

REFORMED

Perspective

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CHRISTIAN
FAMILY

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A photograph showing a close-up of two hands clasped together. One hand is wearing a dark blue denim sleeve, and the other is wearing a striped sweater with red, white, and grey stripes. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with a paved area and some greenery. The front wheel and handlebars of a wheelchair are visible in the lower right corner.

LOVING THE DISABLED

If it comes down to rights,
aren't we doing
something
wrong?

Timmy to the rescue

An imaginary toddler can help us defend the humanity of the unborn

by Jon Dykstra

*“I’m telling you, it’s so simple a two-year-old could do it.”
“You think so? Well, then why doesn’t he just do it for me?”
“That’s not a bad idea.”*

Speaking up for the unborn isn’t easy – it takes courage. However, it isn’t as complicated as it might first seem. We hear a *lot* of arguments for abortion, but the truth is, it all comes down to just one issue. And with a little help from a little boy named Timmy we can make it clear to everyone that the only question to consider is: *What are the unborn?*

If they are human, like us, then they should have the same protections and rights as all of us. And if they aren’t human, then no one should care if they are killed.

Muddying the waters

The reason the abortion debate seems complicated is because abortion supporters want to make it that way. They know that if the two sides are presented clearly they are going to lose. So instead they raise issues like poverty, unemployment, personal choice, freedom, and bring up hard cases like rape and incest. They try to make it about everything, about anything, except the humanity of the unborn.

Timmy can help cut through these evasions. Who is Timmy? He’s a two-year-old toddler and, because he is entirely imaginary, Timmy is able to go wherever he’s needed, whenever he’s needed.

And while he can’t help with every question or objection that might be thrown at us, he sure

can help with a lot, including the ones that follow.

- Should we really bring unwanted children into the world?
- I wouldn’t have an abortion myself but I don’t think I can force my morality on others.
- Are you going to force a woman who can’t feed the children she already has, to bring another child into the world?
- How dare you take away choice from women?
- We have a right to privacy! This is none of the government’s business!
- You shouldn’t oppose abortion unless you’re willing to adopt.
- What about cases of rape? Are you going to make a 13 year-old rape victim suffer through 9 months of pregnancy?
- I think abortion is only wrong when the fetus can feel pain.
- I’m not pro-abortion, but I am pro-choice.
- If you’re against abortion, then don’t have one, but leave me alone.

Putting Timmy to work

Unwantedness

Let’s say an elderly woman hits you with the first objection. She says: “What if a woman doesn’t want a baby? Should we bring unwanted children into the world?”

Here’s where you pull out Timmy. “Ma’am, I want you to imagine for a moment that I have a two-year-old toddler standing next to me. His name is Timmy, *and his mother doesn’t want him*. Can we kill him?”

“No, of course not. But that’s different.”

“Ah yes, but is it different? Is the unborn different from Timmy? That’s the real issue, isn’t it? It’s not about unwantedness; it’s about whether or not the unborn are human like Timmy.”

I wouldn’t but...

When you hear the objection “but that’s different” you know Timmy has done his work. He’s steered the conversation back to the only issue that matters: the humanity of the unborn.

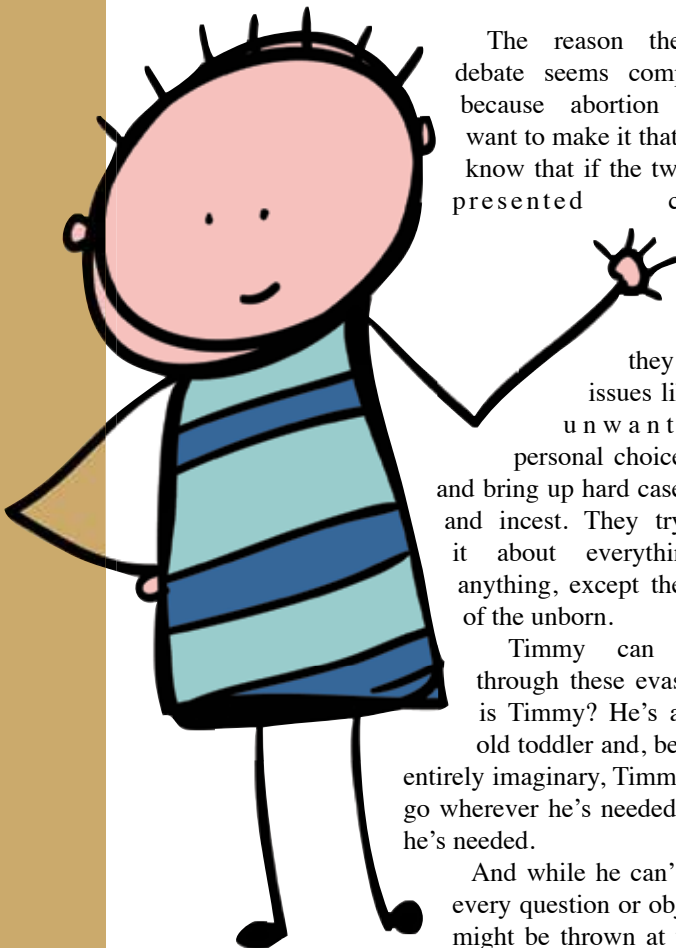
Another example:

“I wouldn’t have an abortion myself but I don’t think I can force my morality on others.”

“This is little Timmy - now I certainly wouldn’t kill him myself, *but I don’t think I can force my morality on others.*”

“Wait, but that’s different!”

“Ah yes, but is it different? That’s the real issue, isn’t it? It’s



not about forcing our morality on others - it's about whether or not the unborn are human like Timmy."

Then don't have one

"If you're against abortion, then don't have one. But don't you dare interfere with my rights!"

"If you're against punching toddlers, then don't punch one. But don't you dare interfere with my right to punch them."

"That's not fair - toddlers are human beings, and the unborn aren't"

"Yes, that's the real issue now, isn't it - are the unborn different from toddlers?"

Privacy

"We have a right to privacy! It's none of the government's business!"

"Would it be alright for Timmy's parents to kick and beat him as long as they did it in private?"

"That's different"

"Ah, but is it different? That's the real issue, isn't it? This isn't about privacy - it's about whether or not the unborn, like a two-year-old toddler."

Unless you'll adopt...

"You shouldn't oppose abortion unless you'll adopt."
"If I were to discover that Timmy's parents abuse him, should I only speak up if I am willing to adopt him?"

Hard case

We'll finish with one last example, the hardest one. What about cases of rape and incest?

This isn't a question people ask because they want an answer. No, this one is lobbed at us with the intent that it blow up in our faces. Fortunately Timmy knows how to disarm this booby trap.

"I want you to imagine I have a two-year-old toddler standing here next to me. His name is Timmy. His father raped his mother and now every times she sees him, she is reminded of that dreadful night. Can we help her deal with her pain by eliminating Timmy?"

"But that's completely different!"

"Is it different? We both agree it would be wrong to kill Timmy for what his father did. If the unborn are human beings, then wouldn't abortion also be punishing a child for the crime his father committed?"

Conclusion

Timmy can help us simplify things by getting the discussion back to the only issue that really matters - the humanity of the unborn.

Of course we will need more than Timmy to defend the unborn. Once we get the discussion focused where it should be – what is the unborn? – we need to be able to answer this question.

Fortunately we are blessed to live in a time when that's gotten pretty easy to do too. There's an abundance of online resources we can turn to for help.

- Visual evidence of the unborn's humanity can be found on websites like UnmaskingChoice.ca and Abort73.com where the remains of aborted fetuses, and their perfectly formed fingers and toes, are shown.
- Philosophical proof that there are no morally significant differences between the newborn and the unborn can be found among the pro-life resource articles at ReformedPerspective.ca. See my article "Why men are superior to women: a pro-life analogy."
- Scientific proof is everywhere. Type in "When does human life begin?" in your search bar and you'll find resource after resource showing it is established scientific fact that human life begins at conception.

These resources are additional tools you can add to your pro-life toolbox. But never forget Timmy; he may not be able to do it all for us, but this little man can do a lot of heavy lifting. Introduce him off to your neighbors, coworkers and friends, and let little Timmy help you teach them what the abortion debate is really all about.

The ideas in this article come from the work of Scott Klusendorf (<http://www.prolifetraining.com>), particularly those found in his book Pro-Life 101, which is highly recommended and available at Amazon.ca.



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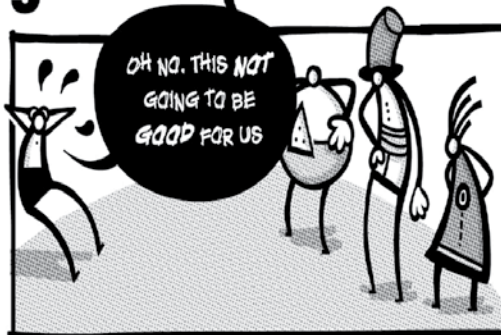
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Love Your Neighbour (who is the same) as Yourself.

The new employees have arrived for their first day at Vanilla Systems™*

*"avoiding any awkward differences in the interests of profitability since 1982"



Epilogue: 1Peter1:22 (thanks @Chaddygrammar)

by Jason Ramasami

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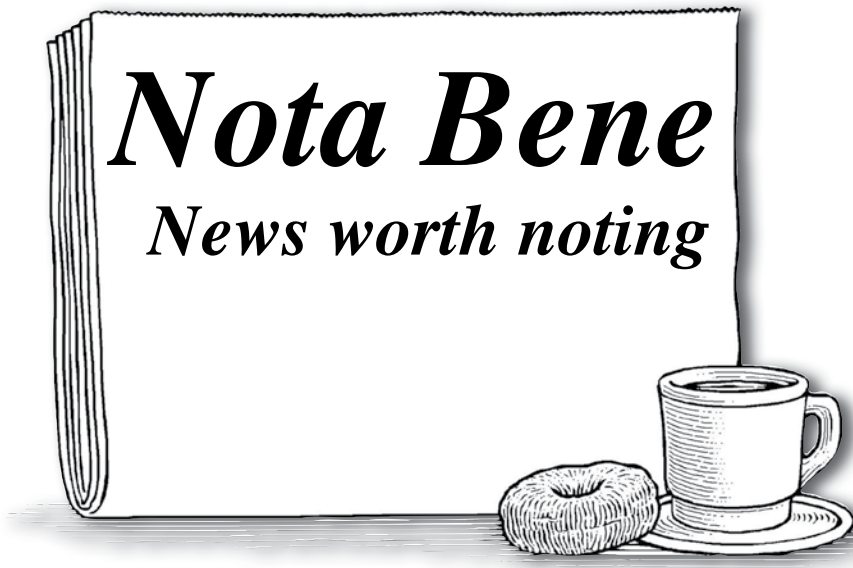
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State may demand much in matters of life and death

by Anna Nienhuis

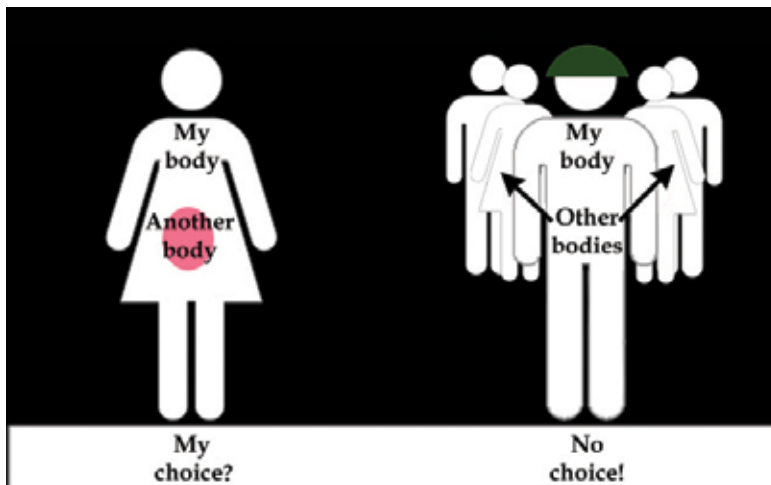
Critics are arguing that when Rona Ambrose, Canada's Minister for the Status of Women, voted in favour Motion 312, she was supporting the victimization of women. Motion 312 asked the federal government to investigate when life begins, and was a possible first step towards putting limits on abortion in Canada. Women are victimized, the critics say, if there is any possibility that, once pregnant, they would be told they will indeed have to carry the baby. This seems to them a loss of control of their bodies, which is unacceptable.

What the critics haven't done is look at the flipside of the coin - in a recent column in *The National Post* Barbara Kay made the point that men have bodies too, and these bodies can also be affected by laws: Canada still "reserves the right to draft men into combat at any time" in the event of a war. This is a law that would put these men's lives at serious risk and have lasting impact on their lives even if they did survive. While in some countries women may be drafted, they are never required to serve in combat roles.

So when it comes to matters of life and death,

Barbara Kay points out the State may make demands on both women and men's bodies.

SOURCE: Barbara Kay's "Neither sex has a monopoly on victimization"; full comment, nationalpost.com; Oct. 2, 2012



CMA says that *where you are determines what you are*

by Jon Dykstra



Shortly before pushing for a ban on spanking (see page 7), the Canadian Medical Association took an even sillier position. In August, at their annual general council, the largest association of doctors in Canada voted to support the wording of the country's Criminal Code which says in section 223 that:

A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state from the body of its mother whether or not:

- a) it has breathed
- b) it has an independent circulation
- c) the navel string is severed.

The law of the land says that what you are – human being, or non-human – is determined by where you are – in the womb or out of it, and the CMA now officially concurs. So after you let your doctor know about the CMA's recent vote, here's a query to direct to him. Is the CMA telling us that in instances of open fetal surgery, where the fetus is taken out of the uterus, operated on, and then returned, that this child gains status as a human being when it leaves the uterus, but loses that status once the surgery is complete and it is put back in the uterus? The CMA's vote had nothing to do with medicine, science or sense. We need to let our doctors know, and ask them to protest this vote.

SOURCE: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/canadian-medical-association-babies-not-human-till-after-birth>

Understanding tree ring dating

by Anna Nienhuis

Tree ring dating has often been thought to be a reasonably accurate way of determining a tree's age, and tree ring "chronologies" have been compiled going as far back as 10,000 years. But the biblical account would seem to indicate an age of only 6,000 some years, so how to explain the discrepancy?

It turns out detailed recent research, with sensitive probes on living trees, is revealing much more about how these tree rings actually come to be. The premise that one ring forms per year is no longer considered valid as research has shown

how variable ring growth actually is. With weather being the number one factor, there are many reasons a tree would produce multiple rings in a single year, and even no ring one year.

From a Biblical perspective, rather than challenging the Bible's chronology, tree rings then can be seen as instructive in

understanding history as it relates to dramatic weather effects, such as the flood, and the effects such events could have on ecology. So while rings may not be an entirely accurate way of guessing a tree's age, they still tell an interesting story about a tree's history. For more on this see John Morris's recent article "Tree ring dating" at www.icr.org.



The Same Love

by Wes Bredenhof

Ever find yourself wondering whatever happened to pop songs with a social conscience? Especially if you lived through the 1980s you may remember artists like Midnight Oil, Bruce Cockburn, Suzanne Vega and many others. They sang about aboriginal rights in Australia, war in Nicaragua, and abused children everywhere. There were many such messages in pop music back then.

But what about today? Not so much. If today's music has any social agenda it's usually one track: homosexual equality. The most notable example recently was Lady Gaga and her anthem *Born This Way*.

Washington state voters will soon be weighing in on Referendum 74 – a measure that will approve or reject a state bill to allow for same-sex marriage in the state. In advance of that, Seattle rapper Macklemore (and sidekicks Ryan Lewis and Mary Lambert) have released a song entitled "Same Love." The song celebrates and promotes acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, including same-sex marriage. Additionally, "Same Love" takes on Christians who might oppose the homosexual

agenda. Whether the song will hit the charts remains to be seen – the album release date is still ahead as this is being written.

Walt Muller of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding (www.cpyu.org) helpfully suggests popular music be understood as both a map and a mirror. It's a mirror because it reflects what's going on in society. It's a map because it often involves an agenda on the part of the artist – the artist wants to take you somewhere. Looked at through this lens, the agenda of "Same Love" is obvious. Macklemore

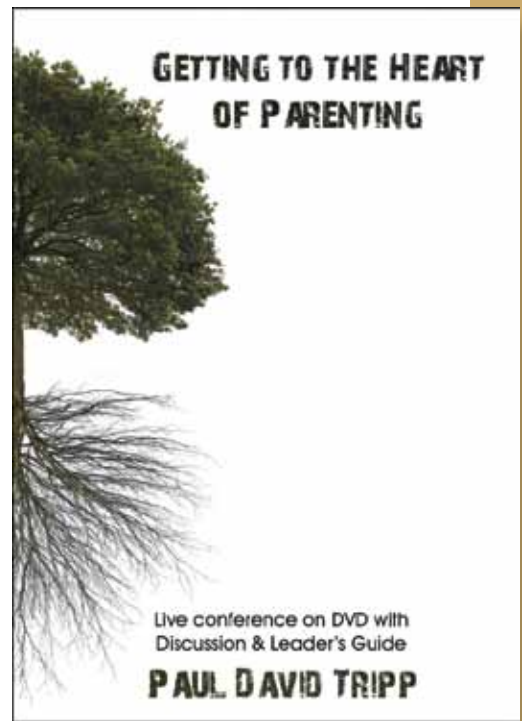
wants his listeners – hip-hop fans usually not that sympathetic to homosexual concerns – to get on side with Ref 74 and other such legislation.

But how does this song work as a mirror? Macklemore is partly reacting against a vicious and ungracious element in society. Sometimes that element portrays itself as Christian. That leads us to think about how we respond to homosexuality and advocates of the homosexual agenda. Yes, we believe what the Bible says about marriage and about same-sex relationships. But do we also really believe what the Bible says about being compassionate and gracious to the lost and broken? For instance, does being opposed to the homosexual agenda mean that we neglect the thousands suffering worldwide from HIV/AIDS? Shouldn't Christians support efforts to find a cure? More significantly, is there a gospel message of salvation for homosexuals too? In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul says that some of the Corinthian Christians had been homosexuals. They came to inherit the kingdom of God through someone lovingly showing them the same grace we have received in Christ. Homosexuals might still accuse us of hating them, but it should never be an accusation with any validity.



Eighties rockers, like Bruce Cockburn ("If I had a rocket launcher") brought up all sorts of political issues. Today musicians seem interested in just one. Photo by Janet Dancer [Flickr.com/photos/janet_dancer/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/janet_dancer/)

Great resource on, among other things, spanking right.



vocal in defending it. It may have quite an impact if hardworking, well-adjusted young men and women stand up for the biblical model of discipline.

Slap down spanking law, medical journal says

by Raoul Kingma

Spanking is now considered an “anachronistic excuse for poor parenting,” according to the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Editor-in-chief John Fletcher goes on to call for a repeal of Section 43 of the Criminal Code (which sanctions spanking), calling it “a constant excuse for parents to cling to an ineffective method of child discipline.”

However, according to government spokesperson Julie Di Mambro, parents are in the best position to raise their children, saying that “we believe it is up to [parents], not the government, to decide what is best for their children so long as it is within reason.” Despite these reassurances, Christian parents should be concerned. Di Mambro indicates that the limits of discipline are those which are “within reason.” This begs the question

of how we determine what exactly is “within reason.” With continued pressure from organizations like the Canadian Medical Association, it may be only a matter of time before spanking is added to the list of the “unreasonable.”

If spanking begins to include the risk of arrest or of our children being taken away Christian parents will avoid spanking... in public. But that would take spanking, done properly, out of the public eye. And if the public never sees spanking done right, we shouldn't be surprised if the only understanding of it they know is spanking done abusively. So there is a pressing need for a public defense of the benefits of proper spanking. Therefore we call on our unmarried brothers and sisters who personally know the benefits of biblical discipline to be especially

Delaware becomes first state to ban spanking

by Anna Nienhuis

In September Delaware passed a law that defines child abuse as including “any act that causes pain.” This would seem to include corporal punishment in all its forms. Many groups are unhappy with this decision, as it is felt this takes away a parent’s freedom to reasonably discipline their children using spanking.

The state is, however, claiming that its intention is *not* to ban spanking, or to prevent parents from choosing how to discipline their children. They claim their focus is on protecting vulnerable children from child abuse. Unfortunately, even if the law is founded on good intentions, it gives child caseworkers legal grounds with which to approach and attack any parent

The organic debate rages on

by Anna Nienhuis

While “organic” has become a firmly established buzzword increasing the costs and popularities of certain foods, science continues to struggle with supporting its actual advantages - a recent Stanford University study found, as commentator Blake Hurst put it, “that the nutritional benefits of organic food have, to say the least, been oversold.”

This debate between organic and conventional farming continues at a pitch usually reserved for religious or political debates or other hot button issues where people are unable to come to an agreement, often because neither side has the proof to convince the other. Making the case “for” organic from either an economic, environmental, or nutritional standpoint has proven difficult and, despite all the hype, organic food sales remain at only about 4 per cent of the dollar value of food sold in the United States.

The question remains unanswered as to whether the animals, plants, farmers, and consumers care enough about “organic” to keep this debate going at its current fevered pitch, or whether things will quiet



Organic hype has even hit cigarettes.

down as the various sides get down to enjoying that we live in a time and place where the money and freedom exist to have a variety of food options for everyone.

SOURCE: Blake Hurst's “Organic Illusions”; www.american.com; Oct. 1, 2012 - <http://www.american.com/archive/2012/october/organic-illusions>

engaging in corporal punishment of any kind.

SOURCE: Raven Clabough's “Delaware law bans parents from spanking their kids”; thenewamerican.com, Sept. 27, 2012

Is Yelling the New Spanking?
 Confessions of a mom who yells. Would it be better to yell?

Posted on May 18, 2011, at 10:07 AM
 by Sarah Stinson, [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Google+](#) | [Share](#)

When I grew up in the '50s, we got spanked. This wasn't shocking. Everyone got spanked. In fact, if you didn't get spanked, it was considered that you were the product of liberal hippies and chances are your mother *didn't* wear a bra and your hair contained natural peanut butter.

Article discussing the most common, and vastly inferior, alternative to spanking.

Inevitable Triumph

by Christine Farenhorst

Reverse psychology is that technical term used to define the art of getting someone to do the opposite of what is suggested. Sometimes called manipulation, reverse psychology uses the viewpoint that no one likes to be told what to do – so much so, that people often will do the opposite of what they are being pressured to do simply to establish a sense of freedom from restriction or authority.

A declining wage for sin

There is a story told of a town in the southern USA during the days when the Ku Klux Klan was very powerful. In that town, there lived a Jewish shopkeeper who owned a small establishment on the main street. He was not popular with the racist Klanners and they devised a plan to run the shopkeeper out of town. Calling together a small gang of young teenage boys, they gave these boys permission to harass the Jewish man. Consequently, each day the boys would collect in front of the shop and begin to yell.

“Jew! Jew! You’re a dirty Jew!” they called out in unison.

No one stopped the band of young rebels, not the police, nor any passers-by. The boys freely paraded up and down in front of the shop, hooting and howling, and generally making life miserable for the Jewish man and his family. At first the shopkeeper thought the boys would tire of the sport, but as the days passed and they continued to heckle him, he began to worry. His appetite waned, he began to lose sleep and neither he nor his family members ventured much out-of-doors any longer.

After a few weeks, however, the Jew



Who’d work for a penny?

concocted a plan of sorts.

One day, when the boys were gathered in front of the shop, jeering and laughing as usual, he opened the door of his business and addressed them.

“From now on,” he called out in a loud voice, “any lad who calls me a Jew will receive a dime.”

Then he reached into his jacket pocket and, true to his word, handed each boy a dime. The group was delighted and came back the following day, wondering if they would be rewarded again for something they enjoyed doing. The shopkeeper reappeared, but this time he did not give

each boy a dime. He reached into his pocket and gave each one a nickel. As he did so he

spoke.

“A dime is too much,” he said, “From now on, any boy who calls me a Jew will get a nickel. I can only afford a nickel today.”

Although a little disappointed, the boys did not complain. Less than a dime, a nickel was still a decent bit of freefall to tuck away. The next day, the same thing happened, only this time the Jew only gave each of them a penny.

“Hey, a penny,” they murmured aggressively, “Why only a penny?”

“That’s all I can afford today,” the

shopkeeper replied, hands on his hips.

“But two days ago you gave us a dime for calling you a Jew, and yesterday you gave us a nickel. It’s just not fair that today you are only handing out a penny.”

“Take it or leave it. That’s all you’re going to get.”

“Do you think we’re going to call you a Jew for a measly penny?”

“So don’t,” the Jew responded.

And they didn’t.

This was reverse psychology, and if the story is a true one, then it was successful.

Prodigal daughter?

My husband and I once tried reverse psychology on one of our daughters. This particular child, who was around five or six at the time, was being very obstinate in that she was disobedient in almost every area of daily living. She complained about going to bed, would not eat her supper, threw tantrums and refused to share. It was hard to manage her and we were almost at our wits’ end. So, like the Jewish shopkeeper, we devised a plan.

Sitting down with the recalcitrant child, we explained to her that she was being a little difficult and that our family was suffering. Consequently, we told her, she was free from that moment on to choose her own way. She did not have to eat what she did not like; she did not have to go to bed when the other children went but could stay up as long as she liked; and, in short, she could consider herself outside of our family and, therefore, outside of the family discipline.

Initially, this child was delighted with the freedom she thought she had been given. Understandably, the other children were just a tad envious. But as our daughter played alone, made decisions alone, and was left on her own, she began to feel very miserable. Before the second day was finished, she came over to us in a very contrite manner and asked to be readmitted to the family circle and included in the disciplines and

rules we had in the house.

This also, was reverse psychology. But in retrospect, it was, on our part, probably not a very wise thing to have done. It could have backfired. God was gracious in that He allowed our manipulation, because that is what it was, to work on her heart.

Conclusion

Does God ever use the trick of reverse psychology on people?

On the whole, as we look around us at the world today, people are certainly misbehaving and in need of change. Would reverse psychology help? Society seems to run the whole gamut of vices described in Galatians 5: “sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and...”

Does God need to use the manipulation of reverse psychology on people in order to get them to behave in such a fashion that they will obey Him; that they will choose for Him and His Kingdom; that they will act in such a way as behooves the creatures He made? Are there phrases or terms which He uses in His Word which we can interpret as allowing us to use the

opposite meaning to that which we read?

Can you imagine a street preacher calling out (conversely) to those who are passing, “Hey, just keep on defrauding your neighbor; smart move to slander that business partner; kudos to you if you get the most out of a divorce settlement; neat trick to ask more for a property than it is worth; keep on buying those lottery tickets, you might get lucky; and, go on strike so your employer will be forced to do what you want him to do.”

It is true that because of our sinful nature, we enjoy doing the opposite of what God commands. But does this consequently mean that God needs to use reverse psychology to change sinful behavior? – to change hearts?

The truth is that God needs no gimmicks – psychological or otherwise. When He tells us something, the command is clear. God’s Word does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

The triad of opposition – the devil, the worldly web of vice and our imperfect hearts – are ever on the prowl. But the simple truth, which God’s unchanging Word holds forth, is that God’s sheep will sooner or later hear and respond to His voice – His unchanging, plain and steadfast voice. He knows them and they will follow.

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In praise of Proverbs

Portable, packaged and pictured principles for daily living

by Jay Adams

The book of Proverbs was written to impart God's wisdom to His saints. It is not a book of moralisms; it is God's input on many, if not most, facets of life. Following the proverbs is to be following God's will so as to serve Jesus Christ.

As such, the Christian puts himself in peril to neglect it.

Portable

Moreover, it is an exceedingly important way to learn, remember, and utilize truth. Most proverbs are portable, packaged, and pictured principles. A great chunk of life, analyzed by the Lord for us, is squeezed into a small package called a proverb. The principle is illustrated, in many cases, so that it becomes concrete enough to understand, remember, and implement. Your task is to find and unpack those that you need at the moment, and use them. The picture illustrating the principle will help you do so.

I call proverbs portable truth because, being small enough to grasp quickly, and memorize easily, they can be carried in the heart for use whenever necessary. In 22:18 the writer urges, "keep them within you, and ...on your lips to use."

They are useful to keep you from sin and to help you handle difficult situations. They are easy to remember, as I said. Take for example, Proverbs 26:16: "The sluggard dips his hand into the bowl; he is too lazy to return it to his mouth."

This humorous picture makes its point without any elaboration. Moreover, whenever you think of laziness, having read this proverb, the picture will probably leap into your mind as it does in mine. The principle

is, of course, that you ought not begin something that, because of your laziness, you don't complete. How often in our churches could the proverb be used to describe (or awaken) people who are too lazy to finish a task!

On the other hand, there is the picture in Proverbs 17:14 that tells you when to quit something you ought not be doing in the first place. Check it out.

Pointed

Proverbs also speaks to our relationships. People are funny: when it comes to selecting friends they rarely do so. Rather, they allow themselves to drift into relationships at work, or elsewhere that, in the long run, may prove foolish. If Proverbs warns about one thing it is the associations we make. In 22:24 it warns:

Don't make friends with an angry man, and don't be the companion of a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways, and entangle yourself in a snare [trap]

Two chapters later, Proverbs 24:1 goes on to say: "Don't envy evil men or desire to be with them; for their hearts plan violence, and their words stir up trouble."

Here's another (23:20):

Don't associate with those who drink too much wine, or with those who gorge themselves on meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will become poor, and grogginess will cloth them in rags.

There are warnings about associating with fools, troublemakers, violent persons, and on and on.

Now someone might ask, "Is Proverbs all negative?"

Not on your life! I've just chosen a few that are – by far, the positive content outweighs the negative. But we all need to be warned from time to time. You will find the way of life that pleases God and brings joy and happiness spelled out in the book – without reading too many chapters either!

Pertinent

If that sounds intriguing, well, there's hardly a book that's more so. But all of the teachings in Proverbs are for those who can keep them; that means, for believers in Jesus Christ who have the Spirit of God at work producing fruit in their lives (Gal. 5:22ff.). Do you know what to do if someone speaks harshly to you? Well, Proverbs 15:1 will tell you. Look it up! Do you know how to keep yourself out of trouble? Read 22:3. Do your kids need discipline? Check out 22:15, and a number of other passages about the matter. Do you lack wisdom? There is a chapter and a half about how to become wise – search it out.

As a matter of fact, why not read all of Proverbs? You could do so in a fairly short time. Mark those you want to return to in order to reflect upon more fully – then do so. You could try reading a chapter a day in Proverbs each month (it lends itself to such a program), determined to find and remember at least one portable truth from each chapter. In months when you have more proverbs than days, double up at the end—it won't take that much more time!

Dr. Jay Adams is Dean of the Institute for Nouthetic Studies and the author of more than 100 books. This is from his blog which can be found at (www.nouthetic.org) and is reprinted here with permission.

Disability rights:

Are they the best way to love the disabled?

by Neil Dykstra

We all agree that the disabled among us should be properly cared for. We want them to have the resources they need to live comfortable lives, even if they cannot earn it for themselves. We want their needs to be addressed and their infirmities to be accommodated. It's clear then, that all of us would support disability rights... right?

Not so fast. The truth is, this rights-based approach has its downsides. We will look at a number of them in this article.

A right to your parking spot

Jocelyn Nolet is a small woman in her 60s. She lives on her own in a condominium complex in Quebec. Her job as a shift cook requires irregular hours, and she often comes home late at night with the day's groceries. Still suffering the effects of a previous injury to her shoulder, it was not easy to haul the groceries across the parking lot to the elevator. Thankfully, she was given the parking spot closest to the elevator, which made the job much easier.

Easier, that is, until the day that her neighbor, Marise Myrand, insisted that she give up her parking spot. Ms. Myrand is well over 350 pounds and has many ailments associated with such extreme obesity: restricted mobility, diabetes, and a heart condition. She believed she was entitled to the parking spot closest to the door because of her disability.

Taken aback by her assertiveness, Ms. Nolet refused. The location of her parking spot meant a lot to her, and she wasn't about to give it up. Nevertheless, Ms. Myrand went to the condominium association and demanded that they give her the parking spot. The association refused to intervene, saying that the choice is entirely up to Ms. Nolet, who had

already refused. Other residents of the condominium complex were shocked by Ms. Myrand's behavior, and began to speak negatively of her.

Ms. Myrand then complained to the province's human rights tribunal.

Today, the residents of the condominium complex are all several hundred dollars poorer. Ms. Nolet now has to make it across the parking lot, with her heavy packages, to get to the elevator. And Ms. Myrand not only has the best parking spot in the complex, she is also \$10,000 richer. A lawyer from Quebec's human rights commission, who gave legal representation to Ms. Myrand at the taxpayer's expense, successfully argued that obesity is a form of disability. He commented that people in society have an obligation to help people with physical disabilities... and that this obligation is enforceable by the state.

Negative vs. positive rights

The Reformation contributed to the modern conception of human rights. Early Protestants, in condemning the Roman Catholic Church's persecution, made the argument that each individual had the right (and the responsibility) to interpret Scripture for themselves. True devotion to God could not be dictated by the Church, but had to be, ultimately, up to the individual. As John Calvin wrote in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

Paul does not hesitate to say that Christ's death is nullified if we put our souls under men's subjection [cf. Gal 2:21]. For in certain chapters

of the letter to the Galatians, Paul is solely trying to show how to us Christ is obscured, or rather extinguished, unless our consciences stand firm in their freedom.

They were making the case for the individual's right to freedom of conscience. Other Protestants promoted further rights, including freedom of religion, freedom of expression, private property, and political equality. These are "negative" rights – individuals have a right to what they *already have*, given to them by God. Negative rights are those that require only inaction from others: don't stop my exercise of free speech, don't steal my property, don't interfere with my worship and you have respected my rights in these areas.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, atheist and pseudo-Christian humanists began to push parallel theories of rights, all of which denied critical theological truths, such as man's depravity. A central theme in their ideas is that force and coercion can – and must – be responsibly employed to achieve some form of material equality. These are called positive rights, that individuals have a right to what *others have*, based on their own need. This was immortalized in the communist motto, *from each according to their ability, to each according to their need*. When people talk about a right to free education, or a right to free healthcare, they are talking about positive rights. These are rights that require action from others - one man's right to a free education necessarily creates the burden for some other man to put in the work and sweat to fund it.

Canada's charter of rights and freedoms recognizes several important negative

rights. But the Charter also spells out in several places a justification to abridge these rights in the pursuit of positive rights. For example, equality under the law can be ignored by the government as long as their object is the “amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups.” It is under this clause that disability rights and other affirmative laws have been justified.

Canada’s various human rights codes are the granddaddy of affirmative laws, and clearly reflect the theory of positive rights. The preamble of the Canadian Human Rights Act explicitly states that “Individuals should... have their needs accommodated” to the point of “undue hardship” – almost word-for-word from the communist motto.

Hopping on the bandwagon

Thomas Sowell, a researcher at the Hoover Institution, wrote extensively about the effects of affirmative “positive-rights” laws in countries around the world. One of his key observations was the inevitable expansion of privileged classes.

Once the government starts favoring particular groups of people, it goes without saying that it provides an incentive to everyone to become a member of a privileged group. As an example, Sowell noted that in 1960 there were less than 50,000 Native Americans born between 1940 and 1944. After twenty years and various affirmative action policies targeting them, the census revealed that there were over 80,000 Native Americans born between 1940 and 1944 – an impossibility unless you consider the pressure to redefine what it means to be a Native American.

The same applies to the disabled. As the benefits proliferate, so do campaigns to include various groups of people under the disability umbrella. The recent reclassification of addictions as disabilities under human rights law has swelled the ranks of the disabled by adding approximately 5 per cent of Canadians with some form of substance abuse problem.

A recent case in BC highlights the widening definition of disability. A man who appeared healthy, but claimed to



THIS IS A PROBLEM

However, not every problem requires a government solution so we need to ask, are government-mandated laws the best or only way to address it? Or is there a much more effective way to help the disabled?

have a “previous judo injury” was asked not to wear hiking boots at a fitness club. The boots were recommended by the man’s doctor for ankle support for a single specific exercise that did not even require any of the equipment at the facility. The BC Human Rights Tribunal nevertheless penalized the fitness club for failing to accommodate the man’s supposed disability.

Less for those that need it

Now the more people that pile onto the bandwagon of privilege, the more diluted the privilege becomes. Dilution occurs in many ways. It saps public sympathy for the disabled when there are some who are clearly freeloading off the system. When the courts and the country finally react against the excesses of these privileges, this reaction will inevitably hurt those who are most disabled, reducing their benefits right alongside those of the freeloaders.

The government may also begin to impose a “hierarchy of privileges,” setting off disputes in which each group competes to make themselves look as miserable as possible, to earn the highest rung of

benefits. Such an exercise cannot possibly promote the dignity of the disabled.

Finally, those who are only marginally disabled are far more able to demand their benefits than those who are debilitated. This results in the resources being shifted away from those who truly need it.

Who pays the costs?

Matthew Wozenilek is no stranger to the human rights system. He has filed several complaints in his hometown of Guelph over wheelchair access rights. One complaint, at a local 7-eleven store, resulted in an order for the store to install an automatic door-opening system at a cost of about \$5,000, and pay Mr. Wozenilek \$6,000 for injury to his dignity.

There is no law in Ontario that requires stores to have automatic door-opening systems. Yet the Tribunal’s decision indicates that should a disabled person request one, the business is obligated to provide it or be fined. It is highly unlikely that Mr. Wozenilek will ever purchase enough Big Gulps for the 7-eleven to recoup its costs for accommodating a single customer. A similar complaint in

BC required stores to install cordless Interac machines in order to accommodate those in wheelchairs if one is requested.

In the eyes of every small business across the country, wheelchair-bound customers now represent a significant financial liability. To put it in bleak capitalistic terms, businesses that are not patronized by the mobility-disabled have a competitive advantage over those that are.

In a case that made headlines around the world, a former McDonald’s employee whose disability prevented her from washing her hands won a human rights complaint over her dismissal. The Tribunal’s reasoning was that McDonald’s had the resources to continue to employ the complainant in an administrative position even if she was completely unsuitable for the job. Essentially, the employer, by virtue of its business success, was on the hook to pay disability benefits out-of-pocket to anyone that was no longer able to perform their duties. Many other cases prove the significant potential costs of accommodation that a business exposes itself to when it hires disabled employees.

Instead of accommodating the needs of the disabled out of compassion, or even as a good business decision to protect their image, they are being forced to do so by individuals who wield special rights. Resentment of the disabled is inevitable.

Unintended consequences

After addictions were reclassified as a disability, it became almost impossible for an employer to fire an employee who could prove that he or she was addicted. That posed a problem in heavy industrial operations, such as Alberta’s tar sands and conventional oil operations. A worker who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs presents a huge safety risk when at the controls of heavy equipment.

Random drug and alcohol testing of employees was instituted as a safety measure. The human rights system whittled the policy down to a bare minimum, and insisted that anyone who tested positive for banned substances would only be removed from the safety-sensitive position, and not be fired, if they could prove that they were addicted.



In claiming that Healthcare is a right, this man is claiming the right to reach into someone else’s pocket to pay for it. Positive rights like this give something free to one person, by obligating someone else to pay for it.

Photo by Gerry Boughan / Shutterstock.com

Yet recreational users who were not addicted could still be fired. I leave it up to the reader to guess as to the ramifications of this policy!

Similar unintended consequences may occur in the field of infectious diseases, which are also classified as a disability. While the bureaucracy pays lip service to ensuring safety in the workforce, they don't seem as cautious when it comes to excluding infected individuals from health and food-related occupations. Only if employers are able to prove that there is a significant health risk can they take measures to prevent transmission of infectious diseases to their customers or employees.

Now, to my knowledge, there aren't any cases of a human rights body going too far in putting the rights of an infected individual over the health of the public. Yet employers, wary of a human rights complaint, are going to be more reluctant to take swift and decisive action when they believe there is a risk of transmission.

Ignoring the disabled

One of the many justifications for Vancouver's self-injection site, where addicts can go to inject themselves without worry of arrest, was motivated purely by selfishness. If the drug-users could be given a safe and clean place to feed their addictions, at least they wouldn't be shooting up on the street. Wouldn't this "clean up" the neighborhood for the benefit of those residents who were not addicted? Isn't that a win-win?

People routinely look to government to deal with the problems they see in society around them. This is no doubt due to most people's compassion for their fellow man, but it is also due to a desire by most of us to avoid becoming personally involved in a solution. It is far easier to petition the government to have others, especially corporations and the rich, pay for a solution, than to become personally involved ourselves.

While it is certainly admirable to aid the disabled in becoming as independent as possible, exchanging a dependence on persons for a dependence on government has its drawbacks for both the disabled and society in general. It eliminates

personal relationships and replaces them with paid civil servants. It does nothing to foster a closer community through acts of charity. It permits a bogus feeling of moral completeness - a feeling that we have already met the needs of the disabled through our laws and taxes - and thus allows us to ignore them. And it removes an opportunity for all of us to learn something about God and ourselves when caring for the disabled.

Less problematic solutions

Would a rejection of government-mandated means to meet the needs of the disabled result in hundreds of people in wheelchairs staring mournfully at stairways that block their path? The answer is an emphatic no. There are other, less problematic, ways to achieve the same effect as human rights laws.

1. Charity: There is plenty of evidence to prove that those who believe in less government intervention are actually more likely to voluntarily accommodate the needs of others. A reduction in the costs of compliance and enforcement would lead to more money available for philanthropy.
2. Better legislative options: Human Rights tribunals impose arbitrary, unpredictable requirements. An across-the-board requirement for new and existing businesses to provide basic accommodation to the disabled would be a fairer, more equitable, and more predictable way of distributing the cost, essentially including it as part of the cost of doing business. These requirements should be put in place by elected officials; they are directly accountable to businesses and the public, which makes them completely unlike the unelected human rights bureaucrats. As an example, think of the parking spot reserved for the disabled at your local Tim Horton's. A legislative approach eliminates the patchwork application of arbitrary standards currently being performed by disinterested bureaucrats. Unfortunately it does still leave the government in the role of deciding on appropriate levels of

accommodation. So this is a better approach, but there is certainly the possibility for something better still to come along.

3. Government should continue to lead by example. While affirmative action policies in hiring are counterproductive and contradictory to the rule of law, governments can set the standard for equal access to its services. This is especially true when it comes to the civil rights that every Canadian possesses, such as the right to vote.
4. Independent business or consumer groups could put pressure on businesses to live up to a particular standard of accommodation. This allows each business to judge whether the recognition as a disabled-friendly establishment is worth the cost, and permits consumers to support with their wallets businesses who conform to their values.

Conclusion

Your money is not the only thing that the disabled need. Their needs are not fulfilled by your forced compliance to a set of obligations. What they need is the same thing that we all need - our love, which simply cannot be legislated. Our obligations to the disabled should proceed from that love, not from a law.

The early church was encouraged to show generosity, and to give to any as he had need (Acts 3:48). This was not to be done through compulsion, but through voluntary acts of generosity as part of our thankfulness to God (2 Cor 9:6-15). This applies to employers and business owners in our midst, who are called by God to generously accommodate the needs of the disabled in their businesses. This applies to us all, not only when the collection bag is passed, but also when we are deciding how to use the financial gifts that God has given us. We answer God's call, not by agitating for legal protections for the disabled, or more government programs and expensive state-run facilities, but by practicing true Christian charity towards the disabled - giving from our hearts, as well as our wallets.



DEBT-PROOF LIVING: The complete guide to living financially free

by Mary Hunt

DPL Press, 2005

311 pages, Paperback

As a regular reader of financial planning literature, and a fan of syndicated talk show hosts Clark Howard and Dave Ramsey, I was immediately drawn to this title when I found it in a used bookstore. I was even more interested when I flipped through the chapters and discovered that the author was a Christian, and that one of her first tools for getting out of debt was *to give more to the Lord!*

Hmmm, I had to read more!

North American society today is incredibly wealthy – even with the recent recession and long drawn-out recovery, we enjoy a standard of living that is far beyond what most of mankind has experienced for most of history. Despite our material riches, and our access to inexpensive food and amenities, many of us struggle to stay out of debt, and find ourselves living paycheck to paycheck.

Author Mary Hunt found herself in this situation some years ago: in a desire to keep up with the Joneses, she and her family regularly outspent their income. As a result, they became mired in over \$100,000 of what she now calls “stupid debt” – debt that financed their lifestyle, not their essentials.

It took them years of dedicated effort, but the Hunts were able to budget and save their way out of debt. Along the way Mrs. Hunt discovered that many of her friends and acquaintances were in similar difficulties, and benefited from her teaching. Since that time she has written a series of books and newsletters helping people better manage their money.

Tithe is vital

One of the first principles the author highlights is that all of our finances belong to our Creator, and that it is our responsibility to be stewardly with what He has given us. An important way we can show this is by giving the tithe: dedicating our first fruits to Him. Even for those deepest in debt, she insists that giving the tithe (or for non Christians, giving to causes important to them) is the first step to properly managing our money. She rightly makes the point that going deeply in debt to finance one’s lifestyle is an incredibly selfish way to live, and cannot be pleasing to God. The tithe recognizes that all of life belongs to the Lord.

There are many keen insights in this book, and, even as a long time budgeter, I found Mrs. Hunt’s prescribed methods very helpful. One example: how often have you started a budget with good intentions, and stuck with it for a period of weeks, or maybe months, and then had your carefully tracked categories thrown off when the transmission blew in the family van. The author recommends what she calls a “Freedom Fund” – a monthly savings plan that recognizes that what we might call an unusual incident can usually be planned for, because these “emergencies” regularly happen, and therefore really should be part of our budgeting plans. A simple concept, but it is explained so clearly and thoroughly, and worked with in such a systematic way

that anyone who follows the plan, will greatly increase the likelihood that they will stick with it!

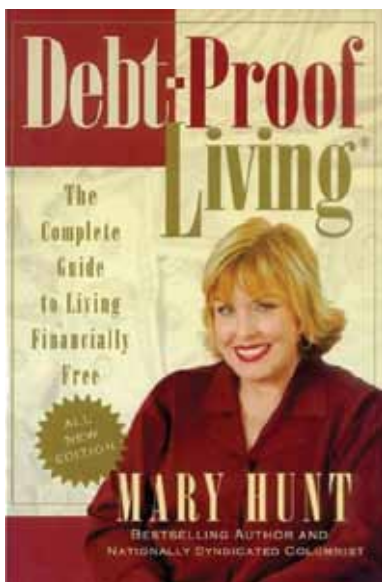
Cash vs. credit

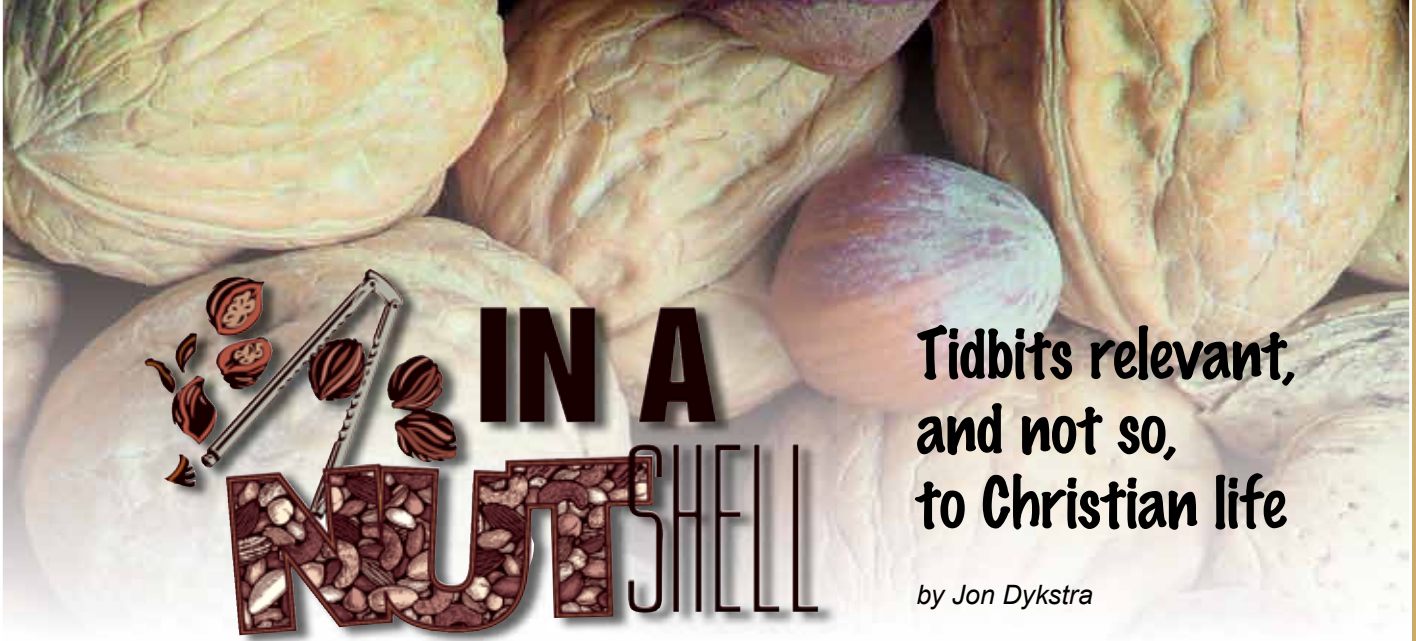
Mrs. Hunt is also not a fan of credit cards: her contention is that most people (yes, most!) spend far more when they use credit than when they are restricted by the amount of cash in their wallet (or in their budgeting envelopes!). Even people who consider themselves careful spenders will make more buying decisions in a given month when they use credit instead of cash.

Mrs. Hunt also tackles the issue of credit scores, and how one can manage one’s credit in a responsible way that will lead to a better credit score, which in turn can help one to qualify for a lower mortgage or car loan rate. As I read this chapter, I recalled that other Christian financial counselors advise that you not worry about your credit score: obsessing with it can lead you to make decisions – like opening additional lines of credit or taking out loans – that might improve your score but which may actually hurt your fight to stay out of debt! (See the work of Christian author Dave Ramsey for more on this point).

Other topics include warnings about debt consolidation loans, tips on how to finance your home, and an encouragement to look carefully at disability insurance as a responsible tool to provide for your family in case of injury that prevents you from being able to work. Lastly, the author looks at how to invest the money that you’ve saved in a stewardly way.

I heartily recommend this book for anyone interested in money management for Christians: even veteran planners will find much good material to work with





Tidbits relevant, and not so, to Christian life

by Jon Dykstra

The cleanest windshield...

The focus of Greg Dutcher's *Killing Calvinism: How to destroy a perfectly good theology from the inside* is on how Calvinists can make their doctrine – though it is the true-est, and most biblical – unattractive to other Christians. Part of the problem as he sees it is that we sometimes fall in love with our theology for its own sake, rather than for Who it allows us to see:

I am concerned that many Calvinists today do little more than celebrate how wonderfully clear their theological windshield is. But like a windshield, Reformed theology is not an end in itself. It is simply a window to the awe-inspiring universe of God's truth, filled with glory, beauty, and grace. Do we need something like a metaphorical windshield of clear, biblical truth to look through as we hope to marvel at God's glory? Absolutely. But we must make sure that we know the difference between staring *at* a windshield and staring *through* one.

Martin Luther on sanctification

"This life is not godliness, but growth in godliness; not health, but healing; not being, but becoming; not rest, but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way; the process is not yet finished, but it has begun; this is not the goal, but it is road; at present all does not gleam and glitter, but everything is being purified."

Ready to be reviled?

Pastors need to teach their people about how to handle with grace being looked down on more than ever before. I heard of John Stott reflecting that as a young man at Cambridge when people said "O he's a Christian," what they meant was that he was a goody-two-shoes. But now to be called a Christian means that you are viewed as a morally-deficient person, because you have not swallowed the gay agenda.

- Dr. John E Benton, Managing Editor of *Evangelicals Now* in the July 2012 issue on how the world will change as gay marriage becomes the norm.

Do you think God can't use you?

When we reflect back on the mistakes we've made, the sins we've committed, the struggles we have, and the weaknesses that plague us, we might think there is no way that God could use us. But we would be wrong. As Paul writes in 1 Cor. 1:27-28 "God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

Consider who God has used in the past:

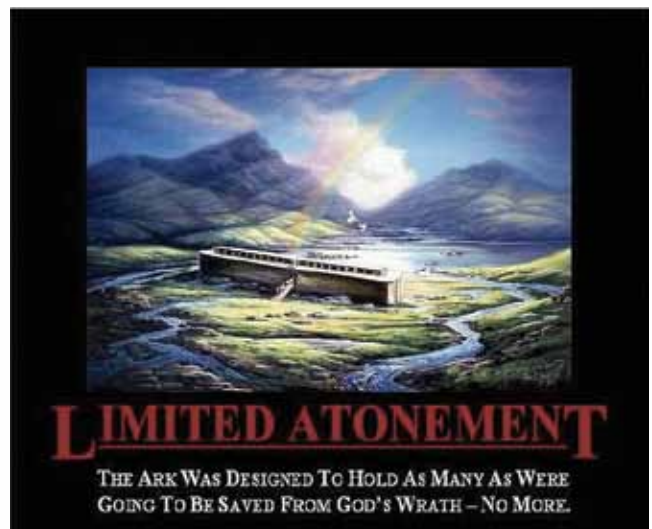
Abraham was near dead, Jacob a deceiver, Gideon afraid, Rahab was a prostitute, Jonah ran away from God, David was an adulterer and murderer, Job was impoverished, the Samaritan woman was divorced, Peter denied God (three times!) and Lazarus was dead for three days!

Yes, we *are* too weak, broken and sinful to do anything for God... in our own strength. But we're just the sort of folk that God chooses to use and strengthen.

SOURCE: The Bible of course... and inspired by a post Eddie Eddings's Calvinistic Cartoons (<http://calvinisticcartoons.blogspot.com>)

Idle hands...

"The idle man tempts the Devil to tempt him." - C. H. Spurgeon



From CalvinisticCartoons.blogspot.com
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For the sake of the children?

Christian education as violation of children's "human rights"

by Michael Wagner

Two topics that are commonly discussed in *Reformed Perspective* are Christian education and the modern notion of "human rights." Christian education is a good thing, of course, and its supporters need to be encouraged. On the other hand, the phrase "human rights" is frequently used as a cover for anti-Christian positions on abortion and gay rights.

Now what happens when Christian education and "human rights" are thrown together? An outcome that is bad for Christians, that's what. Christian education and the modern notion of "human rights" don't fit well together.

Diminishing parents

The clash of so-called "human rights" and Christian education is discussed by American law professor Martha Albertson Fineman in an article entitled "Taking Children's Interests Seriously" (in the 2009 book *What is Right for Children? The Competing Paradigms of Religion and Human Rights*). She is a "children's rights" proponent. But children are too immature to exercise their rights, so "children's rights" are commonly used to empower government officials at the expense of parental rights.

From a Christian perspective, we know *parental rights* should be paramount in education. But Fineman certainly doesn't think so. She says that an emphasis on parental rights in education can be an obstacle to children's best interests. For example, it is assumed by many that parents are in the best position to determine which school subjects and methods of preparation are most likely

to prepare their children for the future. But that assumption is flawed, according to Fineman. As she sees it, that "type of expertise is almost certainly within the province of certified teachers and school boards, not parents." In fact, giving parents the right to make significant educational decisions for their children can harm children's future: "Certain parental decisions can create handicaps and inhibit a child's entry into the secular and complex world in which she or he must live and function as an adult."

In her view, then, it makes much more sense for educational decisions to be made by public education professionals. Parents don't really know very much, after all. Why allow them to make the important decisions?

Besides, the parents are clearly up to no good, at least those who send their children to Christian schools:

Parents in these contexts are often part of a larger religious or ideological community, a community with an independent interest in and intent to indoctrinate children. Such communities conspire with member parents to separate their children from diverse secular, and therefore competing and dangerous, alternatives.

So, those of you reading this who send your children to a Christian school are, in her view, conspiring with church leaders against secular society.

Mandatory public education?

To fix this situation, Fineman thinks

that "human rights" rather than parental rights should be the paramount consideration in educational decision-making. Her perspective reflects that of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which, in a 2006 ruling, upheld a decision by authorities in Germany to prevent a Christian couple from home schooling their children. The ECHR said that home schooling would violate the children's right to education. Fineman warmly welcomed this decision, noting that the

approach of the ECHR provides a competing framework for making decisions regarding the educational and social welfare of the child: that of the best interests of the child, as evaluated through the paradigm of human rights.

In this view, educational decisions must be made in light of "the child's interest in the diversity and independence-conferring potential of a secular and public education." By allowing parents the option of selecting private Christian education for their children, the children's interests are being neglected, according to Fineman: "Indeed, the long-term consequences for the child of being home schooled or sent to a private school cannot be overstated."

Think of the specific consequences for female students, for example. Fineman cites one notable study which

has exposed the ways in which private Christian schools instill sexist beliefs into children and pressure young girls into traditional patriarchal roles rather than professional careers.

That's right. Girls in Christian schools are taught that being wives and mothers is a worthy and meaningful role in life. They are encouraged in this direction rather than being steered towards rewarding professional or business careers. But what about their "human rights"? Who's watching out for the interests of these girls? Clearly it's not their parents, who are allowing them to be guided towards the demeaning and worthless roles of wives and mothers.

What should be done about this? Well, the choice is obvious for Fineman. In her view, the solution "for our current educational dilemma is that public education should be mandatory and universal." What she is demanding comes down to this:

- secular humanism is the truth, with its various permutations of feminism and "diversity" (read: homosexuality)
- therefore all children should go to schools where the truth is taught, namely, public schools.

In this way the children's interests and "human rights" will be protected.

When two worldviews collide

Of course, what she calls "human rights" sounds more like "might makes right" to a Christian. A secular humanist government should (in Fineman's view) force all children to learn secular humanism in its schools. This is not really a case of "human rights" versus oppression, but an issue of one worldview versus another. From a Christian perspective, using the power of the state to force all children to attend secular humanist

public schools does not advance "human rights" one bit; quite the contrary, in fact.

Fineman opposes the Christian worldview and wants to ensure that children from Christian homes are taught her worldview instead. This is what's really involved in her proposal. She would not see it this way because for her, secular humanism is the one true religion and she wants everyone to believe it. I don't say that to demean her — everyone has a religious perspective they consider to be true. But she doesn't seem to be self-conscious of this or the implications.

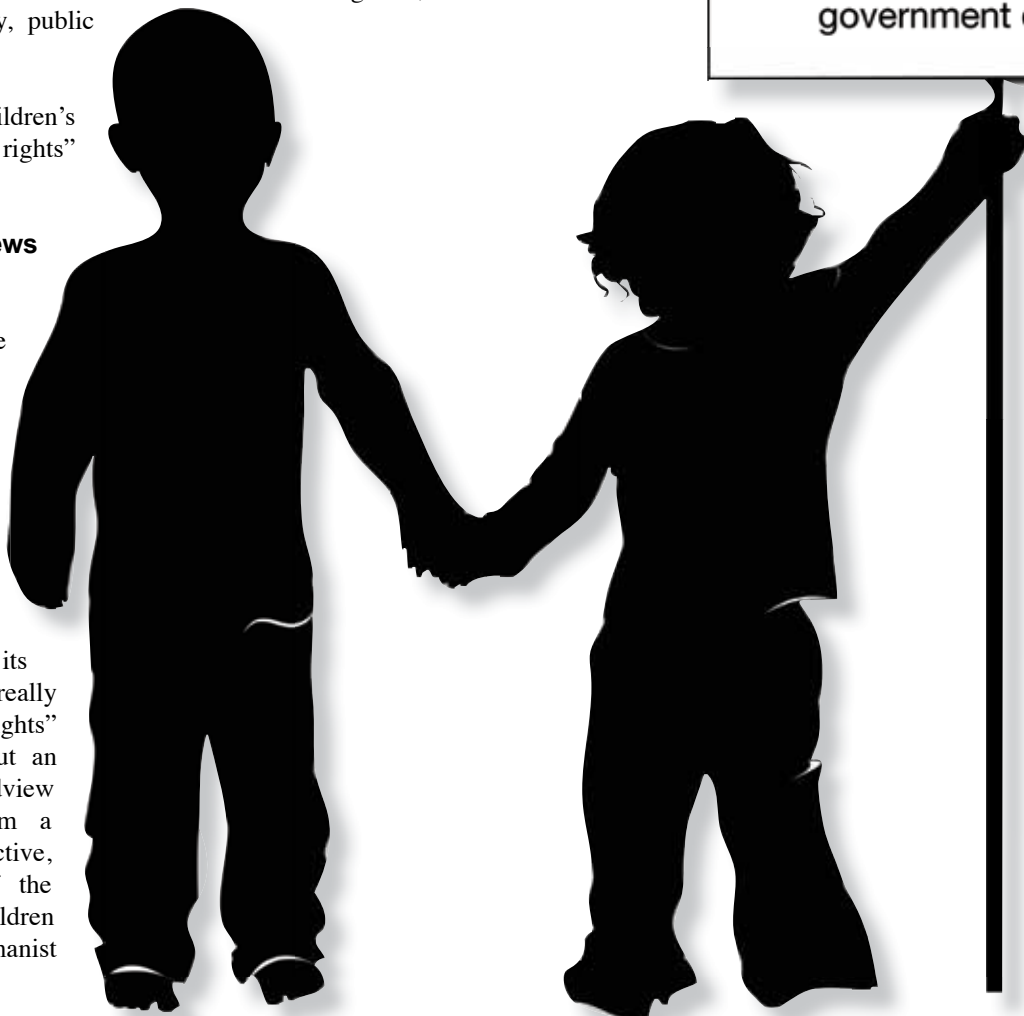
Conclusion

Originally, human rights involved protecting people from the state. In recent decades a new perspective of "human rights" has arisen that involves using the power of the state for social engineering. This is Fineman's conception of human rights. So when the issues of Christian education and "human rights" are mixed together, the outcome is bad

for Christians. For those with a social-engineering view of "human rights," Christianity is oppressive and Christian children need the "independence-conferring potential of a secular and public education" as Fineman puts it. If academics like Fineman continue to promote this agenda, it may be that Christians will need to defend their schools from accusations of "human rights" violations.



I STAND FOR
CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
...as they are understood
and administered by
government officials

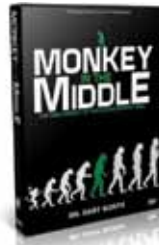


TOP FILMS: Revisionist history revised reviewed by Jon Dykstra

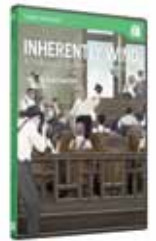
Alleged
Drama
93 min; 2011



Monkey in the Middle
Lecture
104 min; 2011



Inherently Wind
Lecture
74 min; 2004



The year is 1925, and Charlie Anderson's goal is to quit his job, leave his hometown of Dayton, Tennessee and work for legendary *Baltimore Sun* editor H.L. Mencken. When a legal battle in the town's one-room courthouse garners attention from the national media, Charlie thinks he may have just the news story he needs to grab Mencken's attention.

Mencken turns out to be willing to teach Charlie how to craft a news story. But close-up tutelage lets Charlie see that his mentor won't let a little something like the truth get in the way of a good story. Mencken is more than willing to make up a story if it will sell papers. Is Charlie?

Setting

This is a charming romance/drama, and though it is a Christian production the acting is great – most roles have been filled with actors you're likely to recognize (Colm Meaney, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; Fred Thompson, *Law and Order*; Ashley Johnson, *Growing Pains*; Brian Dennehy, *Rambo*, etc.).

But there is another level on which *Alleged* can be appreciated. It is fun but also medicinal.

What do I mean? Well, back in 1960 another film used a court case in 1925 Dayton, Tennessee as the setting for their film. And in the decades since then *Inherit the Wind* has been shown in public school classrooms across the US as a "based on true events" account of what happened back then. But whereas *Alleged* is mostly true, *Inherit the Wind* was mostly propaganda.

Here's what really happened. In 1925 Tennessee passed the Butler Act which forbid Tennessee public schools from teaching students that Man descended

from a lower form. Dayton's John Scopes was the first to be charged with violating the law and his trial garnered national attention when some big names "star" lawyers were enlisted: for the prosecution, the Scripture-quoting, Bible-believing, 3-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan; and for the defense, Clarence Darrow, infamous for his defense of two indefensible child-killing clients.

These big names got the attention of one more: *Baltimore Sun* editor H. L. Mencken whose columns largely influenced how the trial was perceived by the nation. Scopes was found guilty and was fined \$100 but because Mencken portrayed this as being a battle between Science and Christian ignorance, Scopes became a noble martyr, and evolutionists decisively won the publicity battle.

Thirty-five years later *Inherit the Wind* built on Mencken's work, but made Christians look even worse. Townspeople were shown as a lynch mob ready to kill Scopes, their minister a rabid dog, and their defender – William Jennings Bryan – an ignorant, boring blowhard.

So it was a joy and delight to see how this same trial portrayed accurately in *Alleged*. We learn that John Scopes, rather than being hated by the town, was helping it – the trial had been a publicity stunt from the beginning, with Scopes a willing participant. The hordes of reporters and visitors brought in by the trial were a welcome boost to a local economy that had been hit hard by the closure of the town mine.

Cautions

Some cautions to consider: Charlie is drunk as a skunk in one scene, though his fiancée's disappointment makes this an

object lesson in the folly of drunkenness. Also, one character shouts "Hallelujah!" in a seemingly insincere manner during a church service.

Because the film teaches about the implication of Darwinian thought, there is a subplot that deals with eugenics. This may be a disturbing topic for a younger audience that doesn't yet need to know how horrible the world can be.

Conclusion

Because *Inherit the Wind* was shown to generations of American public school children it has had a lasting impact on the way the creation/evolution debate is conducted. It can be given much of the credit for why creationist arguments are most often mocked, rather than answered.

Alleged is an enjoyable counter to *Inherit the Wind*. It is educational, informative, and also fun, romantic, generally light, and quite well acted. Highly recommend for older teens and adults.

Delve deeper

Those that want to delve even deeper into the real events should check out Dr. Gary North's *Monkey in the Middle*. This DVD lecture delves deeper into the trial and contrasts it with the media's coverage (see <http://nicenecouncil.com>).

Inherently Wind is another DVD lecture worth checking out. Dr. David Menton contrasts the real events with *Inherit the Wind*'s portrayal of them. This can be watched for free online at www.answersingenesis.org/media/video/ondemand.

*Jon Dykstra reviews films at
ReelConservative.com.*



A few of my favorites

46 children's books to foster the love of reading and learning

by Janet Faber

We are “People of the Book” so reading should be, and is very important, to us. The goal of all reading is to become readers of the Good Book. It is not enough to teach our children the ability to read; we must also nurture our children to be aware that the content of books should lead us to the author of the Good Book. The following is a treasure trove of books that tries to help with attaining that goal.

To make a list of favorite books is a daunting task. No sooner is the list completed and another treasure is found and could be added to the repertoire of great books. I hope you get reacquainted with some of your favorites and that your own list of great books will grow. Almost all of these selections are picture books that preschoolers and children in the early grades will enjoy, but there are several “chapter books” which are intended for children who are in at least Grade One or Two (these exceptions are noted in the reviews that follow).

Happy reading with your children!

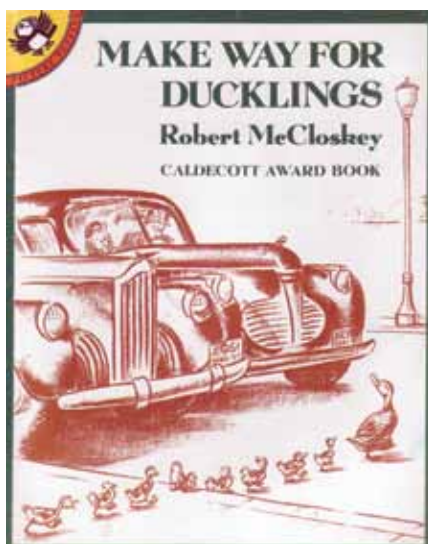
OLDIE GOLDIES

Some books are timeless gems.

Even though they have been written many years ago, these classics have stood the test of time and continue to appeal to children today. On occasion these classics have been updated - “Disneyfied” - and have lost a lot of their substance, so make sure you read the original version.

Make way for the duckling

by Robert McCloskey
Mr. and Mrs. Mallard are looking for just the right place to raise their brood of duckling in New York City.



Caps for sale

by Esphyr Slobodkina
Some monkeys take on the saying of “Monkey see, monkey do” and get into monkey business with a hat peddler.



Tikki Tikki Tembo

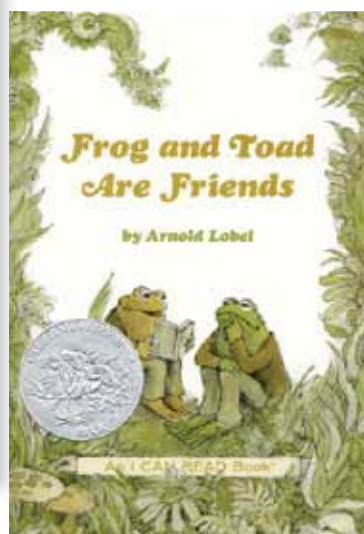
by Arlene Mosel
Help is slow to come for a Chinese boy with a long name who falls into a well.

The story of Ping

by Marjorie Flack
First published back in 1933, this is the story of a funny duck and his misadventures living on the Yangze River.

The world of Pooh

by A.A. Milne
Watch out for the many Disneyfied versions of this story, as only the classic original retains the author's lyrical charm.



This is a chapter book, so it might seem to be something intended for grade school children, but even young children are likely to enjoy it.

Frog and Toad are friends

by Arnold Lobel
Get every Frog and Toad book in this series and you will not be disappointed.

Stone soup

by Marcia Brown
When hungry soldiers come

to a town of greedy inhabitants, they set out to make a soup of water and stones and the whole town enjoys the feast.

Joseph had a little overcoat

by Simms Taback

Joseph's worn coat becomes smaller pieces of clothing until he makes it into a button that he then loses, but that is not the end for, "You can always make something out of nothing."

The tale of Peter Rabbit

by Beatrix Potter

Mrs. Rabbit tells her bunnies not to go into Mr. McGregor's garden, but Peter does not listen and gets into all kinds of mischief.

BOOKS TO TICKLE THE FUNNY BONE

We have all hear it at one time or another: "I don't like to read."

One way to hook your reluctant reader is to start with humorous books. No one can walk away from a book that makes them laugh and humorous books will then help build bridges to other types of books. A book that tickles the funny bone will help the child who doesn't like to read become one who loves to read.

More parts

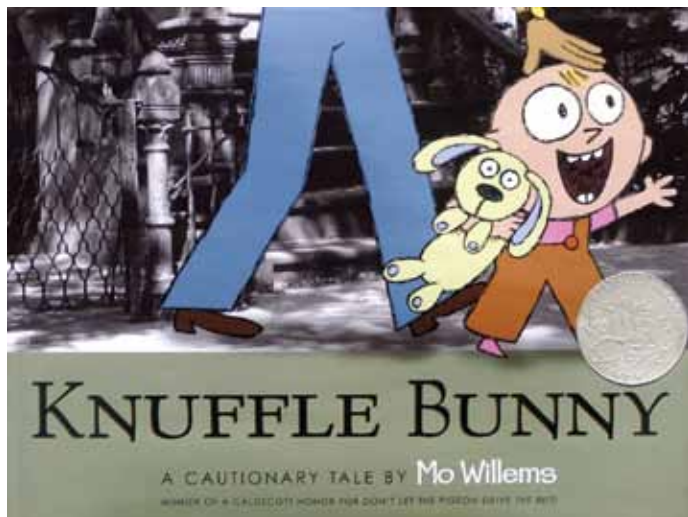
by Tedd Arnold

A hilarious book where a boy fears that the idioms he hears all around him (like "give me a hand") are to be understood *literally*.

Knuffle bunny: a cautionary tale

by Mo Williams

A small girl, not yet able to talk, tries to get her father to understand that her beloved bunny has been left behind at the laundromat.



Cloudy with a chance of meatballs

by Judi Barrett

Imagine a town where meals rain from the sky! Disaster strikes when the town is bombarded with massive-sized portions of food.

The principal's new clothes

by Stephanie Calmenson

This is a respectable twist on the Han Christian Andersen fairytale *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

Hairy Maclary from Donalson's dairy

by Lynley Dodd

A rhyming story about a cheeky little dog and his pals who gets into mischief.

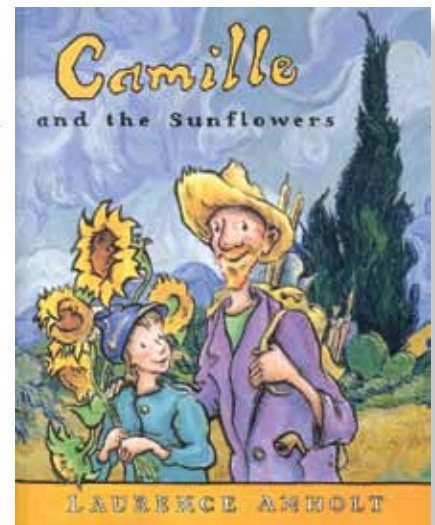
A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Can your child recognize the names: Beethoven, Bach or Brahms? How about Monet or Michelangelo? Even if you are not the artsy type once you read these tales you will have to admit these artists lead colorful lives that make great stories to read.

Camille and the sunflowers

by Laurence Anholt

Based on a true story of a boy and the famous painter Vincent van Gogh.



Berlioz the bear

by Jan Brett

A story based on the composer Berlioz and his strange sounding double bass.

Linnea in Monet's garden

by Christina Bjork

A young girl visits Monet's garden in Paris. This book contains many pictures of Monet's paintings, and also quite a bit of text, so it is best read to slightly older children.

Katie meets the Impressionists

by James Mayhew

Katie visits the museum and becomes part of the famous painting of the Impressionists.

Hallelujah Handel

by Douglas Cowling

Handel, living in the Charles Dickens era, uses his music to help some of the destitute homeless boys of England. This is 48-page

book, so most suitable for children in at least Grade One or Two.

The Farewell Symphony

by *Anna Harwell Celenza*

Here is the story behind Joseph Hayden's famous Farwell Symphony. This picture book has quite a bit more text than average so it is best suited to grade school children.

SNOOZERS

It is good to set aside at least one traditional time each day for reading. The best time to read to wiggly children is at night when they are tired and ready to go to bed. The snoozer books in this list deal with the ritual of going to bed and hopefully will help your active child relax and soon drift off to sleep.

The napping house

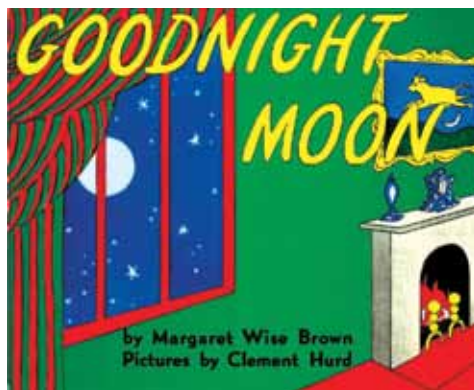
by *Audrey Wood*

Grandma takes a nap and her grandchild climb on top of her, and then one thing leads to another, and disaster leads to delight.

Goodnight moon

by *Margret Wise Brown*

A little rabbit is tucked in bed but he must say goodnight to everything in the room as it grows darker and darker.



Llama, llama, red pajama

by *Anna Dewdney*

Baby Llama has a hard time sleeping and needs his mama's assurance that, "She's always near even if she's not right there."

Goodnight, goodnight, construction site

by *Sherri Duskey*

Even the equipment at the construction site needs to lie down and rest after another day of rough and tough work.



The prince won't go to bed

by *Dayle Anne Dodds*

A little prince in a medieval world will not go to bed and nothing will help... except a goodnight kiss.

Russell the sheep

by *Rob Scotton*

Even sheep count sheep when they can't sleep.

Ira sleeps over

by *Bernard Waber*

A little boy must decide if he wants to take his teddy bear to a sleepover at his friend's house.

GIRLS WITH SPUNK

I like girls with attitude - the right kind of attitude that is.

I'm not talking about the kind of attitude that is obsessed with ones' self and with what's popular in the world. No, I mean the sort of attitude that is determined to learn what it means to be an image bearer of God. Here are some of those sort of girls.

Fancy Nancy

by *Jan O'Connor*

Nancy is a girl who loves everything fancy; even the words that she uses are fancy.

The courage of Sarah Nobel

by *Alice Dagliesh*

A young girl journeys into the wilderness, in this chapter book, and there overcomes her fears of wolves and savage Indians.

Hannah

by *Gloria Whelan*

This 64-page chapter book is set in the pioneering days. When the new teacher persuades a family to allow their "poor, blind Hannah" to attend school, the young girl learns how to read and write.

The story of Ruby Bridges

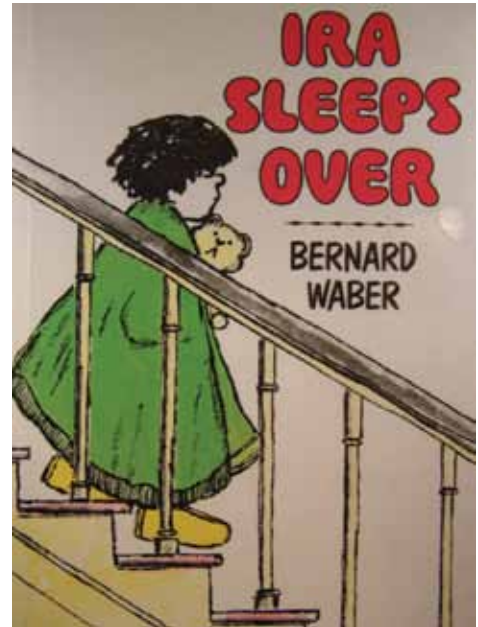
by *Robert Coles*

This is the true story of an American six-year-old girl who was the first black to attend an all-white school; it is a story of courage and faith.

The gardener

by *Sarah Stewart*

Set in the Depression era, a young girl is sent to live with her crotchety uncle because her family is struggling financially, and she tries to brighten the world around her.



Ramona

by Beverley Cleary

There's never been anyone quite like Ramona, a girl with boundless energy and mischievous antics.

My Great-Aunt Arizona

by Gloria Houston

Arizona was a girl who loved to sing, dance, read and dream of visiting faraway places, though she never did travel. Instead she became a teacher who influenced many children.

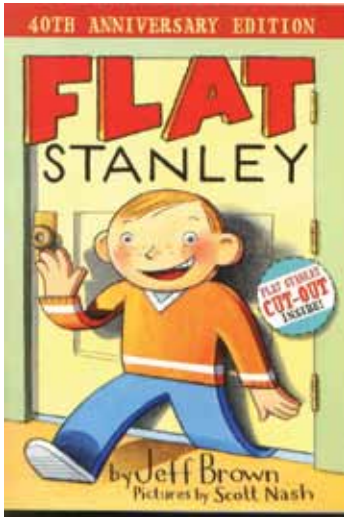
BOYS WILL BE BOYS

Readers often make connections to what they are reading. Children will identify with and want to be one of the characters in a story, which thus becomes a role model for the reader. Therefore, what your child is reading is also developing who they are becoming as an adult. A good book should have characters that we wish our children to emulate. Here are some such characters.

First flight

by George Shea

Young Tom Tate has volunteered to try out the Wright brothers' first flying machine.



Flat Stanley

by Jeff Brown

Stanley becomes flattened when a bulletin board falls on him and he discovers that there are some things only a flat person can do.

The Kingfisher book of great boy stories

This 160-page anthology includes passages from such stories as *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Flat Stanley*, *The Jungle Book* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

This is a great way to get a

“taste” of children’s classic literature.

Zella Zack and Zodiac

by Bill Peet

A zebra and ostrich help each other survive in this zany tale.

ELDERLY HERO AND HEROINES

As a doting grandparent I have learned there is a unique bond between the young and the elderly - both understand that the other needs special care and attention, and both are happy to reciprocate. The following books beautifully portray this loving relationship. So grandparents, find a great book, cuddle

up with a child, and read. You’ll be surprised what you have in common.

When lightning comes in a jar

by Patricia Pollacco

Grandma’s ritual of catching lightening bugs in a jar will be remembered for generations to come.

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

by Mem Fox

Young Wilfrid loves his friend from the nursing home because she has a long name like him, and he wants to help her find her lost memory.

Grandfather and I

by Helen Buckely

Family life can be very busy. But Grandfather always has time to walk with his grandson and look around “just as long as they like.”

The old woman who named things

by Cynthia Rylant

An old woman who has outlived all her friends is reluctant to become too attached to anything she might outlive. So when a stray dog starts visiting she certainly won’t give it a name - she doesn’t want to become attached! However, when it goes missing she has a change of heart...

Grandpa’s teeth

by Rod Clement

It’s a *disthasther* when grandpa’s false teeth go missing.

Mr. Putter and Tabby catch the cold

by Cynthia Rylant

I smile and chuckle every time I read a Mr. Putter and Tabby book.

The Wednesday surprise

by Eve Bunting

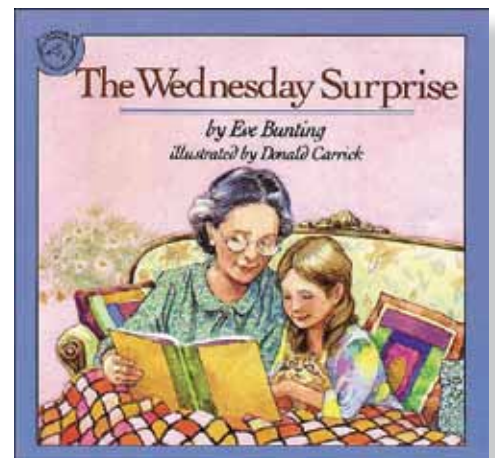
A granddaughter teaches her grandmother to read.

Now one foot, now the other

by Tomi DePaola

Grandpa teaches Bobby to walk

when he is young, and later in life when grandpa has a stroke Bobby helps his grandfather.



Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will

be my witnesses...

by Kieran Beville

Sometimes people are called to court to bear witness to the truth. They are key people in the proceedings because they have vital first hand information. They have seen something or heard something that needs to be brought to light. This is the sort of witness the apostle John is talking about when he writes:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life (1 John 1:1).

What kind of witnesses are we?

Now you and I have never seen Jesus with our own eyes or heard him teach with our physical ears. We were not eyewitnesses to his miracles, or his death on the cross, or his resurrection from the grave. But every true Christian has direct knowledge and experience of Jesus. The believer has first-hand experience regarding the fact that the Gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). We can testify to the fact that, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). We can do this because this is our personal experience. We bear testimony to the reality that, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). We know what it is to have our sins forgiven (Romans 4:7-8) and to have peace with God (Romans 5:1). We know what it means to be free from eternal condemnation (Romans 8:1), to no longer have the wrath of God hanging

over our heads (John 3:36). We can bear testimony to the reality that our sins have been cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). We can say with confidence that our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). We are witnesses to the fact that God's mercy to us in Jesus Christ is far greater than the sum total of all our sins (1 Timothy 1:15-16). God has put our sins out of sight, out of mind, out of reach and out of existence through Christ the atoning sacrifice for our sins. We can invite others to enter this happy, guilt-free, condemnation-free condition if they will repent and put their trust in Jesus and his completed work at Calvary.

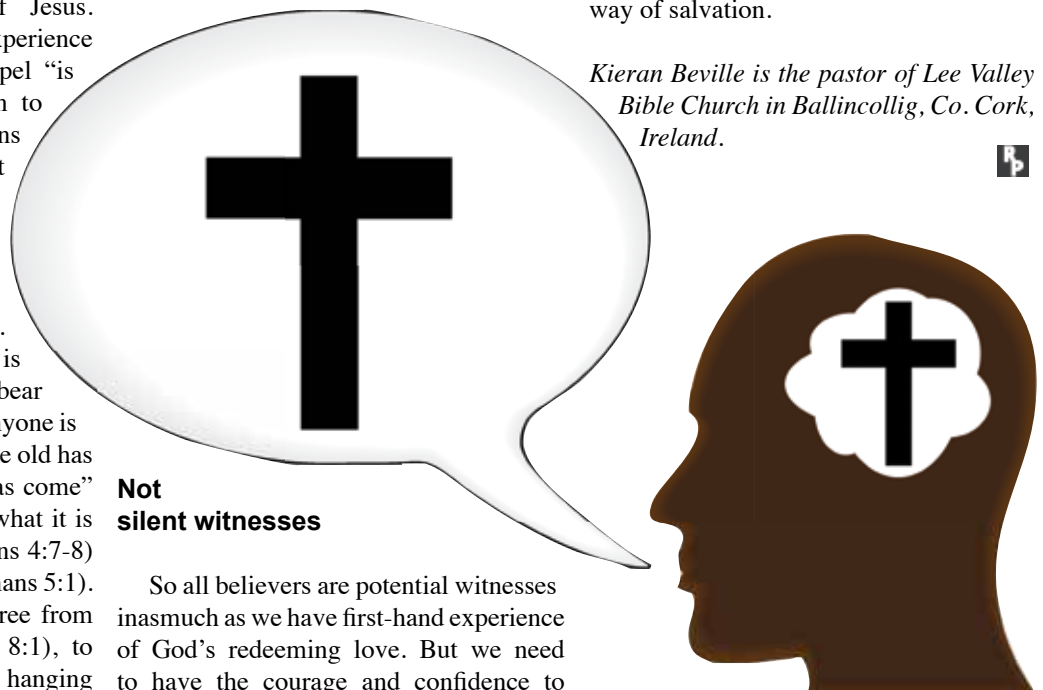
So, having known and experienced these things, we are to bear witness to them, especially to the one who brought them to pass in our lives (Jesus), who is the Christ, the Son of God, and the only Savior of sinners (John 20:31; 1 John 5:11-12).

actively engage in communicating that to others. It is the power of God that enables us to be transformed from weaklings to witnesses.

What are we witnesses to? We are to be witnesses to the truth. In other words we are to bear witness to the unique and universal claims of Christ, that he is the way, the truth and the life and that there is no other name by which people can be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12-13). In order to do this effectively believers have a duty to familiarize themselves with the basics of the gospel message so they can share their faith accurately and articulately with those the Lord brings them into contact with. The leadership of every church has a responsibility to equip its members to do this.

A witness for Jesus Christ is simply someone who tells others what they know about him. That means telling others who Jesus is and what he came to earth to do. This means telling others that Jesus is the way of salvation.

Kieran Beville is the pastor of Lee Valley Bible Church in Ballincollig, Co. Cork, Ireland.



Not silent witnesses

So all believers are potential witnesses inasmuch as we have first-hand experience of God's redeeming love. But we need to have the courage and confidence to

Junk DNA may be headed for the scrapheap

The ENCODE Project: Human complexity is far greater than we imagined

by Margaret Helder

ENCODE is controversial, but an unbiased observer would have to wonder why? This is no tiny or extreme endeavor. This is a scientific project involving 32 laboratories and 440 scientists from 10 countries, and costing \$130 million. And on September 6, 2012 the lead articles for it were published in *Nature*, the world's most highly cited interdisciplinary science journal. So why were many secular scientists upset about ENCODE?

Well it transpires that many scientists, who were not involved, did not like:

- the initial thinking on which the project was based
- how the research was carried out
- and how the conclusions were drawn

What the secular scientists particularly did not like was that so many Intelligent Design and Creation scientists were so pleased with the results!

Two surprises in the “junk DNA”

It all began in the year 2003 when a smaller consortium set out to discover why so much human genetic information seemed to have no function. When scientists in the 1990s set out to document the entire 3 billion nucleotides in the human genome¹, they expected to find about 100,000 protein-coding genes (lengthy pieces of DNA that each determine the structure of one protein). But when the human genome was finally, more or less fully described by 2003, scientists declared that the number of genes was much lower. Today the number

is placed at about 20,000 genes, which occupy only about 1 per cent of the entire collection of 3 billion nucleotides.

So what was the rest of the genome doing? Many scientists declared that the rest – the non-coding nucleotides – were “junk DNA,” discarded during the long process of evolutionary trial and error. Others cautioned that at least some of the non-protein-coding DNA must have a purpose. Intelligent Design and Creation

.....
Intelligent Design and Creation scientists declared that these “gene deserts” must have a purpose and that we should try to find out what the purpose is.
.....

scientists, for their part, declared that these “gene deserts” – these vast areas of the genome that seemed to do nothing – *must* have a purpose and that we should try to find out what the purpose is.

Driven by curiosity about the nature of the genome, in 2003 an international consortium of scientists from 10 countries (not including Canada) began a systematic survey of just 1 per cent of the human genome - though a small percentage, this still involved looking at millions of nucleotides! They were going to

scrutinize this section much more closely than had been done before – whatever was in that stretch of DNA was studied, whether it was a gene, or a non-coding sequence of nucleotides. This is like looking at everything in a small segment of the night sky. Such a study should give a representative indication of what occurs in the sky as a whole. So it was in 2007 that the ENCODE [Encyclopedia of DNA Elements] consortium released their results.

1. Most DNA seems to do something

There were two surprises. Firstly, most of the DNA involved seemed to have a function, or at least it was copied into other molecules in the cell. Thus the scientists concluded: “the simple view of the genome as having a defined set of isolated loci [genes] transcribed independently does not seem to be accurate” (*Nature* June 14/07 p. 813).

2. A lot of DNA seems to have no feasible evolutionary origins

Also they found a lot of stretches of DNA unique to humans, which seemed to have important functions. However in evolution theory, major change should be very slight and thus involve a long slow process. Thus the consortium declared: “we have also encountered a remarkable excess of experimentally identified functional elements lacking evolutionary restraint.... This is perhaps the biggest surprise of the pilot phase of the ENCODE project” (p. 813). Obviously

the consortium had “uncovered some surprises that challenge current dogma on biological mechanisms” (p. 812).

2012's bigger, broader study

The initial ENCODE report was interesting enough to encourage the US based National Human Genome Research Institute to fund a study of the whole human genome. As a result, in 2012, a new larger ENCODE consortium published its results in 30 articles. In summary, they found that:

The vast desert regions have now been populated with hundreds of thousands of features that contribute to gene regulation. And every cell type uses different combinations and permutations of these features to generate its unique biology. This richness helps to explain how relatively few protein-coding genes can provide the biological complexity necessary to grow and run a human being (*Nature* September 6/12 p. 47).

The other surprise from the 2007 report was also upheld and extended – that there are a lot of important molecules that are unique to humans (not found in any other creatures). Thus they declared:

And although many geneticists had thought that the functional elements would be those most conserved across species [similar in humans and in supposed ancestors], they actually found that many important regulatory sequences have evolved rapidly (*Nature* September 6/12 p. 47).

Here's the translation: “many important regulatory” sections of our DNA are uniquely human - there's no hint of non-human ancestors with similar features, so, the evolutionists say, these features must have appeared suddenly in humans.

The disappearing desert of junk DNA

These conclusions, while interesting, are however not what generated all the controversy. It was the repudiation of the

concept of widespread “junk DNA” in the human genome that really annoyed many biologists. Commentary on behalf of the consortium had, after all, declared:

One of the more remarkable findings described in the consortium's entrée paper (page 57) is that 80 per cent of the genome contains elements linked to biochemical functions, dispatching the widely held view that the human genome is mostly “junk DNA” (*Nature* September 6/12 p. 52).

And further: “Why evolution would maintain large amounts of ‘useless’ DNA had remained a mystery, and seemed wasteful. It turns out, however, that there are good reasons to keep this DNA” (p. 54). So the good news was that the “deserts” in the DNA were not junk after all. Another conclusion was that the regulatory system of gene expression in humans is vastly more complicated than we ever imagined! (More on that later.)

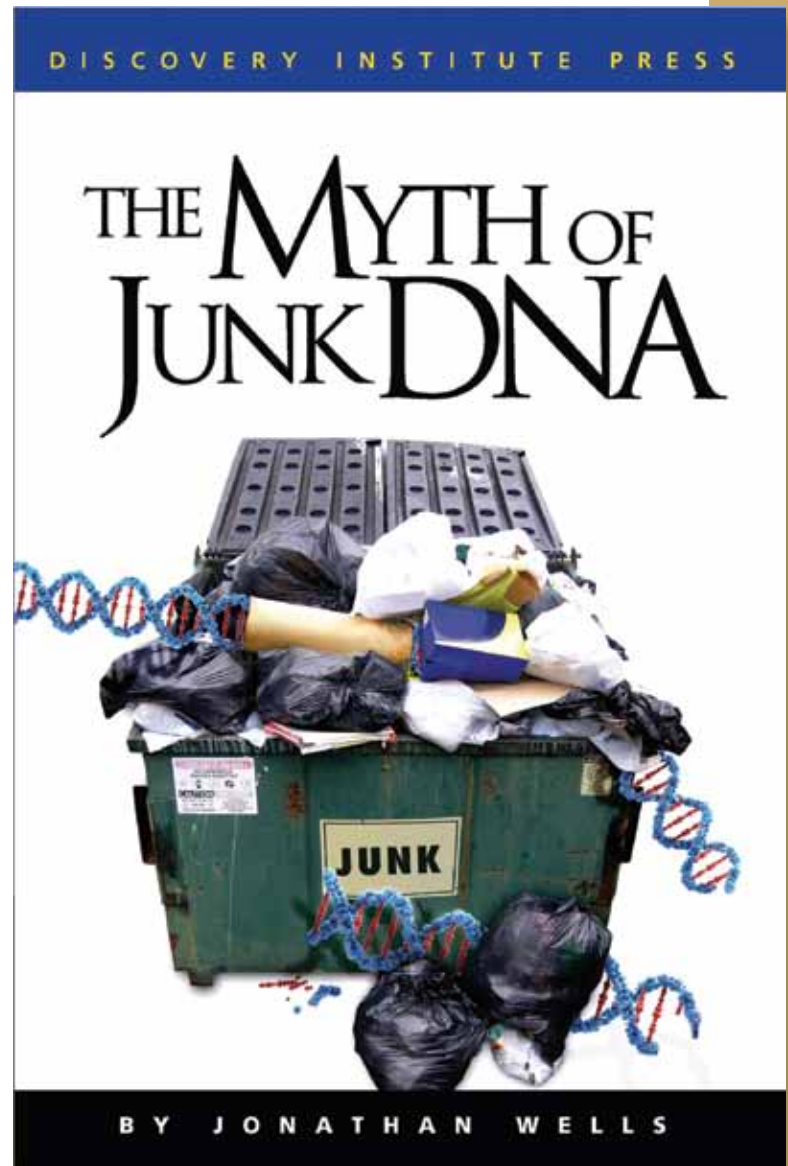
A large number of other scientists in the field of DNA studies, now went on record as objecting to every aspect of the ENCODE study.

Objecting to open-minded approach

For a start, they did not like the systematic nature of

the research. Systematic studies mean that the investigators approach the research without expectations as to what they will find. You might call their attitude objective or neutral for purposes of the study. Thus every observation is equally welcome.

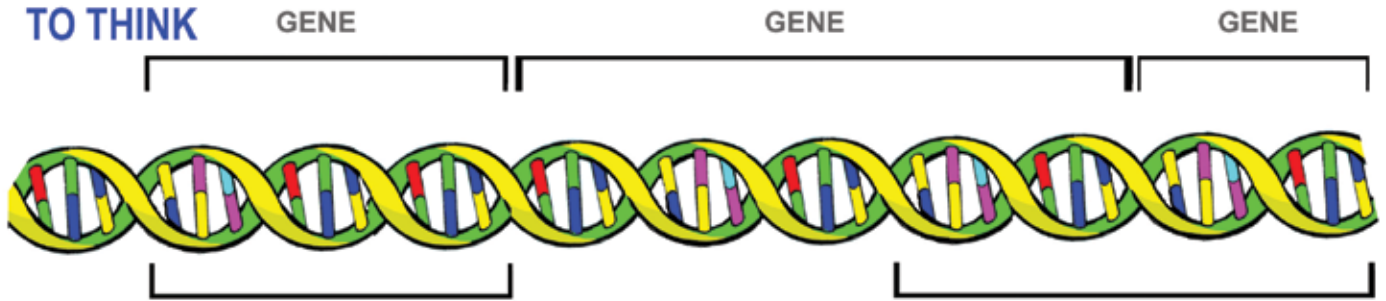
Many scientists, however, prefer to see investigator-initiated, hypothesis-driven, more “creative” projects. In this case the investigator is asking a specific question and presumably hopes for a specific answer. Details not included in the scope



FOR FURTHER READING:

The Myth of Junk DNA
by Jonathan Wells
Discovery Institute Press, 2011
pages 173, Paperback

WHAT WE USED TO THINK



WHAT WE BELIEVE NOW



of the question will not necessarily be observed.

Closer examination reveals that in the present situation, many scientists object to the consortium’s unbiased approach to the data. One scientist declared in his blog “ENCODE Says What?” that: “ENCODE is not actually trying to interpret their data in the light of current thinking about junk DNA, at least not in the actual paper.” The current thinking, or course, is evolution based. He continued: “Personally, I don’t think we can understand genomes unless we try to recognize all the different, noisy, neutral evolutionary processes that work in them.”

In a response to this blog, another scientist concurred: “Surprisingly, ENCODE theory is not explicitly immersed in one of the fundamental tenets of modern biology: Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.” Yet another scientist suggested that the ENCODE controversy might make scientists look “clueless.” “We don’t exactly look competent when we confidently say first “junk” then “oops, no junk,” particularly when we were right the first time.”

Critics philosophically committed to junk DNA

It is evident that the consortium and the outsider critical scientists are considering the same data. However the consortium approached the study without expectations of what they would find, while the critics

insist on an evolutionary interpretation. The latter are thus more closely wedded to the idea of “junk” DNA. They begin their discussion by noting that 50 per cent of the genome consists of small pieces of DNA that occur in multiple repetitive sequences, some of which have presumably changed location in the genome multiple times. By definition, they declare that these sequences are junk DNA. Whether those sequences have a function now or not,

.....
**Here’s the translation:
 “many important
 regulatory” sections
 of our DNA are
 uniquely human -
 there’s no hint of non-
 human ancestors
 with similar features,
 so, the evolutionists
 say, these features
 must have appeared
 suddenly in humans.**

they say, is irrelevant to the discussion. Any present function, they declare, came from “co-option” or drafting of something for a new function. For example, it is like drafting cardboard boxes to function as chairs and tables. The boxes did not start

out with these functions and they were not produced for those functions. But this does not prevent an enterprising person from drafting them for that purpose.

It is true that a large proportion of non-coding DNA consists of pieces of DNA that can move about (transposons) and other fragments that are repeated seemingly almost endlessly. The initial reaction of scientists was that these phenomena must not have any function because they look so *ad hoc*. Indeed evolutionary explanations were soon forthcoming for how these simple repeats got where they are: “We think” declared one scientist, that moveable sequences are like parasitic viruses that somehow invaded the germ line (reproductive cells) and have since managed to exploit their host cells. The thinking is that these pieces of genetic material managed to multiply many times and insert these products into the host genome. It was a case of “move over host DNA, we are moving in!” Of course, the newcomer DNA would provide no benefit to the cell and probably would exert at least a minor negative influence.

The *Nature* commentary on ENCODE declared that “a large proportion of the transcripts in the human genome is thought to be initiated from repetitive elements” (September 6/12 p. 105). Obviously nobody really knows where these repeating sequences came from but, based on evolutionary explanations, they are typically judged to have originated outside the organism or its ancestors. Based on such assumptions, any observed

functions would be after the fact, a case of the cell drafting a piece of code for a function. Such a suggestion ignores the difficulties of making something so apparently random perform a function which is so precise. In any case, the evolutionists declare that, by definition, repeats and moveable pieces of DNA are junk whatever their role now is. Others, like the ENCODE consortium, declare that a phenomenon which exhibits a function, cannot be junk. Thus the consortium declares that human DNA appears to be at least 80 per cent functional and could even approach 100 per cent.

Much more complex than we ever knew

The most amazing aspect of the ENCODE report however is the complexity of the DNA system. Even if you don't follow everything in the next three paragraphs, please read through - you don't need to understand every word to get a good impression of just how amazing God's work in our human design is. We are only now getting a glimmering of its wondrous complexity.

We now know that there are at least 3 different levels of control for cell development.

The first is the nucleotides in the protein-coding section of DNA - the section of our genome that scientists already acknowledged wasn't junk. But this is not a straightforward situation. A gene used to be thought of as a unit, but now a length of DNA code and its exact opposite contain *overlapping fragments of information* that can be stitched together in different combinations to produce all sorts of different proteins (see the graphic on the facing page). Thus the 20,000 or more protein coding genes exhibit an average of 6.3 alternatively spliced versions of protein.

So the immediate DNA code is the first tier of control of what a cell is like. The next layer is "promoters" and "enhancers" which affect gene expression by determining not *what* protein is produced (that is the first tier) but by determining factors such as *when*, *where*, and *how much* of a protein is produced. So far the scientists have discovered about 70,000

promoter regions upstream of the about 20,000 genes and about 400,000 *enhancer regions* that lie thousands or millions of nucleotides away from the target gene (*Nature* September 6/12 p. 60).²

Lastly there are modifications to the compact storage system which allow for adequate access of molecular machines to relevant pieces of DNA.

Conclusion

It is evident that the human genome is a highly coordinated information-packaging and processing system. With different levels of co-ordination, the system is obviously finely tuned in a deliberate and sophisticated manner. The idea that the cell could co-opt or draft some seemingly simple pieces of DNA for such coordination, does not make sense. Such intricate systems do not design themselves.

We owe the ENCODE consortium our gratitude for further describing so many features of the cell, which testify to its wonderful design. These include several tiers of control, the fact that most "junk" DNA can now be defined as useful components (whatever the repetitive appearance it might assume), and that even the straightforward protein-coding regions are compressed and highly complex. Who knew that the human genome project would prove to be so enlightening? No wonder many evolutionists are on the defensive. It would be hard to find a clearer picture of wonderful design than the cells in our human bodies.

Endnote

¹ Each nucleotide could be compared to an individual letter in a book, and once you have them all figured out, and in the right order, then together you have the "book" itself, the human genome.

² These enhancers can be thousands or millions of nucleotides down the line from their target genes, but DNA, as we find it in our body, is looped back and forth, to allow for compact storage, which may allow for some of these enhancer code to be physically very close to their target gene.

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Congregational Meetings

Making the most of them

by Sharon L. Bratcher

Have you ever pondered ways to improve our congregational meetings? At times they get lengthy or tense, some folks drone on and on, and some brothers and sisters grow angry with each other. In the business world there is a lot of material about how to make meetings more productive, and some of these suggestions may be useful within our churches.

Pre-prep

Consider distributing information in plenty of time so that members can read, think it through, pray, and even call and ask questions *before* the meeting. Then do everything possible to convince members of the importance of studying these materials, because having voters who are unaware is not a good situation.

When I was 18, and belonged to a church where both women and men could vote, we considered a motion to purchase a dishwasher for our 400-member congregation. For all of five minutes I thought it through while the committee reported, and then I was the sole vote against it (I preferred to send more money to the missionaries). Afterwards the pastor quietly commented to me, “If you were one of those who spends two hours cleaning after our congregational dinners, you might have voted differently.” He was right. We can work towards informed opinions rather than off-the-cuff decisions.

On time

It is important to respect everyone’s time. Starting a meeting on time respects those who are already there.

And being there on time is an act of love for other people. Coming late says, “I’m

more important than you are.” Of course there are extenuating circumstances – a flat tire, or a household emergency. In our hearts we know if we are treating our church functions with at least as much respect as we treat our workplace.

Reading quietly

Do not read distributed written reports aloud. Instead, let everyone read them quietly and then ask questions – it takes far less time. It’s interesting to note that Philadelphia’s teacher’s union once wrote it into their contract that no one was allowed to read written reports aloud at their meetings – they knew how to read.

Keep it brief

If you need to speak to a point, speak judiciously and stay firmly on the topic. Keep it brief: long historic background is unnecessary. Do not repeat yourself or say exactly what someone else just said; rather, speak only to advance the proceedings.

Disagree with love

If you disagree, present your facts clearly, and express courtesy to those with the opposing opinion. Do not let pride and anger lead you to make unloving comments out loud, or in the car afterwards. Talk to your brother and sister very soon and seek to understand their point of view. Maybe their way is better, or maybe it doesn’t really matter in the long term. Learn from Benjamin Franklin, who during the Constitutional Convention in the United States admitted

that although he didn’t like some of the proposals, he had lived long enough to realize that the ideas of others might actually be better than his own.

One pastor who faced a large church renovation met with the members and wisely explained that not everyone would get his choice of color, name or floor plan. Therefore, he encouraged everyone to lovingly let others decide.

Conclusion

Here is the truth: we don’t argue about matters because we want *different* things, but because we all want the *same* thing: we want to be the one who decides how it will be done.

And so the entire situation comes down to needing a good strong dose of James chapter 4:1-3:

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it...You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Let our congregational meetings serve to promote the church and our Savior.

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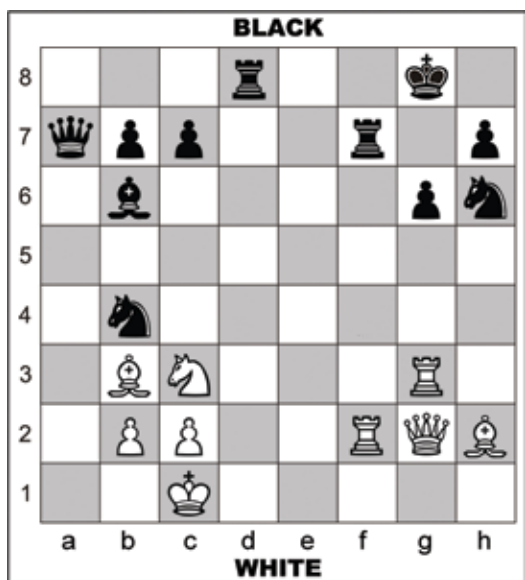


ENTICING ENIGMAS AND CEREBRAL CHALLENGES

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NEW PUZZLES

Chess Puzzle # 193



WHITE to Mate in 4
Or, If it is BLACK's Move,
BLACK to Mate in 3

Riddle for Punsters #193 – "Willing to Be Patient only so Fur"

Why did Mrs. Grizzly kick Mr. Grizzly out of their cave after a few sleepless nights? She found his snoring to be un _____ able and could _____ ly get any sleep.

Problem to Ponder #193 – "Math Terminology"

Below are some descriptions or definitions of terms used in mathematics, followed by the number of letters in each term. For example, a five-sided 2-D closed figure (8) would be a pentagon.

- a) the result of addition (3) _____
- b) the result of subtraction (10) _____
- c) what is produced by multiplication (7) _____
- d) the result of division (8) _____
- e) a rectangle with all sides equal (6) _____
- f) a 2-D figure with 8 sides (7) _____
- g) a 2-D figure with 3 vertices (8) _____
- h) a 4-sided figure with 4 right angles (9) _____
- i) an angle less than 90 degrees (5) _____
- j) the perimeter of a circle (13) _____
- k) half of a circle's diameter (6) _____
- l) a round 3-D object (6) _____

SOLUTIONS TO THE OCTOBER PUZZLE PAGE

Answers to Riddles for Punsters #192 – "Truck Test Troubles"

Rasputin was surprised when he failed the written test for becoming a transport truck driver. He felt confident going in to the test because someone had told him that he was s e m i - literate.

Answers to Problem to Ponder #192 – "Chocolate Chip Cookie Calculations!"

Cynthia made a huge bowl of cookie dough. Using some of it, she baked a batch of chocolate chip cookies. Her youngest brother John ate half of them. Cynthia then baked a second batch (with the same number of cookies as first baked) but her brother Willy ate three quarters of them. She baked a third batch (with 1.5 times as many cookies as the previous batch) and her brother Frankie ate one third of them. Cynthia used up the remaining dough by baking a batch that had 8 more cookies than the first batch. Her fourth brother, Andrew, ate one quarter of that last batch. Cynthia, hungry by then, ate 3 cookies herself and ended up with 53 cookies left. How many cookies altogether did she bake?

Before Cynthia ate 3 there were 56 cookies left. Let x be the number of cookies made in the first batch, so $(1/2)x$ is the number left not eaten by John. $(1/4)x$ would be the cookies of the second batch not eaten by Willy. $(2/3)(1.5x) = 1x$ would be the third batch cookies not eaten by Frankie and $(3/4)(x + 8) = (3/4)x + 6$ would be the cookies of the last batch not eaten by Andrew. Thus, $(1/2)x + (1/4)x + 1x + (3/4)x + 6 = 56$ therefore $2.5x + 6 = 56$ so $2.5x = 50$ so $x = 20$. The total cookies made in the four batches was $x + 1.5x + x + 8 = 20 + 20 + 30 + 28 = 98$ cookies.

SOLUTION TO Chess Puzzle # 192

WHITE to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. N/5xNch NxN
2. NxNch BxN
3. QxP mate

IF

1. N/5xNch K-R1
2. RxP mate
OR QxP mate

Algebraic Notation

1. Nh5xf6 + Nd7xf6
2. Ng4xf6 + Bg7xf6
3. Qd3xh7 ++

IF

1. Nh5xf6 + Kg8-h8
2. Rh2xh7 ++
OR Qd3xh7 ++

BLACK to Mate in 2

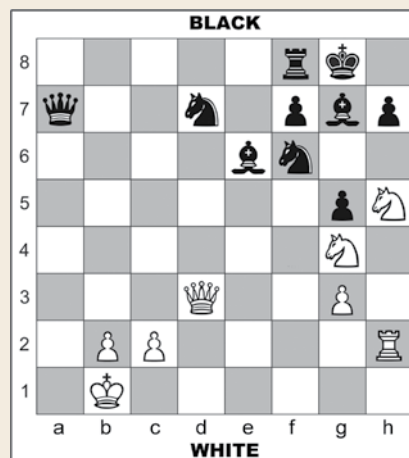
Descriptive Notation

1. ----- Q-N8ch

2. Q-B1 QxQ mate

Algebraic Notation

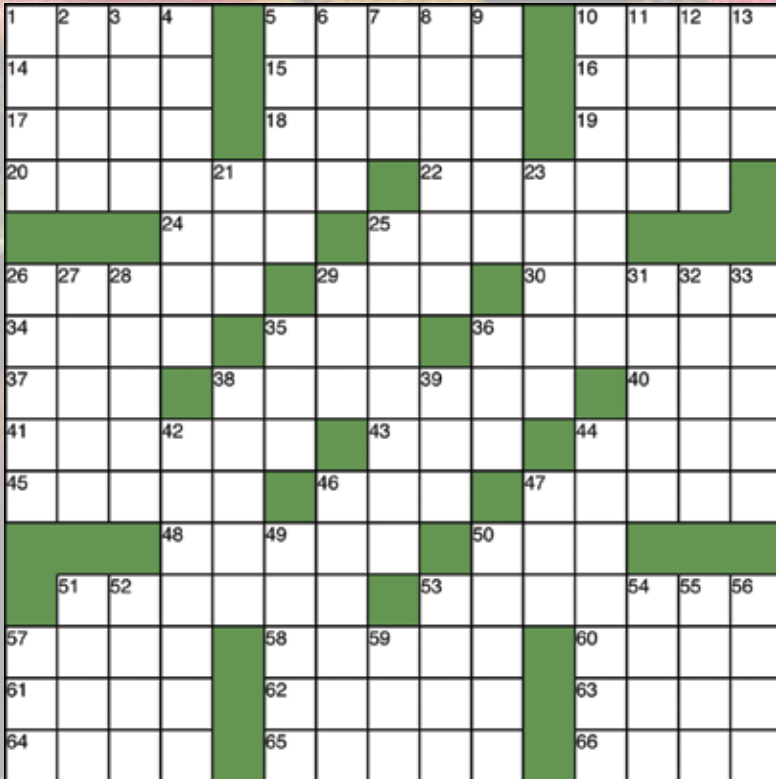
1. ----- Qa7-g1 +
2. Qd3-f1 Qg1xf1 ++



Crossword Puzzle

Series 19 No 8

Last Month's solution
Series 19 No 7



ACROSS:

1. Measurement abbreviation
5. An expression used in the Psalms for a pause
10. Machine sound
14. Hair style
15. By oneself
16. Cause pain
17. A male given name
18. Coffee shop drink
19. Sept-_____ = Canadian town at mouth of St. Lawrence River
20. King Ahaziah's son
22. Long-necked ruminants
24. Army term for missing soldier
25. The Savior
26. Constellation
29. Neither's partner
30. Abraham's father
34. Am. State
35. Carbohydrate (abbr.)
36. Wild animal
37. Int'l normalized ratio
38. Canadian coins
40. Rocky pinnacle
41. Comb. Form for "neutral" in compound words
43. Observe
44. A.K.A. mononucleosis
45. Large jib for racing yachts
46. Borough (abbr.)
47. Took on as an employee
48. Muddy lagoon at mouth of a river
50. Nervous spasm
51. Pertaining to a gala occasion
53. Mary, Martha and Lazarus' hometown
57. Hair line
58. Abraham's grandfather
60. Location
61. Therefore
62. David's daughter
63. Mild, yellow cheese
64. Prying
65. Astound
66. Basic monetary units of Latvia

DOWN:

1. Tough Asiatic grass
2. Thin sword
3. One of the two wives of Lamech
4. Bathsheba's son
5. Tortilla dip
6. Valley where Israelites were encamped when David killed Goliath
7. Abram's nephew
8. Deer adornment
9. Foot parts
10. Capricious notions
11. Kind of hoop
12. Angers
13. Rights (abbr.)
21. Own, in Scotland
23. Vehicles
25. Seventeenth U.S. President
26. Opening, as of old
27. Female given name
28. The approach ramp of a ski jump
29. Dialectical variant of "now"
31. Machine part
32. Supply satisfaction for
33. King of Judea
35. Bird sound
36. Letter of the alphabet
38. Distinguishing quality
39. Variant of "-er", usually used in trades
42. Russian novelist and social critic
44. Archangel in Daniel
46. Balak commanded this man to curse the Israelites, instead, he blessed them
47. Strike hard
49. Kind of ray
50. French earth
51. Card game
52. Units of energy
53. Ruth's husband
54. An extinct language family of southeastern Columbia
55. Precise and tidy
56. Gets stuck
57. Writing implement
59. High Memory Area, in computers

Joyce