

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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PERSPECTIVE

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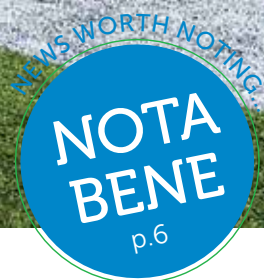
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
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FROM THE EDITOR

On whose side?

Battling Christians should pick the right team

The reason most people tune into the NFL playoffs is to watch large men fight over a small ball. But this year there was also another battle going on, of interest to those who can't tell a pass from a pick. After their January 18 semifinal game Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson and Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers had a debate of sorts about whether God chooses sides in sporting contests.

Though they were down most of the game, Seattle won by outscoring Green Bay 21-3 over final six minutes. Afterwards an ecstatic Russell Wilson credited God for his team's remarkable comeback: "That's God setting it up, to make it so dramatic, so rewarding, so special." Wilson's statement seemed to imply that God wanted Seattle to win – that He was on Seattle's side.

As might be expected, losing quarterback Aaron Rodgers had a different perspective: "I don't think God cares a whole lot about the outcome."

So does God pick sides in football games?

Neither? It's a curious answer – why wouldn't the commander of God's army side with God's people?

Because that would be getting things backwards. Yes, there are two sides, but the dividing line isn't drawn where we think it is – it isn't a matter of us versus them. No, it's all about God. Instead of expecting God to back *our* team we should start trying to be a part of His.

Aaron Rodgers had it right: God isn't for or against any football team. He doesn't pick sides; He is the dividing line. The question we're faced with is only, are we for or against *Him*?

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

That's the real question, and one we're to consider any time we're called to battle.

In the political arena many a Christian candidate has lost his way by asking God to support their campaign rather than ensuring their campaign sides with God. It's only when getting elected becomes something secondary that siding with God can become our first priority.

In marriage we're not called to battle, but battles do come, and it gets that much the worse if one spouse, or both, thinks that God is on their side. No, God isn't going to side with your stubbornness. He doesn't think you're being principled; He knows you're just self-centered. So stop thinking of yourself, and start thinking about Him and what it looks like to play for His team in your marriage. Then you'll forget about being right, and worry about being biblical: being forgiving, submissive and self-sacrificial.

There are also battles in basketball, baseball and every other sport too. When our kids are playing for their Christian school's team they need to understand that God has a team out there on the floor, and there might well be a team opposing Him too, but that division won't be shown via uniform colors. Players who want to side with God will make His priorities their own. So they can set their sights on scoring 20 and winning the championship game, but that can't be their ultimate goal. What'll be more important is trying to do all that God's way: playing with self-control, hearing the coach,

respecting opponents and, despite the mathematical difficulties, giving 110%.

CONCLUSION

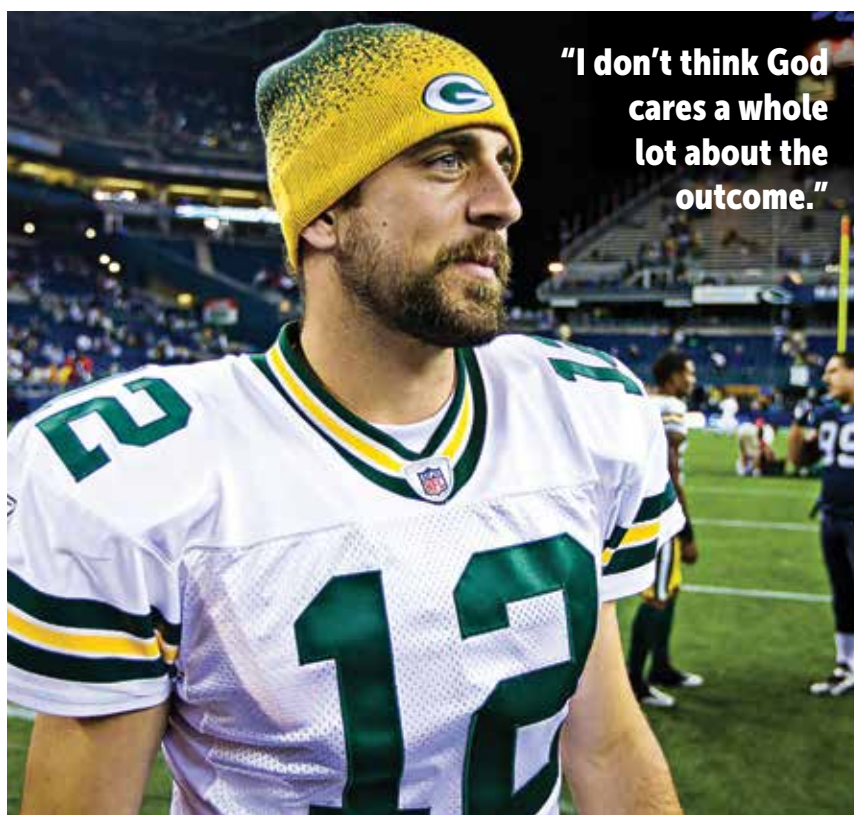
So God wasn't siding with the Seahawks. That's getting it backwards. We are called to be on *His* team and called to play, and to campaign, and to love, and to battle His way. Let's see things rightly and live our lives seeking *His* way.

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

IS GOD ON OUR SIDE?

A few thousand years back a similar sort of question was asked right before a different sort of contest. Israel was about to attack Jericho when Joshua saw a man with drawn sword standing in front of him.

Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."



"I don't think God cares a whole lot about the outcome."

RP

NOTA BENE

News
worth
noting

exact same job, I'm never hiring a man again!

Despite what Arquette implied, and President Obama heavily implied, this 23 cent gap isn't for women doing the same work as men. Instead this represents the difference between the average earnings of all US men and all US women who are working full time. It is *not* an apples-to-apples comparison.

It turns out one of the main reasons that men make more is because men tend to gravitate to higher paying jobs. So, for example, engineering and computer science – dominated by men – are among the highest paying jobs, while early childhood education and social work – dominated by women – are among the lowest paying jobs.

Men also dominate dangerous jobs, which are understandably higher paying: males suffered 92% of US work-related deaths. As Crowder quipped, women “may complain about lower pay...but we die!” Other factors that boost men's pay compared to women's include: men average more hours, more men are in unions, men are more willing to travel for their work, and men don't have to take time off to have children.

So yes, men make more than women on average. But it has little to do with discrimination and primarily has to do with the biblical and oh-so-sexist notion that “God created them male and female.” Men and women are different. And that difference works its way out in all sorts of fashions, including in the economic and employment choices we make. So yes, let's all agree to equal pay for equal work. But let's not get angry about different pay for different work.

SOURCE: Christian Hoff Sommers' “No women don't make less money than men” posted to TheDailyBeast.com on February 1, 2014; Steve Crowder's “Feminist ‘Equal pay’ arguments debunked...thoroughly” posted to louderwithcrowder.com February 26, 2015

DO WOMEN GET PAID LESS FOR THE SAME WORK?

BY JON DYKSTRA



During the February 22 Oscar broadcast, best supporting actress winner Patricia Arquette caused a stir when, she used her acceptance speech to call for “wage equality” for women:

To every woman who gave birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for

everybody else's equal rights –it's our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America.

Her speech drew wild cheers from many in the audience. It echoed a claim President Obama made in last year's State of the Union address that women “still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns.... A woman deserves equal pay for equal work.”

Is this statistic true? Do women get paid just three quarters of what men get for the exact same work?

If it were true, one would have to wonder why, in our capitalistic country, there are any women left to hire. As vlogger Steve Crowder noted,

If I'm a business owner and I can get away with paying a women [three quarters] of what I pay a man for the

CONFIRMING WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS CONFESSED

BY JON DYKSTRA



In March 11, Classis Ontario West adopted an unusual proposal from Hamilton's Providence Canadian Reformed Church: Providence wants an addition made to the Belgic Confession.

As they explain in their proposal, our confessions differ from Scripture in that they aren't perfect or sacred...so they can be amended or edited. That has happened in the past: for instance, at the 1905 General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands a number of words were deleted from Belgic Confession Article 36 "in an effort to better conform to biblical teachings on the role of civil government."

But why would a change need to be made now? Because "the Canadian Reformed Churches presently face a significant doctrinal challenge in the area of origins."

What change does Providence propose? They want to replace the first line of the Belgic Confession's Article 14 with the following to clarify "our confessional and biblical stance on human origins" (new wording is italicized):

We believe that God created *the human race by making and forming Adam from dust (Gen. 2:7) and Eve from Adam's side (Gen. 2:21-22). They were created as the first two humans and are the biological ancestors of all other humans. There were no pre-Adamites, whether human or hominid.* God made and formed Adam after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy.

As the proposal notes, many believe that our confessions are already quite clear on this topic. However, the fact is some Canadian Reformed academics have joined together to argue that the confessions leave room for a great diversity of views on how mankind came to be. This group includes some very prominent figures: Dr. Arnold

Sikkema, Dr. Jitse Van der Meer and Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff. They have a diversity of views amongst themselves, and it can be hard to figure out just what they each believe about Man's origins. On the group's blog they have allowed their most outspoken (and clearest) member, Dr. Jitse Van der Meer, to outline what he considered strong evidence for the possibility that man and chimpanzees have a common ancestor. Does that mean Dr. Van der Meer is affirming the evolution of man from some relation of chimps? Well, there is a nit that can be picked here: relating strong evidence for evolution is not necessarily the same thing as affirming evolution. As Dr. Sikkema noted in a response to the proposal, even a creationist like Dr. Todd Wood has acknowledged that there are strong evidences for evolution.

But, of course, there is acknowledging and there is acknowledging. While both Reformed Academic and Dr. Wood acknowledge the evidence for evolution only Dr. Wood acknowledges that God created Man over six literal days and not via a process that involved pre-Adamites and millennia upon millennia of death, disease, and disaster, which He thereafter declared "good." Context is key.

In his response to the proposal Dr. Sikkema argued that Providence Church had misrepresented him in supporting materials by labeling him a "theistic evolutionist":

I don't "believe in evolution." It's not about belief. I don't believe in Einstein's theory of gravity either, but I do believe in a good, loving, and covenantally faithful Triune God...

Dr. Sikkema uses the term "belief" here in the sense of "place my hope in." In that sense he believes in God, but not evolution or Einstein's theory of gravity. However, no Christian anywhere "places their hope" in evolution, so if that is what it means to "believe in evolution" it

is not surprising Dr. Sikkema rejects the label "theistic evolutionist." As he has redefined the term it can't be applied to anyone at all.

Other objections have already been raised, some of note (an edit will be needed to acknowledge that Eve, too, was made in God's image), but very few of which wrestle with what is at stake here. To paraphrase Douglas Wilson, *did Adam bring death into the world (Romans 5:12) or did millions of years of death and dying bring Adam into the world?* Providence's proposal specifically and clearly rejects the latter and calls upon our churches to do the same

The proposal's critics are going to fall into one of two camps. There will be:

1. Those who argue it isn't necessary because they believe the Confession already rules out pre-Adamites.
2. Those who argue it isn't necessary but who won't rule out pre-Adamites.

If the critics all fall into the first camp, Providence's proposed addition isn't needed. Conversely, if there are any who fall into the second camp, that will highlight why we need to clarify our Confession.

There will also be some who make a show of being in the first camp with carefully parsed statements such as, "it could be argued that the Confession already rules out evolution." While that sounds very first camp-ish, it can be a clever way of saying, "some people – *not necessarily me, mind you* – could argue..." We should view such critics who won't be clear as strengthening the case for Providence's clarifying proposal.

Lots of work, research, and thought has gone into Providence's proposal, and you should read it for yourself. It can be found on their website: ProvidenceChurch.ca.

REFLECTING ON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL COSTS

BY JON DYKSTRA



In the February 9 issue of *Christian Courier* editor Angela Reitsma Bick compiled figures that seemed to show some Christian families are paying quite a bit more for Christian schooling than they did a couple of generations ago. According to her figures, in 1960 Christian education amounted to 5% of a family's income. It was up to 8% by 1990 and in schools that receive no government funding is as much as 19% today.

This was a casual polling of just 13 schools, most of which likely had

Christian Reformed connections, so it'd be a mistake to try to draw any direct parallels to our Canadian Reformed schools. But it does at least prompt a couple of questions:

- Are we spending a greater proportion of our budget on Christian education than previous generations?
- If so, why?

There are many good reasons we would want to spend proportionally more than previous generations (eg. we want to do a better job, we want to underpay our teachers less than we once did, we have more money to spend, etc.). But Bick's numbers are astonishing, and if they have any application to our schools, it would be worth a look back at how previous generations balanced the school budget to see if there are any lessons to be learned for controlling costs in the future.

MORE DUCK DYNASTY UNCOMMON SENSE

BY JON DYKSTRA



Sadie Robertson, granddaughter of *Duck Dynasty* patriarch Phil Robertson, is the latest of that clan to write a book. In an interview with *Inside Edition* she laid out her tips on how young people can stay pure in their dating relationship.

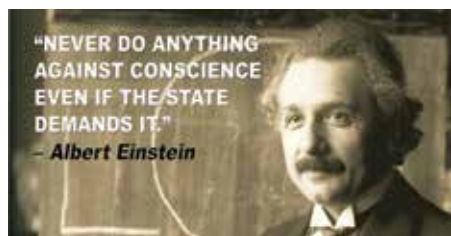
First, don't be home alone together: "You could be the strongest Christian in the world, but when you're home alone together, it just adds that pressure."

Second, stay out of each other's bedrooms: "You don't just want to be in a bedroom, together, door shut – not too much good can come of that."

Finally, pray together before dates: "It's important to keep God at the top of the relationship."

CHOICE IS ONLY FOR LIBERALS?

BY MARIAN CHASE



The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) is currently considering whether to strip away a physician's right not to perform a medical act – like abortion or euthanasia – due to reasons of conscience.

College official Dr. Marc Gabel reportedly declared, "physicians

unwilling to provide or facilitate abortion for reasons of conscience should not be family physicians."

A spokesman for the Protectors of Conscience Project (ConscienceLaws.org), Sean Murphy, noted that if abortion advocates and euthanasia supporters such as Dr. Gabel have their way, the "ethical cleansing of Ontario's medical profession will begin this year, ridding it of practitioners unwilling to do what they believe to be wrong." People are fighting to be cared for by conscienceless doctors who are as comfortable killing patients as they are with curing them.

This same push for conscienceless doctors is now underway in Saskatchewan too, where their College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSS) is also considering forcing doctors to act against their better judgment, requiring them to either perform or refer for

surgeries or other medical acts they themselves do not agree with.

Freedom of conscience is fundamental for democracy, and a part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, so why is this argument even being made? Well, according to Sean Murphy, this latest battle of values is not only driven by concerns about the availability of services such as abortion or euthanasia, but more by a "markedly intolerant ideology masquerading as enlightened objectivity." Or, in other words, the stripping away of ethics and morals in our society is just another way for sinful, depraved mankind to show his *intolerance* for the Law of God, and the beauty of human life. It seems as though pro-choicers are concerned only for *their* right to choose, and not the rights of those who would tell them they chose wrongly.

Peter and PICS

Why, and how, Edmonton's Parkland Immanuel Christian School (PICS) won a national award for inclusive education

by Michelle Doorten

Last year our local Canadian Reformed school received an award – the National Inclusive Education Award – for the way they fully included our son Peter in school life. My husband and I wanted to share some of the highlights of what Parkland Immanuel Christian School (PICS) did through the years, as a way of encouraging our Reformed schools across Canada to continue to aspire to include students with special needs in all facets of the school experience.

A LITTLE ABOUT PETER

To begin it is probably helpful to know a bit about our son, Peter, and the nature of his disabilities. Peter was born prematurely, at 25 weeks gestation, and weighed just over 2 pounds. Thirty-six hours after being born he experienced a severe brain hemorrhage, which resulted in mild to moderate cerebral palsy (spastic triplegia). He began walking at age 4, and today he walks community distances using ankle-foot orthotics on both legs, wears a hand splint on his left hand, and has full use of his right hand. He also has a ventricular-peritoneal shunt which drains his cerebral spinal fluid from a ventricle in his brain into his abdominal area. He is legally blind and therefore uses a white cane, and requires assistive technology and large print for reading. He has a developmental disability and throughout his school career has been blessed with exceptional educational assistants that have helped to modify the curriculum so that he can readily understand and engage with it,

and have supported him in the classroom so that he is a fully contributing member of the class.

Peter is also an avid conversationalist, full of questions and personality! He is currently taking Profession of Faith class at Providence Canadian Reformed Church here in Edmonton, he loves attending church, and he is serious about his personal devotions. He has many interests including camping and travelling as a family with his younger brother and 2 younger sisters, golfing, sit-skiing, watching sports, attending social events at church and school with family and friends, and is an avid Oilers fan.

STARTING SCHOOL

Pete's inclusive journey at PICS began in kindergarten, in September of 2001. Prior to this the kindergarten teacher met us in our home, and learned all she could about Pete. This was such an important first step, and we appreciated it so much! On the kindergarten orientation day we were so blessed by the number of staff and students that went out of their way to say hello to Pete and make him feel at home. Pete had a wonderful first year at school, where he enjoyed participating in all of the classroom activities as well as the many fieldtrips.

In 2002 Pete entered grade 1 as a full-time student. Pete was a "pioneer" at PICS, in that he was the first PICS student to have severe special needs. His grade 1 teacher and educational assistant (EA) took on

this new role with incredible enthusiasm. After school hours and in the evenings (without pay) they attended workshops by the Edmonton Regional Coalition for Inclusive Education, to learn all they could about quality inclusion. This teacher-EA team went on to be Pete's teacher and EA in grade 2 and grade 3 as well, providing a wonderful level of consistency. Pete's IPP (Individual Program Plan) goals were always carefully tracked and recorded, and our meetings were positive and productive. As parents we always felt that our ideas were supported, and that we and the school were on this new journey together.

Pete's elementary teachers in grade 4, 5, and 6 continued the trend of quality



inclusion, dedication and care. Pete's EA spent countless hours of her own time taking Braille courses, so that she could use these skills with Pete, as he learned Braille in the school setting. His EAs helped him be an integral part of School Spirit Days and Sports Days by becoming completely involved in the events themselves and encouraging Pete to do the same.

ON TO JUNIOR HIGH

When it came time for Pete to transition to Junior High, the learning assistance coordinator and a member of the school board attended (along with us, as parents) a 5-evening workshop series offered by a public association in Edmonton for students with special needs transitioning from grade 6 to grade 7. This unity between the school and the home made our experience a truly positive one, in which we felt inclusion was always the focus.

In Grade 7 the teachers continued to strive to include Pete in all class activities. Despite Pete's cerebral palsy and visual impairment, his teacher ensured that he went skiing for the day with his class, using modified techniques. He went on the annual Grade 7 three-night camping trip, near Hinton, Alberta, and went orienteering and canoeing, with the help of staff, parents and peers. These amazing memories will stay with him forever!

With Junior High came Pete's introduction to extra-curricular school activities. When all the boys in his class joined the volleyball and basketball teams, Pete was encouraged to join as well. He became an assistant coach, attending all the games, tracking stats and cheering on his classmates. He consistently coached every season, both volleyball and basketball, for 6 years (grade 7-12). With the support of staff, fellow coaches, parents and peers, he also went with the team on overnight trips to various tournaments, including 6 three-day trips to the Provincial Championships in various schools across Alberta. Pete loved being part of the team photos, player parades, banquets, and hotel stays. At his grade

Pete was a "pioneer" at PICS, in that he was the first PICS student to have severe special needs.

12 Graduation this June he was awarded a scholarship for his commitment to coaching, from the Alberta Schools Athletic Association. A special moment indeed!

SENIOR HIGH AND MORE

In Grade 10, 11 and 12, Pete continued to be involved in the same courses and activities as his peers. Many of the students in Senior High joined the school Drama Club, and Pete did the same. He enjoyed helping out with ticket sales and behind-the-scenes support with lighting and props, and the staff even created scenes with Pete in mind, so that Pete could have an acting role tailored to his comfort level and ability. He loved the rehearsals and the adrenaline rush that accompanied his performances, and thoroughly enjoyed the social inclusion that the teachers and peers in the club provided.

Besides being on honorary assistant coach on the Senior Volleyball and Basketball teams in Senior High, Pete also became involved in Intramurals. PICS has a Senior Ball Hockey League at noon hour for grades 9 – 12, and teachers play as well! Due to his vision and mobility challenges, to have Pete play on this high-speed, intensive court safely is quite a feat, but with the principal as a teammate, padded protective gear, a helmet to protect his head and shunt and a bright jersey to help the other players look out for him, this venture was a solid success.

In Senior High, PICS continued to provide a high level of inclusion within the Senior High level courses. Due to Peter's developmental disability,

the regular curriculum was modified where necessary, and a full-time EA was always present and supportive, but every effort was made to use the materials the whole class was using. Pete's EAs always ensured that Pete has access to large print materials, and with the invention of the iPad, Pete's textbooks, assignments and powerpoints were all downloaded and ready at Pete's fingertips. The learning coordinators at PICS were always professional and ready to help. Every year a variety of consultant visits were scheduled (vision consultant, occupational therapist, adapted education consultant, assistive technology consultant) and meetings were carried out consistently and efficiently.

He also took part in Physical Education class. Although full court team sports are challenging, he still learned the same drills and techniques during skill development time, as well as participated as a referee and scorekeeper, with peer support.

EXTRACURRICULARS

Peter was also provided with many unique course opportunities in Senior High. His course load included core subjects such as Math, English, Social Studies, Religious Studies and CALM, as well as a number of options. He was completely included in Band class, and performed consistently well on percussion, including the bass drum, as a one-handed drummer. He performed in all of the Band concerts and assemblies, and attended a Mass Band Concert with 4 other Canadian Reformed schools, via a 6-day road trip, in Winnipeg, in April. The band teacher was so helpful by communicating with us about Pete's needs on this big trip well ahead of time.

He took Construction class for 3 years, and the teacher did a super job of involving Pete in the process of using saws and machines to create tables, a clock and other projects. This can be challenging, especially due to Pete's vision, but the staff found ways to accommodate this and keep Pete safe! His EA also took a construction course, after hours, in order to support him in

this class.

He also enjoyed a grade 12 level Wildlife course, and was part of a 2 night hike in Jasper, Alberta in June with his classmates, over difficult terrain, using a trail-rider (best described as a back country aide for wheelchair users that is a cross between a wheelbarrow and a rickshaw!) and “sherpas” (to power the trail-rider; this included his dad, grandpa and two of his uncles) to help him with this challenging feat. What a blessing that this was possible.

The staff at PICS this past 13 years – its teachers, its educational assistants, its principals, its secretaries, its learning assistance coordinators, its drama directors, its athletic directors and coaches – have truly proven that they welcome students with special needs, and strive to include them in the most meaningful ways possible. The school community as a whole has also been such a blessing, through individuals and parents who look out for Pete at sports events and fieldtrips, and who stop to chat at church and school events. The

School Board has fully supported the creation of a Learning Assistance and Special Needs policy, and has helped to develop the job description of the learning assistance coordinator position, which is crucial to quality inclusion. The Board has supported the hiring of EAs that have training in the area of inclusion, so that this goal can be attained.

PETER'S PEERS

Not only were the staff, board and parents very supportive, but Pete's peers have been a tremendous blessing in our lives as well. His peers knew him well and loved to see him do well. They hung out by their lockers together, and helped him find his role during group projects. They visited him when he was in the hospital for shunt surgery, and they texted and facebooked about their latest basketball game. They attended birthday parties together, went to sports tournaments together, learned and laughed together. Today they golf together, watch hockey together and

go to Boston Pizza together. We are so thankful for the bond which continues to exist between them.

Pete has graduated from PICS, and he is starting a whole new chapter of his life. This past Spring he applied to Grant MacEwan University here in Edmonton, and in May we heard the exciting news that he was accepted into the Travel Diploma Program with support from a facilitator from the inclusive program there. Out of 20 applicants only 2 were selected, so we are so thankful that God has granted Pete this opportunity. We truly feel that the inclusive education that Pete received at PICS contributed greatly to the inclusive life that Pete continues to lead, and we thank the Lord for this.

CONCLUSION

It is our hope and prayer that inclusive education continues to grow and flourish in our schools, our churches and our communities. We have told this story of Pete's journey, in order to demonstrate how a church and school community can work together to support persons with disabilities. Our journey has had its challenges and there have been times when not all went as smoothly as hoped. But even during challenging times, lessons were learned, new commitments were made, and by God's grace and through Christian love for one another, the bar for measuring inclusive education was raised. PICS continues to live out a vision of inclusion that knows no bounds. We pray that many others will embrace this vision and make it their own, and under God's blessing, help all students with disabilities to be vital, visible and living members of God's Kingdom.

RP

Today Peter is busy attending Grant MacEwan University, while also holding down a part-time job as a print assistant at NexGenGraphix. He also volunteers one morning at PICS, helping out students in the library and in Band class, and can often be found chatting with his former teachers in the staff room.



Peter (seated) in his trail-rider on a hike in Jasper, Alberta.



GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND THE SEAHAWKS

by Rob Slane

When the editor suggested I write a piece about American Football, I was a little taken aback. Firstly, this did seem like an odd subject for a magazine like *Reformed Perspective*. “But still,” I thought, “I suppose we can hardly claim on the one hand that Christ is Lord over all of life, then on the other hand rule American Football as being off-limits.”

The second reason was even more fundamental. I’m a Brit. And not a Brit that has any love, let alone knowledge of American Football. In fact, I’ll put my cards on the table right now: the game has about as much fascination for me as the game of cricket probably has to the average US Football fan – that is to say, none whatsoever. So I was relieved as I read through the editor’s request to find that the American Football bit was somewhat incidental, and I was not being asked to spend hours watching old Giants vs. 49ers games on YouTube.

Rather, the request was to try and make some sort of sense of comments made by Russell Wilson, the Seattle Seahawks quarterback, after his side’s victory over the Green Bay Packers in January, which sent Seattle to the Superbowl.

THE MOST IMPROBABLE OF COMEBACKS

For those not familiar with what happened, with less than four minutes left in the game and trailing 19-7, the Seahawks staged a dramatic recovery, tying the game to take it into overtime, before going on to win 28-22. What was especially amazing was that the Seahawks’ quarterback, Russell Wilson, went from playing one of the worst games of his life, throwing four interceptions, to scoring three touchdowns in the game’s final 6 minutes.

Wilson then caused a stir with his post-match comments when he was asked to explain how his team has gone from being down and out without any hope to being victorious a few minutes later:

“That’s God setting it up, to make it so dramatic, so rewarding, so special.”

Of course this set the whole Twittersphere afluttering with many ridiculing his

claim. It also set off a series of articles on the web with titles like, “Does God play a role in picking the winning team?”

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

So what should we make of Wilson’s comments?

I think we have to break our answer into two parts, one of which deals with the general question of God’s relationship with His creation, and the other which deals with the more specific question of whether He intervened in this particular instance.

The first and more general question is basically a question about the nature of God’s sovereignty, and I think the best way to look at this is to examine all the other possible answers that could have been given as to whether God really did intervene to make the match so dramatic. These positions are:

1. God has nothing to do with Seattle Seahawks games because there is no God.
2. God has nothing to do with Seattle Seahawks games because He does not deal directly with the created order.
3. Although God is sovereign, He has nothing to do with Seattle Seahawks games because He couldn’t care less about US Football.
4. God has everything to do with Seattle Seahawks games, foreordaining their results, and so when Wilson threw his interceptions, that was because of God’s direct “interception.”
5. God has everything to do with Seattle Seahawks games, foreordaining their results, yet he does so in such a way that does not involve the kind of direct intervention Wilson suggests.

We can further categorize these positions as follows:

1. God is in control of nothing because he is not there (Atheistic).
2. God created the universe, winding it up like a watch, and then left it to its own devices (Deistic).
3. God has created the universe, but He is only interested in “spiritual things” (Pietistic).

So what should we make of Russell Wilson’s comments?

4. God is sovereign and controls everything that happens, to the extent that no-one has free will (Ultra Sovereignty).
5. God is sovereign and is involved in everything, yet in such a way that man has liberty to act and to make choices (Sovereignty).

NARROWING IT DOWN

I trust that readers of *Reformed Perspective* can see that both the first two positions are highly illogical, not to mention unbiblical. It is highly illogical to believe that something came from nothing – and by that I really mean nothing: no time, no space, no matter – not to mention also believing that the something was then capable of organizing and sustaining itself into an amazingly complex order.

It is also highly irrational to believe that a creator would go to the trouble of creating an amazingly complex order, only to walk away with total disinterest, leaving it to itself.

What of position three? It actually turns out to be quite odd, since it refutes the very claim it makes. Those who hold to this position tend to be loud about the “sovereignty of God,” yet they then extend this sovereignty to include about 0.000000001% of the universe that God created. Well, if God is sovereign, He is sovereign over all creation and so the idea that He cares nothing for certain parts of His creation – especially “physical things” – is a denial of His sovereignty.

What of positions four and five? They actually share many things in common. Both agree that God is sovereign over all things, including Seattle Seahawks games. Both agree that God foreordains

“God is neither a deist God who is uninvolved in His creation, nor a pietistic God who is sovereign over only a tiny portion of His creation....”

the results of Seahawks games. Both agree that God upholds all the players involved and without this the game could not have been played, let alone played out so dramatically. Yet while the fourth point understands this to mean that God controls everything, down to the last interception, and so basically micromanage His creation, this seems to me to be closer to Greek fatalism than biblical Christianity. The fifth view understands this in a way that retains God's sovereignty, but also insists on man's "free will." I take the fifth view to be the correct one.

FREE WILL?!

I realize that this might spook some readers. "We don't have free will," some might say, "as we lost it in the Fall."

My response is as follows. What we lost when Adam sinned was communion with God, righteousness, holiness and spiritual life, so that we need to be saved, and have no free will to choose salvation. We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins – as dead spiritually as Lazarus in the grave was physically – and as you know, dead people can't bring themselves to life.

However, this is not the same as saying that we lost our ability to make choices in all other areas of life, though of course those choices will be dictated by our sinful hearts. So as I sit here typing, did God foreordain it? Yes. Am I doing it out of free will? Yes. This seems impossible and counter-intuitive, but then He is an

"impossible and counter-intuitive" God.

Here is how chapter three of the Westminster Confession puts it:

God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

This is a grand and frankly amazing statement. The God it presents is infinitely bigger than our imaginations can grasp.

Look at it like this. Can you imagine a God who sets up the world and then gives perfect free will to his creatures so that He doesn't know what is going to happen next and can't control it? Yes, I can easily imagine Him. What about a God who unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass, and does so by micro-managing every single detail to the n^{th} degree? Yep, I can get my head around Him too. But what about a God who unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass, yet does so without infringing on the liberty of His creatures to make choices of their own "free will"? I must confess that I am unable to comprehend such a God, or to understand how this is possible, but then again I have no understanding of how a universe can be spoken into existence either, or how the eternal Son of God can become a baby. Such things are too high for me, and I accept them by faith.

What I am suggesting is that God is neither a deist God who is uninvolved in His creation, nor a pietistic God who is sovereign over a tiny portion of His creation, nor is He a micromanager who manages every aspect of it in the kind of minute details we understand by micromanaging. Rather, He is in sovereign control, upholds everything by the Word of His mouth, foreordains all things, yet does so in such a way that He is not in the business of micromanaging Russell Wilson's passes.

CONCLUSION

But moving on to the second question, couldn't He do that if He wanted? Doesn't God intervene in His creation?

Of course He does, and the Bible is full of instances of His interventions in human affairs. But the question is not whether He can intervene, but rather did He intervene in this specific instance?

The question here hinges to a large extent on just how much priority God puts on the results of American Football games. Now as someone who upholds the sovereignty of God in everything, and the Lordship of Christ over everything, I understand that God cares about all of His creation and this includes American Football. But is this the same as saying that He cares about it to the extent that He is prepared to (miraculously) intervene to "change the result" and give the watching audience a good time? Emphatically no.

Pietists (number three in the positions mentioned above) often want to reduce the things God cares about to "spiritual things" such as salvation, worship, prayer and Bible-reading, with everything else reduced to nought. Then over in the other ditch, there are others who want to flatten everything to make out that God cares for all things equally.

This is not so. Just as we have hierarchies of importance in our lives, it is fairly clear from the Bible that God has hierarchies of interest and importance. Yes, He is interested in American Football, in that He created the players, gave them the ability to play what is essentially a perfectly okay game (well cricket is better of course), and in that He calls on man to do things with all their might and for the glory of God. However, this is not the same as saying that He is interested enough in it to intervene in a game to make the game more exciting and give everyone a good time (except of course for Green Bay fans).

In conclusion, though God cares about His entire creation, and though He ordained the surprising events and the result in the match between the Seahawks and Green Bay Packers, I think Russell Wilson would have a hard time making a Scriptural case that God intervenes directly in such matters.

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

WAR, NOT WHINE

John Piper wants us to know that sins aren't something to complain about – whining isn't the proper response. As he puts it:

I hear so many Christians murmuring about their imperfections and their failures and their addictions and their short-comings, and I see so little war! “Murmur, murmur, murmur... Why am I this way?” Make WAR!

GREAT HORRIBLE PUNS II

- Class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there's no pop quiz.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- They told me I had Type A blood, but it was a Type O.
- It's hard to beat a boiled egg in the morning.
- The bride got a new name and a dress.
- It's hard to explain puns to kleptomaniacs because they always take things literally.
- Someone left a pile of plastecine on my doorstep. I don't know what to make of it.
- Never trust an atom. They make up everything.
- You want to know the key to being a successful mime? I'm not talking.
- Can you think of anything nice about Switzerland? Well, their flag is a big plus.
- While I usually refrain, I prefer to sing songs without their choruses.

SOURCE: unknown – someone, somewhere on the Internet

WHY WAS JESUS SILENT?

After he was arrested, Jesus replied to some of Pilate's questions and responded to a question by the high priest, but to their many false accusations he gave no reply – he stayed silent (Mark 15:5). The late Dr. D. James Kennedy, a popular American Presbyterian pastor last century, had an unusual thought as to why Jesus didn't speak up.

Why was Jesus silent? Is it not often the case that a person is silent because he is giving tacit consent? Could that be the case? Many accusations were made against Him, and yet He denied none of them. Was He perchance guilty? In the answer to that lies the very heart of the Christian faith, and we must uncompromisingly declare that Jesus was silent precisely because He was guilty! He was guilty of everything with which He was charged. And He was guilty of many crimes for which He was not charged. He was guiltier than any man who had ever stood before the Sanhedrin. He was guiltier than the vilest miscreant who shall ever stand before the judgment bar of God. He was the guiltiest man who ever lived! But the guilt He bore was not His own. It was yours, and it was mine. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6)” God hath made Him to be sin for us. Guilty – as charged (2 Cor. 5:21).

YOU CAN'T TRUST HOLLYWOOD?!!

Hollywood tells us that there is one special someone, one soulmate, one person out there who, as Jerry Maguire put it, completes us. Blogger Matt Walsh sums up the Christian position in one sentence: “I didn't marry my wife because she's The One, *she's The One because I married her.*”

G. K CHESTERTON ON REPETITION

To a dad's distress, kids never tire of being thrown in the air. G.K. Chesterton thinks that, as we're in the midst of doing it again, and again and again, we might not be properly appreciating the wonder of it all. Might our son or daughter be reflecting something of God in their unending enthusiasm?

...children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things

repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do it again”; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical ENCORE.

OUCH! BUT...YEAH

“If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him, for you are worse than he thinks you to be.”

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

CLAY TALKING BACK TO THE POTTER

Ravi Zacharias is a Christian apologist who regularly visits university campuses and lets the often hostile audiences ask him whatever questions they will. While at Ohio State University in the 90s, he did an open forum on a radio talk show where the host was an atheist and the callers were antagonistic from the start. One of the callers took him to task for his abortion stance, even though he hadn't made mention of abortion on the open forum to that point. This was Zacharias's responses:

I said, “Can I ask you a question? On every university campus I visit, somebody stands up and says that God is an evil God to allow all this evil into our world. This person typically says, ‘A ...plane crashes: Thirty people die, and twenty people live. What kind of a God would arbitrarily choose some to live and some to die?’”

I continued, “But when we play God and determine whether a child within a mother's womb should live, we argue for that as a moral right. So when human beings are given the privilege of playing God, it's called a moral right. When God plays God, we call it an immoral act. Can you justify this for me?”

That was the end of the conversation.

SOURCE: Ravi Zacharias, from his article “Reaching the Happy thinking pagan” posted to www.RZIM.org on Oct 1, 1995.

BE PRESENT

by Propaganda

So I tend to think of life in terms of movie clips,
or tweetable moments.
Somehow I've convinced myself they last longer that way.
And my wife proved me wrong when she referred to my phone as my black wife.
Now I thought it was funny.
I mean we both giggled.
Now single men take notes,
Now I'm no expert,
But I don't think she was kidding.

She talked about some other stuff,
Which I really don't remember.
I was too busy, in my head, composing a tweet
Where I would quote her with some sort of clever hashtag about marriage,
And about how much I love her,
To be paying attention to her at that moment.
I think what snapped me back was the silence
Which indicated I was supposed to have some sort of response
To whatever she was talking about.

I told my father that story in hopes to get a little sympathy.
My father,
Civil-rights-and-Vietnam-war-vet,
Hopelessly-charming,
on-his-fourth-marriage,
Father.
And rather than the customary nod that men give each other when they understand,
He proceeded to tell me why he failed as my mother's husband.
He said it was the same reason half of his platoon died in Vietnam,
And the same reason you are deathly afraid of your daughter becoming a teenager.

"Son, you can't hear past the explosions,
Either the ones that already happened,
Or the ones you anticipate.
See the former, paralyzes,
Living life in the rearview mirror,
Driving full speed across traffic into the center divider,
So shell-shocked you too stupid to duck when bullets are flying.
Or the latter,
Your life a game of capture the flag,
So focused on the finish line, you stepped right on a land mine.
So ready to attack the day,
Frustrated because you can't find your keys
Focused on the meetings you're gonna miss,
And the traffic you gotta sit in,
To realize that you've been holding your keys the whole time.





Slow down.
You've been hypnotized by the possibility.
Son, I couldn't hear past the bombs.
The first one didn't kill me
And the second one ain't even happened.
Yet it ended our family."

He told me a love story
Of a woman born before him.

He said, "But I knew her before
And at the moment of conception
There was an eternal connection.
And although I didn't know it then
I'd fight for her affection.
It's this war we've been waging
since day one of creation
And only when you lose her
do you learn to appreciate her.
Like even when I'm with her,
I'm itching to get rid of her.
And she only gives you one shot,
Blow it and she's gone.
And I took advantage of her.
That's why I'm telling you this son,
You can't rush her,
Or slow her down.
You better keep her on your side.
She will slip through your fingers like sand.
Her name is Time,
And she told me a secret.
She said multitasking is a myth -
You ain't doin' anything good, just everything awful.
And she begged me to stop stretching her thin,
And stuffing her full.
And stop being so concerned with the old her,
And future her,
But love her now.
Her presence is God's present,
and you should be that: present."

So I guess you could say...
Well I guess I could say
I've been through a divorce now.
Me and my phone are
no longer married.

I think I'm ready to be here...
now



**MAKE
IT UP
AS YOU
GO:**

**Alfred
Kinsey's
sex reseach
exposed**

by Michael Wagner

When an immoral agenda is being advocated on the basis of “scientific” evidence, there is good reason to be suspicious. Science has a certain aura to it in Western societies, so promoting a particular view as being the “scientific” one is a clever strategy. However, sometimes the scientific veneer is just a Trojan Horse. This has been the case with some of the most influential social science of the twentieth century.

Perhaps more than any other single individual, Professor Alfred C. Kinsey of Indiana University could be blamed (or credited) with the breakdown of traditional morality in the USA and other major English-speaking countries. Kinsey was a pioneer “sex researcher” who published two ground-breaking studies, one on male sexual behavior (1948) and the other on female sexual behavior (1953), which rocked the Western world and led to the liberalization of laws regulating sexual conduct in the USA and other countries. That’s a notable accomplishment for one man.

During much of the twentieth century science was seen as providing the answers to many of humanity’s problems, so any perspective couched in the language of science received instant respect and credibility. Kinsey was able to take advantage of this prevailing attitude to push his own personal political agenda of sexual freedom. He correctly figured that scientific data “proving” that most people were secretly promiscuous in one way or another would provide a powerful impetus to overthrow traditional conservative views.

Kinsey thus conducted his “research” in such a way that it would produce the results he wanted.

JUDITH REISMAN UNMASKS KINSEY

Beginning in the 1980s another American researcher, Dr. Judith Reisman, began uncovering the real truth behind Kinsey’s work. She discovered the deliberately fraudulent basis of Kinsey’s influential studies and began to actively alert people to the

fact that many changes in American law and culture had been initiated on the basis of this fraud. Dr. Reisman’s work is very important but she is yet to receive the attention and credit that she is due for her efforts. This work has been summarized in a small book – just 84 pages – by Susan Brinkmann, called *The Kinsey Corruption: An Expose on the Most Influential “Scientist” of Our Time*.

There are many reasons to be outraged over Kinsey’s research, but we will touch on just two of them here.

Perhaps more than any other single individual, Alfred C. Kinsey could be blamed for the breakdown of traditional morality in the USA.

1) He skewed his data

Social science research often involves surveys of the general public. A large group of people is given a set of particular questions, then the answers to those questions are compiled and the survey results are considered to be empirical evidence regarding the issue being studied. Presumably the group of people surveyed is representative of the wider population.

With this in mind it’s not too difficult for an unethical researcher to produce research that will give him the specific results he wants. If he knows beforehand that certain people are likely to give him particular answers to his questions, he can target those people for his survey so that he deliberately gets a larger proportion of

them in his survey sample. Thus the results of his “scientific” study will be heavily weighted in favor of the results he wants. This is basically what Kinsey did.

Kinsey’s research was based on survey data which he claimed represented the American population. But it did not represent the American population, and he knew it. His data included a disproportionately large percentage of people who engaged in sexually immoral behavior.

In an outrageous example, Kinsey classified 1,400 criminals and sex offenders as “normal” on the grounds that such miscreants were essentially the same as other men – except that these had gotten caught.

So the information about sexual behavior provided by these 1,400 degenerate men was considered to represent the sexual behavior of average American males.

When it’s understood how Kinsey undertook much of his research, it’s not surprising that according to his skewed data 95 per cent of the American male population regularly indulged in deviant sexual activities such as extra-marital affairs, homosexuality, pedophilia, etc.”

2) He relied on rapists’ “data”

More outrageous, however, is the way Kinsey obtained data about children’s sexual behavior. In short, children were sexually abused and the abusers would then provide information to Kinsey. One of the chief sources of information about children “was later discovered to be Rex King, the serial child rapist responsible for the rapes of more than 800 children.”

KINSEY IN CANADA

Reisman’s research focuses primarily on the USA where Kinsey worked and had the most obvious impact. However, Kinsey’s influence spread throughout the English-speaking world. Here in Canada, Kinsey’s studies have been used to justify cultural and legal

changes as well.

In 1969 Canada's law was changed to legalize homosexuality. In the debates over this change, Kinsey was cited as an authority. For example, in the House of Commons on January 23, 1969, one MP read from an article stating that "Homosexuality is now known to be much more widespread than was thought in the past, as the researches of Dr. Kinsey and others have shown." He goes on to say that Dr. Kinsey concluded "that 37 per cent of the male population of the United States had had some homosexual experience between the beginning of adolescence and old age." This MP then refers to Kinsey further.

One of the documents cited most commonly in favor of legalizing homosexuality in Canada was the *Wolfenden Report*. This report was an official document produced in the 1950s for the British government recommending liberalization of laws relating to prostitution and homosexuality. In England, the recommendations on prostitution were implemented in 1959 and the recommendations for homosexuality were implemented in 1967.

The *Wolfenden Report* was widely seen as very authoritative and it was unquestionably influential in the changes made to Canada's law on homosexuality. In the House of Commons on January 24, 1969, one Liberal MP pointed out that the government's proposals for legalizing homosexuality were based on the "recommendations of the Wolfenden committee." He goes on to point out that the government's perspective is "very close to the philosophy of the *Wolfenden Report*." Throughout the Parliamentary debate, the *Wolfenden Report* is cited over and over again.

Why is this relevant? Because Alfred Kinsey's "research" on homosexuality was a source for the *Wolfenden Report* itself. The committee that produced the *Wolfenden Report* considered Kinsey to be an authority on homosexuality and freely referred to his work. In this respect, Kinsey indirectly influenced

the change in Canadian law through his impact on the *Wolfenden Report*.

In 1982 Canada adopted the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, the federal and provincial governments were given three years to bring their laws into conformity to the Charter's provisions on equality rights before

"Research" that opposes God's law will be exposed.... eventually.

they came into effect. A Parliamentary committee on equality rights traveled the country in 1985 to get citizen feedback on how the Charter's equality provisions should be interpreted. Numerous homosexual activists made presentations to this committee advocating their perspective. It was common during these presentations for the activists to refer to Kinsey's research as a justification for homosexual rights.

For example, during a presentation to the committee in Vancouver on May 27, 1985, an activist claimed, "Approximately 10% of the population in Canada is gay." Subsequently, MP Svend Robinson asked the presenter, "You made reference to 10%. I assume this is based on the studies by Kinsey and a number of others." The activist replied, "That was the Kinsey Report, the 1948 studies, yes."

Another activist testified before the committee in Winnipeg on May 30, 1985, stating that

Our individual and collective experience has provided us with every reason to think that the statistics deduced by the Kinsey Institute in the 1940s were correct: that about 10% of the population is homosexual.

On that same day another activist said, "Statistically, the invisible homosexual minority makes up approximately 10% of the population of this country." And in yet another presentation, a United Church minister remarked, "We point out that about 10% of the population, according to sociological figures, are of homosexual orientation."

The point here is that Kinsey's studies were viewed as pertinent and relevant to the advancement of homosexual rights here in Canada. His data provided an apparent scientific authority for arguments in favor of homosexual rights. But Kinsey had deliberately skewed his research to get the kind of figures that would support the changes in law and culture that he desired.

KINSEY: THE MOVIE

Some liberals have been concerned about the erosion of Kinsey's credibility that has resulted from Reisman's efforts. A Hollywood movie (appropriately entitled *Kinsey*) was made in 2004 to bolster Kinsey's reputation. It starred Liam Neeson as Kinsey himself.

You won't learn about his fraud in this movie, though. Brinkmann writes



Kinsey's research was popularized in the media, including in this 1953 issue of *TIME* magazine.

that this movie “presents the life and work of Alfred C. Kinsey in the most glowing terms. Instead of presenting the facts, it glorifies him as a persecuted hero who found himself trapped in a world of sexual repression.”

CONCLUSION

Brinkmann notes in the conclusion of her book that the “legacy of Alfred C. Kinsey’s twisted life and work can be read daily in the ever-worsening moral condition of our country.” Of course, Kinsey alone cannot be blamed for the moral decline of the Western countries, but he certainly deserves more blame than just about anybody else.

Kinsey is still widely recognized as an authority on sexual behavior despite the fact that the truth has begun to come out – his research is not reliable.

This provides good grounds to be suspicious of “studies” promoting various aspects of modern sexual promiscuity, whether homosexual or heterosexual. When viewed carefully, many studies purporting to support various trendy views will be found to be faulty. Most researchers aren’t unethical like Kinsey. But all researchers (whether left-wing or right-wing) are influenced by their worldview – their studies will likely confirm their preconceived views. Social science is not like physical science where you can get precise measurements that are repeatable, giving exactly the same results every time. Social science is much more subjective than that.

In other words, the rule “don’t believe everything you read” should be doubly applicable whenever the media reports a new study allegedly demonstrating that monogamy among human beings is unnatural, or that homosexual couples are better parents than heterosexuals, and other such things. Sure, that’s what the study concluded. But you have good grounds for being skeptical about the study itself. These kinds of studies have been flawed or “fixed” before, so the rational response is skepticism. RP

One in ten?

Kinsey’s most famous lie

by Michael Wagner

Even if you haven’t heard of Alfred Kinsey you probably have heard about one of his key “findings” – that 10% of all people are homosexual. Dr. Judith Reisman (in her book *Kinsey: Crimes & Consequences*, 1998) asks, “who, indeed, today has not heard the mantra that homosexuals make up 10 percent of the US population?” She points out that the 10% figure is based “on Kinsey’s authority alone.” In fact, “Kinsey claimed to prove that homosexuals represented between 10% and 37% of all males.”

How did Kinsey arrive at such a figure? It was simple. He deliberately set out to interview a large number of homosexuals to include in his database of human sexual behavior. During the 1940s, when he was conducting his research, this was no easy feat. Back in those days homosexuality was considered shameful, and many states in the USA had laws forbidding such conduct. Therefore Kinsey and his associates had to make a special effort to contact the homosexual enclaves that existed in large American cities in order to be able to solicit interviews with homosexuals.

They were very successful, and hundreds of homosexual case histories were included in Kinsey’s data. In fact, the large number of homosexuals in Kinsey’s data meant that they were clearly over represented in relation to the normal population. Thus it was inescapable that the frequency of homosexuality would be exaggerated in Kinsey’s findings.

And this is exactly what Kinsey intended. Reisman puts it succinctly: “Much of Kinsey’s work is designed to advance several revolutionary notions about homosexuality:

1. that secret homosexuality was relatively commonplace;
2. that most normal Americans hypocritically and secretly engaged in illicit sex of various kinds including homosexuality;
3. that people were commonly bisexual meaning they were both homosexual and heterosexual;
4. thus prejudice against homosexuality was hypocritical and based on ignorance of normal sexual behavior; and
5. children and adults should experience and experiment with both their homosexual and heterosexual sides.

Kinsey’s “research” was definitely agenda-driven and meant to normalize sexual perversion and overturn traditional morality. Among other things, he wanted to advance the cause of homosexuality. This purpose could be served by convincing people that homosexuality was relatively common. Thus he produced the figure that 10% of the population was homosexual, and it has been the generally accepted figure since then.

But it is certainly not true.



by Mike Schouten

An EMERGENCY room is not the CHURCH

Why “We Need a Law” doesn’t talk about the Gospel but you should

One of the questions ARPA Canada has received most often pertains to the promise of the Gospel and how it fits in with the mission of its We Need A Law (WNAL) campaign. The question comes in different variations but usually goes something like this: “Why is there no reference on the WNAL website to God?” or, “If we do manage to get an abortion law but people’s hearts aren’t changed, is it really worth it?” Perhaps you’ve thought about these issues yourself.

NOT OUR GOAL

This is a good question. Should we include a Gospel presentation in our communication?

The decision not to include references to Christianity and the Bible in the majority of WNAL communications has been intentional. Canada is no longer a Judeo-Christian country. We are a pluralistic nation made up of many different worldviews. While this slide away from Scripture is lamentable, and many (most?) hearts of Canadians are turned away from God, there remain opportunities to save the lives of pre-born children right now. The mission of WNAL is to build a groundswell of support among *all* Canadians for legislation that protects pre-born children to the greatest extent possible. So the reason we aren’t quoting Scripture is because we may

be working with people who hate God, but who are still (strangely perhaps) willing to join with us in supporting laws that save the children of the needy and rescue them from oppression and violence (Psalm 72). Though they hate God, they are willing to help us who are striving to rescue those precious in His sight.

Consider a Christian nurse in a hospital emergency room. When a patient arrives in need of immediate medical intervention she carries out the necessary tasks to help the patient. She doesn’t share the Gospel at this point, because there are other tasks to do.

If an opportunity arises later whereby she can share the Gospel – it might be with the patient in recovery or the concerned family members after the operation – she should embrace it. Her primary task may be to save lives and not souls but she may not intentionally avoid confessing the name of Christ. You can insert any example you would like – a construction worker, accountant, lawyer, farmer, etc. As followers of Jesus and members of the Church we all have an awesome responsibility to share His truths in everything we do.

But while we all have that individual responsibility to evangelize, that is not, and need not, be the goal of every organization we are part of. Spreading the Gospel is an organizational goal of the Church. But making good bread is

the goal – or, at least, the main goal – of a Christian-owned bakery. And saving lives is the main goal of a hospital emergency room. Finally, saving unborn babies lives is the primary goal of We Need A Law. All are worthy, God-honouring goals. And all are goals we can work together with non-Christians to accomplish.

A NATURAL SEGUE TO THE GOSPEL

This is not to say that the message of salvation in Jesus cannot be incorporated into the WNAL campaign. As we carry out our mission many opportunities to share the Gospel do arise. I would submit that by virtue of standing up for justice and truth about our pre-born neighbours WNAL is already sharing nuggets of the truth. But there are always opportunities to share more. The reality is that, quite naturally, conversations evolve into discussions about the motivations for our efforts, the intrinsic value of all human beings, the *Imago Dei* (all humans having been made in the image of God), and other moral truths.

However, those opportunities will arise most often at the personal level by the thousands of people tied into our campaign as they interact with others. Allow me a few examples as to how that can be done.

The flag displays which started in Ottawa and are now being put up at dozens of locations throughout Canada

are a great way to offer hope in Christ, especially when put up on church lawns. What better place to speak of both the truth about abortion and the truth of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation in Jesus! This could be done by way of signs, tracts and most importantly, through personal conversations with those who come out to witness at the display.


This year we are going to facilitate a lawn sign campaign. There is a federal election scheduled for the fall and we want the topic of pre-born human rights to become part of the narrative of this election. A sign on your front lawn is sure to get the community talking. When your neighbour asks you what the sign is all about, then you have just received an open invitation to share the Gospel. You could say something like, “Well Bob, as you know I am a Christian and that compels me to stand against injustices in the world. Did you know that abortion is legal throughout an entire pregnancy in Canada?” Another response could be, “Good question Sarah. Because I am a Christian I need to speak up for those who have no voice. Were you aware that only North Korea, China and Canada allow abortion up to the moment of birth?” Consider this a challenge – go get yourself a lawn sign.

Here is one more example of how the Gospel can easily be integrated with the campaign message of WNAL. We regularly ask people to send an email to their MP or MLA. We make it really easy through our online SimpleMail technology. Though the letters are prepared for you in advance, these letters can be customized. There is no reason why you can't edit these letters to beautifully reflect God's care and providence in creating new life and how he demands we protect it (see Psalm 139 and Exodus 20).

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is not the mission of the WNAL campaign to evangelize Canadians. That mission is the responsibility of each of us individually and collectively as Church. May God

be pleased to use our weak efforts as a part of WNAL to build support for laws that move us closer to ending the horrific barbarism and cruel injustice of abortion. May He also use us as Church members to present the Gospel of forgiveness and hope to those who

are damaged and hurting because of this injustice. 

To find out how you can get your own WNAL lawn sign, visit www.weneedalaw.ca/store



"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"
(Rev. 21:6).

Shackled

by Christine Farenhost

There is no denying it, we – all of us – like free things. To win something for free such as a door prize, or even a booby prize, is great fun and, for some reason, very satisfying.

People enjoy shopping at Costco because at almost every aisle corner a little booth has been set up enticing customers with samples – free samples – of drinks, salsa, crackers, fruit and you name it.

We recently had lunch with one of our sons and his wife and afterwards our son picked up the check. "My treat, Mom and Dad," he said. We protested, but in vain. And there's no denying it, it was lovely to have had a free lunch.

The place where we go to have the oil changed on our car offers a free oil change for every fifth time you use their establishment, and yes, this is a great incentive for making appointments with them.

"Free" is indeed a word that has been given a halo – a word that seems to prick up ears and bring a smile to faces.

NOTHING FREE

This last week we attended the funeral of a friend – a Roman Catholic friend – or actually, to be more exact, a lapsed Roman Catholic friend. That is to say, he was not very happy with the Roman Catholic Church and had, on more than one occasion, vented his anger at priests, rules and what he referred to as myths. He died rather suddenly after only a few days of illness, having attained the ripe old age of 76 years. A jolly man, a kind-hearted soul, a unique individual who was talented in a number of ways, we loved him and were shocked when the news of his

death reached us. We had, on more than one occasion, spoken to our friend of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. He listened – sometimes skeptically, sometimes critically and sometimes receptively. Who knows what goes on in the heart of a man?

Even though he rarely graced the doors of his parish church, his funeral service was conducted by the Roman Catholic Church. We attended with a certain amount of curiosity as we had never been to a Roman Catholic funeral. There were obvious parallels with our Reformed funerals. There was a family line-up in the foyer; there were tear-stained, sober faces; and there were the achingly sad figures of relatives who would now miss a loved one. But there were also glaring differences.

...we followed the words, only reading and not singing along as the words had a strong Roman Catholic flavor to them and we did not like the taste.

After offering our condolences to the mourners in the vestibule of the church, we took our places in one of the pews of the medium-sized cathedral, a cathedral replete with ornate, beautiful stained glass windows. Saint Anna and Saint Catharine, as well as numerous other saints, had sunlight flow through their colorful bodies. Kneeling benches, (nothing wrong with them), were in every pew and a woman in front of us was bent down on one in prayer. Another woman sat next to her avidly counting off the beads as she prayed her rosary. There were whisperings behind and beside us – similar to the whisperings we hear in the pews of our churches prior to a service.

After some ten minutes we were asked by the funeral home representative to "please all rise," and the casket was wheeled past us in the center aisle of the church. It was preceded by a young man holding a crozier lifted up high. Behind him came an altar boy and the officiating priest. All were wearing white robes. The family quietly trailed the coffin to the front, seating themselves in the very first pews.

We were invited to stand and sing. There was a Roman Catholic songbook and we followed the words, only reading and not singing along as the words had a strong Roman Catholic flavor to them and we did not like the taste. The balcony behind us must have held a cantor of sorts. For a voice rang out from the rear louder and above all the others. After the singing the priest welcomed everyone and explained that his vestments were white because they symbolized the resurrection of the dead. Pointing to a large burning

Nothing in this service was free! How very sad!

candle, the priest went on to tell us that this was the Paschal or Easter Candle and that it had been lit to symbolize our friend's resurrection. There were many rooms in heaven, he went on to say and because our friend had been baptized, one of these rooms had been made ready for him.

The congregation was next invited to stand and sing the words of a song which called on Mary, the mother of Jesus, to pray for sinners. Again, we did not sing. Judging by the number of mouths moving, there were a great many Roman Catholics in the church.

A daughter read from Scripture that beautiful passage in Job 19, the words of which include "I know that my Redeemer lives." Then someone sang Psalm 23, after which another family member, a niece, read from Romans 6. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" The casket was sprinkled with water to remind the family, the priest said, that we share in Jesus' resurrection through the waters of our baptism. He also told everyone that the white funeral pall had been draped over the casket to symbolize the white garment given at baptism, symbolizing life in Christ.

A small homily by the priest followed. There was no mention of sin, repentance nor of the fact that God's children are saved by grace alone. Afterwards everyone was free to come up and share in Communion. The wafer was held up, bowed to in worship and placed on the tongues of those participating.

A rather nauseating smell permeated throughout the sanctuary. Caused by the incense used during the funeral Mass, its smoke supposedly had the symbolic value of purification and sanctification. Swung from a censor carried by the priest, it was used

liberally by him around the coffin, the crucifix hanging above the coffin and the Paschal Candle. Its smell was sharp and rather pungent in the nostrils. The usage was supposed to link heaven with earth and allow worshipers to come into the presence of God.

The service was over. The coffin was wheeled out again under the supervision of the funeral directors. We all stood and then filed out after the procession. The rosary toting woman walked out behind us – shackled by her beads; all those who had prayed for forgiveness of sins through the mediation of Mary surrounded us – shackled by their need to have a mediator apart from Christ; and the host, the communion bread, supposedly the actual body of Christ, was locked into a little cupboard in the front of the church.

GRACE IS GIVEN

Nothing in this service was free!! How very sad!! Jesus said, in Rev. 21:6 "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Can forgiveness of sins be purchased by any of our own merits? Can we be saved by virtue of the fact that we were baptized?

Can we expect to inhabit one of the rooms prepared for us because Mary has put in a good word for us? The truth is that such questions shackle.

How very strange that so many people, people who, generally speaking, love a freebie, neglect to personally study the Bible, and forego knowing that drinking from Jesus' fountain can be done without price; how very odd that so many people who delight in the possibility of winning the lottery, never take the personal time to peruse the Gospel and so neglect to find out that eternal bread costs nothing.

Lest we Protestants begin to think too highly of ourselves, remember that we too can be shackled if we live under the law and not under grace, if we are bound by legalism. The Ten Commandments can easily become ten shackles if the proclamation of pardon, ("...for by grace you have been saved..." Eph. 2:8), is not eaten and drunk with thankfulness each time it is proclaimed. The truth is that grace is only grace because it is free. If it could be purchased, it would by that very act cease to be grace.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). RP

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CHRISTIAN & COUNCILLOR

How one municipal politician brings God's Word to bear on taxes, government budgets and private citizens' property rights

by Al Siebring

What does a Christian perspective look like when it comes to the relationship between faith, taxation, and the role of government? It's a big question, and one I've been thinking on for many years in my role as a municipal councillor in the District of North Cowichan.

As with all things, we need to start this discussion with Scripture.

PAY TO CAESAR...

The fundamental Scriptural principle when it comes to taxes can be summed up in two words: "Pay them." In Matthew 22, after referencing the "image" on a coin that was handed to him, Christ urged his followers to "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's."

It's also worth noting the broader context here, which includes the notion that, since we are made in God's image, we are also to "render unto God what is God's." In other words, since the coin had Caesar's image on it, it should be given back to him, and equally, since people have God's image stamped on them, they should give themselves in service to Him. Put another way, Christ didn't get too bent out of shape about paying taxes to Caesar, but instead reserved His criticism for those who refused to pay proper homage to His Father.

But are all taxes fair? Are they all necessary and defensible? Of course not. Government, by its very nature, tends towards wastefulness, self-preservation, unwarranted bureaucracy, and empire-building. As someone who's now spent two terms in elected office at the local government level, I can tell you that much of the problem goes to structures and presuppositions that are endemic to the way budgets are put together.

BUDGETING 101

In the municipality where I am an alderman, our budgeting process was recently explained to us by our City Manager like this: "We (municipal staff) look at the things Council has told us they want to accomplish in the upcoming year, and then we determine the tax implications based on what that's going to cost."

This is the paradigm under which many (most?) municipal budgets are prepared. But it has serious tax implications, and I believe it to be fundamentally flawed. This certainly isn't the way most people budget in their households. They don't say: "This year, I want to go to Mexico, do a \$30,000 renovation to my kitchen, and buy a new car. Now I just need to figure out where to get the money." No. The common-sense way of budgeting – the way most

responsible people run their lives and their households – is by saying: "What's a reasonable expectation of my income this year?" Once they establish that, they say: "Now, what can I afford to do with that limited amount of money?" But there's an understanding, right at the very outset, that the amount of money is limited.

Not so with government. There's a perception that the taxpayer has a bottomless pocket. And this can – and often does – lead to indefensible tax increases.

Equally, there's another side to the coin. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities did a study a few years ago to determine the ratio between municipal property taxes and taxes levied by other levels of government. The study found that, (excluding "transfers" of money from senior levels of government for infrastructure projects), municipal government across Canada collected just eight cents of every tax dollar handed over by Canadian taxpayers. With that eight percent of total taxes collected, local governments are expected to deal with responsibilities that include roads, water-supply systems, garbage collection, municipal sewer, recreation, policing/fire services and, in some jurisdictions, affordable housing, public health, and childcare. And that

ratio has come down considerably in the last 50 years or so. It used to be in the range of 11 to 15 cents.

To be clear, the decline in the ratio isn't necessarily because municipalities have become that much more efficient at service delivery. Rather, it's a testimony to the proportionately increasing tax burden imposed by other levels of government, combined with the fact that 50 years ago, most local governments were in the throes of a huge infrastructure boom. Back in the 50's and 60's, everyone was putting in new roads, bridges, and municipal water and sewer systems. Those systems are now starting to wear out, and some are in dire need of replacement, which doesn't bode well for future tax pressures at the local government level.

THE \$20 AN HOUR FRY COOK

But there are also historic inefficiencies in local government – inefficiencies which will take considerable political courage to correct. Labour contracts are a prime example. There is no faster way to get a municipal politician running for the exits than to suggest that the fundamentals of their staff's union contracts need to be re-examined. Most of these contracts go back to when local government workers first got the right to "organize" – they are built on economic presuppositions which were prevalent in the 1970's when there was no end in sight to the boom years, and everyone instinctively understood that a "COLA" (Cost of Living Allowance) Clause was an insult to the intelligence and industriousness of the workers.

In my jurisdiction, for example, this led to a situation where we had high school students coming in to work the concession stand at our local hockey arena. These kids were "on-call" – the minimum payment per their union contract was 4 hours, often for a shift which was considerably shorter than that. And, when all perks and benefits were considered, they were making close to \$20 dollars an hour to flip burgers, a job that would be considered minimum wage in the private sector. It also created a situation where the "food services"



When the government is involved, a teen flipping burgers will get paid \$20 an hour...which is why the government shouldn't be involved in the business of flipping burgers.

division at that Recreation Centre was swimming in about \$180,000 dollars of red ink every year.

But, because it was government, no one thought it necessary to correct the situation...or, at least, not until I took over the chairmanship of the board that runs the facility. Not to blow my own horn, but I told the rest of the board members that as chair, I would happily face the TV cameras – with a picket line behind me – to explain the facts of life to the taxpayers should the issue lead to a strike. The union folded like a house of soggy cards, and that concession stand is now run by a private operator.

All of which is to say that the matter of "taxation" can be complicated. My fundamental worry, though, is that many local government leaders are losing sight of their central responsibility to be "stewards" of the public purse. Instead, many of them make their tax-related decisions based on political agendas ranging the full gamut from extreme environmentalism to a rampant pro-development stance that cannot be sustained. Not to mention fear of retribution at the ballot box at the hands of those whose vested interests might be detrimentally affected by one decision or other.

As an aside, this brings to mind a quote that Ronald Reagan was fond of using – a quote originally attributed variously to Alexander de Tocqueville and Scottish historian Alexander Tytler:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves largesse out of the public treasury. From that moment on the majority will always vote for the candidate promising the most benefits from the treasury, with the result that democracy always collapses over a loose fiscal policy.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

There are many other issues that could be discussed in the pursuit of a Christian perspective on (local) government. Let's look at the one where civic politicians and staff expend most of their political capital and regulatory authority: land use.

Our municipality regulates all new development through a policy it calls "smart growth." The idea is to encourage what's called "in-fill" – making sure the areas that already have residential, industrial, or retail development on

If we truly believe in property rights, landowners should have considerable freedom to do what they want with their property, as long as that freedom isn't paid for through the general tax bills.

them are fully built out before new areas are explored for development.

On the surface, this makes sense. The infrastructure (roads, water, sewer services and the like), are already in place for those existing developments, and it certainly seems quite stewardly not to waste a bunch of money running these services into new areas when there's still undeveloped potential in the existing "growth centres." The problem, of course, is that this process necessarily involves drawing arbitrary lines on a map. And there are people with land just outside of these lines – sometimes literally across the street – who are ineligible to have their various expansion projects approved because of "smart growth."

And while the policy may seem to make sense at first blush, I believe it has the potential to violate a basic biblical principle; the notion of private property rights. (If you have trouble with those "rights" as a biblical concept, simply ask yourself how the 8th Commandment can forbid "stealing"? You can't steal anything from anyone if they don't have an inherent right to own it in the first place.) If we truly believe in property rights,

landowners should have considerable freedom to do what they want with their property, as long as that freedom isn't paid for through the general tax bills.

For example, we might be justified in charging a special development fee to hook into the sewer and water lines because a particular address is outside the proscribed growth boundaries. But to live and die by a policy against any development whatsoever on this land restricts the landowners' freedom to enjoy (and profit from) his property, and minimizes his ability to exercise "dominion" over that land (Gen 1:28). So I would argue that if someone wants water or sewer services for a project that's five, or six, or even twenty miles outside of the "growth boundaries," they should have the option of tapping into that infrastructure...at *their* cost. Practically, of course, that cost would be so prohibitive as to make the development completely untenable, but the principle should stand on its own.

This issue provides an example of how governments should base their decision-making on commonly-accepted (and Biblical) principles, rather than on a well-intentioned but arbitrary set of "rules" that are totally intransigent and often defy common sense.

CONCLUSION

We are often critical of our governments at all their levels, and we do have some reasons to be. But we should also consider what Romans 13 tells us about how we should respond to government, where it says:

...rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good."

That principle, combined with repeated Scriptural injunctions to pray for leaders (1 Tim. 2:1) and for the "peace of the city" (Jer. 29:7), should guide our actions as citizens, and our relationship with governments at all levels.

RP

Al Siebring was recently re-elected to a third term as Councillor in the District of North Cowichan (pop. 30,000), located about an hour north of Victoria. He blogs regularly on municipal governance at www.alsiebring.ca, and is also the host of ARPA's weekly "Lighthouse News" podcast at www.arpacanada.ca/lighthouse/news.

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MERCHANDISE TO MODIFY ONE OF MODERN MAN'S MIGHTIEST MISAPPREHENSIONS



LOVING YOUR TEEN THROUGH TROUBLES

by Jay Younts

The combination of self-seeking motives and being easily angered are effective deterrents against having your teenager believe you when you say you love them.

For example, you just confirmed that your fifteen-year-old son, Justin, has been looking at pornography on the Internet. You could become enraged. You could be hurt that your son has embarrassed you in this way. You tell him in a loud, stern voice that this behavior will stop immediately and he will be grounded with zero privileges for months. You could also let him know that you are confiscating his computer, phone, tablet and any other electronic device he has or ever will have. You could tell him how disappointed you are in him. You could ask him how could he do

this to you and his mother. You could tell him this is a terrible sin. You could say you are sorry to be so angry, but you love him too much to let him do porn.

You could do this. However, you would also be demonstrating a self-serving

ATTRIBUTES OF LOVE

1 Cor. 13:4-8a

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

spirit served up with instant damaging anger. This may not be your intent, but if you are not showing biblical love, then, by definition, you are doing something else. The results will not be pretty!

Thankfully there is an alternative. Following is an example of a conversation that demonstrates what 1 Corinthians 13 looks like in action. See how many positive attributes of love you can find in Dad's conversation.

THE CONVERSATION

"Justin, we have to talk about the images you were viewing on the computer."

"Dad, I really don't want to and I am not going to – it is really none of your business."

"I think I understand why you would

say that. I didn't want to talk to my dad about this stuff either. He caught me looking at a magazine once. He screamed at me and told me never to do it again. He said if I did, I would be in more trouble than I could ever imagine. He grabbed the magazine, stormed out of the room, slammed the door and never spoke to me about it again. Do you think that stopped me from looking at pornography?"

"You did porn!?"

"Yes, Justin, I did, all the way into college. I couldn't stop. I wanted to stop, I prayed about it, I felt guilty, but I couldn't stop. I would always sneak out and buy another porn magazine. I don't know what I would have done if this stuff had been online like it is today. I always felt awful afterwards but I did it anyway, for years."

"Well, how ... how did you stop?"

"I had a roommate my junior year at State who was a strong Christian. He noticed what I was doing and talked to me about it, much like I am talking with you. He went to his pastor when he was in high school to get help with his own

porn struggles."

"Wow, excuse me, but does everybody do porn?"

"Probably not everyone, but it sure seems that way. His pastor worked through some passages in the Bible with him to help him see that porn is really a nasty lie and it has nothing to do with sex in marriage. All porn can do for a person is to make them miserable and craving for more and more of it."

"You got that right."

"The problem with porn is that it looks good and seems exciting, but it is all a lie. The lie is that sex is all about what you want. But if you get what you want by doing porn, you're really doing what Satan wants you to do. He is the Great Deceiver. Porn is really just lust, and it never, ever satisfies. My friend explained all this to me. We did several Bible studies together, but what made the real difference was being able to really know Christ through those studies. To know that he died for the sins of my porn and lust. That he could give me the strength not to trust my desires, but to trust him."

"I've heard some people say porn and

stuff is not mentioned in the Bible. Is that true?"

"Well, if they mean the actual words 'Internet porn' are not mentioned in the Bible, that is true. But the Holy Spirit is way ahead of them. What is mentioned and forbidden is lust. Like I said, porn is just another form of lust. It's nasty stuff."

"Yeah, dad I know. It makes me sick. I had no idea you would understand. I thought you would just get really mad. Do you think you could help me like your friend helped you?"

"Of course. I also need to ask your forgiveness for not helping prepare you better for the attacks of lust. I have been too preoccupied with work and other things and have not been there for you. With God's help we can work through this."

RP

This was first published under the title "Avoiding conflicted love with your teenager - an example" on www.shepherdpress.com and is reprinted here with permission. Jay Younts is the author of Everyday Talk: Talking freely and naturally about God with your children, as well as many other excellent materials on parenting.

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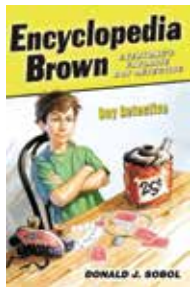
THE BEST

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS

Jon Dykstra

ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN: BOY DETECTIVE

BY DONALD J. SOBOL
1963 / 88 PAGES



Idaville is a small town with a very impressive record – absolutely no one gets away with breaking the law – and a good deal of the credit goes to the police chief's ten-year-old son, known as Encyclopedia to his friends. He solves the town's most puzzling cases over dinner. He also runs his very own detective agency, charging 25 cents a case, plus expenses.

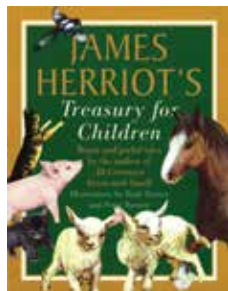
Each of the ten chapters is its own self-contained mystery, with all the information needed to solve the mystery included in the story (and solutions are found in the back). Though the mysteries are simple enough for the 8-14 range to solve many of them, they are still subtle enough to present a challenge to adults (I had to peek at the back twice).

This 29-book series has an old-fashioned small-town appeal. So, for example, there is a gang but it's very much a 1960s sort of boys' gang – they try to trick kids out of their allowance, and might even start a tussle or two, but the very worst that would result is a black eye, or fat lip.

All the main characters are boys, with one notable exception (a girl who serves as Encyclopedia Brown's bodyguard) so it seems to be intended as a boy's series but it will have crossover appeal for anyone who enjoys solving puzzles. While I haven't found anything worrisome or problematic in the dozen or so I've read, I haven't read all 29.

JAMES HERRIOT'S TREASURY FOR CHILDREN

BY JAMES HERRIOT
260 PAGES / 1992 & 2104



James Herriot is best known for a series of semi-autobiographical books he wrote about his veterinary practice in the Northern England country of Yorkshire during the 1930s through the 1950s. Sadly, the books included frequent abuses of God's name. Fortunately, his eight children's stories, collected in this treasury, don't share that problem. All are beautifully illustrated with full-page pictures. While there are some quirky human characters, the animals are the stars, as is evidenced by the story titles:

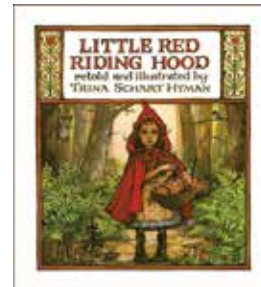
- Moses the Kitten
- Only One Woof
- The Christmas Day Kitten
- Bonny's Big Day
- Blossom comes Home
- The Market Square Dog
- Oscar, Cat-About-Town
- Smudge, the Little Lost Lamb

A couple of cautions: at one point in *Moses the Kitten* Herriot says, "What the devil...?", and in *The Christmas Day Kitten*, the momma cat dies soon after giving birth, which might be a bit traumatic for the very young. Oh, and if you are a tough macho dad who has never shed a tear in front of your kids, well, they'll see another side of you when you come to very beautiful ending of *Bonny's Big Day*.

I'd recommend these for three (so long as they can sit still!) all the way up. I can't imagine anyone not enjoying them.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

BY TRINA SCHAT HYMAN
28 PAGES / 1983



This is a story about a little girl and the big wolf that gobbles her up. If that is a bit of a shock to you, then the version you were told as a child was likely some modernized, bubble-wrapped rendition in which grandma is shut up in a closet rather than eaten, and the woodsman arrives *before* Red Riding Hood takes a trip down the wolf's gullet.

But here we get the traditional tale: first the wolf eats his fill; then he gets his comeuppance.

So why is this traditional tale the better by far version? Peril is the key reason. Our world is not always a safe place, and to prepare our children for it, we need to introduce them to the real world in bits and pieces. One good way to teach them about how bad the real world can be is by introducing them to some of that nastiness – in a measured dose – via fairytales. If you take the peril away from the story so that Red Riding Hood is saved before she is ever really in danger, you have a nice story for a two-year-old, but it is not a story that stretches or challenges anyone older.

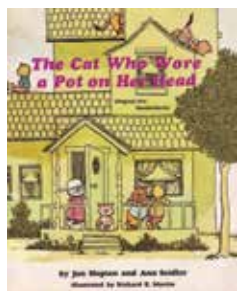
One caution: the woodsman says "jimony" which some consider a "substitute oath."

Many more children's book recommendations can be found at ReallyGoodReads.com.

THE CAT WHO WORE A POT ON HER HEAD

BY JAN SLEPIAN AND ANN SEIDLER

32 PAGES, 1987



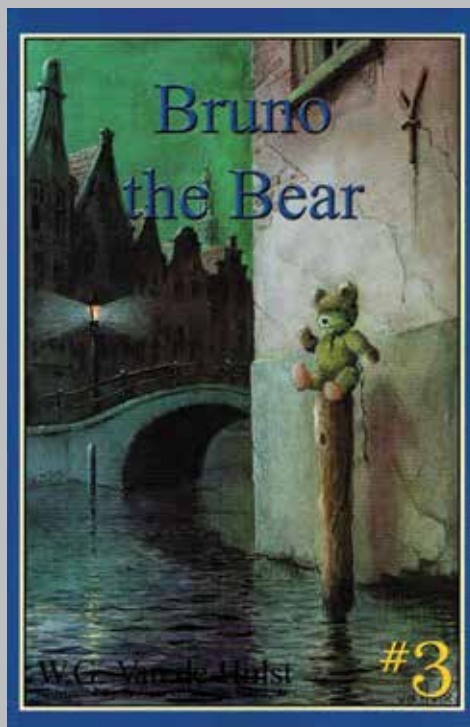
This is just plain goofy fun.

Bendemolena is a little kitten that is part of a big family - a *noisy* family! As the story begins Bendemolena finds a pot, plops it on her head and discovers that her loud home becomes a lot quieter when her ears are covered, so she decides to keep wearing it.

Problems start when her mother, Mrs. Cat, has to leave to help a sick friend, and takes the now hard of hearing Bendemolena with her to relay messages to the rest of the family back home. Mrs. Cat says, "Bendemolena, Bendemolena, run home and tell your brothers and sisters that it's time to put the fish on to bake."

But with the pot pulled tight over her ears Bendemolena isn't quite sure what her mother said: "Did she say put the smish on to fake or put the bish in the lake?" She concludes what her mother must have said was, "to put the soap in the cake" so that's what she tells her brothers and sisters to do.

My three-year-old loved every guess Bendemolena made, and all the silliness that happened each time she came home with another mixed-up message. I'm sure we'll be revisiting this giggle-inducing book regularly.



BRUNO THE BEAR

BY W.G. VAN DE HULST

47 PAGES / 1978 & 2014

Little Rosie is sick so Mother takes her off to bed. But wait, what about her teddy bear Bruno? The little goof has slipped right out of her tired little hand onto the floor. There he lies, sitting up against the doorpost with his glass eye twinkling, almost winking, as if he had a secret joke. It's no joke though, when Jimmy and Joe come home from school, and turn their sister's favorite toy into a puppet on a string. They make Bruno dance and fly, and then - oh no! - they swing him about over the canal outside their window. When Bruno gets hooked on a pole sticking out of the water the string breaks, and then the two naughty boys don't know what to do. Their sister is crying - she's sick and wants her teddy. But they don't dare tell Mother what they did!

Bruno the Bear was originally published in Dutch, and the translators have done a wonderful job - it is a fun book to read out loud. It is also a beautiful book, with more than 25 pictures that are quite helpful in setting the scene. My three-year-old and five-year-old were both able to follow all the way through this pretty long story - I think it might have taken a half hour to finish.

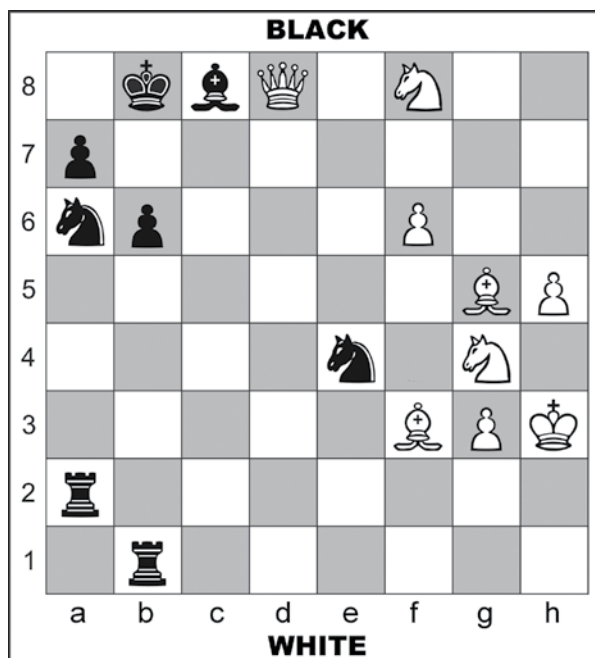
One thing I particularly appreciated was the author's Christian take on the boys' naughtiness. The two boys don't want to tell Mother or Father, and they don't. But that night, as they go to bed, we learn that Joe tried to pray, but didn't dare. And Jimmy "had said it as fast as he could. And that was not really praying. No, Jimmy did not really dare to pray either." When I asked my girls why the two boys didn't dare pray, they understood exactly why, and we had a good conversation about what the boys needed to do - fess up! (Which they do indeed do a few pages later.)

Bruno is one of 21 Van de Hulst children's books the publisher sent me, and so far this is our favorite. In some of the other books I've had to "mute" some of the action - for example, in *The Rockity Rowboat* I skipped over a description of just how fierce a big black dog looked - but what might need a bit of abridgment for a three-year-old will be great reading for a child in Grade One and Two.

So, to sum up, *Bruno* is well translated, beautifully illustrated, thoroughly Christian, and engaging enough to keep a three-year-old's attention for half an hour. You can order it, and the other Van de Hulst books, at Inheritance Publications (www.inhpubl.net).

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Chess Puzzle #219



WHITE to Mate in 2
Or, If it is BLACK's Move,
BLACK to Mate in 3

Riddle for Punsters #219

"Not suited for the Public Square!"

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

Problem to Ponder #219

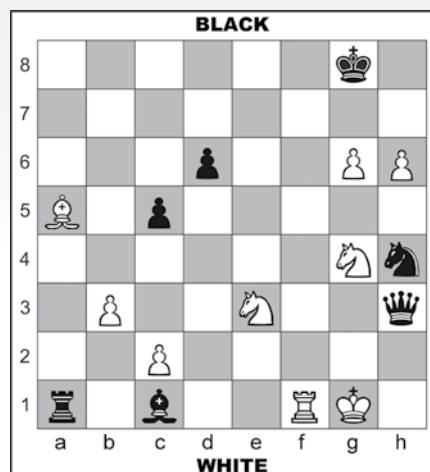
"Too Tired to Skate after Shovelling?"

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

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

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #218



WHITE to Mate in 4

Descriptive Notation

1. P-R7 ch K-N2
2. P-R8=Q ch KxQ
3. B-B3 ch K-N1
4. N-R6 mate

White wins sooner if:

1. P-R7 ch K-R1
2. B-B3 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. h6-h7 + Kg8-g7
2. h7-h8=Q + Kg7xh8
3. Ba5-c3 + Kh8-g8
4. Ng4-h6 ++

White wins sooner if:

1. h6-h7 + Kg8-h8
2. Ba5-c3 ++

BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ---- BxN ch
2. NxB RxR ch
3. NxR Q-N7 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ---- Bc1xe3 +
2. Ng4xe3 Ra1xf1 +
3. Ne3xf1 Qh3-g2 ++

Answers to Riddle for Punsters #218

"Not commonly thought of as common!"

Why is an engaged woman like a phone? They both have a ring.

Why is the furniture in your home like fingerprints left behind at a crime scene? They both need to be dusted.

Answers to Problem to Ponder #218

"Do not slumber — find the number!"

NOTE: 2 answers are possible for each of the first three questions.

Let x be the unknown number in each question.

1. The square of what number is added to the square of the square of 2 to produce the square of 5?

$$X^2 + (2^2)^2 = 5^2 \text{ so } x^2 + 16 = 25 \text{ so } x^2 = 9 \text{ so } x = +/-3$$

The number is 3 or -3.

2. What number, when squared and then added to the square root of 625, produces the square of 13?

$$x^2 + \sqrt{625} = 13^2 \text{ so } x^2 + 25 = 169 \text{ so } x^2 = 144 \text{ so } x = +/-12$$

The number is 12 or -12.

3. A number is multiplied by the square of 4, then that product is squared. The result is 64. The original number was what fraction?

$$(4^2x)^2 = 64 \text{ so } (16x)^2 = 64 \text{ so } 16x = +/-8 \text{ so } x = +/- 1/2$$

The number is 1/2 or -1/2.

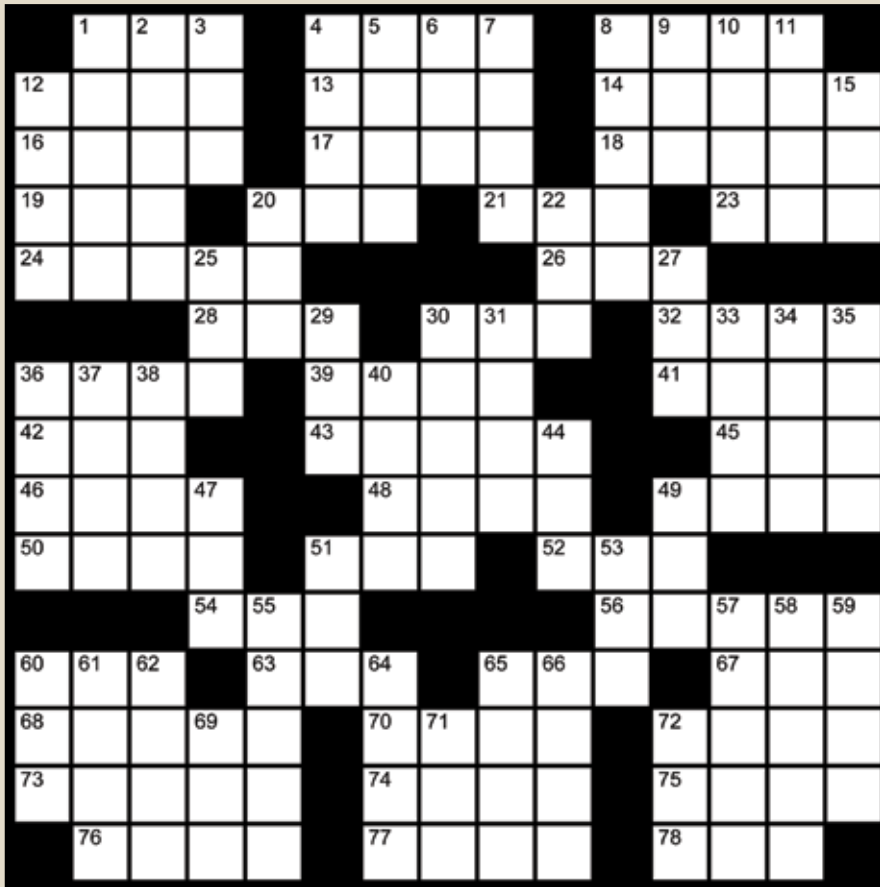
4. A number plus double the number plus one less than the number plus three times double the number minus the product of that number times negative four results in 41. What is the number?

$$X + 2x + (x-1) + 3(2x) - x(-4) = 41 \text{ so } 4x-1+6x+4x=41 \text{ so } 14x = 42 \text{ so } x = 3 \text{ The number is 3.}$$

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



PUZZLE CLUES

SERIES 1-7

ACROSS

1. Short for big hairdo; anagram of italicized word
4. Cool way to prepare a drink to a t
8. Unclean bird of prey in Leviticus 11:14
12. What a mad scientist fills with a vile solution
13. Margarine made from vegetable oils
14. Speak publicly (to *rate* someone else's ideas?)
16. ____ Blyton: popular children's author in past
17. "you have ____ it open" (Psalm 60)
18. Seek to *refute* an opponent (*butting* heads?)
19. Small unclean Biblical mammal (Leviticus 11)
20. Fall behind or trail (after jetting around)
21. Filled your stomach with **eight** servings
23. Quoted exactly as it appears (not my mistake)
24. Unimpressed, uninterested

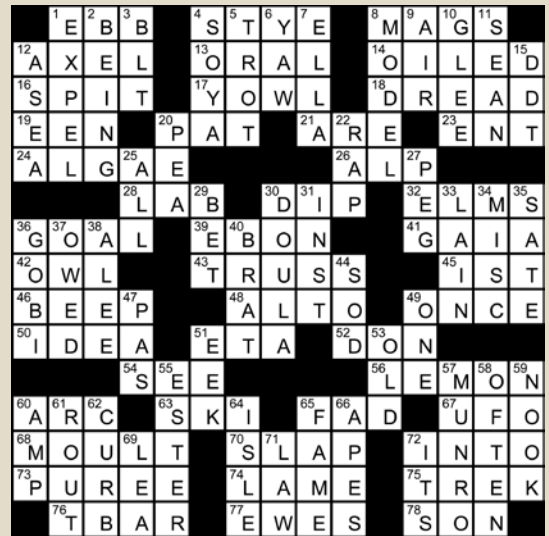
feeling the *blahs*

26. Possessed; past tense of *have*
28. Relatives; people who partially *kindle* your love
30. Lightning lights up the ____ (Luke 17)
32. "For my yoke is ____" (Matthew 11)
36. ____ Cooper; not the western movie star
39. Abominable Snowman! Yet I am not scared.
41. First name of Roadrunner-chasing coyote
42. "they shall become ____ flesh." (Genesis 2)
43. Funny guy found in a class or circus
45. Will the ____ his robe for the ceremony?
46. "when he saw Jesus from ____" (Mark 5)
48. Song in an opera (part of Ariadne's fame)
49. "if the Son ____ you free" (John 8)
50. Lawnmower brand (with

bullish sales in Spain?)

51. Each and every
52. "I will ____ enmity between..." (Genesis 3)
54. "Prove me, O LORD, and ____ me" (Psalm 26)
56. One gift of the wise men
60. Cry of discovery (of where he hid the gifts?)
63. Cartoon girl's cry when she sees a mouse
65. He has to collect ____ from the tree – poor ____!
67. How Santa might say "Aha!"
68. Summarize story so far, or put lid back on
70. Type of sign, or the gas inside it
72. "the ____ were partly iron" (Daniel 2)
73. Crazy obsession (e.g. 70s era Trudeau-_____)
74. King of the Norse "gods"
75. The times estimated for arrival of planes
76. "You ____ on the sword" (Ezekiel 33)
77. Paper ____: craft of making layered pictures
78. What Balaam rode, KJV

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION - SERIES 1-6

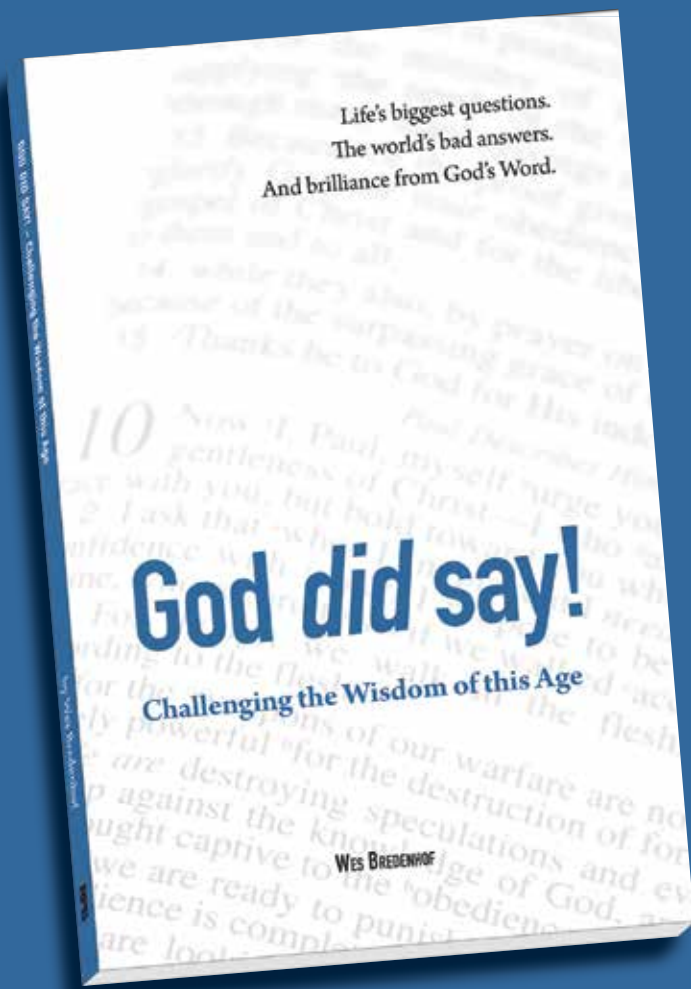


DOWN

1. "____ly, be strong in the Lord" (Eph. 6)
2. Asian condiment: anagram of TIARA
3. "Shall I bear a child, now that I am ____?" (Gen. 18)
4. The smallest bit; ninth letter of Greek alphabet
5. "...____ing their chariot wheels..." (Exodus 14)
6. How a poet says *ever* (problem with his ear?)
7. Female version of 45 across; Spanish title
8. South ____: country of 9 million Presbyterians
9. The anger of an *irate* man
10. Bars keep them and paragraphs have them.
11. Small case for holding needles or cosmetics
12. Part of speech modified by an adverb
15. Abbreviation for *et cetera*
20. Hawaiian adornment to lay around your neck
22. *Your* in KJV English
25. Go rapidly downhill (but enjoying it)
27. "It is like the ____ of Hermon" (Psalm 133)
29. City with same name as New York state
30. Eutychus fell from the third ____ (Acts 20)
31. Name of bird and fruit found in New Zealand
33. Assistant; a real aid to getting anything done
34. Where the coins go in

the vending machine

35. Strong desires (for Japanese currencies)
36. Built around a castle
37. ____tainment - news to amuse
38. Not far
40. Distinctive style or flair, liveliness, vigor
44. Short, sweet sleep (the kind a cat gets)
47. "envy makes the bones ____." (Proverbs 14)
49. A pig stuck in this is partially *stymied*.
51. "_____, Captain!"
53. Official who calls the ball (short form, no *ire*)
55. Returning what is owed
57. Most *RP* readers have Dutch ones
58. Flightless birds, or plural of girl's name
59. Character from *Bonanza*, or what he might ride
60. "with an outstretched ____" (Exodus 6)
61. "My sheep ____ my voice" (John 10)
62. Skin problem often faced by *teens*
64. Boy scout can tie it; wood can have it.
65. Noah was a man of the ____ (Genesis 9)
66. Girl of Green Gables
69. Feel an *ill*ness coming on, or French for garlic
71. Former name of Tokyo; now name of eatery
72. Hot drink spilled at a Party in Boston



E-book (pdf) \$5

Paperback \$16

(\$10 + \$6 shipping)

“Did God really say?” It’s the first question in the Bible, and a very modest one it seems. But what enormous trouble it caused! To Eve it may have seemed the Serpent was trying to clarify what God had said, but his purpose was something else entirely. This, here, was a *challenge* to God’s Truth; this was the Devil trying to raise doubt.

Today some within the Church are asking this same question for the same reason: though they profess God’s Name, these are people who have embraced a worldly form of wisdom. They ask this question not to seek Truth, but to *obscure* the wisdom of God’s Word.

In *God did say!* Dr. Bredenhof clears away the confusion by taking us straight to Scripture. He lays out the answers God has given to Life’s biggest questions, like: “What is Truth?” “What is Right and Wrong?” and “How did we come to be?” He explains what the Bible says about Sin, about Satan, and about the Bible itself. And he exposes the foolishness of the world’s wisdom by contrasting it with the wisdom of God’s Word.

So while some within the Church want to encourage doubts and questions about even the most foundational of doctrines, Dr. Bredenhof wants us to understand that there is no need for uncertainty, because God *did* say!

Order at www.tinyurl.com/GodDidSay