

Christianity Today

DECEMBER 2010

JESUS vs. PAUL



Jesus preached almost exclusively about the kingdom of heaven. Paul highlighted justification by faith. Some say they preached different gospels. Others say Jesus and Paul both preached justification. Still others claim both focused on the kingdom. What gives?

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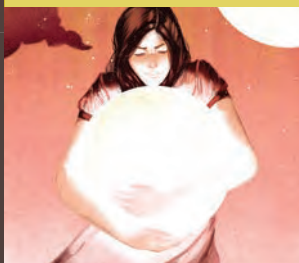
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The Mirror of Truth

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

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

In September, theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking dismissively claimed that string theory eliminated the need for a Creator. In this issue, Trevor Persaud tells the truth about string theory and God (p. 46). Also in this issue, Mark Galli talks with Eliza Griswold about her first-hand research into Muslim-Christian relations. She catalogs the factors that spark conflict and those that make for peaceful coexistence (p. 30).

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

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

David Neff, Editor in Chief

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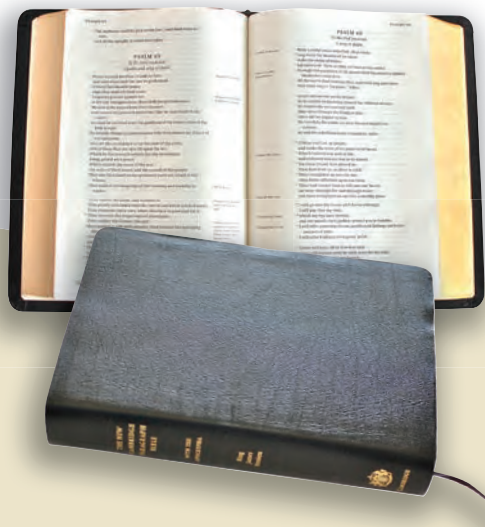
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Behind the Scenes

Allan C. Emery exemplified a life of quiet service.

JESUS SAID it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, but Allan C. Emery did just that. As the scion of an old Boston wool merchant's family, he had a sizable fortune. His mansion, a replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon, had a clear view of Boston Harbor.

Emery, who died just as our most recent issue went to press, wasn't possessed by his possessions. A Christianity Today Incorporated board member for 20 years, Emery generously ladled out his wisdom and his capital, says *Christianity Today* deputy managing editor Tim Morgan.

Paul Toms, Emery's former pastor at Park Street Church in Boston, told me that Emery would say, "I'm well aware that when I leave for church on Sunday, this house could burn down before I come back. I'm trying to learn from God how to hold things in an open hand." From the teens who attended the Bible class he held in his home for 33 years to the major ministries he counseled, Emery was generous with his wisdom, his money, and his time.

Harold Myra, CTI's former CEO, recalled Emery's book, *A Turtle on a Fencepost*. He took his title from a folk proverb: When you see a turtle on a fencepost, you know he didn't get there by himself. "This typified Allan's attitude toward himself," said Myra. "He had tremendous respect and love for his father, and was determined to be worthy of carrying on that heritage."

Interestingly, Emery's father chaired Billy Sunday's Boston evangelistic meetings, and Emery himself played a key role in Billy Graham's Boston crusades.

Emery had been a fellow student of Graham's at Wheaton College, and they renewed their acquaintance when Graham came to Boston in 1950. From the mid-1970s to the late '80s, he served as president and coo of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

Emery served on the boards of many Christian organizations in addition to CTI and BGEA, including Gordon College, Wheaton College, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Joel Aarsvold, longtime CEO of the Graham association, spoke effusively about Emery's trustworthiness. Emery shared Graham's legendary commitment to integrity and was Exhibit A of Graham's habit of surrounding himself with people of strong values.

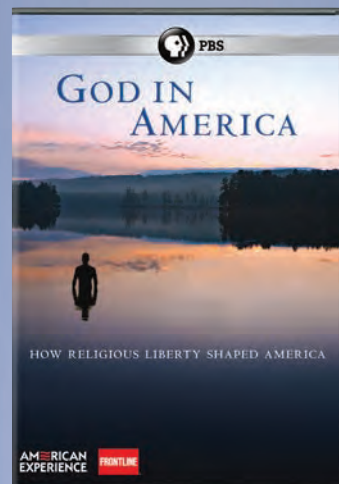
In the 1990s, Emery's deafness hampered his ability to serve, but his passion remained with the expansion of God's kingdom.

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Next month: Todd Daly challenges our impulse to extend our life span; Rob Moll talks to Jeff Van Duzer about God's business model; and Stan Jones outlines how churches should teach congregants about sex.



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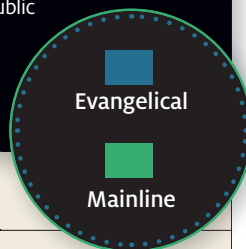
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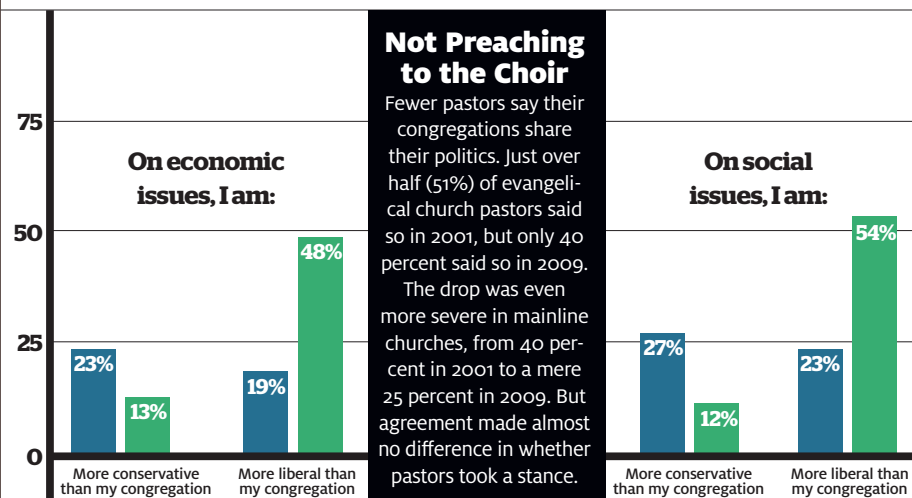
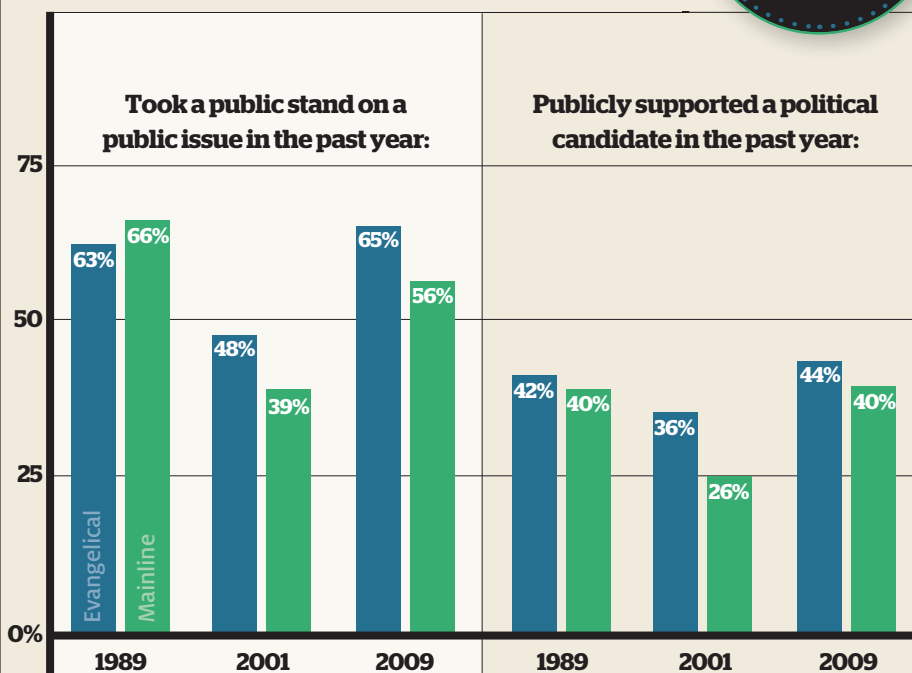
REPORTING & DISPATCHES
FROM THE CHURCH
WORLDWIDE

SPOTLIGHT: Evangelical vs. Mainline Politics

➔ There was a time when evangelical pastors dismissed mainline churches as too political and beholden to "the social gospel." But a new study from Calvin College's Paul B. Henry Institute shows that for the past decade, evangelical pastors have been more likely to take public stances on political issues and candidates than have their mainline cohorts. Overall, some differences between evangelical and mainline clergy are shrinking as mainline pastors become more conservative and evangelical pastors become more socially active.



Political Activity of Pastors

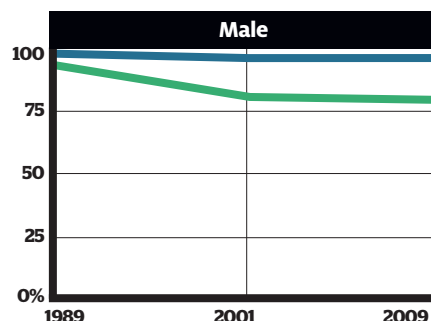
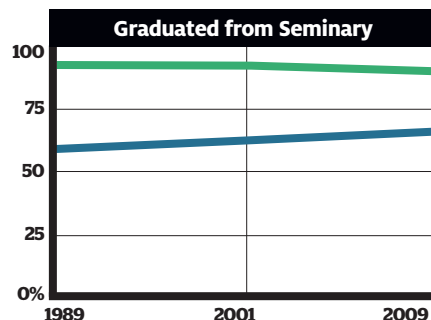
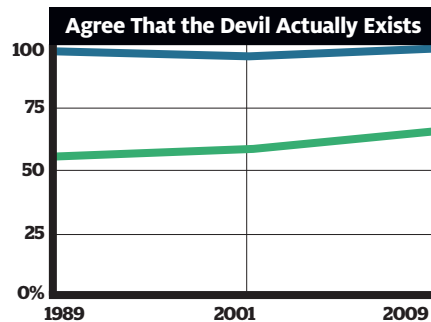
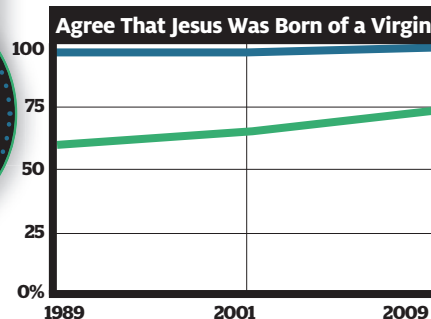


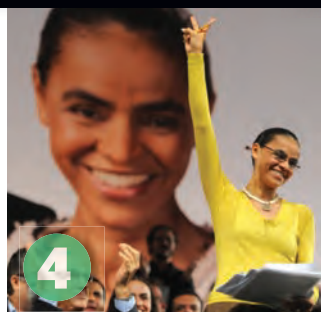
Not Preaching to the Choir

Fewer pastors say their congregations share their politics. Just over half (51%) of evangelical church pastors said so in 2001, but only 40 percent said so in 2009. The drop was even more severe in mainline churches, from 40 percent in 2001 to a mere 25 percent in 2009. But agreement made almost no difference in whether pastors took a stance.

A Narrowing Gap?

Characteristics of Protestant Clergy





GLEANINGS

Important developments in the church and the world.

1 Court: Silence golden in Illinois schools

A dormant 2007 Illinois law mandating "a brief period of silence" at the beginning of every school day was upheld by the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The court said the law was not religious in nature but aimed instead "to calm school children before the start of their day." Permitting students to pray during that moment, it said, did not violate the First Amendment.

2 Doctors allowed to opt out of abortions

EUROPE The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) resolved in October that European doctors have a right to conscientious objection when it comes to abortion. PACE adopted the resolution instead of an earlier draft from its Social, Health, and Family Affairs Committee that objected to "unregulated use" of the right to conscientious objection. The finished resolution prohibits anyone from "being coerced, held liable, or discriminated" into involvement with an abortion "for any reason."

3 Christians acquitted for breaking Muslim fast

ALGERIA A judge in the North African nation's Kabylie region tossed out a case against two recent Muslim converts to Christianity who had been charged with eating during daylight hours in the holy month of Ramadan. The defense argued that the converts had been eating in a discreet place and fell under the protection of international religious freedom law. The judge found that Muslims must fast under Algerian law but that non-Muslims are exempt.

4 Evangelicals influence presidential election

BRAZIL Evangelical voters took center stage in this year's presidential election after concerns over abortion forced Brazil's two leading candidates into a runoff. In the general election, many evangelicals propelled dark-horse Green Party candidate Marina Silva (above) to 19 percent of the vote, leaving the ruling Worker's Party candidate, Roman Catholic Dilma Rousseff, less than 3 percent short of a win. Both Rousseff and her main challenger, Social Democrat José Serra, courted evangelicals for the runoff, with Rousseff backpedaling on some past statements about abortion. Rousseff clinched the presidency with 56 percent of the vote.

5 Exodus departs from Day of Truth

Exodus International has pulled out of the upcoming Day of Truth in the wake of several recent suicides by young victims of anti-gay bullying. The annual Day of Truth was designed to compete with April's Day of Silence, founded to draw attention to anti-gay bullying. Exodus, which works for "freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ," says it no longer thinks the event is necessary. The ministry plans instead to focus on promoting compassion within the church.

6 Investor sues Bible.com owners

An investor in the website Bible.com is suing its board members, claiming that they have failed to capitalize sufficiently on the coveted domain name. The \$50 that owner Roy Miller paid for the URL in 1996 was a steal compared with the high

figures they have been offered since, but Miller won't sell, convinced he is running the site for a purpose. Shareholder James Solakian believes the owners have not sufficiently used the domain name's profit potential. Some estimates place the URL's value at over \$100 million.

7 Crystal Cathedral files for bankruptcy

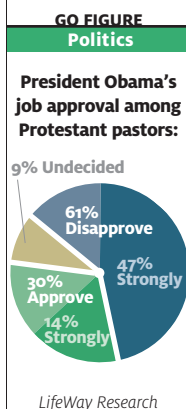
Televangelist Robert H. Schuller's 7,000-member Crystal Cathedral filed for bankruptcy in October. The megachurch had already enacted a round of layoffs and steep budget cuts this year in an attempt to address \$7.5 million worth of debt to unsecured creditors. A few days later, Schuller made a pulpit appeal for tithing and double-tithing to keep his ministry going. Current senior pastor Sheila Schuller Coleman promised that the church could climb back into the black by handling its money in a "biblical" fashion.

8 PC (USA) apologizes for missions abuse

Leaders of the Presbyterian Church (USA) apologized to 30 victims of sexual or physical abuse in the denomination's overseas mission programs, as revealed in a 546-page report released in October. The denomination has been investigating the matter since 2004. Much of the abuse happened at schools for children of missionaries. "I ask you to pray for truth, justice, and healing, both for those who were abused and for those who abused," said PC (USA) world mission director Hunter Farrell.

9 No room for Christians in Malaysian graveyards

MALAYSIA Restrictions on where non-Muslims can bury their dead have led to overflowing Christian cemeteries in areas surrounding the capital of Kuala Lumpur. Many churches prohibit





compiled by Ted Olsen

QUOTATION MARKS

“There’s a competitive environment for ‘no religion,’ and they’re grabbing for all the constituents they can get.”

Mark Silk, director of the Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, on the ad campaigns from four competing atheist groups over the holidays.

The New York Times

“You may be twisting yourselves into pretzels or grasshoppers, but if there is no meditation or direction of consciousness, you are not practicing yoga.”

Albert Mohler, after his online column on the incompatibility of yoga and Christianity caused a small firestorm. He says he was receiving e-mail responses at a rate of about 100 an hour.

AlbertMohler.com

“You couldn’t see the kid’s face entering the front doors.”

Joel Brodsky, divorce attorney for Joseph Reyes, who faced charges for taking his 3-year-old daughter to Mass, violating a court order barring him from exposing her to non-Jewish religion. Brodsky argued that the child in a news video was not clearly Reyes’s daughter.

Chicago Sun-Times

“People who get upset tend to be thinking of the God of the New Testament.”

Sam Childers, self-described Christian mercenary and “machine gun preacher” who pastors a Pennsylvania church. Seven months a year he hunts Lord’s Resistance Army head Joseph Kony and his followers around northern Uganda.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

9

burials outside of the deceased person’s community of residence, so more Malaysian Christians are turning to cremation. The practice is traditionally regarded as non-Christian, more closely associated with faiths like Buddhism. But Christians unable to afford private cemeteries soon may have no other choice. Some Christians are leaving Kuala Lumpur to bury loved ones in sparser cemeteries in other Malaysian states.

10 Controversial North Korean university opens

NORTH KOREA Classes

started this October at Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, the first private university in the socialist state. Funded by a network of South Korean businessmen, many of whom are evangelicals, the university flew in scholars from the United States and Europe. South Koreans hope the school represents a step toward reunification of the divided peninsula; others are skeptical, noting the school boasts a research center for North Korean leader Kim Jong Il’s quasi-religious “Juche” personality cult.

11 Polish Jesus statue will top Rio’s

POLAND The humble town of

Swiebodzin, Poland, has built the tallest statue of Christ in the world. At 118 feet, Swiebodzin’s Jesus tops Rio de Janeiro’s 98-foot “Cristo Redentor” and Bolivia’s 112-foot “Cristo de la Concordia.” Supporters of the project, which was spearheaded by Sylwester Zawadzki, hope it will bring pilgrims and prominence to the struggling town. Critics say the foundations aren’t secure, and a recent construction accident led many to wonder if God really wanted it built. The statue, with a 10-foot crown on Jesus’ head, was completed in November.

11

12 Much ado about Dead Sea Scrolls

As Google launches a project to bring the Dead Sea Scrolls fully online and searchable, two Christian schools are working to gather fragments from the hands of private collectors. Azusa Pacific University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have collected 11 fragments: Southwestern has 6 and Azusa Pacific has 5. But Southwestern insists it is not a race; the important thing, a spokesman said, is making sure the scrolls are available to the academy and the public.

13 Gunmen take congregation hostage

IRAQ More than 50 people

were killed and dozens more injured when gunmen attacked a Roman Catholic church in Baghdad on All Hallow’s Eve. The gunmen entered the church Sunday night just before Mass and took the congregation hostage, demanding the release of a number of detainees and prisoners. Security forces stormed the church after a four-hour standoff. A group called the Islamic State of Iraq claimed responsibility. The attack came days after a Vatican synod of Middle East bishops, at which the pope called for peace and religious freedom to come to the troubled region.

14 Baptist editor resigns

The editor of North Carolina’s Southern Baptist newspaper resigned in October to protect the publication’s funding. Norman Jameson voluntarily left the *Biblical Recorder* to prevent a threat by the Carolina Baptist Association to strip Cooperative Program funding for the *Recorder* at the state convention in November. Jameson, who has been criticized for covering the Woman’s Missionary Union and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, told Associated Baptist Press that his resignation was “not required, but necessary.”

GO FIGURE

Geography

98%

Residents of Shreveport, Louisiana, who describe themselves as Christian. It’s the U.S. city whose residents are most likely to do so.

68%

Residents of San Francisco who describe themselves as Christian, making them the least likely to do so.

19%

Residents of Portland, Maine, who describe themselves as atheist or agnostic, making it the least religious city in America.

Barna Research



MINISTRY

Let People Shop

Food pantries feed more, waste less with client choice. By Charles Honey

It didn't seem right—just letting people take as much free food as they wanted.

Volunteers struggled with the concept when an eastern Ohio food pantry began letting clients choose their own food instead of giving them a pre-boxed three-day supply. But it became clear people weren't going to empty the shelves.

"They looked at us like, 'Where do I begin, and how much should I take?'" recalled Janet Gore, director of Journey's End Ministries in Newcomerstown. "The poor have a lot of pride. They take what they need."

Far from depleting its stocks, Journey's End has seen its cost per person drop as well as a six-fold increase in users since switching to client choice in 2008. Factory closings drove up the numbers, but so did giving clients dignity, Gore said. "We made it much more comfortable for them to shop."

The church-supported pantry is one of many that let people shop for what they want rather than

pre-packaging what's supposed to be good for them. It's a growing philosophy that enables pantries to feed more people and waste less food, advocates say.

"The trend in recent years is very much to move to that system, where people are selecting exactly what they want," said Ross Fraser, spokesman for Feeding America, a national network serving 29,000 pantries, 20 percent of which now use client choice. "We know people will use what they take."

Besides reducing thrown-out food, the system better reflects biblical principles, said John Arnold, executive director of Feeding America West Michigan and a leading proponent of client-choice. "There's no admonishment in Scripture about being overly generous to people who need it."

The debate about how best to feed the hungry has taken on greater urgency amid a recession-wracked holiday season. Feeding America's 200 food banks (suppliers to food

Free Food: Struggling to meet the increased need for food amid a recession-wracked holiday season, more food pantries are discovering that client choice feeds more people without emptying shelves.

pantries) serve 37 million people, including 14 million children—an increase of 46 percent since 2006.

Food banks can't keep up with the need despite bringing in more food than ever, Fraser said. But client choice "optimizes the food that you have" by providing people with what they can and will use. "There's no point giving uncooked pasta to someone who's homeless and doesn't have the means to cook it."

Arnold contends that hunger could be conquered if surplus foods were more efficiently delivered. He said research shows that, in addition to client choice, best practices include purchasing from food banks, relying less on food drives, and setting up mobile pantries.

Those methods would vastly reduce the 6 billion pounds of produce wasted each year and respect people's food choices, he adds, rather than "foist on them things that are maybe more nutritionally perfect that they don't use."

Though commendable, charity programs provide only a fraction of the food provided by federal programs such as school lunch and food stamps, cautions Bread for the World president David Beckmann.

"We can't food-bank our way to the end of hunger," said Beckmann, co-recipient of the 2010 World Food Prize. "Christian people need to change the politics of hunger as well."

LIFE ETHICS

Death of Pro-Life Dems

Midterm election halves caucus. By Tobin Grant and Ruth Moon

The backlash over health-care reform cut in half the number of pro-life Democrats serving in the House of Representatives November 2, making abortion even more of a partisan issue.

In recent years, 40 House

GO FIGURE

Activism

48%

Members of the National Association of Evangelicals' 100+ board of directors who have personally met with at least one of their U.S. senators or representatives.

National Association of Evangelicals

Democrats reliably voted pro-life; now they number 20.

Republicans fighting to take back the House focused on seats held by moderate, pro-life Democrats. The Republicans were helped by pro-life organizations unhappy with these Democrats' votes for the health-care legislation passed last spring. Pro-life groups argue that the bill allows federal funding of abortion, even though President Obama signed an executive order prohibiting it.

"This election has polarized abortion even more in Congress," said John Green, professor of political science at the University of Akron, "because the pro-life voices are less common in the Democratic caucus and more common in the Republican caucus."

Pro-life groups pulled endorsements from Democrats and campaigned for Republican challengers against incumbents such as Steven Driehaus (Ohio) and Kathy Dahlkemper (Pa.). Along with retiring Democrats such as Bart Stupak (Mich.), Bart Gordon (Tenn.), and Charles Melancon (La.), these representatives' districts went Republican.

The pro-life Susan B. Anthony List (SBAL) sponsored a multimillion-dollar "Votes Have Consequences" bus tour that targeted Democrats who voted for the health-care reform. The National Right to Life Committee and CitizenLink also poured advertising dollars into the races.

The incumbents may have lost anyway. In fact, Democrats with solidly pro-life voting records who also opposed the health care bill did worse than those in the Stupak coalition.

"[Republicans] don't want a strong pro-life voice in the Democratic Party; it takes it away as a campaign issue," said Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life of America. "The pro-choice groups and the pro-life Republicans are on the same page: 'We don't want these pro-life Democrats in the party.'"

An SBAL-funded billboard against Driehaus claiming that he "voted for taxpayer-funded abortion" created such a commotion that the Ohio Elections Commission stepped in and ruled it illegal.

Although pro-life Republicans replaced the targeted Democrats, the strategy could significantly change the nature of abortion politics in Congress. "Abortion is likely to come up more often in a Congress where the parties are more polarized on abortion," Green said.

But that political point-scoring might come at the expense of progress, said Stephen Schneck, director of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America.

"If you want to . . . make progress on the whole of the pro-life agenda, you're going to need some Democrats to come along. Going after pro-life Democrats is not going to help the pro-life cause."

But SBAL president Marjorie Dannenfelser predicts her group's actions strengthened the pro-life vote in Congress. "We have a strong team that understands the consequences of undermining the pro-life position," she said. "Real movements don't just say, 'Throw me a few crumbs, and we'll be just fine.'" ❖

EDUCATION

School Choice 2.0

Supreme Court weighs Arizona tax credits. By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

Eight years after declaring school vouchers to be constitutional, the U.S.

Supreme Court is assessing version 2.0 of school choice efforts: tax credits.

The Court heard oral arguments November 3 over the constitutionality of Arizona's dollar-for-dollar tax credits for those who give money to scholarship organizations, most of

which benefit religious schools. Some Arizona taxpayers argue that this setup violates the First Amendment.

"People have moved to tax credits versus vouchers because it's easier as a political matter to convince legislatures," said Eric Rassbach, national litigation director at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. "It has definitely been a trend in school choice movements."

Supporters believe the Court will uphold the credits because the government doesn't decide where the money goes. Opponents argue the credits disproportionately help religious schools.

If the Court allows the credits, it will solidify similar incentives in 13 other states, said Rassbach. If it strikes them down, the ruling will have a "devastating" effect on charitable deductions, tax exemptions for religious organizations, and any other tax treatment that "disproportionately" benefits religious organizations, he said.

It would also be devastating for the 28,000 students who split \$55 million in scholarships last year, said Robert Enlow, president and CEO of the Foundation for Educational Choice, a leading vouchers advocate.

The tax credits have had "far [greater] impact for religious schools than you'd think," Enlow said. "Eighty percent of private schooling in America is currently religious, so the primary beneficiaries of children armed with choice will be religious private schools."

But the growth has been less effective than Jeff Blamer, director of membership for Christian Schools International (CSI), would have hoped because of the lobbyist pressure of teachers' unions.

"I could not tell you any CSI school that is benefiting from a voucher [or tax credit] program," said Blamer, whose organization serves 500 Reformed schools.

Examining how tax credits have benefited Christian schools is not the

PASSAGES



Resigned Mark Earley

As president and CEO of Prison Fellowship, for personal reasons. Chief operating officer Curtis Kemp announced his resignation the same day.



Died Mildred Jefferson

Traillblazing surgeon who became a leading pro-life speaker, on October 15 at her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was 84.



Inaugurated Carol A. Taylor

As president of Vanguard University. Taylor was previously the Costa Mesa, California, school's provost.

[continued on 16]

Briefing [from 15]

right way to look at the situation, he said. "That's where the rub comes, because then you get into the game of constitutionality," he said. "Support for religious institutions with government dollars cannot be done." ➦

CHURCH-STATE AUSTRALIA

Challenging Chappies

Atheist prime minister wants chaplains in schools.
By Trevor Persaud

Despite political opposition and court challenges, Australia's government will continue to use state funds to put staff chaplains in both public and private schools, as it has since 2007.

In August, the government of new Prime Minister Julia Gillard promised to extend the program through 2014. State-funded chaplains now serve 2,700 schools; Gillard wants to add another 1,000.

Gillard, whose atheism sparked international discussion during the campaign, nevertheless pledged

faith in the chaplaincy system shortly after taking office.

"We think it has been a great success, and [wanted] to make sure schools around the country were fairly benefiting from it," Gillard told Australian Christian Lobby director Jim Wallace.

"Many school principals are saying they want pastoral care in their schools," says Tim Mander, CEO of Scripture Union Queensland. "Principals and teachers agree that students are more comfortable approaching their chaplain . . . than other adults in the school community."

The program is voluntary. Chaplains offer "comfort and support to students and staff" as well as "general religious and personal advice," says a spokesman for Peter Garrett, Australia's cabinet minister for education and youth.

"The aim . . . is to provide a complementary support role working alongside psychologists [and] counselors," Garrett's spokesman says. "It is not intended to diminish or replace these services."

Chaplains cannot tell students what they themselves believe unless asked. Most are Christian, though a few schools have Muslim or Buddhist chaplains.

DISCUSSION STARTER Christmas

The U.S. Supreme Court recently refused to consider a challenge to a ban on religious carols in public schools.

The decision underscored how singing "songs of good cheer" can be complicated. Some Christians believe that on the Sundays leading up to Christmas, churches should not sing carols that celebrate the birth of Christ. Others question the theology of some carols.

"Chappies," as Australians call them, do have detractors. A Queensland parent is challenging the program in Australia's High Court, claiming it violates the nation's ban on state-established religion. The Australian Psychological Society (APS) worries that some chaplains without proper psychological training are counseling students. The APS would shift chaplaincy funding to "evidence-based psychological services."

"Chaplains [should] work with students with mental health issues only under the guidance of school psychologists," says Monica Thielking, a former APS adviser who recommended changes to the government program. "That way, students receive the benefit of the services that a chaplain may offer, but in a safe and monitored way."

Rebekah Robinson, a primary school chaplain in Brisbane, Queensland, says that on genuine mental health issues, she and other chaplains are trained to "refer, refer, refer," generally to the principal. Much of a chaplain's job, she says, is not under a counselor's purview.

"You can't tie up a professional psychologist on a professional psychologist's wage with, 'He stole my pencil and I want it back.'" ➦

UNDER DISCUSSION Topics in the current debate.

compiled by Ruth Moon

Should churches ban carols with questionable theology?

YES

"There is the occasional odd lyric, such as 'no crying he makes' from 'Away in a Manger.' This lyric seems to miss a key aspect of the Incarnation: Jesus entered into our suffering. We don't sing that carol, but use instrumental arrangements of the melody."

TOM JENNINGS,
director of worship and arts, Redeemer Presbyterian Church

"Only with care. Carols are some people's only link with a church. But sentimentality is perhaps the single most dangerous feature of our culture—and the sentimental air is never thicker than at Christmas. The Incarnation is messy, dirty, and resonates with the Crucifixion."

JEREMY BEGBIE,
professor of theology, Duke Divinity School

"The time we set aside for corporate worship is precious, so while the idea of 'banning' certain carols is a little too Ebenezer Scrooge for me, pastors and worship leaders should select songs wisely. The good news is there are many theologically rich carols to sing."

CAROLYN ARENDS,
singer-songwriter, author

"The Christmas story does have extra-biblical license, given some carols in our tradition, and that's not harmful. It would become harmful if the carol were presenting something unbiblical; if a carol suggested Mary were not a virgin—that would be an issue."

MIKE HARLAND,
director, LifeWay Worship

"There are deep emotional attachments that often trump any theological discussion. Even though we might say this theology is questionable, if a majority of the church has a desire to continue singing it, we would probably come down on that side."

DAVID EICHER,
hymnal editor, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

"We should admire the simplicity of carols. For example, 'Away in a Manger' follows the tradition of many carols from the English countryside. The simplicity of the words endears the singer to look upon the birth of the child Jesus in a lullaby fashion."

RON CLANCY,
author, American Christmas Classics

NO

Lost Boy: Moses, who is HIV-positive, was found wrapped in a towel along a road in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 2007. A Christian orphanage took him in.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

No Child Left to Die

Half of all babies born with HIV die by age 2. Could we stop that by 2015? By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

Joyce Kamwana got lucky. The mother of two went to the doctor after running a fever, thinking she had malaria. After running tests, the doctor told Kamwana she was HIV-positive. That was 1988, three years after the first case of HIV/AIDS was diagnosed in the East African nation of Malawi.

Kamwana had contracted the disease from her husband, Dan, who would

die from AIDS three years later. Their daughter, Sharon, tested negative for the virus. But their newborn, Tracy, tested positive. After Kamwana finished breastfeeding, more tests were run, and Tracy tested HIV-free. Both girls eventually went to college and were able to donate blood without risk.

"It's quite a relief to say I have only myself to think about now," Kamwana said. "I'm very proud of them. Lord, thank

you. You've done a very good job."

Not every mother living with HIV is as fortunate. Globally, about 1,000 HIV-positive children are born each day. In many developing nations, contracting HIV from one's mother is a death sentence: 50 percent of children who get the disease from their mothers die before their second birthday. Without drug treatment, an HIV-positive pregnant woman has a one in three chance of infecting her child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or through breastfeeding.

Ninety-one percent of children born with HIV live in African nations with very high birth and infant mortality rates. Young children in Uganda, for example, die by the tens of thousands, as the nation has one of the world's highest birth, infant mortality, and HIV infection rates, not to mention deaths from tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases (see "Standing in the (AIDS) Gap," page 18).

Pregnant women with HIV need antiretroviral drugs the most. A 2000 Johns Hopkins University study found that when a pregnant woman takes a single dose of nevirapine (an antiretroviral drug) at the beginning of labor, and her baby takes a dose after birth, the baby's chances of contracting the virus are cut in half, from about 30 percent down to 15 percent.

More recently, researchers have found that a regimen of antiretroviral drugs given to a mother from early in pregnancy to after breastfeeding can reduce the chance of transmission down to about 4 percent. Stephen Lee, senior program director for the prevention, care, and treatment services team at the Elizabeth Pediatric AIDS Foundation, said, "If we can get to under 4 percent of [at-risk] infants being born with HIV, we've accomplished a lot."

FAITH-BASED CHANGE

The greatest challenge is making the new triple-drug regimens and related programs available where they are most needed.

Treatment costs between \$100 and \$140 per year. But only 42 percent of the 33.4 million people worldwide living with HIV have access to ongoing drug treatment. In response, a growing group of faith-based leaders have endorsed the ambitious goal of eliminating mother-child

Standing in the (AIDS) Gap

Only half of HIV-positive children in Uganda receive treatment. By Esther Nakkazi in Kampala, Uganda



fter seven years and \$1.4 billion of American aid, Uganda is coming back to life following a near-death experience with HIV/AIDS.

But the battle is far from over. The U.S. government is spending on average \$5 million a week (\$280 million per year) to fight HIV in the East African country. About 100,000 Ugandans are newly infected each year, and about 25,000 are young children.

"We have a big gap to address in pediatric treatment and care," said Addy Kekitiinwa, executive director of Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation in Kampala. "It's a shame that most adult facilities cannot offer pediatric services."

Christianity Today visited Kampala's Mildmay clinic, which treats HIV-infected women and children. Inside, preschooler Elizabeth happily plays with Jackie, her 2-year-old sister. Both of them are too young to realize how narrowly they escaped becoming a statistic. Worldwide, 280,000 children died of AIDS in 2008.

Wearing a faded pink-and-white dress, Elizabeth is at the clinic for a check-up. For the past four years, clinics and hospitals have become her virtual second home. Born with HIV, Elizabeth came into the world weighing 4.4 pounds. Within eight months, she had contracted meningitis. She was continually coughing and vomiting and became malnourished. After six months of intensive care, she had a 75 percent weight gain and was discharged.

Winnie, Elizabeth and Jackie's mother, is among the 1.1 million Ugandans living with HIV. Before giving birth to Jackie, Winnie, 26, joined an HIV prevention program for expectant women, and so far Jackie has remained disease-free. Now pregnant, Winnie receives updated instruction at Mildmay on how to keep the virus from spreading to her third child.

Such programs are relatively new. In Uganda, programs for HIV-positive pregnant women started in 2000. Clinic nurse Vicky Nabuule told CT that treating pregnant women and children after HIV infection must be comprehensive to succeed long-term. "Women are encouraged to take their medication and to keep their appointments for good adherence," Nabuule said. Prevention reaches 30 percent of the women who are at risk of HIV infection. In Uganda, 150,000 children are living with HIV, but only half of them receive the drug treatment they need to survive.

The Mildmay center treats 22,000 Ugandans annually. The UK-based charity was begun in 1866 by evangelical clergyman William Pennefather to fight a cholera epidemic in London's East End. Mildmay ministers in five African nations. Its programs are designed to treat the whole person. Staff assess the physical, medical, and spiritual needs of each client, then design a treatment program to meet all of those needs. The World Health Organization has given Mildmay one of its best practices awards.

About 90 percent of Uganda's HIV programs rely on donor funding. Within the past year, many cash-strapped programs stopped providing antiretroviral drugs to new patients. This move prompted a worldwide outcry. The PEPFAR program, launched by the Bush administration in 2004, allowed an emergency supply of drugs worth \$5.5 million to be given to the Uganda Ministry of Health. That put another 72,000 HIV-infected people, including 5,000 children, on drugs for the next two years.

"Elizabeth keeps asking me why she has to take the medicine when she is not sick. She does not know how lucky she is," said Winnie. A family friend, Namitala, is also pregnant and HIV-positive. She has lost two children.

Mildmay holds a non-sectarian worship service each morning for clients and staff. Norah Namono, Mildmay's public relations officer, told CT that the pastoral team offers follow-up counseling, because many people living with HIV blame God or witchcraft for their infection.

Dunstan Bukenya, the new Anglican bishop for the Mityana diocese, east of Kampala, said the scientists do the treating, but the healing is from God. "The missionaries knew that very well," Bukenya said. "That is why they built churches alongside hospitals."

HIV transmission by year 2015. Adam Phillips, faith relations manager for the ONE Campaign, an advocacy organization co-founded by U2 frontman Bono, told *Christianity Today*, "This is something we can completely stop. We have the medicine and the know-how. For us it's an imperative to stop it."

ONE's efforts are gathering steam. In May, the Global Fund, which raises billions of dollars for public-health programs in developing countries, launched the Born HIV Free campaign. In October, at the Global Fund Replenishment Meetings, President Obama pledged \$4 billion, a 38 percent increase from the previous pledge. The United Methodist Church gave \$28 million to the Global Fund in 2010. The fund has commitments to receive \$11.7 billion over the next three years. With that money, it will put more people living with HIV/AIDS on daily drug therapy, support more of the 14 million AIDS orphans, and almost double the number of HIV-positive pregnant women receiving preventive services.

This fall, ONE launched its own public awareness campaign, No Child Born with HIV by 2015. ONE has collaborated with evangelical leaders such as Saddleback Church's Rick Warren, West Angeles Church of God in Christ Bishop Charles Blake, and mainline denominations, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Episcopal Church. The campaign precedes a larger push next spring, starting Sunday, April 10. "Lazarus Sunday" borrows from the Orthodox Church's Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday, which commemorates the resurrection of Lazarus. "Jesus tells Lazarus' sisters that his disease will not lead to death, that their brother will rise again," said Phillips, who is a pastor. "We see a Lazarus effect happening when folks can get on antiretroviral [drugs] and their babies are born HIV-free."

Among the local church leaders who have joined ONE's efforts is Michael Hidalgo, pastor of Denver Community Church. On the Sunday nearest World AIDS Day (December 1), Hidalgo will preach on HIV/AIDS mother-child transmission.

"We're teaching on 'O Little Town of Bethlehem.' On Sunday school flannel boards, it's a sweet little place, but

Esther Nakkazi is a journalist in Kampala, Uganda.

historically there are miserable stories located there,” he said. Besides being the site of King David’s anointing, Bethlehem was home to a concubine who was assaulted, cut into pieces, and sent to the tribes of Israel. It was also a place of heart-wrenching genocide ordered by King

found out her husband had infected her with HIV, she was emotionally devastated. Some members of her church responded judgmentally, and she left.

“In 2002, I joined Charismatic Redeemed Ministries International. This is where I was loved for who I was and encouraged that

‘The ONE campaign asks if we have the political will for no child to be born with HIV by 2015. I ask if we have the spiritual will.’

~ Shayne Moore, activist and author

Herod after Jesus’ birth.

“This is the world that God came into,” Hidalgo said. “The story of Jesus being born in a difficult place—it’s not hard to transfer that to children born today in a difficult place.”

MOTHER TO MOTHER

Twenty-two years ago, when Kamwana

with God, everything is possible,” Kamwana told CT. She came to believe God had a purpose for her life. “I consider the battle against HIV as my ministry.”

Kamwana is one woman in an expanding network of Christian mothers focused on preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission. Another is Shayne Moore, a stay-at-home mother of three in

suburban Chicago. Moore, author of the new book *Global Soccer Mom*, began her advocacy work in 2002, around the time Bono was traveling the U.S. calling on Christians to fight HIV.

“The ONE Campaign asks if we have the political will for no child to be born with HIV by 2015,” Moore told CT. “I ask if we have the spiritual will.” But the 15 African nations where HIV is rampant have a combined population of 515 million. Scaling up programs to reach millions of at-risk pregnant women is a daunting challenge. Many women at risk don’t even know they have the virus.

The President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is committed to testing 80 percent of all pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa by 2011. Of those who test positive, 85 percent will begin the drug regimen, said U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Eric Goosby. “We lose a lot of women to follow-up,” he said. It’s difficult to keep a pregnant woman with HIV connected to a

[continued on 20]

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HIV/AIDS Transmission [from 19]

medical facility for 40 weeks of pregnancy and about six months of nursing, he said.

Long-term follow-up for HIV-positive women is a major priority because women

‘We are creating a generation that is HIV-free. If the women keep being treated, we’ll be able to achieve that.’

~ Joyce Kamwana, an HIV-positive mother in Malawi

account for 60 percent of all adults living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa.

Samaritan’s Purse has begun taking on that follow-up role, said the nonprofit’s HIV/AIDS project coordinator, Ashley Wagoner. In eastern Kenya, Samaritan’s Purse is in the middle of a three-year pilot project that will end in 2011. In the Kinango district, outside the coastal city of Mombasa, many women give birth at home. “Some areas were up to 24 miles

[in] walking distance from the nearest clinic,” she said.

In this case, Samaritan’s Purse health workers train existing community health workers and midwives to educate pregnant women about HIV and set up

support groups. Since the program started in 2008, it has trained 37 community health workers, referred about 1,500 women for testing and counseling, and educated almost 4,500 women on how to prevent HIV transmission.

Progress has been encouraging. Of all HIV-positive pregnant women living in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of those who received antiretroviral drugs increased from 15 percent in 2005 to 45

percent in 2008 to 54 percent in 2009. Still, about 18 percent of women with HIV pass the disease on to their newborns.

Dropping that rate to 7 percent by 2012 is a good first goal before dropping the last few percentages to elimination. Lee said, “I think it’s achievable if the momentum being generated right now is maintained, and if the resources follow the rhetoric that people are [using] now.”

For Kamwana, that feels great. “We are creating a generation that is HIV-free,” she said. “If the women keep being treated, we’ll be able to achieve that.” It’s an amazing thing for a woman who never thought she’d live to see grandchildren.

“I will no longer die of AIDS. It will be due to something else, but not AIDS.”

Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra is a journalist from the Chicago area. International reporting in *Christianity Today* is supported by a grant from John Stott Ministries.

Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “No Child Left to Die,” a Bible study based on this article.



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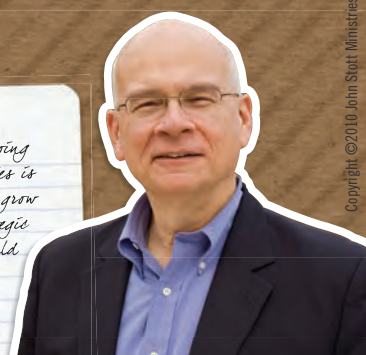
Today, at least 75% of the world’s Christians are non-Western, or living in what is called the “Majority World.” This means Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. But 80% of Majority World pastors have no formal biblical training. And they’re trying to bring biblical truth to areas suffering from extreme poverty and injustice. That’s where we fit in. We’re geared to enable and resource pastors and other Christian leaders to preach and teach the Bible, faithfully and effectively.

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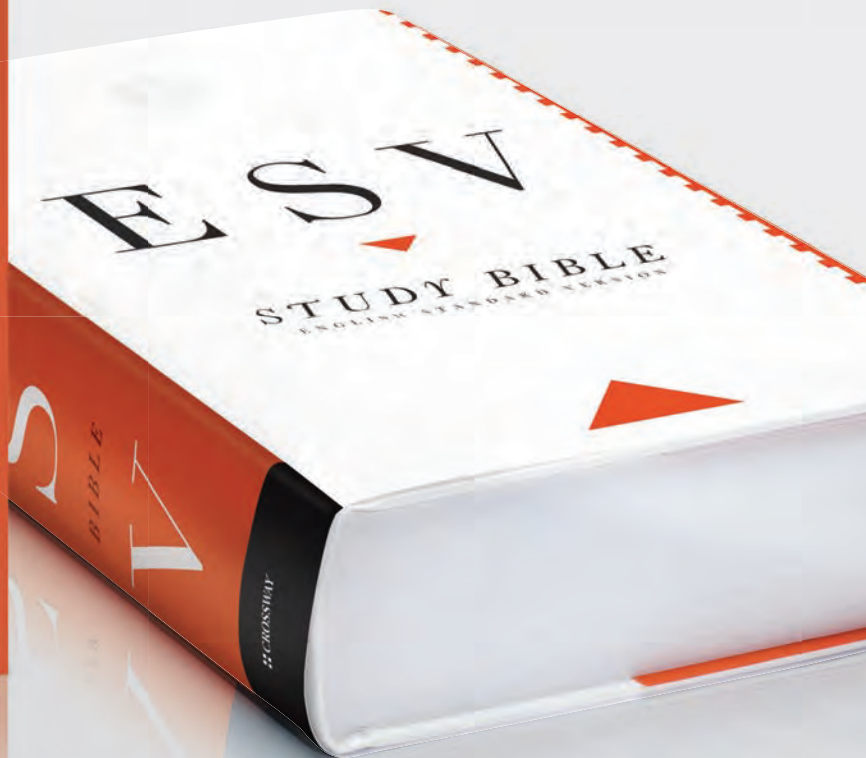
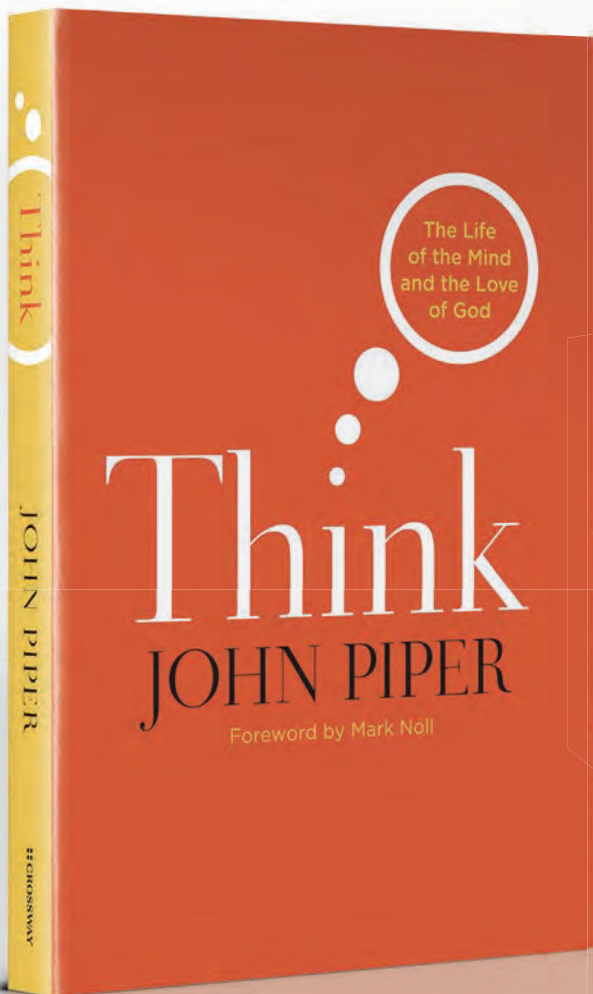
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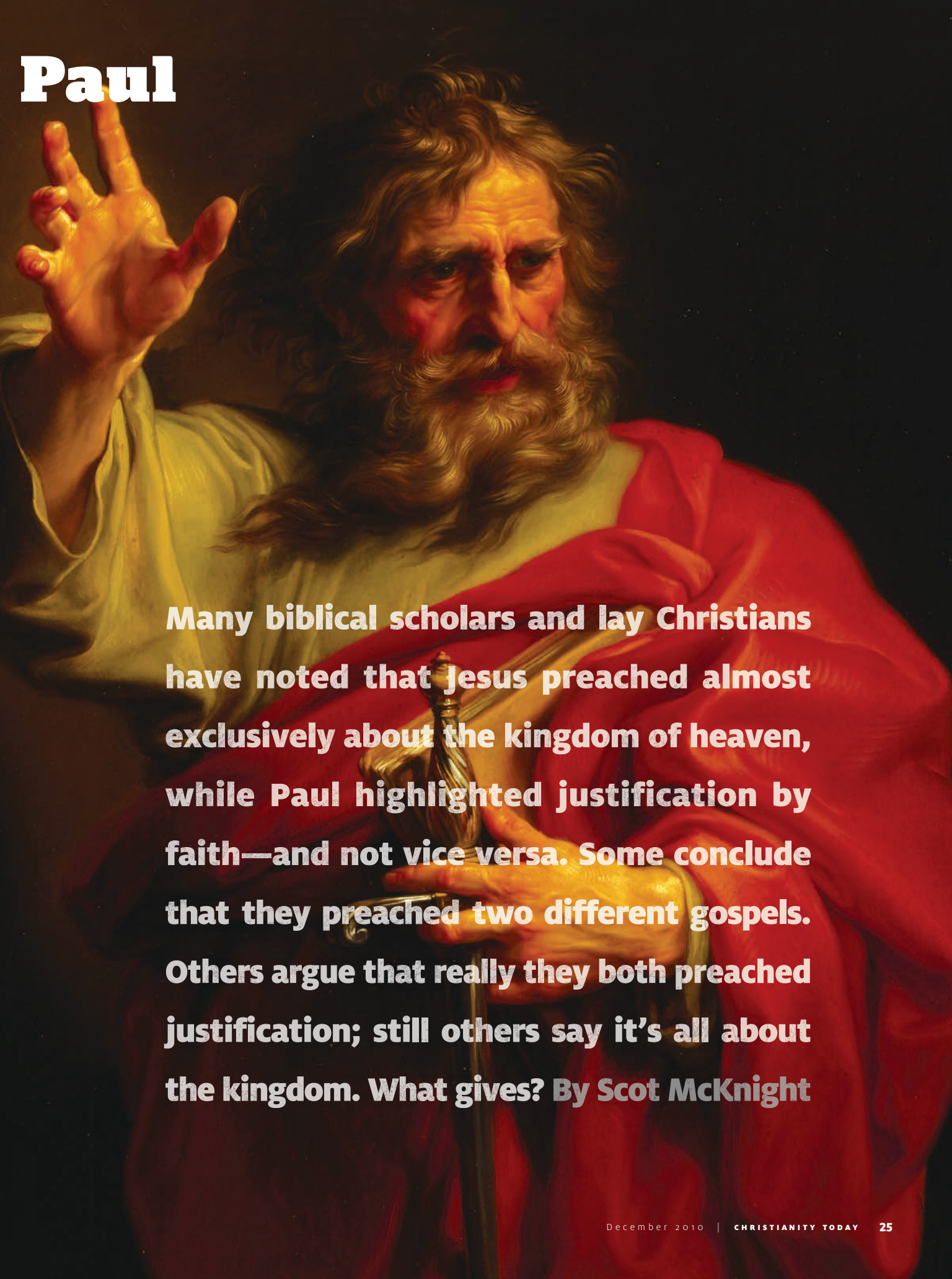
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{ COVER STORY }

Jesus vs.



Paul



Many biblical scholars and lay Christians have noted that Jesus preached almost exclusively about the kingdom of heaven, while Paul highlighted justification by faith—and not vice versa. Some conclude that they preached two different gospels. Others argue that really they both preached justification; still others say it's all about the kingdom. What gives? By Scot McKnight

I GREW up with, on, through, and in the apostle Paul. His letters were the heart of our Bible. From the time I began paying attention to my pastor's sermons, I can only recall sermons on 1 Corinthians—the whole book verse by verse, week by week—and Ephesians. I don't recall a series on any of the Gospels or on Jesus.

There were two annual exceptions to our Pauline focus. At Christmas, we heard a sermon on one of the narratives about Jesus' birth, and during Holy Week, we got something on Jesus' death and resurrection. We were Pauline Christians and not one bit worried about it. I learned to think and believe and live in a Pauline fashion. Everything was filtered through Paul's

theology. Justification was the lens for the gospel, and "life in the Spirit," the lens for Christian living.

Then I went off to Bible college (now Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan) and majored in history while taking as many Bible courses as I could. Once again, Paul featured prominently. My senior year, I read the first volume of Ralph Martin's New Testament Foundations series and was taken with the freshness of the Gospels. But nothing overwhelmed me like my first experience in seminary. Sitting in Walter Liefeld's synoptic Gospels course at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, I was absolutely mesmerized by Jesus, his kingdom vision, and the Gospels. I decided then and there that my life's pursuit would be Jesus and the Gospels.

A few years later, I began doctoral work on the Gospel of Matthew, and a few years after that began teaching as a young professor at Trinity, where I even got to teach Jesus and the Gospels. I spoke so often about Jesus' teachings that one student quipped that I needed to give a lecture called "Jesus' View of Jesus," since I had covered Jesus' view on everything but Jesus!

Something was clearly happening to me. Formerly I had loved Paul and thought with Paul. Then, when I encountered Jesus, as if for the first time, I began learning to think with Jesus. One of my colleagues occasionally suggested I was getting too Jesus-centered and ignoring Paul. I'm not so sure I was ignoring Paul; after all, I was teaching a few of his letters on a regular basis. But I had unlearned how to think in Pauline terms and was thinking only in the terms of Jesus. Everything was kingdom-centered for me.

And, truth be told, I was so taken with Jesus' kingdom vision that reading Paul created a dilemma every time I opened his letters.

AN EVANGELICAL CRISIS

My experience is not unusual. Many of us have made a move from Paul to Jesus, and an increasing tension remains among evangelicals about who gets to set the terms: Jesus or Paul? In other words, will we center our gospel teaching and living on "the kingdom" or "justification by faith"?

The choice matters. It can be said without exaggeration that the evangelical movement owes its fundamental strength to the Reformation and the Great Awakenings and revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries; that is, it is a Paul-shaped movement through and through. The early 20th century arrival of the social gospel, which seemed to link "kingdom" with "liberal" and "justice," made the Pauline emphasis within the evangelical movement more pronounced. Furthermore, when some evangelicals recently rediscovered Jesus' kingdom vision, they were frequently warned that they were on the verge of falling for a social gospel.

But something has happened in the past two decades: a subtle but unmistakable shift among many evangelicals from a Pauline-centered theology to a Jesus-shaped kingdom vision. Sources for this shift surely include George Eldon Ladd's *The Presence of the Future*, the rugged and unrelenting justice voice of Jim Wallis, perhaps most notably in his *Call to Conversion*, and a growing social conscience among evangelicals. We can argue about factors, but what matters is that a shift has occurred.

Daniel Kirk, a young New Testament scholar at one of Fuller Theological Seminary's extension sites, recently sent me a manuscript for review. The first suggested title was, *Jesus Have I Loved, But Paul?* That perfectly captures something I have observed in

15 years of teaching college students. Students love the Jesus part of the class, but their eyes seem to glaze over when we move from Jesus to Paul.

It is not exaggerating to say that evangelicalism is facing a

Evangelicalism is facing a crisis about the relationship of Jesus to Paul, and many today are choosing sides.

crisis about the relationship of Jesus to Paul, and that many today are choosing sides. I meet many young, thinking evangelicals whose "first language" is Jesus and the kingdom. Yet despite the trend, perhaps in reaction to it, many look to Paul and justification by faith as their first language. Those addicted to kingdom language struggle to make Paul fit, while those addicted to Paul's theological terms struggle to make Jesus fit. I know the experience because I, too, struggled to make the Pauline message fit the kingdom vision, and that was after struggling to make Jesus fit into the Pauline message.

TWO APPROACHES

Evangelicals have offered two ways to resolve this dilemma—that is, to bring Paul and Jesus into a more perfect harmony. What stands out is that each approach imagines that it is articulating the gospel itself. One approach is to master Jesus' gospel, the kingdom vision, and show how Paul fits. The other approach is to master Paul's gospel, his theology of justification, and show how Jesus fits. Each approach requires some bending of corners and squeezing of sides but, with extra effort and

some special explanations, each thinks it can show the unity of the messages of Jesus and Paul and that the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of justification are one and the same.

Take the Jesus approach. The kingdom of God, if one follows George Ladd's line of thinking (often called "inaugurated eschatology"), is defined as the "dynamic reign of God." It is grounded in texts like Matthew 12:28, where Jesus says that if he casts out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has (presently) come upon them. Or Mark 1:15: the time has been fulfilled, the kingdom of God has drawn near (so near that its presence is now being felt)—therefore repent and believe. It is not hard to fit "justification by faith" into the mold

of the dynamic, personal, redemptive presence of God in the work of Jesus Christ. With some careful nuancing, the witness of Romans to justification and the witness of Ephesians to a cosmic redemption in Christ can be drawn into the ambit of the kingdom.

But a few problems always emerge. They have always given me an uneasy conscience about this kind of harmonizing. First, Paul doesn't talk about the kingdom enough to make me think his theology is really kingdom-shaped. His letters include fewer than 15 references to the kingdom. Fitting Paul into a kingdom mold is more by hook than it is by the book. Furthermore, Paul thinks more in terms of soteriology, justification, and

ecclesiology than he does kingdom. So, if we are to be fair to Paul, we have to let Paul be Paul.

An even more fatal flaw resides in this approach: kingdom means more than the "dynamic" reign of God at work in Christ. The emphasis on "dynamic" leads me to think that we evangelicals want "kingdom" to refer to the personal experience of conversion, so that it can fit with our evangelical Paul. The roadblock here is insurmountable: kingdom for any and every Jew in the first century had at least four components:

a king (Jesus or God), a people (Israel), a territory (the land of Israel), and a law that governed the people (the Torah or law of Moses). My conclusion: You can't begin at kingdom with Jesus

and simply cross the path and conclude that Jesus was, after all, talking about justification.

What devastates this approach is that some of the central themes of kingdom for Jesus—which are all found in those crucial passages in Luke, such as the opening sermon in Nazareth (4:16–30)—are not found in Paul. Yes, Paul does care for the poor—of Jerusalem, at least. But caring for the poor and the outcast, and a revolutionary message about possessions—well, they just don't show up enough in Paul to lead one fairly to conclude that Paul was essentially teaching the same thing as Jesus. Kingdom and justification are not the same thing. We have to find a better way to harmonize Jesus and Paul.

So others have started with Paul's understanding of justification and found a way to incorporate Jesus' kingdom vision. A recent attempt by John Piper, one of the leading lights in the revival of Reformed theology, illustrates how this can be done. At one pastor's conference, Piper asked a simple question: Did Jesus preach Paul's gospel? The order—asking if Jesus fits Paul!—might rankle many Bible readers and historians, but such questions about the Bible are not inappropriate.

To answer this question, Piper probed the one and only time the word *justified* in a Pauline sense appears in the Gospels. Luke 18:14 reads, "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God." Jesus is referring, of course, to the tax collector and not to the Pharisee. We could add Matthew 12:37, and perhaps Luke 10:29 and 16:15, but we can't find much in the Gospels that shows Jesus thinking in terms of "justification by faith." But Piper's skilled exegesis and theological persuasiveness led him to conclude that Jesus *did* teach justification by faith, perhaps even by double imputation.

Piper isn't alone here. Long ago a German Lutheran, Joachim Jeremias, connected Jesus' term *Abba* (Aramaic for "father") to Paul's theology of justification to show that this central message of the New Testament was found in both Jesus and Paul.

Paul doesn't talk about the kingdom enough to make me think his theology is really kingdom-shaped. His letters include fewer than 15 references to the kingdom.



But what weakens the attempt to make Paul fit into a kingdom vision weakens the attempt to make Jesus fit into Paul's justification paradigm. What makes Paul tick at the level of language just doesn't make Jesus tick. What makes Jesus tick in the kingdom doesn't make Paul tick. We either have to let Jesus be Jesus, who barely talks about justification, and let Paul be Paul, who barely talks about kingdom, or we have to find another way.

I think there is another way, one that is fair to both and at the same time explains the inner unity at the level of *gospel*.

THE GOSPEL WAY

The problem with the two approaches—trying to make Paul fit Jesus' kingdom vision, or trying to make Jesus fit Paul's justification vision—comes down to this: each approach reduces the word *gospel*. For one group, it is equated with the kingdom. For the other, it is a synonym for justification by faith. To be sure, the word *gospel* encapsulates both kingdom and justification, but *gospel* operates on a foundation deeper than either. If we can grasp that, the supposed disjunction between Jesus and Paul disappears.

So where do we begin to get a New Testament understanding of "the gospel"? With Paul! Not with Romans 3 or Romans 5, however, but with 1 Corinthians 15:1–8:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

As we can see, here Paul is about to define *gospel*, and in fact, this is the only text in the New Testament that does so. What he says next is crucial:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

A number of observations are in order.

First, this is the gospel handed on to Paul (v. 3), which suggests it was the gospel the earliest apostles preached.

Second, the gospel saves people from their sins (v. 2–3).

Third, the essence of the gospel is the story of Jesus (vv. 3–8) as the completion of Israel's story (v. 3). Both the word *Christ* (Messiah) and the phrase "according to the Scriptures"

are central to how the apostles understood the word *gospel*.

Fourth, there's not a word here about either kingdom or justification! Sure, you can probe "for our sins" until both themes bubble up to the surface, but we should at least let Paul be Paul when it comes to defining the *gospel*.

Added together, it means this: The gospel is first and foremost about Jesus. Or, to put it theologically, it's about Christology. Behind or underneath both kingdom and justification is the gospel, and the gospel is *the saving story of Jesus that completes Israel's story*. "To gospel" is to tell a story about Jesus as the Messiah, as the Lord, as the Son of God, as the Savior.

Thus, the question of whether the gospel of Jesus and the gospel of Paul are the same is radically reshaped. The question is not, "Does Paul preach the kingdom?" Nor is the question, "Does Jesus preach justification?"

Or if, like Piper, we ask if Jesus preached Paul's gospel, then we are really asking, "Does Jesus preach Jesus?" Or, "What was Jesus' teaching about Jesus?" Or, "Does he preach himself as the completion of Israel's story?" Or, "Does Jesus preach his own life, death, burial, and resurrection?"

The entire New Testament comes together by answering all these questions. And the answer is *Yes, Jesus preached*

himself as the completion of Israel's story. Jesus preached the gospel (of Paul, of Peter, of John) because Jesus preached himself. Any reading of the Gospels, and any

Gospel will do, leads constantly to this question that Jesus himself asked those who saw him and heard him: "Who am I?"

WHAT JESUS THOUGHT OF JESUS

Let's start with Jesus' teaching about the kingdom. His inaugural sermon in his hometown synagogue, at Nazareth, is a profoundly and properly egocentric statement about himself. We miss the essence of this passage if we reduce the story to kingdom only. Jesus reads from Isaiah 61:1–2, a passage about end-time kingdom redemption. But what we need to note is that Jesus thinks he is the agent of that redemption, that he is none other than the "anointed" one.

Another key kingdom text is Luke 7:20–23. John the Baptist asks whether or not Jesus is the "one who was to come." Jesus answers by creating a clever and beautiful mosaic from Isaiah (29:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1). The last line is arresting in its bold claim: "Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of *me*" (emphasis mine). In other words, Jesus claims that he fulfills those Scriptures. "The story of Israel," Jesus is saying, "comes to its completion in me." Again, the message of Jesus is thoroughly egocentric.

This last text leads us to a set of Gospel texts that I call the "Who am I? Who are you?" texts. In these passages, Jesus and John the Baptist are in dialogue with one another and with others about who they are. I fear we skip over these passages because we know them too well. But let me suggest we ask a question about these Jesus and John conversations: What kind of people run around asking others who they are? And when

We can't find much in the Gospels that shows Jesus thinking in terms of 'justification by faith.'

they ask such questions, do they assume that the answers are found in the persons and predictions of the Bible? Which of us says to another, “Who do you think I am? Do you think I’m the figure from Isaiah or the Messiah or Elijah or Moses or the Son of Man or the Davidic king?” None of us, and if we did, we’d be assigned to the fringes of society and perhaps institutionalized.

Jesus and John seemed to have carried on a conversation about who they were. And while John doesn’t seem always to be certain of who he is, Jesus always is certain about both who John is *and* who he is.

(Who did others think Jesus was? Matthew 16:14. Who did others think John was? John 1:19–28. Who did John think John was? John 1:22–23. Who did John think Jesus was? Matthew 3:11–12; Luke 7:18–23.

Who did Jesus think John was? Mark 9:9–13. Who did Jesus think Jesus was? Luke 7:22–23.)

There is something here that courses through the pages of the Gospels: Jesus and John see themselves as the ones who complete Israel’s story, and their story is the saving story. This is exactly what Paul said the gospel was. Jesus may have spoken of kingdom, and Paul may have spoken of justification, but underneath both kingdom and justification is Christology: It is the story about Jesus, who is Messiah and Lord and who brings the kingdom and justifies sinners by faith.

Excuse me for piling on here, but only when we grasp the

gospel as the saving story about Jesus that completes Israel’s story do we see the profound unity between Jesus and Paul. Both “gospel” the same gospel because both told the story of Jesus.

For example, what kind of person says this: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17)? Jesus overtly declares that the entire Law and Prophets point to him and are fulfilled in him, which is to “gospel” exactly as does Paul, who says it this way: “according to the Scriptures.”

What kind of person chooses the symbolic number twelve, which connects to the formation of Israel as a twelve-tribe people and also to the hope for the revival of the ten lost tribes?

But there’s more: Jesus does not include himself because he perceives himself to be the Lord of the Twelve. Jesus, by appointing twelve, saw history coming to completion and saw himself as Lord of that completion. That is gospeling! And it’s the gospel of all the apostles.

What kind of person predicts more than once that he will not only die but also rise, as Jesus does in Mark 9:31?

What kind of person sums up his life as the Son of Man who came to give his life as a ransom for many, but does so in ways that combine Daniel 7’s Son of Man vision with Isaiah 42–53’s servant image? That is what we find when we combine Mark 10:45 with Mark 14:24.

What kind of person sees himself as the Passover, as Jesus does at the Last Supper? Here Jesus synthesizes profound images, makes sense of his own life through those images, and declares that he himself is the redeeming, forgiving agent for Israel. Again, we are right where Paul was in 1 Corinthians 15, when he said Jesus died “for our sins.” This is Paul’s gospel in the words and actions of Jesus.

My contention, then, is simple: If we begin with kingdom, we have to twist Paul into shape to fit a kingdom vision. If we begin with justification, we have to twist Jesus into shape to fit justification. But if we begin with gospel, and if we understand gospel as Paul does in 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, then we will find what unifies Jesus and Paul—that both witness to Jesus as the center of God’s story. The gospel is the core of the Bible, and the gospel is the story of Jesus. Every time we talk about Jesus, we are gospeling. Telling others about Jesus leads to both the kingdom and justification—but only if we begin with Jesus. ☩

Scot McKnight is the Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies at North Park University. He is the author of many books, most recently *One Life: Jesus Calls, We Follow* (Zondervan). Go to ChristianBibleStudies.com for “Jesus vs. Paul,” a Bible study based on this article.





WHEN WE THINK OF ISLAM, we tend to think of the Middle East. But 80 percent of the world's Muslims live elsewhere, and in regions where they encounter half the world's Christians. If one wants to learn about the relationship between Christianity and Islam, there is no better place to begin. So Eliza Griswold spent seven years investigating what she calls the "torrid zone" to unpack the relations of the two great religions. The result is *The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches from the Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam* (Farrar,

Straus and Giroux), "a beautifully written book, full of arresting stories woven around a provocative issue" (*The New York Times*).

Griswold is an award-winning investigative journalist and a fellow at the New America Foundation. Her writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, and *Harper's*. She also has published a collection of poems, *Wideawake Field*. Mark Galli, *CT* senior managing editor, talked with Griswold about her impressions of Islam and Christianity in Africa and Asia.

The title of your book suggests that geography plays a large role in the religious tensions between Muslims and Christians.



{ THE CT INTERVIEW }

The Line Where Religions Collide

Journalist and poet **Eliza Griswold** says we can learn a lot about Islam and Christianity by surveying the region where they have clashed for 200 years. Interview by Mark Galli

The tenth parallel is not so much a specific line but a broader zone. In Africa, it marks the southern edge of most of the continent's 400 million Muslims, who live predominantly north of this line, in the northernmost third of Africa, which is dry land. Historically, as traders and Islamic missionaries traveled, they reached as far south as the tenth parallel. Where the tenth parallel began, so did tsetse [biting] flies, which carried sleeping sickness that killed off traders and missionaries, horses, and camels. Because of sleeping sickness, Islam largely stopped there.

When the European powers came, mostly during the 1800s and early 1900s—especially after 1885 and “the scramble for

Africa”—colonial rule was established in places that had been hard to reach historically. Christian missionaries from these nations came with two great gifts, the two Bs: the Bible and the bicycle.

Many came simply doing what most missionaries do today, bringing the Word in a positive way to people's lives. But some came with the express purpose of stopping Islam as a rival monotheism; they focused their efforts along this southernmost edge of the Muslim world, explicitly along the tenth parallel, to stop Islam from winning Africa. A lot of the language we hear today from Christians about a global battle with Islam is nothing new. It certainly dates back at least 100 years.

This fault line is as sharp as it is because it's one of the most environmentally sensitive belts in the world. Along the equator, depending on the time of year, two winds meet—dry wind dropping from the northern hemisphere and wet wind rising from the south collide. When we look east, that pattern established the encounter of Christianity and Islam on the island nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The trade winds carried Muslim and Christian traders, and Muslim and Christian missionaries, to the same beaches, islands, and ports, where they began to fight over control of what was then the spice route. It's largely an encounter driven by wind and weather, and, again, centuries of migrations, whether on ships or on land.

What are the demographic realities along the tenth parallel?

I started with a single statistic: Four out of five of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims live outside the Arab world. They are not living in the Middle East. They're living in Africa. They're living in Asia. And they live along this fault line, where they meet nearly half of the world's 2 billion Christians. These two worlds meet along this 700-mile-wide band that jigs and jags. The tenth parallel is a broader way of looking at what happens when religions meet on the ground.

I started with a single statistic: Four out of five of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims live outside the Arab world. They are not living in the Middle East.

We've heard the oversimplified narrative about the clash of civilizations. Well, what actually has happened over the 1,500 years these two religions have coexisted? Before I went to Ethiopia, I did not know that in A.D. 615, when the prophet Muhammad was chased out of his hometown of Mecca by his own people, he took most of his followers 210 miles away, to the city now known as Medina. He also sent a dozen of his followers to the safest place he knew: the court of a Christian king, the king of Abyssinia, which today is Ethiopia. These followers of Muhammad went to the king and earned their asylum by telling the king the story of the Virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus underneath a date tree, which is the story from the Qur'an.

The king gave them land in East Africa. For a thousand years there was never trouble between Muslims and their Christian neighbors, because the Muslims were so grateful for that safe haven.

So my book is an attempt to show that religiosity is not always a problem, that it's not always something divisive.

Some argue that Islam is happy to get along peacefully with Christianity if Islam is in the majority, in a position of power. Is that your reading?

My concern about Islam is actually the opposite. When there's a Muslim minority, in my experience, it has more readily gotten along with the Christian majority. It is less likely to stir the pot compared with most minorities.

Our concern should be about how political Islam, when it comes to power, treats Muslim minorities. For example, look at the Ahmadiyya. Here is a sect within Islam that's been declared heretical in Pakistan, and these people suffer.

One of the most overlooked and important human rights issues facing us today is the treatment of religious minorities, period.

One area where we need to pay the most attention is how Muslim-majority countries treat minorities in their midst both within Islam and within other religions, like Christianity. That is a crisis. We are seeing people, both Christians and Muslims who hold minority beliefs, fleeing Muslim countries at very high rates.

Your book reveals deep divisions within Islam. How do those divisions shape Islam's relationship with Christians?

After seven years of watching the two religions across cultures and continents, I've come to believe that the most overlooked religious clashes today are those inside religions, not between them. So what does that mean? Well, there are different kinds of conflicts inside of religions. There are, for example, ideological confrontations between progressives and traditionalists, over who's a true believer and who is not. That's no less true in Islam.

There are two sections of the Qur'an. There are verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca, and there are verses revealed to him in Medina, where he was a warrior statesman. The Meccan verses tend to be more peaceful and inclusive. The Medinan verses are more violent; they are about jihad and include verses that strictly prescribe [rules for] people's daily lives.

Historically Muslims have paid more attention to the Medinan verses, those later verses, which are more martial in nature. But a group within Islam argues for a more progressive

interpretation that gives priority to the more peaceful Meccan verses. Emory University Islamic scholar Abdullahi An-Na'im argues that places where Islam is growing fastest outside of the Arab world have more progressive forms of the faith. So this is a big division within Islam.

Or, look at the divisions between Shi'a and Sunnis. Sunnis are the vast majority of the world's more than 1 billion Muslims. Shi'a believe their leaders have to be tied to Muhammad by blood; Sunnis believe that blood is less important than how history has played out. Then you have the Sufis, which compose the majority of African Muslims. The most frightening emerging division within Islam is between the Sufis and the Sunnis, because Sunni hard-liners are getting more aggressive about saying that Sufis are not true believers. There's potential for more bloodshed.

What are some of the nonreligious factors that make Islamic-Christian relations more violent?

Every religious conflict I witnessed in seven years of reporting has some kind of secular trigger. Those include fights over land, over water, over oil, over political elections—even over cocoa, the principal ingredient in chocolate, in Indonesia. When chocolate prices spiked worldwide, so did violence between Christians and Muslims in Eastern Indonesia.

The 10-40 window has been one of the most inspiring ideas in Christian missions in the past two decades. How do Muslims perceive this initiative?

It terrifies them. Muslims do not understand Christian proselytizing. Even the most conservative Christian evangelists I know understand that in preaching to others, whether it's me or a Muslim, it's giving that person who's hearing the message a choice. It's not about

Our concern should be about how political Islam, when it comes to power, treats Muslim minorities. One of the most overlooked and important human rights issues facing us today is the treatment of religious minorities, period.

forcible conversion. That message does not reach the Muslim world at all. Muslims understand conversion to be linked to imperialism. Proselytizing by the Christian West is nothing new, and it has never been a friendly experience for them. So they hear the 10-40 window as the obliteration of the Islamic world, and they go nuts.

What has led them to believe that Christian evangelism is coercive?

Events particularly after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, when Christian missions became explicitly linked to Western imperialism. Missionaries did not understand themselves as agents of imperial powers, and many times they understood themselves to be working against those forces. But that message never reached Muslims. They saw the Christian West as a monolith. In the same way we see Islam as a monolith, they understand the Christian West as a monolith that's out to get them, and it's out to get them in secular ways, through imposing corrupt democratic governments that undermine their Islamic law.

We occasionally hear about Christians attacking Muslims, especially in Nigeria and Indonesia. What do Muslims in general consider the greatest recent atrocity perpetrated by Christians against Muslims?

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They perceive those as not the attack of the United States but of a Christian nation?

For them there's no difference between the two.

How about vice versa: What do Christians worldwide consider the greatest Muslim atrocity perpetrated against Christians?

The attack on the World Trade Center.

Even to Christians in Africa and Asia?

Absolutely. One Nigerian pastor told me that Nigeria had had its own 9/11 a few days before the U.S. did; he was talking about a very bad attack by Muslims against Christians on September 1, 2001. There is widespread relief among African Christians and Asian Christians who have long been a minority that the U.S. is finally getting it: *Now that American Christians have been attacked, they'll understand how violent Islam is.* This is a Christian understanding in much of the world—that the Christian West is at war with Islam. That's not just a Muslim understanding.

Some observers believe the way forward is for Muslims and Christians to become more moderate. By that they seem to mean that each group should give up their exclusivist claims (that their religion is the true one) and their attempts to convert the world.

That's a naïve assumption. For many secular leaders, religion is an idea that the world will grow out of. But the world isn't becoming less religious; it's becoming more religious.

But many people believe that if you can't get Christians and Muslims to abandon transcendent claims and mission, they will never stop fighting.

Well, I would point to a pastor and an imam in northern Nigeria. Each is a self-avowed fundamentalist in his own faith; each believes the other one is going to hell. Yet they have worked together successfully for the past 15 years to end religious violence in their hometown of Kaduna.

Pastor James Movel Wuye has one arm. The other arm was lopped off by Muslim soldiers when Christians and Muslims were fighting to the death over control of a local market. In their younger days, both Wuye and the imam, Muhammed Nurayn Ashafa, understood themselves to be, respectively, Christian and Muslim soldiers for God. Eventually each had a faith experience.

For example, the pastor went to a conference sponsored by Pat Robertson. He says that the conference might have had other agendas—it wasn't as if Pat Robertson taught him to love Muslims, he clarifies. But after this conference, he said he understood that he couldn't really talk to people who were different unless he came to love them.

The imam already had approached him to stop fighting, and the pastor decided slowly, slowly that he could work with the imam to rebuild his town, because fighting between Christians and Muslims had devastated Kaduna. The pastor says that because he had lost an arm in the fighting, even when they started to work and travel together teaching peace, there were times when he thought about picking up a pillow in the night and smothering the imam.

This is deep difference! But they've been able to overcome their personal differences to work for mutual existence.

Do they still give each other space to evangelize for their faith?

They do. I write in the book about going with the pastor to do his TV show, which he gives in Hausa. Hausa is the language of Muslims in northern Nigeria. He's preaching to Muslims on TV, trying to convert them. The imam does the same thing. He brings Christian orphans into his house.

Still, evangelization is probably the stickiest issue for them. Proselytizing for Islam is most frequently bringing fallen Muslims back into the fold. It's usually not across faith lines. That's one thing that gets Muslims up in arms faster than anything. They believe Christian proselytizing to be cultural genocide, an attempt to wipe out their religion, and that's why they respond so aggressively to it.

So the issue of evangelization remains really sensitive for Muslims.

It's more sensitive than we can understand, because it's tied to the idea of Western imperialism. The two are the same thing to Muslims; they appear to be deliberate attempts to undermine their power and individual and collective identity, to wipe Islam off the world map. ☪





{ EVANGELIZATION }

Teeming Diversity



Complete Turnaround: One hundred years ago, at the famous Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, delegates from the U.S., Canada, and Britain represented 85 percent of the delegates. At Lausanne 2010, less than 12 percent of the delegates came from these countries.

ELYSE PATTEN / LAUSANNE MOVEMENT

I

T BEGAN WITH CRISIS, and it ended in worship.

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, held October 17–25 in Cape Town, South Africa, was the first gathering of evangelical Christians to attempt to accurately represent the reality of today's church leadership. Though the West had a strong voice, its numbers were much smaller than the enthusiastic, unintimidated participants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Consequently, the congress had an atmosphere of continual discovery, as participants looked around and saw the teeming diversity of global faith. Ugandan Anglican Archbishop Henry Orombi told a news conference, "It is a joy to see heaven begin here."

The Lausanne Movement used a highly decentralized process to select participants. A committee in each country chose delegates in numbers proportional to its nation's evangelical population, based on Operation World statistics. Out of a total of 4,000 delegates, the United States got to send 400, Canada 50, the UK 80, and China 230. Selection committees were to include the full spectrum of churches and ethnicities, to assure that at least 60 percent of their choices were under 50 years old, 10 percent under 30, and 10 percent from the "marketplace." Women were to compose at least 35 percent.

A point of contrast: At the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference exactly a century ago, there were 1,200 delegates: 500 from the U.S., 500 from Britain, 4 from Asia, and none from Africa. The world has changed, and Cape Town 2010 embodied the transformation.

THE CHINA CRISIS

China's emergence as a robust participant in world evangelization is an astounding part of that transformation. Chinese took up Cape Town with enthusiasm, choosing their allotment of 230 participants and raising money not only to pay their way but also to enable Christians from neighboring countries to come. (The top four national groups providing financial support to the congress were the U.S., China, South Korea, and India.)

But as participants began to arrive in Cape Town, news came that Chinese authorities were stopping delegates at the airport. Only a handful made it to Cape Town, leaving a gaping hole in the second night's program, which was set aside to celebrate God's work in Asia. "It's like having the World Cup and not having Brazil," said Doug Birdsall, Lausanne's executive chair.

Then came the shocking news that the conference's website and links to 600 GlobaLink sites in 92 countries had been attacked and shut down by sophisticated hackers. In addition, a virus infected on-site computers and slowed computer operations and Internet access to a crawl. It took two days for officials to fully understand the situation. Providentially, two cousins from Bangalore, India, had come to do volunteer IT grunt work. They offered their expertise and were able to set up systems to defend against the attacks.

China was strongly suspected of being behind the attacks. But certainty is impossible, and Lausanne staff have been careful not to point fingers. They do not want to make life more difficult for Christians in China or create lasting antagonism toward the Lausanne Movement. "We want to be peacemakers," Birdsall said. "They may not understand the unstructured nature of evangelicalism, let alone the Lausanne Movement. It's hard for a highly structured society to comprehend that we do not have any strategy for any country in the world."

Philemon Choi, an influential Hong Kong leader, told me that delegate selection had been mishandled. "They chose all 230 delegates from the house church and then invited the [officially recognized] Three-Self Church. That's

The Third Lausanne Congress demonstrated that global evangelicalism has been transformed.

By Tim Stafford in Cape Town, South Africa

Love Language

The new Lausanne Covenant prods us to take personal inventory. By David Neff

The 1974 Lausanne Covenant quickly became the defining theological document for missions and evangelism—two things evangelical Christians care about most. That statement, largely drafted by English pastor-theologian John R. W. Stott, was broad because mission touches on everything from the nature of Christ to critical engagement with cultures. But its most notable feature was a careful affirmation of the proper place of sociopolitical involvement next to evangelism as a Christian duty. It carefully distinguished between the two categories, but it held both to be “necessary expressions” of Christian belief.

Now comes the Cape Town Commitment, the first half of which deals with Christian belief. It was fittingly crafted by Irish biblical scholar Christopher Wright, Stott’s successor as leader of the Langham Partnership/John Stott Ministries.

In the spirit of the Covenant, the Commitment affirms not only deeds of mercy, but also “solidarity and advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed.” But that is not what it will be remembered for.

The most obvious difference from the previous statement is that the Commitment is organized around the theme of *love*. Statements of belief invite us to mentally check off our agreement with each article. This can reassure, allowing us to connect with our forebears in the faith as we recite a creed or read a historic confession.

But the Cape Town Commitment is disturbingly organized as a series of properly ordered loves. “We love because God first loved us,” “We love the living God,” “We love God the Father,” and so on, through, “We love God’s World,” “We love the Gospel of God,” and “We love the mission of God.”

It is easy to mistake mental assent for faith. But introduce the language of love, and it forces me to take an inventory of my passions and commitments. Thus, the Cape Town Commitment asks what I have risked for the gospel lately, what I have done for love of neighbor, where my passion for what touches the heart of God has transformed my life.

The Commitment also moves beyond the Covenant by showing that evangelical theology has matured since 1974. It is missional, narrative, and more conscious of the early church’s theology.

It is missional: The year Stott drafted the Lausanne Covenant, Lesslie Newbigin, the retiring Bishop of Madras, was returning home to England. It would be another 12 years before this godfather of missional thinking published his keen insights into the nature of the church and its role in God’s mission. The Covenant laid a foundation, but the Commitment benefits from 20 years of evangelical interaction with Newbigin’s ideas. We no longer talk about our mission as if it were distinct from God’s mission in Christ. God himself is on a mission, and we participate in that mission.

It is narrative: The Covenant summarized its points in tidy statements. The Commitment frames its points at length with the biblical story of rebellion and redemption. You might compare the 1974 document to the apostle Paul’s more densely reasoned expositions, and the 2010 Commitment to the apostles’ sermons in Acts. Those sermons rehearsed the saving work of God: the election of Abraham’s descendants, their repeated failures, the Prophets’ warnings, and the fulfillment of God’s promises in Jesus the Messiah.

Before Stott crafted the Lausanne Covenant, evangelical theologians were known for their defense of “propositional truth” over against a “theology of encounter” that they claimed divorced Christian faith from concrete history. Since 1974, evangelical theologians have been paying attention to the narrative structure of theology. Robert Webber, for example, challenged evangelicals to frame theology, church life, worship, evangelism, and spiritual formation by the biblical narrative. The goal is to recognize that the propositions defended by evangelicalism’s founders have a fundamentally narrative nature: they summarize the story of God’s rescue plan to reconcile the entire cosmos to himself. This narrative approach and the Commitment’s language about the Atonement also reflect the writings of key early church theologians.

Finally, the Commitment features a call to integrity and obedience paired with a corresponding note of repentance. Near the end of the congress, Wright told the delegates that the greatest obstacle to God’s mission is not persecution or other religions, but the disobedience of God’s own people. He pointed to Christian leaders’ idolatry of power and pride, popularity and success, and wealth and greed. He called them to stop frustrating God’s mission by instead living lives of humility, integrity, and simplicity. This message is repeated in the Commitment, and it is this for which the Commitment deserves to be remembered.

not how you do it. To repair the damage, we must meet face-to-face.” Lausanne leaders hope to visit China soon.

Despite these crises, Cape Town 2010’s complex operations came off superbly. Occupying a gleaming convention center near Cape Town’s beautiful waterfront, the tightly scheduled, fast-paced conference fully integrated drama, dance, video, and art. “The triumph of the conference,” said Calcutta Assemblies of God pastor Ivan Satyavrata, “was how it engaged all the senses.”

For many, the table groups were the most significant innovation. The main hall was an almost endless carpet of tables for six. Each participant was assigned a group for the week, carefully managed for diversity. One hundred and fifty table groups were set by languages other than English so that participants could talk freely. Global diversity was an experiential reality as table groups responded to Scripture together and shared their reactions to key issues. Many participants told me that table groups were the innovation they appreciated most; they only wished they had been given more time to converse.

The high-tech program kept speakers on a tight leash, provided a hailstorm of facts and perspectives, and sometimes overwhelmed participants with information they had little time to reflect on. Never boring, it had the downside of not allowing time and space for some non-Western cultures to be themselves. All congress presentations were in English, the one language shared by all who were providing simultaneous translation into seven other languages. But some Latin American and African speakers struggled to read English scripts. Running translation would have taken twice as long for the same content, but would have let in more humanity.

I asked Femi Adeleye, a Ghanaian plenary speaker, if the planning process had been representative of the global participation. “No’ would be my honest answer,” he said. “Planning has been mostly Western. They sent us the plan, but the template was already established. We could only influence the margins.”

Ruth Padilla DeBorst, a Latin American who gave one of the morning Bible expositions, felt similarly. “This was their program, and we attended. It should be ours, if this is the global church. Technology became the driving force.”

Nevertheless, speakers from five continents gave wonderful daily expositions



The main hall was an almost endless carpet of tables for six. Many participants said the table groups were the innovation they appreciated most; they only wished they had been given more time to converse.

of Ephesians. Others shared amazing testimonies. Eighteen-year-old Sung Kyung Ju told of her determination to witness for Christ in her native North Korea, even though her father, a former high-ranking official, evidently gave his life doing the same. Libby Little read notes for a devotional talk from the bloodstained notebook of her husband, Tom, who was murdered August 5 alongside nine other aid workers in Afghanistan.

Naturally there were grumblings. While John Piper was a favorite expositor for many,

others resented his importing controversy over eternal suffering into an Ephesians text that had nothing to do with it. Some regretted that N. T. Wright was not invited to speak, sensing an underlying attempt to steer the evangelical movement toward a particular kind of theology. Arnold Van Heusden, until recently head of the Evangelical Alliance in the Netherlands, thought he detected a defensive note in the program.

Others saw just the opposite. Cape Town 2010 included several strong pleas for women's

equal participation in ministry, and featuring Padilla DeBorst as a Bible expositor was a seminal event. Strikingly, evangelicalism's past debates over evangelism taking priority over service seemed finished. Speaker after speaker emphasized how integrally the two are related in witness.

Cape Town 2010 provided no theological or missiological breakthroughs. It did, however, provide something Lausanne international director Lindsay Brown hoped for: a ringing affirmation of the uniqueness



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of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the imperative of world evangelization. “I think there’s been slippage,” he told me as the conference began. But slippage was hard to detect in participants’ enthusiasm for traditional evangelical affirmations.

THE CAPE TOWN COMMITMENT

“We didn’t want a jamboree of evangelical triumphalism,” said Christopher Wright, international director for Langham Partnership/John Stott Ministries. In a stirring address, Wright compared in detail the state of the church today and the church in the generations before Luther. “What is the greatest obstacle to God’s mission in the world?” Wright asked. “It is not other religions or a resistant culture. Our idolatry is the single biggest obstacle to world mission. We are a scandal, a stumbling block to the mission of God. Reformation is the desperate need of our day, and it must start with us. If we want to change the world, we must first change our world.” He called for a new reformation beginning within evangelicalism.

Participants devoted much of Saturday to repentance and prayer as they responded

to Wright’s call to reflect on the movement’s lack of humility, integrity, and simplicity.

That same day, Lausanne leadership released part one of the Cape Town Commitment, a statement of belief written by a committee headed by Wright. The committee will complete the second part in the weeks after the congress, and aims to express commitment to action.

Part one is long—16 pages of theology—but beautifully expressive at many points. Notably, the commitment is framed as a covenant of love: God’s love for us, and our consequent love for him and for the world. “Near the beginning of drafting,” Wright told me, “I asked John Stott what he thought of that approach. He approved. ‘Evangelicals usually write statements that affirm or deny, but this is the language of love.’”

Fittingly, the commitment’s framework became part of Cape Town 2010’s final communion service, so that participants “owned” it through worship rather than a signing ceremony.

In the most famous line from the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, Indian Bishop V. S.

Azariah thanked Western missionaries for all that they had brought but asked for one more thing: “Give us friends,” he said.

Cape Town 2010 suggested that Azariah’s plea has been answered. Both in Lausanne’s diverse leadership and in the congress’s everyday mingling, it was hard to overlook the genuine love and personal appreciation. Partnership is a step further, and the congress suggested we are only partway there. The diverse sides are still learning how to plan and work together. Cape Town 2010 provided part of the learning process.

“We have a global mission,” said Satyavrata, “and I think it’s important to have one moment in 20 years for people to come together in one room and see what each other look and talk like.”

“Evangelicalism has exploded,” Birdsall told me. “But it has also fragmented. We needed something to bring us together.” ☩

Tim Stafford is a senior writer for *Christianity Today*. To read the Cape Town Commitment, go to Conversation.Lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11544.



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Q.

Who has been winning souls and planting churches among unreached tribes and nations in the jungles and mountains of Latin America?

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Q.

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A.

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

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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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Youth with a

In its first 50 years, **YWAM** has deployed four million workers in 240 countries.

T

HIS JULY, monsoon rains pounded Pakistan and created an unprecedented crisis in the country, submerging one-fifth of its landmass under water, killing more than 2,000 people, and leaving 20 million injured or homeless and facing the threat of starvation and disease.

Among the hundreds of faith-based, secular, and government relief groups that responded, one evangelical organization not usually recognized for emergency relief took quick action at the local and global level.

Youth With a Mission (YWAM) is known more for its volunteer short-term missions trips and student discipleship than for humanitarian work. But in Karachi, the capital of Sindh Province, students enrolled in YWAM's Discipleship Training School and staff nationwide mobilized immediately. Within two months, 10 short-term YWAM response teams were on the ground in Pakistan, distributing medicine and clothing and taking food packets by donkey to remote villages where other relief groups had few connections.

After the flooding, Lis Cochrane, a former YWAM field leader for South Central Asia, worked her contacts in the United States. She convinced youth groups, college students, and business owners to contribute funds for 100,000 water filters, as requested by desperate Pakistani government officials.

"We're bringing a message that God loves them and we want to help them," says the 48-year-old Swiss-American, who in 1985 was jailed in Nepal for preaching while on assignment with YWAM.

YWAM, launched half a century ago by Loren Cunningham in his parents' garage, is active in 180 nations, making it one of the world's most widely dispersed evangelical missions groups. YWAMers, as members call themselves, undertake an enormous range of ministries: caring for Chechen refugees living in Poland; rebuilding Burmese villages after Cyclone Nargis; sharing the gospel through sports at the FIFA World Cup in Cape Town; sheltering the children of prostitutes in Pune, India; and distributing Bibles in Patagonia on the southern tip of South America.

Steve Douglass, president of Campus Crusade for Christ International, calls Cunningham "a person who pursued the scope of the Great Commission and who embodies the Great Commission by going to every country in the world."



Let It Rain: YWAM Water for Life volunteers on the island nation of Kiribati around the rainwater catchment tank they helped to build.

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Passion

By John W. Kennedy
in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

Now it sets its sights on 152 remaining unreached people groups.



I don't know anyone else who has done that." Indeed, since its inception, YWAM has deployed more than four million people on outreach projects in 240 countries (some of which no longer exist as sovereign states).

YWAM's 50th anniversary celebrations will culminate at its headquarters in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, November 29 to December 4. This year, Cunningham and his wife, Darlene, participated in 43 regional celebrations, including in Nepal and Mongolia, where Christians attempting outreach face significant legal and cultural barriers.

VOICE IN THE DESERT

YWAM is facing new challenges in a leadership transition and in its ongoing mission of world evangelization. This year, while Cunningham, 75, celebrates his 50 years of ministry with a capstone global tour, the ministry's top leaders chart the organization's next steps.

The reserved Cunningham rarely consents to interviews. But in July he sat down for two days with *Christianity Today* in Kona, talking at length about YWAM's past, present, and future.

Cunningham's accomplishments cannot be grasped without considering the gamble he took four years into the ministry, and a dramatic incident that followed. Overseas missions in the 1960s were top-down and slow-to-innovate enterprises, and outreach across denominational boundaries was infrequent and problematic. But in 1964, Cunningham decided to leave the relatively safe cocoon of the Assemblies of God by opening YWAM to all denominations.

Denominational officials believed that Cunningham had proven himself with his idea of leading youth on short-term mission trips. They offered him a good salary, a desk job in the executive suite at headquarters in Missouri, and a small staff. But they told him he had to limit mission trips to once a month and involve only teens from the Pentecostal fellowship.

Instead, Cunningham resigned, unwilling to compromise on the vision he believed God had given him eight years earlier: millions of evangelistic young people from all denominations crashing like waves onto the shores of every continent.



Emergency Supplies: YWAM's Saira Peter (second from right) and her students deliver food to the flood-damaged Sindh Province, Pakistan.

He struck out on his own with Darlene, then his wife of one year. They left the denominational headquarters in Missouri to drive to California to speak at a church. As Darlene drove the van across the Arizona desert, Loren drifted to sleep. Then a tire blew. The van rolled three times, throwing the couple from the vehicle.

'YWAM's goal is to focus on where we are not. We're intentionally trying to go to the least-reached areas, where medical needs, poverty, and illiteracy are the greatest.'

~ David Joel Hamilton, vice president for strategic innovation

When Cunningham came to, he caught sight of his wife's limp body and rushed to cradle her. He found no pulse. Blood and tears streamed down his face into Darlene's open, glassy eyes. He suddenly felt there never would be a greater time of testing. He says he clearly heard God ask, "Loren, do you still want to serve me?"

He wondered what he would have left to live for if his wife died, but he said, "Okay, God. Whatever it takes. I give you my life." He then prayed for Darlene, and she started gasping for breath. She recovered fully.

Ever since, Cunningham has not lost a deep trust in God, which has sustained him through everything from flying in an airplane with no gas in a Togo jungle to simultaneous battles with hepatitis and malaria in Chad.

DISCIPLESHIP SCHOOL

With a volunteer force topping 20,000—and more than 50 percent non-Western—one of YWAM's greatest ongoing challenges is discipleship training. Each volunteer regardless of nationality, race, denomination, or age must attend a six-month Discipleship Training School (DTS).

One of these schools is located in Kona, on Hawaii's Big Island. University of the Nations sits on 110 acres encompassed by palm trees on a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Mynas squawk loudly at sunrise. Geckos dart across the sidewalks. A cruise ship is docked in the harbor below. Often classes are held outdoors in the tem-

perate climate.

Since 1969, the number of YWAM participants has grown at an annual rate of about 13 percent. Each of the 50 flagpoles at the Kona fountain entrance has a different flag, representing the nationalities of students on campus. About 1,100 short-term missionaries are sent out from the campus each year, and 60 of them go on to become long-term missionaries.

Students study the Bible, learn about cross-cultural missions, and pray. Cunningham, who still spends most of his time teaching, leads classes at Kona. "Loren is a superb raconteur who can leave young minds spellbound in rapt attention," says Don Stephens, who served as a YWAM senior leader for three decades. Cunningham

ZAFAR FRANCIS / COURTESY OF YWAM

teaches students to seek God's voice and then obey, even if resources aren't visibly present. For decades he has taught that if a leader and student pray about a situation and hear from the Holy Spirit, a consensus will be evident. In this way, for four decades Cunningham has been teaching what leaders Francis Chan, Reggie McNeal, and David Platt stress today.

Students view Cunningham as an approachable patriarch—a tidier version of Will Geer as Grandpa Walton. Unassuming, soft-spoken, and whimsical, he is a man whom 20-year-olds are comfortable approaching for hugs.

University of the Nations offers more than the six-month discipleship training course, and its academic ministry reaches beyond Hawaii. The university has 500 campuses in 138 locations. Those earning bachelor's or master's degrees in everything from counseling to linguistics must study on at least two continents. The university uses the modular approach, offering intensive focus on a topic followed by hands-on experience in the field. Instructors are volunteers and experts in their fields, and have included author and journalist David Aikman. (The university has not sought accreditation in the U.S.)

EARLY DIFFICULTIES

Some YWAM leaders describe Darlene, who, like her husband, is the child of an Assemblies of God pastor, as the translator of the vision. The enthusiastic, feisty, and energetic 71-year-old preaches and teaches leadership development around the world and has a knack for spotting talent.

According to Darlene, the most difficult period in YWAM's history started in 1973, when the ministry was forced to forfeit \$100,000 that had been deposited on a ship. Leaders had planned to use the money for ministry. Cunningham says the episode was a costly lesson in the importance of integrity and honesty, and the dangers of being overconfident and self-reliant. "We had taken the Lord's glory and put it on a vessel," Cunningham says, choking up in recalling the confession and repentance that followed.

By 1978, YWAM inaugurated Mercy

Ministries, which developed a fleet of ships serving as floating hospitals to provide food, medical supplies, and dental care. Stephens, who took a trip with YWAM to the Bahamas at age 18 in 1964, oversaw the process of turning a former luxury liner into YWAM's first hospital ship 32 years ago. Mercy Ships functioned as an independent entity under YWAM until it split off in 2002, when YWAM directors sensed it had grown too large.

That lack of possessiveness has earned Cunningham respect among mission agencies, most of which have YWAM alumni in their ranks. "We train up some and they go elsewhere," Cunningham says. "YWAM is like a bridge: easy to get on and easy to get off. It's not to be a cul-de-sac to trap people."

Sometimes the opposite occurs when

movement was based on a white man going to non-white people," Cunningham says. He recalls being privately rebuked by a veteran American missionary serving in Nigeria in 1961 because Cunningham had told a group of Nigerian nationals that they too could be missionaries.

At the time, short-term missions seemed outside the box, but Cunningham believed that Jesus implemented the technique by sending out disciples on brief excursions. Mission leaders in the early 1960s also told Cunningham that young missionaries should be paid by their sending organization so they could be held accountable, something they felt young people especially needed. Cunningham insisted that youth needed to raise their own support, noting that "Joseph,



Fire Starter: Loren and Darlene Cunningham at an anniversary celebration with the theme, "The Flame Goes Forward."

a smaller ministry comes under YWAM's umbrella. Melody Green brought Last Days Ministries under that umbrella after the death of her singer-songwriter husband, Keith, in a 1982 plane crash. "YWAM is my tribe," Green, 64, says. "These are the people who have walked with me through life."

In the early years, Cunningham endured criticism that "thrill-seeking" Western youth and unqualified nationals interfered with the work of career missionaries trained in the West. "In 1960, the whole missions

Daniel, David, and John Mark were all teenagers."

"Critics see Loren as just a dreamer—but so was

Joseph," says YWAM's international president, John Dawson.

No one in YWAM—including Cunningham—is paid. Each YWAM employee raises his or her own funds, and some have left lucrative careers to serve on staff. Cunningham, who draws Social Security, is backed by 15 donor couples and says he lives on less than six figures. Cunningham signed over to the mission the royalties from his 1984 book, *Is*

That Really You, God?, which recounts the early years of YWAM and has been published in 115 languages.

GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATION

Summer-long short-term mission trips, Olympics outreach, and ship-based medical care are just some of YWAM's innovations.

Miriam Adeney, professor of world Christian studies and author of *Kingdom Without Borders: The Untold Story of Global Christianity*, says YWAM is "doing the whole gamut of witness, discipling, and serving the poor and oppressed, especially in doing

for 33 years. Leaders focus on what they call the seven spheres of society: the family, economics, government, religion, education, media, and "celebration," which includes the arts, entertainment, and sports.

Media arts and production have grown rapidly. On the Kona campus, Cunningham's 39-year-old son, David, runs the Global Virtual Studio film institute, which can link to 100 locations using high-definition video.

David has been a film director on Hollywood movies for Disney and 20th Century Fox. But he also networks with YWAM graduates and interns to produce inde-

that, Perry has been producing a feature-length documentary, visiting 25 states and conducting 70 interviews with victims, federal agents, and lawmakers. By January she hopes to embark on a cross-country distribution tour.

"I'm doing what I always dreamed of doing, but it happened when I was still in school," says Perry, who has been interviewed as a sex trafficking expert by CNN. "YWAM took me around the world."

SURVIVING CONTROVERSY

From its earliest years, YWAM has been linked to controversy. Gregory Robertson, who served on YWAM's staff from 1973 to 1979 in Germany and California, says he experienced abusive and manipulative shepherding tactics. Some students and staff who disagreed with overseers were viewed as rebellious against God or demon-possessed, Robertson says.

In December 2007, cult allegations surfaced. At a YWAM facility in Arvada, Colorado, Matthew Murray, who had



Crossing Cultures: A YWAM student in Fiji engages girls in conversation during a recent outreach program.

integrated holistic community development." For example, in Colombia, Enith Diaz started YWAM Medellin

15 years ago to provide shelter and basic health care to displaced families. Since then, the outreach has grown to provide grief counseling, agricultural training, and public health programs. During a recent clinic in a village, the medical team treated 1,000 people in four days.

David Joel Hamilton, vice president for strategic innovation at Kona, says YWAM works in three main areas: evangelism, training, and mercy ministries. These are built around Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:18–20, with the goals of personal redemption and social transformation. The more groundbreaking the ministry, the better, says Hamilton, who has been with YWAM

pendent nonprofit projects. One film focused on rebuilding efforts in Haiti, another on changing laws in Brazil that tolerate infanticide among remote tribes. A synchronized editing process allows a film to be made with volunteer talent for a fraction of the cost of a traditionally produced feature film.

Virginia native Morgan Perry joined YWAM directly out of high school for a three-month program as a first step to studying filmmaking in Los Angeles or New York. Instead, she graduated from University of the Nations in September after working in an orphanage in Thailand and studying photography in Switzerland.

As a class project, the articulate and poised Perry took the lead in publishing *Sex + Money*, a book about students' efforts to assist victims of sex trafficking in 20 nations. Following

With a volunteer force topping 20,000—and more than 50 percent non-Western—one of YWAM's greatest ongoing challenges is discipleship training.

attended discipleship training there, shot and killed two YWAM volunteers. In the intense media spotlight, an anonymous source was quoted who likened YWAM training to "cult mind-controlling techniques."

At an international gathering in the late 1970s, Cunningham says, YWAM leaders repented of a "spirit of religious controversy" for trying to win arguments. He has refused to debate critics ever since.

"Of course we are not a cult," says YWAM international chairman Lynn Green. "Talk to our many friends—Campus Crusade, Wycliffe, Operation Mobilization—about our credibility."

YWAM has been branded as heretical for some of its teachings. Author and Cornwall Alliance founder Cal Beisner has criticized the group for promoting moral government theology—the belief that God doesn't know

what choices humans will make.

Cunningham says, "We have never denied the infinite knowledge of God."

What perturbs detractors, such as parachurch ministry watchdog Rick A. Ross, is YWAM's decentralized structure, which he and others claim leads to a lack of accountability in finances and theology. Finances and legal structures are handled at the local level at 1,400 bases. Local boards usually include pastors.

"We don't dictate how to finance something in Mozambique or Mali," Cunningham says. "They have to make their own decisions."

Others see YWAM's decentralized structure—marked by having no headquarters—as shrewd stewardship for avoiding a layer of salaried bureaucracy. Funds given to YWAM must be designated for a specific worker, campus, or project.

YWAM cultivates team leadership even at the highest levels. Dawson, a New Zealander, has been international president since 2001. He is considered a presiding elder of the seven-member Global Leadership Team (which includes Loren and Darlene) rather than a primary director of a legal entity. The ad hoc network is held together by relational, not legal, dynamics, Dawson says.

"Accountability comes from intimacy, not organizational structure," says Dawson, 58. The international board holds the line on vision and values, but has no decision-making power on spending or allocation of resources. Local pastors and business leaders create accountability pressure in rare cases of sexual or financial misdeeds.

"If something goes wrong with us locally, local people will step in and correct—and even rebuke—the people bearing the YWAM name," Dawson says. "That corrective mechanism has proven to be very powerful."

But starting in 2010, those corrective mechanisms are undergoing a new test in a Swedish courtroom. According to state allegations, former Western Europe YWAM leaders Kristian Westergard and Eric Spruyt were key players in Nordic Capital Investments, a firm that allegedly defrauded Christian investors, including YWAM volunteers, through a Ponzi scheme involving tens of millions of dollars. The verdict in Sweden is due before year's end. Other investigations in the Netherlands and Austria are under way.

Green told CT, "They preyed on people

in the Christian community. Some people of Youth With a Mission were victims of that. It's a regrettable thing."

REACHING THE UNENGAGED

These days Cunningham is most excited about fulfilling the Great Commission. A decade ago, YWAM, Campus Crusade, and eight other ministries convened an informal association known as Table 71, named after the place where they first gathered at the Amsterdam 2000 evangelism conference. Table 71 members are devoted to bringing the gospel to hundreds of "unreached, unengaged people groups."

Indeed, YWAM has segmented the world into 4,000 geopolitical units based on evenly distributed populations. "Our goal is to focus on where we are not," Hamilton says. "We're intentionally trying to go to the least-reached areas, where medical needs, poverty, and illiteracy are the greatest."

YWAM likewise is involved in another Great Commission-fulfilling movement, Call2All. The networking movement was spearheaded by Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright but now is led by YWAM's Mark Anderson. Only three years ago, Cunningham says, 639 unengaged, unreached people groups (each with a population of 100,000 or more) existed. That number has been reduced to 152, says Cunningham, thanks to 4,000 Call2All missionaries planting 14,000 churches in the past three years.

YWAM is able to enter countries closed to evangelists and pastors because students simultaneously work as preschool teachers and physicians, among other professions.

Cunningham's 65-year-old sister, Janice Rogers, lives at the base in Lindale, Texas, and is co-author of his five books. She says her brother's influence cannot be taken for granted. "When the first generation of leaders is gone, when there is realignment, we have to make sure we don't move away from the Word of the Lord," Rogers says.

"What I like about the spirit of YWAM is being willing to charge hell with a squirt gun, that go-for-it mentality," Douglass says. "When there is so much to criticize in this

age, [Cunningham] stands out as someone who is an encourager."

Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of the World Evangelical Alliance, notes that it is commonplace now for career missionaries to have short-term missions experience first. "YWAM has given opportunities for ministry to people who would not have been given the same opportunity in many other organizations," says Tunnicliffe. "They have brought together people from many denominations."

YWAMers might have a Lutheran bent in Norway, a Presbyterian emphasis in South



Diverse Support: Corrie Ten Boom and Brother Andrew were strong supporters of YWAM in the early years and spoke at its training events.

Korea, and Anglican sensibilities in England, and the ranks include Baptists and Catholics, Calvinists and Arminians, charismatics and anti-charismatics.

George O. Wood, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, notes that few if any denominations would have approved of Cunningham's unconventional approach 50 years ago. But in hindsight, that risk-taking and innovation has proved to be a global blessing, he says.

"We could have profited greatly by a different decision being made in the 1960s," says Wood, 69. "In the providence of God, when the door didn't open for the Assemblies of God to embrace the program, Loren took it inter-denominationally."

"That was a good move."

John W. Kennedy is a CT contributing editor based in Springfield, Missouri, and news editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*, the weekly magazine of the Assemblies of God.

{ SCIENCE }

Christ of the Klingons

A physicist and a philosopher
envision God's design
in the beautiful equations
of string and M-Theory.
By Trevor Persaud

WE HAVE LEARNED a lot since God humbled Job by daring him to comprehend how Orion and the Pleiades held together. But some scientists and philosophers say our idea of the universe is still too small for the infinite mind of God.

“Creation is more vast than we’ve ever understood,” says Gerald Cleaver, a physics professor at Baylor University. “We as humans have gone through stages, understanding reality to be much larger than it was before.”

We first expanded our understanding of the cosmos from a single planet with an intriguing, sparkling sky overhead, to a system of planets circling the sun, then to a galaxy of stars. Now we know that our galaxy, comprising a hundred billion stars, is one part of a universe that includes immense superstructures containing thousands of galaxies—“Great Walls,” astronomers call them, millions of light-years across. Imagining this expanse shames some of our finest minds into Job-like awe. Cleaver and others believe we might have to widen our view yet again.

“The vastness of reality makes me appreciate the vastness of the Creator,” says Robin Collins, a philosophy professor at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. “I come into contact with it through just thinking about the universe itself. It serves as sort of an icon for me.”

Cleaver and Collins say we might have a clearer answer than ever to God’s later, more basic question for Job: *Do you know the laws of the heavens?* (38:33).

Cleaver works in a branch of theoretical physics called string theory, specifically M-Theory—the same theory that gives physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking the confidence, in his recent book with Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design*, to declare philosophy dead and God unnecessary.

“To me [M-Theory] offers a Christian God whose creative ability is much larger than we ever could imagine before,” Cleaver says.

THEY BROKE GOD’S VIOLIN

At first, string theory at its simplest had a lyrical—or at least musical—explanation. Every particle in the universe was a tiny, one-dimensional string, and different particles existed because of the different ways a string could vibrate. Physicists say that, just as different vibrations produce different notes on a violin or cello, the vibrations of a string could produce an electron, a quark, a neutrino, and so on. That, the theory said, was how the universe worked.

Those were the days. By the mid-1990s, debates over the exact

properties of strings had created five competing string theories. Princeton University’s Edward Witten came up with a way to stitch them together, but the result was not really a “string” theory anymore. A new, single theory arose, called M-Theory, which remains so sketchy that theorists don’t agree on what the *M* stands for. It might be *membrane*.

In the old string-theory days, many theorists had come to believe that space had ten dimensions—the three directions that we see, with time as a fourth dimension, then six curled-up spatial directions that are too small to see unless you happen to be a string. M-Theory added an eleventh dimension, in which a lot seemed to be going on. In addition to one-dimensional strings, the eleventh dimension revealed multi-dimensional objects dubbed membranes (*branes* for short). Hidden from us with our three-dimensional perception, branes could be as small as a string or as large as a universe. In fact, some have suggested that our universe is a massive brane inside a much larger reality.

The violin metaphor doesn’t really seem to encapsulate all this. But if experiments prove it accurate, M-Theory might solve several technical problems that have previously kept scientists from creating a unified “Theory of Everything.” At the moment, M-Theory is the best chance scientists have for arriving at a complete picture of the universe. Some M-Theorists, Cleaver included, think ultimately it will take us even further: that our entire universe—planets, stars, Great Walls, and all—is just a “bubble” on an ocean of existence covered with many more like it.

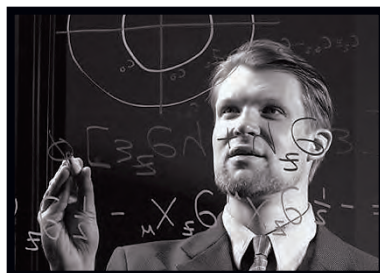
ABOVE THE HEAVENS

These aren’t *Star Trek*-style mirror universes, in which duplicates of each one of us live on parallel Earths where Hitler won the war or the Twin Towers never fell. The multiverse made possible in M-Theory predicts an incredibly diverse array of possible universes with different

sets of physical laws—maybe as many as 10^{500} possible realities. We likely cannot ever reach them, and only a few would be hospitable to human life. Some suggest that universes are continually created, and maybe destroyed, as branes collide with one another.

According to Hawking, the multiverse eliminates the need for God. “M-Theory predicts that a great many universes were created out of nothing,” he writes in *The Grand Design*. “Their creation did not require the intervention of some supernatural being or god. Rather, these multiple universes arise naturally from physical law.”

But Collins says Hawking can’t escape God that easily: If the universe arose from the laws of physics, then who designed the



God of the Infinities: Physicist Cleaver and philosopher Collins believe M-Theory makes biblical sense.

laws of physics? Why does the multiverse work the way it does? Trying to apply science to the question of God, Collins said, “is where scientists are way overstepping their area of competence.”

“One of the problems with those arguments is it really puts God . . . in a very small box,” Cleaver says. “It portrays God as someone who can only fill in the gaps that science can’t explain. As theists,

we need to perceive God as the primary source, the fundamental laws of physics as the secondary.”

To Cleaver, M-Theory’s multiverse, with its dizzying variety, unending moments of new creation, and perhaps infinite scope, makes perfect sense as the work of “a God of the infinities, who creates eternally.” If God is truly eternal, infinite, and self-consistent, Cleaver wrote in a 2006 paper, “We should

expect God to create eternally and infinitely, or not at all.”

A scientist stepping on philosophy’s turf? Maybe. But Collins expressed similar thoughts.

“Paul says in Romans 1 that creation manifests the eternal attributes of God—God’s eternal and infinite power,” Collins says. “You may expect an infinitely creative being to create more than one universe—in fact, many, and maybe more kinds of realities.”

THE LION, THE KLINGON, AND THE CARPENTER’S SON

Once again, speculative fiction writers are way ahead of scientists. C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* includes one of the classic depictions of a multiverse in Western literature. The protagonists of *The Magician’s Nephew* (1955) stumble into the Wood Between the Worlds, a quiet forest full of pools through which they can enter not just Earth and Narnia but countless universes stretching off into the distance. In the course of the story, the heroes see an old universe destroyed and a new one created—and meet the one Lord over all of them. And at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), Aslan tells Edmund and Lucy, “You must begin to come close to your own world now. . . . There I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name.”

If God did create multiple universes, Collins and Cleaver claim, he likely populated more than one.

“I’ve always had problems perceiving the infinite God that we believe in [as] creating life in just one spot,” Cleaver says. “Over the entire past and future of humankind, there’ll probably be no more than a few hundred billion humans to interact with God on this earth. That is a finite number that does not make consistent theological sense to me.”

Collins is intrigued by the possibility of a Messiah with two or more—even a million—faces. Since the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451, orthodox Christian theology has drawn a distinction between the divine nature and the human nature in the single person of Christ. There is no reason, Collins believes, that Christ’s divine nature could not unite with other incarnational forms.

“Who’s going to redeem the Klingons? And they’re very much in need of redemption, as we know from various



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To Cleaver, M-Theory's multiverse, with its dizzying variety, unending moments of new creation, and perhaps infinite scope, makes perfect sense as the work of 'a God of the infinities, who creates eternally.'

Star Trek series," Collins quips. "God the Son, being infinite as he is, could take on the Klingon nature, human nature—you know, a Klingon version of Jesus. . . . So the traditional formula, which is the standard orthodoxy, is actually very compatible with the multiverse idea."

Whether or not we discover a multiverse, Cleaver wants to see the church address the idea of life elsewhere.

"The Catholic Church is far ahead of the Protestant churches on this," Cleaver says. "The Catholic Church had a conference on the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe within the past few years and invited both leading theologians and scientists. The Protestant churches should be doing the same thing."

WHEN THE UNIVERSES SANG

Theoretical physicists like Cleaver spend time in the land of *possibly* and *potentially*. Experiments are in the works at places like Europe's Large Hadron Collider that might possibly determine the truth of M-Theory. A large number of scientists doubt that M-Theory is anything more than a collection of fascinating but fictional equations. And even if M-Theory is correct, that doesn't guarantee a multiverse.

Collins and Cleaver remind us that we serve a God who is easily capable of holding 10^{500} universes in the palm of his hand.

"The beauty of it suggests that this is the true picture of reality," Cleaver says. "The beauty of a theory is extremely important."

That's not just Cleaver the Christian

talking. It's also Cleaver the physicist: "The aesthetics of the mathematics helps us to choose what we think is the more correct theory. The more unifying a theory is, the more beautiful the mathematics are, the more likely that it is true. That is a universal concept among scientists."

"The universe is structured for beauty and elegance," Collins says, noting Paul Dirac, a famously nonreligious physicist, who said in 1963, "It is more important to have beauty in one's equations than to have them fit [an] experiment. . . . If one is working from the point of view of getting beauty in one's equations, and if one has really a sound insight, one is on a sure line of progress."

"To me, that is showing the beauty and the order in the creative nature of God," Cleaver says. "It allows us to expect science to reveal physical truth to us, that the universe—or the multiverse—is not just some random existence that happens to be."

Trevor Persaud is *Christianity Today's* editorial resident.

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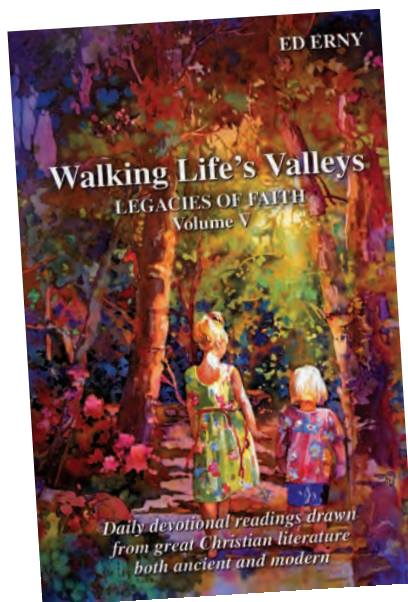
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{ MEDITATION }

Welcoming

Lin

WHILE ON ROUNDS ONE MORNING, my brother Matt, an oncologist at a research hospital, consulted with a man in his mid-40s who had an inoperable brain tumor. The patient had a prior history with cancer that he had lived with for years, but now was accosted by a brain tumor that eventually would take his life.

"I know you need to talk to me about my options," the dying man said, "and I'm willing to undergo the chemo. But I most want to return to the West, watch the sunsets, and enjoy my family with the time that's left." He then talked about his faith in Christ as if my brother needed conversion.

Minutes later, Matt walked a dozen steps to his next patient, a woman in her mid-80s who had just received news of reoccurring, metastatic cancer. "I've never seen so much anxiety in a patient," said Matt. "Her eyes were wild with panic."

Age, of course, does not necessarily correlate with heroism or stoicism at the breaking news of the end of your story. I'd like to think that the older I get, though, the deeper I am becoming spiritually—i.e., that I am growing more like Christ. The middle-aged patient seemed to possess a reality of faith beyond intellectual assent to its truths and a couple decades of church and Bible study. I wonder what my level of anxiety—and faith in the goodness of God—would be on the drive home after a visit with my oncologist. It's sobering enough to remember that every year, as poet W. S. Merwin once observed, I pass unaware the anniversary of my death.

Have I made any real spiritual progress over the past 30 years of faith?

For many, the blossoming of faith coincides with their teens or 20s. It's the phase of life when everything is fresh and full of my potential to transform the world for Christ. It's the years of short-term mission trips and earnest decisions for Christian service and long conversations about a life of significance. In suburban America, much of what 16th-century Spanish monk John of the Cross called the "beginner years" of faith correspond to life's early milestones: high school, college, marriage, and children.

But sometime after age 30, the steep learning curve plateaus, and

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A black and white photograph of a person from behind, walking on a wooden boardwalk that stretches into the distance. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The boardwalk is flanked by grassy fields. In the background, there is a bright, hazy horizon line, possibly a body of water or a distant shore, with a large, bright light source (like the sun) creating a strong glow and lens flare effect. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

mits

When the 'beginner years'
have passed, what does
spiritual maturity look like?
By Dave L. Goetz

the markers of spiritual growth are less pronounced. The language of faith is not fresh anymore (much like life itself). Once I've sung the most contemporary choruses in church for a decade or so, studied the Bible, changed a few diapers in the toddler room, and ministered to the imprisoned, the culture of faith feels comfy, like the friendship of an old married couple. I now can anticipate the denouement of most Advent sermons: "Find some time to quiet your soul to find Jesus amid the hubbub of the Christmas season."

But my obligations are also now different in scale. I'm lashed down by a mortgage, three high-maintenance kids, looming college tuition, and the chronic anxiety of managing a small business. I seldom chafe at that. But the enthusiastic pursuit of a life of significance peters out in midlife. Life's poorly marked trail soon disappears around a bend and into an unmapped stretch of desert: unforeseen suffering and unanticipated consequences. A friend with two children, one of whom has special needs, spent five years in court fighting her ex-husband for the monthly support that the judge had granted her at the divorce. Broke, she stopped pursuing the money. She says, "I had reservations about marrying him—and even my mom warned me. But I wouldn't listen to anyone."

The middle is fraught with course corrections and an incorrigible hope in do-overs. So what's the measure of my life in Christ once I've veered off the map or reached a destination short of what I thought God had planned?

One of the more arcane theological concepts—the *kenosis* of Christ—has taken on new meaning for me as I walk through the valley of the shadow of midlife. Kenosis ("emptying") is the theological attempt to explain what happened at Christmas, when God became a human in the person of Jesus. The word comes from the Greek for self-emptying, which Paul uses in a crucial passage in his letter to the Philippians: "Though [Christ] was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave . . ." (2:6–7, NLT). What Christ volunteered to do models a different kind of spiritual growth as I involuntarily come to terms with the limits of my own story.

REALITIES OF HARVEST SEASON

Who can say, really, when middle age begins? Is it a specific age? Is it a precise but unobservable moment in time, like when the chlorophyll begins its soundless retreat from the leaves in a stand of aspens in the wilderness? Only later do the leaves change from green to gold or red, and then fall off. Is it a change in mindset? A friend complained loudly when I suggested that she, 52, was in middle age.

No matter the arc, midlife is full of joy for the middle-class, suburban Christian—high-school football games under the lights, high-achieving children, and personal milestones. I once overheard a friend say to another who had landed a senior-level promotion at a financial services company that "your hard work all these years has paid off. It's now harvest season." It was one financially successful

50-year-old pumping his fists with another successful 50-year-old. But late summer also foreshadows the coming sadness and inevitable resolution of my story on this earth—divorce, depression, compulsory career changes and long periods of joblessness, the disappointments of childrearing, health issues, the deaths of parents, and the funerals of friends. In the developed world, these are the years when faith confronts a harsher reality.

I also begin to engage the novel idea that I may, actually, die.

These accumulating "limits," as Franciscan Richard Rohr has described them, enable me to grasp emotionally and actually what Christ experienced as a human. I have, of course, always been human. But I've experienced only a modicum of suffering, unlike my Christian brothers and sisters throughout much of the rest of the world. Suffering is not meted out evenhandedly in this life. In my darkest and most lonely moments, I can't recall thinking much about the life to come. I don't have to. I awaken most mornings with the naïve assurance that tomorrow will be better than today.

When God took the form of a human, he was confronted with our limits, though, granted, much different in degree and in kind from my petty psychological and physical ones. The cryptic expression that Christ "gave up his divine privileges" has raised numerous theological questions: Was Christ still all-knowing as he lived and suffered? Was he still knowingly and actually all-powerful, even as the whip tore up his back and as he hung on the cross?

Theologians have framed their debates in the context of Christ's humility, a trait for which I have little imagination. Christ's humility, though, is not like the demeanor of a passive lap dog. His humility originates in power, and that is an important starting point for someone like me, who has achieved a modicum of power and status in this life. His voluntary decision comprises both self-knowledge and self-restraint, modeling how I should submit to the limits of this life.

BEGINNER'S DECEPTION

"How are you doing, spiritually?"

I confess that I almost always dodge that question from well-meaning folks. There's no way to answer it cleanly. "I'm doing well" hints at spiritual pride or implies that I'm in denial: *What is he hiding?* "Not that well" means I have explaining to do. I'm not opposed to that, but only to a friend or two.

Asking about the state of my soul is not like asking what I had for breakfast, largely because of what the fathers and mothers of the faith called the "false self." My spiritual assessment chip tends to operate intermittently, especially during the beginner years of faith. At conversion, an internal conversation ignites between the bloated false self and the new true self who has been awakened by faith. Life itself becomes, as Catholic writer Thomas Merton wrote, a "series of choices between the fiction of our false self, whom we feed with the illusions of passion and selfish appetite, and our loving consent



to the purely gratuitous mercy of God.”

The ability to accurately assess how I’m doing spiritually doesn’t seem to come standard with the original equipment at conversion. I paid scant attention to this interior banter as a young man. I exhausted myself corralling the sins of the flesh (lust, ambition, and greed). I spent years absorbing all the information I could about the earthly expressions of faith: friendships, church, Bible study, mission trips, and other forms of Christian service—all important to establishing a beachhead on the shores of faith.

So much of my pursuit of God was conflated with my anxiety about significance. When my wife, Jana, and I said our vows 20 years ago, we felt a sense of marital destiny: God had brought us together for a purpose. It’s a holy emotion and universal, I suspect. But 20 years later, I discern our gliding trajectory and think, Did God have something “bigger” in mind than our suburban story? Is caring for an aging parent in a memory unit significant? Or threatening your oldest repeatedly on Sunday mornings with cell phone oblivion just to motivate him to attend church? A life of significance as it is lived out is simply different in kind from how it is youthfully envisioned. Many of my ideas about significance during the beginner years of faith were at least one part grandiosity, cloaked in the guise of serving God.

In *The Interior Castle*, Teresa of Avila, the 16th-century spiritual writer, hitches the word *self-knowledge* with humility. She describes self-knowledge as the first mansion (out of seven) in the progression to knowing God fully: “However high a state the soul may have attained, self-knowledge is incumbent upon it . . . Humility must always be doing its work like a bee making its honey in the hive: without humility all will be lost.” Self-knowledge and its visible corollary, humility, seem not to be a one-time acquisition like conversion or an urgent sense of call that often marks the beginner years of faith. It’s a slow, agonizing progression as the soul makes its way toward God.

A friend, an Episcopal priest, invited me to lunch at an exclusive country club near the upscale community in which he served. We sat at a table that overlooked the 18th hole. The lunch crowd hailed the priest like a celebrity coming home to a neighborhood bar. The elderly ladies at a table nearby tried to catch his eye as we sat down. The women giggled like middle-schoolers. When the check for the meal arrived, the waitress asked, “What is your number?” and my friend rattled off his membership number, a perk of his collar, and signed the guest check. He then turned and said to me, “I know this is not real. I know this will all go away once I retire.”

In his mid-50s, he planned to retire early, in about a year. After many years of wearing the collar, though, he recognized the temptation to conflate his person with his role as pastor—and all the delights of the gratis membership. I doubt whether as a 26-year-old pastor he could have separated the two. His ascending story of significance would have distorted reality. Self-knowledge—my ability to distinguish between my false self and the new self God is creating in me—marks progress in midlife. Self-knowledge exposes my naïve faith in my status and the true nature of earthly power.

A SPIRITUALITY OF LIMITS

With all the promise of do-overs at midlife—second (and third) marriages, second families, and fresh careers (and “radical” journeys of Christian service)—it’s still late summer. It’s not springtime. As my story resolves, I will continue to lose whatever status or power I have gathered to myself. I once attended a dinner celebrating the lives of local professional baseball players, several of them in their 80s and 90s. One broke down in the middle of his witty major-league stories from the 1950s and 1960s, and sobbed, “I now have Parkinson’s.” The moment was poignant, and the point was not lost on me: He’s only thirty years older than I am.

The marker of kenosis includes the self-restraint to stop fighting the limits of this life. This is not a passive concession to time but an active discipline that allows me to more freely engage my calling in this life, pursuing what God has left for me to do with honesty, energy, and joy.

On a fly-fishing trip, with still an hour in the truck before arriving home, my fishing buddy off-handedly observed that I was overly sensitive to criticism. He listed a couple instances, including my response to some reviews of my writing. Suddenly, the truck

felt cramped. I snapped back that simply debating what others say about me or what I do isn’t being overly sensitive. I asked him to give more specific examples, which I debunked. Hurt, I withdrew from the conversation and nursed my new wound from a friend. How could I be sensitive to criticism?

In the years since, I’ve come, glacially, to another layer of insight: Not only am I overly sensitive to criticism, I also like to play consultant to others about how they can advance their lives. That’s not how I viewed myself as a beginner in the faith. I saw myself as much more large-hearted. Perhaps that’s what is meant by Merton’s phrase “fictional self”: the fiction I weave about who I am distorts my perception of reality. I now see why humility comes on the heels of self-knowledge: I cringe when I think of how unaware I’ve been. Another friend reminds me that humility and “I feel stupid” are related, but not equivalent. The humility of the true self is by choice (the voluntary component), not by consequence. Now, when I feel duty-bound to defend myself or point out the truth in another’s life, I try to apply the discipline of silence.

That’s approaching the humility of Christ. The marker is not easily acquired, especially for those in the developed world whose lives have been largely about consumption and accumulating status. The markers of faith never seem to appear fully developed. They emerge like larvae that rise from the bottom of a river and over decades make their way to the surface in adult form. No one marker, of course, is the final destination of my life in Christ. But the pursuit of humility is a decent start in the middle years, in which I increasingly find myself yearning to immerse myself, in the words of Merton, in the “rivers of tranquility that flow from God into the whole universe and draw all things back to God.”



Dave L. Goetz is the author of *Death by Suburb* (HarperOne) and the president of CZ Strategy, a marketing consulting firm in Wheaton, Illinois.

Many of my ideas about significance during the beginner years of faith were at least one part grandiosity, cloaked in the guise of serving God.



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VIEWPOINTS

OPINIONS AND
PERSPECTIVES ON
ISSUES FACING
THE CHURCH



The cover story on Al Mohler was one of CT's best. I'm surprised by what one man has been able to do to redirect such a large body of believers.

*Richard Parvin
Clearwater, Florida*

The Reformer

Christianity Today's cover story on Al Mohler ["The Reformer," October] was one of your best, providing good news to those of us who are concerned by the church's willingness to overlook biblical teaching to go along with the culture. I'm surprised by what one man has been able to do to redirect such a large body of believers.

RICHARD PARVIN
Clearwater, Florida

By no stretch of the imagination can Mohler be called a "fundamentalist." Molly Worthen correctly notes Mohler's admiration for Carl F. H. Henry, whose *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* played a major role in the launching of neo-evangelicalism. Evangelicals, including Mohler, rejected the pugnacious stance of fundamentalists toward those they disagreed with. Many scholarly evangelicals believe in biblical inerrancy, complementary roles for men and women, and a seven-day creation. Though not shared by other evangelicals, these convictions do not amount to fundamentalism.

G. WRIGHT DOYLE
Charlottesville, Virginia

I am not a Southern Baptist and have never attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBC). I don't have a dog in this fight. Nonetheless, I was disappointed with the tone and content of Worthen's profile of Mohler. Her thinly veiled condescension toward Mohler and his "fundamentalist" cronies was disturbing. A reader with no previous knowledge of Mohler, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), or SBCs would have walked away with a caricature of all three.

MATTHEW WASSINK
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Worthen provided a fair and accurate summary of the SBC schism, recounting the controversy in such an insightful way, with such polar opposite perspectives on how and why it unfolded. However, it's impossible to capture the depth of pain for those who were marginalized by the new SBC. I left it in the late 1980s in part because it was so painful. The question remains: When worldly techniques are used to wrest power from people perceived as enemies, is this being faithful to the gospel?

R. ELLIOT AYRES
Louisville, Kentucky

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

46%

The Reformer
Molly Worthen

27%

**Mosques in
Middle America**
CT Editorial

8%

**Village Green:
Christians in the
Tea Party**
David Brody,
Wendy Wright,
David P. Gushee

YAY OR NAY Readers' take on "The Reformer"

30%



70%

Obama's Religion

I was excited when I saw the title of CT's Spotlight page, "Getting Obama's Faith Wrong" [October]. I cannot convince many fellow churchgoers that Obama is not a Muslim. Now I can cite a source that my fellow believers consider reputable. Your graph clearly shows a growing problem among evangelicals. There are now more evangelicals who think Obama is Muslim than who think he is Christian, despite the 2008 campaign uproar over the church he once attended.

If James was so concerned about the tongue (1:19–20, 26), I wonder what he would say about inflammatory chain e-mails?

PHYLLIS TIPPIT
Lecturer, Baylor University
Waco, Texas

Costly Forgiveness

Christine Scheller raises excellent points in "How Far Should Forgiveness Go?" [October]. Pastors and church leaders who sexually abuse are usually defined as manipulative and not able to change (repent). Many of them have previously offended, and will continue to do so unless criminal sanctions are severe. They cannot expect churches to soon embrace them, and may need to find a spiritual community known for walking with offenders on the long road ahead.

Several passages in Proverbs say

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

CT'S EDITORS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM.

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shame is never absolved or forgotten. It reminds us of the long-term consequences for the offender and the offended communities. Grace is not cheap. Neither should be forgiveness.

MATTHEW MERCER
Tacoma, Washington

Tea Party Tempest

David Brody and Wendy Wright gave simplistic answers in the October Village Green. Brody mentions charges of racism in the tea party, but instead of providing evidence for why this criticism is unjustified, he says Christians "would be concerned" if it were true. Isn't he ignoring the fact that most of our churches are still segregated by race?

Meanwhile, Wright's opening quotes ["Spread my work ethic, not my wealth"; "Compassion is voluntary, not compulsory"] repeat the slogans of people who think their wealth comes solely from their own hard work. She goes on to mix and match Bible verses with mini-lessons on government, another logically incompatible response unless one believes the U.S. should be a theocracy or ever was one.

It saddened me to see leaders so quickly respond with catchphrases to our country's complex problems.

MARK MENZIES
Harrisonburg, Virginia

A distinguishing feature of the Village Green debate was the level of invective. Brody and Wright remained focused, stressing "federal government overreaching and fiscal indiscipline." David Gushee, meanwhile, could not resist the temptation to rant about "birthers" and racists, while Brody and Wright were kind enough not to mention the "9/11 truthers" and Marxists who oppose them.

C. JAMES FAVINO
Dallastown, Pennsylvania

Where We Read

I appreciate what *Christianity Today* is doing in today's technological world, and I realize that producing a digitalized version of CT could save a lot of money. But a computer screen just isn't the same as the printed page. Moreover, most of us do not have laptops sitting by our beds or in the bathroom, where we happen to do a lot of reading. My husband is a programmer and spends most of his day in front of a computer, yet does his non-work-related reading in the bathroom.

All this to say, we much prefer the print edition of CT.

SHARON WATSON
E-mail

Correction: The name of a contributor to the November Village Green was misspelled. Our apologies to David Johnston.

compiled by Katelyn Beaty

WORTH REPEATING

Things overheard at CT online.

"Israel made the Exodus and Passover events central to its remembrance of God's work. Would the parts about blood and death have been omitted?"

Derek, arguing that parents should include evil and death in stories for their children.

Her meneutics: "Why There's No Narnia in Our Home," by Elrena Evans

"The majority of Christians who are not from Westboro [Baptist Church] will continue to love people unconditionally while holding that homosexuality is not God's plan. And the media will continue to call us 'hateful' for it."

Doug Jolly, on increased media attention to anti-gay bullying.

Political Advocacy Tracker: "Bullying Blame," by Tobin Grant

"We don't have to change the world in order to make our 'mark.' Our mark was made at our baptism, when we were marked with the sign of the cross and identified as God's children."

Mike P., on Christians' misguided efforts to "change the world."

SoulWork: "Insignificant Is Beautiful," by Mark Galli

"Let Disney do the big productions. Let the church love people for the glory of God."

Jim Mather, on the financial woes of Robert Schuller's California megachurch.

CT Liveblog: "Crystal Cathedral Files for Bankruptcy," by Sarah Pulliam Bailey

ONLINE POLL

????
????????
Should Christians be involved in the Tea Party movement?

36%

No, Christians should not be involved in the Tea Party.

32%

Yes, they could be front and center.

27%

Sure. They should participate but not make it their main political activism.

4%

What's the Tea Party?

Total votes: 797

(Online polls do not represent a scientific sample.)

But on the bright side, it comes with free Wi-Fi!



God's Quiet Signature

Why the rescue of the Chilean miners was a 'great miracle.'

FIRST, the merriest of Christmases to the 33 men who spent two months trapped in a Chilean mine earlier this year. Your faith and prayers throughout everything inspired nations.

When you came up in October—two months before many observers expected you to see sunlight—we joined countless others, including your families, in saying, “*Gracias, Señor. It is a miracle from God.*”

Was it, though? The families of the 37 miners killed a few days later in a Chinese coal mine might ask that question fairly. There was nothing baldly supernatural about the rescue in Chile. Improbable, maybe. But shouldn't we pay tribute instead to the courage and perseverance of the miners themselves, the skill and ingenuity of the rescue operation—and the sheer dumb luck that they didn't die on day one?

This brings to mind a story that people tell around this time of year, of a miracle God brought about in Israel long ago. No, not that one. The other one.

One holiday season, Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate Hanukkah (John 10:22). For well over a century, Jews had commemorated the rededication of the temple after Judas Maccabeus led a revolt that took Jerusalem back from the pagan Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes. In Jesus' time, of course, the pagan Roman ruler Tiberius Caesar was the more immediate concern. Many wanted Jesus to tell them plainly if he was the one who would restore Israel's kingdom.

A fair request, perhaps. But Jesus wouldn't do it. His words and works, he insisted, speak for themselves for those who have ears to hear. In this, he wasn't too different from the God of Hanukkah.

A common Hebrew Hanukkah saying is *nes gadol haya sham* (“a great miracle happened

there”). But nothing in the Maccabean revolt clearly required divine intervention. Fire did not descend from heaven to consume the Greek armies. The revolt was a military and political triumph. Yet Jesus and his fellow Jews found something in the events worth remembering yearly at the temple. Rabbis tell the story of a temple lamp that burned for eight days on one day's worth of oil—an anecdote among the epic tales of those times—as God's quiet signature on his work. “So that it



would not seem that the victory was due only to might and heroism,” wrote 16th-century Rabbi Judah Löw, “the miracle was denoted by the lighting of the menorah, to show that it was *all* by a miracle, the war as well.”

Purim, another Jewish festival, doesn't have any supernatural story attached. God is not named once in the Book of Esther, but Jews and Christians worldwide celebrate its events to this day.

God does not always trumpet his involvement in our world. But as Christ taught during Hanukkah, those who attune their ears to the Good Shepherd hear his voice (John 10:27). The Chilean miners testified to this. “There are actually 34 of us,” wrote

Jimmy Sanchez a few days before his release, “because God has never left us down here.” Said topographer Macarena Valdes, who helped guide the rescue effort: “It was 75 percent engineering and 25 percent a miracle.”

Ultimately everything in creation is a “God thing” (James 1:17). It shouldn't take clear evidence of the supernatural, or even the improbable, for us to thank him for what goes right. Yes, we praise him for the miners' rescue. Shouldn't we also thank

him for absurdly small things that the Lord of creation shouldn't have much interest in—a comfortable chair, scoring a touchdown, forging a friendship? Even eating and drinking are conduits of glory (1 Cor. 10:31). Did you just notice yourself breathing? *Gracias, Señor. Nes gadol haya sham.*

J. R. R. Tolkien described history as one “long defeat” with “some samples or glimpses of final victory.” That these samples and glimpses—especially the resurrection of Jesus—point to God's final victory doesn't

always make believing easy, however. Some scholars suggest that the Book of Job was the first to be written down. If so, there would be something perversely attractive about a God who began his scriptural dialogue with us at the same place that, for many people, it stands today. *Are you out there? Do you even care?*

The answer remains. God is. He's there. And he is for us. And his sheep hear his voice calling them to step into light and life—sometimes through a 31-ton drilling rig and always through the one who made himself known as a Galilean country rabbi. No one can snatch us out of his hand (John 10:28). Maybe that's what Hanukkah—and more so Christmas—is all about.

It shouldn't take clear evidence of the supernatural for us to thank God for what goes right.

**Yuletide
Yarns**

What is the best Christmas story not in the Bible?

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Jerry B. Jenkins, a novelist and biographer, owns the Christian Writers Guild and Jenkins Entertainment.

I've always been a sucker for tear-jerking stories, but somehow I missed this Jimmy Stewart Christmas vehicle until I was in my 30s and had a young family.

We were visiting my in-laws, and a rare touch of insomnia (probably the result of too many holiday goodies) saw me flipping channels alone in the wee hours. As fate would have it, I happened upon *It's a Wonderful Life* just as it was beginning.

I had heard of it for years, of course. Many friends listed it among their all-time favorite movies. But the title alone had always put me off. What kind of sappy Frank Capra piece could it portend? I mean, *Capra-esque* had become a pejorative.

But I was riveted from the first scene—what appeared to be twinkling stars talking with each other. I was born at the end of the 1940s and was fascinated by the World War II period. Stewart reminded me of my father, who had served in the war. Donna Reed, who plays his wife, looked like my mother in her prime.

Watching the main characters cavort like children left me with a list of questions for my parents: Was that really the way it was? Did you slide in the snow on shovel blades?

Seeing the brothers become men and interact in mature and loving ways with their aging father made me long for the same with my three sons.

But when the engine of the story really revved up, I knew I was in it till the end. The saga of a man longing to leave his little hometown, only to discover that everything he sought he already owned, will never grow old. Quaint and old-fashioned, this 63-year-old picture is timeless.

The next day I obnoxiously told my family every detail of the story of the man who was given a chance to experience the world as if he had never been born.

Back home I scoured the TV listings to find when the classic would show again, then insisted we all enjoy it together. The kids rolled their eyes, and their body language radiated skepticism, but soon they were as engrossed as I had been.

We watched *It's a Wonderful Life* three more times that holiday season and haven't missed watching it at Christmastime together in more than 25 years since. The entire family knows every line, and our kids' kids have begun watching.

Ten years ago my eldest son, Dallas, and I started Jenkins Entertainment, a filmmaking company. It's little surprise that our latest picture, *What If...*, is a modern take on *It's a Wonderful Life*. Ours shows a man getting to see what his life would have been like had he made the right choices, rather than what the world would be like had he never been born.

There's something satisfying about coming full circle and paying homage to my favorite Christmas story outside the Bible.



THE LITTLEST ANGEL

Kathleen Norris is a poet and the author of the spiritual narratives *The Cloister Walk*, *Dakota*, and, most recently, *Acedia and Me*.

I was fascinated by angels when I was a child. And my favorite book when I was four was Charles Tazewell's *The Littlest Angel*, which had been published a year before I was born.

My mother and father had read the story to me countless times, and I pored over the illustrations on my own. For some reason, the tragedy implicit in the story—that a little boy has died—did not bother me that much; I was pleased to think that a child could be at play among the angels in heaven.

I suppose the story would seem hopelessly corny to anyone *except* a child: As heaven prepares for the birth of Jesus, the only gift the boy can bring is a small box with mementos of his life on earth—a dog's collar, some marbles, and other treasures.

The four-year-old boy had been wreaking havoc among the prim and proper angels of heaven—swinging on the Golden Gates, tumbling

through streets of gold, falling off clouds, and perpetually losing his halo. He finally found an understanding angel who sent messengers to retrieve his treasure box from his former home on earth.

The older angels consider the box an improper gift for the Christ child and typical of this child's impiety. The boy begins to agree. But when by accident the box rolls to the foot of Jesus' throne, Jesus



chooses it as the best gift of all, and transforms it into the star of Bethlehem.

I now know that this theme is reflected in folk tales throughout the world. One is the medieval story of the juggler who scandalizes church officials by plying his trade in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary.

It's the only gift he can give her. But when he drops a ball, the Virgin herself steps down from her pedestal and hands it to him, silencing the crowd. The gift given in poverty from the heart is sufficient to bless God.

When I was a child, I found *The Littlest Angel* a reassuring tale.

I also believed in angels, and still do. As an adult, however, I care less about being able to play in heaven than about God's unconditional love for me, as flawed as I am, impieties and all. That seems to me to be the real message of the Nativity of Christ.

The Littlest Angel, for all its sentimentality, is a theological work. Here is one who stands above the angels—a child who has learned the truth of Exodus 23:20: "I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared" (NRSV).

BEN-HUR

Francine Rivers is the author of more than 30 novels, including *Her Mother's Hope* and *Her Daughter's Dream*.

Ben-Hur, the 1880 masterpiece by General Lew Wallace and the 1959 film adaptation by William Wyler, is a Christmas story that feeds my soul.

The film, starring Charlton Heston, was rereleased in theaters during the Christmas season of 1969. My then-future husband, Rick Rivers—a Marine—had just returned from Vietnam, and his parents took us to see the movie in San Francisco. Years later, when the film was released on VHS, we gave it to Mom and Dad Rivers as a Christmas present. It became a family custom to watch the movie every Christmas Eve.

Ben-Hur is the story of a life changed and redirected by Jesus Christ. Judah Ben-Hur, a man of faith and honor, welcomes his childhood friend Messala back to Judea. Messala, now an ambitious Roman centurion, imprisons Judah and sentences him to serve as a galley slave on a Roman ship.

Five years later, during a sea battle, Judah saves Quintus Arrius, the new commander of the ship and a proconsul of Rome. Arrius adopts him and makes him heir to his fortune. With wealth and power behind him, Judah returns to Judea to find his mother and sister and take revenge upon Messala.

Wallace created other marvelous characters. Esther is beautiful and patient, and prays for Judah's safe return while caring for her disabled and embittered father. Miriam, Judah's mother, and Tirzah, his sister, are both locked away in a dungeon and then cast out as lepers. Simonides is a faithful slave who suffers imprisonment and torture in order to protect the Hur family assets. Balthasar, a wise man, returns to find the Messiah, and Sheik Ilderim is an Arab who helps Judah take revenge against their mutual enemy, Messala—a vengeance that leaves Judah empty and in need of a Savior.

Ben-Hur speaks as powerfully today as it did when first written. I still tear up when I watch the portrayal of Jesus' crucifixion, which brings darkness, an earthquake, and a storm. Jesus' blood flows into the cleansing stream of rain, and Miriam, Tirzah, lepers, and new believers are healed, while Judah is restored to the God who loves him.

It is the story of Christmas: God's Son, born of a virgin to live a sinless life, is the perfect sacrifice for our sins so that we, by faith in him, might be restored to the Father who loves us.

Everything about the Christmas season, including our family's annual encounter with *Ben-Hur*, reminds me of Jesus, my Savior and Lord.



Can't Get No Satisfaction

Addiction is the spiritual disease of our time.

I'VE NEVER MET a potato chip I didn't like. Actually, I've never met a potato chip that didn't call my name from behind the pantry door until I was forced to eat it and every one of its salty companions. So when I heard the phrase "carbohydrate addiction," I knew nutritionists were on to something. It turns out there are foods that can actually *increase* your hunger when you consume them, creating an escalating, recurring need for the very substances that intensify the problem.

The reality of carb addiction is accepted more widely in popular culture than in scientific communities. But most people can verify anecdotally that some food only makes them hungrier.

It seems to me that this phenomenon symbolizes much of what plagues the human condition. We drink liquids that dehydrate us. We buy objects that require us to buy more objects. We make some money, ratchet up our lifestyle in response, and find we need more income to sustain us. The harder we work, the more work there is to do. And the harder we play, the more elusive the fun. Ask anyone working in Hollywood special effects, or in extreme sports, or in the sex trade industry, and all will tell you the same thing: Yesterday's thrill is today's old news. We always need *more*.

One of the hallmarks of addiction is "tolerance"—the experience of requiring an ever-increasing amount of a particular substance or behavior in order for it to satiate us. We recognize that dynamic indisputably in chemical dependencies. But it's harder to spot for those of us who are compulsive about work, food, approval, ministry, possessions, intimacy, social media, security, or any other number of more culturally acceptable addictions.

Gerald May was a psychiatrist whose work with chemically addicted people convinced him of two things: Addiction is,

at root, a spiritual issue; and every human is addicted to some variety of substances, behaviors, and thought patterns. In his classic *Addiction and Grace*, May argues that each of us has a profound desire for God. When that desire is inevitably frustrated or misdirected in a fallen world, we experience pain. We deal with that pain in two ways. We repress the longing, or we attach it to something else.

According to May, attachment "bonds and enslaves the energy of desire" to certain people, things, or behaviors until we are obsessed by unworthy masters who can never truly satisfy. Tragically, our attachment to anything other than God (even to things that are not themselves bad) uses up our desire for God. It truly "wastes" us.

May calls addiction "the spiritual disease of our time," but it's not an exclusively modern phenomenon. There's a passage in Haggai that seems so shockingly current that it's hard to believe it was written over 2,500 years ago. The Israelites had returned from their Babylonian exile to find the temple in ruins. They intended to rebuild it, but had their own places to fix and fields to replant; they were too busy.

"Is it a time," God asked through the prophet, "for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin? . . . Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on

clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it" (Hag. 1:4–6).

Work that is unproductive, food and drink that don't fill or quench, money that doesn't last. The Israelites, to quote a much later poet, can't get no satisfaction. God tells them that life is a treadmill of diminishing returns

because they have neglected the temple, and the only way to enjoy the sort of productive, satisfying existence he intends for them is to spend time in that holy place once more.

Throughout Scripture, God continually develops the concept of the temple as the place he meets with his people. By the New Testament, it's clear that the temple is now inside of us. So I read Haggai and begin to understand: Satisfaction comes only when I spend intentional time with God. It comes when that

original longing for God—a desire that's been mutated into a thousand splintering directions—gets redirected back to him.

Six hundred years after the Babylonian exile, Jesus addresses every problem Haggai describes. Crops don't grow? Christ is the Vine, and we are the branches. Food and drink don't satisfy? Jesus is the Bread of Life and Living Water. Clothes don't warm? The Messiah alone can cover our sin. Wages disappear? Store up your treasures in heaven.

The desire for fullness, wellness, wholeness, productivity, security, and satisfaction turns out to be a desire for . . . Jesus. All substitutes, even salty, crunchy ones, only intensify the hunger. 



Tragically, our attachment to anything other than God uses up our desire for God. It truly 'wastes' us.



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A Cosmic Culmination

Recalling the earth-shaking, kingdom-sized message of Christmas.

SOMETIME this Christmas season, you are sure to hear those rousing words of Handel's *Messiah*, taken from Revelation 11:15: "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (ESV). Tradition has it that the music so moved King George II that he stood to his feet out of respect for an even greater King. The rest of the audience followed, as have audiences for generations since. The Hallelujah Chorus is the culmination of our Messiah's story, a story that Handel rightly showed was foretold by the Prophets, heralded in the Annunciation, and has at its heart a message about a king and a kingdom.

Sadly, that kingdom message is often missed in our saccharine retelling of the Christmas story. Somehow we glaze over the angel's words to Mary, that she will give birth to a son whose "kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:33). The myopia continues as we read the Gospels. We skim over pages of kingdom references. We miss Christ's inaugural address when he opens the scroll of Isaiah and proclaims that Scripture has been fulfilled in the people's hearing (Luke 4:21). We muddle through the parables that tell us repeatedly, "The kingdom of God is like . . ." And we glance over the very reason our Savior was crucified, a sign crudely scrawled beneath the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (John 19:19).

Along the way, the Good News is truncated. An earth-shaking, kingdom-sized announcement is reduced to a personal self-help story. Our gospel has grown too small.

So what was Jesus talking about when he came announcing a kingdom?

He was talking about the eschatological certainty that in the end, God's reign will be made manifest. His message is teleological; it is to *the world*. It is not just to us as individuals: "Come to the cross and you can be saved." As

wonderfully significant as that is for every one of us, and as grateful as I will always be for the night that Christ came into my life, it's all part of a much larger purpose. I am being saved from my sin so that I may serve him in the building of his kingdom, the establishing of his rule. The really good news is that the gospel isn't just about you or me. God has



saved us as part of a larger plan, the coming of his kingdom.

It merits mentioning that surveying the Gospels reveals a dual reality to this kingdom. In one sense, Jesus brings the kingdom with his coming. He heals the sick and drives out demons as a way of proclaiming that the kingdom of God is at hand. And he underscores its present reality when he states, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been

forcefully advancing" (Matt. 11:12a). But elsewhere Jesus talks of the kingdom as a coming reality. When he takes the cup with his disciples, for instance, he states, "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25).

Prominent New Testament scholar Herman Ridderbos wrote in *The Coming of the Kingdom* that Jesus proclaims a kingdom "both as a present and as a future reality." In my book *God and Government*, I discuss this very point. As Augustine taught, while we live in the kingdom of man, we are to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. In some ways it recalls the Allies' triumph in World War II. Jesus' coming is D-day; his second coming will be V-day. The kingdom of God has been inaugurated with his first advent. But the kingdom of God will not be established in its fullness until his second advent. So we wait and pray for that day, hard as that may be.

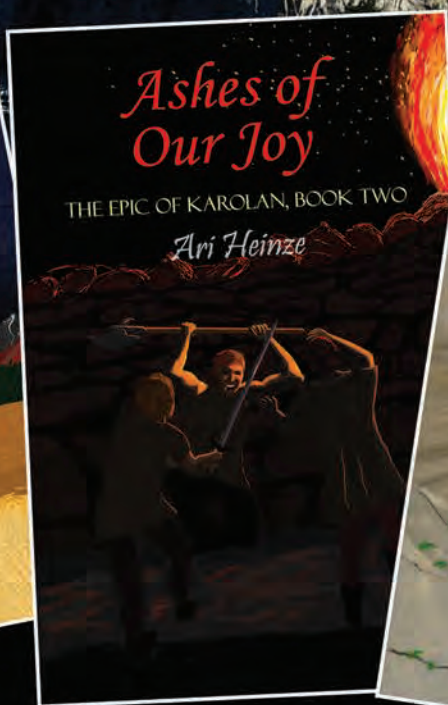
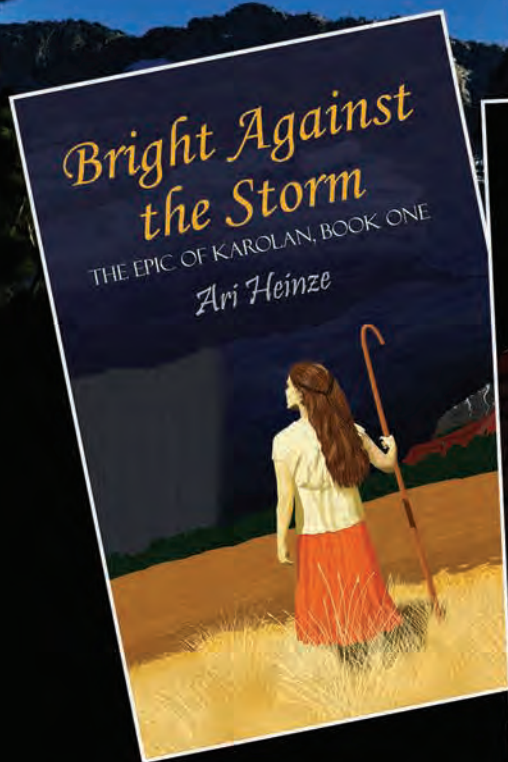
In the interim, while we personally cannot usher in the kingdom (only God can do that), we can faithfully live as citizens of the kingdom to come. The Beatitudes, for example, give us a pattern of life for that coming kingdom that we can aim to live out now.

This Christmas, remind yourself and others of the significance of the Incarnation: that one day God will usher in the fullness of his kingdom. The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever. God will bring about that cosmic culmination. And the chorus of hallelujahs will ring not just for a few stanzas at Christmastime but forevermore.

God's reign will be made manifest. Jesus' message is to the world. It is not just to us as individuals.

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“Lovers of Tolkien’s Middle-earth will find in Heinze’s Karolan a world that is far closer to our own—all the characters are human—but that nevertheless retains the wonder, the awe, and the heroism of *The Lord of the Rings*.”

--Louis Markos, Professor of English and Scholar-in-Residence, Houston Baptist University

The Epic of Karolan is available on Amazon.com or direct from the publisher (visit www.hopewriter.com or call (832) 622-1114).

These books make great Christmas gifts! Book Three is available on Amazon after December 10, but you can pre-order it now direct from the publisher. Book Four, the epic’s triumphant conclusion, will be released in spring 2011.



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CT REVIEW

BOOKS, MOVIES,
MUSIC, AND
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Happiness Now!

We can grab hold of joy in this life, not just in heaven, says theologian Ellen Charry. By Katelyn Beaty

If you are a despondent American looking for a cure, the last place you'll find it is in the Christian section of your local Barnes & Noble. You may have better luck in a nearby section, where psychologists, billionaires, and Buddhist monks reveal the "source," "secret," or "path" to living a happy life, one that's eluded everyone but them. In recent months, Chris Guillebeau, blogger and self-avowed "fighter of the status quo," released *The Art of Non-Conformity* to remind readers to find happiness in remembering, "You don't have to live your life the way other people expect you to." Meanwhile, entrepreneur Michael Masterson published *The Pledge*,

which teaches that happiness is about creating life goals and working toward them—regardless of the merits of said goals. And Sharon Salzberg, in *Real Happiness*, combines Buddhist principles and Western neuroscience to teach that meditation is "the door to real and accessible happiness," all in just 28 days.

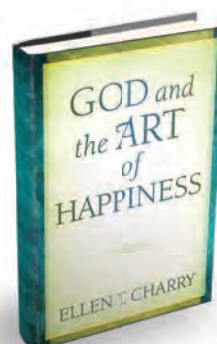
Amid the philosophies of the day, what explains the relative dearth of Christian teaching on happiness? Are we too busy toiling away at good ministry to remember that in our Lord's presence is "fullness of joy," that at his right hand "are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11, ESV)?

Do we even believe God wants us to be happy?

Ellen T. Charry says the Christian tradition has made room for happiness, but primarily in the next life, when believers will be united with God. In other words, the church has located happiness eschatologically—"any sorrow we face now pales in comparison to the joy that awaits." Charry, the Margaret W. Harmon Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Princeton Seminary, thinks this is misguided. In *God and the Art of Happiness* (Eerdmans) ★★★★★, she reframes Christian notions of happiness in two major ways: by defining happiness not primarily as an emotion but as a virtuous way of life, as did Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, and the classical philosophers they drew from; and by leaving room for happiness in this life, which wells up as God draws us closer to himself through Christ.

As in her previous works, notably *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, Charry writes from practical concern, especially for readers who wonder if life is "more than a vale of tears simply to be slogged through somehow in hopes of a heavenly reward." She wonders this herself, having recently lost her husband of 40 years to an "untimely and pointless death."

Like the Stoics and Neo-Platonists who deeply influenced him, Augustine doesn't eschew physical well-being (health, material goods), but he privileges spiritual well-being—that is, loving the triune God—as the root of happiness. As we learn to love God rightly, we also learn to love ourselves, our neighbors, and material goods rightly, and this brings us enjoyment. Sanctification is not a toilsome march but a "healing journey into one's soul, for each step deeper into God heals and strengthens love." Charry says Augustine's "therapeutic soteriology," wherein being



saved means being healed, is central to a robust Christian doctrine of happiness. For Augustine and many theologians to follow (I think of the “Christian hedonist” John Piper), God’s glory is our personal delight.

Next, Charry introduces the obscure 6th-century philosopher Boethius, who wrote *The Consolation of Philosophy* while in jail awaiting execution for treason. Given his unfortunate situation, Boethius uses a dialogue with Lady Philosophy to teach that happiness is not found in temporal circumstances but in staunchly trusting God’s sovereignty. “Happiness is enjoying being part of the divine plan,” says Charry, even amid painful experiences.

If Boethius’s teaching seems dour, Aquinas brightens things up. Charry says the Angelic Doctor “was the first Christian theologian to embrace temporal flourishing in this life by enjoying material goods.” Like Augustine, Aquinas teaches that loving God—more precisely, beholding him in the *beatific vision*—is both the means and ends of our happiness. But unlike Augustine, Aquinas thinks physical and spiritual well-being are positively linked. Enjoying friendships, bodily health, and honorable living can whet our appetites for enjoying God in the next life. (Aquinas makes clear that happiness comes

Aquinas thinks physical and spiritual well-being are positively linked. Friendships, health, and honorable living whet our appetites for enjoying God in the next life.

only through divine grace; noting this, I wrote in the margins, “Non-Christians clearly enjoy these things—is this grace at work, or mere Epicurean distraction?”)

The final player Charry introduces is Joseph Butler, an 18th-century Anglican theologian who preached at a time when psychological egoism—the belief that people always act selfishly, even when they appear altruistic—had deeply influenced Western thought. Against this idea, famously espoused by Thomas Hobbes, Butler teaches that people naturally bend toward goodness, to obeying Scripture and conscience. And when people obey in this way, they love themselves.

Butler believes King David acted in an unnatural, “self-contradictory” way, since adultery and murder made him miserable. So, to obey God is to love both ourselves and others, since “when we advance our own best interest we contribute to the well-being of

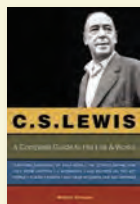
the *polis*,” explains Charry.

Butler’s teachings play a central role in the second half of the book, where Charry names her happiness project: *asherism*. As well as the name given to Jacob’s second son (Gen. 30:13), *asher* is Hebrew for “blessed.” Charry calls it “godly self-enjoyment”: “Happiness is enjoying God, creation, and self by cultivating the wisdom behind divine commands that enable one to become an instrument of the world’s flourishing.” It is not about good emotions or having needs met but about loving God and obeying him, which Jesus teaches are one and the same (John 14:15).

Asherist themes feature prominently in the Torah. God calls Israel to love him and keep his covenant, which he says will bless the young nation in all areas of its corporate life (Deut. 7:9–16). Many Psalms—Charry lists 32—describe the joy of being God’s people and following his decrees. “For the

MY TOP 5 BOOKS ON C.S. LEWIS

By Michael Ward, author of *The Narnia Code* (Tyndale, 2010)



C.S. LEWIS

A Complete Guide to His Life @ Works

WALTER HOOPER (HARPERONE)

This volume contains a brief biography, full of fact and only necessary comment. It also includes summaries of Lewis’s main works, sections on key ideas and people, and a comprehensive list of all Lewis’s writings.



OWEN BARFIELD ON C.S. LEWIS

OWEN BARFIELD,
ED. G. B. TENNYSON
(THE BARFIELD PRESS)

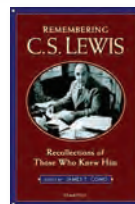
This book offers thought-provoking insights from the man Lewis described as the “wisest and best of my unofficial teachers.”



C.S. LEWIS A Biography

ROGER LANCELYN GREEN
AND WALTER HOOPER
(HARPERCOLLINS ENTERTAINMENT)

Green and Hooper’s reliable account is the first “official” biography and is in many ways the best, especially now that it has been updated.

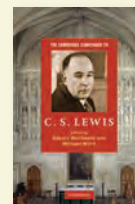


REMEMBERING C.S. LEWIS

Recollections of Those Who Knew Him

ED. JAMES T. COMO
(IGNATIUS PRESS)

This collection—which contains 24 snapshots of Lewis from friends, colleagues, and students—is full of color, humor, and human interest.



THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO C.S. LEWIS

EDS. ROBERT MACSWAIN
AND MICHAEL WARD
(CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS)

The Cambridge Companion compiles 21 scholarly but accessible discussions of Lewis’s works by theology and literature professors from the United Kingdom and North America.

Tanakh [Hebrew Bible], there is no excellent living apart from God's way for Israel that is to become the way for all people," writes Charry. The joy of being Israel portends the joy of being Christ's church. And when the psalmist describes the woes of the wicked, he writes evangelistically: "The wicked man will see and be vexed, he will gnash his teeth and waste away," is a way of saying, "Look at the joy you are missing" (Ps. 112). A similar intent drives Proverbs, which assumes each person chooses to act wisely or foolishly, and thus happily or unhappily.

The asherist themes in the Older Testament culminate in the Younger Testament, especially in John's gospel, which recounts how Joy himself came to dwell among us. At one time, loving God and thus living the good life was about keeping Torah. Now, John the Evangelist says, loving God and thus living the good life is about obeying his Son. "Eternal life" is the distinctly Johannine phrase that describes this new way of living for and with God. Charry writes passionately:

Abiding by divine commands is the wisdom of God for the Tanakh; in John's Gospel it becomes loving intimacy with God. Eternal life with God is to abide in Jesus' wise guidance. By submitting to it, we experience the wisdom that strengthens, empowers, and liberates the soul for a happy life.

This summer I finally read *The Cost of Discipleship*. I saw instantly why Bonhoeffer's call to radical obedience is a classic, and would recommend it to any Christian today, who inevitably is dealing with cheap grace in their circles. Yet I would suggest they read *God and the Art of Happiness* alongside it. Bonhoeffer's vision of the Sermon on the Mount seemed to me to lack the joy—the "blessed is he"—ness—of following Jesus. If I understand Jesus' words in John 10:10, abundant life is offered to us now, as we follow him to his Father's house. Of course Bonhoeffer is right, the trek will cost us everything, including ourselves. But as Charry's invaluable work reminds us, it will also proffer us everything worth having. ✚

Katelyn Beaty is *Christianity Today's* associate editor.

Christ Is Enough

Why this simple reminder is necessary right now.

By Christopher Benson

Just when many of us are buckling under the contemporary regimen for getting closer to God, Phillip Cary compassionately unties the "heavy burdens, hard to bear" (Matt. 23:4, ESV). Addressed to shepherds and their flocks, **Good News for Anxious Christians** (Brazos) ★★★★★ features the admonishing, teaching, and comforting voice of a Christ-haunted philosophy professor at Eastern University. Its timely message is timeless: Servants of Christ grow through repetition of the gospel (which turns the heart outward), not through experimentation with techniques (which turns the heart inward).

Addicted to novelty, American evangelicals are seduced to forget the wisdom of an Israelite king: "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9). The author's target—"new evangelical theology"—is only a reincarnation of 19th century liberal theology, spearheaded by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Such liberalism insisted that the essence of piety is not knowing or doing but feeling an absolute dependence on God. "The molten outpourings of the inner fire," Schleiermacher claimed, give rise to Christian doctrine and ritual. When evangelicals rank their relationship with God above what God did, does, and will do in Jesus Christ, they make better German Romantics than biblical disciples. Consequently, Cary says, they're ushering in a "post-Christian future" in which the person of Christ becomes increasingly impersonal and the Christian experience becomes increasingly unchristian.

His quiver contains ten arrows, one for each of the practical things that we don't have to do because they're not in the Bible, such as: hearing God's voice in our heart, believing our intuitions are the Holy Spirit, letting God take control, and finding God's will for our life. Driven by "consumerist spirituality," churches use these techniques to expand their market share

and ensure brand loyalty. They "succeed" by keeping us perpetually twitchy: guilty when unpracticed, disappointed when practiced. They actually fail by leaving us alone with ourselves, where we're vulnerable to self-deception, moral evasion, and spiritual woolgathering.

Because "experience is formed from the outside in," the goal of the book is to get nail-biting, brow-wrinkled, and sleep-deprived Christians outside of themselves to hear: "The good news of the gospel is that *God* has already decided to do something about our lives—whether we let him or not, whether we do anything about it or not, whether we believe it or not." God is italicized here to emphasize that our transformation is always divinely wrought, not humanly contrived. That's why Martin Luther prayed, "I will remain with thee of whom I can receive but to whom I may not give." Cary submits that the Lutheran doctrine of *sola fide* (faith alone) offers a powerful corrective to the strangely Catholicized and psychologized evangelicalism that oppresses us.

How do we follow the commandment to not be anxious about anything (Phil. 4:6)? The gospel, Cary argues, gives us permission to ignore anxiety-producing techniques because Christ is enough, period. Finding ourselves in Christ, as opposed to finding Christ in ourselves, means we're equipped—through the flesh of Christ, the Word of God, and the life of the church—to persevere in "the trial by existence," invoking the title of Robert Frost's poem. Instead of "bearing it crushed

and mystified," as the poet says in the final line, we can bear any vicissitude with the love, obedience, wisdom, virtue, and beauty of our Savior. ✚

Christopher Benson is a writer in Denver, Colorado. His work has appeared in *The Weekly Standard*, *Books @ Culture*, *Christian Scholar's Review*, *Image*, and *The City*. He blogs at Bensonian.org.



BITS & PIECES

Excerpts from recent books.

WHY JESUS?

WILLIAM H. WILLIMON

(ABINGDON PRESS, 137 PAGES)

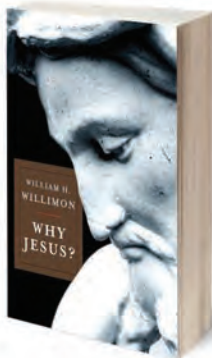
Most people met Jesus on the road. When John the Baptizer introduced Jesus to the world, he quoted the prophet Isaiah, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low . . . and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." In Jesus, God worked a highway construction project, making a road straight through the desert to enslaved humanity. Just as in the exodus, when God made a "way" out of Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land, so Jesus is the "way" to God. How ironic that while we clamored up to God through our intellect, our morality, our architecture, our art, and our institutions (both secular and religious), in Jesus Christ, God slipped in among us. The first name for the church was simply "The Way," not only our way to God but rather God's way to us.

All the Gospels present Jesus on a continual road trip—God in motion, urgently making a way to us in defeat of the desert in which we wander. *Euthys*, the Greek word for "immediately," occurs 42 times in Mark's Gospel. No sooner does Jesus do something than "immediately" he hits the road to elsewhere. Some of Jesus' best words were spoken on the run. Many have wanted to know more about the early childhood and adolescence of Jesus. Matthew and Luke tell us a little about the circumstances of Jesus' birth, and Luke has one story about his going to the Temple in Jerusalem when he was 12. In Mark, probably the earliest of the Gospels, Jesus just shows up out of nowhere, gets baptized by John, and then the Spirit shoos him out into the wilderness. It is as if the Gospels want to say that the action only really gets going when Jesus hits the road.

Jesus cannot be explained simply as the next chapter in the long, gradual, forward advance of humanity; his birth to a virgin named Mary signifies that Jesus is present as the miraculous gift of a gracious God, the God-given goal of all human history. The Gospels tell us that knowing where this gift came from, who his people were, isn't going to help us much. If you want to know about Jesus, if you want to *know* him, you've got to meet him on the road.

What the Gospels deem important about Jesus is not his family or his youth but rather his embarkation on his ministry, his forward movement, his mission. Breaking like a wave across dusty Galilee, he thunders forth into a captive land—God at highest momentum, God immediately. Anybody who wants to meet Jesus, to understand or be with Jesus, must be willing to relocate.

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WILSON'S BOOKMARKS

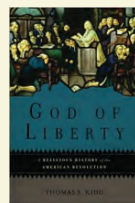
From the editor of Books & Culture.



GOD OF LIBERTY

A Religious History of the American Revolution

THOMAS S. KIDD (BASIC BOOKS)



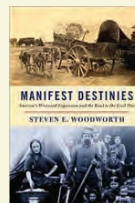
When a book arrives with enthusiastic endorsements from Rodney Stark, Mark Noll, Harry Stout, George Marsden, and Wilfred McClay, what's left to say except "Buy it and read it"? This subject gener-

ates a great many books. Most of them are not worth your time. This one is. Balanced without being bland, lucid in the telling, Thomas Kidd's chronicle corrects the excesses both of those who overstate the degree to which America was founded as a "Christian nation" and of those who seek to minimize the formative role of religion in the new nation's character.

MANIFEST DESTINIES

America's Westward Expansion and the Road to the Civil War

STEVEN E. WOODWORTH (KNOPF)



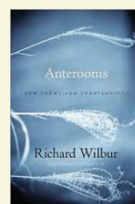
By the time you read this, the news will be in from the November elections. Whatever the outcome, and however much you are disappointed, gratified, disgusted, or cheered by the results,

Steven Woodworth's book will make timely reading. Woodworth, who has published many books on the Civil War, takes us into the thicket of national politics (not any better then, really, than now) to explore the consequences of territorial expansion: "America's manifest destiny to overspread the continent became its manifest destiny finally to face the issue of slavery."

ANTEROOMS

New Poems and Translations

RICHARD WILBUR (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT)



Richard Wilbur's first book of poems, *The Enormous Changes*, appeared in 1947—and here he is in 2010 with a new collection. Enormous changes, indeed, in that span of more than sixty years. A good place

to start is with the fourth poem, "Psalm." The first of its five stanzas reads: "Give thanks for all things / On the plucked lute, and likewise / The harp of ten strings." And the concluding stanza: "Then, in grave relief, / Praise too our sorrows on the / cello of shared grief." *Selah*.



What We Owe the Poor

Tim Keller says seeking justice is not optional for the person saved by grace. Interview by Kristen Scharold

Tim Keller has strong words for people who do not care about the poor: “All I know is, if I don’t care about the poor, if my church doesn’t care about the poor, that’s evil.” The head pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and author of **Generous Justice: How God’s Grace Makes Us Just** (Dutton) spoke with New York–based writer Kristen Scharold about why helping the least of these should be every Christian’s mission.

Why do you think generosity is crucial to biblical justice?

I used the term “generous justice” because many people make a distinction between justice and charity. They say that if we give to the poor voluntarily, it’s just compassion and charity. But Job says that if I’m not generous with my money, I’m offending God, which means it’s not an option and it is unjust by definition to not share with the poor. It’s biblical that we owe the poor as much of our money as we can possibly give away.

What do you hope readers will learn about the relationship between God’s grace and justice?

Cause and effect: God’s grace makes you just. The gospel is such that even though you’re not saved by good works, you are saved by grace and faith—and it will change your life and lead to good works. According to the Bible, if you really have been changed by the grace of God, it will move you toward the poor.

Many Christians hear “justice” and think about issues like sex trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and so on. Would you include those in your definition?

My definition of justice is giving humans their due as people in the image of God. We all agree that everyone deserves not to be enslaved, beaten, raped, or killed. We are not just talking about helping the poor but helping people whose rights are being violated. What people are due is not an easy thing to determine from the Bible. I’m urging Christians not to be so certain that they know how the Bible translates into public policy.

Many Christians say that the best way to do justice in the world is to be a Democrat, others say to be a Republican. I’m trying to shake people loose and say that you need to

be involved in your political party without that kind of triumphalism.

Can you elaborate on the relationship between preaching and justice?

The heart of what I’m supposed to do is preach the Word, win people to faith, and then disciple them. But I can’t disciple people without telling them, “Help the poor.” To believe in Jesus is to obey all he commanded, which means helping the poor.

There is a division between evangelicals. Some feel that doing justice is not what the church is supposed to be doing; on the other hand, there is an overreaction to that among many younger evangelicals who would say the job of the church is word and deed equally. I want people to remember that the impetus for helping people comes from the experience of grace.

What part do you see *Generous Justice* having in the conversations that people like Ron Sider and Tony Campolo have had for several years?

Tony and Ron have been writing great stuff for years, but they’re assuming that their readers basically agree about the importance of the church’s involvement with justice. My book is trying to move people forward and inspire them without leaving behind folks who have questions about the mission of the church and the relationship of social justice to evangelism.

In *Counterfeit Gods*, you wrote about the cultural idolization of money, romance, and power. What idols might prevent us from doing justice?

First, race. People look at people who are different and see them as inferior and deserving of their problems. It’s a way of feeling better than others, because our hearts don’t want to rest in the gospel of grace. Power is another idol, because justice requires being involved with people of other races and sharing power with them.

Another idol would be money, which serves the idol of security. In Deuteronomy 15, God says that if you care for the poor, he will provide for you. God knows that the reason people aren’t generous is that they are afraid. They say, “I need a lot of savings.” But God is saying, “That’s distrust. You’re looking to money to give you a feeling of confidence that I should be giving you.”

INTERVIEW



The Narnia Policeman

Douglas Gresham, C. S. Lewis's stepson and co-producer of the Narnia movies, talks about his role.

Interview by Mark Moring



hen Mark Johnson, producer of the Chronicles of Narnia films, once was asked about co-producer Douglas Gresham's role, Johnson quipped, "Oh, he's to blame." Gresham, the stepson of Narnia author C. S. Lewis, laughs as he tells the story, knowing exactly what Johnson meant: When Narnia fans gripe about any of the movies, Gresham is their first target. On the eve of the December 10 release of the third film, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, we talked to Gresham about his role.

Some fans think you've allowed the filmmakers to stray from the books.

Well, I do my very best. I don't always win my battles, and I fight a lot of them. Some I win, some I lose, some I compromise. I'm not always diplomatic—sometimes I'm pretty blunt. But there are things I will insist on.

Like what?

[They are] often to do with the theological or moral messages. I'm not saying that Hollywood people want to take them out, but often they just don't see it. Jack [Lewis] was very conscious of the fact that Western societies had decided, in their

infinite stupidity, to dispense with important 19th-century values: personal responsibility, commitment, courage, chivalry, courtesy. The Narnia books teach such things, so I fight for those fairly hard.

What have you fought for in *Dawn Treader*?

I'm not going to say, because that wouldn't be fair to those who fought with me! But I will say this: *Dawn Treader* is all about what happens when you commit your life to Christ, and how the Devil gets at you. It's about temptation and what you do about it.

There were rumors that Eustace, after he becomes a dragon, fights with the sea serpent. That's not in the book.

Some folks were attracted [to] the idea that the dragon Eustace would earn his redemption by having a huge fight with the sea serpent. But *earning* one's redemption isn't possible. It's a free gift from Jesus. So that scene is not in the movie. That was a nonnegotiable for me.

I have to be both filmmaker and Narnia watchdog and balance the two. It's not easy. People rely on me to do everything I can to keep these movies accurate—and to keep them

Narnian. And when I make mistakes, they let me know about it.

What has been the biggest complaint?

There are people who don't believe anything should be in the movie that's not actually in the book—including set design, scripting, anything you can think of. This is on the same level, to a certain extent, as people who say you shouldn't go to McDonald's because there are no hamburgers in the Bible. People take it to extremes.

Some are concerned that an agnostic, Michael Apted, directed *Dawn Treader*.

Why shouldn't an agnostic direct this? The temptation for a Christian director would be to put his own Christian beliefs [in] the forefront. An agnostic is probably a good choice in that he doesn't really believe there is a God but doesn't have an antagonistic agenda either. If the man were a rabid atheist, we might have more problems.

What other complaints have you heard?

There was a rumor [before *Prince Caspian* released] that Caspian was going to have a huge romance with Susan. We rejected that idea early on, but it really got people worried. When somebody finally asked me about it, I said, "There are important things to worry about, like global warming. I suggest you pay more attention to them than whether there's going to be a romance between Caspian and Susan." I knew there wasn't going to be a romance, but I wasn't going to say so.

Well, they did make eyes at each other, and they kissed.

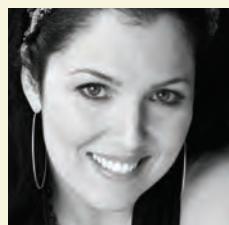
Look, you have a beautiful woman and a handsome guy in an adventure. Let's face it: They are going to make eyes at each other and kiss in the last scene. I don't regard that as romance, but it shouldn't have been in the movie. I think it was nonsense and rather silly, but it wasn't something I was going to dig my heels in [over] and scream about. But it did annoy a lot of Narnian purists, and I think the purists were just as out of line as the people who put the scene in.

You call them Narnian purists. Some call them Narnia police.

Well, I'm the Narnia policeman.

TWO MINUTES WITH...

Leigh Cappillino



It's been 19 years since Ouachita Baptist University friends formed Point of Grace. They have since sold 6 million albums, earned 24 number-one singles, and won numerous awards. But

little gets these women jazzed up more than Christmas music; they have made four holiday albums in 11 years. CT's Mark Moring spoke with Leigh Cappillino—a relative “newcomer,” joining the group in 2004—about the group's new Yuletide collection, *Home for the Holidays*.

Why so many Christmas albums?

Christmastime is when we're at our best. We pull out all the stops, bells, and whistles. Also, we're now a trio instead of a quartet, and we have a new sound. We wanted a more acoustic-driven, Americana feel, different from our other Christmas records, where we had such big, slick production. We recorded this one old school, live with all our voices and instruments at once. It was the most exhilarating thing I've done musically in a long time.

There are traditional songs, but talk about the newer tunes.

We recorded “Labor of Love” from Andrew Peterson's 2004 Christmas album. His audience is not necessarily our audience, so this allows more people to hear this beautiful song that celebrates Mary. And there's a cheeky song called “Candy Cane Lane.” It's a throwback to the Andrews Sisters—the whimsy, the doo-wop, and all that.

What's your favorite Christmas album?

There's so many, but they include 4Him's *The Season of Love*, and anything by Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Diana Krall, and Harry Connick Jr.

What's the hardest part about being in the group?

Balancing it with family life, especially when suffering takes place—like when my daddy was struggling through leukemia. Or when Shelley was struggling with anxiety and didn't want to leave the house. Or when one of Denise's best friends lost her husband, and she wanted to be there. That's when it's difficult, when you want to be with people and you can't.

Keaggy Leads Christmas Parade

The best holiday albums for 2010. By Andrew Greer

Every year starting as early as August and lasting beyond Thanksgiving, the parade of Christmas album releases marches on. While some of the annual entries prompt a “bah, humbug,” others deserve at least a second listen.

This year's best Christmas tunes are on Phil Keaggy's **Welcome Inn** (Kingsway) ★★★★★. In this warm concoction, the two-time Grammy nominee oscillates between originals and classics. The simple elegance of “All Through the Night” and exquisite guitar solo of “In the Bleak Midwinter” highlight the traditional selections, but the Keaggy-penned tracks are the true shining stars.

In a Paul McCartney-like setting, “Father” celebrates the mystery of Christmas by spelling out the believer's eternal inheritance, while the cozy indie vibe of “Village Bells” recalls Keaggy's Ohio childhood. “For the Twelfth Night” details the goodness of human and heavenly relations at Christmastide.

Here are a few more new and noteworthy Christmas recordings:

- Rock acts often terrorize the holiday with noisy deconstructions of joyous classics, but Future of Forestry's **Advent Vol. 2** (Credential) ★★★★★, a six-song EP, rises above the fray with arrangements that emphasize the spiritual meat of carols like “Do You Hear What I Hear” and the spellbinding drone of “Pie Jesu.”

- Multi-instrumentalist Spencer Capier, longtime sidekick for fellow Vancouver artist Carolyn Arends, creates a masterful showcase

on **Christmas Instrumental** (Independent) ★★★★★. Featuring tremulous mandolins, harmonic fiddles, accordion, pedal steel, and other folk apparatus played mostly by Capier, this is a stunning sampler, highlighted by a lilting folk treatment of the Shaker hymn “Not One Sparrow Is Forgotten.”

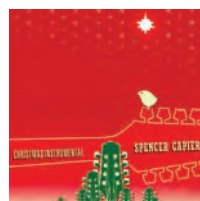
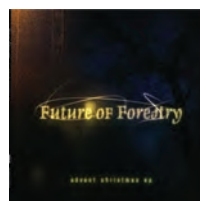
- On Point of Grace's fourth seasonal outing, **Home for the Holidays** (Word) ★★★★★, the veteran trio replaces lush orchestras and multilayered vocals with fiddles and down-home harmonies. Recorded mostly “live” in the studio, these stripped-down tracks embrace the women's newfound homeyness, resulting in a charming holiday set list.

- Jason Crabb, possibly the most underrated vocalist in Christian music, reinvents gems like “Silent Night” and “The Christmas Song” with soothing, smoky soul on his first holiday album, **Because It's Christmas** (Spring Hill) ★★★★★. Though his original tracks are a bit hokey, a few bone-chilling vocal performances redeem the cheese.

Other new notables include The Isaacs, **Christmas** (Gaither Music) ★★★★★; The Puppini Sisters, **Christmas with The Puppini Sisters** (Verve) ★★★★★; Various Artists, **Bethlehem Skyline** (Centricity) ★★★★★; Dave Barnes, **Very Merry Christmas** (Razor & Tie) ★★★★★; and Mike Crawford and his Secret Siblings, **Songs from Jacob's Well Volume III: Songs for the Advent**

Conspiracy (Independent) ★★★★★. ➤

Andrew Greer, a writer and musician living in Nashville, says he could listen to Christmas music year-round.



QUICK TAKES

More media of note.

BOOKS

► SMALL FAITH, GREAT GOD

N. T. WRIGHT (INTERVARSITY PRESS)

★★★★★ N. T. Wright reminds us that Christian faith is neither a mere assent to certain facts nor a sentimental embrace of religious identity. Instead, Christian faith is always determined by its object. The size of our faith is not what matters, but the greatness of the God who has accepted us because of Christ's work on our behalf. This reissue of one of Wright's early works contains a message that may be more timely today than when it was first released in 1978. —Trevin Wax

► HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Comfort for God's People

CALVIN R. STAPERT (EERDMANS)

★★★★★ The market for opera was fading, the fickle English public preferring parody over the real thing. So the resourceful Handel turned from opera to oratorio, supplementing

his elegant and dramatic solos with powerful exclamation points of choral music. Handel couldn't have achieved the greatness of *Messiah* without Charles Jennens, who compiled these texts to fight the tide of spreading deism. Read this book, and you'll never hear *Messiah* the same way again. —David Neff

ON DVD

► DISNEY'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL

DISNEY | RATED PG | NOVEMBER 16

★★★★★ In this computer animated adaptation, director Robert Zemeckis nails the terror of revisiting one's painful moments of selfishness with an understanding that it will doom your future. It excels in portraying a mean old man whose life is empty. But Scrooge's redemption is not as convincing as in other film versions; it lacks heart. Still, it's a faithful adaptation, with most of the dialogue verbatim from the book. —Todd Hertz

► YELLOW ROSES

5 STONES | UNRATED

★★★★★ A chorus of young Christian women share their struggles with issues such

as self-esteem, popularity, and sex, painting a bleak portrait of a teenage wasteland. Filmmaker Mike Edwards allows the girls' stories to give voice to many who feel as if they have none, and in doing so, helps them to find hope. *Yellow Roses* is an excellent resource for youth groups and youth workers. —Laura Leonard

MUSIC

THE CROSSING

► BAILE

(HOME / GRRRMUSICGROUP)

★★★★★ These veterans of Celtic folk, all members of Chicago's Jesus People USA, have produced yet another winner, with tracks ranging from rousing Irish jigs to lovely lilting ballads. Thematically, the songs cover Christ as warrior, protector, redeemer, friend, and savior. The instrumental "Anam Cara" drags on but segues into the compelling "Columbanus," which employs lyrics said to be from the 6th-century monk as he and his colleagues traveled up the Rhine. —Mark Moring

ROBERT PLANT

► BAND OF JOY

(ES PARANZA/ROUNDER)

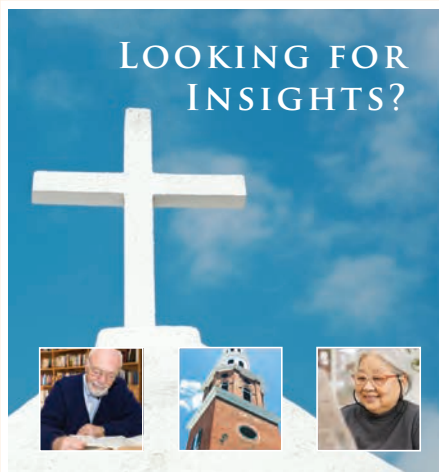
★★★★★ C. S. Lewis famously described Christianity as a "myth turned true." It's no wonder that Robert Plant finds himself drawn to it; his Led Zeppelin lyrics reference everything from Norse lore to the works of Tolkien. His latest turns to American West folklore, including songs in which Christ and Satan circle each other like gunslingers in a cosmic showdown. A couple other songs mix romantic and religious language into existential epics, while "Satan Your Kingdom Must Come Down" and "Even This Shall Pass Away" are more traditionally gospel-oriented. —Josh Hurst

AARON STRUMPEL

► VESPERS: 1 & 2

(THIRSTY DIRT MUSIC)

★★★★★ Aaron Strumpel worships as if his life hangs in the balance. Like his breakthrough 2009 album, *Elephants*, *Vespers* mostly borrows lyrics from the Psalms and sounds from a raw mix of strident folk, wailing trumpet, and clattering percussion. As befitting its title, this six-song EP is slightly more quiet and contemplative, but it is no less visceral or moving. "Born Again" builds to a glorious crescendo of praise, while "I Sing" moves from a pensive piano ballad expressing fear and doubt to a nearly symphonic plea for God to storm a hardened heart. These are urgent prayers for the close of day. —Andy Whitman



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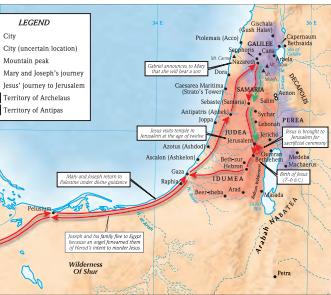
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Name	Surname	Parents	Home	Business	Writings	Notes	Death
Simon	Bartholomew	Joseph and Mary	Galilee	Fisherman	1 & 2 Peter	Simon was the first to be called by Jesus. He was the brother of Andrew and Peter. He was the first to be called 'Rock' by Jesus.	According to tradition, Simon was crucified in the province of Pontus, in the city of Adramyttium, in the year 64 AD.
Andrew	son of John	John and Salome	Galilee	Fisherman		Andrew was the first to bring Jesus to his brother Simon. He was the first to be called 'Brother of Jesus'.	According to tradition, Andrew was crucified in the province of Achaia, in the city of Patras, in the year 64 AD.
James the Greater	son of Zebedee	Zebedee and Salome	Galilee	Fisherman		James was the first to be called 'Boanerges' (Sons of Thunder). He was the first to be called 'James the Greater'.	According to tradition, James was crucified in the province of Syria, in the city of Damascus, in the year 44 AD.
John the Apostle	son of Zebedee	Zebedee and Salome	Galilee	Fisherman		John was the first to be called 'The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved'. He was the first to be called 'John the Apostle'.	According to tradition, John was exiled to the island of Patmos, in the year 95 AD.
James the Lesser	son of Alphaeus	Alphaeus and Mary	Galilee	Fisherman		James was the first to be called 'James the Lesser'. He was the first to be called 'James the Younger'.	According to tradition, James was crucified in the province of Syria, in the city of Damascus, in the year 44 AD.
John the Evangelist	son of Zebedee	Zebedee and Salome	Galilee	Fisherman		John was the first to be called 'The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved'. He was the first to be called 'John the Evangelist'.	According to tradition, John was exiled to the island of Patmos, in the year 95 AD.

of Luke's Gospel (see 44:47-50; 2:10). As **great in the sight of the Lord**, John would be, he was still only the forerunner for the coming Messiah. **Never did we see or hear** indicates that John the Baptist was under a blessing because now (then 4:21). **On filled with the Holy Spirit**... in his mother's womb, see note at verse 41. On the meaning of being filled with the Holy Spirit, see Eph 5:18.

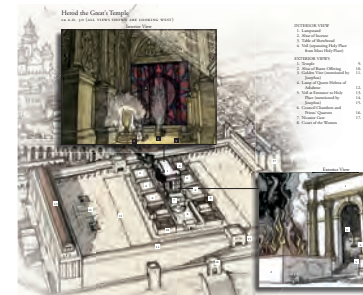
1:16-17 Turn... to the Lord their God speaks of conversion, the result of repentance, which John the Baptist preached (Matthew 3:2). **On before Him... to make ready for the Lord** prepared people across the expanse of the prophetic vision in 4:21-25. **On before Him... to make ready for the Lord** prepared people across the expanse of the prophetic vision in 4:21-25. **On before Him... to make ready for the Lord** prepared people across the expanse of the prophetic vision in 4:21-25.

1:18 Lay Abraham (18:18) and Sarah (18:18-19). Zechariah had a difficult time believing God would fulfill His promise in his old age.

1:19 Gabriel means "bringer of good news." He is one of only two angels named in Scripture. The other is Michael (12:1, 13:1, 14:1).

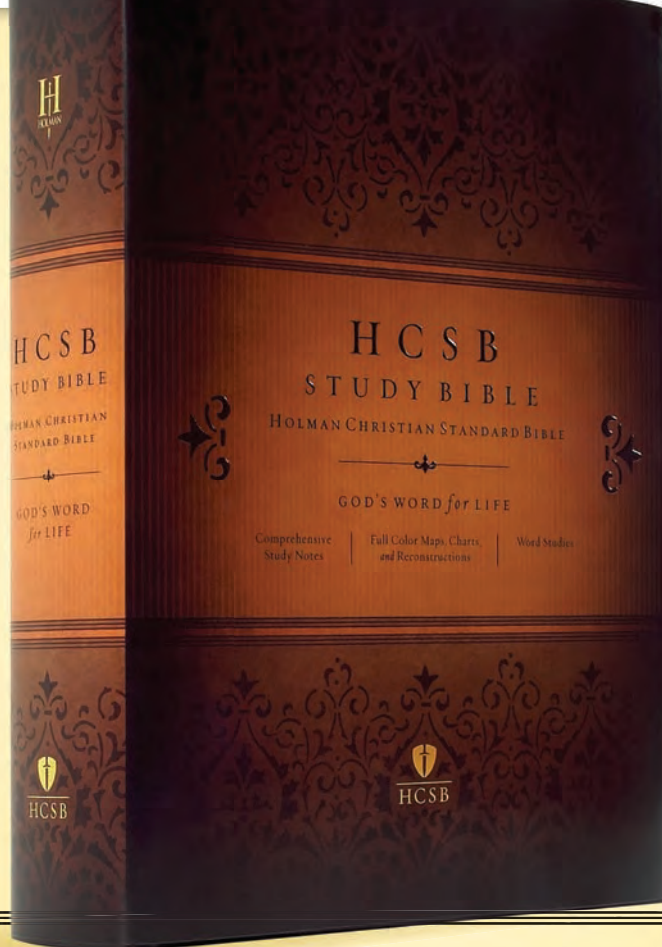
1:20 As punishment for doubting the angel's pronouncement, Zechariah was rendered mute **silent and unable to speak** and possibly deaf as well (6:2). **The day these things take place** was the time that began at John's birth and culminated at his circumcision (see 37-44).

1:21 The **people**... waiting for Zechariah to come out of the **sanctuary** were surprised because he did not emerge when expected. Since Gabriel had rendered him speechless (1:20), Zechariah was unable to pronounce the traditional divine blessing (Num 6:24-26) upon the crowd. **He had seen a vision**, likely because they had seen the angel and the sacred signs he made.



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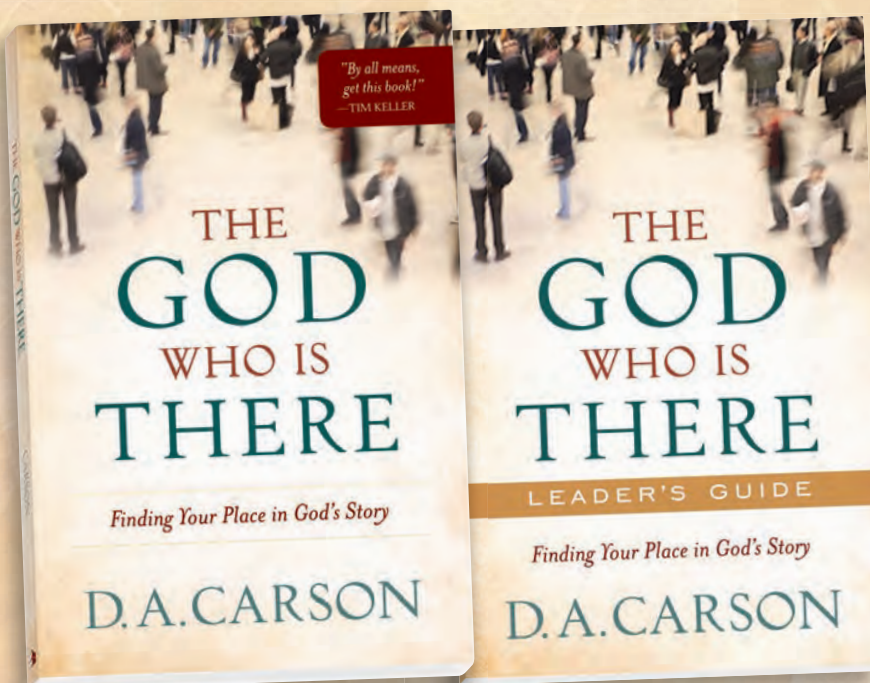
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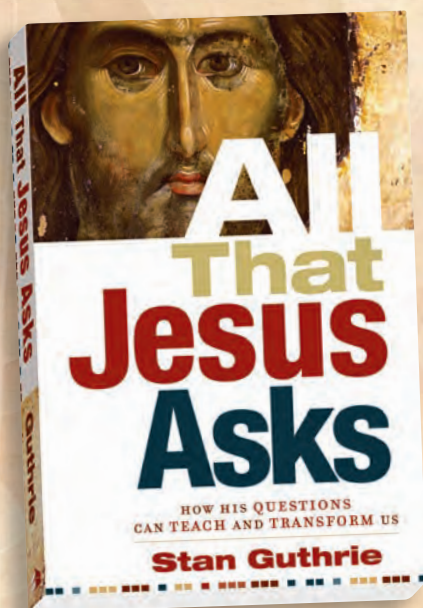
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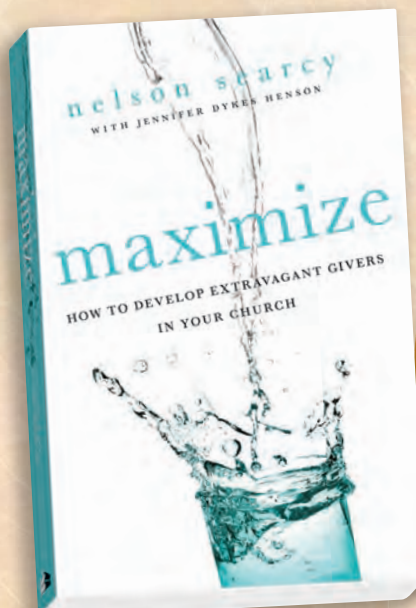
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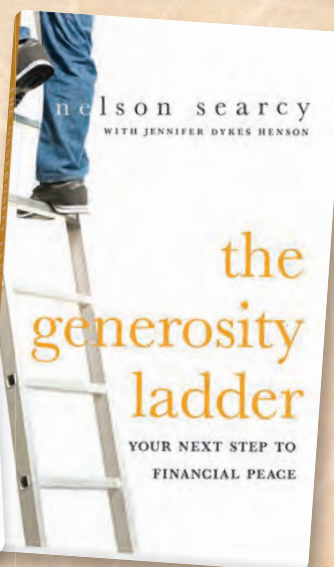
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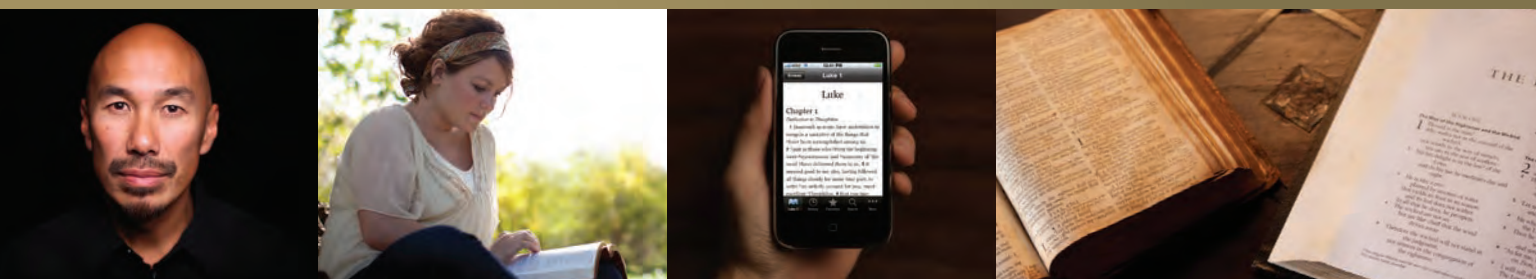
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Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, is seeking a faculty member for a tenure track position in Educational Ministries. The candidate must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent, be competent theologically, and be able to sign the Trinity Statement of Faith (found at <http://www.tiu.edu/divinity/connect/whoarewe/statementoffaith>). The ideal candidate will have the ability to teach at both the master's and doctoral levels; be able to supervise Ph.D. dissertations; have growing competence in qualitative research; have global perspective and be willing to teach internationally; and have teaching capacities in areas of higher education. Faculty rank and salary will be commensurate with previous experience. Interested candidates should send a letter of inquiry with a curriculum vitae to: Perry G. Downs, Ph.D., professor of educational ministries for doctoral education; 2065 Half Day Road; Deerfield, IL 60015. pdowns@tiu.edu. 847-317-8048. All contacts will remain confidential.

[Employment Opportunities]

GENEVA CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER, located near Holland, Michigan, is seeking candidates for its executive director position. The ideal candidate will be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ; have experience in organizational leadership; possess excellent communication skills; and be passionate about the value of camping and retreat ministry. A job description is available at www.campgeneva.org. To apply, please submit a letter of interest and a résumé with references by December 15, 2010, to: Dr. Bill Boersma, chair at billb@christmemorial.org. Attention: Geneva Search Committee.

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Every Square Inch

Alissa Wilkinson seeks the redemption of all creation.

A

lissa Wilkinson jokes that one of her hobbies is “overcommitting myself.” She’s not kidding. Her job, as a writing teacher and student adviser at The King’s College, in New York City, consumes at least 40 hours a week. Another 5 to 10 hours are spent editing *Comment*, a Christian thought journal, and another 8 are spent writing. Add another hour or two per day reading, plus time with husband Tom (a location scout for filmmakers shooting in New York), and her slate is clearly full.

Through those outlets, Wilkinson is leaving her mark. King’s grads typically go on to “transform society,” says new president Dinesh D’Souza, by shaping and leading “strategic public and private institutions.” And *Comment*—until recently helmed by Gideon Strauss,

president of the Center for Public Justice—influences those influencers with essays on the intersection of faith and work, public policy, civic duty, social justice, the arts, and more. Wilkinson occasionally writes articles for *Comment* but mostly edits those from its many contributors, including Richard Mouw, Charles Colson, James Davison Hunter, David Batstone, and Stanley Hauerwas.

Wilkinson says her worldview is rooted in Abraham Kuyper’s notion that “every square inch of this world is Christ’s, and our role is to seek the redemption of all creation.”

- 📍 **Hometown** Albany, New York
- 📍 **Church** The Village Church (PCA), Greenwich Village
- 👤 **Family** Tom (husband)
- 📖 **Reading now** Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*; Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*; David Bentley Hart’s *The Beauty of the Infinite*
- 🎧 **On your iPod** Over the Rhine, The Beatles, *This American Life*, Mars Hill Audio Journal
- 🎬 **Favorite movie** *Stranger Than Fiction*
- 📖 **Favorite Bible verse** 2 Timothy 2:14–15
- 🎥 **Hobbies/interests** Travel, moderately obscure cinema, farmers’ markets

question & answer

What are your biggest challenges teaching students?

They are incredibly intelligent, but many have poor preparation in writing, particularly syntax, style, and structure. Some blame this on texting and the Internet; I believe the primary problem is that many haven’t read and absorbed a lot of great literature for its text, not just its meaning. Many have been taught to view literature as a riddle to be solved, not an art form to be appreciated and emulated.

Even those who read a lot [maintain] a false dichotomy between what they read and how they write, as if the two weren’t related. In my classes, we read and discuss good literature, trying to figure out what makes it work. My favorite part of my work is helping shape these future leaders into people who don’t stop thinking and reading when they walk out my door.

What is *Comment*’s mission?

To take seriously the idea that God’s reign extends into our daily work and play, and to grapple with how that affects institutions like cities, economic orders, the arts, and marriage. In our articles, we hope to convince our readers to apply the same concept to their own lives. Working with [former editor] Gideon Strauss has taught me how to wholeheartedly grapple with what it means to love justice and mercy.

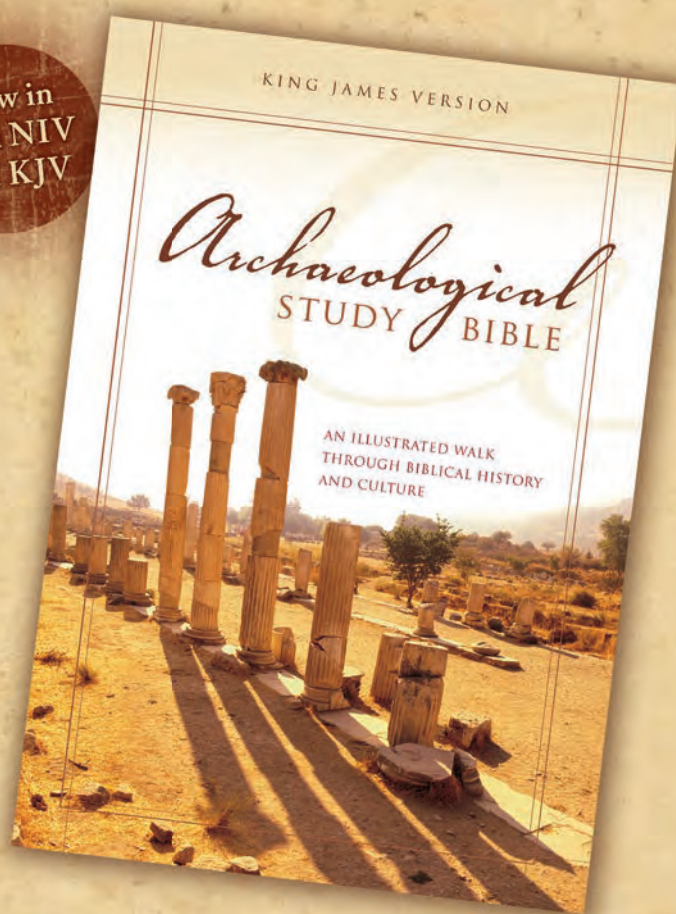
I’ve especially been thinking about how millennials’ practices in faith and in everyday life affect the way they think. And I’m trying to grasp how better to interact with and create art.

What should Christian artists be about?

As I argued in my master’s thesis, Christian artists ought to be less fixated on “message” and instead steep themselves in artistic training, good theology, great literature, and a supportive community—and trust the Holy Spirit to handle the communication. And Christians who view art ought to recognize that even if they don’t agree with “the message” of a work, they can still enjoy the art itself.

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“I wanted a multi-denominational school... but I also wanted it to be solidly biblical.”

Brooke Easton, M.Div., '12

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“I wanted to go to a multi-denominational school,” says second-year M.Div. student Brooke Easton. “Working at Teen Challenge in New York, with people from so many other churches, made me realize that I didn’t know much about other denominations. So I wanted that experience at seminary, but I also wanted it to be solidly biblical.”

Brooke applied to Gordon-Conwell on the recommendation of her pastor, and found the biblical, multi-denominational school she was looking for.



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“It’s been amazing to hear my professors and peers talking about theology and the churches where we are involved. Through my coursework, I am able to know why I believe the specifics of what I believe, but also understand why other churches believe differently.

“I’ve also been blown away by the pastoral heart that professors have. They want us to learn and have an academically rigorous program, but at the same time, the purpose is ultimately for the kingdom of God and for ministry to the local church.

“I’ve actually cried in classes because I was so moved by what the professor was saying and how it applied to my life and ministry.”

Students at Gordon-Conwell are able to access libraries and classes at other theological schools in Boston, including Harvard Divinity School, Boston College, Boston University and Saint John's Seminary.



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