

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

MAY 2015
Volume 34 Issue No. 7

PERSPECTIVE

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READER RESPONSE

DEAR EDITOR:

Reformed Perspective failed to live up to its name in its reporting on the ministry of Mark Driscoll (RP Sep. 2013 and Feb 2015). A Reformed perspective should include consideration of the call to office. A basic Reformed principle is that "ministers of God's Word, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election of the church, with prayer and in good order, as stipulated by the Word of God. Therefore everyone shall take care not to intrude by improper means. He shall wait for the time that he is called by God, so that he may have sure testimony and thus be certain that his call comes from the Lord" (*Belgic Confession* Art. 31). Mark Driscoll is just one of the many examples of charismatic individuals, male or

female, who declare themselves to be pastors or teachers and set up their own church. On his new Internet site, Mark Driscoll continues to be referred to as "Pastor." It is one thing if those who are unchurched are enamoured with these charismatic individuals, but it is very disappointing when those who should be well church-ed do not see the fundamental flaw in these type of ministries. They bypass God's way of working through his church and, at bottom, are nothing but personality cults.

Rev. E. Kampen
Orangeville, ON

EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

The rise and fall of Mark Driscoll left many mystified. Here was a gifted man who, when he presented God's Truth, did it with a clarity and power that was the equal of any preacher. So why then did he fall? And why did his descent destroy Mars Hill, the church he founded? How could such a gifted, seemingly godly, man leave behind him such a swath of devastation?

In Jonathan Chase's 2013 article "Ten Thoughts on Mark Driscoll" he expressed five cautions concerning Driscoll including that he was doctrinally Baptist, a non-cessationist, did not support the Regulative Principle of Worship, and in the past had been irreverent. Though these were good reasons to be cautious about Driscoll, they didn't serve as any sort of explanation for his downfall. After all, many churches hold to these positions without blowing up.

So why the explosion in Driscoll's case? In my February 2015 article "Mark Driscoll is back" I offered up one explanation. "Driscoll lacked accountability," I wrote, "Instead of a consistory, he had an external accountability board that was made up of people who didn't attend his church." And as you note, Driscoll started his

own congregation, rather than being called by one. A good point, and one that builds on my own: Driscoll's actions left him without the wisdom and guidance of the many counsellors (Prov. 11:14) that are available in our form of church governance. There are good reasons we do things the way we do them. Your letter was a helpful contribution to RP's examination of Driscoll's ministry and a good reminder of the blessing God has given us via the wisdom expressed in the *Belgic Confession*.

But did "*Reformed Perspective* [fail] to live up to its name in its reporting on the ministry of Mark Driscoll"? No. We were equipping our readers, many of whom had older children attracted to Mark Driscoll's ministry. We spoke up and offered what clarity we could when it was needed. And while we didn't include your point in the cautions we raised, that does not mean that what we did offer was un-Reformed. We could have said more – more can always be said – but incomplete is not the same as un-Reformed.



FROM THE EDITOR

Patrick Brown isn't pro-life and wishing won't make it so

Two days after Patrick Brown was elected leader of Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party, an article on Canada's biggest pro-life news site declared: "Brown's landslide win... bodes well for life-and-family voters."

The *LifeSiteNews* piece highlighted how Canada's biggest pro-life lobby group, the Campaign Life Coalition (CLC), played a key role in Brown's victory. CLC Toronto's vice-chair Jeff Gunnarson was "very pleased with the efforts of staff, volunteers and supporters who rolled up their sleeves and went to work on this leadership campaign..." He estimated that approximately 20 percent of Brown's vote total came from CLC supporters and he sent out his "heartfelt congratulations to Patrick and to all of our people for a job well done!"

Why was the CLC eager to support Brown? Because, by their measure, Brown had a 100 percent pro-life voting record during his three terms as a Member of Parliament. He had something that very few other political candidates possess: a history of voting the right way.

PAST PERFORMANCE...

But there was just one problem. In September, at the kickoff for his leadership campaign, Brown pulled a page out of the Stephen Harper playbook. He promised he "would not change the status quo" on abortion rights and would "oppose any efforts to do so."

Lest there be any confusion on this point, the status quo for abortion in Canada is that unborn children can be killed at any time, and for any reason, and the government will pay for it.

Brown might have a pro-life record, but he's promised that if it is up to him Ontario will have a pro-choice future.

IT GETS WORSE

It gets worse. Brown's opponents and the media (did I just stutter?) will use his



pro-life record to paint him as a radical social conservative. If he doesn't want this label to stick he's going to have to run from his record. He'll have to be consistently callous, spurning anything that might do even a hint of good for the unborn.

We can see this already happening. On the day of his victory he was asked about his parliamentary votes by both *CBC News* and *Global News*, and asked about them again two days later in an interview with the *Toronto Sun*. He repeated his pro-choice pledge again and again and again: "We are not going to revisit [the abortion] issue. It will not be part of my platform."

Despite the impression that *LifeSiteNews* gave its readers, and Campaign Life Coalition gave their supporters, the unborn will not benefit from Brown's leadership.

A BETTER SORT

It's mystifying as to how the CLC and *LifeSiteNews* could be so wrong about

Patrick Brown. One takeaway is that even the best news sources, and even the most reliable organizations, can get things horribly wrong.

The bigger lesson is that we should never let desperation drive us to delusion. Principled politicians are rare, but it does the unborn no good to rally around a Patrick Brown sort. No champion at all is better than one who believes his political ambitions are more important than unborn children's lives.

The fact is, (while rare) principled politicians do exist. There really are men and women out there eager and able to explain to the muddled masses why the unborn are as precious as the rest of us. They understand that God would rather they speak for the oppressed, even if it means they lose, than win by staying silent.

Our job is to search for these special sorts. When we find them we need to support them with our money and our time. Ideally we'd all have one in our riding, but they aren't yet as numerous as that. We may need to drive a couple ridings over to volunteer for one of these faithful few. Or if there's no one nearby, we can still send money. And if in the whole width and breadth of this country no one can be found worth supporting, then the need is clear. If we can't find one, *we need to become one*. Better to stammer out the truth ourselves than to throw our support behind false hopes like Patrick Brown.

SOURCES: Lianne Laurence's "Patrick Brown's landslide win for Ontario Tory leader bodes well for life-and-family voters" posted to *LifeSiteNews.com* May 11; Antonella Artuso's "Brown's first impressions of Queen's Park" posted to *TorontoSun.com* May 11; Rob Ferguson's "Tory MP Patrick Brown joins Ontario PC leadership race" posted to *TheStar.com* Sept. 28, 2014

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

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

GREAT PR FOR THE UNBORN IN KANSAS

BY KEVIN BRATCHER



Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback signed a law in April that prohibits abortion by dismemberment. Kansas is the first state to pass this law, with other states including Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Missouri looking to follow soon.

This is yet another significant step in the march for life because it unveils one of the more gruesome elements of abortion: that it is done by taking the child apart a piece at a time. It is absolutely vital to the pro-abortion movement that the subject of abortions be dealt with entirely in the abstract, using positive terms such as “empowerment” and “women’s rights” and avoiding any disturbing details that would be, to put it blithely, “bad PR.”

So it is a stroke of genius then to frame this as being either against or for dismemberment. When those are the two options, even the most morally muddled voters know which side to pick.

lift him up....And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

If you want to book Martin Van Woudenberg for a speech in your area, see his website www.BehindtheScreen.ca.

BEHIND THE SCREEN PRESENTER SCARES/TEACHES PARENTS

BY JON DYKSTRA

Con May 6th, at the American Reformed Church in Lynden, WA, speaker Martin Van Woudenberg spent an hour terrifying a group of 60 or more parents. He was doing a presentation on “digital parenting,” and during that first hour he outlined the many and varied dangers that are out there on the Internet. Some in the audience were quite tech-savvy, comfortable with smartphones and tablets, on Facebook and Instagram, and maybe even working in the tech industry. But even the most knowledgeable among them learned a terrifying thing or two about what’s out on the Internet and about various apps that seem to have only perverse and horrifying uses.

It would have been an unsettling evening if that was all Martin Van Woudenberg shared. But he spent his second hour presenting the many different ways that parents can use technology to counter and minimize some of the dangers that technology is bringing into our homes.

It is important, however, to think of this as more than merely a *technological* problem. That the Internet makes it possible to have the contents of a porn store readily accessible via our teen son’s tablet certainly is a technological problem, so

a technological solution like monitoring and filtering software can help in a big way.

But if our child wants to figure out how to access that content, and wants to figure out how to get around whatever guardrails we put in place, that is a *heart* issue. Technology won’t solve a heart problem – that needs to be addressed on a heart level. That means that not only do we need to install this sort of software on our tablets, smartphones, and computers, we need to teach our children to appreciate it. We need them to understand that this monitoring is nothing like spying on them, even though it will involve us looking over their shoulder to see where they go on the Internet. Rather it is all about coming alongside of them to offer help and support when they most need it. God has placed us in a communion of saints, and together we can help one another resist and fight temptation. To address the heart issue we need to teach our children that resisting temptation isn’t a solo activity. As we read in Ecclesiastes 4:

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to

POP-TART PISTOLS NOW LEGAL IN SEVERAL STATES

BY JON DYKSTRA



Florida and Texas now have legislation on the books that will allow their public students to chew pastries into “pop-tart pistols” without fear of punishment. Nevada is also considering such legislation. All this is

because in 2013 a seven-year-old in Maryland, who was trying to chew his toaster pastry into a mountain, instead ended up with pop-tart piece. “Bang, bang,” he said, and out the door he went, suspended by his public school for two days.

Nevada’s legislation would prohibit schools from punishing children in grades K-8 for “simulating a firearm or dangerous weapon” or for “wearing clothing...that depicts a firearm or dangerous weapon.” “The bill is common sense,” said Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, “It just returns common sense back to our school system.”

But does this legislation address the real problem? Is this about the right to bear pastry pistols or is there something far more foundational?

As Assemblyman Jim Wheeler implied, the Maryland school administration lacked common sense. But his legislation will do nothing to make such fools wise.

The real problem is that when this school suspended their son – exposing the administration’s foolishness – his parents didn’t live up to their God-given educational responsibilities and send their boy to a sane school. The problem is that the State is running most of the American and Canadian education system. If, instead, we had a freer, more competitive marketplace for education, then when a school showed it lacked common sense, it would soon lack students too.

SOURCES: George Will’s “Meet Joshua Welch, age 7, the Pop-Tart terrorist,” posted to www.MercuryNews.com on March 9, 2013; Chris Buckley’s “Discussion on ‘Pop-Tart’ Gun Bill in State Assembly” posted to www.KoloTV.com March 5, 2015

PRO-LIFE POLITICIAN SHOWS HOW IT’S DONE

BY JON DYKSTRA



When US senator Rand Paul announced that he was going to run for president one of the very first questions the media asked him was whether the politician’s pro-life stance would allow for exceptions in the case of rape, incest or risk to the life of the mother.

This was a question that required the wisdom of Solomon to answer. There is nuance needed here, as pro-lifers recognize that the life of the mother is just as important as the child, and that, in fact, if the mother dies, the child likely will too. So when the mother’s life is indeed at risk, we would want to

leave that decision with the parents. But we also know that “life of the mother exceptions” have been used to justify thousands of abortions in which the mother was in no danger. So we are rightly wary of such exceptions.

That’s the problem Paul faced: how to explain this to a member of the mainstream media who was likely more interested in portraying him as an extremist than in hearing out a nuanced answer? He decided to answer them according to their folly (Proverbs 26:5). If they were looking for an extremist he knew just where they could find one.

Here’s the deal — we always seem to have the debate *waaaaay* over here on what are the exact details of exemptions, or when it starts. Why don’t we ask the DNC (the Democrat National Committee): Is it okay to kill a seven-pound baby in the uterus? You go back and you ask (DNC head) Debbie Wasserman Schultz if she’s OK with killing a seven-pound baby that is not born yet. Ask her when life begins, and you ask Debbie when it’s okay

to protect life. When you get an answer from Debbie, get back to me.

Hours later Wasserman responded that she supported letting women “make this decision without government involved. Period. End of story.” To which Paul replied:

“Well, it sounds like her answer is yes, that she’s OK with killing a 7-pound baby,” adding that unlike the DNC head, even his most pro-choice friends are opposed to allowing abortion all the way up to the moment of birth.

Wasserman was later asked the “7-pound question” by CNN’s Wolf Blitzer and FoxNews’s Megan Kelly and each time her party’s extreme stance was exposed to any and all who were listening.

What might happen if a Canadian pro-life politician tried something similar to expose the radically pro-abortion positions of Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and NDP leader Thomas Mulcair? One can only wonder, pray and hope.

IN INDIANA TOLERANCE IS A ONE-WAY STREET

BY KEVIN BRATCHER

In March the state of Indiana was hit by nation-wide controversy over a proposed law, the "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" (RFRA), that would have offered some protection for individuals, religious organizations and businesses that didn't want to participate in certain transactions for religious reasons.

Opponents claimed that the bill would allow Christians to start locking their business's doors whenever any man remotely dark-skinned, or seemingly too fashionable, approached.

However that simply isn't happening anywhere. On the other hand, it's well worth noting the current battlegrounds for religious freedom and then examining who the instigators are and who is being attacked. Christians really are under fire.

- US chain Hobby Lobby had to fight all the way to the Supreme Court because the government was trying to force them to provide employees forms of birth control that may cause abortion. The chain was refusing to do so based on the owners' religious convictions.

- A baker, a florist, and a photographer were sued in separate incidents for refusing to provide their services for a homosexual ceremony.
- In Canada, BC's Trinity Western University currently faces a backlash against them being allowed to start a law school, and previously faced the same sort of backlash for their teaching program, because this Christian university formally holds its students to a standard of sexual morality that disallows certain forms of sexual activity.

In these examples (and many more that could be mentioned), it's not as if the demanded goods, services, or pursuits were unavailable to the plaintiffs – there were many other outlets for plaintiffs to get their

photos, wedding cakes, flowers, or picture frames. The goal was to force a Christian company or individual to provide certain products or services in spite of their beliefs.

In other words, it's not a matter of whether a Christian company will sell a gay man a pizza or pay for life-saving medication. It's a matter of whether we as Christians can be coerced into approving of the opposition's same-sex ceremonies, or into funding potentially deadly birth control methods.

After the controversy, the RFRA bill was revised, and now, according to one commentator, might actually make it tougher on Christians trying to follow their conscience: "Among the things that will happen, Christian bakers, florists and photographers would now be forced by the government to participate in a homosexual wedding or else they would be punished by the government."

Christians must understand that the war is not being waged here for equality – the war is being waged against God's standards. The other side doesn't want tolerance – they want to force God's people to endorse what God opposes.

SOURCE: Tony Cook & Tom LoBlanco & Brian Eason's "Gov. Mike Pence sings RFRA fix" accessed on April 2, 2015 at IndyStar.com

Some definitions from the

NEWSPEAK HOMOSEXUAL DICTIONARY

BIGOTRY: When a Christian refuses to endorse gay marriage

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION: When a TV network refuses to air pro-life commercials.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION: Freedom of Christians to *think* what they like

HATRED: Disagreeing with us

TOLERANCE: Doing what we say...or else

POLL: 42% OF MUSLIMS DON'T THINK ISLAM FITS WITH THE WEST

BY JON DYKSTRA

According to poll results published in the *Vancouver Sun* in late March many Canadians "believe Western and Islamic societies are 'irreconcilable.'" The numbers were higher among those outside Islam, but still very high in the Muslim community itself. Over all those who found Islam irreconcilable with the West amounted to:

- 63% of Protestants
- 62% of Jews
- 60% of Catholics
- 42% of Muslims

The exact verbiage of the poll question was not included in any of the dozens of stories covering this poll, and those stories were all copies of or seemed to be based on the original *Vancouver Sun* item (none offered any new information). In other words, this seemed to be a story with but one source. The only confirmation was from the Association for Canadian Studies, the organization that commissioned the poll. While they didn't share the poll on their website, they did link to the news coverage, seemingly confirming that they were happy with the way their poll was being reported.

But the more shocking the poll results, the more we should be interested in how it was worded. The way a question is framed can have an enormous impact on how it is answered.

That means we should approach this poll with measured skepticism, not drawing any conclusions based on this one "witness" alone. But if the numbers are at all accurate they are shocking: *do four out of ten Canadian Muslims really think it is incompatible with the West?* How will this incompatibility be resolved?

SOURCE: Douglas Todd's "Canadians feel rift growing between Western and Muslim societies: poll" posted to VancouverSun.com March 24, 2015.

WHY NOT A \$15/HOUR MINIMUM WAGE?

BY JON DYKSTRA



In mid March the BC government announced an increase to the minimum wage, raising it twenty cents to \$10.45. That wasn't enough for the President of the BC Federation of Labor, Irene Lanzinger, who called for an increase to \$15/hr: "78 per cent of British Columbians agree that the minimum wage should put a full-time earner above the poverty line."

In April, during the Alberta election campaign, NDP leader (and now premier) Rachel Notley also backed a \$15 an hour minimum wage, promising to phase it in over the next four years if elected. "It is simply unacceptable that in a province as prosperous as ours that hard-working Albertans cannot make ends meet."

The motivation behind the minimum wage and ever increase of it is always admirable: the goal is always to help those at the bottom of the economic ladder. But God tells us that we can't judge an action merely by its intention – we have to consider the result (see Proverbs 27:14). So what is the result of a minimum wage?

If the minimum wage is boosted, a company's cost of labor will go up, but not because employees are more productive. So how will a business deal with this labor cost increase? It will either have to increase prices, or use less labor by firing employees or reducing their hours. That is not the sort of result that

will help people on the lowest economic rung.

As David Henderson of Prager University (PragerUniversity.com) has noted, those hurt the most will be those with the least to offer an employer. If someone is looking for their first job and therefore has no track record or experience he likely won't be worth \$15 an hour. He may not be worth \$10. But what if a student who was only worth \$5/hr to an employer was willing to work for that wage? Even if he finds an employer willing to hire him, minimum wages laws make such an arrangement *illegal*. As a result, the inexperienced young man can't get his first step on to the employment ladder. He can't gain the sort of experience (ex. relating to co-workers, demonstrating reliability, learning to listen to a boss, etc.) that would make him more valuable later on. The government may have the best of intentions but the end result for inexperienced workers is that when the minimum wage is boosted higher, they will be less likely to find entry-level work.

But what of the poor? Don't we need to help them? Of course – God calls his people to this very task (Prov. 28:27). But supporting a minimum wage that prices inexperienced workers out of the job marketplace is not a good way to do so.

SOURCES: David Henderson's "What's the Right Minimum Wage?" post to PragerUniversity.com on Oct. 27, 2014; Charles Lammam's "Raising BC minimum wage is not the right policy to help struggling families" posted to HuffingtonPost.ca on April 8, 2015.

A TALE OF TWO TRANSACTIONS

BY KEVIN BRATCHER



In mid April, Brian Klawiter, the owner of a diesel truck repair shop, made national news when on his business's Facebook page he stated that because he was a Christian he would refuse service to any openly gay man or gay couple who came to his establishment. Back in 2013, a florist in Washington State by the name of Barronelle Stutzman was sued by the government for her refusal, based on her Christian convictions, to provide flowers for a gay couple's wedding.

One of these things is not like the other.

If a gay couple walks into Brian Klawiter's Dieseltex shop and wants their monster truck serviced, that is a purely economic interaction, and doesn't involve endorsing their sin. The situation is similar to the situation Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 8 regarding food sacrificed to idols – whereas it is a sin to sacrifice food to idols, there is no sin in the eating of it.

On the other hand, when a gay couple asked Barronelle Stutzman to be a part of their wedding event by providing flowers, or, as has happened elsewhere gay couples have asked Christians to help by catering, providing a venue, performing the ceremony, or taking photos, then they are asking us to glorify their wedding. In these instances Christians are being asked to provide services that by their nature approve of and glorify the event they are hired for.

As Christians we must be aware in our everyday lives of whether we are simply interacting with sinners (see 1 Cor. 5:9-13) or being asked to approve of and endorse their sin. We must do the former, especially if we are to be a witness to them – but we must also avoid the latter, no matter the cost.

WAS CONCEIVED

*For this reason He
had to be made like
His brothers in every way,
in order that He might become
a merciful and faithful high priest
in service to God, and that He might
make atonement for the sins of the people.*
- Heb. 2:17

**He was conceived. Humbled to man -
Housed in a uterus - a soul.
His way was predetermined and
A time appointed for His goal.**

**Implanted in the womb's sweet wall,
He was Omega; yet was new.
Embryo Child, minutely small,
A mortal speck, but Alpha too.**

**At six weeks He was half the size
Of any marble, but a heart,
Brains, arms and legs, ears, nose and eyes,
Began to shape His body's start.**

**He was conceived. This thought is high,
But is a gift, gratuitous.
The promised Fetus, born to die,
In all but sin became like us.**

- Christine Farenhorst

Abortion is the killing of a baby. The technical definition of it is: "The termination of a pregnancy by the removal or expulsion of an embryo or fetus from the uterus, resulting in its death. An abortion can occur spontaneously due to complications during pregnancy or can be induced."

While abortions have been committed throughout history, they have never been as common as they are at this time in history. According to the World Health Organization, every year there are an estimated 40-50 million abortions. This corresponds to 125,000 abortions per day.

When contemplating the abortion issue, Christians do well to reflect on and to praise God for that point in time at which Jesus Christ left His heavenly home to begin life on this sin-filled earth. Such reflections are sobering - such thoughts bowl our minds over with gratitude and awe.

There are two facts we might consider. Firstly, conception takes place when the sperm cell meets the egg at precisely the right moment. Secondly, the Bible clearly tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus, "conceived."

Can we seriously toy with the idea that Christ's life in the womb began at, say, three months, or three weeks, or three days? Then, it seems we would be facing questions such as, "Did He become part of a fetus already in progress?" or, "Was He nothing for a period of time?" If Christ was made "like His brothers in every way," and according to Hebrews 2:17 He was, does this leave us with any options as to when life begins?

What a wonderful Savior we have!



Understanding Motivations

Why Biblical Worldview and Sound Science Generate Skepticism about Manmade Global Warming

by E. Calvin Beisner

In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, the Apostle Paul tells us to “test all things, hold fast what is good.” That, among other things (such as belief that a rational God designed the ordered world to be understood and ruled by rational human beings made in His image), is the Biblical basis for modern science, which arose only once in history and in only one place: Medieval Europe, which was shaped by the Christian worldview.

Such thinking gave rise to scientific method, the key to which is skepticism, as described by the late Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman:

In general we look for a new law by the following process. First we guess it. Then we compute the consequences of the guess to see what would be implied if this law that we guessed is right. Then we compare the result of the computation to nature, with experiment or experience, compare it directly with observation, to see if it works. *If it disagrees with experiment it is wrong.* In that simple statement is the key to science. It does not make any difference how beautiful your guess is. It does not make any


difference how smart you are, who made the guess, or what his name is – if it disagrees with experiment it is wrong. That is all there is to it.

When the IPCC’s computer climate models simulate twice as much warming as has actually occurred over the past 35 years, and not one predicted the complete absence of warming over the last 18 years and 4 months, it is clear that the models are wrong. Applying Feynman’s “key to science,” the conclusion is all but inescapable: There is no rational basis to fear manmade global warming, and therefore no rational basis for any policy meant to prevent it.

That leaves us wondering what other basis there might be for policy ostensibly meant to prevent global warming. We needn’t search far for the answer. IPCC co-chair Ottmar Edenhofer told us in 2010:

The climate summit in Cancun at the end of the month is not a climate conference, but one of the largest economic conferences since the Second World War. ... First of all,

“...we redistribute
de facto the world’s wealth by climate policy”

developed countries have basically expropriated the atmosphere of the world community. But one must say clearly that *we redistribute de facto the world’s wealth by climate policy.* Obviously, the owners of coal and oil will not be enthusiastic about this. One has to free oneself from the illusion that international climate policy is environmental policy. *This has almost nothing to do with environmental policy anymore, with problems such as deforestation or the ozone hole.* 

Dr. Beisner is the Founder and National Spokesman of The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation. This is reprinted with permission from an April 13, 2015 post to www.cornwallalliance.org.

Parent, do you expect to be obeyed?

by Jay Younts

Your view of obedience controls how you give directions. Strange as it may seem, the way your garbage is taken out can reveal your functional understanding of obedience. The goal is to learn how to give holy, everyday directions that please God and bless your children.

Let me begin by asking you two questions: Do you want your children to obey your directions and take out the garbage?

You might be thinking, "That's a strange question; of course I want my children to obey me."

That leads me to the second question. Assuming you want your children to obey you, do you act as if you expect them to take out the garbage?

Now you are sure I am asking stupid questions. "What do you mean, do I act like I want them to take it out? Of course I do!"

Okay, let's examine some ways that parents typically ask for obedience. In this illustration, Joshua is eight years old. How many ways can Mom ask Josh to take out the garbage?

"Joshua, if you want to be helpful, you could take out the garbage sometime when you have some free time."

"Mommy is sooo tired of taking out the garbage all the time. Josh, wouldn't you like to help me?"

Or:

"Josh, take out the garbage right now!!"

"Joshua, I asked you yesterday and the day before and the day before that, would you please find time to take out the garbage!"

"Joshua, please think of things to do to help out, like maybe take out the garbage. Okay?"

"Mommy is sooo tired of taking out the garbage all the time. Josh, wouldn't you like to help me?"

"Joshua, take out the garbage right now, or I will take away your TV privileges for three days!"

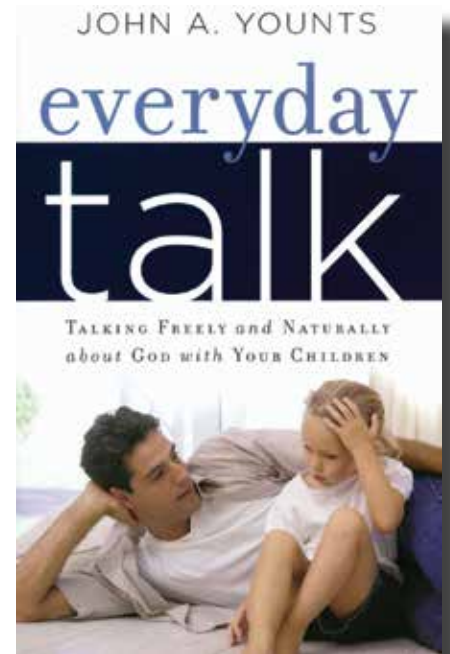
"When I was your age, I always had to take out the garbage every day, whether I wanted to or not. Now take out the garbage!"

"Joshua, this is it! I am not going to ask you again. Take out the garbage!"

"Joshua, if you do not take out the garbage this instant, you are going to get the biggest spanking of your life, and you will get it when your father gets home."

None of these directives to Joshua fit the biblical concept of obedience. Yes, some of the instructions were direct, but many were not. Each reflects a parent who does not really expect to be obeyed. All of these attempts at securing obedience from Joshua fall into the category of manipulation and bargaining. You want the garbage taken out. Joshua does not want to take it out. You cajole, order, plead, bargain, in short, do anything you can to get Joshua to take the garbage out. After awhile you may even give up and take the garbage out yourself, just to end the unpleasantness and frustration.

God does not want your children to obey you simply because you are bigger



than they are and can physically control them. Obedience is more than giving in to coaxing or threats. God wants your children to obey you because it pleases Him and blesses them. How can you tell the difference? Here is the request from a parent who expects Joshua to take out the garbage.

"Joshua, take the garbage out now, please."

"Sure, Mom, no problem."

Here, Joshua's mom expects to be obeyed. She doesn't ask Joshua a question, she gives him clear, pleasant direction. She doesn't whine or plead or bargain or threaten. She speaks directly but pleasantly. Joshua knows exactly what she wants him to do and when. Joshua has been trained to understand that obeying Mom is doing exactly what he is told, right away, with a good attitude. RP

This is taken from Chapter Four of Jay Younts' book Everyday Talk: Talking Freely and Naturally about God with Your Children. A full discussion of these points is contained in this chapter.

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

KNOWLEDGE DOESN'T SAVE

"The devil is a better theologian than any of us and is a devil still."

– A.W. Tozer.

A THIRD WAY GOD'S NAME CAN BE USED IN FICTION

In a March 16 post titled "Fiction and the Third Commandment" Douglas Wilson (dougwils.com) continued a discussion that began in the February issue of *Reformed Perspective*. In that issue I asked why so many Christian fiction authors have their characters taking God's Name in vain. I argued that there were two ways God allows us to use his Name.

God says we can use his Name to talk to Him. And we can use his Name to talk about Him. But a writer may not use God's name simply because his heroine has stubbed a toe and he wants the readers to understand that it really hurt.

In his response Pastor Wilson noted that there is one more proper use Christian authors can make of God's Name – an author can depict someone sinfully abusing God's Name without being guilty of abusing it himself. As evidence, Wilson pointed to Christ's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18. Jesus tells us that both men were praying in the temple but whereas the tax collector was penitent the Pharisee prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." The Pharisee here is neither talking about God, nor talking to Him (bragging isn't prayer) but rather is blaspheming God. What we have here, as Wilson notes, is a

...fictional depiction [of] a high violation of the Third Commandment, committed by a character in a bit of prose composed by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Since Christ does it, we can be sure that it is indeed permissible to depict characters taking God's name in vain. If that strikes you as strange (and it did me), the key point to understand is that in Luke 18, while Jesus is depicting someone taking God's Name in vain, his purpose is still to *honor* God's Name.

This third use of God's name is an easy thing to mess up, which is why Wilson concludes with a caution to writers who are considering making use of this third way: they need to carefully assess whether they are skilled enough to pull it off – if there is a chance they might muddle it up, better to avoid the attempt.

NO NEED FOR FALSE MODESTY

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."

– C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*

ARE YOU PASSING THE BATON?

"My dad....made a great commitment in my life and had given me many things to pass on. His father had given him things to pass on. And what I have I have passed on. You have to take it, develop it, learn it, and pass it on to somebody else. This is a relay race and we are all involved."

– John MacArthur on the importance of telling the next generation what we have learned about God.

DON'T JUST THINK ABOUT IT

"The smallest good deed is better than the greatest good intention."

– unknown

T-SHIRT CHRISTIANITY DONE RIGHT

Abort73.com is a website with all the answers for why the unborn should be protected. So if you don't know what to say, let your shirt do the talking, telling folks where they can go to learn more. This design, and many others, can be purchased at Abort73.com.





DESIGN IN THE **BIG** AND SMALL

by Margaret Helder

When we look at nature, we can hardly miss the design that is everywhere so apparent in living creatures. We recognize it every time we see aspects of an organism that are elegant, beautiful and useful. There are many famous examples of design in nature, traits that are not only beautiful, but which work beautifully as well. The bacterial flagellum springs to mind as an often-discussed example – in Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* he spent some twenty pages on the inner workings of this miniature mechanical biological wonder.

But one can look anywhere! Some examples are more interesting to us than others, but all are worth considering.

WONDERFUL WHALES

Consider for example the difficulties that the largest animals on earth, the rorqual whales, must overcome to obtain enough food. The blue whale is the most famous and largest example of a rorqual. Another is the humpback. Such big animals are not going to be good at chasing smaller more agile prey. Their solution is to find very thick schools of small fish, and then to lunge forward and gulp in a huge mouthful of water containing lots of fish. The whales engulf the water and fish before the latter have a chance to panic and escape. The whales then push the water back out of their mouths through a special filtering system like venetian blinds, which in this case is called baleen. What is left in the mouth, the whale swallows.

It all sounds relatively uncomplicated, but it is not. Without a number of special and unique design features, these whales would starve.

The rorqual whales are named for their specially pleated throats (extending from mouth to navel) which can expand tremendously to accommodate 60 to 80 cubic metres of water and prey, "a volume equal to or greater than that of the individual rorqual itself" (Pyenson et al. *Nature*, 2012 p. 498). The prey must now be separated out from all that water. What the whale does is push the water out of

its mouth through a sieve-like structure which replaces teeth. This filtering system, baleen, consists of keratin, like we have in our fingernails and hair.

The baleen whale's "suspension feeding system" – which involved feeding on, and straining out suspended food particles from water – is unique among mammals, and the pleated throat of the rorquals is unique to this even smaller group of baleen whales. That is not the end of the story. Without further special design features these whales would still be "dead in the water."

No group other than the rorqual whales engulfs a massive volume of water in a single gulp. In order to do this, the animal lunges forward, accelerating to high speed, and then gulps in that huge volume of water, all within six seconds. But how does the whale know what volume of water to engulf? And how does it manage to engulf a volume larger than its own body? How does it know what water to gulp? If the whale just went around gulping random volumes of water, it would certainly starve – schools of fish are patchy in their distribution, and thus cannot be found in any old place.

By the hair of the chinny chin

For a start, the whale has bristles on its chin which function sort of

like whiskers. These allow the animal to identify schools of fish that are sufficiently dense. Now the whale must take advantage of this dense concentration of fish. To do this, the rorqual must control the rate of mouth opening and throat-pouch expansion so as to maximize the intake volume. All this must happen while the whale is lunging forward at high speed.

We now discover more unique design features of the rorquals. The lower jaw consists of left and right halves which are only loosely connected by fibres, and also are only loosely connected to the skull. This allows for great flexibility of the mouth opening. As the rorquals lunge forward, they rotate the components of the jaw so that the opening is close to 90 degrees at the peak of the lunge. The tongue becomes convex and the throat pleats expand. Soon the jaws clamp around a huge volume of water and the whale begins the process of expelling the water and retaining the fishy harvest.

Always new wonders to find

New research has shown that the rorquals enjoy the benefits of yet another design feature which enables them to be successful in this unusual life style. In the centre of the lower jaw (between the two loosely connected halves) is a special and

"Rorqual whales are named for their specially pleated throats which can expand tremendously to accommodate 60 - 80 cubic metres of water and prey..."



There is very little room for “tinkering” or “fine tuning” by spontaneous processes. What is needed is a very astute designer!

completely unique sensory organ. In its basic design it is something like the semicircular canals in our inner ear which allow us to figure out the orientation of our bodies. Inside the canals in our ears, there is clear gel and particles which occupy one position or another. Similarly, in the jaws of these whales there is a structure which has papillae (soft projections) surrounded by a gel-like matrix. This seems much like the mechanoreceptors in our inner ears. Apparently this organ in the whale jaw informs the animal as to the extent of the rotation of the jaws and the expansion of the pleats during mouth opening. The rorquals alone possess this organ between the unfused halves of the lower jaw.

Scientists consider that this sensory organ plays a fundamental role in the extreme feeding method of these largest animals on earth. It is evident from details of the lifestyle of the rorquals that even apparently uncomplicated methods of feeding require special design features. The rorquals are certainly an example of irreducible complexity. Even with baleen instead of teeth, if they didn't have the unique unfused lower jaw, pleats in the throat, the special sensory organ in the jaw, and the sensitive bristles on their chin, these largest of animals could never survive. Evolutionists have no adequate explanations for how these unique features could have developed through spontaneous processes.

MOLECULAR MACHINES

The unique aspects of design that we see in large creatures are even more evident at the level of the very miniature, such as in the living cell. The operative word here is *precision*, and all this comes from

the information encoded in the DNA which controls the exact shape of the component parts of the molecular machines.

Messages and information

Let's spend a moment considering the difference between information and random noise. A message is sent by a someone and conveys information – it is an idea or concept produced by an intelligent mind. So, for example, sound waves can carry information, but not all sound waves convey messages – some are simply the result of random natural processes, like the whistling of the wind. A message is not a physical (material) object, though messages can be conveyed via physical objects, like a piece of paper. But paper itself is not a message. It needs information from an intelligent mind to become a message.

There is information – messages for the inner workings of our cells – encoded into our DNA. But DNA itself is not the message. It is only the “sheet of paper” by which the message is conveyed. What is still needed is the intelligent mind who crafted the message onto the DNA.

Now, normally scientists can understand the difference between a message and random noise, but when it comes to our DNA they insist this information didn't come from anyone. There was no intelligent mind behind it and it just came about from random natural processes.

Intelligent Design apologist Stephen C. Meyer points out that natural processes do not generate information or messages. The whistling of the wind doesn't suddenly start communicating with us, and that's because it has no information for it to communicate. As Dr. Meyer declares in his 2009 book *Signature in the Cell*, “If a process is

orderly enough to be described as a law, it does not, *by definition*, produce events complex enough to convey information.”

So scientists may have started unpacking the messages storied in our DNA, but they have yet to figure out how that message was ever placed there.

Doing things the hard way

Let us take a closer look now at how the information coded in our DNA makes it possible for our cells to craft the most remarkable tiny molecular machines. We'll begin by considering the information-containing molecule itself, the DNA double helix. A note in *Nature* (August 10, 2006 p. 604) remarked, “Few would dispute the genius of DNA's chemical design.”

In spite of the obvious genius of the design, however, many scientists have wondered why the backbone of that long polymer is made up of the more difficult to synthesize five-carbon sugars rather than the readily available six-carbon (glucose) molecules. Why go to all the trouble of using harder to obtain materials? One might imagine that there has to be a reason.

And there is!! Scientists from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, found out why. They built a DNA polymer with a six-carbon backbone. And guess what! The two strands were too bulky to fit together nicely in a classic double helix shape, so that there were irregular twists and steps between rungs in the helix. Obviously the design of the double helix was the result of deliberate choice using less common, but essential, materials.

There is another aspect of the DNA molecule that is noteworthy as well. Simon Conway Morris in his 2003 book *Life's Solution*, declares that the DNA molecule demonstrates “eerie perfection” (p. 13 + 17), in that it is literally a one in a million choice, or rather perhaps one-in-a-hundred-million other alternatives, with the other choices not even close to as

efficient as the one that we see in nature. Indeed, the DNA molecule demonstrates, he says, “startling evidence of optimization.”

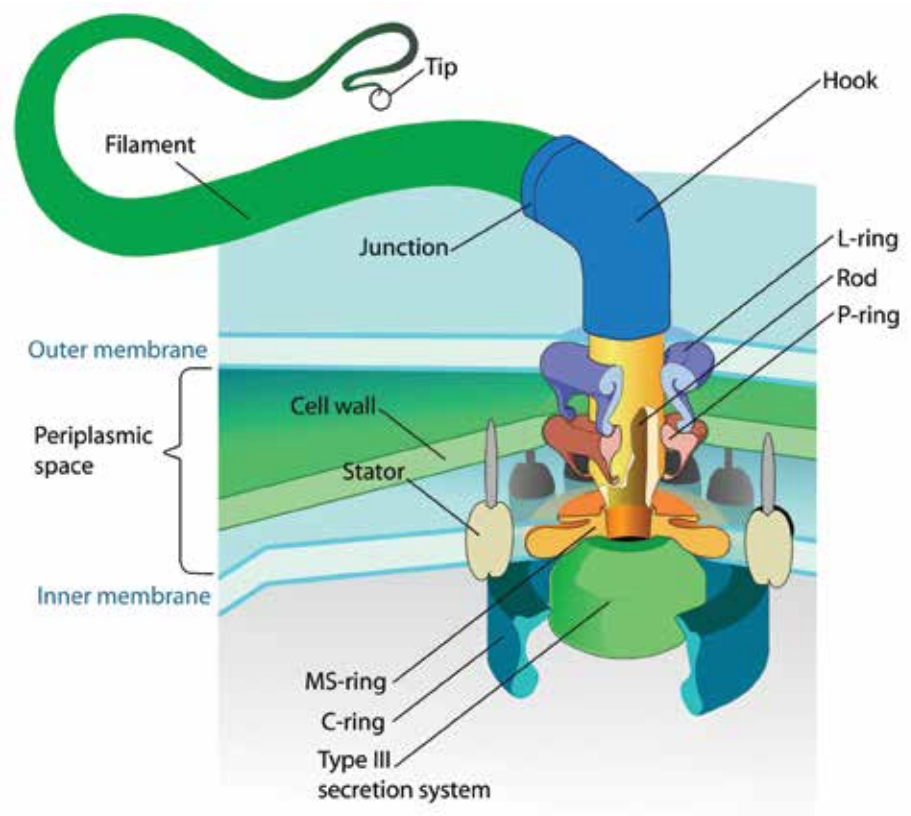
What Dr. Morris was referring to, however, was not the backbone of the DNA molecule (which had to be just right), but the choice of a triplet code based on 4 digit choices (nucleotides or base pairs like 4 alphabetic letters). We can compare this 4 digit system to the binary code (2 choices) that our computers use. But apparently for the requirements of coding for the components of cells, the 4 digit code is just right. Such a system certainly never came about spontaneously! There are too many difficult aspects that have to be just right, at the same time. The double helix is the hardware, but it is the information (software) coded along its length that is the really significant aspect of this molecule.

Exact shapes

One of the kinds of information that the DNA molecule provides is the exact shape of protein molecules. It is the order of the amino acids (coded for in the DNA) that determines how the chain of amino acids folds in on itself to produce a 3-dimensional shape. For an enzyme to drive a chemical reaction, the fit with the materials on which it is working must be extremely close. Thus Kirby and Hollfelder (2008. *Nature* Nov. 6) declare:

Tiny variations (on the scale of 10 picometres, where 1 picometre is 10^{-12} metres [1 trillionth of a meter]) in the binding interactions and molecular packing in an enzyme’s active site can make a remarkable difference to the efficiency of the enzymatic catalysis (p. 45).

...this motor that spins at 10,000 rpm is almost 100% efficient!



The incredible design and complexity of even the simplest life forms baffles evolutionists’ attempts to explain how they could have come about by chance. Here we see the intricate inner workings of a Bacteria’s flagellum – its outboard motor.

Scientists have tried their hand at designing artificial proteins to function as drugs to carry out various metabolic tasks “but the reaction-rate accelerations of these proteins are still *tens of billions of times smaller* than those of many enzymes” from nature (*italics mine*). Natural enzymes work by speeding up reactions billions of times compared to the speed which would occur without adequate catalytic action of the enzyme. Artificially designed proteins simply show no comparison with the natural compounds. Obviously there is little room for error in many molecular machines which drive the life processes of each cell.

One very famous example of the low tolerance for error in protein shapes is the sickle-cell mutation in a gene for haemoglobin. It is caused

by a single error (nucleotide) in a single gene. Nevertheless it is one of the most common serious human genetic diseases in the world. Experts estimate that more than 300,000 children are born with the disease every year. The mutation causes one amino acid (valine) to replace another (glutamic acid). The effect of this is such that the protein assumes a rigid rather than a flexible shape and the red blood cells which carry it likewise become misshaped and sticky, resulting in clumping so that the blood does not move freely through the blood vessels (Pleasants. 2014. *Nature* p. S2-3).

It was back in 2006 that scientist Richard Morimoto concluded from his work with round worm biology that “just a few extra misfolded proteins can kill an organism” (*Nature* Feb. 16 p. 766). He called this discovery

“surprising and slightly horrific.” The situation illustrates the narrow tolerance of organisms, and their component cells, for proteins which may carry a mutation in a critical location. There is very little room for “tinkering” or “fine tuning” by spontaneous processes. What is needed is a very astute designer!

100 Percent efficiency...by chance

One of the most famous molecular machines is the rotary bacterial flagellum made famous by Michael Behe in *Darwin's Black Box* (1996). However, that motor is only found in some bacteria. Another rotary motor has been discovered and this one is universally found in all living cells. It is called the ATP synthase motor. ATP, or adenosine triphosphate, provides the chemical energy that drives the metabolic reactions of the living cell. If the cell has no ATP, it is dead. But of course ATP gets used up and more has to be provided. The “burning” (oxidation) of food provides the energy to produce more ATP.

The motor that achieves this is extremely tiny, only 10 nanometres (billionths of a metre) in diameter compared to 50 for the bacterial flagellum. The motor is very simple in its structure. As the motor spins, it squeezes two components (adenosine diphosphate and phosphate) together forming the finished ATP molecule. Apparently the motor's efficiency is “uncannily high: nearly 100%” (Tokyo Institute of Technology Bulletin no. 4 p. 1 in *Nature* Dec. 20/27, 2007). So this motor that spins at 10,000 rpm is almost 100% efficient! Not only is this rotary machine elegant in its design, but it is also unusual. None of this sounds like a phenomenon that came about spontaneously. With trial and error, there would be no cells and no life.

If one were to ask whether some precisely shaped proteins, such as those which are so necessary for the molecular machines, could appear by chance, the answer seems to be a definite “no.”

Lucking into the right pieces?

An “Insight Introduction” article in *Nature* entitled “Chemical space and biology” (Dobson. 2004 *Nature* December 16) declared: “chemical compounds used by biological systems represent a staggeringly small fraction of the total possible number of small carbon-based compounds...” (p. 824). In other words, the chances of finding a biologically useful molecule by chance in an environment where chemical reactions were proceeding freely under abiotic (non-living) conditions is extremely low. When we consider proteins alone, the results are similar. As author Dr. Dobson elaborated:

As there are 20 different types of amino acid [used in living cells], and the average size of a natural protein is about 300 residues [amino acids], this number is a staggering 20^{300} or more than 10^{390} [1 suitable design out of 10 multiplied by itself almost 400 times possible designs], and if only a single molecule of each of these polypeptides were to be produced, their combined mass would vastly exceed that of the known universe. Natural proteins are therefore a very select group of molecules (p. 824).

Obviously the encountering of any useful protein in nature, even one such molecule, would never happen by chance! These came from a designer who knew what he was doing when he chose certain specifically shaped proteins to function in living cells. Nevertheless it is the amazing control system in the cell, the hardware and software, that allow for such precision in the first place.

CONCLUSION

Whether we look at the biggest beings on earth, or investigate the smallest workings of life, design is evident everywhere. We only have to be willing to see the fingerprints of the God who is there. ^{RP}

This article is an excerpt from an upcoming book by Margaret Helder. Stay tuned for more details in the months ahead.

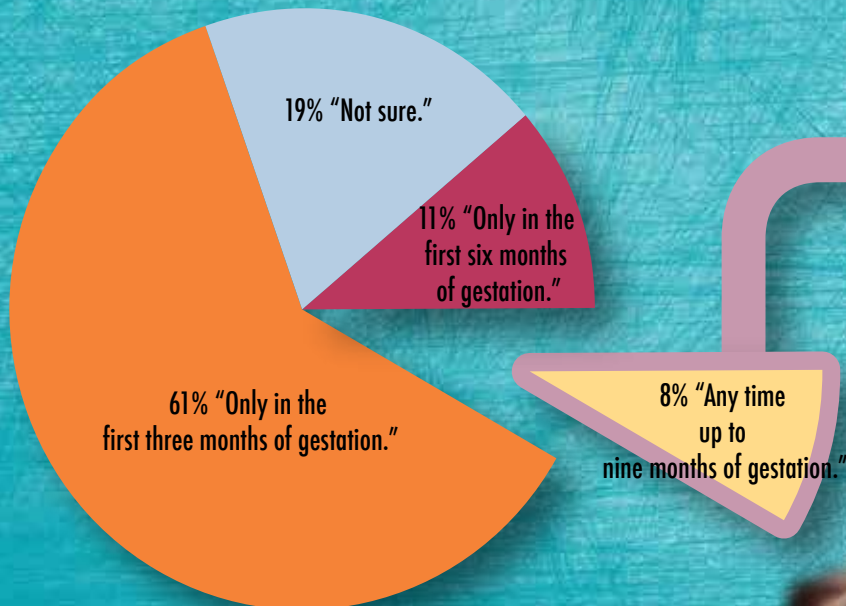


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Canadians' awareness of Canadian abortion law

Canadians were asked,
"As far as you know,
when can an abortion be performed in Canada?"



Conclusion:

The correct answer is
"Any time up to 9 months."

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Sources:

- <http://weneedalaw.ca/images/Awareness%20of%20Abortion%20Laws.pdf>

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A COUPLE FRIENDS YOU SHOULD MEET

JAY ADAMS & D. A. CARSON

by Wes Bredenhof

It's no secret that I love books. Here in my study I often feel like I'm surrounded by good friends. Some are old friends, centuries old, but the two I'd like to introduce you to in this article are still writing today. The aim of this brief introduction is to help you find good friends for yourself — in other words, to find edifying reading that will give you a better understanding of the Christian faith, a greater grasp of the gospel, and a deeper love for Christ.

JAY ADAMS



What does Jay Adams have in common with the Puritans? I mean, besides many theological commonalities? Both are objects of intense prejudice. Everybody knows that Jay Adams and his counseling

methodology is bad, but very few people have actually read anything by Jay Adams. In the Canadian Reformed community, the source of this deep antipathy for Adams can be traced back to a 1977 article in *Clarion* by Dutch theologian C. Trimp. The article (originally a lecture he delivered at our seminary here in Hamilton), while expressing some appreciation, generally took Adams apart. Trimp's critique would be echoed by CanRC leaders for years to come. However, what Trimp wrote was based on just *one* early book of Adams (*Competent to Counsel*) and, in the meantime, Adams had written several more books. In some of those books, he explained himself further and negated many of the criticisms that Trimp offered. I began reading Adams in university and was immediately impressed by his deep commitment to Scripture and the Reformed faith.

Jay Adams (born 1929) is the author of more than 100 books and remains an in-demand lecturer. He did his seminary training at Reformed Episcopal Seminary and completed a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri. From 1963-1983, he taught at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Prior to that, he pastored a number of Presbyterian churches, including an Orthodox Presbyterian congregation. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church currently holds his ministerial credentials. He was the founder of the Christian Counseling

and Educational Foundation (CCEF.org) as well as the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (now called the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors – see BiblicalCounseling.com). He's currently involved with the Institute for Nouthetic Studies (Nouthetic.org).

Why is Jay Adams important?

Jay Adams is important for precisely the same reason I first appreciated Adams back in university: he takes the Bible seriously. He writes on a variety of subjects, from Christian living to counseling to preaching, but whatever the topic, *sola Scriptura* is his touchstone. You may not always agree with his conclusions, but you have to agree that this is the right approach. Basically, Adams takes the presuppositional approach of Cornelius Van Til and applies it to pastoral theology. I've read about a dozen of Adams' books and have learned a lot from them.

Where do I start?

As mentioned, *Competent to Counsel* was one of Adam's earliest books, published in 1970. It's an important book, but it does leave a lot of questions hanging.

If you're interested in Adam's counseling methodology, a better place to start would be *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption*. A good follow-up would

be *How to Help People Change: The Four-Step Biblical Process*. A couple of other books that are more directed to the regular “person in the pew”: *What To Do on Thursday: A Layman’s Guide to the Practical Use of the Scriptures* and *The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image*. Preachers and aspiring preachers need to read his *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching*.

What to watch out for?

Adams is a controversial figure. On a formal level, some people have a difficult time getting past Adams’ tone and style. For some, he’s too strident, too forceful, too critical, or too this or that. Theologically, questions have sometimes been raised about Adam’s concept of habituation. George M. Schwab wrote an article in the Winter 2003 *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (published by CCEF) alleging that Adams was more influenced by O. Hobart Mowrer and William Glasser than by Scripture on this point. When someone has written as much as Adams, you can expect that there will be disagreements and critiques.

Meanwhile, another generation of counselors has arisen and some of these (esp. at CCEF) have modified Adams’ approach in what may be described as a kinder and gentler direction.

And while this is not a serious theological faux pas, if I remember correctly, Adams is also postmillennial in his eschatology.

CONCLUSION

Writing about Jay Adams in a positive way is a risky endeavor. For every positive point that one might rise, there will be a host of people who raise the negatives. Adams is not infallible, but he does respect the infallible Bible and he is Reformed in his convictions. I know that my life and ministry have certainly been enriched by his writings. Perhaps he has something to offer you too.

By the way, Jay Adams blogs at nouthetic.org/blog.

THE QUOTABLE JAY ADAMS

On love

“Love is not first a feeling. Though the feelings come later and grow thick in the basic loam of love, they don’t constitute the sum and substance of love. Love is doing whatever good God says you must do for another, to please God, whether (at first) it pleases you or not. You must do so because He says so; and you don’t wait until you feel like doing so. Love begins with obedience toward God in which one gives to another whatever the other needs. Love is not a gooey, sticky sentimental thing; it is hard to love. Often it hurts to love. Love meant going to the cross through the garden of Gethsemane. Christ did not feel like dying for your sins, Christian, but He did so nonetheless. The Scriptures teach that he endured the cross while focusing on the subsequent joy that it would bring.”

– *How to Overcome Evil*

On being a good dad

“The best way to be a good father to your children is to be a good husband to their mother.”

– *Christian Living in the Home*

On marital roles

Somebody must have the final say. Somebody must be responsible to God for the family’s decisions. Where everybody is responsible, there really isn’t anybody who is responsible. Any organization must have a point where the buck stops. In the home, which is an organization, it stops not with the wife, but with the husband. It is his job to oversee all, make sure that everything runs the way God says it should, and his wife must help him to do so.

– *Christian Living in the Home*

D. A. CARSON



Donald Carson has a Canadian connection, being born in Montreal in 1946. His father was a Baptist pastor and missionary, first among English-speaking Quebecers, then among the French. For Don Carson, one of the results is bilingual fluency. He did his undergrad studies at McGill University in Montreal, and then obtained a Master of Divinity

degree from Central Baptist Seminary in Toronto. Carson was ordained in 1972 at a Baptist church in Richmond, BC. He then went on to obtain a Ph.D. in New Testament studies at Cambridge.

After some years as a professor at a Baptist seminary in Vancouver, he moved to Wheaton, Illinois, to take up a position teaching New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He’s still there today. He’s written numerous books and articles. He frequently speaks at conferences and is actively involved with The Gospel Coalition.

Why is D. A. Carson important?

Carson has three endearing qualities.

First, he is a New Testament scholar with a high view of the Bible. He believes fervently in biblical inspiration and inerrancy. Unfortunately, there are not many high-level NT scholars with such views of their subject matter.

Second, Don Carson loves the gospel. This is reflected in his work with the Gospel Coalition and Together for the Gospel. His passion for the good news also surfaces in just about everything he writes.

Carson is able to produce both high-quality scholarly writing and popular works.

Third, Carson, like Mike Horton, is able to produce *both* high-quality scholarly writing *and* popular works that will edify any Christian.

Where do I start?

If you're looking for something to whet your appetite, the best place to start is Carson's biography of his dad, *Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor* (which can be downloaded for free at tinyurl.com/ordinarypastor).

Then ease into Carson's biblical scholarship with his helpful little volume, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*. If it's devotional reading that you're looking for, check out his *Scandalous: The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus*. If you're a seminary student, or if you're a pastor and haven't read it yet, *Exegetical Fallacies* is a must-read. If you have an interest in postmodernism and hermeneutics, *The Gagging of God* is a thorough treatment.

What to watch out for?

Well, if you haven't guessed it already, Carson is a Baptist. I don't view the denial of infant baptism as a minor, insignificant matter. However, honestly

I don't recall reading anything from Carson that has ever leapt out at me as being distinctly Baptist. It's not as if he makes a point of arguing for believers' baptism in each of his books, or even laying the foundation for that position. I think his purposes are higher.

Another point worth mentioning is that Carson is not a cessationist — he believes that charismatic gifts did not cease with the time of the apostles. But again, this is not a strong theme tainting his writings. With regards to the doctrine of salvation (soteriology), Carson is Calvinistic. He holds to the doctrines of grace. Moreover, he frequently refers to the importance of confessional Christianity. He doesn't mean that as a reference necessarily to the *Three Forms of Unity* or *Westminster Standards*, but to the kind of Christianity that grounds itself in confessions generally oriented to the Protestant Reformation. Though I don't care for the expression myself, some would call him a "Reformed Baptist."

CONCLUSION

I heard Don Carson speak a few years ago at the Canadian Gospel Coalition

Conference just a few streets over from us here in Hamilton. I was impressed. He writes well, but speaks even better. Pretty much anything that Carson writes, I'll read. If he's speaking nearby, I'll be there. I guarantee that this friend will edify you as well.

Dr. Bredenhof is the author of many books including God Did Say! which is available at tinyurl.com/GodDidSay

THE QUOTABLE D.A. CARSON

On prayer

"What we actually do reflects our highest priorities. That means we can proclaim our commitment to prayer until the cows come home, but unless we actually pray, our actions disown our words."

– *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*

On exegesis

"A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text."

On God's character revealed

"Do you wish to see God's love? Look at the cross. Do you wish to see God's wrath? Look at the cross."

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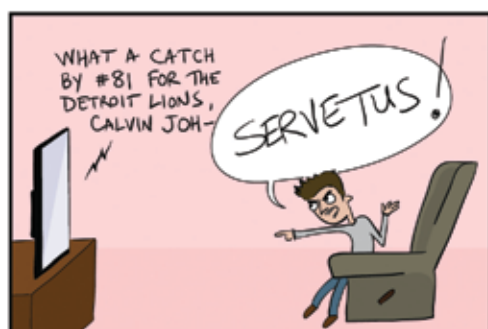
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REFORMED PERSPECTIVE / 23

ECONOMICS FOR EVERYONE

A review of
How an Economy Grows and Why It Crashes

BY MICHAEL WAGNER



One of the illustrations inside: Able puts his fishnet to work while Charlie and Baker look on.

Economics affects everyone but few people care to learn much about it. All the numbers and graphs make it seem complex and quite boring.

Of course some subjects are so important that even if they were boring we'd just have to soldier on and learn them anyway. And you could certainly make that case for economics – every citizen has to get a handle on the basics of economics so we can properly evaluate government policies and get a handle on where the economy may be heading.

However, Peter Schiff and Andrew Schiff have done us a service by making it possible to learn economics without being bored to sleep. Peter Schiff is an investment manager who was also an economic adviser to Congressman Ron Paul's 2008 presidential campaign. Andrew, Peter's brother, is the communications director for Peter's investment firm. In 2014 they released a Collector's Edition of their book *How an Economy Grows and Why It Crashes* that is part fiction, part comic book, and educationally entertaining throughout.

A FISH STORY

Their book is written in the form of a story, with some cartoon illustrations thrown in, which makes this a lot easier to digest and follow than, say, a university economics textbook.

The story begins as follows: Three men, Able, Baker, and Charlie, live on an island and survive by catching fish with their bare hands. They just barely subsist from day to day, catching only enough for their next meal.

Then Able gets the idea of making a simple net to catch fish, but to make it,

he has to invest a day's worth of time. Instead of going fishing, he spends the day crafting the net. This investment is costly – he has to go a day without food! And it is also risky – he doesn't know whether his net will even work. But Able is an entrepreneur, so he takes the risk, and makes the investment.

And work it does. The net enables him to dramatically increase the amount of fish he catches, and therefore improves his lifestyle. The net is "capital" he created that increased his productivity. He subsequently catches more fish than he can consume, and this situation initiates improvements on the island. The lesson, as the Schiffs write, is that "spare production is the lifeblood of a healthy economy."

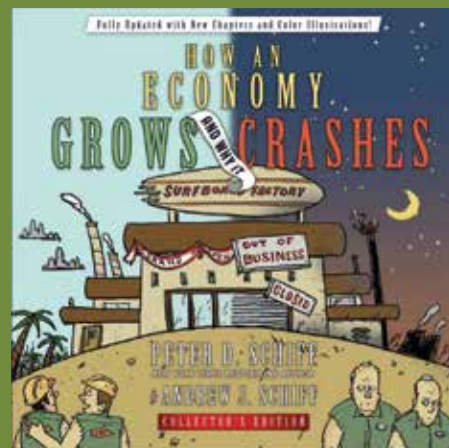
Because he has surplus fish, Able lends them to Baker and Charlie. Those two fellows can then take time off from catching fish with their hands to make nets for themselves. That is, they too create capital to improve production. With the extra fish they can now catch, they pay Able back with interest, and all three of the men are better off than before. Even though they had to pay interest, Baker and Charlie increased their own standard of living.

Able's motivation in loaning the fish was to earn a profit. But the loan he provided benefited the other two men as well as himself. As the Schiffs explain,

The pursuit of profit drives innovation, business formation, and economic growth. It's the force that raises everyone's living standard. A big profit just means that a business is good at satisfying customers. Those who earn it should be celebrated, not vilified.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

The story continues from this point with the three men able to spend less time fishing, and more time developing other tools and implements (capital) for improving their lives. For example, they make more nets to build larger fish-catching devices. The new capital they create increases productivity even further.



How an Economy Grows and Why It Crashes

by Peter and Andrew Schiff

Wiley, 2013

Hardcover, 288 pages

The Schiffs strongly emphasize the importance of increasing productivity as the key to a successful economy. It benefits everyone. Besides using their story to show how, they also add a real-life example: the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. They write that the

...vastly increased productivity of the industrial revolution made it possible for working-class people to afford all kinds of goods, like upholstered furniture, tailored clothing, plumbing, and wheeled transportation, that were previously available only to the rich.

Eventually Able, Baker and Charlie begin trading with people on other islands. Immigrants come to their island, a government is formed, and the economy becomes more complex. Their island society becomes known as Usonia. It's an easy story to follow with lessons on basic economics interwoven with the story's events.

PAPER CURRENCY

Fish function in this story not only as food but also as currency. Everyone eats fish and they are easy to exchange for other items.

Once a government is created for Usonia, it issues paper currency backed

Economics may not be inherently exciting to many people but it affects everyone.

The US government debt is so large, in fact, that the Schiffs do not believe it can ever be paid.

by fish. Each “Fish Reserve Note” could be redeemed for actual fish at a central bank. Using paper money was much easier than carrying actual fish, so it became the common currency.

Over time, though, the government produces larger and larger amounts of paper currency without maintaining enough fish to redeem the notes. Eventually the government declares that the Fish Reserve Notes could not be redeemed for actual fish after all. The value of the currency then becomes based on the citizens’ confidence in the government.

This is much like the situation with money in the world today. The currencies of modern nations are no longer based

on particular sources of value (like gold) but on confidence in the nations’ governments. The Canadian and US dollars were at one time backed by gold (that is, a dollar represented a specific amount of gold), but that is no longer the case. Now they are just paper. The Schiffs point out that this kind of paper money is

commonly called “fiat” money. The word “fiat” comes from Latin and literally means “let it be done.” The word applies because paper money does not have any intrinsic worth, but rather derives its value from government decree.

Right now the worldwide economy based

on fiat money seems to be working. But the Schiffs do not think it will last. They do not consider fiat money to be real money because it has no inherent value, the way gold and other precious metals do. In their view,

we are in a “through the looking glass” world where, for the past 40 years, no country issues real money. This is the biggest monetary experiment ever conducted. No one knows how or when it will end. But rest assured, it will.

GOVERNMENT DEBT

The government of Usonia, like actual governments today, increases spending beyond its means and finances

THE (HONEST) RICH GET RICH BY MAKING US ALL WEALTHIER

by Jon Dykstra

God told us not to covet, but there are many, particularly in the government, who want to assure us it’s fine to demand what the rich have. They tell us it’s only fair to make the “one per cent” pay way more because when we look over the fence at all they have we can’t help but notice that it is quite a lot. Sure, God told us to stop looking over the fence (Ex. 20:17), but the world insists that all this ogling is okay because a lot of our neighbor’s wealth is really ours in the first place. The way they tell the story, there is only so much wealth to go around, so our rich neighbor could only become wealthy by taking from the poor folk like us. And it’s about time he gave some of it back.

That’s what they say ...but as you might suspect, folks who tell us it is okay to do what God forbids often don’t have their facts straight. The

truth of the matter is that, so long as our rich neighbor didn’t get his money from piracy, bank robbing or lobbying the government, he likely got his money by earning it. And if his money was earned, then this neighbor of ours didn’t take anything from anyone, but actually gave more than he got. As commentator John Stossel explains:

It is instinctive to think of life as a zero sum game – if I win, you lose. Politicians think that way because that’s how their world works. And lawyers who sue people think that way – you either win or you lose.

But in business, you only win if you give your customers something they want. If you make a big profit, it doesn’t mean you took it from the customer. The customer voluntarily gave you his money. He felt he

gained something too. It is why you get the weird double thank you moment when you buy anything. If you bought a cup of coffee this morning, you gave the cashier a buck, and she said, “Thank you.” She gave you the coffee, and you said, “Thank you.”

“Thank you.” “Thank you.”

Why both? Because you both felt you won.

But that’s just not intuitive. It’s intuitive to think Bill Gates made \$50 million because he took \$50 million from other people. If that’s the case, how come there is so much more wealth in the world now with all these billionaires? They didn’t take a big piece of the pie. They baked lots of new pies and then took a big piece.

SOURCE: www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/196/off-the-record-with-john-stossel/

its operations through increased taxes, borrowing money, and also printing more paper money. These activities are harmful to the economy in the long run. The Schiffs state that

Taxes and borrowing merely divert private-sector spending or investment to government. Printed money has the same effect. Newly created money spent into circulation by the government depresses the purchasing power of money held by the public.

In the United States, President Barack Obama has pursued a policy of high government expenditures financed by borrowing and printing money. The US government debt is so large, in fact, that the Schiffs do not believe it can ever be paid. They paint a rather unnerving picture:

Ultimately the U.S. government will have only two options: default (tell our creditors that we can't pay, and negotiate a settlement) or inflate (print money to pay off maturing debt). Either option will lead to painful consequences.

They believe that the value of the US dollar will drop steeply because so much is currently being printed. However, its status as the official "reserve currency" of the world keeps its value artificially propped up. Being the international reserve currency means that

the dollar is accepted as the exchange currency for any international transaction. This means that everyone, not just the United States and its trading partners, needs dollars to conduct trade. So even if no one actually buys things that are made in this country, dollars are always in demand. No other country has this monetary good fortune.

In their view, if the US dollar was to lose reserve status, its value would drop severely, wiping out much of the wealth Americans currently possess. Its present value only remains high because of its wide acceptance around the world.

CONCLUSION

Economics may not be inherently exciting to many people but it affects everyone. The basics are understandable if they are presented properly, and the Schiff brothers do a great job in their book. They provide a simple basis for understanding the kinds of measures that help an economy grow as well as those that stifle growth.

Some policies (such as printing more money) provide a temporary illusion of prosperity followed by a financial downturn. Politicians campaigning for re-election love policies that provide an illusion of prosperity. They often make decisions that will benefit themselves in the short run but actually harm the economy in the long run.

The Schiffs emphasize work, saving, thrift, and innovation as keys to

economic success. To a large degree the virtues that lead to prosperity are also Biblical virtues. Therefore, even though the book is not specifically Christian, it reflects much that is compatible with Biblical Christianity. **RP**



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PORNOGRAPHY AND THE LAW

WHAT CAN WE ASK OUR LEADERS TO DO TO FIGHT PORN?

by Mark Penninga

It is encouraging to see churches and Christian families openly discussing the dangerous consequences of pornography. Although sexually explicit materials have existed in culture for millennia, being a snare to God's covenant people in the Old Testament as well, the pervasiveness and effects of pornography today are unprecedented because of its affordability, accessibility, and anonymity. Within seconds, adults and children alike can view or be exposed to explicit images and videos on computers, tablets and smartphones at no cost and without anyone else knowing.

Individuals and families that are not dealing with this reality are inviting evil into their hearts and lives. But is this just a matter for individuals and families to grapple with? Should pornography concern our society at large? If so, what legal and practical options exist to curb it? Can Canada do anything, even with a secular government and society, to fight this evil?

A SCOURGE EVEN SOCIETY CAN SEE

The Bible has a lot to say about the consequences of taking sexuality outside of the confines God intended it for – within marriage between a man and woman and to the exclusion of all others. But even our secular society has to admit that it has broader societal consequences. Morgan Bennett writes,

Though sexuality is considered “private” in our society, the social effects of collective sexual behaviors and norms, including the effects of Internet pornography, cannot be kept “private.” Because pornography is sexual, it is inherently relational and thus inherently social. How people relate to each other in society is important, but how people relate sexually is crucial to the sustenance of a society because it either incentivizes or de-incentivizes the very foundation of society: the family unit.

While it can only be a part of the answer, civil government has every reason to do what it can to uphold that foundational element, the family unit, and the protection of individual citizens.

Given that pornography now includes



As Canada has moved away from its Christian past, it has also stopped enforcing laws on obscenity.

videos of toddlers being molested, women being drugged and raped, and women sexually assaulted by gangs of men, it is of little surprise that empirical evidence demonstrates that porn:

- generates greater acceptance of violence in sex and leniency towards rapists;
- distorts perceptions about sexuality;
- precipitates sexual callousness; and
- causes many men to become aggressive and anti-social.

These negative effects may be expected from hard-core pornography users, but studies show that these negative effects accompany “soft-core” pornography as well. Habitual users become less excited about the same type of images and need more shocking and exciting images to continue to satisfy the same desire.

Pornography can also destroy relationships and marriages. A 2014 study from the journal *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* noted that extramarital sex is one of the most commonly cited reasons for a divorce. And the study found that people who consume pornography have a more positive attitude towards extramarital sex. Other research has found there is also decreased affection and sexual intimacy in a relationship where one partner views pornography.

To add to all of this, pornography is also inherently degrading and dehumanizing. Pornographers and porn consumers treat women as objects or toys; a woman’s worth is determined by her ability to satisfy somebody’s sexual desires. Such degradation of women violates the sanctity of human life. Every human being bears the image of our Maker (see Genesis 9:5-6 for evidence that this remains even after the fall into sin). Regardless of whether someone chooses to take part in pornography or is forced into it, they are a human being worthy of protection, sometimes even from themselves.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING NOW

Isn’t Canada is doing something about this? Unfortunately, the government is not leading by example. As Canada has moved away from its Christian past, it has also stopped enforcing laws on obscenity.

The Criminal Code only mentions the word “pornography” in Section 163.1, where it defines child pornography. Section 163 regulates “obscenity” by making it an offence to fabricate, distribute, or possess for distribution obscene publications. That means that if pornography is not child pornography or not considered obscene, it is legal to make, buy or sell.

The definition of obscenity is important here. Section 163(8) states that “any publication a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence, shall be deemed to be obscene.”

What is deemed to be “undue exploitation” is central. This definition is subjective, resulting in much variation of thought as to what meets the criteria.

A Parliament of Canada report titled “The Evolution of Pornography Law in Canada” notes that “the obscenity standard is today quite ‘liberal.’ In media such as magazines or films... there is considerable leeway; in other, less discretionary forms of expression, such as television, tolerance is lower.”

In the 1992 *R. v. Butler* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously upheld the obscenity provisions in the Criminal Code. Justice Sopinka noted that there was sufficient evidence that “depictions of degrading and dehumanizing sex do harm society, and, in particular, adversely affect attitudes toward women.” But in 2005, in the *R. v. Labaye* decision (known as “the swingers’ club case”) the Supreme Court decided that community standards are now replaced by a harms-based test. Of course it becomes hard to establish harm when people willingly participate in it.

Those who argue that the status-quo should be maintained make the case that it is up to individuals and parents to regulate what is read and watched. But is the same standard applied to other instances where the public and societal harms are

In 2013, Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron made international news by announcing that all homes in the UK would have pornography blocked by their Internet service provider (ISP) unless they explicitly chose to receive it.



so significant? One example is bullying. The provincial and federal governments have gone to great lengths to combat bullying, even though it is not a crime. The federal government has also realized that the cyber-age brings new and increased challenges in combatting bullying, and has responded accordingly. In early 2014, the federal government launched the “Stop Hating Online” campaign, which “will raise awareness among Canadians of the impact of cyber-bullying, and when this behavior amounts to criminal activity.”

Bill C-13, “Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act,” introduced in November 2013, goes further. Bill C-13 bans the distribution of intimate images without the consent of the person depicted. The implicit assumption is that the distribution of intimate images can cause substantial harm and that those harms are magnified in our cyber age.

WHAT ABOUT BRITAIN & AUSTRALIA'S FILTERING EFFORTS?

In 2013, Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron made international news by announcing that all homes in the UK would have pornography blocked by their Internet service provider (ISP) unless they explicitly chose to receive it. He also announced that possessing pornography depicting rape would be a criminal offense, among other measures.

Criticism of this approach was swift, also in Canada. Critics argue that giving ISP's the mandate of filtering out pornography is a dangerous precedent and interferes with personal liberty and privacy. If the government mandates this, what else will it filter? When this government introduced Bill C-30 (an online surveillance and warrantless wiretapping bill) to combat child pornography, it received fierce criticism, even from the federal privacy commissioner. In response, the government dropped the legislation.

An even bigger challenge is the practical difficulty of regulating something as large and fluid as the Internet. There are over 271 million domain names registered online. These domains have subdomains, and all of the information on the domains can change in an instant. As Cory Doctorow explained succinctly

at *TheGuardian.com*, there are only two ways to filter all of this: with real human beings or via software. “To filter content automatically and accurately would require software capable of making human judgments – working artificial intelligence, the province of science fiction.” And there simply are not enough people to examine all the information that is online.

Another technological response is to create a black list of pornography sites which could be constantly updated, using tips from the public (similar to how cybertip.ca is used to combat bullying). Australia requires this of their ISP. ISP's can then be mandated with blocking all of these sites, with a possible option of allowing adults to then opt-in to these sites. Again, there is a host of criticism directed to this approach. Most of the criticism centers on the fact that the filters have limited reach, can easily be bypassed, and require discretion from the person administering them.

Few would argue that filters don't have an impact. They can prevent some people from seeing some pornography some of the time. But that is little to offer when the price tag includes giving vast censorship powers to private ISPs. There are some parallels here to the alcohol prohibition efforts. When it is easy to bypass the law and very difficult to regulate it, the focus shifts to the failure of the law rather than the evil it is trying to counter.

But this doesn't mean there is nothing that can be done through the technological world. Just as we have been able to see our laws against child pornography enforced, including with international cooperation, we should also be able to make similar efforts against illegal pornography.

WHAT ABOUT ICELAND & THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S EFFORTS?

For five years in a row, Iceland was ranked first in the world for women's equal access to opportunity, standing on top of 135 other nations surveyed by the World Economic Forum. Yet, other western nations gawked when Iceland's government announced in 2013 that it was going to try to be the first western nation to ban violent and degrading

...all strip clubs
were banned,
and none exist
in Iceland today.

pornography. But this is just one more step in a progression of policy measures aimed to protect children and reduce sexual violence against women. The government had already passed a law in 2009 similar to Canada's Bill C-36 which imposes fines and jail terms on those buying sexual services. Then, in 2010 they made it illegal for any business to profit from the nudity of its employees. As a result, all strip clubs were banned, and none exist in Iceland today.

Working to crack down on pornography, Iceland's Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Welfare joined together to first consult professionals to analyze the effects of violent pornography and then develop a comprehensive and holistic policy regarding violence prevention, sex education, and sexual health. As a result of this work, the team prepared legislation that would narrow the legal definition of pornography to ban all violent and degrading sexual material.

In addition to drafting legislation, a committee was formed to study how to implement it using technical, legal, and procedural means.

Not long after these plans made news, a new government was elected in Iceland and the push for pornography laws subsided. It is unclear what will be done with the work of the committee. But those who think this is just a blip on the radar fail to see the broader context. In 2011, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe published their report on “violent and extreme pornography” which challenged the member states to do more research on this matter and introduce new legislation with a focus on violent and extreme pornography. These recommendations are spelled

out through a long list of specific policy recommendations.

It isn't only Iceland that has heeded this call. The chart on the right details some of the other European countries that have made efforts to combat extreme pornography. The point is that secular western democracies understand the harm and are taking action, even though their effectiveness will be limited.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

An underlying issue to all of this is the secularization of western nations. We have moved away from an objective standard of morality. Our Supreme Court's decision to abandon "community standards" was a natural progression for a nation that has lost a common moral foundation. When a society guides itself by what feels good, there will be enormous brokenness and a lot of hurt.

But our leaders have little interest in changing course and being guided by the moral standards that come from God. As long as we live in a world that celebrates sexual immorality, we will feel the misery that results from it.

So what can be done today, in secular Canada? A wide variety of Canadians from across the political spectrum, including leftist feminists and social conservatives, recognize the harm and pain caused by pornography. While there is a role to play by parents, the therapeutic community, educators, journalists, private industry, churches and pop culture, there is also a role for civil government.

Canada already has legislation prohibiting obscene material. Yet the lack of prosecution, the vagueness of the law, and the confusion resulting from the Supreme Court of Canada's removal of the community harm principle has resulted in almost no political and legal response to the proliferation of even the most vile forms of pornography. Just as the federal government has taken a lead in combatting narcotics, bullying and prostitution, it can do the same with combatting pornography. In particular ARPA Canada has made the following recommendations to MPs and Senators:

Country	Legislative Efforts to Combat Pornography
Britain	Opt-in requirement, ban "extreme" pornography
Denmark	Blacklist pornographic websites – require opt-in
Iceland	Banned strip clubs, efforts to ban violent and degrading pornography
Scotland	Banned possession of "extreme" pornography
Germany	Illegal to produce and distribute pornography that involves violence or bestiality
Norway	Illegal to depict sexual activities involving animals, rape, violence, or force.

- That Parliament's Standing Committee on Health undertake extensive study of the impact of pornography on the health of Canadians, in particular, the factors that heighten risk for dependency and addiction and the effects of exposure to pornography on children and adolescents;
- That Parliament's Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights undertake research to determine the relationship between pornography and prostitution and human trafficking and between pornography and other sexual crimes. Further, that it or a sub-committee examine the technological means that exist or can be created to effectively restrict criminal activity of this nature online;
- That Parliament conduct a long-term educational campaign, similar to its anti-bullying initiative, about the harm caused by pornography and the means to protect individuals and families from it;
- That Parliament amend the Criminal Code to clarify the obscenity provisions so that violent and degrading pornography is illegal to produce, distribute and possess;
- That the CRTC and other government agencies take reasonable efforts to ensure their own compliance with the spirit of the law and cooperation with the educational campaign. For example, it is deplorable that the CRTC forced three pornographic TV

channels to increase their "Canadian-made" content in 2014;

- That all levels of civil government respect the role and authority of the family so that parents can take appropriate measures to raise their children. For example, some provincial governments have driven a wedge between schools and parents by not allowing parents to opt-out of exposure to sexually explicit material which parents believe is inappropriate for their children.

In sum, there is much that even a secular nation can do to combat what most would recognize is a scourge on society. Our challenge is to make our government officials aware of the problem and potential solutions. This article is based on a policy report that ARPA Canada produced as part of its Respectfully Submitted series. We encourage our readers to download a copy at ARPACanada.ca/publications, print it, and share it with your MP, asking him or her to take action.

Yes, families and individuals can do much to protect ourselves and our children from pornography. But Canada can also take steps to challenge the evil at its source. RP

The original version of this article contained 25 footnotes. If you want to see these references to the research material, visit ARPACanada.ca/publications.

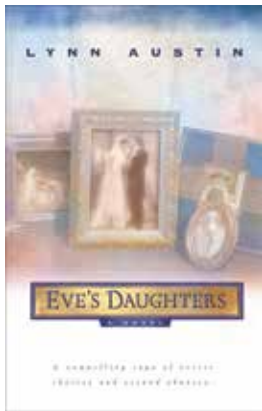
REVIEWS

BETTER CHRISTIAN FICTION

EVE'S DAUGHTERS

BY LYNN AUSTIN

1999 / 432 PAGES



This book was recommended to me by a good friend. I was a little skeptical (Christian women's fiction can be formulaic and sappy!) but while I was still reading it I noticed a young lady at church stuff a copy into a friend's mailbox. She also said it was fantastic. Add my vote, and that makes three recommendations for you so far!

Eve's Daughters is a multi-generational story, but mainly about Emma, a daughter born to immigrant parents. She is a rather free spirit who has trouble living by her parents' rules. Their view of life is too "old country" – Emma considers herself an American, not a German-American.

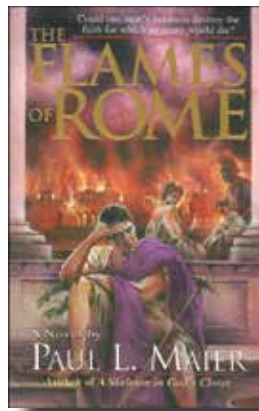
But eventually Emma comes to see that the "rules" of the previous generation have value and are of great importance. She realizes that some of the choices she made in her life have caused great harm to her daughter and even her granddaughter. She must tell them the truth that she has kept carefully hidden for fifty years, and by doing so also free herself of the animosity that she feels toward God. Emma and her daughter and granddaughter learn that love – true love – forgives, just as we are forgiven by God through grace alone.

– JEANETTE DYKSTRA

THE FLAMES OF ROME

BY PAUL L. MAIER

456 PAGES / 2014



The Flames of Rome recounts Nero's rise to power and his ultimate brutal death. This is a novel, so strictly speaking, it is not history – it is true to the historical period, but fills in a lot of details.

What's absolutely fascinating is the way the rise of Christianity is woven through the storyline. Early on, the character Pomponia encounters Christianity and is sorely tempted to get involved with this strange yet exciting sect. This, naturally, causes friction between her and her very Roman husband. Her new husband, Sabinus, happily indulges her beliefs in this offbeat Jewish sect, but becomes more influenced by them than he might have imagined. Sabinus, in his eventual role as governor of Rome, must struggle with his desire to free Rome from the insanity of Nero, while trying not to betray the Christian beliefs he is increasingly calling his own.

One caution: while Maier writes with delicacy, it's still clear that Nero is bisexual, and that Christians die in horrible, terrifying ways. Maier strikes an admirable balance between letting his readers know of the depravity of Rome without using needless and titillating detail. Yet the gross reality is there since a tale like this cannot ignore it.

– JAMES DYKSTRA

SCIMITAR'S EDGE

BY MARVIN OLASKY

2006 / 276 PAGES



When a party of four Americans vacations in Turkey they become the target of terrorists who believe torture can be poetic and artistic.

That's the plotline, but I'm not going to recommend this for its plot. The merits of the book are in the author's expertise. WORLD magazine editor Marvin Olasky has authored such nonfiction books as *The Great Divide: The failure of Islam and the Triumph of the West* and *The Religions Next Door: What We Need To Know About Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, And Islam*. So *Scimitar's Edge* is a highly educational novel, giving readers an insightful look into the minds of Islamic terrorists.

However it is also Olasky's first attempt at fiction, and while it is suspenseful, the dialogue can be clunky at times. From an entertainment perspective, or evaluated on its literary merit, this is a decidedly average book. But for those who like learning via a fictional format, this is a pretty accessible way to learn more about Islamic terrorism, and from a man of wisdom who really knows what he's talking about.

One caution: this is only intended for adults. Olasky details some of the terrorist's torture, and while he treads quite tactfully, it would be too much for young readers.

– JON DYKSTRA

SNOW ON THE TULIPS

BY LIZ TOLSMA
318 PAGES / 2013



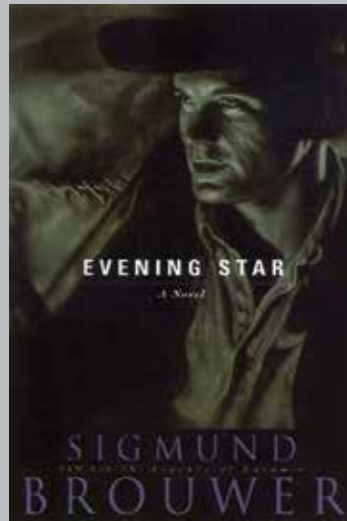
Christian romance fiction is not my thing, but the Dutch setting piqued my interest. It gets off to a quick start, introducing us to Dutch Resistance member Gerrit Langinga as he's being marched to his execution in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands. A badly aimed shot allows him to survive his death sentence, but leaves him dependent on the care of a nearby young and attractive widow, Cornelia, who grudgingly hides him from the Germans.

What sets this apart from most other Christian historical romances is that the theological underpinnings are sound (the author is the daughter of an OPC pastor, so no Arminian undertones here), all the characters are already devout Christians (so no missionary dating), and the characters are authentically and familiarly Dutch. The Dutch setting will appeal to anyone who knows their *hagelslag* from their *dubbel zout*.

As for the writing, overall it isn't bad, but there are a few lines sprinkled throughout that will have readers either groaning or smiling. For example: "*Cornelia.*" *The name swirled on his tongue, sweet as the sugar on olliebollen.* And: *...Gerrit smiled at her, turning her knees to hutsport.*

If you're groaning, steer clear. If you're smiling, you can pick this up at Christianbooks.com.

– JON DYKSTRA



EVENING STAR

BY SIGMUND BROUWER
2000 / 317 PAGES

Set on the 1870s American frontier, this might at first glance seem to be a Western. But there's a good deal of mystery novel here too – from the moment Sam Keaton steps into the town of Laramie he's confronted with one riddle after another. It all starts with an Indian that Keaton saves from a vicious beating. This good deed puts Keaton behind bars. Before he can engineer his escape, the town's Marshal, a mysterious sort himself, sends Keaton off to find out about some gold that may, or may not exist.

While mysteries abound in this very fast-paced book, what sets it apart is the growth Keaton goes through. Early on, he's trapped in his tiny jail cell facing a very large, very angry man who has been sent to kill him. Staring down the wrong end of a shotgun barrel changes Keaton. Soon after, when a pretty, and very willing young woman throws herself at him, Keaton turns her down, but finds himself

... wondering why I had not pursued the company she had been offering.... Because of that shotgun I could not deny the nagging feeling that I was missing something, that life had to be bigger than finding ways to satisfy the varied demands of my body. I could not escape the feeling that deep down, I'd always known life had to be bigger, but along the way I had always chosen whatever distractions it took to keep me from wondering about God. Except now, try as I might, I couldn't ignore what some certainty told me was beyond. If I turned my back on whatever instinct now pulled me to seek answers, if I chose distractions like this Suzanne, I would have to fool myself real good not to find those distractions sour and hollow.

Keaton isn't done with his spiritual wrestling by the end of the book, but he has made a good start of it.

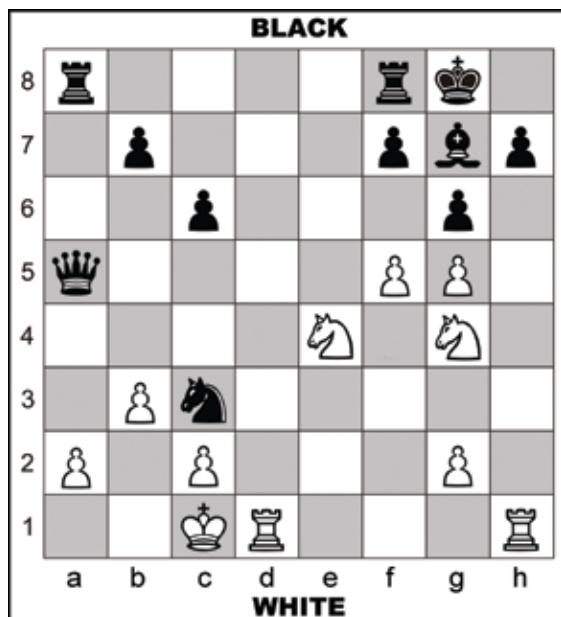
But while there is a lot to love about this book, it is worth noting that there is some adult material here – there is some grit. One example: Keaton recalls a time when he was seduced by a "wild" woman. It never gets lascivious but Brouwer does describe sexual temptation in a pretty frank way. So this is a book I would recommend for adults only.

– JON DYKSTRA

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



Chess Puzzle #221



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

Riddle for Punsters #221

"Just Too Pricey!"

Why did Mrs. Stingysnob faint in the carpet store? When she found out how much it would cost to replace all the carpeting in her large house, she was just fl _____ d.

Problem to Ponder #221

"One letter makes all the difference"

Change the middle letter of the first five-letter word, whose meaning is first given, to make the word whose meaning is given second.
For example, blaze, waterfall -> flame, flume

Hoax, path -> _____ , _____

Slippery, loose -> _____ , _____

Accumulate, watch intently -> _____ , _____

Wonderful, crush -> _____ , _____

Trap, nasal wheeze -> _____ , _____

Bad smell, was smelly -> _____ , _____

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #220



WHITE TO MATE IN 3

Descriptive Notation

1. Bxb7 ch K-N1
2. R-R8 ch NxR
3. QxN mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Bf3xb7 + Kc8-b8
2. Ra3-a8 + Nb6xa8
3. Qa2xa8 ++

BLACK TO MATE IN 4

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- NxB ch
2. K-B1 R-Q8 ch
3. K-K2 R-Q7 ch
4. K-B1 QxNP mate

IF
1. ----- NxB ch
2. K-R1 R-Q8 mate

1. ----- NxB ch
2. K-B2 R-Q7 ch
3. K-B1 QxNP mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Ne5xf3 +
2. Kg1-f1 Rd8-d1 +
3. Kf1-e2 Rd1-d2 +
4. Ke2-f1 Qg6xg2 ++

IF
1. ----- Ne5xf3 +- 2. Kg1-h1 Rd8-d1 ++

1. ----- Ne5xf3 +
2. Kg1-f2 Rd8-d2 +
3. Kf2-f1 Qg6xg2 ++

Answer to Riddle for Punsters

#220 - **"Greens are Good For You!"**

What are the different kinds of salad?

Lettuce look it up!

What types of meals go well with a salad?

That's food for thought!

Are salads healthy to eat?

That's the beleaf of many people!

Answer to Problem to Ponder

#220 - **"Word Transformations"**

MAN -> MAT -> MIT -> WIT

WIT -> WIN -> WON -> TON

WORK -> WORE -> TORE -> TIRE -> TIME

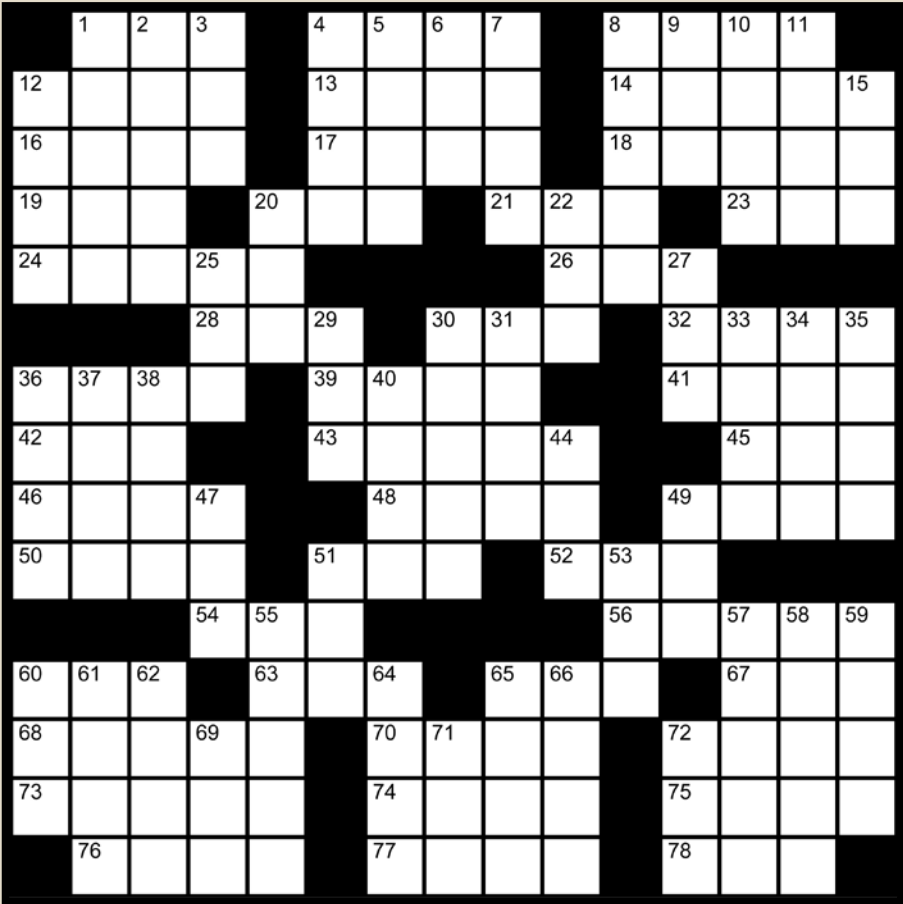
WENT -> WANT -> WANE -> WADE -> MADE

GLADE -> GRADE -> GRACE -> TRACE -> TRACK -> TRUCK

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA



SERIES 1-9

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

- Big fuss (or French farewell, badly spelled)
- 160 make a quarter-section on the prairies
- "Behold, I stand at the ____" (Rev. 3)
- What you have to pay to join or be successful
- Small nail
- Very fast
- Just standing around, an engine going nowhere
- Breathing organ
- "_____ that he will let you go." (Ex. 3)
- "now ____ up and eat" (Gen. 27)
- Six-sided space in a board game
- Deviate from straight course (for plane or ship)
- Sneaky, cunning; or nickname for Stallone
- Raccoon-like animal, but with slenderer snout
- Abbreviation for *manuscripts*

- Eggs (plural of ovum)
- Favorite transportation of the ____ set
- It can burn skin, but it's needed for digestion.
- Help a criminal; or a *wager* he'll get away
- Already not-cool slang for something you like
- ____ Hari: famous female French spy
- Female undergarment
- "the clusters _____ed into" (Gen. 40)
- Color of sunset, embarrassment, anger
- Make money, get what you deserve
- Give off coherent light (as a laser does)
- Floor model (already assembled and cheaper!)
- Place to get ____cious meat-laden sandwiches
- Charged atomic particle to keep your eye on
- "she ____ favor in his sight"

- (Esther 5)
- Chum whose friendship is almost ____pable
- Cry of frustration
- Peek-a-____!
- Agency that administers **drug** enforcement
- "She... filled her ____" (Gen. 24)
- Suffix for words like Americ____ or Sherlocki____
- Noxious insect first appearing in **April**?
- Biblical rebel against Abimelech in Judges 9
- Twelfth month of Hebrew calendar (Esther 9)
- People putting up ripped tents may feel this.
- Hunter in camo will still need ____ (Rhymes!)
- Pharaoh called Joseph this. (Gen. 41)
- "I stand at the ____ and knock" (Rev. 3)
- What Jesus said He'd do; rhyme for 75 across
- Form of classical Japanese musical theatre

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 1-8

DOWN

- Sound part of a TV show
- Land made by sediment at the river mouth
- Suffix for gluc____ and suc____ and fruct____
- God is both willing and ____ to help us.
- Essential point; Latin for cross
- "But Esau ____ to meet him" (Gen. 33)
- Nervously irritable
- "my life _____ near to Sheol" (Ps. 88)
- Insulting term for someone in your way
- Chooses (for)
- Metis leader in 1869 and 1885
- A compact one plays 1 Down
- "let the ____ land appear." (Gen. 1)
- Virus that leads to AIDS
- Abbreviation for *amount*
- Little tyke, small child
- Elkanah and Hannah's son (short form)
- Abbreviation for the showery month
- Land of the Rising Sun
- Summers in Paris
- "let her ____ for them." (1 Tim. 5)
- One thing on your list; or a new couple
- Cut used to make joints in woodworking
- Early mornings we just want to stay ____
- Steep hillside, in Scottish

- dialect (or 42 across with an E)
- "Duke of _____" – title of lordly 1950s hit song
- Largest settlement in Hawaii
- "there arose a ____ king over" (Ex. 1)
- What terriers do at postmen's heels
- The stuff that makes twins identical
- French for *island*
- Don't be up the creek without one!
- Snake most often found in "summer"
- Home entertainment before TV
- "they _____ their teeth" (Lam. 2)
- Unclean speedy mammal in Mosaic law
- Unclean flying mammal in Mosaic law
- What poet did to door (Note next clue!)
- What poet said about water bucket on doorsill
- Bacterial culture medium; rhyme for 72 across
- Found in plural of 65 across; made from fruit
- Plant used for its soothing properties
- Prefix used in words like ____tope and ____mer
- "____ your favorite ____?" – bilingual question
- Plant bristle, or part of **awning**

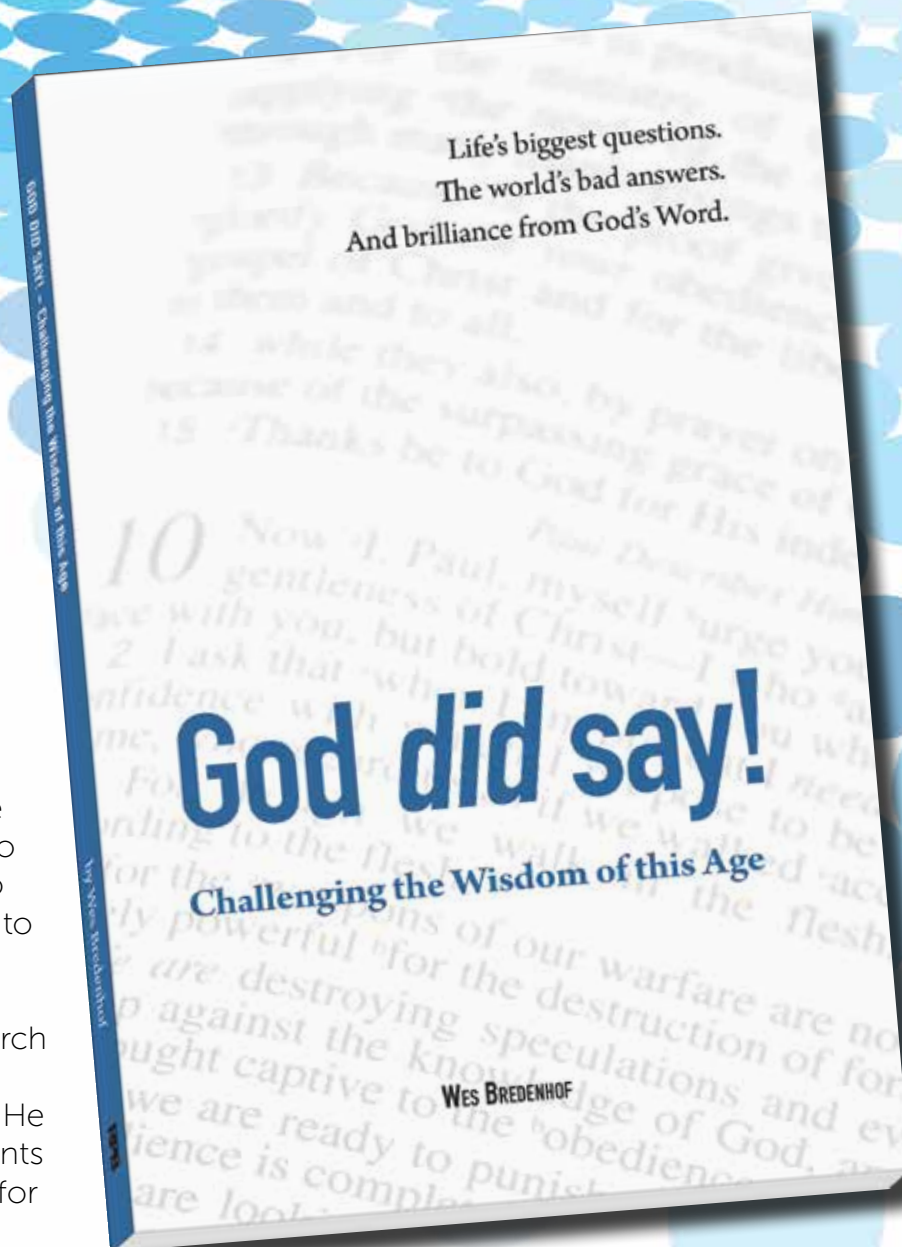
from Reformed Perspective Books

Consider these two questions:

- "What did God say?"
- "Did God *really* say?"

The first one is about finding clarity. The second seems like the first, but when the Serpent asked it of Eve his intent wasn't to *confirm* what God had said, but rather to *challenge* it. He was asking this question to raise doubt.

The same is true today. Some in the Church are questioning, but not to find out what God said. They want to undermine what He said! In his new book Dr. Bredenhof wants us to understand that there is no need for uncertainty, because God *did* say!



120 page

E-book (pdf) **\$5**

Paperback **\$16**

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Order at www.tinyurl.com/GodDidSay