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Volume 32 Issue No. 4

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FROM THE EDITOR

Appreciating the Proverbs 31 woman

There is one line in “Younger Women,” this month’s feature article, that will have readers blinking in surprise. Rev. Bouwman says of the Proverbs 31 woman:

This woman is not the proverbial “super-mom” but simply a God-fearing woman...

Not a super-mom? Simply a God-fearing woman? *Really?*

That runs counter to the popular understanding of her as an *über* woman: so pure, so selfless, so hard-working as to be a completely unrealistic example of what godly womanhood looks like. Under this understanding, the Proverbs 31 woman is as helpful an example of biblical womanhood as a Barbie doll is of physical fitness.

So is this woman unreal, or “simply a God-fearing woman?” To answer that question it will be helpful to take a close look at the passage and “update” the many tasks she takes on.

What we find here is a wife who has her husband’s trust at home and in business matters too (vs. 11,16) and who honors that trust (12). She knows how to use a sewing machine (13) and makes regular trips to Safeway and Costco (14). Each morning, before her kids are even awake, she is up making their lunches and getting breakfast ready (15). This mom has arms grown strong from scrubbing pots, cleaning floors and hauling her children in and out of car seats (17). She has her own online Etsy.com craft store, selling good she makes in the evenings (18-19,24). She makes meals for those in need and, after her kids were all in school, she began volunteering at the local crisis pregnancy clinic (20). She is a mom who finds good clothing for her family, for every season, and who dresses

herself attractively (21-22). All of her hard work makes it possible for her husband to have the time to be an elder or deacon – she makes this possible (23). She is wise, and confident about the future because she recognizes God is in control; she is able to share her wisdom with others over coffee (25-26). She manages her household and doesn’t spend her afternoons watching the soaps (27). Consequently her children and husband can’t contain their pride in her (28-29). They praise her not for how she *looks*, but for the God-fearing woman she *is* (30-31).

This is certainly a remarkable woman. As verse 10 puts it, her “worth is far above jewels.” But doesn’t she sound familiar? Isn’t this someone you know?

While this woman is amazing, we shouldn’t dismiss her as unrealistic. That would be a mistake for two reasons.

First, because it would be ignoring the God-pleasing example He outlines here – this is an example given precisely *for* instruction. That Christian women will regularly fall short of this standard doesn’t mean it can be ignored. It only means that they, like their husbands, need to regularly go to God in repentance, and ask Him to continue to mold them and shape them to better take on the good works He has laid out for them to do.

And, finally, dismissing the Proverbs 31 woman as unrealistic would be to overlook what God has given us in the many women we know that bear a striking resemblance to the woman of this passage. As we read in verse 10, their worth is far beyond jewels, so we should never overlook the enormity of the blessing God has given us in these women!



Jon Dykstra can be reached at editor@reformedperspective.ca. He is the husband of one wife, and the father of two daughters, all worth far more than jewels.

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

NO MORE HOMEWORK IN FRANCE

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



French president Francois Hollande announced in November that he plans to make some major changes to the country's school system during his five-year term. Among those changes is an end to homework, as he feels schoolwork should be done at school, and letting kids take homework home gives an unfair advantage to students with involved, helpful parents. The president also aims to "level the playing field," by allowing children in disadvantaged areas to go to school at a younger age, and school will increase to 4.5 days per week, after the previous president cut it to 4 days to save money. Some kids are already in school until 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., and all these changes are geared at having them stay longer.

While homework isn't necessarily a good thing, and going to school a half day more isn't necessarily bad, the overall direction we see here is for parents to have less time with their children, and less involvement in their education. This is an increasingly statist approach – with the French government replacing parents in raising the nation's children.

SOURCE: Albert Mohler's "The injustice of helpful parents - Yet more insanity"; Dec. 6, 2012; albertmohler.com

HONORING GOD WITH ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

BY JON DYKSTRA



Canadian Reformed artist has garnered some international recognition for his work.

A coin and paper money magazine publisher, Krause Publications, recently announced the winners of its 2013 Coin of the Year Awards. The Royal Canadian Mint won Best Silver Coin for a \$20 coin that was designed by Ontario's own Jason Bouwman. He described the scene as:

...a young person enjoying a recreational outing. The boy breaks from paddling to dip his hand in the water... and touches the past – the reflection reveals an early native paddler (or voyageur) in a traditional birchbark canoe as it also appears on the early silver dollar It tells a story of respecting our ancestry and sharing a love of this land. It honors both Canada's history and the Mint's efforts to preserve and promote our nation's identity.

Reformed Christians are known for our avid pursuit of God's Truth. How wonderful it is, now, to see this same eagerness and excellence shown in the exploration of Beauty.

"I LIKE ADOPTION"

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



Brad Formsma, a father of three who wants to see more people living out the text "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians

9:7). has created a new website iLikeGiving.com. The site is a collection of videos, all of them about generosity,

and all of them sharing the same first two words, "I Like," as their title, followed by a blank that is filled in specifically for that story. For example, the story that started it all, "I Like Bike," is about an immigrant family who has their bikes stolen, but then replaced by Brad Formsma after he heard about their problem.

Each story is personal and unique, and they together make up a campaign against the narcissistic, instant gratification culture we live in. One particularly touching story is "I Like Adoption," which uses a short video

well worth watching to tell us about the Dennehy family. They adopted 9 special children from all around the world to add to their own 3 biological children. You can see the six-minute film at ilikegiving.com/story/i-like-adoption.

This website aims to effect change and show real happiness. Formsma's goal is to foster awareness that will lead to action and increase conversation on important issues, all with a refreshing positive approach.

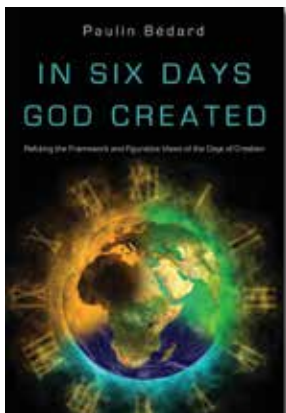
SOURCE: www.ilikegiving.com; Ryan Bomberger's "I Like Adoption: a new short film that will change hearts"; lifesitenews.com; Dec. 17, 2012

RESPONDING TO REFORMED CRITICS OF SIX-DAY CREATION

BY JON DYKSTRA

Did God really create in six days? Since 2009 a group of professors from conservative Reformed denominations have been publicly debating whether Genesis 1 and 2 should be taken literally. This group, which includes Canadian Reformed academics Arnold Sikkema and Frederika Oosterhoff, has been less than clear about the alternative understanding they propose. But they haven't ruled out the possibility of theistic evolution. On the group's blog they wrote:

...the contributors to this blog are by no means in agreement on the scientific and theological validity of theistic evolution, and we further assure them that its promotion is not a "hidden agenda" of this blog. Theistic evolution is accepted, however, among an increasing number of Bible-believing, orthodox Christians. For that reason we believe that we must discuss the theological and scientific issues surrounding the theory among ourselves and also on the blog. It is an issue that we may not be able to resolve adequately but that we also do not, for that reason, want to censor or "run away from."



But, as Canadian Reformed pastor (and frequent *Reformed Perspective* contributor) Dr. Wes Bredenhof recently made clear, theistic evolution is an idea we should run away from. In mid December the pastor published *Position Statements on Creation and Evolution* on his blog Yinkahdinay.WordPress.com. In the thousand-word piece he makes it clear God's Word leaves no room for theistic evolution:

Theistic evolution... requires a radical reinterpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 to explain away certain aspects and make room for science. Historically, the same hermeneutic has been employed to deny

the virgin conception and physical and historical resurrection of Jesus. The hermeneutic which allows for theistic evolution opens the door to a denial of the gospel. This is why I say that we are being assailed by a dangerous false teaching.

The entire post can be found by going to TinyUrl.com/Bredenhof.

In related news, next month a pastor from the L'Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ), expects to publish his book-length defense of six-day creation. Pastor Paulin Bédard's *In Six Days God Created* addresses and rebuts the Framework Hypotheses, another challenge to six-day creation, and one that is accepted by many in the United Reformed Churches. Pastor Bédard argues that this error, in which the six days of creation are viewed as literary devices, is not just problematic, but dangerous:

My concern is that this interpretation attacks the Word of God in a subtle and insidious way, even though many of those who uphold this interpretation do not seem to be conscious of its problems and have a sincere desire to be faithful to the text of Holy Scripture. Nonetheless, the end result of this interpretation is that it reduces the authority of the Bible, introduces novel hermeneutics, and undermines the biblical doctrine of creation.

In Six Days God Created will be published in March and available through Amazon.com (and it will be in English).

GREAT REVIEW OF HORRIBLE BOOK NOW ON RP WEBSITE

BY JON DYKSTRA

Fifty *Shades of Grey* is a series of three filthy books that, according to published accounts, has sold the obscene sum of 65 million copies since the series was first published in 2011. That means the series has sold half as many books as the *Twilight* series (from which it was inspired) and already

outsold *The Hunger Games*. It has also outperformed another recent publishing phenomenon, by becoming the "fastest-selling paperback of all time, selling even faster than the *Harry Potter* series in paperback." Or so saith its Wikipedia page,

While it's unclear what that stat really means, the important thing to take from it is that this series is big! And because it is so very big, *Reformed Perspective* has reviewed it. Now you can learn about this phenomenon without having to be soiled by actually reading any of it.

It needs to be noted that our reviewer, Rob Slane, also wanted to remain unsoiled, so he reviewed the book without reading it either. And he has done a brilliant job. Of all the reviews done by people who haven't read the book they are reviewing, this is by far the best. You can find it now on the front page of our website, www.ReformedPerspective.ca.

SOURCE: DailyMail.co.uk/news/article-2160862/Fifty-Shades-Of-Grey-book-outstrips-Harry-Potter-fastest-selling-paperback-tim

U.S. CHRISTIANS REQUIRED TO KEEP THEIR FAITH OUT OF THEIR BUSINESSES?

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



Camacare – the new U.S. federal health care law – requires companies to have health care plans that cover the morning-after pill and other contraception methods. This part of the law is being fought by Dave and Barbara Green, a Christian family that runs Hobby Lobby, a chain of 514 hobby supply stores across the US. While they offer their employees an extensive health care plan, they don't want their plan to have to cover abortion or abortion-inducing drugs.

They are asking that their company get an exemption, under the "religious conscience exemption" section of the law, which allows "members of certain religious faiths" to be exempt from

provisions in the law that conflict with their faith. Exemptions have already been granted to some religious organizations.

However, in December Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor refused to overturn a lower court ruling that the family's businesses do not qualify as religious organizations and, as such, are required to comply with the full requirements of the law. As a secular business, operating under general, neutral laws, the judgment argues, there is no basis for allowing an exemption.

Starting January 1, the family faced the prospect of fines of up to \$1.3 million per day if they do not comply. They plan to continue pursuing the issue through the courts to stand up for their beliefs.

The decisions made thus far make it clear that Christians in business are expected to keep their beliefs to themselves and not let them affect their business, which, any true Christian knows, is an impossible request, as God rules over all aspects of our life, including our businesses.

SOURCE: Bekcet Adams' "Hobby Lobby: Go ahead and fine us, we won't comply with 'morning-after' mandate"; theblaze.com; Dec. 28, 2012 and Terence Jeffrey's "Obama Administration: We can and will force Christians to act against their faith"; cnsnews.com; Dec. 29, 2012

masquerading as politeness. The chivalrous guy is establishing roles; he is the protector, you are [porcelain]. Your job is to let him be masterful. In my experience, when you are standing on a pedestal, there's not much room to move around. That's by design.

In other words, in the eyes of the feminist, chivalry is a tool designed to control women.

Throughout her article Charen clearly supports the chivalric ideal but makes no clear argument for why men should be chivalrous. Is there a biblical argument to be made for chivalry?

Yes, indeed. First of all, we are all called to honor one another (Romans 12:10) and to serve each other in everything (Phil. 2:1-11). Obeying these exhortations must show in concrete deeds and words rather than being cordoned off into some feeling in the corner of our hearts.

Furthermore, the type of honor we give should be suitable to that which is honored, so the differences between men and women will affect how we honor one another. The Apostle Peter alludes to what type of honor is suitable for women when he commands husbands to honor wives "as the weaker vessel." This is not a slam on women any more than calling a wine glass delicate is a slam on wine glasses. However, men are typically much stronger physically than women, and must learn to honor the strength of a woman differently than the strength of a fellow man.

As well, men must learn to use their strength to protect and serve women instead of using it to dominate them. This comes with regular practice – a man who is incapable of honoring women generally will not be able to honor his wife specifically. So we should train our young boys and young men to honor women in concrete ways – we want to train them up so that they accurately reflect how Jesus Christ serves and protects his bride. And chivalry is just the sort of practice and training they need.

SOURCE: Mona Charen's "Chivalry: The opposite of good manners?"; Dec. 14, 2012 www.nationalreview.com/articles/335605/chivalry-opposite-good-manners-mona-charen#

IS CHIVALRY SEXIST? IS IT BIBLICAL?

BY RAOUL KINGMA



A recent study in the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* has found that both men and women are happier when

men behave like gentlemen. However, the paper's authors are very concerned about this "benevolent sexism," stating that the results of the study "emphasize the need for interventions to reduce its prevalence." Feminism continues its forward march, determined to level the playing field at all costs.

Mona Charen, in a December 14 piece for *National Review Online*, notes that the recommendations of this study follow the feminists' trend of decrying the most honorable traits of men while emulating their worst traits, including promiscuity, aggressiveness and irresponsibility. She quotes feminist writer Gina Barreca as saying:

Chivalry is the opposite of good manners. It's infantilizing. It's contempt



by Christine Farenhorst

AN OFFER THEY COULDN'T...REFUSE?

Six weeks into their stay at Limmer, the Nazi factory officials made an offer to all of the two hundred and sixty-six women. The offer was that if production was increased, that is to say, if the output could become twelve thousand masks per shift, an individual coupon would be offered to each of the women. This coupon, or bonus, would permit the holder to obtain extra food rations or other necessities such as toothpaste, toothbrushes and soap.

Initially, all the women were joyful at the opportunity to be able to get their hands on some extras. But as the hours passed after the offer had been made, things quieted down in the accommodation hut. The women whispered furtively to each other. The Russians huddled together in their own area, the French in theirs as well, and the rest of the women looked doubtfully at one another, sharing comments. As time went on, it became overwhelmingly clear to all in the hut that they should refuse the factory's offer. Consequently, those who spoke German conveyed to those in charge that they did not want the bonus, would refuse the food, and, in short, did not want to collaborate with the enemy.

For two weeks the prisoners could not mark any change in their situation. The shifts continued at the factory. The women were bullied as usual. Then one evening, the Oberscharführer and his redheaded cohort summoned the women to line up outside the hut. One by one the women were called forward to accept a piece of paper, a coupon, from the hand of the commandant. The first woman called forward, refused to move. She was knocked down and kicked. The second woman likewise did not budge. She was beaten. The third did step forward, but upon receiving the coupon, immediately tore it up. She was slapped again and again. The fourth accepted the coupon without retaliation, as did the remaining women, although shamefacedly. One by one they took hold of the paper extended to them. At this point they were permitted to return to their quarters.

PROLONG HIS DAYS

A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days. (Prov. 28:16)

In 1944, there existed just on the outskirts of Hanover, Germany, a comparatively small prisoner of war camp. It consisted of three barracks – an accommodation hut, a hut containing toilets, and a kitchen. The accommodation hut was divided into ten rooms. One of these was an infirmary. The remaining nine rooms each held approximately thirty women. Wooden bunks with rubber scrap mattresses were stacked in tiers of two.

Two hundred and sixty-six women occupied the hut, and they were supervised by a man whose name was Oberscharführer Michel, an SS officer. He shared this authority with a woman – a sadistic female who had been dubbed “the redhead” by the prisoners. As well, there were a number of lesser women in charge – women called Aufsherinnen – women who were in the habit of shouting the words “Ruhe da” or “quiet there” at the top of their lungs.

Of the two hundred and sixty-six women present, forty-four were Russian, a number were Italian, some were Belgian,

others were Spanish, one was from Luxembourg, and the remainder were French. Their occupations were various. There were shop assistants, students, professors, a doctor, nurses, prostitutes, as well as housewives who had been taken hostage for their husbands' involvement against the Nazis. It was a wide cross-section of society and, with the exception of the Russians who formed a core Communist group, they lacked solidarity.

Limmer, the camp in question, was a rather dismal spot and situated close to the city of Hanover. It was surrounded by an electrified barbed wire fence, beyond which the women could just make out an orchard, a church, some farms, and the vague outline of the city – all areas quite beyond their reach. They worked in shifts in a factory within the camp making gas masks. Regularly beaten, they were often deprived of both food and sleep. Intentionally clumsy, the prisoner shift groups attempted to work at a slow pace, often incurring the extreme wrath of the overseers.

TEMPTATION

Inside, the women put the coupons together into a sheaf – into a stacked packet. They tied a string around this packet. Unanimously they again came to the conclusion that they should not profit from so-called German generosity. Neither did any of them want to help the German war effort.

“There were shop assistants, students, professors, a doctor, nurses, prostitutes, as well as housewives...”

The following Sunday, after roll call, it was announced that the canteen would be open that afternoon so that the women could benefit from their coupons. But by late afternoon not one of the women had come to the canteen door – not a single one of them. Although all had dreamed of coffee, pancakes, syrup and buttered potatoes – not one of them left the accommodation hut. From their window they could see the canteen window, and they could clearly observe salad, herring and other delicacies being displayed in full view of their longing eyes. Their mouths watered together. But no one moved. No one went outside.

Towards supper time a voice called out. They could all hear: “The canteen is open. Food distribution is available through food coupons. Everybody outside.”

Still nobody moved. During the next few minutes, the Aufsherinnen ran into the hut and violently compelled the women to come out, lining them up in rows. There they stood, surrounded by the electrified fence, Hanover’s church steeple eyeing them from a distance. Although hungry, pale, and exhausted, they were of one mind. Given two hours to think the matter over, they stood next to one another. They stood for two hours. They stood quietly, not speaking at all, staring

out over the fence at the orchard, the farms and the vague outline of the city – where people lived in houses and ate at tables and slept in decent beds.

“This is a riot,” the redhead shouted after the two hours were up, “and it will cost you dearly.”

But there was such a bond of solidarity among the women that not even an eyelid flickered. Again, a few hours passed. Then, in the darkness of the falling evening, the redhead reappeared carrying scissors. She pulled a woman nearest her out of the line-up, slapped her hard and dragged her along the file by her hair.

“All of you will be shaved if you don’t cooperate,” she shouted.

The other Aufsherinnen walked by, kicking, punching and slapping at random. The Oberscharführer now appeared as well, brandishing his pistol as if, at the least provocation, he might use it. After some time, the beatings stopped, and a brief huddle ensued among the German command.

Turning back to the women, one of the Germans announced in a gruff voice that they would be allowed to explain their rejection of such a marvelous offer. Consequently, one of the women explained to the Oberscharführer that all of them were ashamed to aid German resistance in any way whatsoever, and that they certainly did not want to receive any benefit that might be construed as having helped the Nazis. Neither shouting and screaming, nor further inducement

“He shared this authority with a woman – a sadistic female who had been dubbed “the redhead” by the prisoners.”

of reward, could bring about any change of mind.

Civilians from Hanover worked in the factory alongside the prisoners. As an immediate result of the women’s refusal to accept the coupons, these civilians tried to pass bread rations on to the women, as well as sections of newspaper. Reading about the advance of the Allies, bolstered

courage and increased fortitude.

We can speculate that the solidarity experienced by the women was the result of a common enemy and a love of self-respect. It is amazing that in such a diverse and large group, a consensus was felt. Perhaps there were some Christians among these women. We do not know.

CONCLUSION

“A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but,” continues Proverbs 28:16, “he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.”

Proverbs are not always clear-cut, and are often misused by people. It is good to understand that they are not promises, but generalizations and observations. They might not apply to all circumstances. But they do offer practical guidelines for living and for making wise decisions and often point clearly to “The Truth.”

Were these women’s days prolonged for hating unjust gain? It is a fact that they were all evacuated from the relative comfort of Camp Limmer to the notorious camp at Bergen-Belsen just prior to the end of the war. Perhaps some of them survived to live long lives. Yet we can see a general truth being acted out between these women in Limmer – and that is that there is a great beauty in cooperating together, in being of one mind to not act wickedly. It is very likely that the goals of the women involved were not the same. The different faiths that intermingled in the accommodation hut likely proscribed

to different reasons for being on earth. It is not recorded that there was even a single witness testifying to the “Glory” of why she refused to accept the coupon, testifying of the “Hope” that was in her. It is possible that there was one in the group of two hundred and sixty-six women who did testify. We simply don’t know.

But we do know that there was another

One who willingly came into a broken camp, One who also refused earthly comfort, One who also would not cooperate with the enemy. He paid a much dearer price than the women did. Suffering hideously...He prolonged His days.

Isaiah 53 verse 10 speaks of this prolonging of days:

... it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief, when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days;...

Praise the Lord! For those who put their faith in Him shall also prolong their days!

RP



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When you need...

by Rachel Jankovic

A while ago I was asked to do a radio interview about my book *Loving the Little Years: Motherhood in the Trenches*. In the course of the discussion the man asked me what advice I had for moms who lacked a support group. How can they find help? How can you meet the people who can encourage you, perhaps stirring you up to love and good works, and cheerfulness in the midst of potty training?

Of course this doesn't apply to moms only – lots of people struggle with this. But there is something unique about being a mom that makes it harder to really get out there and meet people. You could go to the park with other moms, and maybe not get past a few sentences coherently exchanged. There are diapers, scrapes, all manner of interruptions. It is not as easy to go somewhere because you need to plan around meals and naps and potties and whatever else is currently happening. You need to know that your own energy will hold up, that you could get yourself back home from wherever you are going. Most of the time mothers are not free to make friends the way they used to.

So what if you really need a little help? What if you are in that burned out, beat-up, emotionally sloppy place that is so easily gotten into? If you are short on sleep, short on time, short on friends (or

even long on friends who need you), and long on demands, this is simply going to be part of your life. The companionship of little children is delightful, funny, fun, and incredible demanding. Nursing and pregnancy can create an ambiance of exhaustion that is hard to get out of. I remember as a senior in high school I used to T.A. in the pre-school. I loved the kids, loved the funniness of everything, would stay for a few hours and feel like I needed to go lie down in a dark room somewhere for the rest of the day. Yet many of us live in an atmosphere a little bit like a pre-school classroom around the clock.

“What should we do when we are flat-out needy?”

OVERCOMING

Anyway, back to the original question, how is this overcome? What should we do when we are flat-out needy? The answer might not be easy, but it is oh so effective. Rephrase the question for yourself. Stop making a little mental list of all the things that would be nice to have someone do for you. Stop thinking of what you would like to be given, and start thinking about what you have to give. We have condensed this in our house to a very simple “when you need, give.” It is incredibly easy to fall into the temptation of keeping a close watch on potentially nice things other people could do for you. But do not define yourself as a needer. Define yourself as a giver.

I know you are thinking (especially if you are a mother) that, of course, you are a giver. Look at all these people who loiter around you looking for handouts all day long. But there is a huge difference



between giving things reluctantly or selfishly, or with dead eyes, or with threats, or as a bribe, and being a giver.

Imagine if that friend you wished you had came to the door with a coffee for you. Without smiling, she handed it to you and said “There. Are you happy now?” then she follows you into your house and says “Oh my word. My head hurts, I am so tired. What do you want me to do? Your laundry or something? FINE! I’ll do it.” Then she could set up a laundry folding area in the middle of your living room so that wherever you went you were able to see her looking imposed on, rubbing her temples dramatically, and sighing ostentatiously. After four hours of this kind of giving, she could finally leave your house with a parting comment about how totally selfless she is, and how it would be nice if someone would think of her every once in a while.

Would you feel so blessed? Would you be so thankful that you had a friend who gave herself so thoughtfully to you? I’m actually pretty certain that we all would have felt more like telling her as she headed out, “No one thinks of you because you have a corner on that market. No one could possibly think more of you and your needs than you do. Goodbye, and don’t come back. Don’t ever pretend to give to me again.”

Of course this is an extreme example. But how much of our “selfless giving” to our children is done with this kind of flair? How many of the meals we make are delivered to our families with a side of droopy eyes, temple rubbing, and loud sighs? Are we really giving what we think we are giving, or are we being that terrible imaginary friend to them? Do your children feel given to? Or do they feel like you would if someone like that came over to help you? Resented, insulted, boring, and unwanted.

The truth is that we cannot necessarily control whether we have friends who give to us. We cannot build a perfect support system for ourselves. What we can do is get outside of ourselves and seek to give to others with a cheerful heart. We can let go of our self-absorption and start giving every time we have an opportunity (which is many thousands of times in a day), with a thankful heart.

So if you are feeling low, think of what you can give. You can always give a smile, give a cheerful laugh, give a meal with no strings of desperation tied onto it. You can confess an attitude that may be in the way. You can turn your thoughts out. You can look to the interests of others who God has placed so conveniently close for giving.

GIVEN EVERYTHING

My Dad has always said, for years and years, don’t spend your time looking in your own heart. The human heart is full of nothing good. Do not go dumpster diving in the needy emotions that you are sure to find inside somewhere. When you feel needy, look to Christ. Because if you belong to him, you have no needs

“What do you want me to do? Your laundry or something? FINE! I’ll do it.”

that have not been filled. When you are looking to Christ, you have so much to give. When you have what he has given you, and you still are consumed with what you need, you need to get yourself re-oriented. You have the Holy Spirit, you have the love of God, you have forgiveness of sins. Drink from that river when you are thirsty. Because that water flows so fast it can not be contained. When you turn to that source, your life will be a life of overflow. Overflow of joy, of gratitude, of forgiveness, of fullness of life. You can never out-need the greatest Giver.

And all the needs below you? All the little cups being held up for water? Give with the same abandon that God gave to you. Give selflessly. Give without reservation. Give in kindness, in laughter, in forgiveness, and in joy. Give what you have been given. RP

Rachel Jankovic is the author of *Loving the Little Years*, and *Fit to Burst*. This article was originally published on Aug. 24 2012, on www.feminagirls.com and is reprinted here with permission.



Titus 2

Young Women

by Clarence Bouwman



*[Older women must]
train the young women to
love their husbands
and children,
to be self-controlled, pure,
working at home, kind,
and submissive to their own husbands,
that the word of God may not be reviled.
– Titus 2:4-5*

While the world
doesn't properly
value wives,
mothers and
homemakers,
God does. And
His Church should.

In Titus 2:4-5 the Apostle Paul gives instructions to young women that fly in the face of today's accepted western wisdom. The instructions in this passage will strike many as ridiculously laughable, outdated, even patronizing. Surely, this can't be God's will for young women in our modern, western society!

Actually, it is.

Paul here is not stating something new – his instructions didn't come out of the blue. What he writes here is built on God's abiding revelation as first revealed in Paradise. When we look back through Scripture we see that Paul is simply echoing what God has said in the Bible many times before. Consider the following passages.

GENESIS 2: WIVES

From the beginning God has given young women the important task of being wives, and in this role being a help to their husbands.

The Lord God put the man He created in the Garden of Eden, with the mandate "to work it and keep it" (vs. 15). The Lord

observed the man-by-himself in the Garden, and determined that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (vs. 18). On his lonesome the man could not image adequately what God's love and kindness and holiness and patience, etc., were like, for these qualities come out primarily in relationships. To overcome this lack that the Lord observed, He did not set beside Adam a penguin to be his companion, nor did He create a second male as a companion. Instead, what He did was fashion a *new being*, a woman.

Paul in the New Testament explains the significance of this divine act: "woman [was created] for man" (1 Corinthians 11:9). We also read that God ordained the married state (Genesis 2:24) with the divine intent that the man be the head and leader, and the woman be "helper" to her husband in his God-given task in daily life (see vs. 15). The woman was not created to be a lone ranger, living independent of man or for herself. To the degree that today's way of thinking encourages women to be independent of men (or, for that matter, men to be independent of women), today's thinking is simply not biblical.

Of course the fall into sin complicated the wife's helping role greatly, if only because selfishness has now come to characterize every person (Ephesians 2:3). In fact, part of the curse on the fallen woman was that she would attempt to dominate her husband (Genesis 3:16b), something distinctly contrary to the ordinance of the beginning and therefore not tolerable among God's people (see Ephesians 5:22ff).

GENESIS 1: MOTHERS

We also learn in the very beginning of the Bible that young women have been given the vital role of being mothers and teachers of the next generation.

The Lord God created male and female to, together, image what God was like. And, together, they were also to be fruitful so that they would produce more people on Planet Earth who could image

God (Genesis 1:27,28).

However, the children that would be born to Adam and Eve in Paradise would not have some sort of instinctive knowledge about how they were to image God. No, they would need to be taught. Inasmuch as Eve would give birth and nurse the child, she would play a vital role in the child's early physical, mental and emotional and, most importantly, spiritual formation. Mothering, we all realize, is much more than nursing or feeding; mothering is first of all training the child how to live in God's world, how to image Him.

Even in Paradise, training on that level was not to start when the child was a toddler or of school age or became a teenager; had infants been born in Paradise, they would have needed concerted instruction from day one on how to image God's characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.*

This much is clear, then: as Eve busied herself with her tasks beside Adam in the

You shall teach [God's words] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand... (Deuteronomy 6:7ff).

Mothering is full-time commitment!

PROVERBS 31: HOUSEHOLD MANAGERS

Proverbs 31 works out in practical terms the roles given in Genesis 1 & 2. The "excellent wife" (vs. 10) is busy in so many things – buying, selling, importing, helping the poor, etc.

A young woman should not think of her household task as a limiting one. The way the world portrays it a young woman can either become something... or stay at home and manage the house. However, when we look at the woman of Proverbs 31 what we see is a capable, talented, ambitious woman. We see a

TITUS 2

Now let's return to our passage in Titus 2.

This letter is written to the believers in Crete, where the gospel had only just come, so Paul saw the need to list for Titus the bits and pieces required to build up church life (Titus 1:5), including instructions to the "young women" of the congregation. The older women (see "Older Woman" in the January issue of *RP*) were to train the young women to live in a particular way, and that training happens, of course, with the book of Genesis (and the rest of the Bible) lying open on the kitchen table. "Young women [are] to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" (Titus 2:4,5).

"LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS"

The first thing the older women are to impress upon the younger is the need to "love their husbands." It's striking: Paul's opening instruction is not that the younger wives are to submit to husbands and serve them; it's instead the command to love. The term the apostle uses has nothing to do with erotic love, but everything to do with the love of the gospel. The same word appears in John 3:16, "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son..." It's the same word the Spirit uses to describe Jesus' work on the cross: Jesus "loved them to the end" (John 13:1). He who was with the Father in glory from eternity laid down His life for His own, even though He knew that they would desert Him and deny Him.

The good news of Jesus' self-emptying for sinners had come to Crete, and for that reason the believers of Crete were expected to act in a certain manner (Titus 2:12). Specifically, because the gospel of Jesus Christ had come to Crete, the pious were to "renounce ungodliness and worldly passions" (2:12) – and that includes that they were to love their neighbors as themselves.

The closest neighbor God gave to the "young women" was obviously their husband, the man with whom she was "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Younger women, then, were duty-bound to love

“ To the degree that today's way of thinking encourages women to be independent of men (or, for that matter, men to be independent of women), today's thinking is simply not biblical. ”

Garden, she was at the same time to be diligent to mold her children, speak to them of their Maker, and show them what imaging Him was like in life's changing circumstances.

Again, the fall into sin made this task so very much more difficult – if only because both the child and the mother were now inclined to any and every sort of evil. Even so, the task given at the very beginning remains. No mother is to permit evil, selfish attitudes to grow in the heart of her little one; from the day her child is born a mother is to show what love is, and demonstrate kindness, patience, self-control, etc. In fact, exactly because of the sinfulness of the child's heart, the task is much bigger and more vital than it would ever have been in Paradise. To say it in Moses' words:

woman who is certainly not limited in what she does. But she is also not career-driven. It isn't self-fulfillment or a spirit of independence that drives her; instead, her agenda revolves around her household: "the heart of her husband trusts in her... She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life" (vs. 11ff) so that "her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land" (vs. 23). In addition, she recognizes her role with her children so that "she looks well to the ways of her household... Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her" (vs. 27, 28).

This woman is not the proverbial "super mom", but simply a God-fearing woman (vs. 30b) who takes the principle of Genesis 1 and 2 seriously, and works them out in the economic context of her day.



their husbands as Christ had loved them; how else could they image what God was like?!?

Christ laid down His life for the ungodly (Romans 5:8); that was the depth and color of His love. Since his people are to do the same, Paul does not mention whether these young women's husbands are deserving of love or not; the young women are simply to do to their husbands as Christ has done to them. To fail to love in that self-emptying manner is to send a signal into the community that prompts the community to speak ill of God's Word – and the apostle won't have that (vs. 5b).

"LOVE THEIR...CHILDREN"

The people next closest to the young women are the children the Lord has entrusted to their care. It's not surprising, then, that the apostle next instructs the women to love those children. Again, the point is not that these mothers are to be nice to their children or to feel emotional about them; the point is that they empty themselves for their children's benefit as Jesus Christ emptied Himself for these women. Again, that self-emptying for the children's benefit images what the Lord God is like.

The young women of Crete were undoubtedly as affected by the fall into sin as anyone else. In their midst will have been mothers who would have preferred to be in the workforce, who would have felt more fulfilled by whatever amounted

// But Paul's word is categorical; they were to empty themselves as Christ emptied Himself, and so show love for their children. Paul wasn't so much encouraging particular feelings for the children as actions; the children should see from Mom what Jesus' love looked like. //

to an "office job" back then, who loathed housework, or who didn't have a "feel" for children. But Paul's word is categorical; they were to empty themselves as Christ emptied Himself, and so show love for their children. Paul wasn't so much encouraging particular feelings for the children as actions; the children should see from Mom what Jesus' love looked like.

"BE SELF-CONTROLLED AND PURE"

The next two terms Paul uses to describe what the younger women were to be, appears in our translations as "self-controlled" and "pure" (NIV and ESV). The first of these terms appears elsewhere

in Scripture to mean "being in one's right mind" (Luke 8:35) or exercising "sober judgment" (Romans 12:3). Right-minded and sober judgment implies that one include all necessary facts in one's decision-making process. That includes the facts mentioned a few verses later in Titus 2:11: "the grace of God has appeared" in Christ's birth, death and resurrection, "bringing salvation for all people." The "young women" of the church are to factor that good news into their decisions as they set about loving their husbands and children. Including the gospel in one's decision-making processes is being "right-minded," thinking with "sober judgment."

The term "pure" is used in pagan literature to describe the need to be chaste/pure when you enter the temple of your idol. The term, then, echoes the instruction of vs. 3, where Paul told the older women to act in a fashion "befitting a temple" (again, see January's "Older Woman" article). The younger women have also received the Holy Spirit, and are also temples of the Lord God; they demonstrate that reality by loving their husbands and children as the Lord of the temple loved them.

"WORKING AT HOME, [BEING] KIND"

With the underlying attitudes made clear, the apostle again comes back to what outward conduct Genesis 1 and 2 requires of New Testament women.

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He uses a phrase that translates well as “working at home.” The point of the phrase is not that these younger women always have their hands in the sink; that is a devilish caricature not at all in agreement with God’s intent.

The Lord’s intent for the younger women is laid out in Genesis 1 and 2, and is drawn out clearly in passages of Old Testament Scripture like Proverbs 31. As mentioned earlier, everything that mother does (whether at home or at the market or in the office) is geared to what’s good for her household, be it first her husband and then her children. That’s taking the principles of Genesis 1 and 2, and working them out in the economic realities of the day. That’s “homeworking,” where all her activity is directed to what’s good for her family. The point is again: not selfishness, but service to the family as Christ served you.

The next term Paul uses dovetails neatly with the instruction to be “working at home.” In her “kindness” or “goodness,” she images God’s goodness and kindness to His children in Jesus Christ. So she “looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness” (Proverbs 31:27).

“SUBMISSIVE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS”

The last instruction the apostle gives to the young women of the congregation is caught in the phrase “submissive to their own husbands.” We realize that here is again a distinct and clear echo of God’s instruction in Genesis 2. Though the fall into sin has made submission so infinitely more difficult than it was for Eve in Paradise, this posture has remained the will of God despite the fall. It’s God who once placed a particular woman beside a particular man, and it’s now His will that a woman in faith accept the head God has placed over her and submit to him. After all, “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (2:11); in life’s multiple brokenness there is salvation from the torment of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. So we’re made able to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions (2:12), including the desire deep within women to resist

submission (Genesis 3:16b).

So a woman who knows Christ’s victory is real demonstrates her conviction by submitting – in obedience to God’s ordinance – to the man God gave her. As a temple of the Spirit she has been made able to obey – and know herself safe in the hands of her faithful God and Savior.

“THAT THE WORD OF GOD MAY NOT BE REVILED”

Our modern western culture scoffs at the apostle’s instruction to younger women; it’s so archaic, so demeaning, so sexist! We’re inclined to say it’s precisely instruction such as this that makes God’s Word ridiculous, and if we could get rid of this throwback to an outdated culture, the gospel of Jesus Christ would be more acceptable to modern people.

In response we need to note two things.

The first is that the cry for female freedom is not so new: cultured folk of Paul’s day called for the same thing. I mention this because Paul was definitely aware of the thinking of his time, and so very aware, too, that his instruction in Titus 2 was distinctly out of step with the finer tastes of society’s movers and shakers. Yet he dared to write what he wrote – and the reason for his daring is simply that he knew he was unpacking, for his modern time, God’s unchanging Word as first revealed in Paradise.

Secondly, we need to note how the apostle concludes his instructions concerning the young women. They are to behave in the way he describes, he says, “that the word of God may not be reviled” (2:5b). It’s a statement we’re surprised at. Isn’t it precisely those instructions of Scripture that have a young woman work at home, submitting to her husband and devoting herself to her children that make the Word of God look silly? How, then, can Paul say that obedience is necessary lest the Word of God be reviled?

The point here is simply that anyone, whether godly or pagan, who reads the Word of God beginning at Genesis 1, can figure out for himself that the woman was created for the man, that her husband is her head, that she has responsibility for her children, and that her place is in the home. Any honest reader of Scripture

can figure out that Paul's instruction in Titus 2:4-5 is not new material, but simply summarizes what God had earlier revealed. If these Bible readers, then, see that you, a Christian who claims to treasure the Word of God, ignore God's instruction in relation to younger women, then you give the unbelieving reader of Scripture reason not to take the rest of God's Word seriously either.

If you insist, as it says in Titus 2:11, that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people," and if you encourage the people you meet to believe in the good news of Christ crucified for sin, you would be shooting yourself in the foot if you then decided not to take Genesis 1 and 2 seriously. For if you don't take God's instruction in Genesis 1 and 2 about the place of women seriously, why should you expect somebody else to take seriously other passages of Scripture that describe Christ's death for sin and His resurrection from the dead? If you don't take Titus 2:4-5 seriously, on what grounds can you still take Titus 2:11 seriously? The result? The word of God is reviled. If any word of God is to be taken seriously, it must all be taken seriously.

VALUE BEYOND MEASURING

Let's tie it all up. Paul had left Titus on Crete with the mandate to "put in order" details of church life on the island (1:5). The fact that he, in that context, included instructions about "young women" can only mean that these sisters have an invaluable role to play in church life.

And while the world doesn't like the supportive role that God has given women, the popularity of the adage "behind every successful man is a good woman" shows how even they recognize how vital this support is. Young women's husbands have a leadership role to play in society (Genesis 2:15) and to fulfill that task they need a helper (Genesis 2:18). Similarly, the behind-the-scenes (no big plaudits or public praise) support and love that mothers give to their children is what allows them to grow in wisdom and knowledge. As another adage explains, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." There is no way we can overstate the importance of the role God has given

“ [Paul] uses a phrase that translates well as “working at home.” The point of the phrase is not that these younger women always have their hands in the sink; that is a devilish caricature not at all in agreement with God’s intent. ”



to young women.

Young women, then, are not to think of marriage, mothering, and working at home as drudgery. Of course, keeping it from being so can be a distinct challenge in our fallen world. But the fact that it's a challenge is no reason to flee from the task. Instead, younger women, redeemed as they are in Jesus' blood and renewed by His Spirit, are to lift their eyes above the snotty noses and the piles of laundry, above their tired husband and their own preferences, and fix their attention on what God is doing. He intends wives and husbands, in relation together, to image Him, and train the next generation to do

the same!

To be allowed to be involved in His church-gathering work is such a privilege! That church-gathering work happens first of all in the home, where young women have been given such a critical role. Neither money nor business makes the world go round, and it isn't education either; rather, the home is where it's at. How privileged the position of the young godly woman! RP

* Of course fathers also have an important role in their children's education, but as the focus of this article is young women we are limiting the discussion here to the mother's educational role.

IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,
AND NOT SO,
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY JON DYKSTRA

THE CELLPHONE STACK

Does this sound familiar? You're out with some friends having a nice dinner. But one has been talking on his phone for the last ten minutes, and a second is managing to fork food into her mouth while still using both hands to type text messages. And the fourth member of your party is preoccupied with tracking down some YouTube video he just has to show everyone. So you're out with your friends for dinner but it seems an awful lot like eating alone.

We've all experience something similar...and put our friends through something similar. So how can we return a little decorum to our dinners-out?

One suggestion, made by a blogger named Stephie, is "The Phone Stack." After everyone orders their meals all cellphones are placed in the center of the table, one on top of another, face down. Though the phones may buzz, no one is allowed to grab their phone until dinner and dessert is done. But if someone just can't stop themselves, well, they have to pick up the check for the night!

As blogger Stephie writes, "Basic premise is to just get people open to the idea of staying active and attentive to one another. But if someone has to take a call; they have to take a call =)."

SOURCE: theweek.com/article/index/223137/how-the-phone-stack-is-civilizing-dinners-out-with-friends

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR HOME?

Rev. Peter Moelker wrote a head-clearing piece titled "My home, my idol?" in the August 2012 issue of *Faith in Focus*. In it he asks Christians to give their head a shake and really think about why we buy, renovate, paint, scrub, tidy, dust, vacuum and have our homes:

Have you ever sat back and asked yourself the question: "what is my home really for?" What is its purpose? A place to store our stuff? A museum to be shown to select guests? A fast-food restaurant to prepare quick meals for those who hurriedly pass through? What is the purpose of my home? The Bible tells us that our homes are to be places where children are instructed in the Law of the Lord (Deut.6:7, 11:19), where the righteous experience the Lord's blessing (Prov.3:33), where Christians fellowship and worship God together (Acts 2:46), and where others are invited in to enjoy that same blessing of the Lord (Acts 16:15, 18:26, Romans 12:13, 16:23, 1 Peter 4:9, 3 John 1:8).

We might be embarrassed to have guests over when our home isn't as pristine as Martha Stewart's (or even as pristine as our house can be on a good day) and when we're having some problems with the night's menu. But if we realize the purpose of our home is for it to be used to the glory of God, rather than presented at its best, for our own glory we'll have the proper perspective and not sweat such little stuff.

ON LOGIC

Sherlock Holmes and his faithful companion Dr. Watson once went on a camping trip. Some hours after they lay down for the night and went to sleep Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?" Holmes asked.

Watson pondered for a minute – accompanying Holmes for years had given him countless opportunities to see the power of keen and careful observations, and, as he was no intellectual slouch himself, he thought now might be a good opportunity to put his own keen observational abilities on display.

"Well, Holmes, astronomically speaking it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you Holmes?"

"It tells me, Watson, that someone has stolen our tent!"

SOURCE: Adapted from a joke making its way around the Internet

SOLA OPUS DEI

"I guess you could say we've been saved by works. His."

- Shai Linne

A CHRISTIAN HUBBY'S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

by Ryan Smith



Men, I have a question for you. Imagine if you will that today you received an annual review of your job performance at work. How would you do? I am sure most of you would get decent marks and some good comments: on time, friendly, hardworking, reliable, and so on.

Now I want you to imagine that today you are receiving an annual review of your role as Head of the Home. Does that prospect scare you? How do you think you would fare? Do you think you are doing ok? How would you do in categories such as: leads my family in worship, leads my wife in devotions, teaches our kids to pray, availability to our children, availability to my wife... Would you score good marks? Or would there be a bunch of comments about you being lazy, or passive, or indifferent... irresponsible?

For most of us, if we treated our employers or vocation with the kind of indifference we treat our families, we would be looking for another job very quickly. Men, it is time for a radical change in attitude and behavior toward our families. If we can't get away with being lazy at work, why would we think it is okay at home?

The sad reality is that many Christian men are willing to work very hard at their jobs and in their pursuit of leisure, yet most of us also act like irresponsible teenagers avoiding our responsibilities toward our families. We would rather crack a beer and watch the hockey game than lead our families to the foot of the cross.

THE BASICS

So I want you to take a moment and honestly rate yourselves on the

following list. Give yourself a mark from 1-10. You:

1. Attend the weekly worship services and ensure your entire family is present.
2. Lead your family in daily worship. (Worship includes: daily Bible reading and instruction, prayer, and singing praise with your family.)
3. Lead your wife in devotions (daily couple's Bible reading and prayer).
4. Have personal devotions (personal Bible reading and prayer).
5. Teach your kids to pray according to Scripture.
6. Avoid arguments; you are non-confrontational.
7. Avoid being self-centered and controlling, and teach your family to put others above themselves.
8. Are able to control your temper.
9. Are available to your children. (You spend time talking with your kids and participating with them in their interests; you engage your kids at their level.)
10. Are available to your wife. (You spend time talking with your wife, engage in her interests, recognize when something is bothering her, support and encourage her.)
11. Are romantically available. (To evaluate, ask yourself: how often do you kiss your wife outside of the bedroom, cook dinner, buy her a rose or tell her you love her. etc.?)
12. Have a work ethic. (You provide financially for your family, and complete tasks around the home and in the church. You view all opportunities as from God and teach your family in these things.)
13. Are stewardly with your finances.

(You are not a lover of money, you tithe regularly, do not waste money on worldly things, do not have a lot of debt, and you train your family in proper stewardship.)

14. Make stewardly use of your talents and abilities. (You use and cultivate your abilities to God's glory and your neighbor's benefit, and are an example to your family in this area.)
15. Are active in the body of Christ. (You live a life of thankfulness for salvation, are active in the body of Christ and in sharing the gospel, and teach your family to live a life of thankfulness.)

For most of us, if we treated our employers or vocation with the kind of indifference we treat our families, we would be looking for another job very quickly."

WOULD YOUR WIFE AGREE?

There are so many other points we could touch on, but for simplicity and this performance evaluation we'll stop there. Once you have rated yourself, take a look at how you did. Are you satisfied? Can you improve?

Now for the scary part... have your wife rate you on the same 15 areas! Are you comfortable asking your wife to rate your performance? If not, is that because you think the results might be quite sobering? Men, we all need to improve - none of us are great at all these things...but we should want to be!

So ask away! It will be interesting and edifying to see where you need to improve. **RP**

A version of this article first appeared on Ryan Smith's blog *One Christian Dad* (onechristiandad.wordpress.com). It is reprinted here with permission.

CLIMATE MODELING

AND WHAT YOU **HAVEN'T HEARD**

by Margaret Helder

Everyone knows that computer models “are not reality.” Everyone knows it, but they either forget it, or act as if they don’t understand what this means. A recent article on climate models says it so well: “By their very nature, models cannot capture all the factors involved in a natural system, and those that they do capture are often incompletely understood” (*Nature* June 14, 2012, p. 183). This makes climate models “impossible to truly verify or validate.”

So where does this situation leave us when it comes to discussions of climate change?

A SHORT HISTORY OF CLIMATE PREDICTION

While computer models have been critically important to discussions concerning climate change, the first warning long predated computer models. In the late 1890s Swedish chemist and physicist Svante A. Arrhenius declared that if carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere were to double, the global average temperature would increase dramatically. Since carbon dioxide levels fluctuate wildly with location, time of day, and time of year, nobody knew what the long-term trends for carbon dioxide were. There was, however, a concern already then, that the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) was adding a lot of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

Then, in conjunction with the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958), equipment for continuous monitoring of carbon dioxide was set up in Hawaii and Antarctica. The program ran for twenty years, and by the end it was apparent that carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere was increasing at an ever faster rate. Thus

Climate change advocates will readily talk about the increasing sophistication of their computer models, but they aren't as eager to acknowledge their models' growing imprecision.

by the late 1970s scientists knew that the trend for carbon dioxide concentration in the air was upward.

But what would they do with this information? An article in *Scientific American* in August 1982 (p. 43) summed up the situation:

In sum, the carbon dioxide question is obscured by many unknowns and uncertainties. Indeed, about the only facts available are the actual measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide, particularly the two decade series at Mauna Loa and the South Pole, and some fairly reliable data from the UN on annual consumption of fossil fuels in industrialized countries (emphasis added).

This single known fact of the trend in carbon dioxide concentration was enough to encourage prominent climatologist Stephen Schneider to declare as early as 1973, even before the end of the atmospheric study, that the situation was of enough concern to encourage the limitation of growth in the human population. His reasoning was that more people would mean that more fossil fuels are burned for energy, and this could lead to an increase in global temperature because carbon dioxide absorbs heat. His

reasons for taking this position were entirely theoretical: “not because there was any clear sign in the climate that greenhouse warming was coming, but just from the physics of the problem” (*World Book Science Year 1990* p. 142).

COMPUTER MODELS TAKE OVER

It was computer models, not any evidence from nature, which provided scientists with a way to interpret the carbon dioxide data. Climatologists and mathematicians constructed equations that they thought adequately represented how the processes in nature work together to determine climate. They then plugged these equations into the most powerful computers available, manipulating various inputs to the system, such as carbon dioxide levels, in order to see what the outcome would be under the conditions in question.

One of the early individuals to work with such models was James E. Hansen of NASA, who continues to be prominent in the climate change field to this day. He and his colleagues compared the models with past climates. Could they make their model duplicate past events? The objective, of course, was to predict Earth’s future climate.

Whatever the details were in the models

employed, all predicted major increases in temperature in future years if carbon dioxide levels continued to increase. These models provided all the validation that the climatologists needed to advocate for massive reductions in the use of fossil fuels.

Most specialists considered the actual weather data to be irrelevant – it is the models that matter to them. Why? As we all know, the climate varies considerably from year to year, and from decade to decade. This is the “noise” that makes trends very hard to detect – the real data is much more confusing, and much harder to decipher than the results coming out of the computer models.

But no matter, the climatologists are certain that global warming (climate change) is coming. However, the fact that they consider the details from actual weather as more or less irrelevant, makes it very hard for “climate skeptics” to argue against the mainstream conclusions. Maybe it is time to look at the computer models themselves upon which the whole field of climate change theory is based.

MORE SOPHISTICATED MEANS MORE ASSUMPTIONS, MEANS LESS PRECISE

A recent article in the journal *Nature* is of interest when it declares concerning new upgraded climate models that, “climate scientists face a serious public-image

model is the uncertainty, which is of necessity built into the equations. The use of more complex equations actually adds more uncertainty to the system. Every equation involves assumptions about the conditions under which the

process applies, and so with fancier equations, there are more unknowns and more uncertainties than ever. This situation results in a wider range of values including a wide range of expected temperatures that could result in the future.

Despite this growing imprecision the article in *Nature* declares “None of this means that climate models are useless” (p. 184). It is like protesting that one is not a crook! Well, let us

look at some examples of the kinds of answers these models are providing.

Consider, for example, the predictions of one such model for water levels in the Mekong River Basin. The fancy model apparently predicts monthly water volumes that range from 16% below normal to 55% above normal. On an annual basis, the model predicts river discharge to occur anywhere between

5% below normal to almost 5% above normal. The authors state plaintively that, “Advising policy makers becomes extremely difficult when models cannot predict even whether a river catchment system will have more or less water” (*Nature* June 14/12, p. 183). Perhaps with such uncertainty, scientists should abstain from offering any advice at all!

The authors state plaintively that, “Advising policy makers becomes extremely difficult when models cannot predict even whether a river catchment system will have more or less water”

problem” (June 14/12 p. 183).

The fact is that new climate models, which make use of significant improvements in our understanding of what controls climate, are unfortunately producing answers that are less clear. The range of conditions under which a given outcome might occur is becoming wider rather than more clearly defined.

One of the problems with any computer

IF ONLY LONG-TERM WEATHER FORECASTING COULD BE THIS PRECISE!



DROUGHTS ARE ON THE RISE...OR ARE THEY?

One of the key areas where the models have been found to be inadequate is in the prediction of extreme events. This is an issue of great concern to most people. Apparently the current Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has



"It predicts temperatures will either rise or drop or stay the same, with a margin of error of plus or minus 10°C."

encountered some serious problems in this regard. According to the recent article in *Nature*:

When the current IPCC models were tested against four major past climate changes, two were unable to even get the basic climate before the shift correct and the other two had to be fed parameters up to ten times greater than would be realistic to produce the abrupt shift (pp. 183-184).

Nowhere is the problem with current models more apparent than with IPCC predictions and conclusions concerning drought. It was the conclusion of the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC that "more intense and longer droughts have been observed over wider areas since the 1970s" (*Nature* November 15, 2012, p. 435). In other words, the report concluded droughts are an increasing problem which result from increased temperatures and decreased precipitation.

More recently, however, some scientists have turned a critical eye on the computer model used to predict drought. The popular equation draws conclusions based on monthly precipitation and

temperature data. The critics point out that loss of moisture to the air through evaporation from surfaces and through water loss from green plants depends on far more factors than just temperature. Apparently wind speed, humidity and the intensity of sunlight (among other factors) all contribute to water loss to the air. Some scientists in the November 15, 2012, issue of *Nature* compared the old equation with a more elaborate one that takes into account several other factors. While the global loss of productive land to drought was estimated at about 0.6% per year from the old equation, it was only 0.08% per year for the new equation. That is a loss seven times smaller than the former calculations. In fact, the overall conclusion from the newer model is that some areas are drier than formerly and other areas wetter, so that there is little evidence over the past 60 years for an increase in total area affected by drought.

This study implies that there is no necessary linkage (correlation) between temperature changes and long-term drought variation (p. 339). The authors muse that it seems strange, to say the least, that many climatologists continue to employ the old, ineffective model (p. 437).

Thus it is evident that a popular computer model may yield results that are known to be overestimates. It is obvious that expert declarations about climate change may be based on inadequate models, and the public is ill-equipped to deal with such claims.

CONCLUSION

So how do the scientists themselves respond to the uncertainty inherent in the answers from computer models? The authors of the June 14, 2012, article on uncertainty in the models declare that the public and policy-makers need to ignore the uncertainty and simply act on the scientists' recommendations (p. 183). The authors declare, "Despite the uncertainty, the weight of scientific evidence is enough to tell us what we need to know." They declare that, whatever the model used, all predict a rise in global temperature if carbon dioxide levels double from pre-industrial levels. And they say that scientists must package their pronouncements in a more appealing fashion.

One approach to tackling the public perception problem is to subtly rephrase conclusions, placing the uncertainty on the date by which things will happen, rather than onto whether they will happen at all.... This "when" not "if" approach is powerful (p. 184).

What is really important would be for the public and politicians to realize that their opinions are being manipulated by clever individuals who have an agenda to change many aspects of modern life. So do not follow the clarion call to drastic action advocated by the experts on climate change. Cautious reflection is better than charging off in the wrong direction! The uncertainties in the computer models upon which climate change theory is based should not instill confidence in the public at large or the politicians who represent their interests.

Advice to new brides

by Sharon L. Bratcher



“Oh, a coffee maker! Just what Peter and I need – thank you so much!” Bridal showers are a fun, valuable tradition. The bride-to-be’s family, friends and acquaintances have the opportunity to celebrate and support the upcoming marriage by providing a few gifts for the new home. The ladies usually enjoy some good cooking, and enjoy laughter from silly games or from anecdotes joyfully shared about the couple’s childhood or their relationship, or perhaps about cooking disasters that others faced as new wives.

At my church we have found that a Saturday morning brunch of egg-and-sausage casserole and muffins brings the best attendance. We ask one of the ladies to share Scripture to encourage and instruct the new bride. We often ask everyone who has been married for a while to give their best advice. From a recent bridal shower, here are the tips that came from women who had been married anywhere from three months to fifty-five years.


1. Respect him by never complaining about him to the other women (except maybe one older than you for counsel). It makes you look just as bad, lowers people’s opinions of him and does not help the situation.
2. Try to be happy with what makes him happy – don’t let your goals get in the way (example: don’t shun time in the bedroom for a cleaner house – which would he rather have?).
3. Have plenty to do when he is busy. Don’t whine about not seeing him when he has to work/minister to others/study. He has callings from the

Lord as husband, church member and employee, and sometimes you need to cheerfully stay out of his way. The forty-hour work week is not in the Bible.

4. It’s okay to set some boundaries from the start. The previous numbers 1 to 3 do not mean that he should be lazy or you should be a slave. Be kind, calm, honest and assertive when necessary. Don’t be a Wendy to his Peter Pan. You are his wife, not his mother.
5. Discern when “it’s the hormones talking” and do not bring up bothersome items then. If it wouldn’t bother you the rest of the month, then let it go a few days. Cry, be alone, read Scripture, walk, scrub something! In other words, acknowledge your emotions, but realize that sometimes they are sinful and ought not to be expressed. Think it through from his perspective.
6. Teach him what to do when you are upset. I told my husband that when I cry, I want him to put his arms around me, and not ask me any questions. He does it quite well, but I needed to

figure out what I wanted and to tell him.

7. Don’t ever expect him to read your mind. He can’t, and most men don’t automatically see the whole picture regarding the home tasks. Make a list of what needs to be done, and, if possible, give him advance notice so he can schedule it (don’t just spring it on him). You might also try saying, “Let’s see, the kids have to be put to bed and the kitchen needs to be cleaned – which would you prefer to do?”
8. Besides reading God’s Word together, read excellent books on marriage and child rearing.
9. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. This does not mean you don’t ever get angry – it means you speak calmly and don’t say things you will regret. For instance, never say “you never” or “you always.” Pray for your husband and talk to the Lord about all aspects of your marriage. Ask Him to give you insight into “him.”

Experience is a good teacher – let’s take these suggestions to heart, and remember Proverbs 14:1: “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” 

Order Sharon’s book: *Soup and Buns: Nourishment from God’s Word for Your Daily Struggles* by contacting sharoncopy@gmail.com. Just \$13!

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Problem to Ponder #196 – "BEDMAS Order of Operations"

Often by grade seven, students are told that mathematical operations are to be done in this order: Operations in BRACKETS then EXPONENTS then DIVISION or MULTIPLICATION (whichever comes first) then ADDITION or SUBTRACTION (whichever comes first).

This creates the acronym BEDMAS.

Thus $(4-1)+2 \times 6-4^2 = 3+2 \times 6-16 = 3+12-16 = 15-16 = -1$.

Determine the following:

a) $3^2 \times 4 - 14/2 =$

b) $4+(8-2)/2-(5 \times 3)+4^2 =$

c) $(12/3-2)^2-4-2 \times 6 =$

d) $9+(7 \times 2-4 \times 4)-12/3+1 =$

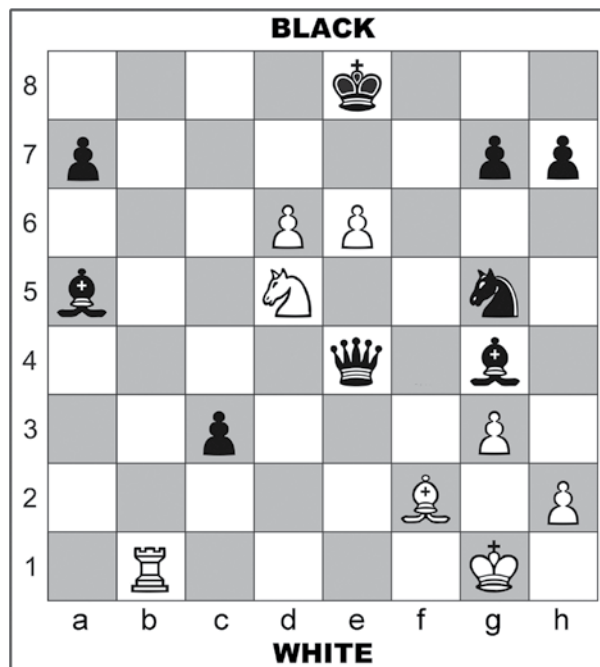
e) $(2-3 \times 4)-2+3^2 =$

Riddle for Punsters #196 – "Not an incidental to brush off!"

What did the gardener do when he had a tooth knocked out?

He requested a dental im _____. When told that he would have to wait for days and meanwhile could only eat soft foods, he decided to p_____ off all the jello and pudding in his house. He read a lot to help with _____ing in the time. He had the _____ption to ask to be treated sooner if at all possible. Coinci_____ly, that is just what happened!

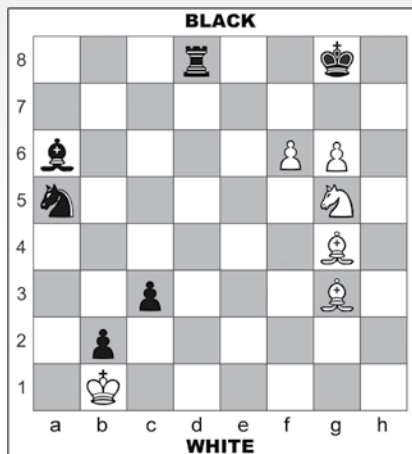
Chess Puzzle #196



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

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #195



WHITE to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. B-K6 ch K-B1
2. P-N7 ch K-K1
3. P-N8=Q mate

White wins sooner if:

1. B-K6 ch K-R1
2. P-N7 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Bg4-e6 + Kg8-f8
2. g6-g7 + Kf8-e8
3. g7-g8=Q ++

White wins sooner if:

1. Bg4-e6 + Kg8-h8
2. g6-g7 ++

BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- B-Q6 ch
2. K-R2 P-N8=Q ch
3. K-R3 Q-N6 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Ba6-d3 +
2. Kb1-a2 b2-b1=Q +
3. Ka2-a3 Qb1-b3 ++

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

Answers to Riddle for Punsters #195

– "Kicking Off a New Career?"

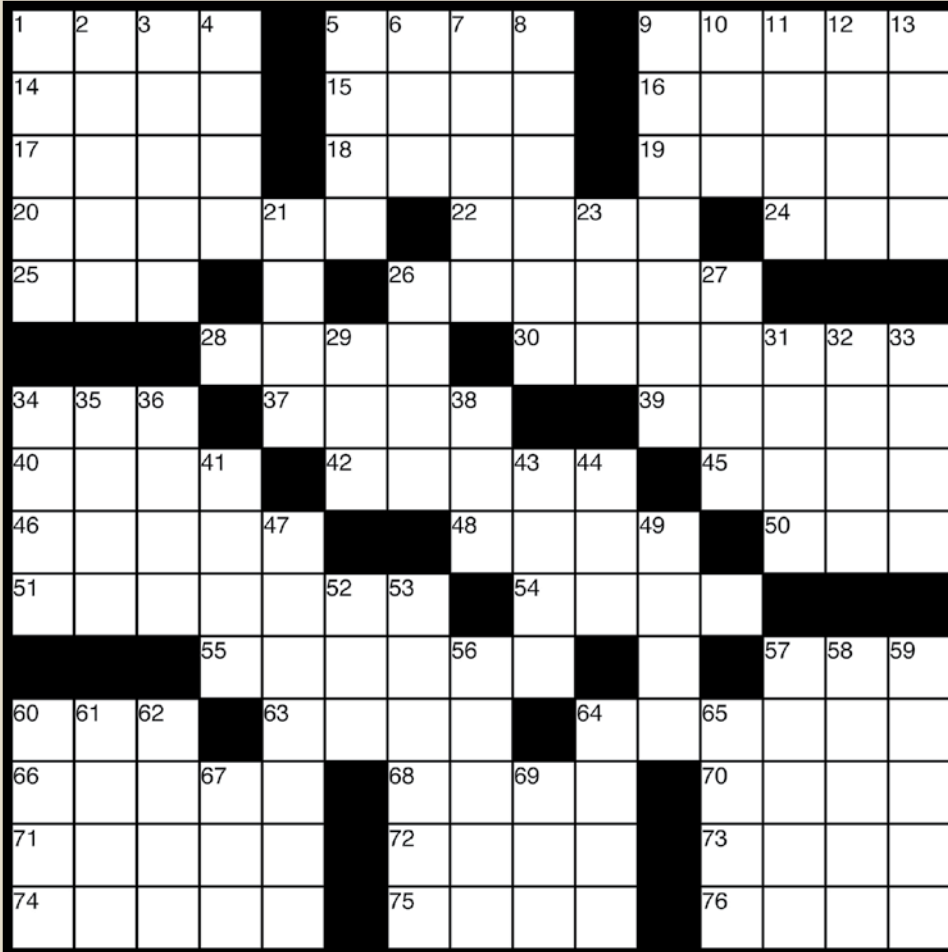
Joe Carpenter now builds gates, but back when he was on the high school football team, what position did he play? He played defense. What position did Tim "Shiny" Silver – now a coin collector – play? He played quarterback. What did Bill Reel, who is now a famous fisherman, do best when he was on the team? Tackle.

Answers to Problem to Ponder

#195 – "Science Terminology - Part 2"

- a) physics term for speed in a certain direction - velocity
- b) long, protruding mouth parts of some insects - proboscis
- c) hot, molten rock of the earth's core - magma
- d) soft but very dense metal that blocks radiation - lead
- e) a hard, transparent gem made of carbon atoms - diamond
- f) the chemical bond in which electrons are shared - covalent
- g) amount of force exerted per unit of area - pressure
- h) the number of vibrations or cycles per unit of time - frequency
- i) the ratio of mass to volume of a substance - density
- j) invisible force that keeps the planets in orbit - gravity
- k) the thin layer which surrounds each body cell - membrane
- l) section (of a chromosome) producing a genetic trait - gene

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



SERIES 19 #11

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

- 1. Seth's father, OT
- 5. Holy (comb. form)
- 9. Isaac's mother, OT
- 14. Prima donna
- 15. Origin, for short
- 16. Fruit used for oil
- 17. Kitchen appliance
- 18. Make a wage
- 19. A lion tiger combo
- 20. Famous French painter
- 22. Fuss
- 24. Exist
- 25. Time
- 26. Seafood
- 28. Put an end to
- 30. Acting with exaggeration
- 34. Reply Paid Postcard (abbr.)
- 37. Spoken
- 39. Pertaining to warships
- 40. A British nobleman
- 42. Kitchen cleaner
- 45. Equivalent
- 46. An armored cavalry unit
- 48. Seafood that whalebone whales eat
- 50. Born
- 51. Scorn or contempt
- 54. Kind of freshwater fish
- 55. Plural of erratum
- 57. Digital Satellite System (abbr.)
- 60. Electroconvulsive Therapy,

- for short
- 63. Having an affinity
- 64. King of Judah
- 66. Ascend
- 68. Run with a long, easy stride
- 70. Glowing ring of light
- 71. Channel
- 72. Airport letters
- 73. Formerly
- 74. Kind of Pollack fish
- 75. Lease an apartment
- 76. A nestling hawk

DOWN

- 1. Love with utmost esteem
- 2. A specially skilled water bird
- 3. An oat grass
- 4. Handheld stone used for grinding maize
- 5. One who weeds the garden
- 6. Genus of macaws

- 7. Circumference
- 8. Pay no heed to
- 9. He built the first temple in Jerusalem
- 10. Man's name
- 11. Gulf on the Baltic Sea
- 12. Assert with confidence
- 13. In this place
- 21. To the inside of
- 23. Not bright
- 26. Stout mast pole
- 27. Parent Teacher's Associations
- 29. A sphere
- 31. Man's name
- 32. An appellation
- 33. Exultant joy
- 34. Returned, for short
- 35. Equal (comb. form)
- 36. Experts

- 38. Throw slowly in an arc
- 41. A veinlike deposit
- 43. Kind of whale
- 44. Missing in action (abbr.)
- 47. Short moral lesson
- 49. Group of three
- 52. Annoy
- 53. Roofer's automatic tool
- 56. Treasury note, informally
- 57. Daily journal
- 58. Tomato dip
- 59. Gunblasts
- 60. OT book of the Bible
- 61. Kind of soil
- 62. Hue
- 64. Witty remark
- 65. Variant spelling of sidhe, an underground fairy palace
- 67. Mahogany (abbr.)
- 69. Kitchen tool

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 19 #10

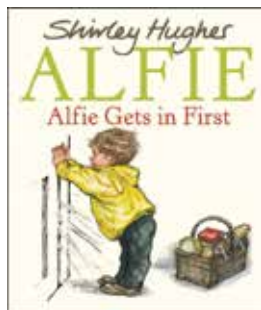
Joyce

REVIEWS

SERIES FOR CHILDREN FROM 3 TO 9

BY JON DYKSTRA

ALFIE GETS IN FIRST/ BY SHIRLEY HUGHES
32 PAGES, 2009



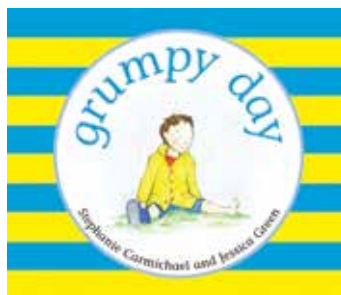
Alfie is a four-year-old boy who likes to help mom, visit grandma, and take his blanket everywhere. Author Shirley Hughes understands the world of children and understands that small things can be big for them. For example, getting a new pair of rubber boots is quite an event for a boy who loves to stamp in puddles (see *Alfie's Feet*).

In *Alfie Gets in First* the little man dashes by his mom to get inside first, and then, when mom goes back outside to get Annie Rose, he slams the front door and accidentally locks everyone out.

Hughes makes great use here of the reader being able to see what's happening on both sides of the door. On the one side we see mom, and soon the neighbors, too, encouraging Alfie to reach for the door handle. But Alfie is too short, so on the other side we see him putting his own plan into action. When he does manage to get the door open, Alfie is a hero, and a celebration over tea and cookies is had with all the neighbors who tried to help.

There is a lot of text on the pages, but if your children can sit still for 10 minutes there is more than enough detail in the pictures to give them lots to look at. Our family has loved every *Alfie* books we've seen.

GRUMPY DAY/ BY STEPHANIE CARMICHAEL & JESSICA GREEN / 24 PAGES, 2011

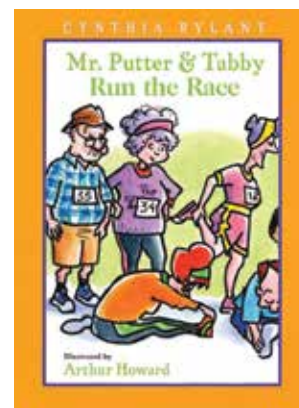


The mom and dad characters in this picture book series demonstrate how parents can seize the many little opportunities that pop up throughout the day to talk to our children about God and the wonders He has wrought. In that way they are as much for parents as for their children.

The series has 3 great books, aimed at preschoolers and early readers. In *Grumpy Day* Luke is annoyed the rainy weather won't let him go outside to kick his ball, but he learns from his mom that it is God who decides when it should rain, and He knows best. In *The Rag Doll* Emily is amazed at the doll her mom makes, and her mom uses the opportunity to talk about how much more amazing and creative God is. And in *Over the Fence* Luke learns that even though his dad doesn't know, God does know who their new neighbors are.

One caution: there is a fourth book in the series, *The Birthday Party*, that is not recommended because it teaches that God loves everyone, which isn't true (Psalm 5:5; Lev. 20:23). To read these titles online go to MatMedia.notlong.com

MR. PUTTER & TABBY RUN THE RACE/
BY CYNTHIA RYLANT / 27 MINUTES, 2005



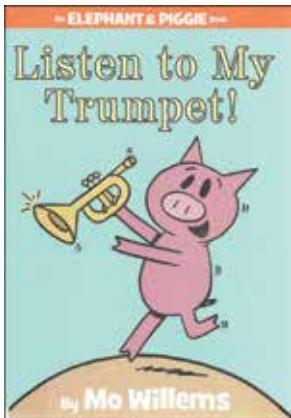
Mr. Putter is an old, retired man with an old, quiet cat named Tabby. And next door they have a wonderful neighbor, Mrs. Teaberry, who has a very active dog named Zeke. They go on the sort of adventures that older people do – a boat ride, a cooking class, painting the porch – and their two pets liven things up too. These are quiet, sweet stories that will have you and your child smiling throughout.

My wife has really enjoyed reading them to our three-year-old, and was only disappointed with one of them when I told her it was the one "where Mr. Putter and Mrs. Teaberry finally get married." She was very sad to discover I was just joking – this perfect couple hasn't yet become an official couple. We are still hoping, though!

I would highly recommend this 20-book series, and was only disappointed with *Mr. Putter & Tabby Take the Train*, which has this elderly couple flouting a no-pets rule – not the best example in a book for young children. But that is the exception in a series full of charm and neighborly kindness. Children and parents will love these two seniors.

Reviews of each individual title in these series can be found at ReallyGoodReads.com

LISTEN TO MY TRUMPET! BY MO WILLEMS / 2012, 64 PAGES

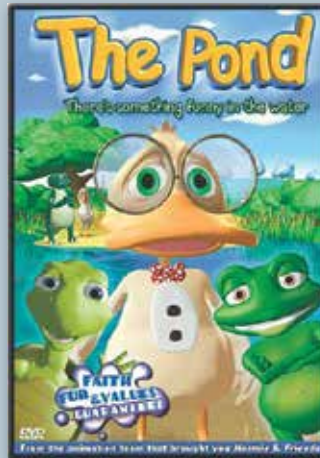


When Elephant hears Piggie playing her new trumpet he has to figure out a nice way to say she is very, very bad! He does a good job, which makes this a fun and instructive book.

What's even better? There are 17 more titles in this series!

My three-year-old loves Mo Willems' simple line drawings and the fact that Piggie and Elephant are both loud and energetic. Plots are simple enough for her to follow, and deal with situations that she understands (like a friend breaking your toy, learning to throw a ball, and cheering up a sad elephant).

I appreciate that, in addition to loads of silly fun, the series has good moral lessons. For example, in *Listen to My Trumpet!*, Elephant praises Piggie for whatever he can: her trumpet is shiny, and she can play it loudly, and she holds it very well. But when Piggie insists on hearing his opinion of her playing, he refuses to lie. He is tactful, but still honest. Fortunately Piggie wasn't trying to play music, but was instead trying to sound like an elephant, so it all works out in the end.



THERE'S SOMETHING FUNNY IN THE WATER

27 MINUTES, 2005

The *Life at the Pond* video series shares *VeggieTales'* formula for success: simple animation + sophisticated humor = children's videos parents can appreciate too.

But while many of the *VeggieTales* videos rewrite familiar biblical stories (e.g., David's descent into murder and adultery is turned into a story about wanting someone else's rubber ducky) *The Pond* doesn't attempt to "improve" on God's Holy Writ, and sets their stories in the present day.

The location is, of course, a pond, and the four stars are all aquatic:

- Bill the Duck is a regular joe; we are Bill
- Tony the Frog fills the role of wisecracking comic relief
- Floyd the Turtle is the most childlike, and the straight man setting up Tony's zingers
- Methuselah the Alligator is older, and a voice of biblical wisdom

In this first video, *There's Something Funny in the Water*, we get two 15-minute stories: first, Bill the Duck doesn't want to be mocked so he hides the fact that he is afraid of heights, and, second, Bill, Tony and Floyd all learn that it is important to keep promises, even when they cut into our fun. These are stories kids can relate to, with humor parents can appreciate. One example: the video begins with the familiar FBI warning against copying the film, and Bill and Tony walk in from the sides to take a look.

Bill: Has the video started?

Tony: No it's just the FBI warning.

Bill: And after this, what? CIA warning? FDA? NRA?

Tony: The NRA puts up a warning, I pay attention!

One caution that should be mentioned: while this first video, and the one that follows it, *The Little Things*, are gentle enough for even three-year-olds, the last three – *The Alligator Hunter*, *The Rise and Fall Of Tony the Frog*, and *Big Mouth Bass* – are more intense. The action is simply too fast paced, and though everything ends happily, there are a few tense moments, so they are definitely for a slightly older (5 or 6 perhaps) crowd.

You can find a trailer for the series at ReelConservative.com.



One of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century was an American Presbyterian named John Gresham Machen. More than any other individual in the English-speaking world, Machen led the intellectual defense of Biblical Christianity against the attacks of theological liberalism in the early twentieth century. Machen was among the top-ranked Biblical scholars of his generation, and he was the point man for conservative Protestantism when it looked like believing the Bible was no longer going to be plausible for educated people.

STARTED OPC & WTS

Among Machen's achievements was the founding of three notable institutions: Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. All three of these institutions continue to exist today.

One of the most recent biographies of Machen is *J. Gresham Machen: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* by Stephen J. Nichols. Nichols recounts Machen's life and also describes the significance of his books.

by Michael Wagner

J. GRESHAM MACHEN



(1881-1937)

Machen was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1881. His father was a successful lawyer, and his mother came from a well-to-do family in Georgia. She was a staunch Presbyterian and raised her son to love the Bible. He did very well at school and ended up attending Johns Hopkins University. Subsequently he decided to do graduate studies at Princeton University while taking some divinity courses at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS).

It's important to note the historical significance of PTS. That seminary was the leading conservative Protestant seminary in the English-speaking world from about the mid-1800s until 1929 (when it would be taken over by theological liberals). In the latter part of the nineteenth century and initial part of the twentieth century, the best known of the Princeton theologians was Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, the leading defender of Biblical Christianity in his day. Warfield would have a strong influence over Machen, and the two became friends.

Stood strong
against the tide
of liberalism
engulfing the
Church

“ Theological liberalism, as Nichols helpfully summarizes it, takes “as a starting point the position that the Bible is not a divinely inspired book, but a human one, deriving from a religious community and traced with legend and myth. ”

IN THE LION'S DEN

During the 1905-1906 academic year, Machen studied in Germany under Wilhelm Herrmann, an influential and articulate theological liberal, who argued, among other things, that it wasn't even vital whether Jesus really lived. Machen's conservative views were severely challenged at this time, but ultimately he was able to resist Herrmann's sinister theological perspective.

After returning to America, Machen became a professor at PTS, teaching the New Testament. He was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or PCUSA in 1914. When the United States finally entered World War One in 1917, Machen volunteered to serve in France with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), where he would operate a canteen, serving refreshments to French and American soldiers on the front line. Although he didn't engage in combat himself, he saw the fighting and its effects first hand.

YOU CAN'T SPLIT A ROTTEN CHURCH

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the insidious tentacles of theological liberalism were rapidly spreading among the Protestant churches of North America, turning people away from belief in the Bible as a supernatural revelation from God. The stage was being set for a showdown between orthodox believers and the adherents of fashionable unbelief.

Machen discussed with B.B. Warfield the possibility of a split in the PCUSA that would separate real Christians from the theological liberals. But as Nichols records, Warfield, seeing the widespread success of liberalism among the leadership of the PCUSA, famously replied, “No, you can't split rotten wood.”

In 1921 Warfield died, and with him

(in the estimate of many people) Old Princeton also died as the stalwart defender of theological conservatism. Soon the pack of liberal wolves (in sheep's clothing, of course) would seize control of the seminary and place it in the service of unbelief.

On a more positive note, Machen's first book entitled *The Origin of Paul's Religion* was published in 1921. In each of his books Machen would defend historic, orthodox Christian beliefs against the rising tide of liberalism. Theological liberalism, as Nichols helpfully summarizes it, takes “as a starting point the position that the Bible is not a divinely inspired book, but a human one, deriving from a religious community and traced with legend and myth.” Machen had a thorough knowledge of the current scholarship on the apostle Paul and was able to defend genuine Christianity against its challengers.

CHRISTIANITY AND LIBERALISM

Besides being a theology professor and author, Machen was becoming increasingly popular as a speaker at various Christian events. In the theological battle between conservatism and liberalism, Machen was beginning to take center stage as the conservative champion in the academic field. In 1923, his book *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (a text for learning Biblical Greek) appeared to wide acclaim. It's still in use today.

But it was another of his books published in 1923 that would become his most important: *Christianity and Liberalism*. “With this book,” Nichols writes, “Machen emerged as the singular spokesperson for the rigorous defense of orthodox Christianity in response to the challenge of liberalism.” It became a classic, clearly demonstrating that historic

“...he demonstrated that genuine Biblical scholarship supported the truth of the Bible. The conflict wasn’t between educated, intelligent liberals and uneducated, ignorant conservatives as some believed.”

Christianity and theological liberalism are, in fact, two entirely different religions.

Due to his efforts in defense of the truth, Machen received the support and accolades of fellow believers. From some of those on the other side, however, Machen received hate mail. According to Nichols, one liberal sent him a letter addressed to “Prof. of Bigotry” that referred to his “miserable theology” and instructed him to “learn to be a Christian or else get out.”

THE FALL OF PRINCETON SEMINARY

As time went on, momentum was clearly on the side of the liberals within the PCUSA, and in 1929 they managed to “reorganize” the governing board of Princeton in such a way as to give control to liberals. Nichols states that with this development, Machen “was left no real choice but to resign.” As a result, with a small band of supporters he founded Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS) in Philadelphia in 1929, with the

“Christians did not need to fear that their religion was being disproven by modern scientific discoveries, as the liberals alleged.”

intent to recreate a seminary in the image of Old Princeton. Among others who left PTS to join with Machen in this endeavor were Cornelius Van Til and John Murray.

Some PTS board members also resigned in order to be on the board of WTS, including Samuel Craig, the founder of Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company (or, as it is more commonly known today, P&R Publishing)

In 1930 Machen produced another significant book, *The Virgin Birth of*

Christ. Liberals, of course, denied that Christ had been born of a virgin because they were unwilling to believe the miracles recorded in the Bible. Nichols writes that this book became “the standard scholarly defense of this crucial, orthodox doctrine for decades to come.”

THE FINAL BATTLE

A decisive showdown between conservatives and liberals in the PCUSA finally occurred in the mid-1930s. In 1933 the PCUSA (along with six other denominations) released an official report entitled *Re-Thinking Missions*. It “advocated a paradigm shift in missions premised on the notion that Christianity is not the exclusively true religion.” This was the liberal view: Christianity should accommodate people of other religions rather than proselytize them.

A battle within the PCUSA ensued between conservatives (led by Machen) who believed that Christianity is the one true religion, and the liberals who were religious pluralists. To make a long story short, the liberals won. In response, Machen founded the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM) so that conservative Presbyterians could give money to missionaries who believed in evangelizing non-Christians.

Having a missions board that is not under the authority of the church is not the Biblical ideal, of course, but the intent was good. However, the General Assembly of the PCUSA declared the IBPFM to be unconstitutional and proceeded to discipline its supporters. Nichols notes,

On March 29, 1935, making front-page news in The New York Times – “Presbytery to Try Machen as Rebel,” ran the headline—Machen was officially defrocked and stripped of his credentials.


Machen appealed this decision but his appeal was rejected by the General Assembly in 1936.

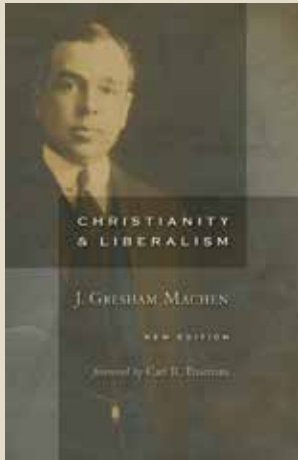
Then in June 1936, Machen and his supporters founded the Presbyterian Church in America. In 1939 its name was changed to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) due to a lawsuit filed by the PCUSA.

Machen had a lot of work on his hands as the leading figure of both WTS and the OPC. He was becoming worn out and exhausted. Then in December 1936 he took a train out to North Dakota to help a struggling congregation there. He caught pneumonia and died on January 1, 1937. His death was a tragic loss for the cause of truth. But he had fought a good fight and left numerous books that would help to strengthen believers in their faith. He also left the institutions he founded that would continue to maintain a testimony against theological liberalism.

CONCLUSION

Gresham Machen was widely recognized as one of the greatest Christian scholars of his generation. He used his God-given talents, education and social standing to uphold Biblical Christianity in the face of unrelenting attacks from theological liberals who sought to undermine the faith. Machen was the conservative scholar of highest standing in this struggle, and his efforts encouraged many Christians to stand fast for orthodoxy.

Of course, Biblical Christianity would have survived even without Machen, but he demonstrated that genuine Biblical scholarship supported the truth of the Bible. The conflict wasn’t between educated, intelligent liberals and uneducated, ignorant conservatives as some believed. The liberal scholars could not refute Machen’s work. Christians did not need to fear that their religion was being disproven by modern scientific discoveries, as the liberals alleged. In his own way, Machen lifted high the standard of orthodox Christianity, providing a rallying point for those who continued to believe the historic faith. The tide of opinion in his day swirled furiously against Biblical Christianity, but he was a rock against which the waves of unbelief harmlessly broke. 



MORE ON MACHEN

If this short article has whet your appetite to learn more about J. Gresham Machen, you'll be interested to know there is a 41-page biography by John Piper available online, for free. Gresham's biography is packaged with two others, about John Owen and Athanasius, in Piper's *Contending For Our All*. A free pdf copy of the book can be downloaded at gresham.notlong.com.

Also, the complete text of Gresham's most influential book, *Christianity & Liberalism*, can be downloaded as a pdf from reformedaudio.org/literature.html.



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Join us for the March for Life this May 9

Join thousands of others and speak up for the unborn in a mass March for Life down the streets of Ottawa to Parliament Hill on May 7.

WHERE: First Baptist Church
140 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa

WHEN: 10:00 a.m. May 9, 2013

Before the March you can join us at a Reformed Protestant prayer service co-hosted by Jubilee Church and ARPA Canada. Jubilee's pastor, Rev. George van Popta, will lead the service. There will also be a motivational call to action by Jonathon VanMaren of CCBP and Mike Schouten of WeNEEDaLaw.ca, and an interactive Pro-Life 101 presentation by ARPA's legal counsel André Schutten.

A free, paper-bag lunch is available for all those who RSVP attendance to Andre@ARPACanada.ca

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