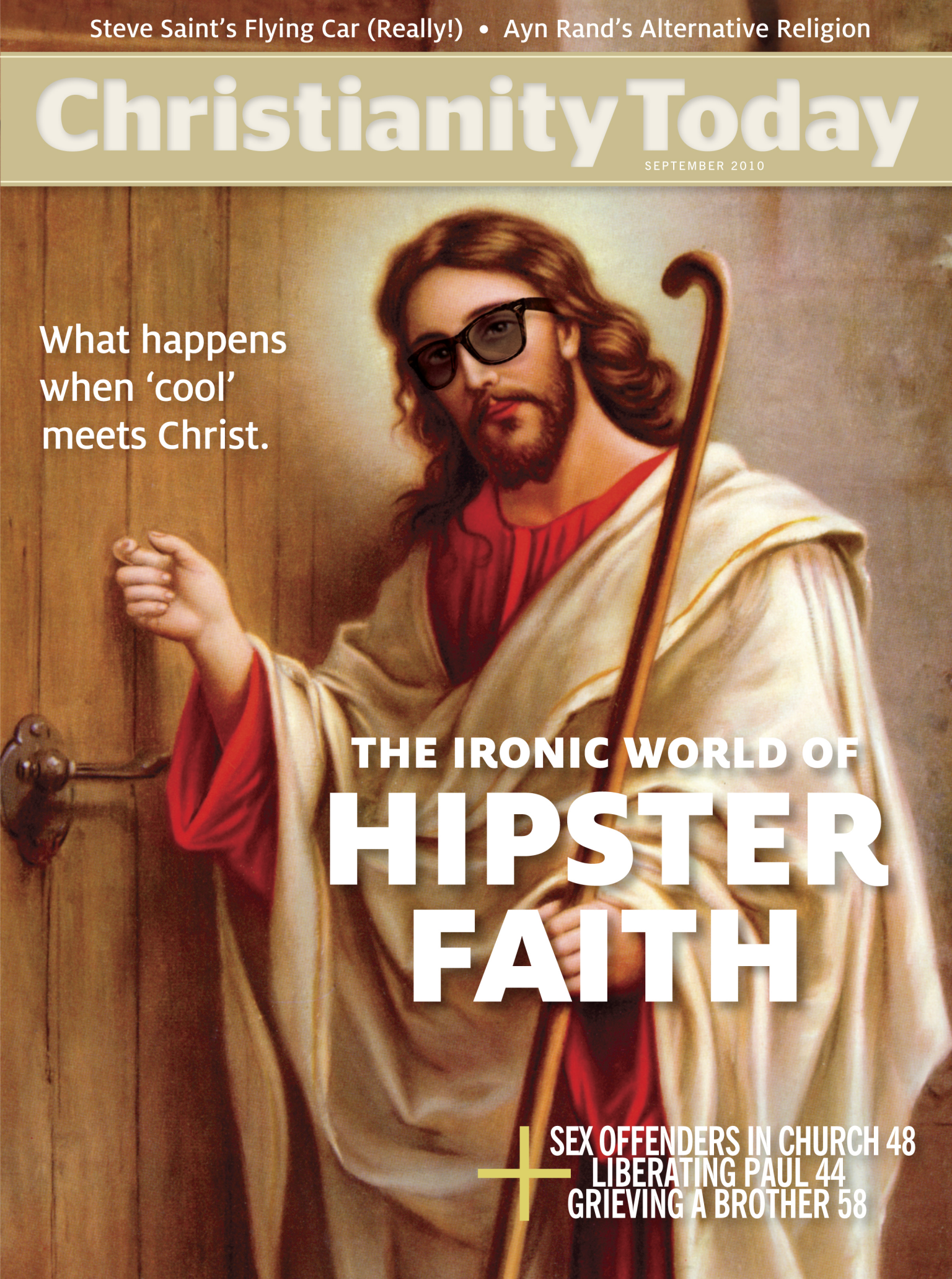


Steve Saint's Flying Car (Really!) • Ayn Rand's Alternative Religion

Christianity Today

SEPTEMBER 2010

What happens
when 'cool'
meets Christ.



THE IRONIC WORLD OF HIPSTER FAITH

 SEX OFFENDERS IN CHURCH 48
LIBERATING PAUL 44
GRIEVING A BROTHER 58

wheaton college graduate school

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Biblical Theology (Ph.D.)

Biblical Theology—Old Testament

Biblical Theology—New Testament

Historical/Systematic Theology

Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.)

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREES

Biblical Archaeology

Biblical Exegesis

History of Christianity

Theology

Christian Formation & Ministry

Clinical Psychology

Counseling Ministries

Evangelism & Leadership

Intercultural Studies

Intercultural Studies & TESOL

Teaching—Elementary

Teaching—Secondary

CERTIFICATES

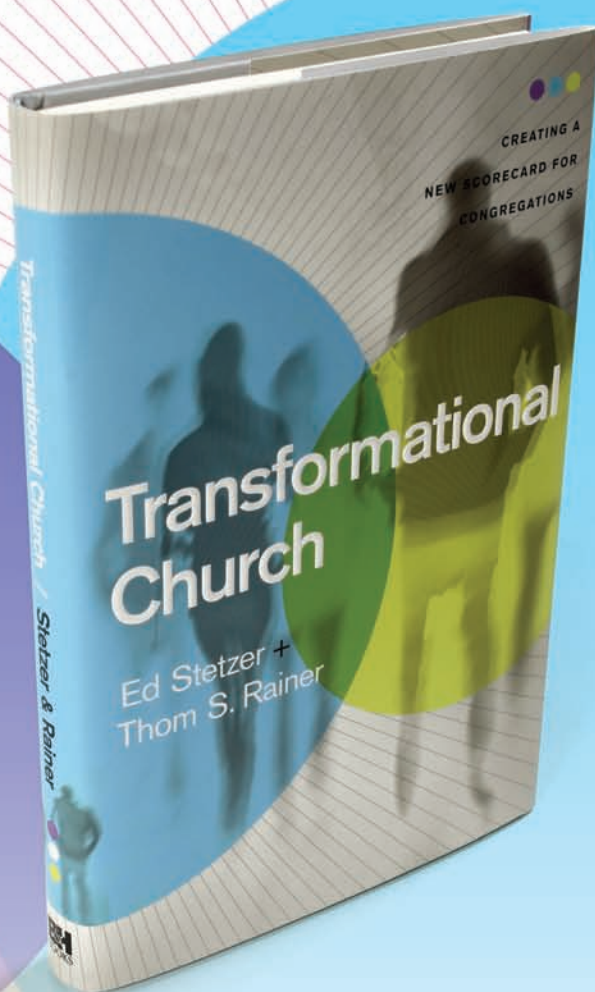
Teaching English to Speakers
of Other Languages

Urban Mission



SCHOLARSHIP + SERVANTHOOD

The graduate programs at Wheaton College offer students a rare combination of academic excellence and practical training in a conservative, evangelical Christian tradition. Committed to the principle that truth is revealed by God through Christ “in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” Wheaton seeks to relate Christian liberal arts education to the needs of the contemporary society. We are extremely blessed by the extraordinary work of our faculty—top scholars who are dedicated to classroom teaching and the shaping of students’ lives.



HOW ARE WE DOING?

The church, that is. Congregations have long measured success by “bodies, budget, and buildings”—a record of attendance, the offering plate, and square footage. But the scorecard can't stop there. When it does, the deeper emphasis on accountability, discipleship, and spiritual maturity is lost. Ignoring those details, we see fewer lives changed by the gospel, more congregations fracture, and the church's cultural influence wane—a situation that is all too familiar among churches today.

Based on the most comprehensive study of its kind, *Transformational Church* takes us to the thriving congregations where truly changing lives is the standard set for ministry. Having interviewed thousands of pastors and church members, Stetzer and Rainer clearly confirm the importance of the mindset, values, and actions necessary to become a Transformational Church in the midst of God's kingdom mission. As churches and believers remain faithful to these biblical and statistically informed principles, the world will see the change:

- People being changed by the power of the gospel
- Believers growing in their faith
- Churches making an impact on their communities and the world

THE TRANSFORMATION STARTS NOW.

Transformational Church is available in bookstores everywhere or visit our website to explore all of the tools and resources available.

 **Transformational
Church.com**

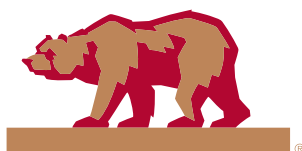
**B&H
BOOKS**

The kind of bank that makes giving easy.

Strengthen your church's finances with a giving kiosk.

The giving kiosk from Bank of the West is a great way to have your members make donations and help you save time and improve record keeping. You may even increase donations, because when you make giving more convenient, people may give more. To learn how a giving kiosk from Bank of the West can help your ministry, call (800) 848-1318 today.

- Debit and credit card capabilities
- Full-color graphics, reflecting the unique look of your church
- Simple navigation and touch-screen interface
- Donor contributions may be directed to multiple designations
- Immediately dispenses a charitable-contribution receipt
- Encryption for secure transactions
- Financing available, with easy monthly payments
- Convenient countertop model also available



BANK OF THE WEST®



Member
FDIC

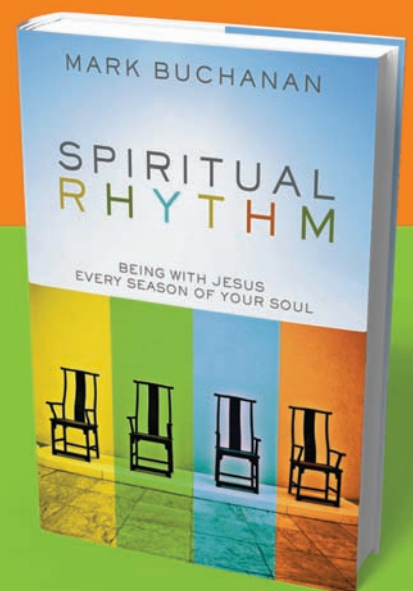
©2010 Bank of the West.
Financing subject to credit approval.

RAIN.

SNOW.

SLEET.

GOD
DELIVERS.



God's no fair-weather friend. In *Spiritual Rhythm*, author Mark Buchanan addresses all four seasons of spiritual growth, and offers advice on how readers can grow closer to God any time of year or in any stage of life. Visit Zondervan.com or check out your online or local bookseller to learn more and purchase your copy.  ZONDERVAN®



Old bus. Renewed faith.

A 2-hour drive ahead, 20 sugar-fueled teens, and a bus that isn't going anywhere. Ministry life is filled with unexpected moments. Wondering if you have the right insurance coverage shouldn't be one of them. For the expertise and specialized insurance protection you need—count on Brotherhood Mutual.

Make your next youth trip safer.
Find free resources at www.OldChurchBus.com.



Brotherhood Mutual
Insurance Company

We understand why.®

Insuring America's churches and related ministries.® | www.brotherhoodmutual.com | 800.333.3735

Property & Liability Insurance | Commercial Vehicle | Workers' Compensation | Foreign Travel Insurance

Copyright 2008 Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. All rights reserved. Brotherhood Mutual is licensed in most states.

BRIEFING



- 13 Spotlight** The History of Hip Christianity
- 14 Gleanings** Regent U. struggles to stay afloat, court erases FCC standards, and drug cartel takes John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart* to heart.
- 16 Headlines** **ACADEMIA** Society of Biblical Literature accused of evangelical pandering—and secular bias.
CHURCH LIFE Immigration officials hamper church gatherings. **17**
EVANGELISM Small ministry creates big waves at Arab festival. **17**
HIGHER EDUCATION Methodists: Multi-faith seminary in, evangelical schools out. **18**
- ◀ **{ In Depth }** **OUTREACH** Messianic leaders try new strategies for reaching the Jewish community in the U.S. and Israel. **19**

FEATURES



- 24 Hipster Faith** **BRETT MCCrackEN**
 What happens when 'cool' meets Christ.
- 32 A 21st Century Reformation**
 Leaders from across the world share their dreams for the global church.
- ◀ **36 Ayn Rand: Goddess of the Great Recession** **GARY MOORE**
 Why Christians should be wary of the late pop philosopher and her disciples.
- 44 Apostle of the Golden Age** **INTERVIEW BY JOHN WILSON**
 A classics scholar says amazing things happen when Paul is read alongside other ancient texts.
- 48 Sex Offenders in the Pew** **MARIAN V. LIAUTAUD**
 How churches are responding to society's most despised.
- 54 The Maverick** **TIM STAFFORD**
 Steve Saint's flying car will take the gospel beyond *The Gates of Splendor*.
- 58 In the Shadow of Mount Hood** **FRANK A. JAMES III**
 Meeting God in the mystery of grief.
- 64 The Refugee Pastor That Could** **MARSHALL ALLEN**
 Chansamone Saiyasak vowed to return to Thailand. And he did—with remarkable results.
- 66 The Most Diverse Gathering Ever** **JOHN W. KENNEDY**
 Lausanne III is rallying 4,000 world leaders to keep the gospel front and center.



VIEWPOINTS

- 69 Letters** Readers respond to the July issue of CT.
- ◀ **71 Where We Stand** Porn: An Equal Opportunity Destroyer
- 72 The Village Green** Jean Bethke Elshtain, Chris Seiple, and Will Willimon discuss whether the U.S. military should stay in Afghanistan.
- 74 Throwing Inkwells** Mollie Ziegler Hemingway explains why spirituality is sexy but religion is not.
- 75 Past Imperfect** David Neff tours the suburbs of heaven.

CT REVIEW

- 79 Books**
- ◀ Terry Eagleton's *On Evil*
 - John Stackhouse: My Top 5 on theodicy
 - Emily Colson's *Dancing with Max*
 - Excerpt: *Under the Influence*, by Monica Ganas
 - Wilson's Bookmarks
 - Interview: Bradley Wright exposes lies about evangelicals
- 84 Movies**
- *No Ordinary Family*
 - *Chaplains Under Fire*
 - Two minutes with Michael Jr.
- 85 Music**
- Arcade Fire's *The Suburbs*
- 86 Quick Takes** More media of note



NOW AVAILABLE
 Downloadable Bible studies
 based on selected articles:
ChristianBibleStudies.com

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 11 Inside CT** Ted Olsen on how to be a real Christian hipster.
- 96 Who's Next** L. L. Barkat writes in and for community.



The Mirror of Truth

Twenty-eight years ago, I left pastoral ministry to become an editor. I oriented myself to my new calling by reading an essay by Wes Pippert, United Press International's veteran political reporter. Was there a theological dimension to the calling of a Christian journalist? Wes connected a journalist's commitment to truth with Jesus' claim to be the Truth.

At *Christianity Today*, I've tried to make the way we handle little-t truth reflect the Truth himself, as "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." But even when it is spoken with grace, the truth can lead to tension. A community's health depends on having an accurate picture of itself, and American Christians need journalists like those at CT to hold up the mirror of truth. After a good look in that mirror, we can celebrate the healthy things we see, as well as scrub off the metaphorical smudges and lose the figurative flab.

In this issue, we tell the truth about philosopher Ayn Rand, whose lies have led many unsuspecting Christians astray (p. 36). We also showcase a classics scholar who tells how reading the apostle Paul in the Greco-Roman context helped her get at the truth he proclaimed (p. 44). And don't miss the debate over what kind of truth is welcome at the Society of Biblical Literature (p. 16).

CT regularly relies on readers like you to help us hold up the mirror—perhaps by creating buzz about a groundbreaking article or by giving gift subscriptions. Now I would like to encourage each of you to continue this needed support in a new way.

You can make your tax-deductible contribution—of any amount—by check or online. Make checks payable to *Christianity Today*, and put "CT Global Excellence Fund" on the memo line, or visit ChristianityToday.com/donate. Your gift will help us continue to speak the truth with fairness, compassion, and grace.

David Neff, Editor in Chief

Send checks (U.S. dollars only) to:
Christianity Today
Attn: Donor Relations Box CT0910
465 Gundersen Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Christianity Today International
is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Founder Billy Graham
Editor in Chief David Neff **Publisher** Keith Stonehocker

Christianity Today
Founded 1956

Senior Managing Editor Mark Galli
Managing Editor, News & Online Journalism Ted Olsen
Deputy Managing Editor Timothy C. Morgan
Design Director Gary Gnidovic
Senior Associate Editor Mark Moring
Associate Editor Katelyn Beaty
Associate Editor, News Jeremy Weber
Online Editor Sarah Pulliam Bailey
Designer Alecia Sharp
Editorial Resident Trevor Persaud
Global Conversation Editor Tim Stafford
Senior Writers Sheryl Henderson Blunt • Tony Carnes
Tim Stafford
Editorial Administrator Rebecca Custer
Editorial Assistant Laura Leonard
Development Coordinator Kim Clay

Editorial Council Timothy F. George • Christopher A. Hall
Scot McKnight • Thomas C. Oden • James I. Packer
Sarah Sumner

Editors at Large Darrell L. Bock • Andy Crouch
Edward Gilbreath • Stan Guthrie • Collin Hansen • Rob Moll
Madison Trammel • John Wilson • Philip Yancey

Contributing Editors Miriam Adeney • James A. Beverley
Mark Buchanan • Charles W. Colson • Michael Cromartie
James R. Edwards • Ajith Fernando • David Gushee
John W. Kennedy • Douglas LeBlanc • Frederica Mathewes-Green
Michael A. Maudlin • Richard Mouw • Mark A. Noll
Roger E. Olson • Ben Patterson • Ronald J. Sider • Bob Smietana
Howard Snyder • Ed Stetzer • Walter Wangerin
Lauren F. Winner • Ben Witherington • Susan Wunderink

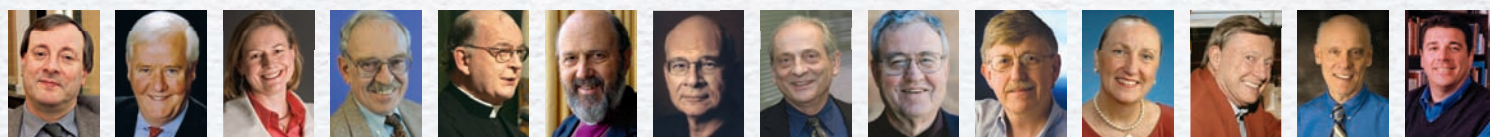
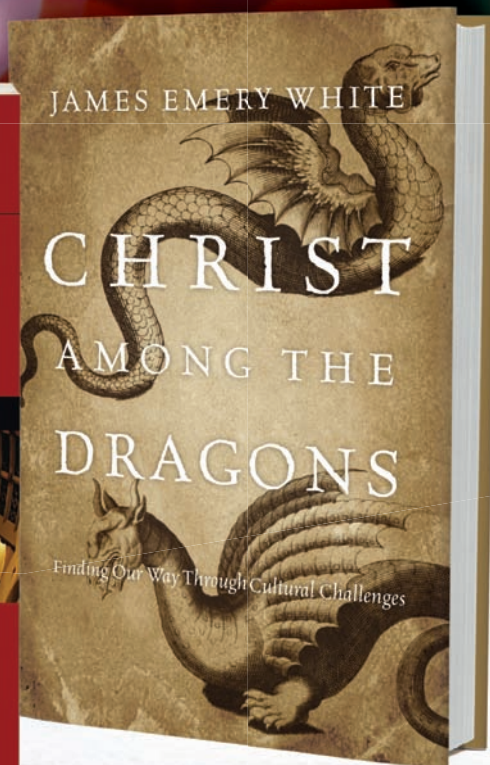
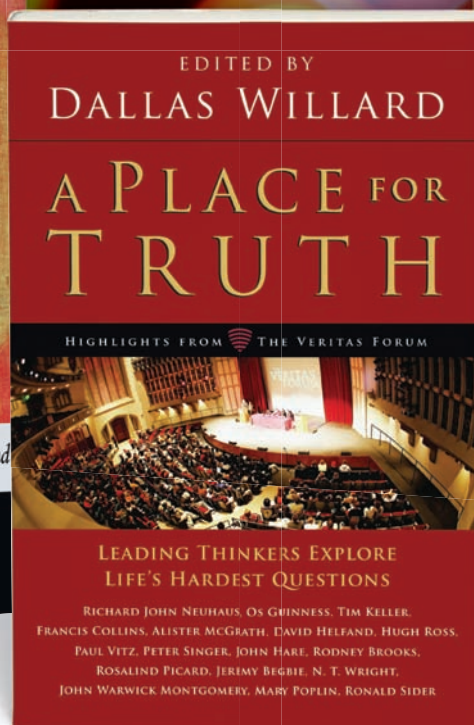
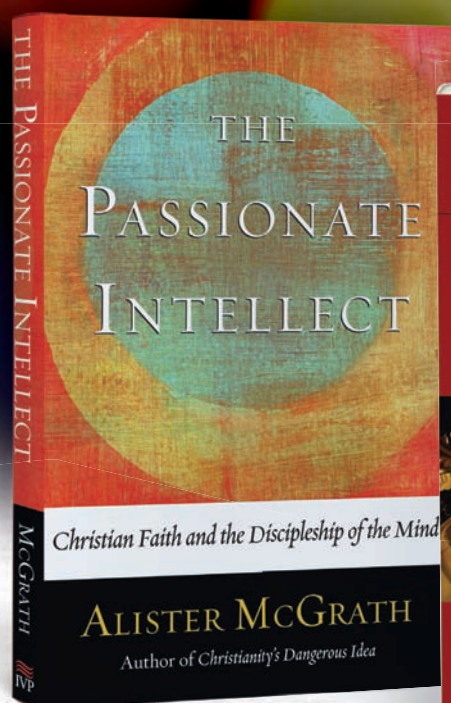
Advisory Editors Deann Alford • Leith Anderson
Myron S. Augsburger • Jim Ball • Randall Balmer
Donald G. Bloesch • Edith Blumhofer • Colin Brown
George Brushaber • Robert E. Cooley • Calvin DeWitt
Edward G. Dobson • David S. Dockery • William A. Dyrness
James Engel • Samuel Escobar • C. Stephen Evans • Richard Foster
John R. Franke • George Gallup Jr. • Vernon Grounds
Christopher D. Hancock • Alan F. Harre • Nathan Hatch
Roberta Hestenes • R. Kent Hughes • Todd M. Johnson
Robert K. Johnston • Walter C. Kaiser Jr. • David Livingstone
Paul L. Maier • Grant McClung • Steven T. McFarland
Alistair E. McGrath • David L. McKenna • James Meeks
Dean Merrill • Stephen V. Monsma • Terry C. Muck
Kenneth A. Myers • Bradley Nassif • Armand M. Nicholi Jr.
Roger Nicole • Will Norton Jr. • Michael Novak • Virginia Stem
Owens • Earl F. Palmer • William Pannell • Eugene Peterson
Richard Pierard • James W. Reapsome • Robert C. Roberts
Haddon W. Robinson • John Rodgers • Vinay Samuel
David P. Scaer • Stephen A. Seamands • Uwe Siemon-Netto
Russell P. Spittler • John Stackhouse Jr. • John R. W. Stott
Joseph M. Stowell • Marianne Meye Thompson
Donald Thorsen • Elmer L. Towns • Grant Wacker
John D. Woodbridge • Edwin M. Yamauchi

Carl F. H. Henry, Editor 1956–68
L. Nelson Bell, Executive Editor 1966–73
Harold Lindsell, Editor 1968–78
Kenneth S. Kantzer, Editor 1978–82
V. Gilbert Beers, Editor 1982–85
George K. Brushaber, Executive Editor 1985–91
Terry C. Muck, Executive Editor 1985–90

Christianity Today (ISSN 0009-5753) is published monthly by Christianity Today International, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188. Periodicals postage paid at Carol Stream, IL, and at additional mailing offices.
©2010 Christianity Today International

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Christianity Today*, P.O. Box 37060, Boone, IA 50037-0060; 1.800.999.1704. Canada Publication Mail Agreement #: 040029733. Registration #: 126028836RT0001. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: WWM Inc., 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, Ontario N8T 3B7. Printed in U.S.A.
Subscription Rates: Regular subscription price: one year \$24.95. Outside U.S. add \$13.00 postage prepaid U.S. currency. \$3.95 per copy.

Keynotes in Contemporary Christian Thought



The Passionate Intellect

Alister McGrath explains the role of Christian thinking in safeguarding the Christian vision of reality. With this in our grasp, we have the capacity for robust cultural engagement, confidently entering the public sphere of ideas.

978-0-8308-3843-1, \$22.00

"This book is not only about the passionate intellect; it exhibits the phenomenon on every page."

—Michael Horton,
Westminster Seminary California

A Place for Truth

Since 1992, The Veritas Forum has provided a place for the academy to explore the deepest questions of truth and life. Here in one volume are The Veritas Forum's most notable presentations, with contributions from Francis Collins, Richard John Neuhaus, Tim Keller, N. T. Wright, Os Guinness and others. Edited by Dallas Willard.

978-0-8308-3845-5, \$20.00

 **VERITAS Books**
FROM INTERVARSITY PRESS

Christ Among the Dragons

When medieval mapmakers came to the end of the known world, they would write on the edges of their maps, "Here Be Dragons." Recently, disputes over core ideas have led the evangelical community into unsettling territory. Will we find our way out? James Emery White sets his sights for the new world Christ is mapping for us.

978-0-8308-3312-2, \$17.00

LOOKING FOR INSIGHTS?



OUR GATEWAY HAS ANSWERS.

religioninsights.org
is your access point
to the findings
and resources of
major religion
projects and leading
organizational
websites.

Insights Into Religion is a website that offers clergy, lay leaders and the public easy access to:

- The latest research on religion
- Reflections on faith and ministry
- Suggestions about congregational life
- Commentary on spiritual practices
- Information about theological education
- Strategies for leadership education

INSIGHTS *into* RELIGION

WWW.RELIGIONINSIGHTS.ORG

CHRISTIANITY TODAY
INTERNATIONAL
A Not-for-Profit Communications Ministry

President and CEO Harold B. Smith

Executive Administrator Paulette DePaul

Executive Vice Presidents Keith Stonehocker
Carol Thompson

Senior Vice President Vicki Howard

Vice Presidents Terumi Echols • David Neff
Marshall Shelley • Amy Simpson

Advertising Terumi Echols • Peggy Gomez

Jillian Hathaway • Walter Hegel • Julie Kaminski

Toks Olawoye • Christina Payton • Stacy Smith

Sandra Sundin • Hazel Ziebell

Web Analytics & Commerce Kathy DePue

Judy Gill • Mark Selvidge • Jonathan Sprowl

Nick Tanner • Jacob Walsh

Circulation Operations Adrian Carrion

Diane Kielma • Sherry Kyle • Kathryn McQuaid

Nancy Nance • Tim Platek

Financial Operations Jim Fuoss • Gary Johnson

Sandra Johnson • Philip MacDonald • Judy VanZanten

Human Resources Norma Bormann • Jaime Patrick

Paul Ross • Richard Shields • Arlene VanGelderren

Production Cynthia Cronk

Customer Support Pamela Ferrill

Technology Clayton Anderson • Stephanie Benware

Valerie Broucek • David Dougherty • Mark Gortowski

Kividi Kikama • Julia King • Emily Mohnkern

Kent Oxley • Theresa Phillips • Stephen Swithers

Board of Directors

FOUNDER, HONORARY CHAIRMAN Billy Graham

CHAIR John A. Huffman Jr.

PRESIDENT AND CEO Harold B. Smith

Miriam Adeney • John N. Akers • Sandra C. Gray

Eugene B. Habecker • Alec Hill • Darryl L. King

Charles H. Kwon • John Ortberg • Samuel Rodriguez

John M. Sommerville

Editorial/Advertising Offices

Editorial: cteditor@christianitytoday.com

Advertising: ctiad@christianitytoday.com

Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL
60188-2415 • 630.260.6200 • Fax: 630.260.8428. Advertising in
Christianity Today does not imply editorial endorsement.

Manuscript Policy

Unsolicited manuscripts and poetry are not accepted. A query
letter must be sent first, describing a proposed manuscript.
Any unsolicited manuscript will not be returned.

Permissions

Christianity Today grants permission for any original article
(not a reprint) to be photocopied for use in a local church or
classroom, provided no more than 1,000 copies are made, are
distributed free, and indicate Christianity Today as the source.

Australian Agent

MediaCom, 14 Eton Road, Keswick 5061, South Australia

Indexes

Christianity Today is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical
Literature; Christian Periodical Index; Religion Index One:
Periodicals, Religious and Theological Abstracts; Book Review
Index; and Academic Abstracts and Magazine Article Summaries.

Occasionally we share subscriber information with select
organizations. If you wish to remove your name from direct
mail, e-mail, or telephone lists, call 1.800.999.1704 or send
e-mail to ctcustserv@christianitytoday.com. Please specify
the types of promotions you do not wish to receive.

Subscription Rates? Gift Subscriptions? Address Changes?

ctfulfill@christianitytoday.com • 1.800.999.1704 or write

Christianity Today, P.O. Box 37060, Boone, IA 50037-0060

Faculty Positions

The following are anticipated
tenure-track faculty openings for
fall 2011; completed Ph.D. desired.
Expanded information about each
opening is available at:
[http://www.wheaton.edu/HR/
employment/openings_fac.php](http://www.wheaton.edu/HR/employment/openings_fac.php)

Wheaton College is an Evangelical
Protestant Christian liberal arts col-
lege whose faculty members affirm a
Statement of Faith and the moral and
lifestyle expectations of our Community
Covenant. Wheaton College complies
with federal and state guidelines of non-
discrimination in employment; women
and minorities are encouraged to apply.
Read more about Wheaton College and
its programs at www.wheaton.edu.



Biblical and Theological Studies:

Assistant Professor of Theology.

Application deadline: August 15, 2010.

Business and Economics:

Bennett (endowed) Chair of Economics.

Application review begins November 2010.

English:

Assistant Professor in 17th or 18th

century British Literature. Application

deadline: November 12, 2010.

History:

Assistant Professor of Modern European/

World History. Application deadline:

November 1, 2010.

Psychology:

Two faculty positions in psychology

doctoral program—rank and clinical

specialty open. Application review begins

October 1, 2010.

Intercultural Studies:

Assistant professor in missions and

intercultural studies with an emphasis

on development/justice or anthropology/

linguistics. Application review ongoing.

Library:

Catalog Librarian. Application review

ongoing.

EXPLORE NEW EMPHASIS OPTIONS AT FULLER



Choosing an emphasis is a great way to take advantage of the rich interdisciplinary resources and faculty available at Fuller. Emphases now available to MA and MDiv students include:

- Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Literature
- Biblical Studies and Theology
- Children at Risk
- Christian Ethics
- International Development and Urban Studies
- Islamic Studies
- Leadership in the Multicultural Latino Community
- Recovery Ministry
- Theology and the Arts
- Worship, Theology, and the Arts
- Youth, Family, and Culture

Theology | Psychology | Intercultural Studies

Pasadena • Colorado • Northwest • California Coast
Northern California • Southwest • Texas • Online

For more information visit fuller.edu or call 800.2FULLER

 GIVE TO MINISTRY AND SUPPLEMENT YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME

the Wheaton College Gift Annuity BY THE NUMB3RS

0

the number of times
Wheaton has missed a
gift annuity payment

150

the number of years Wheaton has
been educating Christian leaders
and managing charitable resources

5.8%

the single-life gift
annuity rate for a
70-year-old donor

1897

the year Wheaton
College issued its
first gift annuity

WHEATON'S ALUMNI 3000+ in evangelism and ministry worldwide | 250 in government and foreign service | 30 college presidents and provosts | 4800+ teachers | 1500 business leaders | 1375 in medicine, science, and research | 2300 in business and commerce | 550 in the arts | 560 attorneys WHEATON TODAY 2400 undergraduates | 500 graduate students | 55+ church denominations represented

What's a gift annuity? You give a gift to Wheaton, and the College makes annual payments to you (or any two beneficiaries) for life. Supplement your retirement income with a current or deferred payment gift annuity. Get an income tax deduction, and while you're at it, reduce capital gains taxes by funding your gift annuity with appreciated securities. You'll be supporting an institution that has produced Christian leaders for 150 years. The numbers make sense. **Visit our website to request your free, no-obligation, customized gift annuity illustration.**

WHEATON.EDU/GIFTANNUITY | GIFT.PLAN@WHEATON.EDU | 1.800.525.9906 | 630.752.5332



501 College Avenue
Wheaton, Illinois 60187



The Tricky *H*-Word

Or, how to be a truly ironic hipster.



HIPSTERS NEVER call themselves hipsters. *Hipster* is always a pejorative term. As Douglas Haddow wrote in a 2008 *Adbusters* article, “It is rare, if not impossible, to find an individual who will proclaim [himself] a proud hipster. It’s an odd dance of self-identity—adamantly denying your existence while wearing clearly defined symbols that proclaim it.”

Indeed, almost all writing on mainstream hipsters, from *Time Out New York*’s “The Hipster Must Die” to the blog “Look at This [Expletive] Hipster,” is loathing—and, inevitably, likely to be read with applause from hipsters themselves. If there’s one thing a hipster hates, it’s other hipsters.

As Haddow explains, it’s easy to see why: “Hipsterdom is the first ‘counterculture’ to be born under the advertising industry’s microscope, leaving it open to constant manipulation but also forcing its participants to continually shift their interests and affiliations. Less a subculture, the hipster is a consumer group—using their capital to purchase empty authenticity and rebellion. But the moment a trend, band, sound, style, or feeling gains too much exposure, it is suddenly looked upon with disdain. Hipsters cannot afford to maintain any cultural loyalties or affiliations for fear they will lose relevance. . . . The hipster represents the end of Western civilization—a culture so detached and disconnected that it has stopped giving birth to anything new.”

Which is why irony is the hipster’s core value. (Remember the “end of irony” memes that circulated after 9/11 and Obama’s election?) The much-lauded original hipsters of the 1940s appropriated elements of black culture (especially jazz culture) as a way to identify with it. Today’s hipsters appropriate other cultural artifacts (especially outdated rural white culture: mustaches, trucker hats, V-necks, and so on) to distance and mock the originators.

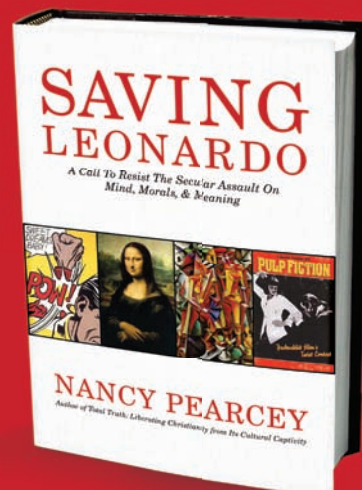
And that’s largely why the Christian hipsters described in this month’s cover story (“Hipster Faith,” page 24) will never quite mesh with their secular counterparts. They may wear skinny jeans and unnecessary scarves, but they lack the utterly nihilistic detachment of their neighbors. Yes, they may be particularly prone to evangelicalism’s original sin—a desire not to be seen as weird—but, as writer Brett McCracken points out, they are not mere consumers. They are as likely to volunteer at the Salvation Army as to shop there. They want to serve the poor even as they adopt “homeless chic” beards and caps. They want to identify with the downtrodden, not just steal their fashions.

So if “hipsters” as such are becoming the group that American urban culture most openly hates, perhaps Christian hipsters should start using the label as a self-description. Wouldn’t that be ironic?

Next month: Al Mohler’s different kind of culture war, William Wilberforce’s dirty little secret, and Joni Eareckson Tada on the blessings of suffering—including her breast cancer.



Who’s shaping your worldview?



In *Saving Leonardo*, best-selling author NANCY PEARCEY shows how global secularists impose their private worldview across an entire society, on everything from your television screen to the pages of a child’s textbook.

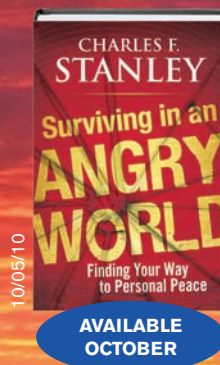
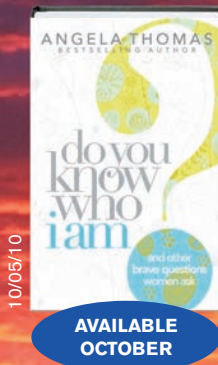
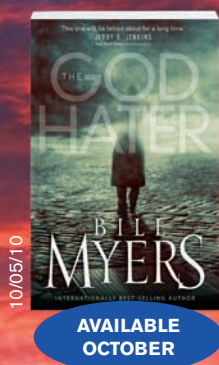
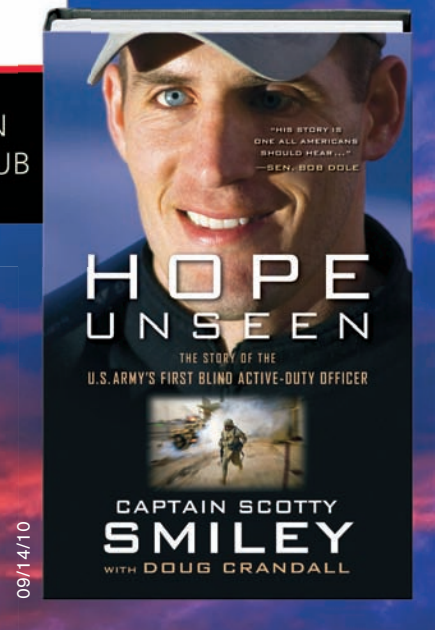
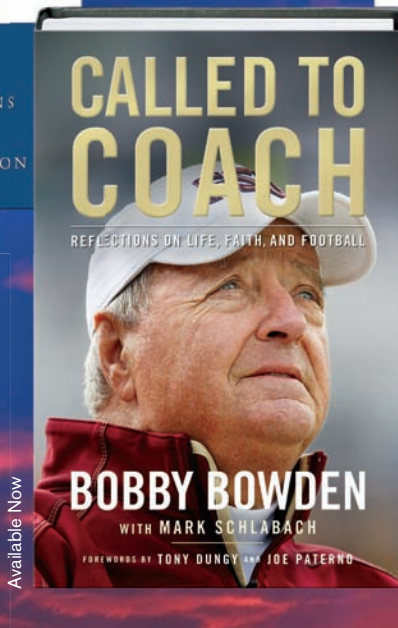
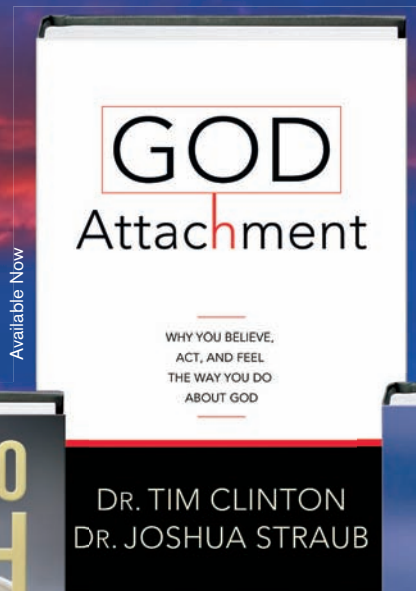
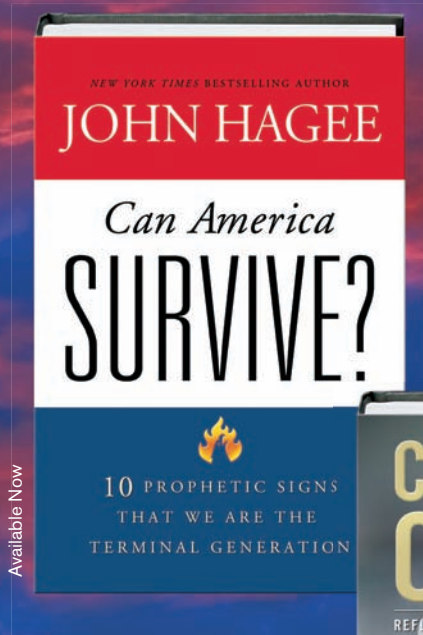
Using more than 100 artistic, media, and science-based illustrations, Pearcey makes a compelling case for biblical Christianity and follows in the footsteps of her award-winner *Total Truth*, which *Publishers Weekly* called “exceptional... the rare long book that leaves one wanting to read more.”



SavingLeonardo.com

Exciting New Releases

from Howard Books



Available wherever books are sold.
Visit simonandschuster.com for more information.

BRIEFING

REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Before We Were Hipsters

➔ Brett McCracken's "Hipster Faith" (p. 24) draws a line from the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and '70s, through the marketing of that movement's countercultural street cred, up to today's ironic indie believers. Such evangelical movements borrow heavily from both "mainstream" counterculture and conservative Christian subculture. They are at once anti-consumerist and a hot marketing demographic, earnest and skeptical, proud outsiders but aspiring for mainstream respect—and they also have many faces.



FRANCIS SCHAEFFER'S L'ABRI

c. 1954–1981

GAVE US: Renewed intellectual aspirations, political engagement, prolife conscience.

BUT ALSO: Franky Schaeffer's paranoid Huffington Post rants.

STILL LISTENING TO: Mark Heard, Os Guinness lectures.



THE JESUS MOVEMENT

c. 1965–1972

GAVE US: Calvary Chapel, Hope Chapel, the Vineyard, Christian rock, Christian counterculture chic.

BUT ALSO: Four decades of worship wars.

STILL LISTENING TO: Larry Norman, Phil Keaggy, Glenn Kaiser.



PROTO-INDIE FOLKIES

c. 1990–

GAVE US: *Paste*, and arguably today's "mainstream" indie folk scene.

BUT ALSO: Obsessions over David Bazan's enigmatic faith for those tired of obsessing over the faith of Bono (or Bob Dylan).

STILL LISTENING TO: Over the Rhine, Buddy & Julie Miller, Pierce Pettis, David Wilcox, anyone sold by the old *PasteMusic.com*.



EMERGENT CHURCH

c. 1997–2009

GAVE US: A healthy skepticism of over-dependence on propositional truth-claims.

BUT ALSO: Lots of propositions about truth.

STILL LISTENING TO: Podcasts of pastors who no longer claim the label (or never really did).



THE CHRISTIAN SURF PUNK SCENE

c. 1982–1993

GAVE US: Another fresh wave of non-corporate Christian rock; the end of "Jesuses per minute" mandates.

BUT ALSO: Replaced "Jesus is my boyfriend" songs with crypto-Christian "Jesus or singer's girlfriend?" lyric questions.

STILL LISTENING TO: The old stuff on the Blonde Vinyl and Alarma labels.

Are Christian Hipsters Anti-Evangelical?

Imagine, if you can, a Christian movement mostly defined by believers under age 40. They are concerned that their parents' faith is too fundamentalist, culturally backward, anti-intellectual, and obsessed with dispensational end-times theology. The fundamentalists may have decent theology in many areas, say these Christians, but seem unconcerned about the poor and other social injustices, and mobilize politically on only one or two moral issues. If only we demonstrated Christ's love more, we would not only find more people drawn to Jesus, Christianity would also be much more culturally acceptable. That more or less defines the neo-evangelical movement of Carl F. H. Henry, Richard Halverson, Ken Taylor, Billy Graham, and Harold Ockenga in the late 1940s. Today's "hipster Christianity" may be less a rejection of the evangelical movement than an echo of Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.



WILD at HEART

DISCOVERING THE SECRET
of A MAN'S SOUL

GLEANNINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Judge overturns gay marriage ban

A federal judge in Boston declared unconstitutional the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which codifies marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The July ruling held that the federal law violates states' rights to define marriage by blocking legally married gay couples from federal benefits and violating the Constitution's "equal protection" clause. Meanwhile, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in June that, because European Union members have not yet reached a consensus on the matter, same-sex marriage cannot be viewed as a human right.

2 Washington pharmacists may pass on Plan B

The Washington State Board of Pharmacy will, for now, allow pharmacists who object to filling certain prescriptions—such as the Plan B morning-after pill—to refer customers elsewhere. Under intense pressure from Governor Christine Gregoire, the board adopted rules in 2007 forcing pharmacists to stock and sell Plan B regardless of moral objections. With lawsuits looming, the board said it is reviewing the regulations.

3 Court erases FCC decency standards

The Second Circuit Court of Appeals overruled the Federal Communication Commission's indecency policy in mid-July, claiming it "effectively chills speech." The court said the policy—which prescribed six-figure fines for "fleeting expletives"—was "unconstitutionally vague" and caused networks to self-censor protected speech. Southern

Baptist leader Richard Land said the ruling could "throw open the floodgates to an even greater torrent of filth and perversion on our nation's airwaves."

4 Regent U. struggles to stay afloat

Despite a \$95 million booster shot from the Christian Broadcasting Network, Pat Robertson's Regent University is struggling for financial stability. Moody's Investors Service predicts that the Virginia Beach school will "continue to experience deficit operating performance" that will "deplete or, at least hamper, financial resource growth" for the foreseeable future. New Regent president Carlos Campo is more optimistic but admitted to the *Houston Chronicle* that "some fiscal challenges remain."

5 Hindu nationalist finally convicted of Orissa riots

INDIA Amid more than 800 police investigations after 2008's Orissa riots, which killed 100 people, Indian Christians finally saw one high-profile conviction. Manoj Pradhan, a leader in the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, received a seven-year prison sentence for causing the death of a Dalit Christian but was soon released on bail. While some Christians welcomed the sentence, local Protestant churches demanded that the court stretch Pradhan's sentence to life.

6 John Eldredge hopes to change drug cartel

The violent Mexican drug cartel La Familia has been distributing *Wild at Heart* to new recruits, drawing on the book's masculine themes and warrior metaphors. Author John Eldredge first expressed "sorrow and

anger" to the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, but later told *The Washington Post* he was "delighted" the cartel was reading it, saying he hoped its true message would "touch the hearts" of its members.

7 PC (USA) still divided on gay issues

Two decisions at the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s July General Assembly revealed a deep divide on sexual ethics within the nation's largest Presbyterian denomination. The assembly voted to lift a ban on noncelibate gay clergy while mandating two years of further study before deciding whether to bless same-sex unions. For the fourth time since 1997, the assembly sent the clergy ruling to local presbyteries for approval.

8 Quebec court rejects 'totalitarian' course

CANADA Loyola High School in Montreal does not want to teach the same secular ethics and religious culture class that Quebec mandates in its public schools, and the province's Superior Court said it does not have to. Justice Gérard Dugré ruled that the government's 2008 decision requiring the multi-faith course at the Catholic school had a "totalitarian quality" that was out of place in a multicultural society. The government plans to appeal.

9 Lutheran college turning out the lights

Dana College, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America school in Blair, Nebraska, closed its doors in July after an accreditation board spiked a final attempt to save the school. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools said that it would not transfer Dana's accreditation if the 126-year-old school were sold to a for-profit corporation. Arrangements are being made for Dana's 500 students.

GO FIGURE Marriage

3.5
Divorces per
1,000 Americans
in 2008.

4
Divorces per
1,000 Americans
in 2000.

Pew Research Center



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“God helped me to see that it’s not just about black people—it’s about poor people. And I’ve come a long way. I knew that I couldn’t live with hate.”

Shirley Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official who was forced to resign after a blogger posted excerpts from her speech to the NAACP. Her “God” comment came in the same address.

The Washington Post

“I over-repented.”

Ted Haggard, on accepting too much guilt for his 2006 prostitution scandal. He has since founded a church within walking distance of his former New Life Church.

The Wall Street Journal

“I don’t want to come back here 15 years from now and apologize to Hispanics. It’s a kingdom issue.”

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, on his support for giving illegal immigrants “a compassionate, just pathway to earning citizenship or legal status.”

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

“Followers of Christ and Americans don’t burn books. Nazis burn books.”

Chris Seiple, president of the Institute for Global Engagement, on plans by a small Florida church to publicly burn Qur’ans on September 11.

Christianity Today Online

“Bring the blind, the lame, Aids and cancer victims! 43 crutches! 25 walking sticks! 2 white canes from blind people! Already left behind.”

An ad for Solid Rock Church in Johannesburg, censured by South Africa’s Advertising Standards Authority for “unsubstantiated healing claims.”

The Star (South Africa)

10 Beliefnet buyers have evangelical connections

Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp sold the multi-faith website Beliefnet in June to the small firm BN Media. Two other BN properties, Affinity4 and Cross Bridge, have a pair of noted evangelicals as key advisers: Jay Sekulow, of the American Center for Law and Justice, and T. D. Jakes, pastor of the Potter’s House in Dallas. The new owner says Beliefnet’s editors will maintain editorial control.

11 Counseling programs dismiss Christian students

A counseling student sued Augusta State University in July, alleging she was told she must change her Christian beliefs about homosexuality in order to graduate. The school asked Jennifer Keeton to complete “diversity sensitivity training” and “increase exposure and interactions with gay populations” or face expulsion. Keeton said she was given “a choice of standing by the Bible or by the [American Counseling Association] Code of Ethics.” Days later, a Michigan federal district court ruled that Eastern Michigan University was justified to dismiss a Christian graduate student from its counseling program in 2009 under similar circumstances. The court said the university has “a rational basis for requiring its students to counsel clients without imposing their personal values.”

12 Sweden demands educational uniformity

SWEDEN Swedish lawmakers enacted a 1,500-page education bill this summer that restricts homeschooling to exceptional circumstances and requires religious “confessional schools” to teach the same curriculum as other schools. The confessional schools (mostly Lutheran) must also make religious activities optional. Opponents say the new law conflicts with the European Convention, which

guarantees families the right to education based on their convictions.

13 Court: Feeding the poor is not religious act

The First Vagabonds Church of God in Orlando, which meets in a city park, must seek a permit to feed the homeless in city parks during its services. The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in July that feeding the poor does not qualify as a symbolic expression of the free exercise of religion. Orlando law requires permits for groups wanting to work in the parks, limiting everyone to two permits per 12 months. The National Coalition for the Homeless recently labeled laws of this type “part of a broader trend toward criminalizing homelessness.”

14 Alcohol in, Baptists out?

INDIA The majority-Christian Indian state of Nagaland is debating whether to end its alcohol prohibition, and area Baptist leaders say the government has left them out of the discussion. The Nagaland Baptist Church Council led the charge for prohibition in 1989. (Some call Nagaland the world’s most Baptist state.) The government says that prohibition only raised the price of alcohol and stimulated the drug trade. Baptists plan to defend the alcohol ban.

15 Oregon cracks down on faith healers

Oregon authorities turned up the heat on a church that rejects medical care. A judge put Timothy and Rebecca Wyland’s child into state custody and ordered medical treatment in July. The Wyland’s church, the Followers of Christ, has fought with authorities for years over their faith-healing traditions; in August, authorities indicted another couple for the death of their newborn son. The Wyland case is the first time authorities have removed a child from a Followers of Christ family.

GO FIGURE Church Life

87%

55%

Evangelical

Mainline Protestant

Churches with 100 or more teens that have a full-time youth minister.

National Congregations Study



Faith and Reason: A professor's public exit from the Society of Biblical Literature, shown here at its July meeting in Tartu, Estonia, in protest of overly religious colleagues prompted online debate over membership standards.

ACADEMIA

Scholars and 'Snake-Handlers'

SBL accused of evangelical pandering—and secular bias. By Bobby Ross Jr.

A professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of California–Berkeley quit the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), voicing concern that the leading organization for biblical scholarship had welcomed “the views of creationists, snake-handlers, and faith healers.”

In an op-ed in the July/August 2010 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Ronald S. Hendel complained that SBL had ended its annual joint conference with the American Academy of Religion (AAR) after 2007 and reached out to “evangelical and fundamentalist groups” to boost its own numbers.

“The battle royal between faith and reason is now in the center ring at the SBL circus,” Hendel wrote, accusing some attendees of proselytizing at the conference.

The piece caused a miniature tsunami on academic blogs, drawing a mix of outrage and amusement

from evangelical scholars. (SBL disputed Hendel’s claims but hosted an online debate over its membership standards.) Coincidentally, not long after the article appeared, SBL and AAR announced plans to resume their joint conference in 2011.

The question of evangelicals’ role in organizations such as SBL and AAR is a perennial one.

After joining 10,000 SBL attendees at the 2009 conference in New Orleans, Dan Wallace, professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, cited the “darker underbelly” of bias by “left-wing fundamentalist” scholars against evangelicals.

“The prejudice runs deep—almost as deep as the ignorance,” Wallace said in a blog post.

In response, Scot McKnight, religious studies professor at North Park University in Chicago, said evangelicals must understand themselves not as dispassionate,

modernist scholars, but rather as “passionate, believing scholars.”

“American evangelicals have an identity problem,” McKnight wrote. “Too many strive to be approved by the [academy] so they can consider themselves real scholars.”

Some tout the importance of Christian involvement in organizations like SBL and AAR.

Certainly, SBL is not the place for overt evangelism, said Joel Willitts, chairman of North Park’s Department of Biblical and Theological Studies. “It is, however, the place to argue for the truth through rigorous arguments and solid evidence,” he said. “Christianity is a public faith, and its truth should stand up to public scrutiny. Evangelicals should point out weak arguments in others, but more so . . . we should point out the weakness in our own.”

Ben Witherington III, professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, said evangelicals should not “ghettoize themselves” by involvement only in organizations such as the Evangelical Theological Society.

“We have much to learn and much to share with other points of view, and going to society meetings of just evangelicals—while it has many virtues—is neither a good witness nor a good way to be stretched and challenged,” he said. “I honestly do not think that discrimination against evangelicals is much of an issue in the guild anymore.”

As for Hendel, he got an earful—in person—from at least one evangelical scholar. Tremper Longman III, professor of biblical studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, said he and his friend Hendel talked about the article at dinner.

“I agreed with him that we shouldn’t be proselytizing within the context of [SBL],” said Longman. “I disagreed with him that only people who do traditional, historical, critical methods should participate in [SBL]. The society is for everyone who has an academic interest in the Bible.”

GO FIGURE Adoption

26%
Increase in all adoption placements at Bethany Christian Services, the largest U.S. adoption agency, in 2010 over 2009.

66%
Increase in international adoption placements. Inquiries are up 95 percent in the wake of Haiti’s earthquake.

Bethany Christian Services

Delegates Denied

U.S. immigration officials hamper Christian gatherings. By Charles Honey

Martin Wanjala was eager to represent the 1,000 members of his Eastern Africa churches at a global conference of Reformed churches in Grand Rapids. He never got the chance.

Wanjala was denied a visa by the U.S. embassy in Kampala, Uganda, to attend the founding meeting of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Despite having the required documentation, including his bank account, marriage, and ordination certificates, Wanjala was told he lacked “sufficient ties” that ensured he would return to Uganda.

“I left the interview room a very disappointed, humiliated, and disgraced person,” said Wanjala, general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church of East Africa.

Wanjala was one of 74 participants denied visas to the mid-June gathering of the WCRC, a new affiliation of 230 Reformed denominations from 108 countries. Seventeen percent of the group’s 436 visa applicants were denied.

The denials angered WCRC leaders who say they represent a larger problem for international Christian initiatives. The Baptist World Alliance said 1,000 of the 5,000 registrants to its World Congress in Hawaii this July were denied visas.

“There’s a growing concern around the world that it’s more and more difficult to hold Christian gatherings in Europe and North America,” said Clifton Kirkpatrick, co-moderator of the WCRC conference. He likened the denials to excluding about 15 percent of U.S. states from representation, adding, “That’s a very difficult basis on which to have meetings with integrity.”

U.S. officials’ main concern is that visa applicants want to stay in the country illegally, said John Echard, a State Department spokesman. “They have to convince the [interviewer] they have sufficient ties and would return to the country of residence,” Echard said. He stressed that religious delegates are treated no differently than other applicants.

Many pastors, low-paid and in church-provided homes, find it hard to make a case for their return.

“How do you prove that you have the resources to want to come back when you’re not paid a real high salary [and] you don’t own property?” said Alan Morrison, general conference business manager for the United Methodist Church.

About 8 percent of international delegates were denied visas to the denomination’s 2008 General Conference, “significantly fewer” than denials for the 2004 meeting, Morrison said. He attributed the improvement to changes made after conferring with the State Department, such as online conference information, giving delegates more-detailed invitation letters, and coaching them on interviews.

At the WCRC conference in Grand Rapids, incensed leaders planned to file a protest with the State Department. As for Wanjala, he says he’s given up “anything to do” with the United States. “Getting a visa to [the] U.S. is like going to heaven.”

EVANGELISM

Dispute in Dearborn

Small ministry creates big waves at Arab festival. By Trevor Persaud

When four Christians were arrested at the annual Arab International Festival in Dearborn, Michigan, this June, many observers accused authorities of bowing to radical

Islam by preventing evangelism. But some Dearborn Christians say the outside group, Acts 17 Apologetics, was asking for trouble.

The City of Dearborn called the arrests “a matter of public safety.” Acts 17 said it defused hostile inquiries, posting YouTube videos to document its claims.

Some inquirers felt that Acts 17, which focuses on preventing conversions to Islam, had previously misrepresented Dearborn. Volunteers at 2009’s festival ejected the group for filming interviews at a Muslim booth; Acts 17 protested the expulsion with YouTube clips titled “Sharia in the U.S.”

Critics say other Christian groups ministered freely at the Arab festival. “I think [Acts 17] was fishing for somebody to come attack them,” said Haytham Abi-Haydar, pastor of Dearborn’s Arabic Fellowship Alliance Church.

“They do ministry with a camera, they’re about as abrasive as they can be . . . and they’re not reaching people,” said former Dearborn resident Ali Elhadj, who runs the Bethlehem Christmas Project, a service-focused reconciliation ministry. “For people who are trying to do real ministry, [that] makes it much more difficult.”

Acts 17 co-founder Nabeel Qureshi insists that most Muslim festival goers did not take offense at his group’s approach. (A local Muslim attorney even hosted a rally in their defense.) He says critics who call Acts 17 confrontational lack knowledge of Arab culture.

“If you just go and talk to people in the Middle East, that’s how they talk,” said Qureshi. “You approach someone, and you say, ‘Hey, what do you think about this?’ . . . Here in the U.S., that might seem confrontational or aggressive. That’s how things are done in the Middle East.”

Acts 17’s David Wood questions whether every Christian-Muslim conversation must be evangelistic.

[continued on 18]

PASSAGES



Elected
Matthew Harrison

As president of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He previously headed the denomination’s World Relief and Human Care division.



Died
Robert Bratcher

Southern Baptist translator of the *Good News Bible* (now *Today’s English Version*), on July 11 in North Carolina. He was 90.



Died
Doug Oldham
Award-winning gospel singer and former praise leader at Jerry Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church, on July 21 in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was 79.

Briefing [from 17]

"It's as if Christians think that the only important goal in the world is converting people to Christianity," he said. "There are other important tasks as well, such as educating people about Islam . . ."

"Our goal in our work with Muslims should be to win them to Christ," said Warren Larson, director of the Zwemer Center for Muslim Studies. "I don't think our only strategy is polemics. There are lots of ways to work with Muslims." ☩

HIGHER EDUCATION

Culling the Flock

Multi-faith seminary in; evangelical schools out.
By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

The United Methodist Church (UMC) lifted sanctions from Claremont School of Theology in June after vetting the seminary's proposal to educate imams and rabbis. The denomination also unexpectedly dropped two evangelical seminaries from its list of approved schools.

The denomination's University Senate froze Claremont's funds in January, asking for a full institutional review to evaluate the suburban Los Angeles school's proposed consortium with a Jewish rabbinical school and a Muslim school.

"We showed them we were going to stay a Christian seminary, and our intent wasn't to water down the Christian religion," said spokesperson Claudia Pearce. "Students will have certain curriculum in common so they can learn to understand each other and work together better."

The senate lifted the sanctions in June and restored the funds, specifying that they cannot be given to the non-Christian schools.

At the same meeting, the senate removed Evangelical Theological Seminary and Palmer Theological Seminary, both in Pennsylvania, from its list of schools approved to educate Methodist ministers.

The cuts begin a paring down of about 40 non-UMC schools that complement 13 UMC seminaries, said bishop and University Senate member William Willimon.

"We have a number of United Methodist seminaries that are really struggling [financially]," he

DISCUSSION STARTER

Prayer

The North Carolina General Assembly is reviewing its policies on guest chaplains after Winston-Salem pastor Ron Baity was told he could not pray in Jesus' name. Meanwhile, the group Atheists of Florida is suing the City of Lakeland over its opening invocations "in Jesus' name." Several governmental bodies around the country are facing similar fights.

said. "It's [an] encouragement for United Methodist students to go to United Methodist schools that need students." The senate considers whether an approved seminary offers classes on Methodist doctrine, employs any Methodist faculty, or is located near any official Methodist seminaries, Willimon said.

The removals came as a shock.

"At the very least, they could have called us and said they'd like to talk," said Mike Sigman, president of Evangelical, where 26 percent of almost 200 students are United Methodist. "This process—it has the feel of being punished. That is very disconcerting to us."

Evangelical was removed because of the "lack of ethnic inclusiveness of faculty and staff, and the absence of full-time United Methodist faculty," according to the senate letter. Evangelical has two part-time UMC professors.

Palmer, however, has received no reason for its removal.

"We were completely caught off-guard," said dean Christopher Hall. About 16 percent of Palmer's 325 students are United Methodist.

"We don't understand why this has been done," Hall said. Palmer is in the process of appealing the decision. ☩

UNDER DISCUSSION *Topics in the current debate.*

compiled by Ruth Moon

Must Christians pray in public forums using Jesus' name?

YES

"The Christian faith demands that we pray in the name of Jesus. One of the great tragedies of the hour is that people think they can just throw a prayer up and God is obligated to answer. God has a prescribed manner of approach—through his Son, Jesus Christ."

RON BAITY,
pastor, Berean Baptist Church

"Prayer isn't superstition or magic. It's talking to God, and generic prayer to a generic deity demeans the living Lord. Regardless of formula, to eschew Christian distinctives is to become religious window-dressing for the state, harming the mission of the church."

TYLER WIGG-STEVENSON,
author, *Brand Jesus*

"The God we pray to is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We know God as that because Jesus is the Son of God. Prayer must be directed to the appropriate subject—we pray not to some vague God but to the Father of Jesus Christ. So prayer is appropriately Christocentric."

STANLEY HAUERWAS,
theologian, Duke Divinity School

"That's the only way Christians pray. To pray in Jesus' name is to pray in his authority, seeking his agenda and purpose. That doesn't have anything to do with whether we say the words 'in Jesus' name' at the end of our prayer or not."

MARK D. ROBERTS,
senior director, Laity Lodge

"Christians praying at government meetings should be careful not to associate the government with a particular religious perspective. Using a government forum to promote a specific religious message pushes the boundaries of constitutional law."

K. HOLLYN HOLLMAN,
general counsel, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

"Where not gathered together specifically as Christians, they should not pray in Jesus' name. I think the temptation to offer that kind of prayer for insincere reasons is far too great to make it legitimate in a secular setting."

JONATHAN MALESIC,
author, *Secret Faith in the Public Square*

NO

Stand and Pray: Messianic leaders join in corporate worship during recent meetings in Brooklyn.



OUTREACH

A Ministry Grows in Brooklyn

Messianic leaders explore new strategies for reaching the Jewish community in the U.S. and Israel. By Tony Carnes in New York City

E

arlier this year, Chosen People Ministries, a Messianic Jewish organization, purchased an 11,000-square-foot building in the heart of Orthodox Brooklyn.

"If you walk out the door and turn left, you are in an Orthodox Jewish community," says president Mitch Glaser. "And if you turn right, you will be able to buy the best borscht you have ever tasted."

Once rehabbed, the building will allow the organization to provide substance-abuse counseling and to teach English as a second language. It will house a library for Messianic research and a 150-seat sanctuary. It will also host an accredited pastoral training program in partnership with an evangelical seminary.

The institutional changes are in many ways symbolic of new opportunities—and lasting tensions—in the modern-day Messianic movement.

JESUS MOVEMENT ROOTS

In 1970, Glaser and Jhan Moskowitz shared a ramshackle houseboat in Sausalito, near San Francisco, selling drugs to help pay their bills. At the time, the two Jews from New York City were reveling in the hippie lifestyle, with no idea they would soon face the spiritual crisis of a lifetime.

One evening, a lucrative drug deal involving 22 pounds of high-grade marijuana unraveled. Gun-toting rip-off artists showed up. One of them placed a sawed-off shotgun at the back of Glaser's neck as others scooped up the cash and pot. Glaser recalled, "I was just 18 and thought, *How stupid have I been to throw my life away!* I was scared, hopeless, and had no one to pray to."

That night, Glaser and Moskowitz escaped with their lives, and Glaser swore off drug-dealing. Later, their lives took a different path.

At the invitation of a friend who had

become a Christian, Glaser visited an evangelical commune in Oregon. Glaser, raised in an Orthodox family, was active in the Young Israel movement (also Orthodox) and hostile to Christianity. "When I passed a church, I walked to the other side of the street," he once told an interviewer. But he was moved by the intimate prayers of commune members.

Returning to California, Glaser began reading the New Testament and, after a few months of struggle, gave his life to Jesus. He was barely 19, thousands of miles from his Brooklyn home, and a new believer. One day, he walked to Sausalito's shoreline and prayed that God would introduce him to another Jewish believer. "Just then, a gospel tract floated onto the rocky shore, right next to where I was sitting and praying," he told *Christianity Today*. "Since I was such a new believer, I assumed this was normal and, though surprised, I picked up the waterlogged tract



Hard Talk: Some 200 Jews for Jesus volunteers witness in July 2006 in one of the organization's largest campaigns ever.

and hitchhiked over to the address on it. This was my first involvement with what would become Jews for Jesus.”

Glaser, Moskowitz (who also became a believer), and other Jews followed the charismatic Moishe Rosen when he left Chosen People Ministries to found Jews for Jesus, now the largest Messianic Jewish organization in North America. In 2008, the San Francisco-based ministry had gifts and other income of \$18.6 million. Rosen died this May at 78.

Over the years, the Messianic Jewish movement solidified its organizational ties to evangelicals while trying to preserve its Jewish identity and culture. The number of Messianic believers in Messianic congregations has grown slowly but steadily despite opposition from all major branches of Judaism.

RENEWED PRESENCE

After 25 years of national ministry with Jews for Jesus, Glaser realized it was time to resign. During his years with the group, he had helped to open a Los Angeles branch, toured with Messianic singing groups (including the Liberated Wailing Wall), and trained outreach volunteers in Manhattan.

Glaser strongly sensed a calling back to his hometown of Brooklyn, which has one of the world's largest concentrations of Jews outside of Israel. In 1997, he became president of Chosen People, a historic

mission to American Jews that had fallen on hard times, with declining finances and ministry. It was founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn, a Polish American, in 1894. In his day, Rabbi Cohn was a missions pioneer, expanding outreach to Jews throughout the U.S., Europe, and Israel. In 1930, Wheaton College awarded an honorary doctorate to Cohn for his ministry achievements.

“Most ministries and organizations need to reinvent themselves after some time, or their methods and strategies can become stultified,” Glaser told *CT*. “This was true of Chosen People, which had accomplished great things over the course of over 100 years of ministry. Reaching Jewish people in a Jewish way is at the heart of our time-tested strategy.”

For Glaser, a first strategic step was moving the organization's headquarters from Charlotte, North Carolina, back home to New York City. Another step was rethinking strategy based on significant changes among Jews and Messianic believers. Changes include the following:

- The emigration of two million Soviet Jews, who left Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union and are impacting Jewish populations in the U.S. and Israel. Some 20 percent of Israel's current Jewish population is from the former Soviet Union.
- The revival of Orthodox Judaism, which is bolstering the influence of Orthodox Jews. Precise numbers are hard to come by, but an estimated 525,000 American Jews are Orthodox, about 10 percent of the American Jewish population. In

Israel, about one million Jews are Orthodox, about 17 percent of the country's Jewish population.

Orthodox families also have the highest birthrate of any Jewish subgroup, so the Orthodox are becoming a greater percentage of all Jews. This means that outreach must explain the gospel in ways that are comprehensible to the Orthodox.

- The number of Messianic Jewish congregations is larger than ever, and more of them are keeping traditional Jewish practices. David Sedaca, vice president of Chosen People, estimates that the U.S. has about 200 such congregations; Russia and former Soviet states, 150; Israel, 75; and at least another 94 around the world.

Some of these congregations, such as Beth Messiah in Cincinnati and Beth Yeshua in Philadelphia, keep traditional Sabbath observance and celebrate Jewish holidays. Glaser says that “because of the explosive growth of [American] Messianic congregations, our leaders came to the conclusion that a new type of training was necessary.”

So Chosen People has partnered with Talbot School of Theology, the seminary of Biola University in La Mirada, California, to create the Charles Feinberg Center for Messianic Jewish Studies. The New York City-based extension offers a full master of divinity program and is designed to train a new generation of leaders in the Messianic movement. Feinberg, who came to faith through Chosen People, was Talbot's founding dean.

The seminary will eventually be based in Brooklyn, when the building rehab is finished. It will be the first accredited evangelical seminary in Brooklyn in recent years.

“It is clear to me that God is calling us to be a witness in one of the most religious Jewish neighborhoods in the world,” Glaser says.

CRITICAL MASS

With an estimated 275,000 Messianic believers worldwide, the movement is divided on theological and missional issues. Still, many leaders now believe there is a “critical mass” of Messianic believers, giving them greater potential to become a more influential movement, if they can resolve their differences.

Resolving differences is not a new

initiative. In 1995, Messianic and Gentile leaders created the Toward Jerusalem Council II initiative to hold discussions about Messianic identity, hoping for greater unity and lasting reconciliation, and not just with fellow Messianic Jews. Glaser told *CT* that the Dallas-based council wants the historic church “to repent from forcing Jewish believers to renounce Jewish tradition.”

In 2007, Messianic leaders started a related effort in New York. They gathered in Borough Park, a Brooklyn neighborhood with a large Orthodox population, for new dialogue. Darrell Bock, a New Testament professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, attended the gathering. “People wanted to talk, but they were compartmentalized,” he says. “Some people had never been in the same room for 40 years.”

‘Reaching Jewish people in a Jewish way is at the heart of our time-tested strategy.’

~ Mitch Glaser, Chosen People Ministries

The leaders tried again this past spring. Bock described it as a peace process, bringing together people with longstanding personal and theological differences. “We wanted to provide a safe space, not unity.” The Messianic movement includes Jews who describe themselves as “Hebrew Christians” and belong to a church, as well as observant Messianic Jews who follow Old Testament laws and worship on Saturdays in a synagogue-like setting.

So what have been their points of dispute? The following questions get at some particulars:

- What is the best way to convince fellow Jews that following *Yeshua* does not erase Jewish identity? Internet technology is playing a greater role in this approach. The newly launched *Isaiah53.com* is geared toward distributing a free book that addresses the question in depth.

- How do Messianic believers understand the Nicene Creed, the Trinity, and other historic doctrinal statements? Christian orthodoxy is not the issue; all major Messianic Jewish organizations accept the Trinity, for example. But some leaders find the historic creeds and doctrines

deeply troubling because they appear to be tied to Greek instead of Hebrew modes of thought. Some leaders believe anti-Semitic attitudes caused Jews to be excluded from developing the creeds.

Scholar Richard Harvey, author of *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology* and a Messianic Jew, says that “dismissing the creeds as unbiblical is simplistic. The creeds were meant to interpret the Bible.”

Church historian Everett Ferguson of Abilene Christian University told *CT*, “I am not aware of any deliberate exclusion of Jewish Christians from the council of Nicea. [But] by the early fourth century, they were on the fringe of the mainstream of the church. Greek philosophy furnished the terminology for theological debate and the wording of the creed.”

- What attitude should Gentile Christian churches have toward Messianic believers? Mark Kinzer, author of *Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism*, believes Gentile churches should affirm Israel’s covenant, the Torah, and Jewish tradition, and support recreation of the historic “Jewish *ekklesia*”—the church that was established at Pentecost.

- How best can Messianic leaders pass on the faith to the next generation? Moskowitz, now the North American director of Jews for Jesus, strikes a hopeful note, acknowledging that “our sons and daughters are not carrying on our wars.” He sees outreach staying at the core of their identity. Young-adult volunteers (called *halutzim*, or “pioneers”) still take part in the Jews for Jesus Summer Witnessing Campaign on New York City’s streets every July.

Chosen People’s purchase of a building in the heart of Orthodox Brooklyn naturally brings all of these questions to the surface. Their main question is: What is the best way to reach out in a very conservative Jewish context?

Matt Rosenberg, the son of prominent

Messianic leader David Rosenberg, believes he and his fellow Messianic leaders face two critical tasks: convincing all young Jews that they should retain their Jewish identity, and leading individuals to commit themselves to belief in *Yeshua* as Messiah.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

The new emphasis on dialogue and leadership development within the Messianic community comes in an era of new challenges in Israel.

The Jerusalem Institute of Justice has documented efforts by radical groups, such as *Yad L’Achim*, to marginalize Messianic congregations. Earlier this year, a Messianic pastor from Be’er Sheva had to pay \$40,000 in fines and court costs after a judge ruled that the ultra-Orthodox had not incited a damaging 2005 riot at the pastor’s congregation, *Nachalat Yeshua*.

Israeli law also prohibits anyone from inducing another person to change religion. Religious Israeli Jews are suspicious of any missionary-like activity. Meanwhile, Chosen People has expanded its ministry operations in West Jerusalem and in one of the poorest sections of Tel Aviv. Glaser says, “We minister to the needy, to younger people, and to many Russian and Sudanese immigrants through a soup kitchen and a variety of social services.” But it offers its services free of charge and without requiring clients to listen to evangelistic messages.

Glaser believes attitudes are changing. Messianic Jews are more willing to overlook ill will coming from the Jewish community. In a few cases, Messianic believers are looking to take their place in Jewish community affairs. “As long as there is clear fidelity to the essentials of the faith [and] the preaching of the gospel, we will encourage Jewish believers in Jesus to remain part of the Jewish community.

“It is important to try to lessen the potential conflict between the Jewish community and our preaching of the gospel whenever possible,” he says. “Our methods and strategies need to change with the day, yet we must at all costs communicate the facts of the gospel without compromise.”

Tony Carnes, based in New York City, is a senior writer for *Christianity Today*.

Q.

Who won a million souls to Christ in Nepal while that country was closed to foreign missionaries?

A.

Native missionaries who were trained and sent out by indigenous evangelical missionary ministries.



Native missionaries conduct an Easter procession along the streets of Kathmandu.

Q.

Who has provided the most financial support to the indigenous missions of Nepal?

A.

During the past 43 years Christian Aid Mission has distributed millions of dollars among more than 30 indigenous ministries in Nepal, including the first to openly baptize new believers and several whose workers have been imprisoned for preaching Christ to Hindus and Buddhists.

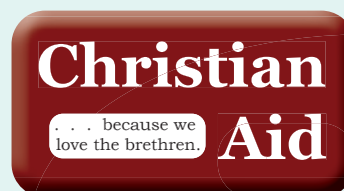
Q. How is Christian Aid financed?

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?

A. Christian Aid is in communication with more than 4000 indigenous missions, some based in almost every unevangelized country on earth. They have over 200,000 missionaries in need of support. All Christians who believe in Christ's "Great Commission" are invited to join hands with Christian Aid in finding help for thousands of native missionaries who are now out on the fields of the world with no promise of regular financial support.

For more than 50 years Christian Aid has been sending financial help to indigenous evangelistic ministries based in unevangelized countries. More than 740 ministries are now being assisted in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. They deploy over 75,000 native missionaries who are spreading the gospel of Christ among unreached people within more than 3000 different tribes and nations. Most are in countries where Americans are not allowed to go as missionaries.



Christian Aid Mission
P. O. Box 9037
Charlottesville, VA 22906

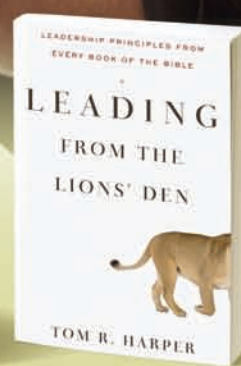
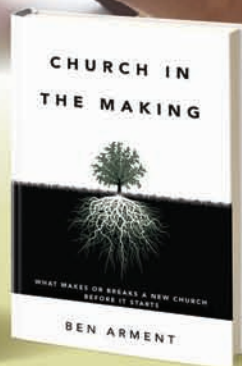
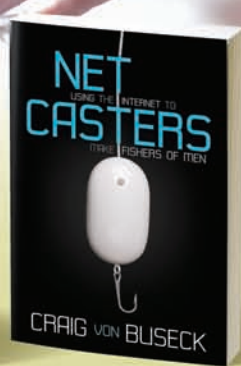
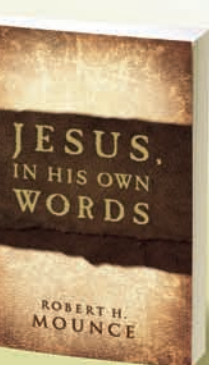
434-977-5650
www.christianaid.org

When you contact Christian Aid, ask for a free copy of Dr. Bob Finley's 285 page book, **REFORMATION IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.**





Learn what the future holds for **your ministry**



Welcome to **The Church Leadership Library**

Culture is shifting. The ranks of the unchurched are growing. But so is openness to the Gospel. And churches that can decipher the trends will grow healthier than ever—with help from the ground-breaking Church Leadership Library.

Building the future on the authority of God's Word. While acclaimed for innovation, every Library resource is based unflinchingly on doctrinal truth, with an aggressive commitment to Biblical inerrancy. Because while societies change, the foundations of faith remain the same.

Researching to reach a rapidly changing world. To reach your neighborhood, your community, your city, you need to know it inside out. The Church Leadership Library resources are developed using state-of-the-art research tools to understand cultural trends based on real data. By listening to churches, Christians, and most importantly the lost, they help you build your ministry not on the world as it was, but as it is and will be.

Equipping you with tomorrow's tools

At your favorite bookstore or online retailer. Or visit www.BHPublishingGroup.com



{ COVER STORY }

Hipster Faith

To remain relevant, many evangelical pastors are following the lead of hipster trendsetters. So what happens when 'cool' meets Christ?

By Brett McCracken

COURTESY OF MOSAIC / HANK FORTNER

A large, stylized yellow letter 'H' is positioned on the left side of the page. It is set against a dark, atmospheric background that appears to be a night scene of a city street or a club interior, with silhouettes of people and some blurred lights in the distance.

HERE'S A RIDDLE: A young man walks into a building. From the outside, it looks like a nondescript, run-down, abandoned warehouse. Inside he finds mood lighting, music with throbbing bass, and young people wearing skinny jeans and superfluous scarves.

A bar off to the side offers drinks of some sort, and a frenetically lit stage is shrouded in fog. Jumbo screens display what appear to be music videos. Everywhere people text on their iPhones.

A young woman with a nose ring and a vaguely Middle Eastern tattoo comes up and introduces herself. She makes awkward (but refreshingly earnest) small talk about her passion for community gardens and food co-ops. She asks him if he has heard Arcade Fire's new album, and compliments him on his bushy beard and lumberjack look. Beards like that are cool, she says. Eventually she asks him for his contact information.

Question: Is the man in a bar? Or is he in a church?

It could go either way.

Welcome to the world of hipster Christianity. It's a world where things like the *Left Behind* book and film series, Jesus fish bumper stickers, and door-to-door evangelism are relevant only as a source of irony or nostalgia. It's a world where *Braveheart* youth-pastor analogies are anathema, where everyone agrees that they wish Pat Robertson "weren't one of us" and shares a

collective distaste for the art of Thomas Kinkadee.

The latest incarnation of a decades-long collision of "cool" and "Christianity," hipster Christianity is in large part a rebellion against the very subculture that birthed it. It's a rebellion against old-school evangelicalism and its fuddy-duddy legalism, apathy about the arts, and pitiful lack of concern for social justice. It's also a rebellion against George W. Bush-style Christianity: American flags in churches, the Ten Commandments in courtrooms, and evangelical leaders who get too involved in conservative politics, such as James Dobson and Jerry Falwell.

The new subculture of young evangelicals—I call them "Christian hipsters"—grew up on Contemporary Christian music (CCM), Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey*, flannel graphs, vacation Bible school, and hysteria about the end times. Now all of that is laughable to them, as they attempt to burn away the kitschy dross of the megachurch Christianity of their youth—with its emphasis on "soul-winning" at the expense of everything else—and trade it for something with real-world gravitas.

They prefer to call themselves "Christ-followers" rather than "Christians." They cringe at the thought of an altar call, and the prospect of passing out tracts gives them nightmares.

Christian hipsters alarm some church leaders and mystify others. But for many observers, hipster Christianity is an exciting development. It reassures them that not all young people are abandoning the church. They are just rehabilitating its image, making it their own.

Downtown Cool: The Mosaic community has multiple gatherings in Southern California (and now two in Berkeley). The main L.A. gathering meets at the Mayan nightclub, 'downtown's leading decked-out dance and event venue,' according to *LA.com*.



In order to remain relevant in this new landscape, many evangelical pastors and church leaders are following the lead of the hipster trendsetters, making sure their churches can check off all the important items on the hipster checklist:

- Get the church involved in social justice and creation care.
- Show clips from R-rated Coen Brothers films (e.g., *No Country for Old Men*, *Fargo*) during services.
- Sponsor church outings to microbreweries.
- Put a worship pastor onstage decked in clothes from American Apparel.
- Be okay with cussing.
- Print bulletins only on recycled cardstock.
- Use Helvetica fonts as much as possible.
- Leverage technologies like Twitter.

This is what hipster Christianity looks like; this is what it requires. But what does it all mean? As the latest zeitgeisty Christian subculture in a long string of zeitgeisty Christian subcultures, what does hipster Christianity offer the church?

And what does it take away?

THE HISTORY OF COOL FAITH

Before we examine those questions, we need to take a whistle-stop tour through the somewhat brief history of “Christian cool.”

By most accounts, the story of cool Christianity begins in the 1960s. Its seeds were planted in the exploding post-war youth culture, which gave rise to a new emphasis on youth ministry

Welcome to the world of hipster Christianity. It's a world where things like the Left Behind series, Jesus fish bumper stickers, and door-to-door evangelism are relevant only as a source of irony or nostalgia.

within evangelicalism, the growth of parachurch organizations like Youth Specialties (founded in 1969), and a general feeling that, to reach increasingly rebellious and countercultural adolescents, Christianity had to get a bit edgier and wiser to the trends of the day.

But the biggest boost for cool Christianity came in the most unexpected way—when, in the late '60s and early '70s, hippies started following Christ. Acid-tripping, long-haired, sandal-wearing hippies like Ted Wise and Lonnie Frisbee led the pack, as hip Christian coffeehouses and communes sprung up in San Francisco, Greenwich Village, Chicago, and all across the country. Denominations like Calvary Chapel and Vineyard exploded, fueled by the charismatic fervor of the young hippie converts. Christian rock was born, led by people like Chuck Girard, a friend of Brian Wilson's whose band Love Song came out of the Laguna Beach dope scene, and Larry Norman, “the grandfather of Christian rock,” whose 1969 masterpiece, *Upon This Rock*, is considered the first Christian rock album. It wasn't long, however, before the alternative/organic Jesus

movement lost steam in the process of becoming mainstream. It wasn't long before “Christian rock” the movement became CCM the industry.

By the 1980s, most of the Jesus People had cut their hair, shaved their beards, and traded in their tunics and sandals for argyle sweaters and penny loafers. Yet the legacy of the hippie Christian movement was alive and well. For one thing, the deeply personal, experiential, Spirit-filled emphasis of the Jesus People remained as the charismatic movement took off, as well as the “just how you like it,” seeker-sensitive approach that became common evangelical practice. This included an emphasis on the new and an elevation of trend and cool. Following the lead of Chuck Smith, whose outreach to hippies through Calvary Chapel reaped huge dividends, more evangelical leaders in the 1980s and '90s actively sought cool. They began to reach out to the youth culture and form churches to fit its needs—motivated by a renewed desire to be contemporary, current, and relevant.

As a result, evangelicalism in the '90s had a firmly established youth culture, built on the infrastructure of a lucrative Christian retail industry and commercial subculture. Huge Christian rock festivals, Lord's Gym T-shirts, www bracelets, Left Behind, and so forth. It was big business. It was corporate. It was schlocky kitsch. And it was begging to be rebelled against.

Enter the age of the Christian hipster. As the '90s gave way to the 2000s, young evangelicals reared in the ostentatious Je\$us subculture began to rebel. They sought a more intellectual faith, one that didn't reject outright the culture, ideas, and art of the secular world. In typical hipster fashion, they rejected the corporate mentality of the purpose-driven megachurch and McMansion evangelicalism, and longed for a simpler, back-to-basics faith that was more about serving the poor than serving Starbucks in the church vestibule.

They looked up to young Christian authors and pastors like Shane Claiborne, Rob Bell, and Donald Miller, read *Relevant* magazine, adored indie-folk musician Sufjan Stevens, and were fascinated by ancient church liturgies and prayers. They began to dress and act like secular hipsters: drinking beer, getting tattoos, riding fixed-gear bikes, and eating raw and organic foods. They took interest in a broader range of issues (the environment, HIV/AIDS, globalization) than their parents' generation, and voted for Barack Obama.

In a way, the contemporary Christian hipster is a full-circle return to the Jesus People hippies of yesteryear. But the Jesus People were secular “hipsters” first, then—having converted to Christianity—began to shed their hippie clothes and customs to form communities that were set apart, ultimately becoming their own subculture (e.g., Jesus People USA). Today's Christian hipsters are doing the reverse. They seek to break out of the Christian subculture. The clothes and customs they shed are nothing less than the evangelical establishment itself, formed through decades of attempts at cool Christianity. Today's Christian hipsters retain their faith, but they want it to be compatible with, not contrary to, secular hipster



No Worship Cover Charge: The Trash Bar in Brooklyn self-advertises as 'Grant Street's premier music venue,' and lists in its weekly lineup the Sunday evening service of Vineyard Church, saying, 'All Are Welcome—No Cover for Service.'

counterculture. Their mission is to rebrand Christianity to be, if not completely void of its own brand altogether, at least cobranded and allied with the things that it had previously set itself in opposition to: art, academics, liberal politics, fashion, and so on.

As a result of its intentional melding of Christian and secular, hipster Christianity often feels a bit like a stealth operation. One cannot easily decipher the Christian elements of a Christian hipster, not because they aren't there, but because they aren't in the foreground as much as, say, the "can't miss it" sartorial expressions (lumberjack beards, vintage dresses, flask as accessory) that traditionally signify hip. You're telling me that indie folk singer is a Calvinist? *Blue Like Jazz* is a book about Christianity? That guy with the Poseidon tattoo I saw at the hookah

of Solomon (an "ancient striptease," as he referred to it, and "one of the steamiest passages in the Bible"). During his sermon, Driscoll—looking like a metrosexual jock in an Ed Hardy-esque tight T-shirt, cross necklace, and faux-hawk—talked about how wives should be "visually generous" with their husbands (e.g., they should keep the lights on when undressing and during sex). I never thought I'd hear a preacher talk about these things from the pulpit. And that's exactly the point.

Hipster Christianity's attention to shock value manifests in others ways. Some churches hold their services in bars and nightclubs—Mosaic in L.A. meets in the Mayan nightclub, and North Brooklyn Vineyard in New York meets at a place called the Trash Bar. Some churches, like Grace Chicago, host wine tastings or schedule outings to microbreweries. I even attended an Anglican church a few years ago that sponsored a cookout with fine wines, beer, and a selection of cigars from the priest's own humidor. Other churches focus more on the shock value

bar last night is a Presbyterian pastor? Who knew?

THE HIPSTER LOOK

In this confounding world of intentionally blurred distinctions and redefined categories, can we make out any clear marks of a Christian hipster?

What makes a church a "hipster church"? Does it have a one-word name that is either a Greek word or something evocative of creation? Does the pastor frequently use words like *kingdom*, *authenticity*, and *justice*, and drop names like N. T. Wright in sermons? Does the church advertise a gluten-free option for Communion? If the answer is yes to all of those questions, chances are that it's a hipster church.

Of course that's simplistic. The hipster Christianity that I discovered during the research for my book—which entailed visits to hipster churches and interviews all over the country—is actually complex and diverse in its incarnations, even if it isn't very diverse in ethnicity and socio-economics. Hipster Christianity isn't a monolithic subculture that can be easily categorized, but it definitely has some recognizable characteristics.

One thing we can fairly say of hipster Christianity is that it frequently strives for shock value. Take, for example, Seattle's Mars Hill Church—a Christian hipster Mecca pastored by Mark Driscoll, the polarizing Howard Stern of neo-Calvinist Christianity. On the Sunday I visited, Driscoll's message was on the Dance of Mahanaim in the Song



of sermons, delving into touchy subjects such as homosexuality, child abuse, sex trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and so on, sometimes with an f-bomb or two thrown in for good measure.

Another distinguishing mark of hipster Christianity is the music in its worship services. In keeping with the overarching “avoid doing what everyone else is doing” motif of hipsterdom at large, most of the hipster churches I visited seemed done with the U2-starry-rock style that now dominates megachurch evangelicalism. Rather than contemporary praise choruses, many of them favored centuries-old hymns.

On the Sunday I visited Resurrection Presbyterian in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (the heart of worldwide hipster culture), the music was pared down (one singer and one instrumentalist), acoustic, vintage, and reverent. All the worship songs were old hymns, including “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise” and “Fair-est Lord Jesus.” Almost everyone in the audience was under 35.

Hipster Christianity also expresses itself theologically, through preaching that often emphasizes covenantal and “new creation” ideas and attempts to construct a more ecclesiological or community-centric view of salvation. Things like soul-winning and going to heaven are downplayed in favor of the notion that heaven will come down to earth and renew the broken creation. Thus, the world matters. It’s not a piece of rotting kindling that we will abandon for heaven one day. It’s the site of a renewed kingdom. All of this informs hipster Christianity’s attention to things like social justice, environmentalism, and the arts, because if God is building his kingdom on earth, then it all matters.

SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL

Lest we overemphasize its importance in worldwide Christianity, we should remember that hipster Christianity is a rather narrow subset of the faith: mostly white evangelical, mostly economically well-off. It has little pertinence to, say, a rural Appalachian church or a monastic community in Ohio, let alone most of Christendom in the non-Western world. It also has little impact on non-white communities in the U.S., a point made by Anthony Bradley—professor of theology at New York’s King’s College—in a recent blog post titled “Can hipster Christians reach non-hipster blacks and Latinos in urban areas?” Soong-Chan Rah asked a similar question in a recent *Sojourners* article,

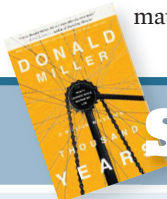
ERIK STENBAKEN

Hipsters reject the purpose-driven megachurch and McMansion evangelicalism, and long for a simpler, back-to-basics faith that is more about serving the poor than serving Starbucks in the church vestibule.

“Is the Emerging Church for Whites Only?”

Hipster Christianity is undoubtedly a specific enterprise, which means its overall impact on global Christianity might be negligible. But it’s clearly shaping some aspects of evangelical culture.

One of hipsterdom’s positive values is its concern for justice—whether it be sweatshops or sex trafficking, water wells or finance reform. Hipsters almost always champion the cause of the underdog (immigrants, the poor, minorities) over those



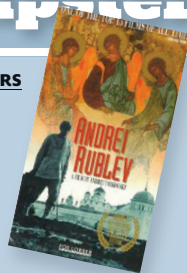
Stuff Christian Hipsters Like

BOOKS BY THESE AUTHORS

C. S. Lewis	Flannery O'Connor
Walker Percy	Jacques Ellul
Dorothy Sayers	Thomas Merton
Terry Eagleton	Shusaku Endo
Donald Miller	Lauren Winner
Evelyn Underhill	Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Anne Lamott	Shane Claiborne
George MacDonald	Henri Nouwen
Shakespeare	Paul Tillich
Plato	Karl Barth
Augustine	Dallas Willard
Annie Dillard	John Steinbeck
Martin Buber	Jim Wallis
Wendell Berry	William Faulkner
Tim Keller	Eugene Peterson
N. T. Wright	Thomas à Kempis
Fyodor Dostoevsky	Emily Dickinson
A. W. Tozer	Marilynne Robinson

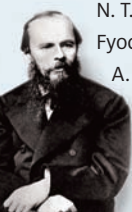
MOVIES BY THESE DIRECTORS

Wim Wenders	David Gordon Green
Sofia Coppola	Gus Van Sant
Spike Jonze	Ingmar Bergman
The Coen Brothers	Jia Zhangke
Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne	Jean-Luc Godard
Carl Dreyer	Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Robert Bresson	Alfonso Cuarón
Yasujiro Ozu	
Terrence Malick	
Martin Scorsese	
Krzysztof Kieślowski	
Hou Hsiao-Hsien	
Andrei Tarkovsky	
Jane Campion	
Wes Anderson	
Paul Thomas Anderson	



MUSIC BY THESE ARTISTS

Sufjan Stevens	Hem
Pedro the Lion	Vigilantes of Love
Radiohead	Larry Norman
Coldplay	Love Song
Damien Jurado	Jars of Clay
Bob Dylan	Low
The National	Neko Case
My Brightest Diamond	Arcade Fire
Rosie Thomas	Kanye West
Denison Witmer	Fleet Foxes
Bifrost Arts	Band of Horses
U2	Ron Sexsmith
John Mark McMillan	She & Him
Mutemath	The Swell Season
Future of Forestry	Feist
Andrew Bird	Vampire Weekend
Animal Collective	Joanna Newsom
Over the Rhine	





Radical Hero: Shane Claiborne (center), author of *Irresistible Revolution*, and his Potter Street Community are admired if not emulated by all hipsters.

with power and privilege. Christians would be hard-pressed to find any Scripture passages that suggest Jesus didn't do the same. Many Christians, sadly, have moved away from social justice and fighting for the well-being of the downtrodden, but Christian hipsters are leading the way back.

Hipster Christians also have a healthy appreciation for the finer things in God's creation. With childlike awe and wonder that betrays their otherwise cynical demeanor, hipsters glory in the little pleasures of life: riding bikes along rivers, eating homemade macarons on a blanket in a friend's front yard, or playing Frisbee in the park. Hipsters appreciate the detail and artistry of creative, well-crafted films, music, books, and woodwork. They take the arts seriously and recognize their crucial part in human flourishing. Mainstream evangelical Christianity—too long in the ghetto of subpar subculture—should take note.

On the other hand, some wonder if hipster Christianity goes too far in embracing worldly things—especially when those things arguably become stumbling blocks or idols in the Christian life. Some suspect that its rebellious embrace of formerly taboo behaviors actually might do more long-term harm than good.

In order to be a hipster, one must be a rebel. Despite the fact that (ironically) hipster culture usually operates within and is sustained by the very structures it opposes, hipsterdom's *raison d'être* is countercultural, boundary-pushing rebellion. As such, hipster existence is frequently rife with vices. If hipsters cannot completely overthrow the structures that bind them, they can at least destabilize them by engaging in hedonistic behavior: smoking, drinking, cursing, sexual experimentation,

and so on. It's about freedom, partying, and transgression—not in the *Jersey Shore*, frat-party sense (unless ironically), but in the “bourbon cask ales taste good and I don't care if I get drunk” sense. Hipsters ridicule bourgeois concerns such as “cigarettes cause cancer” and “drinking should be done in moderation,” opting instead to recklessly embrace such vices with “why not?” abandon. If you aren't willing to engage in at least some of this “subversive hedonism,” you will have a hard time maintaining any hipster credibility.

But what does this mean for *Christian* hipsters? When, in the name of rebellion and “freedom in Christ,” Christian hipsters begin to look and act just like their secular hipster counterparts, drinking and smoking all the same things, shouldn't we raise a red flag?

Isn't Christianity supposed to be distinguishable and set apart from the world? Christian hipsters are rebelling against a mainstream Christianity that they see as too indistinguishable from secular mainstream culture (i.e., consumerist, numbers-driven, Fox News-watching, immigrant-hating, SUV-driving), but their corrective may not turn out much better. Some hipster Christianity is as indistinguishable from its secular hipster counterpart as yesterday's megachurch Christianity was indistinguishable from secular soccer-mom suburbia.

The challenge for hipster Christians is to figure out what it means, in their cultural context, to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24). We are new creations, and the old has passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). How does that mesh with the Pabst-guzzling, Parliament-smoking nonchalant image that seems important to many hipsters?



Shock-jock Preaching: Mark Driscoll's in-your-face homiletics attracts hordes of Seattle hipsters.

Another concern about hipster Christianity is its fundamentally disposable, moving-on-to-what's-next transience. Granted, there is a tension here, because hipsters are rediscovering ancient liturgy and hymns. But one gets the impression that these are valued mostly because they are countercultural and therefore cool in their own way. But cool is all about the "now." It relentlessly pursues the next big thing, abandoning today's trend for tomorrow's with mechanistic speed and efficiency (think trucker hats or messenger bags).

As hipster Christianity grows, the temptation for church leaders will be to fashion themselves (and their churches) in the hipster mold.

This "of the moment" trendiness is an understandably appealing quality for those seeking to advance Christianity in today's world. How can we be taken seriously if we are perceived as behind the times or irrelevant? This is the reasoning that leads many churches to obsess about keeping their churches on pace with the latest technologies, worship music trends, or theological buzzwords (*missional!*). But is this painstaking, resource-draining rat race of staying ahead of the pack worth it? And what happens to Christianity when it becomes, like hipsterdom, a chameleon of fleeting fashion and transient trend?

As hipster Christianity grows, the temptation for church leaders will be to fashion themselves (and their churches) in the hipster mold. But in so doing, these churches will likely only reinforce a growing distinction between "authentic hipster"

and "wannabe hip" churches. The former type is often simply an organic embodiment of an urban environment where hipsters live (and, thus, attend church). These churches are hip not because they self-consciously strive to be, but because they happen to exist in a hipster milieu (e.g., Resurrection Presbyterian in Brooklyn, or Grace Church in London's Hackney neighborhood).

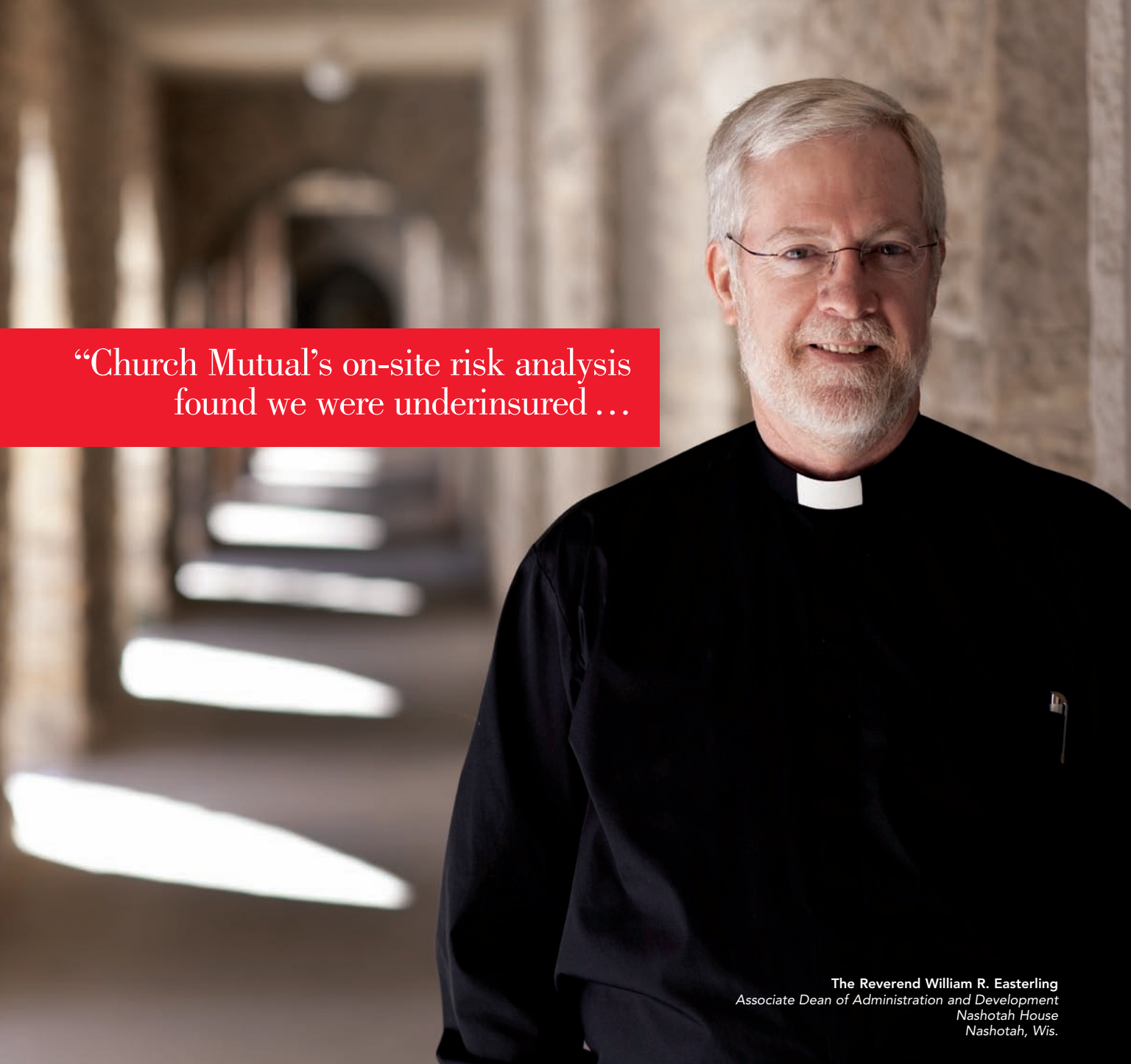
The latter type, on the other hand, appropriates what it perceives to be the prevailing hipster sensibilities in a utilitarian, "staying relevant" way. These wannabe hip churches—largely of the suburban, megachurch, and "contemporary evening service" variety—dress themselves in the accoutrements of hipsterdom not because they understand or value it, but because they are terrified of being excluded, left behind, or undesirable. They are playing catch up, frantically maneuvering to be in the inner rings of culture and fashion rather than the dreaded periphery.

Wannabe-hip churches are springing up everywhere these days, but what will it mean for the larger church? Will this sort of Christianity bring back the youth, or will it further alienate a younger generation fed up with being a target market? Will hipster Christianity repair Christianity's PR problem? Or will it fizzle in a faddish wisp before anyone can say *lectio divina*?

These are open questions. In the meantime, hipster Christianity is a sometimes encouraging, sometimes maddening, always fascinating phenomenon. It defies easy yes-or-no understanding. And that's precisely how it prefers it to be. 

Brett McCracken is author of *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* (Baker, 2010). He works at Biola University in Los Angeles.

RON STORER

A man with grey hair and a beard, wearing glasses and a black clerical shirt with a white collar, stands in a church hallway. The hallway has stone walls and a series of arched doorways receding into the distance. A red banner is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Church Mutual’s on-site risk analysis
found we were underinsured ...

The Reverend William R. Easterling
Associate Dean of Administration and Development
Nashotah House
Nashotah, Wis.

...then came the fire.”

“Church Mutual spent days looking at every building and all our property. They found we were underinsured, but the quote they gave us to be properly insured was well below what we were paying. Then, a month after becoming a policyholder, we had a fire. Church Mutual representatives were on the scene within hours. What could have been a nerve-wracking experience, turned into a smooth one. I cannot recommend or speak more highly of Church Mutual.”

For a detailed on-site risk analysis of your facilities and activities (a value-added service we offer at no charge) and premium quotation, or for a closer look at why more than twice as many religious organizations trust Church Mutual, simply call 800-554-2642 or go to www.churchmutual.com/onsite.

Church Mutual has received consistently high ratings from industry analyst A.M. Best every year since 1952.

Listening. Learning. Leading. is a registered trademark of Church Mutual Insurance Company. © 2010 Church Mutual Insurance Company



Listening. | Learning. | Leading.®

churchmutual.com
800.554.2642

A 21st Century

The Reformation of the 16th century was a revolution of mythic proportions. Scholars and pastors with fresh scriptural insights took advantage of revolutionary changes in the arts, science, humanities, politics, travel, and commerce to turn the Western world upside down. It marked both a return to biblical roots and a leap into the future. In the 21st century, what major changes in the church should Christians be hoping and working for? In the final installment of the Global Conversation, four key leaders from four continents reveal their hopes.

Recover the Supernatural

BY HWA YUNG

ONE BIG SURPRISE of the 20th century was the dramatic growth of churches in the non-Western world. A bigger surprise was that the fastest-growing churches were strongly supernaturally oriented. “In this thought world, prophecy is an everyday reality, while faith healing, exorcism, and dream visions are all basic components of religious sensibility,” religion historian Philip Jenkins has noted. This is true of African Initiated Churches, Pentecostal churches in Latin America, house churches in China and India, and numerous others.

I grew up in a thought world where ancestral spirits, demonic powers, “gods,” and miracles of all kinds abounded. Modern education, the most powerful force behind secularization, almost succeeded in getting me to toss out everything as superstition. Some of these supernatural elements clearly are, but not all. A careful reading of the Bible and the sheer weight of empirical evidence eventually brought me back to a supernatural Christianity. In this, I found myself out of sync with much of Western theology. Here liberals were at least consistent, but not evangelicals. Most liberals denied the supernatural both in the Bible and in the present; evangelicals fought tooth and nail to defend the miraculous in the Bible, but rarely could cope with it in real life.

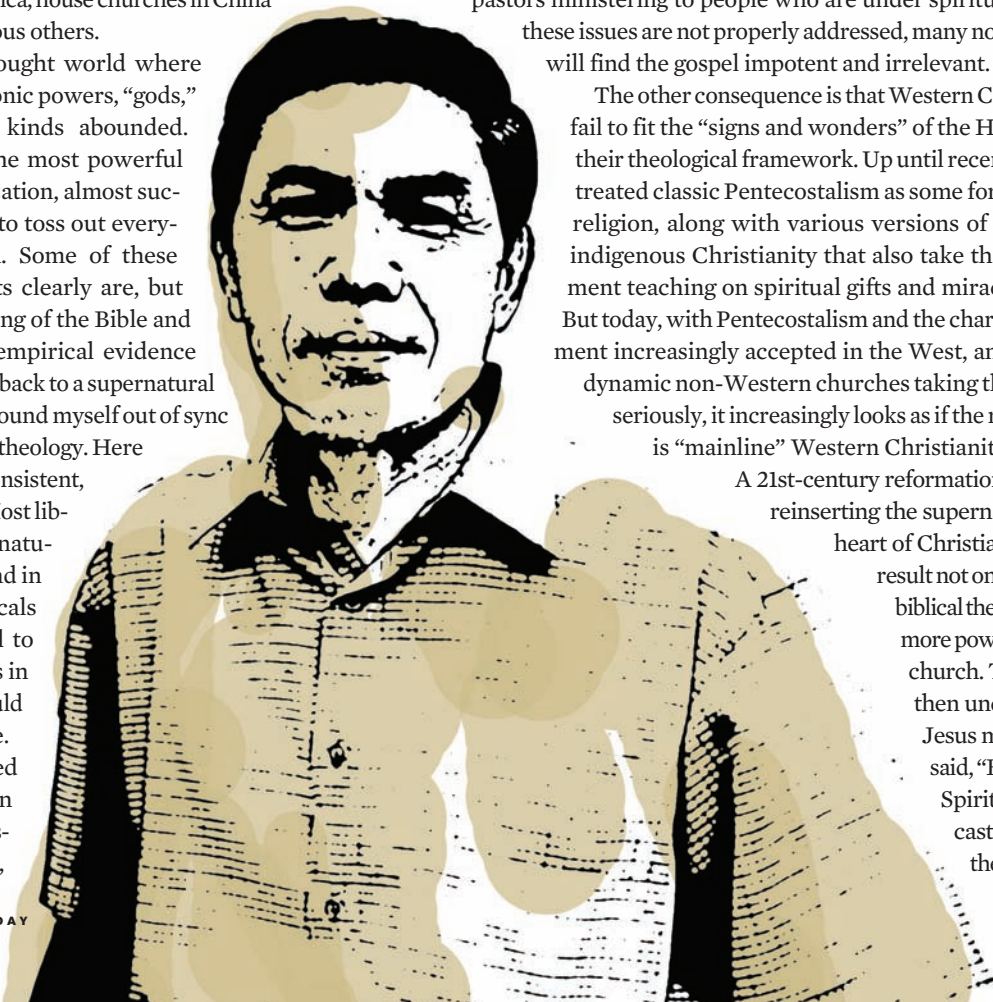
It is now recognized that much of Western thought has been domesticated by modernity,

with its roots in Enlightenment thought. The autonomous rationalism initiated by Descartes and the narrow empiricism pioneered by Hume have so emasculated the modern worldview that a mechanistic universe is all that remains. The resultant denial of the supernatural has crippled much of theology, leading to at least two serious consequences.

First, most present-day Western systematic and pastoral theologies fail to address the demonic at both the personal and cosmic levels. Many scholars deny or ignore the whole subject, explaining away numerous related biblical passages: Paul’s references to “principalities and powers” are reduced to sociological structures; sin and evil are discussed without reference to the demonic. Such theologies sit well with modernity, but they provide no help for evangelists and pastors ministering to people who are under spiritual bondage. If these issues are not properly addressed, many non-Westerners will find the gospel impotent and irrelevant.

The other consequence is that Western Christians often fail to fit the “signs and wonders” of the Holy Spirit into their theological framework. Up until recently, they have treated classic Pentecostalism as some form of aberrant religion, along with various versions of non-Western indigenous Christianity that also take the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts and miracles seriously. But today, with Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement increasingly accepted in the West, and most of the dynamic non-Western churches taking the miraculous seriously, it increasingly looks as if the real aberration is “mainline” Western Christianity.

A 21st-century reformation will demand reinserting the supernatural into the heart of Christianity. This will result not only in a sounder biblical theology but also a more powerful missional church. The world will then understand what Jesus meant when he said, “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom



COURTESY OF BISHOP HWA YUNG

Reformation

Leaders from Malaysia, Argentina, Nigeria, and the United States share their dreams for major changes in the global church.

of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28, ESV).

Hwa Yung is a bishop of the Methodist Church of Malaysia and a member of the management team for Cape Town 2010. He wrote *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*.

Return to First Principles

BY RENE PADILLA

A KEY PROBLEM of evangelical churches worldwide is the unilateral emphasis on numerical growth. For the sake of it, the gospel is watered down, church services are turned into entertainment, and Jesus' commandment to make disciples is replaced by a strategy to enroll as many converts as possible. In my frequent travels, I find an increasing number of megachurches with a high rate of numerical growth but a low degree of concern for faithfulness to the whole gospel and the ethical dimensions of whole-life discipleship. One wonders what has happened to the vision of whole-life discipleship projected in 1974 by the First International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne I) in its celebrated Lausanne Covenant.

Lausanne I is regarded by many as the most significant world evangelical gathering of the 20th century. It is no exaggeration to say that the main significance of the conference was the rediscovery of the absolute importance of the socio-political dimensions of the gospel for church life and mission. According to

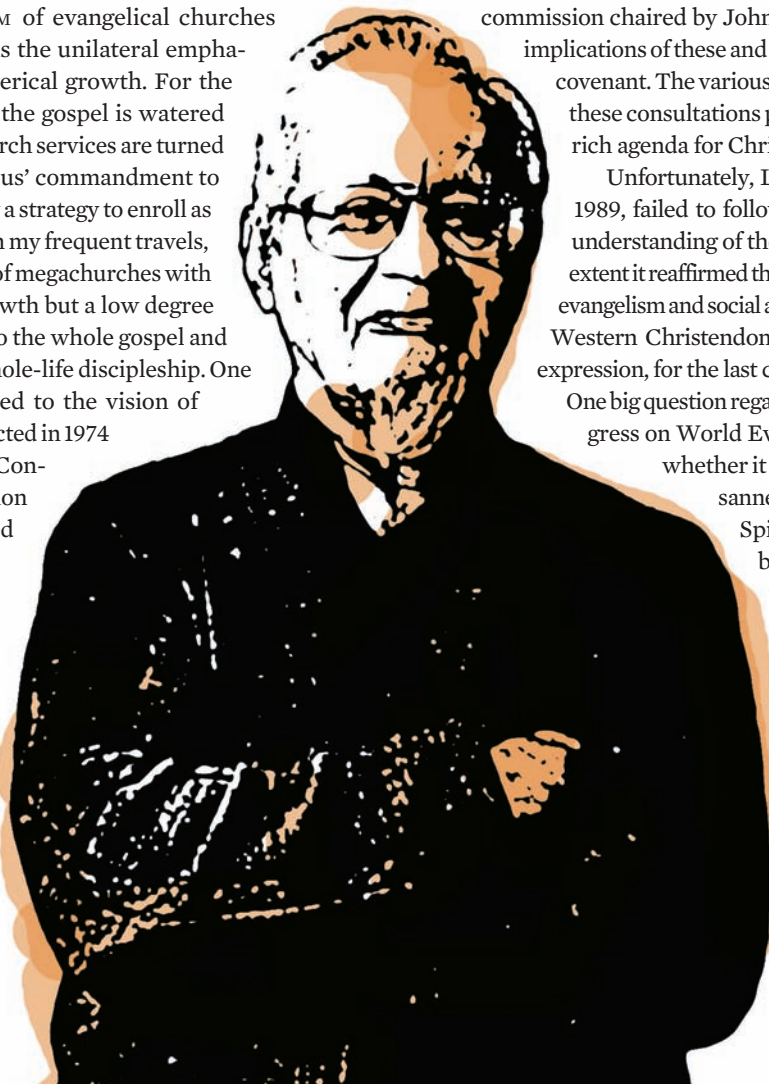
paragraph five of the Lausanne Covenant, because "God is both the Creator and Judge of all people," Christians "should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression." From this perspective, the mission of the church must not be reduced to the oral proclamation of the gospel, as "evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty." The traditional dichotomy between evangelism and social responsibility is thus practically discarded.

Several consultations organized during the late 1970s and early '80s by the theological commission of the Lausanne Movement—a commission chaired by John Stott—explored in depth the implications of these and similar statements made in the covenant. The various statements that emerged from these consultations provide both a solid basis and a rich agenda for Christian action in the world.

Unfortunately, Lausanne II, held in Manila in 1989, failed to follow up on Lausanne I's holistic understanding of the Christian mission. To a large extent it reaffirmed the traditional separation between evangelism and social action that has so deeply affected Western Christendom, especially in its evangelical expression, for the last couple of centuries.

One big question regarding the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town is whether it will simply rubber stamp Lausanne II, or whether it will allow the Spirit to use God's Word, thus becoming a stepping stone for the urgently needed reformation of the church in the spirit of Lausanne I.

Rene Padilla is president emeritus of the Kairos Foundation and director of Kairos Books. He is a founding member of the Latin American Theological Fellowship, and author of *Mission between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom*.



Expand Our Embrace

BY FEMI B. ADELEYE

DURING MY MOST RECENT visit to Ethiopia, I joined students at Addis Ababa University for a meeting of the Evangelical Students' and Graduates' Union of Ethiopia. The students are part of a remarkably courageous Ethiopian church that survived the repressive regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Believers had to go underground between 1974 and 1991 while the regime tortured and murdered tens of thousands. But afterward, the church emerged irrepressible and vibrant in witness.

At the meeting I attended, worship alone lasted an hour. Then came a time of prayer followed by biblical preaching, lasting about two-and-a-half hours. I could tell from the students' singing, dancing, and praying that most of them combined elements of their Orthodox Church background with their evangelical identity. Most could recite long portions of Scripture by heart, a habit they had learned under Communist rule. Some 700 students were present, and I was told that another 50 had gone to a village for rural evangelism. Later that night we sat and ate *injera*, the traditional Ethiopian flatbread, with bare hands from deep bowls.

The Ethiopian students could not have been more different in culture, experience, tradition, and appearance from their counterparts in Oxford and Cambridge who, 64 years ago, pioneered InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (which later became the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students). Yet they are just as much a part of the future identity of global evangelicalism.

There is a deep bowl of evangelical identity and heritage from which we all need to eat. This bowl is filled with diverse gifts contributed from the ends of the earth. Some of the best and most interesting foods on the menu come from newcomers in the evangelical family.

The future of evangelical reform must take our global diversity seriously. We cannot be all that God wants if we are not attending to the global mosaic God is constructing. Beyond clinging to the values of our past Reformation, which was rooted in particular contexts, we must take seriously the values emerging from new centers of Christian expansion.

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1–16),

There is a deep bowl of evangelical identity from which we all need to eat. The best and most interesting foods come from newcomers in the evangelical family.

the landowner hired workers at different times but paid them the same wage. The first-come workers had accepted the terms of payment and would have gone home content if other workers had not been introduced. Instead, they resented the later-come workers. Sometimes evangelicals stand in danger of being like them, expecting higher honor or greater wages because they came first.

We have seen wonderful things. The founding fathers of the evangelical tradition now stand surrounded by beneficiaries who do all they can to defend and preserve the fathers' heritage. This is certainly true of the Ethiopian students I worshiped with.

However, as the Lord of the harvest hires later-come workers, they may produce fresh ideas to enrich the heritage. We cannot remain prisoners of the historical and cultural framework of the first-come workers. Our greater concern must be to learn from what the Lord of history is doing globally. Can anything good come from the



COURTESY OF FEMI ADELEYE

Join the conversation

at ChristianityToday.com/go/conversation. Post your responses to these writers and wrestle with the issues 4,000 Christian leaders will engage at the Lausanne Movement's Cape Town 2010 conference.

Reformation (continued)

previously unimaginable, diverse ends of the earth? Only in being open to learning shall we know.

Femi B. Adeleye is a John Stott Ministries/Langham scholar who serves as associate general secretary for partnership and collaboration with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He also serves on the Pan-African Host Team for the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Cape Town 2010.

Be Agents of Reconciliation

BY LEIGHTON FORD

REFORMATION IS A WORK OF GOD so broad, deep, and historic that it is beyond my scope and probably that of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. I opt for something more modest: a “reformation of manners” (to borrow a phrase from William Wilberforce and others). The phrase originally meant widespread social renewal, but we might aim more modestly at reforming our treatment of others, with courtesy as believers in the way we relate to one another, with respect as evangelists toward those we seek to win.

Three eminent “fathers” of the Lausanne Movement—Billy Graham, John Stott, and Jack Dain—exemplified for me this spirit of truth and grace, of deep conviction about the gospel and humility toward one’s self and others. The world, suggests historian Martin Marty, might be a different place if Graham had been a “mean person.” A Chinese Ph.D. student, herself not a believer, told me that she is writing about how Graham approached other nations with civility, “not with a closed fist but with an open hand.”

When so many regard Christians (especially evangelists and missionaries) as intolerant and arrogant, it could be a worthwhile advance if from Cape Town 2010 emerges a church proclaiming and practicing a generous evangelism,

How do pre-Christians see evangelists? As their friends? Or do they see us as belligerents, heavy-handed and fighting even with each other?

reflecting the generosity of the Lord Jesus.

Our theme for Cape Town 2010 is from Paul’s words: “God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” What an amazing privilege he then cites: that we are “Christ’s ambassadors . . . as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5).

Or, as one paraphrase puts it, “God has changed us from enemies into friends and given us the task of making others his friends also.”

Is that how pre-Christians see evangelists? As friends? Or do they see us as belligerents, heavy-handed and fighting even with each other?

How then should we ambassadors represent this good news? “We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path,” Paul continues. “Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves.”

How? Not only through enduring reproaches for the gospel, but also through purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God (2 Cor. 6:3–7).

So we are to weave together the heart and truth of the gospel *message* with the beauty and grace of gospel *ministry*.

The spirit of Lausanne has been one of living out this attitude. God grant that Cape Town 2010 be a place where evangelical believers come together, listen to one another with respect, learn together in humility, and work and pray together in love.

If Cape Town 2010 can help us become more generous evangelists, reflecting the generosity of Jesus, making the gospel attractive in word, act, and spirit, that can be a large step toward reformation, or transformation, or—pray God—both. ✚

Leighton Ford is president of Leighton Ford Ministries and honorary lifetime chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

COURTESY OF LEIGHTON FORD





AYN RAND: Goddess of the Great Recession

“Whereas traditional conservatism emphasized duties, responsibilities, and social interconnectedness, at the core of the right-wing ideology that Rand spearheaded was a rejection of moral obligations to others.”

JENNIFER BURNS,
in *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*

Why Christians should be wary of the late pop philosopher and her disciples. By Gary Moore

THIS PAST SPRING, the Financial Industry Inquiry Commission held hearings on the world's recent financial crisis. The star witness was Alan Greenspan. *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan translated Greenspan's typically elusive testimony this way: "I didn't do anything wrong, and neither did Ayn Rand by the way, but next time you might try more regulation."

There were obviously many reasons for the Great Recession. But I believe Noonan got to the root of one particular evil.

Fortune magazine once labeled Greenspan "America's most famous libertarian, an Ayn Rand acolyte." (While Rand formally rejected libertarianism, libertarians nonetheless admire her.) But today, both libertarians and Randians are disassociating themselves from Greenspan as quickly as Wall Street. This is the Wall Street that worshiped the former Federal Reserve chairman when *Worth* ran a cover story describing how he was "playing God at the Fed." *Fortune* detailed Greenspan's "love of free markets, suspicion of do-gooders, and righteous hatred of the state apparatus," evidenced by his previous deregulation of the savings and loan industry for Charles Keating and such. Few of us Reaganomics supporters understood his role in that fiasco, so history was bound to repeat itself with the recent subprime mortgage scandal.

About the time *Fortune* was extolling Greenspan, I was putting the finishing touches on a book about finances for a major evangelical publisher. I included a chapter on Rand's quasi-religious philosophies, and another that encouraged Wall Street to embrace a traditional Judeo-Christian ethic. I wrote, "Ayn Rand, like Karl Marx, was one more self-proclaimed prophet who denied the existence of a loving God." I added this comment from a leading political commentator: "Libertarians have replaced Marxists as the world's leading utopia builders." I concluded that we would one day apologize to our children for what Rand had done to our souls, as well as to the political economy.

.....
Illustration by Amanda Duffy

My junior editor removed the chapter on Rand. “No one has heard of Ayn Rand,” she said. But my senior editor reinserted it. He said he had never understood his family until reading it. It made him realize that they had mixed Rand’s strongly anti-government, unquestioningly pro-business, and individualistic worldview with biblical Christianity. Theologians call this “syncretism”—which George Barna calls America’s favorite religion. It’s a religion too many Christians have bent the knee to.

By the end of 2008, “Maestro” Greenspan was booed off the stage. Yet there are at least three reasons we should stay aware of Rand and her remaining disciples.

In 1998, the Modern Library and Random House each conducted surveys to determine the “top” or “best” books of the 20th century. The top book on both popular lists was *Atlas Shrugged*. In the wake of the recent recession, *The Economist* reported that sales of the 52-year-old novel had sharply increased.

Second, Rand still has influential financial disciples like junk-bond king Michael Milken, Chris Cox, head of the Securities and Exchange Commission for the Bush administration leading up to the crash, as well as cultural influencers like *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner, media mogul Ted Turner, and pundits John Stossel, Rush Limbaugh, and Glenn Beck, who recently advised Christians to leave any church that speaks of social justice.

Third, after the crash, the chairman of BB&T Bank told *The New York Times* that he believed Rand would be the lead director of our political economy in 25 years. The article mentioned that BB&T had spent millions putting Rand’s books in U.S. schools.

Though dead for nearly three decades, Rand’s philosophy is still deeply embedded in large sectors of the American economy, as well as among some Christian financial advisers and religious leaders. So we are wise to discern what tune Rand is singing for future generations.

The Economist’s Good Guru Guide says, “Ayn Rand—the heroine of America’s libertarian right—described her philosophy as ‘the concept of man as a noble being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute.’”

Let’s divide that into stanzas.

REASON AS THE ONLY ABSOLUTE

Like *The Economist*, most observers see Rand as a political and economic philosopher. I believe she was first and foremost an anti-Christian philosopher. She didn’t understand the faith. But she knew that Moses was a lawgiver, that Christ told us to “render unto Caesar,” and that Paul told us to pay taxes and to “honor and respect” government leaders (Rom. 13). So she had to get rid of Christianity in order to get rid of government.

Rand once declared, “I want to be known as the greatest champion of reason and the greatest enemy of religion.” Randian evangelist Leonard Peikoff preached that “every argument for God and every attribute ascribed to him rests on a false metaphysical principle.”

In 1941, Rand wrote to a friend that she would “give people a faith—a positive, clear, and consistent system of belief.” Perhaps

this is what prompted Jennifer Burns, professor of history at the University of Virginia, to use the word *goddess* to describe her in her aforementioned book title. Clearly Rand was a false goddess. Lutheran historian Martin Marty has observed, “Every line of the Bible is challenged, countered, and dismissed by the 1,168 pages of *Atlas Shrugged*.” Charles Colson once noted Rand’s “inversion of biblical norms,” how she “exalts selfishness and condemns altruism.”

In talking to a reporter once, I suggested that Rand and Milton Freidman’s teaching that the “only social responsibility of a business is to make money” had played a major role in demoralizing

American business. The reporter also interviewed a Randian professor of business ethics at Duke University who flatly stated, “Religion is incompatible with business.” (His statement was not a little ironic. I had served on a Christian board of directors with entrepreneur J. B. Fuqua. Fuqua’s personal wealth from chairing several stock exchange-listed companies enabled him to give Duke millions of

dollars for the Fuqua School of Business. Yet this professor was teaching that Fuqua couldn’t do what he did. I was reminded of President Reagan’s remark that economists are people who wonder if what works in reality can also work in theory.)

I’m certain the Randian professor wasn’t aware of the counsel of Sir John Templeton. Templeton was my mentor, a Rhodes Scholar, and the one after whom Oxford University’s business school was named. He said, “My counsel to a school of business management is to teach the business person to give unlimited love, and he or she will be more successful.”

Templeton served as chair of Princeton Theological Seminary’s investment committee for years. And he pioneered global investing, believing that affluent North America had a moral responsibility to finance developing nations, just as Europe had financed America’s canals and railroads a hundred years earlier. He refused to speculatively invest in morally deficient industries.

PRODUCTIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Rand was born in Russia as Alisa Rosenbaum. Her father lost his prosperous business to the Bolsheviks, one likely source of her lifelong hatred of government and love of wealth creation. Rand saw herself and her disciples as superior to any category of human who had ever lived. She dismissed even libertarian economists, such as Nobel laureate F. A. Hayek, if they suggested government might play even a small role in the economy during the worst of times.

Ever focused on her own achievements, Rand always made time to cultivate elites who might help her, all the while oblivious to anyone, including her family, who could or would not. She explained in a famous *Playboy* interview that “charity is not a moral duty,” and took to wearing a dollar-sign brooch on her coats. A six-foot wreath of the dollar sign was at the head of her casket—the same symbol the character John Galt made over the world in the last sentence of *Atlas Shrugged*. Galt was her CEO-type savior. The dollar sign was a symbol of selfishness and material productivity that was to replace the cross, a symbol of sacrifice and eternal concerns. Rand would rejoice that

Though dead for nearly three decades, Rand’s philosophy is deeply embedded in large sectors of the American economy, as well as among some Christian financial advisers and religious leaders.

our companies and the affluent are sitting on unprecedented wealth while our government and nonprofits are struggling financially.

ONE'S OWN HAPPINESS

Greenspan once testified before Congress that investment firms should be “unburdened of the perceived need” to consider investors’ interests. The Randian did not succeed in turning that into policy, but too many CEOs, mortgage traders, and regulators obviously found the spirit of Rand appealing, even if investors didn’t find it quite as enriching. Years ago, Southern Methodist University economics professor Ravi Batra wrote on the first page of *Greenspan’s Fraud*, “The picture that emerges is one of an intelligent man centered on the self. More than anything else, Mr. Greenspan seems to take care of Mr. Greenspan. His life and accomplishments turn out to be a fitting monument to Ayn Rand’s philosophy of rational selfishness.”

Perhaps imitating Greenspan as he imitated Rand, few Washington and Wall Street players have accepted responsibility for what has recently happened in our society. After Goldman Sachs was brought before the Senate, the *Financial Times* noted the most surprising development, that “three executives danced around the question” of whether Wall Street “had a duty to act in the interests of clients.”

Ironically, Rand’s philosophy did not serve Rand herself. According to the historian Burns, Rand was “a lonely, alienated child” whose wealthy mother openly complained that she “had never wanted children.” Both are likely reasons Rand “was never able to maintain a steady friendship.” The goddess therefore sought to create mankind in her own image with her philosophy of radical individualism. By the time she died, Rand had alienated most of her friends and was deeply depressed.

MAN AS A NOBLE BEING

Burns also notes in *Goddess of the Market* that Rand pathologically thought even William Hickman, a mass murderer, to be a noble being for defying social conventions. So Rand would surely have approved of Wall Street’s hubristic CEOs. After all, they simply acted in imitation of Galt, doing their own thing without concern for social norms. Rand would have believed the world just fine if these “noble” CEOs were in charge and took care of us by managing our wealth.

The one mistake Greenspan has acknowledged before Congress was thinking that our noble CEOs would govern themselves. In Rand’s utopia, demons exist almost exclusively in government and religion. Her one-eyed perspective could not see Adam Smith’s insight that people of the same trade rarely get together without conspiring against the public. So she, and Greenspan, would never have imagined the CEOs of mortgage companies marketing liar loans to selfish but naïve homebuyers, while the CEOs of investment firms and irresponsible ratings agencies packaged these junk mortgages as AAA-rated

securities to dump into our pension funds. She would blame that entirely on “bureaucrats and do-gooders.” Had she and Greenspan only understood what fallen humans will do for 30 pieces of silver.

Later in life, Rand claimed Aristotle as the only thinker she needed to credit. Yet Burns makes it clear that “Friedrich Nietzsche was the philosopher who quickly became her favorite” when Rand first fantasized about playing God: “Nietzsche’s elitism fortified her own.” Of course, Nietzsche famously proclaimed the death of God; he left it to others to develop an alternative morality. Rand volunteered for the job.

Those who spend a lot of time and money on books and videos speculating about the antichrist can devote themselves to more immediate concerns. As I have explained elsewhere repeatedly, key candidates for the job have been running the American economy the past 30 years with our unwitting assistance.

HERO OF THE LIBERTARIAN RIGHT

Here is where this lifelong conservative Republican has to stop preaching and start meddling. As apologist Ravi Zacharias observed in *Jesus Among Other Gods*, “Wealth and enterprise have so woven themselves around the message of Jesus that popular models of Christianity appear as nothing more than self and greed at the center, with strands of Christian thought at the periphery.”

For example, Pat Robertson tooted Rand’s horn in *The New Millennium* with these words: “The aim of free people everywhere is to limit the power and scope of the government in any way they can,” a sentiment that could inspire many Christian militia handbooks. Ralph Reed, darling of the Religious Right for many years, once wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*, “Traditionalist ends can be advanced through libertarian means.”

To the contrary, I have found it more enriching to achieve traditionalist ends with the traditional means of Christian love. As a political science graduate, I understand the power of libertarian anger to motivate couch potatoes to vote. But as an investment counselor, I have probably seen more financial opportunities missed by clients due to libertarianism than any other thought system.

This is particularly true regarding the federal debt, which libertarians find abhorrent. Deceased financial commentator Larry Burkett, a one-time friend, was once heard on over a thousand evangelical radio stations. He often published newsletters with headlines describing America as “a nation under siege by its government” at about the time Newt Gingrich was attempting his revolution. Burkett’s faulty theological worldview that “every reference to debt in Scripture is a warning” helped stir “the angry white man.” But of course the Sermon on the Mount, whose messenger borrowed a donkey, an upper room, and a tomb during Holy Week alone, suggests that we are to lend to anyone in true need. That obviously means someone is *borrowing*.

And Burkett had obviously not read the 1992 book *The Seven Fat Years*, by Robert Bartley, the legendary, solidly conservative (and obviously biblically literate) former editor of *The Wall Street Journal*. Bartley called the federal debt a “great national myth” that



For Rand, the dollar sign was a symbol of selfishness and material productivity that was to replace the cross, a symbol of sacrifice and eternal concerns.

libertarian politicians had concocted to manipulate voters. He knew that we true conservatives once considered it patriotic to let the government borrow from us when we bought war bonds. God bless his soul, but Larry was so focused on the federal debt, he never saw the massive buildup of debt in Wall Street firms that actually ignited the recent crash.

And, in the spirit of Randian elitism, Larry once wrote, “As cruel as it may sound, from the long-term perspective of the economy, it would be better to raise taxes on the poor than on the wealthy.” I once publicly challenged that theology. Larry wrote me that he didn’t mean what I thought he did. But he never explained what he had meant.

In 2001, this magazine published an article about socially responsible investing. Among other things, it noted that the investment firm founded by evangelical financial planner Ron Blue actually discouraged the integration of ethics toward our neighbors and investing.

Similarly, Austin Pryor, publisher of *Sound Mind Investing*, the most popular evangelical financial newsletter (endorsed by both Burkett and Blue), once confessed: “I receive more questions asking for suggestions on ethical investments than any other topic. . . . Unfortunately, I must tell them I can be of no help. Why not? Because I know of no investments that are guaranteed to meet their criteria.”

Of course, Pryor might have noted that this is true of nearly all financial criteria. But he concluded by saying, “I want to encourage you to shift your thinking away from ethics when investing.” Despite promoting biblical fidelity, Dave Ramsey’s website says much the same today.

I’ve come to believe there’s a connection between Barna’s statement that only 10 percent of Christians integrate our beliefs with our lives, and the fact that the Social Investment Forum says only 10 percent of institutional money under management is integrated with a traditional Christian ethic. We apparently have surrendered to Rand’s ethic of seeking maximum personal gain—in the hope, I suppose, that charity can repair the damage. Unfortunately, the fate of Ken Lay of Enron, a generous giver with whom I served on a Christian board, disproved that human reasoning to millions of employees and shareholders.

As a Christian, I believe we have a moral responsibility to act in a socially responsible manner toward the poor and fellow taxpayers who are now on the hook for Wall Street’s greed. So I was startled to discover that one outspoken evangelical money manager who claims to “invest as Jesus would”—by which he means focusing on sexual issues—was invested in AIG and Goldman Sachs. Evidently, homosexuality and promiscuity have replaced greed as the root of all evil.

Our financial gurus continue to sing in Rand’s temple, using quasi-biblical principles to obtain wealth but disposing of God’s principles if the investment doesn’t lead to “productive achievement.” I’ve long believed that leaders of the Religious Right and our more popular financial advisers, who have attempted to harmonize their philosophies with economic libertarianism the past three decades, have been naïve. Libertarians usually despise Christian social values, advocating the legalization of abortion, illicit drugs, and pornography while worshiping wealth. The biblical discouragement

of unholy alliances should have named that tune as syncretism. But the angry white man of 1994 sings on at today’s tea parties. And his anger is still primarily over economic issues.

TIME TO LOOK UP

How might more of us be found joyfully working in God’s harvest rather than angrily wasting time, talent, and treasure drowning tea?

The *Financial Times* recently published an article titled, “A social vision for the world after socialism.” It concluded, “Active empathy is not socialism, but it is social. It does not assume that a statist economy will replace capitalism, but it does point to stewardship replacing ownership.” Stewardship is about far more than raising enough money to keep our institutional lights on. Economics with-

out the sense of other, without social responsibility, is what I call “casino capitalism.” We insert coins into the machine with no thought other than the payout to ourselves and the house’s take. But what I’ve long called “stewardism” looks inside the machine through loving lenses.

Socially responsible investing has long looked inside our mutual, pension, and endowment funds to ensure our treasures are where our mouths are and where our hearts should be. Community development banking looks inside our banks to see if our deposits are funding affordable housing or speculation, job creation or consumer spending. And micro-enterprise lending, fair trade, and social entrepreneurship look inside developing nations to see if our loans, purchases, and investments are honoring God by enriching our neighbors, particularly the poor.

The paradox is that by looking deeper, we might be as likely to enrich ourselves, as academic studies and anecdotal evidence suggest.

The yearning for a more ethical, prudent approach has been marked by recent books such as *God Is Back*, by the senior editors of *The Economist*, and *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*, by Nobel laureate Robert William Fogel. Two of these authors are agnostics, but they still see America returning to the Promised Land. Bailouts and layoffs have taught even the most individualistic business leaders that Rand and her disciples were wrong to think any of us can ever be financially independent.

The Economist recently put it this way: “Business is a remarkable exercise in cooperation. For all the talk of competition ‘red in tooth and claw,’ companies in fact depend on persuading large numbers of people—workers and bosses, shareholders and suppliers—to work together to a common end. This involves getting lots of strangers to trust each other. It also increasingly involves stretching trust across borders . . . the word *company* is derived from the Latin words *cum* and *pane*, meaning ‘breaking bread together.’”

Let us do so on our knees. Not with the pride of the Pharisees, by claiming that we invest as Jesus would, but with the humility to remember that Moses may invest ethically, but it’s still Jesus who saves. ☩

Gary Moore has worked on Wall Street for three decades, and is the founder of The Financial Seminary (FinancialSeminary.org).

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “God and the Money Goddess,” a Bible study based on this article.

Nietzsche famously proclaimed the death of God; he left it to others to develop an alternative morality. Rand volunteered for the job.

“THE SCOPE
Christianbook.com
OF ~~THRIFT~~ IS
LIMITLESS.”

— THOMAS EDISON

There's no end to how much you can save when you're thrifty. Especially at Christianbook.com. Our huge selection of Christian books, music, and gifts is always up to 50% or more below retail. And if you have a question, our people are always ready to help. So log on or call today. And get absolutely everything Christian...for less.



Christianbook.com®
1-800-CHRISTIAN

Everything Christian...for less

Want to train leaders for ministry
without them leaving your church?



You supply the campus!

With the Antioch School, ***it is possible*** for leaders to be trained and degrees to be earned right in the context of the life of your church or church network! Now you can keep your best leaders while providing them with a rigorous and structured approach to biblical study, character assessment, and skill development.

The training is conducted ***in*** your church, ***by*** your church leaders, and ***for*** your church and church network—resulting in tested and reliable leaders for your ***church***.

Degrees and Certificates Available:

Bachelor of Ministry (B.Min.)
Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.)

Master of Ministry (M.Min.)
Master of Theology (M.Th.)

Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.)
in Global Church-Based Theological Education
Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.)
in Theology in Culture

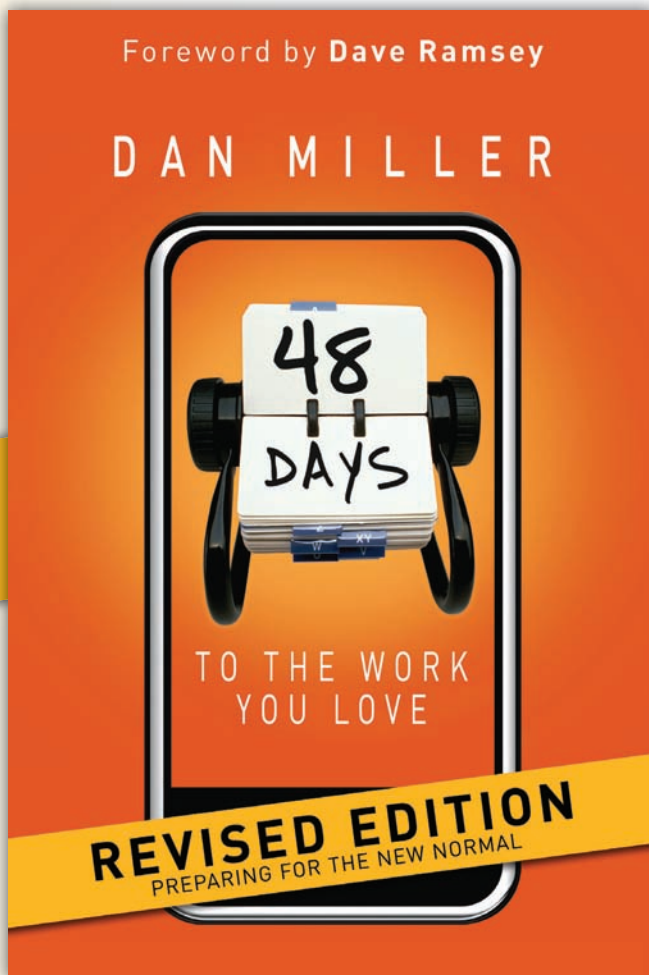
Certificate of Ministry (C.Min.)
Certificate of Theology (C.Th.)



Truly Church-Based and Competency-Based

“Few categories of our lives define us and grow us spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and as people. Our work is one of those defining areas. Sadly, a ‘j-o-b’ is what most people settle for. But as **Dan Miller** so powerfully points out in **48 Days to the Work You Love**, a calling lights up your life.”

—Dave Ramsey



IN ANY ECONOMY, IT PAYS
TO **DISCOVER** YOUR CALLING

As a leading vocational thinker, *Dan Miller* can help you better understand and organize your God-given skills, personality traits, values, dreams, and passions. In this revised edition of his signature book, you'll see clear patterns form that point you toward successful career decisions and smart ideas for thriving in today's changing workplace. Now available online or in stores everywhere.

BHPublishingGroup.com/48Days **B&H BOOKS**

The Apostle of the Golden Age

Classics scholar **Sarah Ruden** says extraordinary things happen when you read Paul alongside other ancient literature. Interview by John Wilson



BOOKS ABOUT THE APOSTLE PAUL arrive regularly at my desk, in such profusion as to strain the carrying capacity of a Kindle. Some are introductions; many are highly specialized studies from this or that academic fiefdom. Some are impeccably orthodox; others flaunt their scorn for Scripture and the traditions of the church. And then there are the effusions of cranks, self-published and self-important, eager to Explain It All.

Now and then, though, something wonderfully unexpected appears. Earlier this year, Pantheon Books published

Sarah Ruden's *Paul Among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time*. Ruden is a translator of Greek and Latin; her Englishing of *The Aeneid* was published in 2008 to considerable acclaim. She is the translator for *The Landmark Julius Caesar* (coming down the road in a bit), and in the coming academic year, as a Guggenheim Fellow and a visiting scholar in classical

CHRIS CAPOZZIELLO



studies at Wesleyan University, she will translate *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus.

You may be thinking that Ruden doesn't have the background of the typical Pauline scholar. You would be right. Herself a poet as well as a translator of classical texts, she approaches the subject from a fresh angle. A couple of months ago—Ruden was then at Yale Divinity School, where she'd been a

visiting fellow since 2007—we talked about her book.

At the very beginning of your first chapter, you say, "The last thing I expected my Greek and Latin to be of any use for was a better understanding of Paul. The very idea that anyone proposed it would have annoyed me." Why was that?

My upbringing was pretty mainstream liberal Christianity. In the Midwestern Methodist church I attended, the word was that, while Paul was very important, he was no friend of women, and he was very harsh and authoritarian. I was taught that there was a big gap between Jesus' mission and Paul's.

You mention at several points in your book that you are now a Quaker. Did you become a Quaker after you grew up?

Yes. I was around 30 when I became a Quaker. This was a decision that I'd come to after a long time away from Christianity altogether. During my last year of graduate school, I was staying in a Quaker boarding house, and it was an astonishing experience for me—an experience of lived Christianity. I was very much at loose ends at the time. I didn't have strong social ties. I had been nerding it out, or nerding it up, maybe, for my entire adult life. I did my undergraduate degree in three years at the University of Michigan, and then I went into a Harvard Ph.D. program at the age of 21.

That took you through most of your 20s?

It did. So there I was, and I really hadn't explored any of the possibilities of human society. The Quaker community was a wonderful place in which to start that. We shared tasks, and they rotated, so everyone would do an equal amount of the dirty work. And they appreciated each other so much. If you did a good job of cleaning the stairs, people would stand at the bottom of the stairs and exclaim about their beauty: "Oh, it shines. How did you do that?" It was there, in a Quaker meeting for worship, that I had a real revelation, a real sense of the presence of God. I heard a voice inside me saying that everything would be okay.

All shall be well. Yes. So you have been practicing your faith as a Quaker for some time now, but even so, by your own account, until relatively recently your attitude toward Paul was still rather dismissive, and also it was completely separate from the work that absorbs you, reading and translating classical Greek and Latin texts. Is that right?

Yes. Completely unconnected.

What happened when you started to read Paul in Greek?

I had been reading the Greco-Roman authors

for years and years and translating them. When I started to read Paul alongside them, I had a sense of everything coming together. For me there seemed to be some kind of parallel between the community of literature and the community of human beings.

Could you flesh that out a little bit? That's a wonderful notion.

Well, there has been a sense of separation between classical literature and sacred literature, even though there is very substantial cultural overlap. There isn't any logical reason for the separation. One reason has been the historian Edward Gibbon—he was very contemptuous of Christian culture. He thought it was basically barbarism and had an almost satirical attitude toward it. This had a huge influence on the academy, especially in the classics. So in classics it has been fashionable for hundreds of years to have contempt for sacred literature. Even before, since the Renaissance, during the rise of humanism, people tended to think, *Well, the Golden Age was the classical one. That was the epitome of civilization.*

But there hasn't been sufficient consideration of the reforming continuity between ancient pagan and modern Christian civilizations. And that's what a study of Paul can highlight—and not just of Paul, for that matter, but any study of the New Testament in the light of classical literature. What becomes clear is that there's a single civilization, and it moves toward greater idealism. You have Platonism. You have Stoicism, Epicureanism. You have all these philosophies arising from the ancient world as educated people struggle against the brutality of idol worship, of superstition, of all of this fairly crude traditional religion. And these aspirations find a home in Christianity. And it's not only that the elite find their

spiritual home in Christianity; it's that the common people do, too, because this new religion is providing new possibilities for ways to live.

Quoting freely from many classical authors, you show how a kind of casual brutality was taken for granted in the ancient world, and how Paul's attitudes, by contrast, actually have much more in common with the norms of the 21st century.

Right. What characterizes our society at its best is the habit of looking at ourselves with a critical attitude. I think this really started

for Western civilization on the road to Damascus. Paul is doing what he's expected to do in his environment. He's involved in persecution. This is all sanctioned by authority, and it's going to get him ahead in his career. He has this revelation, and he is forced to answer the questions, *What are you doing? What are you actually doing? Why are you persecuting me?* That is, what you do to the world, what you do to other people, is what you do to God. So there's a galvanizing, horrifying, but enlightening realization that what you do every moment you do in the sight of an infinitely loving God.

Paul's entire ministry was about that idea. He made a lot of mistakes. He certainly had changes of mind. He had regrets. As he repeatedly said about himself, he was really painfully human in pursuing this idea. He took no personal credit for what he accomplished—the credit belonged to God. But he pursued this great truth relentlessly. And I think that has made us who we are religiously and ethically. That is what brought the ministry of Jesus into our lives in very practical ways.

I don't know whether it's something you do consciously, partly from your experience as a translator, inhabiting another writer's mind, but

reading the book was sometimes almost uncanny: there's a very Pauline style to the book. Was that something that you were aware of?

I think it just happened. My drive is toward a certain kind of ventriloquism. When you translate an ancient author, it's quite difficult, because you don't have a lot more than the words on the page and other people's words on other pages. You have to work really hard to get a sense of the personality of a writer who's been dead so long, whose society has been gone for so long. You try to cultivate your acting ability and your imagination.



CHRIS CAPOZZIELLO

There's a galvanizing, horrifying, but enlightening realization that what you do every moment you do in the sight of an infinitely loving God. Paul's entire ministry was about that idea.

That's what I've been doing for my whole career. So I think I couldn't help doing this with Paul.

What was really special about this book is that once I had translated him, so to speak, I couldn't put him aside. It's very easy for me to put a classical author aside—Vergil, Aristophanes—*Okay, that was interesting. It was fun to pretend to be such a person and to have such views.* But Paul I really could not put aside. There are certain things that he says that inhabit you. What he says about love, about God's commitment to individuals and to community—you can't really walk away and leave that behind.

You talk about Paul's vision of great felicity, which you see at the core of his work. At one point you say that he practically had to reinvent the Greek language to express that.

Yes. He was in quite an unusual position. He was an educated man. We know that. He could quote the pre-Socratic philosophers. He knew about rhetoric. His language is really quite sophisticated, but he is writing in part for people who are *not* so sophisticated, and he is having to deliver concepts that would have been exceedingly strange to everybody in Roman Imperial society, at every level of education.

Romans 1 includes an example of the kind of thing he does when he opens up a topic. He'll take a word and he will repeat it two or three times, even four or five times, in different forms. He will set it out that way. It's almost like he's scrawled his concept on a whiteboard. So in Romans 1, the root he's using is *dik*, justice, and he talks emphatically about injustice (or wickedness or unrighteousness). And then he returns to that later in the chapter in rounding out his horrifying vision of sexual exploitation. He does this with several words, and it's as if he were giving vocabulary lessons, reforming the language of his correspondents right before their eyes.

So there must have been something jolting about his very manner of presenting his message as well as the message itself.

Yes. He will take a completely new idea, as in Romans 1, and then frame it by reforming a common concept. Justice was something that the Greeks just could not stop talking about. To Romans it was also an extremely important concept. What is justice? What is the abstraction of justice? Or how could we

argue about it in a very long philosophical dialogue? But in Romans 1, Paul says justice is in front of your face. Justice is what you are doing or not doing. And this he rams home in the wind-up to his disquisition on homosexuality. Justice is not something out there. Don't talk about what other people do; it's what you are doing. His style would certainly have startled educated people because it's so clunky with these repetitions, especially at the beginning of passages—so emphatic, so awkward, so unlike what they were used to reading.

Did writing this book make you think that at some time you might want to translate some of Paul's letters beyond what you did out of necessity in your own book?

I don't really know. It's such a daunting idea. Scriptural translation is just an enormous responsibility, and it takes an unbelievable amount of learning and commitment. I'm standing right now in the courtyard of the Yale Divinity School quadrangle, and at one corner is the rsv room, and that is actually the room in which scholars got together and hashed out passages of the Revised Standard Version. You need an army of scholars, really.

But I think it's a bit different if one undertakes something like this not to translate all of Scripture, and not for a translation that will have a kind of official status.

Yes. It's possible to translate much smaller portions, to translate something that you are able to study deeply. I think an honest answer would be that I'm afraid. I have at certain times gotten myself involved with certain Gospel passages and thought and thought about them. What has emerged from that thinking are poems, personal poems, and I entitle them after a passage in Matthew or a passage in John, say. If I'm thinking about what these passages really mean, what emerges is more like a prayer than a translation.

I've seen a handful of poems by you. But do you have a book of poems that is out in addition to your translations?

I have one that was published in South Africa, *Other Places*, but it's out of print. So I have taken some poems from that volume along with newer poems for a collection called *The New Places*, which is available at Lulu.com. Publishers and authors alike can put things on this site without giving up copyright. ☩



**Share the Good
News of Christmas™
with your community
this year for only \$1!**

The *Share the Good News™ of Christmas* program is a simple, cost-effective

way to help your church bring the gospel to your community.



The vision for this program is to equip local churches with a gift to use in reaching out to their neighbors and inviting them to visit your church this Christmas season. By participating, you can help us reach **1 million people** with the gospel this year!



*For more information, visit
goodnewsofchristmas.org.*

{ OUTREACH }

Sex Offenders



in the Pew

How churches
are ministering to
society's most despised.

By Marian V. Liautaud

THE FIRST TIME Craig read the Bible was two decades ago, when he was in a county jail. "I'm a voracious reader, and after I had read all the paperbacks in the unit, I finally picked up the Bible and devoured it in four days."

When the prison chaplain asked Craig if he was willing to accept Christ as his Savior, he answered with a question: "Would Christ accept me?" Craig (who asked that his real name not be used) was serving a sentence for multiple sexual assault and abuse—crimes he committed against his young daughter and another girl.

Anglican theologian N. T. Wright states in *Simply Christian* that every society has one unforgiveable sin. Many would argue that the unforgiveable sin today is the sexual abuse of children.

Craig accepted God's pardon for his unforgiveable sin through Christ. He has been living under grace since then, but he still struggles with the consequences of what he did. "No one ever grows up thinking they're going to become a sex offender," he says. "One of God's greatest gifts is a child's innocence. I live with the knowledge that I destroyed this in these girls' lives."

The U.S. Department of Justice's Sex Offender Registry includes the names and locations of 549,000 persons convicted of or charged with sex crimes. The odds are that if you are reading this article, you have come into contact with a sex offender or a victim, whether you know it or not. This in itself may account for the emotionally charged responses to sex offenders.

"Lust, like any addiction, is inherently selfish," Craig says. "It puts walls between you and everyone else because you learn to objectify people. It robs you of the thing that makes you human."

Prison gave Craig time to examine his sin. "In group therapy, I was able to discuss every aspect of my crimes—how I had digressed to committing them and what my cycle of offending was. No more victims—this was my mantra in prison, and it continues today."

Post-prison, Craig has found in the local church support for recovery from what he calls "addiction to lust." For several years, he served as a small group volunteer for a sex addictions ministry at a large church. Today, he and

It Takes a Miracle: Residents and staff of Miracle Village—a community of sex offenders in Pahokee, Florida—exchange the peace. The community's church is led by Pastor Dick Witherow (in the pulpit).

©2010 GREG KAHN / GENESIS PHOTOS

Sex Offenders in the Church

A Christianity Today International Survey

2,864 respondents, most of them active Christians, were drawn from CTI publications and websites.

his wife are in the process of changing churches. Before doing so, Craig made an appointment to meet with his new pastor to inform him of his past.

"I never want to blindside church leaders and have them hear from someone else, 'Hey, did you know he is on the sex offender registry?'" Craig said. "I know that not everyone is able to accept me and my past as a sex offender, and I respect their feelings. Rejection is one of the consequences of my sin." Craig awaits the pastor's verdict.

Nationwide, church leaders are facing the same dilemma as Craig's pastor: how to help restore and incorporate into church life persons who have served time for heinous crimes, while keeping the church safe.

Pastor and author Dick Witherow aptly refers to the sex offender as "the modern-day leper" in his 2009 book by the same title. When Florida became one of the first states to pass laws restricting where released sex offenders can live, Witherow expanded his prison ministry to help the shunned population with the re-entry process. He first opened a ranch for sex offenders, but a change in zoning laws forced him to close the facility. Undaunted, Witherow found a set of duplexes surrounded by sugar cane fields in rural Palm Beach County. He renamed it Miracle Village.

Today, a colony of 69 sex offenders and old-time sugar company workers and their families live side by side well "outside the camp" in one of the nation's wealthiest counties. On Sundays they attend the church where Witherow is senior pastor, as well as classes three days a week on anger management, relationships, and life skills.

"Sex offenders can change just as an alcoholic or drug addict can change," contends Witherow. He quotes 2 Corinthians 5:17 to support his belief: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

He is on a mission to educate people and undo the hysteria that has built up around sex offenders. While the government's focus is on creating laws to restrict those who have been prosecuted, Witherow says, "When you look at recidivism rates for criminals, sex offenders are the least likely to reoffend." That is true if offenders are part of a thoroughgoing accountability system (more about that below).

BEYOND RISK MANAGEMENT

A new national survey reveals that most pastors, church staff, and lay leaders endorse Witherow's goals, but not necessarily all of

his methods.

In April 2010, Christianity Today International (CTI) conducted a national survey of 2,864 people, including ordained church leaders (15 percent), church staff (20 percent), lay members (43 percent), and other active Christians (22 percent). Respondents were drawn from the readers of CTI publications and websites. The purpose of the "Sex Offenders in the Church" survey was to explore attitudes and beliefs on whether to allow sex offenders to participate in faith communities. The survey explored what practices churches use to keep their congregations safe when sex offenders are welcomed.

Pastors, lay leaders, and churchgoers overwhelmingly agree that sex offenders who have legally paid for their crime should be welcomed into churches. In fact, 8 in 10 respondents indicated that registered offenders should be allowed to attend church under continuous supervision and subject to appropriate limitations.

Ian Thomsen, church administrator for Arvada Covenant Church in Arvada, Colorado, says, "If we can reach out to sex offenders, and through our efforts change their lives for the better and take a significant risk away from society, we see this as a tremendous challenge—but what a wonderful challenge. We want to take it on."

"Jesus said there's no unforgivable sin except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit," says Mark Tusken, rector of St. Mark's Church in Geneva, Illinois. "Now that doesn't mean we want to condone sexual crimes. We're not

out to hang a shingle that says SEX OFFENDERS NOT WELCOME any more than we want to hang a shingle that says COME, Y'ALL. But my prayer has always been that St. Mark's would be a safe place—a place where people can come because they sense the refuge of Christ here.

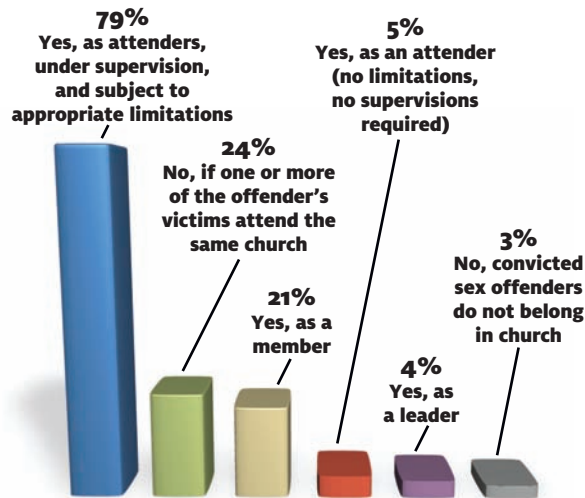
"That means parents can come without even giving a thought about something happening to their kids, but also that somebody with a sex offense in their past ought to be able to come and fit in and not be judged." In the 16 years that Tusken has overseen his congregation, he has known of only one convicted sex offender attending.

According to the survey results, 2 in 10 respondents said they are aware of a church attendee or member who had been convicted of a sex offense. More than half of the time (55 percent), church leaders learned of the offender when he or she directly informed the pastor. Thirty-four percent of respondents said someone from

Do They Belong?

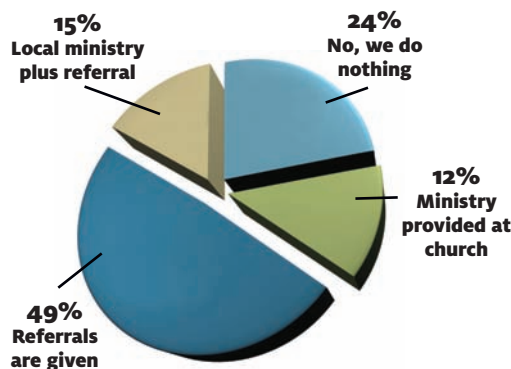
In your opinion, do convicted sex offenders who have been released from prison belong in a church?

Note: Respondents could select more than one choice, so the total exceeds 100%.



Ministry to the Sex-Addicted

Does your church provide recovery ministry to people with sexual addictions, including cyberporn addiction as well as sex-related issues or problems?



the congregation, often another leader, tipped them off. This was the case for Tusken.

“When I accepted the call to lead St. Mark’s, I asked the outgoing rector if there were any skeletons in the church’s closet—any pedophiles, embezzlers, anyone I ought to know about. He revealed that there was one man in the congregation who they had learned from a visitor had been convicted for a sex offense.”

Equipped with this information, Tusken decided to befriend this person and to establish better accountability. “For the past 16 years, I’ve had breakfast with this man once a month. Within a year of meeting, he told me what had happened. I took that as a great sign of health on his part, that within a year of us meeting he came to me and told me the problem.” The individual also honors the church’s policy of never being alone with a child.

Tusken feels good about this person being a part of his church, because of his repentant attitude, the number of offenses he had been convicted of (one), and the years since the offense had occurred (13 years prior to Tusken’s tenure at the church).

The vast majority of survey respondents (83 percent) say that signs of a repentant attitude is the number one determining factor in whether an ex-offender should be welcomed into the church.

TRUST, BUT VERIFY

While church leaders are looking for clues that reveal a broken and contrite heart, sex offenders are notoriously good liars. Anna Salter, a clinical psychologist who consults on sex offenders and victims, offers a word of caution in her 2003 book *Predators: Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders*:

“Decades of research have demonstrated that people cannot reliably tell who is lying. Many offenders report that religious people are even easier to fool than most people.”

One molester, who was himself a minister, told Salter, “I considered church people easy to fool. They have a trust that comes from being Christians. I think they want to believe in people.”

“What makes fooling us so easy is not the worst in us,” says Salter. “It is often the best.” For too long, church leaders have erred on the side of trust instead of insisting on good boundaries and best practices to expose harmful behavior.

“One of the great things that Jesus said is, ‘I am the light of the world.’ I want to live into that,” says Tusken. “I want his light to shine in the dark places of the abuser’s heart and in the hearts of the abused.”

St. Mark’s lets its light shine—in every corner of its building. A recent remodeling project added interior windows to every room. A sign by the front door states the church’s safety policies, and more than 300 adults in the church have gone through its child protection



‘Sex offenders can change just as an alcoholic or drug addict can change.’ ~Dick Witherow, pastor and author

training program.

In southeast Michigan, Laura Kubenez, child protection program director at Woodside Bible Church, looks at the facts, plus the offender’s words and actions, when making decisions about allowing him or her to attend one of the megachurch’s six satellite locations.

“We sit down and create a covenant agreement with the offender,” says Kubenez. “The terms of this agreement are based on two things: what their offense was, and how we feel they are doing in their journey toward recovery.”

Under the Freedom of Information Act, Kubenez is able to examine court documents to learn the facts of an individual’s case. “We tell offenders that it’s not our place to be the judge and the jury; we base our decisions on what the courts say.”

She then enlists the help of lay professionals in the church trained in criminal justice. “We have a defense attorney, a prosecuting attorney, a child court advocate, some child psychologists and psychiatrists, and retired police officers,” Kubenez says.

“Cooperation is absolutely mandatory,” she adds, “or you won’t be allowed to attend our church.” For example, Woodside needs to agree on what conditional attendance will look like. According to Arvada’s Ian Thomsen, this was his church’s biggest sticking point.

“One of our church’s ministries had ‘adopted’ a low-income apartment building and was spending a lot of time tutoring the kids and engaging in all sorts of activities with the residents. We invited these folks to church, and we even provided transportation. Then I found out that a couple of the people who were coming were registered sex offenders.”

Although a lot of issues factored into how to handle their attendance, Arvada’s council agreed on one thing: “We all wanted to minister to them. We feel that they are probably among the neediest in terms of finding Christ and being coached and mentored by Christians.”

Arvada Covenant got bogged down on whether offenders should be chaperoned in church at all times. “Do we have escorts for these

people? That was probably the most contentious question,” Thomsen says. Half of the church council felt that escorts would be too intrusive. The other half (Thomsen included) insisted on them to protect children and youth.

“We have children and youth all over the place, and a person would have unlimited, unsupervised access to kids. I just couldn’t bear the thought of that happening,” Thomsen says. In the end, it took about six months for Arvada Covenant to agree on and adopt a sex offender conditional attendance policy.

REDEMPTION ROAD

Is it worth the effort to include registered sex offenders in local churches? Wouldn’t it be easier to exclude them, even though 95 percent of sex offenders are eventually released from prison?

A majority of the CTI survey respondents believe exclusion may be justified, but not for the sake of convenience. Sixty-six percent would consider excluding registered offenders if their victims attend the same church. Sixty-one percent, before permitting an offender to attend church, said they would review the offender’s probation terms and criminal record.

In addition, 62 percent of survey respondents say they are either not sure or do not believe a sex offender can be rehabilitated to the point where they no longer pose a threat to others.

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers, the largest professional organization on treating sex offenders, states on its website that “although many, if not most, sexual abusers are treatable, there is no known ‘cure.’ Management of sexually abusive behavior is a lifelong task for some sexual abusers.” The organization says repeat sexual crimes can be reduced significantly through prevention, assessment, treatment, supervision, and collaboration involving all parties. Based on the survey, church leaders said churches want to be one of the parties in the re-entry and prevention process.

But why do nearly a quarter (24 percent) of surveyed leaders report that they are doing nothing to provide a church-based recovery ministry to people with sexual addictions? Further, nearly half (49 percent) provide referrals to other ministries.

Miracle Village’s Witherow says, “Most churches are not equipped to handle the negative environment that has been created in how we perceive sex offenders.”

Don Bryant, former pastor of a small congregation outside Boston, has his theories too. “In my 30-plus years as a minister, I have never asked someone to leave the church because their redemptive process was too messy. But what I learned in trying to work with a sex offender at our church is that you need more of a critical mass of people invested in recovery as a ministry.”

With only about 75 members in his congregation, Bryant said there were just not enough people to sustain the level of care and attention the sex offender’s presence required.

When the church dwindled to 35 people, Bryant went to his church board and suggested they close their doors. Although those who left the church never admitted it, Bryant sensed a diminished energy among them for having to deal with the offender.

“The sex offender is the broken and bruised man,” says ex-offender Craig. “He is isolated by the nature of his crimes. To come alongside and reflect Christ through accountability and assistance, to offer mentorship—these would be the most helpful things a church could do. But most churches don’t even want to talk about sex, much less



Modeling Change: Pastor Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower has started a highly effective ministry to sex offenders in California.

Each COSA circle works with one offender and begins with weekly meetings, generally at a church.

sex offenses. And yet to have someone to talk to honestly and openly about their struggles—that’s what being a Christian is all about.”

Another reason many churches don’t have recovery programs may be that they simply do not have a working model. But one group may have cracked the code.

A NEW MODEL

In 1994, the Mennonite Central Committee in Canada created a program that models a simple and effective gateway into society for ex-offenders. Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) began as a pilot project in Ontario. Its mission: to reduce the risk of re-offense and ease offenders back into society.

A 2007 study of COSA groups across Canada showed that offenders who participated in the program had a significant reduction in recidivism in contrast with a matched comparison group. Today, COSA is being established in all of Canada’s provinces, and several U.S. states have also begun implementing the program.

In February 2007, Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, a Mennonite pastor, won a \$290,000 grant from the California Department of

Corrections and Rehabilitation to develop COSA through Fresno Pacific University's Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies. Approximately 100,000 sex offenders are registered in California. In Fresno County alone, 250 prisoners are paroled each month. Up to 30 of them may be sex offenders. Like the Canadian original, the Fresno COSA is faith-based and built around volunteers, which, Ruth-Heffelflower says, is the genius of the program.

"When the community takes responsibility for its own safety and for assisting offenders to live productive lives, healing for all involved can occur in powerful ways," she says.

A COSA circle includes one "core member," a title she says is used to help the offender build a new identity based on something other than his or her criminal past. Three to four volunteers from the community serve as "circle members."

"It doesn't take a particular expertise," Ruth-Heffelflower says. "One circle includes a housewife, a student, and a retired person. But community circle members must be stable, mature, emotionally healthy, and available. They should be... willing to meet regularly and walk with a core member through the ups and downs of life, be ready to confront if necessary, and help him celebrate when good things happen."

Each circle works with one offender and begins with weekly meetings, generally at a church. Circle volunteers provide practical, physical, emotional, and spiritual support for at least one year. Some circles continue for years. Ten are now operating in Fresno, and more are being formed.

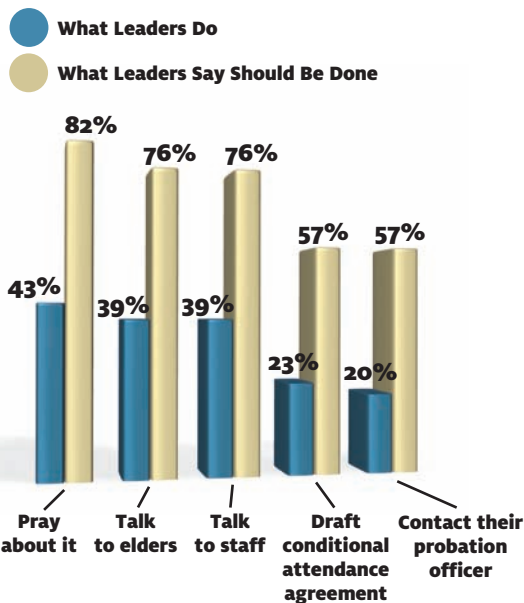
The key to COSA's success is simplicity. It follows two guiding principles: no more victims, and no one is disposable. But simple doesn't mean easy. "We get referrals primarily from state parole. We want the offenders who are considered high-risk with physical, emotional, spiritual, or other needs who do not have support from family, friends, or other sources," says Ruth-Heffelflower—"the ones people are scared of."

Initially, a circle group evaluates a core member's parole. "Sex offenders' parole agreements are more extensive than others," she says. "If you don't know what they are, you can't help them stay accountable, or you might inadvertently help them break parole."

COSA is designed to serve as one piece of an offender's successful re-entry into society. The model is based on relationships with individual offenders who want to change their lives. It does not necessarily substitute for a church. "My bias is that ultimately it's better for our core members to be part of a church, but the challenges of this are pretty great," says Ruth-Heffelflower. "Groups like Celebrate Recovery feature worship

Steps Taken

When you learn an attendee or member of your church is an offender, which of the following steps do you take?



time and sharing. In many ways, the recovery groups become church for these people."

COMPETING INTERESTS

What motivates church and ministry leaders to invest in the recovery of sex offenders? In so many words, leaders told CTI that it could be a deeply enriching experience to work with sex offenders committed to church-based recovery.

"God put them on my doorstep when I wasn't looking for them," says Ruth-Heffelflower.

"The experience of sitting in a room with a sex offender and hearing him say how much he appreciates being part of a circle of people who will be his friends is moving. It gives me energy."

Witherow says he is called to minister to everyone, but that he's been given "a special unction for sex

offenders, because not many will serve them."

Churches face significant competing interests when dealing with sex offenders in their midst. While Craig understands these challenges, he holds out hope—for himself and all sex offenders who want to be part of a faith community—of finding more people with Witherow's special unction.

"I never will reach the point where I don't identify myself as a sex offender," Craig says. "If I'm not to have any more victims, then I have to remember my past as a lesson for my future, especially from the standpoint of receiving God's grace."

Craig notes that most sex offenders commit crimes against a family member. The vast majority of sexual abuse is committed within homes, not by strangers lurking in bushes. About 5 percent of sex offenders suffer from significant mental illness. Cognitive behavioral techniques can teach the offender to control his thoughts and behaviors to prevent future crimes.

Based on Craig's interaction with other sex offenders in prison, he says their crimes are less frequently part of a larger pattern of committing crimes. "We don't want to do it again. We're looking for redemption—hope—that we will be able to successfully interact in society."

Craig experienced Christian redemption and salvation within the walls of a prison. To find it in the real world? That's the grace the church is powerfully able to offer. ➤

Marian V. Liautaud is resources editor for CTI's Church Management Team. She edited *Reducing the Risk*, 3rd Edition, and the training resource "Sex Offenders in the Church." Both are available at YourChurchResources.com.

ONLINE RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE REPORT WITH FULL RESULTS FROM "SEX OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH" SURVEY
YourChurchResources.com

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
peace.fresno.edu/cosa/

ASSOCIATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF SEXUAL ABUSERS
atsa.com

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR CHURCHES
ReducingTheRisk.com

CELEBRATE RECOVERY
CelebrateRecovery.com

The Maverick

Steve Saint's
flying car will
take the gospel
beyond *The Gates*
of *Splendor*.

By Tim Stafford

Photos by
Jon M. Fletcher / Genesis Photos

MARCH 31 IS A MILESTONE DAY AT I-TEC. Engineers at the start-up evangelical missions agency, headquartered in the flat, rural expanses of northern Florida, roll their exotic vehicle from its hangar for critical tests. It's the world's first flyable car that can legally travel on roads and streets.

Visionaries have long dreamed of leaving the road for the skies, and the idea of a flying car has fascinated pilots as well as Hollywood screenwriters (think *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Back to the Future*, and *The Jetsons*).

In the mid-1990s, Steve Saint founded the Indigenous People's Technology and Education Center to build on the vision of his missionary-pilot father, Nate. In 1956, Nate and four other missionaries envisioned taking the gospel to a tribe in Ecuador. But soon after successfully contacting the tribe, all five men were speared to death. Their story—most famously narrated in the book *Through Gates of Splendor*—is perhaps the most chronicled missionary account of the past 100 years.

Like his father, Steve has had a lifelong fascination with aviation. For years he dreamed of creating a flying car that would be rugged enough and versatile enough to drive through a rainforest. I-TEC's engineering team has turned the dream into an award-winning prototype.

I-TEC's flying car zooms up to 90 mph on paved roads. Off road, it handles ruts like a Land Rover. Yet in six minutes, a pilot can unfurl its fixed parachute wing and take off into the wild blue yonder—at up to 40 mph. “The Maverick” aims to revolutionize transportation “where the road ends,” helping indigenous preacher-pilots sustain the church in the remotest rainforests and other uncharted areas.

Located at the general aviation Dunnellon Airport, I-TEC operates out of a hangar that looks like a cross between an aviation museum and a NASCAR garage. Hung from the rafters is the first plane designed for the Waodani, the Ecuadorian people whom Saint's father tried to reach.

INSET PHOTO COURTESY OF I-TEC, INC.



Flyboy: Steve Saint's i-TEC Maverick Sport (above) is just the latest technology the entrepreneur has developed to enhance missions work.

In the hangar's far corner is a modified powered parachute, one step in the evolution of the Maverick. At the hangar's exit sit two small airplanes, both assembled by Waodani. Nearby, the first Maverick prototype lies in disarray, cannibalized for parts. The prototype received *Popular Mechanics'* prestigious "Best Innovation" award in 2009.

I-TEC has now spent months building the Maverick Sport, lighter, faster, and easier to fly. Designed for the recreational market, the sport model will qualify as a light aircraft by weighing no more than 1,320 pounds. I-TEC hopes to sell the Maverick Sport commercially in order to lower the price for interested missionary aviators.

The mid-afternoon sun is beating down as the crew rolls the Maverick Sport to the edge of the runway. The team—a half-dozen gearheads who like tools and things that go *zoom*—have been laboring to get ready for the test drive. Troy Townsend trained in electrical engineering and business administration. Steve Buer is a Minnesota farmer and the best welder of the bunch. Gene Walrath, a retired duck farmer from Wisconsin, is just a bona fide tinkerer.

There are no wild cheers when the Maverick roars to life and takes off down the runway. This isn't a football team; it's a shop used for developing experimental machines. The team expects their car to work. For the next half-hour, a helmeted driver races the Maverick up and down the runway.

But the car overheats, and consultations follow: Is the new radiator sucking air as designed? Might air bubbles have invaded the coolant? The team switches on the propeller for a few test runs. Next week, the Maverick will be displayed at a major air show. I-TEC hopes to begin selling next year. Time is short.

UPDATING PASCAL'S WAGER

Like many entrepreneurial leaders, Steve Saint is restless, passionate, and opinionated. He elicits strong feelings in both directions. He has created an organization like himself: part technology start-up, part missionary agency. What makes I-TEC more complicated is Saint's role in one of the greatest missionary stories of the 20th century.

Steve's father was caught up in similarly feverish preparations 54 years ago. At 32, Nate Saint was working as a jungle pilot in Ecuador with the fledgling Missionary Aviation Fellowship, transporting missionaries. In secret, he and four other young missionaries plotted to reach an isolated, violent tribe known as the Aucas. (The name, Saint says, means "naked savage" in the Quechua language of their local rivals; they call themselves the Waodani, the plural of *Wao*, meaning "human.") The missionaries had pioneered a technique by which Nate, flying in circles, lowered a bucket to hang at a still point in jungle clearings. This enabled the two groups to exchange gifts. Soon the missionaries planned to land on a sandbar and meet the tribe.



The flying car is but one part of Saint's vision, which might be called 'high-tech for low-tech people.'

The plan resulted in disaster when the five missionaries were speared to death. Steve Saint was 4 years old at the time and retains only fragmentary memories. But he grew up with a fierce desire to live up to his father's example. He has spent his life as "Nate Saint's son." He says he willingly accepted that designation. "I saw this as my sacrifice, to give up my identity."

Steve's mother, Marge, stayed in Ecuador, working at Christian radio station HCJB in urban Quito. She eventually married the station head, Abe Van Der Puy. Steve spent many school holidays with his aunt, Rachel Saint, at her missionary home in the Ecuadorian rainforest.

Thus, Steve grew up playing in the jungle with the Waodani, learning their language and culture. At age 13, he was baptized by two men who had participated in his father's murder.

Elisabeth Elliot wrote *Shadow of the Almighty*, an eloquent, near-biblical account that included her dead husband's memorialized version of Pascal's wager: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." Her book transformed the short-term media sensation into an epochal tale of Christlike sacrifice.

More books and films followed, not least Saint's efforts in the documentary film *Beyond the Gates of Splendor*, the feature film *The End of the Spear*, and Saint's book of the same name.

But it was Steve who, through I-TEC, has become the most visible steward of "the Auca story" through speaking, books, and films. That, indirectly, is how he came to start I-TEC.

The flying car is but one part of Saint's vision, which might be called "high-tech for low-tech people." His group's most effective program so far is I-Dent, which has manufactured a portable folding dental chair complete with solar-charged power drill.

An early adopter, dentist Charley Vittitow often volunteered for mission trips until, on a trip to Jamaica, a close friend asked a daunting question: "We have an hour before we have to leave. What do I tell the 85 people who are still in line?" Some had traveled long distances and



It Takes a Team: Stephenie Saint Davis (above left) and Troy Townsend are on the crew of engineers who bring their specialties to bear on the project.



Six months later, Saint came to Vittitow's church and talked about the I-Dent approach. Now Vittitow trains indigenous dentists through mPower, a training organization spun off from I-TEC.

"It feels good to go and help people out," said Saint. "But Jesus appointed his disciples to produce fruit that will last. That means we transfer our skills so that they are able to help themselves."

Today the I-Dent chair is used by professional dentists on mission trips, but it is primarily intended to open doors for indigenous evangelists. After six days of training, local evangelists can offer basic dentistry—filling, cleaning, and removing teeth. Their level of dentistry can't compare with U.S. standards, but Vittitow says a University of Kentucky study found patient results close to those produced by licensed dentists. So far, I-Dent has been used in 33 countries.

I-TEC also offers I-Fix, which teaches basic maintenance and repair, I-Med, which teaches basic medicine, and I-See, which allows missionaries to sell inexpensive eyeglasses as a doorway into resistant communities. (I-See also creates a small business that helps sustain the church's work.)

But I-TEC's slogan—*Training and equipping indigenous God-followers to say, "I can"*—grew out of frustration and failure.

WHEN HELPING HURTS

The Waodani church hardly exists anymore. Missionary leader David Howard, brother of Elisabeth Elliot, says that by the early 1960s, the Waodani were being flooded with North American evangelists dropping in to preach and baptize, to build schools and churches. From Saint's perspective, they kept the Waodani church from maturing.

As a result, Saint says, the people his father and aunt gave their lives for are today in dire trouble—dependent, culturally adrift, and without vital Christian fellowship. This troubles Saint, and makes him deeply critical of North American missions. He complains that many North American churches emphasize costly short-term mission trips but fail to build an evangelizing, multiplying, disciple-making church. I-TEC's critique is incorporated into a book and video curriculum, "Missions Dilemma."

"We are both frivolous and domineering," Saint says. "We've been doing ministry and missions for what we get out of it."

Instead, Saint preaches a bare-bones missions message of "know,

go, show, and blow": know Christ for yourself, go to people who don't know him, show them everything you know, and leave so that they can grow independently. "It's the difference between parenting and baby-sitting."

Saint personally knows this is easier said than done.

After his Aunt Rachel's funeral in 1994, Steve was asked by the Waodani to bring his family and come live with them. The request came as a shock. He was a businessman, mostly in property development and construction, but his Waodani friends persisted. They said they felt helpless before the power of the outside world. They wanted him to teach them how to do things for themselves, building defenses against the plans of oil companies, government officials, and settlers.

So Saint and his family moved to Ecuador, cut a new landing strip, and established a jungle outpost. A store and medical outpost were established under Waodani leadership, and Saint began to teach the Waodani to drill and fill cavities. But his wife, Ginny, soon realized that their presence was actually holding back Waodani leadership. They looked to Steve instead of thinking for themselves. Reluctantly, Steve saw it too. "As long as I am here, they aren't going to shoulder this thing."

When he speaks of the Waodani today, Saint's voice fills with love and frustration. In 50 years the Waodani church ought to have grown up, he says. Instead, "I don't know one younger person who is a trustworthy God-follower. The church is not functioning. It has ceased to exist."

Some Ecuadorians strongly disagree with Saint on this point. Still, the Waodani are like many other hunter-gatherer societies that struggle to coexist with aggressive technological society. Some remain so isolated, they have not heard of Jesus; others respond to Christianity as the Waodani did, but struggle to sustain a viable church and culture. "Know, go, show, and blow" is good advice, but more difficult to apply successfully.

But from Saint's frustration grew the vision of I-TEC, as a way of helping without overwhelming.

The flying car is an odd sight, dangling under its wing in the air like Mary Poppins under her umbrella. Its fate is unpredictable, but it just might end the Waodani's dependence on missionary aviation, enabling them to go and preach the gospel to tribes like themselves.

It also carries on a great story—of the Saint family, of American men and women drawn to love remote peoples, of Christians giving everything to pass on the gospel to those who have not heard—so that they, in turn, can pass on the story.

Tim Stafford is a senior writer for *Christianity Today*.

MIDNIGHT, IT IS SAID, is the portal between this world and the next and is somehow in league with chaos, death, and mystery. It is the moment of dark visitations. So it was for me in December 2006. My sleep was interrupted by a phone call, and I was instantly shocked into full consciousness: My younger brother was trapped in a snow cave on Mount Hood, and an unyielding blizzard prevented rescue.

The mountain proved to be Kelly's final adventure. Losing my brother on Mount Hood has been a painful reminder of my own spiritual fragility. None of us is immune to the heartaches and sorrows that inhabit this misbegotten world. Though I am a preacher, a professor of historical theology, and the provost of a theological seminary, I have found it agonizingly difficult to come to terms with my brother's death. It is one thing to talk about death in the abstract. It is entirely another to cope with the death of someone you love very, very much. The truth of the matter is that losing a loved one hurts down to the deepest parts of your soul.

I was the first to learn the news days later. Hearing those words announcing his death was like a blow to the solar plexus knocking the breath out of me, but telling the rest of my family was more dreadful. I had known heartache before, but this transcended every previous emotion I had ever experienced. My vision blurred. My feet were heavy and seemed to resist carrying me to the next room, where my family anxiously awaited the latest news of the rescue mission on Mount Hood. Kelly's wife, Karen, the children, our mother, three brothers and a sister—they took the news hard. I have never heard weeping like I heard that night in the village at the foot of the mountain. The Bible sometimes refers to "wailing" as an especially forlorn kind of weeping. That is what I heard that night—wailing. I hope I never hear that sound again.

Death is ugly, and we cannot—indeed, should not—try to make it palatable or explain it away with pious platitudes. Death is a cruel, brutal, and fearsome trespasser into this world. It is an intruder and a thief. It has severed an irreplaceable relationship with my brother. We shared the same story, and he knew me in a way no other person did. Kelly would no longer return my calls. Never again would I hear him cheerfully mock me as "Frankie Baby." Sometimes I see him in a dream, and I reach out to grasp him—but he is not there.

We are created for life, not death. Kelly had a shameless zest for living life to the fullest. When death strikes suddenly from the shadows or claws at us until the last breath, those left behind experience numbness and disorientation. Somehow we know in our hearts that it is not supposed to be this way.

AN HONEST QUESTION POSED FROM A BROKEN HEART

One question haunts me: Where was God when Kelly was freezing to death on Mount Hood? For me, it is not whether I should ask such a question, but how I ask it. One can ask the question in a fit of rage, shaking one's fist at God. Many of us, if we are candid, have done that. But once the primal anger settles to a low boil, we can—and, I would submit, should—ask the question.

I am not suggesting that mere mortals can stand in judgment of God or call him to account. God does not report to me. But an honest question posed from a broken heart is to my mind a good and righteous thing.

To ask this hard question is an act of faith. It presupposes a genuine relationship in which the creature actually engages the Creator. If God is my Father, can't I humbly ask why he did not come to Kelly's rescue? For me, to not ask this question would be a failure to take God seriously.

So, where was God? I don't know. I may never know. Perhaps the biggest challenge for my faith is to come to terms with what Martin Luther called the hiddenness of God—*Deus absconditus*. Contemporary Christians are often uncomfortable admitting that God sometimes hides from us. But King David was unafraid to ask, "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself



COURTESY OF KAREN JAMES

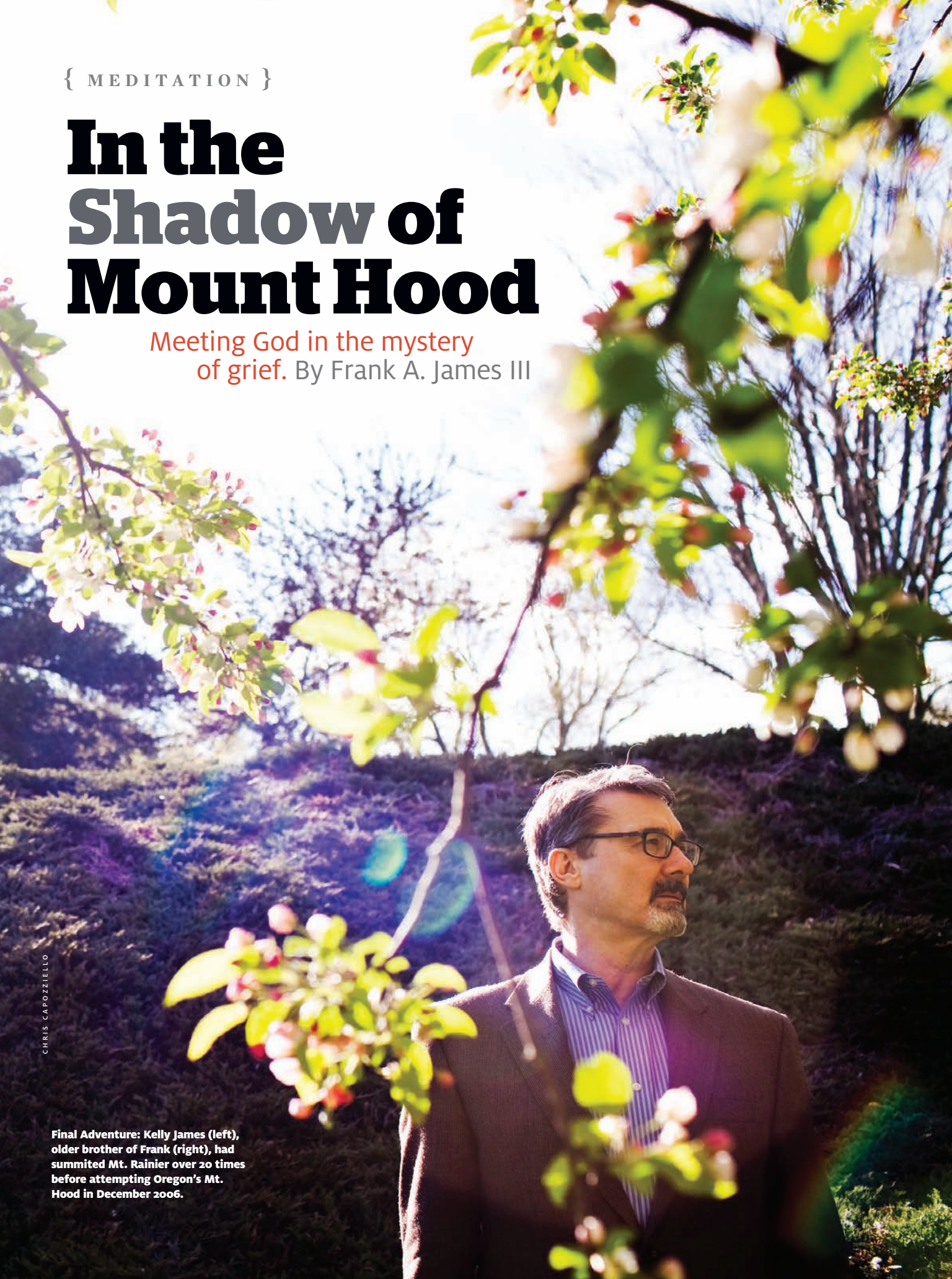
{ MEDITATION }

In the Shadow of Mount Hood

Meeting God in the mystery
of grief. By Frank A. James III

CHRIS CAPOZZIELLO

Final Adventure: Kelly James (left),
older brother of Frank (right), had
summitted Mt. Rainier over 20 times
before attempting Oregon's Mt.
Hood in December 2006.



in times of trouble?" (Ps. 10:1).

As far as I know, God never answered David. Even more bewildering—God was not only silent, he also commemorated his silence for posterity. By including the Psalms in the Holy Book, God made his hiddenness a part of Israel's worship and preserved it for all humanity to ponder. It boggles my mind to imagine throngs of Israelites singing the chorus, "Why do you hide yourself in times of

trouble?"—year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium. This must have been a gut-wrenching experience, and I suspect it was often sung with tears.

I am still trying to make sense of Kelly's death. I don't know why God did not rescue Kelly from the cold grip of the mountain. What I do know is that my relationship with God has entered another dimension—one more mystifying and more honest.

THE DIVINE GRAVITATIONAL PULL

Grief is a relentless predator. Those who have lost loved ones tell me that one never completely escapes it. Strangely, a part of me does not want the grief to stop, because the grief itself is a connection to Kelly. Yet another part of me is so weary from carrying the burden of a broken heart.

In the midst of our family tragedy, I made a peculiar discovery. One would think that grief and disappointment with God would lead to bitterness against him. In my nightmare, I not only prayed intensely in private but also publicly declared my faith and confidence in God on CNN—but Kelly froze to death anyway.

There is disappointment, sadness, and confusion, but oddly, there is no retreat from God. Instead, I find myself drawn to God. To be sure, he is more enigmatic than I thought, but I still can't shake loose from him. There seems to be a kind of gravitational pull toward God.

I am not the first to notice this gravitational pull amid the angst of divine silence. In Psalm 13, David calls out, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (v. 1). A few verses later, the same distressed David is declaring, "But I trust in your unfailing love" (v. 5). Even as he pleads with God to come to his rescue, David finds himself inexorably drawn to him.

It seems paradoxical that David would trust a God who hides himself when David needs him most. But as I have meditated on David's Psalms, I sense he had a different kind of relationship with God—one not many Christians understand. It is more mysterious

Going on a Short-Term Mission Trip?

FREE!

short-term missions.

lasting change.

Round Trip Missions
.com

RoundTripMissions.com gives you practical help for planning an effective, life-changing trip, plus tools to equip your team emotionally and spiritually to get ready to go...and to return.

With a free account, you'll get:

- ▶ Travel Research and Articles
- ▶ Trip Planning Calendar
- ▶ Online Fundraising Tool
- ▶ Trip Blog

a ministry of

CHRISTIANITY TODAY
INTERNATIONAL

Get started on your way to a mission trip that produces lasting change! Visit RoundTripMissions.com today!

The Story Behind the Story

In December 2006, Kelly James and his climbing partners, Brian Hall and Jerry "Nikko" Cooke, died on Mount Hood in northern Oregon. Their expedition was intended to prepare them for their lifelong dream of climbing Mount Everest. The climb began on December 8, but they encountered a rogue blizzard of enormous intensity and duration. They burrowed into a snow cave to wait out the storm. But the storm was unrelenting. Apparently Kelly had been injured, so the hard decision was made that Brian and Nikko should go for help. Sensing the gravity of their situation, Kelly must have released Brian from their long-standing pact never

than I had been led to believe. It is a relationship where simplistic spiritual formulas and religious clichés have no place. David's relationship with God combines brutal honesty with what Luther called a grasping faith. It is a relationship where disappointment is juxtaposed with hope.

One of the profoundly difficult lessons is that amid all the spiritual consternation in the shadow of Mount Hood, God has manifested himself in my grief. Somehow he is found in the disappointment, the confusion, and the raw emotions. This does not exactly make sense to me, and I'm quite sure I don't like it. But I have felt the divine gravity pull me back toward God, even while I am dumbstruck by his hiddenness. My conception of faith has become Abrahamic—which is to say, I must trust God even though I do not understand him.

Many Christians read the Nicene Creed with its marvelous stanza, "On the third day he rose again." They know the story of Christ's dead body being placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea on Friday and pulsing with new life on Sunday. In violation of natural laws, Jesus was again breathing and walking among his astonished disciples. One doubtful disciple even felt compelled to put his finger into Jesus' wound to convince himself that the crucified Jesus was indeed alive. It was hard to believe, but there before them all stood Jesus.

What does the empty tomb of Jesus have to do with the snowy tomb of Kelly James? Everything. Kelly confessed, as I do and as Christians have for nearly 1,700 years, that "we look for the resurrection of the dead."

to leave one another. Alone in the snow cave, Kelly made desperate calls on his cell phone. On Sunday, December 10, against all odds, one call mysteriously connected, and he was able to speak to his wife and two of his sons for six minutes. It was the last time they would hear Kelly's voice.

From the outset, the story captivated the national news media, and the three families asked if I would serve as the public spokesperson. A massive search was launched, and finally, on December 17, we were notified that a body had been discovered. The fateful call came that evening, informing us that the recovered body had a signet ring with the initials JKJ—Jeffrey Kelly James. The search for Brian and Nikko continued, but their bodies were never found. I preached at my brother's funeral on December 27, 2006.

—Frank James

Nicene Christians were not immune to the despondency of despair and grief. Over the centuries, and amid enough tears to fill an ocean, many of us have had to bury our loved ones. But we bury them with a promise: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep . . . For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:20, 22).

This magnificent promise does not

indemnify us against the grief of losing a beloved brother or even against disappointment with God. It does, however, take my faith to depths I never fathomed, where hope begins to poke through the heartache. Like a sunbeam piercing through a cloudy sky, faith portends that better weather is on the way. ☪

Frank A. James III is provost of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



With the cost of education on the rise, the gap between college cost and available financial aid is growing wider every year. As a result, many students and families have resorted to higher-cost private student loans to fill the funding gap. Christian Community Credit Union is here to help. With our Credit Union Student Choice private loan solution, students will achieve their dream of a higher education, without the higher price tag often associated with private student loans.

- No origination or pre-payment fees
- Extremely competitive rates
- Flexible repayment options
- Easy online application and 24/7 call center services
- Convenient line-of-credit that helps you secure financing for your entire college career*

Visit myCCCU.studentchoice.org or call 866.464.9193 to learn more!



*Subject to credit qualification and annual credit review. Christian Community Credit Union is privately insured by American Share Insurance up to \$250,000 per account. This institution is not federally insured or insured by any state government.



Christian Community
CREDIT UNION®



100% COMPASSIONATE

Danika Dahlin brings water to the thirsty.

In the small African country of Malawi, where thousands die every year because of a lack of fresh water, this Biola student is working to make a difference.

Each summer, Danika travels to Malawi with Water Wells for Africa, a nonprofit organization started by her family. There, she has been instrumental in both building wells and providing the education and resources needed to maintain them.

Biola has given Danika the strong academic grounding that she needs to help effectively run an organization. And Biola's commitment to a distinctively biblical worldview has equipped her with the tools and understanding to spread the gospel — and more effectively serve the world for Christ.

That means she's not just quenching physical thirst. She's providing living water to people in need.



BIOLA
UNIVERSITY

Southern California | 1.800.OK.BIOLA | biola.edu/compassionate

A Translation *and* Bible BUILT FOR STUDY

1 More manageable size than some study Bibles—at 2,100 pages, the HCSB Study Bible has all of the features that users expect, but not more than users want.

2 Two-column format, top to bottom, the highly preferred layout in research.

3 50% of the page devoted to text is the goal for as many pages as possible, so notes and ancillary content don't get in the way of the scripture.

4 Pew-friendly notes—focus on the most important concepts and are often in paragraph form, always in an accessible style and tone.

5 Fewer photos, more thoughtfully placed—the highest-quality and most appropriate images for the text on the page, from the leader in 4-color Bible reference.

condemned the innocent. ⁴For the 'Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.'⁵

The Man with the Paralyzed Hand

⁶Moving on from there, He entered their 'synagogue.'⁷ There He saw a man who had a paralyzed hand. And in order to accuse Him they asked Him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'

⁸But He said to them, 'What man among you, if he had a sheep' that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't take hold of it and lift it out?' ⁹A man is worth far more than a sheep, so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath.'

¹⁰Then He told the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' So he stretched it out, and it was restored,¹¹ as good as the other. ¹²But the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.¹³

The Servant of the Lord

¹⁴When Jesus became aware of this, He withdrew from there. Huge crowds¹⁵ followed Him, and He healed them all.¹⁶ He warned them not to make Him known,¹⁷ so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁸12:11 Or had one sheep ¹⁸12:15 Other mss read Many ¹⁸12:22 Lit multitude

of the Sabbath refers to Yahweh since He instituted the Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3), commanded the Sabbath (Ex 20:10), and was the Lord for whom the Sabbath was observed (Lev 23:3). By calling Himself 'Lord of the Sabbath,' Jesus clearly meant to identify Himself as God Almighty.

^{12:10} Many rabbis permitted healing on the Sabbath only when a life was at risk (m. Yoma 8:6). Otherwise, it was illegal to tie a bandage, set a broken bone, or administer medicine. Some rabbis even banned prayer for the sick on the Sabbath.

^{12:11-12} With the exception of the Essenes (CD 11:13-14), most Jews believed it was permissible to rescue a beast of burden (e.g., a donkey) on the Sabbath. It was inconsistent to refuse the same privilege to humans since God values



Reconstruction of a typical first-century synagogue

1817

Matthew 12:25

¹⁸ Here is My Servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul delights; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations.¹⁹ He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets.²⁰ He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick, until He has led justice to victory.²¹ The nations will put their hope in His name.²²

A House Divided

²³Then a demon-possessed man' who was blind and unable to speak was brought to Him. He healed him, so that the man' could both speak and see.²⁴ And all the crowds were astounded and said, 'Perhaps this is the Son of David!'

²⁵When the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'The man drives out demons only by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.'

²⁶Knowing their thoughts,²⁷ He told them:

people more than animals. The Sabbath was to be kept holy (Ex 20:8-11), but a ban on good deeds is unholy and dishonors God.

^{12:13} The man's paralyzed hand had wasted away from disuse. Jesus *restored* the hand's function and also renewed the wasted muscle. Thus, this miracle was an act of creation. Since the Creator God had instituted the Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3), the miracle confirmed Jesus' self-confessed identity as Lord of the Sabbath.

^{12:15-21} Matthew is 42:1-4. This implies *chosen* and *low* obedience. (a) He a universal king; humble and non-violent. His redemptive plan. 'Servant' is closest (see note on 8:17).

^{12:23} On Son of David. ^{12:24} Beelzebub is a Canaanite storm/with worship of Y non-existent, demonic (Ps 106:28), deemed to be the ruler of the demons. ^{12:25-27} Jesus argued his own kingdom, indicated their own demons.

6 References—enhanced prominence with color and located in between the columns of text.

7 4-color verse and reference designations helps readers to visually move from notes and references back to the text.

8 Readability—not only is the Bible text itself in a readable 9-point font, but the study notes are in a 7.5 point, uncompressed type so they will be easier to read.

2200–1800 B.C.	1526–1000	1000–56
From Abraham to David		From David to the Babylonian Exile
Abraham 2166–1991	Moses 1526–1406	David 1000?–970
Isaac 2046–1886	Exodus 1446	Solomon's 990?–931
Jacob 2006–1859	Joshua 1490?–1380?	Rehoboam 927–913
Joseph 1916–1805	Conquest 1400	Jeroboam 908–909
	Judges 1350–1050	Fall of the Northern Kingdom 722
	Ruth 1175?–1125?	Fall of the Southern Kingdom 586
	Samuel 1105?–1020?	
	Saul 1050–1010	

9 Horizontal instead of vertical timelines—the clear preference, and to give additional context, the timelines integrate Biblical and nonbiblical events.

A visual Bible that is comprehensive, easy to read, and easy to use with features and formats to enhance your Bible study experience.

Meet the HCSB STUDY BIBLE at HCSBStudyBible.com and learn more about the translation at HCSB.org.





{ PROFILE }

The Refugee Pastor That Could

As a teen growing up in Tennessee, **Chansamone Saiyasak** vowed to return to Thailand. And he did—with remarkable results.
By Marshall Allen

AS A PASTOR in the rice fields of rural Thailand, Chansamone Saiyasak assumes many roles. He's a cultural anthropologist, studying the Buddhist and animistic beliefs that dominate the northeast part of the country, known as the Isan region. Practices like consulting witch doctors are common.

He's a human rights activist. After more than 170 years of Protestant missionary efforts in Thailand, only about 1 percent of the country's 65 million people are Christians. When believers face opposition—many Thai derisively call Christianity *sasana farang*, the “religion of the foreigner”—Saiyasak publicly defends them.

He's also a provider. When local children need food or education—continual necessities in Thailand—Saiyasak and members of his ministry, Mekong Evangelical Mission (MEM), step up.

And when Sunday morning rolls around, he's a pastor-evangelist, sharing the Good News with those who attend his church.

Saiyasak, 44, was born across the Mekong River that runs along

the eastern border of Thailand, in war-torn Laos. His journey took him halfway around the world to a church in Antioch, Tennessee, and a Ph.D. program in Brussels, Belgium. He now runs an organization in Thailand that oversees nine churches, multiple businesses, a seminary, a radio ministry, an orphanage, and a school.

WHEN ETERNITY TOUCHED REALITY

In the 1970s, Saiyasak's family fled Laos in the wake of the Vietnam War. They lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for two years until being accepted into the United States and plopped by the government into a Nashville ghetto. Saiyasak was about 11 at the time, the oldest of seven children. His family spoke no English and were some of the few Laotians in the predominantly African American housing project.

Meanwhile, Pastor Al Henson and Lighthouse Christian Fellowship, in the Nashville suburb of Antioch, believed that “God's intention was to bring the nations to us.” Lighthouse members began a burgeoning outreach to Laotian refugees, including shuttling vanloads of Laotian children four times a week to the church for English classes and worship services. About 60 Laotian teens met weekly in a home



Bible study, where Saiyasak interpreted.

Saiyasak was struck by how Lighthouse members demonstrated love to the Laotians, how they seemed to experience grace and a personal relationship with God—unfamiliar territory for the nominal Buddhist.

Saiyasak still recalls how a Scripture passage broke through to him one Sunday. “God touched my heart [in my] reading about the love of Christ. He was just all over me,” he says, his voice breaking, his eyes welling. “I opened up my heart to God. That was the transformation—it was like eternity had touched reality.”

Henson took Saiyasak under his wing and raised funds for Saiyasak and other Laotians to attend Lighthouse Christian School. Even as an adolescent, Saiyasak spoke of returning to Thailand to share Christ with his relatives.

Saiyasak graduated as valedictorian of his high school class and earned a degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1990; he went on to earn three postgraduate seminary degrees—a master of divinity, a doctor of ministry, and a Ph.D. in theology and religious studies. But rather than put those degrees toward an academic career in the U.S., he returned to Thailand in 1992 to realize his dream.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES

It's a sunny Sunday morning in November, and worship at Mekong Posai Church, which opened in 2006, is about to begin. Breeze rustles the mango trees; jasmine is in the air. Sandals and flip-flops are nestled in pairs on the porch beneath the church's arched entryway and its scalloped red clay tile roof. Women wash and sort rice, green beans, and basil leaves on the back porch in preparation for an after-service meal.

In Thailand, a church building is more than a meeting place, explains Jay Saiyasak, Chansamone's younger brother and the pastor of Mekong Posai. Having a permanent structure boosts the credibility of Christianity—it's here to stay, not just a fleeting thing—and ensures that converts have a support network.

Thai culture presents many barriers to spreading the faith, says Chansamone, whose 373-page doctoral dissertation examined how the gospel relates to Thai belief systems. Like many Asians, Thai hold group submission as one of their highest social values; they make decisions by deferring to and building consensus among the community and kin group.

Paul De Neu, associate professor of intercultural studies at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, says Thailand's collective culture is particularly strong in Isan, the poorest region in the country, where people depend on one another not only socially and religiously but also economically.

De Neu, a missionary in the Isan region for almost 20 years, says that when Thai become Christians, they are often ostracized by their families, so they form their own support networks through the church. The church thus takes on many social responsibilities, like making burial arrangements for Christians whose families refuse

to do so. The churches in MEM's network, for example, have helped local Christians start and run micro-businesses, including a school bus company, a community store, and a childcare center.

About 50 stackable chairs take up a fraction of Mekong Posai Church's spacious marble tile floor. Some 5,000 people live in the area, but only about 70 are involved in the church, and sometimes, says Jay, the numbers dwindle even more.

THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT COULD

Despite the size of MEM's churches, Saiyasak and the organization have developed booming ministries. Mercy Christian School was registered in 2004 to help parents who had been leaving their children alone at home to work in the city. Saiyasak wrote into the charter

A nominal Buddhist, Saiyasak was struck by how Lighthouse members showed love to the Laotians, how they seemed to experience a personal relationship with God.

that Mercy Christian exists to train children according to Christ's teachings. The school has grown from 43 students to about 1,200, occupying multi-story classroom buildings the size of football fields. The curriculum includes chapel services, Bible classes, and prayer. About 200 students have become Christians.

Despite cultural attitudes toward Christianity, the Thai government funds Mercy Christian because it is classified as “benevolent.” In fact, government funding is already approved for more schools if MEM can raise the funds to start them.

Every year on December 5—the King of Thailand's birthday—the school sponsors the Christmas Cup soccer tournament. The event promotes a drug-free message, provides healthy competition, and serves to build bridges between the church and the community.

DIVINE MANIFESTATION

Saiyasak's credentials bring respect in the broader community. He's one of the few who escaped the region during the war yet returned to serve, De Neu says. His mere presence is a testimony.

“There's no reason he should be living there. He could be a professor in a seminary in the United States,” says De Neu.

Instead, Saiyasak is an activist, community organizer, and pastor in a culture that is indifferent or hostile to Christianity.

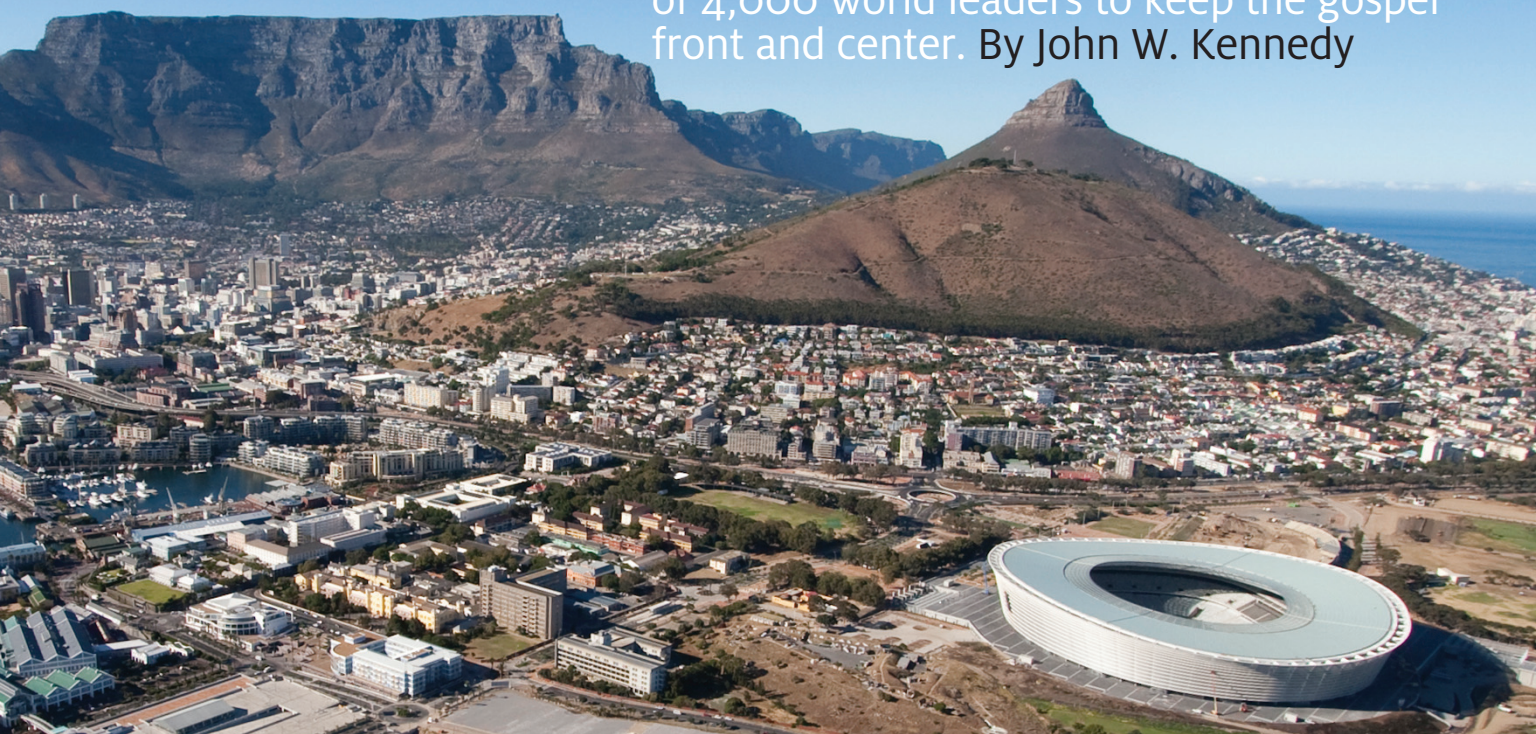
Recently Saiyasak preached to about 200 local pastors at a conference hosted by MEM. He taught on three themes of successful ministry in Thailand, what he calls the Three Ms: the *message* of the gospel; *mercy*, in the form of the orphanage and micro-businesses; and the *miracle*, a transformational encounter with Christ.

As important as preaching the gospel and showing mercy are, Saiyasak says, he never forgets the last *m*. “It's to experience the transformation, the miracle that God has done in our lives,” he says. “That sustains the evangelism, the message, and the mercy of helping people. People need daily renewal, the continuous manifestation of God at work.” ☪

Marshall Allen is a journalist in Las Vegas. International reporting in *Christianity Today* is supported by a grant from John Stott Ministries.

The Most Diverse Gathering

Lausanne III is pulling a cross-section of 4,000 world leaders to keep the gospel front and center. By John W. Kennedy



THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT'S third global gathering will feature a younger, more ethnically diverse, and more geographically varied consortium of evangelical leaders than ever before.

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, known as Cape Town 2010, will take place next month, October 16–25, with 4,000 leaders from 200 countries. Planners have made sure that 55 percent of participants are under age 50.

Billy Graham convened the first International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974, drawing 2,700 evangelicals from 150 nations. The parley comprised mostly white Western leaders at a time when the massive growth of Christianity in the developing world had just begun. British pastor-theologian John Stott served as chief architect of the Lausanne Covenant, which resulted in multiple alliances and spawned many other conferences. The second gathering, held in Manila in 1989, drew an influx of attendees from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and also incorporated Pentecostals and charismatics.

This time around, Americans aren't dominating the behind-the-scenes preparation or the on-stage program. Only 5 of the 25 members of the congress's Advisory Council, which has developed a theological

foundation and strategic vision for the event, are from the U.S.

TWO-THIRDS WORLD SHOWCASED

Program Committee Chair Ramez Atallah, general secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt, pushed for a discussion format of seating six attendees per table, discussing speeches that will be shorter than those from years past.

"We don't want people to come because of big names," Atallah says. "We're not choosing the stars of the evangelical world to speak. People coming to be entertained by great speakers and great music will be disappointed. They could get that sitting at home, watching television."

Executive Chair Doug Birdsall, an Asian Access missionary based at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, doesn't have the name recognition of his Lausanne predecessors. But he has painstakingly guided the event planning to include a cross-section of pastors, scholars, academics, missionaries, educators, and business leaders. Two-thirds of the speakers and presenters are from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, where two-thirds of today's evangelicals live.

"If it's the whole church, it needs to be people from north, south, east, and west," Birdsall says. "These leaders, carefully chosen from thousands of applicants, will represent the demographic, theological, and cultural realities of the global church."

Leighton Ford, program chairman for Lausanne 1974 and chair

ISTOCK

Ever



COURTESY OF DOUG BIRDSALL

of ongoing committees 15 years later, says Americans will leave Cape Town understanding the importance of listening to and being helped by leaders from other parts of the world.

“Back then we thought we had quite a bit to give—and we did,” says Ford, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, and adviser for this year’s Lausanne. “Now we have a great deal to receive. It’s an attitude change that will result.”

Atallah says Western evangelical leaders tend to be goal- and result-oriented, adopting a view of Christian work and life that mimics a business model. He hopes Americans focus on ministry relationships rather than donor responses.

“When Americans evaluate things, they do so from a grid that is counterintuitive to the New Testament,” Atallah says. The grid “goes counter to the relational model that Africans and many other cultures espouse.”

Birdsall says evangelism and social justice must go hand in hand. In light of pluralistic societies and the New Atheism, he says, Christians are more likely to embrace

justice and mercy matters at the expense of the foundational truths that Jesus is the only way to God and that Scripture is the ultimate authority. It’s never hard to find enough American churchgoers to build a house, but drawing interest in a Bible study is another matter, says Birdsall.

“There is a concern that our message is offensive, so there is a tendency to downplay it because respectability and likeability are important to us,” Birdsall says. “If we do everything but proclaim the message, that’s just a partial gospel.”

Korean American Michael Oh, president of Christ Bible Seminary in Nagoya, Japan, embodies the way the global church has changed since Lausanne I. The 39-year-old is responsible for shepherding the younger leaders at Lausanne III.

“We hope to witness in Cape Town a strengthening of healthy generational cooperation and, Lord willing, the beginning of a more deliberate generational transition globally in terms of leadership,” Oh says. “It will be an incredible opportunity for younger leaders to pray, worship, repent, and strategize alongside more experienced leaders.”

Birdsall is optimistic that Cape Town 2010 will feature a proper blend of wisdom from veteran leaders who make well-informed decisions, and energy from younger Christians to carry them out.

This is the first time such a global gathering will be truly global via technology. Not only can individuals watch proceedings on

the Internet, there will also be 400 anchor sites providing global links in 60 nations. Participants at theological institutions, mission sites, and churches worldwide will be able to interact with those at the congress.

ISLAM AND OTHER STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Questions facing the church from within and without are enormous. Cape Town 2010 will tackle key issues that confront the church’s effectiveness in world evangelization, ranging from consumerism to child sex trafficking. Birdsall says the congress will deal with three themes: the impact of secularism; the challenge of other faiths; and the nature of the church, specifically the problems of fragmentation and superficiality among evangelicals.

Islam is at the fore of challenges from other faiths. “Islam is a globally coordinated and unbelievably well-funded aggressive movement,” Oh says. “The church needs to ask whether it will be reactionary or proactive in engagement.”

‘If it’s the whole church, it needs to be people from north, south, east, and west.’

~ Lausanne executive chair
Doug Birdsall



“It’s a great temptation to look upon Muslims as enemies rather than as people God loves,” Ford says.

Rick Warren, whose Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, has trained 400,000 pastors from 64 countries, advocated for Cape Town as the host site. He is on the Lausanne III Advisory Council.

“The church is truly the only global organization on the planet,” Warren said in June at one of twelve pre-congress gatherings at U.S. churches. “My prayer for Lausanne is that we show why we do what we do.”

Cape Town 2010 is designed to be a catalyst for church leaders to form partnerships to spread the Good News and to make disciples. Still, unity within a less homogeneous contingent than the first Lausanne might be easier to declare than to implement.

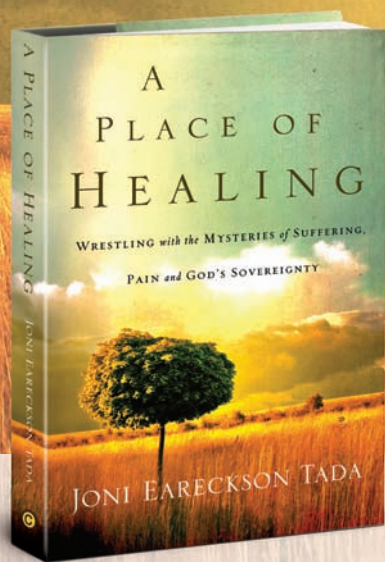
“The issue of cooperation and partnership is just as vital as it was back then—and sometimes just as hard to achieve,” Ford says. “The church is growing rapidly among the poor, and we have a great deal to learn from them.”

At this point, Birdsall believes he and other planners have done everything humanly possible to make sure Cape Town 2010 goes as planned.

“We want to make sure we don’t plan so carefully that we leave God out of it,” Birdsall says. Now he’s focusing on asking for prayer from the faithful.

John W. Kennedy is a contributing editor for *Christianity Today*. To join the conversations at this year’s congress, visit Lausanne.org/globalinkreg.

IF GOD CAN HEAL ME, WHY DOESN'T HE?



“This **wonderfully wise** book on being and not being healed is **vintage Joni**—a true spiritual gem.”

J.I. PACKER, PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,
REGENT COLLEGE

NEW FROM JONI

In this intimate account of a new season of suffering in her life, beloved author **Joni Eareckson Tada** navigates the distance between God's magnificent *yes* and heartbreaking *no*—and helps us find healing in-between.



VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



It's hard to explain to others why our family has adopted five children. Yet how could we not? Jesus loved us enough to adopt us into his family.

Christy Oswald
Luxemburg, Wisconsin

The Adopting God

Thank you, *Christianity Today* and Russell Moore, for shedding light on the responsibility—and opportunity—of adoption [“Abba Changes Everything,” July]. When God chose adoption as the means by which he would save us, he knew fully what it would cost him: incarnation and crucifixion. Having made us his children, he left us in a world of orphans, exhorting us to imitate him (Eph. 5:1). What more obvious, explicit way could we do so than by rescuing forsaken children?

RON OGDEN
Winona Lake, Indiana

As the parent of two adopted children and the director of a poverty relief agency, I would tweak Moore's mandate that “every Christian is called to care for orphans.” Every Christian is called to help the poor, of which orphans are but one subset. Depending on gifts and resources, all members of the body need to engage with the least of these: the hungry, the fatherless, and the imprisoned. To do so will push us past the “carnal sameness” that Moore rails against and let the church model unity in diversity.

MARIANNE HAVER HILL
Pacoima, California

As the parent of eight kids between ages 10 and 15—five of whom were once orphans in another country—adoption is of course heavy on our hearts. It is so hard to explain to others why we do what we do. Many say that we are either saintly or crazy. Yet how could we not? Jesus loved us enough to bring us into his family. We are only following his commands.

When people ask if we are done adopting, our response is generally “no” or “we shall see,” even though we have no idea how we would afford another adoption. But God provides, and this is his journey. We are just grateful to be on it.

CHRISTY OSWALD
Luxemburg, Wisconsin

Original Jew for Jesus

My wife and I spent ten rather fruitless years in Bangladesh. In 1972, as a flourishing missionary at Trinity Seminary, I was looking for an innovative methodology to help our team bring Muslims to Christ. Our textbooks, authored by Fuller professors, provided a theoretical basis for hope. But we lacked concrete examples where contextualization actually worked in reaching Muslims.

Enter Moishe Rosen [“An Evangelist

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

27%
Real Presence
Review of Sara Miles
by John Wilson

20%
Abba Changes Everything
Russell Moore

13%
An Evangelist with Chutzpah
Ruth A. Tucker

YAY OR NAY
Readers' response
to “Real Presence”



12%



88%

with Chutzpah,” July], who provided our team with the boldness to strike out into uncharted territory. Yes, Rosen had huge feet of clay. But I salute him as one whose footprints lie heavily on the worldwide harvesting of Muslims into the kingdom.

PHIL PARSHALL, SIM Missionary at Large
Charlotte, North Carolina

I knew Moishe Rosen for 50 years. As a new Gentile believer in Christ, I was drawn to him because he was a Hebrew Christian. He encouraged me to leave my secular career to become a missionary in East Africa for 32 years. I simply cannot imagine my life apart from the influence of this remarkable man.

“An Evangelist with Chutzpah” includes the blanket statement that Moishe said “friendship evangelism is no evangelism at all.” I recall Moishe saying that friendship evangelism didn't work for him, because most Jews reject friendship with Jewish Christian believers who always want to talk about Jesus as Messiah. He believed that Jews more readily accept Gentile Christian friendships and conversations.

DARWIN DUNHAM
Minneapolis, Florida

Lying for Christ?

CT's July editorial [“Bearing True Witness”] was excellent. Embellishing conversion stories dismisses God's actual

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?
CT'S EDITORS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM.

E-MAIL: cteditor@christianitytoday.com FAX: 630.260.8428

ADDRESS CHANGES, SUBSCRIPTIONS: ctfulfill@christianitytoday.com

activity in our lives as inadequate and misrepresents him terribly. And many of the embellished stories similar to Ergun Caner's only play to our culture's anti-Muslim bias. An embellishing Western Christian knows he will have a sympathetic audience because so many listeners already believe the worst about non-Christians.

DAVE DAUBERT
Chicago, Illinois

CT's editorial reminded me of a woman at a recent writers' workshop who wanted help turning a phrase into an exciting conversion narrative to submit in a writing contest. The phrase? After a near-accident, her husband muttered, "Thank God we weren't hurt." Surely a wordsmith could make the incident sound spectacular, indeed, prize-worthy.

Stories of miracle healings and escapes from abuse and addiction get the book contracts and movie scripts. Stories of God helping someone care for a long-term invalid, turn the other cheek when maligned, or continue to trust him when accidents happen don't make the front page. We no longer see God at work in the ordinary, looking only for the spectacular to assure ourselves that he is with us.

KATIE FUNK WIEBE
Wichita, Kansas

Real Conversion

I was surprised to see CT print a favorable review of Sara Miles's books ["Real Presence," July]. However, I wanted to learn more about her conversion, so I read *Take This Bread* and *Jesus Freak*. I came away with a great admiration for her as a person and a writer. Though John Wilson noted that an acknowledgment of sin was missing from Miles's conversion story, he neglected to add the weightier issue of repentance. Miles likes to focus on Scripture that suits her and disregard the rest. Of course, she is free to proclaim her message. But I can't understand why a Christian magazine would draw attention to such an unorthodox view. In the future, I'd like to see more editorial discernment.

ANNIE REYNOLDS
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Yes, Miles's conversion story leaves something to be desired. But I rebel against the idea that we can never learn anything from a person or book because it is imperfect. Is our faith so immature that we dare not expose ourselves to those who come down differently on certain issues? I'm no Greek philosopher, but I have learned much from Socrates. All truth is God's truth. Take what is good, leave the rest.

CHARLES BOGLE
E-mail

Young Jesus Chronicles



**"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, see me after class.
Your book reports are surprisingly similar."**



BE FRUITFUL OR FRUGAL?
Do Christians couples have a responsibility to have children?

9%

Yes, there's a scriptural mandate for all people.

31%

Yes, children are a blessing from the Lord, and we should be promoting a culture of life.

7%

Maybe, but we shouldn't raise more children than stewarding resources allows.

13%

I don't know whether Christians have a duty to reproduce, but they definitely don't have a duty to be childless.

28%

No, not every Christian has the responsibility to reproduce.

11%

No, because of limited resources, the best way to love all children will be for some couples not to have any.

Total Votes: 614

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

compiled by Laura Leonard

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"We tend to fixate on 'getting it right' instead of risking, trusting, and making decisions that require faith in God's reckless goodness."

Jeff Stull, on the negative impact of the church's dating advice to singles.

Speaking Out: "The Good Christian Girl: A Fable," by Gina Dalonzo

"We are not to be conformed to this world (or our first or adopted culture), but rather to be transformed into kingdom people. That is our destiny, when saints from 'every tribe, language, people, and nation' shall reign on earth."

Scott Herr, disagreeing with the author about the value of monocultural ministries.

Speaking Out: "Needed: More Monocultural Ministries," by Tom Steers

"If people saw the worst of me on the news 24/7, I would have a lot fewer friends. Shouldn't we as Christians just be praying for him?"

Amy, on whether Christians should boycott Mel Gibson's films in light of his offensive rants.

Women's Blog: "Why I Can't Boycott Mel Gibson," by Anna Broadway

"Christians who support current immigration laws are not trying to be unloving. Encouraging people to break the law is not showing love; it is justifying disobedience to God."

J. D., on the misperception some Christians have of those on the other side of the immigration reform debate.

Speaking Out: "Immigration Reform: Another Christian View," by Alan F. H. Wisdom

How porn damages women—and what churches can do about it.

With this in mind, churches can make the tools that are effective in helping Christian men escape porn more available to women. Referrals to outside counselors might list someone uniquely trained to help female addicts. Church leaders might establish accountability groups for women only. And, during cyclical sermons about sexual purity, a pastor might even ask a woman to give her testimony of how Christ met her at the well

In the past few years, we have seen a groundswell of gutsy ministries that know porn stars bear the *imago Dei*, and go to xxx conventions and strip clubs to reinforce that truth. Groups like Pink Cross Missionaries and Treasures are led by former porn actresses whose own broken *imago Dei* has been restored by Jesus. Beyond continuing

When that happens, a whole society suffers, as ours is now, paying for it in countless broken families and lives. Beyond helping addicts, churches can prophetically speak out on porn's unseen but very real societal costs—and invite addicts outside the church to abandon their junk food habit and come to God's banquet of soul-nourishing intimacy. ☩



September 2010 | CHRISTIANITY TODAY 71

*The Ethics
of Promoting
Democracy*

Should the U.S. stay militarily involved in Afghanistan?

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE

Jean Bethke Elshtain teaches ethics in the divinity school and the political science department at the University of Chicago.

It is irrelevant to debate whether the United States should be in Afghanistan; we are already there. The important questions must deal with the realities of the situation.

First, remember why we are there. We entered Afghanistan with the United Nations fully behind the operation after the attacks of September 11, 2001, an act of aggression that necessitated a response. U.S. entry into Afghanistan was an act of self-defense.

The notorious misrule of the Taliban came to an end, and the operation of Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan ceased for the most part. We did not intervene to end Taliban rule per se, but to put an end to Al Qaeda operations. At this point, a return to Taliban control would be a disaster—first and foremost for the people of Afghanistan.

Under the Taliban, those who suffered the most were women. Women were driven out of universities, and girls were not allowed to go to school. Women were denied all legal rights and were not permitted to go out of doors unless escorted by a man. Anyone who defied regulations was beaten or stoned. Women had to be seen by female physicians and remain covered during medical examinations. This meant, in effect, little medical care, as female professionals fled Afghanistan in droves when the Taliban took over.

We must contend with these realities now. Leave aside our own security concerns: Are we content to watch Afghanistan fall once again under Taliban rule? What on earth do people think would happen if we packed our bags and left the country tomorrow? That we would see the lion lie down with the lamb?



We would watch as women now in school were denied an education, and other women were beaten and executed. We would stand by as those who signed on with the prospect of a constitutional Afghanistan are slaughtered. The border with Pakistan, now the site of Taliban operations, would turn into a Taliban stronghold from which they could threaten the security of the entire region. Afghanistan sits astride one of the most dangerous zones in the world. Terrorist entities hanker to generate dirty nuclear weapons with which to threaten all “infidels,” whether Jews, Christians, or the wrong sort of Muslims.

We might pack our bags tomorrow, but we would return as the situation went completely downhill. No American president wants to see Afghanistan lost when so much is at stake. So our present dilemma is not whether we should be there or not, but how we can best secure the situation and eventually withdraw.

We have adopted a difficult counter-insurgency strategy for the sole purpose of trying to spare civilian lives. If this strategy does not succeed, it will mean a much longer U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Let us hope and pray—for the sake of the Afghan people, and in order to somewhat minimize the horrors of this world—that we succeed.

IT'S THE NEW NORMAL

Chris Seiple is president of the Institute for Global Engagement and author of *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*.

The U.S. will be involved militarily in Afghanistan and Iraq for the rest of our lives. This is not unusual; it has been involved militarily in Europe and Japan since the end of World War II, and in Korea, since the 1953 armistice. We are still in the Balkans. Unfortunately, this is how stability and the opportunity for positive change come in a fallen world.

At its best, U.S. military involvement is consistent with the best of local culture and religion, but also deepens and expands a rule of law that protects minorities. The U.S. government is not Christian or inherently good. But it is generally staffed by Americans who are committed to principled pluralism, an idea that can be traced to Christians like Roger Williams, William Penn, and John Locke, who wrestled with how best to engage the world—especially minority populations—as it is.

In Afghanistan, we are fighting on the more tolerant side of an intra-Islamic conflict against an extremist ideology that



enslaves conscience and women. Our side, however, is rampantly corrupt, containing elements of a culture and corresponding constitution that essentially denies pluralism's freedom to respectfully share beliefs. Welcome to the real world.

In this context, the U.S. military should continue to show unprecedented restraint in waging the war, while creating a space for, and modeling, principled pluralism. Such a process often begins with Provincial Reconstruction

Teams. Such military teams coordinate with local and national officials, as well as Afghan and international nongovernmental organizations and, most importantly, Afghanistan's ethno-religious system of councils (the *shura* and the *jirga*).

A successful reconstruction team will leave the local government running more effectively and smoothly than before. It is here that a culture of collaboration and consensus can be demonstrated and developed. Over time, this kind of practical pluralism makes routine the gathering of individuals of deeply different ethnicities, faiths, and values, so that they can share their differing beliefs about how best to serve the people in that area.

The training and education necessary to consistently convene such a forum in Afghanistan, however, is still lacking in the military (and, by extension, the rest of the U.S. government). For example, how does one engage a Pashtun-Islamic understanding of justice in presenting and implementing governance and development projects? What mediation and conflict transformation skills are needed? There are no easy answers.

It is in America's interest to train our military and government leaders in social-cultural-religious engagement. This kind of training is no panacea, but without it, we stand little chance of civilians learning from and taking over this role from the military.

LET JESUS CALL THE SHOTS

Will Willimon is an author and bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church.

After an acrimonious debate about the Iraq war at the United Methodist Church's annual conference a couple of years ago, I declared a series of "Bishop's Conversations about War" all over Alabama.

I'll never do that again. I opened each discussion by saying, "We are going to talk about this war as Christians." I soon learned that it is virtually impossible for us to talk about war using any specifically biblical or Christian referent.

Most people were in favor of the war. We are a democracy; we are powerful; we have a responsibility to spread freedom and democracy

around the world; when our government calls, we have a patriotic duty to offer our children. Missing was any reference to Scripture, church teaching, or any other specifically Christian criterion.

After hearing President Obama's inaugural address, I was not surprised that he would order a massive troop buildup in Afghanistan. We are forced to do that as a powerful, aggrieved democracy. But how should American Christians think about this war?

Some years ago, I recall hearing Jerry Falwell being interviewed about President Bush's first (or was it second?) "war to end all wars" in Iraq. Falwell said that it was important to teach them a lesson, to liberate Iraqis, to stand up to oppression. Yada, yada, yada.

A humiliating moment came when the "godless" television newscaster asked, "But what would Jesus say about this war?"

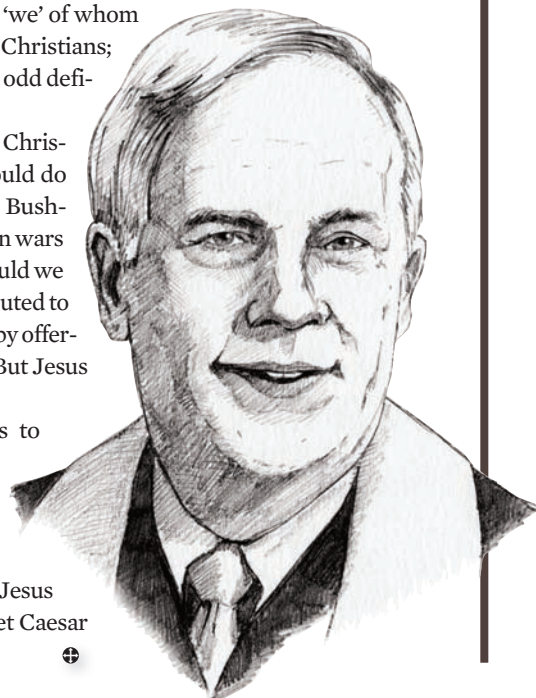
With that, Falwell began perspiring heavily and said something about being "realistic," about evil people only respecting a show of force, about his great respect for President Bush, and so on. We are all realists now; 20th-century liberal theologian Reinhold Niebuhr has triumphed even among allegedly biblical evangelicals like Falwell. In discussions of war and military might, Jesus Christ is irrelevant. Calculating justice trumps Jesus-love.

There was a day when my church had the theological and evangelistic chutzpah to send missionaries to Afghanistan. The Bible told us that they were our brothers and sisters, recipients of Christ's converting love. Now we are in a war with over 1,000 American military deaths and so many more Afghani casualties, mostly women and children, defending a corrupt regime that is anything but democratic and decidedly anti-Christian. We have capitulated to the notion that the qualifier *American* is much more significant and determinative than the designation *Christian*.

As a Christian, I'm forced to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and that all presumptive lordlets are not. So when our President declares that we have a responsibility to fight, to destroy, to force democracy and our brand of freedom anywhere, I wish I had the guts to ask, "Who is this 'we' of whom you speak? We are Christians; Jesus gives us some odd definitions of 'we.'"

I'm not sure that Christians in America could do much to stop these Bush-Obama Near Eastern wars without end. But could we have at least contributed to the national debate by offering an occasional, "But Jesus says that . . .?"

In our attempts to be good, responsible members of a democracy, we have given away the store. While we say Jesus Christ is Lord, we let Caesar call the shots.





Faith Unbound

Why spirituality is sexy but religion is not.



MOST OF MY Facebook friends are clear about their religious views. They identify as Lutheran, Catholic, or atheist. I also have friends who view their religion as a canvas of self-expression. A friend of mine says he is a “Latter-day Bacchanalian/Dionysian, Pastafarian, Cthulhu Cultist.” My cousin tells her online friends, “I’m spiritual, not religious . . . and I enjoy checking out European cathedrals.”

She’s not alone. The number of people who self-identify using the long-popular phrase “spiritual but not religious” is still growing. In 1998, 9 percent of American adults told the General Social Survey they were spiritual but not religious. By 2008, it had risen to 14 percent. Among those ages 18 to 39, the increase was even more dramatic, and 18 percent now say they are spiritual but not religious.

The growth is not because people are less likely to identify as religious, but because nonreligious people are more likely to say they are spiritual, says Duke sociologist Mark Chaves.

Part of the phrase’s popularity can be attributed to its sex appeal. No, really. A social psychologist at Britain’s Southampton University looked at 57 studies covering 15,000 experiment subjects, and reported in *Personality and Social Psychology Review* that North Americans find “intrinsically religious” people desirable—but that the desirability decreases if people portray themselves as extrinsically religious.

Elaborate dating scheme or not, if you wonder what the phrase means, you’ll probably get a different answer from each person you ask. That may be the point.

“Spiritual has, in some sense, come to mean ‘my own personal religion with my own individual creed,’” Timothy Paul Jones, a Baptist seminary professor, told the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.

The word *religion* comes from the Latin

religare (re: “back,” and ligare: “to bind”), so the term is associated with being bound. In that sense, defining oneself as “spiritual, not religious” couldn’t be more apt, reflecting a desire to not be bound by any rules, community, or belief. Being spiritual but not religious is the perfect fit for people who don’t like the demands of religion but aren’t quite ready to



say they have no soul.

Catholic philosopher Peter Kreeft has noted that our culture’s fear “is not the fear of death, as it was for the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, nor is it the fear of hell,” as found in the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic societies of the medieval period. No, the fear of the age “is the fear of meaninglessness itself.”

Yet those who oppose organized religion may be missing out on some of the best tools for staving off meaninglessness.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public

Life found that only 5 percent of the religiously unaffiliated attend church weekly or participate weekly in group prayer, and that only 9 percent read Scripture weekly outside of religious services. Yet what are worship, prayer, and study but “spiritual” disciplines that strengthen faith in a mature Christian?

And that’s the problem. How different are we from the group that *admits* it’s not religious? We too bristle against the binding demands of our faith. We find it easy to justify not tithing or praying. We disrespect authority, fail to take care of our neighbors in need, and covet the materialism of the world. We barely qualify as spiritual or religious.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth.” True spirituality is not an emotion, experience, or set of behaviors, but rests on the truth found in the Scriptures. That Word of God, that truth, that Spirit is what we are bound to as Christians.

In his Small Catechism, Luther describes the work of the Holy Spirit by saying, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.”

Paul lists the fruit of the Holy Spirit as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

If we want to be truly spiritual *and* genuinely religious, then let us pray for the Holy Spirit to let those gifts characterize our interactions with our family members, friends, neighbors, and especially those who do not yet know the gospel of Jesus.

It’s not that spiritual people are less likely to say they’re religious. Instead, nonreligious people are more likely to say they are spiritual.



Dwelling in Heaven's Suburbs

Creating a culture of resurrection is key to full-orbed ministry.

IN JUNE, my former pastor paid me a visit. Now retired, Bob Macfarlane lives 728 miles from his former parish church. We don't see each other often anymore.

After dinner, Bob cast a backward glance. "If I had it to do over again," he said, "I think I'd preach a lot more about heaven." We talked about the preacher's resources on heaven, from ancient Scripture through Dante's 1321 *Paradiso* through Richard Baxter's 1650 *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* to Pope Benedict's 2007 encyclical *Saved in Hope* and N. T. Wright's 2008 *Surprised by Hope*. After Bob returned home, I telephoned him and we talked more.

Why preach about heaven? Bob was unashamed to confess: "The most cogent reason in my case is age. As one gets older, one begins to think there is not much of this life left," he said. "Thinking about heaven is a faithful response to the running out of the string."

RESURRECTION CULTURE

Teaching about heaven is an important ministry to believers who are getting older. Most pastors know that focusing on the aging does not pay back readily in congregational or budget growth. Instead, a focus on young adults and families often marks the church geared for growth. It is a reality of the religious marketplace. But preparing for death and for life in the presence of God is not something the old should do by themselves. Children, youth, and young adults also need to participate in these realities in order to understand the scope of Christian hope. Creating what *CT* editor at large Rob Moll recently called in these pages "a culture of resurrection" is foundational to full-orbed multigenerational ministry.

Teaching about heaven is also a good way to keep our vision of justice in perspective. You can't talk about paradise—the time-place where everything is right—without talking

about the way things will be put right. That means we can't talk about heaven without talking about the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment.

Our individual memories and our community stories are full of injustices—both those we suffer and those we perpetrate. In this life, there is no undoing those injustices. There can be forgiveness and reconciliation and even restitution, but we cannot recover lost lives and lost opportunities.

Scripture's earliest clear teaching of the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:1–3) follows a prophecy about God's people suffering unjust persecution. How will God put things right after his people experience the greatest "time of distress" since the world began? Through a general resurrection and a judgment. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt" (v. 2).

In *Saved in Hope*, Pope Benedict points to the way the "Christian faith has been individualized and primarily oriented towards the salvation of the believer's own soul." As a result, he says, "in the modern era, the idea of the Last Judgment has faded into the background."

"Faith in the Last Judgment," Benedict says, is "first and foremost hope." He calls "the question of justice . . . the strongest argument in favor of faith in eternal life." It is morally inconceivable "that the injustice of history should be the final word," he says, and when we face that, "the necessity for Christ's return

and for new life become fully convincing."

Christians talk more about justice now than ever. God is on an intergalactic justice mission, and we are God's agents, charged with bringing about a limited and relative justice. But lest the overwhelming task make us weary, our heavenly hope keeps it in perspective. As Benedict writes, "A world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope." The restoration of justice is ultimately God's task.

A God whose justice restores lost lives and dreams should lead us to think on heaven.

Practice such meditation on the life to come, wrote Baxter, and "you will find yourself in the suburbs of heaven."

In his fabulously insightful *Paradiso*, Dante visits heaven and its suburbs. In Canto III, Dante meets a former nun named Piccarda, who in her earthly

life was unable to keep her vows because she had been abducted by evil men. She was thus assigned to heaven's "slowest sphere." When Dante asked if she wasn't "desirous of a higher place," she claimed utter satisfaction and blessedness. To wish for anything else would be "discordant" with God's will, she explains.

There's the secret. The Christian's future, the world's justice, and the believer's bliss are the where and when of everything and everyone being in perfect concord with God. A taste of that is available now—here in heaven's suburbs. The fullness will come in God's time by God's power. That is worth preaching about.



Christians talk more about justice now than ever. But lest the overwhelming task make us weary, our heavenly hope keeps it in perspective.

International Human Rights

Freedom from Persecution

Second International Conference on the scourge of human trafficking ...

November 3-7, 2010
Bryan College
Dayton, TN

SPEAKERS

Dr. Paul Marshall

Hudson Institute

*Senior Fellow and noted author on religious freedom
and persecution of religious minorities*

Detective Inspector Steve Wilkinson
Detective Sergeant Roddy Llewellyn

New Scotland Yard

Operation Maxim Human Trafficking Team

Visit www.bryan.edu/freedom
for speakers and schedule.

Thirty million persons are in bondage today, victims of the worldwide scourge of human trafficking. The vast majority of these victims are women and children, sold on the black market without regard to their welfare or fate.

This evil can be fought only with the moral leadership and determination as exhibited in centuries past by Augustine, Wilberforce and Lincoln.

Join us November 3-7 as we examine this plague and consider ways to stand for right and freedom.



**Students Stopping the
Trafficking of People**

For more information, contact Dr. Ronald Petite, Director
Center for Leadership Initiatives, Bryan College, Box 7641, 721 Bryan Drive, Dayton, TN 37321.
Email: fighthumantrafficking@bryan.edu

CHRIST ABOVE ALL
**BRYAN
COLLEGE**



The Bryan Institute
for Critical Thought and Practice



find your place at Calvin...

and get ready
to take your place
in God's world

Nationally ranked in *U.S. News & World Report*

- Top Tier Liberal Arts Colleges
- Focus on Undergraduate Teaching
- Up-and-Coming Schools
- Most Popular Liberal Arts Colleges

100 majors, minors, and academic options

- from accounting to Asian studies, education to engineering, and media production to pre-medicine

First-year student profile

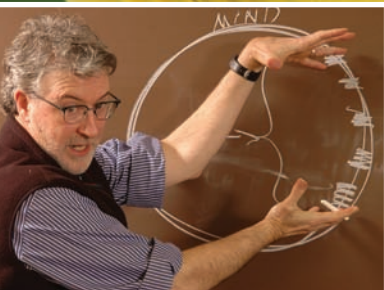
- GPA 3.6 ■ ACT 26 ■ SAT 1200

At Calvin, you'll discover a faculty of recognized scholars, a curriculum that encourages you to think in new and different ways, a community that challenges you to love God with your mind and heart—and a future that holds incredible promise.

Schedule a visit today!

www.calvin.edu/visit

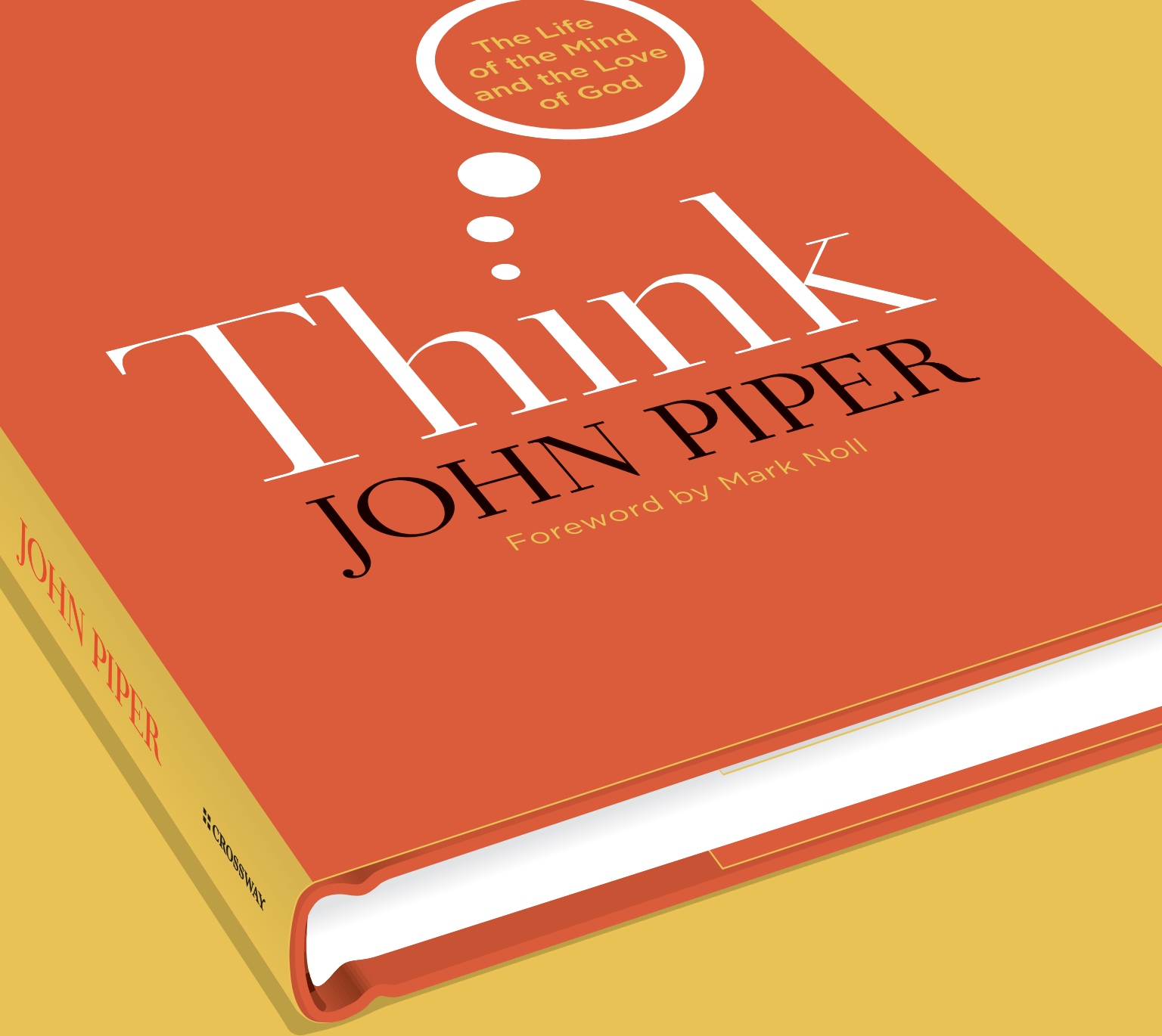
Imagine what the next four years—
and the rest of your life—
might be like.



www.calvin.edu/visit

3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 526-6106 or 1-800-688-0122

CALVIN
MINDS IN THE MAKING



The Life of the Mind and the Love of God

"This book is a plea to embrace serious thinking as a means of loving God and people. It is a plea to reject either-or thinking when it comes to head and heart, thinking and feeling, reason and faith, theology and doxology, mental labor and the ministry of love. It is a plea to see thinking as a necessary, God-ordained means of knowing God. Thinking is one of the important ways that we put the fuel of knowledge on the fires of worship and service to the world."

—From the Introduction



JOHN PIPER is pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. He has authored numerous books, including *Desiring God*, *Don't Waste Your Life*, *This Momentary Marriage*, and *A Sweet and Bitter Providence*.

CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS



Tragic Humanism

Terry Eagleton argues that evil is not as mysterious or as explainable as we think. By Christopher Benson

Two events happened this spring in New York City that flummoxed our sophisticated pundits.

First, a naturalized citizen failed to detonate a car bomb in Times Square. Why did Faisal Shahzad become a jihadist? Explanations included revenge for drone attacks in Pakistan, misery over the foreclosure of his home, rage against George W. Bush, Islamist hatred for infidels, and anger at the creators of *South Park*, a TV show that depicted Muhammad.

Second, after helping an assaulted woman, a homeless immigrant was stabbed in Queens and left for over an hour as dozens of passersby ignored him. A surveillance camera captured the whole scene. When firefighters

arrived, Hugo Alfredo Tale-Yax was dead. Why were there no Good Samaritans? Explanations included bystander apathy, diffusion of responsibility, and desensitization to violence.

The pundits were reluctant to acknowledge the obvious presence of evil in both events, owing to our thin moral discourse and metaphysical uncertainties. Thankfully, British literary critic Terry Eagleton is alert: "We know nothing any more of choirs of heavenly hosts, but we know about Auschwitz. . . . Perhaps evil is all that now keeps warm the space where God used to be."

On Evil (Yale University Press)

★★★★, a superlative follow-up to

Eagleton's *Reason, Faith, and Revolution*, argues against two prevailing viewpoints: "Either human actions are explicable, in which case they cannot be evil; or they are evil, in which case there is nothing more to be said about them." The first viewpoint besets our sanguine politicians, journalists, and social scientists who tend to explain away evil, while the second besets our dour theologians and ministers who invoke "evil" as a conversation stopper. Evil—like God—is neither fully comprehensible nor unfathomable, but partially explainable. Eagleton insists that our explanations of evil may sharpen or soften moral judgment.

Informed by the Marxist accent on class society and the Christian accent on original sin, Eagleton articulates a vision he calls "tragic humanism," which is honest enough to reckon with the brokenness of life, but hopeful enough to affirm the possibility of deep-seated transformation. "Soft-hearted liberals and tough-minded Marxists" need to hear Eagleton because he dares to name individuals and acts "evil," which they regard as an archaic category that has gone the way of the horse-drawn carriage. Otherworldly Christians also need to hear him because he confronts them with the material effects of evil (famine, nuclear weapons, financial malfeasance), which they miss because of their focus on "the spiritual forces of evil" (Eph. 6:12).

If social conditions are solely responsible for evil actions, we are puppets. If human behavior is solely responsible, we are monsters. And if the autonomous will of an individual solely chooses evil actions, we are like "the Satan of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with his 'Evil, be thou my good!'" Against all these dehumanizing responses that move us beyond good and evil, where we are not answerable for our actions, Eagleton contends for an interplay between environment and character, as there is "no absolute distinction between



being influenced and being free.”

On Evil belongs to the genre of religious psychology, where Eagleton brilliantly relates the ultimate concerns of the theologian with the penultimate concerns of the psychoanalyst. Without the former, the result would be a study of human discontent; without the latter, a retreat into papier-mâché piety. Here, Aquinas meets Freud—enriching our reflections on the nature and manifestations of evil.

EVERYDAY DOGMA

This short book comprises three chapters. In “Fictions of Evil,” Eagleton, a Roman Catholic, turns to the modern novels of William Golding, Flann O’Brien, Graham Greene, and Thomas Mann, and develops unconventional expressions of doctrine that might not get the seal of approval from Pope Benedict. For example, he says that “original sin is not the legacy of our first parents but of our parents, who in turn inherited it from their own. The past is what we are made of. Throngs of ghostly ancestors lurk within our most casual gestures, preprogramming our desires and flicking our actions mischievously awry.” Risking a change in the substance of orthodoxy, the author performs the work of a glassblower, expanding the molten glass of dogma beyond its familiar shape until

On Evil belongs to the genre of religious psychology, where Eagleton brilliantly relates the ultimate concerns of the theologian with the penultimate concerns of the psychoanalyst.

greater illumination is achieved.

The second chapter, “Obscene Enjoyment,” opens with perceptive interpretations of evil in Shakespeare’s dramas. Where the three witches of *Macbeth* subvert human speech, sexual identity, and social order, Iago, the villain of *Othello*, itches to deface the virtue and beauty of the married couple because they threaten his own sense of nothingness. These villains are anti-creators, exercising a negative freedom to destroy. “Given the intolerable fact that things do exist,” Eagleton observes, “the best evil can do is try to annihilate them. In this way, it can seek to get on terms with God by inverting his act of creation, in a grisly parody of the Book of Genesis.”

The rest of the chapter explores key questions with the aid of philosophy, theology, and 20th-century political history. Is evil positive or privative? Purposeful or pointless? Rare or common? Glamorous or boring?

Internal or external? Is “radical evil”—willing wickedness for its own sake—even possible? Do not expect neat and tidy answers, because evil is a conundrum.

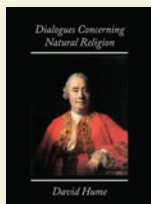
The highlight of this chapter is the application of Freud’s death drive to the alcoholic, whose addiction—like evil—reveals that pleasure and self-violence are inseparable. If the scandal of psychoanalysis is “the proposal that human beings unconsciously desire their own destruction,” then the scandal of the gospel, according to Aquinas, is the proposal that the Divine Physician cares for the sick more than the sick care for themselves (Matt. 9:12).

LOVING ‘FOR NAUGHT’

“Job’s Comforters,” the final chapter, concerns theodicy—the attempt to “justify the ways of God to man.” “Modern attempts to explain evil really stem from the cosmic optimism of the Enlightenment,” Eagleton

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

By John Stackhouse, author of *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil* (InterVarsity Press)



DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION

DAVID HUME (HACKETT)

This is the classic philosophical assault on the idea of God being all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful. If a book can answer Hume, it can answer most skeptics today. If it doesn’t try to answer Hume, move on to one that does.



THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY (PENGUIN CLASSICS)

Why does God allow evil, particularly atrocities? No book more effectively punctures philosophical and theological abstractions with the sharp end of real life.



THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

C. S. LEWIS (HARPERONE)

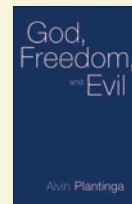
Lewis’s classic is still the most wide-ranging, accessible, and cogent response to the problem of evil. Don’t let its analytical tone make you forget, as many do, that its author lost his mother in childhood and fought on the frontlines of the First World War.



A GRIEF OBSERVED

C. S. LEWIS (HARPERONE)

This *cri de coeur* (“cry from the heart”), rivaled by Nicholas Wolterstorff’s *Lament for a Son*, keeps any intellectual response to evil appropriately modest. Ideas are good; prayers, even angry ones, are better.



GOD, FREEDOM, AND EVIL

ALVIN PLANTINGA (EERDMANS)

The most accessible statement of Plantinga’s Free Will Defense, this argument revolutionized the modern philosophical discussion and helped make Christian thinking plausible in the broader academy.

claims. “Evil is the dark shadow that the light of Reason cannot banish. It is the joker in the cosmic pack, the grit in the oyster, the out-of-place factor in a tidy world.” The Boy Scout argument (evil builds our moral character), the Best of All Possible Worlds argument, the Big Picture argument (“evil is not really evil, just good that we fail to recognize as such”), and the Free Will argument are all incisively critiqued. Bottom line: Theodicies downsize an un-downsizable God and diminish the evilness of evil.

When confronted with evil, we should remember God’s approach with Job in Eagle-ton’s cheeky paraphrase:

Far from offering Job an account of why he has allowed him to suffer, he more or less tells him to go to hell. What can you possibly know about me? is the brunt of his testy intervention. How dare you imagine that you can apply your moral and rational codes to me? Isn’t this like a snail trying to second-guess a scientist? . . . In the end, Job decides to love God for “naught”—to love him without regard for merits or demerits, reward or retribution, with a love as gratuitous as the scourges he has endured.

In a near perfect book—perfect for its profundity and panache—there are imperfections: its insufficient treatment of the relationship between sin and evil; its agnosticism about whether the origins of evil are supernatural or natural; and its mistaken claim that “most wickedness is institutional . . . the result of vested interests and anonymous processes, not of the malign acts of individuals.” Closer engagement with the Bible’s portrayals of evil would have helped.

On Evil leaves the reader with at least two major takeaways. First, evil refuses creaturely limits, which explains the ambition for godlike power in the Garden of Eden, the zeal for racial purity in the Nazis’ Final Solution, and the tireless drive for profit in the American Dream. Second, evil wears many faces—creative and destructive, delightful and deadly, primitive and progressive, clinical and chaotic, idealistic and cynical—to conceal its utter vacancy. ✚

Christopher Benson is a humanities instructor and book reviewer in Denver.

A Gifting Child

Emily Colson says ‘no one remains neutral’ about her autistic son. By Amy Julia Becker

Early on in Emily Colson’s memoir about raising her son—**Dancing with Max: A Mother and Son Who Broke Free** (Zondervan) ★★★★★—

she writes, “Max is not a burden; he is my greatest gift.” This autistic child, who cried most hours of the day as an infant, had long tantrums as a boy, and now has trouble forming words as a young man—surely this child is a burden. But he’s not. Max, now 19, is a gift, not only according to his mother but to all of us who are invited into his story.

Colson believes Max “brings out the best and worst in humanity, from the rudest of remarks to the most genuine acts of selflessness. No one remains neutral.” For instance, Colson recounts the breakdown of her marriage when Max was only 18 months old. Although the father later formed a strong relationship with his son, it appears that the intensity of Max’s early needs wedged the couple apart.

Parallel to this breakdown is Colson’s growing relationship with her father, Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship. Charles’s words in the prologue and epilogue, in which he writes about a relationship that has taught him humility, joy, and love, serve to bracket his daughter’s.

Emily Colson implies throughout that people’s reactions to Max depends on their perspective. For instance, when Max is in a public school, one teacher says, “I can’t see him writing his whole last name. Are we really going to spend the entire year trying to teach him to write the first letter of his last name?” A few months later, with Max in a new school, Colson approaches the new teacher timidly, saying, “I think he’s going to write.” The teacher responds, “Well, that’s great. Because I *know* he’s going to write.”

Members of Colson’s community respond to Max, from calling him “retard” to forming a baseball team for kids

with special needs. Indeed, no one remains neutral.

Max brings out the best in the body of Christ, although one instance of confused charity comes after Max, who had become unruly at a church party, is removed from the room by his mother. She sits with him, alone, for an hour and a half. When she overhears the guests say, “Emily is so filled with grace,” she responds, “I didn’t need velvet-covered clichés. I needed love and comfort. I needed help.”

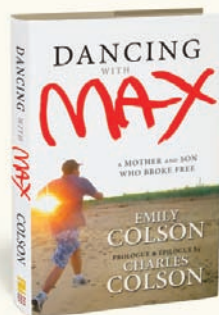
Colson laces her memoir with anecdotes about Max’s baptism, his prayers, and his visits to see prisoners with his grandfather. His autism makes it nearly impossible for him to sit through a service, so the Colsons come only for the closing songs, after which Max helps clean up the sanctuary. “Church isn’t over until Max dances at the back door,” their pastor says.

Colson sees God’s hand in Max’s autism. For instance, she refuses to partake in a seminar for parents called “Grieving the Dream,” because, she says, “I don’t think this diagnosis steals our dreams. What if it were the very thing to build our character, to give our lives purpose?”

Similarly, her father writes, “Could it be that . . . some people are not as affected by the Fall as others?” He wonders if Max offers “a glimpse of what God intended for his original creation.”

Dancing with Max does not ask deep theological questions. It offers few clinical details about autism. It doesn’t need to. The memoir is a love story written from a grandfather to a daughter to a son. Through tantrums and joyful connections, we come to understand what Emily and her father mean when they say Max is a gift. ✚

Amy Julia Becker is a contributor to the CT women’s blog and author of a forthcoming book about her daughter with Down syndrome.



UNDER THE INFLUENCE

California's Intoxicating Spiritual and Cultural Impact on America

MONICA GANAS (BRAZOS PRESS, 192 PAGES)

We do not have to compete for grace, mine for it, earn it, or pay for it. It does not come and go. We can only rest in grace, thus becoming agents of grace. The translation of *Sabbath* to the word *rest* does not describe the kind of rest that's meant. When one is being rescued from drowning, the lifeguard shouts, relax! That's one notion behind Sabbath. When we rest from our frantic labor, we are being asked to trust another that everything is going to be okay. We don't have to save ourselves; we are being saved. We do not have to fret and flail and snatch. We are being cared for.

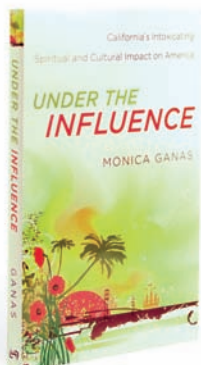
Living in grace is *itself* the work to which we are called, and hard work it is too. We must fight for the gospel of grace today harder than the Galatian church had to fight in the days of St. Paul. Happily, and emblematic of our state's potential, it was a native Californian, the community-minded Josiah Royce, who coined the phrase "the will to believe." At our best, this is who Californians really are—not gullible and silly, but people with the will to believe. As I tell my theater students, unless we are children, it is hard work to make (ourselves) believe. It is hard work to be nice to others when we have been warned against them. It is hard work to rely on the goodness of God when the evidence appears otherwise. It takes years of practice.

I'd give anything if Californians really could be as the nation has stereotyped them: laid back. To me, the California sea otter is the perfect symbol for the truly gracious living always inherent in our state's best possibilities. Once land-based animals, otters were slaughtered by the thousands for their fur in the general blood bath of economic expansion. Like other Californians, they went west, to the ocean, where they adapted, "went with the flow," and became stronger and more resilient.

An otter once bumped against an aquarium window I was staring into and nearly knocked me down. It was the most powerful sea creature I'd ever encountered. Yet in

its migration to the sea, the otter also became more charming and seemingly more playful and relaxed. Resting on its back in the ocean, the otter drifts along tossed by currents so tumultuous that it disappears beneath the waves for minutes at a time before bobbing back to the surface, one tiny arm behind its neck, looking for all the world as though it should be resting a martini on its chest. This is the California waiting for us: this state, and this state of mind.

Copyright © 2010. Used by permission of Brazos Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group.



JOSHUA

J. GORDON MCCONVILLE AND STEPHEN N. WILLIAMS (EERDMANS)



OT scholar McConville and systematic theologian Williams both contribute to this volume in the Two Horizons Commentary, concluding with responses to each other. This series is committed to the *theological*

reading of Scripture, which entails understanding the OT in explicitly Christian terms. Particularly valuable in this volume is Williams's substantial meditation on divinely commanded genocide—an exceptionally nuanced discussion. This is very much a commentary for the church—not just for academics and clergy, but for all who seek a deeper understanding of God's Word.

MAKING TOAST

A Family Story

ROGER ROSENBLATT (ECCO)

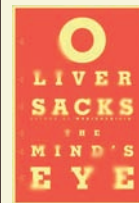


Amy Rosenblatt Solomon, a pediatrician and mother of three (ages 6, 4, and 1), was 38 years old when she collapsed and died while exercising on a treadmill at home, victim of a rare and entirely unsuspected heart condition.

Her parents, Roger (a successful writer) and Ginny, moved in with Amy's widowed husband, Harris, and the kids. This slim, powerful memoir moved me to tears with its account of a family getting on with life after a shattering loss. Making toast becomes a secular act of communion. Are we Christians, by contrast, childish in our hope? Perhaps. But "a little child shall lead them."

THE MIND'S EYE

OLIVER SACKS (KNOPF)



A new book by Oliver Sacks is always cause for rejoicing. Having just had cataract surgery, I was particularly interested in his latest, which features case studies of individuals suffering from odd and

arresting problems with vision (finally including, in a twist, himself). Uniting them all is Sacks's ongoing exploration of the ways in which the brain makes the world intelligible—a theme that goes all the way back to *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. Alas, he can't refrain from a couple of smug putdowns of folk who, contemplating this extraordinary faculty of meaning-making, "invoke the supernatural." Ah, well.

Stop Browbeating

The stats on evangelicalism are much better than you've been led to believe. Interview by Ted Olsen

Young people are not abandoning church. Evangelical beliefs and practices get stronger with more education. Prayer, Bible reading, and evangelism are up. Perceptions about evangelicals have improved dramatically. The data are clear on these matters, says University of Connecticut sociologist Bradley Wright, but evangelicals still want to believe the worst statistics about themselves. *Christianity Today's* Ted Olsen (who, among other things, compiles the Go Figure statistics in our Briefing section) talked to Wright about **Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites . . . and Other Lies You've Been Told** (Bethany House), which aims to change conventional wisdom.

INTERVIEW

There's a lot of good news in your book. What's the best news?

Not to be glib, but the good news is that most of the bad news is wrong. It isn't that there's one specific zinger that changes everything. But there's a large body of work that is mostly factually inaccurate.

Why? Are the survey questions bad? Is the math wrong? Is it how the survey subjects are chosen? Is it the analysis? Or is it the way the numbers get used post-publication?

All of the above, but especially the last two. Take the divorce rate. For years, studies have shown that Christians have lower divorce rates than others. But people aren't interested. If you want to motivate people to take their marriages seriously, you look for a negative, scary statistic. Meanwhile, there's so much good news in journals and academic books that isn't getting through to the public.

But are academic sources really better? I see plenty of weird conclusions in the journals.

Academics are under the same pressure as anyone else: You get brownie points for coming up with something new. So sometimes

you push the newness so hard that you end up in silly places. You need to see people respond to a finding or a theory over five or ten years. Academics over time are accurate but irrelevant. Meanwhile, someone like George Barna can come out with a statistic, put out press releases, and everyone gets it.

I wouldn't say "this source is always good" and "that source is always bad." Rather, we have to make sense of statistics for ourselves, applying our own experience. If I went to a group of Christians and made some sort of outlandish theological or political statement, they would question it. But if I put it in numbers, people would tend to accept it without discernment.

But wouldn't that advice just confirm our biases?

Yes, that would be going too far in the other direction. Rather than picking which statistics we agree with, we should be a little more agnostic about all of them. You don't have to believe them. Christians are called to accept and love people unconditionally. That doesn't apply to statistics. We should be cranky and judgmental.

Social scientists tend to think it's a bigger problem to believe something that's false than to reject something that's true. So we can ratchet up the discernment a lot and still be pretty safe.

What stats did you set out to disprove that turned out to be right?

My goal was to follow the data, not so much to disprove anyone. If you're wondering what I was hoping would be good news but wasn't, it's race. I thought we were doing better. But white evangelicals have more racially prejudiced attitudes toward African Americans than do white non-evangelical Christians and (especially) white non-Christians.

I was also dismayed about

our attitudes toward gays. I'm not talking about whether gay sex is appropriate, but the standard "social distance" questions in sociology, like whether someone should be allowed to give a talk in public or have their book in a library or, "How do you feel about this kind of person?"

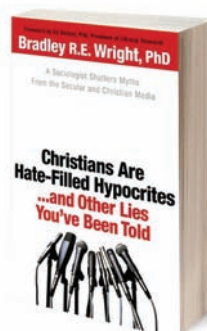
Also, evangelicals have much more negative attitudes toward atheists and non-Christians than non-Christians have about us. I can understand why that happens. We have a strong in-group, and the unfortunate byproduct of that is suspicion of the out-group. But if one thing is clear in Scripture, it's that we're supposed to love people who are different from us. And we just don't do it as well as other groups do.

Should we be comparing ourselves with other groups? At the end of the book, you assign letter grades to evangelical Christianity in the U.S., giving us an A- in religious practices, a B in orthodoxy, and a B overall. But you're grading on a curve. We only look like we're doing well because others are doing so poorly.

Let's say x percent of evangelicals aren't reading their Bibles every day. Any number you put in there is a problem. I accept that. But you don't need to collect data if you're judging on perfection. Another basis of comparison is what I think the number should be. Like the Supreme Court justice who said, "I know it when I see it," I can recognize that 50 percent of evangelicals not reading their Bibles daily is an epidemic or a crisis. But again, you don't need data. That's basically putting your opinions into numbers.

By comparing ourselves with other groups, it gives us a sense of what's possible. If the religiously unaffiliated have good attitudes on race, maybe we should be able to as well.

This is not a call for complacency but for encouragement. Why not say, "We're reading our Scriptures more than most other religious traditions; let's do even better"? Instead, what we hear is, "Christianity's going to fail. You're all a bunch of failures. But if you buy my book, listen to my sermon, or go to my conference, I'll solve everything." These fear messages demoralize people, hinder the message of the church, and hide real problems.



One Super Family

No Ordinary Family has an extraordinary premise: love. By Mark Moring

One of the more anticipated new TV shows this fall is **No Ordinary Family** ★★★★★ (ABC, Tuesdays, 8/7c), a lighthearted drama that lives up to its title not only because of the obvious—Mom, Dad, and two teenage kids have superpowers—but because of a trait much rarer, at least on primetime network television: genuine familial love. They really do care for each other. Sure, they have issues, squabbles, and some of the snark we expect from a TV family, especially with two teens and good writers (including Darren Swimmer and Todd Slavkin of *Smallville*) who appreciate snappy dialogue. But judging from the pilot and from buzz we have heard, the Powells try hard to connect with each other in a fast-paced world that pushes and pulls from all sides.

In the pilot, Jim (Michael Chiklis of *The Shield* and *The Fantastic Four*) laments the loss of family closeness as wife Stephanie (Julie Benz) and children—daughter Daphne and son J. J.—get more absorbed in their own worlds: Stephanie, with her 80-hour work weeks, Daphne, with her social circles, and J. J., with his academic struggles. “My marriage, my kids, my life were slowly slipping away from me,” Jim says in a voiceover. In an effort to bring them together, he plans a vacation to Brazil. Their plane crashes in the



Amazon River, but the family survives—and it's not long before they realize that each has acquired a superpower. Must have been something in the water.

In a wink-wink understatement, Jim says the crash—and resulting abilities—sparked “a new beginning” for the Powells. Tellingly, each family member's superpower represents just what they needed, the opposite of their weakness. Jim felt impotent to do anything about his family; he gains strength and agility, and finds new purpose in life. Stephanie's busy career left her wishing she could be in two places at once; she acquires super-speed that lets her move from place

to place in the blink of an eye. Daphne had trouble reading her friends' (and her boyfriend's) motives; she gets telepathy. J. J., with an apparent learning disability, had trouble reading; he ends up being able to solve complex problems in a single bound. Scripture says that strength is perfected in weakness. In *No Ordinary Family*, that's extraordinarily so.

Meanwhile, Daphne's ESP lets her learn that her boyfriend is sleeping with another girl, after promising Daphne—who apparently wants to save sex for marriage—that he loved her and that he'd wait. This gives Daphne the best line of the pilot: “It's not fair! I can't be a virgin *and* a freak!” (Mom hugs her knowingly.)

Daphne has another great line, though much more serious, when she yells at her parents after an argument, “This family isn't broken, you two are!” After she storms off, Stephanie says to Jim, “She's right, isn't she?” He agrees. They decide that their marriage needs some serious work, and they get right to it.

No Ordinary Family is in many ways like one of my favorite movies, *The Incredibles*, Pixar's 2004 film that depicts a family of superheroes with faults and foibles but who clearly love one another through it all. That premise is hardly new (*The Fantastic Four*, *X-Men*, and the 2005 film *Sky High*), and loving TV families (*The Cosby Show*, *Home Improvement*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*) have been around as long as the medium. But when written, directed, and acted well—and this show has all three in spades—and mined for rich topical potential, such programs can indeed reach beyond the ordinary. +

Mark Moring, CT senior associate editor, oversees CT's movies and TV coverage.

Chaplains in the Line of Fire

Military chaplains have long made an easy target for church-state separatists, and the legitimacy of chaplains in government has been questioned since the beginning of the republic, by no less an authority than James Madison. Add to this long debate a moving and thoughtful documentary, **Chaplains Under Fire** (IHSV) ★★★★★. Filmed largely in combat zones, it brings the viewer alongside chaplains of many denominations and faiths and the warriors they serve, interspersing interviews with proponents on both sides of the issue. While the film makes no attempt to settle the argument, it proves its worth by demonstrating what disputation cannot: the compassion of a chaplain comforting the father of a burned Afghan child; the gratitude of a young officer whose chaplain helped him grieve the loss of a Marine.

At one point, an evangelical chaplain explains his support of a Wiccan priest's right to serve in the corps. Belief that religion has a place in the public square sometimes makes strange bedfellows. As the film demonstrates, it is an accommodation as peculiarly American as the institution of the chaplaincy itself. —*Leigh Bishop, a military reservist who served in Afghanistan in 2008–09*



TWO MINUTES WITH... Michael Jr.



Comedian Michael Jr. says he recently changed his focus from *getting* laughs to *giving* people—especially the hurting—the opportunity to laugh. Now he performs not just

on TV and at comedy clubs and churches but also at prisons and homeless shelters. Some of the charity shows are included in a new documentary, *Comedy: The Road Less Traveled*, screening in churches this fall. CT senior associate editor Mark Moring recently chatted with the comedian.

What stands out about performing for hurting people?

At a youth prison, one guy said, “When Michael Jr. made us laugh, he made us feel more human.” I was blown away; I never thought they were anything *but* human. At a homeless shelter, a meth addict gave me a hug afterward, a hug like he was feeling some kind of release. I later found out that he went straight that night, and has been ever since. At an HIV facility, one guy said he hadn’t laughed in over 20 years. *Twenty years.*

Are Christians a tougher audience than comedy club crowds?

They balance out. In a comedy club, they’re used to hearing bad language and sexual content. If you don’t do that, they’re disappointed at first, but when they start to pay attention, it’s great. At a church, they’re afraid you’re going to curse, so they’re cautious. When they realize you’re not going to curse, they’re okay.

Are Christians willing to laugh at themselves?

Yes. I do a joke about people being “over-saved,” and I talk about different “church things” where Christians absolutely laugh at themselves.

Are you funny in person or just on stage?

I’m not that funny in person. If I were at a party, I’d be off to the side, usually just watching people. My comedy is mostly just observational humor. I observe what people do and talk about it in a funny way. It’s a different kind of humor.

More: MichaelJr.com



Suburban Lament

Arcade Fire sings of a world that suffocates the soul.

By Josh Hurst

Remember the line about the rich man and the eye of the needle? Win Butler—the lead singer and songwriter of indie rock superstars

Arcade Fire—has his own little twist on the familiar words: “Never trust a millionaire quoting the Sermon on the Mount.”

So Butler sings on “City with No Children,” one of 16 songs on the band’s new album, **The Suburbs** (Merge) ★★★★★. But I don’t think he’s anti-wealth, strictly speaking. Butler—who grew up Mormon and took theology classes in college—describes himself as “spiritual” but not a churchgoer. He recently pledged, along with the rest of the band, to donate up to \$1 million

toward relief efforts in Haiti, matching the donations of fans. So cash flow isn’t the issue. No, Butler’s anxieties stem from something more insidious: a culture that has grown so quickly, and is built on such surface-level fascinations, that it can’t possibly last.

The third album from the Montreal group feels like the third chapter of a novel. Their opening salvo, 2004’s *Funeral*, chronicled kids banding together to survive an onslaught of loss and grief. Then came 2007’s *Neon Bible*,

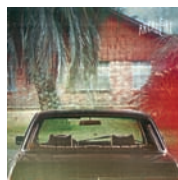
a clear-eyed look at the unholy intersection of politics, commerce, and religion. *The Suburbs* picks up on both ideas and expands them. It’s an album about growing up in affluence and isolation. It’s about a curiously modern malaise, about living in a world that threatens to numb our consciences and suffocate our souls.

But this isn’t just an alarm bell—it’s also a rallying cry. Butler and Co. aren’t content leaving us to suffer under a vision that’s

relentlessly bleak, so they marry their rousing lyrics to anthems built to reach the rafters and coax entire stadiums into singing along. And the band’s worldview is robust and multifaceted: They bemoan a culture where an onslaught of

pleasures dulls our senses, and in “We Used to Wait,” they see a world that moves so fast, we have forgotten how to be patient. But Butler is unwilling to write off his “wasted hours” in the suburbs, and in “Half Light,” he affirms that even if the culture collapses, the important stuff—intimacy, community, redemption—is made to last forever. ➤

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



QUICK TAKES

More media of note.

BOOKS

► THE POWER OF A WHISPER

Hearing God, Having the Guts to Respond

BILL HYBELS (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★ Evangelicals are suddenly enamored with seeing “the sacred in a chaotic world,” as one book subtitle puts it—or, in the language of Brother Lawrence, practicing the presence. Many thrill to find God in a cup of coffee or a walk through a forest. Hybels is more practical: he helps readers discern when and how God speaks to us. While encouraging a personal, experiential relationship with God, he grounds our discernment in something deeper than good feelings: Scripture and the wisdom of fellow believers. —Mark Galli

► UNPOVERTY

Rich Lessons from the Working Poor

MARK LUTZ (COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL)

★★★★★ Mark Lutz believes extreme poverty can be eliminated. But he proposes no silver-bullet solution. Instead, he believes that by listening to the poor, we can learn to help them help themselves. A child of missionary parents and an executive with a leading microfinance organization, Lutz records what he has learned from meeting the poor in the developing world’s villages, slums, and garbage heaps. They show gratitude, persistence, ingenuity, and faith as they work to build up their families and communities. God loves the poor, says Lutz, so we dare not miss the opportunity to help them. —David Neff

► A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

Global Warming Facts for Faith-Based Decisions

KATHERINE HAYHOE AND ANDREW FARLEY (FAITHWORDS)

★★★★★ I don’t know about you, but I’m tired of both the alarmist cries and defensive denials about global warming. I’ve wanted to read something that makes sense of the mountains of data on this controversial topic, and to do so from a uniquely Christian perspective. The authors, a professor and pastor respectively, have done just that. They avoid panic, guilt trips, and utopian and statist solutions. And while their charts, graphs, and photographs make a compelling case, they are more interested in encouraging a response grounded in Christian freedom and grace than in intellectual coercion and fear. A good book for study groups. —Mark Galli

► HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE CHRISTIAN

A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends

MARK A. YARHOUSE (BETHANY HOUSE)

★★★★★ As debates about homosexuality rage in political and religious circles, Christians struggling with same-sex attraction often suffer silently. The gay community hands those with same-sex attraction a “script” that collapses sexual attraction, behavior, and identity into one label. Yarhouse challenges the church to provide an alternative script, one that makes identity in Christ central, and therefore carefully distinguishes between temptation, behavior, and the center of one’s identity. By taking into consideration those with same-sex attraction who nevertheless reject the gay identity, Yarhouse shifts the conversation from the causes of homosexuality to the choices one makes regarding the will of God. —Trevin Wax

MUSIC

THE FAREWELL DRIFTERS

► YELLOW TAG MONDAYS

(HEART SQUEEZE RECORDS)

★★★★★ With the songwriting skills of James Taylor, the melodic affections of Nickel Creek, and the agile musicianship of a legit bluegrass band, the Farewell Drifters’ retro-folk-pop hybrid is a welcome addition in an evolving acoustic landscape. Blanketed with top-shelf harmonies, the Nashville “newgrassers” derive more vocal fashion from Paul Simon’s folksong lyricism than Ricky Skaggs’s nasal bluegrass bite. Distinguishing themselves from their traditional and often narrowly produced contemporaries, the clever quintet swabs heartland songs with modern acoustic production. Add lyrical integrity congruous with the young men’s faith, and the band’s innovations should catch on quickly. —Andrew Greer

WOVENHAND

► THE THRESHINGFLOOR

(SOUNDS FAMILYRE)

★★★★★ *The Threshingfloor* is just as ominously country-gothic as previous Wovenhand albums, but includes a greater diversity of musical ethnicity. David Eugene Edwards continues writing lyrics that blatantly reveal faith in the God of the Bible, but his music has never sounded so worldly. In fact, the Native American and Indian sounds that Edwards has invoked here give the album a downright eclectic aesthetic. Still Edwards sings, “It is his spirit, it is his fruit. Lord Jesus, come bestow belief.” —Ron Augustine

AMID THE CRASH

► AMID THE CRASH

(INDIE)

★★★★★ You can’t help liking a band unafraid of the six-minute song. On the debut EP from this Austin, Texas, trio, only one of the six songs—the radio-ready “The Only Road I Know”—is under four minutes. They’re not afraid of instrumental interludes, either; several stellar guitar solos mark the project. They sound alternately like Downhere, Dave Matthews, Yes, Jars of Clay, and even U2. Lyricist, guitarist, and singer J. R. Taylor, the worship leader at Austin Christian Fellowship, is a fine poet too: “We were born for sorrow / Pulling thorns from sides / Of all the things we follow / Only One decides / Now we’re here forever / On the great endeavor.” —Mark Moring

ON DVD

► MY NAME IS KHAN

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT | PG-13 | AUGUST 10

★★★★★ Indian megastar Shah Rukh Khan plays a man with Asperger’s syndrome who faces all the challenges of being Muslim in post-9/11 America. Coming from India’s Bollywood industry (no, this film is not a musical), Khan casts a fresh eye on America’s religious landscape. While stressing that hatred infects every religion, the film’s depiction of Christian vs. Muslim discrimination sometimes seems spot-on, at other times, culturally out of place. (One doubts that President Bush ever labeled a fundraiser “For Christians Only.”) But is *Khan’s* viewpoint truly flawed, or do people in Bollywood’s America just say things out loud that many U.S. citizens keep to themselves? —Trevor Persaud

► HOLY ROLLERS

FIRST INDEPENDENT PICTURES | RATED R | SEPTEMBER 7

★★★★★ Inspired by real events in the late nineties, this spiritual crime-drama by Jewish director Kevin Asch and Mormon screenwriter Antonio Macia takes viewers into a Hasidic Jewish community in Brooklyn. Jesse Eisenberg plays a keen youth who is reluctantly training to become a rabbi and awaiting an arranged marriage. But swayed off course by his neighbor’s proposition to smuggle drugs from Amsterdam to New York, he falls deep into a double life of crime. *Holy Rollers* is an interesting exploration of the struggle between religious and social identity, in the spirit of American-Jewish literature by Chaim Potok and Philip Roth. —David Roark

COMING YOUR WAY IN **OCTOBER**

Timothy George Gets to Talk with Some Very Interesting People...



- **Chuck Colson**
about the Manhattan Declaration
- **Barry Hankins**
about Francis Schaeffer
- **Cliff Barrows**
about Billy Graham
- **John Rucyhanha**
about genocide in Rwanda
- **Annemarie Kidder**
about confession and celibacy
- **Francis Beckwith**
about the sanctity of life
- **Carl Braaten**
about the gospel and ecumenism
- **Danny Carroll**
about immigration
- **Sinclair Ferguson**
about preaching
- **Kathleen Nielson**
about poetry
- **George Weigel**
about Richard John Neuhaus
- **Ralph Wood**
about Flannery O'Connor
- **and more!**

(And You Can Listen In!)

Beeson
[PODCAST]

www.beesondivinity.com



BEESON
DIVINITY SCHOOL
SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

800 Lakeshore Drive ■ Birmingham, Alabama 35229
www.beesondivinity.com ■ 800 888-8266

Samford University is an equal opportunity institution.



WITH EVERY BIBLE FROM THOMAS NELSON, YOU ARE GUARANTEED A LIFETIME OF QUALITY, A LONG-STANDING LEGACY OF RELIABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE PUBLISHING, AND HEART-FELT INSPIRATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD.



QUALITY

All Thomas Nelson Bibles are guaranteed for life. To learn more, visit www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/guarantee.



LEGACY

Celebrate the legacy of the Bible with one of the world's most renowned, trusted Bible publishers. Join the celebration at www.KJV400Celebration.com.



HEART

Join Thomas Nelson in putting God's Word into action by helping others. Learn how you can change the world and share your stories of compassion at www.SeeGodsWordinAction.com.



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

ThomasNelsonBibles.com



Dr. Dennis P. Hollinger
President & Colman M. Mockler
Distinguished Professor of
Christian Ethics



More than 80%
of Gordon-Conwell
students receive some
form of financial aid.



“New Scholarships, awarding as much as \$10,000 per year”

At Gordon-Conwell, we make every effort to keep tuition costs down so that our graduates can be freed to pursue the calling God has chosen for them. Continuing in that tradition, we are proud to announce six new scholarships.

Presidential Scholarship for Future Christian Leaders	\$10,000/year
Rev. Timothy J. Keller Scholarship for Pastoral Ministry	\$7,500/year
Dr. J Christy Wilson Scholarship for Missions Ministry	\$7,500/year
Dr. David F. Wells Scholarship for Teaching Ministry	\$7,500/year
Counseling Scholarship	\$5,000/year
Military Chaplaincy Scholarship	\$5,000/year

Find out more about these and our other scholarships
at www.gordonconwell.edu/scholarships
or call 1.800.428.7329 to speak with a representative.

Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary



SOUTH HAMILTON | CHARLOTTE | BOSTON | JACKSONVILLE

THINK Theologically | **ENGAGE** Globally | **LIVE** Biblically

Seminary & Graduate School Directory

THE MASTER'S SEMINARY



Download our free catalog at:
www.ColumbiaSeminary.edu

Columbia Evangelical Seminary

P.O. Box 1189 • Buckley, WA 98321
Email: ces@ColumbiaSeminary.edu
Phone: 360-802-6437

"Guaranteeing a future for the Christian mind"

We Train Men as if Lives Depended on It

Information: 800-CALL-TMS
Admissions: rmehringer@tms.edu
www.tms.edu

Seminary Degrees
via Distance Learning
and Mentorship Studies

- Doctoral, Master's, Bachelor's, and Associate Degrees
- Majors in Apologetics, Bible, Ministry, Philosophy, Theology and more
- Work one-on-one with the mentor of your choice throughout your entire degree program

Download our free catalog at:
www.ColumbiaSeminary.edu

Columbia Evangelical Seminary

P.O. Box 1189 • Buckley, WA 98321
Email: ces@ColumbiaSeminary.edu
Phone: 360-802-6437

"Guaranteeing a future for the Christian mind"

Fulfill your calling

"During my divinity school journey, my relationship with God was stretched beyond a surface level faith to a place of mysteries further than my human intellectual capacity."

Lamont serves as Pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Shelby, NC.

www.gardner-webb.edu/divinity

Gardner Webb University
School of Divinity

How are you choosing a college?



Find a school that's the right fit.

Search Christian colleges by:

- location and setting
- programs and degrees
- costs and scholarships
- affiliation
- athletics
- enrollment

www.ChristianCollegeGuide.net



What if your savings account did more than just earn interest?

What if your deposits helped churches and other ministries fulfill their missions?

That's exactly what happens when you save with Evangelical Christian Credit Union (ECCU). We're not just a financial institution. ECCU is a financial cooperative, which means our deposits are used exclusively to resource evangelical ministries and never for causes contrary to Scripture.

So if you'd like your savings account to earn a competitive return while serving people and ministries all over the world (including more than 3,500 missionaries in over 100 countries), give us a call.

We're also known for above-and-beyond customer service, so we'll walk you through the membership process and help you get started.

Put your savings to work serving the kingdom. Call us today at **800.288.4846**.



Your ministry banking resource.®



Your savings federally insured to at least \$250,000 and backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government. National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), a U.S. Government Agency.



Marketplace

Cost: 72 cents per character (each space and punctuation counts as a character); avg. 45 characters per line. Min. \$61.20 (85 characters). CHRISTIANITY TODAY check-marked box ☒ \$22 each insertion; box around ad \$43 each insertion. Ads set display style: \$425 per column inch. Combination discount rates available for LEADERSHIP and YOUR CHURCH. All classified ads automatically placed on ChristianityToday.com at no additional charge. Prepayment and written confirmation needed to process ads. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or personal check accepted. Employment ads given priority. All other ads placed in first available issue. Deadline for reservation or cancellation is seven weeks prior to actual issue date. Address correspondence to: The Marketplace; 465 Gundersen Dr.; Carol Stream, IL 60188; or contact Peggy Gomez, Advertising Account Executive, at: 630.260.6202 x4239; fax 630.260.9401; e-mail Marketplace@ChristianityToday.com.

[Employment Opportunities]

BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

seeks an established scholar or young scholar with outstanding promise to serve as associate dean for academic affairs to oversee all academic personnel, programs, and assessment. The successful candidate must demonstrate excellent teaching, mentoring, and research ability, and must possess excellent administrative, supervisory, and collegial skills. Applicants must have a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ, an active involvement in church life, a commitment to the school's evangelical identity and confession, and a desire to serve with an interdenominational, evangelical faculty and staff. Salary and rank will be commensurate with experience. Samford University is an Equal Opportunity Institution that complies with applicable law prohibiting discrimination in its educational and employment policies and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national or ethnic origin. Nominations and résumés may be sent to Frank Thielman, fsthielem@samford.edu, Beeson Divinity School; Samford University; 800 Lakeshore Drive; Birmingham, AL 35229-2252. Résumés will be received until the position is filled.

MUSIC/YOUTH MINISTER

Full-time position available at New Village Church, Lake Grove, New York. Seeking a spiritually minded person to coordinate music ministry along with heading up youth group program. Proficiency in piano required. Visit our website at www.new-village-church.org. E-mail résumé to nvsearchcommittee@gmail.com.

BLACK FOREST ACADEMY

in Kandern, Germany, is seeking applications for the position of Director beginning fall of 2011. BFA is an internationally accredited Christian boarding school, grades 1–12, operated by TeachBeyond. Under the leadership of the BFA board, the Director's responsibilities include implementing the school's strategic plan and overseeing the multiple divisions of the school. A candidate must be willing and able to raise his/her own support. See www.bfacademy.com/directorsearch.asp.

PASTOR NEEDED

for a Bowling Green, Ohio, Christ-centered, evangelical, missions-focused Congregational Church, with 100 members. We desire a Spirit-led, ordained minister, with pastoral experience, gifted and motivated toward Sunday school growth, leadership training, and counseling. Competitive salary and benefits package. Contact: linda@cornersweb.com. Church profile and minister information form are available at: www.plainchurch.org/search.

[Employment Opportunities]

**DUKE UNIVERSITY
DIVINITY SCHOOL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY**
Duke University Divinity School seeks to make a faculty appointment in the area of Christian Theology, effective July 2011. Nominations and applications are sought for or from persons who exhibit excellence in scholarship and teaching, and whose theological work will support the teaching of Christian doctrine for students at both the master's and doctoral levels. The capacity to relate Christian doctrine to the distinctive features of the Wesleyan theological tradition is desirable. The rank is open; preference is for a candidate at a tenurable rank. Specific faculty rank and salary will be set according to qualifications and experience. A Ph.D. or Th.D. (or equivalent) and experience in ministry (lay or ordained) are requisite. A professional master's degree in a theological discipline is also expected. United Methodists, women, and ethnic minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Nominations and applications should be sent to Ms. Jacquelyn Norris; The Divinity School; Box 90968; Duke University; Durham, NC 27708-0968. Review of applications and nominations will begin September 1, 2010. Applications should include a letter of application and a curriculum vitae. Applicants who have received the doctoral degree within the past five years should include an official transcript for the highest degree held and three letters of reference. Duke University is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer.

DUKE UNIVERSITY THE DIVINITY SCHOOL THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

Duke University Divinity School seeks to make a faculty appointment in the area of Theological Ethics, effective July 2011. Nominations and applications are sought for or from persons who exhibit excellence in scholarship and teaching, and whose theological work will engage university-wide interdisciplinary discussions of ethical issues. The rank is open; preference is for a candidate at a tenurable rank. Specific faculty rank and salary will be set according to qualifications and experience. A Ph.D. or Th.D. (or equivalent) and experience in ministry (lay or ordained) are requisite. A professional master's degree in a theological discipline is also expected. United Methodists, women, and ethnic minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Nominations and applications should be sent to Ms. Jacquelyn Norris; The Divinity School; Box 90968; Duke University; Durham, NC 27708-0968. Review of applications and nominations will begin September 1, 2010. Applications should include a letter of application and a curriculum vitae. Applicants who have received the doctoral degree within the past five years should include an official transcript for the highest degree held and three letters of reference. Duke University is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer.

[Employment Opportunities]

☒ **DENTIST** Great opportunity to join a Christian group practice in central Pennsylvania. 570-323-6116. Pass this on.

[Books, Tapes & Films]

☒ **JESUS IS COMING** by V. Lawrence. Order at 877-421-7323 or www.BarnesandNoble.com.

WWW.WIPFANDSTOCK.COM

Your source for great Christian books!

CHILDREN'S BOOK BY VIOLA HUBBARD
Grandma Alone in Africa; order online through Tate Publishing at www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore or in your local book store.

EVOLUTION NEEDS AN ADJECTIVE
An unplanned evolution is impotent. Free e-book by F. P. Nelson, M.D. www.evolutionneedsanadjective.com.

**THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE
AND HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT**
Books and tapes. Free catalog; 800-228-2665; www.seedsowers.com.

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK >> Fast, Easy, and Affordable

xulon
PRESS

FOR A FREE INFO KIT, CALL
1-866-381-BOOK
Or visit www.XulonPress.com

CAN \$3.95 CHANGE YOUR LIFE?
Go to www.TheOnePageSolution.com and find out. Use code ACT910 for free shipping.

[Travel]

BOUND FOR BOSTON?
Stay at the historic Christian Conference Center. The Walker Center, ideal for group accommodations or bed and breakfast. Easy commute to downtown/airport. Phone: 617-969-3919. E-mail: Reservations@walkerctr.org; www.walkerctr.org.

LONDON, U.K.
Highbury Centre Christian guesthouse. Quiet location on private road, close to bus and train/tube station. Reductions for missionaries and full-time ministers. www.thehighburycentre.org.

[Travel]

☒ **PILGRIM TOURS:** Exceptional Bible Land Tours to Israel, Egypt: Steps of Moses & Joseph, Nile Cruises & Exodus, Jordan, Greece: Steps of Paul, Italy, Germany: Faith of Our Fathers, Churches of Revelation. 800-322-0788. www.pilgrimtours.com.

[Services]

CALLED TO PREACH?

www.IndependentBaptistAlliance.com; 352-621-4981. We can help with ordination and other topics.

FREE

Grant newsletter for ministries. Here-4-You Christian Grant Consulting. www.ChristianFundingDirectory.com; Toll-free: 866-HERE-4-U-1.

CAN \$3.95 CHANGE YOUR LIFE?

Go to www.TheOnePageSolution.com and find out. Use code ACT910 for free shipping.

[Education]

PREPARE TO PASTOR

your own church. www.seminary.ws.

☒ **LEARN SPANISH!** Or any of 20 other languages. Conversational study courses with Christian emphasis. www.languagesforchrist.org.

EARN DEGREE OFF CAMPUS

(Associate's to Ph.D.) Christian Bible College; PO Box 8968; Rocky Mt., NC 27804; 252-451-1031; www.christianbiblecollege.org.

DEGREES THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE

Associate's through Ph.D. Credit for life experience. Low tuition. Accredited schools. For a free catalog: www.lbcs.org; 352-621-4991; or write Liberty Bible College & Seminary; 5480 S. Suncoast Blvd.; Homosassa, FL 34446.

EARN SEMINARY DEGREES AT HOME

Columbia Evangelical Seminary; 360-802-6437; www.ColumbiaSeminary.edu; CES@ColumbiaSeminary.edu.

REGUS UNIVERSITY

M.B.A., D.B.A., J.D., M.Div., D.Min., and P.Psy.D. degrees available. www.RegusU.org.

[Business Opportunities]

MOMS HELPING MOMS

work from home! Computer required; www.mykidscount.com or 281-252-8133.

OPEN YOUR OWN READING CENTER

Operate from home. It's needed, it's rewarding. Huge demand. Great results. Earn \$40 to \$120 per hour. Not a franchise. We provide complete training and materials. www.Academic-Associates.com. 800-861-9196.

[Business Opportunities]

CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR CHRISTIANS who want to earn a reliable income from home. Please request information from www.FamiliesinFaith.com.

[Ministry Opportunities]

MISSIONARIES

If you are considering changing mission boards, or looking to affiliate with a non-denominational, faith-based, evangelical mission-sending agency, consider serving with Ripe for Harvest. Contact Dr. Tim Smith, 480-373-9387; Tim@ripeforharvest.org; or visit us at www.ripeforharvest.org.

CHANGE IRAQ

one child at a time. Serve at Christian schools in Iraq. www.csmedes.org.

BE A MISSION NANNY

Volunteer women needed to serve overseas with missionary families as domestic/childcare help. www.MissionNannies.org.

[Financial Services]

Christians Helping Christians

Be Debt Free

- ✓ Consolidate Payments
- ✓ Stop Late Fees
- ✓ Reduce Interest
- ✓ No Collector Calls

800-642-1201

Non-Profit Agency www.familycredit.org

FAMILY CREDIT MANAGEMENT

[Church Supplies]

CUSHIONS AND UPHOLSTERY

Church cushions and upholstery. Nationwide. www.pewcushions.com; 800-396-7555.

☒ **CHURCH ORGAN SALES** Major classical/church organ manufacturer seeks sales/service personnel or dealership principals in select U.S. locations. Contact Rick Anderson 503-681-0483 or randerson@rodgers.rain.com.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY INTERNATIONAL

Marketplace Classified Advertising

Ads available in:
 • Christianity Today
 • Your Church
 • Leadership
 • Today's Christian Woman

Display Ads:
 \$255-\$525/col. inch
Text Ads:
 46¢-90¢/character
 Magazine combo pricing available

FREE Online Listing with Every Print Ad!

For details contact: PEGGY GOMEZ

Phone: 630-260-6202 x4239

Email: Marketplace@ChristianityToday.com

How are you choosing a college?



ChristianCollegeGuide.net can help you find the school that's the right fit for your teen.

Easily search Christian colleges by:

- location and setting
- affiliation
- programs and degrees
- athletics
- costs and scholarships
- enrollment

www.ChristianCollegeGuide.net

Christianity Today (ISSN 0009-5753) is published monthly by Christianity Today International, 465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188. Periodicals postage paid at Carol Stream, IL, and at additional mailing offices. ©2010 Christianity Today International

Postmaster: Send address changes to Christianity Today, P.O. Box 37060, Boone, IA 50037-0060; 1.800.999.1704. Canada Publication Mail Agreement #: 040029733. Registration #: 126028836RTO001. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: WWM Inc., 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, Ontario N8T 3B7. Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates:

Regular subscription price: one year \$24.95. Outside U.S. add \$13.00 postage prepaid U.S. currency. \$3.95 per copy.

Introducing the **ALL NEW** Books & Culture website!



the arts



current issues



history



interviews



literature



philosophy



religion & theology



science

Become a Premium Member today, and have access to:

- **Web-exclusive articles** from notable authors like Mark Noll, Lauren Winner, and many more.
- **Weekly email newsletter** from John Wilson, editor of Books & Culture.
- **Six bi-monthly issues of the award-winning print publication** that contains analysis of the books, movies, music, and ideas that shape our world.
- **The complete archives: search over 1,000 articles published in Books & Culture** magazine since its beginning in 1995
- **The entire current issue available on the web**—all on the day it mails

For a limited time, Premium Members can join at the Basic Membership price! Take advantage of this special charter offer today!

www.BooksandCulture.com/join



What can you grow in 30 days?

Discover a new way to grow your church's operating funds while helping build ministries across the country. AG Loan Fund Certificates offer fixed interest rates that are competitive with other similar investment options. Plus, funds invested are used to impact lives by providing loans to build churches and ministries. Contact us today and ask about an AG Loan Fund 30-Day Demand Certificate with no long-term commitment.



1-877-616-5203

CT.agloanfund.com



*Annual Percentage Yield **Premium rates available for \$250,000 minimum aggregate AGLF investment. Interest, if paid out must be paid by EFT. Rates effective July 1, 2010, and subject to change. For current rates, visit www.agloanfund.com or call 877-616-5203. This is not an offering to sell securities referred to herein. The offering is made only by the Offering Circular which includes risk factors. The Offering Circular may be obtained by writing or calling AG Loan Fund or online at www.agloanfund.com. An investment in AG Loan Fund involves certain risks that other investment options may not have. Not all risks can be quantified or compared to other investments. You should carefully evaluate all the risks in assessing the potential benefit of the various investments. Investments are not available in Washington, D.C. **Not FDIC or SIPC Insured. Not a Bank Deposit. No AG Financial Solutions Guarantee.**

AG LOAN FUND™ is an affiliated entity of AG Financial Solutions, one of the nation's largest church investment and lending institutions.



Participant First

L. L. Barkat creates in the context of online community.

Stop by L. L. Barkat's website and you'll learn that she is or has been an author, editor, poet, blogger, speaker, consultant, designer, and artist. Try to pin her down by asking, "Okay, what *are* you?" and Barkat—whose writing Scot McKnight compares to Eugene Peterson's—is momentarily stumped. Finally, she answers, "Participant."

"At various times I have taken on different titles depending on how I'm currently participating in life in a meaningful way," says the New York native. "There was a time when I took on the title of artist. Now you could call me an author, a managing editor, a poet. But none of those things singly define me, because as soon as I reach a plateau in my growth, I tend to turn and participate in life in a new way."

- **Hometown** Eastern New York
- **Church** Community Bible Church
- **Family** Husband and two girls ages 10 and 13
- **Reading now** *Why Translation Matters*; *Barbies at Communion: and Other Poems*; *100 Best Business Books*; *Mirror of the World: A New History of Art*
- **On your iPod** Frenchpod.com, Madeleine Peyroux, Natalie Merchant
- **Favorite movie** *Hero*
- **Favorite Bible verse** Isaiah 11:9
- **Your hero** Mary Shelley, Benjamin Franklin
- **Hobbies** piano, hiking, online improv poetry

Lately Barkat is participating as an author (with her new book, *God in the Yard*); a managing editor (of the High Callings Blogs, an online "retreat center" for Christian writers to discuss faith, work, and culture); and a poet (her book of poems, *InsideOut*, has received warm reviews; she also hangs out online with other poets, composing "improv poetry" on Twitter). But usually Barkat goes back to participant, saying that she likes to connect people to one another—mostly in the online world—and to "help them embrace their gifts and call them to personal growth."

question & answer

What is *God in the Yard* about?

The power of solitude in nature. I sat outdoors in my backyard every day for an entire year for at least 15 minutes, rain or shine. It was an extraordinarily powerful experience.

What did you learn from it?

The book's subtitle is "Spiritual Practice for the Rest of Us." The word *practice* implies a reaching toward some kind of perfection; oddly, I feel it's ultimately self-focused: *What can I do to make myself worthier?* This book says there might be other ways to live spiritually—less about practice and more about participation, meaning that it's okay to simply "take part" in the Christian story, moment by moment with God and others. The focus is outward, even in solitude, because it depends on grace.

How did you get into poetry?

When I was asked to write a sonnet in college, it was such a dismal failure that I decided that poetry was best left to other people. I didn't start writing poetry in earnest until I got online—and that is key to understanding me as a writer. I write in community. Somebody asked me, "Tell me why you love to write," and I said, "I don't. I write to love." I started meeting poets online, and they encouraged me to try writing some poetry myself, and it went from there.

And now you write improv poetry on Twitter?

Yes. It's like a party where we write poetry. The first time we met, someone wrote something, and then I started modeling—I'd pick up words of people who would enter in, and use those words in my next poem, a whole poem of 140 characters or less. It's a very community-driven experience.

Is poetry a dying art?

I think it was, but the online world is changing that, mostly because of the ability to share one another's work.

More: lbarkat.com, HighCallingBlogs.com, Twitter.com/tspoeetry

INSIDE^{THE} MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

FINDING PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD



October 1-2, 2010

The Moody Church • 1635 North LaSalle Drive • Chicago, IL

The eyes of the world are focused on the events in the Middle East—the epicenter of the dramatic events that are shaping our world and impacting our future. **Are you ready for it?**



JOEL ROSENBERG
NEW YORK TIMES
BEST-SELLING
AUTHOR



ERWIN LUTZER
SENIOR PASTOR OF
MOODY CHURCH



CHARLIE DYER
VP OF EDUCATION
AT MOODY BIBLE
INSTITUTE



MICHAEL RYDELNIK
PROFESSOR OF
JEWISH STUDIES AT
MOODY BIBLE
INSTITUTE



MITCH GLASER
PRESIDENT OF
CHOSEN PEOPLE
MINISTRIES



STEVE WIGGINS
WORSHIP LEADER
AT HARVEST
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP



MARK ELFSTRAND
HOST OF *THE*
MORNING RIDE ON
MOODY RADIO



JOEL C. ROSENBERG



THE MOODY CHURCH

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:

MiddleEastCrisisConference.com • 888.405.5874



*we believe.
you belong here.*

Education is about more
than earning a degree.
Just 50 miles from Chicago is
Olivet Nazarene University,
where students focus on
being, becoming, believing —
in the classroom and
around the world.

800-648-1463
www.olivet.edu



**OLIVET
NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY**