

Editorial

Welcome to another exciting issue of *Humanist Perspectives*.

In *Letters* you'll find praise for our publishing courage and words from an elderly veteran who almost got cheated out of \$2,000 by Canada's creeping two-tier health system. **The Rev. Paul D. Owen, Ph.D.** responds to **Greta Christina** when she asked in Issue 182 "Why are Believers willfully ignorant about Atheists?" There are other letters, praising our courage and cheering us on.

As an Op-Ed we bring you Installment Four of **Henry Beissel's** thought-provoking *CounterAttack* series that continues to provide practical, if startling, solutions toward securing the success of Canada's experiment in Democracy.

Nancy P. Swartz again shines with a brilliant analysis of the dumbing down of the television branch of The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and why it's important to our democracy.

Tim Murray pulls no punches in a hard look at the Muslim threat today.

For the sake of context, The Prophet Mohammed was born in AD 571. It's important to remember that as soon as anyone would listen, the "Master of the Prophets" was calling for a jihad against the infidels (that's us). The war has been waxing and waning over the centuries. In 1492 the Muslims, who had captured Spain, were defeated, but remained in the Balkans, much of central Europe, and were banging on the doors of Vienna in 1683.

On 6 September 1683, the Poles, under **King Jan III Sobieski**, conducted the largest cavalry charge in history as 20,000 of them defeated an immensely numerically superior force of Muslims who were eventually driven out of central and southern Europe, bringing

to an end more than 500 years of Muslim European military conquests. The last caliphate of the Ottoman Empire was defeated in 1918 when the French and British captured Istanbul.

Today, Washington, blinded by the lust for profits of their military/industrial complex, continues to bungle against a renewed Islamist tide. However, **Tim Murray** lifts the veil on that which has been obscured by American dust – the abiding determination of the Islamists for world domination. Mr Murray reveals the current game plan and it would behoove all of us to pay attention.

Meanwhile, our Book Review section includes a last word by **Geoffrey Dow** on the last words of **Christopher Hitchens** as published in *Mortality* . . . **Mel Massey** examines *From Healing to Hell*, an American tragedy in which a hard-working, fair-minded, brilliant medical doctor is caught up and destroyed by jealous competitors and the Central Intelligence Agency . . . **Henry Beissel** presents *Cry from a Silent Planet* that takes us light years away to an enlightened civilization that faces annihilation. Their only hope is planet earth, but they must eliminate our species first. A thriller that keeps you glued to its 286 pages . . . **James Bacque** reaches deep into **Henry Beissel's** *Coming to Terms With a Child*.

This time we have "A Poet's Voice" by none other than **Henry Beissel**. Mr Beissel was reluctant to step forward but I insisted that even in *Humanist Perspectives* he should not hide his genius under a bushel.

All in all, an enjoyable feast for mind and senses that you should be sure to share with your family and friends.

– *Carl Dow, Editor*



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Letters

Praise from England for Henry Beissel's vision

I am writing this from my home in England, but I lived in Canada for 27 years and am a Canadian citizen.

I am most impressed with Henry Beissel's article in *HP* 182. It is very much to the point and almost all it says applies equally to the United Kingdom, where we have a government with lots of tactics but little strategy. I sense and share the article's underlying anger at the abrading of rights and the unmaking of institutions, so often done just for the sake of replacing one dogma with another. What most impressed me was the author's courage and vision in proposing some cures for the body politic. What is needed, in terms of economics as well as politics, is a massive cultural change. That can only come if enough people get angry enough to want it.

I also like Henry's "Song to my Faraway Love"; a valid, passionate love song is all too rare these days. I look forward to the collection of his poems in the next issue.

— **Patrick Drysdale**
Abingdon, England

Near victim of creeping two-tier health system

I read with interest the article by Henry Beissel named "Everything's Just Fine" in the summer edition, 181, in which he discusses the fact that a two-tier system is creeping in to our Canadian Health Care.

I have just had a personal experience of that.

I am an eighty-six year old World War Two veteran, and have recently developed slight cataracts in both eyes. My optometrist arranged an appointment with an ophthalmologist who, after describing what the operation involved, said that it would cost me around \$1,600.00. I assumed that the cataract surgery was not covered by OHIP, (like dental care, hearing aids) so agreed to have the operations in two months time.

However, while talking to a friend recently, he said that he had had the same procedure done a short while ago and was perfectly happy with the results, all at little or no cost under OHIP.

To confirm, I called my family doctor, who also informed me that this type of surgery is indeed covered by OHIP. So, of course, I called the ophthalmologist and told him I wanted to cancel the \$1,600.00 private, for-profit operation, and have it done under our provincial OHIP system.

The thing that bothers me is that I was never informed by either my optometrist or ophthalmologist that I had a choice to have the surgery done either privately or under OHIP, and I am sure there must be many people, especially seniors, who unknowingly paid up to \$2,000.00 for a service that can be obtained almost cost free.

Poor old Tommy Douglas must be turning in his grave.

— **Bill Wright, Oakville, ON**

'Radical departures...from teachings of Jesus'

Those who complain of "attacks on Christianity" would do well to examine what that term has come to embrace: radical departures from the humanitarian teachings of Jesus, efforts to impose narrow religious dogma on those who are not of the same persuasion, a blatant attempt to convert our democracy to a theocracy, and a meanness of spirit that defies cause and effect relationships.

Its proponents would demand that every sex act have the potential for pregnancy, yet deny the resultant infant born to poverty any support from government programs, no matter how dire the circumstances. They also discount the problem that overpopulation adds to the ever-shrinking global capacity for feeding the multitudes, particularly in view of obvious climate changes.

They also seem to blame women for unwanted pregnancies while completely ignoring the role that men play in the matter. Indeed, even as women are maligned, men are urged to buy products that enhance their sexual performance. What we need is not what these folks call "Christianity"; rather, we need some old-fashioned common-sense application of the Golden Rule with a large measure of logic thrown in.

— **June Fredman**
Wildwood, Missouri

A Christian responds to Greta Christina's challenge to Christians

I'm a subscriber to *Humanist Perspectives* and have just read Greta Christina's article, "Inside the Religious Mind: Why are Believers willfully ignorant about Atheists?" – Autumn 2012, Issue 183.

First of all, I want to thank you for the article. It correctly, I think, asks the right question and calls for a meaningful response. From my readings, which include those that discuss the vastness and age of the known universe, I am aware of just how young we are in the expanse of existence and how important it is to see change and advance in this context. We are children when the age of the universe is considered, and, as children, must realize that we know only a very little of what is yet to be discovered. This awareness fills me with awe while at the same time allows me to see the various attempts we humans make at understanding and giving meaning to our existence as being necessarily open-ended. We would be foolish, any of us, to suggest we know the "complete truth" about what it means to be human in a universe, the boundaries of which, we have still been unable to see. It's beginnings and ultimate meaning is beyond the capacity of any of us to determine with finality.

While I do understand your confusion about why believers are willfully ignorant about atheists, on the other hand, it is important to view the entire question in the context of time. We are "growing up" as it were, although slowly. Your well-written article (Ms Christina) will, hopefully, be a part of the process that leads to the acceptance of all persons as persons and as seekers who, although they may look in different places for truth, are not presumptuous enough to imagine that "their" truth is either absolute or final. As you said in your article, "... grief is one of the things that makes us human ...". If it were possible for us, from whatever perspective, to stress our common humanity and the realities, such as death and grief that we all must face, we could view others and their perspectives with an

understanding and interest that shares our common concern rather than spending our time arguing over which perspective is correct. This is the sad consequence of arguing over a perspective rather than sharing a concern.

There are many ways in which we are, I think, and always will be different. To expect that all persons everywhere will one day perceive and respond to every unknowable phenomenon in exactly the same way is to expect the unlikely and, perhaps, not even the best conclusion for which to hope. We need to learn that we are all different, that we will come to different conclusions about many things but that this does not provide a reason for misunderstanding and certainly not for abuse and marginalization. We need to learn that when it comes to what we don't know with any finality and probably never will, we are all in the same boat as it were. Our only hope, therefore, is to come to listen, to understand and to appreciate both the differences and the similarities in our viewpoints while, at the same time, we accept the fact that ultimate truth, the truth that, for example, takes us beyond the "big bang" to our origins and meanings, is beyond any one of us individually and, at least so far, beyond all of us together. I can relate strongly to your words when you say: "Yes, atheists think that life and morality, love and grief are all part of the physical world. But that doesn't make it less real for us. That makes it more real." These are the things that need to be "more real" to us all, whatever our foundation for them may be. If we would spend more time practicing what we insist makes life more meaningful and rich rather than arguing over the source of the implied concepts, we could and would discover a unity of behaviour that, in any case, is the real concern.

I am a Christian, that is, this is the milieu in which I was raised and in which I was taught life's meaning. I am not the same person I was as a child, however, and my beliefs are now more hopes than facts. I

look upon all beliefs, religious and otherwise, as viable means by which persons attempt to make sense of their lives. Two years ago my wife died of a rare form of cancer and I miss her very much. We had a good life, not untouched by a selfishness that, fortunately, led to growth and to a loving, caring relationship. Even though I cannot say with certainty that I will see her again, I nevertheless hope this will be the case. I believe I am able to deal with the extent to which science has enlightened our lives but, at the same time, I keep an open mind when it comes to ultimate realities that are beyond even the abilities of science to pierce. Let me stress, I don't "know", rather I "hope". Saying this does not change my attitude and responsibility to the here and now, to life as I still live it. As an atheist, you (Ms Christina) are still a searcher for meaning and purpose in life. Although I can't call myself a theist, in part because of what this suggests in the minds of so many, I do remain open to the mystery of life as something I will never know and still, as something which drives me to learn how to best live with all others who, in their own ways, are searching for meaning and purpose as well. While I recognize it is not an easy task, we can arrive at a commonality in what we find is a laudable goal. For me, although I recognize it needs a body of interpretation to make it meaningful, these words, written by another Paul, still fill me with possibility: "Meanwhile, these three remain: faith, hope and love; and the *greatest* of these is love." This equips us for life in the here and now and that should be our primary concern. If there is something beyond this life (and who knows for certain?) then it must certainly share the same characteristic of love, which, in the long run, is the only thing that makes life meaningful, wherever and whenever it exists.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

— The Rev. Paul D. Owen, Ph.D.

Niagara Falls, ON