

Susan  
Delacourt

## Why we should care about the PM's moods

Stephen Harper was apparently in a very good mood on May 2, 2011, when he was doing impersonations of past Conservative leaders at his walk-through rehearsal for his election-night speech.

We learned of the prime minister's pre-victory euphoria through a strategically released "leak" of a video this week, showing a side of Harper we rarely get to see.

Laughing at his own jokes, egged on by his entourage, he gestured like Joe Clark, intoned melliflously like Brian Mulroney and preached from the pulpit like former Reform Party leader Preston Manning.

The "leak" wasn't an accident, obviously. Apparently someone has realized that Harper's humourless, strict-disciplinarian image isn't working in his current spate of troubles. So this week, we were offered a glimpse of a warmer, happier, friendlier Harper.

As it has been noted, the video is professional and steady, not a shaky, cellphone recording. So it's probably safe to assume this snippet came from the Conservatives' own cameras at the election-night rehearsal.

This is a government and a party that unabashedly declares its intentions to "get the message out," so the message is probably something like this: Harper isn't always in a bad mood. He's a really fun guy — especially when he thinks he's winning.

But here's the question: why should we care about the prime minister's moods? All of us have bad days and good days. Some days you feel like making your co-workers laugh, some days you want to just get the job done, go home, write your hockey book and hang out with your cats. Does it really matter if the prime minister is happy, sad or mad?

And here's an attempt at an answer: Harper's moods have an effect on us. In a good mood, as he was on election night in 2011, he talks about governing for all Canadians.

"We are intensely aware that we are and we must be the government of all Canadians, including those who did not vote for us," the magnanimous Harper, the PM in a good mood, said in his victory speech.

But what about when this prime minister is in a bad mood? Who pays the price when he's down in the dumps?

Consider his worst mood ever. It happened in the dying days of 2008, when he overplayed his minority win in the fall election and the opposition decided to oust him with a defeat of his government on a confidence vote in the Commons. It's now called "the coalition crisis."

Harper was reportedly in low spirits then. The fullest insiders' account we have so far of those days, in a lengthy piece by Paul Wells and John Geddes of Maclean's magazine, chronicled how Harper was so gloomy in late 2008 that he was prepared to let his rivals take power away from him.

And in the immediate aftermath, still under his gloom cloud, he made a fateful decision to appoint 18 new senators, recklessly choosing new Conservatives such as Patrick Brazeau, and journalists Mike Duffy and Pamela Wallin. Yes, on Dec. 22, 2008, he made some decisions that would come back to haunt him (and us) in the spring of 2013.

Until he writes his memoirs, we can only guess at Harper's disposition when he was going through the list of Senate candidates in late 2008 and ticking off the names of his appointees — what point he was trying to make with this reckless slew of patronage.

We can surmise, however, that he probably would come up with a different list today.

On this score, Harper isn't all that different from most of us — we make bad decisions in the heat of the moment, when we're simmering mad or in low spirits.

We saw it happen again earlier this month, when a long-time, loyal Conservative MP, Brent Rathgeber, said he'd had enough of being told what to do by the Prime Minister's Office and being treated as little more than a message-delivery system for the boss.

What was the response? As if to prove Rathgeber's point, two PMO staffers (well, one current, one former) took to Twitter to demand that the MP resign his seat and run in a byelection.

That response was ill-considered, and made in haste. If the PMO is being accused of letting staffers run the show, you don't release the staffers to reply to an MP's resignation from caucus.

It's too much to ask any human to be in a good mood all the time, let alone a prime minister with the weight of the nation on him.

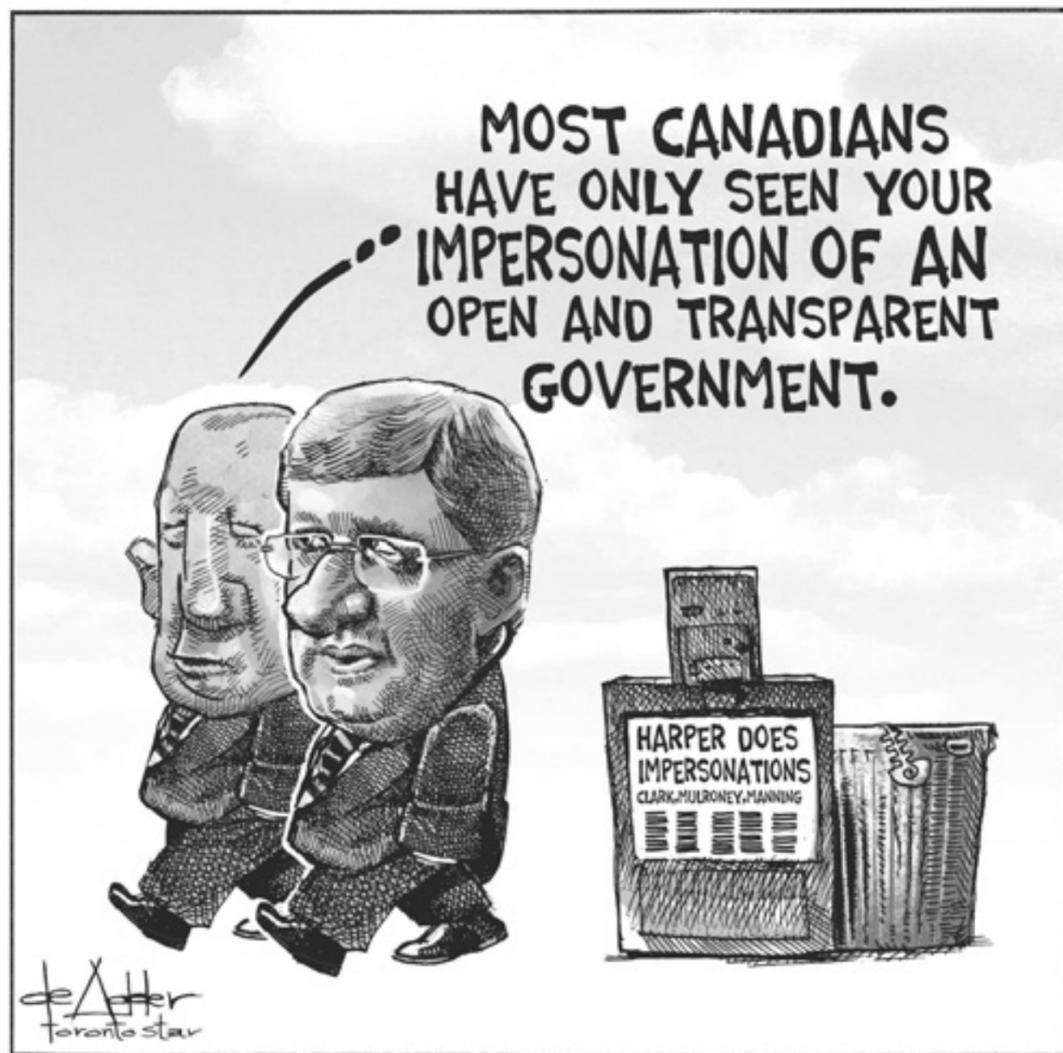
But we probably can ask that the PM and his staff hold off on making any big decisions while they're in a bad mood. As we've seen, those are the decisions that come back to haunt everyone.

sdelacourt@thestar.ca



Prime Minister Stephen Harper performing one of his impromptu imitations on election day in 2011.

## > DRAWSTRING



MICHAEL DE ADDER FOR THE TORONTO STAR

## Q&A > DANIEL FRIEDMANN

### The biblical clock: you could set your world by it

ANTONIA ZERBIAS  
STAFF REPORTER

You would think of engineering physicist Daniel Friedmann, 56, as the kind of guy who scoffs at biblical notions of creation. But the CEO of Canada's leading aerospace company, MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates, doesn't at all reject the "God made" and God created" versions of how the universe came to be.

In fact, in his books *'The Genesis One Code'* and the just-published *'The Broken Gift,'* he's come up with what he calls a "biblical clock" that puts the Bible's six days of creation into a scientific context.

Friedmann will be appearing next week at Moses Znamer's Ideacity Conference, which runs June 19-21 at Koerner Hall.

In this telephone interview, edited for brevity, Friedmann explains how his concepts make the Old Testament make sense, even for those of littlest faith. *The Star* reached him at his home in Vancouver.

#### Are your books science or religion?

Both. The whole issue of evolution and creation, evolution, the controversy over origins, it's a big topic these days. If you look at the polls — we only have good stats for the Americans — the general population is actually quite in the middle on this issue. The vast majority of the population is in their minds in some way reconciling evolution and creation.

#### And where do you fall?

I have tried very hard in my books not to push my point of view. I have tried to show that the arguments stem from our complete misunderstanding about what the Bible says and what science says so people can make a more informed decision.

#### When you say everything in the Bible is all "context-related," what do you mean?

Let's take the word "day." In terms of the first six days, they're "creation days," which are different from just days. There are a number of sources in all the religions that interpret those days as periods of time.

I'm certainly not the first. What is unique about my work is that I went into the sources and I said, "Look, if the Bible is self-contained and if I say a day is not 24 hours, then what is it? Whatever it is, it must be in the Bible. I can't make it up from science, or from what I know today, and push it back on the Bible."

What I discovered was a scaling

factor — just like when you look at the blueprint of your home. It doesn't make a lot of sense until you look at the right-hand corner and it says "one inch equals eight feet" and so on. So I went looking for that in the Bible and I found it. It told me that one day is 2.56 billion years. That is the epoch of time that each of those six "creation days" is.

Now when you read Genesis, which tells you what happened on each day, and use other sources to put those events in a timeline and then convert through this 2.56 billion per day you get an astonishing thing! You get the age of the universe to the decimal place of where science has measured it. You get the first life to the decimal place of where science has measured it. You get the age of the sun and so on.

In my first book I showed 19 different dates that came out of the Bible and came out of the scientific record and they match. That's mathematically impossible unless the scale of 2.56 billion years works.

#### Is that all there is to it? A scale?

I just matched what happened and when it happened without any discussion on how it happened. Everybody argues about how, was it creation or was it evolution, was it divine or was it random. Obviously science and the Bible don't agree on the how.

But once you get the timelines to correlate — I believe nobody has done that before — and then you go back into the how in the Bible, then that's the part that really blows my mind. What happens is, if you read Genesis, a lot of the words — God formed, or God said let there be, or God separated — and when you go back to the original Hebrew, all these words mean like it was a cooking class.

You're taking already existing ingredients and making them into something else. You're taking wood and making into a chair. You're taking hydrogen and making it into stars.

Almost every statement in Genesis is taking something and making it into something else and doing it within nature. Well, that is the dictionary definition of science: cause and effect and the natural laws.

So most of what is going on in Genesis is completely explained in science.

#### Most? Really?

Yes, with three exceptions. Only three and those three things correspond with, match with, the three unanswered questions within science today.

The most famous one is the beginning. If you look at the Big Bang theory, it explains absolutely everything from the beginning until today very nicely but it has no idea how the beginning came about.

The next most famous one is what the Bible calls the human soul. The Bible says the bodies of humans were made just like the bodies of animals.



"Almost every statement in Genesis is taking something and making it into something else and doing it within nature. Well, that is the dictionary definition of science: cause and effect and the natural laws."

DANIEL FRIEDMANN

In some cases science recognizes the soul, in some cases it says there is no soul, we're just super-intelligent. The key thing is, what does a soul bring to a human that it doesn't bring to anyone else? The ability to speak and the ability to envision the future.

We're the only species according to science that can do that. That leads to painting and art and things that in an evolutionary context are completely useless. The Bible tells us that these behaviours come from the soul, the divine soul, from the outside. Science agrees that these behaviours are completely unique to humans but they don't have an explanation for where they come from.

The third thing is the appearance of sea creatures during what science calls the Cambrian explosion. What happened then came out outside of the scientific natural process. God interfered and did something miraculous.

Those are the only three times that something was happening that was not just cause and effect within the normal laws of nature.

#### Are you a religious man yourself?

Yes, getting more and more. I have become more observant in recent years. We've gone kosher. That's the key one. The other key one is the Sabbath of course. I do try to keep it. So yes. Because of all my research.