

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

MAY - JUNE 2023

Volume 42 Issue No. 3

\$5.62

# PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 40+ YEARS

## Elon Musk and visions of the future

P. 20

HOME OWNERSHIP FOR  
CHRISTIANS:

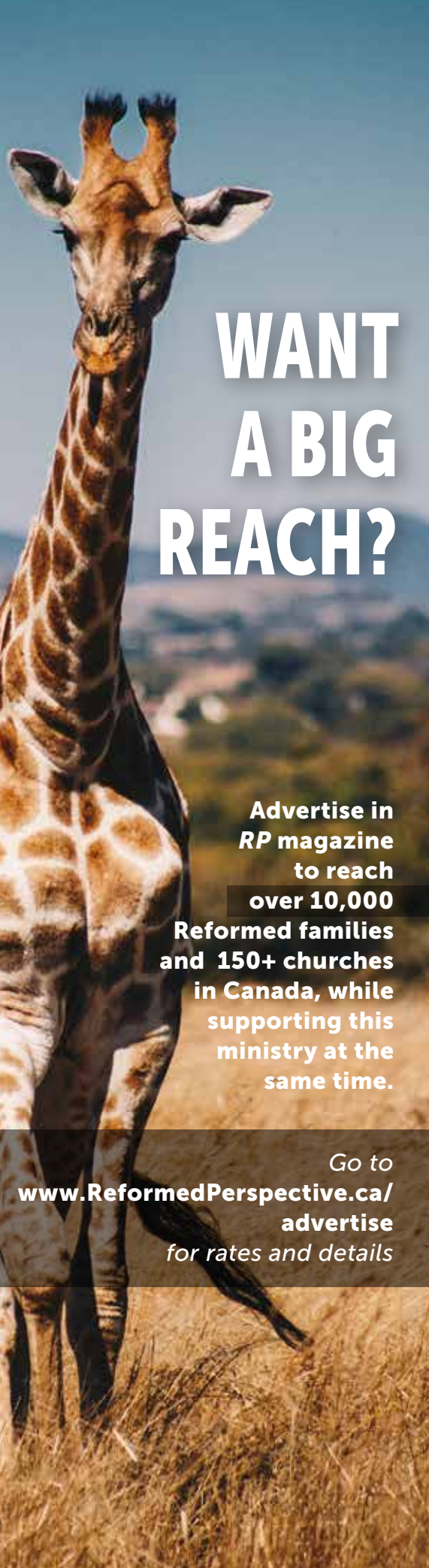
How it happened in  
the past and how  
it might now

P. 32

RANDY ALCORN  
ON INVESTING  
IN ETERNITY

P. 26





**WANT  
A BIG  
REACH?**

**Advertise in  
RP magazine  
to reach  
over 10,000  
Reformed families  
and 150+ churches  
in Canada, while  
supporting this  
ministry at the  
same time.**

Go to  
**[www.ReformedPerspective.ca/](http://www.ReformedPerspective.ca/)**  
**advertise**  
for rates and details

# Reformed **PERSPECTIVE**

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Published bimonthly by Reformed Perspective Foundation Inc.

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

Joanne DeRuiter - Reformed Perspective Administration,  
[admin@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:admin@reformedperspective.ca)  
PO Box 3609  
Smithers, BC, V0J 2N0  
250-643-8114 (Pacific time zone)

**For Letters to the Editor and submissions:** [editor@ReformedPerspective.ca](mailto:editor@ReformedPerspective.ca)

**Editorial Team:** Mark Penninga (Executive Director); Jon Dykstra (Editor);  
Marty VanDriel (Assistant Editor); Jan Broersma (Copy Editor)

**Board of Directors:** Bruce DeBoer (Chairman); Marty VanDriel; Mark Penninga  
(Executive Director); Rev. Jim Witteveen; Aubrey Vandergaag; Sharon de Boer;  
Lucas Holtvliwer

**Template Design:** Compass Creative Studio Inc. [compasscreative.ca](http://compasscreative.ca)

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

**Contact Address for Australia:**

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

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

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

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

**Registration:** ISSN 0714-8208

**Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act**

**Registration No.** 118929272RR0001

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:**

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

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

**Why the price tag on the front cover?**

Reformed Perspective is not sold in stores; it is, instead, distributed for free through churches to ten thousand Christians across Canada. So why the price tag? \$5.62 is the approximate cost for us to produce each magazine, including staffing, writers' fees, administration, printing, and shipping. We are able to distribute them at no cost because of the generous support of people like you, who give monthly or annually to RP. We are a registered Canadian charity. Donations to help cover our costs and expand our work can be made at [ReformedPerspective.ca/donate](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/donate).

Front cover picture credit: Picture credit:  
Shutterstock/wedePotato

CROSSWORD SOLUTION MAY-JUNE





# Elon Musk and visions of the future:

to face the future with enthusiasm

P. 20

by Harma-Mae Smit

P. 4 **Readers' Response**

P. 6 **FROM THE EDITOR**  
How to defend the unborn  
in under a minute  
– Jon Dykstra

P. 10 **NEWS IN PERSPECTIVE**

P. 16 **Reformed communities**  
stepping up to provide  
Safe Families  
– Mark Penninga

P. 18 **The Rhinoceros Party: Politics**  
has always been absurd, but  
30 years ago, even more so  
– James Dykstra

P. 20 **ELON MUSK AND VISIONS**  
**OF THE FUTURE: to face the**  
**future with enthusiasm**  
– Harma-Mae Smit

P. 26 **Investing in Eternity:**  
thinking 30 million years  
ahead  
– Randy Alcorn

P. 32 **HOME OWNERSHIP FOR**  
**CHRISTIANS - How it**  
**happened in the past,**  
**and how it might now**  
– Marty VanDriel

**A podcast review of**  
**"Two Stewards"** P. 33

**Can You Afford a Home?**  
– some practical suggestions  
P. 35

P. 39 **CROSSWORD PUZZLE**  
– Jeff Dykstra

P. 40 **IN A NUTSHELL**  
– Jon Dykstra

P. 42 **Rev. Alfred Sadd (1909-1942):**  
**A great man, and a faint shadow**  
– Christine Farenhorst

P. 44 **Big Bang Christianity? Can we**  
**fit the Big Bang into the Bible?**  
– John Byl

P. 48 **COME AND EXPLORE:**  
**With a seed named Joe**  
– Stephanie Vanderpol

P. 52 **Getting used to a new church**  
– Sharon Bratcher

P. 54 **Competing to shine**  
– Mark Penninga

P. 58 **"Good" vs. Good – Our political**  
**leaders think they know**  
**what's best for us. But by what**  
**standard are they judging**  
**what's good?**  
– Daniel Zekveld

P. 60 **BOOK REVIEWS:**  
**Great Christian fiction for adults**

P. 62 **Biographies that'll make you**  
**love biographies**  
– Jon Dykstra

P. 64 **Top 10 on RedeemTV.com**  
– Jon Dykstra

P. 67 **E.D. UPDATE**  
**Introducing "Manna – Daily**  
**Scripture Meditations"**  
– Mark Penninga

# READERS' RESPONSE

Our last issue on Canada's Indigenous peoples and the country's residential school system prompted a lot of feedback: most were short emails, just thanking us for tackling this underexplored topic, and a couple of teachers shared that they'd be using the issue for next year's First Nations unit. Several readers appreciated how the five authors provided five different, yet complimentary, angles.

And, in the spirit of iron sharpening iron (Prov. 27:17), several critiques were also offered. While none of them came as "letters to the editor," there were two points that were raised more than once, and so it seemed good to address both of them here.

## 1. WERE THEY ALL FORCED TO GO?

The first concern was with one particular line in Dr. Mark Slomp's article "A Call to Action: Loving our Indigenous Neighbors," where he wrote:

"Over 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families by the RCMP between the establishment of these schools in the 1870s and the closure of the last school in the mid-1990s."

If you've followed the newspaper and online coverage of the residential schools over the last decade then, in addition to accounts of physical and sexual abuse, you've also heard stories from former students who were grateful for the education they received there. So, the question was asked, is it accurate then, to say that "150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed"? After all, some of them went willingly.

In answer I'll make a couple points:

- The children were removed. As an RCMP statements puts it: "For more than a century, the Canadian government removed 150,000 Indigenous children from their families and communities to attend government-funded Residential Schools."
- The children were forced to go. While some wanted to go, they had no option but to. And if they didn't go, then the RCMP would show up and lay hands on them.

So, I think the original statement is fair. But I'll also say as editor I could have helped out here to ensure this sentence would be understood just one way, and not as if the RCMP showed up to every house. However, force, or the threat of it, was always involved, with some children hauled off, others going grudgingly but without police escort, and the rest going willingly, but with no choice to do otherwise.

## 2. WHY DIDN'T WE FOCUS MORE ON THE GOOD THAT HAPPENED?

Several readers told us that they wished we had said more about the positive things that did happen in the schools. There were also good teachers there who loved their students. Children were taught to read and write. Some learned skills they later used to succeed in business. And many heard about God for the first time.

Lots of good did happen, but

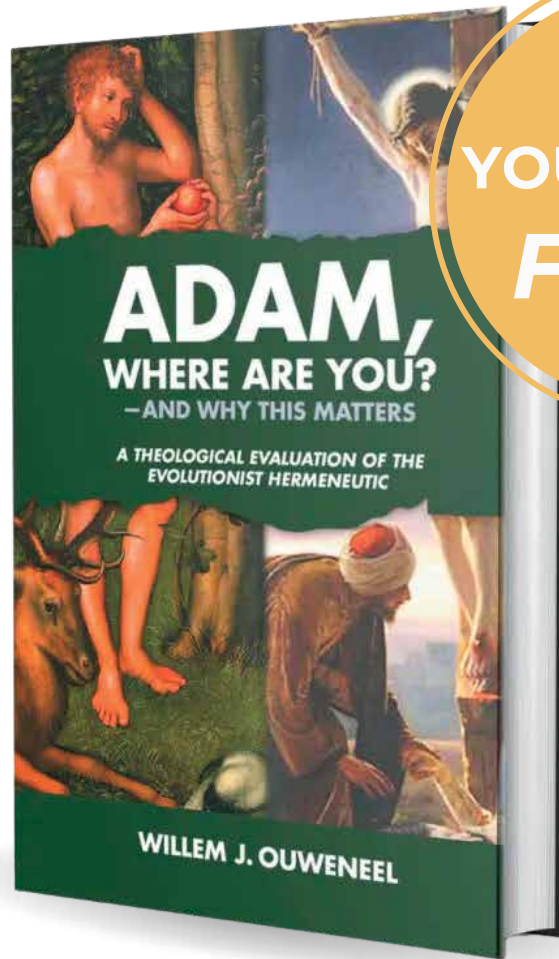
there is a reason the good stories don't get a lot of coverage. Just consider if a teacher today was accused of rape; we'd know better than to start sharing stories of how many kids he taught to do fractions, right? Highlighting the good in that kind of case would come off like we were trying to whitewash the harm.

But there is also a danger that comes with overlooking the good that happened. If we're going to prevent a similar abuse from happening again, we need to understand that a wicked school system isn't going to be staffed entirely by vile men wearing black hats. It won't be that obvious. In my editorial in that issue, I talked about how the government has never stopped using their schools to indoctrinate children. So why do so many Christians still send their kids? Why don't they see through it? *Because of the good that is also going on.* Sure, students are being taught to share their pronouns, but they're also taught their multiplication tables. They'll learn they're just evolved apes. But they'll also learn Shakespeare. So those worried that highlighting the good could be used to whitewash the bad have a legitimate concern; we can see that happening in the governmental schools right now.

But if we are going to see through the trickery then we need to know more, and not less, of our history. And we'll need to identify the bad guys, not by how they *seem*, but by how closely they align themselves with God and His Word. The residential schools were horrible at their core because they violated God's law by taking kids from their parents. Our public schools today are horrible because for six hours a day a child will be taught that God is irrelevant to everything from science to sex-ed. And no amount of incidental good can white out that kind of bad.

– Jon Dykstra





GET  
YOUR COPY  
**FREE\***

## THEISTIC EVOLUTION HAS BECOME A **FAITH** ISSUE

"From out of this [evolutionary] process there emerges a population of *hominids*... when these hominids have *evolved* to the point of exhibiting moral capabilities - our creating God "elects" this population *as his covenant people*." - James K.A. Smith

"To account for *evolution* we must see at least Genesis 1 as *non-literal*... Sometimes [the writers] wants to be taken literally, sometimes they don't." - Timothy Keller

Whatever theistic evolution was in the past, it has grown into a virulent attack upon the foundations of Christianity. Ouweneel brings home the extent to which the authoritative account of creation is being brought into question at reformed educational institutions.

*\*Average cost of shipping to various localities in North America is ~\$15.  
Use promo code **FREE** to get the book free, and pay only \$15 for shipping.  
Contact us at [info@paideiapress.ca](mailto:info@paideiapress.ca) for bulk orders.*

ORDER YOUR COPY AT **PAIDEIAPRESSORDERS.COM**

# HOW TO DEFEND THE UNBORN IN UNDER A MINUTE

by Jon Dykstra

I live in a town that's so pro-life that when I go outside wearing a pro-life t-shirt the only reaction I get is, "Hey Jon, great-looking shirt there. Does it come in red?"

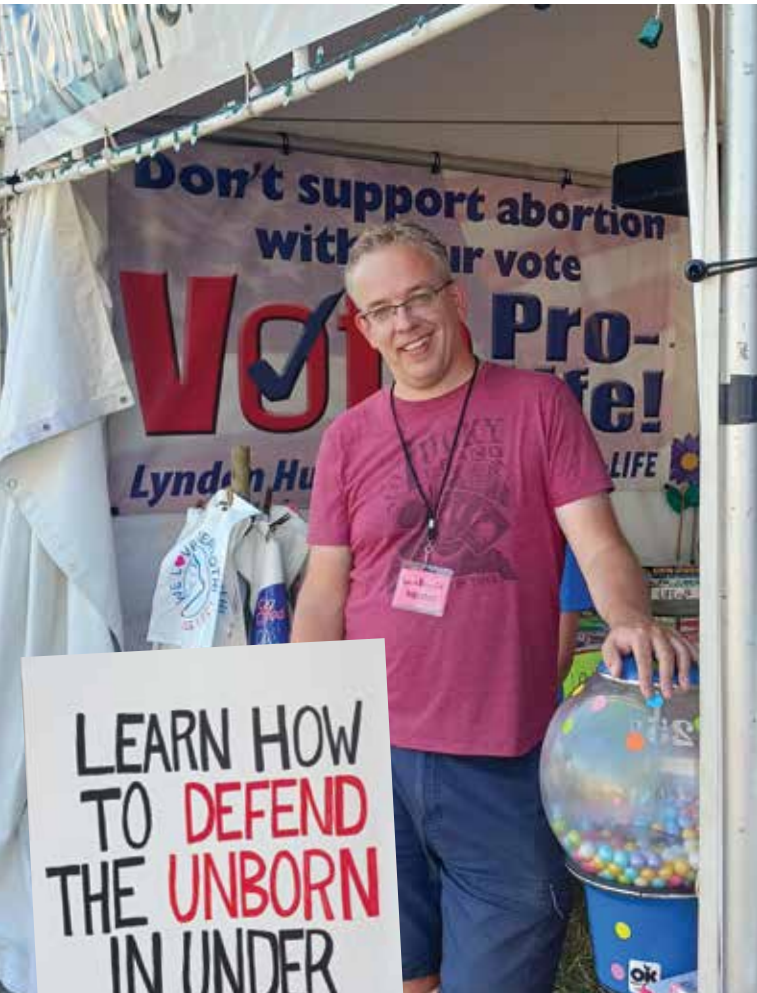
We're so pro-life that when pro-abortion politicians marched in this year's Farmer's Day Parade, there was all sorts of cheering and clapping for the float in front of them and the marching band behind them, but not a peep anywhere near them. They were enveloped in an angry bubble of silence.

Our town is so pro-life that when my daughters and I volunteer at the pro-life booth, we can count on thanks, not shouts. The booth is set up at the summer fair each year, and most everyone stopping by is there to offer encouragement. They bring their kids to get free pro-life lollipops and pencils. Some buy yard signs or hats. The most popular items are our life-size fetal models showing what the unborn look like at 6 months, and 4 months, and 12 weeks; it's always fun when a pregnant mom comes by to show her kids what size their baby brother or sister is right now.

In the half dozen years we've been at this, I've only had a dozen or so folk either insult or argue with me. This, then, is more about preaching to the choir than reaching the opposition.

## EQUIPPING THE CHOIR

That's why this year I decided to switch things up a bit. If it was always



My girls ready to share the age of each of the fetal models.

the choir stopping by, then what if we focused on equipping them? What if we tried to give them a quick “Pro-life 101” refresher, so they could walk away better able to speak up for the unborn?

Of course, everyone at the fair is there for the rides and the food and the demolition derby, so it isn’t really the time and place for a class in apologetics. If I was going to pitch something educational, it needed to be quick. My daughters helped me out with a big poster that made an even bigger promise:

“Learn how to defend the unborn in under a minute!”

The sign was eye-catching, and thankfully ambiguous enough to give me a little wiggle room on the time limit. Was a I promising passersby a 59-second lesson or was I going to show them – in perhaps a slightly longer length of time – how they themselves could offer up a sub-minute defense of the unborn? The fudge factor allowed me to go a little long if I needed it.

## THE SHORT VERSION

A lightning-quick defense of the unborn is possible because most abortion arguments focus on one thing: what the unborn can’t do. The fetus is said to be less valuable and less deserving of protection than you or me because:

- they can’t breathe yet
- they don’t have brainwaves yet
- they aren’t self-aware yet
- they can’t survive on their own
- etc.

Whatever the reason given, it amounts to an abilities test – the unborn are said to

*...the unborn are said to be worth less, because they can do less.*

be *worth* less, because they can *do* less.

Therefore to defend the unborn all we have to do is show how it isn’t our abilities that give us value. We can do that by asking a couple of key questions. We’ll need our opponents to explain:

1. Where does human beings’ worth come from?
2. On what basis are we all equal?

## UNPACKING THE ARGUMENT

If our value comes from what we can *do* then that presents a problem for equality, since we all have very different abilities. I’m bigger than most, and maybe you’re faster than me, and that fellow over there might be smarter than both of us. So, then, in what sense are any of us equal? It’s quite the conundrum for the abortion supporter. Any ability-based answers he gives to the first question will run him into problems with the second.

After all, we all understand that we don’t treat very different things as equal – a Rembrandt is housed in a museum under guard, while a child’s fingerpainting will only rate the fridge door, even though both are art. So unless men and women *are* actually equal in some sense, then we shouldn’t treat them as equal. That’s a thought no one wants to think, so we can be aggressive in pressing the abortion defender to explain how we’re equal.

When he’s fumbling about, it’s our chance and our turn: “You can’t explain where equality comes from, but I can.”

We can explain that what makes us all valuable, and equally so, is the only thing we all equally share: that we are made in the very Image of God (see Gen. 1:27). Being made in the Image of God isn’t something we grow into, or get more of, and it isn’t even something we can cast off (Gen. 9:6). We have it, not on the basis of anything we can do, might do, or should do, but on the basis of Who made us, and how He values us. This is not only an explanation for why a small weaker woman is equal to a stronger bigger man, but why the very small and very weak unborn child is equal to any and all.

## WHAT’S INSIDE

We’ve got a couple feature articles this issue, with the first on Elon Musk and his plans for the future. In a world gone pessimistic, that he has future plans at all makes him stand out. However as Harma-Mae Smit highlights, his plans have their own pessimistic edge. In that sense he is another faux-Savior, and the folks turning to him for inspiration really need us to introduce them to Jesus Himself.

Marty VanDriel contributes our other feature, a look at the rising cost of housing, and what we as families and church communities can do to help the next generation. This is a pressing issue for many young families, so we hope this will get the ideas flowing.

We’d also like to introduce you to another member of our team. Jan Broersma has worked as a writer and editor for several organizations, including School Specialty and Historica Canada. She loves good writing and making good writing better, and has been doing so for a few issues already. Jan lives on the beautiful West Coast of BC with her husband and their three children. We are very grateful for her contributions to date, and look forward to relying on her talents even more. – JD



## STAND ON GOD'S WORD

While our opponent might dismiss the Bible, that doesn't make it any less powerful (Heb. 4:12, Eph. 6:17). And we can counter their dismissal by challenging them to offer any sort of better explanation. They don't have one!

More importantly, when God says His Word won't return empty we need to trust that it's so (Is. 55:11). Too often Christians will try to defend the Christian position without presenting it *as* the Christian position. If our opponents are attacking the unborn for what they can't do, then we'll try to defend the unborn with an equally godless argument, highlighting all that they *can* do. Instead of arguments about being made in the Image of God, we'll show how very much the unborn seem to be crafted in the image of Man:

- The unborn's heart is beating at three weeks
- Brainwaves can be detected at 40 days
- They may be able to survive outside the womb at 20 weeks
- They can recognize their mother's voice at 7 months

The problem with any of these points is that, on their own and apart from the Bible, they are only another abilities test. We're saying that the unborn are valuable because of all these things they can do. But that's *the pro-choice argument!* If we argue that the unborn are valuable because their heart begins beating as early as three weeks, what does that implicitly say about the unborn at two weeks, before their heart-beat has begun? Any defense of the baby based on what it can do throws shade on babies who have yet to develop those abilities. We either stand securely on God's Word, or we will, accidentally but most certainly, end up adopting the very position that we oppose: that our worth comes from what we can do.

## CONCLUSION

I got to share my two-question apologetic with a dozen or so pro-life folk. I also got to try it out with a young man

who wanted to argue. It slowly came out that the reason he thought we should all just mind our own business is because he'd gotten his girlfriend pregnant and paid for her abortion. So he was very interested in justifying what he'd done. He thought the baby wasn't human because it was so small. But this man, little more than a boy himself, was half my size, which I pointed out. Did he really think bigger meant better? No, he conceded, that wasn't true.

He didn't repent. Or at least not then and there. But I was able to confront

him with just how insufficient his justifications were. He left rejecting the Christian explanation for our value, but admitting that he had nothing else to offer.

That's what I could do standing on God's firm foundation; I could blow apart the underpinnings of his godless arguments. Because I did this while giving the glory to God, this confused and hurting boy will know where to go, and Who to turn to for truth and forgiveness. And all it took was a couple of questions and a minute... or so. RP

Thinking of  
**BUYING OR SELLING  
THIS YEAR?**  
CALL US for all your FRASER VALLEY  
REAL ESTATE needs!

**Van Vliet**  
REAL ESTATE

604-834-0789  
tyler@vanvlietrealestate.ca  
vanvlietrealestate.ca

RE/MAX  
Treeland Realty

Building  
on MCS

Expanding  
on our firm  
foundation

Six Classroom Expansion

MARANATHA  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Fergus Maranatha Christian School has been blessed with continual growth over the past years.


With this growth expected to continue in the years to come, we are in need of additional classroom space!

Together we can build towards our goal!  
**We are asking for your support.**

The budget for the project is approximately \$3.5M. We are in our fundraising stage, and our goal is to raise \$2M, in order to keep our mortgage around \$1.5M.



Visit [www.buildingonmcs.com](http://www.buildingonmcs.com) for details, pledge forms and contact information.



Euthanasia should  
**never** be a  
solution for  
mental illness.

Ask your MP to support  
Bill C-314 and help stop the expansion of  
euthanasia to those with mental illness.

[CARENOTKILL.CA](http://CARENOTKILL.CA)



Anchor Christian Homes is a faith-based organization that provides housing and daily-living support to individuals with developmental disabilities.

We operate homes in five locations with plans to open a sixth home soon.

Head Office located in Grimsby, ON

VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[anchor-association.com](http://anchor-association.com)

## We're currently seeking applicants for the position of Executive Director. **APPLY NOW!**

Duties to commence June 1, 2023,  
with some flexibility if needed.

### Responsibilities:

- Works in cooperation with office staff and Board of Directors
- Develops policies consistent with our mission and values
- Ensures the homes meet Ministry requirements
- Provides leadership for the 65 staff who work in the homes
- Monitors the support and care for residents

### Qualifications:

- Applicant must be a professing member of a Canadian Reformed Church, United Reformed Church or sister church
- Training and experience in the Human Services or related field
- Excellent communication skills

### APPLY!

Further information including a detailed job description will be provided upon request.

> **SEND RESUMÉ along with a cover letter**  
**to: [secretary@anchor-association.com](mailto:secretary@anchor-association.com).**

# NEWS

## IN PERSPECTIVE

### TWO BILLS ARE TRYING A SMACK-DOWN ON CANADA'S SPANKING LAW

BY DANIEL ZEKVELD



Over 65 countries around the world have entirely banned all physical discipline of children. In 2022, two separate bills were introduced in the Canadian House of Commons and Senate to add Canada to that list. These bills are the latest of many attempts in the past 25 years to ban spanking in Canada. Both are private member's bills which, although unlikely to pass,

are currently going through the legislative process and are providing fresh opportunities for some politicians to speak out against the authority of parents over their children.

Specifically, these bills attempt to repeal section 43 of the Canadian *Criminal Code* which states:

"Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances."

Some advocates want to ban spanking to fulfill Recommendation 6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action which were released in 2015. The Commission calls on the government to repeal section 43 "in order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." These advocates argue that repealing section 43 is a small but necessary step on the path to reconciliation and that violence against children must be stopped. In advocating for one of the two bills, Senator Stan Kutcher referenced the Bible, seeking to prove that Jesus "recognized the responsibility of kind and considerate parenting, and that did not include hitting children."

Whether in Canada or elsewhere, the language used by advocates often includes "hitting," "violence," or "assault." When language like "we should ban child abuse" or "ban violence against children" is used, it's hard to disagree.

But child abuse and violence against children are (and ought to be) already illegal. Instead, corporal discipline must be seen as the use of reasonable, non-injurious physical force with the intention and purpose of correction or control of a child's behavior.

Other advocates for a spanking ban argue that spanking is harmful for children and that it creates increased risk of violence and mental disorders in children. However, controlled, non-abusive spanking actually tends to reduce negative behavior in children compared to other disciplinary tactics. Take Sweden as an example, where the rates of assaults against minors have increased since the country banned physical discipline in 1979.

Ultimately, parents ought to be able to raise their children as they see fit (within limits, of course). Parents have the responsibility to discipline their children, not out of anger, but out of a desire to protect and train them to be good citizens. The government can never replace parents in the life of a child and must not try to do so by legislating how children ought to be raised.

## A NEW LEAD IN THE SEARCH FOR LIFE BEYOND EARTH

BY AARON BOSSCHER

**I**s there life beyond our earth? And are there planets out there waiting to be inhabited? Dating all the way back to ancient Greece, philosophers and scientists have sought answers for these questions. More recently, there has been a concerted push to advance space technology. We now have:

- Telescopes that see billions of light years away
- A space station that orbits the Earth every 90 minutes
- Vehicles on Mars searching for life

But even with these incredible tools, scientists still have not been able to answer these questions. However, a group of scientists at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) think they may be getting closer. Ana Lobo, Aomawa Shields, Igor Palubski, and Eric Wolf believe that they have found planets that have the potential for liquid water and thus, in their minds, potential for extra-terrestrial life. Their study was summarized in a March 16, 2023 ScienceDaily.com piece: “‘Terminator Zones’ on distant planets could harbor life.”

A “terminator zone” is a dividing line on a planet that always has one side facing its star and the other side in constant darkness. On the dark side of the planet, temperatures would always be extremely low, causing any liquid water to freeze. On the dayside of the planet, temperatures would be scorching hot, causing any liquid water to evaporate. The terminator zone, where the dark meets the light, has the potential to have temperatures suitable for liquid water and, thus, for extra-terrestrial life. These types of planets do not occur in our Solar System but are common enough among planets orbiting the stars seen in our night sky.

So what should we think about

this search for ET? Well, we know all of Creation has been affected by Man’s fall into sin. The key question then is, would God allow intelligent life on *other* planets to be judged because of Man’s fall on *this* planet? That seems implausible. However, even if *intelligent* extra-terrestrial life is unlikely from a biblical perspective, there wouldn’t seem to be any biblical reason to rule out the possibility of *non-intelligent* lifeforms existing outside of Earth.

As Christians, we can view UCI’s work and other studies like it with curiosity, and also a lot of skepticism.

Secular scientists look around our planet and see an abundance of life, so they presume that life coming into being is relatively simple. However, if it is so simple, then why can’t they find life anywhere else? Surely, it has to be somewhere out there! So they begin the cycle of searching, possible discovery, and eventual failure. Then their desperate search begins anew. And as it does, Christians can simply sit back. We have nothing to prove, and no need to find extra-terrestrial life – unlike evolution, our biblical worldview doesn’t require (or rule out) life on other planets.



## DID THE “FOUNTAINS OF THE DEEP” MAKE JOE ROGAN LOSE SLEEP?

BY JON DYKSTRA

**J**oe Rogan is one of the world’s most popular podcasters, well known for his curiosity (though also for his vulgarity). It was that curiosity that, on March 29, had him doing some mind-blowing late-night reading. As he posted to Instagram:

**Me:** man, it’s after 2am, I should probably get some sleep.

**Article:** “Did you know there’s an absolutely massive supply of water hidden underneath the Earth’s crust that’s three times bigger than the oceans that sit on the surface?”

**Me:** No, I did not know that. And now that’s all I’m interested in...

While the article Rogan read was recent, this superocean was discovered more than a decade ago. This water is said to be buried 400 miles down, captured in a type of rock called “ringwoodite.” The amount of

water in these rocks has been variously estimated as being as much as all the water in all our oceans, or even three times that amount.

Rogan’s post went out to his 16 million Instagram followers and caught the attention of *Not the Bee*’s John Knox. Knox connected some dots and suggested that this vast quantity of water might be the “fountains of the great deep” that “burst forth” in Genesis 7:11 when God brought the Flood to punish the world.

It was an interesting idea. The biblical Flood account is mocked as being impossible on account of all the water that’d be needed to cover Mount Everest. But what if Mount Everest wasn’t so tall, and the oceans weren’t so deep? As professor Brad Alles has noted: “if the planet were as smooth as a billiard cue ball, there’s enough water to cover the earth 1.7 miles deep all over.” So maybe the world pre-Flood was a flatter place. And as Genesis 7:11 shares – and this 2014 discovery also highlights – the water

we see is far from the only water on Earth. There’s also water under the ground!

Now, the Institute for Creation Research’s Brian Thomas does differ with John Knox. He argued back in 2014 that this ringwoodite, because it is 400 miles down, is probably too far underground to have contributed to the Flood. He doesn’t think these stones were a part of the “fountains of the great deep.”

However, he does highlight how “this discovery shows that the mantle materials can store vast amounts of water.”

And if the amount of water on and under the Earth’s surface is enough to blow Joe Rogan’s mind, here’s something that should get Christians’ jaws to drop. In Luke 19:40, Jesus explains that if his disciples were silenced, then even the stones would cry out. In this incident we can see God using a foul-mouthed agnostic comedian to get the word out that an unbelievably vast quantity of water is trapped deep in the Earth’s mantle. How’s that for stones – of one type and another – crying out?

## UPCOMING DOCUMENTARY ASKS, HOW CAN WE END ABORTION IN CANADA?

BY JON DYKSTRA



**T**wo Canadian filmmakers want to know: *how can Canada get a win for the unborn like the US experienced in 2022?* And Josie Luetke and Ruth Robert are making a documentary to figure it out.

They’ve titled it *Roe Canada: The*

*True North in a Post-Roe World*, a reference to the US Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision that legalized abortion across the country 50 years ago. The reason we are now in a “Post-Roe” era is because of the stunning *Dobbs* decision last year, in which the Supreme Court overthrew *Roe* and declared that the US Constitution does not protect a right to abortion. When their ruling was issued, pro-lifers on both sides of the border could hardly believe it was real. We’d almost forgotten that with God nothing is impossible.

Then, in the immediate aftermath of *Dobbs*, individual states like Idaho, Texas, and South Dakota started of-

fering protections for the unborn right from conception.

Now these two filmmakers want to know, *how can it happen here?* The documentary will feature the *Baby-lon Bee*’s Seth Dillon, former Planned Parenthood director Abby Johnson, *Reformed Perspective* contributor Jonathon Van Maren, activist Stephanie Gray Connors, and many others. Together they are trying to craft a roadmap for the end of abortion in Canada.

Luetke and Robert plan to finish *Roe Canada* by the fall but already have a trailer available. Find it, along with information on how you can help fund the film, at [RoeCanadaFilm.com](http://RoeCanadaFilm.com).

## HARRY WHITTINGTON (1927-2023): A REPUBLICAN WHO CONVINCED DEMOCRATS THAT IF YOU'RE CONFUSED, YOU SHOULDN'T KILL

BY JON DYKSTRA



**E**arlier this year Harry Whittington died at the age of 95. While the attorney, World War II veteran, and Republican Party supporter led a busy life, the media coverage of his passing all focused on just one event: the day that the Vice President of the United States shot him.

It happened in 2006, 17 years ago, when Whittington was a spry 78. He was out on a hunting trip with the VP, Dick Cheney, and Whittington was trailing behind, searching for a bird he'd previously downed. Then a quail popped out of the bushes behind Cheney, the Vice President turned, fired off a shot, and hit Whittington instead, spraying his chest and face with more than 100 pellets of birdshot. Some of the pellets remained in Whittington to the day he died and one lodged in or near his heart, causing him a heart attack. Fortunately, Whittington recovered quickly, even appearing at a press conference only days later.

But in the meantime, the shooting became fodder for leftwing media and especially the late-night talk shows. It was referenced in David Letterman's Top 10 List, and the focus of a skit on Jay Leno's *The Tonight Show*. Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, and *Saturday Night Live* all piled on. Some years later, the then President Obama got in on it too, suggesting that Cheney's memoirs were going to be titled *How to Shoot Friends and Interrogate People*.

These Democrats all understood that what Cheney had done was incredibly foolish. A cardinal rule in hunting is that you can't fire your gun unless you're sure people aren't in your line of fire. Pleading ignorance is no excuse – you have to *know* no human life is being endangered or you can't fire. Obama rightly mocked Cheney for proceeding with deadly intent, without being sure whether he was going to kill bird or man.

In the abortion debate, a popular argument in favor of the "right to choose" is that "no one really knows when life begins." Candidate Obama himself seemed to take this position when prominent pastor Rick Warren asked him "At what point does a baby get human rights?" Obama replied, "...answering that question with specificity is above my pay



The Free Reformed School Association (Tas) Inc. invites applications for the following positions:

### Teachers

**Full-Time, Part-Time, 12-month or 6-month appointments considered**

At JCS, our vision is to be a *strongly connected* community of learners, deeply committed to our faith and to continual growth, nurturing individuals to be their best in the service of God and to His glory.

We are looking to add enthusiastic, committed teachers to our team for the 2022/23 school years. Due to growing class sizes we need additional, suitably qualified, teachers. Applications for full-time and part-time employment welcome, with 6-month or 12-month appointments considered.

John Calvin School currently has over 120 students from Kinder to Grade 10 with an average combined class size of 19. We are a well-resourced school, located in Launceston, a beautiful city in the north of Tasmania, a breathtaking part of God's creation.  
(<https://www.discovertasmania.com.au/>)

Applicants must be a member of the Free Reformed Church of Australia or any of her sister churches, be able to be registered to teach in Tasmania and be registered to work with vulnerable people.

Conditions and salary are based on the Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020.

Expressions of interest for future positions, full-time or part-time, are welcome.

For application forms, see the school website ([www.jcs.tas.edu.au/employment](http://www.jcs.tas.edu.au/employment)).

Forward completed applications to the Business Manager:

- E-mail: [wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au](mailto:wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au)
- Address: PO Box 89, Launceston 7250, Tasmania, Australia.

For more information, contact the Principal, Mr Daniel Coote

- E-mail: [cooted@jcs.tas.edu.au](mailto:cooted@jcs.tas.edu.au)

grade." He didn't know.

But if Obama doesn't know, and if no one knows whether or not what's being killed is human, that ignorance is just one more reason to ban abortion. The Democrats all mocked Dick Cheney for firing in ignorance. As Harry Whittington's injuries remind us still today, if we're unsure whether or not human life lies within, then we can't try to kill it. It's that simple.

## MP ED FAST WANTS TO HALT CANADA'S RUNAWAY EUTHANASIA TRAIN

BY MARK PENNINGA

**I**n a courageous move, Conservative Member of Parliament Ed Fast has introduced a private member's bill to permanently halt the federal government's effort to expand euthanasia to the mentally ill. "It is deeply concerning that this government appears to be moving from a culture of life to a culture of death," he said to reporters on Parliament Hill.

When euthanasia and assisted suicide were legalized by Parliament in 2016, they were limited to those whose suffering was intolerable, with an incurable illness, and where natural death was foreseeable. It didn't take long and the safeguards were broadened or ignored. Most recently, that included government legislation that would allow euthanasia for those whose sole reason was mental illness. As *Reformed Perspective* reported in our last issue, in response to strong concerns, the federal government paused this plan for one year, but only to give time for medical professionals to get ready.

### CANADA KEEPS SLIDING DOWN THAT SLOPE

Fast introduced Bill C-314, the Mental Health Protection Act, to put the brakes on the expansion of euthanasia. "As many of us had predicted when assisted death was legalized in 2016, we now find ourselves on a steep slippery slope that jeopardizes the lives of society's most vulnerable" Fast shared in an article that was published by the *National Post*. "As citizens who believe the government is there to protect and nurture life, we must ask: Who's next? The poor and homeless who are already approaching our food banks to ask for MAID?"

The MP is concerned that Parliament has not properly studied what could result from its reckless course.

"The expert panel struck by the government to review expansion

of MAID was not permitted to study the underlying merits of extending assisted death to the mentally ill. The panel even failed to deliver on its mandate to propose additional MAID safeguards. In fact, two of the panel members quit, noting that the outcome of the deliberations appeared to have been pre-determined."

Although opposition MPs often have to stand alone when introducing private member's legislation, especially on contentious social issues, this time was different. The Conservative Party of Canada's leader Pierre Poilievre stood next to Fast for his announcement and spoke up in his support. "Our job is to turn their hurt back into hope. To treat mental illness problems rather than ending people's lives" the CBC reported. He also committed that a government led by him would repeal euthanasia and assisted suicide for the mentally ill.

### IMPORTANT, WHETHER OR NOT IT PASSES

A private member's bill rarely becomes law, and it is highly unlikely that the Liberal government would about-face and support Fast's bill. Yet, as we have seen from those who overturned Canada's laws on life, family, and marriage in recent decades, efforts like this are critical for changing a trajectory long term. It shifts the "Overton Window," moving an idea along a spectrum of acceptability from radical to sensible and then to policy. In the case of Bill C-314, Ed Fast's bill gave an opportunity for his leader and his party to put a stake in the ground, promising to take action if they are given the opportunity to govern.



When an MP chooses to introduce a bill on a contentious social issue, they are also setting themselves up for a backlash of opposition, both from activists on the other side of the issue as well as from their own colleagues and supporters. Many within the Conservative Party balk when MPs provide any leadership on social issues, as they see this as something that will only take away their support and make it even more difficult to ever form government. Those who courageously speak up are often marginalized and rarely promoted to take on bigger roles in the party or in Parliament.

ARPA Canada, which has been meeting with government officials about this issue for years, and helping the Christian community speak up for life, rejoiced when C-314 was introduced. "For many years it has felt like we've been on a runaway train when it comes to legalized euthanasia. This bill signals that there is a willingness to stop this runaway train in its tracks!" Mike Schouten, ARPA's Executive Director, shared in a note to supporters. "ARPA Canada praises God for this development. We serve a sovereign God with whom nothing happens by chance (Prov. 19:21) and who directs the hearts of our leaders like streams of water (Prov. 21:1). We truly believe God is hearing and positively answering the prayers of His people on behalf of the country in which we live."

## CDC REPORT: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HUNGERING FOR HOPE

BY MARK PENNINGA

**T**oday's youth, especially teen girls, are experiencing unprecedented hopelessness.

So says a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report examined the connection between a person's mental health and their sexual behavior, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, as well as racial and sexual identity. It surveyed 17,000 US high school students in 2021.

Researchers found that two groups, in particular, are struggling. 57 percent of teen girls reported feeling "persistently sad or hopeless." Even more alarming, 30 percent said they seriously considered suicide, up by 60 percent from a decade ago.

LGBQ youth are also struggling, and at more than double the rate of the rest of the population. The report broke down high school students who experienced poor mental health during the

past 30 days (also in 2021) and found that the number was at 22% for heterosexual students and 52% for LGBQ students. And almost half of LGBQ students had also considered suicide. Mainstream reporting on this news blamed the poor mental health of LGBQ students on stigma and violence. But if that is the case, why do the levels continue to increase when identifying as LGBQ has never been so affirmed in the public, to the point of being trendy among many youth?

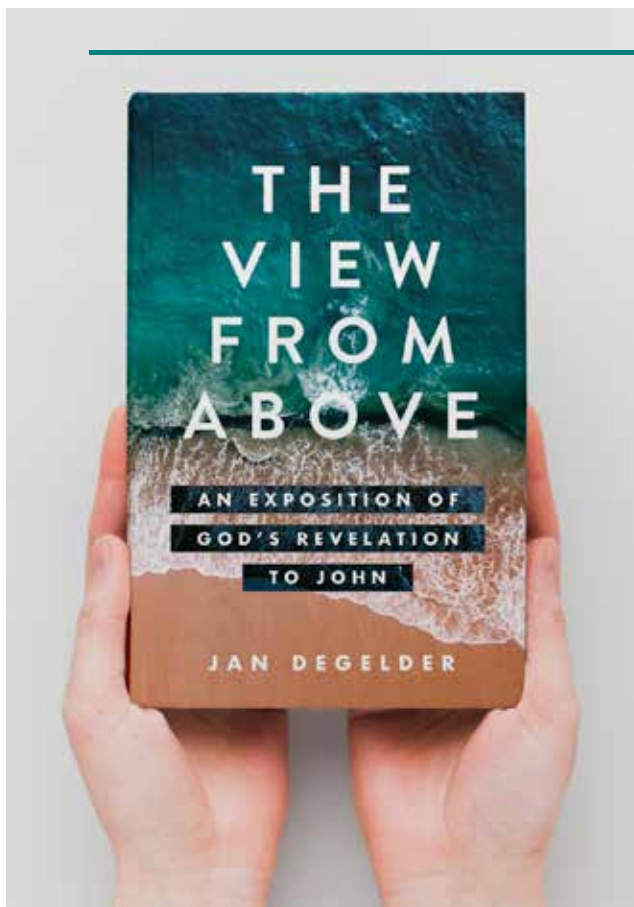
It doesn't take an expert to see the connection between poor mental health among youth and a massive increase in screen time and social media over the past decade, as well as the negative effects of government policies in response to Covid, including mandatory masking in schools.

It does take the eyes of faith to see the connection between hopelessness and



our society's ignorance of the Gospel and decisions to ignore God's good will for our lives. The sad reality is that many youth today have never been given real and abiding hope. These youth are smart enough to realize that if this world is all there is, and they alone decide what has value and meaning, then life is rather empty.

Now, more than ever, the Church has an opportunity to bring hope to a generation that is craving for a reason to live. "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (Heb. 6:19).



## THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

### AN EXPOSITION OF GOD'S REVELATION TO JOHN

BY JAN DEGELDER

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

- Dr. William den Hollander

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

#### Available for purchase online

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

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

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

# Reformed communities stepping up to provide



## SAFE FAMILIES

by Mark Penninga

**I**t takes some courage to get into the public to show love for our neighbors, with a meal for an elderly person, taking part in a Life Chain, or helping at the local soup kitchen. But how would we feel about welcoming the public into our own homes to live with us temporarily?

### A DIFFERENT SORT OF FOSTERING

It was at a legal seminar in London, Ontario, about ten years ago, that I first heard of a movement called “safe families.” Jennifer Francis, a young woman at that seminar, was intent on launching the organization, modeled after Safe Families for Children in the USA. Not only has it taken off in Canada, members of the Reformed church community are helping it expand to new areas.

Safe Families exists to keep children safe and families together. As they describe on their website, they “temporarily host children and provide a network of support to families in crisis while they get back on their feet.” What sets them apart is that they do this outside of the government system. Yet their effectiveness has made them a go-to place for child welfare agencies, who regularly refer families to them, encouraging these families to make use of their care so that they don’t get into a crisis mode where the government needs to intervene.

“Instead of waiting for bad things to happen to children, we can step in to help,” they explain. “By design, child welfare systems are designed to react *after* something bad happens to a child. Such interventions can be necessary in cases of abuse and neglect, but we can help *before* bad things occur.” In the 20 years of their existence, the Safe Families movement has provided over 35,000 hostings, utilizing 25,000 volunteers and 4,500 churches, most of those in the US, UK, or Canada, with 93 percent of the

children returning home.

The concept immediately struck a chord in my heart, as it provides an opportunity for Christ’s church to open our arms to vulnerable families and children in a way that is both practical and simple. Having witnessed the enormous sacrifice, and occasional heartache, of families who served within the government system as foster families, this appeared to be an option that would be far more doable for ordinary families.

God blessed that young woman’s vision and Safe Families was incorporated as a Canadian non-profit in 2012. Francis has since been faithfully leading the organization, first as the Executive Director, and now as the interim chair of the board. Safe Families started ministering to families in the Greater Toronto Area but has now spread to many cities across Canada.

### REFORMED FOLK SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

When I was first introduced to the concept, I couldn’t help but consider the potential for the Reformed community in Canada to get on board, as we are blessed with so many solid families who would be able to provide temporary care to children in need, outside the foster system. Sure enough, quietly and humbly, some in the Reformed community have been getting involved with the new chapters that have been formed.

Most recently, a chapter is being formed in BC’s Lower Mainland. I reached out to Jessica Wildeboer, who is chairing the steering committee to form this new chapter and is a member of the Langley Canadian Reformed Church.

I asked her what sparked the idea of bringing a chapter to the Fraser Valley. She explained that she heard about the organization from her sister, who attended an information session in Edmonton, but she didn’t give it

much thought until a friend sent her a link to the Real Talk podcast episode, where Lucas Holtvluwer and Tyler Vanderwoude sat down with Hildy Sloots from Safe Families last year.

"I rarely listen to podcasts at all, but somehow (God's work) I found myself washing dishes while listening to it. I was hooked. I loved all that I heard" shared Wildeboer. And she didn't stop there. "I knew this needed to happen here in the Lower Mainland. I sent an email to Safe Families and asked about a BC chapter. They replied saying that a Zoom meeting was coming up and I was welcome to join. This was in September. By November we had a steering committee established with nine Christians, from Vancouver to Chilliwack, and we started planning steps forward."

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO HELP

In February of this year, Jason Peters, the Western Canada Director of Safe Families, led three information sessions in the Fraser Valley. They were thrilled to have about 230 people come out, representing 25 different churches.

Three members of the steering committee shared with the audiences why they believed Safe Families was needed and important. "As chair, I shared my own experience of seeing my church rally around my family in times of crisis" Wildeboer explained. RCMP officer Steve Vandelft, and social worker Kathleen Vanderveen, also shared how in their work experience they would often see families who needed extra support.

Wildeboer explained that "We put out sign-up papers asking for people to express what areas they might be interested in helping with in the future. Different areas include being a resources friend (organize meals, pick up groceries, help with a reno), family friend (do some babysitting, offer encouragement), family coach (overseeing the volunteers surrounding the family in crisis), and host family (hosting children overnight in your home for short periods of time, sometimes weeks)."

The response was incredible. "After the three info sessions, we had so many people check so many boxes with want-

Six of the nine steering committee members, along with the Western Canada Director for Safe Families Jason Peters. Jessica Wildeboer is second from the left.



ing to help, and we even had 18 families sign up wanting to become a host family! Amazing!"

## A CHRISTIAN WITNESS

What also sets Safe Families apart is their faith-based approach, "motivated by the compassion and grace that they first received from Jesus Christ." And the beautiful thing is that instead of this closing doors to working with the child welfare system, they form a bridge between families who are in need and the Christian community.

"When a family in church is in crisis, meals are brought, babysitting is arranged, rides are organized, whatever is needed is provided," shared Wildeboer. "But how do people without a church community survive when a crisis hits? Our churches seem rich with resources such as stable homes. How can we bless our community with our resources?"

She also liked that the service is local and hands-on. "I think there is also something precious and vital about being more intentional within our own communities. I like my kids to help with babysitting. I like my kids to help with making a meal and dropping it off. I like my kids to write cards to neighbours and hand-deliver them. Sometimes we can be too busy in our own safe comfortable bubble with people we know, but we could improve with meeting new people and warmly welcoming all those we meet. It is good to get uncomfortable, that's what Jesus did." RP

*To learn more about Safe Families and find the locations of their chapters, go to [SafeFamiliesCanada.com](http://SafeFamiliesCanada.com). You can also listen to, or watch, the Real Talk interview that first inspired Jessica Wildeboer at [Youtube.com/@RealTalkReformed](https://www.youtube.com/@RealTalkReformed) or at [RealTalkPodcast.ca](http://RealTalkPodcast.ca).*



# THE RHINO PARTY

by James Dykstra

Politics may seem especially absurd these days, but it didn't start here. In Canada, the wackiness goes back at least a few decades, to the founding of the Rhinoceros Party.

Founded in 1963 by Jacques Ferron, this party claimed to be inspired by a Brazilian rhinoceros, Cacareco, who had been elected to a city council in Brazil in 1958. The Canadians needed a rhino closer to home though, so the movement chose Cornelius the First, a rhinoceros in the Granby Zoo near Montreal as their leader.

The party existed from 1963 until 1993 when it was officially dissolved, but it was resurrected in 2007, though with an arguably cruder edge to its humor. That edge might reflect the new times in which the party found itself.

## BIG PROMISES

The Rhinoceros Party promised what some would say any other party did: the completely impossible.

For example, at one time or another the Rhinoceros Party promised to:

- Abolish the Law of Gravity.
- They also hoped to give the unemployed the right to strike.
- They sought to reduce the speed of light since it's much too fast.
- The Rhinos wanted to provide higher education by building taller schools.
- They promised to end crime by abolishing all laws.
- They were in favor of adopting the British system of driving on the left instead of the right. This would be brought in gradually starting with large trucks, then buses, and then small cars and bicycles.
- They sought to declare war on Belgium. In one of the *Tintin* books, the Belgian hero killed a rhino. War could be avoided if the Belgian embassy in Canada delivered a case of mussels and a case of Belgian beer to the head office of the Rhino Party. Interestingly, though the Rhinos never elected a single representative to Parliament, the Belgian embassy did come through on the mussels and beer.
- They wanted to impose an import quota on cold winter weather. The only seasons that would be allowed were to be salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.
- Preying on Canadians' distrust of their southern neighbors, the Rhinos promised to count the Thousand Islands in case the Americans had stolen some.

Perhaps the only promise that the Rhinoceros Party might have kept was that if they were ever able to form the government, they would promptly resign thereby forcing a new election.

## JUST CURSING THE DARKNESS

In its attempts at humor, the Rhinoceros Party sometimes descended into crudity. Arguably, they were no worse than many of the politicians who currently grace the world stage. They did


# THE RHINOCEROS PARTY

Politics has always been absurd, but 30 years ago, even more so

point out the absurdity of the promises made by many politicians who make promises they have either thought out poorly and find they cannot keep, or who may make ones so grandiose they know in advance they'll never be able to follow through.

But while humor points out the absurd and the weaknesses of Canadian parties and politicians, it doesn't suggest an alternative. The Rhinoceroses in the party tore down the pretensions of the proud, but failed to replace them with anything more reasonable.

## RETIRING THE RHINO

The original Rhinoceros Party met its demise in 1993. In order to stay a registered party, each party had to run candidates in 50 electoral districts, a feat that was too difficult at the time for the Rhinos. Consequently, in protest, the party chose to abstain from the 1993 election. The chief officer of Elections Canada ordered that the party be dissolved and money from the sale of assets was to be sent to the Canadian government's Receiver General. Party leader Charlie MacKenzie refused, and after two years of back and forth, Elections Canada declined to prosecute MacKenzie making him Canada's self-described "least wanted fugitive." 

*James Dykstra is a sometimes history teacher, author, and podcaster. This article is taken from an episode of his History.icu podcast, "where history is never boring." Find it at History.icu, or on Spotify, Google podcasts, or wherever you find your podcasts.*

## IF THE RHINOS JOINED THE CHP

One of the best policy proposals the Rhinoceros Party of Canada made went something like this:

"Convicted murderers get life? Unborn babies get killed? We'll swap that!"

It was a good policy told with punch, and short enough to fit on a t-shirt. The only problem? I'm not sure it happened. I thought it did, but when I started searching for the when and where, I found there's nothing online to back up my hazy recall. It also strikes me as being out of step with the rest of the party's generally frivolous stands – it's too emphatically pro-life.

So if it wasn't the Rhinos, might it have been the Christian Heritage Party (CHP)? They are pro-life – Canada's only pro-life party – but it struck me as a bit too "quippy" for them. It almost seems like a combination of the two parties: a satiric Rhinosh take but one that doesn't just tear down, but offers a Christian alternative. And yes, a CHP vet remembers them running something like this in years past. Turns out the CHP has a little Rhino in it.  
– Jon Dykstra

# Elon Musk and Visions of the Future:

to face the future with enthusiasm

by Harma-Mae Smit

---

*“These human space flight missions were a beacon of hope to me and to millions over the past two years as our world has been going through one of the most difficult periods in recent human history. We see the rise of division, fear, cynicism, and the loss of common humanity, right when it is needed most. So, first, Elon, let me say thank you for giving the world hope and reason to be excited about the future.”*

– Lex Fridman speaking about SpaceX to Elon Musk, on his podcast released December 28, 2021

---

Where are the dreams of previous decades, of flying cars and paperless offices and TV phones? Not only have these dreams turned out to be rather bleak (Zoom as a sort of TV phone has not sparked joy in anyone), but no new visions of the future have sprung up to replace them.

Young people – those supposedly optimistic young people – fill social media feeds with anxiety-soaked visions of climate catastrophe, plague and economic collapse. Our world dreams of catastrophe, not progress.

And yet some young people do turn to one figure as a beacon of hope in the negativity all around them. They turn to a public figure who frequently and publicly describes a future where humanity overcomes its challenges, and continues to seek out the meaning of existence. This is the vision of the future provided by Elon Musk – a controversial figure whose “true fans” love him for his insistence that human ingenuity can create a future that will be better.

Christians, of all people, have reason to be excited about the future. We live in hope, even in the midst of darkness and despair. Or so we say. And yet it is not Christianity that many turn to, to escape the bleak future. It is not Christianity that provides these young fans with a new vision of the future, and an optimism to be hopeful again.

When we see the success of visionary dreams of the future, when we see Elon Musk inspiring millions, it pushes us as Christians to work out what we mean by hope. It pushes us to define what we expect from the future. And it urges us to consider whether we are “visionary,” and whether we should be.



## THE PROFOUND HOPEFULNESS OF ELON MUSK

*"You want to wake up in the morning and think the future is going to be great—and that's what being a spacefaring civilization is all about. It's about believing in the future and thinking that the future will be better than the past. And I can't think of anything more exciting than going out there and being among the stars."* – Elon Musk, SpaceX website

What is Elon Musk's vision? Musk has many critics, including many who doubt he sincerely means to benefit common humanity with his companies and inventions. Despite this, fans continue to flock to him. Whether or not his vision of the future is sincere or a marketing tactic, the simple fact is that there is something in his vision that fulfills something his fans are looking for. They draw hopefulness from his vision. Why is that?

First of all, Musk has the ability to drag unlikely concepts, like reusable rockets, into the realm of reality. For a young generation struggling with anxiety, just getting out of bed in the morning can feel superhuman. A person who can come up with an idea, and then make sure that idea gets done, confronts our feelings of helplessness and comforts us that maybe solving our problems is as simple as just doing it. "When something is important enough, you do it, even if the odds are not in your favor," as Musk says in his interview with Lex Fridman.

On one level, Musk is not that revolutionary. Electric cars, space flights to Mars, satellite internet – all of these are ideas that have been dreamed up before Musk came along. But because Musk has done more than dream, Musk has become a source of inspiration.

But Musk doesn't simply get things done – he frames his activities as the stuff that fires imaginations. "You need to have things that when you wake up in the morning, you're excited about the future," Musk argues in another interview with the *Babylon Bee*. "Why live? If it's all about solving problems of being miserable, like, why live? So they've got to be things that...you know, get you in the

heart. And I think space is one of those things."

God created a world with much more than the bare necessities. He also created a people with a capacity for enthusiasm – an enthusiasm to explore, an enthusiasm to see what is possible. We can be full of curiosity about creation, just as scientists before us reached out to God through their discoveries of the natural world. Haven't Christians who have come before have been eager to explore and create? From Johannes Kepler to David Livingstone, the world has opened up to us through the enthusiasm of those who have come before us.

The Bible itself illustrates this too. The overall arc of the Bible moves from its beginnings in the garden to its ending in the city. The story of creation is a story that includes the development and unfolding of what God made. This is why we need dreamers and visionaries, to bring out the possibilities inherent in creation.

Elon Musk hits on some important things. Building real things in the real world matters, even if it isn't easy to bring things together and make them work together. In fact, building real things can contribute to a feeling of fulfillment in us, a feeling of doing what we were meant to do. No wonder some find inspiration in this.

But Musk himself is used as the example to follow for those looking for

a hopeful outlook on the future. As a man who presents himself as someone who dreams and builds his dreams, he is viewed as an inspiration. This means the vision he presents should be examined in more depth. Before we fully jump on board with Elon Musk's future, we should consider what future, exactly, he presents.

## THE BLEAKNESS OF ELON'S FUTURE

Elon Musk claims to want to build the future so humans can continue to seek the meaning of life.

"I don't know when I'll die, but I won't live forever. But I would like to know that we are on a path to understanding the nature of the universe and the meaning of life and what questions to ask about the answer that is the universe."

Musk wants to save humanity so humanity can continue to struggle with the meaning of existence. Well and good! Humans are meant to seek out the purpose of their existence, and not give up on their existence as meaningless. But Musk himself holds back from offering an answer to the question of meaning, only vaguely hinting that humanity might figure it out in some far-off someday. And in this way, Musk's future does not fully alleviate the temptation to nihilism.

After all, what does he really think the



# MUSK'S HIGHS AND LOWS

by Jon Dykstra

Elon Musk might be best known for a brilliant bit of marketing he did back in 2018 for two of his companies: he launched his own Tesla electric roadster into space on one of his SpaceX rockets. Images of his red sports car, blue Earth in the background, were carried by papers around the globe. More recently his SpaceX company made news for providing their Starlink satellite internet service to Ukraine when invading Russian forces destroyed much of the country's online access.



## **RICHEST**

Musk has also earned fame by, at times, being the richest man on the planet. Back in February, stock market gains gave him a net worth of \$187 billion regaining him the title, at least briefly – he has some competition. He'd probably have had a firmer grip on the title if not for his 2022 Twitter purchase, which cost him \$44 billion.

## **FREE SPEECH DEFENDER**

Since that purchase Musk has been making headlines for the conservatives and/or Christians that he's "unbanned" from the social media giant, including Jordan Peterson, Project Veritas, and the Christian satire site *Babylon Bee*. The *Bee* ran into trouble with Twitter in 2022 when they awarded US Assistant Health Secretary Rachel Levine their "Man of the Year Award." Levine is transgender – a guy pretending to be a girl – and the pre-Musk Twitter would cancel your account if you didn't play along with this sort of delusion. But within a month of Musk finalizing his purchase, the *Babylon Bee*, Peterson, and others, could tweet again.

## **UNAFRAID OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA MOB**

Musk had gained admirers for being willing to tweet common sense takes

that too many others are scared to say. An April 14 example: "Any parent or doctor who sterilizes a child before they are a consenting adult should go to prison for life."

## **DEBUNKING OVERPOPULATION**

Musk's 100+ million Twitter followers allow him to debunk lies like few others can, and he's been using his influence to take down the myth of overpopulation. He's brought attention to the fact that the world's population isn't exploding but is, in fact, facing a coming collapse.

## **AT THE GOVERNMENT TROUGH**

While Musk has shown entrepreneurial initiative a good chunk of his wealth has come via the public trough. He's received billions in subsidies from various levels of government around the world to build factories. And he's made billions through government programs that allow his electric car company, Tesla, to make more from selling climate credits than from selling cars. The government awards Tesla these climate credits because their electric cars are said to be more friendly for the planet. Tesla can then sell these credits to other companies that aren't meeting their climate targets.

## **IS A MORAL LIBERAL**

In addition to endorsing homosexuality, and euthanasia, Musk has had a less than exemplary family life, having his 9 children with 3 different women and via surrogacy. And while he is against "transitioning" children, his company Tesla has touted it has helped its adult employees "transition."

## **APATHETIC ABOUT GOD**

Finally, Musk's influence is troubling particularly when it comes to God. His obvious smarts make his agnosticism seem almost respectable, which in turn may give others the idea that doubt is not something to wrestle with, but is simply a place to land.

## **CONCLUSION**

Much more could be shared; we haven't even touched on Musk's "Boring Company" tunneling projects, or the 20,000 flamethrowers he's sold, or his connection to PayPal. But even this short overview shows him to be a man of many interests, and consequently, a pretty intriguing fellow.

But might his one million interests be a distraction for him from considering his Creator? **RP**

nature of the universe is?

He is building physical technologies that will greatly impact the real world we live in. But he is deeply ambivalent about whether the world we live in is a real world after all. “The odds that we’re in base reality is one in billions,” he explained at Code Conference in 2016. It’s a fun idea that tech entrepreneurs and philosophers like to play with – the idea we might be living in a video game that is a copy of some deeper reality. Except this idea of “what’s really going on” is cold comfort to the apathetic and despairing.

And Musk is, famously, all-in on artificial intelligence, as well as linking our brains to computers (see his company Neuralink). This does indicate a belief that reality may really not consist of anything more than ones and zeros after all.

If we are living in a simulation, a cosmic simulation where something is jerking us around like puppets – well, some of us might be eager to know the truth of this. But this truth is not the kind of truth that sets us free from apathy. Musk does not know what the meaning of life is. He only wants to buy more time for humanity to figure it out.

The answer to the meaning of existence that many people arrive at today, when looking at the failures of humanity, is simply that humanity does not deserve to exist. This is what feeds into our current culture’s apathy. And no journeys among the stars are fantastic enough to change their minds.

In some sense, Elon Musk is right. What makes life worth living is working on problems, seeking the meaning of existence, and exploring every cranny of creation. Only Christians can fight with those problems before the face of a God Who has answers.

## SAVING US FROM THE FUTURE?

Do Musk’s fans really turn to him because of his musings about reality being a simulation, or because of his goal of preserving human consciousness in order to seek out the meaning of life? It is possible they turn to him for a far simpler reason than this. For some of them, it may be less about finding positive inspiration in his message, and excitement for the future



– and more of a response to *fear* of the future.

Fear of the future is behind so much of human activity. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in a sermon in 1933, “What else is all the razzle-dazzle and drunkenness of New Year’s Eve, other than our great fear of a new era, of the future? Fear is breathing down our necks.”

Elon Musk’s vision is a relief because it offers a positive vision of the future, in contrast to the terrible ones on the news every day. It acknowledges terrible consequences that may occur, but it encourages us that humanity can overcome them. By being hopeful, it helps others to hang onto hope. And this relief from fear brings devotion along with it.

After all, is it really self-evident that space travel is inspiring, and is that truly what his fans latch onto when they admire Musk? Going to Mars is presented with the enthusiasm that the age of exploration brought, when voyages to unknown lands brought home wonders. Except in our case, Mars is not exactly unknown or unexplored. The magic of going there is to just say we can go there, to say humans have set foot on a place we already know all about – more like a family vacation to Paris than a voyage of discovery to the South Seas.

To make it even more prosaic, the rea-

son to go there is “a life insurance policy.” Musk presents his technology as supplying a reason to get up in the morning and feel optimistic about the future, but he simultaneously does not shy away from arguing his work will preserve humanity in case something really bad happens to earth. He says, “We should basically think of this, being a multi-planet species, just like taking out insurance for life itself – like, life insurance for life.” (“This turned into an infomercial real quick,” says his interviewer, Lex Fridman).

His focus on using technology to avoid potentially devastating problems, such as climate change, helps explain why he is so often viewed as a *savior* by the devoted.

To explore out of a love of exploration, out of a joy of living, is quite different than to explore and build to avoid a negative outcome. To the extent Elon Musk’s vision is driven by a joy of discovery, it is admirable. To the extent it reveals humanity’s underlying fears and insecurities, it reveals a drive to control and secure our own futures.

Looking to technology to solve all our problems and absolve us of our fears quickly becomes placing our faith in technology – in other words, placing our faith in humankind. Ideally, we recognize the capabilities God has given to humanity, while simultaneously recognizing their

source in God. Otherwise the failures of humanity can feel overwhelming, as demonstrated by our current culture's reaction to the optimism of the 1950s. Nihilism and apathy are much more common, despite the technological progress of the twentieth century.

## CHRISTIANS AND THE HOPE THAT THEY HAVE

Christianity should also inspire us to live, and not just a grit-your-teeth-and-get-through-life kind of living. There is a superficial similarity with Elon Musk here. But what is Christianity's vision of the future?

One critique of Christianity is that it directs all hope to life after death. It neglects the world we live in for some

will just continue to get worse and worse ("wars and rumors of wars") until Jesus comes again.

But let's turn from what some Christians have thought about the future and look towards what the Bible presents as the future.

What is the clearest, most concrete vision of the future that Christianity offers? It is actually quite simple and clear: the return of Christ. "[W]e wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). The return of Christ is our future.

Notably, this future that the Bible describes is a future that Elon Musk does not find comforting at all: "We could have a chapter past Revelation," he says

towards the kingdom of heaven. Yes, this means living for the world to come. But at the same time, this means recognizing the kingdom of heaven exists already in the world today, like "yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough" (Matt. 13:33). It is about doing our work in this world in the light of eternity, not as if our work right now doesn't matter because there will be another world, but because what we do now does matter for our eternal future.

Perhaps it is Herman Bavinck who explains this best, in his article, "The Kingdom of God, The Highest Good":

"We are, finally, the totality of what we have ever willed, thought, felt, and done. The profit that we yield for ourselves in this way is profit for the Kingdom of God. Even a cup of cold water given to a disciple of Jesus receives a reward. God calls us to work in such a way that, amid all that we do, we should envision the eternal work that God desires to bring about through people... even if our work space be ever so small and our occupation ever so nondescript. This is truly and essentially working for the Kingdom of God."

It is mysterious how God promises to bring everything to fulfillment, but the new world will not be "starting over." Even in Revelation 21, the kings of the earth bring their splendor into the new Jerusalem, indicating that in some fashion the glories of this world, once redeemed, will crown the new heavens and new earth. It will not make God's work in history now into something meaningless.

We're allowed to be visionary. We've been given a vision that equips us to work. And so we're called to hope. To hope in a way that encourages us to try, to build and invent, to strive for a concrete idea of what could be better, and to fight to understand what we're here on earth for.

For Christians the future is inevitable. Our consciousness *will not* be snuffed out. Humanity will go on for eternity, to live and love and build, and learn about what we can do, before the face of our God. **RP**

---

[Musk's] focus on using technology to avoid potentially devastating problems... helps explain why he is so often viewed as a savior by the devoted.



fairy tale future. It maintains the status quo by promising if Christians are meek and humble they will be rewarded in the life to come.

Christian visions of the future that have been presented have at times been bleak as well – that the physical world doesn't deserve improvement, as it will be enveloped in fire anyway. Or that humanity can never progress, because we're deeply stained by sin. Or history

when asked what book he'd add to the Bible. "Like, is there a happy ending here? Revelation Part 2: The Happy Ending." He does not elaborate on what he finds so depressing about the new earth and the Bible's vision of the future, but it could be that he does not see the continuation and culmination of our work in this world into the next. Perhaps "the apocalypse" really sounds like a final end to him.

Christians live with their lives pointing



# Salt & Light

Tim Challies, W. Robert Godfrey, Steven Lawson,  
Burk Parsons, Derek Thomas, Robert VanDoodewaard



November 10–11,  
2023

# ONTARIO

## Ligonier Conference in Ontario

In this conference hosted by Ligonier Ministries, we'll study Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount and consider how to live by His example before a watching world. **Register now, and join us this coming November.**

[Ligonier.ca/ontario](https://Ligonier.ca/ontario)



# INVESTING IN ETERNITY: thinking 30 million years ahead

by Randy Alcorn

**I**n Matthew 13:44 we find a single verse that captures the heart and soul of following Christ: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

Picture an average guy, leading a routine life. One day something happens that

changes his life forever. While crossing a field, aimlessly thrusting his staff into the ground, *he hears a thud*. He gets down on his knees, digs with his hands, and finds treasure. He realizes this is very old – way too old to have been buried by the current landowner, who wouldn’t have any idea it’s even there. He has found unclaimed treasure, waiting for someone

to unearth it.

The treasure captures his imagination. It becomes the reference point, the center of gravity of his life. He is single-mindedly bent on obtaining that treasure. He is willing to pay any price. This is a man who experiences the ultimate paradigm shift. He takes on a new perspective and sees life through different eyes.



## *The only joy I know comparable to leading a person to Christ is giving generously to the kingdom of God.*

The only joy I know comparable to leading a person to Christ is giving generously to the kingdom of God. That through my giving, people might be won to Christ, the hungry fed, and the suffering helped in the name of Christ is a joy beyond comprehension.

Let me ask you a question about this man in Matthew 13, the one who found the treasure: are we supposed to feel sorry for him? I mean, we're told he went and sold *all* that he had – and in the original Greek “all” means all; that's why it's translated that way!

We might think, “It cost him everything. Poor man. Think of his sacrifices!”

No. We are not to pity this man – we are to *envy* him. The sacrifice paled in comparison to the reward. The payoff was much greater than the cost.

The man who found the treasure would be a fool not to do exactly what he did. He made short-term sacrifices for long-term rewards. “But it cost him everything he had.” *Yes, and it gained him everything that mattered.*

The key word is “joy.” “In his joy” – *not* in his misery – he made sacrifices! How can you sacrifice with joy? Because of the relative worth of what is given up versus what is gained.

When you catch a vision for what it means to God, any feeling of sacrifice is overwhelmed with pure joy and excitement. To hear the applause of heaven, to hear pleasure in the voice of God, to hear Him say “Well done, my good and faithful servant” – nothing else compares.

### SMART INVESTING

In Matthew 6:19-24, we see that Jesus always lived with two Kingdoms in mind: the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Heaven. He speaks here of the Two Treasuries, Two Perspectives, and Two Masters of these two kingdoms.

Verse 20 tells us to “store up treasures in heaven.” God values treasures, but He defines them differently than we do. We consider things treasures that are nothing but junk in the eyes of eternity. John Wesley said, “I judge all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity.”

“Store up treasures” demonstrates that God is not against an investment mentality. In fact, He *commands* us to store up treasures! But He tells us to stop storing them up in the wrong place, and start storing them up in the right place.

God is not against us acting in our own interests. He commands us to act not in our immediate short-term interests, but our eternal long-term interests. That which is to God's ultimate glory is to our ultimate good. It's just the pay-off isn't now; it's then.

The problem with prosperity theology, also called the health and wealth gospel, and with lots of our Christian radio and television programs, is that they look for material payoffs in the present age. God's provision of wealth is seen as a call to increase our standard of living – while Scripture presents it as a call to increase our standard of *giving*.

Ironically, looking for the payoff now is never in our best interests, because it robs us of eternal reward. We'll be rewarded for giving – but the real and lasting rewards will come in eternity. It all comes down to *delayed gratification*.

I think Paul was alluding to Christ's words in Matthew 6 when he wrote 1 Timothy 6:17-19:

“Command those who are rich in this present world [*which is passing*] not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God [*who is certain*], who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do

### INCOMPARABLE JOY

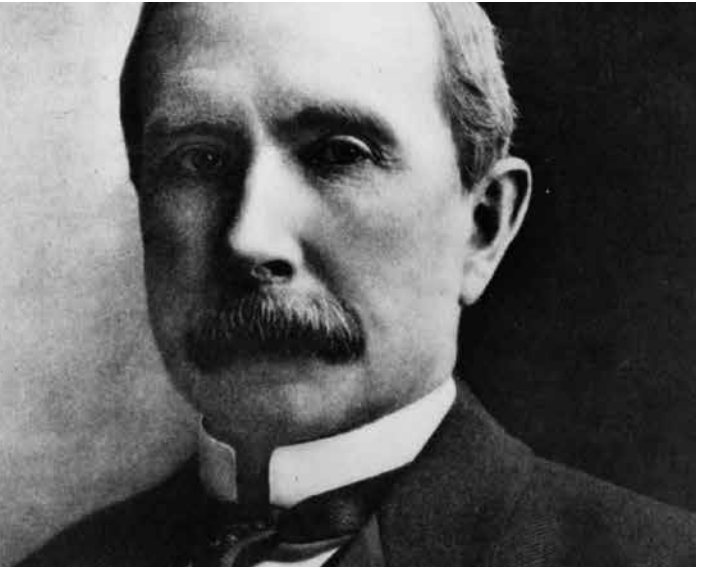
Of course, Jesus is simply using the treasure in the field as an illustration of heavenly treasure. No matter how great an earthly treasure is, it's still worthless in the eyes of eternity. In fact, it is exactly this kind of treasure that people waste their lives on. Jesus is appealing to what people do value – temporary earthly treasure – in order to make an analogy to what they should value: eternal heavenly treasure.

Today, Christians desperately need such a radical paradigm shift. God doesn't just raise up donors; He raises up disciples whose lives are so filled with a vision for eternity that they wouldn't dream of not investing their money and their time and their lives where they will matter most. Once they see the treasures of eternity and become consumed by them, nobody will be able to keep them from giving.

John D. Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died his accountant was asked, "How much money did John D. leave?"

His reply was classic:  
"He left... all of it."

- Randy Alcorn



good, to be rich in good deeds [*a different kind of wealth*], and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation [*certain and stable*] for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life [*you want to get a life? Here's how*]."

Christ gives us an incredible investment opportunity. He gives us the opportunity to cash in earthly treasure for heavenly treasure. It's like trading a sack of old rusty bottle caps for ownership of the Coca-Cola company. You're so excited about what you now own that the last thing you'd do is stand around whining about giving up your bottle caps.

Notice Christ's reasoning: "Store up treasures in heaven..." Why? Because it's *right*? No, because it's *smart*. Because it will last. It won't be consumed by moths and rust or taken by thieves.

You'll never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul. Why? Because *you can't take it with you*.

John D. Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died his accountant was asked, "How much money did John D. leave?" His reply was classic: "He left... *all of it*."

You can't take it with you. But in Matthew 6 Jesus adds something profound, something life changing. You can't take it with you, but... you can send it on ahead.

Anything we try to hang onto will be lost. Anything we put in His hands will be ours for eternity. Not just insured up to \$100,000. Insured without limit by the FDIC – Father's Deposit Insurance Corporation.

John Wesley was shown around a vast estate by a proud plantation owner. They rode their horses all day and saw only a fraction of the estate. At the end of the day when they sat down to dinner the owner said, "Well, Mr. Wesley, what do you think?" Wesley thought about it and said, "I think you're going to have a hard time leaving all this."

The way to lay up treasures in Heaven includes giving away our money and possessions but is not limited to it. The Bible teaches that those things which we keep can also serve kingdom purposes. They can be generously shared and invested and used in ways that serve eternal purposes, that further God's kingdom for His glory rather than just building our own little kingdoms for our own glory.

### THINK THIRTY MILLION YEARS AHEAD

Missionary Jim Elliot was killed by the Auca Indians in the 50's. His philosophy of life was expressed in those great words, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Does it sound like Jim Elliot didn't care about gain? No, he cared about the right kind

of gain – gain that would last, not just for the short today but for what A. W. Tozer called "the long tomorrow."

Are you an investor? Great. Invest in what counts the most. You have the desire to succeed? Fine, succeed in servanthood, in giving, in praying, in reaching out to the lost and needy. You have ambitions? Fine. Make them kingdom ambitions. You have dreams? Great. Are you willing to trade in your short-term dreams for the eternal dreams of the risen Christ? In investments they say, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." But in this case, it sounds too good to be true, but it is true, because it is the promise of God.

Financial planners tell us, "When it comes to your money, don't just think just three days ahead, or three months or three years. Think 30 years." Christ, the ultimate investment counselor, takes it one step further. He says, "Don't just ask yourself, how will this investment be paying off in thirty years. Ask, *how will this investment be paying off in thirty million years?*"

In Matthew 6, verses 22 and 23, Jesus also talks about two perspectives – the good eye and the bad eye. We must train our vision, put on the corrective lens of God's Word, and learn not to be limited by the horizons of this world. We need to learn to see, think, and act in light of eternity. (This is the theme of my novels *Deadline* and *Dominion*, and *Edge of Eternity*.)

Perspective is what John Wesley had when he said, “I judge all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity.” It’s what C. T. Studd had when he said, “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”

For fourteen years I was a pastor. One Sunday morning I stood before my church and said, “I have bad news – I have a terminal disease. I’m going to die.” Then I added, “But the news gets even worse. You have the same disease. You’re going to die too.”

The disease is mortality. We’re all going to die. One day very soon we will each stand before our Lord, the Audience of One. He will sift out our lives – some will burn as what 1 Corinthians 3 calls wood, hay, and stubble. Some will remain, as what He calls gold, silver, and precious stones. How much will burn and how much will remain depends on how we have used our lives and our resources here.

Imagine for a moment that you are alive at the very end of the American Civil War. You are living in the South, but your home is really in the North. While in the South you have accumulated a good amount of Confederate currency. Suppose you also know for a fact that the North is going to win the war, and that the end could come at any time. What will you do with your Confederate money?

If you were smart, there is only one answer to the question. You would cash in your Confederate currency for U.S. currency – the only money that will have value once the war is over. You would keep only enough Confederate currency to meet your basic needs for that short period until the war was over and the money would be worthless.

Likewise, as believers we have inside knowledge of an eventual upheaval in the worldwide social and economic situation. The currency of this world will be worthless at our death or Christ’s return.

This knowledge should radically affect our investment strategy. For us to accumulate vast earthly treasures in the face of the inevitable future is equivalent to stockpiling Confederate money despite our awareness of its eventual worthlessness. It’s not only wrong – it’s just plain stupid!

Kingdom currency, backed by the eternal treasury, is the only medium of exchange recognized by the Son of God, whose government will last forever. The currency of His kingdom is our present faithful service and sacrificial use of our resources for Him.

In the investment world there are experts and advisors known as “Market Timers.” When they read the signs that the stock market is about to take a downward turn, they recommend switching funds immediately into more dependable or consistent investments, such as money markets or T-Bills, or certificates of deposit.

In Matthew 6 Jesus functions as the foremost investment advisor, the ultimate expert in the economies of earth and Heaven. His strategy is simple – He tells us to once and for all switch investment vehicles. He tells us to transfer our funds from earth (which is volatile and ready to take a permanent dive) to Heaven (which is totally dependable, insured by God Himself, and is coming soon to forever replace the economy of earth).

Second Peter 3 gives us a financial forecast, or maybe you could call it an insider tip. It tells us that this world and everything in it is going to burn. There is a coming holocaust of things. Revelation 18 speaks of the economic world system of materialism, called “Babylon the Great.” If that’s the kingdom you’re investing your life in, then go ahead and be depressed. You’ve got a lot to be depressed about. Babylon is going down!

If your treasures are in Heaven, there is good news. Heaven is coming and *anything you’ve put in God’s hands is safe*. What you’ve used for the glory of God will have counted for eternity. What you’ve given to God on earth will be there in Heaven. What you clung on to for yourself won’t be.

## WHERE’S YOUR HEART?

In Matthew 6:21 Jesus says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” He’s saying, “Show me your checkbook, your Visa statement, and your receipts, and I’ll show you where your heart is. Your heart follows your money.”

Want a heart for Microsoft? Put your

money in it! Want a heart for General Motors? Buy up shares.

Want a heart for God? Put your treasures where God is at work. Want a heart for missions? Put your treasures in missions. Want a heart for your church’s ministry? Invest your money in your church’s ministry. Develop vested interests in the work of God. *Every day, buy up more shares in God’s kingdom!*

Years ago, when I was a pastor, we decided our church didn’t have God’s heart for the poor and needy. We asked around to find out who was doing the best job in famine relief, chose World Relief, and decided to invest some treasure in Heaven.

Though our missions budget was only \$60,000 at the time, we took a famine relief offering of \$25,000 and were informed that made us World Relief’s largest church supporter. In the years since, God has grabbed ahold of our church, and we have gone from being a church with a small heart for missions to a church with a great heart for missions. In 1998, our church’s missions budget was \$384,000. Above that we gave \$200,000 to various missions projects and a famine relief offering of \$253,000 to World Relief, for a total of \$830,000. Our expanding giving to missions has resulted in an expanding heart for missions. That’s what giving does – you put your treasure somewhere, and it takes your heart there.

When our missions pastor returned from Sudan one November and told us of the opportunity to rescue Christians taken into slavery, family after family spontaneously decided to forgo Christmas presents and give instead to free slaves. The fourth-grade class at our school came up with projects to raise thousands of dollars. A sixth-grade girl took the \$50 she’d saved up to play basketball and gave it to Sudan. One family had several hundred dollars they’d been saving for years to go to Disneyland, and their child asked if they could give the money to help slaves. Before long people had given \$60,000 to redeem slaves, and we never even had a special offering. It was contagious. If we increase people’s vision for investing in eternity and help them see opportunities to make a difference, *God will take care of raising funds*.

## NOW'S OUR OPPORTUNITY

Five minutes after we die, we'll know exactly how we should have lived, but it will be too late to go back and change anything. God has given us His Word so *we don't have to wait until we die to know how we should have lived*. There's no second chance for the unbeliever – but also no second chance for the believer!

You and I have one life on earth to invest in Heaven. Let's not miss the opportunity. Here's a prayer for us: May what will be most important to us five minutes after we die, become most important to us now.

I have one final question: Why are so many Christians today afraid to die? It's because we have made this world our home. The Bible tells us something else – that we are pilgrims, strangers, aliens, ambassadors. *Our citizenship is in Heaven*. But we've become so attached to this world – our roots are so deep – that we live for the wrong kingdom. We forget our true home, built for us by the Carpenter from Nazareth, waiting for us in a far better place.

Most Christians have laid up their treasures on earth. Consequently, every day that brings them closer to death takes them further from their treasures. They end up backing into eternity, not wanting to let go of the mudpies they've accumulated.

Christ calls us to turn it around – to store up our treasures in Heaven so instead of backing away from our treasures, we're always moving *toward* our treasures.

He who spends his life moving away from his treasures has reason to despair; he who spends his life moving toward his treasures has reason to rejoice.

*Are you moving toward your treasures or away from them?*

Alfred Nobel was a Swedish chemist who made his fortune by inventing dynamite and other powerful explosives, which were bought by governments to produce weapons. When Nobel's brother died, one newspaper accidentally printed Alfred's obituary instead. He was described as a man who became rich from enabling people to kill each other in unprecedented quantities. Shaken from this assessment, Nobel resolved to use his fortune to

reward accomplishments that benefited humanity, including what we now know as the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nobel had a rare opportunity – to look at the assessment of his life at its end, but to still be alive and have the opportunity to change that assessment. The same is true for us. Right now, we live on earth, the land of second chances.

Let's put ourselves in Nobel's place. Let's read our own obituary, not as written by uninformed or biased men, but as an on-looking angel might write it from Heaven's point of view. Let's look at it carefully. Then let's use the rest of our lives to edit that obituary into what we really want it to be, and to live each day with the knowledge that every moment we get closer to death, we get closer to our treasures rather than further from them.

*God, give us an eternal perspective, to change the way we think and the way we give, the degree to which we invest all that we are and have into eternity. Help us to invest our resources in your kingdom*

*purposes, now and forever. Help us not to serve our own agendas, but yours, and to live our lives for your glory and hear you say to us one day, "Well done my good and faithful servant." We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.* RP

*A version of this article first appeared on Randy Alcorn's Eternal Perspective Ministries website EPM.org. He is the author of more than two dozen books, fiction and non-fiction, many of which we've reviewed including: **Heaven, Lord Foulgrin's Letters, and The Grace and Truth Paradox**. He's also made two past editions of his concise pro-life books available for free – **Does the Birth-Control Pill Cause Abortions?** and **Why Pro-life?** – both of which can be found on ReformedPerspective.ca. Strangely, we haven't reviewed the one of his books that might be most akin to this article, **The Treasure Principle**, even though it's a favorite of both editor Jon Dykstra and Executive Director Mark Penninga.*



we are  
**HIRING**

Hope Academy is a Christian mission school located in Brampton ON. We are excited to announce that we are growing and looking to hire an additional teacher for the 2023-2024 school year! We are currently looking for the following positions:

- Elementary teacher - full time / part time
- Supply teacher

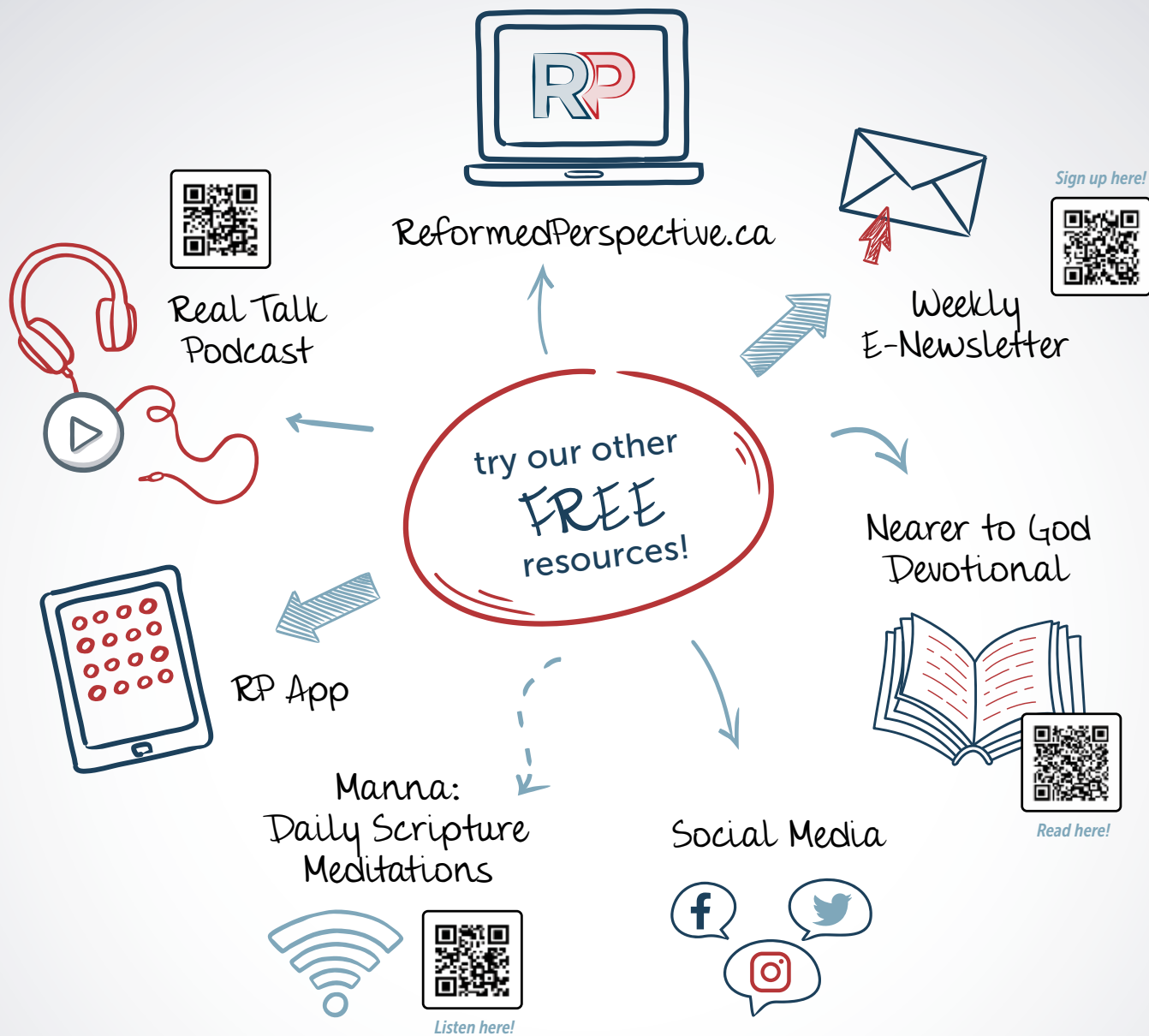
For more information, please  
call Chris Van Dyken

416 254 1617

Please send your resume,  
statement of faith, and  
philosophy of education to

chris.vandyken@hope-academy.ca

# Want more from RP?



**Between all our platforms, RP's reach is now 1-2 Million a year.**

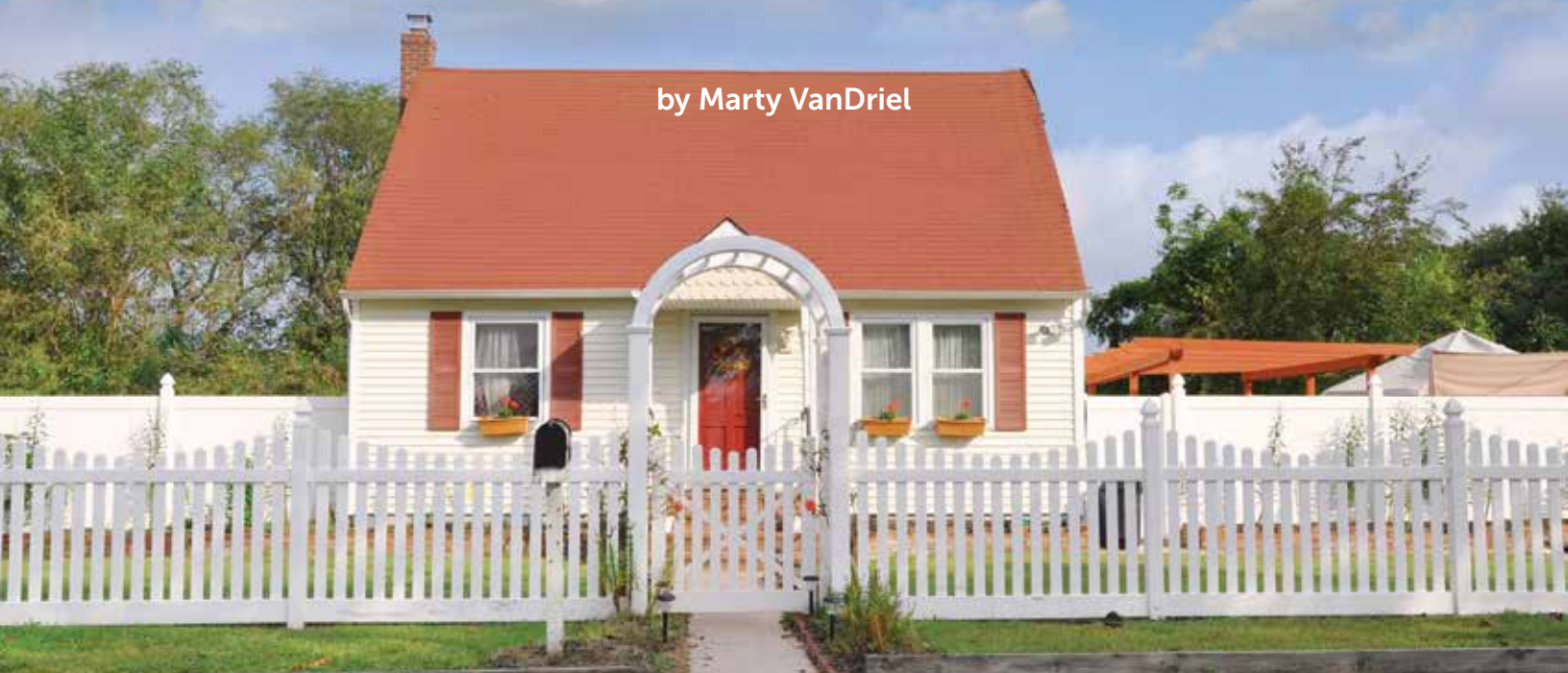


Our work is funded by people like you who give monthly or annually so that we can share a Reformed Perspective with the world. Our costs continue to increase as more people are hungry for a faithful alternative to the mainstream media. If you are willing to help us cover these costs and grow, donations can be made at **[www.ReformedPerspective.ca/donate](http://www.ReformedPerspective.ca/donate)**, e-transferred to **[admin@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:admin@reformedperspective.ca)**, or mailed to Box 3609, Smithers BC, V0J 2N0. RP is a registered Canadian charity.

# HOME OWNERSHIP FOR CHRISTIANS

How it happened in the past, and how it might now

by Marty VanDriel



**A**s home prices have risen in most of Canada, young people may be wondering if they will ever be able to afford to own their own home.

In BC's Fraser Valley, and in the golden triangle of southern Ontario, prices have fallen recently, but a rise in interest rates have kept mortgage payments at a rate that is unaffordable for many. Is a house with a white picket fence to call one's own an impossible dream today? How should Christians approach the concept of home ownership, and are there ways that we can be of service to one another in this important part of our lives?

I interviewed young couples, homeowners, renters, realtors, and others to get some insight into how Christians

view real estate ownership, and to provide helpful advice for those who are wondering what the best course of action is for their family.

## SOME BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

We turn first to Scripture for some general principles on home and land ownership.

Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it!" Christians know from God's Word that all of creation belongs to our God: He made it all, and He owns every square inch. Because we acknowledge God's ownership of every bit of creation, Christians view our "ownership" of a home, or a business differently. We

acknowledge that the Lord calls us to be good stewards of what He has entrusted to us, and that He expects us to "be fruitful, to fill the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28).

The Lord gave wise laws through Moses that emphasized a family's ownership of land. One who was in financial difficulty could lend his land to another, but this was not to be a permanent change in ownership: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land you shall allow a redemption of the land" (Leviticus 25:23-24).

Further in Leviticus 25, Moses draws a distinction between agricultural

land, and houses in “walled cities.” “If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a year of its sale. For a full year, he shall have the right of redemption. If it is not redeemed within a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong in perpetuity to the buyer throughout his generations.” (vs. 29-30). Homes attached to farmland were treated differently; they did return to the family who originally owned them. Since many of us now live in “walled cities” – that is, we do not depend on the fruit of the land for our income – it makes sense that these two types of properties were treated differently.

More than 2,000 years later, we may look at the principles laid out in Scripture for guidance as we consider real estate and home ownership. We no longer live in God’s promised land, with guidelines for generational ownership, yet we observe that the Lord commanded His people to care for the land He entrusted to them, and that He blessed Israel as they did so faithfully, from generation to generation.

## THE CANADIAN DREAM

Home ownership has long been part of the Canadian dream. For many in the Reformed community, our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents emigrated from the Netherlands with the hope of better economic opportunities, and a desire to buy their own farm, homestead, or family home... which may have been out of reach in the old country. Then, as now, a house was a costly purchase, and required diligent saving for a down payment, and prudent money management to make the monthly mortgage payments.

Despite the challenges, most families in decades past found ways to get into home ownership, and by living below their means, and perhaps doing without some of the non-necessities, they were able to make their mortgage payments. It was not uncommon among our immigrant community for a couple to make do with one car for the family, and it was likely not a brand new vehicle but one that was purchased at least a few years old.

## THEN VERSUS NOW

We are accustomed these days to inexpensive electronic devices, and to Wi-Fi access throughout our homes. A generation or two ago, a television was a costly appliance, and many families did without these: having a screen for everyone in the house was not considered a necessity!

Another area that families did without was luxurious vacations. Although a trip to Mexico or Europe would be wonderful, many decided that camping at a lake, or making a road trip to cottage

## FINANCES FOR THE LAYMAN:

### A PODCAST REVIEW OF “TWO STEWARDS”

by Marty VanDriel

Two Christian businessmen from southern Ontario with passion for real estate, money management, and other financial topics wanted to share their experience and advice with the broader world. What better way than to start a podcast?

Mark Krikke and Brent VanderWoude call their two-man show “Two Stewards” (TwoStewards.ca), a great title for lessons on stewardship that are communicated in layman’s terms, with good humor thrown in. Mark and his wife Kristen Krikke founded Joy-hill Property Management, specializing in



short and medium-term property rentals. Brent and Cherita VanderWoude own “Good Stewards” (GoodStewards.ca), a company with the goal of helping clients invest in real estate with someone at their side as a partner and adviser.

“There are a ton of podcasts out there with promises of getting rich quick, and that’s not us,” said VanderWoude. “We want to highlight financial realities of the world we live in, and help people make stewardly decisions with their money, all from a Christian perspective.” As VanderWoude laid out in their first show, “If your money is going to outpace inflation, you can’t just put it in a savings account; that just doesn’t work anymore.”

After two introductory shows, the next episodes of the podcast have focused on real estate as an investment, with the hosts making a strong case that buying homes for this purpose is superior to many other ways to make your money grow. In episode three, Krikke touted the ability to leverage your investing dollars – you, as an investor, provide the down payment, but the bank lends you a multiple of those funds, allowing you to make a return on a larger investment than your original down payment. The hosts also brought up cash flow, third-party paydown, and price appreciation as just some of the reasons to choose real estate for your investing.

If these terms are making your head spin or your eyes glaze over, you might appreciate Krikke’s and VanderWoude’s simple and down-to-earth explanations of each of these concepts. “Two Stewards” can be found on all the usual podcasting apps, on Youtube, and on their website TwoStewards.ca.



These condo apartments in the Niagara area went for \$130,000 ten years ago, and are now listing for almost \$400,000.

country would be a great way to make memories with their children.

From 2003 to 2018, prices for free-standing houses increased up to 330% in parts of Canada. Especially in greater Vancouver and southern Ontario, supply and demand drove prices up to levels that seem unimaginable to those who considered homes expensive already decades ago.

Immigration to Canada from all over the world drove part of the demand side of this equation: in the last two years, more than 830,000 immigrants have moved into the Great White North, and many of these people have moved to areas that already had booming real estate prices. Construction costs for newly built homes have also ballooned. Higher wages for construction workers, increased costs for materials, and more and more red tape from local government all contributed to the costs that builders incurred, and passed on to new home buyers.

At the same time, the earning power of workers has grown exponentially. The average salary of a Canadian wage earner increased 2.45% each year the past

twenty years, with large spikes in the past couple of years (including over 10% in 2020). This is slightly lower than the 3.8% overall inflation rate in Canada over the same time period, but not outrageously different.

### WISDOM FROM GOD'S PEOPLE

Given all of the above, what wisdom can we offer a young Christian couple today? We all have different gifts and abilities; we live in different parts of the country, with different real estate pricing; what Scriptural principles can we apply to our lives today to honor the Lord in all aspects of life? I talked to several couples and families in different stages of their earthly journey, seeking wisdom for God's people today.

Bert and Linda Vane are members of the Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church in BC, and are parents of eleven children. Bert began his career as an entrepreneur in landscaping, employing many young people in landscape maintenance and new construction. As the Lord blessed them, the Vanes also invested in agricultural businesses, in real estate, and other

opportunities. Bert believes that God gives all His creatures the obligation to work, and gives us stewardship of different pieces of life on earth.

“God grants us the right to ‘own’ a piece of His creation, to provide shelter and food for our families. He gives us the responsibility to provide for our families, and home ownership is a part of this calling.”

Bert believes without a doubt that ownership of one's own house is a godly desire, that ownership of property grants many blessings in the course of one's life. These blessings include financial increase, but also add the stability granted to families when they are able to remain rooted in a location where they can be a dependable part of a church community.

### MORTGAGE HELPERS

Since owning a home has become increasingly expensive, renting our primary residence has become another reasonable choice for Christians. Especially for young couples, needing only

a one or two-bedroom home or suite in their first years of marriage, renting can be a wise decision for a period of time. This is most often not a wise choice for the long term (longer than 18 months), since ultimately costs for a rental unit are based on real estate prices, which change with time, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mostly increase at or above the level of inflation.

When we were newly married, way back in the day, my wife Faith and I returned from our honeymoon to a one-bedroom suite in the basement of brother and sister-in-law, Ken and Christine VanderPloeg. I never thought to ask at the time, but I'm sure that our meager monthly rental payments were appreciated in Ken and Christine's financial journey as they used that suite as a "mortgage helper," and raised six children in that same home. We lived in that basement suite for a bit less than two years, when we were blessed to be able to buy our own home. It was also in Surrey, BC, and also contained a basement suite that was our own mortgage helper in the following years.

I can recall a few sleepless nights as Faith and I wondered whether or not it was the right thing to do, to buy our own home, especially as the purchase price seemed so impossibly high, more than ten times our annual earnings back in 1993. With

good council from parents and in-laws, we went forward in faith, and bought our first home. We had enough funds for a good-sized down payment, thanks to my wife's diligent savings, and we were able to borrow from family instead of the bank for the remainder, at a favorable interest rate. Later I learned that my parents-in-law, Henk and Jennie Schoen, had been able to offer similar assistance to all of their nine children, a result of their own stewardly financial management, and a generous spirit that was a blessing to all of us. Thanks Dad and Mom (since departed to glory)!

Readers may glean a few principles from the example above. First, living in less than ideal circumstances, with a suite as a mortgage helper, or a partnership arrangement of some kind, can be a great stepping stone to home ownership. And second, when parents or family are able to help financially or otherwise, they can be a huge blessing to a young couple that otherwise might not be able to afford a house of their own.

### A FEW CURRENT EXAMPLES

Younger readers might be forgiven for scoffing at my own example of getting into the real estate market: "That's well and good for you, old timer, but



Sean and Lauren Stel have been able to buy a house by doing so with Lauren's brother Ben Ravensbergen.

things have changed today! Prices are so high compared to your day!" That is certainly true: real estate prices are far higher today, but income levels are also much higher than past generations. Further, thriftiness as our parents and grandparents practiced, creative solutions like basement suites or partnerships, and tapping into the generous spirit of family and friends, are all still enormous

## CAN YOU AFFORD A HOME? – SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

by Marty VanDriel

If you're wondering if you can afford a home, this would be a good time to look carefully at your monthly expenditures. Christians are called to be wise stewards of what God has entrusted to us, and He has blessed us with so much! Yet if we are not careful, we can so easily fritter away our funds, and end up not being able to take care of obligations or move ahead with good goals like home ownership.

In Luke 14, Jesus gave a parable about the cost of being one of his disciples, and used the analogy of a builder considering his expenditures before tackling a project: "For which of you, desiring to

build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

### DON'T JUST THINK ABOUT IT

A tool to help in deciding whether or not one can afford a home is a monthly budget. Most people hate budgeting; it can be such a tedious task! But it is also an excellent discipline that will make an enormous impact on your ability to manage your income and expenses, and over time will result in you being able to be even more generous to charitable causes, and to help others along your path.

How do you start? Like any journey, it always begins with the first step. Take a notebook, or open a new spreadsheet, and for 60 days, write down and categorize every time you spend money. You can download your banking transactions into financial software as a shortcut, but it is more effective the "old fashioned" way – making you more conscious of your spending patterns.

Categorize your spending into different categories as follows: charity, savings, groceries, mortgage or rent, insurance, home maintenance, education, property taxes, entertainment, dining out, utilities, transportation, clothing,

medical/health, and personal care. After 60 days of tracking your expenses, you'll have a pretty good idea of where your money is going, and you can set goals in these categories that will help you decrease your spending where it is not important, and increase your savings.

### A SAMPLE BUDGET

This graph shows what a typical household might set as goals for spending in these different categories (these may be quite different for you depending on where you live, and your stage of life):

- Charity: 10% (Make this your first expenditure, not your last!)
- Savings: 10%
- Mortgage/Rent: 25%
- Education: 10% (Depends greatly on what stage of life you are at!)
- Groceries/household: 10%
- Utilities: 6%
- Insurance monthly: 5%
- Property tax monthly: 5%
- Transportation / gas / savings for repairs: 5%
- Home maintenance / savings for maintenance: 5%
- Clothing: 2%
- Personal care: 2%
- Medical / Dental / Health: 2%
- Gifts: 1%
- Entertainment / Recreation: 1%
- Eating away from home: 1%

Many financial planners recommend that you not take on a mortgage that would result in more than 30% of your monthly expenditures going to your home (including property tax, home insurance, and monthly payments). As you develop your own budget, you'll be able to see if that "rule of thumb" works for you.

### THE "FREEDOM FUND"

Sometimes our budgets go astray when we have bills for an unplanned car repair, or when our annual home insurance premium comes due. Financial planners have recommended a concept called the "Freedom Fund," and it can be a huge help. For expenses that are regular and planned (like an insurance bill, or

property taxes), one can divide the total expected expense in 12, and then set aside that amount every month into a dedicated savings account.

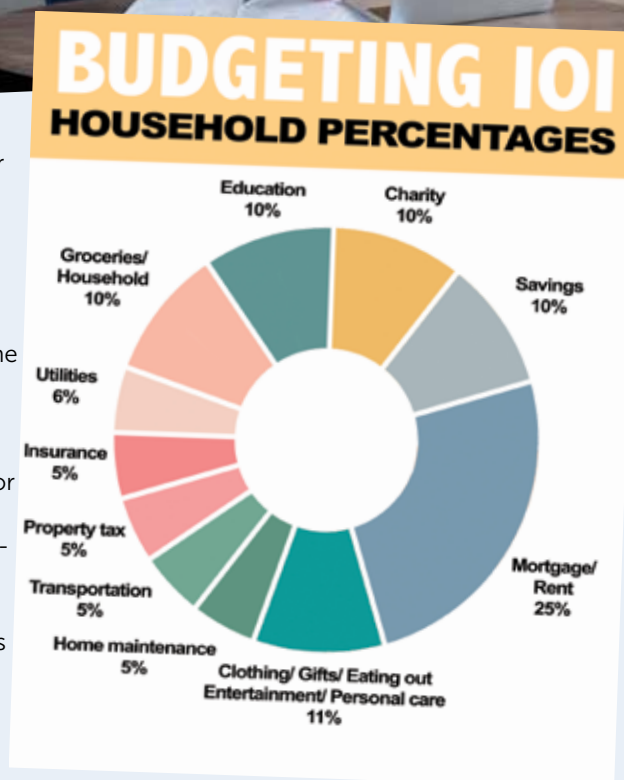
For expenses that are not regular, but that we can expect will come up, like a car repair bill, or major appliance replacement, one can set aside a reasonable amount (as low as \$50 per month, or as high as you might think prudent) into another savings account. (Many banks and credit unions allow members to create "sub accounts" connected to their savings account, and even allow you to name them online!)

These savings accounts, labeled for their intended purpose (like "Car Repair" or "Home Repair" or "Insurance"), become your "Freedom Funds," so named because they can free you of the stress of sudden bills or non regular expenses. It's a really simple concept, but if you follow the suggestion, you will find yourself in better control of your finances!


### CASH IS THE ANSWER!

One more incredibly effective way to stretch your money further is to begin paying for most of your purchases with cash. Yes, it's old-fashioned; no, it's not as convenient as plastic, but you may be absolutely certain that you will spend less, and will be better able to stick to your budget, if you change to cash as your payment system for every one of the categories that you can do so.

At the beginning of each week, or perhaps after each paycheck, take out cash for each category for which you are responsible. (You can use envelopes to



differentiate each category, or you can buy an organizer wallet that has three or four different compartments.) When the funds for a category are empty, that's it for spending for that period!

People laugh when they hear this suggestion – it's so simple – how can it work? But it really does have a powerful effect on overall spending. There's something about having to take cash out of a wallet that is more of a deliberate spending choice than simply swiping or inserting a credit or debit card. Try it! You have nothing to lose except a little bit of convenience. 

opportunities today just as they were in previous generations.

Sean Stel is a software engineer working for L3Harris Wescam; he and his wife Lauren have two children. The Stels have been shopping for the right real estate deal for some time in the Smithville, Ontario area. Sean and Lauren brought Lauren's brother Ben Ravensbergen into the buying process, and are together on the cusp of buying a home together. Ben works in construction, and hopes to be able to build a suite in the home for his own use. Sean and Lauren are very thankful for the opportunity to make this work, and hope to be able to live in their new home for many years. Sean shared the good advice that he received from family and friends: "Write down whatever you agree to, so that you don't have any forgetfulness or misunderstanding down the road!" Especially as property values fluctuate, and as life circumstances change, this is indeed good counsel for anyone who buys a home with a partner.

Ben and Meagan den Boer are Australian immigrants living in the Fraser Valley of BC. Ben is a teacher at Credo Christian High School, and Meagan, a former nurse in Australia, is a stay-at-home mom. Right now, the den Boers can't see a way to buying a home in the Fraser Valley. With a teacher's salary, with home prices as high as they are, and with most family connections being back home in Australia, it doesn't seem to make sense for the young couple. The den Boers are very grateful for their current living space, as they rent a two-bedroom apartment (mortgage helper) at a reasonable rent. Meagan stated that none of her friends in BC have been able to buy a home yet at this point, and many are renting basement suites or apartments from family and acquaintances. Ben and Meagan do already own a home back in Australia, and are glad they did not sell it upon their move to Canada.

## OWNING VERSUS RENTING

Tim Bratcher and Brian Bratcher are twin brothers, and immigrants to Canada from Pennsylvania. Tim and Brian were born and raised as members of the Blue Bell American Reformed Church;

both brothers married Canadian spouses, and both ended up living in southern Ontario with their families. Brian and his wife Alicia bought a home in Dunnville about seven years ago. Although the purchase price was high compared to house prices in other parts of the U.S.A. or Canada where they could have moved, Brian and Alicia were able to borrow funds from relatives that made the purchase work. Seven years later, their home is worth more than double what they paid for it, and they have been able to put down roots in Dunnville.

Tim and his wife Amanda have not been able to make that same leap into the market, but have been able to rent a home that has worked for their family. Tim and Amanda moved out of Guelph to Welland, where rents are more affordable. Tim has strong opinions on real estate and landlords, and believes that a part of the increase in housing prices has been small investors who buy homes to rent them out. "I'd advise against buying a \$500,000 home as a rental income property, if you know that you'll have to charge at or above the current going rate. It just bumps that average higher, and each new unit will 'snap' to that new rate."

## HELP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Reformed Christians in 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada have been tremendously blessed in so many ways by our God. This includes incredible financial blessings! On average, "baby boomers" (born between 1946 and 1964) are considered the wealthiest people ever in the history of the world, and members of "Generation X" (born from 1965 to 1982) are not far behind, perhaps on a trajectory to surpass their parents in



Ben and Meagan den Boer, along with their little guy Micaiah. Like many young couples in BC's Fraser Valley, they haven't found a home purchase that makes sense for them.

wealth. How might we use what God has entrusted to us for the good of God's Kingdom?

God calls us to recognize His ownership of everything on earth: even while we think about "our" wealth, or "our" savings, we do well to remember that ultimately it is all the Lord's. Might we be able to take part of our long-term savings or investments and have it be a blessing for our brothers and sisters, as well as for ourselves?

Here are a few ways that family can help younger people get into home ownership:

### ***1. Celebrate the wedding, help with the house!***

We've all seen wedding celebrations that become ostentatious displays, with lavish and unnecessary spending on things that mean very little in the long run. Are there ways that we as parents and grandparents and friends can encourage our children to appropriately celebrate their wedding with family and friends, while not digging a financial hole at the very start of their married life? When young couples are presented

with the huge consequences of putting \$15,000 towards the down payment on a house, and \$10,000 towards a wedding celebration, versus \$25,000 towards the wedding, we can help them make decisions that will be of huge benefit to them in the long term. (Hint: no one remembers what kind of napkins you had at your wedding, or what kind of food was served, but everyone remembers the speeches and the *gezelligheid*!)

## 2. Sharing our homes

Many of us still live in the homes in which we raised our families, and no longer need all the room that we have. Yet, it might not make economic sense for us to move because of the cost of moving, or we might just enjoy the home in which we live. Could we find a way to accommodate our married children in our homes for a few years while they get established? This may be for a few months; it may be for a few years, but however it is accomplished, it can be a huge savings for a young family.

## 3. Lending funds at a low interest rate, or co-signing a loan

With mortgage rates much higher than they were three years ago, interest has become a much larger component of buyers' monthly payments. Could you lend your relatives or friends some of your savings at a lower rate than the bank would lend to them? Or could you lend them a portion of the down payment at low or no interest?

Co-signing a loan, while potentially risky for the co-signer, is also an avenue to helping a young couple to establish credibility with a bank. (Co-signers need to be aware that they are responsible for continued payments on loans, even when things get messy!)

## 4. Lending funds as a shared investment

Many economists believe that real estate prices in Canada will continue to rise well above the rate of inflation. For

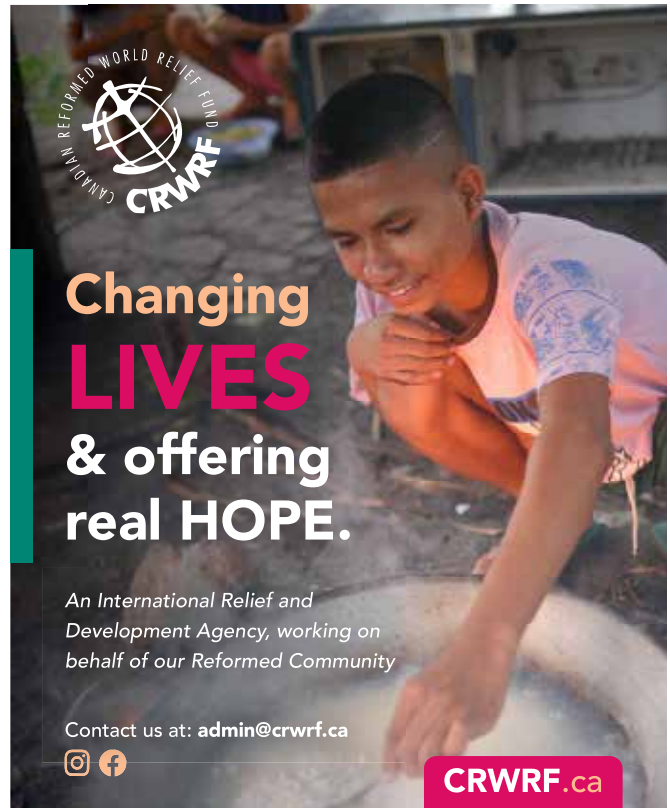
your long-term savings, could you find a way to invest in real estate with your children or grandchildren, providing part of the capital required in exchange for a percentage of the increase in value?

This concept requires careful documentation so that all parties are aware of how increases or losses in value are shared, but may be a good investment for the older generation, as well as a huge helper for the younger generation.

## CONCLUSION

From the examples above, and from our own experience, we can observe that home ownership has been an enormous blessing for generations of Canadian Christians. In the long term, owning one's own home is foundational to financial stability and good

stewardship of the resources the Lord has entrusted to us. May the Lord give wisdom to young couples considering how they may become homeowners, and may He give a spirit of generosity to older generations wishing to help their children and grandchildren in this good and godly goal. RP



**Changing LIVES & offering real HOPE.**

An International Relief and Development Agency, working on behalf of our Reformed Community

Contact us at: [admin@crwrf.ca](mailto:admin@crwrf.ca)

[CRWRF.ca](https://www.crwrf.ca)

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

 <b>Rachel VANDYK</b> Administrator <a href="mailto:rachel@yourniagarahome.com">rachel@yourniagarahome.com</a>	 <b>Randy MULDER</b> sales representative 905-359-9411	 <b>Bill BROUWER</b> sales representative 905-341-4400	 <b>Ron MULDER</b> sales representative 905-327-4564	 <b>John MEERVELD</b> Broker 905-531-0093	 <b>Lisa VROLIJK</b> Administrator <a href="mailto:lisa@yourniagarahome.com">lisa@yourniagarahome.com</a>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**YOUR NIAGARA HOME TEAM**  **RE/MAX GARDEN CITY**  
For All Your Real Estate Needs  
each office independently owned & operated  
reality inc., brokerage  
2390 South Service Road, Jordan

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA

MAY-JUNE 2023

## PUZZLE CLUES

Find this issue's solution on page 2!

### ACROSS

1. "Say it twice, sailor!"
4. Polite address to *female* captain
8. "How \_\_\_\_" are God's thoughts! (Ps. 139)
12. Current capital of Yemen
13. "not \_\_\_\_ to finish" (Luke 14)
14. Vine-covered
16. Prejudice toward a certain type of tire
17. Kind of unclean bird in Mosaic law
18. "\_\_\_\_\_ again be put to shame." (Joel 2)
19. Ending of ballad or auction?
20. It's bottomless. (Rev. 9, 11, 17, 20)
21. "Prove me, O LORD, and \_\_\_\_ me" (Ps. 26)
23. "A rose by \_\_\_\_ other name..." (Shakespeare)
24. Someone who works with pianos
26. Mountain in Europe
28. Animal noise in 26 Across
30. How to get RP on the web (abbr.)
32. "offered a sacrifice to the \_\_\_\_" (Acts 7)
36. \_\_\_\_ *the Looking Glass* (except, in slang)
39. "a burning place" (Is. 30)
41. "Want to play a \_\_\_\_?" "Sure, I'm \_\_\_\_!"
42. "Then \_\_\_\_ you hence to..."  
(*Romeo and Juliet*)
43. "I give this ring as a \_\_\_\_ of my love."
45. \_\_\_\_ Lizzie (early Model T nickname)
46. Cheesy Dutch product
48. "A prophet? \_\_\_\_, \_ tell you..." (Luke 7)
49. "He... \_\_\_\_ up kings" (Dan. 2)
50. Emperor, likely, during Paul's ministry
51. How to pay for shipping haddock?  
(acronym)
52. Justin Trudeau's puppy, or his Papa?
54. It's roughly the same shape as 53 Down.
56. Eagle's home that sounds spooky?
60. Cold part of 73 Across?
63. "All for \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ for all!" (Dumas)
65. Nothing; no; nada; zilch; zero
67. They come before 3 Down.
68. Foundational material (Rev. 21)
70. One part of an offering (Lev. 7, 8)
72. With all due speed; stat (abbr.)
73. Piece of cake
74. Peasant partly serving a feudal lord
75. Leery; skeptical; suspicious
76. How tea is served in a heat wave
77. Small whirlpool
78. "I love \_\_\_\_." (ram's declaration?)

### DOWN

1. God be with ye, in France
2. Desire, partly earnestly
3. They come after 67 Across.
4. "Gift of the \_\_\_\_" (O'Henry story title)
5. Have a common boundary
6. "They were \_\_\_\_ together" (Acts 2)
7. "every human heart will \_\_\_\_"  
(Is. 13)
8. A record-making material
9. It's often crossed by a st.
10. Alternate spelling for Hindu "god"
11. Typical high school student
12. Aid and \_\_\_\_: an offensive combination?
15. Kind of wit or wine
20. In favor of paid work
22. Musical form of TobyMac and Shai Linne
25. The Great \_\_\_\_ War of 1932 (in Australia)
27. \_\_\_\_ War of 1859 (in San Juan Islands)
29. Choose
30. Annoyed, with some ire involved
31. "who hopes for what he \_\_\_\_?"  
(Rom. 8)
33. Sounds like a piece of historical data!
34. Skip; leave out; exclude
35. It focuses light in a camera or eye.
36. It tells when.
37. "they fled to \_\_\_\_ themselves"  
(Dan. 10)
38. Where good generals don't lead from?
40. It's up and down when you play with it.
44. Little bite
47. Type of rule that causes chaos
49. Home on the farm
51. It's made out of 45 Across.
53. Delicacy in Japan, but not if electric
55. Seeped, leaked out
57. Cut again, or looked at the cut again
58. Not the real thing
59. Notice from a distance; also a sports award
60. "\_\_\_\_ the real thing..." (Coca-Cola slogan)
61. E. \_\_\_\_ (intestinal bacteria; possible illness)
62. Long hero story in poetry
64. "I don't need it. Give it to someone \_\_\_\_"
65. "\_\_\_\_ and saffron," (Song of Songs)
66. Potentially problematic
69. Very good fighter pilot
71. It has 600,000 words. (abbr.)
72. It can be high or low in cards.

### LIKE THE CROSSWORD? PLEASE SEND US A NOTE!

What do you think about the crossword? Is the difficulty too high? Too low? Should we keep it? Or should it go? If you like it, can you let us know? You can do so by sending a quick note to [admin@ReformedPerspective.ca](mailto:admin@ReformedPerspective.ca). Your responses will help us a lot – thanks!

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## MEDIA-CREATED NEWS

If you feel a need to know all that's going on in the world around you, it's important to understand how little the media account may actually represent reality. Jonathon Van Maren makes that point in his article "Malcolm Muggeridge on Christ and the Media":

In his slim 1977 volume *Christ and the Media*, Malcolm Muggeridge describes a scene instantly recognizable to anyone familiar with political protest in our TV age. He was in Washington, D.C. working as a correspondent and came across a group of protestors moping about, holding slackened signs, chatting. Bored police were also present. What were they waiting for? The cameras, as it turned out. Once they showed up – action! "Whereupon placards were lifted, slogans shouted, fists clenched; a few demonstrators were arrested and pitched into the police van, and a few cops kicked until, 'Cut!'" Moments later, the streets were again silent. On TV that evening, it all looked very impressive. "On the television screen," revolutionary Jerry Rubin once observed, "news is not so much reported as created."

SOURCE: [TheBridgehead.ca/2021/03/29/malcolm-muggeridge-on-christ-and-the-media/](https://TheBridgehead.ca/2021/03/29/malcolm-muggeridge-on-christ-and-the-media/)

## REASONS TO READ

"A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age."

– C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

## A NEED FOR THE OUTRAGEOUS?

There's a fellow I read occasionally because he has some unique insights into our culture. But I rarely quote him, because the way he talks is generally outside the bounds of what even Christians find acceptable. I'm not talking about truly offensive speech, but more that he'll call spades spades right when everyone else is avoiding mention of dirt-moving equipment altogether. He explained:

"...I personally decided to say things that are outside the Overton Window, knowing that this came with risks. My bet was that the good I could do was likely to outweigh the possible negative outcomes. You might make similar choices. The idea then is not to live in fear, but to be smartly and strategically courageous."

The "Overton Window" is a term to describe the range

(window) of acceptable discourse – what makes for polite conversation. And this Window can be shifted. For example, publicly stating that homosexuality is sinful fell inside this Window when I was a kid, but it doesn't anymore. Why did things shift? Because some on the outside were willing to publicly state outrageous things like "homosexuality is good!" By repeatedly making these "out of bounds" statements they normalized the thought, and started pulling the Window in their direction. The eventual result was that what they were saying wasn't viewed as outrageous any more.

This Christian writer has taken that lesson, and decided to state his positions baldly, even when they fall well outside the Overton Window. He's doing so in an attempt to pull that Window back where it belongs. The problem with his approach is that he'll sometimes sound rude and crude, even to the Christians who agree with him.

I've had a different approach, generally trying to make my case in as winsome a manner as possible. I want to frame what are becoming outrageous positions – that euthanasia is murder, the unborn are as valuable as you and me, that men can't become women – as if they actually fall within the Overton Window, as they obviously should.

But the problem with my approach is that no matter how reasonably I might present something today, unless God brings our country to repentance, it's only a matter of time (only a matter of weeks?) before what was once acceptable is deemed bigoted. And then I'll either have to be okay with being outrageous, or I'll have to take back what I'd previously said.

So whose approach is better? It strikes me that while we still shouldn't be outrageous simply for the sake of being outrageousness, when saying "what is a woman?" will get you in trouble, then it's time for all of us to get comfortable with being outrageous.

## IF DAD TOLD ONLY DINOSAUR JOKES

As you might expect with dinosaur jokes, all of these are oldies. And some of them are even goodies.

*What do you call a dinosaur that never gives up?*

Try-try-try-ceratops

*What dinosaur makes a good police officer?* Tricera-cops

*What did the dinosaur call her blouse shop?* Try Sarah's Tops

*Why don't dinosaurs drive cars?*

Too many Tyrannosaurus wrecks

*What do you call a T-rex in a cowboy hat?*

Tyrannosaurus Tex

*How do you invite a dinosaur to a cafe?* "Tea, Rex?"

*Where does the T-rex spend its money?* At a dino-store

*What do you call a sleeping T-rex?* A dino-snore

*What do you get when a dinosaur scores a touchdown?*

A dino-score

*What did the dinosaur use to build his house?* A dino-saw

*Why did the dinosaur wear a bandage?* It had a dino-sore

SOURCE: Charles Keller's Colossal Fossils: Dinosaur Riddles, and the world wide web

## DON'T GO IT ALONE

"In more than a decade of pastoral ministry I've never met a Christian who was healthier, more mature, and more active in ministry by being apart from the church. But I have found the opposite to be invariably true. The weakest Christians are those least connected to the body. And the less involved you are, the more disconnected those following you will be. The man who attempts Christianity without the church shoots himself in the foot, shoots his children in the leg, and shoots his grandchildren in the heart."

– Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in our Holiness*

## A TURN OF A PHRASE

"Paraproductians" take a common figure of speech and put a twist on the ending. Comedian Groucho Marx ("I've had a perfectly wonderful evening, but this wasn't it") was a master, but the authorship of the very best examples are hard to track down. And what makes the very best good too, is that they are in fact true, the proof being in how they parallel Scripture.

- Don't argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience. (Prov. 26:4) – Mark Twain?
- When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember that the Fire Department usually uses water. (Prov. 15:1) – unknown
- Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak. (Prov. 17:28) – attributed, probably incorrectly, to Einstein
- Truth is hate to those who hate truth. (Prov. 9:7-8) – unknown

## 2 BODIES INVOLVED

Jeff Durbin is a Reformed Baptist pastor who, along with his church members, regularly witnesses in front of their local abortion clinic. In an exchange captured on their Apologia Studios YouTube channel he had an opportunity to drive home the point that there are two bodies involved in any pregnancy.

**MAN:** What's wrong with them being able to choose?

**DURBIN:** Who being able to choose?

**MAN:** Whoever. People should be able to do what they want with their bodies.

**DURBIN:** So, can I rape a woman?

**MAN:** No, you shouldn't do that.

**DURBIN:** So I can't do what I want with my own body, can I?

**MAN:** You can do what you want with your body. You just can't do anything with anyone else's body.

**DURBIN:** So, let me try this. A person should be able to do what they want with their own bodies. We shouldn't be allowed to just abuse other people's bodies.

**MAN:** Absolutely.

**DURBIN:** So, in the case of what's happening inside there right now, the woman's body is not dying. It's another body, biologically distinct inside of her, that is being killed. I'm all for women doing what they want with their bodies. I'm



in agreement with you actually, fundamentally, that we shouldn't be able to harm other people's bodies, which is precisely what's happening in there. I'm glad you joined us.

## THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW ON CHILDREN "CHOOSING" THEIR GENDER

In a Nov. 13, 1961 episode of *The Andy Griffith Show* titled "Opie's Hobo Friend," Sheriff Andy Taylor is concerned with the influence a hobo is having on his son. So he decides to have a talk with the man, David Browne. Browne wonders why the boy, Opie, can't just figure things out on his own.

**BROWNE:** Who's to say that the boy would be happier your way than mine. Why not let him decide?

**SHERIFF TAYLOR:** Nah, I'm afraid it don't work that way. You can't let a young'un decide for himself. He'll grab at the first flashy thing with shiny ribbons on it. Then, when he finds out there's a hook in it, it's too late. Wrong ideas come packaged with so much glitter that it's hard to convince 'em that other things might be better in the long run. All a parent can do is say "wait" and "trust me" and try to keep temptation away.

I almost titled this, "More sense in the 60s" but realized this wasn't an example of things being better and people being smarter back in the day. Instead, it was the opposite, showing that they were wrestling with similar problems then too. Maybe that's one reason why Solomon warns us "Do not say, 'Why were the old days better than these?' For it is not wise to ask such questions" (Eccl. 7:10). We won't appreciate the blessings of today, nor the courage of our parents, if we keep imagining that yesteryear was so much better.

*Rev. Alfred Sadd (1909-1942)*

# A GREAT MAN, AND A FAINT SHADOW

by Christine Farenhorst

The December 8, 1942 issue of *The Times*, the British daily newspaper based in London, published a small but complimentary obituary/article on the death of a Reverend Alfred Sadd.

So who was this Reverend Alfred Sadd?

## ALL ABOUT THE OCEAN

First seeing the light of day in Maldon, located in southeastern England, on November the 7th, 1909, Alfred was born into a wealthy timber and boat building family – a family which was blessed with eight children. His father, Henry Sadd, died while the boy was young and he was raised by his mother with helpful support from other family members. The Sadd household belonged to the Congregational Church – at that time a Protestant church in the Calvinist tradition tracing its roots to the Puritans. (Today, sadly, the Congregationalist Church is no longer doctrinally sound.)

Young Alfred enjoyed sailing and became a member of the Sea Scouts – part of the Scout movement which placed great emphasis on boating activities. Alfred knew every nook and cranny of the River Blackwater, a river close to his Maldon, Essex home. The young boy, who loved nature, collected oysters, fished and sailed around Northey Island watching the numerous birds who made their home in the area.

At the age of fourteen, Alfred was sent to the Leys School in Cambridge. Boarding there, the teenager probably had a Mr. Balgarnie as master when he was a student. Mr. Balgarnie happened to be the inspiration for the teacher in James Hilton's classic book *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*.

Not a natural academic, Alfred developed into a jack-of-all-trades, a person skilled at many jobs. He built houses, continued to be active in the Sea Scouts, repaired boats and also acquired a degree in physiology. Nevertheless, Alfred, good-natured and interested in everything and all those around him, eventually came to the conviction that he was meant to study theology in Cambridge.

## BECOMING A MISSIONARY

Perhaps because his heart was so set on serving God and, consequently, others, Alfred Sadd joined the London Missionary Society. (Eric Liddell – 1924 Olympic gold medalist in the 400-meter race – had also served as an LMS missionary and was sent to China by the Society.) In the mid 1930s, Alfred was commissioned by the Society to go to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, in the central Pacific Ocean. The station there was one of the most isolated stations of the LMS occupied by British missionaries. Alfred had no serious objections to going to such an outpost. He loved the sea and thought to import his scouting knowledge to the area, using it alongside his evangelical outreach. His standard form of introduction was saying: "Hello, I'm Sadd. But not really."

Tarawa, the capital of the Republic of Kiribati, was one of 32 atolls that formed

the island nation. An archipelago of atolls on the western side of Kiribati, it was divided into North Tarawa and South Tarawa. Home as it was to an array of flora and fauna, including a wealth of marine life, Alfred loved it. The seas around Tarawa teemed with tropical fish, shellfish, and sharks. Plant life in the area included coconut palms, banana trees, and papaya trees. And Alfred's work in this lovely place was blessed as he preached and lived alongside the islanders. Dedicated, Alfred loved his surroundings and his work. Coming home on a six-month furlough in 1938, he enthusiastically regaled his family with numerous stories of the people to whom he ministered, as well as the beautiful island on which they lived.

## STAYING PUT

When the Second World War began, Pastor Alfred Sadd was initially in a quandary. Should he evacuate, as the Europeans on the island were urged to do, and return home? But then what would happen to his beloved congregation? The Japanese, a grave danger especially after their attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, did not seem to be on the prowl in his immediate Tarawa neighborhood. A number of weeks passed after the Pearl Harbor attack and nothing much seemed

*When the Second World War began,  
Pastor Alfred Sadd was... in a quandary.  
Should he evacuate?*



"Six months after the Pearl Harbor raid, however, the Japanese did set foot on the island. They arrived violently..."

to change on the islands. Without question Alfred had come to the conclusion that he would stay. Consequently, he wrote home: "God has something bigger ... He intends me to do." Two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Tarawa was subject to a bombing raid. Concerned for the people in his church on the island of Tarawa, Alfred prayed much. It was now February of 1942. Even at this time, however, no Japanese soldiers had showed up on the shore and again he felt that he and his flock were relatively safe.

Six months after the Pearl Harbor raid, however, the Japanese did set foot on the island. They arrived violently and frightened both parishioners and non-parishioners with their long bayonets. When Alfred came alongside the harassed islanders, riding his bicycle and smiling encouragement, the Japanese soldiers spread a Union Jack in front of him and ordered him to drive his bicycle over it. When he refused, they confiscated the bicycle and he was taken to a commanding officer. Agreeably he strode in front of his captors, walking ahead of them in such large strides towards this commanding officer, that he left them behind. It annoyed the soldiers fearfully. The officer in charge again ordered Alfred to walk on the British flag. He smiled, approached it, but instead of walking on it, he turned to the right. There was another order, and

this time when he came to the flag, he turned to the left. Once more, infuriated by his insubordination, the officer told him to stomp on the flag. Instead, Alfred Sadd picked up the ensign, gathered it in his arms and kissed it.

The result of this patriotic outburst was that the British pastor was sent, along with nearly two dozen other island prisoners, to work in hard labor. Seventeen of these men were soldiers, or coastwatchers, men who had been designated to monitor Japanese advances. Most of them came from New Zealand. Five of them, like Alfred Sadd, were civilians.

### STANDING IN THE WAY

After Alfred had worked in hard labor for a number of days, there was an American air raid. This air raid motivated the Japanese to come to the decision to execute all prisoners.

Many of the condemned prisoners were not very old, barely out of school. They were afraid, uncertain and heavy-hearted. Alfred felt great compassion for these young men. As they stood in a row, waiting to be beheaded, he stepped to the front of the line. Courageously, he stood before them and spoke to them, cheering them on with words of faith. Perhaps at this point he remembered what he had written to his family at home not too

long before this time: "*God has something bigger ... He intends me to do.*" In any case, when he had finished speaking to the prisoners, he remained at the head of the line, almost as if shielding them as long as he could from the terrible fate that the Japanese had in mind. He thought more of their fears than his own. Alfred, consequently, was the first to be beheaded. It was October the 15th of 1942.

### ANOTHER SHIELD


When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane with eleven of His disciples just prior to being arrested, He was also concerned for their safety. They did not have any clear idea of the great plan of salvation. They were not even faintly aware of what God intended to do and they were opposed to the unfolding of events. Peter even took out a sword to stop the arrest.

Jesus did not praise Peter for taking out his sword. Rather, He told Peter to put away the sword in order to protect him as much as to protect those who came to arrest Him. Mark well the words of John 18:4-9.

Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "*I am He.*" Judas, who betrayed Him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "*I am He,*" they drew back and fell to the ground. So He asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that *I am He.* So, if you seek Me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that He had spoken: "Of those whom you gave Me I have lost not one."

Twice Jesus proclaimed that He is the great I AM. He had come for this specific hour and would let nothing stand in the way of His purpose which was and is the salvation of His people.

Much as Alfred Sadd's courage and love for his fellowmen is to be lauded, it is but a faint shadow compared to the courage and love Jesus showed for His elect.

Praised be His name! 

# Big Bang Christianity?

## CAN WE FIT THE BIG BANG INTO THE BIBLE?

by John Byl

**C**osmology is the most important subject in the world. Why? Because it is the story of the world: its origin, structure, purpose, and destiny. Our cosmology forms the basis for our response to the most fundamental questions regarding our existence. Our cosmological beliefs shape our morality, religion, and culture. Our cosmology is closely linked to our worldview.

I contend then, that to make Christianity plausible, we must critique the current secular worldview and particularly its

Big Bang cosmology. And then we must present Christianity as a comprehensive worldview with its own, Christ-centered, cosmology.

### TRYING OUT A BIBLICAL BIG BANG?

Unfortunately, many Christian scientists and theologians accept Big Bang cosmology as gospel truth, established beyond any reasonable scientific doubt. They believe that, to make Christianity plausible to our society, Christians should embrace Big Bang Cosmology.

Far from seeing “Big Bang Cosmology” (BBC) as a threat to Christianity, prominent apologists such as William Craig and Stephen Meyer believe it provides compelling evidence of the biblical teaching of *creatio ex nihilo*, thus offering a useful step in proving the existence of a transcendent God. For example, Meyer concludes:

“Taken jointly, general relativity and the Big Bang theory provide a scientific description of what Christian theologians have long described in doctrinal terms as *creatio ex nihilo* – creation out of nothing (again, nothing physical). These theories place a heavy demand on any proposed causal explanation of the universe, since the cause of the beginning of the universe must transcend time, space, matter, and energy.”<sup>1</sup>

Christian apologist Gregory Koukl goes even further,

**THE EXPLOSION THAT CREATED IT ALL?** Many Christian scientists and theologians believe that, to make Christianity plausible to our society, Christians should embrace Big Bang Cosmology.

“I know the Big Bang idea is controversial with some Christians, but I think that’s because they haven’t realized how well it fits the Story [the Christian worldview laid out in the Bible], which basically says the same thing.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course, since BBC forms an integral part of the naturalist worldview, Christians must first “baptize” BBC. This involves insisting that the biblical God is the creator of the universe, that BBC merely describes *how* God created, that



God *can* act miraculously at times, and so on. However, regarding the history of the physical universe, baptized BBC is factually identical to the naturalist version.

So, how well does BBC fit the Christian worldview? Are there really no clashes? Is there no theological price to pay? Let's examine more closely how the Bible and BBC compare regarding the past, future, and present structure of the universe.

## CONFLICTS REGARDING ORIGINS

### 1. Astronomical evolution

Big Bang Cosmology and Genesis certainly agree on a few things: the universe began a finite time ago, light was one of the first things created, and humans the last.

Yet, they differ hugely on the *timescale* (billions of years versus thousands of years) and the *order* of events (Sun, then Earth, then vegetation, versus Earth, then vegetation, then Sun). They differ also regarding the *mode* of creation. In BBC everything arises gradually through evolutionary processes, based solely on the operation of natural laws. According to the Bible, God acted directly at each step, bringing in something new. And this happened quickly: He spoke, and it was.

Further, they differ in that BBC assumes natural laws have never changed whereas, according to the Bible, rebellion against God subjected the entire creation, including astronomical objects, to distortion and decay, affecting even natural laws.

To harmonize the Bible with BBC one could simply re-interpret Genesis 1 (and Ex. 20:11; 31:17), treating the creation days as merely a literary device (e.g., the Framework Hypothesis) conveying theological rather than historical truth, and re-interpret those biblical texts speaking of the universal effect of sin (e.g., Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1; Heb. 12:26-27).

This may seem like a small price to pay to harmonize the Bible with modern cosmology. Unfortunately, this introduces the hermeneutical principle that perceived scientific truths should control our reading of Scripture. Once that hermeneutic is granted legitimacy, it becomes difficult to restrain.

### 2. Geological evolution

One could stop here, adopting an old universe/young earth position. This, however, is rarely done. Having accepted mainstream astronomy, why not likewise accept mainstream geology? Both are based on the same naturalist presuppositions. If the naturalist picture of the history of stars and planets is deemed reliable, why not also the naturalist picture of the history of planet Earth?

Consequently, BBC-accepting Christians generally accept also mainstream geology as giving a reliable account of Earth history.

But now the cost is much higher. Mainstream geology claims fossil evidence for pain, suffering, predation, disease, earthquakes, and the like, millions of years before Man. Such natural evil could therefore not be due to Adam's Fall, but must be part of God's initial "very good" creation.

Much else in Genesis now becomes implausible. Thus William Craig considers Genesis 1-11 to be "mytho-history," having "fantastic elements" that are "palpably false" if taken to be literally true, including the ideas that God created the world in six days, that there was a snake that could talk, that there were actual cherubim with a flaming sword, that Noah's flood was global, that linguistic diversity can be traced back to the Tower of Babel, and that the earth is only thousands of years old.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, Craig's stress on God's transcendence, needed for his cosmological argument, aids his mythologizing of Genesis:

"If Genesis 1-11 functions as mytho-history, then these chapters need not be read literally. The accounts of the origin and Fall of man are clearly metaphorical or figurative in nature, featuring as they do an anthropomorphic deity incompatible with the transcendent God of the creation account."<sup>4</sup>

The greatest problem, however, is mainstream geology's placing the existence of humans, or human-look-alikes, more than a million years ago, as primitive cave-dwellers, lacking language skills. This is hard to square with the biblical account of Adam and his fall into sin. The biblical Adam does not fit plausibly within natural-

ist geology. Hence, the proper Christian approach is to rebuild geology, taking due account of biblical history.

### 3. Biological evolution

This brings us to the next logical step. Having accepted mainstream astronomy and geology, why not also mainstream biology? If mainstream science is right about the ages of things, why should it not also be right about the evolutionary origin of things?

Most Christian biologists are evolutionists. They consider the evidence for evolution overwhelming. So does theologian Bruce Waltke, who said,

"if the data is overwhelmingly in favor of evolution, to deny that reality will make us a cult...some odd group that is not really interacting with the world... To deny scientific reality would be to deny the truth of God in the world. For us as Christians, this would serve as our spiritual death because we would not be loving God with all of our minds. It would also be our spiritual death in witness to the world because we would not be seen as credible..."<sup>5</sup>

Where does that leave Adam? Adam has been variously considered as a neo-lithic farmer, a tribal chief, a representative human, the first *homo sapien*, or a member of an even earlier hominid species. He is viewed as either fully created, physically evolved with a created soul, or fully evolved. Craig takes Adam and Eve to be two evolved members of Heidelberg Man, in whom God implanted rational souls at least 750,000 years ago.<sup>6</sup>

Given the difficulty of fitting the biblical Adam into mainstream science, many theologians now deny his actual existence. Theologian Peter Enns considers Adam to be merely a literary figure.<sup>7</sup> So does theologian John Schneider, who believes that humans were never morally upright, that death is not due to sin, and that Christ's atonement was not a payment for human sin. Blaming evolution (and thus implicating God, who drives evolution) for making humans selfish and sinful, he ends up with a universalism where all humans are

saved.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, major theological matters are now at stake; this has become a salvation issue.

Few Christians may want to go that far. Yet once we start adapting the Bible to mainstream science the stopping point becomes arbitrary, as is reflected in the wide spectrum of views on origins among Christians.

## THE BIG BANG AND HEAVEN

The Bible depicts Heaven as a physical place created directly by God, in time and space, and containing angels, God's throne, Christ in His human flesh, the departed souls of saints, etc. Normally invisible to us, Heaven seems to be a three-dimensional subspace embedded in a larger-dimensional space containing also the celestial cosmos. It may well have its own natural laws. Yet Heaven is closely linked to Earth, where heavenly agents can cause physical effects.

This Heaven is hard to reconcile with modern cosmology, which assumes there is no space or time beyond our physical universe. It considers the celestial universe to be a closed system. It literally has no place for Heaven. It is hard to imagine Heaven originating from the Big Bang singularity, partaking of any expansion of space, or undergoing any sort of physical change.

Christians upholding Big Bang Cosmology rarely discuss Heaven or angels. When they do, they seem to think of Heaven as a vague spiritual abstraction. Thus, for example, William Craig believes that Heaven is a purely spiritual realm, beyond space-time, inhabited entirely by non-physical beings, so that even Christ presently has no physical body.<sup>9</sup>

## THE BIG BANG AND THE FUTURE

The contrast between Big Bang Cosmology and Christianity is most stark regarding the future. Modern cosmology predicts the eventual extinction of all life in the universe, whether by freezing, frying, or the "big rip." Further, modern biology asserts that dead is dead; there can be no resurrection of dead individuals.

Against such despair, the central hope of Christianity is the impending return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead,

the Last Judgment, and life everlasting in a renewed heaven and a renewed earth. These essentials of Christianity cannot be compromised by any Christian worthy of the name.

Hence, many Christian believers in Big Bang origins will reject Big Bang eschatology. For example, William Craig,<sup>10</sup> as well as physicists-turned-theologians John Polkinghorne<sup>11</sup> and Robert Russell,<sup>12</sup> all profess that Christian hope for a personal, as well as a cosmic resurrection must be grounded upon God and His mercy rather than in science.

To justify their rejection of Big Bang eschatology, they all note that God's sovereignty enables Him to change natural laws or personally intervene whenever He wishes, invalidating scientific predictions based on uniformity assumptions. Therefore, they urge, we should trust the Bible about God's future eschatological acts, rather than the predictions of mainstream science.

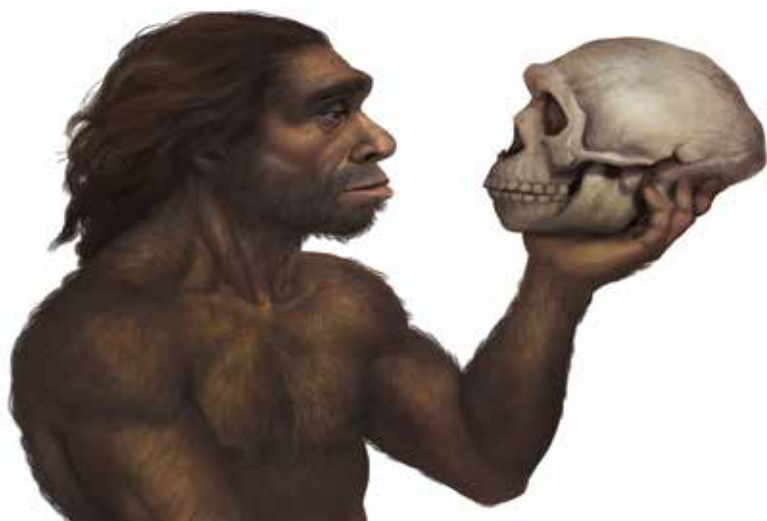
Such a Bible-first epistemology is commendable. Yet it is highly inconsistent with their belief, following mainstream science, that Gen. 1-11 is largely mythical, or "palpably false," to use Craig's words. If we can trust God's word about the future, why not also about the past? If God's radical actions in nature can nullify scientific extrapola-

tions into the future, why not apply the same limits to scientific extrapolations into the past?

The cosmic reconciliation will involve much *continuity*, in that the Earth and heavenly bodies will not be destroyed but renewed. But also there will be also *discontinuity*, in that the renewed cosmos will likely not be subject to physical decay. Russell speculates that the natural laws may be modified, so that thermodynamics may be included only to the extent that it contributes to natural good, but not to natural evil.<sup>13</sup>

Russell's proposal regarding future thermodynamics is remarkably similar to the modified thermodynamics suggested by some creationists as applying to the initial "very good" creation before its distortion due to sin. Indeed, the biblical eschatological terms of "renewal," "redemption," "reconciliation" all imply a restoration back to an *original good state*. It seems that the entire cosmos was adversely affected by sin, from which it will be cleansed and recreated into a new heaven and earth (e.g., Rom. 8:18-25, 2 Peter 3: 5-13).<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Russell does not question that this transition will take place very rapidly: after Christ's return but before the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven. The apostle John's vision of the new heav-



**ADAM CONTEMPLATING HIS ANCESTOR?** The Big Bang brings with it ancestors for Adam who would have lived and died millions of years before he ever came to be.

ens (Rev. 21:1-2) suggests that the cosmos will be instantly transformed so that renewed galaxies billions of light-years away will be immediately visible to an observer on the renewed Earth. Just like in the initial creation, where God spoke “*and it was so.*” If distant starlight is not a problem in the renewed cosmos, why should it be a problem in the original cosmos?


## CONCLUSION

To sum up, Christians should be wary of embracing Big Bang cosmology. Although this in itself may involve only minor revision of the Bible, it introduces a science-driven hermeneutic. This opens the door to acceptance also of geological and biological evolution, leading to the loss of the biblical Adam, and raising numerous weighty theological problems.

It is hard to square modern cosmology with the existence of Heaven as a physical place in space and time that interacts with the visible cosmos. Most importantly, Christians must certainly break with Big

Bang cosmology regarding its future predictions, which rule out a future restored cosmos and our bodily resurrection.

Therefore, since we must ultimately place our trust in God’s written Word, and in the power and faithfulness of our Lord, regarding our future salvation, should we not likewise apply this same trust to other matters that God has revealed to us? Christians should develop their own comprehensive cosmology and worldview, rather than trying to placate worldly wisdom.

If, in the eyes of the world, Christianity is ultimately viewed as foolishness anyway, we may as well be consistent “fools.” 

*Dr. John Byl blogs at [Bylogos.blogspot.com](http://Bylogos.blogspot.com) where this first appeared. He is a Professor emeritus for Trinity Western University, and the author of “God and Cosmos: A Christian View of Time, Space, and the Universe” and “The Divine Challenge: On Matter, Mind, Math & Meaning.”*

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Stephen C. Meyer 1999. “The Return of the God Hypothesis,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 11 (1-2):1-38, p. 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Gregory Koukl 2017. *The Story of Reality: How the World Began, How It Ends, and Everything Important That Happens in Between*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, p. 51.
- <sup>3</sup> William Lane Craig 2021. *In Quest of the Historical Adam*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p. 101, 105.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Quoted in Morris III, H. 2010. “Creation by Evolution,” *Acts & Facts*. 39 (6): 4-5.
- <sup>6</sup> William Lane Craig, “The Historical Adam,” *First Things* 316 (October 2021): 47-48.
- <sup>7</sup> Peter Enns 2012. *The Evolution of Adam*. Brazos Press.
- <sup>8</sup> John R. Schneider, “Recent Genetic Science and Christian Theology on Human Origins: An ‘Aesthetic Supralapsarianism,’” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 62:3 (Sept 2010): 197.
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/#714-Zygotic-Jesus> (Jan.11, 2021), accessed Nov.3, 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> William Lane Craig, “The End of the World.” Available at: [www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/popular-writings/science-theology/the-end-of-the-world/](http://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/popular-writings/science-theology/the-end-of-the-world/). Accessed March 6, 2023.
- <sup>11</sup> John Polkinghorne 2002. *The God of Hope and the End of the World*, Yale University Press: New Haven, CN.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert J. Russell 2008. *Cosmology: From Alpha to Omega*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- <sup>13</sup> Russell, *op.cit.* pp. 307-310.
- <sup>14</sup> See, for example Cornelis Venema 2000. *The Promise of the Future*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, ch.13.



GOD KEEP OUR LAND  
**GLORIOUS**  
 AND FREE

**SUBSCRIBE** to our newsletters at [arpacanada.ca/subscribe](http://arpacanada.ca/subscribe)



THIS IS JOE.

Hello there! I have prepared a speech.

\*AHEM\*



When I finally get planted,



I'll grow up

**BIG AND STRONG**



I'll try to do what's good and right  
And stay clear of all that's wrong.



I'll turn my head each morning  
Toward the SON who is my  
*light*  
To guide my each and every step...



... through the dark of day or night.



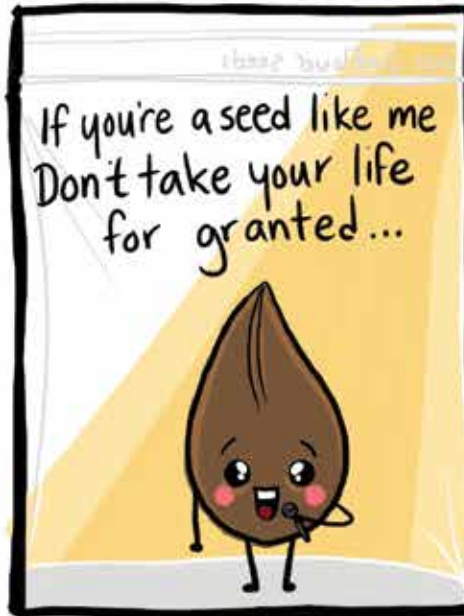
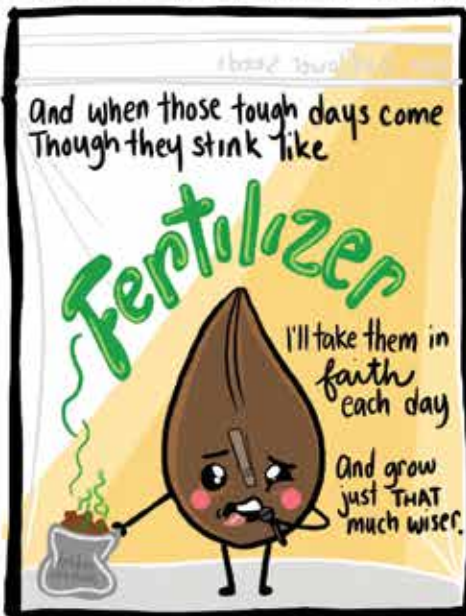
I'll thirst for the Living Water  
From the fount that never dries  
I will not wither nor grow  
For in HIM my strength relies.



I'll dig my roots in  
**LOOOONG** and **DEEP**  
Into my foundation



**FIRM** and **SURE**





**DECIPHER  
THE CODE**

Plants do  
from

In the 1500s, these explorers discovered sunflowers and took them back to Europe where they became incredibly popular.

Plants don't have a McDonalds or No Frills to get food from, so where do they get their nutrients?

The process where plants use sunlight, water and carbon dioxide to create oxygen and energy in the form of sugar is called....

## 1. Who is The Gardener?

2. It might seem like a spelling mistake, but it's not.  
Why is "sun" spelt "SON"?
3. Obviously we do not have roots, but what is our firm and sure foundation?  
How can we "dig deep" into it?
4. What is the living water that Joe is talking about? Where can we find it?
5. Fertilizer is stinky business, but it is necessary for plants to grow.  
How do the tough times in our life help us to grow?
6. How can you "bloom where you are planted?"



Visit [www.reformedperspective.ca/kids](http://www.reformedperspective.ca/kids) to download!

Let's dig in!

# Putting the Bible into

# ACTION

The Parable of the Sower is well known, but sometimes the meaning can seem too difficult to understand. So, let's put the Parable of the Sower into action!

## STEP ONE:



Read The Parable of the Sower found in Matthew 13 :3-23

## STEP TWO:



Take some seeds  
(any vegetable or sunflower)

## STEP THREE:



Place some seeds in different growing environments just like those in the passage :

- a. Verse 19 - Along the path (your driveway)
- b. Verse 20 - On rocky ground ( gravel, bark mulch)
- c. Verse 22 - Among the thorns (among weeds)
- d. Verse 23 - Into good, fertile soil (tended garden bed)

## STEP FOUR:



Have patience!

## STEP FIVE:

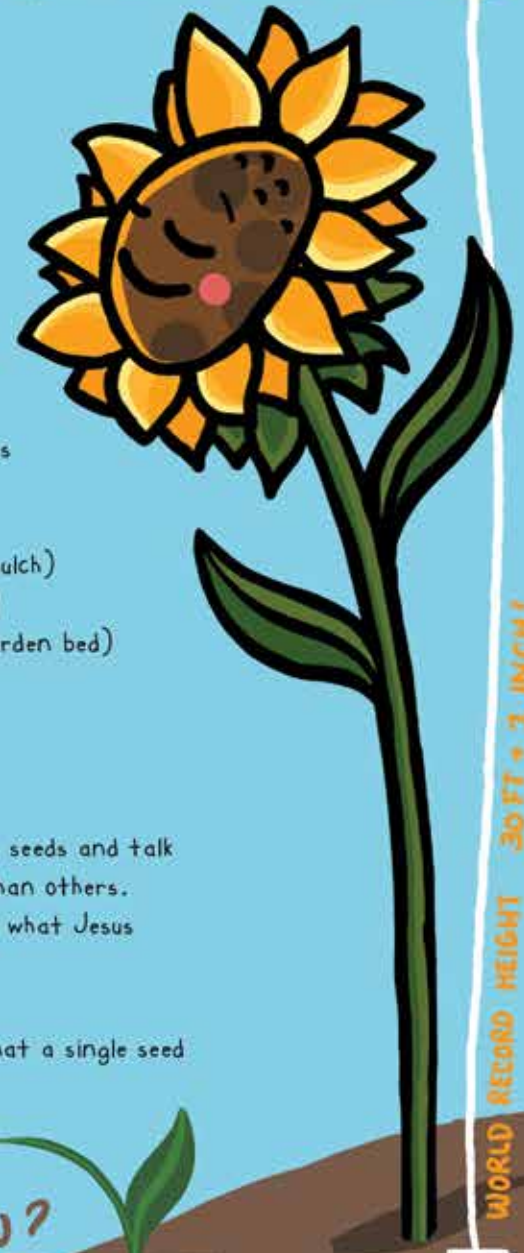


Make an effort to periodically check on the various seeds and talk about why some of the seeds are growing better than others. Consider the environment they are growing in and what Jesus told the disciples about those environments.

## STEP SIX:



Take time to marvel at the wondrous mystery that a single seed can produce so much and praise the Lord!



WORLD RECORD HEIGHT 30 FT + 1 INCH!

## DID YOU KNOW?



SUNFLOWERS NEED  
6-8 HOURS  
OF SUNLIGHT PER DAY

THOUSANDS  
OF TINY FLOWERS  
MAKE UP THE CENTER  
OF A SUNFLOWER.  
*Becoming seeds  
as the flower  
matures!*



SUNFLOWERS TURN THEIR HEADS TO FACE THE SUN THROUGHOUT THE DAY.



# GETTING USED TO A NEW CHURCH

by Sharon Bratcher

**T**he time may come when you must leave the church you grew up in and become a member elsewhere. Let me be clear: I'm not encouraging people to withdraw or change their denomination/federation. I'm referring to church changes that are made because of marriage, affordability of location, employment, or desire to live near loved ones. It's a huge life change, so I'm offering some suggestions to help you get used to your new place of worship and fellowship.

## WHEN WILL I FEEL AT HOME?

It helps a lot to know that you are going to feel weird for the first few Sundays, or possibly the first few months. You knew every nook and corner of your old church, when to stand or sit, and most of the faces were familiar. You had friends there. Suddenly, the rooms, the faces, and

maybe even the music are different.

But after a while, you will adjust to the new situation. You will recognize a few faces, begin to build new friendships, and get used to the differences.

One of the benefits of being in a new church is that you come in with a clean slate. Nobody knows about the silly or awful things you did as a teenager or young parent, or pre-judges you because of them. As we mature and grow in grace, we (hopefully) leave behind some of our follies and sins, and learn to treat people with more kindness and patience, "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Col. 3:13). We progressively learn how to love one another (1 John 4:7-8). Sometimes it's easier to "turn over a new leaf" in a new location.

*...you are going to feel weird for the first few Sundays, or possibly the first few months.*

## HOW NOT TO CHOOSE A CHURCH

What characteristics should you consider in a new-to-you church? What if you actually have 2-3 or more choices? On one of our moves, there were two excellent churches that were exactly 8 miles from our home. Which to choose? There are lots of ways that people make their

final decisions about this – and some are better than others!

Some folks might want to choose a church based on which one has the nicest facilities. While I have had wishful thinking for a large fellowship hall and useful kitchen, in over 40 years of marriage, those amenities have always been at the churches that we *didn't* choose.

When my husband enrolled in Westminster Seminary, he had no vehicle, and therefore planned to walk up a fairly steep hill to Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church. His dormmate Leigh had a crush on a girl who attended a smaller OPC about 8 miles away. He offered Dennis a ride, which sounded much better than hiking up the hill – especially in poor weather conditions.

Though the ride was important, for Dennis it was a mixture of the pastor's friendliness and his excellent sermons that kept him attending that small church in Blue Bell, PA, and led to my membership as well for over 25 years (most of which were after it became Canadian/American Reformed).

So far, we have seen that great facilities, desire for love, and convenience might be subjective reasons for choosing a particular church. But more should be said about the "friendliness factor."

Friendliness is important. Countless times, people have told me that they didn't choose Church A or Church B because when they attended for one or two Sundays, nobody said hello to them. As the visitor, you will initially feel awkward and out of place and a friendly welcome could help to alleviate that emotion.

On the other hand, you shouldn't judge a church by that – friendliness can be overrated as a standard for choosing a church. In fact, I have two friends who had opposite experiences within the same church! Perhaps there were reasons why no one greeted you. Maybe they were rushing to deal with their children, or frustrated because their car broke down, or ill, or grieving. Maybe the official greeters were greeting someone else when you walked by. Don't think that they don't care about you; maybe they just don't care about you – yet.

And on this topic, just a word to

church members: please do reach out to people you don't know at church with a welcome and a desire to learn more about who they are! Don't be so caught up in your own usual group of people that you neglect to include people who want to be an asset to your church! Wouldn't it be nice to have more people to share all the responsibilities?

## SO, HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

First and foremost, you need to choose a church where you will find the pure preaching of the Word of God, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the appropriate use of church discipline. Not all buildings with the designation of "church" preach the truth, and you need to carefully research before attending.

Secondly, consider the location. When you are choosing where to worship, it is best to live close to your church *if at all possible*. Make living close to other church members a priority when you are house or apartment hunting. Why? Because we have found that visiting other members, and having other members visit us, is much more likely to happen if the distance between us is short. When you live 30-60 minutes away, there will be folks who don't want to drive to your house. And people are more likely to drop off a meal 5 minutes away than 30-60 minutes away. We all get very busy in our lives, so if you can make fellowship and caring more convenient, why not do so? You don't want to use "distance" as an excuse to not participate in the life of the church (or the Christian school).

## JUMP RIGHT IN

The way to feel a part of a new congregation is to get to know people, and the way to get acquainted is to get involved with smaller group meetings/service projects of any sort. In fact, this is probably the best way for introverts, especially, to begin feeling at home. Consider these examples that we have observed:

- Show up and work hard at a church maintenance day. One couple did this before they even officially joined. What a great opportunity to converse and demonstrate that they were seri-

ous about serving the Lord along with us.

- Attend the ladies' and men's Bible studies and take your children to youth meetings.
- Note the requests for meals for new mothers and shut-ins and sign up to help.
- Join the choir.
- Attend a baby shower even if you do not know the new mother – it's a great way to get acquainted, and your attendance and a small gift are always appreciated.
- Shake the pastor's hand and tell him who you are. Introduce yourself to one of the elders, or if they have cards in the pews, fill one out and place it in the offering plate. If you don't want to be called, just give an email or home address. In my lifetime, I have noticed that churches are always happy to gain new members, and some of them will send you information about their church.
- Send get well or encouragement cards to people who are shut-ins or recovering from surgery. The inspiring Bible verses in them will be uplifting even if they haven't met you yet. Knowing that someone cares and is praying for them is always appreciated. So what if they don't know who you are – they will soon!
- Don't sit back and wait for everyone to reach out to you. God calls all of us to help and encourage one another. Pray and ask Him to help you see ways to participate in your new church life. In Hebrews 10:24 we read, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Your efforts will bless someone.

## CONCLUSION

Although you will feel out of place during the first few times you worship in your new location, gradually you will begin to feel at home. Serving the Lord – "Blooming where you are planted" – will bring you into contact with fellow members, and after a while, friendships are likely to form. Following some of these suggestions might just move things along a bit quicker. **RP**

# COMPETING TO SHINE

by Mark Penninga



Speaking up for those who can't speak.

Reformed youth across Canada are taking to heart Paul's encouragement to young Timothy "don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers...." Over the past year, 16 school clubs and over 300 individuals have taken part in a friendly competition, organized by ARPA Canada and using newly-developed custom software, to spur each other on as Christian witnesses in Canada's public square.

## ARPA PROFILES TOOK OFF

Daniel Kanis, the "tech-wizard" at ARPA, came up with the idea of using technology to "gamify" political action to make it competitive and fun. He first introduced his concept to his colleagues at a summer staff retreat, and then launched it publicly as "ARPA Profiles" mid 2022.

"The key to success would be rapid onboarding of students and adults alike" Kanis shared in an interview with *RP*. "Rapid onboarding" is what it sounds like: getting a lot of people all involved – all "on board" – at the same time.

"In October we had our chance. We

rapidly onboarded a variety of students across the country from British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario at our youth conferences.” It didn’t take long and a healthy spirit of competition arose between these schools, that continues till today.

ARPA Profiles involves signing up for a unique profile on their website, taking part in political action and then getting points for that action, depending on how difficult it is. For example, sending an EasyMail letter gets you 200 points, meeting with your MP or MLA will result in 15,000 points, and distributing flyers results in 1,000 points for every 25 flyers. If you are really ambitious and can get an airplane to fly a pro-life banner, you get 1,000,000 points! Other options include things like visiting an old age home, helping a pregnancy care center with groceries, baking cookies for an event, or hosting a flag display.

Those who have an ARPA profile can earn points for themselves but also for the school club or ARPA chapter that they are a member of. To make it fun, the school club with the most points gets a banner to keep, a trophy for a year, a pizza party, and celebration shirts. There are also prizes for individual championships. The deadline is May 17, 2023, and at press time, there is a fierce competition between Valerie Beukema, Judy Slaa, and Brooklyn Gortemaker, for the top place.

The race for the top school has Winnipeg's Immanuel Christian School in the lead, followed by the Alberta Home School group, Mount Cheam Christian from Chilliwack, and Ebenezer school in Smithers.

## IN IT TOGETHER

When asked what ARPA Profiles has accomplished, Kanis shared that it has “one key ingredient that I think is essential to political action. And that’s the thought of: ‘I’m not doing this alone.’”



We hosted a prayer meeting in St. Albert.  
There were people who prayed with us and we sang together  
*(Alberta Home School Group with their own shirts!)*



10,000 flag display for the preborn in northern Alberta



Meeting with our Member of Parliament,  
Dane Lloyd



We finished our post-it note display which we  
have been working on for 23 days. Every note rep-  
resents 40 lives of children lost to abortion.  
(Ebenezer School, Smithers)



Walked around town and distributed 100 Care Not Kill flyers.  
(Dufferin Christian in Carman, MB)

The ARPA Profiles website fosters a sense of community, as participants post a picture of what they did. Scrolling through dozens of pictures will silence those who lament that young people

aren't very active today. Not only are many active, they are doing things that their parents or grandparents likely never did at their age. And the hope is that it will make it far more likely that they continue to shine in the public square the rest of their lives.

Looking through the pictures, it is evident that Albertans are leading by example. Ed Hoogerdyk serves as ARPA's Alberta Manager, with a special focus on helping Albertans shine their lights with political action. "ARPA Profiles is a great motivator!" he shared with me. Hoogerdyk proceeded to give some examples, beginning with their "CareNotKill" campaign. "Shortly after pictures are shared of grassroots action (flyer runs, billboards, banners), I receive inquiries from people wanting to order items so they can take action as well."

Hoogerdyk has noticed a steady increase in the number of school club members and adult chapter members. "More people are meeting. More people are praying. More people are politically engaged." And it is translating into giving as well. "Fundraising builds community spirit and reminds people of the importance of witnessing in their own communities. It's been inspiring to work alongside so many 'cheerful givers' in Alberta."

## HEALTHY COMPETITION

Hoogerdyk testified that the competitive aspect of ARPA Profiles is important. "The competition is healthy. I sense a strong spirit of unity amongst the school clubs and chapters. They're sharing updates with each other and encouraging each other to compete."

I asked Kanis how he would respond to those who think that people should be active without needing points or prizes. "At the level and caliber that the students


on the platform are doing action, they are to be doing it for the heart of the mission,” he answered. “If you were just participating in the competition for the points, and for the prize, at the end of the day those with heart will win. It is great to award and acknowledge those people who go above and beyond in being a faithful Christian witness.”

### ACTIVE LIKE NEVER BEFORE

But is all of this just an exception to the general rule that Christians aren’t very engaged in politics or culture? Hoogerdyk respectfully challenged those who think this way. “Based on my experience, there continues to be an increase in the number of people engaging with politics.” He proceeded to give examples.

“First, more people are praying. This is evident in prayer matters brought up in church services, messages from people letting us know they regularly pray for ARPA’s work, and ARPA’s prayer calendar. Second, more people are staying informed and taking action. They’re participating in grassroots activities, supporting our chapters and clubs, and contributing financially.”

And the involvement goes deeper too. “There are numerous constituency associations with good Reformed Christian representation, including some who are presidents of these associations.”

The contest closes mid-May, and readers can get plugged into ARPA’s weekly Quick Update videos, newsletter, or social media to find out which individual or school makes the podium. But it likely doesn’t end there. Kanis is hoping that they can build on the success next year. “I am tremendously thankful for the uptake that the ARPA supporters have shown in the open reception of this new system. I am thankful for their patience as this first year was sure to have some hiccups. I hope it can be a blessing to many others, and that those who may not have heard about ARPA Profiles can sign up and be encouraged with just how much action is happening across Canada!” 



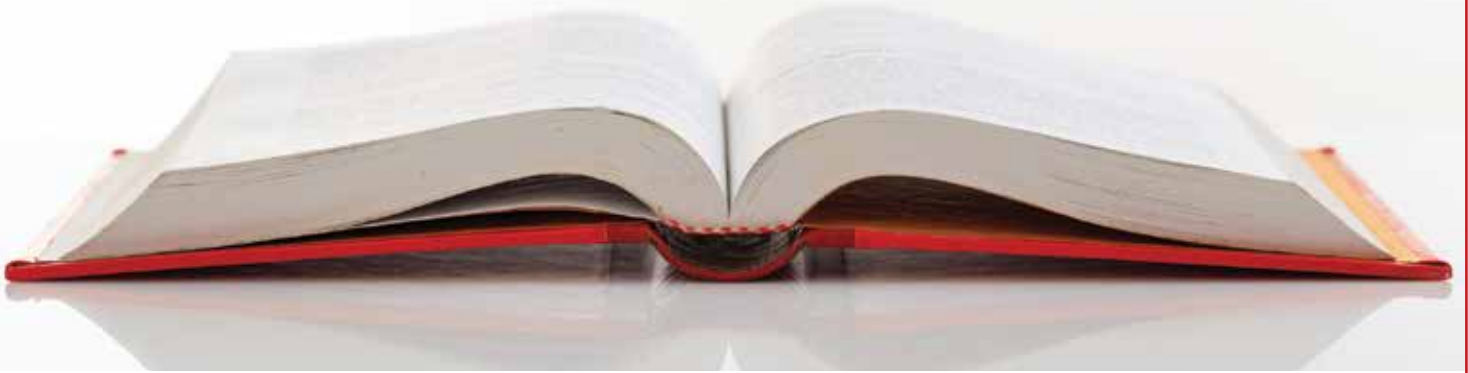
We visited a seniors home on Feb 23 and we played bingo with them! It was a lot of fun (Alberta Home School Group – Edmonton)



I held signs up for an hour, and got a lot of waves and honks.

(Mya V, Immanuel Christian in Winnipeg)

# "Good" vs. Good



**Our political leaders think they know what's best for us.  
But by what standard are they judging what's good?**

by Daniel Zekveld

**W**hy should Christians participate in political action in the first place? That's an important question to answer, since Christian involvement in politics is largely misunderstood by the world, and not always clarified that well by Christians themselves.

So, again, why should Christians get involved in politics? To advocate for society to be built on Christian principles, since we know these principles are what God commands in His Word. We also want to advocate for the freedom for God's people to do what He has called us to do.

## **DON'T FORCE YOUR MORALITY ON ME!**

Now, the world around us will ask us to kindly keep our religion to ourselves and they'll tell us we shouldn't try to force our morality on them. Other Christians can also be among the most vocal opponents of applying an explicitly Christian approach to public policy. You might hear

them argue that while God's Word is authoritative for us and for how we live, it isn't authoritative for the world around us. Who are we to think that we can apply our faith to public policy? Isn't it inappropriate to apply biblical principles to those who do not believe?

We might be tempted to think that if someone's choices are not hurting anyone, then do we still need to advocate for Christian policy? This might be particularly so when it comes to the whole area of sexuality: if two men are living together, or a couple is shackled up before marriage, should we really care? Maybe we should just keep to ourselves and avoid any sort of "political" conversations around marriage, or gender, or family.

## **THE "COMMON GOOD"**

But if we rule out a Christian approach to politics, then what's left? The alternative typically proposed relies on the idea of "the common good" or "the public

interest." Policies are presented as being good for various groups of citizens. So, for example:

- decriminalizing abortion is presented as giving women the right to choose
- legalizing euthanasia is presented as a means of relieving suffering
- redefining marriage is presented as allowing people to love whoever they want

Other examples would include how certain housing policies are presented as strategies to reduce homelessness and policies allowing safe injection sites might be presented as preventing overdose deaths.

In these cases, does the government care about the common good? In their minds, yes. But their perspective of the common good is often different from a Reformed Christian's perspective.

The fact is, every policy springs from

*...some Christians might say that we should only advocate for policies based on social scientific evidence that the world can agree with.*

a particular worldview. Our worldview directly impacts how we define policy issues and how we propose solutions. If I think that choice or autonomy is the ultimate good, then abortion and euthanasia would seem to be good things. But if I know that God's law places important limits on choice and autonomy, I'll understand that abortion and euthanasia must fall within those limitations.

Policy decisions impact real people, but how we view that impact depends on how we see the world and our place in it more broadly. And we must also examine the worldview of our policy-makers as we consider the policies they champion. A "faith" in science or liberalism or secularism or autonomy or anything else will affect how they view law and policy.

### FOR THE TRUE GOOD OF OUR NEIGHBORS

Because of differing ideas of the "common good," some Christians might say that we should only advocate for policies based on social scientific evidence that the world can agree with. But if we forget about the biblical worldview behind our evidence, it will often be interpreted in a way that is detrimental to those around us.

For example, as governments seek to redefine the family, the prevailing attitude is "all kids need is a loving family - it doesn't matter what the family structure is." It can be easy to fall into this thinking. After all, aren't loving gay parents better than an abusive mother and father? We begin to look at extremes instead of a biblical starting point for the family. And we fail to hold to an objective foundation for what is truly good for the people affected.

Christians need to be confident in both the wisdom and goodness of our God, and consequently certain that principles

set forth in the Bible will yield policies that are good for Canadians. It is in the Gospel where we find *the* truth about humanity and the world. Therefore, we should also seek to influence our society with God's law. As Christian philosopher James Smith explained in his book *Awaiting the King*,

"if we are convinced (convicted) that in Christ and His Word we know something about *how to be human*, then shouldn't we seek to bend social practices and policy in that direction *for the good of our neighbors?*"

This applies not just to life issues like euthanasia and abortion, but also when we're talking about the family, gender, and sexuality. There too, we need to recognize God's good design for human beings before we can understand what is truly good for our neighbors. And when we know what God thinks, then the facts will fit too – as ARPA Canada explained in a recent policy document, the natural family as God designed it is statistically most likely to produce the best outcomes for children.

### THE WORLD'S "GOOD" EXPOSED

As confident as we can be that God knows best, we can also be certain that the world's "good" will eventually be exposed as anything but.

I recently learned about one organization that focuses on trying to help the "survivors of the Sexual Revolution." That's language you don't often hear in the broader culture, because our society views the Sexual Revolution as a beneficial liberation from the constraints of sexual morality. But victims abound, including many who didn't survive: prostituted and abused women, people

who have undergone "sex reassignment" procedures, children who have lost a parent due to divorce, and of course the many aborted children.

A recent example of harm caused by the Sexual Revolution is the enactment of a national, criminal ban on conversion therapy. The ban assumes that biblical views on gender and sexuality are harmful to people struggling with their gender or sexuality. In reality, the law hinders people who are struggling from receiving the help they need. This brings us back to the question of worldview. A Christian worldview in this instance presents the truth about God's design for humanity, the reality of a fallen world, but also the way of restoration.

### CONCLUSION

The world will criticize us for advocating for biblically based policies, and characterize it as trying to "force our own morality on others" or as "getting involved in something that doesn't concern them." Other Christians may even find fault with bringing the Bible to bear in the public square.

But it is because we care deeply about our neighbors that we want to share and advocate for what is true and good. And it is because of God and His Word that we know what is true and good.

So when we hear of a policy decision, we need to step back and look at biblical principles and what God's Word says about what is glorifying to God and good for our neighbors. From there, we can analyze whether the government truly understands what is good for our neighbors based on God's good design. As Nancy Pearcey writes in *Love Thy Body*:

"Christians must be prepared to minister to the wounded, the refugees of the secular moral revolution whose lives have been wrecked by its false promises of freedom and autonomy."

Advocating for Christian policy is not selfish nor oppressive. It is truly for the common good. 

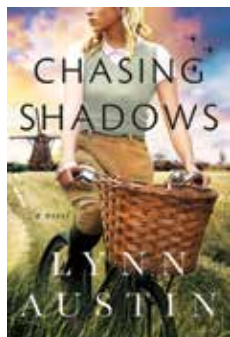
# BOOKS

## GREAT CHRISTIAN FICTION FOR ADULTS

[ReformedPerspective.ca/books](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/books)

### CHASING SHADOWS

BY LYNN AUSTIN  
2021 / 432 PAGES



*Chasing Shadows* takes place in WWII Holland and is a novel about choices and consequences. Miriam, a Jewish girl and a musician, and her professor father flee Germany to the safety of Holland. Lena, a farmer's wife, struggles with her faith when her husband Pieter and daughter Ans work for the Underground and her son is forced into a work camp. She learns that the enemy of faith is not doubt but fear.

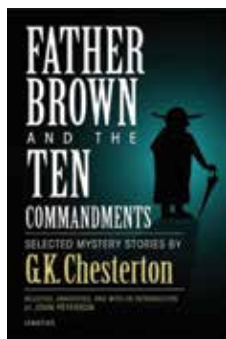
Interestingly, the book dwells at some length on the time leading up to the Nazi invasion of Holland and how the Dutch were convinced that, because they declared themselves to be a neutral nation, they would be safe.

After the invasion, life went on as normal for the most part, until Hitler started persecuting the Jews. Ans becomes involved with the resistance movement, helping to find places for the Jews to hide who became known as the "Shadow People." So many of the Dutch people who helped the Jews were Christians. Their faith was often sorely tested and questions such as, "Are we allowed to lie?" are discussed. It's an excellent book for any church or school library.

– JOANNA VANDERPOL

### FATHER BROWN AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

BY G.K. CHESTERTON  
2017 / 249 PAGES



An heiress of a large fortune has fallen to her death, and suicide seems the obvious explanation. But then along comes a short man in clerical dress with an explanation that shocks everyone. This short man is Father Brown, Roman Catholic priest, who doubles as an amateur detective. Brown often finds success in his investigations because of his perceptive understanding of human nature. Brown also uses his unimposing character and position to gain valuable information from witnesses who see him as only a priest. This information, often overlooked by even the reader, helps Father Brown bring the criminal to justice.

Brown was a creation of G.K. Chesterton, who was Catholic himself, but whose apologetic writings are much appreciated by Protestants too. This collection of mysteries is focused around the Ten Commandments, taking on the commandments one by one.

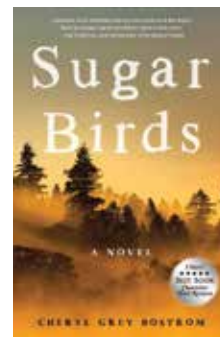
Two cautions: first, G.K. Chesterton wrote over one hundred years ago so his vocabulary may be less accessible to younger readers. Some of Chesterton's characters use racial slurs (Agar Rock in *The Scandal of Father Brown*) and there are a couple uses of "salty" language.

I have never been a huge fan of mystery novels but found myself thoroughly enjoying each story.

– AARON BOSSCHER

### SUGAR BIRDS

BY CHERYL GREY BOSTROM  
2021 / 328 PAGES



This page-turner takes place in the Pacific Northwest, a little north of Seattle, and tells the story of two girls who have lost their way in wildernesses of their own making.

Ten-year-old Aggie accidentally sets fire to her home and is sure she has killed her parents. So, she flees into the forest where she puts the survival skills taught by her dad into practice. Climbing trees is her passion and finding bird nests with eggs waiting to hatch gives her joy but she has been forbidden by her unstable mother to continue climbing. Celia is 16 years old and has to spend the summer with her grandma instead of going to Lake Chelan with her father. She meets a very handsome farm hand and falls in love with him but this relationship is a disaster waiting to happen. Aggie's autistic brother, Burnaby, carefully gathers bones of birds that have died and threads their skeletons back together. He becomes a healing balm for troubled Celia.

Cautions include a few instances of impolite language, a section where Celia and a boy are beginning something they shouldn't but steer clear, and one time there's the threat of rape, though not the act.

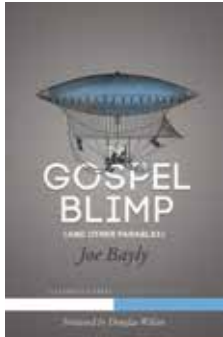
This is quite the touching story about anger, rebellion, forgiveness, and redemption. However, because of the mentioned subject matter I would recommend it for the mature reader.

– JOANNA VANDERPOL

## THE GOSPEL BLIMP (AND OTHER PARABLES)

BY JOE BAYLY

2013 / 155 PAGES

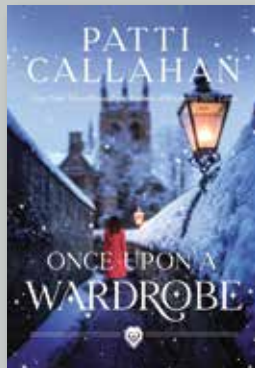


We all have people in our lives that we should share the Gospel with but we might be unsure about how to approach them. Do we drop crumbs while talking at the water cooler? Do we invite them over for dinner and let our actions speak for themselves?

In the title parable of this short story collection, "Herm" has a better idea. Rallying his church behind him, Herm encourages them to forget all that awkward personal interaction and instead purchase a blimp to fly over their town. They customize the blimp with all the Christian bells and whistles such as a Scripture-verse banner, gospel tracts by the bushels to drop from the sky, and a PA system to blast the town with Sunday's sermon. It's a brilliant satiric take on how far Christians can go to avoid taking the obvious, but scary step, of talking to our neighbors about our God.

Included in this short book are many other funny, satirical, and surprisingly profound parables. I recommend any young adult or older read at least a few of them. The one notable caution concerns a single use of the "N-word" in the short story "The Saving Message."

- AARON BOSSCHER



## ONCE UPON A WARDROBE

BY PATTI CALLAHAN

2021 / 285 PAGES

The year is 1950, and an eight-year-old George Henry Devonshire has finished a book, just published, called *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And now he wants to know *Where does Narnia come from?* George is old enough to know Narnia is not real, and yet at eight, he's somehow already

wise enough to know that this story is about something very true. So where did it come from?

Born with a weak heart, the young George has been confined for most of his life to his own room, and, on better days, to the rest of his house. But his older sister Megs loves him fiercely and comes home every weekend from university, so George is sure she'll help him figure this out. Megs, after all, goes to Oxford, where the creator of Narnia teaches. She should just ask him! It turns out though, that Oxford isn't simply one college, but dozens, and Megs is at an entirely different school than where Lewis teaches. She sometimes sees him walking about, but the quiet girl doesn't want to intrude on the great man with bothersome questions. And yet, for her brother, she promises to try.

In the end, Megs doesn't so much manage to introduce herself to Lewis, as Lewis's brother Warnie introduces himself to her... and invites her for tea! What follows is only the first conversation of many. Megs keeps coming back because Lewis and his brother never seem to offer the simple answer that young George is after. Instead of sharing where Narnia came from, the two tell Megs stories about their growing up. Megs isn't into stories the way her brother is – her studies in math and physics don't leave her a lot of time, as she might put it, to waste on fiction – so even as she enjoys her time with the two men, she doesn't understand why they won't give her a more direct answer to relay to young George. Her brother loves the stories she brings home, but he keeps sending her back for more. George is aware, even though his parents and sister have tried to shelter him from the knowledge, that he does not have long to live on this earth. So there's an insistent edge to his questions: he *needs* to know where such beauty and truth comes from.

Patti Callahan has married careful research with simply wonderful prose to create a fictionalized biography of both Lewis and his best-known book. I loved this so much I've given it to my mom and my wife, and I can't really give it higher praise than that. If you're looking for the serious sort of biography that tells you what the subject ate for breakfast on his 43rd birthday, you'll need to look elsewhere. But if you enjoy learning a little something from the fiction you read, or if you've ever wanted to know more about the man who gave us Narnia, you won't find a more charming introduction.

- JON DYKSTRA



# Biographies That'll Make You Love Biographies

by Jon Dykstra

Christian biographies are a wonderful glimpse into what God has done in other people's lives. They're also a way to learn how God acts in the world around us.

There's also a challenge that comes with reading the true life stories of earlier Christians. When we see what they were willing to risk and were able to accomplish, we can't help but ask: "What could God do with me, if only I trusted Him to keep a firm hold of me?"

## 5 FOR THOSE WHO ALREADY LOVE BIOGRAPHIES

The first set here is for those who already have a biography book shelf. While I'll readily concede that tastes differ, the top three titles here should be included in anyone and everyone's library – these are *fantastic* books!

1. Laura Hillenbrand's **Unbroken** – WWII veteran Louis Zamperini survived enemy fire, being alone on a raft for weeks, and a Japanese POW camp, all the while being "unbroken." But Who was keeping him so?
2. Brother Andrew's **God's Smuggler** – Dutchman dares to smuggle Bibles behind the Iron Curtain, counting on God to blind seeing eyes.
3. Corrie ten Boom's **The Hiding Place** – Dutch woman and her family hide Jews during WWII, get caught and sent to concentration camps, and

Corrie shows us how God was with her in it all.

4. Kara Tippetts' **The Hardest Peace** – A pastor's wife starts a mommy blog, then uses it to share her journey when she is diagnosed with terminal cancer. She shows us how to die in the security, and to the glory, of God. Amazingly beautiful!
5. George van Popta's **Man of the First Hour** – A must-read for anyone with Canadian Reformed denominational connections. The story of the first pastor of the Canadian Reformed churches, and, in part, a history of the founding of the denomination.

**Bonus:** Rosario Champagne Butterfield's **The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert** – Lesbian university professor meets a pastor who asks her, *have you ever considered that you might be wrong?*

## 5 TO GET YOU (OR YOUR KIDS) STARTED

This second set are especially accessible. Sometimes it's because they are shorter reads, while other times it's that they are fictionalized biographies that read like novels because, well, they *are* novels... but grounded firmly in reality.

1. Susan K. Leigh's **Luther: Echoes of the Hammer** – Graphic novel, yes; superficial? No!

2. Todd Nettleton's **When Faith Is Forbidden** – 40 true stories from the front lines about God using both miracles and persecution to gather His people.
3. Kim and Krickitt Carpenter's **The Vow** – After a car accident leaves a wife with no memory of marrying, or even meeting her husband, she remains committed to the marriage vow she made before God. (Don't watch the movie version; the scriptwriters didn't even read the book!)
4. Robertson McQuilkin's **A Promise Kept** – Christian college president leaves his position when his wife is struck by Alzheimer's.
5. Matt Carter and Aaron Ivey's **Steal Away Home** – A fictionalized biography of Charles Spurgeon and his friend, a former slave, Thomas Johnson. This is a pain-free way to learn about the "Prince of Preachers."

**Bonus:** Douglas Bond's **The Thunder** – a fictionalized biography of John Knox, showing him to be the action hero, body guard, pastor that he was. And just to make this a baker's dozen, Bond has another fantastic fictionalized biography, this one of C.S. Lewis when he was in the trenches of World War I. It's called **War in the Wasteland**. It's amazing! RP

# WORLD NEWS GROUP

## What does news literacy have to do with discipleship? **Everything.**

Advancing the kingdom starts with knowing how God is fulfilling His plan across the globe. Through print magazines, podcasts, videos, and online articles, WORLD News Group provides sound journalism that's grounded in facts and Biblical truth.



[wng.org](http://wng.org)



[worldwatch.news](http://worldwatch.news)



[gwnews.com](http://gwnews.com)



## Sound journalism is for the whole family.

# TOP 10 ON RedeemTV.com

by Jon Dykstra

**R**edeem TV is a free Christian streaming service with hundreds and hundreds of films. While a lot of it is older content that's quite middling by today's expectations, they do have some shows, movies, and documentaries that are sure to appeal. What follows is a Top 10 list of their very best.

For longer versions of these reviews, including age appropriateness and any cautions, see this article on [ReformedPerspective.ca](http://ReformedPerspective.ca). While Redeem TV's service is free, to use it you will have to sign up for an account at RedeemTV.com.



## **FLIGHT: THE GENIUS OF BIRDS**

DOCUMENTARY

63 MIN / 2013

**RATING: 9/10**

When I watched this with my three-year-old daughter

we had the exact same reaction: "Wow!" *Flight* takes a look at the design of birds and focuses particularly on hummingbirds, starlings, and arctic terns and all three have their wow moments.



## **SUE THOMAS: F.B.I.**

DRAMA / TV SERIES

41 MIN / 57 EPISODES / 2002-2005

**RATING: 8/10**

Based on the real life of deaf F.B.I. agent Sue Thomas, it

combines the intrigue of police investigations with the unique comic pairing

of the courageous but somewhat naive Sue and her lovable but not-always-so-well-behaved hearing dog Levi. The shows are generally tame, but not lame: a Christian series where the acting might not be Oscar-worthy, but isn't cringe-worthy either.



## **METAMORPHOSIS: THE BEAUTY AND DESIGN OF BUTTERFLIES**

DOCUMENTARY

64 MIN / 2011

**RATING: 8/10**

Did you ever stop to reflect that

beauty is not essential to the survival of creatures, that it is an optional extra? But who chose to confer beauty on so many creatures (and on nature in general) and why? In Eccl. 3:11 we read: "He has made everything beautiful in its time." Indeed He has! And there are few groups of organisms that demonstrate this as well as butterflies do.



## **LIVING WATERS: INTELLIGENT DESIGN IN THE OCEANS OF THE EARTH**

DOCUMENTARY

69 MIN / 2015

**RATING: 8/10**

This is one part nature documentary and one part evolutionary takedown. Illustra Media understands that a great way to expose evolution is to take a close in-depth look at some of the creatures that God has made, like dolphins, sea turtles, Pacific salmon, and humpback whales. My preschool children weren't always able to follow the discussion, but the close-up videos and computer animations kept their attention. Meanwhile, their mom and I were stunned by the sheer brilliance and creativity of our God!

Did you know that a dolphin's echolocation can actually tell the difference between a golf ball and a ping-pong ball? Very cool stuff here!



## FINAL SOLUTION

DRAMA  
102 MIN / 2001  
**RATING: 8/10**

This is the true story of a church-going, *Mein Kampf*-reading young man who was taught from the pulpit that white South Africans were God's new chosen people. And then God uses a girl, and a black pastor, to break him down completely.



## SABINA

DRAMA  
115 MIN / 2022  
**RATING: 7/10**

Sabina and Richard Wurmbrand went on to start Voice of the Martyrs (VOM), a group that helps the persecuted Church around the world. But before they began VOM, they were persecuted themselves. Their life story has been told in two films now, the first about Richard, called *Tortured for Christ* (also available at RedeemTV), and now this one, about Sabina, and how she was able to forgive the Nazis that killed so many of her Jewish family.



## FREEDOM

DRAMA  
94 MIN / 2014  
**RATING: 7/10**

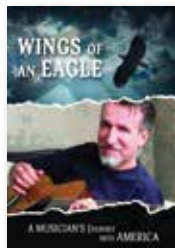
Like many a film "inspired by true events," this isn't good history but it is pretty decent cinema. *Freedom* is really two stories in one, the first loosely based on the life of John Newton. He's the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace" and while the film gets the broad details of his life right – he was the captain of a slave trade ship, he did have an encounter with God on his ship, and he did turn his back on the slave trade – the timeline of those events has been greatly compacted. In real life, his rejection of the slave trade

was a gradual shift over years and even decades, while in the film it seems more a matter of weeks. The second story takes place 100 years later, and is a fictional account of a family of slaves fleeing Virginia via the Underground Railroad. Cuba Gooding Jr. stars as the father, Samuel.

## WINGS OF AN EAGLE: A MUSICIAN'S JOURNEY INTO AMERICA

DOCUMENTARY  
98 MIN / 2017  
**RATING: 8/10**

Winnipeg's favorite singer-songwriter Steve Bell gets his own documentary. Bell's been a traveling man for decades, crisscrossing the country, doing thousands of gigs, winning a couple of Junos, and even performing with symphonies across Canada. He's also headed south regularly and traveled the world. But he's never really "made it big." This is the story of both his contentment with the success God has given him, and the many friends who, encouraged by his music, want him to reach that larger audience and are doing what they can to help.



## FOREVER STRONG

DRAMA  
109 MIN / 2008  
**RATING: 7/10**

This one begins with a fall from grace: teen rugby star Rick Penning crashes his car, injuring his girlfriend, and gets sent to juvenile detention for his second DUI. He also loses the affection of his rugby coach father who only seems able to relate to his son as a coach and not as a dad. Even behind bars Rick is hardly repentant. A prison chaplain of sorts starts setting him right by, first, having him scrub a lot of latrines and, second, by introducing him to a very special rugby coach. Larry Gelwix's Highland club has won

the US nationals 15 of the last 20 years, but as he puts it, he's more about creating championship boys, than winning championships. It's a sports movie, and we all know Rick's going to eventually change things completely around, but it has enough twists and turns to keep things interesting. Parents should be aware that as part of his bad-boy life, there are scenes of partying with brief shots of bare-chested guys and bikini-clad girls.

## RYAN DEFRATES: SECRET AGENT

ANIMATED  
29 MIN / 12 EPISODES  
/ 2017-2018  
**RATING: 7/10**



These are the animated adventures of a secret agent... and his mom. Ryan is new to the spy game, and while he has a lot to learn what's really holding him back is that he's not so good at listening to others, including his mom. Hijinks ensue. I will note that while our kids enjoyed every episode that we watched, my wife and I found that a little Defrates was better than a lot of it. The way he ignores others' advice gets a bit annoying after a half dozen episodes. An interesting bonus: you can watch these with Dutch subtitles on.

## Others

If you sign up with RedeemTV.com you may also want to check out some of these, also available there:

- **DRAMAS:** Vow to Cherish / The Gospel Blimp / Martin Luther (1953) / John Hus: A Journey of No Return
- **CHILDREN:** Patterns of Evidence: Young Explorers / Storm / The Defense of New Haven / Runner from Ravenshead / Torchlighters
- **DOCUMENTARIES:** Captivated / Rescued / The Reckoning / Hidden Heroes / Making Choices / How Should We Then Live? / Whatever Happened to the Human Race? / C.S. Lewis Onstage **RP**



make yourself at *home*  
safe and worry free

**ONE & TWO BEDROOM UNITS  
AVAILABLE TO LEASE & PURCHASE**

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION



**DIRK** | 519-808-3940



**ROB** | 519-808-3940



[WWW.STILLWATERS.INFO](http://WWW.STILLWATERS.INFO)



8 CENTRE ST. NORWICH, ON

Do you want to be part of a new not-for-profit Christian Corporation and have the chance to help shape the direction of our organization and make a valuable contribution to vulnerable mothers and their children who currently fall between cracks of our service delivery system? Then, we have the opportunity for you!!

We are hiring an **Executive Director** to help us set up agency programs, residences and secure necessary staff & sustainable funding sources. Please see our more detailed listing at: [www.selahplace.ca/careers](http://www.selahplace.ca/careers) and apply to our Hiring Committee@ [hr@selahplace.ca](mailto:hr@selahplace.ca) or call 204-795-8977 for more details.

**Closing date:** Open until we find the right candidate

**About us:** Selah Place Inc. is a Winnipeg-based service which will help new and expecting mothers 18–25 years old manage a household and care for their pre-school children. While residing in our transitional housing, they will be given the opportunity to learn basic life skills, complete their education, attend prenatal and parenting classes, and ultimately be prepared to manage a home independently. Our service team will include trained professionals and volunteers to surround the women with a Christ-centered circle of care and Christian community to assist them in building healthy relationships and meaningful lasting attachments.



*Selah Place*  
WINNIPEG, MB  
EST. 2012

# WORD & DEED

PRAY for our partners  
SPONSOR a child  
JOIN a business group  
PARTICIPATE in a fundraiser



## OUR MISSION

To help meet the spiritual and physical needs of people in the developing world in accordance with biblical principles for the glory of God.

[www.wordanddeed.org](http://www.wordanddeed.org)

# It's Time!

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

**Health care?**  
**Environment?**  
**Taxation?**  
**Abortion?**  
**Censorship?**

You get the idea.

It's Time! ...  
**for CHP Canada.**  
It's Time!...  
for better government

**CHP**  
CHRISTIAN HERITAGE PARTY  
PARTI DE L'HERITAGE CHRÉTIEN

For Better Solutions for Canada visit  
[www.chp.ca](http://www.chp.ca)...while there's still time!  
Or phone toll-free 1-888 VOTE CHP for more information.

Wish to make a donation? Please send a personal cheque payable to Christian Heritage Party, Box 30009, 150 Main St. East, Grimsby, ON. L3M1P0

# — INTRODUCING —

## IT ALL CAME TOGETHER

After our board agreed, we got to work quickly. Our webmaster Mark Coolen first put the entire archive of meditations on our website where they are sortable by pastor or series, and you can listen to them or read the accompanying transcript where that is available.

But we also understood that this world has no shortage of good information. It needs to be delivered to people in a convenient way. We decided to create a new podcast, featuring one of these meditations every day. The short length makes it convenient to listen while commuting to work, doing the dishes, or drinking a coffee. And the podcast medium allows you to listen whenever it is convenient for you, anywhere, and at no cost.

Thanks to technology, and our webmaster's skill, we could automate all of this, so that the next podcast is served daily without our staff having to commit daily time to it.

To give it a taste, just search for "Manna: Daily Scripture Meditations" wherever you access your podcasts. If you don't use a podcast app or player of any kind, you can still listen by going to [MannaPodcast.ca](http://MannaPodcast.ca) or by finding it on [ReformedPerspective.ca/VoiceOfTheChurch](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/VoiceOfTheChurch), or on our app (which you can download at [ReformedPerspective.ca/App](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/App)). Try it for at least a few days, as there is a large variety of speakers and topics. If you find it helpful for your daily walk, please spread the word so that others can subscribe too. **RP**

*Mark Penninga is Reformed Perspective's Executive Director.*



**Pass it on!**

If you enjoyed this complimentary magazine, would you consider making a donation so that we can produce more like it and share it freely with the world?

[www.ReformedPerspective.ca/donate](http://www.ReformedPerspective.ca/donate)





## Daily Scripture MEDITATIONS

*Our newest podcast offers daily nourishment from God's Word*

In response to Israel's hunger while in the wilderness, God told Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you." He then proceeded to feed them exactly as much as they needed, teaching His people to rely on Him each day again.

Although the manna stopped coming some 3,000 years ago when the people entered Canaan, God still gives us His grace each day again. He feeds us through His Word. And we are reminded daily that without this nourishment, we simply won't survive spiritually. We will starve.

Recognizing the need for daily nourishment from God's Word, *Reformed Perspective* (RP) is grateful to share a brand-new podcast that delivers a short Scripture meditation to whomever subscribes (free of charge). The background story is an encouraging example of how our work can go further when we work together.

### CONTINUING THEIR WORK

Last summer, a Reformed radio ministry called Voice of the Church (VOTC) approached RP, as they were considering

winding down their ministry by year end. For over 40 years VOTC teamed up with dozens of Reformed pastors to produce 10–12-minute meditations from Scripture that were aired weekly on radio stations in North America. About 900 meditations were produced, in addition to some longer presentations that were recorded in audio and video and shared online.

But people no longer listen to the radio like they used to, and it became increasingly difficult to know if many people were benefiting from the great effort and cost that went into these. After assessing whether others would be interested in taking it over, the ministry came to the hard decision to wrap it up by the end of 2022.

VOTC approached us because they saw how RP was broadcasting effectively and through mediums that reach people today. They particularly appreciated how our *Real Talk* podcast was applying faith to relevant issues of the day and reaching a wide variety of ages. They asked if we would be able to utilize the work they have been doing.

# RP's Summer Photo Contest!

## A Different Perspective On God's World

Last year we invited you to show us how you were enjoying God that summer. This time we'd like to put a twist on the same idea. We're calling our theme "A Different Perspective on God's World." So please explore God's creation, His flowers and forests, the Heavens that declare His glory, and the people He has put here, and then put a unique spin on the presentation.

What will that look like? That's for you to decide. We hope this theme will inspire, but we're not trying to limit your creativity. So take your picture and then send it along with a caption highlighting how this is a different angle on God's world.

**Now get out there and start clicking!**

### CATEGORIES:

- Children and youth (under 18)
- Adults (18+)

### RULES:

- Maximum 3 entries per person
- Must be an original photo, taken this year
- Include a line to explain how the photo relates to the theme
- Provide permission to RP to be able to publish your photo online and/or in print if selected

### PRIZES:

- The winner and runner-up for both categories will be printed in *Reformed Perspective* this fall;
- The winner of each category will receive a \$100 gift certificate to ChristianBooks.com and the runner-up will receive a \$75 gift certificate.

### DETAILS:

- Send your photo (high-resolution) to [admin@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:admin@reformedperspective.ca) **before August 15, 2023**;
- Include the name of the photographer, age, title, and a caption briefly explaining how your photo connects to the theme (max 100 words). Also indicate whether you give permission to RP to publish it.

