

**REFORMED**

# Perspective

A MAGAZINE  
FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN  
FAMILY

Volume 30 No 7

May 2011

The Cross  
and  
the  
Crescent:

Reaching  
out with  
the  
gospel



# What's wrong with our churches?

Editorial

Jon Dykstra

In one large church some of the older members were feeling quite lonely and took their concerns to the church council. They asked the elders and deacons why they weren't visiting the seniors in the congregation more often.

Many of the council members were chagrined to find out they had been neglecting these members of the church – they took turns expressing their regret and made promises to visit more often.

However, not all the elders and deacons agreed that they were being neglectful. One quietly spoke up, and instead of apologizing, challenged the seniors. He noted that the men on council were away from home most nights of the week, and had many demands on their time. In contrast the assembled seniors had been blessed with time to fill, as well as reasonably good health, and cars to get around in. He concluded with a question: "If you are lonely then why don't you take up the task of visiting those shut-in, and why not offer rides to those without cars?"

## Don't look to others

We all have different ideas of how our churches could do things better and, like these seniors, our ideas are most often directed at what other *others* should do. Our churches undoubtedly do have problems, but it is this that is one of the most pressing – looking to others to make the very changes we need to make ourselves.

A recent conversation with some young people had me experiencing *déjà vu* – they wondered why our churches weren't as welcoming as some others that they knew. As a younger man I had made this same complaint. . . frequently!

When I was in university, meeting new people almost every day, I wondered how I could invite them to my church when I knew they would find it far too quiet, formal and unfriendly.

My friends had similar concerns and together we knew just how this problem could be fixed. The list was extensive, but some of the highlights involved things the minister could

# We are.

do, welcoming visitors as the service began, and then again afterwards, personally shaking their hands as they left. We also had ideas on how the elders could make the church more welcoming, and may have had some new job assignments for the deacons too.

.....  
***We all have different ideas  
of how our churches could  
do things better***  
.....

Back then I often shared my complaints with one of my older brothers. He was sympathetic, agreeing that the church really needed to be welcoming to strangers from the moment they enter the doors. But he wasn't content to simply criticize from the sidelines. My brother soon got involved with the church ushers, recruiting some of the more outgoing young people in the congregation to take on this task. He got them all nametags, and just generally ensured that each Sunday any newcomers would be welcomed by a bright and shining face. And he also became an usher, taking a regular turn being the *change he wanted to see*.

## Equip ourselves

Now that was fine and good for my brother. He was an outgoing fellow, able to dial up the charm and make people feel welcome. But what are introverts like me, and maybe you, to do? It would be nice if we could push this task onto those who seem most suited to it but the innumerable passages in Scripture that talk of welcoming the stranger have no opt-out clause for the introverted (Deut. 10:19 Matt. 25:35, Hebrews 13:1, Romans 12:13 and of course Matt. 7:12 to name just a few). My brother's actions also confronted me with the uncomfortable reality that I wasn't taking seriously what the Lord says in Matthew 7:3-5:

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention

to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye. . . ."

I had been quick to criticize, but slow to do anything about the problem myself. And it seemed it wasn't just a matter of shutting up – I had to put up.

If I didn't feel equipped to doing this task on my own, that left me with one other possibility: doing it with help. I talked to some friends – a few who were more extroverted, but others who were much like myself – and we made a pact. We agreed that we could call on one another for backup to go greet strangers. And, if an invitation was accepted, this back-up role would also involve coming along for coffee and cake to help keep the conversation going. What we might be leery to do alone, we could thus accomplish together.

### Conclusion

Our churches are not perfect, and there might very well be things our churches' councils can do better. But before we look to others to fix the problems we see, we need to ask what we could do ourselves. Can we meet the need? Can we equip ourselves to do this task? We are all, together, the Body of Christ, and while elders and deacons, and the minister, all have their work to do, there are no unimportant parts. We are *all* called to be active, and called to be in service to one another.

So if we see some area in which our church is falling short, we can stop seeing it as a problem for others to fix and instead ask ourselves if it is an opportunity for us to serve our brothers and sisters, in gratitude to our Lord.

*The title of this article is a paraphrase of a G. K. Chesterton quote. When asked by The Times to write an essay on the theme: "What is wrong with the world?" he gave them a two-word response: "I am." It was a reply that took humility to write, but showed a keen understanding of his own fallen human nature.*

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## What's Inside

The age of the Earth has been in contention in our conservative Reformed circles for some time now. In this issue we present the second in a series of four articles by Dr. Miep von Lindheim-Westerink that offer some much-needed answers to the questions being posed. We also tackle this same issue from another direction with "How Scientific is our Science?" by Dominic Statham. Though the Bible and the findings of mainstream Science do often conflict, only one of these two is a reliable source of Truth.

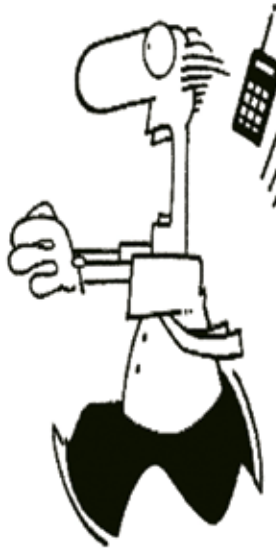
Finally, we have an article on Islam by Dr. Wes Bredenhof that contrasts and compares Christianity with Islam. There is something in it for everyone – it is an introductory article on the subject but it is sure to teach something new to even those already well-read on this increasingly important topic.

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LONG LINE WANTING  
TO KNOW WHAT  
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www.reformedperspective.ca

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

## Address for Administrative Matters (Subscriptions, Advertisements, Change of Address):

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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 \*including 5% G.S.T. – G.S.T. No. R118929272RT

*We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the*

*Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.*



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Registration: ISSN 0714-8208

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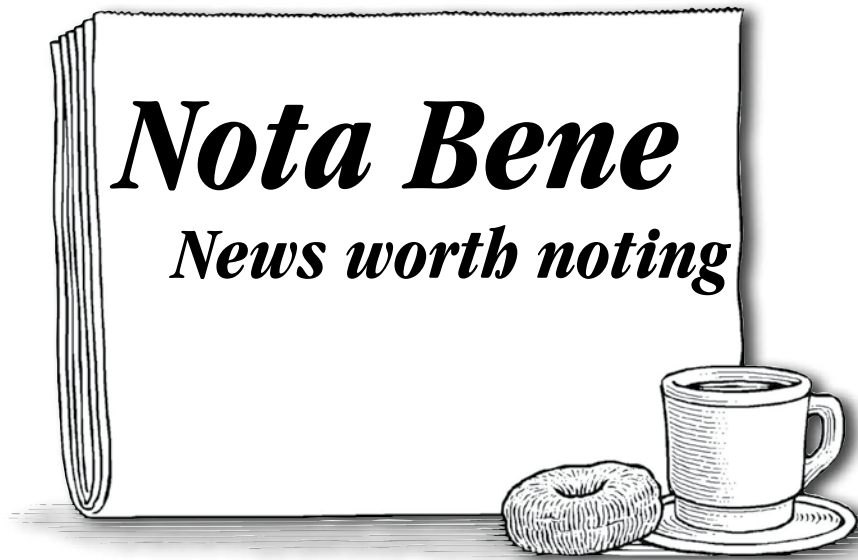
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# Nota Bene

## News worth noting



### Who needs a government?

by Anna Nienhuis

Belgium is continuing its streak as the country that has gone the longest without a government – 300+ days – after political, cultural and linguistic divisions between political parties left the country without a government after an election last June. On Feb 18 Guinness World Records recognized this “achievement”, taking the trophy from previous record holder Iraq (249 days), who had taken it from the Dutch only 3 months ago after the Dutch managed to go unbeaten for 30 years.

Belgians are still at the point of laughing at themselves rather than

being upset about the situation, largely because their government is decentralized, and local and regional governments are continuing to function effectively. The country remains stable and economically prosperous, but a government will eventually be needed as issues such as foreign policy, defense, national budget and debt are currently being ignored – perhaps the theory is if they ignore things long enough they will just go away.

SOURCE: Ian Traynor’s “Some streak: Belgium marks 250 days with no government”; [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Feb. 18, 2011 and Edmonton Journal; April 20, 2011

### Male/female wage gap gone

by Anna Nienhuis

This past April 12 was a very quiet “Equal Pay Day” as protests and demonstrations are unnecessary according to recent stats in the United States. This date was chosen as “Equal Pay Day” because activists claim that’s how long women have to work into the new year to make the equivalent of what men made the previous year. However this seems to no longer be the case.

In the United States, the unemployment rate is now higher among men than women, as men tend to be in jobs more affected by the recession,

such as manufacturing and construction. Women, on the other hand, are better represented in more insulated jobs such as healthcare and teaching.

Studies have also found that men may in some cases make more than women due to the higher risk jobs and longer hours they work, with men working on average 9% more hours than women over the course of a year, while women tend toward jobs with stable hours and a comfortable environment, jobs that might pay less but do so for both men and women. In addition, a 2010 study of single, childless urban workers found that among this

### Qur’an compared to Christ

by Anna Nienhuis

At least 24 people have died in Afghanistan, including seven United Nations employees, in a rage following a Florida pastor’s public burning of the Qur’an in March. Despite efforts in the United States to minimize press regarding the incident, word quickly spread over the Internet and Afghan president Hamid Karzai condemned the burning as “disrespectful and abhorrent.”

Well-known evangelical pastor John Piper (citing U.K. scholar Andrew Walls) tried to explain why Muslims were so upset by this event. To them, he said, the Qur’an is a divine gift of revelation sent by Allah, from heaven, and impure in any language by the original Arabic. We tend to assume they view it in the same way we as Christians view the Bible. However, Piper says a better comparison is to say the Qur’an is viewed by Muslims in much the same way as we see Christ, the Word incarnate, who came as a gift directly from heaven. Burning the Qur’an then, would be comparable to *crucifying Christ*.

This is

no way excuses the murder and riots resulting from the



event, but does perhaps give us a better understanding of the outrage and just how central the Qur’an is in the Muslim religion.

SOURCE: Michelle Vu’s “John Piper compares Quran burning to crucifying Christ”; [christianpost.com](http://christianpost.com), Apr. 6, 2011

group women in fact made an average of 8% more than their male colleagues, indicating the effect on salary of the fact that women now pursue more education than men.

In short, it’s time for women to stop worrying about whether they are receiving equal pay for equal work as it is no longer the issue. Rather, most women surveyed, even primary wage earners, indicated that they would like to know there are good jobs out there for their husbands, sons and brothers, as well as for women.

SOURCE: Carrie Lukas’ “There is no male-female wage gap”; [www.online.wsj.com](http://www.online.wsj.com), April 12, 2011

## This isn't your parents' NIV

In 2005 Zondervan Publishing put out *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) an updated version of their popular NIV translation. It was a controversial revision as it replaced many of the Bible's masculine singulars with gender-neutral plurals. So, for example, Rev. 3:20 went from "...I will come and eat with *him*, and *he* with *me*" to "...I will come to eat with *them*, and *they* with *me*."

The TNIV translation was initially meant to replace the NIV, but it garnered such controversy that Zondervan promised that they would retain the NIV. Now, in 2011, Zondervan is back with a new update of the NIV, and has again sought to make this translation gender-neutral. While critics, like The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW.org) note that improvements have been made since 2005, they don't regard this new NIV as improvement on the old. In a quest to become gender-neutral Zondervan has again replaced male singulars with plurals. Here is the NIV 2011 version of Rev. 3:20: "... I will come to eat with *that person*, and *they* with *me*."

According to blogger John Dyers (as relayed by Marvin Olasky in WORLD) the biggest differences between the 1984 and 2011 version of the NIV are the removal of:

"'He,' 'his,' or 'him' 2,700 times, 'man' or 'men' 1,600 times, and 'fathers,' 'forefathers,' or 'brothers' 500 times."

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of this new translation is that it is being published under the old name. Zondervan has said that the original 1984 version (as well as the TNIV) will no longer be published, and the new 2011 version will be distributed under the NIV banner. This means the some will buy the 2011 NIV unaware it isn't their old favorite.

SOURCES: <http://www.biblewebapp.com/niv2011-changes/>; [CBMW.org/Blog/Posts/CBMW-Responds-to-New-NIV2011](http://CBMW.org/Blog/Posts/CBMW-Responds-to-New-NIV2011)

<sup>16</sup> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>19</sup> When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without

## Mars Hill versus. . . Mars Hill

by Jon Dykstra

Both are bestselling authors, both have been linked to the emergent church movement, both are big fans of John Piper and both pastor churches that are named Mars Hill. So it wouldn't be surprising then, if people were to confuse Mark Driscoll, pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, and Rob Bell, pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

But despite the similarities, there is much that distinguishes the two, and that became very apparent early this year, when Rob Bell published *Love Wins* a book that asks:

"Has God created billions of people over thousands of years only to select a few to go to heaven and everyone else to suffer forever in hell? Is this acceptable to God? How is this 'good news?'"

Bell doesn't offer clear answers to the many, many questions he asks in his book, but it is evident from the way he frames this question what answer he is after. The problem is, the answer Bell is after does away with Hell.

Soon after the book's release that other Mars Hill pastor, Mark Driscoll, made it clear he wanted no one to con-

fuse him with Bell. He decided he would address the same topic, but instead of questioning Hell – and orthodox belief – he offered answers drawn from the Bible:

"To get to hell someone must reject the God who shows them his goodness and out of love for all "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25); reject the Spirit who "convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (Job 16:8); and reject the crucified Son who said, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). Obviously, God has been exceedingly gracious to sinners."

Despite some superficial similarities, Bell and Driscoll couldn't be more different. One thinks that because he can ask questions he has something to say, while the other actually has something to say because he turns to God's Word for his wisdom.

SOURCE: [TheResurgence.com/2011/03/14/to-hell-with-hell/](http://TheResurgence.com/2011/03/14/to-hell-with-hell/); Photo courtesy of Mars Hill Church



## "Sun News" new news source in Canada

by Anna Nienhuis

Launched in Canada on April 18, in the midst of election time, "Sun News" is a new source of news for Canadians, dubbed "right-wing" by critics, and aiming to discuss things in a less politically-correct manner. The network's goal is to provide "fair, factual and thought-provoking news coverage" about issues that are not always covered, or are only covered from a definite bias. This includes topics that social conservatives care about, from life issues to education.



One of those lined up for his own show, well-known champion of free speech Ezra Levant, said, "My deep hope. . . is that we talk about things that actually matter." Canadians will have the opportunity in the coming weeks and months to see how well Sun TV is reaching this goal.

SOURCE: Rebecca Millette's " 'Fox News North' TV news network launches in Canada"; [lifesitenews.com](http://lifesitenews.com), Apr. 18, 2011



The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same:

# 2,000 Years of Christian Pro-Life Activities

by Michael Wagner

The pro-life movement began in the early 1970s as a result of the legalization of abortion in Britain (1967), Canada (1969), the USA (1973) and elsewhere at this time. Or rather, that's when the *modern* pro-life movement began – our generation is not the first to fight against abortion and infanticide. Due to human nature, those evils have been present at various points in history and therefore Christian pro-life movements, in a sense, have been active at various points as well.

American author George Grant (not to be confused with the pro-life Canadian philosopher of the same name) has written a book on the history of the pro-life movement called *Third Time Around: A History of the Pro-Life Movement From the First Century to the Present*. He gives a brief overview that divides pro-life history into three main periods:

1. The early church and medieval period;
2. The Renaissance/Reformation and mission movement period leading into the nineteenth century;
3. Our own era of the pro-life movement beginning around the 1960s.

## The first pro-life successes

During the time of the Roman Empire, unwanted babies were commonly abandoned outside of cities to die from exposure. Abortion was also practiced in a primitive way. But the fourth century bishop Basil wanted to stop these kinds of things and thus initiated a campaign against abandonment, abortion and infanticide. This campaign influenced Emperor Valentinian to take steps against those practices. Grant writes: “For the first time in human history, abortion, infanticide, exposure, and abandonment were made illegitimate.”

Of course, other leaders in the early church also contributed to the struggle against child-killing. Grant sums up the situation by saying that

“The early church was pro-life. They issued pro-life pronouncements. They launched pro-life activities. And they lived pro-life lifestyles.”

As years passed the church continued its efforts to defend and promote the sanctity of life. Despite the increasing number of corruptions that were creeping into the church during this period, it maintained a consistent pro-life stand and its influence had positive political repercussions: “As early as the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, pro-life legislation was universally and comprehensively enforced.”

The first centuries of growth for the church in Europe had a major effect on changing people's views about the

value of infants' lives. “Before the explosive and penetrating growth of medieval Christian influence, the primordial evils of abortion, infanticide, abandonment, and exposure were a normal part of everyday life in Europe. Afterward, they were regarded as the grotesque perversions that they actually are.”

## Fighting abortion the second-time around

Unfortunately, those evils made a comeback during the Renaissance and Enlightenment period in Europe, roughly the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Ancient Greek and Roman thought was revived during that period, along with its corresponding views supporting baby killing. As Grant writes, European “culture soon reverted to the morals of pagan antiquity, including the desecration of life.”

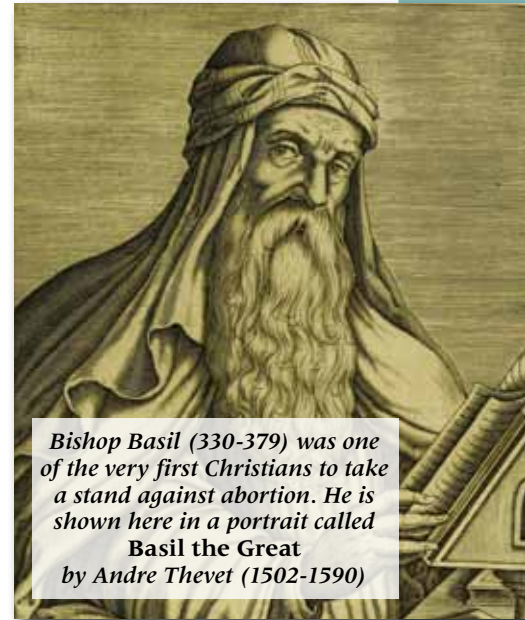
In a number of Western European cities, anywhere from 10 per cent to over 30 per cent of newborn infants were killed or abandoned during this period. However, with the emergence of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century, and the subsequent Counter-Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church, major figures in both the Protestant churches and Papal Church condemned and fought against anti-life forces.

Leading reformer John Calvin was firmly opposed to abortion. Grant quotes Calvin as arguing,

“If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy an unborn child in the womb before it has come to light.”

During the nineteenth century there was a surge in Protestant missionary work, with large numbers of missionaries from Europe and North America going all over the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The effect of the Gospel was, of course, the salvation of multitudes of people. But the Gospel also has benefits for earthly life and

“chief among those benefits of course, was a new respect for innocent human life – a respect that was entirely



*Bishop Basil (330-379) was one of the very first Christians to take a stand against abortion. He is shown here in a portrait called Basil the Great by Andre Thevet (1502-1590)*

unknown anywhere in the world until the advent of the gospel.”

In areas of the world affected by the missionaries, the practices of abandonment, infanticide and abortion were severely curtailed.

In sum:

“The great pro-life legacy – that had been handed down from the Patristic church to the Medieval church to the Renaissance church – was honored, upheld, and even extended by the missionaries that circled the planet during the nineteenth century.”

### Yet a third time

Strangely, abortion was a relatively widespread practice in the United States during the first part of the nineteenth century. Grant states: “Abortion was big business. And abortionists were men and women of great power and influence.”

After the Civil War of the early 1860s, however, various American churches took strong stands in opposition to abortion, and a vigorous pro-life movement developed. Within a few years it had been completely successful in eradicating abortion in the United States:

“By the end of the century the procedure had been criminalized across the board. Most of the legal changes came during a short twenty-year period from 1860 to 1880.”

### Abortion and churches today


Human nature being what it is, abortion began to find prominent supporters again by the early twentieth century among people who were concerned about “overpopulation.” Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, was a central leader in the effort to promote birth control and abortion. Grant seems to suggest that support for birth control opened the door for supporting abortion among the Protestant churches.

In embracing birth control in 1930, the liberal American Protestant ecumenical group, the Federal Council of Churches (precursor to the current National Council of Churches), “became the first major organization in the history of Christendom to affirm the language and philosophy of ‘choice.’” First the liberal Protestants, and then many evangelical Protestants, embraced birth control and subsequently abortion. Yes, by the late 1960s many evangelical leaders were in favor of abortion (i.e., “pro-choice”)!

This began to change rapidly during the 1970s as certain evangelical leaders spoke out against abortion. Francis Schaeffer is most notable in this regard, alerting evangelicals to the Biblical position, which is very different from the liberal position, of course. The effect was substantial: “By 1985, twenty-eight Protestant denominations, associations, and missions had recanted their earlier pro-abortion positions.” Basically, the bulk of the evangelical churches swung back to the historic Christian position of opposition to abortion by the late 1980s.

### Lord, please bless our efforts today!

It can be depressing to see the current widespread support for abortion in Western countries, especially the support from the media, and academic and political elites. But in their struggle against abortion, modern Christians are following in the footsteps of believers through the centuries. As Grant writes, “Pro-life efforts have been an integral aspect of the work and ministry of faithful believers since the dawning of the faith in the first century.”

Looking back at those efforts, we can see that God has blessed Christian pro-lifers at various points through history. Laws were passed and cultural attitudes about infants and unborn children were changed for the better. This should be an encouragement to every Christian, reminding us of 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (ESV). 



*An enormous pro-life protest in Brazil. The sign reads “No to Abortion.”*

*(The photo was produced by Agência Brasil and was published under the Creative Commons License Attribution 2.5 Brazil.)*



# When have we done enough?

## Balancing time for politics, community, faith, family, and the rest of life

by Mark Penninga

At a recent ARPA Canada event, a woman in the audience piped up during question time “we are constantly being told to do more! When have we done enough?”

What a fantastic question. Although the Reformed community in Canada has a history of faith-based political and social action, the reality is that it has always struggled making the transition from talk to walk. To hear comments suggesting that too much is happening is heart warming to a guy who has a job devoted to promoting political action.

But it does beg the question; just how much time should we be spending on political efforts when so many other important things need to be done? Here are some guidelines that I think can help us each make that decision in our own lives.

### 1) Time is not ours

It’s important to remember that time is not something we own. We have given our lives to God as a sacrifice of thankfulness (Romans 12:1) and just as we acknowledge that God owns our possessions, he also owns our time. Deciding how to use “our” time dramatically changes when we believe that it actually belongs to God and He has given it to us to invest it. Then a better question is “how has God asked us to use the time He has given us?”

### 2) God puts us in different roles

The amount of time I devote to politics should not be the standard for others. Neither should we look at our parents, pastors, or friends. A stay-at-home mom has different responsibilities than a recently-retired man. We should focus on the place where God has put us in life rather than where God has placed others. Don’t put your expectations for what you should do too high or too low based on what others are doing.

### 3) Our roles have priorities

All of us have multiple commitments and responsibilities and are forced to allocate time to each of them. Sadly, we often “wing it” and give our time to whatever suits us at the moment, often leaving our commitments to the deadline.

Worship, Bible reading, marriage, parenting, church leadership, education, exercise, and leisure require substantial amounts of time from many of us. The point is that these things should come as priorities and even within these priorities, some are more important than others. Applying our faith to the public square should never get in the way of our

commitments to God, spouse, or children regardless of how important we think the cause is.

### 4) Goals are essential

With all of these priorities competing for our time, we need to make firm commitments about how much we ought to give to each of them. If you don’t write down your goals it is very difficult to keep them and make decisions when new challenges and opportunities face us. Make long-term (1-5 years), medium-term (this year), and short-term (this week) goals, write them down, and look at them regularly to make sure you are staying on track. Don’t bother writing down goals that you don’t intend to keep.

.....  
***A better question is “how has God asked us to use the time He has given us?”***  
.....

It is much easier to say “no” when you see a list of previous commitments you have made. And it is more difficult to say “yes” to something you want to do when you see how it will take time away from other things you like. Goals bring discipline and discipline is essential for time management.

### 5) We each have a civic duty to take part in public life

Democracies don’t just work “by themselves.” They require the active commitment of their citizens. That is why it is a civic duty to participate. And participation does not just mean voting every four year. We are called to follow the issues that our communities and nation are grappling with so that we can make informed decisions and share our views with our elected representatives. We are abdicating our civic responsibility if the Reformed community devotes all of its time to its own churches, schools, families, and sports leagues.

### 6) We have a Christian duty, as prophet, priest, and king, to take part in public life

Lord’s Day 12 of the Heidelberg Catechism reminds us that being a Christian means that we are all prophets, priests, and kings. That means we all share the calling to “fight

.....  
***If you don't write  
down your goals it is  
very difficult to  
keep them***  
.....



against sin and the devil in this life. . . ." The myth persists that political and social engagement is for "those who like that sort of thing." When sin and the devil are running rampant in Canada and destroying marriages, abusing the elderly, selling the vulnerable into the sex trade or exploiting children to gratify the perversity of adults, we each have a calling to fight. That means getting off our lazy-boys and taking action in meaningful ways.

### **7) Our civic duty can be accomplished in little time**

Following the issues of the day and taking action in the public square does not mean that we have to devote our lives to that cause (though we could sure use more youths who pursue careers with this in mind).

We can be politically aware and active and still have as much time as we did previously. For example, we can take 15 minutes per day that we currently invest in watching TV shows or reading novels and use that time to read newspaper articles, books, and magazine articles on current affairs. We can also make use of the work of organizations like ARPA Canada to respond to current issues in a timely

way. Subscribe to ARPA Canada's E-Luminary newsletter at [www.ARPACanada.ca](http://www.ARPACanada.ca) and get the news sent to your inbox at no charge. Armed with the information, we can then take action. A mere 4 minutes is all that is needed to make use of our Easy Mail technology to write a letter to the appropriate government officials. Or you can devote 40 minutes to writing a letter to the editor. If you set a goal of one action item per month, plus attending one public event per month, the total time is minimal.

### **Conclusion**

Political and social action should generally take up a very small part of our lives. Small is OK, as long as it is focussed and goal-oriented. It is very easy for us to say we are "too busy" without analyzing what exactly we are busy with and what God wants us to do with the time He gave us. It is amazing how much can be accomplished if we devote a small but regular amount of time towards a cause. And if you have done this already – great! Don't do more just because you get another email about an important issue. Go outside and kick the soccer ball around.



# “In Quarreling, The Truth Is Always Lost”

– Publilius Syrus

by Christine Farenhorst

People often quibble about the most inconsequential, strange and minor matters, making these matters – the longer they talk about them – of major importance. Such was the case in the year 1828, when two writers, both in the throes of completing a biography, disagreed on the manner of death of one named John Hampden.

John Hampden lived in England during the time of Oliver Cromwell. As a matter of fact, he was first cousin to Oliver. Born in London in 1595, he was the eldest son of William Hampden, a Puritan landowner with estates in Buckinghamshire and Middlesex. Educated as a lawyer, he became a Member of Parliament (MP) for Grampond, Cornwall in 1621 during the reign of James I. Later he served as MP for Wendover, Buckinghamshire during the reign of Charles I. Had he wished, he could have purchased advancement for himself in court, but he chose to resist Charles I's arbitrary government. And in so doing he earned the title “the Patriot.”

Like other Puritans, John Hampden was deeply suspicious of Catholic influence at court and in 1627, at the still young age of 32, he rose to national fame when he refused to pay the forced loan demanded by the king, stating that such loans were illegal and a violation of the Magna Carta. The only person to refuse, he was, for almost a year, imprisoned for his stand. In 1637, James I, who was always short of money, attempted to raise funds by extending the tax of “ship money.” It was a tax normally levied on coastal towns to pay the Navy, but James thought to impose it inland as well. Hampden, considering this act illegal as well, once more refused the king. This led to a lengthy court case. A year later the judges found the Crown – that is James I – to be right and Hampden wrong. He was forced to pay the tax. Although the verdict went against Hampden, he was regarded as the nation's hero, famous for his firm stand against forced loans and ship-money. Like other Puritans, Hampden was also extremely sympathetic with the opposition of the Scottish Covenanters to Archbishop Laud's Prayer Book. Honest, a man of integrity, persuasive, a faithful Christian, he appeared to be a good role model.

## Battle begins

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Hampden became a Colonel in Cromwell's army, bravely and successfully leading regiments of Greencoats (so named because of the color of their coats) to victory.

On June 18, 1643, a Sunday, the Catholic Prince Rupert, one of the Royalist commanders, overcame a convoy carrying pay for the Parliamentary Army, and ravaged the countryside of Chinnor and Wycombe. Close to the area, John Hampden was told what had happened. Rather than wait for his full infantry regiment, Hampden immediately set off in pursuit of Prince Rupert with a body of troopers, hoping to release prisoners who had been taken and to recover the 21,000 pounds pay with which Rupert had made off. However he was taken by surprise by Rupert, who had stopped to ambush him. In the fight that followed John Hampden was mortally wounded. The troopers scattered in disarray and in panic. John was carried off to Thame. Although cared for by a surgeon, the wounds he sustained worsened. Nothing could be done. He died a week after the battle on his wedding anniversary.

From one Sunday to the next a great deal can happen, as John Hampden's life illustrates. One Sunday he had been worshiping in his pew, singing psalms and praying for liberty and peace – peace for England and peace for his soul; and the next Sunday his lifeless body was being carried by a large company of soldiers into another church. The men who carried and surrounded his coffin, were weeping even as they were singing Psalm 90:

*Thou sweepest men away, vain in their glory,  
For they are like a fleeting dream before Thee,  
Like grass which springs up in the early morning,  
Like flowers for a while the earth adorning  
That with the dawn unfold on hill and glade;  
By evening time they wither and they fade.*

John Hampden had been much beloved. The men carried the coffin up the Hampden estate avenue to the Hampden church – a church where John had worshiped since he was a child. Crowds of mourners lined the avenue. No one spoke as the men walked by; some sang along but many was the tear that fell down the faces of the tenants. John Hampden had been a good master.

A grave had been dug for John near the remains of his first wife. He had reached the age of forty-nine and although he was remembered as “The Patriot,” surely the heavenly title of “faithful servant” was more appropriate. The burial date was June 25, 1643.

### **A different sort of battle**

Now for the inconsequential quibble. Some two centuries after the death of John Hampden, a group of people assembled at the Hampden church. No psalm singing this time. Just whispers and a general air of expectation and some lugubrious excitement. Two factions were present: one surrounded a contemporary writer by the name of Clarendon, and the other surrounded an author by the name of Lord Nugent. Both men were involved in writing a biography on John Hampden, but disagreed violently about how John Hampden had died. Clarendon maintained that death was due to the effects of two musket balls received in the shoulder; whereas Lord Nugent said John Hampden’s death had been caused by the bursting of his own pistol, which so shattered his hand that he died from the effects of the wound.

To decide who was correct, permission had been obtained to examine the body. The party assembled together consisted of the two writers, a Counsellor, the rector of the parish, eight other gentlemen, twelve grave-diggers and their assistants, a plumber and the parish clerk.

It was early morning and work began by turning over the floor of the church. Being wealthier than most, John Hampden, as well as other notables of his day, had had the “debatable” privilege of being buried beneath the tiled flooring of the sanctuary. Dates and initials on several exposed coffins were carefully scrutinized. At length a coffin was exposed whose plate was so corroded that it crumbled when touched. But being near John Hampden’s first wife’s coffin, it was supposed this coffin was the one. At this point the plumber’s job began. He cut longitudinally across the stipulated coffin until the whole was sufficiently loosened to roll back the lead, in order to lift off the wooden lid beneath it. Under this was another wooden lid and this was raised up also. The group of watchers now saw that the coffin was filled with sawdust which was also removed. Everyone’s neck was craned, trying to see what lay underneath the sawdust. The plumber stepped out of the hole and Lord Nugent stepped down into it and proceeded to remove the outer cloth wrapped around the body, as well as a second and third cloth.




*The man under dispute: John Hampden*

The coffin was, at this point, raised from the grave and placed on a trestle in the center of the church. Then what was left of the rather well-preserved body was carefully examined. Sound teeth, as well as a little beard remained on the lower part of the chin, and strong whiskers still showed. The arms were studied. The right arm was without a hand, which had apparently been amputated. Searching under the clothes a number of small bones were discovered. Lord Nugent smiled. His theory, he told the group, was very likely correct. John Hampden’s hand had been shattered. Still, Clarendon was not satisfied and insisted upon a closer examination of the shoulder. Consequently, the exhumers removed the body’s arms by means of a pen-knife. The right arm was properly connected, but the left arm was loose and dislocated.

The body was re-interred shortly afterwards and the result of this rude violation of the grave was that no agreement was reached as to the cause of John Hampden’s death. Each man felt that he had cause to say that he had been right.

Did it matter?

Whether his hand had shattered or whether his shoulder had sustained two musket balls, John Hampden was a Christian who had died in the Lord. Yes, dust he was and to dust he returned. But his death had no sting and his grave held no victory. And that was, in essence, his biography. 

# The Cross and the Crescent

## Bringing the gospel to those immersed in the Muslim worldview

by Wes Bredenhof

*Revised text of a lecture given at Providence Reformed Collegiate, in London, ON in April 2011. A footnoted version of this article is available in the Resource Article section of ReformedPerspective.ca*

Many reports place Islam as the world's fastest growing religion and several things account for this huge growth.

One of them is that Islam is missionary in nature. By that I mean to say that many Muslims make serious efforts to bring others to their beliefs. Many Muslims have a vision for an Islamic world and they're doing their best to make this vision become reality. This also means that it is easy to get Muslims to engage in conversations about spiritual matters.

Another factor is something that makes Islam attractive to many. It's the fact that Islam is not just a religion. It's not just something for the spiritual aspect of your life. In principle, Islam is an all-encompassing worldview. Serious Muslims do not compartmentalize their lives into the religious and the secular. Islam takes in everything. Now, of course there will be inconsistencies among Muslims, like there are among Christians. Just as you'll find Sunday Christians or Christmas and Easter Christians, you'll also find Friday Muslims or Ramadan Muslims or Hajj Muslims. Yet, in principle, Islam does not allow for that and it is this that makes it attractive to so many.

Related to that, Islam is a religion of strict law. In Islam human beings are not in need of redemption. They have the capacity to obey and thereby to earn divine favour. Islam is a religion of works, not of grace. If you read the Qur'an or especially the hadiths (authoritative reports of what Muhammad taught), you'll soon be struck by how much of them consists of commands. In Islam, religion is not first about what someone else has done for you, but about what *you must do* for someone else. And you *can* do it, says Islam. This appeals to our human hearts hard-wired for law (Rom. 2:15). Left to ourselves, our natural inclination is to think we can climb our way up to heaven.

### Contrasting worldviews

In what follows, I want to consider how to bring the gospel to Muslims. Specifically, I want to explore how we can engage in the defence and promotion of the Christian faith (apologetics) with our Muslim friends and neighbours. We're going to approach this from the perspective of worldviews. Does the Muslim worldview present an adequate and coherent account of the world? How does it compare to the Christian worldview?



I should hasten to add that this is not a comprehensive approach in the sense that I will deal with every problem within Islam. Islam is complex and there are many ways to critique it. I have tried here to focus on some of the more important elements and illustrate how Islam fails as a *worldview*. I also recognize the great diversity among Muslims and have tried to focus on worldview elements that all Muslims would hold in common.

### The Islamic worldview

As I set out to describe the central elements of the Islamic worldview, two important things need to be clear from the start.

#### *We don't worship the same God*

First, there is the historical development of Islam. Muhammad delivered the Qur'an and developed Islam after encountering Judaism and heretical forms of Christianity. Islam has sometimes been described as a Christian heresy. This is not altogether accurate. We could debate about what a "Christian heresy" is, but it seems clear enough that Islam is not even remotely Christian, although it is certainly heretical – i.e. it contradicts key teachings of the Christian faith such as the Trinity. It is more accurate to describe Islam as a religious worldview with some historical roots in heretical forms of Christianity.

Second, Muslims do not worship the true God revealed in the Bible. Though there are some superficial things in common, the Allah of Islam is not the Yahweh of the Bible. For one thing, as just mentioned, Islam finds the doctrine of the Trinity not only nonsensical and irrational, but also offensive and blasphemous. Christians hold that the Trinity is an essential teaching – in fact, the Athanasian Creed insists that you cannot be saved without believing it.

Now I should clarify that Christians shouldn't have a problem with calling God, "Allah." After all, even our English word "God" has not always referred to Yahweh, the Triune God who reveals himself in Scripture. As the Christian faith moved into Europe, that word "God" *became* how we refer to him. The word "Allah" is simply the Arabic word for "God." A few parts of the Bible were originally written in Aramaic, a language related to both Hebrew and Arabic. In the Aramaic parts of the Bible, God is called *'elah*, a word very close to Allah in Arabic. Today Arabic translations of the Bible use the word "Allah" for God, as do Indonesian translations (Indonesian is heavily influenced by Arabic).

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***Islam is a religion of works,  
not of grace***

.....

The problem is not with the word "Allah"; the problem is with what it refers to. If Allah is describing Muhammad's god, that's a problem. Muhammad's god is not Abraham's God, nor Paul's God. But if "Allah" is being used by Arabic Christians to refer to the God of the Bible, there's nothing wrong with that. My point is: don't buy into the myth that Christians and Muslims worship the same deity. We don't.

*More than just the Qur'an*

We should begin with the question of authority. What does Islam regard as the source or sources of divine truth?

Right away most people think of the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. The Qur'an is indeed a source of divine truth for Muslims. Muhammad was a prophet of Allah and he recited the Qur'an. Allah promised that the Qur'an would be guarded against corruption (Surah 15:9). The Qur'an is much different from the Bible. The entire book is written as poetry and consists of 114 books or Surahs and it progresses from the largest Surahs to the smallest. Also, Islam does not consider every part of the Qur'an to hold equal authority. There is a doctrine called abrogation. Abrogation says the parts of the Qur'an that were written later are more authoritative than earlier parts (because the Qur'an's Surahs are ordered by size rather than arranged chronologically, these later parts of the Qur'an do not, necessarily occur later in the book)

Besides the Qur'an, most Muslims also hold to the authority of the hadiths. The hadiths are considered to be reliable reports of what Muhammad said, did, or approved of.

The hadiths consist of thousands of items. What this means is that the Islamic worldview is not just defined by the Qur'an -- the hadiths are equally important. I might also mention that there's disagreement among Muslims about the hadiths -- Sunni Muslims hold to one set and Shi'ite Muslims to a different one.

According to Islam, the Bible is also authoritative (at least the Old Testament and "the Gospel"). However, this must be carefully qualified. Muslims believe that the Bible as it exists today has been corrupted by Jews and Christians.

Therefore, the Bible is unreliable. Muslims are discouraged from reading the Bible.

*Their Allah had no Son*

Let's go to another key question: what does Islam teach about Allah? As mentioned a few moments ago, Islam is monotheistic -- it holds to belief in one god. This one god is unique and incomparable. He alone is to be worshipped. The Qur'an says that belief in a Trinity is blasphemy (5:73). Jesus was not God, but merely a prophet (5:75). In Islam, Allah is highly exalted; his foremost attribute is his transcendence. Islam's monotheism, rejection of the Trinity, and focus on God's transcendence are key elements in the Islamic worldview.

*Their Man needs no Saviour*

What about humanity? What does Islam teach about who we are? Islam denies that man needs a Saviour. If only a man will be taught, and if he will only learn, then he can please Allah. Man's problem is not sin so much as ignorance. In Islam, people commit sins, but they are not sinful. There is no such thing as original sin in Islam -- the idea that people are conceived and born in sin. People come into this world essentially good. They end up sinning because they do not know the will of Allah. They need to be taught.

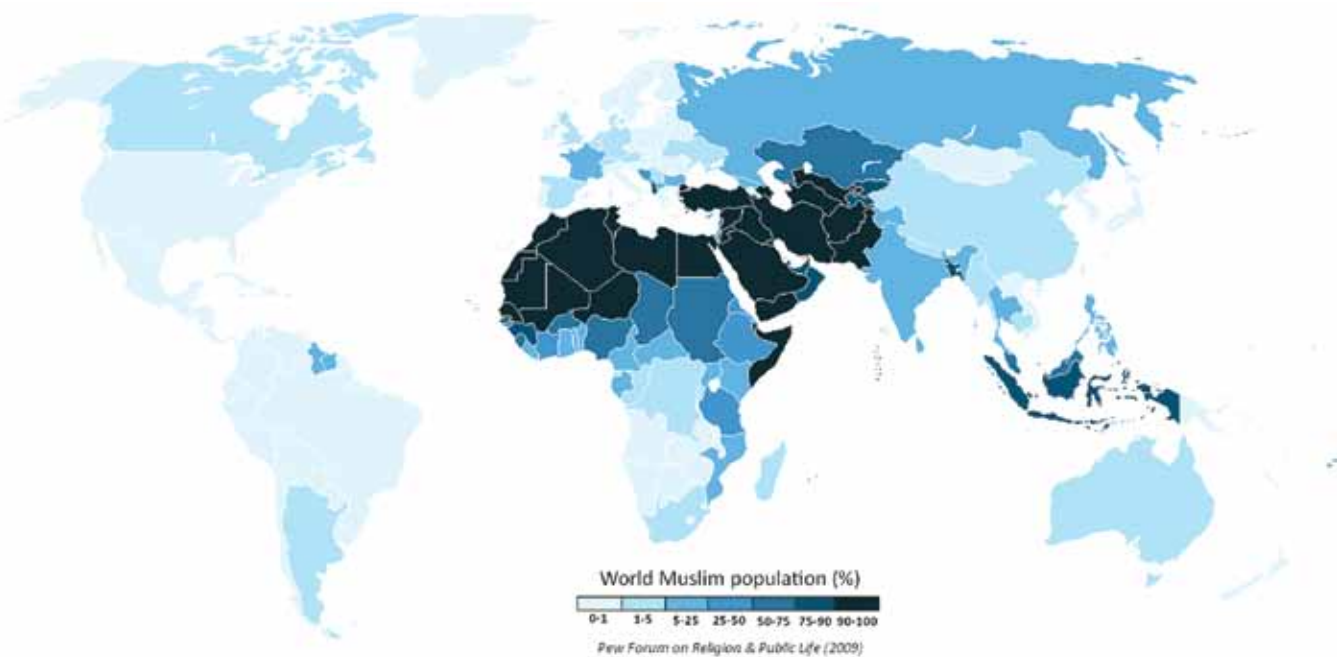
If we put it in Christian terms, we would say that Islam is on the Pelagian track. Pelagius was the British monk who opposed Augustine. Pelagius also taught that man is essentially good.

Islam acknowledges there will be a day of judgment. People will have to answer for what they have done. The way to Paradise is to believe Allah and his prophet Muhammad and to do good deeds, especially to follow the five pillars of Islam: prayer, fasting during Ramadan, pilgrimage (Hajj), almsgiving, and saying the shahada (the testimony of faith, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."). When someone becomes a Muslim, Allah forgives all previous evil deeds. After becoming a Muslim, Allah rewards good deeds and punishes bad ones. In other words, Islam is a religion of works, a law religion. Yes, they say Allah is merciful, but he is merciful to those who submit to him ("Islam" means "submission"). He shows mercy to the deserving.

*Ethics and Shari'ah*

That brings us to consider ethics in the Islamic worldview. As might be expected, Muslims derive their ethics primarily from the Qur'an and the hadiths. The Islamic worldview is not relativistic when it comes to ethics. In other words, Muslims say they believe in moral absolutes. Morality comes from the will of Allah, but not from his person or essential being. Good and evil are whatever Allah says they are. Moreover, the prophet Muhammad is the perfect ethical example. Whatever Muhammad said or did stands as an authoritative guide for the behaviour of Muslims.

Besides personal ethics, Islam also holds to a system of political ethics, called Shari'ah law. Shari'ah is derived from the Qur'an and especially the hadiths, but also from community traditions ('Ijma) and legal reasoning (Qiyas).



We should note that Shari'ah is a controversial area in Islam. Muslims frequently disagree with one another on many details of what Shari'ah involves. So, for instance, some Muslims (especially in Africa) insist on female genital mutilation. Many others disagree that this is required by Islam. Another example would be the consumption of alcohol. Some Muslims insist that Shari'ah law forbids the consumption of all alcoholic beverages. Others allow this to varying degrees.

#### *Muslim view of history*

There are a few aspects of the Islamic worldview that we haven't considered, but one more that is important is the Islamic view of history. In the Islamic worldview, as in the Christian, history is linear. It has a beginning (creation) and an end (the last judgment). Muslims also believe in what is called historical determinism. This means Allah has determined everything that will happen in history. There are no chance happenings. Everything is in the control of Allah.

#### **Critique of the Islamic worldview**

What I want to do now is do a brief internal critique of the Islamic worldview. What I mean by that is that I want to examine this worldview to consider whether it makes sense of the world in which we live. Does Islam offer true truth? We are checking for three things: arbitrariness, inconsistency, and whether Islam provides the preconditions required for the world to make sense. In biblical terms, we are applying what Scripture says in Proverbs 26:5, "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes." This is going to be brief. Islam is complex and a detailed internal critique would require a lot more space than what I have here.

#### *Examining the Qur'an*

Let's begin with the sources of authority in Islam, particularly the Qur'an. First, we need to deal with the Muslim claim that the Qur'an has been guarded from corruption. Muslim books will often contrast this with the Bible. As you may know, there are thousands of biblical manuscripts in Hebrew and Greek and not all of them agree with one another in some of the details. So, for instance, some Greek New Testament manuscripts have a longer ending of Mark than others. Muslims see that and conclude that the Greek New Testament has been corrupted by Christians. We have twisted the Word of God so as to make Jesus to be the divine Son of God. The Qur'an is different, they say. They often claim that nothing has been changed in the Qur'an since the time it was assembled.

However, these claims cannot be substantiated. Like with the Bible, there are ancient manuscripts of the Qur'an and there are variations between these manuscripts. Some of the most important manuscripts are locked away and scholars are not even permitted to examine them. Moreover, even some Muslim commentators acknowledge that parts of the Qur'an are missing. Some Muslim scholars accuse other Muslim scholars of denying parts of the Qur'an. The truth of the matter is that it is arbitrary to claim the Qur'an has been preserved perfectly intact since around the time of Muhammad. It is not only arbitrary, it's patently false.

Unfortunately, the average Muslim is not aware of this and will not likely be convinced of it on the say-so of a Christian. Christians need to point to the Muslim sources themselves which speak of the problems found in the original Arabic manuscripts of the Qur'an.

### *Contradiction and abrogation*

Things get even more complicated when we discuss inconsistencies or contradictions within the Qur'an. Informed Muslims are quick to point out the same sorts of problems within the Bible. From an outsider's perspective, there are teachings in the Bible that seem contradictory. Just as one example, Moses says not to eat pork. Jesus says you can eat pork. An apparent contradiction. Of course, we appeal to the fact that the Old Testament ceremonial laws of clean and unclean were pointing ahead to Christ and after his coming they no longer apply. But Muslims do something similar with the Qur'an and their doctrine of abrogation. At least it appears that way at first glance.

Remember: abrogation is the idea that later teachings of the Qur'an supersede earlier teachings. It is sometimes called progressive revelation. Yet even this teaching is hotly debated among Muslim scholars. Some Muslims believe that abrogation applies to matters of law, matters of fact, or both. Others argue there is no abrogation in the Qur'an, but where the Qur'an speaks of this, it is referring to the Bible. For those who hold to abrogation in the Qur'an, there are significant differences about the number of verses abrogated. Some say there are more than two hundred, others limit it to five. Islam does not present a united front on these issues.

There are internal inconsistencies and difficulties within the Qur'an. One of the most famous deals with how Muslims are to regard Christians and Jews. In some places (e.g. Surah 2.62), we read words that sound peaceful – Muslims are to consider Christians and Jews their friends. In others (e.g. 5.51, 9.123), the Qur'an sings a different tune – Muslims are to consider Christians and Jews their enemies.

Muslims take different approaches to this. Some argue from the difference between the Meccan and the Medinan surahs. The Meccan surahs were supposedly revealed at Mecca and tend towards preaching peace and tolerance, leaving judgment for God in the hereafter. The Medinan surahs

were revealed at Medina, after Muhammad and his followers had fled there and taken up the sword. These surahs tend to be more militaristic and adversarial towards Jews and Christians. For some Muslims, the later surahs abrogate the earlier ones. Whatever the case may be, Muslims need to account for these (and other) inconsistencies within the Qur'an – we need to challenge them on this.

### *Hadiths*

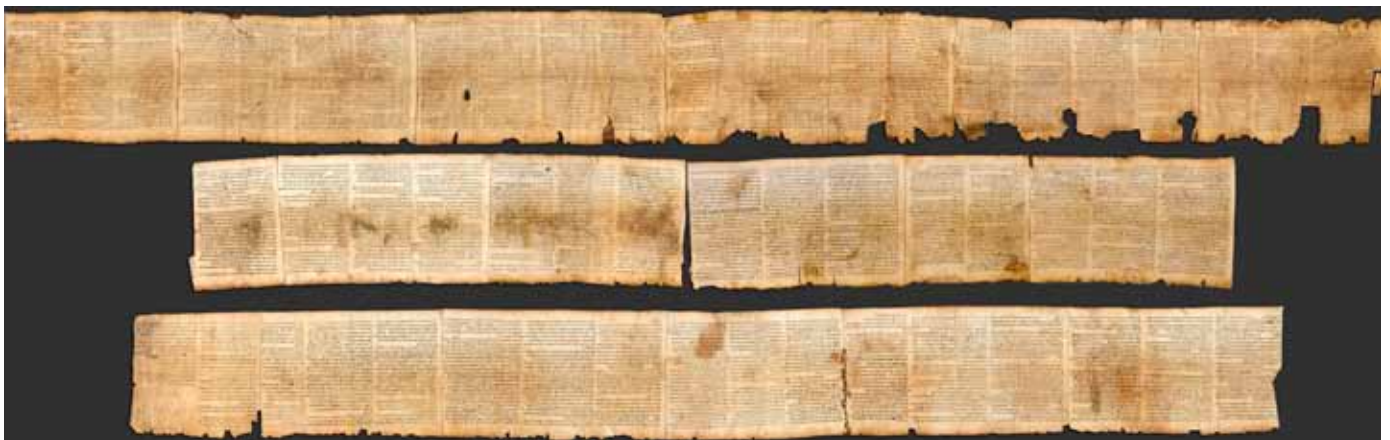
The situation is the same, or even worse, with the hadiths. There are contradictions and inconsistencies between the hadiths and the Qur'an. In fact, there are Muslims who recognize this fact and who consequently insist on the authority of the Qur'an alone (although they do also allow a teaching role for tradition on things like prayer). Some Muslims argue that the hadiths are entirely conjecture and that they engage in an anti-Islamic deification of Muhammad. According to them, Muhammad's only function was to deliver the Qur'an.

Yet there are millions more Muslims who do regard the hadiths as canonical. For them, we need to ask hard questions like: why is the punishment for adultery one hundred lashes in the Qur'an but stoning in the hadith? Why hold the hadith as canonical and authoritative when the Qur'an states that Muhammad was an ordinary man (18.110 and 41.6) and could have erred (28.56)? Why do the most authoritative books of hadith (Muslim and Ibn Hanbal) report that Muhammad commanded that no one should take anything authoritative from him besides the Qur'an?

### *The Bible*

As mentioned, the Bible is also regarded as a source of authority for Muslims. However, it is functionally irrelevant or disregarded because Islam is convinced the Bible has been corrupted by Jews and Christians.

Here the challenge needs to be issued: where is the evidence for this alleged corruption? Yes, there are variations in the biblical manuscripts. Yet the overall picture is one of



*Muslims say the Bible has been corrupted.  
The Dead Sea Scrolls – including this one of the Book of Isaiah and dated to second century BC – reveal an Old Testament of two thousand years ago that is that same as the one we have in our Bibles today.*



remarkable textual integrity – the statistic often mentioned is that 99% of the biblical text is not in question. So when Muslims claim that the gospels found in the New Testament do not give an accurate or authentic record of what Jesus said, they need to be challenged to prove it. What evidence is there outside of the Qur'an to justify the claim, for instance, that Jesus was not crucified? Where are the manuscripts of the gospels that leave out the crucifixion or that conform to the Qur'an's claims? These claims are arbitrary and unable to be justified.

#### *The one and the many*

Now we come to Muslim theology, what Islam claims about Allah. Islam is correct, of course, to insist on monotheism. The problems emerge with its rejection of the Trinity. There is a problem in philosophy known as the problem of the one and the many. Put briefly, what is more important the one or the many, universals or particulars, unity or diversity? Unbelieving (and sometimes even Christian) worldviews opt for one or the other. Because of its anti-Trinitarian monotheistic orientation, Islam opts for the dominance of the one.

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### ***Even some Muslim commentators acknowledge that parts of the Qu'an are missing***

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Islam has difficulty accounting for a world in which there is both diversity and unity. In fact, Islam by its very nature cannot tolerate diversity. This is because of its conception of Allah. Incidentally, this is why democracy is uncomfortable to serious Muslims. Democracy is not Islamic. Having a system of rule that accounts for the will of the many (the ruled) and the will of the one (the ruler) is radically out of sync with Islam. Of course, there are Muslims who do promote democracy and long for democratic rule, but as they do this they are either being inconsistent with their Islamic principles or using democracy as a means to achieve their own visions of tyrannical Islamic rule. Muslims must be challenged to account for the one and the many on the basis of their own beliefs, from within their own worldview.

#### *Man and ethics*

When it comes to Muslim anthropology – what Islam teaches about man – we face the idea that mankind is basically good. There are two problems here within the Islamic worldview.

The first is the more obvious. It's the fact that reality says something far different. Human beings do inflict terrible evil on one another. Muslims might respond by saying that this is because these people do not know the will of Allah. But then how does one explain Muslims who know the will of Allah

and yet still do evil things? The only way out of that is to say that a Muslim who does an evil thing at that exact point does not know the will of Allah.

That brings me to the second problem and it is the fact that the Islamic Allah is *not holy enough*. He sets the bar low enough that human beings are able to attain conformity to Allah's will. They claim that Allah is highly exalted. Yet they reduce the distance between Allah and humanity by allowing for the possibility of what we would call works righteousness. There is an inconsistency here that must be accounted for, that must be challenged. Why does Islam not take the Creator-creature distinction seriously? Why does Islam fail to take sin and its effects seriously? Is Allah's mercy really merciful when it only comes to the deserving? And is anyone deserving?

That brings us to the last point of my critique and that has to do with ethics. Again, we have to turn to consider Allah, for he is the source of Islamic ethics. According to Islam, ethics derives, not from Allah's being, but from his will or word. Goodness is defined by what Allah wants it to be, not by Allah's own being. Now, as I mentioned, Islam is not relativistic when it comes to ethics. However, strictly speaking this isn't completely true. Allah can change his mind. Unlike in Christianity, Allah is not immutable. In other words, his will can change. Since Islamic ethics depends on his will, there is no certainty whether what is good today will still be good tomorrow. There can be no certainty that what is evil today will still be evil tomorrow. There is a difficulty here within the Islamic worldview and we can and should draw attention to it. How can Muslims account for absolute morality from within their own worldview?

#### **Commending Christianity to Muslims**

Having briefly critiqued the Islamic worldview, we also want to offer a positive alternative with the Christian worldview. This falls in line with what Scripture says in Proverbs 26:4, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself." We aim to present Muslims with the truth of the Christian faith and our prayer is that God will use our presentation to bring them to true faith in Jesus Christ.

#### *Reading God's Word*

There is just one important take-away lesson here: challenge Muslims to read the Bible for themselves. As mentioned earlier, Muslims are discouraged from reading the Bible. In principle, they say it has authority (though arguing it has been corrupted), but in practice, they virtually ignore it. Very few Muslims have ever read the Bible in a meaningful way. When engaged with Muslims in serious spiritual conversation, ask them if they've ever read the Bible and if they haven't, ask them to. If they are looking for a place to begin, you could suggest John or Mark. You want them to reconsider Jesus. Not to merely consider him as a prophet, but as the Redeemer. You want them to hear his challenges to human sinful nature and the way he surgically exposed

our greatest need, the need for redemption from sin and its consequences. Our Lord Jesus speaks in his Word and it's his voice that Muslims need to hear.

You may also need to reassure your Muslim friend about the textual integrity of the Bible. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament has been remarkably preserved. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran have proven this. Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls contain Old Testament writings and when compared with later OT manuscripts, the conformity is astonishing. With the New Testament as well, there is no textual evidence for widespread corruption.

#### *The Trinity*

We will also need to explain the doctrine of the Trinity as best we can. Guided by the Qur'an (4.171 and 5.73), Muslims commonly misunderstand this doctrine to be saying that there are three gods. In other words, according to the Qur'an, Christians are basically polytheists. We need to be clear that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is one. There is one God. We are monotheists. The same doctrine says that God eternally consists of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but yet not three Gods. Three persons, one God. If the Muslim asks you to rationally explain that, you will have to say that it is impossible to explain it. God is incomprehensible. There is mystery in God. If we were to understand everything about him, he would no longer be God.

.....

### ***Madany suggests focussing on the weakest point in Islam: the doctrine of man***

.....

Closely connected with that, you'll have to clarify the doctrine of Christ. Muslims believe that Christians think that Jesus is the product of a sexual relationship between God and Mary and they find that deeply offensive. We have to explain that this is not what we believe. Rather, our Lord Jesus took on human flesh within the womb of the virgin Mary by the working of the Holy Spirit. There was no sexual relationship. They will still find the idea of Jesus being the Son of God offensive. God cannot have a son, they will say. But we could again appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures. Psalm 2 is the classic example: "You are my Son, today I have become your Father." Where is the proof that this Psalm has been corrupted by either Jews or Christians?

#### *Our need for our Saviour*

With regard to ethics, like Muslims, we have a divine source. We believe the Bible defines how human beings are to conduct their lives. We believe God's will extends not only

to our external actions, but also to the attitudes and inclinations of our hearts. The Holy God has the highest standards, standards which are impossible for sinful human beings to meet. We can quote the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect." Perfection is God's ethical demand and our inability to meet that demand drives us to the Saviour.

As we rest and trust in him, we come to love and thankfulness. We want to obey God because it's our heart-felt desire to please him. Our guide for doing that is found in his law. His law has its source in God's being. As the Psalmist says (119:68), God does good and God is good. Goodness is defined not merely by what God says, but who God is. Further, the Bible tells us that God is unchangeable, immutable. Therefore what God says is good will always be good. He will not waver. God is not fickle or arbitrary. Thus, there is an absolute standard for morality and ethics according to the Christian worldview.

#### **Conclusion**

There is far more that could be said on this topic. Let me leave you with some thoughts from a Reformed missionary to Muslims, Bassam Madany.

First, to be an effective witness to Muslims, he says you need to study Islam. What I've presented here is just a basic introduction to some of the issues. If God brings Muslims across your path, and you have the opportunities to witness to them, you'll need to learn much more, both through discussions with your Muslim friends and through your own research and reading. Not only do you need to be well-grounded in what Islam says, you obviously also have to know what you yourself believe and why you believe. You have to be well-grounded in Scripture.

Second, Madany suggests focussing on the weakest point in Islam: the doctrine of man. Islam does not take sin seriously. It's not realistic about the pervasive depravity brought on by Adam's fall. Islam has an optimistic view of man, a view that doesn't fit with reality or with Scripture. Are we really to believe that Jews and Christians corrupted the Bible to make man appear more corrupt than he really is?

Finally, our goal is to bring Muslims to Christ. As important as it is, the doctrine of the Trinity is only a step along the way to the acceptance of the gospel. The same is true for the biblical doctrine of man and of sin. Our hope is that we can see our Muslim friends find true hope and peace in Christ the Saviour. To that end, all our efforts need to be bathed in prayer. We need to pray for opportunities to speak of Christ not only to Muslims, but to all people. We need to pray for the ability to speak the truth in love. We need to pray for those to whom we speak, that the Holy Spirit would use our weak and feeble words to regenerate dead and cold hearts. Finally, and most importantly, we ought to pray that God would magnify his glory through our efforts, frail though they may be.



# BEST BOOKS: THREE BOARD BOOKS

reviewed by Jon Dykstra

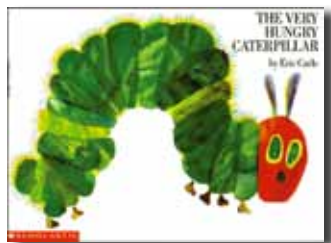
## THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

by Eric Carle

This book is over 40 years old now, and still as popular as ever. The plot is simple, and almost overly so for a book that is going to be read and reread by dear old dad – it is about a very hungry caterpillar who eats and eats and eats for a week, and then turns into a beautiful butterfly. But there are two different aspects of the book that make it a favorite of my one-year-old daughter.

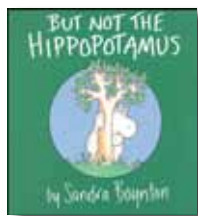
First the inside pages are very easy for little hands to turn because they vary in width from the rest of the pages. On Monday the caterpillar eats through one apples, and the page with the apple is only a fifth as wide as the book; on Tuesday he eats through two pears, and that pages is two fifths as wide as the book, and so it continues with three plums (three fifths) four strawberries, and finally five oranges, in which the page is back to the normal full width.

Second, the page covering what the caterpillar eats on Saturday is a two-page spread of colorful cake, ice cream, cheese, sausage, pie, watermelon and more, and it looks good enough to eat. Our little one likes to turn to this page first, and will flip back to it again and again and again.



## BUT NOT THE HIPPOPOTAMUS

by Sandra Boynton



Hippo doesn't seem to be included in much of what her friends are up to. For example, we learn on the first page of this board book, that "A hog and a frog cavort in the bog. . . but not the Hippopotamus." The next page, it is more of the same: "A cat and two rats are trying on hat. . . but not the Hippopotamus." Poor Hippo! She is always being left out.

After a few more pages of forlorn Hippo looking wistfully at what others are up to, (and the repeating refrain, ". . .but not the Hippopotamus") the rest notice how neglectful they've been, and invite Hippo to "come join the lot of us!"

Now as we all know invitations are nice, but sometimes people turn them down, even when they really want to go. So we are in suspense as shy Hippo ponders what to do: "She just doesn't know – Should she stay? Should she go?" So it is with joy that we turn the page to see her exclaim: "BUT YES THE HIPPOPOTAMUS!"

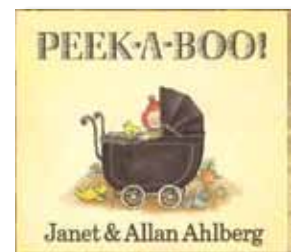
One final line concludes the story: ". . . but not the armadillo." We see this small creature staring sadly after Hippo as she joyfully joins the group. It is a great end to a remarkable book, reminding us that not only should we look to include others, but that once is not enough – there are still others who are being forgotten and could use a friend.

## PEEK-A-BOO!

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

The setting of this book is England, and it appears to be right around World War II (judging from the Daddy's uniform). The "plot" is very simple – the story starts with a baby in his crib, waking up in the morning and looking around to see what he can see. We follow him through the day, always seeing through his eyes at what he can see, until his day ends and he heads to bed.

It is the construction of this book that fascinates my daughter – on the first two page spread the baby is in her crib on the left hand side, and the right page is all white, but with a large round hole cut through it so that we (and the baby) can "peek" to see what is on the page behind it. And once she is done peeking, she turns the page, and then spends her time looking at all the activity going on in the fully-revealed page. The illustrator, Janet Ahlberg, fills her pictures with layers of detail – there is so much there I don't even mind paging through it again and again. . . . and again and again and again! So we get to play a game of peek-a-boo five times as we read through the book, peering through these holes to see what comes next.



Jon Dykstra and his siblings blog on books at [ReallyGoodReads.com](http://ReallyGoodReads.com) where longer reviews of these books can be found.



# “And behold, it was very good”

## What did Paradise look like, before the Fall?

by Miep von Lindheim-Westerink

Did Creation take days. . . or eons? And does it really make much difference; is this an issue worth making a big fuss about? Isn't it far more important *that* God has created everything than *how long it took*?

These are questions that many a Bible reader has asked himself at some point. What should we care if scientists say that the Earth – with its layers upon layers of fossil-bearing strata – is very, very old? Couldn't that just mean that the Creation “days” were actually long periods of time in which these strata and fossils were formed?

### Quick review

These are questions I explored in an earlier article in which I argued that a belief in an eons-long Creation Week causes great exegetical and theological problems. What problems? Let me give you a brief summary (for a more complete answer, see my April 2011 article: “Were there fossils in Paradise?”).

In the strata the fossils are in a fixed order: in the bottom layer, only bacteria are found, while higher up mammals appear, and only at the very top will you find the remains of Man. So according to modern science, Man only came into existence three billion years after the first primitive forms of life appeared. So if we hold to a Creation “Week” that took place over long ages, then we would consequently regard these fossil-bearing strata as originating during this creation period. The strata would, in fact, give a *report* of God's creative acts from the moment when first life began to when the creation of Man occurred.

One of the problems (one of six) I noted in my earlier article is that the fossil-bearing strata show unequivocally that the world before Man arrived on Earth, was already full of suffering and struggle, dying and even extinctions – there were, then, already fossils in Paradise. Oh, and let's not forget the record of repeated major natural disaster found in the strata that also occurred before Man's arrival.

If we hold to a long ages view, then this is what the Creation “Week” involved. But, of course, these events are difficult to reconcile with the “very good” creation of which God speaks in Genesis 1. Therefore it seems impossible to place the formation of the strata *before* the creation of Man and before our Fall into sin. I therefore reject this idea on biblical grounds.

But if I reject an eons-long Creation Week, this leads me to a logical, important question:

How, then, did God's good Creation function and what did it look like before the Fall into sin? Many people think of Paradise as a haven of peace and harmony, and free of all death, pain and suffering. But isn't this naive? Would predatory behavior, would eating meat, diseases, and food shortages have only started after the Fall? To believe this requires accepting an unimaginable rupture occurring at the Fall, wretchedly divorcing the Paradise that was, from the world we know today.

### What was it like before the Fall?

So were there predators in Paradise?

Well, we know God created all the animals including the predators: lions, snakes, the mighty dinosaurs too. We see in these animals how wonderfully attuned their whole outer physique, and their inner digestive organs, are to their carnivorous lifestyle. For example, the artful web of the spider serves as the perfect trap to catch mosquitoes for food. And think of the lethally-efficient dagger-like teeth of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, or the hollow poisonous fangs of a snake.

If these predators already existed in Paradise, then was bloodshed and death already “innate” before the Fall? Furthermore, is it possible that in Paradise people never trampled bugs and worms in the grass? Would animals, while munching on plants, have neatly avoided crunching up aphids? And besides, when plants are eaten, isn't this also a sort of dying? Is it even conceivable that there was no death before the Fall? Is it indeed possible that Nature functioned so entirely different *before* the Fall than it does now afterwards?

One more question: what does the Bible say about this? It's when we turn to Scripture that we start finding some answers – four categories of biblical proof texts point out that yes, at the Fall definite radical changes in Nature occurred.

#### 1. *It was very good*

We can learn what Paradise was like before the Fall by reading God's own evaluation of it: “And behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). But what is meant here by “very good”?

Well, in Isaiah 11:6-9 we read about lambs, wolves, children, bears and snakes that live in peace together. Now it is not said in so many words that this is how it was in Paradise,

*How did predators like lions behave, and what did they look like, before the Fall?*

or that this is literally how it will be on the New Earth. But this much is clear: this image of peace and goodness is the exact opposite of today's ferocious lions and snakes with poisonous fangs. In Isaiah 65:25 we read a similar account, which concludes saying: "they will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain." We learn here that today's ferocious beasts are not considered by God as "very good" so they must not have been in Paradise.

In Nahum 2:11-13 the image of a consuming, murderous lion is used to describe evil.

Moreover, throughout the whole Bible death, suffering and illness are pointed out as evil, or as appropriate punishments. God punishes the nations with natural disasters, so we can mark these as evil: drought, blight, scorching heat waves, locusts (Deut. 28) and scarcity of food (Rev. 6:5, 6). These are all mentioned as notices of judgment.

By looking at these texts we can start to see what "very good" does, and does not entail.

## 2. Plant eaters

A second indication that Nature functioned very *differently* before the Fall is that God at Creation gave to humans and animals only the plants to eat. To Man He gave every seed-bearing plant and fruit trees and to the animals He gave green plants as food (Gen. 1:29-30).

It is only after the Fall (and seemingly, only after the Flood, though perhaps Abel ate the sheep he tended – see Genesis 4) that God expressly allows people to eat meat (Genesis 9:3). So now animals living in the wild had reason to fear humans!

About the food of animals nothing is said in Genesis 9, but it is very well possible that it was only after the Flood that animals became predatory. After all, it takes until Genesis 9:5 for us to read for the first time that animals that destroy people must pay with their lives. In either case, these texts suggest that Nature, perhaps before the Flood but definitely before the Fall functioned differently, because there were no predators – everyone ate vegetarian!

## 3. No thorns and thistles

A third scripture proof for a change in Nature occurring after the Fall is this: it was after the Fall, that God punished Man with death (Romans 5:12; Gen. 3:19). Our body became mortal and with that, also susceptible to weakness, sickness, aging and death. Clearly this must have meant a radical change in the physical constitution of Man.

God also made life difficult with "thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3:18). Growing crops, the planting and the cultivating, now became difficult – our existence now became difficult! Man now had to contend with Nature; the ground was cursed. All this can only be meaningfully understood if *before* that time there were no "thorns and thistles" and if the work done before was not as difficult. That seems possible only with fundamentally different living conditions.



## 4. No futility

Finally, we read in Romans 8:18-23 that the creation "was subjected to futility." This cannot have been the situation immediately at Creation: a verb form is used here indicating that this happened at a particular moment. When was that? After the Fall when, because of the sin of Man, the Earth was cursed.<sup>1</sup>

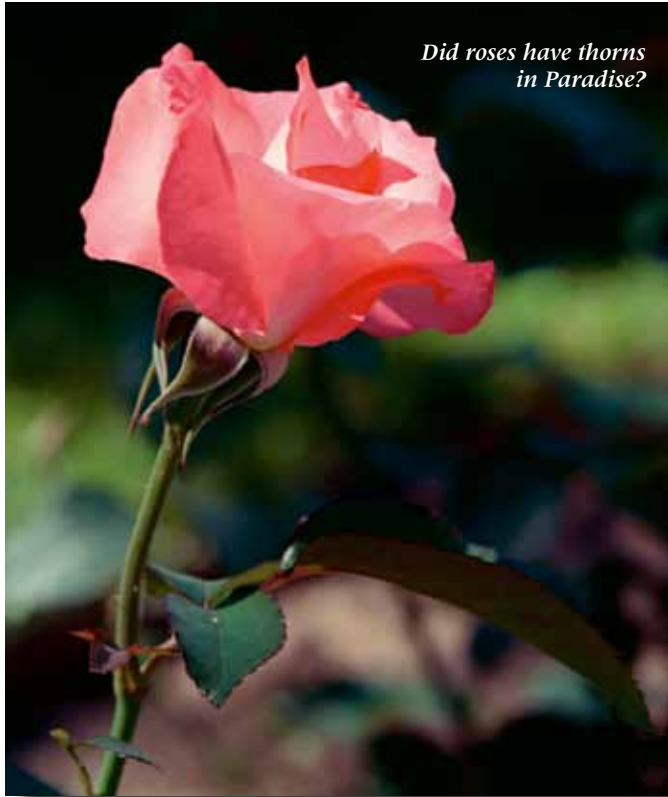
Since then the Earth sighs and is in travail. Don't we see this suffering and hear the groaning of Creation? Again and again there is sickness, suffering, death and natural disasters. We see this futility in nests full of chicks of which only a few will survive, and see it again in floods that destroy large swaths of Nature. And what of the extinction of plant and animal species? Such futility!

Romans 8 tells us to see all this misery in the present Nature as a degeneration of the good Creation. This chapter also tells us there is hope: Creation will be freed of its "bondage to corruption." On the New Earth she will be redeemed from the slavery of death, destruction and natural disasters.

## The Bible is clear

The biblical data is clear. These texts show that Man's Fall did indeed result in a radical rupture. A transformation occurred, not only in humans, but also in all of Nature – death made its appearance.

Now such a rupture is not an option if we were to assume Creation took place over long time periods in which strata and fossils were gradually laid down. Why not? Because if the strata are a true record of a millions-of-years long Creation, then we see in them a Nature that functioned back then exactly as it does today (as we saw in my previous article). We see then, in the strata "thorns and thistles" showing up long before Man arrives. If the strata are a true record of Creation then there were always extinctions and natural disasters and always this same futility, illness, suffering and death.



*Did roses have thorns  
in Paradise?*

### **A limit to our knowledge**

Let's return to our original question: what did God's Creation look like before the Fall? Can we say anything more about it than that there was no suffering, death, natural disasters, etc.? Don't we all want to know more? How did this perfect Creation function?

It is at this point that we arrive at the limits of our knowledge.

The first limit is that the Bible gives us no decisive answer about the nature of life in Paradise – this good life is not described in detail. It is also not explained to us through what physical-biological processes Creation came to be under the curse of sin. It is correctly said that the Bible is not a science manual. Although the Bible does indeed give us reliable, true statements, this book of faith does not provide answers to all the scientific questions we might have in the Year of our Lord, 2011. It tells us the history of salvation, and all that is important for that. Details about Nature are more indirectly and summarily reported, given to us only to the extent they are relevant to the history of salvation.

A second limitation is one we find in ourselves – we are not able to comprehend a different world than the one we know today. We cannot look at the Nature of today and reason backwards to reach an understanding of a very different situation from before the Fall.

Our picture of the world of Paradise can never be complete.

But we would defraud the power and glory of God if we therefore believe that God could not have created a perfectly functioning, futility-free Nature.

Here we need great modesty. As God said to Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4). And as the Preacher teaches us: "Man can not fathom the work of God from beginning to end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God has placed a limit on our knowledge on this matter. The angels who closed the Garden of Eden have closed off our research opportunities there as well!

Incidentally, isn't the same true even for the future Earth, and our glorified incorruptible body? That is our own flesh, but changed in such a way that it will not know hurt, weakness and pain anymore. How that will be, is also far beyond our imagination. When the Corinthians posed questions about this (1 Cor. 15:35), Paul called this "foolish" and he pointed to God's omnipotence that is *far* beyond our understanding.

If we can't comprehend the perfection that will be, when God brings about the restoration of all things, then why should we think that God's original good Creation must be comprehensible to us?

### **No bloodshed**

While we won't ever arrive at a complete picture of the world before the Fall, we can still in a humble, careful manner, investigate further. Can't more be said on the matter of predators, parasites and such? And what about beetles, worms and aphids? In Paradise did these tiny creatures escape trampling by the larger animals? Were aphids never consumed along with the leaves they were sitting on? Also: what about plants that were eaten? If they were eaten, they still died, didn't they? So doesn't it seem likely that at least some creatures did die before the Fall?

The Hebrew word *nephesh* (soul) can perhaps help us here. *Nephesh chayyah* is translated as "living beings" whether human or animal (Genesis 1:20-24, Genesis. 2:7). This word stands for breath, the beginning of life, or "breathing creature." It is also linked to feelings (hatred, hunger, thirst, desire, love). So we can think of this term as describing life that possesses a certain degree of consciousness.

Plants do not have such a *nephesh*; so when they are eaten, they do not die in the biblical sense of the term – not like the death that Adam brought on us when he ate the fruit.

Within the animal kingdom, we can perhaps make a further division. In Leviticus 17:11-14 and Genesis 9:4 it is said: "For the soul (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood." This may mean that animals without blood (bacteria, insects, worms) do not belong to the *nephesh*-animals. This could correspond with Genesis 2:19-20 – there we read that Adam gave names to living beings (*chayya nephesh*) but here the creeping creatures of Genesis 1:24 are not mentioned.

Therefore it is possible that the death of these animals does not need to be considered as "death" in the biblical sense. Or to put it another way, we could conclude that in Paradise there was no violent death, particularly no death with bloodshed. No animals fought and killed each other, they did not shed another's blood, and they were not cruel, like they are now.<sup>2</sup>

## Variability

But what about the predators then? These must have been present in Paradise, right? After all, the Bible does not mention any new creative works of God after the Fall.

Regarding this issue there are a few approaches we can take to get to a preliminary answer.

It is possible that “predator” body structures were used in a different way before the Fall. We can see some of this happening even now. Think of pandas, piranhas, bats, and vultures: with their pointed teeth, claws, or sharp curved beaks some of them are still herbivores. We also know that even the king of the meat eaters, the lion, can live a long time on plant food. These examples suggest that animals we now, on the basis of dental and skeletal features, count as carnivores could function, in other natural conditions, as herbivores.

Moreover, it is possible that some creatures after the Fall were mutatively degenerated. This for example, could have caused previously benign viruses or helpful bacteria to become a hazard, causing illnesses, and even death.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, it was recently observed that the variability of plants and animals species, when confronted with a greatly changed environment, can themselves change greatly – many species seem to have a built-in variability that can involve both their physical structure and their food preferences. We’ve seen this happen with sponges that have in a very short time shown an ability to take on a carnivorous appetite. A similar dietary specialization, including corresponding changes in physique, are now also known to occur in certain fish species. This variability<sup>4</sup> shows up where animals are exposed to rapidly changing circumstances in factors such as temperature, air pressure, or the chemical composition of an area. Another example: in mice can, when subjected to certain chemical stimuli, develop a very different set of teeth. And chickens will develop teeth when a particular signal substance is injected in the egg.

This type of rapid change in habit and appearance has nothing to do with Evolution<sup>5</sup> – this is not chance and time leading to greater complexity. No mutations occur; there are no change in the DNA. What is involved here is the turning on or off of certain genes that are already present in the DNA!

This suggests that God has built great latent variation possibilities into animals’ and plants’ genetic coding. He has placed within this code the built-in potential for rapid change if the circumstances ask for it. The Flood and/or the Fall could have created just the sort of circumstances for such deferred genetic potential to be activated, causing many organisms to be greatly changed in their lifestyle and appearance.

## Conclusion

God created the world good, without any natural disasters, without suffering and struggle, and without death and dying. With Man’s Fall into sin the Earth was cursed.

Of course questions still remain. We have only sparse details about the appearance of God’s good Creation, and therefore can only guess at all the changes that occurred with the Fall. So it is only natural to want to know more: what did it look like?

Two principles are important to remember when thinking about this.

In the first place we need to come to the realization that with these and similar questions about origins there are clear boundaries placed as to what we can know. The Bible does not go into great detail, and this area of study is inaccessible to our study and research.

Second, as we search for answers our starting point must be the historicity of God’s good Creation, and the reality of the Fall into sin, and the unique consequences of it, as recounted in the Bible. In short, I read Genesis as a reliable, historical account of God’s great and mighty work of Creation, perhaps poetically sung, but no less factual. This work is beyond our understanding, and for which we can only sing praise and give thanksgiving to our Creator.

## Until next time. . .

But if we hold to the Genesis as a reliable, historical account, this conclusion has consequences for our attitude toward science.

The first consequence is that the prevailing worldview of evolutionary theory, with its great age of the Earth and its evolutionary development of all life forms are rejected. Is that possible? Or do we then ignore obvious and proven facts?

The second is that for orthodox Christians who want to maintain the biblical truths of a good Creation, the Fall and a global Flood, there lies a major challenge. Namely to show how the strata and their fossil contents occurred within the short biblical chronology, namely the time after the Fall. These are topics I will address in a following article.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. Gendreau and Dr. W.H. Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 393-394,351: “These verses are not understood without bringing into account the connection with Gen. 1-3”, “The fate of Creation is linked to the acts of the people”

<sup>2</sup> D. Batten (hrsg.), K. Ham, J. Sarfati, C. Wieland, *Fragen an den Anfang. Die Logik der Schöpfung*, Christliche LiteraturVerbreitung eV. Bielefeld, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> For more on this see Dr. J. Bergman, “Did God make pathogenic viruses?” *Creation.com/did-god-make-pathogenic-viruses*

<sup>4</sup> This variability is called differentiated gene expression. This is the new paradigm in biology. For more see the work of (non-creationist) M.W. Kirschner and J.C. Gerhart, *The Plausibility of Life: Resolving Darwin’s Dilemma* (2005). The creationist Wood describes how, through various forms of differential gene expression after the flood rapid formation of kind within basic groups (baramin’s) can have taken place.

<sup>5</sup> Thought this sort of change is called “micro-evolution” by some – change within a species using already present genetic information. It does not, however, have anything to do with the Theory of Evolution, which requires new genetic information to be created.

*The late Dr. Miep von Lindheim-Westerink was a biologist in the Netherlands. This article was first published in the September 2010 issue of Nader Bekeken (Vol 17, Issue 9) and is reprinted here with their permission, and the permission of her husband. It has been translated from the original Dutch by Joanne Berends.*



# HOW SCIENTIFIC IS OUR SCIENCE?

## NEW YORKER ARTICLES EXPLAIN WHY MUCH OF WHAT PASSES AS SCIENCE IS FAR FROM OBJECTIVE AND UNBIASED

by Dominic Statham

According to a recent New Yorker article by Jonah Lehrer,<sup>1</sup> there is a serious problem with much of our scientific research – the “decline effect.” Increasingly, many “well-established facts” are coming into question. Despite the original data sets indicating the validity of certain findings, even “beyond reasonable doubt,” subsequent attempts to replicate these results are failing. New anti-psychotic drugs, originally hailed as offering dramatic improvements in patients’ symptoms, seem to have lost their power; other therapies, ranging from cardiac stents to Vitamin E treatments appear to be waning in their effectiveness; the efficacy of some antidepressants appears to have declined threefold in recent decades. “It’s as if our facts were losing their truth”, Lehrer argues, and “claims that have been enshrined in textbooks are suddenly unprovable. . . it’s occurring across a wide range of fields, from psychology to ecology.”

Lehrer is clearly not alone in expressing such concerns. Recently, John Ioannidis, Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, published a paper entitled, “Why most published research findings are false.”<sup>2</sup>

### Four common flaws

Lehrer is probably right in saying that, in most cases, the problem is not deliberate fraud. Sometimes, the most plausible explanation is that the original sample size was just too small and, when the experiment is repeated and the effects of randomness are mitigated, a truer result is obtained.

In other cases the problem is the design of the experiment. The apparent decline in the effectiveness of anti-psychotics, for example, could be attributed to the choice of subjects – those suffering milder forms of psychosis might be less likely to demonstrate dramatic improvement than the more serious cases.

Sometimes, so little is known about the subject being investigated that the factors which determine the result are not even known. Consequently, the data yielded cannot be related to the parameters being tested as they are really a by-product of “invisible” variables which are not understood.

What was of particular interest in Lehrer’s article, however, was its emphasis on the “human aspects” of the problem. According to Lehrer, these include selective reporting of results, publication bias by journal editors, fashions and illusions nurtured by a priori beliefs.

### Darwin’s theory of sexual selection

In the early 1990s, the Danish ornithologist Anders Møller published a number of papers providing data supporting Darwin’s theory of sexual selection.<sup>3,4</sup> Female barn swallows, he claimed, preferentially mated with males having long, symmetrical feathers. Since there appeared to be a correlation between the genetic quality of the bird and the symmetry and length of its feathers, he argued that this confirmed the view that feather ornaments in birds arose through an evolutionary process. Aesthetics was really about genetics.

Lehrer reports that, following the publication of Møller’s work, a number of scientists published data supporting his findings. Not only did some confirm the role of symmetry in sexual selection in barn swallows, but others demonstrated the principle with fruit flies and even humans. Researchers found that women preferred the smell of more symmetrical men. Anthropologists at Rutgers found that more symmetrical men were consistently rated as better dancers.

Within a few years, however, all the hype died down, as more studies were conducted which cast doubt on Møller’s conclusions. Some even became very critical of him.<sup>5</sup> Why, then, did Møller’s idea become so popular so quickly?

### Publication bias and selective reporting

Evolutionary biologist Professor Leigh Simmons of the University of Western Australia was one of many who became enthusiastic about the symmetry theory and started to conduct his own experiments. However, he failed to find the effect.

Remarkably, when he submitted his results to the scientific journals, he had difficulty getting them published. “[They] only wanted confirming data” he said, “It was too exciting an idea to disprove.”<sup>1</sup> Lehrer comments,



“For Simmons, the steep rise and slow fall [of the symmetry theory] is a clear example of a scientific paradigm, one of those intellectual fads that both guide and constrain research; after a new paradigm is proposed, the peer review process is tilted towards positive results.”<sup>1</sup>

Professor Michael Jennions, a biologist at the Australian National University, noted the “decline effect” in papers dealing with ecology and evolutionary biology – many of the theories seemed to fade into irrelevance. Jennions postulated a number of reasons for this, including publication bias against non-significant results, and paradigms generating “bandwagon effects.”<sup>6</sup>

According to Professor Richard Palmer, a biologist at the University of Alberta, a good deal of the “decline effect” can be explained by the selective reporting of results.<sup>7</sup> He commented,

“We cannot escape the troubling conclusion that some – perhaps many – cherished generalities are at best exaggerated in their biological significance and at worst a collective illusion nurtured by strong a priori beliefs often repeated.”

Even the act of measurement is vulnerable to all sorts of perception biases, he argued. Indeed, he remarked, “That’s just the way human beings work.”<sup>1</sup>

.....  
***Much of what passes as science is far from objective and unbiased***  
.....

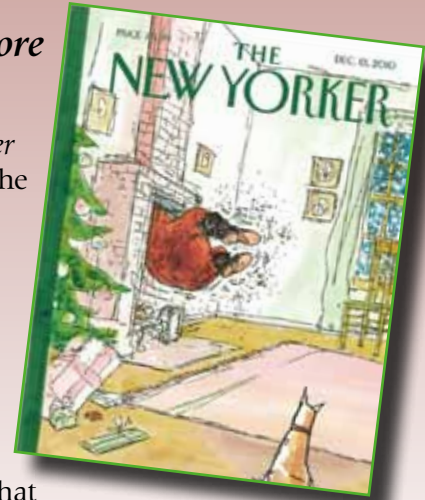
A good example of selective reporting relates to studies of acupuncture. While in some Asian countries acupuncture is widely accepted as a medical treatment, in the West it is viewed with more skepticism. These cultural differences appear to influence the results of clinical trials. In forty-seven studies conducted in China, Taiwan and Japan, every single trial concluded that acupuncture is an effective treatment. However, in ninety-four trials conducted during the same period in the United States, Sweden and the UK, only fifty-six per cent found a benefit. Palmer notes,

“this wide discrepancy suggests that scientists find ways to confirm their preferred hypothesis, disregarding what they don’t want to see. Our beliefs are a form of blindness.”<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ioannidis would agree. “It feels good to validate a hypothesis,” he says, and “it feels even better when you’ve got a financial interest in the idea or your career depends upon it. And that’s why, even after a claim has been systematically disproven, you still see some stubborn researchers citing the first few studies that show a strong effect. They really want to believe that it’s true.”<sup>1</sup>

### ***To read more***

The *New Yorker* article from the December 13, 2010 – Jonah Lehrer’s “The Truth Wears Off: Is there something wrong with the scientific method?” – that spawned this article, can be read online at [RPNewYorker.notlong.com](http://RPNewYorker.notlong.com)



### **Science and the paradigm**

Lehrer’s article confirms what biblical creationists have been saying for many years. Much of what passes as science is far from objective and unbiased. Ruling paradigms will often dictate the interpretation of data, which might otherwise be understood as indicating something quite different.

For example, common anatomy obviously points to a common ancestor if you are an evolutionist, but to a common designer if you are a creationist. Comparison of protein sequences provides either evidence for evolution or evidence against evolution, depending on how the data is presented.<sup>8</sup> People will believe what they want to believe, and data will be viewed accordingly.

One study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that, of thirty-four tests that had been subjected to replication, the results of forty-one per cent of them had either been directly contradicted or had been shown to be significantly exaggerated.<sup>9</sup>

If this is true for controlled experiments – where tests can be carefully replicated by others – how much more will it be true of evolutionary speculations about what happened many years outside of living memory, and for which there is no possibility of replication? And if this is true of matters relating to daily work, how much more will it be true of issues that have profound implications for what people believe about themselves and how they may behave? Many people do not want to believe in a Creator as they dislike the idea that they will be held accountable for their actions. Believing the theory of evolution, rather than the biblical account of creation, enables them to justify their desire to live as they please.

For many, it is a fact that there is no Creator and there was no supernatural creation. If so, then life must have arisen through natural processes. When they learn that no scientist can explain how the first life forms could have evolved from inanimate matter, they simply assume that this question will be answered one day through further research. When they learn that the fossil record is characterized by the general absence of clear transitional forms (rather than the presence of countless transitional forms forming many obvious chains, which would be expected if evolution were true), they simply believe that for some reason the transitional forms were never fossilized. When they learn about the indescribable complexity of the genome and the cell, or listen to a great concert pianist, or see the paintings of a brilliant artist, they simply marvel at what evolution can do. The scientific basis for such beliefs can come later – after all “it is a fact” that evolution did it.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Lehrer, J., The truth wears off: is there something wrong with the scientific method?, The New Yorker, 13 December 2010; [www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/12/13/101213fa\\_fact\\_lehrer?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/12/13/101213fa_fact_lehrer?currentPage=all).

<sup>2</sup> Ioannidis, J.P.A., Why most published research findings are false, Plos Medicine 2(8):e124, 30 August 2005;

[www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124](http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124)

<sup>3</sup> Møller, A.P. and Hogland, J., Patterns of fluctuating asymmetry in avian feather ornaments: Implication for models of sexual selection, Proceedings of the Royal Society 245(1312):1-5, 22 July 1991; [rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/245/1312/1.abstract](http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/245/1312/1.abstract)


<sup>4</sup> Møller, A.P., Female swallow preference for symmetrical male sexual ornaments, Nature 357: 238-240, 21 May 1992; [www.nature.com/nature/journal/v357/n6375/abs/357238a0.html](http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v357/n6375/abs/357238a0.html)

<sup>5</sup> Borrell, B., A fluctuating reality, The Scientist 21(1):26, 1 January 2007; [www.the-scientist.com/article/home/39386](http://www.the-scientist.com/article/home/39386)

<sup>6</sup> Jennions, M.D. and Møller, A.P., Relationships fade with time: a meta-analysis of temporal trends in publication in ecology and evolution, Proceedings of the Royal Society, published on-line 4 December 2001; [www.anu.edu.au/BoZo/jennions/publications/Paper33.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/BoZo/jennions/publications/Paper33.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Palmer, A.R., Detecting publication bias in metaanalysis: a case study of fluctuating asymmetry and sexual selection, Am. Naturalist 154(2):220-233, August 1999; [www.jstor.org/pss/10.1086/303223](http://www.jstor.org/pss/10.1086/303223)

<sup>8</sup> Statham, D.R., Evolution: good science? Exposing the ideological nature of Darwin's theory, ch. 7, Day One, UK, 2009

<sup>9</sup> Ioannidis, J.P.A., Contradicted and initially stronger effects in highly cited clinical research, JAMA 294(2):218–228, 2005; [jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/294/2/218.pdf](http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/294/2/218.pdf) 

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This is for groups and individuals whose philosophy and worldview is in accord with that of *Reformed Perspective*, so we reserve the right to refuse any ad.

# Every baby is precious

## A huge advance in science is being used to target the unborn

by Margaret Helder

Over the past two years, various scientific journals have celebrated the first decade since the human genome – our DNA makeup – was documented in detail.

The various anniversaries being celebrated were quite varied. For example, one event marked ten years since June 2000 when the main contributing scientists got together with American President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, to announce completion of the Human Genome Project (which was begun in 1989 and initially expected to take fifteen years). But there were other significant dates in the Project's history: it was on February 12, 2001 (the 192<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Darwin's birth) that the actual data were published in scientific journals. Overall this milestone of an achievement in medical science required more than a decade of work, the expenditure of about three billion dollars, and the combined efforts of scientists in various countries, particularly Britain and the United States. Thus we have seen celebratory articles for two successive years.

### What took ten years, now takes a day

In the decade the followed the Project's completion medical science has not stood still. The costs of sequencing a human genome have plummeted even as the speed of the process has increased.

Our genome consists of the chemical details of the DNA molecule (genetic information), documented in the order of their occurrence – discovering the order of these chemical details is called “sequencing.” If that sounds a bit complicated, then consider this: as of 2010, it is now possible to sequence a human genome 50,000 times faster than it was in 2000. It can be done within a single day, and for only a few thousand dollars.

In addition, as more and more data on more and more people are churned out, the costs are expected to keep falling. By the end of 2010, at least 2,700 complete human genomes had been sequenced. By the end of 2011, more than 30,000 completely documented human genomes are expected.

### The first individual's genome

The first human genome released was actually the averaged results from several individuals. It was not until 2007 that detailed information on the DNA from a single individual became available. This information was dubbed HuRef, or a reference base, and it represented the DNA sequence of

Craig Venter, one of the most prominent scientists involved in the project. Now it was possible to compare data from one individual with others in order to obtain an idea of how much genetic variation there is within the human population. It has since been discovered that human genomes vary by between 1% and 3%. There is no one standard sequence but of course there needs to be a point of comparison such as Dr. Venter.

Among the individuals whose genomes have been studied are Archbishop Desmond Tutu, an African of the Bantu tribe, and !Gubi, a Namibian hunter-gatherer. The sequence from !Gubi was also compared with partial sequences of three others in his community. The surprising result was that all four individuals are as different from each other as a European might be from an Asian. Even individuals who lived within walking distance were found to have very different genomes. However, most human populations do not demonstrate such high variability in genetic information.

### How useful is this?

Some might wonder how useful these data have proved to be. The medical community has been very disappointed to discover that, up to this point, there is very little practical application. An editorial in *Nature* (April 1, 2010) thus reported:

“Excitement over start-up companies offering personal genetic testing has withered just as fast, as it has become clear that their predictions have little actionable value.”

What the editorialist means is that people may obtain information on problem genes, but there is nothing anyone can do to fix the situation. Thus the editorialist points out that there is a big gap between basic research and clinical application.

One thing that the human genome project has revealed is the high number of mutations – mutations that have the potential to exert a negative effect – that every individual carries. A technical article in the October 28, 2010 issue of *Nature* reported that:

“On average, each person is found to carry approximately 250 to 300 loss-of-function variants in annotated genes and 50 to 100 variants previously implicated in inherited disorders.”

A variant or mutation is a departure from the expected normal condition. Furthermore, the authors estimate that each individual might be expected to carry 10 to 30 new mutations



not found in his parents. In this situation, medical science may not have many solutions, but it certainly can identify potential problems!

It is obvious that everybody carries a large number of deleterious (potentially negative effect) variations but many of the really negative genes exert no obvious effect in a carrier unless that person has received an identical deleterious gene from each parent. One of the hazards of genome sequencing, however, is that the standards for accuracy are sometimes not too high. How reliable is a reported genome sequence? An article in the April 1, 2010 issue of *Nature*, cautions that:

“Whole-genome sequencing will produce abnormal results in all who are tested: everyone will have positive results, false positives and false negatives. Some results may prove harmful; some will be useless. Preserving the health benefits of genomics while minimizing the harm will be an important research goal.”

#### **Ominous turn**

One might wonder why anybody would be interested in such unreliable information. However the significance of ge-

nome sequencing for the identification of deleterious genes, has become much more ominous as scientists have turned their attention to prenatal genetic diagnosis.

The whole idea of prenatal genetic diagnosis began in 1956 when two Danish scientists published a paper describing how it would be possible to identify Down’s syndrome babies while they were still in their mothers’ wombs. Prenatal testing for this genetic condition then became widely available in the late 1960s. However since this process (amniocentesis) carries a 0.5-1.0 % risk of miscarriage, the test is usually offered only to pregnant women aged 35 or older, whose risk of bearing a Down’s syndrome baby is considered to be higher than the elevated risk of miscarriage. A more recent test, called chorionic villus sampling (CVS) carries an elevated risk of miscarriage of 0.8%. These tests are so invasive and the risk so high that very few pregnant women undergo such a procedure. Concerning these tests, an article on the topic of prenatal genetic diagnosis in *Nature* (Jan 20, 2011) declared:

“Confronted with a long needle or a transvaginal probe, few, if any, women will undergo either procedure without understanding that something serious is happening.”

The serious situation is that these tests are usually carried out to identify Down's syndrome babies. When the results of the test are positive, most women elect to abort the baby. It is mainly people who are prepared to act on the results of this test, after all, who actually undergo so dangerous a procedure. This is the current situation in the United States where 2% of pregnant women undergo such a prenatal genetic test.

**What if it was non-invasive?**

The question arises, however, what would happen if there was a non-invasive prenatal test which could provide information on hundreds or even thousands of genetic characteristics and conditions? Would people embrace the new procedure with a view to choosing an abortion if the results are not as desired? Unfortunately this is not an abstract question – such a test could be a reality within five years.

Doctors routinely order several blood tests on each pregnant woman. Few people would notice an extra blood test. They would not notice, that is, until they are provided with a list of deleterious genes or other adverse genetic conditions exhibited by the unborn baby. Immediately there will be pressure on the expectant mother. Are these conditions serious? And if so, what should she do about it, bearing in mind that abortion is generally the recommended response.

**Knowledge being put to perverse use**

Medical scientists apparently have known for decades that some cells from the unborn baby are able to pass through the placenta into the mother's blood. The fetal cells soon disintegrate in the mother's blood. Thus even early in pregnancy, scientists estimate that 5-10% of the DNA molecules dissolved in the mother's blood, come from her unborn baby. Based on this knowledge, in the UK, the Netherlands and France, a maternal blood test is used to discover the baby's Rh factor. If it is different from that of an Rh- mother, then doctors can better deal with the situation so that a healthier baby will result.

The situation concerning prenatal diagnoses changed in December 2010, when independent teams from Hong Kong and California, published proof that it is possible to sequence fragments of fetal DNA in the mother's blood and thereby to obtain the genetic details for thousands of genes. Scientists now estimate that as sequencing technology becomes cheaper, it will be possible to test for chromosomal abnormalities like Down's syndrome, for single gene diseases like cystic fibrosis and for various non-disease characteristics like gender, all from a maternal blood test. The article on the topic in

*Nature* (January 20, 2011), estimates that for-profit companies should have such a blood test available within five years. Indeed the development of such a test is a certainty, says the article. Society must prepare now.

**"No, we don't want that test"**

The questions that arise from this situation include, how many people will elect to take this test? It would be a terrible thing if women were tested without their informed consent. Women must be informed what such a test entails. The implications are a lot more serious than just the collection of another vial of blood. Will there be more abortions? The author of the *Nature* article thinks there will be. Will people with disabilities become increasingly isolated? Will doctors be sued if they do not prescribe the test and a baby is born with a congenital condition? Will a new wave of pro-eugenic sentiment sweep society?

.....

***Doctors routinely order several blood tests on each pregnant woman.***

***Few people would notice an extra blood test.***

.....

There are two things which we should all remember. One is that all of us carry lots of deleterious genes, and secondly these tests have so far been notoriously unreliable. The reliability of the test may of course improve over time. However who of us has genes good enough to pass such a test? It depends upon the standards which are adopted by the doctor and the parents. No chromosomal abnormalities? Maybe pass. No single gene mutations? Maybe fail, depending upon the genes involved.

Society obviously is facing a terrible dilemma. It is particularly important therefore that Christians become aware that this test is coming and that they *do not want it*. The rest of society may anguish over standards on what constitutes a desirable baby, but Christians want all their babies because we know that children are a heritage of the Lord.





# Soup & Buns

## Growing apple trees

*“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”*

– 1 Corinthians 3:7

by Sharon L. Bratcher

Four year old Patty picked up the tiny flower seed and put it into the little hole she had just made in the soil in the 2 inch reddish pot. Carefully following her Mommy’s directions, she pushed the soil on the sides in the pot over the little seed and pressed down on it gently. Then she lifted the little pitcher and poured just a little bit of water onto it.

“Now pick it up carefully and put it on the windowsill,” Mommy said. “And it’s going to grow into a beautiful red flower!”

“It will grow big!” said Patty, stretching both her little arms out wide.

The next morning Patty ran straight to the windowsill to look at her flower. But the little pot looked the same as it had the day before. When Mommy came downstairs, she found that someone’s fingers had been digging in it. “Patty?” she asked.

“It didn’t grow,” Patty said, disappointed.

\*\*\*\*\*

We smile because we know that it takes time for a plant to grow, and that little ones must learn this. Plants need days or weeks before any green sprout pokes up through the soil. Months pass before a plant grows to full height and produces flowers, fruit or vegetables.

And if you plant an apple seed, you shouldn’t turn on the oven just yet to bake your first apple pie. It will take six to ten years for a seed to grow to maturity and produce tasty fruit.

Let’s think for a moment about “a word fitly spoken” that is like “apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11.) It seems that we are often as impatient as Patty in regards to expecting instantaneous results from the truth that we speak. We expect to see results very quickly. For instance, perhaps a conversation comes up at work where we have opportunity to speak God’s Truth on the matter, so we do. But because our co-worker laughs or denies what we say, we think that it hasn’t done any good and that maybe we shouldn’t bother.

Or maybe we have a child who does not obey us, and we explain to him that we are called by the Lord to teach him to do what is right. He becomes defensive and lashes out at us verbally. We may leave his room thinking that “it went in one ear and out the other.” We couldn’t see the seed growing.

The same goes for any person speaking God’s Truth lovingly to a fellow church member.

We should ask ourselves: why are we looking for instant gratification?

Why do we think that our desires for our co-worker’s salvation, a godly child, or our brother’s or sister’s sanctification, are going to happen right when the words are spoken?

We need to realize that we are planting seeds. And they are likely to be apple tree seeds.

Most of us can remember a time when someone made a comment to us that made a deep impression. We may not have admitted it at the time, but it stuck. We may have even tried to bury it. But God used that statement to cause some growth to occur.

Here’s an example I have remembered for many years. A professor in my college hushed a class that laughed at a student’s question. He simply stated, “He wasn’t born with that knowledge, and neither were you or I.” It was a profound truth with ramifications regarding the treatment of my fellow students.

If you read stories about missionaries, you may be astounded at how long some of them labored in their fields before seeing anyone come to salvation. Then think about how long it took to travel to China, to India, or even to England. Everything took so much time!

Our lives are perhaps “too instant” now. Because we can flip lights on in a second, communicate with anyone in the world immediately via computer, and find a verse in Proverbs online in ten seconds without even getting up out of our chairs – we are less patient. We may doubt the Lord’s working in something that takes “forever” to happen. We give up. We lack fortitude. We have been conditioned to expect immediate, visible results.

Let’s not neglect saying or doing what God would want us to say or do just because we don’t think we will get to see or eat the fruit. We cannot see the seeds growing, but He can.

*45 of Sharon’s articles are in Soup and Buns: Nourishment from God’s Word for Your Daily Struggles. \$10 (US)/book plus shipping. Contact [sharoncopy@gmail.com](mailto:sharoncopy@gmail.com).*

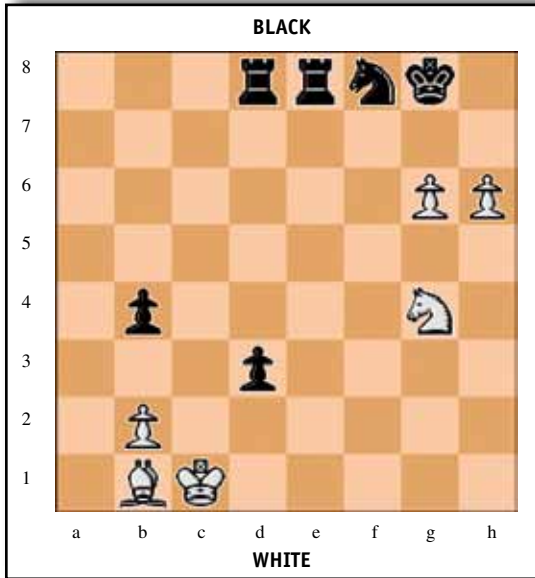


# ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page, 43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 OR [robgleach@gmail.com](mailto:robgleach@gmail.com)

## NEW PUZZLES

### Chess Puzzle # 177



White to Mate in 2  
Or, if it is BLACK's Move, BLACK to Mate in 3

### Riddles for Punsters #177 – "Learning Difficulties"

What did the flight school student say to his classmate? I did not have time to study for this test so I will just have to w \_ \_ \_ it.

A medical student was constantly being annoyed by a classmate so his friend said to him, "That pest is just trying to n \_ \_ \_ e you."

### Problem to Ponder #177 – "eXcellent words"

Determine which word (of the English language) containing the letter "x" is being defined or described. The number in brackets indicate how many letters are in the word.

For example: end-of-course evaluation (4) has exam as the answer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) leave a place
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) American state
- \_\_\_\_\_ (9) musical instrument
- \_\_\_\_\_ (7) a language of North America
- \_\_\_\_\_ (12) both left and right handed
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) a book used by students
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) to wear down one's patience
- \_\_\_\_\_ (8) a type of sugar
- \_\_\_\_\_ (7) voice loudly; cry out
- \_\_\_\_\_ (7) a dictionary
- \_\_\_\_\_ (9) a limit; a boundary
- \_\_\_\_\_ (7) give details; clarify.

## SOLUTIONS TO THE (APRIL) PUZZLE PAGE

### Answers to Riddles for Punsters #176

– "A Party at the Zoo"

Leo Lion went to the party and had a roaring good time. Joe Crocodile spent much of the evening eating bits and bites. Tom Lamb would have gone but felt sheepish about asking someone to accompany him. Peter Polar Bear spent the evening just relaxing on the comfortable furniture.



### Answers to Problem to Ponder #176

– "Word Transformations"

he -> he -> by

big -> bog -> dog -> dot

farm -> harm -> hard -> herd -> held

chews -> chess -> chest -> crest -> crust -> trust

### SOLUTION TO CHESS PUZZLE # 176

#### WHITE to Mate in 4

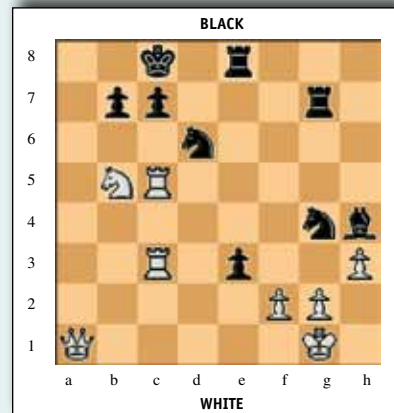
- Descriptive Notation**
- Rxp ch RxR
  - RxR ch K-Q1
  - Q-QR8 ch N-B1
  - QxN mate

#### Algebraic Notation

- Rc5xc7 + Rg7xc7
- Rc3xc7 + Kc8-d8
- Qa1-a8 + Nd6-c8
- Qa8xc8 ++

#### BLACK to Mate in 3

- Descriptive Notation**
- \_\_\_\_\_ PxP ch



- K-R1 R-K8 ch
- QxR PxQ=Q mate

#### BLACK wins sooner if

- \_\_\_\_\_ PxP ch
- K-B1 N-R7 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

- \_\_\_\_\_ e3xf2 +
- Kg1-h1 Re8-e1 +
- Qa1xe1 f2xe1=Q ++

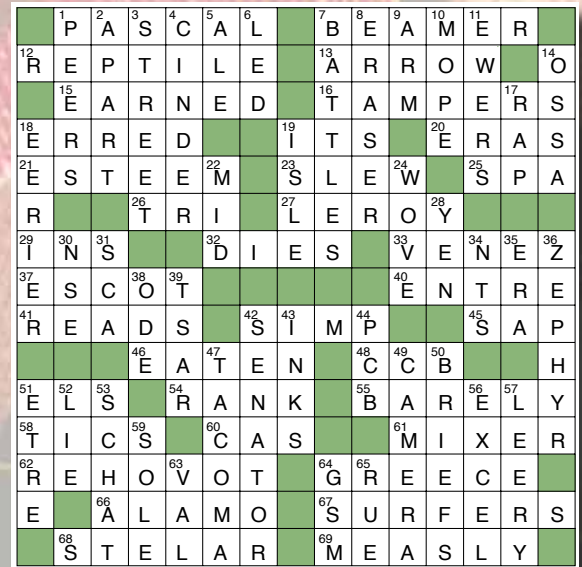
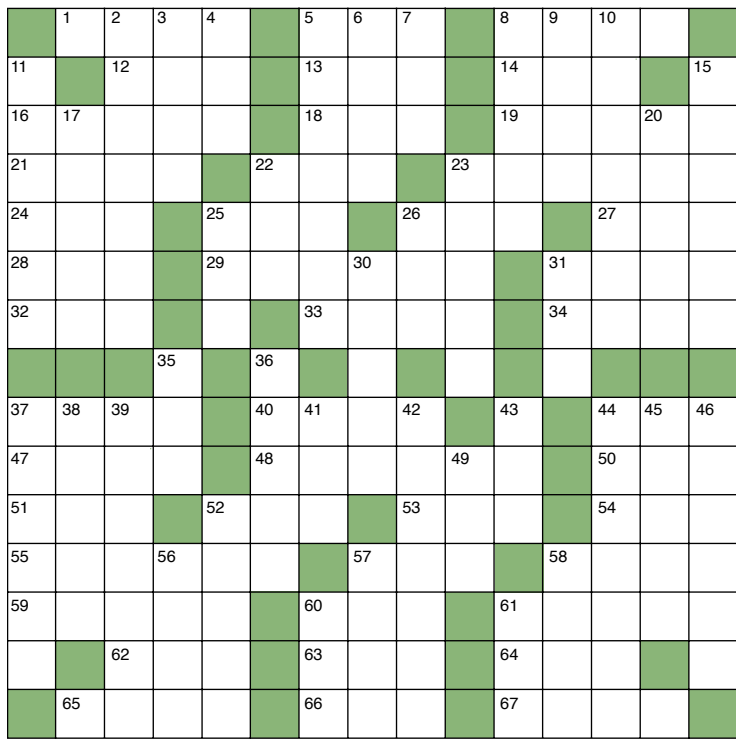
#### BLACK wins sooner if

- \_\_\_\_\_ e3xf2 +
- Kg1-f1 Ng4-h2 ++

# Crossword Puzzle

Series 18 No 4

Last Month's solution  
Series 18 No 3



**ACROSS:**

- 1. Small round stain
- 5. Bird's call
- 8. Soccer 'judges'
- 12. Exist
- 13. In debt to
- 14. Before, poetically speaking
- 16. Sped
- 18. Catch a criminal
- 19. Light fogs or sprays
- 21. Sound repetition
- 22. Pig pen
- 23. Kind of horses
- 24. Severity of illness (abbr.)
- 25. Body of water
- 26. Family member, at times
- 27. Sea goddess who rescued Odysseus
- 28. Transpose (abbr.)
- 29. Had poison ivy
- 31. Finished
- 32. Japanese ogre of folklore
- 33. Fish
- 34. Jaunty
- 37. Cloak-like garment
- 40. Smell
- 44. Policeman
- 47. One of the places the Israelites camped after their Exodus
- 48. Child's father or mother
- 50. Unit number
- 51. Calendar mo.
- 52. Century (abbr.)
- 53. Meadow
- 54. Employ
- 55. Story monsters who live under bridges
- 57. Pet the dog's head
- 58. Russian city
- 59. Lady's name
- 60. Domesticated pet
- 61. Dull and lusterless surface
- 62. Euro. Theater of Operations (WWII)
- 63. Rate of years
- 64. Had dinner
- 65. Perfect place
- 66. Slumber site
- 67. Am. Dept. of Agriculture

**DOWN:**

- 2. Ancient board game
- 3. Famous cookie
- 4. Spread hay out for drying
- 5. Touch sport
- 6. Far from here
- 7. What a spider spins
- 8. Send someone payment
- 9. AKA Ireland
- 10. Joyous, merry
- 11. Magician's word
- 15. Classify according to kind
- 17. Tree fruit
- 20. Printer part
- 22. Matching pair
- 23. Bike part
- 25. Drink slowly
- 26. Writing implement
- 30. Comic quality
- 31. Dutch grandparent
- 35. Dress edge
- 36. Tie downs
- 37. Middle
- 38. So, in Paris
- 39. Turned around
- 41. Tribe of Israel
- 42. Family
- 43. Station (abbr.)
- 44. Wooded
- 45. Beginning
- 46. Prepared potatoes
- 49. Butterfly trap
- 52. Athenian general, died 422 bc
- 56. To let, to leave, archaically speaking
- 57. Book part
- 58. Horse feed
- 60. Taxi
- 61. Egyptian cat

*Joyce*