

Reformed CELEBRATING GOD'S TRUTH

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2024  
Volume 43 Issue No. 5

# PERSPECTIVE



# What's inside?

This issue has two main features: the results of our 2024 "Capture the Contrast" photo contest, and something that every one of us needs to take to heart – dying well.

## MORE THAN 200 PHOTO ENTRIES!

When we picked *capture the contrast* as the theme for this year's photo contest, we weren't sure if it would be a help, channeling readers' creativity, or maybe a hindrance instead, acting as more of a barrier. Thankfully the results were as amazing as ever – the Youth and Adult entries topped more than 200 entries overall.

Five members of the RP team served as judges, and what a delightful job that was! In this issue you will find 23 pages of photos, but that is only about a quarter of the entries. A very big thanks to all of you who took the time to "capture the contrast" and share it with us.

## DYING WELL

The Greek for "dying well" is euthanasia. How striking it is that the term came to mean the intentional killing of another person. And then, some decades later, even this word has been replaced by "medical aid in dying" as "euthanasia" has taken on a negative connotation. Our sinful world needs to continually adopt new language to make evil appear to be good. In contrast, the church can look to both God's Word and history to understand what it means to die well – to die in Christ.

Although we may have received many sermons that

prepare us to die well, that doesn't mean we are prepared to encounter death, for ourselves or our loved ones. Many decisions have to be made in preparation for a funeral, and then we often struggle to move forward in the weeks, months, and years after a loved one has died.

It is a big topic, and we extend our hearty thanks to the team at Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home, who were happy to agree to prepare a series of articles. What a blessing it is that there is a funeral home that is owned and managed by people who share our faith commitments.

## NEXT ISSUE: POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS

As plans currently stand, our focus next issue will be on helping parents and youth navigate the post-secondary world. If you have an idea, story, or article that could help on this front, please pitch it to [editor@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:editor@reformedperspective.ca).



**Our cover is adapted from the winning photo in the adult category, "Awe & Wonder" by Jeremy Kiers**

## 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 Holtvliuwer

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

**Template Design (2013):** Compass Creative Studio Inc. [compasscreative.ca](http://compasscreative.ca)

**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 us at [admin@ReformedPerspective.ca](mailto:admin@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)



# Capture the Contrast

P. 20-31, 42-52

- P. 4 **FROM THE EDITOR**  
**Write Your Own Eulogy**  
- Jon Dykstra
- P. 6 **NEWS IN PERSPECTIVE**  
- Jon Dykstra, Mark Penninga
- P. 14 **Why Are You Grieving?**  
- Rick Ludwig
- P. 20 **PHOTO CONTEST:**  
**CAPTURE THE CONTRAST**  
**Adult Winners**  
**& Featured Photos**
- P. 32 **A Tool to Counter**  
**the Religion of Death**  
- reviewed by André Schutten
- P. 36 **A Funeral is a Community Event**  
- Kayla Ruggi
- P. 38 **Will You Die Well?**  
- Mark Penninga
- P. 40 **The Five W's**  
**of Funeral Planning**  
- Garnet VanPopta
- P. 42 **PHOTO CONTEST:**  
**CAPTURE THE CONTRAST**  
**Youth Winners**  
**& Featured Photos**
- P. 56 **This Is My Body: After death a**  
**body remains, and a decision**  
**has to be made**  
- Rick Ludwig
- P. 58 **BOOK REVIEWS:**  
**On Aging and Dying Well**  
- Jon Dykstra
- P. 60 **Let the Little Children Come**  
- Diane Vanderwoude Russell
- P. 61 **CROSSWORD PUZZLE**  
- Jeff Dykstra
- P. 62 **Before the Reformation:**  
**The Italian monk Savonarola**  
- Christine Farenhorst
- P. 66 **IN A NUTSHELL**  
- Jon Dykstra
- P. 68 **COME AND EXPLORE:**  
**Rufus + Gruff: Pawsitively Kind**  
- Stephanie Vanderpol
- P. 76 **INTERVIEW WITH AN ARTIST:**  
**Floyd Elzinga - Creating art**  
**out of the new and old**  
- Jason Bouwman
- P. 78 **More Than the Magazine**
- P. 80 **FILM REVIEWS: Classics from**  
**the 1920s to 1950s**  
- Jon Dykstra
- P. 83 **E.D. UPDATE:**  
**Dressing for Warfare**  
- Mark Penninga

# Write your own eulogy

by Jon Dykstra



**M**y neighbor wrote my eulogy last week, or what I hope will be at least a part of it. It was her daughter's birthday, and I had popped over with a present. Neither mother nor daughter was surprised when it turned out to be a couple of books, and that's what prompted the mom to say: "Jon, when you die, I think everyone at the funeral will have gotten a book from you."

I'd like that to be true. I do think birthdays and anniversaries are a wonderful excuse to pass along a good book, and while I haven't reached near everyone yet, the Lord willing, I do still have time. So, yes, "book giver" is something I'd love to have included in my eulogy.

What would you like included in yours?

Eulogies are most often written for us by our family after we have passed on, but some years back Dr. Gary North challenged his readers to write their own eulogies. He first wanted them to write up a good resume to detail what they'd *already* done, and then they were supposed to write their eulogy to lay out what they *intended* to do. After both were complete, North challenged his readers to focus in on the differences.

"How well does your résumé match what you would like said in your eulogy? If there is a big discrepancy, work on both.... There should be more to your life than your résumé. If there isn't, start working on improving your eulogy. Then work backward."

This talk of dying is all about bringing focus to how we can live out our purpose. God created us to glorify Him, and to best do that we need follow just two commands: to first love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and second, to love our neighbor as ourself (Matt. 22:37-39). So writing a eulogy is

really just casting our eyes to the future to see how we might go about loving God and Man.

## WRITE IT WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG

While North's proposal was an exercise aimed at everyone, there's distinct benefits for young and old. Young people writing eulogies? Yes, because there's benefit in asking, "How would I like to be remembered?" sooner rather than later. The earlier we get to it, the more time we'll have to live out whatever goals we set.

Like to be remembered as a generous donor to missions and Christian schooling? That might be achievable if you start charting this course in your teens. Would you love to be known as a nurturing parent? Best to write that down long before your kids move out. Want to be called a doting grandmother to dozens? It's more realistic if you're busy having, and loving, your own large family now.

It's a different twist on goal-setting, because eulogies don't focus on our typical aspirations. A big house is nice, but have you ever heard that mentioned at a funeral? We'd all love to be able to explore the globe, but who'd want to be known simply as a world traveler at the end of their life? What priority do you want to give to your job? There are all sorts of careers that'd be worth a mention as your son or daughter sums up your time on earth, but only so long as they were a means of serving God, and hadn't *become* a god to you. That's how writing a eulogy early can show you what sort of goals are worth setting.

Typing it out when you're young is also a reminder to not put off what you can do today, since none of us have a promise of tomorrow. In his book *Seasons of Sorrow*, Reformed pastor and author Tim Challies wrote about his son Nicholas's sudden death. The young man was just 20 when he died, and at the time

was attending seminary and engaged to be married. While those plans were cut short, his father could take comfort in being able to write in his obituary:

“[Nicholas] eventually became convinced that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, and that he ought to be a follower of Jesus.... All who share his faith commend him for running his short race well and anticipate the day when they will see him again.”

## WORTH DOING WHEN YOU'RE OLD

There's a different value in writing your eulogy when you're older. It may be less about setting major new goals – limits on time and strength don't allow a man in his sixties to take on studying to be a doctor, or starting a pig farm. But new ventures are still possible since retirement may bring time to do activities that just weren't possible before. I know a man who took up painting and got quite good at it, leaving works that adorn the walls of family and friends. When infirmity took that away he turned to crafting poetry, glorifying his Maker in an entirely new way.

But in these later years one benefit to writing a eulogy comes in the clarity it brings to revisions that should and could be made. A young man can fool himself into thinking he has all the time in the world to make amends. But once there's no denying death's approach, we can't miss the need to make the most of the short time we might still have. It's only fiction, but in *Where the Blue Sky Begins*, a terminal cancer diagnosis is what gives the main character her clear mission – she's put it off for years but she's sure God wants her to ask forgiveness of seven people she's wronged.

The very reason we might not want to write our eulogy at this age – all the regrets we don't want to think about – is a big reason to do it. Sin has stained all our stories and what we've done can't be undone. But it can be forgiven. Ships may have sailed, but course corrections are always possible because our God is merciful. Just think of the thief on the cross. We don't know how old he was, but we know he had no strength and no time to offer – stuck as he was, he couldn't do anything other than profess Jesus as righteous. But that was quite the plot twist, and whatever his story's beginnings, he had such a spectacularly God-glorifying final chapter it was included in the Bible (Luke 23:39-43). Not all revisions are going to be this dramatic, but we all have sins we can flee from. Think of common examples: a stern mother can't get back those early years, but she may now have time to craft a different entry as a grandma. Maybe you spent too much time watching hockey, or obsessing about the royals, or reading trashy fiction? Whatever our sins, so long as breath remains, we can repent. And then possibilities will exist still to glorify our Maker.

For many a faithful saint these final chapters can also be about etching deeper what's already been put down. My parents have

gotten to a stage where getting out of bed has become an accomplishment, but they continue doing what they've always done, showing what a great marriage and sacrificial love looks like. It comes out in small ways, maybe bringing another cup of coffee, or holding hands during Jessica Fletcher but it's more of what's been going on for half a century now. It was also quite something to see my wife's grandmother holding forth on her deathbed, still loving on the people gathered around her, more concerned about how they were doing than the pain she was feeling. And knowing she had just hours and not weeks, she took the opportunity to share some pointed advice because it was clear she had no time but the present.

When years and maybe decades may still remain, polishing can be done. A good young elder can continue on as an older elder. Retired businessmen can burnish their legacy by mentoring younger entrepreneurs. Paul tells us that older men and women are to teach the younger generation (Titus 2), and Asaph tells us to share with our children what God has done in our own lives (Ps. 78). So long as breath remains, opportunities to honor God continue. Writing a eulogy in our later years can be about adding on an exclamation mark to what we already have down.


## CONCLUSION

When I first started writing this article, I intended to share my own eulogy as an example. But if this exercise is going to be as brutally honest as it is meant to be, the results aren't really for public consumption.

I will share a couple of broader lessons learned. Like every Christian parent, I want to make it easy for my kids to say about me – to know about me – “He loved his Lord.” And I want my neighbors to know it too. There's that old joke that goes, “if the government ever brought up charges against you for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?” Would your neighbors be able to join in on the prosecution side? Maybe like you, I have some work to do here.

I've also realized, at least at this point of my life, I can most glorify God by being a patient father. There's all sorts of other things I can work on too, and goals I should follow through on (like a book I've yet to start). But right now, every day again – almost moment by moment – I have repeated opportunities to help or to hurt the mood of my household. I can do so either as a harried, slightly grumpy, justice- more than mercy-minded, busy dad, or as a happier, calmer, more patient parent who better reflects his Father in Heaven. This second option is easy enough to write down, but if it's going to be a goal and not simply a wish, steps need to be taken, and what will that look like? This eulogy-writing is only useful if it leads to concrete actions. So if I'm grumpy because I'm too busy, then I need to either take less on, or take steps to be better at organization. I know I'm a better saint when I'm well rested, so bed time needs to become a priority. If I really want to be remembered as a patient dad, what am I going to do about it, and what am I willing to give up to achieve this goal?

That's what I've learned, but now how about you? What are your friends and family going to say about you when you're gone?

And what can you do about it still now? 

*Young people writing eulogies?*



## CANADA'S NEWS BAN ONE YEAR LATER

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**t's been a year now since Meta, and its Facebook and Instagram platforms, banned Canadian news from their platforms. Why'd they put the ban in place? They were responding to Canada's 2023 "Online News Act." The Act required large "digital news intermediaries" – only Google and Meta met the criteria – to compensate Canadian news outlets for news articles the social media giants shared on their platforms.

Instead of paying up, Meta instead chose to stop sharing these news links.

It's now a year after they put their ban in place, and a report from the Media Ecosystem Observatory (MEO) highlights

how the ban has hurt Canadian media's online presence. The report estimated that pre-ban, Canadian news outlets' social media engagement amounted to more than 19 million a day, but post ban that has dropped by 8 million or roughly 43%. It has hit local news particularly hard because many were only on Facebook, and not other platforms.

The results also include almost a third of Canadian news outlets going effectively dark on the social web, no longer posting to it. 770 outlets were posting prior to the ban, and a year later that's down 215. So the Online News Act is hurting rather than helping.

The premise behind the Act was al-

ways flawed. It was built on the presumption that by linking to news articles, these two companies, in some way, owed the news outlets something.

Google and Meta were making money off of sharing these news links, as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram rank one, two, and three among the places Canadians turn to for their news. Being a home to these links brought more traffic which meant more ad revenue.

But Meta and Google were helping their bottom line by also *helping* these news outlets. Any online creator, big or small, wants their content shared – that's how we can reach further. No shares means no reads, watches, or listens. That's why companies *pay* Meta and Google to share their posts – so we can reach more people. The idea of penalizing these companies for sharing links to news articles is akin to penalizing them for giving out free promotional ads.

Both Google and Meta threatened to simply stop carrying any Canadian news – if what they were doing was going to be viewed as theft, then they would stop "stealing." However, shortly before the Act came into force, Google negotiated an agreement with the Canadian government, giving it \$100 million a year to be distributed as the government so decides. Thus the Act becomes yet another medium for the Liberal government to direct dollars to the media outlets it wants to support.

Meta held firm – it would not pay – so it chose instead to stop allowing Canadian news shares on its platforms. The government backed them into a corner, and they decided to show just how helpful (and not harmful) they were to Canada's news outlets... by no longer helping them.

A year later, and the point has been well made. Canadians are still turning to Facebook and Instagram for their news, but there isn't much to find. The Online News Act has effectively prevented many Canadians from being able to access Canadian news coverage.

So, will the government learn its lesson and back down? Or are they happy with Canadians being limited in their access to Canadian news?

## PROSTITUTION LAWS CHALLENGED AT SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

BY MARK PENNINGA

**I**n 2014 Parliament passed a new prostitution law that ARPA Canada called “the most significant piece of legislation on a social issue passed during the nine years that Stephen Harper was prime minister.” It criminalized the purchase of sexual services while making it easier for prostitutes, most of whom are being exploited, to exit the sex trade. The goal was to target the *demand* – the men purchasing sex – rather than the women and men supplying it, but with the end goal of having the supply dwindle.

That law has since been challenged from multiple angles by those wishing to legalize and normalize prostitution. One case – *Mikhail Kloubakov, et al. v.*



*His Majesty the King* – is now before Canada’s highest court.

The case finds its origins in a 2021 conviction of two men from Calgary who worked for an escort agency and financially benefited from prostitution and procuring women into the sex trade. These men are challenging these laws as unconstitutional. They won their case in the lower court but lost at the

Court of Appeal in Alberta.

This summer, ARPA Canada and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada worked together to submit legal arguments to the Supreme Court of Canada, urging the court to uphold the law. They noted that criminal law protects foundational norms and this law in particular protects the norms of dignity and equality. At the core of prostitution law,

“is the normative judgment that the exchange of sexual services for consideration is contrary to these norms, inherently exploitative, unavoidably damaging to individuals and society, and deserving of criminal prohibition.”

The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear the case in November.

## STATE-SANCTIONED MURDER NOW THE 5TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN CANADA

BY MARK PENNINGA

**S**tate-sanctioned murder, euphemistically called “medical assistance in dying,” has quickly become one of the leading causes of death in Canada, according to a new study by the Canadian think tank Cardus.

Their report noted that MAiD deaths have increased thirteen-fold in the short time since it was legalized in 2016 (growing from 1,018 deaths then to 13,241 now). That makes it the fifth leading cause of death in the country, and the “world’s fastest-growing assisted-dying program.”

Only 3.5 percent of requests for assisted killing are denied, and that number continues to decrease. The study also noted that “MAiD request can be assessed and provided in a single day.”

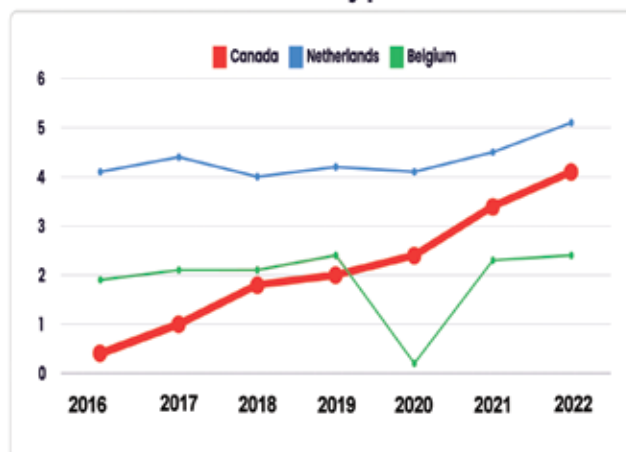
When doctor-assisted mur-

der was first decriminalized, the courts stressed that it had to be “stringently limited” and “carefully monitored.” But those who argued against euthanasia explained that limits would be impossible to maintain once “my body, my choice” is regarded as a sufficient moral

justification for murder. If that justifies the assisted killing of someone sick, why wouldn’t it also justify the killing of someone who is healthy?

But murder and suicide are wrong precisely because it isn’t our body, so it isn’t our choice. As God notes in Gen. 9:6 the reason murder is wrong is because He made us in His very Image. In a world where the law doesn’t testify to the gift of life like it used to, the Church has all the more calling to share this positive and life-affirming message through our words and, more importantly, through our deeds. We are surrounded by so many neighbors whose hopes are quickly diminishing as their bodies age or they face sickness. May we seize every opportunity to show them the Gospel of Life, which gives hope in this life and the next.

MAiD deaths by percent



## BC FINALLY DECLARES COVID EMERGENCY IS OVER – FIRED HEALTHCARE WORKERS CAN NOW APPLY FOR WORK

BY MARK PENNINGA



Over four years after declaring a public health emergency over Covid-19, BC's provincial health officer has finally announced that the emergency is over. The July 26, 2024 announcement means that the remaining restrictions, as well as the vaccination requirement for healthcare workers, are lifted.

But instead of explaining why BC maintained the "emergency" far beyond the rest of the country and continent, the NDP government devoted the majority of its announcement to explaining a new vaccine registry that it has created, requiring healthcare workers to disclose their immunization status.

About 2500 healthcare workers lost their jobs in BC because of their unwillingness to support the government's vaccine mandate. The announcement noted that they now have permission to apply for healthcare positions.

Dr. Matt Dykstra, who owns a family practice and has 1,500 of his own patients in Smithers, BC, wasn't willing to sign a statement, printed in the local paper, of unconditional support for the vaccine and other pandemic-related public health measures. Later, as a result of the mandate, he was forbidden to practice in any publicly-funded healthcare facility, including the local hospital, maternity ward, and extended care homes. In response, he helped form the Canadian Society for Science and Ethics in Medicine (CSSEM), which launched a judicial review, asking a judge to review the reasonableness of the public health order.

After hearing Dr. Bonnie Henry's announcement, Dr. Dykstra shared that on the one hand he is excited and thankful to get back to work using "the full breadth of my skills." But he also can't deny that it would be easier to do so if Dr. Henry's announcement included some sort of acknowledgment of the harm and hurt that the government's decisions caused. "An apology would help," he shared, but he knows it

isn't really about him.

"Ultimately, I'm going to work to serve the Lord and, very much, to serve my neighbors, my community, many of which are church people, many of which need a doctor, many of which rely on the emergency room being open."

Dr. Dykstra noted that he would have appreciated "some kind of explanation as to why BC was such an outlier" with its decision to maintain the health order for so long, when all other jurisdictions in North America welcomed healthcare workers back a long time ago.

He also worries that the message that Dr. Henry's announcement gives to society is "I guess we can permit these guys to go back to work." But that leaves some huge questions that she never answered publicly. "Was I, am I, a risk? Or was I ever a risk? At what point would I become an unacceptable risk again?"

Dr. Dykstra noted as well that there are multiple legal efforts still before the courts. Their CSSEM judicial review (with nurse Hilary Vandergugten, another Reformed believer, among those involved) is being appealed. He hopes that these cases are not deemed moot in light of the announcement.

"The major issues at play here are more than 'can we go to work today?' It's whether Bonnie Henry used adequate evidence, and if she didn't, then that caused a lot of harm that should be discussed."

Reflecting on the past few years from



a spiritual perspective, Dykstra notes that his prayers about it have changed significantly. "For a good while, I was praying that the mandate could be lifted and that the pain and suffering as a result of the mandate, would be put to bed." He acknowledges that "the Lord answered my prayer, not in the way that I was asking Him to, but in a different way." He was given:

"a tremendous sense of peace about it and about losing my job and I have been so blessed in going to work now with less anxiety and less fear than I used to, and I actually stopped praying for the end of the mandates. Not that I didn't want the mandates to end, but they just seem way less important."

He also experienced great blessings that he wouldn't have been able to have otherwise, including more time with his family, opening a drop-in clinic that was so desperately needed in the community, and being able to serve as an elder in his church.

"The Lord has brought me through that with great blessing," he reflected.



## HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS OVERTAKING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS IN BC

BY MARK PENNINGA

**A**ccording to a BC survey conducted last year, 2023 might have been the first year that more people in the province were going “all out” with their decorating for Halloween than for Christmas.

The survey was conducted by BC Hydro, the crown corporation that provides most of BC’s hydro power. It found that half of the residents decorated their homes for Halloween in 2023, thirteen per cent of whom put on a “mega display” (defined as ten or more strings of lights and at least one plug-in inflatable). Just over half were planning to decorate for Christmas, of which ten percent planned a “mega display.”

Although the numbers are similar, and the survey was done before Christmas, when one compares Halloween decorations with Christmas, the contrast is striking. Halloween

decorations generally celebrate death with tombstones, skeletons, and even effigies, ropes around their necks, hanging from trees, and then there’s the embrace of the occult, witches, and darkness. In contrast, most Christmas decorations radiate light, joy, and beauty, a fitting display to mark a holiday that celebrates the birth of our Incarnate Lord.

BC has made headlines for being the province with the highest proportion of people who say they have “no religious affiliation” (up to 41 percent in 2023). As such, it isn’t surprising that there is

waning enthusiasm for the celebration of Christ’s birth. Yet it is sad that a population would willfully celebrate the darkness which Christ came to save us from. “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness” (Isaiah 5:20).



## ST. CATHARINES DROPS CENSORSHIP BYLAW

BY MARK PENNINGA

**J**ust three weeks before having to appear in court to defend their bylaw that censored pictures of pre-born children, the city of St. Catharines blinked and backed down.

ARPA Canada took the city to court in response to a bylaw that forbids delivering any image of a fetus to a private residence unless the material is placed in a sealed envelope with a warning label attached to it. ARPA argued that this bylaw infringed the Charter-protected freedoms of conscience, religion, and expression and was crafted to

suppress pro-life content.

As the court date drew close, the *St. Catharines’ Standard* reported that “councillors repealed the bylaw Monday night after an in-camera meeting with the city’s solicitor.”

The turn-about is a good example of the importance of legal action, and the judicial branch of government more generally, as a check against the overreach of government agents using their power to suppress justice and truth. Although the federal and provincial legislatures tend to get the most attention, it is the cities and towns (the municipal level) that most commonly violate the fundamental freedoms protected in the Charter.

The newspaper quoted extensively from ARPA’s lawyer John Sikkema, who led the challenge. “The real aim of the bylaw was to suppress opposition to abortion,” he explained to the paper.

“Suppressing pro-life speech because some people find it offensive is not a pressing or substantial objective, as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms requires. Rather, in a free and democratic society, is an odious objective.”

In a separate note to supporters, ARPA explained that a further outcome of this is that “other cities considering similar bylaws will be much less eager to pursue them.”



## FORMER COP, CORONER, AND MAYOR DOES A 180 ON DRUG POLICY

BY MARK PENNINGA

**I**t isn't often that public officials who once championed "progressive" policies admit they were wrong. But it is becoming more common when it comes to those who once advocated for drug decriminalization with perhaps the most striking example to emerge being Larry Campbell. The former Senator and mayor of Vancouver supported the opening of North America's first supervised drug-consumption site and advocated for the legalization of opioids. But as *The Globe and Mail* is reporting, he thinks differently now.

"Mr. Campbell, 76, says that British Columbia's NDP government made a mistake when it decriminalized the possession of small amounts of illicit drugs without thinking through the impact on communities. He says the government made an even worse mistake when it started dispensing prescription opioids to drug users, through the practice known as safe supply."

Campbell was first on the RCMP drug

squad in the 1970's, and was then a city coroner in the 1980's, a story captured loosely in a CBC drama called *Da Vinci's Inquest*. As he told the *Globe and Mail*:

"I've been a big harm-reduction guy forever and, after decriminalization, I just came to the realization that we were going down the wrong path and nobody was standing up."

He believes far too much focus has been put on "harm reduction" and not nearly enough on prevention, enforcement, and treatment. He recently took a trip to Alberta and was impressed by the United Conservative Party's strategy of investing in an addiction treatment system. "We've got to figure out how we help people not only stay alive but have a life," he shared.

What folks are looking for in drugs (and money, sex, fame, and more) is the sort of higher purpose and meaning that the police and a secular government can never provide. But the Church can step into the gap. God's people understand that we were made



for a reason, and that fulfilment can be found in glorifying and enjoying God. His Church has been entrusted with the Gospel truth that though we might be drug users, or any other type of sinner, we can be washed clean – we can be reconciled with our Maker, through Christ. But, as Paul writes in Romans 10:14-15:

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Will we let others in on this good news, or keep it to ourselves?

## REFORMED BOOK PUBLISHER CHANGES HANDS

BY MARK PENNINGA

**R**eformed book publisher Paideia Press (PaideiaPress.ca), which has published over 400 titles since it started in the late 1970's, has been gifted to the Cántaro Institute.

Many Dutch Reformed readers will be familiar with Paideia titles like *Scout*, *Journey Through the Night* and the well-loved devotional *Daylight* by Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven. After some quiet years, the publisher resurfaced in the past decade, and while S.G. DeGraaf's fantastic four-volume *Promise and Deliverance* series might be the only holdover from those former days, they have a slew of new titles promoting "reformational thinking."

Paideia Press was the effort of Niagara-based entrepreneur John Hultink. He has now gifted all the titles and copyrights to Cántaro Institute, which bills itself as a "reformed confessional organization committed to the advancement of the Christian worldview for the reformation and renewal of the church and culture." The institute is based on the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689). What might be of



most interest to our readership is the Institute's own publishing efforts defending creation which includes titles like Jerry Bergman's *Evolution's Dangerous Ideas* and C.S. Lewis's *War Against Scientism & Naturalism*. They have also made e-book versions of *Promise and Deliverance* available for free, which is a great quick study aid for parents and teachers trying to share Bible stories with children. You can find all four volumes by searching for "Promise and Deliverance" at [Cantarolnstitute.org](http://Cantarolnstitute.org).

## TRANSMUTILATION DEFENDER COMES TO REGRET YOUTHFUL TATTOO

BY JON DYKSTRA

**A** young lady who goes by the online moniker of “emo hag” was such a fan of the *Harry Potter* series that she got a Harry Potter “sleeve” tattooed on one arm. But then the series’ author J.K. Rowling refused to give full-throated approval of transgenderism. Rowling is happy to support men wearing dresses, but she isn’t willing to pretend they are actually women. That has many on the Left (including actors who’ve made millions off her movies) denouncing her, and “emo hag” decided the only thing to do was black out the Harry Potter sleeve she’d spent years, and thousands of dollars, creating.

The irony here was expressed by Gene Parmesan in a comment on her tweet. He wrote:

“wait so in your youth you made a permanent change to your body that you grew to regret???”

She still didn’t catch the irony, tweeting back:

“yes it’s amazing how right my dad was about this whole thing [laughing emoji]”.

Christians can appreciate Parmesan’s clever question, but we also need to understand where it falls short. He addresses *regret*, but that’s not the real issue. The devil’s play here is to blind the world to God’s created order, and the fact that He, and not we, decides what gender a person will be (Gen. 1:26-27).

Gene Parmesan didn’t start with God, and as a result his point isn’t standing on a firm foundation. In fact, it can be easily rebutted. After all, kids

regularly make decisions in their youth that they come to regret. A kid might choose to take Dutch instead of French, or Physics instead of Chemistry. And any hours they put into basketball can’t also be put into piano. As an adult, they might come to really regret those decisions. So the transgender lobby could readily grant that, like course selection and basketball practices, some kids might come to regret their choice. *But whatcha gonna do? Choices have to be made, right?*

And that’s the real issue: whether this is a choice. Our real argument is that when it comes to gender, there are no options to explore because God has already made the choice for us.

Christians will sometimes avoid mention of God when they make arguments in the public square in the hopes of being heard and being more effective. But, like “emo hag” we’re missing out on some irony here. Godless arguments *aren’t* actually effective because they aren’t firmly grounded. It’s not a coincidence that Parmesan’s argument could be rebutted. That’s true of every Godless argument, because they don’t stand on a firm footing. We can appreciate Gene Parmesan’s point but should think of it as a great *plank* – it’s not strong enough to stand on, but stacked on the solid foundation of God’s Truth, it can be put to constructive use.



## JULY 22 WAS THE HOTTEST DAY EVER?

BY JON DYKSTRA

**T**he Associated Press declared July 22<sup>nd</sup> not simply a hot day, but the hottest day.

Two days later their banner headline proclaimed: “Monday breaks the record for the hottest day ever on Earth.” How hot was it? The global mean temperature was said to be 17.15 degrees Celsius, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Such a headline, and such precision, may tell us a little something about the weather, but it says much more about the folks holding the bullhorns. Global mean temperature to *two decimal places*? As the Climate Discussion Nexus noted in their July 31 News Roundup:

“You could believe satellite measurements are a lot more comprehensive and exact than they really are without falling for the notion that ‘Monday was 0.06 degrees Celsius hotter than Sunday’ worldwide. Because nobody, including Copernicus that made this guessurement, knows what the temperature is anywhere to 0.06C, let alone what it is everywhere. Yet we’re meant to swallow [that] whole.”

And the hottest day ever? If you run with secular assumptions about the age of the Earth, then they would have to acknowledge that in the distant past it was much warmer than today and with more CO<sub>2</sub> in the air too.

And what if, as a creationist, you know better than to buy into these old earth assumptions? Then you’re even more aware of just how badly secular scientists, and the secular media that covers them, can overstate their certainty.

## WRONG FOLK THINK GOD IS RELEVANT TO POLITICS

BY JON DYKSTRA



n the US, God is referenced in the political sphere in a way that He just isn't in Canada. A recent example on the Right occurred in July just days after Donald Trump was shot in the ear in a failed assassination attempt. A picture circulated on the Internet showing Jesus with a bandage on His ear – the artist was equating Trump with the Son of God.

This sort of blasphemy isn't limited to the Right. Democrat California governor Gavin Newsom's campaign paid for billboards to run in Mississippi that read "Need an abortion? California is ready to help" and underneath were the words from Mark 12:31: "Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these."

Then, more recently, the Kamala Harris campaign reached out to black churches, and dozens of pastors responded, urging their congregations to support one of the most pro-abortion candidates ever.

Canadians could take the wrong lesson, seeing this as proof we need to keep our faith out of our politics. But if God rules over every square inch of creation – and we know He does – then the better lesson would be for God's people to speak up more boldly, lest we abandon the public square to blasphemous pseudo-Christians.



Picture credit: Lev Radin / shutterstock.com

## PRESIDENT TRUMP RUNS FROM HIS PRO-LIFE PAST

BY JON DYKSTRA



Donald Trump once had the distinction of being the most pro-life president in living memory. In his first term in office, he put into place the Supreme Court judges that overturned the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision which had legalized abortion across the country 50 years before. *Roe* getting struck down was a ruling no one had expected, and almost no one could even have imagined. Yet, it happened, thanks largely to President Trump.

But in a campaign stop in late August, the former president made quite the reversal. Instead of helping the unborn he pledged to put more babies in harm's way. He told a crowd at Pottersville, Michigan:

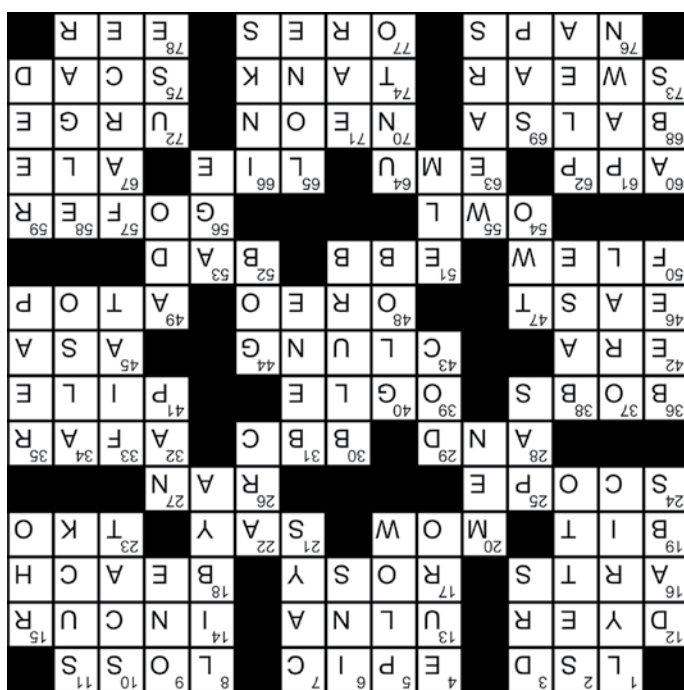
"I'm announcing today in a major statement that under the Trump Administration, your government will pay for, or your insurance company will be mandated to pay for, all costs associated with IVF treatment, fertilization for women.... because we want more babies, to put it very nicely."

He positioned the policy as pro-family, but because abortion is regularly part of IVF treatments, this is far from pro-family. As John Stonestreet explained in a recent Breakpoint.org column:

"As commonly practiced, IVF almost always involves creating multiple embryos, since 'excess' embryos improves the chance of achieving pregnancy. In most cases, the embryos that are created are then screened for 'viability.' Those deemed unviable are either destroyed or stored. Embryos are transferred into the woman's uterus, either one at a time or multiples at a time. If pregnancy is achieved before all embryos are transferred, the rest are frozen, disposed of, donated to medical research, or stored for later use. If multiple pregnancies are achieved, a 'fetal reduction' [i.e. abortion] is often recommended and performed."

And Trump promises his government will pay for it, or make sure the insurance companies do.

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION SEPT-OCT





RenewingYourMind.org



## Broadcasting Truth *for* 30 Years

Since 1994, *Renewing Your Mind* has delivered daily Bible teaching to listeners around the world. This podcast and radio program continues to be the first contact many people have with the truth of God's holiness, and Christians in more than 180 countries make each episode a part of their regular routine. We give God glory for three decades of in-depth instruction from Dr. R.C. Sproul and others. Follow *Renewing Your Mind* wherever you get your podcasts, and join this daily pursuit of spiritual transformation by God's grace as His Word is faithfully proclaimed.

### WAYS TO LISTEN:



PODCAST



ONLINE



LIGONIER APP



REFNET



RADIO



DAILY EMAIL

# Why are you grieving?

What is grief?  
Where does it come from?  
What do we do with it?  
Does it have a purpose?  
Does it have an end?

by Rick Ludwig

**O**ur emergence into the big world from our mother's womb comes with a spontaneous outburst of crying. In fact, if we enter this life too stoically, we may even be poked or prodded until we make our presence known. Instinctively a child cries out, gasping a lungful of oxygen with a wail, while being ejected from the safety of the mother's womb into something new and uncertain. This is a traumatic entrance and is the first sense of loss and aloneness.

And so the grieving begins!

Grieving is a common reality of our human existence, but that doesn't make it any easier to discuss. Instead, we avoid talking about it, keeping it private. That pushes this experience to the margins of our lives and then, when it comes, it still mostly catches us off guard. Our Western society remains grief-avoidant and breathes a collective sigh of relief when its shadow passes by. Grief is offensive

for a culture that champions conquest, survival, and gain, and which finds defeat, relenting, and loss as bitter and even shameful.

Christians are not unaffected by this social milieu so we also may stumble along, hiding from our own grief or that of others.

So let's talk about grief. Sometimes the best place to start a discussion is the most difficult place. A discussion about life, death, and funerals in a Christian context finds a suitable launching point to come to terms with our grief. *Why* are you grieving?

## SUSAN AND BERT

Let's begin with a short story. It is a story that gets to the heart of what is confusing about grief for the bereaved and for those around them.

A year or so after the death of her husband, Susan was hosting her brother-

in-law and sister-in-law in her home for a number of days for a visit, as they lived out of province. During the visit her brother-in-law, Bert, noticed that Susan still talked a lot about her husband, even a year after his death. He noticed many items around the house that still brought his deceased brother to mind, both individual and family pictures, and even some of his personal belongings. Sometimes, during the visit, as Susan shared her memories and her struggles around living without her husband, she became quite emotional. Bert deduced, after observing this for a few days, that Susan was not doing well. She seemed unwilling to move forward, not willing to turn the page. Before parting he shared his observation with her.

"Susie," he said, "I hope you take this the right way, but you need to be willing to move on. What you are doing is not helpful. It will not bring him back. Think

about the future and don't dwell on the past. Maybe you should get rid of some of his things and put some of those pictures away. You can't look forward if you're always looking back."

Bert left feeling like he had offered difficult but sage parting advice. Susan was left feeling admonished, confused, guilty and mostly misunderstood.

A year later, Bert and his wife Betty returned for another short stay with Susan. Betty had recently returned from a three-week trip to Europe with some girlfriends. Bert spent the first while of the visit bemoaning what a trial it had been for him to stay home while Betty traveled. It was okay for a few days but it wore thin after a while. He rotated around the kids' homes for dinner but that was tiring by week three. He was bored and restless at home. It was awfully quiet in the house at night. A few of their friends invited him over but it was awkward to go there alone. When she returned from her trip, Bert told Betty that he wouldn't do that again. Next time he would go along on the trip.

Susan looked knowingly at Bert and with tears in her eyes, said, "Bert, now imagine that Betty never came home!" Bert was very quiet as he was beginning to understand. Betty slid over on the couch and gave Susan a hug and glared just a little at Bert.

## LOVE AND GRIEF

There are many misconceptions about loss and grief, but perhaps the biggest one is that grief is something to get over. Grief is often seen as a disease with its own pathology. It begins with loss and the symptoms may include anger, denial, bargaining, and accepting. Then, somehow, over time and space, the symptoms fade and that opens the way to recovery and renewal.

Many people talk about doing things to get closure on their grief. It's as if grief sits in a wide-open closet and if we could do all the right things we could slam that closet door shut and preferably put a lock on it. The truth is, our biggest struggles around grief have little to do with closure and much more to do with opening. There is so much pressure within us and

around us to say goodbye to our grief even while we are often still unwilling or unable to say hello to it. The reality is that we can't live without grief. Grief is the price we pay for love in a fallen world.

## GRIEVING ISN'T WEAKNESS

This is a good place to begin talking about grief also for the child of God. If we can understand the relationship between love and grief we can begin to distance our grief from the anxieties of weakness, sin, and failure. We can begin to see our grief as a *crucible*; a place where God relates with us and refines us so we can come closer to Him and to each other.

That is a large part of our struggle with grief. In our grieving we often are convinced that we grieve because we are weak in our faith and then our goal is to overcome this weakness. We might think that the life of thankfulness to God is one where we live out the joy of our faith, and that this joy cannot include our grief.

This is a poor conclusion. God teaches us in His Word that this is not true. In fact, He teaches us that the two – grief and joy – go hand in hand:

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you

may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

Our joy in the Lord also needs to be discovered in our trials and the grief that accompanies them. Somehow, we have to reconcile our grief in this life with our ongoing and deepening relationship with God. We need to discover how the two fit together. We have to experience God's refining purposes in this, how He is transforming us to be perfect and complete.

We cannot experience this when we deny or resist the reality of grief and its impact on our daily life. Both the trials and the grief they bring mysteriously enhance the joy of our faith. They help us meet God when we are most vulnerable, most needy, most true to whom we really are, and most realistic about how little we can really fend for ourselves.

We have to admit, though, this is often a frightening, confusing, and seemingly solitary place. We don't go here easily. Grief drags us reluctantly, even kicking and screaming.

## GOD'S LOVE AND OURS

Grief is the price we pay for love.

Let's explore that further. When we talk about love we need to begin with God. God is not only the source of love, He is love. In 1 John 4:8 we read:





# 7 ARTICLES ON AGING WELL

by Harma-Mae Smit

Our society is uncomfortable with aging, but as Christians we know every year is a blessing – not just to ourselves, but also to others. Here are some articles on aging well that we’ve shared throughout the years, and they’re all worth sharing again!

## 1. SENIORS: FLORIDA DOES NOT EXIST

The Christian faith depends on transmission from older to younger, which means “Florida” (ie: a life of leisure without responsibilities) does not exist, even if you happen to live there. Here’s how seniors can pass their wisdom on.



## 2. HOW IMPORTANT IS “NOTHING”?

How many of us plan to do “nothing” in retirement, and what other options are there? We’re made for more than nothing, and shifting gears is different than stopping.

## 3. AGING IN HOPE!

When we realize we are aging, we don’t need to deny it or cling to our youth. Here’s where our hope lies.



## 4. OLDER WOMEN HAVE MUCH TO GIVE

What roles can older women specifically take on? There are many, as Titus 2 lays out!

## 5. OLDER MEN STILL HAVE A JOB TO DO

What roles can older men specifically take on? Find out what Titus 2 has for older men to do as well.



## 6. WHAT MY GRANDMA TAUGHT ME

The impact one grandma had on her grandchildren’s lives is incredible, even as her body and mind grew weaker.

## 7. GETTING OLD(ER)

Growing older is often difficult, but here is how God continues to carry His people through the years.



“Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

It is the loving God who created the world and initiated a love relationship with us in Adam and Eve. We know this relationship as the covenant of love. God created us to naturally live in loving relationship with Him and also with each other (“It is not good that the man should be alone,” Gen. 2:18).

When Adam and Eve broke covenant with God, the great antithesis was introduced to the world. Now there would be two types of people. There would be people who, through God’s mercy, continue to live in an ever-mending loving relationship with Him. And there would be people who, in God’s judgement, live in broken relationship, increasingly filled with hatred toward God, and feeling distant from Him. In Genesis 6 we read about God looking down on the escalating wickedness of man after the fall into sin and we see God’s response to it all:

“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart.” (RSV, ESV: “and His heart was deeply troubled.”)

God grieved over love lost, over the broken relationship with mankind whom He had created out of His great love. This makes it clear that, from the beginning, grief has been connected to love.

And it is evident that grief is the God-given response to the interruption of love – His response to the consequence of sin’s entrance into the world. Grief is also the sanctified response to love’s loss. God grieved over His broken relationship with the crown of His creation. He grieved to the point He was sorry He had even made man. He regretted this relationship for the evil and pain it brought into the world.

We can be thankful that God’s mercy preceded this great sorrow, and that



He already had promised a Savior. This early reality of a coming Savior is the introduction of grief with hope (1 Thess. 4:13). As image bearers of God, we also grieve our losses with our hope resting in the Savior.

## GREATER GRIEF?

I daresay the need to grieve is even heightened in the life of God's people. When questioned, Jesus responded to the Pharisees that the greatest Law for mankind is this:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22).

A life of thankfulness that is pleasing to God is one that is filled with loving relationships, first with God and then by extension with each other.

However, our love relationships with each other are not only hampered by sin, they are also curtailed by death. Both sin and death bring grief into our life as we are forced to eventually let go of our relationships with each other, the very relationships that God calls us to initiate and foster and maintain. These relationships take all our time and

energy to build and grow and it is only understandable that they will take much energy to let go of. We will need time to sort out what was and what is, what remains and what must be left behind. As we are forced to let go of those relationships one by one, we learn that we can only cling to the one relationship that does not end. Our relationship with God, which is claimed and secured for us by Jesus Christ, is what we have to hold on to through thick and thin. Inevitably our grief leads us to Jesus.

So let's consider our Savior.

## JESUS WEPT

Jesus was billed by the prophets as a “man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (Is. 53:3). He was the one who loved perfectly, the one who restored the covenant of love. He loved His Father and His neighbor deeply. And then He had to give it all up. And He suffered and grieved over it.

In our grief it is so important for us to know that Jesus truly understands our experience. We have a sympathetic Savior. He knows our pain and He is moved in love to care for us. Let's look at a couple of examples of this in the Bible.

The raising of Lazarus is a story of great revelation of the Messiah. On the one hand we see the power of the one who will Himself rise from the dead

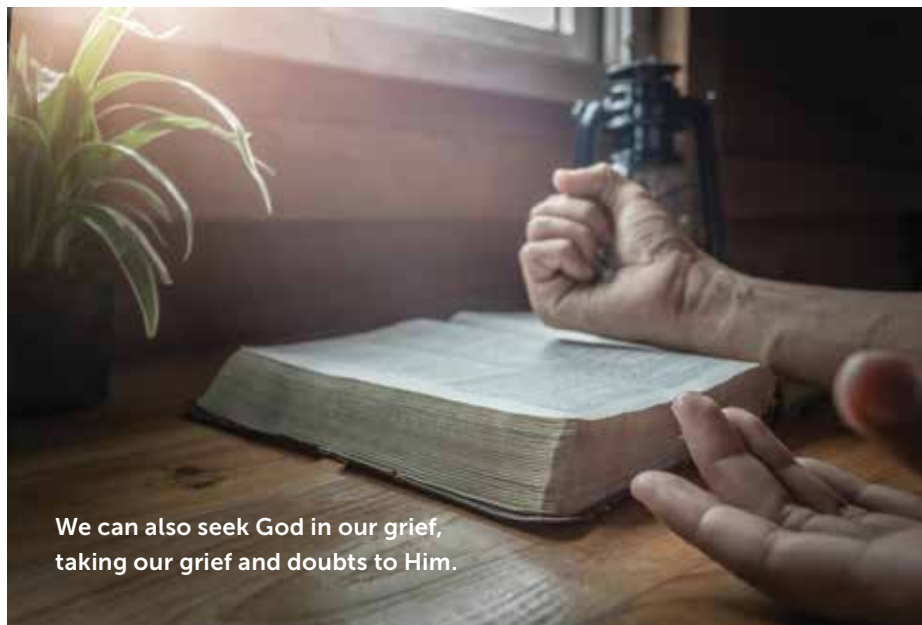
as the Son of God. He delays two days in responding to Martha and Mary's urging *that the one whom He loves is ill*. He tells the disciples that He does this for their sake so that they will see His power and believe. He also affirms this power to Martha and Mary when He arrives and responds to their rebuke for His tardiness.

And yet we also see, for our benefit as well, a gripping revelation of Jesus' humanity. We see something of His heart. He is deeply moved by the suffering of His friends as they mourn their brother's death. He is very troubled when He confronts the grave of His friend. He weeps over the death of Lazarus. Those around Him make this crucial connection to His outpouring of tears: “*See how He loved him.*” Jesus our Savior sanctifies our tears before His Father. He shows us that the price we pay for love in this life is grief. He assures us that it is not only okay to grieve – it is godly to grieve.

It is helpful for us to see that Jesus also gives direction for our grief. Grief is not aimless or an end in itself. Grief leads to greater dependence on God and deeper discovery of the goal of our life. For the child of God, grief brings us to the same Father that Jesus turned to.

In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus facing an impending broken relationship with God – a broken relationship we will never have to face because of His death and resurrection. Jesus faced this to pay the punishment for our sin and our sinful nature. And as He faced this He began to grieve deeply. Jesus sweat droplets of blood while His helpless friends slept close by. He was alone with His Father and poured out His anguish. And His Father heard Him and sent an angel to strengthen Him. This was a great encouragement for Jesus and it allowed Him to fulfil His ministry, to go all the way to the grave. This is also a great comfort for us. Our Father listens to our grieving hearts and responds. Our Savior understands our sorrow and sympathizes with us. He opens the way to our Father.

And He also has left us with a great Comforter.



We can also seek God in our grief, taking our grief and doubts to Him.

## COMFORT IN GRIEF

It is important to remember that, in His compassion, our Lord Jesus left us with a Comforter. His greatest assurance for His disciples and us is that He will return and bring us home to a place He has prepared for us (John 14). Yet He has not left us floundering in a big gap between His ascension and return. He sent us the Comforter, the one who would remind us of Jesus and that the Father's love comes to us through Him. The Comforter can take our grief and refine us by it, take our tears and groans and relay them coherently to our Father, take our grief and transform it into worship. Jesus did not leave us alone in our sadness. He has poured out His comfort on us and in us by the Spirit.

So now let's work with this as we experience our hurts and losses and grief.

For starters, we can rest assured that it is okay to grieve. We can tune out the very mixed messages that tell us we are strong if we remain in control of our emotions at all times in our grief and that we are weak when we express or share our feelings. We can also seek God in our grief, taking our grief and doubts to Him. We can free ourselves from the pressure of getting over our grief.

Instead, we can explore and examine our grief as a way to come closer to God and to each other, to recognize our vulnerability in this life and our need to lean on each other now, and to fully depend on God forever.

## FRIENDS IN GRIEF

What does this mean for you if you are trying to help someone in their grief? Will you help open the way for their expression of pain or you will try to block it at every turn? Can you see it as part of God's transforming work in their life and come alongside them? Will you see that you share in the same vulnerability? Can you be patient with them as they work through the difficult feelings, emotions and adjustments that grief demands? Will you be a listening ear and a partner in prayer? Will you be okay in knowing that you cannot resolve grief, but you can share the load?

A well-known counselor gives the

following instruction when seeking help from our family and friends. He challenges us to find our *therapeutic third*. He suggests that one third of people we know will be hurtful in our grief, one third will be of no help and one third will be understanding and a good listening ear and an encouragement. That's something to think about when we assess others and ourselves. In knowing and understanding this we must not be too proud in our self-assessment as we fall somewhere in all of those thirds for all the people we know and come in contact with. The goal is not for you to judge others but rather to find your therapeutic third and to be a part of someone else's.

This grief journey in life will require us to be honest with ourselves and vulnerable to others who love us. Have you suffered the loss of a child? That is a terrible burden. Will you share this pain with your husband or wife? Put words and tears to it? Don't carry this weight alone. And then bring it to God, in privacy on your own, and together with each other. Express your grief and see that it is made holy and helpful in Jesus Christ. Experience the comfort of His Spirit as He speaks to you through His Word and through the encouragement of fellow believers. Are you feeling alone and abandoned because of the death of your husband or wife? That's a reality that can rock your world – how as two you became one and then somehow, by death's intervention, you feel alone and like you are even less than one. Can you share this experience and hurt with your elder or your best friend? Pour it out to God when you are feeling overwhelmed. He is the God of all compassion. Write down your thoughts and feelings and then reflect on them and observe how God is caring for you from day to day. Find the people in your life who will share the burden with you, rather than judge you for carrying it. Find the people who gently help you carry it daily and regularly help you lay it down before Jesus.


## PAY IT FORWARD

We could go on in identifying our own losses and the grief that accompanies them. And we should, as God has

invested great purpose and meaning in them for you and me. He is taking every part of the suffering and hurt we experience in this life and using it, lovingly and purposefully, for our salvation (Rom. 8:28). And He has given us a way to experience and express it and work with it in our grieving. He has provided a way to share it and to encourage each other through it. He has shown us the way to Himself in the face of suffering.

He has also empowered us to help each other in it. There is the flowing cascade of comfort that exists in the communion of saints: one person reaching out knowingly to the next as they recognize the pain and hurt of suffering and loss, and the heavy weight of grief (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Brothers and sisters, reaching out, not in judgement, but with encouragement. Not pushing the load aside, but putting a shoulder underneath it. Not trying to defeat or overcome it, but instead bending to it and then stretching out to God. We can only do this for someone else if we also have experienced this grace of God ourselves through the loving concern of another. We can only do this when we too have been comforted by God in our grief. We can only do this if we have opened our hearts to God and to each other in our grief. When we do this we will experience the Comforter, sent from above, overtaking our lives and filling our hearts with Christ.

Why are you grieving? Because life on earth is both beautiful and ugly, joyful and sad, full of beginnings and endings and God is gracious to you. He gives a voice to your plaint, He gives a purpose to your hurt, and He draws you closer to Himself in your hour of need. He redeems your lost love with His love in Jesus Christ. When we come to the end of ourselves in our grief, we begin to see the kindness of our Savior more clearly. May He be gentle with us as we grieve over the death of our loved ones.

Until He comes. 

*Rick Ludwig is a funeral director at, and the owner of, Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home in Hamilton, Ontario.*

*You can email him at [rludwig@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com](mailto:rludwig@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com).*

# The Christian funeral is a procession of faith.

*Let us walk with you and share the Faith-Link difference.*



Rick Ludwig



Greg Luxon



Kayla Ruggi



Diane Russell



Garnet VanPopta

It's comforting to come home.  
[kitchingsteepeandludwig.com/faithlink](http://kitchingsteepeandludwig.com/faithlink)  
1-800-737-8275



**KITCHING  
STEEPE & LUDWIG**  
FUNERAL HOME LIMITED

# Capture the Contrast

## RP's summer photo contest results

Our photo contest keeps getting bigger and bigger! This time we asked you to consider the contrasts found everywhere in God's creation – from the beginning He crafted light and darkness, dry land and waters, fur and feathers, work and rest. We wanted you to head out, explore, discover, and then share what you uncovered. And boy, oh boy did you! Once again, we have been blessed with an overwhelming array, and we just had to share as many as we could, devoting more than 20 pages to the fantastic, fun, and often feathery pictures you will find here. So, thank you to all who entered on behalf of the thousands of RP readers who can now enjoy your work.

What follows are the best of the best, broken up into two categories: **Adult (18 and up)** entries cover the next dozen pages, and then the **Youth (under 18)** entries can be found a little further on, from pages 42 to 52.

### ADULT

### WINNER



**In Awe & Wonder:** I took this photo while on a camping trip to Grundy Lake Provincial Park with a group of friends with whom we go annually with our families. All of the kids were in bed already when we went to the beach to stargaze on a clear moonless night about midnight. It was incredible to witness. We all stood there in awe at God's creation. I remember feeling so small compared to how vast the Milky Way is (seen here). – **Jeremy Kiers**



## RUNNER-UP

An intense sky is created as the sun is setting on Lake Winnipeg at Grand Beach. The intense colours of sky and clouds, the glow on the drifting sand, and the golden outline of the person approaching the beach.

– Cor Lodder

## RUNNER-UP

**Dragonfly Emergence – From Nymph to Adult:** One morning I noticed a barn swallow hovering around some bulrushes by our pond.

Upon a closer look I spotted a group of dragonflies molting. I quickly went home to get my camera in order to take this incredible picture, capturing the succession, from left to right, of dragonflies transforming from a nymph to an adult. As their wings unfold, they must wait for the sun to dry them before they can fly. God made the lifecycle of this insect to start its life in water and then be transformed into an airborne adult.

– John Verbinnen



## ADULT ENTRIES



**Sunset:** To me, this image highlights the contrast of individual drops of water and grains of sand versus the entire lake and beach.

– Natalie Myers

**Brothers:** This picture is precious to me as it shows our two sons holding hands. They are the only two boys in our family of 5 children, so they have a special bond. And the obvious contrast of their difference in height, with 10 years of difference in age, shows the contrast in this picture.

– Christine Bos



**In the Garden:** I love how the flurry of the wings contrasts with the calmness of her gaze.

– Carrie Jonker

## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST



**Diamond Ring:** As the moon passed between the sun and the earth, the surreal transformation of day to night during the totality phase of April's solar eclipse was a breathtaking experience. For a brief time, the temperature dropped and the stars became visible in the afternoon sky. As totality came to a close and the sun was beginning to emerge, we witnessed this breathtaking "Diamond Ring."

– Rachel Vander Deen

**2-Striped Plant Hopper on Black Eyed Susan:** The 2-Striped Planthopper is just one of hundreds of Treehoppers, Planthoppers and Leafhoppers that frequent the undergrowth sucking sap from the leaves of plants. The contrast in size of these tiny insects compared to the plants they inhabit is fascinating, a world unto their own.

– Mark Williams



This photo captured a Blue-winged Mountain Tanager at a feeding area at a finca near Cali, Colombia. As the Tanager foraged, a female Red-headed Barbet flew in for a landing--- startling the Tanager with its wing flutters.

While the Tanager is still and in focus, the flying Barbet almost looks like a ghost. I like the juxtaposition of crispness and softness and the wide array of colors between the 2 birds. Ultimately, though the birds have many contrasting elements including size and shape of head and bill; they found no threat in one another and foraged peacefully together.

– Sylvia Guarino

## ADULT ENTRIES

### Changing of the Guards: Spot the difference!

The more you look, the more contrast you see. Not only do the short, black ankle socks and birks differ from the diced hose tops, the modern athletic shorts are a far cry from the Scottish military kilt with a horsehair Sporran. You also see dead grass and green grass, old buildings and a hill green of wildflowers and weeds. And if you look even closer yet, you will notice one hand at attention and another in a pocket, and smooth legs and hairy legs. And just maybe you can find even more!

– Em Slaa



**Bumble Bee on Evening Primrose:** I am always amazed at the symbiotic relationship God has embedded in the makeup of various insects to pollen producing plants. The contrast between the Bumble Bee, a flying insect and the stationary flower of an Evening Primrose provides and sustains life for both entities.

– Mark Williams

### The Contrast of Elements:

Hard-soft, wet-dry,  
absorbent-nonabsorbent.

– Rene Gagne





## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST



This photo was taken at a youth conference where my husband and I were chaperones; early morning at the lake, where many of the youth begin the day with personal devotions. I loved the contrast of these colourful canoes against the grey shadows and mist of early dawn.

– Holly Enter

**A Spring Walk in the Woods:** I enjoy the contrast of the decay of the fallen tree with the fresh spring bloom of the Woodland Phlox.

– Carrie Jonker

**God's Work Reflected:** In the busyness of our lives, the LORD provides a calm, contrasting reflection of His creation in the separation of the heavens, land and waters for us to marvel at His majesty. If only we pause to soak it in; Praise be the LORD!

– Jason Kottelenberg



## ADULT ENTRIES



**9 Decades:** This photo exhibits three types of contrast: 1. 90 year age difference, 2. Shirt color, 3. Clear foreground vs muted background

– Sharon Bratcher



**Sea Star:** We travelled to the Oregon Coast this summer and I spent a lot of time photographing the ocean, beach and rocks. The contrast between the bright orange sea star and the neutral rocks and sand is strikingly beautiful.

– Sheila VanDelft



**Singing Among the Branches:** In Psalm 104, the psalmist describes how every diverse aspect of God's creation praises His handiwork and sovereignty -- including the expanse of the heavens and earth, down to the smallest birds "that sing among the branches" (vs. 12). Let even His smallest creatures point us back to the infinite and majestic creator who deserves all the glory.

– Hannah Koutstaal

## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST

**Candere:** I have always been intrigued with the angle used to capture subject matter. By changing the angle, the invisible becomes visible and the simple becomes complex. Something small can become significant and something significant can become small. I am reminded of our wonderful God. What is man that you are mindful of him? In His grace we are given an entirely new angle with which we can view the world.

– Scott Zylstra



The contrast of deep blue glacial ice flows against the rugged granite mountain rock, and the lush green forests that glad the lower ranges as they blend with the Alaskan Fjords.

– Cor Lodder

**Flowery Reflection:** We see God's love in every aspect of His created world – even the flowers! The beauty of this flowery reflection, in contrast to the man-made road it is laying in, is meant to point us to One who provides all good things.

– Hannah Koutstaal



## ADULT ENTRIES

**From Death to Life:** When I first took these photos of the mushrooms growing on the log I didn't think much of it besides it looking neat, but upon reflection afterwards, the contrast of the living mushrooms growing on the dead log lying in the stream seemed to me a picture of the new birth: the log representing a sinner's dead heart, but when submerged in the streams of living water, starts to become alive and produce fruit.

– Irene Roth



Plant or animal? Flora or fauna? We make it a contrast, but you can't really have one without the other.

– Lyn Leyenhorst

## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST



Sprung  
– Scott Zylstra

**Between Life and Death:** This picture is of Meleah Tubergen, whose first child, born in 2022, only lived for about one hour. Meleah is now due any day with her second child, and living in the difficult tension between the joy of new life and the memories of recent death.

Though this contrast is not part of God's original creation, the stark contrast between life and death is one that we all have to live with. It reminds us that God meant it when he first told Adam that he would surely die if he disobeyed God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and yet, even after God pronounced the curse for their disobedience, Adam still named Eve "the mother of all living," because of the Messiah that would come and obtain final victory over death.

– Kristen Bazen



## ADULT ENTRIES



Quite often, photographers prefer to capture the radiant red male cardinal rather than its pale brown female counterpart. However, with the sun hitting this bird, oranges with golden undertones burst with distinction. In this instance, the cardinal's crest is upright, indicating she is alert to her surroundings. What penetrating eyes she has! What a wonderful Creator we have in our Lord! All glory to Him for His marvelous creation.

– David Van Dyke

**Robin Eggs in Spring:** I love the contrast of spring, roaring in like a lion, after months of cold, monochromatic winter. It was a joy to discover these robin eggs in my garden: they capture the robust colour of long-awaited spring and the work of our faithful Creator!

– Jessica Geerlinks



This photo contrasts well in showing the peace of God in the blue sky with the wrath of God in the storm. Added to that is the showing of God's glory in the sunset glowing on the clouds and sky (there was a tornado warning at the time). Taken in Brandon, MB mid-June, 2024

– Martha DeGelder

## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST

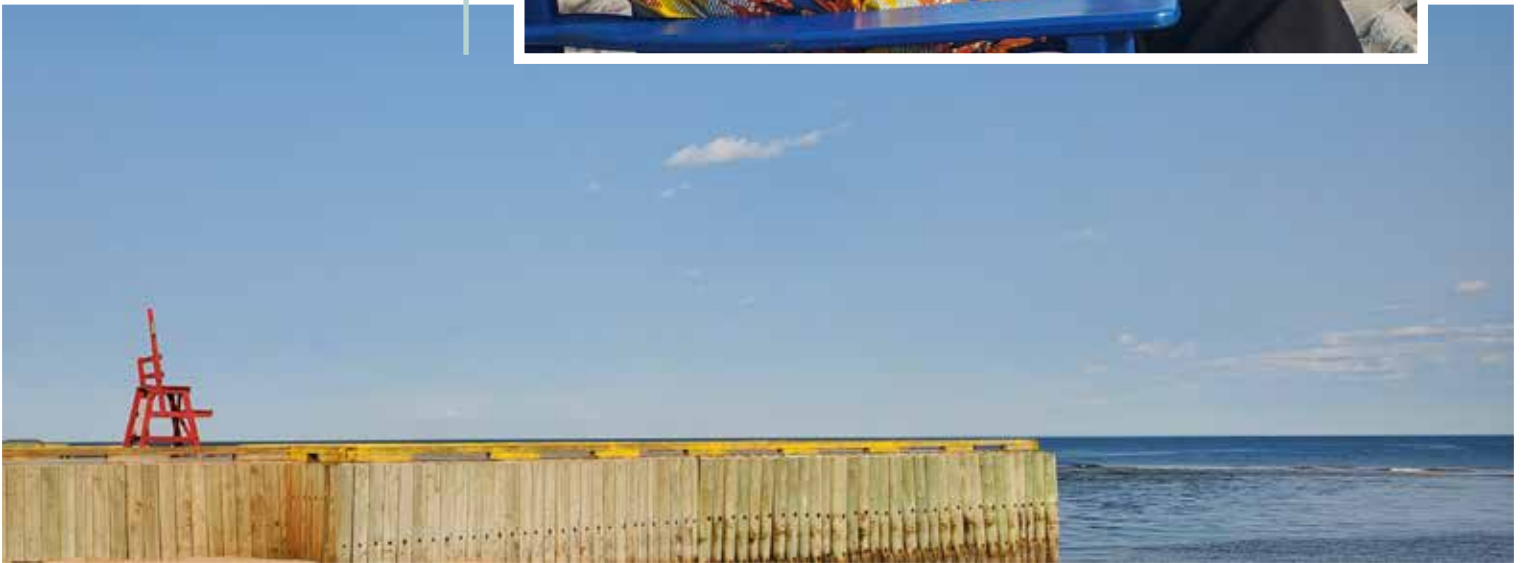
**Boys in Blue.....Chairs:** Two men. In blue chairs. Looking at their phones. Everything else is a contrast – hat/bare head; sun glasses/reg glasses; bright shirt/plain T; long pants/shorts; dark skin/pale skin.

– AJ Slaa



**From Pier to Shining Sea:** The strong horizontal lines of yellow top of the pier and blue horizon, are contrasted with the vertical logs of the pier and the upright red chair.

– Judy Slaa



My husband and I had the opportunity to hike in Sequoia National Park in June. Talk about contrasts! One feels so small next to these incredible giants... and in awe of their Creator.

– Holly Enter



Euthanasia promises autonomy – *you* will decide how you die – but like all the devil’s promises, this one is also a lie. A healthcare system that uses murder as medicine isn’t going to act in the interests of the sick and disabled they’ve abandoned in their hospital hallways. Those are the patients they’ll pressure to just take their “medicine” so as to clear the corridor.



# A Tool to Counter the Religion of Death

Dr. Goligher has given us a short, readable, important book to help fight euthanasia

reviewed by André Schutten



In April 2024, a desperate father in Calgary, Alberta begged a judge to prevent the doctor-assisted suicide of his 27-year-old autistic daughter. The father argued that his daughter’s “condition, to the extent that she has a condition, is mental not physical in nature” and raised serious concerns about the approval process for her death, including whether legal safeguards had been met and whether “doctor shopping” had taken place (where patients assessed as “ineligible” continue to seek out opinions from other doctors until they find ones willing to approve of their assisted suicide).

### CONFUSION REIGNS

But the judge felt he could not intervene:

“MAiD assessments are conducted in accordance with the structure imposed by the *Criminal Code* ... but they remain medical assessments conducted by doctors ... [Such assessments] are private in nature and involve the application of specialized professional judgment. ... The Court has no expertise and no place in reviewing MAiD assessments in some sort of *ad hoc* system of pre-authorization...”

But by this logic, *any* medical assessment, including a mistaken or careless one, approving of an assisted death could be impervious to judicial review. Furthermore, the judge reasoned that preventing the daughter from accessing “medical assistance in dying” would do more harm to her than allowing it, a deeply religious argument Dr. Goligher tackles head-on in his book, as we will see. Thankfully, the Alberta Court of Appeal granted an injunction halting the assisted death from proceeding at least until the appeal is heard later this year.

This story emphasizes just how far we’ve come in Canada with euthanasia and assisted suicide (collectively referred to in Canada with the euphemism “medical assistance in dying” or “MAiD”).

## HOW SHOULD WE THEN DIE? A Christian Response to Physician-Assisted Death

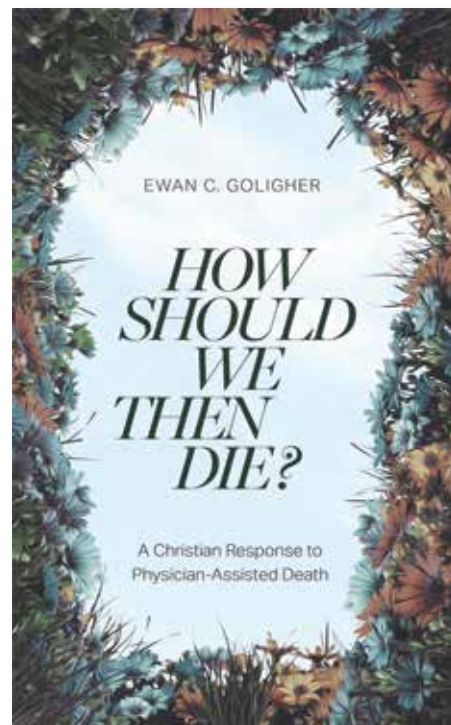
BY EWAN C. GOLIGHER  
2024 / 145 PAGES

What’s more, many Christians seem genuinely confused about how to deal with the issue. I’ve taught multiple university courses on law, human rights, and public policy in two different Christian post-secondary institutions, and in most of them the issue of euthanasia has been discussed and studied. In each class, I have found Christian students who either (1) believe that euthanasia is wrong but are unable to articulate *why*, or (2) believe it is wrong (morally wrong, I suppose) to “impose” on others one’s belief that euthanasia is wrong.

### MUCH-NEEDED BOOK

And so, not even a decade into this legal and moral quagmire, Christians in Canada are in desperate need of resources to help respond to this issue in a way that is compassionate, thoughtful, and theologically grounded. Thank the Lord for providing such a resource through the pen of Dr. Ewan Goligher!

Dr. Goligher is a medical doctor and an elder in a PCA church in Toronto. I first met him when he and I co-taught at the Christian Legal Institute (the only Christian legal training academy in Canada) and he urged students to pay careful attention to this issue and to champion the human rights of the vulnerable whose lives are placed at risk in the name of “autonomy” and “self-determination.” He also encouraged students to be prepared to defend Christian and other doctors who are clinically, ethically, and conscientiously opposed to participating in the intentional termination of patients’ lives. Since that first meeting, I’ve enjoyed a friendship with Ewan and we have picked up our conversations at other events: Christian legal and medical conferences and at the Apologetics Canada conference where Dr. Goligher has also lectured.



Ewan’s book is a beautifully written apologetic for the Christian answer to the ultimate question that every human will face: how should we then die?

### SECULAR GOD DOESN’T VALUE LIFE

Our culture is increasingly promoting one answer: “Autonomy is lord. And so I have the *right* to die, with public assistance, at the time and place and in the manner of my own choosing.” Ewan dispels that approach as a falsehood that completely undermines the value of some.

“So when we say that people matter, we are also saying that it is good that they exist. If people have intrinsic value, then it is always good that they exist. And if we insist that they really matter – that they have deep intrinsic, inherent value – then the cessation of their existence (their death) must always be regarded as a terrible tragedy.”

Ewan also shows persuasively how embracing “assisted death is an act of secular faith” and just how presuppositional and religious the arguments for

## ...physician-assisted death is best considered an act of blind faith on their part

assisted suicide are.

“Because those who claim that death is nothing don’t really know that for sure, physician-assisted death is best considered an act of blind faith on their part. It is an act at least as superstitious and religious as any carried out in any religious services of any kind. Those who administer physician assisted death are functioning not as doctors but as priests, helping their patients by ushering them out of life and into the afterlife, the great unknown.”

### THE REAL GOD OFFERS REAL HOPE

But what of despair? Ewan offers a fuller, hopeful approach to those struggling to find meaning in their suffering, rooting his answer in the confession of faith as expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism: we belong not to ourselves but to a faithful, loving Savior.

Expanding on and moving beyond the work of Jewish psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, Ewan shows that, to live with suffering we need transcendent meaning rather than self-invented meaning, and that,

“we only clearly behold the true meaning and significance of our lives in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.”

### A THIRD WAY

The opening paragraph of the Supreme Court of Canada’s 2015 *Carter v. Canada* decision – which led to the legalization of doctor-hastened death – presented an “either/or” dichotomy: either a person dies a horrific death with extensive suffering, or they take their own life early.

However, Dr. Goligher shows his readers a third way: physical and

existential suffering can be substantially mitigated without eliminating the sufferer. He also helpfully distinguishes between refusing treat-

ment, the cessation of which leads to death, which is ethical; and euthanasia, which is not. This area of medical ethics has been the source of some confusion due to the conflation of certain concepts and terms. In short, to refuse treatment is permissible for a Christian because where there is a

“decision to withdraw life support (which is not really an action but rather the cessation of action)... the actual cause of death is the underlying illness. Life-sustaining treatments are not discontinued in order to bring about the patient’s death; rather, they are discontinued because it is recognized that they are no longer effective or appropriate.”

But any act the intention of which is to end the life of the patient is something different in kind, and is immoral because it intentionally seeks to end the life of the patient. Such action is properly called homicide. In fact, assisted suicide (or MAiD as it is called in the Criminal Code) is still classified as homicide in the Criminal Code. As Dr. Goligher notes, “The intention, or goal, of the action is the key distinguishing feature.”


### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Ewan’s book is thoughtful and engaging. Multiple references and allusions to Shakespeare and Schaeffer, Augustine and Tolstoy, Camus and Nietzsche show a breadth of knowledge and engagement with key thinkers, without ever coming across as stuffy or academic. I highly recommend this book for young Christians’ study groups, for elders and pastors, for moms and dads, for nurses and doctors. At a relatively short 145 pages, the book is a very accessible read,

easily understandable for a grade 11 or 12 student.

And it is written to be understandable and compelling to both Christians and the broader Canadian public. It presents the gospel beautifully in its final chapters.

Throughout the book, Ewan’s approach is that of a compassionate doctor, one who has clearly seen more than his fair share of suffering. Each chapter opens with a true heart-wrenching story of extreme anguish. There is no downplaying how brutal human suffering can be, but Ewan’s extensive clinical experience in managing and mitigating pain and suffering also shines through in this book. Ewan is more than a physician; he is also a pastor-elder and his compassion comes through the pages of this book too. The moving stories he shares put a lump in my throat as I read them.

As the story I opened with illustrates, and as many experiences will confirm, physician-hastened death will impose itself on the Church on many fronts. Christian physicians, nurses, and palliative institutions are being pressured to provide and approve of euthanasia (these professionals are no longer seen as virtuous but as villainous for not “supporting” their patients). Some doctors are now proactively suggesting euthanasia to elderly or disabled patients as a “medical option” that should be considered. And our culture is planting the seed early in the minds of our children (and our seniors!) to see medically hastened death as a dignified way to die. The Church cannot be silent or ignorant on this issue. No better resource is available to assist her to understand and speak than this book. 

*André Schutten is Senior Legal Counsel and Director of Training & Development at Christian Legal Fellowship (CLF), Canada’s Christian legal ministry.*

*Christian Legal Fellowship sits at the intersection of the church, the state, the legal academy, and the legal profession. To learn more, please contact André at [aschutten@christianlegalfellowship.org](mailto:aschutten@christianlegalfellowship.org).*

# HOPE REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IS **HIRING!**

We are looking for passionate, committed and professional applicants who seek to serve Jesus Christ in Reformed Education and are a member in good standing of a NAPARC church.

- Gr 3 Teacher (Maternity Leave - Begin End of October)
- Educational Assistant (Full Day)
- Educational Assistant (Mornings)

All interested applicants are asked to submit a statement of faith, philosophy of teaching, and references (including their pastor) along with their resume.

Send your resume to:

Mr. J Kikkert, Principal  
principal@hopercs.ca  
519-448-9913

www.hopercs.ca



# WORD & DEED



Christian Education



Theological Training



Infrastructure



Vocational Training



Medical Care



Christian After School Programs



Orphan Care Program



Disaster Relief



Agricultural Training

55+  
ongoing projects

17+  
countries

25+  
partners

*"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*  
Colossians 3:17

www.wordanddeed.org

# WE SERVE OUR CLIENTS, OUR COMMUNITY & OUR LORD



**Rachel VANDYK**  
sales representative  
289-214-1825



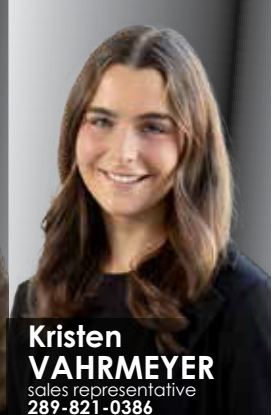
**Randy MULDER**  
sales representative  
905-359-9411



**Bill BROUWER**  
sales representative  
905-341-4400



**Ron MULDER**  
sales representative  
905-327-4564



**Kristen VAHRMEYER**  
sales representative  
289-821-0386



**YOUR NIAGARAHOMETEAM**  
For All Your Real Estate Needs

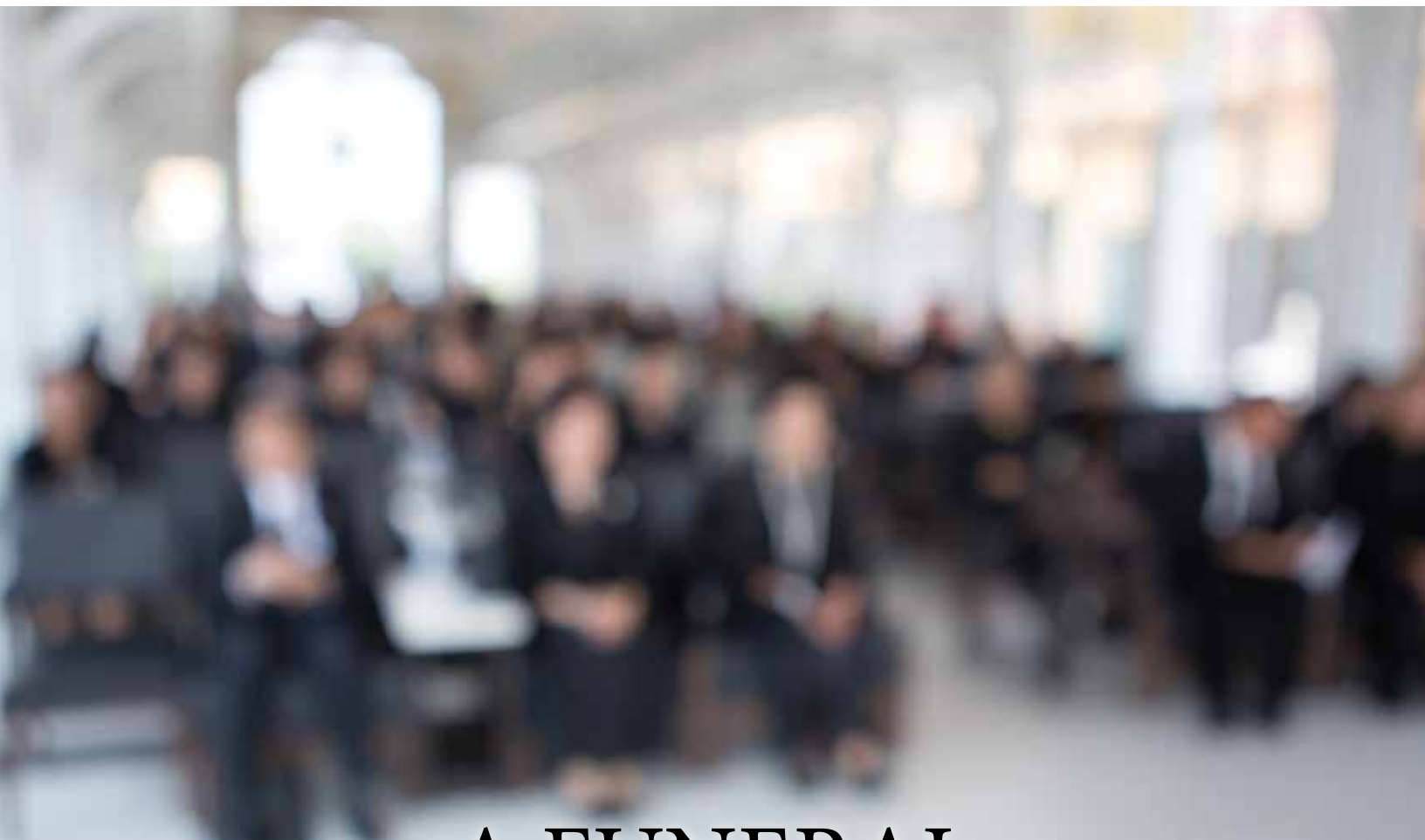
each office independently owned & operated



**RE/MAX**

**GARDEN CITY**  
realty inc., brokerage

2390 South Service Road, Jordan



# A FUNERAL IS A COMMUNITY EVENT

*Your presence alone can be a comfort*

by Kayla Ruggi

**N**ot long ago I was directing a funeral, and the service was about to begin. The doors to the sanctuary opened to myself and the pastor, and, most importantly, the grieving widower and his family. Waiting for us were 400 guests in attendance. There was an audible gasp and fresh tears from the family, followed by a brief pause as they took in this overwhelming show of support. We walked down the aisle to the reserved pews, surrounded by a sea of compassionate faces, an earthly cloud of witnesses. I was struck by the visible comfort this community gave the family simply by *showing up*. Their presence was a gift I don't think the family will ever forget.

An experience like this highlights how funerals are com-

munity events. It also shows us the opportunity, and with that the responsibility, we have to be a support system. We can learn here, too, some practical ways we can care for the grieving family among us.

## **PRACTICAL ADVICE**

In our church tradition, it is typical that a family would choose to have a time of visitation prior to the funeral event. The visitation is often our first opportunity to show up for the family. This is a time where you are invited to share in the family's burden of missing their loved one. It is a time to mourn with those who mourn, but also an opportunity to reflect on God's faithfulness in their loved one's life. In many

ways, it is a sacred time.

Maybe you have found yourself at visitation for someone with a particularly tragic circumstance surrounding their death: perhaps a child has died, or a sudden accident or illness has occurred, rocking the community and stirring your heart to express your condolences. Especially in those circumstances you may find you don't have the right words to say.

Know that first and foremost, your presence alone can be a comfort to the family member.

Second, you may be at a loss for words, and that is okay. At times we don't understand why God gives and takes away, and we can be tempted to overcompensate with our words, even

*...you may be at a loss for words, and that is okay.*

though that may do more harm than good. While it may be tempting to say, *"they're in a better place"* or *"all in God's timing"* – even though these might be true – I find it more effective to keep things simple and say something along the lines of, *"my condolences to you,"* and maybe share a short memory about their loved one. If words escape you, do not be discouraged. Consider Job's friends, who sat with him in silence for seven days and seven nights upon seeing his grief-stricken state. A grieving family needs your constancy and listening ear, not your ability to take their pain away. A visitation gathering is a visual representation of one's community. It can be a vulnerable position for a family to receive visitors, while they are mourning and processing their grief, whatever that may look like, but it is healthy for them to see and experience that visible show of support.

While your presence can provide comfort to the family, there are also benefits for the community that attends the visitation. Often times at these events, the casket is present and open for the public to pay their respects to the deceased. In this moment, we are encouraged not only to reflect on God's faithfulness to this individual, but also His great promises to us in our mortality if we have surrendered our lives to Him. We can be reminded that when we ourselves suffer a great loss, this is the same community that will serve as a hand and foot to us in our time of need. Our gathering together becomes an illustration of something much greater and eternal!

Our responsibility to the family does not necessarily stop at showing our support at the visitation. Attending the funeral also allows you the opportunity to experience the family's memories shared in eulogies, as well as hear about God's promises for His children through the words of Scripture read

and meditated upon at the funeral service.

Typically, you are also invited to share in a meal after the funeral events. Just as Jesus shared food and fellowship with many during His life leading up to His death, you are invited to break bread with the family, ensure they are nourished physically, and perhaps share stories about their loved one and offer words of encouragement for the days ahead.


## MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

In my experience, I have noticed that our seniors in the community show up to visitations faithfully. I would encourage our younger generation to continue this tradition. While perhaps standing in line, or taking a night off from watching a show after work and coming to visitation instead may not sound appealing, this is a calling and responsibility we have as brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is equally encouraging for the children and grandchildren of the deceased to have their friends share in their loss. Often these family members will comment to us how appreciative they were of their friends taking the time to show up for them. I remember a basketball coach being particularly moved when her whole team of grade 9 and 10 students came to the visitation for her late father.

You may be thinking that these practical ways to support the family sound daunting and beyond your abilities. Perhaps you are anxious and don't know where to begin in supporting the grieving. While I encourage you to attend the events, there are many roles behind the scenes that we witness at every funeral as well. There are individuals such as childcare providers at the church to support little ones in the grieving family, the livestream/AV technicians for the service, the individuals who make food and serve it for the reception, and the list goes on. Be encouraged then, to find your role when it comes to funerals and visitations in your congregation and your community: *"As it is, there are many parts but one body"* (1 Cor. 12:20).

I would like to leave you with an excerpt from a prayer in Douglas Kaine McKelvey's *Every Moment Holy (Volume II)*. The title of this prayer is: "A Liturgy Interceding for Those Who Will Gather to Grieve for Me."

*And so may the fellowship of those  
who assemble to grieve my passing  
become a sharing of sorrow's burdens,  
and a celebration of your long  
faithfulness  
in my life, and still more  
a warm recollection of the gifts  
we were ever intended  
to be to one another.* 

*Kayla Ruggi is funeral director at Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home in Hamilton, Ontario. You can email her at [info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com](mailto:info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com).*



# Will you die well?

by Mark Penninga

We spend a lot of time preparing for things. Every day we prepare for school, work, or whatever else may be on our plate. We ensure we brush our teeth, get dressed, are well nourished, and aware of what is on our calendar. We fill our vehicles with fuel and ensure they still have insurance. We like to be prepared, especially if something big is coming our way.

But something really big *is* coming our way, any moment now, and many of us aren't actually prepared for it. You are going to die.

Are you ready to die? More than that, will you die well?

When we face things we don't like, our western culture tend to resort to one of two methods. The first is to minimize it, living as if it isn't a big deal, and the second is to try and control the situation.

## EVASION #1: MINIMIZING

In recent decades, death is purposely being hidden. The days of wearing clothing to show you are mourning the loss of a loved one has long passed. Instead of being buried, 77% of deaths

in my home province of BC result in cremation. After all, cremation is simple – it doesn't require a casket, a plot in a graveyard, a funeral, a headstone, or even much of a wait. The body is simply "gone" with just some ashes remaining.

Funerals have also been replaced with "memorial gatherings" or "celebrations of life" where a few words are spoken, pictures shared, and some drinks are poured. During and post-Covid, even many of these empty practices have been abandoned.

With fewer children and broken families, many Canadians are approaching death realizing that they won't be leaving much of a hole in anyone's lives. Sure enough, when they die their rooms are emptied, the walls are painted, and the next tenant moves in shortly after. Did anyone even notice?

We can point to culture, but how are we preparing for the prospect of our own deaths? A former pastor of mine shared that he prefers to preach at a funeral over a wedding. At a funeral people are usually listening – thirsty souls needing spiritual water. At a wedding most people are distracted,

waiting for the message to wrap up so we can carry on with the other plans. The problem is that much of our lives can be characterized by distractions from what really matters.

When it is our funeral, we won't have any time left to pay attention. We are either ready or we aren't.

## EVASION #2: PRETENDING TO BE IN CONTROL

Since humanity is not able to escape death, it is becoming common to do what we can to control it by ending life on our own terms. Since "assisted death" or MAiD was legalized in 2016, the numbers have jumped as much as 30 percent each year since. Well over 50,000 Canadians have already been killed this way. The *National Post* recently shared the story of Dr. Ellen Wiebe, who grew up in a Christian home and has killed over 400 people in BC. She calls her work "incredibly rewarding" stating that "it's the last thing I'll give up." Why is it so important? "It's about honouring people's wishes, empowering people to have control over their own lives."

Again, Christians can face the same temptation, in at least two ways. First, many religious leaders claim that “MAiD” is a blessing to be embraced, as it allows people to die without facing more pain.

And, without “assisted death” even being considered, other Christians do everything they can to fight against God’s clear plan to let our earthly life come to an end. We seek to control our death through every medical option available, or by becoming bitter at God for interfering with our hopes and plans.

## DYING WELL

God has made it clear to us that minimizing death, or trying to control it, are both foolish. Since our first parents ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, death has been unavoidable (Gen. 2:17). And even if a doctor and the government are willing to end our lives, every one of us will still stand before God to give an account (2 Cor. 5:10-11). So if we want to live and die well, we need to understand life and death from God’s perspective, not our own.

The Apostle Paul gives us the answer so beautifully in Ephesians 1 and 2.

*I urge you to set aside this magazine, pick up your Bible, and read Ephesians 1:1-2:10 right now. It will likely be some of the most valuable time of your day.*

Did you notice how many times Paul wrote about being “in Christ” and “in Him”? What God makes very plain to us in these verses is that if we want to die well, we need to die *in Christ*.

Left to ourselves, death will have the victory over us. It doesn’t matter if we attended a Reformed church all our lives, were well respected by others, and are surrounded by a large and loving family. As Paul shares in Ephesians 2:1: “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked... following the prince of the power of the air...” We were dead, even if our hearts were still beating.

Thankfully the message doesn’t stop there. In verse 4-8 we hear the Gospel. Let it sink in:

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...”

When we die in Christ we are saved from eternal death by Christ’s death, and can look forward to being raised to eternal life, just as Christ did. That is why, in his letter to the Phillipians Paul was able to testify “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). As Pastor Jonathan Parnell shared in his article “Die Well” on DesiringGod.org, “Death is gain because when all is lost, we still have all we ever really wanted, and now we have him in a deeper, richer experience that, as the apostle Paul says, is ‘far better’ (Philippians 1:23).”

To live in Christ means to *surrender*


everything to Him. Not control, or fight or hide, but surrender. “I am not my own but belong, in body and soul, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ” (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 1). Paradoxically, living well means dying to ourselves – even dying everyday (1 Cor. 15:31), so that we can experience abundant life – eternal life in Christ.

## VICTORY IN CHRIST

When we are in Christ we don’t have to minimize death, or try control it. We can rest in God’s good plan for our life.

This doesn’t take away from the fact that death is our enemy. It stings. I’m “only” 43 but have felt the pain of death acutely many times. I’m not looking forward to experiencing it even more in my remaining days.

Yet it makes all the difference in the world to understand that in Christ, death doesn’t have the final word for my loved ones or myself. Because He died for us and conquered the grave with His resurrection from the dead, “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54). It is now a gateway to life. Real life. Eternal life.

“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57). 



Parties are just one among many ways that people will avoid thinking about their inevitable deaths.



# The five W's of funeral planning

by Garnet VanPopta

I can think of many times I've answered the phone at the funeral home and the person on the other end of the line expressed a need to plan a funeral, but didn't know where to start. They wanted to have the conversation, but did not know what questions to ask or how to begin the conversation. Hopefully, by asking and answering some basic questions I can help prompt your thoughts and ideas about end-of-life planning.

## WHO?

- Funeral planning can be done by anybody. At some point in the Christian life, we are confronted with our own mortality and that gets us thinking about our exit plan.
- Christians should give careful attention to funeral planning, since a funeral is a final witness to those left behind about what we believe and hold dear, and is an opportunity for the gospel comfort to be presented to our family and friends and leave a lasting impression. My father, a retired pastor, has said on occasion that he prefers to preach at a funeral rather than a wedding, because those in attendance at a funeral are usually listening more closely. A great question to ask yourself is, "What do I want my funeral to communicate?"
- Funerals are for the living, so funerals must be relevant and meaningful to those left behind. Planning ahead for your own funeral may be the only time you arrange an event for everyone in your life to attend but not yourself.
- Funeral planning is often done by the recently bereaved. Death comes sooner than expected many times, and a sudden, tragic loss can cause us to go numb, and feel like we are go-

ing through the motions in a daze. A trusted funeral director can be valuable in helping you navigate all the decisions that need to be made and help you to stay within budget.

- Ultimately, your executor (or if there is no will, your closest kin) has legal authority to make your funeral decisions. They should be carefully selected and clearly informed of your wishes.

## WHAT?

- Planning ahead can take many forms. It can simply be a conversation between spouses, parents and children, or friends about wishes a person may have regarding a funeral. It could also involve a conversation between a parishioner and a pastor about what text, songs and message should be incorporated into the funeral liturgy.
- Planning ahead can also involve some more practical steps, such as purchasing cemetery interment rights, selecting a funeral home to assist your family, choosing services and other items like a casket, cemetery vault, marker or monument, and even setting aside the funds to pay for them. In many areas you can research some of this information ahead of time from a funeral home's website to educate yourself.
- There is typically no cost for a funeral planning consultation appointment and recording your preferences on file at a funeral home.
- If a death has already taken place, decisions need to be made rather quickly. There could be as many as 25 or more things to decide in a short period of time about a loved one's funeral, ranging from which funeral home should look after the arrangements to what

outfit he or she should be dressed in, to who the organist or pianist should be. Choose a funeral director who you know is going to be a helpful guide through all the decisions that need to be made.

## WHEN?

- Funeral planning should be done at your own pace. Any cemetery or funeral provider who is aggressively pursuing you or pressuring you should be avoided. Your funeral provider should provide plenty of information and choices and show a long-term commitment to your local community. Look for a referral if you are new in town.
- Planning ahead for a funeral is often done in conjunction with retirement planning, or when a family home or other assets are sold, or when conversations about aging and end of life tend to come up naturally.
- Funeral planning without making a will is like building a chair with only two legs. These things should be done in tandem.
- The timing of funeral planning conversations can be difficult to navigate, especially when one party is more willing to discuss the topic than the other. But talking about it doesn't make it happen any sooner, it only helps you to be more prepared. Maybe that sounds cliché, but there is truth to this statement, especially as we confess God's providence in life and in death. Involving other family members, such as adult children, in the conversation can be helpful to move along in a productive way.
- Funeral planning should be done earlier than you might think. For those who are married, funeral planning is




a mutual gift that you can give to your spouse (kind of like when my wife and I signed our wills on our anniversary). It allows you to make decisions together. I have seen many surviving spouses burdened with making the final decision on all the details when nothing has been planned ahead of time. If you are single, planning ahead allows you to have some control and say over the details of your own funeral, rather than leaving everything in the hands of your executor.

- Planning early also allows you time to consider all the options, and plan for the expenses.

### WHERE?

- Conversations can be shared anywhere. They can happen while on a drive, over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, at a family gathering, or while sharing a quiet moment. Somewhere along the way you need to capture the content of the conversations and put it on paper.
- We often sit around the family kitchen table to help people, whether for planning ahead, or when someone has died. Arrangements can also be discussed at the funeral home by appointment.

### WHY?

- Planning ahead has a financial benefit, as a prepaid funeral arrangement offers guarantees and the investment of funds that protect the family from any future inflation of costs.
- Planning is preparing. It allows you to face difficult realities with loved ones, and to say confidently that even though it will be so hard, we will be able to face death, that last enemy, standing on God's promises, as they are boldly proclaimed to us as part of a well-planned funeral. Having those conversations ahead of time can really make all the difference and set us off in the right direction on the grief journey when the time comes to say goodbye to a loved one. 

Garnet VanPopta is a funeral director at Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home in Hamilton, Ontario. You can email him at [info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com](mailto:info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com).

## SEASONS OF SORROW: THE PAIN OF LOSS AND THE COMFORT OF GOD

BY TIM CHALLIES  
2022 / 199 PAGES

Nick Challies was just 20 years old when he died. He was involved in a dorm activity, playing a game along with his sister, fiancée, and other college students when he suddenly fell to the ground, never to get up.

Nick's dad is Tim Challies, a blogger known to many in Reformed circles. This book covers the year – the four seasons – that followed Nick's death, as his father turned to writing to figure out what he was thinking and feeling about God's decision to take his son now, and not the much later that Tim, his wife, family, fiancée, and friends, had anticipated and hoped for.

The gift Challies gives here is that in his struggles to articulate his loss, he gives his readers the words to express their own. Like Job, he knows God's ways are best, so he can echo, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). He trusts that even as he can't understand why God did this, it was somehow for his good, and that of his whole family. But Challies also expresses his fear of the Lord – not the holy sort of fear that is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7) but just the *downright afraid* sort, because if God has taken one child from him, what might God have planned for him next?

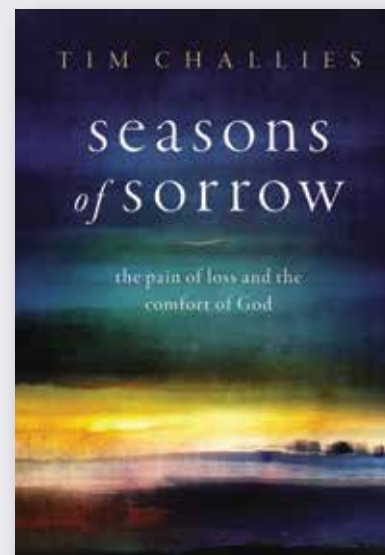
It's this back and forth that I found the most helpful. Challies is trusting the Lord, but that doesn't keep him from expressing his doubts too. He's comforted by God's promises, but that doesn't leave him any less devastated. He has all sorts of questions, and finds many answers in the Psalms and in the writings of Christians who have wrestled with loss in ages past, but he doesn't find all the answers he'd like.

Over the last two decades, Challies has made a name for himself as a discerning Christian leader. In laying open his broken heart for us all to see, I think his example will help dispel any "peer pressure" that might have some grieving men thinking that *enough is enough, and it's time for me to get over it now*. Challies speaks of the need for *getting on* with things, but is sure there'll be no *getting over* the loss of his son.

At one point Challies worries that he may be making an idol of Nick. When he thinks of heaven, he's anticipating his reunion with his son more than meeting Jesus face to face. Again, this openness gives voice to a feeling I think many wrestle with, but maybe haven't even thought or dared to put into words. I found it helpful too when Challies shared a prayer he continues to offer up to the Lord, that he himself doesn't understand. He's asking the Lord to give him sons. His only son has died, and he and his wife are too old to have more children. He does hope and anticipate that his two daughters will bring a couple of good Christian young men into their family one day, but that is not what this prayer is about. He *loved* being the father of a son. And so he brings that desire to God still, not even sure what he is asking of God. And yet he comes to his Heavenly Father with his confusion and deepest longings.

*Seasons of Sorrow* will be an impactful book for anyone who has experienced loss themselves, but the best time to read this might be before you ever need it.

– Jon Dykstra



# Capture the Contrast

## RP's summer photo contest results continued...

The **Youth (under 18)** entries that follow are worth lingering over, both what's depicted – God's creativity is on full display – and for the creativity of the photographers. You might want to share this section in particular with your children, spend some time together, flipping from one page to the next, and even ask them their favorites. That'll get them ready and raring to go for next year's contest!

YOUTH

WINNER



**God's Colourful Creation!:** God has made the sunsets beautiful, and His children play with creativity; Praise be to God for creating everything!

– Alexis H, age 12



## RUNNER-UP

**Prairie Canola Fields:** One of my favourite things about living in Alberta are the canola fields and big, blue skies! The contrast of the bright yellow canola and blue skies with the line of green trees in the middle make a contrasted, yet complementary-coloured photo.

– Caleb V, age 13



## RUNNER-UP

**Flames:** It connects to the theme by contrasting brightness and darkness. The flame is the brightness, and the wood in the background is the darkness. This picture also relates to Psalm 119:105.

– Leanna VB, age 10

## YOUTH ENTRIES

**Wasaga Beach:** This picture has contrast between the still sand, moving water, and the sky. God uses water in the Bible to show how our bodies are washed/cleansed. Hebrews 10:22 is a good example: "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." Wasaga Beach is a special place I like to go with my family. The lake is beautiful and it reminds me of how our sins are washed away.

– Mikaela L, age 14

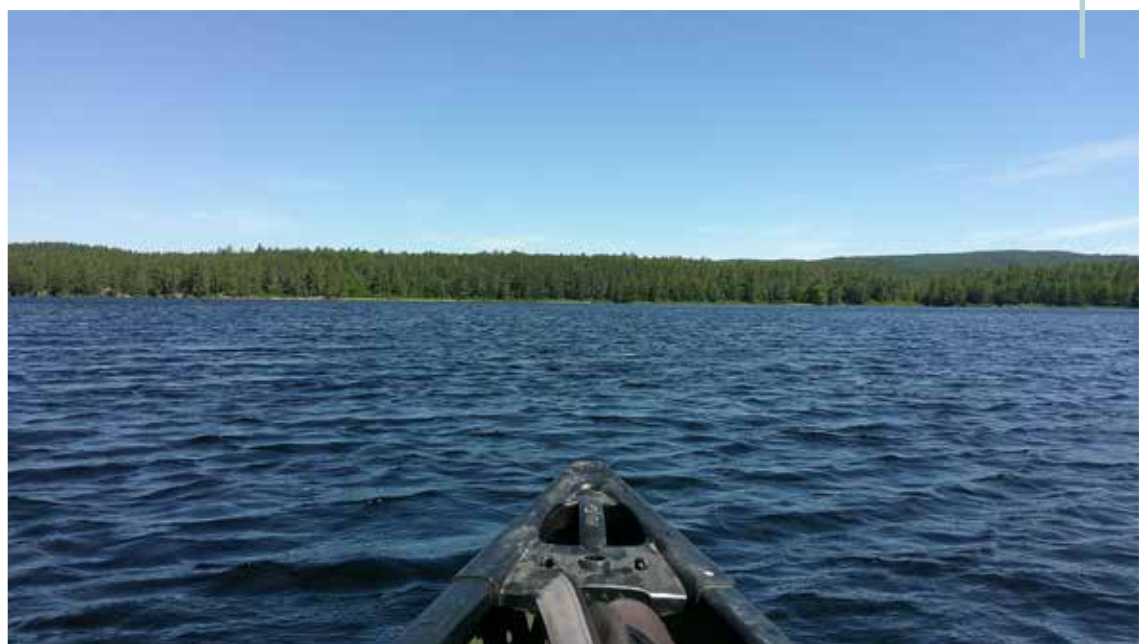


God has made many beautiful contrasts.  
The contrast here is dryland and the sea.

– Sadie D, age 10



Exploration – Joy vD, age 13



## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST

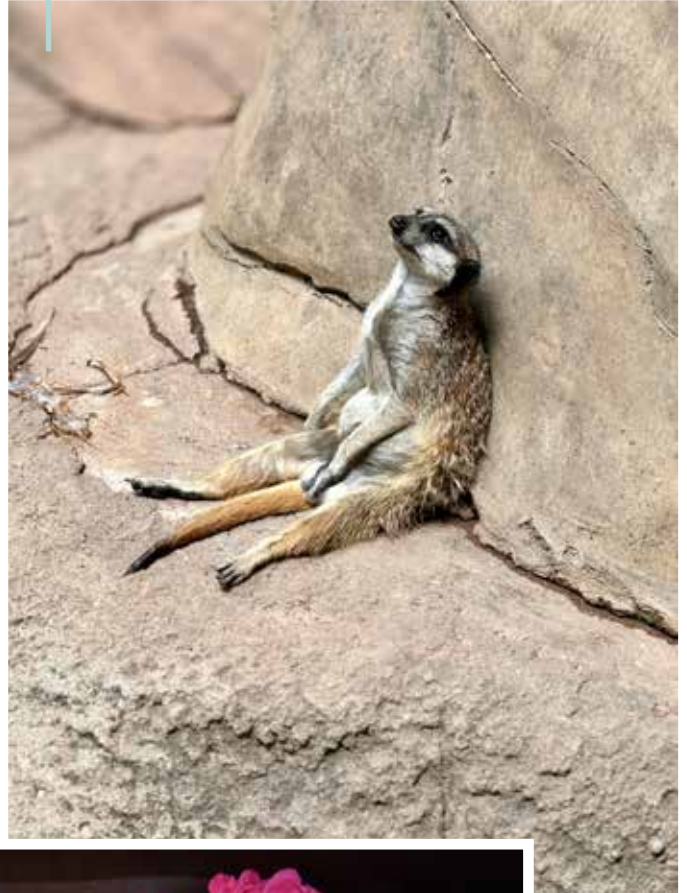


This photo shows the contrast in colour that we find in God's creation with the bright green, pink, and blue. It reminded me of Psalm 113:3; "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!"

– Addyson T, age 16

**Timon from *The Lion King*:** The contrast is between Timon, and the rock. The background is blurred and Timon is the focused foreground, I took this picture when we were in Louisville Kentucky at a zoo.

– Kenzie D, age 13



God made us, He made nature. He made the flower on top of the Volvo engine and God's image bearers made the engine.

The engine is dark and the flower is bright.

– Kayla R, age 11



## YOUTH ENTRIES



These here are our puppies. We take them outside everyday to play. This time they decided to cuddle up and have fun. The contrast here is the colour of the puppies. Our dog had 5 altogether and only one of them was black.

– Jacob T, age 10

**Amidst the Storm:** In the beginning God created light and darkness. "And God separated the light from the darkness" Genesis 1:4b. This is one of the first mentions of contrast in the Bible. My picture shows the contrast between dark and light. Even amidst the darkness of the storm... the sun shines through the clouds, seemingly brighter than before. It created this beautiful contrasting display of golden colour against a stark cloudy gray.

– Brooklyn G, age 17



**Seeing Eye to Eye:** This picture is of my two sisters' eyes and how their eye colour is so different from each other.

– Abigail B, age 12

## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST



The contrast is a black and white butterfly against bright green leaves.

– Emily M, age 16



**A Perched Bird:** The vibrant yellow-headed blackbird sits in the foreground in contrast to the mellow blurred background.

– Seth B, age 16



**Busy Bee:** This picture has contrast between the yellow of the bee and the sunflower against the green leaves. Honey and honey bees are images that can convey God's blessings, God's love, strength, wisdom, things of great worth and even references to Christ. "Pleasant words are like honey sweet to the soul."  
– Proverbs 16:24

– Mikaela L, age 14

## YOUTH ENTRIES



**Glowing:** My picture is of a bright flower with a dark background matching the theme of light and darkness.

– Mikaela W,



I guess I'll start at the beginning. This summer my family and I went to the Louisville Zoo in Kentucky, USA. This is where I saw a snake that really stood out to me. I immediately asked my mom if I could take a picture with her phone. Just the way the snake was wrapped in the stick, its yellow eyes staring at me. It had green skin and white dots. That's why I picked this amazing creature created by God.

– Lukas S, age 12



**It Takes Millions to Make One:** This photo is a comparison between the clear, spraying water droplets and the blurred background of millions of water droplets streaming down the waterfall's edge. It shows the detail God gave to just this one waterfall.

– Nadine W



## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST

This photo shows contrast in different colours in the sky as well as contrasting the sky with the trees and wheat. Focusing closely on the wheat shows the detail in God's amazing creation.

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

-Revelation 4:11

- Samantha H, age 17



**Puppy Love:** A friendship between a puppy and a child. Although they are different, they are made by the same Creator.

- Miriam S, age 13

## YOUTH ENTRIES



**God's Creation with Man's:**  
This photo compares God's creation (the beauty of nature) and man's creation (the stain of graffiti).

– Nadine W

When you think of a duck, you probably would think of a green-headed mallard. But wait till you see this duck. God has made a huge diversity of how animals look. The white eyes and the oddly-shaped beak of this scoter contrast with the classic look of a mallard.

– Josiah C



**Garry the Grasshopper:** The contrast in this picture is the green and the red, or that the grasshopper is biotic and the chair is abiotic. And the grasshopper is made by God and the chair is man made.

– Kenzie D, age 13



## CAPTURE THE CONTRAST



This picture reveals both God's power and His calmness through the thunderstorm as it rolls over the setting sun.

– Lydia VG, age 17

This is a picture of Bartholomew chewing on a stalk of catnip. The contrast is in the colours - green and soft orange; and, of course, Bartholomew is enjoying himself but the catnip is not!

– Esther L



**Beauty and Dirt:** Filthy hands conflicting with the beauty of a rose. Our sinful lives contrasted with God's rich love and blessings. What a wonder that God gives us His Blessings, despite all our filthiness.

– Olivia R, age 15

## YOUTH ENTRIES

**Ice and Snow:** there is a lot of contrast in this photo with the lights of the snow and darks with the trees and cracks of the ice.

– Jaydelle D, age 17



There is a bright chick, flower and mug, but the inside of the flower and background is dark. There is also a contrast between the 2 yellows. Even though they are both yellow they are a different yellow.

– Kayla R, age 11



**Crosses Since the Beginning of Time - (or at least digital clocks):** I had this photo idea for a while and when the opportunity came I grabbed it. So in this photo I've captured the contrast in two ways. The first and more obvious one being the bright lit up numbers against the black background. The second less obvious one being that in between the spaces in the five and two is a hidden cross, hence the title of the photo.

– Brooklyn H, age 13



FALL TOUR 2024

# USE IT OR LOSE IT.

*An Exploration of Freedom  
of Expression*



Visit our website  
for dates and locations!  
[ARPACANADA.ca/falltour2024](http://ARPACANADA.ca/falltour2024)



Heard about a tax effective way to support charities? Have an investment portfolio with appreciated assets?

*Transferring appreciated stocks, mutual funds, ETFs to a charity in-kind provides several benefits;*

- Capital gain is realized by the charity... no capital gains tax payable
- Donation receipt issued for full market value
- Generous gift available for use by the charity



Contact our executive director to explore if this is an effective option for you.  
For more information: [info@harvestfoundation.ca](mailto:info@harvestfoundation.ca) | 289.309.1466

# TIMOTHY project



The Timothy Project prepares and equips men for service in the churches by providing them with relevant, theological, and scripturally based study material. For over the past nine years we are partnered with the Reformational study centre in South Africa. Currently we are working with over 13 thousand pastors from more than 70 developing countries! The project "Lamad" is the newest addition to the project. Lamad means: To Learn, To Teach, To Disciple. This project will be very helpful to the lay pastors and many more young Christians by means of providing them with simplified Christian courses on many topics. There are more than 2 million pastors in Africa, and by far the greatest percentage of these are lay pastors, with only basic school education. Lamad offers them courses that are carefully designed to teach them theological lessons while improving their literacy. We ask you to prayerfully consider supporting this ministry. With your contributions, we can continue to bring the Word to those who would otherwise not have access to the complete Gospel of salvation.

Please email the committee at [info4timothyproject@gmail.com](mailto:info4timothyproject@gmail.com)


Contributions may be made via e-transfer or cheque.  
E-transfer may be sent to [vineyardchurchincan@gmail.com](mailto:vineyardchurchincan@gmail.com) with "Timothy Project" in the memo line. (Receipts will be issued).  
Cheques should be made out to Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church; please include "Timothy Project" in the memo line address it to:  
Attn: Elza Delities  
Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church  
4628 John Street, Box 831  
Beaconsfield, ON L0R 1B2

*It is our hope and prayer that the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ will reach the ends of the earth and that God would continue to use each of us as instruments in His hands. To Him be the glory!*

# ReformedBookServices

PROMOTING GODLINESS, REVIVAL & REFORMATION

- Discover the power of God's Word in every book
- Bibles and Christian books at low prices
- See us at many Canadian conferences
- Visit us at 16 Roy Blvd. Brantford, ON
- We are a non profit bookstore
- Bulk order discounts available
- We offer Canada wide shipping





Subscribe


Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

519-304-4709

[www.reformedbookservices.ca](http://www.reformedbookservices.ca)  
[info@reformedbookservices.ca](mailto:info@reformedbookservices.ca)

# Your Reformed Voice in Ottawa



Planning a trip to Ottawa?  
Stop in for a visit.


**ARNOLD VIERSEN**  
MP | PEACE RIVER—WESTLOCK

1-800-667-8450    [arnold.viersen@parl.gc.ca](mailto:arnold.viersen@parl.gc.ca)    [mparnoldviersen](https://www.facebook.com/mparnoldviersen)  
613-996-1783    [arnoldviersen](https://www.instagram.com/arnoldviersen)


Campaign Life Coalition Presents

# LIFE CHAIN

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2024



Join thousands across Canada standing against abortion in a peaceful, prayerful demonstration!



[www.campaignlifecoalition.com/lifechain](http://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/lifechain) | 1-800-730-5358 | [lifechain@clife.ca](mailto:lifechain@clife.ca)



# ARPA YOUTH CONFERENCE



Get ready for an unforgettable experience at the 2024 Youth Conference!

Register now and join us in making a difference!

[ARPACANADA.ca/event/youth24](https://arpacanada.ca/event/youth24)



## STUBBE'S PRECAST

# WE ARE HIRING!

## PLANT MANAGER CENTRALIA

- Family Owned
- Christian Values
- No work on Sundays
- Competitive Wages
- Benefits
- and Much More



Scan here to APPLY or contact [careers@stubbes.org](mailto:careers@stubbes.org)

[www.stubbes.org](https://www.stubbes.org)

# THIS IS MY BODY

## After death a body remains, and a decision has to be made

by Rick Ludwig

At the end of each life on earth a body remains and a decision has to be made as to what to do with it. The options for the legal disposition of human remains continue to expand. At one time, entombment or earth burial was most prevalent in the Western world. In recent decades, cremation has rapidly overtaken burial, particularly in urban centres, and there is new and varied interest in green (natural) burial, alkaline hydrolysis, and even human composting.

There is a direct correlation between the secularization of a culture and the growing question of, “What does it really matter?” and the assertion, “This is my body to do with whatever I see fit.” Even the contemporary Christian is beginning to wonder about the significance of their body after death. Is it only a leftover shell of little significance? Isn't it my soul that is immortal? Where does the deceased body fit in the Christian funeral ceremony? Should it leave first or last or not appear at all? These are the questions of our day. Some respond with a firm conviction, one way or the other. Many others offer

The temptation in the Christian life is to look either for a command or for freedom. Does God's Word provide a clear instruction or not? Are we bound to a particular practice or free to decide? However, our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Spirit is not one of rules and regulations but of grace and love and renewed belonging. That means our search for meaning and purpose in our actions and decisions goes much deeper than dos and don'ts. It goes to the heart of our connection with God. That bond is rooted and renewed in Jesus Christ through the Spirit. And the Bible tells us a lot about this.

### THE INCARNATION

At the center of the gospel message is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This is a crucial reality. God's Son came in human form. He is the Son of man. He took on a body and soul like us. This condescension was not just so He could relate to us as a brother, but so that He could stand in our place. As the second Adam, He looked to undo the damaged relationship between God and man brought on by the fall into sin of the first Adam. In His human body and spirit, He lived the law of love to perfection and He paid the price for our sin with the shedding of His innocent blood

*The temptation in the Christian life is to look either for a command or for freedom.*

a shrug of indifference.





on the cross.

And then He conquered death in His body through the three days in the tomb and His resurrection from the dead! And He ascended in His glorified body to be with His Father in heaven and to prepare a place for us! All of this happened in His human body for our sake. At the last Passover Jesus presented the importance of this reality to the disciples in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He said, "This is my body, broken for you."

The apostles spoke and wrote in earnest about the importance of the incarnation and the significance of the resurrection. Paul lamented that if the physical resurrection is not true then Christians would be the most pitiable of all people. He also told the Corinthians that it is a matter of first importance. He described the burial of the dead and the subsequent resurrection in agrarian terms, something planted in one form with the expectation of the appearance of something greater emerging. This is a matter of faith grounded in the reality of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection as the first fruits of the harvest

to eternal life.

Many years later, the writers of the Heidelberg Catechism launched the confession with these words of comfort: *that I belong, with body and soul, both in life and in death to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ*. They recognized the connection of our bodies and souls to Christ's for now and eternity. They saw it as a very personal matter that is confessionally of first importance!


### BEARING WITNESS

British statesman William E. Gladstone once said:

"Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

His point is clear. The decisions we make around the care of the dead bear witness to what we believe, what we confess, what we hold dear. Believers have always understood that the care of the

dead is an important matter, from Abel, to the patriarchs, to Moses, to the kings, to Christ, until today. This has never been based on rules and regulations but rather on the covenant promises of God in His Son Jesus Christ. Our decisions around our deceased bodies and those of our loved ones are a matter of faith. They are a matter of spiritual discernment and of joyful, hopeful confession. They are an opportunity to bring glory to the name of God. Even as we reverently bear up the dead bodies of those we love, we make our song, "Alleluia!" as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

This is not something to be easily shrugged off, or to simply follow the trends of society. As a matter of first importance, this will take some serious and thoughtful contemplation. It matters to us what we do with our bodies in life and in death because it mattered to Christ. 

*Rick Ludwig is a funeral director, and the owner of Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home in Hamilton, ON. Email him at [rludwig@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com](mailto:rludwig@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com).*



### RICK ON REAL TALK

Back in 2021, Rick Ludwig & Diane Vanderwoude Russell appeared on the *Real Talk* podcast to talk about grief. You can use your phone camera on the QR code to go watch it on YouTube, or you can head to [www.RealTalkPodcast.ca](http://www.RealTalkPodcast.ca) and scroll all the way down to episode #32 to have a listen on your favorite podcast platform.



### CREMATION: WHY AND WHY NOT?

Back in 2003 when I wrote this article one of the three points I made to argue *for* cremation related to the novelty of it. Back then cremation was still in the minority in Canada, and a rarity in our Reformed circles – I'd never heard of anyone getting cremated. So, I thought getting cremated would be so unusual that people would want to know why I went that route. And when the question was asked, it would give an opportunity for a gospel witness: that I didn't need a plot of ground here on Earth because I was confident that I would be with my Lord.

But Canadian cremation rates have jumped since then to around 80% in 2022. In the US cremations are in the

majority too, increasing from under 20% in 2000 to over 60% in 2022. In some Asian countries the cremation rate is over 90% (South Korea, Taiwan, Nepal) with Japan on the high end at 99%. So, it's hardly unusual now. So the novelty argument isn't the strongest anymore. But the article does contain other arguments, both for and against, as well as links to 4 theologians offering their own biblically-based takes for and against. Use the QR code or send your browser to [ReformedPerspective.ca/urn](http://ReformedPerspective.ca/urn).



– Jon Dykstra

# BOOKS

ON AGING AND DYING WELL

ReformedPerspective.ca/books

## A GOOD OLD AGE: AN A TO Z OF LOVING AND FOLLOWING THE LORD JESUS IN LATER YEARS

BY DEREK PRIME  
2017 / 184 PAGES



As the introduction notes, this isn't a book to be read straight through. It'd be best digested at a pace of a chapter every day or two because they all are worth spending time pondering and more importantly, implementing. The 86-year-old author used the alphabet to highlight lessons for the elderly to learn, beginning with "A is for Acceptance" since there's just no getting past it.

Each chapter is a mix of practical advice (about things like downsizing your material goods, and delegating tasks you can't do any more) and spiritual encouragement, or perhaps they could better be called spiritual challenges, as in "N is for non-judgmental" and "P is for peaceable." Aches and pains may make it easier to be irritable, but the author wants to challenge his readers to, even in these trials, continue to act as examples for the younger generation. The chapter headings give a good feel for what's covered, so here's a selection of others:

- C is for contentment
- I is for intercession
- W is for walk
- Z is for zeal

And each chapter then concludes with a prayer.

This would be a good book for anyone getting up there in years, but it'd be a very good read too, for the middle-aged generation looking after their parents.

## DEATH BY LIVING: LIFE IS MEANT TO BE SPENT

BY N.D. WILSON  
2013 / 190 PAGES



The author once noted that if you're doing life right, you keep graduating up to more and more responsibility and troubles. Think middle school was tough? Surprise – high school's got twice the work load and twice the drama! Handled that well? Surprise – now you're a husband with three kids! It's onward and forward.

*Death by Living* is a book for the young Christian who needs to know that it is normal to have sleepless nights, baby spit-up on your shoulder, overflowing honey-do lists, neglected household chores because you were helping at some church event, and so on. And it's okay. Because, as the subtitle says, life is meant to be spent – God gave us our lives to live them out.

This is a hard-to-sum-up book, but covers some of the same ground as John Piper's *Don't Waste Your Life*, and Kevin DeYoung's *Just Do Something*. Wilson wants us to embrace life as a co-author of sorts. God made us but He also entrusted us with figuring out a lot of our plot points going forward. He has given us a life to invest or bury. So are we going to get up and take on dragons or slowly sink into the couch doom-scrolling through election season idiocy?

*Death by Living* is a strangely comforting book that kicks a reader in his pants one page, and then goes all powerfully poetic on the next. A must read for anyone stuck in neutral.

## THE HARDEST PEACE: EXPECTING GRACE IN THE MIDST OF LIFE'S HARD

BY KARA TIPPETTS  
2014 / 189 PAGES



Several months after finishing this book Kara Tippett died. She knew it was coming, but in this part biography, part devotional Kara wants us to understand it was not in spite of her long battle with cancer, but because of it and through it, that God showed His goodness to her.

At one point Kara shares how, as one of her daughters was being tucked into bed, the girl asked her father, "Is Mama going to die of cancer or old age?" Kara's husband couldn't find the strength to say the words and asked Kara for help. So Kara padded down the hall and slipped under the covers with her daughter. She asks the reader,

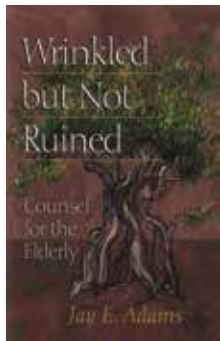
How do you speak to your young child of grace you struggle to have the imagination to behold? You just do. It's the raw places of faith without sight. It's the painful moments of preaching a sermon to yourself you know you struggle to believe. It's the quiet prayer from Mark: "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

That is what we are all struggling with: we trust God in the good times; help us trust You in the bad! Kara is wonderfully encouraging in showing how she came to understand that God is faithful, even in the bad, and even in her doubts. He is good, and He can be trusted.

There is a wonderful documentary on her life too, called *The Long Goodbye: the Kara Tippett story*.

## WRINKLED BUT NOT RUINED: COUNSEL FOR THE ELDERLY

BY JAY ADAMS  
1999 / 112 PAGES



This covers some of the same ground as *A Good Old Age*, but with a different target audience. The elderly can read this and would benefit from it, but this is intended more for the elders, pastors, families, and congregations that minister to the elderly.

As is his way, Jay Adams takes us to Scripture, this time to highlight the very different view of aging the Bible has. The world can speak only to the losses that come with aging, of your job, independence, and stamina. Getting old stinks and that's all they have to say about it. In contrast, Adams notes that for the obedient Christian, "The tragedy of aging is offset by the triumph of growingly becoming what God wants one to be." There is a victory to be had.

There are also particular challenges and temptations to face so Adams includes chapters on the problems of Illness and Loneliness, and also the sins of Anger, Bitterness and Cynicism. He encourages higher expectations for the elderly to continue to work as they are able, not necessarily in their old job, but definitely in keeping with Psalm 92:14: "The righteous... will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green." It is a small book, written in Adams' personable style, but with lots to chew on.

## WHERE THE BLUE SKY BEGINS

BY KATIE POWNER  
2022 / 343 PAGES



The back cover pitched this novel as, *quirky dying woman meets confident cute guy*. Hmmmm.... But a friend recommended it, so I kept on. I wasn't sure if this was going to be a somber reflective read, what with the 40-something small-town Christian girl Eunice Parker having only 6 or so months to live. Or was this somehow going to be a comedic odd coupling, with the early 30s, non-Christian pretty boy/city boy Eric Larson moving in as her next-door neighbor? It's a bit of both – as lighthearted as a book about death could be expected to be, but one that'll still have you thinking about how you'd like to end your own time here on Earth.

Our story begins with Eric Larson arriving from Seattle to fill in as branch manager for a small rural branch of his uncle's financial company. When his GPS has him wondering where exactly his rental unit is, his inattentive driving sends Eunice and her scooter careening off the road. It isn't exactly a hit and run, but close enough, so when she discovers Eric is her new neighbor she makes him a deal: she won't press charges if Eric will chauffeur her to different addresses over the next weeks. Feeling bad, and without much choice, Eric agrees.

And where does Eunice want to go? To make amends. With the ultimate deadline approaching, Eunice is certain that God wants her to seek forgiveness from seven different people she's wronged. It's a very different sort of bucket list.

This plot could have been tacky and lame in the hands of a different writer, but Katie Powner has got some skills. Eric Larson starts off as a bit of a stock character – good-looking, athletic, shallow, and a little smug – but these sorts do exist. And as Eric drives Eunice around, he grows. And Eunice grows with him: she's let her illness shut her off from the world, but now, with a mission from God driving her to where she desperately doesn't want to go, she's been given this unexpected angel of sorts, to offer assistance and even encouragement.

The one caution is only that this isn't one for young readers. Eric isn't a Christian and he does have a girlfriend back in Seattle. A few comments are made that make it clear their relationship has involved more physical intimacy than non-married folks should be up to. But Powner doesn't get into any details. When Tiffani with an "i" comes by for a short stay, and Eric wants to see how compatible they would be apart from the physical stuff, Tiffani doesn't make it easy for him. So, the most "explicit" passage would just be a mention made of how she left the bathroom open a crack when she took a shower.

Things could have gotten strange if there had been a romantic angle between the shallow Eric and the dying Eunice, but there wasn't. The lack of romance is a nice twist – this became more of a "buddy pic" story. I really enjoyed *Where the Blue Sky Begins*, and if you're up for a book that will get you smiling some and crying a bit too, you should check it out.

# Let the little children come

Children can't be sheltered from the death of a loved one. But they can be comforted.

by Diane Vanderwoude Russell

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matt. 19:14)*

A year before I was born, my oldest brother Sidney died in a car accident. My parents and nine siblings navigated the visitation and funeral as best they could. In 1984, death and grief were not as openly discussed as they are today. In hindsight, my parents wished they would have slowed everything down a little, giving themselves more time as a family to take in what had just happened and also to prepare my two youngest brothers for the experience. These brothers were kindly babysat by a lady from their church during the visitation and funeral. But now, as grown adults and parents themselves, they still have clear memories of that time and they wish they had been included in the funeral events.

Ten years later, when I was eight years old, we lost my brother Justin in a car accident as well. This time, as siblings, we were able to experience things together as much as we wished to be included. Not everyone wanted to go

to the accident site, but some of us did. There wasn't a question of whether we were too young to attend his visitation and funeral; we all attended. From the oldest to the youngest, we shook hands with hundreds of people who came out from our church community to support us. My brother Reuben, who was 11, and I might have taken breaks to run around the funeral home for a bit, even getting in trouble from the funeral director just once.

I share this to be realistic. I strongly believe that children need to be included in all family events in an age-appropriate manner. This starts with being truthful about what has happened. "Grandpa has died, and his soul has gone to heaven to be with Jesus." We need to steer away from terms like sleeping or resting. Not being honest with a child can cause confusion and even unnecessary fear of what death actually is. Telling them they cannot see their loved one in the casket because "it is not appropriate for kids" only makes their imagination run wild, potentially leading to real fear and avoidance of death or funeral homes in adulthood.


I know adults who were made to fear funeral homes and caskets as children, and now they struggle to attend visitations and funerals to support their own friends and church communities. This is unfortunate, as death is a part of life, as God speaks of this in Ecclesiastes 3:1-2:

"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be

born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."

In 2014, we lost my brother Jason to cancer at 45 years old. Now, as an adult, I had also been a funeral director for over eight years. This was a different grief for me than when I was eight years old. I had this brother my whole life; he was my friend, and now it was time to say goodbye. Navigating the funeral details with my brother's wife and ensuring his children felt included was crucial. They all came to the funeral home the day after his death to pick out his casket. They stood in the visitation receiving line and attended the funeral. Seeing their young friends come to support these grieving children was so special to see. I am glad that, as a society, we see more and more children coming to support their friends who have lost a loved one. This will help raise young people with a healthy perspective on death and dying and with the understanding that those who are grieving need their support. God has also made it possible for us to share these difficult experiences in a positive way!

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

(2 Cor. 1:3-4) 

*Diane Vanderwoude Russell is a funeral director at Kitching, Steepe & Ludwig Funeral Home in Hamilton, Ontario. You can email her at [info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com](mailto:info@kitchingsteepeandludwig.com).*



Sidney, Justin, and Jason, three of Diane's siblings who died young.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

BY JEFF DYKSTRA

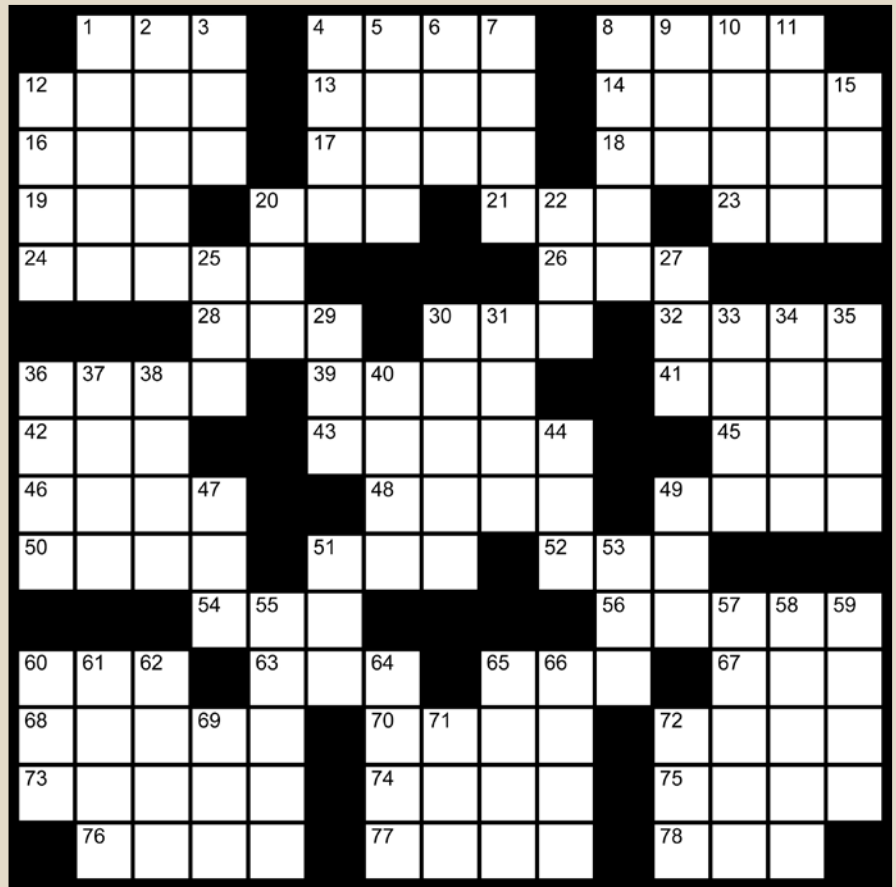
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2024

## PUZZLE CLUES

Find this issue's solution on page 12!

### ACROSS

1. Potent psychedelic drug (abbr.)
4. Type of poem that has a long tale
8. "there will be no \_\_\_\_ of life" (Acts 27)
12. One who colorfully changes clothes
13. Bone between your elbow and wrist
14. "lest you \_\_\_\_\_ sin..." (Lev. 19)
16. You can get a degree of these.
17. "\_\_\_\_-red, love's proper hue" (John Milton)
18. Paul's ship's desperate destination (Acts 27)
19. One way to handle a horse (Ps. 32)
20. Give a brush cut, but no brush, to your lawn
21. "they had nothing to \_\_\_\_" (Acts 4)
23. Reason to stop a boxing bout (abbr.)
24. Sweep; span
26. "and fire \_\_\_\_ down to the earth." (Ex. 9)
28. Sentence opener, often, in King James Bible
30. British public broadcaster (abbr.)
32. "They saw him from \_\_\_\_" (Gen. 37)
36. What a boxer does before he weaves
39. Look leeringly, lustfully, and lecherously
41. Heap
42. Identifiable period (partly of liberation?)
43. "while he \_\_\_\_\_ to Peter and John" (Acts 3)
45. "war between \_\_\_\_ and Baasha" (1 Kings 15)
46. Origin of the wise men (Matt. 2)
48. Three-layer cookie
49. On the peak
50. "He rode on a cherub and \_\_\_\_\_" (Ps. 18)
51. What alternates with flow in tides
52. "no good tree bears \_\_\_\_ fruit" (Luke 6)
54. "I am like a desert \_\_\_\_" (Ps. 102)
56. Sounds like you go for coffee and snacks?
60. "There's an \_\_\_\_ for that!" (Apple slogan)
63. Second largest living bird
65. "no \_\_\_\_ is of the truth" (1 John 2)
67. The type of beer that Guinness makes
68. Model plane wood
70. Noble gas, atomic number 10
72. "Do not \_\_\_\_\_ me to leave you" (Ruth 1)
73. "But above all... do not \_\_\_\_\_" (James 5)
74. One \_\_\_\_ has a 500-gallon \_\_\_\_.
75. Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection
76. Take them when you're tired.
77. Where metals are found
78. Found after auction or election?



### DOWN

1. Type of poem sung to, it sounds like, a liar?
2. Get started vigorously; vigorous-fight?
3. "...keep your powder \_\_\_\_" (Oliver Cromwell)
4. Current currency of Germany
5. "The sluggard does not \_\_\_\_\_" (Prov. 20)
6. Do you get the \_\_\_\_ and outs of this clue?
7. Low-elevation sandy islands on coral reefs
8. Country under God's judgment (Eze. 30)
9. "salvation in no \_\_\_\_ else" (Acts 4)
10. "Go away, you song without real words!"
11. "His young ones \_\_\_\_ up blood..." (Job 39)
12. Pats lightly to clean up a spill
15. Seventeenth letter of Greek alphabet
20. "your old \_\_\_\_ shall dream dreams" (Joel 2)
22. Joan of \_\_\_\_: French female fighter of 1400s
25. Faux \_\_\_\_ - social misstep
27. "...a two-hour \_\_\_\_, from 1 to 4." (Yogi Berra)
29. "What's up, \_\_\_\_?" (Bugs Bunny greeting)
30. Back cover book teaser (partly blurred?)
31. Nota \_\_\_\_ = "Take careful note!"
33. Make of car, according to decree?
34. "whom he \_\_\_\_\_ named apostles" (Mark 3)
35. "You shall sow, but not \_\_\_\_\_" (Micah 6)
36. "Where's the \_\_\_\_\_?" (1984 Wendy's slogan)
37. Type of cancer or exam
38. Headquarters
40. Synonym of, and rhyme with, *blob*
44. Rhyme with, and synonym, of 40 Down
47. "\_\_\_\_ men stood by them" (Acts 1)
49. No-fuss hair: \_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_
51. \_\_\_\_ Conflict: 1971 dispute over tree culling
53. "They still bear fruit in old \_\_\_\_" (Ps. 92)
55. "one who \_\_\_\_\_ the fine clothing" (James 2)
57. Play based on improbable situations
58. Composer of *Pomp and Circumstance*
59. Egypt is a broken one, in Is. 36
60. Muscle group found just below your pecs
61. Expendable chess piece
62. Guilty... or not guilty
64. "For \_\_\_\_ you is born this day..." (Luke 2)
65. Ranger with a Silver horse
66. The different colors of four-color pens
69. "ever full of \_\_\_\_ and green" (Ps. 92)
71. "...and cut off his right \_\_\_\_" (John 18)
72. "The poor \_\_\_\_ entreaties..." (Prov. 18)



# BEFORE THE REFORMATION

The Italian monk Savonarola got on the wrong side of the Pope long before a German monk did the same

by Christine Farenhorst

*This story takes place in Strasbourg at the beginning of the 16th century, before Martin Luther was excommunicated. While God would use Luther mightily, the seeds of the Reformation were already being sown, with other monks, including one named Savonarola, beginning again to preach the gospel. When a mere priest contradicts a pope, it might seem obvious who the people would believe. But God wrote His Law on our hearts, and like Luther, there were people who could tell how great their sin was, and how insufficient the Roman Catholic answer for sins was. The pope versus conscience. And so, there was much discussion in many households...*

\*\*\*\*\*

It was evening and candles were lit in the sitting-room. The Schütz family was comfortably gathered together in the soft glim of their flicker. Father Jacob regarded the faces of his wife and older children with satisfaction. The younger ones were already in bed. How wonderful it was to sit thus! How marvelous to have healthy children when he knew full well that many, many of the children of his friends had died in babyhood and in infancy. He regarded young Katharina's face with especial love. That child, always in and out of the workshop, in and out of the kitchen, and in and out of everything, most often with a torn stocking, tousled hair and a smudge on her face somewhere.

"You know," he said, "I have heard that

in Italy, a small linen square, called by the name of pocket handkerchief, has come into use."

"What is it, father?" said Barbara, as she smoothed the pleats of her dress with her hands, "What is a pocket handkerchief?"

"Well, it is a piece of cloth which you can keep in your pocket in case you have to... well, for example, sneeze. Then you can use it to wipe yourself instead of using ..." He stopped and smiled at Katharina. The child was regarding him with such big eyes.

"Can you have three of them in your pocket at the same time?" she asked.

"Why would you want three, Katharina, child?"

"Well, in case I sneezed three times,"

she said, “or I might use one of them to carry some shiny pebbles, or,” she went on with increasing enthusiasm, “I might use another to wave like a flag, or...”

Her mother interrupted. “Enough, little girl, do not speak overly much in company. It is not becoming.”

“But what,” responded the child, “if I have to say something that takes many sentences, Mutti? What then?”

“Then you have to swallow your words and keep them inside,” her mother said, “and that is that.”

“But...”

“Shh, Katharina.”

Lux, who sat next to Katharina poked her in the ribs. “Ouch,” she said and gave him a shove.

“I have heard a story,” Lux said, seemingly not minding the shove at all, and looking at her in a teasing way, “that at Hammel in Saxony, on the 20th of June in 1484, which is not that many years ago, the Devil, in the likeness of a pied piper, carried away one hundred and thirty children.”

But it was his sister Barbara, and not Katharina, who responded. “The devil!” she cried, nervously, stopping the incessant smoothing of the pleats of her skirt, and tightly clasping her hands in her lap.

“Oh, he is teasing,” Elisabet interjected, putting her arm around Barbara, “isn’t he, Vati?”

“Well,” Jacob said, “I have heard the story as well, but I wouldn’t put too much stock in it.”

“Probably,” Lux went on, “the children in Hammel behaved badly. Perhaps,” and here he eyed Katharina again with a grin, “they talked too much, or perhaps,” and here he eyed Elisabet and winked, “they were just a little too critical of good brothers.”

“Oh, pshaw,” Elisabet said, “as if you are good.”

“Well, the truth is,” replied Lux, “that those children were never seen again.”

“Well, I wish that pied piper would come and pipe some of the monks away,” Katharina said.

“Katharina!” Her mother was about to reach over and give the child a swat, but Jacob, who sat next to his wife, put an arm about her, forestalling the move.

“Why would you say that, child?”

“Well,” Katharina said, “yesterday, when I went to get a bolt of cloth from Frau Schel, I saw a monk take some money from a blind beggar’s box close to the Blatterhaus, the new hospital built by Herr Hoffmeister. And...”

“What were you doing there, Katharina, by the Blatterhaus?” her mother interrupted, “Frau Schel’s house is not...”

“Well, you see,” Katharina was quick to interrupt and explain, “I heard the tower bells ringing and the music was so beautiful that I thought it might be angels ringing them. So I...”

“Katharina,” her mother sighed, “can’t I trust you to go where I send you?”

“Oh, yes, you can, mother. Did I not come back quickly?”

Lux, once more grinning at his sister, intervened because he thought the conversation was rapidly turning into Katharina’s disadvantage. “I have heard talk at the school lately, about a monk named Savonarola,” he said, “and about his death in Florence in 1498. That was actually,” he turned to Katharina, “the year you were born, Kathe.”

“Who was Sanorovala?” she asked.

“Not Sanorovala, you goose, but Savonarola.”

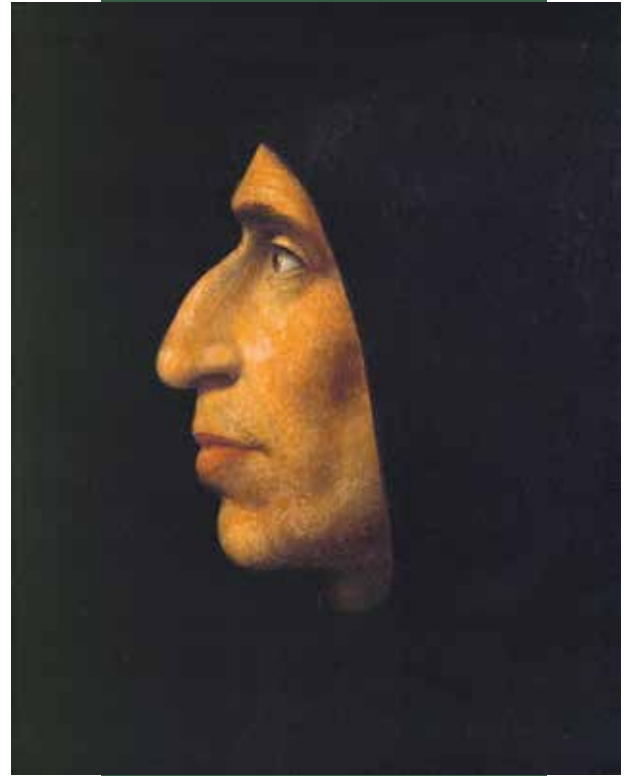
“He was an Italian monk, Katharina,” her father answered, “and not the kind you would want a pied piper to lead away, I think. I have only heard good things about this Savonarola.”

“Tell us, father,” Elisabet pleaded, hoping for a story.

“Well, mother, what do you think?” Jacob said, eyeing his wife’s face.

“Go ahead,” she conceded with a smile, “not that I can stop you if you have a mind to tell a story.”

“Well, I do believe,” Jacob began, crossing his legs and stretching himself as he began his tale, “that Savonarola was born in the year 1452 in Ferrara in Italy. That was actually a year before I was born. The



*Girolamo Savonarola painted by Fra Bartolomeo, around 1498*

man could have been my brother.” Jacob said the last sentence rather speculatively and very slowly, stretching his legs again as he said it.

“Your brother, father?” Katharina interjected, “but how could that be if he was Italian. You are not Italian but German.”

“Yes, but there are more ways than one in which men can be brothers.”

“Be quiet, goose,” Lux said, “I want to hear what father has to say.”

“Savonarola felt that God wanted him to be a monk when he was only a young boy.”

“How...?” Katharina began but was poked by Lux.

“Whether his parents were against him becoming a monk or not, I don’t know, but the fact is that when he was twenty-two years old, he secretly left home and joined the Dominicans at their monastery in Bologna.”



This imposing statue of the man stands in the very city that hung him and burned his body.

“You mean his mother and father didn’t know where he was and it was all right?” Katharina interjected, and the words spilled out quickly for she didn’t want to be poked by Lux again. Her mother gave her a long look mingled with severity and love, causing Katharina to look down at her lap rather shamefacedly. It was true. She had asked the question to alert her mother to the fact that sometimes children find it necessary to leave home without saying where they are going.

“Shh, Katharina. Let Vati tell the story please.” This time it was Barbara who hushed her.

“Savonarola stayed with the Dominicans for seven years – years in which he reportedly lived a good life. He prayed much; he gave away what he had to the poor; he studied the Bible and he read about the lives of saints. After these seven years, the Dominican monks sent him back to Ferrara to preach.”

“I wonder if his mother and father were happy to see him again,” said Elisa-

bet, “after all, he had snuck out of the house and they didn’t know where he was all that time, did they? Or did they?”

“Well, I heard that the people in Ferrara, and I’m not sure about his mother and father, were not too happy to have him come back. So he didn’t stay in that city very long but moved on to Florence and preached there.”

“Were they happy to have him come to Florence?” little Jacob piped up, seated on Katharina’s other side.

“Well, some of the people in Florence were happy to have him and others were not,” Jacob senior answered his young son.

“Why?” the child said.

His father did not answer directly but went on talking. “Florence is a beautiful city. It is in a valley and has a beautiful river running through it called the Arno. On either side of the river are olive groves and cypress groves. I have heard tell it is a wonderful sight to behold as the sun is setting in that place. Yes, I have heard tell that by many.”

“Would you like to make a picture of that city, father?” Katharina threw in impulsively, “Would you like to make a picture of the olive groves?”

“I think I might,” her father answered with a smile, “there are many things there, for a fact, that I would like to behold – many works and monuments of art, things built with marble and not with wood. In any case,” he went on, sitting up, “this was the city where Savonarola came to preach, a city which was the center of intellectual and literary learning. As a matter of fact, he preached there for ten years. He was, I think, quite popular and much more liked than he had been in Ferrara.”

“Why,” Jacob asked again.

“He preached maybe just like our Dr. Geiler?” Barbara asked, who had a great respect for their priest.

“Yes, Barbara” her father answered, “I think that in many respects this was true. Many people came to hear Savonarola preach. As a matter of fact, thousands of people came from all over Italy and other places to hear the monk.”

“But why?” This time it was not Jacob who asked but Frau Schütz.

“Because, dear wife, Savonarola addressed all those things which also bother us. He addressed the evils of the day; he was not afraid to attack the corruption of the church even drawing attention to monks from his own monastery; he compared the sumptuousness of their lodgings with the poverty of the Lord; he criticized the silks and velvets that the church leaders wore; and he deplored the fatness of the tables at which they ate while there were so many poor in the city who went hungry.”

“It seems he was a brave man,” Lux said, and Katharina poked him this time and said “Shh,” much to the amusement of little Jacob.

“After about ten years of preaching,” Jacob went on, “Savonarola was made



prior of the monastery and better yet, in 1492, he was made manager of the city, instead of the Lorenzo family, the ruling family. And that is how Florence, for a short while, became a republic with a reforming preacher at its head. And things began to change in the city – good things began to happen.”

“What sort of things, father,” Barbara asked.

“Well, things like the monks not being allowed to take advantage of the poor, things like good preaching being accessible to all, and virtues like love and compassion being stressed as being virtues that our good Lord and Savior desired in all people. But...” He stopped and looked at them all. Everyone looked back at him.

“But what father?” Katharina finally threw out when, in her estimation, he was not quick enough in answering.

“But there were people in the city who did not like to give up their wicked practices; they did not like to see the true words of the Lord Jesus preached out loud to the people of the city; they did not like to hear that men are saved, not by good works, but by the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“But it is good, is it not, father, to do good works. Surely...” Barbara began, in a bewildered voice.

“Yes, it is, child. Of course it behooves us to do good works.”

“Well, then,” she said, “perhaps this Savonarola ...” She stopped again.

“Yes,” her father said slowly, “I have thought on it. Not as much as I fear I should think on it. And in my small amount of thinking I have not come to a clear conclusion. But this is what he preached: that men are saved only by the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“What happened to him, father? What happened to Savonarola?”

“Well, the Pope at that time, Alexander VI, a pope who was not known for his piety... Yes, yes, I know,” he nodded to his wife who eyed him rather reproachfully, “the man has died and I should not speak ill of the dead for God will judge – well, this pope was not too pleased by Savonarola’s preaching. He first offered Savonarola a bribe – he offered him a cardinal’s hat...”

“A hat?” Katharina called out, “the Pope offered Savonarola a hat?”

“Savonarola, you child,” Elisabet corrected her.

“Well,” Katharina said, “it seems to me that a hat is not a very good bribe at all. I shouldn’t think that I could be bribed with a hat, and...”

“Shh,” Lux poked his sister again as she spoke.

“A cardinal’s hat, Kathe,” her father went on, “is not just a hat, although, mind you, cardinals do wear very red hats. No, a cardinal’s hat is a position, an office in the church, which gives you a great deal of authority and money.”

“Oh,” Katharina said, shame-faced that she had not known such a thing. The rest of the children snickered.

“But Savonarola would not be bribed. Indeed, he was angry to receive such a bribe from the Pope. So the Pope excommunicated him and as a result, many people, afraid of the Pope and his power, turned away from Savonarola, although they had rather liked the way he preached at the beginning.”

“Well, you shouldn’t turn away from friends,” Barbara said, her cheeks red, and eyes flaming.

“No, you shouldn’t, Barbara,” her father rejoined, “but these people in Florence did. And the result was that Savonarola, who would not change his mind about what he believed and kept preaching it, was arrested by agents of the Pope and thrown into prison. He wrote much while he was in prison. He wrote down everything he believed. Then he was tried and found guilty of heresy and shortly afterwards he was hanged and his body was burnt at the stake on the Piazza della Gran’ Ducca – burnt in front of a group of people who previously had listened to him, had cheered him and had been his friends.”

“That’s ...” Katharina began but could not finish.

“Were there people left behind who believed what Savonarola said,” Lux asked.

“I... I don’t know, son,” Jacob Schütz answered.

“It is dangerous not to believe what the Pope says,” little Jacob said, “so I suppose we must all believe what the Pope says if



If you enjoyed this story, you can read more in Christine Farenhorst’s *Katharina, Katharina: the story of Katharina Schütz Zell* which is available in Canada at **ReformedBookServices.ca** and **ReformedChristianbooks.com**. Be sure to read *RP*’s review!

we do not want to hang and burn.”

“But what if what the Pope says is not true,” Elisabet threw out.

“Well, this I know,” Barbara said to no one in particular, “that we must do good works, or we will spend a long time in purgatory.”

“Yes,” Katharina agreed, “I think that this is true. But,” she went on, “what if it is not true.”

“You are a silly goose,” Lux said, patting her on the shoulder, “you say one thing, and then you say another.”

“It is time for the children to go to bed, Jacob,” Mutti interjected, “and I hope they can go to sleep.”

“Well, let us have our prayers then, before they, and we as well, all go to sleep, wife.”

Jacob knelt down in front of his chair. Everyone followed suit and knelt down also, and he intoned, with great sincerity, the Lord’s Prayer, afterwards committing everyone to the care of God the Father in heaven. **RP**

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

BY JON DYKSTRA

## ENGLISH IS A FUNNY LANGUAGE

Have you ever seen:

- a shoe box?
- a ball park?
- a hot dog stand?
- a square dance?
- a horse fly?
- a kitchen sink?
- a home run?
- a picket fence?
- a hole punch?

## MATH KIDS WILL LIKE

Children's picture book author Amy Krouse Rosenthal liked to make word equations. Here are a few of her funniest:

- somersaults + somersaults + somersaults = dizzy
- (patience + silence) + coffee = Poetry
- (patience + silence) + beer = Fishing
- blaming + eye rolling ≠ sincere apology
- chalk + sitting = school
- chalk + jumping = hopscotch
- chores ÷ everyone = family

## 2 AM AT THE SAME TIME EVERYWHERE

Have you ever missed an online meeting because you've gotten confused about the time zones? Sure, the fellow in Ontario wants to meet at 3, but you're in BC, so does he mean your 3 o'clock or his? And what about the guy in Australia – is his 3 your AM or PM?

Turns out there is a solution to this dilemma, a time-zone-free universal clock that results in everyone's 1 PM happening at exactly the same time, no matter country or continent.

If that strikes you as odd, then consider the "universal time" we already have in place: months. Here in North America, December is a snowy month – it's winter for us. But meanwhile in Australia, December is the middle of their summer. If we were to keep months the way we keep hours, then they should really be having a summer month like June when, halfway around the globe we are having our wintery December. That would allow us to both have wintery Decembers, which would make it a bit easier for Santa and his sleigh to land on their roofs without doing any damage to the shingles. But it would make it confusing to have to wonder what month it is in another country. So I like our universal months.

Now we just need to do the same thing for our 24-hour clock so that 2 AM here is happening at the exact moment as 2 AM in China, Australia, the Netherlands and everywhere else. There is already a "Coordinated Universal Time" (with the not quite in the right order abbreviation of UTC) that's used by airplanes. Way simpler to know when you'll arrive if you aren't subtracting all the time zones. Everyone around the world should have the exact same time...at exactly the same time. Then when it came

time to schedule a meeting it'd be easy for everyone to know when it's actually happening.

But what about Daylight Savings Time (DST), you might ask? How would UTC work with DST? It doesn't. But let's all agree that Daylight Savings Time is annoying, so when we make the shift to UTC, we'll also get rid of DST and be all the better for it.

So what say you?

## IF YOU PLANT CORN...

I don't know Dudley Hall, but I do like his common-sense take on Galatians 6:7:

"If you plant corn you've given up your options about what the fruit's going to be. If you plant corn, you're going to get up corn. And Scripture says, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.'

"If you sow to the flesh, if you sow to your selfish desires, that's the fruit. You go I don't want that fruit; *I want a better fruit.* Well, you've gotta go backwards. You can't just change the fruit. You have to go back and decide, what do I have to plant to get that?"

## THERE IS NO NEUTRALITY IN EDUCATION

The Organization of American Historians proclaims itself as the "largest professional society dedicated to United States history." But what *sort* of history does it teach?

- Getting the Story Straight: Queering Regional Identities
- Supporting Pregnant-Capable Students in Abortion-Ban States
- Teaching K-12 History in an Educational Culture War: What Scholars Can Do to Strengthen Antiracist Education
- Queering Work: LGBT Labor Histories

## GOING ALL PHILIPPIANS 4:8 ON SPORTS

In Dean Register's *Minister's Manual* he tells a story about a pastor, Leith Anderson, who grew up as an avid fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers. One year his father took him to a World Series game where his beloved Dodgers were playing their hated cross-town rivals, the New York Yankees. Anderson was sure his Dodgers were going to win, but he was bitterly disappointed when they never even got on base and lost the game 2-0.

Years later Anderson had an opportunity to share his World Series experience with another avid baseball fan. "It was such a disappointment," he told the man, "the Dodgers never even got to base."

"You mean you were actually there?" the man asked in amazement. "You were there when the Yankees' Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in World Series history? That must have been amazing!" Anderson had been so wrapped up in the rivalry that he missed out on appreciating the most dominating pressure-packed pitching performance ever displayed in the baseball finals!

Sportsmanship at its core is about remembering that the guys on the other team are our opponents, not our enemies – fellow

human beings made in God's image. Recognizing that won't cut into our intensity, but should cut down on our cross-checks. While we're always going to cheer on our hometown, if we eliminate the hate we'll also be able to appreciate a brilliant performance by the other team's guy.

## NOTABLE QUOTABLES ON FAVORITISM

- "The axiomatic error undermining much of Western Civilization is 'weak makes right.' If someone accepts, explicitly or implicitly, that the oppressed are always the good guys, then the natural conclusion is that the strong are the bad guys." – Elon Musk
- "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit.... Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits..." – Exodus 23
- "Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." – a slogan journalist William Randolph Hearst, and many journalists after him, embraced. Noble sounding, and so much so that many a pastor has claimed it as a good slogan for the mission of the Church. But the pivot point here is on who you think the afflicted are. If you believe the weak, the poor, or the various sexual and ethnic minorities are always the afflicted, and if you've already decided Christians, or men, or the rich, are always the comfortable, then it isn't such a good slogan after all.

## HOW MANY?

With our long-lasting LED lightbulbs I wonder if the "how many \_\_\_\_s does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" jokes might go the way of all those old "how many \_\_\_\_s does it take to switch out a buggy wheel?" quips. You sure don't hear those anymore! So, before they all go dim, here are some of the best bulb bits.

### How many...

- ...babysitters does it take to change a lightbulb? None – they don't make Pampers that small.
- Appliance sales men? Just one, but for this week and this week only.
- Folk musicians? One to screw it in, and one to complain that it's electric.
- Evolutionists? None – they are sure that it'll just happen if you give it enough time.
- Skateboarders? One, but it'll take him 100 tries.
- Optimists? One, and he doesn't need a lightbulb – he knows the old one is just screwed in too tightly.
- Pessimists? None – they won't bother, because they're sure the wiring's shot too.
- How many real men? None. Real men aren't scared of the dark.

## EDUCATIONAL VIEWING?

"All television is educational television, the only question is, *What is it teaching?*" – Nicholas Johnson

## SAYING "I LOVE YOU"

A woman in an adult creative-writing class didn't quite know what to make of her homework assignment. She had to write different ways to say "I love you," each of which had to be 25 words or less, and they couldn't include the word "love."

After she spent ten minutes scratching her head, the woman's husband came up behind her and started massaging her shoulders. As he loosened up her shoulders and neck she was finally able to start writing. Here is what she submitted to her instructor:

- "I'll get up and see what that noise was."
- "It looks good on you, but you look even better in the red top."
- "Cuddle up – I'll get your feet warm."

SOURCE: Adapted from joke in the February 1990 Reader's Digest submitted by Charlotte Mortimer

## STANDING UP FOR THE UNBORN HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE!

"If we speak in church, we're told it's too political; if we speak in the political arena, we're told it's too religious. If we speak in the media we're told it's too disturbing; in the educational realm, it's too disruptive. On the public streets, it's too distressing for children; in the business world it's too controversial, in the family, too divisive, and in a social setting it's just impolite.

"So if abortion is wrong, where do we go to say so? The answer is that we have to stop looking for a risk-free place to fight abortion, and speak up in all those arenas. Let's stop counting the cost for ourselves if we speak up, and start counting the cost for them if we are silent. The pro-life movement does not need a lot of people; it needs people who are willing to take a lot of risk."

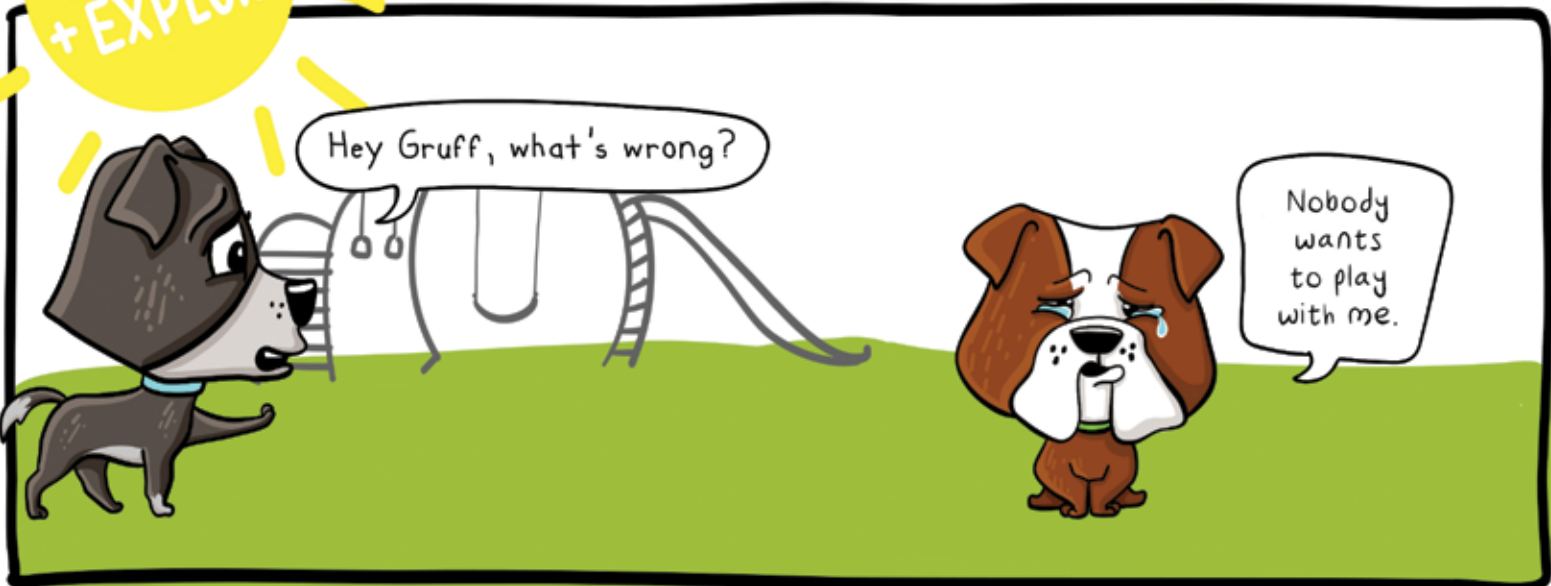
– Roman Catholic priest Frank Pavone speaking against those who say they are pro-life, but object to the issue of abortion being raised in a particular "arena."



by Sophia D., 12 years old.

come  
+ EXPLORE

# RUFUS + GRUFFA



Hey Gruff, what's wrong?

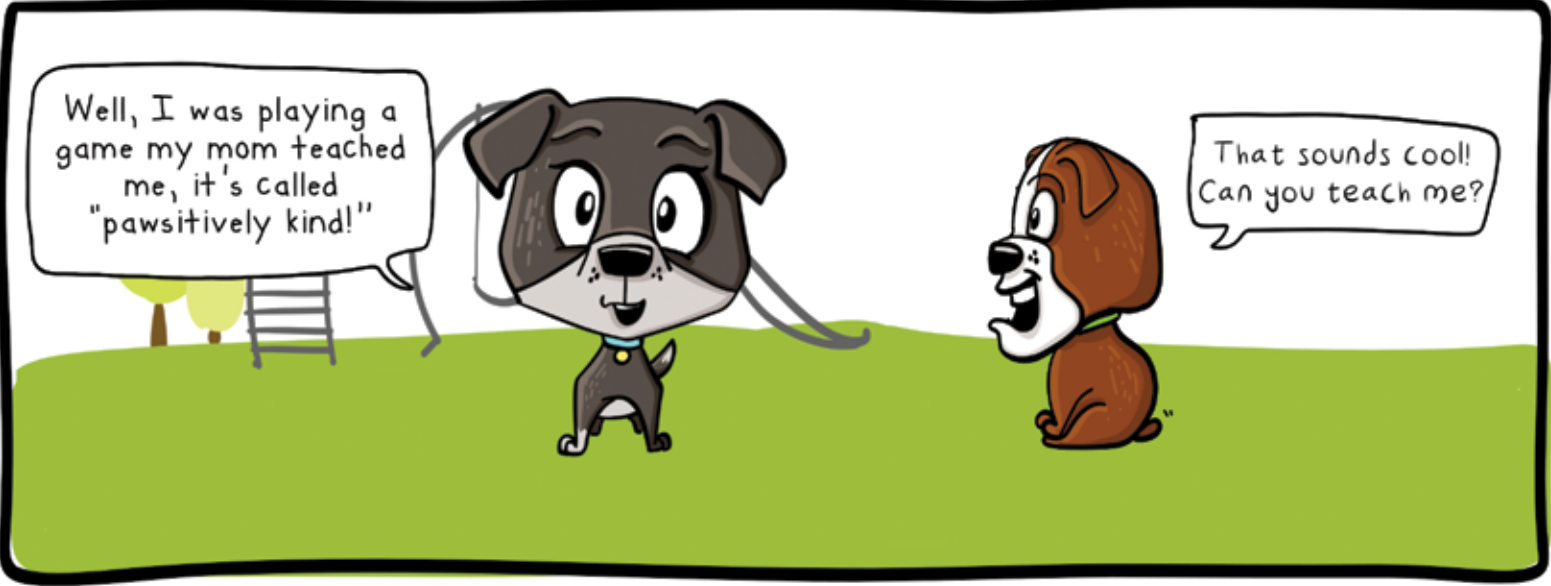
Nobody  
wants  
to play  
with me.



Well, I'll play with you!

Really?  
That's sure  
kind of ya,  
Rufus!

What should  
we play?



Well, I was playing a  
game my mom taught  
me, it's called  
"pawsitively kind!"

That sounds cool!  
Can you teach me?

# Pawsitively KIND

Come + Explore is created by Stephanie Vanderpol who is a mom of 4 kids and who sometimes lets her kids eat dry cereal like puppies because it's fun.

Well, it's sort of like superheroes but instead of pretending to save the world, you actually spread kindness to anyone you meet or see in need.



So, like how you noticed I was in need and you said you would play with me?



Yup!



Do you think we could have costumes though, like them superheroes?



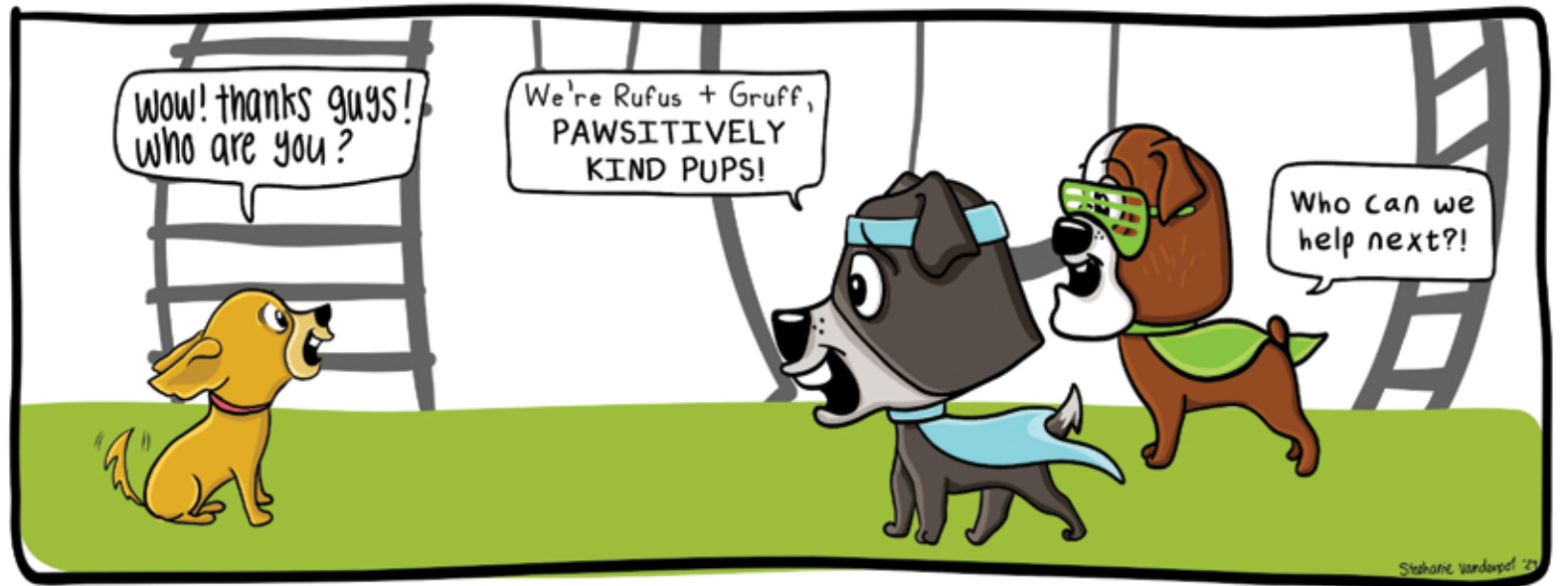
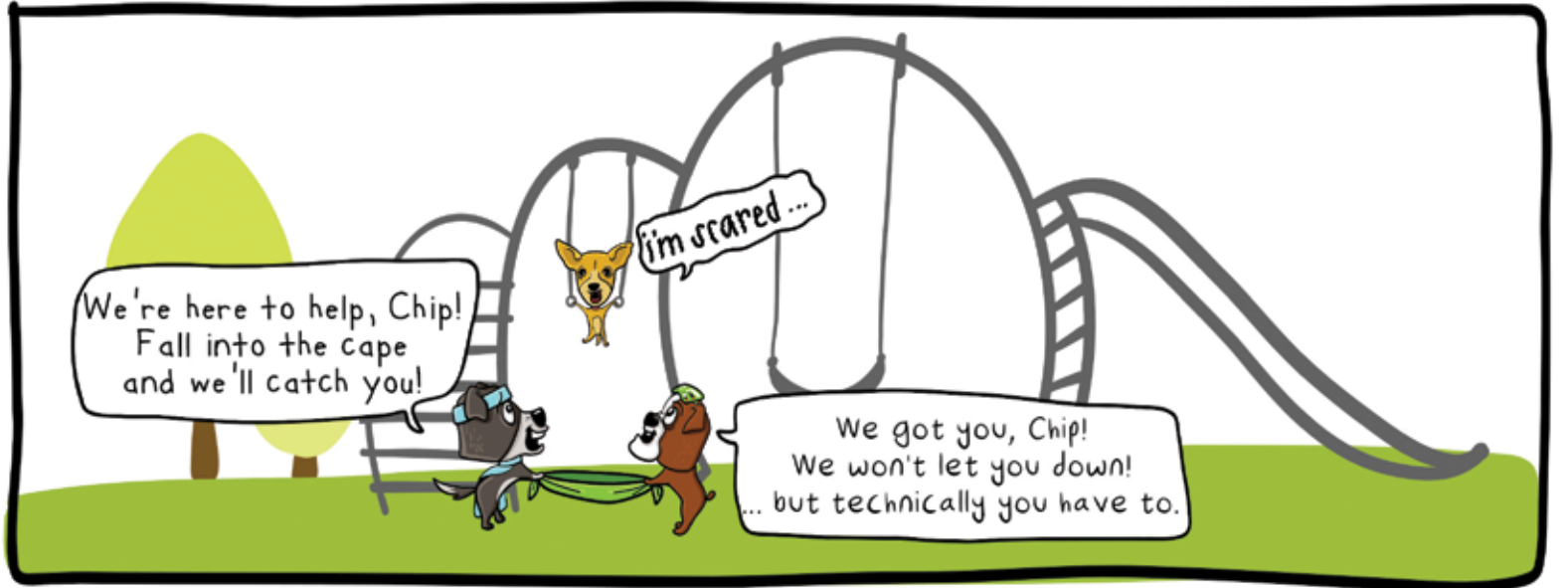
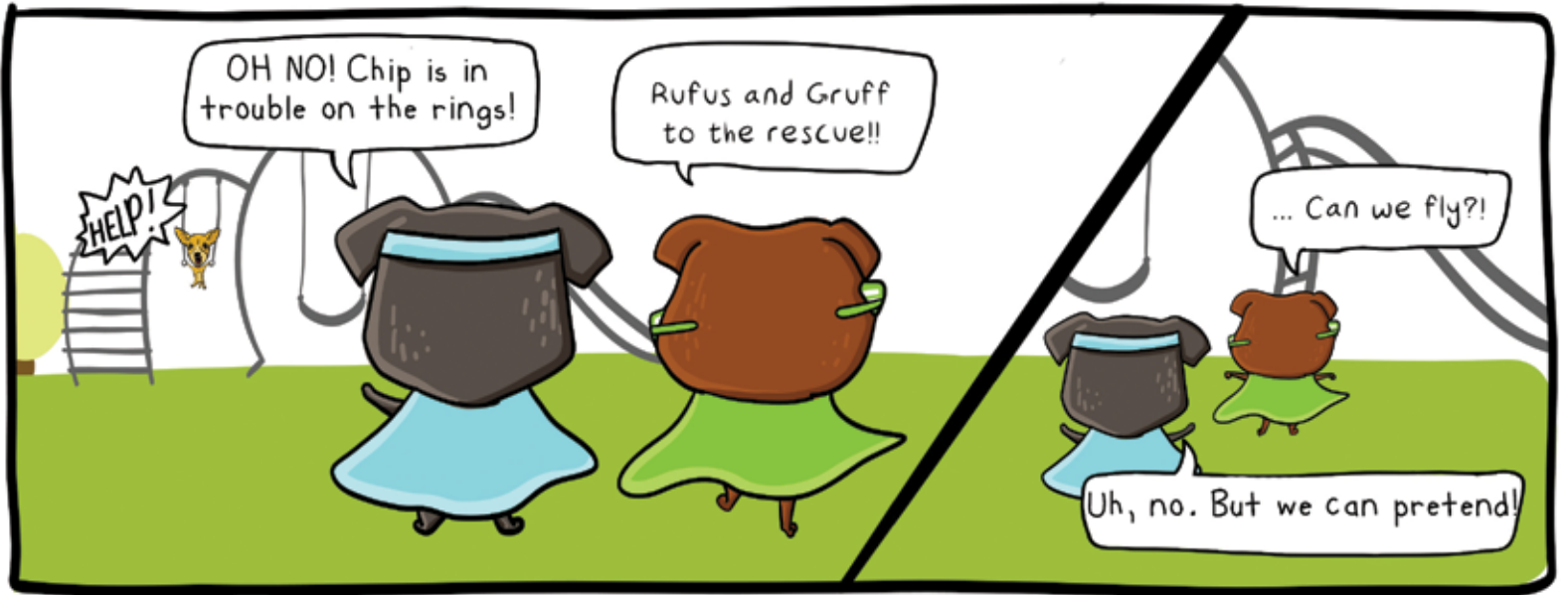
Rufus + Gruff...



**PAWSITIVELY  
KIND PUPS!**

WRITE A SLOGAN FOR RUFUS+GRUFF!

continued ...



You don't need a cool name or a cape to be Pawsitively Kind - you don't even need to be a dog (but you can always pretend, because eating out of a bowl can sometimes be super fun).

Has anyone ever done something kind for you? (Moms are notorious for doing kind things - ever wonder how that dirty laundry ends up clean and neatly back in your cupboard?). Think of sometime where someone went out of their way to make you smile. Remember how it made your heart warm and a smile cross your cheeks. Don't you want to share that feeling with someone else?

Being kind goes against our sinful nature and today's society that tells us to always put "me first". We want to be first in line, the first teacher's helper, we want the first piece of cake, the biggest piece of cake, the piece with the most icing... the list can go on and on! But we are supposed to be counter-cultural in our behaviours! Jesus has released us from our selfish desires (if only we'd listen), so we can take every opportunity given to us to be kind! Being kind means putting others before yourself, whether that someone is a fellow classmate, your teacher, your sibling or even someone in the checkout line, it means taking the last piece of cake - the small one with little icing. It means choosing to do what Jesus did, even if it means small, and even big, sacrifices for yourself (which it usually does).

Maybe you don't know where to start. Here are some things you can do that will make someone's day (and make you an honorary member of Pawsitively Kind!).



do your chores  
without  
complaining

Pray for  
a kind  
heart

Play with  
someone  
who's lonely

Open the  
door for  
someone

PICK UP  
GARBAGE

wait for  
the last  
piece of cake

SMILE

GIVE UP  
YOUR TURN  
ON THE SWINGS

Play with  
your sibling

Pass the  
ball in  
SPORTS

adopt a  
pet from  
a shelter

help someone  
UP if they fall

help an elderly  
neighbour with  
their groceries

say please  
+ thank you

listen when  
others talk



## *Missions Education Service*

Reformed Ministries is a joint mission project in beautiful Papua New Guinea supported by the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Canadian Reformed Churches, and Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

We are seeking a **Reformed Education Support Worker** to work cooperatively with our 4 Christian Day Schools so that they can *function self-sufficiently, develop professionally and educate covenantally*.

We are inviting male applicants for 2 non-renewable 3-year terms starting late 2024/early 2025.

Applicants must be:

- a communicant member in good standing of the Canadian Reformed Churches or a church with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship;
- an accredited teacher, preferably with experience in school administration;
- committed to covenantal education;
- physically able to walk 1-2 hours to our village schools during the rainy season; and
- willing to assist in fundraising and partnership development.

Applications should include a resume, your view of Reformed education, and two letters of reference, one of which must be from your consistory.

Applications or requests for more information can be submitted to Ruth deJonge ([ruthdejonge@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdejonge@gmail.com)).

## *Serving the Reformed Churches of Papua New Guinea*


**The world is full of noise,**  
pushing in every direction. Find your way forward and  
prepare for a career while exploring what it means to reflect  
the love of Jesus Christ wherever you go, in whatever you do.  
Turn down the volume and listen closely.

**Your Future  
is Calling**

 Redeemer  
University

LEARN MORE AT  
[REDEEMER.CA](http://REDEEMER.CA)







Kenya

# 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](http://CRWRF.ca)

**CHP** CANADA **CHRISTIAN HERITAGE PARTY OF CANADA**

## RESTORING OUR CULTURE

ON CHRISTIAN MORAL PRINCIPLES




**CHP.ca 1-888-868-3247**

### WISH TO MAKE A DONATION?

Please send a personal cheque payable to **CHRISTIAN HERITAGE PARTY**,  
Box 30009, 150 Main St. East, Grimsby, ON. L3M 1P0

# REFORMED CONFESSIONS

[reformedconfessions.org](http://reformedconfessions.org) →



A collection of Reformed Confessions with extensive study materials



**COVENANT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

7 Howard Avenue  
London, Ontario  
N6P 1B8  
519-203-0266

ROOTED IN TRUTH - GROWING IN CHRIST

Covenant Christian School in London, Ontario is seeking a

### PRINCIPAL

commencing the 2025/2026 school year.

This is an opportunity to lead a united, professional staff of 20 equipping covenant children for a life of kingdom service through Christ-centred education. Our school has been blessed with:



- Community drawn from several Reformed churches
- Experienced Vice-principal
- Newly expanded facilities supporting 185 students in K-8
- Excellent volunteer base
- Extensive Special Education program

Applicants should be members in good standing of a Canadian Reformed, Free Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian, or United Reformed church.

For more information, or to apply with a resume, statement of faith and statement of Reformed education, please contact:

Education Committee Chair [edcomm@ccslondon.org](mailto:edcomm@ccslondon.org) or Board Chair [board@ccslondon.org](mailto:board@ccslondon.org)

# LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Around 90% of undergraduate students live on Dordt University's campus. We are intentional about our residential campus because we believe learning goes beyond what happens in the classroom.

We call our living areas "learning communities" – spaces where students grow and are shaped through relationship building and purposeful programming. They help students hone relational skills and develop as image-bearers of Christ in a way that will transform their communities beyond their time at Dordt.

By living in learning communities, Dordt students get to interact with students from different majors, backgrounds, and stories. This creates a healthy vibrancy on our campus. The soccer player and the theatre performer attend each other's events, the business major and the education major discuss their fields, and the student from Vancouver learns from a student who grew up in the Midwest. Perspectives are strengthened, horizons are broadened, and an appreciation of the beauty of God's Kingdom is grown.

At Dordt, students are hungry for the Gospel. Their curiosity and desire for knowledge prompts Bible studies and small groups and conversations around the dinner table. Some

of the most formative moments are the deep conversations that happen late at night in the hallway with friends. This is only possible through a community that is moving forward together, reaching and striving for the same goal of becoming more like Jesus.

As Christian philosopher Calvin Seerveld wrote, "God has set things up so that cultural endeavor is always a communal enterprise, done by trained men and women in concert, gripped by a spirit that is larger than each one individually and that pulls them together as they do their formative work."

Our hope is that, at the end of their time at Dordt University, students have developed an appreciation for their neighbor and are grounded in their own unique identity in Christ, which they are able to take with them to be culture makers in their homes, workplaces, churches, and communities.

**Derek Buteyn**

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE  
DORDT UNIVERSITY



"What I've enjoyed most about Dordt is growing in my faith alongside people who were on similar life journeys as myself. I'll remember memories made at cross country meets, countless hours spent in the labs, and meals shared at the Commons with friends, but I can honestly say that Dordt has shaped me into the person I am today, and it is because of God's providence that I'm walking away from Dordt with a new perspective on life."

**Lucy Burkowski**

DORDT CLASS OF 2024  
VERMILLION, SOUTH DAKOTA



"Dordt helped me fully understand what it meant to be involved with a community of faith. What we do in life should be for God's glory, so whether it's in the workplace or my life or my community I can live out that faith in a way that is God-honoring. And I hope my kids—as they grow older—realize that's a very important aspect that we learned through our community of friends that we developed at Dordt."

**Scott Kallemeyn**

DORDT CLASS OF 2004  
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA



## Readers of Reformed **PERSPECTIVE**

Redeem a \$500 travel voucher with this ad when you come to Dordt for a campus visit.

*Sign up now!*



[dordt.edu/visit](https://dordt.edu/visit)



# FLOYD ELZINGA:

## Creating art out of the new and old

### INTERVIEW WITH AN ARTIST

by Jason Bouwman

It's a cold rainy April morning when I meet Floyd Elzinga in his Beamsville studio. His left arm is cradled in a sling to help his shoulder recover from a recent surgery. Unable to work for the time being, Floyd has some time to answer my questions about his life's work.

Floyd is an established Canadian artist perhaps best known for his metal sculptures of pine cones and windswept trees. The natural, organic objects fashioned from welded steel are an intriguing contrast of materials and subject matter. It's proven to be a successful motif for Floyd who, along with his team, produces hundreds of pieces per year ranging in price from \$50 to \$150,000 (that's not a typo). While many have encouraged Floyd to focus on pursuing the top end of that market, he continually chooses to make pieces that are accessible to as many people as possible.

Patrons of Elzinga's work include art lovers, wealthy homeowners, corporations, and public institutions. One of the first sights visitors encounter, when crossing into Canada via the Queenston-Lewiston bridge in Southern Ontario, is that of Floyd's giant metal pine cones and a metal maple leaf.

We've stepped into Floyd's office now: a small room off to the side of his fabricating shop. It's cluttered with papers, bits of metal, half-finished desktop sculptures, a computer, a coffee maker, a record player and a milk crate full of vinyl records. I'm curious to learn more about his recent "Artist in Residence" experience in Nepal. We take a seat on some old chairs and I ask Floyd how all this started and what might be next for him.

Although Floyd has always had an interest in forestry, art was his passion. With the encouragement of those closest to him, he ended up earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design in Halifax, NS. Early on Floyd chose to work with scrap metal. His reasons for this choice were twofold. First, it was familiar to him – there had always been a lot of the stuff lying around the farm he grew up on. Second, it was cheap, or at least cheaper than other more traditional materials used for sculpting. As he shared, "In college you have lots of time to pursue your ideas but no money."

Floyd soon realized that while it takes considerable skill to


fashion an original work from scrap metal, it is almost impossible to replicate such a piece, which he wanted to do. So his company, Artifice, now follows a process that is centered around new metal rods and sheet metal. The shift to stock materials is a choice that Floyd continues to reflect on and question.

Wrestling with those questions led Elzinga to Nepal... and back to using scrap metal. In a recent partnership with Sagarmatha Next and the Denali Foundation Floyd has been transforming the mountain waste on Mount Everest into art as "part of the Everest Base Camp trekking route clean up and waste reduction education campaign." Elzinga and part of his Canadian team, Jeff Buikema and Carolyn Elzinga, spent 5 weeks in late 2022 working in the remote Khumbu region of Nepal. Thanks to their work there, including the creation of a massive new garbage sculpture, future trekkers to Everest basecamp will be challenged to consider how they might do their part to clean up the tons of waste in the region.

"Although these sculptures are jarringly incongruous in the beautiful mountain scape, they offer the viewer a chance to reflect on both the brokenness of the past and the persistent hope for the future."

Elzinga was excited about the result: "The goal of giving garbage a new value and incentivizing its removal from this remote area was being realized in the moment! .... I was suddenly overwhelmed with how much more I could do."

All this leaves Floyd with another problem to solve. "In college you have lots of time to pursue your ideas but no money. I have some more money these days," says Floyd, "but too many ideas, too much garbage, and not enough time!"

To learn more about Elzinga and view more of his art, go to [FloydElzinga.com](https://FloydElzinga.com). 

*If you have a suggestion for an artist you'd like to see profiled in RP please email Jason Bouwman at [studio@jasonbouwman.com](mailto:studio@jasonbouwman.com)*



◀ **"Hope"** | 12' tall x 5' diameter (2022)  
Everest trekking route waste  
Syangboche, Nepal



▲ **"Potential"** | 8 pine cone sculptures 4'-10' (2019)  
Art In the Forest  
Hanoi, Vietnam



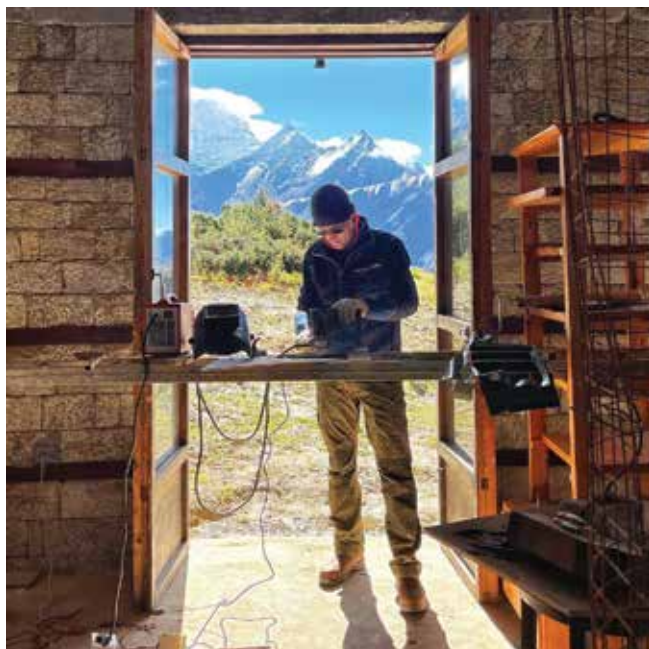
▲ **"Colonization"** | 27 pinecones from 1'-9' long (2015)  
Allen Lambert Galleria  
Toronto, Ontario



▲ **"Unzip the Earth"** (2017)  
Oeno Gallery  
Bloomfield, Ontario



▲ **"Universal Stopper"** (2019)  
Oeno Gallery  
Bloomfield, Ontario



The artist working in his studio in Nepal.

# MORE More Than the Magazine

We love print, but we're grateful for our website too, so we can share more than could ever fit inside the magazine's pages. So, if you're only reading each print issue, then here's a look at some of what you are missing online. Scan the QR codes to take you right to it.

## Best of *Saturday Selections*

**Saturday Selections** is a weekly column on ReformedPerspective.ca that shares links to great pieces from other publications. Articles can be from mainstream news or Christian outlets, so if an article lacks Reformed perspective, I offer that in my short introduction. Highlights from the last couple of months include:

### The curious case of the Christian Reformed Church

"How many denominations have gone this far down the road toward theological liberalism and then put on the brakes in a significant way?" Monroe asked. None."

On the brink of plunging into all sorts of sexual perversion, the CRC seems to be solidly reversing course. Praise God!



### Daniel's 3 tips for surviving university

Christian young people who are not able to resist peer pressure will need to steer clear of university, because standing out is an absolute requirement.



### Abe Lincoln with a lesson on lying

The smartest politicians don't break promises; like Abe here, they try not to make any promises at all. Pro-life voters need to watch out lest their votes go to politicians who won't be pinned down as to what they'll actually do for the unborn.



### Are memories stored in the brain?

Scientists are still working out where our memories are stored. Thought it was the brain and that's that? Not so fast!



"...removal of major parts of the brain — including removal of entire lobes and hemispheres — does not usually remove memories. That should not be surprising if we assume that psychological things like memories are not the kind of things that can be cut out with a scalpel."



### It's a young world after all

On offer here, four evidences of a young solar system.



# Best of *Real Talk*



Lucas Holtvluwer and Tyler Vanderwoude have been hosting their podcast for three years now. Find all the episodes at [RealTalkPodcast.ca](https://RealTalkPodcast.ca) or scan the QR code to watch them on YouTube. Some recent highlights include:

### #103 – Generosity that changes the world

The head of a non-profit, Ray Pennings, and two businessmen, Al Schutten and Peter Kranendonk join Lucas to talk about the gift of giving. God puts some of us in a position to give to worthy causes, but as Kranendonk shares, this gift has to be accompanied with love, wisdom, service, and more, lest your giving cause more harm than help.

### #102 – Advice to young women: 5 principles

This episode is inspired by Jan Broersma's recent article "Advice for young women ... from A to Z." Jan is joined by Sue Schouten, Marlene Deboersap, and host Lucas Holtvluwer for this special edition of Real Talk.

### #101 – Should Christians homeschool?

Lucas chats with homeschooling mom Andrea Veldkamp about the challenges and opportunities of education around the kitchen table...



# Daily Devotionals

ReformedPerspective.ca hosts two daily devotionals, *Manna* in audio, and *Nearer to God* for those who prefer to read. You can also access both on the front page of ReformedPerspective.ca or through the RP App, downloadable at [ReformedPerspective.ca/App](https://ReformedPerspective.ca/App).



Daily devotional link

### Manna Daily Audio Devotional

For four decades, a Christian media outreach program called "Voice of the Church" teamed up with dozens of Reformed pastors to produce 7-15 minute meditations from Scripture that were aired weekly on radio stations in North America. This outreach concluded its work in 2022 and the collection of over 900 Bible meditations was entrusted to us. We've republished it as a daily audio podcast at [MannaPodcast.ca](https://MannaPodcast.ca).

### Nearer To God Devotional

One after another, different Reformed pastors take a month to share devotionals on a theme, whether that might be a particular point of doctrine, or as happened in August, an overview of the book of Colossians.



# FILMS

by Jon Dykstra

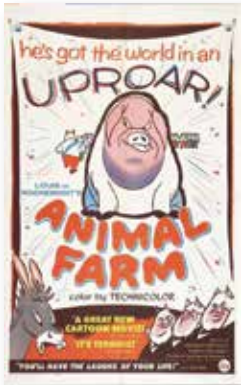
CLASSICS THE FAMILY WILL LOVE!

ReformedPerspective.ca/movies

## ANIMAL FARM

ANIMATED / DRAMA

1954 / 72 MINUTES **RATING: 7/10**



As in the original book, a farm setting is used to highlight conflict between the "working class" – chickens, geese, cows, and pigs – and the wealthy, represented here by the farmer who owns everything. Author George Orwell was anti-communist, but not blind to the problems of the arrogant elite who abused the poor, so his Farmer Jones here is a piece of work, shown whipping the animals in a drunken stupor.

When Old Major, the most revered pig on the farm, calls a meeting, all attend. He gives a rousing speech, calling for solidarity against the oppressive farmer, and equality for all animals. The animals drive out Farmer Jones, and take over the farm for themselves.

The animals soon learn the same lessons as the poor Russians peasants when they overthrew the Tsar: being free of one tyrant isn't the same as being free. The pigs take the place of the farmer, because, after all, someone has to show some leadership, and they are soon sleeping in the farmer's bed, even as the rest of the animals remain in the barn. All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.

This is about education more than entertainment – a great presentation of one of the most important novels of our age. At a time when "equity" is the ultimate goal, it's important to teach the next generation where that road really takes us. A great one for 12 to 112.

## ROBERTA

MUSICAL

1935 / 106 MINUTES **RATING: 8/10**



It's 1935, and Huck Haines (Fred Astaire) and his band, the Indianians of Wabash, Indiana have just gotten off the boat, landing in Paris after a long trip from America. There's just one problem: the Russian restaurateur who hired them to play at his place thought he was hiring *Indians*, the Native American sort, and not *Indianians*, the pale-faced sort. So Alexander Petrovich Moskowitz Voyda is not pleased, and he fires Haines.

So it's on to Plan B. They'll look up any friends they can think of that live in Paris. The pickings are slim – Haines' best friend John Kent has an aunt. But it turns out she is the world-famous fashion designer Roberta. When they all show up on her salon's front step, it's time for some more music, with dancing quick to follow.

I could tell you more of the plot, but while it's sweet – two romances for the price of one – the plot really isn't the point: this is about finding opportunities for Fred Astaire to dance with Ginger Rogers, and do they have some great numbers.

Language concerns would be limited to a bunch of "Gee, that would be swell"s. Kent does also get drunk in one scene, though his foolishness is made plain for all to see.

Two thumbs up – this is a great one for parents and older kids, so long as they have appreciated black and white films in the past.

## RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

DRAMA

1958 / 93 MINUTES **RATING: 8/10**



Sometimes when my girls are playing I'll watch a movie I know they won't be interested in because I don't want to tempt them to interrupt their fun. That was my intent this time around – what kid wants to watch a black and white film about submarine warfare?

Well, as it turns out, all of them.

The attraction? This wasn't like anything they'd seen before, with about 90 percent taking place in the close quarters of the USS *Nerka*. It also helped that both stars – Burt Lancaster and Clark Gable – have quite the onscreen presence.

And it helped that my girls had their dad along to explain some of the basics of World War II submarine warfare.

Two cautions: a young sailor who we've gotten to know, dies when a loose torpedo drops from its rack and lands on him. Not graphic, but sad for younger viewers. Also, the crew, with some regularity, pat the bottom of a pin-up picture – the typical World War II sort, the woman clothed but wearing short shorts – hanging in the mess hall. The weirdness of this practice really comes out when you try explaining it to your kids.

It is a classic for a reason, with a great running conflict between the captain and his passed-over second-in-command, but the biggest selling feature? Loads of action!



# 100-year-old silent movies? Really?

My dad introduced me to some of the black and white classics that were produced in his heyday, but the two below were already old long before he was born. So why watch them still today? I could make an educational case – these were made at the dawn of the film era, and are worth seeing just for historical reasons. But that's not why I've shown them to my own kids. And that's not why they've loved them too!

## SHERLOCK JR.

COMEDY / FAMILY

1924 / 44 MINUTES **RATING: 8/10**

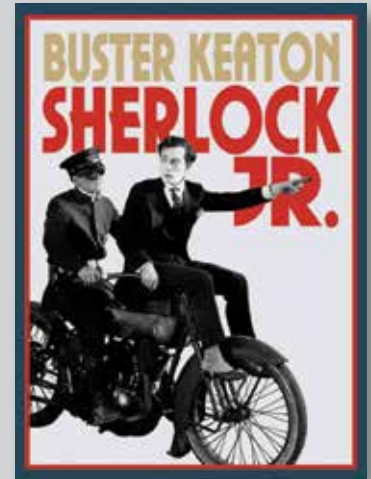
Want to get your kids interested in the golden oldies? *Sherlock Jr.* is the perfect introduction – a black-and-white classic with the frenetic pacing of a cartoon!

Buster Keaton plays a movie theater projectionist who wants to become a great detective to impress a girl. But he's not the only fellow interested. Standing in his way is a tall, handsome rival who has no scruples – this scoundrel steals a watch from the girl's dad. Buster offers to do an investigation, but he is humiliated twice over when his clever rival frames him for the theft.

Dejected, Buster returns to the theater in time for the afternoon showing and gets the movie started. But as it's playing, he falls asleep and Buster dreams himself right into the movie action as the suave and savvy detective.

The best action scene in the movie is when Buster, in hot pursuit of the villains, hops on the front handlebars of a motorbike being driven by his trusted sidekick. But, unbeknownst to Buster, just as the motorbike starts off, his sidekick falls off – Buster is on it alone, sitting on the handlebars, urging the absent driver to be a little more careful about the way he's driving! But what's going to happen when Buster wakes up? Well, even as he's solving mysteries in his dream world, his beautiful girl is figuring out things in the real one.

Moments of peril, and a brief occasion or two of fisticuffs that might be a bit scary for the very young.



## SEVEN CHANCES

COMEDY / SILENT

1925 / 56 MIN **RATING: 8/10**

Buster Keaton stars as Jimmie Shannon, a down-on-his-luck businessman who has long wanted to marry his sweetheart, Mary Jones, except he doesn't have the money to support them. Then a lawyer shows up with an offer: Jimmie will inherit \$7 million on the condition that he is married by 7 pm on his 27th birthday... which is today! Jimmie's problems are solved: he can marry his girl and keep him and his partner out of debtor's jail! So off he rushes to propose, but he muffs it, making it sound like he only wants to marry Mary for the money. So she refuses!

The distraught Jimmie has no interest in marrying anyone now, but is pressured by his partner to marry someone, anyone just to keep them out of jail. The partner makes a list of seven names – seven chances – for Jimmie to try. And when Jimmie foolishly does, he gets laughed right out the door. But that partner isn't finished: he tells the newspaper about the story, and effectively takes out an ad for ladies interested in marrying a millionaire to meet him at the church. Hundreds show up, and the chase is on! For the next ten minutes we get to watch Keaton jump, leap, slide, and run, run, run for his life!

This comes with a couple of concerns. With Jimmie seemingly willing to propose to just about anyone, he approaches a woman from behind only to veer off when he discovers she's black. It's a quick few seconds and kids may not even notice the racism here, but if they do, then you can talk about the way things were back then.

The bigger caution is the film's premise: marrying for money. This was remade in 1999 as *The Bachelor*, and it bombed, probably because by adding color, sound, and a serious actor, they made it almost believable. If anybody would actually marry someone for money, that'd be sad and creepy. The original remains hilarious precisely because it stars a clown no one could ever find believable.

I've tested it on pre-teens and skeptical 20 and 30-year-olds too, and while it took them all a few minutes to warm to it, by the end everyone was giving it the thumbs up. There are many cheap or free lousy copies available online, so be sure to spend a few bucks to rent a good version. It'll make a huge difference!



It's time to embark on an exciting teaching journey  
and an adventure in Tassie!



## Come and join our diverse & dynamic team at John Calvin School Launceston

Where we aspire 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 have exciting opportunities for full-time and part-time positions starting  
January 2024 and beyond:

**Primary Teachers**

+

**Secondary Teachers**

*particularly (but not limited to) those with expertise in English, HASS, Design + Technology*

As well as future positions we would love to explore with you.

Applicants must:

- be a member of the Free Reformed Church of Australia or any of her sister churches.
- want to work in a collaborative environment that values your unique skills and ideas.
- be able to use cutting edge resources and technology to enhance teaching.
- be able to be registered to teach in Tasmania and work with vulnerable people.

Competitive salaries cover all award entitlements as listed in  
Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020 and more.

### INTERESTED?

- For more information contact Mr D Coote - Principal [cooted@jcs.tas.edu.au](mailto:cooted@jcs.tas.edu.au)
- Find application forms at [www.jcs.tas.edu.au/employment](http://www.jcs.tas.edu.au/employment)
- Send completed applications to Mrs K Wielstra - Assoc Sec [wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au](mailto:wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au)



Free Reformed School Association TAS t/a  
John Calvin School, Launceston  
49-53 Howick St  
South Launceston TAS 7249

# DRESSING FOR WARFARE

**“What we are setting out to do is to provide Christian families with reading material that will help them dress up for warfare.”**

– John deVos, *RP’s* first editor writing in 1982

by Mark Penninga

I received a special gift this summer – three boxes of old copies of *Reformed Perspective* magazine. The collection included the very first issues, going back to January of 1982.

Going through some of the earlier issues, I was very impressed:

- The journalism was comprehensive, covering the news and issues of the day with depth and rigor, all through the lens of God’s Word;
- The articles covered everything from politics to science, art, and medicine;
- The design was both creative and beautiful;
- Although the original people involved were primarily from the Canadian Reformed Churches, the coverage was always ecumenical – reporting on a wide variety of developments within Christianity and looking at everything from a biblical perspective (and not merely a denominational perspective);
- The editor, John deVos, was wise and a very gifted writer.

But what I found even more impressive than all this was the deep conviction that ran through each page. This was captured already in the first editorial by brother deVos:

“What we are setting out to do is to provide Christian families with reading material that will help them dress

up for warfare. The apostle Paul gives us his war report from the battlefield: ‘For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places’ (Eph. 6). ... We must not underestimate the power and the impact of the spirits that are at work in our days.”

He then proceeded to trace the world-view conflicts in the past century, connecting the conflicts back to those who report on the news.


“Therefore, we attempt to cover much of the same territory as is reported on by the so-called neutral media. But we will at all times do so in the full awareness that our King is exalted up on high, and that, seated in majesty at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, He guides and He directs all the world events to suit His divine purpose.”

Amen!

42 years have passed and many others – donors, writers, subscribers, distributors, and board members – have picked up the torch, motivated by the same convictions.

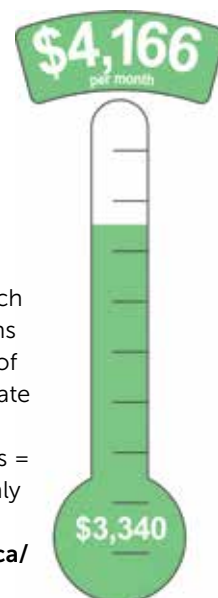
Perhaps what has been most encouraging as I look through these magazines is the consistency with what I witness today. Although the magazine may look

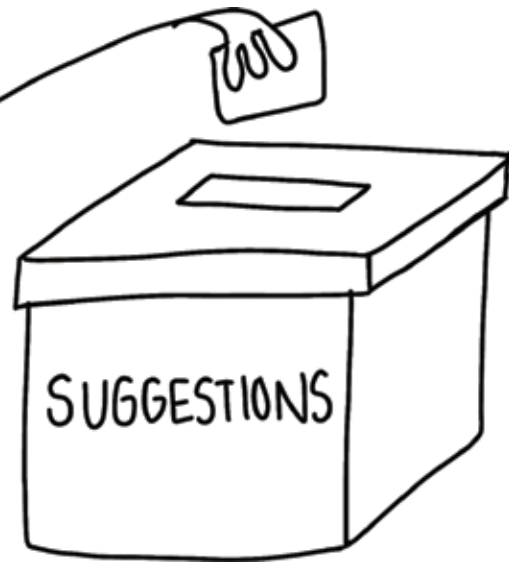
different, and we now publish in many other mediums (including a podcast, app, website, newsletter, etc.) I see the same conviction present in this team today. Our editor, Jon Dykstra, is a man I have great respect and admiration for, particularly because of how committed he is to celebrating God’s truth, regardless of how the world (and many Christians) may react.

The spiritual war continues to be waged in 2024, and the need to be suitably dressed for warfare is perhaps even greater today than it was in 1982. Yet, regardless of the intensity of the battle, we have the same assurance – Christ is King! 

## Help fund Christian journalism

*RP* is trying to raise \$4,166 in new monthly donations by the end of this year. And some generous folks will match these monthly donations with a full year’s worth of support (e.g. if you donate \$20/month, they will donate \$20 x 12 months = \$240). Start your monthly donation at [ReformedPerspective.ca/donate](https://ReformedPerspective.ca/donate)





# Speak to **RP's** next strategic plan!

You may have noticed some changes at RP over the past couple years, after RP's board implemented a new strategic plan in 2022:

- Circulation has skyrocketed to over 10,000 families
- The magazine is thicker (now at 84 pages)
- We added a quality cover so that it lasts

And then there is the actual content:

- More original journalism
- Stories about people in our Reformed community
- A kids' section and artist profile
- Access to RP's other content, including our Real Talk podcast and daily devotional



It is time for a new strategic plan, and we invite you to participate. Looking at our print magazine in particular (design, layout, size, content, frequency, etc.):



1. What is RP doing really well that you want to see continue?
2. What are we doing very poorly that you want to see dropped?
3. What do you hope to see more of?
4. What do you hope to see less of?
5. Do you have any other feedback for RP as we chart a path into the future?



You can share your anonymous thoughts (in just a few minutes) by going to the QR code below, or you can send us an email via [admin@reformedperspective.ca](mailto:admin@reformedperspective.ca).



We thank God for making this possible, and we thank our donors, volunteers, and staff for being His means to turn this into a reality.

But we also know there is much room to improve.

