

Wilberforce's Secret • Joni's Cancer Challenge

Christianity Today

OCTOBER 2010

How
Al Mohler
transformed
a seminary,
helped change
a denomination,
and challenges
a culture.

THE REFORMER

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BY TAMARA REYNOLDS



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Keep the Conversation Going

For the past 12 months, *Christianity Today* and its readers have engaged in “The Global Conversation”—a discussion of issues that face the church around the world, led on our pages by observers from Ghana to Singapore and responded to online by voices from Korea to Kenya. If you haven’t already visited *ChristianityToday.com/GlobalConversation*, do so right away.

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

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

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

But there is the matter of money. The Lausanne Movement underwrote our focused preparation for Cape Town 2010. For us to keep developing the discussion, we look to you, our readers, for special gifts. I encourage you to prayerfully consider what you can do to invest in this expanding work.

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*.

David Neff, Editor in Chief

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Honest Appraisal

Learning from reformers, past and present.

EVEN THOUGH Martin Luther is my favorite Reformer, I take some pride in my connection to Ulrich Zwingli. Okay, it's a dubious connection since I can't trace my ancestors back to the 16th century. But on October 11, 1531, Adam Näf distinguished himself in battle, rallying the Protestant troops against the ultimately victorious Catholic forces. Zwingli, a great preacher but a lousy general, lost his life that day. However, for Näf's bravery, Zurich granted him and his descendants permanent citizenship and hereditary honors.

Protestant kids are taught to admire Reformers the way Catholic children learn to love virgin martyrs and ascetic saints. Imagine my disappointment, then, when I learned about Calvin's role in burning the heretic Servetus and numerous witches.

Reading Protestant history should make us take seriously the Reformation principle of "a reformed church, always being reformed." The Reformers did a good job of calling the Catholic Church to its biblical and patristic roots, but they also knew that the task of reforming lives and institutions is never over. That job requires an honest appraisal of both past and present.

William Wilberforce is a reformer we want to learn from. We love his critique of mere religiosity. We praise his passion against all forms of cruelty, whether directed against African slaves, petty criminals, or animals used for sport. We admire his perseverance.

It is tricky to fit all the pieces together, though, when we learn that he supported workers' rights and then voted for bills that prevented them from assembling to organize. And as Ted Olsen relates in this issue (page 46), we are now called to integrate Wilberforce's fierce opposition to slavery with his refusal to support reforms of slavery that masqueraded as "apprenticeship" in the African colony he helped found.

Al Mohler is a contemporary reformer we want to understand. Beginning on page 18, Molly Worthen sketches a sensitive and complex portrait of a passionate Southern Baptist who has had tremendous impact trying to restore Southern Baptist institutions to his (well-informed) historical vision. Mohler is also reforming fundamentalism (apologies to George Marsden) as he models cultural engagement and helps his students escape obscurantism.

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Next month: Leslie Leyland Fields explores ethical eating, Philip Yancey visits the Middle East, and Drew Dyck probes the reasons many young adults abandon the faith.



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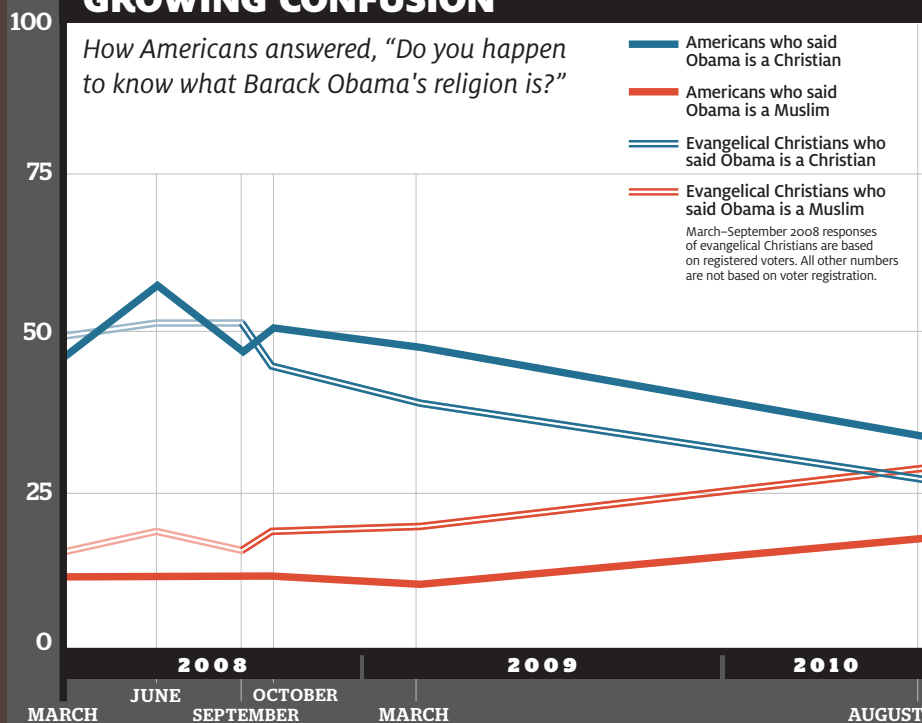
BRIEFING

REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Getting Obama's Faith Wrong

➔ An August Pew Forum report found that nearly one in five Americans thinks President Obama is a Muslim. Even more surprising: 60 percent of Americans who think he's Muslim say they learned it from the media. A quarter of those who think he's Muslim say Obama talks about his faith too much. The belief correlates strongly with political opposition, but it's not only those who dislike Obama who have changed: less than half of Democrats and African Americans now say he's a Christian. By the way, Pew's survey happened before Obama spoke about the prospect of an Islamic center near the World Trade Center site. A *Time* poll taken after his remarks, with slightly different wording than Pew's, found that 24 percent of Americans think Obama is a Muslim.

GROWING CONFUSION



18%

18 PERCENTERS

So if 18 percent of Americans think Obama is a Muslim, is that a large number or a small one? Consider that 18 percent of Americans also:

Strongly believe that climate change is real, human-caused, and harmful.

Nature

Believe the sun revolves around the earth.

Gallup

Affiliate with a mainline Protestant church.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

Believe it is definitely true that human beings developed over millions of years from less-advanced forms of life.

Gallup

Do not use the Internet.

Center for the Digital Future

Have read a book written by James Dobson.

Baylor Religion Survey

Think charitable organizations do a very good job running their programs and services.

Organizational Performance Initiative

Are very confident they will meet their retirement savings goals by the time they retire.

Employee Benefit Research Institute

Don't buckle their seatbelts.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Believe creatures such as Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster will be discovered by science one day.

Baylor Religion Survey

Can name freedom of religion as one of the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

First Amendment Center

"I am a devout Christian. I believe in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. . . . I have never practiced Islam. I am respectful of the religion, but it's not my own."

Barack Obama, in a January 2008 interview with *Christianity Today*



GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Mission not dissuaded by murdered workers

AFGHANISTAN International Assistance Mission (IAM) says it will continue working in Afghanistan despite the early-August murders of ten IAM workers returning from an eye-care expedition in northwestern Nuristan. Team leader Tom Little had served in the country since 1976; IAM has operated in Afghanistan for 44 years. "God willing, we will continue to serve the Afghan people," announced IAM director Dirk Frans.

exempt from state insurance regulations. The Florida-based organization, which serves 40,000 Christians in 49 states and pools \$42 million in annual contributions, says its members engage in charitable activity and publishes disclaimers that it is not a substitute for insurance. The argument has persuaded two lower Kentucky courts in the past, but the state attorney general pursued the case to the high court, which determined that Medi-Share "fits comfortably within the statutory definition of an insurance contract."

2 World Vision wins firing case

A three-judge panel from the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled August 23 that World Vision is a religious organization that can hire and fire people based on faith. Three former employees had sued World Vision for letting them go after they rejected key parts of the group's statement of faith. World Vision welcomed the decision, but the majority opinion was split on the rationale for the organization's exemption from Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Legal experts wonder if the complex opinion will add uncertainty to the debate over religious hiring. Days later, World Vision and more than 100 other religious organizations lobbied Congress against a clause in pending substance abuse and mental health legislation that would remove hiring freedoms for federal grant recipients.

3 Court: Regulate Medi-Share as insurance

The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled in August that Medi-Share, a Christian health-care cost-sharing program, offers a "shifting of risk" and thus shouldn't be

4 Judge: Researchers cannot destroy embryos

A federal district judge temporarily blocked the Obama administration's plans to fund embryonic stem-cell research. Reviving a lawsuit filed by the Christian Medical Association, Nightlight Christian Adoptions, and two doctors after granting the doctors standing, Judge Royce C. Lamberth reminded the government of a 1996 law that keeps federal dollars out of any projects that involve the destruction of human embryos. The Justice Department plans to appeal.

5 Church leaders set back after constitution vote

KENYA Voters overwhelmingly adopted a new draft constitution despite fierce opposition from church leaders on issues related to abortion and Islamic courts. Several retired clergy supported the new constitution; Kenya's top Anglican leader eventually told parishioners to "vote their conscience." Opposed church leaders alleged vote-rigging, but a post-election survey reveals that 58 percent of Kenyans trust church leaders less than they did before the election.

6 Christians, atheists may run state-funded schools

UNITED KINGDOM Prime Minister David Cameron's coalition government may soon be funding religious schools using state money. A keystone of the coalition's new education plan, Cameron's "free schools" program allows parents, teachers, religious organizations, and other private groups to set up schools that would receive direct government funds. Some free schools may open by fall 2011. Responding to a comment from prominent atheist Richard Dawkins, education minister Michael Gove said atheist groups are also welcome to found schools.

7 Court strikes national park speech restrictions

Citing the First Amendment, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals eliminated regulations requiring individuals and small groups to get a permit before "engaging in expressive activities" within designated free speech zones. In 2007, officials at Mount Rushmore National Memorial stopped Michael Boardley from passing out gospel tracts. The court noted that permits made logistical sense when coordinating large groups, but should not apply to smaller groups or individuals.

8 Canada drops religion from census

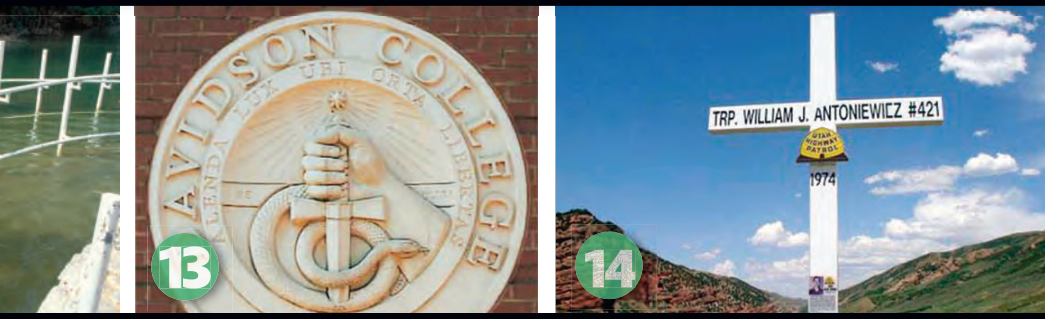
CANADA Evangelicals objected in July when the national government told Statistics Canada (StatsCan) to replace the long-form Canadian census questionnaire, which asked about religion, with a voluntary National Household Survey in 2011. Some say that failing to collect accurate data on religious demographics will further marginalize evangelicals and other minority religious groups. Top StatsCan officials also dislike the idea of a voluntary survey; the agency's director, Munir Sheikh, resigned in protest.

GO FIGURE Life Ethics

13%
Rise in euthanasia or assisted suicide cases in the Netherlands last year. The number rose 10.5% in 2008.

2%
Percentage of all Dutch deaths represented by the 2,636 euthanasia cases.

The Globe and Mail



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“Once you’re there . . . witnessing evil, and you come to the Western world and everyone is celebrating you are back—it can be aggravating.”

Robert Park, the American missionary and activist detained in North Korea for six weeks, after North Korea also released his friend Aijalon Gomes.

Christianity Today Online

“They try to be the hands and the feet of Jesus, not the mouth of Jesus.”

Charles Beckett, father of Cheryl Beckett, one of the International Assistance Mission workers killed in Afghanistan, on the Taliban’s claim that the group was proselytizing.

The New York Times

“Christians concerned about Glenn’s faith should judge the tree by its fruits, not its labels.”

David Barton, founder of WallBuilders, on talk-show host Glenn Beck, a Mormon.

Facebook

“I think the whole Bible is about God putting people back in the ministry. . . . I see Ergun with a long, profitable ministry.”

Elmer Towns, who replaced Ergun Caner as dean of Liberty Baptist Seminary amid concerns that Caner made false statements about his personal history. Towns, 77, led the seminary from 1979 to 1992.

Lynchburg News & Advance

“Even if we disagree with the rights of gay couples to adopt . . . it doesn’t make us bad foster parents.”

John Yallop, who was rejected as a foster parent in England because he and his wife preferred to meet same-sex couples seeking to adopt outside their home (to avoid confusing their own young children).

The Daily Mail

9 War crimes sentence leaves nation unsatisfied

CAMBODIA In July, the Cambodia Tribunal sentenced former Communist leader Kang Kek Iew, better known as Comrade

Duch, to 35 years in prison for crimes against humanity. Given time served, Duch will spend 19 more years in prison. Many Cambodians are furious, saying the sentence is far too lenient. Duch says he converted to Christianity while a fugitive, and the minister who baptized Duch testified at the trial, though prosecutors questioned Duch’s sincerity. As commander of the infamous S-21 Prison under Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge regime, Duch was responsible for tens of thousands of executions.

10 Islamic state moves toward secularism

BANGLADESH The Supreme Court of Bangladesh tossed out the fifth amendment to its constitution in July. The 1979 amendment had helped change the country from a secular state to an Islamic republic and permitted religious political parties for the first time. Legal experts hailed the act as a step back toward secularism, though observers say Bangladesh is unlikely to start banning Islamic political parties. Islam remains the state religion.

11 Jordan River may be too dirty

ISRAEL Government officials and environmentalists are clashing over one of the holiest spots in the Holy Land. In July, Israel’s health ministry discussed closing access to the spot on the lower Jordan that Christians traditionally link with Jesus’ baptism after environmentalist groups called attention to sewage, pollutants, and heavy diversion of water. Israel’s Ministry of Tourism insisted the

water was fine. A subsequent test put the pollution content well within safe levels, but environmentalists dispute the results. Israel has pledged \$5 million to rehabilitate the river.

12 More layoffs at Focus on the Family

Focus on the Family cut its workforce to 750 in late July, laying off 110 employees. The organization has been downsizing since 2002, when it employed 1,400 people; its previous round of layoffs, in 2009, took 75 jobs. Focus has slashed more than \$60 million from its budget in the past few years.

13 Court: Religious schools cannot have police

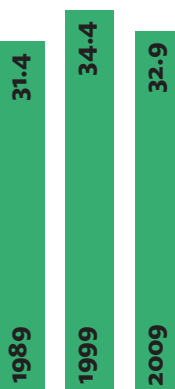
North Carolina’s Court of Appeals declared in August that Davidson College, as a “religious organization,” cannot have a campus police force. Bound by precedent, the court felt “compelled” to rule that the private school affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) violated the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause by enforcing state law. But the court’s opinion urged the state supreme court to hear an appeal, acknowledging a difference between a religious organization and a religiously affiliated university.

14 Utah memorial crosses must go

The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August that the State of Utah cannot erect memorial crosses to honor the deaths of Utah Highway Patrol officers. Responding to a suit from American Atheists, the three-judge panel declared that the 12-foot-tall, privately funded roadside crosses constituted an “endorsement of Christianity.” In 2007, a federal district judge declared the crosses a secular symbol of death. The Utah Highway Patrol plans to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

GO FIGURE Higher Education

Median age of candidates for Master of Divinity degrees.



USA Today / Center for the Study of Theological Education



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ITALY

Cross Examination

Italian crucifix case a mixed bag. By Ruth Moon

As a lawsuit over religious displays in Italian public classrooms makes its way up the European Court ladder, Italian evangelicals have joined those opposing the government's use of crucifixes.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled last November that such displays violate children's right to freedom of religion. Italy and 10 other member states of the Council of Europe are appealing the decision, which is binding on all 47 members. The states argue that the crucifix is more a cultural than a religious symbol.

The Italian Evangelical Alliance (IEA) supports the ECHR's religious symbol ban for several reasons, said vice chairman Leonardo De Chirico. The case deals specifically with a Roman Catholic symbol—the cross with a dying Christ on it—not the more general Christian cross. Its public display represents the imposition of Catholicism as the state religion, which ended in 1984. And

the IEA is committed to the separation of church and state.

Rather than focusing on symbolic cases, De Chirico said, Christians worldwide should partner with Italian evangelicals to ensure true freedom of religion in the country.

"We would hope that evangelicals worldwide support religious liberty for minorities," he said, "not vestiges of a nominally Christian system of power."

This summer, the IEA and other Italian faith groups hosted a 1,000-person march for religious freedom in Rome to protest what they perceive as Roman Catholic favoritism. Coverage of Catholic events takes up most religion coverage in the national media, De Chirico said, and Rome's city council plans to build 51 Catholic churches with public funds. Protestant clergy and schools, by contrast, do not receive government support, and often have trouble registering with government agencies.

The European Religious Liberty Forum of the European Evangelical

Cross Purposes: European evangelicals from historically Catholic nations support a human rights court ban on crucifixes in Italian public schools. Meanwhile, those from historically Communist nations fear a return to a stripped-down, Soviet-era public square.

Alliance discussed the case at its April meeting in Istanbul.

Most representatives saw the court's decision as infringing on national rights, said Julia Doxat-Purser, religious liberty coordinator for the alliance. Evangelicals from nations with Communist pasts were even concerned the decision represents a move back to a stripped-down, Soviet-era public square.

By contrast, evangelicals from Roman Catholic contexts, such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, believe "the concept of secularism is liberating" because it "gives room for other faith groups to exist and to thrive," she said.

"The [November] decision was shocking in that the [ECHR], which could be viewed as Europe's most important defender of human rights, was apparently calling for the banning of religious symbols in public buildings," Doxat-Purser said. "It was a dangerous, secularizing step and an infringement of national culture and autonomy. [Yet] faith minorities do feel oppressed by the constant symbolic reminder of the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy and elsewhere."

Gregor Puppink, director of the European Center for Law and Justice, an affiliate of the American Center for Law and Justice, noted that almost half of the Council of Europe's 47 members have either filed friend of the court briefs supporting Italy or issued statements in favor of displaying crucifixes.

Puppink said it is inappropriate for the court to take a position on something so specific to a certain country.

"Religion is not a purely individual reality. The social dimension of religion is essential," Puppink said. "Christianity is a living heritage: remove Christianity from society, and you will strongly contribute to removing faith from the heart of the next generations."

A final ruling from the ECHR is expected this fall.

GO FIGURE Ethics

52%

Americans who say most Americans are basically honest.

45%

Americans who say religious people are likely to be more honest than non-religious people. Forty-five percent say the groups are equally honest. Seven percent say religious people are less honest.

Rasmussen Reports

Border Crossing

Philip Yancey's newest book debuts in Brazil.

By Ken Walker

FaithWords is poised to release Philip Yancey's *What Good Is God?* on October 19, bolstering the launch with an array of national advertising, online promotion, and social media interviews.

However, the U.S. publicity push lags behind Yancey's first related appearance—a book signing at Livraria Cultura in downtown São Paulo on September 6, the day the title released in Brazil. Ten days later, Hodder & Stoughton released the book in the United Kingdom.

Mark Carpenter, CEO of Brazilian publisher Editora Mundo Cristão, calls this “an important signpost.”

“It indicates the growing importance of Christian publishing outside the U.S., particularly in emerging-market economies,” said Carpenter, former chairman of Media Associates International, which supports Christian publishing worldwide.

“We’re often running to catch up with American release dates,” said Ian Metcalfe, publisher of Bibles and digital at Hodder & Stoughton. However, he added, “I don’t think it’s a big deal. There are still different markets around the world.”

With 15 million in English-language sales alone for Yancey’s 20-plus books, the significance of debuting his latest outside the English-speaking world isn’t lost on the 60-year-old author. He sees growth in titles from other nations as well.

“Christianity is a global concern now, and publishers in Korea, Brazil, and other large markets got tired of just reprinting American books,” Yancey said. “They work at cultivating their own writers.”

The first printings of Yancey’s latest show that America’s influence

still dominates Christian publishing. Brazil and UK publishers scheduled initial releases of 10,000 copies each. South Korea’s ChungRim Publishing planned 5,000 for its October 19 Yancey premiere. By contrast, FaithWords has been considering a first printing of up to 200,000.

The overseas activity could create a two-way street over time. Yet while authors such as Swedish Stieg Larsson, Brazilian Paul Coelho, and Italian Umberto Eco have found success in the U.S., few translations have landed at Christian houses. Carpenter said his Brazilian company more commonly sells reprint rights elsewhere around the world.

“The American book market is one of the world’s most provincial,” Carpenter said. “Thus, American publishing houses have not invested in worldwide editorial acquisitions.”

“I don’t think it’s a one-way street,” Metcalfe said. “But it can seem like that at times. Obviously the U.S. has contributed a lot to the world. Maybe we’re coming to a point where we can contribute something back as well.”

MONEY AND BUSINESS

Pension Tension

Lawsuit questions ‘church related’ retirement plans.

By Rob Moll

Most Americans have watched their retirement plans suffer over the past two years. But the 500 members of the Augsburg Fortress pension plan have had it worse than most.

The publishing arm of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) folded its plan in December, forcing beneficiaries to accept a significantly reduced income. The announcement, as well as similar ones from other church-affiliated organizations, has opened debate on how such pension plans are regulated.

PASSAGES



Resigned Sammy Mah

As president and CEO of World Relief. Sam Wolgemuth, board chairman of Youth for Christ International, will serve as interim CEO.



Ordained Ruth Graham

Daughter of Billy Graham, into ministry at University Baptist Church in Charlottesville, North Carolina.



Died Clark Pinnock

Professor of systematic theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, of a heart attack on August 15. He was 73.

As a church plan, Augsburg Fortress’s is not insured by the federal agency that insures private pension plans. The 1974 pension law’s exemption for churches has expanded to include church-affiliated nonprofits, such as hospitals, social service agencies, and publishers. Now the IRS is considering limits on such organizations’ ability to convert to church plans.

The Augsburg Fortress case may intensify that consideration. Knowing the plan was underfunded, the publisher stopped enrolling new employees in 2005. But after the stock market collapse and a tough publishing climate, the plan was nearly empty and the publisher distributed the remaining funds. In response, beneficiaries sued.

As many as 86 organizations converted federally insured plans to church plans between 1997 and 2007, says Karen Ferguson, director of the Pension Rights Center. It is not known how many have failed since there is no central oversight. “The result has been devastating for employees,” she says, “who will get a small fraction of the retirement benefits they earned.”

But churches do not operate like corporations, says the Church Benefits Association, and regulating church plans could entangle the government in religious matters. Ira Lupu, a law professor at George Washington University, agrees. “In some affiliated organizations, like a seminary school or a Catholic order, a lot of employees have clergy responsibilities,” Lupu says. However, he says, “The further you get away from what makes a religious institution distinct, the harder it is to justify the exemption being driven by the First Amendment.”

Attorney Ron Kilgard, who represents the suing retirees, doesn’t dispute the church exemption. But he says that if Augsburg Fortress is exempt because it is church affiliated, the church should fill the gap.

[continued on 12]

Briefing [from 11]

"A church plan doesn't mean you can walk away from your obligations."

The ELCA, which seeks to dismiss the suit, says it "had no role in the creation, management, funding, or termination of the Augsburg Fortress pension plan."

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Catholic Question

Apologist D'Souza will lead The King's College.

By Sarah Pulliam Bailey

The King's College surprised many higher education observers by choosing Dinesh D'Souza as president of the historically evangelical school in New York City. The prominent author and apologist is widely identified as a Roman Catholic; on his website he self-describes as "a believing Catholic but a poorly practicing one."

"I'm quite happy to acknowledge my Catholic background; at the same time, I'm very comfortable with Reformation theology," said D'Souza, who has attended a Calvary Chapel

congregation in San Diego for the past 10 years. "I'm comfortable with the evangelical world. In a sense, I'm part of it." He said that his views align with the Apostles' Creed and C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*.

"Christians spend a lot of time in intramural-type debates and squabbles: Are you a Catholic or Protestant? If you are a Protestant, what type are you?" D'Souza said. "I would comfortably describe myself as a born-again Christian, but I don't feel it is necessary to renounce anything. I am not doing Catholic apologetics, that's for sure."

Meeting in rented space in the Empire State Building, King's closed in 1994 after financial troubles but reopened in 1998 under Campus Crusade for Christ's ownership. It has about 450 students.

King's seems to be using a different leadership model than other Christian colleges, said David Dockery, president of Union University.

"It is an appointment that surprised many people," said Dockery, editor of *The Future of Christian Higher Education*. "It sends a signal that King's wants to function within the framework of historic Trinitarian Christianity, but I'm not sure what it says about its evangelical identity."

DISCUSSION STARTER Condemnation

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments October 6 on whether Westboro Baptist Church's street protests of military funerals are protected by the First Amendment. In 2009, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a \$5 million verdict against Fred Phelps and his church in a lawsuit brought by the father of a fallen Iraq Marine who said the protest was an invasion of privacy.

Marvin Olasky, provost at King's, said the board chose D'Souza for his fundraising potential, not to make a statement. "I know there's some concern on the part of some evangelicals about the direction of King's because of Dinesh's background," he said. "But he, in my view, is certainly heading in the right direction."

Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, might have been concerned about D'Souza's appointment in the earlier part of Bright's life but not in his later years, said John Turner, a history professor at the University of South Alabama.

"He was really worried about John F. Kennedy's election," said Turner, author of *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ*. But Bright was also one of the most prominent Protestant signers of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, a 1994 document on Christian mission. "I think this would be right up his alley for the later years of his life, when he became a bridge builder," said Turner.

King's and Campus Crusade's board of directors recently voted to grant the college independence. A King's spokesperson said its leaders are in the early stages and must take legal steps first.

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Trevor Persaud

Should Christians publicly denounce believers who vilify others?

YES

"I've thought for a long time that Christians need to step up and criticize believers who behave badly. We publicly criticize each other for heresies or heterodox ideas, but we don't often publicly criticize each other for flagrantly bad behavior."

ROGER OLSON,
theologian, Baylor University

"I think there's a place for that. I think we need to do a better job of accountability within the body of Christ, as opposed to trying to hold the world to a standard that they don't necessarily even understand."

JIM DALY,
CEO, Focus on the Family

"We should first try to reach an erring brother or sister privately. But if they will not listen to us, then 'taking it to the church' would include a public critique if the 'sin/mistake' is a public reality."

RON SIDER,
president, Evangelicals for Social Action

"Based on Matthew 18, Christians should first try individually. If they don't respond, differentiate between the persons and their actions. It is important for the world to know that evangelical Christians disassociate themselves from hate-filled actions."

DENNIS HOLLINGER,
president, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"The trick is to not sound just like Fred Phelps when you're yelling at Fred Phelps to be quiet. . . . I would suggest finding the thing that we can do to put Christ front and center."

DAN MERCHANT,
director, Lord, Save Us From Your Followers

"I have chosen, if at all possible, to simply separate myself from groups like the Westboro Church, who ironically picketed our church for reasons unknown to me. Sometimes it is necessary, however, to speak out when the behavior becomes so egregious."

JIM GARLOW,
chairman, Renewing American Leadership

NO

Post-Quake Outpouring: Since January, more than 100,000 Haitians have become Christians. Pastor St. Cyr planted a church, including 1,000 new believers, to meet new spiritual needs.



CHURCH LIFE HAITI

A Different Kind of Tent Revival

How one pastor is tackling Haiti's complex challenges.

By Sarah Pulliam Bailey in Port-au-Prince



et ready for Sunday," an aid worker warned. "They like to put white people up front, next to the blaring speakers."

He was not exaggerating. Ushers took a group of visiting American Christians to the front of the Baptist church as a

deafening six-piece band led a crowd of several hundred Haitians in praise songs on a sweltering summer day.

There were no pews, water fountains, or projection screens. The congregation squeezed onto crowded benches beneath an open tent as a generator hummed in the background. Like many of Port-au-Prince's

churches, this one didn't exist a year ago. Sitting in the middle of a tent city on what used to be Haiti's only golf course, it is a child of the earthquake.

"Some pastors died. A lot of churches collapsed in the earthquake," the tent church's head pastor, Jean F. E. St. Cyr, explained. His was one of them: its walls are ruins, its congregants scattered.

On January 15, three days after the 7.0-magnitude earthquake rattled the country to bits, St. Cyr started leading services in the rain and mud. It was supposed to be a few days of worship amid tragedy. But the congregation is becoming a permanent fixture. St. Cyr put down gravel to contain the mud. A group of American friends sent him a tent for shelter. The church is easy to spot with its large white tent nestled near neighboring residential tents, some made out of plastic tarps, sticks, and strings.

The camp, overseen by actor Sean Penn, houses about 50,000 people. Outside the church, women sit on stools and do each other's hair, bathe children in metal bins, and many flock to visiting Americans to ask for food.

St. Cyr is eager to describe his large tent as not just a church but a sanctuary. "We're not in the camp!" he told the congregation. "We're in the kingdom! Your presence tells us God is here."

IN-TENT WORSHIP

When it's not raining, between 500 and 600 people pack the church each night, St. Cyr said. Morning services are less popular because of the tradition of wearing Sunday morning dress: ties and suits for men, head coverings and skirts for women. The evening services' casual atmosphere attracts many residents who are hungry and nearly all of whom are unemployed or underemployed.

During the service, Haitians sang with raised hands, many of them holding worn Bibles. A woman holding a bouquet of flowers moved to the front and spoke in Creole. St. Cyr translated into English.

"It's Father's Day in Haiti. If you read the Bible, women come from men. So if you have problems, they come from men," he joked. He left many of her remarks untranslated. "What they just said was a

lot of good things about me as a father,” he summarized. “But I don’t know if they’re true.”

The music continued as the offering was taken and St. Cyr ceded the pulpit to Dan Carl, a missionary from Omaha who has been serving in Haiti since 2002. Haitian pastors frequently want missionaries to preach at their services, Carl explained, so he gave a brief sermon, mostly in Creole. “Things don’t happen quickly here. Sometimes it feels like we’re moving backwards,” he said before his sermon. “The saints need to be strengthened.”

After the service, Carl’s wife, Liz, said it sometimes feels like missions work here moves backwards, too. “People will respond to an altar call,” she said. “They’ll raise their hands to accept Jesus. But you never know if they did the same thing last week.”

St. Cyr said he’s not seeing the same people come forward every week. Instead, “the church is growing,” he said. “We’ve had 1,400 get saved in the first two months. God allowed people to see who

the real believers were.”

A greater concern, said Liz Carl, is the fact that American connections can prompt a backlash among Haitians against the Haitian pastors who receive support from Americans.

“A lot of Haitians see pastoring as a way to make money. I’m not telling you it’s all of them, but some see it as a business,” she said. “The moment they see you with a white person, they think you’re getting money.”

Suspicion of Western-backed pastors is common in developing countries, but it has perhaps grown amid the flood of aid pouring into Haiti. Several Haitians said leaders—or those pretending to be ones—take money or food and then distribute only a small amount to the group.

“They’re just feathering their nests,” said ‘Big Mae’ Marckeson, 20, who lives in a tent near the church. “The earthquake was a breakthrough for some people.”

St. Cyr said he does not receive financial support from anyone in the United States, though Haitians still ask him for resources.

“They think I have food on my hands,” he said. “They think I have money.”

In fact, St. Cyr remains in his damaged house a few minutes away. “It’s condemned to be demolished, but I have no other place to go.”

That’s not quite true. He could easily leave Haiti. St. Cyr attended Florida Bible College (Hollywood, Florida) and Northeastern Bible College (Caldwell, New Jersey). Then he took a pastoral job on Staten Island. In 1997, he returned to Haiti to lead a church. After the earthquake, his frightened wife moved back to the U.S. to be closer to her sons in Kissimmee, Florida. St. Cyr said he has not been released from his ministry to join them.

“In a sense, I feel like a soldier. If a soldier can’t adapt to his circumstances, he’s not a soldier,” the pastor said. “Paul had never been in jail, but he learned to praise God [there].”

St. Cyr decided to stay in-country within days of the quake, as people wrestled not only for survival but for spiritual meaning.

215 Baptist Churches Planted in Haiti

New fellowships will ‘preserve the harvest’ of new Christians. Interview by Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra



Raig Culbreth, the director of partnership missions for the Florida Baptist Convention, has been visiting Haiti for the past 12 years and working with the country’s more than 1,000 Baptist churches. After his most recent visit, Culbreth spoke with reporter Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra about his work.

Countless churches lost property in the January earthquake. How many new churches have been started since January 12?

Since January, 215 brand-new Baptist churches have been started. None of these churches meet in a building. I wouldn’t even call them tents. There are no walls. A piece of plastic has been put up over wood or frames to get them out of the sun and rain.

What are the long-term prospects for these congregations?

Very good. Our plan involves Bible training, working with established pastors for encouragement, and small salary supplements for pastors. We believe everything rises and falls on leadership.

Why should planting new churches be a priority over housing or education?

You have to be on similar tracks that run together. You have to provide for them spiritually, or we’ve become just another relief agency.

Has there been a net gain in Baptist churches?

Yes. We had 891 before the earthquake, and now we have about 1,105.

Were many people in these congregations previously active in a church?

No, just the opposite, in fact. We are finding many new converts from the earthquake experience. We have records of 162,314 conversions since the earthquake. We believe our new churches are made up of these converts. We are after a relationship with Jesus Christ, not a nation that has religious people.

What are the differences between these new churches and the ones that existed before the quake?

All are under plastic tarps versus fixed buildings and full of new believers, so all are eager to learn. Their pastors are leaning heavily on God for everything. The pastors have no American supporters, which is not so bad.

How do church-planting methods change in times of disaster?

The church-planting movement in Haiti is a result of the harvest of believers. We did not seek to start church plants to reach people, but to start churches to preserve the harvest. Big difference. During a disaster, we push for people to come to Christ. When that happens, we seek to start a church with new believers.

'This was my burden here, to let people know that God is not done with us yet.'

~ Jean F. E. St. Cyr, Haitian pastor

"People were saying that it was God's judgment against Haiti," St. Cyr said. "We still have a lot of wicked people around when nice kids are dying. This was my burden here, to let people know that God is not done with us yet. We're here to comfort people. I'm not trying to preach doomsday here. God burned in my heart to give faith to people."

St. Cyr said he tailors his sermons to address the needs of those in the battered tents.

"It's important for the preacher to remind people what God is doing right now, how God wants to use [them] in this season," he said. "I preach that you have to be loving. If you love, this is the time to

love more. I preach a lot about equality. One day, all wealth will be gone."

'COME WITH A PURPOSE'

St. Cyr is not getting wealthy in the aftermath of the earthquake, but he is becoming a prominent leader. He meets

with celebrities who visit the tent city, and with President René Préval, whom he has asked to open the food storehouses. The president is concerned that free food distribution will hurt the economy. St. Cyr agrees that the priority should be on rebuilding Haiti's economy so that people do not have to depend on foreign aid workers for basic needs. But meanwhile, he said, free food is going to waste in warehouses. "Préval listens to pastors, but I don't know what he does with the listening."

St. Cyr has also met countless Christian aid groups working in the tent city, some doing a better job than others.

"I'm a friendly pastor, so don't get me wrong," St. Cyr said. "But I'm tired of

seeing people coming and doing nothing. Come with a purpose. God will never send anyone without purpose."

The best thing Christians can do, St. Cyr said, is to share skills with the Haitians so that they can learn to provide for themselves.

"You will see a bunch of people come and leave, and they'll have pictures and tell you they've seen poverty," he said. "If you ask them, 'Did you touch people's lives?' you probably won't get a good answer."

As with many short-term trips, he said, it's often the Americans who benefit from coming to Haiti.

"God ministers to people who have nothing," St. Cyr said. "You American people come down to bless Haitians. Then you see Haitians live joyfully with nothing. Paul said, 'I used to live in abundance, at the same time I was lacking.' Every bad situation is an opportunity to strengthen your faith."

Sarah Pulliam Bailey is *Christianity Today's* online editor.



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- Rome - Early Christian life & art

Q. Who have been winning Muslims to Christ and planting underground churches in North Africa and other Arabic-language areas?

A. Native missionaries who have been trained and sent out by indigenous evangelical missionary ministries.



Q. Who provides financial support for indigenous Christian missions in Arabic-speaking Islamic countries?

A. For the past 50 years Christian Aid Mission has been quietly supporting indigenous evangelical ministries that are winning souls to Christ in almost all of the Arabic-language countries.

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.

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Reformer

How **Al Mohler**
transformed
a seminary,
helped change
a denomination,
and challenges
a secular culture.

By Molly Worthen

A

AT AGE 15,

R. Albert Mohler Jr. had a crisis of faith. Two years earlier, his family had moved from the conservative idyll of Lakeland, Florida, to the other end of the world: Pompano Beach, 200 miles south, where Christian faith was by no means universal and the fleshpots of Miami beckoned. In Lakeland, life had revolved around Southside Baptist Church, a traditional congregation that treasured its “tall steeple, pipe organ, and things done decently and in order,” says Mohler.

He entered the church rolls while still in the womb, as “Baby Mohler,” and later joined every age-appropriate church activity, from the Royal Ambassadors to summer camp at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center. “It was an intact culture, so the messages I was receiving at home and church were the same messages I was receiving in public school,” he says, “and I just considered that’s the way the world was and always would be.” In Pompano Beach, torn from everything he knew, Mohler found himself in class sitting next to the children of rabbis and Roman Catholics, the high-school honors

Photos by Tamara Reynolds



A man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, white shirt, and a red, white, and blue striped tie, is seated in a large, dark leather office chair. He is leaning forward slightly, resting his hands on a dark wooden desk. On the desk, there is an open book, a pen, a small white card, and several decorative items including a brass bell, a small white box, and some colorful glass ornaments. In the background, tall bookshelves filled with numerous books are visible. A large, dark lamp is positioned to the right of the man, casting a warm light. A bronze bust of a man's head is partially visible in the foreground on the right side.

Bibliophile: Mohler is a voracious reader, and collector, of books. His personal library contains over 40,000 catalogued volumes and is arranged in rooms by theme—church history, biblical studies, worldview and culture, and so forth.

curriculum stirring in his mind the biggest questions of existence.

The curious teen's youth pastor offered the diversions of his megachurch's bowling alley and gymnasium, but had no answers to his questions. He took the boy to meet the minister of a fast-growing congregation down the highway in Fort Lauderdale: Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church. D. James Kennedy listened to Mohler and knew just the antidote to his anxieties. Francis Schaeffer's *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* "had an absolutely determinative impact on my life as a young teenager," Mohler says. "Not that I understood everything that Schaeffer was saying, but it came with incredible assurance that there were legitimate

Christian answers to these questions." Schaeffer became a hero; Kennedy, a lifelong mentor. At 15, Mohler was already a friend of culture warriors and a citizen of the wider evangelical world—yet still a born-and-bred member of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), where the culture wars seemed remote and *evangelical* was a "Yankee word."

Thirty-six years later, Mohler is the president of the SBC's flagship school—the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville—and the most prominent public intellectual in the convention. In recent years, his influence has spread beyond Southern Baptist circles. He blogs for *The Washington Post's* On Faith religion column (not to mention his own blog) and has appeared multiple times on *Larry King Live*. Until this July, he reached listeners across the country five days a week on a syndicated radio program (he gave up the show to free up time for writing books and longer-form podcasts). *Time* magazine has turned to Mohler for the conservative evangelical perspective on issues ranging from evolution to Christian missions in Iraq, calling him the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S."

After nearly 20 years at the helm of Southern Seminary, Mohler has put the finishing touches on what supporters call the "conservative resurgence" and critics bemoan as the "fundamentalist takeover": the radical shift of SBC leadership from the moderate, even mainline-inclined theology of the 1970s to today's firm grounding in biblical inerrancy, a complementarian view of gender roles,

and, more often than not, conservative politics. Before Mohler's appointment, Southern faculty celebrated higher biblical criticism and embraced evolutionary theory. Now the school is a bulwark of conservative Reformed theology and creationism. The campus of lush trees and neocolonial architecture is the staging ground for a struggle against a mainstream culture that Mohler believes is sliding into moral chaos—and against "postmodern

Mohler believes Southern Baptists are Reformed thinkers rather than merely pietistic revivalists, citizens of the world rather than the South, and evangelical in the best sense of the word. Others aren't so sure.

Christians," the enemy within.

To Mohler—who eschews the "culture warrior" label for its political connotations—these battles require not so much reformation in Washington as renewal in the church. Despite his modest media empire and efforts to engage a broad audience, Mohler's parachurch enterprises come second to his duties as a denominational man, his aim to unify the SBC and reverse falling baptism rates. He is not the only Southern Baptist worried about the church; nor do all of his fellow believers agree with his theological vision for the denomination. As Southern Baptists struggle to evangelize post-Christian America and rev up missions worldwide, they are finding that the denomination cannot face the future until they agree on what constitutes true Southern Baptist history and identity. Mohler believes Southern Baptists are Reformed thinkers rather than merely pietistic revivalists, citizens of the world rather than the South, and evangelical in the best sense of the word.

Others aren't so sure.

BATTLE FOR THE BAPTIST SOUL

In 1979, when the SBC's annual meeting elected Memphis pastor Adrian Rogers as president and the conservatives launched their push to take over the denomination's leadership, Mohler was a senior at Samford University in Birmingham. He had only a faint notion of the turmoil engulfing his church. Samford's moderate faculty inculcated students with the view that "there were good guys and bad guys in this denominational

conflict, and the good guys were forces of scholarship, academic respectability, and serious theological thought, and the bad guys were recidivist fundamentalists who were seeking to topple the integrity of the Southern Baptist system," Mohler says.

At the time, moderates staffed the SBC's key bureaucratic bodies and the boards of trustees that ran the denomination's schools. Since the late 1960s, conservatives had grum-

bled that these leaders embraced modern methods of interpreting the Bible, compromised Scripture to accommodate secular culture, and espoused a version of Christianity alien to the Baptist in the pew. They organized fellowships and founded renegade Bible schools years prior to the 1979 election, when they studied the minutiae of SBC electoral rules in

order to direct the outcome. Most moderates failed to take conservatives' intentions seriously until it was too late.

The conservative strategy was simple: Elect a conservative as president of the SBC for ten consecutive years, during which time all crucial denominational positions would come due for re-nomination, allowing them to populate all boards, agencies, and trusteeships with their own kind. Conservatives gained control of nearly all major Southern Baptist bodies by the end of the 1980s. They pressured the moderate president of Southern Seminary, Roy Honeycutt, to crack down on faculty who deviated from the school's founding Abstract of Principles, a document based on the early confessions of English Calvinist Baptists. Honeycutt weathered years of negotiation and compromise between liberal faculty and fire-breathing trustees, finally announcing his retirement in the fall of 1992. After a tense presidential search, the trustees appointed the candidate many considered a long shot: the untested Mohler, then 33.

Some faculty were cautiously optimistic. They had known Mohler when he was a student at Southern, where he wrote his dissertation on evangelical responses to Karl Barth, worked as Honeycutt's personal assistant, and was firmly in the moderate fold. He led student protests in support of women in ministry, and in 1984 lent his signature to a full-page ad in the Louisville *Courier-Journal* protesting the SBC's recent resolution condemning female ordination. However, those who had followed Mohler's



career since then—and read the editorials he wrote as editor of the Georgia Baptist Convention’s *Christian Index*—understood that Mohler had since become an “unquestioned fundamentalist,” Jack Harwell, editor of the moderate monthly *Baptists Today*, told *The Courier-Journal*.

Mohler admits that his thinking changed. When he arrived at Southern, he adopted his professors’ views because he was “raised with a predisposition to trust anything with a Southern Baptist label,” he says. He embraced an egalitarian view of gender roles because “I’d never come across a complementarian argument. That was not presented in class.”

One day, toward the end of his studies, the Student Evangelical Fellowship invited Carl F. H. Henry to campus. In Mohler’s recollection, the faculty disdained Henry as a “northern evangelical”—a term they rarely distinguished from “fundamentalist”—and treated him rudely, making no arrangements for hospitality. They left Henry, a Southern Baptist and a trained theologian with a Ph.D. from Boston University, in Mohler’s care.

Strolling the campus grounds, Henry asked Mohler how he justified women’s ordination.

After Mohler rehearsed the argument he had learned in class, “Dr. Henry looked at me with a look of intellectual shock and asked me how, if I held to the inerrancy of Scripture, I could possibly hold to the egalitarian position. I tried to defend it and discovered that I didn’t have much ammunition,” Mohler says. “He looked at me . . . and he said, ‘You will, one day, be embarrassed by this conversation.’ Well, I was embarrassed by the conversation right then! . . . In 24 hours, I came to the chilling conclusion that the hermeneutic required for an egalitarian position was incompatible with the inerrancy of Scripture.”

Mohler found that Henry’s critique of post-war northern evangelicalism helped explain the confusion he detected among Baptists in the South two generations later. Henry also influenced Mohler’s attraction to presuppositionalism, a school of apologetics associated with Westminster Theological Seminary scholar Cornelius Van Til. Presuppositionalism is a system of thought that boils down to the slogans advocated by that other prominent presuppositionalist, Francis Schaeffer: There is no such thing as neutrality. Every worldview

Next Reformers: Mohler encourages students to blog, tweet, and engage in SBC meetings.

is predicated on certain founding assumptions, and those of Christianity are incompatible with those undergirding the

secular humanist worldview. Studying Barth’s effort to mediate between the presuppositions of Christianity and those of secular modernity hardened Mohler’s conviction that “mediating between modernity and Christian orthodoxy doesn’t work.”

After graduation, Mohler’s stint covering SBC news at the *Christian Index* convinced him that the battle between conservatives and moderates was not a matter of politics or personalities but of presuppositions. He saw that “these are two fundamentally different understandings of the Baptist faith, Baptist identity, and the future of the SBC,” he says. When he took office at Southern Seminary in 1993, compromise and accommodation were not strategies he had in mind.

Within three years of Mohler’s inauguration, Southern Seminary’s faculty and administration had turned over almost completely. He asserted control over the seminary’s hiring and tenure processes, insisting that even inerrantist evangelicals hired as

compromise candidates were unacceptable if they supported women's ordination. "It was like John Grisham's *The Firm*," says Carey Newman, director of Baylor University Press, who joined Southern's faculty in 1993 but left after five tense years. "Al recruited young lieutenants, students who were spies in the classes who would report back to him what was being said in every classroom."

The seminary's Abstract of Principles did not address women's ordination, but Mohler and the trustees believed that faculty should conform to what they considered the prevailing sentiment among Southern Baptist laypeople. Through a combination of forced resignations and "golden parachute" retirement packages, Mohler purged the School of Theology, closed the School of Social Work, and replaced moderates with inerrantist faculty who agreed with him on abortion, homosexuality, women's ordination, and his brand of Reformed theology. (As proof of the seminary's current "diversity," some faculty protest that they are only four-point Calvinists.)

E. Glenn Hinson, one of the old-guard faculty at Southern, granted that there was some distance between his colleagues and the average layperson, "but all of us could go into a Southern Baptist church with our love for the Bible and, using modern hermeneutical methods, thrill people with what they learned about the Bible," he said. "Most all of us went to help people love the Bible, but without ignoring the tremendous problems of understanding it." Moderates feared that the seminary's metamorphosis would turn Southern into an intellectual backwater.

Mohler has gone to great lengths to counteract this assumption, to nurture a polished, well-read breed of fundamentalism that is a far cry from H. L. Mencken's caricature of the literalist bumpkin. "He knows he's carrying the mantle of Southern Seminary, which has been, at its best, patrician in its appreciation of culture and learning," says J. Ligon Duncan, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, and a friend of Mohler. Students at Southern are not sawdust-trail Baptists but the smartly dressed sort who can make small talk about literature and art. On a recent weekend for prospective students, future seminar-ians crowded into Mohler's personal library in the basement of the president's house, goggle-eyed. At the time, Mohler possessed

40,700 catalogued volumes (the number grows every month), some 20,000 of which his student librarians have organized by the Dewey decimal system in rooms arranged by theme ("Church History"; "Biblical Studies"; "Worldview and Culture"; and so on).

The students wandered through each room, pausing to study shelves packed with everything from the ante-Nicene fathers to Andrea Dworkin, one arm around their shivering wives in the climate-controlled chambers. In the Church History room, next to the fireplace displaying framed pages of a medieval Book of Hours, they admired Mohler's shrine to Winston Churchill: portraits of the British Bulldog, shelves of his books, even a program from his funeral.

On the other side of the fireplace are the books and visage of another hero, Charles Spurgeon. Every cranny of the room displays a carefully chosen artifact: elaborate model ships and resin statues of medieval knights astride the tops of bookshelves; a cabinet of presidential memorabilia; numerous paintings of George Washington; a replica of the

Within three years of Mohler's inauguration, the faculty and administration of Southern Seminary had turned over almost completely.

last letter from the Alamo (which gasping students took to be original). Mohler's is probably the only library that contains both an original portrait of William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's adviser, and an enormous painting of Franz Joseph, the Habsburg emperor. Why a Southern Baptist would favor the company of an Anglican schemer and a Catholic autocrat is not entirely clear.

A self-conscious air pervades the library, in the jumble of cultural artifacts intended to convey worldliness; in the shelves lined with a conspicuous number of Great Books, Harvard Classics, and other pre-packaged sets that seem the fruit of a single-minded mission to conquer a body of knowledge, or at least to give that impression.

"Mohler, as aristocratic as he appears, is of very common stock," says Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and one of the original architects of the conservative takeover. "We just don't have very many aristocrats in the SBC." (Mohler's

father was a grocer.) For a denomination in which only a fraction of pastors have earned advanced degrees, Mohler's library sends an important message: "We may be fundamentalists, but we are not obscurantists." His seminary trains pastors not in the model of "Texas Tornado" J. Frank Norris, but of the genteel founder of Southern Seminary, James Boyce. In one campus building, a clothier sells blazers and ties, and a small barbershop offers Redken hair products and eyebrow waxes for \$10, apparently to encourage students to counter outsiders' stereotypes of fundamentalists.

Mohler leads by example: impeccably groomed, his voice measured, he is not the backslapping car-salesman preacher that northern evangelicals might imagine. The mainstream media adore him because he is so palatable, so polite—yet never afraid to take extreme positions. *Time's* declaration that Mohler is the "reigning intellectual" of today's evangelicalism seems an overstatement considering the array of accomplished evangelicals in academia and politics. But Alvin Plantinga or Michael Gerson would

never go on the record endorsing hormone therapy for gay fetuses or defending seven-day young-earth creationism, as Mohler has done. In a recent speech, he was pugnacious on the latter subject—in his beguiling, well-mannered way—arguing that "the exegetical defense of a 24-hour

calendar day [in Genesis] is sufficient" and taking to task such leading lights as John Stott and J. I. Packer for their more conciliatory views of the fossil record.

Mohler is not so much an intellectual or theologian as he is an articulate controversialist, a popularizer and spokesman who has branded himself as one who speaks to and for evangelicals. His multimedia finesse makes Francis Schaeffer appear amateur. His books (one is titled *He Is Not Silent*, a nod to Schaeffer) rehearse familiar arguments about the importance of maintaining a biblical worldview, and offer little in the way of original analysis—though Mohler is capable of nuanced scholarship, such as the dissection of Barth in his dissertation. Ivory-tower discourse is simply not his primary calling.

Rather, his vocation is to redefine the notion of "culture warrior." Mohler rejects the cliché of infiltrating Washington to take dominion in Christ's name. "I don't invest a lot of hope in the political sphere," he says. "I

believe in Niebuhr's analysis, and then some—evangelicals invest too much confidence in a political recovery that Scripture doesn't prescribe." Mohler prefers instead to offer a stream of commentary on a diverse range of subjects, provide the secular media with a consistent evangelical viewpoint, and give constituents talking points to defend the biblical worldview on any subject that might come their way—all while running a seminary and serving the SBC.

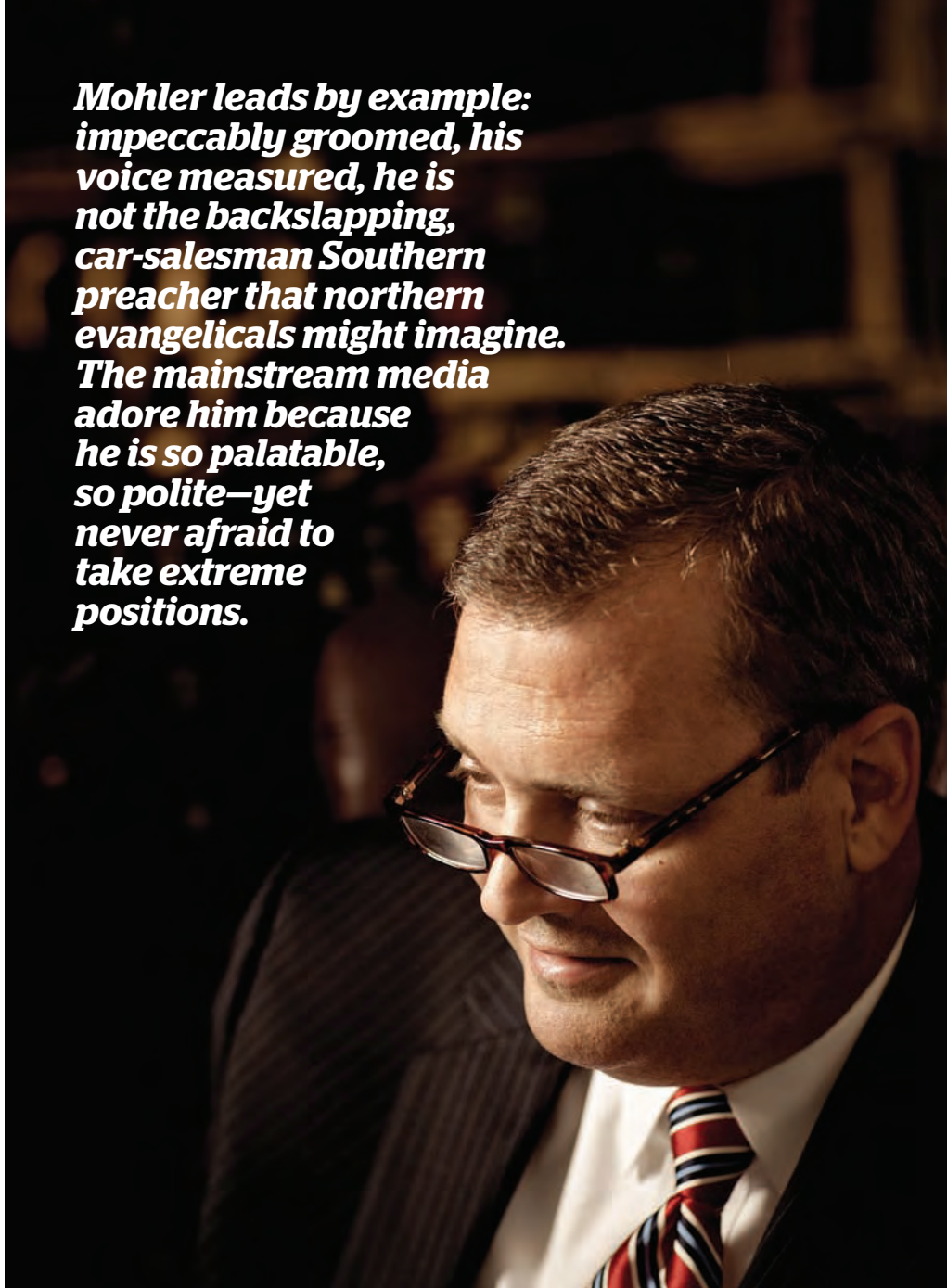
"I am always a Baptist, and with the full measure of conviction," he says. He dabbles in the parachurch world of Henry and Schaeffer, collaborating with other evangelical leaders in coalitions such as Together for the Gospel, and encourages fellow Southern Baptists to do the same: to break out of the longstanding cultural isolation of the denomination that scholar Martin Marty once called "the Catholic Church of the South," and recognize their common ground with other evangelicals. But Mohler's primary loyalty is to his mother church.

While other culture warriors maintain loose relationships with their home denominations, Mohler has placed his personal enterprises at the service of the SBC. He is teaching young Southern Baptists to use Twitter while they pastor and attend the annual convention, and to be committed SBC citizens—no matter what anyone says about young evangelicals' lack of denominational loyalty.

"I started a blog because [Mohler] had a blog," says Owen Strachan, a recent Southern graduate. "I loved what he was doing, going deep into cultural sources of the day and engaging in a conversation with them." Each year, more Southern graduates fan out across the country and the globe, preaching in the Mohler school of Reformed cultural engagement. "Al's denominational and institutional role makes his legacy very different from that of his two heroes, Schaeffer and Henry," says Russell Moore, dean of the School of Theology at Southern. "His reshaping of Southern and the course of the SBC will long outlive him in a way that is not possible with parachurch organizations."

THE 'CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE SOUTH'
Mohler was the principal drafter of the 2000 revision of the Baptist Faith and Message,

Mohler leads by example: impeccably groomed, his voice measured, he is not the backslapping, car-salesman Southern preacher that northern evangelicals might imagine. The mainstream media adore him because he is so palatable, so polite—yet never afraid to take extreme positions.



the closest document Southern Baptists have to a confession. The revision made official the convention's commitment to scriptural inerrancy and gender complementarianism, overcoming protests from the few remaining moderates that the conservative "creed" violated the Baptist principle of "soul competency," whereby each individual Christian is able and required to come to his own terms with the Bible. Yet even moderates acknowledge the historic place of confessional statements in Baptist history. "I've never agreed that Baptists are not creedal," says Bill Leonard, until recently the dean of Wake Forest Divinity School, who taught at Southern Seminary during the moderate

days. "Baptists are non-creedal—except when they decide to be."

Conservatives have conquered every major SBC body (with a few important exceptions, including Baylor University, whose moderate trustees broke from the SBC, and the Texas and Virginia state conventions, which remain in moderate control, forcing conservatives in those states to found their own conventions). Yet all is not well. Southern Baptist baptisms have fallen for the second year in a row, and everyone admits that the official membership tally—some 16 million—is a gross exaggeration of how many people show up in church on a given Sunday (perhaps by as much as half). Young people

are leaving. Church-planting has stalled.

The conservatives who led the revolution of the 1980s were unprepared for this. “They thought they’d get rid of 200,000 moderates, then would have a great majority who were inerrantists, and their theology would keep them as the largest and most thriving denomination,” says Leonard. “The thing that’s worrying them is the newer generation of pastors, bloggers, and laity, the postmodern evangelical types who do not toe the line on the things they agree on.”

Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and a longtime friend of Mohler, sees the problem as structural rather than ideological. “We exchanged a moderate, neo-orthodox, liberal bureaucracy for a more conservative, even fundamentalist bureaucracy. But I think some of the folks who are part of the bureaucracy would have been part of it regardless of who won. They are bureaucrats at heart, atheological. . . . That’s something we didn’t see, and now we have to deal with it.”

Conservatives have also learned that, now that the battles of the 1980s and 1990s are over, more theological variation remains among self-described fundamentalists than they bargained for. Those who led the first wave of the conservative resurgence—men like Paige Patterson and Adrian Rogers—were revivalist preachers who hailed from the Deep South or Southwest and favored emotional, barnstorming evangelism and pietistic theology. Mohler, on the other hand, is a cerebral, churchly, east-of-the-Mississippi kind of Baptist—and a five-point Calvinist.

Many commentators, in these pages and elsewhere, have noted the rising interest in Reformed theology among young evangelicals. In no denomination has the Calvinist revival been more striking, and more controversial, than in the SBC. Although many Southern Baptists were Calvinists in the 19th century, for the past hundred years most have feared Calvinism as an abstract bogey in a Geneva collar, threatening to divide churches over doctrinal minutiae and kill evangelism with predestinarian bile.

In the 1980s, a small number of Southern Baptist scholars began examining their

denomination’s Reformed roots. “The leaders of the conservative movement didn’t want this,” says Thomas Nettles, who teaches historical theology at Southern Seminary. “Calvinism had been demonized. When they were shown that it was Southern Baptist, that James Boyce was formulating something that was generally held by Southern Baptists, it became a matter of, ‘We’ve outgrown that.’ . . . The Calvinist movement was very small at first, but it became larger as the younger generation began to see this in the documents.”



Not Tiptoeing: *Time* called Mohler American evangelicalism’s ‘reigning intellectual.’

A year or two into Mohler’s presidency, when his intention to steer Southern seminary in a Reformed direction became clear, non-Calvinists indicted him as the main carrier of a theology they viewed as an alien spore in SBC life. However, it was too late to halt Calvinism’s growing popularity. “Calvinism had the chance to seep out into the convention in a more pervasive way, so that no one could say Southern and Mohler were the problem,” Nettles says. In a 2007 LifeWay Research study, nearly one-third of recent SBC seminary graduates self-identified as Calvinist.

Mohler believes that the only intellectually robust defense of biblical inerrancy lies in the Reformed scholasticism that emerged from the Synod of Dort (1618) and enjoyed its apogee at late-19th-century Princeton Theological Seminary, where James Boyce trained. Non-Calvinist conservatives, Mohler says, “are not aware of the basic structures of thought, rightly described as Reformed, that are necessary to protect the very gospel they insist is to be eagerly shared.” He thinks that

Reformed theology’s appeal to young people proves its unique imperviousness to the corrosive forces of 21st-century life. “If you’re a young Southern Baptist and you’ve been swimming against the tide of secularism . . . you’re going to have to have a structure of thought that’s more comprehensive than merely a deck of cards with all the right doctrines.” In this regard, Mohler is just as elitist as the moderates of old Southern: he is certain he has the truth, and those Baptists who protest simply are not initiated into the systematic splendor of Reformed thought.

“I would disagree completely,” says David Allen, dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern Seminary. “The early church affirmed inerrancy long before Calvin set foot on the planet.” Yet Mohler is correct that the theologians of old Princeton, drawing on a particular strain of Reformed theology, formulated the hyper-rationalist theology that deemed the Bible “a storehouse of facts” (in the words of Princeton theologian Charles Hodge)

and became a cornerstone of American fundamentalists’ response to modernity. “Fundamentalism of a more sophisticated sort traces its roots to Dort Calvinism,” says Hinson. (Calvin’s own theology is distinct from that of his followers. It is far from clear, for example, that he believed in limited atonement, the *L* in Dort’s famous TULIP.)

Hinson and other moderates say that Mohler misrepresents the Baptist tradition. A pietistic strain of theology that emphasized religious experience evolved parallel to the Calvinistic theology of Southern’s founders. The Puritan movement, out of which Baptists emerged, “was primarily about heart religion, not primarily scholastic in character, or obsessed with doctrine, as Mohler is,” says Hinson. To Joseph Phelps, a graduate of the old Southern who pastors a liberal Baptist church in Louisville, Mohler’s version of Baptist history is not only reductionist but also damaging to evangelism. “It’s not my experience [that seekers demand rationalist proof of the Bible],” he says. “Even if that were true, to reduce the gospel to logic

is not a fair thing to do, just because that's what people think they need to perpetuate the faith. That doesn't get you the kingdom, the mystery, and the love of God."

Among conservatives, leaders on both sides of the Calvinist chasm downplay the friction these days. "I'm more in the Radical Reformation tradition than Mohler would be," says Patterson, citing the Anabaptist heritage that his seminary celebrates. "But we've always been able to work together."

"Calvinism is a small issue," says Ed Stetzer of the SBC's LifeWay Research. "On the scale of theological diversity, it's not that big of a distinction." Yet faculty at Southern say their graduates have struggled to find pulpits in the Deep South, where fear of a Calvinist conspiracy is perhaps strongest. Moreover, the SBC's current crisis over baptismal numbers—and how to evangelize in a postmodern age—has placed theological questions front and center.

"What's scary to Reformed people is that they don't want to fall into the same decisionistic evangelism that filled our churches with non-serious people," says Nettles.

Moderates argue that historically, the SBC tolerated a range of theological and political viewpoints, and this big tent was a key to the church's success in evangelism. "What's always held Southern Baptist churches together has not been agreement on theology or gender roles, but their common commitment to missions," says Diana Garland, former dean of Southern's defunct School of Social Work, now dean of a similar school at Baylor. Garland notes that even today, many SBC-affiliated churches have members who give money to moderate breakaway organizations, such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. "They also give to the SBC because of a long sense of loyalty to the mission-sending organization, not because they agree or even understand what's going on in the leadership," she says. "There's a cultural identity and loyalty that's far deeper than beliefs and agreement."

In Mohler's view, that "cultural identity" concealed rampant heterodoxy for far too long—and in the SBC of the 21st century, cultural unity is a thing of the past. He argues that ethnic and religious diversity in the South has undermined the "tribal identity" on which the SBC based its traditional strength.

If Southern Baptists want their churches to thrive, Mohler says, they must reclaim the sectarian mentality of the New Testament, and trade tribal identity for firm theological commitment. Despite the affection that Mohler has for the "cradle to grave" edifice of SBC programs that nurtured him, he has compared these with other outmoded structures based on business models of the 1950s, like General Motors and the suburban shopping mall.

After the 2009 convention, SBC president Johnny Hunt appointed a "Great Commission Resurgence Task Force" to study how

If Southern Baptists want their churches to thrive, Mohler says, they must reclaim the sectarian mentality of the New Testament, and trade tribal identity for firm theological commitment.

conservatives could follow their theological victory with an overhaul of convention structure. The Task Force Report, drafted primarily by Mohler, proposed reforming the funding mechanism that has channeled money from SBC churches to state conventions and national mission boards, schools, and agencies since 1925: the Cooperative Program (CP). Such changes would allow congregations to count as "Great Commission Giving" the money they send directly to organizations such as the International Mission Board—encouraging them to bypass the CP, which would normally give some of the money to state conventions. Furthermore, the report recommended dissolving the "cooperative agreements" between state conventions and the CP in order to reduce the funds remaining in the hands of state conventions and—in theory, at least—to free up financial support for church-planting in northern and western regions where the SBC is weak.

At the June convention in Orlando, the report passed (in a slightly amended form) by a margin of three to one—but only after contentious debate. Critics charge that the reforms will undermine the evangelism that Southern Baptists must do in their own backyards. Pastors of small Southern Baptist churches—the median congregation reports a weekly attendance of 74—say the changes leave them in the lurch, as small churches

depend far more on money from state associations than do megachurches (whose interests, these critics note, were well represented on the Task Force). Others say the report offered no more than bureaucratic reshuffling, and did not go far enough.

Akin stresses that in an enormous organization like the SBC, no change happens quickly. But when asked which models of church-planting and evangelism the Task Force admired, his answer was telling. "We have looked at—we have no intention of emulating them at every point—Acts 29 and Redeemer Presbyterian [Church in Manhattan]," he says, naming two of the most prominent Reformed evangelical church-planting bodies in the country. "We are this big, monstrous aircraft carrier, and they're both speedboats, but we've been watching them." Although the main personality associated with Acts 29, Mark Driscoll of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, sticks in the craw of many

Southern Baptists for his harsh language and rejection of teetotalism, his philosophy of church-planting—based on theological rigor, tight organization, and cutting-edge cultural engagement—may be the best way to inspire young Southern Baptists and produce the baptismal numbers that convince SBC skeptics. "When you're looking for theologically vibrant, healthy models that lead to growing churches, where else are you going to look?" asks Mohler.

Advocates of the Task Force Report stick to their populist rhetoric, assuring critics that their hearts, and the true power of the SBC, lie with the local church. But few Southern Baptists doubt the power of the denominational apparatus. If they did, they would give up their time-honored tradition of fighting over it. Mohler's career suggests that, in the hands of a single-minded cultural strategist, denominational institutions may become the new engines of a subtler, smarter—yet doggedly fundamentalist—confrontation with postmodern secular culture. Drop the culture war terminology, if you like—but whatever it is that Al Mohler is doing, D. James Kennedy and Francis Schaeffer would approve. ☩

Molly Worthen is a writer and journalist finishing her Ph.D. in American religious history at Yale University.



A Covenant with the Earth

Why the work of Christ makes all the difference in our care of creation. By Matthew Farrelly

THE OIL SPILL in the Gulf of Mexico is the most recent clear and present witness that environmental issues are not the intellectual hobby of the dilettante, but instead have *everything* to do with life and death.

Life: The holistic health and daily provision of countless men, women, and children of the Gulf region have been threatened. Death: human deaths are enough, let alone the death of the Gulf's ecosystem, once teeming with biodiversity. While recent reports suggest that the spill is dissipating much faster than we had feared, we won't know the full effects for years. And the present scope of the disaster has been bad enough, almost unfathomable.

The oil spill has raised the environmental consciousness of the American public. But if publishing trends are any indication, evangelicals' concern for the environment was surging even before April 20. In the past year, practically every evangelical publishing house has published or re-released a book on creation care. Some, frankly, are naïve: While the Bible contains many references to rivers, seas, mountains, and animals, and portrays a God who cares for the sparrow and a Son who commonly used agrarian images in his teachings, this does not qualify God as "green." Other books, thankfully, mine rich biblical themes.

Let me highlight four of these books, and then suggest one biblical theme worth exploring more deeply and broadly as we seek to learn what it means to care for creation *as Christians*.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

Of the four books I highlight, three represent a common theology of creation care.

One of the most popular said books is Matthew Sleeth's *The Gospel According to the Earth: Why the Good Book Is a Green Book*, released by

HarperOne this March. A former ER doctor, Sleeth has been one of the more effective evangelists for creation care in the evangelical movement, a popular speaker on many Christian college campuses.

His book recounts the roots of his environmental conversion: "So, I asked myself, *What, if anything, does the Bible have to say about caring for the earth?*" He read the Bible from cover to cover, underlining everything that had to do with nature. "What I ended up with was an underlined Bible," he writes. Sleeth's intent is "[to explore] some of the deepest themes of Scripture—repeating patterns . . . that counsel us to lead lives closer to the example set by Jesus."

Unfortunately, with some exceptions, Sleeth offers a piecemeal collection of anecdotes and biblical passages that are often decontextualized or merely contain nature imagery. For example, in examining the theme of work in Genesis 1–3, Sleeth challenges us to rethink our captivity to American consumerism and recommit to simple living. These are good admonitions, but his interaction with the Bible is frustratingly cutesy. He imagines the apple in Genesis 3 as a "labor-saving device" and Adam's temptation as avoiding the "honest work" that God prepared for him. From this, Sleeth challenges our overdependence on labor-saving devices (think electric dryers) and provides practical ways we can care for creation by adopting "retro-technology" (think clotheslines).

Strangely, what motivated Sleeth's family to live in retro was "to honor the commandment to tend and care for the garden." However, he continues, "It is not the primary reason we continue to do it. *We do this labor-increasing activity because it gives us more life.*" But doesn't honoring God and his commands always give us more life?

He calls for water conservation due to its ubiquity in Scripture: the Flood, human development in the waters of the womb, Jesus' "rebirth" (not "resurrection"?), and the fact that salvation is a rebirth through "water and spirit." Curiously, Sleeth notes how water is also a symbol of chaos, darkness, and danger in the ancient world, but emphasizes its positive associations in John 3, in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus. But amassing texts that include nature symbols

does not suffice for supporting creation care.

Sleeth does call us to live simply, communally, and to truly rest—all biblical themes. In a chapter titled “Gleaning,” he challenges readers to avoid wasting food and other resources. The Book of Ruth is the controlling text that he paraphrases into a modern scenario. Leviticus and Deuteronomy are his texts for discussing God’s care for the widow and stranger, as well as God’s intention for the land and its resources. That’s more like it. I only wish Sleeth would have done this more.

Like Sleeth, Jonathan Merritt—in *Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet* (Faith Words, April 2010)—writes with humility and charity. He addresses the political, cultural, and biblical assumptions that many of us hold, and dismisses faddish “pop environmentalism” for what he calls a “Deeper Shade of Green,” a creation care approach that is grounded in God’s Word.

Merritt brings his seminary education to bear in offering thoughtful, researched, and faithful engagement with the Bible and its original cultures. For example, he describes humanity’s role as divine monarchs who are to steward the earth on God’s behalf. Merritt also reflects on the theological implications of the Incarnation, one of which is God’s affirmation and love for the physical world.

His criticisms of pop eschatology are also refreshing; however, his own end-times reflections are a little confusing. He writes, “*Future knowledge* doesn’t change our present obligations,” and, “*The knowledge* of a returning Master does not free us from our earthly obligations; it calls us to them” (emphases mine). While I agree with the latter point, it’s more true to say that biblical eschatology is not concerned for the present because of any *knowledge* we possess, but rather because God’s future is a reality that *has already broken into the present* through Jesus.

In *Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God’s People* (Judson, February 2010), Scott C. Sabin doesn’t articulate as much as assume that the Bible justifies caring for creation. The book describes his epiphany about the inseparable relationship between poverty and the environment, a connection he made through his work as president of the nonprofit Plant With Purpose.

At one point, Sabin does discuss standard creation care texts, but he is not tempted to squeeze unnatural interpretations in to suit his ends. His overarching message is that we must jettison a self-centered gospel and embrace a cosmic one. Sabin points out the economic details in the lives of the people Jesus encountered. In our efforts

to move to the spiritual application of Jesus’ interactions, Sabin says, we often pass by the flesh-and-bone poor and dirty—much like the priest and Levite passed the half-dead man lying on the road to Jericho (Luke 10). Overall, Sabin’s book is a wonderful vignette of how the church is striving to embody new creation in the present.

Steven Bouma-Prediger’s *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Baker Academic) is the newly released second edition of a well-respected work from 2001, when creation

care was not to any great extent on the evangelical radar. *For the Beauty of the Earth* is by far the most commendable of the four books. (Both Merritt and Sabin lean heavily on the first edition in their respective works.) Bouma-Prediger brings together well-researched biblical study and solid ecological, philosophical, and poetic material. He begins by having readers focus on whatever backyard they call “home.” He says that we Westerners do not have an ecological sense of place—we are ignorant of the state of our land—and must renew our affections for our own “placed-ness.” He writes, “We care for only what we love. We love only what we know. We truly know only what we experience.”

Accessibly and engagingly, he outlines an ecological state of the union and then surveys a biblical view of ecology. He says his interpretation is “rooted in the text, warranted by what we know of the time and place and culture of that now-ancient world of meaning, and put into explicit conversation with the questions and challenges of our time . . . a faithful attempt to hear the message of Scripture, while attentive to a groaning earth.” He largely succeeds, for he faithfully treats texts in light of the larger biblical narrative and the cultures in which they were written.

CREATION AND COVENANT

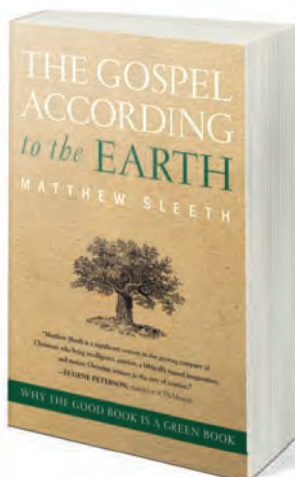
All of these books suggest that the Bible is indeed a rich resource for understanding God’s love for his creation. But one theme deserving greater attention from evangelicals—especially if we aim to ground our creation care *in Christ*—is covenant.

Most everyone today understands that the “dominion” described in Genesis 1 is really about stewardship of creation. Created in God’s image, we were designed to function as God’s representatives.

In fact, the original Hebrew in Genesis 1 and 2 implies that we are to be both *kingly* and *priestly* representatives. Genesis 2:15 says, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden *to work* it and *keep* it” (ESV, emphasis mine). This language is used later in the Old Testament to describe the priests’ and Levites’ service in the tabernacle (Num. 3:7–8; 18:7). In a profound way, then, to be a human is to be a priest. We have been *placed* within creation to mediate God’s presence, embody God’s posture, and enact God’s purposes on the earth. And, like priests, we offer creation back to God; we ought not to regard any of our earthly labors as profane or secular, but as sacred service to God on behalf of the world.

Ellen F. Davis, professor of Bible and practical theology at Duke Divinity School, has suggested that instead of *dominion*, we translate the original Hebrew verb as “exercise skilled mastery.” What we do with creation matters to God. Do we seek to work and shape it faithfully and beautifully *in relationship* with God and his purposes for the world, or, perversely, to satisfy our selfish desires?

Having a relationship with God, biblically speaking, is always understood in the context of *covenant*.



Biblical covenants are not unlike contracts, but they are much more personal in nature. Covenant faithfulness brought blessing; unfaithfulness, a curse. And significantly, a third party always mediated and served as witness.

Just as God created Adam and Eve to be priests in relationship with him, so too God called Israel into covenant relationship with himself. But Israel was to be a *kingdom* of priests. God entered into this relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 20) with the appropriate stipulations, blessings, and curses (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28), as well as with a third party witness: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God . . . by loving the Lord your God . . . then you shall live

In a profound way, then, to be human is to be a priest. We have been placed within the creation to mediate God’s presence, embody God’s posture, and enact God’s purposes in the earth.

and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it . . . I call heaven and earth to witness against you today” (Deut. 30:15–20; emphasis mine). Later, the Prophets call heaven and earth as witnesses against unfaithful Israel in calling them to repent (e.g., Isa. 1:2; Mic. 1:2; 6:2).

Surveying covenant history, it becomes apparent that the relationship between human beings and the land is crucial. The ecological state of the land is dependent on Israel’s relationship with Yahweh; the land responds to both the sinfulness and holiness of God’s people.

For example, in the early Genesis account, the divine mandate continued on through Adam’s descendants. Scripture carefully notes that Adam’s son Seth inherits his father’s “image and likeness” (Gen. 5:3). From Seth’s line comes Noah, who is meant to bring relief to the cursed earth: “*Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands*” (Gen. 5:29).

God reaffirms the Adamic covenant with Noah, a new Adam. Genesis 9 tells us that the covenant is between three parties: the Lord, Noah, and the entire creation: “And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you *and every living creature* . . .

for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.’” (v. 12–13).

But Noah is not able to bring ultimate relief to the earth. Isaiah 24 paints a picture of the earth lying defiled because of sin: “for they have . . . broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth” (24:5–6).

THE TREE AND THE CROSS

Despite the failures of Adam, Noah, and Israel, the Prophets spoke of a time of full and final

restoration, not only for Israel and all humanity but also for the entire cosmos. As Hosea beautifully writes, “And I will make for them a covenant on that day *with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things on the ground*. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever” (2:18–19; see also Isa. 11; 43:16–20; 51:3; 65:17, 25; Ezek. 36–37; 47; Rev. 21–22).

The good news is that the promised new covenant has been fulfilled in Israel’s Messiah—Jesus. In Christ’s death and resurrection, the curse on humanity and all of creation has been lifted. The church is the new Israel, where this new creation has begun. God has been faithful to his covenant even when his people have not.

Thus, in Jesus, the new creation has dawned, and God’s future world has broken into the present! The church, as Christ’s body, is to embody the new creation, as the groaning creation stands “on tiptoe” (to borrow J. B. Phillips’s translation of Romans 8:19), awaiting the final glorification

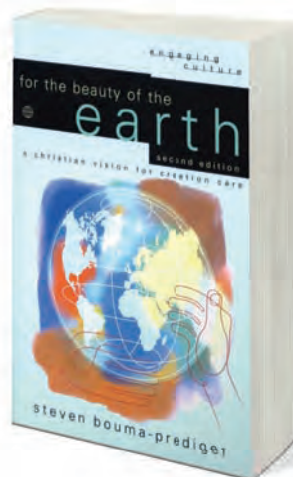
of God’s children. All of our ethics are to be lived out from this all-at-once future and present reality as we await the final consummation at Christ’s second coming.

In light of the new covenant, all of our creation care is grounded in Christ. It is not grounded in our fear of ecological destruction or some romanticized view of nature—nor in political correctness. Because Christ has ushered us into this new covenant—between God and us and all of creation—our relationship to creation is inherently *in Christ*. The image of Adam has been reframed, restructured, and re-engineered in Christ’s image. Thus, our “dominion” and “tending and keeping” of the earth is where we now work *as* new creation and *for* new creation. We are a restored kingdom of priests, and part of our mediation is between God and “every living creature,” even the land itself.

As the spate of recent creation-care books shows, evangelicals are thinking more deeply and acting more faithfully than ever before when it comes to creation care. But I believe our concern should be shaped first and foremost by this great redemptive narrative that God has fulfilled in Christ, and is still telling through Christ’s body, the church, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I wear a Celtic cross that shows Adam and Eve under the tree in the Garden, which, as the Tree of Life, points to the Cross of Christ. The couple looks like they are grasping the tree. Christian environmental stewardship must always take place at the foot of the Cross, where we grasp that the old is passing away, and that all things—people, creatures, and the land—are becoming new. ✚

Matthew Farrelly teaches Bible and logic at Covenant Classical School in Naperville, Illinois.



Joni Eareckson Tada, now facing breast cancer and chronic pain, talks about the blessings of suffering. Interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

ONI EARECKSON TADA might be mistaken for a modern-day Job. The disabilities advocate was severely paralyzed in a diving accident at age 17. For the past ten years, she has endured chronic pain. Now, at age 60, she confronts breast cancer. Sounding upbeat and confident after surgery, she spoke with *Christianity Today* about her latest book, *A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God's Sovereignty* (David C. Cook), where she outlines her theology of suffering.

How has your perspective on suffering and healing changed since your breast cancer diagnosis?

Thankfully, it hasn't changed at all. You examine Scripture again and follow every passage regarding healing. I did that with my quadriplegia, and I did that again 10 years ago, when I embarked on a whole new life of chronic pain. Just a month ago, getting diagnosed with breast cancer, I looked at those same Scriptures, and God's words do not change.

Even though it seems like a lot is being piled on, I keep thinking about 1 Peter 2:21: "To these hardships you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps."

Those steps most often lead Christians not to miraculous, divine interventions but directly into the fellowship of suffering. In a way, I've been drawn closer to the Savior, even with this breast cancer. There are things about his character that I wasn't seeing a year ago or even six months ago. That tells me that I'm still growing and being transformed. First Peter 2:21 is a good rule of thumb for any Christian struggling to understand God's purposes in hardship.

Can you elaborate on new ways you think about God's character?

In John 14, Jesus says, "Anyone who has faith in me will do . . . even greater things than these." We tend to think Jesus was talking about miracles, as if Jesus were saying, "Hey guys, look at these miracles! One day, you'll do many more miracles than me!"

The thing that Jesus was doing wasn't necessarily the miracles. He was giving the gospel; he was advancing his kingdom; he was reclaiming the earth as rightfully his. When Jesus gave that promise, he was saying, "I'm giving you a job to do, my Father and I want the gospel to go forth, and I promise you'll have everything you need to get that job done, and you'll do an even better job than me." Jesus ministered for three years, and at the end, he had a handful of disciples who half-believed in him. After Jesus went to heaven and the Holy Spirit came down—my goodness, Peter preaches one sermon and thousands believe. That's the greater thing that God wants us to do.

That's what I have been seeing this past month. Every x-ray technician, every nurse, every doctor's secretary, every clinician, every person I meet in nuclear medicine and at the MRI—it's amazing how many opportunities I've been given to see people hungry and thirsty for Christ. I knew that was true before, but there seems to be something special that is accompanying this diagnosis. I'm just so amazed by people asking me, "How can you approach this breast cancer with such confidence in a God who allows it?" And I'm being given the chance to answer.

The greater thing is not the miracle; it's the advancement of the gospel, it's the giving of the kingdom, reclaiming what is rightfully Christ's.

You have hinted at a classic question: How can a good God allow such suffering in the world? How does your latest book, on God's sovereignty, address that?

When people ask that question—even I struggle with that question—we aren't accepting the

{ THE CT INTERVIEW }

Something Greater Than Healing

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fact that this earth is wired to be difficult. The rule of thumb is that we experience much suffering because we live in a fallen world, and it is groaning under the weight of a heavy curse. If God being good means he has to get rid of sin, it means he would have to get rid of sinners. God is a God of great generosity and great mercy, so he is keeping the execution of suffering. He's not closing the curtain on suffering until there is more time to gather more people into the fold of Christ's fellowship.

The greater thing Jesus promises we can do is not the miracle, but the advancement of the gospel, reclaiming what is rightfully his.

That answer suits me, and I think it would suit others if they stop and think: *Suffering is connected to sin; if God were to get rid of suffering, he'd have to get rid of sin, and then he'd have to get rid of sinners—and God is too merciful to do that.*

Is it different when the cause of suffering is natural? For instance, you might not have

control over getting breast cancer. Do you cope differently from someone who has something done to her by another person? Certainly I could have controlled this one; I should have gotten a mammogram five years ago. I have no one to blame but myself. I can't point the finger at secondhand smoke in restaurants. I should've gotten a mammogram, and I did not. I failed to do it, and I regret that. (If I were to tell your female readers anything, I'd say, "Get a mammogram.")

sorts of things that he doesn't approve of. He doesn't approve of my spinal-cord injury or my cancer, but in his sovereign decree he has allowed them. I don't care if you use *permit*, *allow*, or *ordained*; it's all the same thing. Ultimately it goes back to God being in charge. I don't think there is a real difference.

Suffering is hardship and heartache. It's one package. Yes, God could have prevented it. He could prevent a thief from breaking in and stealing, he could prevent a wicked man with a gun from firing it, and he could have prevented my cancer. He could have put in my heart: *Go get a mammogram*. If he chooses to allow these things to occur, it doesn't mean he's any less caring or compassionate. His will, purpose, and sovereign design may be a bit more obscure and enigmatic on this side of eternity.

When you discovered you had breast cancer, was your reaction different from all your previous experiences of suffering?

I don't fall apart emotionally. There's a lump. Wow, okay, let's get this taken care of. I broke my neck. Yikes. What is this going to mean? Okay, let's buckle down and move forward.



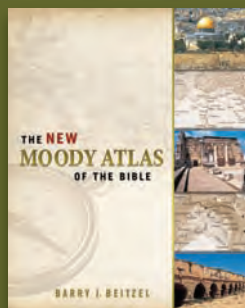
Best Christian Books of 2010 Presented by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association



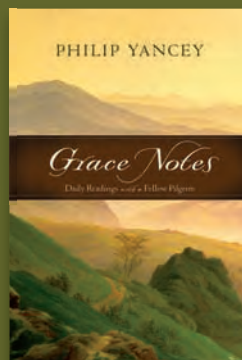
FICTION
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Christa Parrish
Bethany House/Baker Publishing Group



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GRACE NOTES
Philip Yancey | Zondervan



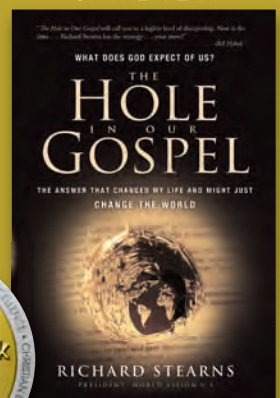
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I'm the kind of person who cannot allow those emotions to go down the grim path of despair. It's too deep of a miry pit. I'd rather face life head-on and with full force and take things as they come, learn from those things, and move forward.

How should we respond to someone who is suffering?

It's important to follow injunctions from God's Word: Go to the elders, be anointed with oil, and confess sin. If you feel you need to go to a special prayer service, by all means attend it. Have a pastor anoint you with oil and lay hands on you. After you do, you have to keep on living. That's what happened to me when I was first injured. I confessed sin and was anointed with oil. Do I sit around for my hands and feet to get the message? I have to live in the meantime. If you feel led to, pray and seek healing, but keep living while you're looking for the healing.

Even if the focus is on living, shouldn't Christians prepare themselves for further suffering and death?

None of us, in our culture of comfort, know how to prepare ourselves for dying, but that's what we should do every day. Every single day, we die a thousand deaths. We don't just walk through the valley of the shadow of death when we get a medical report or when we survive a stroke. We go through the valley of the shadow of death every time we say no to our selfish desires. When we say yes to the grace of God, we are learning how to die.

This past weekend, I was singing hymns with friends. One of my favorites is "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," but the words in the hymnal we were using had been changed. They took out the verse on death: (singing) "Death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side." They exchanged the wonderfully rich, pithy, deep, hard words with something vague like, "Help me through until the other side." They extricated those words about death and hell's destruction. Why do that? We need to learn how to die every day. Suffering does that. It prepares us. Every time we go to sleep, it's a rehearsal of the day when our eyes will ultimately close and we wake up on the side of eternity.

What teachings of Jesus especially help you understand suffering?

There's the portion of Scripture in Matthew 18 where Jesus says, "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out." Here Jesus, the one who delighted in healing hands that could not work, restoring feet that could not walk, giving sight to eyes that could not see—here he is, saying cut off your hand, gouge out your eyes, *if* these things are causing you to sin. Jesus underscores his priority that yes, the physical body counts, but it does not trump the health of the soul.

When people ask about healing, I'm less interested in the physical and more interested in healing in my heart. Pray that I get rid of my lazy attitude about God's Word and prayer, of brute pride—set me free from self-centeredness. Those are more important, because Jesus thought they were more important. +

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for "Something Greater Than Healing," a Bible study based on this article.



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{ PHOTO ESSAY }

Cape Cod's
newly completed
**Church of the
Transfiguration**
embodies the
belief that beauty
can nurture our
communion
with God.

Interview
by David Neff

Photography
by Gary Gnidovic

The Art of Glory



People Look East: This photomontage shows the Church of the Transfiguration's art-packed interior, culminating at the eastern wall with a monumental mosaic of Christ in glory.

THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION, located near picturesque Rock Harbor on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, may be the most art-intensive worship space built in recent years. Everywhere you look there seems to be carved stone, cast bronze, mosaic, fresco, or stained glass.

But the Church of the Transfiguration is art-intensive in another way: From the beginning, the worshipping community has attracted members with an artistic impulse. The Community of Jesus, the intentional ecumenical community that worships here, is widely known for the quality of its musical ministry—from a choir that has toured in 24 countries and produced 45 CDs to a world champion marching band.

As the community built its new structure, it retained master artists in traditional media and apprenticed members to those artists.

As a result, the community not only learned new skills and partly underwrote the building with sweat equity, it also deepened the community's creative spirituality. When the community outgrew its original worship space, it thought carefully not only about what worship activity would happen in the new space, but also about what that new worship space would say, what its witness would be. Thus, the building's focus on art with a biblical message.

The church building was dedicated in June 2000, and in June 2010, the congregation celebrated the completion of the extensive artwork. *Christianity Today* editor in chief David Neff interviewed Community of Jesus spokesperson Blair Tingley about the biblical message of the church's art.

What is the point of all the art in this church?

When we thought about the art, the fundamental thing we wanted



was for it to teach the Bible. It needed to be a teaching church that would recount the history of salvation from Genesis to Revelation.

In addition, we wanted the art to support and illuminate the Easter mystery—hence the centrality of the altar—and give glory to God.

Parallel to that is the celebration of creation. That's what you see when you approach the church's atrium. The exterior of the church celebrates the beauty of creation as recounted in Genesis. The first two verses in the Bible, which talk about God's Spirit hovering over the chaos, are portrayed on the lintel over the door. The front doors show Adam and Eve standing beside the Tree of Life. This celebrates



the beauty of God's work before sin. In the atrium, each of the carved stone capitals on the pillars celebrates a different day of creation.

I noticed Garden of Eden imagery just inside the front doors, too.

A Tree of Life mosaic starts on the floor right at the doors and carries on the full length of the center aisle. Then it bursts into full flower at the altar.

Embedded in that tree are different portions of the Bible story. Because the church tells the story of salvation, the first thing we do is show the need for salvation. We recount the story of Cain and Abel in mosaic on the floor at the very opening of the doors.

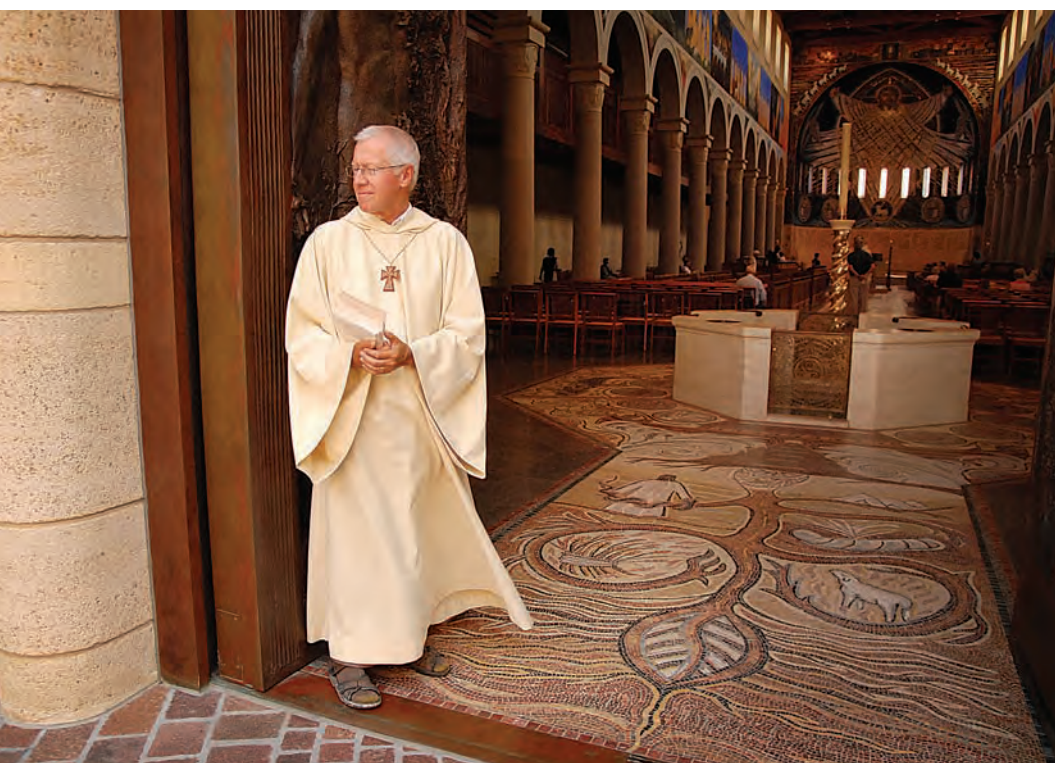
Floor Show: Glow from the west wall's oculus window enlivens the Tree of Life processional path that also features Moses and Elijah, witnesses to the Transfiguration.

It Loves to Tell the Story: True fresco paintings depict scenes from the life of Christ, beginning (from right) with the visit of the Magi and Jesus' baptism, followed by the wedding at Cana and four other miracles. Alternate paintings show people from every nation traveling to heaven.

Then you come to the baptismal font, which is large, made of marble, and eight-sided. The theme of the baptismal font is the Trinity enlivening the newly baptized. Here Christians are reborn. That's a re-gensis. On the floor surrounding the font is the story of Noah and the Flood, another of God's works of salvation. We have embedded in the Noah story 42 aquatic animals from the Cape Cod area. That gives salvation a concrete context. Yes, salvation occurs everywhere, but the art emphasizes that it happens in this place.

As you walk toward the east end of the church, there are medallions to illustrate the stories of Moses and Elijah and that outline our need for salvation.





Welcome to Worship: Usher Eric Cragg greets worshipers at the church's main doors. In the church's center aisle, the pulpit holds the gospel book (below), with its carved cover that presents the traditional symbols of the four evangelists.

The next main piece of liturgical furniture is the pulpit or ambo, from which we proclaim the Word of God. In the floor surrounding the lectern is the story of Jonah and the whale, a typology for Christ's three days in the tomb.

Then we process toward the altar, which is housed in a conch-shaped terminus wall at the east end. On the floor you see the Tree of Life bursting into full flower and fruit, symbolic of paradise.

Does the art on the walls have a similar thematic flow to the art on the floor?

We have fresco murals painted in the



part of the wall beneath the windows and above the columns and arches.

On the north wall are scenes from the life of Christ in chronological order: Jesus' baptism, the wedding at Cana, and some other stories of Jesus' miracles.

On the south wall, the mural begins with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and then tells the story of the Passion through the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, ending in Pentecost.

Between the scenes from the life of Christ, we have representations of all nations and tribes coming to the heavenly city. The picture is taken from both Isaiah and Revelation.

Beneath the rectangular murals are triangular areas called spandrels. In those spandrels are Old Testament images that relate to the New Testament images just above them. For example, underneath the Last Supper is Melchizedek offering bread and wine, and Abraham ready to sacrifice Isaac.

On the west wall is a contemporary depiction in glass of Christ's glory at the moment of his transfiguration.

That's where your church takes its name from. How did you come to name this the Church of the Transfiguration?

A key idea that drives our community is that we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ. We are, or should be, reflecting the glory of Christ in every element of everything our community does, whether it's the church building

or the way we bake a cake or clean our homes. Doing all things for the glory of God has been a foundational ethos.

When Christ went up the mountain and was transfigured, his disciples witnessed his heavenly glory for the first time. The image provides a good balance to the art at the far end of the church, where we picture Christ returning in glory. So those two scenes and the idea that all of us are to reflect his glory led to the naming of the church.

When you visit the church, though, the Transfiguration isn't what you notice first.

Yes, what you notice is Christ in glory in the apse, the half-dome at the far end of the church. The picture is taken from Revelation. Christ is portrayed coming again, with his arms outstretched. He has two seraphim with him, one on each side, and 12 trees beneath him, which are symbolic of the Tree of Life.

Above him we show the heavenly Jerusalem, the new city where we're headed. Processing in through the gate of the heavenly Jerusalem are 12 sheep, symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel, and peoples of all nations coming to the heavenly city and to the Lamb. Way above that is the Alpha and Omega, Jesus Christ, the first and last.

How has participation in all this art changed community members?

Creativity and artistic leanings have been part of the community since its first days in the late 1960s. One of our founders, Mother Cay, had a strong feeling that the Spirit of God inspired the spirit of creativity and that we were all nurtured by the role of beauty in communicating with God.

When we began to build the church, the depth and breadth of artistic understanding and expression increased enormously through that process. More than half the community members were involved in the arts. Whether it was being trained by professional artists or even helping the guilds who were trained by the professional artists, it enriched our

community's own artistic understanding.

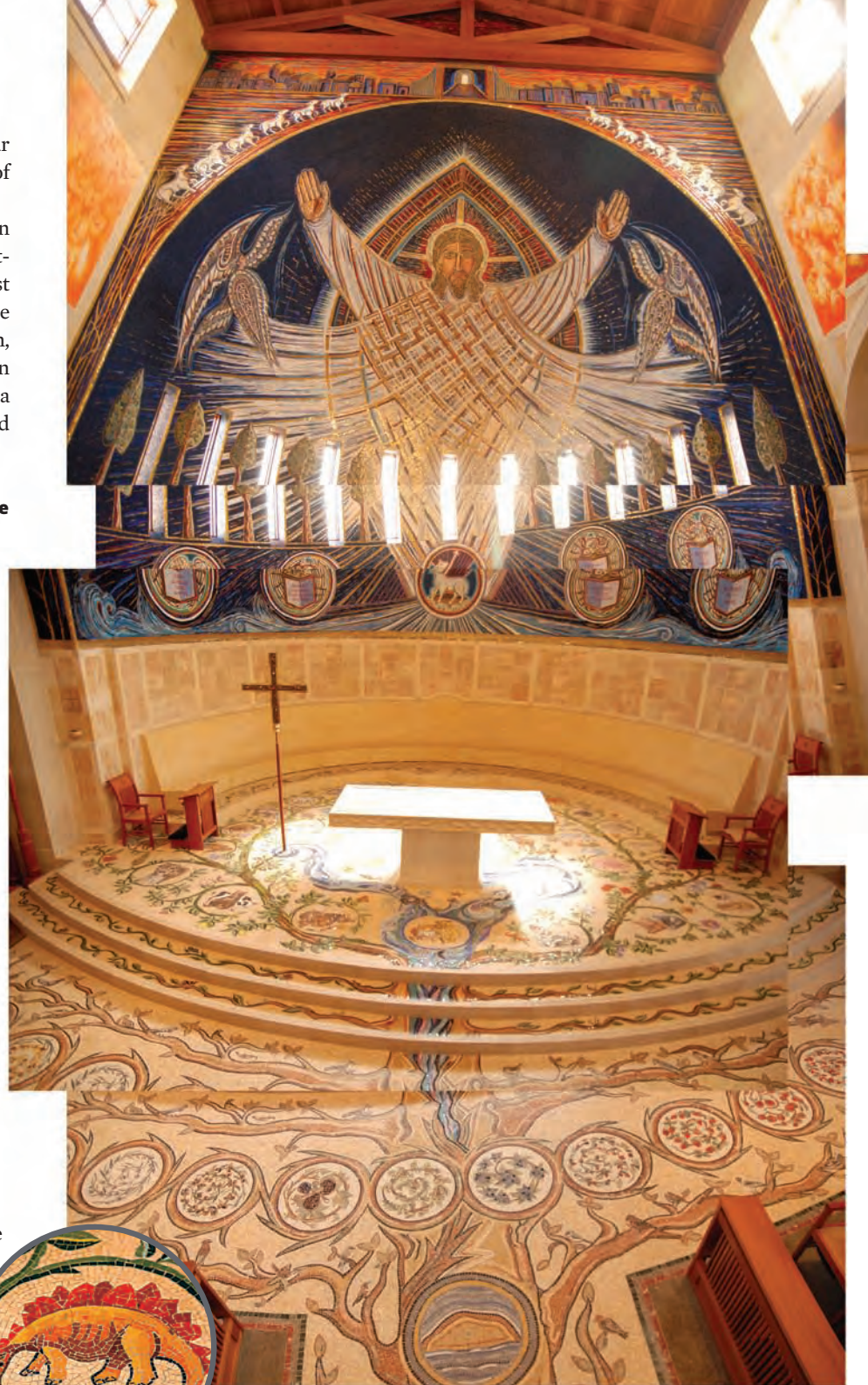
It also inspired additional creativity that wasn't necessarily directly related to the craft they were studying. Some people who trained in the mosaic guild have gone on to express themselves through costume design for our theater guild.

You talk about beauty as a channel for get-

Banqueting Table: Christ returns in glory above the altar, while the Tree of Life bursts into full bloom around its base, linking the Eucharist to the heavenly banquet of joy and peace. Inset: Stegosaurus in paradise.

ting to know God. Has that experience also been deepened in the community?

Absolutely. The whole notion of beauty being a way through which we can worship and receive a sense of God's love has been



FAST FACTS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Groundbreaking: November 1, 1997

Dedication: June 17, 2000

Completion of the art: June 2010

Seating capacity: 540

Members of the community: 281

Church height: 55 feet

Church width: 72 feet

Church length: 182 feet

**Building cost, not including
donated labor:** \$10 million

**Estimated value of donated
labor:** \$1.5 million

Primary building material: Limestone

foundational. It has only increased as the arts themselves have increased.

What impact does the new church have on visitors?

When I am giving tours and we round the corner of the community's white clapboard buildings, the view of this stone basilica is often unexpected. People aren't anticipating what they run into visually. The nature of the stone and the simplicity of the structure give it a timeless quality. The simple basilica shape allows us to be timeless in a way that a Gothic structure wouldn't.

I often say when I am giving tours that all

After a Service: Below, children enjoy the atrium fountain. Upper right, ringers pull the 10 change-ringing bells imported from a foundry in London, while a 4,000-pound bronze angel atop the bell tower watches over the church.

Christians can find this style of architecture in their heritage. If they trace their family tree back far enough, they'll find a basilica. We wanted to have a church that was welcoming to all Christians, that all Christians would feel at home in, by virtue of the fact that it wasn't exclusive to a particular branch of Christianity.

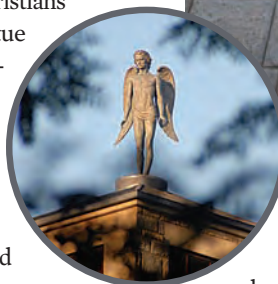
In addition to looking back to the ancient and traditional, we wanted the church to have a fresh voice architecturally and artistically, to have something contemporary to say. So there is modern expression throughout the church.

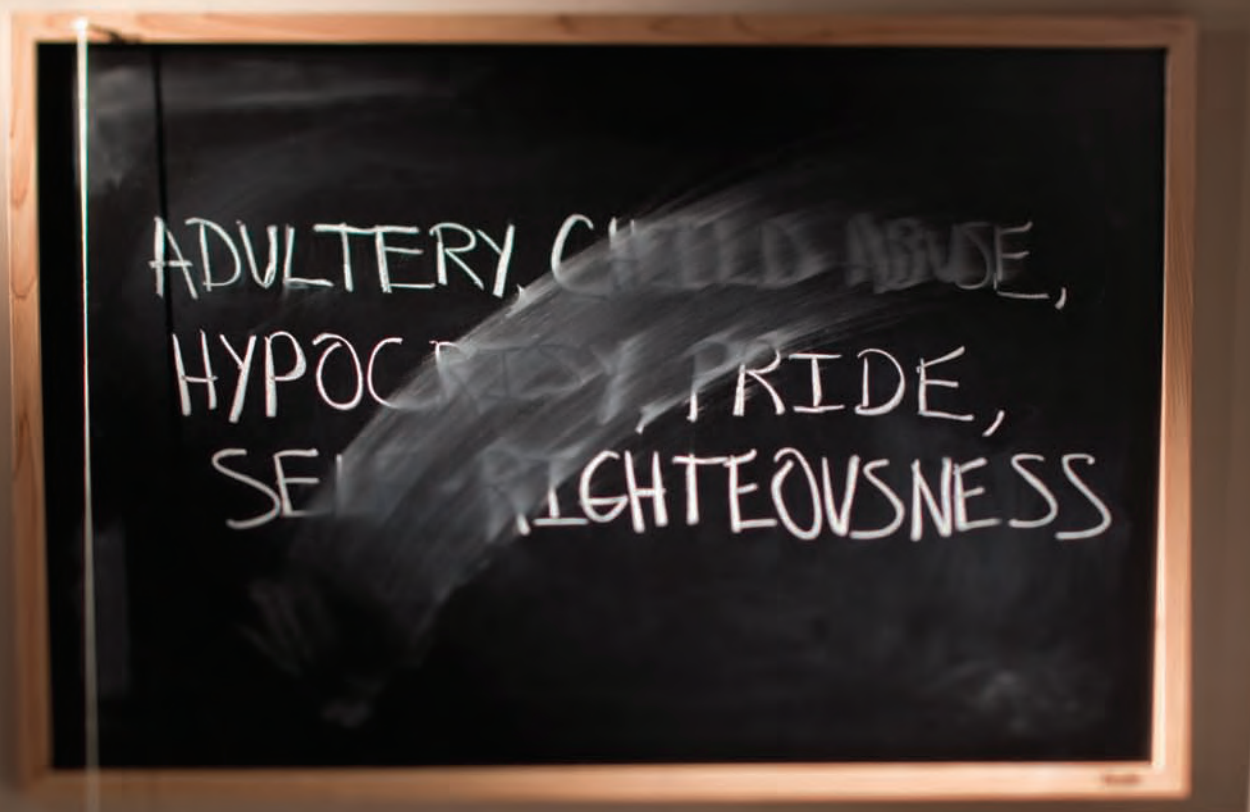
How does the building reach out to others?

That was why we wanted a teaching building

that spoke eloquently and majestically of God's work through human history.

The church is open. Our services are public. We welcome people to join us for worship and prayer, and to experience the love of Christ. It's a church that is built to be shared.





{ ETHICS }

How Far Should Forgiveness Go?

Seventy times seven? I can barely forgive some corrupt clergy once.
By Christine A. Scheller



“Forgiving love is a possibility only for those who know that they are not good, who feel themselves in need of divine mercy, who live in a dimension deeper and higher than that of moral idealism, feel themselves as well as their fellow men convicted of sin by a holy God and know that the differences between the good man and the bad man are insignificant in his sight.”

REINHOLD NIEBUHR, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*

WISH I COULD BELIEVE every one of these words from Reinhold Niebuhr. Instinctually, I don’t, wishing instead for Dante’s hell for certain kinds of sinners—like corrupt pastors who egregiously violate their calling and never repent. In my unregenerate opinion, I believe these types of sinners should be relegated to the eighth and ninth

circles of Dante’s *Inferno*.

I’ve read numerous books on forgiveness. Some of them lead me to conclude that the authors have never known the kind of spiritual betrayal some Christians, including myself, have known. If they did, they could never write the pabulum they are selling.

A diverse collection of books—L. Gregory Jones’s *Embodying Forgiveness*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Ethics*, Simon Wiesenthal’s *The Sunflower*, Miroslav Volf’s *Free of Charge*, and Desmond Tutu’s *No Future Without Forgiveness*—offer honest help for my unforgiving heart. These writers grapple with the call to forgive in the face of real evil. They understand that pop psychology and cheap theology are no match for it. The murderous societies under which most of them suffered find their Christian complement in churches that, for example, allow or ignore the sexual abuse of children and punish those who call the abusers to account.

I’m certainly not unique in having a long history with clergy misconduct (“Sorrow But No Regrets,” *Christianity*

Today, July 2007). Perhaps I have the distinction of having walked with a sex-abuse survivor and her family in their quest for justice in a famous megachurch whose leaders vilified them for their decision to prosecute—and of having faced similar treatment for reporting a suspected pedophile in this church (“Day of Reckoning,” *CT*, March 2007).

Two years after my husband resigned his pastoral position there due to systemic corruption, our firstborn child died by suicide (“In the Valley of the Shadow of Suicide,” *CT*, April 2009). I hold certain church leaders responsible for a multiplicity of sins, beginning with false advertising and ending with causing many little ones—including my own—to stumble.

Niebuhr’s moral equivalency statement asks me to place my sins on par with those of sexual abusers and their accomplices. I instinctively don’t believe it. Nor do I believe that the difference between the sins of “the good man and the bad man” is insignificant in God’s eyes.

One only needs to read the parable of the Prodigal Son to see that God acknowledges a difference. When the obedient older brother asks his father why he had never slain “even a young goat” (Luke 15:29) on the son’s behalf, the father explains that his younger son was dead, but is now alive, was lost, but is now found. That’s a significant demarcation—one that describes not only the father’s love but also the sinner’s repentance.

In Matthew 18:1–10, Jesus teaches a familiar lesson that contrasts unbridled ambition with undefiled faith. It includes a dire list of consequences for those who harm the undefiled. “[W]hoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me,” he says. “But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would

be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” That’s strong language. Jesus continues by admonishing the guilty to mutilate body parts that cause them to sin rather than have their bodies and souls thrown into hell. “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones,” the gentle Savior warns. “For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

But wait. Luke the Evangelist adds something in his telling (17:1–6). Jesus ends his lesson with a far different warning: “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and seven times a day returns to you, saying ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

To this, Jesus’ disciples understandably reply, “Increase our faith.” And then the Lord promises that if they have faith as small as a mustard seed, it is more than enough.

GRACIOUS CONDEMNATION

Herein lies the trouble: Repentance is so difficult both to measure and to find, and in its absence, we have such little capacity for forgiving.

I have seen ministry leaders rebuked not once but seventy times seven, and not one of them openly repented or was reconciled to the communities their actions destroyed. The young woman I mentioned wanted two things: change in a church that stubbornly resisted it, and an apology for the punishment she and her family received in the years following the abuse. She didn’t get either. Instead, attorneys negotiated the price of an apology, and she received a cash settlement in exchange for her silence.

What is a Christian to make of that?

In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer writes the following:

The *first* service one owes to others in community involves listening to them. Just as our love for God begins with listening to God’s Word, the beginning of love for other Christians is learning to listen to them.... Christians

who can no longer listen to one another will soon no longer be listening to God either; they will always be talking even in the presence of God. The death of the spiritual life starts here, and in the end there is nothing left but empty spiritual chatter and clerical condescension which chokes on pious words.

In *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and*



***Herein lies the trouble:
Repentance is so difficult
both to measure and to
find, and in its absence,
we have such little
capacity for forgiving.***

Limits of Forgiveness, Wiesenthal, an Austrian Jewish Holocaust survivor, writes that for a time, the world could not believe the Nazi atrocities were really happening because it couldn’t comprehend the systematic extermination of a people. But before long, “priests, philanthropists, and philosophers implored the world to forgive the Nazis.” Bitterly, Wiesenthal concludes, “Most of these altruists had probably never even had their ears boxed, but nevertheless found compassion for the murderers of innocent millions.”

In contrast, Anglican Archbishop Tutu’s 2000 memoir, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, describes the liberating power of public testimony and confession in paving the way to freedom for post-apartheid South Africans. Tutu commends a decision made before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings to grant amnesty to all who confessed, regardless of whether or not they expressed remorse, because true repentance is too

difficult to evaluate in a moment.

So how do we forgive the spiritual leaders who betray us in the absence of confession and observable repentance?

In *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*, Yale theologian Miroslav Volf says, “Condemnation is not the heart of forgiveness. It’s the indispensable presupposition of it.” Forgiveness that does not take seriously the offense against an injured party is fraudulent and cheap.

Authentic forgiveness, writes Volf—whose family suffered under communism and whose brother died in a preventable accident—“cuts the tie of equivalence between the offense and the way we treat the offender. I don’t demand that the one who has taken my eye lose his eye or that the one who has killed my child by negligence be killed. In fact, I don’t demand that he lose anything. I forgo all retribution. In forgiving, I absorb the injury—the way I may absorb, say, the financial impact of a bad business transaction.”

Don’t misread Volf: In his view, discipline is consistent with forgiveness. Criminals should go to jail. Clergymen who violate church teaching (or the law) should be defrocked. Our laws rightly prohibit murder, not anger, even though

Jesus said the source of both is the human heart. “Forgiveness,” Volf writes, “places us on a boundary between enmity and friendship, between exclusion and embrace. It tears down the wall of hostility that wrongdoing erects, but it doesn’t take us into the territory of friendship.”

“Often,” he concedes, “that’s all we can muster the strength to do, and all that offenders will allow us. Yet at its best, forgiveness hopes for more.”

HOPING AGAINST HOPE

It hopes for more, and very often doesn’t get it. After my husband and I left the megachurch, we joined an Anglican church that was being sued by the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles over a property dispute. Six months later, the rector who had led our congregation out of the Episcopal Church was forced to resign over alleged inappropriate conduct toward another staff member. He

moved to another state and quickly took up ministry in a sister church. The reformer refused to be reformed.

Meanwhile, the assistant priest—who had written his master's thesis on restoring fallen clergy—handled the crisis with considerable care. There was no question that the rector would step down, or that the recipient of his unwanted advances would be protected. Public meetings were held where congregants could express feelings of betrayal and ask questions. We were shown a diagram of possible outcomes, and were challenged not to allow ourselves to be crippled by the priest's failure.

The vestry enlisted outside support from various sources. This included a healing service for the women of the church. A licensed therapist led us through an exercise of releasing our former pastor. I hadn't been there long enough to have an emotional investment in his betrayal, so I invited the sex-abuse survivor's mother to the service, and together we applied the exercises to our situation.

Because this new faith community handled the crisis with integrity, it facilitated my spiritual restoration from the previous one. My husband and I were asked to write a letter to our bishops describing the consequences we had witnessed when clergy misconduct goes habitually unchecked. Church leaders—who themselves had been willing to pay a high price for following their consciences—heard and affirmed us. Not only that, every Sunday, we confessed our sins corporately and asked the Lord to forgive us as we forgave those who trespassed against us.

For two years, many of my prayers of confession were related to actions I had taken in regard to the megachurch. No matter how just a cause, when one chooses to act against friends and spiritual leaders, even in communities where Jesus' command to forgive is used to manipulate, and where accusations of vengefulness are thrown in anyone's direction who confronts wrongdoing, one struggles with guilt. Yet week after week, I was comforted by the post-Communion prayer "assuring us in these holy mysteries" that through the body and blood of Christ, we all were forgiven.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HUMAN GUILT

At the time he was involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler, Bonhoeffer wrote: "If it is responsible action, if it is action which is concerned solely and entirely with the other man, if it arises from selfless love for the

real man who is our brother, then precisely because this is so, it cannot wish to shun the fellowship of human guilt." To this, he adds, "Before other men the man of free responsibility is justified by necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience, but before God he hopes only for mercy" (*Ethics*).

The righteousness of Bonhoeffer's actions is still debated by theologians, if not by descendants of some Holocaust victims. So are the actions of sex-abuse survivors who sue their former churches for negligence. In my mind, there is no question about the righteousness of either cause in the face of complicit silence from the people of God.

And yet, I cannot seriously wish hell upon corrupt spiritual leaders while clinging to my faith in the mercy of God for my son and for myself. Suicide casts on those left in its wake unanswerable questions and a pall of guilt for sins both real and imagined. Thus the

***Who am I to say
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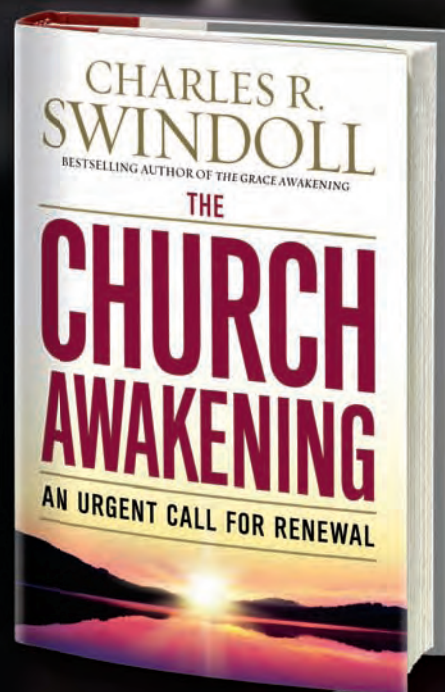
distance has closed in my mind between myself and all the clergymen I would so easily condemn. I yield ground in my resistance to cheap grace, because my unforgiving heart is broken, and because the sinner I am most concerned about is my son.

The prologue to Niebuhr's statement about forgiveness is this: "There is no deeper pathos in the spiritual life of man than the cruelty of righteous people. If any one idea dominates the teachings of Jesus, it is his opposition to the self-righteousness of the righteous. The parable spoken unto 'certain which trusted in themselves that they are righteous, and despised others' made the most morally disciplined group of the day, his Pharisees, the object of his criticism. . . . They were proud in the sight of God and they were merciless and unforgiving to their fellow-men. Their pride is the basis of their lack of mercy. The unmerciful servant, in Jesus'

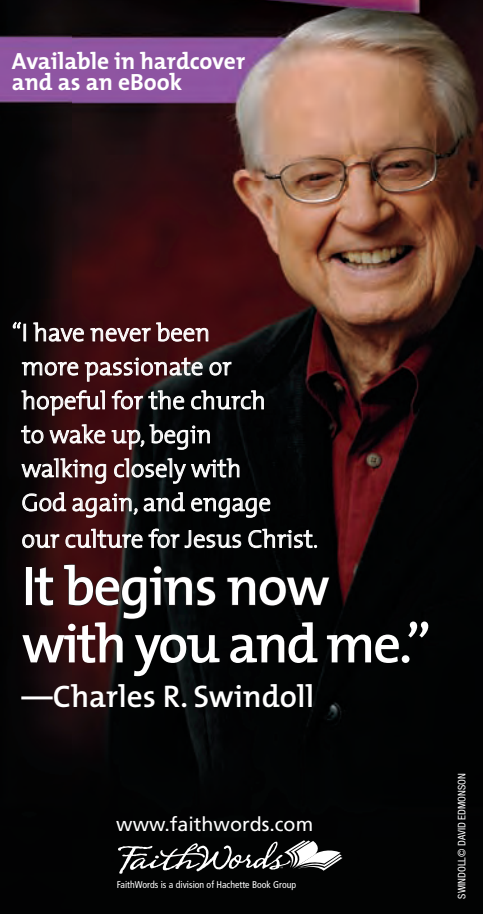
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Forgiveness [from 43]

parable, is unforgiving to his fellow-servant in spite of the mercy which he had received from his master.”

Who am I to say I won't forgive, when I know forgiveness does not mean to condone their actions or to absolve them—since God alone can absolve? I am no better than the apostles who rightly understood the challenge that was before them. With them, I can only reply, “Increase my faith, dear Lord.”

Mercifully, there are Christian men and women who are gifted to guide stubborn disciples like me. In his magnificent *Embodying Forgiveness*, Gregory Jones, former dean of Duke Divinity School, offers a definition of forgiveness that is adequate to a world full of evil and ambiguity:

Forgiveness is not so much a word spoken, an action performed, or a feeling felt as it is an embodied way of life in an ever-deepening friendship with the triune God and with others. As such, a Christian account of forgiveness ought not to simply or even primarily be focused on an absolution of guilt; rather, it ought to be focused on the reconciliation of brokenness, the restoration of communion—with God, with one another, and with the whole Creation. Indeed, because of the pervasiveness of sin and evil, Christian forgiveness must be at once an expression of commitment to a way of life, the cruciform life of holiness in which we seek to “unlearn” sin and learn the ways of God, and a means of seeking reconciliation in the midst of particular sins, specific instances of brokenness.

Each of us lives in the midst of particular sins and specific instances of brokenness. And each of us must choose how we will respond. Living a life of holiness and learning the ways of God sometimes mean letting go of our need for justice and instead embracing a world that groans in anticipation of the day when it, and we, will be redeemed.

It means accepting with humility that God alone is good. 

Christine A. Scheller is a CT contributing editor and writer living in New Jersey.

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The Abolitionists' Scandal

William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect founded Sierra Leone, then tolerated a form of slavery there, a new book reveals. By Ted Olsen

D

IG ALL YOU WANT, but you're not going to find any dirt on him, William Wilberforce biographer Eric Metaxas told a Chicago meeting of Christian leaders in April.

No doubt most of those at the Trinity Forum gathering—from political advocacy organizations, aid and relief groups, megachurches, and other influential organizations—were already familiar with the 18th-century parliamentarian and his efforts to lead British abolitionists to victory.

The 2007 bicentennial of the Slave Trade Act (which barred slave trading in the British Empire) was the high point in a decade of increased attention to Wilberforce, marked by the release of the film *Amazing Grace* and a library of new biographies. In one, Rick Warren called Wilberforce “one of the greatest influences on my life.” John Piper’s volume emphasized the abolitionist’s passion for theology. Focus on the Family produced a lengthy radio drama. Charles Colson, perhaps Wilberforce’s greatest booster, referenced him in at least 73 recent *BreakPoint* radio commentaries.

Rice University sociologist D. Michael Lindsay says that of the evangelicals in cultural leadership he has studied, most notably for his 2007 book *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 39 percent named Wilberforce, C. S. Lewis, or both men as their personal hero or icon. (While he doesn’t have figures for Wilberforce alone, Lindsay says, a contest between Lewis and Wilberforce would be “neck and neck.”)

Wilberforce’s celebrity status is particularly remarkable because it’s new, Lindsay says, noting that Christian media from the 1940s and ’50s contain almost no references to his life and work.

Now, most evangelicals have at least heard the 1787 declaration Wilberforce wrote in his journal: “God Almighty has set before me

two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners” (*manners* is a close synonym of *morality*). For evangelicals increasingly engaged on both social justice and sexual ethics issues, it strikes a particular chord.

It’s not that skeptics couldn’t find “dirt” on Wilberforce if they poked around. Even in his day, he found himself the target of criticism and threats. Today’s critics have their own set of complaints both personal (he was an opium addict, using the drug to combat a lifelong intestinal ailment) and political (he supported outlawing unions and government curbs on civil liberties). Modern American evangelicals don’t particularly care. They know that opium was a common treatment in his day and likely share some of his views on unions and balancing security and liberty.

But a new history of Wilberforce’s Clapham Sect—the evangelical network active in a number of evangelistic and social efforts—is calling attention to an incident in Wilberforce’s life that is not so easily dismissed:

In Sierra Leone, Wilberforce had the chance to release captives, but instead silenced the whistleblower, his own protégé, who had tried to set them free.

‘LITTLE BETTER THAN A SLAVE-FACTORY’

As Stephen Tomkins explains in his book *The Clapham Sect* (Lion Hudson), Wilberforce and his friends had set up the Sierra Leone Company with an ambitious three-pronged goal: “the abolition of the slave trade, the civilization of Africa, and the introduction of the gospel there.” Even after the British government made Sierra Leone a crown colony, it left most decisions to Clapham Sect members. Wilberforce picked Lt. Thomas Perronet Thompson to be the colony’s



first crown governor.

On the day of Thompson's arrival, a slave trader came to him with an offer: "If you will only allow me, Sir, to bring slaves into the colony and to apprentice them, I will directly bring 300," he said. By the time the apprenticeships were over, "I think they will have pretty well worked themselves out."

In other words, the slave trader saw little difference between a slave and an apprentice. Soon, Thompson saw little difference as well. He watched male "apprentices" sold to Sierra Leone settlers for \$20 ("the women were given away"), after which they were given nothing but provisions and were imprisoned when they tried to escape or avoid work. One white master repeatedly used a hot iron to punish his apprentice—an 8-year-old girl. When challenged, Thompson recorded, the master replied "that he paid money for the girl and therefore she is his . . . [and he] has a right to do as he pleases with his own." When called a slave trader, the man was indignant. "I did not buy her," he replied. "I redeemed her."

"So much for this religious colony," Thompson wrote to his fiancée. "These apprenticeships have after 16 years [of] successful struggle at last introduced actual slavery into the colony. . . . I am writing to Ld Ch and Mr. Wilberforce very plainly about the colony . . . [which] will soon be little better than a slave-factory. The effect of this representation will either set the matter to rights or be very likely to whirl me from my government, but I am acting as every man of honesty and spirit would act under the same persuasions."

Thompson did not wait for a reply. Instead, acting as governor, he freed all jailed runaway apprentices and declared all apprenticeships felonious forms of slavery. Masters losing their

apprentices, he announced, would not be compensated.

Unfortunately, Thompson's friends in Britain did not see things the same way. Sierra Leone Company chairman Henry Thornton—a founding member of the Clapham Sect, close friend and cousin of Wilberforce, and a Member of Parliament—replied that the buying and selling of apprentices was a problem, but said the company “could not agree that the transaction ought to be confounded with that of a Sale of Slaves.” In fact, Thornton wrote, such apprenticeships were required by the Slave Trade Act and Thompson was wrong to release the apprentices. (Tomkins says the act made apprenticeships optional. That Tomkins, Thornton, and Thompson have such differing views may be related to the fact that the relevant section of the act is a 716-word sentence.)

If Thornton's letter came as a disappointment, Wilberforce's no doubt came as a blow. “I entirely subscribe” to Thornton's conclusion, he said. “I wish I had time to go into particulars respecting the difficulties which forced us into acquiescing in the

system of apprenticing.” Thompson's assertion that the abolitionists could do away with apprenticeship if they wanted to, Wilberforce wrote, “has drawn forth at once a smile and a sigh. . . . I will only assure you that you were never more mistaken.”

Weeks later, Wilberforce wrote again. “The manner of your coming home will be

When called a slave trader, the man was indignant. ‘I did not buy her,’ he replied. ‘I redeemed her.’

such, I trust, as to prevent public discredit.” The government had not yet told Thompson he was being replaced as governor, but the directors of the Sierra Leone Company had made up their minds. “I could not but acquiesce in their unanimous reasoning and conclusion,” Wilberforce wrote.

Thompson left quietly, eventually becoming a military general and an MP himself. His replacement, meanwhile, reinstated apprenticeships. The incident—and possibly many of the horrors of Sierra Leone apprenticeships—would have remained

buried in private correspondence had not a fired Sierra Leone judge publicized the matter (along with a host of other accusations both erroneous and ludicrous).

“He was a very angry person with an axe to grind,” Tomkins writes, noting that the judge showed no concern about the apprenticeships while in office. “Either he didn't know what he was talking about or decided to throw everything he could do to do as much damage as possible, regardless of the facts. Still, he did bring to light information that was buried and that was in the public interest.”

The judge's 84-page pamphlet ignited a scandal. But it was eventually forgotten, Tomkins says, as Wilberforce became “an icon for the Victorian period and a British hero. No one's story was told more in children's textbooks than his, and this part of the story fell by the wayside.”

A PERMANENT STAIN?

Every successful reformer inevitably faces criticism that they aren't reforming enough. And, as with Wilberforce, these complaints come from both the idealistic and the cynical

PRECEDING PAGE • (1759-1833), 1832 (PEN AND INK ON PAPER), RICHMOND, GEORGE (1809-96) ©WILBERFORCE HOUSE, HULL CITY MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES, UK / THE BRIDGMAN ART LIBRARY INTERNATIONAL

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who merely use idealism as a weapon. But that doesn't completely stifle the question: Does Wilberforce's support of de facto slavery in Sierra Leone tarnish his central legacy in abolishing the slave trade, and eventually slavery itself? Tens of thousands of slaves were being traded each year in the British Empire before the Slave Trade Act. How much should the annual enslavement of a few hundred in the abolitionists' Sierra Leone subtract from that feat?

"I can only look to the 20 years Wilberforce spent working on this issue and think that for someone who had given so much to fighting slavery, if there had been a way to get rid of the apprenticeships, he would have worked to do it," says Tomkins, who calls himself a critical fan of Wilberforce.

"Wilberforce was much more of a political realist than people give him credit for, but he was also a campaigner for his whole career," he said. "He's not someone who would have worked well in government itself, running the country."

In Sierra Leone, however, Wilberforce and his friends were running a country, or at least a colony. And that may have limited the

scope of his vision. As Lindsay says, "Most leaders feel that there are significant limits to what they can do. Pastors assume CEOs can really move the deal, but the CEOs feel very limited and constrained in doing just that." But Lindsay's research also shows that those leaders can do much more than they think. (That Wilberforce faced the same struggle, Lindsay says, may endear him even more to cosmopolitan Christians.)

Tomkins says both Wilberforce and Thompson had views of government that got in the way of reforming or ending the apprenticeship system. Wilberforce, he said, "had a deep devotion to government, a reverence for it, and was often too willing to defer to them when he could have stuck to his guns."

Thompson, meanwhile, "was an idealist about many things, including the government, and felt that if this was happening that the government must not be aware of it." And he wrongfully assumed that those who knew about it supported slavery and barbarism. As a result, Tomkins writes, "Thompson made a serious mistake in his choice of friends and enemies."

When British newspapers started

devoting attention to Tomkins's new book, the Evangelical Alliance published a response. Evangelicals "may not be wholly comfortable with [Wilberforce's] political and utilitarian calculation" in suppressing Thompson, Paul Bickley wrote. "We did not need to know this to know that evangelicals have lionized him too much."

Does Tomkins agree? "All evangelical heroes have a certain unreality about them," he says. "We hear all about their achievements but rarely about their personal failures. With Wilberforce there was a dark side, a political side that wasn't always so positive. So yes, he is seen in too rosy a light and deserves to have a well-rounded understanding."

But Tomkins isn't eager to tear Wilberforce off his pedestal. "It's not a moral failing or an integrity issue. Wilberforce was involved in a political system in which he made compromises that sit uncomfortably with his idealism and with what he accomplished. It doesn't detract from what he achieved. But it does need to be remembered alongside it." +

Ted Olsen is *Christianity Today's* managing editor for news and online journalism.



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OPINIONS AND
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THE CHURCH



Beth Moore is our Esther, a healthy antidote to the fake-bake-shake prosperity teachers.

Conn Davis

South Coffeyville, Oklahoma

The Big-Haired Biblicist

Thank you for the superb August cover package on Beth Moore ["Why Women Want Moore," "First Came the Bible"]. As a fellow Southern Baptist, I notice her books and workbooks are displayed prominently at LifeWay bookstores. She is our Esther, a healthy antidote to the fake-bake-shake prosperity teachers. Every Christian man should read her books to understand his sisters in Christ.

CONN DAVIS

South Coffeyville, Oklahoma

Not only is Beth Moore's foray into pop psychology another example of gospel-gone-wrong, the stubborn privacy of the subject should have prompted *Christianity Today* to scrap the article. By its own admission, the article repeated facts that Moore has shared in speeches and books. In an age where total disclosure is the unfortunate norm, there is a trace of honor in Moore's privacy, but it's not worth a CT cover story.

TIMOTHY SPRANKLE

Warsaw, Indiana

Beth Moore is exactly what the body of Christ needs. She knows when the Lord speaks to her and then takes that

understanding to her listeners. Notice I said *listeners*—many men like Beth too. I don't have many opportunities to study with her, but when I do I take full advantage of it and have never been disappointed.

If you want a preacher, go and listen to what others have to say. If you want a teacher, tune into what Moore says about Scripture, and get ready for the ride of your life.

RICH GARRISON

E-mail

Moore is fairly harmless doctrinally, and she sincerely encourages women to not take her word as final, but she fails to appropriately model an approach to the Christian life that all women can pursue. She doesn't teach women how to study the Bible; she studies it for them and then spoon feeds. Moore's "figurative application," as she refers to it, calls into question her ability to handle the context of a given passage. And her scorn for the theological academy is apparent not only in her writings but also in her videos and online audios. One need not look far to discover this.

SARAH FLASHING

Harvard, Illinois

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37%

Megaphone Theodicy

In his well-written article "Saved by an Atheist" [August], Rob Moll quotes from Albert Camus' *The Plague* that the priest had "no real answer to suffering." The priest evidently went on to argue that suffering is due to "God's judgment on a wicked city."

Without knowing the circumstances, it's hard to discern the reasons behind particular instances of suffering. However, we cannot talk about any suffering without remembering the suffering God took upon himself for our eternal redemption.

Speaking personally, it took suffering in my life for Jesus to get my attention. It was his love and a saving miracle from a suicide attempt that brought me to him. Our Lord is the One we can always depend on, even if it takes suffering to find that out.

WILLIAM STEWART WHITEMORE

Grants Pass, Oregon

Gritty Creation Care

CT's editorial "Let the Sea Resound" [August] was a nice start, but only a start. That we are required to steward the earth is obvious. But how do we steward in specific instances such as the oil spill? Do we stop all deep-sea drilling, or do we insist that government regulators more diligently require oil companies to implement methods of preventing

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

CT'S EDITORS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM.

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blowouts? Both options are consistent with creation care in the simplified version. Yet between these two options is a huge political battle. If Christians are going to get beyond platitudes, we need to address the gritty specifics.

The Christian Right has been castigated for using political power to influence public policy. Now Christian environmentalists want to do the same thing. That's not necessarily wrong—we just need to think more carefully about it.

WAYNE SHOCKLEY
Brooklyn, Wisconsin

How do we know that the Gulf spill was caused by hubris and greed? The spill showed we aren't safely able to drill nearly a mile below the ocean surface. But such an error in judgment may not express these vices. Regarding the damage, the restorative properties God has built into the ecosystem will likely surprise us.

Creation care? Yes! But not an easy condemnation of legitimate human enterprise that, in a fallen world, will occasionally end disastrously.

MARK E. ROBERTS
E-mail

Noncommittal Nation

I agree with Chuck Colson's main point in "The Lost Art of Commitment" [August], but take exception to his statement that

the anthem of the '60s anti-war protesters was "nothing is worth dying for." Has he forgotten Kent State? That "group" was asking, "Is there anything worth killing for?"—a question that many Christians of the past 2,000 years have also asked in their quest to become like Jesus.

If Colson wants to blame something from about 40 years ago that has led to a low-commitment culture, may I suggest the introduction of no-fault divorce laws?

MARK PHILLIPS
Kansas City, Missouri

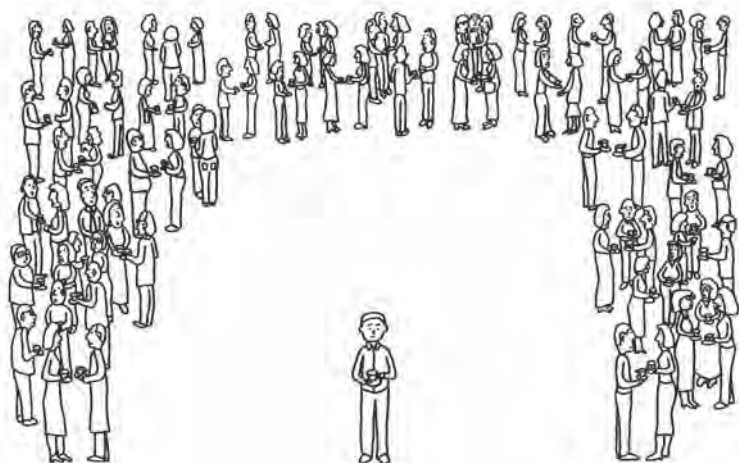
One expression of our fear of commitment is Christians hopping from one church to another for all kinds of reasons except the only legitimate one: the Holy Spirit's leading. The early church faced this problem as well, but with competing denominations, worship styles, and ministry focuses today, it has become an epidemic.

Having pastored a church that had split over a financial crisis, I learned that the membership covenant means very little to many people. I encourage any believer who reads this to stay faithful to the local body God has led you to until you move away or God leads you elsewhere.

STANLEY ZACK
Munster, Indiana

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compiled by Katelyn Beaty

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.



ONLINE POLL

WHERE YOUR GIVING GOES
Where are the missionaries you personally support?

21%

In rural areas.

16%

In suburbs/small towns.

17%

In small cities.

28%

In large cities.

8%

I don't personally give to missionaries, but my church does.

8%

I don't give to individual missionaries, just to organizations that work in many settings.

1%

I don't give to missions.

Total Votes: 410

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

"It would be easy to pigeonhole Anne Rice. The better choice is to sit down and have a chat with her. I applaud CT for talking to Rice rather than just about her."

Tom Fisher, on the novelist's announcement that she's leaving Christianity.

Q&A: "Anne Rice on Following Christ without Christianity," interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

"If we put as much time into prayer for the gay community as we did into forcing our values on them, maybe lives could be changed. I'm not saying legislation isn't important, but we forget that those in the LGBT community are people who need Christ."

H. K., on the Christian response to Judge Walker's ruling against Proposition 8.

"What Is the Gospel Response to the Prop. 8 Decision?" by various commentators

"The Taliban believes they were promoting Christianity—and so do I. Without a word about Jesus, they were being 'living stones' in the house of God."

Phillip Ross, on the 10 medical workers murdered by the Taliban, who said the group was "preaching Christianity."

CT Liveblog: "Christian Aid Workers Killed in Afghanistan," by David Neff

"I suspect there's a little Sonny Dewey in us all. We may not kill or commit adultery (save in our minds), but identifying with him can lead to some neglected soul searching."

Johnny Long, on the protagonist of *The Apostle*, Robert Duvall's 1997 film about a Pentecostal preacher.

"The Low-Down on Robert Duvall," interview by Mark Moring

Mosques in Middle America

The strain of religious diversity tests Christians' own principles.

DEBATE OVER the so-called Ground Zero mosque has stirred an excess of angst over the Muslim presence in America. Opportunists have exploited that anxiety for political advantage. The overheated debate may be moot: while the legal standing of the planned Muslim community center is solid, its financing is reportedly shaky.

What is not settled is the place of Muslims in American society. Anxiety about Islam has spread in response to proposed mosques in Wisconsin, California, and Tennessee, where an arsonist set construction equipment ablaze. Muslims who wish to build places of prayer meet resistance, both violent and verbal. How should American Christians respond?

Twenty years ago, Terry Muck, then CT's executive editor, wrote presciently about the presence of world religions in America. In *Alien Gods on American Turf*, he noted that the 1980s influx of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists caused little concern. Nevertheless, Muck observed that "the strain of this diversity" was moving Christians who were traditionally "bedrock supporters" of religious freedom to begin questioning the limits of First Amendment guarantees. "Ten or twenty years from now," he warned, "the full force of non-Christian religions will be felt."

Just 11 years later, terrorists from Islam's Wahhabist fringe attacked the Pentagon, destroyed the World Trade Center, and created an acute awareness of Islam's adherents in the United States.

Muck did not foresee 9/11, but he was certain that the relative invisibility of non-Christian religions would evaporate. He urged American Christians to work out an understanding of their relationship to these faiths. We have not done that well.

America's founding generation faced similar questions. In the article "The Founding Fathers and Islam," the Library of Congress's James Hutson tells how Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Rush, and

Richard Henry Lee (who made the motion in Congress that the colonies declare independence) argued for religious freedom for "Mahomitans" to make them feel welcome in the new nation.

Not everyone in that era welcomed Islam. One preacher proclaimed that the religion "breathes nothing but arms [and] is propagated by arms." Yet the president of Yale praised Islam for its strong morality. Islam, like Christianity, taught a system of future rewards and punishments. The architects of America welcomed Muslims because they deemed belief in a carrot-and-stick afterlife essential to their experiment in liberty. If the new state were to prosper, it had to attract moral citizens who worked hard, supported their families, and sacrificed for the common good.

American Christians can adopt the Founders' pragmatism. We can admire the modesty of even the most progressive Muslim women as they resist our amoral society's immodesty. We can affirm the piety that prays five times a day, gives alms, and fasts. We can applaud Muslim efforts to build strong families.

However, Christians must move beyond both fear and mere pragmatism. We must probe our own principles and ask what they lead us to do.

First, Jesus' principles of neighbor love and the Golden Rule demand that we put ourselves in the place of American Muslims. How would we want to be treated if we were nurturing new faith communities and building new churches? At the least, we would want to be known as persons. Christians in communities

where new mosques are planned could, for example, create chances for Muslims and Christians to discuss best how to raise their families in an increasingly secular society. Focusing on common challenges can replace fear and division with understanding and cooperation.

Second, concern for fellow Christians living in Muslim-dominated countries should make us cautious about saying or doing things that could worsen their lives. News of anti-Muslim sentiment in the West only complicates their situation. The burden of being Christian varies in severity, but nearly all Christians in Muslim-majority countries live under significant disadvantage. To say, as Newt Gingrich has, that

we should allow no more mosques in the U.S. until Saudi Arabia allows Christian churches is to be untrue to our principles. We must model religious freedom as a human right and not fashion our lives after repressive regimes.

Third, as Christ's witnesses, we consider every encounter an opportunity to show non-Christians the grace of Christ. Treating all Muslims as potential jihadists does not open opportunities for sharing the Good News. Suspicion is no foundation for evangelism. On the other hand, befriending American Muslims and defending their freedoms can tear down obstacles.

Like the apostle Paul, we no longer regard anyone from a worldly point of view. In our relationship with American Muslims, we must give concrete form to our calling as servants of reconciliation and ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:16–20). ✚



Treating all Muslims as potential jihadists does not open opportunities for sharing the Good News.

*Mixing Jesus
into Populist
Politics*

What place do Christians have in the tea party movement?

IN THE FRONT ROW

David Brody is the Christian Broadcasting Network's White House Correspondent.

When it comes to politics, I'm not a big fan of cw (conventional wisdom). After all, Hillary Clinton—not Barack Obama—would be President today if cw ruled. Joe Biden would have cleaned Sarah Palin's clock in the 2008 vice presidential debate if cw had held true. It didn't.

Now comes word from the cw experts, better known as the mainstream media, that Christians and the tea party just don't go together.

Their reasoning goes like this: The tea party movement cares only about fiscal issues, so Christians should take their social issues and go play somewhere else. News flash for the cw crowd: Wrong again. Strike three. You're out.

The tea party movement is the perfect place for Christians to lobby for biblical values and priorities, and many Christians seem to know that.

I have traveled across this great land and flocked to tea party events and rallies. Who do I see showing up? Conservative, Bible-believing Christians. A seat at the table is reserved for this key voting constituency because, as strategist and leading evangelical Ralph Reed tells me, "If you protect marriage and you protect life, but the federal government is destroying our future through a \$20 trillion debt, that threatens our future just as much as moral decay does."

Besides, just because fiscal issues dominate the tea party agenda doesn't mean issues like abortion are gone and forgotten. While Christians may not be marching with their pro-life signs at tea party rallies, the heated debate over the recent health-care bill proved that abortion is always in the mix.

The mainstream media like to say that racism is rampant in the tea party movement. If this were true, Christians would be concerned; racism, too, is a moral issue, and something true Christians reject outright.

Yet the funny thing is, tea party rallies are not filled with racial epithets. The language is more indicative of love of country and love of God. I remember tea party favorite Senator Jim DeMint once saying, "... the motivation behind these tea party crowds is a spiritual component. I think it's very akin to the Great Awakening before the American Revolution. ... 'I'm praying for you' comes up more than anything else in these crowds."

In our society, we love to put everyone in boxes. The media do a great job at this. But reality is always more complicated, and no one fits in one box. It's not unusual to see a fiscally conservative, gun-owning, flag-waving, home-schooling, stay-at-home Christian mom show up at a tea party event. This woman encompasses many special interests, but they are all wrapped up in one purpose: to take our government back and send a message to the current administration.

Start marching to a tea party near you. There's a seat waiting.

ON THE INSIDE

Wendy Wright is president of Concerned Women for America, the nation's largest public policy women's organization.

"Spread my work ethic, not my wealth," proclaimed one sign at a tea party gathering. "Compassion is voluntary, not compulsory," said another. These pithy statements express principles that make America great and have their roots in the Bible. Personal responsibility, charity, the proper role of government, and fiscal discipline are biblical principles that are woven into the fabric of America.

The government's profligate defiance of these virtues and of constitutional limits is driving millions to the tea party movement. "We live by the rules," tea party activists say, "so Congress should abide by constitutional rules."

This ideology is particularly attractive to women, who fill the movement as leaders and activists. Women usually manage household budgets and health-care decisions. Mothers who diligently instill morals in their children find the government undercutting their teachings and challenging their ability to make medical choices.

The movement also opens doors to talk about Christian principles. Eager to articulate and defend their beliefs, many people enthusiastically study America's founding, igniting a "constitutional revival." This provides a unique opportunity for Christians. Over the past 30 years, evangelicals have rediscovered America's Christian roots. Concerned Women for America state chapters hold book clubs with tea party activists to study constitutional principles. This naturally leads to curiosity about concepts like "inalienable rights, which come from God." Biblical principles are woven throughout the Constitution—principles some current leaders seem to have forgotten. Such principles include the following:

- The rule of law. This comes from the Ten Commandments. Laws applied to Moses as well as the people and were available for

all to read and understand.

- All men are created equal. As John Adams wrote, “The doctrine of human equality is founded entirely in the Christian doctrine that we are all children of the same Father, all accountable to him for our conduct to one another, all equally bound to respect each other’s self love.”

- Our officials represent us—hence the term “public servant.” Jesus said, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among must be your servant” (Mark 10:42–43, *ESV*).

- A separation of powers. Government power is diffused among three branches: executive, judicial, and legislative. Authority is delegated to federal, state, and local governments. Why? If too much power is given to one person or entity, it will be abused. America’s founding fathers seem to have known Romans 3:23 well, that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Tea party activists believe the government has strayed from its foundation. Christians can show that the strength of that foundation is the wisdom revealed in the Bible. The tea party movement is an effective way to bring our leaders back to their roots.



AMANDA DUFFEY

ON THE OUTSIDE

David P. Gushee is Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics at Mercer University, where he directs the Center for Theology and Public Life.

The tea party movement is primarily a reaction to the November 2008 election of Barack Obama and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, and the policies they have undertaken since January 2009. Obama’s election and the particular policies he and Congress have

pursued have triggered this populist movement.

Tea partiers reject nearly everything the Obama administration and Congress have done since January 2009: the stimulus bill, the auto industry bailout, proposed “cap and trade” environmental legislation, and, especially, health-care reform.

At a policy level, the tea party movement is most interesting in its general opposition to the expansion of federal government power and spending in the name of American constitutionalism. Because both Republicans and Democrats have presided over that expansion and both have regularly failed to balance the federal budget, the tea partiers present a challenge to the prevailing political order of the country. Their “Contract From America” demands as its first item that any new law must name the specific provision of the Constitution that gives Congress the authority to legislate in that area.

Perhaps a healthy dose of this kind of scrutiny might rein in excesses of both the warfare/national security state we have developed since World War II, and the welfare/economic security state that has evolved piecemeal since the 1930s. (I think the former is the greater problem, and hope the tea partiers will press for its rollback.)

But the tea party movement also has ugly weaknesses. I saw a new bumper sticker this week. It said, “Take Our Country Back: November 2010.” It’s hard to deny the evidence available from tea party events that much of the passion driving the movement flows from visceral opposition to President Obama.

“Birthers” (disproportionately represented among tea partiers), the nearly universal tea partier belief that Obama is a socialist and/or communist, and, yes, the occasional racially tinged incidents and comments, all signal disbelief that this country ever could have elected Obama.

President Obama is the Other. The symbolism of “Don’t Tread on Me,” the emphasis on gun rights, and the tea party’s links to America’s revolutionary days lend a frightening undertone to the movement, at least on its fringes.

To the extent that the tea party movement is simply a contemporary expression of low taxes, small government, and leave-me-alone libertarianism, it

carries all the weaknesses of that libertarianism in terms of Christian social ethics. We Christians are called to care for the underprivileged, not leave them to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Government plays a key role in that kind of care.

To the extent that it is a grassroots reaction to federal government overreaching and fiscal indiscipline, the tea party movement opens a discussion worth having. But to the extent that it is a veil for white reaction to Barack Obama and our increasingly heterogeneous and multiracial society, the movement must be roundly condemned by any who follow Jesus Christ.



Hospitality Sweet

One of the forgotten keys to the dynamic worship of God.



IN A RECENT family vacation, we stayed with two sets of friends. We spent the first night in a small prairie town, in the lovely but simple home of some fellow musicians who fed us hamburgers and offered us a hide-a-bed. The second night we spent visiting the gorgeous, new urban house of wealthier friends who fed us organic roast and outfitted the guest bed with 1,000-thread-count sheets. In both places, the hospitality was extraordinary. Both hosts thought of what we needed before we did—clean towels, snacks for the road. Although the resources were quite different, the spirit was wonderfully the same. We felt so at home both nights that we talked into the wee hours about things that mattered, including our jobs, our families, and our churches.

I've attended some 2,000 church services in my lifetime, both as a church member and as a guest musician at a wide variety of gatherings across North America. I've participated in many different approaches to "doing" church.

We've sung from hymnals, songbooks, and PowerPoint slides with slick video backgrounds. We've been accompanied by choirs, folk singers, and rock bands. We've heard preaching from ministers in robes, suits, and graphic tees. We've met in cathedrals, sanctuaries, gymnasiums, and living rooms. We've read formal liturgies and followed the unspoken liturgies of a particular church's service format. Almost always, we have taken an offering.

We have called it all "church," and we've argued about the right way to do it in order to give God glory, reach seekers, and foster spiritual growth. Sometimes we've had trouble separating our aesthetic preferences from our theologies and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I have my own biases, and it's almost impossible to perceive any worship service outside of that lens. But lately I've been

constructing a mental catalog of gatherings I've attended that were especially worshipful, challenging, or nourishing. I've been shocked by how widely they range in style, size, and polish. I can recall a wonderful communal awareness of God's presence in churches mega and miniscule, charismatic and conservative, contemporary and classical. (And I have found only empty ritual in a similar range of gatherings.)

Evidently, God will move wherever and whenever he pleases, regardless of our resources and plans. But when I look at my list of the most memorable gatherings, I see certain commonalities. Each of those services—whether led by a gifted team of professionals or by decidedly less proficient volunteers—was thoroughly Christocentric and profoundly reverent. No surprises there. The common characteristic that I least expected? Hospitality.

Robert Webber was the first person I heard speak about hospitality in the context of worship. He told a story about attending an unfamiliar church while traveling. About half of the church members constituted the choir, sitting up front in the loft. When it was time to sing, the choir director turned to the congregation and took the time to teach each parishioner his part, going over the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass lines until everyone knew what to do. Webber claimed that in the course of the opening song, guided by the choir at the front, he went from being a stranger to someone who belonged. He knew exactly how to

enter into that community's worship, because he had been taught his part in it.

"In the church," Webber concluded, "singing is hospitality."

I've been in churches where the singing (not to mention the praying and preaching) is impressive and professional, but not hospitable. Those services have been more of a

show than a family reunion, more a presentation than a meal together at a life-giving table. They have been effective to a point, but they haven't held a candle to hospitable churches that use every resource available (from the church's architecture to its care in establishing and teaching its liturgies in any style) to make each person included and sure of her part.

Hospitality matters because every time we worship together,

we are drawn not only into our particular community, but also into the community of angels and saints who are always praising God. Even better, we are being reminded that we are included in the circle of fellowship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Son is the true worship leader who helps us express our thanks to the Father, the phenomenally hospitable God who invites us to make ourselves at home with him.

Church is powerful when it embodies this inclusion—much like our hospitable friends did on our recent family vacation. When church is like that, it becomes the home away from home where we offer each other a place to reunite, be fed, commune, wash, rest, and receive what we need for the road. ✚



Hospitality matters because every time we worship together, we are drawn into the community of angels and saints who are always praising God.



We Must Not Despair

It's not the time to withdraw from politics.

THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: Many Christians have grown weary of the culture wars. Compared with prior years, Christians have little visible presence in this season's election campaign, and certainly younger evangelicals see the conservative religious agenda as strident and often offensive. What's more, prominent Christian leaders are telling us to take a sabbatical from politics—a seductively appealing message for so many fatigued by our 30-year-long uphill struggle.

At the same time, secularists berate Christians for the culture wars, claiming that we are trying to impose our bigoted agenda on them. Often intimidated, Christians fear raising controversial questions.

But someone should ask: Who started the divisive culture wars in the first place? Far from being the aggressors—as the press would have us believe—religious conservatives have simply been responding to the relentless secularization of American life.

There was a time when Christianity's positive influence on society was applauded. U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a strong civil libertarian, stated in the 1952 *Zorach v. Clauson* case: "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. . . . When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities . . . it follows the best of our traditions. For it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs."

Scarcely a decade later, the Supreme Court, in an astonishing reversal, declared in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) that prayer and Bible reading in public schools were to be outlawed—and thus opened Pandora's Box. In case after case, justices decided against the traditional values of our country, culminating in 1973 with *Roe v. Wade*, when the Court ruled that killing human life at its earliest stages was now a constitutionally protected practice—leading

to an unbroken string of such cases since.

The changes in American life weren't limited to the law. School boards discovered programs like values clarification that were far from neutral and were clear assaults on Christian values. Condoms were made available in schools, while many religious materials were forbidden.

This was part of an unprecedented assault on the traditional moral fabric of the country. People of Christian conscience could sit still no longer. What followed was what Harvard



professor Nathan Glazer called a "defensive reaction of the conservative heartland."

Far from seeking to impose their beliefs upon the nation, Christian conservatives were manning the ramparts, protecting the moral foundations of society.

Today is no different. As other Christian leaders and I wrote in the Manhattan Declaration, "Because the sanctity of human life, the dignity of marriage as a union of husband and wife, and the freedom of conscience and religion are foundational principles of justice and the common good, we are compelled by our Christian faith to speak and act in their defense."

On each of these fronts, the forces of secularism have assaulted foundational principles necessary for true human flourishing and the preservation of moral order. We defend them

not for parochial interests but for the good of society.

It was under somewhat similar conditions that Augustine wrote *The City of God*. As buildings smoldered in Rome, accusations flew that Christians, by seeking to replace the pagan gods, had caused the fall of the city. But Rome's demise, as Augustine explained, could not be laid at the feet of Christians. Compelled by love of God and neighbor, Christians, he argued, make the best of citizens, working to create the kind of society where all can live peaceable and godly lives. His classic work has served for 1,600 years as an apologetic for the wholehearted participation of the citizens of the city of God in the city of man.

So is now the time to back away? Is "faithful presence" enough for Christians even as the forces of secularization grow stronger and more militant? Do we say nothing when, for perhaps the first time in our nation's history, the administration seeks, as a matter of policy, to redefine "freedom of religion"? From the very beginning of our republic, freedom of religion has meant free exercise of religion—the right to live out one's religious beliefs. Instead, our Secretary of State and the administration speak of nothing more than "freedom of worship"—the right to worship privately as one pleases. And we are to disengage from politics?

Absolutely not. We cannot do so and remain faithful to the command to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves.

This is no time for despair. And it is no time for retreat. Instead, it is time, in the tradition of Augustine, to work for justice and the common good—not just for ourselves, but for all who are made in God's image. ✚

Is 'faithful presence' enough for Christians even as the forces of secularization grow stronger and more militant?

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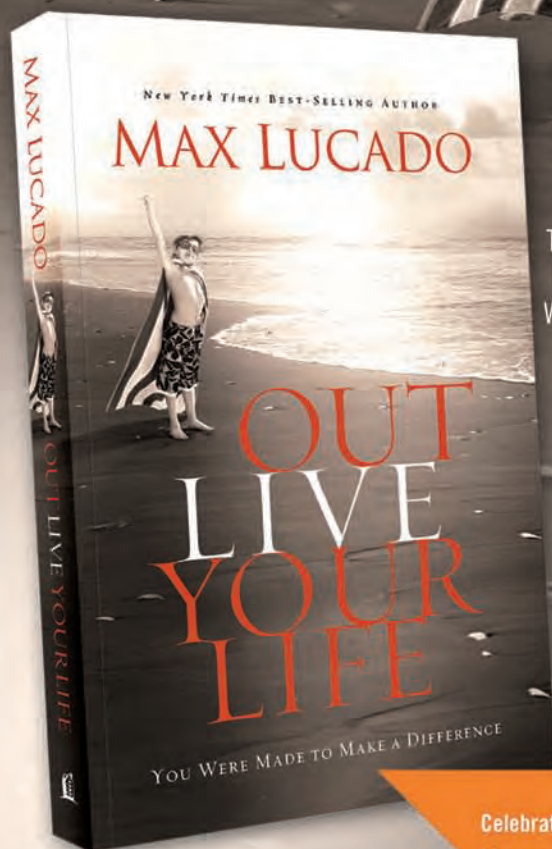
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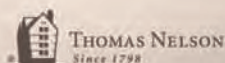


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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
THE ARTS

Always Dying, Always Reborn

Exploring the new horizons—and limits—of our perpetual chase for immortality. By John Wilson

Science," however you unpack that charged concept, touches pretty much every aspect of our lives these days.

Isn't it surprising, then, how little you read about it in Christian magazines, except in connection with a handful of hot-button issues? If only *Christianity Today's* budget permitted, the magazine could employ a full-time science editor to keep up with breaking news, hang out with researchers at work, attend the occasional conference, and read, read, read, for we live in a golden age of science-writing, and there

would be no shortage of material worth passing on to a larger audience.

Maybe an enlightened donor will step up. In the meantime, let me tell you about one exceptionally good book that touches on matters of interest to us all: Jonathan Weiner's *Long for This World: The Strange Science of Immortality* (Ecco) ★★★★★. Weiner's narrative deftly interweaves three strands: an overview of human speculation on aging and the prospects for immortality, from antiquity to

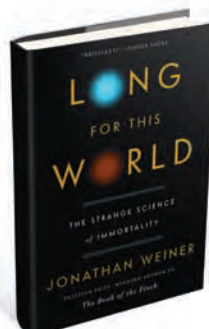
the present, mixed with his own reflections on mortality and the meaning of our lives; an introduction to the scientific study of aging, with an emphasis on the findings and controversies of recent decades; and an up-close portrait of one long-bearded maverick, Aubrey David Nicholas Jasper de Grey, obsessed with life extension and the quest for virtual immortality.

Weiner's perspective is that of a thoroughly secularized Jewish intellectual, deeply conversant with modern science (especially biology), which has been his province as a writer, but also knowledgeable in other spheres. He is well aware of Christian teachings about death and the afterlife, and he alludes to them on several occasions, but they don't figure significantly in his account. ("For us—for my crowd, at least," he remarks late in the book, "when arguments turn cosmic, the great contraries in life tend to be material.")

"We are always dying," Weiner writes, "and always reborn. And that is living. Our bodies are not finished products but works in progress, works continually being dismantled and repaired, rebuilt and restored, destroyed and healed at every moment in the act of living."

But as we age, the balance gradually shifts: more is being dismantled than is being repaired. Why is that so? Can anything be done about it? Weiner surveys opposing big-picture views. On the one hand, there's the notion that aging and death itself can be explained in strict Darwinian terms as adaptations: "accomplishments that we complicated creatures should be proud of. Amoebae and other single-celled organisms are forced to remain immortal because they do nothing but divide and divide." And on the other hand, there's the seemingly outrageous suggestion that "aging is just an accident."

But it's not at all outrageous, if, as Stephen Jay Gould has argued,



we human beings ourselves are “glorious accidents.” In the alternative understanding of aging and death passionately advocated by Aubrey de Grey,

the project of eternal youth and perpetual health becomes as plausible as any other human dream that evolution itself has not granted us but that we might have some hope, with industry and luck, to arrange for ourselves, like flying through the air, or curing the whooping cough, or making life so comfortable that most of us can expect to reach the age of eighty.

Many gerontologists, whatever their opinions about such controversies, are working on a much more modest scale. Weiner visits Janet Sparrow, for instance, a Columbia University researcher who is “trying to find ways to prevent one of the common vision problems of old age, macular degeneration. It is a simple case of the simplest aging problem, the problem of clearing away debris as we get older.” And yet as Weiner shows, even this “simple problem”—one that has troubled my 87-year-old mother—is

Weiner thinks that eternal life would be boring. He quotes a number of people who share this sentiment, including the philosopher Bertrand Williams: ‘Immortality, or a state without death, would be meaningless.’

fiendishly complicated. Thanks to the painstaking work of researchers like Sparrow, the threat of this particular affliction may one day be greatly reduced, as so many ills have been tamed, and subsequent generations will take the result for granted.

What Sparrow is seeking to accomplish on a very small scale, Aubrey de Grey envisions for the whole human organism. For the details of his current plan (he calls it WILT: Whole-Body Interdiction of Lengthening of Telomeres), you’ll have to read the book. Suffice it to say that his SENS (Strategies for Engineering Negligible Senescence) are not likely to be effected anytime soon.

BOREDOM IMMORTAL?

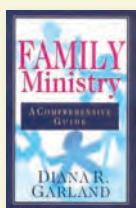
Aubrey (as Weiner refers to him) is the reason that, improbable as it may seem, one

can imagine *Long for this World* inspiring a movie. You won’t quickly forget the picture of him sitting across the table from Weiner in the Cambridge pub frequented by Watson and Crick when they were trying to figure out the structure of DNA. Stroking and twining his beard (“it pools in his lap when he sits down”), Aubrey presents his theories with an arrogant assurance that brooks no dissent, all the while downing pint after pint of ale. (Aubrey drinks beer the way I drank coffee before aging caught up with me. And this is the man obsessed with the “junk” that fouls our bodies as we age? Hmmm.)

If Aubrey does make it to the big screen, moviegoers won’t need to bring Kleenex. His story is a weird cross-breeding of *A Beautiful Mind* with something along the lines of Charles Portis’s novel *Masters of*

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON FAMILY MINISTRY

By Reggie Joiner, author of *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide*



FAMILY MINISTRY *A Comprehensive Guide*

DIANA R. GARLAND
(IVP ACADEMIC)

Garland’s volume is one of most exhaustive works for understanding historical perceptions of family ministry from an academic approach.

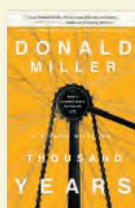


DEEP JUSTICE IN A BROKEN WORLD

Helping Your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs around Them

CHAP CLARK AND KARA POWELL
(ZONDERVAN)

Chap Clark, author of *Hurt* and a professor at Fuller Seminary, and Kara Powell, executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute, focus their research on helping church leaders more effectively reach the next generation.



A MILLION MILES IN A THOUSAND YEARS

What I Learned While Editing My Life

DONALD MILLER
(THOMAS NELSON)

Miller looks at life as a story, an important part of an effective family ministry. From his book we learn how to invite the next generation into the bigger story that God desires for them.



WHO STOLE MY CHURCH?

What to Do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the 21st Century

GORDON MACDONALD
(THOMAS NELSON)

Based on a true story, this book looks at how to transition a church for the sake of a new generation, and emphasizes the need for intergenerational relationships.



SILOS, POLITICS AND TURF WARS

A Leadership Fable about Destroying the Barriers That Turn Colleagues into Competitors

PATRICK LENCIONI (JOSSEY-BASS)

Lencioni demonstrates how to have the right kind of meetings and break down “silos” that can exist between departments. His model helps gather age-group directors around the same table to work as a team.

Atlantis, with plenty of sheer nuttiness. If you have a weakness for tales of brilliant, eccentric autodidacts, especially of the British variety (and more especially of brilliant, eccentric autodidacts who never learned to drive), you won't want to miss it (the book or the movie).

In part, it's a deeply creepy story. In the utopian future Aubrey envisions, "human life would be completely transformed, of course. Among other things, virtually everyone on the planet would feel as Aubrey did [that is, as Aubrey does right now], that there was little point in having children, because there was so much to do. Each of us would feel that we had so much life ahead to enjoy just for ourselves." In short, the European Union's dream of heaven on earth, taken to its logical conclusion.

In "The Trouble with Immortality," his next-to-last chapter, Weiner dissents from Aubrey's gospel, but much of his dissent is based on "a dread of eternal repetition," a sense that eternal life would be boring. He quotes a number of people who share this sentiment, including the philosopher Bernard Williams: "Immortality, or a state without death, would be meaningless."

Ah. Well, if Bernard Williams said so, it must be true. But I must say that I have never found the prospect of eternal life boring, and that I have never understood why this assertion is regarded with more seriousness than we would accord to some restless fellow who announced (as many do, often in a tone dripping with contempt) that life right now is *boring, so boring*. And perhaps that's why, on the last page of the book, even as he rejects Aubrey's promise of immortality, Weiner confesses: "I'm surprised to find myself wavering. Maybe I'm half of the devil's party without knowing it."

Weiner's book appears at a moment when many Christian thinkers contend that we as believers are too much preoccupied with promises of endless felicity under the larches of paradise. They claim that this overemphasis on the afterlife grossly distorts the gospel, interfering with our ability to fully participate in God's kingdom here and now. With all due respect, I wonder what they are talking about. *Too much* talk about heaven? Not in my neighborhood. ✚

John Wilson is the editor of *Books & Culture*.

Looking Over the Fence

New research suggests scientists are more like neighbors than enemies of the faith. By Andy Crouch

No matter how hard scholars try to inject some nuance into the complicated history of science and faith, the language of warfare refuses to die. Witness the title of this book—yet another conflict metaphor. Yet in Elaine Howard Ecklund's telling—in **Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think** (Oxford University Press) ★★★★★—the best image for understanding science and religion may be neighbors who share a common boundary, with a few aging trees looming over one another's homes. One day they may be chatting and even swapping power tools, the next engaged in tense negotiations about where the property line actually lies.

Ecklund, who teaches sociology at Rice, surveyed 1,700 scientists and conducted personal interviews with 275. This method gives her work both statistical validity and psychological depth. She focused on scientists at "elite" institutions, all of them secular, and some of her findings are encouraging.

Few scientists fit the mold of the "angry atheist" popularized by Richard Dawkins, long the dubiously titled Professor for the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford. Ecklund certainly found some scientists (many raised in religious families) who are now hostile to religion and are opposed to granting it any place in their universities. But they are a distinct minority.

True, a whopping 64 percent of these elite scientists are atheists or agnostics (compared with 6 percent of all Americans), while a vanishing 2 percent (roughly three dozen of her 1,700 subjects) are evangelical Christians. But in the middle are many, even among the atheists, who describe themselves as "spiritual," and many more are respectful of religious faith even if they do not share it themselves. Significantly, Ecklund found that the younger scientists

are, the more likely they are "to believe in God and to attend religious services"—just the opposite of younger Americans as a whole.

More troubling is that whether friendly, neutral, or hostile, Ecklund's subjects seem woefully inarticulate about religion itself (recalling sociologist Christian Smith's teenage interviewees who could fluently discuss contraception but were tongue-tied about religious doctrine). Some resort to tired stereotypes even when they are trying to be kind. Their own spirituality, meanwhile, is improvisational at best, largely unmoored from tradition and actual congregations.

Equally troubling is a small but notable number who feel compelled to conceal their traditional faith from their colleagues—potential ambassadors who are effectively missing in action. Ecklund identifies a bare handful of "boundary pioneers," like National Institutes of Health director Francis Collins, who seek and win a hearing from both sides, but they seem to be as rare as young-earth creationists on a Galapagos cruise.

Clearly we need better communication, and better metaphors. One upcoming symposium where I have been invited to speak has the studiously optimistic title, "The Vibrant Dance of Faith and Science," but not many of Ecklund's scientists look likely to sign up for tango lessons any time soon. Neither side, however, can afford to ignore the other. Science and religion are neighbors, and at their shared (and contested) boundary are some

of the most important issues of human existence. Ecklund offers at least some hope that the next generation of scientists will want to talk over the fence. Let's hope Christian leaders have something wise and winsome to say in response. ✚

Andy Crouch is a Christianity Today senior editor.



SPIRITUAL RHYTHM

Being with Jesus Every Season of Your Soul

MARK BUCHANAN (ZONDERVAN, 336 PAGES)

The heart in fall is, in a word, expectant. If we've prepared well in spring, plowing and sowing and planting, then we wait in an expectancy of hope. If we have not prepared well, we wait in an expectation of disappointment, maybe dread.

"Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God," Hebrews [6:7] says. "But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned." One minor motif running through Hebrews is agricultural, the rhythms of planting and reaping. . . .

Agriculture is about patience and anticipation: we expect something to come from our efforts. The heart in fall especially lives with this expectation. It feels the weight of it, the heft and tug of what's coming. Let me change the image somewhat to illustrate.

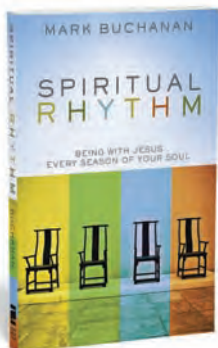
It just turned fall a few days ago, but only today does it feel like fall. Up until now, days were warm and languid, and bright with the last burst of hibiscus and geranium. Everyone wore shorts and T-shirts, even in the evenings, and some still swam in the rivers. It dawned this morning looking like more of the same. But by midmorning, a grayness squelched the sun, a cold wind barreled down the sky, a chill spread through the house. And then a cold slathering rain began to fall.

So I started the season's first wood fire. The wood's been curing since last winter. I gathered an armload of it, plus a fistful of kindling, and started my fire. In a few minutes, it blazed hot and bright in the stove, the dry wood popping and sparking like firecrackers.

Then I went out and surveyed my woodpile. Just shy of three cords, I reckon. In a typical winter, I burn through three and a half. And if the spring is cool and wet, I'll push that close to four. I'm short of wood, then. . . .

Today, estimating in my head the shortfall, I felt in my heart a weight of disappointment. Though I knew about this problem way back, I hadn't felt the weight till now, standing in my shed with the wind howling at my back, the rain pouring off the eaves. Now the time to do something about it has come and gone. Now, I pray for a mild, brief winter.

That's a long story to remake a simple point—that the heart in fall fills up with anticipation. And that anticipation—joyful, dreadful, eager, resigned—has much to do with how we have stewarded our other seasons.



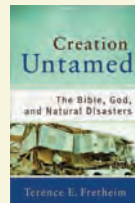
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CREATION UNTAMED

The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters

TERENCE E. FRETHEIM (BAKER ACADEMIC)

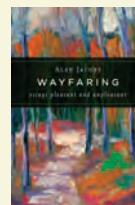


"Divine action" is a hot topic just now. Like much academic talk, the term is comically pompous, managing to suggest that God is anxiously awaiting the judgment of a panel of theologians and philosophers as to when and how he can "act." And yet the subjects encompassed in this conversation touch us all. Terence Fretheim's very useful book on God and natural disasters can be read with profit by believers with a wide range of views on sovereignty and "divine action." Fretheim's own view is that "natural disasters are a key agent of God in the continuing creation of the world" (emphasis his).

WAYFARING

Essays Pleasant and Unpleasant

ALAN JACOBS (EERDMANS)



Most of the pieces in this collection first appeared in *Books & Culture* or *First Things*. If you think that by recommending Alan Jacobs's book here I am engaged in brazen backscratching, I suggest you dash off a furious e-mail. Readers not inclined to respond that way may want to check out the first essay in *Wayfaring*, "Sentences." It is just over three pages long. If it leaves you lukewarm, that's fine. There are plenty of other good books. But some of you, I know, will be delighted by this glimpse of sentences in the making, as I was, and you'll want to read more.

MASTER OF DISGUISES

CHARLES SIMIC (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT)



Charles Simic was the poet laureate of the United States in 2007–2008. The thought of it is wonderfully ironic, not because the honor was not deserved—Simic is a superb poet—but because of the incongruity between the world of his imagination and the public office. His new collection has a sharp taste, like the dregs of very strong coffee. It's a book of old age (or what used to be called old age), the testament of an unbeliever, loaded with religious language bent and turned to his purpose (and yet at moments seeming to wish for more).



Compassion: The Best Apologetic

Max Lucado explains why he focuses on poverty in his latest book. Interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey



My other books are more, 'Let's get on our knees,' while this book is more, 'Let's roll up our sleeves,'" says Max Lucado, whose upcoming book royalties will go to World Vision. Lucado will be on tour with TobyMac, Michael W. Smith, and Third Day for World Vision's "Make a Difference Tour" this month. He spoke with *CT* online editor Sarah Pulliam Bailey about **Outlive Your Life: You Were Made to Make a Difference** (Thomas Nelson) and his recent shift in focus.

What provoked your interest in poverty?

About four years ago, a guy asked me what my great-grandchildren would think about my response to the one billion hungry people on the planet. I had neglected this area in my life and in my teaching. It led to a series I did for the church, which led to this book, which is based on the Book of Acts, about the Jerusalem church. When you study the first 12 chapters of Acts, you see how the church responded to things like hunger, bias, persecution, racial tension, and hypocrisy inside the church.

You write, "Cut concern out of the Bible, and you cut the heart out of it." How do

you prioritize poverty among other issues?

Compassion is the best apologetic. There are many controversial issues in our culture. The church should take a strong stance on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage. But there's something about compassion that causes society to say, "We're going to take this person seriously." Take Mother Teresa. She was confrontational on abortion, but she wasn't rejected by society.

You ask people to "outlive" their lives.

Does the title suggest that you have to appeal to people's own interest before you can call them to action?

Good point—although I think Jesus appealed to that when he talked about not laying up treasures on earth. I don't believe our works save us, but I believe they follow us into heaven and bring glory to God.

You seemed to have a similar experience like Kay and Rick Warren, who saw a need for HIV/AIDS outreach.

Yes. When I gave my life to Christ when I was 20 years old, I was very involved in social justice. I got caught up in the necessary part of being a pastor, a writer, and a father. I felt like the Holy Spirit was calling me back into that about five years ago.

Compassion in evangelical churches is out of balance. When I talk about it, I get a lot of glazed expressions. My book is *Compassion 101*. It's not nearly as developed as books by Richard Stearns, Tony Campolo, and Ron Sider.

Fox commentator Glenn Beck urged Christians to leave their churches if they said anything about "social justice." How would you respond to his suggestion?

I think that a church should be setting the pace for social justice. There's a great statement in the Book of Acts: "No one was in need." There's not an indication that it was a forced thing. If there were a spirit of volunteerism in our churches, would all the needs in the world be met? Ideally, I think so.

You participated in a meeting with Barack Obama in 2008. How has he handled poverty and other issues?

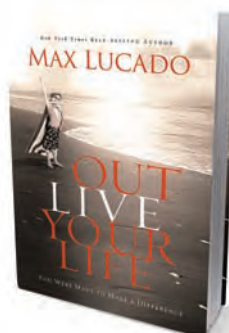
I am really concerned about debt. I just don't see how that reconciles with responsible stewardship. Our church has tried to address debt for 10 years now. I'm not anti-liberal. I love the word *liberal*—it means generous. I want the government to do all it can to enable people to get out of poverty. I'm not a political activist.

I do have stronger feelings than others on immigration reform because we have so many people here in San Antonio who have lived as illegal aliens for a decade or two. If they were told to return to Mexico, it's not a realistic solution for many people I'm close to. I think finding a pathway to citizenship is a more responsible, respectful, neighborly approach to the solution.

How would you address some critics who suggest your writing is simplistic?

I would give them a good John Stott book or a John Piper book. I realize that I'm kind of nightstand reading. Some people write lullabies; I write lullabies.

INTERVIEW



An Extravagant Tribute to Beauty

The Secret of Kells is a visual wonder and a glorious story. By Jeffrey Overstreet

I have seen the book . . . the book that turned darkness into light.” These words help introduce **The Secret of Kells** (GKIDS) ★★★★★, a hand-drawn animation film releasing to DVD this month. They are spoken by Aisling, an ancient fairy who protects the forest outside of the Kells monastery. Her testimony is surprising: She’s a figure from pagan mythology, while this book that turns darkness into light is, in fact, a beautiful edition of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The Book of Kells is an illuminated manuscript lovingly crafted by Celtic monks circa A.D. 800 and currently displayed at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. It leaves most people speechless upon seeing it. And this family-friendly, Oscar-nominated film (in 2009, for best animation) is an extravagant tribute.

When a monk named Brother Aidan enlists young Brendan to help him finish crafting the Book of Kells, Brendan goes beyond the monastery’s walls to collect the secret ingredients of Aidan’s radiant ink. In the forest, he stumbles into mythic revelations



and adventure, even as Scandinavian barbarians advance. Brendan’s excursion infuriates Abbott Cellach, who is so terrified of attack that he has forgotten faith and kindness, becoming obsessed with perfecting a wall that will stave off the Vikings.

The film brilliantly employs the rich medieval designs embedded in the Book of Kells. Familiar Celtic imagery runs wild, giving texture and cohesion to Aisling’s sumptuously illustrated forest and the monastery’s impressive architecture.

The film portrays mythical monsters and fairies alongside Christian figures, which is part of what makes it so delightful. C. S. Lewis

and J. R. R. Tolkien famously highlighted inklings of truth in many pagan tales, showing how the world’s myths point to the One True Myth. Likewise, *The Secret of Kells* vividly reconciles the symbolism and styles of mystical traditions in a way that favors the gospel. It also suggests that Christian virtue and a love of nature, so often associated with paganism, are not mutually exclusive.

So why did the filmmakers of a movie about the four Gospels refrain from mentioning the gospel? (Is that why the word *secret* is in the title?) What was it? Anti-Christian prejudice? I doubt it. Saint Brendan becomes a hero. And the Book of Kells is praised as bringing hope to the world.

Whatever the case, it’s a confounding omission in an otherwise glorious celebration of a sacred treasure. The Book of Kells is, as the film says, a work of art that “lights the way in these dark days.” (More: TheSecretofKells.com) +

Jeffrey Overstreet is author of *Auralia’s Colors* and an award-winning film critic.

© GKIDS

MY TOP 5 MOVIES ON THE HOLOCAUST

By David Roark, a Dallas-based writer and film critic



SCHINDLER'S LIST

1993 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG

Spielberg’s magnum opus tells the true story of Oskar Schindler, a greedy German industrialist who, though he had plotted to make a fortune from the war, ended up saving the lives of thousands of Jews at great personal cost.



THE COUNTERFEITERS

2008 | UNRATED

DIRECTED BY STEFAN RUZOWITZKY

In a Nazi prison camp, a Jewish forger’s expertise is used to advance a secret counterfeiting operation. He faces a moral dilemma: play it safe and aid the Germans or risk rebelling with his fellow prisoners.



LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

1998 | RATED PG-13

DIRECTED BY ROBERTO BENIGNI

This poignant Italian drama follows a father and son imprisoned in a concentration camp. The father tries to keep his young son’s spirits high by convincing him that their plight is merely a game in which the first person to reach 1,000 points wins a tank.



THE HIDING PLACE

1975 | UNRATED

DIRECTED BY JAMES F. COLLIER

Adapted from Corrie ten Boom’s autobiography, the film follows a devout family as they incarnate the love of Christ by risking their lives to hide Jews in their Holland home.



THE PIANIST

2002 | RATED R

DIRECTED BY ROMAN POLANSKI

This raw character study about Jewish concert pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman shows how he survived the invasion of Poland. Anchored by Adrien Brody’s sincere performance, it speaks volumes about the power of art and human resilience in the face of unfathomable horrors.

TWO MINUTES WITH...

Mira Sorvino



Mira Sorvino has played everything from a prostitute, in an Oscar-winning performance in *Mighty Aphrodite*, to a brilliant entomologist in the horror film *Mimic*. But her most

recent role, as an abused wife in *Like Daniel Dust* (now in theaters), has been her most challenging, she tells CT senior associate editor Mark Moring. Sorvino, a Christian, says the film—in which a struggling couple tries to get back the son they had given up for adoption—is rife with biblical themes.

This was a difficult role, wasn't it?

Very. It was something I took home with me every night and tried to shake off. Some of the scenes were so painful. In one scene, you see my character in the stairwell, cringing. It's a tiny blip on the radar screen of the movie, but I sat there maybe four hours while we shot that scene, at this dismal place of absolute despair.

But there's an evolution in her character, and the film is ultimately about forgiveness and redemption.

Why did you want to play this part?

I thought this would be a challenging role that would help me grow. My saving grace was to have my three kids on the set, to be able to hug them and tell them how much I love them. My children are my joy and a blessing from God.

Is there anything in particular a Christian will take away from the film?

It's biblical—the story of the two women and King Solomon. Who loves the child more? The one who is willing to have him cut in half, or the one who is willing to give him to the other mother?

In terms of living a life in service to Jesus, we're always called upon to do not the easy thing or the selfish thing but the most loving thing. I think all the characters in this movie are trying to do that. Every one of them has to do soul-searching. Every one is striving toward a more pure, strong, spiritual life, even if it costs them greatly. It's a beautiful story about being human, baring your soul, and reorienting how you're going to live—all with a lot of prayer and faith.



Giving 'Inspiration' a Good Name

The latest from **Mavis Staples** truly soars. By Josh Hurst

The term “inspirational music” has gotten a bad name. It's often lazy shorthand for music with a feel-good, vaguely spiritual vibe but frequently little in the way of substance. But Mavis Staples makes music that is actually inspirational—not because it glosses over the hardships of life, but because it embraces hope in spite of them. Exhibit A:

You Are Not Alone (Anti-) ★★★★★, the latest album from the national treasure who began her career with the Staples Family Singers in 1950, even before she hit her teens.

Heading the project is Wilco frontman Jeff Tweedy, who gives Staples, 71, the finest production of her career. The album is a raw, ragged beauty, deriving its soul and authenticity from its rough edges. It's a wonderfully warm, unfussy record that splits the difference between vintage Staples Family gospel—“Downward Road” even emulates Pop Staples's rumbling reverb guitar—and sweet, sonorous soul. The title cut, written by Tweedy, almost sounds like something from Wilco's *Sky Blue Sky*, only lighter and with more heart. He also

coaxes his star vocalist into new territory—“Wonderful Savior” is Staples's first-ever *a capella* recording.

What makes the album, of course, are the songs. Tweedy wrote a couple; others are Staples Family staples. Covers of songs by Allen Toussaint, Randy Newman, and John Fogerty are also here. What unites the songs is their deep, abiding hopefulness. They give *real* inspiration—songs emphasizing the kinship of believers, the promise of a heavenly kingdom, and the joys of persevering through trials by fire.

And there is some fire, by the way, and some brimstone to go with it, most clearly on “Downward Road,” a blistering account of where the ways of the wicked lead them. Tweedy hasn't removed the heart of the gospel just for the sake of making this music “inspirational.” He lets Mavis be Mavis, better than she's ever been before—and that's what makes this album not just a treasure but also an inspiration. ✦

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



QUICK TAKES

More media of note.

BOOKS

TRIBULATION

► THE LAND BETWEEN

Finding God in Difficult Transitions

JEFF MANION (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★

► BETWEEN A ROCK AND A GRACE PLACE

Divine Surprises in the Tight Spots of Life

CAROL KENT (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★

Manion lost his mother at an early age and has since walked with many others through painful trials. He invites readers to enter into the biblical narrative of the Israelites in the wilderness as a way to find God. The backdrop of Kent's book is her son, who is serving a life sentence for murder. Kent weaves letters from her son with other "grace place" stories to underline hope and joy in Christ.

CHRISTIANITY

► EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT EVANGELICALS IS WRONG (WELL, ALMOST EVERYTHING)

An Insider's Look at Myths and Realities

STEVE WILKENS AND DON THORSEN (BAKER)

★★★★★

► THE NEXT CHRISTIANS

How a New Generation Is Restoring the Faith

GABE LYONS (DOUBLEDAY RELIGION)

★★★★★

Wilkens and Thorsen do a good job of explaining what evangelicalism is and isn't, exploding some myths and reinforcing the reality that the movement is much more diverse than the media let on. Lyons, coauthor of the popular *UnChristian*, argues that younger Christians are trying to forge a new way of being Christian that rejects a lot of what evangelicals (or, à la Wilkens and Thorsen, a segment) currently represent.

THE MIND

► THINK

The Life of the Mind and the Love of God

JOHN PIPER (CROSSWAY)

★★★★★

► APOLOGETICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

LOUIS MARKOS (CROSSWAY)

★★★★★

► HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED YOU?

RAVI ZACHARIAS (ZONDERVAN)

★★★★★

Ultimately, argues Piper, there is no dichotomy between thinking about God and experiencing God, for thinking is "indispensable when it comes to having a passion for God." Markos summarizes some of the most cogent albeit popular thinking about the faith—that of Schaeffer, Lewis, Chesterton, Lane Craig, and Strobel—on the way to defending the faith today. Zacharias answers questions from skeptics in his usual engaging manner.

EVANGELISM

► MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

Sharing Faith by Listening

ELEANOR SHEPHERD (WIPF AND STOCK)

★★★★★

► NETCASTERS

Using the Internet to Make Fishers of Men

CRAIG VON BUSECK (BROADMAN AND HOLMAN)

★★★★★

Shepherd would probably eschew Markos's "neatly packaged answers," for she favors a probing listening as a kind of "spiritual accompaniment" to encouraging people into the faith. Von Buseck guides readers in how to use blogs, chat rooms, Facebook, Twitter, and other tools to share the gospel in the virtual world.

JUSTICE

► EXODUS FROM HUNGER

We Are Called to Change the Politics of Hunger

DAVID BECKMANN (WESTMINSTER JOHN KNOX)

★★★★★

► THE DANGEROUS ACT OF LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus

MARK LABBERTON (INTERVARSITY)

★★★★★

Beckmann, president of the Christian nonprofit Bread for the World, lays out his case not just for the priority of dealing with hunger, but also for the need to deal with it with political solutions, not just through charity. Labberton argues persuasively that

engaging injustice in the world must go hand in hand with a renewal of our hearts.

SPIRITUALITY

► ANCIENT PATHS

Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way

DAVID ROBINSON (PARACLETE)

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► JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius

LARRY WARNER (INTERVARSITY)

★★★★★

► SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Following the Movements of the Spirit

HENRI NOUWEN, WITH MICHAEL CHRISTENSEN AND

REBECCA LAIRD (HARPERONE)

★★★★★

► FORGIVING AS WE'VE BEEN FORGIVEN

Community Practices for Making Peace

L. GREGORY JONES AND CÉLESTIN MUSEKURA

(INTERVARSITY)

★★★★★

Both Robinson and Warner mine the riches of Catholic spirituality for readers of a non-Catholic persuasion. Christensen and Laird make lectures of the late Henri Nouwen accessible. And Jones and Musekura buck the trend and set spiritual formation primarily in a community context. —Books reviewed by Mark Galli

IN THEATERS

► LIKE DANDELION DUST

DOWNES BROTHERS | RATED PG-13 | SEPTEMBER 24

★★★★★ A story about the battle between the adoptive and biological parents of a 6-year-old boy, this feature film adaptation of Karen Kingsbury's bestseller packs plenty of emotional punch. Although made by a Christian production company, evangelical themes are used sparingly, and the film's exploration of sacrificial love and courage in difficult circumstances will resonate with all viewers. The film skillfully avoids one-dimensional stereotypes—each character is nuanced enough to earn viewers' empathy. Academy Award winner Mira Sorvino (see page 67) and Golden Globe nominee Barry Pepper deliver stand-out performances as the boy's ill-equipped but well-intentioned birth parents. —Carolyn Arends

ON TV

► RAISING HOPE

FOX | TUESDAYS, 9/8C | SEPTEMBER 21

★★★★★ In a primetime TV culture that rarely acknowledges the sanctity of life, this new comedy is a refreshing change. After 23-year-old Jimmy, a party animal who lives with his parents, has a one-night stand, he later learns that the girl is (a) a wanted felon, and (b) pregnant. After she gives birth in prison, Jimmy ends up with the baby girl, who has been named Princess Beyoncé. Jimmy wants to keep her, saying, "This is a chance for me to do something good." His parents reluctantly agree, and his mom says, "I'm not parading my granddaughter around church named Princess Beyoncé." The baby is given a new name—Hope—and prime-time TV, a healthy dose of hope. —Mark Moring

ON DVD

► EGGSPOITATION

(CENTER FOR BIOETHICS AND CULTURE)

★★★★★ Jennifer Lahl is a retired nurse with one mission: to shut down the lucrative—and ethically sticky—fertility industry in the U.S. In this affecting documentary, the founder-director of the Center for Bioethics and Culture focuses on the inconspicuous and unregulated "supply" side, talking to three young women who donated their eggs to private clinics that lure college students. Along with payment, the women got a heap of chronic medical issues they weren't warned of. The 40-minute film would work well as an educational tool in churches and classrooms—if viewers can take its ominous soundtrack and creepy close-ups of syringes and embryos with a grain of salt. (More: Eggsplotation.com) —Katelyn Beaty

MUSIC

DOUG BURR

► O YE DEVASTATOR

(VELVET BLUE MUSIC/SPUNE)

★★★★★ Previous albums from Burr, the son of a Southern Baptist pastor, have explored the intersection of faith and doubt. He's always been obsessed with mysteries human and divine, the conundrum of a loving God who is both ever-present and hidden. Here, Burr brings a more refined lyrical approach and a broader sonic palette to the mix, resulting in his finest album. God is present in these songs, but the outcome remains in doubt. These are sinners and saints fully capable of ignoring the narrow gate and choosing the broad path of destruction. The impact lies in those puzzling riddles, and Burr lets his chilling stories unravel without ever tying the knots. —Andy Whitman

JOHN MELLENCAMP

► NO BETTER THAN THIS

(ROUNDER RECORDS)

★★★★★ John Mellencamp stopped caring about making hit records a long time ago, and his musical legacy is all the better for it. His latest is a hopelessly uncommercial foray into early rockabilly, honky-tonk, and topical folk, and harks back to when Elvis was still a skinny Mississippi kid and Woody Guthrie was hopping freight trains. T Bone Burnett's production is dependably drenched in '50s reverb, and Mellencamp delivers a set of classic tunes highlighted by "Right Behind Me," an update of Robert Johnson's spiritual wrestling match "Me and the Devil Blues." Haunted by ghosts—Holy and otherwise—these songs retain the spooky timelessness of the best American music. —Andy Whitman

THE OPIATE MASS

► VOLUME 2: ALBATROSS

(SELF-RELEASED)

★★★★★ This, the second in a series of EPS (the first, *Make a Sound*, was released in February), is another collection of unsettling and beautiful ancient-future church music. Starting off with a Radiohead-like take on the classic hymn

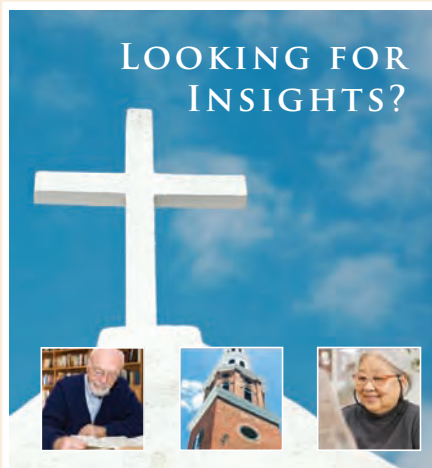
"What Wondrous Love Is This," the Seattle band's lush, orchestral songs take seriously both the woundedness of the human condition (especially their hushed version of Sinead O'Connor's "This Is to Mother You") and the atoning work of Christ, as on the sparse and punchy "Paschal Troparion." It's a spiritually heavy but rewarding 30 minutes. —Joel Hartse

BRIAN WILSON

► BRIAN WILSON REIMAGINES GERSHWIN

(DISNEY PEARL)

★★★★★ "I believe that music is God's voice," says Brian Wilson, one of the great American composers of the last half of the 20th century. George Gershwin, one of the great American composers of the first half, may not have agreed, but his music (and brother Ira's lyrics) was frequently God-haunted if not outright inspired. Wilson, founder of the Beach Boys, here "reimagines" fourteen Gershwin works, including two never-before-published songs: "The Like in I Love You" and "Nothing but Love." More popular covers include "Summertime" and "It Ain't Necessarily So," all adding up to a CD that Wilson calls "the most spiritual project I've ever worked on." —Mark Moring



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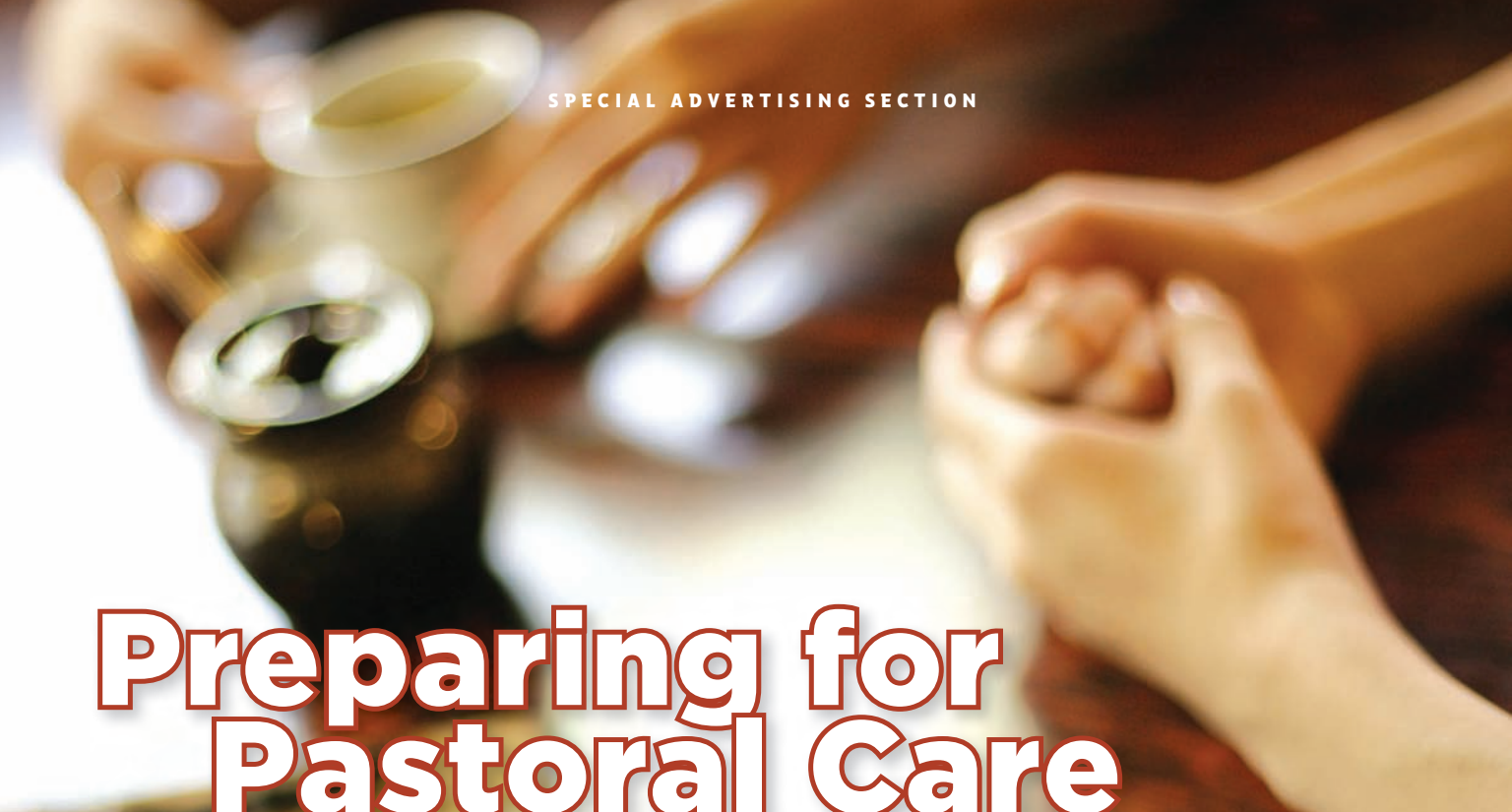
Helping Hurting People

**How seminaries are
equipping future ministers
to care for those in crisis.**

page 72

**Master's programs in
psychology and counseling
prepare students for
compassionate caring.**

page 82



Preparing for Pastoral Care

How seminaries are equipping future ministers to care for those in crisis.

Today's pastors are finding themselves stretched far beyond the traditional roles of preaching, teaching, and congregational leadership. With many people facing complex and stressful issues—unemployment, financial difficulties, political discord, continuing military conflicts, even natural and man-made disasters—those in ministry find themselves directly caring for individuals and families in crisis. This care, at the very least, requires listening compassionately, offering biblically-based guidance and prayer, and even connecting people with additional outside help. However, pastors often discover that a more extensive commitment to pastoral care or counseling is necessary.

"Without a doubt, ministry to individuals in crisis is an increasingly urgent component of pastoral ministry," says R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. "In one sense, that has always been a major concern of ministry. Nevertheless, given the complexities of life, it seems that crises multiply and accumulate."

It's not surprising, then, that seminaries

take this pastoral responsibility seriously. Regardless of approach, today's seminaries are working hard to equip and prepare ministers to provide care that is both practical and faithful.

Counseling Coursework

In addition to immersing students in the study of Scripture and theology, and cultivating skills in preaching, teaching, worship, and leadership, all Master of Divinity (M.Div.) curricula require coursework in pastoral care and counseling, internships, and participation in forums that process field experiences with a mentor and/or facilitated peer discussion group.

At Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland, Oregon, prior to undertaking ministry internships, coursework in pastoral care and counseling introduces students to the spiritual and psychological dimensions of pastoral care, basic counseling skills, and the characteristics of effective ministry. Subsequent coursework—often elective—exposes students to the breadth of pastoral care or counseling scenarios, and prepares them intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally for the demands of this type of ministry.

The School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, in Boiling Springs, North Carolina, incorporates introductory coursework in pastoral care and counseling into the M.Div. core curriculum and also offers pastoral care and counseling as one of five concentrations with which students may round out their studies. According to the divinity school course catalog, the concentration includes pastoral theology, ministry to families, crisis intervention, grief counseling, and clinical pastoral education—pastoral care in a clinical, as opposed to congregational, setting. Students may also take classes in pathology and addictions, training lay counselors, legal and ethical issues, conflict management, and chaplaincy. The pastoral care and counseling concentration, says Robert W. Canoy, dean of the school, "provides specialized training for ministers as counselors and care-givers, whether in a parish or an institutional setting."

Southern Seminary takes a different approach, emphasizing biblical counseling, which relies on intensive study of biblical insight into human character and God's will in order to apply Scripture to the diversity of counseling issues.

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"Our approach is distinctive, based in the conviction that the most important pastoral care happens in the pulpit, where the people of God are prepared for the challenges of life through the preaching and teaching of God's word," Mohler says. "This puts the increased burden upon the institution to teach the Bible comprehensively, getting to the often-neglected aspects of biblical application to the crises of life."

While Southern offers numerous degree options in biblical counseling—including specialized M.Div. concentrations and Master of Arts (M.A.) and Ph.D. programs—the seminary weaves this approach into the core M.Div. curriculum regardless of specialization. "In one sense, the pastor should assume that every single member of the congregation is an individual in need or crisis. If the crisis is not experienced in the present, it almost surely will be in the future. The pastor's central task of teaching and preaching the word of God in the act of congregational worship is the primary

means by which God arms his people to endure crises," Mohler says. Therefore, "The pastor needs to teach and preach in such a way that the congregation is actually prepared for the crisis before it happens."

At Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, students are expected to become "careful and empathetic listeners, able to bring biblical and theological wisdom to the real-life events of their congregations. An important skill in this respect is for students to learn to 'see' the people in their congregation from a perspective shaped and formed by Scripture, beyond the important resources of psychological and systems theories," says Leanne Van Dyk, dean and vice president of academic affairs. "When a pastoral care-giver interacts with a person troubled by illness, depression, unemployment, or loss, the pastor sees a beloved child of God . . . a person to whom God has committed God's own self through Jesus Christ and daily sustains through the Holy Spirit."

Western's M.Div. curriculum emphasizes student formation for ministry, from personal spiritual formation to 400 hours of internship experience. In addition to five required credit-hours of pastoral care and counseling coursework, students participate in weekly peer group meetings that give them the chance to "unpack issues in ministry and find the wisdom and counsel of a trusted group of fellow students," Van Dyk says. "Confidentiality is highly prized, and the support and mutual encouragement is a key aspect of their learning."

Through Western's Dual Degree program, students may earn both an M.Div. and a Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) in four years. Students in the dual-track program, Van Dyk says, "take the full range of theological coursework, so that they can function in ministry as perceptive and thoughtful Christian leaders, and are guided in their studies by theologically trained mentors in the diverse fields of social work." The result, she says, is that "our dual-degree

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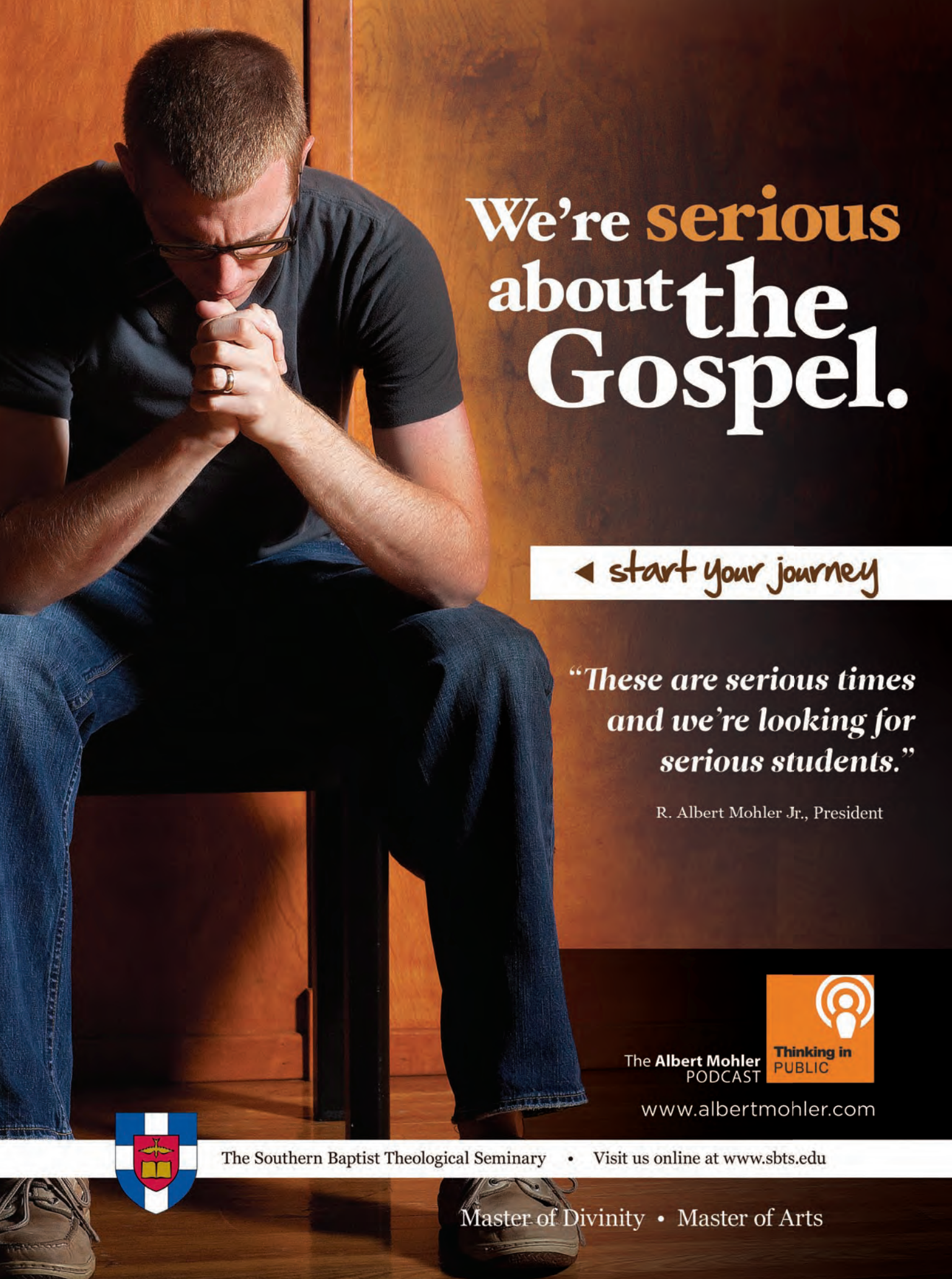
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students learn to pay attention to where the gospel gives light to their work in non-profit organizations, social service agencies, or church-based service work. They learn how to collaborate with organizations, both Christian and non-Christian, in order to do their ministry."

Many seminaries offer non-degree options as well. The Pittman Center for Congregational Enrichment at Gardner-Webb University provides continuing education for clergy as well as the Lay Institute of Religion for church lay leaders. According to the school's website, Pittman's classes cover topics such as Bible, theology, teacher training, deacon ministry, church leadership, spirituality, and health and wellness.

Personal Preparation

Preparation for providing pastoral care involves more than attaining proficiency in biblical knowledge and ministry skill sets, though both are essential. Spiritual maturity, emotional health, supportive peer groups, and an honest assessment of strengths and weaknesses are likewise necessary for pastors to sustain effective, healthy ministries to those in crisis.

At Western, Van Dyk reports that student formation involves more than coursework, internships and peer groups. "Each student takes a comprehensive set of psychological tests, which are then reported back to the student in a one-on-one conversation. The student is then asked to write a paper that identifies what they have learned about themselves, what unique strengths they have for ministry, and what unique potential difficulties they could have in ministry," she says. Students are also asked to propose a plan for growth and ongoing self-assessment, and engage in one-on-one interviews with a pastoral counselor to further explore their growth areas. "This rather extensive process has proved to be very helpful to students in understanding themselves so that they can be counselors and pastoral leaders with good emotional health," she says.

At Multnomah, "all pastoral M.Div. students engage in four semesters of ministry involvement that best matches their sense of calling, passion, and purpose," says Roger Trautmann, dean of students,

associate professor of pastoral ministries and internship mentoring director. At the start of each semester, Multnomah students create a Ministry Formation Plan that guides their development as pastors. This plan, which serves as a learning contract, includes personal assessment, character goals, coursework, and ministry engagement, and culminates with a self-assessment that reflects on "all components of their training and what they learned about their quest for character and ministry competency," Trautmann says. "The difficulties they experienced become formative as students are challenged to see themselves as servants of Christ in diverse ministry circumstances."

"Ministry is dynamic and unpredictable on many fronts," explains Trautmann. "By learning how to process life and monitor two indicators of anxiety and anger, the pastoral leader can assess personal issues that need to be addressed. By writing the realities of their expenditures of time and energy in an actual plan, and then reflecting on the outcomes at the end of each semester, the pastoral student actually learns practical disciplines necessary for sustainable ministry."

The mutual encouragement, support and accountability of seminary peer groups mirror the personal care experienced in Christian community. These faculty- or mentor-led forums prepare students for life after seminary in a number of ways. Canoy reports that Gardner-Webb also uses these sessions to address a host of personal issues pastors face, including: developing good habits for a balanced life as family member, minister, and friend; worshiping while leading in worship; reading the Bible devotionally as well as academically; practicing the presence of God; developing a life of prayer; maintaining good physical health and rest; and becoming a life-long learner. "We focused balanced attention on what students should be, know, and do," he says. Addressing "being" begins with enrollment, he adds, as each student is paired with a spiritual mentor who walks with him/her in spiritual formation sessions throughout the M.Div. program.

Honest assessment of one's own strengths and potential weaknesses is a key part of the formation process, as students gain awareness of their particular gifts as well as areas in which they need to especially practice reliance upon God and others that God may raise up to join them.

Multnomah's Elizabeth List, professor of psychology, department chairperson, and director of the M.A. in counseling program says that whether or not pastors feel particularly gifted or called in the area of counseling, "It often falls on their shoulders to provide at least crisis care for their congregation. While patience, compassion and good listening skills are necessary qualities when working with people, pastors also need to learn how to set and uphold good boundaries, how to listen for organic [physical or psychological]—as well as spiritual—issues, and when and where to refer should a member of the congregation need more help than the pastor or the church can offer." She reports that while pastors sometimes feel burdened to be proficient in every area of ministry, "Many have found that it is very helpful to have a list of professional counselors who share the same beliefs as the church to draw from and partner with in mental health issues."

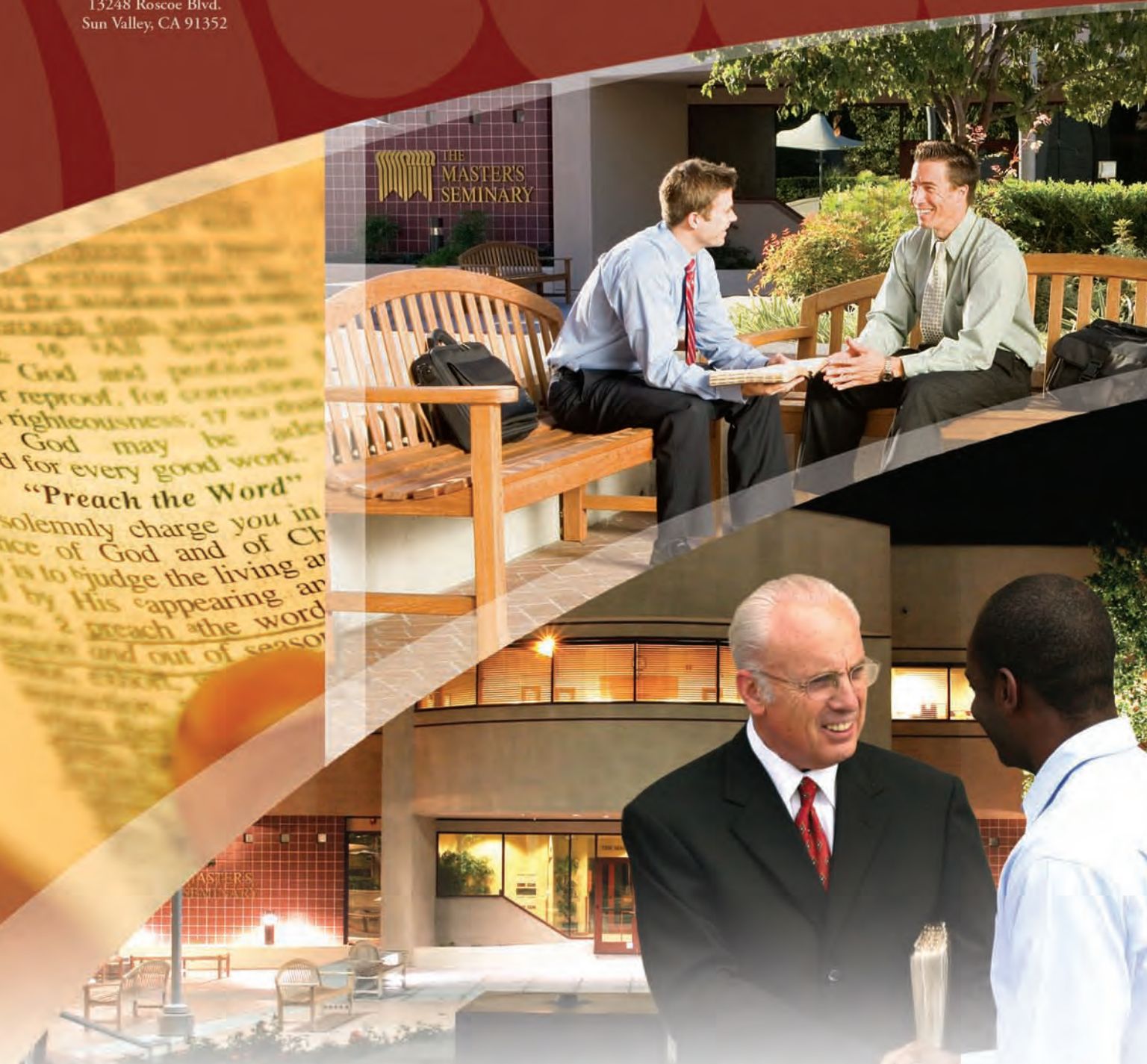
As they bear the burdens and pressures of pastoral care, future pastors are also cautioned against common pitfalls in Christian leadership and signs that may indicate they are headed for spiritual or emotional danger.

"Ministers must learn that our basic humanity prevents us from transcending the limitations of time and energy that are natural to fallen humanity," says Albert Mohler of Southern Seminary. "Clearly, there are certain seasons of life when [good personal stewardship] is more difficult. The birth of every child means an increase in parental time and attention. The complications of modern life, the imperative of study, and the demands of congregational ministry all compete for the minister's time, concentration, and energy." As a result, he says, "Far too many ministers attempt to perform the acts of ministry in their own energy and according to a philosophy

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continued from page 76

that is better suited to management than ministry."

In his teaching and community ministry at New Life Fellowship, pastor Rich Villodas, a 2009 graduate of Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, observes that he has been challenged by internal pressures to "provide leadership without having the corresponding spiritual formation to lead with integrity. I get tempted to lead out of my gifts and abilities, instead of out of my brokenness," he says. "My seminary preparation constantly brought me back to the notion that spiritual formation must precede leadership if it's going to glorify God."

"At the core, a pastoral minister is devoted to being a Christ-like person . . . cultivated through spiritual reflection on the person and work of the incarnate Son of God and a passionate pursuit of a transforming relationship with Christ," Trautmann says. "The means by which this is developed is through consistent spiritual reflection and prayerful integration, as well as living in close proximity to Christ and his community." Trautmann also encourages seminarians to practice a cycle of "retreat, rest/recreation, reflection, and re-entry," to maintain spiritual vitality in a life of service.

Southern's Mohler encourages students to practice the personal spiritual disciplines of the Christian life, "in order that the minister will be ready for the comprehensive task of ministry. These disciplines are centered, of course, in prayer, the reading and study of the Bible, and the gifts of the devotional life," he says. "Beyond this, ministers must follow their own advice and teaching, and make certain that they are turning to the means of grace that are available to all believers: the preaching and teaching of the word of God, the ordinances of the church, and the fellowship of the congregation." The humble recognition that the demands of ministry exceed the individual's ability and resources, he says, "is what we hope will ground our students as they move into ministry."

Kathy Furlong is a freelance writer living in Philadelphia, PA.

Education in Action

Putting training to use in everyday ministries.

Marlinda Ireland

Marlinda Ireland is an associate pastor at Christ Church, a non-denominational, multi-ethnic congregation that meets in Montclair and Rockaway, New Jersey. Primarily, she serves as the church's worship pastor and women's ministry director, but like nearly every other minister working today, Ireland does more. "I regularly provide spiritual and practical guidance to a wide variety of hurting people," she says. A 2009 graduate of Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, Ireland says that her work involves "counseling, establishing support groups, organizing small group Bible studies, developing a mentoring program, assisting with job placement, strategically connecting [people] with community-based social programs, and providing one-on-one accountability."

She believes that her seminary education has served her well. "I considered several institutions, but made Alliance my final choice after seeing the quality of knowledge and skills in several graduates," she says. Ireland also appreciated the school's cultural, ethnic, and denominational diversity. "I felt that this kind of exposure would help foster growth in my ability to contextualize and communicate biblical truth within our increasingly complex society," she says.

At Christ Church, Ireland has become attuned to the way that personal struggles can lead to "see-saw" spirituality. "Jesus' final instructions were to 'go and make disciples.' However, many struggle with becoming disciplined enough to carry out our Savior's most famous last words—especially in tough times. As a result, large segments of the Christian community are living for God one moment and at the mercy of our problems the next," she says. "My seminary experience has prepared me to effectively teach the Bible, confidently lead others, and become innovative at cultivating consistent spiritual transformation. In short, ATS is helping me help others become contagious Christians and win the war against spiritual mediocrity."



Rich Villodas

As a teaching and community pastor at New Life Fellowship in Queens, New York, Rich Villodas teaches regularly—on Sundays and in other settings, oversees small groups that meet throughout New York City, equips small group leaders to give pastoral care to their members, and sometimes walks with congregants through seasons of need. "My heart and passion is to create small group communities with the intention of connecting people to them. This creates much-needed opportunities for people to experience friendship, support, and comfort during challenging times," he says. "I am not a proponent of a ministry model in which the pastor is the sole source of spiritual guidance."

A 2009 graduate of Alliance Seminary, Villodas recalls that he was drawn to the seminary's commitment to spiritual formation. "I was intrigued by the integration of spiritual disciplines, emotional health, and leadership," he says. "I experienced a holistic approach to Christian spirituality which would sustain the work I do for Christ."

Practicing a holistic approach has been immensely helpful as Villodas has faced the isolation and loneliness that often accompanies pastoral leadership. "During my time at Alliance, I was trained to live out the Christian experience in the context of community," he says. "My seminary preparation grounded me in the truth that in order to lead well and live a life that can sustain the pressures of leadership, I must belong to a community." —KF





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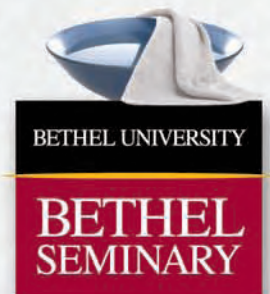
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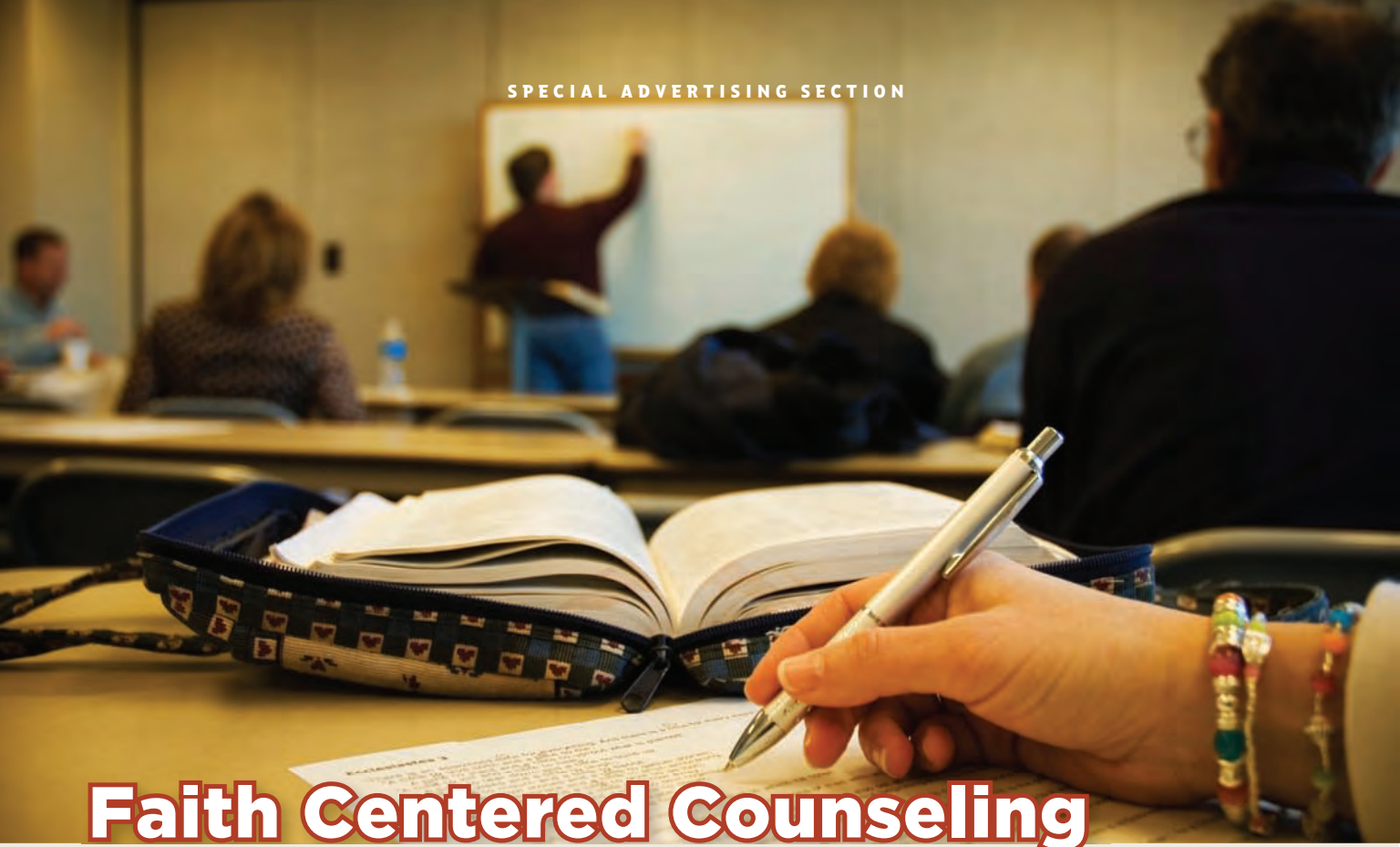
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Master's degrees in counseling or psychology can lead to fulfilling work in many contexts: private practice, public or private medical facilities, community mental health centers, universities, primary and secondary schools, secular or faith-based agencies, doctoral studies, and more. A number of Christian graduate schools and seminaries today offer master's programs—some also offer doctoral programs—that equip students to provide compassionate help for people in need of wise counsel or mental health services.

The College of Adult & Professional Studies and Graduate School at Bethel University, in St. Paul, Minnesota, offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) in counseling psychology, in which cohorts of students (small groups that study together for the duration of the program) earn their degrees in either a two-year or three-year format. According to its website, this program “employs a scientist/practitioner model integrating

the discipline of psychology, with its roots in science and theory, the art of counseling, and a Christian worldview.”

The goal, says Jim Koch, director of the counseling psychology program, is to “develop therapeutic skills, diagnostic ability, analytic ability, the conceptualization of problems and issues, and the ability to think integratively, putting the worlds of faith, values, and psychology together.” Once they have completed their first-year coursework, students engage in a 700-hour practicum, working with clients and colleagues under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional.

The M.A. in psychology and M.A. in clinical psychology with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy at the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP), in Los Angeles, likewise prepare students for diverse professional applications or doctoral studies. “Our mission is to prepare students for lives of purpose, service and leadership,”

says Robert deMayo, associate dean of the psychology division. “Students are trained to develop skills in evidence-based practice in mental health and the multicultural competencies essential to practice in diverse communities.” The GSEP also offers a doctor of psychology (Psy.D.) in clinical psychology.

At Pepperdine, students learn “to meet the varied psychological needs of clients, taking into account the individual values of the client—including their religious and spiritual commitments—and their socio-cultural context,” says Edward Shafranske, professor of psychology and director of the Psy.D. program. “No matter the client’s unique suffering and conflicts, the program develops a foundation of professional competence, values, and ethics for graduates to respond in a highly empathic and effective manner.”

One distinctive of Pepperdine’s psychology programs, deMayo says, is their emphasis on equipping students to work in culturally diverse settings.

continued on page 84



"In my time at Trinity, I have really appreciated the intentionality of the faculty in their approach toward their students. They are committed to providing expertise in their field, as well as developing and caring for the whole person. The faculty are extremely pastoral. Here, it's not just my mind that is valued but who I am as a whole person. I feel like I've received an education that connects the mind with the heart."

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Learning opportunities in multi- and cross-cultural contexts include various training sites in and around Los Angeles, GSEP initiatives such as the Culture and Trauma Research Lab—which studies the role of cultural context, including religion and spirituality, in recovery from interpersonal trauma—and the Urban Initiative which, he says, aims “to prepare a new generation of education and mental health professionals with the skills and will to work effectively in underserved urban communities for the long term.”

Studying psychology at a Christian graduate school naturally invites students to consider the role of spirituality in the practice of therapy. At Bethel University, “We ask our learners to actively engage in questions surrounding the interrelationship of their faith and professional practice,” says Lori Jass, acting vice president and dean of the college of adult & professional Studies and Graduate School. “Through

this process, students at Bethel find that they are transformed as people, well beyond simply acquiring a degree or a set of professional skills.”

Bethel’s Christian foundations, and the faith-informed perspectives of students and faculty, are evident throughout the curriculum, Koch says. Integration Seminars that are taken concurrently with practicum requirements and courses such as Integration of Psychology and Worldview—which explores counseling from within a Christian worldview and evaluates various models for describing the relationship between psychology and Christianity—further aid student formation in this area.

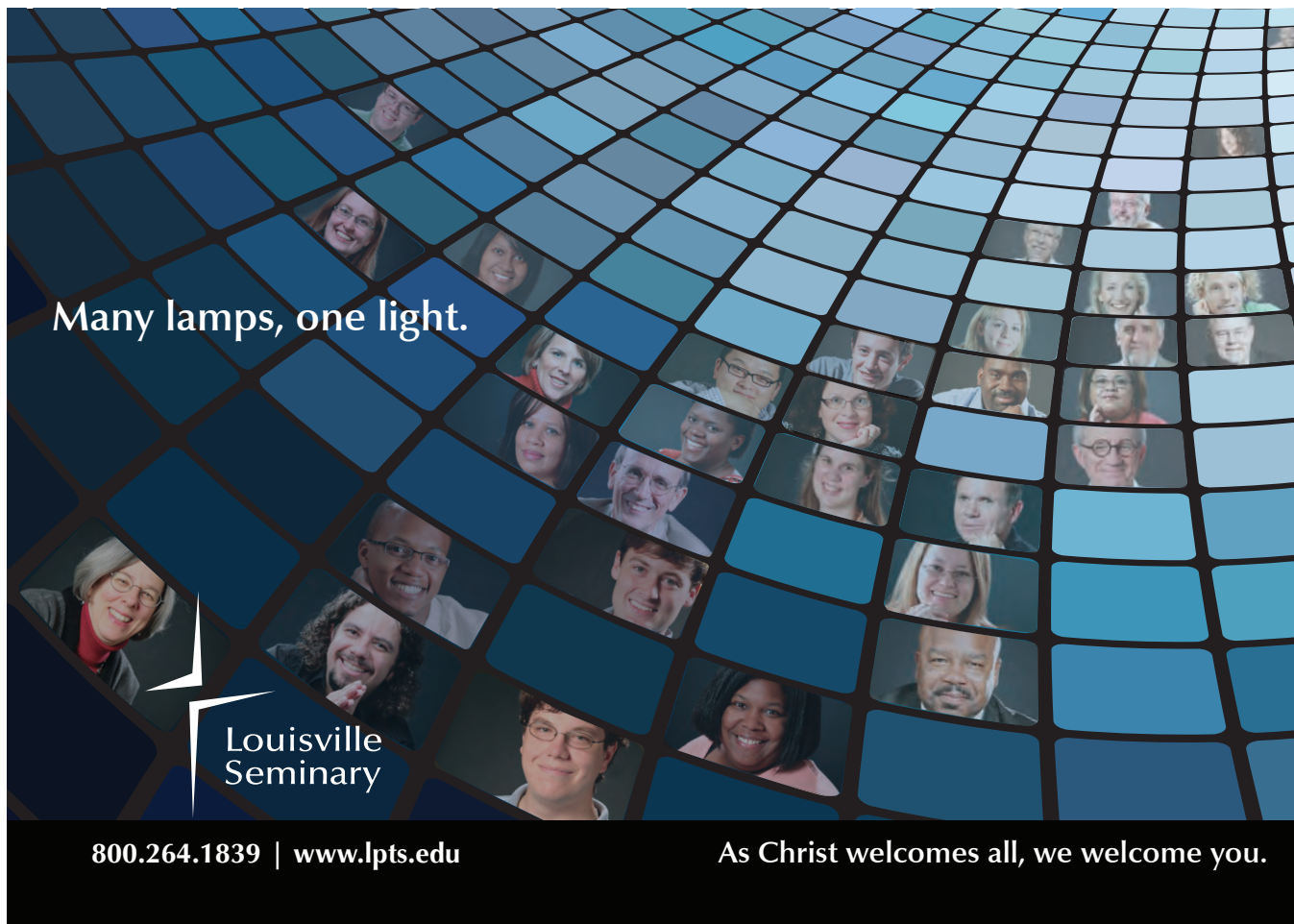
“The conceptual integration between the discipline of psychology and faith is done through assignments, group projects, and classroom discussion,” Koch says. His hope is that the process of making these connections will be formative beyond professional practice:

“We encourage people to take faith and psychological concepts and integrate them into their therapy practice, but we also want them to make it part of their own praxis—their own lives—so they not only conceptualize it for their clients but also for themselves.”

At Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland, Oregon, the M.A. in counseling program includes Bible and theology classes along with counseling coursework and field requirements. Elizabeth List, professor of psychology, department chairperson and director of the M.A. in counseling program, says that this degree “trains students to approach mental health holistically, addressing the mind, the body, and the spirit through a biblical lens, and equips them to work with broken and hurting people in the secular and Christian world.”

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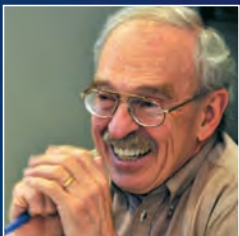
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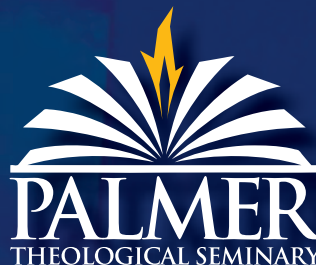


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settings. Other applications of the degree, List says, include teaching, consulting, and human resources. In addition to skills development and the integration of biblical/theological understanding, she notes that the program encourages students to “approach their practice of counseling . . . from a servant-healer perspective.”

The spiritual heritage of these universities also shapes how graduates relate to their clients. “In addition to the development of professionalism and clinical competence, we hope to inspire students to deeply respect the clients with whom they serve, to develop an appreciation for diversity in all its human forms, and to be strengthened in their commitment to serve others with a spirit of gratitude for the opportunity,” Pepperdine’s Shafranske says. “As such we hope that students grasp that their professional training is integral to a far more important calling that brings forth purpose and meaning and, for many, involves a faith dimension.” —KF

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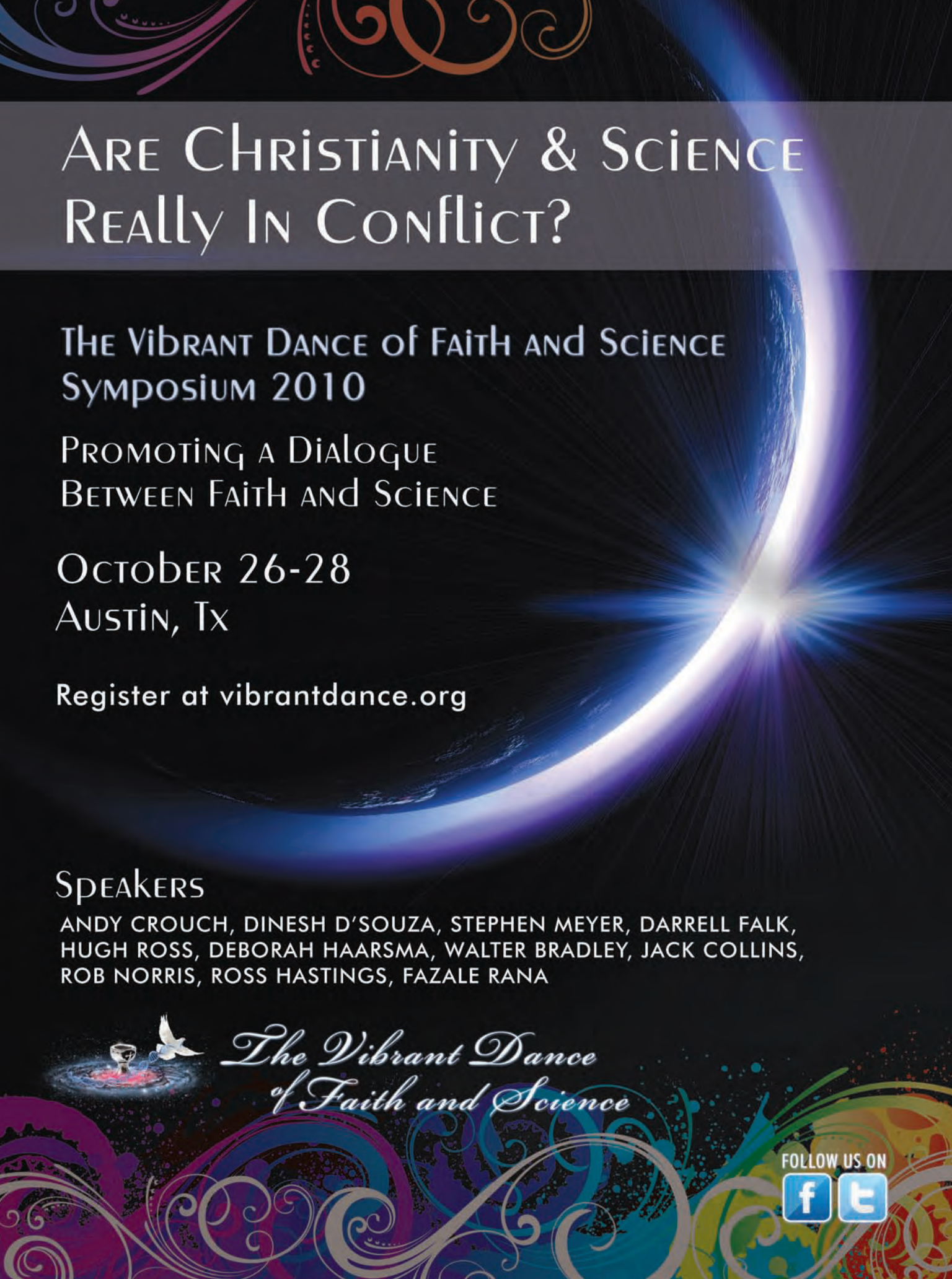
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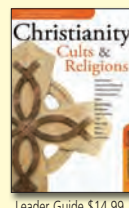
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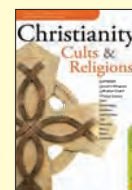
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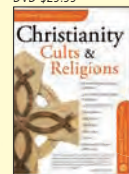


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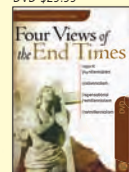


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The Ultimate Wave

Bryan Jennings takes the Good News to surfers.

Bryan Jennings wasn't any different from many other surfers who grew up on the California coast—on the beach and hitting the waves by day, partying and getting laid at night. He occasionally attended church “for all the wrong reasons, namely free pizza and pretty girls,” but when he met Jesus at age 18, his life turned around in a hurry. He cleaned up his act and his game, and was soon surfing professionally. But what he enjoyed most was telling people about his faith and riding the Ultimate Wave.

At age 20, while attending Point Loma Nazarene University, Jennings hosted a Christian surfing camp and called it Walking On Water (wow). Ten kids showed up. Now, 15 years later, wow is an internationally known ministry. Its summer camps have reached thousands, and its mission trips and outreach events take the Good News to surfers around the world.

Today, wow is best known for its films, which combine surfing footage with music and powerful testimonies to reach a global audience. Jennings, 36, estimates that three million people have seen the movies, and says thousands have come to Christ as a result of the ministry.

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- **Favorite website** Surflife.com
- **Hero** Joseph of the Bible
- **Best meal you make** smoothies

question & answer

Where did the idea for Walking On Water begin?

My first year as a believer (at 18), I was in the Lord and in the world, trying to live both ways. My best friend said I couldn't keep living the way I used to; no one had disciplined me, and at first, I didn't understand. Finally, I realized I had to step it up, and I did. When I started having some success [as a pro surfer], kids were looking up to me, and I wanted to do something with that and with my faith. So I organized the first camp, and we've been going ever since.

What prompted you to start making surfing movies?

Typical surfing movies show a famous pro surfer at a party, drinking with some girl and basically saying, “This is the life. You get to surf around the world and party.” I got tired of seeing all these worldly surfing movies, and said, “Let's make one that glorifies the Lord.” One guy wrote us a check to fund it (*Follow the Leader*, 1996), and we were off.

Your next movie is going to be about surfing in Israel?

Yes. It's called *Promised Land*. There are 20,000 surfers in Israel, and the purpose of the film is for Christians and the church to better understand Israel as God's chosen people, and how we as believers are grafted into God's family. And, of course, we hope that Jews will come to know Jesus as Messiah.

What's the most challenging part of running the ministry?

Fundraising, operations, and staff management. I just had a vision for sharing the gospel, starting with surfers. The business and administrative stuff isn't my gift. I try to get those things done so I can go out and do what I'm passionate about. More than ever, kids need Jesus. They need to see real people who love the Lord, and I'm thankful God has allowed us to be part of the answer.

More: WalkingOnWater.org



Professor Patrick T. Smith

Gordon-Conwell plans to offer a new degree, the **Master of Arts in Ethics and Society** for the Fall of 2011.*

*Pending ATS approval



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- Parachurch workers
- Lay Christians in the marketplace
- NGO and Government Agency workers
- Military/Hospital Chaplains
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