

James Dobson's Focus on the Females • Moishe 'Jews for Jesus' Rosen's Legacy

Christianity Today

JULY 2010



WHOLE EARTH EVANGELISM 26

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE 34

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Abba Changes Everything

Why every
Christian
is called to
rescue orphans.

Q.

Who is building the kingdom of God in the 54 countries of Africa through evangelism, discipleship, missionary training, church planting, orphan care and relief in the name of Christ for victims of wars, persecution, genocide, famines, floods and other disasters?

A.

Native African missionaries serving with independent indigenous evangelistic missions.



Q.

Who provides financial assistance for the indigenous missions of Africa?

A.

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Q. How is Christian Aid financed?

A. Christian Aid is supported entirely by freewill gifts and offerings from Bible-believing, missionary-minded Christians, churches and organizations.

Q. Do indigenous missions in other countries also need our financial help?

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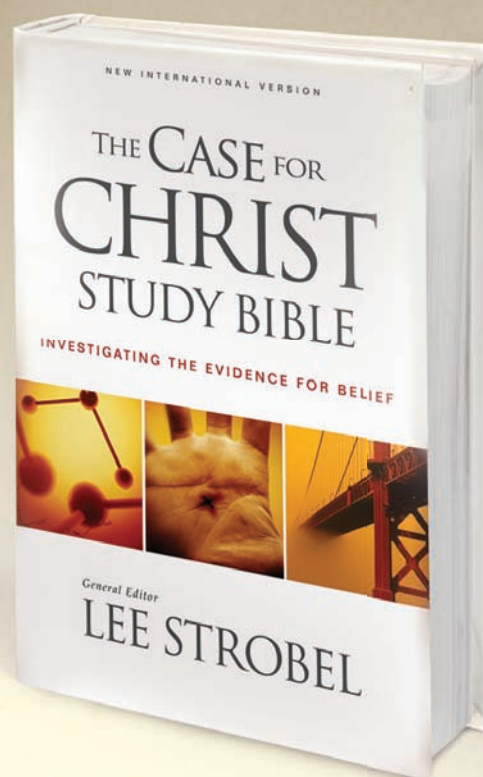
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1. God is not great.
2. Faith is a delusion.
3. Religion is irrational.

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Keep the Conversation Going

For the past 10 months, *Christianity Today* and its readers have engaged in “The Global Conversation”—a discussion of issues that face the church around the world, led on our pages by observers from Ghana to Singapore and responded to online by voices from Korea to Kenya. If you haven’t already visited ChristianityToday.com/GlobalConversation, do so right away.

The conversation was sparked by the vision for the Lausanne Movement’s coming conference in Cape Town, where the discussion will blossom among the 4,000 delegates from around the world.

We’re eager to keep an open—and global—conversation going on our pages. This exercise has us addicted. The words from Syria and Spain and—next month—Sri Lanka humble me, motivate me, and give me insight. Perhaps you’ve had the same experience.

The Lausanne Movement helped make that discussion possible by opening its international network of evangelism-minded church leaders. In selecting our contributors, we have plugged into other international Christian networks as well—from the World Evangelical Alliance to World Vision, from John Stott Ministries to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Our international networks continue to grow.

But there is the matter of money. As part of its preparation for Cape Town 2010, the Lausanne Movement underwrote our focused attempt at this global conversation. For us to keep developing the discussion, we look to you, our readers, for special gifts. I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might invest in this expanding work.

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David Neff, Editor in Chief

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Adoption Is Everywhere

Even God is into it.

IN DECEMBER, *Christianity Today* editor at large Collin Hansen (who examines the spirituality of your hometown on page 34) put evangelicals' growing attention to adoption as number six on his "Top Ten Theology Stories of 2009" for our website. It made a lot of sense: *The Blind Side* put the spotlight on adoption for moviegoers, while Russell Moore's *Adopted for Life* created buzz among Christian nonfiction readers.

The way 2010 is going, adoption is likely to rank higher than sixth place by year's end. Rick Warren devoted this year's Saddleback Civil Forum to orphans and adoption, joining popular conferences like Together for Adoption, the Christian Alliance for Orphans Summit (page 23), and Moore's own Adopting for Life.

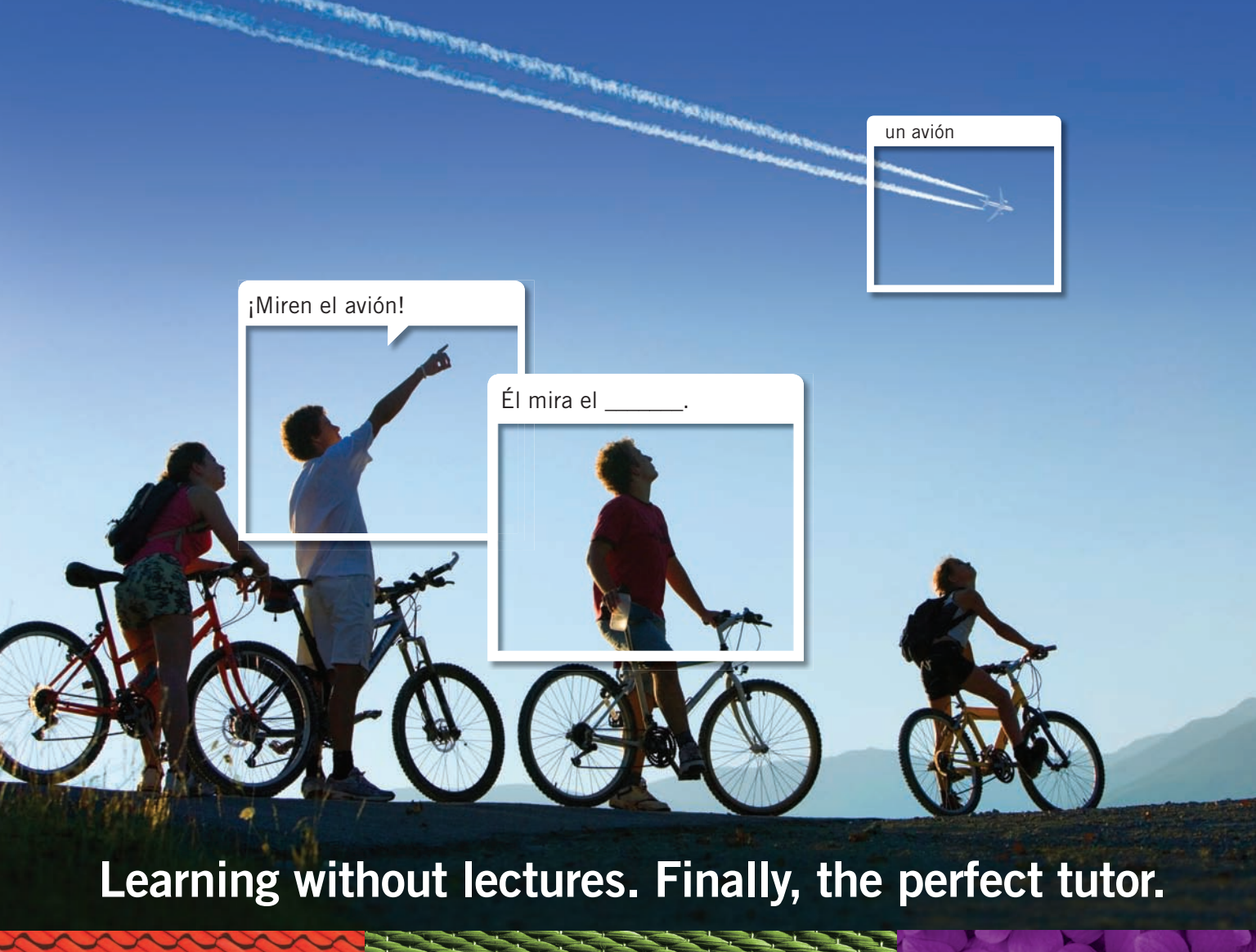
The trend goes beyond dedicated gatherings, however: Nearly every conference we've attended recently devoted attention to orphans, adoption, the fatherless, and so on. Church leadership conference Catalyst gave a major push to adoption at its main gathering in October and continues to highlight it at regional meetings. The keynote presentation at Q (a conference for Christian culture leaders) focused on fatherlessness, with calls to establish foster-care ministries, support adoptive families, and build orphanages abroad.

Adoption even became a main issue at this year's Wheaton Theology Conference, which was somewhat unlikely since it focused on the work of N. T. Wright. But theologian Kevin Vanhoozer argued that the theology of adoption was the key to reconciling Wright's views on justification with his Reformed critics'. The law court that finds us justified in Christ, Vanhoozer said, is less of a criminal court than a family court.

Socio-political reasons abound for why we're hearing more about orphans and adoption today. I have friends who, faced with the seemingly countless ways to pursue social justice and compassion, are starting with the "orphans and widows" of James 1:27. Other friends praise the focus on adoption for being an important family issue that sidesteps the ceaseless debates on "gay stuff." Then again, other friends see adoption as the new battleground over homosexuality.

But more often, I hear people talking theologically about adoption, highlighting it as the act that most directly mirrors God's actions toward us. I don't hear many guilt trips or apocalyptic warnings. Instead, I hear echoes of one of J. I. Packer's comments in *Knowing God*: "Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption." Moore helps us grasp it much better, starting on page 18. 

Next month: We look at the life and theology of Beth Moore, the most popular Bible study teacher in America; we hear what sociologist Robert Wuthnow thinks about fear; and we learn how atheism led Rob Moll to Christ.



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BRIEFING

REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Reforming Health-care Reform

➔ Three months after President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law, it remains a political "big . . . deal"—the focus of high-profile lawsuits and nearly every midterm election campaign. But observers say the bill may have become a surprising boon for the pro-life movement, as states have moved to restrict abortion coverage in the "health insurance exchanges" mandated by the law. Meanwhile, House members have introduced the Protect Life Act (H.R. 5111) to reinstate the abortion restrictions that were not included in the final health-care reform bill.

51% Americans who think private insurance plans should not cover abortion.

Fox News/Opinion Dynamics and CNN/Opinion Research Corporation

Americans who think federally subsidized plans should not cover abortion. **56%**

CBS News

Restricted private insurance for abortion after the bill's passage.

Passed restrictions in legislature, now awaiting governors' signature.

Introduced restriction legislation.

Had already restricted private insurance coverage for abortion.

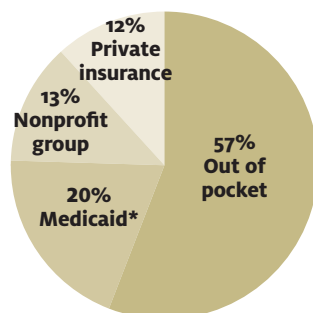
Ensuring Limits

How states are keeping abortion out of the new insurance plans.



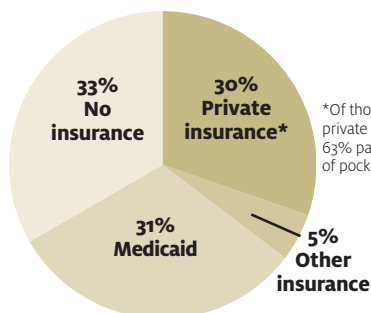
Does Insurance Matter?

How women paid for their abortions:



*17 states allow state Medicaid dollars to pay for abortions in most cases.

How they were covered:



*Of those with private insurance, 63% paid out of pocket anyway.

How much:

\$413 | **\$1,300**
Average cost for a first-trimester abortion. | Average cost for an abortion at 20 weeks.

ANOTHER FRONT

The health-care reform bill's mandate to purchase health insurance included an exemption for non-insurance Christian "health care sharing ministries" (like Medi-Share, Samaritan Ministries, and Christian Healthcare Ministries) as well as for "recognized religious sects" like the Amish and Old Order Mennonites that are "conscientiously opposed" to insurance. A win for religious freedom? Liberty University and the Thomas More Law Center don't think so. Both groups filed lawsuits, claiming the exemptions "favor certain religious sects over others" and thus violate the Constitution.



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Nepal wavers on religious identity

NEPAL Nepal's national religion is under renewed debate as the country of 29 million faces a deadline to pass a new constitution cementing its transition from monarchy to republic. Nepal's Maoist party and the country's 700,000 Christians are calling for the government to honor promises of a secular state, while Hindu factions increasingly demonstrate in support of reestablishing a Hindu nation. The country has technically had a secular government since 2006, but Christians claim they are still persecuted and conversions remain illegal.

churches are unhappy with the current draft, which permits abortion if the life or health of the mother is endangered or if "emergency treatment" is needed. Church leaders are similarly unhappy with the proposed continuation of Muslim Kadhis courts; on May 24 the country's High Court agreed, declaring such courts (beyond colonial-era ones on the Indian Ocean coast) illegal for unconstitutionally promoting Islam over other religions.

4 Religious minorities gain Senate seats

PAKISTAN Four seats for religious minorities have been added to Pakistan's 100-member Senate under the country's new 18th amendment. Each of Pakistan's four provinces received one seat reserved for a non-Muslim religious minority. Current estimates place Pakistan's population at 95 percent Muslim and 2-4 percent Christian. Observers hope Christians will fill at least two of the four positions.

2 NAE works to curb abortion rate

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has announced its willingness to cooperate across ideological lines as part of a new campaign to reduce the number of abortions. NAE president Leith Anderson said he is still opposed to abortion on demand, and the NAE Generation Forum website says it wants to "converse and cooperate without compromising our bedrock principles." A majority of surveyed evangelical leaders support making adoption services, pre- and post-natal care, and contraceptives more available.

5 Court gives murky employment ruling

CANADA A Toronto court ruled that religious groups can enforce standards of conduct when employees are "actively involved in converting the residents to, or instilling in them," religious belief or morals. But the Ontario Divisional Court said Christian Horizons, a group that runs homes for disabled people, did not have the right to fire Connie Heintz after she began a homosexual relationship in 2002. "Support workers," the court said, "are not hired or expected to bring the residents into the evangelical Christian religion by having them adopt a certain lifestyle." The Evangelical

3 Churches may boycott new constitution

KENYA Church leaders are threatening to boycott the latest draft of Kenya's revised constitution over language they say permits abortion. Leaders of the National Council of Churches in Kenya, the Roman Catholic Church, and Pentecostal

6 Alcohol and church coexist under new law

A new Arizona law prohibits zoning rules that restrict the location of churches. Yuma city officials had said Centro Familiar Cristiano Buenas Nuevas could not open a church on Main Street because it would undermine downtown development; a Prohibition-era restriction requires businesses with liquor licenses to be built at least 300 feet away from places of worship. Under the new law, a city can designate up to three entertainment districts where churches and alcohol coexist.

7 Pioneers merges with Arab World Ministries

Missions organizations Pioneers-USA and Arab World Ministries (AWM) are merging in order to plant more churches in Muslim-majority countries. The groups will combine U.S. operations, with eight AWM staff moving to the Orlando offices of Pioneers by September 2010. The merger will combine Pioneers' recruiting abilities with AWM's strength in reaching closed people groups. AWM has about 400 staff around the world, and Pioneers has 1,900 missionaries worldwide.

8 Christian president tips balance of power

NIGERIA Christian president Goodluck Jonathan was sworn into office in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, just after former president Umaru Yar'Adua's burial. Yar'Adua, a Muslim, died less than four years into a presidential term fraught with personal health problems. Observers worry the transition will upset the country's balance

GO FIGURE Unemployment

1.2%
Unemployment rate
among U.S. clergy.

9.9%
National unemployment
rate (in April
2010).

5,000
Clergy looking
for jobs in 2009.

2,000
Clergy looking
for jobs in 2005.

The Wall Street Journal



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“Just because a Christian says something and fails does not mean their words are wrong. . . . But it hurts the cause.”

Mark Souder, who resigned from the House of Representatives after admitting to an affair with a female staffer with whom he had shot a video on sexual abstinence.

The Journal Gazette

“One of my great goals in life is to live long enough to where I am in the pulpit, preaching my heart out, and I die on the spot, my chin hits the pulpit—boom!—and I’m down and out. What a way to die!”

Charles Swindoll, at a Thomas Road Baptist Church pastors conference.

The Orlando Sentinel

“I am mortified by my mistake, and can only hope the purity of my motive, to find a way to connect with the graduates and encourage them to a life of service, will allow you to forgive me.”

Ann Curry, *Today* show anchor, after praising famous alumni from Wheaton College in Illinois at the commencement ceremony for Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

Chicago Tribune

“We’re still under a court injunction. We have to take it down.”

Linda Slater, spokeswoman for the National Park Service, on a replica of a memorial cross in the Mojave National Preserve. The original was stolen after the Supreme Court ruled it could remain while lower courts continue to debate it. Had the original been returned, it would have stayed up.

The Press-Enterprise

of power; an unwritten agreement shifts the presidency from a Christian to a Muslim every eight years, so Jonathan is taking office with more than half of a Muslim presidential term remaining.

12 Arrest warrant issued for copyright violations

UNITED KINGDOM

A British high court has issued an arrest warrant for a man who called copyright law “un-Christian” and posted online more than 130 complete works by evangelical publishers on his paid-access site. Andrew Amue listed titles from Zondervan, Moody, Tyndale, and Thomas Nelson on his websites *evanglibrary.com* and *evanglibrary.org.uk*. The warrant was issued after Amue failed to appear at a hearing; officials from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association believe he is operating under an assumed name.

13 Christian schools might teach Hindu culture

INDIA

A new proposal before the Maharashtra state government would require Mumbai’s more than 150 Christian schools to teach the Hindu lifestyle to students. The proposal was made by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, which helps finance the schools and is currently run by a coalition of Hindu parties. Gregory Lobo, general secretary of the Archdiocesan Board of Education, says his schools promote respect for all religions, and that requiring Hindutva culture teaching is not needed.

10 Tiananmen leader converts

Chai Ling, the sole female leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest in China, was baptized as a Christian on April 4. Ling said she converted because of her inability to change Chinese politics and her horror at China’s one-child law, which has resulted in millions of abortions. The law’s repercussions are like “a daily Tiananmen massacre . . . in broad daylight,” she said. Ling currently lives in Boston and co-owns a software company with her husband.

11 Anglican unity movement splits

The Anglican Mission (AM; formerly AMIA) announced it will leave the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), the conservative umbrella group that the AM helped found last fall. AM leaders say the break will allow the group to continue focusing on church planting. The decision was prompted in part by the Rwandan House of Bishops, which oversees AM and objected to bishops’ dual membership. AM, which has 156 churches, has applied for ministry-partner status.

14 Layoffs hit church publishing executives

The president and three vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s publishing arm were laid off in late April. The Review and Herald Publishing Association laid off its vice presidents of finance, books and subscription literature, and periodicals. Graphics vice president Mark Thomas was named interim president. The 16-million member Maryland-based denomination cited “mounting financial losses” due to the tight market for religious publishing.

GO FIGURE Faith-Based

6+

Staff on the Democratic National Committee’s faith outreach team in 2008.

1

Staff (part-time) today.

The Washington Post



Mixing Missionaries: Korean Christians are one of many ethnic groups that call the Southern Baptist Convention home. But with 25 percent of North America's 202 immigrant groups still unreached, Southern Baptists plan to unleash their overseas missionaries in the States.

OUTREACH

Evangelism vs. Missions?

Southern Baptists contemplate unleashing the IMB at home. By Bobby Ross Jr.

For 164 years, the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention has focused on taking the gospel overseas.

But in May, the 16 million-member denomination's Great Commission Resurgence Task Force recommended removing restrictions on the IMB's missions work in the United States and Canada—long the territory of the convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB).

Southern Baptists considered the proposal at their annual meeting June 15 and 16 in Orlando, Florida.

"When the Southern Baptist Convention was founded, the world was rather easily divided into 'home' and 'foreign' missions," the task force said in its report. "That world is gone. Now, with revolutions in transportation and the movement of peoples, the world has come to North America."

The task force called for allowing

the IMB to use its skills and knowledge of foreign cultures and languages to develop strategies for sharing Jesus with "as many as 586 unreached and underserved peoples" in the United States.

Daniel Akin, a task force member, downplayed the notion that the proposal might pit the IMB and NAMB against each other—for funding or souls. There is no such thing as competition when it comes to sharing the gospel, he said.

"We talked to both the IMB and the NAMB leadership and trustees before we put this forward," Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, said of the proposal. "There was no pushback."

Mike Ebert, communications team leader for the NAMB, agreed, saying the change would "hasten an even closer partnership."

But some said the idea of simultaneous domestic ministry

by the IMB and NAMB needed more thorough "vetting."

"I'm sure those kinds of relationships can be worked out," Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, told Baptist Press. "But once people come to America, they acclimate themselves more than we think they do."

Missions experts say the task force's recommendation reflects a recognition that the concept of evangelism (domestic) vs. missions (international) is outdated in a world of immigration, refugees, and diasporas.

"There is no biblical distinction between evangelism and missions, so with good motives, we are creating a distinction without a difference," said Ed Stetzer, LifeWay Research president and missiologist in residence.

"The world has become 'borderless,'" said Sadiri Joy Tira, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's senior associate for diasporas. Therefore, "what we do over there must be done over here at the same time."

Alejandro Mandes, director of Hispanic ministries for the Evangelical Free Church of America, said an estimated 11 million to 13 million undocumented immigrants live in the U.S.

"That is much larger than many countries we send missionaries to," Mandes said. "I would consider that a legitimate mission field—a gap."

A joint NAMB and LifeWay Research study released in March found that nearly 3,800 missionaries and church planters are working among first-generation immigrants in North America. Yet 25 percent of these 202 immigrant groups remain unreached.

The proposed SBC change does not indicate that the NAMB has failed to target immigrant or ethnic groups in its evangelistic efforts, Akin said.

In May alone, the NAMB hosted separate meetings of Korean and Romanian church leaders concerning how to reach the groups in North America.

GO FIGURE Church-State

46%

Americans who say the Supreme Court has been too hostile toward religion.

13%

Americans who say the Supreme Court has been too friendly toward it.

Rasmussen Reports

Rather, Akin said, the idea is to take advantage of the expertise of IMB missionaries when they return to the United States on furloughs. "It would be ideal while they're here," he said, "for them to lead and be involved in ministry to the very people they have been trained to evangelize." ☩

DENOMINATIONS

Sheep Stealing Studied

Presbyterians weigh guidelines for reformists.
By Ken Walker

A yearlong Presbyterian Church (USA) investigation found no evidence to support accusations that the conservative Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) actively solicited PC(USA) congregations. However, the April report expressed concerns over "inappropriate interference" by the EPC's New Wineskins Presbytery, which works with disaffected PC(USA) churches.

Neither denomination will comment until the PC(USA) General Assembly meets this July in Minneapolis, where delegates will consider asking the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to create guidelines for interactions between member denominations.

"There is going to be tension between the two groups, as there is between other Presbyterian and Reformed groups in the country," said Jeff Jeremiah, stated clerk for the EPC.

A renewal group leader doubts the potential guidelines will do much to stem an exodus, which in recent years has claimed more than 100 churches from the denomination.

"I think this is an attempt by a dying denomination to corral whatever churches it has left, rather than to be reformed and change its policies," said Parker Williamson, editor emeritus of *The Presbyterian Layman*.

The strains between the EPC

(100,000 members) and the much larger PC(USA) (2.1 million) were likely exacerbated by mid-May events: a cutback of 49 positions at PC(USA) headquarters just days after First Presbyterian of Aurora, Illinois, left the denomination and an Arizona church announced its intention to do likewise.

Some say the divide mirrors conflicts between more than 35 renewal groups and other mainline denominations.

David Runnion-Bareford, president and CEO of the Association for Church Renewal umbrella group, said some renewal groups are critical and others try to work within the system.

Presently, he sees a third set of groups emerging: "lifeboat groups," such as the Anglican Church in North America, which is distancing itself from the Episcopal Church. "They are more associative and draw people together . . . encouraging each other, finding qualified pastors, and keeping churches healthy," he said.

Another is the North American Lutheran Church, which plans to form this August in Columbus, Ohio, one year after the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approved same-sex unions and noncelibate gay clergy.

Already, more churches have left the ELCA over the past year than the PC(USA) over the past four years, according to reformists' estimates. By early May, 351 congregations (out of more than 10,000) had voted to leave since August, although only 122 successfully completed the process.

Whether this could prompt a Presbyterian-like dialogue is unclear. However, Alan Wisdom, director of Presbyterian Action for Faith and Freedom, hopes all denominations remember the need for civility, lest non-Christians think such disputes are primarily about church property. "I would hope church officials dealing with these questions would put people first," Wisdom said. "Christ came to die for people, not denominations." ☩

CHURCH LIFE

Mixed Blessings

Love offerings prove taxing. By Eric Frazier

Are "love offerings" to preachers always taxable income?

That question, which has bedeviled churches for decades, made headlines once again in the May tax-evasion conviction of Charlotte, North Carolina, pastor Anthony Jinwright and his wife, Harriet.

The co-pastors of Greater Salem City of God said they'd been confused about whether money from speaking fees and anniversary collections was taxable. But the IRS and federal prosecutors argued that the couple had received so many warnings that their failure to report more than \$2.3 million in taxable income from 2002 to 2007 was clearly willful.

Financial consultant Robert Howze issued some of those warnings. He said other congregations around the country are struggling with questions about love offerings.

"It's not much talked about," he said, "but the confusion is there."

Richard Hammar, editor of *Church Law & Tax Report*, agrees.

"There's confusion in the minds of a lot of pastors," he said, "but there's no confusion about the tax statutes that apply. . . . It's almost impossible for love gifts from the church to be non-taxable."

If the gift is given out of a "detached and disinterested generosity"—dollars handed to a homeless man, for instance—it would be non-taxable income, he said. But if it can be construed as payment for services rendered, it's taxable.

Hammar, an attorney and CPA, said congregants often get confused because they give such offerings simply "to bless the pastor." So why, they ask, should the IRS be involved?

[continued on 12]

PASSAGES



Appointed Ben Homan

As president of John Stott Ministries, Homan is president and CEO of Food for the Hungry and former development officer for Covenant Seminary, St. Louis.



Died Robert Dugan Jr.

Past director of government affairs for the National Association of Evangelicals, on May 4 in Albuquerque. He was 78.



Leaving Francis Chan

As senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, California, in order to pursue new opportunities.

Briefing [from 11]

"The problem is, the gift is being made in the employment context," he said. In such context, "it's almost impossible to isolate that from services rendered."

Dan Busby, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, said churches should realize that large sums of money or multiple love offerings per year can draw IRS scrutiny if not reported as income to the pastor. "Churches and pastors need to be aware that this is an issue."

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Worrisome Words

New rhetoric draws concern. By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

Freedom of worship" has recently replaced the phrase "freedom of religion" in public pronouncements from the Obama administration. Experts are concerned that the new rhetoric may signal a policy change.

"Freedom of worship" first

appeared in President Obama's November remarks at the memorial service for the victims of the Fort Hood shooting. Days later, he referred to worship rather than religion in speeches in Japan and China.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed the shift in language in a December speech at Georgetown University and while addressing senators in January.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom noted the shift in its 2010 annual report. "This change in phraseology could well be viewed by human rights defenders and officials in other countries as having concrete policy implications," the report said.

Freedom of worship means the right to pray within the confines of a place of worship or to privately believe, said Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom. "It excludes the right to raise your children in your faith; the right to have religious literature; the right to meet with co-religionists; the right to raise funds; . . . [and] evangelize."

The State Department does acknowledge that worship is just one component of religion, said spokesperson Andy Laine. "However, the terms 'freedom of religion'

GO FIGURE Abortion

3
Consecutive Gallup polls that found more Americans calling themselves pro-life than pro-choice, leading the polling group to call it the "new normal."

50%
Americans who say that abortion is morally wrong, down from 56% in 2009.

Gallup

and 'freedom of worship' have often been used interchangeably through U.S. history, and policymakers in this administration will sometimes do likewise."

While Obama's administration may simply be using different words to say the same thing, the timing of the change is worrisome, said Thomas Farr, religion professor at Georgetown University. Obama has not yet appointed an ambassador for international religious freedom, and the position has been demoted within the State Department.

"It puts what otherwise might have been passed off as a rhetorical shift under the spotlight a little more," Farr said.

As with all diplomatic decisions, the move is a gain and a loss, said Carl Esbeck, professor of law at the University of Missouri.

Other countries may interpret the change as a sign that America is backing down from championing a robust, expansive view of religious freedom. However, the State Department has traditionally ignored religion's impact on foreign affairs, he said. "The Obama administration seems, at least in part, to get that a large part of successful foreign relations is taking religion into account."

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Should churches increase their operating budgets in 2011?

YES

"All of us should be on a journey of faith . . . ever increasing our commitment to resources for God's kingdom. Increase your budget, but do so aware of the challenges and pain that may exist in your congregation, and certainly without incurring debt."

CHUCK BENTLEY,
CEO, Crown Financial Ministries

"Yes, but modestly. The Federal Reserve wants to be accommodating because there's an election coming up, and everyone votes their wallets. There has not been a decline in the U.S. stock market in the third year of a presidency since the Great Depression."

GARY MOORE,
founder, The Financial Seminary

"If the vision for the year requires more resources than the previous year's budget, then yes. If a church does not have a clear sense of what God is calling them to do, the leaders should seek him in prayer, and probably trim the budget in the season of waiting on him."

GARY HOAG,
Generosity Monk

"Years of prosperity concealed underlying issues that are the real reasons giving is down at some churches. Scarcity begins to clarify everything. Some churches learned that they haven't been healthy for a while, and the abundance of money was just covering it up."

JIM SHEPPARD,
CEO, Generis

"Until we see earnings go up, most churches that have static attendance are not going to see much of a rise in giving. When we see in the U.S. that earnings are slow to increase, churches should be modest in their budgeting for the new year."

SCOTT MCCONNELL,
associate director, LifeWay Research

"Our church will not. In October 2008 a tsunami hit Wall Street, and almost overnight there was a crisis. Churches do not experience tsunamis, but they are experiencing rising floodwaters of financial challenges. People aren't giving as much."

BRIAN KLUTH,
founder, Maximum Generosity

NO



Not So Scrawny: Mozambican children provide one-on-one care for laying hens, leading to quality egg production. Missionaries Elizabeth and Don Kantel oversee the project.

MISSIONS

A Hand Up

Faith-based model teaches rural poor how to use trade to rise out of poverty.

By Cassandra Soars in Mizeze, Mozambique

The day Canadian missionary Don Kantel released 400 chicks into a poultry enclosure in Mizeze, a village of 20,000 in northern Mozambique, all the village's children gathered to watch, wondering what would happen next. Before the shipment of day-old chicks arrived, Kantel had methodically prepared the enclosure and explained to villagers the process of feeding and watering the chickens and regularly cleaning their space. The Mozambicans didn't understand why anyone would do all this work for a few scrawny chickens. Chickens run loose in Africa, eating whatever they find, mostly insects and garbage. Nobody cared for them at all.

Kantel and his wife, Elizabeth, an expert in community-based health care,

were determined to create a holistic model for transforming life among Africa's poorest families through job creation and evangelistic outreach. Through Iris Ministries, a mission to orphans and vulnerable children, the Kantels helped launch the model in Mizeze. The project brings together farming, animal husbandry, long-term orphan care, education, and a newly planted church, all in a sustainable way with indigenous leaders.

For much of his life, Kantel has been, in his own words, "something of an elitist," an academic who founded St. Stephen's, a small Christian university in New Brunswick, Canada. He had shown little interest in the fate of the rural poor. When he did think about poverty, he reasoned that the poor were likely the authors of their misfortune. He never envisioned himself as "Papa

Don"—a retired administrator getting his hands dirty fighting poverty.

Kantel smiled watching the chicks run around. All was going according to plan. But before the day was out, Don and Elizabeth faced a defining crisis. Winds began to pick up, storm clouds formed, and torrential rains started. A potentially deadly cyclone moved in off the Indian Ocean. Storms like this come with 100 mile-per-hour winds and can trigger lethal flash floods.

Cold rain lashed the chicks as they huddled together. Their open-air shelter offered little protection. Kantel feared the storm would kill the project. He ran into the enclosure and gathered up a few chicks. As he left the project that night, he was sure the remaining chick population, along with Mizeze's chicken farming prospects, would be wiped out by morning.



Future Jobs: As Mieze children grow older, they will be trained to raise goats or work in their country's fast-growing tourist industry.

AID FOR TRADE

As Kantel waited out the storm in his and Elizabeth's home near the village, his mind retraced the stunning progress the children of Mieze had made during the past 14 months. In 2007, at the start of the project, about 40 children moved into new houses. They had been just like many other Mozambican children, abandoned due to the recent civil war, HIV/AIDS, or extreme poverty. They had no possessions other than the tattered rags they wore.

Most were completely bewildered by their new environment. They had never slept in a bed, eaten three meals in a single day, flipped on a light switch, or seen their own face in a mirror.

"Some of the kids were very withdrawn. Some were very aggressive," Kantel says. "All came from situations of unimaginable deprivation, and some were victims of abuse, as well." A few months after moving into the compound, the children were well-dressed, well-fed, sociable, healthy, and happy.

When Kantel wakes up in the morning, he intentionally asks God what it will take that day to help the children become leaders in their generation—which is where his vision for chicken farming began.

For Mieze's community to grow and thrive, its members needed to learn how to create quality goods to sell. Trade, the exchange of goods and services across borders, is one way to address chronic poverty. The bigger the market you can sell to, the more jobs you can create.

Mozambique usually ranks among the world's ten poorest nations. The nation gained independence from Portugal in 1975 after nearly 500 years of colonial rule, which brought widespread slavery and discrimination. A civil war ensued, and the country fell into the hands of a Marxist faction that nationalized the economy and traded with Soviet Russia. After the Soviet Union fell in 1991, Mozambican reformers privatized many industries. But the country's economy remains very weak. Unemployment is high, and the majority of its 21 million people survive by subsistence farming. Most of the poor have no access to land and no money for seed to grow food.

While global charities step in with food aid and emergency assistance for Mozambique (as they did after Cyclone Elaine in February 2000), relief organizations aren't usually equipped to create sustainable businesses that provide long-term employment.

The World Trade Organization, seeing the limits of traditional aid programs, started its Aid for Trade initiative in 2005. It aims to help poor countries "strengthen their economies by developing their productive capacity to allow them to export more." Increased trade and exports show great potential to pull people out of poverty.

But trade is no panacea, bringing problems that traditional direct aid does not. For instance, some otherwise destitute nations, such as Sudan and Kenya, have strong exports (oil, coffee). But the trade system is often stacked against local workers in favor of powerful government

agencies and multinational corporations. Sudan's government uses 70 percent of its oil profits to build up its military.

Also, village-level trade programs are difficult to sustain because many uncontrollable factors (war, drought, and political corruption) often interrupt progress. But if trade inequities are minimized and such programs take root, they create lasting jobs.

Sierra Leone, with its ginger exports, is among the African countries recently benefiting from aid-enhanced trade. Ginger is used as a beverage flavor locally, as a spice in Europe, and as oil in India. With a \$100,000 initial grant and three years of effort, Sierra Leone in 2006 exported its first ginger supply in 22 years.

Kantel, after looking at what Mieze villagers could do, determined that chickens and chicken eggs were a good place to start. Rich and poor alike the world over consume more than 60 million tons of chicken eggs each year. But Africa is the second lowest egg-producing continent. There is much room for growth. South Africa, a neighbor to Mozambique, has the richest economy in Africa and recently set a goal to double its consumption and production of chicken eggs.

THE NEXT GENERATION

After a mostly sleepless night worrying about the baby chicks in the cyclone, Kantel returned to the Mieze project early the next morning.

The children and project staff greeted him enthusiastically. They had stayed up all night in the open-air shelter, drying, warming, and protecting the chicks. Nearly all had survived.

In the process, the children had taken ownership of the project. From that day on, the children—with further instruction—have run the chicken farm themselves. Every day they sit inside the enclosure, waiting expectantly. When an egg is laid, they jump up and immediately put it in a refrigerator to sell at the local market.

The chicken farm is now in its third successful year of operation. In early 2008, the first production cycle was celebrated with a chicken feast for 500 church members, guests, and Mieze villagers.

The farm also expanded its egg production and partnered with Technoserve, a

Trade, the exchange of goods and services across borders, is becoming a compelling way to address poverty. The bigger the market you can sell to, the more jobs you can create.

business development charity, to cut costs for its broiler chickens. This summer, project staff will devote more land to the chicken farm and increase their goat herd from 50 to 300. Yet Kantel's eyes are fixed on the horizon. He said Mize children will need jobs and a functioning, growing economy when they turn 18.

David Bronkema, director of development programs at the School of Leadership and Development at Eastern University near Philadelphia, said he likes the Mize project because "it's looking to provide opportunities for future jobs, which is a fundamental way to alleviate poverty."

The project includes developing

potable water, a food assistance program for other vulnerable children in the village, a church, a community health care and school access program, and a farm that the community can use to grow and sell food.

Joao Juma, a gifted Mozambican church planter, embodies the Mize project's Christian character. Six years ago, Juma started a new church on the outskirts of the village. Since then, the church has grown 300 percent, and a new sanctuary with seating for more than 1,000 was just dedicated. Much of the growth is due to evangelistic outreach to non-Christian children during Saturday morning worship and Bible teaching.

Pastor Juma works closely with the

Kantels to integrate Christian instruction into job training. Together they foresee a time when older youth might operate their own chicken farms or goat ranches for milk, cheese, and meat.

For villagers, working in agriculture and animal husbandry provides some protection from the dark side of globalization, because their products may be consumed as well as sold on the open market. That's not the case with cotton, gold, and other commodities that are subject to wide price swings.

JUSTICE, JOBS, AND TOURISM

Christian development experts believe unjust or outmoded trade practices often work against the goals of direct charitable aid.

Experts note the following examples:

- International trade is worth \$10 million *a minute*, but poor countries today account for only 0.4 percent of world trade. The United Nations estimates that unfair trade rules deny poor nations \$700 billion a year.

- Trade talks often favor rich nations

[continued on 16]

"When I arrived in Heaven, the same five angels who had helped Daddy out of the car were there. They comforted me."

-ALEX MALARKEY



In 2004, **KEVIN MALARKEY** and his six-year-old son, **ALEX**, suffered a terrible car wreck that paralyzed Alex. When Alex awoke from a two-month coma, he shared incredible stories of the accident scene and events in the hospital that took place while he was unconscious; of angels who took him through the gates of Heaven; and most amazing thing of all...meeting and talking with Jesus!

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"I think that Alex has gone to be with Jesus," a friend told the stricken dad.

A Hand Up [from 15]

and large corporations. After one recent preliminary trade negotiation, experts estimated that rich countries would gain \$141.8 billion per year, while Africa as a whole would lose \$2.6 billion per year.

- Agricultural subsidies in developed nations encourage overproduction of certain food commodities such as rice and wheat. The surplus is typically dumped on world markets, driving down prices.

Bronkema said that when he talks with evangelicals, he asks them, "What do you think poverty is due to?" Very few mention businesses or income generation. "Most don't realize there are no jobs."

Kantel believes chronic poverty in places like Mozambique will not be defeated unless the poor are given better access to resources and markets. Agricultural trade is crucial. Trade in livestock products grew from \$55 billion in 2000 to \$93 billion in 2006. Developing countries account for only 20 percent of the world's animal

product exports. Countries like Mozambique have room to grow their share.

After looking at the possibilities for trade beyond eggs, chickens, goat meat, mangos, and limes, Kantel and Iris Ministries decided to explore tourism, the fastest-growing sector of Mozambique's economy; tourism income in 2005 grew 37 percent over one year. They are forming plans for small businesses and lodges that cater to the tourist and service industries. This will address their desire to raise awareness and expand trade into new areas.

With thousands of miles of unspoiled coastline and exotic wildlife, the prospects for tourism growth are huge. Tourism brings consumers and foreign exchange into a developing country's economy. Through vocational training programs, Iris Ministries is preparing orphaned youth for employment in these sectors. With strong laws and employment safeguards, many more people can successfully join the 32,000 who currently work in tourism.

Christians could support these goals by

choosing to vacation in developing countries. Worldwide, faith-based tourism, including short-term missions, is a \$10 billion per year industry. Programs offering a mission trip plus tourism have already sprung up in Kenya and the Dominican Republic.

In these programs, Christian visitors typically have a well-defined opportunity to volunteer with a vacation add-on, where they might find fresh eggs from a village like Mize on the breakfast menu.

Kantel cannot forecast a time when aid for trade will erase the need for direct aid programs, but the two can complement each other. He says, "Judiciously balanced aid, which meets immediate and recurrent needs and also targets long-term growth and development, is actually an essential component in positioning a nation to be a player in international markets." ✦

Cassandra Soars is a writer based in Mozambique. International reporting in *Christianity Today* is supported by a grant from John Stott Ministries.



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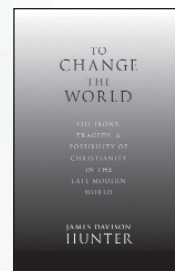
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Why every Christian is called

Abba Changes Everything

{ COVER STORY }

T

HE CREEPIEST SOUND I have ever heard was nothing at all. My wife, Maria, and I stood in the hallway of an orphanage somewhere in the former Soviet Union, on the first of two trips required for our petition to adopt. Orphanage staff led us down a hallway to greet the two 1-year-olds we hoped would become our sons. The horror wasn't the squalor and the stench, although we at times stifled the urge to vomit and weep. The horror was the quiet of it all. The place was more silent than a funeral home by night.

I stopped and pulled on Maria's elbow. "Why is it so quiet? The place is filled with babies." Both of us compared the stillness with the buzz and punctuated squeals that came from our church nursery back home. Here, if we listened carefully enough, we could hear babies rocking themselves back and forth, the crib slats gently bumping against the walls. These children did not cry, because infants eventually learn to stop crying if no one ever responds to their calls for food, for comfort, for love. No one ever responded to these children. So they stopped.

to rescue orphans.

By Russell D. Moore

The silence continued as we entered the boys' room. Little Sergei (now Timothy) smiled at us, dancing up and down while holding the side of his crib. Little Maxim (now Benjamin) stood straight at attention, regal and czar-like. But neither boy made a sound. We read them books filled with words they couldn't understand, about saying good-night to the moon and cows jumping over the same. But there were no cries, no squeals, no groans. Every day we left at the appointed time in the same way we had entered: in silence.

On the last day of the trip, Maria and I arrived at the moment we had dreaded since the minute we received our adoption referral. We had to tell the boys goodbye, as by law we had to return to the United States and wait for the legal paperwork to be completed before returning to pick them up for good. After hugging and kissing them, we walked out into the quiet hallway as Maria shook with tears.

And that's when we heard the scream.



Little Maxim fell back in his crib and let out a guttural yell. It seemed he knew, maybe for the first time, that he would be heard. On some primal level, he knew he had a father and mother now. I will never forget how the hairs on my arms stood up as I heard the yell. I was struck, maybe for the first time, by the force of the Abba cry passages in the New Testament, ones I had memorized in Vacation Bible School. And I was surprised by how little I had gotten it until now.

GOSPEL AND MISSION

When someone learns that I'm going to speak at their church about adoption, typically the first question is, "So will you be talking about the doctrine of adoption or, you know, *real* adoption?" That's a hard question, because I cannot address one without addressing the other. We cannot master one aspect and then move to the other, from the vertical aspect of adoption to the horizontal aspect, or vice versa.

Families, the Bible tells us, reflect something eternally true about God. It is God's fatherhood after which every family in heaven and on earth is named (Eph. 3:14–15). We know what human parenting should look like based on our Father's behavior toward us.

The reverse is also true. We see something of God's fatherhood in our relationship with our human fathers. Jesus tells us that our fathers' provision and discipline show us God's active love toward us (Matt. 7:9–11; Heb. 12:5–17).

The same principle is at work in adoption. Adoption is, on one hand, gospel. Our identity and inheritance are grounded in our adoption in Christ. Adoption is also *mission*. In this, our adoption spurs us to join Christ in advocating for the poor, the marginalized, the abandoned, and the fatherless. Without the theological aspect, the growing Christian emphasis on orphan care too often seems like one more cause wristband for compassionate conservative evangelicals to wear until the trend dies down. Without the missional aspect, the doctrine of adoption too easily becomes mere metaphor, just another way to say "saved."

NO NATURAL-BORN CHILDREN OF GOD

Little Maxim's scream changed everything—more, I think, than did the judge's verdict and the notarized paperwork. It was the moment, in his recognizing that he would be heard, that he went from being an orphan to being a son. It was also the moment I became a father, in fact if not in law. We both recognized that something was wrong, because suddenly, life as it had been seemed terribly disordered.

Up to that time, I had read the Abba cry passages in Romans and Galatians the same way I had heard them preached: as a gurgle of familiarity, the spiritual equivalent of an infant cooing "Papa" or "Daddy." Relational intimacy is surely present in the texts—hence Paul's choice of such a personal word as *Abba*—but this definitely isn't sentimental. After all, Scripture tells us that Jesus' Spirit lets our hearts cry "Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6). Jesus cries "Abba, Father" as he screams "with loud cries and tears" for deliverance in the Garden of Gethsemane (Heb. 5:7; Mark 14:36, *esv*, used throughout). Similarly, the doctrine of adoption shows us that we "groan" with the creation itself "as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our

bodies" (Rom. 8:23). It is the scream of the crucified.

The gospel of adoption challenges us, first of all, to recognize ourselves as spiritual orphans. The gospel compels us to see our fallen universe—and our own egocentric kingdoms therein—as not the way it's supposed to be.

With our evangelistic emphasis on the sinner's prayer, evangelicals ought to recognize this more than we often do. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13), we rightly insist. But we rarely feel how desperate—and how liberating—the call is. We assume it's a cry only at the beginning of the Christian walk, not through the ongoing work of the Spirit. We grow complacent in the present age, too comfortable to cry out for a Father we can sense only by faith.

The Abba cry of our adoption defines who we are and what family we belong to. That's why Scripture's witness to the doctrine of adop-

tion has everything to do with church unity, away from the divisions of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, rich and poor (Gal. 3:28). None of us are natural-born children of God, entitled to all this grace, all this glory. It's not just the Gentiles—with their uncircumcised penises and pig-flesh-eating mouths—who were adopted into this family. The Jewish Christians, too,

received adoption (Rom. 9:4). Yes, Abraham was the father of the Israelites, but he was an Iraqi Gentile before he joined the household of God. We Christians receive newcomers because, in Christ, we have been received. Our identity and our inheritance are found in Christ, or they are not found at all.

I was at first reluctant to adopt, because I assumed an adopted child would always be more distant than a child "of my own." I was wrong. And I should have known better. After all, there are no "adopted children" of God, as an ongoing category. Adoption tells us how we came into the family of God. And once we are here, no distinction is drawn between those at the dinner table. Love based on the preservation and protection of genetic material makes sense in a Darwinian—not a Christian—view of reality.

Thus, the adoption and orphan care movement teaches us something revolutionary about the *evangel*.

ORPHAN CARE: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

We evangelicals often seem to identify more around corporate brands and political parties than with each other in our local churches. But our adoption in Christ makes us not warring partisans but loving siblings, whom the Spirit has taken from the babble of Babel to the oneness of Pentecost. The church's unity attests to the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). Would our gospel be more credible if "church family" wasn't just a slogan, if "brothers and sisters" was more than metaphor? What would happen if the world saw fewer "white churches" and "black churches," fewer "blue-collar churches" and "white-collar churches," and fewer baby boomer and emerging churches, and saw more churches whose members have little in common except being saved by the gospel?

Our churches ought to be showing the families therein how love and belonging transcend categories of the flesh. Instead, though, it

Would our gospel be more credible if 'church family' wasn't just a slogan, if 'brothers and sisters' was more than metaphor?

ISTOCK



seems God is using families who adopt to teach the church. In fact, perhaps we so often wonder whether adopted children can really be brothers and sisters because we so rarely see it displayed in our pews. Some—maybe even you—might wonder how an African American family could love a white Ukrainian baby, how a Haitian teenager could call Swedish parents Mom and Dad. The adoption movement is challenging the impoverished hegemony of our carnal sameness, as more and more families in the church are starting to show fellow believers the meaning of unity in diversity.

That's why adoption and orphan care can ultimately make the church a counterculture. The demonic rulers of the age hate orphans because they hate babies—and have from Pharaoh to Moloch to Herod to the divorce culture to malaria to HIV/AIDS. They hate foster care and orphan advocacy because these actions are icons of the gospel's eternal reality. Our enemies would prefer that we find our identity and inheritance in what we can see and verify as ours—the flesh—rather than according to the veiled rhythms of the Spirit. Orphan care isn't charity; it's spiritual warfare.

A NEW HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

After we learn more about our gospel identity, we start reflecting the economy and priorities of our new household. The God of Israel consistently urges his people to care for the orphan, the widow, and the immigrant (Deut. 24:17–22) by noting his adopting purposes as “Father of the fatherless” (Ps. 68:5). He announces, “If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry” (Ex. 22:23).

The Spirit drives us not just to cry Abba in the Christian gospel, but also to respond to the cries of the weak through Christian mission.

Orphan care is, by definition, missional. Paul's letter to the Romans, which includes perhaps the clearest explanation of the doctrine of adoption, isn't a systematic theology text; it's a missionary manifesto, calling the church in Rome to unify and to join Paul in making Christ known to the nations (Rom. 15:1–21). This is why James—the brother of Jesus—tells us that caring for widows and orphans is the essence of “pure and undefiled” religion (1:27). And Jesus himself—adopted by the righteous Joseph—identifies himself with the “least of these my brothers” (Matt. 25:40). And he tells us that the first time we hear his voice in person, he will be asking if we did the same.

Imagine, for a moment, the plight of an orphan somewhere out there. With every passing year, she will become less “cute,” thus less adoptable. In a few years, on her eighteenth birthday, she will be expelled from the system. She might join the military or find job training. Maybe she'll stare at a tile on the ceiling above her as her body is violated—alone or before a camera crew of strangers—by a man who's willing to pay enough for her to eat for one day. Maybe she'll place a revolver in her mouth or tie a rope around her neck, knowing no one will notice except the ones who have to clean up afterward. This story could just as well describe a boy who is orphaned. Can you feel the desperation of what it means to be an orphan? Jesus can. Orphans are his little sisters and brothers. He hears them.

In saying that orphan care is missional, I do not mean that every Christian is called to adopt or foster a child. But every Christian is called to care for orphans. As with every aspect of Christ's mission, a diversity of gifts abounds. Some have room at their table and in their

hearts for another stocking on the mantle by this coming Christmas. Others are gifted financially to help families who would like to adopt but cannot figure out how to make ends meet. Others can babysit while families with children make their court dates and complete home-study papers.

Still others can lead mission trips to rock and hug and sing to orphans who may never be adopted. Pastors can simply ask whether anyone in their congregation might be called to adopt or foster parent, or to empower someone who is. And all of us can pray—specifically and urgently—for orphans the world over.

Some would seek to contrast orphan care—and other so-called social ministries—with evangelism, perhaps even with the gospel itself. But such a dichotomy just does not stand up to biblical revelation. Genuine faith works through love, the Bible tells us (Gal. 5:6). The mission of Christ points us, as theologian Carl Henry reminded the last generation of evangelicals, to a God of both justice and justification.

Since genuine faith is always orphan-protecting, a culture of adoption and evangelism can work together. Indeed, they grow from the same root. Churches that are other-directed instead of self-obsessed in adopting unwanted children will be other-directed instead of self-obsessed in verbally witnessing to unwanted people. A conscience that's burdened for orphans, rather than seared over in the quest for more stuff, will be burdened for spiritual orphans. A church that learns to love beyond the borders of biology will learn to do mission outside the borders of geography.

A KINGDOM OF RESCUED CHILDREN

As the Spirit draws more Christians to orphan care, we also must insist that adoption is not just a backdoor route to child evangelism. Of course, Christians who adopt will teach their children that what they believe is true and ultimately meaningful. Every parent does that and, to some degree, cannot do otherwise. A secular progressive parent would (rightly) correct racial bigotry or misogyny in his or her child. We wouldn't accuse that parent of having a child in order to export Western democratic values. In the same way, Christian

parents will teach their child the message of Jesus, regardless of how the child arrived in their home.

But this doesn't mean that adoption is simply a means to evangelism, any more than biologically bearing children is reproductive evangelism. As those who have experienced gospel adoption, we know it is good for all children to have parents, even parents who do not yet know Christ. We advocate, then, for all orphans and rejoice when unbelievers adopt too, just as we encourage marriage between unbelievers, since marriage witnesses to the Christ-church union even when the married couple doesn't see it. The gospel is better understood in a culture that understands the one-flesh union. Likewise, the fatherhood

of God is better understood in a culture where children know what it means to say "Daddy" and "Mommy."

Scripture characterizes the kingdom of Christ as a kingdom of rescued children. Solomon looks to the final reign of God's anointed and sings, "For

he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight" (Ps. 72:12–14). When we contend for orphans—born and unborn—we are doing more than cultural activism. A culture of adoption, orphan care, and ministry to mothers in distress announces what the kingdom of God looks like and to whom it belongs. We're contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

While I was writing this article, my children came running through my study hyped up on Kool-Aid and Pop-Tarts (don't judge me). I heard myself saying, "Will all of you please be quiet so I can think?" But I remembered when our house was quiet, and I remembered the silence of the orphanage where we found Timothy and Benjamin. The kingdom of God isn't quiet. Instead it's like my house these days, "like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men" (Mic. 2:12).

The universe around us is creepily silent—like an orphanage in which the children no longer believe they will be heard. But if we listen with Galilean ears, we can hear the quiet desperation of thumbs being sucked, of cribs being rocked. As we welcome orphans into our homes, we can show the orphaned universe what it means to belong to a God who welcomes the fatherless.

Let's remember that we were orphans once, and that someone came looking for us, someone who taught us to call him "Abba." Let's be ambassadors for the One who loves the little children, all the children of the world. Like him, let's welcome children into our homes, our churches, and our lives, especially those we are not supposed to want.

Russell D. Moore is author of *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches* (Crossway). He is senior vice president and dean of the School of Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He is also a preaching pastor at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. He and his wife, Maria, have four sons. **Go to** ChristianBibleStudies.com for "Abba Changes Everything," a Bible study based on this article.



Coming Alongside Parents

Churches are getting real about adoption's challenges—and helping families after the child arrives.

By Carla Barnhill

IN 1962, my parents picked up a 3-month-old boy from a Minneapolis children's home. Instead of a shower or welcoming committee, they came home to silence and sideways looks. They were adopting at a time when the decision was considered a response to an epic reproductive failure, something not discussed in polite company.

And then there was the baby. At just three months, my older brother showed signs of institutionalization. My mother remembers how he lay in her arms like a board, never able to snuggle. Psychologists were only beginning to form theories on attachment disorder, and no one, including my parents, fully understood how even a few months without parental nurture can impact a child.

Thank God that attitudes about adoption are changing.

The Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAO) held its sixth annual summit on orphan care this April at Grace Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. Featuring keynote addresses from John Piper, Steven Curtis and Mary Beth Chapman, and Al Mohler, the summit drew more than 1,200 attendees, most of them ministering to orphans through their home churches. Watching those gathered, I knew this was not my parents' generation.

WHAT THE STATE CAN'T DO

Jedd Medefind, president of the Virginia-based CAO, says his organization wants to encourage care for orphans worldwide through adoption, foster care, and orphan care. A nebulous term, *orphan care* includes everything from funding children's homes in countries



with large numbers of orphans to holding shoe drives for children in orphanages. CAO, with over 100 member ministries, is also starting to advocate “in-country” solutions where churches in countries with many orphans encourage and help families in their midst to adopt. “We want to build communities that are committed to families who are committed to orphans,” says Medefind.

From megachurches like Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, and Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee, to small congregations like First Baptist Church in Cambridge, Minnesota, U.S. churches are launching orphan care ministries, most of them lay-led. One such ministry, Tapestry, began in 2000 when a few adoption-hopeful couples at Irving Bible Church in North Texas began meeting. Launched by Michael and Amy Monroe, Tapestry has become a cultural juggernaut at Irving Bible and in the wider community. It helps adoptive families wade through the endless amounts of paperwork, home visits, and assessments, and, after a child arrives, provides education and connects families to support groups.

Ministries like the Denver-based Project 1:27 work with government agencies to place children with families and support them before and after adoption. Taking its name from James 1:27, the project, together with the Colorado Department of Human Services, is credited with helping to shrink the number of the state’s children waiting to be adopted from 800 to 365 in just two years.

Tapestry’s Michael Monroe notes that while local and state foster care agencies do many things efficiently, they leave gaps.

“State agencies are well-equipped to help if you have decided to move forward, but less so if you have questions about adoption,” the adoptive father of four says. “Church-based ministries are best positioned to come alongside families and help them prayerfully make the best decision.”

Still other ministries train foster parents, find families who can provide respite care, and keep free childcare supplies on hand for foster families. And that’s just ministry to children in the U.S.

A CONTINUUM OF NEED

Two weeks before CAO’s summit this spring, a Tennessee woman made headlines when she tried to send her adopted son on a plane back to Russia, with a note tucked in his backpack: “I no longer wish to parent this child.” Her stated reasons—that the 8-year-old boy had psychological problems, that he seemed like a physical and emotional threat—struck at the heart of many adoptive parents’ worst fears.

Just ten years ago, the church’s mantra on adoption was that love heals a host of problems. Adoptive and foster families were given prayer and encouraging words as they waited for a child, but largely left to their own devices once the child arrived.

“For a long time, churches focused on the pre-adoption process,” Medefind says. “There’s a growing understanding that the journey really kicks in once the adoption happens. The vision of the church has matured to encompass that.”

That journey is often a bumpy one. Many children coming from children’s homes or foster care are “children from hard places,” says Michael. When emotional or psychological issues start playing out in their new families, parents turn to their church communities—and

churches don’t always know how to help. Thus, both the child and the parents suffer alone.

Tapestry aims to address the care gap—one that government agencies cannot address—by working with parents before they adopt.

“We learned early on that the kids aren’t the only ones with issues,” says Michael. “Parents need help examining their own motivations and expectations [for adopting]. They need to embark on their own healing journey that involves discovering past hurts and how those might impact their parenting. There’s no better time to start working on these issues than while they are waiting.”

Tapestry also helps parents recognize that every adoption and foster care situation carries an element of grief. Something or someone has been lost, and if the loss is not addressed, the family will suffer. Tapestry provides education on everything from how to parent abused children to how to address a parent’s own fears in order to build healthy families.

Medefind says more CAO member ministries are starting to “recognize that we can’t ride in on a white horse and rescue kids. They know that adoption brings great joy, but can some-

times bring great pain for all involved. Orphan care ministries are maturing to encompass the whole process.”

BEYOND GOOD INTENTIONS

Not all churches can sustain a ministry like Tapestry, but those that want to ramp up their orphan care have many practical outlets: keeping a list of resources for families interested in adoption or foster care; knitting blankets for children’s homes; managing a fund that helps adoptive families with costs; and providing respite care for adoptive or foster parents, to name a few.

Basic provisions can have a tremendous impact. Mo, a single mother from Iowa who asked to remain anonymous to protect her child, adopted her 10-month-old daughter out of foster care. She says her needs don’t always fit churches’ typical new-baby gifts (meals, baby showers, babysitting). “When my daughter is upset, she does a lot of property damage. I would love some help with repairs, but I don’t know how to let people know. I’m afraid to have people see what she’s done. How would they view her afterward?”

Stacey and her husband, Sam, live in Minnesota and have adopted two children from Guatemala. Stacey encourages churches to include adoptive and foster care parents in their ministry to all parents. “One of the hardest moments was about a month before our daughter came home. I was at a women’s retreat [where] they brought all the pregnant women on stage to pray for them and give them gift baskets. They didn’t include me. It was really hard to take.”

Thankfully for these and other adoptive and foster families, churches are recognizing that mere good intentions won’t help families recover from the loss that often leads to adoption—or to prepare for the joy that awaits. It takes a community of people who are willing to wrap themselves around a family who has wrapped themselves around a child.



Carla Barnhill is a writer and editor based in Minneapolis. She blogs at TheMommyRevolution.com.

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Whole Earth Evangelism

Creation care is part and parcel of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. By Scott Sabin

In the 1960s, the ecology movement was launched with a fundamental insight: Everything is part of a system. If you alter one thing, it will affect something else—for good or ill. For example, we discovered back then that using the pesticide DDT to control mosquitoes and malaria (a good thing) also weakened the shells of birds' eggs and threatened their ability to reproduce (a bad thing). Such discoveries helped us think beyond our immediate actions and anticipate the collateral damage created by the way we live.

Are evangelization, compassionate justice ministry, and earth care similarly connected in a spiritual ecology? In this essay for the Global Conversation, Scott Sabin, author of the newly published *Tending to Eden*, connects those dots.

ON A PRECARIOUS SLOPE, Etienne digs in the dusty soil with a small hoe, planting beans in hopeful anticipation of the rains, which have become unpredictable in recent years. Miles away, his wife is returning from the increasingly distant forest with a large bundle of firewood on her head. She was up before dawn carrying water from the spring, nearly an hour's walk away. The infant on her back is sick with intestinal parasites from drinking the water that she has worked so hard to provide.

Though the global context may be lost on Etienne and his family, they live with the consequences of environmental degradation on a daily basis. By contrast, in the United States, frequent headlines warn of the tribulations of the earth and its ecosystems, but because the impact on our daily lives feels minimal, the steady parade of dire predictions is ignored—or worse, fosters despair.

Until I began working with Plant with Purpose (formerly Floresta), I was among those who ignored the signs, occasionally lamenting the loss of a favorite hiking place or noticing that I no longer saw horned lizards in my backyard. Beyond that, the environment was a secondary concern. Those who went before me at Plant with Purpose, however, saw a direct connection between forest health and the health of poor communities. To get beyond treating the symptoms of poverty, we would need to address the health of the ecosystem that

Illustration by Michael Mullan

supported the poor. Standing on a windswept hillside in Haiti one afternoon, overlooking a panorama of eroded mountains and silt-choked rivers, it dawned on me that we could not give a cup of cold water without restoring the watershed. Over the past 18 years, I have slowly realized that this observation applies beyond Haiti. We all depend on a healthy world.

As 6.8 billion human beings seek to satisfy their needs and desires on an ever-shrinking planet, it should not surprise us that the issue of environmental stewardship or “creation care” is part of our global conversation.

While climate change dominates the discussion, hundreds of lesser known and less controversial environmental issues are coming to a head.

Marine species we used to think were infinite in number are vanishing at alarming rates. Half of the world’s primates are in danger of extinction. Frogs and bees are disappearing. Fresh water is becoming increasingly scarce. Deforestation is reducing rainfall, soil fertility, and water resources in many parts of the world. In light of these realities, what is our role as Christians?

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

From the very beginning, caring for the earth that God created has been a fundamental part of our role.

In Genesis 2:15, Adam is placed in the garden to serve (*‘abad*) and protect (*shamar*) it. Throughout the Old Testament we are reminded that “the Earth is the Lord’s” and that our role is one of stewardship—temporary caretakers who will one day be called to account for how well we have discharged our duties. This is reinforced in Revelation 11:18, which says Judgment Day will bring the destruction of those who destroy the earth.

Scripture also indicates a direct correlation between the behavior of humans and the health of the earth. The ground is cursed as a result of Adam’s sin. Later, in the story of the Flood, human sin results in the destruction of most life on earth. What is spared is saved through the active participation of Noah. In Jeremiah 12:4 and many other passages, we see the land and its creatures suffering as a direct result of sin.

“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life” (Gen. 3:17). Much of the world has gone to great ends to mitigate the consequences of the Adamic curse. We have distanced ourselves from the physical labor of producing food (and with that, brought a number of unintended consequences). But for hundreds of millions of subsistence and near-subsistence farmers worldwide, the curse’s “painful toil” is a fundamental aspect of life. I clearly remember an afternoon spent planting beans on a rocky mountainside in Haiti, my bloody hands and aching back reminders of the daily reality my brothers and sisters lived.

Yet as the Psalms make clear, creation—even creation broken by sin—gives glory to God. When Job calls God to account, God shows Job his greatness by pointing to his creation, and reminds Job of his need for humility in the face of things he doesn’t understand (Job 38–41). This passage also gives a glimpse of the delight God takes in the earth. Psalm 104 further emphasizes this, as well as the special relationship God has with his creatures, independent of humanity. Like Job, we need to learn that we are not always the center of the story.

Following in Adam’s footsteps, we are still called to be stewards of creation, which still belongs to God. But our role now goes further. Paul tells us in Romans 8:22 that creation is groaning as if in childbirth, anticipating redemption and eagerly waiting for the children of God to be revealed. As God’s children, we are a part of this good news for creation—a creation that until now has suffered due to our sin and greed. God’s plan of

redemption is intended as good news not just for us but for the environment as well. While only God can finally redeem the creation, we are his agents in bringing a foretaste of that redemption. As Christians, our environmental responsibility is awesome and humbling.

THE UNINSULATED POOR

It is more than an issue of obedience and humility. Environmental stewardship is also a justice issue. There is no need to prioritize between love of neighbor and care for God’s creation.

In the United States and Europe, it is easy to forget that the earth is our life-support system. For too many of us, water comes in plastic bottles, and food comes from a supermarket. We see the environment as a luxury.

Yet the poorest people in the world are not so insulated. When the rain doesn’t come, people starve. When soil erodes, families go hungry. When water gets polluted, children get intestinal diseases. When all the trees are cut down, women walk hours for firewood. When the land is deforested, watersheds no longer function, causing rivers and streams to dry up. When the rain does come, deadly landslides ensue. For most of the people with whom I have worked over the past 15 years, their soil and their water are virtually their only assets. Preserving and sustainably using those assets, so as not to further degrade those ecosystems—serving creation as stewards—becomes central to serving those people.

One elitist stream in the secular environmental movement has seen creation solely in terms of its recreational possibilities. From this perspective, humans, and especially the poor, can only be burdens on the land. It has been easy for North Americans to imagine wilderness as something that is best left untouched by human influence.

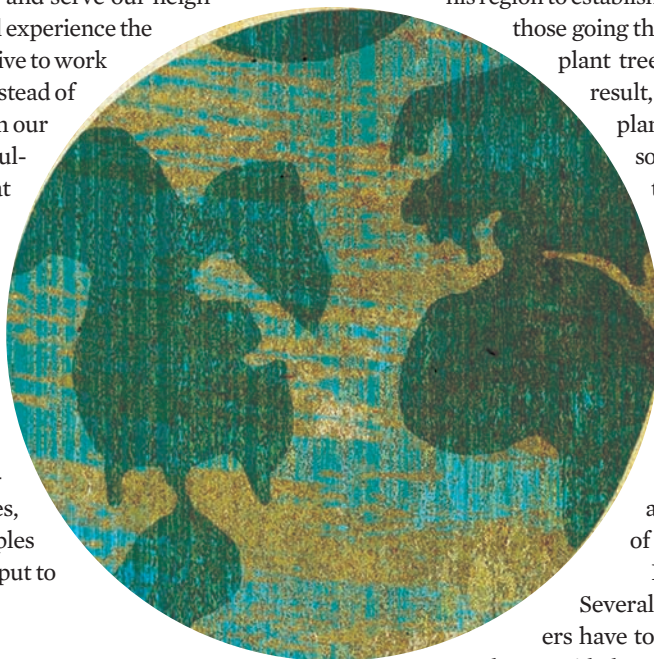
In truth, there is hardly such a thing as

We have little choice as to whether we will interact with creation. But we can choose whether our interactions will be life-giving or death-dealing.

Key Christian leaders respond to this article at ChristianityToday.com/go/conversation. Post your own comments to become part of the Global Conversation about important issues related to world evangelization in preparation for the Lausanne Movement’s Cape Town 2010 conference.

untouched wilderness. The rainforests of the Amazon and the South Pacific and the prairies of North America were all shaped by human influence. Furthermore, to see creation as something humans should leave untouched is to ignore our stewardship role. God calls us to participate in nature, contributing to and ensuring its fruitfulness. We have little choice as to whether we will interact with creation. But we can choose whether our interactions will be life-giving or death-dealing. Our citizenship in God's kingdom should inform this choice.

The coming of God's kingdom has changed our fundamental reality. We love our enemies and serve our neighbors. Similarly, though we still experience the effects of the curse, we can strive to work with God's natural systems instead of against them. Over and over in our work with sustainable agriculture, we have discovered that we have that choice. Weeds still grow and crops still fail, of course, but we can work in such a way as to give back to creation, mimicking its fertility cycles. The more closely agriculture mimics natural ecosystems, the more sustainable it is. Agroforestry, permaculture, composting latrines, and even recycling are examples in which these principles are put to work.



FROM ENVIRONMENT TO EVANGELISM

God's ability to work things together for good is obvious in the intricate ways that ecosystems fit together. Nothing is wasted; everything has its niche. Everywhere, life springs forth from death, and resurrection is foreshadowed. Beyond seeking merely to reduce our footprint, we can seek to be restorative in our relationship with the earth.

On a global scale, restoration is a monumental task. We are unlikely to achieve it this side of Christ's return, any more than we are likely to bring about world peace by turning the other cheek. However, kingdom thinking can serve to guide our planning and our individual choices. At Plant with Purpose, we have seen restoration happen. Rivers and streams that had withered have begun to flow again due to upstream solutions. They have become powerful illustrations of God's ability to redeem and restore, both for us and for the farmers with whom we are striving to share Christ's love.

In industrialized countries, where we are shielded from the direct feedback of the land, we have much to learn from our brothers and sisters in subsistence-farming countries. For example, I have understood much more deeply the connection between environmental degradation and misery among

Haitian farmers than in biology classes in the U.S. I have been very impressed with the seriousness with which African, Latin American, and Asian church leaders have embraced creation care. When Care of Creation, an environmental missions agency, hosted a "God and Creation" conference in Kenya, it was filled to capacity with pastors and leaders from all over East Africa. Similar conferences in the U.S. have struggled to get more than a handful to attend.

Furthermore, African conference attendance resulted in action. One Tanzanian pastor encouraged all the churches in his region to establish tree nurseries. They required those going through confirmation classes to plant trees in order to graduate. As a result, over 500,000 trees have been planted, and an important water source that had become intermittent now flows steadily.

This is gospel work. Paul reminds us in Romans 1:20 that creation reveals much about God. As such, it is a perfect starting point for a conversation about what we can learn of God's character from his Word. Environmental stewardship can be an integral part of God's story of redemption.

It can also open many doors. Several Plant with Purpose supporters have told me that their involvement has provided opportunities to share Christ with environmentalist friends or colleagues. My colleagues in the creation care community have had countless chances to engage with communities that would otherwise be closed to us.

Rivers and streams that had withered now flow again. They are powerful illustrations of God's ability to redeem and restore.

At the same time, conversations with poor farmers about the land and soil have given us perfect opportunities to integrate the gospel story into our work. After all, the Bible begins the story in the same place, with creation, earth, and soil.

Much of the world is either directly suffering as a result of environmental degradation or reacting in numb despair to gloomy predictions. Both groups desperately need the hope of Jesus Christ.

It is the hope they long for, a hope that speaks directly to the redemption of all creation and reminds them that God loves the cosmos.

The gospel is for everyone—from dirt farmers to environmental activists. It is good news that God cares about all that he has created.



Scott Sabin is executive director of Plant with Purpose (PlantwithPurpose.org), a Christian nonprofit organization that reverses deforestation and poverty.

A close-up portrait of a young girl with light green eyes and brown hair. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The text "Focus on the Females" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the upper portion of her face.

Focus on the Females

James Dobson
explains his ideas
for raising daughters,
and life after Focus.

Interview by
Sarah Pulliam Bailey

B

ETWEEN “SEXTING,” cyber bullying, and bikinis with padded tops for 7-year-olds, James Dobson thinks mainstream culture doesn’t offer girls a pretty picture. Dobson’s *Bringing Up Girls* (Tyndale) is the sequel to *Bringing Up Boys*, which has sold more than two million copies to date.

The founder of Focus on the Family says that one of his favorite letters came from a 14-year-old girl. “I hate you dr. dobson,” she wrote. “I had to watch the dumbest movie today about sex. You made the movie. HA! Like you’d know anything about it.” Parents are producing strong-willed children, Dobson says, and he wants parents to assume responsibility. Dobson spoke with *Christianity Today* about his vision for shaping the next generation of women and his departure from Focus on the Family.

How have cultural expectations for girls changed since you raised your daughter? Was there advice for raising girls 30 years ago that would be bad advice today?

No, I haven’t changed my views because they are rooted in moral principles and in Scripture, so they are eternal. I don’t mean to imply I have a corner on God’s truth, but I do draw the ideas and principles from that foundation. It’s amazing that if you go back 40 years, when I wrote *Dare to Discipline*, and read those principles today, they are still on target. *Dare to Discipline* was published in 1970 in the midst of the Vietnam War and a culture of rebellion. The book was written in that context, but the principles of child rearing have not changed.

Has the rise of feminism made it harder for parents to bring up girls?

The culture has totally changed. Girls today are growing up too fast; the influences of the entertainment industry have changed. Girls are experiencing a lot that their mothers and grandmothers never experienced. That age compression thrusts girls into the adolescent experience far too early and gets them thinking about sexuality at an early age and creates pressure. We are dealing with evidences of emotional turmoil, including eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia; 90 percent of those with eating disorders are girls, some of them as young as 5.

Recently a clothing manufacturer finally took this product off the shelves: bikinis with padded bras for 7-year-olds. You also have cutting, piercing, and sexual aggression among elementary-school-age kids and early involvement in drugs and alcohol. Girls have now reached parity with boys in binge drinking, and there’s a high level of violence among girls. One out of three boys and girls is either a victim or a perpetrator of bullying. We’ve seen news recently about girls who hang themselves after being taunted. There has never been an easy time to raise kids, but it’s harder today.

Has feminism made anything easier about raising girls?

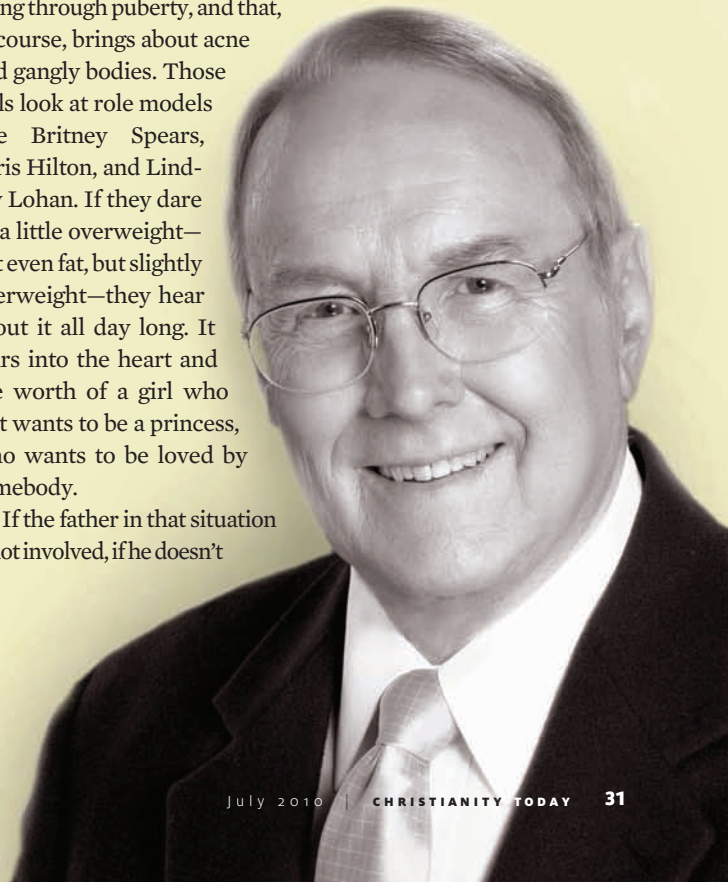
Feminism certainly addressed problems that needed to be addressed. Before the late 1960s, when the women’s movement came into full

force, women were treated like sex objects, and there was not equal pay for equal work. There’s now a level of respect for women that was not as evident, say, 50 years ago.

In your book you write about famous women who say they struggle with self-esteem. Yet we are in a culture that also promotes self-help material. How do you teach your daughter about healthy self-esteem while not training her to be self-focused?

My concern is the model that the entertainment industry puts forward. It’s a one-value system of evaluating human worth, and that one value is beauty. Girls in their adolescent and middle-school years are going through puberty, and that, of course, brings about acne and gangly bodies. Those girls look at role models like Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, and Lindsay Lohan. If they dare be a little overweight—not even fat, but slightly overweight—they hear about it all day long. It tears into the heart and the worth of a girl who just wants to be a princess, who wants to be loved by somebody.

If the father in that situation is not involved, if he doesn’t



affirm her, love her, tell her she's pretty, put his arm around her, and give her attention, she often looks for it elsewhere. The only thing she has to bargain with is her sexuality, and she thinks she'll be loved if she gives certain gifts of her sexuality. We know where that leads: He gets what he wants and dumps her, and she doesn't get what she wants, which is love.

You explained some of the stereotypes of young girls—they love flowers and are more easily wounded than boys. Are there stereotypes you think are harmful that shouldn't be reinforced?

Yes. In recent years—this is perhaps a product of the feminist movement—girls feel the need to emulate boys, even predatory boys. They are tough, rough, crude, profane, and sexually aggressive. Girls are often the ones to make advances toward boys, which takes away their need to be the initiators. That grows out of this empowerment movement that is related to some feminist ideals that are harmful to girls. Girls are more vulnerable, more easily wounded, and more sensitive in many ways. That is why it's so important for the parents to affirm them, build their understanding of their identity, and help them cope with the culture.

You also warn about the dangers of technology and entertainment. How do you suggest parents handle their children's activities on websites like Facebook and Twitter?

Parents have to know what technology their kids are using. Sexting is a terrible thing. Pornography is pervasive, and parents need to keep up with changes in technology and protect their kids. That's a tough assignment, because kids are ahead of them. Parents often have extremely demanding careers, and when they come home they have nothing left to give, so the culture will often take your kids to hell.

You mentioned your earlier book *Dare to Discipline*. Should parents discipline their girls differently from boys?

It depends on the individual. No, you don't follow a formula. You have to understand the temperament of the child and give her what you perceive her needing.

You wrote about your grandmother, who co-pastored a church with your grandfather. If your daughter were to show gifts of leadership and ministry, how would you encourage her to use those gifts as she grows up?

I would encourage her to use whatever gifts God gives her. You can draw the conclusion—which I do not say in this book—that women have to be locked into a narrow role, that they can't be creative and can't be leaders. That's ridiculous and certainly not the point of the book. But it is important that girls know what it means to be a woman. Males and females are unique and different, because their brains are different. There's not a limitation on girls. My grandmother was very strong, and so was my mother. She also knew what it meant to be a woman and wife and was very successful at it.

What do you see as the next area of gender tension in our culture?

I think there's going to be more of the same. Unfortunately, that

probably means the continued deterioration of the family. When the family is in disarray, kids suffer. There will probably be more divorce, more single mothers and single fathers. We are not moving in a healthy direction. Our culture is moving toward greater sexual expression. Of course the Internet, with its pornography and influence, is going to be very difficult to counter. We need prayer and dedication to kids to bring them through it.

You said in your book that Karen Santorum would make a wonderful First Lady, and you've made some political endorsements.

Do you plan on getting involved in politics?

I certainly plan on being involved in the culture and the moral issues I believe in. The institution of the family has very few friends in Washington. President Obama has already announced he's going to roll back the Bush tax cuts, which means a reinstitution of the marriage penalty tax in 2011. With the tax, married couples actually pay higher taxes than those living together out of wedlock. That's just one example of the disregard for the needs of families. You can be sure I'll do what I can to influence that in the future.

You have left a long legacy for Focus on the Family. Were you ready to leave?

Yes and no. I was there for 33 years; I was the founder and president and chairman, and I poured my life into that ministry. We went from a half-time secretary in 1977 to 1,400 employees and an interna-

tional ministry that reached 220 million people every day. It's hard to walk away from something like that. We have asked the Lord, *Tell us what you want us to do. We're happy to stay here and die on the job if that's what you want. But if it's not, we don't want to stay too long.* Founders and presidents have a way of overstaying their welcome and then dying in their desk chair. They leave the organization in disarray because the younger generation has not been trained.

In 2001, I felt the Lord wanted me to step down as president. It was a hard thing to do, but I knew that his hand was at my back. We cried for three or four weeks, and on the last day we cried all day. People were so kind to us, yet it was time to go. But I'm healthy, and I have lots of energy, and I still have a lot I want to say. We started this new ministry called Family Talk, and it's taking off. I'm going back to 1977 and starting over.

Do you see Family Talk as competing at all with Focus on the Family?

It's kind of silly to think that the family, with all its problems across the country and around the world, needs only one ministry whose goal is to reach out to them. There's plenty of work to be done. We're not in competition any more than two Baptist churches in Atlanta are in competition. We're not trying to hurt each other, wound each other, or overtake each other. That's not going to happen.

My legacy doesn't matter. It isn't important that I be remembered. It's important that when I stand before the Lord, he says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." I want to finish strong. I don't want to make a mistake that would hurt the cause of Christ late in my life, so I'm going to do everything I can to bring many people to Christ. If he can use me in that regard through Family Talk, that will be my greatest legacy.



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Love Where You



THE FRONT PORCH is back. A growing number of buyers are asking for designs that include the iconic hometown amenity, according to *Chicago Tribune* interviews with building contractors. Front porches provide

families and friends with a place to gather while they keep an eye on the kids. By facilitating small talk, they build local community. And local community is no small accomplishment with so many reasons to stay inside and watch television, surf the Web, or play video games. The front porch's comeback suggests that some people have found no suitable substitute for knowing their neighbors.

If the latest figures on geographic mobility are any indication, we would be wise to make nice with those neighbors. Despite commercial air travel, interstate highways, mobile phones, and e-mail, the mobility rate has declined steadily since the U.S. Census Bureau began tracking such data in 1948. In the aftermath of World War II, as suburbs began sprouting from farmland, a record 21.2

TOM MADAY

Live



The City: After two decades of meeting in temporary spaces, Park Community Church settled in a remade storage warehouse overlooking Chicago.

Urban, suburban, and rural churches respond to new challenges in a less mobile era. By Collin Hansen

barely in 2009, to 12.5 percent.

With more Americans than ever staying put, I visited three churches—one urban, one suburban, and one rural—to see how the body of Christ is loving where its members live.

URBAN ENTHUSIASTS

Approaching Chicago's old Cabrini-Green neighborhood, Salvation Army resale shops and storefront Pentecostal churches gradually give way to upscale bars and new condominiums. Once home to America's most notorious public housing project, Cabrini-Green has gentrified. Gone are the high-rise buildings that blotted Chicago's skyline just one mile from Michigan Avenue's upscale shops.

The neighborhood's new kid on the block matches the community's retooled profile. If you're a single 20-something Christian living in Chicago, there's a good chance you attend Park Community Church. The non-denominational church's immaculate new auditorium offers a panoramic view of the Chicago skyline. But on one summer Sunday evening, the curtains were drawn and the lights dimmed to create a club-like, intimate worship experience.

After a few songs, a pastor asked the congregation to arrange themselves according to neighborhood. Park's congregation is composed of people from across the city. A layout of the auditorium appeared on the video screens, with sections labeled by neighborhood. The largest block encompassed popular neighborhoods for urbane young professionals, including Lincoln Park and Wrigleyville.

Pastor Jackson Crum preached about what it means to be a good neighbor—a timely topic for the church, which had moved into its new facility one year earlier. He asked the church to imagine what Chicago would look like if the winds of revival blew through. He said the neighborhood is already buzzing about Park. The church's auditorium had recently hosted graduation for Jenner Academy, a

nearby elementary school. Park has drawn from its deep well of highly educated members to find mentors for the schoolchildren.

But Park's greatest strength—its vibrant youth—is also its most daunting challenge. Many members are hardly older than the church, founded nearly 20 years ago. And contrary to the national trend, every year some of the church's most active, giving members relocate as their attention turns to marriage and kids. When a pastor recognized the dads on Father's Day, no more than 10 in the crowd of hundreds stood.

Park is a great place to find a spouse, but a less popular place to settle. Teaching pastor J. R. Kerr states plainly that the church has few answers and lots of questions about how to reach its neighborhood. At the local school, 120 kids are homeless. Church members, whose average education is a master's degree, are eager to learn about the neighborhood and invest in its future. Kerr hopes that small steps today will result in great leaps forward 20 years down the road. In one new effort (partly to retain families as well as to serve the community), Park hosts a Christian elementary school.

"A city gets transformed when neighborhoods marked by the gospel are redeemed," Kerr says. "To do that, we need to stay 20 or 30 years. We need young people who will say, 'Chicago is my city.'"

SUBURBAN PARADISE

Perhaps no social factor in the U.S. has contributed to the growth of evangelicalism like suburban sprawl. Where American farmland yields to acres of tract housing and subdivisions, megachurches soon follow. Uprooted from their native towns, many disoriented suburban families search for new community networks and find them in megachurches.

Calvary Baptist Church in suburban Woodstock, Illinois, more than 50 miles from downtown Chicago, was founded about 50 years ago to give displaced Southerners a place to call home. Visiting the church building, with its purple and yellow windows, feels like visiting the Deep South in the 1950s.

But that Calvary Baptist Church is no more. For half a century, the church never grew larger than 70 and struggled to make a dent in the town of 25,000. When pastor Steve McCoy was called, he wanted the church to become more outwardly focused and friendly to visitors. Last year the church changed its name to Doxa Fellowship. Effectively restarting, the church

percent of Americans moved between 1950 and 1951. But only 13.2 percent of Americans moved between 2006 and 2007. Then in April 2009, the Census Bureau reported that a mere 11.9 percent of Americans moved in 2008. This rate was the lowest in recorded U.S. history, and the 1.3 percent drop between 2007 and 2008 was the second-largest one-year decline. The number rebounded only

loaned its building to a Hispanic congregation and moved into a third-floor ballroom overlooking Main Street. During Doxa's Sunday morning service, you can hear the sound of drag-racing Harleys and smell popcorn cooking in the vintage theater across the street. The balcony overlooks the commuter rail station and Woodstock's idyllic town square, where Bill Murray filmed *Groundhog Day*.

McCoy and I talked about the challenges and opportunities of suburban ministry as we enjoyed the sounds of a folk festival in the town square. Just a few weeks after the church moved, he noted an uptick in visitors, including Hispanics, a rapidly growing segment of the town's population. McCoy has found a little neighborly interest can go a long way in showing God's love to Woodstock. The declining mobility rate may offer the potential for long-term relationships both within and outside church walls and foster deeper community bonds in cities and suburbs alike. McCoy opens family cookouts to the community and finds that something as simple as carrying around a tennis ball (for pickup games of hot box or pickle) helps foster friendly conversations with strangers.

McCoy knows how urban enthusiasts malign the suburbs as safe, secure, and boring. But just as Park members are trying to encourage people to settle down in the city, so also suburban churches now cope with the urban challenges of racial and economic diversity. The financial factors that have stunted mobility everywhere have worsened poverty where you might not expect it in the suburbs. McCoy could sit back and lament Woodstock's many challenges. Instead, he's looking for ways to help it flourish.

***'A city gets transformed when neighborhoods marked by the gospel are redeemed. To do that, we need to stay 20 or 30 years.'* ~ J. R. Kerr**

"We want to find what's already beautiful in the community and relate redemption with what people deal with in real life," McCoy says. "But we're also trying to display God's beauty through community and holiness to help people understand Jesus' work of redemption."

FORETASTE OF HEAVEN

Mobility is deeply ingrained in the American experience. Even with an all-time low mobility rate, 35.2 million Americans moved

in 2008. Rare today is the person who grows up, marries, works, raises children, and dies in the same place. Except for Native Americans, everyone traces their roots to ancestors who left their homelands to settle in a new, unfamiliar land. Setting down roots in a particular place sounds nice, but given the choice, many will opt to uproot in search of a good job and



The Suburb: Woodstock residents commute to their jobs, but few travel the 51 miles to downtown Chicago. Most work in closer suburbs.

STEVE MCCOY

a nice home. Declining mobility may mask an American population itching to move but temporarily tethered to a mortgage.

Taken for granted by many Americans, mobility is a prominent theme in Scripture. The motivation to move accords with the

biblical mandate, at least in part. Jesus commissions his disciples to fan out into the nations (Matt. 28:19–20). The Christian life has been pictured as a pilgrimage, most famously by John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress*. But in the biblical storyline of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation of God's kingdom, we see that mobility is not a virtue in and of itself.

Sometimes it is a curse. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's warning, he banished them from the Garden where he had placed

them (Gen. 3:23–24). Only one generation later, the Lord cursed Cain to be a wanderer on the earth after Cain killed his brother (Gen. 4:12). When the whole earth conspired to build a city and tower that would reach to heaven, "lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4, *ESV*), the Lord scattered them (Gen. 11:8–9).

But more often than not, mobility stands in tension with settled existence; in the Bible, life is essentially a pilgrimage, but always toward a final destination. God called Abraham to leave his native country and family to settle in a new land (Gen. 12:1). But even then, God settled Abraham and his descendants in a place he had prepared, the Promised Land of Canaan. The Exodus was God's grand plan to deliver his people from slavery in Egypt and settle them in a place like Eden, flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 33:3). Despite the Lord's miraculous deliverance, the Hebrews lacked faith that God would clear out this place for them. So God made them wander in the desert for 40 years (Num. 32:13). When they finally settled in the Promised Land, the Hebrews flourished under the leadership of King David and King Solomon. But once again, the Hebrews pursued the gods of the surrounding nations. So God used those nations to exile Israel and Judah from the Promised Land (2 Kings 17:1–6; 25:18–20).

Along the way, God has always made provision for his pilgrim people to honor him. The Lord made Joseph a successful aide to Egyptian leaders (Gen. 39:2–6). Moses was raised by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:1–10). Even when God sent Judah into exile, he left them with instructions for how to live among the Gentiles. They should build homes, plant

final destination.

Christians understand this about life in a way their unbelieving neighbors cannot comprehend. And how Christians live in the way stations can implicitly give their neighbors a glimpse of the New Jerusalem (1 Pet. 2:12), and hopefully attract them to the faith.

Though Brauns himself grew up on a farm, he had never served a rural church until the 151-year-old congregation called him midway through his ministry. He likens his return to the pivotal moment when one of his favorite literary characters, Wendell Berry's seminary dropout Jayber Crow, crosses the river on his way home to Port William.

As we sat together in Stillman Valley's only restaurant, Brauns explained how he recently began reading Berry, the acclaimed Kentucky agrarian and novelist. Brauns says Berry's "membership" of fictional Port William has showed him the beauty and loveliness of community.

"These people can't fully know how much I love them," Brauns says, tears welling in his eyes.

Stillman Valley, not particularly mobile, offers its share of challenges, Brauns admits. He focuses on foreign missions to help ward off the provincialism that plagues many rural communities. Brauns has immersed himself in local history in order to understand the people he serves. Driving around town, he points to several houses and explains their family history. Noticing the library, he tells how he helped acquire every novel and collection of essays the 75-year-old Berry has written so far.

Brauns recalls one particular Berry passage that calmed his restless spirit. In typical Berry fashion, wisdom ushers forth from simple characters.

"Uncle Burley said hills always looked blue when you were far away from them," Berry writes in the voice of title character Nathan Coulter. "That was a pretty color for hills; the little houses and barns and fields looked so neat and quiet tucked against them. It made you want to be close to them. But he said that when you got close they were like the hills you'd left, and when you looked back your own hills were blue and you wanted to go back again. He said he reckoned a man could wear himself out going back and forth."

Indeed, the pilgrimage of life can threaten to wear a traveler out, unless he knows that the blue that seems far away will become an everlasting home. ✚

Collin Hansen is a CT editor at large and co-author, with John Woodbridge, of the forthcoming book *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories That Stretch and Stir* (Zondervan).



The Town: Few call the 151-year-old Red Brick Church by its longer, more official name.

gardens, marry, and multiply, all the while seeking and praying for the city's welfare, for they would share in its prosperity (Jer. 29:4–7).

Though the Jews returned to the land after 70 years, they remained in a form of exile under foreign dominion through the time of Jesus. Even the Son of Man had no place to rest his head (Luke 9:58). After Jesus ascended and the apostles huddled in Jerusalem, God scattered them to preach the Word (Acts 8:4), first to Samaria and ultimately to the capital city of Rome.

But the story didn't end there. And it doesn't end with us today. Numerous biblical passages indicate that a renewed and glorified earth will be Christians' eternal home (Isa. 60; 65:17ff; Matt. 5:5; Rom. 8:21; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21–22). The places we build and sustain today may give the world a foretaste of the New Jerusalem. So in one sense, the places where we live are not way stations along the pilgrimage, but rather signs of our

RURAL SPIRIT

As my car cut through corridors of corn on the way to Stillman Valley, Illinois, I noticed a surprising sight over the horizon: vapors emitted by a nuclear plant. The farming in this part of the country is good, but the plant provides much-needed jobs for several small towns in north-central Illinois.

Pulling into town with 20 minutes to spare, I was surprised to see an early-arriving crowd walking toward the Congregational Christian Church of Stillman Valley, more commonly known as the Red Brick Church. Eventually, about 200 of the town's 1,000 residents filled the pews on a cool summer morning as Pastor Chris Brauns preached about the covenant-making ceremony in Genesis 15. He appealed to the congregation's experience to help them understand the setting.

"We're farm people," Brauns said. "We know a three-year-old heifer is a big heifer."



Audacious Apologist: Moishe Rosen demonstrates outside San Francisco's Garden of Eden strip club in 1973.

At first a reluctant street preacher, **Moishe Rosen**, founder of Jews

An Evangelist

CANCER DIDN'T KICK ME and I didn't kick the bucket"—a blog entry, September 10, 2009. Moishe Rosen died May 19 in San Francisco of prostate cancer at age 78, leaving behind a wife, two daughters, a controversial parachurch organization, and more than a bucketful of quips.

As the founder of Jews for Jesus, Rosen was the most colorful Jewish evangelist of the 20th century—perhaps since the apostle Paul. Even before he founded Jews for Jesus in 1969, he demonstrated a unique form of confrontational evangelism that often riled Christians and Jews alike. "Friendship evangelism," he once said, "is no evangelism at all."

Born in 1932, Rosen grew up in an Orthodox—though not particularly religious—home: "My Jewishness is something that I took for granted. I grew up in Denver, Colorado, in a neighborhood where most of the people were Jewish. If you walked to the grocery store or the shoemaker or the barber, you expected to hear Yiddish."

He and Ceil Starr, still teenagers, married in an Orthodox synagogue but were determined not to keep a kosher home. They would be "modern American Jews." But through an extraordinary set of circumstances, they both became Christians some three years later. Ceil converted after befriending a Christian woman; Rosen, not pleased, began studying the New Testament in order to prove her wrong. That led to his own conversion. He later enrolled at Northeastern Bible College in New Jersey and went on to become an ordained Baptist minister, though he quickly discovered he was not an evangelist by nature.

Rosen's first street-preaching assignment was on an isolated traffic island: "I had written my speech on school notebook paper, and I read it as though I were delivering a proclamation. Nobody at all walked by in the 45 minutes we were out there, and I was relieved when it was over. I thanked God for our lack of listeners."

By the time Rosen was in his thirties, however, he was in New York, working as an administrator for the American Board of Missions to the Jews (now Chosen People Ministries), where he was, by his own account, shielded by a secretary and two assistants. He was an effective trainer and had turned into a popular speaker, but he did not get down-and-dirty in the trenches of Jewish evangelism.

Sprinkling his messages with wisecracks, Rosen sometimes repeated Ronald Reagan's quip: "A hippie dresses like Tarzan, walks like Jane, and smells like Cheetah." On one occasion, a friend confronted him: Had Rosen ever smelled a hippie? Rosen snapped back that he had never gotten close enough to.

But the words stuck in his mouth. Rosen instantly recognized the self-indictment. Large numbers of hippies, after all, were Jewish. That incident was the turning point in his ministry. He began spending time in Greenwich Village and wrote the first of his tracts ("broad-sides"), a crude cartoon message entitled "A Message from Squares." It was hardly a typical tract: "Hey you with the beard on your face!" "We think you are beautiful." "God likes beards too."

Soon Rosen was heavily involved in youth-focused street evangelism—the precursor of Jews for Jesus, a movement that some years later found itself headquartered at the center of hippie ferment, the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco. Quick to poke fun at himself and the incongruity of his ministry, Rosen often quipped, "I'm overweight, overbearing, and over 40. What am I doing leading a youth movement?"

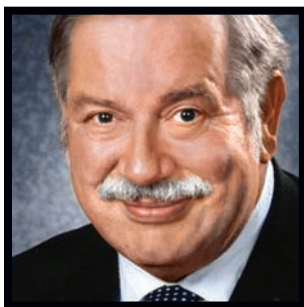
Rosen was convinced that Jewish mission endeavors were failing. Organizations sponsored city missions, educational ministries, and youth camps, but had few lasting conversions to show for all their efforts. Jewish mission outreach in the 19th and early 20th centuries had recorded large numbers of baptisms. But with the horrific revelations of the Nazi Holocaust, support for Jewish evangelism declined, and ministries hesitated to confront Jews forcefully with the message of Jesus.

In recent decades, Jewish missions have transitioned into Messianic Jewish ministries that emphasize Jewish forms and culture—more Jewish in their rituals, according to Rosen, than are practicing Jews themselves. He was determined to defy the softer

approach to Jewish evangelism. To his critics who scorned the name Jews for Jesus and the high-stakes pursuit of Jewish youth, he had a quick comeback: "If the Jews didn't need Jesus, why didn't he come by way of Ireland?"

CERTIFIABLY SANE

Who was this rotund minister whom I introduced several years ago in a seminary chapel service as "the only Jewish Buddha" I had ever known? Rosen was a man of ambiguity and paradox and legendary contradictions. He liked to tell the story that before going off to Bible college, his father insisted he see a psychiatrist—fearing he might have gone over the edge in his zeal for Jesus. Rosen insisted he was not offended: "I thought there was always the possibility that I might really be insane." After two sessions, the doctor sent Rosen's father a letter stating Rosen had been examined and "found to be psychiatrically normal." That has been his ace in the hole: "So no matter what anyone says about my mental stability these days, I at least have a letter to prove it. Most people don't."



Moishe Rosen

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JEWS FOR JESUS

for Jesus, came to relish insults and controversy. By Ruth A. Tucker

with Chutzpah

In a 2009 blog entry entitled “35 Things About Me,” Rosen wrote, “I want to be a godly person. . . . I’ve tried to be godly, but I know too much about my failures.” As he continued his blog post, he admitted his fondness for “seeing pretty girls of all ages.” He allegedly said to a group of single male staff members, “There are three good reasons why you should get married. The first is sex. The second is sex. The third is sex.” Perhaps more than liking women, though, he confessed, “I love to eat,” but “I don’t like being fat.”

He did not reference in his 35 things about himself—or among his failures—his notorious temper. On more than one occasion, during staff meetings he threw things in a fit of rage across the room—once, according to testimony, ripping a phone out of the outlet and throwing it “through a plate glass window.” Such incidents were presumably spontaneous. But “pain training” was another matter altogether. In the early 1970s, when Jews for Jesus street evangelists were sometimes roughed up by the Jewish Defense League, Rosen sought to toughen up his troops by slapping and hitting them, sometimes knocking them to the floor. His justification was to teach that the threat of pain was worse than the actual pain itself. The board of directors soon put an



‘You Can’t Ignore Us’: Rosen speaks at a Jesus Joy Rally in Madison Square Garden’s Felt Forum in 1972.

end to this treatment.

Because of such practices and a host of rigid rules, many staff members left the movement. Some of the online testimonies are poignant. Jo Ann Schneider Farris sought unsuccessfully to make amends. “I didn’t want Moishe Rosen to leave this planet being hated,” she wrote. “Somehow, I believed things could be made right and everyone could hug and make up.” But until recently, she found the chasm too wide to bridge.

According to one estimate, “Half of the missionaries who leave Jews for Jesus leave ‘badly.’” Jews for Jesus insists the figure is inflated; yet even so, the painful stories of many who have left should not be discounted as simply the fabrications of malcontents. Rosen conceded as much when he wrote in 2003, “Sometimes I fear that I was too tough on some of you. For those mistakes, I truly apologize.”

In the decades after setting up shop in San Francisco, Rosen’s star rose as he developed four parallel aspects of the ministry: recruiting youth (primarily Jewish) for evangelistic ministry; reaching out to Christians (individuals and organizations) for support; goading Jews in an effort to draw public reaction; and using various forms of media (particularly broadsides and advertisements) for publicity.

COURTESY OF JEWS FOR JESUS



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To be ignored or go unnoticed was the response the movement needed to avoid at all costs. Opposition, persecution, abuse, insult—bring it on. On one occasion, someone shot a bullet through a window at the San Francisco headquarters. How did Rosen react? By giving whistles to the staff.

If some of his methods were deemed outrageous and offensive, all the better. A large black-and-white newspaper ad depicting Orthodox Jewish men—as might be seen walking to synagogue on the Sabbath—was designed to shock the senses. The man in the middle is opening his coat to reveal a bright red Jews for Jesus T-shirt. Make the New York Jewish establishment mad, grab public attention, and in the process pique the curiosity of rebellious Jewish youth. A recipe for success.

Baiting the Jewish establishment often provoked strong reactions and gave Rosen and his movement the attention he sought. “I feel less revulsion for Christian missionaries than for their Jewish accomplices,” wrote Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel. “They do not even have the courage to declare frankly that they have decided to repudiate their people and its memories.” Jewish reporter Jacqueline Swartz vilified the group’s Christ in the Passover presentations: “This is a Passover from hell. A macabre parody.”

“Eccentricity is armor that gives you an advantage,” Rosen once mused. “Always keep people guessing.” The impact on the Jewish community? “Jews for Jesus is like an elephant in the room; you can’t ignore us.”

What about his achievements as a Christian leader? His barely audible response, when interviewed in 2006, was matter-of-fact: “I’m not impressed with my own achievements. . . . I’m like Ferdinand the Bull, who didn’t want to charge; all he wanted to do was go out in the field with the flowers and bees. . . . I was no paragon of dedication.”

Rosen had little patience for typical worship services. Nevertheless, in broadly evangelical circles, Rosen was generally held in high regard. He crossed denominational lines easily and cultivated friends and financial support from fundamentalists to Pentecostals to mainline Protestants. In fact, staid Christian Reformed folks were his staunchest allies. Vernon Grounds, a noted evangelical scholar and president emeritus of Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, said of Rosen, “He is a dynamic and creative witness! When Moishe Rosen comes into a city,

there is either a revival or a riot.”

Rosen stepped down from his position as the director of Jews for Jesus in 1996, at age 64. Not long before his death, when asked what his greatest legacy was, Rosen’s response was predictable: “People can no longer dismiss the idea of Jewish Christians.” No one ever challenged Rosen’s claim to be a Christian, but to Jews that meant he had renounced his Jewishness. The debate over

Jewish Christians will never be resolved across religious lines. But anyone who knew and worked with Moishe Rosen would never doubt either his pride in his Jewish heritage or his Christian witness. 

Ruth A. Tucker, Ph.D., is the author of *Not Ashamed: The Story of Jews for Jesus* and the forthcoming *Parade of Faith: A Biographical History of the Christian Church* (Zondervan, January 2011).

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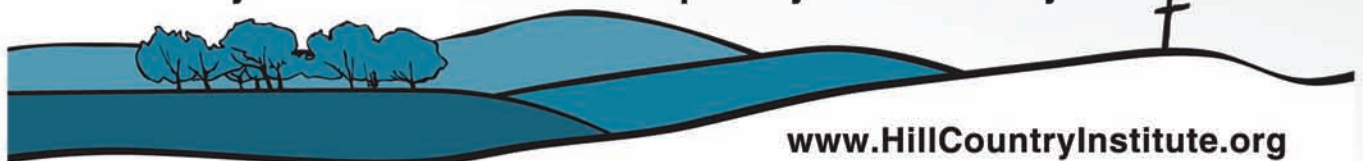
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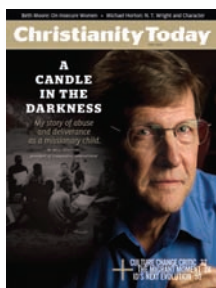
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VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



As an African and a missionary, I know firsthand the great ills some missionaries have brought along the way. I pray that readers with deep-seated scars will find healing.

Stan Okoro
Umuahia, Nigeria

Forgiving an Abuser

Wess Stafford's account of his childhood ["A Candle in the Darkness," May] is the most moving I've ever read. Usually children crumple under such abuses, which typically wreck their development and their performance as adults. Yet God is involved. He marks the suffering; he knows the grief of the most helpless.

A revolution against evil can be truly liberating depending on one's motive. If it is vengeance, the end is forecast. If it is justice, great benefits will come. Justice and redemption belong together.

JAMES WILLINGHAM
E-mail

When I first heard from other Mamou students in the late 1980s about the abuses, few in the missionary world would listen. When abuse is systemic, we seem to treat it differently from isolated incidents—particularly if the system is religious. We sense that criticizing the system is equal to criticizing God or the faith, and will thus protect the system to protect God. When we separate the two, we can deal with systemic matters while keeping our faith with greater clarity. Stafford's story helps us do just that.

RUTH VAN REKEN
Indianapolis, Indiana

I almost couldn't finish Stafford's story for the tears in my eyes. As an African

and a missionary, I know firsthand the great ills some missionaries have brought along the way. I'm so glad our God is both loving and just, and I pray that readers with deep-seated scars will find healing from our Father.

STAN OKORO
Umuahia, Nigeria

Wess Stafford Responds:

Ever since my story appeared in *Christianity Today*, the most common question I've heard is, "How did you move from pain to deliverance?" My reply to readers is a single word: *forgiveness*.

At age 17, I realized that those who hurt me would never apologize. They weren't even sorry. But I could no longer bear carrying the pain of my past, so I chose to forgive them anyway. "Get out of my heart. Get out of my mind. Get out of my life!" I remember saying. "What you did to me will not define me. You stole my childhood, but you cannot have the rest of my life. Get out—I forgive you!"

Since then I've learned that while God always requires us to forgive, forgiving isn't saying that what happened was okay. It doesn't release someone from the consequences of their actions. And it doesn't require letting someone back into your life. It does mean giving up the right to seek revenge.

So, here is my counsel to those who have suffered: If you have never been able

to forgive, you are allowing the person who hurt you to live rent-free in your heart. It's costing him nothing and costing you everything. Perhaps it's time for you to evict him through forgiveness.

Saving Colorado's Orphans

Thank you for highlighting Colorado's success in reducing the number of kids in foster care. May's Gleanings section [p. 13] said the reduction (from 800 to 365) was "thanks to an initiative spearheaded by Focus on the Family." While we at Focus are honored to have played a part, we could not have done it without the collective efforts of the government, adoption agencies, churches, and ministries. In fact, the cooperation began before our Wait No More initiative, with a ministry called Project 1:27 partnering with the Colorado Department of Human Services and county agencies. We want to be sure to give credit where credit is due.

KELLY ROSATI
Senior Director, Sanctity of Human Life Project, Focus on the Family
Colorado Springs, Colorado

When to Leave a Church

Joseph Hellerman asserts in "A Family Affair" [May] that those who stay in their churches grow and those who leave don't. This argument is simplistic at best and dangerous at worst. Congregations

TOP 3
What got the
most comments
in May's CT

22%
The Village Green:
Intelligent Design
Karl Giberson,
Stephen C. Meyer,
and Marcus Ross

19%
A Candle in the
Darkness
Wess Stafford

14%
A Family Affair
Joseph H. Hellerman

YAY OR NAY
Readers' take on
The Village Green:
Intelligent Design

71%
29%

range from healthy and life-giving to abusive and death-dealing. And changing a dysfunctional church culture is difficult, requiring changes that most churches won't attempt. Portraying those who leave a church after much prayer as uncommitted and shallow is an instance of the church shooting its wounded.

DIANE ZEMKE
Spokane, Washington

Regarding Hellerman's discussion of the movie *Titanic*: Isn't arranging for Rose to marry a jerk to satisfy the family's greed for money and status a tidy form of parents selling children? Hellerman seems to endorse the idea. I call it family sin. Just as Jesus, who valued family loyalty, said following him trumped family loyalty when the loyalties conflicted (Matt. 10:35-37), so times will arise when following Christ requires leaving a church—or a family. It's not always self-serving to leave a church enmeshed in the pastor's ego or mired in legalism. The wrong church can be as pathogenic as an abusive family.

DAVID DONALDSON
Golden, Colorado

Getting Smart about ID

It was refreshing to see May's Village Green contributors, albeit with varying levels of candor, admit that intelligent

design (ID) as a scientific theory is bankrupt. And since ID is not specifically Christian, the better question for a Christian magazine might be, "How can we teach the doctrine of creation effectively?" instead of, "How can ID gain academic credibility?" I'd suggest focusing on the truths revealed in Genesis, such as creation's order, goodness, and purpose, and man's stewardship and accountability.

STEVEN ANDERSON
Auburn, Maine

Karl Giberson says "science loves rebels," but the reverse is true; anyone who challenges the prevailing paradigm faces knee-jerk opposition. Einstein's relativity theories were vigorously opposed, and he in turn fought against quantum mechanics. The big bang theory got its name as a form of ridicule. The list goes on, as Thomas Kuhn documented in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

Today's scientific sacred cows are neo-Darwinian evolution and anthropogenic global warming. Anyone who critiques either is ridiculed. So it is with ID proponents, who helpfully note chinks in the naturalistic evolutionary paradigm. The need encouragement—not attacks—from people who claim to be on God's side.

HUGH HENRY, PH.D.
Highland Heights, Kentucky



ONLINE POLL

BORDERLINE ETHICS
What is your response to Arizona's new immigration law?

10%
It is unconstitutional.

17%
It will likely encourage racial and ethnic profiling.

8%
It will encourage government invasion of privacy.

42%
It only enforces existing laws that the federal government has been lax about.

14%
It is necessary in order to control crime.

5%
It is not strict enough.

3%
I don't know enough about the law.

2%
I'm informed, but still unsure.

Total Votes: 778

compiled by Laura Leonard

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"Can't we show love without advocating anarchy and law breaking?"

Julie Anne, on Christians' response to Arizona's immigration law that would allow police to ask about a person's legal status while enforcing another law.

Speaking Out: "Arizona's Border Crisis," by Jenny Hwang

"Science can identify the mechanisms that might lead to unhappy relationships, but the Bible explains why: We are born with a sinful condition. And we need the Bible to tell us how to escape this condition."

John M., on new research that suggests genetics predisposes some people to bad relationships.

Women's Blog: "Adultery: My Genes Made Me Do It," by Amy Julia Becker

"It's been refreshing to see Christian values discussed with such fervor and respect in mainstream culture. *Lost* helped us start a conversation we might not have otherwise begun."

Sayra G., on the spiritual impact of the hit television show, which ended its six-season run in May.

"Redeeming Lost," interview with TV critic Jeff Jensen by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

"I don't care what justices are, so long as they faithfully uphold their oath to 'protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.'"

Jim Sparks, on the prospect of a Protestant-free Supreme Court.

"6 Catholics, 3 Jews," by Elesha Coffman

CARTOON • DAN REYNOLDS

Bearing True Witness

Why we are tempted to embellish conversion stories.

HE HAS A GREAT STORY," Christian blogger Jason Smathers told *The Tennessean* about Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary president Ergun Caner. "I wished he'd tell that story and stop where the facts end."

Smathers is one of several bloggers who have raised doubts about Caner's testimony about leaving Islam for Jesus.

"Until I was 15 years old, I was in the Islamic youth jihad," Caner told a Florida congregation in November 2001. "Until I came to America, until I found Jesus Christ as Lord, I was trained to do that which was done on 11 September." But divorce documents say Caner was born in Sweden, moved to the United States at age 4, and was raised by his non-Muslim mother.

He also told television network CBN, "The only thing I ever learned about Christianity I learned from my imam and the scholars in the mosque. Then when I began to be trained in Madras we heard even more about Christians, that they are our enemies."

As the Associated Press pointed out, "It's not clear if the transcript should read 'madrasas,' a type of religious school for Muslims, or 'Madras,' a city in India. Neither makes sense in the context of a 1970s boyhood in central Ohio." (A Liberty University investigation was due to conclude June 30.)

Caner isn't the only prominent convert from Islam under the microscope. Christians and others have been uncovering problems in the testimonies of prominent "former terrorist" speakers Kamal Saleem, Walid Shoebat, and Zachariah Anani.

Caner blamed a few misplaced words, just like Senate candidate Richard Blumenthal, who was exposed as falsely claiming to have served in Vietnam (rather than, as he later admitted, "during" the Vietnam War as a stateside member of the Marine Corps Reserve). In late February, Caner said, "I

would be surprised if no discrepancies were discovered, given the hundreds of messages I have given. Every minister has made pulpit mistakes. . . . I am sure I will make some in the future. For those times where I misspoke, said it wrong, scrambled words, or was just outright confusing, I apologize and will strive to do better."

GRACE BEFORE, GRACE AFTER

Caner is right that every minister makes pulpit mistakes. But embellishing or exag-



Liberty University is investigating accusations against seminary president Ergun Caner.

gerating one's testimony is very different from misattributing a quote or other frequent preaching blunders. As Bruce Hindmarsh detailed in his landmark 2005 book, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, our testimonies and spiritual autobiographies both describe and shape our core identity: they tell how Jesus rescued us as individuals and brought us into his communion of saints. They form us, and they form the communities we belong to. Since the 18th century, most evangelical churches have required some kind of testimony for membership. (As Hindmarsh puts it, "No narrative, no admittance.") We are a conversion-focused people

who love stories.

With such an emphasis, it's no wonder so many of us are tempted to embellish our testimonies, to describe the time before making "a decision for Christ" as worse than it was and the afterward as too blissful. Testimony envy may be part of any community, but we evangelicals seem to have a particular bent toward narrative one-upmanship.

The Bible is full of variations on "I once was lost but now am found" that affirm we are at once already new creations in Christ and are being changed and converted moment by moment. Testimonies that shade the truth treat grace as a *moment* rather than as God's overflowing gift. While some of us have trouble pointing to a "moment of decision," each of us can surely see how God was extending grace to us long before we knew him. And each of us certainly knows the need for God's grace long after "the hour we first believed."

But the larger problem with embellished testimonies is that they inevitably shift the focus away from God. Unfortunately, this is a problem even for those of us who don't falsify our conversion stories: We can still forget that we are bearing witness to the work of God, not the change in our own lives or the evils of life without God (or of a false religion). It's not about how blind we were or how well we now see. It's not about how lost we were or how great it is to be found. It's about who God is, and how his grace is so amazing that he would save even us.

It's a great story, even for those of us with "boring" conversions (like growing up in central Ohio without terrorism training). Let's tell that story and stop where the facts end. ✚

Testimonies bear witness to the work of God, not the change in our own lives or the evils of life without God.

*Biotech's
Hidden
Dilemma*

What should be done with frozen embryos left over at fertility clinics?

ADOPT THEM

Ron Stoddart is the director of Nightlight Christian Adoptions, a nonprofit that facilitates embryonic adoption.

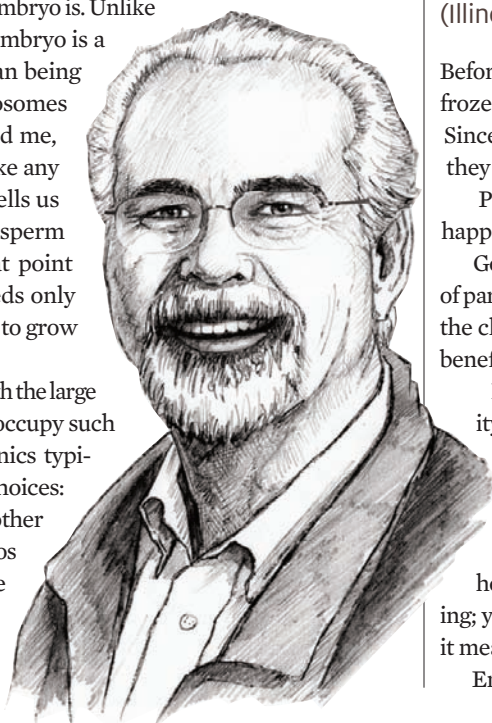
When couples choose in-vitro fertilization to create embryos to help build their families, the unused embryos are frozen for future attempts at pregnancy. Most couples are unprepared for what to do with remaining embryos once their family is complete. There are over 500,000 embryos currently frozen in storage at American clinics.

Although together these embryos occupy a space the size of a 12mm cube—the size of a board game die—they represent the population of a city the size of Atlanta. Size is subject to perspective. We all look mighty small from the moon. But to God, we are wondrously made and valuable at every stage of development.

In 2009, a public opinion survey asked what should be done with remaining embryos. Most respondents said that the embryos should be donated to other infertile couples (68.8 percent) rather than being destroyed (5.9 percent) or being donated for research (which also destroys them).

To answer this question from a Christian perspective, we must first understand what an embryo is. Unlike an egg or sperm cell, an embryo is a complete pre-born human being with a full set of chromosomes and DNA. Just like you and me, it is a unique human unlike any other on earth. Science tells us that life begins when a sperm and egg unite. From that point forward, the embryo needs only nutrients and a safe place to grow to develop into a child.

So what are we to do with the large number of embryos who occupy such a tiny space? Fertility clinics typically give patients four choices: donate the embryos to another couple, donate the embryos for research, destroy the embryos, or keep the embryos in frozen storage. We may agree that



the best choice is for the couple who created the embryos to try for another pregnancy with them. But what if the couple does not want additional children?

In that case, donating the embryos to another couple seems like the most loving choice. But the donor family might be concerned about another family parenting “their child” (a concern shared by every birthmother who has chosen adoption over abortion).

More than 3,000 children have been born in the United States through embryo donation or adoption. Fertility clinics have had embryo donation programs for over 20 years, but embryo adoption, a process whereby donors are actively involved in finding parents to receive the embryos, began in 1997 with Nightlight Christian Adoptions’ Snowflakes program. Donors have a choice in what to do with their remaining embryos.

For those who believe that life begins at conception and is worthy of protection and a chance to impact the world as God intended, only one choice remains: birth.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

David Cook teaches philosophy at Wheaton College (Illinois) and is an expert in bioethics.

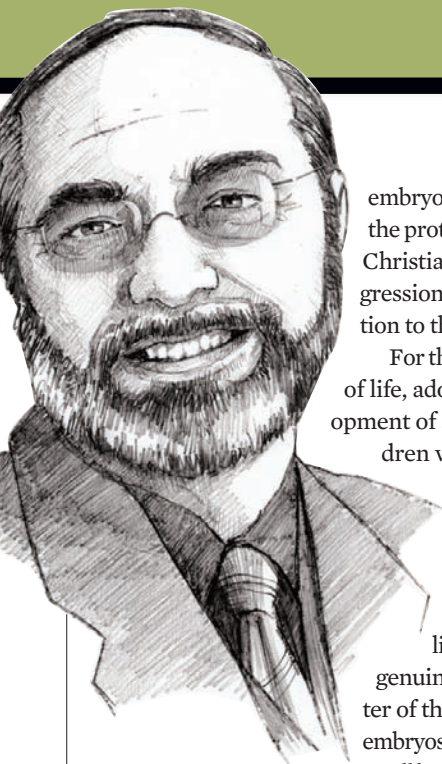
Before we can set significant guidelines regarding the fate of unused, frozen human embryos, we must ask: Who is responsible for them? Since embryos cannot make decisions, who gets to decide whether they will be donated, adopted, or destroyed?

Parents decide for their children, and families decide what will happen to an unconscious or dying family member.

Good fertility clinics will have clear protocols protecting the rights of parents and donors. The embryos in question were created to help the childless, so adopting or donating fulfills the same goal for the benefit of the child and the childless.

But parents are not the only ones who need to take responsibility. Governments, hospitals, and medical authorities also need to have clear guidelines about dealing with potentially profitable human tissue. In the UK, a scandal involving hospitals taking human material from patients and using it without their consent led to funerals for body parts. The prospect of holding funerals for thousands of destroyed embryos is horrifying; yet if we believe we are dealing with human beings, what does it mean to give embryos dignity and respect?

Embryos must be protected from evil. Not everyone believes that



embryos are fully human or deserve all the protection given to unborn life. But Christians believe there is a clear progression from the moment of fertilization to the person's death.

For those who believe in the sanctity of life, adoption, donation, or the development of artificial wombs to carry children who are not adopted seem the morally acceptable options for preserving life.

On the other hand, we cannot force those who are unconcerned about embryonic life to preserve it unless we offer genuine alternatives to the slaughter of the innocent: destroying "spare" embryos. Clinics, donors, and parents try to sell human tissue ranging from blood to

organs, so they must take up the ethical question of selling embryos.

It is entirely plausible to go so far as pushing to legally ban human embryo destruction. Germany has such a ban, and also has one of Europe's most thriving biotech research sectors.

At the heart of fertility medicine is a deep desire to have children, help the childless, and make a great deal of money. A growing number of couples are desperate for children; adopting unused embryos to be carried in the wombs of infertile women may be those couples' best chance of having children.

Adoption is clearly a way of allowing embryos to be born and rectifying a bad situation in the child's best interest. It would proactively encourage the creation of fewer embryos, rather than reacting after the problem has been created.

Parents, medical workers, and everyone who is concerned about embryonic lives should begin by accepting responsibility for the problem and work for a solution that embraces the sanctity of life and protects the unborn. There are no ideal scenarios, but we can protect the innocent, preserve human life, and care for the needy.

FIRST, HELP COUPLES

Ellen Painter Dollar is the author of a forthcoming book about Christian perspectives on reproductive and genetic technology.

Our oldest daughter inherited from me a disabling bone disorder called osteogenesis imperfecta (OI). When she was 2 years old and living through a harrowing cycle of broken bones, we underwent pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) in an attempt to have a second child who would not have OI.

PGD is in-vitro fertilization (IVF) with the added step of genetic screening. Only one of four embryos tested negative for OI and was implanted, but I did not get pregnant. (We eventually conceived both our second and third children naturally; neither of them inherited OI.) We had the other three embryos destroyed. We made that

decision with little reflection, in the emotional muddle of caring for a broken toddler while undergoing a strenuous procedure loaded with tough questions.

A failure to contemplate the ethics of embryo disposition before undergoing IVF is common, while clear decisions are not. A 2005 study found that 72 percent of couples interviewed had not made and were not making decisions about embryo disposition. An earlier study revealed that more than 80 percent of couples who had planned to donate their embryos for research or to other couples changed their minds. These couples had deeply personal ideas about their embryos as potential children, siblings to existing children, and symbols of their infertility. The study also found that couples were more focused on getting pregnant than on the decisions that might follow.

This focus means that considering the moral dimensions of fertility medicine is usually not part of the plan, for either patients or clinicians. Our clinic had a psychologist available to discuss ethical and emotional concerns, but we were never encouraged, much less required, to meet with her. Christian friends offered support, but we found church resources inadequate. Many faith communities are ill equipped to counsel couples on the ethical questions raised by assisted reproduction.

Fertility patients need help with the ethical and emotional questions, both before and throughout the process. A psychologist or other counselor should take substantial time at IVF information sessions to educate patients about the questions they will face and encourage couples to meet with counselors or religious advisers.

Christians have much work to do. These reproductive technologies now touch millions of families. Seminars should add instruction about reproductive bioethics to their curricula. Pastors need to educate themselves about current technologies and encourage couples to step off the fertility-treatment treadmill for a time to think faithfully about the rocky terrain they are entering on the journey toward parenthood.

Some couples may decide not to go the IVF route after all, while others will be better equipped to make embryo disposition decisions with forethought and care.

Did my husband and I sin by having our embryos destroyed? I'm sure many would say the answer is clearly yes. But there is far more complexity than clarity in reproductive ethics. I am certain about one thing: Christians need much better resources for ethical and theological reflection before undergoing IVF. Perhaps more meaningful reflection will lead to fewer Christians taking that step, and fewer embryos ending up in freezers.





Vainly Naming the Name

Cussing isn't our only problem—though that's bad enough.

BEFORE MY FRIEND'S DAD became a Lutheran pastor, he was a rough and tumble seaman who, well, swore like a sailor. He was even reprimanded once by a Navy superior for using excessive foul language. So when *The Pacific*, HBO's new series about Marines in World War II, came out, he made sure to catch it.

But he could not watch it. The language—particularly the taking of the Lord's name in vain—was just too much. When a sailor says you've crossed the line, you've crossed the line.

The series was on HBO, a venue that loves going to extremes. But taking the Lord's name in vain has become something of a pastime in popular culture.

Jonathan Chait, a senior editor at the liberal political magazine *The New Republic*, wrote a blog post during the health-care debate that shocked me. "J---- C-----," the headline began, followed by the statement that some arcane legislative process was "Not That Difficult!"

When Tiger Woods returned to golf following his sex scandal, he retained his habit of cussing a blue streak whenever he made a bad shot. "G--! Tiger! J---- C-----!" he said after a lousy drive. The announcers didn't even flinch. Critics scolded Brit Hume for suggesting that Woods needed Christ's forgiveness, but almost no one cared when Woods swore in Christ's name.

Vice President Joe Biden got a lot of grief for dropping the f-bomb before President Obama signed health-care legislation into law. But how many people noticed that he used "Jesus Christ" to curse in a *Wall Street Journal* interview last year?

It used to be considered unacceptable to speak this way. Now it's beyond common.

Exodus 20:7 tells us, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes

his name in vain" (ESV).

For many of us, this commandment means, "Don't cuss." It does—but it means so much more than that.

Unlike the mythic gods of the ancient world, Yahweh is not revealed only by things in nature but is primarily known by his name and the deeds associated with that name. In the prologue to the Ten Commandments, Yahweh identifies himself and says he brought the Hebrews out of bondage. God's



name is mentioned 5,343 times in 23,213 verses of the Hebrew text of the Bible.

"It is the revelation of his name that makes the Hebrews into his people, and it is by his name that he is to be remembered among his people forever. The name, then, is the only thing that Yahweh's people have by which to know and to worship him," writes David L. Adams in *The Anonymous God*.

The first tablet of the Law includes the commandments connected with God's self-revelation, which have specific threats of punishment and are expanded with explanations. That probably indicates that God cares

deeply about his name and how we use it. Surely something so important to God ought to be important to us, even if it's completely counter to the spirit of our culture.

Unlike other commandments dealing with adultery and murder, the third commandment's prohibitions can be harder to recognize as sin. We think it doesn't matter as much because, after all, it's "only words."

The third commandment doesn't just mean we should avoid cursing or swearing in God's name. It's possible to violate it even if we never utter a curse word.

Martin Luther said that "the greatest abuse" of this commandment occurs "when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as God's Word."

In other words, false doctrine taught by those who claim to speak for God is worse than the crudest and most profane comedy special ever to air. When pastors go beyond Scripture to promote the gospel of prosperity or to tell parishioners not

to worry about sexual immorality, they are not just wrong—they have also blasphemed God's holy name.

As with all commandments, we keep them not just by avoiding certain behaviors but also by doing good works. So we are reminded to pray, praise, and verbally give thanks to God for his goodness and to call out to him in times of trouble. We must work to ensure proper teaching and employ God's name in defense of truth and goodness.

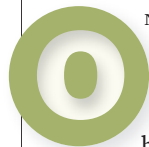
Or, as the psalmist says, "... call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me" (50:15, ESV). ✚

Critics scolded Brit Hume for suggesting that Tiger Woods needed Christ's forgiveness, but almost no one cared when Woods swore in Christ's name.



Stride Toward Peace

Risking love in a land of violence.



ONE OF THE MOST important books I read as a young adult was Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Stride Toward Freedom*. The book introduced me to nonviolent resistance—the commitment to change social evils while rejecting the temptation to use violence.

When Montgomery, Alabama's African Americans began their protests, they didn't call their approach by its philosophical names, *nonviolent* or *passive resistance*. "The phrase most often heard," wrote King, "was 'Christian Love.' It was the Sermon on the Mount, rather than a doctrine of passive resistance, that initially inspired the Negroes of Montgomery to dignified social action. It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the Negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love."

Christian love is an interesting label for nonviolent resistance, because it forces the protester to seek not only the well-being of one's own family and clan, but also the well-being of those whose policies have—wittingly or unwittingly—created unjust hardship.

As a basis for social protest, Christian love does not seek to deprive the depriver of anything. Rather, it tries to show a group that robs others of some social good that they are indeed depriving themselves. For example, by segregation, white Southerners kept their hearts wrapped in indifference and their lives divorced from encountering the realities of life in the black community, and thus from the opportunity to treat African Americans fairly.

THE ONLY OPTION

Nonviolent action isn't just a historical curiosity. Lately Palestinians have shown increased interest in nonviolent action—and Christians have played a crucial role in persuading fellow Palestinians to turn from violence.

This brief column is not the place to assess blame for the present state of affairs. The 1948

Israeli War of Independence (which Palestinians call "The Calamity") and the 1967 Six-Day War deprived many people of land and livelihood. Since then, things have continued to get worse, socially and economically.

Israeli actions and policies have continued to contribute to the impasse, as have Palestinian threats, terrorism, and persistent denial of Israel's right to exist. Leaders on both sides have manipulated fear and resentment for political ends, so that both sides deeply distrust any talk of peace.

Palestinians who had never before considered nonviolence an option are beginning to realize that they will always lose in a violent confrontation when dealing with a bigger, better-armed power. If peace is the goal, especially in this context, some are recognizing they need another path.

One of the trailblazers on that new path is U.S.-born Sami Awad, executive director of the Bethlehem-based Holy Land Trust. "Nonviolence is the only option that Palestinians should engage in and the only option we have, in terms of resisting occupation," Awad told *Sojourners*. He used to think it was a strategic *option*, alongside other means of resistance. But he has come to see it as the only viable choice. Every Friday, Awad puts his life on the line in nonviolent actions that range from planting olive trees to standing in the paths of bulldozers and tanks.

By standing with Muslim villagers, the Christian Awad provokes curiosity. The main question: Why, when he has no personal stake in a given village's land or history, does he take these risks? Often the only Christian taking

part in these actions, he gives villagers a one-word answer: *Jesus*. Jesus is his reason.

In 1987, Israel deported Awad's uncle Mubarak, who now teaches at American University, on a technicality. But at the time, "everyone knew" he was deported because he advocated nonviolent resistance, which threatened the carefully calibrated tension. Sami Awad believes nonviolence can seriously

undermine the fear that undergirds Israel's strong military approach to Palestinians. "Israeli society," he says, "is born out of fear." In 2009, Awad told the Vineyard Leadership Conference that visiting Auschwitz with a group of Jews, Muslims, and Chris-

tians helped him understand how every act of violence by a Palestinian perpetuates the Holocaust fear—that every Palestinian is bent on the destruction of Jews.

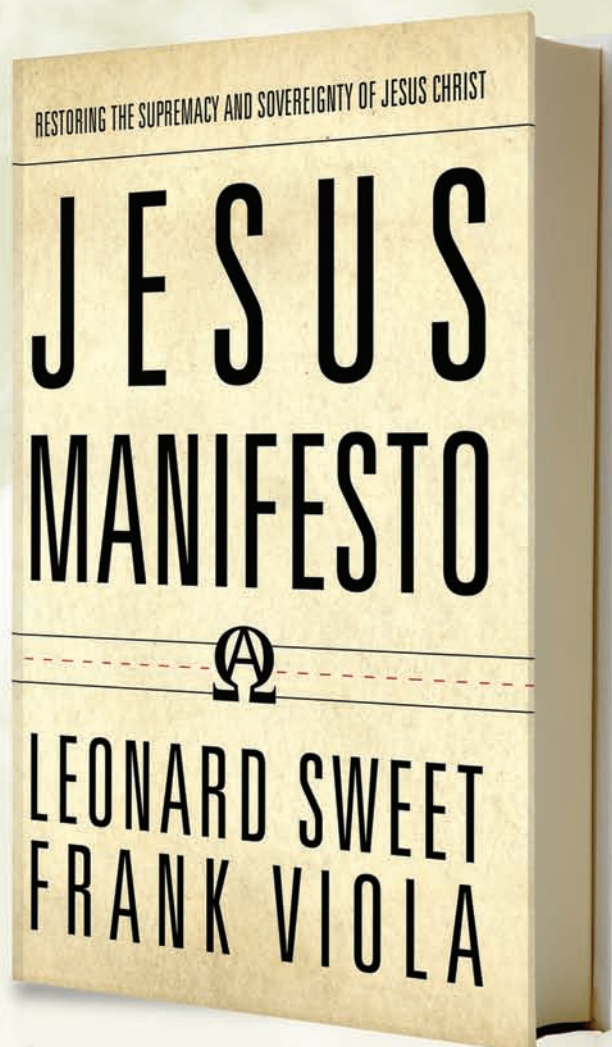
Awad seeks peace, but he also wants Israelis to be healed of their fear, and Palestinian Muslims and Christians to repair their own divisions. That healing cannot happen if nonviolence is only a means for Palestinians to get what they want, if it is not truly grounded in love for the Israelis. If the rhetoric of hate and resentment continues to exist along with the language of love, nonviolence will seem opportunistic and empty.

At the end of his 1987 trial, Awad's uncle Mubarak told the Israeli Supreme Court, "I have never hated you. I don't hate you now. I will never hate you." If the whole of Palestinian society can join the Awads in abandoning hate, the gospel of love can subvert fear and lay the foundations of peace. ✚



Why, when Sami Awad has no personal stake in a given village's land, does he take these risks? He gives villagers a one-word answer: *Jesus*.

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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS



Real Presence

What can happen when a thoroughly secular woman eats a piece of bread. By John Wilson

We don't think of the Eucharist as a vehicle for conversion. We have forgotten the history of our own founding. Among the first Christians, the Eucharistic meal was an act of fellowship that often attracted newcomers—so many, in fact, as to pose a problem for fledgling churches. Not all participants in the sacred meal understood what it meant (insofar as we are ever capable of that) or honored its meaning. Gradually the Eucharist was limited to believers who had undergone a lengthy catechesis. A necessary corrective? Perhaps, but one loaded with the irony of unintended consequences. A millennium later, on a typical Sunday, the priest celebrated the Eucharist while the congregation looked on.

"One early, cloudy morning when I was forty-six," Sara Miles writes in *Take This Bread*,

I walked into a church, ate a piece of bread, took a sip of wine. A routine Sunday activity for tens of millions of Americans—except that up until that moment I'd led a thoroughly secular life, at best indifferent to religion, more often appalled by its fundamentalist crusades. This was my first communion. It changed everything.

Eating Jesus, as I did that day to my great astonishment, led me against all my expectations to a faith I'd scorned and work I'd never imagined. The

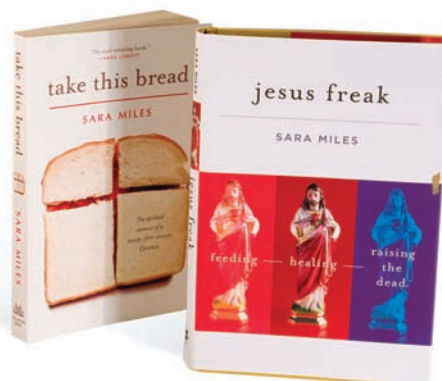
mysterious sacrament turned out to be not a symbolic wafer but actual food—indeed, the bread of life. In that shocking moment of communion, filled with a deep desire to reach for and become part of a body, I realized that what I'd been doing with my life all along was what I was meant to do: feed people.

Everything in Miles's two memoirs, **Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion** (Ballantine, 2008) and **Jesus Freak: Feeding, Healing, Raising the Dead** (Jossey-Bass, 2010) ★★★★★, flows from this moment, and after a cumulative 454 pages, its meaning is far from being exhausted.

FROM REJECTION AND BACK

All conversions are instances of the same irreducible mystery, and each conversion is unique. Miles's grandparents on both sides of the family were missionaries. While my own mother was a little girl living in Shanghai with her missionary parents, Miles's father was born in Burma, where his parents were serving under the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society; Miles's mother was "carried in a laundry hamper across the ocean to Baghdad" by parents serving with the United Mission in Mesopotamia.

By the time Miles was born, her mother and father had decisively rejected the Christian faith. When Miles herself was grown, she was drawn abroad by the needs of



others, as her grandparents had been. But during her sojourn as a journalist in Nicaragua and El Salvador she wasn't thinking about Jesus:

The power of the cross—the idea that suffering for others can lead to new life—was for me then, as it was for the unbelievers Saint Paul wrote about, and remains for rationalists today, “folly.”

While she was in El Salvador, Miles became pregnant. She and the father, Bob, another journalist, settled in San Francisco, where their daughter Katie was born. Here Miles's life took on a new domesticity, rooted in one place. Bob, “who had come out as a gay man,” lived nearby. And Miles and Katie—“a luminously happy, talkative child”—began to share their home with Martha, an editor with whom Miles had fallen in love. As she recounts in *Take This Bread*:

Over the next five years, I cooked dinner every night for Martha and

‘Eating Jesus, as I did that day to my great astonishment, led me against all my expectations to a faith I’d scorned and work I’d never imagined.’ ~Sara Miles

Katie at home. And every day, Katie kept talking and laughing and reaching for more. As my life got happier, ease and love began to enter me, side by side with the memories I carried. While the classic conversion story involves desperation, hitting bottom, and a plea for help, I think now it was gratitude, as well as the suffering I’d seen, that made room for me to open my heart to something new.

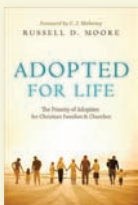
Each conversion is unique, but something is missing here, something essential to the very notion of *conversion*: a deep acknowledgment of personal brokenness, sinfulness, and the need for healing. That missing element is restored in part elsewhere in Miles's

memoirs, not so much contradicting as complicating and deepening this picture of a soul awakened by gratitude.

Indeed, part of what makes these books compelling is Miles's gift for holding in tension the surpassing joy we share in “the great feast prepared before the foundation of the world,” and the weariness, the sadness, the irritation, the sheer messiness we must nevertheless contend with day by day as we seek to follow Jesus. This comes through with splendid clarity in her account of the work that her conversion most immediately called her to: establishing a food pantry at the church where she first took Communion, St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco, enlarging the reach of that ministry, and then organizing food pantries throughout the city.

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON ORPHAN CARE

By Jedd Medefind, president, the Christian Alliance for Orphans



ADOPTED FOR LIFE

The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches

RUSSELL D. MOORE (CROSSWAY)

With deep theological moorings, Moore builds an inspiring case for why adoption carries special priority for Christians. Even readers who don't agree with Moore on all points will find it difficult to escape the power of his conviction that God's adoption of all believers is the wellspring for Christian action to “defend the cause of the fatherless.”

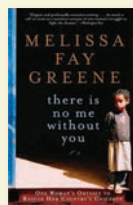


THE CONNECTED CHILD

Bring Hope and Healing to Your Adoptive Family

KARYN PURVIS, DAVID CROSS, AND WENDY LYONS SUNSHINE (MCGRAW-HILL)

Built on research and medical expertise, this accessible book provides both compassionate insight and concrete practices that any parent can apply to nurture and connect fully with children coming from difficult backgrounds. Purvis's new study guide and other resources are also invaluable.

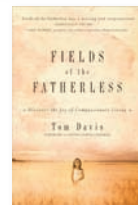


THERE IS NO ME WITHOUT YOU

One Woman's Odyssey to Rescue Africa's Children

MELISSA FAY GREENE (BLOOMSBURY)

Greene opens unforgettable windows into the plight of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS with the true story of one Ethiopian widow and the children she took in. Her well-crafted account is both haunting and hopeful, exposing both aching need and the complexity of responding wisely, alongside the beauty found when we do.



FIELDS OF THE FATHERLESS

Discover the Joy of Compassionate Living

TOM DAVIS (DAVID C. COOK)

Weaving together Scripture and compelling narrative, Davis paints a simple yet powerful picture of what it looks like when Christians come to share God's passion for orphans. *Fields of the Fatherless* offers not only inspiration and provocation, but also practical steps for action.



THE ONE FACTOR

How One Changes Everything

DOUG SAUDER

(4KIDS OF SOUTH FLORIDA)

Focusing on real stories of children from foster care, this slim volume delivers its punch with dozens of poignant reminders why the number one matters more than all the statistics in the world. Sauder helps us turn the tired adage that “one person can make a big difference” into a vibrant, vivifying confidence.

But it is not enough, Miles insists, to serve food to hungry people—though that is no negligible thing—and then return to business as usual. We must be willing to have our lives entangled with the lives of others—people we wouldn’t hang out with of our own volition.

IGNORING JESUS

Miles writes passionately and persuasively on these themes. Alas, running through both of her memoirs are caricatures of the church in general and evangelical Christianity in particular, straw men and women primly sitting in pews or broadcasting smug hate speech. These figures are trundled onstage repeatedly, to be contrasted with Christianity as Miles practices it. At such moments, the generosity of spirit and rueful self-knowledge that otherwise characterize her writing seem to disappear.

But it would be a shame if such lapses kept evangelicals from reading Miles, who has no doubt been at the receiving end of plenty of caricatures (not least, the preposterous claim that living arrangements such as hers constitute a great threat to “the family”). Her books, among their many virtues, have the merit of forcing us to think about the selective way we tend to invoke Scripture (which, of course, applies to Miles as well), including the very words of Jesus. Why do we all cite certain passages over and over while finding excuses to slide past others or explain away what seems to be their clear import? (What was it that Jesus said about the Eucharist in the Gospel of John?)

In the last chapter of *Jesus Freak*, Miles describes

... the point I used to reach with my secular friends and family, who were fine, intellectually, with the idea of religion. They were broad-minded and reasonable, and agreed there were lots of beautiful stories in the Bible. “But damn, Sara,” said one, finally. “You mean this?”

She does. And she reminds us again and again of a potent truth that we’re in danger of ignoring even as we routinely affirm it: “All it takes to be a Jesus freak is to follow him.” ☩

John Wilson is editor of *Books @ Culture*.

Screwtape for New Atheists

The Loser Letters pokes serious fun at a mostly humorless movement. By Mollie Ziegler Hemingway

Catholic writer Mary Eberstadt’s new novel, **The Loser Letters: A Comic Tale of Life, Death, and Atheism** (Ignatius Press) ★★★★★, begins by noting the laurels and attention heaped on authors such as Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Christopher Hitchens. With a couple decades off to forget Soviet Communism’s anti-religious oppression, the last few years have been awfully good for unbelief.

Everything is going great for the New Atheists, observes the book’s narrator—a witty, sharp-tongued 20-something named A. F. Christian (A Former Christian)—except for one thing: “... where is the testimony of anyone Your writings have actually convinced?”

Riffing on C. S. Lewis’s observation that people tend to drift into unbelief rather than convert to it, Christian fancies herself the only actual convert to atheism. She proceeds to offer epistolary advice to the New Atheists on how to improve their message and gain more converts—another obvious Lewis homage.

Each of the book’s ten letters approaches a serious issue from a decidedly humorous bent. Christian’s first letter takes on sexual mores. After describing the typical U.S. college campus—“as pure as any Atheist’s dream, as deity-free as the Bravo channel on Sunday morn (or any other time!)”—she points out that the guilt and consequences attached to promiscuity are still prevalent.

Christian also urges atheists to explain their contradictions; for example, how “99.9999999 percent of humanity” has been wrong about religion except themselves. And she eviscerates some of the logical arguments in favor of abortion, while effectively mocking the media’s transparently transgressive lack of respect for human dignity.

Perhaps the book’s most

important lesson is its much-needed call for an accurate grasp of Western civilization. It’s nice to see someone simply point out Christians’ good works compared with the dearth of atheists’—and not just in works of charity. Eberstadt devotes a whole chapter to art. After listing great works inspired by religious belief, Christian asks, “... against this Dull artistic excellence, what exactly do we Atheists bring to the table? The Brooklyn Museum of Art? Elton John? Your books? Freak dancing? Rammstein?”

Even a regular critic of atheism can learn from this disarmingly comic tale. Christian’s gentle encouragement for the New Atheists to understand why women aren’t flocking to their movement indicts atheism as an individualistic wasteland. She suggests that the discrepancy between the sexes might be related to “taking care of smaller and weaker members of the Species.” And she notes how many prominent atheists, from Spinoza to Nietzsche and beyond, were either childless or living outside real families.

The book’s only downside is its conclusion, which shifts from a discussion of the broadly religious to a somewhat sectarian Catholicism. But that forgivable flaw shouldn’t narrow the audience of a book that believers and nonbelievers alike can benefit from.

For anyone who has read the more dreadfully histrionic books for and against atheism, Eberstadt’s letters are a welcome relief. Her tone is just right, and her premise enables

her to hit heavy topics without devolving into polemic. The New Atheists’ self-righteous, mostly humorless stance has been ripe for a takedown for years, and *The Loser Letters* delivers on the task. ☩

Mollie Ziegler Hemingway

is a CT columnist and writes for *GetReligion.org*.



THE CHRISTIAN ATHEIST

Believing in God but Living as if He Doesn't Exist

CRAIG GROESCHEL (ZONDERVAN, 256 PAGES)

Charles Blondin was a world-renowned tightrope artist and acrobat. On June 30, 1859, before a stunned crowd of 100,000 excited onlookers, Blondin was the first person to cross Niagara Falls by tightrope. He crossed 1,100 feet on a single three-inch hemp cord, strung from 160 feet above the falls on one side to a spot 270 feet above the falls on the other. The breathless assembly watched him accomplish, step by slow step, a feat most believed impossible.

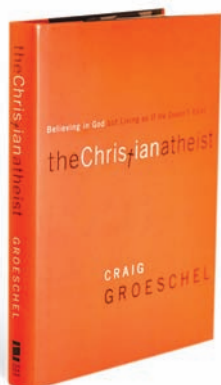
But Blondin was just getting started. In the years to come, the daring entertainer crossed again and again: on stilts, in a sack, even pushing a wheelbarrow! The story goes that an exuberant onlooker called out, "You could cross with a man in that wheelbarrow!" Blondin agreed and invited the man to climb in. The spectator nervously declined.

My dysfunctional relationship with God was often like that. I've always believed in God, just not enough to trust him with my whole life in his wheelbarrow. I knew God could fulfill his promises, but I was never sure he'd do it for me. My selfish Christian Atheist view was that God existed for me, rather than I for him. If he'd do what I thought he should, I'd trust him more. If he'd come through for me, I'd give him more of my life. If he made my life better and pain-free, I'd believe him more passionately. But anytime God didn't meet my expectations, we had a problem. God created me in his image. I returned the favor and created him in mine. The kind of God I wanted to believe in was this: if he's not what I want, then he can't have my whole life. . . .

Every day, we'll choose to live out our belief in God instead of believing in the world or ourselves. When we truly know God, rather than living ashamed of our past of doubting God's love for us, we can daily enjoy his grace and unconditional love and acceptance. As our faith and prayer life grow, we'll see his goodness—even in our trials—and grow to forgive as he has freely forgiven us. Instead of believing we can

never change, we can let his unlimited power transform us and lead us out of a life paralyzed by fear and worry. Because God isn't just someone we believe in but is our life, we won't seek security and happiness in the things of the world but will find them in his presence and will. As he consumes us, strengthened by his church, we'll seize opportunities to share his love with people daily. The choice is ours.

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WILSON'S BOOKMARKS

From the editor of Books & Culture.



PEARL BUCK IN CHINA

Journey to The Good Earth

HILARY SPURLING (SIMON & SCHUSTER)



Hilary Spurling is one of the best living biographers, and in *Pearl Buck* she has a splendid subject: daughter of missionaries and later scourge of the missions movement; indefatigable proto-feminist; Nobel

Prize-winning novelist and worldwide best-seller; interpreter of China for two generations of Americans. The interest of the narrative never flags, but you have to read it against the grain of the author's intentions. "There is a kind of insular absurdity," Spurling lectures with characteristic scorn, "about attempting to superimpose nineteenth-century biblical orthodoxy on an ancient, highly civilized culture." She seems oblivious to the spiritual ferment in China today.

THE FLIGHT OF THE INTELLECTUALS

PAUL BERMAN (MELVILLE HOUSE)



This trenchantly argued book expands Berman's extraordinary *New Republic* article (itself close to the size of a short book) on the failure of Western intellectuals to come to grips with the radical Islamist movement,

and in particular the way that this pattern of evasion has been exemplified in the case of philosopher Tariq Ramadan, widely hailed as the very model of a moderate Muslim. Indispensable reading, even though Berman fails to adequately acknowledge the wide range of Western intellectuals who have *not* failed the test.

HERE COMES THE GARBAGE BARGE!

JONAH WINTER AND RED NOSE STUDIO (SCHWARTZ & WADE/RANDOM HOUSE)



Based on an actual incident, this rollicking cautionary tale recounts the bizarre voyage of a barge loaded with garbage, all the way

from Long Island to Belize and back, trying to find a place to dump its unwelcome load. The story teaches its lesson in a wonderfully inviting fashion, and the illustrations make this one of my favorite books of the year so far, whether for children or adults. (Bonus: Inside the dust jacket, the illustrator explains how he worked his magic; a video on the same theme is on the Web.)



The Authentic Bonhoeffer

Eric Metaxas explains how the German theologian lived a life worth examining. Interview by Collin Hansen

Authenticity appears to be the virtue *du jour* for many Christians. But Dietrich Bonhoeffer wasn't just talking about authenticity; he was actually living it. The Lutheran pastor-theologian was eventually hanged for conspiring to kill Adolf Hitler. In **Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy** (Thomas Nelson), author Eric Metaxas uncovers the person behind such Christian classics as *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*. CT editor at large Collin Hansen spoke with Metaxas about Bonhoeffer's life and legacy.

What inspired you to begin studying Bonhoeffer?

My mother grew up in Nazi Germany, losing her father during the war. He was one of many reluctant German soldiers forced to participate in a war he was against. The history of this painful period has always haunted me. When I first heard in 1988 about Bonhoeffer and his death at the hands of the Nazis, I was staggered. I couldn't believe I had never heard about it before. The idea that a man, because

of his Christian faith, would stand up to Hitler and would give his life just astonished me.

Would you describe Bonhoeffer as an evangelical? What distinguished his views from the prevailing liberal theology of his professors, including Adolf von Harnack?

That is what's so amazing. Bonhoeffer is more like a theologically conservative evangelical than anything else. He was as orthodox as Saint Paul or Isaiah, from his teen years all the way to his last day on earth. But it seems that theological liberals have somehow made Bonhoeffer in their own image, mainly based on the fact that he studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and that he wanted to visit Mahatma Gandhi, and that he used the phrase "religionless Christianity" in a letter.

But if you look deeper, you'll see that this view is somewhat misleading. For example, by the

phrase "religionless Christianity" Bonhoeffer meant only that the dead religion that was passing for Lutheran Christianity in Germany before the war had failed [his generation]. Bonhoeffer knew that for Christianity to be more than religion—more than a fig leaf—it had to declare Jesus as Lord over everything, not just the religious sphere.

What did Bonhoeffer think of America? How did his visits affect him?

Bonhoeffer was hardly affected by his studies at Union. In letters sent home, he sneered at what passed for theology in the U.S. But a trip to Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem changed everything. He saw the full-throated gospel of Christ for perhaps the first time in his life. The worship and sermons stunned him. He'd seen the real thing, a Christianity based on wholehearted devotion to Jesus. When he returned to Germany, everyone could see that he was different. The experience deepened his faith quite dramatically.

In 1939, Bonhoeffer thought he should leave Germany and avoid the coming war by returning to New York. He stayed for only 26 days in America, where he felt wildly out of sorts. He knew that God was calling him back to Germany.

Do you expect any controversy from your evaluation of Bonhoeffer?

Some people on the theological Left who have thought of Bonhoeffer as belonging to them may find that he also belongs to some of the people they think of as their theological enemies. But the good news is that Bonhoeffer knew that he belonged to Christ, so everyone can keep their shirts on.

How does Bonhoeffer challenge Christians today to consider the cost of discipleship?

Bonhoeffer showed genuine courage and authenticity in his life. He said many unpopular things and was unafraid to do so. For example, he was not afraid to say that abortion was murder. He was sexually pure, and he was devoted to Jesus. One could see that with him; it was never mere talk. He was the real deal, all the way through. It's hard not to be inspired by that.



INTERVIEW

Christian Zionism in the Dock

Two documentaries take on the controversial theology. By Tim Avery

If two new documentary films are any indication, Christian Zionism is officially on notice. The filmmakers of **Waiting for Armageddon** (First Run Features) ★★★★★ and **With God on Our Side** (Rooftop Productions) ★★★★★ explore problems with believing that God has a special plan for ethnic Israel and thus politically advocating on behalf of the modern state of Israel.

The first film probes the movement from the inside—the politically powerful (and potentially explosive) alliance between evangelicals and Israel. The second is more of an outsider's perspective, examining the situation from a Palestinian point of view.

The three directors of *Armageddon* are non-Christians concerned about the “unlikely relationship” between Christians and Israel. To learn more, they seek out Christian Zionist professors, pastors, authors, families—even a tour group in Israel. The interviewees explain that the Jewish people must reclaim all of Israel for Jesus to return to earth.

Also interviewed are Jews in Israel who, interestingly, are ambivalent toward their Christian allies. They admit to liking the money and political clout the alliance brings, but they resent being seen as pawns in a Christian endgame.



The directors' lack of familiarity with their subject matter both helps and hinders the film. On the plus side, *Armageddon* steps back and lets Zionists speak for themselves, giving viewers fuller pictures of them as people. Especially revealing is the manner in which the Zionists express their beliefs. One Zionist describes the Apocalypse with the seething language of Revelation in an utterly matter-of-fact tone. Another man sounds flippant. The emotional disconnect is striking. Since the film forgoes narration, the gaze of the camera at the juxtaposition feels like an open-mouthed gape.

But while *Armageddon* delivers vivid close-ups, it distorts the big picture. Most glaringly, it assumes that all evangelicals hold Christian Zionist convictions. So the film's implied cry to the public—“Look out, there are 50 million people in America

itching to ignite Armageddon!”—is grossly misleading.

Still, there are many evangelical Zionists, which is why Porter Speakman Jr. made *With God on Our Side*. A Christian pastor, Speakman asks such Zionists to reevaluate their absolute support of Israel. He presents historical context, theological perspective, and on-the-ground impressions.

The film's history primer clearly traces the roots of Christian Zionist thinking to the 19th-century “father of dispensationalism,” John Nelson Darby, and recaps key political turning points in the Holy Land. Such history suggests that Palestinians' claims to the land cannot be easily dismissed.

For people like John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel, these muddy political waters are cleared up by Scripture. Both documentaries are framed with clips of Hagee shouting Zionist exhortations to energized crowds. It's sensational material. But to its credit, *With God on Our Side* also interviews Hagee, letting him articulate his position: The Abrahamic covenant's promise of land, he argues, still applies today and trumps all else.

Hagee's dissenters then step in and distinguish between his two-covenant theology (ethnic Israel plus the church) and a one-covenant theology (believing Gentiles grafted into believing Israel). It's not difficult to figure out which camp Portman belongs to, but he gives both sides their due. This basic theological contextualization is sorely needed for Christians who are divided by this issue.

Speakman works hardest to show how ordinary Palestinians, including fellow Christians, are being hurt by Israel's policies, particularly in the West Bank. Some might consider this segment slanted, since Israelis get little screen time, but Speakman is telling a story he thinks his intended audience has not heard. Whether one agrees with Speakman or not, his challenging glimpses remind us that *people* are at stake here.

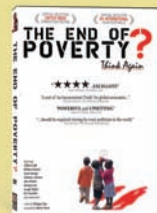
Tim Avery is a film critic and associate editor of *BuildingChurchLeaders.com*.

A Needed Clamor

Befitting its title, *The End of Poverty?* (Cinema Libre) ★★★★★ begins with a question: In a world of so much wealth, why does so much poverty exist? In search of answers, this documentary traces the history of poverty, from the conquistadors' plundering of Indian communities, through slavery and colonization, up to recent development philosophies that aided agriculture production in wealthy countries at the expense of farmers in the world's poorest countries.

The end of poverty? This loftiest of goals will remain elusive, the film suggests, unless there are changes to an economic system responsible for creating the world's rich-poor divide. Changes include relieving the debt of the poorest countries, reforming land and tax policies in those countries, and enabling them to extract and transform their natural resources for their own well-being.

Whatever your view of these solutions, this film will make you think. It raises a needed clamor. After all the questions, the film ends with a declarative sentence: 16,000 children die each day from hunger and related diseases. So the film's main question certainly needs to be answered sooner than later. —Roger Thurow, coauthor of *Enough: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty*



TWO MINUTES WITH...

Sandra McCracken



In a rare five-star review for *Christianity Today*, one of our critics wrote that Sandra McCracken's new album of hymns, *In Feast or Fallow*, "presents us with perhaps the most beautiful,

poignant collection" since the turn of the century. CT senior associate editor Mark Moring spoke with McCracken about the project and her husband, fellow folk singer Derek Webb.

You've said that the songs on this album address fear.

Fear is pervasive in our culture, and the church is not immune. We have to combat fear with freedom at every turn. Some of the songs are personal reflections or stories of the people I love—fear of economic crisis, of losing your job, of having a baby, of not being able to have a baby, of President Obama's political change, of not having any political change. The list is endless, [but] none of these fears are a match for the love of God.

What sparked your interest in hymns?

My mom taught me hymns when I was a girl. In college, as part of Reformed University Fellowship, we sang old and sometimes obscure hymns with acoustic guitars. It was liberating to get away from a square organ or classical piano approach to accompaniment. Hymns have always been like nourishment for my soul.

You're a folk singer. Do you think of the great hymnists as the folk singers of their day—writing about the human condition?

I'd like to think that Wesley, Crosby, Luther, and others had a folk singer quality. They surely didn't think of themselves that way, but some of our more recently famed folk singers (Dylan, Cash) did not see their prophetic position while they were in the middle of their work.

What does Derek bring to your music?

We have always been pretty independent as creative people. But we have learned more how to work together, for him to help me with my ideas, and for me to help with his. I am absolutely more of an artist because of his ideas—even the ones I don't agree with. This mutual sharpening is crucial.



Smokin' Sacred Steel

T-Bone Burnett brings out the best in Robert Randolph.

By Josh Hurst

They are the ultimate odd couple: a renowned producer of Americana who, in recent years, has had only one speed (sloow), and a guitar virtuoso in the Sacred Steel tradition with a reputation for smoldering shows and white-hot energy. The pairing of T-Bone Burnett and Robert Randolph probably shouldn't work, but on *We Walk This Road* (Warner Brothers) ★★★★★, they bring out each other's best.

Before Burnett got stuck in the sleepy, country-noir vein of *Raising Sand*, his Grammy-winning effort with Robert Plant and Alison Krauss, he was best known as a curator type with an encyclopedic knowledge of American music. For this project, Burnett carefully selected a mix of vintage gospel tunes and more contemporary cuts from Bob Dylan, John Lennon, and Prince.

From there, he left it up to Randolph. Smart move. With his Family Band in tow, the steel ace applies molten-lava guitar work to gospel standards, infusing everything he touches with funk and pulling various genres into the realm of gospel with his spiritual fervor and

rafter-raising energy. This thing is *hot*.

Every note is drenched in gospel, and some of the best moments come when you least expect them. Randolph covers Dylan's "Shot of Love" the way Jimi Hendrix might have, but the song's heat comes truly from its spiritual urgency. Prince's "Walk Don't Walk," meanwhile, isn't a religious song per se, but the gospel-choir treatment makes it sound like it was born in a church service.

We Walk This Road is a stirring testament to American music history, particularly to its religious tradition. But it's far more than a museum piece, thanks to Randolph and his band's crackling energy and the way he puts the songs together and watches

the sparks fly. Socially aware cuts like John Lennon's "I Don't Wanna Be a Soldier Mama" remind us that such songs don't arise in a cultural vacuum. But the show-stopping ballad "I Still Belong to Jesus" is a resounding declaration, rooted in the truest Hope there is, and it shows just where Randolph's heart lies. ➤



Josh Hurst, a music and film critic, blogs at TheHurstReview.wordpress.com.

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BOOKS

► RESCUING AMBITION

DAVE HARVEY (CROSSWAY)

★★★★★ Dave Harvey of Sovereign Grace Ministries believes that ambition need not be suppressed but instead set free. In this pioneering book, he contrasts godly ambition with selfish ambition. Humans are innate “glory chasers,” but our desire for our own glory shrinks our souls. We need God’s Word to expose our search for counterfeit splendor and set our hearts on holy ambition for God that results in a greater passion for service in the church.

► HELLO, I LOVE YOU

Adventures in Adoptive Fatherhood

TED KLUCK (MOODY)

★★★★★ Ted and Kristin Kluck desperately wanted children and sensed the Lord calling them to adopt orphans. After a long and arduous process, they adopted two children from Ukraine. Kluck’s memoir is written in the present tense, which makes readers feel as if they are on the journey with them. His sense of humor is on display throughout the book, particularly in the difficult moments of culture shock, red tape, and familial pressure.

► IN THE LAND OF BELIEVERS

An Outsider’s Extraordinary Journey into the Heart of the Evangelical Church

GINA WELCH (METROPOLITAN)

★★★★★ How does a young, Yale-educated atheist find out about evangelicals? Gina Welch decided to fake a conversion experience, get baptized, and spend two years as a member of Thomas Road Baptist Church, once pastored by Jerry Falwell. Her story helpfully demonstrates that intolerance and insularity can be just as characteristic of the Left as of the Right. She also notes inconsistencies in evangelical theology and practice. Still, Welch implies that all evangelicals are of the Thomas Road variety, making one wonder how her story might have changed had she chosen a different church.

—Books reviewed by Trevin Wax

MUSIC

SIERRA LEONE’S REFUGEE ALL STARS

► RISE & SHINE

(CUMBANCH)

★★★★★ Formed while in refugee camps

after fleeing civil war, the All Stars have been on a surreal journey that has included opening gigs for Aerosmith. Their transcendent sophomore album solidifies the group as more than an inspirational collective; these are talented artists who turn unthinkable violence and poverty into a celebratory musical fusion. English and African voices lament injustices, pray for peace, and deliver political satire. Faith and biblical imagery sparkle among reggae, traditional rhythms, and occasional top notes of blues harmonica and boozy brass. —Jeremy V. Jones

BLITZEN TRAPPER

► DESTROYER OF THE VOID

★★★★★ Portland-based six-piece band Blitzen Trapper fuses alt-country and indie folk over a classic rock-and-roll core. Their multi-instrumental compositions alone are ambitious, and the songs’ deeply spiritual themes engage both heart and mind. Revealing struggles between personal desires and divine truths, Eric Earley’s lyrics are metaphor-laden. Lyrics like, “I had a lover, her name was Grace / She found me down in a lonely place,” are reminiscent of wisdom’s personification in Proverbs. —Ron Augustine

THE MYNABIRDS

► WHAT WE LOSE IN THE FIRE WE GAIN IN THE FLOOD

(SADDLE CREEK)

★★★★★ The album title gives away the major themes of the Mynabirds’ debut—the ache of loss and confidence in restoration. Songwriter Laura Burhenn’s fierce grip on grace pairs beautifully with the album’s roots in old gospel tunes, and listeners are encouraged by her resilience as she tells us that “every little thing, when it falls, it falls in its right place.” Between soulful piano, incredible brass backing, and Burhenn’s rich voice, the Mynabirds have blended old and new into a perfect and unexpected picture of modernized gospel and soul. —Kristin Garrett

JOSH RITTER

► SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY

(PYTHEAS)

★★★★★ Josh Ritter’s latest album springs from his song “The Curse,” which tells the tale of a 19th-century anthropologist who falls in love with the mummy she unearths. The two characters quickly find themselves in the midst of a timeless, cosmic collision of love and death; Ritter, the not-so-objective narrator, seems troubled by the outcome. Death haunts the whole album, making his grip on love tentative and inspiring a Job-like shouting match with the Almighty that’s not exactly pious but nevertheless soul-stirring in its honesty. —Josh Hurst

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Class Action

Nicole Baker Fulgham champions educational equity.

Growing up in Detroit, Nicole Baker Fulgham was fortunate to attend a magnet school where most graduates went on to college. The neighborhood school many of her friends attended had a 50 percent dropout rate, no AP classes, and very few grads who earned a college degree. One of her best friends had never heard of the SAT until her senior year, when Nicole mentioned it. “I was devastated that the school system seemed to assume she wouldn’t go to college,” Fulgham says. “That moment stayed with me and continues to motivate me today.”

After graduating from the University of Michigan with a B.A. in English, Fulgham joined Teach for America (TFA), an organization that helps children and youth in low-

income communities receive a better education. She taught fifth grade in Compton, California, leading her students to the highest academic gains of any fifth-grade class in the district. She later earned a Ph.D. at UCLA, focusing on urban education policy and teacher preparation. She rejoined TFA, where she now serves as vice president of faith community relations, building awareness about educational inequity and ways that people of faith can support TFA’s mission: “I want to see faith communities prioritize educational equality as one of their top social causes.”

- **Hometown** Washington, D.C., area
- **Church** Christian Fellowship Church
- **Family** Alonzo (husband); two teens and a 4-year-old
- **Reading now** *The Help*, by Kathryn Stockett
- **On your iPod** Nichole Nordeman, John Coltrane, India.Arie
- **What makes you laugh** NPR’s *Wait, Wait . . . Don’t Tell Me!*
- **Favorite website** RealSimple.com
- **Favorite recent film** *The Blind Side*
- **Favorite Bible verse** Micah 6:8

question & answer

Your favorite teacher growing up?

Mrs. Scharfenberg, my seventh-grade teacher. She expected more from us than any other teacher in my school. She wouldn’t hear excuses or tolerate misbehavior. And everyone rose to the occasion. She also helped me believe I was a unique and special kid—which was impressive, since I was in the middle of my awkward phase.

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Does Scripture speak to the topic of education?

The Bible encourages us to work on behalf of those in need. Children are among the most vulnerable in our society, and as Christians we must advocate on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves. Christians can be an awesome example of God’s love by helping to ensure that our most vulnerable children get an excellent education.

How can the church help?

The church can be a unique moral voice and advocate for kids in low-income communities. Christians can step out to work for social issues like HIV/AIDS, homelessness, and poverty. There’s no way we can eliminate poverty without giving kids in poverty the education they deserve.

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Doug now continues that work as Director of the Wilson Center for World Missions at Gordon-Conwell and Executive Chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.



Billy Graham, co-founder of Gordon-Conwell, led the first Lausanne Congress in 1974.

He continues, “Billy Graham, the co-founder of Gordon-Conwell, called the first Lausanne Congress in 1974. His passion was to ‘unite evangelicals in the common task of the evangelization of the world.’ In October, the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization will convene in Cape Town, South Africa. There, members of the seminary community will join some 4,000 other evangelicals to continue the mission of ‘the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.’”

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