest son, Steven meeting his bride, Sarah on SGS as well!

**RP:** What can someone joining SGS expect? What specifically do you offer?

**DS:** On SGS, members can search for friends, activity partners, possible romantic interests and Events in which to participate. There's was just an Event in Indiana in September promoted on SGS, via group email and Facebook. I've made some excellent friends and had some sweet fellowship at Reformed Conferences and Cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean which SGSers have attended. A group of guys and myself went to practice our Second Amendment skills at Frontsight for their 4-day defensive handgun course and had an excellent time!

In addition to Events, and emailing other members within SGS, there is Chat and Forums. Members are encouraged to create their own Event locally and we'd be glad to promote it. If they know of Events in which SGSers might be interested, let us know and we can put it on SGS Calendar.

**RP:** People online often seem ruder than they'd be in real life. And on a



number of Reformed social forums geared to singles, there sometimes seem to be young men intent on impressing the ladies by showing off their theological chops. They start firestorms, attacking rather than discussing, and just generally bring heat but no light. I'd assume that has to happen sometimes on SGS too. What's your approach to dealing with it?

**DS:** I know exactly to what you are referring. The place that could occur is in SGS Forums, but I have not actually seen that.

If it were to occur, I would want it to be observed and learned from...to be seen as a mean of getting to know someone. One of the negative things about "dating" is that it is usually two persons alone with little interaction with others, as compared with courtship where the couple is more involved with family, friends and peers. In that context you can learn a lot about a person in the way they interact with others, especially those who might think or act differently than themselves.

Well, in Forums that interaction with others can also take place (even if to a lesser degree than in person) and whatever they reveal about themselves, for good or bad, is, frankly, helpful to everyone else there in the search for a

"mate."

That said, if rude behavior were observed I might contact them, especially if it were extreme. However, again, I have never observed that. I think others involved in the conversation call each other to accountability. It is *not* Facebook – conversations are far more friendly here.

**RP:** And what are the costs?

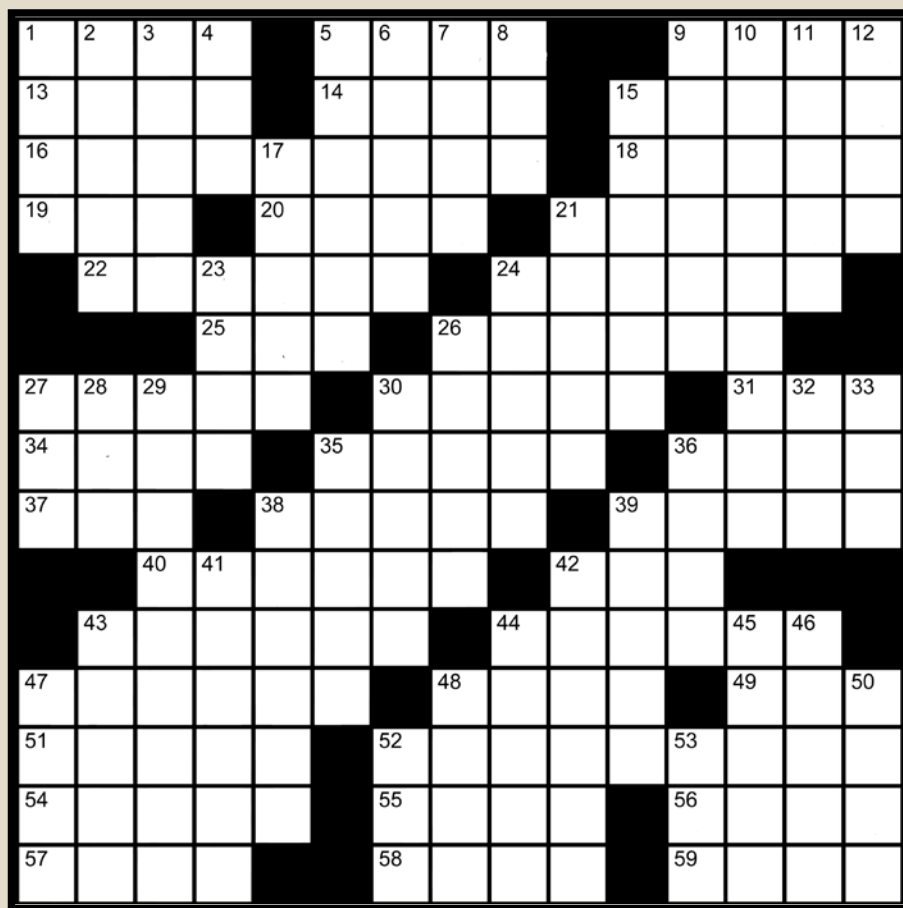
**DS:** When someone goes to SGS they will be invited to create a Profile by answering questions about themselves such as age, location, Reformed denomination, hobbies, etc. The goal is to allow others to get to know them, learning about them by reading their "story." There is a search feature to allow you to find others in your country, and that's free to all regardless of subscription status but if you want to chat or email other members, then they have to sign up for a subscription. The cost of the subscription depends on the length: a month is \$19.99, 3 months is \$44.99, 6 months is \$69.99 and a Year is \$89.99. These subscriptions are far less expensive than other "dating" sites. **RP**

To find out more, visit  
[www.sovereigngracesingles.com](http://www.sovereigngracesingles.com).



# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 5-2

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. Scottish girl
5. Unit of perceived loudness
9. Long-legged wading bird with curved beak
13. Succulent plant used for skin care products
14. "Why do the nations \_\_\_\_\_?" (Psalm 2)
15. Intimidate (rhymes with 6 Down)
16. Get over the (really) high bar
18. Stroll; saunter
19. Utilitarian, sporty vehicle (abbreviation)
20. XVIII – IX
21. Gallows
22. Hate; loathe; abhor
24. Effect; consequence
25. Excellent flier or high/low card
26. Edam or Gouda
27. \_\_\_\_\_ and alas!

30. Perfect contentment

31. Stick out (from)

34. Value of outdated Canadian coin

35. Salty water used in cooking

36. Mexican currency

37. Large wine cask

38. Bird and bat manure

39. Teacher (or someone who toots?)

40. Six \_'\_\_\_\_\_ (behind you in flying)

42. Motor vehicle (partly like a chariot?)

43. Agreeable lemur (1 word) or what a sailor says to his captain (2 words)

44. "make you lie down in \_\_\_\_\_." (Hosea 2)

47. They identify products or livestock.

48. "striking a \_\_\_\_\_, ...ran... aground." (Acts 27)

49. "struck them \_\_\_\_ and

thigh" (Judges 15)

51. Dishwasher and washing machine cycle

52. Footloose and \_\_\_\_\_
54. Possible pre-cancerous cells (abbreviation)

55. Indigenous people of Japan and Russia

56. "a light shone in the \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 12)

57. Where all golfers get their starts

58. It's grand in a baseball game.

59. Give up (power or territory)

### DOWN

1. "who \_\_\_\_\_ with his tongue" (Judges 7)

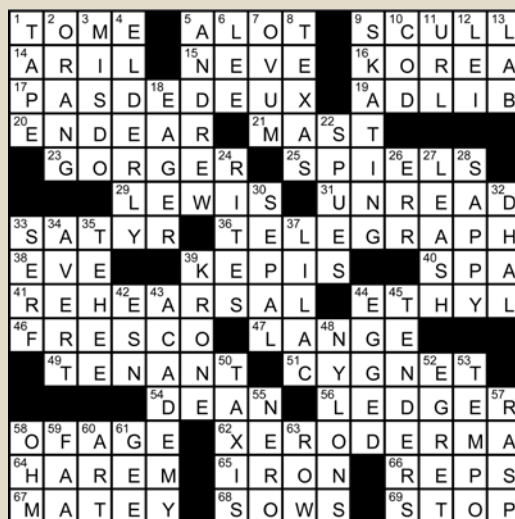
2. "saying with \_\_\_\_\_ voice" (Revelation 5)

3. "you can \_\_\_\_\_ problems" (Daniel 5)

4. "for they shall \_\_\_\_ God." (Matthew 5)

5. "\_\_\_\_\_ the name of the LORD" (Joel 2)

## LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 5-1

6. Remain (unpleasantly) in one's mind
7. Leer
8. "hailed the \_\_\_\_ ashore" (John 21)
9. Longer term for iamb
10. Part of hot tub or printer
11. Small arm of sea, lake or river
12. Leave this the way it is (in editing)
15. Low raised platforms
17. Type of shirt or sweater
21. Canada's silly birds
23. Courtesy
24. Animal often killed by poachers for its horn
26. What glasses do in a toast
27. "O Lord, pay attention and \_\_\_\_\_" (Daniel 9)
28. Monetary unit of Moldova and Romania
29. Irritation; vexation
30. \_\_\_\_\_ yourself for orthodontic work!
32. It's known for entertaining the troops.
33. Hill or rocky peak (in Ont., Can.?)
35. The gulls hang around them.
36. "fine linen, white and \_\_\_\_\_" (Revelation 19)
38. Forest clearings
39. It's like toffee, but you can pull it.
41. One of Moses' tasks ordered in Exodus 30.

42. Part of (Caesar's?) the intestine
43. "\_\_\_\_\_, plead your case" (Micah 6)
44. Cassia tree (and medicine prepared from it)
45. "and these \_\_\_\_\_ agree" (1 John 5)
46. "the fields \_\_\_\_\_ no food" (Habakkuk 3)
47. Misbehaving child (or wurst kind of sausage)
48. Travel in style in Canada VIA this method.
50. Soccer superstar
52. What come between mis and sols
53. Federal Communications regulator

# Small deeds being done

"Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned."  
– Peter Marshall

Here at *Reformed Perspective*, we'd love to equip the whole Christian world to know and speak God's Truth. But big goals aren't always admirable. Aim too high and instead of doing anything well, you may end up doing everything badly.

That's why *Reformed Perspective's* focus has, from the start, been a lot smaller: our target audience when we began was just a couple of Reformed denominations located in Canada and Australia, whose members came from a primarily Dutch background. And because we knew our audience – our editors and writers and board members were from those churches – we were familiar with their needs and interests, weaknesses, and strengths.

In the 35 years since our start, we have expanded our sights some, even as we've maintained our focus. We're speaking first and foremost to a Reformed conservative audience, and one that already knows Christian schooling is a priority. Our readers are as familiar with St. Nick as they are with Santa, have the Apostles' Creed memorized, and can probably recite Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1 off by heart too. They baptize their babies, donate to pro-life causes, hold to a 6-day Creation, believe wine is a blessing (even as drunkenness is a sin), may not be all that good at talking about

God, are eager to use political activism to honor His Name, and at some point have given a *dropje* to an unsuspecting friend.

That's who we're trying to equip, these are the people we know and the people we are, and by focusing here we can serve them better than we ever could if we were aiming for a broader audience. Seth Godin speaks to business and marketing audiences, but he recently made a point that echoed Peter Marshall's quote. He noted:

"When you seek to engage with everyone, you rarely delight anyone....[But] when you have your eyes firmly focused....your quality, your story and your impact will all get better.

"And then, ironically enough, the word will spread."

And that's exactly what we're finding – word *has* started to spread. That's due in part to a change we made almost three years ago when we started posting all our articles and videos and reviews to our website. When we began doing so, *ReformedPerspective.ca* might have gotten just 300 visitors a day, but over the last couple of months we've been averaging more than a 1,000.

So even as our writers are tackling *our* challenges, others around the world have benefited from articles like these:

- Charles Darwin's grave mistake
- Porn addiction isn't just a guy thing
- When we have to parent our parents
- War through the eyes of a child: Alice Kuik shares her memories of World War II
- 8 free films for your study group
- Is recreational marijuana sinful?
- A careful look at the issue of birth control
- Church, home, and school – a two legged stool?
- In defense of biblical spanking
- 12 Creation videos that'll have you awestruck

It's via the Internet that a Dutch Canadian magazine was able to introduce some Nigerians to Reformer John Hus via a free Czech film; a Cuban pastor was pointed to the works of American theologian RC Sproul; and a Spanish publisher got English material to translate for his own magazine. We've become a resource for folks we don't know and will never meet.

And yet, as far as our reach grows, it's our original target audience that makes it all possible. We're trying to serve them, and via their generous support they've enabled *Reformed Perspective* to equip Christians far beyond our shores.



# Become a monthly donor and help us reach the world!

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

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

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

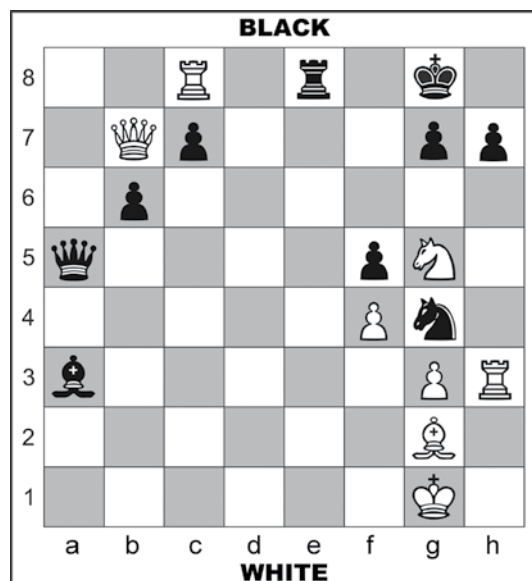
Completed forms, along with a void cheque, can be mailed to: *Reformed Perspective*, **Box 1328, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0.**



# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



## Chess Puzzle #254



**WHITE to Mate in 3**

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

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

## Riddle for Punsters

#254 – "If you know business, go into show business?"

*Why did the pig farmer become an actor?*

He liked to act like a real \_ \_ \_ when on stage.

*Why did the baker become an actor?*

He like to do r \_ \_ \_ playing.

*Why did the boxer become a comedian on stage?*

When telling a joke he was good at giving the p \_ \_ \_ \_ line.

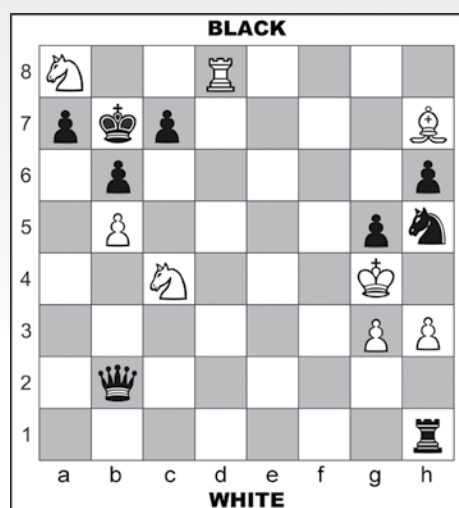
## Problem to Ponder

#254 – "After Picking those Vegetables You Can Sit and Veg!"

Four boys, namely Jim, Abdul, Hans and Ivan, helped their mom pick vegetables from their garden on a Saturday. There were red potatoes, purple beets, yellow onions and orange carrots. Each boy picked a different type of vegetable and each had a different size of reusable bag (made of recycled materials), namely small, medium, large or extra large. The boys' ages increase when their names are written in alphabetical order with the exception of Abdul. Jim is the second oldest. The older a boy, the larger the collection bag he uses. Abdul picked a vegetable that is not purple and Hans picked a vegetable that is neither purple nor orange. The color of the vegetable that Ivan picked starts with a letter that sometimes is used as a vowel. Which type of vegetable did Abdul pick and what size of bag did Ivan use?

## Last Issue's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #253



**WHITE TO MATE IN 2**

**Descriptive Notation**

1. B-K4 ch P-B3
2. N-Q6 mate

**Algebraic Notation**

1. Bh7-e4 + c7-c6
2. Nc4-d6 ++

**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

**Descriptive Notation**

1. ---- Q-K7 ch
2. K-B5 R-KB8 ch
3. K-N6 R-B3 mate

**Algebraic Notation**

1. ---- Qb2-e2 +
2. Kg4-f5 Rh1-f1 +
3. Kf5-g6 Rf1-f6 ++

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#253 – "Employment Events"

Did you hear about the researcher who leapt at the opportunity to study frog migration patterns?

Did you hear about the customer who paid the refrigerator repair man with cold cash instead of by credit?

Did you hear about the mechanic who wrenched his back trying to remove rusty bolts?

Did you hear about the carpenter who for weeks tried to hammer out the details of a contract with his boss then finally he nailed it?

## Answer to Problem to Ponder

#253 – "WORD JUMBLE – Types of Trees in Canada"

**DECIDUOUS (BROADLEAF) TREES**

hebec **beech**  
ryrhec **cherry**  
lwolwi **willow**  
tututreb **butternut**  
brac pleap **crab apple**

gooddow **dogwood**  
lapem **maple**  
notdotcowo **cottonwood**  
mulp **plum**  
thiwe chirb **white birch**

hunttecs **chestnut**  
rolapp **poplar**  
twanul **walnut**  
shingle lem **english elm**

**CONIFER (EVERGREEN) TREES**

cared **cedar**  
dodorew **redwood**

neip **pine**  
punjire **juniper**

cupres **spruce**  
laudsog fri **douglas fir**



# FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD

## CELEBRATE 1517

In this issue we are happy to feature works from across Canada that were created to celebrate the origins of Reformation Day when, on Oct 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg. The Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary and Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College teamed together to solicit submissions as part of their “Faithful to His Word: Celebrate 1517” project. Some readers may have heard the music and seen the drama compositions that were commissioned by these institutions for the occasion, as these were performed all across Canada and much appreciated. Since the number of submissions towards a commemorative book were fewer than hoped, the project organizers asked *Reformed Perspective* if it was interested in publishing the best submissions here, and we are happy to do so. On these pages you can see some of the fruit: one essay, one poem, two stories, and three art pieces

The article is by a name already familiar to *Reformed Perspective* readers, Harma Mae Smit, who shares a work of scholarship that is intense –

it demands a little something from the reader, but certainly rewards that effort with a look at “Luther’s other life-changing doctrine.”

The three pieces of artwork all accompany Harma Mae Smit’s essay, and were submitted by two students who were in senior high (Sabrina Shei and Aiden Van Delft) and one who was in elementary (Amy Warkentin).

We have a wonderful poem by Katie Tomlin, who was in Grade 8 when she submitted her piece about martyr Thomas Cramner.

Finally, we have two stories – two pieces of historical fiction that are closely aligned with historical fact. They do add some details and dialogue, but follow the facts as we know them. The first gives us a look at the Reformation in France. Rebecca Van Raalte was in Grade 12 when she submitted her story of the Bartholomew’s Day Massacre and Admiral Gaspar de Coligny’s last stand. Anna Meerstra (Grade 11) then shares the story of how English Bible translator William Tyndale was betrayed and turned over to the authorities.

# Original Sin: LUTHER'S OTHER LIFE-CHANGING DOCTRINE

by Harma-Mae Smit

Every Reformation Day we remember how God used Luther to teach the Church that we are justified, not by what we do, but *by faith alone*.

Often overlooked is how God used Luther to revive another forgotten doctrine.

Martin Luther is more than another dusty historical figure – he has become a symbol of the Reformation itself. His legend is vivid enough to obscure the details of the actual man and the world in which he lived. The legend tells us the story of the tight way his life mirrored his theology, in his journey from the bondage of doubt to freedom in Christ.

Yet this is not the only legend told – a man as famous as Luther collects negative portrayals as well as positive ones. Not all Roman Catholics would see Luther as a man to celebrate.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Martin Luther has been characterized as a coarse man, a divisive man – worse than that, a man who allowed his own personal struggles with his faith to split the church. He was offered every comfort in the church he was raised in. His priest confessor grew tired of listening to the litany of sins he had committed, sins so minor they were hardly worth the breath it took to confess them.<sup>2</sup> Why couldn't Luther find comfort in his faith? It is said of him, that surely he must have been of a depressive temperament, or mentally unstable.<sup>3</sup> Surely he was a peculiar man, an unusual man, and not a man others

should've followed.

Of course, it shouldn't come as a great shock to anyone that a Roman Catholic might disparage Martin Luther as being unhealthily obsessed with sin, even as a Protestant might respect him as a great mind. Yet what we are after in this article is an honest evaluation of the life and thinking of this pivotal figure who has had such an enormous impact on Christianity. So this is the necessary question: was Luther unhealthily obsessed with his defects, or was this an important piece in the formulation of his theology?

## AWARENESS OF THE FULL HORROR OF OUR SINFUL INCLINATIONS

Luther's theology is well-known: justification by faith alone.

But to focus on justification by faith alone is to miss the rest of the story. It misses Luther's awful awareness of sin, and his dawning realization that sin was not limited to his conscious actions but was linked to the very nature of who he was. In fact, Luther suffered because he was aware not only of his *actual* sin, but also his *sinful nature*. And the comfort his church offered him all the years he struggled as a monk was rooted in a very different view of

humanity's original sin, a view that did not provide him with the strategies to address his own sinful nature as the fountain of his sinful impulses.

This is not a mere scholastic discussion.

Not only does one's opinion of Martin Luther as a human being affect the way one views the Reformation, but it also affects the way one approaches anyone who experiences distress, as Luther did, over their sinful inclinations. Luther's understanding of his sinful nature, can give comfort to those who are also rightly realizing the full horror of the sinful inclinations running through their every action. This is an important point. Understanding the sinfulness of our nature is necessary if we're going to give true comfort to believers who produce sin continually. To neglect to define human nature as actively inclined to sin, even after conversion, leads to spiritual distress. Luther's life illustrates this, and Reformed theology further confirms this.

Consequently, it is necessary to first look at the doctrine of original sin as the Roman Catholic Church understood it, and then how Luther differed and how it affected his life



## A SINFUL NATURE OR AN UNGOVERNED ONE?

Did Roman Catholics in Luther's time, then, not think humans had a sinful nature? It is perhaps better to say they did not talk in terms of a sinful nature at all. Theologians defined original sin as a *lack* of a special gift God had granted at creation. This special gift, which is often called "original justice" in their writings, enabled man to conform his will to God. And as a result of original justice, man's will could be rightly directed towards God.

Then, when man fell, this special gift was removed, and therefore man in his nature was wounded and no longer directed to God.<sup>4</sup> Man's passions became unleashed as a result of losing original justice in the Fall, and these passions

were no longer rightly directed by man's will and reason. This ungoverned desire or passion was not in itself regarded as sinful unless it resulted in an actual sinful action. Therefore there did remain in man the "tinder of sin" or "concupiscence," from which actual sins sprung, but which was not sin itself.<sup>5</sup>

*Concupiscence* is not a replacement for the Reformed understanding of man's sinful nature, but rather a separate concept, separated from man's will and reason, and not something active in every part of a man. This illustrates that medieval theology had quite a different formulation of the nature of man, and used these divisions to explain original sin in a very different way than later Protestant theology.

This doctrine had developed through-

## But Now I See by Aidan Van Delft

Aidan Van Delft used bright colors to portray joy at what the Reformation brought. Before Luther, sermons and Bible readings were done in Latin, "so the common churchgoer could only understand the stained glass images" but "when the Reformation started so did the translation of the Bible." Van Delft used the "harsh lines in the stained glass windows [to] represent the order of the old church." And "the smooth lines represent the hidden beauty that was now revealed" to the masses."



*It might even be  
comforting to  
conclude Luther  
could not have  
been in his right  
mind...*

out the Middle Ages, with theologians such as Anselm and Thomas Aquinas increasingly defining original sin as a lack of something, rather than an active inclination against God, as Augustine had.<sup>6</sup>

In one sense their move in this direction makes sense, because to define original sin as a lack and a removal of a special gift appears to preserve the justice of God. If God only took back what had never been essential to man's nature, God is not unjust because he may grant or not grant gifts as he wishes. A division of the nature of man was one way to address this, and medieval theology was further influenced by philosophical traditions of the time.<sup>7</sup>

This conception of original sin was carried over by the Nominalist theologians that Luther reacted most strongly against. In this school of thought, God adapted his righteous requirements to mercifully accept the very best acts man could do, and that God would, in return, give grace to man if man did his very best.<sup>8</sup> This has obvious implications for justification, but it affects original sin as well, as it teaches that man, after the fall, is still able to detest sin and seek God.<sup>9</sup> It was asserted that man in his natural powers could achieve selfless love out of his own will, and God would graciously respond to this.<sup>10</sup> This theology can only result from a conception of original sin as a *lack* of something, rather than an *active* inclination to rebel against God.

## LUTHER'S STRUGGLE

When expressed this way, the division between the usual Protestant and Roman Catholic view of Luther becomes clearer.

Our opinion of Luther might hinge on the nature of the sinful inclinations Luther detected in himself.

If God did *not* hold Luther guilty for his concupiscence, all of Luther's fellow priests were right to be exasperated by his continual struggle with his worry over it, and Roman Catholics today are right to dismiss Luther's obsession as anxious mental instability.

But if he truly stood condemned before the face of God, as he felt he was, then he was justified in his terror and his struggle to find a source of comfort. As a result, the Reformation that resulted from his shift in theology was justified, and more than justified – it was necessary!

Luther suffered deeply as he grew more and more aware of the sea of sinful inclinations inside him. He would confess his sins daily – for as long as six hours – searching his memory and analyzing his every motive to be sure he had not missed a single one. While his priest grew exasperated with listening, Luther grew more and more frightened that he could go on thinking of new sins even after six hours. Roland H. Bainton underscores this in his biography of Luther, *Here I Stand*:

"There is, according to Luther, something much more drastically wrong with man than any particular list of offenses which can be enumerated, confessed and forgiven. The very nature of man is corrupt. The penitential system fails because it is directed to particular lapses. Luther had come to perceive that the entire man is in need of forgiveness."<sup>11</sup>

This realization plunged Luther into terror. Philip Watson describes Luther's state like this:

"The scholastic theologians, it is true, taught that *concupiscentia* was not in itself to be regarded as sin... But this again occasioned questionings and apprehension in Luther's mind. Had his will not consented? ... Was he really in a state of grace – for he could perceive no evidence of its effective working in him?"<sup>12</sup>

The comfort offered by his priests – that

God was a merciful God – did little to alleviate this burden. To Luther, this kind of mercy diminished God's righteousness, and he refused to conceive of God's justice in such human terms.<sup>13</sup>

But was Luther's problem his own sinful inability to accept mercy, or was there a flaw in his theology that needed to be rectified? Luther came to believe there was a flaw in his theology, namely, that every action a person takes, even those which outwardly appear to be good ones, are shot through with sin.

One could easily conclude Luther's conscience was overly sensitive, and that he suffered for nothing.<sup>14</sup> It might even be comforting to conclude Luther could not have been in his right mind to have been so bothered by how he fell short of God's standards. Everyone falls short, after all, and it is comforting to assume God will overlook small shortcomings. And Luther was a monk – he'd devoted everything to being a good one. But it is better to conclude that Luther had the valuable ability not to take his sins lightly. Perhaps his sensitive conscience was necessary to correctly depict a God who doesn't make compromises with sin. Luther himself mused in this way later in his life.<sup>15</sup>

Luther experienced intense distress, and part of his distress was a direct result of the way theology was framed at the time. Defining original sin as a loss rather than an active inclination did not give him a conception that equipped him to understand the sinful inclinations he could see in himself. When he felt the desire to curse God, the only way he could fit it into the theology he knew at the time was in a way that damned him. If he truly was a

### Martin Luther by Amy Warkentin

Here we see Martin Luther posting his 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Church door. The artist, Amy Warkentin wanted to "send the message that indulgences were wrong and Martin Luther was right."



believer he should be moving towards a deeper understanding of God, but despite all his spiritual acts he never felt his sinful impulses lessen. He knew what was inside him was an active inclination. The sins he confessed constantly were active rebellion, an active rebellion against God. And he needed a theology that could incorporate this rebellious inclination that he could not deny was in himself, and yet still grant him the comfort of being saved.

Luther's freedom began when he, finally, not only faced the reality of his depravity, but also grasped that Christ's sacrifice had the power to atone for not only his actual sins but also his sinful nature. "Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into Paradise."<sup>16</sup> It was only after this realization that he was freed from his constant inner reflection to be

able to go out into the world and actually, by the grace of God, to change it.

### LUTHER'S CONCEPT OF ORIGINAL SIN

When it comes to original sin it is clear that Luther objected to the church's doctrine of original sin on two points: first, that natural man can take even a step towards loving God, or make any motion that God could condescend to respond to with grace; second, that even after conversion man still possesses sinful desires that are present even in outwardly good works.

Luther never systematically pulls all of his theological ideas together in one work, but he discusses original sin throughout his writings. In particular, his early lectures on Romans are crucial in

the development of his ideas on original sin because in connection with Romans he spends a lengthy amount of time considering this doctrine.<sup>17</sup> Luther argues on the basis of Romans that original sin was not just a lack of a quality in the will or a lack of light in the mind, but a total lack of uprightness and power of everything in body and soul – a complete inclination to evil.<sup>18</sup> The scholastic trend Luther discerned was an attempt to replace divine grace with light of human reason.<sup>19</sup> Luther argues, in response, that using human reason to discern what is good will only define the best things according to humans, not God. "[W]e should call 'natural' the fact that we are in sin and death and that we desire, understand, and long for things that are corrupt and evil," Luther states in another one of his





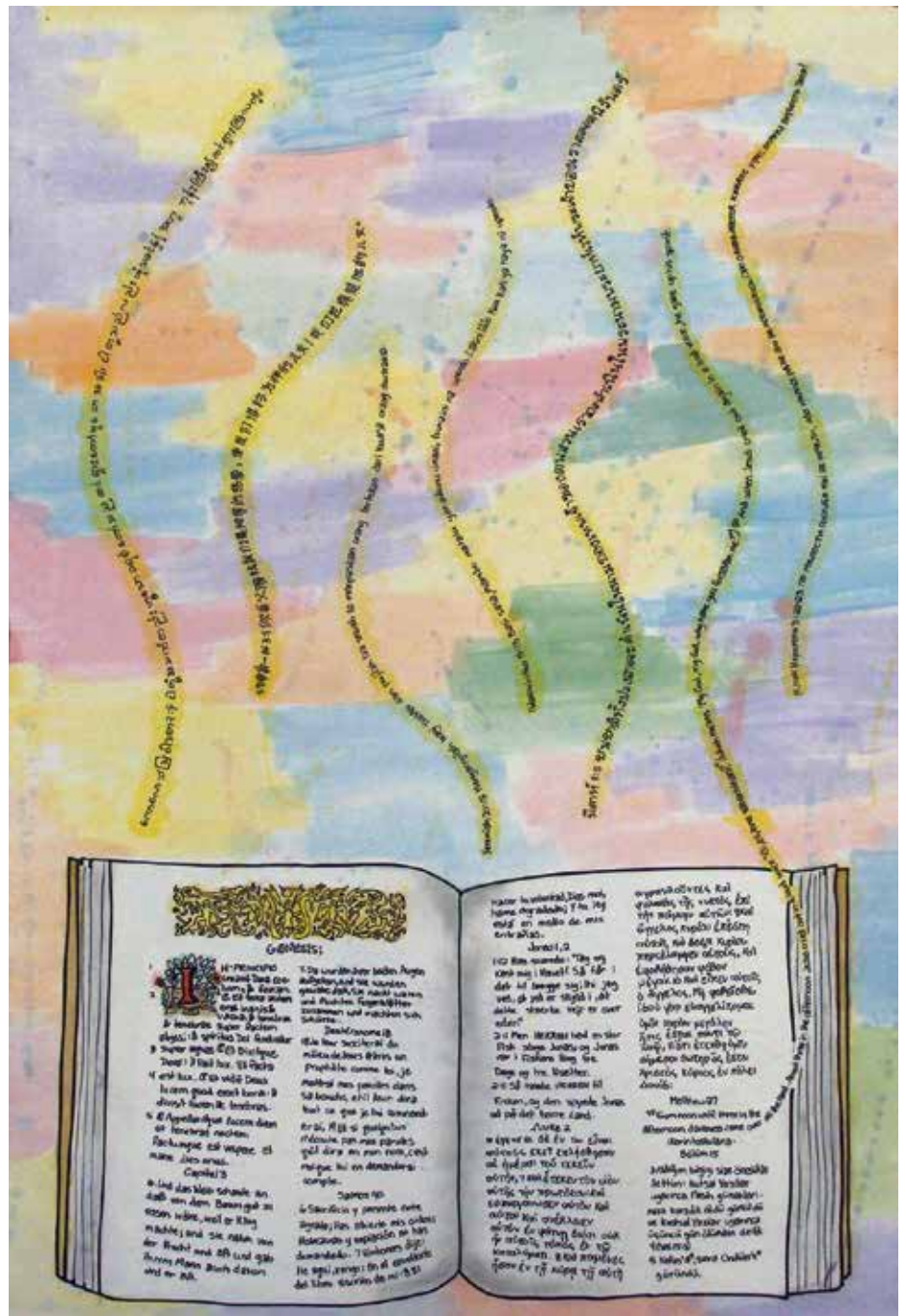
## Writing Through Time by Sabrina Shei

Sabrina Shei depicts the Bible in Latin, as it was when limited to only the few and the elite in the Church, and then shows passages in other languages drifting up and away from the Latin Bible, showing that, “now people have the opportunity to read it in their own languages.”

works. He then insists, “Who does not see the contradiction between the statement that the natural powers are perfect, and the statement that nature is corrupted by sin?”<sup>20</sup> Human nature will result in doing “good things in an evil way.” Good things performed by natural capacity are good in an evil way, performed not for service of God but in service of the creature.<sup>21</sup>

In this work on Romans, Luther also works out the sinfulness of believers. One of the reasons Luther was so radical is related to his second assertion, that an active sinful nature still operates in a believer, and that therefore a person can be simultaneously saved and a sinner. Yet his lectures on Romans should utterly destroy any notion that Luther preached righteousness through faith alone in order to dispense with good works: Luther argues that a sinner has the beginning of righteousness and continues to seek more and more of it. In other words, while a man knows he is a sinner and knows every moment that he is entirely incapable of doing anything good, he continues to follow the will of God in his life. He continues to walk the path God has set out, because God’s grace has shown him the first step. Every intentional step a sinner takes is an intentional movement from sin to righteousness.<sup>22</sup>

Luther was convinced that defining original sin in terms of privation (or lack) alone was a reductionist approach and did not express the real severity of the Adam’s sin. He argued sin is not a localized part but in the whole person, as well as a positive reality and not privation.<sup>23</sup> This doctrine needs to be intimately connected with salvation – Christ is the second Adam, and just as the



penalty in Adam leads to condemnation, believers receive the gift of grace through Christ to avoid condemnation.<sup>24</sup>

## ROMAN CATHOLIC RESPONSE

It is clear Luther’s view of original sin was one of part of his theology that Rome objected to. In 1545 the Roman Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent specifically to deal with the theology of Luther and other Reformers.

The Council’s decrees state:

“This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin, the holy council declares the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in the sense that it is truly and properly sin in those born again, but in the sense that it is of sin and inclines to sin. But if anyone is of the contrary opinion, let him be anathema.”<sup>25</sup>

Here the Council declares that even when Paul laments that he is inclined to actively commit sin, he is not talking about something that is sin in and of itself. Due to conflicting streams of Roman Catholic thought on original sin at the time, the definition of original sin by this council is perhaps more vague than it could have been, and yet it still rejects any formulation of original sin that could fall in line with Luther.<sup>26</sup> It is defined as a loss (of justice and holiness), and underscores that the origin and possible effect of concupiscence is sin, while concupiscence itself does not incur guilt – under this definition it is then possible for believers to do good works free of sinful inclinations.

More clarity on the decrees of the Council of Trent is provided in *The Council of Trent: Catechism for Parish Priests*, written soon after the Council of Trent ended. This catechism continues to define concupiscence as the “fuel of sin” and not sin itself.<sup>27</sup> It confirms that when concupiscence is used to refer to the remains of sin after baptism, it is not conceiving of concupiscence as identical to the Reformed concep-

tion of the sinful nature.

It is interesting to note is how concupiscence is defined as the remains of sin after baptism (the “fuel of sin” or the “tinder of sin”), and yet in this Catechism it is also defined as merely a desire for something one doesn’t have. Certainly a desire for warmth when one is cold should not be considered a sin, but can this desire be thought of as a remainder after original sin is removed?

It seems more likely that the term concupiscence can be used in two ways, first as a more benign term which refers to desire, and then as a more negative term referring to the unbridled desires that man loses control over as a result of his wounded nature. The Reformed definition of sinful nature would not be a loss of control over human desires, but rather the active sinful bend in every human desire.

And this parish priest catechism goes on to highlight the issues with understanding concupiscence in this way, when it goes on to define sinful concupiscence as concupiscence that conflicts with spirit and reason. The Reformed interpretation would emphasize that spirit and reason are bent

away from God as well, and so a conflict between desire, spirit and reason would be meaningless as a barometer of sinfulness before God.

The medieval Roman Catholic interpretations of original sin flow out of understandable concerns – concerns to preserve the voluntary nature of original sin, and to prevent an overly deterministic understanding of sin. There is an impulse to encourage believers to do good works, and fight against their actual sin. However, the solution runs up against obvious problems. If the radical nature of sin is diminished, and man’s nature is affected by the fall only by the loss of something, any active rebellious tendencies are left without an explanation.

### OUR COMFORT

How, then, should original sin be defined? As with any doctrine, there are many different ideas about it. But a definition of original sin needs to be practical, and speak directly to the individual believer who sees in themselves a sin-streaked nature. This is why the Reformers formulated confessions

Think you can change the world  
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to be used in the church, and these define sin clearly. First, the Heidelberg Catechism emphasizes man is unable to do good because he is by nature inclined to hate God and his neighbour. This active turning away from God is at the heart of both our sinful nature and every actual sin.<sup>28</sup> The Belgic Confession also devotes an article to the doctrine of original sin, and emphasizes in the same way that man is a slave to sin.<sup>29</sup>

Original sin, according to the Belgic Confession, corrupts the entire nature of man:

“As a root it produces in man all sorts of sin. It is, therefore, so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn the human race. It is not abolished nor eradicated even by baptism, for sin continually streams forth like water welling up from this woeful source.”<sup>30</sup>

This formulation does a few things. It insists original sin corrupts the entire nature of man, not just one part of it. And it does not diminish the radical nature of human nature’s corruption. The Belgic Confession uses as scriptural evidence not just Paul’s well-known passage about doing the sin he does not want to do, but also Romans 5:12, which declares through Adam all were made sinners. Adam’s sin resulted in more than just a potential from which true sin could spring, rather it produced real sinners. This is necessary to grasp, and the various explanations of original sin must hold onto this central concept.

Therefore in the Belgic Confession humans did not just merely lose something because of original sin, just as Luther insisted man did not just merely lose some quality in the will or light in the mind. “For whatever light is in us has changed into darkness,” the Belgic Confession agrees. Scripture supports this by showing the corruption of the will and of every part of man: the heart of man is polluted, the mind of man is set on sin, and the desire of man is contrary to God.<sup>31</sup> Humans of themselves are by nature rebellious and always turned away from God – “None is righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). The Belgic Confession insists the effects of sin are so radical and so widespread, especially in man prior to conversion, that it is impossible to imagine how man can take even a step towards a right relationship with God again. And it underscores Luther’s understanding that even in a believer this sinful nature will continue to produce sin, as it states:

“the awareness of this corruption may make [believers] groan as they eagerly wait to be delivered from this body of death.”

Therefore our confessions present to us a necessary formulation of the biblical passages on original sin – and, in addition, it provide unspeakable comfort. See, for example, the declaration in the Belgic Confession:



"We believe that, when He saw that man had thus plunged himself into physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, our gracious God in His marvellous wisdom and goodness set out to seek man when he trembling fled from Him."<sup>32</sup>

This is utterly realistic about humanity. It does not shy away from the worst of our nature. Yet it magnifies God. God does not meet us halfway – God goes farther and actually saves those who are actively running away.

In conclusion, this confession – and this entire doctrine of original sin – directly reassures those who are distressed because they are real sinners with active rebellious inclinations against God. Just as Luther looked at himself and despaired at his progress toward loving God, unable to leave behind sin and unable to make progress in ridding himself of his sinful nature, so too many believers may look at themselves in discouragement. In order to move on from despair, Luther needed to both acknowledge the bend of his own nature away from God – radically affecting every ounce of him – and to accept this inclination as true sin. Then he could fully grasp the even greater length God reaches, and find the assurance of astonishing forgiveness in Christ. Christ's blood covers the guilt of our sinful nature just as much as it covers actual sins. Just as in Adam man fell so fully, so man was so united with Christ as to be absolutely saved. And believers today can follow in this comfort. They no longer need to be paralyzed by an inward focus on the depth of their sin, but they can move on from the depth of their sin to look outward to Christ. And this truly frees a believer to live and act.

RP

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is not to deny many Roman Catholics do, in fact, view Luther positively despite his excommunication by the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>2</sup> "Look here," said [Luther's confessor, Johann von Staupitz], "if you expected Christ to forgive you, come in with something to forgive—parricide, blasphemy, adultery—instead of all these peccadilloes." Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, (New York, Abingdon Press, 1950), 54.

<sup>3</sup> For examples of modern speculations on Luther's mental state, including diagnoses of scrupulosity, see <http://catholicexchange.com/from-scrupulosity-to-lutherosity-part-1>, and <http://www.catholicstand.com/scrupulosity-a-little-bit-of-hell/>, for two examples. Accessed November 6, 2017. This Roman Catholic view of Luther stems from writings such as the above, as well as personal interaction with individual Ro-

man Catholics. It is important to note no one view of Luther is unanimous.

<sup>4</sup> George Vandervelde, *Original Sin: Two Major Trends in Contemporary Roman Catholic Reinterpretation*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1975), 30.

<sup>5</sup> In medieval theology, the Fall did result in original sin; however, the guilt and condemnation of original sin is removed by God in his grace in baptism. The doctrine of original sin is intimately connected with the doctrine of baptism, however to explore the meaning of the sacrament of baptism in depth is beyond the scope of this paper. According to Roman Catholic theology, baptism remits original sin.

<sup>6</sup> There were various theological strains on the doctrine of original sin within the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, with different scholars following Augustinian, Anselmian and Thomistic formulations of the doctrine. There was not one defined, dominant view. Vandervelde, *Original Sin*, 27, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Jairzinho Lopes Pereira attributes Augustine's lack of influence among the Scholastics (those Luther opposed) to Aristotelian philosophical influence. Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner* (Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 267.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 269-270. Gabriel Biel, who spoke of a 'pactum' between God and humans, where God promises to reward with grace those who do their best, not because humans deserve grace, but because God is merciful. Luther wrote against this, and others in the Nominalist school of thought.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>10</sup> Another theologian Luther was likely reacting against was Duns Scotus: see Philip Watson's description of Luther's interaction with Scotus' theology. Philip Watson, *Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), 50.

<sup>11</sup> Bainton, *Here I stand*, 55. In Luther's work on Psalm 51 he also describes his struggle to understand the doctrine of original sin, and his conviction that natural man could not will the good. He lectured on the Psalms early in his career, prior to lecturing on Romans. From this passage, it is not clear whether he finds much comfort in this conception of man's sinful inclinations. He does not move on to justification in his explanation, but rather asserts an explanation of original sin is a mystery. A correct understanding of original sin needs to be tied to salvation in Christ to bring comfort. See "Psalm 51," in *Selected Psalms* 1 (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; trans. Jaroslav Pelikan; vol. 12 of *Luther's Works*; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 351.

<sup>12</sup> Watson, *Let God be God*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 322n.3.

<sup>14</sup> Bainton goes on to address the question of Luther's mental state, admitting many aspects of Luther's state at the time do compare with mental disturbances. However, he maintains, Luther's mental struggle never affected his tremendous work output. In addition, the issues Luther struggled with were real issues that existed in the religion he lived and worked with, and more than that, he did make progress through his struggles to clarify what religious solutions actually addressed his struggles and which were unhelpful. Later, Bainton shows Luther's mentor, Staupitz, must have considered Luther fundamentally sound despite his exasperation with Luther's inability to find comfort, because Staupitz told Luther he should assume the chair of the Bible at the university. Despite all Luther's struggles, he was entrusted with teaching others, and Staupitz appeared to have confidence that by teaching the source of their religion, Luther would learn about what help the Bible offered him in his struggles. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 56, 60.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 361. Throughout his life Luther eventually worked out a technique for dealing with his spiritual depression. One important part was that he came to believe that sensitive believers could, by going through such struggles, understand their beliefs in a deeper way. Sensitive believers could then share these beliefs with less sensitive believers in a way that leads them to agree with the truth of it.

<sup>16</sup> Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 65.

<sup>17</sup> Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 28, 31.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia* (ed. Hilton C. Oswald; trans. Jacob A. O. Preus; vol. 25 of *Luther's Works*; Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 299.

<sup>19</sup> In Luther's work on Psalm 51, he also describes being taught that man had only lost grace and that if man followed the

light of his nature he would be given grace. Luther rejects this formulation. See Luther, "Psalm 51," 351.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>21</sup> Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 338-339.

<sup>22</sup> Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, 260.

<sup>23</sup> Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 331-332.

<sup>24</sup> Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 335.

<sup>25</sup> Council of Trent, Session 5, June 17, 1546, Decree concerning original sin, in *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. Rev. H. J. Schroeder (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, 1978), 27-28.

<sup>26</sup> See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: 1949), 258, <http://downloads.biblicaltraining.org/Systematic%20Theology%20by%20Louis%20Berkhof.pdf>.

Vandervelde argues that the reason the Council of Trent was somewhat vague in its definition was that there were participants from Augustinian, Anselmian and Thomistic traditions. They agreed on which errors to combat, but less so on what ideas to defend (p 33). It is interesting to note one of the participants at the Council of Trent, Seripando (who was an Augustinian), opposed defining concupiscence as "a morally neutral human drive" instead of a "morally qualified inclination to evil." However, he was not successful. Vandervelde, *Original Sin*, 40.

<sup>27</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, 1982) 183-184, 469-470.

<sup>28</sup> "The Heidelberg Catechism," in *Creeds of Christendom: with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 309.

<sup>29</sup> "Belgic Confession," in *Creeds of Christendom: with a History and Critical Notes*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 3:398-400. Hereafter I will cite the Belgic Confession in the form BC Article 14 with the volume and page number of Schaff following in brackets, e.g., BC Article 14 (3:398-400).

<sup>30</sup> BC Article 15 (3:400-401).

<sup>31</sup> See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 258, as well as Jer 17: 9, Rom 8: 7, Gal 5: 24.

<sup>32</sup> BC Article 17 (3:402).

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# The Lord Can

March 20, 1556 in Oxford Prison.

Cold

Empty

Dark

Except for

A desk, a candle, 14 documents and an old man

Told to sign the documents

And recant

Told to write a speech

And speak it to an audience

Four long hours he wrote his speech and  
signed the

documents

But he writes another

Taken out of prison and taken to a church

He is going to give the right speech

But he is afraid

A silent cry "I can't do this anymore"

The Lord replies,

"But I can"

– Katie Tomlin

The year was 1555 and Queen Mary, who has since become known as "Bloody Mary," had ascended the throne of England two years before. Her courts had quickly found Cranmer, and other prominent reformers who had served the previous English monarchs, guilty of treason. But she and the Roman Catholic authorities had hoped to make an example of Cranmer, so they worked him over for some time until he signed a document renouncing his Reformed faith. However, on the day he was to read it publicly before being led to the stake, he unexpectedly deviated from his script and renounced his recantation. The Queen was robbed of her triumph, and Cranmer announced: "This hand hath offended; it shall burn first!" The hand that had signed his recantation would burn first.

– Dr. Ted Van Raalte

"Death of Cranmer" (1887)  
by Joseph Martin Kronheim

# COLIGNY'S LAST STAND

by Rebecca Van Raalte

August 24 1572:  
St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre

Gaspar de Coligny woke with a start and sat bolt upright. His eyes scoured the room, examining every inch of it. Far off he could hear faint screams. His heartbeat quickened. He rubbed his tired eyes, stunned and confused. His mind felt trapped in a foggy cloud. What was happening?

Then, the pungent odour of smoke slowly crept up his nose and at once he remembered; it was the riots.

France had been in a constant state of internal war ever since the marriage between Henry of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois. This wedding, fabricated to establish peace between the Catholics and the Huguenots, gave the Catholics the perfect chance to further their persecution. Many Huguenots had gathered in Paris to celebrate the wedding. Mobs roamed the streets and brutally attacked them. The Catholics mercilessly planned the assassination of Huguenot leaders.

Coligny squeezed his eyes shut, trying to block the remembrance of the excruciating pain. His stomach twisted and his head spun. Vomit rose in his throat, but he swallowed it.

He looked down to his shattered elbow and then to his hand. One bullet had torn through his finger. Another had skimmed off his elbow.

The pain became too much to bear and he sank back into his bed. His vision darkened. He closed his eyes and tried to rest.

Despite his suffering, he thanked the Lord for sparing his life. The Catholics had tried to kill him but by God's grace, he had survived. Coligny knew death was not something to fear but he believed he still had work to accomplish on earth.

This attempted assassination, intended to weaken the Huguenots, left him further convinced to continue leading them. He

felt determined to persist in his task and to spread the hope of the gospel.

He remembered the comforting words found in Romans 8:18: *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

He repeated this over and over to himself. This mantra encouraged and uplifted him in the worst of times. It reminded him of the hope for the future; there was more beyond this difficult, sinful life.

The terror and the uproar in the streets would quickly be put to an end. He was certain of it. The king would send his soldiers and protect the Huguenots. There was no need to be afraid. He laid his head

down on his pillow and closed his eyes. Slowly, he drifted back to sleep.

A piercing scream broke the chill night air!

Something deep inside him ached from the terror in that deadly scream. His heart pounded in his chest as though it were trapped in a prison, desperate to escape.

The horror in the streets below was reaching a new extreme, turning into complete chaos. Barking, neighing, screaming, and pleading, it all overlapped. Over this horrible medley, Coligny could hear a new hymn rising. The believers sang of their only hope and strength.

Then, a loud bang! He clutched at his ringing ears.

An arquebus had been fired directly below in his courtyard. The gunshot brought his mind racing back to the pain from a few days ago. His finger and elbow burned from the agony but he pushed it off. He had to focus on this moment right now. He had been naive to think it was only a small riot that would quickly end. It was another attempt on his life. His impending death hung over his head.

Fingers shaking, his breath hitched and his heart raced furiously.

His spirit was crushed. He took a deep gasping breath.

"You are not alone," he reminded himself, "God is with you."

Tears streamed down his face. The power and majesty of his God awed him, lifting his spirit.

He clenched his hands together. They grasped desperately, as though searching for something to hold onto.

"Lord! Please give me the strength I need! Give me peace and humility to accept if this is my time. I know your will is good and you do all things for a purpose. Fortify my spirit so that even now I may be a true witness to your glory and honour."

He rose to his feet, still shaking but feeling a calm deep inside him. He knew the Lord was with Him.

Below Duke Henry I of Guise led his

## Who were the Huguenots?

The French Reformed believers of the sixteenth century were called "Huguenots." As early as the 1570s the Huguenots themselves had several theories as to the origin of the term and their Roman Catholic opponents had yet other, related to the apes. Whatever the origin of this term, these Reformed believers were numerous and influential, but heavily persecuted. In 1562 their churches numbered 2150, with 816 of these having fully functioning consistories.

But in 1572 thousands of Huguenots were killed in waves of persecution across France; the event came to be called "St. Bartholomew's Massacre." Among the most prominent of the victims was the Huguenot nobleman who was the admiral of the French navy, Gaspar de Coligny.

- Ted Van Raalte



Death of Admiral de Coligny (1887)  
by Joseph Martin Kronheim



men forward. A deep rage against Coligny burned inside him. Although there was no steadfast proof, Guise was certain that ten years ago Coligny had ordered the assassination of his father, Francis Duke of Guise. Now he would avenge his father. Coligny, and all that he stood for, would be destroyed. The Huguenot force would be lost and the spread of heathen doctrine would end.

Guise barked out orders to his men, calling them to break down the door: "Strike down anyone who gets in your way. Stop for nothing! Coligny must be slaughtered, no matter the cost!"

Guise's rage and determination were evident on his face. The men could see it in his furrowed brow and his narrowed eyes. His lips turned into an ugly snarl and he spat at any man who fell behind.

Furniture scraped on the wooden floors. Coligny's allies blocked the path of the Duke of Guise, willing to die if it meant there was even the slightest chance Coligny might survive.

They heard the wrath in Guise's voice but it did not frighten them. Nothing would stop them from serving Coligny loyally to the bitter end.

Guise's blood boiled and he urged his



men onwards. Swinging their swords with all their strength, striking down Coligny's allies, they shoved ahead. They trampled the dead bodies under their feet. Crimson blood stained the floor, coating Guise and his men.

Coligny knew his death was coming. He awaited the same gruesome fate as his allies. Yet, he felt at peace. There was fear in him but he knew it was good to leave this life. Much greater glory and joy awaited him. The Lord made him bold and courageous.

The minister was summoned. Together, he and Coligny, knelt on the floor, bowed their heads, folded their hands, and closed their eyes. The minister praised God for His glorious deeds and asked for strength in this time of need.

Ignoring the banging feet on the stairs, the clashing metal, and the rough shouts from the fearless soldiers Coligny focused with all his might on the minister's words. Slowly, his brow unfurrowed. The tight clenching grasp of his hands loosened and his breath became even. His heart returned to a steady pace.

He rose with a peaceful expression on his face; a look of childlike trust and hope.

In a calm voice, he said to those around him "I see clearly what they are seeking. I have known for a long time that my death was near. I am happy and ready to die in God. By His grace I have hope for the life everlasting. I have no more need for human support. Go, my friends, as quickly as you can. It is enough for me that God is here."

He knew his human allies could do no more for him. God would be with him to the end.

At these words his companions nodded. Though they left and sought refuge on the roofs, their hearts remained with him. They would not forget the work Coligny had done. As they sought refuge they prayed for him.

The Lord assured his faithful servant. By God's strength Coligny felt prepared to leave this sorrowful world and to pass onto something greater.

Suddenly, the door to his chamber flew open. A young, sturdy soldier burst through panting heavily.

"Are you Coligny?" he demanded,

glaring at him.

Coligny saw the deep hatred burning in those eyes. He took a deep breath. Calmly he replied in a resilient voice: "Yes, I am he. But young man, what are you going to do? You cannot shorten my life by any days."

The man ignored his words and launched himself at Coligny with a loud cry. His sword flew forward, thrusting itself into Coligny's chest. Coligny staggered back from the force of the blow. His face clearly showed his suffering. A cry of pain escaped his lips.

The man steeled himself and thrust his sword again, disfiguring Coligny's face.

Blood splattered across the room, soaking into the wooden floors below.

The soldier breathed heavily. Sweat and blood dripped down his face. He looked at Coligny, the corners of his mouth spreading into a triumphant grin.

The pain overwhelmed Coligny. His eyes shut tight. His vision faded in and out. He prayed this would quickly come to an end.


The young soldier walked towards Coligny and kicked him. Coligny coughed blood onto the floor. He had no control over his body. Blood gurgled in his throat as he tried to cry for help.

He choked, unable to breathe. A great weight was upon his chest. The agony was overwhelming. Then, the room began to blur. The pain faded away.

The soldier lifted up the dead body. With a loud grunt, he threw it out the window. It tumbled to the courtyard below, hitting the ground with a loud, awful thunk. The blood struck Guise and his men, painting their faces. To them it was a sign of their victorious triumph; their victory over the Huguenots.

Guise drew a handkerchief from his pocket. The pure, clean white was quickly stained. He laughed cruelly and his men cheered with him. They hurled insults at Coligny's dead body, kicking it again and again. Failing to see God was in control, that this was a part of His plan, they revelled in their might and power.

The Lord, knowing Coligny's work on earth was done, brought him home. God, in His grace, preserved the Huguenots, allowing them to grow in number despite numerous persecutions. The hope of the gospel and the power of God is mighty enough to defeat all the devil's works.

As Martin Luther had written only a few decades earlier: "The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever." 

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A portrait of William Tyndale, a man with a full beard and a dark cap, wearing a dark robe. He is holding a book in his left hand and pointing with his right index finger. The background is dark and textured. In the upper right corner, there is Latin text: "GVLIELMVS TINDALE MARTYR OLIM EX AVLA MAGD".

# TYNDALE BETRAYED

*He wanted the Bible in English.  
But the King of England did not.*

*by Anna Meerstra*

“**H**ere Henry, take this money and give it to Sir John Harcourt when you go into London tomorrow on your way to the University of Oxford. Don’t get distracted by anything, and you are forbidden to spend the money on anything for yourself. This is very important, it needs to be delivered right away.”

These words from his father rang through Henry’s mind as he wandered the dark, deserted alleyways of Antwerp, Belgium. The night was overcast and grey, and Henry could not see the stars. The cobblestoned pathways were damp from the rain, and he could hear rats scurrying along in the gutters.

Just four weeks earlier, Henry had

been doing as his father instructed. He’d gotten to London safely with the 300 shillings stored in a little bag tucked into his boot. He had every intention of giving the money to Sir John Harcourt when he went across the London bridge.

However, as he crossed the bridge he saw a friend of his. His friend, Frederick, was also going to Oxford



University. When he saw Frederick, he promptly forgot about the important little package in his boot, and went to the tavern. During his time at the tavern, Henry encountered a very arrogant man, who had a pocket full of money and a hand full of cards. Here Henry had suddenly remembered the money in his boot, brought it out with a flourish, and challenged the man to a game. He had lost the game miserably, and had also squandered all of his father's money.

Henry had fled London later that night. He knew he couldn't go to Oxford anymore, because they did not tolerate gamblers. He also knew that he couldn't go home, and the British authorities would probably be looking for him when they found out that the money was missing. So Henry had stumbled down to the docks, drunk and scared, and shoved what little money he had left into the hands of the first sailor he had seen and ran onto the boat. Henry had had no idea where the boat was going, but that night, he didn't really care, as long as it was going away from London.

All of these thoughts raced through Henry's mind as he continued to roam the dark streets of Antwerp. He had no money, and he had no idea what he was going to do. Now night had fallen, and Henry was just as lost as he was when he had come to the city that morning. He approached a crossroad, and saw an old, decrepit stable across the street. He crossed the street and pushed open the old door, and stepped inside. The stable was dark, but dry, and sheltered from the wind. Henry, suddenly overcome with exhaustion, crept to a corner and promptly fell asleep.

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The next morning, Henry awoke with a start. The sun was peeking through the slats of the walls of the stable. He got up, and stepped out the door, onto a bustling street. The sun was up, and merchants were bringing their goods to the market, and farmers were toting their fresh produce on their shoulders.

Henry also saw Belgian foot soldiers nailing posters on any available space around town. He sauntered over to the nearest poster and to read it. The poster read, "Wanted alive, William Tyndale. To be tried for heresy against the Roman Catholic Church, and His Excellency King Henry VIII. Reward of 5,000 shillings."

"Well, they still haven't caught him," said a tall, menacing man. "Do you know who he is?"

"Yes," said Henry, "He is wanted because he is trying to translate the Bible into English for everybody."

"Yes, a terrible nuisance. The Pope and King are very displeased that he has not been caught yet," replied the man. "I have been commissioned to capture him myself, and I need someone to be my right hand man. The reward is quite generous, and the Pope is anxious to have him captured."

Henry was excited about the reward. *If I caught Mr. Tyndale, I could give the money to Sir John Harcourt, and then everything would be fine again, he thought. This is the perfect way to get the money back.*

"Do you have any need for some extra money?"

"Well, in fact, yes, I do. Does anybody know where Tyndale is hiding?"

"No, but I have my suspicions. The other Reformers already suspect me, so I personally can't get any more information. Here, come along with me. Do you have anything going on today? No? Good, let's go to the tavern and talk things over for a bit."

"All right."

"I don't believe you have introduced yourself to me," said the tall man, as he lead Henry through a dark alleyway, and into a low lit, quiet tavern.

"My name is Henry Phillips, son of Sir Richard Phillips. And you are?"

"I am Bishop John Stokesley, and I am looking for someone to capture Tyndale for me, and you seem fit for the daunting task. Would you be willing to work something out with me? Oh, barkeeper, two lagers please. On me, of course. So, would you be willing?"

"Oh, uh, what would I have to do? I don't have any money, or anywhere to stay."

"Oh, I can provide you with some money. I also have friends up in high places, and so we would be able to work something out. Here is my plan."

The bar keeper approached their table with their drinks, and John Stokesley lowered his voice. "We could get you into the University of Louvain, and you would have to be a good student. We could pass you as my cousin's son, and that you are the son of a merchant. You are also quite wealthy. You would be studying commerce and trade, and so I need you to make acquaintance with Mr. Thomas Poyntz, a leading merchant here in Antwerp. I think he might be involved with Tyndale somehow. Does this sound good to you?"

"Yes, that sounds fine. I will do it. How much of the reward do I get?"

"Oh, those are just the little details; we will figure that out when we get there. Do we have a deal?"

"We have a deal."

"Perfect. In the meantime, I can pay for you to have a room right here, and we will use this tavern as our meeting place. I will go and see about your university admission right away."

John left in a hurry, muttering under his breath about all the things that would have to be done. After he had left, the barkeeper led Henry up a set of steep stairs to a little room over the tavern. It was furnished sparsely, with a small bed and desk, and a chair under the window looking out onto the alleyway.

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One week later, Henry was packing up his things, and getting ready to go to the University of Louvain. He said goodbye to the barkeeper, and met John Stokesley down in the tavern. John led him outside and gave his bags to a servant, and they both climbed into a carriage.

"So, let's review the plan again," said John. "You are my cousin's son, and you have been sent here to this prestigious

university to continue your studies. You are studying commerce and law. You are not a staunch Roman Catholic, and you agree with some of the teachings of the Reformers. Does it all make sense?"

"Yes, sounds perfect."

"All right, here we are. Good luck, and don't let me down."

Just a few days later, the professors of Louvain had noticed Henry as a hardworking, diligent student. He was acknowledged for his quick wits, and his charming and easy smile. Henry was soon considered the top student, and he was even tutoring some of the other students at Louvain. Since Henry was studying commerce and law, he had lots of opportunities to get in touch with Mr. Thomas Poyntz, one of the leading merchants in the city of Antwerp. Henry asked if he could apprentice with Thomas, so that he could get real hands on work as a merchant. Thomas was not immediately drawn to Henry like so many others were. In fact, Thomas was quite apprehensive of him. He thought that Henry was a good worker, and he appreciated the help around his shop, but there was a nagging feeling in the back of his mind about Henry. Something was just a little bit off.

It was the custom of the merchants back then to meet regularly at the tavern during the evening. They would all order a drink, and spend the evening debating the different aspects of their trades and businesses. There were many merchants in the town of Antwerp because it had a bustling seaport. Henry was able to meet many influential people of the city, and also have an influence on them. Henry spent the evenings with the rest of the merchants in the taverns across town. It was in one of these taverns on a cool evening in May, that Thomas Poyntz made a big mistake.

"Hello Henry, good to see you again," said Thomas.

"Hello Thomas, how are you this fine evening?"

"Very well, thank-you. What about you?"

"Fine, fine. Shall I order you a

drink?"

"That would be greatly appreciated, thank-you."

The tavern was quite crowded and busy that particular evening, but Henry did not mind. He knew what he had to do. John Stokesley had come back into town a couple days earlier, and had talked to Henry for quite some time. John said that the King was even more upset than ever that Tyndale was not caught, because somehow his Bibles were being smuggled into England. John was disappointed that Henry was not even good friends with Thomas yet, only business partners, and Henry said that he would work even harder than before. Henry knew that he just had to talk to Thomas Poyntz about his faith, and see where he stood, before he could make any plans of his own. And that is exactly what Henry did that evening.

Later on in the evening, after Henry had bought Thomas a couple too many drinks, they got to talking about Thomas' faith. Thomas loudly proclaimed, with no shame at all, that he was not a Roman Catholic. Henry acted his part well, and was able to convince Thomas that he was a firm follower of the Reformation, and especially of William Tyndale. Henry told Thomas that he greatly admired the work of Tyndale, and he said that England needed the Bibles. Thomas, his mind befuddled from the alcohol, told Henry that William Tyndale, the man that Henry so greatly admired, was staying right under his roof. "Right under the nose of the English king, and the king doesn't even suspect it!" he had loudly proclaimed. And that was that. Henry had gotten all of the information that he needed to carry out his plans. He abruptly left the tavern, and went and told John Stokesley right away. They made plans to capture Tyndale the next week.

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William Tyndale woke up on May 21, 1535 with the sun shining through his window. *What a beautiful day*, he thought; *I thank my Almighty Father*

*for such wonderful weather*. He got downstairs, and saw a note on the kitchen table.

*Mr. Tyndale,*

*I (Thomas) will be gone for the next few days on a business trip in Barrow. My apprentice has invited you to dine at his house this evening, and he will provide for you for the next couple of days.*

*Godspeed,*

*Thomas Poyntz*

*Oh wonderful*, William thought, *I can finally meet the young man that Thomas has talked about so very much*. Tyndale spent the day translating the book of Daniel, and walking through the streets of Antwerp. At 5 o'clock sharp that evening, there was a knock on the door of his house. Tyndale gathered up the newest edition of his Bible, to show his host, and walked out the door. Tyndale immediately started to talk about his work, thinking that Henry was a follower of the Reformers, just like he was. Henry went along with the conversation, and agreed with everything that Tyndale said.

The street to Henry's house was a winding, narrow alleyway. Henry stood to the side to allow Tyndale to enter his house first. Unbeknownst to Tyndale, Henry had two other guests that evening.

The moment that Tyndale crossed the threshold of Henry's house, he was roughly seized by two men.

"Wait! What are you doing? Get your hands off me!" Tyndale yelled.

But he was abruptly cut off when a thick hand was clasped over his mouth. His eyes quickly darted over to Henry with a questioning and accusing look. His eyes seemed to say, "Who are you? What do you know about me?" A flash of doubt raced through Henry's mind, but he was beyond caring. He needed that money, and he didn't care how he had to get it.

"Get him out of here, and bring him





to the authorities,” Henry commanded. “Make sure they notify the King and the Pope right away.”

The two burly men bound Tyndale with ropes, and stole away into the night. Henry left the city of Antwerp that evening after a quick stop at John Stokesley’s to collect his reward money. When Henry got to John’s house, however, John was nowhere to be seen. He must have gone to London to get the reward money! Henry thought. I will go meet him there, he decided. When Henry got to London, one week later, to collect his money from Bishop John Stokesley, he couldn’t find John anywhere. No one had seen him, and

no one knew where he was. So Henry decided to go back to Antwerp, to see if John was there. After a couple days of searching, Henry gave up, suspecting that John ran off with the money. Henry spent the rest of his life wandering around Europe, with nothing to do, and nowhere to go, until he eventually died in Italy in 1542.

Meanwhile, Tyndale was brought to the authorities, who sent him to the dungeons of the Castle of Vilvoorde. Tyndale suffered in these dungeons for a year before his trial even started. In August 1536 he was condemned a heretic and two months later he was strangled while tied to a stake and,

after he was dead, his body was burned. As the noose was being fastened around his neck, Tyndale’s last prayer was, “LORD, open the eyes of the King of England.” RP

*Tyndale’s dying prayer was answered two years later, when the king first allowed the use of English Bibles in parishes across the country. And then, a year after that, Tyndale’s own translation was official approved by the king.*



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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## LUTHER AND ARISTOTLE ON THE NEED FOR BALANCE AND MODERATION

I've read that in Martin Luther's first year at Wittenberg he had to regularly lecture on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. And while Luther didn't seem a fan of the Greek philosopher, one of Luther's more famous quotes is an echo of sorts to a passage in *Ethics*. Martin Luther once said:

"Human nature is like a drunk peasant. Lift him into the saddle on one side, over he topples on the other side."

Long before, Aristotle spoke of the need for balance, and how there are two equal and opposite ways of getting things wrong:

"...the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; temperance and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean."

Of course, that a Greek philosopher said something doesn't mean it is biblical. So is the need for balance a biblical idea? It can indeed be, and alcohol is an example. On the one hand God forbids drunkenness, but on the other, doesn't require us to completely abstain – instead He calls for moderation. Another example might be sexuality and dress. On the one hand we are called to modesty, so lascivious or scandalous dress is forbidden, but we don't all have to go around wearing burkas. There is a balance point between perverse and prudish.

The key then, is to act as God commands us, and not simply react against one way the Devil is trying to lure us.

## ONLY GOD'S WORD MAKES SENSE OF IT ALL

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen – not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

– C.S. Lewis, in *Is Theology Poetry*

## MORE CONSISTENT INCONSISTENCY

"Gender is constructed, but an individual who desires gender re-assignment surgery is to be unarguably considered a man trapped in a woman's body (or vice versa). *The fact that both of these cannot logically be true, simultaneously, is just ignored.*"

– Jordan Peterson

## ON ATHEIST AND ATHEISM

On his website [ProofThatGodExists.org](http://ProofThatGodExists.org), apologist Sye Ten Bruggencate has a collection of more than 50 of his favorite quotes. If you like these four, be sure to check out his website for more.

- "The atheist can't find God for the same reason that a thief can't find a policeman." – Author Unknown
- "The theory that thought is merely a movement in the brain is, in my opinion, nonsense; for if so, that theory itself would be merely a movement, an event among atoms, which may have speed and direction but of which it would be meaningless to use the words 'true' or 'false'." – C.S. Lewis
- "Someone once said that if you sat a million monkeys at a million typewriters for a million years, one of them would eventually type out all of Hamlet by chance. But when we find the text of Hamlet, we don't wonder whether it came from chance and monkeys. Why then does the atheist use that incredibly improbable explanation for the universe? Clearly, because it is his only chance of remaining an atheist. At this point we need a psychological explanation of the atheist rather than a logical explanation of the universe." – Peter Kreeft
- "If there is no God, then all that exists is time and chance acting on matter. If this is true then the difference between your thoughts and mine correspond to the difference between shaking up a bottle of Mountain Dew and a bottle of Dr. Pepper. You simply fizz atheistically and I fizz theistically. This means that you do not hold to atheism because it is true, but rather because of a series of chemical reactions.... If there is no God, then all abstractions are chemical epiphenomena, like swamp gas over fetid water. This means that we have no reason for assigning truth and falsity to the chemical fizz we call reasoning or right and wrong to the irrational reaction we call morality. If no God, mankind is a set of bi-pedal carbon units of mostly water. And nothing else." – Douglas Wilson

## UDDERLY MARVELOUS

Back in 2013 Vince Rozmiarek got put in charge of his small town's community center message board, and soon after starting posting puns to the big 6" by 4" outdoor sign. Now the two puns he posts each week are seen by the many driving by, and by the 84,000 folks who have signed up for the Indian Hills Community Sign Facebook page. While his puns tackle all sorts of topics, he can't "steer" clear of farm jokes.

- Cows have hooves because they lactose.
- Ban pre-shredded cheese. Make America grate again.

- If a cow doesn't produce milk is it a milk dud or an udder failure?
- Cheerful cowboys make jolly ranchers
- Amish banks have cash cows
- The pregnant cow soon became decalfinated
- Award-winning cow. Outstanding in field.
- I called my horse mayo, and sometimes mayo neighs.
- Man assaults his neighbor with milk and cheese. How dairy?!?
- If pigs could fly, imagine how good their wings would taste.

### A BETTER SORT OF STRAW

I've been pricing things out, and as near as I can figure:

- Plastic straws cost 4-5 cents each but they are becoming harder to find, and if you use one people think you are Hitler.
- Paper straws cost something similar or even cheaper...but they are paper straws. Enough said.
- Bamboo straws are 10-15 cents each and they still aren't as good as plastic.

Meanwhile, you can buy a pack of Twizzlers for 2.99 at Wal-Mart with 60 pieces in it, which works out to 5 cents each. Nip off the top and bottom and you have not only a straw that works way better than paper, and is cheaper than bamboo, but it's even better than plastic in that you can eat it afterward.

And it keeps getting better: turns out Twizzlers are even a "low fat" straw.

### REAGAN ON BIG GOVERNMENT

"Government is like a baby. An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other."

– Ronald Reagan as quoted in *The Reagan Wit* by Bill Adler

### DOING HOMEWORK ON SUNDAY?

"When I was in college and seminary, I made what was a bold decision at the time and committed, along with a friend, that we would not do homework on Sundays. No reading assignments. No papers. No studying for tests. It meant rethinking my Saturdays, which meant being more thoughtful about my Friday evenings. I couldn't sleep till noon on Saturday, watch football, hang out with my friends all day, and go out to a social event at night and then play catch-up on Sunday. I had to make pretty drastic changes.

"But I never regretted the commitment. Setting aside Sunday was a habit that served me well throughout all my



*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Prov. 1:7*

## TEACHING VACANCY – NEW ZEALAND

The Reformed Christian School Association in Upper Hutt, New Zealand is seeking a teacher to teach lower primary levels at our Christian School. Our aim is to develop a biblically consistent world and life view in our students based on the Reformed faith.

Applicants should be committed to the Reformed faith and to Christian education. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a small covenant school, and we look forward to your application. If you have any questions or would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us. Please forward your C.V. or any questions you may have to: [board@silverstreamchristian.school.nz](mailto:board@silverstreamchristian.school.nz)

studies. Sunday became my favorite day of the week. I was freed up to go to church more than once. I could go on a long walk or read a book or take a nap. The day became an island of get-to in an ocean of have-to.

"How many of us think, 'You know what? Life is a little underwhelming. I'm not very busy. I wish the days could be more crowded. I wish life could be more hectic.' Very few people think that way. So don't you want a day where you can say no to many of the oughts in your head? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a day of freedom, one day in seven where the other six days have no claim on you?"

– Kevin DeYoung, in *The 10 Commandments*

(h/t to Dr. Wes Bredenhof)

### DOUBTERS SHOULD QUESTION THEIR DOUBTS TOO

"Some believers spend too much time doubting their faith, and not enough time doubting their doubts. Yes, there are some reasonable questions that thoughtful people have always raised about the Christian faith. But there are also some very good questions that faithful people should raise about their spiritual doubts:

- "Have I studied what God has to say on this questions, or have I been listening mainly to his detractors?"
- "Am I well aware of how this doubt has been addressed in the history of Christian theology, or has my thinking been relatively superficial?"
- "Have I been compromising with sin in ways that make it harder for me to hear God's voice and diminish my desire for the purity of his truth?"
- "Is this a doubt that I have offered sincerely to God in prayer, or am I waiting to see if God measures up to my standards before I ask for his help?"

– Phil Ryken, in *Loving Jesus More*

# REVIEWS

## EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING

By Jon Dykstra

### CITIZENFOUR

DOCUMENTARY

113 MINUTES / 2014 **RATING 7/10**



In May of 2013, Edward Snowden fled to Hong Kong with a computer full of classified National Security Agency (NSA) documents that proved the US was spying on its own citizens and on friendly governments too. *CitizenFour* details how it was only after he took the documents to reporters, and the story hit the newspapers, that the NSA finally admitted they were collecting all sorts of data on US citizens.

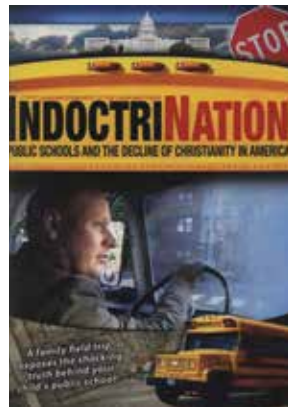
Two warnings: the film is one-sided, telling the story of Snowden the hero, and never really exploring why anyone would think him a traitor (as many have called him). This short review doesn't leave room to provide that other side (Prov. 18:17) but I touch on it in the longer review available online.

Also, there are two instances of God's name being taken in vain in this film. *RP* doesn't recommend movies that blaspheme, so why the exception? Because this is for education, not entertainment. While we shouldn't watch violent war coverage for fun, there is a reason to watch it to be informed. Similarly, while entertainment isn't reason enough to overlook blasphemy, this is a topic where we need to learn more – the only way we can rein in government abuses is if we understand what they are.

### INDOCTRINATION

DOCUMENTARY

102 MINUTES; 2011 **RATING 8/10**



*Indoctrination* takes us on a big yellow school bus, traveling across America to hear educational experts, public school teachers, and Reformed theologians uncover the radically anti-Christian roots of public education. As they explain it, it is no accident that God is now unwelcome in the classroom – for many of the most pivotal figures in educational history that was the plan from the beginning. And while the focus here is on the US public system, the anti-Christian educational philosophy it explores can be found on both sides of the border so this is every bit as relevant for Canadian Christians.

The dire state of public education is depressing, but becomes easier to take when explained by the charming Scottish narrator (and film director) Colin Gunn. Add in clever animations and fantastic interviewees (like John Taylor Gatto) and *Indoctrination* is as **enjoyable** as it is educational.

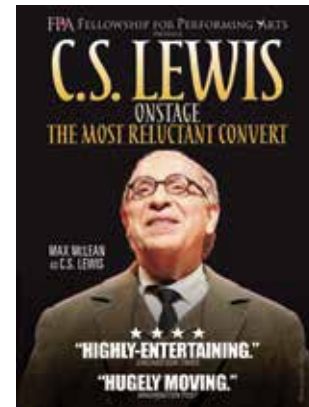
All Christians need to see this, including those sending their children to private Christian schools. The harmful ideas in public schools, of the parents being, at best a partner to teachers, and at worst, an obstacle, is bound to have some ripple effects that we need to watch out for.

Watch the first 30 minutes for free on [ReformedPerspective.ca](http://ReformedPerspective.ca), or rent the full 102-minute version at [IndoctrinationMovie.com](http://IndoctrinationMovie.com).

### C.S. LEWIS ONSTAGE: THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT

BIOGRAPHICAL DRAMA

76 MINUTES / 2018 **RATING: 7/10**



Imagine having the opportunity to go back in time and visit with C.S. Lewis. If that idea excites you, then this is a must see! Max McLean's one-man theatre production, *C.S. Lewis Onstage* is still touring, but this filmed version is already out on DVD. Mclean, as Lewis, shares the story of his conversion, starting with how he rejected God as a schoolboy. He voices the atheistic arguments he relied on (that are still in use today). But God used the talents of a diverse cast of writers to bring this prodigal back, from George MacDonald to G.K. Chesterton, and Tolkien too.

One caution I will note relates not to this film, but to Lewis' works, where some discernment is needed. But while Lewis was no 5-point Calvinist, here he sounds much like one: Lewis takes no credit for turning to God.

As fantastic film a film as it is, I'll note it is also a very *calm* one – just one man talking. So if you're at all tired, save it for another night (I watched this over multiple nights because I did start nodding...even as I loved every minute of it).

For anyone who ever wished they could have met Lewis, this is the very next best thing!



# Short dystopian film is free to see online



## 2081: EVERYONE WILL FINALLY BE EQUAL

DRAMA

2009 / 25 MINUTES    **RATING: 8/10**

*"The year is 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law you see; they were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else..."*

In 2081 a "golden age of equality" has been ushered in by the "Handicapper General" whose job is to assess everyone's abilities and, if they have any advantages, to then assign them "handicaps" to take them away. In the film's opening scene we meet George who, being a little stronger than most, is sunk down in his easy chair by the heavy weights he's been assigned to sap his strength. He's also outfitted with earphones that hit him with piercing sounds to make it impossible for him to use his higher than average IQ. Meanwhile, his wife Hazel sits

comfortably on the couch, knitting. She hasn't been outfitted with any handicaps because she's been deemed to have no advantages.

So they are equal. But is it an equality we want to have? Hazel and George are now just as fast, just as strong, and just as able to do math as one another. But this is an equality of the lowest common denominator. To bring this equality George's gifts had to be diminished until he was at Hazel's level. And for the government to bring about this type of equality, it had to treat them quite differently: Hazel is free, while George is in chains.

Surely this isn't what we mean by equality, is it? There must be some other, better sort?

While the film doesn't really direct us to the equality that is worth pursuing, the Bible does. In Leviticus 19:15 we're pointed to a type of equality that involves treating all alike, not favoring the less advantaged over the rich, or the rich over the poor. Instead of endorsing *2081's equality of outcomes*, God tells us to extend an *equality of treatment*.

*2081* is so short I don't want to give any more of the plot away. But if you're looking for a great conversation starter, this is a fantastic film, though be sure to watch it with your Bible in hand. To see it for free, visit [Teaching2081.org](http://Teaching2081.org) where you will have to sign up to their email list for access (but I haven't been spammed yet, and you can always unsubscribe from it any time).

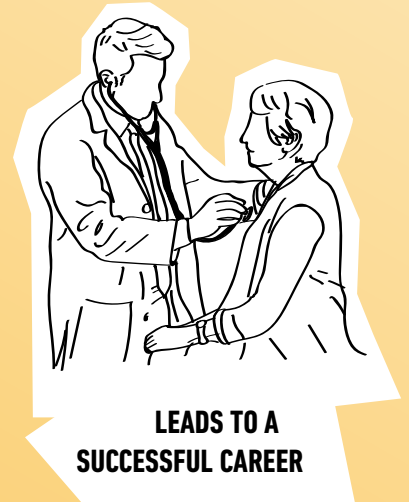
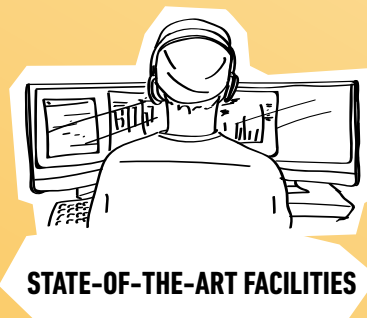
The questions below might be a help in getting the discussion going, but they do give more of the story away, so check them out after you've seen the film.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 In *2081* equality is said to have been achieved. But has it really? Are Hazel and George and Harrison equal to the Handicapper General? Can you think of any historical examples where governments brought a form of equality to the masses, that they didn't want to share in themselves?
- 2 Does the Bible support an equality of *outcomes* or an equality of *treatment* (aka. an equality of opportunity)? See Leviticus 19:15, Ex. 23:3, 1 Timothy 5:21, and James 2:8-9.
- 3 How is Hazel's situation improved by George being handicapped? Why would she hate it if he removed his handicaps? How does Ex. 20:17 apply here?
- 4 Is income inequality (2 Chronicles 1:12; Ex. 20:17) something that God calls on Christians to fight? Is poverty (Prov. 19:17)?
- 5 What was Harrison Bergeron hoping to accomplish? If no one remembers his speech then did he die for anything? If we take an unsuccessful stand for what is right why could that still be worth doing? In what way is our measure of success different than that of the world's?
- 6 In *2081* the government controls every aspect of people's lives. Why do governments grow? Who is it, that's asking them to do more? What are the dangers of governments that get too big? (1 Samuel 8:10-22)



DO YOUNG ADULTS HAVE TO  
**CHOOSE**  
BETWEEN THEIR FAITH AND CAREER?







## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

From summer research monitoring Hamilton's Chedoke Creek Watershed to interning on Parliament Hill to a co-op work term at a local business, students connect their callings to careers. Exploring how faith and learning apply in real-world scenarios gives students an opportunity to be agents of change, getting them ready for work as kingdom citizens the day they graduate.



## CREATE CULTURE

Art, theatre, music, media, English and other disciplines teach technical skills and foster meaningful culture-making that brings glory to God while helping others.



## CAPSTONE

The final course in the Core curriculum sees senior students of all majors apply their Christian worldview and interdisciplinary knowledge to a real issue impacting today's world.

# REDEEMER HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT YOU COULD DO BOTH...

Redeemer prepares students not only for a particular career path but also for a lifetime of faith. Explore Redeemer's approach to fully integrating faith and education, career and calling in the four articles that follow.

Each article paints a picture of how Redeemer students and alumni communicate, critique and lead in ways that reflect the hope of Jesus Christ — the best hope there is.



# Two Perspectives on Ottawa

**DANIEL ZEKVELD '19 AND JOHANNA WOLFERT '19 SHARE HOW THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE LAURENTIAN LEADERSHIP CENTRE PROGRAM SHAPED THEM ACADEMICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.**

**N**AVIGATING THE POLITICAL sphere is a challenging task and can be especially tricky for people of faith. How do Christians make a difference in a sector where faith is supposed to be left at home? For Redeemer students interested in work in politics, gaining hands-on experience by studying in Ottawa and interning alongside Parliament Hill politicians is invaluable.

Daniel Zekveld '19, who majored in international relations, has ambitions to eventually work for a political NGO or not-for-profit. In the fall term of his senior year, he had the opportunity to take part in Trinity Western University's Laurentian Leadership Centre (LLC) program. A semester at the LLC consists of three courses, an internship and on-site living at a historic mansion in Ottawa. Zekveld took courses in Canadian government leadership, ethics, public affairs, public policy and cultural change while also completing an internship. He interned with the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA), where he got a taste of the multifaceted operations at a political NGO, from attending lobbying meetings and summarizing documents to helping to create

*“We spent a lot of time in our classes wrestling together with how to live out our faith in the public square.”*

promotional videos. Zekveld also had the opportunity to work in an MP's office, completing data entry and research.

Zekveld was well-prepared to participate at the LLC. “My international relations major from Redeemer and my experience at the LLC fully complemented each other,” he noted. “My experience at the LLC helped me to understand various parts of my education to a fuller extent. My classes at Redeemer helped me to excel at the LLC: in classwork, class discussion and my internship tasks.”

Studies and work through the LLC helped Zekveld to discern how he can be active in politics while also holding fast to his Christian faith. “There are a lot of Christians who indicate that it's hard to be effective as a Christian in the public square. Before coming here, I sometimes had the impression that, in general, politicians cared less about their faith,” he reflected. “While this may be true with some, I have met and heard about many serious Christians who are involved in the public square.”

Zekveld earned credits towards his degree and a certificate in leadership and applied public affairs. He left the LLC with a renewed hope that he has brought with him to the workforce. “This experience helped to restore my faith in our political system and helped me see that change is possible,” he said. “Change can be made through ordinary people by God's grace.”

Johanna Wolfert '19 also majored in international relations and joined the LLC programs in the fall of her final year. In Ottawa was the opportunity to learn from different perspectives, which challenged her to grow intellectually and spiritually. “Perhaps most importantly,” she summed, “moving in with a group of strangers and living in a new city forced me out of my comfort zone, stretching me in a unique way and helping me grow.”

Her classes also offered an opportunity to grow. “Not only did my LLC classes build and expand on the material I learned during my years at Redeemer,” she continued, “they challenged me to re-examine what I know from a different angle.” Interning at an MP's office, she tackled speechwriting, constituency communications and committee work. She also researched religious freedom issues seen in Canada and abroad.

As a part of the LLC classes, Wolfert and her classmates went on field trips in Ottawa, attending a Supreme Court hearing and visiting the Cardus office to learn about the history of Christian social thought. “Every day at the mansion brought new opportunities to challenge and encourage each other,” Wolfert said. “We also spent a lot of time in our classes wrestling together with how to live out our faith in the public sphere.”

Experiential learning is an essential part of education at Redeemer. Wolfert and Zekveld's experiences in Ottawa with the Laurentian Leadership Centre are a testament to the value of off-campus study. “I would highly recommend this program to anyone,” Wolfert concluded. “The internship, classes and community life experiences are extremely valuable for any discipline.”



A photograph of a man with glasses and a black shirt standing on a wooden bridge over a river. The background is a dense, green forest. The title 'Intentional About Community' is overlaid in large white text.

# Intentional About Community

JAKE BAKKER '18 IS STARTING HIS CAREER WITH A COMBINATION OF BUSINESS AND MISSIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

**J**AKE BAKKER, WHO graduated with a BA in accounting in 2018, is exploring his calling by working and living in Costa Rica.

During his last year at Redeemer, Bakker wondered how he could use his business skills in international development. He found a way forward with Cohort of Missioners, a year-long missions experience organized by Resonate Global Mission. The program's participants are paired with a local missions organization, receiving mentorship and practising communal spiritual formation.

For the first three months of the program, Bakker stayed with a local family. For the rest of his time in Costa Rica, Bakker is living in an intentional community called Casa Adobe with 15 other people from around the globe. He serves his neighbours in Santa Rosa, a community that is a short distance outside of the capital San José, by teaching English and offering guitar classes. Bakker also does financial work three days a week for Organización Surgir, an NGO that works with at-risk youth in San José using restorative justice practices.

The Cohort of Missioners program appealed to Bakker because of his experiences working summers in greenhouses alongside temporary workers from Mexico and Guatemala. "In my career path, it's been important to build friendships with people from different cultures and mutually learn about each other," he explained. "That's a large part of why I wanted to serve in Latin America."

Bakker's interest in community living and the intersection of business and missions was shaped by his time at Redeemer. He had the opportunity to major in accounting, take in other disciplines, like international development, and complete courses, like Social Entrepreneurship, that combined various areas of study.

"Living on-campus at Redeemer prepared me for living in an intentional community here in Costa Rica," Bakker said. "At Casa Adobe, our spiritual formation is the backbone of what we do. From caring for God's creation through communal gardening and river restoration projects to striving for peace in our community, our faith is key."

There is a lot to experience and learn when living in a new culture. Planning to stay in Costa Rica until September 2019, Bakker has been making the most of his time with Cohort of Missioners. "It's amazing to see how similar and different the world can be," he said about his time so far. "God is working in every community in the world. My hope is that we can listen to God's voice, see where he is working and join in, wherever we may be living."

# Caring for the Whole Person

**RACHEL VANDENDOOL '07 HAS LAUNCHED HER OWN PHYSIOTHERAPY PRACTICE, WHERE SHE TEACHES HEALTHY, SAFE MOVEMENT.**

**A** **S AN AVID** runner and soccer player, Rachel VandenDool grew up knowing the importance of recovery from injuries and learning to move safely. Participating in every sport she could led to many sports-related injuries. She spent a lot of time in physiotherapists' and chiropractors' offices receiving care for her injuries and seeing first-hand the importance of proper rehabilitation. Intrigued by the rehab process and often excited to share what she'd learned about the body, VandenDool was drawn from a young age to work in physiotherapy.

Today, VandenDool has eight years of experience as a registered physiotherapist at clinics throughout Hamilton and last summer, launched her own physiotherapy practice.

At Redeemer, VandenDool found success both on the soccer pitch and in the classroom. While captaining the women's soccer team and racking up an impressive list of athletic awards, she worked towards the completion of a Bachelor of Arts in honours kinesiology. During her studies, VandenDool had the opportunity to work as a student trainer, travelling with a few of Redeemer's varsity teams and taping their injuries for games. She went on to complete two physiotherapy placements while still a student, learning about day-to-day work in the field. These hands-on experiences helped to foster the passion that she's had since childhood and confirm that she was on the right path.

"Redeemer's liberal arts approach taught me to look at the world holistically, which is a philosophy at the core of my physiotherapy practice today," said VandenDool. "I believe the best way to identify the origin of a patient's pain, and ultimately help them to achieve their goals, is to look at each patient as a whole. My liberal arts background helps me to do this." After graduating from Redeemer in 2007, VandenDool went on to complete a master of science in physical therapy at Queen's University in 2010. She is now registered with the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario and is a member of the Canadian and Ontario physiotherapy associations.



*"I love sharing with patients how God created the body to work."*

Each day at her practice presents VandenDool with new challenges and new opportunities to use her gifts. "No two patients are the same," she reflected, "so I am constantly thinking of what is best for each individual. It keeps my job exciting and ever-changing."

Physiotherapy is VandenDool's calling, a profession where she can partner with God in his work of restoration and healing. "God designed our bodies with so much intricacy and complexity," she said. "I love sharing with patients how God created the body to work, what happens when dysfunction is present and how to restore it to better function. It is one of my favourite parts of being a physiotherapist."

# Announcing Act Five



**REDEEMER AND FIVE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOLS ARE TOGETHER LAUNCHING ACT FIVE, AN EIGHT-MONTH CHRISTIAN GAP YEAR PROGRAM, IN SEPTEMBER 2019.**

**T**HE PRESSURE TO figure out what's next is intense as high school comes to a close. A lot of young adults have a nagging uncertainty, worrying about falling behind or wasting a year while not yet ready to jump into a three or four-year program.

What if these students had the chance to breathe, explore future pathways and learn more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus?

Act Five, an eight-month Christian gap year program, is Redeemer and five area Christian high schools' response to this need. Act Five offers the time and space for young adults to explore who they are, where they're going and how their faith fits into a rapidly changing world.

The first Act Five cohort is starting the program this September. Each participant will encounter new experiences and interpret them with the support of a community that

learns, travels, works and worships together. The students, along with program staff, are living in a Hamilton neighbourhood. The Act Five home will be the central base for meals, classes, events and fellowship.

By creating regular rhythms of study, worship and prayer, the program will provide a year that is deeply transformative for students who are transitioning into adulthood and making choices that will shape them for years to come. Research shows that students who complete a gap year program are better prepared for post-secondary education, for the workplace and for engaged lives in our cities and churches.

Throughout the year, Act Five students will travel to a variety of settings and communities. Students will take on three outdoor canoeing and camping trips with Coldwater Canada, attend the Jubilee Conference in Pittsburg, work with EduDeo

Ministries in Zambia and, with the guidance of Ohsweken Baptist Church, learn from communities within the Six Nations reserve.

From January to April, Act Five participants will live and serve in Hamilton. Students will participate in two field placements with not-for-profit organizations, local businesses and tradespersons in the city. In their placements, students will experience Christian vocation first-hand, under the supervision and guidance of mature Christians who are living out their faith in diverse contexts in Hamilton.

Overall, Act Five is helping young adults to find their place in God's story. The gap year program calls students to live out their faith, rooted in the biblical story and looking forward to what God is doing next.





## APPLY NOW!

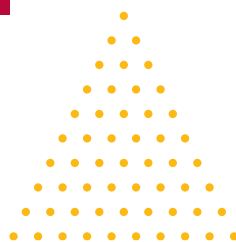
Redeemer's Admissions team works directly with every applicant. You and your student will be guided through the process by an admissions counsellor who can answer questions along the way, helping to discern where God might be calling your student.

Apply directly on our website at [REDEEMER.CA/APPLY](https://redeemer.ca/apply)

## COME FOR A VISIT!

Experience Redeemer for yourself. Campus visits often include tours, lunch with professors and the chance to sit in on a class. Students also have the option to stay overnight in the dorms!

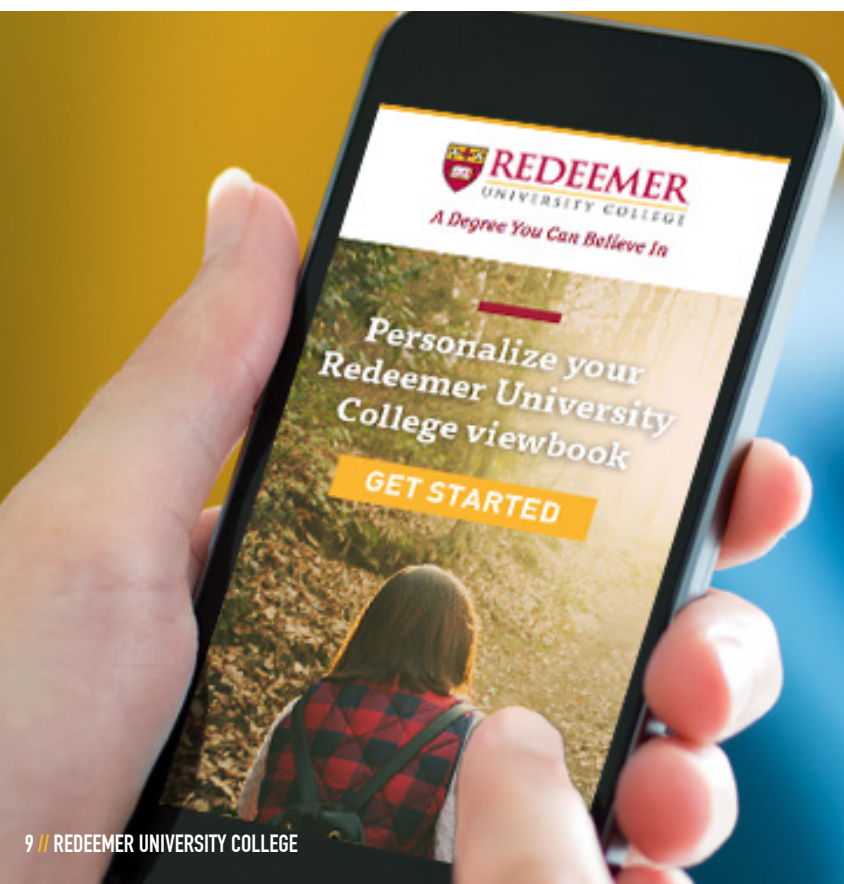
Registration is easy at [REDEEMER.CA/VISIT](https://redeemer.ca/visit)



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