

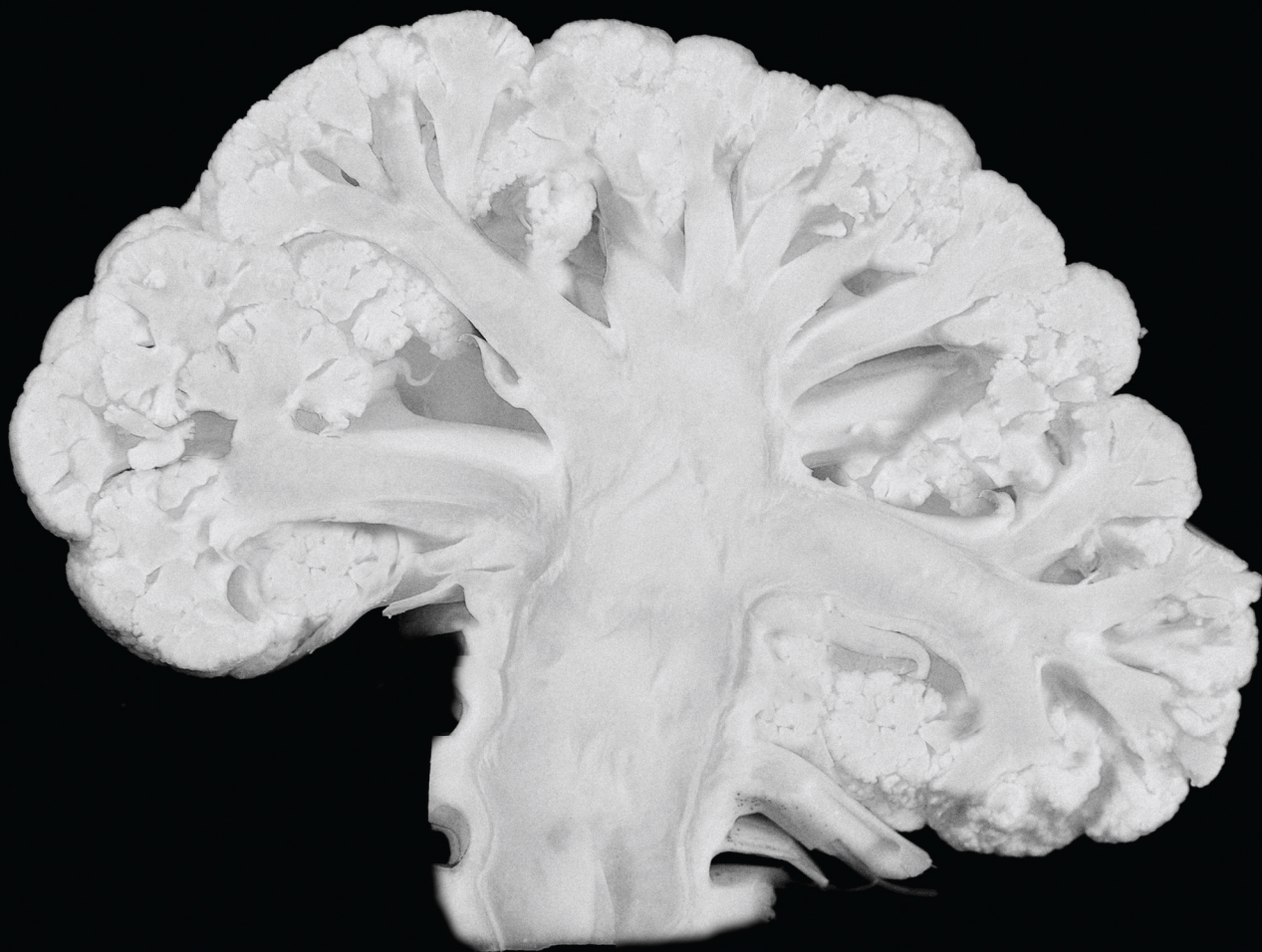
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Christianity Today

NOVEMBER 2010

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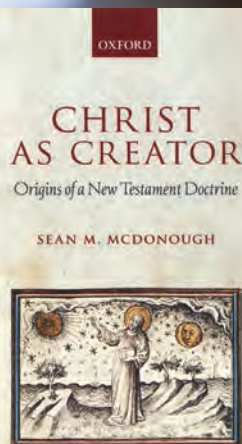
+ THE NEW APOSTATES 40
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“The Son of God becomes
a man, and there’s a
written record? Maybe that’s
worth a little study.”

Dr. Sean McDonough,
Professor of New Testament

Dr. McDonough’s most recent
book, *Christ as Creator* (Oxford
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New Testament teaching that
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God made the world.

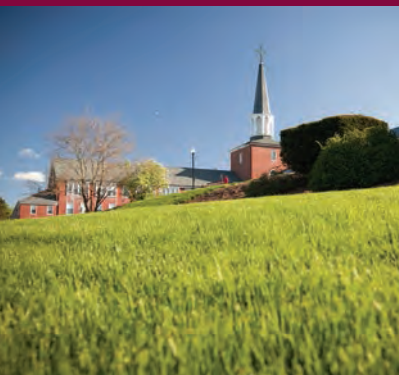


“Sometimes we find ourselves taking the incarnation for granted,” says Dr. Sean McDonough, Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

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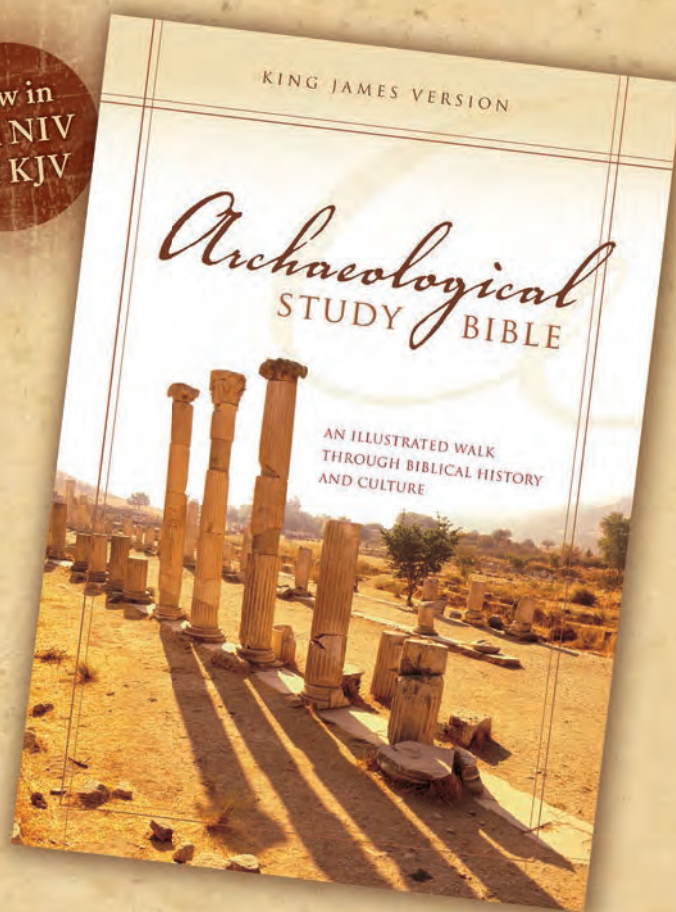


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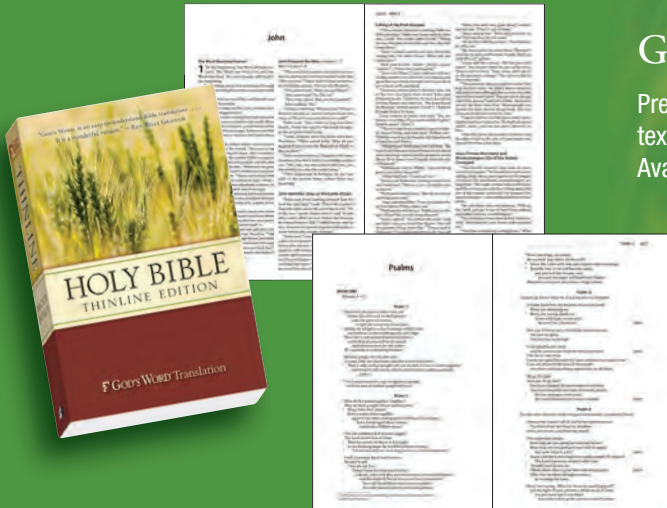
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BY GARY GNIDOVIC



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

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

Your Eyes on God's World

God's world is a big place, and at *Christianity Today*, we have committed to doing everything we can to give you a front-row seat on what God is doing around the globe.

In recent months, for example, we introduced readers to a Canadian economist in Mozambique who uses trade to help the poor; profiled a Laotian refugee who has returned to Thailand to foster churches, businesses, schools, and an orphanage; and reported on ministry in a Port-au-Prince tent city.

We live in a time when American pastors are taking cues from clergy in Rwanda, Ukraine, and South Korea. Because Christ-followers need to connect with fellow believers worldwide, we are constantly expanding our global vision and yours.

Can we continue to increase this unique international coverage? Like many of you, we at CT have felt the pinch of recent economic uncertainties, and travel to unfamiliar cultures takes much more of our writers' time and emotional energy.

Fortunately, we have had some help. Several organizations help with costs, access, and in-country travel. As I write, we are capitalizing on the ONE Campaign's connections to report on how mother-to-child HIV transmission in Africa can be ended by year 2015.

Such assistance encourages us as we plan future reports of gospel growth in the uttermost parts. That is why I want to encourage you as a CT "fellow traveler" 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 portion, or visit ChristianityToday.com/donate.

David Neff, Editor in Chief

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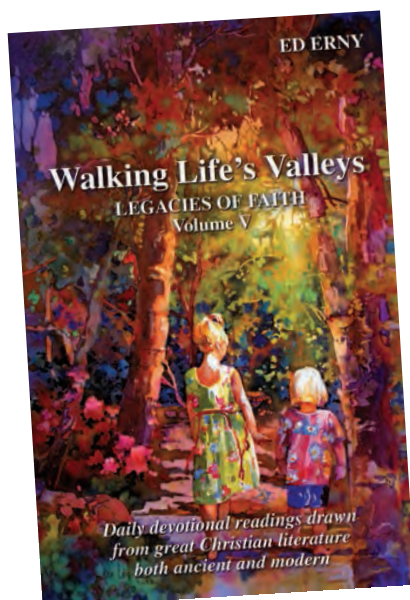
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is, "What is keeping you from growing?"*
John Ortberg

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Research Professor of New Testament Studies,
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Food Fights

But it doesn't have to be this way.

T

HE HUSBAND-WIFE TEAM, both veterinarians, were speaking on God's concern for animals. At the end of the Sunday school class, they explained why they were vegetarians. They clarified that vegetarianism wasn't required of all Christians, and presented their case in a gracious tone. Yet between the sarcastic asides and the hostile tone of questions, it was clear that the carnivores in the room had been threatened.

Food is so personal! *Christianity Today* editorial "discussions" on the topic have been intense and energetic. At my own dinner table, harsh words have been spoken and tears shed as children and parents have exchanged views on the matter.

We Christians do not like people telling us how to eat. This goes way back. The Jerusalem Council told Gentile Christians not to eat food sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29), but the admonition was ignored almost immediately (Rom. 14:2). In the end, Paul told believers to let their consciences guide them (Rom. 14:12).

But food is also a corporate enterprise. Every meal we consume has come to us through a complex chain of events—from fields to trains to factories to trucks to stores to the refrigerator—and each stage has an ethical dimension. Along the chain, workers are to be employed justly, animals treated fairly, the environment preserved wisely, and bodies fed nutritiously. And then there's this: food is to be enjoyed and celebrated as one of God's finest gifts.

The problem is that when we get serious about ethics, food becomes more of a problem than an occasion of praise. When we celebrate the joy of food, we tend to get lax about ethics. Who will deliver us from this alimentary tension?

Leslie Leyland Fields, for one. In this month's cover story (page 22), she lays out the contemporary ethics of eating without flinching on the basic Christian presupposition: Food is a gift from God to be celebrated in freedom. And in Fields's new book, *The Spirit of Food: 34 Writers on Feasting and Fasting toward God* (Wipf and Stock), you will not find a finer collection of essays that reflects Christianly on the subject.

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Next month: Scot McKnight wades into the question that many biblical scholars are debating: Did Jesus and Paul preach different gospels? John Wilson makes a case for a practice we dropped long ago: memorizing Scripture. And John W. Kennedy looks at one of the most successful short-term missions organizations in modern history: Youth With A Mission.



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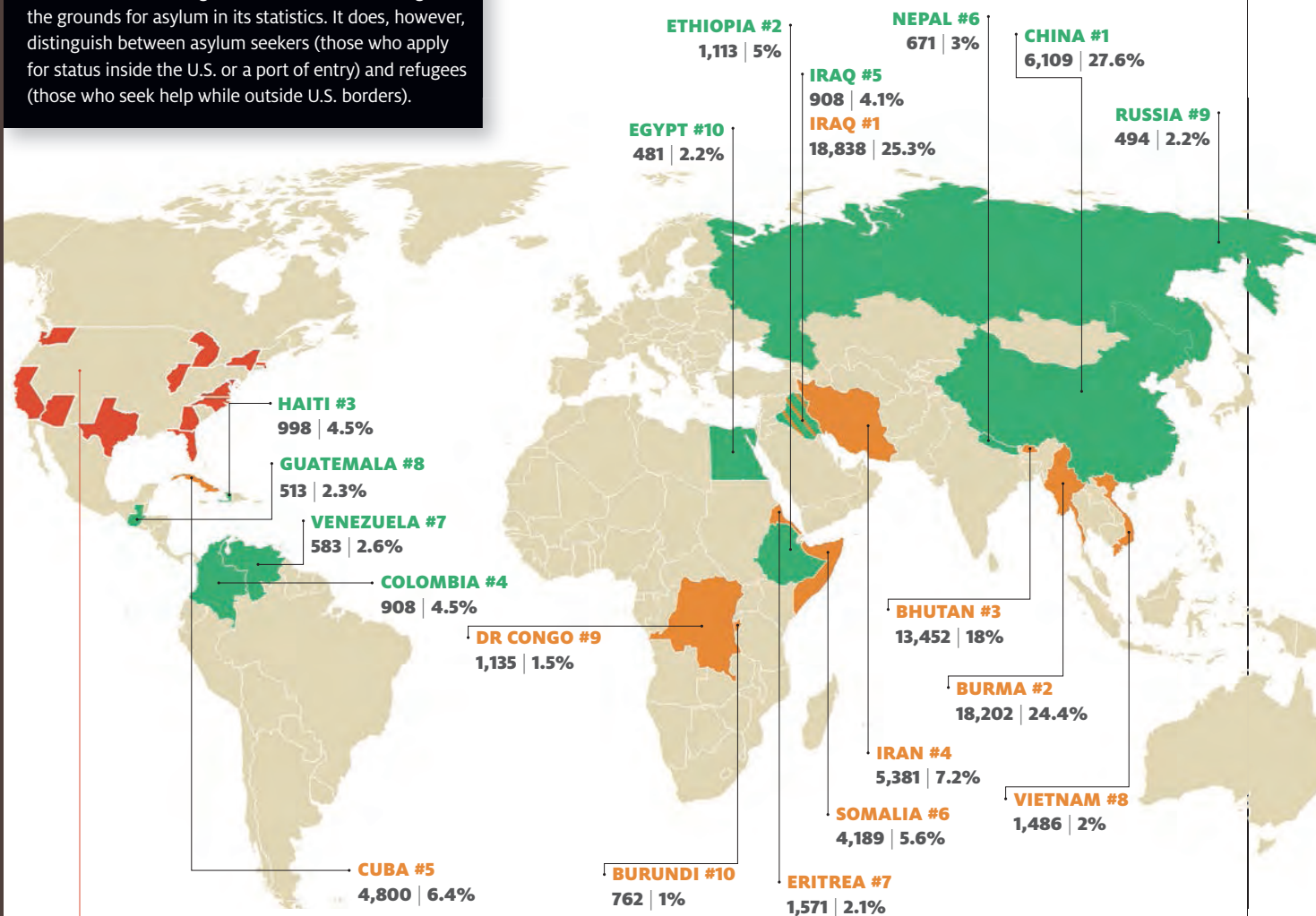
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FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Today's Pilgrims

➔ Like the settlers of Plymouth Colony who celebrated their Thanksgiving feast 389 years ago, today's refugees and asylum seekers have fled their homelands because of persecution of several kinds—not just religious. So connected are questions of religious liberty and political freedom that the U.S. government does not distinguish the grounds for asylum in its statistics. It does, however, distinguish between asylum seekers (those who apply for status inside the U.S. or a port of entry) and refugees (those who seek help while outside U.S. borders).

REFUGEES
ASYLUM SEEKERS
TOP RECEIVING STATES

IRAQ #1 — COUNTRY AND RANK
18,838 | 25.3% — % OF ASYLEES OR REFUGEES TO THE U.S.
NUMBER OF ASYLEES OR REFUGEES TO THE U.S.
2009 DATA





GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Abuse surfaces at West African mission school

SENEGAL More than 50 children were allegedly abused at a New Tribes Mission (NTM) boarding school in Senegal in the 1980s. The report, released by Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (G.R.A.C.E.), says NTM "emphasized the saving of souls at the expense of children." Recommendations include establishing a \$1 million fund for damages to missionary kids and attempting to apologize to each child. NTM, which commissioned the report, said leaders are "deeply saddened" and have begun making recommended changes.

missions should be funded cooperatively or directly. Leaders of Arkansas' and Louisiana's state conventions publicly opposed the nomination of Kentucky pastor Kevin Ezell, noting that his 4,740-member church has budgeted more than \$1.3 million for missions this year, but that only 2 percent will go through the SBC's Cooperative Program (which helps fund the NAMB). Another sign: The Kansas-Nebraska Convention announced it was reducing cooperative funding from 32 percent to 22 percent of its budget in order to give more directly to missions.

2 Violence prompts revision of worship law

INDONESIA Authorities in Indonesia will revise a decree that gives districts the power to authorize places of worship. The law has created difficulty for Christians, whose applications for church locations rarely make it through the process. The announcement follows the stabbings of two Protestant leaders in Bekasi and a torch-lit protest in Jakarta, the nation's capital. In early September, a state court in West Java overturned a December 2009 decree that closed the Bekasi church's doors; members continued to meet outside, where escalating conflicts with local radical Muslims made international headlines.

3 SBC election spotlights missions debate

The election of the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) new president illustrated tensions in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) over whether

4 Court: Religious group can get school funds

A religious student group cannot be denied school funds on the basis of its religious activities, the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled. Badger Catholic filed suit when the University of Wisconsin-Madison denied the group money for programs, including prayer meetings aimed at reducing student anxiety. The court's 2-1 decision implied that religious activities such as worship and evangelism are indistinguishable from religious dialogue, a position that dissenting judge Ann Williams said "degrades religion and the practice of religion."

5 Army chaplain first to die since Vietnam War

AFGHANISTAN An Army chaplain struck by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan August 30 became the first chaplain killed in combat since the Vietnam War. Dale Allen Goetz, 43, an Oregon minister with an M.Div. from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Minnesota, was one of more than 400 chaplains stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

6 IHOP sues IHOP

After 10 years of duplicate acronyms, the International House of Pancakes is suing the International House of Prayer for trademark dilution and infringement. The Kansas City-based prayer center opened 10 years ago with the goal of holding day-and-night prayer. The restaurant chain said it is only now suing because the church has declined requests to change its name, has recently expanded, and now serves food at some locations.

7 Baptists arrested for helping AIDS patients

ZIMBABWE Six aid workers connected to a California church were arrested in Zimbabwe in late September while handing out anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS patients.

The group—five Americans representing Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, and one Zimbabwean doctor—was held in Harare Central Police Station for allegedly lacking proper certification. A lawyer said two members were licensed doctors; charges were later dropped.

8 Christian college settles whistleblower suit

Grand Canyon University's parent company announced it will settle a lawsuit with a former employee, paying Ronald D. Irwin and the Department of Education \$5.2 million. Irwin had sued the online Christian school for allegedly violating federal regulations that prohibit schools that receive federal financial aid from giving enrollment-based pay incentives to recruiters.

9 Churches protest donations monitoring

INDIA Christian organizations in India are upset about a recent bill that requires NGOs to register and work in the "national interest" in order to receive foreign contributions. Churches and religious

GO FIGURE Religious Literacy

45%
American Catholics who do not know their church teaches that the bread and wine in Communion become the body and blood of Christ.

53%
American Protestants who cannot identify Martin Luther as the person who inspired the Protestant Reformation.

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life



compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“The band makes good, thoughtful music, and we invited them here based on their artistic merit. However, after weeks of discussion and consideration, the irony of the band’s name was impossible to explain to many.”

A Calvin College press release, explaining why Vancouver-based indie rock band The New Pornographers was disinvited to the campus.

Calvin.edu

“In this chapel people often invoke the Holy Spirit. But the people who fill this room every day aren’t pure spirits. . . . [S]weat, breath, carbon dioxide, all sorts of dust . . . ends up on the walls.”

Antonio Paolucci, director of the Vatican Museums, on visitors’ damage to the Sistine Chapel.

La Repubblica, via Associated Press

“I’ve got five rocks, and I haven’t thrown one yet.”

Eddie Long, senior pastor of the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Georgia, vowing to fight accusations of sexual misconduct.

The New York Times

“As long as we stay focused on the fiscal issues, that’s the glue that holds us together. If we start delving into the religious aspect or social aspect, that’s when we’re going to become divided and when people are going to disagree.”

Amy Kremer, chairman of the Tea Party Express, on why she won’t publicly oppose abortion and same-sex marriage.

NPR

6

10 Charity commission defines ‘public benefit’

NEW ZEALAND Exodus Ministries has been denied charitable tax status in New Zealand because of its mission to support anyone “wishing to leave the homosexual lifestyle.” The New Zealand Charities Commission said homosexuality is not a disease and cannot be cured, and therefore the group is not performing a public benefit or conducting charitable work. Since 2007, the charity commission has denied charitable status to more than 2,600 groups.

11 High-profile Christians split after referendum

KENYA The former leader of a violent Kenyan sect has left his well-known denomination after a falling out over the country’s new constitution. Mungiki convert Maina Njenga left Jesus Is Alive Ministries after its high-profile leader Margaret Wanjiru opposed the revisions. Njenga is now a leader in little-known Amazing Grace International Ministries, which mainly comprises former Mungiki.

12 Bishop defrocked after consecration

FINLAND Bishop Matti Väisänen, head of the Luther Foundation in Finland, was removed from state clergy ranks after traditionalist bishops from Sweden and Africa consecrated him in August to provide leadership to 17 congregations who left the state church over women’s ordination. Väisänen said the Church of Finland, which subordinates church leadership

13 Copts decry Islamic ‘Bible’

EGYPT A new version of the Bible printed by the Islamic Enlightenment Publishing House has caused an uproar among Coptic Christians. Publisher Abuislam Abdullah said his version of the Bible was written before the Book of Genesis and proves that the Christian Bible was forged. Coptic leaders threatened legal action and asked that the book be taken out of circulation.

14 Doughnuts get students in hot water

Students from a New Mexico youth ministry were disciplined for leaving doughnuts with religious messages in teachers’ lounges at Roswell high schools. The district placed 25 students from Church on the Move on detention or suspension for “showing kindness,” said parents who protested. The ministry previously sued the school district after it disciplined students for distributing plastic fetuses to promote pregnancy services.

15 New law leaves Christians out in the cold

AZERBAIJAN Legal changes requiring religious communities in Azerbaijan to re-register with the state on a periodic basis have left only two Protestant churches approved. Unregistered communities, including the 1,500-member Cathedral of Praise in the capital of Baku, cannot meet in buildings not registered to them, preventing them from holding worship. The Council of Europe’s commissioner for human rights called the re-registration superfluous and cumbersome.

GO FIGURE Money

\$139,000

Median salary for senior pastors at megachurches (2,000+ in weekly attendance).

\$60,000

Median salary for men’s ministry pastors at megachurches.

\$47,000

Median salary for women’s ministry pastors at megachurches.

Leadership Network



POLITICS EL SALVADOR

A Double-Edged Sword

Pastors split over Bible reading in schools as fix for violence. By Jeremy Weber

The uproar over El Salvador's July decree that the Bible must be read daily in public schools came largely from the nation's pastors.

On July 1, the Legislative Assembly passed Decreto 411, mandating that schools begin each day with seven minutes of Bible reading without commentary. The goal: to teach morality to students to prevent them from joining the violent gangs plaguing the Central American nation of 6 million. Weeks before, a street gang set fire to a city bus traveling through the outskirts of San Salvador, burning 14 civilians to death.

The law provoked a heated public debate among church leaders.

"Salvadoran society is totally polarized. No gray exists—all is white or black," said Susana Barrera, El Salvador correspondent for the ecumenical news agency ALC. The Evangelical Alliance of El Salvador and many Pentecostal churches

largely supported the measure, while Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Baptists, and other historical church bodies largely opposed it.

Opponents said their concern wasn't with the Bible or the power of its words, but with the law. Decreto 411 was passed without consulting church leaders first, and left undefined who would read the Bible, what verses would be read, and which translation would be used. This left room for fears of Catholics and Protestants spinning the chosen texts in their respective favor and concerns about "proselytism."

"Reading the Scriptures can never be bad," said Medardo Gómez, bishop of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. "[Yet] we believe reading the Bible is not magic."

Juan Carlos Hasbún, president of the Evangelical Alliance of El Salvador, discounted such concerns. "The idea was to read one proverb and one psalm every day, that's it,"

Morning Devotions: Some pastors want the Bible to be read in El Salvador's public schools to reduce violence. Others want it read in the nation's churches first.

he said. "Public schools are where most youth [become] gang members. If you present hope, something different, you can impact their lives."

President Mauricio Funes initially supported the law but vetoed it on July 27, asking that religious groups be consulted.

Protestants, who now compose an estimated 40 percent of the historically Catholic nation's population, pushed for such a law twice in the past 12 years. Many want a national strategy for encouraging morality and civics but disagree over methods.

"The deeper issues undergirding the horrendous violence . . . are complex and demand more strategic intervention, policy, and budget," said Ruth Padilla DeBorst, general secretary of the Latin American Theological Fellowship. She labeled the law a "religious whitewash" that could obscure the Bible's "life-giving message" and "current relevance."

Hasbún acknowledges the complexities. "The Bible reading was not to solve the problem in one day; it was to establish values in the new generation—the guys who are out in the streets skateboarding, who still don't have guns in their hands."

As the government discusses the future of the law with church leaders, some have ideas of other places to start.

"An area where Bible reading must be promoted is the church itself," said Juan Carlos Cárcamo, World Vision coordinator for church relations. "A profound weakness in many churches is that Bible reading has been replaced by alternative liturgical expressions, which are not illegitimate but in terms of transforming lives leave large gaps."

"The problem in El Salvador is not religion; Salvadorans are poor and believers," said Jaime Wilfredo Peña, president of the Baptist Federation. "The problem [is] poverty, marginalization, and exclusion. . . . This requires more comprehensive [solutions] instead of trying to cover the sun with a finger."

GO FIGURE China

69%
Christians in China who said they converted to Christianity because they or their family members had fallen ill, according to an official survey.

70%
Chinese Christians who are women.

China Daily

Christian Decline Stalls

Reports of UK church's death may be premature.

By Charles Honey

Pope Benedict XVI endured protests and warned of “aggressive secularism” on his September visit to the United Kingdom. But a survey released shortly before his arrival suggests Britain’s long-term slide away from church has bottomed out.

The British number-crunching group Christian Research declared an end to a decades-old attendance decline in the Church of England and the Catholic Church, and a slight uptick among Baptists.

This was surprising news to those who figured Christianity was still dying in Britain, where only about 7 percent of people regularly attend worship, and where atheist groups bought billboards to tell the passing pope, “Two million Scots are good without God.”

Christians cautiously welcomed the survey. “It’s not a massive upswing by any means,” said Michael Hudson of Christian Research. “But it did look as if the decline had come to an end.”

The numbers showed Church of England attendance holding fairly steady since 2001 at just under 1.2 million. Catholic attendance leveled off in 2005 at a little more than 900,000, while Baptist Union attendance increased modestly since 2002 to nearly 154,000.

The findings contradicted recent forecasts. Retired Christian Research director Peter Brierley earlier this year projected further decline, including an alarming drop-off among young adults.

“He may well prove to be right, but in the short term there’s a pickup we thought might encourage the churches,” Hudson said.

It encouraged Dennis Pethers, a Baptist evangelist who has been trying to get Britons interested in Christ since 1993. Pethers, who heads Viz-A-Viz Ministries, said the numbers reflect churches getting more involved in people’s lives, and people getting involved in nontraditional Christian venues such as the cafechurch coffeehouse network.

“Church is not a place to which people come but a community to which they belong,” he said. “And that doesn’t necessarily have to be on Sunday.”

Many Britons have found spiritual resonance in such ventures as Fresh Expressions, a network of nontraditional congregations, and the long-running Greenbelt music festival. The Alpha Course, developed by the vibrant Anglican church Holy Trinity Brompton, is a popular introduction to faith that has reached an estimated 1.5 million Britons.

One observer says increased interest in spirituality—and faith’s increased role in public life—are signs that secularization has failed to deliver. “Religion is on every agenda, whether news media or politics, in a way that it wasn’t in the past,” said Paul Woolley, director of the Theos think tank.

However, Krish Kandiah of the Evangelical Alliance UK is skeptical of the new survey’s import. Although immigrant churches add vitality, the church has “massive problems” including disaffected youth, he said. “I’d be worried if we started to relax and think we’ve accomplished our mission.”

EVANGELISM EUROPE

Roma Revival

Christianity thrives among ‘Gypsies’ despite prejudice.

By Trevor Persaud

In deporting thousands of Roma, or Gypsies, this summer, France polarized the European Union and focused continent-wide attention

on the ethnic minority known for its centuries-old story of discrimination. Less well known is how far the gospel is spreading among them.

“Most people still hate Gypsies, especially in France,” said John Boyd, a Roma pastor who works with Light and Life, an Assemblies of God ministry by and for Roma. “[Yet] revival hasn’t stopped. God is calling Gypsies all around the world.”

Pentecostalism has spread throughout the worldwide Roma community since the early 1950s. France has over 200,000 Pentecostals among perhaps 500,000 Roma, according to Thomas Acton, a professor of Romani studies at the University of Greenwich.

In the United Kingdom, Boyd hosts tent missions where groups of Roma gather in a field to hear preaching and teaching. “This summer has been exceptional,” he said. “We’ve seen . . . 300 people come to faith in Christ.”

Acton says Roma ministry is successful because evangelists have made the gospel understandable “as if God were a Gypsy.”

“The Romani churches have nativized the gospel,” he said. “It’s not a foreign ideology; it’s the gospel that has taken on Romani colors.” Acton said Roma storytellers can make traditional Bible stories sound fresh and immediate. “It sounds like it was written yesterday.”

Beni Lup, regional director of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, cites a recent Roma Christian music festival held in Sibiu, one of Romania’s cultural centers. “All the Gypsies had boxes of literature, and they’ll go to Romanians and say, ‘See, the people in France kick us out, but Jesus sent us to give you this Good News of the gospel.’”

Acton is impressed by Roma Christians’ ability to find joy in their faith while living in a continent that has rejected their people for centuries. “I think the Romani witness that is emerging—as it gets written down [and] people understand what is going on—[will be seen as] a moment in

[continued on 16]

PASSAGES



Died

Donald Bloesch
Well-known evangelical theologian in the United Church of Christ, on August 24 of complications from Parkinson’s disease. He was 82.



Died

Peter Marshall Jr.
Author of *The Light and the Glory* and other providentialist history books, on September 8 in his hometown of Orleans, Massachusetts. He was 70.



Retiring

Morris Chapman
As president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s executive committee. Chapman was a significant voice in the SBC conservative resurgence.

Briefing [from 15]

world religion.”

Lup agrees. “[Roma] tell me, ‘We are known as people who steal and deceive others. Now we want people to see our testimony, and then our lives will be different.’”

DENOMINATIONS

Challenging Individualism

N.C. proposal raises age-old questions of Baptist identity. By Bobby Ross Jr.

Warning to Baptists: fighting words to follow, including “creeds,” “confessions,” and “individual vs. congregational authority.”

The subject of long-standing debates in Baptist circles is gaining renewed attention as the North Carolina chapter of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) revises its foundational statement.

CBF is a national alliance of 1,900 moderate Baptist congregations that broke from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1991, in part because of concerns that the SBC was

becoming too authoritative—“too creedal” and “too Catholic,” as some complained.

In a section titled “Priesthood of All Believers,” CBF North Carolina currently affirms “the freedom and right of every Christian to interpret and apply Scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit” without creeds or clergy control. The revision replaces that section with this: “We confess that the Christian faith is best understood and experienced within the community of God’s people who are called to be priests to one another. . . .”

“The debate is [preferring] emphasis on the community or the individual,” said Tony Cartledge, associate professor of Old Testament at Campbell University Divinity School. “Traditionalists dislike any thought of a magisterium-like body setting doctrinal standards . . . while those who favor a more ‘Bapto-Catholic’ approach appear to fear hyper-individualism.”

The new statement includes the Apostles’ Creed, an early statement of Christian belief used for liturgical and teaching purposes. “It is included not as a matter of coercion or discipline, but as a way for [us] to express [our] connection

DISCUSSION STARTER Life Ethics

In September, Missouri became the second state (after South Dakota) to define life as beginning at conception and abortion as ending the life of a human being. An effort to include the definition in Missouri’s constitution failed, but Colorado will vote in November on an amendment defining the unborn as “persons” from the moment of conception.

with Christians throughout the ages,” said Larry Hovis, CBF North Carolina’s executive coordinator.

But critics such as Bruce Prescott, executive director of Mainstream Oklahoma Baptists, say the proposal attempts to enforce a level of uniformity that moderates rejected when they left the SBC. “Their efforts . . . have a lighter touch than the fundamentalists,” he said. “Nevertheless, their emphasis on community is designed to set parameters on liberty of conscience.”

The revision is being discussed at statewide meetings through November, and it’s unclear whether it will be adopted. “The exchanges on the Web have become quite heated,” said Bill Leonard, a leading Baptist historian at Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

Leonard, who jokes that he already has “too many T-shirts from Baptist battles as it is,” said the discussion illustrates the “creative yet volatile tension that always exists between the lone believer and the congregation of believers.

“Baptists are at their best when they find ways to live with that tension,” he added. “The Baptist system itself makes maintaining that balance very messy.”

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Do state laws defining personhood help the unborn?

YES

“Whether those kind of amendments win or lose votes, they expose voters to the truth. It creates a discussion in the public: What are unborn children? Are they human life? If they are human life, do they deserve the same rights as the rest of us?”

KRISTI BURTON

BROWN, spokesperson, 2008 Colorado Personhood Amendment

“Public debate remains regarding whether or not it is warranted to protect less the lives of some human beings because they lack some characteristic. If that is the debate—not whether or not some humans are really humans—then that needs to be clarified.”

JOHN KILNER,

professor of bioethics, Trinity International University

“They could, if written carefully and if they don’t fall victim to activist judges. There’s work to be done to educate people on the morality and science of human life. If people are not well informed, opponents are able to exploit it. Activist judges can make it worse for the unborn.”

WENDY WRIGHT,

president, Concerned Women for America

“Disagreement about basic moral assumptions has big consequences. In the long run, what will ‘stick’ will be the result of real moral persuasion, not coercion, resulting in deep cultural change that ends up embodied in legal structures reflecting the moral norms.”

CHRISTIAN SMITH,

author, *Moral, Believing Animals*

“Laws don’t address the primary question: the relationship between the parents of the unborn child and that child. The mom says—when she has an abortion—I can’t be your parent. Either I can’t or I won’t have a relationship with you.’ [Laws] don’t affect that issue.”

BOB SMETANA,

author, *The Breath of Life* (forthcoming)

“Defining personhood merely codifies a familiar position, neglecting compassionate consideration of real people. Moving beyond old arguments to consider the complexity of reproductive decision-making will carry the conversation forward; new laws will not.”

ELLEN PAINTER

DOLLAR, blogger, *Choices That Matter*

NO

Icing on the Cake: Shepherds College student Gloria Pavuk dreams not just of having a paying job someday but of running her own business.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Why Not College?

New faith-based school opens doors for young adults with intellectual disabilities. By Elissa Cooper in Union Grove, Wisconsin

Russ Kinkade holds up a pen. If it were broken, he says, he would toss it. “So if you objectify people and see they are broken, then it makes logical sense that you would discard them,” concludes Kinkade, executive vice president of Shepherds Ministries.

Located south of Milwaukee, the nonprofit Christian organization has 53

years of experience in overcoming the perception that people with disabilities have little to contribute to society and thus can be discarded.

In 2008, the ministry launched Shepherds College, the nation’s first faith-based residential college exclusively for students with intellectual disabilities. At the end of the current academic year, Shepherds, a three-year program, will

graduate its first class.

Intellectual disabilities include autism, Down syndrome, brain injury, or other developmental complications. Students at Shepherds have mild to moderate disabilities and are typically at a third-grade or higher academic level. In the U.S., about seven million people have an intellectual disability, affecting about one in ten families.

A few miles from campus, third-year student Gloria Pavuk is baking her way toward a bright future in culinary arts. In the Country Rose Bakery kitchen, Pavuk works as an intern with customers as well as kitchen staff. On the day *Christianity Today* visited, a hefty batch of banana bread was headed for the oven.

Country Rose owner Rose Laketa describes Pavuk as a quick learner. “She can pretty much do whatever she wants to do,” Laketa says. “She could very possibly run her own business because of how she picks up so quickly.” Twenty-six students ages 18 to 34 are currently enrolled at Shepherds, and Pavuk is one of five students in their final year.

Pavuk was drawn to the college because of its distinctive combination of academic and vocational education in a Christian residential environment.

“When I came here,” says Pavuk, “my faith really grew because of all the support, both emotionally and spiritually.”

“The value of a human being is not about their capacity to function. They have intrinsic value that has nothing to do with function,” Kinkade told CT. “Your worth as a human being is essential, but your functions will vary.”

Shepherds College is at the leading edge of a new crop of national programs that provide innovative education and vocational training to high-school graduates with intellectual disabilities.

REALITY CHECK AT AGE 22

In 1957, the year Shepherds Ministries began at a Baptist church in Milwaukee, people with intellectual disabilities faced systemic discrimination in education, medical care, employment, and housing, and were frequently institutionalized for life.

But during the following decades, a number of federal laws were passed to help

rectify the situation, including the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). The laws created programs for preschoolers with disabilities and individualized education plans, and mainstreamed students with disabilities into classrooms through high

finding a job-training program or receiving government financial support through Social Security. In the meantime, Amstutz says, many are stuck living with their parents, unable to make a clear transition to adulthood. During this time, students' social skills may regress as they become more isolated from peers.

Postsecondary education programs like

wherein programs and classes are only for students with intellectual disabilities, who learn vocational and social skills.

Shepherds College most closely identifies with the substantially separate model. By their second year, Shepherds students select either culinary arts or horticulture as a major. In their third year, they add internships to their class schedule.

Classes emphasize practical skills and spiritual disciplines. Students learn computer skills and how to manage personal finances. They also discuss the Bible and pray together. Students are not required to be Christians, but a great many are or become Christians while there.

Shepherds employs 12 teachers and 8 staff, some of whom were trained by Gary Meers, who teaches career planning for people with disabilities at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Special Education. Although studies have yet to determine which type of program is most effective, Meers likes the amount of independence Shepherds College provides, in that "students identify for themselves what works."

Congress recently approved \$11 million toward a grant for postsecondary education programs for intellectually disabled students. Unemployment is high among adults with disabilities. In 2009, 19 percent of all adults with any kind of disability earned a paycheck, compared with 64.5 percent of Americans without a disability. Various national studies show that graduates of postsecondary education programs have higher employment rates and earn higher incomes, Hart says.

BEYOND CHARITY CARE

As Christian leaders have expanded programs for people with disabilities, they have moved beyond civil rights advocacy to focusing on personal growth and development.

Brian Meyers, a third-year classmate of Pavuk's, is an example. Meyers was raised in a Christian home where his parents provided many opportunities for him. But there was something missing, says Brian's mother, Carolyn Meyers: "There's one thing we could never provide for him, and that's independence from us."

'The value of a human being is not about their capacity to function. They have intrinsic value that has nothing to do with function.'

~ Russ Kinkade, Shepherds Ministries

school or until they reach age 22.

Then the students face a crunch. Debra Hart, educational coordinator at the Institute for Community Inclusion, a Boston-based nonprofit, says for the past 35 years, students with disabilities have grown up as members of their communities. Like their peers, they dream of going to college, getting a job, and living on their own. But, as Hart wrote in a 2006 report, "Of all students with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities have the poorest post-school outcomes."

Bill Amstutz, president of Shepherds Ministries, notes that young adults with disabilities may look for 10 years before

Shepherds want to help young adults make that transition. At last count, 250 such programs exist throughout the U.S., with 25 more launching this fall.

Hart says three types of programs are available:

- The inclusive individual support model, wherein students attend regular academic classes with peers and receive individual support, such as meeting with a tutor.
- The hybrid model, wherein students take classes on life skills as well as attend academic classes with students who do not have disabilities.
- The substantially separate model,

Against the Odds: Culinary arts is one of the majors offered at Shepherds.





Campus Life: Shepherds strives to create Christian community for its students.

Shepherds provided Meyers that opportunity. President Amstutz developed a concept he calls Appropriate Independence (Ai). “We do want the students reaching their highest God-given potential, but we want it to be done appropriately.” According to Kinkade, as outlined in the document “Appropriate Independence: Potential Realized,” that means “supported self-sufficiency that is aligned with the strengths of each individual and guided by Christian values,” including, “God has designed each person on purpose and for a purpose”; “God has created people as individuals, for a community”; “the purpose is to train for life”; and “the goal is to empower individuals to serve.”

This year, Shepherds College started Ai² groups led by students like Meyers and Pavuk. The groups meet on Friday nights to fellowship and support one another spiritually and emotionally. While Shepherds staff supervise the groups, the goal is for students to take the lead. Tracy Terrill, the college’s director, says, “We aren’t going to accomplish Appropriate Independence during their three years that they’re with us, but we hope to have them on that path.”

Meyers has seen his gifts grow through classes and volunteering as a resident assistant in the first-year men’s housing. Meyers frequently prays with Shepherds residents and fellow students. Because of

an apologetics class at Shepherds, he says, he was better able to explain the gospel to an atheist he met on an outing.

Leaning forward intensely, Meyers references Scripture constantly and describes some of the excitement that comes with sharing his faith. “Each time it happens, it’s hard to sleep at night,” Meyers says, because after someone comes to Christ, Christians want—like the angels—to rejoice with every new believer.

Being a leader is challenging, says Meyers, but helping others become leaders is worth it. “That’s what a good leader does. He learns it. He shows it. And he teaches it.”

Shepherds College is in the process of receiving accreditation. Once earned, accreditation will allow students to receive financial aid and state funding. (Annual tuition and room and board at Shepherds is currently \$30,125.)

Accreditation, in turn, would attract more students; the school would like to have 50 students by year five. And as the college grows, administrators hope to add more majors.

Meers at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has examined many different educational facilities for disabled individuals and recognizes what works. Shepherds College, Meers said, has developed an effective and sustainable model.

Each student who graduates this spring will be assigned a life coach, who will check in regularly as the student transitions into a new, independent life.

Pavuk says she wants to be a cake decorator at a bakery upon graduating. She adds, “After I’ve gained a lot of experience in the bakery business, I want to open up my own business.”

Meyers is considering lots of opportunities. He likes horticulture but also enjoys volunteering at the fire department in his hometown in Missouri. He’s also interested in a ministry position with his parents at New Tribes Mission or continuing at Shepherds College as a residential staff member. “I just try to leave it at God’s feet, because that’s the best place to leave all your plans.”

Elissa Cooper is *Christianity Today*’s editorial assistant.

Ministries to Disabled Expand Their Reach

Despite its ongoing successes, Shepherds Ministries continues to ask what more it could do for people with developmental and cognitive disabilities.

When Shepherds began, Amstutz explains, it was commonly believed that children born with significant physical and intellectual disabilities would not survive to adulthood. With today’s medical advances, people with disabilities have the same life expectancy as those without. One Shepherds Ministries resident is in his 80s. Many have outlived their parents, who were their sole means of support.

Shepherds Ministries has a reputation for being ahead of its time and has long been a resource to other disability-focused organizations.

Dawn Clark grew up at Union Grove Baptist Church, where people from Shepherds Ministries performed during worship services. Now she directs disability ministries at College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, and heads a program called STARS (Seeking To Always Reflect the Savior), which reaches out to about 100 families in Chicago’s suburbs.

Shepherds has provided guidance to STARS for years, such as speaking to volunteers and parents about Ai, and, most recently, advising STARS leaders on forming a new nonprofit to run a group home. STARS is just one example of a faith-based network focused on disability ministry:

- Friendship Ministries (*Friendship.org*) assists churches and organizations in customizing intellectual disability ministry programs in their communities. It is international and has worked with at least 60 denominations.
- Bethesda Lutheran Communities (*blhs.org*) provides direct services to people with intellectual disabilities and provides Christian leaders with educational resources.
- Christian Church Foundation for the Handicapped (*ccfh.org*) creates resource materials for churches to aid people with disabilities. For adults, it operates two residential facilities that promote spiritual growth and social interaction.

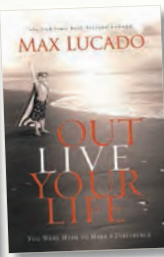
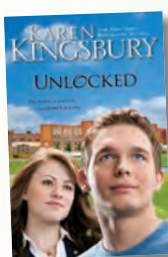
“People can sell people with intellectual disabilities short,” Clark told CT. “We believe that they are worthy to be taught. They can come to true faith in Christ, and it’s amazing what they do understand about the gospel.” —*Elissa Cooper*



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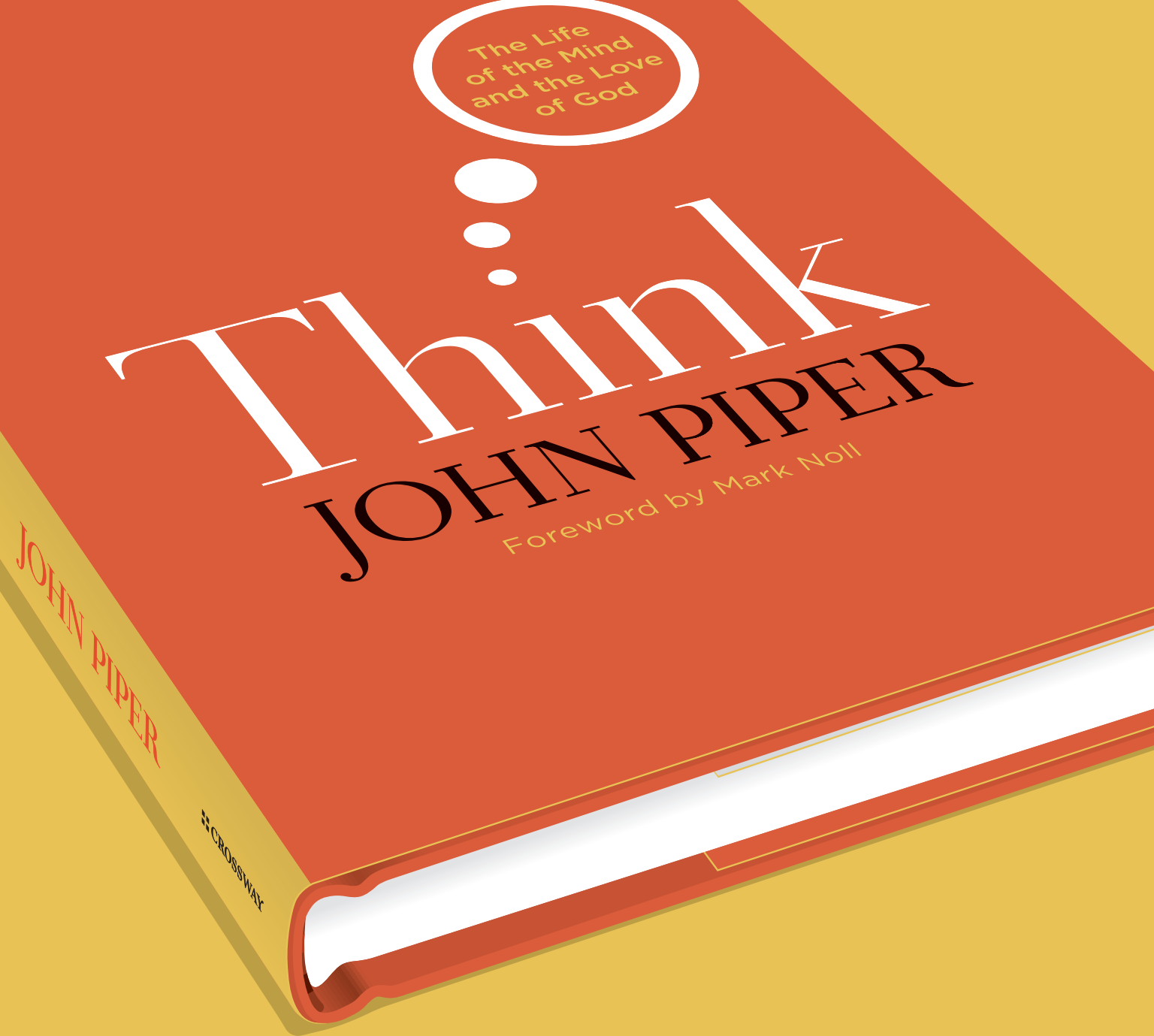
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The Life of the Mind and the Love of God

"This book is a plea to embrace serious thinking as a means of loving God and people. It is a plea to reject either-or thinking when it comes to head and heart, thinking and feeling, reason and faith, theology and doxology, mental labor and the ministry of love. It is a plea to see thinking as a necessary, God-ordained means of knowing God. Thinking is one of the important ways that we put the fuel of knowledge on the fires of worship and service to the world."

—From the Introduction



JOHN PIPER is pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. He has authored numerous books, including *Desiring God*, *Don't Waste Your Life*, *This Momentary Marriage*, and *A Sweet and Bitter Providence*.



{ COVER STORY }

A Feast Fit for the King

Returning the growing fields
and kitchen table to God.
By Leslie Leyland Fields



T'S POTLUCK SUNDAY.

I stand near the end of a long line wondering what will be left by the time I get to the front, grateful that I'm not particularly hungry.

I have some idea of what the offerings will be: hot dogs wrapped in white buns, cut

in half for the more delicate appetites; buckets of drive-through fried chicken anchoring the table. Neon-orange cheese doodles will inevitably show up, somewhere near the salads. The greenest item will be several bowls of lime Jell-O with fruit suspended in it, which, I've decided, is to signal its inobvious function as food.

We pray our thanks over this smorgasbord

of chemical wizardry and marketing genius, ask that it would strengthen our bodies (something I believe will take divine intervention), and invite Jesus to be among us as we eat.

When we lift our heads, I consider this last request and wonder, surveying the tables: *What would Jesus put on his plate?* Would Jesus eat lime Jell-O and cheese doodles? Would he care that the chicken in the bucket came from cages where the birds were likely fed their own recycled excrement? Would he eat that barbequed pork that came from massive pig farms that pollute the water, soil, and air? Would he stand, as I do, filled with guilt, dread, and judgment before this culinary minefield?

I think a lot about food these days, and not always charitably. I've been ruminating

on the headlines and a recent crop of food books concerning what many are calling "the global food crisis," one that has given rise to a new food movement in the United States and abroad. The movement has taken on the momentum of a religious revival, changing the way Americans eat and how they think about food and the use of the earth. Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*; Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*; Nicolette Hahn Niman's *Righteous Porkchop*; Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*; Marion Nestle's *Food Politics*; Jonathan Safran Foer's *Eating Animals*; and many others expose the disturbing state of the nation's food supply and the destructive effects of industrialized food production on the national and global environment.



The most recent confirmation that all is not well on our plates came in August, when 1,500 people were poisoned by eggs contaminated with salmonella, leading to a recall of 550 million eggs. (The chickens at the culprit farms were kept in battery cages, which have been criticized for being both unsanitary and inhumane.) When *The New York Times Magazine* announced its intention to expand its already generous coverage of food this year, it explained that such writing is “perhaps never a more crucial part of what we do than today—a moment when what and how we eat has emerged as a Washington issue and a global-environmental issue as well as a kitchen-table one.”

While elements of the new food movement are rarely Christ-centered (more on that soon), I believe the movement has much to teach Christians about stewarding creation, loving our neighbors, and eating and drinking to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

MANURE LAGOONS, SUPERWEEDS, AND GMOs

Where does the news begin? Most of the authors trace our crisis in food conduct and conscience to the events following World War II, when the federal government led a shift from family-operated agrarian economies to corporatized agribusinesses. In agribusiness, efficiency and mass production have, more often than not, overruled fair treatment of farmers, humane treatment of animals, and proper care of the land.

I’ve been ruminating on a crop of books concerning ‘the global food crisis,’ one that has given rise to a new food movement. The movement has taken on the momentum of a religious revival, changing the way Americans think about food and the use of the earth.

One of the early voices to sound the alarm was social critic and Kentucky farmer Wendell Berry, who has written voluminously about returning integrity to the act of eating. In his essay “The Pleasures of Eating,” he describes a typical processed meal, either fast food or cooked at home from packages, so altered from its original form as to be unrecognizable on the plate. “What nature has produced, man has turned into the products of industry,” Berry concluded. Two sentences from his famous essay have become rallying cries for the new food revolution: “Eating is an agricultural act”; and “. . . how we eat determines, to a considerable extent, how the world is used.”

Reports on “how the world is used” for food production make up an apocalyptic catalog that leaves no ground untainted. The ills



CARL WARNER

of factory farming begin with the dousing of soil and crops with pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and herbicides, producing foods with measurable levels of contaminants. The runoff from these additives is the primary source of water pollution in the U.S., more than all other industrial sources combined. Factory hog farms alone, with their massive “manure lagoons,” emit 70,000 tons of hydrogen sulfide gas annually. Herbicides such as Roundup are used in such quantities that “superweeds” resistant to pesticides have sprung up, creating the need for yet more toxic formulas.

Meanwhile, Monsanto, DuPont, and other multinational agricultural corporations are creating a growing number of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), altering the genetic code of one species by inserting genes from another, even animal to plant. (The Grocery Manufacturers of America estimates that 75 percent of food on U.S. grocery shelves contains at least one GMO.) There are significant concerns over the long-term safety of such foods, the deep decrease in agricultural biodiversity their use has created, and the monopolizing of patents and seed by corporations. The net result: The nation’s food supply is under the dominion of a few conglomerates.

What can we do about such realities? Many books, such as Jane Goodall’s *Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating*, include “What You Can Do” lists. While there are notable distinctions between writers, there is general agreement that “mindful eating” (a term borrowed from Buddhist practice) entails the following:

- Educating ourselves on where food comes from (a chemist’s lab? a hemisphere away? a local farm?);
- Eating locally as much as possible to support local farmers and to reduce the natural resources it takes to put food on our plate;
- Growing and preparing our own food;
- Eating lower on the food chain, meaning eating less meat and more plants;
- Supporting fair-trade practices that protect rather than exploit workers;
- Supporting organic farms and free-range ranches;
- Advocating for a return to agricultural biodiversity.

Here let me offer full disclosure. I have spent large portions of my life in the New Hampshire woods and Alaskan wilderness, growing, hunting, and harvesting much of my own food. As such, most of the can-do lists read to me as commonsense activities and responses to a real crisis. I would argue a step further: As Christians, under obligation to the God who created our bodies, and as Americans, who continue to lead the industrialized world in obesity rates, we should foster a healthier diet. As believers urged by the apostle Paul to “take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ,” we should be more thoughtful about food production and our treatment of God’s creatures and his earth.

Yet after reading the literature and listening to the many conversations around me, I have significant concerns and cautions about the new food movement.

DEEP-FRIED HAPPINESS

My critique begins, paradoxically, with the movement’s greatest strengths: its call to an integrated, holistic perspective and the personal moral accountability that integration brings. At the movement’s core is the belief that the world is a single, intricate, and interdependent ecosystem. Thus our personal acts have global consequences, for good and for ill, ones we don’t often see but that are nonetheless real. The Organic Garden Café in Boston, a raw foods café, exemplifies this sense of unity. By “embrac[ing] the idea of oneness,” the café’s mission is to “honor the earth, farmers, and ourselves through our use of pure organic ingredients.”

While Christians rightly reject the Eastern and New Age pantheism that often informs “the world as one,” we are hard-pressed to ignore the observable fact that what’s done upstream has downstream effects—an environmental version of “many parts, one body.” Monsanto’s controversial pesticide Roundup runs into aquatic systems and kills more than weeds—it also kills amphibians and other animals. The new food movement continues in the footsteps of the environmental movement of the 1960s to counteract the mass reductionism ushered in by industrialization and even the scientific method itself, both of which reduce whole systems to parts and pieces.

Our disconnection from our food and its sources is further fed by our culture’s emphasis on personal happiness and moral subjectivity, leading to what author Barbara Kingsolver calls “alimentary alienation.” When we pull packages of deep-fried chicken fingers or cans of cheese spray off the grocery shelf—which we are entitled to eat because they make us happy—we don’t recognize the source of the food nor consider its cost to workers, farmers, or the environment. We see only the pieced, processed, and packaged final product.



The Grim Realities of Factory Farms

Factory farms, also known as CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations), contain half of the nation's meat, egg, and dairy animal populations, operating on a scale inconceivable to previous generations of farmers. Sanderson Farms, the fourth largest chicken producer in the United States, annually processes 397 million chickens. Circle Four Farms in Utah annually raises more than 1 million hogs for slaughter. CAFOs are characterized by the following conditions:

Confinement: Animals are strictly confined to prevent any unwanted, energy-wasting movement. Chickens are kept in “battery cages” so small (50 square inches) that they cannot turn around or open their wings. Calves raised for veal are kept in “veal crates” that prevent turning around during their 16- to 18-week lives. During pregnancy, hogs are kept in “gestation crates” typically 2 feet wide. Just before birth, they are moved to “farrowing crates” that are equally small.

Use of Chemicals and Drugs: The extreme density of animals on CAFOs requires heavy use of pesticides and antibiotics to prevent disease. Some 13.5 million pounds of antibiotics are used annually in animal feed and water. Artificial growth hormones are also used to force rapid growth and amplify milk production. Poultry grow so large that they are often unable to stand or walk properly.

Unfit Feed: Herbivores such as cattle, chickens, and turkey are often fed same-species meat byproducts, including ground-up chicken; feathers; chicken, swine, and cattle excrement; and cattle blood and fat. Farms in the Upper Midwest feed dairy cows waste from candy manufacturers, unheated starch, and rejected French fries and potato chips. The recent egg salmonella outbreak was caused by infected feed.

Disease: The above conditions have contributed to outbreaks of diseases such as *E. coli*, mad cow disease, swine flu, salmonella, and bird flu. Animals often suffer from bloat, acidosis, abscessed livers, ascites (congestive heart failure), pneumonia, and feedlot polio. The use of antibiotics to treat these diseases is contributing to antibiotic-resistant “superbugs” that are transmittable to humans. —Leslie Leyland Fields

“Whole Foods,” then, is not just the name of an upscale grocer. It symbolizes a return to a larger, holistic view of the earth, and a call to moral responsibility within that sphere.

Nowhere are religion and morality more on display—or the voices more hortatory—than in discussions on the killing fields of the factory farms. Several dozen books have appeared recently detailing the horrific cruelties taking place at pens and slaughterhouses (see sidebar, “The Grim Realities of Factory Farms”). While the authors do not advocate for identical measures, all seek to at least reduce if not outright end animal suffering and/or usage because of its patent immorality. They also believe continuing to raise animals for meat is morally unjustifiable because of its monopoly on resources that could feed the world's hungry. Jonathan Safran Foer, in *Eating Animals*, writes, “So what kind of crime is animal agriculture, which uses 756 million tons of grain and corn per year, much more than enough to adequately feed the 1.4 billion humans who are living in dire poverty?”

The authors are right to reclaim the field, the slaughterhouse, and the kitchen as integrated realms of morality. Is there any activity under the sun beyond the scope of God's goodness, compassion, and righteousness? The attention to the essential unity of creation—all created and sustained by one God, our Father—calls believers into some part of the food movement as well, just as we are called to care for creation and pursue justice on others' behalf. All are inextricably woven together, bearing on our Genesis command to “dress and keep the garden,” to exercise caring dominion over its creatures, and to love our neighbors. As Scott Sabin of Plant With Purpose reminds us, “We have little choice as to whether we will interact with creation. But we can choose whether our interactions will be life-giving or death-dealing.”

EATING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Despite the new food movement's ambitious and commendable goals, however, its core beliefs offer an alternative religious movement, much of it carrying the urgency of an ultimate cause. Its central tenet is that by changing the way we eat, we can save ourselves—and the world. John Robbins's book *The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and Our World* is just one of many holding out on this explicit promise. One review sums up the book's *raison d'être* like this: “What can we do to help stop global warming, feed the hungry, prevent cruelty to animals, avoid genetically modified foods, be healthier and live longer? Eat vegetarian.” Many books go further, urging a vegan diet that rejects all animal products, including eggs and dairy. (One reason given by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, author of *The Face on Your Plate: The Truth about Food*: The animals have not consented to our use of their goods.)

Evangelistic zeal for transforming the world through a restricted diet abounds. Foer reported in a recent interview that 18 percent of college students are vegetarians now, adding, “There are more vegetarians in college than Catholics, there are more vegetarians than any major, except for business . . . That's something I feel very good about.” Walter Robb, the co-president of Whole Foods, the poster-grocer of the food movement, has described the goals of his company in distinctly religious language: “We're not retailers with a mission, we're missionaries who retail.” The “mission” is first: “... to change the way the world eats,” a motive that “comes from our soul,” Robb says.

In this worldview, *righteousness, morality, purity, and guilt* are common terms applied most often not to people or to actions but to actual foods. The book *Righteous Porkchop* includes a chapter on “Eating the Right Food.” Recipes are labeled “righteous” as well: Righteous Tofu Burger, Amanda’s Righteous Queso (made without processed cheese), and Righteous Raspberry Lollies (without dairy or refined sugar “so you can suck on them with a clear conscience”).

“Pure” is a ubiquitous adjective used to describe a vegetarian or vegan diet and lifestyle. An animal-free diet that also rejects “caffeine,

Food is a major concern in the Scriptures, the locus of both physical and spiritual realities that gesture to the essential integration of both. But in the biblical economy, food alone can never bestow purity, health, or righteousness.

sugar, alcohol, or processed foods” is labeled “ultra-pure.” If you have overindulged, rather than confessing your sins you can undergo a “cleanse,” a popular diet or fasting practice that rids the body, and some claim the spirit, of “toxins.”

To claim that certain foods lead through the narrow gate to purity and righteousness, and others lead down the wide road to pollution, is nothing new. A popular Hindi website, Food for Life Global (“Uniting the World Through Pure Food”), explains that only “pure vegetarianism” is allowed because what we eat directly affects “our spiritual consciousness” and our “subsequent behaviors.” The very purpose of food, it says, “is to give strength to the body and purify the mind.” Some strands of Buddhism also require vegetarianism. A woman writes on a food blog, “My desire to be a vegetarian is very tied up to my desire to be a Really Good Person.”

Perhaps in no other time has our culture so widely absorbed the largely Eastern concept that physical, mental, and spiritual purity can be derived from food—and that we earn our virtue through vigilance over fork and plate.

Strangely, while these writers offer a global, moral, even theological perspective on food, in practice their approach can lead to myopic self-absorption and legalism. In online social networks, people dish the details of their every meal and bite as if the world hung upon their words and their food choices. Some show signs of *orthorexia*, an eating disorder defined as “an unhealthy obsession with healthy eating.” Colorado nutritionist Steven Bratman coined the term after his own journey into obsessively healthy eating while living on a commune and managing an organic farm. In his desire “to eat pure food,” he rejected any vegetable plucked from the garden more than 15 minutes previously. For the sake of mindfulness, he ate alone and chewed each bite 50 times, all of which left him feeling “clear-headed, strong, and self-righteous.” He writes, “A day filled with sprouts, umeboshi plums, and amaranth biscuits comes to feel as holy as one spent serving the poor and homeless.”

Bratman’s goal of achieving “wellness through healthy eating,” though, began to take over his life. “I had been seduced by righteous eating. The problem of my life’s meaning had been transferred inexorably to food, and I could not reclaim it.” Today, Bratman, now restored, sees growing numbers of patients in his clinic with this disorder.

GOODBYE, EDEN

Part of the devolution from lofty global goals to a crippling personal obsession may simply be our sinful bent toward the self. But I think there is more going on. In a recent essay in *Policy Review*, “Is Food the New Sex?” Mary Eberstadt ponders a cultural reversal in values: We have become mindful and puritanical about food, and mindless and licentious about sex. Perhaps in a world where moral values are subjective and in constant flux, we feel an even greater need for boundaries and stability, at least in some areas of our lives. We may not be able to resist an affair, control our children, prevent sexual abuse in our churches, or restrain Wall Street greed, but we *can* control what we put into our mouths.

In yet one more irony, the save-the-world theology of diet, while seeming to deepen the value of food, paradoxically often reduces food to the function it performs: food as social justice; food as nutrition; food as righteousness. All of these views diminish the fuller meaning

of food found in the Scriptures.

On the opening page of the Bible, God announces that all he has made, the fruits and vegetables spoken from his imagination, are “very good.” Lush in flavor, exquisite in beauty and fragrance, their value is intrinsic to their God-made-ness. He gives the food to the first man and woman as sustenance. But even in this state of sinlessness, God sets limits on Adam and Eve’s diet, that as they obeyed, they would be fed not only physically but spiritually as well. Food was intended to be another expression of their dependence on and communion with their Creator.

The Old Testament dietary laws were given later to God’s people not as a means of earning righteousness, but to remind the Israelites that they were set apart from all other nations, and that every activity, even the daily labor of feeding themselves, was to be done within the province and provision of a loving God. The manna God miraculously fed his people in the desert was a foreshadowing of Jesus, who came to give himself as the Bread of Life. In his last hours on earth, Jesus chose to enjoy a dinner with his disciples, where he served homely bread and local wine to mark his death and ongoing life within the disciples and us. While we sup on the bread and wine of Communion now, we hungrily await the marriage supper of the lamb, a coming feast we joyously anticipate through simple daily foods.

Even a cursory reading reveals that food is a major concern in the Scriptures, the locus of both physical and spiritual realities that gesture not solely to one or to the other, but to the essential integration of both. But in the biblical economy, food alone—even the food of the Communion table—can never bestow purity, health, or righteousness. When Christ fed the hungry thousands on the hillside, he fed them not only actual bread but also words of truth and salvation, that he comes as the Bread of Life and the Living Water to help us recognize the deeper needs that he alone can fulfill.

“Every bite of food, given by God himself, is to make God known to man, to make man’s life communion with God,” Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann writes in *For the Life of the World*. But without recognition of the God who has made the earth, our dependence on water and food may move us elsewhere—toward communion with the earth, even communion with food itself. These elements, then,

become ends in themselves, and the full integration that the food movement seeks and that God desires for us is lost.

Our attempts to restore the earth and return to Edenic communion with it ultimately cannot succeed. Just as we cannot perfect our bodies or spirits through eating pure foods, so we cannot perfect the earth, no matter how heroic our efforts. Because of our foreparents' appetite for authority and forbidden food, creation has been groaning,

How shall we use our freedom in Christ? If it ends in mindless consumption, exploitation of God's gifts, and mistreatment of our bodies, then we have allowed our appetites to enslave us again.

subjected to futility and death. Sea lions eat the first 15 salmon from my family's fishing nets to fill their appetites. They gash and torment 30 more simply for play. One spring I counted 90 deer washed up on our beach line, drowned as they swam across the strait.

Nature will always be "red in tooth and claw." We steward the earth and exercise dominion over its creatures as expressions of love for and obedience to our Creator, who named it all very good, but we cannot take back or re-create the garden. Not until heaven will we see the garden restored, but it will be set not within a wilderness, but within the gates of a massive city, the unavoidable conclusion that the perfected world to come is foremost about proximity and communion with one another and with God.

COOKING POTS TO SACRED BOWLS

Finally, without a theology rooted in the God of creation and the God of the Scriptures—who alone completes the meaning of creation and its sustenance, and who will someday fully restore it—I worry that the food movement and its calls to action will divert us from our real need: a transformed heart. I worry as well that it may devolve into the very fragmentation it aspires to repair. Without a redeemer, the source of grace, the integration and holism that the movement seeks to easily descend into orthorexia, purer-than-thou-ism, and factionalism.

Such is the case even now. Pollan describes the food movement as a "big, lumpy tent" where "sometimes the various factions beneath it work at cross-purposes." Bratman remembers the splintering and infighting among commune members over whose diet was purer. Tom Billings, a raw-foodist, complains that the raw-foods movement is "split into a number of factions, and it seems that no one agrees with anyone else." The last thing we need inside or outside the church is another brand of factious legalism.

But we in the church have much to answer for ourselves. Here's a question, which I ask myself as well: Why have we ignored food for so long? Why are we not attending more seriously to Paul's injunction to literally "eat or drink . . . for the glory of God"? Beyond a quick word of thanks before meals, have we seriously considered how our eating and drinking either reveals or suppresses the glory of God? I don't believe we have. Most of us have been living in a kind of self-absorbed somnolence that may be partly rooted in our own lingering dualism that privileges the soul over the body.

Additionally, the Protestants among us have reveled in our dietary

freedom and our distinctiveness from more liturgical churches, which follow the church calendar and maintain traditions of feasting and fasting. As Protestants, our food practices have relied far too heavily on a single New Testament passage, I believe: Peter's vision of a sheet full of formerly unclean animals let down from heaven. God's command to "rise, kill and eat" (the supreme-meat-lover's favorite biblical scene), in my opinion, has been used to justify a kind of gustatory free-for-all.

How shall we use our freedom in Christ? Freedom is never given for license or for self-indulgence. If our freedom ends in mindless consumption, abuse of the earth, exploitation of God's gifts, and mistreatment of our bodies, then we have allowed our appetites to enslave us again.

I don't really know what Jesus would have put on his plate at the church potluck that day. I suspect he might have tossed a few cheese doodles on his plate,

next to his Jell-O, quietly reminding me that it is not what goes into our bodies that makes us unclean, but what comes out of them, from our mouths and hearts. Even so, I'm pretty sure there will not be junk food in heaven, nor do I think we'll be eating meat. I'm expecting to cook good, slow food there, and I have reason to believe we will.

Zechariah, my new favorite minor prophet, ends his book, which is largely about condemnation and judgment, with a gorgeous culinary image of heaven. When heaven comes down to earth, he writes, "the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them" (Zech. 14:20–21).

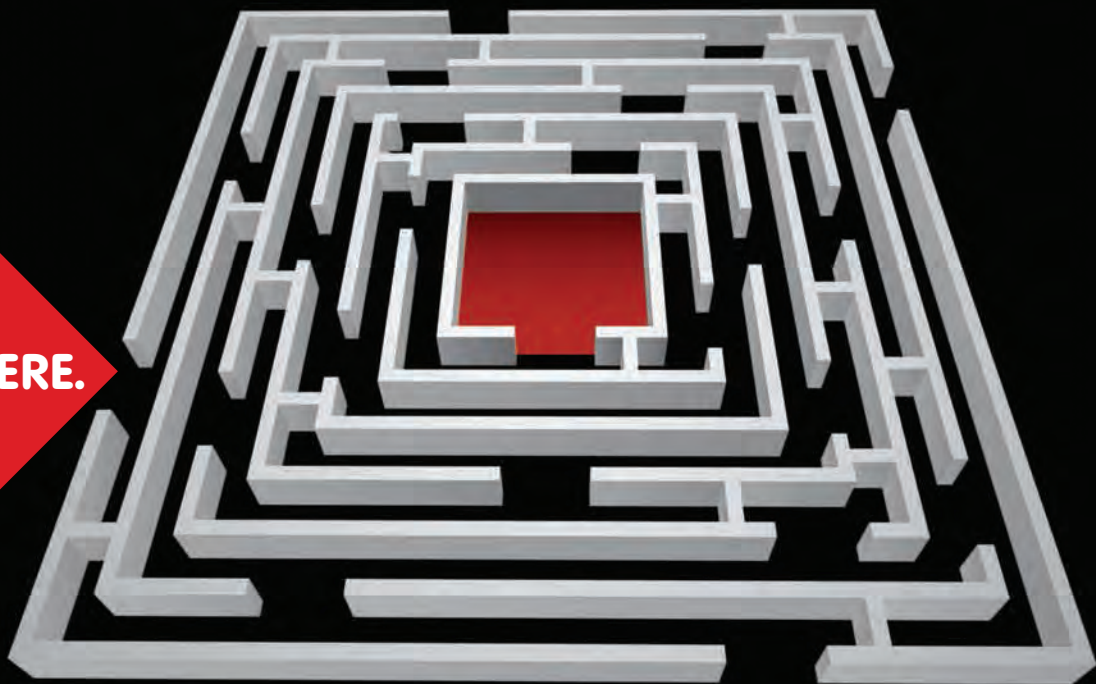
Every pot—yours, mine—will be holy to the Lord. And every soup and vegetable and grain and fish and casserole and soufflé and flan and pasta prepared within them will be holy to all who partake.

I believe we're not to wait for this day, that we are to join the food movement thoughtfully and joyously, beginning now to more faithfully give attention to food. I don't pretend to practice or even understand all the ways this is possible, but I am beginning to learn. Many others in the church are already practicing such attention. Some, like Amy Frykholm, are beginning simple fasting practices. Alyssa Herbaly Coons is slowly adding local farm-raised meat to her lifelong vegetarian diet. Green Bay Community Church in Wisconsin has been holding a farmer's market in the church parking lot on Thursday nights, followed by an open-air worship service. The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee has joined a fair trade coffee group, Brew Justice, that buys coffee from small independent farmers. Women in my own church have begun an organic food co-op. And, like most congregations, Fellowship Church in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, has a food pantry open to anyone in need.

So much is possible as we return the growing fields and the kitchen table to God, to whom it all belongs. As we do, we will discover another essential means of divining God's glory in our midst and living out our stewardship of God's earth, ourselves, and our neighbors. May we all take, eat, and be blessed by God's holy, sumptuous foods. ☩

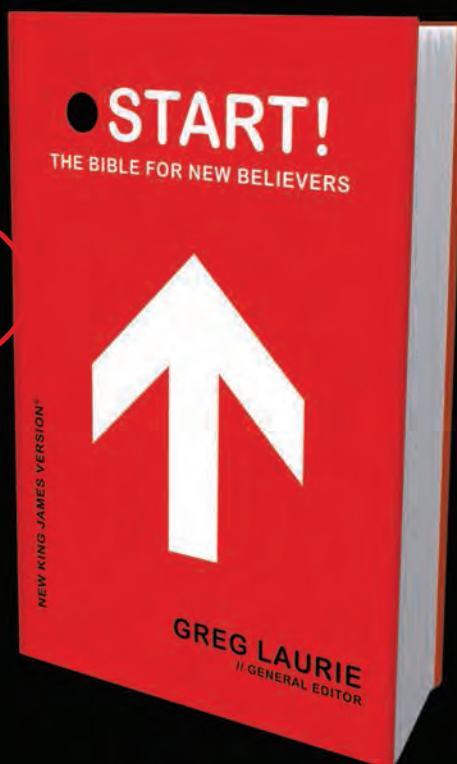
Leslie Leyland Fields is an author living with her husband and six children on Kodiak Island, Alaska. She is the editor of *The Spirit of Food: 34 Writers on Feasting and Fasting toward God* (Wipf and Stock) and the author most recently of *'Parenting Is Your Highest Calling' . . . and Eight Other Myths That Trap Us in Worry and Guilt* (Waterbrook).

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A person is silhouetted against a bright sunset in a desert landscape. The person is standing on the right side of the frame, looking down. The ground is dark and uneven, with some sparse vegetation on the left. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow, with some clouds visible.

{ OUTREACH }

*Early in 2009, Philip Yancey went on a speaking tour of the Middle East, primarily in the United Arab Emirates and other small countries along the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf. In Bahrain he met in a backyard with 30 people from Saudi Arabia, all expatriates. Most of them lived in compounds built by the oil companies, and all had chilling stories about life in one of the world's most conservative Muslim countries. The hosts asked the caterers to step inside as Yancey talked, fearing they would be reported to Saudi authorities. Yancey is the author of many books, including *What Good Is God?: In Search of a Faith That Matters* (Hachette/FaithWords), from which this article is excerpted and condensed.*

A Living Stream in the Desert

How the Christian faith will be a subversive—and liberating—influence in the Middle East.
By Philip Yancey



IF SOMEONE HAD STOOD HERE in Julius Caesar's day and predicted the decline of the mighty Roman Empire and the triumph of an upstart religion founded by a Galilean peasant, he would have been judged a lunatic. As would anyone who stood in the Middle East five centuries later and predicted the downfall of Christianity, by then dominant in places like Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Yet here we are in the 21st century meeting rather furtively in a backyard in an Islamic state, hoping that none of the hired help are eavesdropping. As a visitor, I cannot help wondering why this part of the world, the birthplace and once the center of the Christian faith, became the region most resistant to it.

I get one possible clue from the French sociologist Jacques Ellul who, looking around him at the modern world, noted a paradoxical trend: As the Christian faith permeates society, it tends to produce values that contradict the gospel. I sometimes test his theory while traveling by asking foreigners, "When I say the words *United States*, what first comes to mind?" Invariably,

I get one of three responses:

Wealth. Representing only 5 percent of the world's population, the U.S. generates almost a fourth of the world's economic output and still dominates global finance.

Military power. The U.S., as the media regularly remind us, is “the world's only superpower.” The U.S. military budget exceeds that of the next 23 nations combined, including China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

never seen a woman's knee, or even her face.”

For our part, Americans react with confusion and dismay as mobs of screaming Muslims call for “death to the Great Satan” and burn our leaders in effigy. The label “Great Satan” especially rankles, for we think of the U.S. as a Christian nation, far more devout than, say, most European countries. At least we still go to church. How can anyone consider us diabolical?

Most observers understand the difference

games and public monuments to the Ten Commandments, in the Middle East even the airlines broadcast the call to prayer five times a day. And in countries with a variety of religions, like Nigeria, as the Muslim population increases, they seek to impose the religious Shari'ah law on all citizens.

The top-down approach has a certain ruthless efficiency. At one point, Islam conquered three-fourths of all Christian territory, including the Middle East and much of Europe. Of course, we Christians have had our own experiments with moral coercion—Spain's Inquisition, Calvin's Geneva, Cromwell's England, New England's Puritans—which we look back upon with regret. Over time, though, the Christian West moved toward a separation of church and state and a respect for religious freedom.

Much of the misgiving that Muslims feel for the West stems from our strong emphasis on freedom, always a risky enterprise. I've heard some say they would rather rear their children in a closely guarded Islamic society than in the United States, where freedom so often leads to decadence. An Egyptian Christian told me he cannot check into a hotel room with a woman until they show evidence that she is his wife—a policy he appreciates, as does his wife. We could also learn from the Islamic emphasis on family. Middle Eastern émigrés to the West are shocked to find us shuttling preschoolers off to daycare and elderly parents to nursing homes.

Although there may be advantages to living in the Middle East, Christians here face the daily challenge of practicing their faith as a small minority in a culture that may sometimes seem hostile. How can they stay true to their beliefs and present a different picture of Christianity to their Muslim neighbors? Fortunately, they have a good model to follow: the original Christians who came from this region.

Recently I have been reading a historical study by Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*. A sociologist of religion, Stark investigated the success of the early Christian movement, which, starting from a few thousand followers, grew to encompass half the population of the Roman Empire in three centuries. In the midst of a hostile environment, the Christians simply acted on their beliefs. Going against the majority culture, they treated slaves as human beings, often liberating them, and elevated women to positions of leadership. When an



Decadence. Most people in other countries get their notion of the U.S. from Hollywood movies, which seem to them obsessed with sex and crime.

Each contradicts the teachings and example of Jesus, whose life was marked by poverty, self-sacrifice, and purity. No wonder followers of Islam puzzle over Christianity, a powerful faith that somehow produces the opposite of its ideals in society at large.

American soldiers stationed here know the pattern: while fighting in two Gulf wars, they had to get by without alcohol and *Playboy* in deference to the strict Islamic code in the staging nations. One Muslim mentioned to me the *Baywatch* syndrome, alluding to the titillating television program that some years ago replaced *Dallas* as the most popular U.S. television export overseas. “We are attracted to what we most fear,” he said. “Imagine what decadent American culture represents to a young Muslim who, outside of his family, has

between a committed Christian who accepts Jesus as a model for living and a “cultural Christian” who happens to live in a nation with a Christian heritage. Most Muslims do not. (Similarly, many Americans paint the Middle East with a broad brush, judging all Muslims as radicals and terrorists.) One reason for their confusion, I believe, relates to the total-society approach to religion typical of Islam and the laissez-faire approach more common in Christian societies.

Several years ago, a Muslim man said to me, “I have read the entire Qur'an and can find no guidance in it on how Muslims should live as a *minority* in a society. I have read the entire New Testament and can find no guidance in it on how Christians should live as a *majority*.” He put his finger on a central difference between the two faiths. Muslim societies tend to unify religion, culture, law, and politics. Whereas U.S. courts debate the legality of nonsectarian prayers at football

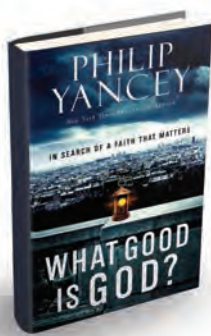
epidemic hit their towns, they stayed behind to nurse the sick. They refused to participate in such common practices as abortion and infanticide. They responded to persecution as martyrs, not as terrorists. And when Roman social networks disintegrated, the church stepped in. Even one of their pagan critics had to acknowledge that early Christians loved their neighbors “as if they were our own family.”

In the long run, the compassionate work that many of you are doing among the laborers from other countries may have more impact on Middle Eastern society than all the billions of dollars being poured into oil exploration and construction projects. I have seen the long-term results of a few early missionaries who sacrificially brought education and medical care to neglected groups here. People instinctively know the difference between something done with a profit motive and something done with a love motive.

Some in the United States judge our nation’s success by such measures as gross national product, military might, and global dominance. The kingdom of God measures such things as care for the downtrodden and love for enemies. In the final reckoning described in Matthew 25, God will judge nations by how they treat the poor, the sick, the hungry, the alien, and the prisoner. How differently would the world view my country if it associated the U.S. with the “Jesus syndrome” rather than with weapons, wealth, and the *Baywatch* syndrome?

WHEN VICTIMS WRITE HISTORY

I once attended a weekend retreat sponsored by the late psychiatrist and author M. Scott Peck (*The Road Less Traveled*) that brought together ten Jews, ten Christians, and ten Muslims. Peck had the idea that in order to solve human problems, we should first work to create a spirit of community, and only then try to resolve differences on issues—precisely the opposite of the normal approach in diplomacy. I regret to say that the weekend mainly accentuated conflict between the Jews and Muslims as the Christians sat silent on the sidelines.



One of the attendees was Hanan Ashrawi, a prominent Palestinian legislator, activist, and scholar. She introduced herself by saying, “I am quadruply marginalized. I am a feminist woman in a male-dominated society. I am a Christian from a predominantly Muslim society. I am a Palestinian, a people without a country. And here in the United States, I am a racial and cultural minority.”

Shortly after that retreat, I came across the writings of René Girard, a French philosopher and anthropologist whose brilliant career culminated in a position at Stanford University. Girard became fascinated with the fact that in modern times a “marginalized” person assumes a moral authority. In our group, for example, Dr.

Over time the gospel works its liberating effect. Women, minorities, the disabled, human rights activists—all these draw their moral force from the power of the gospel unleashed at the Cross, when God took the side of the victim.

Ashrawi’s introduction gained her respect. Girard noted that a cavalcade of liberation movements—abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, the civil rights movement, animal rights, gay rights, women’s rights, minority rights, human rights—had gathered speed in the 20th century.

The trend mystified Girard because he found nothing comparable in his readings of ancient literature. Victors, not the marginalized, wrote history, and the myths from Babylon, Greece, and elsewhere celebrated strong heroes, not pitiable victims. In his further research, Girard traced the phenomenon back to the historical figure of Jesus. It struck Girard that Jesus’ story cuts against the grain of every heroic story from its time. Indeed, Jesus chose poverty and disgrace, spent his infancy as a refugee, lived in a minority race under a harsh regime, and died as a prisoner. From the very beginning Jesus took the side of the underdog: the poor, the oppressed, the sick, the “marginalized.” His crucifixion, Girard concluded, introduced a

new plot to history: The victim becomes a hero by being a victim. To the consternation of his secular colleagues, Girard converted to Christianity.

When Jesus died as an innocent victim, it introduced what one of Girard’s disciples has called “the most sweeping historical revolution in the world, namely, the emergence of an empathy for victims.” Today the victim occupies the moral high ground everywhere in the Western world: consider how the media portray the plight of HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa or Tibetan refugees or uprooted Palestinians. Girard contends that Jesus’ life and death brought forth a new stream in history, one that undermines injustice. It may take centuries for that stream to erode a hard bank of oppression, as it did with slavery, but the stream of liberation flows on.

Sometimes Jesus’ own followers join the stream, and sometimes they stand on the bank and watch. Yet over time the gospel works its liberating effect. (You can see the contrast clearly in societies that have experienced little Christian influence.) Women, minorities, the disabled, human rights activists—all these draw their moral force from the power of the gospel unleashed at the Cross, when God took the side of the victim. In a great irony, the “politically correct” movement defending these rights often positions itself as an enemy of Christianity, when in fact the gospel has contributed the very underpinnings that make possible such a movement. And those who condemn the church for its episodes of violence, slavery, sexism, and racism do so by gospel principles. The gospel continues to leaven a culture even when the church takes the wrong side on an issue.

I have seen the stream flowing here in the Middle East as many of you reach out to help victims of injustice. Some countries in this region have a pecking order based on gender, race, and religion as rigid in its own way as the caste system in India. By your own examples, you are showing your neighbors another way to treat women, aliens, servants, and other races. In the process, you are also showing a new Christian face to a region that tends to judge us by stereotypes.

You may feel like a beleaguered minority here, with good reason. Yet again and again in human history, a minority of Christians

who simply express the spirit of Jesus can have a potent subversive influence. It has happened in this part of the world before, and it can happen anew.

MOVING ROCKS

I close with a true story from Afghanistan that took place in the early 1970s, before the Russian occupation or the Taliban regime or the NATO intervention. At the time, the

government allowed a small Christian church to service internationals who worked there, though no Afghans could attend. (A sterner government later revoked permission and destroyed the church, bulldozing a large hole in the ground because they had heard rumors of an "underground church.")

A friend of mine named Len organized a musical team of young people to tour countries in the Middle East. With some

trepidation, he also accepted an invitation to extend the trip to Afghanistan for a concert in downtown Kabul. Len made the teenagers write out exactly what they would say, subject to his approval. "This is a strict Muslim government," he warned them. "If you say the wrong thing, you could end up in prison and at the same time jeopardize every Christian who lives in this country. Memorize these words and don't dare stray from them when you perform." The teenagers listened wide-eyed as he described the ominous consequence of a slight misstep.

In a warm-up, the team gave an abbreviated program at a United Nations-sponsored school and then a restaurant, singing folk tunes and songs about God's love. The night of the official concert in Kabul, almost a thousand Afghans filled the hall and spilled outside the open doors to listen. All went well until one teenager on the team put down his guitar and started improvising: "I'd like to tell you about my best friend, a man named Jesus, and the difference he has made in my life." From the side of the stage, Len motioned wildly for him to stop, drawing his finger across his neck. Ignoring him, the teenager proceeded to give a detailed account of how God had transformed his life.

"I was practically beside myself," Len told me. "I knew the consequences, and I sat with my head in my hands waiting for the sword to drop. Instead, the most amazing thing happened. The Minister of Cultural Affairs for Afghanistan stood and walked to the stage to respond.

"'We have seen many American young people come through this country,' he said. 'Most of them come for drugs, and most look like hippies. We have not seen nor heard from young people like you. God's love is a message my country needs. How thrilled I am to hear you! You are a prototype for the youth of Afghanistan to follow in the future. I would like to invite you to expand your tour so that you visit every college and faculty and also give this same message on Kabul Radio. I will make it happen.'"

Len was dumbfounded. That night he gathered the musical group together. "Did you hear what the man said? We're changing our tickets, of course, to lengthen our visit. And he wants you to give this same message—you'd better not change a word!"

Over the next few days, the musical team held other performances. After each event



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Afghan young people crowded around with questions. *Tell me more about this Jesus—we know of him through the Qur'an. You speak of a personal relationship with God. Can you describe it? How does your faith change you?* Some asked to pray with the teenagers. Nothing like it had ever happened in Afghanistan.

On the last day, after a triumphant tour, the teenagers met J. Christy Wilson, a revered figure in Afghanistan. Born of missionary parents in Iran, he earned a degree from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in Oriental studies from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He then spent 22 years in Afghanistan, serving as principal of a government high school and teaching English to the Crown Prince and Afghan diplomats. He also led the Community Christian Church and founded the School for the Blind in Kabul.

Wilson drove the teenagers to an unusual tourist site, the only cemetery in Afghanistan where “infidels” could be buried. He walked to the first, ancient gravestone, pitted with age. “This man worked here 30 years and translated the Bible into the Afghan language,” he said. “Not a single convert. And in this grave next to him lies the man who replaced him, along with his children who died here. He toiled for 25 years, and baptized the first Afghan Christian.” As they strolled among the gravestones, he recounted the stories of early missionaries and their fates.

At the end of the row he stopped, turned, and looked the teenagers straight in the eye. “For 30 years, one man moved rocks. That’s all he did, move rocks. Then came his replacement, who did nothing but dig furrows. There came another who planted seeds, and another who watered. And now you kids—you kids—are bringing in the harvest.”

“It was one of the great moments of my life,” Len recalls. “I watched their faces as it suddenly dawned on these exuberant American teenagers that the amazing spiritual awakening they had witnessed was but the last step in a long line of faithful service stretching back over many decades. I’ll never forget that scene.”

Those of you who work and pray in this hostile part of the world may sometimes feel as if you do nothing but move rocks, or dig furrows. Maybe so. God alone controls

the harvest. We have no idea what the future holds for the Middle East. Most of the Westerners who come here represent something other than Jesus. Some bring in military equipment. Some come to exploit the resources and invest their dollars. But you have a different calling: to make known the spirit of Jesus and to join the stream of liberation that broke free 2,000 years ago.

That image, of course, comes not just from

René Girard but from the prophet Amos, who said, “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness, like a never-failing stream!” May that stream gather momentum in this place.

Excerpted from the book *What Good Is God?* by Philip Yancey. Used by permission of the publisher, FaithWords, a division of the Hachette Publishing Group.



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{ THE CT INTERVIEW }

Faithfully and Pol Present



WALTER CALAHAN

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How and why **Michael Gerson** believes Christians should not abandon the public square.

Interview by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

CHRISTIANS' RETREAT from American politics would be a mistake, argues Michael Gerson, against those who prefer more behind-the-scenes forms of cultural engagement. As President George W. Bush's speechwriter for five years, and now as senior research fellow at the Institute for Global Engagement, Gerson has seen first-hand how policy has tangible cultural effects. Gerson recently co-authored *City of Man: Religion and Politics in a New Era* (Moody) with Peter Wehner and began a one-year fellowship with the ONE Campaign, the Bono-backed nonprofit devoted to funding international aid programs. Gerson will be working on the campaign's religious and conservative coalition on development, disease, and trade issues. "I am not, however, in charge of distributing U2 tickets," he says.

Gerson spoke with CT online editor Sarah Pulliam Bailey about why Christians should remain vigorously engaged in the political sphere.

You gently critique the Religious Right, saying, "The biggest problem with the Religious Right has not been tonal or strategic but rather theological." Could you flesh that out? How might Christians approach politics differently?

We are in a moment of transition. There's a discontent with an older model of social engagement. One reason is tonal. The Religious Right reacted to the aggressions of modernity, to the impression that leading institutions were imposing an alien vision on American society. Its fundraising appeals presented politics through the prism of a bitter divide. It was the children of light against the children of darkness.

Another element is political and strategic. Because it brought many moral concerns to public life, the Religious Right became an appendage of another political ideology: the Republican Party. So you would see voter guides that were not only on moral issues but also on tax policy and missile defense. I am a conservative, but I think the Christian faith stands in judgment of all political ideologies. When it's too closely identified with any of them, it becomes a tool in someone else's power game.

The third element is theological. After 9/11, when Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson publicly blamed the suffering of the American people on various American sins, they left out other sins: exploitation of the poor, pride, and vanity. When an American religious leader says that Orlando might be destroyed because of Gay Day, and a hurricane hits Disney World on Gay Day, it seems cruel rather than compassionate.

The book also addresses the underestimated virtues of the Religious Right. The movement led conservative Christians back into social engagement after a period in the wilderness, and it raised issues about the value of human life and the importance of traditional values and family.

Did you see evangelicals become tools in a power game in the Bush administration?

People who take the Bible seriously are going to be disposed toward

traditional morality. That can change over time—it wasn't too long ago that the Democratic Party was identified with those types of issues.

Evangelicals, particularly in 2000, closely embraced President Bush because he brought a broader agenda than the traditional conservative issues. He was capable not just of doing a traditional Republican economic agenda but also of doing the HIV/AIDS initiative. That was an outworking of his view of America and his faith. I never saw the cynical manipulation of evangelicals in that context. I think evangelicals were naturally attracted to Bush as somebody who shared many of their priorities. But the broader point is that for most of its early history—with the arguments over the regulation of private schools, the reaction to *Roe v. Wade*, and the debates on marriage and family—conservative religious people in America have largely reacted to their perception of aggressive secular elites. Their agenda, oddly, has been determined by someone else because they have reacted to the aggression of the other side.

You also critique James Davison Hunter's argument

in *To Change the World*, saying that “he imputes too little influence to the state and the political process. They are more important than he thinks.” But might the Religious Right have relied too much on political solutions?

Pete Wehner and I do not draw the conclusion that the answer to the Religious Right is a retreat from political engagement, that social and cultural engagement is private. At any given moment in American society, Christians face demands of justice that they are responsible for as part of Christian and American citizenship. We live in a self-governing society where people can't take breaks from engagement just because they don't think things have gone well.

The alternative isn't to *not* do politics; the alternative is to do it better. We try to be careful in the book, because these duties vary based on history and the form of government. We live in a representative democracy, where everyone shares in the governing of the nation. That implies a certain set of duties that can't be escaped. The appropriate response is not for Christians to throw up their hands and stare at the political process.

We set out basic themes from the history of Christian reflection on politics, particularly justice, order, prosperity, and virtue.

You also write that just “engaging culture,” as some are suggesting, won't quite cut it.

Culture making and engaging in culture are important, but there are political imperatives in any time that have to be taken seriously. Law often plays an important role in determining the parameters of a culture, in what's accepted and what's honored. The obvious example is when a group of white pastors in Birmingham told Martin Luther King Jr. that his demands for legal change were premature, that cultural change had to take place first. His response was, “You make that argument because you don't feel the results of legal injustice. You don't have the same sense of urgency because you don't share the circumstance.”

Whenever I hear someone say that culture

We live in a self-governing society where people can't take breaks from engagement just because they don't think things have gone well.

is more important than politics, I immediately think of hundreds of thousands of children who are dying completely needlessly of malaria because the U.S. doesn't do something. For those kids, the political task is quite important. They don't have the luxury of saying, “Let's write great books.” They need the U.S. government to act urgently in the cause of justice.

You argued in your last book for compassionate conservatism. Might it risk overestimating what the government can accomplish?

Compassionate conservatism argues for a limited but noble role of government, which is to respect the role of mediating institutions and support their work instead of always providing services. That view comes out of Catholic social teaching, and it's consistent with a Reformed reflection on the nature of society. It says that government can't do everything, but that there are ways it can strengthen the work of churches, charities, and communities in meeting social needs.

We have tax breaks for charitable giving, and we provide a lot of social services through

private, religious, and community institutions. There are a lot of creative ways we could do that, but that is not trusting government too much. It is devolving power in a society, not just to states or local governments but also to communities, religious institutions, and individuals.

In the epilogue, you write, “Politics is the realm of necessity; politics is the realm of hope and possibility; politics can be the realm of nobility.” This reminded me of President Obama's campaign slogan.

That's not conscious. We were trying to make a substantial point that many conservatives in the 1980s were predicting that American social decay would take place quickly and comprehensively—that families were breaking down, that drug abuse was increasing, and that America was headed toward social and cultural collapse. What we found instead was that at least an important part of the problem was stupid government policy. We did welfare reform that got people out of welfare dependence and into work. We reduced crime just by routinely enforcing the law. That's an antidote to pessimism.

There are some areas where good government policy can improve people's lives dramatically and where bad public policy can undermine human flourishing dramatically. Those are areas where Christians should have strong opinions and where the government matters greatly.

In your columns you have been skeptical of the tea party. Do the tea partiers have a misguided theology?

The tea party is a tremendously diverse grassroots social movement. We have massive deficit problems, and we need to analyze what the government is doing and why it's doing it. But there's a position that goes at least a couple of steps further that is anti-government. The position believes that the entirety of the modern state—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid—all are fundamentally unconstitutional, that since they are not in the text of the Constitution, they are actually illegal.

The imposition of that kind of ideology would be an act of great cruelty. From a Christian social justice perspective, there are significant problems with that view. It's

appropriate to be skeptical about government, but the government has important and noble roles that we need to honor. We need to be thoughtful about what it should and should not do, instead of adopting a broad, essentially anti-government attitude, essentially libertarian. The mainstream Christian reflection has concluded that government has an important role in pursuing the common good. It plays an important role in defending the weak and the vulnerable.

But does that make people more dependent on the government and less dependent on other social structures like churches and charities?

It can. Welfare is the perfect example where a well-intended public program really decimated families and communities. It's hard to argue that Social Security has created a culture of dependence and bad behavior among old people. Social Security has been a tremendous success in bringing millions of people out of terrible poverty at the end of their lives. Now that doesn't mean it shouldn't be reformed to be financially sustainable and more oriented toward individual empowerment. These are valid public obligations. But they have to be done the right way or they can be counterproductive.

In what ways is the government limited in addressing physical needs? How should the government determine which areas to be involved in?

Health care is a big case study in these questions. My general approach suggests that government has a valid public role in encouraging access to health care for the poor. I don't think that's an illegitimate government goal. But two fundamentally different visions are competing right now on how to do that. One empowers individuals, essentially allowing them to buy private insurance in a private system and encouraging them to control costs. The other one says we need to centralize and do various forms of government-sponsored rationing, whether it's Medicaid or other things. A Christian could argue that there's an important imperative for government involvement in health care, particularly when it comes to helping the poor, but then could disagree vigorously about how to apply that

as a prudential matter.

In many ways, it's the church's duty to define these broad moral imperatives toward justice, order, and human dignity. It's the imperative of Christian laypeople who know what they are talking about to design policies that actually achieve these ends. And those debates are substantive, fact-based debates. How do you achieve

The purpose of Christian social engagement is not to seek a preferred status for Christianity but to pursue a vision of universal human dignity informed by our faith.

these goals in a way that's not counterproductive? That mainly depends on the expertise of Christians, not on the pronouncement of church bodies.

How do you help Christians think theologically about political engagement?

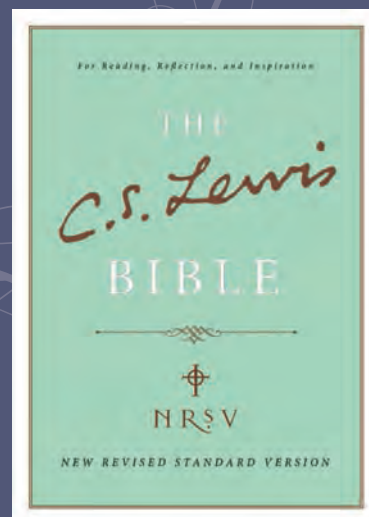
The purpose of Christian social engagement is

not to seek a preferred status for Christianity but to pursue a vision of universal human dignity informed by our faith. Christians' goal is not to favor their own. It's to vindicate everyone's rights and dignity, including their neighbors'.

That's been a huge progression in the church's approach. If you look at the Middle Ages, you very much had the theology of the tribe where the church was competing in society for influence and using that influence at the expense of Jews at home, of heretics, and of Muslims abroad. It was a battle.

But that has shifted significantly to say that it's really not the purpose of the church to serve its own interests. Its purpose is to serve in the interest of human rights and dignity, which were taught by Christ himself. It's the reason Muslims also have religious liberty rights—not because we approve of their faith, but because we view them as individuals created in the image of God with rights of conscience. +

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SOME striking mile markers appear on the road through young adulthood: leaving for college, getting the first job and apartment, starting a career, getting married—and, for many people today, walking away from the Christian faith.

A few years ago, shortly after college, I was in my studio apartment with a friend and fellow pastor's kid. After some small talk over dinner, he announced, "I'm not a Christian anymore. I don't know what happened. I just left it."

An image flashed into my mind from the last time I had seen him. It was at a Promise Keepers rally. I remembered watching him worship, eyes pinched shut with one slender arm skyward.

How did his family react to his decision? I asked. His eyes turned to the ground. "Growing up I had an uncle who wasn't a Christian, and we prayed for him all the time," he said wistfully. "I'm sure they pray for me like that."

About that time, I began encountering many other "leavers": a basketball buddy, a soft-spoken young woman from my church's worship team, a friend from youth group. In addition to the more vocal ex-Christians were a slew of others who had simply drifted away. Now that I'm in my early 30s, the stories of apostasy have slowed, but only slightly. Recently I learned that a former colleague in Christian publishing started a blog to share his "post-faith musings."

These anecdotes may be part of a larger trend. Among young adults in the U.S., sociologists are seeing a major shift taking place *away* from Christianity. A faithful response requires that we examine the exodus and ask ourselves some honest questions about why.

SONS OF 'NONE'

Recent studies have brought the trend to light. Among the findings released in 2009 from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), one stood out. The percentage of Americans claiming "no religion" almost doubled in about two decades, climbing from 8.1 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2008. The trend wasn't confined to one region. Those marking "no religion," called the "Nones," made up the only group to have grown in every state, from the secular Northeast to the conservative Bible Belt. The Nones were most numerous among the young: a whopping 22 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds claimed no religion, up from 11 percent in 1990. The study also found that 73 percent of Nones came from religious homes; 66 percent were described by the study as "de-converts."

Other survey results have been grimmer. At the May 2009 Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, top political scientists Robert Putnam and David Campbell presented research from their book *American Grace*, released last month. They reported that "young Americans are dropping out of religion at an alarming rate of five to six times the historic rate (30 to 40 percent have no religion today, versus 5 to 10 percent a generation ago)."



{ CULTURAL TRENDS }

The Leavers

More than in previous generations, 20- and 30-somethings are abandoning the faith. Why? By Drew Dyck



There has been a corresponding drop in church involvement. According to Rainer Research, approximately 70 percent of American youth drop out of church between the age of 18 and 22. The Barna Group estimates that 80 percent of those reared in the church will be “disengaged” by the time they are 29. Barna Group president David Kinnaman described the reality in stark terms:

“Imagine a group photo of all the students who come to your church (or live within your community of believers) in a typical year. Take a big fat marker and cross out three out of every four faces. That’s the probable toll of spiritual disengagement as students navigate through their faith during the next two decades.”

In his book *unChristian*, Kinnaman relayed his findings from thousands of interviews with young adults. Among his many conclusions was this: “The vast majority of outsiders [to the Christian faith] in this country, particularly among young generations, are actually *dechurched* individuals.” He reports that 65 percent of all American young people report having made a commitment to Jesus Christ at some point. In other words, most unbelieving outsiders are old friends, yesterday’s worshipers, children who once prayed to Jesus.

To tweak Kinnaman’s language, the problem today isn’t those who are *unChristian*, but that so many are *ex-Christian*. Strictly speaking, they are not an “unreached people group.” They are our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, and friends. They have dwelt among us.

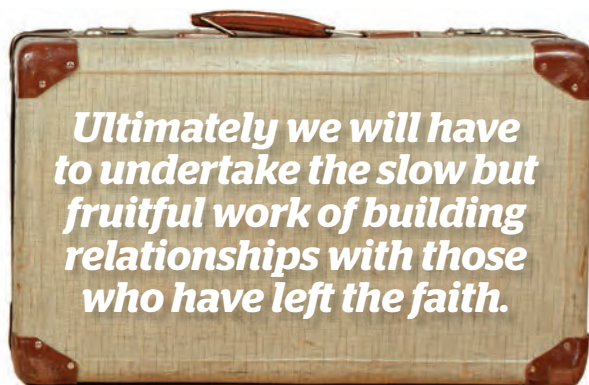
WON'T THEY JUST COME BACK?

A handful of researchers insists that the dramatic drop-off in 20-something spirituality is not cause for alarm. They view the exodus from the church as a hiatus, a matter of many post-collegiate Americans “slapping the snooze” on Sunday mornings.

In his recent book *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites . . . and Other Lies You've Been Told*, sociologist Bradley Wright says the trend of young people leaving the faith in record numbers is “one of the myths” of contemporary Christianity. Wright, a shrewd contrarian, says members of every generation are regarded with suspicion by their older counterparts. He describes himself as a youth

sporting “longish hair and a disco-print shirt,” and asks readers, “Do you think the adults of that generation had any faith in the future based on teens like us?” Though he acknowledges that “we can’t know for sure what will happen,” Wright believes the best bet is that history will repeat itself: “. . . young people commonly leave organized religion as they separate from their families, but then rejoin when they start families of their own.”

Rodney Stark also calls for calm. The Baylor University sociologist concedes that data from his school’s research mirror that of the above studies, but Stark isn’t shaken. “Young people have always been less likely



Ultimately we will have to undertake the slow but fruitful work of building relationships with those who have left the faith.

to attend [church] than are older people,” he writes. Stark is confident that the youngsters will return. “A bit later in life when they have married, and especially after children arrive, they become more regular [church] attendees. This happens in every generation.”

There is something to these arguments. Scholars like Wright and Stark expose the folly of breathless predictions of Christianity’s imminent demise. The North American church does not teeter on the brink of extinction. But, in my view, the crisis of people leaving the faith has taken on new gravity.

First, young adults today are dropping religion at a greater rate than young adults of yesteryear—“five to six times the historic rate,” say Putnam and Campbell.

Second, the life-phase argument may no longer pertain. Young adulthood is not what it used to be. For one, it’s much longer. Marriage, career, children—the primary sociological forces that drive adults back to religious commitment—are now delayed until the late 20s, even into the 30s. Returning to the fold after a two- or three-year hiatus is one thing. Coming back after more than a decade is considerably more unlikely.

Third, a tectonic shift has occurred in the

broader culture. Past generations may have rebelled for a season, but they still inhabited a predominantly Judeo-Christian culture. For those reared in pluralistic, post-Christian America, the cultural gravity that has pulled previous generations back to the faith has weakened or dissipated altogether.

So 20- and 30-somethings are leaving—but why? When I ask church people, I receive some variation of this answer: moral compromise. A teenage girl goes off to college and starts to party. A young man moves in with his girlfriend. Soon the conflict between belief and behavior becomes unbearable. Tired of dealing with a guilty conscience and unwilling to abandon their sinful lifestyles, they drop their Christian commitment. They may cite intellectual skepticism or disappointments with the church, but these are smokescreens designed to hide the reason. “They change their creed to match their deeds,” as my parents would say.

I think there’s some truth to this—more than most young leavers would care to admit. The Christian life is hard to sustain in the face of so many temptations. Over the past year, I’ve conducted in-depth interviews with scores of ex-Christians. Only two were honest enough to cite moral compromise as the primary reason for their departures. Many experienced intellectual crises that seemed to conveniently coincide with the adoption of a lifestyle that fell outside the bounds of Christian morality.

THE REST OF THE STORY

However, in many cases, moral compromise wasn’t the whole story. For example, one friend has had distinctly postmodern misgivings. When his father learned of his decision to leave the faith, he rushed his son a copy of *Mere Christianity*, hoping the book would bring him back. But C. S. Lewis’s logical style left him cold. “All that rationality comes from the Western philosophical tradition,” he told me. “I don’t think that’s the only way to find truth.”

I also met leavers who felt Christianity failed to measure up intellectually. Shane, a 27-year-old father of three, was swept away by the tide of New Atheist literature. He described growing up a “sheltered Lutheran” who was “into Jesus” and active in youth group. Now he spoke slowly and deliberately,

as if testifying in court. "I'm an atheist and an empiricist. I don't believe religion or psychics or astrology or anything supernatural."

Others have been hurt by Christians. Katie, a former believer in her early 30s, had been molested by two members of her childhood church. Her mother occasionally still drags her to church. Once, one of her mother's friends approached Katie with an intense look of concern. She grabbed Katie by the shoulders: "Katie, you've become so hard," she said.

Katie's voice faltered as she recalled the encounter. "That affected me," she said. "I don't want to be hard." She paused to regain her poise. "But you have to be hard, or else life will hurt you."

A sizable minority of leavers have adopted alternative spiritualities. A popular choice is Wicca. Morninghawk Apollo (who renamed himself as is common in Wiccan practice) discussed his rejection of Christianity with candor. "Ultimately why I left is that the Christian God demands that you submit to his will. In Wicca, it's just the other way around. Your will is paramount. We believe in gods and goddesses, but the deities we choose to serve

are based on our wills." That Morninghawk had a Christian past was hardly unique among his friends. "It is rare to meet a new Wiccan who wasn't raised in the church," he told me.

In my interviews, I was struck by the diversity of the stories—one can hardly lump them together and chalk up all departures to "youthful rebellion." Yet there were commonalities. Many de-conversions were precipitated by what happened inside rather than outside the church. Even those who adopted materialist worldviews or vogueish spiritualities traced their departures back to what happened in church.

What pushed them out? Again, the reasons for departing in each case were unique, but I realized that most leavers had been exposed to a superficial form of Christianity that effectively inoculated them against authentic faith. When sociologist Christian Smith and his fellow researchers examined the spiritual lives of American teenagers, they found most teens practicing a religion best called "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," which casts God as a distant Creator who blesses people who are "good, nice, and

fair." Its central goal is to help believers "be happy and feel good about oneself."

Where did teenagers learn this faith? Unfortunately, it's one taught, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, at every age level in many churches. It's in the air that many churchgoers breathe, from seeker-friendly worship services to low-commitment small groups. When this naïve and coldly utilitarian view of God crashes on the hard rocks of reality, we shouldn't be surprised to see people of any age walk away.

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

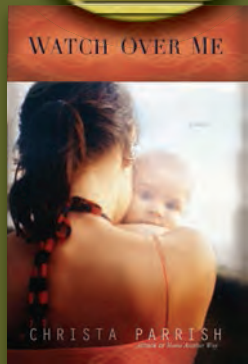
The reasons that 20- and 30-somethings are leaving are complex. A significant part of leaving has to do with the new culture we live in, and there is only so much to be done about that. But we in the church have control over at least one part of the equation: how we respond.

While we feel rightly perplexed, if not devastated, when loved ones leave, we should not let grief carry us away. I talked with one parent who was despondent over his grown son's loss of faith. He said his son was "into satanic stuff." After a little probing, I found



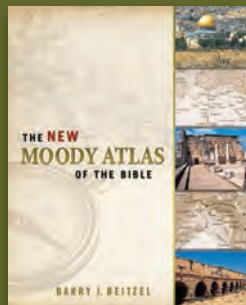
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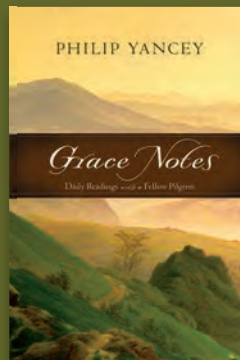


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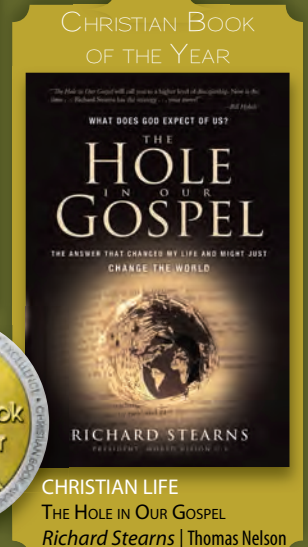
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that the son was really a garden variety pluralist. He loved Jesus but saw him as one figure in a pantheon of spiritual luminaries. This is a far cry from his father's assessment. I cringed inwardly when I imagined them discussing matters of faith.

Christians often have one of two opposite and equally harmful reactions when they talk with someone who has left the faith: they go on the offensive, delivering a homespun, judgmental sermon, or they freeze in a defensive crouch and fail to engage at all.

Another unsettling pattern emerged during my interviews. Almost to a person, the leavers with whom I spoke recalled that, before leaving the faith, they were regularly shut down when they expressed doubts. Some were ridiculed in front of peers for asking "insolent questions." Others reported receiving trite answers to vexing questions and being scolded for not accepting them. One was slapped across the face, literally.

At the 2008 American Sociological Association meeting, scholars from the University of Connecticut and Oregon State University reported that "the most frequently

mentioned role of Christians in de-conversion was in amplifying existing doubt." De-converts reported "sharing their burgeoning doubts with a Christian friend or family member only to receive trite, unhelpful answers."

Churches often lack the appropriate resources. We have programs geared for gender- and age-groups and for those struggling with addictions or exploring the faith. But there's precious little for *Christians* struggling with the faith. But two recent books suggest this may be changing: *Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*, by Thom and Sam Rainer, and *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches That Reach Them*, by Ed Stetzer. Both of these equip churches to reach disaffected people.

The answer, of course, lies in more than offering another program. Nor should we overestimate the efficacy of slicker services or edgy outreach. Only with prayer and thoughtful engagement will at least some of the current exodus be stemmed.

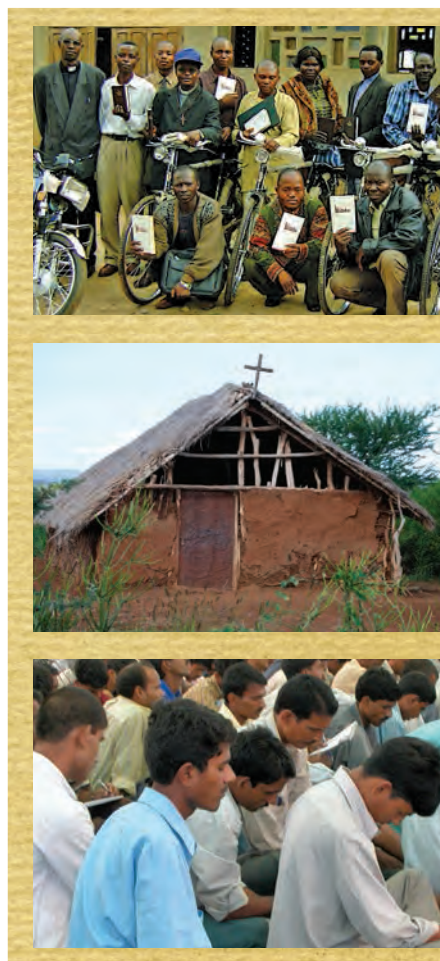
One place to begin is by rethinking how we minister to those from youth to old age. There's nothing wrong with pizza and video

games, nor with seeker-sensitive services, nor with low-commitment small groups that introduce people to the Christian faith. But these cannot replace serious programs of discipleship and catechism. The temptation to wander from the faith is not a new one. The apostle Paul exhorted the church at Ephesus to strive to mature every believer, so that "we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes" (Eph. 4:14, *esv*).

Ultimately we will have to undertake the slow but fruitful work of building relationships with those who have left the faith. This means viewing their skepticism for what it often is: the tortured language of spiritual longing. And once we've listened long and hard to their stories, and built bridges of trust, we will be ready to light the way back home. ☩

Drew Dyck is a manager in the Church Ministry Media Group at Christianity Today International, and author of *Generation Ex-Christian* (Moody).

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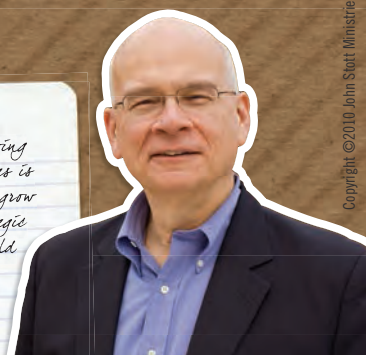
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YOU WOULD THINK that with continuing high rates of unemployment, people would be especially grateful for their jobs this Thanksgiving. You would be dead wrong.

In this precarious economy, many employers have had to trim workers, forcing those who remain to pick up the slack—or a pink slip. Resentment and misery are building among those with jobs, to say nothing of the unemployed.

Gallup says that nearly three-fourths of us with paid positions are phoning it in; 55 percent are “disengaged” (emotionally detached) at work, while another 16 percent are “actively disengaged.” The actively disengaged are costing their companies about \$350 billion each year. The damage to their self-esteem and emotional well-being—not to mention their souls—is incalculable.

Ingratitude is hardly a modern phenomenon, of course. One day Jesus encountered it while on the way to Jerusalem, traversing what Puritan commentator Matthew Henry called “the frontier-country, the marches that lay between Samaria and Galilee.”

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (Luke 17:11–13, ESV, used throughout).

Jesus is called aside by the plaintive shouts of men afflicted with a serious skin condition that present-day translators render as leprosy. Bible scholars generally don’t believe their disease was the same as modern-day leprosy, but clearly it fell under the unhappy strictures of the Old Testament law intended to keep communicable disease from spreading.

These ten men knew the law. They had to; it was a matter of life and death. But they also knew something of the kindness and power of Jesus. His fame had preceded him, even in this seemingly godforsaken dead end. Surely, they must have thought, *if Jesus can cure the blind, heal the lame, and raise the dead, he has the power to help us, too?* They were already outcasts and had nothing to lose, so they raised their voices in desperate hope.

When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (Luke 17:14a).

The Master simply tells them to go to the priests, who were the first-century referees as to whether a healing had taken place. Any cure, according to the Book of Leviticus, would need the equivalent of a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, so that the formerly suffering could be ritually restored to the community. It didn’t matter whether

a well-known healer such as Jesus had performed a miracle. The ten men would still have to do the paperwork.

I am reminded of the Old Testament story of Naaman, the Syrian general healed of leprosy by Elisha. When the prophet told Naaman to bathe in the Jordan, initially he balked. The strange task seemed much beneath the dignity of a great military commander. But a wise servant encouraged Naaman to swallow his pride and do it in faith. He did, and healing quickly followed.

Here the ten face a similar test. Will they go to the priests who must certify their healing? How can they, since Jesus has done nothing outwardly to assure them of a cure? “This,” Henry notes, “was a trial of their obedience.” How would they respond to the Lord’s command? Something in the reputation of Jesus, or perhaps in the way he looked them in the eye, encouraged them that they had met not divine indifference, but God’s mercy, on the road.

And as they went they were cleansed (Luke 17:14b).

Note the progression: “as they went they were cleansed.” The obedience precedes the healing. It seems clear: If they had not gone, they would have remained lepers. No obedience, no blessing. The obedience was part and parcel of receiving God’s unmerited grace. The same is true today for all who encounter Jesus on the way.

{ MEDITATION }

The Blessing of Gratitude

Why Jesus commands us to be thankful.

By Stan Guthrie

TRUST AND OBEY

While we can never earn God’s grace, in everyday life we can short-circuit it with our self-destructive disobedience. Robertson McQuilkin of Columbia International University emphasizes two critical factors—trust and obedience—as integral to the walk of faith. Trust is one step, obedience the other. With both we move forward in the Christian life. Emphasizing one over the other will leave you, in McQuilkin’s words, “hopping mad.” Here the ten do both—trust and obey—and receive the blessing.

Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan (Luke 17:15–16).

The men go as directed, and then their healing comes. We don’t know how far they traveled toward the priests before it dawned on them that they were cured. We do know it could not have been a great distance, because the Samaritan who turned back is able to find Jesus, who is heading south for Jerusalem. Also, apparently the disciples could hear the man’s loud praising before he got to them.

I’m guessing that the return trip for this man was more than a few steps; otherwise, there is no compelling reason why the other nine would not have come, too. Going back to Jesus definitely involves a detour, a change in plans.

Until this point, the ten lepers have acted in concert: They had

lived together, they had cried out together, they had gone off together, and they had been cleansed together. Now, however, one peels off like a jet leaving formation and heads for Jesus. Something is different: Perhaps his skin is clear, or the constant itching and pain are gone. Whatever has happened, the man knows he has been blessed, and the blessing requires a response. First he sees, then he turns, then he praises.

According to Robert Emmons of the University of California–Davis, the word *thanks* and its cognates appear in the Bible more than 150 times, and gratitude has been a cherished virtue down through church history. Jonathan Edwards, in his classic work *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, notes approvingly the “gracious stirrings of grateful affection toward God.” These the Samaritan displays with joy.

And then, with the Samaritan still humbly at Jesus’ feet, come three pointed, rapid-fire questions that cast a shadow over the celebration.

Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one

found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:17–18).

I must confess, these questions have always bothered me. At first blush they seem to reflect a childish need for praise and recognition on the part of Jesus. Wasn’t performing the miracle enough for him? Isn’t doing a good deed its own reward? Why did he need to be thanked?

A JOYFUL INEVITABILITY

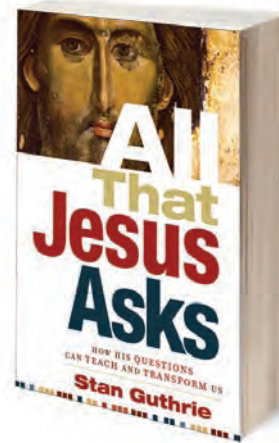
I am more troubled by Jesus’ response to the nine than by their apparent lack of gratitude. Weren’t they doing what he had asked, going to the priests? And wouldn’t turning back be, in some sense, a sign of disobedience? Additionally, going to the trouble of finding the Healer again would take time and effort and delay their restoration to the community. Jesus would understand their lack of thankfulness. They were only following orders.

Only Jesus *didn’t* understand. Though already having rewarded their obedience, he wanted something more. He sought their gratitude. And after they had received a new lease on life, was this really so much to expect? “Gratefulness,” Emmons notes, “is a knowing awareness that we are the recipients of goodness.” Didn’t these men know?

The nine who did not give thanks were not only rude. They were also ignorant, misaligned with the truth of the universe:

We are the recipients, not the creators, of goodness. In acknowledging this simple truth we ennoble ourselves. “God,” John Piper says, “is the one Being in all the universe for whom seeking his own praise is the ultimately loving act.”

Given that fact, praise is not a mere option. It is a joyful inevitability in a world designed and upheld by God. The only



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question is whether we will add our voices to the choir. When Jesus entered Jerusalem during the last week of his earthly ministry, the crowd of disciples erupted in praise, echoing the Psalms: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” Some of the Pharisees, however, growled, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” But Jesus rightly answered, “I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

MERCIES DOUBLED

If the history of humanity reveals anything, it is that we are dependent creatures. We depend on the rain falling, the sun shining, the doctor curing, the asteroid missing. And in our best moments, we know it, and that knowledge produces gratitude. In 1998 Gallup reported that 54 percent of Americans express gratitude to God “all the time.”

And when we turn our focus from ourselves to him, paradoxically we are the ones who benefit. “The self,” in the words of Emmons, “is a very poor place to find happiness or meaning in life.” Studies show that gratitude is associated with “pro-social behaviors” and with improved emotional well-being.

Organizational consultant Sean Doyle suggests that “by reframing the events of our lives in positive ways and including a glimmer of gratitude, we . . . increase our sense of coherence with the world.” Such glimmers can lighten our misery and energize us for more effective service—in the workplace and in life.

And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19).

I wonder how the nine felt when the man, rising from his worship, finally caught up with them, telling of his grateful exchange with Jesus. They had missed the opportunity to deepen their elation by giving thanks. Henry says that the grateful man received more than the other nine because “he had his cure confirmed particularly with an encomium: *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. . . Temporal mercies are *then* doubled and sweetened to us when they are *fetched* in by the prayers of faith, and returned by the praises of faith” (emphases in original). The nine had their cure; the one had his cure, *plus* a relationship with Jesus.

As with the ten, just as there are no barriers to experiencing God’s grace, neither

are there excuses. If we want more of his blessings, we must praise him for those we already have. A thankful heart always leads to more blessings, even if, as for many of us in this economy, we seemingly don’t have a lot to be thankful for. The blessings may come quietly, unexpectedly, or in disguise, but come they will. But we must choose gratitude to receive them, for our own good.

“For everyone who has,” Jesus said,

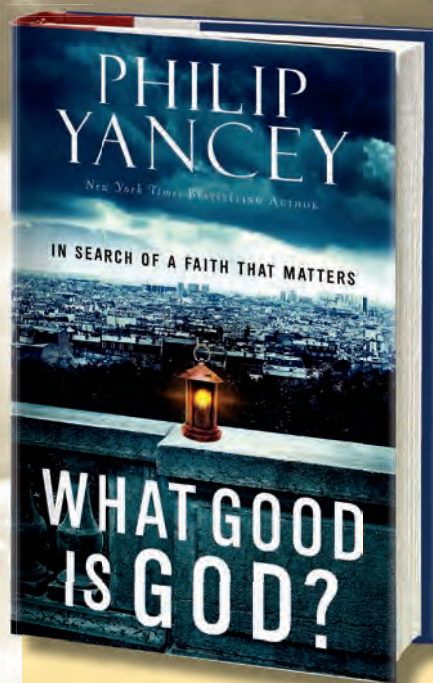
“will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.” God’s blessings are available to us, if we will but take them, with thanksgiving. ⊕

Stan Guthrie is a CT editor at large. This article is adapted from his new book, *All That Jesus Asks: How His Questions Can Teach and Transform Us* (Baker Books, 2010). Used by permission.

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THE LIFE OF Vernon Grounds, who died September 12 at age 96, spanned the birth, growth, and maturation of the evangelical movement in North America. During his seven decades of ministry, he helped shape contemporary evangelicalism in significant ways: by building a key institution, Denver Seminary; by challenging evangelicals to wed social action to evangelism; and by pointing the way to a new and thoroughly Christian approach to

psychology. But before he did those things, Grounds gave himself to preaching a reasoned and reasonable faith.

While a student at the newly formed Faith Theological Seminary in Delaware, Grounds became part of a group that included such later evangelical luminaries as Arthur Glasser, Kenneth Kantzer, Joseph Bayly, and Francis Schaeffer. The Faith Seminary community, like its theological guru Carl McIntire, was committed to defending the intellectual foundations of our supernatural faith.

While a young pastor in Paterson, New Jersey, Grounds produced his first book, *The Reason for Our Hope*, based on a series of radio talks. He ably made the case for faith in the supernatural Christ and the credibility of his Word. With this book, Grounds began his ongoing emphasis on apologetics. Over the next few years, in tandem with Edward John Carnell of the newly formed Fuller Theological Seminary, he was at the forefront of an intellectual renaissance among American evangelicals.

While pastoring in Paterson, Grounds also pursued a Ph.D. in psychology at Drew University. There he began writing a dissertation on “The Concept of Love in the Psychology of Sigmund Freud.” It took him 20 years to complete the dissertation, but his topic presaged his engagement with culture and his break with fundamentalism.

Grounds’s intellectual star power attracted a wider audience, leading him out of the pastorate to the newly formed Baptist Bible Seminary in New York, where, in the fall of 1945, he began as dean and professor of theology and apologetics. In 1951 he accepted a call to serve as dean and then president of Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary (later renamed Denver Seminary). He led that institution over the next 28 years, modeling “servant leadership” years before the phrase became popular. He inspired Denver’s faculty, staff, and constituents and helped the seminary grow from 30 students to over 300. Remarkably, he accomplished this through periods of financial strain and vicious attacks from fundamentalists, while pursuing an itinerant ministry that led evangelical apologist Bernard Ramm to

compare him to the peripatetic John Wesley.

Grounds penned these lines to describe the ethos of Denver Seminary: *Here is no unanchored liberalism—freedom to think without commitment. Here is no encrusted dogmatism—commitment without freedom to think. Here is vibrant evangelicalism—commitment to think within the limits laid down in Scripture.*

He took his own words to heart and went on to write five more books and nearly 200 articles related to the veracity of the Christian faith and its application to the needs and issues of the day—particularly in the widely divergent arenas of social ethics and Christian counseling. Without Grounds’s contributions in these areas, evangelicalism as we know it would not exist.

{ TRIBUTE }

A Man for All Evangelicals

Vernon Grounds shaped the movement with a rare combination of gifts in apologetics, social justice, and pastoral counseling.

By Scott Wenig

REDEMPITIVE RADICALISM

During the 1960s, with its rapidly changing culture that was increasingly hostile to the gospel, Grounds challenged fortress-minded evangelicals to combine social action with personal conversion. In 1969 he published *Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility*, a short landmark work based on a 1967 series of lectures. In this book, which Ron Sider has called “far ahead of its time,” Grounds declared the Savior’s love for humanity as the driving force behind a “social justice” that Christians were to proclaim and practice.

Grounds’s lectures came four years before the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern and the founding of Evangelicals for Social Action, and seven years before the landmark Lausanne Covenant urged evangelical social responsibility. The lectures were a harbinger of the current evangelical consensus that Christian mission

COURTESY OF DENVER SEMINARY

must embrace both evangelism and social action.

During this time of ferment, Grounds told *Christianity Today* magazine readers that while “God has his own program mapped out for changing the world by the personal intervention of Jesus Christ, who will return to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth,” there was “no biblical reason for concluding that enormous evils cannot be significantly changed before our Lord comes back.” We are to be “God’s saboteurs,” he said, as well as “spiritual subversives, duplicating the redemptive radicalism of those first-century Christians who were condemned for turning the world upside-down.”

Through the 1980s and ’90s, Grounds kept his focus on social justice and probed the issues of nuclear proliferation and Christian

‘CARE WAS HIS GREATEST GIFT’

Grounds was also one of the main forces behind the rise of Christian counseling. His study of love in the thought of Freud and Erich Fromm helped him realize the limits of human-centered therapies and to advocate the healing power of God’s unlimited love. “Calvary love,” he called it.

He began an M.A. program in counseling at Denver Seminary that did not follow the clinical pastoral education model used at the mainline seminaries. He built instead on evangelical theological foundations while drawing on the best from secular psychology and psychotherapy. His integration of therapeutic and biblical truth is best seen in the final two chapters of his 1976 book *Emotional Problems and the Gospel*. Over time, Denver’s program attracted admiration and emulation from many in the larger evangelical community.

Denver Seminary’s approach to Christian counseling grew from Grounds’s deep commitment to the care of souls. As his biographer, the late Bruce Shelley, noted, “Care was his greatest gift. He was almost supernaturally adept at it. He preached the gospel. He read and understood psychology. He taught crisis counseling. But he lived pastoral care.” At an individual level, Grounds’s ministry of affectionate mercy was nothing short of God’s grace to thousands of people.

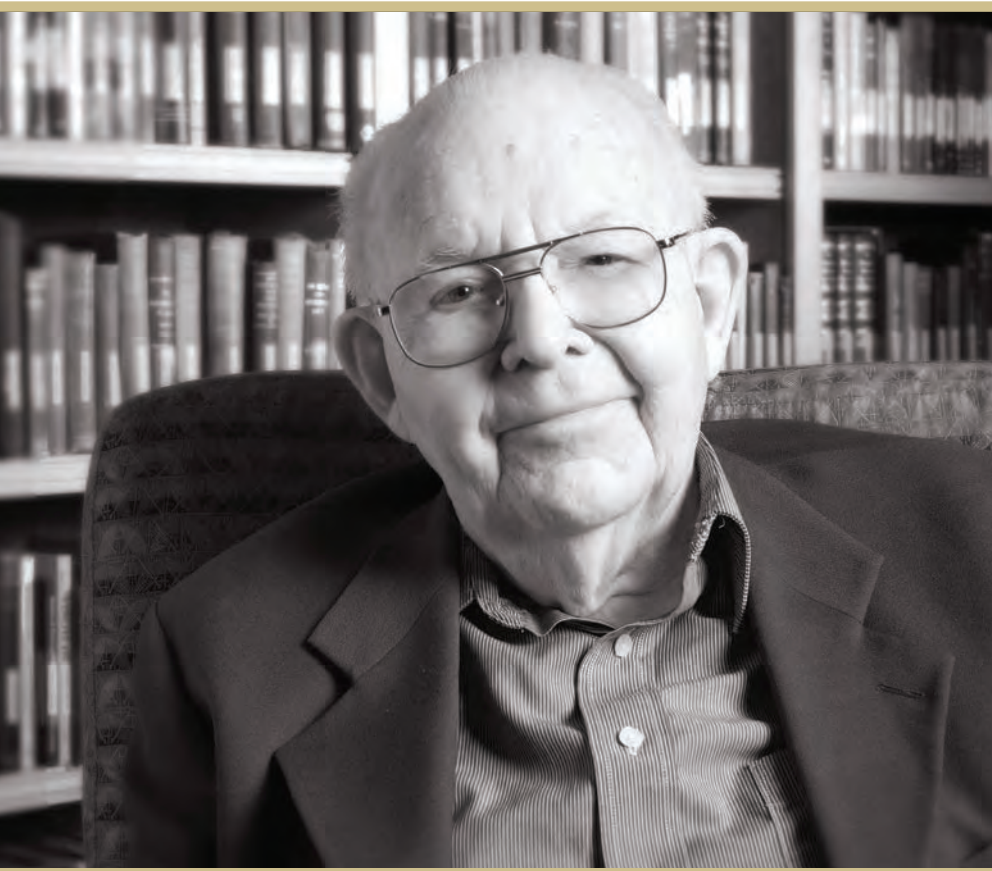
Grounds once described himself as “sanguine, phlegmatic, and hopefully empathic.” Those who had the privilege of enjoying his presence always labeled him as kind, compassionate, wise, and witty.

Grounds retired from the seminary presidency in 1979. He became president emeritus and then chancellor. Functionally, little changed. He spent the 1980s and ’90s doing what he done before: traveling, speaking, teaching, writing, presiding over Evangelicals for Social Action, and, above all else, counseling wounded souls. Rather than retreating to a sunny climate and a gated community, Grounds traveled abroad to see human suffering and injustice up

close. He raised questions about the threat of war in light of Christ’s call to make peace. As always, he called attention to broken people and modeled personal involvement with them.

Never a strong administrator, Grounds was wise enough to admit that his job was “not to ride herd on details or be a fundraiser but to be a catalyst, interpreter, planner, and an agent of reconciliation.” He showed that he was all these things and more by his long, fruitful life of loving service and godly influence in the cause of Christ. ✚

Scott Wenig is associate professor of applied theology at Denver Seminary.



Without the contributions of Vernon Grounds to social justice and Christian counseling, evangelicalism as we know it would not exist.

peacemaking.

At the end of the century, he told the readers of *Prism* that the “gospel brings us under the lordship of the Savior who measurelessly extends neighbor responsibility. Christ makes our in-group not just the church but the whole family of humanity,” Grounds continued, “refusing to let ethnicity, ancestry, geography, ideology, or even theology limit our responsibility to our neighbor.”

Denver Seminary institutionalized Grounds’s social justice commitment in the Vernon Grounds Institute of Public Ethics, which hosts an annual conference on current issues.

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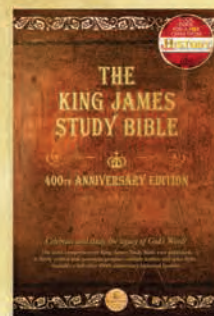
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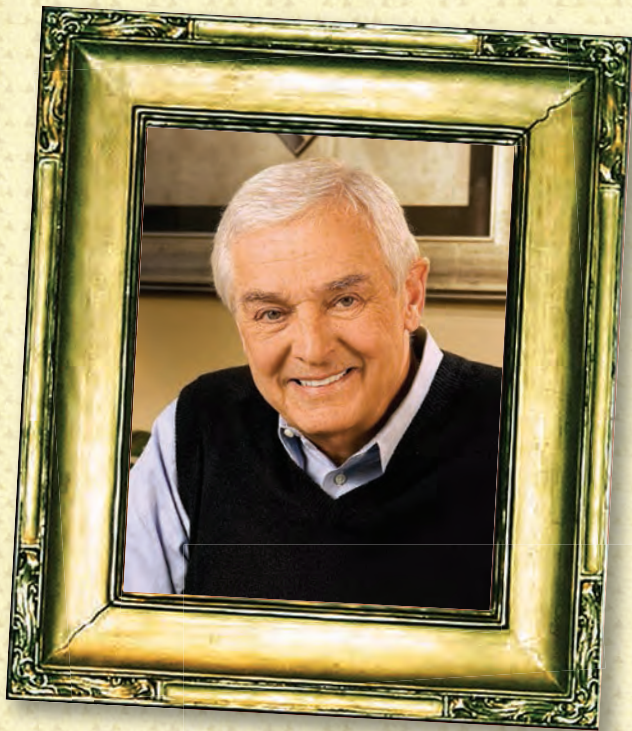


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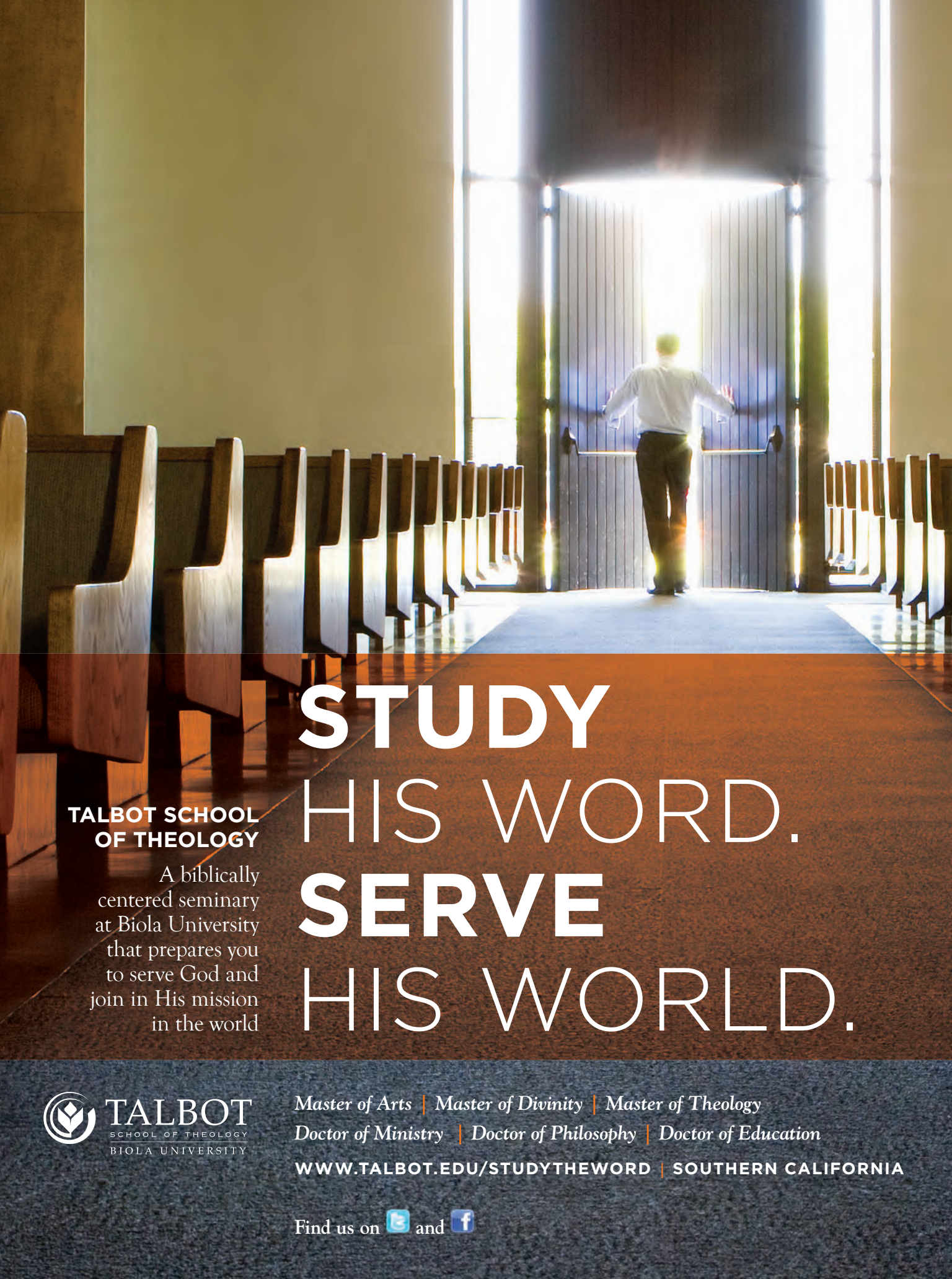
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VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



Hipster churches have their place and were great for us for a time. But eventually the hipster grows up. Then what?

Stephanie Hotine
Hayden, Idaho

Jesus in Skinny Jeans

Thank you for Brett McCracken's article describing "Hipster Faith" [September]. My husband and I are 30-somethings who have attended hipster churches in three states. Now that we have children, we long for the simpler days of *Adventures in Odyssey* and flannel graphs. Instead, we find our children glued to TV screens in their Sunday school classes, with gluten-free snacks but nobody who knows their names. And while the worship music is rocking, the preaching is surface level, primarily aimed at meeting emotional needs.

Hipster churches have their place and were great for us for a time. But eventually the hipster grows up. Then what?

STEPHANIE HOTINE
Hayden, Idaho

McCracken needed to acknowledge the difference between "cool" Christianity and contextualized Christianity. Cool Christianity will sacrifice the gospel in order to gain the world's acceptance. The desire to please man rather than God began long before the 1960s.

In contrast, contextualized Christianity will adopt cultural expressions of its surrounding community. Few critiqued

Hudson Taylor for adopting Chinese customs or Adoniram Judson for assuming Burmese dress. In this sense, some hipster believers are not forsaking the gospel—though they are forsaking a few sacred cows of former generations.

The issue is not beards and beers. Of course the pastor living in a wealthy urban community will not wear camouflage and drive a two-ton flatbed any more than a pastor living in Appalachia will sacrifice these necessities. The issue is whether Christ is preached.

J. RYAN WEST
Louisville, Kentucky

The article on hipster Christians was a wake-up call for people like me. I don't want to make people wonder what I am. Christ wasn't nearly as mysterious as we like to try to be. Confounding, yes, but he said who he was, what he came to do, and what he plans to do.

I will keep singing the old hymns. I'll continue the organic thing. I'll keep my heart open to all who need help. But I will also remember that I am called to be a light: not a dim, vintage lamp or a string of paper lanterns—a *light*.

GILEAH TAYLOR
Destin, Florida

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

36%

Hipster Faith
Brett McCracken

27%

**Ayn Rand:
Goddess of the
Great Recession**
Gary Moore

9%

**Sex Offenders
in the Pew**
Marian V. Liautaud

YAY OR NAY Readers' take on "Hipster Faith"

46%



54%

Regent U.'s Future

We are grateful to have the opportunity to contextualize a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article on Moody's Investors Service credit rating update for Regent University, which *Christianity Today* recently republished [Gleanings, September]. We want to make clear that the article did not fairly represent the university's financial state. Moody's report clearly reflects that the university has taken appropriate, positive steps to create a sustainable budget model for Regent's future, but neither article emphasized that truth.

Moody's Investors Service credit rating was unchanged from its last report; Regent's credit rating was not downgraded in any way. When our report appeared last year, it was not nearly as positive, but no articles were written. From our perspective, this is a non-story. Also, after a comprehensive financial and academic review, Regent was awarded reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 2009.

We would like to affirm that we have not received any kind of recent "bailout" or "gift" from the Christian Broadcasting Network. Like other Christian colleges, Regent believes we are truly partnering with God—and many devoted friends, advocates, alums, donors, and others—to advance his kingdom. We take financial stewardship seriously and assure CT

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

CT'S EDITORS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM.

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readers (some of our dearest friends and supporters) that, with God's grace and favor, we will continue to deliver an outstanding, Christ-centered educational experience for students who are called to excellence and Christian leadership.

CARLOS CAMPO

President, Regent University
Virginia Beach, Virginia

The Gospel of Randism

In "Ayn Rand, Goddess of the Great Recession" [September], Gary Moore rightly rejects Rand's moral teachings as deeply anti-Christian. But he unfairly elides the distinction between economic libertarianism and Randism. Libertarianism is a doctrine about the proper limits of government. It holds that governments should not coercively redistribute wealth. Randism adds to libertarianism a doctrine about personal morality to the effect that there is no obligation to voluntarily share resources with others.

It is Rand's selfish morality, not her economic libertarianism, that should offend Christians.

JASON BALDWIN

Birmingham, Alabama

A Voluntary Sacrifice

Thank you for covering how churches can minister to sex offenders ["Sex Offenders in the Pew," September]. Tim Keller has said that "repentance is a form of voluntary sacrifice." In this way, ministering to

sex offenders may mean helping them see that their voluntary sacrifices—not demanding full access to the church, accepting a small group as their church—are helping themselves and the larger church, including congregants with histories of victimization.

We encourage churches who want to reach sex offenders to first develop ministries to victims. Fairly or not, the church is known more for her cover-up of abuse than for her protection of the vulnerable.

DIANE M. LANGBERG, PHILIP G. MONROE
Jenkintown, Pennsylvania

The Lamb in Wartime

Thank you, Will Willimon, for answering September's Village Green question—"Should the U.S. stay militarily involved in Afghanistan?"—as a *Christian*. The other voices were almost identical to those in mainstream media. One uses a Bible passage in a manner many evangelicals would consider ridiculous if used by a non-Christian. The other repeats the most-used rationale for American military involvement since World War II.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was preceded by years of prayer and candlelit processions. While the lion didn't lie down with the lamb, the Russian bear refrained from killing the sheep. That's close enough for me to believe we should keep trying Jesus' way.

MARK PHILLIPS

Kansas City, Missouri



FLETCHER

compiled by Katelyn Beaty

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at *CT* online.



ONLINE POLL

A MORMON'S ALTAR CALL

Does Glenn Beck's Mormon faith affect your interest in his call to 'turn America back to God'?

33%

Yes, I am aware of his faith, but it doesn't change my interest in his message.

21%

Yes, I generally don't pay attention to him because of his Mormon faith.

11%

No, his Mormon faith has no impact on my interest in his message.

26%

No, I don't like his political views, so it wouldn't matter.

9%

I didn't know Beck was Mormon.

Total votes: 1,486

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

"When Glenn Beck starts preaching Christ crucified, I might start listening. Until then, it's all meaningless."

John L., on the conservative Mormon talk-show host's influence among American evangelicals.

"Beck Wants to Lead, But Will Evangelicals Follow?"

by Adelle M. Banks, RNS

"If Jesus had had eye problems, I bet he would have appreciated sunglasses."

Original Anna, defending *CT*'s September cover image of a hipster Jesus wearing Wayfarers.

SoulWork: "Holy Incarnation!" by Mark Galli

"Three things are impressive in theologians: humility, humility, humility."

Chris Anderson, remembering meeting the late (and humble) evangelical theologian Donald Bloesch at a Karl Barth Society event.

CT Liveblog: "Bloesch Underappreciated in His Lifetime, Colleague Says," by Trevor Persaud

"Darn it, I'm tearing up again! In an industry that comes across as shallow (ccm), Mary Beth and Steve Chapman live out the truth they sing and talk about."

Anne S., on the Chapmans' witness after the death of their daughter, Maria, in 2008.

"Mary Beth Chapman vs. God," interview by Mark Moring

"If Christopher Hitchens and other 'hard cases' wind up in heaven, it will be due to the grace of God, not the good intentions behind an Internet prayer chain."

Vicki, on Christians' response to the New Atheist's recent cancer diagnosis.

CT Women's Blog: "Not Everyone Is Praying for Christopher Hitchens Today," by Karen Spears Zacharias

Burned by the Qur'an Burning

Our media culture values outrage over truth. We can do better.

REMEMBER TERRY JONES? No? Big mustache, tiny congregation? He put up a notice on Facebook that he was going to burn a Qur'an on September 11 and ended

up in every major media outlet in the world? There have been a few media panics since mid-September, so it's okay if you forgot. But it's worth considering how Jones drew attention to the way things work now.

How did the pastor of a church of 30 to 50 congregants, someone who was already known locally as a publicity-hungry crank, become so "relevant" and "culture-shaping" that President Obama, General Petraeus, and nearly every Christian leader imaginable felt the need to weigh in?

Mostly because Jones took advantage of an impoverished media environment that values outrage and eyeballs above all else. Publications that have not been able to convince their online readers to pay for articles must instead find as many people as possible to read them for free. The more eyeballs, the more ad impressions, the more revenue. Pageviews have become the metric most synonymous with success in our media landscape.

Once upon a time, we imagined that readers would go to the website of a publication they liked, look at the headlines, and click on what they wanted to read. In reality, search engines drive at least 40 percent of the traffic to news stories, and readers don't particularly care who is publishing them. As investor and blogger Ben Elowitz noted, summarizing several recent reports: "The average U.S. Internet user tunes in [to] 83 different domains per month and a staggering 2,600 web pages per month, and goes to Google 13 times per day just to decide where to go."

That is why we see so many headlines with Justin Bieber and Lindsay Lohan in them. (For those who found this editorial online by Googling one of those names, welcome!)

News organizations (and their aggregating rivals) are using Google Insights and other analytics resources to find out what people are searching for; then they assign news stories to capture the ready-made audience.

The drive for traffic has turned too many stories into a version of the Balloon Boy hoax (in which a Colorado couple falsely claimed their son had been carried away in a helium balloon, garnering international attention), complained *Washington Post* columnist



Roxanne Roberts in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. Indeed, the Qur'an burning bears similarity to that 2009 hoax: The only thing keeping it in the headlines was outrage.

IT'S AN OUTRAGE

At the recent Religion Newswriters Association meeting, panelists discussed how to capture online audiences. The panelists (from *The Washington Post's* On Faith site, CNN's new Belief blog, and the Huffington Post's religion section) talked about how free opinion pieces had garnered truckloads of pageviews.

The good news: Editors and publishers now know that their readers want to read about religion. The bad news: Editors and publishers now know that those readers are more likely to click on an inflammatory rehashed column on homosexuality, Islam, atheism, or evolution than on a deeply

researched report that illuminates important but less controversial issues.

With fewer professional religion reporters on the beat, mainstream religion coverage is falling back to tropes and shop-worn narratives that we thought were being laid to rest, especially, "Religious people sure are crazy," and, "Religious leaders condemn [insert current outrage here]." It's not surprising that Jones's name first spread through a wire service story prompted by a press release from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a group known for perpetual outrage.

Eventually the news world was overtaken by headlines about the latest person outraged by Jones's proposal. As September 11 drew closer, Fox News and the Associated Press promised to downplay the event. "AP policy is not to provide coverage of events that are gratuitously manufactured to provoke and offend," the news service said—the day after it ran the headline, "Angelina Jolie Condemns Planned Qur'an Burning."

By September 11, the news trucks had left Gainesville, and pundits were back to debating Sarah Palin and Lady Gaga.

This is the strange media world we all—both journalists and readers—now live in. It calls for more discernment than ever, because the next Gainesville frenzy will come upon us before we know it.

The questions are: Will you reflexively click on that headline to satiate some trivial curiosity? Will leaders again announce their outrage over a non-event? Will bloggers pour fuel on the fire? Will we report on it just to increase pageviews?

We can all do better. To paraphrase Paul, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just—read about and report on these things." ✦

This is the strange media world we all—both journalists and readers—now live in. It calls for more discernment than ever.

*New Limits
on Religious
Freedom*

Should Christians support laws that ban Muslim women from wearing the face veil in public?

OPPOSE THE BAN

David Johnson, author of *Earth, Empire and Sacred Text: Muslims and Christians as Trustees of Creation*, is a University of Pennsylvania visiting scholar.

Recent efforts in Europe to ban the face veil (the niqab or burqa) are not so much concerned with women's rights and security as they are with obtaining votes from an electorate that is increasingly xenophobic and anxious about national identity.

Indeed, it's a convenient tactic for politicians to unite people from the Right (concerned with the "threat of Islam") and the Left (moved by issues of gender equality and secularism) in order to draw attention away from pressing social and economic issues.

First, let's clear away some false problems. The specter of "Eurabia" is a no-show. Studies point to the decline of Muslim birthrates in ways that parallel other populations worldwide. Also, over the centuries Islamic jurists never agreed on the specifics of modest dress for women. Local cultures determined what women wore. The face covering is mostly a recent invention, and, in fact, a rarity, even if numbers seem to be growing. Some sources put the number of women wearing it in all of Europe at 2,000.

The wider issue is that worries over identity have been exacerbated by globalization and a wave of religious revivalism across the board. France has by far the highest percentage of Muslims in Europe (8.3 percent, more than double the UK's figure), and its brand of extreme secularism (*laïcité*) requires minorities to shed their cultural distinctives to conform to the majority. Perhaps it's no coincidence that in France the burqa ban, passed by Parliament on the eve of Bastille Day, was followed by threats to strip people of their citizenship for crimes like polygamy, female circumcision, and threatening a policeman, and the deportation of hundreds of *Roma*, or Gypsies. Issues of cultural and national identity are rolled up under the burqa heading.

The proposed law would fine burqa-clad women \$190 and men who are convicted of forcing women to wear it \$20,000. Muslim organizations are divided on the issue. Some see it as a problem of extreme coreligionists and prefer to back the secular state. But most also point to its discriminatory nature: only Muslims are singled out. If security is the issue, then why does the law explicitly exempt motorcycle helmets, carnival costumes, fencing gear, and the like? Furthermore, should a state whose motto includes the word *liberty* presume to tell people what to wear?

Why, then, should Christians support a law that reinforces discrimination against a particular group (Muslims) and appears to exploit feelings of vulnerability for political gain? Jesus showcased love—even love of enemy—as the central virtue of his kingdom, and therefore consistently defended society's most despised: women, lepers, Samaritans, tax collectors, and prostitutes. Shouldn't we who claim to follow him do our utmost to build bridges of love and trust with fellow citizens who feel beleaguered today? It seems to me that this call would mean opposing the burqa-ban law. Other solutions may be found to resolve legitimate security issues.

SUPPORT WOMEN FIRST

Christine Schirmacher is a scholar with the Institute of Islamic Studies of the Evangelical Alliance in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Islam has arrived in the West. It has become more and more visible through large mosques and minarets, militant jihadists, and a visible dress code, particularly the face veil for Muslim women. Increasingly seen in Europe, the face veil may soon appear on Main Street USA.

In Europe's major cities, a fraction of Muslim women wear the face veil. But this minority is growing, just as it is in large cities in Islamic-majority countries. The laws passed across Europe that forbid women from covering their faces in public are said to be based on security concerns. Many Westerners' reactions to Muslims are heavily influenced by the September 11 attacks and other horrific acts of terrorism. Thus, any symbols relating to Islam arouse our deep fears.

But the face veil is neither a symbol of violence nor of terror. What should the Christian attitude be toward the face veil? Does it belong to the realm of religious freedom and for that reason deserve legal protection?

It is not that simple. Islamic theologians sharply debate whether women should wear a veil at all. In the Qur'an, neither the face veil nor the headscarf is mentioned in clear terms. The Qur'an only mentions "garments which women [should] cast over" (Sura 33:59). What that means is subject to interpretation. For that reason, there are many forms of the headscarf, and some Muslims do not wear one at all.

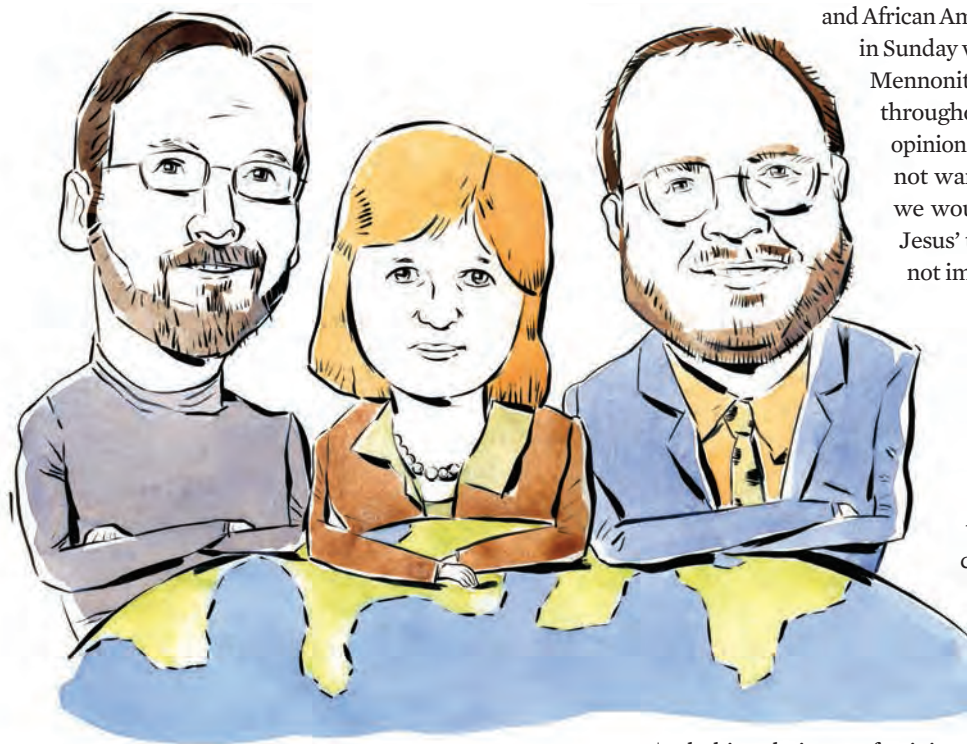
Many individual Muslims reject the view that wearing a face veil is a duty. But those who see Islam as a political system declare it to be obligatory. They preach that the entire world should return to Islam as it was practiced in the time of Muhammad. They preach that Shari'ah law has to be imposed in the West, that a woman has

fewer rights than a man, that polygamy is good, and that a man has the right to cast out a wife or to force her to obey.

It is these individuals who use the pulpits of mosques to refer to those who do not follow extreme interpretations of the Qur'an as "nonbelievers." They warn against too much integration into Western societies. They take away the freedom of Muslim women. When they make the face veil obligatory, they isolate women by making them invisible.

But a ban on face veils in Western countries would still not achieve freedom for women. A ban would not reform Shari'ah, or indicate equality for women, or indicate an enlightenment or liberalization of Islam. For that reason, we should not oppose the women who wear veils, but rather politicized Islam, which aims to implement Shari'ah law.

First and foremost, church leaders are called to get to know Muslims as their neighbors and exchange prejudice for Christian love.



DEFEND MUSLIM LIBERTY

Joseph Cumming is director of the Reconciliation Program at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture at Yale Divinity School.

Christian commitment to religious liberty is rooted in Jesus' teaching, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Luke 6:31). When Christians dialogue with Muslims, a vital concern we rightly address is restrictions placed on Christians in Muslim-majority countries. If we want Muslims to uphold religious liberty for Christian minorities, we must defend religious liberty for Muslims when they are the minority.

Some respond, "We will defend Muslims' freedom when Muslims begin respecting freedom for persecuted Christians in

Muslim-majority countries." Concern for the suffering church is right (Heb. 13:3), but immediately after the Golden Rule, Jesus adds in the Luke passage, "Do good . . . expecting nothing in return" (6:35). We must defend liberty for others whether or not they reciprocate. Christians should set a moral example for the world, not wait for others to lead.

But does Islam really require a face veil? This is vigorously debated within the Muslim community. Most Muslims worldwide interpret Islam as requiring a headscarf but not a face veil for women. A minority of Muslims sees the face veil as mandatory or recommended, while an opposing minority sees even headscarves as unnecessary. Should the state adjudicate this debate?

To answer this following Jesus' do-unto-others principle, consider the parallel issue among Christians. Most Christians interpret 1 Corinthians 11:1–16 as not requiring women to cover their heads. But a significant number of Christian women (notably in non-Western

and African American churches) do cover their heads in Sunday worship. And some (e.g., traditionalist Mennonites) conscientiously cover their heads throughout the week. Though we each have opinions on this exegetical question, we would not want the state to adjudicate it for us. If we would not want this for ourselves, then Jesus' teaching strongly suggests we should not impose it on Muslims.

But is the veil inherently oppressive to women? In some contexts (for example, Afghanistan under Taliban rule), women have been forced to wear face coverings against their will. In such circumstances, defending women's human rights as equal before the law is a legitimate Christian concern (Gal. 3:28).

Nevertheless, many self-respecting, articulate Muslim women make a conscious choice to veil, or they advocate their sisters' right to do so. Some even see their modest

clothing choice as a feminist statement.

When the state compels them to uncover themselves in public, they feel violated. Jesus' do-unto-others principle suggests we let Muslim women speak for themselves about what their clothing choices mean to them.

But what about security when we cannot see people's faces? The state has a legitimate concern to ascertain the identity of people entering sensitive locations like airports. In such venues, however, we already offer women the option of being checked in private by female security personnel.

Jesus' words about logs and specks (Luke 6:41–42) suggest we first must defend Muslim fellow-citizens' liberty in our country, and only then will we "see clearly" enough to ask Muslims about treatment of Christians in Muslim-majority countries. This may make us uncomfortable, but Jesus never said discipleship was anything but costly.





The Parent of All Virtues

Gratitude is also the one we are most likely to sabotage.

A

PEARING ON Conan O'Brien's show last year, comedian Louis C. K. lamented how frustrated people get when cell phones and cross-country flights are slow or faulty. "Everything is amazing right now and nobody's happy," he said. When people complain that their flight boarded 20 minutes late or that they had to sit on the runway for 40 minutes before takeoff, he asks a few additional questions.

"Oh really, what happened next? Did you fly through the air, incredibly, like a bird? Did you partake in the miracle of human flight?"

The appearance hit a nerve—with over a million YouTube views and counting—because it's true: Whether it's our impatience with technology or, more likely, with family members and friends, our complaints reflect how much we take for granted.

We know that God has given us our bodies and souls, reason and senses, material possessions, and relationships. Yet with all that God richly provides us daily, many of us struggle to be grateful.

This isn't just impious, it is also unhealthy. Studies show that grateful people are happier and more satisfied with their lives and social relationships. They are more forgiving and supportive than those who are ungrateful. They are less depressed, stressed, envious, and anxious. In fact, high levels of gratitude explain more about psychological well-being than 30 of the most commonly studied personality traits, according to two recent studies published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

The Roman philosopher Cicero was on to something when he said, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others." It's also the basic Christian attitude. Paul tells the Thessalonians to "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18).

That might seem a challenge during a season of economic trouble and political unrest. But consider German pastor Martin Rinckart, who served a town that became a refuge for political and military fugitives during the Thirty Years War. The situation in Eilenburg was bad even before the Black Plague arrived in 1637. One pastor fled. Rinckart buried another two on the same day. The only pastor remaining, he conducted



funeral services for as many as 50 people a day and 4,480 within one year.

Yet Rinckart is best known for writing, in the midst of the war, the great hymn that triumphantly proclaims this:

Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

How many of us could focus on God's blessings with death and hardship all around us? Perhaps the problem is that we think too highly of ourselves. Margaret Visser studied cultural differences in showing thanks as she prepared her 2009 book *The Gift of Thanks: The Roots and Rituals of Gratitude*. The Japanese sometimes accept gifts by saying, "I'm sorry." The subtext, Visser explains, is, "I am fully aware of my debt to you. I can never repay it."

There's a lesson in that expression. In the Gospel of Luke, Simon the Pharisee hosts a dinner party for Jesus. A sinful woman with a bad reputation shows up, gets near Jesus, and washes his feet with her tears and anoints him with perfume. When Simon grumbles, Jesus tells a story about two debtors. One has a small debt, the other a large debt. Neither is able to repay, and the lender forgives both debts. The lesson: the greater the forgiveness, the greater the thankfulness.

We have trouble being grateful because we fail to acknowledge our sinfulness and debt. Isn't that why we complain about every slight from family or friends?

The truth is that we have so many things to be thankful for, including family, home, work, play, food, drink, and everything else that goes into daily life. But the God who provides these things has given us an even better gift: himself.

God has revealed himself to us, giving us his Word, granting us faith and the Holy Spirit, hearing our prayers, and forgiving our sins. So, rejoice and receive the gifts of God, confessing him and his goodness. Or, as the psalmist says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." ✚

The Japanese sometimes accept gifts by saying, 'I'm sorry.' The subtext is, 'I am fully aware of my debt to you. I can never repay it.'

Q.

Who are winning souls and planting churches among unreached peoples of Southeast Asia?

A.

Though hindered by poverty and persecution, native missionaries trained and sent out by indigenous missions are advancing the gospel of Christ in every country of S.E. Asia.

**Q.**

Who provides financial support for indigenous missions in Southeast Asia?

A.

Christian Aid Mission helps over 100 ministries to send out thousands of native missionaries throughout all of Southeast Asia.

Q. How is Christian Aid financed?

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

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

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

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

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Singing for Jesus

One reason white America sings spirituals today.

H

OW DID white Americans come to adopt slave songs like “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”?

Personally, I learned my spirituals from country singer Tennessee Ernie Ford, bless his little pea-pickin’ heart. But historically, white America learned its spirituals from the Fisk Jubilee Singers, an African American group that toured America and Europe from 1871 to 1878, raising funds for Nashville’s newly birthed Fisk University.

The Jubilee Singers’ story begins with evangelical abolitionists who believed in the power of education to elevate former slaves and equip them for full participation in American society.

Arthur and Lewis Tappan founded the American Missionary Association (AMA) because they believed existing mission societies were complicit with slavery. AMA agents followed the Union armies’ advance through Confederate territory, setting up schools to bring Christianity and literacy to freed slaves. By 1867, over 38,000 students were enrolled in the AMA’s day or night schools. And by 1869, it had founded eleven colleges for former slaves, including Fisk.

As the AMA spread its resources thinly, Fisk teetered financially. Its treasurer, George Leonard White, had been in the Ohio Infantry, whose battles had taken him to Tennessee. There he began teaching music and penmanship at Fisk and then took on the management of the school’s finances.

Tell Them We Are Singing for Jesus, Toni P. Anderson’s new history of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, calls White ambitious, headstrong, and obstinate—qualities that fitted him to pursue his daunting vision of fielding a singing group to raise funds for fragile Fisk. The singers braved bad weather and racial bias and found little success until famous Brooklyn preacher Henry Ward Beecher lent the Jubilee Singers his support.

After Beecher’s endorsement, Christian audiences shed their suspicions of the Jubilee Singers (shunned because minstrel shows had created an unsavory reputation for black music). The crowds swelled, and so did Fisk’s coffers. The singers’ hardships shifted from dealing with cold, hunger, and racism to coping with their fellow singers’ vanities and White’s punishing performance schedules.

The AMA set out to help freed slaves by means of education—not just literacy, but also proper decorum and Christian values.



“Elevate, educate, and evangelize were inseparable goals to the AMA,” writes Anderson. This educational uplift was part of a broader Anglo-American effort to foster the cultural development of disadvantaged peoples with a view to eventually Christianizing the globe.

The 19th-century missionary zeal that spread Christian civilization feels mildly embarrassing today. Much that passed under the banner of the White Man’s Burden was condescending and even racist. But don’t dismiss the AMA’s education initiatives. Booker T. Washington described “the intense desire which the people of [his] race showed for education. It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn.” For former slaves, whose social development had been

stymied by law and brutal force, literacy, Victorian manners, and Christian virtues were lifesavers in a chaotic ocean of freedom.

The story of the Fisk Jubilee Singers is ironic. White Christians aimed to give black Americans Christian civilization, but they received a dose of slave spirituality that shaped Anglo-American Christianity for the better.

The Jubilee Singers embarked on their tours to demonstrate that former slaves could perform the best of the Western musical canon. They soon discovered, however, that the spirituals in their concerts moved their audiences deeply, and they devoted their revised repertoire to slave songs of faith. Their arrangement of “Steal Away,” with its dramatic dynamic contrasts, left American and British audiences weeping.

The Jubilee Singers did more than create awareness of an important American folk art. They gave white audiences a striking vision of Christ’s liberating power. That vision gave hope that those with other bondages might experience their own exodus. Every Jubilee Singers concert was evangelistic.

They also sang for churches in England and Scotland where music had been strictly limited to Psalm-singing. In some areas, they preceded evangelists Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey, opening the door to gospel music as a vehicle for the religious affections.

It’s not that we all would still be singing Genevan Psalms in church if it hadn’t been for the Jubilee Singers. Charles Wesley, John Newton, and William Cowper chipped away at that granite long before. But these songs spoke with a simplicity and immediacy that the more poetic hymns of Wesley and Cowper lacked. For many of us, they still do. And for that we owe a debt of gratitude. ✚

The Fisk Jubilee Singers gave audiences a striking vision of Christ’s liberating power.



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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
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The Divine Divide

The gods of America, and the difference they make.

By Matthew Lee Anderson

M

ore than a century ago, Friedrich Nietzsche, the depressive and depressing German philosopher, pronounced the death of God, but most Americans have yet to hear the message. The four horsemen of the New Atheist apocalypse—Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel C. Dennett—have done their best to carry on the movement that Nietzsche heralded, but their achievement has been largely monetary. Some 90 percent of Americans are still content to believe in God.

Or *gods*, rather. According to Baylor University professors Paul Froese and Christopher Bader, the real war in American

society is not between atheists and theists, but between people who have differing conceptions of the divine. In 1991, James Davison Hunter introduced the concept of the culture wars, which he said were grounded in different conceptions of moral authority.

In *America's Four Gods: What We Say about God—and What That Says about Us* (Oxford University Press) ★★★★★, Froese and Bader take the sociological examination one step further. Views of “moral authority” are notoriously difficult to study empirically. Few people, after all, are equipped to explain the differences between moral relativism and moral

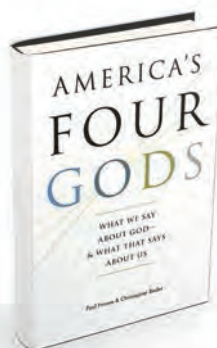
absolutism. So Froese and Bader examine our conception of God to determine whether and how our theological ideas matter for politics and culture.

The American religious landscape is admittedly as varied and complex as the geographical landscape. This makes any taxonomy of religious beliefs necessarily artificial, as the authors note. So they start with what American religious believers have in common: namely, the notion that God is loving. This is something some 85 percent of Americans affirm.

Beneath that superficial similarity, though, is a range of conceptions about God's character. Those conceptions dramatically alter our understanding of the shape his love takes in our world. Froese and Bader examine two questions whose answers, they contend, determine more about a person's cultural and political worldview than any other sociological factor. First, to what extent does God interact with the world? Second, to what extent does God judge the world? As the authors put it, “The answers to these questions predict the substance of our worldviews much better than the color of our skin, the size of our bank account, the political party we belong to, or whether we wear a white Stetson or faded Birkenstocks.”

Respondents' answers lead the authors to identify four conceptions of God among the American religious public: (1) the authoritative God, who both judges and is closely engaged in the world; (2) the benevolent God, who is “engaged but nonjudgmental”; (3) the critical God, who happens to be judgmental but disengaged; and (4) the distant God, who is neither engaged nor judgmental, and could care less about how humans muck about.

The rubric is helpful. It moves beyond the binary culture-war characterizations of “Left and Right,” “progressive



and conservative,” and so on. Our overdependence on such characterizations became clear when black evangelicals in California voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama, as expected, but also voted to ban homosexual marriages. The outcome reminded everyone that the culture wars aren’t always fought along partisan lines.

Consider evangelicals’ views on science and its relationship to the Bible. In what is probably the strongest section of the book, Froese and Bader point out that the basic question for Christians is not *whether* the Bible and science are ultimately reconciled, but *how*. For the most part, only atheists think an intrinsic conflict exists between science and religion. Everyone else is working to make sure their worldview fits with science. This includes the dissenters from Darwinian orthodoxy. They want to teach competing accounts of human origins in science classes, the authors claim, to show a firm commitment to remaining properly scientific.

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

Despite Christians’ nearly unanimous endorsement of the scientific enterprise, significant differences remain. Some argue about whose research should be trusted,

The authors conclude that ‘the evolutionism-creationism debate is premised not on religious faith but on differences of opinion about the role of God in the world.’

others over what role science should play in society. Not surprisingly, those who believe God is highly engaged in the world—an authoritarian or benevolent God—often think he manipulates circumstances and the physical order in small and big ways. As we might expect, they registered significantly more skepticism about whether humans evolved from primates than those who believe God is critical or distant—that is, disengaged from the world.

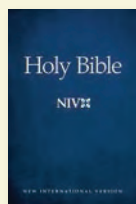
The skepticism doesn’t stop at specific claims. Believers in a benevolent or authoritarian God were far more likely to think that we rely far too much on science and not enough on faith. Additionally, twice as many believers in a distant or critical God were willing to affirm that science would eventually provide solutions to most of society’s problems. The evidence, the authors conclude, suggests that “the

evolutionism-creationism debate is premised not on religious faith but on differences of opinion about the role of God in the world.”

The distinctions between how our competing views of God matter are less clear elsewhere. Still, interesting gems emerge. For instance, Americans in lower economic classes tend to view God as judgmental and angry. At the same time, believers in such a God tend to favor religious solutions to economic problems. For example, black communities like Greater Exodus Baptist Church in Philadelphia—where an authoritarian conception of God seems to dominate—want to use grants from the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships for the church’s social work. Those with less judgmental views of God favor more strictly secular solutions to economic problems.

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON THE HISTORICAL JESUS

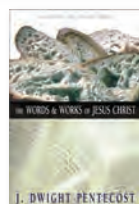
By Darrell Bock, editor of *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (Eerdmans)



THE GOSPELS

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

I am serious about this—nothing has helped shape my view of Jesus more than the Gospels, read repeatedly as narrative, ethic, and theology—especially looking to see where they challenge my perspectives.

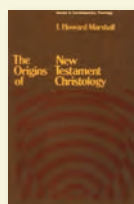


THE WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS CHRIST

A Study in the Life of Christ

J. DWIGHT PENTECOST
(ZONDERVAN)

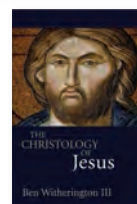
Pentecost looks at the life of Jesus through the lens of all the Gospels. This oriented me in the subject, giving me an appreciation for each Gospel.



THE ORIGINS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTOLOGY

I. HOWARD MARSHALL
(INTERVARSITY)

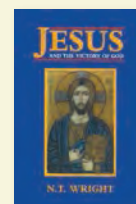
Marshall explains the meaning and background of the key titles applied to Jesus (Lord, Savior, Son of Man), as well as the scholarly debate surrounding them.



THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JESUS

BEN WITHERINGTON III
(AUGSBURG FORTRESS)

Witherington takes the titles of Christ in conjunction with Jesus’ actions and mission.



JESUS AND THE VICTORY OF GOD

N. T. WRIGHT
(AUGSBURG FORTRESS)

Wright places Jesus in his Jewish context, showing how the key themes in his life worked together.

Bader and Froese suggest that the number of Americans who believe in a distant God will grow. This corresponds with an overall decrease in religious affiliation in America. At the same time, they see evangelicalism—with its emphasis on God's close, personal engagement with individuals—as the central bulwark against this trend.

In one chapter, Froese and Bader describe a conservative Protestant evangelical church where the pastor was surprised to discover that his congregants were happy to describe God as a “cosmic force,” and yet had vastly different perspectives on whether God has a gender. The story highlights the merits of their taxonomy. On one hand, people might subscribe to similar doctrinal claims yet hold starkly different views of God. Or people might disagree about a particular doctrine, like election, yet conceive of God as intimately involved in their decisions and as one who judges them closely for their sin. Some beliefs might give them a common ethos, even where their doctrinal beliefs diverge.

The authors' work demonstrates the limitations of their taxonomy. It reminds us that the full counsel of Scripture needs to shape our conceptions. The God who is merciful is also just, and the Spirit who dwells in our hearts sometimes remains silent. Most of all, *America's Four Gods* is a stark reminder to Christians of the ongoing need for clear and persuasive teaching on the meaning and limitations of divine action, and the nature of God's judgment on sin. In that sense, the authors' focus on the two most important questions provides a helpful map for pastors who want to see significant life and worldview change in their congregations.

Froese and Bader have given both sociologists and the church empirical proof not only that God matters for public life, but *how* God matters. Their account sometimes raises more questions than it answers. And occasionally it seems to depend on particular cultural readings rather than statistical analysis. Still, it is an intricate and precise portrait of the rich texture of our American religious life. ➤

Matthew Lee Anderson blogs at Mere Orthodoxy and is writing a book on Pope John Paul II's theology of the body.

Local Is Beautiful

Bill McKibben believes we can thrive on a planet that will never be the same. By LaVonne Neff

Reduce fossil fuel consumption now, or our grandchildren will suffer.” That’s the old wisdom, and it has its critics. Some think environmentalists exaggerate; Bill McKibben believes they don’t go nearly far enough. Global catastrophe, he says, is already here. The earth has changed so radically that it needs a new name: he suggests *Eaarth*.

McKibben has been dubbed “probably the nation’s leading environmentalist” (*The Boston Globe*) and “the world’s best green journalist” (*Time*). He is also a churchgoing, Sunday-school-teaching Methodist who has written that church people should be at the fore of the environmental movement, because Christianity teaches social justice, creation care, and selfless concern for others (*The Christian Century*).

In his newest book, ***Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*** (Times Books) ★★★★★, McKibben argues that “the earth has changed in profound ways, ways that have already taken us out of the sweet spot where humans so long thrived.” For 10,000 years we bumped along quite nicely with 275 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Then we started burning fossil fuels, and the CO₂ level began to rise. Respected scientists now estimate that the maximum safe level is 350 parts per million. According to McKibben’s website, 350.org, we are currently at 387.

The results are already devastating. If we were able to turn back the clock and reduce CO₂ levels to 350ppm or lower, we would still have a thawed Arctic, acidified oceans, changed rainfall patterns, and higher temperatures. “We’re not . . . going to get back the planet we used to have, the one on which our civilization developed,” McKibben writes. “We’re like the guy who ate steak for dinner every night and let his cholesterol top 300 and had the heart attack. Now he dines on Lipitor and

walks on the treadmill, but half his heart is dead tissue.”

Despite his somber warnings, McKibben is no doomsday prophet. Unlike Frank Fenner, an Australian scientist who recently prophesied the extinction of mankind within 100 years, McKibben believes we can thrive on *Eaarth*, though not if we continue to make a god of economic growth. We can and should develop alternative energy sources, but there’s no way we can afford the number of projects we would need in order to pursue our relentless rush to Bigger and Better.

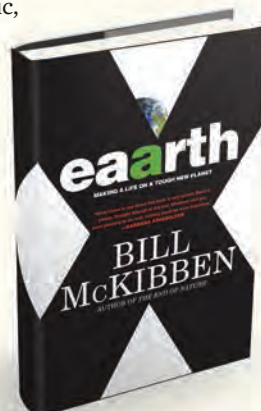
McKibben’s solution, by contrast, is Small and Local. Instead of hauling food around the world, we should foster family farms. Instead of constant flying and driving, we should keep in touch through the Internet. Instead of building giant centralized power plants, we should develop many local power sources. Instead of relying on the government for everything, we should strengthen our communities.

In this book, McKibben does not relate environmental concerns to biblical teachings, as he has done in articles online and in *Harper's* magazine. His recommendations, however, fit well with Scripture’s respect for creation and concern for the poor, its scorn for riches and praise for contentment, and—underlying everything else—its requirement to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The biblical lifestyle sharply contrasts with the Western pursuit of money, possessions, and personal fulfillment. The American gross

domestic income is over \$46,000 per capita (the world average is about \$10,000), and most of us want more. What would happen if millions of prosperous Christians chose instead to live more biblically, looking for ways to share *Eaarth's* dwindling resources with all? ➤

LaVonne Neff blogs at Lively Dust and The Neff Review.



SPIRITUAL WRITINGS

A New Translation and Selection by George Pattison

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

(HARPER PERENNIAL MODERN CLASSICS, 336 PAGES)

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.”

But what does this mean? What am I to do? What kind of striving is it of which it can be said that it seeks or desires the kingdom of God? Ought I to get a position corresponding to my abilities and powers in order to bring this about? No, you are first to seek the kingdom of God. Ought I, then, to give all my fortune to the poor? No, you are first to seek the kingdom of God. But does this, then, mean that, in a sense, there is nothing for me to do? Quite right—there is, in a sense, nothing. In the very deepest sense, you are to make yourself nothing, to become nothing before God, and learn to keep silent—and it is in this silence that you begin to seek what must come first: the kingdom of God.

Thus, in a godly way, one goes in a certain sense backward, toward the beginning. . . . The beginning is this art of becoming silent, for there is no art in being silent in the way that nature is silent. And to be thus, in the deepest sense, silent, silent before God, is how one begins to learn the fear of God. For just as the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, silence is the beginning of the fear of God. And just as the fear of God is more than the beginning of wisdom, since it is “wisdom” itself, so, too, is silence more than the beginning of the fear of God—it is “the fear of God.” In this silence, in the fear of God, wishing, desire, and their many thoughts fall silent. In this silence, in the fear of God, the verbosity of thanksgiving falls silent.

Human beings’ superiority over animals consists in being able to talk, but in relation to God this can bring about their ruin if, being able to talk, they want to talk. God is in heaven, and we are on earth, and therefore we cannot easily talk together. God is love, and human beings—as one says to a child and maybe even for its benefit—are little rascals, and therefore they cannot easily talk together. It is only with much fear and trembling that human beings can talk with God, in much fear and trembling. But to talk in much fear and trembling is also difficult for other reasons, for just as anxiety causes

one to be physically unable to speak, so, too, does much fear and trembling make speech become dumb and fall silent.

The person who knows how to pray knows this, and those who don’t know how to pray might perhaps learn this by praying. . . . Praying is not listening to oneself speak but is about becoming silent and, in becoming silent, waiting, until the one who prays hears God.

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DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

BORIS PASTERNAK (PANTHEON)



If you are under forty, the odds are pretty good that you have not read Pasternak’s great novel, a cause célèbre in its own day, at the height of the cold war. This new translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky

provides an occasion to discover (or rediscover) one of the indispensable books of the 20th century. It is a poet’s novel—that shapes every aspect of the book—and at its heart is a vision of life that draws deeply on Christianity and yet is clearly distinct from the orthodox (and Orthodox) faith. For dessert, watch the 1965 movie version.

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO SCIENCE AND RELIGION

EDITED BY PETER HARRISON (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)



Both the strengths and weaknesses of the science-and-religion conversation are reflected in this volume. Peter Harrison is himself a superb scholar, and he provides a fine introductory essay after

having assembled a lineup of distinguished contributors. While they represent a variety of perspectives, they generally reject the notion that science and religion are implacable foes. So far, so good. Nevertheless, there are recurring irritations—most notably, an anxiety on the part of Christian scholars to tidy God up and make him presentable. Under the guise of a more expansive conception, we are given a God who—wonder of wonders!—neatly fits the prescriptions of early 21st-century academics.

THE MAN WITH THE BALTIC STARE

JAMES CHURCH (MINOTAUR/ST. MARTIN'S)



North Korea is in the news—again. For an unfamiliar angle on that vexed subject, try the fourth novel about Inspector O (yes, O). “James Church, a pseudonym,” the back flap tells us, “is a former Western intel-

ligence officer with decades of experience in Asia.” The accompanying photo, taken at night, shows a bearded man, much of his face concealed by the brim of his hat, lighting a pipe. Whoever he is, James Church has a sense of humor—and a take on life in North Korea that’s different from anything else I’ve seen though his cynicism about Christians is all too familiar.

Spirituality for the Long Haul

What the Amish can, and cannot, teach evangelicals.

Interview by Randall L. Frame

Four years ago this October, gunman Charles Carl Roberts IV entered the West Nickel Mines School, a one-room Amish schoolhouse near Lancaster, Penn., took hostages, and eventually shot ten girls ages 6 to 13, killing five of them before committing suicide in the schoolhouse. The forgiveness offered by the community was widely admired, and curiosity about the Amish way of life skyrocketed. Evangelical Christians have a heightened interest in Amish spirituality, hoping its insights can deepen their own faith.

The Amish Way: Patient Faith in a Perilous World (Jossey-Bass) is the second collaborative effort from Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and David L. Weaver-Zercher, authors of the 2007 book *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*. Their follow-up provides a detailed exploration of Amish spirituality, which places a high premium on discipline, patience, and simplicity. Randall L. Frame, director of marketing and communications at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern University, spoke with Weaver-Zercher, professor of American religious history at Messiah College, about the strengths and weaknesses of the Amish way of life.

What is your own history and relationship with the Amish?

Like my coauthors, I was raised in an Anabaptist-related church in a region with a large Amish population. The Amish were different from us, obviously, but because they were so much a part of my cultural landscape, I didn't find them particularly strange or exotic. It was only after I moved to areas of the country where there were no Amish people that I came to appreciate both the uniqueness of the Amish way and the hold that Amish people have on outsiders'

imaginations. This fascination remains at the heart of my interest in studying Amish life: the way in which outsiders are drawn to the Amish, talk about them, and seek to appropriate them.

Do the Amish consider themselves evangelicals?

The Amish hold some things in common with American evangelicals: the authority of the Bible, the importance of living lives transformed by Jesus Christ, and belief in the eternal consequences of one's decisions on earth.

But the Amish do not talk about themselves as evangelicals, nor do they share certain evangelical convictions. For example, they are not interested in doing verbal evangelism; rather, they see their community life as their witness. The Amish are uncomfortable with revivalism and other fast-paced approaches to conversion. And they do not seek to bend the larger society to their wishes.

Also, submitting themselves in numerous ways to their community of faith, they are less individualistic in their approach to faith than are American evangelicals.

Your book points out that an Amish education is limited to eighth grade, so there are no Amish Bible scholars, at least none with degrees from theological schools. Is it a fair criticism to suggest that Amish interpretations of certain Bible principles and passages are simplistic?

I would not call Amish approaches to the Bible simplistic. Rather, they are both *traditional* and *pre-modern*. That is, their biblical

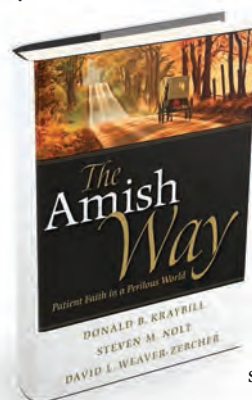
interpretations are firmly rooted in their community's history of interpretation, and their conclusions have not been affected by modern and postmodern interpretive methods. My colleague Steve Nolt says that the Amish sometimes take a "wisdom" approach to reading the Bible, finding particular applications through metaphorical readings of the text. One example is [the passage], "God separated light from darkness," which the Amish interpret to mean that the church and world should be separate. In general, they demonstrate a pre-modern, non-systematic, non-literal interpretive approach that is more akin to medieval allegory.

If you were given the authority by Amish leaders to change one thing about their beliefs or practices, what would it be?

Some Amish communities have been slow to respond to domestic abuse in their midst. This tendency is sometimes rooted in naïve views of human nature: the view that a confessed sin is now in the past, and that life moves on without further consequences. This tendency to deal too lightly with domestic abuse is not unique to Amish churches—unfortunately, it's true of many churches—but Amish women and children are typically less able than others to avail themselves of resources in the larger society, resources that could assist them in their situation.

In addressing the relevance of the Amish way for "the rest of us," you and your coauthors note that you are "a bit uneasy about attempting to patch up modern life by sewing on a few Amish values." That said, what can all followers of Christ learn from the Amish way?

We live in an instant society, and many Christians approach their spiritual lives that way. Many Christians look for quick, easy, painless ways to grow spiritually, and they often end up being disappointed with the growth they see. The Amish point us to the importance of patient practice. They remind us that engaging in everyday—sometimes tedious—practices over long periods of time is the most trustworthy way to foster spiritual depth.



More Than a Mountain

Deep Down plumbs theological divide on coal mining. By Jonathan Merritt

Mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mining is the biggest environmental problem you've never heard of. A common procedure in the Appalachian region, MTR uses explosives to blow up to 1,000 feet off the tops of mountains to extract layers of coal buried within. Coal companies often push the remaining rock and soil into surrounding valleys, destroying streams—and, often, the lives of destitute people—below.

Enter *Deep Down* (Forward Films) ★★★★★, a documentary that attempts to expose the problem of MTR by hanging human flesh on a complex environmental issue. The film, airing Tuesday, November 23, on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, centers on Beverly May and Terry Ratliff of Maytown, Kentucky, neighbors on opposite sides of the same literal—and philosophical—mountain.

When Miller Brothers Coal Company offers to lease their land for MTR, May turns them down, but Ratliff considers signing on. He's a carpenter with no health insurance or retirement income, so it's easy to understand his interest in an offer of \$75,000 to lease six acres.

May sees MTR as an "abomination" that



should be outlawed because of its effect on the quality of water, the safety of homes, and the peace of communities. "You're not supposed to blow the top off a mountain and dump the rock and the rubble into the nearest creek," she says. But Ratliff sees mining as a necessary evil to sustain a region that runs on coal.

Rather than punching through a list of statistics or slapping viewers with jarring scenes of devastation, *Deep Down* approaches the issue in a deeply personal way, looking at lives rather than landscapes, with passionate pleas for a better approach to coal mining.

Especially interesting are the film's theological undertones. An early scene depicts a piece of mining machinery affixed with a JESUS IS LORD banner, a sign of the intersection

of theology and creation care.

On one side are those who hold a traditional dominion theology, which asserts that God gave humans the earth solely for their benefit. "I feel God put coal and other natural resources here for a purpose," says Samuel Maggard, vice president of Miller Brothers. "That purpose is for energy requirements and jobs."

One woman from a coal-mining family adds, "God gave us resources to use, and coal is one of them. . . . Texas has oil, Idaho has potatoes, and we have coal."

When faced with the environmental consequences, some respond by saying that God made the earth so resilient that humans could never inflict permanent damage. "No matter how bad we're screwing it up, it will come back," Ratliff says.

On the other side are those who believe that caring for creation is a stewardship mandate from a God who retains ownership of the earth and wants all of life—not just humans—to flourish. As May puts it, "There's a document at the county courthouse that says I own 21 acres on Wilson Creek. But I don't think I own it. Not in the sense that I can dispose of it. It is not a refrigerator. It is not a pair of socks. It's not mine to dispose of. It is mine to take care of, and to protect, and to enjoy, and then to pass on to the next generation—hopefully in better shape than I got it."

The connection between their theologies and their positions on MTR clearly diverge. And this is how mountains become more than just mountains. They are testaments to the glory of their Creator. They are home to some of our nation's poorest citizens. They are rapidly becoming environmental battlefields. More importantly, they are points for theological reflection, which energy-loving Americans cannot afford to ignore. (More: DeepDownFilm.org)

Jonathan Merritt is author of *Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet* and blogs at JonathanMerritt.com.

Hopes and Fears of All the Years

If you're looking for a primer on the tensions between the state of Israel and the refugee families it displaced, *Little Town of Bethlehem* (EthnoGraphic Media) ★★★★★ won't do the job. But if you want to glimpse the conflict's human face and the way it affects both those who live under occupation and the soldiers who serve as enforcers, by all means, watch this movie.

The film follows the intertwined stories of three peace activists: Palestinian Christian Sami Awad, Palestinian Muslim Ahmad Al-Azzeh, and Israeli Defense Force helicopter pilot Yonatan Shapira. All three have moved from fear and bitterness to confidence that nonviolent action will lead to a just peace. The storytelling is nonlinear and impressionistic as the film explores these intersecting lives through interviews, reenactments, archival footage, and animation.

Little Town of Bethlehem was produced by Mart Green and written and directed by Jim Hanon, who previously collaborated on *End of the Spear* and *Miss HIV*. The production values and artistic sensibilities are remarkably strong for a documentary about one of the most neuralgic situations on the globe. This makes a painful story a pleasure to watch. (More: LittleTownofBethlehem.org) —David Neff, CT Editor in Chief



TWO MINUTES WITH...

Randall Wallace



Randall Wallace is best known for his work with Mel Gibson, penning the script for *Braveheart* and writing and directing *We Were Soldiers*, also starring Gibson. Now Wallace transitions to a battle-

field of another kind—the racetrack—as director of Disney’s *Secretariat*, the story of the 1973 Triple Crown winner and the owner who coaxed him to victory. Wallace, who once attended divinity school, talked to CT senior associate editor Mark Moring about the film (now in theaters) and how his faith informs his work.

Why did you want to tell this story?

It was exciting. It had dimensions of surprise. I didn’t know how spectacular the horse was, and I knew nothing about the woman who owned him and her courage and vision.

The film opens with a passage from Job 39—not a popular decision in mainstream moviemaking.

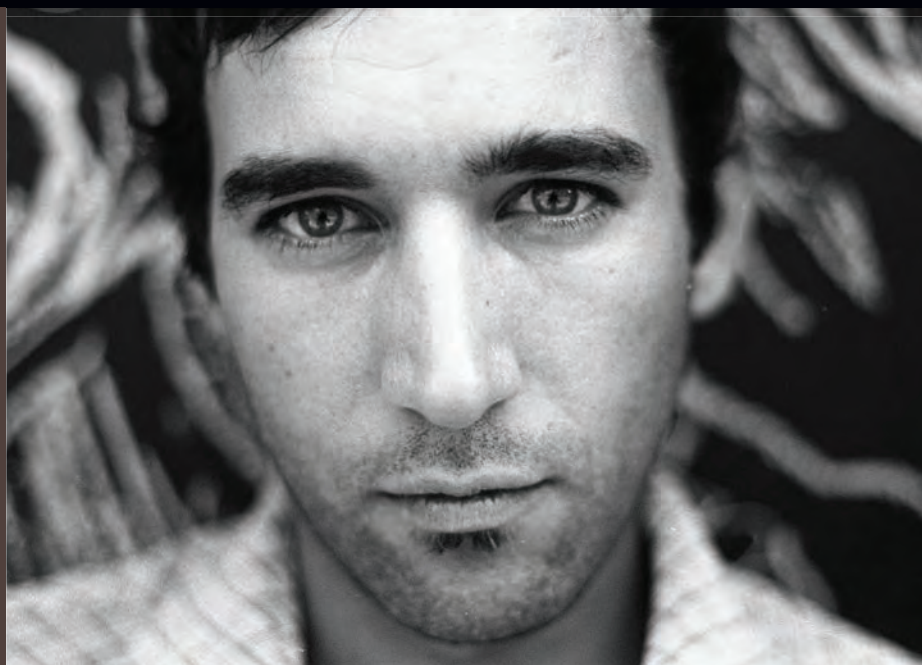
Disney had the same concerns I did; they wanted the movie to appeal to as many people as possible and not to disinvite someone because of the Bible passage and our use of “Oh Happy Day” [a popular spiritual that plays prominently]. I tested the movie with some [non-Christian] friends. After one screening, a friend had tears sheeting down her face and said, “I’m Jewish, and I want them to sing ‘Oh Happy Day’ at my funeral.” I knew then we had done the right thing.

You once considered being a pastor.

My minister asked if I felt called. I said, “I don’t know that I’ve heard the calling to be a minister, but it’s the highest calling anyone could have.” He said, “You’re wrong. The highest calling you can have is the calling that is yours.”

Is making movies like ministering to those in the theater seats?

The purest pulpit that I can have is through what I’ve said in movies like *Braveheart* and now in *Secretariat*. I hope and pray that the message is not my religion but the revelation that God is greater than we are, and that life can work if we are willing to believe and trust and be faithful.



Love & the End Times

Stevens’s newest defies easy categories. By Katelyn Beaty

Forget the odes to Abraham Lincoln and Casimir Pulaski, the allusions to Flannery O’Connor and Christ’s transfiguration. Independent musician Sufjan Stevens seems bent on dodging listener expectations, which have mounted since 2005, when his civic opera *Illinois* catapulted him into indie mega-stardom. Unlike previous albums, his newest, *The Age of Adz* (Asthmatic Kitty) ★★★★★, conspicuously lacks a narrative theme, instead featuring cryptic lyrics about human love and desire, and the end of days. Stevens has also traded his signature banjo for digital wizardry, using electronic beats as the backbone of the 75-minute album.

The grand sonic experiment begins quietly, with “Futile Devices,” a profession of brotherly love, before moving to “Too Much” and the title track. Both are ornate, multi-layered melodies that interweave a small chorus of male and female voices (a Stevens signature) with cascading flutes, sappy trombones, and bleeps and whirs that sound like fight scenes from *Star Trek*. “I Walked,” the album’s first single, is a nod to 1980s synthesized pop, a down-tempo lament over a lost lover.

Adz deemphasizes the theological themes

that have endeared Stevens to many Christians, but they are present. “Get Real Get Right” is an apocalyptic warning—delivered by spacemen. The message? “Get right with the Lord.” “Vesuvius” is a Greco-Roman processional that has Stevens calling on the volcano, the “fire of fire,” to “fall on me now as I favor the ghost.” Holy or otherwise, the ghost has Stevens asking repeatedly, “Why does it have to be so hard?” “Impossible Soul,” the final track, runs over 25 minutes and showcases Stevens’s formal training and playfulness in the studio. Beneath the masterful mixing, though, is a personal confession: “And all I want is the perfect love, though I know it’s small, I won’t hurt for its soul.” Stevens calls this his “first love song,” and in its banjo-led conclusion, he seems resigned to the impossibility of romantic love without sorrow.

The Age of Adz lacks references to Jesus and includes some colorful language, which might trouble some listeners. But they will discover that, like his music, Stevens is a complicated and brilliant creature: neither a “Christian artist” nor an “artist who is a Christian,” but a human like the rest of us. ✦

Katelyn Beaty is associate editor of *Christianity Today*.



BOOKS

► THE GOD WHO IS THERE

Finding Your Place in God's Story

D. A. CARSON (BAKER)

★★★★★ Don Carson provides an overview of the Bible's story of our world and the God who has made us. The New Testament theologian's approach resembles an airplane soaring over the biblical landscape, allowing us to take in the grand sweep of its narrative. But Carson also lands the plane back on the ground, carefully expounding key biblical texts. The result is a splendid introduction to Christian teaching, one that balances biblical and systematic theology as well as biblical exegesis and summary. —Trevin Wax

► SOULS IN FULL SAIL

A Christian Spirituality for the Later Years

EMILIE GRIFFIN (INTERVARSITY)

★★★★★ Out of a youth-obsessed culture, even and especially in evangelicalism, comes a wise book. Wise, because it's grounded in both biblical insight and the experience of *having lived*—the latter trait being sorely lacking in much evangelical fare these days. Many things have to be rethought in the winter years—home, vocation, parents, health, children, and money, to name a few—and Griffin helps readers do so Christianly, using prose both thought provoking and beautiful. —Mark Galli

► CALVIN'S LADDER

A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension

JULIE CANLIS (EERDMANS)

★★★★★ Any book that helps rescue John Calvin from his undeserved reputation as a grim egghead needs to be noted. In fact, Calvin's theology, especially as detailed in the *Institutes*, was from first to last pastoral, driven by a concern to comfort souls. His spirituality, as Canlis shows, is anything but rigidly Reformed. Because Calvin's theology is saturated with the theme of our *participation in Christ*, she says, the Geneva pastor lies well within the tradition of Christian mysticism. —Mark Galli

ON TV

► THE LONGORIA AFFAIR

PBS INDEPENDENT LENS | UNRATED | NOVEMBER 9

Not yet reviewed Long before he became the President who signed into law the Civil Rights

Act of 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson fought ethnic discrimination. This documentary chronicles the then-freshman Texas senator who in 1949 overcame a grave injustice. Private Feliz Longoria Jr. had been killed while fighting for the U.S. in the Philippines, but a local funeral home refused to perform services, "because the whites wouldn't like it." Thanks to Johnson's efforts, Longoria became the first Mexican American to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. —Mark Moring

ON DVD

► THE NATURE OF EXISTENCE

BLINK | UNRATED | NOVEMBER 23

★★★★★ Filmmaker Roger Nygard is asking big questions: "Why do we exist?" "Is God real?" "Is there absolute truth?" In this fast-paced 94-minute documentary, Nygard takes his questions around the world to theologians, philosophers, scientists, pastors, gurus, quacks, and the man on the street, yielding answers from every conceivable perspective. Nygard never settles on answers, but for a whirlwind overview of world-views, you can't beat this. —Mark Moring

► PLEASE GIVE

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS | RATED R | OCTOBER 19

★★★★★ In Nicole Holofcener's New York City comedy-drama, Catherine Keener plays Kate, a wife and mother who earns a hefty living reselling estate-sale furniture at inflated prices. Stirred by the compassion of her neighbor's altruistic granddaughter (played convincingly by Rebecca Hall), Kate abruptly finds herself overwhelmed with guilt for how her unethical business practices have made her family wealthy. She tries to assuage her burdens through acts of charity to homeless people in her neighborhood, learning that contentment doesn't come from excess or consolation but instead from genuine love. —David Roark

MUSIC

RICKY SKAGGS

► MOSAIC

(SKAGGS FAMILY RECORDS)

★★★★★ The 56-year-old Kentucky native has put aside his world-renowned bluegrass sound for an album of spirituals colored with modern country, Irish spirituals, and touches of pop—reminiscent of Alison Krauss and Emmylou Harris. He cuts right to the heart of his faith-filled message, spotlighting his warm, fatherly vocals and unfettered lyrics. *Mosaic* falters only at the end with a

cringe-inducing, ghostly spoken word that dulls the warm glow the rest of the album emanates. Highlights include "Fire from the Sky" and "My Cup Runneth Over." —Robert Ham

LIZZ WRIGHT

► FELLOWSHIP

(VERVE FORECAST)

★★★★★ Soul singer Lizz Wright's first gospel album includes her familiar blend of light rock and funky, folksy R&B, similar to her excellent *Salt* and *The Orchard*. But a wheezy church organ finds its way into "God Specializes," and handclaps, gospel shouts, and old-timey piano drive the nine-minute "Gospel Medley." African flavors reveal the deep cultural history of these songs. The material—hymns, spirituals, and holy rockers by Bob Marley and Jimi Hendrix—mostly bypass the theology of sin and salvation in favor of compassion, forgiveness, and perseverance, but "Amazing Grace" gives the album its anchor, and its last word. —Josh Hurst

THIRD DAY

► MOVE

(PROVIDENT)

★★★★★ The pioneering rockers revisit their southern heritage on an album that marries deep soul to melodic rock throughout. "Lift Up Your Face" kicks off the CD and features a fiery collaboration with the legendary Blind Boys of Alabama. "Follow Me There" continues the upward decree with a gospel Americana tone à la Mavis Staples—complete with a gospel-inspired background chorus. With a charismatic Dobro guitar leading the way, "Surrender" issues another believer's appeal in a Lynyrd Skynyrd-type acoustic rock vein. *Move* is another attractive addition to an illustrious discography. —Andrew Greer

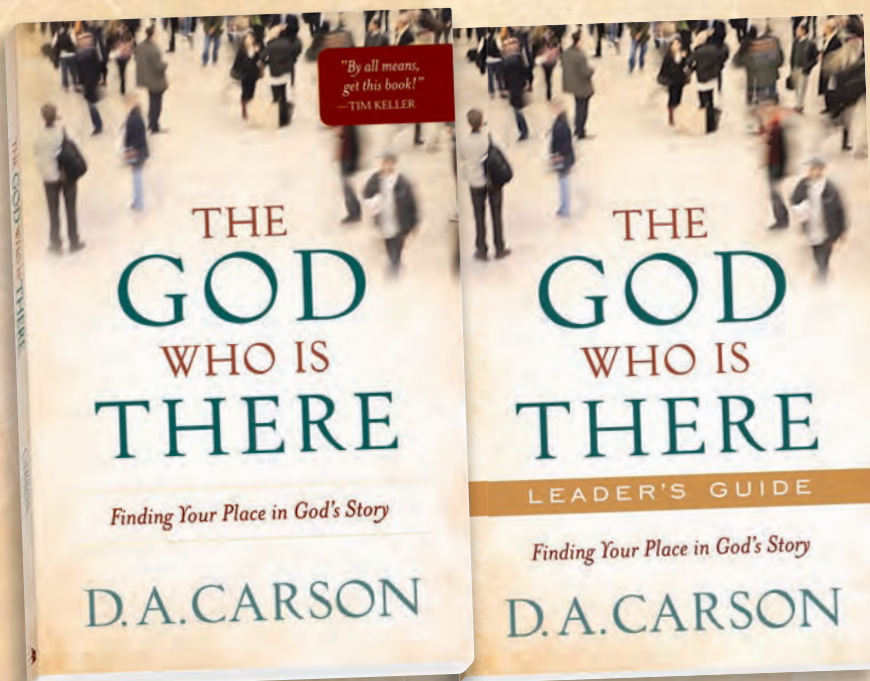
TOM JONES

► PRAISE AND BLAME

(LOST HIGHWAY)

★★★★★ Forget his trademark kitsch: *Praise and Blame* has been heralded as Tom Jones's very own American Recordings album. But where those latter-day Johnny Cash projects veered toward the morose, Jones turns in a vigorous set of robust, full-throated performances—stark but full of life. Jones, who recently turned 70, sings the blues, culling his material from gospel standards, spirituals, and a particularly fervent Dylan cut, "What Good Am I?" But this is no covers album; it's a composition about a man at the crossroads, a chronicle of spiritual awakening, of choices between right and wrong, with heaven and hell very much in the balance. —Josh Hurst

New for Fall from Baker Books



9780801013720 • 240 pp. • \$16.99p

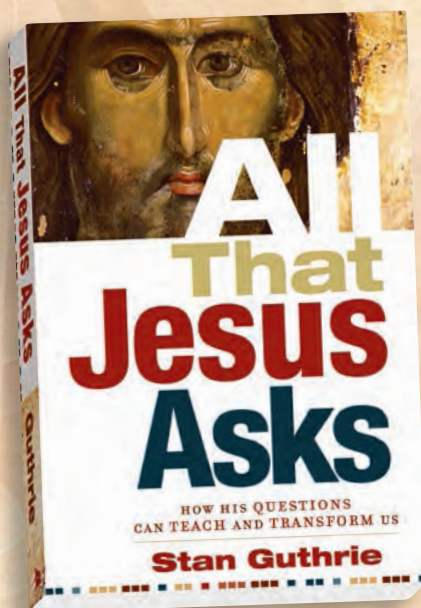
9780801013737 • 96 pp. • \$9.99p

NEW FROM D. A. CARSON

“Don Carson’s *The God Who Is There* is a unique and important volume in many ways . . . It unpacks the whole biblical storyline through the lens of God’s character and actions. As a ministry tool, it can be used for evangelism, since it so thoroughly lays out the doctrine of God, as Paul does on Mars Hill in Acts 17. And yet it also does what the catechisms of the Reformation churches did: give Christians a grounding in basic biblical beliefs and behavior.

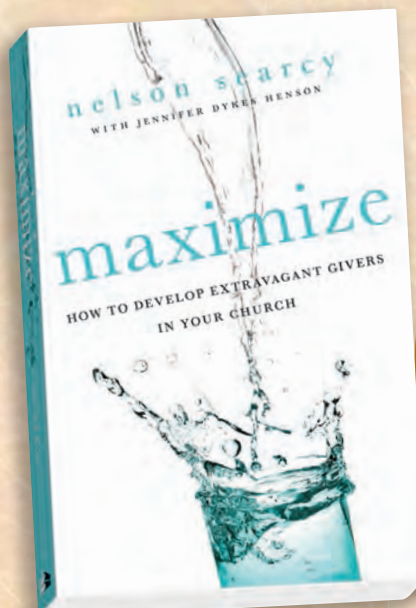
By all means, get this book!”

—**Tim Keller**, pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City



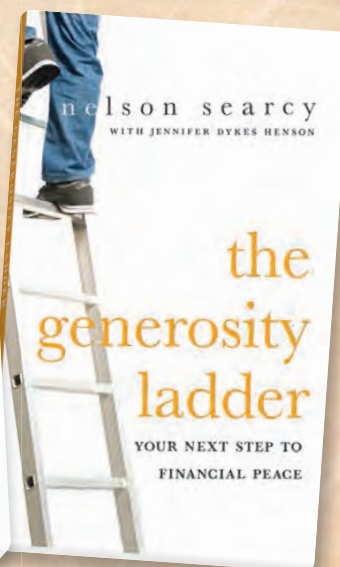
9780801071546 • 368 pp. • \$19.99p

“Using the questions that Jesus actually asked of those around him, Stan leads us into a deeper look at Christ’s humanity, authority, and mission. In *All That Jesus Asks*, you will discover the rugged truth about Christ and what that truth asks of you.” —**Joni Eareckson Tada**, Joni and Friends International Disability Center



9780801072185 • 240 pp. • \$14.99p

“In *Maximize*, Nelson helps you to get an idea of how a church can handle its finances. This is must reading for all pastors who want to lead their churches in the area of its finances.” —**Aubrey Malphurs**, founder, the Malphurs Group; professor of pastoral ministries, Dallas Seminary

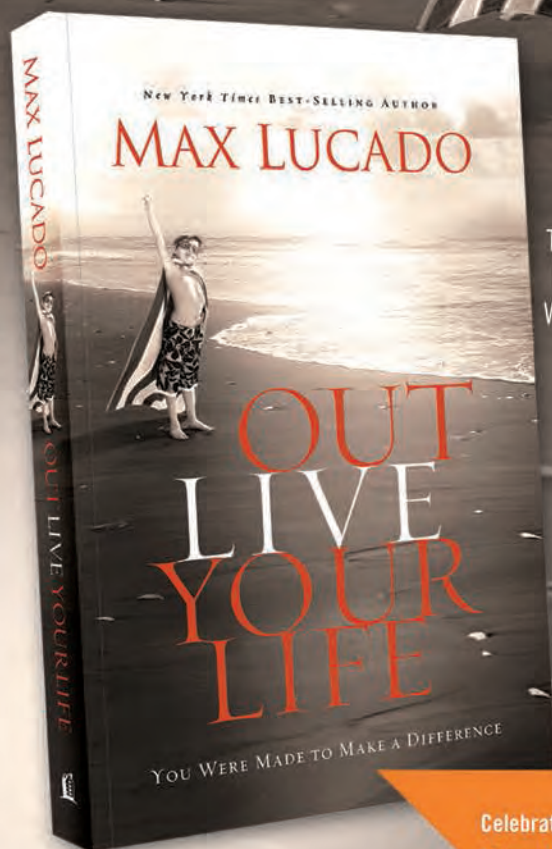


9780801072765 • 112 pp. • \$6.99p

Published alongside *Maximize*, Nelson Searcy’s much-anticipated stewardship guidebook for church leaders, *The Generosity Ladder* will allow laypeople to fully grasp God’s plan for their finances, acknowledge their current level of stewardship, and chart out the steps they need to take in order to handle money in a way that honors God.

REMEMBER WHEN YOU THOUGHT
YOU COULD CHANGE THE WORLD?

YOU STILL CAN!

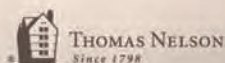


These are difficult days, but we've been given an opportunity to make a big difference. What if we did? What if we rocked the world with hope? We are created by a great God to do great works. He invites us to outlive our lives, not just in heaven, but here on earth. Let's live our lives in such a way that the world will be glad we did.

Max Lucado

*A full complement of church program, evangelism,
and personal resources are available at MaxLucado.com.*

Celebrating 25 years of writing, Max Lucado invites you to help him reach his goal of 25,000 kids sponsored through World Vision. Visit MaxLucado.com/worldvision for details.



Available wherever books are sold

One hundred percent of the author royalties from Outlive Your Life products will benefit children and families through World Vision and other ministries of faith-based compassion. To follow World Vision's use of the funds, go to www.MaxLucado.com.



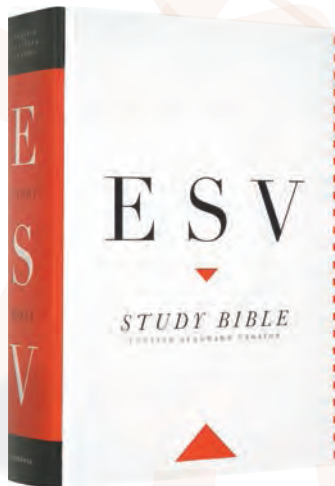
2010 Christmas Gift Guide



www.ChristmasGiftBuyingGuide.com

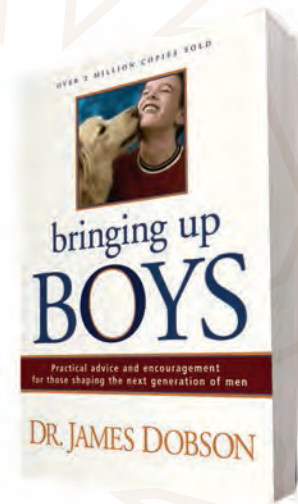
Women At Risk, International

Shop with a purpose this holiday season and lift women to dignity! We address 14 risk issues in 21 countries, including the evil of human trafficking. Purchase fine jewelry and other gifts made by at-risk or rescued women and give hope! Learn more and shop our full product line at www.warinternational.org or call 1-888-END-SLAVERY.



ESV Study Bible

The *ESV Study Bible* was created to help people understand the Bible in a deeper way. Combining the best and most recent evangelical Christian scholarship with the highly regarded ESV text, it is the most comprehensive study Bible ever published. www.ESV.org.



Bringing Up Boys

With so much confusion about the role of men in our society, it's no wonder so many parents and teachers are at a loss about how to bring up boys. In *Bringing Up Boys*, Dr. Dobson tackles these questions and offers advice based on a firm foundation of biblical principles.

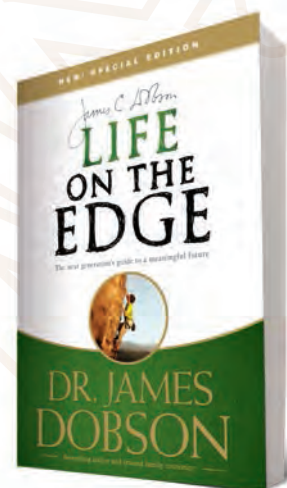
Plain & Simple Christmas

From the author of the widely popular Kauffman Amish Bakery Series. Shunned Anna Mae doesn't receive the welcome she expects when she pays a visit for Christmas. As her world begins to fall apart, she's led to question her place in her family—and her faith in Amish tradition.

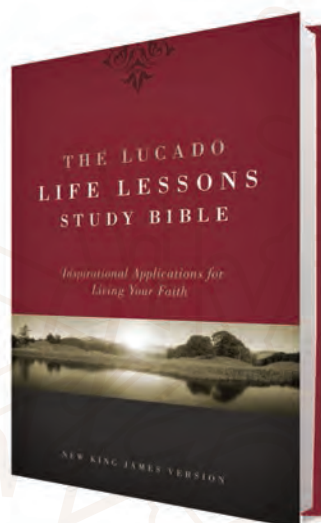


Life on the Edge

Some of the most dramatic life changes occur during the "critical decade"—those ten years between 16 and 26. *Life on the Edge* by Dr. James Dobson offers principles to help you make right choices and get the direction you need to look forward to a bright and successful future.



To order visit www.ChristmasGiftBuyingGuide.com or call 1-800-Christian



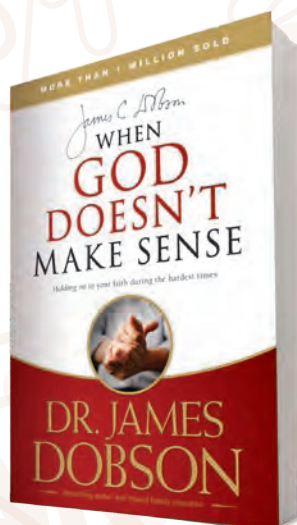
The Lucado Life Lessons Study Bible

The Lucado Life Lessons Study Bible invites you to discover inspirational applications for living your faith. With more than 1,000 Life Lessons offering insights straight from Max Lucado, this Bible is a comprehensive resource to meet all of your devotional, study, and life needs, making the message of God's Word more meaningful and impactful than ever.



So Long, Insecurity

Beth Moore's *So Long, Insecurity* helps women escape the bondage of insecurity. Beth's *New York Times* Bestseller takes women on a journey that stops that nagging insecurity permanently. Beth helps women become secure in who God made them to be so they experience life and spiritual growth as God intended.



When God Doesn't Make Sense

Every person who lives long enough will eventually encounter circumstances that are difficult to explain theologically. In *When God Doesn't Make Sense*, family counselor Dr. James Dobson offers assurance of God's constant care, even when human suffering is beyond our comprehension.

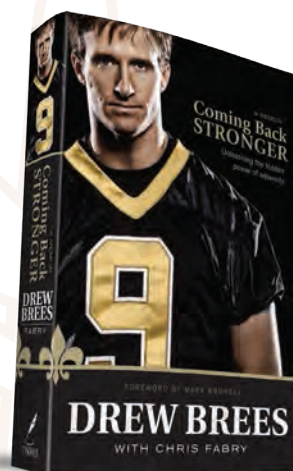
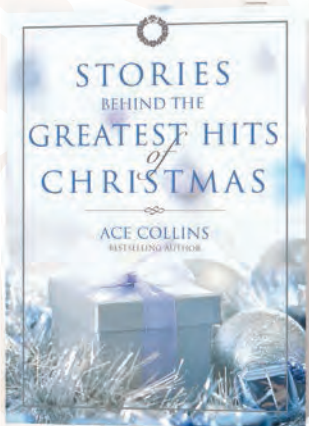


The One Year Bible

You can do it! *The One Year Bible* helps you read the entire Bible in one year in as little as 15 minutes a day. It guides you through God's Word with daily readings from the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs for a fresh, compelling, life-changing devotional experience.

Stories Behind the Greatest Hits of Christmas

You know these Christmas songs by heart. But do you know the stories behind them—who wrote them and why? Ace Collin's new book is a treasure trove of inspiration, information, and the kind of magic that makes Christmas the beloved holiday it is. This is sure to become a hit with your family.



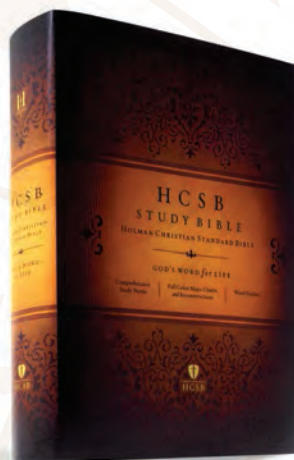
Coming Back Stronger

In *Coming Back Stronger*, New Orleans Saints quarterback and Superbowl MVP Drew Brees reveals how faith helped him return from a severe shoulder injury to become a superbowl champion. Drew recounts how his faith is inspirational in a city and a team that people had almost given up on.



Bringing Up Girls

Now more than ever, our daughters need wisdom and guidance to avoid life's pitfalls. In *Bringing Up Girls*, the long-awaited sequel to his bestselling book *Bringing Up Boys*, Dr. James Dobson brings a new depth of detailed research and practical insight to the task of raising well-grounded girls.

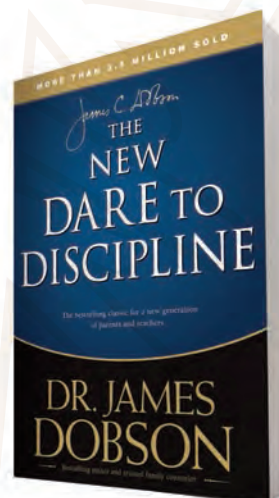


HCSB Study Bible

The name is Yahweh. God gave us his personal name, which is why you'll see it in the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*. Accuracy is one of the reasons you'll love reading any of the HCSB digital or print editions. See www.HCSB.org.

The New Dare to Discipline

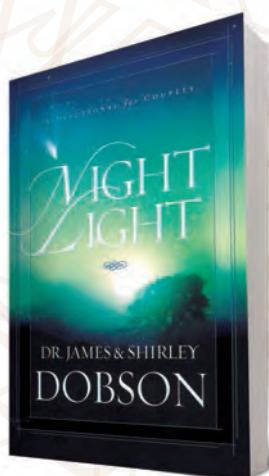
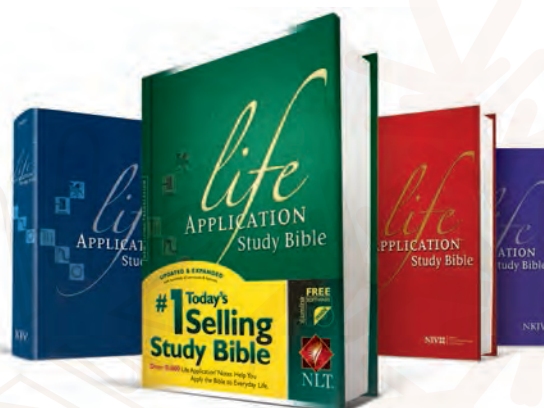
Why are boundaries important? Do children really want limits set on their behavior? Find much-needed answers to these important questions in *The New Dare to Discipline* by parenting expert Dr. James Dobson. This practical guide will teach you how to meet your children's needs of love, trust, affection—and discipline.



To order visit www.ChristmasGiftBuyingGuide.com or call 1-800-Christian

Life Application Study Bible

The *Life Application Study Bible* is the bestselling study Bible in all major translations. Nearly 10,000 Life Application notes and features challenge readers to apply Scripture to everyday life. Book introductions, in-text maps and charts, personality profiles, and a topical index bring additional clarity to the Scriptures.

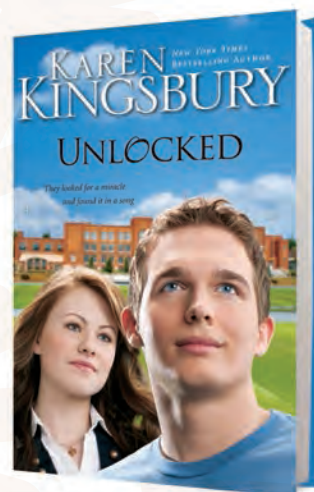


Night Light

All married couples need regular, quiet moments—to renew love and intimacy with each other and with the Lord. *Night Light*, by Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, is a daily devotional that offers the practical, biblical insights that have encouraged couples around the world.

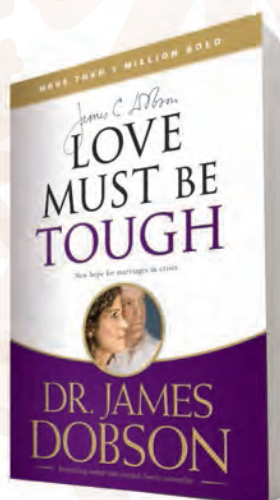
Unlocked

New York Times bestselling author Karen Kingsbury presents *Unlocked*. Holden Harris is an autistic eighteen-year-old who is bullied at school. Ella Reynolds is the head cheerleader who befriends Holden but has problems of her own at home. In her trademark way, Kingsbury tackles real-life issues of high school bullying, autism, adultery, and ultimately ... acceptance.



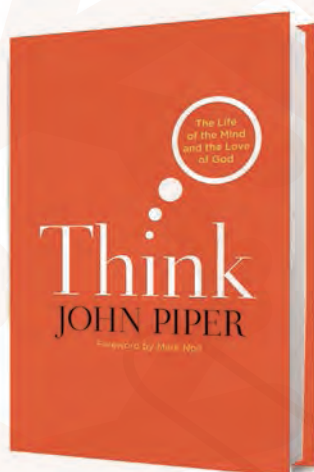
The Word of Promise® Audio Bible

Hear the Bible come alive! Featuring a star-studded cast of over 600 actors, original music score, and incredible feature film quality sound effects. Experience the Scriptures like never before—brought to life and dramatized in a way that will fully immerse you in the Word and leave you wanting more. Visit www.ThomasNelson.com/TheWordofPromise for more info.



Love Must Be Tough

Unlike most approaches to marriage crisis, Dr. James Dobson's strategy in this groundbreaking classic does not require the willing cooperation of both spouses. *Love Must Be Tough* will help you rekindle romance, renew your relationship, and draw your partner back into your arms.

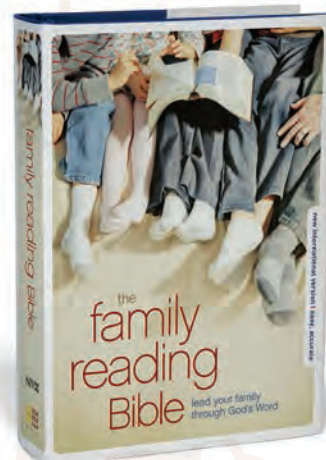


Think

John Piper challenges the church to think hard for the glory of God. He demonstrates from Scripture that we don't need to choose between glorifying God with our heart or with our mind. It's not heart *or* mind, but heart *and* mind. www.Crossway.org.

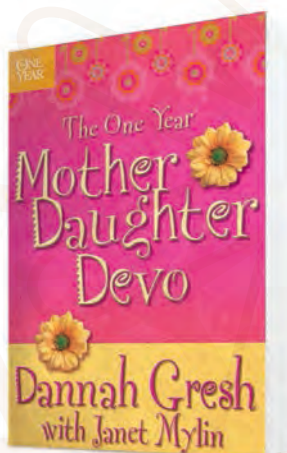
NIV Family Reading Bible

The *NIV Family Reading Bible* is a fresh way to explore the Bible. The Scripture readings are chronological, allowing your family to understand the storyline of Scripture and really grasp God's coherent, redemptive plan. Three reading tracks accommodate children of any age, and insightful questions and fun facts keep kids engaged.



Fun Devotions for Kids

Everyone in your family can learn the value of quiet time with God. Our devotions help children of all ages get in the practice of talking to God and thinking about God each day.



One Year Mother-Daughter Devotion

Don't miss this interactive daily devotional designed to help mothers and daughters grow closer to each other and to God through fun and unique elements for daily Bible study. A variety of themed devotions on meaningful friendships, true beauty, biblical modesty, and vibrant purity will give moms and daughters a lot to talk about.

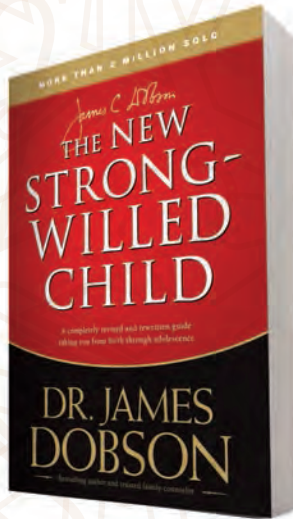
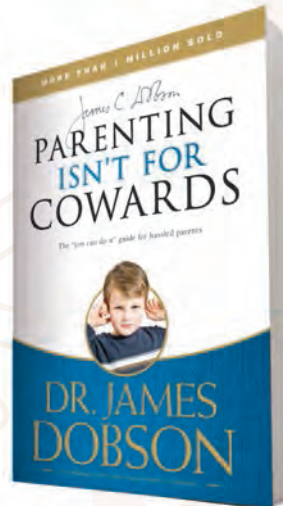
My Princess Bible and Rumble! Zap! Pow!

With fun-filled art and stories that are just the right length, these Bible storybooks feature biblical favorites as well as some of the lesser known stories in the Bible. These Bible storybooks will capture kids' hearts and minds and help them apply lessons from each story. Perfect for ages 2-6.



Parenting Isn't for Cowards

Speaking as a therapist and a father—and drawing on a landmark study of 35,000 parents—Dr. James Dobson helps you prevent child-rearing troubles before they happen, restore your energy when you're facing burnout, and much more. *Parenting Isn't for Cowards* will help you experience the full joy of parenthood!



The New Strong-Willed Child

Rewritten for a new generation of parents and teachers, *The New Strong-Willed Child* offers advice on raising difficult-to-handle children and incorporates the latest research with Dr. James Dobson's legendary wit and wisdom. This book is a must-read for parents dealing with sibling rivalry, ADHD, low self-esteem, and other important issues.



Celebrate Advent

Follow Jotham and his friends Bartholomew and Tabitha as they journey through the Christmas story, ending their travels at the stable in Bethlehem. With day-by-day readings, reflections for family devotions, and advice for making Christmas a meaningful season of worship, these read-aloud storybooks are a fun way to celebrate Advent.



ESV Seek and Find Bible

The *ESV Seek and Find Bible* is the ideal first "real" Bible for pre-readers and young readers, ages 5-10, to grow up with. It is also a wonderful resource for parents to use in family Bible reading and for teachers who teach the Bible to young children. www.ESV.org.

This Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to share the love of Christ with a needy orphan across the lands of Russia?

For as little as \$5 a month or \$60 a year, you can help a loving church worker disciple one Russian orphan, like this one, at Christmas and for an entire year.

Please contact:
Slavic Gospel Association
800-BIBLE-50 or at
www.orphansreborn.org



EDUCATION WITH A SOUL



Diplomas & Discipleship

Christian colleges and universities are more committed than ever to marrying academics with faith. page 84



More Than a Class

Four Christian college students discuss how their academic courses strengthened their faith. page 96



Proving Their Mission

New research project requires Christian higher education to evaluate its spiritual impact on students. page 104

College

Diplomas & Discipleship



Christian colleges and universities are more committed than ever to marrying academics with faith.

Graphic Design majors from a university in northwest Arkansas have a unique experience to put on their resumes—they traveled to Fiji to work with local children. “In addition to playing and talking with the kids, they designed an illustrated booklet to help relieve children’s fears about eye and dental care,” says Rod Reed, university chaplain at John Brown University, the institution that organized the trip. As a testament to the students’ efforts, a medical missionary group plans to use the book with pediatric patients.

These budding graphic designers are just one example of the unique opportunity at Christian colleges and universities to combine diplomas and discipleship as students pursue careers in journalism, the sciences, or even advanced degrees like executive MBAs. In addition to the typical curriculum, a syllabus might read, “God welcome here.”

Reed says faith is central to the academic experience of all majors at JBU. “Faculty members from fields of construction design to biology to the honors program help students understand how their faith affects the way they learn.” He is co-editing a book on how faculty at Christian universities help students grow spiritually, and is struck by the diversity of responses from

students he’s interviewed. He says, “I asked a student what class did the best job of integrating faith and learning, and he said ‘Principles of Math’ and ‘English Lit.’

“It’s easy to think that we educate the head in the classroom, the heart through chapel and ministries, and the hand through service learning, but our approach to education is much more integrated than that,” Reed says.

“The main difference [between Christian schools and secular institutions] is that the classes are taught by professors who share the same basic worldview as the student . . . a theistic one,” says Mike Tenneson, Ph.D., professor of biology at Evangel University. Tenneson has personally experienced this difference, as he earned one of his two master’s degrees and his doctorate at secular universities. “Students don’t have to worry that faculty are trying to dismantle their Christian faith,” he says.

Faculty at Evangel, an Assemblies of God-affiliated school in Missouri, also offer students a “unique perspective of the discipline through the eyes of faith.” For instance, when studying origins in Tenneson’s biology class, students read the writings of proponents and critics of the major camps: young earth creation, old earth creation, theistic evolution, deistic evolution, and atheistic evolution. They are then required to provide the

rationale/evidences used to support each viewpoint. He recalls a past student who said he was happy “Christians could indeed keep their brains and their faith.”

But students who choose Christian colleges may face a greater academic challenge by exercising their “brains and faith.” They complete traditional courses toward a degree and career, but they also examine how faith relates to their studies and their profession. “None of this is easy,” admits Dr. Ken Carson, provost and professor of psychology at Geneva College in Pennsylvania. The school, founded in 1848, published a document in the early 1960s articulating why they are not just a college, but a Christian college. It reads, “Students, as creatures of God, are under His mandate both to learn and to apply all knowledge for the purpose of knowing and glorifying God. They should not be sheltered from non-Christian viewpoints, but must become able to evaluate all knowledge critically, to gain from that which is true and to discard error.”

Carson, who holds a doctorate in organizational psychology, describes how this works out in the classroom. “An education professor helps students critically evaluate children’s literature through the lens of faith. One prof has explored the implications of post-modern thinking on children’s books.

“Engineering students are confronted

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STRENGTHENING LIVES FOR PURPOSE, SERVICE, AND LEADERSHIP



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with ethics issues such as how to act when they are asked to cut corners, to the more esoteric questions of what it means to be human in a world increasingly dominated by technology.”

Regent University’s new president, Dr. Carlos Campo, is passionate about helping more students see the value of choosing a Christian institution over a state school. “We believe that every student is body, mind, and spirit. If an education does not include spiritual development, then we’ve missed the most important component of all,” he says. “As Jesus said, ‘the flesh counts for nothing’; only the spiritual endures.”

Campo says the value of a spiritual education at Regent can be seen in the success of graduates. You might expect him to list career achievements when he defines success, as Campo’s own family is filled with them—he is the son of famous entertainers and a first cousin of actor George Clooney. But, he says, any measure of success for Christian college students includes the spiritual. “Yes, we are very proud that the current governor of Virginia is a Regent University grad, that we have graduated over 300 Teachers of the Year, and received over 200 film awards, but if we don’t reflect the love of God in all we do, we are only ‘clanging cymbals.’”

“Regent University knows that faith and learning integration is our foremost ‘distinctive’ as a university, and we have established a policy and process to ensure that we keep integration at the forefront of our academic development,” Campo says. The school recognizes that some faculty well-qualified to teach in their discipline may not be as qualified in hermeneutics or worldview. “[Incoming] faculty who are not proficient [in the integration of faith and learning] must submit a plan to achieve proficiency within a three-year period,” he says. This may include courses at the divinity school, assigned readings, and lectures.

A doctoral student in strategic leadership at Regent says the school delivers theologically and academically. “My fear was either a spiritual overlay on a corporate model or a biblical worldview detached from

reality. Instead, I have experienced an integration of my devotional and developmental life in many of the assignments.”

National surveys show Christian colleges and universities encourage students in the growth of their faith. Olivet Nazarene University is located about an hour outside Chicago on a sprawling campus where fans flock each summer to see the Chicago Bears in training camp. The school provided two recent surveys on students’ spirituality. A 2008 survey of 35,000 college freshman found 89% of ONU students said the school strengthened their faith compared to 35% of students at non-religious private schools. In the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement, seniors at ONU gave high marks when asked if courses in their major helped them think about how Christian values relate to their future profession.

The dean of the business school at ONU, Glen Rewerts, speaks about faith in the classroom. “The business department holds regular meetings to discuss our efforts at integration in the different areas of business such as management, leadership, accounting, finance, and marketing. The department requires each faculty member to address faith integration in their syllabus,” he says.

Prospective students may not realize how different the classroom experience could be if they choose to earn their degree at a Christian college. Rewerts says all professors are expected to include a devotional thought or Scripture in class. “The best devotionals are those that relate to the subject matter of the day in that particular course,” he says. Rewerts, who holds both an MBA and a law degree, admits it can be a creative challenge when the course is statistics or accounting.

At Judson University in Elgin, Illinois, the all-Christian faculty may also begin class with a devotional or prayer. “I know a psychology professor that has students grasp Scripture passages by singing a silly melody with words and hand gestures,” says Dr. Dave Sanders, associate professor of Christian

ministries. “What is more critical for faith development, however, is that professors teach out of their own faith as a way of life, in demonstration that ‘Christian’ is who they are, not merely a set of beliefs they live by.” Sanders describes three women’s soccer players who recently came to faith in Christ partly due to their professors. One was even baptized by the university president, who is an ordained minister.

Lest you think it’s some sort of Bible camp, Judson is not a place where all students are Christians. “We have Christian students studying and living right alongside non-believing students. This creates a ‘family of God with visitors’ kind of environment,” Sanders says. The ordained pastor, who also has 25 years of staff experience with Young Life, says the classroom at Judson is a place of “in reach” and “outreach.” “We are looking for transformation in students’ lives no matter what their beginning point when they arrive here. For this reason, we seek to approach faith and learning in the classroom, in the dorms, on the sports teams—all areas of the campus.” He says Judson is also strong academically, with education majors sought after in local schools. The school of art, design and architecture is one of the largest programs on campus.

Sanders allows his students to personally assess their spiritual growth over four years on campus. Each freshman writes a spiritual journey autobiography paper and a worldview paper. Four years later, they reflect on these papers. He recalls a male senior student who had an “a-ha” moment, seeing the immaturity in both his writing and work as a freshman. But the student also saw how much he had grown spiritually, and how as a senior he could intelligently articulate the philosophies and theological views that shape his faith.

Grand Canyon University in Arizona has an enrollment of 25,000+ on campus and online. Its nursing program attracts all types of students from young freshmen to mid-career adults. As a Christ-centered university, GCU professors are able to incorporate faith discussions that future nurses or doctors

continued on page 90

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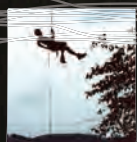
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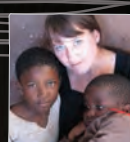
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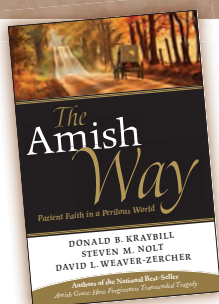
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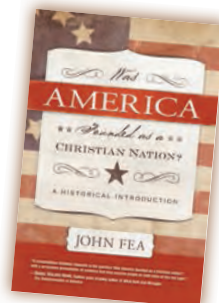
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see anew



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will inevitably face as patients deal with fear and loss. "Students will have health care assignments that increase their understanding of different faith-based traditions focused on customs around birth, illness, and death, as these are all critical milestones in patient care," says Dr. Kathy Player, president of GCU.

Player, who holds four advanced degrees, says GCU offers online students access to virtual Bible study groups in addition to their coursework. She has seen students return to faith through classes in the Christian educational setting. Player describes an adult nursing student who spoke to the dean after completing a course at GCU. "The Bible course, and more particularly the faculty, helped renew her faith and she was delighted to report back how she was not only attending church again but bringing her children with her."

The college campus experience at a Christian institution allows such personal interactions with faculty

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through smaller class sizes, even at a high enrollment school like GCU. Judson also enrolls all students in mentor groups led by older students for the first seven weeks on campus. Many campuses in the Christian college community also offer mentoring by full professors and staff—this is not the teaching assistant who may hold office hours, but an established scholar who's been in the field for years and wrestled through questions of faith within that discipline. "Most students immediately notice the

difference between the personal, caring attention given our students and what is often experienced in a large, public university," Darryl Tippens, provost of Pepperdine University, says.

Christian colleges and universities also encourage students to live out their faith through practical service opportunities. "In a number of [Geneva College] classes, students are required to engage in service learning projects such as serving as tutors in after-school programs in the local school districts,"

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Carson says. Grand Canyon University expects to add required service hours next year for all students. The school sponsors 75–100 events per year for the local community. “Our integration of faith and learning extends beyond the classroom to actual ‘hands on’ application,” Player says.

At Pepperdine, a respected Christian university in Malibu, California, Tippens says law students engage in externships around the world that focus on international human rights. Students also live out their faith by participating in one of the school’s mission-centric clinical programs. The provost recalls a student who took an elective called “Christ, the Law and Legal Profession.” She was so motivated to put her faith into action that she became the founding director of Pepperdine’s legal clinic at the Union Rescue Mission.

Tippens, who has been a scholar, instructor, and professor for over 30 years, says research shows that service learning helps students grow in their faith. Two 4-year longitudinal studies involving more than 2,000 Pepperdine students identified significant factors

affecting students’ faith journeys. Among them are personal mentoring from a faculty member and participation in service projects.

The survey also found that study abroad programs can foster deeper faith. That’s why the practice is encouraged at Pepperdine. In the school’s college of arts and sciences, the percentage of students studying abroad is nearly 60%. “When a student leaves American culture for an extended period of time, the experience strips away the ‘cultural’ aspects of their faith, leaving them to wrestle with the core beliefs of Christianity,” Tippens explains. “Many students come back with a much more mature faith.” He quotes a law student who spent his summer working in Uganda. “I had often heard that students go to law school and lose their souls. I came to Pepperdine and found mine.”

Allowing students to engage their faith during academic travel is something many Christian colleges do well. Tenneson teaches a marine biology class that includes a two-week field trip to the Florida Keys. “We examine a variety of marine

environments, but we also spend significant time working with local churches. This has included outreaches to high schools, leading worship, teaching, and preaching,” he says.

“At most state institutions, students will be asked to put their faith on the shelf for four years, and the impact of that act has eternal implications,” Campo says. “Just as your body would suffer dramatic and possibly permanent consequences if you failed to exercise it for four years, so your spirit should not take a hiatus when you enter college.”

A closer look at these eight institutions gives a picture of the incredible opportunity that Christian colleges and universities present to students who are willing to take a step of faith and apply, visit, and prayerfully attend. Their reward is a degree to be proud of and a depth of spiritual knowledge greater than when they began.

Kara Miler is a freelance writer, TV journalist, and mom. She can be reached through her blog at writerkara.blogspot.com. She lives with her husband and son in Chicago, IL.



More Than a Class

Four Christian college students discuss how their academic courses strengthened their faith.

Like a potential date who is smart, good looking, and spiritual, Christian colleges and universities may offer the “total package” for Christian students checking them out. These campuses earn high marks

from students who say professors challenge them to grow in Christ in the classroom as well as the dorm room. Four of these students explain how they’ve grown spiritually in their college classes.

“To be honest, I’m still a Christian

partly because of some of the classes I’ve taken at Wheaton,” Isaiah Fasoldt says. The national merit scholar chose Wheaton College over an Ivy League school. Twenty-one-year-old Fasoldt says he is proud of his self-described fundamentalist background. But,



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in high school, the intellectual teen struggled with doubts in conversations with atheists, wondering how God could exist with suffering in the world. He found answers to his spiritual struggle in a history class. The Wheaton College course examined

your faith," Fasoldt says. "Maybe some of the issues I had with Christianity aren't necessarily with Christianity itself, but with how Christianity is expressed in our culture."

The senior from upstate New York also took advantage of Wheaton's

"I grew in my faith in psychology class because my professor was very clear about what the Bible says, while also covering what the secular world is saying about the mind," Sweetman says. "I learned things I need to know to become a counselor."

The 20-year-old junior says Christian professors are open about their faith. "You're going to pray before each class," he says. He remembers two instances when professors stopped class to pray for students dealing with deaths in their families.

Like Sweetman, Kali Wagner is grateful for the Christian college she attends. At Seattle Pacific University, the honors program brings critical thinking and Christ into her poetry. "It was eye-opening for me to realize that Christians need not be afraid of the world of academia, because there is truth in our faith," Wagner says.

She developed her senior thesis in a literature class while reading

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"TO BE HONEST, I'M STILL A CHRISTIAN PARTLY BECAUSE OF SOME OF THE CLASSES I'VE TAKEN AT WHEATON."

what it meant to be Western and what it meant to be modern. The professor led Fasoldt to think about what happens when capitalism and consumerism are exported to other cultures. "Taking that class made me realize that my Christian faith isn't as strongly tied to the 'Christian American' values I dislike, such as consumerism in churches or encouraging quick decisions about

"Dine with a Mind" program. The college says about 60 students a week invite professors to a free cafeteria meal through the program.

Some 300 miles to the south, a tech-savvy teen says professors at Boyce College deepened the faith he blogged about for years. Tim Sweetman was already a popular youth blogger when he enrolled in the Louisville, Kentucky, school, receiving 500,000 hits in one year.



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several books by J. M. Coetzee on post-apartheid South Africa. "We spend time in class talking about reconciliation. Reconciliation is a huge focus of Coetzee's work even though he's not a Christian," Wagner explains. "In class, we discuss how we should engage with his work even though he's not coming from a Christian perspective."

She also experienced significant spiritual growth after spending a semester fasting regularly, which was the spiritual discipline assignment she chose in one of the theology and Scripture courses required for all SPU students, regardless of major.

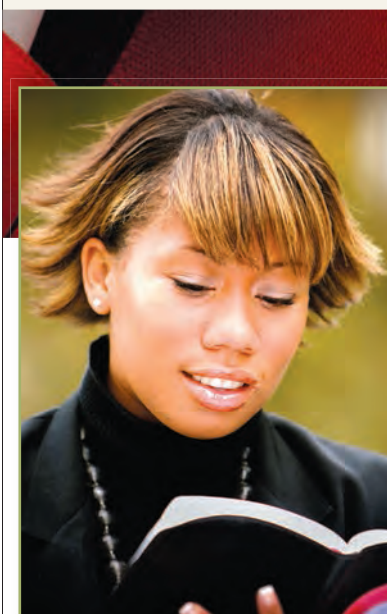
In South Carolina, Paulina Campis says classes at Columbia International University blew away her narrow view of the gospel. "We kids who grew up in Christian homes think we know a lot about the Bible. We come to

school to prove what we know instead of trying to receive knowledge. The Lord humbled me and showed me I didn't know as much as I thought I did," Campis admits.

Campis is also humbled to observe the genuine faith lived out by her professors and faculty mentor. "They're very approachable," she says. "Their offices are right across from the classrooms. They also care about our spiritual formation."

This bright student plans to become a counselor, like her father, who's a Christian psychologist back home in Mexico. "My psychology classes integrated with my Bible classes are a great combination," she says. "Learning to filter truth has helped me know how I will apply these psychology principles in how I do counseling in the future."

—K.M.



Proving Their Mission

**New research project requires
Christian higher education to evaluate
its spiritual impact on students.**



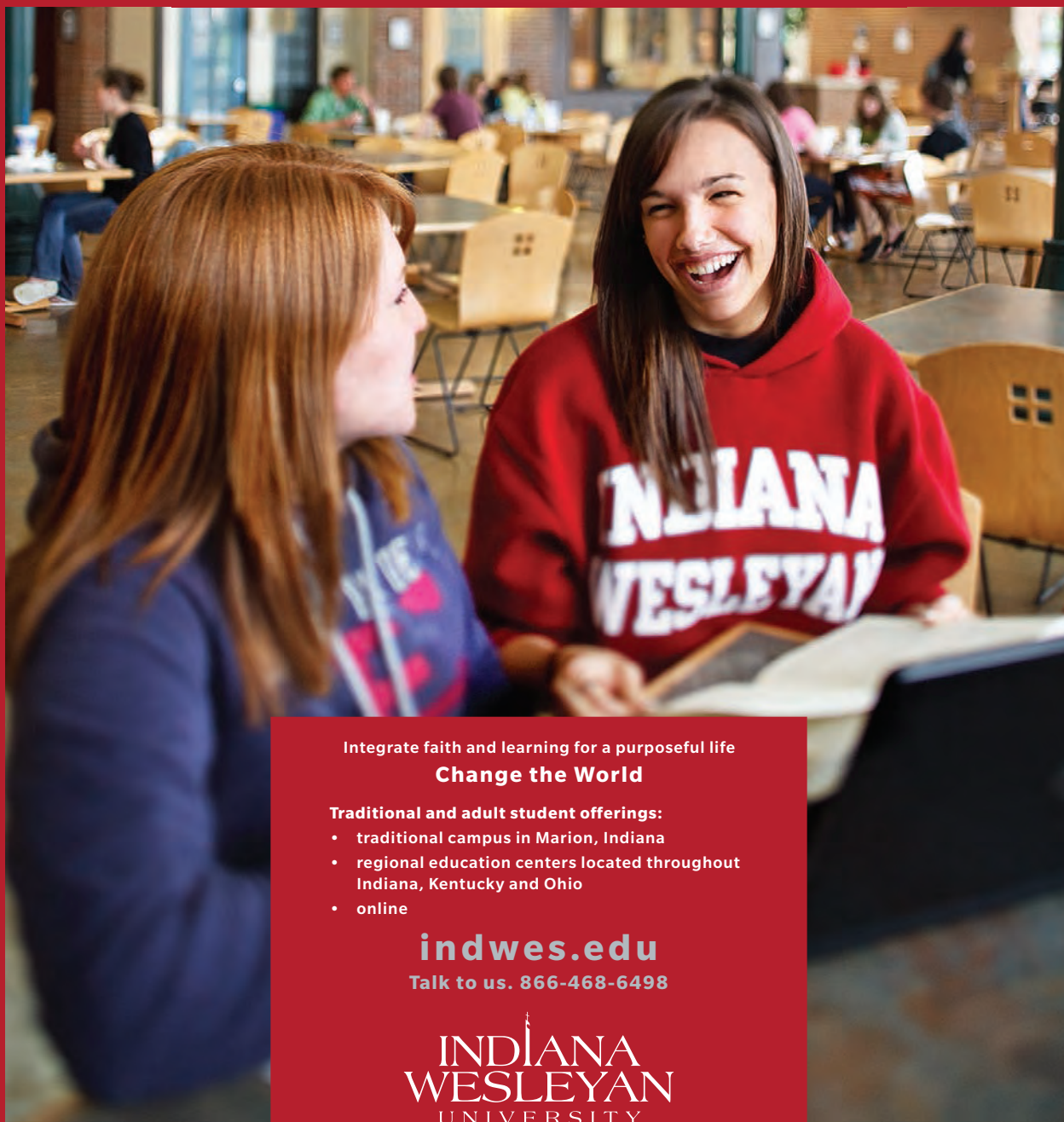
Christian colleges and universities are participating in a new research project examining how these institutions develop the faith of their students. Experts say the project is necessary to defend the schools' right to exclusively hire Christians to carry out

their mission, and to provide data to enhance the spiritual impact of their campuses.

Presidents, administrators, and professors from ten Christian schools recently met in British Columbia, Canada. "We're trying to identify more precisely what we mean by the term 'spiritual formation.' How do

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continued from page 104

we define it so we can evaluate how we are accomplishing it?" Dr. Paul R. Corts, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) says. CCCU, which organized the Symposium on Spiritual Formation, represents 109 campuses of diverse Christian faith traditions.

Symposium attendees agreed to a core definition, which schools can expand for their own theological traditions. "Spiritual formation is integral to Christian higher education—it is the biblically-guided process in which people are being transformed into the likeness of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit within the faith community in order to love and serve God and others," it says. CCCU will use the new definition to identify campuses and programs that are succeeding at spiritual formation, and study them.

A recent analysis conducted by the University of Texas at Austin found significant anecdotal evidence that spiritual growth occurs at Christian institutions. But the report, commissioned by CCCU, said additional long-term research is needed on the mechanisms that make spiritual growth more likely at a Christian college. It also called for more research on how sacred schools produce stronger spiritual development for students when compared to secular schools.

"There is potential, if we can't demonstrate what we are doing, that [the government] might say, 'Why are we giving you this [hiring] exemption if you can't demonstrate you are accomplishing your religious mission?'" Corts says.

Dr. Carlos Campo, president of Regent University, says he is pleased with the ongoing, online discussion among symposium attendees. "We are making time because we believe it will strengthen our spiritual connections, give us the latest research in the area of spiritual formation, and help Regent University define our path for future direction and guidance in the Holy Spirit," he says.

—K.M.



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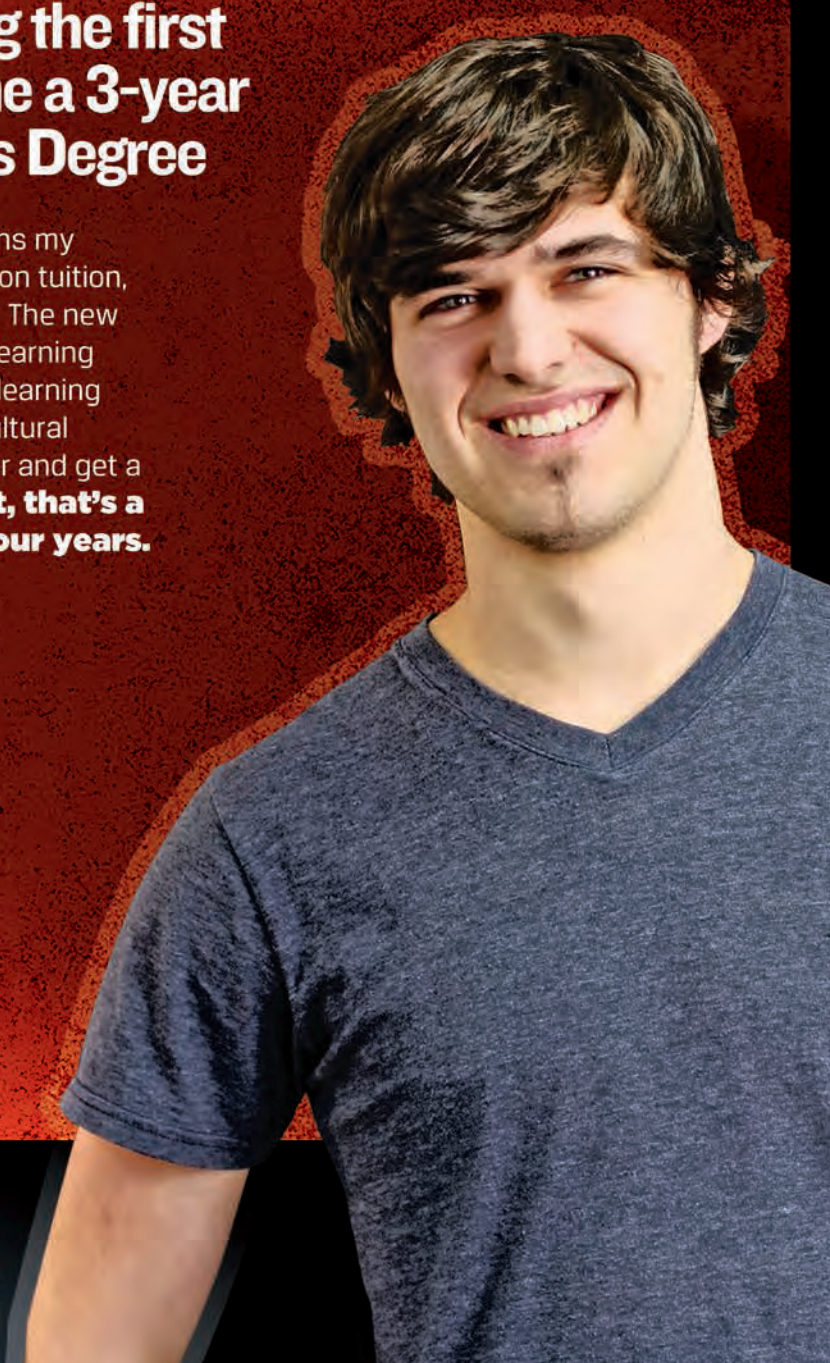
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Suicide Mission

Jamie Tworkowski writes love on self-destructive lives.

By Mark Moring

One day, Jamie Tworkowski might hear from someone who decided not to commit suicide after seeking help from his nonprofit, To Write Love on Her Arms (TWLOHA). The next day, he might speak at a memorial for a girl who took her own life, even after reaching out. “We never get used to stuff like that,” says Tworkowski, “but I don’t think we’re supposed to. That stuff just breaks our hearts and reminds us what’s at stake.”

Tworkowski, 30, founded TWLOHA in early 2006 while helping a 19-year-old friend, Renee, who was struggling with addiction, depression, self-injury (she had written “F--- Up” with a

razor on her forearm), and attempted suicide. While Renee debated getting treatment, Tworkowski and other friends offered support; in the meantime, he wrote an essay, “To Write Love on Her Arms,” addressing Renee’s situation. The name stuck, T-shirts started selling, Christian bands (including Switchfoot) started spreading the word, and a movement was born. Since then, TWLOHA—partnering with the likes of Teen Challenge, S.A.F.E. Alternatives, and others—has responded to more than 150,000 people (many in crisis) and donated over \$700,000 to treatment and recovery centers. ➤

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- **Favorite website** aspworldtour.com, donmilleris.com
- **Heroes** Bono, Jon Foreman, Donald Miller, Jon Tyson
- **Hobbies** Writing, surfing, music, basketball

question & answer

Is TWLOHA a Christian organization?

No. The word *Christian*, in my opinion, has been abused and misrepresented. It’s a label that alienates people. Jesus didn’t come to establish a subculture; he came to heal the world. With TWLOHA, we are simply trying to let people know that they matter, that they’re not alone in their struggles, and that hope and help are real.

How does your faith inform your work?

My faith is the lens I see the world through. I believe that God loves people and cares about people’s pain.

“To Write Love on Her Arms” is a clunky title. Why stick with it?

Our title causes people to wonder what it means. It opens up a conversation and invites people to learn more. Our title says a lot about who we are and how we approach what we do.

How do you promote TWLOHA?

I probably spend half my time on the road. I’m speaking more frequently at colleges and universities, where we are starting more chapters. Folks from our team go out on the Warped Tour and to other music festivals. If you see our tent somewhere, we’re not just selling T-shirts. We’re there for the conversations.

What else does TWLOHA do?

We also address depression, addiction, and suicide. The big picture is how we cope with pain. We’re talking about issues that affect male and female, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, the world over.

What would you say to the church about engaging those issues?

We have to let people know it’s okay to be human, to admit questions and struggles. And let’s not ignore the tools and solutions. If someone breaks their arm, you don’t just pray—you take them to get the bone fixed. Let’s do the same for people battling depression and addiction, by getting them treatment and medicine.

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