

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

JULY/AUGUST 2013
Volume 32 Issue No. 9/10

PERSPECTIVE

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A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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

For Subscriptions or to Change your address, contact:

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Canadian Funds – 1 year \$50.00, 2 years \$93.00, 3 years \$137.00*
Canada Airmail \$73.00,* U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$80.00
U.S. Funds – 1 year \$55.00, 2 years \$100.00, 3 years \$145.00,
International Surface Mail \$69.00 (2 years \$125.00, 3 years \$184.00)

International Airmail \$115.00

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*We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada,
through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.*

Canada

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Registration: ISSN 0714-8208

Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act

Registration No. 118929272RR0001

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FROM THE EDITOR

A plan for impatient pro-life politicians

Just wait,” she said. It was a curious request from a lady who spent much of her time volunteering as a pregnancy counselor at a pro-life clinic. She was running for MLA and, while she wanted to help the unborn, she didn’t want to bring up the issue just yet. We were running in a historically NDP riding, so she wanted to play up her gender – *she was a strong woman* – and keep quiet, for the time being, about her pro-life connections. Once she was elected, *then* she would speak out.

But she lost, so she never did.

“Just you wait,” he said. A half a dozen years ago, a Conservative Party regional director assured me the Tories were pro-life, and the reason they weren’t speaking up for the unborn was because their minority government didn’t allow them to take any strong stands on controversial issues. Wait until they get a majority, he said, and then we’ll see them take action!

But they won, and we didn’t.

Waiting is not an effective political pro-life stratagem. So it got my attention when an impatient pro-life friend asked: “Why can’t we just do good *now*?” It was a great question, and one I’ve shared with a lot of people since. What can we do politically right now? The most intriguing response I got was a proposal to make use of Canada’s very generous political donation tax credits to speak up for the unborn right away.



Quadrupling donations

Federally, political donations up to the amount of \$400 get a 75% tax credit. That means that a donation of \$400, in effect, costs just \$100, as the donor will get \$300 back from their taxes.

Now imagine what could be accomplished if a political candidate, or a party, or an electoral district association (EDA), decided to use these incredibly generous deductions to speak up loudly for the unborn right now. Would you donate \$400 *at the cost of only \$100 for you* to a political candidate who is going to speak up for the unborn now? What an opportunity!

Catching attention

This would be a “swing for the fences” approach – going for the home run rather than the base hit. It would involve assembling a team of pro-life designers, film makers and other creative individuals to work with an EDA, or candidate, to produce high quality pro-life media in all manner of mediums – commercials, short YouTube videos, brochures, billboards, T-shirt and bumper sticker designs, etc. These would then be distributed by the widest means possible.

Lots of prolife groups are putting out clear and succinct material, and there is no need to duplicate their efforts. The intent here would be to produce content that’d have the potential to go viral and be seen by tens and hundreds of thousands.

Designers would be challenged to stretch themselves creatively and embrace experimentation, to produce materials that are eye-catching, thought-provoking and conversation-starting.

Nation-wide donation pool

Our voting options are always limited – we have to choose from the small slate of candidates in our riding – but our options are wide open when it comes to political donations. We can give to anyone running anywhere in the country, and we can give to any party, or any electoral district association (EDA). That means an EDA or a candidate who wanted to speak out could be supported by donors countrywide! They could offer pro-life supporters the opportunity to speak up for the unborn in the political realm loudly and immediately.

Conclusion

This plan doesn’t need much to come together: a party, an EDA or a candidate who wants to do good now, paired up with a small fundraising team. The bulk of the work – the actual media creation – would be hired out to the graphic designers.

As far as I know, no one has ever done this. I have no idea how well it will work. But I am quite sure it will be a lot more effective than waiting.

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

DEAR EDITOR,

I was surprised by the inclusion of the article, "The Two-Book Fallacy" by Jason Lisle in the May 2013 issue. Dr. Lisle takes issue with the analogy of creation as a book, arguing that such an analogy is a fallacy. However, the analogy of creation as a book is thoroughly Reformed: in article 2 of the Belgic Confession we read that:

We know [God] by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most beautiful book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature...

Thus, I think you can understand my confusion over the inclusion of an article in an explicitly Reformed magazine that suggests our Reformed confessions are fallacious and misleading.

Furthermore, Dr. Lisle suggests

that rocks and fossils "don't literally mean anything because they are not statements made by an author who is intending to convey an idea." How wrong he is! If we look to the Scriptures, Psalm 19:1-4 tells us exactly what rocks and fossils and all parts of nature are telling us: the glory of God is real and incredible! That's what they mean. God's intention in "rock" is to bring glory to Himself. It all exists to point us to Him!

This brings me then to the opening editorial in the same issue. I think both Dr. Lisle and the editor of this magazine are protesting too much and, in so doing, are missing a more important point. We should be able to readily admit that the Bible is not a science textbook; to try to argue otherwise shows desperation, or else poor understanding of the two books of revelation and what their purposes are.

The problem with the argument of those Christians who argue for an old earth is not that they think the Bible is not a science book; it's that science is not a history book. That's the problem with their

argument. Science and nature tell us today about God. Psalm 19 is written in the present tense because the purpose of the nature book and its meaning is that it should be read today to bring glory to God today. And Christian scientists can marvel at what nature tells us about God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – by looking through the microscope, test tube or telescope and marvelling at those present realities through observable experiments tested in the present.

When science tries to tell us about the long-distant past, it steps outside of its domain. Major assumptions about history, reality and God must be made if interpreting years gone by through present-day scientific experiments. I think that the readers of *Reformed Perspective* would be better served by analyzing those assumptions in light of God's Word instead of undermining Reformed analogies about nature.

André Schutten
Gatineau, QC

EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

Your confusion is understandable. I had intended, in my editorial, to put Dr. Jason Lisle's article in a context that would make it clear that what he was objecting to was not the analogy itself, but rather treating a simile as though it was reality. I didn't cover everything I should have, so I welcome the opportunity

your letter presents to fill in some of the gaps.

As you note, the Belgic Confession likens "the creation, preservation and government of the universe" to a "most beautiful book." Analogies can be effective, but their limits need to be noted. For example, in Matthew 23:37 God is compared to a hen who "gathers her chicks under her wings" – this

analogy applies to the loving, protective nature of a hen, and should not be understood to reveal that God is feminine. That's not what it is about.

Clearly the universe is *not* a book – it is not made up of pages and text, and it's not enclosed in a cover or held together by a spine. The Belgic Confession is making a specific, very limited point of

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comparison when it likens God's creation to a book. How exactly is it like a book? In how it proclaims "God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature." It does so with book-like clarity, "so that people are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

But in the Creation/Evolution debate among Christians this book analogy has been extended in a completely different, and entirely inaccurate, direction. It has been taken to mean that creation can *teach us about our origins with book-like clarity*. This misunderstanding then presents us with a dilemma: if we have one book saying we were created in just six days, and another saying it took millions of years, and both are equally clear on this matter, then what should we believe?

So the goal of my editorial, along with the inclusion of Dr. Lisle's article, was to make clear that such a dilemma is entirely of our own making. Creation is *not* like a book when it comes to teaching us about our origins. As Dr. Lisle notes, it

does not speak with that kind of clarity on this topic. In contrast, the Bible is not merely *like* a book, it *actually is one!* It is there, and only there, that we get bookish clarity on how we, and the world around us, came to be.

The way the two-book analogy is being used in the Creation/Evolution debate *is* fallacious. God's creation simply does not speak with book-like clarity when it comes to our origins. But, and this is the point I should have made clear the first

go-around, the two-book analogy remains helpful when it is used to illustrate the clarity with which God shows "his eternal power and divine nature" to everyone on the planet.

One final note, a good Letter to the Editor brings to mind Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Your letter allowed me to bring clarity to what I had originally left quite cloudy. Thank you for sharpening me.

DEAR EDITOR,

It seems odd to me that a magazine with "Reformed" in its name and the Belgic Confession in its purpose statement (in article 2 of its constitution) would so pointedly disagree with that confession's Article 2. You did that in a lead editorial "Scripture vs. the 'book' of Nature" and featured article

"Two-Book Fallacy." The Belgic Confession, in article 2, calls God's creatures, great and small, so many letters in a beautiful book. I presume the metaphor to imply that the book is more than a picture book, but that the letters in this book are to be read and lead us to perceive the things of God.

Your editorial endorsed and applauded Dr Lisle's dismissal of

a second book, though the Belgic Confession upholds that view.

Perhaps a more nuanced position should be thought out, rather than simply reproducing un-Reformed articles to bolster your position in your discussion with others.

John van Popta
Burlington, Ontario

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

WE PAY MORE IN TAX THAN FOR FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER COMBINED.

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA



According to a recent Fraser Institute report, a Canadian family with the average income of \$74,113 paid

\$9,195 in income taxes in 2012, which is roughly 12.5% of their pay. What may surprise many, however, is that this number accounts for less than a third of the total amount that Canadians pay to their government.

CPP, EI and health care taxes in B.C., Ontario and Quebec increase the average Canadian family's taxes by \$6,769. Estimates on sales tax show another \$4,812 being paid to the government, while property taxes add \$3,607. Less visible taxes, including profit taxes (\$3,302), liquor, tobacco and amusement taxes (\$1,680), automobile and gas taxes (\$791) and "other" taxes (\$1,457) add to the yearly total.

Adding up these figures shows that the average Canadian family paid \$31,615 in taxes against an income of \$74,113. This is equal to 43% of their income, which is even higher than the 37% that goes towards paying for food, clothing, and shelter combined. This also means that the government has control over how 43% of the money that a family earns is used, and often the values it supports are not shared with the families who earned the money in the first place.

SOURCE: "Income tax only a portion of total tax bill" by Charles Lammam and Milagros Palacios, in the Fraser Institute's Canadian Student Review - Summer 2013

RESPECTFUL REBUKE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



In late April NBA player Jason Collins "came out" as gay, and insisted he was also Christian. In

the sports network ESPN's resultant coverage, NBA analyst Chris Broussard commented that he believed, from the Bible, that homosexuality is a sin. That set social media on fire with calls to #firechrisbroussard.

However, ESPN stood by their man, expressing regret that Broussard's comments had distracted from the program, but also supporting him with a statement to the effect that

they encourage diversity and would allow the type of respectful discussion that had occurred. Under increasing pressure, they did specify that his views did not represent that of the network, and said he should not have given his personal opinion in this way.

Broussard holds onto his job for now, perhaps because he was able to present his beliefs in a respectful, reasonable way. He was directly questioned on whether someone can be a practicing homosexual and a Christian, as Collins claims to be, and Broussard clearly said, "If you're openly living in unrepentant sin, whatever it may be, not just homosexuality, I believe that's walking in open rebellion to God and to Jesus Christ."

He gave a very good answer, and Christians should take note of how careful, considerate, and yet still very clear comments on such hot-button issues portray Christianity and Christ much more accurately than the self-righteous, holier-than-thought approach that sometimes occurs with the issue of homosexuality.

Peter Baklinski's "ESPN stands by Christian analyst who called homosexuality an 'open rebellion' against God"; lifesitenews.com; April 30, 2013.

HARPER CALLED TO “FACE THE CHILDREN”

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



Stephen Harper

Prime Minister, MP
Calgary Southwest



Michelle Rempel

MP Calgary Centre-
North



Bal Gosal

MP Bramalea-Gore-
Malton

LIVE ACTION EXPOSES INFANTICIDE GOING ON IN ABORTION CLINICS

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA



In May 15, Kermit Gosnell was convicted for three counts of murder in cases where he killed babies

born alive in botched abortions. Since then there have been efforts from pro-aborts to claim that Gosnell is an anomaly. However, thanks to an investigation by the pro-life group Live Action (LiveAction.org), it has been made clear that this is not the case. In their “Inhuman campaign” Live Action has gone undercover to three separate abortion clinics, where they were assured that if their baby was born alive, it would not stay that way.

- In Bronx, New York, a clinic worker describes the process of putting the infant in a sealed jar for transfer without regard for whether it is breathing or not.
- In Washington, D.C., abortionist Dr. Santangelo admits that he is legally required to save a baby born alive, but adds that “it’s all in how vigorously you do things.”
- In Phoenix, Arizona, abortionist Dr. Mercer says that he doesn’t resuscitate an infant “nine times out of ten.”

All three of these examples are in direct violation of the Born Alive Infants Protection Act. They are also chilling portrayals of the truth that pro-life campaigners have long recognized: if life inside the womb is not valued, then it is a small step for life outside of the womb to lose value as well.

To learn more about Live Action’s “Inhuman campaign” visit LiveAction.org/inhuman.

The Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR) launched a new campaign called “Face the Children” in May. Constituents in five federal ridings received postcards with their Member of Parliament pictured side-by-side with a graphic image of late-term abortion victims.

Starting with Prime Minister Harper, this campaign is aimed at shattering the “cold indifference to the slaughter of pre-born children” that Harper has firmly maintained throughout his years

as Prime Minister. The five MPs (the first three are pictured above) were not chosen randomly, but were selected based on their positions and their track record of working against protection for the unborn.

While this postcard campaign may seem extreme, it is hoped this bold action will rouse voters to action, that their voices may be heard by those who claim to represent them and their beliefs.

SOURCE: “Anti-abortion activists face-off with Stephen Harper” posted to unmaskingchoice.ca on May 13, 2013; “Anti-Abortion Postcard: Michelle Rempel, Conservative Calgary MP, Target Of Latest Campaign” posted to huffingtonpost.ca on May 23, 2013

CHRISTIANS THE MOST PERSECUTED GROUP IN THE WORLD

BY ANNA NIENHUIS AND JON DYKSTRA

Testimony at the May 22 annual meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe shows Christians are the most persecuted group in the world. Dr. Massimo Introvigne, an Italian sociologist, noted that there is one Christian being killed for his faith every five minutes, mostly in Islamic or Communist countries. Even in Europe fifteen countries have laws that can be seen as directly limiting the freedom of speech for Christians.

Introvigne says that in the West

the most danger lies in countries where there is limitation on “the conscientious objection of Christians” – countries where tolerance and relativist thinking make many Christian views unacceptable for expression in public, such as on issues like abortion, homosexuality and even marriage. He concluded that,

Naturally, it would be a mistake to place homicidal violence against Christians occurring in some countries of Africa and Asia on the same plane with legal and administrative discrimination against Christians in Europe. But...Where discrimination becomes normal, the transition to violence is never far away.”

FOLLOWING CANADA: US BOY SCOUTS NOW OPEN TO HOMOSEXUALS

BY ELISSA DYKSTRA AND JON DYKSTRA



In 2000 the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) were faced with a lawsuit from James Dale, who had been expelled from the group for openly declaring himself to be gay. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, where it was decided that, as a private organization, the BSA had the right to exclude membership from those outside of their stated beliefs. This verdict was seen as a landmark victory in the defense of religious freedom and a triumph for those who held morality as more important than political correctness. This year, however, the leadership of

BSA has voluntarily given up much of the ground that they gained by voting to allow participation of boys who are openly homosexual.

We have to go back to the 1990s to understand just what a problem this is. Back in 1991 a five-part investigative series by the *Washington Times* into sexual abuse in the ranks of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) came to this conclusion: "The Boy Scouts are a magnet for men who want to have sexual relations with children... Pedophiles join the Scouts for a simple reason: it's where the boys are." The BSA addressed the problem of sexual abuse by, among other things, requiring "two-deep leadership": a minimum of two adults must be present during all events, thus preventing any predatory adults from being alone with children. Another protective measure was to give girls, when they are present, separate accommodations. But this new policy leaves children unprotected from any predatory homosexual youth who decide to join the Scouts because "it's

where the boys are."

A similar policy was implemented in Canada back in 1999 when girls, atheists, homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals were allowed to join. The hope was that this inclusion would put a stop to decline in membership (from 265,000 in 1990 to 200,000 in 1999) but they instead saw a further decrease. In 2013 membership was down to just 101,000.

For the time being this change in policy does not extend to Scout leaders, but there is great pressure from homosexual activists for this ban to be lifted as well. This pressure is one that the BSA will now be more vulnerable to, since they have implicitly declared their opposition to homosexuality to be a matter of preference, rather than a matter of morality. In failing to uphold God's standards regarding sexual activity, the BSA has lost their moral foundation and their ability to take stands on issues in the future.

Peter Baklinski's "ESPN stands by Christian analyst who called homosexuality an 'open rebellion' against God"; lifesitenews.com; April 30, 2013.

CHINA GUILTY OF MASS MURDER

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



The Chinese government has recently supplied numbers indicating approximately 336 million abortions have been performed over the past 40 years. This staggering number is impossible to comprehend – it is equal to the combined populations of the United States and Australia.

Many of those abortions "have the character of rape", says Stephen Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute. Women are ordered or physically forced to have abortions, and others are forcibly sterilized. About 196 million women have been sterilized.

China can now boast, alongside these horrific numbers, the highest suicide rate for women anywhere in the world, as well as the highest rate of breast cancer. Such a tragedy and the ensuing additional issues indicate a complete disregard for the value of human life. For all the international interference in various global human rights violations, no nation in the world is taking a stand to confront China on their murderous record.

SOURCE: Joe Carter's "China admits to the greatest slaughter in human history"; thegospelcoalition.org, March 22, 2013, and Mark Strodes' "China: 336 million abortions in barely 4 decades"; bpnews.net, March 19, 2013.

A WIN FOR OUR SIDE: TORONTO BLOCKS CASINO BID

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

Money can't buy happiness, as Torontonians know and were willing to fight for. With a casino set to open in their city, citizens of Toronto stepped up and made their voices heard, resulting in city council voting down the proposal in late May by a resounding 38-6.

The province wanted to open the casino and keep all the profits, leaving no benefit and a lot of potential risk for the people of Toronto. The vote shows that Canadians do still have a voice and the passion to make that voice heard, something the government needs to remember.

SOURCE: Megan O'Toole's "Council formally kills possibility of a Toronto casino" posted to NationalPost.com on May 21, 2013.



I've always known spanking was controversial. But it wasn't until I took a job at Focus on the Family that I discovered just how contentious corporal discipline is. As a research analyst in the public policy department, I fielded many of the phone calls that were deemed legal or political. It didn't take long before I noticed a theme. Distraught parents were calling from across Canada – their children were being taken away from them by Children's Aid Societies because the parents had used physical discipline. Others were not allowed to adopt or foster children because they believed that corporal punishment was an appropriate form of discipline. And many families reported interrogations in which their children were separated from the parents and required to explain in detail how their parents disciplined them and how it made them feel.

According to the Criminal Code, Canadian parents are allowed to use physical discipline. This was challenged in court, and in 2004 the Supreme Court of Canada upheld this right. However, the court did stipulate restrictions to ensure that the physical nature of the discipline was not harmful. For example, it ruled that a child must be old enough to understand why they are being disciplined (age two) but not older than 12. Further, the force may not degrade the child, objects may not be used, and force may not be applied to the head.

So if spanking is not a crime, why were Children's Aid Societies treating it like it was? The short answer is that they believe that physical discipline can never be good – they believe it is always abuse. These government bureaucracies are given incredible power and independence, allowing them to make their own rules about what is appropriate, regardless of what the law books say.

Opposition to spanking is growing.

SPANKING SMACKDOWN:

TAKING ANTI-SPANKING ACTIVISTS HEAD-ON

by Mark Penninga

Since 1997, Members of Parliament have introduced no fewer than eight private members' bills to fully ban corporal punishment. Currently, Bill S-204, introduced by Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, awaits second reading in the Senate. Her previous effort in 2008 passed through the Senate but died when an election was called. And it's not just Parliamentarians. A 2012 editorial in the Canadian Medical Association Journal make the same case: "It is time for Canada to remove this anachronistic excuse for poor parenting from the statute book."

RESEARCH OBSCURED

Oddly, both opponents and proponents of physical discipline argue that the well-being of children motivates them. Opponents are quick to bring out studies which suggest that children who were spanked suffer mentally and are more likely to be aggressive themselves.

Yet a closer look at the actual research

In 2007, researchers conducted the first-ever scientific review of studies that compared physical discipline with alternative methods. Twenty-six studies from the past fifty years were examined, and the conclusion was not all that revolutionary: "Whether physical punishment compared favorably or unfavorably with other tactics depended on the type of physical punishment."

The study also looked at what they called an "optimal" type of physical discipline – conditional spanking. As reflected in the parameters laid out by our Supreme Court, conditional spanking is non-abusive, done sparingly, and under control. Now that there was some focus, the findings were telling: "Conditional spanking was more strongly associated with reductions in noncompliance or antisocial behavior than 10 of 13 alternate disciplinary tactics." In other words, when physical discipline is administered in keeping with Canadian law, it came out as good

behavior than other forms of behavior. It was also very telling that there were no negative side effects unique to just physical discipline.

These findings are consistent with a 2006 New Zealand study, the first long-term study in the world that separated individuals who were spanked with an open hand from those who were never spanked or those who were inflicted with severe physical punishment. It tracked 962 children, born in 1972 and 1973, until they were 32 years old. Jane Millichamp, the lead author, noted, "I have looked at just about every study I can lay my hands on, and there are thousands, and I have not found any evidence that an occasional mild smack with an open hand on the clothed behind or the leg or hand is harmful or instills violence in kids." One finding that surprised the researchers was that "non-physical punishment was most frequently regarded as the worst punishment ever received, with 50% of [study members] naming at least one non-physical punishment method such as privilege loss."

SWEDEN'S EXAMPLE

In 1979, Sweden became the first nation in the world to outlaw all physical discipline. This approach is often heralded as an example that all other civilized countries should follow. University of Manitoba professor Joan Durrant has been a leader on this front, thanks to her report, *A Generation without Smacking*, which argues that Sweden's model has been a huge success by changing attitudes about corporal punishment, reducing child abuse, reducing violence by children, and allowing professionals to intervene before violence escalates.

Sadly, much of her research has been accepted without question, because most of her sources were written in Swedish. That was the case, until Dr. Robert E Larzelere reviewed her findings and found most of them to be completely out of sync with the data on which she based her findings. He found that physical child abuse by relatives against children under age seven increased

Most studies (especially the ones that get media attention) fail to differentiate between different types of physical discipline. As a result, pushing, slapping and other violent actions get lumped in with controlled physical discipline.

methods reveals an important detail that many leave out. Most studies (especially the ones that get media attention) fail to differentiate between different types of physical discipline. As a result, pushing, slapping and other violent actions get lumped in with controlled physical discipline. Discipline that does not even meet the standards laid out by the Supreme Court is seen as representative of all physical discipline.

as, or better than, all other forms of discipline studied.

The review findings also challenged the oft-argued response that the only positive outcomes of physical discipline are short-term compliance. It found that it fared as well as other discipline methods for all behavior problems, including both long and short-term outcomes. Further, it found that it resulted in lower rates of anti-social

It was also very telling that there were no negative side effects unique to just physical discipline.

489% from 1981 to 1994. There was also a 519% increase in criminal assaults by children under age 15 (born after the law), compared with only a 53% increase by 25 to 29-year-olds. Even more shocking, 46 to 60% of cases investigated under Sweden's law result in children being removed from homes. 22,000 Swedish children were removed from homes in 1981, compared to 1,900 in Germany, 710 in Denmark, 552 in Finland, and 163 in Norway.

One example of the disastrous effects of Sweden's spanking law is the 2010 case of a mother and father from Karlstad, Sweden, who were jailed for nine months each and were ordered to pay 25,000 kronor (\$11,000) to each of their three children who were spanked. More damaging than the jail and fines, all four of their children were removed from their home. Although the court concluded that the parents "had a loving and caring relationship to their children" apparently spanking is serious enough to merit such a sentence. Legislators have to ask themselves whether a child is better off with their loving parents who may occasionally administer physical discipline or with someone else after having been forcefully removed from their parents, with a chasm of distrust and fear created by the State.

As a side note, New Zealand followed Sweden's example and adopted anti-spanking legislation. In 2009, just two years later, a whopping 88% of voters in a public referendum asked that the law be rescinded.

THE DEEPER ISSUE: THE STATE AS PARENT

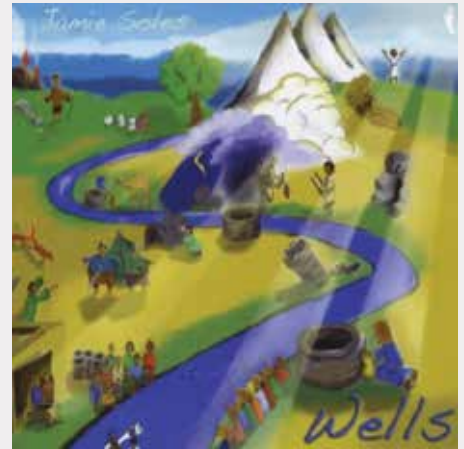
Looking at the Senate debates from previous anti-spanking legislation as well as coverage in the mainstream media, a common sentiment is that parents can't be trusted to raise their children properly. The enlightened "experts" and bureaucrats need to step in to ensure that children are not abused or brainwashed. There is growing belief that Christian parents in particular (especially those who home-school) are dangerous "fundamentalists" whereas the State is "neutral."

State parenting is increasingly being pushed in Canadian public policy. Anti-bullying legislation and mandatory classes in secularism are two recent examples of the State imposing its worldview on children, often in violation of the will of the parents. Even if we hold to a naïve worldview that assumes the best of humanity, history should teach us that when the State has this power, children are sacrificed to political ideologies. Contrast this with the family unit, in which parents as the decision-makers love their children and would sacrifice their own lives for them.

A biblical perspective of the State is limited to preserving an orderly society and punishing wrongdoers (including actual child abusers), so that the other institutions of society can go about their respective tasks and flourish. The institution of the family has its own governance that is independent of the State and accountable directly to God. We need to remind our civil governments that they have no authority to interfere into the governance of the family except when it comes to criminal matters. If you go to www.ARPCanada.ca you can find an EasyMail letter on this issue that allows you to do this personally and quickly.

This article is based on a policy report called "Respectfully Submitted - Corporal Discipline" that was prepared for Parliamentarians and which can be found at www.ARPCanada.ca. There you will also find links to the studies referenced in this article.

RP



This Old Man (revised)

On his 2000 children's album *Wells* Jamie Soles included a song that was politically incorrect from the start, and promises to only become more so. But what a conversation starter!

*This old man, he played one
When I was a wayward one
With a knick-knack, whack-a-smack
Give a kid the rod
This old man's obeying God*

*This old man, he played two
He knew what he had to do...*

*This old man, he played three
He laid me across his knee...*

*This old man, he played four
I knew what I had in store...*

*This old man, he played five
OW! That makes me feel alive...*

*This old man, he played six
He cured me of all my tricks...*

*This old man, he played seven
He wants me to go to heaven...*

*This old man, he played eight
Do it now, it will not wait...*

*This old man, he played nine
He laid nine on my behind...*

*This old man, he played ten
I will not do that again...*



SONS OF THE MOST HIGH

by Christine Farenhorst

Many schoolchildren will tell you, with a great deal of enthusiasm, that the Titanic was thought to be “unsinkable.” But she sank. Not as many school children are familiar with the Armada, not one ship but a fleet of 130 ships, which was thought to be “invincible.”

Commissioned by King Philip II of Spain, these ships sailed en masse out of the Spanish port in Corunna in April of 1588, almost 450 years ago. The Spanish monarch confidently waved goodbye to his seamen and they were proudly dubbed by him and the Spanish population, “the world’s largest naval fleet.” Their

Resemblance to God – always in a finite manner, as creatures; He alone, the Creator-Redeemer, is the Infinite – is demonstrated by the kindness, the active sympathy and the helpfulness which the true followers of Jesus show even to those who are their enemies, that is, who hate them. In doing this the children of God reveal God’s image, because He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. – William Hendriksen

purpose was to attack and invade England.

The Armada was a huge enterprise. The Spanish people were certain that the English population would be terrified at the news of such a large naval expedition traveling their way. Cannons, guns, gunpowder, swords and horses were all loaded on board. Amazingly enough, in terms of provisions, these 130 ships carried 11 million pounds of biscuits, 40,000 gallons of olive oil, 14,000 barrels of wine, 600,000 pounds of salted pork, 11,000 pairs of sandals, 5,000 pairs of shoes, 180 priests and 728 servants. Quite a cargo!!

Unfortunately for the Spanish, in the Almighty providence of God, a number of things happened that rather spoiled things in favor of the English. The stores put on board rotted as the barrels that contained the food and water were made of new wood which was still damp; the plan to pick up extra Spanish soldiers along the way in various ports did not work out; the Spanish High Admiral died and the man chosen to replace him had never before been to sea; and 65 ships of the fleet, that is to say, half of them, foundered in North Atlantic storms.

EL GRAN GRIFON

The El Gran Grifon was the flagship of the Spanish Armada's supply squadron. She was a large ship – 650 tons large – and toted 38 guns. Attacked and damaged in the first battle with English ships in the Channel, she escaped into the open North Sea. Leaky and weary, the Gran Grifon just wanted to get back home to Spain. Her food was rotting, the water undrinkable, and most of the men were ill with scurvy. Heavy Southwestern winds engulfed the vessel, and fog was so thick that seeing where they were was next to impossible. Unable to clear the Irish coast, the Gran Grifon struggled to keep afloat. Out of sight of what was left of the Armada, except for 3 consort ships, they hardly made headway. Wind, fog, sleet and tempest kept the men at the pumps day and night, but in spite of their hard work they failed to keep the water level down. The diary of one of the men aboard read:

...we gave ourselves up for lost, for the seas ran mountains high and the rain fell in torrents. At two in the morning we saw an island ahead of us which... filled us with consternation... But God in His mercy at that moment sent us a sudden gleam of light and enabled us to avoid danger... Two hours later another island loomed up so that it seemed impossible to weather it. But God came to our aid... This was the Isle of Cream, where we had decided to bring up if we could not reach Scotland... We tried to get near, but after trying four hours against wind and tide, we found it impossible... We thought our lives had ended, and each one of us reconciled himself to God. The two companies, 230 men in all, and 40 men we had taken from another ship, had pumped incessantly... but the water still increased. So we gave way to despair and each one called upon the Virgin Mary to be our intermediary... at two in the afternoon we sighted an island where we arrived at sunset.

The Gran Grifon ran aground on the Fair Isle on the 28th of September in the year 1588.

The citizens of Anstruther in the Firth of Forth, Scotland, awoke that morning in September to find a strange ship, a very large ship indeed, barely afloat, in their harbor. They were alarmed. Rumors of a Spanish invasion were rife, and not a few of them reached for arms to fend off possible attackers. What should they do? After a few huddles in the street, the leading town officials decided that they should approach their pastor, one James Melville.

HEAP BURNING COALS

James Melville had been born just outside of Dundee in 1556, at the time of the Reformation in Scotland. His family was one of the leading families of the Protestant faction, his uncle Andrew being one of the founders of the church of Scotland. At the time of the arrival of the Spanish ship, James Melville was in

charge of the ministry of Abercrombie, Pittenweem, Anstruther and Kilrenny. James Melville kept a diary and, concerning the coming of the Spanish Armada, he wrote:

...for a long time the news of the Spanish navy and army had been blasted abroad...Terrible was the fear, piercing were the preachings, earnest, zealous, and fervent were the prayers, sounding were the sighs and sobs, and abounding were the tears at that Fast and General Assembly kept in Edinburgh when the news was credibly told, sometimes of their landing in Dunbar, sometimes at St. Andrews...

...We knew certainly soon after, the Lord of Armies, Who rides upon the wings of the winds, the Keeper of His own in Israel, was in the mean time conveying that monstrous navy about our coasts, and directing their hulks and gallees to the islands, rocks and sands, whereupon He had destined their wreck and destruction...

That particular morning of September 28th, pastor James Melville was woken up early by one of the bailies (policemen) of the town: "I have to tell you news, Sir. There is arrived within our harbor this morning a ship full of Spaniards, but not to give mercy but to ask!"

The bailie went on to tell Pastor Melville that the ill and weak Spaniards on the ship had come ashore but had been commanded by the town authorities to return to their ship until the Magistrates of Anstruther should advise them otherwise. The Spaniards had humbly obeyed the order and had returned to their ship.

"Will you now come, Pastor Melville, and hear their petition alongside the Magistrates of the town?"

James Melville dressed and went into Anstruther where he, together with the Magistrates, went into the Tolbooth. After they consulted together, they permitted the commander of the Gran Grifon to appear before them. This large

and formidable person was described in both posture and action by Melville as:

a very reverent man of big stature, and grave and stout countenance, grey-haired, and very humble like. After a low curtsy, bowing down with his face near the ground, and touching my shoe with his hand, he began his harangue in the Spanish tongue, whereof I understood the substance; and being about to answer in Latin, a young man with him to be his interpreter, began and told over again to us in good English. The sum was that King Philip, his master, had rigged out a navy and army to land in England, for just causes to be avenged of many intolerable wrongs he had received of that nation; but God for their sins had been against them, and by storm of weather had driven the navy by the coast of England, and with him a certain number of Captains, being the General of twenty hulks, upon an isle of Scotland, called the Fair Isle, where they made shipwreck and where so many as had escaped the merciless seas and rocks, had for six or seven weeks suffered great hunger and cold,...they were come hither to kiss the King's Majestic hand of Scotland, and to find relief and comfort thereby...

There was silence in the chamber. All the men present simply stared at the Spanish commander, whose name was Juan Gomez. Eventually James Melville, clearing his throat, answered carefully. Previously he had talked with the council, and they had elected him spokesperson. They had agreed that, even though they were at war and could never be reconciled with regard to matters of faith with the Spaniards, their enemies should know that they, Scottish Protestants, were men moved by humane compassion, and were Christians of a better religion than they. For whereas their king violently took the Protestant people peaceably conducting business in his country, and confiscated their goods and burned their bodies

in flames, they would not retaliate in similar manner. The Spaniards were to find only Christian pity and works of mercy and alms, leaving to God to work in their hearts concerning religion, as it pleased Him. The Magistrates and James Melville, being of one mind, caused James Melville to respond in the following manner. "We are an enemy," he said, addressing commander Gomez, "of the bishop of Rome and his vassal, Philip of Spain, your king. Philip burns and pillages and harries the Scottish Protestants who come to his kingdom for trade. But," he continued, eyeing the Spaniard standing in front of the council, "we will show you, and show all the papists, how much better the Scottish Protestant faith is than yours. We will help you in your distress."

When this had been translated for commander Gomez, he appeared very grateful. He said he could not answer for his church and its laws and order, but he could only thank them on behalf of himself and his men.

GODLY EXAMPLE

The sailors and soldiers aboard the *Gran Grifon* were nursed and fed "...kaill, pottage and fishe." The Scottish Laird of the area, together with some gentlemen of the land, gave the commander and some of the captains, lodging. They were well provided for. James Melville records:

...for my advice was conform to the Prophet Elizeus' advice to the King of Israel, in Samaria, "Give them bread and water," etc. ... But verily all the while my heart melted within me for desire of thankfulness to God, when I remembered the prideful and cruel nature of the people, and how they would have used us in case they had landed with their forces among us; and saw the wonderful work of God's mercy and justice in making us see them, the chief commanders of them, to make such courtesy to poor seamen and their soldiers who so abjectly begged alms at our doors and in our streets.

...these 130 ships carried 11 million pounds of biscuits, 40,000 gallons of olive oil, 14,000 barrels of wine, 600,000 pounds of salted pork, 11,000 pairs of sandals, 5,000 pairs of shoes, 180 priests and 728 servants.

The Spanish sailors and soldiers were consequently treated to a period of Scottish hospitality while their repatriation to Spanish Flanders was negotiated.

It is not recorded whether or not commander Gomez became a partaker of the true bread and the real gift of the water of life. At a later date, however, he discovered that an Anstruther vessel had been impounded by the Spanish authorities in Calais. He interceded on their behalf and, at that time, passed on his regards to James Melville, the Laird and the townsfolk of Anstruther.

A striking example of one who endeavored to truly love his enemies, James Melville himself was exiled by Charles I for his continued opposition to the imposition of Bishops in Scotland. He died in 1614.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:35-36)

IN A NUTSHELL

BY JON DYKSTRA

TIDBITS RELEVANT,
AND NOT SO,
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

many of us have this same problem - we might have an adequately-sized “mental hard drive” but it seems most of us have limited RAM storage.

BANNED BOOKS

Cartoonist Eddie Eddings recently made this provocative suggestion on his blog:

When you see a display of “Most Banned Books” at a bookstore or on line - ask them why they didn’t include the Holy Bible. It is not only the best selling book of all time - it is also the most banned.

SOURCE: <http://calvinisticcartoons.blogspot.com>

THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS II

Romans 1:18-20 says that there are no true atheists; everyone, at some level, knows there is a God. As Paul puts it, “since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen... so that people are without excuse.”

Apologist Sye TenBruggencate gives an illustrative example of this deep-down knowledge in the extras section of his DVD *How to Answer The Fool*. He tells the story of a man he met while doing some street evangelism.

This fellow, in his fifties, he comes up on his bicycle. And he tells me that two of his brothers committed suicide. He said that after his brothers committed suicide, he swore at God. He was angry with God.

He happened to have a book on Hinduism on his bicycle that he had picked up at the dollar store just a day or two before. And you could tell that he’d read through it, because he wanted answers, or so he said. He said, “You know this Brahman, this oneness of being, I can get into that. I like it. This makes a lot of sense to me; I could get into Hinduism.”

So I said to him, “Tell me, is that the God you were angry at when your brothers committed suicide?”

He started crying.

People know... they know God exists.

AGAIN! AGAIN! AGAIN!

A child never tires of being thrown in the air. G.K. Chesterton (in *Orthodoxy*) wondered if in this endless sense of wonder they were more God-like than adults.

It might be true that the sun rises regularly because he never gets tired of rising. His routine might be due, not to a lifelessness, but to a rush of life. ... It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical encore.

THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS

In his book, *Choosing My Religion*, R.C. Sproul argued that

...I don’t think too many people who have a firm hold on reality can technically be called atheists. Recently a man came to believe in God at a meeting of atheists. The speaker declared that he was going to give God three minutes to prove Himself by striking him dead. The man stopped speaking and stared at the clock on the wall. In perfect silence one minute passed, then two and at least three. As the deadline passed there was an audible exhalation of air throughout the room. People had been holding their breath. “I knew in that moment that we were a bunch of hypocrites. There wasn’t a real atheist in the place,” the man said.

EZEKIEL 12:2 SCIENCE

In Ezekiel 12:2 God describes the people of Israel as a rebellious people that “have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear.” They were being willfully blind and deliberately deaf.

Today this description would be a good fit for the secular scientists that evolutionist Richard Lewontin is talking about here:

We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.

LIMITED RAM

I was recently talking to someone who explained that they knew quite a bit about the Middle East, though they couldn’t recall most of it right now. I loved the way he put that. It’s one thing to have just the right response stored away somewhere in our brain, and quite another thing to be able to pull it up at just the moment we need it. I think

MARRIAGE vs. MAWWAIGE

by John Smith

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY



"Mawwiage! That bswessed event, that dweam within a dweam..." Any one who has watched Rob Reiner's 1987 movie, *The Princess Bride*, will recognize the words of "the impressive clergyman" as he begins the wedding ceremony for Buttercup and Prince Humperdinck. His speech impediment lightens the suspense by turning a serious moment into a joke. Buttercup, after all, was not supposed to marry the pretentious Humperdinck but her true love, Westley. Normally, of course, one should cringe at such mockery: weddings are to be solemnized, not made light of. On the other hand, the clergyman's mispronunciation is perhaps an apt metaphor for the way the institution has eroded in Western society: marriage has indeed become "mawwiage."

I've noticed that people have begun to use the expression "traditional marriage" to specify what they mean; evidently the simple term "marriage" is no longer specific enough. Churches, too, feel the need to spell out a definition for marriage in order to protect themselves from legal action. To give but one example, in 2007 the Canadian Reformed Churches added the following line to the article on marriage in their Church Order: "The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman."

Some would argue that the Word of God is not as clear as that. I recently read a letter to the editor in my local paper arguing that the Bible itself allows for a plurality of marital arrangements. Besides monogamy, one finds polygamy and concubinage, not just among the villains, but among the heroes of holy writ. In short, Scripture allows for variety of practice.

What are we to make of such an argument? In this article I'd like to review what the Bible says about marriage, particularly in the Old Testament since it's especially there that one finds multiple wives and concubines.

CUSTOMS

Marriage is a divine institution: God performed the first wedding by creating the woman and bringing her to the man. I find it interesting, then, that the LORD did not give Israel precise laws for how marriages were to be arranged. These were a matter of existing social customs and varied from one situation to another.

Usually it was the man who chose the wife rather than the other way around; we don't often read of women taking the initiative. On Naomi's prompting, Ruth went to Boaz and told him to spread the

brothers (Judges 21:22). In *Song of Songs*, there is no mention of a father, and it is the brothers who say, "What shall we do for our sister for the day she is spoken for?" (8:8).

Did the bride herself have any say in the matter? Sometimes not, for example if she was a slave. Other times, yes – Rebekah's brother and father made the arrangements with Abraham's servant, but when it was time to go, her family asked her, "Will you go with this man?" and she replied, "I will go" (Gen 24:58). Though the arrangements were often

Besides monogamy, one finds polygamy and concubinage, not just among the villains, but among the heroes of holy writ.

corner of his garment over her: this was a request for marriage. Yet Boaz had to make the legal arrangements.

Marriages were often arranged between the father and the groom, for example between Laban and Jacob for the hand of Rachel. Sometimes the groom's father made the arrangements for him. For example, Abraham found a wife for Isaac through his servant (Gen 24), and Judah took Tamar for his son Er. Occasionally it was the groom's mother: Hagar took a wife for Ishmael (Gen 21:21). Samson asked both his parents to get a wife for him (Judg 14:2). Often the brothers of the bride-to-be were also involved in the arrangements. Think of Abram posing as Sarai's brother (Gen 13:13-16), or of Laban's involvement in the arrangements for Rebekah (Gen 24:29, 50), or of Shechem's conversation with Dinah's father and brothers after he had raped her (Gen 34:11-18). When the elders of Israel instructed the surviving Benjamites to catch wives from the dancing girls of Shiloh, they also promised to pacify their fathers and

made for her, a woman could presumably make her feelings known. In *Song of Songs* the woman says that her vineyard is hers to give (8:12). In our own society, women are much more actively involved in the choice of a life partner, so it's hard for us to imagine the customs of the Ancient Near East. Yet marital love could flourish there too. Isaac loved Rebekah from the moment he took her to be his wife (Gen 24:67), and *Song of Songs* speaks eloquently of the desires of a couple in love. More importantly the Lord Jesus taught that behind all the arrangements, God was at work: "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matt 19:6). That principle is equally true for arranged marriages and marriages of choice.

LAWS

While the LORD did not legislate who made the arrangements, He did restrict whom one could marry. Marriages with the Canaanites were not permitted:

Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take

their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you (Deut 7:3; cf. Josh 23:12-13).

God had a special warning for the king: "He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray." This happened to Solomon, who loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter – Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods."... As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods (1 Kings 11:1-4).

God also forbade marrying close

THE FORMALITIES

Marriage was a two-step affair in Bible times. The first step was the betrothal: if the girl's family agreed to the marriage, the man would give her father a mohar, or "bride price," in the form of a service or sum of money. Jacob obtained a wife with seven years of hard labor. David paid with Philistine foreskins. Othniel did it by capturing a town (Judg 1:13, Josh 15:17). In the case of rape, a high price was set: "If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives" (Deut 22:28-29). Notice, by the way, that it does not say that she must marry him or that she cannot divorce him. This law was intended as a

a man to sleep with a betrothed woman was adultery (Deut 22:23-24), and to break off a betrothal required a divorce (Matt 1:19).

The second step was the wedding feast where bride and groom would come together. The feast could last as long as a week (Gen 29:27; Judg 14:17); it included processions and music (Ps 78:63; 1 Macc 9:39), as well as the consummation of the marriage (Gen 29:23).

Was there a written marriage contract? In some Ancient Near Eastern cultures there was: archaeologists have discovered a marriage contract in the Akkadian language. One of its clauses specified that if the woman were barren the husband would have to wait seven years before marrying a second wife. There are also Sumerian marriage records which show that a couple swore an oath before judges in the presence of witnesses. There is no evidence for the use of oaths in marriage ceremonies in Israel. The first mention of a marriage contract is found in the book of Tobit. There we read that the father of the bride "wrote out a contract, a scroll of marriage, that he gave her to him as wife according to the decree of the law of Moses. After that they began to eat and drink." (Tob 7:13-14). A marriage contract has also been found from the Jewish community in Elephantine with the words, "She is my wife and I am her husband from this day forever." The Bible does not mention such contracts, however, and it is difficult to say how common they were.

POLYGAMY

"The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman." But if that's so, what does one do with the many examples of polygamy in the Old Testament? Kings were forbidden to multiply wives (Deut 17:17), and Israelites were forbidden to marry two sisters (Lev 18:18), but polygamy was not forbidden outright. We read of men such as David and Solomon who had many wives. Especially striking is 2 Samuel 12:8, where God says to David, "I gave your master's wives into your arms." There "wives" (plural) are called a gift from God! All the same, polygamy often

...when another wife was added, the companionship was ruined, and the harmony replaced by bitterness and rivalry, and so the Lord showed his people that his original purpose for marriage was best, and that human solutions lead only to misery.

relatives. A woman had to be at least two successive steps removed by blood, and one step removed by marriage, from her husband (Lev 18:6-18; 20:10-21). There were several other restrictions: a man could not marry two sisters, and a high priest could not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, so that he would not defile his offspring (Lev 21:13-15). These laws show God's concern for the spiritual wellbeing of his people: one's choice of marriage partner deeply affects one's relationship with the LORD!

deterrent for the man: there would be a high price to pay and no opportunity for divorce.

In return for the bride price, the father-in-law would often give a dowry along with his daughter. For example, Rebekah could take her maids (Gen 24:61); Othniel's wife asked her father for a field (Josh 15:18); Pharaoh captured the town of Gezer, killed its Canaanite inhabitants, and gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife (1 Kings 9:16). Betrothal in those days meant more than engagement does today: it was considered a binding agreement: for

led to marital difficulty: think of the unhappiness between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, the rivalry between Rachel and Leah, the bitterness of Hannah, David's greed for Uriah's wife, and Solomon's idolatry.

So why would a man want to marry more than one wife? In the case of a king, it was often a desire to cement alliances with surrounding kingdoms by marrying the daughters of their kings. This practice carried with it a grave temptation to syncretism and idolatry, and that's why God told kings not to multiply wives. In the case of regular Israelites, it was often the desire for a male heir. If his wife did not bear children, a man would marry another, and so the second purpose of marriage (procreation) came at the expense of the first (companionship). For when another wife was added, the companionship was ruined, and the harmony replaced by bitterness and rivalry, and so the LORD showed his people that his original purpose for marriage was best, and that human solutions lead only to misery.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

This survey of Israel's customs and laws leads us to the following conclusions.

1. DESCRIPTIVE IS NOT PRESCRIPTIVE

God designed marriage as part of his perfect creation. Yet this institution has been marred by the brokenness of sin. Not all marriages in the Old Testament were monogamous, so one might be tempted to give a descriptive definition that includes, for example, polygamy and concubinage.

Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, must read the Old Testament as he did: Christ defined marriage prescriptively by pointing his disciples back to the beginning (Matt 19:4). Indeed, the first marriage, which served as a pattern for subsequent marriages, was monogamous and heterosexual, while the first man said to have had more than one wife was the arrogant Lamech of Cain's line. (cont'd)

WEDDING WORDS

by John Smith

The Bible uses a wide assortment of words to talk about marriage. If we want to know what God has to say about marriage in the Bible, it helps to understand some of the related words He uses.

NO NOUN, BUT VERBS APLENTY

The Hebrew of the Old Testament does not have a noun for "marriage," but it does have a number of verbs for "getting married." A man "takes someone as wife" (laqach le-ishah). A woman "becomes someone's wife" (hayethah le-ishah). A father gives his daughter in marriage (nathan le-ishah).

The word baal means husband, but because it was also the name of the god Baal, the LORD told his people that they were no longer to use this word for him: "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband' (ishi); you will no longer call me 'my master' (baali). I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked" (Hos 2:16-17).

Another verb for marriage means "to become someone's son-in-law" (chathan), an expression often used for making political alliances. Hence chathan can mean either "son-in-law" or "groom," and its counterpart kalah can mean either "daughter-in-law" or "bride."

In short, the vocabulary for marriage refers consistently to the husband-wife relationship.

HAVING SEX DOES NOT SOLEMNIZE A MARRIAGE

Someone once said to me that in Bible times weddings were not "solemnized" or "officiated" – that it was simply the

act of sexual intercourse that sealed the relationship. However, that's simply not true, as the Hebrew terminology above makes clear. Furthermore in Bible times there was a very clear, two-step procedure for formalizing the marriage relationship: the first step was the betrothal, and the second was the marriage feast.

In addition, besides the words mentioned above, the Hebrew language has another set of words for sexual relations. The four main expressions are bo' ("to go into"), shakav ("to lie with"), galah 'erwah ("to uncover nakedness"), and yada' ("to know"). The first is used of a man having sexual relations with a woman, either within or outside of marriage. The second word is more general: it, too, refers to sexual relations within or outside of marriage, either of a woman with a man, or a man with a woman. It is also used for the forbidden acts of homosexuality, bestiality, and rape. The third is likewise used for shameful sexual activity, for example with a close relative or with a woman having her period. The fourth expression, "to know," is used of sexual intimacy, usually (though not always) between husband and wife. A virgin is a woman "who has not known a man."

The use of these expressions shows that Scripture does not simply equate "getting married" with "having sex."



the first marriage, which served as a pattern for subsequent marriages, was monogamous and heterosexual, while the first man said to have had more than one wife was the arrogant Lamech of Cain's line.

2. GOD AS A HUSBAND IS A PRESCRIPTIVE EXAMPLE

In the Old Testament the LORD often portrayed himself as a husband to Israel: Israel was not only his servant and his son, but also his wife. This image portrays God as faithful – the perfect, caring husband for a wife who had nothing to attract her to him, and a jealous husband to a wife who often strayed after idols. This image of the Lord as a husband continues in the New Testament. Think of Ephesians 5, where the relationship between a husband and wife is compared to that between Christ and his church.

3. POLYGAMY IS NOT WORSE THAN GAY MARRIAGE

In Canada the institution of marriage has deteriorated: not only is the divorce rate high, but gay marriage has been legalized. Many fear that polygamy will be next. It is indeed conceivable that laws which forbid polygamy will be declared unconstitutional.

Yet Scripture does not teach us that permitting homosexual marriage will lead to permitting polygamy; that is not a Scriptural slippery slope. Quite to the contrary, Scripture places these in completely different categories. Polygamy was a form of marriage that led to misery, but was tolerated and restricted by the law. Homosexual relationships, on the other hand, were never permitted, but condemned as an abomination. As Christians we should resist both, but we should not connect them.


4. WE ARE ALREADY BETROTHED

Christ purchased the church for himself by dying on the cross. His blood was the bride price that secured our betrothal. As church we live in the stage between the betrothal and the marriage feast, and therefore the church can already be called the bride of Christ, even though the marriage feast has not yet come.

5. WE ARE ALREADY UNITED

The Lord gave his church the sacrament of holy supper as a foretaste of the marriage feast. At this supper the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ so that we experience what it means to be his bride. Therefore Lord's Day 28 of the Heidelberg Catechism rightly uses the marriage language of Genesis 2 to explain what happens in this sacrament: "Although Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, yet we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, and we forever live and are governed by one Spirit as the members of our body are by one soul."

6. OUR WEDDING IS CERTAIN

The Old Testament institution of marriage helps us to believe that Christ really will return. After all, a bridegroom who has already paid the bride-price will certainly come back for the marriage feast. 

Dr. John Smith is Professor of Old Testament at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.

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UNDERSTANDING SERMONS BETTER

by Jeremy de Haan

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL PREACHING

Like everything else that's worthwhile in life, listening to sermons is enriched by being informed. The benefit of being informed is that it unlocks for you the finer details that make a thing worth enjoying. If you don't understand how a sport like football works, for instance, watching a game will be confusing and you'll find yourself flipping channels. It's by knowing the rules and strategies that you judge one play against the next, and by that knowledge you are freed to enjoy all the details of the game. Understanding sermons, too, is enriched by knowing something of how sermons are supposed to work. Living in the times that we do, with instant access to a wide variety of contemporary preaching,

Christians are awash in options for listening. Even the smallest exposure to today's popular preachers will make it clear that the sorts of sermons you hear in Canadian Reformed churches differ from those that you'll hear elsewhere.

The reason for this is that when a pastor opens up the Word of God, reads it, and explains it to the congregation, he is using specific interpretive methods in order to do so. Different methods will produce different sermons, and, simply enough, similar methods will produce similar types of sermons. Canadian Reformed sermons do have a particular character to them, and one of the reasons is because our ministers rely heavily on a method called "redemptive historical preaching" (RHP).

“God often uses conflict to sharpen the Church's understanding of various points of doctrine or practice.”

I recently finished my freshman year at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. One of the courses we took was an introduction to Homiletics, which is essentially the study of sermons. Throughout the course we spent a lot of time discussing RHP and had the opportunity to learn of its history and development in our Reformed tradition. You could say that redemptive-historical

example of faith for us. The work of God is pushed to the background, if it comes out at all, while the life of the individual becomes the message. Even worse, sometimes the special circumstances surrounding an individual, such as David's slaying Goliath, or Hannah's becoming pregnant, are touted as the sorts of things we should expect in our own lives. If you're thinking of The

members? As far as I know, nobody's arguing that the Canadian Forces should change their military tactics because of Jericho, or that the medical profession has been made redundant because of Naaman; nor is Ruth's crawling under the covers with Boaz put forward as an example for our unmarried couples. Such interpretations would immediately strike most Christians as ridiculous, but they are simply the results of the exemplaric method consistently applied.

...the book of Esther isn't just about Esther, but, more broadly, about Christ; and the same goes for the book of Job, or Joshua.

sermons are to the Canadian Reformed churches what bamboo rods are to fly fishermen. They've got the sort of strong and dependable reputation that comes about after years of honest service, but there's enough subtlety and tradition that those who are prone to romance start calling them works of art. In other words, they're useful but they do attract the purists.

THE HISTORY BEHIND RHP

In order to understand RHP, we need to look back at the Netherlands some eighty years ago and contrast RHP with the method of preaching that was *de rigueur* at the time. That method is called "exemplaric" preaching, and if you pay any attention to mainstream evangelical Christianity, exemplaric preaching will sound familiar. You won't find the word "exemplaric" in the dictionary, but if you're etymologically astute, you'll have noticed that it's similar to the more familiar "exemplary" which in turn is related to the word "example."

Ministers who preach using this method will take an Old Testament figure, Abraham, for instance, and preach on how Abraham is a good or bad

Prayer of Jabez right now, then you know what I'm talking about.

EXEMPLARIC: NOT SO EXEMPLARY

The problem with exemplaric preaching is that, not only does it miss the point of the text, it can also be a message that leads to despair. For example, a minister might preach on David and Goliath and tell the congregation that with enough faith they, too, can kill their Goliaths. A flock of Davids will stream out of the doors after the service, go home, and that week sling their hearts out. And they're going to fail. Whatever their Goliaths are – their fears, or addictions, or the darkness that eats away at their minds – those giants will not be slain in a moment of strong faith. Because what the minister failed to tell them was that it wasn't David's faith that killed Goliath. It was God's power. And it isn't our faith that shatters the grip of sin; it's Christ's power.

After all, if it were so straightforward, how did the New Testament writers miss it? Why didn't Stephen slay his captors, David-style? Or why didn't the Church simply "Jabez" her way to more

REDISCOVERING RHP

This was the method of preaching being used in the Netherlands, and it led to a strong counter-movement. A group of preachers led by Dr. Klaas Schilder instead emphasized the RHP method. As you can imagine, this method removed the focus from the individuals and placed it solely on God and on His plan for salvation.

Dr. Schilder and company didn't invent RHP any more than the Council of Nicaea invented the Trinity, but God often uses conflict to sharpen the Church's understanding of various points of doctrine or practice. The conflicts about preaching in the Netherlands provoked our fathers to look more closely at preaching in Scripture, and to use the principles found there as a corrective for methods in their own day.

The most foundational principle for interpreting the Old Testament is the one we find explained on the road to Emmaus: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). The Old Testament, as David Murray has put it, is the biography of Jesus Christ. What this means is that the book of Esther isn't just about Esther, but, more broadly, about Christ; and the same goes for the book of Job, or Joshua. It's about drawing everything into the larger story of the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ. The account of Abraham in Egypt is less about Abraham's actions in difficult circumstances, and more about God remaining faithful to His promises to Abraham, and preserving the family

through which the Messiah would eventually come.

In addition to drawing the lines to Christ, the RHP method brings out the fact that God did not reveal His plans all at once, but that His revelation progressed throughout history. The Bible, after all, was written over a period of roughly 1500 years. Our culture often celebrates a certain notion of progress which explains history as mankind's long, slow, and tumultuous journey from darkness to enlightenment, from caves to Cape Canaveral. We see ourselves as having shaken off the chains of the past, striding boldly towards a bright and limitless future. However ridiculous and utopian our concept of progress may be, and it is nothing more than the secular perversion of Christian eschatology, it does help us to understand the progress of revelation as we find it in the Old Testament. The only thing Adam and Eve knew about God's plans was that a saviour would eventually come, but they didn't know if it would be a son, or grandson, or great-grandson. Noah knew nothing of the sacrament of circumcision, Abraham did not know the Mosaic laws, and Moses would have been puzzled by the phrase "the stump of Jesse." These developments occurred as God saw fit, each one revealing a little more of the coming Christ, and it's important when preaching on an OT passage to note where the passage stands in light of redemptive-historical progress.

FINDING THE BALANCE

However, in the last couple decades in our circles RHP, too, has seen its share of criticism. Or more specifically, it's the way that the method has been applied that has been criticized.

Some RHP sermons were masterpieces of intricacy, drawing out lines in Scripture that were original and intellectually satisfying; but these sermons didn't always work very hard at reaching into the lives of the congregants. Because of the strong stigma against exemplaric preaching, ministers did not want to be accused of it. So some would avoid the fact that,

in addition to working out His plan of salvation, the Lord was very much involved in the lives of His children in Scripture. Thus ministers sometimes missed opportunities to speak a loving or an admonishing word into the often grimy and confusing lives of those sitting in the pew. After all, there's no denying that in that tricky situation in Egypt, Abraham *should* have trusted God, and that we should as well when we find ourselves beset with the claustrophobia of a rock and a hard place. In Stephen's sermon to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7, he uses examples of Israel's rebellion in the Old Testament to put the knife to his Jewish contemporaries who had rejected Christ. Which means he finds instruction in the lives of Old Testament people. Hebrews 11 also gives a number of examples of the faith of saints; no doubt a faith that comes from God and holds to Christ, but a faith illustrated to us with flesh and blood.

Nevertheless, these instances do not justify the exemplaric method. For in the end, exemplaric preaching treats Scripture as little more than a catalogue of human interactions with the divine, with man being primary. It assumes that the events we read about in the Bible are faith-activated norms for all believers in all times. If you aren't experiencing those events in your own life, it's because your weak and shriveled faith is useless and you should be ashamed.


Redemptive-historical preaching, on

“Because of the strong stigma against exemplaric preaching, ministers did not want to be accused of it.”

the other hand, holds that all of Scripture speaks a single message of the revelation of God's saving work in Christ through history. It recognizes that nothing but the fall was ever accomplished by the will of man, and that God's supreme power demonstrated in its fullness on the cross is the dominant and defining event in history. Only with that unifying principle securely in place can we properly apply the Scriptures. Only once we have seen clearly through the lens of Christ can we do as Stephen did, or the writer of Hebrews, and gain instruction from the lives of biblical saints. Indeed, only when we understand the account of God's people within the grand framework of Christ's redemption can we even begin to understand our own lives.

CONCLUSION

Because the concept of redemptive history is a significant influence on our sermons, understanding it will help you to gain further insight from them. You may expect that from whatever passage the minister is preaching, he will bring out what it says about Christ, and about the fulfillment of God's promises in Him. This is the superstructure by which we make sense of God's Word. Gravity pulls rivers to the sea, and Christ pulls every verse to Himself.

With that in mind, there's plenty of room for discussion on how much a biblical figure's life should be brought out in a sermon. This will be different depending on the minister and on the pastoral situation in a church, so it's impossible to clearly delineate what that balance should be. But without question that balance is crucial to the art, to the finesse, of sermonry. The right sermons leave our hearts aglow with the hope we have in Christ, our thoughts riveted to the reality of what He has done; but they also leave us encouraged in the midst of our often undramatic sanctification, comforted to know that we have a God who delights to reach into our messy lives and make His peace and His presence known. 

REVIEWS

DOCUMENTARIES INSPIRING A "WOW!"

FLIGHT: THE GENIUS OF BIRDS

63 MIN / 2013



I watched this with my three-year-old daughter and we had the exact same reaction: "Wow!" Flight takes a look at the design of birds and focuses particularly on hummingbirds, starlings and arctic terns. All three have their wow moments:

- the hummingbird with how its tongue works
- the starlings with how thousands of them can come together in giant, flexing living clouds – this was awesome!
- the arctic terns in how they can migrate from one end of the planet to the other every year

While the hour-long film did tax the interest of my daughter – about half way through she returned to her Lego – the next day she was asking to see the rest of it. The impressive computer graphics, and the continuous close-up, slow-motion, and wide-angle shots make this a visual feast. It is intended for adults, but suitable for, and enthralling for, children too. I really can't imagine anyone not loving this.

The thesis of Flight is that the intricacies involved in birds' ability to fly gives evidence of a Designer. But the producers don't specifically name the Designer; they don't specifically give God the credit He is due. But what the producers don't do, viewers are sure to – you can't watch this without praising God!

– Jon Dykstra

HOW TO ANSWER THE FOOL

85 MIN / 2013



Some Christians will try to provide atheists with reasons for why they should believe in the Bible, and for why they should believe in God. In How To Answer The Fool Sye Ten Bruggencate teaches us to skip past this, to start with the Bible, and to instead present to the unbeliever the fact that it is only by acknowledging God, and the Bible as his Word, that the world makes any sense.

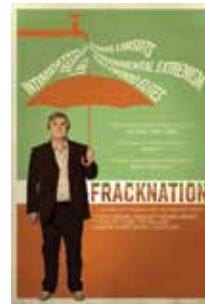
This is a "presuppositional" approach to defending our Christian faith. It is the way Pastor Douglas Wilson also does apologetics in the documentary Collision. But whereas Wilson focuses on morality there – demonstrating that an atheist has no basis on which to complain about anything being immoral – Bruggencate focuses on the issue of reason here, showing that atheists have no basis, in their worldview, to believe in their reasoning. He makes his case so well that the university students we see him interacting with give up on reason, and start to argue that they actually know nothing. It's comical to see a person paying thousands of dollars a year to learn denying that they can know anything.

This is a must-see film for absolutely everyone. The only caution I would add concerns "winsomeness." How to Answer the Fool is the better instructional presuppositional apologetics film, but Douglas Wilson's Collision is a better example of this approach done winsomely.

– Jon Dykstra

FRACKNATION

BY EDWARD WELCH / 239 PAGES / 199



Gas and oil are the lubrication of modern society and industry – try to imagine life without it! Our transportation, clothing, heating, and most of the "stuff" we buy depend on a reliable source of oil. "Fracking" involves fracturing the shale deep, deep underground to allow gas and oil free flow. Typically water is mixed with sand and chemicals, injected at high pressure into a wellbore to create fractures, which forms conduits to allow gas and oil to flow easily to the well.

Fracknation is a documentary borne out of a journalist's search for the truth about claims made in a film title Gasland, that "fracking" causes water supplies to be polluted. In Gasland, no lab details are provided, only false claims that people's drinking water was being contaminated with "weapons grade uranium." But the damage was done. Following the showing of Gasland, a moratorium was placed on drilling and fracking in many areas in the USA, Europe and Russia.

Fracknation was funded by 3,305 individuals from 26 countries who wanted the truth told. Phelim Mc Aleer does a good job of doing just that. You will enjoy watching a courageous journalist expose the lie and do so with a twinkle in the eye. God has given man the ability to dig deep into the ground and while all energy extraction comes with risks, this film makes a straightforward case that fracking is one of the safer methods to extract energy from the ground.

– Bob Lodder

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

THE HEART OF TEXAS

2008 / 60 MINUTES



SPOILER ALERT: I am going to divulge what's at the heart of *The Heart of Texas* because, though this is a wonderful film, some people might find it too much: a family loses their 4-year-old daughter to a hit-and-run driver.

What happens next is amazing. Grover Norwood, the girl's father, not only forgives the driver, he is concerned about the guilt the man is feeling – Ulice Parker had no idea he had hit a person. So Grover invites Ulice to the funeral and seats him in the front row, right next to himself and his wife. The forgiveness shown is absolute, beautiful, and almost unbelievable. As the IMDB.com synopsis puts it: "one man chooses an extraordinary and far-reaching path of forgiveness that the world has never seen."

But is this forgiveness the likes of which the world has never seen? No. As Grover makes clear, what he has done is only a reflection, a shadow, of what God has done for us. These are not Reformed Christians, and some of what is said has an Arminian underpinning to it. So some minimal discernment is needed to evaluate what is expressed here verbally. But you are not likely to see Christ-life forgiveness demonstrated better in action. What God enables Grover Norwood and his wife to do is awesome.

- Jon Dykstra



IT'S A GIRL

2012 / 63 MINUTES

This must be the first documentary that Reformed Perspective and radical feminism's flagship publication, *Ms. Magazine*, have both recommended.


It covers the topic of gendercide – the killing of unborn baby girls just because they are girls – and it begins with a smiling Indian mother explaining how she strangled every one of her eight newborn girls. Her casually murderous ways are not unusual in India, where women are greatly devalued. There is a saying in southern region that, "Rearing a daughter is like watering a neighbor's tree." The thought is that girls are of no benefit to the family they are born into; they are only of benefit to the family they marry into. Why? Because of dowries. Though the practice is illegal, the giving of dowries is still common in much of India. And because this money has to be paid by the bride's family to the groom, it is profitable to have sons, but a financial burden to have daughters. So families value daughters-in-law, but not daughters.

The film begins with India, but about midway through transitions to China where they have also devalued women, though it has nothing to do with dowries. Instead the culprit is the country's one-child policy. Traditionally, it is sons who care for their parents so if a couple can have just one child, they want it to be a boy.

The end result, as this documentary shows, is that "the three deadliest words in the world" are "it's a girl." In India mothers will regularly kill their baby girls soon after birth: from the ages of 1-5 the mortality rate for girls is 40% higher than for boys. In both India and China women who are pregnant with girls can face enormous pressure to abort.

So why should we watch this film? Because it's relevant here in North America too. This is an issue that can unite both Christians and non-Christians to take some early steps together towards the protection of the unborn. This stratagem was first tried in Canada in late 2012 when Conservative Party MP Mark Warawa put forward a motion that would have condemned gendercide. Unfortunately some backroom maneuvering meant his motion never came up for debate. But with some support this documentary could have a role in bringing this issue to the public's attention once again. A trailer for *It's a Girl* can be found at www.itsagirlmovie.com.

- Jon Dykstra



**WHY WOULD
HE DO IT
LIKE THAT?**

by Rob Slane

recently set about the task of making an enclosure to keep animals, and I want to tell you how I did it. This may seem to be a strange topic for *Reformed Perspective* readers but please bear with me, and I trust that all will become clear.

QUITE THE CREATION

My aim was to create a large, secure enclosure and so I began by marking out an area within my back yard. You may think it somewhat eccentric, but for some very good reasons (which I won't trouble you with) I had to begin the construction at night. So right after I had marked out the area and unraveled some fencing, I erected an enormous halogen lamp over the whole site, which, when turned on, flooded the area with light, which was good.

The following day I began to clear the enclosure, which was somewhat waterlogged. I bailed out most of the water, but took care to leave some behind, as I needed a little in order to provide ponds for the aquatic animals. By the end of the day, I have to say I was well pleased with the result.

When I came back to the site the next day, I began to shift some of the water I had left in the enclosure into ponds by digging holes in some places, and then piling the dirt up into mounds elsewhere to create dry patches. Once this was done, I spent the remainder of the day putting in some plants and food for the animals to eat. By this time, the whole thing was starting to take shape really nicely.

My main task on the following day was to take down the halogen lamp, which I had intended only as a temporary measure, and to put some smaller, permanent lights around the outside of the enclosure which, when fixed up, looked really quite wonderful.

The next two days things began to get really exciting. First I put some fish and other aquatic creatures into the ponds, and I also brought some birds into the enclosure. Then on the following day I introduced some land animals into the enclosure.

At this point, the whole thing was almost finished, except for one thing. It had always been my intention to get my son to look after the enclosure, and so the last thing I did was to show him what I had made, telling him that it was a gift to him and giving him some quite specific instructions as to how I wanted him to perform the task of looking after it.

You perhaps won't be surprised to hear that at the end of all that I took

...God "made him to have dominion over the works of his hands" (Psalm 8:6). The theistic evolution paradigm robs man of this highly exalted position for over 99% of the history of the creation...

the next day off and had a well-earned rest. Surveying all that I had done, I can honestly say that I was extremely pleased with the way things had turned out. The whole thing had taken me a total of 24 years from start to finish, but it was well worth it.

"Now hang on a second. Did you just say 24 years?"

"Yes, that's right, 24 years."

"But from what you said above, it sounded like the whole thing took you six days with one day of rest at the end."

"Yes, it did sound like that, didn't it? But if I told you that one day is as four years to me, would that begin to make a little more sense?"

Well, no, it wouldn't, but hopefully you've got the point by now. The time frame above clearly cannot be stretched out from six days of work into 24 years, yet this is essentially the position taken by those who advocate theistic evolution when they attempt to stretch the creation account in Genesis into billions of years. What I want to do in the remainder of this article is to ask whether there are any compelling reasons why we might want to engage in this particular "stretching exercise."

WHY WOULD IT TAKE SO LONG?

Sticking with the above introductory analogy, let me pose the following question: why might such a project end up taking 24 years, rather than six days? There are five possible reasons:

I might actually need 24 years to complete a project because of the sheer amount of work involved (although anyone who has seen the plethora of unfinished projects in my shed might wonder whether even 24 years would be enough time).

- I might be impeded by one thing or another – resources, health or weather, for example.
- I might just be plain lazy and so somehow manage to turn a six-day job into a 24-year job.
- I might need to take a long time in order to make sure the work is of sufficient quality.
- I might have some other purpose for having taken 24 years, when I could easily have done it much quicker.

Now of all these possibilities apply to men, but only the last one might apply to God. Though the volume of work, unforeseen impediments, laziness and the issue of quality might be factors in the length of time it would take me to build my enclosure, all Christians would agree that none of these things would

be factors for God in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth.

The amount of work involved was no obstacle to God, nor could anything have impeded Him in the process. It goes without saying that laziness, whilst applying to men, does not and could not apply to God, and it also goes without saying that the quality issue is not a factor with God, and He could have produced a Universe of the same perfect quality no matter what time period He took to complete it. In other words, there was nothing whatsoever that could have prevented Him from finishing His creation in a nanosecond, six days or 13 billion years – whatever He willed to do.

deliberately chose to take 24 years to complete it rather than six days?

Now someone might conceivably use this very point to question why God would have created in six days, rather than a nanosecond. After all, He could have finished it all in a nanosecond if He had wanted to. There is, however, a very good reason why this was so, since His purpose was to give the world as a gift to man to tend and keep. The six days of work and one day of rest sets a pattern for how men are to live, worship and take dominion over that gift. This is clearly seen in the reason given for keeping the 4th commandment: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and

by others, but what I want to do is to come at the issue from a different angle. My question is simply this: If God could have made the Heavens and the Earth and all that is in them in six days, what arguments from Scripture and from the purposes of God are there to support the idea that He actually decided to take billions of years and evolutionary processes to do so? In other words, why would He do it like that?

BRING GLORY TO GOD

In order to test the claims of those who affirm theistic evolution, we must begin by asking the following question: what is God’s overarching creational purpose? Revelation 4:11 supplies us with the answer to this: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.” In other words, God’s purpose in creating all things was to bring glory and honor to himself.

There are essentially two ways that God gets glory from his creation. One is from the very fact of his creation itself being wonderful and reflecting his glory. There is a sense in which even if there were not one single believer on planet Earth, the creation would still praise Him, and He would still be glorified. The Psalms are particularly rich in descriptions of God’s natural order praising Him, for instance, verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 148: “Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens!” But although the creation can and does praise Him, by virtue of their being glorious and reflecting His glory, is this the praise that God ultimately seeks?

Imagine that Beethoven had premiered his 5th Symphony to an empty concert hall, and so at the end there was complete silence. Would the lack of people to applaud the piece diminish it at all or call into question the genius of its composer? Of course not! The music

How then was God’s creational purpose and His glory fulfilled if he took 13 billion years and a multitude of dead animals along the way, when he could have done it all in six days and minus the carnage?

A REASON FOR SIX DAYS

Which leaves us with only the final possibility – that of having some other purpose for taking time to finish a job. With men, it is difficult to think of a single reason why anyone, given the option of building an enclosure such as the one described above in 6 days or 24 years, would deliberately choose to do it in 24 years. That would make little sense. If a man were just as able to produce work of excellent quality, whether it took him 6 days or 24 years, why would he choose the 24-year option? Furthermore, if his purpose in creating the enclosure was because he wanted to give it to his son as a gift, wouldn’t it be odd if he

the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

But what good reasons exist why God might have chosen to create in 13 billion years rather than six days? If I am to take the claims of theistic evolution seriously, what I want to know is why He would have done it *this* way and not done it *that* way.

Arguments for or against theistic evolution are usually discussions of whether the word “day” (*Yom*) must be taken literally, or what “the rocks” say, or whether evolution undermines the foundation of the gospel itself. These arguments have been covered very ably

is glorious regardless of whether anyone actually listens to it or applauds.

In much the same way, God's creation exalts Him and brings Him glory irrespective of whether there exists another being to acknowledge it. Days 1 to 5 of Genesis – prior to the creation of man – are all described as good. But just as Beethoven's intention was never just to create a symphony and have it played to an empty concert hall, God's intention was never to create the world and leave it without a creature to praise and thank Him for it. Beethoven's 5th is great, regardless of who listens to it, but how much more glorious does the piece become when an audience is there to hear and gives a standing ovation at the end? By the same token, God's creation is glorious, regardless of who is there to appreciate it, yet how much more is God glorified when He receives the praise of angels and men?

His overarching purpose was therefore to create a being that was not only made in His own image, but also capable of and willing to give Him glory. The Westminster Shorter Catechism famously begins with the question, "What is the chief end of man," and gives the answer, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." This can be flipped on its head to become, "What was God's purpose in creating man? That He might be glorified, and that man might share in His happiness." That, in a nutshell, is why God made us and therefore why we are here. We are to reflect his glory in everything we do, we are to enjoy Him and the gifts He gives us, and we are to return praise and thanksgiving to Him in our worship. This fits perfectly into the six days of work and one day of rest worship paradigm, where the pattern for our lives is established and ordered. But how does this fit in with the paradigm given by theistic evolution?

EARTH MADE FOR US

Theistic evolution assumes that it took billions of years for the earth to even

exist, yet alone become inhabited. Yet this is at variance with Isaiah, who says that "the Lord did not create the Earth in vain," but rather "formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18). If God's purpose for the Earth was for it to be inhabited by men, and that it would be vain not to be inhabited by them, what possible reason would He have had to leave it uninhabited for so long?

Genesis 1:26-28 is clear that the whole purpose of the created order was that it was a gift for His image bearer who was to be given charge over it. If this was the purpose of God's creation, what possible reasons would He have had to put this off for something like 13 billion years?

The Scriptures plainly teach that God's purpose for man was not only to bear and reflect his image, but also to praise him in his worship: "I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your marvelous works" (Psalm 9:1). If this is God's purpose for man, what possible reasons would he have had to defer receiving praise for billions of years?


DEFERRED GLORY, DOMINION

God's purposes and His glory simply cannot be reconciled with the theistic evolution paradigm. To come back to the original analogy I used earlier, if my purpose was to create an enclosure and to give it to my son, so that he might tend it and return to give me thankfulness, in what way would I be achieving my purpose if I deliberately took 24 years to complete it when I could have finished it in six days? How then was God's creational purpose and His glory fulfilled if he took 13 billion years and a multitude of dead animals along the way, when he could have done it all in six days and minus the carnage?

Furthermore, where is man's dignity in all of this? Psalm 8 states that man is crowned with glory and honor (Psalm 8:5). In the six-day creational paradigm, it is easy to see why this is so. The Earth was made for man and given to him as a

...if I told you that one day is as four years to me, would that begin to make a little more sense?

gift. He was then given responsibility for it and God "made him to have dominion over the works of his hands" (Psalm 8:6). The theistic evolution paradigm robs man of this highly exalted position for over 99% of the history of the creation, and for billions of years the Earth was apparently left to its own devices, without a dominion taker and without one bearing the *Imago Dei*.

In conclusion, a straightforward reading of the Genesis account clearly suggests that God finished the Heavens and the Earth, including His image bearer, in a period of six days. This entirely accords with God's purpose in creating all things – that He might receive glory and honor. The onus is therefore on those who advocate theistic evolution to show from the Scriptures and from the purposes of God why and how He would have used billions of years of slow graduated changes, without mankind to glorify Him, in order to bring this about. My contention is that theistic evolution is not only incompatible with the straightforward Genesis narrative, it also misses the entire purpose God had for His creation. As far as theories go, it falls well short of His glory. 

CAN WE PROTECT OUR HISTORY?

by Margaret Helder

WE CAN STORE MORE DATA THAN EVER BEFORE... BUT HOW LONG CAN WE STORE IT?

The monuments and written records of the ancient world seem so skimpy and primitive.

But they do communicate some details about the ancient world to us. But consider this: what sort of record might our civilization leave to future generations?

The answer is, shockingly little. This is the digital age, after all. We have collected a richness of records which is almost unimaginable. The shocking thing, however, is that within one or two generations most of this information could well be lost.

MORE AND MORE AND MORE

How could this happen?

Well, over the last decade, as everyone knows, everything has become digital. We don't capture images on film anymore, but in digital files. And we certainly don't carve images in stone. Instead of letters, we send email messages. We don't buy books; we download documents to an e-reader. Yes, every organization has a website, and information is at our fingertips, but the whole system is extremely fragile!

Some estimate that the amount of digital data grew tenfold between 2007 and 2011, from 161 billion gigabytes to 1800 billion gigabytes. At present the

amount of stored data probably doubles every 18 months.

Modern society has acquired a great deal of very valuable data. There are images from space, expensively acquired, in ever more exquisite detail. Comparisons of observations made at one time, with those made later, need data retrieval. The sequencing of DNA from many kinds of organism all require storage of huge amounts of data. Fancy physics experiments, like that of the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, all generate tremendous amounts of data.

The looming problem, however, is that digital data don't last!

EASIER TO CARRY, HARDER TO KEEP

It is very discouraging to discover that CDs and DVDs have a life expectancy of less than 20 years and, whatever the method of storage, the safest procedure is to transfer the data ever five years, before they have a chance to degrade. Apparently, among the major at risk formats are JPEGs, JAVA source code and websites using HTML and PDF documents.

One expert pointed out, in addition, that as new technology replaces older, data stored in older formats become increasingly hard to access. In fact, the European Union alone is said to be losing over 3 billion euros worth of digital information every year.

An interesting example of the costs of storage of digital data is that of Tevatron, a fancy laboratory for studying particle physics in the US. Because of limited funding and because the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland has much better equipment, the Tevatron was permanently shut down at the end of 2011. Over 26 years, however, it had generated 20 million gigabytes of data (at major cost to the taxpayers). The data still show promise for analysis. However, there is no funding to maintain the relevant computers. Moreover, the software for reading the data, and the human expertise in knowing what to do with the data, could well all disappear within a few years. Even in a best-case scenario, over the next five years thousands of magnetic tapes' worth of data will have to be saved in newer higher density storage with a suitable new system for retrieving old data. To achieve this, dedicated computers will be needed with new software and maintenance personnel. Then in five years the whole cycle must begin again.

The problems with our digital storage technologies are twofold. The data don't last once they have been laid down and must be transferred to keep them fresh, while the technology for storage and reading keeps changing.

An amusing example of this is NASA, which in the early 2000s found that it was unable to access data from the space program of the 1960s and 1970s. So there they were, scouring Internet

auction sites to find second-hand eight-inch floppy drives which could read their priceless data.

Similar events of loss or near loss happen all the time. In 2009 when Yahoo! closed their GeoCities server, a huge amount of data was lost, perhaps "the most amount of history in the shortest amount of time, certainly on purpose, in living memory." Nobody seemed to notice, but if these had been paper documents which were lost from a library, the outcry would have been anguished indeed. The take-home lesson is that as a digital society, we need better systems to store and read data. In view of this, some scientists have turned their attention not to a new system, but to a tried and true system, much better than modern devices.

Enter DNA to the discussion.

DNA BEATS USB

Inside every living cell, there are long strands of a molecule called DNA which carry information. This information determines how the creature develops from a single cell, and how the creature will function when mature. This molecule, first described in 1953, consists of a chain of sugar molecules joined by phosphate groups. Each sugar molecule has attached to it one or another of four small nitrogen-carrying molecules called nucleotides. The order of the nucleotides along the DNA chain determines the information which the molecule carries. It is also a feature of DNA that it can be exactly copied endless times. This is because of the way the nucleotide bases fit together. DNA, therefore, is a system that stores and uses digital data.

Turning back to human technology, everyone agrees that we need a high density storage medium for data, one

...NASA... in the early 2000s found that it was unable to access data from the space program of the 1960s and 1970s. So there they were, scouring Internet auction sites to find second-hand eight-inch floppy drives which could read their priceless data.

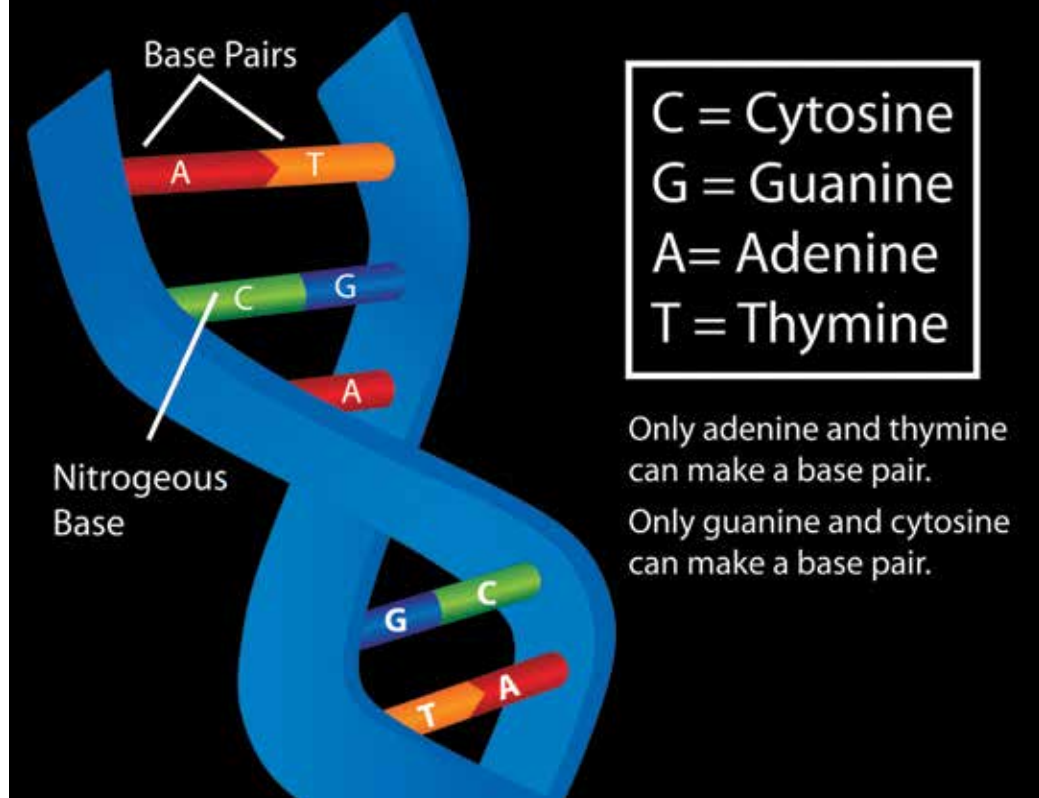


Today's USB drives are a fraction of the size, but store as much as 1,000,000 times more than 1970s era 8-inch, 1-meg floppy disks.

that can be preserved for long periods of time under easily achieved conditions, and one with a proven track record as a bearer of information.

According to all these criteria, DNA is a proven winner. This molecule easily stores 2.2 million gigabytes of data per gram of DNA, the equivalent of about 468,000 DVDs in a tiny speck of material. This is superlative information-storing capacity! The Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, for example, generates about 15 million gigabytes of

...as for best storage, it seems that dry storage at room temperature works perfectly fine. The molecules should remain stable for thousands of years, if required.



data per year. With this storage capacity of DNA, storage space should be no trouble at all! As for conditions required for best storage, it seems that dry storage at room temperature works perfectly fine. The molecules should remain stable for thousands of years, if required.

The remaining issue is what kind of promise does DNA provide for storing our digital recordings, images, text, etc. And how do we extract the information once it has been stored in DNA? These are issues that occupy the attention of some scientists today.

A further concern, of course, is the economics of the technique. In August 2012, three scientists/bioengineers at Harvard's Medical School published an account of how they stored the entire text (53,000 words and 11 digital images) of a genetics text in DNA code. An inkjet printer embedded the chemically synthesized DNA onto the surface of a tiny glass chip. Later they re-suspended the DNA in liquid, and fed it into a DNA sequencing machine after which a computer translated the coded information into English text. And there it was! The text of the book restored, with only an error rate of 2 errors per million bits. Since in digital code there are 8 bits per character or letter, this translated into only a few single-letter typos in the whole book. Not too bad a record!

WRITTEN, MAILED, AND READ

What the scientists did to convert the book's text into DNA code was to assign two of the 4 nucleotide choices in DNA to represent a 0 in the binary code, and the other two nucleotide choices to represent a 1. Then the English text was translated into binary code, and then into the equivalent in DNA code. To turn this into physical reality, the DNA code was then (metaphorically) chopped into very short blocks of code, with information added at the end of each short chunk to show where, in the large scheme of things, this piece occurs. Everything was just theoretical up to this point, however.

There are commercial laboratories that are able to piece together (synthesize) short strands of DNA with a specific order of nucleotides. The next step then was to order the synthesizing of about 55,000 different short strands of DNA and to multiply each of these millions of times as well. These were then stored in dry form. Later, to recover the information, the DNA sample consisting of all these different strands was sequenced and read by special machine/computer systems.

It is evident that this is not a cheap process!

Then on February 7, 2012, an article in *Nature* reported on some improvements to the system. One of the main sources

of error in retrieving the data in the first study was when the computer failed to count repeating nucleotides. Thus in a list like TTTT, the computer might miss one of the repeats. Thus a large team of British and American scientists devised a coding system where there would be no repeats. Instead of a binary system with two choices, 0 or 1, they chose a "ternary" system with choices 0, 1 or 2. Next they set up rules whereby if the last nucleotide in a chain is A, then to indicate 0 next, one would choose C; to indicate 1, one would choose G, and to indicate 2, one would choose T. Similarly, if the last letter used is T, then to indicate 0, one would use A; for 1, one would choose C, and for 2, one would use G. Similar rules apply to the other two nucleotides last listed. The rules seem complex, but computers follow whatever rules are programmed into them.

The team of Goldman and others (including Ewan Birney, ENCODE's lead analysis coordinator), stored 5 files in their DNA sample: all Shakespeare's sonnets (in ASCII text), a medium resolution photograph (in JPEG2000 format), a 26-second recording (MP3 format), and a PDF of Watson and Crick's original brief 1953 paper on the structure of DNA, as well as code which converted the data to base-3 digits (in ASCII text). In a cute stunt, they then shipped the dried material at ambient

temperature (without any specialized packing), from the USA to Germany via the UK. In Germany the 117 nucleotide long strings of DNA were read by machine and converted back into their original formats.

This study involved only 739 kilobytes of data. However, an interesting part of the discussion was economic. At commercial rates, the DNA storage method costs about \$12,400 per megabyte stored and a further \$220 per megabyte of data read from the system. In a world where something like the Large Hadron Collider generates about 15 billion megabytes per year, nobody is going to pay to store the data in DNA! However, if one desired to store the data for an interval of between 600 to 5000 years, then this technique is economic even now, since the data do not have to be frequently transferred. If costs associated with DNA technology fall as expected, within a decade, it might be reasonable to store data for 50 years or

more with this method.


The advantages of DNA data storage are its extremely high density and easy storage requirements (on a shelf at room temperature) and, of course, its permanence.

The disadvantages are the high cost of suitable computer/machine systems needed to encode the data and later to read it. In addition, accessing the data can be a slow process, depending on how fancy the machines are and how many are used. In addition, there is no “random access memory” in this system – one has to decode the whole file. And, finally, there is no modifying the data once it has been deposited.

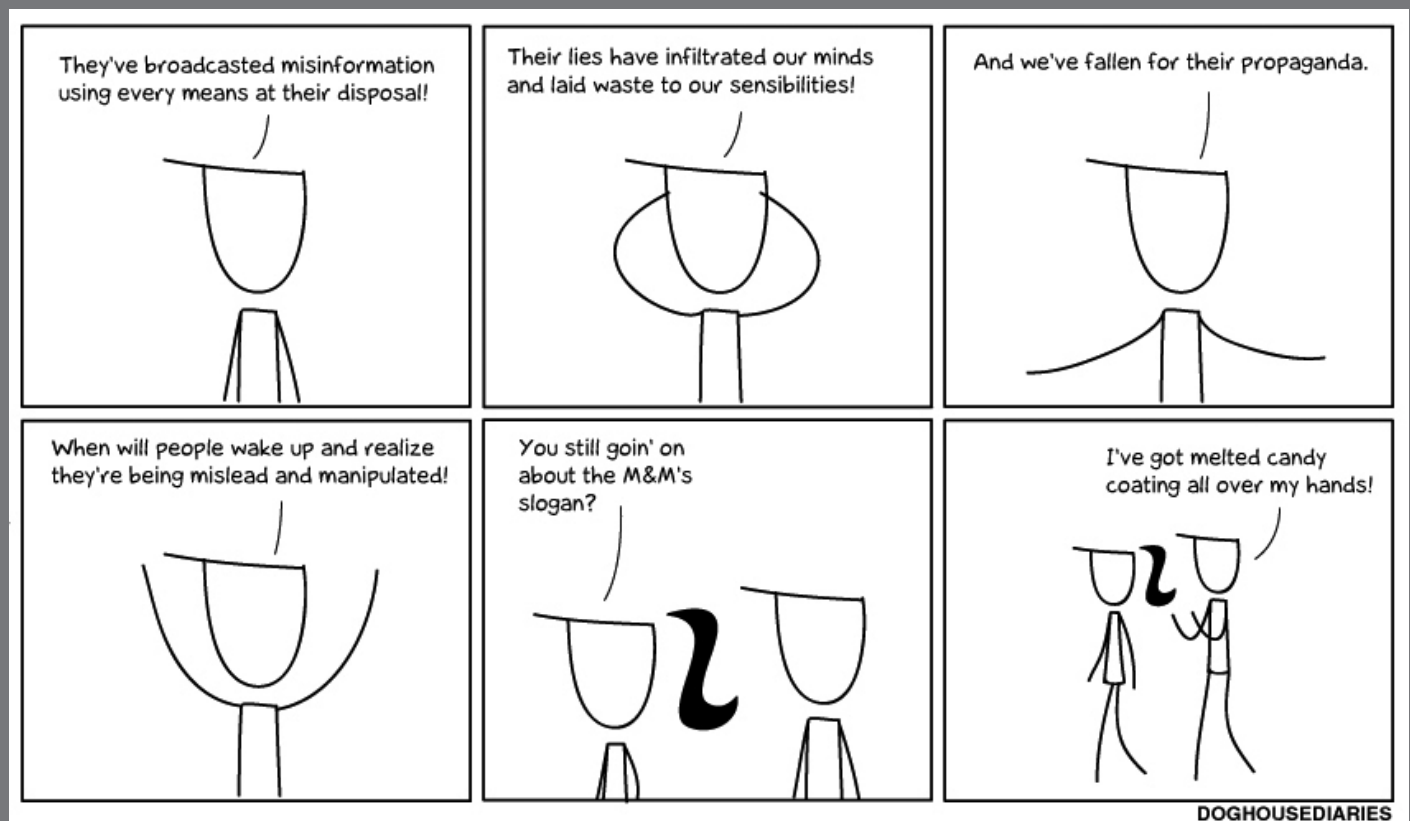
AWESOME DESIGN

So our technological society happily seeks to exploit a system which exhibits capacities far, far beyond our pitifully inadequate methods of data storage. One commentary called DNA “the ultimate hard drive” (*Wired Science* posted

online August 17, 2012). And where, one might ask, did hard drives come from? Certainly they did not appear spontaneously. They are the result of the combined design efforts of many, many computer engineers. Nobody would imagine hard drives could develop by chance.

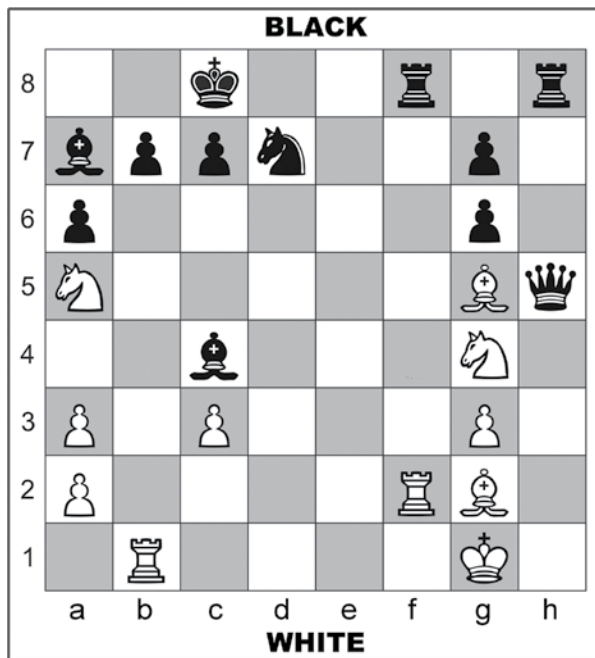
And what about DNA, so much more sophisticated than current computers in its reliability and intensely concentrated data storage capacity? Of course, DNA did not develop by chance either. In fact, the characteristics of DNA demonstrate that the system was wonderfully designed by our omniscient and omnipotent God. A code that stores information never has been, and never will be, developed by chance. This God-given system may help us protect some information for generations to come. Once again, our technological society borrows designs which God has provided to us in nature. 

COMICS



ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Chess Puzzle #201



Problem to Ponder #201

"A Nice Day on the walkway"

A Japanese Garden, 12 meters long by 9 meters wide, is entirely enclosed by a walkway made of square patio stones with dimensions $\frac{3}{4}$ meter by $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. How many patio stones were used to make the walkway, **and** what is their total surface area, **and** what would their total cost be (including 12% tax) if the cost of each individual patio stone is \$7.49?

Riddle for Punsters #201

"We Wonder Whether the Weather Will be Wetter"

When Sam, manager of a weather station, which is a high p_____ job, s t ____e d into the office, the other workers felt a c_____ go down their spines. Later, Sam relaxed as he ate a b l _____d from Dairy Queen. Seeing the ice cream treat, Jim said, "C_____ man!"

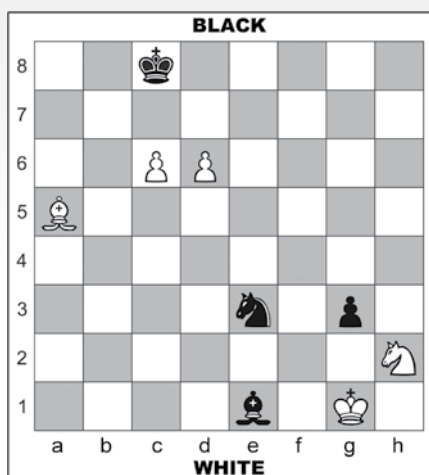
WHITE to Mate in 4

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

BLACK to Mate in 2

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #200



White to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. P-Q7 ch K-N1
2. P-Q8=Q ch K-R2
3. Q-B7 ch K-R3
4. Q-N6 mate

White wins sooner if

1. d6-d7 + Kc8-b8
2. d7-d8=Q + Kb8-a7
3. Qd8-c7 + Ka7-a6
4. Qc7-b6 ++

BLACK to Mate in 4

Descriptive Notation

1. B-B7 ch K-R1
2. P-N7 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Be1-f2 + Kg1-h1
2. g3-g2 ++

Answers to Riddle for Punsters

#200 – "The dog was sad but the melon was glad"

Why did the lonely watermelon, who was looking for a pet, decide to buy a sheep dog that always looked rather sad? That dog would be suitable as a **melon collie** pet.

Answers to Problem to Ponder

#200 – "Birds of a feather flock together"

Some geese were flying north in their usual "V" formation. How many different ways can geese fill the positions if there are an equal number of geese on each side of the leader? For example, if there are 3 geese, the positions can be filled 6 ways, namely $\begin{matrix} B & C & A \\ A & C & B \\ B & A & C \end{matrix}$ or $\begin{matrix} C & A & B \\ B & C & A \\ C & B & A \end{matrix}$. Therefore, how many ways can the "V" formation be made if the number of geese is a) 5? b) 9? c) 15? d) 45?

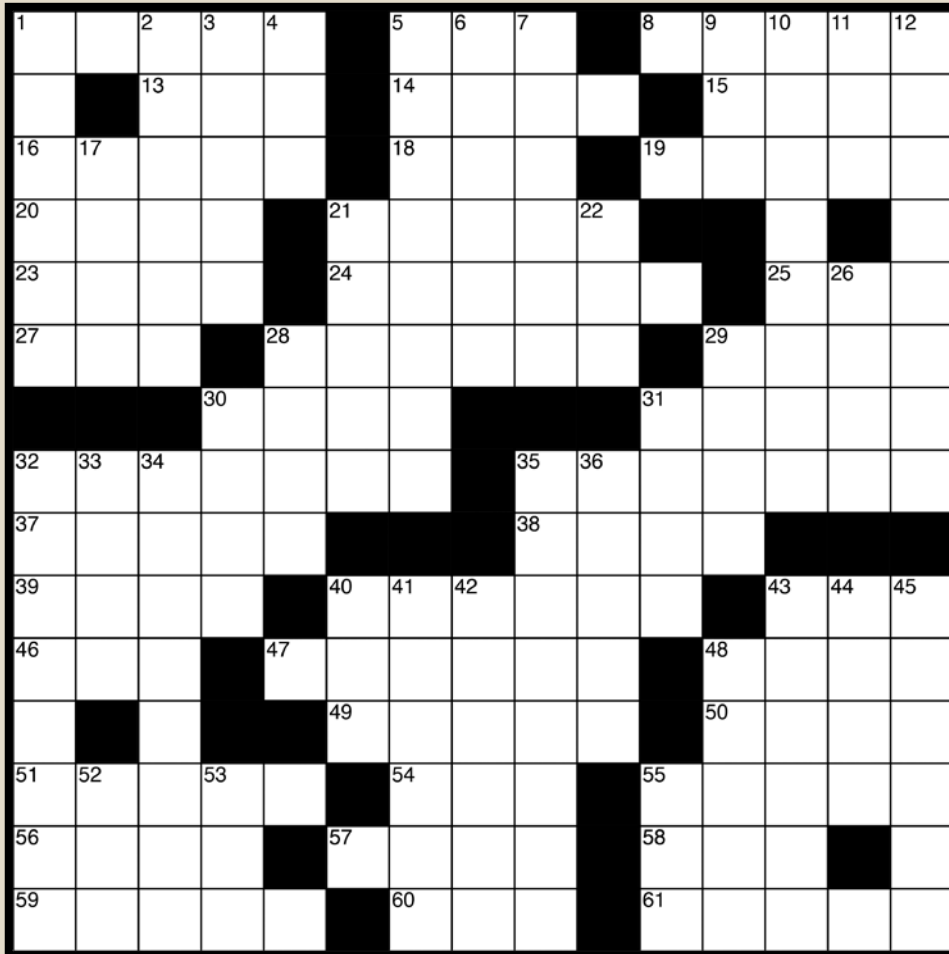
The 6 possibilities in the example above could be written $\begin{matrix} B & C & A \\ A & C & A & B \\ B & C & B & A & C & A \end{matrix}$, showing 3 possible birds for the first (left-most) position, 2 choices of geese for the second (the middle) and 1 choice left for the last position (left-most), thus $3 \times 2 \times 1 = 6$ possible arrangements of the 3 birds.

Similarly, for a) 5 geese there are 5 choices for the left most bird, then 4, then 3, then 2, then 1 so **5 geese can make $5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ "V" formations** (which can be found quickly on a scientific calculator using the n! or "n factorial" button, whereby $5! = 120$) Therefore the remaining answers are:

- b) 9 geese can form $9! = 362880$ "V" formations
- c) 15 geese can form $15! = 1307674368000$ "V" formations
- d) 45 geese can form $45! = 1.1962222 \times 10^{56}$ "V" formations. WOW!

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



SERIES 20 #4

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. A Minor Prophet, 8th century
5. French sea
8. Parking attendant
13. Works of design
14. Malt beverages
15. Fly like an eagle
16. Portion out
18. The egg of a parasitic insect
19. A spotted horse
20. Sudden attack on something
21. A prince in India
23. A river in England

24. A Major Prophet, 8th century
25. Her Britannic Majesty, for short
27. Here Is Buried (hic situs est)
28. In a rash manner
29. Be bold enough
30. Tear with the teeth
31. Another name for David's city (Is. 29:1)
32. The mother of King Josiah of Judah
35. An Athenian woman converted under Paul
37. Elude, escape
38. Amalekite king spared

by Saul

39. Defendant in Roman law
40. Disgraces
43. Accomplished
46. Amount of work
47. Compatriot
48. Manufactured
49. Temporary failure
50. Unusual, comb. form
51. Very small quantities
54. Muscular spasm
55. Lively and active
56. Scottish ones
57. Intellectual leader
58. Fish eggs
59. King of Judea, sometimes called the great
60. Socioeconomic status, for short
61. King of Moab, killed by Ehud

DOWN

1. Fireplace floor
2. Salty solution
3. Eat away
4. Attorney (abbr.)
5. The first son of Joseph
6. Hebrew prophet of the 9th century
7. Sale of goods to customers
9. Airspeed indicator (abbr.)
10. A cat having long fur
11. Consume food
12. Ore sorting conical screens
17. Places down to rest
21. A lariat
22. Clover used for forage
26. Suspension used as a culture for viruses
28. Operate a horse
29. Pull with effort

30. Expresses farewell
31. Japanese pearl divers
32. Major Prophet of 6th & 7th centuries
33. Always
34. Certain offspring
35. Capital of Syria
36. Yellow oil used bleaching flour
40. Salvatore, to his pals
41. A break in work
42. Seek ambitiously
43. A Prophet during the Captivity
44. Mere image of something
45. Humiliate
48. A people descended from Japheth
52. A single thing
53. A volcanic mountain in Japan
55. Exist

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 2 #10

Joyce

16 churches,
in 3 countries,
over 5000 users,
and growing...

It's a membership management tool,
It's a photo directory,
It's an events calendar with reminders,
It's a bulletin & sermon archive,
It's a church website builder

It's...



Introducing Church Social, powerful and exciting web-based software that's relevant **for every member of your church!**

Learn more about us at churchsocialapp.com

Follow our progress at facebook.com/churchsocialapp