

# Editorial & Opinion

# Family & Marriage

## Thoughts on 9/11

By Bill Connor

As we approach the 22nd anniversary of the attacks on September 11, 2001, my thoughts return to that fateful day and what came before and after it. With the distance of time to better appreciate what surrounded those attacks, I have come to a better perspective. As happened with Pearl Harbor, almost everything changed for America, even if it has taken time to recognize the pivotal nature of the 9/11 attacks. Every American's prism is different, but also similar in relation to those events. I would like to share my own experience and with it show the profound nature of the events.

On September 11, 2001, I was a U.S. Army Infantry officer stationed at Ft. Benning, GA, and I had been on active duty since the summer in 1990 when I had graduated from The Citadel. My wife Susan was an Army M.D., and we had three young children.

I had watched the constant growth of radical Islamic terrorism throughout my career to that point, starting with the first World Trade Center attempted attack in 1993, but continuing with more brazen attacks against our embassies in Africa and even U.S. Navy ships in the Persian Gulf.

Within the military, our primary focus was on either peace-keeping operations, like that in the Balkans and places like Somalia. My three deployments up to that point had been to the Middle East, with two to the Persian Gulf area and a seven-month peace-keeping mission between Egypt and Israel in the Sinai. America was the clear world "hegemon," and with the exception of nuclear parity with Russia, no military power was up to the point of being considered a peer military competitor. We had seen radical Islamic terrorism growing throughout the world, but



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America had not been hit beyond the failed attack on the World Trade Center in 1993.

September 11, therefore, was a complete shock to the system. We went from virtually no attacks on our homeland to around 3,000 Americans being killed in the four airline attacks of that day against our most iconic structures of economic and military power.

I remember at Fort Benning standing there in uniform watching the TV as the second airline hit the World Trade Center: All of us aghast and virtually frozen in disbelief. We initially assumed that the first airline hitting the tower might have been an accident, but the second strike meant we were at war. I immediately knew what those of my parents' generation felt when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The frustrating part was that unlike Pearl Harbor, we didn't have a clearly defined enemy, and that became the source of so many problems in the years to come. During World War II, we knew exactly who hit us, and we dedicated ourselves to defeating the Axis Powers at all costs and finishing that mission in under four years. That was not to be the case after 9/11.

After 9/11, we determined the terrorist group "al Qaeda" ("the base" in Arabic) was the direct enemy who had planned the attacks. With the emotion of something worse than Pearl Harbor (an attack against a military target in a territory outside the continental United States), however, we didn't limit ourselves to going after al Qaeda or their Taliban hosts in Afghanistan. We decided to go after the form of attack with a "War on Terrorism," and included countries with virtually no connection to al Qaeda as being part of an "Axis of Evil" or something similar. We also decided that as part of the decision of going to war, we would dismantle regimes which might possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD). We went even further hoping that we would spread democracy to also make ourselves safer.

The invasion of Iraq, unlike Afghanistan with al Qaeda and Taliban hosts, was justified upon the more indirect threats we came up with after 9/11. Iraq was thought to possess WMD, and when that proved to be questionable, the justification shifted to the spreading of democracy in order to create security for the United States.

In Afghanistan, we stayed beyond expelling al Qaeda and the Taliban and decided we had to rebuild Afghanistan into a democracy, again, for our security.

I was part of that Afghanistan mission, and as an Infantry major and then a Lt. colonel, I advised the Afghans in their operations against insurgents attempting to overthrow the "new" Afghan government.

I will never regret my service, and I believe we did make a positive difference despite the failed strategic decisions made in the summer of 2021 during that disastrous withdrawal. Prior to our leaving, the Afghan

## Two Worlds or One

"The most pervasive thought pattern of our times is the two-realm view of truth." -Nancy Pearcey  
"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" -Bible (John 14:6)

"As the foundational social institution, the family has functioned as the laboratory for countless social experiments. Every political visionary dreams up some scheme for retooling the family - often abolishing it altogether in favor of either radical statism [concentrating extensive economic, political, and related controls in the state at the cost of individual liberty] or radical individualism [individual rights override the mores and rules of society]." (Total Truth, Nancy Pearcey)  
Last week we discussed the only two lifestyle options we have: conforming to the world's ways, or allowing God to transform us to follow His ways. The Bible (His-story) says God created us to enjoy His perfect world (Creation). Instead of following God's design, man chose to do his own thing, resulting in a sinful destructive nature (Fall). God sent His son, Jesus, that the world might be restored to its original, created purpose (Redemption).  
Today, in our schools and in society in general today, we are being presented with (and often coerced to accept) a very different world view. This alternative world view is held by numerous philosophers (past and present) whose influence is pervasive today. It comes in many shapes and forms but can be summarized by the two terms grace and nature. Grace means theology and the mysteries of faith. Na-

ture means knowledge of the things of this world, unencumbered by grace.

The separation between grace and nature came into full focus when Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwinism was strictly naturalistic, explaining all of life's origin and development by natural causes. There was no need for a creator; all of life just evolved as a result of natural processes. A little research shows that there are significant gaps in the natural processes. As someone noted, "Darwinism might explain the survival of the fittest, but it fails to explain the arrival of the fittest." However, the naturalistic processes attempt either to explain away the gaps and failures or to minimize their significance. Darwin acknowledged the damaging impact of missing evidence (for example, the discontinuous nature of fossil records) on his theory, but he thought the evidence would eventually be discovered. However, new findings continue to show the opposite - the gaps of missing evidence are growing.

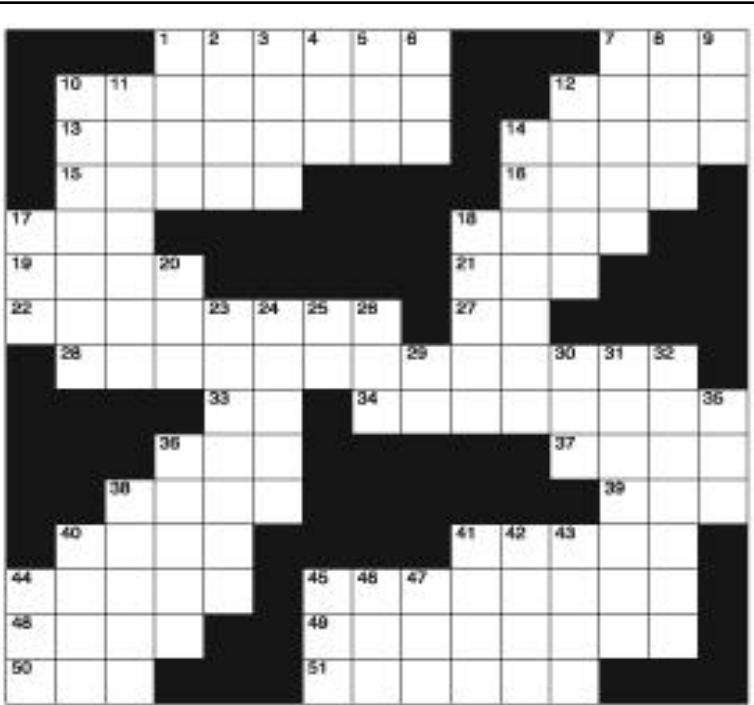
The difficulty we encounter today in promoting grace and nature as the genesis for creation, is illustrated by a statement by the well-known British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins: "Even if there were no actual evidence in favor of the Darwinian theory... We should still be justified in preferring it over all rival theories." In other words, Dawkins is unwilling to admit there might be a creator God, so he says we have to come up with some other theory. Perhaps all the above is too academic for most of us. I like to keep things simple: there is a God, and I don't see a problem accepting the evolutionary process. I believe



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in Christian values. I believe these "values are for the modern mind subjective preferences, personal and social, over against the objective realities provided by scientific knowledge." (Douglas Sloan). As Allan Bloom (author of the best-seller *The Closing of the American Mind*) put it: "Every school child knows values are relative," and not objectively true. In other words, science is about facts; religion is about values, not connected to any particular truth, and subject to change.

Many of us grew up in church, or at least were significantly influenced by a Christian culture. For our younger generation, such influence is often missing or significantly altered. We must get back to celebrating the existence of a single truth, that of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and allowing that truth to drive our thoughts and actions all the time, 24/7. The Family & Marriage Coalition of Aiken, Inc. (FAMCO) was created to provide resources for you to succeed in your marriage and families. Roger Rollins, Executive Director, FAMCO, 803-640-4689, rogerrollins@gmail.com, <http://www.aikenfamco.com>. Let us know how we can help.

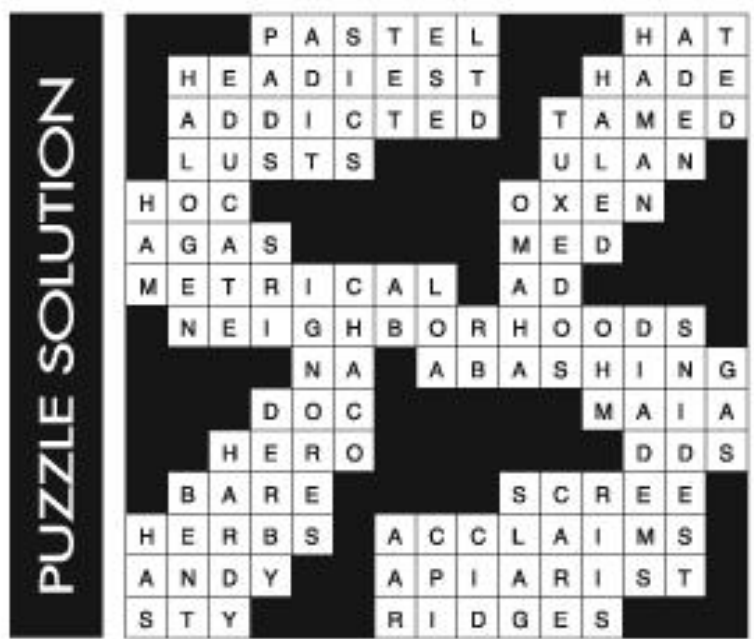


### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Type of crayon
- 7. Fashion accessory
- 10. Most cerebral
- 12. Incline from vertical
- 13. Dependent on
- 14. Broken in
- 15. Strongly desires
- 16. Mounted soldier
- 17. Ad \_\_\_ : when necessary
- 18. Cattle
- 19. Ottoman military commanders
- 21. \_\_\_ student, learns healing
- 22. Composed in poetic meter
- 27. Promotional material
- 28. Where people live
- 33. Sodium
- 34. Embarrassing
- 36. Medical man
- 37. Mother of Hermes
- 38. One who saves the day
- 39. Tooth caregiver
- 40. Not clothed
- 41. Slope covered with loose stones
- 44. Used to cook
- 45. Praises enthusiastically
- 48. Rooney is a famous one
- 49. Beekeeper
- 50. Pigpen
- 51. Potato chip brand

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Living quarters
- 2. Horizontal passage
- 3. Attacks
- 4. Vietnamese offensive
- 5. Midway between east and southeast
- 6. Confined (abbr.)
- 7. Book of Esther antagonist
- 8. Poet in Yemen
- 9. CNN's founder
- 10. Type of bulb
- 11. Prepare
- 12. Promoted
- 14. Dinner jackets
- 17. Partner to cheese
- 18. Nebraska city
- 20. Human gene
- 23. Pays no attention to
- 24. Lowland South American plain
- 25. Blood group
- 26. Mauna \_\_\_, Hawaiian volcano
- 29. Atomic #37
- 30. Unit of electrical resistance
- 31. Jeweled crowns
- 32. Nastiest
- 35. Traditional cars need it
- 36. Bowler hat
- 38. Robust
- 40. Not straight
- 41. Stony waste matter
- 42. Have an interest in
- 43. Jacob \_\_\_, journalist
- 44. Maintains possession of
- 45. Swiss river
- 46. Average cost of market goods
- 47. Spanish soldier: El \_\_\_



## SUDOKU

			1	4				
			4	8	2			
9	6					1		
	5			3	6			9
	4					2		
	3	1	4					6
5								9
				1	5	6		
				4	7			

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

### Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER: