

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

MAY/JUNE 2021
Volume 40 Issue No. 4

PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS

SUMMER READING SUGGESTIONS

DOUGLAS WILSON'S
DEVoured BY CANNABIS
P.4

A REASON TO READ
BIOGRAPHIES
P.26

KEVIN DEYOUNG'S
*MEN AND WOMEN
IN THE CHURCH*
P.32

CARL TRUEMAN
ON TODAY'S
SEXUAL MADNESS
P.37

FEATURE AUTHOR:
JAN BRETT
P.40

NOTA
BENE
p. 6

FROM THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD • MOVIE REVIEWS



ADVERTISE IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

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

Reformed PERSPECTIVE

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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

For print magazine requests or to change your address, contact:

Sherri Harsevoort - Reformed Perspective Administration,
Box 1039, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0
admin@reformedperspective.ca
1-204-751-0613

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

E-mail: editor@reformedperspective.ca

Editor: Jon Dykstra

Regular Contributors: Sharon Bratcher, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder, Rob Slane, Michael Wagner

Board of Directors: Bruce DeBoer (Chairman); Marty VanDriel (Treasurer); Chris deBoer (Executive Director); Aren Vreugdenhil; Aubrey Vandergaag; Sharon de Boer (Secretary); Miranda Hofsink

Template Design: Compass Creative Studio Inc. compasscreative.ca

Art Direction, Design and Layout: Annelies Veurink
www.facebook.com/FreshDesignByAnnelies

Contact Address for Australia:

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

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

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

If you are interested in the work of Reformed Perspective Foundation and in the promotion of Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially in your local area, and you need help, contact our editor at editor@ReformedPerspective.ca.

Registration: ISSN 0714-8208
Charitable Organization under Canada
Income Tax Act

Registration No. 118929272RR0001

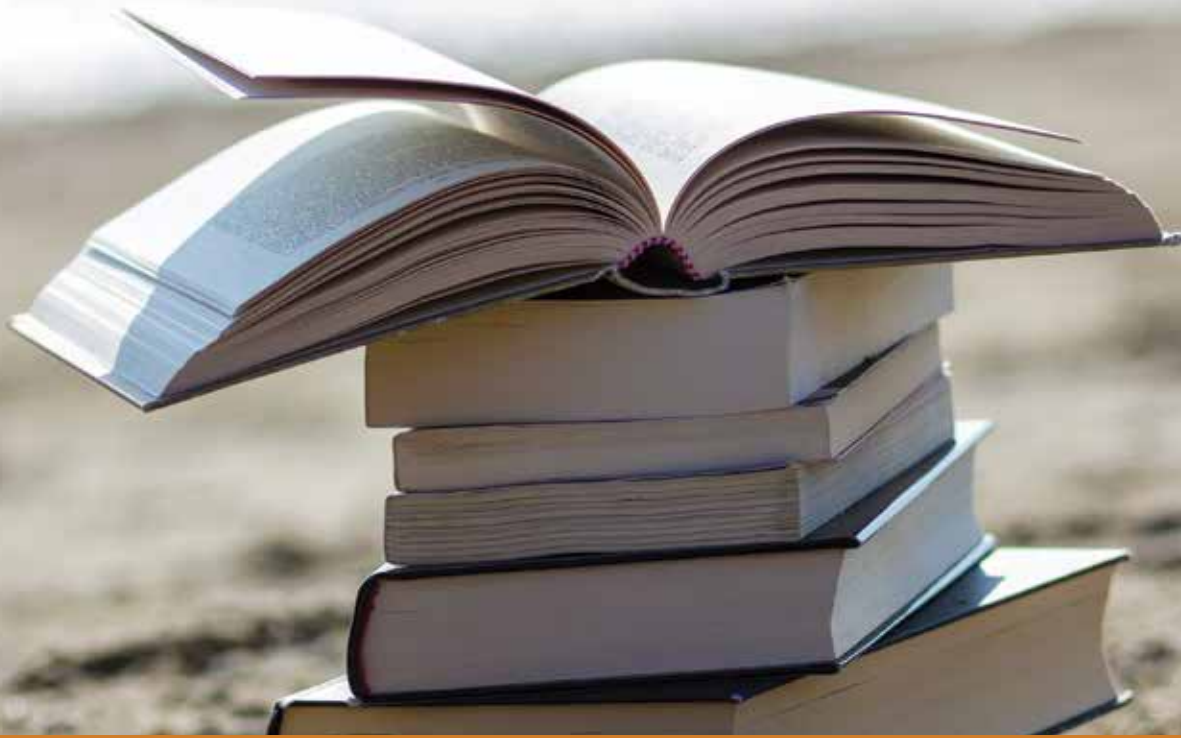
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE
CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

reformedperspective.ca

CROSSWORD SOLUTION SERIES 6-6





SUMMER SUGGESTIONS

Devoured by Cannabis, Men and Women in the Church, Return of the God Hypothesis, The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self, and more!

P.4,32-45



**INFANT BAPTISM VS.
BELIEVERS-ONLY BAPTISM**

- Garry Vanderveen

P.8



COMFORT WHEN FACING DEATH

- Andrew J. Pol

P.30



**BETSIE, THE WATCHMAKER'S
DAUGHTER** P.18

- Christine Farenhorst

FROM THE EDITOR P.4

- Jon Dykstra

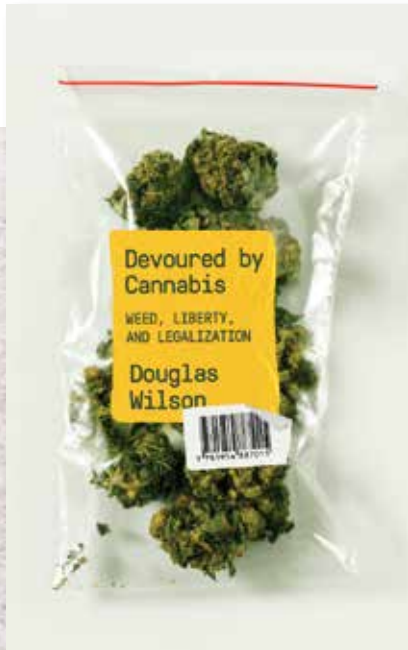
NOTA BENE P.6

IN A NUTSHELL P.12

HERETIC? P.10

- Wes Bredenhof

FREE CHRISTIAN FILMS P.16



DEVOURED BY CANNABIS

BY DOUGLAS WILSON
99 PAGES / 2021

A CASE AGAINST CANNABIS

by Jon Dykstra

Why shouldn't Christians smoke marijuana? The go-to answer to that question used to be: Because it is illegal. But with its legalization in Canada and many US states, that argument is increasingly irrelevant.

But are there any other reasons not to inhale? In this slim volume Douglas Wilson says yes, arguing that it is a sin, and despite what's happening in jurisdictions all over, it is the sort of sin that should also be a crime.

INTOXICATION IS OUT

So why is it a sin? Wilson points to God's prohibition against intoxication. While alcohol can also cause intoxication, he notes the Bible also spells out five legitimate uses including:

1. sacramental
2. medicinal
3. aesthetic
4. quenching thirst
5. a celebratory, gladdening the heart, function.

It is this last one that is sometimes pointed to as a legitimate usage for marijuana, but in answer to that argument, Wilson notes that God's condemnation of drunkenness and His call for self-control puts constraints on what sort

of celebrations we should have. "True celebration is *discipline*, accompanied by hard work, training, and fruition of joy" while the use of marijuana "is a celebratory slide downward..."

His point is that alcohol goes well with a been-cooking-all-day-holiday-feast, with one wine pairing "well with the beef, and another chosen because it complements the pasta." Meanwhile, "marijuana goes well with Oreos and mustard." The one can be a part of a God-glorifying family gathering, the other simply a lead-in to letting loose. Thus "the only possible lawful use for marijuana is the medicinal, [but] the use to which everyone puts marijuana is the one that is denied to alcohol," i.e. intoxication.

SHOULD IT BE A CRIME?

Wilson also makes the argument that marijuana usage is not simply a sin, but a crime, and notes that's a departure from the more hands-off stance he once leaned toward. Why the change? While acknowledging not all sins should be crimes – we wouldn't want the government trying to police the 10th commandment – Wilson notes that in a finger-in-every-pot State such that we have, whatever isn't criminalized is all too often then encouraged and tax-sub-

sidized. And it isn't hard to see how that would happen with marijuana usage. Our welfare state will have the government picking up the pieces, doling out tax dollars. That might be money for medical treatments dealing with increased cases of psychosis. Or it might be increased unemployment and welfare payouts that will be needed for the addicted.

Another cost will come to employers. The way legalization has proceeded, it is as if it's been some sort of neutral act, granting the pot-user a freedom at no cost to anyone else. If that were so, Wilson notes, then:

"...the liberty to smoke pot and the liberty to fire a pothead should be the same liberty. Otherwise, we are granting liberty to the privilege and no liberty at all to the responsibility.... [But] the way the push for legal pot is happening now, the pressure is on us to increase the liberty of the irresponsible while simultaneously decreasing the liberty of the responsible ones."

Government will be stuck with the cost, as will employers, who will not be allowed to fire someone for using what will now be a perfectly legal substance.

Wilson is not arguing so much that marijuana must always and in all circum-

stances be criminalized, but more that if presented with a choice of the State either criminalizing usage or encouraging it, then we should choose the former. But are those really the only realistic options? Can't the State take a neutral stance, neither against, but also not for? Well, the latest bit of evidence on that front is Washington State's "Joint for Jabs" where the government is using the promise of a free joint to promote Covid vaccination. And California has announced a \$100 million bailout for their struggling marijuana shops. It really does seem that if they aren't against it, then they will be pushing it.

So what then is to be done? Wilson is writing for the US, where some states have legalized it and others have not, and there he's hoping it might still be possible, if not to maintain an outright "red," to at least run with a "yellow" rather than a "green." Where it is completely legal, like Canada, the hope would be that at least the Church can recognize what should be – that it is a sin, even if it isn't a crime. Unconfused on that point, God's people can minimize our own addictions. And to help others, we can make a push for restrictions, particularly for teenage and young adult usage.

SINNERS NEED THEIR SAVIOR

The book concludes with a Gospel appeal, in which Wilson reminds us that it is only when our country turns back to God that we will be able to turn away from such addictions. But he is quick to point out that while our addictions should have our country desperate for God, we don't turn to Christ simply to right ourselves or our country.

"If we treat Christ as the means to an end (freedom from drugs, say), then we

are not coming to Him as Christ. He is a Savior, not a self-help specialist. We come to the Giver for who He is and not for the gifts that He might give. At the same time, He is the Giver of gifts (Eph. 4:8)."

Our culture doesn't just need to be freed from addiction – a sober pagan is still going to hell. What the Church can direct people to is not simply freedom from drugs, but freedom in Christ. In Him, we are free to enjoy our God and Maker, and we are free to live to His glory. That will also be a freedom from addiction, but that is the fruit that comes from turning to God. What Wilson is reminding us of here is the need to point others to the Tree of Life, and not simply its fruit.

CONCLUSION

The value of Wilson's book is, first and foremost, the section on whether marijuana usage should be a sin. The clarity on offer here could be a great help for our teens and young adults when (not if) they are pressured into trying it. For parents who think that won't happen, just remember back to the parties you

WHAT'S INSIDE?

As summer arrives and vacations are scheduled, there is often extra time available to do some reading. We've got some recommendations that cover a lot of different territory but what unites them is that they are all fantastic reads. And all are highly educational. They run from the light yet helpful *Devoured by Cannabis*, to the really readable but a-highlighter-is-absolutely-required *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. Whatever your interests, there is something here that you'll want to read, or maybe even need to.

either attended or heard about where all the attendees were church-goers, but where underage drinking was prevalent nonetheless. So let's not be naive about whether our children are going to be offered marijuana at their own parties today. Dad, mom, Wilson's book is a quick, insightful discussion that would make for a great read for you to tackle along with your teen – it's a tool here for you to use. **RP**

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

WE SERVE
OUR **CLIENTS**, OUR **COMMUNITY**
& OUR **LORD**

Rachel VANDYK
sales representative
289-214-1825

Randy MULDER
sales representative
905-359-9411

Bill BROUWER
sales representative
905-341-4400

Ron MULDER
sales representative
905-327-4564

John MEERVELD
Broker
905-531-0093

Lisa VROLIJK
Administrator
lisa@yourniagarahome.com

YOURNIAGARAHOMETEAM
For All Your Real Estate Needs

RE/MAX **GARDEN CITY**
realty inc., brokerage
2390 South Service Road, Jordan

NOTA BENE

News worth noting
BY JON DYKSTRA

GOVERNMENT IS SPENDING OVER HALF OF WHAT CANADIAN FAMILIES EARN

Each year the Fraser Institute, an economic think tank, calculates Canada's "Tax Freedom Day." If the average Canadian family's earnings were to go just towards paying the taxes they owe to all three levels of government, this is the day they'd have paid it all off. And 2021's Tax Freedom Day was May 24.

This is accounting for not just your income taxes but *all* the taxes levied. So, also included are payroll taxes, health taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, profit taxes, "sin" taxes, fuel taxes, and the many other fees and levies the government collects.

Of course, not all government revenues come from taxes – we're also running a sizeable deficit, funded by borrowing. That's why the Fraser Institute has also calculated a "Balanced Budget Tax Freedom Day." This date is calculated by considering how much we'd each have to pay if the government funded

all their current expenses *without* borrowing. Then we'd have to work all way to July 7 to pay off government expenses, and only then would we start earning for our own family. What that means is that the government is spending just over half of what Canadian families earn but they are lowering what we have to pay now by running up a debt that someone will have to pay off later.

This isn't just saddling our children with our expenses: our growing debt is already impacting us now.

The Fraser Institute estimates that the interest payments we have to make, when we combine the debt from every level of government, amounted to approximately \$67 billion this last year. That's somewhere in the range of what Canada's K-12 schooling costs.

Because provincial debts vary greatly, the average "combined interest cost per person" varied greatly by province, with the low end being \$1,059/person in BC, and the high being \$2,604/person in Newfoundland. That's a cost that comes each year again. This is why God talks about debt being like slavery (Prov. 22:7). The money we owe limits what we can do going forward.

We could view this past year's deficit spending as, perhaps, understandable because of the unprecedented year it was. In our own households, if we were faced with a big enough emergency, we might raid our kid's piggy banks and borrow from them. But before we excuse the federal government for overspending in 2020, consider how much they plan to *continue* overspending. Our pre-pandemic federal debt was \$721 billion, and the government's own expectations have that doubling by 2026.

The problem here is not a revenue shortfall, but the sheer size of our government. In 1 Samuel 8:10-22 the prophet Samuel warns of the danger of a king because he might demand *ten percent* – he might in arrogance demand as much as God did! Well, this past year the average Canadian family had to pay a combined, all levels of government, tax bill of 39% of their earnings. And if we eliminated government borrowing

and had to pay as we go, that same average family would have to contribute 51% of their income! We should take warning from Lord Acton here, not simply that "power tends to corrupt" but, with government grown to such enormous size, that "absolute power corrupts absolutely."

SOURCES: "Canadians celebrate Tax Freedom Day on May 24, 2021" by Milagros Palacios, Jake Fuss, and Nathaniel Li, published in the Fraser Research Bulletin, May 2021 edition; "Federal and Provincial Debt-interest Costs for Canadians" by Jake Fuss and Steve Lafleur, published in the Fraser Research Bulletin, Feb. 2021



SPORTS BETTING IS BOOMING

Even as COVID lockdowns shut down most of the major sports leagues in 2020, it was the biggest year yet for American sports betting. More than \$21 billion was bet, up 50% from the \$13 billion gambled in 2019. Being stuck at home might have been a factor in the increase, limiting our other entertainment options. But another factor is how, over the last few years, gambling has become a socially acceptable way of enhancing the enjoyment of a game. A 2018 survey found 4 out of 10 American men in the 25-34 age bracket would place a bet on a game at least once a week.

Good stewards that we are called to

be, Christians can't gamble with what God has entrusted to us... not even when it's just a few bucks with our friends. Gambling is a zero sum game, where any gains you might make can only come at the expense of someone else. So if you are loving your friends as you should (Mark 12:31) you shouldn't want to profit at their expense.

The growing prevalence of gambling does present an opportunity of sorts. If many or even most of our college friends or coworkers are betting on tonight's football game, then obeying God by staying out of the office pool is going to make us stick out. That can be an uncomfortable spot, but it is also



what being a light looks like.

So get out your big foam finger, your air horn, and your authentic jersey, and cheer on the home team just for the fun of it. And maybe your bet-free example will spawn some important questions, or even some imitators.

SOURCES: John Stonestreet and Roberto Rivera's "Betting on March Madness," posted to BreakPoint.org on March 23, 2021; Does TV sports have a future? Bet on it," posted to www2.Deloitte.com on Dec. 11, 2018.

ERIN O'TOOLE VOTES AGAINST THE UNBORN AT HIS FIRST OPPORTUNITY

On June 2, Canada's Parliament voted overwhelmingly to reject restrictions on the murder of unborn baby girls. More specifically, they voted, 248 to 82 against backbench MP Cathay Wagantall's Private Member's Bill C-233, which would have made it illegal to abort a baby simply because she is female.

The good news? For the first time in more than a decade Parliament had to debate a bill that would restrict abortion. That got people talking about the unborn, and got their plight some

needed public attention.


The bill also gave us a public accounting of just how wicked some of our politicians are. This was about as minimally pro-life – as small a step forward – as any pro-life bill could be in that it didn't necessarily prevent any abortions, but simply ruled out one justification for them: sex-selection. And by protecting unborn girls it also offered as much political cover as any pro-life bill ever could – this was a feminist pro-life bill. Yet 248 still voted against it. These MPs have shown that there is a real depth and commitment

to their wickedness.

Among those with babies' blood on their hands is Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole. That he voted against the bill should come as no surprise to anyone since he's always pledged to support the murder of the unborn as a right. But Christian Heritage Party leader Rod Taylor noted something that was curious:

"31 of the 81 Conservatives who supported C-233 also supported the nomination of either Erin O'Toole in 2020, when he ran as a pro-choice (pro-abortion) leadership contestant or Peter Mackay, who was even farther left. When I look at the list of MPs who endorsed O'Toole or Mackay over pro-life MP Derek Sloan, it makes me wonder how they expected that the election of a leader who was actively promoting an anti-life position could ever lead to a good result in the House of Commons. As it is, any likelihood of the weakened and conflicted Conservative Party achieving victory in the next election has vanished. Compromise in the leadership contest in 2020 has guaranteed compromise on moral issues in 2021."





by Garry Vanderveen

Infant Baptism vs. Believers-only Baptism

WHAT'S THE MAIN DIFFERENCE?

The fundamental difference between the two positions is revealed in how one answers this question: Is baptism primarily God's action or is it a human response?

The Bible tells us that we are dead in sin (Eph. 2:1). Consequently, it is God who makes us alive in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4). Even our faith, which is our response to God's great work of salvation, is of divine origin. Faith itself is gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Infant baptism testifies to the grace of God in salvation: God is the one who initiates, acts and saves. Believers-only baptism testifies to our response of faith to God's saving work in ourselves. On this view, baptism is a sign and seal of my public profession of faith in Christ Jesus.

AN OVERLOOKED ARGUMENT

There are plenty of helpful resources on infant baptism, and most of them rightly link baptism to circumcision. In Genesis 17, God promises to be "God to you [i.e. Abraham] and to your offspring

forever (Gen. 17:7). There is great comfort in knowing that God binds himself by covenant to infants even before they can respond to him by faith. Truly, we love him because he first loved us.

Often overlooked, however, in the discussion on infant baptism are Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians 10:1-5. Although these verses do not provide a comprehensive understanding of infant baptism, they provide another important line of thought. Put simply: Paul assumes that New Testament baptism is the fulfillment of Mosaic baptism. Paul writes:

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for

they were overthrown in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:1-5).

FOUR OBSERVATIONS

There are many golden truths that need to be mined from these few verses but consider the following four simple observations, which help us understand the meaning of infant baptism.

1. *The Church is the new Israel*

First, in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul applies lessons from Israel's history to the church. Paul can do this only because he sees the church as the fulfillment of Israel: the church is the new Israel (Gal. 6:16). More specifically, Paul sees Mosaic baptism as having relevance for the Christian church. This explains why Paul can tell the Corinthians that this event – Israel's baptism in the Red Sea – is an example for them (1 Cor. 10:6). The Old Testament is not a random collection of stories in which God interacts with a people that have no connection to us. No! For Paul, the Old

Testament is part of our story. The story of Israel is the history of the church. These are our parents - these are our “fathers” (1 Cor. 10:1) – and since God does not change, he continues to relate to us in the same way he related to Israel: by means of the covenant.

2. In this case all means all

Second, Paul notes that all of Israel was baptized, ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink. In this case, “all” means “all.” The elderly, the infants and everyone in between were baptized. Whatever else we can say about this passage, it is clear that infants were baptized when they crossed the Red Sea, as they escaped from Egypt. And if infants were baptized, numbered among God’s people, and partook of Christ in the Old Testament, it only makes sense that they would enjoy the same privileges and blessings today.

3. The Red Sea was the work of God

Third, Israel’s baptism was pre-eminently


the work of God. It was God who led our fathers by pillar of cloud. It was God who opened wide the Red Sea and provided the dry ground. It is true that the adults had to respond to God’s work by faith – they had to walk on the dry ground. And it is also true that the infants who could not walk, but were carried by their parents, were beneficiaries of this baptism. They were delivered from Egypt along with their parents.

4. Baptism is not a guarantee

Fourth, baptism does not guarantee salvation. Paul says that God was not pleased with most of Israel, and they were overthrown in the wilderness. Who were these people? They were the adults who rebelled against God and the leadership of Moses. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until they died off and their baptized children were old enough to enter the Promised Land. God was indeed the God to these children despite the apostasy of

their parents, and their baptism reminded them of God’s faithfulness toward them.

CONCLUSION

There is much more than can be said about this passage. However, these brief observations are sufficient to lead us to the following modest conclusion: The Apostle Paul retells the story of Israel’s baptism in the Red Sea because he believed that they participated in an event that corresponds to the sacrament of Christian baptism.¹ 

ENDNOTE

¹ Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 67.

Rev. Garry Vanderveen blogs at Show, Don't Tell (GarryVanderveen.com) where a version of this first appeared. It is reprinted here with permission.



THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

AN EXPOSITION OF
GOD'S REVELATION
TO JOHN

JAN DEGELDER

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

AN EXPOSITION OF GOD'S REVELATION TO JOHN

BY JAN DEGELDER

“This book bears the distinct marks of a seasoned preacher and pastor. DeGelder’s warm tone and conversational style, coupled with his refusal to be sidetracked by the endless speculations that tend to populate studies of the book of Revelation and distract from its urgent message for the contemporary church, make this a worthwhile read for any and all Christians...”

- Dr. William den Hollander

Professor of New Testament at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, Hamilton, Ontario

Available for purchase online

US: **\$20** Amazon.com | Barnes & Noble

Canada: **\$25** TheStudy-Books.com

Or ask your local Christian book seller to carry this title, too!

HERETIC?

by Wes Bredenhof

I was once labeled a heretic. In fact, I'm sure it's happened more than once. And no, it wasn't Roman Catholics or Muslims saying this – although they would/should certainly classify me as such. This was other Reformed believers. The occasion was a blog post where I shared Richard Sibbes' answer to the question of whether saints in heaven are aware of our trials and miseries (he said they aren't). Some didn't agree with that and I was therefore labeled a "heretic."

There are at least two related issues involved here.

First, there's a popular notion amongst some Reformed believers that every theological error is a heresy. This notion equates error with heresy, as if they are complete synonyms.

Second, there's another notion (found with some) that treats all theological errors as if they were of the same weight. Every theological error then becomes a matter of heaven or hell. In such thinking, to administer the Lord's Supper differently is virtually in the same category as denying the Trinity. It might not ever be said that crassly, but when you look at what's said and done, it often seems to come down to that.

HERESIES PUT SALVATION IN JEOPARDY

To really understand what's involved here we need to turn to church history. Today's misuse of the terms "heresy" and "heretic" are often caused by a lack of understanding of how these terms have been used historically.

In the centuries after the apostles, debates raged about certain doctrinal points. In these debates, certain teachings

were ultimately considered to be heretical. By "heretical," the Church understood that holding to such doctrines put one's salvation in jeopardy. In fact, there were certain teachings where, if one held them consistently and unrepentantly to death, one would not be saved. The word "heresy" was reserved for these teachings that struck at the heart of the Christian faith, attacking fundamental doctrines.

One of the most obvious examples is the doctrine of the Trinity. Denying the doctrine of the Trinity (in various ways) is regarded as heretical. The Athanasian Creed lays out the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and then says in article 28, "So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity." If in any way you deny that God is three persons in one being, you're a heretic.

Another example has to do with Christ and his two natures. Says the Athanasian Creed:

"It is necessary, however, to eternal salvation that he should also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the right faith is that we should confess and believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally both God and man."

If you deny that Christ is both true God and true man, you're a heretic. When we say that, it should be clear that we're making a statement about the seriousness of this error, namely that this is an error for which someone can be damned. A heresy is a deadly error. The biblical basis of making such strong statements is found in places like 1 John 2:22-23:

"Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the anti-christ, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

Another classic example of a heresy is Pelagianism. Pelagius and his followers denied original sin and taught a synergistic view of salvation: since humans are not dead in sin, they can cooperate with God in salvation. The Council of Carthage in 417-418 condemned Pelagianism as a heresy and declared that those who held to it were anathema – "anathema" means "eternally condemned and outside of salvation." The Council could confidently assert that because of what Scripture itself says in passages like Galatians 1:8:

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."

In Greek, Paul used the word *anathema*. The Church has always regarded Pelagianism as another gospel, and therefore an accursed heresy.

REFORMED CONFESSIONS USE HERESY WITH RESTRAINT

Our Reformed confessions are rather careful in what they label as heresy. Canons of Dort 3/4 article 10 reaffirms that Pelagianism is a heresy. Belgic Confession article 9 mentions several "false Christians and heretics": Marcion, Mani, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, and Arius. These were in deadly error with regard to the Trinity. Certain Anabaptists are also described as holding to heresy in Belgic Confession article 18. Though they're not mentioned by name, the Confession is referring to Menno Simons and Melchior Hoffmann. They taught that Christ doesn't have a real human nature from Mary but that, in his incarnation, he took his human nature from heaven. This is a heresy because it runs into serious trouble with the two natures of Christ, and specifically whether his human nature is a true human nature.

Not every theological error is a heresy.

TWO SERIOUS ERRORS THAT AREN'T HERESY

Let me now mention two prevalent errors that aren't heresies. Theistic evolution isn't a heresy. It's a serious error which may lead to heresy, but as such, it's not a heresy. I've never referred to it as such and I've cautioned others against describing it as such.

Women in ecclesiastical office is a serious error conflicting with Scripture. It emerges from a way of interpreting the Scriptures which could lead to far more serious doctrinal trouble. However, you shouldn't say it's a heresy. That wouldn't fit with the way this term has been understood and used in church history and in our confessions.

TOO LOADED A TERM FOR SMALLER DISPUTES

Not every theological error is a heresy. Certainly someone's disagreement with you on a particular doctrinal point doesn't allow you to loosely throw the term "heretic" around. The words

"heresy, heretic, heretical" should be reserved for only the most serious doctrinal errors, the ones where the Church clearly confesses from the Scriptures that these views are salvation-jeopardizing. By that, we also recognize that not all errors are of the same seriousness. We definitely want to strive for doctrinal precision and accuracy, but we also have to realize that not all points of doctrine carry the same weight and therefore we can, even in confessional Reformed churches, have some room for disagreement.

If that's true with regard to *doctrine*, it's even truer with respect to *practice*. True Christians eager to follow what the Bible teaches reach different conclusions on such things as vaccinations or the lockdowns of the last year. When you see a fellow believer with different convictions about living as a Christian, be careful before you bombastically toss around that label, "Heretic!" It's a loaded term never to be used glibly. RP

Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge, Alberta

is prayerfully seeking a

FULL-TIME PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

to serve alongside our Senior Pastor under the guidance of the Consistory in shepherding God's flock. The Pastor of Congregational Life will direct his attention to the counselling needs of the congregation in addition to preaching approximately 25% of the Lord's days. Other aspects of the ministry, such as visitation and education, will be shared with our Senior Pastor. The ideal candidate would have a heart of love for Christ and his people, be an ordained minister of the Word, or ministerial candidate, and be committed to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity. Training in Biblical Counselling would be an asset.

Expressions of interest along with a CV can be emailed in confidence to callingcommittee@trinityurc.ca. This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.



PRINCIPAL POSITION

for the **2022/2023** school year

Neerlandia Covenant Canadian Reformed School Mission Statement:

*"Assisting parents by
training students for a life
of service to God and their
neighbor through Biblical
redemptive teaching."*

Whether you are an experienced principal looking for a change, or a teacher, or a vice principal with the desire and aptitude to lead, we would love to hear from you!

CONTACT US AT:

secretary@covenantschool.ca

WANT TO SEE MORE?

View our promo video at:
COVENANTSCHOOL.CA

*Learning to Walk Together
in the Light of God's Word*

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

response to Jacob's marriage to Leah where the groom didn't realize who he was marrying until it was too late (Gen. 29:22-25). Thus the veil flip – in the thousands of years since, no man has wanted to make that same mistake!

RICHER THAN YOU KNEW

Today's complaints about "income inequality" mask the fact that, in the West, anyone who can afford a smartphone is richer than the richest oil baron or railroad tycoon of one hundred years ago. Just consider all the features our phones have on them that people of that time could never have dreamed of. We have in our back pocket:



- instant access to newspapers, stock reports, and a library larger than any building could hold
- all the music we own, and the ability to hear tons more
- our very own personal GPS - try explaining that one to a 1920s tycoon!
- our own video recorder
- all of our photos carried along with us at all times
- our own TV, radio, camera, calculator, alarm clock, and calendar

That doesn't even get into what all our apps can do. And just to underscore just how rich we are, let's mention a big one that, admittedly, isn't phone-related, but is appreciated by all: *indoor plumbing* – once a luxury item, now, thankfully standard issue! If some today want to focus on how much more Jeff Bezo, Bill Gates, or Elon Musk have compared to the rest of us, we should instead remember how richly God has blessed us!

JUST CHECKING...

There's a custom, still in use in many weddings, for the bride to come down the aisle with her face covered by a veil. The groom will then, right before the vows, lift the veil over her head. One interesting theory (impossible to prove) for the origins and timing of this veil flip is that it may be a

TYRANNY OF THE BUSYBODY

"Of all tyrannies a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his [greed] may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience."

– C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER ON BEING A COBELLIGERENT, NOT AN ALLY

Francis Schaeffer made an interesting distinction between allies and cobelligerents that any Christians involved in any sort of political movement needs to understand:

"Christians must realize that there is a difference between being a cobelligerent and an ally. At times we will seem to be saying exactly the same thing as those without a Christian base are saying. If there is social injustice, say there is social injustice. If we need order, say we need order. In these cases, and at these specific points, we would be cobelligerents. But we must not align ourselves as though we are in any camp built on a non-Christian base. We are an ally of no such camp. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is different – totally different; it rests on the absolutes given to us in Scripture.

"My observation of many [Christians] is this: suddenly they are confronted by some two camps and they are told, 'Choose, choose, choose.' By God's grace they must say, 'I will not choose between these two. I stand alone with God, the God who has spoken in the Scripture, the God who is the infinite-personal God, and neither of your two sides is standing there. So if I seem to be saying the same thing at one point, understand that I am a cobelligerent at this particular place, but I am not an ally.

"The danger is that the older [generation] will forget this distinction and become an ally of an establishment elite, and at the same time his son or daughter will forget this distinction and become an ally of some 'leftish' elite. We must say what the Bible says when it causes us to seem to be saying what others are saying, such as 'Justice!' or 'Stop the meaningless bombings!' But we must never forget that this is only a passing cobelligerency and not an alliance." – *A Christian View of the Church*

Forgetting this distinction is where some Christians went off the rails with Donald Trump, excusing his evident sins

(pride, arrogance, advocacy for homosexuality) because they thought he was our ally, and not just, at times, a cobelligerent. Canada's Conservative Party under the pro-choice Erin O'Toole, presents another such dilemma/temptation: if we can use it – if we can treat it as a cobelligerent on some issues – wonderful, but Christians must not mistake it for an ally.

WALTER WILLIAMS ON HIS INCOME INEQUALITY WITH MICHAEL JORDAN

Does the tenth commandment still apply if our neighbor is Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, or Michael Jordan? Then why are concerns about income equality (rather than poverty) now treated as downright virtuous, and a matter of justice? In the quote below Walter Williams doesn't argue coveting is still a sin, but he does make the case that concerns about income inequality are arrogant, belittling the freely-made decisions made by millions who happily gave money to Gates, Bezos, and Jordan for what they were offering in exchange.

"Why is it that Michael Jordan earns \$33 million a year and I don't even earn one-half of one percent of that? ...my problem is with my fellow man, who'd plunk down \$200 to see Jordan play and wouldn't pay a dollar to see me play... The bottom

line explanation of Michael Jordan's income relative to mine lies in his capacity to please his fellow man. The person who takes exception to Jordan's salary or sees him...as making 'little contribution to society' is really disagreeing with decisions made by millions upon millions of independent decision-makers who decided to fork over their money to see Jordan play."

SOURCE: "From whence comes income?" posted to WalterWilliams.com on April 23, 2003

APPLY THE GOLDEN RULE TO LOCKDOWNS?

Back when shutting down the economy was still unprecedented, doing it was quite something. But now that we've lived through more than a year of such lockdowns, off and on, there's good reason to worry that this will no longer be viewed as a "nuclear option" never to be invoked, but that it will be used ever more readily.

So how can we again make it a measure of last resort? The Golden Rule, (Luke 19:18) to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," should serve as inspiration for legislation we can push for, that would only allows politicians to shut down the economy (or any portions thereof) for as long as they themselves are willing to go without a paycheck. Then, in an emergency, they could still do it, but only if they thought it important enough to share the pain.

JOIN US

in equipping
covenant youth
to be **disciples**
of our King

**WE INVITE YOU TO
COME FOR A VISIT!**

Contact us at:
PRINCIPAL@COVENANTSCHOOL.CA
for more information on
compensation for your trip!



THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE

Located east of the Rockies and a little over an hour from the bustling hub of Edmonton, Covenant Canadian Reformed School of Neerlandia welcomes you to its quaint rural community.

Dedicated teachers are paramount to meeting Covenant's continued needs and to expand the school and its programs for over 260 enthusiastic covenant children. This is recognized by a supportive community who loves, celebrates, and values its teachers.

Currently accepting applications for Elementary School teachers for the 2021/2022 school year.

Learning to Walk Together in
the **Light of God's Word**
COVENANTSCHOOL.CA



WE HAVE TO KEEP TELLING OUR KIDS...

The folks at MamaBearApologetics.com recently put their own spin on the popular “7 things every child needs to hear” meme that’s made it’s way around the Internet:

1. I love you
2. I’m proud of you
3. I’m sorry
4. I forgive you
5. I’m listening
6. Communism has failed everywhere it has been tried
7. You’ve got what it takes

IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO DO “X” ON SUNDAY?

“When Christians ask: ‘Is it ok for me do X on Sundays?’ the first response should normally not be ‘yes’ or ‘no’ but ‘Why would you be doing it?’ The most common answer to that question is probably ‘Because I don’t have time for it in the rest of the week.’ This highlights the importance of understanding the whole of the fourth commandment. The problem here is not how we spend Sunday; it is how we are using Monday to Saturday. We are living the week the wrong way around, as if there had been no resurrection! Use Sunday as a day of rest, worship, fellowship first and we will almost inevitably begin to discipline our use of time in the other six days of the week. Grasp this and the Sabbath principle becomes one of the simplest and most helpful of all God’s gifts. The burden-free day at the beginning of the week both regulates the days that follow and refreshes us for them.”

– **Sinclair Ferguson**, in *Devoted to God* (p. 266)

(h/t to Wes Bredenhof)

LIFE CRAFTED BY CHANCE? THEY CAN’T EVEN DO IT ON PURPOSE!

“Assemble the dream team you want and build a cell.... You assemble the teams of biologists, chemists, origin of life researchers, YouTubers, however many people you want on that team. And you give them all the RNA, DNA, and proteins that they want, the enzymes that they want, and you give them the lipids that they want, and say ‘Go ahead make a cell.’ Because somehow on an early Earth this happened under a rock in a little pool somewhere. Why can’t you do it in your laboratory? They can’t.But we’re supposed to believe that somewhere in some hydrothermal vent or underpool all of this came together? Come on!”

– Biologist **James Tour**, in his YouTube lecture “The origin of life has not been explained”

PROVERBS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Solomon was born 3,000 years before tweets and status updates and yet he still has a lot to say about them.

- “Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.” – Proverbs 10:19

- “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” – Proverbs 18:2
- “It is to one’s honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.” – Proverbs 20:3
- “He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears.” – Proverbs 26:17

IF ANIMALS ARE PEOPLE, WHY NOT FLOWERS TOO?

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) want us to stop using “anti-animal language” and they have some alternatives to propose. Instead of “bringing home the bacon” they want us to say “bringing home the bagels.” And instead of “take the bull by the horns” they offer “take the flower by the thorns.”

What’s funny about this – besides everything – is how easy it is to imagine this actually being taken seriously. Of course, such a change would be followed by – in ten, or maybe just five years’ time – another group complaining about how PETA’s substitutions are insensitive to the gluten-intolerant, and, even worse, to flowers.

ON FRIENDS, AND OUR OTHER VIEWING HABITS

In his recent article, “The dark enduring legacy of Friends,” Jonathon Van Maren reflected on the Christians viewing habits.

“...when religious people consumed the same entertainment as everybody else, it created a sort of moral schizophrenia—laughing along about everything from porn binges to promiscuity one day while attending church to hear a pastor explain how such things were so wicked God Himself had to be crucified to save people from these sins the next. Most mainstream TV shows offered people the opportunity to entertain themselves by laughing at sin, although few realized it or saw it that way.”

TWO ON A WOMAN’S CALLING

“Sometimes marriage and motherhood are celebrated at the expense of all other things God calls women to do. Some say a woman’s highest calling is to be a wife and a mother. But a woman’s highest calling is really to follow Jesus. Some are called to do that as wives. Some are called to follow Him as a wife and mother, and some are called to follow Him as single people. The Bible gives us an elevated view of both modes. We Christians have tended to downplay or denigrate singleness in order to elevate marriage.

“But the negative contrast to marriage isn’t singleness. It’s having multiple partners in non-monogamous sexual relationships. An important piece of the puzzle, therefore, is actually those women who are called to follow Jesus as singles.”

– Rebecca McLaughlin

“One of the biggest lies that women believe is that working for an employer is liberating, while working for one’s own family is a burden.”

– Angela Mitchell @raisingapologists (instagram)

IT'S TIME!

Time is running out! Canada is being changed—***without your consent!*** Historic rights and freedoms are being stripped away, the economy is being badly mismanaged, and new carbon taxes will cripple your family finances.

Health care?

Environment?

Taxation?

Abortion?

Censorship?

**YOU GET
THE IDEA!**

It's Time...
for **CHP Canada**

It's Time...
for better government



For Better Solutions for Canada visit
CHP.ca... while there's still time!

OR PHONE TOLL-FREE 1-888-868-3247 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

COLLISION

DOCUMENTARY
2009 / 88 MINUTES
RATING: 9/10



In 2007 atheist Christopher Hitchens and Reformed pastor Douglas Wilson toured the east-coast to repeatedly debate each other on the question "Is Christianity good for the world?" Film-maker Darren Doane tagged along and captured their exchanges, both on stage in formal debates settings, and as they conversed over a pint of beer in the local pub. The end result is the most entertaining and enthralling debate you will ever see on film.

This is a must-see, for how it'll prepare our young people. The attacks that Hitchens levels against God and Christianity are mimicked on secular campuses and even in the work force, so Wilson's able defense of the Faith will be instructive and an encouragement when we face these same attacks.

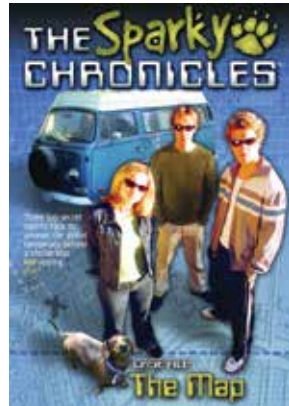
He also does apologetics differently and better than most, taking it right to Christopher Hitchens, rather than being on the defensive, like many Christian apologists tend to be. You'll have to watch the film to see exactly how, but this quote is an example:

"There are two tenets of atheism. One, there is no God. Two, I hate Him."

The link to see it for free can be found in our longer online review at ReformedPerspective.ca.

THE SPARKY CHRONICLES: THE MAP

FAMILY / CHILDREN'S
2003 / 28 MINUTES
RATING: 7/10



When their beloved Sparky is dog-napped by the infamous international criminal known only as "The Clip," three college-age friends – Ethan, Jeffrey, and Christina – vow to find their pooch, no matter how long it takes. *Sparky Chronicles* is a Christian spy spoof, with sting operations, tranquilizer darts, explosions, and one chase scene after another. These aren't high-speed chases, mind you – and at one point the villain gets away by walking at a brisk trot – but that's the point. The pounding music, the quick cuts between the determined pursuers and their frantic prey, and then the shots of the speedometer needle slowly edging past 35: as spoofs go, they're pretty much nailing it.

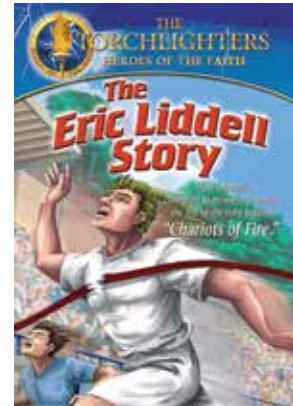
When they happen upon a map that The Clip has left behind, Christina makes mention of how the Bible is the same sort of thing for life: a guide that tells us what's right and true. That's the lesson being taught, but unlike what happens in many a Christian production, they don't beat kids over the head with it.

I'd recommend this for tweens, but younger kids might enjoy it too. The only downside is that while things are set up for a sequel, there isn't one.

You can watch it for free at ReformedPerspective.ca

THE ERIC LIDDELL STORY

ANIMATED / FAMILY
2007 / 31 MINUTES
RATING: 6/10



Eric Liddell is best known for his decision not to compete in the 1924 Olympic 100-meter race because doing so would require him to run in a heat on Sunday. Despite enormous pressure to compromise he was committed to remembering "the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." Eventually, a different sort of compromise was struck, which had Liddell run in the 200 and 400-meter races instead, winning a bronze and a gold. His firm convictions, and his outstanding athletic performances, were the subject of the Oscar-winning 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*.

While both film and video cover Eric-the-athlete, this covers his later years as Eric-the-missionary. Born in China to missionary parents, he returned there after the Olympics to serve as a missionary from 1925 until 1943 when Japan invaded. Liddell stayed even then, to continue telling the Chinese about God but it cost him, as he ended up in a Japanese internment camp.

While this is more educational than entertaining, it is a compelling true story. So gather the family round and be inspired by a man who knew that God was worthy of all honor, and most certainly came before fame and before his own safety. Watch it for free (with commercials) at ReformedPerspective.ca.

FREE AND FANTASTIC, ON THE FATHER OF THE REFORMATION

What makes this a must-see is its unique mix of drama and documentary. Other great Luther documentaries exist, but the most engaging of “talking heads” can’t really grab the attention of a broad audience. And while dramas can grab the younger audience, they can’t go into the same depth as a documentary. An actor can show us Luther’s despair or his joy, but no one can depict the greatness of God’s grace, so it goes largely unexplored.

A Return to Grace is a *docudrama* – half documentary and half drama – making good use of the strengths of each. There are learned theologians to give us the background and explain the Scriptural debates that occurred, and there are also elaborately set and well-acted scenes from Luther’s life. I would guess it is a near 50/50 split. Pádraic Delaney’s Luther is very believable, speaking volumes with not just his tongue, but his grimaces, smiles, and silences.

I’ve probably watched at least a half dozen Luther films, and I’ve never seen the chronology of Luther’s life depicted as clearly. There are also explanations offered here that are left as mysteries elsewhere. Have you ever wondered why the Pope didn’t just crush this monk early on when he was still seemingly insignificant? *Return to Grace* shares that the Pope didn’t want to make an enemy of Luther’s prince, Frederick III, because the prince was one of the seven electors who would choose the next Holy Roman Emperor. The Pope had no direct say in that selection, and if he hoped to have any sort of influence at all, he would need to be on the good side of the electors. God so set the scene that the Pope had to act cautiously and with restraint and couldn’t just burn Luther at the stake.

While I was familiar with only one of the theologians interviewed (United Reformed professor Carl Trueman), they all had some great Luther gems to share. James Korthals, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary contributed this one about Luther’s view on vocation:

“The farmer out in the field pitching dung is doing a greater work for God than the monk in the monastery praying for his own salvation.”

This was, at the time, a revolutionary idea of vocation. Even today, many seem to think that minister and missionary are the true God-glorifying jobs, and all else is second best. In saying all jobs could be done to God’s glory, Luther presented all fruitful work as being worthy of respect.

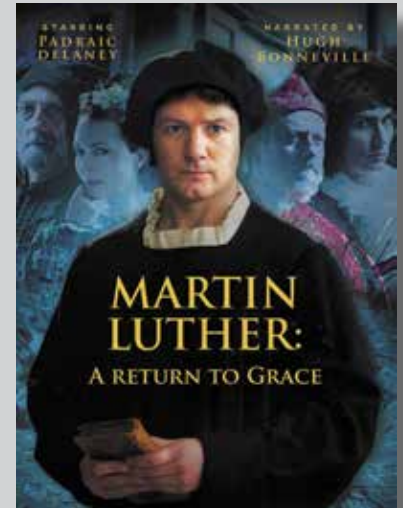
This is one of the ideas highlighted in one of the film’s alternate title: *Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed the World*. The story here is first and foremost about Luther rediscovering the gracious nature of God, but it is also about Luther’s influence as it impacted people far beyond the church door, and about the ripples that continue to be felt even today, and even in the secular world.

CAUTIONS

I have no real cautions for the film. I was a little concerned when a Roman Catholic Cardinal, Timothy Dolan, made a few brief appearances. But he doesn’t say much of anything, and even concedes that Luther’s rebellion was understandable against that old corrupted Roman Catholic Church. He might be implying that today’s Roman Catholic Church is different, but he isn’t given the time to make that case.

CONCLUSION

Return to Grace’s drama/documentary combination draws viewers in without sacrificing depth. This still isn’t one for pre-teens, but for adults, and the sort of teen looking to be an adult, this will be a fascinating presentation of the man and what he learned about our great God. Don’t save it for Reformation Day – it’s free to see now at ReformedPerspective.ca.



MARTIN LUTHER: A RETURN TO GRACE

DOCUDRAMA

2017 / 106 MINUTES

RATING: 8/10



BETSIE, THE WATCHMAKER'S DAUGHTER

by Christine Farenhorst

Extraordinary stories of extraordinary men and women make up the fabric of history books: men and women who by some incident in their lives have been able to capture the attention and imagination of those living today. They usually comprise those of outstanding intellect; those who have invented things; those who have led armies to victory; those of noble birth who have ruled well; or those who have explored unknown territories. We rarely delve into the lives, however, of the little folk, of those who merely accomplish the sometimes boring, day-by-day tasks that God has assigned to His people.

Yet the days written in God's book of those little people - the widow who dropped a seemingly worthless mite into the temple treasury, the man who provided a donkey for the Master's use, and those who shared bread and fish in times of hunger - are endless.

There is the story of Betsie - Betsie the watchmaker's daughter - Betsie, an ordinary, little woman - who used her time well.

FATHER'S ARMS - 1889

She often sat on the single stone step leading down from the doorway of her father's shop on the corner of Bartel-jorisstraat, watching the children of the neighborhood run by. The ragtag and bobtail of the city's youngsters sprinted by her as they kicked a ball, skipped noisily with skipping ropes and ran helter-skelter in all directions playing hide-and-go-seek. Soft auburn hair framed her face and she smiled into the shouts as if she were participating in the games. Her feet in the high, laced-up shoes, tingled. They longed to gallop and rush about in wild abandonment as well.

"*Betsie, meisje* (little girl)." A strong hand touched the small, hunched up back. "What are you doing sitting here on these cold steps? You'll get sick again."

Betsie turned her head and looked up, smiling at the bearded man framed in the open door of his shop. Then she slowly stood up and father Ten Boom

picked up the four-year-old, carrying her into his workshop. "So," he whispered softly into her ear, "you are studying the other children running and playing and inside you there are some tears because God did not make Betsie strong and able-bodied and fit."

Betsie's arms tightened around her father's neck. His beard scratched her cheek and she nuzzled into it. "Yes," she whispered back.

All around them in the 1889 watchmaker's workshop clocks ticked and chimed and spoke of time. Father Ten Boom sat down on his chair by the workbench and settled the child onto his lap. He rocked her back and forth. "God has a reason for making each one of us the way we are, Betsie. Perhaps you are often tired and ill in your body so that your spirit might grow strong."

The child sighed and thought of the wind on her cheeks and how she would love to run into it, stretching her arms wide to receive its blowing head-on.

"You are very special, Betsie. God loves you very much and maybe you

can show others His love also.”

He kissed the top of her hair. “Now then, let’s go upstairs and see if mother has some tea and if your brother Willem is home from school yet.”

He stood up and the child, light in his arms, was strangely solemn as she looked towards the street door – a door she passed with her father as they made their way up the stairs.

The years passed and the watchmaker was blessed with two more children, two more daughters, who were named Nollie and Corrie. There were also the three aunts, sisters of Mama ten Boom, who lived in their brother-in-law’s home until they died. The watchmaker’s house, though overflowing, was filled with happiness as he taught his children and his neighbors how to live faithfully before the face of God.

2 Peter 1:5-8 teaches a very important precept which is that certain qualities will produce a well-rounded, productive Christian life. The passage reads:

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Not everyone in the world is born with amazing talents, with awe-inspiring gifts. Although there are some who can sing as if they were Caruso, and others have the ability to draw in the manner of Michelangelo, and still others play the violin like Itzak Perlman, the truth is that most people are run-of-the mill, ordinary people; people who appear average and unremarkable. And yet it is good to remember that all mankind is made in the image of God and that all Christians have access to

the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Betsie ten Boom was spoon-fed on 2 Peter 1’s promise and as a child, and later as a young woman she strove for godly qualities; as she labored, she increased in faith and in compassion. She developed a deep love for other people who experienced pain or trouble. The years passed, and God blessed the frail child in ways that may not have been obvious to others.

Times changed in the ten Boom household after World War I. The children grew older. Nollie and Willem married. The aunts and mother ten Boom died. Betsie’s health, although fairly stable, was never quite up to scratch and she made a conscious decision not to marry but to stay home and take care of her aging father and her younger sister, Corrie. Initially she helped her father in the watch shop downstairs, but Corrie took her place and Betsie was happy to take charge of the household side of things. There were scores of foster children who passed through the ten Boom household, all receiving Christian nurture, love and care. Together with Corrie, Betsie, a single mother in Israel, was effective and productive in God’s eyes.

THE RADIO ADDRESS - MAY 1940

The year 1940, a year, which would celebrate Betsie’s fifty-fifth birthday, also hosted the onset of World War II for the Netherlands. Although the Dutch had hoped to remain neutral in the looming conflict which was already raging in Europe, this was not to be. The Third Reich, after invading and occupying Poland, Norway and Denmark, also invaded her little western neighbor.

The evening prior to this invasion, on May 9, 1940, father Ten Boom, Betsie and Corrie stayed up to listen to their radio. After their usual prayers and Bible reading, they were getting sleepy. It was past their usual bedtime, but the Prime Minister of Holland, his Excellency Dirk Jan de Geer, was slated to speak and most people in Holland were eager to hear what he had to say. Flowers were blooming in the parks and in the ten Boom windowsills. Conflicting



A 1950s picture of the ten Boom watch shop.

rumors flew around. Betsie heard them from the people next door; she heard them in the shops when she bought food; and she heard them on the steps of the St. Bavo church after she worshipped each Sunday. Holland would be drawn into the war, many said while others were convinced that the German Nazis, who had pledged goodwill to the people of the Netherlands, would not invade. But France and Britain were already in the war and shouldn’t those countries be supported?

The radio crackled and both Betsie and Corrie sat up straight in their chairs. It was 9:30. They strained their ears towards the wireless. Prime Minister de Geer’s voice was mild. There is nothing to worry about, he assured his radio audience. War will not happen. Had he not just spoken with influential government officials? Father Ten Boom, Betsie, and Corrie looked at one another skeptically. The Prime Minister’s words seemed to be full of air, unrealistic, carrying no weight. Father ten Boom turned off the radio. Then

the family rose quietly from their high-backed, wooden chairs, kissed one another goodnight and trudged up the stairs to bed.

Sleep was difficult to come by even though the blankets were tucked in tightly. There were too many thoughts running around in Betsie's mind. She sighed, tossed and turned. The city of Amsterdam lay seventeen kilometres to the east. Betsie noted through her window that the sky was aglow with a strange color. It was an unearthly glow, and the house on Barteljorisstraat seemed to be shaking from time to time.

Corrie, who was huddling next to Betsie, whispered: "I had a dream."

"What did you dream, Corrie?"

"I dreamt that I saw a big wagon in the middle of Haarlem. Four huge, black horses pulled the wagon. I was in the wagon, Betsie... and you were too... and father was in it as well... and some of our friends."

She hesitated and Betsie waited for her to continue. "The horses began to pull the wagon and we couldn't get off but we didn't want to go where they were taking us." Corrie stopped again and then leaned heavily into the curve of her sister's back. The house shook again.

"Oh, Betsie! I'm so afraid! Do you think the dream was some kind of vision?"

Betsie answered softly, turning and putting her arm around her sister. "I don't know. But if God has shown us the bad times that are coming, it's enough to know that He knows about them. That's why He sometimes shows us things – to tell us that He is in control."

Amsterdam was bombed on May 11, 1940.



The hiding place, as it was shown to people after the war.

The ten Booms became acutely aware, as the next few months passed, that life was being made extremely difficult for the Jews living in Holland. First posters, then signs, shot up reading "No Jews Allowed."

After this yellow stars became mandatory as part of the dress code for the children of Abraham. Finally, groups were seen being herded onto trucks and taken away. Father ten Boom said, "Those poor people," but it was the soldiers perpetrating this ungodly work to whom he was referring. Betsie understood her father with her deepest spirit. Were not the Jewish people the apple of God's eye? And were not those who hurt them to be pitied?

A secret room was constructed in

Corrie's bedroom behind a false wall. It had a ventilation system and could hold six people. A buzzer was installed which could be heard throughout the house to warn refugees to retreat to the secret room as quickly as possible if a raid was imminent. Almost overnight the ten Boom home became part of the resistance movement – a sanctuary where Jews could turn up and hide from their oppressors, from those who sought to kill them. Eight hundred Jews were eventually helped as father ten Boom and his two daughters risked their lives in feeding and sheltering the persecuted.

"FEAR GOD AND HONOR THE QUEEN" – FEBRUARY 1944

For four years things went well until a German raid on the ten Boom residence in February of 1944 seemingly brought Jewish aid to a grinding halt. The raid happened on a day when Corrie was not feeling well. Feeling

miserable and running a high temperature, she was roughly pulled out of her bed by Nazi soldiers. Permitted to put on clothes over top of her pajamas, she was taken downstairs. Her father and Betsie were sitting on chairs pulled back against the living room wall.

"Where are the Jews?" The Nazis barked out the question and when no answer was forthcoming, Corrie was struck twice, so hard that she almost fainted.

"Lord Jesus," she whispered, "Protect me."

"If you say that name again, I'll kill you."

Betsie was led from the room and returned later with swollen lips and a bruised cheek.

"Oh, Betsie," Corrie moaned, "They hurt you."

"Yes," Betsie answered thickly, "and I feel so sorry for them."

The German officer in command turned, yelling: "Prisoners will remain silent!"

He then turned to father ten Boom. "You, old man, I see that you believe in the Bible. What does it say in your Bible about obeying the government?"

"Fear God," father ten Boom answered in a clear voice, "and honor the queen."

The German officer stared at him suspiciously. "The Bible doesn't say that!"

"No," father ten Boom admitted, "It says 'Fear God and honor the king,' but in our case that is the queen."

The secret room was not found during the raid although it was not for lack of trying by the Nazis. They ransacked the house from top to bottom. The ten Booms, however, were not allowed to go free. Along with thirty-five other people they were herded to the police station where they were put in a room together. There were mats on the floor where they were told to sleep. Father ten Boom read to the entire room from the Bible: the Bible which was stored within his memory.

"Thou art my hiding place and my shield..." The old man's voice was firm and the others who had been arrested drank assurance from it.

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

They all slept soundly that night.

The next morning, after another period of questioning, they were all packed onto a bus.

"The dream," Corrie spoke under her breath to her sister, "It's the dream, Betsie."

After a lengthy drive of more than an hour, they were ordered off the bus and lined up against a yellow wall. The men were separated from the women at this point. As the sisters were being led

away, Corrie turned her head to look back.

"God be with you, father!" Father ten Boom turned his face away from the wall also and answered, calling back clearly, "And with you, my daughters!"

These were the last words Betsie and Corrie heard their father speak on earth. Becoming ill in the Scheveningen prison to which they had been taken, he died in a hospital corridor only ten days after the arrest.

VUGHT CAMP - JUNE

The next months in prison were difficult. For the first time in their lives, Betsie and Corrie were separated. Provisionally, four months later, as women were being loaded onto a transport train to a different internment camp at Vught they were reunited.

Vught was a political concentration camp. With barbed wire fencing surrounding it, the place appeared both dismal and terrifying. The women guards were cruel and made the inmates stand for hours on end. It was a somber, desperate and dirty place and it never had enough food for the people housed within its enclosure. Roll call each morning was five o'clock sharp and if only one prisoner was late, all the other prisoners were punished.

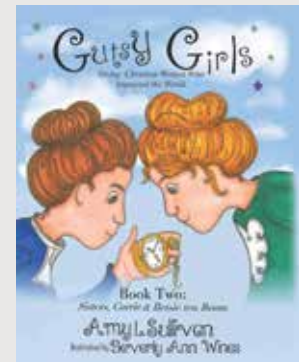
"Betsie," wailed Corrie, one early morning, "How long do you think we shall be here?"

"Perhaps a long, long time, Corrie," Betsie answered slowly and thoughtfully, "Perhaps many years. But what better way could we spend our lives?"

"What are you talking about, Betsie?" Corrie was frustrated at the answer.

"These women here with us, Corrie, look at them. If people can be taught to hate, then they can be taught to love as well. And we must find a way to teach them."

Betsie's work assignment was sewing uniforms, whereas Corrie's job was



GUTSY GIRLS: SISTERS CORRIE & BETSIE TEN BOOM

BY AMY L. SULLIVAN

2016 / 36 PAGES

This is the true story of two Dutch sisters who knew that God could be trusted and that assurance gave them and their whole family the courage to hide Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

This is a G-rated account of an R-rated time. That's accomplished via cartoonish pictures, and by sometimes speaking in vague generalities like: "German soldiers planned evil things against people who were Jewish." Even so, the reader learns that the Nazis hated the Jews, and the ten Booms knew God wanted them to act. They smuggled in bricks to create a false wall in their home that Jews and others could hide behind. The author shares that the width of that hiding place – at just 23 inches – was not even as wide as this book opened up!

The ten Booms helped 800 people before they were caught. In the final pages we see Corrie freed and, through God's grace, able to forgive the very Germans who so mistreated her and her sister.

There are no cautions for *this* book. But it is the second of a series of 5, and the subject of Book 4 is Jennifer Wiseman, who has had a big role in promoting theistic evolution. So the ten Boom book is well worth getting, but not so the series. – JON DYKSTRA



**Growing In Grace
Equipping For Excellence
Learning For Life**

Dufferin Christian School
invites applications for the role of
PRINCIPAL
for the 2022-2023 school year.

DCS is a K-12 Reformed school
with over 260 students located in
Carman, Manitoba.

It offers a highly supportive community,
an enthusiastic and cohesive staff, a
robust administrative support team, and
an experienced and committed board.

Interested individuals are encouraged to
reach out to the current Principal or Board
chairman for more details, and to discuss
the possibility of taking on a transitioning
Assistant-Principal role for August 2021.

Applicants must be communicant
members of a Canadian Reformed Church
or a Church in ecclesiastical fellowship
with the same.

Applications should be sent to
Dufferin Christian School
Box 1450, Carman, MB, Canada, ROG OJO

Attention: Mr. Garrett Veldman

OR EMAILED TO:

boardsecretary@dufferinchristian.ca

For more information, please contact:

Principal: Mr. Nathan Kok, 204-745-2278,
principal@dufferinchristian.ca

Chairman: Mr. Anton Borst, 204-745-8935,
chairman@dufferinchristian.ca

labor in a factory. They had been able
to smuggle a Bible inside the camp and
took turns carrying it about in a small
cloth bag hanging from their neck. In
the evening, prayer meetings were held
and many women crowded around the
bunks to hear the comforting words of
the Bible.

RAVENSBRUCK – SEPT

In September of 1944, the sisters were
transported once again. This time it
was to Ravensbruck. Fifty miles north
of Berlin, it was the largest concentra-
tion camp for women in the German
Reich and housed political prisoners,
gypsies, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and
others deemed dangerous by the Nazis.

If conditions had been bad in Vught,
conditions in Ravensbruck were far
more brutal. The straw that covered
the bunks in the eighteen barracks that
made up the main camp was filthy.
Women prisoners slept in three-tiered
wooden bunks, and each barracks had
but one washroom and toilet. Food
rations were meager and sanitary
conditions abominable. Many women
were subjected to unethical medical
experiments as SS doctors put chemical
substances on wounds to ascertain what
the results would be. These doctors
also tested women on various methods
of setting and transplanting bones and
they cruelly amputated limbs to facili-
tate these tests. Countless prisoners
died as a result of these horrific experi-
ments. It was in such an environment
that the ten Boom sisters arrived in the
last winter of the war.

"We should cut our hair, Corrie."

Betsie's advice was down-to-earth and
practical. Everywhere around them
women were cutting each other's hair.
Long hair was difficult to keep clean.

"Oh, Betsie!!" Corrie sobbed as she
snipped several inches off Betsie's thick
dark hair. Later, they buried their hair
in the sand around their barracks.

The three-tiered bunks were appall-
ingly grimy. Rotting straw had been
placed on top of broken wood and the

women were so crowded that they were
forced to lay three in a single bunk –
making it very taxing to get any rest at
all.

"How can we live in such a place,
Betsie?"

"Show us how, Lord," Betsie prayed
in reply and then she opened her eyes
and said, "Corrie, what did we read this
morning?"

"We read from Thessalonians."

"And what did our text say?"

Reluctantly, Corrie answered her
sister: "Rejoice always, pray constantly,
and give thanks in all circumstances."

"That's it. That's God's answer."

"What is His answer, Betsie?"

"To give thanks ... to give thanks in
everything."

The sour smell of human sweat and
dirt drifted around them. Lice moved
the straw in the bunks. "In everything,
Betsie? Must we give thanks in every-
thing?" Corrie's voice was small and
resigned.

"Yes, in everything. Listen, Corrie.
We're together. That's a blessing, isn't it?
And then, well we have a Bible. Think
of it!! A Bible!! And then, last of all,
we're really crowded and that means
we'll be able to tell more women about
Jesus."

Corrie nodded, subdued.

"So then," Betsie closed her eyes
again, "thank You, Lord, for the lice..."

"Oh, Betsie," wailed Corrie, "not the
lice!"

"It says 'in everything,' Corrie."

Barracks 28, where Betsie and Corrie
were housed, was an extensive melting-
pot of nationalities. The women housed
there came from a diverse number of
countries – Germany, France, Poland,
Holland, to name a few. Because the
quarters were so cramped, there was
much quarrelling. In the dark of the
night Betsie took Corrie's hand.

"Lord Jesus," she prayed out loud,
"send your peace into this room. There
has been too little praying here. The
very walls know it. But where You enter,
Lord, the spirit of strife cannot exist."

Gradually things quieted down and the angry mutterings stopped.

Ravensbruck held no sewing detail for Betsie, nor a factory job for Corrie. Both sisters had to work outside, leveling rough ground. Lifting shovels full of heavy dirt was almost too much for Betsie. She staggered if the load was too massive and at one point a guard struck her. Corrie, seeing her sister hurt, lost her temper and wanted to fly at the guard with her shovel, but Betsie restrained her. A red stain became visible on Betsie's shirt.

"Oh, Betsie!" Corrie was overcome with sadness, but Betsie covered the bloodstain with her hand.

"Don't look at it, Corrie. Only look at Jesus."

There were worship services. These services were not conducted in a chapel or in a church of any kind but were held at the back of the barracks under a dangling, pitiful little light bulb. These services were conducted, not just on Sunday night, but every night. More and more women attended these services. First they sang softly, the Polish women singing a Polish hymn or the French women singing a French hymn. Then either Betsie or Corrie would open the Bible, translating the words into German as they read. And one of the women would translate their words into Polish and another would translate into Russian and another into French. In this way, all the women would hear the Word of God in their own language. Sometimes Betsie and Corrie wondered why no one interrupted these services. Later they discovered that the lice – the thanked-for lice – kept the guards away from Barrack 28.

Betsie was not growing stronger. The frail child, who had sat on the front step of her father's workshop watching

THE HIDING PLACE

BY CORRIE TEN BOOM

1971 (2006 REISSUE) / 272 PAGES

To know more about Betsie and Corrie ten Boom there is no better place to turn than Corrie's autobiography.

In the first third of the book she shows how God was preparing in her early life for what was coming. Part of that preparation was the gift of a wise father. Once, when she was a little girl, she overheard someone talk of "sex sin" so she went to her father and asked him, "Father what is sexsin?"

He turned to look at me, as he always did when answering a question, but to my surprise he said nothing. At last he stood up, lifted his traveling case from the rack over our heads, and set it up on the floor. "Will you carry it off the train, Corrie?" he said.

I stood up and tugged at it. It was crammed with the watches and spare parts he had purchased that morning. "It's too heavy," I said.

"Yes," he said. "And it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a heavy load. It's the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you."

And I was satisfied. More than satisfied – wonderfully at peace. There were answers to this and all my hard questions – for now I was content to leave them in my father's keeping.

Later she, still as a child, has her first encounter with death – a small baby in an apartment on her same block has passed away – and she can't stop worrying about what she would do if her father and mother died. She can't eat, and can't stop crying. In response her father points his little girl to her Heavenly Father.

Father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. "Corrie," he began gently, "when you and I go to Amsterdam – when do I give you your ticket?"

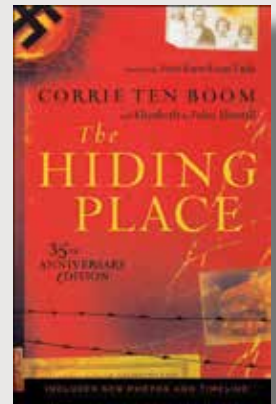
I sniffed a few times, considering this. "Why, just before we get on the train."

"Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need – just in time."

And that is just what Corrie finds when, years later, this 48-year-old ordinary woman finds herself as the leader of a Resistance cell, hiding Jews and members of the underground, stealing ration cards from the Nazis, and providing whatever help she could to whoever came asking. And that is what she found still in the midst of the Nazi concentration camp, surrounded by cruel guards. God gave her just what she needed.

This is a wonderful story that will be encouraging to anyone contending with discouragement, sickness, and death. Miss ten Boom wants us to know that God never stops being good, even when we are wavering as things around us go so very badly. Then we can trust Him. We can count on Him because He loves his children!

I'd recommend *The Hiding Place* to anyone 16 and up and suggest it as a very good offering for any reading group – it would foster some wonderful discussions! (And skip the "young reader's edition" because this abridgement robs us of Corrie's unique voice.) – JON DYKSTRA



other children play, had run with the best of them. But she was now visibly wasting away. There was a small vitamin bottle that Corrie had carefully saved. Whenever Betsie was especially weak, Corrie would insist that her sister take a vitamin drop. But there were other women who were also ill. Corrie tried to save the drops for those who needed it most. But there were so many ill women. First there were fifteen, then twenty, and then still more. Yet every time she tilted the small bottle, another drop petered out.

"There was a woman in the Bible," smiled Betsie, "whose oil jar was never empty."

One day one of the other women prisoners managed to obtain some more vitamins, several large bottles of vitamins. The prisoners felt rich but they decided together that before they use their new cache of nutrients, the small bottle should be finished off. But when Corrie tried, at this point in time, to shake another drop out of the faithful jar, nothing happened. No matter how hard she shook the bottle, nothing materialized. It was finally empty.

"Corrie!! Corrie!! Wake up!"

"What is it, Betsie? It's in the middle of the night. We need our sleep."

"I have to tell you something important, Corrie."

"Can't you tell me tomorrow?"

"No, it's really important. It's about what God wants us to do after this war and I'm afraid that I will forget it if I don't tell you now."

"All right, Betsie, go ahead. I'm awake now."

Through the darkness of the barracks, Betsie's hands found Corrie's hands and squeezed them. "We must rent one of these camps after the war, Corrie. And we must clean it and make it comfortable so that the German people who will have no home left can begin a new life. And in Holland, Corrie, in Holland we must find a house where we will be able to take care of all those who will survive these concentra-

tion camps."

"Where would we live, Betsie, in Holland or in Germany?"

"We would live in neither place, Corrie. For you will travel all over the world and tell everyone what we have learned here: that Jesus is very real and that He is stronger than any power of darkness."

RELEASED - DECEMBER

The days passed. Betsie grew more tired each day and was barely able to fill her quota of work. One morning a fit of coughing seized her and when it was over a blood stain darkened the straw on which she lay.

"Are you sure we'll be together after the war, Betsie? You said that we would..." Corrie could not finish and helplessly watched as her sister coughed again and again. But afterward Betsie did answer.

"Always, Corrie ... you and I."

The morning dawned when Betsie could move neither arms nor legs. She was carried away on a stretcher to another building where the very sick were kept. Corrie managed to find out that Betsie had been put on a cot next to a window. She stood by that window, smiling at her sister until the camp police shouted at her and told her to move along. At noon Corrie tried again. Betsie looked tremendously thin and frail in the cot. Her lips were blue. But those blue lips smiled at Corrie and formed words.

"So much work to do."

It was not until the next morning that Corrie was able to visit the window once more. But a nurse blocked her view. Corrie pressed her face against the pane. She tried to peer past the white form. Another nurse entered. When they both moved to the side, Corrie finally saw Betsie. That is, she saw what had been Betsie. There was only a body now – a thin, yellow skeleton whose soul had flown straight into the arms of a waiting and loving God. Corrie sobbed as the two nurses wrapped her sister's body in a sheet, lifted her off the cot and carried her away.

There was a room where the dead were kept. Bodies were piled on top of one another along the wall. Betsie's body was put there alongside all the others who had died that night. But her face was no longer lined with sorrow, hunger and pain. She looked peaceful. She appeared to be sleeping. She seemed to be leaning on her father's lap, as she was wont to do when she was a little girl. And so she was. Betsie ten Boom had reached her Shield and Hiding Place.


Two days after Betsie's death, Corrie's name was called out during morning roll call and she was commanded to stand to the side before reporting to the administration barracks. When she came to the administration barracks, a clerk stamped papers on which was written "Certificate of Discharge." Although it was later discovered that this was a human clerical error, it truly was God's providence. After a brief hospital stint because of her swollen legs, Corrie was released from Ravensbruck at the end of December 1944.

REUNITED - 1985

After the war Betsie's sister, Corrie, was able to open a camp in Germany for the many homeless people there. God also permitted her to begin a home in Holland for war victims. Later she traveled all over the world, carrying the message of Jesus until her death in 1985.

"Are you sure we'll be together, Betsie?" Corrie's question echoes down the corridors of time. And always Betsie's answer rings out firmly, rings out firmly to encourage all followers of Christ.

"Always, Corrie ... you and I."

And so they are, even as all Christians will be, together before God's throne. 

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA

SERIES 6-6

PUZZLE CLUES

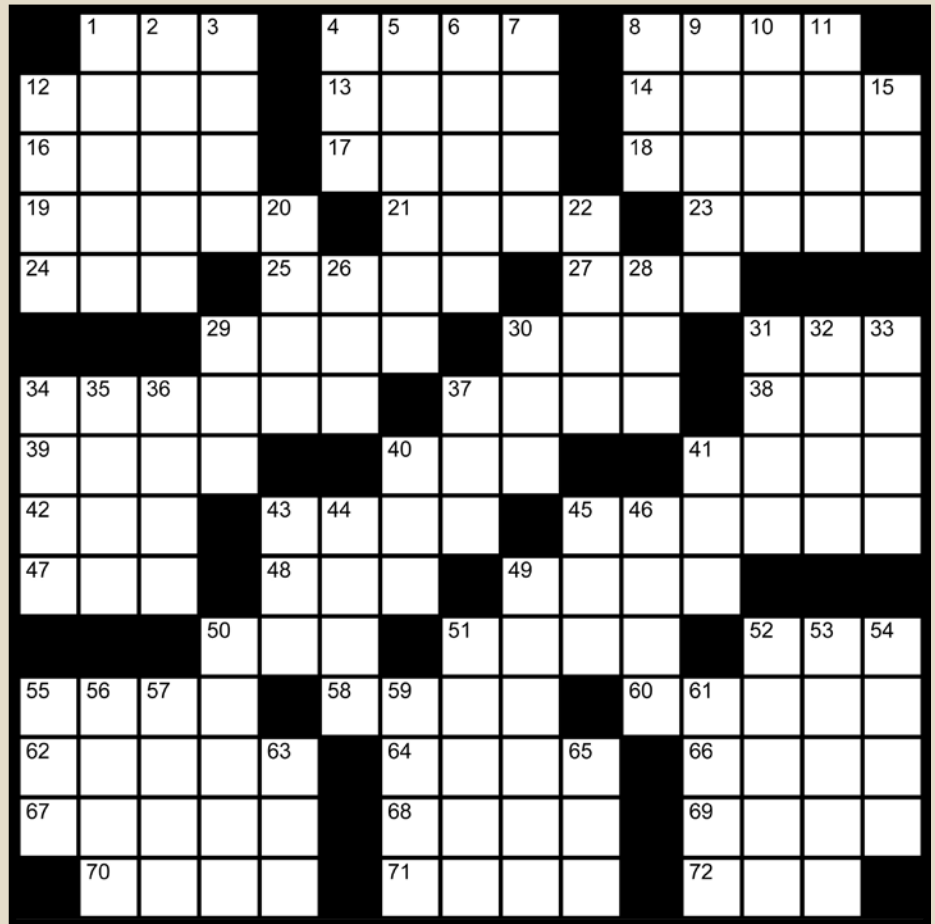
Find this issue's solution on page 2!

ACROSS

1. "Boaz... ____ down there." (Ruth 4)
4. Double-reed woodwind instrument
8. Colored or smelling like ashes
12. _____, Israel (Crusader stronghold), or a unit of land of 4,840 square yards
13. Relating to the mouth (e.g. in health)
14. Courageous and confident; also a type of beer
16. Ice ____ or Rubik's _____
17. Big trees - See 6 Down
18. Word of greeting
19. Early nuclear weapon
21. "_____ yourselves in... love" (Jude)
23. The Bo who lost her sheep
24. "My ____ has heard" (Job 13)
25. Baker's instrument (not Chet Baker)
27. It takes three of this to have *success* or *misses*
29. Speaker's platform (partly of daisies?)
30. Do you want to ____ my ____?
31. Federal Communications Commission
34. Police _____ - big demand in 2020
37. "Behold, a ____ horse!" (Rev. 6)
38. Exclamation to taunt or show surprise
39. "As the _____, about to falter..."
40. What a cow chews
41. I ____ that test - and then that serve!
42. Before (as said before, in poetry)
43. Pig food
45. Put a charge on an atom
47. *Fitting* to call a rental suite this (abbr.)
48. Similar people are like two peas in this.
49. Problem for green-eyed monsters?
50. Sink; droop
51. Bone in your forearm
52. Aid to clean eating
55. 1000-km-long river in Central Europe
58. Tasty vegetable that is more than ok
60. Baby insect
62. Sound of one of T. S. Eliot's *Cats*
64. Bites, snaps at
66. "just tried to keep my _____" (Mark Spitz)
67. Flattery may be _____ influence.
68. "_____ is _____ and west is west" (Kipling)
69. Father of King Ahab (1 Kings 16)
70. Sea salmon that has spawned
71. Miss Muffett's go-to with curds
72. "Sports... the ____ department of life."

DOWN

1. The kind of gear deep people need
2. _____ Day (a tree-mendous celebration)
3. Swarm (with)
4. Successful tic-tac-toe row
5. People step on them to avoid problems.
6. Made of timber from trees in 17 Across
7. "someone _____ saw him" (Luke 1)
8. What's left after the fire
9. "The throne had six _____" (1 Kings 10)
10. "I can't believe I ate the _____ doughnut!"
11. _____ log
12. Ongoing dull pain
15. "torn... from ____ to bottom." (John 19)
20. Sounds like Obelix's favorite is a bore.
22. _____ & Stick tiles
26. Teens are often full of ____ and vigor.
28. French female saint (abbreviation)
29. Short for Dorothy (if she's a bit dotty)
30. Place from which to launch
31. An ellipse has two of them.
32. _____ Genese: French restaurant
33. What spies write their messages in
34. Flightless South American bird
35. Wyatt _____ - lawman who famously fought at the O.K. Corral
36. "_____ not yourself...." (Ps. 37)
37. I let my ____ sleep in a ____ tent.
40. Fish often used in British fish and chips
41. "if there is... ____ comfort" (Phili. 2)
43. Mineral spring (at least partly spring!)
44. Company's public image; brand symbol
45. Place to rest *in* (on the road)
46. Typical shape in track
49. Pass by (like "As Time Goes By")
50. The soul of South Korea (a capital ideal)
51. Murder victim in the reign of King David
52. Prefix referring to bromine
53. Import of King Solomon (1 Kings 10)
54. Indonesian tourist destination
55. Flightless Australian bird
56. Game show title: *The Weakest _____*
57. "Love _____ me welcome" (G. Herbert)
59. "But he _____ their thoughts" (Luke 6)
61. Acronym for "a Cherry on top" store
63. "_____ with the dew of heaven" (Dan. 4)
65. It looks like a pig lives here!



A reason to read biographies

A great reason to read biographies is because they are an antidote to short-term thinking. When you're caught up in the moment it's easy to fixate on how hard-pressed you are, or how weak, or how hurt. When we're thinking about only the now, we're liable to question where God is, and forget how faithful God has shown Himself in the past.

Biographies take us out of the immediate by showing us how God has operated in a person's life over that lifetime. So yes, they faced challenges and difficulties, but an overview of their whole life will often allow us to see exactly how God caused "all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).

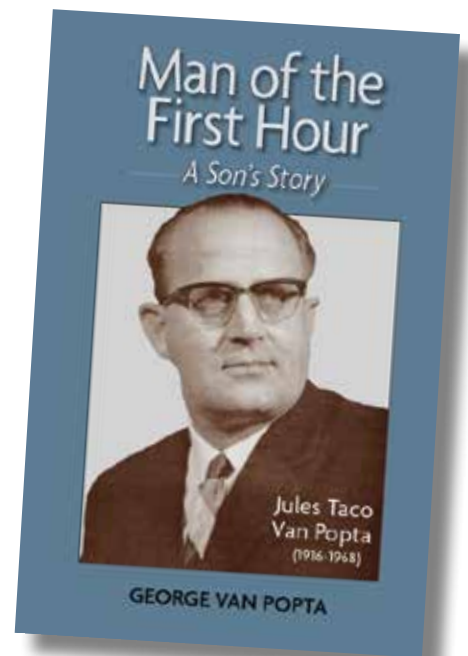
RP's newest release, *Man of the First Hour* by George Van Popta, is a biography about his father Jules Van Popta, the very first pastor of the Canadian Reformed Churches. If you've ever despaired about how things today are getting worse and worse, it'll be such an encouragement to see that some of the challenges this pioneer had to face have definitely improved since then. In fact, one of the challenges his generation had to face has been transformed into a blessing that benefits us greatly today. As George van Popta writes:

"One of the questions that confronted my father right from the beginning was whether a member of the church could join a trade union (ch. 7). This issue had arisen in the New Westminster church and the consistory had decided that membership in a trade union was incompatible with church membership. Brother Efraim Baartman, an office-bearer in New Westminster, and my father published articles about unions and union membership in the first yearbook (1952) of the churches. Both articles demonstrate the incompatibility of such dual and conflicting member-

ships. My father's very thorough piece is added as an appendix to this book (appendix 3). He carefully analyzed a number of union constitutions and showed how a member was required to pledge to obey future decisions the union would make. A Christian, said my father, owes that allegiance to Christ, and to Christ alone.

"My father's position on union membership left a stamp on the Canadian Reformed Churches. In Canadian Reformed culture there has been an aversion to joining and binding oneself to a union. The pages of the Year-End issue of *Clarion*, a magazine widely read in the Canadian Reformed Churches, are replete with advertisements and well-wishes from many businesses owned by members of the churches. Some companies trace their origins to the stalwart efforts of the early immigrants. These independent businesses have been an incalculable blessing to the churches, providing employment for thousands of people who, in turn, are well able to support the ministry of the gospel, the Christian schools, old age homes, summer evangelism, political associations, diaconal relief efforts, and more."

There were other reasons not to join a union: their adversarial underpinnings, an offshoot of Marxist thinking that sees the worker as having to fight ownership; union members striking while also preventing replacement workers from filling in (they acted as if the job was theirs, rather than belonging to the business owner who created it, and in this way they stole the job); and union dues being used to fund ungodly political efforts. While these issues haven't gone away, we can see that many of them have gotten better. For example, the Christian Labor Association of Canada is a union that spe-




MAN OF THE FIRST HOUR: A SON'S STORY

BY GEORGE VAN POPTA
2021 / 226 PAGES

cifically renounces the Marxist adversarial approach.

More encouraging still is seeing how God used the difficulties back then to build His Church now. Entrepreneurs started businesses so that they and their brothers and sisters could find non-union work, and some of those businesses today fund much of the good our Church community is involved in.

This can be an encouragement for us today. Our corporate culture's embrace of "Pride Month" in June is another indicator of how hard it's becoming for a Christian to get a job in a big company. Will they hire someone who won't pretend that Fred – who now goes by Fredina – is a woman? What will they think of someone who doesn't want a rainbow flag on his desk? Certain jobs may be out of bounds once again for the faithful Christian. That is a challenge. In the short-term that can be downright depressing. But God has promised that He will turn this to our good. And in reading great biographies like *Man of the First Hour*, we can see how He already has, again and again.

Order "*Man of the First Hour*" at Press.ReformedPerspective.ca. 

- JON DYKSTRA



Monthly Donors are helping us reach the world!

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

PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT:

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

Please debit my bank account: (attach VOID cheque for banking information)

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 Other: _____

Withdrawn on the _____ (1st or 15th) day of each month

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

This payment is made on behalf of ☐ an Individual ☐ a Business

I may revoke my authorization at any time, subject to providing notice of 30 days. I can obtain a sample cancellation form, or further information on my right to cancel a PAD Agreement, at my financial institution or by visiting www.cdnpay.ca. I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

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

Completed forms, along with a void cheque, can be mailed to: *Reformed Perspective*, Box 1039, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0.



Kingdom Builder Deposit

Ethical: Funds support mortgages to churches/schools.

Smart: Consistent rates of return to depositor.

Charitable: Interest earnings shared with the school plus a donation receipt to you.



Helping parents. Reducing tuition.

Visit our website or contact our executive director Bernie Kottelenberg
HarvestFoundation.ca | info@harvestfoundation.ca | 289.309.1466

ADVICE YOUR WAY



Whether it's market shifts or a major life milestone, we'll meet you where you are – in just the way you choose – *to get you where you want to go.*



Wade Van Bostelen, CFP®, FMA, FCSI, FP Canada™ Fellow
Certified Financial Planner

Email: wbostelen@ipcc.org

101-3430 South Service Road, Burlington, ON L7N 3T9

905-333-0902 • www.ipcburlington.ca

COMFORT FACING DEATH

by Andrew J. Pol

Do you ever think about your own death? Poets may come up with flowery words and philosophers may make scholarly statements that ring hollow when there is no connection with the Word of God.

But in Psalm 139 God gives us the comfort we need when facing the end of our lives. It brings into sharp focus that no matter where we are, the LORD, our covenant God, is there. He knows everything about us, even our thoughts! That can frighten someone who tries to escape from God, but for those who put their trust in Him, it gives us confidence and strength.



GOD HAS BEEN WORKING ON US

In verse 13, David highlights God's personal involvement in our lives from conception onwards. He poetically describes the creative activity of the LORD, "you formed my inward parts." The Hebrew word used for "formed" here points to ownership. Our God has been personally involved in shaping our bodies and has laid his personal stamp on our very being.

David continues the thought in a parallel fashion, "you knitted me together in my mother's womb." He is honouring the LORD, who lays the basis for the development of each body part, weaving the network of bones and tissues. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14).

In verse 15, David speaks of having

been "woven." The word he uses occurs eight times in the book of Exodus. There it refers to the work of someone who weaves coloured cloth or who embroiders a cloth with coloured threads. That requires talent and skill. As scientific advances continue, we can learn more and more about the complexity of the human body and stand in awe of God's creative work!

GOD HAS PLANS FOR US

David marvels further in the next verse, "Your eyes saw my unformed substance." This indicates divine activity, not the seeing of an uninterested spectator. He broadens the picture dramatically by stating "in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there

was none of them." God's knowledge of our lives includes foreknowledge. His care for us predates our lives and forms part of a plan that extends beyond our temporary existence on earth.

Knowing that our lives here on earth are limited by God should not make us afraid. He, who has put so much thought and effort into forming us in the wombs of our mothers, promises to be with us throughout our lives and beyond that.

GOD IS WITH US

Centuries after David wrote Psalm 139, God was at work in the womb of the virgin Mary. He shaped a body for his only begotten Son. The coming of the Son of God into the world was truly a "wonder," a miracle beyond com-

prehension. Jesus Christ is Immanuel, “God with us.” Nothing throughout his life, including his crucifixion and death, happened by chance. He was “delivered up... crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men,” but all of this took place “according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). God’s plan was for his Son to become the Saviour of sinners and to lead people like you and me into fellowship with God forever.

The question we face when contemplating David’s words is whether or not we are prepared to echo them. Do we take comfort from knowing that our Creator is the LORD, our faithful covenant God? Are we entrusting ourselves and our eternal future into the hands of him who put so much thought and effort into forming us in the wombs of our mothers?

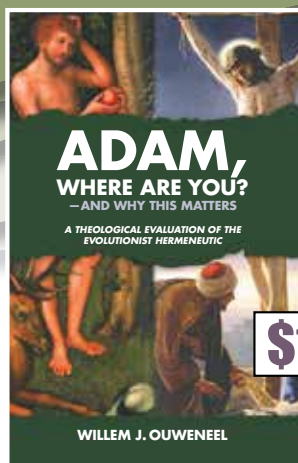
Psalm 139 ends with a petition. “Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps 139: 23-24). Are you prepared to make this prayer your own? Guided by the Word and Spirit of God, you may then be confident that his way is the way of life forever with him (Ps 139:24)! **RP**

Dr. Pol is a retired minister of the Carman West Canadian Reformed Church in Manitoba.

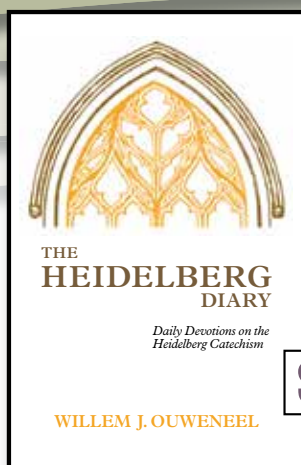
New Books!

New Life in the Kingdom!



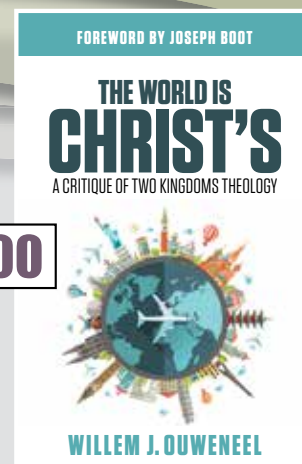
\$14.00

The central thesis of this book is that those who accept the theory of general evolution cannot at the same time be orthodox Christians because the matter of origins does not belong at the periphery but at the heart of the Christian message.



\$14.00

Discover and participate in the rich tradition of one of the earliest and most influential guides to Christian life and doctrine of the Reformation era.



The Two Kingdoms controversy is at root a question of how we ought to understand and live in a world that refuses to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

SPECIAL PRICE:

If more than 10 copies of any of these titles combined is shipped to **one** address in your community, the price will be only \$7.00 per book plus a flat shipping fee of \$10.

Order your copies from www.paideiapressorders.com

A COMPLEMENTARIANISM 101 MANUAL

reviewed by Wes Bredenhof

Kevin DeYoung's latest tackles an always timely topic. In the last few years, the "women in office" issue has been on the radar of various Reformed churches. This is especially owing to the fact that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) went in that direction in 2017. But we shouldn't think it's only a Dutch issue. In every church I've served as a pastor there have been those convinced that women should serve in church leadership. The need is always there for well-written resources clearly explaining the Bible's teaching.

DeYoung, pastor of a Presbyterian church in North Carolina, wrote this book with his congregation in mind. He writes in the Introduction:

"I have often wished for a book that explained the Bible's teaching about men and women in the church in a way that the interested layperson could understand and a size that he or she could read in a few hours."

I'd say DeYoung has hit the mark.

A COMPLEMENTARIANISM STAND

Men and Women in the Church advocates for a position known as complementarianism and *against* egalitarianism. Complementarians hold that men and women are essentially equal, but have been given different, complementary roles. Egalitarians hold that whatever roles men can perform, women can also perform. All of this is in the context of the church and its offices. Complementarians are against women in office and egalitarians are for.

About two-thirds of the book is taken up with exposition of the most debated

passages: Genesis 1-3, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:33-35, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

The last third of the book looks at common objections made against the complementarian position (Deborah? Phoebe? Junia?), as well as explaining how the biblical teaching applies to boys and girls, men and women. The book concludes with an appendix interacting at length with John Dickson, a "broad complementarian" who nonetheless argues that women should be permitted to preach in public worship.

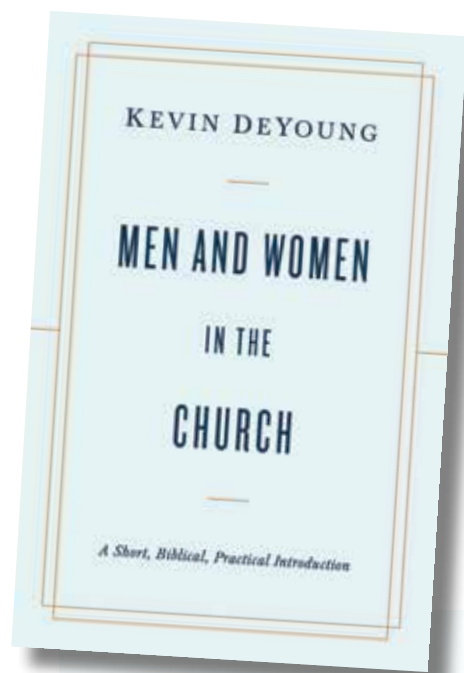
I've read a number of pro-complementarian books over the years, but DeYoung stands out. He rightly argues, for instance, that this issue isn't the proverbial molehill – the gospel is at stake. This is because of how God links male/female complementarity with the relationship between Christ and his church in Ephesians 5:32. So DeYoung writes:

Ephesians 5 may be about marriage, but we can't make any sense of the underlying logic unless we note God's intentions in creating marriage as a gospel-shaped union between a differentiated and complementary pair. Any move to abolish all distinctions between men and women is a move (whether intentionally or not) to tear down the building blocks of redemption itself.

When the issue is stated like that, its importance comes into clear view.

REFUTING ETERNAL SUBORDINATION

Another highlight is DeYoung's helpful correction of some complementar-



MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: A SHORT, BIBLICAL, PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION

BY KEVIN DEYOUNG
2021 / 170 PAGES

ians who've argued that the husband-wife relationship is parallel to God's headship over Christ. The Trinity thus furnishes a model for marriage, particularly the relationship between the Father and the Son. This position has come to be known as the eternal subordination of the Son (ESS). It's based on a misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 11:3, "I want you to understand that head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." DeYoung offers a sound refutation, though the language here does get technical.


CAUTIONS

There were only a couple of things I must be critical about. DeYoung argues that women should be able to "share a testimony, give an announcement, or offer a prayer" in public worship. It's debatable whether testimonies and announcements belong in public worship. Prayer certainly does, but it is corporate

prayer being led by someone. Moreover, corporate prayer in public worship has a teaching quality to it. The congregation is learning to pray by being led in prayer. DeYoung bases his argument on his observation that 1 Corinthians 11 assumes there is some place for women to be speaking in the church's public worship. However, as my colleague Dr. Dean Anderson has pointed out, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is not speaking about public worship services.¹

Another criticism, of less importance, is not about what DeYoung said, but what he left out. Near the end, he writes that "men and women should not relate to every other man or woman as husband and wife. And yet there is something about the marriage relationship that shows for everyone the sort of people men and women were made to be" (p.136). It would have been helpful to flesh that out a little more. For example, what does that mean for women in politics, business, the military, or law enforcement? I know it's meant to be a "short" book, but couldn't we just have had a paragraph or two?

CONCLUSION

Men and Women in the Church ought to be in church libraries and high school Bible classes. It's also important reading for church leaders. Our church runs something called the Service and Leadership Training program. This is to prepare young men for church leadership. One of the sessions deals with the topic of women in office. Kevin DeYoung's book will be on the recommended reading list from now on. It's a fairly simple and biblically faithfully guide in an area where Satan is working furiously to undermine not only God's Word in general, but also the gospel in particular. 

ENDNOTE

¹ See his essay, "The Women Should Keep Silence in the Churches!" (1 Cor. 14:34) at his website, <https://anderson.modelcrafts.eu/articles-and-sermons/>

*Dr. Bredenhof blogs at
yinkahdinay.wordpress.com.*

TWO ON WORSHIP & THE PREVENTION OF WORSHIP WARS

by Frank Ezinga

With the restrictions on church attendance easing, many people are saying: "Can't wait for Sunday." Did you know that there is also a book with that name by Michael Walters? The back cover has a large heading which says: "A Silver Bullet for the Worship Wars." After reading Dr. Wes Bredenhof's book on worship, *Aiming to Please*, I dove into this one book with its intriguing title.

There is some overlap between it and *Aiming to Please*, in chapters on liturgy, music, and sacraments. However, there are also new topics in Walter's book. For example, Walters comments on the acoustics of the sanctuary. While many (of our) church buildings are optimized for the speaking voice, Walters points out that the sanctuary has multiple functions, including a space for singing and music. Therefore, the room should be acoustically designed for both speaking and singing.

Bredenhof and Walters both look at pulpits, which Walters sees as being replaced by a "lectern" in modern churches. He comments:

"The presence of a pulpit communicates that it is the Word of God, not the communicator, that is most significant in preaching."

He continues, noting that modern communicators often prefer to have no barrier between themselves and their audience. Yet, pastors would do well to let their congregations know why they use "the sacred desk."

While Bredenhof comes from a singing tradition with a select number of songs that the congregation knows well, Walters comes from a different practice where the songs are in abundance. The result: "Hymn singing can be a stretch for many worshipers these days." Having many songs for the congregation to sing means there may be too many to be familiar with them. His advice is: "It is better to know ten or twelve hymns well than thirty perfunctorily." Perhaps something to keep in mind while the Canadian Reformed churches are considering adding more songs.

Worship often changes, and Worship Wars start because of a lack of knowledge and understanding. It is essential to know why we do what we do. Both of these books would be an aid to any who want to learn.

Frank Ezinga blogs at FrankEzinga.com.



CAN'T WAIT FOR SUNDAY: LEADING YOUR CONGREGATION IN AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

BY MICHAEL WALTERS
2020 / 224 PAGES



AIMING TO PLEASE: A GUIDE TO REFORMED WORSHIP

BY WES BREDENHOF
2020 / 232 PAGES

MATERIALISM POINTS TO A MAKER TOO

reviewed by Margaret Helder

Stephen Meyer's impetus to write *Return of the God Hypothesis* came from a debate at the University of Toronto's Wycliffe College in March 2016. Our family actually watched this event. The topic concerned whether we can see evidence of God's handiwork in nature, and three very different viewpoints were represented: professing Christian Stephen Meyer, atheist Lawrence Krauss, and theistic evolutionist Denis Lamoureux. From the start it was an organizer's worst nightmare in that Lawrence Krauss led off using a good proportion of his time not to debate, but to make light of Stephen Meyer, remarking that if he had known that his opponent was to be someone with the poor credentials of Meyer, he (Krauss) would never have come. Worse still, Stephen Meyer rose to speak, but the bright lights brought on a migraine headache such that he could scarcely see or speak. While he had come intending to take on Krauss's "universe from nothing" views, his condition did not permit this to be the time nor the place. But this missed opportunity motivated Meyer to create another – after much additional research, this book became the time and the place!

But it isn't just Lawrence Krauss that Meyer addresses here. He tackles the claims of both Krauss, America's most prominent scientific atheist, and those of Stephen Hawking who was, until his death in 2018, the world's best-known scientist and atheist. These men both claimed to have demonstrated that the universe spontaneously appeared from nothing. In a posthumously published book, Hawking declared: "No one created the universe and no one directs our fate." In response, Stephen Meyer confides:

"Reading Hawking's final words saddened me not only for Hawking, but also for the many millions of people who have long labored under the impression that the testimony of nature renders belief in God untenable."

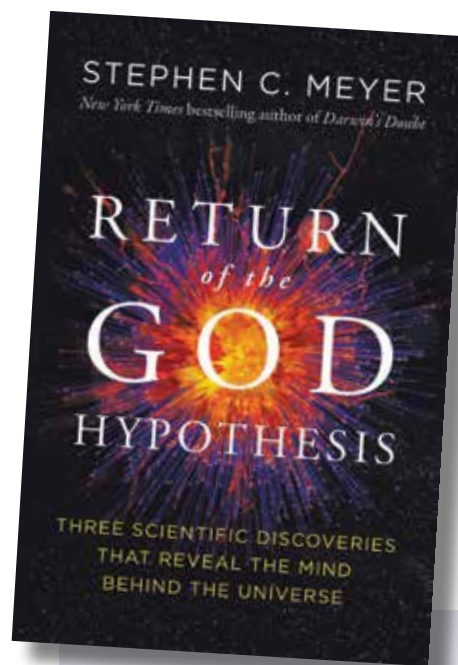
Meyer shares that as a teen, he himself was saddened by the futility of such a life, one without God. So he's written a book that would have benefited his teenage self – *Return of the God Hypothesis* is a refutation of Hawking's atheistic message. Thus, Meyer replies to Hawking:

"[My] book has better news: ...Not only does theism solve a lot of philosophical problems, but empirical evidence from the natural world points powerfully to the reality of a great mind behind the universe. Our beautiful, expanding, and finely tuned universe and the exquisite, integrated, and informational complexity of living organisms bear witness to the *reality* of a transcendent intelligence – a personal God."

ORDER GIVES EVIDENCE OF AN "ORDERER"

Stephen Meyer begins his book by pointing out that it was the Judeo-Christian doctrine of creation that first fostered the development of science in the Christian West. These early philosophers realized that nature was the product of a rational God. Stephen Meyer therefore declares that, indeed:

"the monotheistic worldview of the ancient Hebrews suggested a reason to expect a single coherent order in nature and thus a single, universally applicable set of laws governing the natural world."



RETURN OF THE GOD HYPOTHESIS

BY STEPHEN C. MEYER

568 PAGES / 2021

Obviously, scientists did not retain those initial views. Enlightenment ideals led to skepticism about God and emphasis on the value of human reason alone, which also promoted materialism – this is the idea that matter and energy should be understood as the sole foundations of reality. Soon scientists were declaring that only materialistic explanations of nature were legitimately scientific. Therefore,

"By the beginning of the twentieth century, science – despite its theistic beginnings – seemed to have no need of the God hypothesis."

KEY SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES

With this background, Stephen Meyer now begins to consider biology, chemistry and especially physics.

Everything didn't come from nothing

The particular interest of most theoretical physicists is to explain where everything came from. We soon discover that there are no physical explanations of origins which do not need a causal intel-

ligence (a creator). We have all heard about the big bang, but not so many people realize that extrapolation of the mathematics back from the present, continues on to *zero*, the “singularity.” In Meyer’s words:

“...Hawking, Ellis and Penrose’s singularity proofs ... implied that a materialistic universe of infinite density began to exist some finite time ago starting from nothing – or at least from nothing spatial, temporal, material or physical.”

The cause, then, of a beginning would have to come from something *outside* of nature – something (or rather, *Someone*) supernatural! As young earth creationists, we have our own (eye-witness) account of the universe’s origins, but we can appreciate how God has so arranged things, that even the Bible-rejecting materialist can’t escape the implication that the universe had a supernatural origin. Of course, atheists certainly do not want to contemplate this idea.

An incredibly finely-tuned universe

In the 1980s, there was more bad news for the atheists. When physicists studied the physical forces and natural laws governing all nature, they discovered a “curious thing.” Forces like gravity, or electromagnetism exhibit extremely precise values and constants which cannot be otherwise if life is to exist. Thus, Stephen Meyer points out that:

“...the number [Oxford physicist Roger] Penrose calculated – 1 in $10^{10^{123}}$ – provides a quantitative measure of the unimaginably precise fine tuning to the initial conditions of the universe....The mathematical expression $10^{10^{123}}$ represents what mathematicians call a hyper-exponential number – 10 raised to the 10th power (or 10 billion) raised again to the 123rd power. To put that number in perspective, it might help to note that physicists have estimated that the whole universe contains ‘only’ 10^{80} elementary particles (a huge number

– 1 followed by 80 zeros). But that number nevertheless represents a minuscule fraction of $10^{10^{123}}$. In fact, if we tried to write out this number with a 1 followed by all the zeros that would be needed...there would be more zeros... than there are elementary particles in the entire universe.... I’m not aware of a word in English that does justice to the kind of precision we are discussing.”

Even more bad news for the atheists is that “the specific values of the constants represent features of the laws themselves, not aspects of nature that the laws could conceivably explain.” A causal agent is required, neither “nature” nor “nothing” will do.

ATHEIST ANSWERS AREN’T COMING

Enter to the scene the quantum cosmologists like Lawrence Krauss and Stephen Hawking who most emphatically did not want to admit any need for God to explain origin of the universe. Quantum cosmology attempts to “explain the origin of our universe as the outcome of a set of possibilities described by the mathematics of quantum mechanics.”

Quantum cosmologists such as John Wheeler and Bryce DeWitt developed an equation that synthesizes mathematical concepts from quantum mechanics and general relativity. Solving their equation,

“allows physicists to construct a wave function *for the universe*. That wave function describes different possible universes with different possible gravitational fields, that is different curvatures of space and different mass-energy configurations (or matter fields).”

The problem for scientists doing these calculations is that the range of possibilities is so huge, and the characteristics of our fine tuned universe are so precise that they have to choose what values to include in the equations. But explaining why nature would choose such arbitrary values has proved difficult for those people “that attempt to explain how the


universe emerged *from nothing*.”

And there are other problems for quantum cosmologists. “If the medium of math is the mind, does this mean that *mind should predate universe*?” Indeed “we have no experience of mathematical equations creating reality.” Thus Stephen Meyer insists that quantum cosmology “attributes causal powers to abstract mathematics and depends upon intelligent inputs of information from theoretical physicists as they model the origin of the universe.”

The highlight of this discussion and the book itself is that: “quantum cosmology implies the need for an intelligent agent to breathe, if not ‘fire into the equations’ then certainly specificity and information. Thus, it implies something akin to the biblical idea that ‘in the beginning was the Word.’ And that’s not nothing – by anybody’s definition.”

MATERIALIST ASSUMPTIONS LEAD TO SUPERNATURAL IMPLICATIONS

No matter what the theories are that scientists may propose to explain our observations of nature, none can avoid implications about intelligent cause and control. Stephen Meyer also discusses other exotic theories such as various approaches to a multiverse. None of these concepts is at all convincing either. The take home message is that “reflecting on this evidence can enable us to discover – or rediscover – the reality of God. And that discovery is good news indeed.”

The author discusses a lot of technical concepts over many disciplines, but he works hard to make the concepts reasonably understandable. While the author supports long ages, his message resonates with young earth advocates as well. For the interested adult, this book is well worth the effort and an inspiring read. 

Dr. Margaret Helder is the President of the Creation Science Association of Alberta which has just published an intriguing new book called “Wonderful and Bizarre Life forms in Creation”. You can learn more about and order here: www.create.ab.ca/wonderful-new-book-from-dr-bergman/#more-9864.



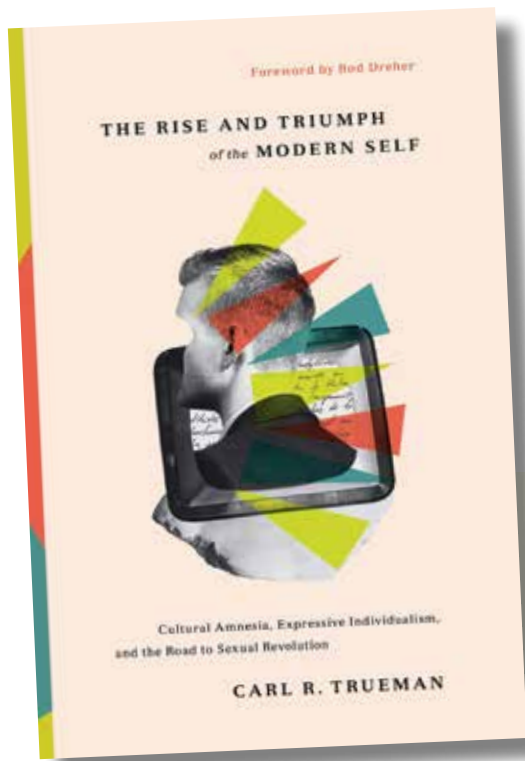
A NEW PODCAST FROM LIGONIER MINISTRIES

In all the noise of everyday life, how do you focus on what really matters? Where do you go to regain perspective? Drawn from a lifetime of Bible study and reflections on the nature of truth, including content never before released, *Ultimately with R.C. Sproul* features unique moments of insight to help you understand what you believe and why you believe it. Each episode of this new podcast is only a few minutes, filled with biblical teaching and theological wisdom to help you renew your mind, make sense of the world around you, and grow in your knowledge of who God is. Listen every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to set your mind on what matters most—what matters ultimately.

Subscribe today. Just search for “Ultimately with R.C. Sproul” in your favorite podcast app.



UltimatelyPodcast.com



TRUEMAN ON TODAY'S SEXUAL MADNESS

reviewed by Wes Bredenhof

THE RISE AND TRIUMPH OF THE MODERN SELF: CULTURAL AMNESIA, EXPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM, AND THE ROAD TO SEXUAL REVOLUTION

BY CARL R. TRUEMAN
2020 / 425 PAGES

Carl Trueman has lost his sense of humour. I've read several of his books and they all had clever moments of wit. However, there's nothing to laugh about in Trueman's latest. There's a definite risk in it being otherwise. Our day doesn't tolerate any joking around when it comes to the sexual revolution, particularly from those who might be critical of it. Even when we come with gravitas, the revolutionaries will *not* be pleased. While progressives "Christian" or secular won't bear any critiques of their revolution, Bible-believing Christians need such critiques more than ever. If we're going to withstand the forces arrayed against us, we need deep-digging analysis. And Trueman delivers.

For those unfamiliar with him, Carl Trueman is professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College in Pennsylvania. He was previously a professor of historical theology and church history at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He's an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the author of numerous books and articles.

By training Trueman is a historian and this book is primarily a work of history. It explains how things came to be as they are. Trueman writes:

My aim is to explain how and why a certain notion of the self has come to dominate the culture of the West, why

this self finds its most obvious manifestation in the transformation of sexual mores, and what the wider implications of this transformation are and may well be in the future.

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self is not, therefore, so much of a *theological* analysis of intellectual and cultural trends past and present. There is some such analysis, but *The Rise and Triumph...* is primarily *historical* -- albeit written from a Christian historian's perspective. It essentially traces the historical development leading up to the sexual revolution of our present day.

4 PARTS

In Part 1, "Architecture of the Revolution," Trueman lays out some helpful conceptual categories and tools for understanding the history to be examined.

In Part 2, "Foundations of the Revolution," he explores how philosophers (Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Marx), scientists (Darwin) and poets (Wordsworth, Shelley, and Blake) played key roles in the development of the psychologized self.

Part 3, "Sexualization of the Revolution," features psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, whom Trueman asserts, "is actually the key figure in the narrative of this book." More than anyone else, Freud is responsible for sexualizing psychology. As Trueman notes,

"...before Freud, sex was an activity, for procreation or for recreation; after Freud, sex is definitive of who we are, as individuals, as societies, and as a species."

Marxist scholars Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse took the next step and politicized sex. Accordingly, "Sex is no longer a private activity because sexuality is a constitutive element of public, social identity."

In Part 4, "Triumphs of the Revolution," Trueman demonstrates how the sexual revolution has carried the day in terms of:

- pornography
- how feelings govern ethics (the therapeutic mindset)
- and transgenderism

The last of these is the most interesting, as Trueman describes how transgender individuals were not initially welcomed by the gay and especially the lesbian community. Even gays and lesbians weren't always on the same side. So, how did the T come to stand with the L and the G? Trueman answers:

"...it is a political coalition forged on the basis of a common enemy -- a socially and politically enforced heterosexual normativity."

TWO HIGHLIGHTS

There are many good insights in *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, but let me isolate two that especially grabbed my attention. For many years, I understood the sexual revolution as something that more or less developed out of the “hippie”/anti-war movement of the 1960s with the catalyst being America’s involvement in Vietnam. I thought of it as an anti-authoritarian and at times anarchic, at other times Marxist, social phenomenon. However, Trueman’s work shows that to understand the present day, we have to reach back at least two centuries.

The other insight has to do with the way sexuality has become key to self-hood and identity. Trueman notes that, in today’s world, not recognizing someone’s identity leads to feelings of inferiority. This is akin to a personal attack. He goes on:

This observation is important in enabling us to understand why, for example, in a society where sexuality is foundational to personal identity, mere tolerance of homosexuality is bound to become unacceptable. The

“I believe it will be recognized as one of the landmark Christian books of our time.”

issue is not one of simply decriminalizing behaviour; that would certainly mean that homosexual acts were tolerated by society, but the acts are only a part of the overall problem. The real issue is one of recognition, of recognizing the legitimacy of who the person thinks he actually is. That requires more than mere tolerance; it requires equality before the law and recognition by the law and society. And that means that those who refuse to grant such recognition will be the ones who find themselves on the wrong side of both the law and emerging social attitudes.

The person who objects to homosexual practice is, in contemporary society, actually objecting to homosexual identity. And the refusal by any individual to recognize an identity that so-

ciety at large recognizes as legitimate is a moral offense, not simply a matter of indifference. The question of identity in the modern world is a question of dignity. For this reason, the various court cases in America concerning the provision of cakes and flowers for gay weddings are not ultimately about the flowers or the cakes. They are about the recognition of gay identity and, according to members of the LGBTQ+ community, the recognition that they need in order to feel that they are equal members of society.

Trueman nails it. The sexual revolution doesn’t want our indifference or our toleration. It wants our affirmation, recognition, and celebration. Anything short of that is considered phobic – defined as a form of irrational bigotry.

6 key quotes

Ben Shapiro called it “the most important book of our moment” while Reformed blogger Tim Challies said of it: “I don’t think there will be a better-researched or more fascinating book in all of 2020.”

What follows are a half dozen quotes from Carl Trueman’s *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*, to give you peek at what’s inside.

THE QUESTION ANSWERED IN THIS BOOK

“Why does the sentence, ‘I am a woman trapped in a man’s body’ make sense not simply to those who have sat in poststructuralist and queer-theory seminars but to my neighbors, to people I pass on the street, to coworkers who have no particular political ax to grind... How did such a strange idea become the common orthodox currency of our culture?”


SHUT UP, YOU TRANSPHOBES!

“The sexual revolution does not simply represent a... modest expansion of the boundaries of what is and is not

acceptable sexual behavior; rather, it involves the abolition of such codes in their entirety. More than that, it has come, in certain areas, such as that of homosexuality, to require the positive repudiation of traditional sexual mores to the point where belief in, or maintenance of, such traditional views has come to be seen as ridiculous and even a sign of serious mental or moral deficiency. The most obvious evidence of this change is the way language has been transformed to serve the purpose of rendering illegitimate any dissent from the current political consensus on sexuality. Criticism of homosexuality is now *homophobia*, that of transgenderism is *transphobia*. The use of the term

CONCLUSION

The book ends with a “Concluding Unscientific Prologue.” The last word there is Trueman’s hint he may have more to say on this subject. He does already here propose some constructive ways in which the church could be engaging with the world, besotted as it is with the sexual revolution. One of his points here did however raise my eyebrow: “Protestants need to recover both natural law and a high view of the physical body” (p.405). I have no problem with the latter. But “natural law” here would seem to demand a little more explanation than Trueman provides. He frames it in the context of teaching the church should provide to its members regarding moral principles. So, it would seem, he’s proposing the recovery of an understanding of the moral order God has revealed in nature. But since that moral order is more clearly revealed in the Word of God, and we’re talking about the church, why not focus our attention on Scripture?

All Christian leaders need to read this book, whether they’re involved with leadership in education, business, government, or the church. The sexual revolution threatens Christian hearts and minds which are sometimes naïve to the consequences of accepting some or all of its key premises. Christian leaders need to be conversant with the history and philosophy behind the revolution, so they can speak the truth in love from God’s Word. *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* meets that need. I believe it will be recognized as one of the landmark Christian books of our time. 

phobia is deliberate and effectively places such criticism of the new sexual culture into the realm of the irrational and points towards an underlying bigotry on the point of those who hold such views.”

SEXUALITY AS GOD

“Freud has, in fact, provided the West with a compelling myth – not in the sense of a narrative that everybody knows is false but in the sense of a basic idea by which we can understand the world around us – regardless of whether it is ‘true’ in the commonsense way of understanding the word. That myth is the idea that sex, in terms of sexual desire and sexual fulfilment, is the real key to human existence, to what it means to be human.”

SEXUALITY AS WHO YOU REALLY ARE

“...the underlying argument of this book is that the sexual revolution, and its various manifestations in modern society, cannot be treated in isolation, but must rather be interpreted as the specific and perhaps most obvious social manifestation of a much deeper and wider revolution in the understanding of what it means to be a self. While sex



**DESIGN
BUILD
DELIVER**

At North Valley, our approach is simple. We ask a lot of questions. And we collaborate with you to design, build and deliver. We also sweat the small stuff – like pulling permits, because details matter.

WE'RE HIRING We're currently looking for journeyman carpenters to join our team in Northern BC. Please send your resumé to Tylor Versteeg smithers@northvalleydesign.ca

north valley
design + construction

northvalleydesign.ca

may be presented today as little more than a recreational activity, sexuality is presented as that which lies at the very heart of what it means to be an authentic person.”

SHUTTING DOWN FREE SPEECH

“While earlier generations might have seen damage to body or property as the most serious categories of crime, a highly psychologized era will accord increasing importance to words as means of oppression. And this represents a serious challenge to one of the foundations of liberal democracy: freedom of speech. Once harm and oppression are regarded as being primarily psychological categories, freedom of speech then becomes part of the problem, not the solution, because words become potential weapons.”

DON'T WHINE; WORK

“Every age has had its darkness and its dangers. The task of the Christian is not to whine about the moment in which he or she lives but to understand its problems and respond appropriately to them.”

JAN BRETT: picture books' peak

by Jon Dykstra

What sets Jan Brett (1949-) apart as a picture book *illustrator* is how much she packs into every page. There's always lots going on right there in the middle of her double-page pictures and then there's even more to see toward the edges – Brett's trademark is to use the side and bottom borders to give hints to the attentive child of what might be coming next. So, for example, in *The Mitten*, the small picture on the right-hand border of every two-page spread gives us our first glimpse of the next animal to try to squeeze into the already crowded mitten.

What sets Brett apart as an *author* is the creative twists she brings to otherwise familiar fairytales. Goldilocks, the Gingerbread Man, Cinderella, and the Big Bad Wolf are all taken to new settings, with the most unusual reimagining being Cinderella as told with chickens.

RECOMMENDED

All of her books are 32 pages, and all are aimed at the pre-school to Grade 2 age group (though older children will certainly enjoy revisiting them for years to come). But which Brett should you begin with? And which would make ideal gifts for the kids or grandkids, or purchases for the school library? With more than 40 books so far, there's certainly lots to enjoy. What follows are my recommendations grouped by theme.

TWO SETS OF MITTENS

I couldn't track down which is Brett's most popular book, but in that she's

written three sequels to it, I'd think Brett's favorite has to be *The Mitten*.

The Mitten: A Ukrainian Folktale (1989)

After his grandmother knits him some snow-white mittens, Nicki loses one in the forest. But one boy's loss is a mole's gain, who finds it just the perfect size to crawl into and stay cozy and warm. A passing rabbit has the same thought, and, despite there really being no room, joins the mole, only to have a hedgehog, owl and more squeeze in. The charming story has a fun twist at the end when Nicki recovers his lost mitten.

The Hat (1997)

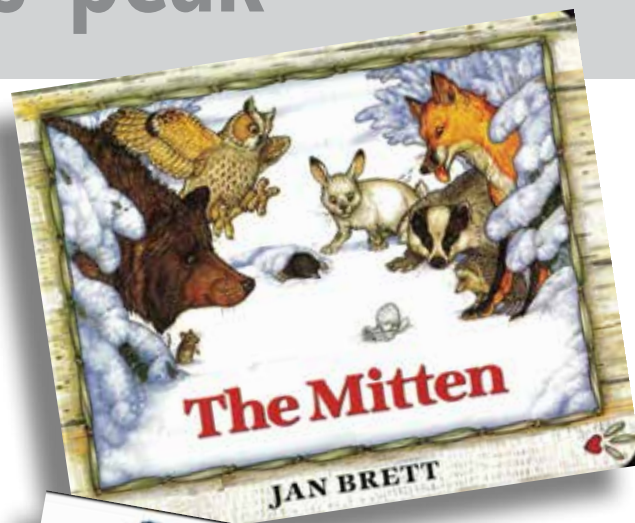
Hedgie gets a woolen sock stuck to her head, and the other animals use the rest of the drying laundry to fashion their own hats.

The Umbrella (2002)

This retelling of *The Mitten* takes place in the jungle, and begins with a little frog trying to find refuge in a little boy's lost umbrella. But it isn't too long before he has a lot of very close neighbors.

Cozy (2020)

An Alaskan Muskox named Cozy becomes a refuge for cold animals seeking shelter. It starts with some lemmings, then a snowshoe rabbit,



and so on. The attentive young reader will notice that this is another retelling of *The Mitten* but with its own creative twists.

HEDGIE'S BOOKS

Hedgie the hedgehog makes frequent appearances in Brett's books, showing up in at least twenty of them. Most often it's somewhere in the background (he's carved into a bedpost in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*) but in *The Hat*, and in the books below, he has a bigger role.

Trouble with Trolls (1994)

A little girl, Treva, has to contend with some troublesome trolls who really want her pet dog for their own. Though she outsmarts them in the end, children might feel a little sorry for the trolls, who just wanted a pet. But the observant child will notice that, though they don't deserve it, by story's end, the trolls do end up with a wonderful pet. Guess who it is!

Hedgie's Surprise (2002)

Hedgie helps a hen stop a thieving Tomten (a Danish gremlin) from taking her eggs so that she can have a family. The borders are done as needlepoint for added charm.

The Snowy Nap (2018)

Hedgie puts off hibernation long enough to see the farm in wintertime.

FAIRYTALES WELL (RE)TOLD

There is a reason the same fairytales we heard as kids are still being told – they are classics for a reason. But Brett's taken on the challenge of improving on them, and in these four her success is obvious. The first three here are all versions of Goldilocks and there's something to love about each one.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears (1987)

What sets this faithful retelling apart is the detailed, gorgeous pic-

tures - there is so much to see! And the author also explains (which few other versions do) how the Papa and Mama bears could tell Goldilocks had been on their chairs and beds.

The Three Snow Bears (2007)

An Inuit girl, Aloo-ki, ends up at the igloo house of a family of polar bears. She's less destructive than in the original, and the bears are more forgiving. The arctic landscape brings added charm.

The Mermaid (2017)

This time Goldilocks is a mermaid visiting the home of the three octopuses. The ending is a little happier than it usually is – the little one gets a gift from "Goldilocks."

Beauty and the Beast (1989)

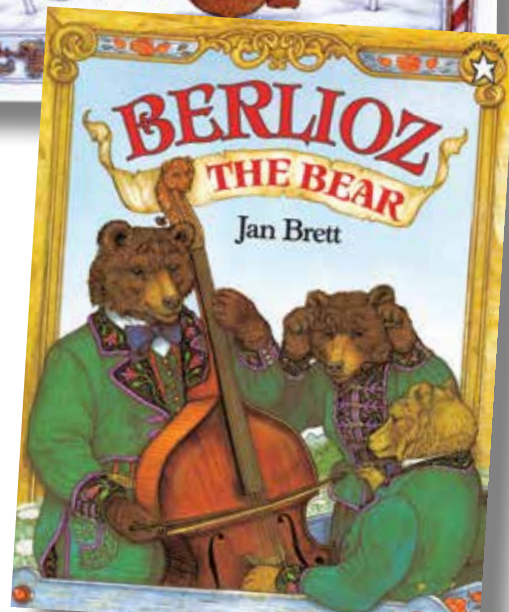
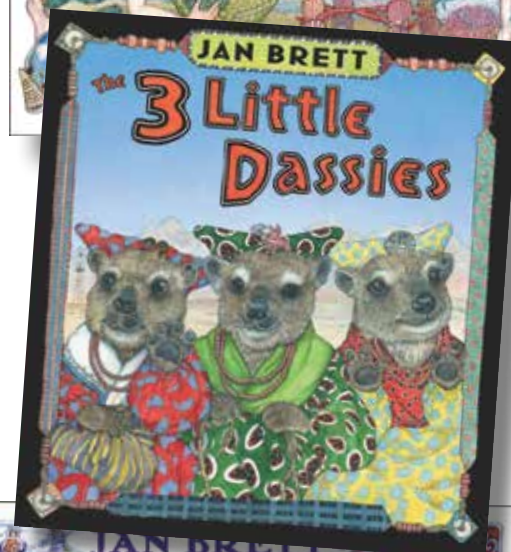
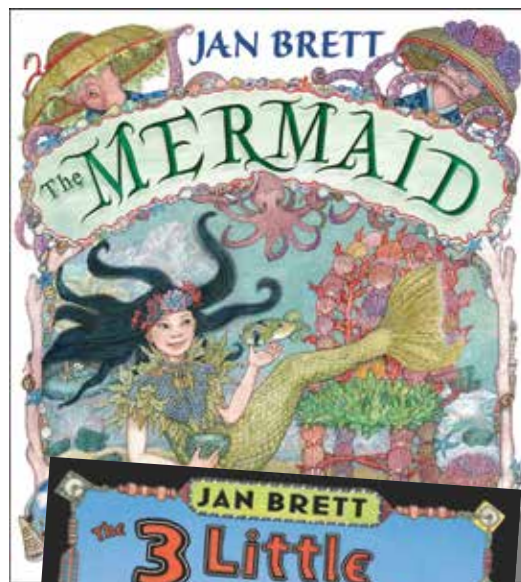
To save her father, a girl agrees to live with a beast and his animal servants. That's always made this my least favorite fairytale – what sort of loving father would let his daughter sacrifice herself for him? But while Brett's version still includes this troublesome opening, the artwork makes it special. An observant child will notice the paintings shown on the castle hallway walls reveal what the animal servants used to look like back when they were human.

Town Mouse • Country Mouse (1994)

When a pair of country mice switch places with two city mice, they both learn that there's no place like home. An added element to this version: a city cat and a country owl both intent on getting dinner.

Gingerbread Baby (1997)

While the title character is full of sass, this is a kinder, gentler twist on the classic Gingerbread Man tale.



The 3 Little Dassies (2010)

Brett has taken *The Three Little Pigs* to Africa, swapping in dassies (gopher-like creatures) as the architects, and an eagle as the windbag. It's a little scarier than its source material, because the eagle actually catches the first two dassies, But never fear – in the picture borders we can watch as they are rescued by a friendly lizard even as the eagle makes his unsuccessful attempt at Dassie #3.

THE REST OF THE BEST

Among this potpourri are originals from Jan Brett, as well as folktales from other countries.

Annie and the Wild Animals (1985)

When a little girl's pet cat goes missing, she tries to find a new pet from among the wild animals in the forest. What she discovers is that none of them are a good fit. Fortunately, her cat comes back...and she brings some surprises with her.

Fritz and the Beautiful Horses (1987)

A scruffy pony wishes that someone would ride him but all anyone does is laugh at how he looks. But when the town's bridge breaks, the sure-footed Fritz is able to do something the beautiful horses won't – he can bring the town's children through the river back to their parents. Hurray for Fritz!

Berlioz the Bear (1991)

A bear and his band of musicians are stuck on their way to the gala – their donkey won't budge. Can the rooster, cat, goat, or ox get him to move? No, but children will enjoy seeing how something much smaller can change the stubborn beast's mind!

Daisy Comes Home (2002)

Set in China, this is the tale of a quiet meek chicken who gets picked on by other chickens. But on an unexpected journey, she has to fight a monkey, a dog, and more, and her courage helps her stand up to the chicken bullies when she gets back home.

Honey.. Honey... Lion! (2005)

The honeyguide bird and honey badger normally work together, with the little bird showing the badger where to find honey, and the badger breaking things open so they can both feast. But one day, when honey badger decides not to share, honeyguide knows exactly how to teach him a lesson.

The Turnip (2015)

Based on an old Russian folktale, the badger family can't pull their giant turnip out of the ground, no matter how much help they get. But when a rooster tries it on his own, and, unnoticed to all, he gets some help from below – bears pushing the turnip up out of their den – the turnip finally comes out.

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

Armadillo Rodeo

A near-sighted armadillo befriends a pair of red cowboy boots and follows wherever their owner takes them. It's fine, but just not as interesting as Brett's best.

Hedgie Blasts Off

Hedgie goes to space to unplug a planet that shoots sparkles, much to the alien tourists' delight. There's nothing all that wrong with it (aside maybe from the aliens, because aliens don't actually exist... but, of course, talking animals don't either). However, its simpler format (no border pictures) and science fiction elements make it different and just not as enjoyable as Brett's usual fare.

Gingerbread Friends

In this sequel to *Gingerbread Baby*, the baby goes on a journey in search of friends only to find out that other baked goods can't talk or dance. But when he returns home to find that his friend has baked him a whole bunch of gingerbread friends. Kids will probably

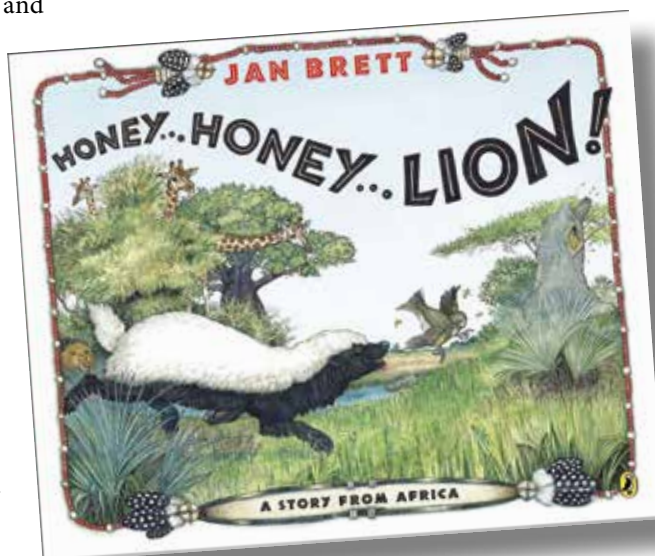
appreciate this sequel, but parents will find it less creative than the first

Mossy

A unique turtle – she has a mossy garden growing on her back – is put on display in a museum. But Mossy pines to be back with the new friend (and budding romantic partner?) Scooty. To help the lonely turtle, the museum director releases her back into the wild. This is a gorgeous book, but its message about creature care is in line with environmentalism's general “hands off” approach which stands in opposition to the “hands on” role God has assigned us as stewards. While this will go over kids' heads I'm noting it because Brett is pointedly preaching here – there is a message to this book – and she's directing that point to young impressionable readers. While I'd have no problem reading this with my children, it is one I would want to read *with* them. I'd tell them that, yes, it is important to address Mossy's loneliness, but returning her to Nature wasn't the only option – Scooty could also have been brought indoors.

Cinders: A Chicken Cinderella

This is both a bizarre but enjoyable take on Cinderella, with chickens playing the principal parts. The only downside to this book is from a school library perspective: it has a double-page foldout in the middle, that'll quickly get crumpled up.



The Tale of the Tiger Slippers

Tiger tries to throw out his old raggedy shoes that served him well as he worked his way to wealth, but no matter what he tries, they end up coming back. The story doesn't have the usual Jan Brett spark, and because the tigers are dressed as people their clothing doesn't allow Brett's art to capture the real beauty of these animals.

DON'T BOTHER

Of the twelve books listed below, 8 have Christmas in the title, one is about Easter, and the other about Noah's Ark. The problem here is not so much with anything in the individual titles but in what's missing from all of them: God. His complete absence is so conspicuous it's even noticeable to unbelievers – *Publisher's Weekly*, in their review of *On Noah's Ark*, noted how Brett:

"omits the biblical framework.... There's no mention of God or his relationship to Noah, nor any reason given for the Flood."

If you read one of her Christmas books God's absence won't be as conspicuous since many a Christmas story skips over the real reason for the season, so the fact that she does as well doesn't seem so glaring. But when an author writes eight books about Christmas and Christ never comes up, we have to wonder, what's going on? In *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, Brett follows the song with "A Brief History" of the Twelve Days. She writes that:

"The Twelve Days of Christmas are the days linking Christmas on December 25 and the Epiphany on January 6, when the three Magi offered the first Christmas presents – gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

Gifts to *Who*? The Magi get a nod, but Jesus is still ignored?

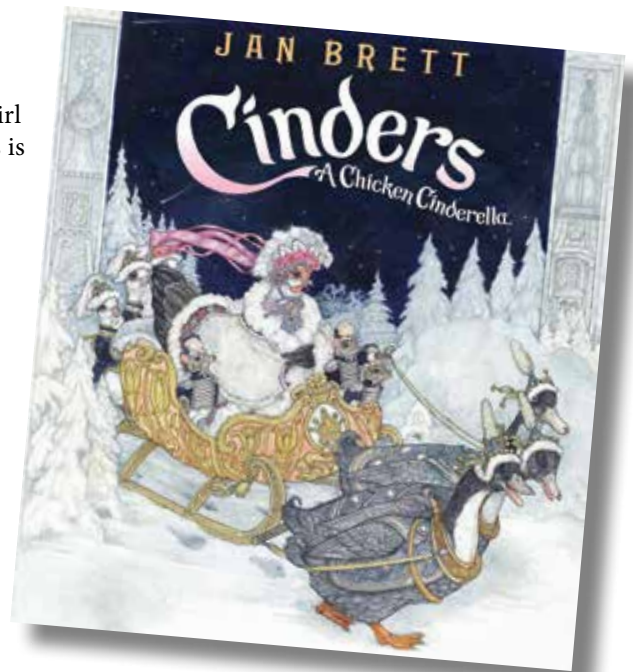
Individually, Brett's Christmas books are simply fluffy fun, but collectively they are a studious avoidance of any mention of the God who became Man.

So why bother with them?

- **Christmas Trolls** – Young girl teaches trolls that Christmas is about generosity.
- **The Easter Egg** – An Easter Rabbit becomes the focus of the season.
- **On Noah's ark** – The boat itself is far smaller than the Bible describes and, contrary to Scripture, it says the mountaintops were not covered.
- **The Wild Christmas Reindeer** – Elf learns that reindeer respond better to kindness than bullying.
- **Gingerbread Christmas** – The Gingerbread baby and his band celebrate Christmas... with no mention of Christ.
- **The night before Christmas** – The classic poem, with Jan Brett's art.
- **The Twelve Days of Christmas** – Brett notes that though the song is "named for this religious holiday" it "is actually quite pagan in tone."
- **The Animal's Santa** – A rabbit discovers that Santa is "truly, truly true." Sigh.
- **Home for Christmas** – A young troll eventually learns there is no place like home. The Christmas in the title has no relevance in the story.
- **Who's that knocking on Christmas Eve?** – A boy and his giant ice bear scare trolls away from a Christmas feast.

Two others also worth giving a miss:

- **Comet's nine lives** – On an island where dogs are people, but cats are just cats, we follow along as a cat (rather gently) dies eight times.
- **The first dog** – A cave boy turns a helpful wolf into his pet and names him "dog." There's a touch of evolution here in her presumption that this occurred 12,000-55,000 years ago.



CONCLUSION

If your kids are into picture books, then they'll love Jan Brett – it's as simple as that. Her detailed full-page illustrations are genius, wonderfully capturing the beauty of the many different animals she's featured. There's no one better. RP



MISSION IN MEXICO

operating in Querétaro, Mexico is prayerfully seeking a missionary to serve alongside a mission worker already working in the mission field. The mission in Querétaro is new with many opportunities. If you have a heart to spread the Word to those in need of the gospel, are an ordained minister of the Word, and of the Reformed faith, prayerfully consider our request. Fluency in Spanish is an asset. Interest or questions can confidentially be emailed to tdboeve@gmail.com.

BOOKS

RECENT RELEASES OF VARIOUS SORTS

MANGA CLASSICS: ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

BY L.M. MONTGOMERY AND CRYSTAL S. CHAN
2020 / 308 PAGES



While *Anne of Green Gables* (first published in 1908) is a very Canadian story, it's always been incredibly popular in Japan too so it makes sense that her story would be given a manga treatment.

If you're unfamiliar with Anne, she's an orphan girl living in the Prince Edward Island of the 1870s, sent by mistake to the home of an aged brother and sister who need help with the farm work. The mistake is, they asked for a boy. Instead, they got the imaginative, effusive, emotional, red-head Anne. And once they meet, they can't let her go.

If you're unfamiliar with manga, it's a comic style that originated in Japan, and it reads right to left, because that's how the Japanese read. That also means the back of the book is actually the front...which takes some getting used to.

This adaptation is faithfully done, and at 300 pages, given the space it needs to tell the story well - only a very few scenes are given an abridged treatment. Teens should skip straight to the original book, but for younger readers, or the reluctant sort, this will be a great way to introduce them to this dynamic lass.

- JON DYKSTRA

R.C. SPROUL: A LIFE

BY STEPHEN J. NICHOLS
2021 / 400 PAGES



The R.C. Sproul of Stephen Nichols's biography is a man pursuing his Maker's holiness - eager to understand and communicate it.

Following his undergrad conversion, Sproul's zeal drove him and his wife, Vesta, to hunt after vital educational and ministry opportunities. They relocated almost annually during their first decade together. Soon Sproul's winning personality and authenticity as a "battlefield theologian" make him a magnet for hungry believers. We see Ligonier Study Center launched in 1971, the writing of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, and Sproul's stand against reductive ecumenicism. Nichols gives ample space to Sproul's many books and radio work. Finally come stories of Florida, the building of Saint Andrew's, and founding of Reformation Bible College (RBC).

Nichols has produced an accessible book, popular in tone rather than scholarly. And the Sproul we meet in these pages is the gentle lion so many of us felt we knew through the books and radio. Without a doubt, Sproul loved the church, immersing himself in his shepherding vocation.

Nichols's book is, finally, deeply encouraging and even convicting as we view the whole-life portrait of this faithful teacher. The 21st century church, as much as any before, greatly needs the stories of such brothers and fellow saints.

- ADAM WALTER

ECHO ISLAND

BY JARED C. WILSON
2020 / 251 PAGES



After a camping trip, four friends return home to find the streets empty - everyone is gone, and there's no sign of where they went, or what made them go. Bradley, Jason, Archer, and Tim have the whole town to themselves and they can go wherever they want and take whatever they want. But what they want is to solve the mystery in front of them. But how are they going to find answers? And maybe the more important question is, are they *really* alone?

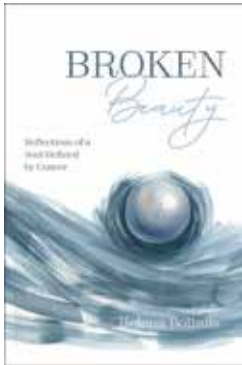
The publisher has this in "Survival stories" and "Action & Adventure" categories, and that sure doesn't capture it. "Mystery" is getting closer, but this one is hard to nail down. Is "Twilight Zone" a fiction genre? Maybe it isn't that the book defies description, but more that any proper description would have to include spoilers.

The author says he was writing for teens who like C.S. Lewis. That's helpful, because there is a Christian allegory lurking just under the surface. But I'll add that a 12-year-old who's only just figured out Aslan is a Christ-figure is going to find this *frustratingly* mysterious, whereas a 16-year old who has been chowing down on *The Screwtape Letters* will find it *intriguingly* so. That makes this one for your older avid-reading teen, but you'll want to borrow it yourself.

- JON DYKSTRA

BROKEN BEAUTY – REFLECTIONS OF A SOUL REFINED BY CANCER

BY HELENA BOLHUIS
2020 / 252 PAGES



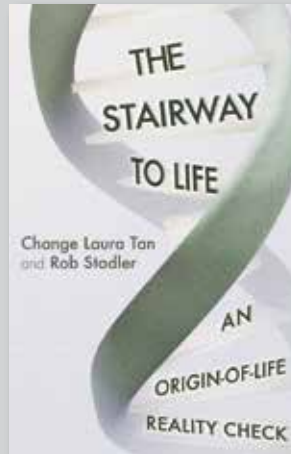
Written with warmth, raw honesty, and so much hope, *Broken Beauty* gives the reader a close glimpse into a heart-rending yet beautiful time of suffering and sickness. Though it reads like a personal memoir, *Broken Beauty* is not so much a book about the author, Helena Bolhuis, as it is a moving testimony about the faithful God and loving Father who carried and led her through her cancer journey. Saturated with references to God's Word and the comfort that Helena received from it, this book will be a real encouragement to anyone going through a period of trial or illness.

It would also be helpful to read when walking alongside a friend or relative experiencing a tough time, for throughout the book there is useful advice and practical wisdom on how to be there for someone who is hurting. In this world broken by sin, we will all encounter suffering during our lives, whether our own or that of someone we love, and Helena's book shines a bright light on how God turns our suffering into something beautiful, to His glory.

"Now I understood that life is all about God's glory in my story and my delight in Him through that story. Now I understood that through His glory, my joy is made complete." (p.239)

Find *Broken Beauty* at Amazon, including as an audiobook read by the author.

– REBECCA BREDENHOF



THE STAIRWAY TO LIFE: AN ORIGIN-OF-LIFE REALITY CHECK

BY CHANGE LAURA TAN AND ROB STADLER
2020 / 224 PAGES

Stairway highlights how evolutionists don't have a clue as to how life first came to be. Not only are their best theories wholly inadequate to explain how it could have happened by some *unguided purposeless* process, they don't even know how to create life *on purpose*.

What *Stairway* does is break the problem down into 12 smaller steps. It then spends a chapter on each step, examining the best evolutionary explanations of how this step might have happened via purely naturalistic forces (i.e., without God). But the digging only uncovers how everything we already know, and the more that we learn, shows that even these bite-sized chunks couldn't be accomplished by Nature alone. Consider just these three steps:

- How did the first building blocks of life come to be?
- How did the left-handed building blocks get separated from the right-handed ones? Life on Earth is almost exclusively left-handed amino acids, but any natural process will form them in equal measures of both right and left-handed sorts. Scientists don't know have any ideas as to how the useful left-handed ones could be sifted out from the troublesome right-handed sort.
- How can we keep the right amount of water in, excess water out, and allow waste products to make their way out of the cell without letting invaders in? A cell needs a fully functional membrane right from day one and doesn't have time to evolve this in any sort of step-wise fashion.

That atheist response to all these problems is likely to be: "Well, we just haven't figured that out yet...but we will." However, what authors Tan and Stadler are explaining, chapter by chapter, is that the more we learn, the greater the problems become for evolution. Not only are we not finding naturalistic answers, the more we learn the more we're discovering how very intricate life is. We're actually getting further and further from any sort of naturalistic theory of life's origins, because life is much more complicated than Darwin – or even scientists of a decade ago – ever realized.

Stairway to Life is not an easy read – you'd need at least some high school biology or chemistry – but it sure is an encouraging one! I don't think I've ever seen such a thorough and methodical take down of naturalistic origins theories.

You don't need to understand every last jot and tittle here to understand that the authors are laying out some serious haymakers here. I've read dozens of books about evolution, Intelligent Design and the origin of life, and *Stairway* would have to rate in amongst the top 3. So I'd give this two very big thumbs up, and encourage you to get a copy for your church library too.

– JON DYKSTRA

On the benefits and limits of creeds and confessions

by Chris deBoer

Most *RP* readers belong to creedal churches. We hold to creeds and confessions because they have helped the Church preserve the truth of God's Word through the generations. So what are these confessions? In his article "The Necessity of Creeds and Confessions" (published in the last issue), Garry Vanderveen defined confessions as a:

"common/shared interpretation of Scripture, which is the highest and only infallible rule for faith and life."

Orthodox Reformed churches generally still adhere to the ecumenical creeds (Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostles') and some set of Reformed creeds (e.g., Westminster Standards, Three Forms of Unity, Augsburg Confession, etc.). In this article I want to explore both the benefit of creeds, and their limits.

SYMBOLS THAT CAME WITH RISKS

In the early church, to hold to a creed or confession was often done at risk of one's social and/or physical safety. In his *A History of Christianity* (Vol. 1), Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette explained that creeds and confessions are known as "symbols" because the term symbol here,

"comes from a word which in one of its usages meant a watchword, or a password in a military camp. As applied to a creed, it was a sign or test of membership in the

Church. Assent to the creed or symbol was required to those who were being baptized"

People made this confession with a conviction to join the Lord's army, as it were. They were convinced that Jesus Christ was the true Son of God, that He made full payment for their sins, and that they were assured of the resurrection of the dead. Each believer was prepared to "deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow [Christ]" (Luke 9: 23).

Philip Schaff, in his *Creeds of Christendom* (Vol. 1), explains that the earliest creeds were often committed to memory and not written down.

"From fear of profanation and misconstruction by unbelievers... the celebration of the sacraments and the baptismal creed, as a part of the baptismal act, were kept secret among the communicant members until the Church triumphed in the Roman Empire."

The earliest creeds are found in Scripture itself. When Christ asks the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter confesses, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:15-16). The importance of making a confession was quickly tied to one's baptism and membership in the early church, and it included a confession of the Triune God before being baptized into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE AUTHORITY OF CREEDS

The creeds have an ecclesiastical authority but not in the same way that the Roman Catholic Church, and others, would suggest. The Roman Catholic Church believes that the creeds, traditions, and the papacy share a co-ordinate (equal) authority with Scripture, and that, then, is a denial of *Scripture alone*. Of course, with the Roman Catholic view of continuing authoritative revelation, we can anticipate, and we learn from experience, that the result is an ever-changing view of what God's Word teaches. Councils, encyclicals, and formal Church documents become as authoritative as Scripture, and because these come later, they can be seen as progressive revelation.

Protestant churches need to be careful that we do not fall into the same trap; we need to be very cautious that we do not elevate the ecumenical or Reformed creeds to such a status that we start arguing that any topic they don't address must therefore be left to the freedom of the individual believer. Many of the creeds were written to articulate what Scripture teaches in response to a perversion of the Scriptures, a heresy. They were written in a historical context, addressing particular matters that were pertinent. They could not have foreseen issues such as abortion, euthanasia, gender confusion, etc. as topics that would need to be addressed. To grant freedom on these issues simply because the creeds don't speak to them would be to ignore what Scripture does say. Then we would be

elevating the confessions to the same level, or even higher than Scripture. And if we do that, then we risk causing the pendulum to swing the other way, leading to an abandoning of creeds and confessions and a turn towards rationalism and unfaithfulness.

At the same time, the confessions do have an ecclesiastical authority as they regulate the public teaching of the church. They also allow members to express their commitment to the truth of the Scriptures as articulated by the church.

The Apostles' Creed appears to be the first formally crafted creed, and seems to have developed in response to Gnosticism, Marcionism, and Monasticism. The Nicene Creed, more prevalent in the East, seems to be an expansion of the Apostles' Creed, with a somewhat stronger emphasis on the Trinity, and in particular, the nature of Christ. So, also, Reformed creeds were written to elucidate the biblical teachings on salvation by grace alone, the sovereignty of God, the sufficiency and completeness of Scripture, etc. They were written to echo the truth of Scriptures on core doctrines of the faith after those doctrines were perverted

"the Scriptures have a self-authenticating authority while the confessions have a provisional authority...."

or misunderstood by the Roman Church and others.

Just as early church members used the Apostles' Creed to make their public profession of faith in order to receive access to the sacraments, so also today, we do something similar. It is quite reasonable to think that members of Reformed churches would express their agreement with Reformed confessions as a way to experience access to the sacraments for themselves and their children within Reformed churches. Are the truths expressed in the later creeds less true, or less important? Are they not expressing crucial truths? Or perhaps we have come to a point in the 21st Century that such truths are of secondary importance – to our detriment, I fear.

To be clear, the Scriptures have a self-

authenticating authority while the confessions have a provisional authority – they are authoritative in so far as they agree with or accurately summarize the Scriptures. This bears repeating. As Schaff puts it: "The Bible is of God: the confession is man's answer to God's Word"

NO CREED BUT CHRIST?

I recall numerous discussions I had as a young adult with my peers, about the role of the confessions. Many wanted to adopt a "*no creed but Christ*" attitude. For them, this means that we do not need to express anything other than Christ – only Christ.

This sounds pious and echoes the sounds of "*Christ alone*." But what does only Christ, or "...*but Christ*" really mean? Does Scripture allow us to accept the Marcionites

That abortion isn't condemned in creeds or confessions, doesn't grant us the freedom to kill the unborn.

Why?

Because what our confessions may not address, Scripture still does.

and Gnostics in the church of Christ? Or better yet, does Christ accept them as members of His bride? Today's Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses also speak piously of Christ. In fact, the Mormons sing so many evangelical hymns about Christ, it is a wonder that they will not rightly comprehend what they sing.

But the truth is, the Apostles' Creed is – *but Christ*; the Nicene Creed is – *but Christ*; the Heidelberg Catechism is – *but Christ*. What I mean, of course, is that these creeds seek to be nothing more than an articulation of *but Christ* – they are only what Christ's Word teaches us.

All of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is equally the Word of God. As long as creeds and confessions echo the truth of God's Word, they remain *but Christ*.

GREY AREAS

To be fair, the aforementioned points raise some real challenges. In particular, how do we view or interact with those who cannot articulate agreement with Reformed confessions, but bear fruit as confessing Christians? They could agree with the Apostles' Creed or all the ecumenical creeds, but not the Reformed ones. Can they not also be members of local Reformed congregations? Do they have to answer "I do" to this question: Do you believe the Word of God, summarized in the confessions, and taught here in this Christian church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

These are questions I'll explore in future articles as I seek to read through the forms for making a public profession of faith in use among faithful Reformed churches. As a start, however, there are things that churches cannot know, or things that we cannot decide – this is God's hidden will. God decides who is and will be a member of the New Jerusalem, and every individual there will be there only because of Christ's redeeming work. What the church can and must do, however, is ensure that the thrice holy God is honoured and His Word obeyed, and preached. If the Church no longer believes that the confessions articulate fundamental truths of God's Word, necessary for salvation – if they are more than *but Christ* – then one wonders why they should maintain any kind of ecclesiastical authority.

"No creed but Christ" sounds pious... but what does [it] really mean? our time. "

Is there no room for grace, further education, disagreement? On a practical level, I find this very difficult. I believe, for example, fundamentally, that children should be baptized as members of Christ's covenant congregation. I also believe that I have true brothers and sisters who would agree that children of believers belong to God, but who would disagree that baptism is a sign and seal of that reality, and so refuse to baptize their children. Is there a way to express and experience this unity despite the significant difference? Can I be honest and say, "I don't know"?

Perhaps we need to begin by identifying a difference between a personal conviction and a church's position. That is, while I enjoy fellowship and relationship with such brothers and sisters, the fullness of our unity cannot be expressed until there is repentance and/or until Christ returns, in whom all of our sins are completely forgiven. If we were to put the problem the other way, a Reformed Baptist congregation would not agree to baptize my children if that church believed, fundamentally, that doing so would be sin or at least meaningless. Would I be permitted to be a

full-fledged member if I refused to be rebaptized? Probably not.

Creeds and confessions express a church's understanding of the truth of God's Word. They are not meant to serve as a catalogue of ideas from which we can pick and choose. The church adopts these statements of faith because they delineate our expression of the faith from those who express this faith differently. So, while we are on earth, we must strive to maintain the truth, and unity in that truth. Where there is not unity in understanding of the truth, there might need to be a limit to the experience of the spiritual unity we trust often exists. God is gracious, and while it is not good that brothers and sisters are separated because of sin, it is the way things are. Perhaps, even before Christ returns, we'll all agree on why we baptize (or not) children of believers, but not likely. So, we wait patiently and pray fervently for Christ's return when we will all experience the fullness of joy in belonging to Christ and to each other, in perfection.

Until then... let us be careful that we do not compromise on the truth of God's Word RP



AVERTEX
UTILITY SOLUTIONS INC.

**CAPABILITY YOU
CAN TRUST**

Orangeville/Smithville
1.888.837.3030
www.AVERTEX.ca

AVERTEX UTILITY SOLUTIONS INC is a progressive underground utility contractor specializing in electrical utilities, railroad utilities, renewable energy, telecommunications, water and sewer, and specialty services.

AVERTEX is owned and operated on Christian principles.
 We are currently looking for like-minded individuals to consider applying for the following full-time positions:

- **Project Manager - Smithville, ON**
- **Estimator - Orangeville, ON**

We offer competitive wages, a great benefits package and generous pension.

All interested persons are encouraged to submit their resume to:

ORANGEVILLE 205235 County Rd 109 Amaranth, ON L9W 0T8	Jason Kottelenberg 1.888.837.3030 jasonkott@avertex.ca	James Vis 1.866.521.3030 jvis@avertex.ca
		SMITHVILLE 2749 Thompson Road Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

or visit www.AVERTEX.ca



by Jay Adams

The common word on the streets today is “tolerance.” That idea, however, is wrong – very wrong... dead wrong! There’s no such thing as tolerance. No one is tolerant. Tolerance is a myth; indeed, it is a dangerous myth. Anyone who claims to stand for tolerance, anyone says he is tolerant—whether he’s aware of it or not—is lying.

“Wait a minute. I disagree. I’m tolerant, no matter what you say. And, furthermore, I resent being called a liar.”

You’re a liar!

“Now, hold on. How can you say that? You don’t even know me. How can you call me a liar?”

Because you’re lying—that’s what liars do.

“It simply isn’t right of you to pre-judge me, your reader, when you have never met me.”

Oh? Why not? You seem to be agitated over a simple statement that I made out there in the blue. I didn’t ask you to chime in. You put yourself in the category of liars.

“I can’t have people going around calling others liars without challenging them. After all, by implication, since I’m a tolerant person, you included me.”

If you are truly tolerant of differing points of view you wouldn’t go about challenging those who say something that disagrees with yours. If you’re truly tolerant, then why don’t you cheerfully agree that I have every right to go about telling your friends and relatives that you’re a liar?

“That wouldn’t be right. I don’t like people to make unfounded judgments. And, besides it would be a nasty thing to do.”

Are you saying that you’re intolerant of such a claim? Or of anyone who makes it?

“No. I’m tolerant of views that differ from mine.”

Then, you wouldn’t mind if I talk to your friends—right?

“Wrong.”

What makes it wrong to do so?

“The fact that it’s simply untrue.”

But I say that it is true.

“Let’s stop this bickering right now. Would you be satisfied if I conceded that you have the right to be wrong?”

Ah! So, you’re so tolerant that you are ready to tolerate “error” to make it go away?

“That isn’t so. I accept only those things that are true.”

So you don’t tolerate error? It doesn’t matter to you whether others are in error or not so long as you are right? Does that mean you are tolerant of error in others and, therefore, of what you call my lies and my position of intolerance?

“I want others to know the truth too.”

Then, why don't you accept the truth that you're a liar?

"Because it's not true."

'Tis.

"Taint."

'Tis.

"Prove it"

OK. You claim that you're tolerant when we know that it's not true. So you say/deny that you tolerate error in yourself/others.

"There you go—calling me a liar again! And, I certainly don't know that it's true."

All this discussion, and you haven't yet gotten the point? I say you're a liar simply because you've already demonstrated that you are. You claim to accept truth alone, yet you won't admit that you're a liar or that you're intolerant. That's two lies right there.

"You're impossible!"

That's number three.

"OK, there's one thing I can't tolerate—you! You're intolerable."

Good. First thing you've said that's right so far. You're coming along. But since it's true, that too proves you're a liar. You said that you are tolerant, but let me ask you, are you intolerant not only of my intolerance but of intolerance in general? Seems that a tolerant person would have to be in order to be consistent.

"Well..."

See, that's the reason why anyone who claims to be tolerant isn't. You said that you resented being called a liar. That sounds like an intolerant attitude to me. You can't tolerate intolerance or you're tolerating what you claim to abhor. Put it the other way: you claim to abhor what you ought to tolerate—if you were truly tolerant. That position is contradictory in itself. To be intolerant of intolerance is contradictory. You can't have it both ways. Of course, you can lie about it. Let's move on. Why do you think that intolerance is dangerous?

"Don't think that it is."

Every Christian does. Are you a Christian?

"Yes."

Jesus said that He was the way to the Father (if you remember) and that nobody can come to the Father but by Him. The apostle also said that there is no other Name under the sky by which a person

may be saved—but only by Jesus' Name.

"Yes, but . . ."

No 'buts' about it, so far as the Bible is concerned. No one can be saved except by Jesus Christ. All other ways are erroneous, indeed, nothing but lies. So they are dangerous, leading people astray, away from the only true way to God. Right?

"But I tolerate other people's views."

Why? That's dangerous. It's dangerous to them. The idea again is that you can tolerate error in others, but not in yourself, right? It doesn't matter what happens to them—just so you can be tolerant. Is that it?

"That's not fair."

Who's talking about fairness? By what standard do you determine whether or not something is fair? But, let's go on rather than getting into a round of that. Do you believe in Christian missions?

"Of course."

Then you believe in intolerance. The whole concept of missions is based on a doctrine of intolerance—intolerance of the evil religions of men that lead them to eternal damnation. Moreover, and of greater importance, these false religions dishonor the true God. Missionaries believe that false beliefs must be destroyed before they destroy those who hold them. God doesn't tolerate false belief or unbelief. Read Romans 1.

"I have read it. But we can be polite."

Of course, often we can. But who's talking about politeness? And by the way, tell me, did Jesus tolerate the Pharisees and the Sadducees?


"Well..."

Do you remember some of the things He said to them and about them?

"Certainly."

Was Jesus always polite when he did? Why are you tolerant when Jesus wasn't? You're a Christian. Follow Him!

"I give up. You're hopeless!"

You mean intolerant? 

Dr. Jay Adams (1929-2020) is the author of more than 100 books. This is reprinted with permission from his blog which can be found at www.nouthetic.org.



PASTOR SEARCH

Covenant Reformed Church of Grande Prairie, Alberta is prayerfully seeking a Full-Time Pastor to join us as we continue to be a faithful witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in this city of 70,000

We are a small unified congregation that recognizes the calling to be missional. We are looking to the Lord's leading in bringing us a man to join us on our quest to be faithfully orthodox and graciously loving as we serve the Lord Jesus together.

Our Pastor will lead the preaching of the word and sacraments, the teaching of the youth, and together with the congregation seek to impact the community for Christ.

The ideal candidate would have a heart of love for Christ and his people, a desire to be missional, be an ordained minister of the Word, or ministerial candidate, and be committed to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity.

Expressions of interest along with a resume can be emailed in confidence to the Elders: at clerk@grandeprairieurc.org or alternatively you may reach out to the chair of consistory directly: Wietse Jagersma 780-882-9616

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHRISTIAN CHARITIES, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, AND MORE



Albertos Polizogopoulos



John Sikkema



Faye Sonier



Peter Stockland

The Acacia Group is a national Christian law firm that provides legal and crisis communications services.

- ☑ Ministry policies
- ☑ Human rights litigation
- ☑ Education law
- ☑ COVID-19 protocols
- ☑ Employment law
- ☑ Free consultations

www.acaciagroup.ca
(613) 221-5895



Good news for today.
Bright hope for tomorrow.



Streetlight
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A New Building to Grow In STREETLIGHT BUILDING FUND DRIVE

Streetlight has been proclaiming the gospel in downtown Hamilton for over 20 years.

God has blessed our work so richly that we need a new building in order to continue growing!

Our plan is to build a larger and more functional building on our existing property, and to achieve this we are hoping to raise \$2,100,000. We ask that you prayerfully consider contributing to this project.



Together, we can continue to reflect the light of God's grace in our community and Shine On!

Please visit streetlightministries.ca/shine-on to donate online,
or donate via e-transfer to info@streetlightministries.ca.
Donations should be earmarked for the Shine On Campaign.



There's an app for that!

Download the
Reformed Perspective
app for access to:

Devotionals

Articles

Podcasts

Movie Reviews

Book Reviews

and more...



***Reformed Perspective's* app can be downloaded
for Apple and Android devices.**

**Get it on your phone now to have ready access to
our devotionals, articles, and podcasts!**

**After you've downloaded and enjoyed the content,
let your friends know so they can get it too!**