

Richard Dawkins and his inconsistencies

by Scott Ventureyra

In his celebrated treatise on Darwinism, *The Blind Watchmaker*, published in 1986, Richard Dawkins writes: “The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.”

Has Dawkins changed his mind? If he hasn't, then he still believes that, in our universe, nothing is evil and nothing is good.

And yet, Dawkins made headlines this August, twenty-eight years later, with a proclamation that it's immoral for a mother not to abort a fetus that has Down's Syndrome. Has he suddenly decided we can say certain actions (like abortion) are not “indifferent” but either “good” or “bad” – for the troubled mother, or for the others in her family, or, on any of a number of grounds, for society?

One wonders how can something be declared immoral when the universe is ultimately comprised of “pitiless indifference?”

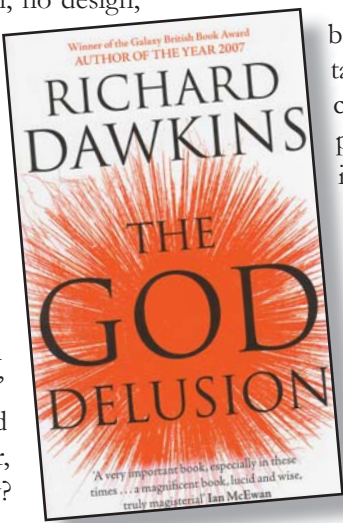
It had been quite some time since I had given the new-atheists and their rhetoric much thought. This was inspired recently by an acquaintance who had an unusual admiration for Dawkins and his arguments against religious belief and God. He reasoned that anyone who

didn't agree with Dawkins' logic was either ignorant or completely brainwashed by religious superstition and fear tactics. I found it remarkable that anyone could hold such a view eight years after the publication of *The God Delusion*.

There are many refutations of Dawkins' book in the form of essays, articles, presentations placed on YouTube and books. One can also easily find debates dismantling popular atheistic arguments one by one, including Dawkins' encounter with John Lennox (a professor of mathematics and philosophy) in 2008. If people want to think clearly about these issues, many resources are at their fingertips.

This leads me to another of Dawkins' inconsistencies. Dawkins takes pride in being a man of science. He believes that a scientist would rather die at the stake than knowingly maintain a false idea. However, Dawkins has not ac-

knowledgeed many of the false ideas throughout *The God Delusion* that his critics have repeatedly pointed out. For example, on pages 157-8, Dawkins lays out the main argument of his book. It contains six steps that do not add up to the conclusion. William Lane Craig has shown why the argument is invalid. It can be found in the book: *Contending with Christianity's Critics*. One then wonders why



Lessons learned from my Quechua friends

by Doug Lockhart

I can be a real whiner. For example, any time my car needs repairs and I have to catch the bus to work, I feel real sorry for myself. I gripe and complain like a little kid. After all, the trip from my home to my office can take 40 or 50 minutes! And 15 of those minutes are often spent standing around in the cold, or walking to and from the bus stop in cool or wet weather. However, after my recent trip to Peru on behalf of Wycliffe Canada's *Word Alive* magazine, I'm feeling a little sheepish. That's because we met some incredible men and women who work with ATEK, Wycliffe's partner organization in southern Peru that works to promote literacy, leadership training and Scripture engagement in numerous Quechua communities.

Keep in mind that these communities are high in the Andes, where the air is thin and temperatures can be downright cold.

One of the ladies we met is Olga. We visited her this past November, at her home high in the mountains. Olga puts me to shame, because she would be overjoyed if she had a warm, comfortable bus to travel in as she carries out her ministry with ATEK. She's deeply committed to teaching Quechua women from the translated Scrip-

tures and training them how to teach others. But to visit her sisters in Christ, she has to ride for hours on horseback, through deep ravines and high mountain passes, in all kinds of weather. Olga shared that she doesn't receive much thanks or encouragement for her service – so understandably, she sometimes feels discouraged.

What's more, Olga doesn't receive any pay for her ministry to women. To serve them, she has to leave her husband and children and farm animals for hours or days at a time. What keeps her going? Simple gratitude to God that she can now read His Word in her own language, and her desire to share His Word with her people.

I met several other ATEK workers who share that same commitment to their people, including Joni, who helped translate our interview. And her colleagues Luisa, Thomas, Fredi, and many others. To carry out their ministries, they usually have to find a truck or bus heading in the same general direction they are, but then walk for miles to reach the remote villages God has called them to serve. After meeting the ATEK team, I felt nothing but deep admiration for their commitment and dedication.

Next time I have to catch the bus to work, I'm praying that God will help me to zip my lip.

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Dawkins, a man of reason and science, hasn't rebutted Craig's refutation. And if he can't respond to the criticisms why hasn't he admitted this publicly? If not solely for the sake of truth and scientific integrity? Perhaps book sales are more important than truth for some. It is no wonder that Dawkins has continuously avoided a one-on-one discussion or debate with Craig.

It is my hope that atheists who admire Dawkins will have a sufficiently open mind to realize these inconsistencies.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

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Eric Barger – the reluctant harbinger

by Don McAreavy

Recently, Calgary Berean Fellowship hosted Eric Barger, founder of Take a Stand Ministries, to speak on troubling issues facing the Church. His three-day whistle stop was crammed with presentations on the Emergent Church, Universalism and Chrislam – the latest move to marry the Church with Islam.

Barger insisted on his reluctance of being the herald of bad news, but like a modern day Jeremiah, felt constrained to tell the truth and let the chips fall where they may.

His discussion on Chrislam was particularly telling, especially in regards to the latest Charlie Hebdo murders in France.

“Christians are being deceived about Islam,” Barger lamented. Barger asked, “why is the emphasis of these ecumenical marriage counsellors always on the commonality between Christianity and Islam? Shouldn’t they be questioning why we are joining with another belief system in the first place?”

Chrislam is part of the de-sensitivity process as Islam becomes more accepted and normal. Here is where Barger pleads to be understood as one who is not anti-Muslim but anti-Islam (the belief system that has only accomplished one thing – sending millions to hell).

In rolling the credits of those jumping on the nuptial band wagon the keen observer will notice a blatant omission – not one mosque is involved in these unity love fests. Churches and denominations will race headlong towards “a unity at all costs” but the Imam’s of Islam refuse to offer their mosques. In their eyes, the Bible will never be equal to the Qur’an, and the Jesus of the Qur’an is merely a prophet – not the Son of God.

Chrislam is the defining spiritual pulse of how far the Church has strayed. During the pageantry and the

“look at me” hubris in these ecumenical fiestas, there is a major component missing – discernment. Chrislam, Barger emphasized, “is just the symptom while the real root problem is the famine of the Word of God.”

Former Mormon Ed Decker also noticed a disturbing trend among today’s Latter-day Saints (LDS) where formerly held dogmas are being jettisoned to adopt a Tinker Bell and Peter Pan relationship that is devoid of formerly held beliefs. Not that Decker agrees with Mormon doctrine. He left Mormonism to find the real Jesus. But he is alarmed that this drift towards embracing religious pet dander, to

escalate a unity at all costs, will leave Bible-believing Christians with their exclusive saving Gospel out in the cold.

The push towards unity also requires a rewriting of history. October 31, 2017 is the 500th anniversary of Luther’s 95 thesis on the Wittenberg door. What was accomplished by the Reformers is now being dismissed. The Pope and the Catholic Church are now rumbling that “The Protest is Over” and that “the cry for unity is about to become the single thread that could be the undoing



Eric Barger, founder of Take a Stand Ministries.

of the Protestant Church.”

Barger is ruffling a lot of feathers. His caution, to those who will listen, is to reject all calls to compromise. The Reformation happened for a reason and when Rome repents from its false teachings then we can talk.

Are Catholics going to give up the Vatican? Are Muslims going to give up their Mosques? Are Mormons going to give up their Temples? Then why should we give up our Bibles?

Barger ended with the admonition that “we have daylight for now but it is getting dark, so work now, don’t hold back, work with the Bible because it will be okay for us in the end.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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(1 Pet. 1:3 and John 11:25). In John’s apocalyptic vision (Rev. 21:1-2) when speaking of the new heaven, new earth and the new Jerusalem, he does not use the common word for new (neon) but uses the word, kainos, (which means refurbished, or connected to but separate from the old). NOW, the church is called to be the inviting sign to the world of the Eden that once was, but is now restored in Christ’s resurrection. We are not called to build the kingdom; in Christ, God has already done it! The Church is called to be the inviting signs of what it is like, right NOW!

Nevertheless, in the meantime, and concerning latter days, Jesus has taught us that things will be getting infinitely worse, not better! As I have noted in my book, *Time and the Biblical Bang*, I urge all of us to put Jesus’ teaching first and foremost. Why? Jesus IS the living Word. (John 1:1) As such, His teaching is not lost in the mists of symbolic literature, but is clear and direct. (e.g., Matt.24, Luke 21, Mark 13). So we should never begin our latter day thinking with books like Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation. We should always begin with the teaching of Jesus, and then see how symbolic literature fits into His teaching concerning the story of one Eden to another.

Yes, Ian is right, in part. There are places where thou-

Charles Alexander
Calgary, AB

On anti-religious indoctrination

by Scott Ventureyra

Indoctrination is defined as: “to instruct in a doctrine, principle, ideology, etc., especially to imbue with a specific partisan or biased belief or point of view.” This definition serves well for understanding anti-religious indoctrination – the presentation of ideologies that are set to challenge traditional theistic thought and values, even when couched in seemingly neutral and subtle ways.

There is an inherent assumption in modern Western society that people who believe in God are irrational. Popular culture is suffused with anti-religious material whether it is through newspapers, TV shows, documentaries, out-spoken celebrities or popular books. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there are many good reasons to believe in God’s existence. Many modern versions of arguments for God’s existence are defended by highly intelligent Christian philosophers and theologians. Much of this argumentation provide a convincing explanation for the following phenomena: the origin of the universe, the existence of the universe, the origin of the laws and constants of physics, the origin of consciousness, the existence of objective morality, the correspondence of our minds to understand reality in an accurate way which permits scientific study and the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus.

It is worth pointing out that one can be rationally justified (a natural intuitive belief known as properly basic) in believing in God and trusting in Him wholly apart from arguments but the beauty is that these arguments back up Christian beliefs.

Here are several ways to recognize when one is being exposed to anti-religious indoctrination:

First, whenever an educator is adamant of pushing an ideology on their students as if it were commonsensical and widely established (despite it obviously not being so, such as the inexistence of God).

Second, whenever an educator denies truth. This includes denial of well-established laws of logic which are necessary for any scientific endeavour let alone communication. The laws of logic cannot be proved but must be presupposed; without this, communication would be literally impossible. They are necessary for discerning religious truths.

Third, the exposition of moral relativism, which denies objective moral truths. An important distinction between subjective and objective truths must be made. Subjective truth is based on internal preferences whereas objective truths are based on the outside world and cannot be altered based on our desires, regardless of how much we wish. Moral relativists deny objective truths and reduce everything to the subjective level of internal preferences, then proceed by rationalizing them. Such a view, if put into practice, could have devastating consequences.

Fourth, the advocating of scientism – a belief that science can account for all types of knowledge. It is commonplace in university settings for professors to pin science against religious belief, as if it were a scientific claim.

Fifth, the relentless exposition of naturalistic (the view that all that exists are natural phenomena; no God(s), souls or spiritual beings) ideologies while mocking religious and supernatural concepts.

Sixth, the presentation and defense of liberal ethical ideas such as abortion, homosexual marriage and euthanasia.

Typically, any dissent from these ideas are stifled and met with vitriol. There have been attempts to silence dissenters with fear tactics. This does not create greater understanding and is poor pedagogy. Parents and older students should be vigilant of educators who push such ideologies on their students. It is the first step forward to overcome anti-religious indoctrination.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

Finding the road to Damascus

by Scott Ventureyra

On January 15, my 94 year old godfather spent most of his adult life as an agnostic, and has now fully accepted Christ. My godfather, who I will call Joe, said that I was instrumental for his return to the Christian faith. The winding and often treacherous roads that led Joe back to the way, the truth and the life entail a remarkable journey.

Joe valiantly resisted the Soviet invasion of his home country. Subsequent to this revolution, he immigrated to Canada in 1957 as a refugee. He later became a highly successful surgeon and professor of medicine.

When I think about the events that led to the development of my relationship with him, I think of the fact that my father was inspired to pursue neurosurgery by Frigyes Karinthy's work, *A Journey Round My Skull*. This calling eventually led my father to Ottawa to practice neurosurgery under Joe.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that Karinthy was the first to expound the concept of six degrees of separation, whereby everyone and everything are connected through six steps or less. All the more intriguing when I ponder the interconnections and synchronicities of our lives comprising the influence of Karinthy's work on my father.

Years later, after Joe and my father developed a strong personal and professional relationship, my father had asked him to be my godfather (padrino in Spanish) for my baptism. This is a title that I have often used affectionately to refer to him since I was a little boy.

Despite a life, in large part, dedicated to saving innocent children's lives, it was marred with loss, sufferings and tragedies. Joe lost his first wife after immigrating to Canada. Fortunately he met his second wife not so long after his tragic loss. She has been a blessing throughout his difficult life and remains a dedicated wife by his side to this very day. Unfortunately, two of the children were tragically lost to pancreatic cancer; his daughter from his first marriage and his son, a few days before this past

Christmas. There must be a distinct frustration and feeling of abandonment from God for any father who loses a child but even more so for a surgeon who spends his days saving other children's lives.

Joe is quite familiar with suffering and the evils of this broken world. This is why it must be acknowledged that the emotional problem of evil is very vivid and can become overwhelming in the life of the sufferer.

Nevertheless, in order to be able to provide a rational explanation to the non-believer as to why God permits evil, one must separate the emotional and the logical aspects of the problem of evil. Interestingly, once evil is acknowledged, so must the good and consequently the moral law which provides the ability to discern between the two. Ultimately, it presupposes the existence of a moral law giver, even though the problem seeks to undermine the very existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God.

I believe it inevitably creates more of a difficulty for the non-believer who assumes evil. On the one hand, they must confront the nihilist who denies any objective meaning and value in the absence of God and on the other hand the theist who has coherent grounds for affirming objective meaning and value.

I shared many emails and in-person discussions with Joe for close to a decade. He told me about his grandfather being a Calvinist minister in a small town and how this faith was carried forward from his father onto him. He described the in-

fluence of a professor of surgery whose skepticism and methodology weakened his religious convictions.

After learning this, I had provided Joe with a wealth of resources challenging his agnosticism including some of my own writings and general thoughts.

I bought him some important books including *There is a God* by the late atheist philosopher Antony Flew who on the evidence of modern science, changed his mind about God's existence before his death. I also bought him *Reasonable Faith* by

William Lane Craig, which is one of the most convincing books in Christian apologetics today.

I then questioned Joe's assumptions revolving around the problem of evil, suffering and wars, the relationship between science and theology, arguments for God's existence, the evidence for the historicity of Jesus' resurrection and claims to His divine self-understanding and a host of other issues.

So, over the years, and even with the number of visits over the past year, I felt his position would remain fixed, despite

all of the material and sound argumentation I provided him alongside my many prayers.

Indeed in 2012, at the age of 92, he said he had stopped searching and was upset by the violence wrought by religious bigotry. Anyone who tells you apologetics is obsolete or irrelevant in our day and age couldn't be more mistaken. Countless thinking people want logical responses to difficult questions about the Christian faith. Apologetics is a Biblical mandate, as 1 Peter 3:15-16 instructs us.

I visited Joe a number of times recently with my daughter. You can see his love and wonder of children because of their purity and innocence.

He had spoken significantly about the loss of his only son. I could see, in his eyes, the hope of resurrection and reunification with his son, as he stared at the picture of him on his dresser.

I suspect that much of Joe's time alone this past year has permitted him to deeply reflect upon his life, the afterlife and our correspondence and conversations that challenged his long-held assumptions regarding God and the Christian faith.

The Lord has blessed me with the privilege to play a role in his return to Christ. As this time of Easter when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, we should never forget that God draws near to those who draw near to Him. My godfather is a testimony of this.

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Julianna & Scott Ventureyra with his 94 year old Godfather.

Calgary's Pregnancy Care Centre says good-bye to director

Calgary, AB – In November 2014, Wendy Lowe moved on from her role as executive director of the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre (CPCC). Wendy had carried out her role for 26 years with great enthusiasm, joy, professionalism, and commitment to excellence. Over that time the centre has developed to become one of the leading pregnancy care providers in North America.

The CPCC is very thankful for Lowe, and the people she has developed around her. Though sad to see her leave, the centre has been moving forward with confidence in the future of the CPCC. They recently announced the appointment of Jutta Wittmeier as the new executive director. Wittmeier brings a wealth of knowledge and wisdom, from her 25 years of experience, to this role. Her disarming smile and gentle approach combined with passion for this work make her the right person for the job.

The staff team has continued to function at a high level under her leadership. They continue to offer resources and support to families facing unplanned pregnancy. Alongside unplanned pregnancy, many of our clients experience homelessness, grief, addiction, mental health issues, and abuse. It is the centre's job to offer them hope and assistance as they navigate the path toward their goals.

In addition to these services, local schools are continuing to make use of CCPC's expertise as they communicate with students about knowing their boundaries and pursuing respectful relationships. Emphasizing respect, personal worth and value, and the right to refuse, the Take Charge Program presents abstinence to teenagers as a way of respecting self and others.

With more attention being drawn to the need for boundaries and the increased risks of social media interactions, the team has been busier than ever. The increase in demand for CCPC's program has prompted them to hire another staff member for our Take Charge team.

Though this time of transition has presented some challenges, it has also been a time of opportunity. CCPC would like to invite you to join in their mission to provide help and healing to those facing unplanned pregnancy.

They are very grateful for all who have contributed to this work throughout the years.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the work of the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre, or if you would like to hear more about what they do, visit www.pregcare.com for details on how you can partner in their work.

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They also said that "approved association" with Jehovah's Witnesses demanded accepting 1914 as the end of the "Gentile Times," that the Kingdom of God was now established in heaven, and

that it was the time for Christ's foretold presence.

To most Bible believing Christians this language is foreign and was never proclaimed from pulpits because it simply is not true.

The 1914 icing on the cake was the Watchtower's warning that Christendom's Clergy, for failing to support this view, will be destroyed in the "Great Tribulation" just ahead.

More than 100 years have come and gone and all we are left with is a false prophecy, a false Jesus, a false spirit and a false gospel.

To hide this embarrassment the Watchtower is now secretly securing old books and publications to burn.

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How to counteract anti-religious indoctrination

by Scott Ventureya

In my article, published in February of this year, titled “On Anti-Religious Indoctrination” I focused my discussion to how one can recognize instances of anti-religious indoctrination. Now, I would like to focus my attention to how Christians can counteract it.

Students can challenge indoctrination by asking their professors and teachers simple but logical questions. Apologist Greg Koukl refers to this in his book *Tactics* as the Colombo tactic: “[going] on the offensive in an inoffensive way by using carefully selected questions to productively advance the conversation. Simply put, never make a statement, at least at first, when a question will do the job.”

By doing this one can gather more information from them, reveal inconsistencies and leaps in logic through solely asking appropriate questions.

However, just one or two questions might suffice to get the instructor and the other students thinking. For example, if educators are speaking about evolution, ask them to define what they mean by such a term since it has several different meanings which are more often than not conflated with one another. Be suspicious when the definition involves statements beyond what science can deduce.

If educators are blatantly infusing their philosophies with scientific observation, be prepared to question why this is so. For instance, if they make statements suggesting that the evolutionary process is purposeless, direction-

less and without the intended advents of humans, ask them how they know this through scientific experiment or reasoning. Their answer will most likely reveal their anti-religious bias.

Parents and older students should be vigilant of educators who deny truth (alongside other forms of anti-religious indoctrination). If consistent, they will not be able to discern the difference between receiving an A or F on a test. I believe it is absolutely important for students to question educators (in a respectful manner) when they present unwarranted conclusions. The implications are great if such conclusions remain unchallenged.

Why should a democratic society remain silent about the anti-religious indoctrination of students in the schools we fund through our tax dollars? Equipping young minds to ask the right questions is essential.

The retired law professor Phillip Johnson pointedly stated in his book *The Right Questions: Truth Meaning & Public Debate*: “the questions I am asking are the ones they should be asking, and that their education to this point has prepared them to ask the wrong questions [instead of] the right ones.”

Luckily, there exists a wealth of resources to counteract each of these means of anti-religious indoctrination. For literature on philosophical arguments for God’s existence I would recommend authors such as William Lane Craig (see especially *On Guard* (beginners) and *Reasonable Faith* (advanced)), Norman Geisler, J.P. Moreland, Richard Swinburne, Alvin Plantinga and Stuart Hackett. For lit-

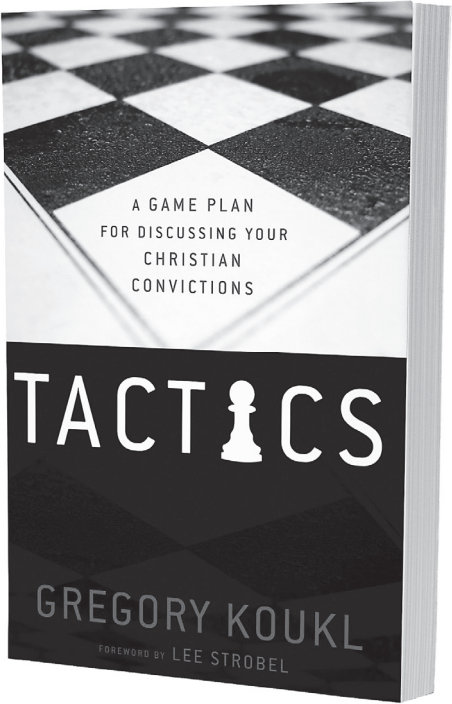
erature on Intelligent Design I would suggest looking at the writings of William A. Dembski, Stephen C. Meyer, Michael Denton and Michael Behe.

In the camp of theistic evolution one could read Francis Collins, Kenneth Miller, Denis Lamoureux and Simon Conway Morris. In order to understand biological evolution (from a materialistic perspective), one should look at books by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Michael Ruse. An interesting appraisal of competing theories over origins would be Thomas Fowler’s and Daniel Kuebler’s, *The Evolution Controversy*. A helpful text for Christians struggling with homosexuality is Michael Brown’s, *Can You be Gay and Christian?: Responding in Love and Truth to Questions About Homosexuality*. Another useful text for combatting moral relativism would be Francis J. Beckwith’s and Gregory Koukl’s, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*. For an extremely useful book to share one’s Christian faith in a logical way, I would suggest, Greg Koukl’s, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing your Christian Convictions*.

With the growing questions revolving around Islam a good introduction to the subject by a Christian thinker is James R. White’s *What Every Christian Needs To Know About The Qur’an*. These and many resources will educate Christians in a variety of important issues which are vital to the church and contemporary cultural issues.

So, it is essential for Christians to read as widely as possible from differing viewpoints on issues pertaining to truth, relativism, the existence of God, other religions (Islam), evolution, creation, abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, and science in general in order to gain a nuanced and balanced perspective. It is critical to understand what you stand for and what you stand against. This is a proper step in countering attacks against what you believe.

Scott Ventureya is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University in Ottawa Ontario. He has a keen interest in apologetics.



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Is Canada too tolerant?

Thinking about tolerance

by Scott Ventureyra

Several months ago, a good friend (unfortunately an ex-friend now, who identifies as a Christian but has a Muslim mother) and I, had a disagreement over several things written by a Christian scholar regarding Islam. He was upset by the content of the article which challenged the nature of Islam and its growing presence in Western consciousness.

In the end, he seemed to reduce religion just to a personal taste instead of truth. He also said that one ought to focus on bolstering their own faith rather than engage in polemics regarding other faiths. This is a politically correct stance to take in a multi-cultural country. But doesn't that betray freedom of inquiry, thought and debate?

This was not the first time I had such conversations. Indeed many friends and acquaintances seem to get upset at the notion that one religion or viewpoint could be deemed correct over others. Essentially, my friend was playing into the hands of what has become known as the “new tolerance.”

Recently, because of this and the many engagements I've had with people over the years regarding religion and truth, it inspired me to participate in a roundtable on Tolerance at the Dominican University College held April 24, 2015. This essay, takes some of the main points from that presentation into consideration.

The idea of tolerance was defended by John Locke in 1689, in his work: *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Locke maintained that church and state held separate functions. The government upheld external interests related to life, liberty and welfare whereas the church was concerned with internal interests such as salvation. This notion that was exclusive to religious polemic, has now, since the 19th and 20th centuries been extended to all facets of society including racial, sexual, political, social and other differences.

Nonetheless, it seems as though, there is a sentiment, at least among certain pockets of thinkers and segments of the population, in North America, of there being something incorrect with our popular consciousness regarding tolerance. In February of 2007, over the period of three days, CBC radio hosted a debate and discussion titled *The Trouble with Tolerance* where the following questions were considered: “What does tolerance look like?” “Why is it that in Canada, in order to honour somebody else's tradition, I have to dishonour my own?” “Is Canada too tolerant for its own good?” “Do you have to be tolerant of intolerant people” and “How far can we tolerate tolerance?”

So what has happened? We have seen a dramatic shift in our conception of tolerance. We have gone from tolerance meaning the acceptance of the existence of differing religions where we recognize individual's right to have different beliefs or practices without an attempt to suppress them to now the acceptance of different views. The direct implications of this are that we jump from the ability to articulate beliefs and claims that we do not agree with to the claim that all beliefs are equally valid.

The first view demonstrates the “old” tolerance and the latter the “new” tolerance (something my friend unknowingly fell victim to). This is precisely the point that many thinkers have made in recent years including D.A. Carson in his book *The Intolerance of Tolerance*.

The problem is compounded in contemporary popu-

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lar culture since both the old and the new meanings are sometimes used interchangeably.

But things get worse. The difficulty lies in discerning which one is being used and when. For instance, if one says that “Christians tolerate others religions” – what does one mean by this statement? Does it mean that Christians accept the existence of other religions or that they accept other religions as being equally true? What if someone declares that Christians are so intolerant? Does this mean that Christians want all dissenting positions to be eradicated or does it mean that Christians insist that Jesus is the sole way to God? In response to such a question Carson argues that:

The former is patently untrue; the latter is certainly true (at least, if Christians are trying to be faithful to the Bible): Christians do think that Jesus is the only way to God. But does that make them intolerant? In the former sense of “intolerant,” not

at all; the fact remains, however, that any sort of exclusive truth claim is widely viewed as a sign of gross intolerance. But the latter depends absolutely on the second meaning of “tolerance.”

It is worth pointing out that, implicit in the whole notion of tolerance is truth. We tolerate other viewpoints because we essentially disagree with them. Imbedded in all of this is

the notion that we are affirming a position we think is correct since we are tolerating others which we think of as being incorrect. Hence, an assumption of truth and falsity associated with tolerance. You cannot tolerate something you already agree with. The new version of tolerance, argues for an incoherent view that promotes relativism. So, this whole notion of the “new tolerance” is logically incoherent since tolerance itself assumes believing someone else's position is false, otherwise you would not tolerate it.

But the new tolerance insists one is intolerant if one does not accept all views as equally valid. Again, my friend seems to have fallen victim to this fallacious form of reasoning. What compounds the issue is that the “new” tolerance asserts that no position or belief is being taken but of course, the claim that all viewpoints are equally valid, is a position in and of itself. In the end, the promotion of relativism, does not take any religion seriously since it reduces them to mere preferences. The “new” tolerance stifles dialogue and suppresses truth. For those who appreciate progress, we must fight against these pernicious ideas. Under relativism, progress is impossible.

As Christians, we cannot compromise truth for the sake of political correctness and to appease other's beliefs we know to be incorrect. This would betray the Gospel message. It is outright cowardly and goes against the spirit of cultivating true Christian virtues. The Christian road is a difficult one. The price to be paid can sometimes be friendship. However, I am hopeful, if we can defend truth and make our friends understand the many flaws in contemporary thinking, although an uphill battle, we have nothing ultimately to fear. We are called to be lights to the world. Correct thinking is a necessary light that can shine brightly in a period of vast confusion and darkness.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

Vision and leadership



by Brian Rushfeldt

Do I need to be a visionary to be a leader?

I have been asked this question. Both friends and clients struggle with this key issue. Some people believe they are leaders but lack vision. Others are visionaries but lack any leadership ability.

Here is a quote to consider, “Without a vision of God and His desire one cannot have a God-given vision.” Is this true?

God, through Scripture, gives clear vision and directives for each one – ‘Love God with all your being...’ a general vision for every one of us who profess faith in Christ. However it does not stop there, it says love others as yourself. Scripture also tells us to serve one another and carry each other's burdens; to go into nations and tell them about Christ and make disciples. Are these not corporate visions from God's heart? Of course, He also gives us specific visions.

The significant thing about these foundational principles/ visions is they have an order to them. First, if you do not love God then can you fulfill the others?

I, like many I know, thought I had a specific vision from the Lord only to find after a week or so I have done nothing with it. I have tried some of the “visions” I thought I received only to be frustrated that my passion waned when all did not go as “I” planned. In reflecting on these situations I am sure that I needed a clearer vision of God before I received a specific God-given vision.

A wonderfully powerful principle comes to mind here, “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and then...” — Matthew 6:33. And then!

The first question I raised was, does a person need both vision and leadership character? Answer: every leader is not a visionary but they are leaders. I also know some great visionaries who are not leaders. Some leaders have the character and the abilities to lead but lack vision. They engage people effectively, they build team, they keep focus and gain support due to their influence and ability. But it is necessary for these leaders to have someone close that can see the future, a visionary. I have observed the flip side of this hamburger: great visionaries who have little or no leadership character or ability. They are so full of ideas they wear people down and scare people off. These visionaries need to learn their number one need is relationship with others who have leadership character and ability. Then what a team! Lone rangers only succeed in movies.

The apostle Paul had amazing leadership character and vision. But even he realized the need for team. Relationships became so key to him that he would not go until he had the team together. Nehemiah received a vision to rebuild the wall but he only proceeded after he prayed, planned and got the team in place.

I am very persuaded that vision and leadership do go together but not always reside in the same person. If you do not have both vision and leadership character create an inner circle of complimentary men and women and build a team. A strong inner circle can make you successful. God and a team can make you significant. Without a vision people parish but with vision and leadership people thrive.

God shows us a pattern, first love Him and seek His vision. Then allow Him to develop our character. And then we join the team, march onto the field, serving Him, expecting victory and success.

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For more info contact Brian Rushfeldt, CEO via email at bhr@sham.ca, phone 403-295-1932 or web: www.LeadershipGym.ca

CITY LIGHT NEWS, JULY 2015 — 5

Rosebud Theatre launches new way to engage with Rosebud Travel Club

Rosebud, AB – For the second consecutive season, Rosebud Theatre offers visitors an up close and personal connection to the theatre through its Engage! series. This series of activities and discussions is offered to anyone interested and provides unique and authentic perspective on the shows produced through the season.

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New this year is the Rosebud Travel Club. A magnificent theatrical adventure awaits! Partnering with Anderson Vacations, Rosebud Theatre is proud to present their grandest Engage! event to date, the Rosebud Travel Club. Participants can enjoy a nine day, once in a life-time, cultural experience traveling to beautiful British Columbia.

The nine day excursions to B.C. includes stops in Kelowna, Vancouver, Chemainus, and Kamloops, where guests will be treated to a VIP theatre experience with live theatre performances at five different theatres. A winery tour in Kelowna, sightseeing on Granville Island, back-stage tours, and more are also included.

This vacation will be hosted by Rosebud Centre of the Arts company members Adam Furfaro, Mark Lewandowski, and Morris Ertman. Guests will also be accompanied by members of Rosebud's Resident Theatre Company, who will provide entertainment along the way.

The maiden voyage of the Rosebud Travel Club will be launched November 14 and returns on November 22. For full details and itinerary visit rosebudtheatre.com or email travelclub@rosebudcentreofthearts.com.

For those looking to enhance their theatre experience with a shorter event, some of the Rosebud Theatre's other Engage! events include:

- Friday Talk-backs & Studio Stage Talk-backs – Question-and-answer periods with members of the company
- Fridays with Morris – Discussions with Artistic Director, Morris Ertman, and various guest artists about the "why" behind the show.

Theological notions simplified for children

by Scott Ventureyra

Dr. William Lane Craig, a world renowned Christian philosopher, theologian and apologist has written many works at the scholarly level. He has tackled deep issues such as arguments for the existence of God, God's relationship to time, the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human free will and the historicity of the Jesus' resurrection.

In 2012, Craig, wrote 10 books for children under the series title *What is God Like?: The Attributes of God for Children*. In each of these books he helps both children and parents wrestle with issues revolving around one of 10 of God's attributes including, being all knowing, all loving, all powerful, all good, Trinitarian, eternal, self-sufficient, omni-present, supremely great and immaterial.

The books are beautifully illustrated and engaging for children. They involve dialogues between a father, mother and their children.

Through these dialogues, difficult theological ideas are simplified in a way children, and parents without much philosophical or theological training, can understand.

For instance, in one of the titles dealing with God being all-powerful, Craig carefully explains how this does not entail that God is capable of doing anything. For example, God cannot sin since if He were to sin, He would not be a maximally perfect being, hence not God. God cannot perform logical contradictions such as making a square in the shape of a circle, since it is impossible for something to be both the shape of a circle and a square at the same time. It is a fun way to get children thinking clearly and logically at a very young age.

These books also make reference to Scripture when providing responses to questions regarding the differ-

- True Stories – Resident Company member, David Snider, guides participants in a warm and welcoming exchange of true stories.
- Mysteries of Rosebud Tour – Hear the history and interesting stories as you tour the hamlet and the Rosebud Theatre production facilities.
- Behind-the-Scenes Tour – Join members of the Rosebud Theatre production staff as they unveil some of the magic behind the curtain.
- Spotlight Series – Pre-show talks on show related topics.
- Join the Chorus – Learn a production number under the eyes and ears of the Rosebud Theatre production team.
- Sing-a-longs – Bring your instruments and voice to an informal jam session with show-related music.

Most Engage! events are free with the purchase of your Rosebud Theatre ticket and require no additional reservation. Dates and times are posted on the show page of the Rosebud Theatre website.

Currently on the main stage at Rosebud Theatre is *The Wizard of Oz* with matinee and evening performances at the Opera House until September 5. Join Dorothy and her friends in this classic tale with a humorous twist. On the BMO Studio Stage is the romantic comedy, *Last Train to Nibroc* at 5 pm until August 29. Both shows run Wednesday to Saturday.

For times and availability you can call the Box Office at 1-800-267-7553, or visit the Rosebud Theatre website at rosebudtheatre.com.

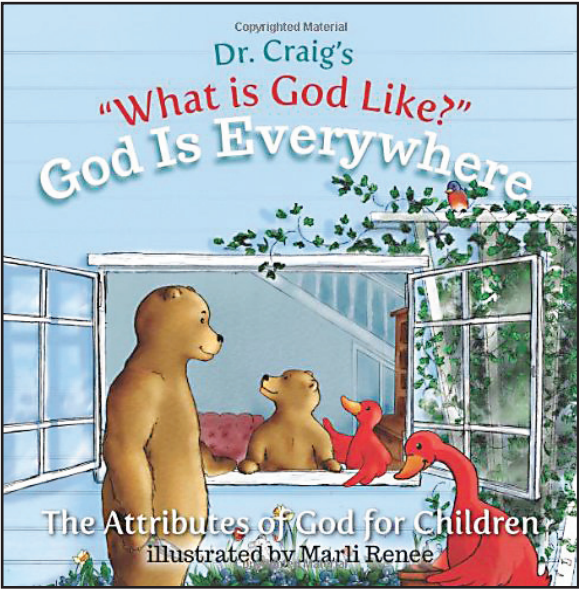
ent attributes of God. A memory verse is found at the end of each book.

I have purchased all 10 books. I read them regularly with my 5-year-old daughter. My daughter is quite receptive to these ideas and reflects profoundly on them. For instance, on issues regarding the nature of Christ, she has asked the following question: "How can Jesus die, if Jesus is God?" Helping her understand the dual nature of Christ, helped clarify how such a thing is even possible. A distinction between the pre-incarnate Christ (the second person of the Trinity) and the incarnate Christ helped bring clarity to the question. The pre-incarnate Christ had only a divine nature but the incarnate Christ possesses both a divine and human nature. So, in a sense, it is true when one says that God died because a divine person died on the cross but it is not that God ceased to exist.

It is important to realize that in traditional Christianity, death is viewed as the separation of the soul from the body, which is understood to have happened to Christ, thereby, undergoing a disembodied state. However, at the moment of resurrection, Christ's soul was reunified with his body.

The only misgiving I have is that the family depicted in the series which comprises a father bear, a mother goose, a boy bear and a girl goose does not make much sense from a biological perspective. Nonetheless, these series are a great resource for the emergent Christian youth in defending their faith in a logical, creative and loving manner.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.



Guest Columns continued

Muslims in the land of the Caliphate with their jets, which were of no avail to them in the filthy streets and alleys of Paris. Indeed, this is just the beginning. It is also a warning for any who wish to take heed.

Allah is the Greatest, and to Allah belongs all honor, and to his messenger, and to the believers.”

Running toward the bullets will not be easy, but it should be natural if we are motivated by love. With love our natural reaction to danger is to protect others, not to protect ourselves. If we were camping with our kids, love would not allow us to sit back if a wolf showed up around the campfire. Love would not compel us to negotiate or find common ground with a rattlesnake if it showed up in our tent. No, love would motivate us to action – to be willing to stand up and step into harm’s way for the sake of those we love. Just as it did with our troops in previous bloody wars love is calling us to run “toward the bullets” today. Love doesn’t sit back when danger is around, it doesn’t cower in the face of fear and it doesn’t look to its own interests above others.

No, love looks quite different than that.

Love is willing to fight because love is willing to die.

The picture of love we are seeing in our nation today appears to be quite different than the love Jesus spoke about in John 15:13. We as Canadians and Americans, and many Christians aren’t springing to our feet to stand in the gap against evil. We are not laying down our lives to be a blessing – we are often protecting ourselves to get the blessing. We have replaced the fear of God with the fear of man – the very thing we have struggled with ourselves. And this man-pleasing spirit has caused an inward focus in many Christians who seek to save only themselves. We has been replaced by Me in the church today. It’s time for a change.

We must stand for truth. We must decide what is right and what is wrong, and choose. Either we are on the side of good or evil. We have allowed truth to become whatever works, and whatever makes people feel good. In our post modern world everything has become truth. All behaviors and opinions are acceptable. The only wrong is if you tell someone what they are doing is wrong, even if it is out of love for that person.

Truth has become relative in today’s world and we are to accept that there is no such thing as absolute truth. But is the claim “all truth is relative” a relative truth or an absolute truth? If it is a relative truth then it really is meaningless. If there is no absolute truth how can there be a right and wrong. Most sane people would have to agree that there is good and evil. Today we are selfishly redefining what is good, and dangerously ignoring what is clearly evil. We must decide, sooner rather than later. We are faced with choosing death or choosing life. In our communities and country, and on planet earth today, as well as forever in eternity.

Government is not the answer. It has become like us. Selfish and self-motivated. There is no right or wrong, good or evil, only getting elected. And you can’t get elected anymore by standing for the truth. If we truly wish to reverse the course of where our society is heading, to live again in a country where there is right and wrong, a country that again will pursue good, and a country that again will fight to death against evil, we the people must be that change. In our families, in our schools, on our sports teams, on town councils and school boards, and in our churches.

But if you choose to raise your hand and join the battle to take back our country, you will have to run toward the bullets. We are told by a reliable Source, who was nailed to a tree and died for showing us truth, that if one chooses to follow Truth, and stand for good, to believe that all lives are sacred and to boldly proclaim that there is a right and a wrong, that we will be “crucified.” Not by our enemies necessarily, but also by the media, by our friends, by our families, and even by our churches.

We remember and are forever grateful to those men and women who ran toward the bullets, so many losing their lives as they battled evil to retain the freedoms we enjoy in a country that was created and flourished by following Judeo-Christian truths and values. Now we must rise up and take a stand to defend our country from the attack on truth and justice taking place within our borders and society, and across the world.

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The time is now to stop fighting each other, and come together as churches, as truth loving people, leading our communities and our nation, by proclaiming what is right, calling out wrong, defending good and running toward the

bullets if necessary, to defeat evil.

Lest we forget.

May God have mercy on us, guide us in our ways, and may His army of Angels be with us in the days to come.

Trudeau and the decapitation of Christian values

by Scott Ventureyra

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau upon winning the 2015 Canadian federal elections echoed Sir Wilfred Laurier’s famous conciliatorily fashioned words “sunny ways.” The context of Laurier’s “sunny ways” is much more distinct than what we face now. Laurier sought to find a solution to the Manitoba Schools question which played a pivotal role in his defeat of the Conservative government headed by Charles Tupper in 1896. The Manitoba Schools question concerned the elimination of public funding for Catholic schools which contradicted the constitutional Manitoba Act of 1870 which was meant to provide Christians with educational rights (Catholics and Protestants alike).

The Conservatives attempted to override this by proposing a corrective legislation which was opposed and blocked by parliament due to Laurier’s effort. However, Laurier did propose a compromise which was to be examined on a case by case method to see if there were sufficient students to justify Catholic education in a particular school. At the time, this was largely seen as the best possible solution to appease both French and English sensibilities in Manitoba.

Today the landscape is quite distinct from the days of Laurier. How conciliatory are Trudeau’s “sunny ways?” In 2014, Trudeau declared that opponents of abortion should not run for the Liberal Party. He wanted his party to be “resolutely pro-choice” since the “debate has been settled.” Although candid, his stance is undemocratic, intolerant and fundamentally anti-Christian. This is an assault on Christian ethics and the doctrine of imago dei (that humans are created in the image of God) which is shared with Judaism and Sufi Islam (the rest of Islam does not recognize this doctrine).

One can hardly see how such a stance is anything but conciliatory. Even many non-religious people who are pro-life would be offended by Trudeau’s stance, although their position is much more difficult to logically justify given that their worldview cannot ultimately affirm objective values and duties. The same could be said for Christians or other theists (although Islam permits abortion under particular conditions) who support pro-choice.

Let’s now turn to the horrific attacks which occurred in Paris on November 13, carried forth by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) which involved mass shootings, suicide bombings, and hostage-taking. Despite these shocking events Trudeau has not changed his promise to bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees in the next two months. Nor has he waived in removing fighter jets from Syria and Iraqi strikes.

After his brief speech on the Paris attacks, Trudeau avoided providing a direct answer to important questions regarding Canada’s involvement in the fight against ISIS, viable security measures for Canadians and the reconsideration of the repealing of Bill C-51. All of this is a warranted cause for Canadians to worry about their national and personal safety. Ousting Stephen Harper has potentially brought something far more ominous to the Canadian landscape.

The question inevitably arises: How can we prevent Trudeau from leading Canada to a similar destructive path as we have seen with the influx of migrants throughout Europe? A number of European leaders have linked the consistent stream of migrants with the atrocities committed in Paris. If something similar occurs in Canada that would be the one unforgivable sin for Trudeau and the liberal party. People must rise up against the potential threat we face. It is logistically impossible to perform appropriate security and medical checks on 25,000 immigrants within a two month period. What sort of criteria and selection process is underway?

Basing it on the sentiments revealed on the comment sections of many news articles, it seems that the majority of Canadians are in major opposition to such an operation. It is unfeasible and now extremely dangerous.

Trudeau and the Liberal Party are unnecessarily depleting much needed economic resources for the people that are already struggling in our country. How can we begin to truly help others before we help ourselves? What about the very possible immanent dangers that could arise as a consequence of such a rushed process? Should it not give Trudeau and the Liberal Party pause to consider that a Syrian passport was found near one of the suicide bombers who detonated himself up at the Stade de France? Even if one of the 25,000 immigrants poses a threat, that is one too many. Especially if it were preventable by running proper security checks.

How did we get to this point? Some have made the case that there is a self-hatred occurring in Western countries with respect to Christian values. I think this argument is not too far off the mark. Recently a pregnant Muslim woman who was attacked in Quebec lead to a motion condemning Islamophobia or any associated hate speech towards Muslims whether online or in person, in particular towards Syrian refugees. I most certainly denounce an attack on a pregnant woman, or any innocent person for that matter, but what is one to make of the fact that Quebec has one of the most liberal abortion laws in Canada? It makes one wonder if this is not really a hatred for Christianity. After all, aren’t we more tolerant towards non-Christian symbols than Christian ones?

The irony mustn’t escape us though. The Europe Union and Canada have paradoxically, now with alarming numbers, been welcoming with open arms a very conservative/fundamentalist religion, ironically, pressure is placed on the Christian countries to accommodate homosexual unions. Is this not a form of suicide? We are emptying ourselves of our Christian identity through the governments that are voted into power, in our case Trudeau’s brand of liberalism. Indeed, as I have argued in my column in July, people are confused about what tolerance means. It means accepting the existence of other views while disagreeing not that disagreeing entails intolerance (as is typically used as a criticism against Christianity). I truly fear what is to come if we do not do something to change this state of affairs. Darker days my friends, darker days.

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Guest Column

CLN is committed to running a monthly “guest column” open to anyone who wants to articulate their views on a religious, political or other relevant issue. Articles may be written in the first person and are published at the discretion of the editor. Writing should reflect standard journalistic style and is subject to editing. Statements, beliefs and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of CLN or its advertisers.

Phil Lynott in retrospect: from tragedy to Christian hope

by Scott Ventureyra

As the 30th anniversary of Phil Lynott’s death quickly approaches, it gives us the opportunity to reflect on a tragic life that could have been transformed. On January 4th, 1986, at the age of 36, Lynott died of heart failure and pneumonia caused by a heroin overdose and many bouts of heavy drinking.

He was the frontman, founding member, bassist and main song writer of Thin Lizzy, a prolific rock band from Ireland that gained prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Although they released many songs and memorable albums, they were best known for their mega hit of 1976 *The Boys Are Back in Town*.

All too often the lives of rock ’n roll icons like Lynott end with tremendous sorrow. Recent examples include Scott Weiland’s (former frontman of Stone Temple Pilots) death in December and the heart breaking death of Tony Sly, the talented frontman of the punk rock band No Use for a Name, in the summer of 2012. And on and on, as if, sadistically, programmed into the genetics of these individuals and the fabric of the universe they inhabit.

These ostensibly tortured souls succumb to inescapable proclivities combined with a seemingly endless supply of deadly substances. So, the scientific materialist narrative goes, right?

Christian truth, however, points in a different direction where grace and true freedom can break such individuals free from lives bent on destruction.

Although self-inflicted because of an indulgence with dangerous excesses, it nonetheless, leaves family, friends and fans in a bleak enveloping void.

Not surprisingly, even somewhat poignantly prophetic, Lynott modeled himself after dead rock stars such as Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin who had succumbed to similar self-fulfilled finalities. The eerie cry for help in his song *Gotta Give it Up*, attests to the realization of the severity of his addictions. Unfortunately, he did not fully commit himself to finding a way out.

Lynott knew the consequences of his actions and the inevitability of his impending death, at a relatively young age, caused by a successive chain of poor decisions. Oddly, it was as though he embraced it through his morbid fascination with the tragic endings of others.

It reminds me of the great singer, Jeff Buckley (who did not have heavy addictions himself) who had an untimely death akin to his own father, Tim Buckley. There is a proleptic feel to the words of these men which can be re-interpreted in such ways after their deaths.

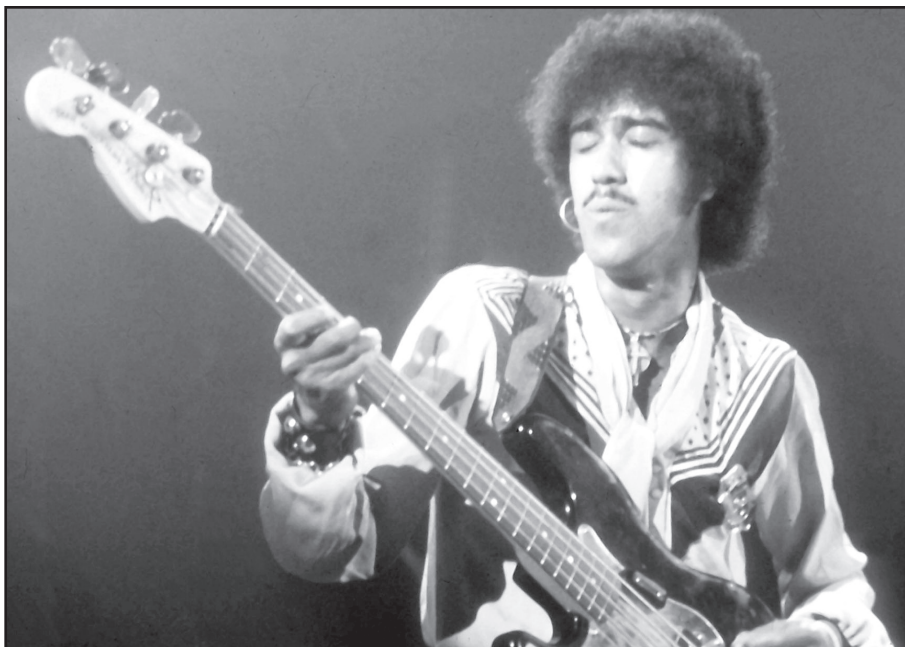
Without a doubt, Lynott was a talented musician and a brilliant song writer. His brokenness inspired him to write many great musical compositions. He possessed a tremendous knack for capturing one’s very own sentiments and sorrows in wonderful prose. Three songs stand out the most. *Running Back* speaks of a dissolved relationship with playfully sarcastic humour: “when they say it’s over, it’s not all over, there’s still the pain.” Some of the songs Lynott had written actually had a positive

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and optimistic feel to them. *Do Anything You Want To* captures this positivity:

“People that despise you will analyse then criticise you. They’ll scandalise and tell lies until they realize. You are someone they should have apologised to. Don’t let these people compromise you. Be wise too... Hey you you’re not their puppet on a string. You can do everything. It’s true if you really want to. You can do anything you want.”

Finally, *Southbound* is a song about new beginnings that possesses an infectiously melodic guitar riff coupled with a nostalgic evocative quality. It brings back many memories. Some old and some more recent, including images of driving my car while playing it with the windows down on a tranquil summer evening as my daughter sings along.



Frontman for Thin Lizzy, bassist Phil Lynott met with an untimely death.

our original selfishness inherited by the fallen creative order and all living things in it, leaves us in a devastating despair, if solely left to our own devices. Lynott even in his pitiful state realized there was no escape outside of Christ. In his song *The Holy War*, he recognizes the wages of sin through a cosmic battle between God and the devil where we are all active participants.

Shortly before his death he repented for his selfish life. His mother, at his deathbed, for the first time, saw the hidden scars of addiction on the soles of his feet. It is my hope that this repentance was a true one and that Lynott was saved by the only One who can save us from ourselves.

Ultimately, there is a proactive message that can be taken from Lynott’s death 30 years ago. Let us not ignore the signs of despair we see in others around us. It is Christ-like to extend a hand to help one who is struggling through life with problems of addiction. Of course, people have to have the desire to help themselves in order to make any meaningful impact on them. Nevertheless, we can reach out in subtle ways through showing love and compassion, as Jesus did with sinners of all stripes. Jesus boldly declares in Luke 5:32, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Jesus came for all since as Romans 3:23 declares, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

The point not to be missed is that Christ came for the very sinners who recognized their need of His salvific gift. Lynott may have only truly recognized this in the face of death. Sometimes it is in this despair we have the propensity towards kenosis; the act of self-emptying and becoming one with Christ. Let us pray that every single one of us becomes aligned to God’s will.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.



The greatest story...



by Brian Rushfeldt

Have I got a story for you!

Everything about this greatest story ever told appears to the human being as impossible, made-up, folk lore. A baby being born – no big deal – there have been quite a few babies born in our lifetime, I was one of them. But from a virgin woman? A star hovering over the very spot where that baby was born – have you ever seen a star hover before? But the unbelievable story has just begun.

Physical body healings, supernatural wine-making, unexplainable disappearances from angry crowds, feeding a few thousand hungry people with a few cakes and two fish; these are the “facts” the story teller says. Oh yes and a guy who had been dead for a couple of days – “comes forth” staggering out of the tomb trying to walk with grave clothes wrapped around him. Really!

But then the story gets more challenging. The man who all the local people knew was hung from a tree and died along side a couple of other guys. That’s it, say goodbye and grieve. It wasn’t the first time those people had seen somebody hung on a tree and left to die. Then they bury him in a tomb and block the entrance with a massive rock. But the next morning is what really blows people’s minds. The huge rock that blocked the entrance had been moved and the body was missing. Who would have gone to all that trouble to recover a dead man, especially when those guards nearby would kill you if you tried that?

Okay, are you ready for the punch line? That missing dead man comes walking along the road beside some of those old friends the next day but they are so out of it with grief they didn’t even recognize him. Then when he speaks, suddenly someone recognizes his voice and they are really freaked out now.

Aren’t all those “facts” a bit hard to believe? But here is the kicker – that man is still alive today, over 2,100 years later.

Isn’t that the greatest story you have ever heard? And millions around the world know it is true.

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Getting to know Him would be a great way to start to 2016.

My prayer for all of you is that you’ll meet Him, get to know Him and spend time with Him each day in your new year.

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CITY LIGHT NEWS, JANUARY 2016 — 5

Guest Column

CLN is committed to running a monthly “guest column” open to anyone who wants to articulate their views on a religious, political or other relevant issue. Articles may be written in the first person and are published at the discretion of the editor. Writing should reflect standard journalistic style and is subject to editing. Statements, beliefs and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of CLN or its advertisers.

Demolishing secular pretensions: assisted suicide, the media and relativism

by Scott Ventureyra

The other day, I sent a friend an article about Ontario’s first legal assisted suicide. My friend, although a lapsed Christian, is a well-meaning individual. He longs for self-transcendence but, as many people do, searches for it through false avenues. It consistently seems to elude him but I pray for him that he will receive God’s grace (as I do for many others). Sometimes this friend seems so close but still so far from recognizing truth.

He is an unfortunate result of the complete morass of Western culture. This quagmire we find ourselves in, is in large part due to the unmitigated control the media through means of newspaper articles, TV shows, movies, etc. has over society. For instance, many journalists writing for major newspapers are expected to follow a script which often ridicules religious beliefs while bolstering liberal secular viewpoints.

It is a time where unreflective thought is frequently celebrated. Slogans and caricatures of real issues posted on Facebook and Twitter feeds are considered to be enlightened wisdom. Indeed individuals in general, even though, thinking they are free to decide and vote have been the victims of systematic brainwashing through the internet and other various media outlets. The question is, can democracy truly cope with such monsters? With this type of manipulation and control, the answer seems quite grim. Despite the ease of access to all sorts of information including credible and valuable sources, through the internet, society as a whole has lost its ability to think critically and sift the good from the bad. This is also a sad reflection of many who consider themselves to be university educated. The corrective to this problem is education emphasizing critical thinking – one that can be liberated from the shackles of liberal secular ideology that has dominated so much of our academic institutions for the past 50 years or so.

Often times, when we find ourselves in moments where we think that we cannot help someone like my above mentioned friend, there is an opening, no matter how slight. My friend responded to the article with some questions that opened the possibility for dialogue. He asked why one should not be allowed to kill themselves if they want to, particularly, if they are not physically capable. Then he proceeded to ask what the “big picture” was surrounding such issues. What follows is part of my response to him.

Doctors are not “compelled” to provide physician assisted suicide. However, part of the big picture includes doctors being implicated in physician assisted suicide through “effective” and “timely” referrals despite their personal and/or religious beliefs. This does not set a good precedence; things could easily digress in the foreseeable future. It makes doctors who have a moral conscience against such practices into accomplices. It is a form of totalitarianism. Those interested in informing themselves should read the *Interim Guidance on Physician-Assisted Death* published by The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

In the end, it all comes down to what is ethically right. If we are just accidental unplanned assemblages of matter

where consciousness and the “self” (i.e., when you say “I am”) is merely a delusion then ultimately questions about life and death have minimal value and are ultimately of no consequence. This is the presumption that is taken into Canadian legislations; those of pernicious unreflective secular dogmas. North America is turning into a greater mess every day. It reflects an ongoing celebration of the culture of death, at both extremes of human life. It is an abolishment of the human person and our supposed dignity. One will only begin to understand how society will slowly devolve into the depths of nihilism as things move more and more towards this direction. It is also a culture of relativism (which is impossible to live out consistently) where slogans such as “that’s his/her choice, it has nothing to do with me” are mindlessly repeated. Well, once it begins to affect you personally then you start to see that moral relativism does not work. It is ironic to see those who deem themselves “progressive” typically

uphold moral and religious relativism. As progressives, they cannot improve their morality. There is no moral reform since this presupposes an objective standard of acting but this is what is denied by relativists. If there is no better method of behaving then there can be no improvement. After all, it is ultimately “his/her choice.” There are no real moral standards, just preferences.

Evil has to be denounced for what it is. That is why questions about the afterlife, God and God’s nature are fundamental to ethical issues. Otherwise, as Protagoras declared “man is the measure of all things.” In the apocalyptic lyrics of King Crimson’s song, *Epitaph*, a similar pronouncement is made:

“Between the iron gates of fate. The seeds of time were sown. And watered by the deeds of those, who know and who are known. Knowledge is a deadly friend if no one sets the rules. The fate of all mankind I see, is in the hands of fools.”

These poignant words beautifully capture the state in which contemporary Western culture finds itself in.

A mutual friend of ours, who is a Muslim, many years ago made a comment that stuck with my friend. He said “everything in this life is a test.” Indeed, I pointed out to my friend, who years ago had repeated this saying, that this thought was absolutely right, that is, if there are eternal consequences to our actions in this life.

God provides us with opportunities to make impacts on the lives of others. Sometimes we do not see the direct or potential impact of our action but we must always be prepared to be a witness to the gospel through our varied talents in whatever way we can. It is my hope that my friend will give more thought to issues of life, death (suicide) and God. This will help us to do God’s will and help others to draw closer to Him. Let us be reminded of St. Paul’s much needed words:

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” — 2 Corinthians 10:5

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

The church in the world

by Brian Rushfeldt



It appears that darkness is overtaking the light. The amount of wars, horrendous acts of violence and open oppression of the church fills the news. It seems political leaders are fully incompetent to arrest this. Law and order enforcement has little effect and military actions are not solving the problems.

The turmoil in economies of the nations has many on edge. Job losses have brought stress on many lives. Those who overspent when their income was good are now in financial trouble. And politicians have no solutions.

Stress on marriages and family relationships is increasing constantly whether financial, sexual, or time pressured. Parent/child stress is increasing and some is rooted in the false teaching of public education that pits parent’s beliefs and teachings against their children as indoctrinated by educators.

Medical and social service care that was once provided by church people has been relegated to bureaucrats. Many times the large bureaucratic system fails those in need because the basis for caring is no longer grounded in love but in “obliged service” by hirelings.

So what are we, as followers of Jesus, to do? How are we to overcome in time of persecution and oppression? How should we help those who are in need? Listen to what Jesus said, *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* — John 16:33.

When the Church turned over many powers and services to the State, it inarguably surrendered its influence and effectiveness. Many criticisms of the church in recent years is that the Church has become irrelevant. Why is that? Are we failing to meet the needs of the “lost” – have we relegated our call to the world, or are we simply not bold enough to speak for the oppressed?

We now observe the State as one of the persecutors of people, including Christians. That ought to purify the church of all dross. D. L. Moody said in *The Overcoming Life*, “It was persecution that gave Scotland to Presbyterianism. It was persecution that gave this country to civil and religious freedom. The most glorious triumphs of the Church have been won in times of persecution.” He went on to write “If the world has nothing to say against you, Jesus Christ will have nothing to say for you.”

So let us be of good cheer but not silent or inactive. In a loud voice join Jesus in overcoming false “church” teaching, immoral public education and dangerous deception from politicians.

We must promote and defend our faith by action, fully trusting God is with us in a world that is deceived, confused, blind and dark.

The often quoted quip ‘Jesus is the answer’ has always annoyed me. To the world we should instead, as followers of Jesus, speak and demonstrate the answers to those we know are off track in their eternal path, for is that not our command?

Prayer

“God, stir up your servants that we become light and salt to help some who live in darkness and are imprisoned in deception. Strengthen all your people to overcome all things that we encounter. Help us to love and serve so we are relevant to those who do not yet know enough about you. Make us influential again Lord.”

As Palmer Hartsough in a 1896 hymn wrote: “I am resolved no longer to linger, charmed by the world’s delight; Taught by the Bible, led by the Spirit, We’ll walk the heavenly way.”

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CITY LIGHT NEWS, APRIL 2016 — 5

That reminds me of a story...

by Peter McManus

While reading in the book of Job, I came across a line that really resonated with me. It simply stated “I helped those without hope, and they blessed me.” — Job 29:13

If you’ve ever been to a third-world country, then I know that you can relate to this statement. You know that they have nothing to give back to you in the usual sense of blessing you with material things. But I have found that each time I go on a short-term missions trip, I come home enriched by what I have received.

On one of my trips to the Philippines, a young woman came up to me after hearing that I had a severely handicapped daughter. She gave a me something that was dear to herself – a bracelet that her father had given to her when she was little. It held a special place in her heart as her dad had since passed away. She wanted my daughter to have it.

Years later, after our daughter passed away, I decided that on my next trip to the Philippines, I would return this bracelet to bless her in return. We both shed some tears as we remembered both her father and my daughter.

Having been on numerous short-term missionary trips across the ocean as well as to the Navajo Nation in Arizona, South Central Los Angeles and an orphanage in Baja, Mexico, I can tell you that you always come back blessed by someone who has, by our standards, nothing.

One lady came running up to my wife and I just as we were leaving the half-way house in South Central, the poorest area of Los Angeles. She handed my wife a Canadian \$5 bill. She called it her “seed money for Canada.” Within the year, I took a team with me to minister to the men and women living at the half-way house, where most of the “clients” were either gang members or addicts that had been sent there

through the justice system. That’s when I remembered this lady’s “seed money” that she invested in us. We were able to bless them in return, but the real blessing was originally bestowed on us through her. I like the message that this brings. It’s the principle of sowing and reaping. If you sow generosity, you will reap generosity. If you sow joy, you will reap joy.

The story of Job, with all his afflictions, loss of family, friends who were naysayers, and loss of his livelihood knew God well enough to not curse Him. In the end, after praying for his friends, God blessed him with exactly double of what he had in the beginning.

If we choose to be like Job, who chose to praise God in the midst of overwhelming circumstances, then I am certain that God can bless us with whatever we are going through. And, the blessings can come from the most unlikely source. Even the poorest.

You can email Peter at editor@calgarychristian.com

Neology absurdity

by Brian Rushfeldt

Are you aware there is a “developing” language that is “gender neutral”? You may be asking who is developing such foolishness and what is it.

Here are some of the alternatives to his and hers, him and her, he and she: ‘thon,’ ‘hiz’ and ‘hizer,’ ‘ne’ and ‘nir,’ ‘ze’ and ‘zir,’ and ‘xe’ and ‘xyr.’

You had better learn these or you may be accused by a human rights tribe for being bigoted or discriminating or offending certain people. Some universities are teaching this falsehood and trying to enforce its use.

But there are some who refuse to adhere to such nonsense. I am not alone. One professor at the University of Toronto said, “The pronoun issue is straightforward.” Jordan Peterson went on to say, “I won’t mouth the words of ideologues, because when you do that you become a puppet for their ideology.” Ideologues is a nice term. I have another word for them.

Here is a very unused word but defines exactly what is occurring (just as it did in Gnosticism times).

Neology. Merriam-Webster defines neology: the use of a new word or expression or of an established word in a new or different sense: the use of new expressions that are not sanctioned by conventional standard usage.

Neology resulted in terms like gender fluidity, sexual orientation, and inter-generational sex, and multiple genders. All to the detriment of civilized society.

We must be very discerning in this age of mass communication. Before internet and live news TV some of these ideas would have taken years to gain

any recognition. Now people get quickly taken in due to the hype surrounding them from the activists who think them up.

Be like Professor Peterson, do not accept or even repeat such foolishness.



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God, Love and The Enduring Message of Terry Fox Finding unity despite disunity

by Scott Ventureyra

Given our contemporary climate with debates regarding politics, economics, race, gender, religion and the upcoming American presidential elections which tend to create more disunity than unity, it would be worth our time to take a step back.

Even if just briefly, I would like to focus my attention towards a cause that will help create unity instead of disunity. This I believe is found in the inspirational story of the great Canadian hero Terry Fox. The story is well known. Fox, at the age of 18, was diagnosed with bone cancer. His right leg was amputated above the knee. Despite this huge setback, he was determined to fight cancer by running from coast to coast across Canada.

When many people would choose to turn inwards, become bitter, and succumb to their impending death, Fox chose life and decided to ‘rage against the dying of the light’ as he states: “I don’t feel that this is unfair. That’s the thing about cancer. I’m not the only one, it happens all the time to people. I’m not special. This just intensifies what I did. It gives it more meaning. It’ll inspire more people. I just wish people would realize that anything’s possible if you try; dreams are made possible if you try.”


This run, in 1979, came to be known as the *Marathon of Hope*. This was 36 years ago. Since then, not just Canadians but millions of people around the

world have participated in *The National School Run Day*, *The Terry Fox Run*, and *Terry Fox fundraising event*. As of 2014, remarkably, 650 million dollars have been raised in Terry Fox’s name – an incredible achievement considering how it all began. Fox’s prophetic words have been realized: “Even if I don’t finish, we need others to continue. It’s got to keep going without me.”

Just the other day, a newsletter sent home to parents from my daughter’s Catholic elementary school, describing the Terry Fox Run/Walk On inspired me to create a webpage for my daughter where sponsors could donate money online. It is a beautiful thing to see the sponsor’s names from people who have different ideologies but share the common propensity towards love and fighting a secondary cause of much of our human suffering – cancer. As Fox recognized, cancer affects us all.

Fox promised himself that if he should live, he should prove himself deserving of life. Indeed, he did and this serves as extraordinary example for all of us to live by. We should all follow Fox’s example to love selflessly, mirroring Jesus’ radical altruism, albeit through a finite and imperfect way. In line with this, let us keep Christian apologist and Christian convert from Islam, Nabeel Qureshi (author of *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*), in our prayers, who has been recently stricken with stage IV stomach cancer. Let his work, faith and courage also be an example to all of us.





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A REFLECTION FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON: GOD, TRUTH AND LOVE

by **Scott Ventureyra**

As we conclude the holiday season and venture into the New Year, try not to be too swept up with the hoopla of consumerism and economic materialism.

In our day and age, with the technology of smart phones, hi-speed internet, wi-fi access, iPads, new gaming systems, etc., it is easier than ever to get distracted from God, truth, and love.

Now that Christmas has just passed us it would be worthwhile to give a brief reflection on its significance.

Irrespective of the origins of Christmas, it is the idea that the second person of the Trinity invaded the space-time created order and was incarnated into Jesus Christ, a being who is fully man and fully God, through the mystery of the hypostatic union.

Jesus was the long expected Messiah who came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. The prophecies included that the Messiah would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:20; Galatians 4:4) who was a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:26-31) and that He would be called Immanuel, meaning “God is with

us” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). He came to fulfill these and many other important prophecies.

In a time where we find people unthinkingly express their belief in moral and religious relativism, it is important to focus on truth. Moral and religious relativism is self-defeating

that the Word (the second person of Trinity) became flesh: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning*” – John 1:1-2. This is a profound statement of truth since the Word is the term for Logos in Greek which signifies in theology, divine reason.

Not only does God embody reason and truth but truth is also enshrouded in love, as 1 John 14:6 states: “*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*”

As we enter a new year, remember to fix your eyes on God who is truth and love which propels us to be witnesses to the Gospel. Thus, charity in a time like this is vital but as George Michael in his song *Prayer for Time* recognized, we should not let it be a “coat” that is worn only twice a year. It should be demonstrated and carried forth every day in

whatever way possible. Even though Christmas has passed, let us be witnesses to truth, love and God! A Happy New Year to all!

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.



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Canada’s boldest professor fights for freedom of speech

by Scott Ventureyra

Professor Jordan B. Peterson is in a fight for freedom of speech. Last November, he participated in a debate revolving around Bill C-16 (which seeks to protect one’s gender identity and expression) and free speech, against two other professors at the

University of Toronto (UofT). It can be found on YouTube. He is a clinical psychologist and a tenured professor of psychology at the UofT who has been teaching there since 1998. In 1999, he published an important book, *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief* which intersects

insights from different religious perspectives, cognitive science and a Jungian methodology to understand myth and narrative. Unlike a great many professors in our highly secularized universities, Peterson is very much aware of the devastating consequences of the eradication of religion through his careful readings of thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and George Orwell. In September, Peterson posted three videos dealing with political correctness and his concerns over Bill C-16 and the surrounding legislation. Bill C-16 has passed its third reading in late November. If we just take a look at, for example, how gender identity is defined on the Ontario Humans Rights Commission website, we can discern a host of problems: “Gender identity is each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum.” Peterson states in his video that

such a definition has not only been poorly written but also poorly thought out which should be major cause for worry. This legislation raises many questions that require further clarification. Peterson is clear that such definitions are not only nonsensical but also divisive, ideologically motivated and will eventually lead to more confusion and chaos. Whether one is an educator, student, professional or layperson, we must unite and not compromise truth. Without truth there cannot be discourse nor debate which ultimately can lead to authentic progress. We must strive to progress and live through our common good, to stand against tyranny at all levels of society. Peterson represents a flickering light in an increasingly dark time. If we unify ourselves we can create that flicker into an unceasingly bright light for all. Following the poignant words of Bruce Cockburn, “[you’ve] got to kick at the darkness ‘til it bleeds daylight.”

“Without truth there cannot be discourse nor debate which ultimately can lead to authentic progress.”

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“While many are going to the grave, this senior went back to work at 78.”

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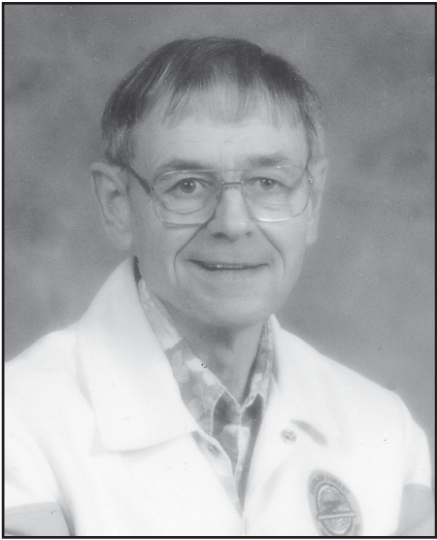
Barrie celebrates 87th birthday and is still working

Eighty-seven year old Barrie Colins of Bowden, Alberta, had retired over 20 years ago and was in very poor health at the time. He could hardly walk, and struggled to tell us his story. Barrie has a different story today! He went back to work eight years ago to get some exercise and enjoy a bit of pocket money. Barrie works at Extra Foods in Innisfail, a seven minute drive from home, where he organizes stock for five hours a day three days a week. One of the reasons Barrie says he’s in good shape today is because of his relationship with Calgary area-based Phytotherapist Robert Kish and his wife, Margo. Following God’s principles has restored and maintained great health for him. Twenty-one years ago a friend introduced Barrie to the health-conscious couple and the Kishes invited Barrie and his friend to supper at their home. “We got acquainted with them and got talking and I decided that I would go to them for my health concerns,” Barrie added. A short while later, Barrie wasn’t feeling very well. He went to see the Kishes for the first time. “They thought I was in terrible shape and they checked me all over,” he said. “They gave me some homeopathics, vitamins and minerals and I got better. And I’ve been going to see them for the past 21 years. Every time I have a health concern I make an appointment and go and see them. I like to get checked up once or twice a year and sometimes more than that.” “I attribute my good health to their help, lots of prayer and eating right,” he professed. “I’ve been health conscious for many years.” When asked what he thinks of the Kishes, Barrie

didn’t hold anything back. “I think they’re a great couple. They love the Lord,” he smiled. “They love people and they want to see people get well. I’ve always enjoyed going to see them and I consider them special friends. They’ve got a nice, beautiful clean clinic there. They’re also very hospitable. They’ve helped me out and it’s been good.” When Barrie complained of having chest pains while climbing hills or just going for a walk, Robert Kish recommended he go and get checked out by his doctor. Barrie followed Kish’s advice, went to see his doctor and was sent to a cardiologist who said he’d need an angiogram. Barrie had an angioplasty at the Foothills Hospital, followed it up with some of Kish’s therapies and is feeling much better today. “After the operation, I took the Kish’s therapies and I think my arteries are doing very well now,” he said. “They have special supplements that are great for heart and arteries. I take quite a bit of them. They’re great – they’ve got a lot of vitamins and minerals in them. I highly recommend them.” Barrie, a Christian since 1970, attends the Nazarene Church in Innisfail, 12 km from where he lives, and sees his job as temporary because he loves attending Christian camps. “I might work just for the winter but come summer I want to go to camp,” he insisted. “I go to two camps: The Keenager’s (seniors) camp at River’s Edge Camp and the family camp there too, and then I’m booked at Camp Harmattan for their family camp this coming summer.”

This active senior owns his own house in Bowden and has had people tell him, “You should sell your house and go and live in an old folk’s home.” “Well, no way,” Barrie voiced. “Why should I, if I can look after myself? That’s the last thing I want to do. I might eventually, but I’m still driving my car and I’m still getting a good report from the doctors when I go to renew my license. “I’m hopelessly youth-oriented,” he continued. “I’ve counseled kids in Christian camps for a number of years. I don’t see myself as an old folk. I don’t walk with a cane, walker or wheelchair or anything like that and I praise the Lord for that and pray for those that do.” Barrie also keeps busy with his hobbies. He restores antique radios – the kind with tubes. He jogs and walks to the post office every day, and enjoys reading. He is also very active in his church. Barrie says his experience with the Kishes has been very good. “I’ve told a lot of people about the Kishes and given out their business cards. I would highly recommend them to anybody with health problems. They’ve been wonderful. Not only as health care people but as friends. I consider them very special friends. Especially since they’re Christians too.” Barry is in a maintenance program and visits the Kishes once a year.

“I attribute my good health to their help, lots of prayer and eating right,” he professed.



87 year old Barrie Colins.

Robert J. Kish, Phy.D. (Phy.)

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A brief reflection on M-103 and Islamophobia

by **Scott Ventureyra**

Those who kowtow to political correctness, typically identify as champions of pluralism and diversity, except when it pertains to diversity of thought.

Political correctness has unleashed a ubiquitous malaise throughout Western civilization at the expense of our freedoms and liberties. Universities have become a place of complacency, where at every turn students require trigger warnings and safe spaces in order to cope with what are perceived as microaggressions.

Nonetheless, the university is a place of rigorous debate that is supposed to foster deep reflection, questioning and the development of innovative discoveries. It is not a daycare.

In lieu of M-103 (M-103 is a motion in the House of Commons authored and presented by Iqra Khalid. The motion condemns Islamophobia in Canada, along

with all other forms of “systemic racism and religious discrimination), it should be stated that no religion or worldview should have special protection or rights over another. All should be protected, with the small caveat that they conform to Western democratic values. We would not want to uphold any view that is antithetical to Western values.

Phobia signifies an irrational fear or aversion to something. The question arises... do those who oppose M-103 have an irrational fear or aversion? The answer is: it depends. Not all forms of Islam are the same. For instance, I do not think most sensible people would have a fear of Ahmadis. The Ahmadiyya Islamic sect is a very peaceful version of Islam. Many Muslims consider this sect to be heretical because of its eradication of military jihad and its unique interpretation of two words in the Quran.

But, what about Wahhabi Islam?

Wahhabism is a religious movement stemming out of Sunni Islam. It is the state religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Having worked at the Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau, I know well, that many Saudis come to Canada for their studies.

Saudi Arabians are spending millions of dollars building mosques and Islamic centers throughout Canada. What are we to make of this? Especially considering that Wahhabism has had a profound influence on Abū Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS.

This form of Islam is antithetical to our core Western values. Would fear of this brand of Islam be considered to be irrational? I think not.

As Canadians, we should avoid falling into relativistic traps, as our dear Prime Minister has fallen prey to. On the one hand, he affirms feminist values, yet on the other hand, rejects them by attending a gender segregated event at an Ottawa mosque – he cannot have it both ways. Either you stand for Western values or you don’t.

It is essential that any legislation or motion be worded carefully and accurately. We have already seen sloppily and dangerously written bills which imposes compelled speech, such as Bill C-16.

Scott Ventureyra is a PhD Theology (candidate) at the Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

ONE MAN’S OPINION

Do you know why you were born?

by **Doug Kelley**

I have lived almost 70 years on this earth and discovered that my primary job is to “preach, pray and prophesy.” Before coming to this revelation, I thought my job was being a lawyer, a pastor, a husband, a father, a businessman and a hundred other significant titles.

But God began to show me that regardless of the current label hanging over me, my job remained the same. God has given all of us two commandments – love God and love our neighbour as yourself. –Matt 22:36-40.

Many years ago I owned a personnel agency. I was having a discussion with my manager (who was also a sister in the Lord) when she turned to me and dismissed me with these words, “Go do what you do best – love somebody.”

This admonition has been a daily reminder that our job is both vertical (God) and horizontal (man). We are called to live in the gap. As a prophet we hear the voice

of God to share with family and friends. As a priest we talk to God about the problems of our family and friends.

Perhaps Mark Twain got it best when he said, “The two most important days in your life are the day that you are born and the day you find out why.”

As I pastor to the least, the lost and the lonely of Los Angeles, I want to break the power of addiction by discovering “why they were born.” We all have been born to have fellowship with Him because He put “eternity in our hearts.”

In addition to our vertical purpose, God has given a horizontal mandate to “do good to all men, especially the household of faith” – Gal 6:10. I do this by preaching, praying and prophesying. What is your purpose?

Doug Kelley pastors Open Arms Church in South Central, Los Angeles and can be emailed at pastordougkelley@aim.com

The Case For Christ comes to life in film

Waterloo, ON – *The Case for Christ* comes to life in its big screen debut, releasing in select markets across Canada on April 7, 2017. The film is based on Lee Strobel’s best-selling book about his own journey as an award-winning investigative journalist and resolute atheist who sets out to disprove Christianity.

“The book *The Case for Christ* lays out the overwhelming foundation of evidence from which personal faith can rise,” Strobel said. The film gives the dramatic story behind the story of a man with personal animosity for Christianity who used journalistic and

legal techniques to evaluate its claims. *The Case for Christ* takes audiences on an exciting journey from skepticism to belief. The film draws on the true story of Lee and Leslie Strobel, whose marriage struggled as her growing faith collided with his determined atheism.

The dramatic retelling of their journey offers a human touch on the in-depth research Lee Strobel conducted. *The Case for Christ* is a moving story that will inspire everyone who sees it: believers, those who are searching, and even those who are where Lee Strobel once was. Theatre listings available at www.TheCaseForChristMovie.com

Minute for the persecuted

Submitted by **Al Coats**

Turkey

On July 15th, 2016, Turkey reported that factions within its military had attempted but failed to overthrow the government of President Erdogan.

The failed coup allowed Erdogan to declare a state of emergency in order to completely purge every possible opponent of his rule, real or imagined.

Nearly every aspect of Turkey has been affected. Thousands of teachers, judges, lawyers, police, military personnel, journalists, academics and others have been suspended or arrested.

It was the perfect justification for Erdogan to assume the role of dictator, placing the nail in the coffin of nearly 100 years of secular government in Turkey, and putting this 80 million strong Muslim nation on the fast track towards radical Islam.

This has had a huge impact on Turkey’s Christians, once two million, now only 120,000 (less than one per cent of the population). A Christian missionary in Turkey said that this is probably the worst case scenario for Christians in Turkey.

Christians will probably be among

those targeted, because their lack of adherence to Islam could be seen as a threat to the government.

There is already an increased crack-down on Christians, especially those from outside the country. For example, Andrew Bronson, a U.S. citizen who had been running a church there for 23 years, was arrested in October and has been in jail there ever since, charged with terrorism, and denied contact with lawyers and diplomats.

The government has passed an emergency order that allows it to rid the country of anyone it deems a threat, without judicial order or review.

During the night of the coup, angry mobs in two cities smashed the windows of at least two churches.

Please pray for foreign Christians who are at risk of losing everything if dubbed a ‘national security threat.’ With no evidence or forewarning, families may lose their visas, their ministries and their homes.

Pray also for local Christians to have strength as they enter into what may prove to be a very dark time for the church in Turkey.

Source: www.persecution.org



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Fell on a Black Day: A Reflection on Chris Cornell’s suicide

by Scott Ventureyra

Chris Cornell, the front man of the Seattle grunge rock bands, Soundgarden and Audioslave, was declared dead on May 17. Further information revealed that the cause of death was suicide by hanging.

Growing up, Cornell was one of my favourite singers. He had an impressive four-octave vocal range, combined with a unique talent for authoring poignant lyrics and thoughtfully composed music. However, I am not writing about that talent in this article.

Suicide is a difficult subject to broach, but I cannot conclude that Cornell’s suicide was merely determined by his genetics and environment, although further information suggests that using Ativan for relieving anxiety may have impaired his judgment. However, is that a sufficient explanation? Some are speculating that Soundgarden’s cover of Led Zeppelin’s song, *In My Time of Dying*, which was their last song at the Fox Theatre in Detroit on May 17, was Cornell’s goodbye to the world. Something tells me he was very cognizant of what he would do.

In my estimation, we are ultimately both

praiseworthy and blameworthy for our actions; neither neuroscience nor physics preclude this. I think we have good philosophical and theological reasons to affirm genuine free will. After all, why would we praise Cornell’s musical abilities “if it were not he who freely and creatively composed and performed such wonderful music? Are we to praise matter in motion, i.e., the unintended firing of neurons to produce something that utterly transcends physics?

The informational content of music cannot be reduced to just the sounds produced by instruments or vocal chords, nor can the subjective experience of music. We may also ask, why we would condemn serial murderers and child rapists if we are wholly determined by genetic makeup and environmental factors?

It is quite simple; if no one has any moral responsibility, we do not have the right to praise or blame anyone. Throughout our lives, we cultivate virtues and vices. We do not become the persons we are overnight.

Whether we like it, in a world without God, without the after-life, without free will, things just are. As Richard Dawkins has observed, such an understanding of the universe is filled with “nothing but blind, pitiless indifference.”

As a follower of Christ, it saddens me to think that Cornell’s despair, depression or confusion or

whatever it was that led him to this path of, which appears at all glances, as irreparable damage. Let us hope that in those final moments, Chris reached out to the Redeemer of all, instead of “the gods and the angels, like a pagan [or] to anyone who will take [him] to heaven.” (Lyrics to *Like a Stone* by Cornell)

An indubitable and inescapable arcane feeling of pathos is in each of us, whether we acknowledge it or not. Some of us attempt to suffocate it with alcohol, drugs, sex, and countless other distractions that become false gods. We worship false gods whenever we place any created thing above God.

However, this suffocation, which is manifested through various forms of idolatry, can only be overcome by the Source of all, the ultimate, uncreated Reality, who is God. This is why St. Augustine observed that, “our hearts are restless, until they rest in [God].” Perhaps Cornell had a similar realization when he wrote in his cryptic song *Like a Stone*: “in your house I long to be, room by room patiently, I’ll wait for you there, like a stone, I’ll wait for you there, alone...”

Instead of his final decision, I wish that Cornell would have “tried to live” that day.

Scott Ventureyra completed his Ph.D. in theology at Dominican University College in Ottawa. His thesis focused on the origin of consciousness as it pertains to the science-theology interaction. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.



YC sees “bus driver” favour returned

by Peter Fleck

As a teenager, Mike Love was prone to getting into trouble. But after his school bus driver took an interest in him and invited him to church youth group, he came to faith in Jesus Christ.

This past Victoria Day long weekend, the

tables have turned.

For the last 23 years, Love has organized annual YC youth conferences in Alberta.

As 5,000 people gathered in Red Deer for YC 2017, among the crowd was a youth group bus driver who wandered into the ENMAX Centrium to see what the excitement was all about. After hearing the message, the driver made a commitment to follow Jesus.

“The wonderful thing about that is that the Gospel isn’t just for young people,” Love said.

The founder and executive director of Extreme Dream Ministries explained the messages given could equally be taught in any church to any adult.

“We never talk down to young people,” he said.

Seeing attendance numbers drop in Edmonton, this year YC returned to its birthplace in Red Deer.

Committed to growing the conference here, Love said the staff at Westerner Park

“have been absolutely amazing.”

Yet to ensure long term viability, he explained more registrations and increased sponsorships are needed. Featuring high-level sound, lighting, and video production, the event drawing top speakers and music artists is an expensive undertaking.

Under the current arrangement, the Centrium can hold up to 7,500 people. Yet Love said finding sufficient space for all the breakout sessions, exhibits and recreational activities will be a challenge.

As this year’s event was winding down, Love said he’s discovered his passion for reaching youth is as strong as ever. And he said youth leaders confirmed how valuable the conference is for them.

Lead singer for Northern Ireland’s Bluetree, Aaron Boyd, was excited to bring along his 11-year-old daughter as a participant this year.

Boyd explained he wanted “to let her be a part of something

a wee bit bigger... to experience something that just doesn’t happen back home.”

As a youngster, Australian Luke Smallbone of the band, For King & Country, took in numerous YC conferences. His brother, Daniel, is the longtime YC lighting director. And his sister, Rebecca St. James, frequently performed at the event.

“This event has had a massive impact on my life,” Smallbone told the crowd on Sunday night.

With that, he challenged the young people, “You get one shot at life. Make a difference with the way that you love Jesus.”

Believing in the next generation to make that difference, Love said, “We’ll do whatever we have to, to influence kids.”

From November 17-18, Extreme Dream Ministries is also putting on a Momentum conference in Edmonton for young adults 18 and older. Information is available at www.momentumab.ca.

www.calgarychristian.com

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MORNING OF FAITH

COMMUNITY MEMBERS
UNITE TOGETHER

Westerner Days has a long standing tradition of uniting community members together!

Westerner Park will open the grounds at 10:00 am with free admission to anyone wishing to attend the 11:00 am service.

Guests are welcome to stay on the grounds and enjoy the rest of the afternoon at the fair.
*Parking fee will be in effect.

Nonperishable food donations will be accepted at the service for the Red Deer and District Food Bank.

JOIN US
SUNDAY, JULY 23
for Morning of Faith, a non-denominational service.

Presented by: **Shine 90.5FM**

That reminds me of a story...

by **Peter McManus**

Even from a young age, music has played a huge role in my life, with my musical tastes changing over the years from jazz, blues, rock, big band, and almost in a league of their own, the Beatles.

I remember when I was about five or six, lying underneath the large console stereo, whenever a song came on that I really liked. From under the four-legged piece of furniture, one could marvel at all the wires and glowing tubes that powered the large speakers. With the bass knob turned all the way up, I was delighted to see the speakers reverberate with each note being played. The sound was amzing under there!

One of my favourites was *Mack the Knife* by Bobby Darin. Whenever that song came on, I would literally run to my favourite spot.

Over the years, music styles changed; in the early 60's, many "gag" songs soon became popular. Songs such as *The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)*

by the Chipmunks, *Puff, the Magic Dragon* by Peter, Paul and Mary, *Monster Mash* by Bobby "Boris" Pickett & The Crypt-Kickers, *Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh* by Allan Sherman, and the song everybody loved to sing, *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* by the Tokens.

When the Beatles hit the scene, I can remember standing in front of a mirror, playing air guitar, complete with slightly bowed knees pretending I was John Lennon, bouncing up and down singing my lungs out to their music.

Later on came the acid rock with the likes of Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Cream, the Doors, and a host of other bands that promoted yet another wave of music.

When I became a Christian in 1970, rock music was frowned upon in many churches, so my love of playing the drums was placed on hold — for a time I rarely listened to music.

That changed two years later when I was given the opportunity to play in the church I was attending. As

far as I know, I think I was the first rock drummer to play in a Calgary church (please let me know if this isn't accurate).

One thing led to another; soon a group of us were in a Christian rock band, playing to a host of audiences ranging from churches, prisons, coffee houses and youth groups.

Music has changed over the years; I must say that I miss the times when you could sing along with just about any song that came on the radio. Not anymore. Lyrics today are often too difficult to understand.

Today there are so many choices being played — on 29 radio stations in Calgary and area, alone. Officially, there's 41 different genres of music but that number quickly increases when you add all the sub-categories under each genre.

It's fun to remember our past, play some old tunes, but I think playing some new, creative songs can be just as good. If only I could understand the lyrics!

Faith, hope and mystery

We're all on God's perfect GPS

by **Frank King**

It was a beautiful morning for photography, so there I was, on vacation in southern Ontario, roaming a Lake Ontario beach with my camera, tripod and filters. Trouble is, when I finished and returned to my rental car, the iPhone I'd taken with me was nowhere to be found.

I managed to keep from panicking; the sun wasn't up yet so it was still dim, but I hadn't roamed far on the beach, so it seemed likely I would find the phone. After a half-hour of fruitlessly scouring the beach like a forensic detective, the panic began. I headed back to the home of our friends, Ross and Sue Carkner, out of ideas for what to do.

Ross wondered if the phone could be found via the Internet. He Googled something like "finding a lost iPhone" and was presented with all kinds of

directions. Following them, we were soon provided with a map of the beach and a locator for the phone. Technology had "pinged" what I couldn't see.

So back I went, this time with Ross and Sue, and the search resumed. A young man who was running on the beach joined us and, eventually, he found the iPhone. I was so relieved that I hugged him like a long-lost brother.

As Ross, Sue and I later pondered the event, we saw the parallels with us and God. His own, absolutely perfect GPS has every one of us, "pinged." He knows where we are, what we are doing, what we are thinking.

If you're like me, this isn't always good news. Because we live in, and are unconsciously influenced by, a culture that wants nothing to do with Jesus, I

often behave and/or think in ways that dishonour all that He has done for everyone who professes to believe in Him.

Sometimes, I'm so caught up in a moment of emotion that the last thing I want is to be reminded of is that not only am I on God's radar, but because I follow Christ, I'm supposed to be His ambassador in an unbelieving world.

These are the times when I need to be reminded: it's not about me. It's about Him.

All the views expressed by Frank King in this column are his own and do not reflect on his role as manager of media relations for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada and Samaritan's Purse Canada.



Farewell Nabeel: The loss of a young Christian apologist

by **Scott Ventureyra**

I wish to offer some thoughts on Nabeel's extraordinary life. It is with tremendous sorrow that I discovered that Nabeel Qureshi (1983-2017), a brother in Christ, has left us. Indeed, we lost one of the great ambassadors for Christ of our times. Qureshi was diagnosed with Stage IV stomach cancer over a year ago.

Qureshi led a brief yet remarkable life; he died at 34 years old. He was five years younger than the prodigious Catholic physicist, mathematician, philosopher and theologian, Blaise Pascal, who died at 39 in the 17th century. Over the past 12 years, since his conversion ot Christianity, Qureshi finished a medical degree, two masters, began a doctorate at Oxford... authored three books... travelled the world... led many Muslims to Christ. He even started a family.

Indeed, Qureshi, at such a young age, accomplished much more than most can even come close to in a lifetime. He was a fearless young man who was on a mission, a mission for bringing the lost sheep

to Christ. He saw the human plight, one tormented by sin, as not just a series of human failings against God and one another but as an infirmity that taints every possible way one sees the whole world.

Unlike for many, his conversion to Christianity was one that was marked not by a selfish gain but a selfless commitment to God and humanity.


Famous evangelical preacher and world renowned Christian apologist, Ravi Zacharias, gave a powerful and poignant eulogy at Qureshi's funeral. Zacharias focused on the uniqueness of Qureshi's Christian life (the last 12 years) which he described as being abnormally born, torn, scorned and now gone.

Let us mourn this great loss but let us celebrate this brief but extraordinary life, while not forgetting to follow in Qureshi's steps in our mission to spread the good news in whatever way possible.

Scott Ventureyra completed his PhD in theology at Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.



Nabeel Qureshi
1983-2017



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'Til the soul felt its worth

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

I'll bet you don't have to think long to match the melody with the lyrics of this Christmas carol. I'll also bet that like me, some of the subtleties of the words have passed by unnoticed.

But someone brought up the verse above at work and pondered the line "'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth." Any idea what it means? I think I've figured it out. 'He' is Jesus Christ. The inference in this lyric is that His arrival caused people to feel valued in a new way.

The lyric makes sense because Christ's birth was first announced not to the Justin Trudeaus, Barack

Obamas or Lady Gagas of that time, but to smelly sheep herders. It was the first of many times when Jesus would level the playing field between the haves and have-nots of this world.

Some faiths adhere to a "caste" system that ranks people's value. Others advocate violence against those who do not agree with their beliefs.

Meanwhile, the Bible describes how Jesus casually did the unthinkable for a Jew in ancient Israel: He had a very public conversation with a non-Jewish woman of questionable repute. Because of what He did, her soul felt a new worth.

Is that model being carried out today by followers of Jesus? Yes. Consider that a majority of prison ministries are Christian. Why? Because the criminals our culture considers useless are of huge value to God. In fact, they have the same value as you and me.

The good news we celebrate at Christmas is God sent Jesus for ALL people. The evidence is this Bible excerpt: "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him would not be lost, but have eternal life."

Notice there are no exceptions listed? That's the unique thing about Christianity. Because our souls have equal worth to God, we all have a chance to accept God's extraordinary Christmas gift and find new meaning in our lives.

All the opinions expressed by Frank King are his own and do not reflect his role as manager of media relations for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada and Samaritan's Purse Canada.



The Governor General's hubris and anti-intellectualism

by Scott Ventureyra

At the Canadian Science Policy Conference in Ottawa, Governor General (GG) Julie Payette made the following remarks: "And we are still debating and still questioning whether life was a divine intervention or whether it was coming out of a natural process let alone, oh my goodness, a random process." I want to offer some comments on this rather confused and prejudicial sentence.

One wonders what the supreme governor of the Church of England, Queen Elizabeth II, whom GG Payette represents, would think. The GG's mandate is to represent the queen and not give partisan views on what people should believe or not believe in a free society. Having said that, I think she is highly misinformed on the relationship between science and faith.

The GG raised a number of issues pertaining to not only science, but theology, the science-theology dialogue and philosophy of science.

The GG should know there are nuanced positions on the relationship of science and religion, including what the physicist-theologian, Robert John Russell dubbed "creative mutual interaction," whereby science and theology mutually inform each another.

Consider what the late nuclear physicist, theologian and pioneer of the science-theology interaction, Ian Barbour, labeled dialogue and integration which outlines many of the complexities concerning the relations between the two.

Treatment of deep questions such as the origin of life and God's interaction with physical reality require careful thought.

The GG, who was trained in engineering and worked as an astronaut, should have some acquaintance with the tremendous obstacles that face origin of life studies. For instance, philosopher of science, Stephen C. Meyer, in his seminal book on the origin of life, *Signature in the Cell*, builds a case for agent

causation using standard scientific modes of reasoning. He uses abductive reasoning, which is standard to the historical sciences.

Pitting science against faith is so typical of our highly secularized society. Exposing such intellectual laziness and canned statements would help the general population help the general population realize that science and reason are not really opposed to faith and theology.

I would like to extend an invitation to both the GG and the Prime Minister for a debate on the nature of science, science and theology interaction, issues in the philosophy of science or even the reasonableness of faith and the existence of God. This, however, would require them to finally substantiate many of their audacious claims.

Scott Ventureyra completed his Ph.D. in theology at Dominican University College in Ottawa, Ontario. He has a keen interest in Christian apologetics.

Samaritan's Purse providing medical, physical relief to desperate Rohingya refugees

Calgary, AB — Samaritan's Purse Canada (SP) is providing medical aid and distributing emergency supplies to thousands of impoverished Rohingya people from Myanmar who have fled for their lives to escape violence.

Since bloodshed and brutality erupted in their homeland August 25, more than 600,000 Rohingya escaped to Bangladesh, where they are living in temporary huts, tents, and under tarps in crowded refugee camps.

Samaritan's Purse Canada has deployed personnel to Bangladesh who are working with local partners to distribute blankets, tarps, hygiene kits, and other desperately needed emergency items to refugees. They are also assessing how their extensive experience providing safe water in emergencies can assist Rohingya families.

"Homes were burned, people were brutalized, and those that survived fled with little but the clothes on their backs and maybe a few household items," said Samaritan's Purse Canada employee David Bock from a refugee camp. "The speed of this displacement of Rohingya people from Myanmar has been almost unparalleled. These are very

vulnerable people who need our help." Samaritan's Purse has deployed Canadian medical staff to treat wounded and sick Rohingya refugees at a Bangladesh hospital. In addition, SP is transporting medical equipment and supplies to the area.

To support Samaritan's Purse's emergency disaster relief efforts in Bangladesh and around the world, visit www.SamaritansPurse.ca or call 1-800-663-6500.

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