

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JULY/AUGUST 2015

Volume 34 Issue No. 9

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

## WRONG QUESTIONS LEAD TO WRONG ANSWERS p.24

OF BABY BIRDS,  
DEATH, AND  
CREATION

P.18

NOT YOUR  
AVERAGE  
PAEDOBAPTISM

P.20

DO WE NEED  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS?

P.16

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

IN A NUTSHELL • FROM THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD

Is this not  
your copy of  
Reformed  
Perspective?



Enjoy Reformed Perspective  
all year long. Receive freshly  
designed monthly issues  
with articles pertinent to  
Reformed living.

**CDN \$50/year**

USA \$55/year

Int'l \$69/year

**SUBSCRIBE  
TODAY**

**1-855-527-1366**

**ReformedPerspective.ca**

# Reformed **PERSPECTIVE**

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Published monthly by the Foundation for the publication of a  
Reformed Social-Political Magazine (Reformed Perspective Foundation).

**For Subscriptions or to Change your address, contact:**

Joanna deBoer - Reformed Perspective Administration,  
Box 1328, 230 2nd AV NW, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0  
subscribe@reformedperspective.ca  
1-855-527-1366

**For Letters to the Editor, Advertising and Submissions, contact:**

E-mail: editor@reformedperspective.ca

**Editor:** Jon Dykstra

**Regular Contributors:** Sharon Bratcher, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder,  
Anna Nienhuis, Michael Wagner

**Board of Directors:** John Voorhorst (Chairman); Henry Stel (Managing  
Editor); Ken Stel (Secretary); Chris deBoer (Treasurer); Bob Lodder

**Template Design:** Compass Creative Studio Inc. compasscreative.ca

**Art Direction, Design and Layout:** Annelies Schoen

www.facebook.com/FreshDesignByAnnelies

**Contact Address for South Africa:**

Arie Roos, Box 584, Kuilsrivier, 7580 Republic of South Africa

**Contact Address for Australia:**

Pro Ecclesia Publishers, PO Box 189, Kelmescott, W. Australia 6111

**Copyright statement:** Copyright in letters, articles, cartoons and any other material  
submitted to Reformed Perspective and accepted for publication remains with the  
author, but RP and its reciprocal organizations may freely reproduce them in print,  
electronic or other forms.

*This periodical is owned and operated by the Foundation for the publication of a  
Reformed Social-Political Magazine, a nonprofit organization, whose purpose is described in  
Article 2 of its constitution: "to publish periodically a magazine promoting Reformed principles  
in all spheres of life, especially the social, political and economic realms." In carrying out its  
objectives, the society is bound by the Bible, God's infallible Word, as it is summarized and  
confessed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort (Article 3  
of the constitution).*

*If you are interested in the work of Reformed Perspective Foundation and in the promotion of  
Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially in your local area, and you need help, call  
John Voorhorst at 1 (403) 328-9114 (days), and 1 (403) 345-2904 (evenings).*

**Annual Subscription Rates:**

**Canadian Funds – 1 year \$50.00, 2 years \$93.00, 3 years \$137.00\***

**Canada Airmail \$73.00,\* U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$80.00**

**U.S. Funds – 1 year \$55.00, 2 years \$100.00, 3 years \$145.00,**

**International Surface Mail \$69.00 (2 years \$125.00, 3 years \$184.00)**

**International Airmail \$115.00**

**\*including 5% G.S.T. – G.S.T. No. R118929272RT0001**

*We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada,  
through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.*

**Canada**

**Cancellation Agreement**

Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to  
subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date.

**Registration: ISSN 0714-8208**

**Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act**

**Registration No. 118929272RR0001**

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:**

**One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5**

reformedperspective.ca





# WRONG QUESTIONS LEAD TO WRONG ANSWERS p.24

by Margaret Helder



OF BABY BIRDS, DEATH AND CREATION

- Ken Wieske

**p.18**



NOT YOUR AVERAGE PAEDOBAPTISM

- Jared Olliphint

**p.20**



DO WE NEED PUBLIC SCHOOLS? **P.16**

- Michael Wagner

FROM THE EDITOR **P.6**

- Jon Dykstra

NOTA BENE **P.8**

IN A NUTSHELL **P.13**

A GOOD HUNGER **P.14**

- Christine Farenhorst

OUR HEROES HAVE FEET OF CLAY **P.28**

- James Dykstra

# READERS' RESPONSE

## DEAR EDITOR,

Some comments in regard to your recent editorial about Patrick Brown in the May issue. To say the least we are truly upset about the attack on Campaign Life Coalition (CLC) and *LifeSiteNews.com*, thereby doing harm to their image. We as Christians and Christian organizations must stick together in the fight against the evil culture we live in. CLC has a record of fighting this war since the early 70s, without compromise. They are the ones who tirelessly have met with politicians, and presented briefs to the government. They organized the "Life Chain" in October and in May the "March for Life" in Ottawa for the 18th time. Also with every election they provided information, such as was available, on the candidate's standing on life and family issues. They have never stooped to criticize other organizations although we know they do not agree with all of the tactics used by some of them!

In your article you should have shown more respect for this organization and recognized what they have done in the past and still do. But you zeroed in on what you consider the wrong information, which was just "the best we can get" philosophy, as *ARPA* does in their gestational approach in the abortion issue and now openly with the new "assisted suicide" debate. Would you have wanted Christine Elliot to be elected? We would have been in deeper trouble yet. At least Patrick Brown has a 100% pro-life voting record as Member of Parliament.

However, while we all have our own responsibility in doing what we think is right; we do know and confess that Christ our Lord controls everything, also the outcome of elections.

On a slightly different note, I am glad you realize that there are (but rare) principled politicians. You can find them in the Christian Heritage Party. And if elected, they will be allowed to speak up, unlike the members of other political parties.

Adrian and Joanne Dieleman  
Grimsby, Ontario

## EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

You've shared some of the wonderful work that CLC does. And I'll add that *LifeSiteNews.com* is amazing. The reason I called them one of "the best news sources" in my editorial is because of what they choose to cover: pro-family and pro-life stories that the mainstream media ignores.

They even carry stories about Roman Catholic officials and organizations that profess to be pro-life but don't act that way. Though the editor and many of his staff are Roman Catholic they don't let that stop them from challenging Roman Catholics who aren't living up to their pro-life principles. They do stoop to criticize other organizations and that, in fact, is why they are worth supporting.

They know that their dedication to the unborn may mean they have to call even their friends to account, and they have the courage to do so! They understand that loyalty is misplaced when it requires us to support a friend who is on the wrong side of an issue.

That's why I am only following their example when I exposed their misrepresentation of Patrick Brown. He is a monster, who has promised to ensure the murder of the unborn will continue unchecked. Yet our friends at *LifeSiteNews.com* and the CLC told us he was worth supporting. In these circumstances our loyalty to God and to His Truth requires that we correct our friends. After all, this was no small mistake on their part. I don't

know if it was due to bad research (Did they manage to miss Patrick Brown's repeated pro-abortion pledges?) or bad judgment (Did they know about his pro-abortion pledge but disregard it?) and I haven't heard back from them.

But I do know that such a mistake is a rarity among the vast volumes of pro-family and pro-life material that *LifeSiteNews.com* publishes. That's why, in-between writing them the first time about this and the second, I was very happy to contribute to their donation drive. While they are not perfect and do not deserve our unwavering loyalty (that belongs only to God), I believe their work is well worth our dollars.



## DEAR EDITOR,

I write in regards to your June editorial “Did Adam have a belly button?”. The Bible states that God formed the animals out of the ground and He created man in his image, male and female He created them. Scripture also states (Gen 2:7):

...the (covenant) LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

“Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (vs. 22). The Belgic Confession speaks the same, identical language when it states in article 14: “We believe that God created man of the dust from the ground and he made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy.”

Going beyond what is revealed is dangerous as our forefathers testified. After all, will questioning such clear statements not amount to a denial of “a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for... sins and a hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Canons of Dort chapter I, art.12)? Are church confessions required to ward off or submit to scientific scrutiny? Is the desire to clarify what is revealed anything but an attitude of “inquisitively prying in an irreverent and unholy manner” based on unbelief? (see CoD, I,14).

The editorial fittingly used as heading, “Did Adam have a belly button?” However, what question can be next – was the second Adam sexually impotent or a homosexual?

The best way to clear up “confusion” is to subject everything in faith to the Word of God and to halt heresies by engaging church discipline instead of deliberations.

Dennis Teitsma  
Winnipeg, MB

## EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

Going beyond what is revealed is indeed dangerous, which is why the Canons of Dort teaches, in the two quotations you cite, that we should not go about “inquisitively prying” into the mystery of the unfathomable doctrine of Election.

But is Man’s origin as unfathomable a mystery as Election? Or is how we came to be no mystery at all? Here we hit on the very issue being disputed!

On the one side are those who question whether God might have done things quickly or quite slowly, who question if He used death to

create, who question what is really meant by the word “dust,” and who question whether Adam had ancestors. They say it is all very hazy as to how we came to be.

On the other side are those who say it couldn’t be plainer – we can read all about it in His Word.

That’s why prying into Election, and clarifying what God said about Man’s origins are very different matters. The first involves going *beyond* what God has said; the second is about ensuring we don’t *depart* from what He has said.

You’ve asked, “Is the desire to clarify

what is revealed anything but an attitude of ‘inquisitively prying in an irreverent and unholy manner’ based on unbelief?” We need to be clear that the desire to clarify here has nothing at all to do with irreverent unbelief. Prying is something the Confessions forbid, but *clarifying* is what the Confessions do!

We can debate whether Providence church’s clarifying proposal is the best way to fight this haziness error. But let’s not equate the clarity they are after with the prying that the Confessions forbid.





FROM THE EDITOR

# Curiosity and cat videos

Is our curiosity controlling us, or are we controlling it?

Curiosity has a deservedly mixed reputation. It can be downright lethal... and not only to cats. In our Internet age, where trouble is only a click or two away, curiosity can quickly take us where we should not go. But curiosity can also drive us to discover more about God, whether by investigating his Word or his world.

In Ian Leslie's *Curious: the Desire to Know and Why your Future Depends on It* he makes a useful division between two main sorts of curiosity – epistemic and diversive. This isn't exactly "good" versus "bad" curiosity but is more a matter of "focused" versus "unfocused."

## DIVERISVE CURIOSITY

"Diversive curiosity" is an "attraction to everything novel" and "manifests itself as a restless desire for the new and the next." As Leslie explains it:

The modern world seems designed to stimulate our diversive curiosity. Every tweet, headline, ad, blog post, and app at once promises and denies a

satisfaction for which we are ever more impatient.

This quest for the "new and next" isn't necessarily bad – this is why new questions get asked, new interests are discovered, and new people are met. But Leslie argues that while "unfettered curiosity is wonderful; unchanneled curiosity is not."

What problem is there with unchanneled curiosity? It doesn't fix itself on anything. It lacks purpose or discipline – diversive curiosity might start off well-intentioned, but if it has nothing to focus on then a search for "Calvin's thoughts on art" can quickly turn into hours spent on "The art of Calvin and Hobbes."

Leslie recounts a question that was posted to Reddit: "If someone from the 1950s suddenly appeared today, what would be the most difficult thing to explain to them about today?" The favorite answer was: "I possess a device in my pocket that is capable of accessing the entirety of information known to man. I

use it to look at pictures of cats and get into arguments with strangers."

We have access to more knowledge than ever before. We have the potential – carried around in our pockets – to learn how to fix or build or study almost anything. We can collaborate on ideas with people next to us or on the other side of the globe. But so long as we let our curiosity run free – flitting from one tweet, one game, one photo, one video, to another – then this incredible potential will be unrealized.

## CHANNELED CURIOSITY

Here is where the second sort of curiosity comes in. "Epistemic curiosity" is curiosity with a purpose. It is a "deeper, more disciplined, and effortful type of curiosity." It is this sort of curiosity that drives us from reading blog post headlines to seeking out books on the same subject. It's sustained curiosity. It's directed curiosity.

It's the sort of curiosity that drives a boy to collect beetles and butterflies, and then



when he wants to know more he heads to the library for books. It's this sort of curiosity that has a girl trying out crayons and pens and pencils and paints to figure out how best she can draw a horse. To get good she's going to need to sustain this appetite for paper and pen, but more importantly she'll need to steer clear of the constant stream of YouTube cat videos and other curiosities that are competing for her attention.

## GODLY CURIOSITY IS FETTERED

While Ian Leslie values unfettered curiosity, God expects our curiosity to be not only channeled but fettered too.

There is every reason for Christians to be curious – God is infinite, and He's given us a near infinite universe to explore. But there are corners of it that we should not investigate. Article 13 of the *Belgic Confession* warns that we should not:

...inquire with undue curiosity into what God does that surpasses human understanding and is beyond our ability to comprehend.

Some of what God has done is too great for us to understand (election, for example) and when it comes to those matters we need to actively constrain our curiosity. We need to put on some fetters.

There are also more earthy matters that we need to not investigate. We need to fetter our curiosity when it comes to:

- gossip (whether about people we know, or celebrities we don't)
- our rich neighbor's income
- sexuality (within marriage epistemic curiosity about sex can be a very good thing, but outside of, or before marriage, it can only cause trouble)

In other words we shouldn't be curious about matters beyond us, or matters that should be beneath us.

## FREEING US FROM DISTRACTIONS

When it comes to diversive curiosity – the attraction to the new and next – there are no biblical texts telling us how many cat videos in a row are too many cat videos in a row. God hasn't told us how

many times we can check our Facebook newsfeed in an hour, or what time of night we need to turn off our phone. There are no stated limits as to how many tweets we can read, how many Instagram pictures we can view, how blog posts we can click on, each day. So how can we know how much is too much?

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* gives us a clue when it explains what Man's purpose here on earth is: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

How does that help? Well, if we're too busy to pray, too busy to read the Bible, too busy to be a part of the communion of saints, too busy to act as God's hands and feet here on earth, too busy with all sorts of distractions to glorify God, and too busy enjoying these distractions to enjoy God, then we can know wherever the line might be, we're way over it!

So how can we free ourselves from these distractions? Part of it will involve putting down the smartphone, tucking away the tablet, and turning off the computer. We should consider:

- Putting tight limits on family members' screen time each week, with more severe constraints for the very young (many doctors suggest children under 2 shouldn't watch TV at all) and for out of control kids.
- Shutting down the Internet for the evening (which still allows kids to use their devices to read) or the afternoon, or only having it on for weekends or for homework.
- Going on a month-long technology fast to allow your family to get proper priorities back in place – this is an option that most children will hate (and many an adult) but the more passionate the resistance, the stronger the case for this intervention.

While these practical suggestions will be helpful they also aren't enough. We need to address this as the sin problem that it is. When we can't control our curiosity, when it controls us, we're enslaved. When our curiosity doesn't direct us to God, but distracts us from Him, we're committing idolatry, making YouTube videos and Instagram pics our first priority.

## THE CELLPHONE STACK

You're out with some friends having a nice dinner. But one has been talking on his phone for the last ten minutes, and a second is managing to fork food into her mouth while still using both hands to type text messages. And the fourth member of your party is preoccupied with tracking down some YouTube video he just has to show everyone. So you're out with your friends for dinner but it seems an awful lot like eating alone.

We've all experienced something similar... and put our friends through something similar. So how can we return a little decorum to our dinners-out?

One suggestion, made by a blogger named Stephie, is "The Phone Stack." After everyone orders their meals all cellphones are placed in the center of the table, one on top of another, face down. Though the phones may buzz, no one is allowed to grab their phone until dinner and dessert is done. But if someone just can't stop themselves, well, *they have to pick up the check for the night!*

As blogger Stephie writes, "Basic premise is to just get people open to the idea of staying active and attentive to one another. But if someone has to take a call; they have to take a call =)."

SOURCE: [theweek.com/article/index/223137/how-the-phone-stack-is-civilizing-dinners-out-with-friends](http://theweek.com/article/index/223137/how-the-phone-stack-is-civilizing-dinners-out-with-friends)

It's only when we acknowledge our sin that we can understand our need for forgiveness. Fortunately God in his mercy will grant forgiveness if we ask. Then in thankfulness we can seek ways to direct our curiosity in a God-honoring fashion. God is infinite, so there's no shortage of wonders to explore, whether that's God Himself, His Word, His world, the bodies He gave us, the family He placed us in, the talents He chose for us, the friends He provided, or the communion of saints He surrounded us with. There's no shortage of wonders to wonder about.

May God help us control our curiosity, so that in this too, all we do can honor Him.

Jon Dykstra can be reached at [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca).

# NOTA BENE

News worth noting

## DRONE ABORTION PILLS DELIVERED TO POLAND

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



**C**orporate giants Amazon and Google were among the first to consider adapting drone technology to fuel business delivery. Now drones have become affordable and simple enough for personal use...and personal agendas. In June a drone carrying abortion pills was flown into Poland, from Germany, by a Dutch activist group.

The gesture was done to protest Poland's "severe" abortion restrictions, where women cannot have an abortion without evidence of rape, incest, health risk or severe fetal abnormalities. The pills, not legal in Poland, were downed by two (non-pregnant) attention seekers while cameras rolled in what was supposed to be a grand gesture for reproductive rights. The women's group who launched the drone claims that abortion is a reproductive human right. Due to the small size and non-commercial use of the drones, the Dutch group explained, "neither Polish or German laws could prohibit it from flying between borders." It seems some new laws might need to be worked out quickly, as German authorities did arrive to confiscate the drone controllers after it landed in Poland. Drones may be the way of the future, but as with most any new technology, some people are determined to use it for evil.

SOURCE: Lauren O'Neil's "Abortion drone" delivers pregnancy-terminating pills to women in Poland"; June 29, 2015; cbc.ca

## TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



**E**dmonton Catholic Schools were calling for the termination of a bus driver after a student video-recorded him kicking another student off the bus. The short clip seemed to show the bus driver unreasonably stranding the poor student.

However, the bus company refused to fire him (though they did move him to another route) and instead released the dashboard video that showed what had happened right before the events recorded in the student's video. It turns out that a Grade 7 student had been kicking and hitting a younger child right behind the driver, and then

a Grade 8 student came up beside the driver and used both hands to swing a large duffel bag directly into the side of the driver's head.

The driver can be seen taking a deep breath, re-settling his glasses, which had been knocked askew, and rubbing his face before turning to the student. Both students are then removed from the bus, after arguing further with the driver. After seeing the full story, the school board issued an apology to the bus driver, but it is unlikely he will ever drive the route again, one already known for high driver turnover.

This story is a reminder of the deep need for solid teachings of respect for authority and love for our neighbour, as well as a reminder to us when watching the news to always ask critical questions. As Proverbs 18:17 states, "The first to present his case seems right, until another comes and examines him."

SOURCE: "School bus driver still not cleared to drive Catholic routes"; June 3, 2015; cbc.ca





## ONTARIO CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSOCIATION STANDS WITH ARPA?

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

**A**RPA Canada and pro-life blogger Patricia Maloney have launched a constitutional challenge to end the Ontario government's exclusion of abortion information from access to information requests. The case challenges a law that was quietly snuck onto the books five years ago which allows the government to refuse to release abortion statistics to the public – through this law the Ontario government stifles debate on abortion, as no one has accurate information to base arguments on.

Soon after ARPA announced their legal challenge, they received support from an unlikely ally. The Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA) published a position paper in support of ARPA's case, joining in voicing

...the concern that there is palpable institutional bias against pro-life advocates in Ontario and that this is harmful to society and substantively unjust towards members of the community.

This very same OCLA took the *Carter* case – which argued for a right to assisted suicide – all the way to the Supreme Court. Having this group's support certainly strengthens ARPA's case, while also showing how God can use any organization to his glory.

SOURCE: OCLA position paper on institutional bias against pro-life campaigners in Ontario April 29, 2015; ocla.ca

## WHITE SISTER SAYS SHE IS BLACK MOTHER

BY JON DYKSTRA

**T**his summer a former Olympic athlete convinced the world that a man can become a woman. Bruce Jenner underwent surgeries that included breast implants, facial sculpting, and amputation of his penis. He was given the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage.

Soon after, the *National Post* featured an article on able-bodied people who want to be disabled, and like Jenner, want to make use of surgery to amputate parts of their body. And like Jenner, they describe themselves as feeling like imposters in their own bodies. One fellow, now known as One Hand Jason went so far as to cut off his right arm with a "very sharp power tool." He has yet to receive any awards for the courage involved in his transformation.

In mid June the president of the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) told her local news station that despite being born from two very white parents, she considers herself black. Whereas amputations were involved in both Jenner's situation and that of One Hand Jason, Rachel Dolezal made use of only a change of hairdo and perhaps a tanning booth. She has not received any awards for her transformation.

Dolezal also shared that she considers her adoptive black brother to be her son.

Can men become women, abled become disabled, white become black, and brothers become sons? The world is sure about the first, and confused about the last three, though they have no justifiable reason to be so. If amputations are to be celebrated in

Jenner's case, on what basis can they object to them for One Hand Jason? And if what we are is defined by how we feel things should be – which is how the world is treating Jenner – then of course a white can be black and your brother can be your son.

Whereas the world despises discernment (they call it being judgmental), God encourages it. God made us male and female, and assigned different roles on that basis. So this is a difference to be embraced, not ignored or fought. And while He has made us in a rainbow of skin tones, this is a difference He minimizes – in the opening chapters of the Bible we are told that all of us are of one blood and there is just one human race. The world is confused, but Christians need not be. God has given us guidance as to which differences matter, and which differences are made too much of.

Whether we can convince our non-Christian neighbors and friends that God's ways are the best ways is up to the Holy Spirit, but with a question or two (like, "Do you think Jenner and One Hand Jason should be celebrated for amputating body parts?") we can show them the vast gulf that exists between His ways and the world's wacky ways.

SOURCES: Sarah Boesveld's "Becoming disabled by choice, not chance: 'Transabled' people feel like imposters in their fully working bodies" published to NationalPost.com June 3; Dave Urbanski's "Parents of Local NAACP President: Our Daughter Is White", posted to TheBlaze.com on June 12.

**THEN**



**NOW**



## THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: LET US NEVER FORGET

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**n early June Canada's Indian Residential Schools Truth & Reconciliation Commission finished up 7 years of work. They released a list of 94 recommendations about what can be done to address the wrongs committed at the Native residential (boarding) schools.

The goal of these schools – which were run by churches along with the government – was to educate, but also convert and civilize the Native children, replacing their culture with a Western one. The first ones were started in the late 1800s and the last closed in 1996. Starting in 1884, school became compulsory for Native children under 16, and when a local school wasn't available Native children would often be forcibly taken from their families and

sent to these boarding schools. In other instances families were threatened with fines or prison if they didn't send their children. This practice left the children on their own, away from any family or trusted adults they could turn to for help. That left them especially vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse.

Of the Commission's 94 recommendations some are simply wrong. For example, #6 calls for a repeal of Section 43 of the Criminal Code. This is the section that specifically grants parents a defense when they use "reasonable force to discipline a child" – this is a legal recognition of parents' right to spank their children. The reason the Commission is calling for an end to spanking is likely because of the physical abuse some Natives suffered in the schools, but in making this recommendation they are overlooking the vast gulf that exists between beating up a child and spanking one.

One of the best recommendations might be to make a monument to remember the evil done to these children and their families. Why? We want our country and especially our legislators to be continually confronted with the

horror that the government committed in stealing children from their parents to teach them values their parents opposed.

Recent actions of the Quebec and Ontario governments show there is good reason to think this lesson could be forgotten. In 2008 the Quebec government crafted a new course to teach religion from a State-mandated secular perspective – all students, including those homeschooled or in private schools, were required to take the course (the courts have granted some relief from these demands, but only in part). Meanwhile in Ontario right now the government is pushing forward on their proposed and hotly opposed Sex-Ed curriculum. Those in power are still eager to force their worldview on other people's children.

So let's build a monument, make it huge, and place it somewhere in Ottawa that legislators will walk past every day. Stealing and indoctrinating children remains a temptation for lawmakers, so they need to be reminded of past wrongs in the hope that this memory will restrain them from committing future evils.

SOURCE: [news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/five-of-the-best-and-perhaps-worst\\_trc.ca](http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/five-of-the-best-and-perhaps-worst_trc.ca)

## FRCA SUSPENDS RELATIONSHIP WITH RCN

BY JON DYKSTRA



**A**t the start of 2015 the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands-Liberated (RCN) had a sister-church relationship with both the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA). That's only half true now: at the FRCA's recently concluded synod the denomination decided to suspend their relationship with the RCN.

What is the reason for this suspension?

Well, at the FRCA's previous synod in 2012 they decided to express to the RCN that they had serious concerns that the Dutch denomination was evidencing "a liberal way of interpreting Scripture." Examples given included how the RCN was allowing one of their seminary lecturers to assert "creation to be a myth, along with much of Genesis 1-11." Another related to how the RCN had adopted regulations that allowed for the amalgamation of RCN congregations with those of the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NGK). This was objectionable since the NGK have, since 2004, allowed women to be ministers, and they have also mandated a study as to whether practicing homosexuals may fill the offices of elder and deacon.

The RCN didn't heed this warning. Since there was no change the FRCA felt they had no choice but to suspend their relationship and warn the RCN that "if the next synod of the RCN in 2017 does not express and demonstrate evidence of repentance" then this sister relationship "will become untenable." In other words, it will end.

In the meantime this suspension means that FRCA congregations will no longer automatically accept attestations from the RCN, and the denomination's pulpits will no longer be open to RCN ministers.

While the CanRC has expressed its own concerns, at this point they are continuing on with their sister-church relationship with RCN.

## ASSISTED SUICIDE: THE SLOPE IS SLICK

BY JON DYKSTRA



**T**he *De Morgen* newspaper is reporting that a healthy 24 year-old Belgian woman plans to use euthanasia to die this summer. Though she “has good friends, loves coffee, and loves theater” she wants to die because, ever since childhood, she has felt that, “life, that’s not for me.” That this made the news in Belgium, a country where 1,924 people were killed via euthanasia in 2013-2014, shows that the idea of a healthy young person killing herself still has some shock value. But when a shocking act is repeated repetitively it won’t remain shocking for long,

and similar sorts of cases are already happening with regularity in Belgium. In 2013-2014 there were 50-60 people killed for simply psychological reasons.

Here in Canada the Supreme Court wants to allow assisted suicide for adults with enduring, intolerable pain who clearly consent. What’s important for us to understand is that this new standard they propose has no bedrock under it. God’s standard is built on a firm foundation, but this new proposal will not stand up to battering. Here’s what God says about life:

- life is a gift from Him (and thus not ours to throw away)
- life is sacred, because we are all made in His Image
- death is an enemy to be fought (and not embraced as a treatment)
- death has been beaten, and so needn’t be feared, for those who love Him

If we reject what He says, we are left with not simply a different standard, but ultimately none at all. The justices think euthanasia should just be for adults who clearly consent and who are suffering intolerably? Why? Don’t children suffer too? And what if someone has lost the ability to consent? Should we *force* dementia patients to live out their last years? As for the pain being intolerable, who are we to say what is intolerable and what is not? And just that quick we’re right where Belgium is, where even healthy young women can qualify for euthanasia.

What can Christians do? We have to tell our friends, our neighbors and our political leaders that we must stick with what God says. And we need to explain to them why no other standard will stand up!

SOURCES: Alex Schadenberg’s “Euthanasia doctor justifies death for depressed people.” Posted to <http://alexschadenberg.blogspot.ca/> on March 21, 2015; Alex Schadenberg’s “Healthy 24-year-old woman to be euthanized in Belgium,” posted to [LifesiteNews.com](http://LifesiteNews.com) on June 22, 2015.

## A DEGREE YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

The rapid rate of change in our world makes choosing a career path difficult. You need a dynamic university education where theory meets experience. Along the way, you’ll be challenged to deepen your faith as you discover your world and transform your mind. You’ll find more than a future job. You’ll find your place in God’s world. This is your calling. This is Redeemer.

FIND OUT MORE AT [WWW.REDEEMER.CA](http://WWW.REDEEMER.CA)







# FIGHTING ERROR IN THE CHURCH

by Jay Adams

Sometimes it may seem that we spend too much time refuting falsehood. All of us are chagrined at the preponderance of error both within and without the Church. We may write off those who attempt to combat it and set forth the truth in clarity over against it as “heresy hunters.” The term is used pejoratively; but should it be? Take a quick look at the Books of the New Testament, merely scratching the surface, and see what you think.

- In the **Gospels** Jesus warns against false teachers, speaks of wolves in sheep’s clothing and the “leaven of the Pharisees.” The record of His ministry is one of conflict with those who refused to accept the teaching He set forth.
- **Acts** contains the record of the church’s first major controversy over whether or not a person must become a Jew before he could qualify as a Christian. A church council was called to settle the matter. Paul goes to lengths to warn the Ephesian elders about wolves who would devour the flock and schismatically draw away disciples to themselves.
- **Romans** is an entire doctrinal treatise about justification by faith alone in contrast to salvation by works, and how sanctification follows thereafter. In it, Paul also takes up the rejection of the Jewish church.
- **I Corinthians** is loaded with

problems; schism, misuse of gifts, church discipline, marriage and divorce, and on, and on, on.

- **II Corinthians** takes on false apostles who had invaded the church and charged him with pretending to be an apostle. The place of apostolic authority is set forth, along with the qualifications of an apostle.
- **Galatians** is a sterling defense of Justification by faith alone over against those who taught otherwise, and were upsetting the church by Judaistic legalism.
- **Ephesians** is less controversial, being a universal epistle rather than directed to the adverse circumstances of an individual or a congregation
- **Philippians** deals with a split in an otherwise good church. But it has to do with self-centeredness and sets forth a key Christological passage.
- **Colossians** is consumed with fighting Judaistic Gnosticism.
- **I & II Thessalonians** take up false teaching about the Lord’s coming and eschatology.
- **I & II Timothy & Titus** teach “healthy” doctrine over against many false ideas. And, in them, Paul doesn’t hesitate to name specific heretical individuals.
- **Philemon** is a welcome exception
- **Hebrews**, in its entirety, combats all influences that would cause Jewish Christians to revert to Judaism.
- **James** utterly destroys the idea that one can have genuine faith that does

not result in good works.

- **I Peter** explains how the New Testament church is no longer a physical political entity, but that the church is now the spiritual people of God, the new Israel.
- **II Peter** warns against scoffers and libertines unsettling the church and reveals the true picture of final things.
- **I John** argues quite effectively throughout the book against Gnosticism of a Cerentian sort.
- **II John** warns against hospitality for heretics
- **III John** deals with church discipline gone so far astray as to virtually destroy a church.
- **Jude** throughout its entirety is an exhortation to contend against the libertines who invaded the church that failed to listen to the warnings in II Peter.
- **Revelation** speaks of the warfare of God against apostate Judaism, the first persecutor of the church, and Rome, the second persecutor, and predicts the fall. It also mentions cults like the Nicolaitans.

Now, in light of the above, if you can, tell me why we should not be prepared to detect and refute falsehood in the Church. RP

*This originally appeared on Dr. Adams’ blog at [www.nouthetic.org](http://www.nouthetic.org) and is reprinted here with permission.*

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## LYRICS O' THE MONTH

In his song *Screen Door* Rich Mullins seemed to be working through James 2:14-26 (and Matthew 7:15-20, Galatians 5:6, Hebrews 6:10, etc.):

*It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine  
Faith without works baby, it just ain't happening  
One is your left hand, one is your right  
It'll take two strong arms to hold on tight  
Some folks cut off their nose, just to spite their face  
I think you need some works to show for your alleged faith*

*Well there's a difference you know  
'Tween having faith and playing make believe  
One will make you grow, the other one just make you sleep  
Talk about it but I really think you oughta  
Take a leap off of the ship before you claim to walk on water  
Faith without works is like a song you can't sing  
It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine*

*Faith comes from God and every word that He breathes  
He lets you take it to your heart, so you can give it hands and feet  
It's gotta be active if it's gonna be alive  
You gotta put it into practice, otherwise...  
Faith without works is like a song you can't sing  
It's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine*

## CONTENDING WITH MUSLIMS ISN'T MEAN

"Our culture has accepted two huge lies: The first is that if you disagree with someone's lifestyle, you must fear them or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate." – Rick Warren

## NEXT FOR THE US SUPREME COURT?

Despite dying over a hundred years ago, poet William Cosmo Monkhouse (1840-1901) has his finger on the pulse of today's culture.

*There once was an old man of Lyme  
Who married three wives at a time.  
When asked, "Why a third?"  
He replied, "One's absurd!  
And bigamy, sir, is a crime."*

## SPURGEON SPOUTING SENSE ON...

EVANGELISM: "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter."

BEATING PROCRASTINATION: "The way to do a great deal is to keep on doing a little. The way to do nothing at all is to be continually resolving that you will do everything."

FINDING A PERFECT CHURCH: "If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us."

LOVING GOD'S WORD: "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't."

## TOP 10 MATH JOKES

- Counting in binary is as easy as 01, 10, 11...
- Did you hear about the mathematician who was afraid of negative numbers? He'd stop at nothing to avoid them.

SOURCE: Andy Simmon's "25 Jokes that make you sound like a genius" in the Sept. 2014 issue of Reader's Digest

## T-SHIRT CHRISTIANITY: THE GOOD KIND

Abort73.com sells shirts to direct people to their website, which offers up compelling and comprehensive information on the evils of abortion. You can buy this shirt and many others at Abort73.com, by clicking on a link at the very top marked "Gear."







*Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man - though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows His love for us to in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.*

– Romans 5:7-10

# A GOOD HUNGER

by Christine Farenhorst

**D**uring the reign of George I, king of England and Ireland from 1714 to 1727, the sister of a high-ranking judge was married to a gentleman of a good family. This gentleman, his good family notwithstanding, after being married committed murder in a very base manner. The judge, afraid that his family name would be dragged through the mud, went to the king to ask for a pardon for his guilty brother-in-law. It was impossible for the judge to soften

the story in any way. The crime had been committed openly, and committed in a heinous way. Yet the judge was very earnest in his appeal to the king begging him to stay the sentence of execution so that his family would not have to bear the infamy of scandal.

"So, Mr. Justice," King George is reported to have responded, "What you propose to me is that I should transfer the infamy from you and your family, to me and my family; but I shall do no such thing."

The request was refused.

## GUILTY, BUT NOT OF THAT

Everyone rejoices when a well-deserved pardon is given. People instinctively feel that it is no bad thing to stay execution and to issue a pardon when obvious innocence is demonstrated. On May 13, 2015, Governor Terry McAuliffe of the state of Virginia gave out the following statement:

Today I am issuing an absolute pardon for Michael Kenneth McAlister. My staff and I have carefully and thoroughly reviewed

*Everyone rejoices when a well-deserved pardon is given.*



# *There were those who had doubts about McAlister's guilt in this incident, but attempts to free the man were unsuccessful.*

the documentation in this case and concluded that a pardon is appropriate in light of the overwhelming evidence, including a recent confession by another individual, pointing to Mr. McAlister's actual innocence of the crime for which he was convicted.

The governor concluded his statement with these words:

Mr. McAlister has served 29 years in prison... for a crime he did not commit. A number of individuals in the law enforcement community, including the Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Richmond, have concluded that this crime was committed by another individual, and that Mr. McAlister should be freed to return to his family and his community. I have reached the same conclusion and I have acted in accordance with the law. The integrity of our justice system depends on the guarantee of a fair trial that is informed by all available evidence. Protecting that integrity requires quick action in the event that new evidence comes to light.

At the onset of 1986, Michael McAlister plied the trade of carpenter and was living with his mother. He was at this time 29 years old, a divorced father of two children, with a history of alcohol abuse. Nine years earlier, in 1977, this carpenter had also faced charges of indecent exposure to a minor. Quite a history! Through a quirk in nature, which in the grand scheme of things is called providence, McAlister also looked very much like a man by the name of Norman Bruce Derr.

In February of 1986, his look-alike, Norman Bruce Derr, attempted to rape and kidnap a woman in the laundry facility of an apartment complex in Richmond. Derr was wearing a stocking mask, a red plaid shirt and was carrying a knife. The woman, who was partially able to pull off her assailant's mask, described him to the police, who composed a rough sketch

from her description. One of the police investigators noted the resemblance to McAlister in this sketch, and went to visit him. The carpenter vehemently denied any involvement in the attempted rape and readily agreed to pose for a picture which was to be shown to the victim. He was wearing a plaid shirt.

When the victim was shown an array of photos, photos in which Derr was not included, she chose McAlister's picture over the others. Because of this alleged identification, McAlister was later convicted of attempted rape and abduction and sentenced to 50 years.

There were those who had doubts about McAlister's guilt in this incident, but attempts to free the man were unsuccessful.

Although he was released from prison on mandatory parole in 2004, Michael McAlister was later sent back to prison to serve the remainder of his sentence for failing to comply with rules. That is to say, during his parole, he began to drink again, and relapsed into exhibitionism. Although he felt the law was just in imprisoning him for these latter matters, he thought it was unfair that his life was seemingly controlled by an earlier crime he persistently maintained he did not commit.

Recently Derr, who is currently serving three life sentences, confessed to the crime of which Michael McAlister was convicted. Derr's chief attorney, Mr. Mercer, was quoted as saying that his client is now at peace with himself and at peace with God.

At the news of Derr's confession, Michael McAlister became ecstatic, very emotional and very excited. He broke down and cried and was apparently very grateful to everyone. His exoneration came five days before a hearing that could have led to the erstwhile carpenter's indefinite confinement as a violent sex offender under Virginia state's civil commitment law.

Michael McAlister's sister, Denise, who is four years older than her brother, drove with her mother to pick him up from prison. She said: "I'm the happiest

woman in the world right now, next to my mother. We're going directly home so he can eat some of his mother's home-baked cookies." The newspapers noted that his family was also preparing a tasty supper for him as he has been wanting a home-cooked meal of pork chops on the grill for a long time.


And who can look into the hearts of these two men, Derr and McAlister, but God Himself? Who can see whether or not they realize that they are two fallen creatures who have been given extra time to repent in order to be truly free – truly pardoned?

## **THE EVIDENCE IS AGAINST US**

There are usually applications, things to learn, when we, all of us Derrs and McAlisters to some degree, browse historical data or when we read daily news items – items often filled with schemes, murders, felonies, adulteries, and so on.

One of the applications from the above scenarios is that we should remember that our God is just and that He has enough evidence against us to condemn us forever; another is that, amazingly enough, He is both willing and able to forgive His children for Jesus' sake. Not only that, but He takes our infamy on Himself.

We easily confess with our mouth, feel that we are on deserved parole, only to transgress again and again. Though we might feel a surge of feel-good justice upon reading about Governor McAuliffe's pardon, really his piece of paper is nothing next to that pardon which God has written for us – a pardon which we should read each day and hide in the pocket of our hearts. It is a message that should leave us, much more so than Michael McAlister, ecstatic, emotional and very excited. Consequently, weeping with happiness because we have truly been freed from prison, we should delight to sup with Him as well.

Are you hungry? Taste and see that the Lord is good! 



# DO WE NEED PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

*History shows that the West became literate  
without governmental help*

by Michael Wagner

I once heard a lady say, “If it wasn’t for the government, none of us would be able to read or write.” She was referring to the fact that the vast majority of children in Canada (approximately 94%) attend public schools. In this lady’s view, if the government had not provided these schools then most people would be illiterate.

This is probably a fairly common assumption. How would it be possible to have a literate society without government schools?

Long ago literacy rates were very low. At the end of the Middle Ages, for example, probably less than 10% of European men were literate, and an even smaller percentage of women. Today literacy is close to universal in all Western societies. So this change from mass illiteracy to mass literacy must have been the result of government schooling, right?

Actually, no.

## **FREE, COMPULSORY, AND UNIVERSAL SCHOOLING**

People today think governmental schools are needed because that’s what they see. Compulsory attendance laws require children to attend school, and the vast majority of these schools are owned, operated, and staffed by the government. Education is largely a governmental quasi-monopoly. And they do not charge any fees to attend, which means schooling is free, compulsory, and universal.

In addition, there are a couple of common arguments given for why the government should dominate the field of education.

For one, many people are too poor to afford to pay for education. Therefore without schools provided through taxation, their children would not get any education.

It is also believed by many that making schooling compulsory is necessary because parents need to be coerced by the government to send their children to

school. The government wants all children to receive an appropriate education, but some parents don’t. The assumption is that the government cares more about the educational welfare of children than parents.

## **EDWIN G. WEST**

The most compelling academic challenge to these arguments has been provided by Edwin G. West (1922-2001), formerly an economics professor at Carleton University in Ottawa. As James Tooley explains in his book *E. G. West: Economic Liberalism and the Role of Government in Education*, West did not believe there was a need for either compulsory attendance laws or public schools.

## **THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE**

Most of West’s original research dealt with nineteenth century England. What he found was that schooling was available on a large scale, even for most

## Literacy was virtually universal before the government schools came along...

children from the poorest families. This is significant because the government did not have any role in education before 1833, when it began providing limited funding for a small number of private schools. Before this private schools had essentially educated the vast majority of English children.

Interestingly, as West points out, earlier in the nineteenth century (before 1833) the British government was concerned that *too many* children of lower class families were learning to read! It was afraid that they would read anti-government literature, and therefore took steps to prevent lower class children from becoming literate. As Tooley relates, the

...government used both legal and fiscal actions against newspaper circulation in order to control the reading habits of the masses, including advertising duties, stamp taxes and excise taxes.

It is important to take note of this fact: the government was trying to interfere with the spread of literacy that was occurring through exclusively private sector initiative. Left on their own, parents from poor families were eagerly obtaining basic education for their children, even in the face of government opposition. Contrary to supporters of compulsory schooling laws, parents want their children to get the best education possible! They don't need the government to force them to provide education for their children.

### WIDESPREAD WORKING CLASS LITERACY

West provides all kinds of statistical data from various parts of England to demonstrate the widespread learning that was occurring without government involvement. For example, the evidence suggests that at least two-thirds of the working class was literate by 1840, with

that proportion increasing to about 90 percent by the mid-1860s. Keep in mind that this is the segment of the population believed to have least access to education due to financial hardships. The upper and middle classes had even greater educational opportunities.

The figure from the mid-1860s is particularly significant because Britain did not begin creating public schools until 1870. The private education sector in England grew dramatically during the 1800s leading to almost universal literacy before a single public school was established. There were subsidies to some private schools after 1833, but most educational funding came from parents and other private sources.

The original purpose of creating public schools from 1870 onwards was to fill the small holes that some people believed existed in the private sector. However, once "free" government schooling was available, it began to displace private schooling. Increasing numbers of students opted for "free" education, and many private schools therefore shut down. This process of replacing private education with public education was encouraged by government education bureaucrats and teachers' associations. Over time, the government schools became dominant.

### FIRST LITERACY, THEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Literacy was virtually universal in England before the government schools came along and displaced the private schools, and West has data from New York State and New South Wales that show a very similar pattern.

This historical record leads Tooley to an important conclusion about public education:

What West's analysis suggests is that in order to promote universal literacy and schooling more generally, the kind

of state education with which we are familiar—namely, state-provided, state-funded and regulated schooling—is *not* required.


Some targeted funding to help children of the poorest families may be justifiable, but government provision of education is unnecessary.

The original edition of West's most well-known book, *Education and the State*, was published in 1965 and led to a firestorm because it challenged widespread beliefs about government's role in education. A third and expanded edition of the book is currently kept in print by the Liberty Fund in Indianapolis. Despite the availability of his work, many people are unaware of it. But Tooley notes that West's evidence is unassailable:

To scholars who are willing to go back to the original sources, rather than rely on secondhand historical summaries, there appears to be little real dispute about the ways in which private sources—the churches and philanthropists, and small-scale proprietors—largely independent of any government assistance, were able to bring about literacy and provide schooling for the vast majority, including the poor.

### CONCLUSION

Contrary to what the lady at the start of this article might believe, government intervention was not a key factor in the spread of literacy in the West. The assumption made by most that the government must provide schools and compel children to attend in order for basic skills to be acquired is nonsense. Parents want their children to get the best education possible and are willing to make big sacrifices to achieve that goal. That is what the historical evidence shows, as demonstrated by E. G. West.

Parents are much more concerned about the education of their children than any politician or bureaucrat ever will be. In the absence of government schooling, the vast majority of children would still receive an education. 





# Of baby birds, death, and creation

by Ken Wieske

**T**oday we started off the day with a funeral right after breakfast. Bluey Leapey Wieske died during the night. We buried him at the back of the ATC property, close by where we buried the cow a few months ago. Micah asked me, “Daddy, when I

die, can you bury me next to Bluey?”

Micah called him Bluey Leapey because of his eyes. They were a kind of blue, and the flickering of his eyelids made Micah think of the name “Leapey.” Micah found Bluey’s nest fallen to the ground from the towering

palm trees by the kitchen complex. Bluey had fallen with the nest, then climbed partway back up the tree where Micah found him, stunned, clinging to the bark.

For two days Micah researched how to care for injured wild baby birds. He

*... some Christian scientists believe that the Bible should be read in such a way that it allows for a world in which animal and human life developed over millions of years.*

did everything he could to nurture and save the little bird. One clear instruction from the many sources consulted Micah completely ignored: “Do not handle the bird too much.” For some reason, Bluey did not seem to like being placed in the remnant of the nest we gathered up. He much preferred to nestle on Micah’s chest, clinging to his shirt. I fully expected the bird to die within minutes, but he lasted two days with Micah feeding him fruit and bread moistened with water.

Micah is seven years old. He is an active, energetic, carefree, very physical child. He is also extremely sensitive. This morning we awoke to hear his wails of lamentation as he discovered Bluey’s lifeless form lying in the carefully prepared nesting box next to his bed. Micah’s weeping continued as we headed out after breakfast and laid Bluey to rest in a small hole dug under a spreading tree in the back field.

Why did Micah cry?

Is his grief a consequence of his innate understanding that death is abnormal, an enemy, a cursed result of sin and the Fall? Or his is grief abnormal, an enemy, a cursed result of sin and the Fall?

## DEATH IS GOOD?

There are those who, in an attempt to resolve perceived conflicts between science and faith, propose that the Bible be read in the light of modern scientific research. Since scientists claim that multiple lines of evidence point to animal ancestry for humans, and an evolutionary origin to all of life, some Christian scientists believe that the Bible should be read in such a way that it allows for a world in which animal and human life developed over millions of years. Contrary to atheistic evolutionism, this Christian version

understands the process not to be the result of random chance, but rather a beautiful, intricate process created and directed by God Himself for His glory.

There’s a problem: this theory requires that death and suffering exist in this world long before the arrival of Adam and Eve. (In fact, this theory makes it impossible to even hold on to the Biblical Adam and Eve, but that’s a different story.)

The problem is dismissed by Christians who believe that God used evolution to create life on this planet. They argue that when the Bible says that death entered into the world through man’s sin, this is a reference to the death of humans. It doesn’t refer to the death of non-human creatures. Science has established the presence of catastrophic death and disease well before the arrival of homo sapiens in the history of evolution. According to evolutionary creationists, that’s OK. Evolution requires millions of years of birth, suffering, and death in order to progress. This can be understood to be “very good,” as God declared of His creation, as long as it doesn’t refer to human death. Since Adam and Eve’s respective “parents” or non-human progenitors were not actually human, but only human-like, it doesn’t matter that they suffered and died before the Fall. This is all part of God’s glorious plan of (evolutionary) creation, which He declared very good. It’s really good and beautiful that foxes eat rabbits. Or that little birds fall out of trees and die. It’s all part of how Creation/Evolution works. Behold, it was very good. And it is very good.

Why is Micah crying then?

According to the thesis that Creation is through Evolution, I guess Micah’s sinful little heart is rebelling against God’s good and perfect creative work.

Who is Micah to question what God calls very good? This is the way God has made the world: through suffering and death, Life is perfected. That’s the way it was before the Fall, and that’s the way it continues after the Fall.

## NOT THE WAY IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE

However, the Bible teaches something different. The Bible informs the way I comfort and instruct Micah at this important educational moment. We speak together about the very good creation into which our sin introduced death and destruction as results of God’s curse. This is an important instructional opportunity to show Micah that the wages of sin is death: not just death in the sense of a heart stopping or a person not breathing anymore, but death in all of its horrible catastrophically destructive aspects as it affects man, relationships, animals, and all of creation. This little bird died because Eve took a bite from a fruit that God had told her not to eat. This little bird died because we are sinners. The creation is groaning and is in bondage to decay because of our sin.

But here is the good news. Jesus is making all things new. In the new creation, things are very, very good. There is no more death. In the new heavens and the new earth, Micah will no longer weep over a dead little bird, because Jesus is bringing about the day when the full Life-giving and Life-transforming results of Jesus’ death and resurrection will finally rid the universe of every last vestige of the heart-wrenching sadness and misery that results from our Fall. RP

*Rev. Wieske is a Canadian Reformed missionary serving the churches in Brazil.*



# NOT YOUR AVERAGE PAEDOBAPTISM

## CONTRASTING INFANT VS. BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

by Jared Oliphint

“No way will anyone pour water on my kid’s head,” my recently converted dad said to our seminary-trained pastor. Having been raised in the Roman Catholic church, my father was understandably skittish at the thought of baptizing babies, associating the practice with the false doctrine and ceremony of Rome. So our Reformed pastor patiently explained the practice of infant baptism in a way that made sense, and my dad eventually gave permission for his eldest son (me) to be baptized.

Being born into a Presbyterian pew, typical questions about infant baptism started popping in my head as I grew older: “Why do we baptize this way?” and “Doesn’t this look a little too Roman Catholic-y?”

It took awhile to sort out the complexities involved with baptism, specifically the infant variety. The “click,” the light bulb, and the “Aha!” moment occurred when someone helped me ask the right questions like, “Whom does Scripture include within the new covenant

people?” As I tinkered with the idea of a covenant people, the meaning of the covenant sign started to take shape.

Point-counterpoint volleys on baptism can be dizzying, even annoying at times. I hope to clear away some of what causes that fog, and to clarify some of the reasons your neighborhood Presbyterians think it’s a good idea to pour water on unsuspecting babies.

### WHAT I AM NOT ARGUING

First, tuck away all those household arguments for another time. While they might be useful for making a cumulative case for infant baptism, relevant household passages (Acts 16:13–15, 32–34; 1 Cor. 1:16) seem inconclusive on whether infants were crawling around households whose members were collectively baptized.

Second, scrap the “oldest practice wins” case. Historical arguments, like whether evidence for infant baptism in the early church exists, can also lend a hand toward making a comprehensive case. But those historical arguments can seem speculative,

except to the already convinced. Some historical evidence (quotes from Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and so on) might gesture in the direction of infant baptism as a practice in the early church, but we lack undeniable, conclusive proof of baby-sprinkling during those initial post-apostolic years.

### ARGUMENTS OFF THE TABLE

If you’re a credobaptist, you may have more in common with your paedobaptist friends than you think. Presbyterians not only believe in credobaptism, they practice it; they just don’t believe in exclusive credobaptism.

This means that every instance of adult/believer/credobaptism in Scripture fits within both the paedobaptist view and the credobaptist view. They are celebrated examples of someone who was formerly outside the new covenant, now in the new covenant.

But if the new covenant sign of baptism represents only cleansing and conversion, one significant example throws a wrench



**Paedobaptism:** Also called Infant Baptism. This is the practice of baptizing infants. *Paedo* is a prefix that means “relating to children” and is derived from the Greek word *pais* which means children. Those who hold to Paedobaptism will also baptize adult converts.

**Credobaptism:** The practice of baptizing only those who make a profession of faith. This precludes infants, since speech is an important precursor to profession. But while the term “adult baptism” is sometimes used as a synonym for Credobaptism, this is an inaccurate descriptor since many who hold to Credobaptism support the baptism of teens and even young children. Credobaptism is also called Believer’s Baptism.

into that idea: Jesus’s baptism (Matt. 3:13–17). Under a paedobaptist reading, Jesus gets baptized as one coming from the old covenant (Luke 2:21) into the new. He received baptism not because he needed to be cleansed, nor because he experienced “conversion,” but because as both covenantal cause and covenantal recipient, he ushered in a new covenant with a new covenant sign for both him and his people (Mark 10:39).

## COVENANT INCLUSION

So who now qualifies for receiving the sign of the new covenant? Rather than focusing on any particular instance of baptism, we might uncover more by peering into how Scripture as a whole describes those who are in the new covenant.

In the section on apostasy in the book of Hebrews, specifically in Hebrews 10:26–30, the writer describes someone who

1. has received the knowledge of the truth,
2. has been sanctified by the blood of the covenant (and therefore is in the covenant, by which he has been sanctified)

*but also*

3. goes on to sin deliberately,
4. has set aside the law of Moses,
5. dies without mercy,
6. no longer has a sacrifice for sins,
7. has outraged the Spirit of grace, and
8. has profaned the blood of the covenant.

If being “in the covenant” means “being saved” – regenerated, effectually called, salvifically united to Christ, and so on – then the person described here in Hebrews cannot exist. If we equate “being in the new covenant” with “being saved,” then

the person in Hebrews 10 loses salvation, and losing salvation is not possible for any stripe of Reformed theology – Baptist or Presbyterian. (That topic – the “perseverance of the saints” – deserves a separate article all to itself. Its centerpiece would include a number of marquee passages from Scripture like John 10:26–30, demonstrating that once someone receives salvation, it cannot be lost. See also John 3:16.)

John 15:1–6 throws another kink into the “new covenant = salvation” formula. Jesus uses a metaphor for himself (the vine) and his people (the branches). He speaks of someone who

1. is in Christ
2. does not bear fruit,
3. does not abide in him,

*but also*

*so*

4. is taken away, and
5. burned.

How can someone be in Christ yet fall away? Scripture reveals an important distinction and nuance between being in Christ/covenant salvifically, and being in Christ/covenant ecclesiology, or as a member of God’s people. If that covenantal distinction gets flattened to include only a salvific sense, then John would be saying that someone can be in Christ/in the covenant salvifically, yet able to be taken away and burned – able to lose salvation. Again, that conclusion is not an option.

## WHAT TO DO WITH BAPTIZING BABIES?

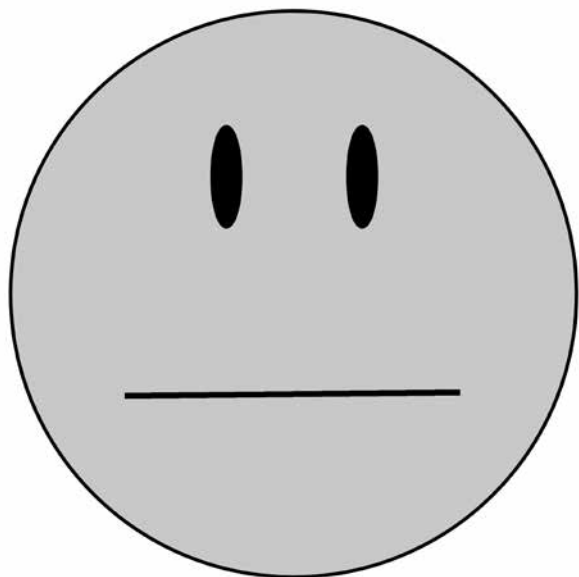
From these and other biblical passages, the presence of unbelievers, as part of the new covenant within the church, seems to be part of God’s intentional design of the

new covenant, not a design flaw.

When we read about the new covenant through this lens – where those who are in the new covenant include not only those who are in Christ salvifically (the invisible church of true believers) but those in Christ ecclesiology (the Sunday-attending, visible church of both believers and unbelievers) – much of the New Testament reads more naturally. For example, 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 makes more sense, because when an unbelieving spouse converts to Christianity, the other members of that family – even the members who are unbelievers, including the children – are made (ecclesiology, non-salvifically) holy. New covenant blessings extend beyond one’s own individual conversion. When working through 1 Peter 4:17, we expect the household of God to be judged (as we saw in Heb. 10:30), because within God’s household we find not only believers but unbelievers. The new covenant church expects its members will include faithful believers, but also those who have not “obeyed the gospel of God.”

So are children of those in the church “in the new covenant”? A thousand times yes. They are born into Christ’s church, into the people of God, into the new covenant, though not necessarily into salvation. It is foreign to the design of the new covenant church to treat our children as those who participate outside of God’s covenant family. Scripture never speaks about children in that way. Though we cannot know whether an individual infant has received salvation, we do not need to guess and speculate about such a thing in order to know whether that child is in the covenant. We operate as if the child belongs to the new covenant people of God in the church. RP

*This article was first published on The Gospel Coalition website ([www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)) and is reprinted here with permission.*



# God, Non-God & THE MYTH OF NEUTRALITY

by Rob Slane

**T**he subtle myth of neutrality! It works something like this: Christians believe that God exists, right? Unbelievers, on the other hand, believe that God doesn't exist, right?

Now let's imagine that a Christian and an unbeliever are having a discussion – let's say about the increase in crime in Western countries. If the Christian wants to mention that the increase in lawlessness just happens to be occurring at the same time as the greatest apostasy from Christianity the world has ever seen and that these two things are intrinsically connected, he is, of course, going to have to mention God. And it is at this point in the discussion that he may well be told to “stop ramming your religion down

my throat” or such like. By which the unbeliever means, “Hey, buddy, I thought we were having a discussion about crime, and suddenly you've stepped way over the line of neutrality and now you're trying to foist your religious beliefs on me.”

But is it really the case that the unbeliever is adopting neutral territory?

For the unbeliever, even though his view of crime – why it exists, why it has increased in recent years, what its cure is – is intrinsically connected to his belief that there is no God, he doesn't actually ever have to mention “non-God” in order not to bring God into the discussion. He just doesn't mention God.

And so, while the Christian is busy mentioning God and the unbeliever is busy not mentioning “non-God,” the impression given is that the Christian is bent on foisting his religious beliefs on all and sundry, whereas the unbeliever is the epitome of perfect neutrality and would never dream of ramming any of his beliefs down anyone's throat. Except, of course, that he does it all the time, albeit in a way that is much harder to spot, because his core belief is a negative presupposition rather than a positive one.

And it is this very point of alleged neutrality that is being used to hack away at the foundations of Christian civilization, even as you read this. Just take a look at the culture wars that are taking place in most Western countries at present. The unbelievers that have

controlled these countries for the past few decades have adopted some of the most radical programs of social reform that the world has ever seen, all in an unbiblical direction and all entirely unneutral. But as soon as someone rises up to challenge what is going on and invokes the “G” word, the most militant unbelievers cry foul, throwing their hands into the air in uproar, screaming about keeping God out of politics, out of economics, out of the schools, out of the law, out of sexual ethics, out of the abortion clinics, out of anything and everything, except that maybe they'll let believers keep him for a few hours on a Sunday.

And this is the way that the secular humanists silence any real opposition to their agenda – by painting themselves and their agenda as completely neutral and therefore utterly harmless, so that anyone who invokes the “G” word to oppose them must be automatically barred from the debate. In this way, they are able to deny freedom of speech and of thought, successfully cover up their own underlying assumptions and get away with “ramming their non-God beliefs and agenda down our throats” on a daily basis. **RP**

*This is an extract from Rob Slane's upcoming book **A Christian and an Unbeliever Discuss: Life, the Universe & Everything**.*

*...the impression given is that the Christian is bent on foisting his religious beliefs on all and sundry, whereas the unbeliever is the epitome of perfect neutrality...*

# COMICS



**Just Thinking** by Jason Bouwman

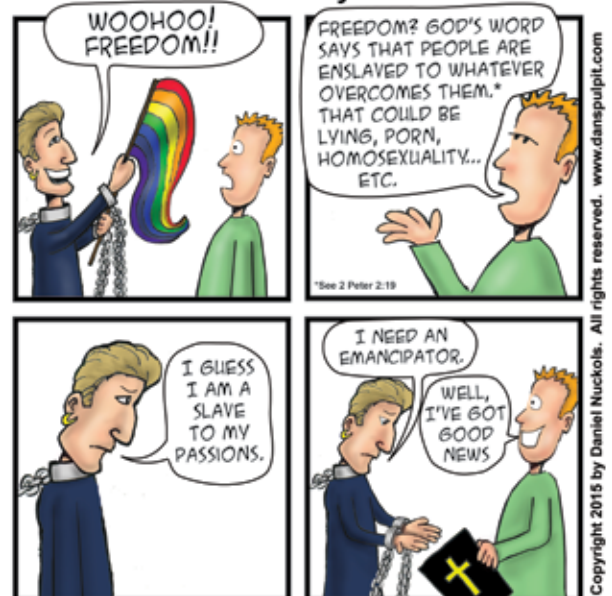


**Just Thinking** by Jason Bouwman



**C2it**

by Daniel Nuckols



**"...if the Son sets you free,  
you will be free indeed."**

**John 8:36**





# WRONG QUESTIONS LEAD TO WRONG ANSWERS

Why don't brilliant scientists see evidence of God's design in Nature?  
Because they deliberately blind themselves to this evidence.

BY MARGARET HELDER

**T**he conflict between Biblical revelation and some aspects of modern science is a longstanding issue, and Christian young people can't avoid being impacted by this dilemma. What should they believe? Should they accept that creation took place in six literal days, or should they seek some sort of accommodation of Scripture with the teachings of science? Many have anguished over this choice.

The appeal of trying to accommodate to the popular scientific view – the appeal of bundling the Bible with the Big Bang – is clear. After all, don't objective scientists know what they are talking about? So don't we need to listen to what they are telling us they see?

## CHRISTIAN VS. SECULAR AGENDAS

In this context, what everyone must understand is that there *are no* objective

scientists. Everyone has starting assumptions. The Christian naturally confesses that God exists, that He is omnipotent and omniscient and has communicated with us. Nature is God's handiwork. Thus the Christian confesses that we see testimony to God's work and character when we look at nature. For example we read in Psalms 19:1-3:

The heavens declare the glory of

God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Another famous passage about the testimony of nature is Job 12:7-9:

But ask the beasts, and they will teach you, and the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you, or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?

When we study biology, we see that God is the creator!

The secular position contrasts sharply with the Christian view. Mainstream scientists maintain that natural explanations can be found for everything. No supernatural input will ever be evident. For example, an editorial in the journal *Nature* (March 12, 1981) remarked concerning the definition of science: "...one prejudice is allowable, even necessary - the preconception that theories can be constructed to account for all observable phenomena." Thus the Christian expects to see God revealed in nature, while the secular person says God will never be revealed in nature.

## DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS PROMPT DIFFERENT QUESTIONS

With different expectations come different questions – there is a big difference between what secular scientists and what some Christians will ask about natural systems. And their different questions will result in very different answers obtained.

For example, suppose somebody showed you a photograph of three unfamiliar objects, green in color and square in shape. If you were to ask that person "How did Nature form that?" the only possible response would be some sort of process. However, if you were instead to ask, "Did Nature form that?" then the person has the opportunity to investigate whether or not these square

watermelons (which is what the objects turn out to be) had an entirely natural origin.

Similarly, if a scientist asks, "How did life come about spontaneously?" then the only possible answer is a process. If the same scientist were to ask "Could life come about spontaneously?" in this case he has the opportunity to examine what cells are like and what the biochemical processes in cells are like, and thereafter conclude that life *could not* have come about spontaneously. Thus the answers obtained from the study of nature depend upon what questions are asked.

## NO RESULTS

There is no issue that more clearly demonstrates the impact of what questions are asked of nature, than the discipline of origin of life studies. Specialist John H. McClendon's summary of the situation was as follows: "Since we know that life did arise, we are obligated to find mechanisms to accumulate enough organic matter to start life." Scientists may feel themselves *obligated* to find such a scenario, but they are having a difficult time finding one nonetheless.

The difficulties of proposing and defending a reasonable scenario for the origin of life were further highlighted by Simon Conway Morris in 2003 in a chapter entitled "The Origin of Life: straining the soup of our credulity" from his book entitled *Life's Solution*. Of these chemists who are not discouraged by the results of their experiments, he remarks:

...chemists have devised reaction pathways that can produce reasonable quantities of ribose [needed for one popular scenario], but the sheer complexity of the process and the careful manipulation of the many steps during the reaction make one wonder about its applicability to the origin of life.

Dr. Morris is telling us that the kind of chemical reactions that require fancy manipulation by a chemist do not occur spontaneously in nature (apart from in

...if a scientist asks,  
"How did life  
come about  
spontaneously?"  
then the only  
possible answer is  
a process.

living cells).

Scientists were still looking for support for the "RNA world" in 2014 when the following description of a possible process was printed in *Nature*:

After ten rounds of selection and amplification of catalytic molecules; pruning of superfluous sequences; insertion of another randomized segment to create a new pool; and then another six rounds of selection and amplification, a D-ribozyme was isolated that could perform template-directed joining of L-substrates about a million times faster than the uncatalyzed reaction.

One would have to be very gullible indeed to believe that any of this could happen spontaneously. Indeed the article referred to the process as "engineering" which presupposed that an intelligent agent (the chemist) carried out the process.

An article in *Nature* five years previously had similarly highlighted the difficulties of the RNA world hypothesis, the most popular explanation today for how life could have originated in spontaneous fashion. Matthew W. Powner et al declared:

At some stage in the origin of life, an informational polymer *must have arisen by purely chemical means*. According to one version of the "RNA world" hypothesis, this polymer was RNA, *but attempts to provide*

"An approximate answer to the right question is worth a great deal more than a precise answer to the wrong question."  
– John Tukey

"Knowledge is having the right answer. Wisdom is knowing the right question."  
– Unknown

"Trying to get to the answer before one has understood all the right questions is a prime source of error in human affairs."  
– Phillip E. Johnson

*experimental support for this have failed (italics mine).*

The determination of the mainstream scientists to keep looking for a spontaneous solution to the origin of life, even when the results are totally contrary, has long been recognized. But they do not see this situation as a problem. Thus David Deamer remarked in a book review on origin of life theories:

[Author] Harold argues that, notwithstanding the vast literature, progress has gone little beyond the findings of Soviet biochemist Alexander Oparin and British polymath J. B. S. Haldane more than 80 years ago, when they independently argued that Louis Pasteur's dictum "All life from life" was wrong.

Note that the "findings" of Oparin and

Haldane that Pasteur was wrong, were not based on any evidence, (they still aren't), but on a choice to believe that life can come from non-living chemicals.

### THEIR BIAS BLINDS

The secular scientist approaches the study of nature with a specific agenda. Nature is to be interpreted only in terms of matter, energy, and natural processes, even if the results look ridiculous. A prominent geneticist, Richard Lewontin (b. 1929) actually stated this very clearly. In a famous review of a book by Carl Sagan, he wrote:

Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science.... because we have an *a priori* commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.

What Dr. Lewontin said, was that scientists bias their studies so that only natural explanations will

## HOW BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS GET IT WRONG

If a scientist were to set out to discover what made these melons square, could he figure out the right answer if he only investigated how natural processes could have done it? Would he hit on the right answer if, from the start, he ruled out even the possibility that intelligence and intention may have been involved in crafting these cubes?

Nope. If he was brilliant he might come up with some clever and even compelling hypotheses, but none of them would be correct. He would always get it wrong because he was crediting to chance what had been accomplished by design.





... the answers will never be any closer to the truth if the wrong questions are being asked in the first place.

ever be obtained. Similarly astronomer Robert Jastrow (1925-2008) equated such an approach as almost a religion for scientists:

Scientists... believe that every event that takes place in the world can be explained in a rational way as a consequence of some previous event. If there is a religion in science, this statement can be regarded as its main article of faith...

### NOTHING TO DO WITH THE TRUTH

It is certainly reasonable to ask how legitimate it is to restrict science to only naturalistic hypotheses. The answer you'll get to that question depends upon whom you ask. Biologist Leonard Brand (b. 1941) replies that such restrictions are not legitimate.

Our research only answers the questions we are willing to ask, naturalism allows only certain questions to be asked... Naturalism has a powerful biasing influence in science, in steering scientific thinking, and, in many cases, deciding what conclusions are to be reached.

Others point out that secular scientists may restrict what explanations about nature qualify for the term "science" but they *cannot* at the same time claim that what they are dealing with is truth. For example, philosophers of science Stephen C. Meyer (b. 1958) and Paul A. Nelson (b. 1958) point out:

Restricting science to naturalistic hypotheses is not an innocuous methodological stratagem [innocent technique] which nevertheless leaves science free to pursue the truth. God,

after all, may not have been away on other business when life originated, or humankind came to be.

These men declare that the secular assumption that God did not intervene directly in nature does not make it so.

Similarly, Calvin College (in Michigan) philosopher of science Del Ratzsch points out that:

If nature is not a closed, naturalistic system – that is, if reality does not respect the naturalists' edict – then science built around that edict cannot be credited *a priori* with getting at truth, being self-corrective or anything of the sort.

What Dr. Ratzsch has pointed out is that wrong questions will always elicit wrong answers. Scientific explanations may change (and indeed they do) but the answers will never be any closer to the truth if the wrong questions are being asked in the first place. It is often said that science is "self-corrective," i.e. that errors are exposed and better explanations developed. However the term "self-corrective" is meaningless when the studies are biased from the beginning.

### CONCLUSION

Secular scientists, with their expectations of never seeing God in nature, have confined themselves to mechanistic explanations and interpretations. Such, of course, is the theory of evolution. As Dr. Ratzsch remarks: "... materialists have no viable choice but to view the world through evolutionary spectacles of some sort." Similarly Dr. Brand tells us: "The evolutionary theory is based on the

philosophy of naturalism, and does not consider any hypotheses that involve divine intervention in the history of the universe."

Influenced by their secular colleagues, many Christians choose a theistic evolution type of explanation for origins. For example, Clarence Menninga (b. 1928, science professor emeritus at Calvin College), wrote in *The Banner*:

But it is presumptuous and arrogant for us to restrict God's options by claiming that he could not have used natural processes to bring about certain complex structures and functions, even if we do not understand in scientific terms how that was done.

Thus Dr. Menninga explains the appearance of living creatures in terms of an evolutionary process. He assumes that this is so, contrary to what the Bible says, even though he is unaware of a scientific explanation for the process.

It is evident that if such scientists were to ask different questions, based on the expectation of seeing God's work and character revealed in nature, they might not necessarily come to any evolutionary conclusions at all. In addition, the concept of long ages is a necessary ingredient in any evolutionary scenario. If there were no process of gradual change (evolution), if organisms were created directly, then there is no need for a long period of past time other than the few thousands of years for which we have historical records. RP

*This is an extract from Margaret Helder's upcoming book. More details about when it will be available will follow in upcoming issues!*

# OUR HEROES HAVE FEET OF CLAY

by James Dykstra

**Y**ou find them everywhere. They're the people we look up to. They sing, they dance, they play hockey, they win battles and they found nations. They're our heroes.

You know the people: George Washington, Wayne Gretzky, Winston Churchill, or Ginger Rogers. They're larger than life figures that do larger than life things flawlessly. We want to be like them.

Unless you're Canadian. When an Internet poll asked Canadians who their heroes were some of the results were predictable, like Terry Fox, but there were also a few less likely individuals. Don't misunderstand, these people did some incredible things and were certainly larger than life. However, they were also hopelessly flawed.

## JOHN A.

One man who topped the list was Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A Macdonald. It is to Sir John A. that



much of the credit goes for the founding of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. He helped pull together a disparate bunch of English Canadian Reformers and Tories and united them with French Canadian *Bleus*. Then he got the British to bully Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into a grand confederation

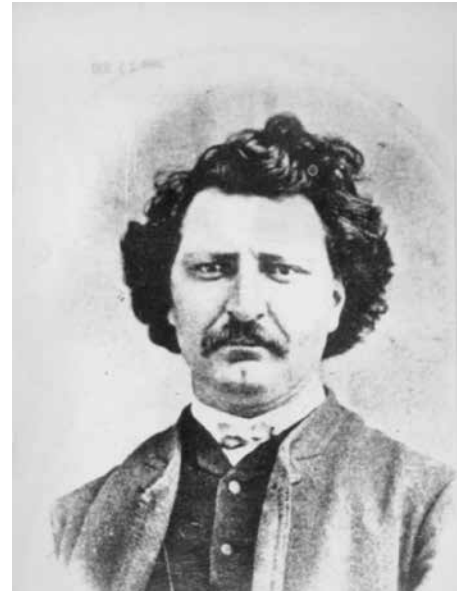
*...the prime minister was a habitual drunkard. It was no secret for he bragged about his drinking, yet Canadians forgave him, returning him and his party to office in 1878.*

of colonies that formed the nucleus of the present day Canada. While that's impressive, Canadians know Sir John A. in a more intimate way than that. You see, as most Canadians are aware, Sir John was bounced from office in 1873 for the Pacific Railway Scandal that involved suggestions of bribes, patronage, and all kinds of corruption. Additionally, the prime minister was a habitual drunkard. It was no secret for he bragged about his drinking, yet Canadians forgave him, returning him and his party to office in 1878.

There are other unusual Canadians as well. William Lyon Mackenzie King made the list of heroes for his impressive job of shepherding Canada through the Second World War. If that doesn't sound impressive, keep in mind that when Prime Minister Borden tried to guide the country during the previous world war, he succeeded in alienating French speaking Quebec, and much of the farming population, as well as accidentally splitting the opposition Liberal party in two. King kept peace and tranquillity, while Borden created a political crisis that threatened to undo Canada. Though he was a master politician, Canadians were aware of King's oddities, including consulting with mediums, and talking to his dead dog – stuffed and sitting on the mantle.

## REBEL RIEL

Louis Riel was also on the list of heroes. While the man who initiated the only rebellions Canada has ever had



may seem an odd choice as a hero, to many Western Canadians Riel is exactly that. With his rebellions at Red River and then in the North West Territories, Riel was probably the first Westerner that ever made “the East” sit up and take notice, and to perpetually alienated Westerners, that makes Riel a hero.

However, Riel was a religious fanatic, believing himself a prophet and in communication with God. He had spent time in a mental asylum, and at the time of the 1885 Rebellion may have actually been mentally unbalanced.

## E IS FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND EUGENICS



In its heroes, Canada is an equal opportunity employer. One of the most significant women to make the list was Emily Murphy. A successful writer under the pen name Janey Canuck, a Member of the Canadian Parliament, the first female police magistrate in the British Empire, and a participant in the landmark “Persons Case” that gave Canadian women legal status as people, Murphy has had her reputation tarnished in recent years.


*Canadians choices for heroes have been odd.*

The United Farmers government of the province of Alberta enacted the Sexual Sterilization Act in 1928 that allowed for the sterilization of the mentally incompetent and others unfit to parent. This version of eugenics, repugnant to most modern Canadians, was strongly backed by the otherwise progressive and reform-minded Murphy.

## CONCLUSION

Canadians' choices for heroes have been odd. The less savory facts behind the lives of most of Canada's heroes are well known and thoroughly documented, but Canadians picked these people anyway. Someone once told me that you can't tell an American something bad about their heroes. They don't want to know about George Washington's dismal military record as a British lieutenant, and they won't listen if you tell them that Thomas Jefferson had slaves on his plantation. They certainly don't want to hear any suggestions that Martin Luther King cheated on his wife, or may have plagiarized his dissertation. But Canadians are different. They know the weaknesses of their heroes and accept them for that.

The Bible also contains some unusual heroes, “heroes of faith” like Noah, Abraham, and Rahab. Noah got drunk, Abraham denied that Sarah was actually his wife, and Rahab was a prostitute. These were flawed people, but by God's strength, they were allowed incredible moments and even years to do deeds that we still remember today. We look back at them, and we look up to them for those deeds.

Heroes are not flawless people. They make mistakes, but that doesn't negate the good that they've been allowed to do. That doesn't mean we can't look up to them, but it does mean we can't idolize them. It's healthy to know that even great women and men have feet of clay, for it reminds us who is ultimately in control. 

*James Dykstra is both a student and teacher of Canadian history*



## ADVERTISE IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

We have several thousand readers and no idea if they want to buy your product. What we are sure of is that your ad dollars will support a thoroughly Reformed magazine. To find out about our advertising rates, ad sizes and more information see [ReformedPerspective.ca/advertise](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/advertise)



# CALL ME BILLY

I met a man the other day  
Who thought he was a goat  
He shaped his hair to look like horns  
And bleated from his throat

Confused, but caught with sympathy  
With truth I plied the man  
But he with darkened eyes aghast  
Just bid me "Baa!" and ran

With grief at his misguided state  
I followed him with care  
But coming round a corner, stopped  
At what my eyes saw there

A crowd had gathered round this wretch  
And placed him on their stage  
They cheered his choice with loud acclaim  
And led him to their cage

I cried aloud, "Don't do it, man!"  
To keep him from their chains  
They turned on me in frothy rage  
And blamed me for his pains

I cried again, "You need the Truth!"  
But he in fear refused  
He bleated feebly, fearing that  
His thoughts could be confused

The crowd rose up and echoed him  
With voices loud and bold  
With angry eyes they charged at me  
With tongues and whips to scold

I fled, I hesitate to say  
And sorrowful admit  
For they together threatened to  
A greater crime commit

But as I left that tragedy  
I chanced a look behind  
And saw that each had hidden close  
Some error like his kind

The tragic truth was now laid bare:  
They had no love for him  
But used his case just to affirm  
Each one's beloved whim

– Kevin Bratcher



Illustration by  
Mark Beauchamp

# FAITHLINK

FUNERAL CARE

Meeting you where it matters.

## We can help when you need it.

We can meet you in the comfort of your own home to arrange:

- > Visiting and Service in your church facility
- > Cemetery arrangements
- > Complete assistance with C.P.P., Life Ins., Pensions, etc. after the funeral

We'll come to you at no extra cost.

Let us show you the Faith-Link difference.



Rick Ludwig



Garnet van Popta



Diane Vanderwoude



**KITCHING  
STEEPE & LUDWIG**

FUNERAL HOME LIMITED

*It's comforting to come home.*

1-800-737-8275 | [kitchingsteepeandludwig.com/faithlink](http://kitchingsteepeandludwig.com/faithlink)

## CARTOONISTS

*We're looking for  
a few good  
stick men*



*Do you have humorous  
insights to share? Can  
you draw a stick figure?  
Then why not craft  
a comic or two for  
Reformed Perspective?*

Send your submissions to:  
[editor@ReformedPerspective.ca](mailto:editor@ReformedPerspective.ca)

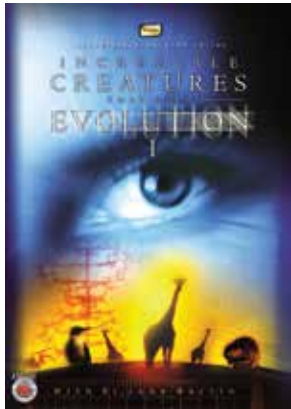


[facebook.com/ReformedPerspectiveMagazine](https://facebook.com/ReformedPerspectiveMagazine)



### INCREDIBLE CREATURES THAT DEFY EVOLUTION I

47 MIN. / 2006



Dr. Jobe Martin was once an evolutionist. He became a creationist when, as a professor at a dental college, he gave a lecture on the evolution of the tooth – teaching that fish scales eventually migrated into the mouth and became teeth – and was challenged by a couple of his students to investigate creation science. He'd never heard of it, but was willing to take a look. And the closer he looked the more he realized that much of the evolution he believed in was based on assumptions.

His study led him to investigate animals and other creatures, and in this short documentary he shares with us some of the most incredible features of some pretty incredible creatures that forced him to acknowledge that there was a Master Designer behind all this. For example, did you know:

- ...the bombardier beetle repels attackers by shooting a fiery liquid out of its rear end?
- ...the giraffe's heart is strong enough to pump blood all the way up to its head? But what happens when it lowers that head to take a drink? The same strong stream of oxygenated blood will now be traveling with enough pressure to blow out its brain...except for the shut off valves

in its neck that kick in when it dips its head.

- ...the woodpecker has a barbed gluey tongue that sticks to bugs but doesn't stick to its own beak? And it has a skull that is designed to do the work of a jackhammer without giving the poor fellow a headache.

Dr. Martin shows us why we should be amazed by many other creatures including: the beaver, the Australian incubator bird, the platypus, the chicken egg, the chuckwalla lizard, the gecko, and us humans.

My preschool daughters were amazed, and while this is a video primarily intended for children, my wife and I were also engaged. We were floored by just how creative God is. It is good family viewing, with enough pictures and film footage to keep the attention of the very young, and for parents, a narrative that highlights God's sense of fun and genius.

This might not be a good one to hand to any hardened evolution-believing folk you might know. It is just a children's video – it isn't meant to offer an overly detailed or complete argument against evolution, and hardened critics will seize on that lack of depth to dismiss it entirely. So this is best to get for your own family, or your Christian school.

There are two more films in this series, all of them quite good, but this one is the very best of the bunch.

– JON DYKSTRA

### AS WE FORGIVE

54 MIN. / 2010



In Rwanda, in 1994, the unimaginable happened: approximately one million Tutsi Rwandans were killed by their friends, neighbors and fellow church members. The enormous scale of the evil left the government incapable of offering any sort of justice. The jails couldn't hold the tens of thousands of perpetrators, so many of those who confessed were pardoned and sent back to their villages, and homes, to live alongside the surviving victims.

In *As We Forgive* we meet two women who survived the attacks and two men who participated in them. The film is well worth watching twice: first putting ourselves in the place of the victims, and understanding how it is that God equips them to be able to offer forgiveness (if they can forgive this, why are we holding onto our grudges?) and then putting ourselves in the place of the murderers. The two men we meet show what true repentance looks like. As one explains, he can never make up for what he has done, but he can try to show his repentance by doing all the good he can for his victims. His repentance is more than words – he is building houses for the genocide survivors.

One caution: scenes of the aftermath of the genocide make this unsuitable for children.

– JON DYKSTRA



## THE GREEN PRINCE

101 MINUTES / 2014



Mosab Hassan Yousef is the son of one of the founders of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, and served as his father's right hand man. But at the same time he was working as an informant for the Israeli secret police, the Shin Bet. This is his unbelievable story.

While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the background to everything, it's clear that director Nadav Schirman is most interested in what was going on in Yousef's head and heart. Yousef is adamant that, "I would never betray my father" but Shin Bet agent Gonen Ben Yitzhak also found him surprisingly easy to turn. The same young man who bought weapons to attack the Israelis later becomes passionate about working with the Israelis to save Jewish lives.

One of the explanations for this dramatic turnaround is Yousef's conversion to Christianity. But he starts working for the Shin Bet before he becomes Christian: perhaps his willingness to help is evidence of how God was already stirring his conscience?

Dramatic re-enactments give the whole thing a cinematic feel – at times this seems like an espionage thriller. It's based on Yousef's remarkable biography *Son of Hamas*, a book that everyone who reads it loves. The book is better, but if you haven't read it and are interested in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, this is about as good a documentary on the topic as you'll find.

– JON DYKSTRA



## ANONYMOUS FATHER'S DAY

44 MIN. / 2011

It begins with a moving testimony from a woman describing how she felt when she discovered that she was conceived through a sperm donor, and that she had no idea who her actual father really was. She quickly discovered "donor-conceived persons" number in the hundreds of thousands, and thirty to sixty thousand new human beings are conceived using donor sperm every year. This is now a \$3.3 billion industry, with very few regulations.

However, in their desperate quest for children, many adults have forgotten the impact their decisions will have on children who now realize that one-half of their family tree is a question mark. "My daddy's name is donor," reads one slogan. "I am the child of a stranger," reads another. "Nobody stops to think," muses the documentarian Barry Stevens, himself conceived using a sperm donor, "that the babies grow up." Is it so hard to understand, Stevens asks, that donor-conceived persons just want to know the basic facts surrounding their origin? Interviewee after interviewee describes an inexplicable sense of loss, and recount whole childhoods spent creating memories and imaginary fathers. "I look in the mirror," one said, "and I don't know who I look like."

Surprisingly, there has been quite a backlash against donor-conceived persons who choose to tell their stories. From infertile couples to radical gay rights activists who see these reproductive technologies as a path to parenthood, those advocating the regulation of what they call "an industry to design, produce, and sell babies" are often told to keep their mouths shut. This is in spite of the fact that the murky origins of donor-conceived persons are leading to problems that border on the bizarre – including what one called "accidental incest," in which there is increasingly a real possibility (and real examples) of biological half-brothers and half-sisters getting married.

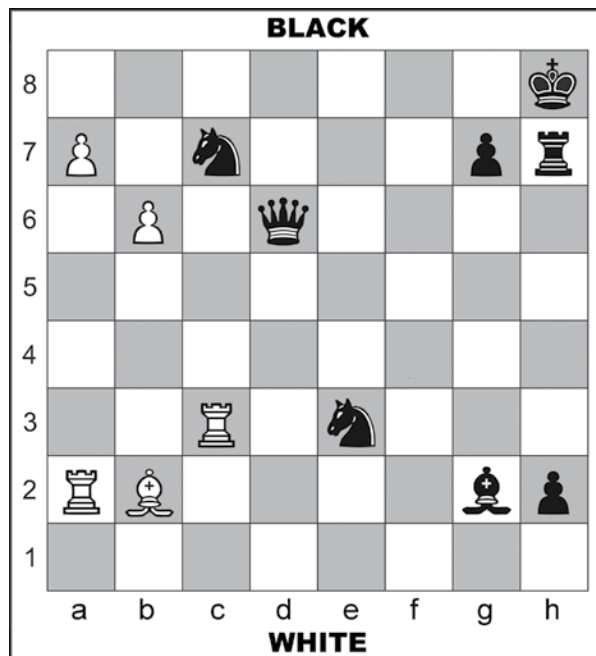
This is not just about the ethics surrounding reproductive technologies and scientists manipulating the beginning of new human lives. It is also about young men and women staring in the mirror and wondering whose eyes and hair and smile they have, and whether or not the strangers they pass on their way to work are actually their half-siblings, cousins, relatives. *Anonymous Father's Day* is about family and its centrality and importance. It may be beginning a conversation nobody wants to have, but it is certainly a conversation that needs to happen.

The trailer and DVD can be found at [www.anonymousfathersday.com](http://www.anonymousfathersday.com).

– JONATHON VAN MAREN

# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #223



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

## Riddle for Punsters #223

"Check Webster's Dictionary?"

What kind of widow could also be considered a SPINster?

A \_\_\_\_\_ widow s \_\_\_\_\_.

Check it out on the World Wide \_\_\_\_\_!

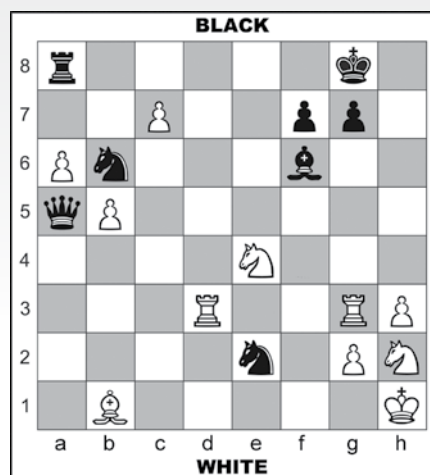
## Problem to Ponder #223

"Pizza Puzzle"

At Antonio's Pizza Palace, two rectangular pizzas (15 inch by 10 inch) have a before-tax price of \$23, which includes one topping. Each extra topping adds \$1.50 to the price. A 14 inch diameter round pizza costs \$16.00 but a second one can be bought for half that price. That includes 2 toppings, with an extra cost of \$1.20 for each additional topping. If the tax rate is 16% for take-out pizza, and pizzas are ordered with three toppings, what is the total cost for two rectangular pizzas? Would two round pizzas cost less? What is the cost (including tax) per square inch of pizza for rectangular and for round pizza with three toppings? (NOTE that the area of a circle is  $A=\pi r^2$ , about 3.1416 times the square of the radius).

## Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #222



### WHITE TO MATE IN 4

#### Descriptive Notation

1. NxB ch K-B1
2. R-Q8 ch K-K2
3. N-N8 ch K-K3
4. R-K3 mate

#### IF

1. NxB ch K-R1
2. R-Q8 ch RxR
3. PxR=Q mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Ne4xf6 + Kg8-f8
2. Rd3-d8 + Kf8-e7
3. Nf6-g8 + Ke7-e6
4. Rg3-e3 ++

#### IF

1. Ne4xf6 + Kg8-h8
2. Rd3-d8 + Ra8xd8
3. c7xd8=Q ++

### BLACK TO MATE IN 3

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- Q-K8 ch
2. N-B1 QxN ch
3. K-R2 Q-N8 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Qa5-e1 +
2. Nh2-f1 Qe1xf1 +
3. Kh1-h2 Qf1-g1 ++

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters #222

"Let's not BLAB about the LAB"

Why do dilute chemicals not do well on tests in the lab? They just do not have the concentration necessary. Why did the acid's report cause a lot of negative reactions? Its information base clearly lacked neutrality.

## Answer to Problem to Ponder #222

"Plan a Party for the Birthday Girl?"

Jim is presently twelve years older than Tim but three years younger than Kim. Six years ago Jim was twice as old as Tim was then. How many years from now will Kim have her fortieth birthday?

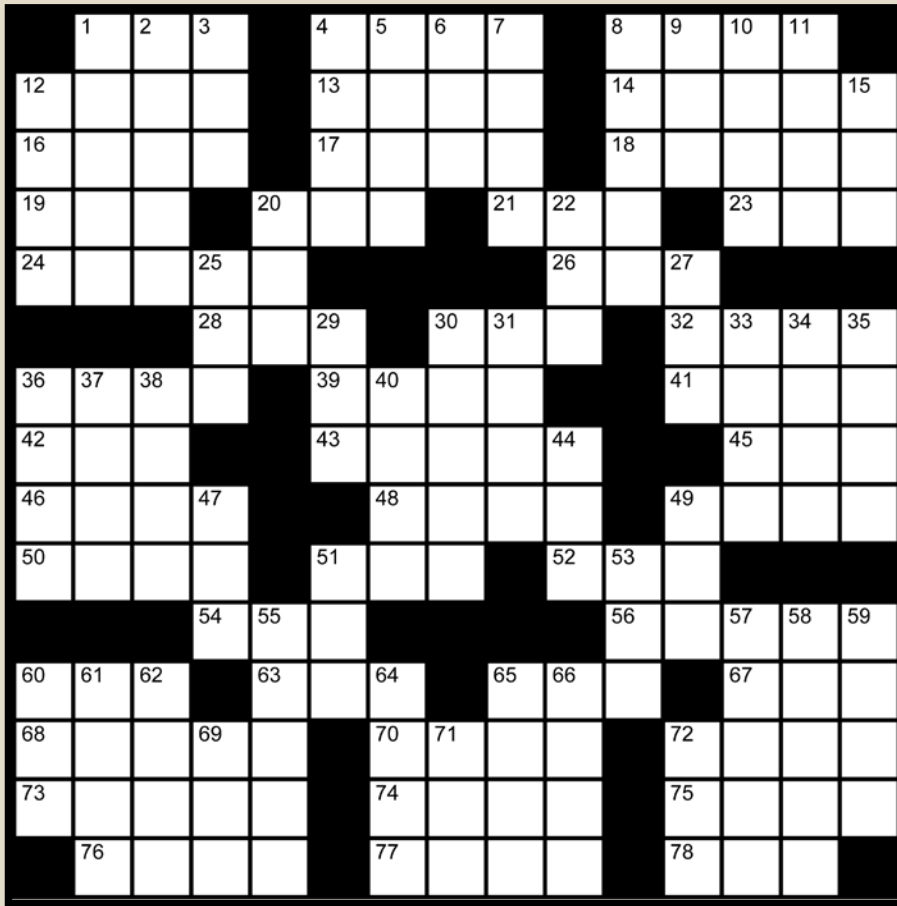
Let J be Jim's (present) age, T be Tim's age and K be Kim's age (all in years). From the info given,  $J = T + 12$  and  $J - 6 = 2(t - 6)$  and  $J = K - 3$

Substituting  $J=T+12$  into the second equation results in  $T+12 - 6 = 2(T-6)$  so  $T+6 = 2T-12$  so  $6 = T-12$  so  $18 = T$  is Tim's age, thus  $J = T+12 = 18+12 = 30$  is Jim's age and  $K = J+3 = 30+3 = 33$  is Kim's age and  $40-33 = 7$  so **Kim will have her 40th birthday 7 years from now.**

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

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



## SERIES 1-11

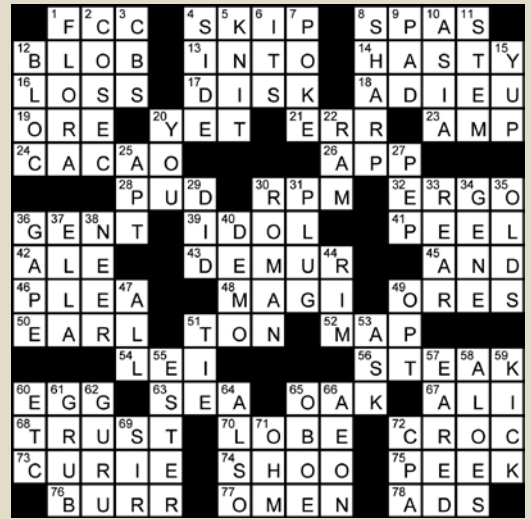
## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. Don't \_\_\_ the edges of your beard. (Lev. 19)
4. This one is over your head. Don't bark at me!
8. When you are opposed (especially by your aunty)
12. Indigenous people of Japan
13. Super-fighter-bomber shelved by Canada
14. Mischief-making, peace-disturbing
16. Specific spice (that embodies wisdom?)
17. Amaziah's term for Amos (Amos 7)
18. French goodbye commending me to God's care
19. Someone involved in election (short form)
20. Not quite even (the poet's contraction instead)
21. Name for receding tide
23. Abbreviation for measure in recipe
24. Chimney \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ stakes
26. Country that EPA regulates
28. One of the three states of matter
30. Tiny piece of charged matter
32. Dissatisfied expression
36. Type of wrestling that's BIG in Japan
39. "Be \_\_\_ to one another" (Eph. 4)
41. "For my yoke is \_\_\_" (Matt. 11)
42. "...she took of its fruit and \_\_\_" (Gen. 3)
43. One who starts a car, but goes nowhere
45. The less hip way to say hip
46. "Behold, the \_\_\_ of God...." (John 1)
48. "Tremble, you women... at \_\_\_" (Is. 32)
49. Meditate (on) or Greek 'goddess' of inspiration
50. "A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and \_\_\_!"
51. Affirmative answer from Maw or Paw
52. Name (someone, especially

- with a title)
54. \_\_\_-to-\_\_\_ (standing up to a rival)
56. "...my heart \_\_\_ me." (Psalm 40)
60. Greeting from Caesar or one of his subjects
63. Abbreviation for tax on value added to product
65. Only line spoken by a cow in a \_\_\_-vie
67. "...many a slip / 'twixt the cup and the \_\_\_."
68. Sorceress in Homer's The Odyssey
70. "Excuse me" (when you're sew annoyed?)
72. Native American tribe in Arizona and Mexico
73. First name of mystery story writer E. A. Poe
74. South Asian wrap-around garment for women
75. "And \_\_\_ fell... forty days and...." (Gen. 7)
76. "bring two of every \_\_\_ into the ark" (Gen. 6)
77. Editing mark meaning "Let it stand."
78. Abbreviation for month named after \_\_\_avian

## LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



## SERIES 1-10

### DOWN

1. What the London cat said
2. Corner, or (obtuse?) early inhabitant of England
3. "For you tithe mint and ....." (Luke 11)
4. Level (a city or house) to the ground
5. "All... are hot as an ....." (Hosea 7)
6. Rough rock deposit from which metal is taken
7. Golfers' shout (so balls don't hit your \_\_\_ head)
8. One group opposing the temple (Nehemiah 4)
9. Where Cain came after his crime (Genesis 4)
10. Insulting name for annoying person
11. March period Julius Caesar was told to avoid
12. Snakes found in Egypt (one by Cleopatra)
15. Affirmative response in a Goofy way
20. Agency created to protect environment in U.S.
22. Tightly knit knot of hair on top of head
25. People with swelled heads have a big one.
27. Animal imported by King Solomon (1 Kings 10)
29. Apres-\_\_\_ - relaxing evening in the chalet
30. Relative by marriage
31. Two ancient types: Pindaric and Horatian \_\_\_
33. Hawaiian island
34. Duct tape has at least 101 \_\_\_!
35. "...Adam, who was a \_\_\_ of...." (Romans 5)
36. "You are the \_\_\_ of the earth...." (Matt. 5)
37. State of Salt Lake City, and of the \_\_\_ Jazz
38. What you send to a colleague at the office
40. What 49 across brings (light bulb over-head?)
44. Color of choler, or of communism
47. On the other hand; yet
49. Master's degree to administer a big business
51. Affirmative answer in a voice vote
53. Supposed interplanetary transportation
55. Explicit, not hidden, open and above board
57. Relating to the upper hipbone
58. "...do you \_\_\_ wisdom to yourself?" (Job 15)
59. Width (of a wing, your arms, or a bridge)
60. Top (and bottom) card in a suit
61. Plural short form for surveillance footage
62. Cogito, \_\_\_ sum: Descartes' famous saying
64. Official news agency of Soviet Union
65. \_\_\_ Christianity by C. S. Lewis
66. Leave out, fail to include
69. Non-interplanetary transportation
71. Headgear worn by Dr. Seuss's Cat
72. A \_\_\_ noun is used to stand in for a noun.



# IF YOU HAD 3 SECONDS AND 200 SQ. FEET TO CHANGE THE WORLD. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

## *Call for Entries!*

Submit your ideas for our new billboard for a chance to win a NEW Galaxy Tablet!

We challenge you to create and submit a compelling **new design concept** which can be used by ARPA groups and other organizations across Canada on billboards and in other media campaigns.

### **CATEGORIES & PRIZES:**

#### **Category 1: Abortion**

1st: 8" Samsung Galaxy tablet  
Runners up (x2): 1 Year Free  
Subscription to RP Magazine!

#### **Category 2: Free Topic**

1st: 10" Samsung Galaxy tablet  
Runners up (x2): 1 Year Free  
Subscription to RP Magazine!

### **SUBMISSIONS:**

Send your entries to:  
[info@ARPACanada.ca](mailto:info@ARPACanada.ca)

### **RULES AND REGS:**

For contest rules visit:  
[arpacanada.ca/contest2015](http://arpacanada.ca/contest2015)

### **DEADLINE:**

Submissions due:  
October 23, 2015

SPONSORED BY:

Reformed  
**PERSPECTIVE**

[compasscreative.ca](http://compasscreative.ca)

Association for Reformed Political Action  
**ARPA**  
CANADA