

No Quarter November

THE ANTHOLOGY

DOUGLAS WILSON

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*To the burning couch crew.
You know who you are.*

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Introduction

So it is apparent that I believe that there really is a time for rhetorical qualifications. That time was not November 2018.

Allow me to explain. No, no, I insist. During the course of the month of November, my plan was to write a series of blog posts where I said what I think, flat out, and to do so without qualifying anything. The things I would write could potentially be qualified, and it would be no sin to do so, but my plan was to let everybody all know what was going on out there without any of that “but on the other hand” stuff. There is another hand with five fingers on it, and there are qualifications to be made, and you can rest assured that I knew all about them, but decided to keep them to myself.

This was kind of like a wordsmithing Mardi Gras. Or what happens in November stays in November.

For some reason, this whole thing reminds of a particular definition from Ambrose Bierce’s *The Devil’s Dictionary*:

EXILE, n. One who serves his country by residing abroad, yet is not an ambassador.”

An English sea-captain being asked if he had read “The Exile of Erin,” replied: “No, sir, but I should like to anchor on it.” Years afterwards, when he had been hanged as a pirate after a career of unparalleled atrocities, the following memorandum was found in the ship’s log that he had kept at the time of his reply: Aug. 3d, 1842. Made a joke on the ex-Isle of Erin. Coldly received. War with the whole world!

CHAPTER ONE

Burn All the Schools

H.L. Mencken once suggested a shrewd educational reform that has somehow not caught on. He said that there was nothing wrong with our current education establishment that could not be fixed by burning all the schools, and hanging all the teachers. Now some might want to dismiss this as an extreme measure, but visionaries are often dismissed in their own day. “You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one”

Get Them Out Now

I do have an idea, followed by a question. Millions of evangelicals still have their children in the government school system. *Get them out now.* Having Christian children in the government school system is what theologians of another era would have called sinnity-sin-sin.

Not a little smidge of sinnity either.¹ Not really a debatable matter. Stop it. Crash the system. If there ever were to be a true reformation among us, Christians leaving the public school system would form a refugee column that would make the Mississippi River look like a solitary tear running down Horace Mann's cheek.

My question is a simple one, but I will divide it into two questions in just a moment. Here is the first phase of the question:

In order for all Christians to get their kids out of the maw of this government school system, what *would* it take precisely? How many outrages would have to be slathered over the tops of all of our heads before we said something like, "Friend, enough"? How outrageous would such outrages have to get before somebody noticed? How much before *everybody* noticed?

How far down this wormhole do we have to go?

Some time, away in the *future*, the last holdout, some Baptist deacon in Tennessee, will finally acknowledge that when the public school system refused to allow his (politely worded) request for his daughter to opt out of the lab for the pole dancing class, with the football team as the practice audience, they really had "gone too far." The football team was there because *they* were all in mandatory sensitivity training, which meant that they had to watch the girls without any catcalling, which they did grumble about a little bit.

Here is how the question divides. What it would take in 2018 is a very different question than what it will take twenty years from now, in 2038. The reason I know this is because what it would have taken in 1998, and before that in 1978, is quite different from what it would take now. Decadence, as Augustine once put it, is a conveyor

1. Now when I say . . . *Nope. You said you wouldn't. November, man.* Don't want people to think . . . *Doesn't matter what they think. If they are in sin anyway, all the qualifications in the world are just being pushed up the wrong rain spout.* Well, didn't feel like it anyway. *Good.* Sorry about that. Old habits die hard. *No problem.*

CHAPTER TWO

Smash the Matriarchy

When I was a young boy, our family didn't own a television, which is why I was robbed of enjoying some of the greater cultural achievements of the mid-to-late-1950s. But as luck would have it, from time to time I did get a glimpse of some of those achievements, here and there on the run, you know. One time we were visiting some friends in another state, as I remember, and *they* had a television.

On this privileged occasion, I recall taking in an episode of *The Lone Ranger*. The theme of this particular show was about that time when there was this mousy little man, hen-pecked to the outer limits of human endurance, and through a series of circumstances, the Lone Ranger adopted this poor man and made him something of a protégé. The end result of this crash course in masculinity was that the little man headed on home, and the happy ending to the whole saga was him pulling out his revolver and shooting his wife's dishes

off her shelves. It makes me happy just thinking about it. Fade to black, and with her thinking something along the lines of *finally!*

Now I know what you are thinking. You are thinking that this would be an excellent time for me to bend my “no qualifications” rule for November. No, not that. No qualifications. Fire away.

Or perhaps you were thinking that watching stuff like that must have been what turned an innocent little boy with a cute smile into the raging misogynist that he is today. No, that’s not right either. My “raging misogyny” has other sources entirely.

Here’s the right answer—or rather, here’s what you *should* be thinking. You should be thinking that we are so far gone as a nation that we don’t even recognize how much healthier that time was, shot up dishes and all. We like to flatter ourselves, saying that we have made “a lot of progress” on women’s issues, while some of the more conservative among us lament the “side effects” of such progress, such as 60 million dead babies. But think for a moment. When I was watching that show, abortion was against the law in all fifty states. Maybe we have not progressed at all. Maybe the word for it is regress, or more accurately, apostasy.

About That Word *Matriarchy*

When I urge, as it appears I did in the title of this piece, the smashing of the matriarchy, I want to make sure to begin by defining our terms. This I propose to do, taking as my starting point a definition of matriarchy that runs thus: “a system of society or government ruled by a woman or women.” But an adjustment is needed. A slight difficulty is caused by the fact that rule by mothers and rule by women are not necessarily the same thing. The word matriarchy has *mater* (mother) at the root, and so what could you call rule by women who

have waged a very bloody war on the very idea of motherhood? It has been bloody enough to actually warrant the name of a monstrous regiment.

So whatever is happening, we are not actually being ruled by fruitful women (a state of affairs that *fruitful* women actually detest), but rather by men with a homosexual ethos who have recruited a horde of childless and gullible women to serve as their honey-trap shock troops. Such women are those who have accepted the flattering vanities of career “advancement” in place of a truly satisfying life as the active mother of a teeming and energetic pack of yard apes. These duped women have somehow been persuaded that the good opinion of the bureaucrats in HR is somehow far more valuable than the good opinion of the yard apes. It isn’t, by the way.

Unfortunately, we don’t have a word for rule by that sort of women. We don’t have a word for “rule by barren feminists who have been snookered by the homosexual vibe,” so *matriarchy* will have to do as a stand-in for the present. But it is a stipulated definition, and the true nature of it will be revealed in due course.

Cut to the Chase

The gifts that make women such a marvel and wonder are not those gifts which equip them for rule. Women are not supposed to rule over men because they are, generally speaking, taking one thing with another, no good at it.

There are three basic governments that God has established among men, and according to Scripture women are restricted from rule in all three of them. In two of these governments, the restriction is general, and in one it is absolute. We shall consider each one in turn.

CHAPTER THREE

Horny Presbyterians and Woke Baptists

Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Preachers

Mothers naturally want their children to be safe, and to remain safe throughout the course of their lives. But wise mothers don't value that safety above all things. Better to be the mother of a son who dies valiantly in battle than the mother of a coward who lives long—"come back with your shield or on it" really is a noble sentiment.

So in a time of hot persecution, there is a natural affection that would certainly tempt a mother to want her son to "stay safe," which would mean staying out of front line ministry. This is a natural inclination, and it must be mortified. But there is also a love for God—in days like ours when cowardice is deemed cool—that should *prevent* mothers from wanting their sons in *that* kind of ministry. Why should she want him to be preeminent among all the woke cowards?

So, as already indicated, we are living in just such a time, which is why mamas shouldn't want their babies to grow up to be preachers—at least the kind of preachers who have learned how to rebuke “sin” (now known as human flourishing deficit points) through six or seven layers of homiletical cotton wool. *Woomfy woomf fuflowy!*

The word of God preached *right* is sharper than a two-edged sword, separating the joints and marrow (Heb. 4:12). The word of God mumbled in a way that comports with aforesaid human flourishing is like swatting some tank of a badly-behaving toddler, delivering what sounded like a decisive *whomp* on top of his diaper *and* overalls. *That'll* show him.

How Is This Possible?

So how is it possible for America to be so corrupt, as corrupt as she has become, and for us to have so many millions of evangelical believers, and to have so many thousands of men preaching to all of us, week after week, and not have hundreds of those men in jail? I am referring to men being jailed, not for throwing bombs, but for preaching the kind of sermons that matter.

How is it that our sermons present so little of a threat that they can be for the most part ignored?

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” (Heb. 12:4, ESV).

God created the world through the Word (Jn. 1:1). He spoke and it came to be. God recreated the world, giving us a new heavens and new earth, and He did so through the Word. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14). The Word then gave His apostles the ministry of subduing the world through the preached Word, and this was a mission that they passed on to their preaching

CHAPTER FOUR

Evolution as an Uncommonly Silly Idea

Prolegomena to the Skylarking

One of the things a writer must do, if he is planning on running with the big boys, is demonstrate his erudition and learning as he starts off the proceedings, and to do so by means of judicious citations. What better way to set the tone than by quoting the trenchant expertise of others? And because I am going to be tackling a view held by virtually all the real brains of the scientific world, that ratio being settled by the Credentials Office of the Cartel, who better to cite than a business management consultant and a journalist?

Peter Drucker once made this observation, one that holds true outside the world of business, out to the edge of the universe in fact: “The only things that evolve by themselves in an organization are disorder, friction, and malperformance.”²

2 Peter Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1974), 444.

And Malcolm Muggeridge, no slouch when it came to astute observation, once said this: “I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially to the extent to which it has been applied, will be one of the greatest jokes in the history books of the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity it has.”³

Actual Introduction

The initial presenting problem is how and why highly intelligent people can believe and do extraordinarily foolish things. We see this in day-to-day sorts of situations, as when a very smart woman makes obviously bad romantic choices, or when a statistician, who actually knows the actual odds, throws a bunch of money away in some gambling spree. A shiny hot car can have a superb engine, along with a tachometer that bounces crazily on the right side of the dial, and still be on the wrong road.

This has corporate and societal applications also. In the history of dumb ideas—we have agreed to speak frankly throughout the month of November—the gold and silver medalists would have to be Darwinism and Marxism. Marxism believes, for example, that it can cost a dollar to make a loaf of bread, and that we can make everybody sell it for 50 cents a loaf, and yet, at the end of the day, still have bread. This is tantamount to believing that 3 is bigger than 5, and yet the fact remains that the people who actually *believe* this are clustered in our major universities. You know, our grand societal thinkery-spots.

And Darwinism! But I must restrain myself. Don’t want to get out over the fronts of my skis. Gotta pace myself here.

3 Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Advocate* (March 1984): 7.

Set the Stage

Spider webs that are marvels of structural engineering, millions of them all over the globe, made by spiders with the intelligence of an arachnid with a teeny little brain . . . not to mention the intelligence of a trained structural engineer. Migratory Arctic terns which fly from Antarctica to the Arctic and back again, mysteriously finding their way each way. Eons ago one bright tern said to another one, “You know, given the tilt of the earth’s axis, I’ll bet it is summer on the other end of this globe when it is winter here . . . you know?” And because one good tern deserves another, the two of them set off, and eventually persuaded all the others that this was the way to enjoy endless summer. Then there are the beetles, over three hundred thousand *species* of beetles, careening around in the backyards of who knows how many of us. Salt water salmon heading up fresh water rivers in order to spawn, letting nothing whatever interfere with their urgent need to get there. Monarch butterflies, which have never been to the particular spot in Mexico where they all spend the winter, make a trek there by the millions. Trillions of cells in one human body, each one of them orders of magnitude finer than an exquisite watch, all of them synchronized and working together. Then consider a particular kind of caterpillar, which when frightened by a predatory bird, has a rear end that swells up into the shape of a venomous viper head. Another butterfly, bright blue when its wings are spread, folds them up together to look for all the world like a brown, dried-up leaf. Down at the microscopic level, DNA replicates itself like it was a factory filled with exquisitely-tuned robotic machines. Another insect, stumbling onto the aforementioned dried leaf strategy by blind, stupid, purposeless chance, looks exactly like a different kind of dried up leaf. Blind impersonal forces really enjoy that dried leaf trick. Protein chains fold up elegantly, just like that garden

hose in your shed over the winter that doesn't ever get tangled. Oh, your hoses *do* get tangled? You must not be trained in science.

And then keep in mind the fact that I have listed here a small handful of marvels, which when compared to all the marvels which *could* be listed, are like one little tiny BB, rolling around on the concrete floor of an empty CostCo warehouse.

What do you get when you take a “just so” story, and multiply it to the 178th power? You get the assured results of *science*, you fundamentalist ninny-hammer, and why aren't you bowing down to the sound of the cornet, flute, dulcimer, and sackbut?

Dullards, Dogberry, and Darwin

A common emphasis among Christians is that folly, biblically defined, is *not* the same thing as stupidity. We are told, *ad nauseam*, that biblical folly is a *moral* category, not an intellectual one. It is claimed that a fool in the biblical sense might do very well indeed on an IQ test. Moreover, since we are speaking frankly, my interlocutor might say, a fool in the biblical sense might run IQ circles around, as the Victorians might put it, the present writer. The present writer is perhaps standing out there on a wide flat surface of some pretty pedestrian assumptions about common sense science, as he probably *is*, while the bosses of the world spin scientific Brodies around him. Thus the narrative goes, as we are constantly cautioned to remember—we are dealing with very *smart* people.

So, we are assured, yet again, that when Scripture says something like, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1), . . . fool does not actually mean, you know, fool. The point is earnestly made that this is a *moral* folly, not an intellectual deficiency. Never, ever assume that unbelievers are operating foolishly in

the intellectual realm. They are very smart people. If they were not smart people, how could we look up to them, yearn after them, and wish we could be like them? Well, that's foolish too, and it seems that we *are* becoming like them.

But the Scriptures teach us that such moral folly *results in* intellectual darkness. “*Having the understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18; emphasis added). Where does the darkness of understanding come from? It comes from the blindness of their heart.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom. 1:21). A refusal to honor God as God, and refusal to give Him thanks, results in what? Darkness of heart, and vanity of imagination.

So while it may be technically true, so far as it goes, that a smart person (by a stipulated and narrow set of measurements) can deny that God made the world and all that it contains, it remains the case that such a person is thereupon called upon to affirm, with a solemn countenance, a series of propositions that are stupid—and I mean stupid with three o's.

All this means is that a genius need not be dullard in order to be a fool. The fact that the fool is not brain-power rpm impaired simply means that his stupidity does not have an explanation that is located in his natural mental limitations. The stupidity—and it is very real stupidity—must therefore be coming from somewhere else. In fact, when the person involved is not mentally handicapped that actually makes the stupidity *more* stupid, not less.

If a simpleton assured you that wet streets cause rain, we can attribute the stupid claim to the stupidity of the source. But if a man

CHAPTER FIVE

PCA, RIP

Bear with me for just a few moments. This will get livelier, and a lot more interesting, in just short while.

I am not seeking to qualify my point, as should become apparent shortly, but I do need to state my qualifications to make the point. Those qualifications, as I hope you will acknowledge shortly, are sterling, and a central part of my argument. We are struggling with different definitions of the word *qualification* here. In speaking to this issue of the coming demise of the PCA, I have the qualifications to make no qualifications.

I am not a member of a PCA church, nor have I ever been a member of a PCA church. I grew up in Southern Baptist circles, and after my hitch in the Navy, found myself pastoring a Jesus-people-like baptistic fellowship. That church started to grow, and so I couldn't really get away to seminary. I finished my formal schooling

in philosophy, and then turned to an OJT reading program in theology. As a result of books—a series of dangerous books—I began to careen through some of my paradigm shifts, like I was a exegetical pinball or something. I started out a conservative evangelical of baptistic mien, and in the mid-eighties I became postmill. Then in 1988 I became a Calvinist. One thing led to another, and by 1993, I was a paedobaptist.

Me becoming a paedobaptist caused no little consternation on the session of our church, and so the elders began the process of removing me from the pulpit. We then had a heads of household meeting in which the congregation (still mostly baptists or agno-baptists) told the elders in no uncertain terms that they did not want to divide over this issue, and that they wanted the elders to work it out. After that crisis, the church did eventually come to a “baptismal cooperation agreement,” which enabled our baptists, paedobaptists, and agno-baptists to work together.

The reason this is relevant is that it essentially cut off any real prospect of us joining a confessionally Reformed body like the OPC or PCA. We did send one delegation to a meeting of the Northwest Presbytery of the PCA, but nothing came of that. I did not want to join a historically Reformed body if the price of that admission was me double-crossing the baptists who had stood by me in our baptismal crisis/controversy. And so that brought in the Groucho Marx rule as applied to presbyteries—I didn’t want to join one that would have us. I didn’t want anyone to water down their standards on baptism (heh), and I also didn’t want to desert the men who had stood with me.

So there we were, and that set the stage for the formation of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), which also accommodates differing views on baptism.

Yes, But . . .

Now I know that some of you may be looking at your watches. This seems like it should be filed under *that's-all-very-interesting-but*. Are you not simply tracing for us the very shadowy outlines of your fairly oblique connections with the PCA? And thus establishing for us the uncouthness of your rudeness in pronouncing a funeral oration—as it is apparent from the title of this post—over a body you never had anything to do with? How am I not taking a passing dog by the ears?

But here is the point, and it's a hummer. The PCA was formed in 1973, and I think it is safe to say that from that time down to the present, one of the biggest controversies that that denomination has ever gone through was the Federal Vision controversy. That controversy spanned many years, many presbyteries, and included pronouncements of the General Assembly. Numerous PCA men were charged with doctrinal heterodoxy in PCA courts (Leithart, Wilkins, Meyers, et al)—with varying results but with no one convicted of heresy. Conferences were held, books were published, phone calls were not returned, invitations to speak were withdrawn, anathemas were hurled, and so on. A Niagara of words poured over the lip of the falls. As said above, this was one of the biggest controversies, if not *the* biggest, the PCA has ever had.

And I was one of the central combatants in that fray. I was smack in the middle of it. That position gave me a peculiar vantage.

Most of my contributions to the polemical back and forth were published on my blog. I recently pulled all those posts together in one book, and the word count for that book came in northwards of 300,000 words. I had a great deal to say, and almost all of it was in response to what others were saying, usually pretty loudly. And those incoming accusations, many of them, most of them, were from the PCA.

CHAPTER SIX

Those BioLogos Unbelievers

Eugene Genovese once wrote that, during his atheist days, whenever he was in the company of a liberal Christian, he always felt that comfortable sense that he was in the presence of a fellow unbeliever. Unbelief is a thing.

And that matter of faith is always the basic issue. One of the New Testament names for Christians is the simple term *believers* (Acts 5:14; 1 Tim. 4:12). When Jesus would admonish His disciples, one of the ways He would do it was through His stinging phrase “ye of little faith” (Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31).

The Westminster Confession is full of pastoral wisdom, and does know that saving with can be “different in degrees, weak or strong” and “may often and many ways [be] assailed, and weakened” (14.3). But at the same time they do *not* allow the frailties and foibles of various Christians to be the determining factor in *defining* the essence of

what saving faith is always called to do. “By this faith, a Christian *believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word*” (14.2; emphasis added).

This would have to include Genesis. Saving faith believes to be true *whatsoever* is revealed in the Word. Mull that over.

And Genesis was not composed of some gummy-like material, and is not a text that can be shaped into whatever form is currently needed to maintain respectability out there in the world. Someone who can read Genesis and find millions of years in there, not to mention those years occupied with turning crickets into condors, is someone who could be appointed to the Supreme Court, open his copy of the Constitution, and discover in it that we are supposed to have three senators from every state.

Believers are supposed to, you know, believe things. And they are supposed to believe *what was written*. So when it comes to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, when someone in the Church tells us they “don’t believe that it means . . .” our response should be, “Exactly so. And that’s the problem. Not a small one either.”

Cancer doesn’t arrive all at once, pervading the body in ten minutes. The cancer of unbelief will take root in one place, and then spread to the others. Too often our debates about theological liberalism (just a fancy name for this unbelief) are over whether the patient has *died* yet, when they ought to be over whether the patient has cancer yet. There is a type of naïve observer who will accept that a denomination is going liberal after it has died of that liberalism. They will only accept a diagnosis of liberalism from the coroner, never from the doctors. So prior to that point where the farm is actually purchased, when something could still be done about it, denial is the name of the game. And so it is—*anyone* who admits any kind of funny business into Genesis 1-11, while they may not be dead in their liberalism, they do have a case of it.