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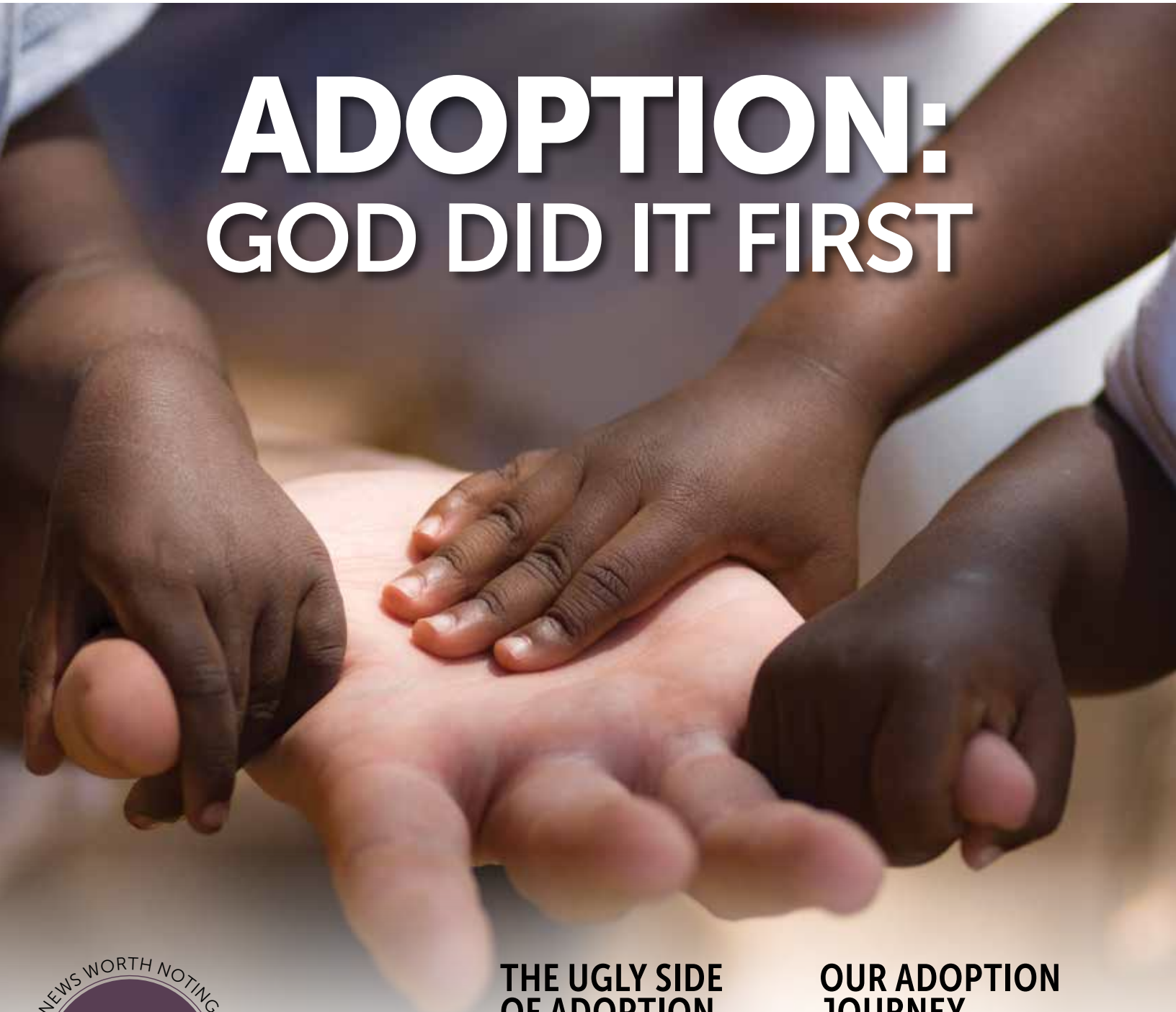
A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

APRIL 2015
Volume 34 Issue No. 6

PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

ADOPTION: GOD DID IT FIRST



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Considering adoption

God is concerned about orphans (Ex. 22:22, Deut. 14:29, Psalm 10:14,18 & 68:5 & 146:9, Proverbs 23:10) and He wants us to care about them too (James 1:27). That means His Church should be full of adoptees and full of adopters, and full of people encouraging adoption, and people enabling adoption, and people praying for the many orphans that remain. God's concern for orphans means we should all consider adoption.

It doesn't mean we are all called to adopt.

Paul writes in 1 Cor. 12 about the members of the Church having different gifts, and that those with one gift should not look down at those with another. The same is true when it comes to adoption. We don't all have the same callings. We're not all ministers. We're not all homemakers. We're not all mechanics. We're not all volunteering at the local pregnancy center. We have different giftings – God has given us different talents.

So not everyone has to adopt.

Yet the Church should be a refuge for the fatherless, and a home for the orphan. Consequently there is good reason for us all to consider adoption.

And here are a few key points to consider.

ADOPTION DOESN'T ALWAYS TURN OUT AS HOPED

As Ashley Whittemore notes in her article this issue, "Be it death or abuse or abandonment, intentional or otherwise, there is a tragic reason this child is in need of a different family." The tragedies orphans have suffered can leave a lasting impact that parents, no matter how loving, might not be able to overcome. That means adopted children may be more likely to get into the sorts of trouble that will have their parents prematurely gray.

However, this isn't so much a reason not to adopt as it is a reason to re-evaluate what we expect from adoption. From a cost/benefit analysis adoption has no guaranteed pay-off. If it's only about our parental happiness, then adoption is a risky proposition.

But what if adoption is also spiritual warfare? Many times adoption involves taking a child from a godless situation and bringing them into God's covenant, into a Christian home, where they will be sent to a Christian school, and taught about all that their baptism entails. We can be sure the devil hates Christian adoption!

And what if adoption is about rescuing a child? Adopted children may cause their parents stress – we don't know how this will all work out in the end! – but when we bring an orphan into our family, we do know she won't be neglected or lonely, and will be far less likely to be exploited. Getting adopted means fewer troubles ahead for her.

And what if adoption is about imitating God? We've never had anything to offer God – there was no reason for Christ to die for us but our need. Yet we were adopted as God's own sons and daughters (Rom. 8:15&23, Gal. 4:4-6, Eph. 1:4-5). Adoption is an opportunity to go and do likewise, dying of ourselves in service of another.

Adoption comes with no guarantees...but parenting never does.

WE CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH

The world is a broken place, with so much that needs to be set right. But God created us as finite beings. In addition we are fallen beings. That means that not only do we have limits, we sometimes won't acknowledge them. Then an arrogant sort of guilt can consume us as we see orphans uncared for and it seems up to us to do it all... whether we actually have the ability to care for another child or not. The fact remains, we all have our limits, and that includes limits on our time, energy, health, emotional stability, money and more. As we consider adoption we also have to consider the children we already have and what they need from us.

But while we each have our limits, God has placed us in a community of believers. Not all of us are called to adopt, but we are called to support one another, and what we cannot do alone we can do together. We can all be a help to adoptive parents, supporting them with our money (some churches have adoption funds), or our time (free babysitting?) or our energy (our kids can mow their lawn). Some of us can promote adoption by reading up on it (see the book reviews this issue) and sharing that information with others. We can all pray for orphans, and for adoptive parents. Some can foster children. And some can donate to Christian adoption agencies.


We're not all called to adopt, but we can all play our part.

ORPHANS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES IN NEED

Widows and orphans are a pressing concern for God, so they should be for us too. But what of the many others in need? What of the other spiritual battles for us to contend? One excellent reason not to adopt is because God is calling us to something else. There's no shortage of good works that God has laid out for us to do.

However, if we don't nail down what that something is, "something else" can easily become "nothing at all." We need to figure out what God wants us to do with what He has given us. We're not all called to adopt, but we are called to make use of our talents.

CONCLUSION

There are many excellent reasons not to adopt – it isn't something everyone should do. However, God cares for orphans so his Church should too. Since there are millions around the world who have no mother or father to look after them that means there are millions of reasons for all of us to promote adoption and millions of reasons for us to consider it. 



Jon Dykstra can be reached at editor@reformedperspective.ca.

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

STEPHEN A. SMITH ON DISENFRANCHISEMENT

BY JON DYKSTRA



E SPN commentator Stephen A. Smith made the news March 17 when he encouraged US blacks to vote for the Republican party.

What I dream is that for one election every black person in America vote Republican...Do you know that since 1964, black America hasn't given the Republican Party more than 15 percent of its vote? What that means is, black folks in America are telling one party we don't give a ----- about you. They're telling the other party, 'you've got our vote' therefore you have labeled yourself disenfranchised because one party knows they have you under their thumb and the other party knows they're never going to get you and nobody comes to address your interests.

There is a Canadian parallel worth exploring. Here in Canada, the Conservative Party knows it has a lock on Christians' votes, and so it feels no need to cater to us and our interests. We vote for them, but they don't represent us. We've been disenfranchised.

What if Canadian Christians tried Stephen A. Smith's approach? What if, for one election, every Christian in Canada didn't vote for the Conservatives and instead stayed home or, where it was possible, voted CHP? Might it then, as Smith predicts,

...force everyone to pay attention to us...and all of a sudden, everyone will cater to our needs...and suddenly we won't be disenfranchised anymore.

TWO NEW GROUPS ARE TACKLING TECH AND PORN

BY JON DYKSTRA



In the last couple of months, two new groups have been started by Reformed gentlemen to help parents and young people combat the pull of online pornography.

Jonathon Van Maren has written for *Reformed Perspective* and has made appearances in many Reformed churches in his role as a pro-life educator with the Canadian Centre for Bio-ethical Reform. Now, along with two others, he has set up a non-profit called Strength to Fight to fight "back against the porn invasion." They've already spoken in both Christian and secular settings – at high schools, and on college campuses – and in

churches. Pornography is still seldomly discussed in churches, and Van Maren wants to change that. He passionately believes that Christians need to understand just how prevalent porn is.

Martin Van Woudenberg has recently launched Behind the Screen to help parents get a better understanding of the digital world their children are living in. He is a high school teacher, and in an earlier career he was involved in the tech industry for two decades, so he knows what's out there, and what students can get into. In his two-hour presentation he teaches parents about the best ways to monitor children's various devices and limit their screen time. He also discusses the limits of monitoring software, and shares some of the dangers and benefits of various social media tools. How should we introduce our children to technology? He has some thoughts to share on that topic as well.

To book Jonathon Van Maren or Martin Van Woudenberg, and to learn most about the talks they give, visit their websites, StrengthToFight.ca and BehindtheScreen.ca.

PROSTITUTION ARTICLES SHOW THE PERIL OF “HEADLINE READING”

BY JON DYKSTRA

In March, articles started popping up about prostitution in which the headlines said one thing and the body of the piece said something quite different. The articles were based on a survey that the United Kingdom’s Leeds University has done with 240 prostitutes. Media outlets like *The Guardian*, *Russia Today*, *The Independent* and the *Metro* ran with headlines like:

THE MAJORITY OF SEX WORKERS ENJOY THEIR JOB

1 IN 3 SEX WORKERS HAVE DEGREES – SURVEY

The thesis of the headlines, and of their accompanying articles, was that prostitution was not something women were doing out of desperation, but because they wanted to and enjoyed it. But one bit of information that appeared in the body of most articles was that this survey “took data from British sex workers who were not trafficked into selling sex but had chosen to do so...” In other words, while the headlines made this seem like a survey representative of all prostitutes, it actually excluded anyone who had been forced into prostitution.

So do 1 in 3 UK prostitutes have a degree? And do the majority of UK sex workers enjoy their jobs? To find that out, the survey would need to have included women who have been prostituted – women who have been forced into it. And none of the articles seemed to ask that question.

It turns out it is a very hard question to answer. Estimates of exactly what percentage of prostitutes in the UK are coerced vary widely, with one paper reporting there were as many as “25,000 sex slaves on the streets of Britain”. But they had nothing to back up that figure. Another reported figure is based on surveys done with British police way back in 1998, who at that time reported they were aware of just 71 women who had been trafficked that year. Of course that reveals nothing about just how many trafficked women the police might have been unaware of. So we seem to have only old sources, bad sources and no sources, which makes this a muddled picture.

What is clear is that media outlets that presented the Leeds University survey as a survey representative of all prostitutes – in headline or article – are incompetent or agenda driven, and in either case should not be trusted.



FROM COUPLES TO THROUPLES

BY MARIAN CHASE

If two men can marry, why not three? That must be what homosexual couple “Art” and “Joke” thought when they proposed to the third in their triad, “Bell.” The “throuple” gained attention around the world when wedding pictures preceding the event went viral in February. “We believe many people do understand and accept our choice. Love is love, after all,” said Bell.

This throuple is leaving even some gay activists uncomfortable. As one gay man commented on the pictures, “one husband is hard enough, three’s a handful.” But how can gay rightists object to this newest development? For them, keeping marriage to just two would be hypocritical – they’ve justified homosexual marriage on the basis of a “love is ultimate” standard, so they can’t denounce polygamists who justify their relationships with this same slogan. When Man destroys the fences of God’s laws, no other constraints will hold. So redefining marriage has rendered it meaningless and open to anything: homosexuality, polygamy, even marriage to oneself.

So what’s the Christian response? It’s not enough for Christians to be against gay marriage. Instead, we have to stand up for Biblical marriage by living our marriages according to God’s standards. As Michael Brown writes in his article reviewing the trio’s “marriage,” “hold fast to marriage as God meant it to be, and in the end, you and your family will be the envy of society.”



1 in 3 sex workers have degrees – survey

Published time: March 02, 2015 15:05
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UK CHRISTIANS OFFER UP SAFE HAVEN FOR EX-MUSLIMS

BY JON DYKSTRA

At the end of 2014, British Christians came together to set up a “safe haven” to help protect people in the UK who want to leave Islam. The January edition of *Evangelicals Now* reported that the initiative began soon after a girl “practically turned up on the doorstep of Christian Concern explaining that she was under threat from her family due to her desire to reject Islam.” But

at that time there was no help to be had, and she ended up returning to her home to live under shari’a law. So this new initiative, called Safe Haven, was begun to offer confidential advice to those thinking of leaving Islam and it may even help them relocate.

Why the need to relocate? As one project supporter explained, “It’s OK for people when they convert from another religion to Islam. Nobody says,

‘I’m going to kill you.’ They don’t live in fear of their lives. Why is it that when a person leaves an Islamic background, becomes a Christian, why do we have to live in fear of our lives?” Another supporter explained that after he left Islam while living in the UK he received death threats and had his car burned and his house vandalized.

SOURCE: “Safe houses for believers” by Christian Concern (safe-haven.org.uk) published in the January edition of *Evangelicals Now*.

ON COMPULSORY VOTING

BY JON DYKSTRA



In Australia if you don’t vote, it could cost you. Voting is compulsory, and citizens who don’t can be fined up to \$170.

Australia started compulsory voting nearly a century ago, and in the 2013 election roughly 80% of the voting age population cast a ballot.¹ To put that number in context, in the 2011 Canadian federal election less the 55% of voters participated, and in 2014 US election just one third of voting age Americans cast their ballot.²

So should North America follow Australia’s lead and make voting mandatory? It would certainly be a quick way to reverse the slow and constant decline in voter turnout in both countries.

What it wouldn’t do is address the underlying reasons why people are becoming apathetic. Making people vote still won’t make them *want* to vote.

Compulsory voting advocates argue that higher voter turnouts gives a government a higher degree of political legitimacy. In the last US election the winners could only claim to have a majority of support from the third of the population that actually voted. That means they could have had support from as little as 17% of the voting aged

population. Compulsory voting would mean the voter would have to win support from a far large segment of the population.

But where would this increase come from?

It’d be from the apathetic: those too lazy to get educated about their choices, or those who know and hate their choices, but who are too sluggish to step up and offer voters an alternative. Why would we want to force these folks to *eenie, meenie, miney, mo* their way through the slate of candidates? Are we really making democracy better when your thoughtful choice can be countered by a guy who made his selection based on his favorite number: “I’m going with lucky number 4!”?

It would be safe to say that a very high percentage of *Reformed Perspective* readers vote each election. We have every reason to be apathetic – how often do our politicians show any sort of principled leadership? – but we continue to vote, and when there is no one to vote for, we even run. We’re motivated, and that allows us to “punch above our weight,” impacting Canadian politics in bigger ways than our small numbers should really allow.

But if we force the great swathes of apathetic Canadians to make their utterly random choices, that will make our light shine a little less brightly. We have no reason to support compulsory voting.

Endnote

1 The official figure was 93% but that doesn’t factor in that, despite the law, 10% of Australians aren’t registered to vote. When we consider all the people of voting age, and then see how many actually voted, we get 80%. This is also the calculation used with the American and Canadian figures that follow.

2 Figures are from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, IDEA, www.idea.int/vt/



SUN NEWS IS DEAD...LONG LIVE SUN NEWS!

BY JON DYKSTRA

The *Sun News Network* was a Canadian news and opinion cable channel that was often compared to *FOX News* in the US. Like *FOX News*, it was friendlier to pro-life and Christian views than any of its competition.

Birtherd April 18, 2011, *Sun News* died less than 4 years later, on February 13 of this year, due to mounting losses – it lost more than \$46 million of one three year period. The end of the network came without notice: after a repeat broadcast of *Byline with Brian Lilley* the network’s logo was shown for 30 seconds and then the screen went blank. They left it to other media outlets to inform the public about the channel’s demise.

But just three days after the death of *Sun News*, a new media outlet was birthed featuring some of the same on-air and behind the scenes talent. *TheRebel.media* is being fronted by former *Sun News* personalities Ezra Levant, Brian Lilley and Marissa Semkiw and is being paid for via an ongoing crowdfunding initiative. The driving force behind *The Rebel* is Ezra Levant. He believes that by delivering their news and views over the Internet rather than via a cable network it will allow them to cover much of the same content but at a much lower cost.

The Call

The phone call you were waiting for
Should be routine, as times before.
But nothing could for this prepare.
Incurable!! Your time is there!!
For suddenly from loved ones here
Our leaving becomes all too clear.
It is like, stabbed, in pain you stand,
But Jesus takes us by the hand.
He says: "You have believed in Me,
From death you are forever free
I lead you through the vale of shadow
Until you reach the luscious meadow."
Like Israel through the Jordan River,
Where God Himself did them deliver,
He kept the waters' towering heap
From swallowing them in the deep.
Between them God did take His stand,
Till all entered the Promised Land.
Would He not easy crossing give
For all who in true faith did live?
Christ has already paid the price
For them to enter Paradise.

– *Riemer Faber*





*We live in a fallen world
where parents leave their
own to roam the streets
because they never knew
any different themselves.*

THE UGLY SIDE OF ADOPTION

NOT EASY, NOT SIMPLE. PAINFUL. CONFUSING. AND CHRIST-LIKE

by Ashley Whittemore

I found this entry the other day while randomly flipping through an old journal:

January 2, 2013

Today, sort of in passing and sort of without even realizing it, I prayed a prayer. "Do something great through me... No matter what it takes." I meant it when I prayed it, but my next thought was: "Uh-oh."

Dear Ashley from almost two years ago: that next thought was very appropriate.

You see we used to have the "ideal" family. I'll never forget when I was pregnant the second time and we found out we were having a girl and how perfect that was for us. We had our boy and now our girl to complete the balance. Two little picture-perfect blonde haired, blue-eyed beauties.

We always talked about bringing another child into the family down the road. Maybe adopt from Africa or Asia, a newborn who needed a home. We could do that in a few years, no problem.

I did not anticipate that later that same year we would move to a little town called Benjamin Constant in Brazil, and that shortly thereafter, when Raegan was just 4 months old, we would meet a little brown-eyed girl that would rewrite everything we knew about parenthood and ourselves. I will never forget the night I laid there in bed and told Richard I felt like we should pray about adopting her.

I had no idea – not the slightest clue – what I was praying for.

I remember discussing the challenges we knew we would face. The language barrier, the physical and mental delays, the criticism from the locals; we knew it would be difficult.

Those things now seem like child's play.

When you hear people talk about adoption, you hear about how beautiful it is, this Gospel picture. I say it myself. The idea of redeeming a child from pain and suffering and hopelessness is undeniably inviting. To be a part of bringing hope and life to a child is one of our callings as followers of Christ. Beautiful indeed.

What we do not hear a whole lot about, however, is the ugly side.

IT ALL STARTS WITH SOMETHING VERY BAD

Without tragedy, there is no need for adoption. If something were not broken, there would be no need to fix it.

If it were not for the fact that something went terribly wrong, adoption would not be necessary. Be it death or abuse or abandonment, intentional or otherwise, there is a tragic reason this child is in need of a different family from the one that shares the same bloodline and facial features. There is a broken past with every single adopted child out there and it leaves a mark. Sometimes that mark is a faded scar that is barely noticeable to the untrained eye.

Other times, it is a gaping flesh wound that needs constant attention and care.

God chose to give us the latter.

And it has been ugly.

Because nothing prepares you for having to hold down that sought after child as she kicks and screams, "I want to go back to the street!!" And all because you are doing what no one else in her life ever has: you are loving her.

I will never forget googling "What if I don't like my adopted daughter" and the relief I felt when articles actually popped up, announcing that these feelings of mine are actually common.

In August, she completed one year in our home – and the single hardest year of our life. I look back at the child who stepped into our home that Friday night. Her scalp was so full of infection that the doctors prescribed four different medications to heal it. Her teeth were little pieces of black and brown bone jutting from her infected gums. Her hair was brittle and orange in color from lack of nutrition. Her eyes were wild pupils, enlarged as she tried to understand what was happening, her body conditioned

If it were not for the fact that something went terribly wrong, adoption would not be necessary.

Our life as we knew it was destroyed that day. It was destroyed for the sake of redeeming this one.

to remain in a constant state of fight or flight. She carried her small backpack full of dirty, hole-ridden clothing that a person would not even consider donating to Goodwill.

This isn't what it should look like, a family bringing in another. It should be that her biological mother tucks her in at night, along with her 7 biological siblings, assuring them of love and care. They should laugh together and go on outings together and she should know the love of a family with siblings and parents that look like her, speak like her. She should know the value of discipline and should be taught consequence.

But we live in a fallen world where parents leave their own to roam the streets because they never knew any different themselves.

So our life as we knew it was destroyed that day. It was destroyed for the sake of redeeming this one. But we never knew what that would entail.

It has been painful.

No adoption is pain free. I am not referring to the hours spent at the courthouse or the paperwork that seems insurmountable. I do not mean the waiting game of home visits and psychologist appointments.

Those are the easy parts, my friends.

The hard part is loving. And that is the part I never anticipated.

Shortly after our daughter moved in, the giddiness of having a new child wore off. It was like having a newborn to care for except that this newborn had been in survival mode for six and half years and thought she had a better idea than you of what she needed. The lies began and the manipulation commenced and suddenly, after just three months of having what now felt like a stranger in our home, we began to recoil.

"What have we done?" I would ask myself, remembering our "perfect"

family of four.

I would scroll through my Facebook newsfeed and the pictures of perfect families would dance across my screen, almost taunting me. I would close the app feeling guilt, regret, confusion. Pain.

I often say if we had known what we were getting into before we got into it, we wouldn't have gotten into it. And I know that is exactly why God does not often reveal His plans for us, because we would run away in fear of the trials that lie before us, not valuing the refining process that makes us a just a little more like Him.

Yesterday I looked at her as she sat across the table from me, unaware of my thoughts. Her hair is dark brown now and shines in the light. Her teeth, bright white and clean. We have had to buy her new shoes three times this year as her body catches up to the size it should be for her age. She is able to read now, something we had all but given up hope on as she didn't know the difference between a letter and a number this time last year.

She is beautiful on the outside – a whitewashed wall.

Because you don't raise yourself on the street for six and a half years with no consequence. So the lies and manipulation and disobedience flow so naturally to her that at times she doesn't even perceive it. She resists our love. She has yet to grasp the fact that she no longer has to protect herself; she is safe here. So she hides behind the walls she built so long ago of self-preservation and self-focus and replaces each brick as we attempt to take them down.

IT ISN'T SIMPLE

There is a common perception out there that implies that adoption, because it is a concept based on the Gospel and because it is redeeming a child

from their orphan status, is simple. Of course, we may be quick to admit that the process is complicated. The attorney and the judge and the biological parents or the orphanage and the paperwork and the waiting and the waiting and the waiting... that part is hard, but then – *THEN* – it's smooth sailing.

"All we need is love." Right?

Adoption is far from simple.

I see heart-warming adoption quotes on social media all the time, especially in November, National Adoption Awareness Month. In fact, not long ago I stumbled across my own "Adoption" board on my Pinterest that coincidentally I created about the same time that journal entry was written and couldn't help but laugh out loud and what my picture of adoption looked like back then. Back before the long nights and tears and confusion and calling out to God.

Because once the Facebook pictures are posted and the excitement dies down over this new addition, you find yourself face to face alone with a reality that you did not stop to consider before:

Yes, the Gospel is a picture of adoption into the family of Christ. And the Gospel includes immense amounts of suffering. Without death, there is no redemption. Without pain, there is no joy in victory.

Over a year has passed now and mostly we are thankful that we have survived. In the beginning, all day, every day was consumed with teaching truth and consequence, faith and repentance, and trying to discern the truth from the lies. And now most days are still that way but they have become graciously spaced out to where sometimes we actually feel like a functioning family of five on some level or another.

Grace from Heaven.

AN ENCOURAGEMENT

Why do I say all this? Not for a pity party, I assure you. We are taught to rejoice in our sufferings because it is through them that we are formed more into the image of our Savior.

I say it, believe it or not, as an encouragement. I have read several blog

posts and books this past year and the ones that encouraged me most were the ones that said something to this effect, “This adoption thing? It’s hard. You are going to fail at times. You are going to cry and ask ‘why?’, possibly often. You are going to feel overwhelmed. And guess what: sometimes you are going to struggle to love. But it is ok because you, on your own, can’t love anyway. It is impossible. But the good news is that through Christ, you can love unconditionally and without reciprocation. Hang in there. His mercy is new every day. And His grace is sufficient.”

So to my fellow adoptive parents, who find themselves overwhelmed and overcome and cringe when they see the idealized photos of adoption: do not give up. God has a purpose for this child and part of it is to refine you and teach you what unconditional love really looks like – messy. Another part – maybe the biggest – is to give you the slightest

glimpse of the pain that Christ went through and the miracle it is that He can love us as He does. Oh, the miracle.

To those in the adoption process, do not let this discourage you, but also don’t write me off. There is a certain naivety in every new adoption. I know, I have been there and I believe that is also God’s grace measured out to us. Often God keeps us blinded to the realities of the trials we will face in order to grow our faith. It is necessary. “Oh, but you adopted an older child/out of birth order/foreign speaker. I’m adopting a newborn/young child/English speaker,” you may say. Irrelevant my friends. I know personal stories of children adopted from birth that have immense struggles. So listen to those who have gone before and prepare your hearts. Pray for God to prepare you in ways that you do not even realize that you need to be prepared. Pray for faith and endurance. Pray for peace and hope. You will need all of these as you embark on this journey.

For those who are reading this and have had a “smooth” attachment to you’re adopted child, hold your judgment. Instead of casting stones, throw up some prayers for those who adopted the more severely injured, those struggling to love, and those who dread another day. Be careful not to become self-righteous because your experience looks different. Rejoice that God chose to give you a child with less baggage in tow.

This adoption thing is ugly. It takes time for broken things to mend. It takes time for wounds to heal.

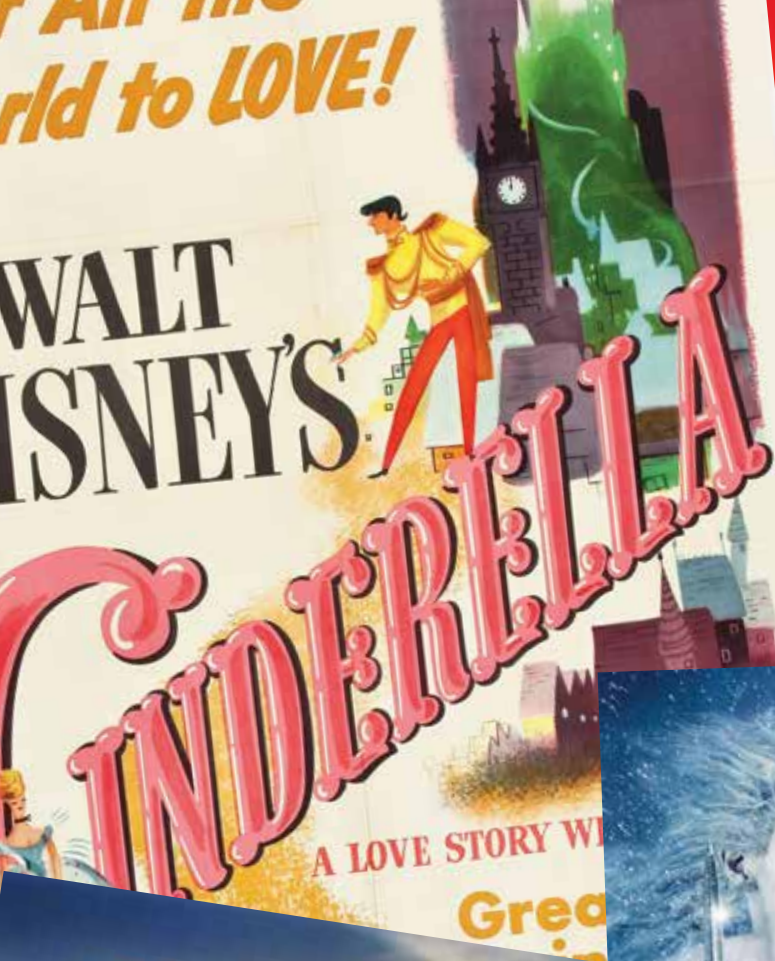
But you know what’s amazing about it all?

He gives beauty for ashes. And that, my friends, is beautiful indeed. RP

Ashley Whittemore blogs at www.onthebeautifuljourney.blogspot.com. This is reprinted with permission from her post for November 8, 2014.

Without tragedy, there is no need for adoption. If something were not broken, there would be no need to fix it.





BEYOND JUDGING A MOVIE BY ITS POSTER

Most “family friendly” films are precarious

by Michael Minkoff

Recent research indicates that our brains are more synaptically active while we sleep than they are while we watch television or movies. This is not just a physical reality, but a spiritual one. Most people, including an alarming number of Christians, watch movies strictly for enjoyment, with a passive and receptive mental stance. But Christians should not view movies this way, and if they can't watch movies any other way, they shouldn't watch movies at all.

The Proverbs tell us: “Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, and so is wisdom to a man of understanding” (Prov. 10:23). In other words, vanity, futility, and immorality are fun to a fool. These alone please him.

A wise man, on the other hand, finds pleasure and satisfaction in the exercise of wisdom and discernment. If a movie is little more than eye-candy – an exercise in superficiality and sensual experience – it won't do very much to please a wise man. He wants something to chew on, some way to exercise and practice his discernment, some avenue to make a distinction between excellence and mediocrity, right and wrong. Mature Christians “because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). A thoughtful, well-produced movie can be and should be another playground for the pleasurable practice of biblical discernment.

BETWEEN RIGHT AND ALMOST RIGHT

As is apparent to most human beings, some family pets, and even some household appliances, one can either

watch a given movie, or not watch it. Not watching a movie is the easiest way to avoid being affected by it. When a movie sells itself with sex, violence, and coarse language, it is almost always a good choice to skip it. Judging a movie by its poster, preview, and rating is the easiest form of discernment, and for me at least, it shaves off about 90% of all contemporary movies right off the bat without any further inquiry.

But, as Charles Spurgeon has said, “Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong; rather, it is telling the difference between right and almost right.” It seems that most Christians, if they use discernment at the box office at all, discern only according to appearances. If a movie contains little coarse language, no nudity, and no exorbitant violence, they consider the movie harmless family entertainment. Well-dressed, sweet-smelling lies are harder to detect than stinky, ugly ones. For this reason, Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and we should not be surprised when his servants come to us in equally deceptive garb (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

We must learn to exercise a discernment which looks at the heart of a matter. God exercises this kind of discernment perfectly, and we also can “spiritually appraise” all things because we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15-16). It is clear we must avoid supporting movies that display a penchant for sin and all that the flesh lusts after, but what about those “family-friendly” films that seem so

harmless? How do we avoid the pitfalls of worldview deception when something seems “almost right”?

“IMITATION VALUE EXTRACTS”

I think the most dangerous feature of mainstream family-friendly films is the ubiquitous inclusion of what I call “imitation value extracts.” These are virtues or convictions that have been extracted from their context. They are ready-made virtues.

It is easy to account (or should I say bank account) for their existence. Hollywood producers want to make as much money as possible from their films, naturally. In order to do this, they have to attract as many viewers as possible. This means it is important for them to neutralize any elements in their movies that might unduly offend any potential market. Thus, “value extracts” allow any number of viewers with vastly different substantive beliefs to pour their own definitions, sources, and foundations into the generalized, non-exclusive frameworks of any given film.

Allow me a detour for a moment to talk about an interesting Biblical backdrop for this discussion. The word translated “medium” in the Old Testament (meaning necromancer or sorcerer) is the Hebrew word “ob” which means “empty wine skin.” This means that the mediums emptied themselves out so that they could be filled with any passing spirit.

In the same way, Hollywood has embraced a stance of tolerant pluralism, emptying itself of any divisive or

Value extracts are dangerous deceptions – barely even half-truths. Virtue does not exist without Christ.

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exclusive convictions so as to be open to the opinions (and especially, the money) of any passing viewer. Let's look at a few examples of objectless, foundationless "value extracts" in some "classic" family films.

PRINCE OF EGYPT

Consider the movie *Prince of Egypt*, Dreamworks Animation's first film, which is loosely based on the Biblical account of Moses. The theme song for the film is entitled "When You Believe." The chorus to this song is:

*There can be miracles, when you believe
Though hope is frail, it's hard to kill
Who knows what miracles you can achieve
When you believe, somehow you will
You will when you believe...*

This is a great example of extracted values. Here, the faith and hope have no object. Their value is intrinsic. The focus is on the individual's act of belief, not on the object of his belief. You can achieve miracles if you believe, even if what you believe in doesn't exist, there is power in the act of belief. Belief is its own reward. It doesn't matter what or who you believe in, just that you believe. The belief itself is what is valuable about religion because it gives you the strength to carry on through difficult times.

I wish this were the only example of "imitation faith extract." But it isn't. Here are a few more examples.

THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER

The first song for the ending credits of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* contains these lines:

*We can be the kings and queens of anything if we believe.
It's written in the stars that shine above,
A world where you and I belong,
where faith and love will keep us strong,
Exactly who we are is just enough.*

In these lines, we see both faith and love operating as value extracts – totally separated from any object. This would be bad enough, but consider this testimony from Liam Neeson, who has played Aslan in all the Narnia movies so far:

Aslan symbolizes a Christ-like figure but he also symbolizes for me Mohammed, Buddha, and all the great spiritual leaders and prophets over the centuries. That's who Aslan stands for as well as a mentor figure for kids – that's what he means for me.

THE POLAR EXPRESS

Hmmm. So the movie has been designed so that any religious belief can fit into its framework. It has been stripped of political incorrectness by removing or primarily neutralizing Christian truths that would exclude other beliefs. Notice again the emphasis on self. In fact, if mainstream “family” movies give any object for faith, it is always the self. How many times have you heard the platitude: “You’ve just gotta believe in yourself.” Something in me thinks that C.S. Lewis would not be terribly happy about the marketizing neutralization of his specifically and obviously Christian stories, but I guess there is no way to know until we get to “somewhere in the stars where you and I belong” and then, we can ask him.

THE POLAR EXPRESS

Another example is *The Polar Express*. In it, the train conductor says, “The thing about trains... it doesn’t matter where they’re going. What matters is deciding to get on.” Later, the protagonist chants, “I believe. I believe. I believe.” According to the conductor, the direction, destination, source, or foundation of belief – I mean trains – is not important. So the boy just has to “believe.” Whatever he believes in is unimportant. As long as he decides to believe, that is what is important.

Or how about *Cinderella*: “If you keep believing, the dreams you wish will come true.”

Or even *Kung Fu Panda*: “Promise me, XiFu! Promise me you will believe!”

Once you start to notice this sort of thing, the examples are really endless. “Value Extracts” are the moral backbone of almost all family films. Love very commonly operates as a value extract – without boundaries, without object, without foundation. The “power of love.” Courage, loyalty, and honesty also appear regularly, and without a foundation. Whatever the value, it must be presented in a nebulous enough way to receive any viewer’s particular definitions. Hollywood provides the empty wineskin, you provide the passing spirit.

BARELY EVEN HALF-TRUTHS

Value extracts are dangerous deceptions – barely even half-truths. Virtue does not exist without Christ. Nothing has intrinsic value apart from Him. Faith without an object is useless. Love without definition is as good as hate. Courage, loyalty, honesty, etc. are arbitrary without biblical boundaries. Good and evil do not exist without an absolute standard to distinguish them. To ascribe intrinsic or independent value to anything is to say, in effect, that things can have existence and goodness independent of God.

Non-Christians wish this were the case because they want the fruit of Christianity without having to bow the knee to Christ. But Ecclesiastes makes it very clear: under the sun (i.e., excluding the heavens where God is), everything is intrinsically meaningless and vain.

So, these seemingly safe family movies may appear to be harmless family fun, but they are actually denying the root of all meaningful existence – God and His Word.

As such, most “family friendly” films are precarious [substitute for ‘dangerous’ – feel free to change it back], and should not be viewed passively.

It is profitable to watch these movies, even with your children, only if you couch the movie-watching experience as an active sparring session... a module of worldview conflict training. Without this self-conscious predisposition to “guarding our hearts,” we will leave ourselves vulnerable to the onslaughts of vain speculation and worldly philosophy. Watching movies and engaging with the philosophy of our culture must never be a passive experience, for to allow it to be such would be to sit under the tutelage and in the friendly company of scoffers. We cannot be deceived, such an approach has corrupted and will continue to corrupt Christian morals. The enjoyment we receive from movies must be the sport of exercising our Biblical discernment, not the passive and passing pleasure of folly (thinking again like Prov. 10:23).

So, next time you go to the movies, don’t leave your mind at the box office or your heart unguarded. Prepare yourself for the invigorating exercise of your discernment. Then, take the strength and understanding you gain from that exercise and use it to engage your culture for the kingdom of Christ! RP

This article is reprinted with permission from the author, and was first posted to Movieology.tv, a now defunct website that offered challenging and highly enlightening movie reviews from a biblical, Reformed worldview.

...most “family friendly” films are precarious [substitute for ‘dangerous’ – feel free to change it back], and should not be viewed passively.





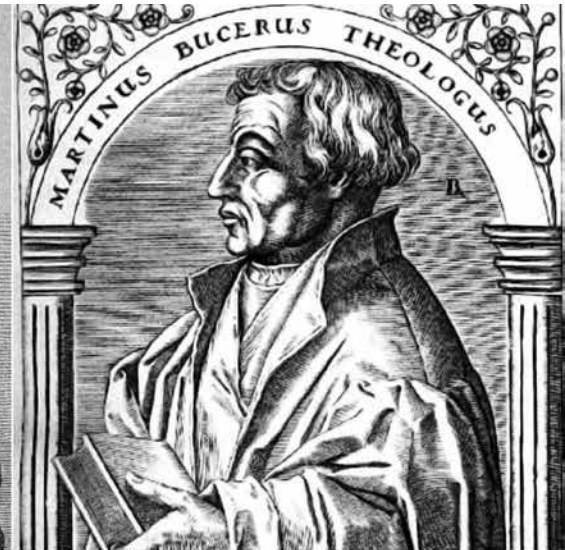
HUSBAND

2



HUSBAND

3



HUSBAND

4

IN YOUR PRESENCE THERE IS FULLNESS OF JOY

(PSALM 16:9-11)

by Christine Farenhorst

I can vividly recall how, as a child, I visited people with my father. In Holland I would ride in front of him as he peddled his bike across city and country roads in Groningen; in Canada, I sat next to him in the front seat of the car as he traversed the highways of Ontario. Frequently he took me inside as he spent time with members of the congregation. Often I sat quietly in a corner of the room and waited until it was time to go home again.

On one such visit a woman, a godly woman and mother, began to weep as she recounted her fear of going to heaven. This was rather unusual, and unobtrusively seated on a chair in a dimly lit room, my young ears perked up. It turned out that this lady was the second wife of her husband and she was afraid that in heaven he would love the first wife more than herself. My father pointed out that there was no marriage in heaven and that, after all, men and

women were souls. He spoke of being too caught up in the present – in our physical bodies, our intimacies, and our friendships – and that the focus of dying was to be with Jesus. Your relationship with your husband, he stressed time and again, will be far better in heaven than it is now, difficult as that may be to understand.

The strange thing is that there are many women (and men) who worry about such a situation as has just been

...this lady was the second wife of her husband and she was afraid that in heaven he would love the first wife more than herself.

described. Another godly woman, Mary, (as a matter of fact, I think she was one of the godliest women I ever met), was quite anxious about meeting her husband and her sister after death. Prior to the Second World War, Mary's older sister, married to a pastor, had contracted consumption. Because she loved her sister dearly, Mary had volunteered to help out with her little nieces and nephews, with the cooking and cleaning, and with the nursing. No matter - in the end her sister died. Consequently, as often happened in such cases, she shortly afterwards married the widower. How else could this single-parent family have survived? Mary loved her sister's husband, who was now her own husband, passionately and bore him two more children. They were married for more than fifty years before he died of a heart attack. When I met her she was an old woman, beloved by her stepchildren as well as her own children and spoken of with respect and affection by all who knew her. She had led a virtuous, unselfish life. Yet this lady was bothered exceedingly by one point - whom would her husband love more in heaven: her sister or herself?

Perhaps our concept of love for God and eternal life is often focused too much on individual salvation. The truth taught in Scripture is that everlasting union with our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as perfect unity with all His elect, will be fulfilled in heaven. In this world with our feeble minds and bodies, it is hard to contemplate what it will be like

to "shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father" (Matt. 13:43). Here we use methods to try and appear sweet, good-looking and kind to others, but in heaven we will shine in a way that does not come from brand-name clothes, make-up, or vitamin supplements. No, we will have attained a holiness that will reflect the love of God - and we will love all those we see and meet with a most holy, tender and perfect love and they, in turn, will love us.

LUDWIG KELLER

Wibrandis Rosenblatt, sometimes referred to as the "Bride of the Reformation," was born in 1504 in Bad Säckingen, Germany and raised in Basel. Her father was in the Austrian army in the service of the Emperor Maximilian. He wasn't home much and perhaps that is why Frau Rosenblatt moved back to Basel with her young daughter, back to the place where her family was quite prominent. Taught the housekeeping arts by her mother, Wibrandis was a lovely young girl, one any man would be proud to wed. She was married before she was twenty to a Basel craftsman by the name of Ludwig Keller. Ludwig Keller was a humanist. But both he and Wibrandis were thrilled when a little daughter, named Wibrandis after her mother, was born to them. Yet God in His wisdom cut Ludwig's life short before the couple had been married two years.

OECOLAMPADIUS

Before two years had passed, Wibrandis received a second offer of marriage, this from a man twenty-two years older than herself - a man by the name of Johannes Hausschein. Hausschein's hellenized name was Oecolampadius and he was the pastor of St. Martin's church in Basel. In addition to being a pastor, he was also a professor of theology. A scholar, well-versed in Greek and Hebrew, he had assisted Erasmus in the publication of his edition of the New Testament. Oecolampadius was a man set in his ways, a man who liked to have his home run smoothly and his mother

had always seen to it that it did. When she died, however, he was urged by other Reformers to marry. After much contemplation, and in spite of the fact that he had taken a vow of chastity early on in his career, he opted in favor of marriage, (although criticized severely for this by Erasmus), for the sake of Protestantism. Wibrandis, a widow with a little girl to raise, accepted the much older man's offer in the spring of 1528. She was twenty-four and he was forty-five.

Wibrandis bore her second husband three children, all of whom were given Greek names - Eusebius, Irene and Aletheia - meaning piety, peace and truth. Shortly after his marriage Oecolampadius wrote to his friend Farel:

In case you have not heard, let me tell you that in place of my deceased mother the Lord has given me a sister and wife, adequately Christian, not exactly affluent, well-born, a widow with several years experience in bearing the cross. I wish she were older but I see in her no signs of youthful petulance. Pray the Lord to give us a long and happy marriage.

A year later he wrote to another reformer and friend, Wolfgang Capito:

My wife is what I always wanted and I wish for no other. She is not contentious, garrulous, or a gadabout, but looks after the household. She is too simple to be proud and too discreet to be condemned.

Oecolampadius was obviously happy in marriage. Yet his earthly bliss was not to last. He fell ill. In November of 1531 he gathered his very young children around him and spoke to each of them. Someone asked whether the light above the bed was too bright for him. He smiled, struck his chest and said: "Here's light enough within." He died shortly afterwards and Wibrandis was widowed for a second time - this time with four little children in her care, as well as her aging mother.

WOLFGANG CAPITO

Around the same time that Oecolampadius died, the wife of another prominent reformer, Wolfgang Fabricius Koepfl, (better known as Capito) died also. Capito was advised, even as Oecolampadius had been advised, to remarry. He was at that time the dean of the church of St. Thomas in Strasbourg. There were those who suggested that Wibrandis, the widow of Oecolampadius had been a chaste and suitable helpmeet and would she not be a lovely companion and wife for Capito as well? The counsel of godly men prevailed in the life of Capito and he proposed to Wibrandis who accepted. In August of 1532 she married for the third time. She brought with her four children and her mother. Wolfgang Capito was fifty-four years old to her twenty-eight years of age. Wibrandis bore Capito five children - three girls and two boys.

Wibrandis was a good wife for Capito. She balanced his budget, (something which had been a problem), kept the household running smoothly, entertained friends and mended his clothes. There were the occasional bouts of sickness but none were so awful and horrifying as the plague of 1541 when two and a half thousand died in Strasbourg. The son of Oecolampadius, Eusebius, died of it, as well as two of the children of Capito and Wibrandis. Capito himself was also stricken and died. Wibrandis was widowed for the third time.

Elizabeth, the wife of Martin Bucer, another reformer who lived in Strasbourg, also succumbed to the plague. On her deathbed she was informed that Capito had died and that Wibrandis was widowed. Elizabeth, a former nun, had borne her husband thirteen children of whom only five were alive at the onset of the plague outbreak. Four of these last five had just died of this disease. Knowing that she would shortly be gone as well, Elizabeth summoned both her husband and Wibrandis to her bedside. Wibrandis, having just been widowed hesitated about being seen in public but could not refuse to come to a dying friend's

bedside. She came to the Bucer house in the evening. Elizabeth Bucer, looking steadily at the man and woman standing at her bedside, appealed to her husband to remarry and to Wibrandis to take her place in the Bucer household.

MARTIN BUCER

In April of 1542 Wibrandis Rosenblatt and Martin Bucer were married. Martin was Wibrandis' senior by thirteen years. The marriage contract read that they married for: "the furtherance of the glory of God and the upbuilding of the Christian church." Bucer wrote at this time:

Although I am past the age suited to marriage, I have nevertheless, in view of my circumstances and office, decided to follow the advice of my brothers and to marry the widow of Capito. As my response to the illegitimate canon laws about a second marriage, (digamy), I would point to the law from Ezekiel 44 which does permit a priest to wed the widow of a priest. She still has four children: a girl from Oecolampadius, and a boy and two small girls from Capito. The latter, as you know, did not leave her much on account of the tough luck he had with his money loans but thanks to the aid of Wendelin Rihel there is a little money with which to support her. As long as God gives me life and my income, we will keep that money - however small the amount will be - for the orphans and we will treat them as our own children. My motives for taking this step are (1) loneliness and (2) the danger which exists if a person starts a household with someone he does not know. Further, there is the virtuous character of this widow and the love I owe to the orphaned children of the man who made himself so useful to me. Pray the Lord for us so that our plans may be approved by Christ and be of benefit to His church.

Later he wrote of his second wife,

...Wibrandis has proven to be pure, honorable, faithful and godly as well as a diligent helper... and has a

**And in heaven
whose wife shall
she be? Is the
answer not simple?**

gift for ministry as for many years she demonstrated in her marriage to those two precious men of God, Oecolampadius and Capito.

He compared his two wives and said:

I am even a little afraid of my excellent wife's tendency to be overly accommodating in my direction. My first wife felt somewhat more free to admonish me and now I realize that that freedom of hers was not only useful but necessary. Aside from her excessive diligence on my behalf and her accommodating attitude, my present wife leaves nothing to be desired; yet, O how strong still is my yearning for my deceased wife - that first marriage, so reverently contracted struck such deep roots in me.

In 1549 Martin Bucer was appointed professor of divinity in Cambridge, England. He traveled down there ahead of his family. It was a cold country and by the end of 1549 the whole Bucer household had arrived. The climate was hard on Martin's health. He updated his will noting that, should he die, Wibrandis would do fine on her own, but that he felt she should remarry. In 1551 Bucer died, worn out by hard work and by the harsh, rainy and damp days of Britain. King Edward VI awarded Wibrandis 100 marks for services rendered to the Church of England.

Wibrandis did not remarry but eventually returned to Basel, the place where she had been raised by her mother. Another decade would pass before she died, in 1564, of the plague.

And in heaven whose wife shall she be? Is the answer not simple? She always was and also will be there, the bride of Christ. **RP**

Being ready to witness

Acts 26 shows it can be as simple as saying what you've seen

by Sharon Bratcher

Our Lord calls us to share the gospel but often we wonder how, when, or if we might be able to witness to others about Jesus Christ. The fear of not knowing what to say, and of therefore saying the wrong words, paralyzes us into saying nothing. And will we be laughed at? Not taken seriously? Rejected? Too often we find it hard to imagine that God will use our words and actions as a part of His process for bringing someone to Him. We know that He may in theory. But do our actions show that we believe He may in reality?

HOW PAUL WAS PREPARED TO BE A WITNESS

We have many excuses to not do what we know we should do. Instead of paying heed to them, let's turn our attention to Scripture, to see what we can learn from the example of Paul, and witness he gave to King Agrippa. In Acts 26 he tells the king the story of his conversion. In verses 16-18 we read that when Jesus appeared to Paul (then known as Saul), Jesus said to him:

"Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

Paul speaks of himself as being called to be a *witness* and a *servant*. As a servant, he is appointed, rescued and sent by God. As a witness, he is to tell "what I have seen" and "what he has showed me." He ends by saying, "So then, King Agrippa, I wasn't

disobedient to the vision from heaven" (Acts 26:19).

When Paul was dramatically confronted by Jesus, struck blind, and completely changed into a new creature whose old ways passed away, his knowledge of the true God was still limited. He had much to learn and he went through an unusual training that was specifically for him. As each day began, he was only able to tell what he had seen and what God had shown him up until that point in time. As his knowledge and experience grew, he had more to tell. It is the same with us.

So, let's ask ourselves – what have we seen and what has He shown us?

HOW WE CAN PREPARE TO BE A WITNESS

It's often difficult on the spur of the moment to gather all our information together in a cohesive presentation. But there are things we can do so that we will "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks" (1 Pet. 3:15) For example:

1. *Write down what God has taught you.* Most of us won't do it daily or weekly, but we could keep a notebook or file where we write down some of what we learn, and then re-read it now and again, to remind us.
2. *Take notes during the sermon.* How much of the sermon is really remembered? Note-taking solidifies the truths we hear and gives us the option of re-visiting those truths by reading those notes and Scripture passages later in the day, the week, or even months later.
3. *Keep learning.* If we reach the point where we think we know enough Scripture and theology to coast along, we are in a dangerous place. Just like an engine-propelled vehicle, we can only coast for a short while if the power

to the engine is cut; eventually we will come to a standstill. We must read God's Word regularly.

All of these are reasons why our worship service and Bible studies are the most important activities that we do each week.

USED BY GOD TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Why should we tell what we have seen and what God has shown us? While we don't have exactly the same calling as Paul, we can still learn from the charge Jesus gave him in Acts 26:17-18 that God is able to use us. Through our witness too God can:

- open their eyes
- turn them from darkness to light
- turn them from the power of Satan to God
- grant them forgiveness of sins
- give them a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Him

As blogger Matt Walsh posted late last year:

Only Jesus can save, of course, but He has delegated an enormous amount of power and responsibility to us. We have the capacity to spread truth and bring souls to Him. We are armed with abilities beyond our comprehension, and our actions, our words, our thoughts, will reverberate through the cosmos in ways that we cannot possibly understand.

Acts 26:16-18 says that the telling of what we have seen and what God has shown us will be used to turn people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. This is what we should do. Let us be obedient!

RP



JUDGES VS. JUSTICE

A HISTORY OF ABORTION IN CANADIAN COURTS

BY MICHAEL WAGNER

In 1988 Canada's Supreme Court's gave their Morgentaler decision which struck down all restrictions on abortion in the country. Shortly afterwards the Supreme Court again dealt with abortion in the *Borowski* and *Daigle* cases. Together, these three cases have been called the "abortion trilogy" and a close look at these cases shows how Canada's top judges can take a large amount of the credit for us being one of just three countries in the world with no protection for the unborn.

1. THE MORGENTALER DECISION

In 1983 abortionist Henry Morgentaler was charged with operating an illegal abortion clinic in Toronto. At that time, the law only allowed abortions to be performed in accredited hospitals with

special abortion committees that had to approve each abortion. Morgentaler and his supporters considered this to be too restrictive.

His case went all the way to the top and on January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court ruled that Canada's abortion law violated section 7 of the Charter. The majority of judges argued that the abortion law violated the procedural fairness required by the Charter of Rights. While this was a major victory for Morgentaler, there was a sense in which that decision was not a complete defeat for the pro-life cause because it gave Parliament the option to pass better abortion legislation (though Parliament hasn't touched the issue since).

In his 1992 book *Morgentaler vs. Borowski*, University of Calgary political

scientist Ted Morton relates some little known information that shines some light on the Supreme Court's thinking. Morton notes that when Gwen Landolt, a lawyer and leader of the pro-family group REAL Women of Canada, read the Supreme Court's decision she noticed something startling. Four of the judges who struck down the law referred to a document known as the *Powell Report* in their decision. Dr. Marion Powell had been commissioned by the Ontario government to survey the availability of abortion services in Ontario. Dr. Powell was a "pro-choice" activist, and her report was released on January 27, 1987, three months *after* Morgentaler's case had been heard by the Supreme Court.

Landolt reviewed the Morgentaler docket in the Supreme Court archives

The Supreme Court had relied heavily on a document that had not been submitted as evidence, and which had been produced by an abortion rights activist.

and confirmed that the *Powell Report* had not been mentioned in court when the case was argued – obviously because the report did not yet exist at that time. In other words, the Supreme Court, in striking down Canada’s abortion law, had relied heavily on a document that had not been submitted as evidence, and which had been produced by an abortion rights activist.

Landolt shared this information with Laura McArthur, the president of the Toronto Right to Life Association. McArthur then lodged an official complaint with the Canadian Judicial Council, arguing that the Court had deprived Morgentaler’s opponents of the right to challenge the *Powell Report* when the case was argued. Considering that Dr. Powell was a pro-abortion activist, the impartiality of her report was certainly questionable.

The Council replied that the issue raised by McArthur was outside of its mandate to consider, and also that the Supreme Court occasionally relies on materials which have not been introduced as evidence. This is known as “judicial notice.” However, as Prof. Morton notes, “To justify the Court’s use of the *Powell Report* as an exercise of judicial notice was to stretch the concept beyond its normal scope.”

2. THE BOROWSKI DECISION

While Henry Morgentaler had been fighting in the courts to strike down restrictions on abortion, a prominent Manitoba pro-life activist (and former provincial cabinet minister), Joe Borowski, had been fighting in the courts to have abortion prohibited in Canada. That is, he was challenging the same law Morgentaler was challenging, except from the opposite point of view: Borowski said Canada’s abortion law violated the Charter because it allowed abortions to be performed. He argued that unborn children were protected by the Charter’s declaration that “everyone has the right to life.”

After considerable effort and expense, Borowski’s case reached the Supreme Court in October 1988. A few months later the Court ruled that it would not

address Borowski’s arguments because his case had become moot. The law he was challenging had been struck down in the *Morgentaler* decision, so the Court did not need to address issues related to legislation that was no longer operative.


All of Borowski’s efforts were thwarted by this declaration that his case had become moot. Years of work and expense came to nothing. Now the pro-life movement had lost two cases at the Supreme Court, but there was one more yet to come.

3. THE DAIGLE DECISION

On July 7, 1989, Jean-Guy Tremblay obtained a court injunction in Quebec to prevent his former girlfriend, Chantal Daigle, from aborting the child they had conceived together. The Quebec Superior Court upheld the injunction 10 days later. Then on July 26 the Quebec Court of Appeal also upheld the injunction. In a decision that shocked the country, that court ruled that an unborn child was a “distinct human entity” that “has a right to life and protection by those who conceive it.”

The Quebec Court of Appeal decision was immediately appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court judges were called back from their summer vacations to hold an emergency session on August 8. As Ted Morton and fellow University of Calgary political scientist Rainer Knopff write in their 1992 book *Charter Politics*, “Never before in the Court’s history had a case moved from trial to the highest court in the land with such speed!” Canada was in the midst of a full-fledged crisis. How dare a court in this country declare that unborn children had a right to life!

During the Supreme Court proceedings, Daigle’s lawyer announced that she had gone to the US and had an abortion there, making the case moot. The injunction preventing her from getting an abortion no longer had any practical effect. The Chief Justice then asked the opposing lawyers if they wished to continue the proceedings. Tremblay’s lawyer said no, but Daigle’s lawyer said yes. The Court therefore decided to continue, and within



“Never before in the Court’s history had a case moved from trial to the highest court in the land with such speed!”

two hours they had struck down the (moot) injunction against Daigle, once again handing the pro-abortion side a complete victory.

That wasn’t all, however. The Court decided to do more than decide Daigle’s case, which concerned Quebec’s civil law. The Court went well beyond the questions of that case by also addressing the rights of the fetus under common law, which applies in the other nine provinces. This was to prevent a similar case from later arising in one of the common law jurisdictions.

The Supreme Court had previously taken the position that it wanted to avoid unnecessary judicial pronouncements. Morton and Knopff point out that in this case the Court violated its own maxim twice:

When the justices learned that Chantal Daigle had had her abortion, why did they persist in ruling on the issues involved rather than declaring the case moot – which it clearly was? Similarly, why did the Court expand the scope of its ruling to include the common law when this was not necessary for a Quebec appeal?

They note that, “for many this aspect of the *Daigle* decision encourages the suspicion that the Supreme Court is less than neutral on the abortion issue.”

Morton and Knopff indicate that there are other questions as well. When Borowski’s case became moot, the Supreme Court refused to proceed with it. When Daigle’s case became moot, the

Court proceeded anyway. “Why under these circumstances, sceptics wonder, did the Court persist in deciding the issue of fetal rights? Why did it treat Borowski and Daigle so differently?”

As mentioned, Daigle’s case was rushed to the Supreme Court level unlike any previous case. Perhaps this can be justified because of the medical issues involved. It could be seen to be an emergency situation. As a result of the lack of time, there was much less legal preparation and input than usual for a major court case. When Daigle had her abortion, however, the emergency was over. There was no need to rush into a decision without proper study and thoughtful consideration. This was serious stuff, after all, because it concerned the supreme law of the land.

Morton and Knopf quote another constitutional expert as saying that it was a bad idea to rush ahead with the Daigle case and produce a major court ruling “in a hothouse, emergency atmosphere. This opinion will be with us for centuries.” And yet this important decision had been reached with considerably less preparation and argumentation than would normally occur. The Canadian people (most notably those in the womb) were not well served.

OPERATION RESCUE

Besides the Daigle controversy, there was other activity on the abortion

front in Canada during 1989. After the *Morgentaler* decision, many Canadian pro-lifers became increasingly frustrated about the lack of restrictions on abortion. Some joined Operation Rescue and engaged in civil disobedience directed primarily against Everywoman’s Health Clinic in Vancouver and two abortion clinics in Toronto. Operation Rescue was a group founded in the US to promote nonviolent resistance as a pro-life tactic.

Operation Rescue activists would use their bodies to block access to the entrance of abortuaries. Pregnant women were thereby prevented from entering and getting abortions. The police were always called in to break up the blockades. Court injunctions were imposed against these protests, but activists would often ignore the injunctions. Many were thus thrown in jail and fined. The courts in BC were particularly harsh in dealing with protestors who participated in Operation Rescue.


But while the mainstream media strongly approved of Daigle’s actions and her Supreme Court decision, it disapproved of the Operation Rescue missions. Writing at the time, *Ted Byfield* of Alberta Report pointed out the hypocrisy of the situation:

It’s true that, in aborting the child, she defied a court injunction. In Vancouver, that is a dreadful thing to

do, as the judges so gravely aver every time they slam the abortuary rescuers into jail for doing it. [Daigle] receives no such admonition. She has been through enough, the judges decide. So we see how law is administered in Canada. If you defy an injunction in opposing abortion, you are a wretched criminal and must go to jail. If you defy an injunction in having an abortion, you are a national hero, and warmly commended.

CONCLUSION

Ted Byfield’s comment puts the matter clearly. Canada’s courts had become politicized. When they were presented with an abortion-related case, the outcome always favored the pro-abortion side. The courts reasoned one way in one case, and the opposite way in another case, in order to arrive at their desired decision. Their legal reasoning was steered in particular directions to achieve their political goals.

The courts will not change until Canadian society has been changed. This is why the efforts of pro-life groups are so important. Neither the politicians nor the courts will respond favorably to pro-life arguments until there’s a broader reception of the pro-life message. It isn’t going to start at the top –grassroots activity is essential to accomplishing this goal. We all need to talk to our neighbors. 



“Our Supreme Court can take a large amount of the credit for us being one of just three countries in the world with no protection for the unborn.”

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

ROSES ARE YELLOW

They come in red,
Also yellow.
For the right gal,
Risk red, fellow.

A TAX ON THE STUPID

Professional golfer Fred Couples once shared how he first learned that there is no such thing as a sure bet. The lesson was learned when the late tennis player, Bobby Riggs, challenged him to a golf money match. There was one condition though – Riggs wanted one “throw” per hole. Even with one throw it seemed highly unlikely Riggs could beat the professional golfer, so Couples took the bet.

“On the first hole I hit my approach shot to 15 feet. Meanwhile it took Riggs four shots to reach the green,” said Couples. “But just as I got set to putt Riggs walked over, picked up my ball and threw it out-of-bounds.”

Riggs started laughing and wouldn’t accept Couples’ money.

“You’ve heard the lesson before, but here it is again,” Couples said, “If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.”

SOURCE: Golf Digest Nov. 2000, National Post, Oct. 11/00

ADAM’S RIB

Since Eve was created out of Adam’s rib, there is a popular but erroneous misconception that men today have one less rib than women. Interestingly, even Adam might not have been short a rib: this bone, if carefully removed leaving the surrounding periosteum membrane intact, can grow back.

BLUE VIOLETS

Violets are blue
So we are told
Are they lonely
Or simply cold?

DEEP THOUGHTS FROM COOKIE MONSTER

- “It’s weird that we cook bacon, and bake cookies.”
- “Cookie dough is the sushi of desserts.”
- “Surely if tomato is fruit, that makes ketchup a jam.”
- “What was the best thing before sliced bread?”

CATERPILLARS ARE CRAZY COOL

The wonder of how caterpillars become butterflies is so mysterious that in 2009 zoologist Donald Williamson suggested, in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, that butterflies and caterpillars were, basically, two different organisms that at some point in their evolution accidentally mated. His theory was ridiculed by others, and the same journal published a rebuttal soon afterwards, but it highlights just how wonderfully weird caterpillar/butterflies are – evolutionists are left grasping at straws to explain them.

When a caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis, the caterpillar parts of its DNA are described as being “turned off” and the butterfly parts are then turned on – it undergoes a complete remodeling. In fact, if a caterpillar were to lose a leg, it would have no impact on how many legs it would then have in butterfly form. There are two complete and utterly different bodies, wrapped up in one amazing creature.

Our God is amazing...and fun!

SOURCE: Ted Olsen’s “Are Butterflies a New Creation” posted to ChristianityToday.com on Feb 19, 2014

COLOR BLINDNESS

If you believe
Violets are blue.
What color are
Oranges to you?

SO GOOD SOMEONE SHOULD HAVE SAID THEM

Some of the very best quotes may never have been said. Or, at least, not by the folks they are linked to. For example, Luther, when asked to recant his writings, declined and is said to have told the Emperor, “Here I stand. I can do no other.” While the sentiment is certainly Luther’s, whether this verbiage came from his lips is up for debate. What follows are quotes whose origins are disputed, but whose awesomeness is certain.

“Comparison is the thief of Joy.”

– *attributed, but disputed, to Theodore Roosevelt*

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

– *attributed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, but seemingly never sourced*

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

– *commonly attributed to Martin Luther, it is by Elizabeth Rundle Charles, in her novel The Chronicles of the Schoenberg Cotta Family*

“You don’t have a soul. You are a soul; you have a body.”

– *attributed to C.S. Lewis, but seemingly not found in his writings.*

“When people stop believing in God, they don’t believe in nothing – they believe in anything.”

– *attributed to G.K. Chesterton, but likely originating as a summary of his thoughts by biographer Emile Cammaerts*



OUR ADOPTION JOURNEY

by Michelle Helder

When he first suggested I write about our adoption journey, I asked the editor for specifics: what was he looking for? His answer: everything involved in our adoption journey.

Oh my. All that was involved in our adoption journey? In *one* article?! And the word count allowed for this *one* article about our journey? Just a couple thousand or so. Wow. I thought going through the process of adoption was tough!! Keeping it that short will be quite the challenge, and since I have only 1,900 words left I better get straight to it.

TWO TOGETHER

Our journey to adoption was a long one. I don't mean the actual adoption process, but rather the time it took for the two of us to get on the same page about adoption. That took 10 years long.

My husband and I were married in 1998 with the full knowledge that, humanly speaking, we would never have a biological child. The first few years I was all gung-ho about it, wanting to adopt. However, my husband wasn't quite sure. Within a few months of getting married we did ask for a package from a private adoption agency, but we found out that most agencies wouldn't look at us until we had been

married for at least two years. That put the process on hold.

During those years we developed a rhythm as a couple; it was a rhythm that consisted of lots of time together, mostly filled with contentment for how the Lord saw us to be: a family of two. We adventured lots, and we were able to help out in the church in ways we wouldn't have been able to if we'd had children. Adoption was something that we continued to talk about off and on, especially in the summer, Christmas, and March break (when I missed my students so much). But it never went any further.

In year 10, things started to shift. By

We went home that night, filled with excitement, anticipation, fear, niggling doubts, and with more questions.

this time my husband was in his early to mid 30s and the thought of being a father appealed to him more than it did when he was 24. The problem? Me! In my mind, we had closed that door and I was not interested in pursuing adoption any more. In fact, I had decided to go back to school to further my education as a teacher. And now he wants to adopt?!

Well, it truly is amazing how the Lord works. Here I thought I went back to college to enhance my career, but no, God had other plans! It was while I was in school that God changed my heart. I, too, wanted to adopt. It literally was a change, a moment that I will never forget – it slammed me one day, took my breath away and was crystal clear.

It was the first thing I said to my husband when he walked into the door: “Can we look into adoption?”

Yes!

Now what??

RESEARCH

We decided right away not to tell anyone that we were looking into it. For so many years, people encouraged us to look into it, but clearly it was not God’s timing. We wanted to search it out without influence from our family and friends. And that is exactly what we did.

We called Beginnings, a private adoption agency. I don’t remember ever discussing other ways to adopt, either via the Children’s Aid Society, or adopting internationally. We just both knew about Beginnings, and that is where we started.

In order to pursue it, we had to educate ourselves about adoption. We needed to find answers to questions like:

- How long will the process be?
- What are the provincial laws?
- What are the chances of a baby being placed with us and then taken out of our home?
- What are the fees?
- And what is this about Open Adoption?!

When we called Beginnings to ask some of our questions, they encouraged us to attend an “Adoption Day” where the day was filled with educational workshops. However, the next such day was the following Saturday, just 5 days from when we called...could we make it?

Again, we are in awe of how God works in our lives. You see, months earlier we had accepted the challenge of climbing the CN Tower stairs that very same day at 6 in the morning – the very day the adoption workshops were going to be held. So we were already booked for that day, right? But guess what? The adoption workshops were being held in a building *right beside the CN Tower*. And the workshops started at 8 am! Divine? I know so.

As if climbing 1,776 stairs wasn’t exhilarating enough, we quickly changed out of our sweats in our car, and walked next door to attend the Adoption Day. What would the outcome be? What would we come away with? After being educated, what conclusion will we come to? That adoption is for us? Or is it not?

Eight hours later and after lots of prayer, we came to the realization that:

- a. We wanted to adopt
- b. We knew what we wanted in regards to one of the scariest aspects of adoption: Openness

THE PAPERWORK

We went home that night, filled with excitement, anticipation, fear, niggling doubts, and with more questions. We

WHAT IS OPEN ADOPTION?

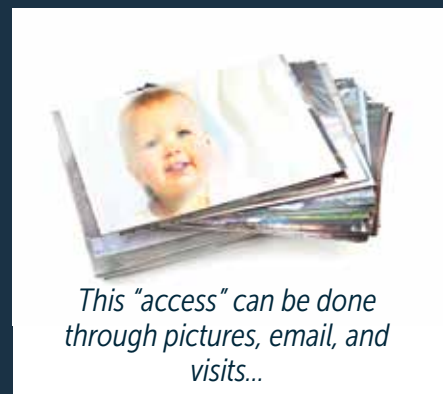
Whereas in Closed Adoption (often called Confidential Adoption) the identity of the biological parents is kept sealed, in Open Adoption adoptees have access to birth parents as well as their family history, including their medical history (which definitely came in handy for our daughter).

This “access” can be done through email, pictures, and visit(s), according to what you and the birth parents have agreed to. You, the adoptive parents, set the parameters as to how involved the birth parents are. You are matched according to what you are comfortable with. If you are comfortable with one visit a year, you will not be presented to birth parents that are hoping for more.

If, for whatever reason, you see that the visit(s) are not in the best interest of your child, you, the adoptive parents, have every right to stop contact for a while.

Open Adoption eases the decision (somewhat) for the birth parent(s), as they will get to know how their child is doing once s/he has been placed in someone else’s arms.

While this part of the adoption was one of the hardest things to grapple with for us, having gone through it now, we are so thankful that our children know their backgrounds, know where they came from and know that many people love them, including their birth parents.



This “access” can be done through pictures, email, and visits...

After using up all the ink from every single pen in our home, we were finally on The List! Praise God!

filled out the application form from Beginnings and were contacted by one of their adoption practitioners. And so the paperwork started. And filling out all that paperwork never seemed to end! All those poor trees!

Some of the questions we had to answer were:

- Were you spanked as a child?
- Did you drink? Take drugs? Any family members drink and/or take drugs?
- Were you sexually abused?
- Is there depression in your family?
- How will you deal with a disobedient child?
- How much money do you make?
- How long have you lived in your home?
- What's your education?

By the time you are done filling out the forms, you are pretty sure that there is no way any agency will accept you as a prospective adoptive family.

And then comes the next list of questions, ones that can be so, so difficult to answer:

- What are you looking for in a child?
- Boy? Girl? Twins? Sibling group?
- What age?
- Race?
- What birth defects are you comfortable with? Downs Syndrome? Hip displacement? Cleft lip? Birthmark? Limbs missing? Blind? Deaf?
- What level of alcohol/drug usage are you comfortable with?

The reason why I say those questions are so difficult to answer is because, well, doesn't every child deserve a home? Especially a Christian home? Many times we just sat there, stumped, wrestling with what boxes to check off and which ones to leave blank.

Once all the paperwork was done – including questions that family and friends had to answer on our behalf – our home inspected to make sure our water temperature was lukewarm and every cupboard had a lock, checklists checked, police checks approved, fingerprints processed and cheques cashed (private adoption costs money), there was yet one more thing that had to be accomplished before getting on “The List” and that was 27 hours of P.R.I.D.E training, which stands for Parents’ Resources for Information, Development, and Education.

There was so much work involved to get on The List, yet all of it was required. But that wasn't the end of it. In between all of the above, we had to make a “Profile Book” since we were going the route of Open Adoption. A Profile Book is a book that birth parents will use to choose you to raise their child. You address them in your book, like you are writing them a letter. This book needs to be about you.

Have you ever tried to make a book about yourself, knowing that what you put in there could either turn birth parents off, or interest them? In that book, you present yourselves as individuals, as a couple, your interests, your values, your future goals, what you hope for in a relationship with the birth parents. And don't forget to add pictures! But be careful! You don't want to put too much in this book, or too little; or put in old pictures of yourselves or too many posed pictures; or look fake, or be too serious; or be too adventurous, or be too much of a homebody, or, well, I think you get the idea. Basically, it's a book that pretty much makes you feel like you are selling yourself in order to prove that YOU are the ones the birth parents should choose over and above all the other vying adoptive parents. Yeah, a very difficult project to complete.

For us, all the above was completed by us and our adoption practitioner in 3 months. After using up all the ink from every single pen in our home, we were finally on The List! Praise God!

So exciting, yet oh so nerve-wracking. I couldn't help but question quietly during all this work, “What if this was never God's plan? What if we followed our will, rather than God's? What if after all this, it was never meant to be in the first place?”

Thankfully God put those questions to rest fairly quickly. Six weeks later we were chosen by our daughter's birth parents. (Yes, that was quick, and no, that is not the norm!) Five months after that our daughter was born and placed in our arms, moments that I just cannot write about as our English language (or any language out there) fails to have words that would capture it accurately.

CONCLUSION

While reading all of this you may come to the conclusion that our journey was painless and simple, easy to write about because it all “turned out.” For the most part, that is true. However, remember, I was given the guideline of just 2,000 words. That doesn't leave a whole lot to go over every single up and down this journey had for us, and there were lots. Besides, this is just one of our adoption journeys. When our daughter was 18 months old (the age required before being able to go back on The List), we embarked on our second adoption journey, a much different one, but one that also resulted in the blessing of a baby, our son.

But before I end, I will quickly speak more of one part of the journey – which really, is a journey in itself, and that is the journey of reaching the decision to adopt. Maybe you are there right now – trying to decide whether to adopt or not. This part of the journey was definitely much harder and longer for us than the

journey of adoption.

For some, wanting to adopt a child may come easily, and for others it takes time. And for others still, adoption just is not for them. For us, we definitely fit in the middle category: it took time. It took us a lot of time to come to terms with difficult matters, matters such as:

- How do we *know* whether to pursue adoption or not? Is it for us?! (Everyone else seems to think it is.....but do we?)
- How did others come to know it was for them?
- Will it ease our infertility struggles?
- Will we be able to love someone else's baby?
- Will things go awry when the child is older (as many well-meaning loved ones from the older generation warned us about)
- Will we ever see this child as

ours? Or will we only see the child as our "adopted" daughter/son?

It was so vital that, before we pursued adoption, my husband and I had to be on the same page – that adoption was something we *both* desired. And in order to be on the same page, we first had to go through the grieving process of not having a biological child.


To be honest, though, we never did come to terms with some of those difficult struggles mentioned above until after our child was placed with us. But if you are at this point on your journey, not knowing whether to adopt or not, secretly still wishing, hoping and praying for a biological child, then I ask you this question, a question that is blunt yet real:

*Do you want to pass down your genetics?
Or do you want to parent?*

While you wrestle with that question,

“Do you want to pass down your genetics? Or do you want to parent?”

and many others, continue to go to God for guidance, remembering to always pray (and mean it when you pray this): “*Thy will be done.*” Pray that you may follow His will willingly, putting aside your wants and desires. And when you pray this day in and day out, with His Word open, I promise you, His *will* will become clear to you. That may lead you on the journey of adoption, or to a life full with other plans He has for you.

“For this God is our God forever and forever; He will be our guide even to the end.” Ps. 48:14 

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INFERTILITY, SENSITIVITY & ADOPTION

by Michelle Helder

In our Reformed churches, children are a blessing that frequently comes within a year or two of getting married. But what if that is not the case for a couple?

It's also quite common to ask someone whether they have children or not. But how would we respond if a person confided to us that no, they had no children even though they had been trying for a number of months, and even years.

In my own experience I found the most common response is something like, "Oh, I'm sorry," followed quickly by, "Have you guys thought of adoption?"

PRESSURED

Without meaning to, that question applies a lot of pressure to a couple struggling to conceive – pressure to put to rest their dream of having a biological child; pressure to look elsewhere for a child; pressure to see adoption as the answer; pressure that if they *don't* adopt, they will be viewed as selfish and unloving; and pressure to adopt because well, that could very well mean they will get pregnant since, as so many have pointed out, that's what happened to someone's aunt's daughter's husband's sister's niece!

Yes, we often and unintentionally apply pressure to couples who are struggling with infertility when we casually and quickly suggest adoption as the answer. Speaking from experience, this suggestion was often very hard to hear. We knew everyone meant well, but at the time it hurt because we were still

struggling with infertility, and adoption wasn't something what we were looking for. We were looking for a shoulder to cry on. We needed to be reminded that God still loved us and that this love was shown every day by the gifts He had given us, even if those gifts didn't include a child.

You see, adoption doesn't solve a couple's infertility – adoption isn't a cure for infertility. Once adoption takes place, infertility is *still* there! Just because we've adopted, that doesn't mean our infertility is gone and isn't an issue anymore. It has definitely taken a backseat and isn't in the forefront, but it is still there. Before an infertile couple looks at adoption, they may need to first grieve the loss of their dream of having a biological child. And that can be a long or short process. They need to come to terms with many things that come with infertility before looking at adoption.

And besides, adoption is a whole journey in itself – one with more ups and downs than the largest roller coaster out there! – and it simply isn't for everyone either.

CONCLUSION

So if a couple confides in you about their infertility, don't immediately try to solve their problem – don't suggest adoption right away. Just listen to them and be that shoulder for them to cry on. If you feel the need to say something (don't we all?!), let them know you are praying for them and that you are there for them.

By the way, after many years of people


suggesting adoption to us, we began to throw the question back at them. The conversation often went like this:

Well-meaning person: "So, do you have any kids?"

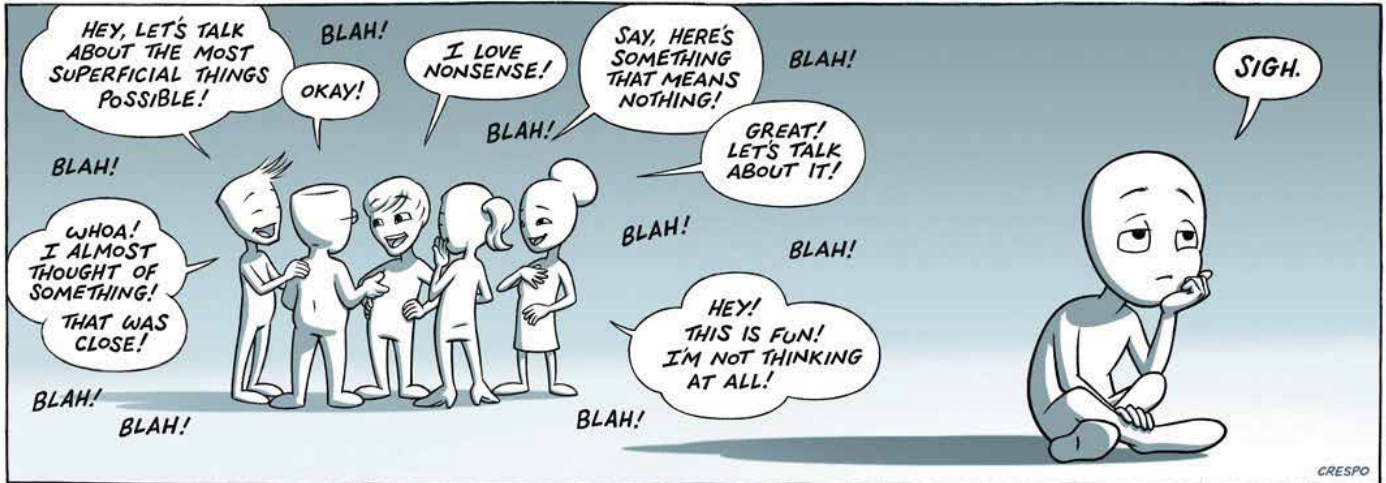
Us: "Ummmm, no. So far the Lord has not given us any children."

Well-meaning person: "Oh! I am sorry!! Have you thought of adoption?"

Us: "Well, we have. But have you?!"

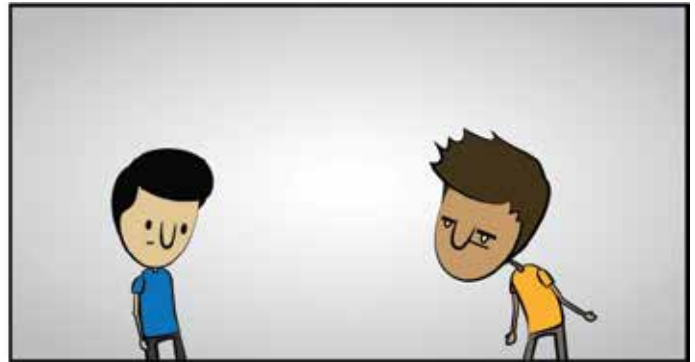
You see, adoption isn't only for those who can't have kids! 

We unintentionally apply pressure to couples who are struggling with infertility when we quickly suggest adoption as the answer.



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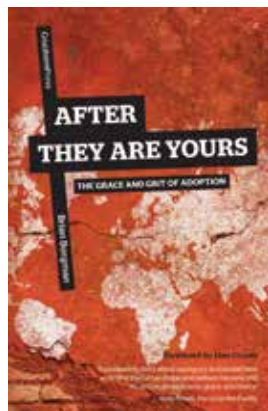


REVIEWS

ON ADOPTION IN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

AFTER THEY ARE YOURS

BY DAN CRUVER AND BRIAN BORGMAN
2014 / 120 PAGES



This is not a warm and fuzzy book about adoption. It is a very real look inside an adoptive home on the not-so-nice days when it seems a good idea to give up. It is about the parental need to daily receive your own intake of God's grace in order to pass it along. It is about the grit and grace needed to raise a child who is troubled and also very different from you. It is about loving through the thick of it.

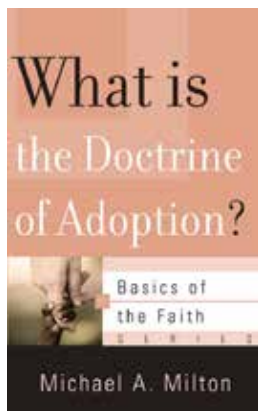
As the authors explain, when we are called to adopt, "it is to intentionally step into a broken situation for the purpose of healing." All adoption starts with loss; every adoptive child has lost their natural family. We were created to be raised by our natural families but the brokenness of sin has created the need for adoption. "It is mercy, and it will require a lifetime of ministry."

This is a good read for everyone who knows an adoptive family. It helps explain the trials that are present when raising children who have been hurt and who, on some days, might be especially tough to love. An easy, quick read that will make us more compassionate to those around us.

- KELLI KOBES

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF ADOPTION?

BY MICHAEL A. MILTON
2012 / 36 PAGES



The other books reviewed here encourage us to adopt because God adopted us first. Michael Milton's goal is to teach us about our heavenly adoption, and he uses earthly adoption as an illustration.

How does earthly adoption reflect what God has done? Well, when we adopt a child we choose them not because of anything they have done, but because of what we have decided to do – they don't earn their adoption; it is a gift. And we show love towards them, opening our hearts and our home to them, long before they ever express love towards us. It is all unprompted, unearned and unending. So too, God's adoption of us as his children.

Milton makes use of the Bible, the Westminster Confession, and personal anecdotes to illustrate the wonder of our heavenly adoption – this is a pretty easy read. He also has some great quotes, the best from J.I. Packer who explains that while it is wonderful that our sins are forgiven, it is all the more wonderful that we were adopted: "To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater."

- JON DYKSTRA

HELPING YOUR ADOPTED CHILD

BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP
2008 / 22 PAGES



This was a very easy and quick booklet to read, full of encouraging words for adoptive parents, and helpful reminders that each child is unique and yet all must find their identity in Christ. This identity in Christ is a special blessing for an adoptive child who may have significant personal issues with identity and place. Mr. Tripp states that "you will have to remind your child again and again that all who believe are adopted into God's family, we are all God's children," and, "you must constantly work to root your adopted child's identity in Christ."

The author encourages parents to not only go to Christ with your child's needs but also their own needs in parenting, because God knows the size and importance of the task you have taken on. In disciplining, go for the heart – that's where behavior is controlled from – but realize that some struggles will stem from the inherent differences in the hardwiring of your child.

As parents, we appreciate this book for the reminders and comforts it helped us to see once again. This is one we keep handy for days when a pick-me-up is needed – for our adoptive parenting as well as biological parenting.

- KELLI KOBES

RESCUED: THE HEART OF ADOPTION AND CARING FOR ORPHANS

DOCUMENTARY

62 MIN / 2012

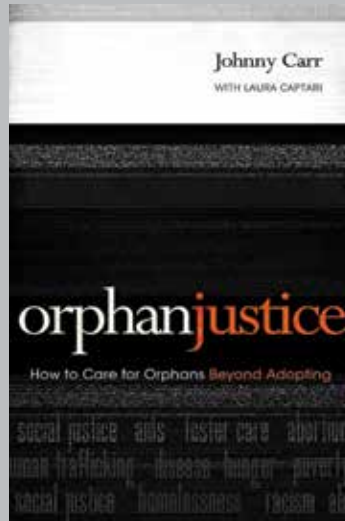


I was a little unsettled after watching this documentary because it so passionately encourages adoption and, well, my wife and I haven't. RC Sproul Jr. and Kevin Swanson, two of the many folks interviewed, readily assure watchers that not everyone is called to adopt. But then they go on to note how care for orphans is a godly act, an act that pastors should encourage off the pulpit, and an act the Church is currently not giving enough attention to. It's hard to watch and not wonder, "Are we just being selfish deciding not to adopt?"

And, of course, that's the very point: we're not all called to adopt, but maybe a lot more of us are called to adopt than we think and we just haven't thought through it all that carefully or prayerfully. These folks want us to think it through again...or for the first time.

At just one hour, this is the most "shareable" resource of the ones listed here, easy to pass on to friends and family after you've seen it. It is also attractive, with good interviewees, and a solid Christian perspective. So buy it, share it, and talk about it. It can be purchased at Christianbooks.com.

- JON DYKSTRA



ORPHAN JUSTICE

BY JOHNNY CARR

2013 / 197 PAGES

Carr is calling Christians to action – though not necessarily adoption – to defend orphans in real tangible ways.

Carr also wants us to understand the enormity of the challenge. Each year in the US 1.2 million women choose abortion, and just 18,000 choose adoption. And at present as many as 92 percent of US Down syndrome children are aborted. If abortion were ended tomorrow, would we as the Church be there to care for the hundreds of thousands more unwanted children born each year, many with special needs? The answer would seem to be no, as evidenced by the 100,000 children currently in the US foster care system who are eligible for adoption but are just waiting.

Carr uses US numbers, but his point is applicable to Canada – we are called to care for orphans (James 1:27), and yet there are many orphans still in need of care.

So what can we do? Carr knows that not everyone has been called to adopt, and at the end of each chapter he outlines things that anyone can do, things that many can do, and things that a few can do.

For example, anyone can look out for families in our communities who are foster parents, to see what we can do to encourage and help them (providing a meal, inviting them over, etc.). Anyone can offer babysitting to adoptive families, or donate to a church fund that will match dollars for parents who want to adopt.

Many can consider becoming a respite worker for foster families, undergoing the training and screening needed to ensure they are ready to care for children (for a few hours or maybe a few days) who might have special needs. Many can volunteer at pregnancy counseling centers. Many can buy products from micro-finance organizations that work to help the poorest families start businesses, so these families will have the money they need to keep their families intact.

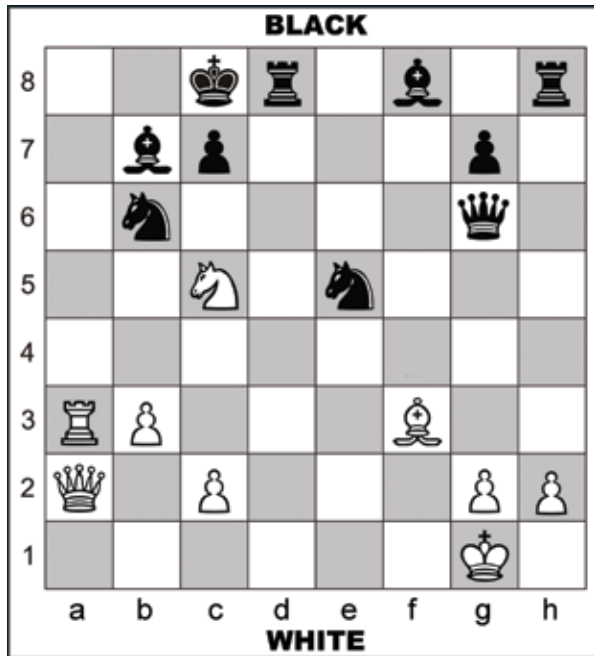
A few can go through foster care certification to see if they might want to become foster parents. A few can consider adopting a child living with HIV/AIDS. A few can consider starting a ministry that teaches the doctrine of adoption to churches here and abroad. Carr includes many more examples of what we can do, leaving us with the challenge that whether we can do a lot or a little, we can all do something to seek justice for orphans.

- JON DYKSTRA

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



Chess Puzzle #220



Riddle for Punsters #220

"Greens are Good for You!"

- What are the different kinds of salad? L _____ e look it up!
 What types of meals go well with a salad? That's _____ for thought!
 Are salads healthy to eat? That's the be- _____ of many people!

Problem to Ponder #220

"Word Transformations"

Change the start word into the final word by changing one letter at a time, never changing a letter in a given position twice.

For example, GLOVE->GROVE->GRAVE->BRAVE->BRACE or PIN->PIT->PET->GET

MAN -> _____ -> _____ -> WIT

WIT -> _____ -> _____ -> TON

WORK -> _____ -> _____ -> _____ -> TIME

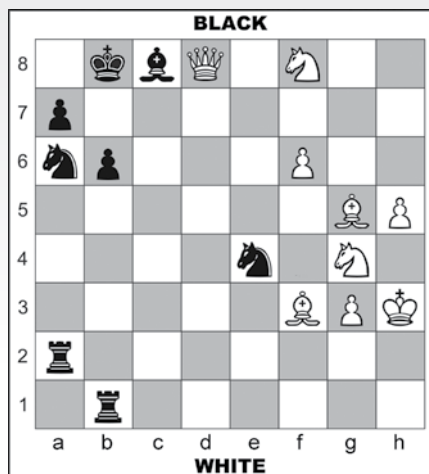
WENT -> _____ -> _____ -> _____ -> MADE

GLADE -> _____ -> _____ -> _____ -> _____ -> TRUCK

WHITE to Mate in 3 Or, if it is BLACK's Move, **BLACK to Mate in 4**

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #219



WHITE TO MATE IN 2

Descriptive Notation

1. N-Q7 ch K-N2
or K-R1
2. BxN mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Nf8-d7 + Kb8-b7
or Kb8-a8
2. Bf3xe4 ++

BLACK TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- NxB ch
2. K-R4 NxB ch
3. K-R3 R-KR8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Ne4xg5 +
2. Kh3-h4 Ng5xf3 +
3. Kh4-h3 Rb1-h1 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#219 - "Not suited for the Public Square!"

Why did the baker not do well when he left the bakery to go into politics? Although he was able to speak with floury language most people thought that his ideas were half-baked and full of fluff. Thus he was more of a roll model than a role model.

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#219 - "Too Tired to Skate after Shovelling?"

Tim and Jim took 4 hours to shovel 10 cm of snow off the pond behind their house so they could skate on the pond. Tim, shovelling by himself, took 6 hours to remove 12 cm of snow the previous week. How many hours will it take to shovel 14 cm of snow off the pond if

- a) Jim shovels by himself?
- b) Jim is helped by Tim?
- c) Jim and Tim are helped by Kim, who can shovel half as fast as Tim?

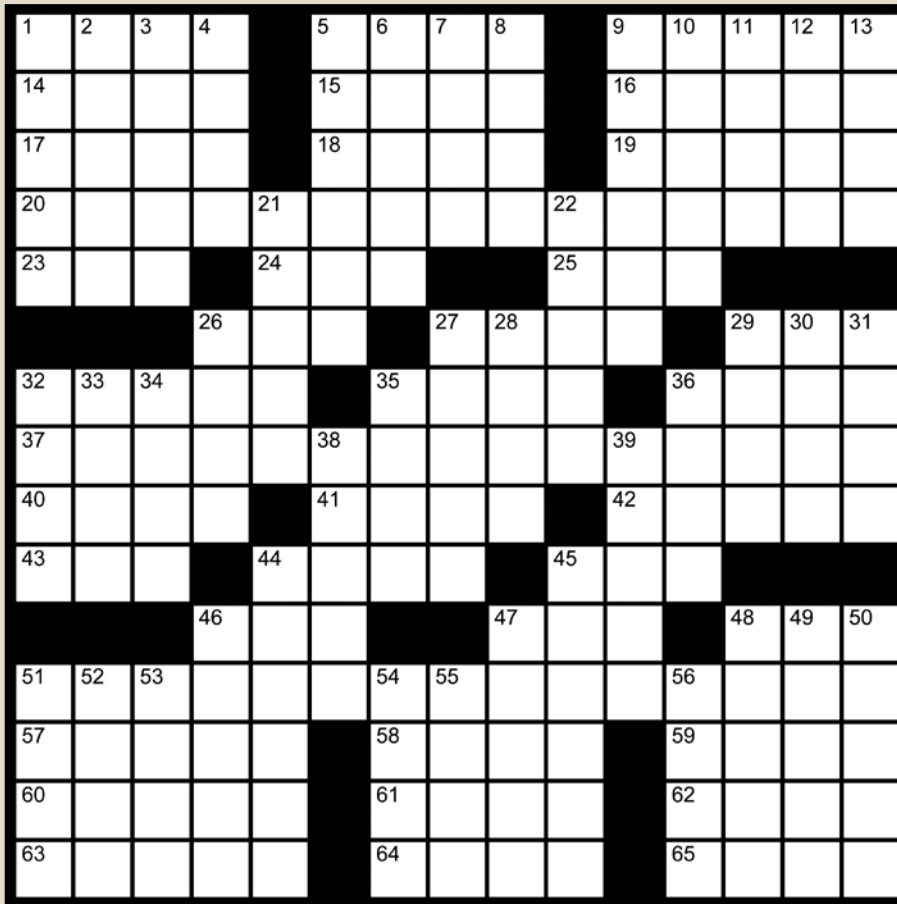
Tim shovels the pond at a rate of 12 cm in 6 h so **2 cm/hour**, so in 4 hours Tim would shovel 8 cm. In 4 hours Tim and Jim did 10 cm so Jim did 2 cm of that in the 4 hours so Jim shovels at a rate of $2/4 = 0.5$ **cm/hour**. Thus, to shovel 14 cm of snow off the whole pond,

- a) Jim by himself would take $14\text{cm} / 0.5\text{cm/hour} = \mathbf{28 \text{ hours!}}$
- b) In 4 hours Tim with Jim did 10 cm so **in 4/10 hour they do 1 cm** so shovelling 14 cm would take them $(4/10) \times 14 = \mathbf{5.6 \text{ hours}}$
- c) Tim shovels 2 cm per hour, Jim 0.5 cm per hour, and Kim at half Tim's rate so 1 cm per hour. Together they would shovel **2+0.5+1 = 3.5 cm/hour** so 14 cm would take them $14\text{cm} / 3.5\text{cm/h} = \mathbf{4 \text{ hours.}}$

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 1-8

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. Supporting timber for a building
5. Scoundrels
9. Pined, or felt pained
14. ____-aircraft, ____dis-establishmentarianism
15. Shape of egg or racetrack
16. What it's like under a tree
17. Roads have them; people get stuck in them.
18. "_____ of the Ancient Mariner"
19. "all their troops, a great _____" (Joshua 1)
20. Business not conducted online
23. "Just a ____! I'll be there in a moment."
24. Poetic contraction for time late in the day
25. Poetic term for before
26. "Go to the ____, O slug-gard" (Proverbs 6)
27. You do it on a horse or

29. "The lot is cast into the ____" (Proverbs 16)
32. Country infamous for Mussolini
35. Popular Internet connection feature
36. "grain for ____ in Egypt" (Genesis 42)
37. Disaffection, discontent, disquiet
40. "Is there an ____ in here? I just said that!"
41. Gross like 33 down (as a kid might describe it)
42. W. H. ____ (20th-century poet)
43. Why is it blue?
44. What you look like with a leaky pen
45. Container for ashes or coffee
46. Measure of thermal resistance of, say, a ____a
47. General name for a nation's

- post office system
48. Black ____ (secret missions behind enemy lines)
51. Instrumental background to, say, a movie
57. Home of Heat and Dolphins in Florida
58. ____matic transmission (in most ____mobiles)
59. Flip a pin to get a type of palm tree
60. His face was pimpled or _____
61. Miniature water buffalo in Indonesia
62. "obedience, in word or ____" (Romans 15)
63. Many square ones in a yard (British spelling)
64. Ointment used to anoint Jesus' head and feet
65. Leftovers, or when your meal goes to the dogs

DOWN

1. "...as _____ in your eyes" (Numbers 33)
2. To get used to or insensitive

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 1-7

- to – variant spelling
3. There's room at the top... of the house.
4. Assorted or varied (abbreviation)
5. Female undergarment that gets laced up
6. Related to birds, but not to bottled water
7. One can do it with faint praise.
8. You may need it when you're going downhill.
9. Boat passengers go _____.
10. Regular task, especially in family life
11. Deer (archaic)
12. Work of Old Norse literature
13. One who colours garments with dye
21. African country known for fast runners
22. Mass _____ (20th century); social _____ (today)
26. As well; in addition to
27. Perilous, dangerous, hazardous
28. Tentative, barely plausible, hardly likely
29. "he ____ his hands on him" (Numbers 27)
30. ____ vera (plant used in herbal medicine)
31. ____ State (university in sports scandal)
32. "Beware the ____ of March!" (Julius Caesar)
33. Bug that rhymes with 35 down
34. Possible description of inside of 45 across
35. What actually burns when you light a candle
36. Setting for phasers (or tasers?)
38. Slight hint of color
39. Tricky shot in billiards
44. Sodium _____: form of iodine added to food
45. Put music or video onto the Internet to share
46. It flips when you boil eggs.
47. Animal sometimes wrestled (near 57 across)
48. Type of willow used in basketwork, about 1300
49. Tool to transfer measured fluid volume in lab
50. Huge amounts or numbers (of)
51. Prayer leader of a mosque
52. A ____ place to visit – in France
53. What "can do" people don't say
54. Type of flatbread probably originating in India
55. Type of fish named bluefin (or Charlie)
56. "____ the straps of the yoke" (Isaiah 58)

Help us **SPEAK UP** for those without a voice.

Join thousands of others and speak up for Canadian pre-born children in a mass rally on Parliament Hill and a March for Life through the streets of Ottawa.



join us
ON **MAY 14**
FOR THE 2015:

**REFORMED
PRAYER SERVICE:** 11am-12pm @ First Baptist Church
140 LAURIER AVENUE W, OTTAWA

MARCH FOR LIFE: *meet on Parliament Hill
following the prayer service*

FREE LUNCH: *Available for those who register to*
NIKI@ARPACANADA.CA

MARCH
FOR *life*



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