

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

APRIL/MAY 2022  
Volume 41 Issue No. 3

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 40+ YEARS



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## RP's 52 IN 22 CHALLENGE

*A lawyer, a minister, and an editor are all  
trying to read 52 books in 2022*

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# Reformed PERSPECTIVE

## A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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# RP'S 52 IN 22 CHALLENGE

A book a week through 2022?

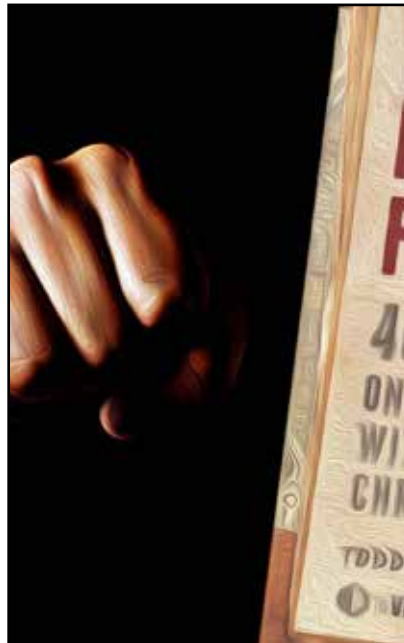
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# Lessons From My Mum

## There is hope for Western Civilization

by Mark Penninga

I learned an important lesson from a cheap house plant last week – that plant was a chrysanthemum (mum), and it comes with a background story that needs to be understood to get the lesson.

### DESTINED TO DIE

Last fall, when I was working with ARPA Canada, I did about fifteen presentations alongside my colleagues as part of our fall tour. The theme for this tour was on being “rooted in Christ.” At each of these presentations I quoted from Jeremiah 17:7-8:

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,  
whose confidence is in Him.  
They will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit.

I also made reference to a recent book by Al Mohler called *The Gathering Storm*, in which he calls out what he refers to as “cut flower civilizations.” At this point in the presentation, I’d proceed to hold up a house plant and then use a pair of scissors to hack off the flowers. Each night I would hold up the cut flowers and say “when we are cut off from our Christian roots, a civilization is destined to die.”

Sometimes I would add a few lines: “we all know what will happen to these flowers now that they are cut. We can give them sunlight and water, but they won’t survive without roots.”

In the presentation we gave examples of how Canada was cutting itself off from the roots that give life, but we also spoke to how that didn’t mean there was no hope. I explained that “if our roots go down into Jesus Christ then we can have complete confidence that He will sustain His children. Although our civilization may not last, His people and His Church will.”

### NEW HOPE

Fast forward to this spring and the ARPA team came to my home town to do the same presentation. But this time I was in the audience, alongside a few of my children. One of my former colleagues gave the same demonstration, using



a mum that he picked up at the local grocery store. He asked my son Nathan to hold it while he cut the flowers, and then gave the flowers to Nathan to take home.

Nathan took those cut flowers home and my wife Jaclyn put them in a vase with water. I expected that they would wilt quickly and be thrown out in a few days. I then promptly forgot about them.

A month later I was surprised to see that the flowers were still alive in that vase. And when we pulled them out of the water we were astonished to see that they had started growing some very impressive roots!

Jesus once said that if his disciples had to keep quiet, “the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:40). In this case, the flowers were crying out. Their message was hard to miss. It is God who gives life, also to civilizations. Just as God birthed and blessed Western Civilization, so He is able to cause it to grow new roots if that is His will.

Indeed, we serve a God of abounding grace. When we, as individuals, try to go our own way, if God is pleased to save us, He will achieve His purpose. He brings us back. God can also give a new lease on life to a civilization.

## ROOTED HOPE

20th Century historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote a 12-volume book set about the rise and fall of 26 civilizations throughout history. He concluded that “*great civilizations are not murdered. They commit suicide.*” I once wrote:

“What happens to a society which discourages new life, kills vulnerable life, surgically alters healthy bodies to conform to unhealthy minds, puts the greatest taxes on those who are the most economically productive, and treats a basic building block of life (carbon) as if it were a pollutant? That society is committing suicide.”

In other words, even though I care deeply for our civilization, I had little



hope for it.

But through this mum, I was reminded that civilizations don't rise and fall based simply on the behaviour and choices of their leaders and citizens. Jesus Christ is guiding all of history and gets to determine what happens to the West. And He may well show His grace, just as He has done to so many of us individually.

My wife Jaclyn has since cut the flowers off the stems and planted the roots (with the stems) in new soil. She explained to me that the plant's energy

needs to now go into taking root, not keeping the flowers alive. The flowers can come later.

Indeed, may God be gracious to the West and allow us to yet grow our roots into Him. There may yet be new flowers blooming in His time.

Let's pray that God will work revival, while shining His grace and truth wherever He plants us. RP

*Mark Penninga is the Executive Director of Reformed Perspective.*





# 3 REASONS

## to praise God for social media

by Chris Martin

**A**s a default, I tend to call attention to the *problems* that social media, and our relationship with it, has introduced into our lives. Social media has a grip on our hearts and minds in countless, ever-evolving ways, and it is important for us to keep up with that. So much of it is harming us in ways we don't see.

All of that being true, I think it is also important to also recognize the goodness of God and all that we do enjoy because of the social Internet. It really isn't all bad! And we do well to be reminded of this.

With all of that, here are three reasons I think we can praise God for social media:

### **1) WE CAN SEE THE WORK OF GOD AROUND THE WORLD**

Isn't it amazing that social media has afforded us the opportunity to see the ways God is working around the world? In

the days before the Internet, to learn of God's work in Spain or Indonesia or South Africa would have required a personal connection with someone in those parts of the world – perhaps our church sent a missionary abroad or a friend from college chose to serve the Lord in a different part of the world and we joined their mailing list.

Today, we can see the amazing work of God around the world by browsing the Internet, joining email lists of missions organizations, or simply engaging with brothers and sisters in Christ on our preferred social media platforms. Sure, an ever-present opportunity to be aware of the work of God in the world can tempt us to be overly-concerned with matters that are out of our control, but what a grace of God to be able to see his hand move across the world in such miraculous ways simply by scrolling on the screens in our hands!

God is always at work in every corner of the globe. He is

eternally interested in revealing the fullness of his glory so that ever-increasing numbers of people can come into contact with his goodness and trust him as their God rather than themselves. The Internet, and social media in particular, have given us the ability to peek into how God is doing this all around the world in a way no one in history has had before. So cool.

## 2) WE CAN CONNECT WITH LIKE-MINDED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

As I mentioned above, one of the ways we can learn of the ways God is working around the world is simply by connecting with brothers and sisters in Christ on social media.

Of course, one of the saddest effects of the social Internet on Christians is that it enables our desire to meddle, gossip, and wield our virtual tongues in ways that do not honor the Lord. I am guilty of using social media to hurt others with my words, as are most of us, I'm sure. This is a real sin of which we ought to repent, too – hurtful online speech is no less real than in-person hurtful speech.

But what an amazing grace of God it is when we use social media to connect with other believers not to debate theology or call into question their faith, but build one another up through encouragement, prayer, and fellowship!

I am grateful to God for how social media has acted as a way to keep in touch with brothers and sisters across the world or from past periods of my life when we lived close to one another. And, at the same time, I am grateful for all the relationships the Lord has given me that have almost exclusively taken place through various social internet avenues. There are dozens of brothers and sisters in Christ I have interacted with on Twitter or Facebook or elsewhere that I will not meet until we dine together at the marriage supper of the Lamb. How amazing is that?! Praise God for such an opportunity.

## 3) WE CAN STUDY THE BELIEFS AND CULTURE OF ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

I don't know about you, but I love learning. I read all kinds of books. I like reading books about U.S. presidents. I like reading books about business moguls like John D. Rockefeller (which I'm reading right now). I like reading books about social media. I like reading books about God's work in our lives.

On top of reading books about all kinds of subjects, I love accidentally falling down what are often called "Wikipedia Rabbit Holes" – maybe you've experienced this! You find yourself on one Wikipedia page, then another, then another, and before you know it you've wasted an hour! But that time is so often *not* wasted! Just the other day I was researching some famous criminal who came up in conversation, which then led me to a Wikipedia page about one of the highest security prisons in the world. It was so fascinating! I learned a lot.

How cool is it that we can use the Internet to learn? Even more specifically, we can use *social media* to learn! Social me-

*If we are intentional, we can really learn a lot by scrolling on social media. It doesn't have to be all about consumption and entertainment*


dia doesn't just have to be all about political arguments and funny cat videos. Simply by spending time on social media and interacting with people who are unlike you, you can learn about how different people live, believe, and see the world. Maybe you'll never make it to India and experience the richness of Indian culture, but if you happen to connect with an Indian person on social media, you could engage in conversation with them about what they believe, what a typical day looks like for them, and learn how their life is different from yours.

Social media has afforded us the opportunity to have a much more diverse, well-rounded perspective on the world. Of course, when we engage with people who hold different worldviews or systems of belief, we don't have to adopt their perspectives, but the more we can learn about other people and perspectives the more we can question our own and grow! If we are intentional, we can really learn a lot by scrolling on social media. It doesn't have to be all about consumption and entertainment.

## REMEMBER TO PRAISE GOD

I really try hard to keep up with the ways social media is evolving so that I can write helpful articles that caution us against blindly adopting every new and latest social media trend. We need to be more careful about how we use social media.

But cynicism and unhealthy negativity can so easily creep in when I constantly study the harmful effects of social media. It is important to remember to praise God for the goodness He shows us in these small provisions.

Any peek we can get into the workings of God in the world is amazing. Praise God for the tools he gives us to see him work and make much of his name. 

*This is reprinted with permission from Chris Martin's "Terms of Service" newsletter ([www.termsofservice.social](http://www.termsofservice.social)) which looks at the social internet from a Christian perspective. You can sign up for free. He has just published his first book, "Terms of Service: the Real Cost of Social Media."*

# BOOKS

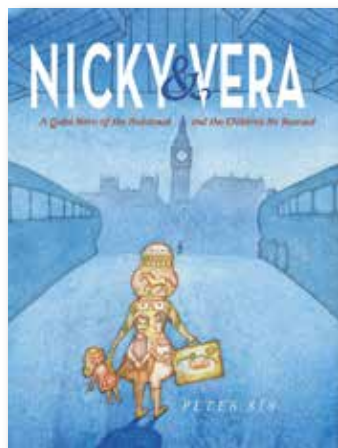
## A POTPOURRI OF PICTURE BOOKS

By Jon Dykstra

### NICKY & VERA: A QUIET HERO OF THE HOLOCAUST...

BY PETER SIS

64 PAGES / 2021



Nicholas Winston never set out to be a hero but he also knew what needed to be done. When the Germans were taking over Czechoslovakia in chunks, before World War II has even officially begun, Jews in the country were trying to get their children out. Winston knew how to get this done, pushing the paperwork, bribing the right people, and arranging for families in England where the children could stay.

He ended up saving 669 children, most or all of them Jewish, and he didn't have to brave bullets to do it. The lesson of this book? That there are quiet ways to do vital work. It was quiet work, but no less life-saving than what Allied soldiers did fighting to end the Nazi reign. Winston's actions are much like the important work we are most often called to today – our fights don't involve risk of life and limb. Instead, we need to be persistent, seizing opportunities when they come, creating them when they don't, and working around obstacles as they appear.

Winston was not Christian so far as I can tell, but his example is still one we can benefit from. This is a great picture book for any school library, to be pulled out and showcased around Remembrance Day each year.

### CORRIE TEN BOOM: THE COURAGEOUS WOMAN AND THE SECRET ROOM

BY LAURA CAPUTO-WICKHAM

24 PAGES / 2021



For such a short one, this picture book sure fits a lot inside. We meet Corrie ten Boom as a child sitting with her watchmaker father at work, see the whole family's love for the Lord evident in their devotions together, and then transition to World War II and witness the family's eagerness to hide and protect Jews from the Nazis. Finally, we see her capture, time in the concentration camps, and a glimpse of her life afterward.

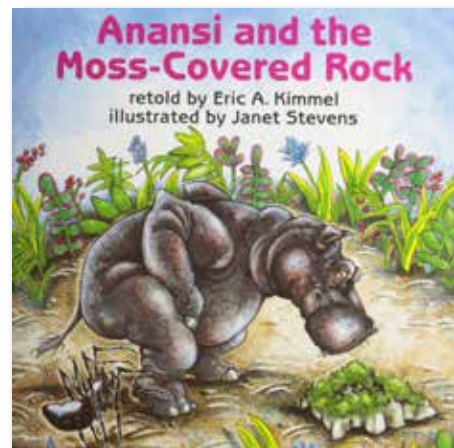
Corrie ten Boom was a brave woman, but others have been brave before her, so what makes her "picture book worthy"? It was the *foundation* for her courage that set her apart. She feared and loved the Lord, which is why she didn't fear Man, not even Nazi soldiers armed with guns. It was her understanding of how things really are – that God is in control – that led her to act when so many others, Christians among them, were too frightened to.

This is a very good picture book, but it can't match her glorious autobiography *The Hiding Place*, so children should be told that when they get older, they really need to hear this remarkable woman's story again, and this time in her own words.

### ANANSI AND THE MOSS-COVERED ROCK

BY ERIC A. KIMMEL

32 PAGES / 1988



Anansi the spider makes quite the discovery: a strange moss-covered rock that somehow knocks you out if you say: "Isn't this a strange moss-covered rock!"

The trickster that he is, Anansi starts bringing his friends to come see it, and encourages them to comment on it. Of course, once they do they take an unintended one-hour nap, allowing Anansi to go to their house and take their food. He begins with Lion, then Elephant, Rhinoceros, Hippopotamus, and goes on and on.

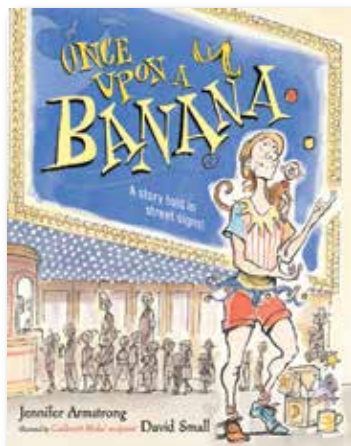
The careful reader will notice that there is another animal watching all these goings-on. Somewhere behind the bushes, on most every page, is the little Bush Deer. He decides to make things right by pulling a trick on the trickster. When Anansi invites him to go look at the rock, Bush Deer goes but he doesn't comment on the rock. He even pretends he can't see it. In frustration, Anansi ends up spouting the troublesome phrase himself...and down he goes! That allows the Bush Deer a whole hour to clear out Anansi's house and return his ill-gotten gains.

This is a fun animals-as-people folktale that rewards the observant child who spots the bush deer long before it makes its first "official" appearance.



## ONCE UPON A BANANA

BY JENNIFER ARMSTRONG  
48 PAGES / 2013



Long before kids can read, many really, really want to. Wordless books are a way to build on this enthusiasm.

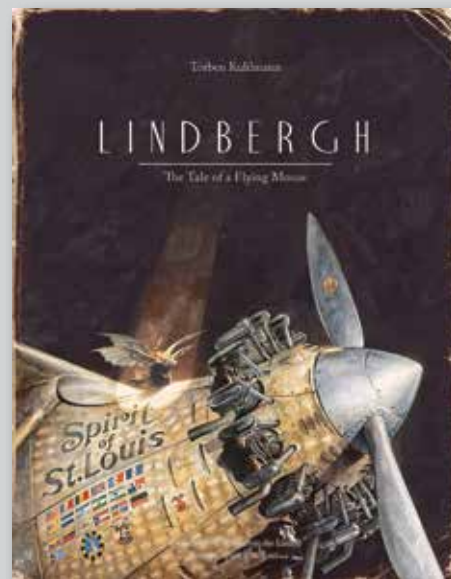
I did need to go through *Once Upon A Banana* the first time with my youngest, pointing out things like how banana peels are supposed to be slippery, and how the book was giving us hints as to what was coming, by showing us some characters in full color, and the less important characters only in shades of blue. After I gave this short "lesson," my pre-reader could do it all on her own.

The story is one big chase scene, with monkey-owner chasing monkey, and then grocer chasing monkey-owner, and then some dogs join the chase, and a skateboarding judge, and a mom and her baby in its stroller. Oh, and there's a big garbage truck in the mix too. It's crazy and frantic with lots to look at on every page.

The only downside to wordless books is that they take hardly any time to read. But this one does have a lot happening on each page, leaving pre-readers with lots to explore. We liked this one so much that after returning it to the library, we ended up buying a copy...which has gotten lots of use.

## LINDBERGH: THE TALE OF A FLYING MOUSE

BY TORBEN KUHLMANN  
96 PAGES / 2014



It seems man had a *little* help learning to fly – this is the story of a little mouse who made the very first transatlantic flight, back when Charles Lindbergh was but a lad. As our story begins we learn what first motivated this mouse to seek the skies. In the late 1800s, another invention was becoming quite popular – the mousetrap! – which had this furry inventor seeking somewhere safer to live. Why not try flying to America, a place that welcomed immigrants of all sorts (whether man or mouse)? That was a good destination, but when he tried boarding a boat, he barely escaped the harbor cats. They were guarding the docks, and there was no getting past them. It was there, however, as the little mouse was hiding in the shadows, that he was “struck” by inspiration:

“Suddenly wings flapped against his face! Ghostly creatures flew through the dark. They looked like mice, with tiny eyes and huge ears. But they flew with powerful black wings. The little mouse carefully studied the strange flying relatives, then scurried home...”

Why not try flying to America using wings like bats! In the many pages that follow we see the mouse draft plans, secure supplies, evade owls, fail, try again, fail once more, and then finally make his way into the skies.

What makes the book so special is the enormous, gorgeous pictures. Though a picture book, it is not a little child's story, in part because it has grim bits – one mouse is depicted in a newspaper picture as clearly dead, caught in a mousetrap. Then there's the length and depth of the story, and the detail in the pictures. The mouse draws schematics that deserve to be closely examined – echoes of Leonardo da Vinci!

This story is the very pinnacle of creative genius. It will teach children at least a little about what it took to first develop powered flight, providing as fun and wonderfully illustrated an introduction to the topic as you'll find. And if your child does enjoy this one, they'll likely also love *Edison: the Mystery of the Missing Mouse Treasure* (2018) in which a mouse invents underwater travel to recover the illuminating invention his ancestor created. (Two others in Kuhlmann's “Mouse Adventures” series have some nits that could be picked – see the online review for more).

# FRAUD AND TRUTH

by Christine Farenhorst



**F**raud is defined as wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain. And insurance fraud is a deliberate deception perpetrated against or by an insurance company or agent for the purpose of financial gain.

When my husband was still in practice as a veterinarian, he was often asked to sign death certificates for farmers – certificates which would assure an insurance company that the claim the farmer was making on the death of a cattle beast by lightning was authentic. There were a number of occasions, however, when he could not in good conscience sign that form for a hopeful farmer as there had been no thunder storms or lightning in

the area and as it was obvious that something else had killed the animal.

## SHOULD'VE BEEN MORTIFIED

In 2005 an English man by the name of Anthony McErlean – a trustworthy, bespectacled, older-looking gentleman – impersonated his wife and handed in his own death insurance claim to an insurance company. The claim stated that he had died after being struck by a cabbage truck while traveling in Honduras. The life insurance payout was a whopping 520,000 pounds.

It was a lot of money and, sniffing a hint of fraud, the insurance company checked out the circumstances with the police. Strangely enough, the police

found Anthony's fingerprints all over his own death certificate suggesting that Anthony McErlean had filled in the form after he had died. This was, of course, an impossibility. Found out, charged with fraud, the man was sentenced to six years in prison. Anthony's wife, who was obviously not acquainted with Exodus 23:1 – "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness" – was also sentenced.

## FRAUD STARTED EARLY

There are numerous frauds recorded in history. All of them are the result of our forebears, Adam and Eve, who literally "fell" for the lines which the greatest

fraudster of all had fed them. Those lines are recorded in Genesis and read: "Has God really said?" and "You will not surely die." The repercussions of their fall into sin resound throughout the ages. Remember, for example:

"Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.'"  
– Gen 27:19

"... and the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth." – 1 Kings 21:13

"... a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property."  
– Acts 5:1

The refrain of dishonest gain played (and plays) on.

## MURDEROUS FRAUD

During the 1780s, it is estimated that some 300,000 slaves were exported from Africa and carried away into captivity by slavers.

In 1664, the British captured and took Cape Coast Castle in Ghana. Throughout the 1700s construction on this castle was continuous. Bricks and tiles from England were imported. Rebuilding the large structure, they used it ignominiously. The castle grew in size. It grew because the slave trade grew – a trade that constituted 90% of business on the Gold Coast. A slave outpost, Cape Coast Castle boasted large underground dungeons which had little ventilation and no windows. Throughout the years of this immoral trade, it played the wicked host to about a thousand prisoners at a time. Vast numbers of enslaved Africans who entered the structure through a door dubbed "Door of no Return," were brought to this fortification prior to being sold into bondage.

In the summer of 1781, a British slave ship left Ghana after herding out 442 slaves from the dungeons of Cape Coast Castle. The vessel, captained by a Luke Collingwood and named *Zong*, was excessively overloaded. Its human cargo was stuffed tightly into a five-foot high hold like the proverbial sardines in

a can. There was also a ledge along the edge of the hold and it served to store more people even as books are stored on a shelf. On this journey, the *Zong*'s hold was what was described as a "tight pack," which meant that as many people were crammed together as the space could possibly contain. Moreover, these captured people were chained together. They could not leave to go to a toilet, but day after long day had to lie in their own excrement. Conditions were ripe for illness and death. If one slave died, he was often not removed immediately, and the chained body could remain in his stilted position for hours and hours between two live people. The area was dark, the air was stale and the smell putrid. There was a ship's doctor, a man who stood to receive bonus payment depending on how many slaves stayed alive.

Bound for Jamaica the *Zong*, due to a navigational error, spent three extra weeks at sea, much longer than anticipated. The usual six to eleven weeks trip morphed into twelve and thirteen weeks. Consequently, the water supply dwindled. It was now November. Sickness in the fold had begun, malnutrition, filth and sadness causing the subjugated to weaken day after day.

Wanting to do something to hedge his bets on delivering healthy freightage, Captain Collingwood jettisoned some of the cargo. You might remember the story of Paul as he was on a ship that was troubled by storm and recall that some of the cargo on that ship was thrown overboard to lighten the load. However, the cargo on board the *Zong* was not tackle or some other material commodity; no, the cargo jettisoned on board the *Zong* consisted of human beings. In light of the fact that these humans had been insured, Captain Collingwood had 132 sick slaves thrown into the Atlantic. If they had died on board, the crew would not be able to claim any insurance money.

When the *Zong* finally arrived in Black River, Jamaica, the ship's owner, a fellow by the name of James Gregson, filled out an insurance claim fraudulently asserting that money for the loss of the slaves was due. The abolitionists of the day used this

horrendous death claim to focus public attention on the plight of the slaves. The case went to court.

In 1783, the crew of the *Zong* was tried. The case was heard, however, as an insurance dispute rather than as a murder trial. The question was not, "Can the murder of 132 slaves go unpunished?" but rather "Can the cargo be covered by the insurance company?"

The publicity surrounding this trial caused the King's Bench, (the highest court in Britain), to call for a second trial. Although the abolitionists sought to have criminal charges brought against the captain and the crew, this was refused by the British Solicitor General, John Lee. He is quoted to have said:

"What is this claim that human people have been thrown overboard? This is a case of chattels or goods. Blacks are goods and property; it is madness to accuse these well-serving honorable men of murder.... The case is the same as if wood had been thrown overboard."

## CONCLUSION

The fraud in the *Zong* case seems to be fraud at its extreme. It makes you gag and throw up your hands at the absurdity and wickedness of the whole story, at the depths of the depravity of the human heart.

Fraud, again, is defined as wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.

There was another court case once: it was one that took place in Jerusalem; it was one of the greatest criminal deceptions of all time; it was one thought by the abusers to be a personal victory; and it was one that determined our eternal fate.

When Jesus was convicted as a common criminal, Satan rejoiced and his minions with him. The strange thing is that this most fraudulent court case ever recorded in the annals of mankind worked for good; the strange thing is that those who believe that this fraud was foretold and that it came to pass because God willed it are blessed; and the strange thing is that those who thank God for this fraud are saved. RP





# PERSISTENT EVANGELISM

When it comes to witnessing, are we just too impatient?

by Brian Zegers and Peter Vogel

**H**ow long would you patiently wait for your morning coffee? Five minutes? Would you even last that long? What if you first had to manually grind the beans, boil the water over a fire, and, if you wanted cream with it, milk the cow? It wasn't so many years ago that these time-consuming tasks had to be performed prior to enjoying a morning coffee. And back then, when they had to put work into it, do you think people were as particular about the taste and

quality of their coffee? Not so much. However, today, with our near instant coffee gratification, it seems the more we get, the more we expect, and even demand.

## IMPATIENCE WITH GOD?

Of course, a little impatience when it comes to coffee isn't too concerning. But do we have this same impatience with God also? Daily, when we receive a multitude of mercies from God, isn't it our nature to turn around and

demand more, better, and faster? We wouldn't use those words in our prayers, but in our hearts we do want God to use His power to give us what we think is best... *and give it right away.*

Are we patient and persistent when praying and working for the furtherance of God's Kingdom? Or are we often in a great rush in our witnessing to the lost? If we don't see a response of faith in the first few weeks, or months, or years, we become

## How long would you wait patiently for your morning coffee? Five minutes?

impatient, we despair, and we wonder if it is all a waste of time. If it isn't working, just move on, right?

Wrong. We don't know – and don't get to set – the speed at which God *ought* to work in the lives of people who are lost. God's speed often appears to us to be a strangely slow speed, but that is His business, not ours. Our job is to be faithful to the task He has given us. And our patience with people is proof of our love for them – and proof of our faith in God's power to change them.

Patience is so important that J.I. Packer dared to write:

“If you are not willing thus to be patient, you need not expect that God will favour you by enabling you to win souls.”

### PERSISTENT WITNESS

When we look to the Bible, we see the apostles repeatedly preaching the gospel even when there was opposition. And they continued to do so after repeatedly being arrested, imprisoned, and told to cease (Acts 4-5). It was persevering during hardship. That is a concept that many Christians in the West have little experience of. Why do we experience setbacks while we are working in obedience to God's commands? It seems like an unnecessary trial. In our weaker moments we could be tempted to think that if God wants us to build His church, He should (at least)


remove the obstacles so it wouldn't take so long.

The apostles stop when – and only when – they are forcefully driven out (Acts 13:50-51) or opposed, verbally berated, and mocked (Acts 18:6). In so doing, they followed Jesus' command: “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces” (Matt.7:6) and: “And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town” (Matt.10:14).

God isn't “looking for results” the same way that we often do. Rather, God is the one who brings results about, and He decides how and when those results will come about. We are merely tools in God's hand, used by Him to bring about His purposes in His timing. And God often uses processes that try our patience, test our perseverance, and cause us to trust His power, purposes and timing.

Once again, J.I. Packer's words come to mind:

“God saves in His own time, and we ought not to suppose that He is in such a hurry as we are... the work of evangelizing demands more patience and sheer 'stickability', more reserves of persevering love and care, than most of us twenty-first century Christians have at (our) command.”

So let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season – according to God's timetable and not our own – we will reap, if we do not lose heart. 

*Pastor Brian Zegers has been called to minister the Gospel to Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area, and Peter Vogel serves full-time as Ministry Assistant at Word of Life Ministry. Find them at WordOfLifeMinistry.ca and their YouTube channel “True Salaam” where they seek to explain the Gospel to Muslim viewers.*



**Bellstone Christian School**  
invites applications for  
the following positions:

### **GRADE 7 OR 8 TEACHING POSITION FT**

### **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT FT (GRADE 1)**

We have been blessed with a dedicated school society, as well as a cohesive and enthusiastic staff. We are in our 6th year of operation under the LORD's blessing, with an enrolment of 130+ students.

We are looking for qualified applicants who are committed to the Reformed faith and are passionate about educating God's covenant children.

Applicants should be members of the Canadian Reformed Churches or of a church with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship. Please submit a letter

of application along with a resume, a statement of faith, your view of Reformed education and two letters of reference.

If you have an interest in this position and would like to discuss it further, please do not hesitate to call or email us for further information.

Applications and requests for further information can be directed to **Henk Nobel** at [hnobel@bellstoneschool.ca](mailto:hnobel@bellstoneschool.ca) or [edcom@bellstoneschool.ca](mailto:edcom@bellstoneschool.ca).

If you have any phone inquiries about these exciting roles please reach out to

**Jake DeJong** at (519) 865-2487.



# All's well with the Earth

by Christine Farenhorst

*"I'm so glad that my parents never experienced such a time as this, such a time of uncertainty."*

*"I'm so glad they did not have to endure this period of trial during which churches and other places are closed."*

*"I'm so thankful that they did not have to live through these past two years because it would have broken their heart to know that I would not have been able to visit them in their old age home or sit at their bedside in a hospital."*

\*\*\*

Presently many people quote and identify with such sentiments as are stated above. There are those who have become terribly angry; others are reduced to tears of depression because of increasing loneliness; there are many others who are extremely frustrated about being denied access to restaurants, theatres and vacations; and there are those who fear the ongoing Covid death tolls announced daily in the news media.

"Remember the former things of old;  
for I am God,  
and there is no other;  
I am God,  
and there is none like me,  
declaring the end  
from the beginning  
and from ancient times  
things not yet done, saying,  
'My counsel shall stand,  
and I will accomplish all my  
purpose,'  
calling a bird of prey  
from the east,  
the man of my counsel  
from a far country.  
I have spoken,  
and I will bring it to pass;  
I have purposed,  
and I will do it."  
— Isaiah 46:9-11

Is it true that our parents, our ancestors, or any people in times past, had no idea about such hardships or deprivations? Or have past generations undergone their own distressing circumstances and severe affliction? And does history give us accountings of such circumstances?

Consider Charles Spurgeon, (1834-1892), who lived with much pain a great part of his life. His wife was bedridden for the greater part of their marriage. Spurgeon had smallpox, he had gout, as well as rheumatism, Bright's disease (an inflammation of the kidneys) and was afflicted, from time to time, with severe depression. It is recorded that he spent nearly a third of his last twenty-two years not even able to preach.

Still, this preacher freely confessed that his distress and hardship drew him closer to God. He is quoted as saying, speaking to a number of ministers and students:

"I daresay the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of



# *Often, we think we are in control, or we want to be in control, in total control... and then something happens.*

sickness... If some men I know could only be favored with a month of rheumatism, it would by God's grace, mellow them marvelously."

Since the Fall, suffering and distress have been part of humanity. Perhaps, being caught smack in the middle of a discouraging time period, it would seem that this twenty-first century is undergoing an especially calamitous and catastrophic time.

Yet going back only a little in time, as little as the last century, we immediately glimpse turmoil, confusion and unrest in that time period as well. And yet our parents lived through it – lived through it and were blessed. My father and mother, for example, were born in the first decade of 1900 – a time rife with many tragic and disastrous events. An extremely limited but worthwhile overview follows, listing a few of those events.

\*\*\*

At the onset of the twentieth century, concentration camps were being operated by the British in South Africa. This was during and after the Second Boer War (1899-1902). Whole regions in South Africa were targeted and depopulated. Systematic destruction of Boer crops and livestock went alongside the burning down of homesteads and farms to prevent the Boers from returning there. Tens of thousands of men, women and children were forcibly moved into these concentration camps. Originally set up as refugee camps for displaced people, epidemics of measles and typhoid killed thousands interred there. Hygiene was terrible. Eventually there were a total of 45 camps for the Boers and 64 more camps

for black Africans. Of the 28,000 Boer men who were captured as prisoners of war, 25,630 were sent overseas. Approximately 26,000 women and children died in these camps.

In 1906 there was an earthquake in California. This 7.9 earthquake ranks as one of the most significant earthquakes of all time. Its epicenter was near San Francisco, and it spawned devastating fires in its wake. More than 3,000 people died and over eighty percent of the city was destroyed.

In 1907 a Peasants' Revolt in Romania, caused by inequity in land ownership, was squelched by the Romanian military. At least 11,000 were killed.

1908 saw another destructive earthquake. It took place in Italy. Measured as 7.1 in magnitude, it caused the death of between 75,000 and 82,000 people. The city of Messina's shoreline was greatly altered, as large sections of its coast sunk several feet into the sea. Houses, churches, palaces and monuments collapsed. Without distinction, railway workers, priests, sculptors, historians, politicians, ambassadors, policemen, writers, singers and attorneys were struck down in one small moment of time.

In 1912, the ship Titanic sank after striking an iceberg. Fifteen thousand of her passengers died. The ship carried some of the wealthiest people in England as well as hundreds of immigrants from Great Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia – people who were seeking a new life in the US.

In 1912-13 the First and Second Balkan Wars ravaged southeastern Europe. These resulted in huge casualties. The Bulgarians lost approximately 65,000 men, the Greeks 9,500, the Montenegrins 3,000, the

Serbs at least 36,000, and the Ottomans as many as 125,000. As well, tens of thousands of civilians died from disease.

In 1914 WWI began, resulting in the deaths of 40 million.

From February 1918 to April 1920 the Spanish Flu or the Great Influenza Epidemic seemed to reign. A deadly global influenza pandemic, it was caused by the H1N1 influenza A virus. With 500 million suspected cases, this pandemic engendered an estimated 25-50 million deaths.

\*\*\*

Often, we think we are in control, or we want to be in control, in total control... and then something happens. It might be an accident, job loss, a war, a broken relationship, or a pandemic. But these things have always been and will be until Christ returns.

Another quote from Spurgeon puts it in this way, a very good way:

"I am afraid that all the grace I have got of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours, might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable.... Affliction is...the best book in a minister's library."

Isaiah, the great prophet Isaiah, totally concurs with Spurgeon and calls out the words of our providential God and Father:

*I am the Lord, and there is no other,  
besides me there is no God;  
I equip you,  
though you do not know me,  
that people may know,  
from the rising of the sun  
and from the west,  
that there is none besides me;  
I am the Lord, and there is no other.  
I form light and create darkness;  
I make well-being and create calamity;  
I am the Lord,  
who does all these things.  
– Isaiah 45:5-7*

RP

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA

## 7-3 PUZZLE CLUES

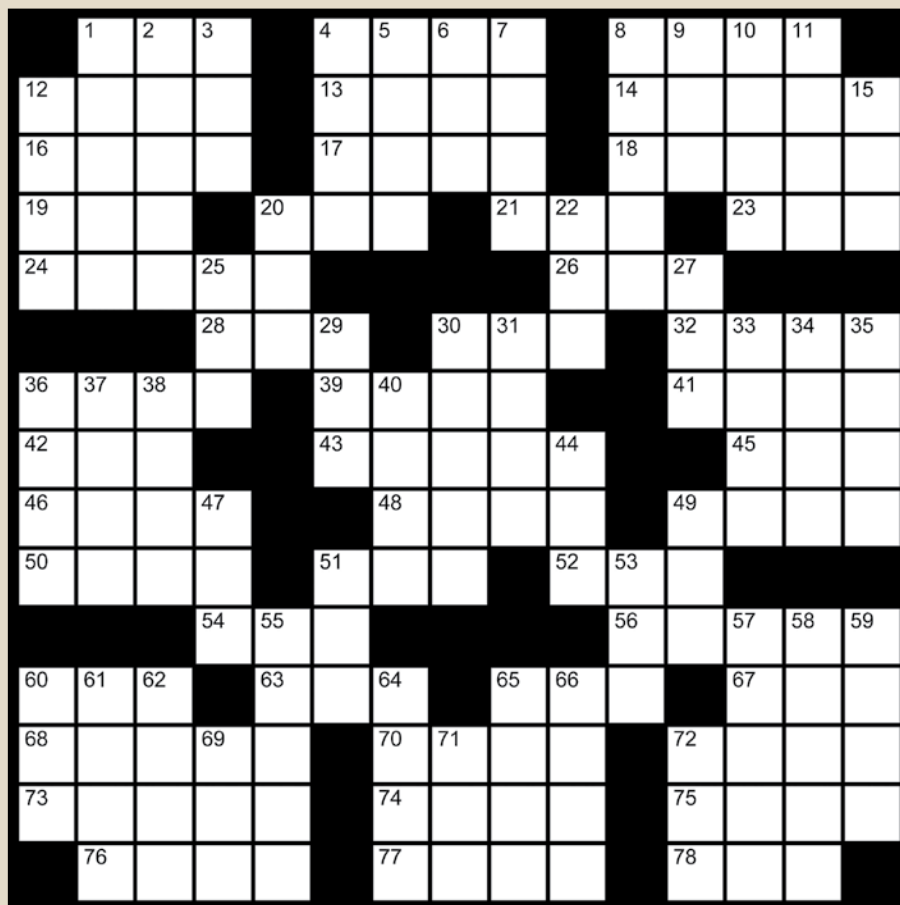
Find this issue's solution on page 2!

### ACROSS

1. American spy group (abbr.)
4. Yiddish word for *synagogue*
8. Hebrew month roughly equivalent to March
12. Sea eagles
13. Top-of-the-line stereo
14. Largest city in Nigeria
16. Realtors & auctioneers have *many* of them.
17. It's a vera nice way to treat a cut.
18. It's both spiral and rhymes with *spiral*.
19. Abbreviation for Julius Caesar's last month
20. "I am like a desert \_\_\_\_" (Ps. 102)
21. Country of many of *RP*'s subscribers
23. "if there is \_\_\_\_\_ comfort" (Philippians 2)
24. Philosopher who talked in a stoa
26. Barbie's bestie
28. Pouch within an animal or plant
30. Israeli submachine gun
32. "For \_\_\_\_\_ you is born this day..." (Luke 2)
36. "shall... \_\_\_\_\_ the hair of..." (Eze. 44)
39. Desert in China and southern Mongolia
41. "to each as any had \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 4)
42. Seek the love of; court
43. Some like to have a few in the fire.
45. Connecting word, but not *but*
46. One kind of saxophone
48. Mexican finger food
49. Something a bachelor may have, to a degree
50. Old King Cole's favorite salad?
51. East in Paris
52. "Ehh, what's up, \_\_\_\_?" (Bugs Bunny)
54. No, nope, nah (archaic form)
56. True conversion = a spiritual \_-\_\_\_\_\_.
60. For each
63. Experienced animal doctor (short form)
65. Too well established *routine* (partly)
67. Is a shy goldfish a coy \_\_\_\_?
68. "It is a pleasing \_\_\_\_\_" (Exodus 29)
70. "\_\_\_\_\_ for the great city" (Rev. 18)
72. "when I \_\_\_\_\_, I shall rise" (Micah 7)
73. "\_\_\_\_\_ (which means Teacher)" (John 1)
74. "As waters fail from a \_\_\_\_\_" (Job 14)
75. It can be found in the middle of 74 Across.
76. Mammal found partly in sea
77. Sheepish mothers
78. It's often found by your phone no.

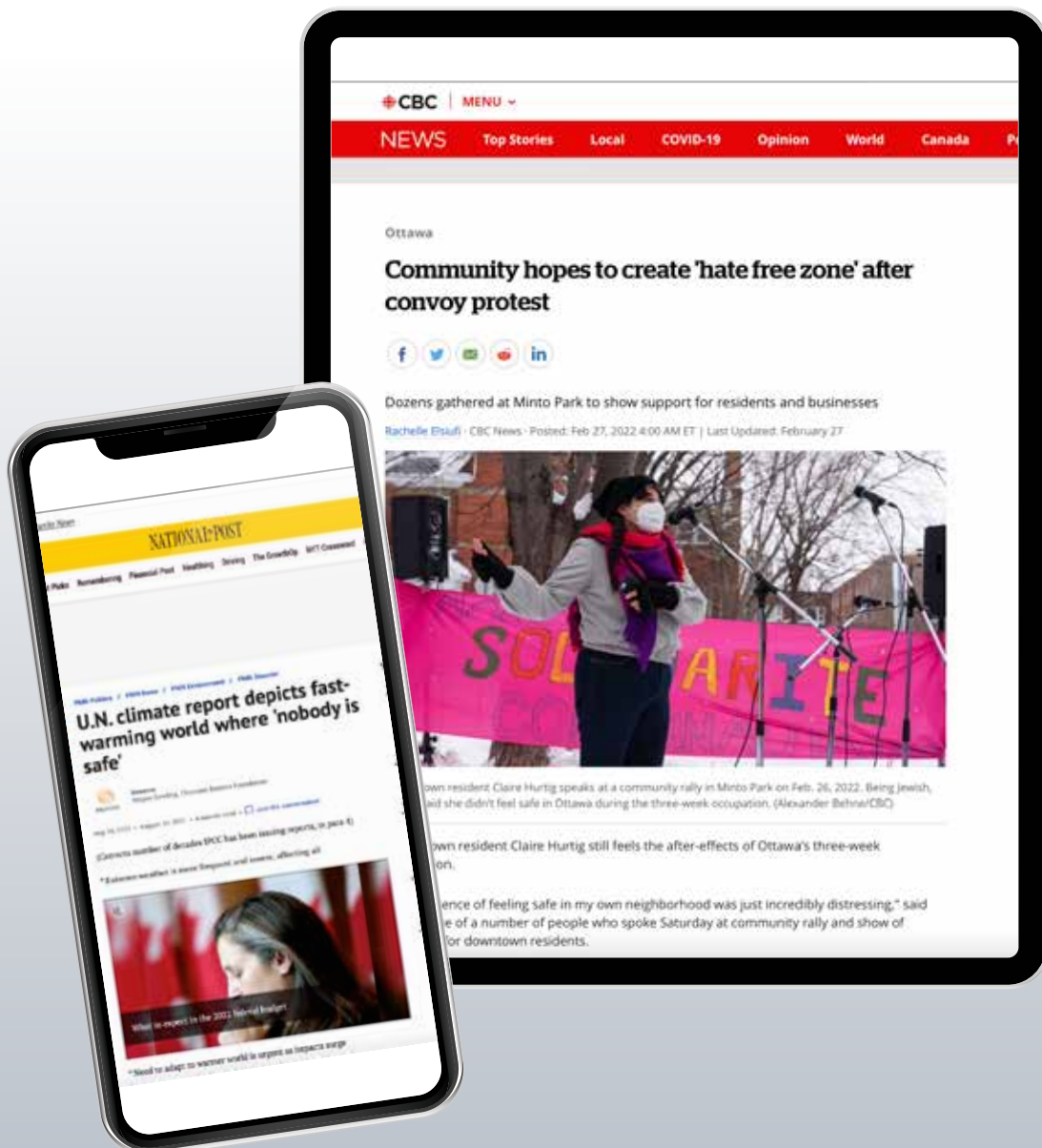
### DOWN

1. Resident of country near Serbia
2. Beginning of an essay (short form)
3. Donkey (for readers of King James Version)
4. Playwright George Bernard \_\_\_\_\_
5. "fled to the \_\_\_\_\_ country" (Gen. 14)
6. Supposed alien vehicle (abbr.)
7. In \_\_\_\_\_ of (= instead of)
8. Pond scum
9. "...on the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_" (Rev. 1)
10. City where the Taj Mahal is located
11. Coat color of domestic animals
12. Dutch, Siberian, American, & Chinese trees
15. Foxlike (especially in *Aesop's Fables*)
20. Edible tuber called *yam* in New Zealand
22. People who do this may be going downhill.
25. Suffix for a philosophy or ideology
27. Monk in convent? No! You'll find \_\_\_\_!
29. How Pixar makes movies (abbr.)
30. World War II German submarine
31. Element important to the immune system
33. "I will draw \_\_\_\_\_ to you for..." (Mal. 3)
34. "from him the \_\_\_\_\_ peg" (Zech. 10)
35. 50/50 chance = even \_\_\_\_\_
36. "\_\_\_\_\_ brillig, and the slithy toves..."
37. "Who will \_\_\_\_\_ away the stone..." (Mark 16)
38. Tiniest detail? It's all Greek to !!
40. Table scraps
44. You lay it down on the job in the summer.
47. "righteous in his \_\_\_\_ eyes" (Job 32)
49. "so one \_\_\_\_ of righteousness..." (Rom. 5)
51. "for \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ they see..." (Is. 52)
53. "I will pour \_\_\_\_ my Spirit..." (Acts 2)
55. "I held my peace to no \_\_\_\_\_" (Ps. 39)
57. Proclamation of a czar
58. Cinnamon and dinner
59. The crocodile / is found often in the \_\_\_\_\_.
60. \_\_\_\_ for the (golf) course
61. Historical periods
62. "Bring quickly the best \_\_\_\_\_" (Luke 15)
64. *A \_\_\_\_\_ of Two Cities* (Charles Dickens)
65. It "leaves" the yard cleaner in the fall.
66. Does WD40 really have 1001 \_\_\_\_\_?
69. It helps you mind your own business (abbr.).
71. "the \_\_\_\_ of liberty" (James 1, 2)
72. Do the \_\_\_\_'s needles look like fur?



# What **perspective** is shaping your church and your family?

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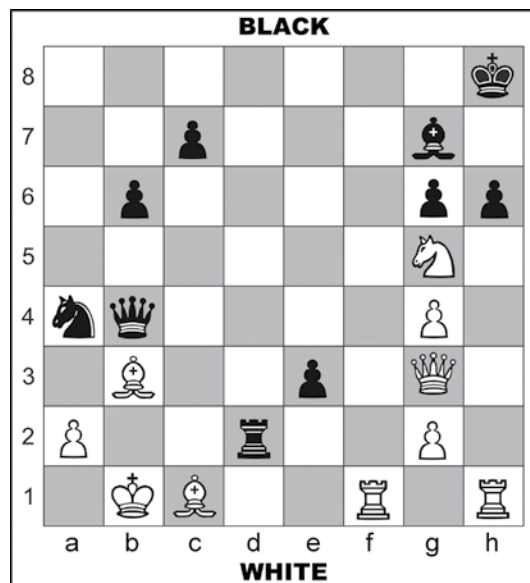




# ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

## Chess Puzzle #268

"Some sacrifices bring success!"



**WHITE TO MATE IN 3**  
Or, If it is BLACK's Move,  
**BLACK TO MATE IN 3**

## Riddle for Punsters

### #268 - "Did someone com-plane?"

Why did the female pilot get fired for what the airline called "w \_ \_ \_ \_ y reasons"? It became known that she was on a c \_ \_ \_ \_ diet. She is hoping to \_ \_ \_ d a new job with a r \_ \_ \_ ed up salary. Perhaps it will work out well if she catches w \_ \_ \_ of a theatre job, assuming they have an suitable opening and enough stage p \_ \_ \_ \_ .

## Problem to Ponder

### #268 - "Does it fit ... your budget?"

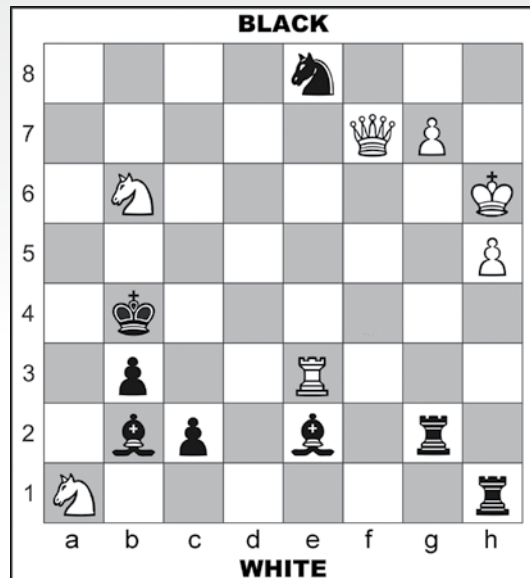
Natasha has a clothing store for women who want to look fashionable without paying inflated prices so she marks up items only 40% above her wholesale cost. She sold a blue sweater on sale at 20% off the regular (marked-up) price. A lovely emerald green sweater was sold for twice the sale price of the blue sweater. The profit made selling the green sweater was \$28 more than the profit on the blue one even though Natasha paid the same wholesale cost for each sweater. At what price was the green sweater sold?

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

## NOV/DEC 2021 SOLUTIONS

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #267

"Rooks lead the attack"



**WHITE TO MATE IN 3**

#### Descriptive Notation

1. RxP ch K-R4
  2. Q-Q5 ch K-R3
  3. Q-R8 mate
- OR
2. Q-Q5 ch B-N4
  3. QxB mate

#### BLACK loses sooner if

1. RxPch K-B4
2. Q-Q5 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Re3xb3 + Kb4-a5
2. Qf7-d5 + Ka5-a6
3. Qd5-a8 ++

#### OR

2. Qf7-d5+ Be2-b5
3. Qd5xb5 ++

#### BLACK loses sooner if

1. Re3xb3+ Kb4-c5
2. Qf7-d5 ++

#### BLACK TO MATE IN 3

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- RxP ch
2. QxR BxP ch
3. K-R7 N-B3 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Rh1xh5 +
2. Qf7xh5 Bb2xg7 +
3. Kh6-h7 Ne8-f6 ++

## Answer to Riddle for Punsters

### #267 - "Some Sticky Situation!"

Gerry accidentally gave his wife a glue stick instead of lipstick. He feared that she would tell all her friends about his blunder but she has said nothing! Her lips have been sealed ever since it happened. She looks somewhat slimmer than before the blunder. It seems to be helping her to stick to her diet.

## Answer to Problem to Ponder

### #267 - "Number Combinations - Part 2"

As in Part 1, use, EACH ONLY ONCE, the digits 1, 3, 4 and 6. Use the operations addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, each AT MOST ONCE. However, ONE of the 4 numbers may be used as an **EXPONENT**! Again, if desired, round brackets may be used, but AT MOST ONCE. Of course, ALWAYS follow the order of algebraic operations (BEDMAS). For example, to produce the result -2 one possible answer is  $4 \times 1^3 - 6 = 4 \times 1 - 6 = 4 - 6 = -2$  and to produce the result 999 one answer is  $(6 + 4)^3 - 1 = 10^3 - 1 = 1000 - 1 = 999$ .

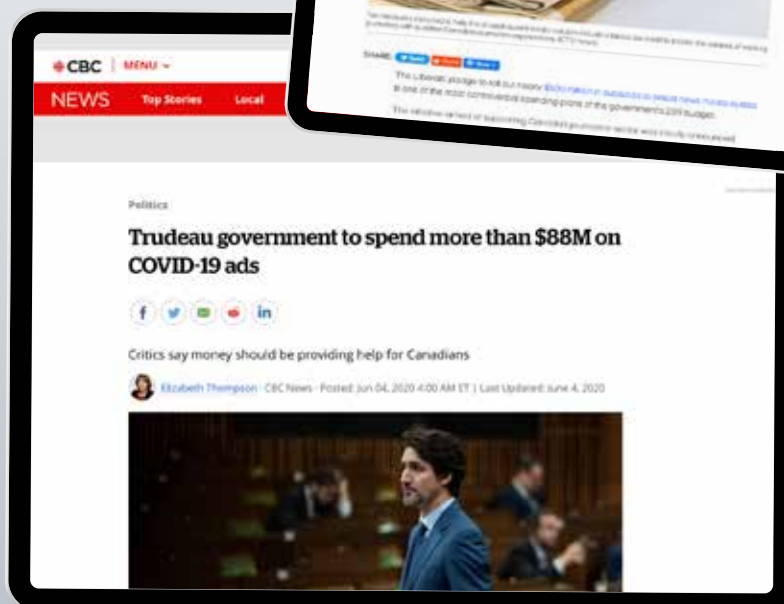
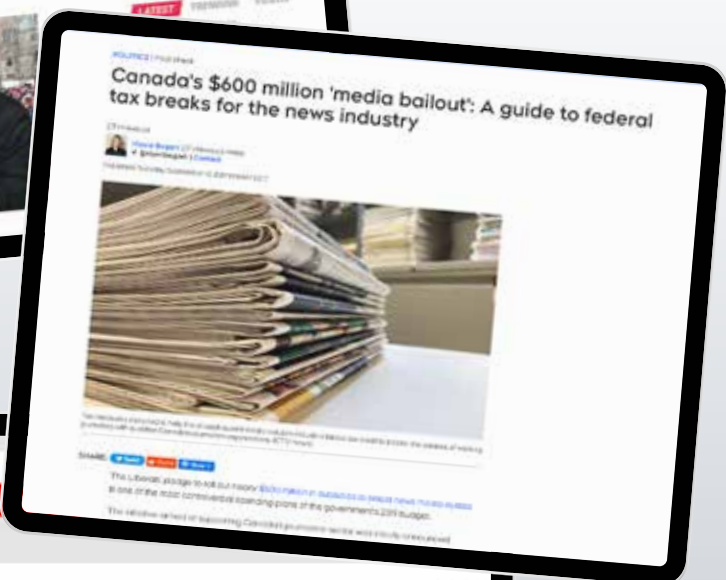
Find **at least one way** to produce the following results.

- a) 8 b) 81 c) 15 d) -12 e) -11.

Keeping **BEDMAS** in mind, first do what is in **Brackets** then do **Exponents** then **Division or Multiplication** (whichever comes first) then **Addition or Subtraction** (whichever comes first), some of the answers possible are:

- $(6 - 4 \times 1)^3 = (6 - 4)^3 = (2)^3 = 8$
- $(6 / 3 + 1)^4 = (2 + 1)^4 = (3)^4 = 81$
- $(6 / 3)^4 - 1 = (2)^4 - 1 = 16 - 1 = 15$
- $4 \times 6 / (1 - 3) = 4 \times 6 / (-2) = 24 / (-2) = -12$
- $1^6 - 4 \times 3 = 1 - 12 = -11$

# Who is **behind** these perspectives?



# Will you help us develop a faithful alternative, grounded on grace and truth?

---

In recent years, *Reformed Perspective* has taken big steps to bring a Christian perspective to many more people by developing an app, weekly e-newsletter, podcast, and new website, now with thousands of articles. And we've made these freely available to the world. We also took a leap of faith by no longer charging a subscription for our print magazine.

This was important to us because we don't just produce content because we find it enjoyable or interesting. Rather, we do so because our mission is **"to promote a Biblically Reformed perspective in all spheres of life by equipping and encouraging Christians to think, speak, and act in a manner consistent with their confession."**

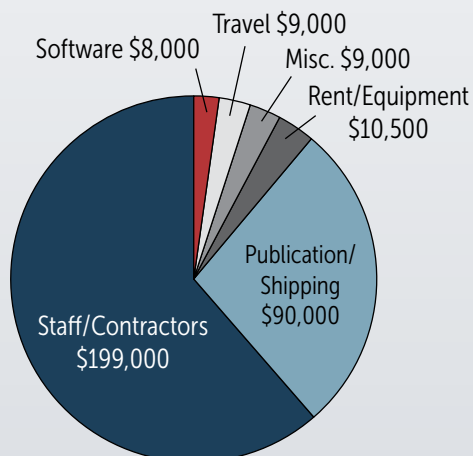
We're being inundated with messages every hour. The secular worldview is hitting us and our children everywhere we look. The federal government is spending billions of dollars every year to spread its version of reality, funding not only the CBC, but also sending hundreds of millions to private media companies – even "conservative" media, such as the *National Post*. Is it any wonder that publications are very hesitant to question the government's direction on sexuality, climate change, gender, vaccines, and so many other pressing issues?

We wanted to reach the church and the world too. Since that was hard to do when there was a payment required to get *RP*, we made it free. And we relied on people who understood the value of our work and chose to invest in it with a donation. **By God's grace, this worked. As a result, instead of reaching just our subscribers, our content now gets read, seen, or heard well over 1,000,000 times a year. Even the circulation of our print magazine has increased four times over in the past five years.**

And that is just a start.

**Our goal is to grow this team and develop sound Christian journalism in the years to come.** We are developing a strategic plan to make this vision a reality.

But a vision and a plan aren't enough. We are a small team that has invested a lot of our own time, effort and funds to bring *RP* to where it is. Without pursuing government support, for this to be a reality we need support from people like you.



Our expenses are \$325,500 this year. That includes:

- 9 staff and contractors, including two full-time, five part-time, and two volunteers;
- Our websites, newsletters, app, podcasts, social media, and book publishing;
- Printing over 6,000 magazines every issue, and with rising paper costs;
- Shipping these magazines throughout Canada and the world;
- Printing and shipping books for RP Press and The Study

About \$100,000 of this budget comes from individuals who have filled in the form on the right and provide a small or large monthly donation. This stable funding is the reason why *RP* still exists today.

But that is less than a third of our total budget. For *RP*'s work to continue, and to expand this work to develop journalism in the future, we need this base of support to increase even more.





Please join us in growing *RP* so that it can reach tens of thousands more Reformed Christians, the broader Christian community, and the world.

**Don't just be frustrated by the media. Invest in a quality alternative.**

**Credit card donations** can be made at [ReformedPerspective.ca](http://ReformedPerspective.ca). **Cheques** can be mailed to the address at the bottom of this page. **E-transfers** can be sent to [admin@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:admin@reformedperspective.ca). Canadian donations will receive a tax receipt. For any questions, please call Joanne at 250-643-8114 (BC time). Thank you for making this work possible!

#### 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   ☐ \$250   ☐ \$500   ☐ \$1000   ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn on the \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>) day of each month

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://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](http://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 Administration, PO Box 3609 Smithers, BC, V0J 2N0.*

The Board at **River's Edge Haven of Hope** is excited to welcome applicants for the position of

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FULL TIME)**

River's Edge is a farm-based Christian organization that welcomes anyone who desires to come and experience the love and grace of Jesus Christ and be encouraged to grow.

We are looking for applicants who want to build on the foundation of the existing ministry and take it to new heights while intentionally maintaining our reformed biblical principles.

Are you an individual who has a profound interest in leading this ministry to empower, connect and instill hope in children and youth who may wonder who could love them and care for them unconditionally?

### **Some highlights of the role:**

Finance and business management • Employee management  
Board accountability • Program development • Mentoring children  
Community relations • Animal care • Other duties as assigned

### **Some desired qualifications:**

Degree/Diploma preferably in health, social services, management and leadership  
3 years of experience in social service and health care is preferred.  
Understanding or interest in animal care is an asset • Leadership and supervisory skills

### **DOES THE ABOVE HAVE YOU INTRIGUED?**

We would love for you to send an application with your statement of faith to [info@riversedge.ca](mailto:info@riversedge.ca) or [nickwvdo@gmail.com](mailto:nickwvdo@gmail.com)

Dunnville, ON

**Find us online at [RiversEdge.ca](http://RiversEdge.ca)**



**RIVER'S EDGE**  
HAVEN OF HOPE

# { IN A TIDBITS RELEVANT, AND NOT SO, TO CHRISTIAN LIFE NUTSHELL } BY JON DYKSTRA

## JUNIOR KNOWS BEST?

In a recent review, Roman Catholic film critic Steven D. Greydanus argues that we're seeing an expansion of the old doofus/domineering dad cliché to now include moms too.

Pixar's new *Turning Red* is the latest example of an increasing shift to overbearing maternal figures, from young Mirabel's and Miguel's domineering abuelas in *Encanto* and *Coco* to middle-aged Joe Gardner's loving but controlling mom in *Soul*. Antecedents for this trend of mothers as functional antagonists include Merida's demanding mother Queen Elinor in *Brave* and *Tangled*'s actually villainous Mother Gothel.... In *Turning Red*, Meilin "Mei Mei" Lee, a 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian girl living in Toronto in 2002, comes from a long line of tightly controlled and controlling maternal figures, including her tiger mom Ming and her grandmother as well as a half dozen aunts.

When both parents are portrayed as problems to overcome rather than guides to turn to, this leads to what Greydanus calls the "Junior knows best" trope: the kid himself is the smartest person in the room. Don't confuse this with the "dead or otherwise absent parents" trend that's also common on the screen and in many a kid's book – that exists only because if parents aren't absent, they'd deal with the danger, and the children wouldn't even have an adventure. There's a difference between a kid relying on his own smarts because missing parents leave him with no other option, and a child relying on himself because his parents are idiots.

If you spot a "Junior knows best" moment, why not hit the pause button and discuss it with your children? You can ask them to look up Proverbs 1:8 – "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching." – and flip to Isaiah 3 too, which in verse 4 talks of God cursing Jerusalem and Judah by placing children in leadership positions. Spell out for them the difference between what this film is preaching and what God says.

SOURCE: Steve Greydanus' "Mother knows best: *Turning Red*, *Encanto*, and Disney/Pixar's new overbearing moms" posted to CatholicWorldReport.com on Mar. 10, 2022

## THE CALL TO PRO-LIFE WITNESS

Deut. 21:1-9 has interesting implications for us today. Here God gives instructions for what to do when a murder victim is found in a field, and no one knows who did it. Then the elders of the nearest town are supposed to come, sacrifice a heifer, and declare they had nothing to do with it. With this sacrifice and public declaration, they then would have "purged from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood..."

What relevance might that have for Christians today? Confronted with 200+ legally sanctioned murders per day in Canada, could we understand the principle behind this text as being an encouragement, a call even, for us to publicly dissociate ourselves

from our nation's abortion guilt? Were we to publicly declare that we have no part in these unborn children's deaths, we would uphold the wickedness of this crime, and ensure that it is not normalized or ignored as inconsequential.

How can we make such a public pro-life witness? In addition to public protests – flag displays like ARPA Canada has done, or March for Life events – we can also buy or make pro-life t-shirts, using slogans like:

- Fetus is not a species..." – Albany Rose
- Every unwanted child a dead child. Doesn't sound so nice anymore, does it?
- Former fetus
- If you don't believe in miracles, perhaps you've forgotten you are one.
- My size does not affect my worth
- Abortion is the death penalty for someone else's actions
- I will shut up about abortion when it has been abolished
- I have my own DNA – I'm a person
- Speak for the weak
- If abortion isn't wrong, then nothing is wrong

## IT'S ONLY ROCK AND ROLL

"It's so funny being a Christian musician. It always scares me when people think so highly of Christian music, Contemporary Christian music especially. Because I kinda go, I know a lot of us, and we don't know jack about anything. Not that I don't want you to buy our records and come to our concerts. I sure do. But you should come for entertainment. If you really want spiritual nourishment, you should go to church... you should read the Scriptures."

- Rich Mullins, July 19, 1997

## FIRST DATE QUESTIONS

In *Dating with Discernment*, author Sam Andreades has an appendix full of 40 "first date questions." He offers them as a way to calm the nerves, if you can't think of something to talk about, so many of them are lighthearted: *What animals would you like to be? SciFi or RomCom? Deep down, do you think Pluto should be recognized as a planet?*

But he includes others that could be categorized as "time savers." There are issues that divide us, and if your date thinks one way, and you know it has to be the other, you might be able to save you both a lot of time by finding that out quickly.

That doesn't mean the question can't still be fun. It just means it isn't *just* fun. So here are a few of his more pointed queries:





Americans can buy it at [Shop.LiveAction.org](http://Shop.LiveAction.org)

- Tell me about your family? Are you close with them?
- What is the most wonderful feeling in the world for you?
- What is the biggest need you see in the Church?
- What was a time when you couldn't stop laughing?
- Can Christians believe in aliens?
- When is Jesus coming back?
- What was the subject of your last prayer?
- What do you think God has been trying to teach you recently? Are you learning it?

## DID YOU GET ALL YOUR DEDUCTIONS?

In a 2012 article, Christian economist Gary North wrote about just how complicated the US tax was already then 4 times the length of all Shakespeare's works combined, and US taxpayers were spending 7.6 billion hours complying with federal tax requirements (that doesn't even include the hours

needed to fulfil state requirements). And even the experts couldn't agree on how to understand it:

"Our tax system has become so complicated that it is almost impossible to file your taxes correctly. For example, back in 1998 *Money Magazine* had 46 different tax professionals complete a tax return for a hypothetical household. All 46 of them came up with a different result.... In 2009, *PC World* had five of the most popular tax preparation software websites prepare a tax return for a hypothetical household. All five of them came up with a different result."

As of 2016, Canada's tax code has only just over a million words, which, at a quarter of the US length, might seem downright simplistic. But, the country's auditor general found that it was too complicated for even the Canada Revenue Agency, which was giving the wrong answer to queries from the public 30 percent of the time.

SOURCES: Gary North's "41 Federal Tax Facts: Voters Meekly Submit" posted to *TeaPartyEconomist.com* on April 17, 2012; Charles Lammam and Hugh MacIntyre's "Canada's tax code is too complicated - even for CRA officials" posted to *FraserInstitute.org* on Dec. 11, 2017

## ONLY EARTH HAS RAINBOWS

Life on Earth requires a lot of "fine tuning," with our planet just the right distance from the Sun to allow freezing and melting, and the planetary axis tilted just so for seasons, a moon for tides to circulate and cleanse shores and oceans, an atmosphere to distribute heat (otherwise the sun-side would cook as the night-side froze), and a magnetic field that contributes to our protection from harmful solar radiation.

That all these needs were met (and many more) is all a big coninkydink for evolutionists – we just lucked out and got exactly what we needed.

But we didn't need rainbows.

And yet, as Guillermo Gonzalez recently noted, we're on the only planet in the Solar System to get them. What's needed for a rainbow is:

"suspended water droplets in the atmosphere and the direct sunlight that results from the sun being between the horizon and 42 degrees altitude. This typically occurs just after a thunderstorm has passed and small droplets are still in the atmosphere, and the sky is clearing in front of the sun. Seems like a simple setup. This must be a common phenomenon in the cosmos, right?"

But it isn't so simple. Our moon doesn't have the atmosphere. Mars doesn't have the moisture. Venus has too thick an atmosphere and as we head further out, the other planets don't have liquid water.

So, the only planet to have rainbows is the only one with people on it to see them. To evolutionists that's just one more coinkydink. To God's people, just another example of His love and care.

SOURCE: Guillermo Gonzalez's "Do we live on a privileged planet?" posted to *EvolutionNews.org* on Oct. 25, 2021

## SASS, OR NOT SASS?

by Sharon L. Bratcher

How do you talk to your children? Do you always speak to these little Image-bearers as you, yourself would like to be spoken to? Recently an acquaintance told me about how he often tells his 5-year-old, “Hurry up, we have to go, I can’t wait all day.” Then, the other day as his wife was changing their 3-year-old, the child said, “I can’t wait all day.” We both laughed, and the dad said something about his child’s “sass.”

But was it really sass? I don’t think it was. The child had learned from his father what to say when he is impatient and wants to move along to another activity. Was it sass when the dad said it to his 5-year-old? If not, then it wasn’t sass when his child copied him. How could a little child even know it wasn’t something that ought to be said?

If we don’t want them saying certain words or phrases anymore, then we must stop doing it ourselves. As in this case, it really wasn’t accomplishing the dad’s desired goal anyway! It’s too easy to rationalize showing disrespect to our own children. We might assume that they won’t even catch it, but eventually they will.

And then we’ll hear them sounding just like us.



This is an excerpt from Jason Bouwman’s unique devotional, *Still Thinking*, which Canadians can buy at [StillThinkingBook.com](http://StillThinkingBook.com)

## PUNTASTIC

The editing tool Grammarly regularly passes on puns and other wordplay jokes. Here’s a few of their best, with a few thrown in from the Indian Hills Community Sign too:

- It’s hard to explain puns to kleptomaniacs, because they always take things, literally
- I was walking past a farm, and a sign read: “Duck, eggs!” I thought, “That’s an unnecessary comma.” Then it hit me.
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- A word in this sentence is misspelled.
- I have an irrational fear of overly intricate clusters of commercial buildings. It’s a complex complex complex.
- Irony is the opposite of wrinkly
- Puns about communism aren’t funny unless everyone gets them.
- To be frank I’d have to change my name.
- What do you give a man who has everything? Antibiotics!

## STRESS RELIEVER

Before I overhype this tip, I’ll note that while it does seem to work for everyone, it doesn’t necessarily do a lot for everyone. Still, a little relief is better than none, right? This is from Andrew Huberman, billed as a “Stanford Neuroscientist” during an appearance on the Kevin Rose podcast.

“This is the fastest way that I’m aware of that’s anchored in real known biology to calm oneself down and the cool thing is it works the first time, and it works every time, and it takes about a second.... It’s an inhale through the nose, and then it’s another inhale at the top, and then a long exhale. That’s the fastest way to slower your heart and calm down.”

Just a breath in, and before you exhale, another breath in – a “double inhale” – then a slow exhale. I’ve tried it, and found it helpful, and instantly, though, of course, only partially. Still, a nice tool to have in the toolbox when the going gets tough.

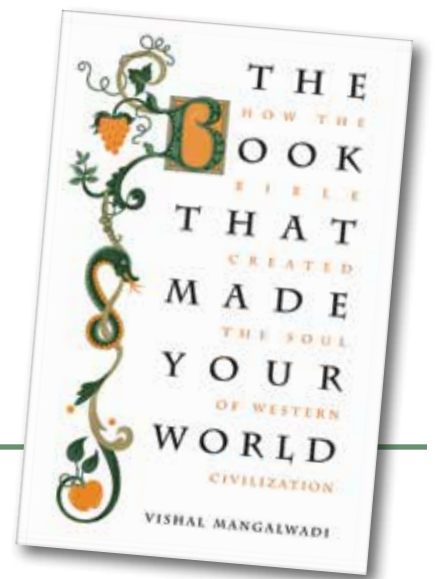
## A BETTER WAY OF GETTING RICH

“Prior to capitalism, the way people amassed great wealth was by looting, plundering and enslaving their fellow man. Capitalism made it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man.”

– Walter E. Williams (1936-2020)

# How the Bible made the world a better place

by Michael Wagner



**THE BOOK THAT  
MADE YOUR WORLD:  
How the bible created  
the soul of the  
western civilization**  
BY VISHAL MANGALWADI  
442 PAGES / 2011

**T**hough most wouldn't want to admit it, the Bible has made the world a better place even for those that don't believe it.

How can that be? Well, it was the worldview taught in the Bible that led to the development of modern science and all its benefits. It was the same worldview that led to the dramatic expansion of educational institutions, as well as the greater political freedom and economic prosperity we enjoy. Most people today enjoy higher standards of living and better medical care simply because the Bible influenced Western culture in a particular direction.

Vishal Mangalwadi, a Christian intellectual from India, explains all this in his 2011 book, *The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*. Mangalwadi was born and raised within a culture dominated by Hinduism, and this experience gave him special insight into the effects of Christianity on the world and particular nations.

So what are some ways a biblical worldview makes the world better?

## MONKS AT WORK

As a basic principle, the Bible promotes a strong work ethic. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 that, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

While there are probably hard-working people in every culture, Mangalwadi explains that Christianity places a unique emphasis on work: "The God who liberated the Jews worked for six days and

commanded human beings to do the same. That is the opposite of Hindu tradition, which conceives of God as a meditator or *Yogeshwar* ('god of yoga')."

The biblical emphasis on work inspired Christian monks to use their time well. Saint Benedict, who is known as the father of Western monasticism, supported a strong work ethic and wrote that "Idleness is an enemy of the soul."

Christian monks in Europe were important to the early development of technology, some of which we still use today. They were, Mangalwadi writes, "the first to begin the widespread use of the watermill for grinding and for developing power machinery."

## CLOCKS AND EYEGLASSES

Another important example is the invention of clocks. As one scholar, David Landes, has argued, "clocks were invented because monks needed them." They had set times for prayer and for particular jobs that had to be done. After sunset, the sundial was of no use. The need for proper time management drove the quest for something reliable, and clocks were the solution.

As Mangalwadi explains, the impetus for creating clocks resulted from a specifically Christian worldview:

"The Bible-shaped culture made time management an aspect of establishing human dominion over the physical universe because the Bible saw time as a part of physical reality. By contrast, in Indian culture, time was

perceived either as an eternal but terrible god (*Kal*) or as a part of the cosmic illusion (*maya*)."

Besides clocks, Christian monks also had a role in the invention of eyeglasses. They spent lots of time reading and studying, but that became more difficult as they got older and their eyes became weaker. Eyeglasses dramatically improved the ability of older monks to read and work on manuscripts.

Of course, other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism also have monks, but it was the Christian ones at the forefront of technology. As Mangalwadi puts it, "Christian monks were different because the Bible gave them a different worldview."

## LOTS TO LEARN

People who believe that the Bible is the Word of God will be greatly motivated to read it. Thus, especially after the Reformation, there was a strong impetus to increase literacy in Europe. In other words, Christianity was the main driver for the expansion of literacy and education.

According to Mangalwadi, the Bible di-





Besides clocks, Christian monks also had a role in the invention of eyeglasses.

rectly inspired the creation of the first 123 colleges and universities in the United States.

But it wasn't just Christian countries that benefited from this educational impulse. As missionaries took the gospel to countries throughout the world, they also promoted literacy and education so that people could read the Bible and improve their lives overall. As Mangalwadi writes:

"They birthed, financed, and nurtured hundreds of universities, thousands of colleges, and tens of thousands of schools. They educated millions and transformed nations. This gigantic, global mission was inspired and sustained by one book—the Bible."

### LOOKING FOR SCIENTIFIC LAWS

The scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was launched by men who had been strongly influenced by the Bible. The biblical worldview provided the philosophical basis for their quest. In contrast, other worldviews see life and reality in ways that often discourage scientific pursuits. There were, of course, many intelligent and capable Hindus and Buddhists. However, they did not have the philosophical motivation to pursue scientific knowledge. As Mangalwadi explains:

"A culture may have capable individuals, but they don't look for 'laws of nature' if they believe that nature is enchanted and ruled by millions of little deities like a rain god, a river goddess, or a rat *deva*."

In short, people live according to what they believe, and if they believe an erroneous worldview, they will be limited in what they set out to achieve. In contrast to the Hindus and Buddhists, the "pioneers of science believed that the material realm was real, not magical, enchanted, or governed by spirits and demons. They assumed it was understandable because God created it as *rational, ordered*, and regulated by *natural laws*."

Early in the history of India, a certain degree of medical technology developed. In fact, there were people in India who were medical geniuses. However, medical technology could only go so far in India because of certain cultural limitations. For one thing, special knowledge was considered to be something to keep secret, not something to share with others.

Besides that, the Hindu and Buddhist concept of "karma" helped prevent the spread of medical care. Suffering was considered to be punishment for deeds committed in a previous life. Suffering,

in this sense, was a form of justice. It was widely believed that alleviating someone's suffering now would only increase it later, so it was better to leave them to suffer now.

As Mangalwadi summarizes, "my ancestors did not lack intelligence, but our genius was expressed in a philosophy that taught us to worship nature instead of establishing dominion over it."

### HONESTY

Mangalwadi tells an especially interesting story that illustrates the power of the Bible. Once when he was visiting the Netherlands, a Dutch friend took him to get some fresh milk. They drove to a dairy farm familiar to the friend. They walked into a building with a large tank containing milk. The friend opened a tap and filled a jug he had brought with milk. Then he put some money into a nearby bowl containing cash, and they left.

Mangalwadi was shocked by this transaction, telling his friend, "if you were an Indian, you would take the milk and the money!" However, the Dutch dairy farmer knew that he could trust his neighbors to be honest about paying for the milk they took. Thus they could come and go at will, taking what they needed and leaving an appropriate payment. It was all based on trust because the people

“  
...an economy  
in a culture that  
produces generally  
honest citizens  
can operate more  
efficiently and at  
lower cost than  
one in a culture of  
dishonesty.”

were trustworthy.

Later, Mangalwadi recounted this experience to a conference in Indonesia. An Egyptian conference participant told him that an Egyptian would not only take the milk and the money, but also the cows!

In many countries of the world, a dairy farmer who wanted to sell his milk directly to customers would need to hire a cashier because he wouldn't be able to trust his customers. As a result, he would have to charge a higher price for the milk to pay for the cashier.

But if the customers could not be trusted, neither could the dairy farmer himself. So the customers would want the government to hire inspectors to ensure that the farmers were not adding water to the milk. Therefore, taxes would need to be collected to pay the inspectors, increasing costs even further.

The bottom line is that an economy in a culture that produces generally honest citizens can operate more efficiently and at lower cost than one in a culture of dishonesty. If producers and consumers can trust each other, the cost of doing business is much lower. Such a situation, of course, contributes to overall economic prosperity.

With this in mind, Mangalwadi asks what made the ordinary people of the Netherlands so different from people in India and Egypt? "The answer is simple. The Bible taught the people of Holland that even though no human being may be watching us in that dairy farm, God, our ultimate judge, is watching to see if we obey his commands to neither covet nor steal."

## CORRUPTION

A German organization called Transparency International creates an annual ranking of countries to compare their levels of corruption. The ranking is called the Global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), with the least corrupt countries listed at the top, and the most corrupt at the bottom. Countries heavily influenced by Protestantism dominate the top ten. In the 2021 CPI, the only non-Protestant countries in the top ten are Singapore at number 4 (where there are more Buddhists than Christians), and Luxembourg

at number 9 (which is predominantly Roman Catholic). As Mangalwadi explains:

"The CPI confirms what I saw in Holland—that the Bible is the only force known to history that has freed entire nations from corruption while simultaneously giving them political freedom. The most secular nations—that is, the ex-communist, atheistic nations, which teach that when no man or machine is watching you, then no one is watching you—are among the most corrupt nations, not too different from Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim nations."

The CPI provides empirical evidence that the countries most influenced by the Bible in the past are the least corrupt.

## FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was a critic and opponent of Christianity. He saw that Christianity helped the weak and downtrodden to survive and thrive, and didn't like it. In his view, the survival of wretched and downtrodden people weakens society. It would be better for them to perish so that only the fittest would survive, creating a society of strong, able-bodied people. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, Christianity had undermined the strength of the West.

Interestingly, Nietzsche's critique can actually be seen as a back-handed compliment to Christianity. As Mangalwadi points out, Nietzsche was essentially correct about the effect of the Bible on history:

"It drove the movement for the abolition of slavery and promoted care for the weak, such as widows, orphans, the handicapped, and leprosy patients. From liberating and rehabilitating temple prostitutes to reforming prisons and bringing sanity and morality to wars, the biblical tradition has been the most powerful civilizing force."

## CONCLUSION

The Bible has done much to make the world a better place. Even people who reject it benefit from its effects.



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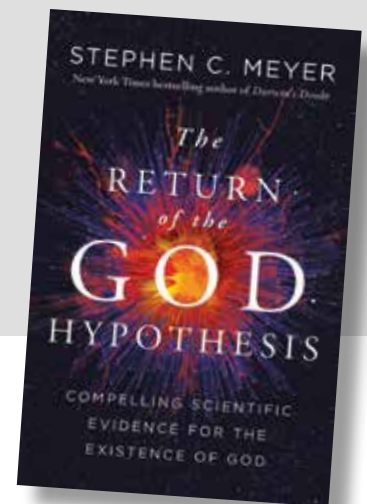
The Bible introduced a worldview that initiated technological development, the spread of education, and economic prosperity. Christian missionaries have done much to improve the lives of people in many countries of the world. And these are just some of the material benefits that resulted from the Bible.

Even more importantly, it shows the only way of salvation through faith in Christ. There is nothing like the Bible. <sup>RP</sup>

# Is God a Hypothesis?

Despite praise from Christians, Stephen Meyer's newest critique of Evolution isn't a Christian book

by Wes Bredenhof



Stephen C. Meyer's *Return of the God Hypothesis* continues to receive accolades. Most recently, *World* magazine chose it as one of their 2021 books of the year. On Amazon, as I write, it's currently the #1 best-seller under "Creationism" and #4 under "Science & Religion." This is an important and influential book coming out of the Intelligent Design movement.

However, from a biblical perspective, it has several glaring problems.

The subtitle reads, "Three Scientific Discoveries that Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe." Those three "discoveries" are:

1. the Big Bang
2. the fine-tuning of the universe
3. the existence of highly-detailed DNA information.

Meyer works with these three to argue for the eminent plausibility of the "God hypothesis."

## 1. THE BIG BANG

While I'm not qualified to evaluate the scientific evidence for the Big Bang, I do know that Big Bang cosmology is *not* consistent with the biblical account of origins. In a video on this subject, Christian astrophysicist Dr. Jason Lisle explains how Big Bang cosmology and the Bible conflict at several key points.<sup>1</sup>

- a) They conflict on the method of creation; the Big Bang says that the universe came into existence naturally, whereas the Bible says that it was created supernaturally by God.
- b) There's also a conflict on the time scale; Big Bang cosmology says that it happened billions of years ago, whereas the Bible says that creation happened several thousand years ago.
- c) The order of events is different, with the Bible saying that the earth is made before the stars.
- d) Finally, Dr. Lisle points out how they each tell a widely different story of

the future. Big Bang cosmology posits a universe that will eventually end in heat death. The Bible says that God will judge all people and then there will be a new heavens and new earth where God will dwell with the redeemed.

The Big Bang irreconcilably contradicts the Bible. A Bible-believing Christian can't use something that contradicts God's Word in order to argue for the likelihood of the existence of God. That brings us down to two scientific discoveries.

## 2. FINE-TUNING

I won't say much about the second one, the fine-tuning of the universe. Given what the Bible says about God as our wise





Big Bang cosmology conflicts with the biblical account at several key points including the timescale and order of creation

and good Creator, one would expect what Paul Davies is quoted as saying:

“The really amazing thing is not that life on earth is balanced on a knife-edge, but that the entire universe is balanced on a knife-edge, and would be total chaos if any of the natural ‘constants’ were off even slightly.”

While Meyer’s argument is that this fine-tuning points to the *probability* of a Creator (more on the problematic nature of that in a moment), the fine-tuning of the universe is indeed an observation consistent with the revelation of who God is in the Scriptures.

### 3. DNA INFORMATION

When arguing for the “God hypothesis” with DNA information, Meyer makes his case using what’s called “deep time.” Contrary to what the Bible indicates, Meyer believes the earth has a history involving hundreds of millions of years. In fact, chapter 10 is entitled, “The Cambrian and Other Information Explosions.” The Cambrian explosion allegedly took place 530 million years ago. As the story goes, this involves an explosion of new life forms in the fossil record. Meyer argues that this also represents an explosion of biological information. It poses a difficulty for materialistic theories of biological evolution, but could possibly “also provide

positive evidence *for* intelligent design” (p.209).

However, for a Bible-believing Christian, the problem is that God said he created the heavens and the earth at the beginning (Gen. 1:1) – and Jesus said that God created Adam and Eve at the beginning (Matt. 19:4). If you subsequently take the genealogies of Scripture seriously, even granting some gaps, you’re left with a world with an age on the order of thousands of years, not millions.

### SOME VALUE

Now before I get to the most serious issues with *The Return of the God Hypothesis*, let me say that Bible-believing Christians can get some value out of it. Some of the value comes when Meyer is critiquing materialist scientists.

For example, Stephen Hawking is quoted as saying, “Because there is a law of gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.” But Meyer points out that:

“causes and scientific laws are not the same things... The laws of physics represent only our descriptions of nature. Descriptions in themselves do not cause things to happen.”

There’s yet more value in Meyer’s critique of prominent theistic evolutionists like Deborah Haarsma of BioLogos.

I also appreciate his setting the historical record straight on Isaac Newton and his alleged “God-of-the-gaps blunder.” As Meyer describes it,

“Supposedly, Newton invoked *specific acts* of God (or angels) to occasionally fix the orbits of the planets and to compensate for Newton’s inability to describe the regular motion of those planets accurately.”

However, when Meyer went back to the original source, Newton’s *Principia*, he discovered that Newton didn’t posit this kind of divine action at all. The story is completely false.

Finally, Meyer illustrates how materialist scientists and philosophers live contrary to the beliefs they profess to hold. For example, David Hume questioned the uniformity of nature. This is the idea that, in the future, the world will act as it has in the past. While Hume questioned it, he still acted as though he believed in it, just as every skeptic does when he walks through a door rather than a window. As Meyer notes, “All of us act as though we believe the world in its most fundamental regularities, will behave in the future the way that it has behaved in the past.” Alvin Plantinga furthers this point, in noting that, if evolutionary naturalism is true, “we have significant reason to doubt the reliability of our minds.” Charles Darwin had already identified this problem in an 1881 letter:

But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value at all or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey’s mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?

Yet no one really does doubt in this way. To do so would ultimately be self-defeating, since we would also have to doubt our beliefs about evolutionary naturalism. This is a good example of answering a fool according to his folly (Prov. 26:5).

## TOO TENTATIVE

My two biggest beefs with *Return of the God Hypothesis* have to do with the method of argumentation and the conclusion which results. There are these three scientific discoveries mentioned earlier. Meyer incorporates these discoveries into what's called an abductive argument for the existence of God. Such an argument works by way of inference to the best explanation. It takes this form:

**Logic:** If A were true, then C would be as a matter of course.

**Data:** The surprising fact C is observed.

**Conclusion:** Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.

Filling it out, it looks something like this:

**Logic:** If a personal God existed, then DNA information would be as a matter of course.

**Data:** The surprising fact of DNA information is observed.

**Conclusion:** Hence, there is reason to suspect that a personal God exists.

One of the crucial things to note here is that the “logic of abduction...does not produce certainty, but instead plausibility or possibility.” This tentativeness is reflected throughout Meyer’s book. His argument is ultimately that “the God hypothesis” is *possibly* the best explanation of the three scientific “discoveries” discussed. So: a personal God quite *likely* exists.

From a biblical perspective, this is unacceptable. The Bible doesn’t reveal the existence of God to us as a likelihood, but a *certainty*. His existence is real and on some level *everyone knows it* (Rom. 1:18-20).

Furthermore, the idea that God is a hypothesis to be tested or evaluated by sinful creatures is repugnant to biblical revelation. The creature ought never to stand in judgment over the Creator or reduce him to a hypothesis. Human beings have no right to judge God’s existence or anything else about who He is or what He does. The whole premise of Meyer’s book flatters people into thinking they *do* have such a right. That’s not a minor procedural peccadillo, but

a massive misstep, even an affront to the Creator.

## TOO GENERAL

Meyer’s conclusion has another problem embedded in it. He argues for the plausibility of the existence of *a* personal God. In chapters 13 and 14, his reasoning excludes pantheism and deism as possibilities. That leaves him with a God who is personal and involved with his creation, not only at the beginning, but on an ongoing basis. But the problem is that this is still not the God of the Bible. Meyer’s God who very likely exists could be the Allah of the Muslims, the God of the Jews, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, or the Mormons. What we’re left with is plain vanilla theism. Meyer has argued for *a* god, but not the Triune God of the Bible, and certainly not for the biblical worldview package. Meyer professes to be a Christian, but this book could just as well have been written by a Jew or Muslim.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately all the problems in *Return of the God Hypothesis* trace back to one fundamental difficulty in Meyer’s method: he doesn’t start with the Word of God. Instead, he starts with the notion of neutral intellectual ground. He doesn’t

seem to apprehend that the problem with unbelief isn’t intellectual, but moral. *There is no neutrality.*

Those who reject the God of the Bible are rejecting him because of the wicked rebellion in their hearts. It’s this foundational issue that really needs to be addressed. Meyer doesn’t do that. In his book, there’s no sin from which unbelievers need to repent. There’s just errant thinking that needs more information and sounder logic. In his book, there’s no Saviour to whom unbelievers need to turn, no gospel to deliver from vanity and futility. There’s just science and logic putting our minds at ease about origins. I bought *Return of the God Hypothesis* in a Christian bookstore, but I really don’t know why it was there. Even if Christians may find some things of value, it’s not a Christian book.

For a far better biblical alternative, I highly recommend Jason Lisle’s *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*. RP

## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>“Does the Big Bang Fit with the Bible?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7DIQBcCbYc>

*Dr. Wes Bredenhof blogs at Bredenhof.ca where a version of this review first appeared.*

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# "I USED TO BEAT HIM"

by Todd Nettleton

*What follows is an excerpt from Todd Nettleton's "When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the frontlines with persecuted Christians" (2021/272 pages). Each chapter is a story of a Christian who shared God's good news with those around them, come what may. They shared it because they knew that the relatives trying to silence them, the mob trying to intimidate them, or even the policemen coming to arrest them, all needed what God had already given to them. This is a story of Christians far braver than we, but more importantly, it is the story of the good God who sustained them. In a few instances, He did so by way of big miracles: Muslims with no access to the Bible are reached in their dreams, police tossing a house find a lost sewing needle but miss the three large boxes of Bibles in the middle of the room. In others, the miracles were maybe less spectacular, but exactly what was needed: a woman whose husband was murdered is able to forgive the murderers, a drug addict who turns to God is instantly freed from his addiction. These persecuted Christians want us to understand that for God's people, persecution is to be expected (John 15:18-21) but it need not be feared because our God is greater than the world and what we might have to suffer is nothing compared to what we have gained in Him.*

The nickname "Haji" is a term of respect in the Muslim world, bestowed on those who have completed their haji pilgrimage to Mecca, one of Islam's five pillars. It's not commonly combined with the title pastor!

We met "Pastor Haji" at his grass-roofed house in the southern part of Ethiopia, an area where a rising tide of radical Islam was threatening the church

and Christian believers. Outside the house, there was a burn mark on the wall. One week prior, radical Muslims tried to set fire to Haji's house. Thankfully, he put out the fire.

As we sit, drinking orange sodas Haji graciously offered us, we can look up to see sunlight streaming through holes in the tightly packed grass roof. The holes are the result of neighborhood Muslims

throwing stones onto the house, trying to pressure Haji and his family to leave the area or return to Islam. Thankfully, none of his family was injured by falling stones.

Haji understands the hatred of radical Muslims. He used to be one of them! He was so devout, he was sent to Saudi Arabia for special training.

As we stood outside the hut, Haji



## Haji understands the hatred of radical Muslims. He used to be one of them!

had his arm around the evangelist that brought us to meet him. Nodding his head toward the evangelist, he said five words I will never forget.

“I used to beat him.”

*What?*

“I used to beat him.” Haji went on to tell us that he was the leader of a radical Islamic group of young men, and part of their holy duty to their Prophet was attacking and harassing Christians. One of those they attacked was this very evangelist, the man now smiling with Haji’s arm draped loosely across his shoulders.

In spite of beatings, the evangelist refused hatred for his attackers. Instead, he showed them love and offered them blessings and good news. Haji had no explanation for such a response. How could a man you were beating show love to you? How could he not grow angry and fight back?

Eventually, Haji’s heart was won by the gospel message and the love of the Christian man he was attacking. He left the vitriol and violence of Islam for peace beyond his understanding.

Islamic friends were not happy with his decision. Haji would spend a year in jail. He would face some of the same tactics he’d used against Christians. Now he was facing rocks through his roof and attempts to burn down his house. But he would not give up his faith in Jesus.

Once again, I’m struck by the joy the men and women of our persecuted Christian family possess. Haji is a happy man. His smile is huge. His laugh comes easily and often. This is not a man who

lives in constant fear, though the threats against him are real and constant. This is a man having fun, living an adventure, and serving a great King.

Haji is having kingdom impact. Who better to talk to Muslims about Jesus than a former Muslim, one who completed the *hajj*, one so devout he was sent to Saudi Arabia for special training? Who better to spell out the differences between a god who will weigh out your good deeds and bad deeds to see whether you’ve earned the right to enter paradise, and a God who knows our good deeds can never outweigh our sinfulness, and so sent His own Son to pay the price for our bad deeds and purchase our entrance to heaven with His own blood?

Haji’s story is not unique. One of the church’s first great missionaries was a man so zealous for his religion he asked for the assignment of hunting down men and women who didn’t follow their teachings. Then that man ran into the

very One he was persecuting, and was forever changed.

One of our *Voice of the Martyr* (VOM) contacts in Colombia has a saying: “A race-horse can run just as fast in either direction.” One who is zealous for sin will often become zealous for Christ. One who beat Christians might eventually accept beatings with joy in service to his King.

It’s easy for us to look at someone with holier-than-thou religious eyes and write them off spiritually. He is so hard-hearted nothing could reach him. She is so trapped in sin she can never get out. But the testimony of Pastor Haji – and the apostle Paul – is that *none of us* is beyond the reach of God’s grace and mercy. And those saved from much are often the racehorses that run fastest for Christ and furthest to reach others for Him.

“I used to beat him,” said the pastor. Said the persecuted Christian. Said the kingdom worker. With a smile. RP

*Taken from “When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the Frontlines with Persecuted Christians” by Todd Nettleton & The Voice of the Martyrs (©2021). Published by Moody Publishers. MoodyPublishers.com. Used by permission.*

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# RP'S 52 IN 22 CHALLENGE

## A book a week through 2022?

If you're a reader, there's a good chance you have a stack of books somewhere that you've really been meaning to get to. But, what with the busyness of life, that stack might well be growing as it is so hard to set aside the time. Wow then, can we get to the reading that we really want to do anyway?

The answer, for a trio of competitive lads, was to get a challenge going. So a lawyer, a minister, and an editor – André Schutten, Jim Witteveen, and Jon Dykstra – all agreed that they would read 52 books by the end of 2022. This “52 in 22” challenge is a race of sorts, and to up the motivation, the three will keep a public running total of their progress, posting short reviews of each book here on this web page (with selections appearing in each issue of the print magazine). Finally, to add a mildly punitive element to it, each agreed, at year's end, to donate \$20 for every book they didn't complete to a charity of their choice.

Our hope is that the challenge might spur others on to read more great books, including, perhaps, some of the suggestions listed here. While space doesn't allow us to include all the reviews here in the magazine, you can find below a selection of the most popular of the reviews from the first two months of the challenge, January and February. You can find all the reviews on our website at [ReformedPerspective.ca/52](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/52) and keep up with our progress on RP's social media channels – MeWe, Facebook, Instagram, and Gab – under the hashtag #RP52in22

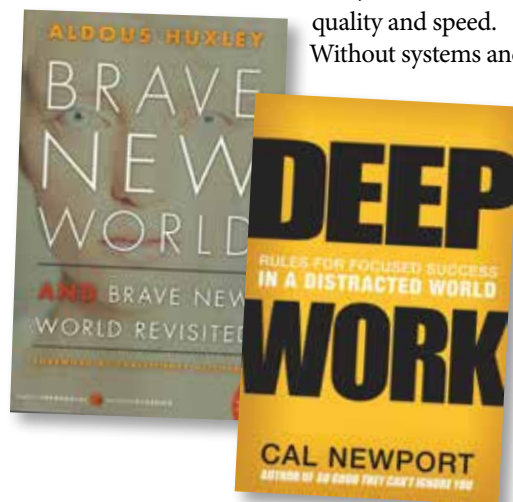
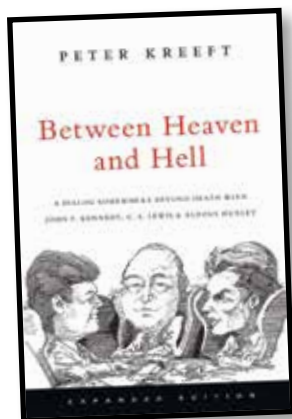
### THE LAWYER – ANDRÉ SCHUTTEN

Beloved philosopher Peter Kreeft's *Beyond Heaven and Hell* (1982, 115 pages) is a short book patterned after a Socratic dialogue. Kreeft imagines a conversation between three famous men who all died on November 22, 1963. Christian theologian C.S. Lewis takes on the modern humanist in President John F. Kennedy and the Eastern pantheist and philosopher Aldous Huxley while discussing and debating the existence of hell, the place of authority, and Scripture as trustworthy, the reality of Jesus Christ and his divinity, and more. Highly recommended. It can be read in a single sitting on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday evening. It might be fun to read it aloud with two others, each taking a voice of the three characters.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and *Brave New World Revisited* (1958) (combined edition, 2005, 340 pages) are modern classics. The former is a dystopian novel, predicting future tyranny not through violence, pain, and terror but through pleasure and technological and medical planning and psychological conditioning. The latter is a nonfiction piece in which Huxley compares modern human relations in 1958 with what he prophesied in 1932. While Huxley was not a Christian, some of his

criticisms – though certainly not all – are spot on. Huxley's prophesy of control through pleasure – evaluated in the 21st century – is more accurate than George Orwell's prophesy of societal control through pain and terror in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (published in 1949). The ethical/political issues surrounding IVF and surrogacy, the redefinition of the family to include up to four parents, the ubiquitous nature of pornography, the dramatic shift of divorcing procreation from sex, the state-control of vast swaths of the education system, and society's desire to prefer safety and comfort over freedom and responsibility, all suggest that Huxley was the more prescient philosopher. The book is unsettling to read but I nonetheless recommend it, not only to better understand the many cultural references to it, but also to prick your imagination to better critique the state of our society today.

If you have ever struggled with concentration when needing to focus on a challenging project (writing an article or sermon, understanding an intellectual problem, studying for an exam, etc.) then Cal Newport's *Deep Work* (2016, 296 pages) is a must-read. This was the second time I'd read this book in less than two years. It confirms with scientific and anecdotal evidence what I've grown to know for myself over the last 10 years: a person needs to have lots of dedicated, focused time in order to do deep work. Newport defines deep work as: “work for extended periods with full concentration on a single task free from distraction” and argues it is essential to develop two core abilities: 1. the ability to quickly master hard things/ideas; and 2. the ability to produce at an elite level, in terms of both quality and speed. Without systems and

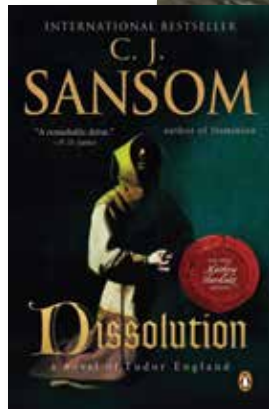
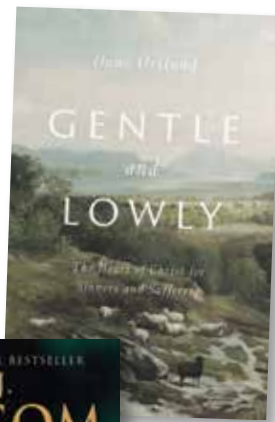




strategies in place, deep work becomes nearly impossible, making productivity, innovation and output stagnate. This book provides those strategies. I highly recommend *Deep Work* to any who want to improve their focus and output with the caveat that this book is not written from a Christian perspective. Implement the strategies, without losing gospel focus in your life.

Historian-turned-lawyer-turned-fiction-writer C.J. Sansom has written an engaging historical fiction novel in *Dissolution* (2003, 390 pages). Set during the initial years of the English Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries there, the story follows a hunchbacked lawyer, Matthew Shardlake, who is sent to investigate a murder in a monastery at the behest of Thomas Cromwell (the vicar general of King Henry VIII). The book is part Agatha Christie mystery, part John Grisham drama, combined with the very careful research of the best historical fiction writers. The value of the book for a Christian reader (beyond just enjoying some good fiction) is to show the messiness of the early Reformation in England. Sansom puts away any romantic ideas Reformed people might have about that era. While a corrupt church hierarchy was displaced, it was done through the brutal and corrupt tactics of a tyrant with some early English Reformers playing along. I recommend the book for mystery lovers and historical fiction fans interested in learning a bit more about the early Reformation era with the caveat that the story contains mature subject matter: murder, torture, and adultery (though thankfully not graphically described).

Presbyterian pastor Dane Ort-lund's *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (2020,

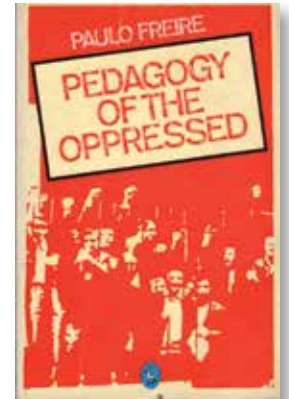


224 pages) is a beautifully written book on God's heart for his people. A handful of people recommended this book to me and, since I received it as a Christmas gift from the ARPA Canada board, I decided to read it as my morning devotional. If you've ever struggled with the question of whether God might love you despite your sins,

read this book. If you've ever thought that God's attitude toward you is one of exasperation, read this book. It literally brought me to tears, and encouraged me many times. I highly recommend the book for personal devotions or as an evening devotion for a couple, or as a dinner-time devotional for families with older children. It will provoke discussions of wonder, amazement and praise at how great God's love for us really is.

## THE MINISTER – JIM WITTEVEEN

According to its afterword, "few books have been so widely debated, quoted, excerpted, and also used for teacher education, graduate and undergraduate courses, and in some high schools" as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970, 219 pages). There is no denying the influence that Paulo Freire's educational philosophy has had around the world. And as I read this, Freire's best-known work, my only conclusion is that this influence has been resoundingly negative. Replete with citations of such luminaries as Lenin, Mao, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* proudly proclaims its Marxist



THE LAWYER



basis, building a system of education on a very flimsy foundation indeed. I have little good to say about this book, although I believe that Freire's characterization of government educational systems as tools of the elite used to control and form society according to its desires is entirely accurate. His "solutions," however, are disastrous – as the results have continued to show. While I wouldn't recommend this book as a handbook of pedagogy, I do recommend it for anyone who would like to learn more about why public and higher education has become what it is today.

One of the best-known psychological experiments in history was that of Stanley Milgram, professor of psychology at Yale University. In a series of experiments, Milgram tested hundreds of unwitting subjects for their willingness to administer electric shocks to a "victim" who answered a series of quiz questions incorrectly. Participants were told that they were participating in a study of the efficacy of punishment for learning, but the real goal of the experiment was to study how obedient people would be to authority, even when told to do things that went against their conscience. Milgram discovered that obedience to authority is deeply ingrained, and that the majority of participants would obey even when they believed they were seriously hurting someone. *Obedience to Authority* (1974, 253 pages) is the fruit of Milgram's research. Much of it is taken up by an explanation of the various forms that the experiments took, but it is the individual case studies that are particularly interesting and insightful. One participant was a member of a Dutch Reformed Church, and had lived through the Nazi occupation of Holland; at one point in the experiment, he refused to continue when he believed that the "subject" was being hurt. Another

was an Old Testament professor who also refused to obey the authority figure. When asked what he thought the most effective way of strengthening resistance to inhumane authority, he responded: "If one had as one's ultimate authority God, then it trivializes human authority." Milgram writes from an evolutionist perspective. That being said, I recommend this book to anyone interested in deepening their understanding about obedience to authority from a psychological and sociological perspective.

My personal library is rather roughly organized according to topic, and one of the categories that I use to sort my collection is "Know Your Enemy." The books included under this heading are ones that I wouldn't recommend because I agree with their content, but rather because it's important to know first-hand what it is that we're up against. Saul Alinsky's *Rules*

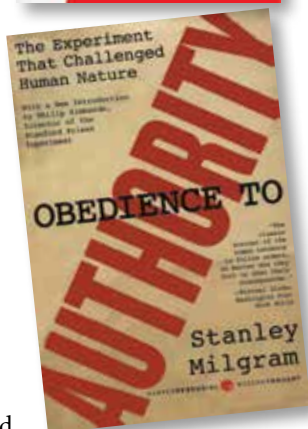
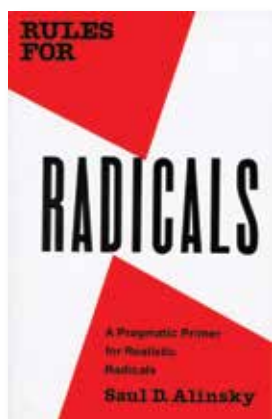
*for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals* (1971, 196 pages) is one such book – a highly influential work that provides an insider's view of tactics that have become ubiquitous in the world of politics, and what motivates those who use them. If you've ever wondered why the political arena is so often characterized by dishonesty and pragmatism instead of by high ideals and straightforward honesty, you need look no further than *Rules for Radicals*, the playbook for a generation of "community organizers," activists, and politicians. Alinsky's dedication of this book to "the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom – Lucifer" reveals his starting point, and from there, as you can

well imagine, it goes nowhere good. So I recommend this book because we need to be aware of the tactics that are being used against us. For more, check out my *Dan*

11:32 podcast on Alinsky's book.

Written from a Christian perspective, Carol M. Swain and Christopher J. Schorr's *Black Eye for America: How Critical Race Theory is Burning Down the House* (2021, 152 pages) is readable and brief – just 79 pages, plus glossary, notes, appendix, and index. That makes it an insightful introduction to Critical Race Theory (CRT) going back to its roots in Marxism, specifically the cultural Marxism of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt school of critical theorists. Each chapter concludes with a list of discussion questions, making it ideal for group study and discussion. Although written specifically for the American context, the book's suggestions for engaging with and opposing CRT's influence are easily applicable to readers in other countries as well.

John McWhorter's *Woke Racism: How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America* (2021, 224 pages) is by an African-American who is himself not a believer. But he makes the case for thinking about the new anti-racism (based in Critical Race Theory) as a religious system, and its supporters ("the Elect") as religious adherents. Highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to learn more about the worldviews that form the foundation of Critical Race Theory, with the caveat that the book is not written from a Christian perspective, and does contain a bit of rough language.



## THE EDITOR – JON DYKSTRA

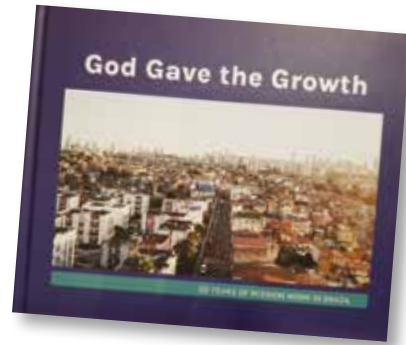
John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678, 187 pages) is a series of theological debates and discussions wrapped inside an epic journey. Our hero, the Pilgrim, is setting out from "the City of Destruction" to find a home in the Good King's "Celestial City" and the journey serves as a metaphor for the Christian life. Bunyan has many challenges and encouragements to offer, but the main one is that "the bitter must come before the sweet." He wants readers to understand that turning to God won't make our life easy, and might even make it much harder. But God is worth it! So, along the way, the Pilgrim has to contend with many trials including false friends, doubt, depression, all sorts of temptations, and persecution. He is also strengthened along the way by faithful friends, and good counselors who show him what the Lord has done for other pilgrims. There's wisdom packed in here, which is the reason it was the English world's most influential novel for at least a couple of centuries. Readers should take care in finding a good version. Most modernizations (including the *Amazon Classic* version) cut out meat or sections that offend modern sensibilities. A fantastic exception is that done by C. J. Lovik, which lightly – but effectively! – modernizes the text, and includes helpful explanatory endnotes, and wonderful illustrations every ten pages or so.

A "3 Johns" version of the original is available for free at DesiringGod.org: written by John Bunyan, introduced by John Newton (who wrote the song "Amazing Grace"), and including a Bunyan biography by John Piper. Want even more? Bunyan wrote a sequel, this time about the journey of Pilgrim's wife, called "Pilgrim's Progress Part II: Christiana."

I'm not one for abridgments, but John Bunyan's classic is almost

350 years old, so the original wasn't going to work with my young daughters. So I checked out the three most popular children's editions and was pleasantly surprised with them all. The most loyal to the original was *Dangerous Journey* (1985, 127 pages). Editor Oliver Hunkin has carefully abridged, rather than rewritten Bunyan's story, and done so in a way that makes it easily understandable for the teen audience it is aimed at. He's paired it with pictures that do a lot of explaining, but are scarier than my preteen audience was up for. Hunkin also includes a much-abridged 16-page version of Bunyan's sequel, about Christiana's journey. For younger children, the most authentic version is Tyler Van Halteren's *Little Pilgrim's Big Journey* (2020, 223 pages). It has somewhat cartoonish pictures they'll enjoy, and the principal character, Christian, is now a boy. I appreciated that Van Halteren's rewrite still contains most of Bunyan's theological challenges and lessons, though on a kid's level. He's also written a second book, Part II, that covers Christiana's journey, though now instead of being the pilgrim's wife, she is his little sister. The one I read to my children is Helen L. Taylor's adaptation, *Little Pilgrim's Progress* (1946, 336 pages). This text was the most readable of the three (Halteren's version is very close) and also includes Christiana's journey, though she is now Christian's friend. A little of the theological heft was lost, but I think that's okay, so long as kids know they need to check out the original when they're older. There are many versions of Taylor's adaptation, some with lavish pictures and others with only simple line drawings.

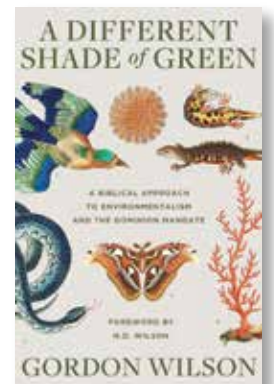
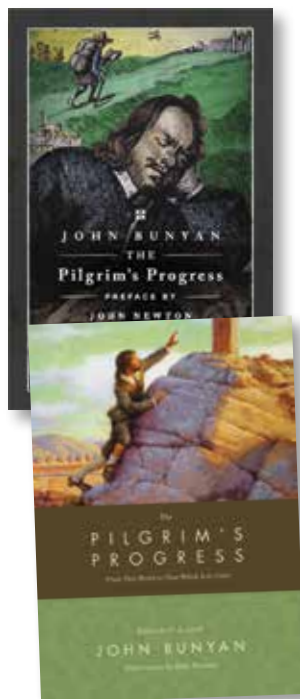
If the news has you antsy, then you might be interested in a book that calmed and encouraged me. To celebrate 50 years of Canadian Reformed involvement in the mission work in Brazil,



editor Harold Ludwig and the Aldergrove Brazil Mission Society, have given us *God Gave the Growth* (2021, 144 pages).

Dozens of contributors, including past and present missionaries and all sorts of workers, take turns sharing how God greatly blessed their work. There are challenges – a different language and culture creates barriers that have to be overcome – but maybe the greatest challenge is one we pray we could experience in Canada too: such a hunger for the Reformed truth that there are more opportunities to preach and teach than can be met. As one missionary shares: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38). I really loved that there were so many contributors, as they gave very different glimpses at what God has been up to. Canadians can purchase the sturdy oversized hardcover for \$30 CAN plus shipping at MissionBoardBrazil.org.

Christians are right to be skeptical of an environmental movement that sees Man as a problem for the planet, rather than the steward of it. But, as Gordon Wilson explains in his *A Different Shade of Green* (2019, 189 pages), Christians can't simply be contrarians – we won't arrive at the biblical position by being reactionary and anti-Green. Instead, our foundation has to be God's Word, starting with the dominion mandate in Genesis 1:28, and then God's own evaluation of His creation as is expressed a few verses later: "and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). We are to value His Creation





and the creatures in it because He values it, and we are to take charge of its care because He has made us responsible for it. What Dr. Wilson has gifted us with here is a challenging and engaging Biblical Environmentalism 101 – he hasn't worked it all out for us, but he is pointing us in the right direction.

In *God's Smuggler* (1967, 288 pages) "Brother Andrew" relates one extraordinary answer to prayer after another, whether it be a needed cake delivered at the last moment by an off-duty postman, or the instant healing of Andrew's crippled ankle. Then, in his work smuggling Bibles behind the Iron Curtain, this Dutchman came to rely on the extraordinary becoming regular. Border crossings into Communist countries were always tense, but each time Brother Andrew would ask God to "make seeing eyes blind" and God would do so. The same border guards who had just taken apart the car in front of them would simply wave them through or, if they did inspect their cargo, the guards would completely miss the Bibles crammed in everywhere. It was through these regular miracles that God used Andrew and his coworkers to deliver His Word to millions in the persecuted Church. I told my children we shouldn't understand the many miracles

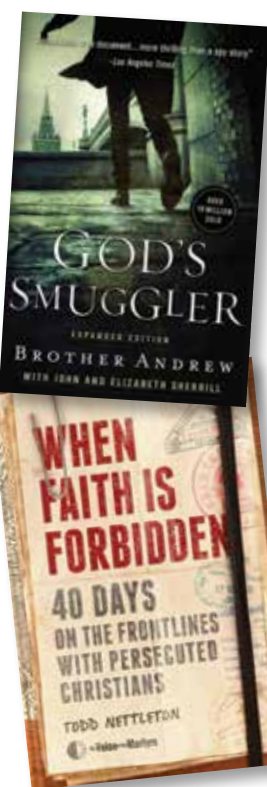
Andrew experienced as evidence that he was always acting wisely and praying as he should (he acknowledges God honored some of his requests despite how he prayed). We can take it as evidence of God's great love for his persecuted Church!

I read Todd Nettleton's *When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the frontlines with persecuted Christians* (2021, 272 pages) in just two days. It was simply too wonderful to put down. Each of the 40 chapters is a story of



a Christian who shared God's good news with those around them, come what may. They shared it because they knew that the relatives trying to silence them, or even the policemen coming to arrest them, all needed what God had already given to them. So, this is a story of Christians far braver than we, but more importantly, it is the story of the good God who sustained them. In a few instances He did so by way of big miracles: Muslims with no access to the Bible are reached in their dreams, police tossing a house find a lost sewing needle but miss the three large boxes of Bibles in the middle of the room. In others, the miracles were maybe less spectacular, but exactly what was needed: a man who used to beat Christians is so won over he is now willing to suffer those beatings rather than stay quiet about his Lord, a woman whose husband was murdered is able to forgive the murderers, a drug addict who turns to God is instantly freed from his addiction. This is an incredible book, and much needed here in the West where we are terrified of speaking God's good news because of what it might cost us in status, or promotions, or friendships. These persecuted Christians want us to understand that for God's people, persecution is to be expected (John 15:18-21) but it need not be feared because our God is greater than the world and what we might have to suffer is nothing compared

to what we have gained in Him.

Frank Abe and Tamiko Nimura's *We Hereby Refuse: Japanese American resistance to wartime incarceration* (2021, 160 pages) is a graphic novel account of the tens of thousands of Japanese Americans who were imprisoned in the US in World War II based solely on their ethnicity. They lost their jobs, businesses, and even their homes. Despite the obvious discrimination against them, the vast majority went without protest, believing that quiet acceptance was a way of showing their patriotism. However, some did dare to protest, and *We Hereby Refuse* shares three of their stories. One inescapable lesson: the government is powerful, and with power comes the need to use it with great restraint. What happens when it doesn't act with restraint? We can get victims by the thousands, as happened here. Another? The need for brave individuals to challenge government abuses, in the hopes of reducing the number of victims. RP



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# 10 GAMES YOU CAN PLAY WITH A TODDLER

without having to roll off the sofa



by Sharon Bratcher

A young relative has two toddlers, and our conversation reminded me of some useful strategies from those wonderful and exhausting days. While I don't miss the days when several of my children were sick simultaneously, or those hours when they all whined or argued, I do miss those young years: their voices giving daily news bulletins that showed me who they were and who they were becoming, and all of the singing, learning, and playing together.

Some negative people see only the duties of parenting. That's like a Fortune 500 company president focusing only on flooding toilets in the washroom, or employee theft. But as the saying goes, "nothing is work unless

you'd rather be doing something else." You can enjoy being in the thick of it now, even if the work is challenging and tiring!

The first strategy is that days always went best when I guided, loosely at least, the order of the activities for the day. Mom or Dad assessed the needs and the desires of the children, and then decided when it was playtime, rest time, or lunchtime.

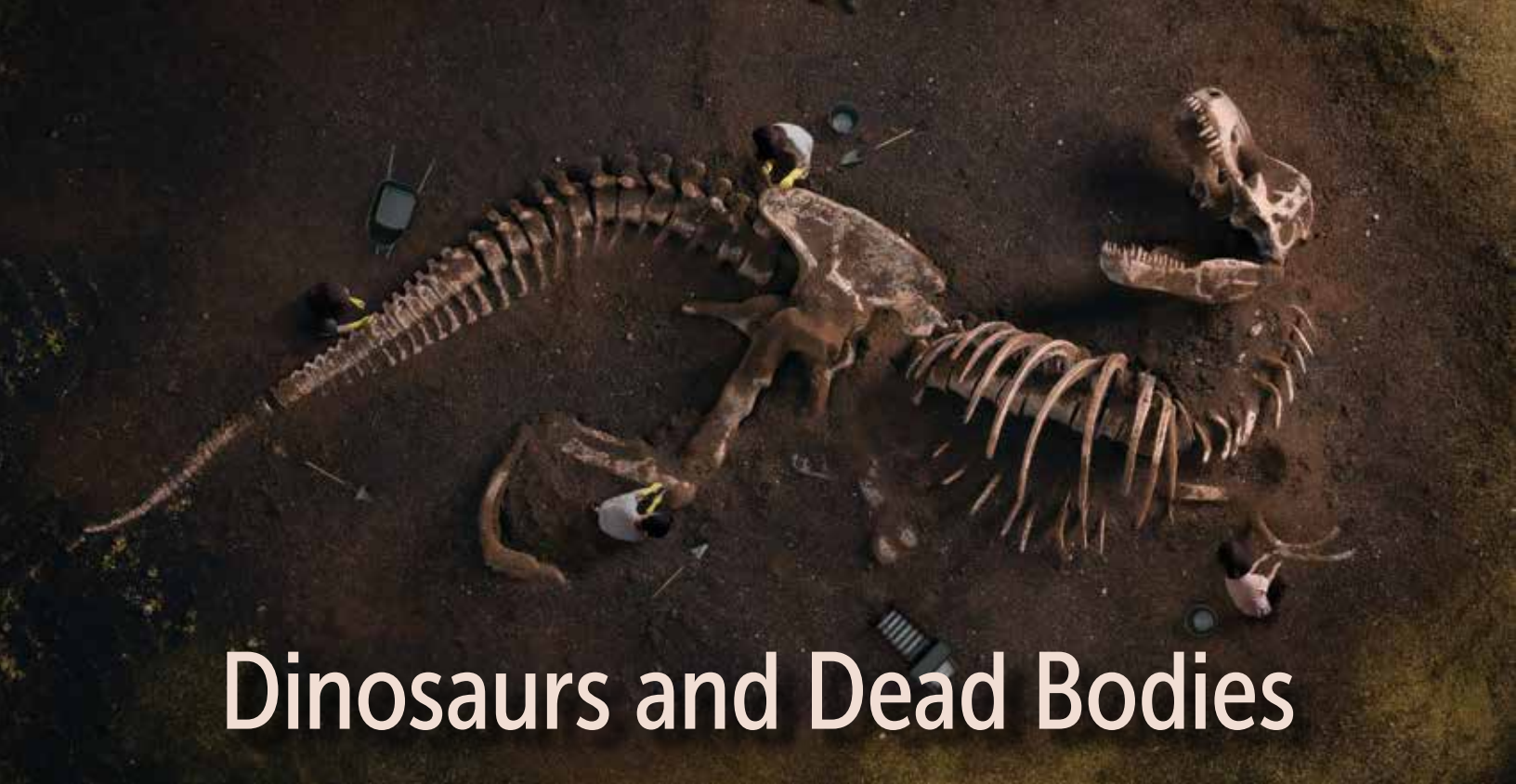
A second strategy was born from fatigue and creativity. I found that with enthusiasm I could engage the little ones in activities that could be done while I was physically resting and they were getting exercise.

Here's my top ten list:

1. **Fetch.** Seriously! While lying on the sofa, you can throw a ball for a toddler to retrieve. They love it, and you get to be prone.
2. **Rollies.** Similar to fetch, except that you take whichever toys will roll (stacking rings, for instance) and you roll them as far as you can, and the kids chase them and bring them back. I used to do this in the church nursery and it kept them occupied for a good twenty minutes.
3. **Coloring.** Children like to have you color with them. Get a coffee table that's the height of the sofa, and pull it over next to the sofa. While you lie there, color together, commenting on what you are doing. It's a great time to listen. You can even color with your odd hand if you need to turn over onto your other side – the kids don't care or even notice.
4. **Reading,** and lessons. Let them bring over their favorite books. I taught all of my kids to read (starting at age 4) using *Why Johnny Can't Read* by Rudolf
5. **Blocks or Duplos.** Build towers and teach them to build houses on the coffee table. Practice boundaries by letting them use opposite ends of the table to build. They love your attention to their designs and details.
6. **Safety scissors, magazines, catalogs, and tape = books.** Staple together 3 or 4 pieces of construction paper and then, on the coffee table, let them cut pictures and tape them in to make a book. Have them dictate what to say, and write it down exactly. All together at the end you can pick up the debris.
7. **"Don't let the balloon hit the floor!"** Best played when there are at least 2-3 kids to run and jump after it. You can use one hand and one foot as you lie there.
8. **Sing.** Sing songs that they know. Teach them silly songs
9. **Write letters to grandparents, or church members.** Be the secretary and ask them what to say (with a little prompting.) Let them make up a story, and read back each paragraph as they finish it. If you use a pencil and paper on a clipboard or book, you can write while laying on your back. After your rest you can walk to the mailbox together.
10. **Watch a video together.** I'm not for plugging kids in very often, but it is another activity you can do while lying down on the sofa. Plan it, saying, "after lunch cleanup we'll watch a video together;" then get comfy and enjoying their responses, teaching them tidbits: "God made those puppies, didn't He?"

Toddlers desire your loving attention. You can give them a full dose of it and rest yourself by trying these ideas in your home. **RP**





# Dinosaurs and Dead Bodies

If Lenin's body can't last much longer, how could dinosaur tissue have lasted millions of years?

by Shawn Hoffman

In a Russian laboratory, a team of highly trained Russian scientists is leaning over a dead body. The body is that of a man who has been dead for over 90 years, and these scientists are being paid \$200,000 a year to keep this man looking alive. They are good at what they do, such that some people consider this body to be the best preserved corpse in the world.

These are the earthly remains of the infamous Vladimir Lenin, socialist revolutionary and founder of the Soviet Union. It is estimated that he killed 3.7 million of his own people during his bloody reign of terror. He was an avowed atheist and declared that "there is nothing more abominable than religion," and "all worship of a divinity is a necrophilia." He was responsible for the mass killing of thousands of Christians in Russia.

When Lenin died in January of 1924, the first embalming efforts began at a Moscow location that would later be termed the "Lenin lab." It might seem like it should be an easy task to preserve

a body for a long time, but it is actually very difficult. There were times when up to 200 scientists were employed at the Lenin lab, researching and testing the best ways to preserve Lenin's body. They have partially succeeded. If you go to see the body of Lenin today, lying in his glass sarcophagus in Red Square you might think he looks in fairly good condition.

The reality is that it has been a huge task to keep him looking like that. The sarcophagus is cooled to 61 degrees, with the humidity between 80 and 90 percent. Underneath his clothing there is a double-layered rubber suit that keeps a thin layer of embalming fluid continually covering his body. The body gets re-embalmed once every other year, using a process that involves submerging the body in baths of glycerol solution, formaldehyde, potassium acetate, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, acetic acid solution and acetic sodium. Each session takes about 45 days.

After the re-embalming Lenin is carted back to his sarcophagus, but each week

he is visited by scientists who carefully examine his skin using precision, scientific instruments to detect any change in moisture, color and contour. Dehydration and time are the main enemies. If any fungus stains or mold spots are detected on Lenin's face they are carefully treated with a mild bleach solution. A doctor who worked on the body from 1934 to 1952 said that with current preservation techniques, the body could last "many decades, even for 100 years."

It is now getting close to 100 years, but despite the best efforts of hundreds of scientists and over 90 years of research Lenin's body is still deteriorating; the best of modern science has not been able to stop the downward march to dust. Artificial skin has been created to replace what is deteriorating, and his nose, face, and other parts of his body have been resculpted to restore their appearance. A moldable material made of paraffin, glycerin and carotene has been used to replace much of the skin fat to maintain the original shape of the body. It has

been estimated that only 23% of Lenin's original body tissue still remains. The rest has been replaced by artificial materials. So the famous body of Lenin is becoming more and more of a "wax" sculpture and less and less of a real body.

## ANOTHER WELL PRESERVED BODY

Let us now leave Russia and visit another location, this time on the other side of the world. Once again a team of scientists is bending over the remains of a body. This time they are not in a high-tech laboratory. They have just finished removing these remains from the dirt. Once again it is a very old body, but this time all they have is the skeleton. It's the bones of a T-rex dinosaur, and a paleontologist named Mary Schweitzer is about to take one of its bones back to her laboratory for careful study. It's there that she places the bone in a solution of EDTA, to dissolve the bone matrix.

To the astonishment of the scientific community, she discovered that there was still soft tissue inside – blood vessels, red blood cells, etc. At first some of the other scientists ridiculed her because they said, "These fossils are millions of years old and we know that biological material doesn't last that long!" But she finally proved that it was the soft tissues of the dinosaur itself, and the majority of the scientific community accepted her discovery.

As time went by more and more fossils from all over the world were tested and found to still contain soft tissues. If you saw some of the microscope pictures you might easily think you were looking at a piece of meat from the grocery store. The level of preservation is quite amazing! Even the microscopic structures of veins, red blood cells, osteocytes, and nerves have been preserved!

## YOUNG EARTH OR OLD FLESH?

Now the scientists had a problem. Most of them believed the dinosaurs had died out 65 million years ago, and previous experiments had shown that soft tissues should not last for millions of years. But they weren't willing to let go of their belief that evolution happened over millions of years, so they started scrambling

for answers to explain why the dinosaur bones still had soft tissue in them.

Scientists who believed that the fossils formed in a worldwide flood about 4,400 years ago, like the Bible describes, didn't have a problem with this discovery. Like so many other discoveries in recent science, it matched very well with their belief that the earth is only about 6,000 years and the fossils formed during the flood. This was exciting news for them, but not for the evolutionary scientists!

Mary Schweitzer next did an experiment by soaking ostrich blood vessels in concentrated blood plasma for two years to see what would happen. She reported that after two years the blood vessels were still recognizable. She suspected that the iron in the blood acted somewhat like a preservative. So she put forth the theory that maybe the soft tissue in the dinosaur bones had been preserved for millions of years by iron in the blood of the dinosaurs. She compared it to the action of formaldehyde, except not as strong. The scientists who believed in Darwinian evolution immediately grabbed onto this explanation as the answer to their dilemma. They said that this experiment must explain how dinosaur soft tissue could last for millions of years.

But does it really? Many of the bones Mary Schweitzer tested are dated by evolutionists at 145,000,000 to 199,000,000 years old. Can a 2-year experiment in a climate controlled laboratory be extrapolated to explain 145,000,000 years of preservation under harsh environmental conditions? Animals die all the time. We've all seen them dead beside the road. Does the iron in their blood act as a preservative to keep their tissues from decaying?

Ninety years of research and the combined knowledge of up to 200 scientists has not been able to stop the decay of Lenin's body. They are using the most advanced preservation techniques and the best embalming chemicals, including formaldehyde, but that is still not enough to stop the slow, but steady decline into dust. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). It appears that iron molecules do have some preservative qualities that act in a similar


way to formaldehyde, except that they are weaker than formaldehyde. And we can see that even formaldehyde itself, combined with other strong chemicals cannot preserve tissue indefinitely. A large portion of Lenin's body is already gone after only ninety years. It is even surprising to find that fragments of soft tissue have been preserved in dinosaur bones for over 4,000 years since the flood buried these fossils. But it is quite inconceivable that iron molecules could preserve tissue for 145,000,000 years.

In order to grasp the vast difference between the evolutionary time scale and the Bible time scale, let's try converting them to seconds. If the 4,400 years since the flood was converted to 4,400 seconds or 1.2 hours, and the 145,000,000 years (the supposed age of the bones) was converted to 145,000,000 seconds or 4.5 years, we can see the huge difference between the two. What a little over an hour is to four and a half years, the evolutionary time scale is to the creation time scale. Evolutionary scientists believe these soft tissues are almost 33,000 times older than creation scientists do!

## REJECTING ACCOUNTABILITY DOESN'T WORK

Evolutionists are willing to believe something extraordinary rather than accept the thought that maybe God created the earth only 6,000 years ago and the Bible record of the flood is true and accurate. Why do they rule out God, even as they struggle to find other explanations? Well, if there is a God in heaven, then we are accountable to Him for what we do and how we live our lives. And they don't like that.

However, it also means that if we give our lives to Christ and ask his forgiveness for our sins, then we can have eternal life with Him in the earth made new!

Lenin asserted that there is nothing more abominable than religion, yet his decaying body is unmistakable evidence that soft tissue contained in dinosaur bones cannot be millions of years old. We can imagine that if we had lived under his Red Terror in Russia, he would have said to us, "You Christians will spread your religion over my dead body!" Indeed! 

## EXTRAORDINARY

COMEDY / DRAMA

2017 / 88 MINUTES

RATING: 6/10



If you're looking for a quiet Hallmark-ish film to watch with your spouse, the two of you all snuggled up on the couch, this might fill the bill. *Extraordinary* is based on the real-life story of Liberty University professor and ultra marathon runner David Horton. This is a fellow who runs not simply for hours, but for months, taking on challenges like a Mexico-to-Canada race (which puts a whole new meaning to "cross-country running").

When Horton's doctor says he needs knee replacement surgery and it'll put an end to his competitive running career, Horton still wants to do one last race. But unbeknownst to him, his wife Nancy has been busy planning a surprise vacation for the whole family, sure that her husband's knee pain (and recent heart surgery) will keep him home with them this summer.

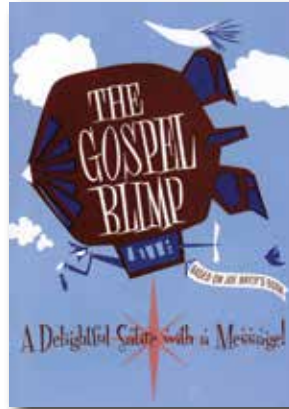
Horton is played by Leland Klassen, a gifted physical comedian, who brings a quirky charm to the role. Overall, *Extraordinary* is a lightweight comedic drama about a doofus husband who takes a while to get his priorities right but who figures it out in time for a happy ending for all. That's all it is, and on some evenings that's really all we're looking for. See it for free at [ReformedPerspective.ca](http://ReformedPerspective.ca).

## THE GOSPEL BLIMP

SATIRE / DRAMA

1967 / 38 MIN

RATING: 8/10



50 years later, this understated satire still ranks among the better Christian films ever made. It begins with a group of enthusiastic Christians having a barbeque in their backyard, discussing how they can evangelize the unconverted next-door neighbor. They know the conventional ways of doing it, but they're looking for something... special.

As they're relaxing, sitting back in their lawn chairs, a blimp flies overhead, and that's when it hits them – that's what they need to do! Buy a blimp so they can fly it over the neighbor's house, and over the entire town, and throw down gospel tracks. What a brilliant plan! That they miss the obvious alternative is only part of the film's point, but it's this satiric take that makes this both cutting and memorable. Their plans just keep getting bigger and bigger!

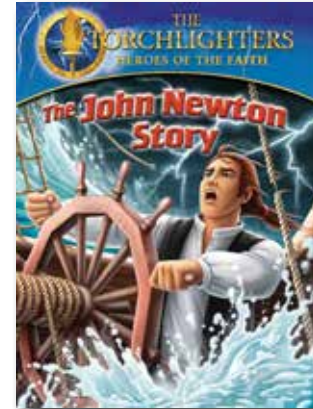
What allows this to be just as engaging five decades later is its still relevant point – that we make evangelism harder than it needs to be. It would be a great short film to share with any group of Christian friends and then talk about afterward – it offers lots of fodder for discussion. Watch it for free at [ReformedPerspective.ca](http://ReformedPerspective.ca).

## THE JOHN NEWTON STORY

ANIMATED / DRAMA

2021 / 30 MINUTES

RATING: 7/10



When an anti-slavery bill is brought to the British Parliament, an MP goes to old John Newton (the author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*) to ask him to speak out on the issue. In response, Newton shares his dark history. As a young sailor his talk was so salty the other sailors complained. And when he did turn to God, it took years for him to completely reform: he stayed in the slave trade, captaining two slave ships.

This is why the MP has come to Newton: since Newton captained the ships as a Christian, the MP thinks he can convince Newton to speak out in favor of slavery. Newton will not, and realizes he must now, finally, begin to speak against it.

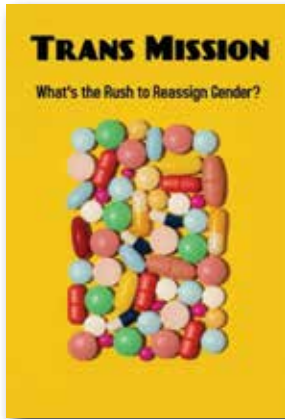
The brightly-colored animation might have parents thinking this is all-ages viewing, but the topic matter means it is not. The toughest scene is at the start, where we're shown a happy African village overrun by slavers killing and stealing. It's muted violence and brief, lasting only a couple of minutes. Parents can watch it to gauge whether their children will be able to handle the rest.

Watch for free at [RedeemTV.com](http://RedeemTV.com) (you will have to sign up for a free account).



## TRANS MISSION

DOCUMENTARY  
2021 / 52 MINUTES  
RATING: 7/10



Here's the secular case against the "transitioning" of children – the chemical and surgical alterations of children done in an attempt to make them seem more like the sex they are not. To make that case the documentary:

1. highlights the irreversible damage that is done to children (and adults) when they are put on puberty blockers
2. challenges the supposed mental health benefits of "gender transitioning"

*Trans Mission* provides many different examples of problems with "transitioning," all of which are evidences Christians can use to argue that it is God, and not Man, Who decides our sex. The weakness with this documentary is that it has no such biblical foundation. They don't object to "transitioning," but simply to children doing so, because they are not mature enough to know all the implications.

That is a good point. But what's the counter to some people regretting the choice they made as a child? Wouldn't it be others who have the equal and opposite regret? There *are* those who regret not having "transitioned" earlier. So if this were only one regret vs. another, how would we decide whose regrets should prevail?

What the World desperately needs to know is that God made us male and female (Gen. 1:27), and that rejecting that Truth will never lead to peace.



## RAISED ON PORN: THE NEW SEX ED

DOCUMENTARY  
2021 / 37 MINUTES  
RATING: 8/10

This is not pleasant to watch, and for parents, it might be downright scary. But the story it tells is one we all need to know. As Jean Kilbourne says in the film, "The Internet has made porn not only accessible, it's really made it inescapable." What that's meant for today's teens and preteens is that they're turning to online pornography for their "sex ed."

The terrifying part of this is that it isn't just what *you* teach your children and when you allow them access to the Internet and smartphones, but also what kind of access their friends have, and what kind of videos those friends have been watching. Another expert, Gail Dines, explains, violent porn is now the norm.

*Raised on Porn* includes interviews with men who were first caught up in porn as children, when they weren't seeking it out, and didn't understand where porn would take them. One went to jail, another nearly destroyed his marriage, going from porn to tracking down a prostitute. We also hear from leading psychologists and neurologists telling us what porn does to the brain. We hear from addiction therapists who have seen the demand for their services skyrocket.

### CAUTIONS

This takes God's name in vain at least once, and while I don't normally recommend films that take God's name in vain, this exception is because of how important this could be for parents.

There is no nudity, but there are brief flashes of vulgar video titles, and a few brief video clips of clothed men and women, which have been taken from violent porn videos. Nothing explicit is shown but it is still disturbing. They flash by quickly, but this is not for children's eyes, and may also be troublesome for some adults to see (1 Cor. 10:12).

A different sort of caution: what's presented here is a secular argument, entirely free of any mention of God and His views on sexuality. The argument it is making is *against* what the culture is doing, but nowhere are we told what we should be *for*. What's missing is a presentation of God's intention for sex. Because God is left out, what's also missing is hope. We meet addicts who have left porn behind, but we're not told exactly how that happened. We can presume it involved some of the therapists featured. But what can parents do to help their children steer clear?

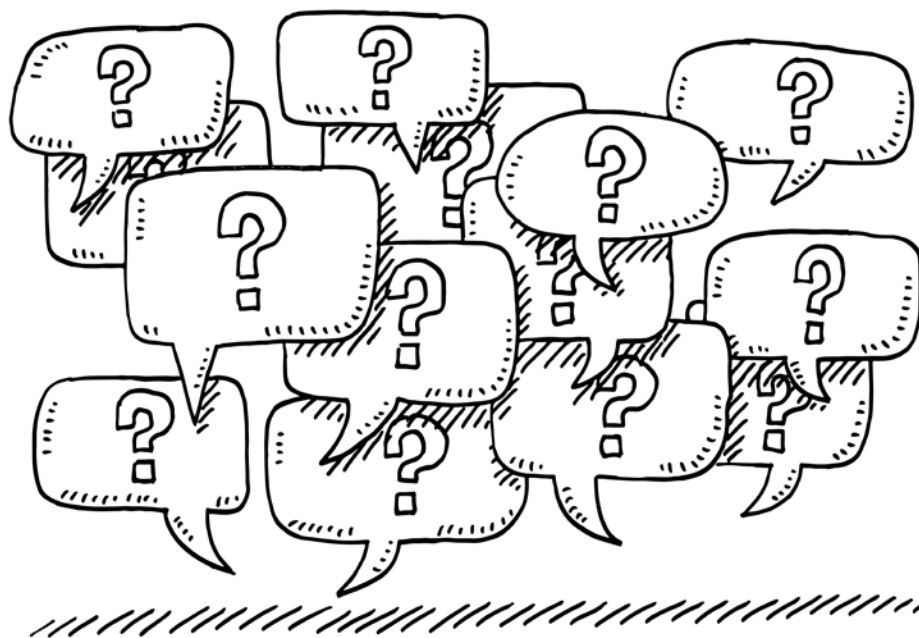
To supplement this film, parents can further educate themselves at [ProtectYoungMinds.org](https://ProtectYoungMinds.org) and the Christian organization [CovenantEyes.com](https://CovenantEyes.com) which has monitoring software for a fee, and some incredible resources for free, including fantastic e-books. A specifically Reformed, though not free, resource can be found at [SetFreeCourse.com](https://SetFreeCourse.com).

### CONCLUSION

With the prevalence of smartphones, it would be crazy for us to think our children will never see any of this violent pornography. The danger this poses to our boys is how it can enslave them and how the Devil can use that addiction to undermine their service to God in the future too. Girls aren't immune either, and also face the danger of what this pornography can make the young men in their lives expect of them. So who should watch this? Parents, and after they watch it on their own, they can consider whether they should watch it again with their older teens. We *need* to talk about this with our children, one way or another. Watch it for free at [ReformedPerspective.ca](https://ReformedPerspective.ca).

# How To Refute Skepticism

by John Byl



*Romans 1:18-32 explains that God's creation proclaims His existence, as well as our guilt, such that everyone is left "without excuse."*

*Yet rebellious man wants some sort of excuse. So one that he offers is that our sense can be fooled, and our thinking too, so – these extreme skeptics propose – can we really know anything at all? And if we can't know anything, how can we be held accountable? But, as John Byl explains in this excerpt from his book "The Divine Challenge," such skepticism is self-defeating.*

Skepticism about human ability to acquire knowledge is as old as philosophy. The Greek philosopher Pyrrho (circa 360-270 BC), who had been in the army of Alexander the Great, taught skepticism regarding the senses, logic, and morals. He affirmed that there were no rational grounds for preferring one belief above another. Hence one should renounce all claims to knowledge.

A somewhat more recent advocate of skepticism was the philosopher David Hume (1711-1776). Hume believed that all our knowledge derives from sense impressions. Consequently, he denied the validity of all abstract ideas, including notions of causation, the external world, and even the self.

Skepticism is appealing to the intellectually lazy for, if all knowledge is reduced to the status of mere opinion, the ignorant is as wise as the learned scholar.

## 1. TEST THE ASSUMPTIONS

How would one refute skepticism?

Any worldview consists of various presuppositions, accepted on faith, and their logical consequences. One might start, therefore, by analyzing, one by one, each of the skeptic's premises as to its plausibility.

Take, for example, Hume's assumption that our minds consist entirely of a succession of perceptions, without any trace of intellectuality. This presupposition alone already leaves no room for any thinking *about* our perceptions or how they are linked. Once one adopts a more comprehensive view of mind, Hume's skeptical conclusions no longer follow.

Often, however, the initial errors are small and not easily discerned. It is only later, after a long train of thought, that they produce significant consequences. As Aristotle noted in *De Caelo* (*On the Heavens*),

The least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousand-fold...that which was small at the start turns out a giant at the end.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. TRY OUT THE SYSTEM

This suggests a second, more indirect approach. Instead of examining presuppositions individually, we can examine them together, as a unit. One way we can test the plausibility of a set of presuppositions is to examine the reasonableness of the conclusions that they entail. In any logically valid argument, the conclusion follows from the premises. One must then either accept the conclusion or reject the premises. To make a rational choice, one must ask: what is more plausible, that the premises are true or that the conclusion is false?

Often, of course, our comparison of plausibility is itself rather subjective, colored by our worldview. Sometimes, however, the conclusions are so strongly contrary to common sense that the choice should be clear. In that case, we have a *reductio ad absurdum* of the premises.

Consider, for example, George E. Moore's refutation of Hume's skepticism:

It seems to me that, in fact, there really is no stronger and better argument than the following. I do know that this pencil exists; but I could not know this, if Hume's principles were true; therefore, Hume's principles, one or both of them, are false. I think this argument really is as strong and good a one as any that could be used: and I think it really is

conclusive. In other words, I think that the fact that, if Hume's principles were true, I could not know of the existence of this pencil, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of those principles.<sup>2</sup>

Moore argues that, since it is more certain that his pencil exists than that Hume's premises are true, Hume's set of premises must therefore be rejected as false.

Moore's argument is like that of Aristotle, in *Physica*, who met the skepticism of his day with the reply:

That nature exists it would be absurd to try to prove, for it is obvious that there are many things of this kind and to prove what is obvious by what is not is the mark of a man who is unable to distinguish what is self-evident from what is not.<sup>3</sup>

In brief, if the falsity of the conclusion is more plausible than the truthfulness of the premises, then it is rational to reject the premises. This is particularly the case if

the conclusions deny that which is directly evident to our senses. After all, worldviews are supposed to *explain* our observations. If any theoretical explanation is at odds with our personal experiences, then it is clearly the explanation, rather than our experience, that will have to be revised. The advantage of this method of refutation is that one need not pinpoint exactly where the initial error occurred.

### 3. IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE OUT

Hume's skepticism fails also the test of livability. Consider, for example, Hume's own writings on skepticism. Surely Hume, by writing and publishing arguments for skepticism, expected others to read and comprehend them. This, in turn, assumes the existence of an external world consisting of at least paper with symbols on it, as well as other minds to whom the symbols on the paper are directed. It assumes further that, in reading Hume's book, the senses of other people will reliably transmit to the mind what is written down. Hence Hume's written defense of skepti-

cism is self-refuting. Hume's book itself refutes the theory of mind it contains.

Indeed, Hume confessed his own inability to consistently maintain his skepticism:

The great subverter of Pyrrhonism or the excessive principles of skepticism is action, and employment, and the occupations of the common life. These principles may flourish and triumph in the schools; where it is, indeed, difficult if not impossible to refute them. But as soon as they leave the shade, and by the presence of the real objects, which actuate our passions and sentiments, are put in opposition to the more powerful principles of our nature, they vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined sceptic in the same condition as other mortals....

Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all

MY NOSE  
WILL GROW  
NOW!



Like the statement above, extreme skepticism is self-contradictory and nonsensical.



## THE DIVINE CHALLENGE: ON MATTER, MIND, MATH & MEANING

BY JOHN BYL  
2021 / 421 PAGES



Christians believe the world, the universe, and everything came about by Supernatural means – our God created! Those that deny the existence of God say that the universe came about only by natural processes – mere physics and chemistry, over eons of time. Is this a debate to explain why there is something, rather than nothing? No, says John Byl, the real question is “Who will rule: God or Man?” And in the world’s attempts to usurp God, they’ve crafted many a worldview to try to explain things apart from Him.

In his brilliant apologetic work *The Divine Challenge*, Dr. Byl shares the world’s best godless worldviews. He shows, often in the proponents’ own words, how their explanations are self-contradictory or simply fail to explain what they set out to explain. Naturalism says there is nothing outside of nature, and materialism that there is nothing outside matter, so how can either explain how matter came to be, or the non-material world of math and meaning? Byl also makes evident how very often these godless philosophers understand the emptiness of their best answers, and yet cling to them anyway because they hate the alternative: bowing their knee to God.

This is a book that will stretch most readers, and in some parts (Chapter 14 was a doozy!) I only got the gist of it. But what an encouraging gist it was! While the 2004 paperback edition is still available, Dr. Byl has made his 2021 revision a free e-book you can download at his site: [bylogos.blogspot.com](http://bylogos.blogspot.com).

– JON DYKSTRA

his doubts and scruples.... When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself, and to confess that all his objections are mere amusement....<sup>4</sup>

Hume’s failure to integrate skepticism into his daily life is itself the practical refutation of skepticism. Deeds, not words, are the most telling indicator of a philosopher’s deepest convictions.

Hume conceded that “custom...is the great guide of human life.”<sup>5</sup> Only Hume’s habits of mind enabled him to accept such things as, for example, the principle of causality whereby he could successfully navigate life. However, he was unable to give these a rigorous philosophical grounding in terms of his empirical presuppositions. Hume’s skeptical worldview failed to adequately account for the reliability of such common-sense knowledge.

The dilemma of relativism is that it asserts a non-relative claim, which inevitably leads to its self-refutation. As Thomas Nagel notes:

The claim “everything is subjective” must be nonsense, for it would itself have to be either subjective or objective. But it cannot be objective, since in that case it would be false. And it cannot be subjective, because then it cannot rule out any objective claim, including the claim that it is objectively false.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the skeptical claim “there is no objective truth” is itself a truth claim, contradicting itself.

If relativists were consistent with their professed beliefs, then they would have to remain silent. Skepticism renders philosophical discourse null and void. Hume concluded his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* with the following advice on how to choose books:

Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity and number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately for Hume, this severe standard dooms his own works to ashes.

In sum, a worldview may be assessed directly, by examining the plausibility of its presuppositions, or indirectly, by considering the consequences of its set of presuppositions. It is irrational to accept a worldview whose consequences are less plausible than the denial of one or more of that worldview’s presuppositions.

Extreme forms of skepticism or relativism cannot be rationally defended. Any viable worldview must allow for (and justify), at least to some extent, objective logic and language, as well as other factors that are presumed in normal intellectual discourse. The relativist may claim that he is not concerned with rationality or consistency. He may prefer to live inconsistently rather than opt for another worldview. However, this amounts to giving up on explaining reality and resigning oneself to superficiality. RP

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Aristotle. 1952. *The Works of Aristotle Vol.I. [Great Books of the Western World Vol.8]*. Robert M. Hutchins (ed.). Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, p. 362.
- 2 Moore, George E. 1953. *Some Main Problems in Philosophy*. New York: Collier, pp. 119-120.
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- 4 Hume, David 1777. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. La Salle: Open Court (1958 reprint), pp. 177-179.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 6 Nagel, Thomas. 1997. *The Last Word*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 15.
- 7 Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

*This is an excerpt from Dr. John Byl’s apologetic classic “The Divine Challenge: on Matter, Mind, Math & Meaning” which he’s just updated, and made freely available via his website [bylogos.blogspot.com](http://bylogos.blogspot.com). It is reprinted here with the author’s permission.*

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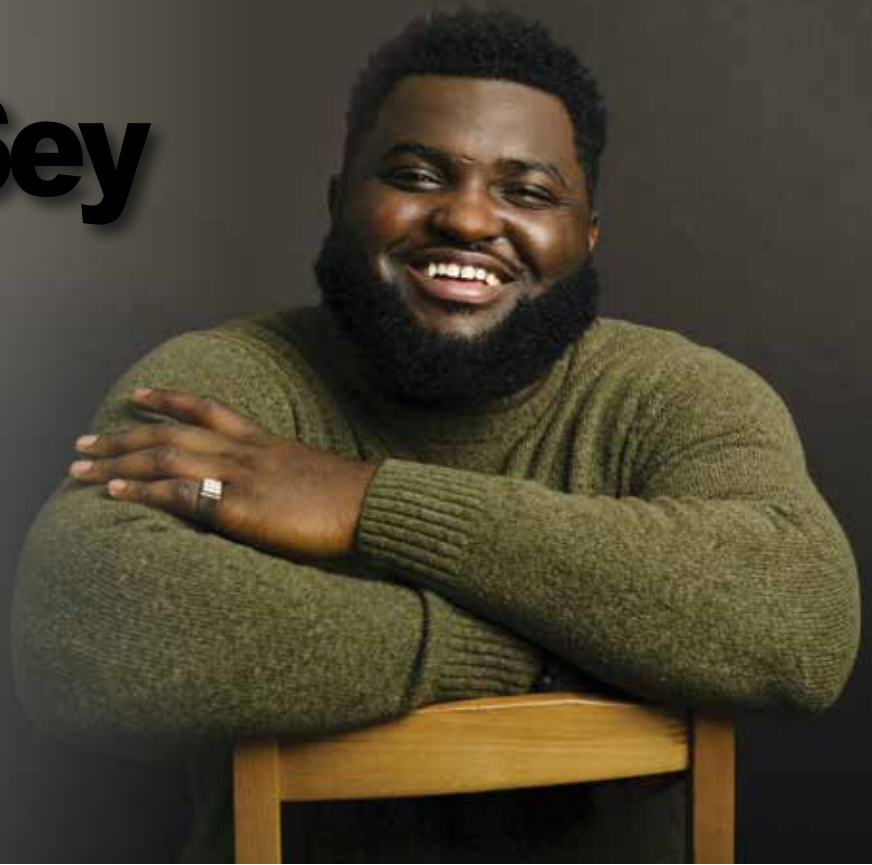


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# Samuel Sey On Critical Race Theory



*This is an edited excerpt from Lucas Holtvlüwer and Tyler Vanderwoude's Real Talk podcast, Episode 43, where they discuss Critical Race Theory with Samuel Sey of SlowToWrite.com. Real Talk is a podcast of Reformed Perspective featuring great conversations on everything from propaganda to mental health, and with all sorts of guests including Tim Challies, Arnold Viersen, and Jonathon Van Maren. If you haven't checked it out already, you really should. And you really can, at [www.RealTalkPodcast.ca!](http://www.RealTalkPodcast.ca!)*

**Lucas Holtvlüwer:** Define Critical Race Theory (CRT) for our listeners and maybe give a couple of examples of where it's infiltrated our society.

**Samuel Sey:** Critical Race Theory is very complex, intentionally. Many people call it Marxist, and some Critical Race theorists would deny that but it really is a version of Marxism, a newer version of Marxism. So, I'll explain Marxism first in a very brief way.

Marxism, basically, is the idea that there is an essential conflict between groups in society, and these groups are the *bourgeoisie*, or you would say the privileged class of rich people, versus the *proletariat*, being the poor lower class. That's the idea.

There's a book called *From Class to Race*, by one of the founders of Critical Race Theory, Charles W. Mills. What he says is, Karl Marx was right that there is a conflict in society, a conflict that has been plaguing

society from the very beginning and is still ongoing today, until there is a revolution. This author says Marx was right about there being a conflict but what he was wrong about is what the conflict was really about.

Marx said it was an economic or class struggle. Critical Race Theory says, it's a racial struggle – it's really between white people and black, white people versus non-white people. That is really what Critical Race Theory is about.

And it also says, in very post-modern thinking, is that Western society, especially Canada, is built by white people for white people. So even the values that we think are impartial – things like freedom, rights, impartiality, our legal system, our schools, our government, our churches, all the things we think are impartial – they're designed by white people for white people, as a way to marginalize and oppress non-white people. That's what Critical Race

Theory is, in a very general, brief way.

The implication is that white people – unless they are fighting against the systems and the culture – are racist. If you want to abolish the system, then you are anti-racist; if you're not for revolution, then you are a racist by nature.

In terms of examples, I don't know if you guys know about this, but last year around Black History Month, I was invited to a school in Alberta to speak about racism. But, I guess they didn't Google me. They did not read any of my articles, so they thought, I guess, that I was going to be teaching Critical Race Theory. They didn't know that I was going to be actually speaking against Critical Race views.

**Tyler Vanderwoude:** Oops!

**Samuel Sey:** That's a big oops indeed. I was actually fairly tame. I didn't want to shock them. The title of the speech was "What



is racism?” and I was defining racism biblically as partiality (Acts 10:34-35, Gal. 3:28, Lev. 19:15). Racism is simply partiality against someone because of their skin color. Or to use a more broad definition, racism is bias against anyone because of their skin color, therefore you can be racist against black people, white people, Asian people, brown people, indigenous people, it doesn't matter.

Then I said – and this is a key part that became controversial – if racism means partiality, then systemic racism means systemic partiality. What that means is if someone claims Canada is systemically racist then they need to identify a policy or a law from the government that shows partiality or a bias against black people. Systematic racism is shown, not by outcomes, not by disparities but by clear favoritism against black people. I asked if they could find a single such law or policy in Canada. They could not find a single one. So that was it. I leave. Then a few weeks later the school wrote a public letter denouncing me for denigrating students, for denying racism, for sharing racist views, essentially calling me a racist. Now the one thing they didn't do was mention my name. Everyone knew who they were talking about – people from the talk at the school knew they were referring to me. But I guess if they mentioned my name, someone would google me and they would realize that, wait a minute, this guy's black! Which probably doesn't jive with what they're saying.

That's one example where, by simply defining racism through biblical theology, they deem that I'm racist because I am protecting the white supremacist definition, in their mind, of racism.

Another example: I think it was in the Durham region here in Ontario you had the school board [Editor's note: it was a local bargaining unit of the teacher's union] giving non-white teachers more weight in their votes, because they believe that non-white people are oppressed and are marginalized in society. They, therefore, need to compensate for that by making their votes count more than the white person, which is, of course, racism.

But that's an example of Critical Race Theory.

There's many more. The federal government has given – I'm forgetting what they call this project – but there's a project from the federal government that gives black businesses more funding because they're black. Because, again, they live in a racist society, they have more barriers, therefore they need more help from the government.

**Lucas Holtvliwer:** The tricky part about Critical Race Theory is that, perhaps there are grains of truth to some of the claims. There has been, obviously, discrimination in the past, there are disparities today, and people find themselves in different situations. And often you can categorize that, generally speaking, certain demographic groups based on race are in better or worse positions, financially speaking. So, I guess what I would ask is, is Critical Race Theory just a tool that people can use to look at the world and sort through disparities and figure out why disparities exist, or is there more of a theological, more of a worldview at play behind it?

**Samuel Sey:** Critical Race theorists claim it is “just a tool,” or what they call an analytic tool. But I think they're not being honest. I also don't mind them calling it that.

It clearly is a worldview – they see Western society, or Canada, or white people, as being a certain way. They have a definition for what is injustice or what is just. They're not simply analyzing things. They are claiming good and evil, righteous and evil. They have a theological view as to what is right or wrong, what should be punished and what shouldn't be. Through that worldview, they analyze the world. That is true for every worldview – every worldview is analytical by nature. So yes, they analyze things, but fundamentally CRT is a theology.

They have, what I like to call, their own past and future. We say that through Adam all humanity became sinners. We know that there's no distinction between Jew or Greek, or black or white; we are all fallen people. The problem is Critical Race theorists would essentially say white people, since they have more power, are more evil or more “sinful” than non-white

people. That's why they oftentimes say only white people can be racist, because white people have power and other people don't. So they have a different theological understanding of sin.

And they also have their own future, in the sense that they have their own heaven which is really a socialist or communist utopia. The key word in Critical Race Theory is “equity.” They really believe that we can have equity, which basically means “equality of outcome” – that you can have all non-white people and all white people having an equal outcome. According to the most prominent political race theory scholar today, Ibram X. Kendi, the only way – and he's kind of right about this – to produce equity is to discriminate. He actually says this very openly. He says that the remedy for past discrimination is present or future discrimination. That's also because in his book *How To Be An Anti-racist* – which I call *How To Be A Racist* because the book is all about racism – he says that racial discrimination is only wrong if it leads to inequity, but it's good if it leads to equity. That means it's okay to be racist against white people, it's okay to discriminate against a white person if it will lead to equality of outcome between all people. So it's okay to bring white people down so that you can make them equal with all groups.

It never works out that way, of course. There are always going to be people who have more power than others. But just like communists, now and in the past, Critical Race theorists will be the ones on top and everybody else, including black people will be at the bottom.

**Lucas Holtvliwer:** I think the one topic that trips up a lot of folks, especially white folks, is this idea of “white privilege” because I feel like there is some truth to it. There are differences in outcomes, more so, certainly, in America, but still as you pointed out in previous interviews, also in Canada there is quite the disparity. Can you talk to folks about what this idea of white privilege is, how they can understand it, if there's some truth there, how to navigate the truth, and separate out the truth from the Critical Race Theory

**Samuel Sey:** ....White Canadians generally are more wealthy than black Canadians. As to the reason why, I wrote an article, maybe three years ago now, addressing this topic. I compared the numbers in America, the UK, and Canada when it comes to the disparities between white people and black people in these three nations.

My point is this: these three nations have very different histories concerning slavery segregation and racism. All three nations have experienced racism against black people, for sure, throughout their history, but all three nations have very varying degrees of this racism.

And yet the numbers comparing white people and black people in these nations are very similar when it comes to wealth, crime, education, and basically everything else.

My point is, if we would claim the reason for this is because of the legacy of slavery or racism, how can you make that claim when, again, you have identical outcomes but with very different histories. It makes no sense.

My explanation – which is proven because this is the common denominator between all three nations – is fatherlessness. I grew up without a dad in the home so I know this personally. Long story short, my father left my mom before I was born. It meant that since my father wasn't home my mom was never home either because she had to work two jobs. When she was working two jobs I had no one teaching me discipline, therefore I became a very violent kid. I was in 25 fights before I became a Christian at 19. When I said 25 fights I mean 25 fistfights. ....My mom is an incredible mother but it's very hard to take care of a child when you are the only parent in the home.

I mention that because single parenthood is the norm for a lot of black people. Here is the issue: in America 75% of black children are raised in a household with no father. 75%. The number for white people it's 25%. That's a 50% gap.

That is the real issue there, when it comes to disparities. It is a known

fact that children raised without their fathers in the home leads to more crime, more sexual activity, poorer education, poor discipline, which creates, of course, a lot of the disparities that we already know. In Canada the numbers are pretty similar as well. That is the issue that no one talks about when it comes to white privilege.

So if someone says to me there's white

privilege, I don't like that term because it's based on Critical Race Theory and I will reject it. But what I will say is this: if a white person is more privileged than a black person, generally it's because they have more access to their father which leads to more privilege and prosperity in the home and in culture. **RP**

*Picture graciously provided by Samuel Sey.*



**All about definitions:** If "white privilege" means favoring whites over blacks then we should end it. However, white privilege is regularly defined as: having an intact family, never wondering where your next meal is coming from, police presuming your innocence, living in a generally crime-free neighborhood, and having access to good schools. If that's what is meant, then talk of ending it for whites is counterproductive envy. Our goal shouldn't be to *end* the access anyone might have to blessings, but to seek to *extend* blessings to more and more.



# READER RESPONSE

## DEAR EDITOR,

In light of the lightning-fast passage of Bill C-4 through parliament and then the Senate you posed the question, "Aren't the Conservatives still our only option?" (see "Bill C-4: How the Conservatives did this to Canada" in the Dec/Nov 2021 issue).

My response is that the Conservatives should not have been a Christian option for quite some time. I left the Conservatives 12 years ago but did more than just leave, I became involved with the only real Christian option being the Christian Heritage Party of Canada (CHP Canada). I worked with like-minded Christians in the reopening of the CHP Canada Hamilton Mountain EDA, became President and have been the CHP Canada candidate for Hamilton Mountain in every election since then. 4 years later I also became the Ontario President of CHP Canada, all of this not because I needed something else to do but because I needed to do something else rather than support a party founded in being popular with the secular world.

In 2016 CHP Canada Hamilton Mountain took a public stance against males accessing public intimate female facilities by means of a bus shelter ad campaign which the City cancelled only 3 days into the 4-week contract. CHP Canada and our EDA then spent considerable effort and money to have the City's action scrutinized under the Judicial Review process which resulted in a 3-judge unanimous ruling in favor of political free speech.

In July of this year, CHP Canada intervened in a Judicial Review against the City of Guelph for their removal of pro-life bus ads with their stated grounds for their action being that the ads were misleading in inferring that a preborn child is a person and human. In neither of these expensive court actions did the Conservatives appear, although they have been marching in gay pride parades and recognising same-sex marriage and touting their "pro-choice" policy for many years.

CHP Canada is now in the early discussions stage of considering court action regarding the constitutionality of Bill C-4, again

AS: I agree. I'm not sure the Opposition members understand just what they've done. I am most concerned about the kids and other Canadians struggling with deep, existential questions about who they are, how they should live, and how to square their deep feelings and questions of identity with their spiritual commitments. This bill bans access to one set of answers. But the Conservatives also sold out on that heritage of freedom. Look, I'm a constitutional lawyer and I'm telling you, this bill trumps all over freedom of religion for pastoral counsellors, freedom of conscience for medical professionals, freedom of expression for preachers and teachers, freedom of association for communities of faith, and –

perhaps ironically – the equality rights of members of the LG-BTQ+ community.

JD: The what community? I always took a stand for an end to hyphenated Canadians. Have we replaced hyphens with acronym?

AS: Well, the LGBTQ+ community developed a little after your time, I guess. Anyway, for those who are gay or lesbian, or who are attracted to the same sex but want and choose to live according to their spiritual or religious convictions, they are prevented by the government (with the applause of the opposition) from accessing the kind of help and services that you or I would be able to access.

## Bill C-4: How the Conservatives did this to Canada

by Jon Dykstra

On November 29 the Liberals introduced a bill to ban conversion therapy. Under the pretense of protecting homosexuals from getting forcibly "converted" from their same-sex attraction, what the bill actually targeted was Christian pastors and counsellors and others who are willing to help those who want out of the homosexual lifestyle. As Jonathan Van Marren wrote:

"there were concerns that the deliberately broad definition proposed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals would ban pastoral conversations between clergy and their parishioners and leave adults with unwanted same-sex attraction unable to receive the counselling they desired. In fact, in some instances parents could be prevented from opposing sex changes for their own children."

This was actually the third time the Liberals had introduced such a bill, but the previous two had been derailed by the months-long process that it takes to get a bill approved. The previous attempt, then labeled Bill C-6, was introduced on September 23, 2020, and took nine months, until June 22, 2021, to pass through the committee hearings and the three readings required in the House of Commons. It was then given to the Senate for their own three-stage assessment process, but they didn't have a chance to pass it before the Prime Minister called an election on August 13. His election call meant that Bill C-6 (along with all the other bills not yet

passed) "died on the order paper."

Bill C-4 might have had to go through this same process, and in the months and even years that it could have taken, who knows but that it could have been derailed yet once more. But on Dec. 1 Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole told the media that his party was going to accelerate the passage of the government's bill. Later that same day Conservative MP Rob Moore put forward a motion to skip all the House committees and readings, and send the bill directly and immediately to the Senate. His motion required unanimous approval to pass – if a single MP had voiced a nay, the motion wouldn't have passed. How could the Conservatives have expected to get that unanimity when there had been 63 MPs willing to vote against Bill C-6 earlier this year? Of that number 62 were their own Conservative MPs. So why would they expect to have no opposition this time around?

Their confidence might have been, in part, due to the timing of their motion. Conservative MP Garnett Genuis was the most vocal opponent of the previous Bill C-6, launching the website "Fix the Definition" to put a face to the people this bill would harm. But on December 1, Genuis was out of the country, attending a NATO conference in Latvia.

The Conservative strategy also involved pulling a fast one on their own MPs – the motion was made and passed in approximately one minute. They were able

to do it so quickly because no one actually had to vote for the motion: the Speaker of the House only asked to hear from those opposed to it. When no one spoke up, it was passed.

While many of the Conservatives were clearly in on this maneuver – as evidenced by the wild clapping immediately afterward – any MPs unaware of what Rob Moore was about to do could have blinked and they would have missed it, it was over that fast. The CPAC coverage of the vote shows that some of the Conservatives were not clapping, and remained sitting and the most downcast of them might have been Arnold Viersen. In a post to his personal Facebook page five days later, he explained that:

"...it was a surprise that caught me and some of my colleagues off guard. I am opposed to C-4 in written and should have said no, but I did not react fast enough. I'm sorry."

His post's comments were filled with thanks for his apology. For almost two weeks it had been a mystery as to why a bill that criminalized the presentation of the Gospel would pass without any Christian MPs objecting. Now we had a partial explanation for the MPs' silence: this had been sprung on them.

Curiously, in the same post, Viersen suggested that: "Had we [the Conservatives] won the election we would not be in this situation."

Let's consider that for a moment. What if the Conservatives that just pulled this on us? We can be relieved that Garnett Genuis and Arnold Viersen have some

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pledged a "free vote" on this issue. A few good men and women seem to have been threatened by their fellow Conservatives to keep quiet.

sort of explanation or apology for why they didn't stand up against this bill, but the Conservative Party overall has no such excuse. Trudeau's Liberals introduced this bill, but it was O'Toole's Conservatives who accomplished what the Liberals never did: the Conservatives got it across the finish line.

It bears repeating just how wicked this bill is. As Jojo Ruba noted, while an earlier version of the bill at least "could not prevent consenting adults from having conversations about sexuality with their clergy or their counsellor, as long as the counselling was free" this latest version removed even that protection. That's what the Conservative Party has accomplished under O'Toole: they've made the compelling case that they are not the lesser of two evils.

So where are politically-minded Christians to turn? Aren't the Conservatives still our only option? They are, after all, the only major party to tolerate pro-life Christians. That's true enough, but as the passage of this law highlights, tolerating pro-life Christians is very different from siding with them. If Christians are to be involved in the Conservative Party, it cannot be to further the party's agenda. We cannot let them use us for their ends. If Christians are to continue in the Conservative Party then they have to do so with their eyes wide open, involving themselves in the party only to use it for our own, godly ends. If it becomes impossible to do that, then that should be the end of our involvement. Christians should have no loyalty to a party that has no loyalty to God, and, indeed, in this latest act, stands directly in opposition

But let's talk about the role of the Opposition in Parliament some more.

JD: "The Opposition that fulfills its functions makes as important

Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole





not because we need something to do but because we need to do something. How is it that Christians believe that the Conservative party is their only option; it seems that perhaps Israel got out of Egypt but Egypt never got out of the church.

JIM ENOS  
ONTARIO PRESIDENT  
THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE PARTY OF CANADA

#### DEAR EDITOR,

I wish to respond to your recent musings concerning the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC). In your article ("Bill C-4: How the Conservatives did this to Canada" Nov/Dec 2021) you suggest that a continued involvement with the CPC must be accompanied with "eyes wide open." I would contend that it is now very difficult and even impossible to contend that "open eyes" will yet result in support for the CPC. I believe we have come to the point that support for the CPC is no longer an appropriate conviction for the voting Christian.

As you write (and I am thankful for it) "Christians should have no loyalty to a party that has no loyalty to God, and, indeed, in this latest act, stands in direct opposition." Sadly, Bill C-4 enshrines into law a frontal attack against God's created order and His Holy Word and thus the character and person of God.

But, I must also add I was sadly disappointed that you made no mention in your reflections at this point of the Christian Heritage Party (CHP). For some years now the CHP has sought with its own limitations to stand for the Biblical principles that once, to some degree, defined our country. If we truly want a Christian voice in Canadian politics, the CHP is the place we should harness our efforts. It has become increasingly difficult to sing asking the Lord to "keep our land glorious and free." Our prayer must be that God will bless this land in such a way that He would once again make our land glorious and free. May the Lord use each one of us to that end.

Wishing you the Lord's continued blessings in your multiple labors.

REV. P.J. VELLENGA  
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